



3d artist

Concept Art, Digital &
Matte Painting Magazine
Issue 056 August 2010

Cover Image By Igracio Bezan Lazcano



Interview
Kerem Beyit



Articles
Sketchbook of Min Yum



The Gallery
James Wolf Strehle, Lin Bo and
Clint Cearley, plus more!



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FUTURISTIC CHARACTERS, CITIES & CONCEPTS



Concept art for Games

Thomas Pringle continues the **Concept art for Games** tutorial series with his second tutorial in as many months.



Painting Futuristic Cities

Frank Hong concludes our **Painting Futuristic Cities** tutorial series with his fantastic take on a City at Sunset.



Custom Brushes For Sci-Fi

Chase Stone brings us upto date with our **Custom Brushes for Sci-Fi** tutorial series. This month focusing on an Egyptian Sci-Fi theme.



Editorial

Well it looks like the summer may be disappearing here in the U.K, the sun has gone and the rain has begun, but we won't let that get us down as we have a visual feast in this month's issue as well as some amazing tutorials to keep us occupied as we try to keep dry.

This month's jaw dropping cover image comes from the remarkable Ignacio Bazan Lazcano. Ignacio continues our Futuristic Marines tutorial series by showing us how he created his amazing marine to survive and fight in a hot volcanic planet environment. This is not only a great image but a superb tutorial packed with quick tips and useful tricks to help you create your very own futuristic marine.

This month 2DArtist managed to catch up with a lot of people's favorite artist **Kerem Beyit**. Kerem is the king of fantasy and he gives us a taste of his superb talents with a huge selection of great finished pieces. Kerem tells us how he found his way into the industry through hard work and plenty of practice. If dragons, swords and epic scenery are your thing this is the interview for you.

Every now and again an artist comes along who you know you want to see more of, and that is definitely the case with this month's sketchbook artist. **Min Yum** gives us an insight into his sketching techniques as well as showing us the processes he uses to start a piece of concept art. If this article catches your eye keep watching this space as in a few months time we will be featuring an excellent tutorial by Min showing us how to paint a Siren.

Thomas Pringle is back again with the next chapter in the Concept Art for Computer games series. Thomas did a great job in the first chapter and doesn't disappoint in the second chapter as he shows us how to paint the interior of the prison planet! Whilst we are on the subject of sci-fi we wrap up the Futuristic Cities series this month with a futuristic City at sunset. **Frank Hong** leads us in this one and shows us how to use the tones from the sunset sky along with the lights and colors from the futuristic city. This is the last chapter in this series and next month we will be moving on to Painting Creatures from Folklore and we have a great tutorial to get us started with a bang!

001		Contents What's in this month?
008		Kerem Beyit Artist
028		Sketchbook The Sketchbook of Min Yum
036		The Gallery 10 of the Best 2D Artworks
048		Concept Art For Games Environments by Thomas Pringle
054		Futuristic Marines Evolved Future Marine by Ignacio Bazan Lazcano
060		Futuristic Cities City at Sunset by Frank Hong
068		Custom Brushes For Sci-Fi Egyptian Sci-Fi Scene by Chase Stone
078		"3324 North Carolina" Project Overview by Jason Seiler
086		"Make Me Proud..." Digital Art Masters: Volume 4 – Free Chapter
089		About us 3DTotal.com Ltd Information & Contacts

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Chase Stone is our master of Custom Brushes this month. This is Chase's first full tutorial for us and he really pulls through and does a great job! Chase shows us how to create a selection of brushes to improve the overall look of our image and finishes off with an excellent illustration to show the benefit of using them. Chase is definitely one to look out for. I think we will be seeing more and more great work from him!

Many of you would have been blown away by the amazing image 3324 North Carolina by Jason Seiler that featured in our gallery a few months ago. Well this month Jason shows us how he did it and gives us some amazing tips to try to create the same effect ourselves.

This issue really is brimming with excellent content and this continues into our gallery which displays work from **Tomasz Jedruszek**, **James Wolf Strehle**, **Serge Birault** and many more great artists.



Get the most out of your Magazine!

If you're having problems viewing the double-page spreads that we feature in this magazine, follow this handy little guide on how to set up your PDF reader!



Setting up your PDF reader

For optimum viewing of the magazine it is recommended that you have the latest Acrobat Reader installed.

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To view the many double-page spreads featured in 2D Artist magazine, you can set the reader to display 'two-up', which will show double-page spreads as one large landscape image:

1. Open the magazine in Reader;
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3. Select **Two-up Continuous**, making sure that **Show Cover Page** is also selected.



Contributing Artists

Every month many artists around the world contribute to **3DCreative** and **2DArtist** magazines. Here you can find out a bit more about them! If you would like to be a part of **3DCreative** or **2DArtist** magazine, please contact: simon@3dtotal.com



Kerem Beyit

Kerem Beyit was born in Ankara, Turkey in (1980) and started drawing at an early age due to the inspiration he got from comic books. Kerem studied graphic design for four years but doesn't have any formal training in illustration, he is self trained. Kerem is currently working as a freelance artist.



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Thomas Pringle

Thomas was born in Copenhagen, Denmark, 1977.

He received his Masters Degree in illustration from the School of Design in Kolding, Denmark. He has worked on many high profile projects in the game industry. Client list, among others: Blur studio, Digital Extremes, Armature studio, Avalanche studios, Human head studios, THQ and Vectorcell. He currently resides in Ontario, Canada.

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Ignacio Bazan Lazcano

Lives in the beautiful city of Buenos Aires where he's been working for four years in the games industry as an illustrator and concept artist. He currently works for TimeGate Studios where his tasks include developing the aesthetics of the game right from the very beginning – what he'd call, "pre-production". In the future he'd like for Argentina to become well-known for its artistic talent, where he can learn – and teach – amongst the best. <http://www.neisbeis.deviantart.com/>
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Interview - Image by Kerem Beyit

Would You Like To Contribute To 3DCreative Or 2DArtist Magazines?

We are always looking for tutorial artists, gallery submissions, potential interviewees, 'making of' writers, and more. For more information, please send a link to your work to: simon@3dtotal.com



Frank Hong

Frank Hong is a freelance artist based in Toronto, Canada. His inspiration comes from a wide range of games that he grew up with. Frank spends his free time practicing concept art and matte painting. Frank is currently working professionally on a variety of projects from different game developments to feature film productions.

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Min Yum

Min was born in Korea and moved to Australia when he was 10. He has been working in the games and films industry for the past 4 years in Sydney. Currently he works as a freelance concept artist and illustrator.



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VFS applauds our Animation & Visual Effects alumni for their wins at the **2010 Computer Graphics Student Awards!**



STUDENT OF THE YEAR
Maximilian-Gordon Vogt



EXCELLENCE IN LIGHTING
Frederik Lillelund



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Three cheers to three great emerging artists for standing out on the world stage! You do us proud.

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2010 COMPUTER GRAPHICS STUDENT AWARDS



Kerem Beyit

Although he started drawing during childhood, art was just a hobby to Kerem Beyit until about six years ago when he began to realize he could have a successful career in the industry. Now a freelance illustrator for companies such as Wizards of the Coast, Kerem's portfolio is bursting with beautiful character studies, book covers and fire-breathing dragons. We caught up with him recently to find out how life has changed for this talented artist over the last couple of years.

“As for why I find dragons fascinating, well, they’re big and nasty, they have sharp teeth and horns, they come in lots of variations and on top of that they can fly!”

Interview with Kerem Beyit

Hi Kerem – thanks for taking the time out to talk to me today! It's been a long time since you've graced the pages of *2DArtist*; I believe you were one of our very first interviewees, way back in 2006. So I guess what I'd like to know is a little bit about your artistic background and also what you've been up to since 3DTotal spoke to you last. Any exciting projects over the last four years?

You're right, it's been years! I don't remember if we touched on the background issue during our first interview but to give you a short summary: as a little kid I was hooked on cartoons and toys. Because of this it didn't take long for me to discover comic books, and just like every kid who read comics I started making doodles – the only difference from the majority was the fact that I could do this all day long without getting bored at all! After all that unconscious practice, I can say that I developed a certain level of familiarity with drawing. In short, most of my artistic foundations were built when I was a child, but I have not received any formal illustration training; in fact I viewed art as a hobby rather than a job up until 2003-2004 and would only draw occasionally. Fortunately then I had an epiphany and I started drawing again. I guess you know the rest!

What has happened since 2006...? It is very difficult to summarize that. I spent some time



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in the army and had a lot of time to think there. By the time I got back home I had some goals worked out. So I intensified my schedule and started building a much, much more impressive portfolio, while also continuing to take on commissions to make ends meet. I worked for companies like Aranim, FFG and Maid Maridian, and of course there were the book covers too, but I mainly produced personal illustrations. It was in 2008 when I finally decided I had reached the level I was aiming for, and I sent my portfolio to two of the most prominent companies in the industry: WOTC







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and UpperDeck. They were the top two names in a list of over 70 companies that I'd made, so I knew that if I didn't hear back from them then there were other companies I could try. However both companies actually got back to me on the same day, so I didn't have to worry about trying anyone else!

Since that day I've been working with WOTC non-stop and as my portfolio has grown and gotten better, I've also had offers from other big companies. I've started doing book covers for important publishers like Simon&Schuster, Penguin, Blanvalet, Klett Cotta and Ravensburger. Right now, besides my usual workload, I'm doing the Pathfinder covers for Paizo and I believe there are four more covers I have to do besides the four I've already finished. Other than that, I've done some promo artwork for online games and, of course, the occasional album covers for some bands.

Those are some pretty big names – it must be great to work for such prestigious companies! Now you work as an illustrator, but you say that you've had no formal illustration training and your bio talks about learning your craft by studying the work of masters such as Brom.

Was it difficult to get work as an illustrator without that formal training? Do you regret not having training or do you feel that your artistic style has benefited from having the freedom to develop without the constraints of being taught by someone else?

I have always deeply regretted not having received any formal education, but it's not like I had a choice either. When I decided to become an illustrator I was a guy in his twenties who

had already graduated from the graphic design department, and so going back to college was not an easy decision to make. Besides, in my loveliest of countries there wasn't even a proper art course to talk about let alone a school which provided education for illustrators – which is still the case actually. Receiving education abroad was not a possibility for me due to financial reasons. So that is why I didn't have much say over this.



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I had to follow this path because I only had one option, but I would say that no matter what your occupation is, being taught about your craft by qualified instructors is of the utmost importance. It is not easy to analyze a picture and distinguish the whole composition, contrast values, tones, effects, dynamism and the elements that make it beautiful. If someone tells you about these a light bulb turns on in your mind, but discovering them on your own is a tough task.

I have learnt all the tricks I know with the trial and error method, but considering the fact that they are by the thousands, I wish I could have saved time by learning them from someone else. But it's no use crying over spilled milk! I have now mastered most of the basics, and besides there are no limits to learning and developing in our occupation. A teacher can only get you to a basic level, but I don't need to say how time saving that can be at the

beginning, so if you have the opportunity then there is no need to try and make it on your own. Don't be crazy - get an education!

However I should mention that there is one benefit I gained from being self-taught: as an artist who got over problems on his own – or rather by observation and imitation – I never fear a challenging situation. What I mean is that when I start a new piece, I don't worry about



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if it's going to be a good one or not – I just get on with it. So maybe that can be counted as an advantage, for what it's worth...

I've interviewed a couple of self-taught artists now and it's interesting how different their reactions have been to having taken that path. Most have been fairly positive about it, but it's clear that you definitely would have chosen a formal education if you'd had the chance.

Do you think you would have ended up in a different position today if you had been through the educational system, or would you still have aimed to become an illustrator, working for companies like Wizards of the Coast?

It's only natural for a self-taught artist to speak in favor of the self-taught discipline; it's human nature. But I am a realistic person and I can say that I would have been a better painter right now if I had completed the development process,

which takes years in a shorter timeframe. So if I'd had a chance at education, I would have had stronger foundations. Of course it is impossible to guess where that would have taken me, path-wise; maybe I would be working for a studio, but that's really not what I desire at heart. Once a freelancer, always a freelancer [Laughs]!

But when I look back on it, the choices I've made and the factors I had no control over







made me who I am today, and I am fairly happy with my life and career.

Now when I was preparing for this interview I was poking around your website, doing a bit of research, and I have to say it's one of the coolest artist's websites I've ever seen! Could you tell us a bit more about how it came to be created?

Oh please don't get me started on that – I absolutely hate that website! It's filled with bugs and it hasn't been updated in over a year. I told the webmaster to go for a user-friendly option so that I could do the updates myself, but they insisted they would take that responsibility for me. After a couple of updates I have never heard from them again and the fact that the website is still online is a mystery to me. Right now I'm thinking about having an html website that won't give me such a hard time about updates and until then you can see my current pieces on my Deviantart page.



[Laughs] It's funny how something can look so different from someone else's point of view! I'm sorry to hear the website has caused you such a headache, but I really did think it looked cool – maybe it's just because I like dragons. Which leads me neatly onto my next question: dragons, dragons and more dragons. They're everywhere in your art – from those beautiful colored portraits to popping up in other fantasy scenes you've created. So what is about this noble fantasy beast that you find so fascinating? I guess no one would believe me now if I were to say I have no particular interest in dragons [Laughs]. Sincerely though, as a person who loves all kinds of fantasy elements and creatures, I cannot say I like dragons any more than I like big cats. I believe the first time I drew a dragon was when I was commissioned for the Turkish editions of the Vlad Taltos series, and the attraction those pieces gathered on the internet guided me in the direction of making more of them. I even went ahead and did a whole series of dragon portraits as the ultimate step, and due to the popularity of

those pieces companies started asking me for dragon-themed artworks, which brought even more dragon-artwork-seeking customers as a result, and now my portfolio is overcrowded with dragon pictures... I do not upload any dragon-themed pieces anymore so that my portfolio doesn't have such a dragon-obsessed look, but I do actually have about twenty such pieces lying around.

“I like drawing single figures because I can focus all my energy and attention on the character due to the lack of a composition and even a background.”

As for why I find dragons fascinating, well, they're big and nasty, they have sharp teeth and horns, they come in lots of variations and on top of that they can fly! But the most important thing is that they're cool looking. And I like drawing cool looking things.

It seems that the majority of your personal work consists of character studies. Why do you think that is? And can you talk us through your artistic



style and how you go about creating one of your beautiful images?

I like drawing single figures because I can focus all my energy and attention on the character due to the lack of a composition and even a background. I can put the details in as delicately as I wish and all the focus is centered on the character since there isn't a distracting, or rather a competing, element. As a person who has realized many complex compositions, I can

say that I always prefer character design, but unfortunately that's not what clients ask for all the time.

When designing a character, the first thing I focus on is the pose. For me, the pose comes before anything else since it tells a lot about the character. You can incorporate traits like sassiness, fearlessness or fickleness with a simple posture and once you support that with



a facial expression afterwards, your character takes their full shape. It is a mistake to rely on the facial expression only; the two have to work together.

“I could talk for hours about the importance of eyes in character design and how rendering realistic eyes can bring your character to life.”

After drawing the right pose, I build the body structure of course and then the face physiognomy. While drawing faces – especially for female figures – I always use references. For me, that is the right path that leads to realistic and believable character design. While it is certainly possible to capture simple expressions by following the caricatured and stylized forms and patterns, and it is easy to draw a spoiled girl or an evil grin using only your imagination, when you’ve got a character whose whole body,



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armor and gear have been rendered in a photo-realistic manner, then the face has to be photo-realistic as well, and you should make use of real photographs at this point. For example, if there happens to be a facial expression that I can’t quite get to work, or find too plastic or airbrushy, then I take a look at a random appropriate photograph. This helps me to see details I can add to what I’ve already done and when I’ve added those details, the end result looks incredibly realistic. Of course every time I add such details I learn new things about the structure and anatomy of the face, which makes me consider using references as an indispensable practice now [Laughs].

I could talk for hours about the importance of eyes in character design and how rendering realistic eyes can bring your character to life. There are pieces where I put hours into making the eyes as realistic as they can possibly be. This can sometimes result in a certain imbalance in some of my works, where you can see I have focused on the face and left the body parts in a rather rough shape or poorly rendered, which is a mistake. No matter how hard I try to maintain the level of detail as homogenized as possible, sometimes you can only put in as much detail as your deadline allows you!

Having drawn armor, clothing and swords for years now, I have completely mastered their basics. However it’s always a good idea to take



a look at how real armor takes the light or what kind of a pattern folds of fabric follow every now and then.

“The best kind of client for me is the one that trusts my vision and lets me do my thing.”

You mentioned working to briefs given to you by clients – I’m guessing this can sometimes be quite restrictive. Is it difficult to handle? Are you ever tempted to try and change a brief to better suit the needs of the project, or do you just have to suck it up and deliver what the client has asked for, regardless of what you personally think of the idea?

You’ve touched on the subject that basically constitutes the biggest problem for me about my job [Laughs]! I could write pages about this. Frankly, clients can be tiresome. The amount of frustration you can avoid usually depends a whole lot on the moderating skills of the buffer in between (editor or art director), but unfortunately not all the companies I work with give you an art director to deal with; most of the time a graphic designer is assigned this job and that is where the problems begin. Of course I have very good



relationships with my long-term contacts – you get to know each other as the time goes by – however with people whom you’re working for the first time, or on rare occasions, you are likely to have problems. And of course when you add a client who doesn’t know what they want into the equation, you have a nice mess to get out of!

For compositions that are impossible to visually create or that are contradictory in description, I always give clients my notes and my own advice such as, “What works better here?” and tell them about the direction I would suggest they

follow. Some accept this while some insist on their requests and at that point you can either back down from the commission or follow the client’s direction. But adapting the description to your own liking without getting the client’s consent is out of the question; that wouldn’t be professional. There are times I deviate from the original brief without confirmation, but these are little changes that don’t affect the essence and the main elements.

I have seen lovely compositions butchered by the clients, which used to drive me crazy. But now I find that creating a separate personal



version for me, and giving the client what they want, is a much better alternative.

The best kind of client for me is the one that trusts my vision and lets me do my thing. The results I produce for these types of clients are always better.

One last question before we wrap this up: if you had a pet dragon, what color would it be and what would you call it?

A black one that doesn't belong to the flame-blowing kind would be nice, I guess. I would call him Pepe once I'm sure he's okay with it!

Kerem Beyit

For more work by this artist please visit

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

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Interviewed by: Jo Hargreaves



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“Things have slowly changed and now I find myself spending more time sketching than working on a finished painting.”

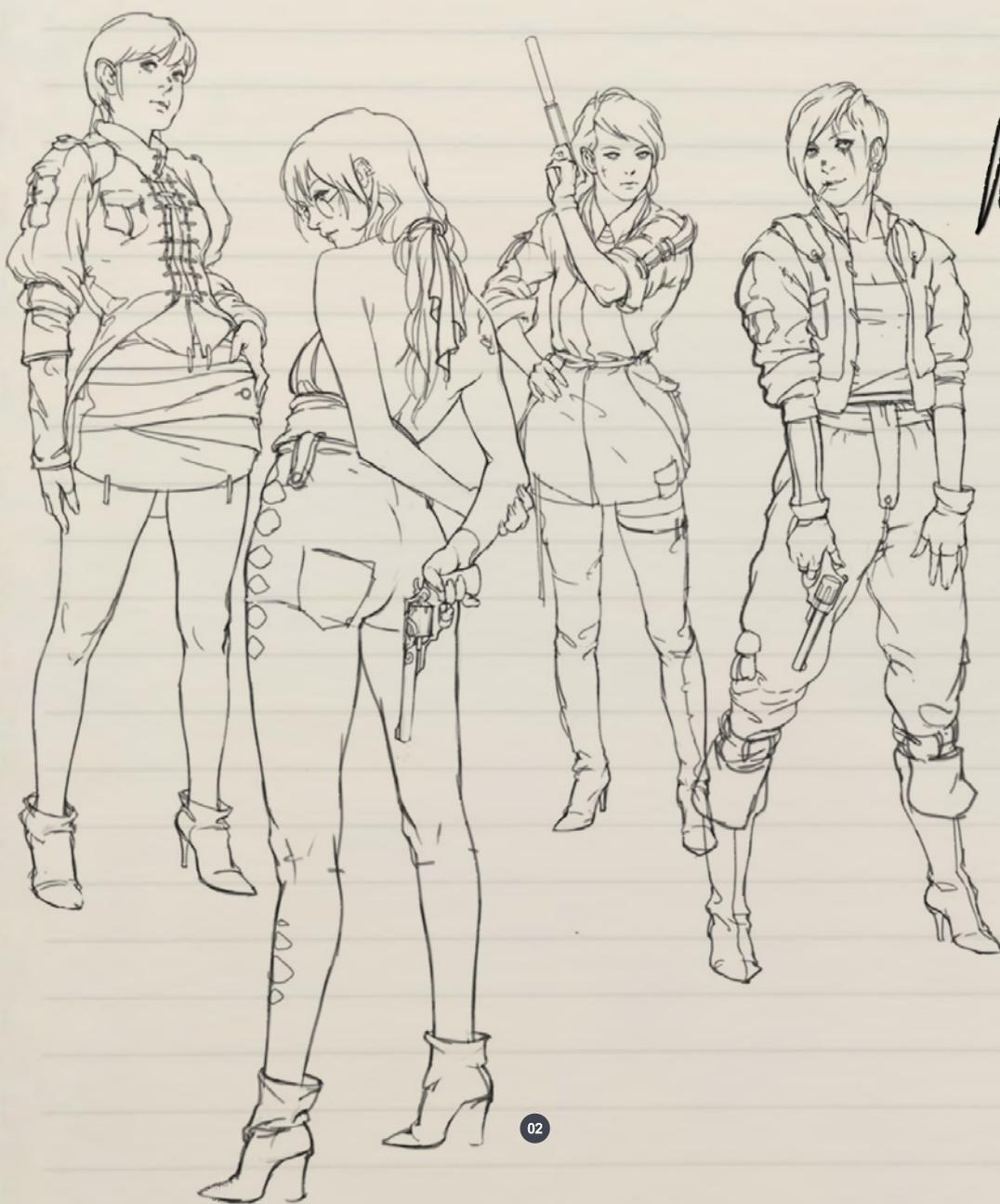


SKETCHBOOK OF MIN YUM

We are very pleased this month to present you with the sketchbook of the fantastic Min Yum! Min shares some really great line drawings and grayscale images with us as well as guiding us through his creative thought process.

SKETCHBOOK OF MIN YUM

Sketching is by far the most basic and natural way of expressing yourself as an artist and for many, including myself, sketching takes up a huge chunk of the time. Whether it be for sketching out thumbnails or just doodling for fun, it has become a big part of my art. This hasn't always been the case for me, but things have slowly changed and now I find myself spending more time sketching than working on a finished painting. I am just going to share some of my character/figurative sketches here and my thoughts behind creating them (Fig.01).



02



01

Drawing figures from your imagination is a tough business. It's complicated and doesn't seem to get easier with time. It's funny in a way; the more you try to understand it the more complicated it gets. I try to improve my figure work each and every time I draw a character but even after many years of practice it's still a big mystery to me. Yes, I am very envious of those artists that make it look easy, but at the same time I have a lot of respect for them. Characters are still my favourite thing to draw and paint, and because of that I spent most of my free time drawing characters and studying figurative work (Fig.02).

I usually start my characters with simple gestures as it's important to establish the poses and overall feel of the figure quickly without being too concerned about features and instead concentrating on weight and proportion (Fig.03).

I try to study more detailed anatomy and life drawing on the side to become better at simplifying the human form. I think if we understand this then it gives us much more freedom and confidence. Here are some studies (Fig.04).



03



04



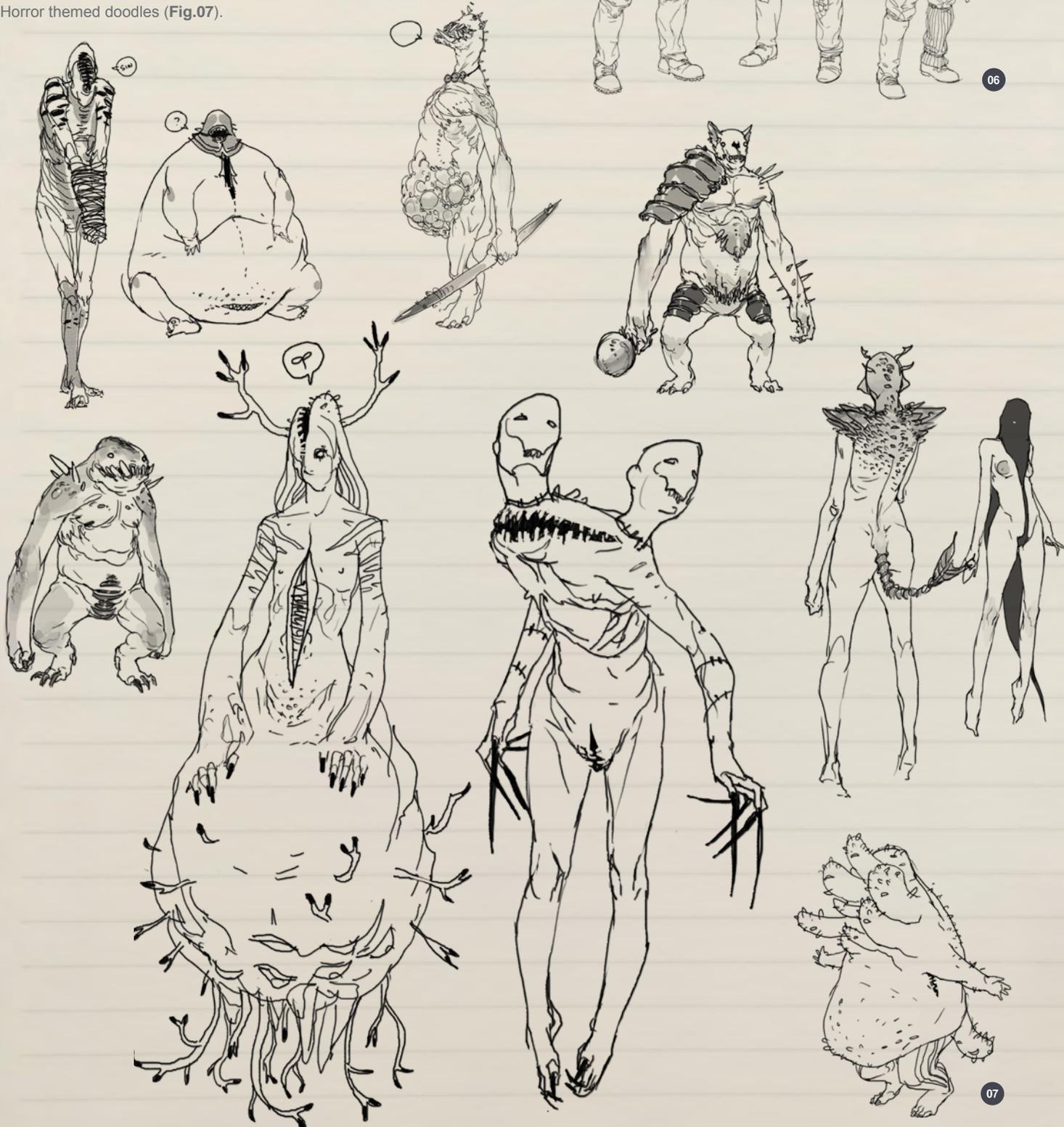
05

Characters can have many different body types, from thin to round and so on. I try and draw different body types and not just the stock standard "hero" proportions. Expressing attitude is important as well; a young female teen is certainly going to have a very different vibe to, say, a psychotic male butcher (Fig.05).

I can't say I am a fan of crazy amounts of detailed overlay design. For example a character with five heads and nine tails, a huge sword and gun, with big padded armour wrapped around him that contains a million daggers doesn't really interest me. I tend to stick to a few key characteristics as far as design is concerned and avoid adding too much detail. I think it helps in terms of readability and gives a greater sense reality. Here are some more cleaned up sketches (Fig.06).



Horror themed doodles (Fig.07).





08

Faces are something we can all easily relate to even if you don't draw, probably because we see them on daily basis. Much like gestures, faces have different types and varieties too. Here are some face sketches (Fig.08).

Clothing is a funny one and understanding anatomy certainly helps when wrapping it around a figure. I get my inspiration from looking through historic outfits, but also from many of the fashion designers. These are great sources of inspiration, not just guides as to how clothing works (Fig.09).



09

Here are a couple of sketches rendered in black and white. I never quite got around to finishing them (Fig.10 – 11).



10



11

A sketch for a piece of personal work, "A stroll in the dark"
and the finished painting (Fig.12 – 13).



12



13



14

And just one last thing: don't forget to
have fun (Fig.14)!

MIN YUM

For more information please visit:
<http://www.minart.net/>
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3D CHARACTER DESIGN SERIES WITH SCOTT PATTON

In this two volume series, Scott Patton shows the processes he uses to create a 3D character for feature films. The first volume explores Patton's fast and efficient method for concept sculpting, skipping the 2D sketch phase all together and designing the character entirely within ZBrush®. He covers everything from blocking out the forms and fleshing out the muscles, to adding props, detailing with alphas and posing the character. The second volume covers methods for creating a final color rendering using ZBrush and Photoshop®. Patton shows how he squeezes the most from ZBrush's powerful renderer to create both a wide and close-up shot of the character. He then shares creative Photoshop tips and tricks to quickly get to a finished piece of concept art from the ZBrush renders, covering topics such as adding and refining skin texture, hair, eyes, shadows and scars. Patton also discusses how to create backgrounds that enhance the character and overall composition.



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THE GALLERY

This month we feature:

Youcef Koudil (Andalous)

AGONIST

Black Volta Studios

Tomasz Jedruszek

Reiko Groß

James Wolf Strehle

Clint Cearley

Lin Bo

Serge Birault

Geoffroy Thoorens





Alice in Funky Land

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The Last Knight Standing

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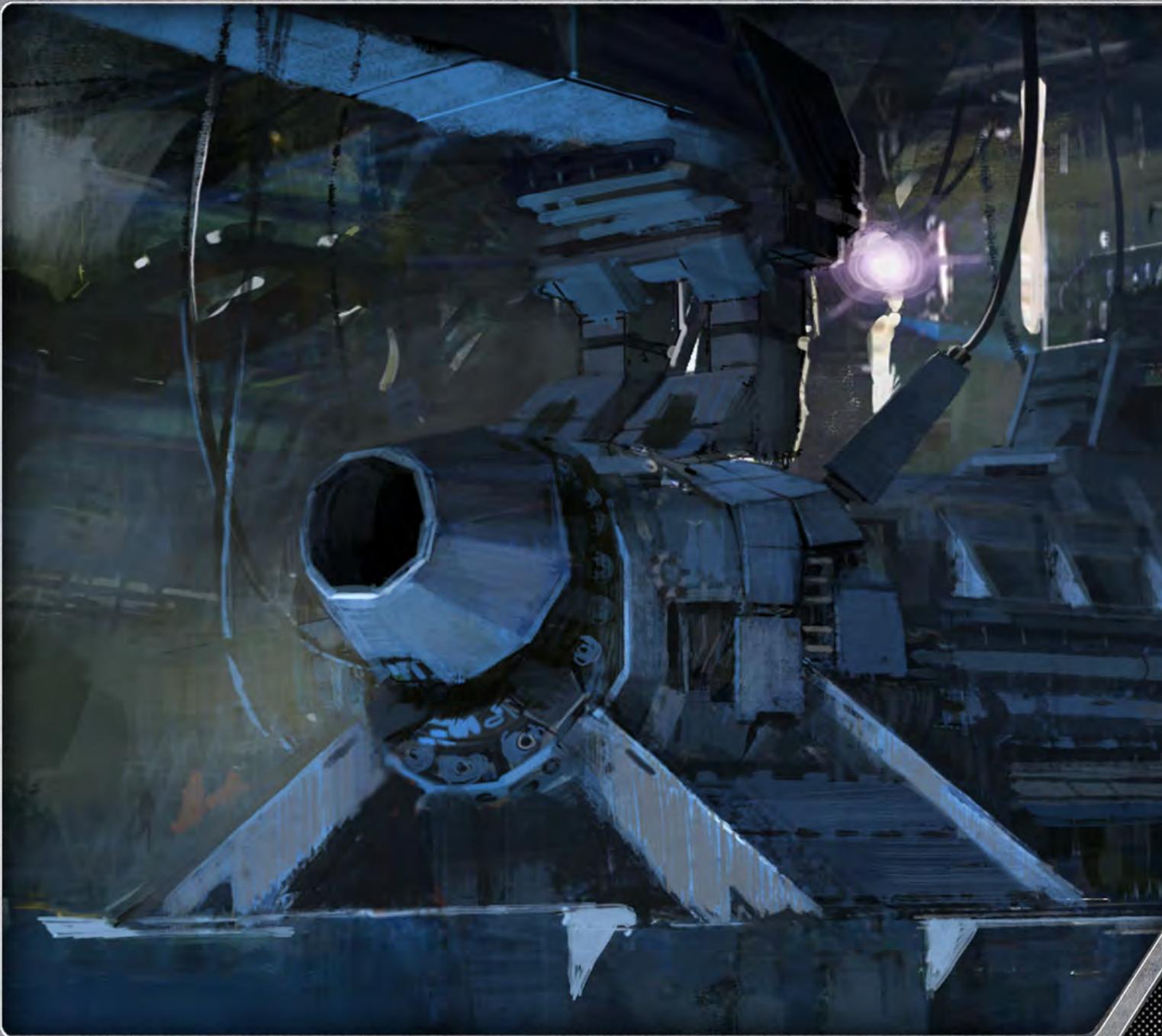
TWITCH

Su Yeong Kim (AGONIST)

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CONCEPT ART FOR GAMES

Concept art for computer games is a fascinating field and an industry that a lot of aspiring digital artists would love to be involved with. This tutorial series has been written by some of the biggest and best names in the gaming industry, who will guide us through the way they would tackle the three main areas where concept work is required: environments, characters and accessories. The artists involved in this series have created a games brief themselves and are free to create their own vision of the description. They will reflect on the steps they choose to take from the point of receiving the brief up until they have created a completed concept for their required section.



Game type: First person shooter

Genre: Sci-Fi **Year:** 2300

The setting is Earth and the prison planet, Asturia. 90% of the game is on Asturia.

Plot summary: Lex Crane, a former police officer, is now the chief of security at Skye Global, the largest manufacturer of pharmaceuticals on the planet. Lex discovers something about the company he works for that he shouldn't have, and this starts a chain reaction that causes him to be wrongly accused for the murder of his family and a local politician. He is sentenced to life imprisonment on the prison planet of Asturia. On the prison planet he is constantly targeted by the criminals that he put there all those years ago, along with an unknown enemy within the prison walls hired by Skye Global. Lex was framed by Skye Global's CEO, Lance Shepherd, and Shepherd is now trying to have him killed in a place where nobody will miss him or even realize he's dead. Lex is trying to escape from the prison and return to Earth, where he's convinced he can find the evidence to clear his name. Along the way he forms unexpected alliances and is disappointed by shocking betrayals.

The environment: The setting is dark and cold. The planet is basically a giant rock. There is no lush foliage or vast bodies of water. Instead there are pits of oil and sludge. The terrain has large, jagged rock formations jutting out sporadically throughout the landscape. The sky is constantly filled with flashes of green lightning, which brings on poisonous rain storms.

There is a giant prison facility that has been placed on the planet to house the galaxy's most violent and evil criminal element. Escape is rarely ever attempted because of the sheer fact that outside the walls survival is not possible. The extremely harsh climate, along with the predatory dangers that exist on the planet, make it so that the prisoners would rather stay confined to prison. At least there is food, shelter, warmth etc., inside the jail.

Prisoners are forced to work as part of their sentence. The labor camps are set up throughout the perimeter surrounding the prison. They are forced to mine for the oil that exists deep within the surface of the planet. Along with these intensely laborious tasks of digging and mining, the prisoners are also constantly expanding the facility to house yet more prisoners.



01

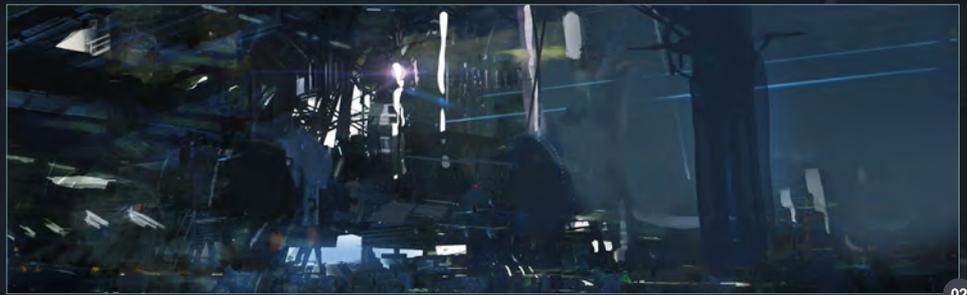
Concept Art for Games: Part 2 - Environments

Software Used: Photoshop

Prison planet:

The assignment for this tutorial is to design the environments for a fictional game universe that takes place on a prison planet. In the first part I showed how to create an establishing shot of the entrance to the prison facility. In this second part I will flesh out a concept of the labour camps that are deep down in the planet where they are shielded from the hostile environment on the surface.

The main emphasis in this high level concept will be to focus on creating signature shapes that can be used to flesh out the overall look and feel of a level in the game. I start out by establishing my lens and blocking in the overall



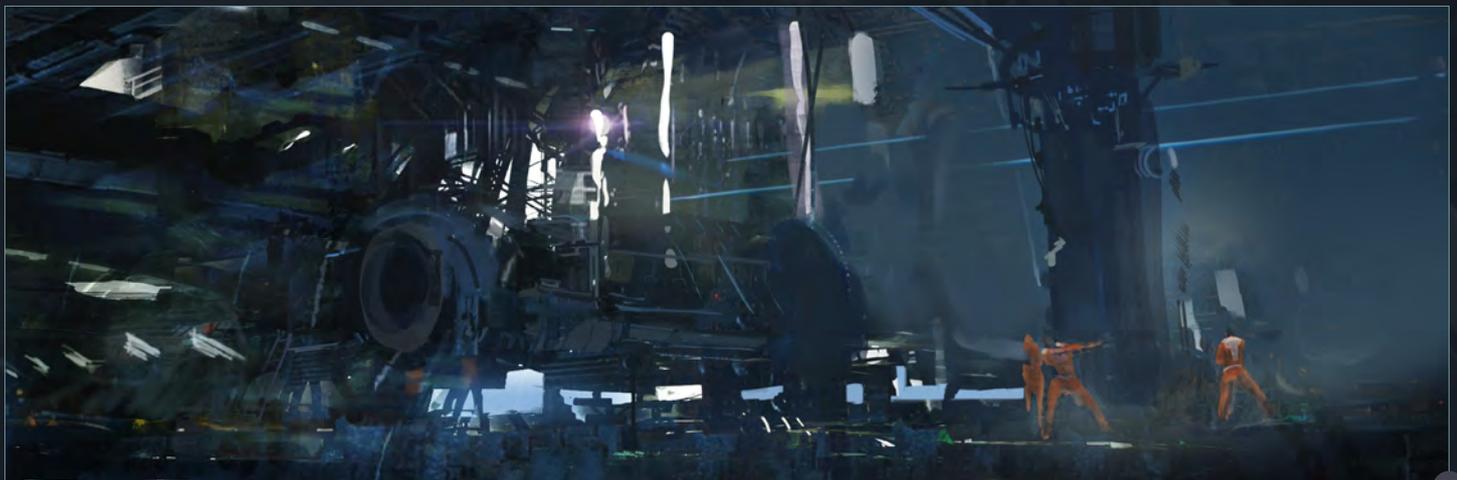
02

shapes. At this stage the focus of my attention is to find an interesting angle to present the concept from, and getting a good contrast going. This will ensure that the image has good readability (Fig.01).

Once I feel I have something that will work I move on to adding the bigger elements of the image. I settle on a blue color which I treat as a base point that I will start to add local colors to. Sometimes I find it helpful to add bits of some of my old paintings and toggle through the layers menu in Photoshop. Often by doing this you will

find an interesting combination of colors that can be very useful (Fig.02).

Up till now all I have done is narrow down my selection of color and defined the mayor shapes. Now it's time to select the local colors and the design all the different objects at the location. I pick a strong orange for the workers as it gives a good contrast to the blue and helps balance the image. The big machine to the left will be some sort of cooling apparatus for the drill, so I have to make sure to add vents to make it look functional and plausible (Fig.03).

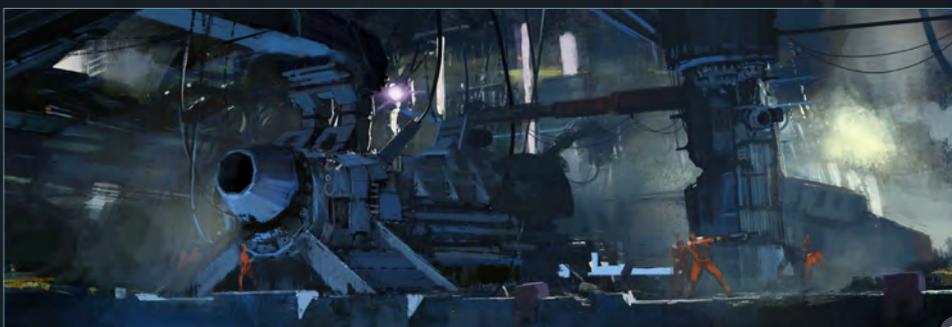


03



04

When designing I like to try different things out on a separate layer or even on paper before settling on a final design. It's always good to do lots of quick variations to get a feel for the object. In this case I tend to focus mostly on the silhouette since I know it will be fairly backlit and have a lot of ducts and pipes breaking out from the core shapes. I always try to push the



05

contrast and in this case I make sure to have a round air duct at the front to compliment the otherwise quite blocky design of the machine (Fig.04).

I decide to add white helmets to the workers as they give a really nice contrast to the surroundings as well (Fig.05).



At this stage in the painting it's mostly fine tuning as everything is already quite established. The only big addition I make to the painting is the overhanging pipes and wire. I like the wires as they give a nice curvature to the horizontal and vertical dominated design of the painting.

Thomas Pringle

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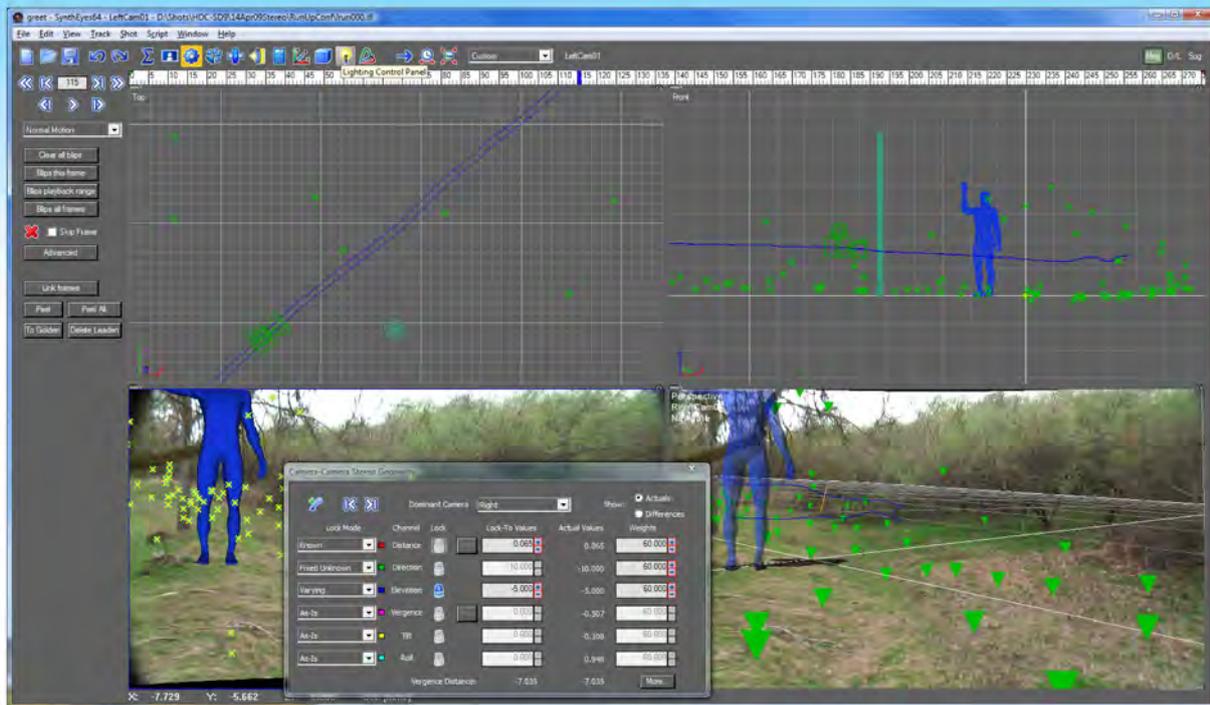
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M FUTURISTIC MARINES



Futuristic soldiers and marines appear in many pieces of digital art. We see them in huge sci-fi scenes or even as a lone soldier wandering in a deserted landscape.

They regularly feature in first person shooter computer games and even on the covers of books and comics. In this tutorial series our artists will be showing us how to create an original futuristic soldier that could live and thrive in some of the different environments a marine may face. The artists will also explore different methods of creating futuristic and organic armour and weaponry.

Chapter 1: Evolved Future Marine | Svetlin Velinov | July 10

Chapter 2: Hot Planet Hydro Marine | Ignacio Bazan Lazzano | Aug 10

Chapter 3: All-Terrain Marine | Richard Tilbury | Sep 10

Chapter 4: Female Marine | Alex Ruiz | Oct 10

Painting Futuristic Marines: Part 2 - Hot Planet Hydro Marine

Software Used: Photoshop

Hundreds of games have been published in which the main character is a soldier from the future. These games are known as FPS or first person shooter. Currently a lot of progress is being made concerning the way games look. New technology and 3D engines make games look as if they are real and contain very detailed images. For this reason, when it comes to making art, you have to show a lot of detail.

Although detail and design disappear when playing the game, the truth is that you have to first sell the game. This is the reason why detail and a cool design make the difference.

The Tutorial

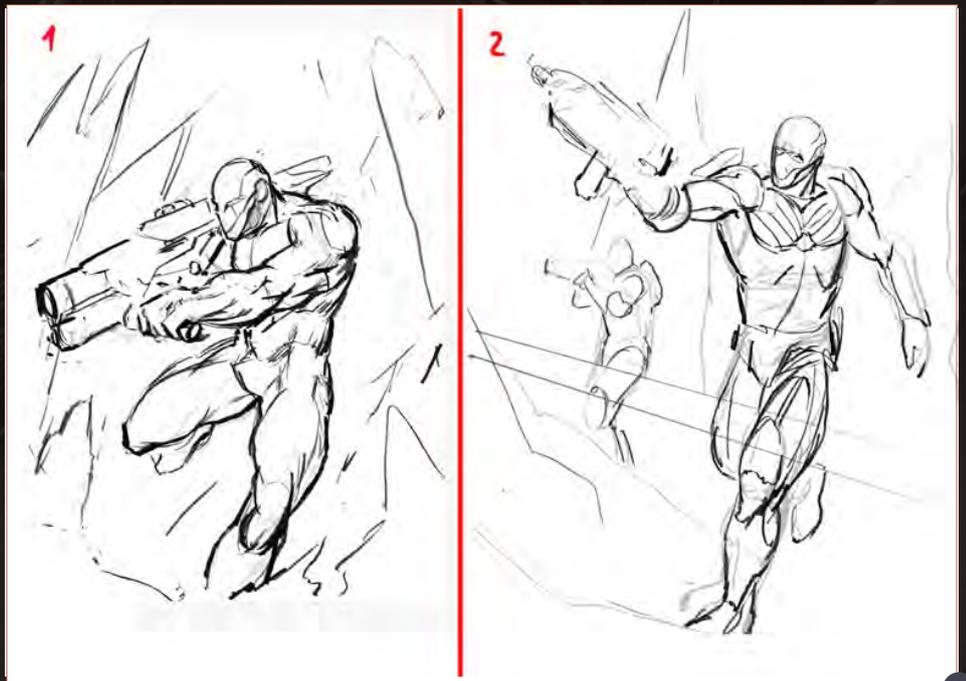
The idea of this tutorial was to design a marine who has a suit that could withstand extreme heat on fire planets. For the last two weeks I've been drawing volcanic lava backgrounds for the company I work for. I had to do a lot of research and look for various images related to volcanoes and natural landforms. This was very useful as I can use this research for my tutorial.

The Sketch

To start it is necessary to do several sketches to help you select the best idea. The first idea that came to me was to draw the character standing in front of a background, holding a gun in his arms. This is the classic way of showing a character, and it is useful to begin with it (Fig.01). Later in the process I realized that this idea would be a bit boring, and decided to do something less static always thinking about the commercial effect. I decided it would be best to show the character in a dramatic situation, full of action, as if it were the marketing poster for a game (Fig.02).



01



02

I made two quick sketches and selected option 2. I thought this was the one that had more potential to be developed.

Style and References

To be up to date and know what it is fashionable, it is necessary to sit down and look for good references. What is very useful when thinking about creating action scenes, is to watch films related to the subject, or to play games full of action. "Crisis", "Dead Space",

"Section 8", "Halo", "Applesseed ex machine", all provided me with inspiration for my image and all of them are excellent games and films in my opinion.

To decide what to draw and which aesthetic or creative path to take, it is necessary to think about all the references that we researched earlier in the process. On this occasion I look for human body pictures to use them as reference for the marine's suit. I also look for photographs

of volcanic lava, volcanoes, and stones for the background.

As I always say, the first and most important thing to do is to research before you start to draw. This is the way most videogames companies work.

The Picture

My aim, if possible, is to show you in a simple and fast way how to create a more professional and realistic drawing. I will focus on techniques concerning realism, final finish, texturing and special effects.

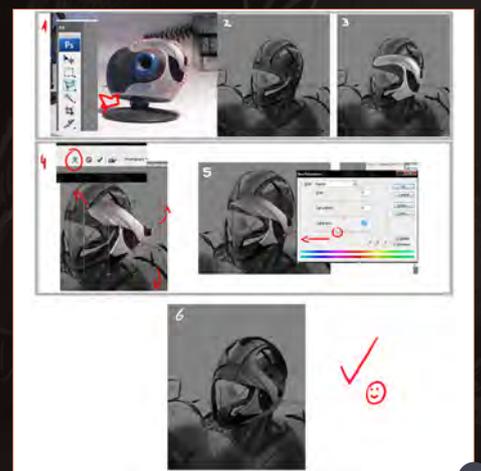
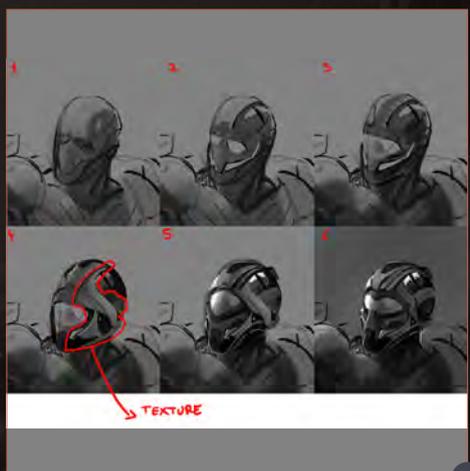
To begin with I will show you step by step the following figures in grayscale. Afterwards, I'll stop to explain to you how to work on the more advanced stages (Fig.03).

Realism and Final Finish Techniques

To get an idea for the whole design I begin by drawing the soldier's helmet. Once that is finished, it will help inspire me to draw the rest of the body. I started to create the shape of the helmet using Photoshop's classic brush I then used part of a web cam from a photograph to give it a real texture and from then onwards I used this texture, drawing on it with a normal brush (Fig.04).

To select the area of the photograph I am interested in I use the lasso tool. Then I mark out the area I want (CTRL+C, CTRL+V). Once I have got the piece of the photograph I want in my drawing I use CTRL+T and the click warp option in the top bar to adapt the photo to the soldier's head shape. The last step is to transform the photo's colors into the same grey tones of the drawing. Afterwards, I press CTRL+U and select the proper light tone on the lightness progress line (Fig.05).

This technique can be used to make things we draw seem real.



The following picture show in four steps how I designed the torso. Almost everything is done with the brush and for strategic areas photographic support can be used (Fig.06).

I used a similar process on the torso. Almost everything is done with the brush and for strategic areas photographic support can be used (Fig.07).

Textures

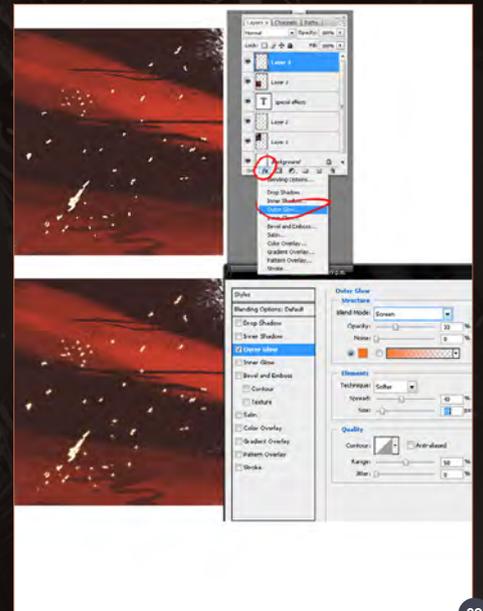
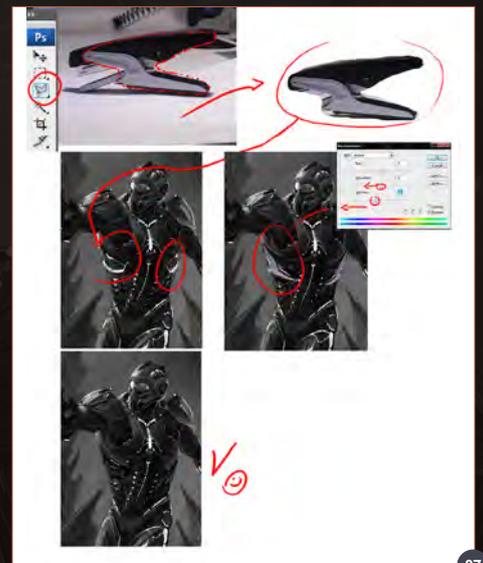
When it comes to texturing the most recommended method is to first draw the shape and afterwards cover it with a particular texture. This time I'll show you how to make the stones that are in the background.

First draw a rock with any brush you want. Then look for a photo that has the desired rock texture, and then select the area you are interested in (loop tool + CTRL C+CTRL V), and put it on the drawing using overlay. Once you have the texture on the drawing, open up a new layer and paint the texture with a brush to give it the final finish. It is an easy and fast way to obtain realistic results (Fig.08).

Special Effects

When the drawing looks like it is nearly finished it is time to think about the last step, which I call "to put popcorns to the subject". That is to say, special effects: sparks, lights, fires, etc. This step is defining, because it will give our drawing the final punch to be marketable.

To make the sparks draw yellow color points -almost white- on each and every area poured with lava and the use one of Photoshop's



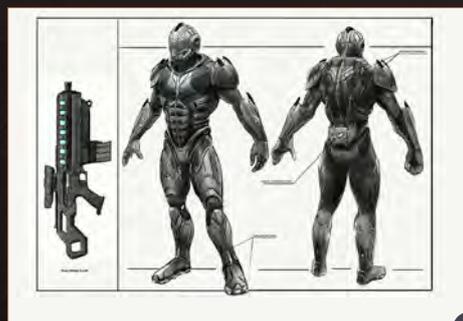
effects. Go to FX + Outer Glow and then modify levels to obtain the desired effect. It's very easy and it looks wonderful (Fig.09).

Remember that this is only a technique useful to improve your work. The most important thing is the ability to create original things.

Bonus Track!

I designed for the final presentation a schematic. This image helps 3D artists to shape the final character to be included in the game (Fig.10).

I hope you have enjoyed it! (Fig.11)



Conclusion

It's very difficult to develop in one tutorial a drawing like this completely because of its complexity. I've tried to teach you the key points to get the best quality possible. You can use the tips more than once in the same drawing but don't make ill use of them.

Ignacio Bazan Lazcano

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PAINTING FUTURISTIC CITIES



This tutorial series will be made up of six chapters exploring the creation of Futuristic Cities. Each chapter will be tackled by a different artist, who will use their boundless skill and experience to guide you through all the necessary aspects of creating your Futuristic City. Our artists will guide you step by step through the process, starting by sketching and creating your ideas, they then will show you how to incorporate the specific themes of their topic chapter to show a different aspect to the Futuristic City.

Chapter 1 | Issue 052 Mar 2010 | Wealthy City

Chapter 2 | Issue 052 Apr 2010 | Docks

Chapter 3 | Issue 053 May 2010 | Skyscrapers and flying traffic

Chapter 4 | Issue 054 Jun 2010 | Slum City

Chapter 5 | Issue 055 Jul 2010 | Bazaar/ indoor market place

Chapter 6 | Issue 056 Aug 2010 | Aerial shot over a city at sunset

“For sci-fi pictures there is almost no limit to the architectural designs and this allows the exploration of some really interesting shapes and designs”

Chapter 6 - City at Sunset

Software used: Photoshop

Introduction

Painting a sci-fi cityscape at sunset can be challenging. There are a few aspects I have to focus on for this image: the design, lighting, and composition. For sci-fi pictures there is almost no limit to the architectural designs and this allows the exploration of some really interesting shapes and designs, but it's also important to keep the structures believable and appealing.

A cityscape at sunset means I have to carefully control the lighting so that it works for me. When the sun is low and near to the horizon, the sunlight becomes filtered and adds a fantastic warm mood to the environment. I decided to take advantage of this and compose an image that has high contrast between the background and the foreground.

Preparing the Scene

I start this piece by preparing an image of the sky. I want to create a sunset cityscape with high value contrast; so I use an image of the sky which gives me a good sense of the light direction and brightness. I use curves to make a reddish yellow, simulating the color of a sky at sunset. I then position it higher in the scene so my horizon line is somewhere in the middle.

Blocking In

With a large Opaque brush I start to block in shapes for the cityscape. I want to create a

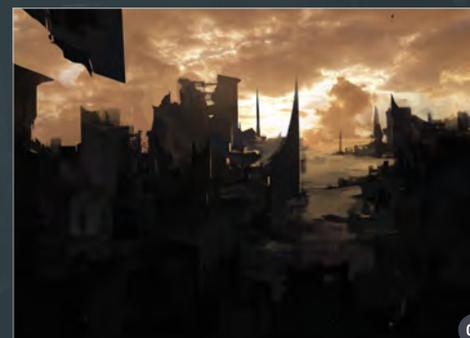


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futuristic cityscape with interesting shapes and high-rise buildings. The shapes I'm using are very hard-edged and spiky. I will roughly paint in some silhouettes to indicate the structures and try to find an interesting composition (Fig.01).

Composition

I decide to tweak the composition and move the focal point slightly to the right; I use the Free-Transform tool for this (Fig.02). I continue to adapt the composition by filling in the left side of the image. I use the Polygon-Selection tool to create selections of various shapes, then fill it in with a Hard brush (Fig.03). This technique gives some really sharp edges on the corners of the buildings.

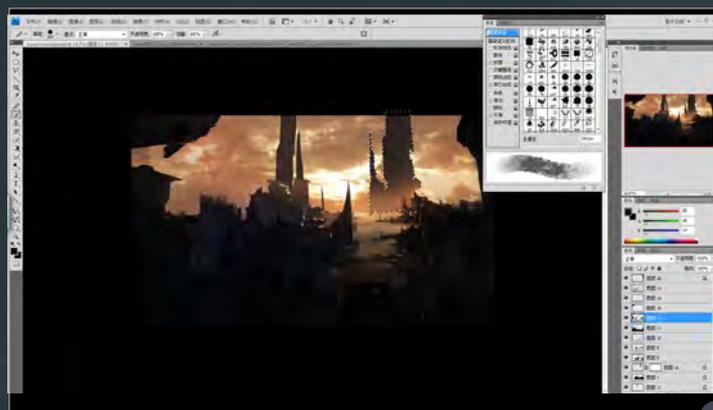


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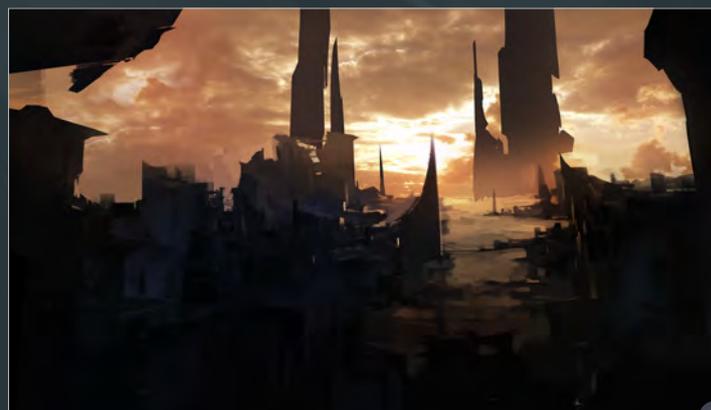
and continue to make corrections to the composition. I add in the two large buildings in the background to establish depth in the piece (Fig.04). The left and right buildings in the foreground act as cropping elements; I use this to make the image tighter. Cropping the image with shapes will give the viewer a more focused overall feel, leading the viewer's eyes into the image.

Depth Establishment

I widen the image for a broader viewing angle,



03



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The Planet

I start to paint in a hazy planet in the far background by adding a rim of light (Fig.05). This gives the image an alien setting and again, adds depth to the composition.

Buildings in Mid-ground

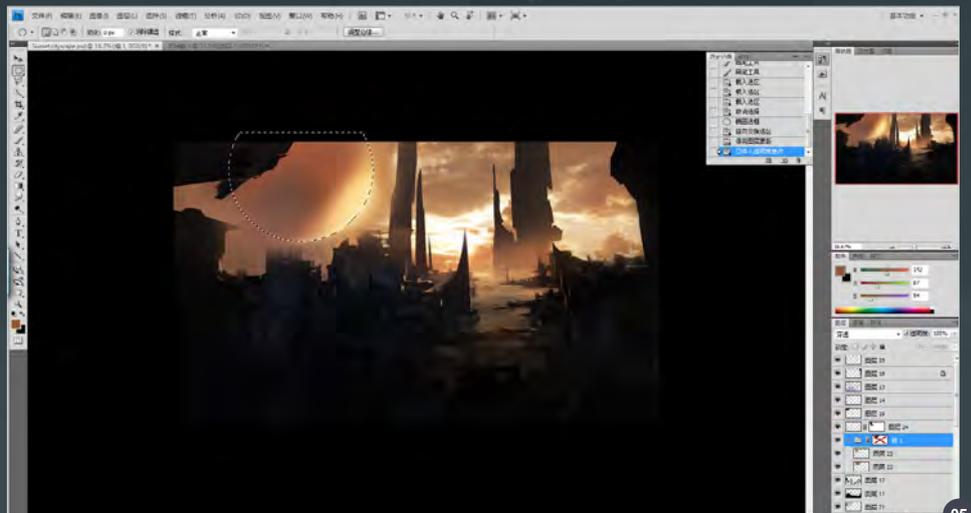
Now with the composition mostly in place, I start to layer the buildings into the cityscape mid-ground (Fig.06). I will keep the light direction in mind when I define the buildings. Because of the strong back light established in the image, most of the buildings will only catch highlights on the top and the side facing the light. Most surfaces that face the camera won't have direct lighting, so I will keep them dark and work on the rim. I work mostly with a solid Hard Edge brush for this piece. I have the pressure set to Flow, so that it gives me enough control over the blending and provides a really fast and opaque rendering (Fig.07).

Building Details

It takes some time to define the mid-ground buildings in detail. Under limited lighting conditions it's important not to over expose the buildings, generally keeping it darker than the light source in the background. I also decide to add a secondary color in the image, something that work as an accent to contrast the overall red hue of the image (Fig.08).

Adjustments

I start to make some overall adjustments to the painting. First I use a curve Adjustment layer

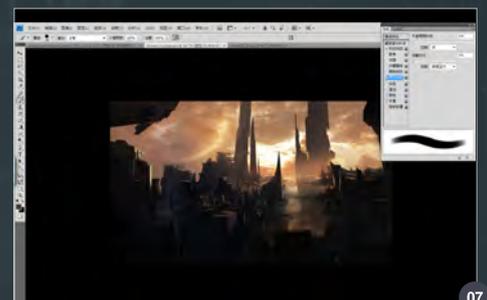


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to filter all my painted layers. By tweaking the red channel, I am able to add more red to the highlights, while keeping the shadows relatively blue in contrast (Fig.09). Then I switch to a Soft Edged brush, and start to blend some of the elements together in the background. This helps to produce a softer image, and makes it look more natural.



07



08



09

Reconstruction

I find the structures in the painting too cubic and repetitive, so I decide to reconstruct the mid and foreground, adding a lot more circular forms and sci-fi looking structures to break up the boring buildings (Fig.10).

Tuning the Buildings

After the major change in the buildings, I start to look for repetition in the shapes. In order to tune down the chaotic structures in the painting and make them look like they belong, I carefully establish some repetition between the foreground, mid-ground, and background (Fig.11).

City Lights

In this step, I'm going to bring the cityscape alive with neon lights and windows (Fig.12). I crop parts from a photo of a city at night and take advantage of the Color Dodge layer to create this effect. After I have copied and pasted a section from a photo, I use the Curves editor to darken the shadows, so that only the windows will show up in the image (Fig.13). Then I switch the layer blending mode to Color Dodge; this will allow a very nice glow from just the bright windows and eliminate any black areas in the photo.

To the Finish

Before calling this piece finished, I make some adjustments to refine the foreground elements, adding repeating shapes and trying to tie the image together overall (Fig.14). I use a horizontal platform to help break up shapes in the foreground, adding depth and definition.

I continue to fine-tune the windows and lights. I add some clouds and mists for layering and with that I'm going to call this piece done! Thank you for reading, and I hope this tutorial helped you understand the process of creating a sci-fi cityscape at sunset. Best of luck! (Fig.15).

Frank Hong

For more from this artist visit:

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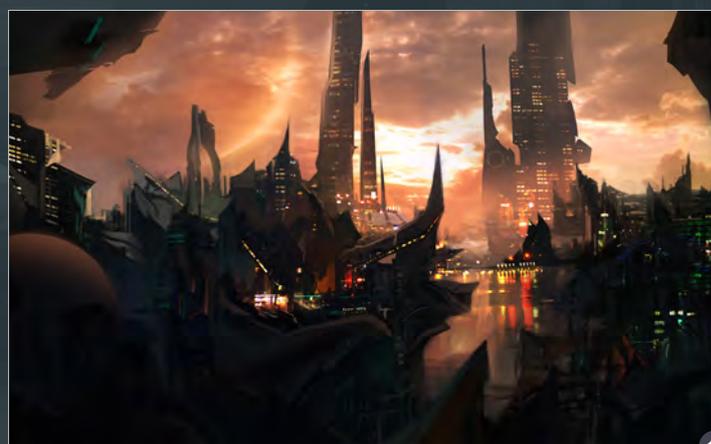
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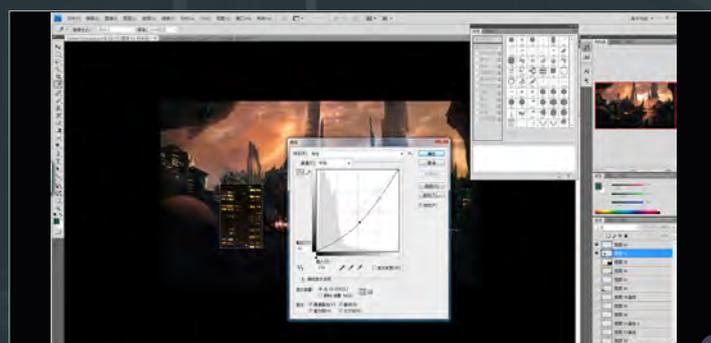
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11



12



13



14





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CUSTOM BRUSHES



Custom brushes are not only a great way to increase the speed at which a painting can be completed, but can also create an effect that would otherwise be impossible. They can be used in many different types of scene, but many would argue that they become most useful when creating a space scene. In space many items need replicating or reproducing in vast quantities, which can be difficult, but custom brushes can make this process much easier and simpler. In this series the artists involved will be showing you how to create brushes to improve your scene and how to use them to the best effect.

Chapter 01: Asteroid Belt | July 2010

Chapter 02: Egyptian Sci-Fi Scene | August 2010

Chapter 03: Underground Corridor | September 2010

Chapter 04: Night-Time Sci-Fi City Battle | October 2010

Chapter 05: Sci-Fi Ruins | November 2010

Chapter 06: Underwater City | December 2010

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RESOURCES** 

– Free Brushes

Custom Brushes For Sci-Fi Chapter 2 - Egyptian Sci-Fi Scene

Software used: Photoshop

Introduction

The goal of this chapter was to show an explorer discovering something alien in an Egyptian tomb. I'm going to show you how I went about painting it and, more specifically, how custom brushes and patterns helped speed things up.

Sketching

I started out by loosely getting my idea down with a rough sketch (Fig.01). For the alien artifact, I decided to go with an obelisk inspired by *2001*, but with some glowing alien writing scribbled on it. I went through a couple of variations before I came up with something I liked, ending up with a worm's eye perspective and a couple of different light sources, with a



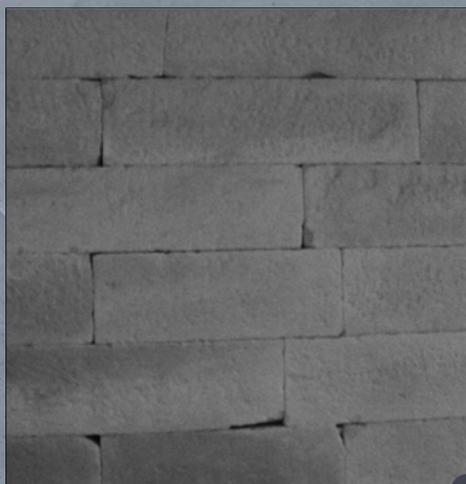
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teal/yellow color scheme. Ideally you want to do all the experimenting at this stage because if you do it later on (like I usually do) you might end up frustrated.

Once the sketch was looking promising I worked out a perspective grid and refined it, defining the structure of the wall and staircase (Fig.02). Since I knew I would be applying patterns and



02



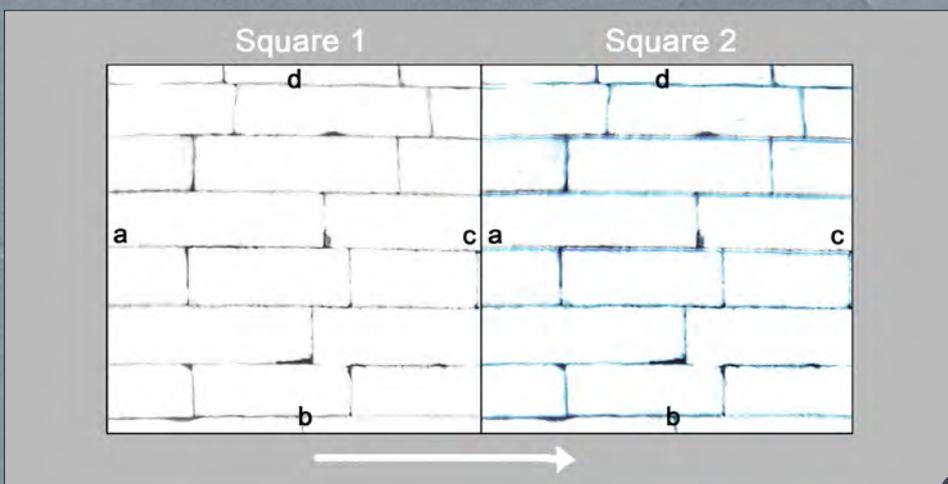
03

textures to these surfaces, I tried to get my values as accurate as possible, working out shadows and atmospheric perspective. It makes things easier later on.

Making a repeating pattern

OK, so I've got my blank wall, the perspective is good and the values are more or less down. Now we're going to brick it up. The problem is nobody wants to manually paint a million bricks. Fortunately, Photoshop can help us out with that. But first, you need to make a repeating brick pattern. I'm sure most of the readers already know how to do this, but it's pretty important so just in case, here's how I do it.

Let's say you have a photo or drawing of some bricks, but it doesn't tile very well, for example (Fig.03). The first thing you have to do is open that photo or drawing in a square Photoshop document. If it's a photo, white out everything except the outline of the bricks; you don't want to deal with the photographic texture in between



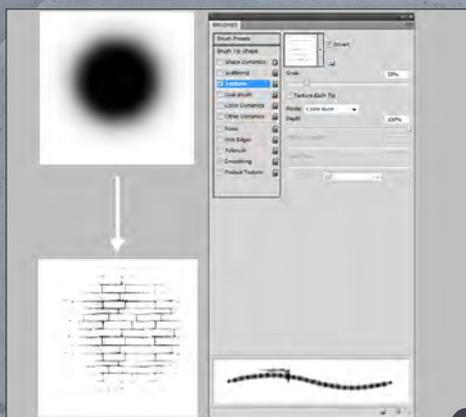
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as you can see in Square 1 of Fig.04. Also, for copyright purposes, make sure it's a photo that you took personally. Enlarge the canvas (not the image) and make it three times its original size so that you have some room to play around in, and then duplicate your pattern to another layer (we'll call this Square 2). Drag Square 2 over to the right, so that side "c" of Square 1 is adjacent to side "a" of Square 2. Now adjust Square 2 (and only Square 2) to blend with Square 1.

The blue lines in Fig.04 represent the changes I made, which, because we're only dealing with lines here, were very subtle. When it's a good transition, move Square 2 back over Square 1, and merge down. Now repeat this process but instead of moving the duplicate to the side, move it up so that side "b" of Square 2 meets side "d" of Square 1. Once these fit well, bring the duplicate back over Square 1, merge the layers and bam, you've got a repeating pattern. I apologize for making that sound way more complicated than it is.

Now, go to Edit > Define Pattern. Once it is defined as a pattern, turn the image into a texture that can be applied to a brush. Next, get a really big, soft default brush. Open up the brush pallet and enabled the texture. Selecting the brick pattern, put the depth all the way up, and adjusted the scale appropriately (Fig.05). This allows us to essentially paint the pattern onto the image; just make sure its on its own layer though as it is in box A in Fig.06.

Now, go to Edit > Transform > Perspective, and warp the pattern until it matches the perspective of your piece as you can see in box B of Fig.06. You'll have to do this separately for surfaces with different vanishing points. Then, and this is important, paint over it as in box C in Fig.06. The key to using patterns and brushes is going back and applying your hand to them; otherwise they will look tiled and computerized. This whole process should take probably less than ten minutes and is way better than painting all those bricks one by one.



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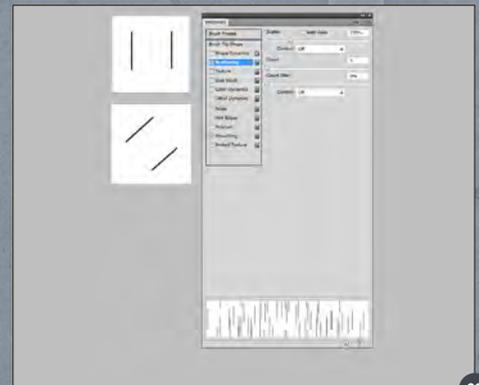
There are some things that you'll still have to paint though. The statue was just straight up painting with the Chalk brush, and went through a couple of variations (Fig.07). B looked weird somehow, so I gave him a staff, which seemed more fitting for an Egyptian guardian statue.

it, but not look like any kind of human alphabet. Instead of just straight up drawing out the pattern, I created a couple very simple custom brushes to lay down the groundwork. These are literally just straight lines that I defined as brushes, and enabled scattering on (Fig.08).

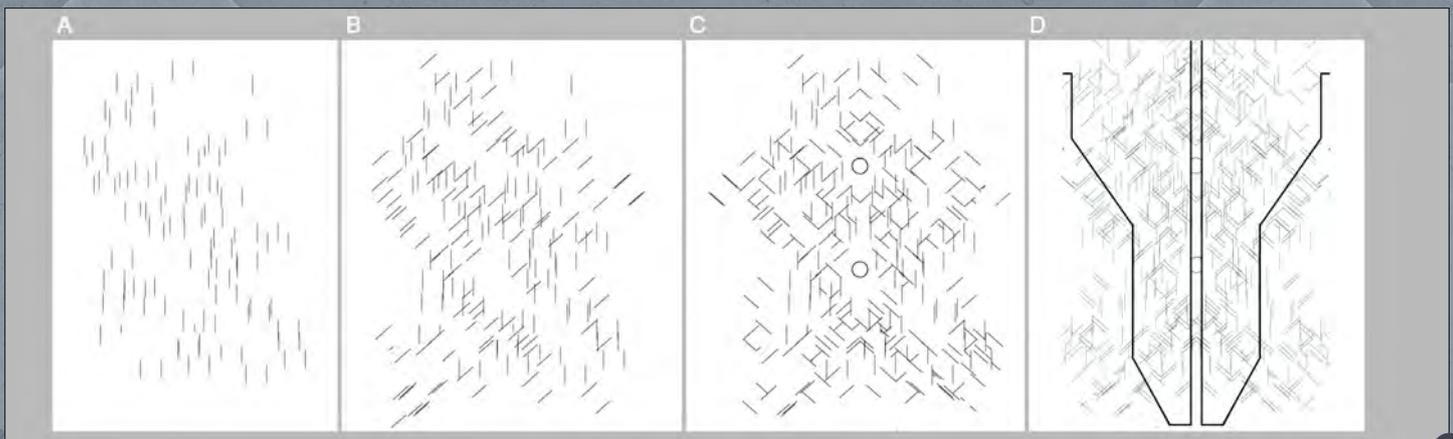
Making the Alien Writing

Ideally, I wanted the writing on the obelisk to look like there was some rhyme and reason to

it. First, I laid down a couple of the vertical lines on their own layer (Fig.09). Then I did the same with the Slanted brush on another layer, which I



08



09

then duplicated and flipped so it made diagonals going in the other direction. What this gave me was a pretty random collection of lines that were also semi-symmetrical. Next, I merged those layers and cleaned it up by connecting some lines and erasing others. To make things a bit more organized, I confined the pattern within an overall symmetrical shape.

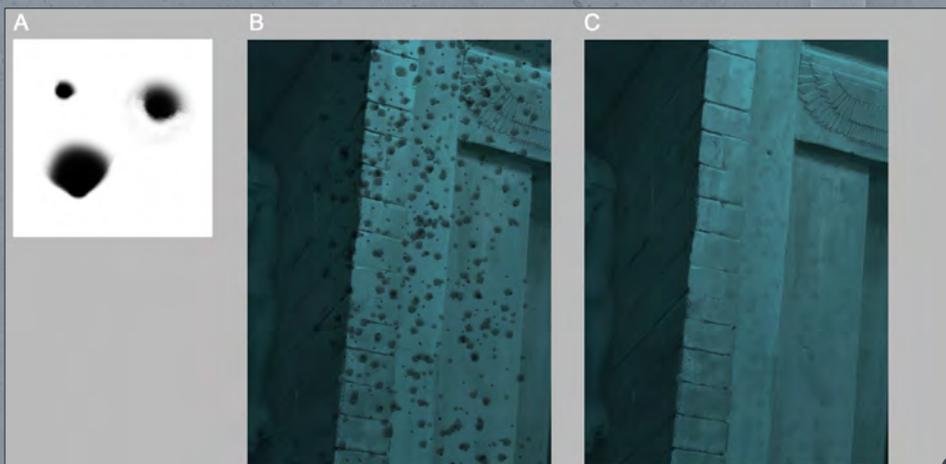
I brought the pattern into my piece as a solid teal shape and, just like the bricks, used the perspective tool to map it into place. Then I just had to erase from it, leaving some parts brighter than others, to create a pulsating, shimmering look (Fig.10).

Those walls still looked a little flat, so I created a sort of dimple brush to add a little variety to the surface (Fig.11). Again, I enabled Scattering and also enable a little Angle Jitter. I did a few strokes on a new layer, and this generated a random collection of dimple shapes, which I then lowered to about 10% opacity. I wanted this to be very subtle; the goal was simply to add some variety to the surface.

To create a dusty atmosphere, I used the same process but with a textured brush I created from a photo of a canvas (Fig.12). Again, the word here is subtlety. The texture gives the surface



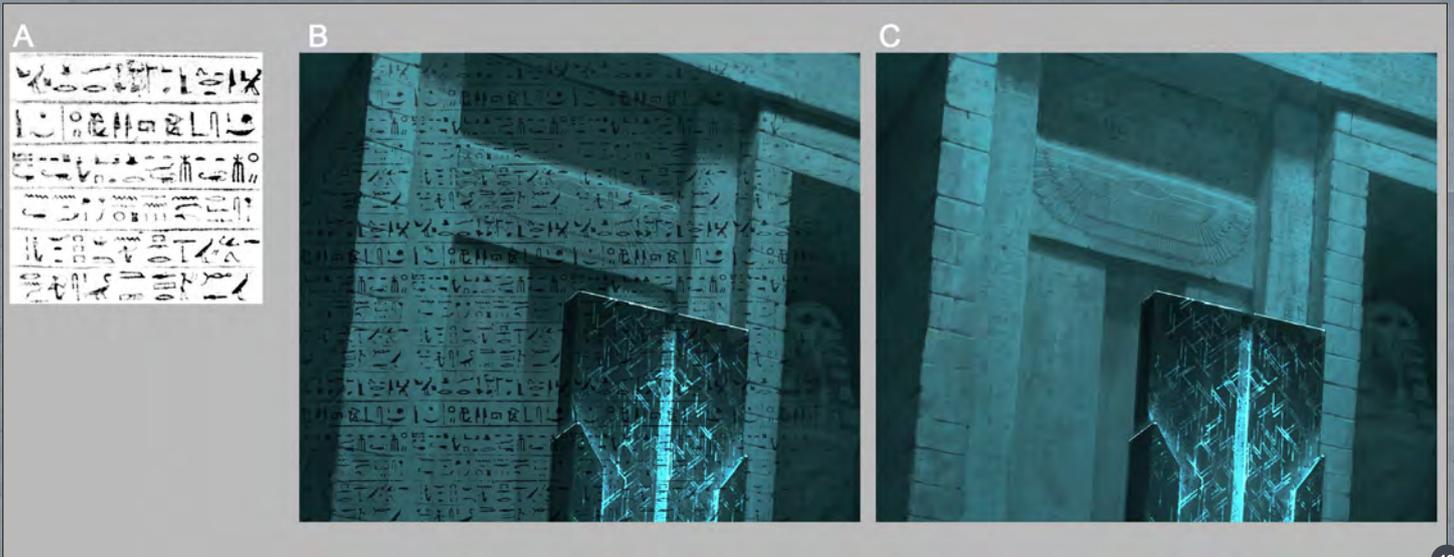
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a little bit of visual variety that pulls things together.

Finally, using the same process as the bricks, I laid down a hieroglyphic pattern on the wall. I used perspective to warp it, and then thoroughly erased it from the layer. This is a pattern that could easily become distracting, so make sure you really bump it down (Fig.13).

And last but not least, we have to put in our intrepid explorer. I wanted so bad to give him

a fedora, but to avoid this becoming Indiana Jones fan art, I went with a Middle Eastern style head wrap, which is cool in its own way. Like the statues, this was just straight up painting with the chalk brush (Fig.14)

As always, thanks to 2DArtist magazine. Hopefully, this tutorial proves helpful to some of you!

Chase Stone

For more from this artist visit:
<http://chasestone.cgsociety.org/gallery/773638/>
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chasesc2@gmail.com



– Free Brushes



14





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DIGITAL ART MASTERS

: VOLUME 5

“Digital Art Masters is in its fifth edition now, and can easily be considered one of the best showcases of digital artwork available today. The quality of the artworks, the fine printing and the valuable walkthroughs make this book a must-have for any art lover and for any CG artist, professional or beginner.”

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Following on from the success of our first four books, we received yet another overwhelming response to our call for submissions for Digital Art Masters: Volume 5. Once again over 1,100 submissions made their way into the Digital Art Masters mailbox, proving to us that the series is becoming ever more popular with not only our readers, but artists around the world too!

From this massive number of incredible entries, the 3DTotal team began the difficult task of choosing approximately 300 images to take through to the next round. To help in the task, we enlisted the help of industry professionals Tim Warnock (matte painter), Till Nowak (3D artist) and John Kearney and Chung Wong (videogame artists - VooFoo Studios) to be our guest judges. These wonderful artists braved the headaches of a grueling judging process and helped the 3DTotal team to select the 50 stunning images that appear in this year's fantastic line-up.

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“My paintings tend to have a lot of detail, but don’t let that fool you. The details are only final touches. The most important thing is the drawing”

Jason Seiler continues to impress the staff at 2Dartist with every image he sends in, but in the case of this image we were simply blown away. Jason tells us how he achieved a super realistic look on his fantastic painting 3324 North Carolina, and walks us through every step from the original sketches through to a beautiful finished piece.





01

3324 North Carolina

Software Used: Photoshop CS3

Many artists can draw a decent likeness of a well known face, but to many it is hard to capture true character, or spirit. For me the most important thing is capturing this truth, or as I like to say the essence of a person or scene. I try to get a lifelike realism into my paintings, but not merely because of how I render, but by observing the unique qualities of the individual that I am illustrating.

I enjoy drawing my subjects in exaggerated form. The slightest push of an expression or posture in just the right place, can tell the viewer quite a bit.

I am a traditional painter at heart, painting with oil, acrylic and watercolor. But I have also taught myself how to paint digitally which is the medium

that I prefer to use for my published work. I paint with a 21" Cintiq made by Wacom (Fig.01). The Cintiq enables the artist to work naturally and intuitively drawing and painting directly on the surface of an LCD display (Fig.02). My

technique when painting digitally is very similar to the way I paint with oils or acrylics. I tend to work from dark to light, with my main focus being on values and color harmony. I do not use any form of photo manipulation, the work



02



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04



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that I create digitally is hand drawn and painted. Painting digitally has its advantages for both me and art directors. There is no fuss or time spent on scanning or color correcting. It is never a problem if changes need to be made, and the time it takes me to create a painting digitally versus traditionally is cut in half. The best part about it is that the final result looks like a traditional painting. Often people confuse my traditional and digital paintings, not knowing which is which?

To start my diner painting “3324 North California”, I created several thumbnail sketches (**Fig.03 – 06**). Doing thumbnails is a simple and quick way for me to find an interesting composition and explore character shape and proportion. My thumbnail sketches are like short hand notes. Typically, I don’t share my thumbnail process with art directors, unless they have requested it. They can be confusing to others, so after developing thumbnails, I quickly move on to the sketch.

By this stage, I have the idea and composition set. I then take my own pictures for reference. This way I can control the lighting, folding in clothing, poses, hand gestures and expressions. I have used my own face many times to create expressions for my subjects. After gathering all the reference I need, I do a final sketch (**Fig.07 - 08**). I love to draw, and I feel it is the foundation for the art that I create.







09

Often times I prefer sketching on a toned background rather than a white background. This helps me to lay down my line work, and quickly establish lights and darks giving my sketch a depth and life of its own, in a short amount of time. A strong drawing and composition must come first.

Once the sketch is approved, I prepare the sketch for painting. I usually cover my entire sketch with a thin layer of raw umber, turning the sketch into something similar to that of a traditional under painting (Fig.09 – 10).



10

My paintings tend to have a lot of detail, but don't let that fool you. The details are only final touches (Fig.11). The most important thing is the drawing, once I have that I focus the next step capturing light and establishing strong values. I create a limited palette, and

stick with only these colors for the duration of the painting (Fig.12 – 15). Because of my experience painting with mediums such as oil and acrylic, painting digitally comes naturally. If you understand how to paint traditionally, mixing color digitally is done basically the same way,



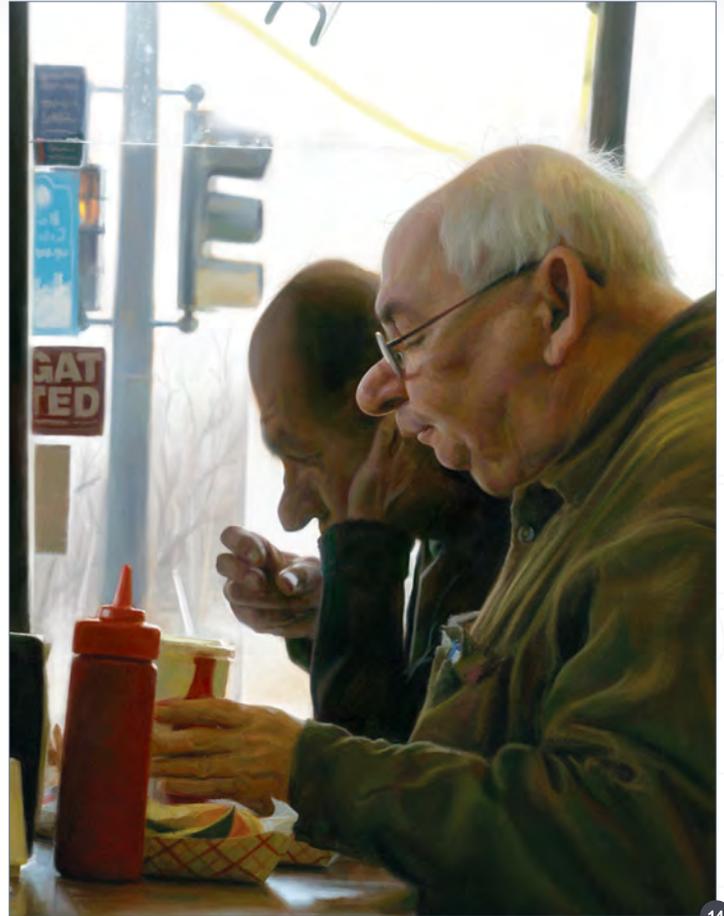
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only mixing and blending your colors is much easier and quicker. It is easy for digital painters to get carried away and get near-photo realistic results. But for me, this approach is against all that I love about painting. I enjoy seeing a thumbprint on a painting, or loose hairs that have fallen from a brush becoming a permanent part of the painting. I purposely leave brush marks visible, and if the lighting and values are correct, the painting will still have a very realistic look and quality to it. (Fig.16)

Jason Seiler

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 or contact
jseiler@jpusa.org



15



DIGITAL ART MASTERS VOLUME 4

With the release of 3DTotal's book, *Digital Art Masters: Volume 4*, we have some exclusive chapters for you...

This is more than just an artwork book. Not only does it feature full-colour, full-page images, but each artist has given a detailed description, in their own words, of the creation process behind each piece of published artwork. And they've done it especially for this book!

This month we feature:

"Make Me Proud..."
by Marek Okon





The following shots of the "Make me proud..." book pages are featured here in full-resolution and can be read by zooming in...

MAKE ME PROUD...

BY MAREK OKON

SOFTWARE USED: Photoshop, CS2



INTRODUCTION

Make me proud... was an image created for one of ImagineFX magazine's "Workshops" articles. The initial idea behind the creation of this image was to study light and shadow in a full sunlit environment, and to consider all of the characteristics and traps of such a scene that a painter would undoubtedly face when lacking bright sunlight.

CONCEPT

Some of you may have seen my work already and will know that I like to add extra elements of story to my images, to try and keep the viewer's attention for that extra minute. The best location for the study of sunlight is of course the desert, and so I chose to paint a rocky desert valley within a fantasy world, featuring the huge artifacts left behind by some technologically advanced species. In the scene we witness dragons being used as a heavy duty work force, a group of dragon farmers all trying to manage a dragon on the loose, and on a more nostalgic note we also see a father in the foreground leading his son for his first day as a dragon farmer. Like father, like son.

SKETCHES

After the idea was formed I painted a few quick sketches, just to pick the best composition for my scene. I usually find that one of my sketches is close enough in order for me to proceed with the painting (Fig.01). At this stage,



the sketch work was fast and loose – just a few lines and values. I wanted to be able to change it without losing too much work.

LIGHT CONSIDERATION

Even before I laid my first brushstroke on this painting, I had to secure in my mind what was going to be important in a sunlight environment. First of all, the global light source is the sun, it's very strong and direct, with a light yellow (or orange if you're working on a sunset/sunrise scene) hue. It also casts very sharp shadows that will nicely sculpt the form of the subject you are painting. The second global light source is of course the blue sky. This light is almost invisible in direct sunlight, but it's revealed

in the shadows that are created by the sun. The sky is a dome light which is scattered, because we are basically surrounded by it, mainly from the top and sometimes from the sides. It creates shadows that are soft, blurry and fade quickly, due to the Omni-directional nature of the sky light.

On top of this theory I also had to calculate the indirect light sources created by the sunlight. In full sunlight practically everything is bouncing some of the light back, and it can be quite difficult to keep track of it. This is what makes painting things in full sunlight a much tougher experience: the multiple light sources.

LIGHT SETUP

So after analyzing the behavior of sunlight, which after some time comes to you so naturally that you don't even have to think about it, I made my first color sketch (Fig.02).



The colors were slightly exaggerated, and I did this just to see how my lighting setup was working more clearly.

The father and son characters are standing in the sun's shadow, but they are still partially illuminated by the sky light (demonstrated by the blue arrows in Fig.03). This is why they have a bluish cast with soft shadows all around them. The dragon on the other hand is illuminated directly by the sun (demonstrated by the white arrows); he has nice sharp shadows cast by his muscles, neck and wings – notice that his left and bottom sides are completely shielded from the sun. If a bit of the sun's shadow that other lights come to life! Almost every shadow on the dragon's body has a bluish hue from this sky light, although there are places that the sky light won't reach at all, such as under the wings or on the dragon's tummy. And those are also places where some bounced light (demonstrated by the red arrows) appears – a warm yellow/orange light bounced from the sand and rocks. The same thing happens when it comes to the bottom of the cliff and the overhang. The only difference is that inside the overhang we have no trace of any blue sky light, because it's completely cut off from it – and thus dark.

PAINTING

With the basic lighting setup down, I moved on to the shape blocking and object rendering work, remembering not to get into the details too soon and to develop the image equally (Fig.04) (otherwise I would have had to later rework areas that didn't get well) with one another. In these early stages I was using a basic round brush to quickly define the shape and volume of the objects (Fig.05). From time to time I also used a flat round brush to make nice clean lines on the ground and rocks. Flipping the image horizontally several times also helped keep things looking fresh in my mind; this technique helps to catch most of the mistakes early on.

I continued adding more and more elements from my initial concepts, applying the same light rules previously mentioned to each new addition to the scene (Fig.06), working my way through the image from the background to foreground, pass after pass, adding more detail, textures and objects (Fig.07). Once I was happy with the results I applied some atmospheric effects – dust, halos, aerial perspective (Fig.08). And finally, I balanced the whole image with a few adjustment layers with masks for different planes and elements in the picture (Fig.09).

CONCLUSION

Well that's pretty much it, everything else comes down to technicalities, which I think are less important than



the knowledge and understanding of the basic principles behind any painting. When you understand the universal rules it doesn't matter what program or textures or brushes you are using.

Working on this image allowed me the time to understand more of the nuances and behavior of light under different environmental conditions, and in the end I was also quite satisfied that I had managed to successfully combine a purely technical exercise with some deeper story telling.

ARTIST PORTFOLIO



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