

# 3d artist

Concept Art, Digital & Matte Painting Magazine  
Issue 060 December 2010

Cover Image By Liam Peters

## Interview

Marcin Jakubowski



## Articles

Sketchbook of Keun-ju Kim



## The Gallery

Yuehui Tang, Akasha & Songnan Li plus more!



# PAINTING CHARACTERS



## Painting Creatures From Folklore

**Richard Tilbury** is back again and this time he shows us how to design and paint an Ogre in our **Creatures from Folklore** series.



## Portraiture

**Guillermo Ramírez** tackles a female caricature in our new **Portraiture** series.



## Concept Art for Games

**Craig Sellars** wraps up our **Concept art for Games** series with his final chapter about vehicles for games.

## Custom Brushes for Sci-Fi

**Alex Ruiz** is our tutor in this month **Custom Brushes for Sci-Fi** tutorial.



## Editorial

Hello and a very merry Christmas to all! December is always such a busy time of the year, there is shopping to do, a big meal to prepare and the relatives you only see at Christmas will soon be descending upon you. Well this month we are more than happy to provide a welcomed distraction, and hope you enjoy sitting back in your

chair with lovely eggnog and Decembers 2DArtist.

On the first day of Christmas my true love gave to me, an interview with **Marcin Jakubowski**. Well it almost fits! Marcin is a great artist and illustrator from Poland who has a fantastic variety of skills and a fantastic portfolio to feast your eyes on. Some of you may be familiar with his work as he is a regular in the CG forums, and Marcin tells us how important it is to keep up your internet presence particularly when you live somewhere when the options for a CG artist are limited.

On the second day of Christmas my true love gave to me, an article that was very sketchy. Yes it's the sketchbook, and this month it's a cracker (too many bad jokes!). **Keun-ju Kim** works in the computer games industry and has a great variety of concepts to enjoy, from characters to landscapes and everything in between. This one is really worth checking out!

On the third day of Christmas my true love gave to me, tutorials that were very handy. This month sees the last chapter in the fantastic Concept art for games series. **Craig Sellars** wraps things up for us with an excellent all terrain vehicle to navigate the tricky surface of the prison planet. Craig and the other artists Thomas Pringle and Bart Tiogson have done a great job for us with this one, but next month we start a new series on Art Fundamentals and this is a good one!

**Guillermo Ramirez** continues our Portraiture series this month and shows us how to do a caricature of a female. This is another good addition to the series full of useful tips and tricks.

Creatures from Folklore has been a really cool series so far, and has treated us to a lot of really cool images. This month is no exception as our very own **Richard Tilbury** talks us through the design and creation of an Ogre. Rich shows us how he comes up with an original design

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for the character that fits the description, and how he integrates his final design into the scene.

Custom Brushes for Sci-Fi comes to a conclusion this month. I hope you have all enjoyed this series as much as I have. **Alex Ruiz** makes up the final piece to the puzzle and talks us through the creation of brushes for alien plant-life. Alex uses some really cool techniques including starting with a 3D base. Next month we have a cool new series Comic Art!

Sorry, here I go again. On the fourth day of Christmas my true love gave to me a making of and 2D Gallery. What a selection we have this month. A great making of by **Liam Peters** and some fantastic gallery images featuring work by **Branko Bistovic**, **Andreas Rocha**, **Facundo Diaz** and many more.

Ok, I will leave you to read the magazine whilst I think of eight more days of Christmas. Have a good one!



# 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!

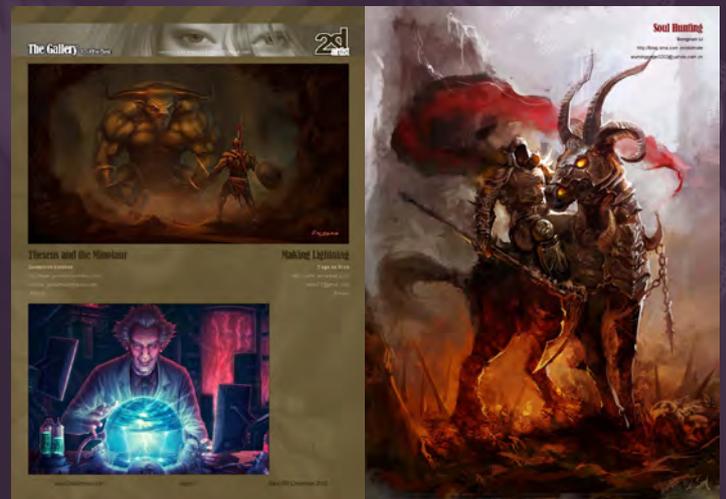
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1. Open the magazine in Reader;
2. Go to the **View** menu, then **Page display**;
3. Select **Two-up Continuous**, making sure that **Show Cover Page** is also selected.



## 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](mailto:simon@3dtotal.com)



### Richard Tilbury

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

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### Liam Peters

Liam was born and raised in Australia and during his studies in Brisbane he fell in love with digital art. At the end of 2008

he officially moved to the United States to be with the love of his life and begin pursuing his art career. He currently works as a freelance illustrator based in Houston, Texas.

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### Gillermo Ramirez

Guillermo Ramirez was born in Madrid Spain, and has since he was a child been drawing caricatures of his teachers, friends, family... everybody. He began his art studies at ESDIP art school in Madrid, where he currently studies animation.

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### Craig Sellars

Craig Sellars is a freelance Illustrator and Concept Designer living in Canada. After studying Industrial Design and Classical Animation, Craig worked as a traditional Layout Artist at Walt Disney and then transitioned to do digital work in the Games industry. As a freelance artist, Craig has worked internationally with numerous companies in the Games, Toy and Film industries.

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### Keun-ju Kim

Keun-ju Kim is a concept artist working in Korea. He has enjoyed painting since his childhood, and was a game artist before he studied fine arts at university. He has been painting digitally for about 7 years and is currently Art Director at EA- Mobile in Korea.

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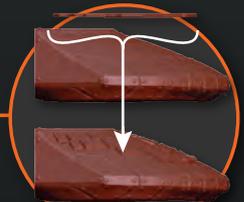
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# Marcin Jakubowski



Marcin Jakubowski is a fantastic and versatile artist from Poland who has kindly agreed to be interviewed by us this month. Marcin has had a diverse route into the CG industry and is now producing amazing images and illustrations that you will all enjoy in this month's interview.

**“Being featured in an art book is very satisfying, especially when I consider the fact that my art has been chosen from a number of images submitted by some of the best artists in the world.”**

## Interview with Marcin Jakubowski

Hi Marcin, it is a pleasure to speak to you, I am a big fan of your work. We will start with a nice easy one: can you tell us a little about yourself and about your life in the CG industry so far?

Hi, thank you very much. I'm a constant dreamer, always thinking of other worlds. But as I can't send the vision directly into people's heads I use my painting skills to visualise ideas. I'm a painter and concept artist who has been working digitally since 2002. To start with I was a layout designer and a flash illustrator for a company making educational software, but after three years I chose a freelancer's path.

I understand that you are currently living and working in Poland. What are the opportunities like there for talented artists? And do you find that you do a lot of work for foreign clients?

The Polish CG industry is many years behind Western Europe and, of course, USA. The CG studios are rather small and made up of self-taught individuals, because there are still



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no schools offering valuable CG courses. The industry is focused on the TV commercial market, which is financially tempting. There are occasionally jobs in special effects for films, but we still haven't produced any full-length 3D animation movies. So it's sad to say, but currently it's not a good place for people looking for world class projects.

Fortunately the situation is gradually changing. There are so many talented people helping to develop the industry with dedication and passion. For example, our artists are among

the winners in lots of internet CG challenges, and Polish shorts from Platige Image studio win many prizes at prestigious festivals. Working on local projects can be interesting but I wish I could work more for big foreign studios.

It seems like you started in a fairly graphics-based environment. How did you make the transition to concept art? Also you mention that there are no good CG schools in Poland; does that mean that you are self-taught?

Yes, I'm self-taught, not only because there were no CG schools, but because I just wasn't



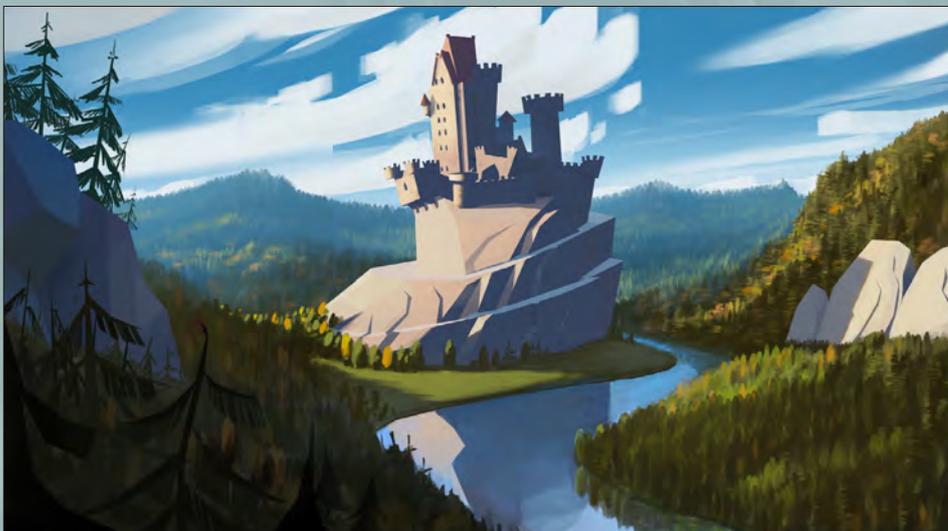


aware of my talent and career possibilities. I could have gone to some academy of fine art, but I had heard too many stories about starving artists who only became rich after their death, and I wasn't interested in such a fate! [Laughs]. I noticed of course that I drew better than others, but nobody ever encouraged me to think about it seriously. I went to university and chose computer sciences and economics,

but soon lost my interest and started to learn about computer graphics on my own. One day I discovered a concept art gallery from *Star Wars* on the internet and it was like someone had turned a light on. Suddenly I realized that it was possible to do art for a living, which hadn't been obvious to me before. Soon I found a job as a layout designer and I got an opportunity to look at good cartoon illustrators. I tried to learn

from them and designed ultra cute, sweet, smart and happy characters (children's productions mainly), and developed a darker and more painterly style just to keep the mental balance. This way when I decided to go freelance I was prepared for both a cartoon and dark style. This flexibility resulted in a variety of projects.

**“People believe that if they can't find something in the Internet it doesn't exist.”**



You have featured in a few different books over the past few years - congratulations! Do you think that this is an important way of getting some well-deserved attention, and what is it like to receive that sort of worldwide recognition? Being featured in an art book is very satisfying, especially when I consider the fact that my art has been chosen from a number of images submitted by some of the best artists in the world. Besides, it's nice to see the image printed professionally; since I'm a digital painter viewing



my work happens mainly on a monitor screen. I have no idea how much being in the books influences the general recognition I receive. I think that the internet galleries are more efficient, but paper books are grand for sure, and generate a kind of aura around the artist.

I have to agree with the importance of showing your work in the various galleries and forums, as that is where I find a lot of the artists that we use. Do you do most of your self-marketing online? Are there any other ways that you make people aware of your work?

Marketing online is extremely important nowadays. People believe that if they can't find something on the internet then it doesn't exist. I publish my works in popular online galleries, but I obviously could be more active. It seems that I'm just not a fan of the all social stuff popular





today. Besides 90% of my work is under the NDA and I'm not allowed to show anything for months. I think that I should focus on precise searching for connections in the industry.

You were involved in a really interesting project animating the history of Poland (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2DrXgj1NwN8>). What exactly was your involvement with this project, and was it nice to work on a subject as personal as your country's history?

The animated history of Poland has been created specifically for the Polish pavilion at the Shanghai World Expo. It's eight minutes long and has been rendered in stereoscopic 3D (of

course). I was responsible for developing the visual style of the animation and planning the shots and the mood. We used hand-painted environments projected onto simple 3D geometry and full 3D characters. I painted about half of the backgrounds and designed the base characters.

Our film is only an impression of Polish history because it's simply impossible to show over a thousand years in just a few minutes. I guess it's rather unsatisfying for hardcore history lovers, but for people looking for some kind of inspiration it's enjoyable. The history of our country is very dramatic and it was quite a

challenge to withstand the temptation to make a film full of heroic action. From an artistic and technical side it was a very interesting project, particularly considering the 3D world and hand-painted images.

**“Usually I’ve got quite a clear vision in my mind before I start painting.”**

Can you tell us a little about the process you use to create your work? Do you have a set process or way of working, or does it depend on what kind of image you are working on?

Usually I've got quite a clear vision in my mind before I start painting. After collecting some reference material I launch Flash or Photoshop and sketch until I get a few versions of the object or scene. Then I make a few color schemes in Photoshop. After choosing the most promising version I add some color variations by mixing some textures or other images. If the image is interesting enough I merge all the layers and continue painting details. I use a tidy and not too sophisticated set of brushes. Working on many layers slows me down so I prefer using as few layers as possible. The whole process is rather simple without special tricks or advanced tools. I love hand-painted







images and would rather continue improving my skills in that direction.

On your website it says that you work as a freelancer. What types of projects do you take on and what would be your ideal type of work? I do a lot of things and I really can't say that I'm bored. Usually I make concept art and matte paintings for animated films and advertising. I design characters and environments in many styles - from cartoon to realism. Sometimes I paint a book covers or illustrations for a card or board game. I was also involved in many architectural designs and even scenery for a theatrical play.

I would like to focus on concept art for animated films. I won't be original but it's my dream to join an experienced studio and work on some outstanding full length animated production. It's probably a typical dream of many artists so it won't be easy. Anyway I'm trying to improve my skills in that direction while waiting eagerly for new challenges.

To work on feature films does seem to be the ultimate aim of many artists. As you're skilled in both realistic and cartoon art, what kind of movie would you like to work on? Would it be a Pixar-like animation or maybe a realistic blockbuster movie instead? And do you think that you will

have to move abroad to work on this kind of project?

I would appreciate any kind of film with an inspiring atmosphere. I love stylized animation with a rich color palette like Pixar, but also realistic films with a dark and sinister mood. If I had an interesting opportunity I certainly would go abroad. It's not only because of career chances, but because I'm just curious about new places.

What do you like to do when you are not working? Do you have any hobbies that you find help keep the creative juices flowing?

Since I'm a young father I spend most of my free time with my little daughter. We draw a lot (believe me, I really don't force her!) and read many books. Most of them are pretty bad and definitely not inspiring, but there are also some great examples of creativity. I started to think about my own stories that I could tell to my daughter some day. A casual walk with a happy child on a nice day can be fascinating, just like in Miyazaki's *My Neighbour Totoro*. I love his films even more now.







Thanks for agreeing to be interviewed by *2DArtist*. It has been a pleasure talking to such a talented artist and I am sure I am not the only one who is looking forward to the day when we get to see your work on the big screen. Thanks. Many thanks. I hope that the readers find my work inspiring. Thank you for your time!

## **Marcin Jakubowski**

For more work by this artist please visit:

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

Or contact them at:

[marcin@balloontree.com](mailto:marcin@balloontree.com)

Interviewed by: Simon Morse

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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 undead are a playable race in World of Warcraft. When I first saw them, I was amazed at how they could let “corpses” be player characters. It stimulated my imagination...”



# SKETCHBOOK OF KEUN-JU KIM

Keun-ju Kim, or “Rabbiteyes”, is a fantastic and versatile concept artist in the video game industry, boasting a portfolio rammed with environments and characters of different genres and styles. In this month’s sketchbook Keun-ju shows us some of his outstanding sketching and explains how his sketches are so important to the outcome of his final image.

## SKETCHBOOK OF KEUN-JU KIM

Hello, I am Keun-ju Kim and I work as a video game concept artist. I'm known as Rabbiteyes on the internet and in the forums. I enjoy drawing and painting everything from characters, backgrounds and animals to mechas, creatures and comics. I am very pleased to get a chance to share my sketches here.



This is my most recent sketch called "Electric Chair Girl" (Fig.01). After sitting on an electric chair, she somehow gained a superpower rather than dying. This character was originally created to be used in a Korean group illustration art book. I personally liked this theme so I decided to draw her again.



02

Sharp-edged erasers are very useful when making detailed sketches (Fig.02).

I usually use a mechanical pencil with 2B lead for sketches (Fig.03 – 04).



03



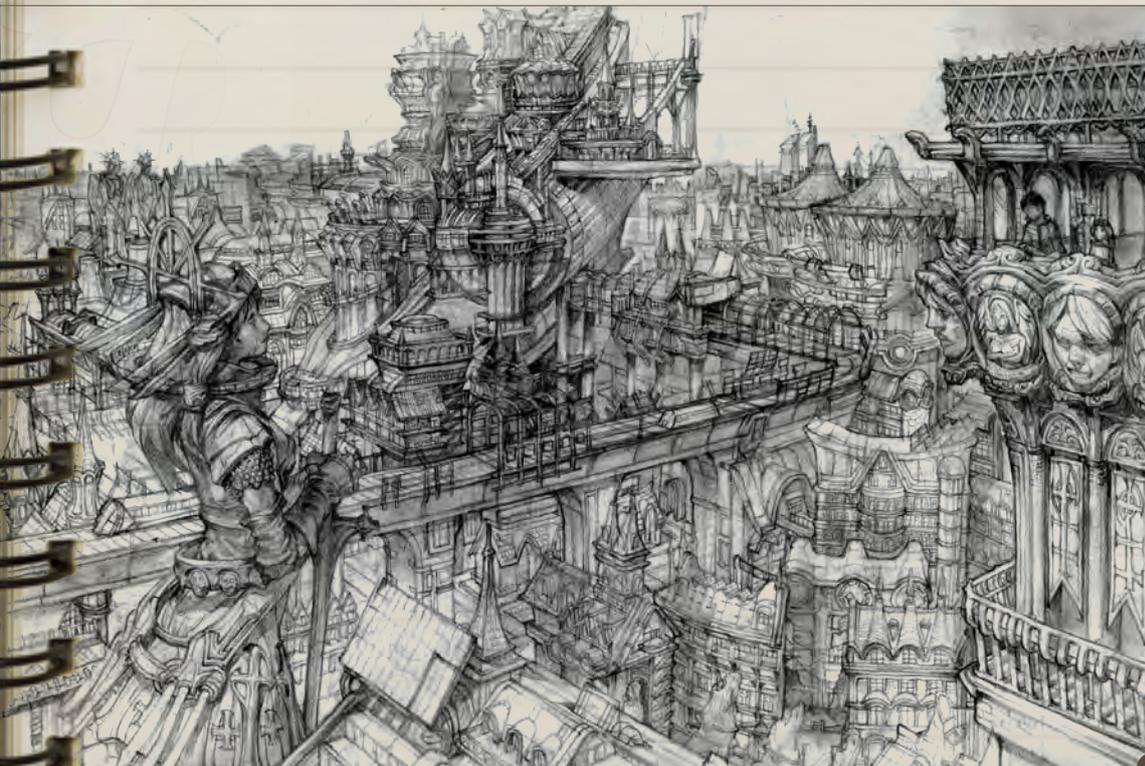
04



05



06



07

The title is "Awakening." This is a sketch for one of my older comic books. The protagonist "awakens" her hidden powers when facing oncoming threats (Fig.05).

I cut the width a little and added a more mysterious feel with the coloring (Fig.06).

"A Reconstructed City". This is a city built on the crash site of a massive airship. Instead of unusual composition, I focused on the variety of the buildings' locations and shapes for this sketch. There is a castle built over the crashed airship in the center of the image. The goddess statue on the left serves as the symbol of the city (Fig.07).



08

I think I put too much emphasis on urban ambience while painting this work, making the result a bit too monotonous (Fig.08).

This is a sketch for a TPS game character. I kept heavy action games like *Gears of Wars*

in mind while designing this alien character, giving it an exoskeletal frame and shell in order to maximize its tough, powerful image. Its "hairs", which look like octopus legs, work as antennae. Its legs are short, and it has a tail on the back (Fig.09).

After scanning the sketch, I painted it black and white to define the structure in detail (Fig.10).

I added a mix of mechanical and shell texture when painting (Fig.11).



09



10



11



12

This is a sketch of a monster. The contrast between mechanized vertebrae and more organic limbs is to show a feeling of a "modified/deformed" creature (Fig.12).

I added even more contrast between the vertebrae and the organic parts when refining details (Fig.13).

I added more texture and lighting effects to finish the coloring (Fig.14).



13



14

Another character sketch. This design is inspired by various games such as *Killzone*, *Star Wars* and *Gears of War*. The design is not intended to be a totally futuristic soldier, but rather a mixture of different images and worlds (Fig.15 - 17).



15



16



I added a Chinese letter logo on the chest, adding more to the design (Fig.18).

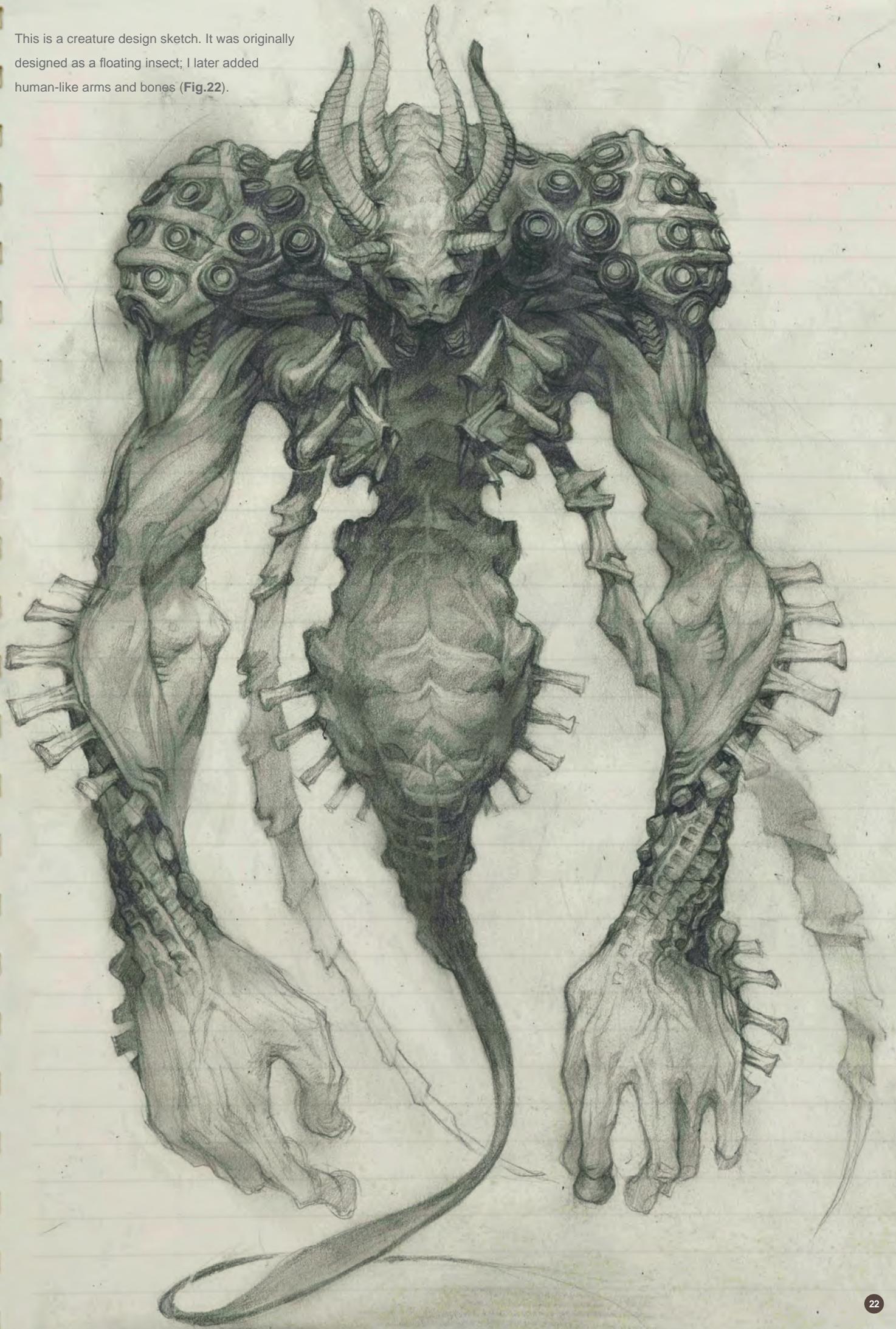


This is a sketch of a pretty, rather androgynous boy pilot. Though intended to be cute in general, he has a few interesting twists such as horns on the forehead (Fig.19–20).

To emphasize his androgynous image, I changed his thigh-cut spandex into stockings. This change, along with the anklet, gives a more complex feeling (Fig.21).



This is a creature design sketch. It was originally designed as a floating insect; I later added human-like arms and bones (Fig.22).



You may notice female torsos concealed in the creature's arms (Fig.23).





24

This is a sorceress who uses cards as her spell implements (Fig.24). While the overall design follows well-known conventions such as a pointed hat and staves, I gave small variations on the detail to give originality to the character. You can see her hip sack with alchemy vials, a gun knife, and her bare feet.

This character is a cheerful woman, so I used a brighter color palette to fit her personality (Fig.25).



25



26

This character is a psionic elf boy. Sad-looking eyes and long ears show he's an elf, and his uniform tells that he's a pilot (Fig.26).

His uniform mostly consists of blue and white. The aura effect around him also follows the color (Fig.27).



27



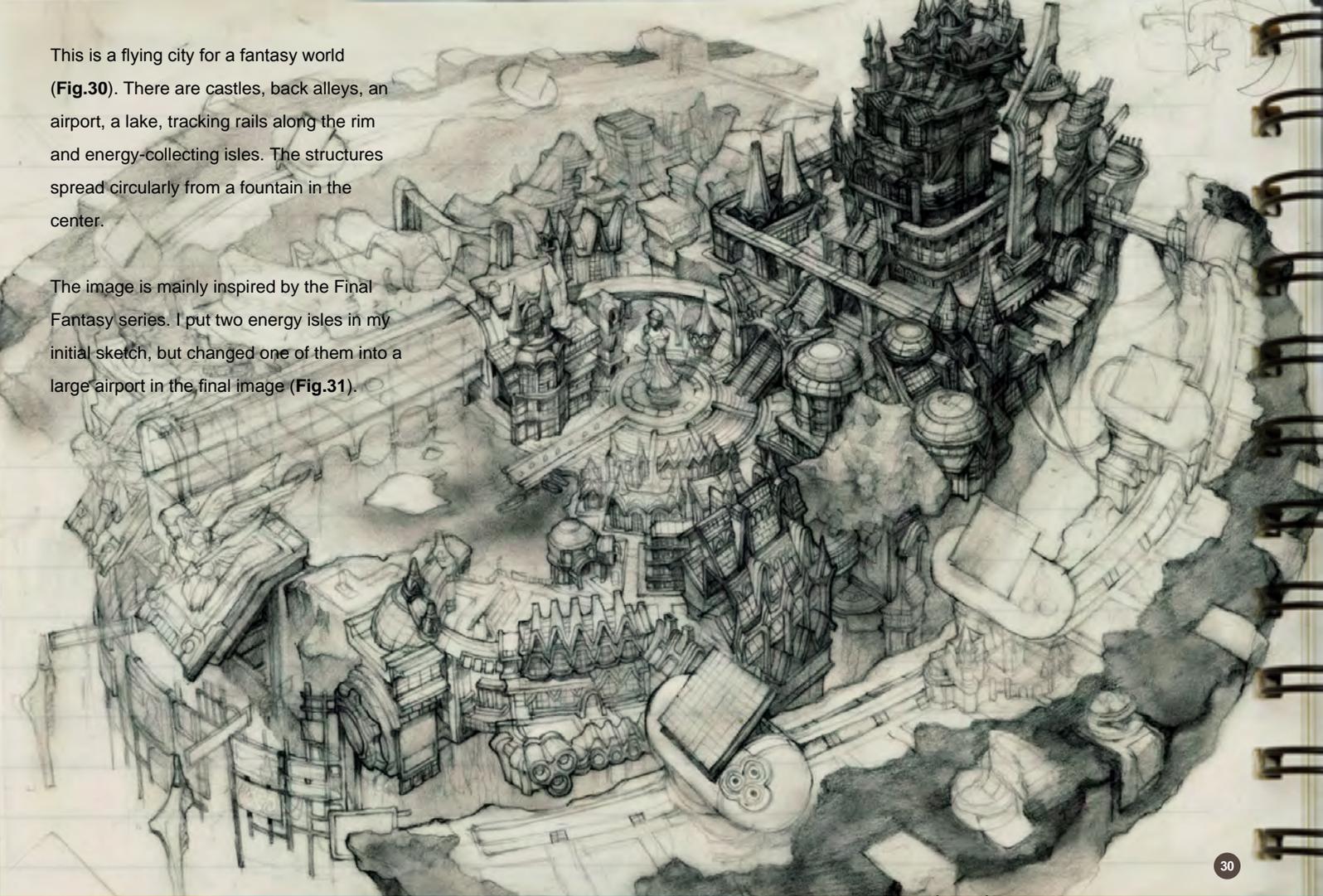
This creature is intended to be a “boss character” (Fig.28). It floats in the air, and has many different parts to its body; the wings resemble a whale’s fins, the legs are inspired by those of a centipede, and its shell is mechanized.

As if it’s a flying steam engine, it shoots flaming black smokes from its mechanized back (Fig.29).



This is a flying city for a fantasy world (Fig.30). There are castles, back alleys, an airport, a lake, tracking rails along the rim and energy-collecting isles. The structures spread circularly from a fountain in the center.

The image is mainly inspired by the Final Fantasy series. I put two energy isles in my initial sketch, but changed one of them into a large airport in the final image (Fig.31).



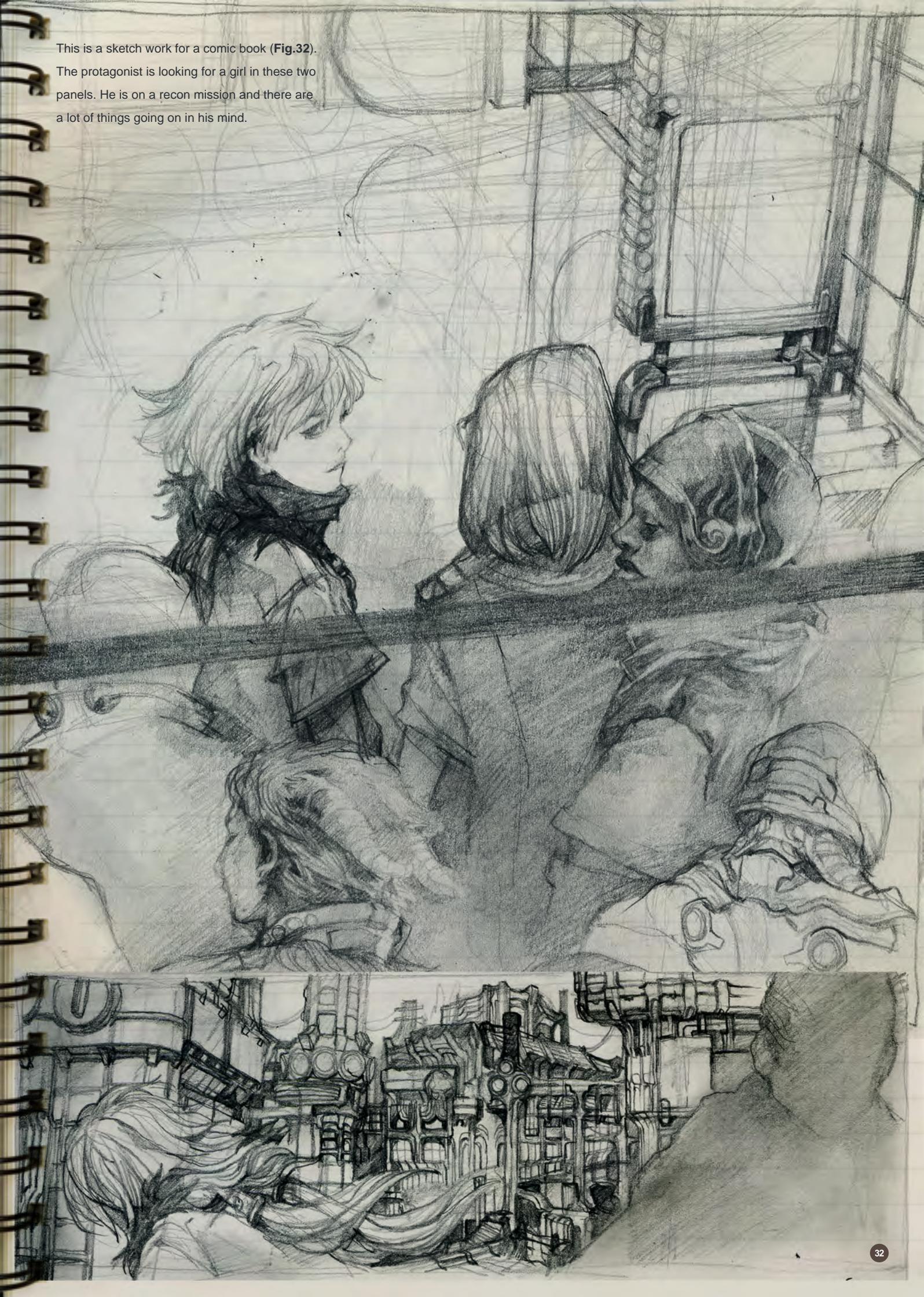
30



31

This is a sketch work for a comic book (Fig.32).

The protagonist is looking for a girl in these two panels. He is on a recon mission and there are a lot of things going on in his mind.



To show his confused state of mind, I simplified the drawing a little and put more emphasis on the overall tone instead (Fig.33).

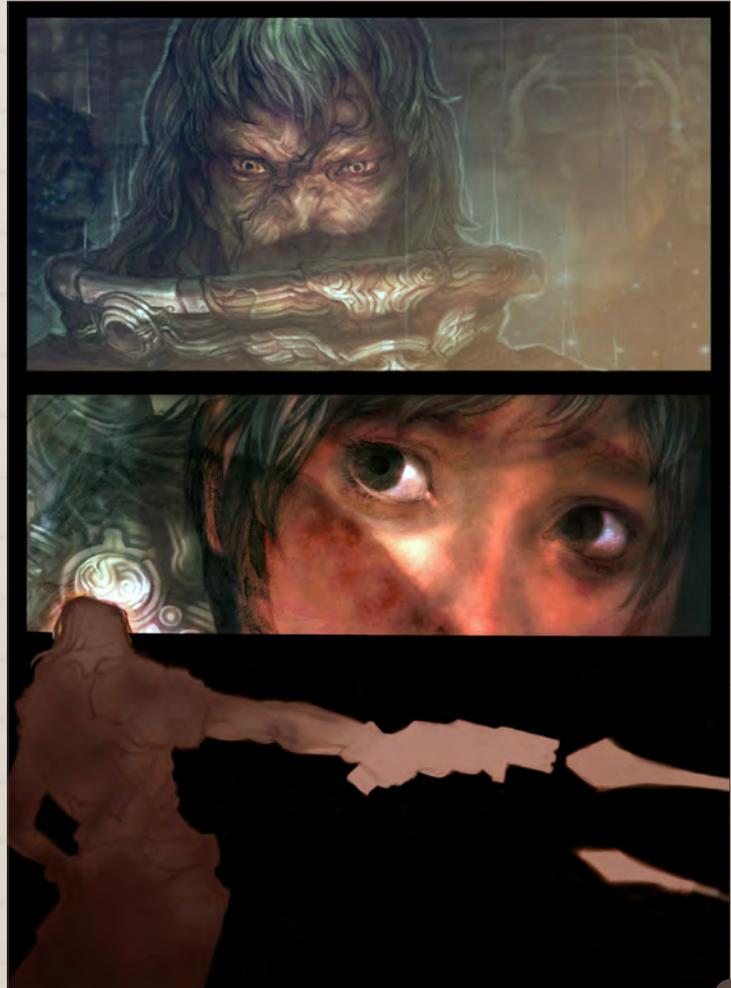


The protagonist and the girl are in a pinch (Fig.34). The Crescent Assassin draws a gun and shoots them. The antagonist has determination and ruthlessness on his face while the girl shows her scared state. It took some time to make the silhouetted third panel work with the others.

Rainy weather is shown by the overall mist on the panels (Fig.35).



34



35

Sketches of a monster design. This creature has a spider-like structure; the modeler requested separate limbs in the design sketches. I was thinking of movies like *Aliens* and *The Thing* while working on this project (Fig.36).

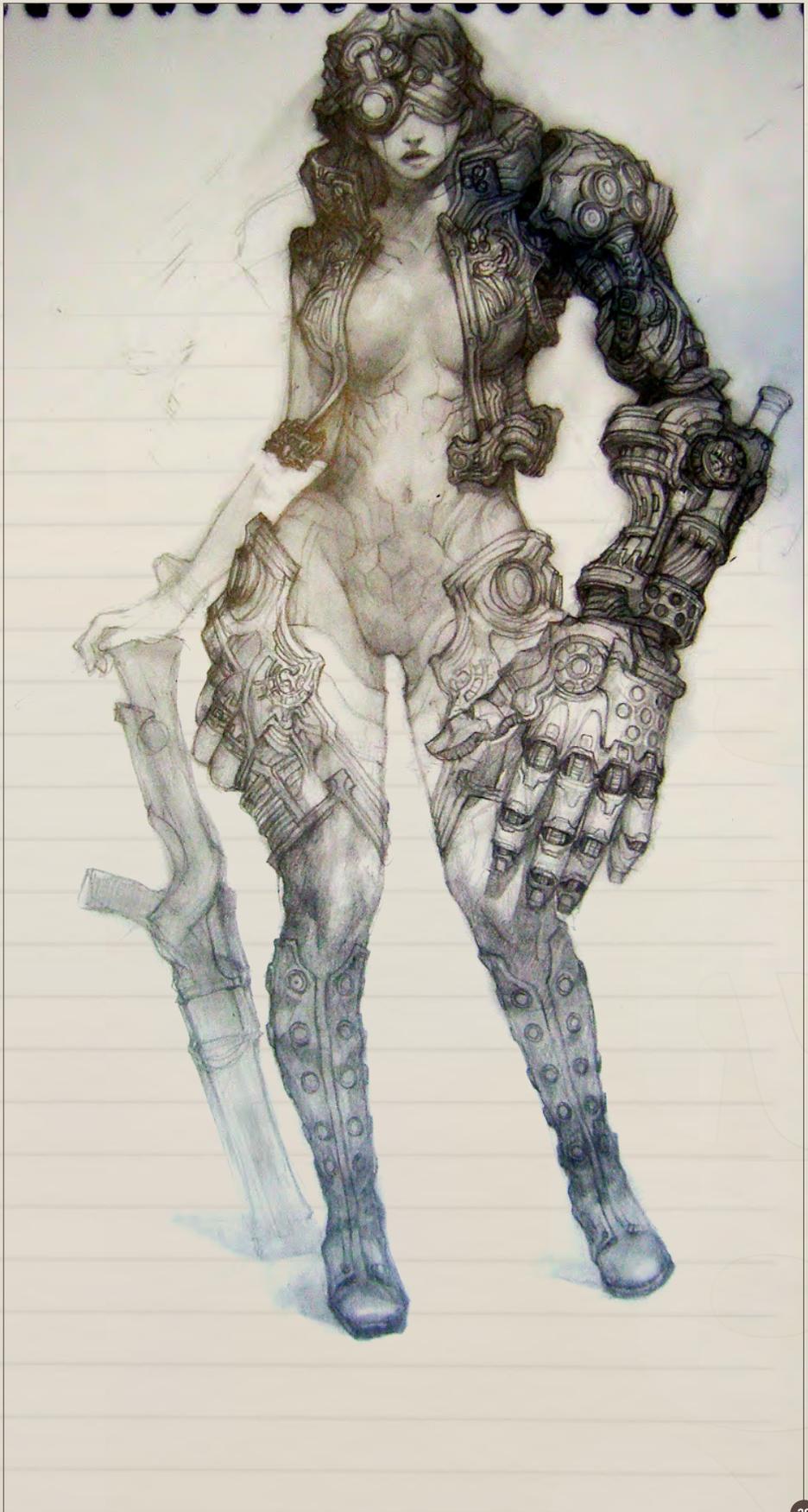




37

This creature emits light on several points of its body (Fig.37); the luminous points are mostly on joints and other hidden parts.

I often draw cyborg women with mechanical arms, and this one even has a name; Arky (Fig.38). This sketch is one of many depictions of her. This is a rather grim design which does not show her face. I wanted to show a more mature feeling compared to my usually more "girly" characters.



38

The mechanized arm shows heat and smoke. To maximize asymmetry, I almost hid her other arm in the final image (Fig.39).



39

This is a sketch of a flyer-riding character (Fig.40). While she is of a horned race, I wanted to make this work feel joyful, so I put several elements that emphasize cheerfulness such as an active-looking hairstyle, asymmetric horns, a band-aid on the cheek and protruding eyes.



I don't really like pink personally, but thought it would fit this character. I still don't like it though (Fig.41).



This is a sketch of a ninja (Fig.42). His slim, brutal-looking physique feels almost non-human, while his face shows some androgynous beauty. A ninja is not done simply by giving him a black cat suit and a Japanese sword; I paid attention to his headband to give additional signs (the design motif is influenced by *Naruto* and *Star Gladiator*).



His shining eyes are a later implementation; they were originally supposed to be eyes without pupils (you see such a character in *Naruto*, too (Fig.43)).



I once thought the hairstyle of Spike from *Cowboy Bebop* was really cool; I decided to apply the hair to a boy character (Fig.44). The lion-looking character on the left is a Haetae (Xiezhi in Chinese), an Asian mythical creature.

Sometimes I'm sick of beautiful heroes. These heroes are intentionally depicted as not pretty, handsome or tall (Fig.45). Not being pretty is okay, though I feel a little sorry for them as I put them in the sewer.

The undead are a playable race in *World of Warcraft* (Fig.46). When I first saw them, I was amazed at how they could let "corpses" be player characters. It stimulated my imagination and I started thinking about what would have happened to them, so I drew this sketch. The undead girl is smiling, holding a mysterious ring in her hand. There is a bloody portrait of her as a human on the wall, and the feet in the air hint how she died.



44



45



46



47

The same character again (**Fig.47**). This sketch does not contain as many symbols and hints, though; she is sitting on her own gravestone.

This is a sketch to practice deformation and exaggeration of different movements and composition. His rival and potential love interest is shown in the background, and his pose is dynamic; the composition could be very typical (**Fig.48**).



48



The sketch depicts a female ghost (**Fig.49**). I took a wide angle viewpoint to distort perspective, and tried to deliver the translucent feel by half-shown signs and objects.

49



50

This is another sketch of Electric Chair Girl (**Fig.50**). The two girls are siblings and both Asians. The one in the front has mechanized part of her body. Her mechanical parts are designed to feel like an electric chair. The elder sister in the back wears a rustling dress and a wide-rimmed flower hat in order to maximize contrast.

This is another undead girl (a warlock) sketch (**Fig.51**). She has a severed dwarf head in her hand, and her summoned Succubus is smiling in the background shadow. What the girl is looking at is a window that sheds light rays. The light gives a dramatic effect on her face, showing a hint of emotion from the expressionless girl.



51



52

I consider Hellboy the most interesting hero-genre character (**Fig.52**). This sketch is made right after I watched the movie. Looks like this is Hellgirl.



This sketch is based on my own experience and the feeling of unforgettable love (**Fig.53**).

The original size of this drawing was quite big, about 1.5 meters by 1 meter. Since the sketch was so big, there were a lot of objects to describe. The perspective also had to be tweaked to accommodate a wide angle. It took quite some time (**Fig.54**).



The father is counseling the daughter on her love relationship, lighting her tobacco pipe up (Fig.55). I was teaching painting at the time I drew this, and my students who like Japanese manga and anime filled in the balloons. I do not read or speak Japanese at all.

I usually do drawings on cheap paper notebooks with a 2B mechanical pencil, but sometimes I do draw directly into Photoshop. When I use computers for line drawings, I don't pay too much attention to details or textures, but concentrate on giving overall direction for the finished work (Fig.56-59).

## KEUN-JU KIM

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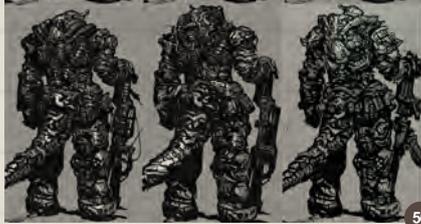
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55



56



57



58



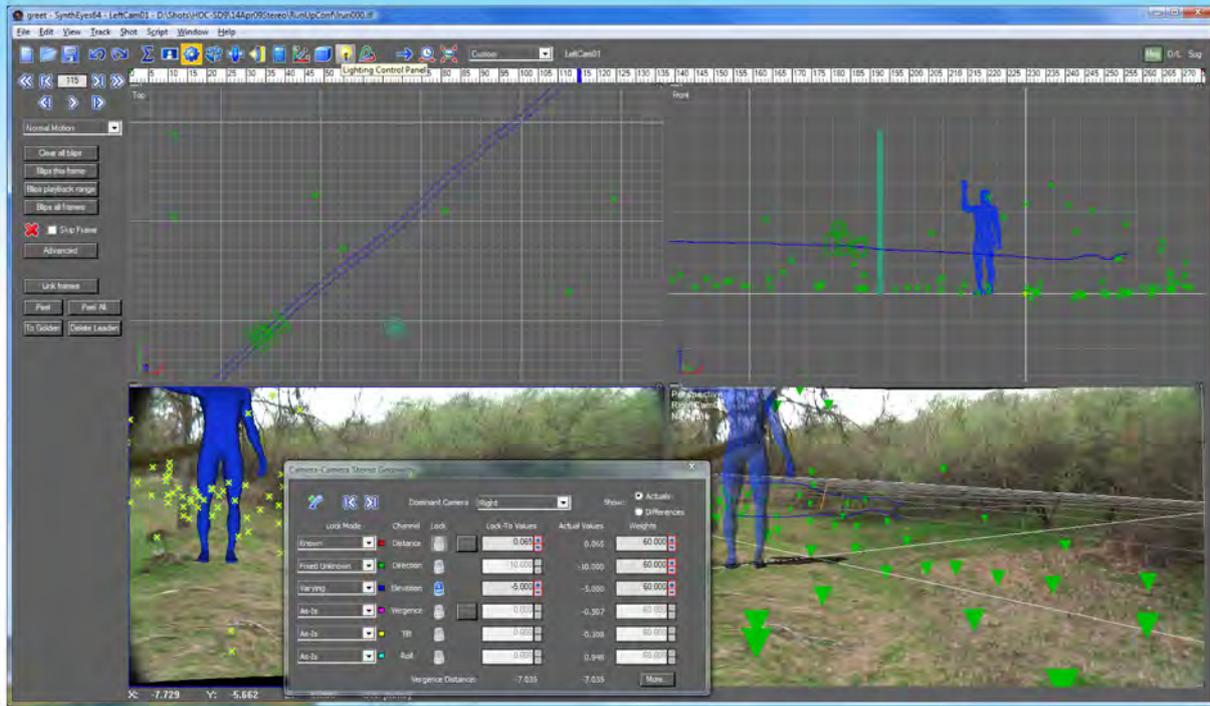
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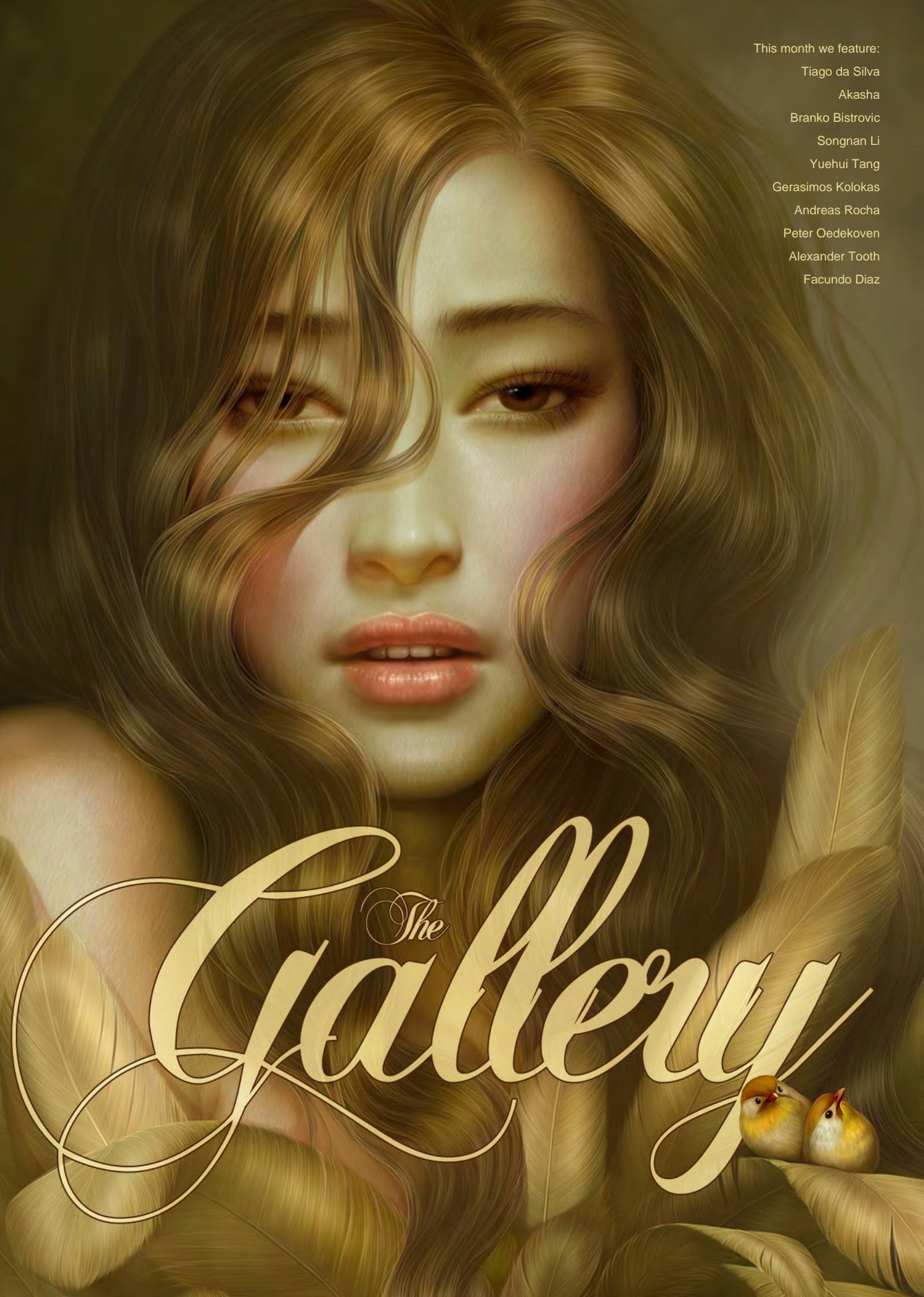
Gerasimos Kolokas

Andreas Rocha

Peter Oedekoven

Alexander Tooth

Facundo Diaz



*The*  
**Gallery**



## Energy Backup

Facundo Diaz

<http://www.fdportfolio.com.ar/index.htm>

[facu\\_kw@hotmail.com](mailto:facu_kw@hotmail.com)

(Above)



## Warm Mist

Andreas Rocha

<http://www.andreasrocha.com>

[rocha.andreas@gmail.com](mailto:rocha.andreas@gmail.com)

(Right)



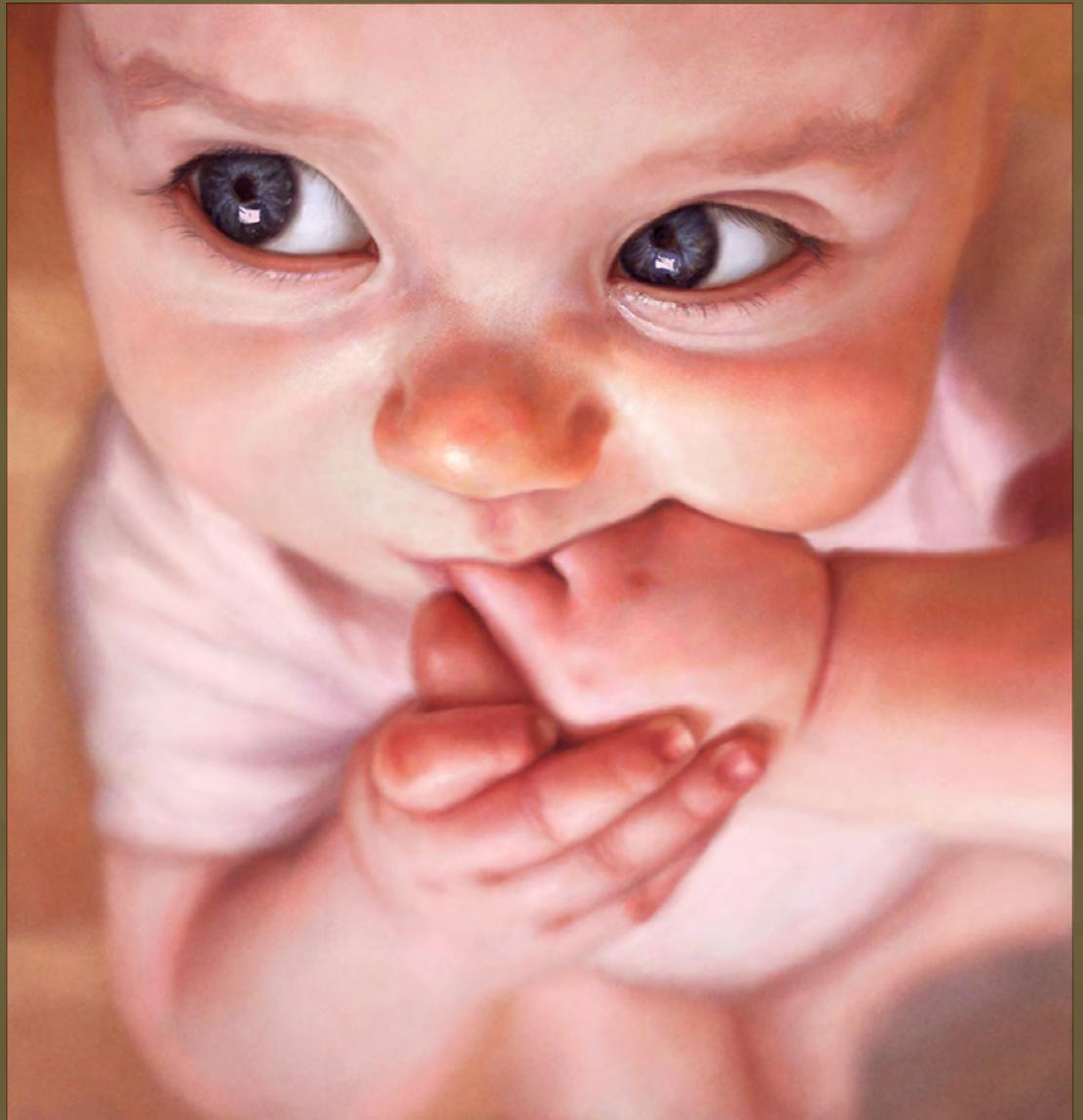
## My Angel

Akasha

<http://www.tasart.hu>

[moxica@mailbox.hu](mailto:moxica@mailbox.hu)

(Above)



## Baby Lida

Branko Bistovic

<http://branko.cgsociety.org/gallery/>

[bisvic@gmail.com](mailto:bisvic@gmail.com)

(Right)

# The War Machine

Alexander Tooth

<http://alextooth.com>

[alextoothart@gmail.com](mailto:alextoothart@gmail.com)



T.A.S.T.



## Theseus and the Minotaur

Gerasimos Kolokas

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

[kolokas\\_gerasimos@yahoo.com](mailto:kolokas_gerasimos@yahoo.com)

(Above)

## Making Lightning

Tiago da Silva

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

[tmds77@gmail.com](mailto:tmds77@gmail.com)

(Below)



# Soul Hunting

Songnan Li

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# Hansel und Gretel 1945

Peter Oedekoven

<http://www.oedekoven-illustration.com>

[peter@die-artillerie.de](mailto:peter@die-artillerie.de)





# National des Deut

in der Doms  
30.2

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## Massen

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Portrait

Yuehui Tang

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

[tyhart@163.com](mailto:tyhart@163.com)



Yuehui Tang 2010.4.17

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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.

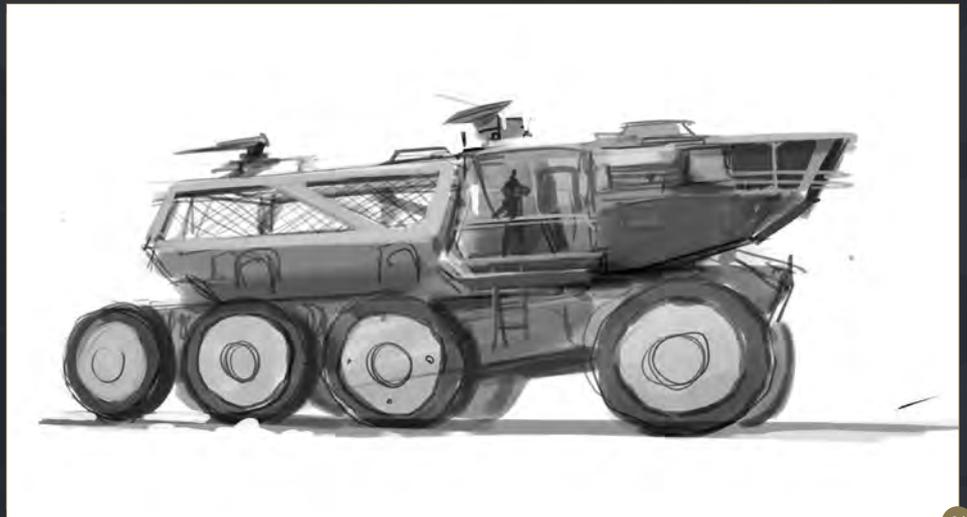
## Concept Art for Games: Part 6 - Accessories

**Software used:** Photoshop

For my second and final chapter in the project, my task is to design a heavy ground transport vehicle to be used on the prison planet Asturia. This would be a vehicle used by prison security forces to patrol the surface, transport personnel, track escaped prisoners etc.

Much like the flying transport vehicle I designed last month, and in keeping with the hostile environment and brutal nature of the prison, I want this vehicle to feel very heavy and rugged. Therefore, I again want function to be the main focus and the vehicle to be very utilitarian.

Instead of drawing with pencil and markers, to speed things along, I'm again using Photoshop and the hard round brush to create my rough sketches.



01

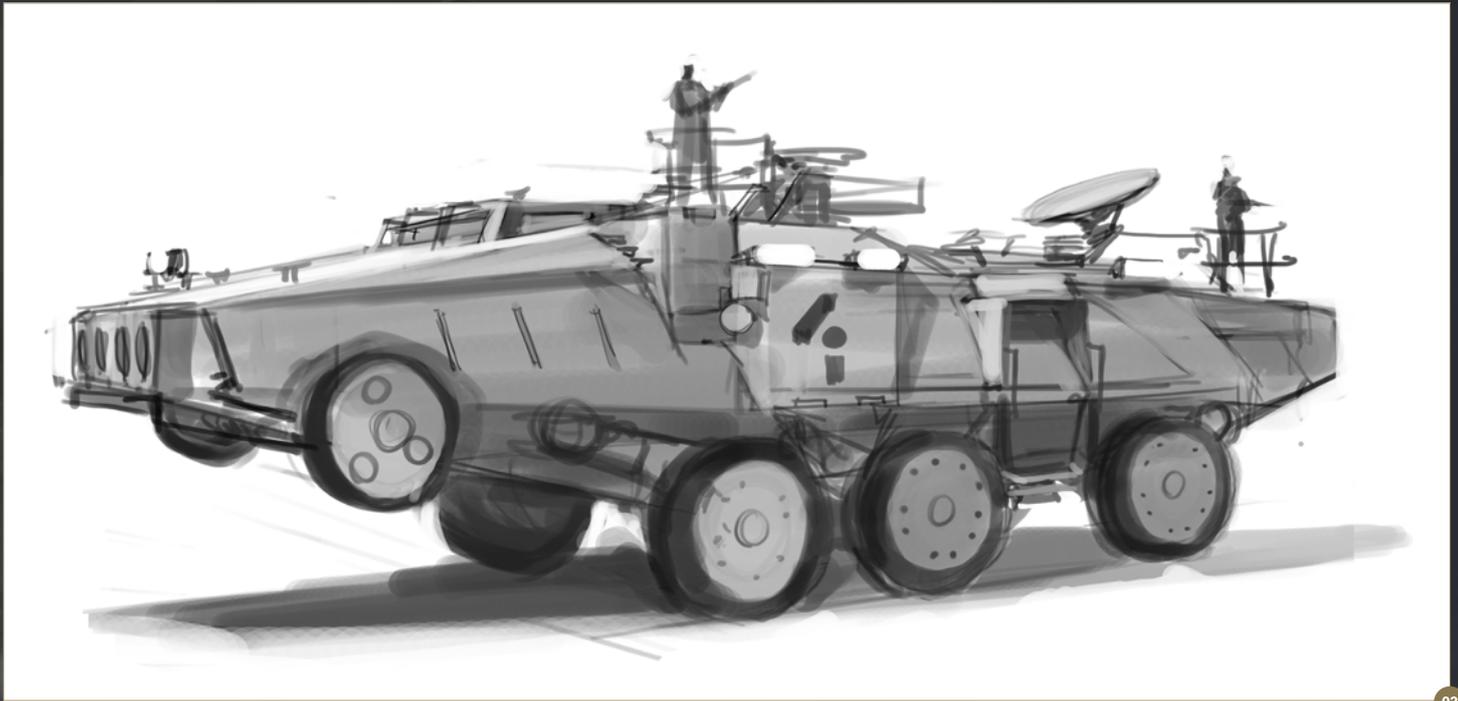
I start out by looking at heavy machinery and sketch this idea of a large tractor-like truck (**Fig.01**). I incorporate a cabin that projects forward to create an interesting overall shape, which is functional as it provides the driver with a clear view of the terrain ahead. In order to secure the escaped prisoners after they are recaptured, I add a large, heavy cage on the back of the vehicle. While the overall design has the

heavy look I am searching for, I feel it is a little too conventional looking and seems more like a piece of agricultural equipment rather than a heavy prison vehicle.

Next I'm thinking about a more unconventional drive system - tracks (**Fig.02**). But to avoid having the design just look like a tank, I make the body of the vehicle taller, boxy and more of



02



03

a classic 70's sci-fi shape. This design has the feel I am looking for - it feels very heavy and would definitely be at home wandering around a hostile planet's surface. However, I start thinking about the speed required to track down the dangerous (and highly motivated) prisoners sent to this high security prison and decide I need something that feels like it could reach higher speeds.

Rather than tanks I start to look at armored transports used by the military. The angled surfaces still have that nice tough feel, and even when I stretch out the shape it still feels heavy, but also looks like it could be fast if needed (Fig.03). I incorporate the triple axle as it adds to the sense of both weight and scale. In a bit of pseudo engineering design I add a small, secondary set of wheels to the front end with the idea that they could help the vehicle's long snout over steep inclines in the terrain.

This, in reality, probably wouldn't help at all but I like the feel of the wheels up there - visually, they break up the shapes a bit more and give the sense that this vehicle has been designed for a specific use and that overrules any consideration of aesthetic.

With the hostile environment the vehicle operates in, it has to be pretty self-sufficient in case it loses contact with the main settlement, so I add all sorts of gear to the top.

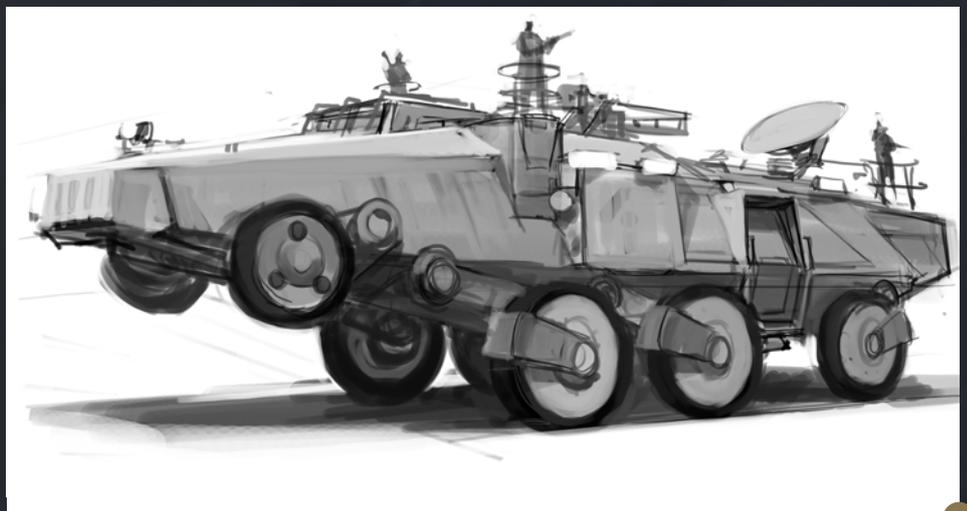
These include a radar dish both because it makes practical sense and because it's a nice distinctive shape to break up the large boxy shape of the vehicle's exterior. I also think it would be interesting to perch guards on top of the vehicle who keep watch up from up there.

At this point I feel Fig.03 has the most interesting shapes and incorporates all the things I want to achieve in my design so I set

about working this up to a finished painting. In Photoshop, I create a large canvas for my painting and since I like the feel and basic angle of the initial sketch, I paste that in and begin drawing over it (Fig.04).

In the final illustration, I want to have a slightly lower angle to give the vehicle a little more scale so I adjust that at this point, drawing into things and tweaking it to achieve the desired perspective.

Next, I jump right into the color by adding a few random sections of sky photos as overlays (Fig.05).



04



05

This quickly establishes value that can be painted into and also defines some of the light early on. I then do an overlay wash to tie the color together and get the muted, desaturated hue I am looking for. This is all done on layers

behind the original sketch which is now on an overlay layer that allows the color of the sky to come through.

Next I start to establish the ground my vehicle will sit on (**Fig.06**). I do this by pasting in photos

of rocky ground at various opacities over the top of each other until the density of texture feels good. I then merge these photo layers together quickly and adjust the color and opacity of the layer until the ground takes on the appropriate



06

hue of the sky and environment. I then start to paint into the ground, creating different sized shapes to both add interest and to reinforce perspective. Behind the truck, I also start to imply the rocky surface of the environment. I find that when designing a vehicle, structure or even a character, portraying whatever it is in a simulated location is very effective at helping people visualize how the final product will look when everything is put together.

At this point I turn my attention back to the vehicle and start to establish the lighting on the surfaces (**Fig.07**). While I want to illustrate the vehicle as a whole, I also want to create areas of interest in the illustration, so I have the front end of the vehicle catching most of the light, while I let the rear of the vehicle fall into shadow where most of its illumination will be from reflected light to be established later. More details are refined at this point such as surface features and the equipment and guards on top of the vehicle.

I continue to tweak the overall color, such as adding some warmth to the light with an overlay (**Fig.08**).



07

At the rear of the vehicle, I add a little red light with a fog around it, which provides some secondary color, and the lighter value allows me to define the silhouette of the vehicle's dimly lit rear. I also add a little more color by painting flecks of warm light coming out of the ground. Perhaps this is lava or something else - it's not really important.

All that counts is the fact that it adds atmosphere and color. More surface detail is established on the vehicle, such as dirt and weathering.

At this point the illustration is well established. The vehicle is relatively well defined, the shapes are all working well and I am pleased with the lighting and color. All that remains for me now is to add a little more detail to accentuate some things, and let others remain undefined and therefore secondary in interest.

I move to the wheels, adding details to their edges to better define them. It seems there could be more focus on the hatch near the rear of the vehicle, so I add a small light to illuminate the area then add details such as railings, steps etc.



08

Considering again the purpose of the vehicle, I add three light strips along the side which are used for illuminating the dim landscape when in search of missing prisoners.

The image is now nearing completion but because I always like trying to incorporate a little narrative to an image, I am unable to resist adding a couple of characters in the foreground doing sci-fi stuff on the surface, while their pals on the vehicle stand watch. I then do one last pass at the values, tweaking the levels to make sure everything is how I want it and the final image is completed and ready for review (Fig.09).

## Craig Sellars

For more from this artist visit:

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

Or contact them at:

[sellarsart@hotmail.com](mailto:sellarsart@hotmail.com)





C. SELLARS

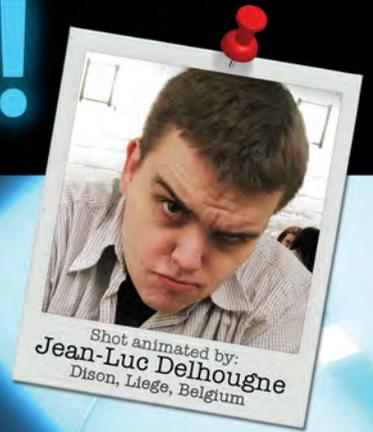


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Portraits are one of the most commonly tackled subjects in all forms of art, but also one of the most common that we see go horribly wrong. In this series our talented artists will be showing us how to use a photo reference to paint an accurate portrait without being tempted to do a paintover. We don't stop there though; we also venture into the specialized field of caricatures. Caricatures are a tricky subject to deal with, but there are ways that you can use your photo reference to make them easier and this series gives us an insight into this process.

# Portraiture

Chapter 02 | Female Caricature | Guillermo Ramírez

## Portraiture - Chapter 02: Female Caricature

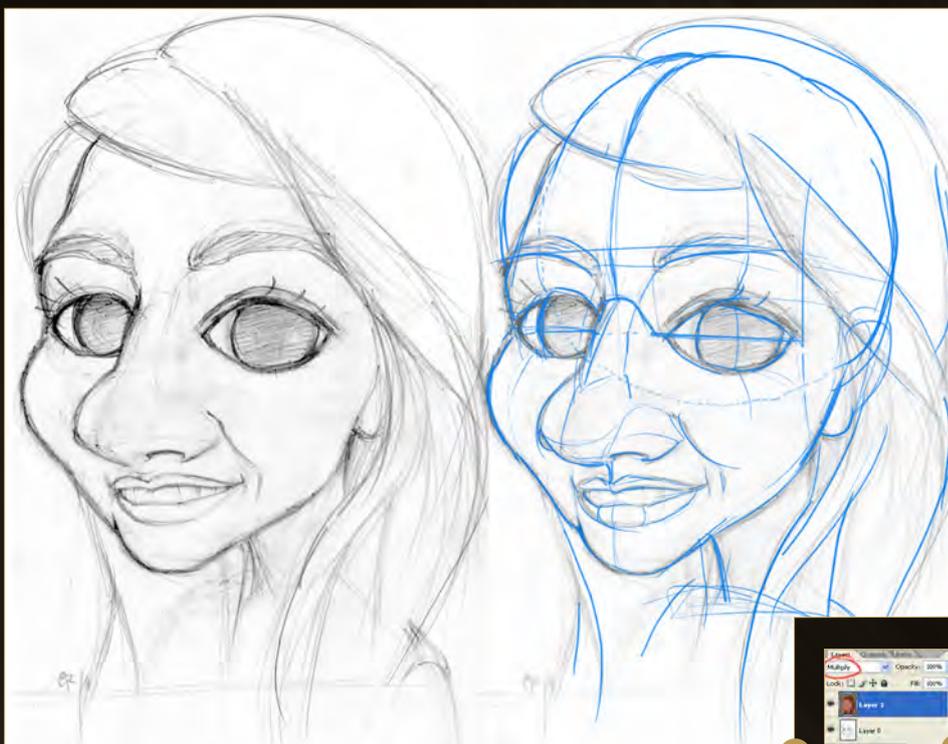
Software used: Photoshop

### Sketch

Normally I start by drawing forms (without detailing facial features) that resemble the characteristic shape of the face that we're going to caricature. Later I draw these forms, concentrating more on the three dimensional shape of the features we are going to accentuate. It is important to emphasize the most obvious features without losing the three-dimensional structure (**Fig.01**).

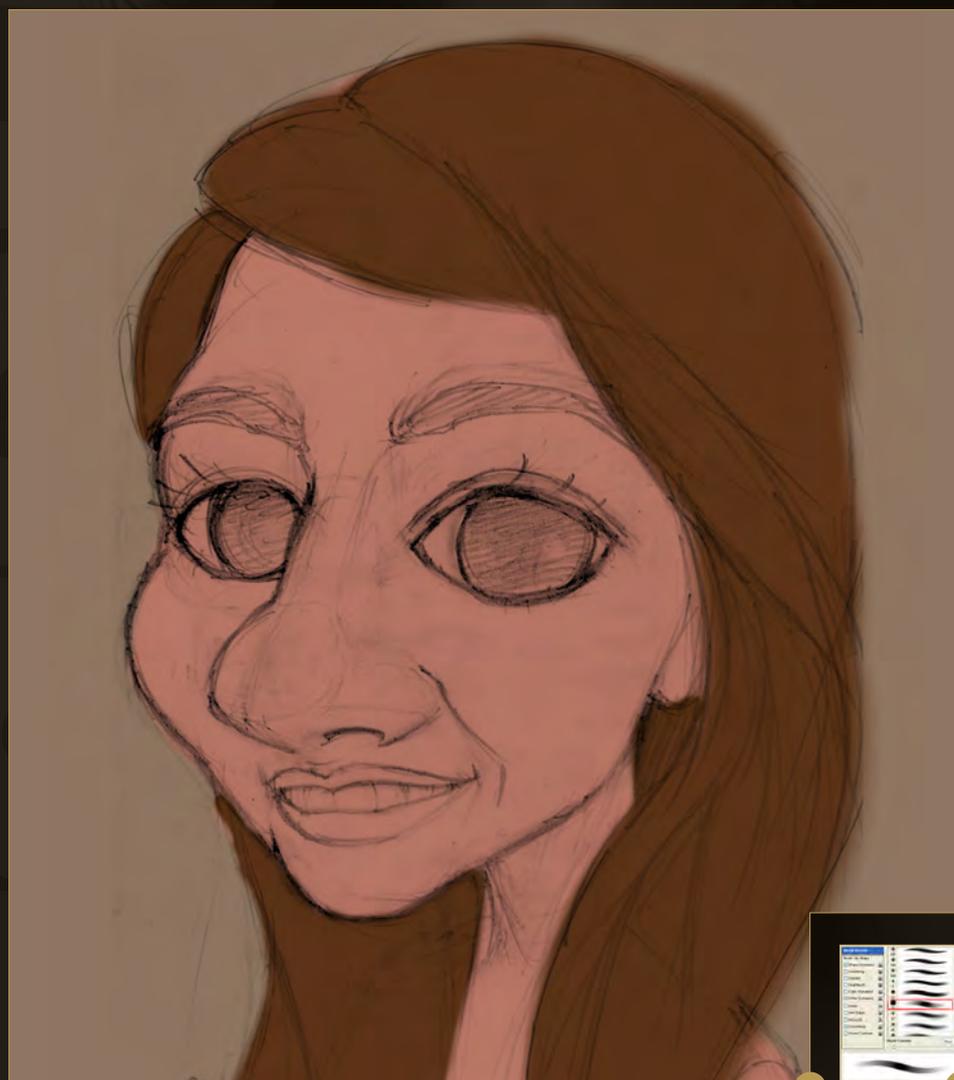
### Base Color

It is time to begin to color the picture. To do this we make a new layer above the layer we



01

02



03

04a

sketched. Set this new layer to Multiply mode (**Fig.02**). The colors that we are going to use in this phase are all neutral colors, which basically means the colors of each area without the lights and the shadows added. Use a Large brush to do this and make it a little blurred. Later we will configure a brush to use to paint the light and shade, but for now simply fill each area (**Fig.03**).

### Shades

Before adding the shade we need to configure our brush. Select the brush that appears in **Fig. 04** and set it in the following way. In Brush Tip Shape the Spacing must be 1% and Shape Dynamics has to be activated with Size Jitter to 0%, controlled by Pen Pressure and the Minimum Diameter should be 70%. Also other Dynamics has to be activated with Opacity Jitter to 0% controlled by Pen Pressure and activate the Smoothing. Set the Flow of the brush to 45% and the Hardness to 50-70%. If you have selected the brush in **Fig.04a** you will only have to change the Spacing, the Flow and the Hardness. As soon as the brush is formed create a layer under the sketch. The layer of the sketch has to be in Multiply mode to allow you to see the shadow. To do the shadows choose

a dark color from the photo reference that you started off with (always have this photo nearby - **Fig.04b**). There is no need to go into detail because later we will paint over all of this. This is only a guide (**Fig.05**).

### Light

Create a new layer above the base colors layer where you should paint the areas of light. The way to paint the lights is the same as in the previous step. The color that I'm using is a pure white, and little by little you can add light to the caricature. Don't worry about how it is going, as this is not at all the final result (**Fig.06**).

### Colors Palette

Now we are going to select the colors that we will paint our caricature with. I usually half-close the eyes whilst looking at the photo to see the main colors, shade, midtone, light and sheens. In a new layer that is placed above everything, paint small samples of the tones of each of the elements of our image. You can see my layers



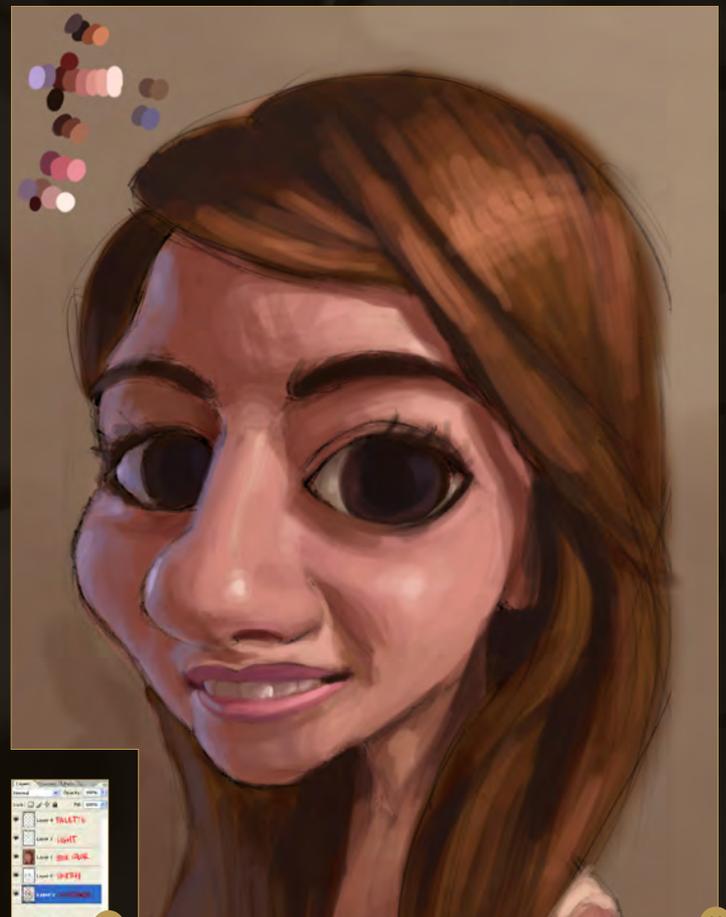
in **Fig.07**. Clearly in our image there are more tones than these few, but for now it's ok.

### Wide Strokes

In a new layer below the palette start adding wide strokes. Don't use the zoom for the time being; you can go into detail later. Paint from dark to light trying to imitate your photograph.

You will quickly see how the caricature changes when you paint it using natural colors.

As I said before, there are colors that we don't have in our palette. For example, the eyes have a lot of similar colors that make look real, so we will select those colors in the photo (**Fig.08**).





09



10

## Detailing the Nose

Now that we have a color sketch, it is the time to start adding details. Zoom into the area you are focusing on to paint it in detail. I usually start with the nose, and begin to paint following the guidelines of the lights and shadows painted in the previous step.

You can even add the pores on the nose to give the caricature a realistic appearance. I recommend using the keyboard shortcuts to increase and decrease the diameter of the brush. Up to this point we have worked with wide brush strokes; that is because if we started to detail from the beginning, we risked losing the union of the elements and our caricature would be divided into parts, losing realism (Fig.09).

## Detailing the Mouth

After completing the nose, I would then suggest moving on the mouth. Refining this feature adds a lot of realism to the caricature. When painting



11

the mouth be careful to start from the mouth out to the lips, as it is easier and cleaner than if you paint the lips first and then the mouth interior.

Teeth reflect a lot of light, so you have to take this into account when painting. In the case of this photo we have two light sources of different colors and the lips, which give a pink tint to the teeth (Fig.10).

## Detailing the Eyes

When you have done this detail the eyes. As when we made the mouth, paint the eyes from the inside out. The eyeball is a bit like a crystal ball - try to show that effect with reflections and sheens.

Also at this point you can move on to the cheeks, forehead and eyebrows that had been sketched out. When it comes to doing the eyelashes, create a new layer just above the layer you have been working on. This way you can make the lashes without worrying about spoiling the rest. Lower the minimum diameter of the brush to 0% and start from the eyelid out, pressing the pen on the base and painting out towards the end of the eyelash (Fig.11). Then finish the neck and shoulders in the same way we've done everything else (Fig.12).

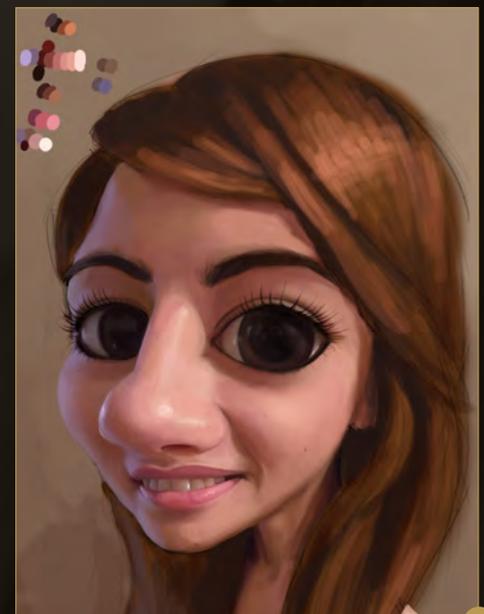
## Hair and Finishing Touches

To do the hair, create a new layer above the eyelashes layer to work comfortably. This time lower the Minimal Diameter of the brush to 10%.

Start with the darkest colors of the hair, painting in wide strokes, and then move on to the lighter colors. Lower the diameter of the brush little by little so that it makes the hair look natural. When we have done this you can paint random hairs to get a more realistic look.

Now define the background a little and add the finishing touches while looking for errors. For example, in this case I decided to slightly change the eyes and cheekbones using the Liquify tool. This helps us with small adjustments. We would have to redo the area if the error was bigger. When you have done the last adjustments the work is finished and you just need to sign it (Fig.13).

I hope you liked this tutorial!



12

## Guillermo Ramírez

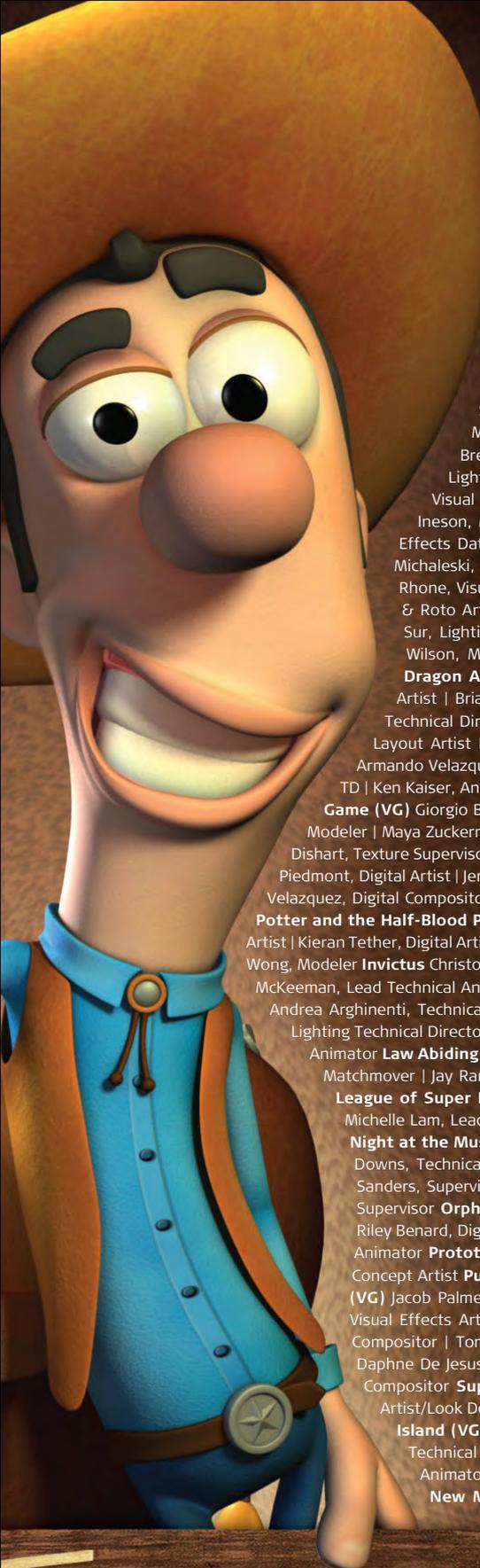
For more from this artist visit:

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VFS student work by Thiago Martins

# PAINTING CREATURES FROM FOLKLORE



Fantasy plays a huge part in digital art. It influences thousands of artists from around the world and has become a large part of the film and gaming industry. So much of what we see within this genre is drawn from fairy tales and folklore. In this tutorial series our artists will be showing us how to research creatures from folklore and use this gathered information to create an original and accurate depiction of these fantasy characters.

Chapter 1: September Issue 57 | Goblin | Andrei Pervukhin

Chapter 2: October Issue 58 | Fairy | Nikolai Aleksander

Chapter 3: November Issue 59 | Siren | Min Yum

**Chapter 4: This Issue | Ogre | Richard Tilbury**

Chapter 5: Next Issue | Troll | Simon Dominic Brewer

## Painting Creatures From Folklore: Chapter 04 - Ogre

Software used: Photoshop

### Introduction

An ogre is described in literature as a humanoid monster that is large, hideous and preys on human beings. They often have a large head and strong body, appear hairy, and are disgusting, brutal and closely related to trolls. The word "ogre" has its origin in French but they have featured in mythology, folklore and fiction alike.

When you research the topic you discover a broad range of depictions from various cultures and time periods, all of which look very different. I knew that my version should look hideous and although I imagined him to be a creature to fear, I also felt he should be somewhat unintelligent – more brawn than brains, so to speak.

### Thumbnail Sketches

I had a vision in my mind of a monster that should certainly look frightening and have giant proportions, but I could not picture his face which was the crucial aspect in portraying his character. As a result I decided to create some thumbnail sketches to explore his appearance.



**Fig.01** shows a series of grayscale portraits done using a Standard Hard Round brush. The notion that ogres are meant to feed on humans was a trait that struck me as their most fearsome aspect and so I drew some faces with their mouths open. A gaping mouth showing a set of gnarled teeth seemed appropriate to emphasize their cruel intent. As mentioned earlier, ogres have also been described as being hairy and so I added a beard to several versions.

Having reviewed each of them I decided that version 1 reminded me of Rasputin and so was not suitable. I liked his eyes and furrowed brow but, ultimately, he looked too human. Numbers 2 and 3 had less human proportions but seemed too stylized, almost leaning towards cartoons. In

contrast, versions 5 and 6 looked more realistic, but had a distinct caveman quality which wasn't what I was after.

Although sketch 1 was not really along the right lines I actually liked the mouth partly open and so did a couple of variations on this. I liked the small eyes in version 4 but his face looked somehow kinder than some of the other versions. His features looked softer by comparison and almost evoked the quality of a gentle giant. I decided to make the face overtly asymmetrical and with more distorted features (7). This sketch certainly seemed to encapsulate a quality I was after and was the version I decided to settle on.

### Blocking In

With the decision made on which face to use I started to block in a rough composition. At this stage I was unsure about what I was going to paint, but I imagined the ogre emerging from the shadows towards an unsuspecting foreground character. To have him creeping up on a potential victim was a way of injecting a sense of tension into the image and helping the viewer feel a sense of danger.

**Fig.02** shows the initial stages in which the ogre is set within a dark backdrop. I considered having him inside a building or house but then felt he should be much larger. I thought about predatory animals such as tigers and lions and how they stalk humans who have ventured from





settlements and villages. This gave me the idea of a creature that would wait within the cover of a forest and snatch anyone straying too near the tree line. In this way I could keep him partly concealed in shadows.

I added in some trees using a couple of custom brushes, which you can see in **Fig.03**. I used a variation of the same brush to paint both the trunks and the foliage.

Using the same brush I started to add in some definition to the foreground as well as adding some volume to the trunks (**Fig.04**).

## Adding Color

I added another layer that would be used as the initial color scheme. This layer is set to Overlay blending mode, which means whatever color is applied maintains the tonal range of the layer below. **Fig.05** shows the color layer set to Normal mode in the bottom left and the resultant effect when it is set to Overlay (main image). I started to paint some detail into the ogre's face as well as also adding a goat into the foreground, which would become the focus of his attention and also a focal point in the scene (**Fig.06**).



At this stage the face now looked a little too bright compared to the previous version; however I knew I could tone this down later and so I deliberately left the ogre on a separate layer.

## Composition

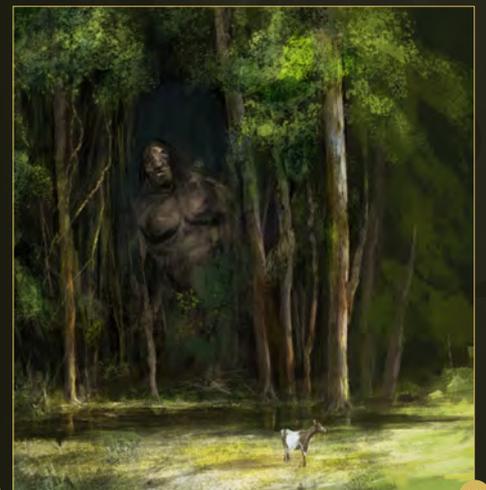
The ogre was very central in the composition and so needed to be addressed as the distance either side of his head was similar with respect to the canvas boundary. This doesn't make for a particularly dynamic composition and so I opted to extend the canvas as opposed to moving the character. I added a section down the right hand edge as I preferred the idea of more space devoted to the forest.



**Fig.07** shows the newly altered composition with the ogre occupying a more balanced position in the frame. I also decided to make the darker band in front of the forest into a pond or area of flood water. It made an interesting feature that separated the forest from the foreground.

The next stage was to re-scale the ogre and integrate him into the background. **Fig.08** shows his new position. I experimented by having him leaning out behind some cover, watching the goat, possibly waiting to rush out and grab it!

The smaller scale certainly helped the composition, but his leaning posture looked a little awkward. I tried having him stand upright,



but with a slight tilt of his head to suggest he is tracking the movement of the goat (Fig.09). This seemed like a much more satisfactory solution, although having referred once again to my thumbnails I realised his face was losing some of the qualities I liked in version 7. Using this as a guide I re-painted the features to make them match more closely.

At this stage I had only three layers in my PSD file: the goat, the ogre and the rest of the scene. I wanted to add warmth to the sunlight that was falling across the foreground section and so I first duplicated the scene layer and then went to Image > Adjustments > Color Balance and increased the red and yellow values by around +14 (Fig.10).

I then used the Eraser tool to restrict the warmer values to the foreground and to the tree trunks, which can be compared in Fig.08 – Fig.09.

## Adjustment Layers

Although the ogre is sheltered by the forest I thought it would add drama to have some dappled sunlight cast across his body through the tree canopy. To do this I created two new adjustment layers: Curves and Color Balance.



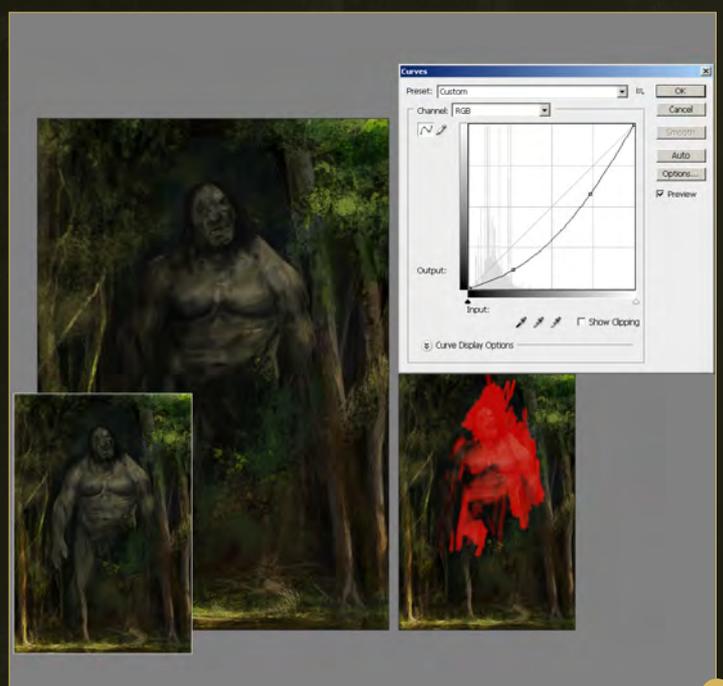
09

The Curves adjustment layer was used to add a shadow to the left side of the character, which faces away from the light. In Fig.11 you can see the ogre before this is applied in the bottom left

(inset). On the right you can see the Curves adjustment and the mask below this (in red), which restricts the shadow to the left side of his torso and arm.



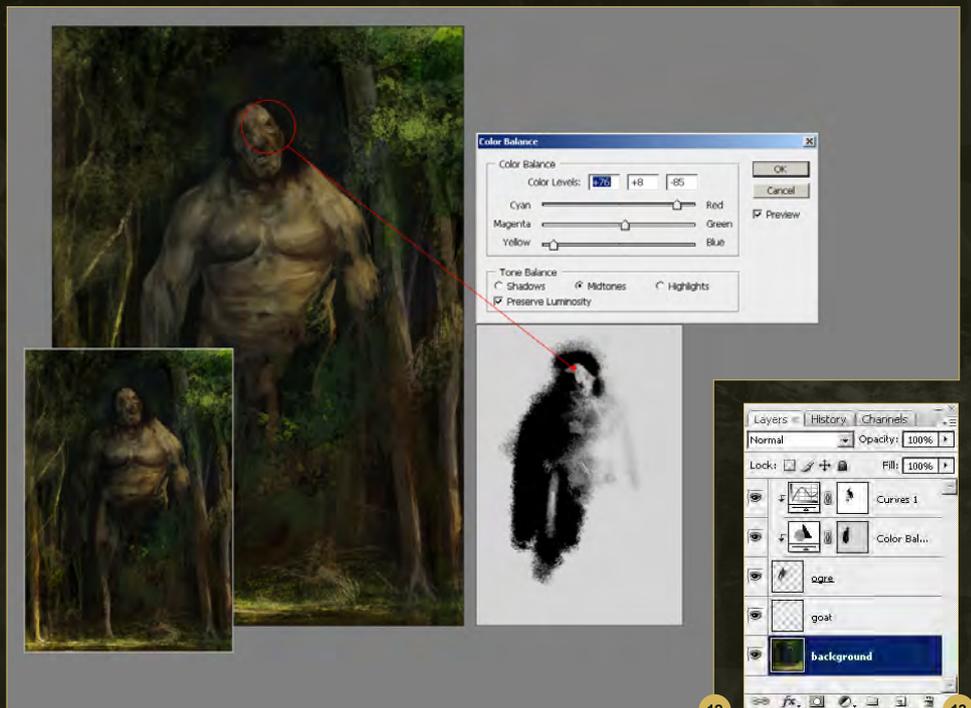
10



11

The Curves adjustment is used to darken the entire character and then, by using black to paint into the mask (red area), it is possible to control which parts of the image are left unaffected.

The Color Balance adjustment layer is used to create the warm sunlight cast across his body (Fig.12). Here you can see that the ogre has been color tinted with more yellow and red and a slight amount of green (+8). The grayscale image shows the Layer Mask with the black areas being used to add to the mask and thus hide the color adjustment. You will notice that the area of white on the right side of the face reveals the mask and creates a highlight (ringed in red). The final result of both layers can be seen in the lower left (inset).



12

13



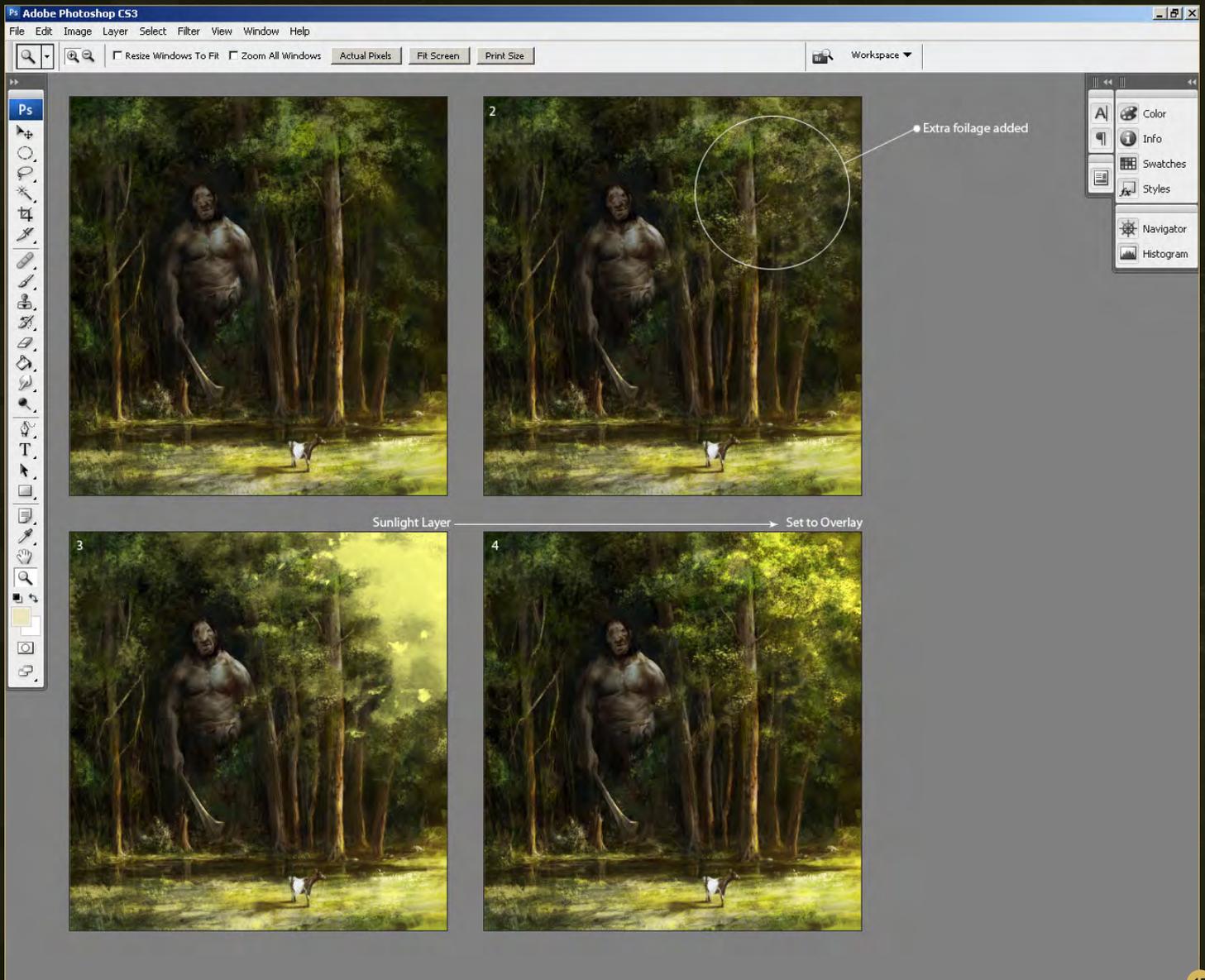
The Layer structure now looks like Fig.13 with the two adjustment layers at the top of the palette.

## Final Refinements

I wanted the ogre to look imposing and have a powerful stature, but I was starting to see a resemblance to the Hulk and so scaled his waist and shoulders in a bit. I used Image > Adjustments > Color Balance to cool down the color by adding some blue and green to reflect the forest shade (Fig.14). I then duplicated the character layer, added some highlights across his right shoulder (1) and also darkened his left side (2). I finished by using a Soft Eraser to bring back some subtle highlights down his left arm (3).

I wanted the forest to appear denser and so added some extra leaves along the right hand side of the image (see image 2 in Fig.15). This helped make the clearing where the ogre is situated appear more like a cave entrance. To help make this area recede further into the picture plane I painted in a new layer to represent sunlight streaming across from the upper right. Image 3 shows the layer set to Normal Blending mode using a lemon yellow

14

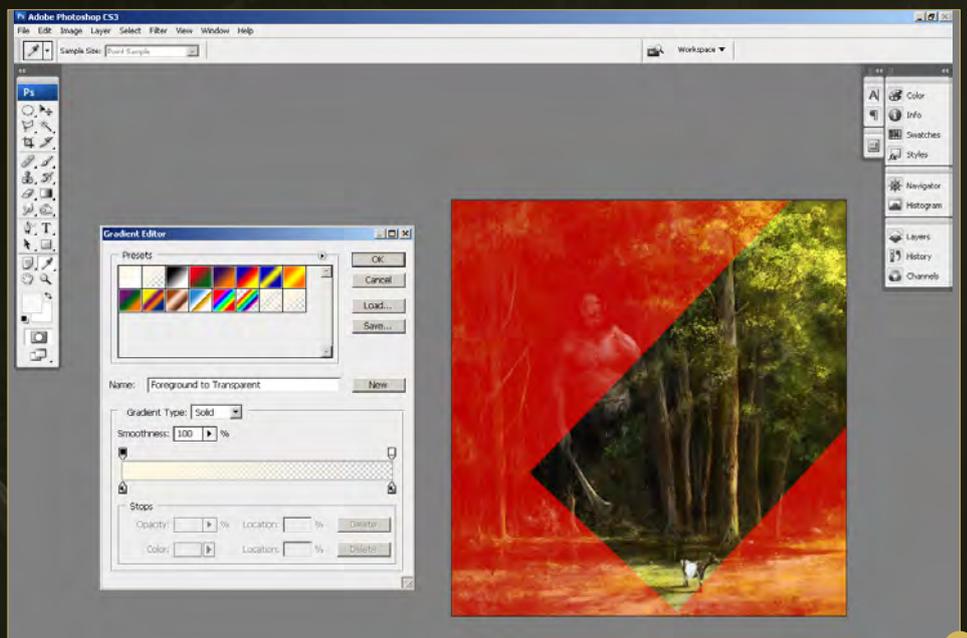


15

and then the consequent result when set to Overlay (image 4).

Once I had added some sunlight catching the canopy in the upper right, I imagined some beams of light falling onto the foreground. To create these I made a rectangular selection area that stretched from the upper right towards the goat (see Fig.16). Once done I changed the foreground color to a pale yellow 6and then applied a Foreground to Transparent Gradient, dragging from the upper right down.

I then used a Soft Eraser to create some streaks and break up the consistency somewhat. Here is the finished version (Fig.17).



16

## Richard Tilbury

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# CHARACTER CREATION: FINISHING TOUCHES

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# SCI FI

## 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 04: Underground Corridor | October 2010

Chapter 02: Egyptian Sci-Fi Scene | August 2010

Chapter 05: Underwater City | November 2010

Chapter 03: Night-Time Sci-Fi City Battle | September 2010

Chapter 06: Sci-Fi Ruins | December 2010



01a

### Custom Brushes For Sci-Fi Chapter 6 - Sci-Fi Ruins

**Software used:** Photoshop

I used Google SketchUp in the beginning to get my basic layout and to set my starting viewpoint (**Fig.01a**). By using basic 3D shapes I designed the main structures and added shadows to the scene. I'm no 3D expert, but this program definitely makes it easier to plan your scene.

Here I throw a warm tone over the image (**Fig.1b**). This is to start moving the lighting in more of a moody, dramatic direction.

On a new layer, I start roughing in some elements such as trees (**Fig.02**) and also begin to concentrate on the foreground and middle ground detail. You will notice that I am still keeping things very loose at this point.

I start to bring in some greens to help balance out the orange (**Fig.03**), as well as continuing to sketch shapes. You will notice that I have introduced some custom brushes to the right of the scene.



01b



02



At this stage, as in most images that I do, I play around with different lighting and mood scenarios (**Fig.04**). Here I try for a night feel, or a kind of twilight effect. However I decide that it just isn't creepy enough, and go back to the greens and browns.

Not only do I revert back to the original color scheme, but I desaturate it a little as well (**Fig.05a**). It's important at this point to ease the color saturation, as it will be easier to control the image and not get "distracted" by color, which is why I stress to students the need to really understand values (light and darks). For example, it's darker at the front of the image, as objects are closer, and lighter in background because things are further in the distance.

There's an old saying in art: "Value does all the work; color takes all the credit." Words for artists to live by!



Here I outfit the center of the image with more alien-looking elements, done with custom brush work (**Fig.5b**). Then, by going into some of my other images and cutting out "parts", I scatter them here and there. As long as you make something new out of it, I'm totally ok with scavenging previous artwork from my personal stash!





Before I start getting into more brush work, I want to bring in photographic element of other plants, to help me with shape and color ideas (Fig.06). I use some fern references, as those already have an alien-like quality to them. I continue to rough in more elements and tweak the composition (Fig.07). At this point I'm really "dirty-ing" the scene up. I really want that abandoned look, so I add rock and dirty-looking textures. I do this by finding an image, bringing it into the scene, and setting the layer blending mode to Overlay. Now to the main part of this tutorial: custom brush work! Creating a brush is a fairly simple task; it's what you do with it and how you use it that makes it effective. When making a brush you need to come up with a



05b

black graphic. It can be simple or complicated, but in the case of the plant life in this scene we'll keep it simple (Fig.08a). Next fade the edges, as that adds a little bit of depth to the brush, which you'll realize is very important when using

your brush in the image (Fig.08b).

Next crop it as close as you can to the graphic.

06

Then go to the Define Brush Preset menu (Fig.08c) and name it whatever you want, and that's it!



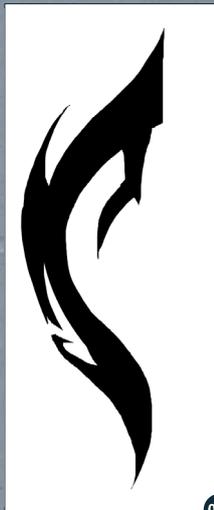
07

Now the brush has been made, it is ready to be edited, as shown in **Fig.08d**.

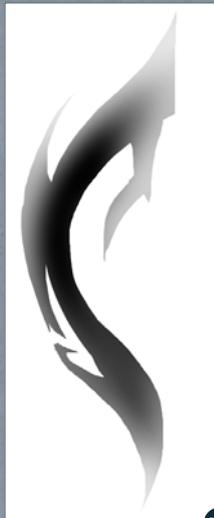
So, in your brush palette, under Shape Dynamics, set the angle jitter to Direction and make sure Other Dynamics is set to Pen Pressure. By doing these two things, your brush will go in the "direction" your pen goes, and the brush will have pressure sensitivity. And that's how you get that fern-like element when designing your plants.

Now your brush doesn't have to look like the leaf of a plant, or anything like the object you want to paint really. In fact it shouldn't! For example, look at **Fig.09**. The top three brush designs are quick figure silhouettes done in a life drawing class.

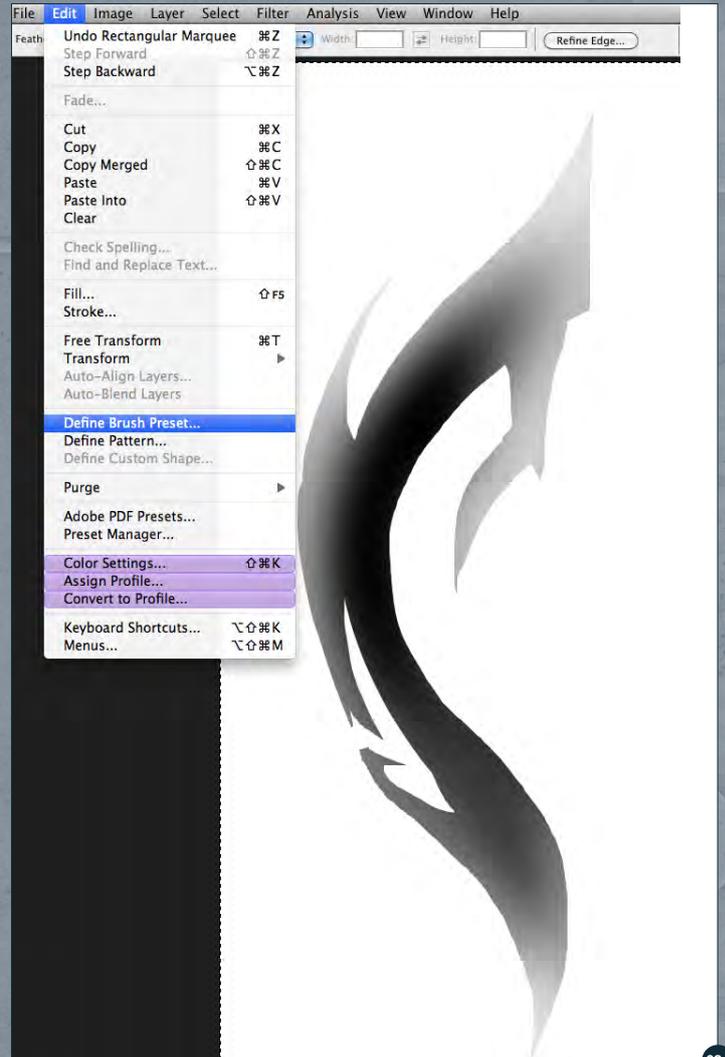
The other "graphics" are just abstract; sharp and pointy shapes that can lend themselves to plants. So have fun with your brush designs and always remember to keep tweaking them in your brush palette. It's amazing how many different brushes you can get out of one graphic just by changing shape dynamics, dual brush and spacing, all within your brush palette.



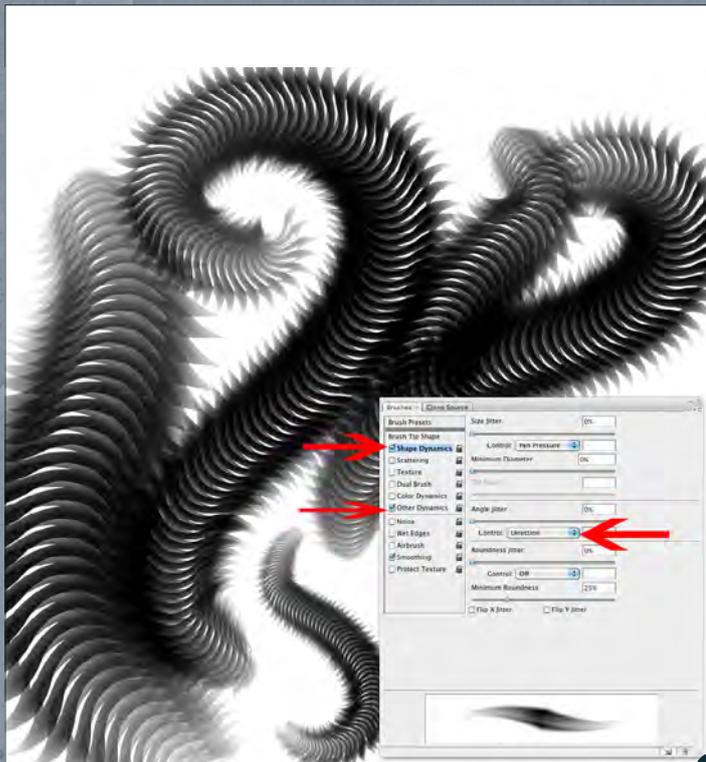
08a



08b



08c



08d



09



In these close-ups (**Fig.10a**), you can see some of the custom brush work I am painting over itself and the photography. I also add some small glowing forms, such as the blue orbs on the left. In (**Fig.10b-10c**) there is more of the same thing. In some areas I let the photography show a little more, in others the custom brush work. I do this to try to keep an overall balance to the image. Sometimes when you work up close for too long and pull out, you realize that you either have to bring the entire image up to that level, or start erasing!

For some final adjustments I push some elements back and bring some forward, all in order to make sure that the depth reads clearly. Most importantly I keep the attention on the plant-life itself. Now go make some crazy custom brush alien plants! (**Fig.11**).

10a



## Alex Ruiz

For more from this artist visit:

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

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10b



10c







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Image by Craig Sellars



**“I constantly flip my images horizontally back and forth throughout the entire painting process. It helps me get a fresh look at my image and reveals any flaws or imbalances.”**

Many of you will remember “Discovering a Muse”, the fantastic image by Liam Peters from our 2DArtist gallery in July. Well Liam gives us a great insight into his general creation process in this month’s Making Of, and shows us a great way of incorporating photo textures into our images

# DISCOVERING A MUSE

MAKING OF BY LIAM PETERS

## Making of Discovering a Muse

Software Used: Photoshop

### Objective

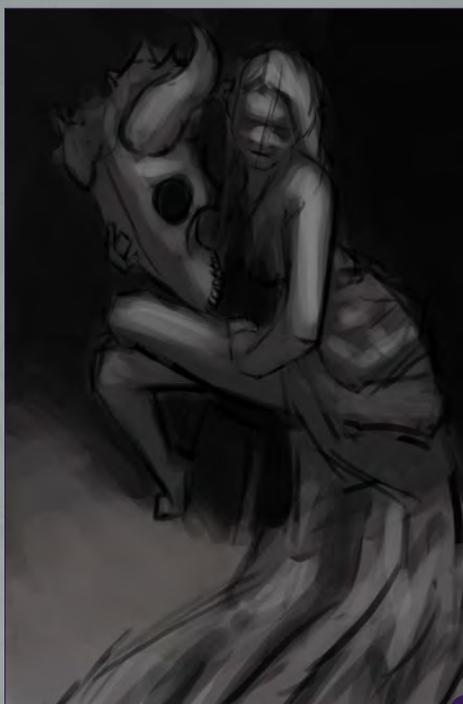
Muse was created for a competition called "Discover a Muse". The brief for the competition was to use the model Veronika Kotlajic as a reference or inspiration, and create an image that embodies the terms strong, independent, and sexy. Firstly, I decided I wanted to use a costume concept from an old painting I did a year ago called "Violet" (Fig.01). I figured this competition would be a good opportunity to reinvent this image in a new light and with a much improved skill set.

### Concept & Composition

In adapting my old painting within the boundaries of the competition brief, I wanted to create a new pose and also show her face so we could see some resemblance to the model. I really liked the dress and the mask from my original work, so I was after a pose and perspective that would show off the costume whilst maintaining the sense of strength and sex appeal. The dress was inspired by old Victorian-style dresses with the full skirts and flounces. I exposed her legs and kept the fabric long and



01



02a



02b

flowing down the back, almost like a tail. It's a little more contemporary with a slight burlesque feel to it, which I think fit well within the brief. I thought the addition of a skull or mask would help convey dominance, strength and give off the impression of an alpha female.

The first step was to sketch out a couple of quick drafts to explore the themes I needed to communicate in the painting (Fig.2a – 2b). I decided to go with the first sketch (Fig.2a) because it had a good balance of all the elements I wanted and also incorporated the mask more so than the second draft. The



downward perspective was more interesting to me, showed off the flowing design of the dress and gave me adequate room to show her face. The arm posture reminded me of strength and impatience while crossed bare legs illustrated her allure. I also liked the downward spotlight lighting because it isolated the main character by cutting down on distraction from too much background detail.

## Refining the Composition

Once my composition was planned out, I drew up a refined line drawing of the main subjects. Afterwards, I went ahead and blocked in the color scheme and the lighting (Fig.03 – 04). At this point I knew that I wanted her dress to remain a deep purple color with a slight satin feel. The purple hue was chosen because it originally reminded me of a bright threat



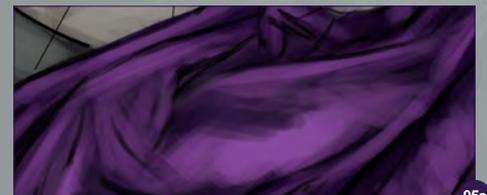
display; similar to various poisonous animals that warn off danger (fitting I thought). Her skin was initially intended to be pale, but since she was positioned amongst cooler surroundings, a warmer skin tone broke up the color temperatures nicely. The flooring was made out of stone consisting of a light green and brown to complement the dominant colors and serve as an afterthought to the main focus of the image.

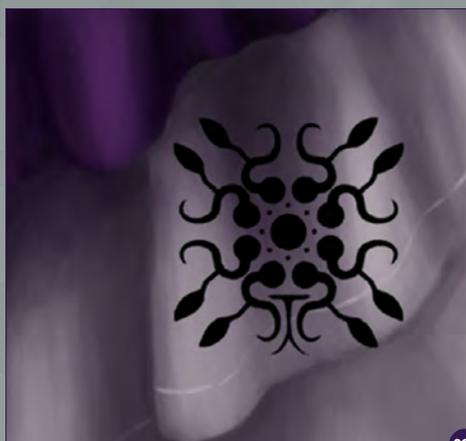
## Technique & Finer Details

As a general rule for myself, I constantly flip my images horizontally back and forth throughout the entire painting process. It helps me get a fresh look at my image and reveals any flaws or imbalances that may show up.

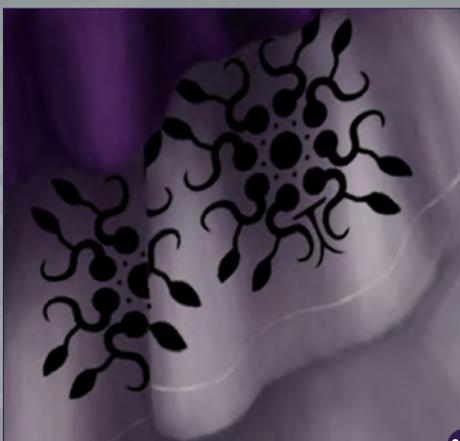
So from here on out I focused on blending the colors and refining the rest of the details.

Because I wanted the fabric to have a slightly thicker feel than silk, I blended the shades of the folds (Fig.05a – 05b) using a basic Hard brush with varying levels of Opacity. For the intricate details on the white flounces I designed a custom pattern. Next, I copied and placed my new pattern into the positions that I wanted along the fabric. Using the different Transform

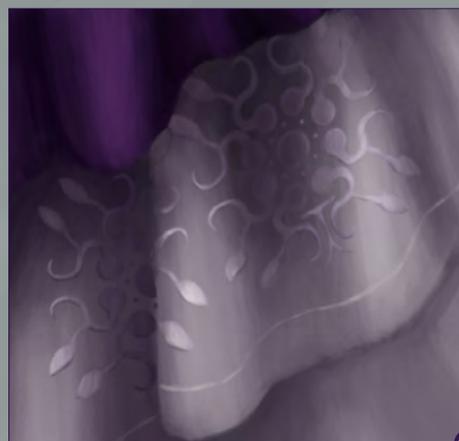




06a



06b



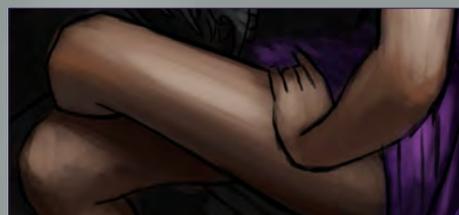
06c

tools I experimented with shaping and cutting the design in accordance to the lay of the material. Next I merged all of the separate patterns onto one layer and then made a Clipping Mask layer above it. With the Clipping Mask, it was easier to paint within the designs and blend them in with the folds and shadows of the frills (Fig.06a – 06c).

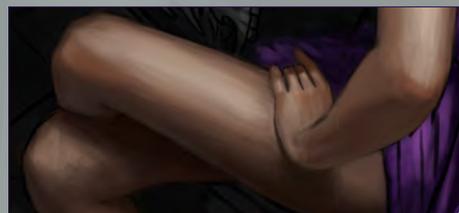
In Fig.07a – 07c you can see how I continued to blend and refine the skin with the Hard-edge brush with different levels of Opacity. As a final step to blend in the flesh tones I went back over the skin with a Soft brush at a low Opacity to further smooth out my paint strokes. I'm careful not to overuse the Soft brush because I find it sometimes make things appear too plastic-like or fake.

My intention for the mask was to create a balance against the vivid dress. I created some bold circular shapes to help it stand out against the darker background and to create some unity within the design. I also used nice bold highlights to draw the eye upwards into the darkness of the painting (Fig.08a – 08c).

For the floor, I gathered some photo textures of cracked concrete and stone and made some simple texture brushes. Using a Multiply layer and some trial and error, I started applying texture and then erased some areas to break up the repeating cookie-cutter effect. Because adding the texture darkened things a bit, I used an Overlay layer to revitalize the green and brown color and then, using a Screen layer, I reapplied the general lighting. Afterwards it was



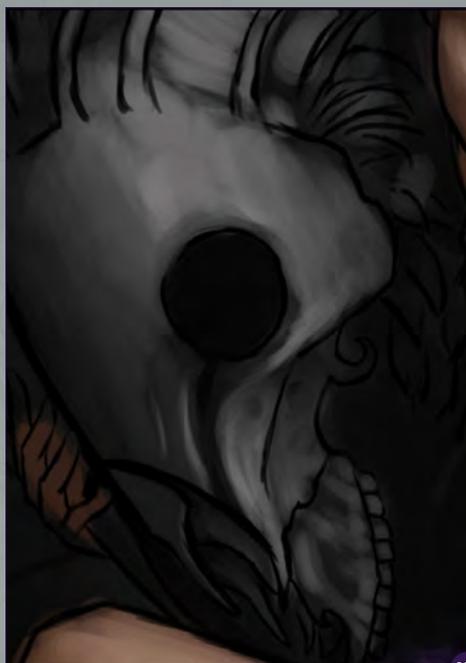
07a



07b



07c



08a



08b



08c

just a matter of smoothing things out following what I had already painted as a guide. As a final step, I reapplied some more texture with lower Opacity to add that finer detail and then a little more painting on top again to avoid that slapped on texture look (Fig.09a – 09e).

## Final Touch Ups

Before I finished up, I made sure to apply all of the final highlights. The next stage for me involved a lot of experimentation, basically trying anything that could help enhance the final image as a whole, including Multiply layers, adjusting levels, Color Balance and Contrast. One of my final touches, for example, was to use a Multiply layer and a Soft brush with low Opacity to darken the rims of the painting to further accentuate the lighting of the piece (Fig.10).

## Reflection

Overall, I was quite happy with how this piece turned out. As a general rule, I try to incorporate things I have never done before in each of my paintings. In this particular artwork, I had never attempted stone or this perspective and as always, fabric and the human figure are a big challenge for me. However, having been self-taught, it's nice to see that my constant practice has paid off over the last year in comparing the final product (Fig.10) to my original (Fig.01).

## Liam Peters

For more from this artist visit:  
<http://liampeters.blogspot.com/>  
 or contact them at:  
[petersliam@hotmail.com](mailto:petersliam@hotmail.com)



09a



09b



09c



09d



09e



09f



# DIGITAL ART MASTERS VOLUME 5



With the release of 3DTotal's book, *Digital Art Masters: Volume 5*, 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:  
**"SECRET AGENT"**  
BY CHASE STONE



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



## STANDOFF

BY CHASE STONE  
JOB TITLE: Concept Artist  
SOFTWARE USED: Photoshop

**INTRODUCTION**  
This image was done in response to a challenge hosted by CGSociety, the theme being "Secret Agent." I had a pretty tough time coming up with an idea at first; my initial concepts just didn't feel iconic enough. Eventually I decided to go with a classic James Bond-inspired scene, complete with Soviets, suits, silencers, an evil mastermind (a rogue, ex-Soviet general) and a plot to destroy the world. A little over the top, yes, but it felt right.

A lot of espionage images logically tend to focus on the agent, or even more so on the agent in a sticky situation. It's fun and engaging because the viewer has to wonder how the hero is going to save himself, or instead if he can save himself at all. After roughing out this sketch (Fig. 01), I found that it might be more fun to flip that notion around and focus on the bad guy, and to illustrate the bad guy having been defeated. I figured that if I could really nail the emotion on his face during this life-changing moment then this could end up being a special image.

**CREATING THE IMAGE**  
With this piece I basically used only one brush, called the Chalk brush (Fig. 02). It's one of the Photoshop defaults,

I WANTED THE ROGUE GENERAL TO BE THE FOCAL POINT, SO I BROUGHT THE "CAMERA" IN AND SHIFTED IT OVER TO THE RIGHT, WHICH CENTERED HIM IN THE FRAME.



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SCENES

but in this case with Shape Dynamics disabled and Pen Pressure turned on. Usually I try to use a variety of default custom brushes but for some reason I got stuck on this one and painted virtually everything with it.

My initial sketch was only meant to get the essence of my ideas down on paper. My second sketch (Fig. 03) was a bit more refined, and focused more on composition. I wanted the rogue general to be the focal point, so I brought the "camera" in and shifted it over to the right, which centered him in the frame. I also decided to drop a spotlight right in between the two characters that would draw attention to the general by illuminating his face and take attention away from the agent, who would be silhouetted.

**BACKGROUND**  
Here's a quick rundown of some of the background elements. The first step was working out the perspective (Fig. 04). When I created Standoff, I was still learning this subject so this stage was probably the toughest part

for me, but also the one that I learned the most from. Here you can see the horizon line (blue line), one of the vanishing points (yellow dot – the other VP is way off to the curves to the right; I just approximated their locations) and the human perspective (red lines). The faint white lines emanating from each vanishing point served as loose guides throughout the painting process.

I DECIDED EARLY ON THAT HIS EXPRESSION SHOULD BE SUBTLE, SO NO ANGRY TEETH OR OVER-CONFIDENT MUSTACHE TWIRLING.

I created all the little screens for training the desk monitors separately in another document, and then pasted them in and used the Transform > Skew tool to adjust their perspective. The background was being way too simplistic and boring, so I decided to place the monitors at an angle to add a little variety. This meant finding another vanishing point directly above the first and having the orthogonals correspond to it (Fig. 05).

The map (Fig. 06) was done much the same way, created in a separate document and then skewed into the correct position.

**CHARACTERS**  
I painted all of the characters with more or less the same basic process, so I'm just going to talk about the most important one (the general) in detail.

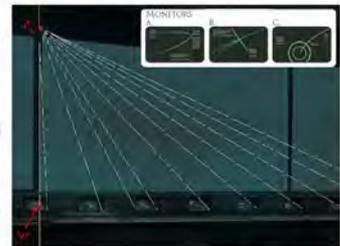
First and foremost, I had to decide what kind of emotion the general would be conveying, for me this was the most important part of the whole project. I decided early on that his expression should be subtle, so no angry teeth baring



or over-confident mustache twirling. I finally settled on cold defiance, which I felt would speak volumes about his character, given his predicament.

Using the Chalk brush at about 10-15 pixels, I started out with broad strokes, making sure the size and proportions were correct (Fig. 07a). I may have spent the most time on this stage because even when it's rough one can still sense the type of emotion, and I had to get that definite look right from the beginning. It took some trial and error, but it finally started to come together.

During the next phase I skinned the brush to about 7 pixels, sampled a darker gray, and started refining the shadows (Fig. 07b). I then did the same for the highlights,



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SCENES

taking special care to get the highlight on the left (our left) of his face just right (Fig. 87c). I always try to apply these stages on their own layers simply because I tend to overdo things so it's helpful being able to use the Eraser tool. Once the face was really starting to come together, I zoomed in and shrank the brush down to about 2 pixels, and hatched in the details.



The color (Fig. 87d) was the final and easiest step, because it consisted mostly of just laying in flat colors on a layer set to Multiply. One thing to keep in mind about painting on a Multiply layer is that it tends to darken your values, since the whites don't stay white but instead adopt the color you're laying down. So, after working on this layer I painted directly on top of it in a normal



layer to pump up the highlights. Because the general was supposed to be the focal point, I gave the spotlight above him a warm hue to contrast with the cool blues and greens of the rest of the image.

Fig. 88a - it is another example of how I go about painting my figures, again similar to the way I painted the general's face. I start by roughing in using black and white, refining darks, lights, details, and then finally adding color. The only difference with these guys was that I actually had some direct reference material to work from with myself as the model. I didn't feel the need to invent their faces, so the two dead guys ended up almost like self-portraits.

**CONCLUSION**  
In the end the image worked out well; I accomplished what I set out to do and everything else fell more or less into place. If I'd had more time to work on it I might have added more character and variety to the background, but other than that this image became something that I'm proud to have in my portfolio, and that's the most important thing.

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: VOLUME 5

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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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