

# 3d artist

Concept Art, Digital & Matte Painting  
Magazine - Issue 063 March 2011



## Interview

Branko Bistrovic



## Articles

Sketchbook of Clint Cearley



## The Gallery

Jordi Gonzalez, Boco and  
Claire Beard, plus more!



# PERFECTING PORTRAITURE

Jason Seiler's master class in Character Painting

## NEW!!! Mastering Comic Art

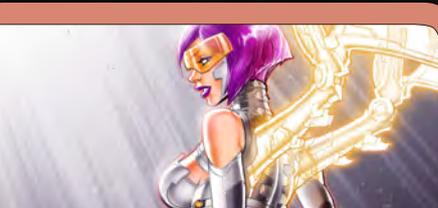
David Nakayama kick starts this new series by sketching out his comic art character Tech Angel.

## Art Fundamentals Article

Marta Dahlig shows us the ways and means of portraying emotion in paintings for our Art Fundamentals series.

## Dragons City Rampage

This month Tomasz Jedruszek continues our Photoreal fantasy series by tackling a photoreal Dragon.





## Editorial

The days are getting longer and the cold weather is on its way out! It's time to rejoice and welcome the arrival of the sun! Well I hope that is the case where you are, here in Worcester in the U.K it is still cold and miserable outside. However the new issue of 2DArtist is enough to lighten anyone's life!

I always get excited when the new magazine gets released and this month is no exception. We have some great artists and tutorials in this issue, and where is better to begin our focus than the front cover which is the handiwork of one of my favourite artists in the community today, **Jason Seiler**. Jason has been creating jaw dropping caricatures for years which is why he was the perfect person to ask to handle the next chapter in our Portraiture series. I don't think I need to say much more about this one, but I will strongly recommend that check it out!

We really have been spoilt by some of the artists in this issue, and in our Realistic Fantasy Tutorial **Tomasz Jedruszek** continues the trend! Tomasz talks us through designing a creature that is realistic and therefore believable. Some of the points he brings out make so much sense I can't wait to give them a go and design some of my own monsters.

If like me you were bought up by comic books and graphic novels our new series is definitely for you! **David Nakayama** kicks off his new three part series by showing us how to create our starting point, the sketch. This is another outstanding tutorial series, plus it gives us a good opportunity to get out our good old pencil and paper.

Another industry heavyweight is giving us some priceless advice in this month's Art Fundamentals series. **Marta Dahlig** is famous for her character work, and is one of the best when it comes to portraying emotion. In this tutorial she will be showing us little tricks and techniques we can use to convey the mood and feeling we are aiming to. Yet again, this is a cracker!

With so many of my favourite artists handling our tutorials this month I thought I would continue the theme through to this month's interview. This month we catch up with **Branko Bistrovic** who is not only an outstanding artist but also a top guy! Branko's work is top notch, and if you are unfamiliar with him you should grab this opportunity to get to know his work. I don't think there is anyone better at mixing innocent characters with creepy undertones!

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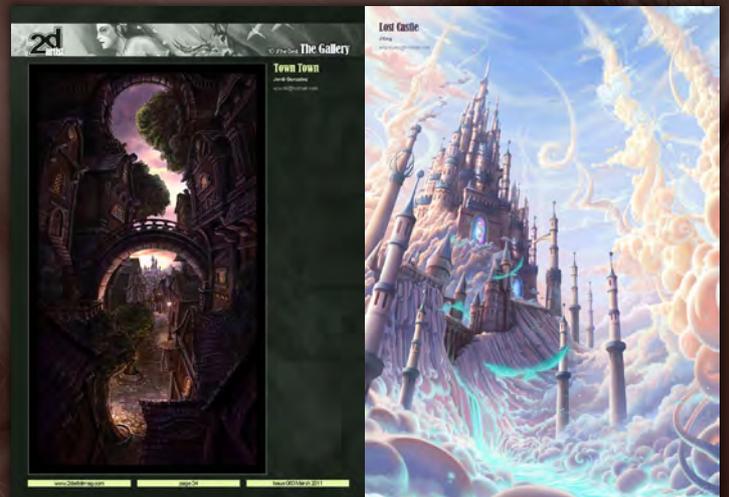
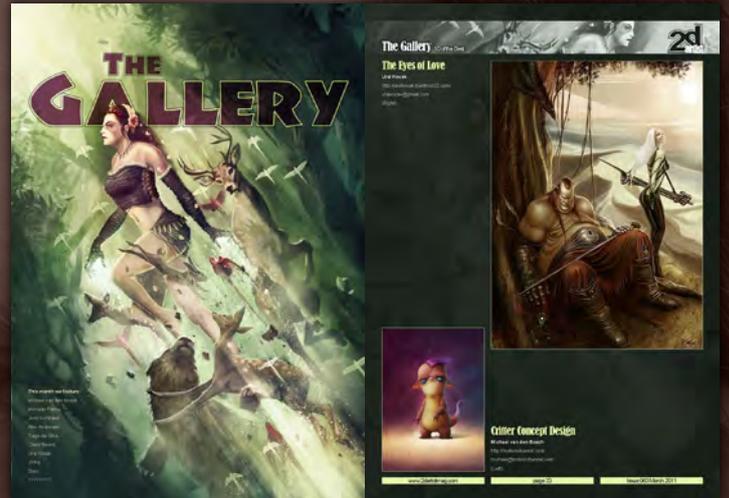
This month's sketchbook gives us a brief glance at the work of **Clint Cearley**. Clint is an interesting artist with varying influence that come out in his sketchbook. Every now and again I see a sketchbook where the artist clearly sketches with a purpose in mind, either to practice a technique or explore a subject matter, this is one of those occasions.

I will wrap things up by talking about our gallery and making of **Yap Jia Xing** is this month's making of artist and he shows us how he made his cute Fluffy Pup image. The gallery this month features work from **Walter Barna**, **Claire Beard**, **Michael van den Bosch** and many other talented artists. Take my word for it, this is 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!



## Setting up your PDF reader

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

You can download it for free here: [DOWNLOAD!](#)

To view the many double-page spreads featured in 2DArtist 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;
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)



### Branko Bistrovic

Color Supervisor in an animation studio by day, and a dark and handsome doodler by night ... He hopes to one day achieve the coveted status of concept artist, but for the moment is happy with bringing to life his own imaginings for himself, as well as some contract work on the side of course.



<http://www.brushdreams.com/brankosfurnace.swf>  
[bisvic@gmail.com](mailto:bisvic@gmail.com)



### Jason Seiler

Has had the pleasure of painting for many magazines, such as TIME and MAD.

He's also worked on films for Universal Pictures, and more. He teaches a course on caricature illustration for Schoolism.com, and last year his first book came out, called "Caricature, the Art of Jason Seiler". His second book, "Seiler 2008-2009" will be available this July, as well as a two-hour instructional DVD, "Sketching with Jason Seiler". <http://www.jasonseiler.com>  
[jseiler@jpusa.org](mailto:jseiler@jpusa.org)



### David Nakayama

In his 8 years as a professional illustrator, David Nakayama has worked extensively in the concept art, comic book, and package art fields for the likes of NCsoft, Disney, Marvel Comics, and others. He's currently Lead Concept Artist at Paragon Studios (developers of City of Heroes) and served as Art Lead during the production of the game's 2nd major boxed expansion, City of Heroes: GOING ROGUE.



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### Yap Jia Xing

Yap Jia Xing lives in Malaysia and calls himself JXing in the forums. Yap thinks he is greedy as he has tried out many different forms of art but finally feels he has settled now. Yap is currently practicing to help develop his skills. He would like to do some character art or concept art.

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



### Clint Cearley

Clint enjoys living out his childhood ambition of getting paid to draw cool fantasy stuff. Trained in traditional media most of his work is now digital though the sketchbook is never far or forgotten. He's primarily inspired from other artists such as the classical pencil work of Alan Lee to the powerful concept work of Kekai Kotaki.



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[clintcearley@live.com](mailto:clintcearley@live.com)

## Piracy Notice

### March 2011 Update

Many thanks to our customers for your continued support, we really hope you enjoy this month's edition and by purchasing your copy you are helping us to boost quality and content even more. As a result, we have just commissioned the awesome **Marek Denko** to create an exclusive multi-part tutorial series. This is just one example of how supporting us comes around full circle and benefits you, and there'll be plenty more to follow!

If you are reading this from a pirated copy then shame on you! The entire CG community, whether artists, schools, websites, companies etc, needs to support each other to help the industry grow and develop. Taking from each other will only have the opposite effect.

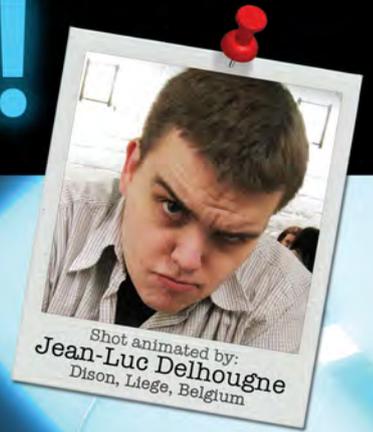
### Previous Announcement

#### **3DTotal.com Partnering With ConceptArt.org**

3DTotal is glad to announce that the successful anti-piracy system used on ConceptArt.Org to protect it's video content is now being used to bring an end to piracy of the content produced by the incredible artists who support our magazines, website and tutorials which are enjoyed by so many. This anti-piracy effort has brought to light many of the users who have been pirating content illegally in the ConceptArt.org community and it is now assisting with protecting and enforcing copyrights here.

3DTotal greatly appreciates all our customers and the incredible artists who support this community with products. Piracy has become a major obstacle that must be resolved in order to see the artists who create these works and 3DTotal see success long into the future. Without the content sold here, this community and resource would not be what it is. With the support of our customers we have been able to offer an ever increasing stable of great content at affordable prices. Thank you all for your continued support. We are here to help teach and assist artists worldwide.

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*- Jean-Luc Delhougne  
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**“We all know art is influential. It can change people’s perceptions and move them to greatness or self-reflective introversion. I’m choosing to ride that fact like a starling rides on the back of a rhino – in style...”**

# BRANKO BISTROVIC

Branko Bistrovic is one interesting guy. An eastern European currently working in Canada, he specializes in taking a typically innocent and pure idea, and turning it on its head by drawing out the dark and twisted impulses. In one of the most engaging interviews we’ve had in *2DArtist* magazine, Branko shares his thoughts on life-changing decisions, fairytales and how the advent of the digital age has influenced the artistic development of a whole new generation of artists.

## Interview with Branko Bistovic

Hi Branko! Now you're a familiar name to us here at 3DTotal – your work's been in our mags, on our website and is due to be published in *Digital Art Masters: Volume 6* later this summer... but what about the guy behind the art? I'm intrigued because while your website is full of amazing images, there's zero information about you! So to kick things off, could you give us a quick overview on who you are, where you're from and what you're up to work-wise at the moment?

Howdy Jo! Well, where to begin... I suppose the same place I would if you met me in person: appearance. I'm a short, big-nosed Serbo-Croatian, with one leg calf significantly smaller than the other, which is dashingly complimented by a small scar over my left eye. Now that I've got the ladies salivating I can tell you I currently



live in Toronto, Canada, having moved here from the former Yugoslavia when I was six with my mum and pops. Currently I'm employed at 9 Story Entertainment and am responsible for all things color, and the creation of Title Slates.

**[Laughs]** You've made yourself sound like a pirate with that description! I guess we'll all get to judge for ourselves when your profile

picture pops up in *DAM: V6*... Anyway, you've given me the perfect opening for my next question: **Title Slates. What are they and what does the work involve?**

Ah, that's easy. A Title Slate is an illustration consisting of the name of the animated episode in fancy letters, along with a fancy illustration of the character doing something exaggerated that links with the plot of the story. They're quite fun





B.P.

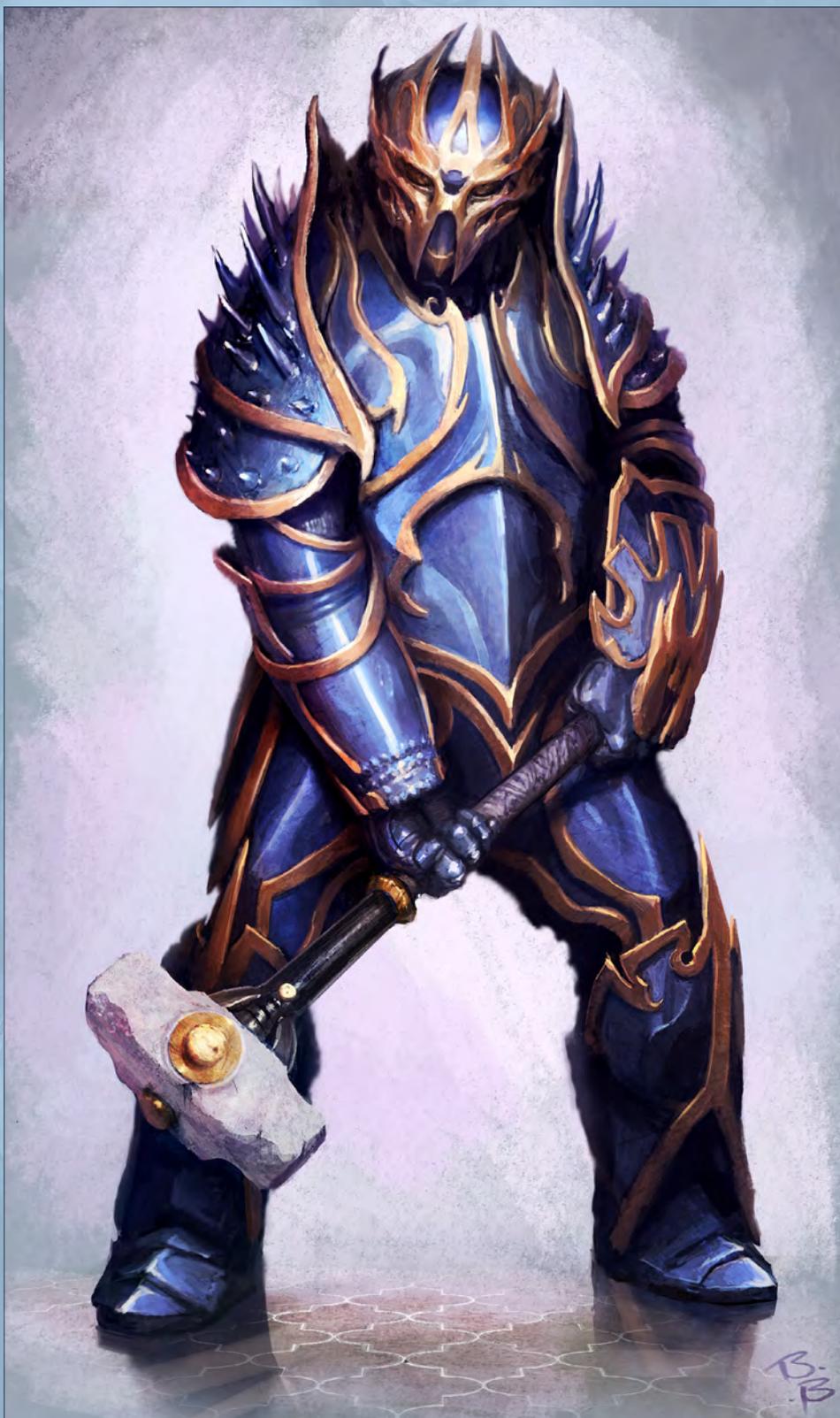
to do, although it's a challenge taking a flat 2D character with ridiculously shortened limbs and giving them volume while still keeping the model accurate. Luckily, I have a wicked director who gives me as much freedom as I could want, so even though I have to knock out one of these a week at high res, along with regular duties, I nonetheless find it a pleasure.

**“A proper villain fills us with fear, anxiety and fascination, and the best ones have a certain malice that is convincing enough to make you feel that that kind of evil could exist.”**

Onto the art! Now I've checked out your gallery and there's a definite theme running through it – fantasy and sci-fi! As a big fan of this genre myself, I can totally get on board with that. But there's also a dark twist to the majority of your work – in the words of our editor Simon, you make “innocent things seem horrible” [Laughs]. What's that all about? What is it about this juxtaposition of innocence/light with twisted/dark that attracts you?

Until the age of six, I was reared on Grimm fairytales. Then I moved to Canada and was more or less “Disneyfied”. Despite this fact, one thing that remained constant to me – even in Disney's re-tellings – is that the villain in fairytales is usually quite terrifying.

A proper villain fills us with fear, anxiety and fascination, and the best ones have a certain malice that is convincing enough to make you feel that that kind of evil could exist. Long after the story itself is forgotten that feeling lingers, and for that reason I try to incorporate a bit (or a lot) of malice into everything I produce – hoping that will help it linger. For that same reason I try to add beauty where it isn't expected. For instance, in “Someone Hug That Witch” there



are flower petals streaming from her hair – a suggestion that even a horror like that still has a part of her that can, at least for a moment, stop and appreciate the beauty of some pretty pink and red petals. She's willing to put them in her hair because she thinks they make her

look more beautiful... The fact that she would even think herself beautiful is both horrific and somehow pathetic.

On a more deadpan note, I should add that I grew up with very liberal parents. They let me



watch *Friday the 13th*, *Halloween* etc., when I was six, and I'm pretty damn sure that has something to do with it. Oh and also, I like gloves with claws.

That's pretty hardcore stuff for a six-year old! I can still remember being terrified by the spitting dinosaurs in *Jurassic Park* when I was nine and that killing off any desire I had

to watch even vaguely scary films... seems like you thrive on them. You mentioned a lot of fairytale influences there – who would be your top fairytale villain?



Ah, hard to say... I'm really not sure what my favorite is! The earliest villains I can remember visually are Giger's Alien and Freddy Krueger. As for fairytales, I'd have to say the wolf. It's

hard to say he's my favorite though, because he is truly revolting and terrifying. Not some charismatic badass, but a real monster and one that made an impact on me. I was told

the original version by my uncle when I was young, so I remember *Little Red Riding Hood* as a horror story more than a happy kid story. Recently I've been reading up on old fairytales



and have come across some truly revolting stuff. I was surprised to discover that my uncle wasn't lying or even exaggerating in his retelling – let me share a few (I'll warn you, they're pretty grim...)

*Little Red Riding Hood*. So there are many variations to this fable, but in the very early tales the wolf eats the grandmother and Red and that's that. They aren't rescued in the end; he simply just gobbles them up. That's kind of

crappy and creepy, sure, but more disturbing though is that in one version the wolf, still disguised as the grandmother, leaves some of the grandmother's remains out for Red. He tells her he has prepared the meal for her, and yep, she eats it, never realizing she's consuming her own grandmamma!



**“When working traditionally, the connection with the art you are producing is second to none.”**

There are a few others as well. In a version of *Sleeping Beauty*, the queen is a descendent of ogres and has an appetite for little children. And in *The Juniper Tree*, a jealous step-mother decapitates her step-son, places his head back on his body and gets her daughter to slap the boy, knocking his head off and causing the daughter to believe she killed her brother. Then, to top it off, the step-mother makes a stew out of the boy's body... Hannibal Lector, eat your heart out!

Wonderful stuff, no?

Can you walk us through the typical way you approach creating an image? As a 2D artist I'm going to go out on a limb and guess you use Photoshop? Are there any particular tricks or processes you like to use?

Yep, I use Photoshop. I also use Painter,



Artrage and traditional methods (watercolors). They've all got their pros and cons of course.

Photoshop is the best at layer management, selecting and transforming and is predictable. It's the most reliable for productions since everyone uses it, is pretty familiar with it, and it crashes very rarely.

Painter is as close to traditional as I can get digitally. The brushes are an excellent blend of control and traditional unpredictability. Unfortunately it's not as stable as Photoshop.

Artrage is great for oil clumped textures of course, but it's also quite versatile for sketching, with excellent pencils.

When working traditionally, the connection with the art you are producing is second to none; it's just you, the paint and the canvas/paper/napkin/

wall/cheek. The downside is that it has none of the convenience of digital art ("undo", layers, etc..) but the lack of all those things has the upside of demanding a level of focus from me that I never quite achieve when working digitally.

Recently, more so than ever, I've been striving to bridge the gap between digital and traditional by using "undo" less, less layers and less

resource textures in my personal art (not a very good idea in production art though, where revisions are constant). I want to achieve that level of focus I get working with real watercolors, where there is only a negligible safety net and also the digital convenience of not having to clean up spilled paint, or rush out before the art store closes for that extra \$38.00, 37ml tube of W&N cadmium red.





You know, if I use Corel Painter's real Watercolors I can come pretty darn close. Still though, it's bloody tempting to spring a new layer every once in awhile and try something offbeat for a change.

**That's an interesting perspective because it does seem that digital art opens the door to constantly correcting/changing things, throwing layers around like confetti and generally scrambling towards a finished**

**piece. We see it as a wonderful innovation, but do you think this ability to right any wrong at the click of a button is perhaps having a negative effect and causing artists to become lazy?**

Yeah, most definitely. I catch it in myself all the time. Lack of foresight and preparation, relying too much on the computer to solve problems you can't figure out on your own, e.g: perspective, proper lighting, textures, etc.

Besides the computer reliance, the rest of the issues also exist in the traditional realm, but I don't think they are as prolific amongst traditional artists who work in the entertainment field simply because traditional mediums aren't as forgiving. Usually you have to have a clear idea of what you want to paint before you mix the oils.

The issue isn't in using the tools; it's becoming reliant on the tools to cover up your



shortcomings. If you're a concept artist and have ridiculous deadlines, you don't have the time to paint textures or countless tree branches. Instead you have to rely on photos and specific brushes, and this is how I feel the tools should be used.

On the other hand, when you are doing a personal piece and have no deadline, but continue to use all of the same shortcuts simply because you can't be bothered to learn how to

paint those elements, then I do feel the artist is stunting his own artistic development. Shortcuts exist to save time, not to represent the best you can do.

**I love the quote you have on your blog: "Art is dangerous, I do art, therefore... I am dangerous! But a friendly sort of danger, the kind you want to cuddle up with." Care to elaborate on what this means? [Laughs].**

We all know art is influential. It can change

people's perceptions and move them to greatness or self-reflective introversion. I'm choosing to ride that fact like a starling rides on the back of a rhino – in style...

In all honesty though, I don't think my art nears any such potential, mainly because it's too commercial. But the fact that it is commercial at least makes it more approachable; it's not heavily moral and is something most can digest if not right-out love. You might even go so far as



to say it's something you'd be willing to cuddle up with, well, kind of... [Laughs]. Also, I had to add the "cuddle" part so that I could net in the clients, I'm sure you know how it is.

**If you had to pick one moment of your life that stands out as being particularly significant in your personal or artistic development, what would it be and why?**

It's literally a week before the second year of university. I've picked my classes, schedules are

established, most efficient route to each class negotiated, but despite all this my gut won't give it a rest. It just doesn't feel right.

I'm on the subway heading back from orientation, when I tell myself "f\*!# it". I get off on the next stop, take the train back to the registrar and request that I have my fees reimbursed and be dropped from all classes (I wish the process had been as smooth as I'm making it sound here! For instance, I remember being so

distracted that I slipped on someone's dropped ice-cream. I chose not to think of that as an ill omen and instead was grateful it was a good smelling pile I had stepped on for a change.)

Anyways, after about three days of hassling, my money was reimbursed (although I'm sure they had my place in the classes filled within the hour). I hightailed it to a downtown private animation college, and with only two days before classes were to properly begin I showed some doodles, put on my best puppy eyes (with a promise of immediate payment) and was accepted. It's all been doodles since then.

A week later I told my father. He took it like a real champ, only making one snide comment, I think, and since then has been behind me all the way. I'm sure there was a moment there somewhere where he screamed inside though [Laughs]!

**I guess that's what the phrase "going with your gut" really means! Okay, so in the spirit of Gwyneth Paltrow in *Sliding Doors* (which,**



for those who don't know, is a film all about how a woman's life splits off in two different directions when she does/doesn't get on a subway, if you had stayed on the subway that day, where do you think you would be now? And what would you be doing? Do you think you would still have eventually found your way to art?

Hmm, that's a tough one. I'd like to think I would have found art one way or another, but I'm not so much a believer in destiny as I am in each individual defining their own path. There are so many people I talk to who constantly tell me how lucky I am, and how they wanted to be artists, photographers, writers, but for one reason or another they found themselves where they are now.

**“It's never too late to find pleasure in the things that you enjoy. The greatest obstacle might very well just be you.”**

Though that does remind me of a friend whose father a few years ago told him how lucky he was to have followed his passion (my friend is an artist, and doing well for himself). The father



is a foreman for Toronto's transit system; he makes a good living but beyond that it's just a job to him. He admitted that the comfort and security of the job locked him in early and as the years passed he kept telling himself, "I'll do it, I'll do it, just after this next bill, after this next holiday..." Then one morning he realized 20+ years had passed, he now had a family to support and those sorts of dreams no longer mattered. He wanted to take up photography. The saddest part is that for years he actually avoided doing it even as a hobby because it frustrated him that he didn't stick to it. I actually think that it's that fear of regret that spurred me to get off the subway and turn back that day. It

made me nauseous to imagine that years from now I'd be looking back wondering what would have happened if I had gotten off.

I wonder now if I would have developed the same strain of regret my buddy's dad had, until I too would begin to avoid art. Well, luckily I was scared sufficiently enough to get off. Heh, I suppose all I really did that day was run from something more frightening into something less frightening!

On his retirement last year my friend bought his father a DSLR. Every time I see him outdoors now he's got that camera with him. To a degree



I suppose it's never too late to find pleasure  
in the things that you enjoy. The greatest  
obstacle might very well just be you.

## Branko Bistovic

For more information please visit:

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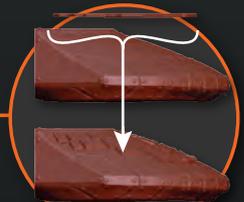
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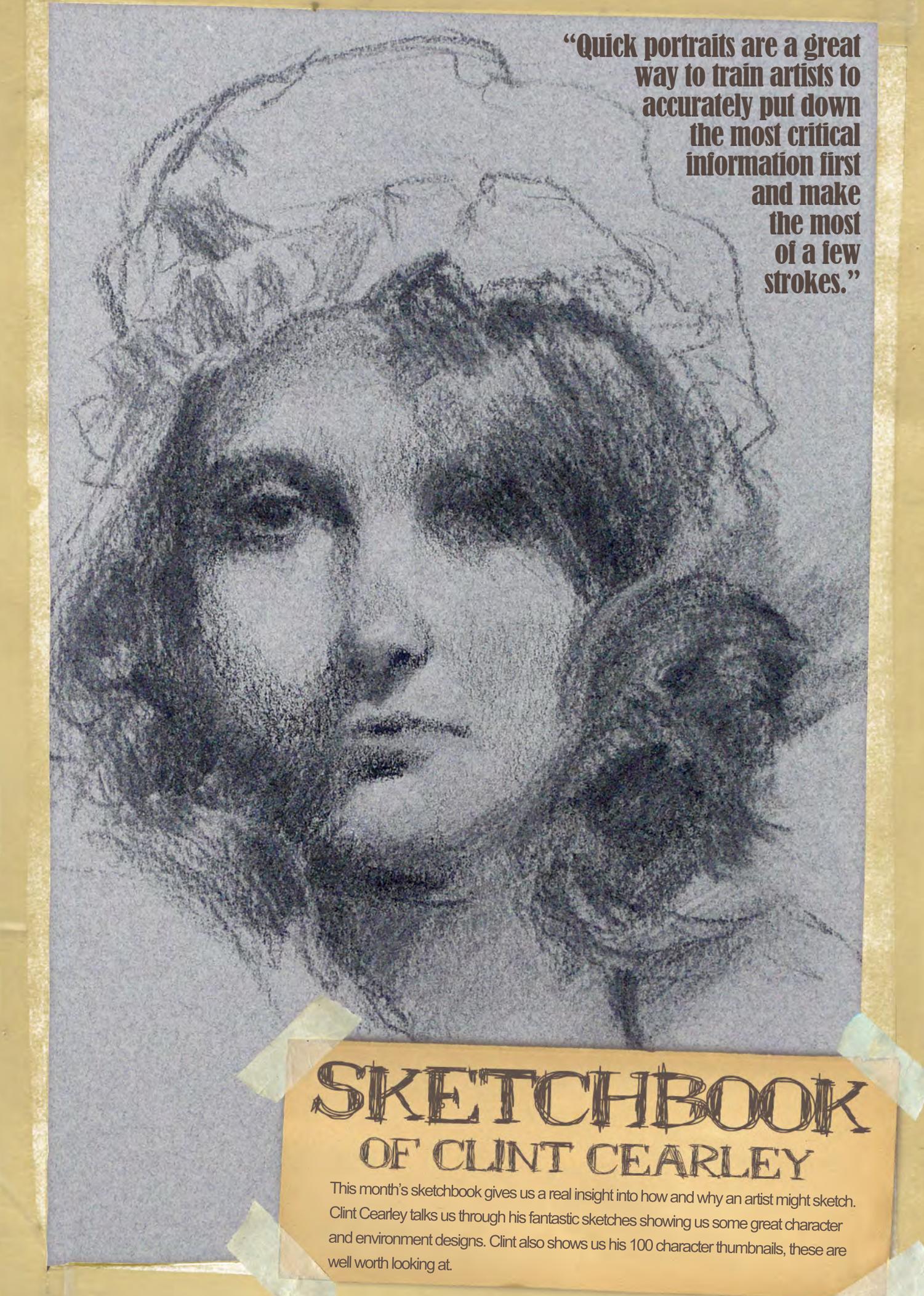
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**“Quick portraits are a great way to train artists to accurately put down the most critical information first and make the most of a few strokes.”**

# SKETCHBOOK OF CLINT CEARLEY

This month's sketchbook gives us a real insight into how and why an artist might sketch. Clint Cearley talks us through his fantastic sketches showing us some great character and environment designs. Clint also shows us his 100 character thumbnails, these are well worth looking at.

## SKETCHBOOK OF CLINT CEARLEY

I have a weakness for retro and Steampunk. This started as a pencil sketch, but later I added tone and highlights in Photoshop (**Fig.01**).

This is a portrait from life. With limited time it's important to decide before starting what you want to focus on; in this case the forms of the profile (**Fig.02**).

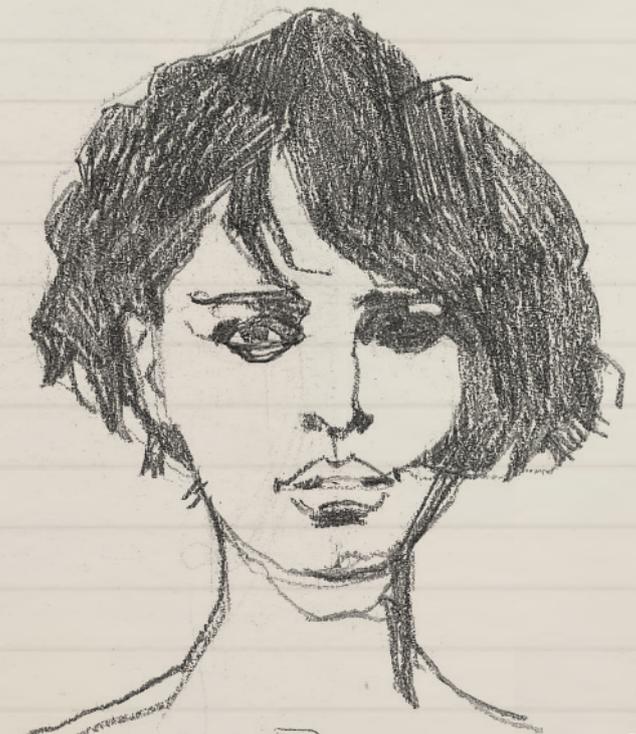
Here I was playing around with a different style on a quick portrait of Natalie Portman. I consider experimenting with new styles, subjects and media to be vital to artistic growth (**Fig.03**).



01



02



03

These are my 100 character thumbnails. These began with squiggly lines indicating general size and pose, then I refined them to show what

character I saw in the squiggles. This serves as a creativity exercise and is the basis for later pieces (Fig.04).



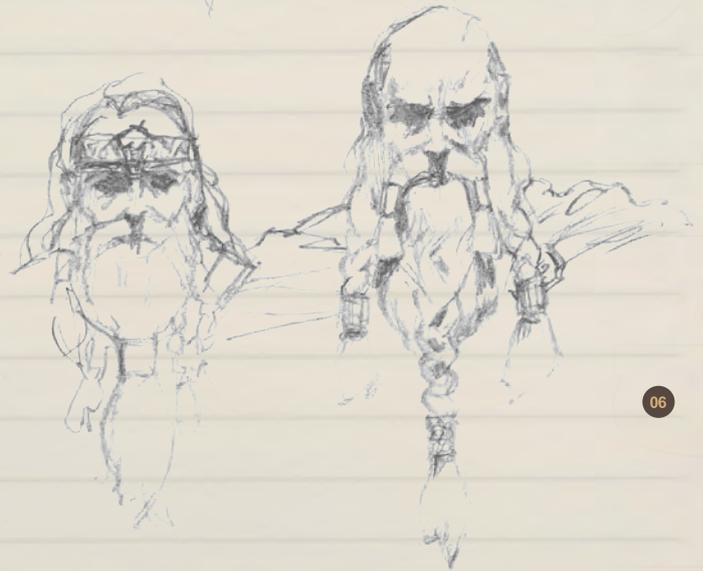
This is an 11- 15 minute portrait from life with charcoal on toned paper. Quick portraits are a great way to train artists to accurately put down the most critical information first and make the most of a few strokes (**Fig.05**).



These are Viking head variations with a N.C. Wyeth lean (Fig.06).

A character concept for a commission. The design was too dark for the nature of the character so a different direction was taken (Fig.07).

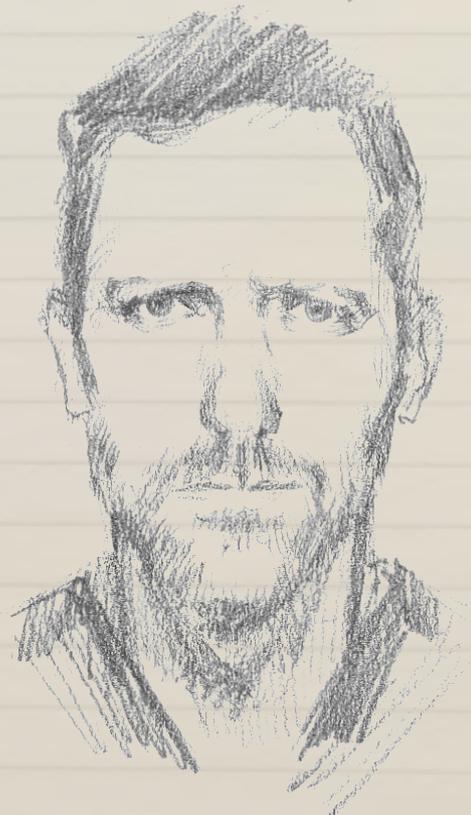
Hugh Laurie, the incredible actor and star of *House of* which I'm a fan (Fig.08).



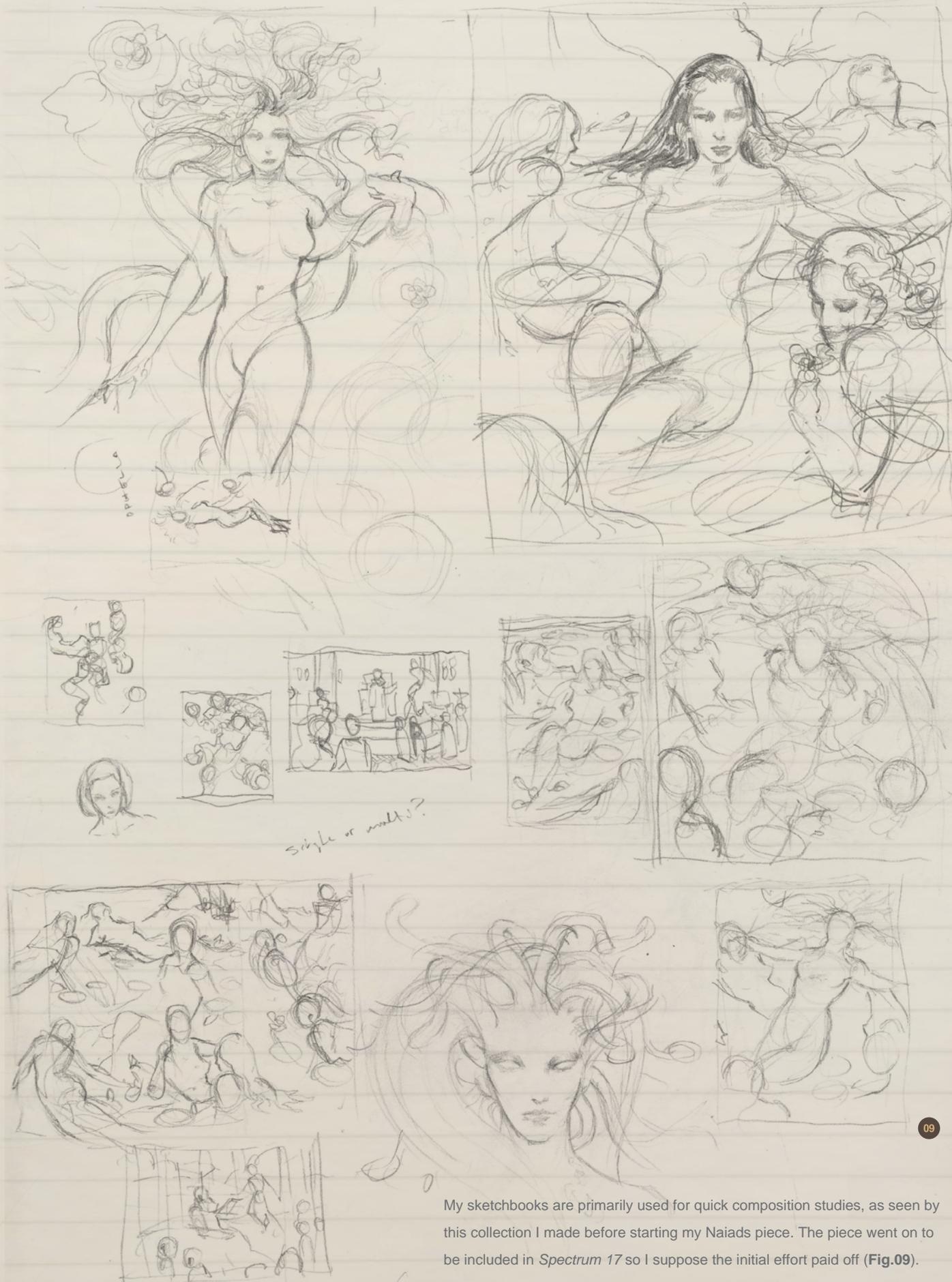
06



07



08



single or multi?

09

My sketchbooks are primarily used for quick composition studies, as seen by this collection I made before starting my Naiads piece. The piece went on to be included in *Spectrum 17* so I suppose the initial effort paid off (Fig.09).

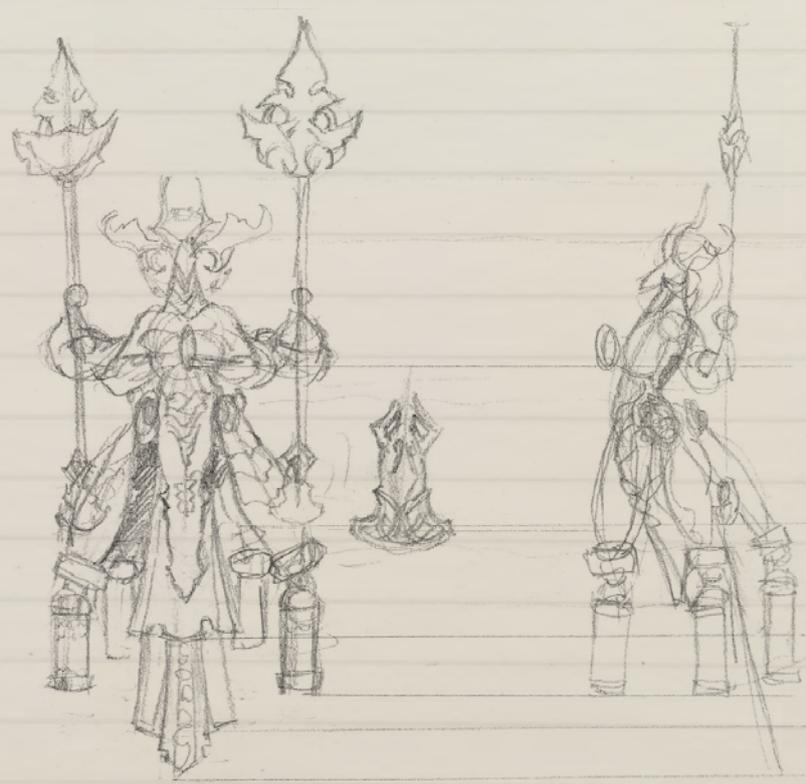


- ① THE FIGURE SET TO THE FAR SIDE OF THE FRAME EVOKES TENSION IN THE SCENE, THE MOOD HOWEVER IS NOT NECESSARILY DARK BECAUSE THE FIGURE IS FULLY HIGH-KEY AND THERE REMAINS ANOTHER HIGH-KEY OBJECT ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF THE FRAME TO BALANCE AGAINST.
- ② THIS FRAME GOES A GOOD STEP DARKER THAN ① BY TILTING THE CAMERA ANGLE, REMOVING A BALANCING LIGHT ON OPPOSITE SIDE OF FRAME AND REMOVING ALL BUT NECESSARY LIGHT ON SUBJECT. NOW THE SCENE IS NOT ONLY TENSE BUT OMINOUSLY SINISTER.
- ③ IN ACCORDANCE OF THE YIN YANG PRINCIPLE EVERY SCENE SHOULD BE PRIMARILY LIGHT OR PRIMARILY DARK RARELY NEUTRAL.
- ④ BACKLIGHTING A FIGURE IS A TECHNIQUE USUALLY RESERVED FOR THE PROTAGONISTS OF THE SCENE AS IT BESTOWS A HEROIC OR ANGELIC QUALITY TO THE FIGURE. CENTERING THE SUBJECT PERFECTLY BALANCES THE FRAME, IDENTIFIES THE MAIN SUBJECT & EVOKES CALMNESS & STABILITY.
- ⑤ EVEN THOUGH THE SHOT IS NOT DOMINANTLY LIGHT OR DARK THERE ARE LARGE SIMPLE LIGHT AND DARK AREAS THAT BALANCE EACH OTHER.

The corner of an objects plane become lost in indirect light as all sides are being evenly lit. The natural color/value then takes dominance being the only quality that distinguishes between one element and the next.

These are studies based on stills from the *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*. I "boiled down" the scenes to the basic composition and values to glean how they convey their messages and emotion with just those basic tools. A lot is to be learned from our cinematic brothers, as seen by the notes to the side (Fig.10).

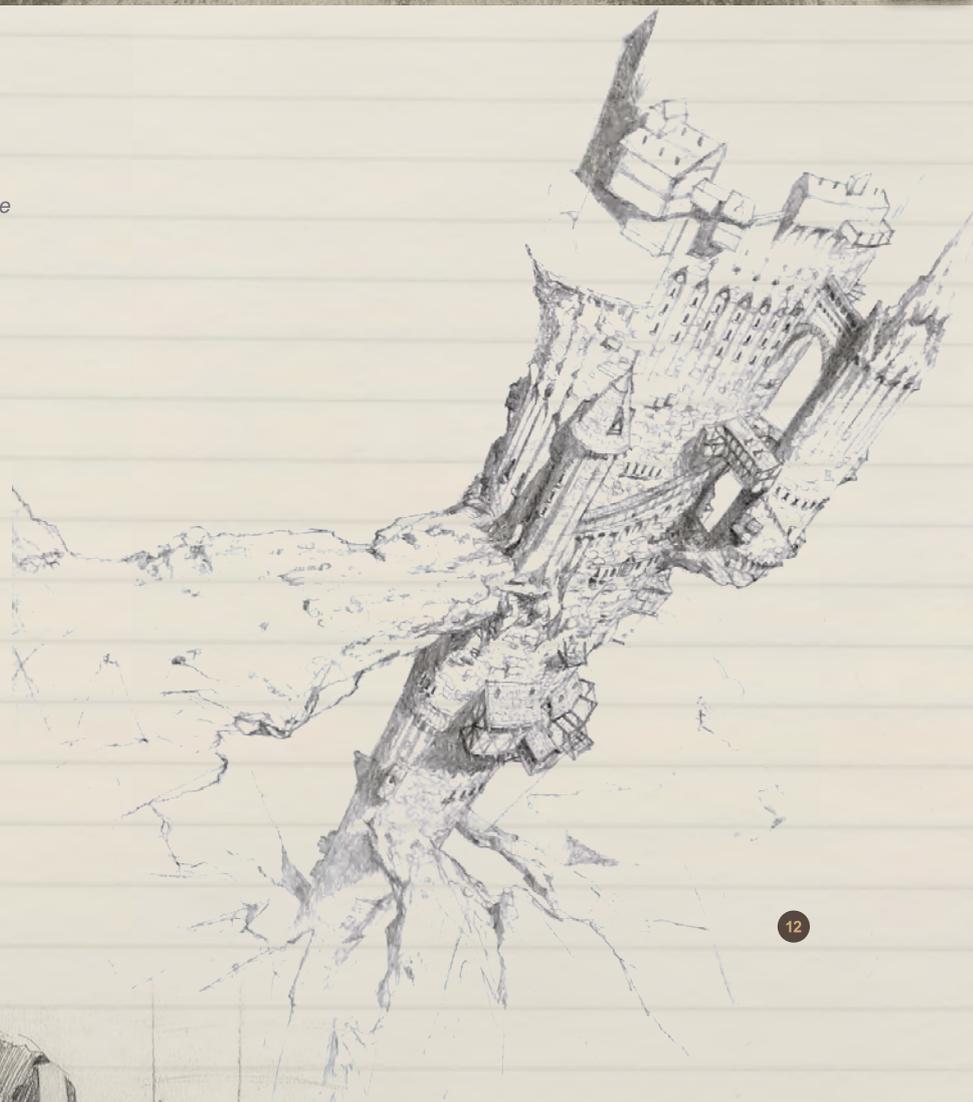
This is a character concept for Dominance War from years back. Pesky paying projects ended up needing my attention more so it was never finished but I've always liked the idea. Maybe the opportunity to recycle him will come sometime (Fig.11).



This is a random environment concept that I burned boring stretches of several afternoons detailing (Fig.12).

After pouring over Alan Lee's *The Lord of the Rings* sketchbook I was inspired to do this scene (Fig.13).

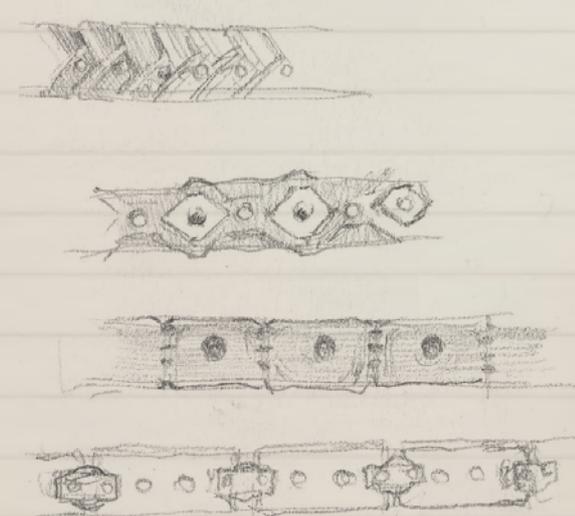
With most of my final pieces and advanced sketches being digital, my sketchbook is used for doing lots of things like these little studies of medieval belt styles (Fig.14).



12



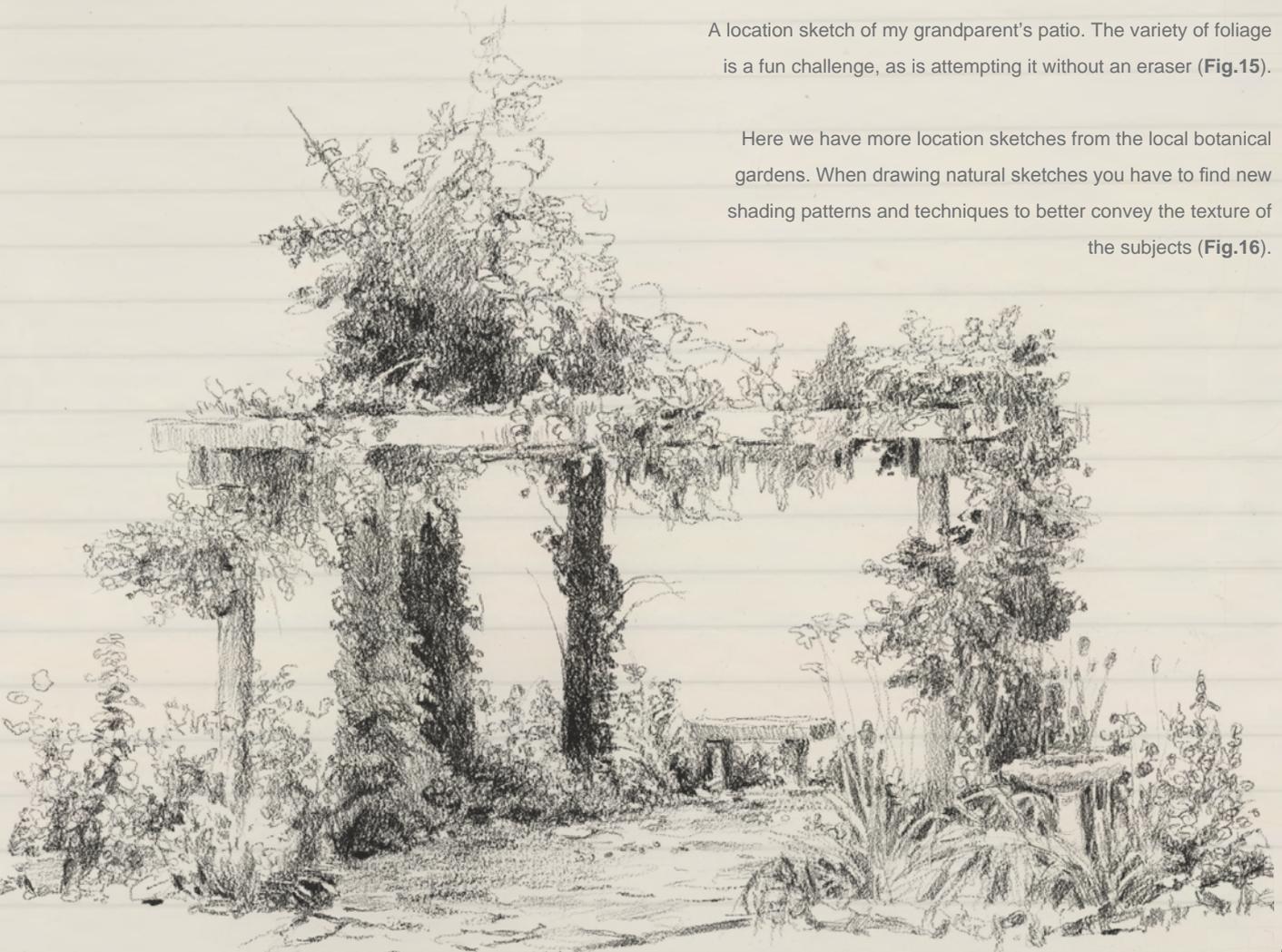
13



14

A location sketch of my grandparent's patio. The variety of foliage is a fun challenge, as is attempting it without an eraser (**Fig.15**).

Here we have more location sketches from the local botanical gardens. When drawing natural sketches you have to find new shading patterns and techniques to better convey the texture of the subjects (**Fig.16**).



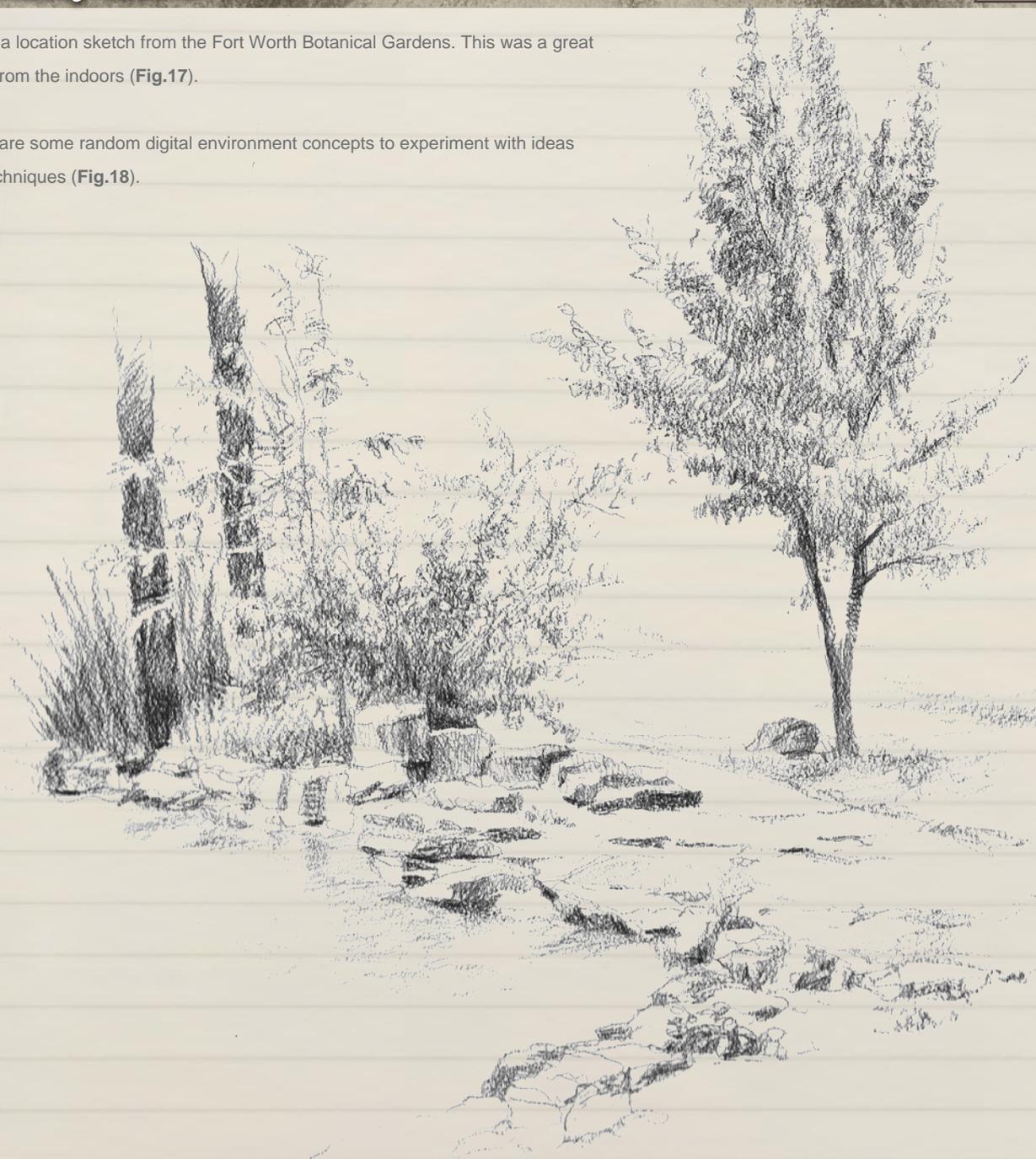
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16

This is a location sketch from the Fort Worth Botanical Gardens. This was a great break from the indoors (Fig.17).

These are some random digital environment concepts to experiment with ideas and techniques (Fig.18).



17



18



After sketching a basic pose and duplicating it I can quickly focus on apparel design without having to redraw the figure every time. Here are concepts for a personal character and story idea (Fig.19).

Choosing 6 favorites of the 100 concepts sheet, I enlarged and refined the characters. These were created as a portfolio piece to show conceptual process (Fig.20).

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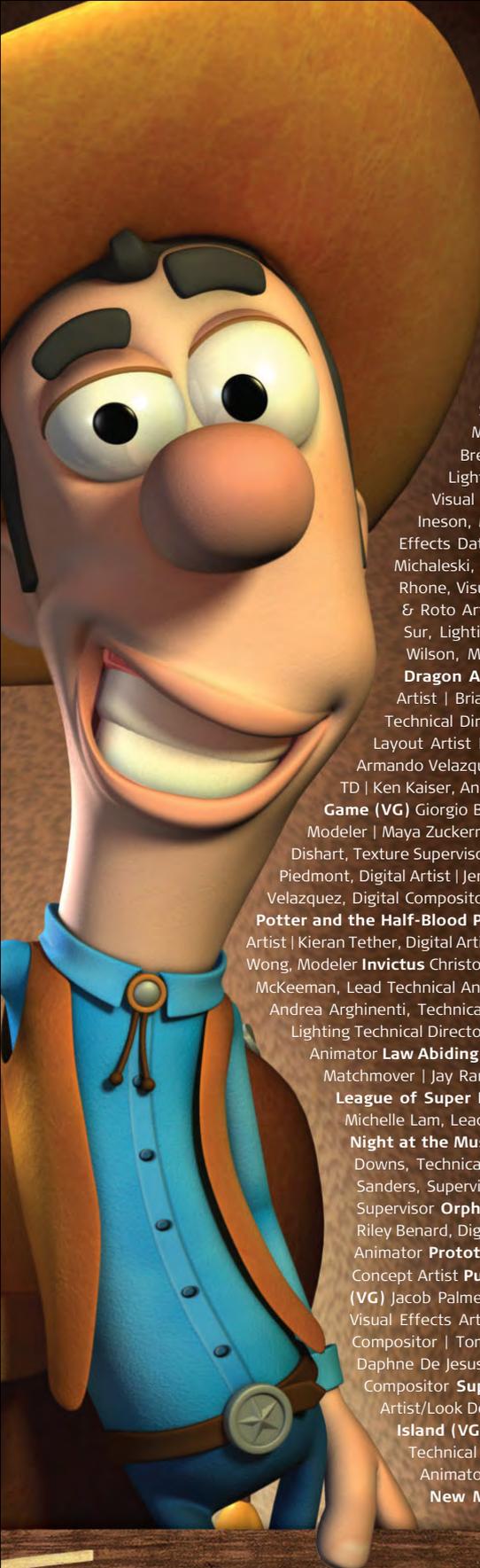
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McLeod, Digital Composer **Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince** Harry Mukhopadhyay, Lead Effects Technical Director | Pietro Ponti, TD Generalist | Gia Sadhwani, Digital Effects Artist | Kieran Tether, Digital Artist | Teh-wei Yeh, Lighting TD **Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs** Scott Lemmer, Animator | Thom Roberts, Animator | Brent Wong, Modeler **Invictus** Christopher Ahrens, Lighting Lead | Geoffrey Hancock, Visual Effects Supervisor | Sean Lewkiw, Digital Effects Supervisor | Jason McKeeman, Lead Technical Animator | Farhad Mohasseb, Composer | Michelle Skrzyniarz, Matchmove Artist | Jose Yapor, Animator **Killzone 2 (VG)** Andrea Arghinenti, Technical Artist **King of the Hill** Michael Loya, Director **Knowing** Tim Rowlandson, Rigging Technical Director | Richard Sur, Lighting Technical Director **Land of the Lost** Nicholas Augello, Massive Technical Director | Tony Etienne, Lighting Supervisor | Amy Lu, Character Animator **Law Abiding Citizen** Freddy Chavez, Composer | Veronica Marino, Composer | James McPhail, Effects Animator | Jacob Curtis Miller, Matchmover | Jay Randall, Visual Effects Supervisor | Derek Stevenson, Matchmover | Shawn Walsh, Visual Effects Executive Producer **The League of Super Evil** Daphne De Jesus, Composer | Barry Karnowski, Animation Supervisor **The Lord of the Rings: Conquest (VG)** Michelle Lam, Lead Character Artist **The Lovely Bones** Michael Cozens, Previs Animator **Monsters vs. Aliens** Jiyoun Lee, Texture Artist **Night at the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian** Rex Ahn, Previsualization Lead | Nicholas Augello, Technical Animator | Christopher Downs, Technical Animator | Joshua Herrig, Lead Lighter | Zeke Norton, Previsualization Supervisor | Ai Saimoto, Lighting Lead | Ben Sanders, Supervising Animator | Derek Stevenson, Previsualization Artist | Joey Wilson, Previsualization Artist | Adam Yaniv, Animation Supervisor **Orphan** Francisco Moncayo Moreno, Digital Artist | Shawn Walsh, Visual Effects Executive Producer **Paul Blart: Mall Cop** Riley Benard, Digital Composer **Planet 51** Sandro di Segni, Senior Effects TD | Jorge Kirschner Torres, Modeler | Gianfranco Valle, Effects Animator **Prototype (VG)** Harry Ahn, Lead Cinematics Animator | Bobby Bath, Lead Character Artist **Punch-Out!! (VG)** Nelson Garcia, Concept Artist **Pushing Daisies** Scott Dewis, Visual Effects **Red Faction: Guerrilla (VG)** Dilber Mann, Project Manager **Resident Evil 5 (VG)** Jacob Palmer, Animator **Rock Band Unplugged (VG)** Mike Krentz, Artist **Sanctuary** Julie Bergman, Animator | Mladen Miholjic, Visual Effects Artist **Shorts** David Yabu, Animator **Sorority Row** Mike Rhone, Visual Effects Artist **Star Trek** Aruna Inversin, Digital Composer | Tom Piedmont, Digital Plate Restoration | Kieran Tether, Digital Artist | Teh-wei Yeh, Digital Artist **Stargate Universe** Daphne De Jesus, Digital Composer | Julianna Kolakis, Character Designer | Daniel Osaki, Lead 3D Modeler | Anna Tonrungraj, Digital Composer **Supernatural**, Daphne De Jesus, Digital Composer **Surrogates** Anthony Di Ninno, Animator | Joshua Herrig, Lighting Artist/Look Dev Artist | Matthias Lowry, Digital Composer | Laurie Powers, Composer | Teh-wei Yeh, Digital Artist **Tales of Monkey Island (VG)** Jason Findley, Character Artist **Terminator Salvation** Geeta Basantani, Digital Matte Painter | Teh-wei Yeh, Lighting Technical Director **Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen** Allen Holbrook, Animator | Aruna Inversin, Composer | Stephen King, Animator | Henri Tan, Creature Technical Director | Kieran Tether, Digital Artist | Teh-wei Yeh, Digital Artist **The Twilight Saga: New Moon** Dominic Cheung, Lighting Technical Director **Uncharted 2: Among Thieves (VG)** Mike Yosh, Lead Animator

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VFS student work by Thiago Martins

# THE GALLERY



**This month we feature:**

Michael van den Bosch

Miroslav Petrov

Jordi Gonzalez

Alex Andreyev

Tiago da Silva

Claire Beard

Ural Kocak

JXing

Boco

Walter Barna

## The Eyes of Love

Ural Kocak

<http://www.uralkocak.com>

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

(Right)



## Critter Concept Design

Michael van den Bosch

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[michael@motionchannel.com](mailto:michael@motionchannel.com)

(Left)



## Town Town

Jordi Gonzalez

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# Lost Castle

JXing

angusyap@hotmail.com





## Sci - Fi Hud

Tiago da Silva

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TIAGO DA SILVA '10

## 2-D Invasion

Alex Andreyev

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(Right)



## City of Darkness

Claire Beard

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(Left)

# Dragon Slayer

Walter Barna

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## Earthrise characters

Miroslav Petrov

<http://www.soulsart.org>

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





# Wildlife Levitator

Boco

<http://www.artofboco.com>

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Vue procedural planet by Dax Pandhi.



**Chapter 01 | January Issue 061**

Composition

**Chapter 02 | February Issue 062**

Lighting and Color

**Chapter 03 | This Issue**

Portraying Emotion

**Chapter 04 | Next Issue**

Story Telling

**Chapter 05 | May Issue 065**

Perspective and Depth

Some things in art cannot be avoided, and some things must be understood to create great images. We call these Art Fundamentals. The same compositional rules and techniques to demonstrate depth of field are being used today as were being used hundreds of years ago. In this series industry professionals will be teaching us the art fundamentals that they put into practice, and will be sharing amazing tips that we can all use to improve the quality of our work.

# ART FUNDAMENTALS

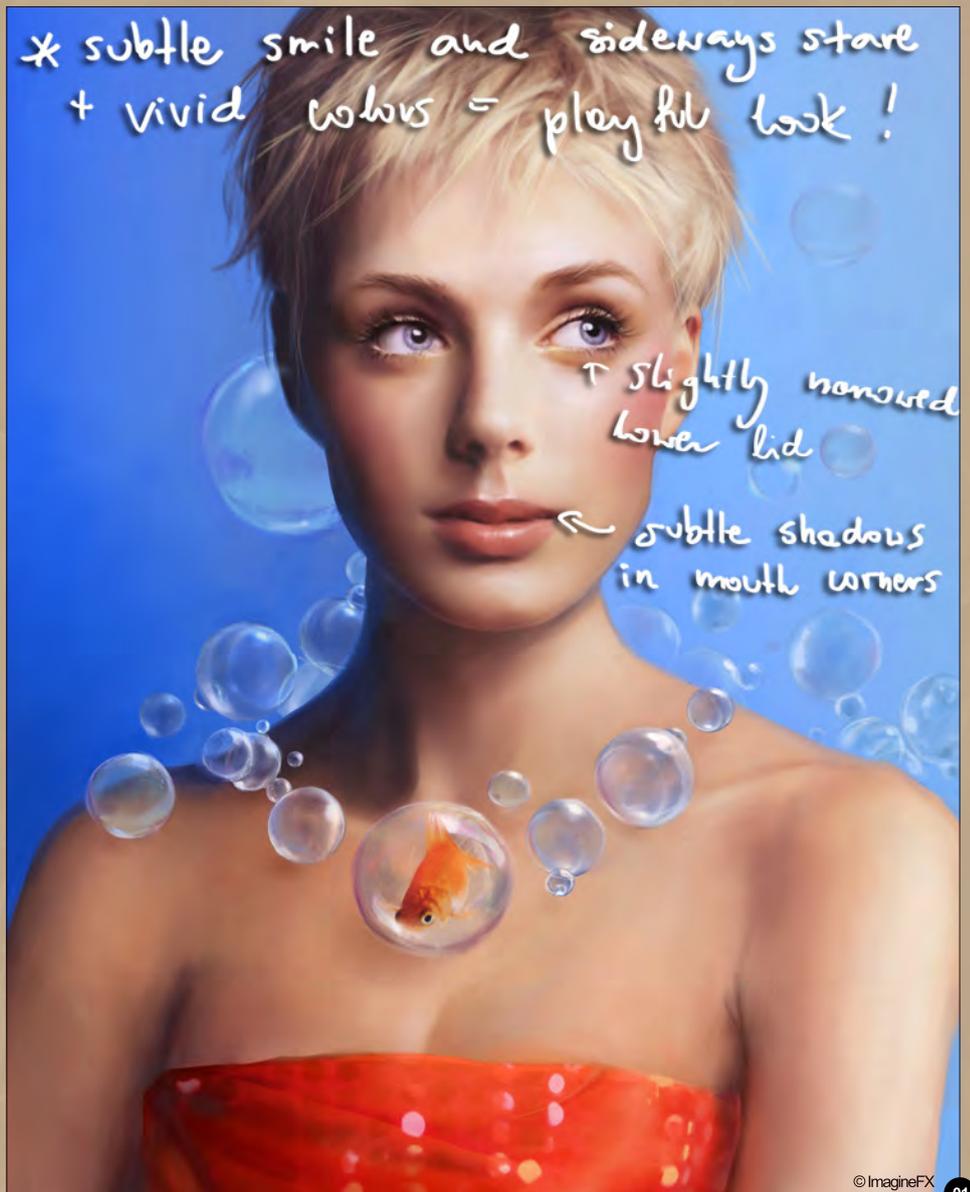
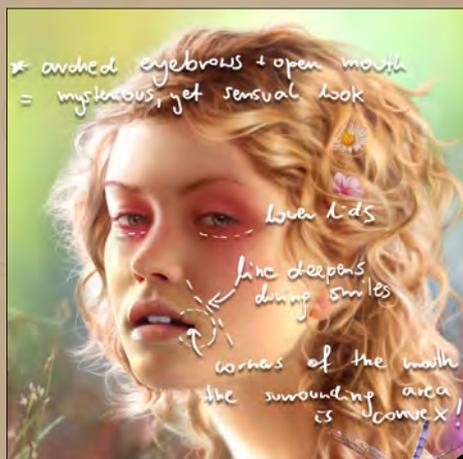
## Art Fundamentals Article: Chapter 03 - Portraying Emotion

Software used: Photoshop

In the industry the concern over how we paint has always been bigger than what we paint. We tend to battle over which software we should use or discuss texturing techniques we ought to apply. Under pressure to constantly improve techniques, we sometimes forget about the reason that made us paint in the first place – the need to express our sensitivity.

Depicting emotions is a rather hard task and requires not only a great deal of personal involvement, but also a thorough knowledge of the ways they can be conveyed. Luckily, there are many ways to do so. Some means are quite obvious, such as character facial expression or posing, while some are much more subtle, like modeling facial features or specially adjusting color themes and composition. The best results, naturally, come from combining those ways within one image.

Firstly, let's discuss the easiest and most straightforward means of conveying emotions – the character facial expressions. When painting an expression, the most important rule to keep in mind is the unity of all facial features. Each and every facial expression is created by the face as a whole. If you want to check what I mean, take a picture of a smiling person and



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cover the upper part of the face, so you can only see the lips and chin. Next, cover only the bottom half of the picture, so you can only see the eyes. As you can see, in both cases you could easily guess the expression of the person in a picture. That is to say that all the features, including the easy to omit cheeks, take part in creating a facial expression.

Knowing that, it won't come as a surprise that in order to paint a believable portrait, you cannot limit yourself to merely painting the right shapes of eyes or lips (Fig.01). That being said, it's important to always keep in mind the whole structure of the face, including muscle placement. And therefore, when you paint a

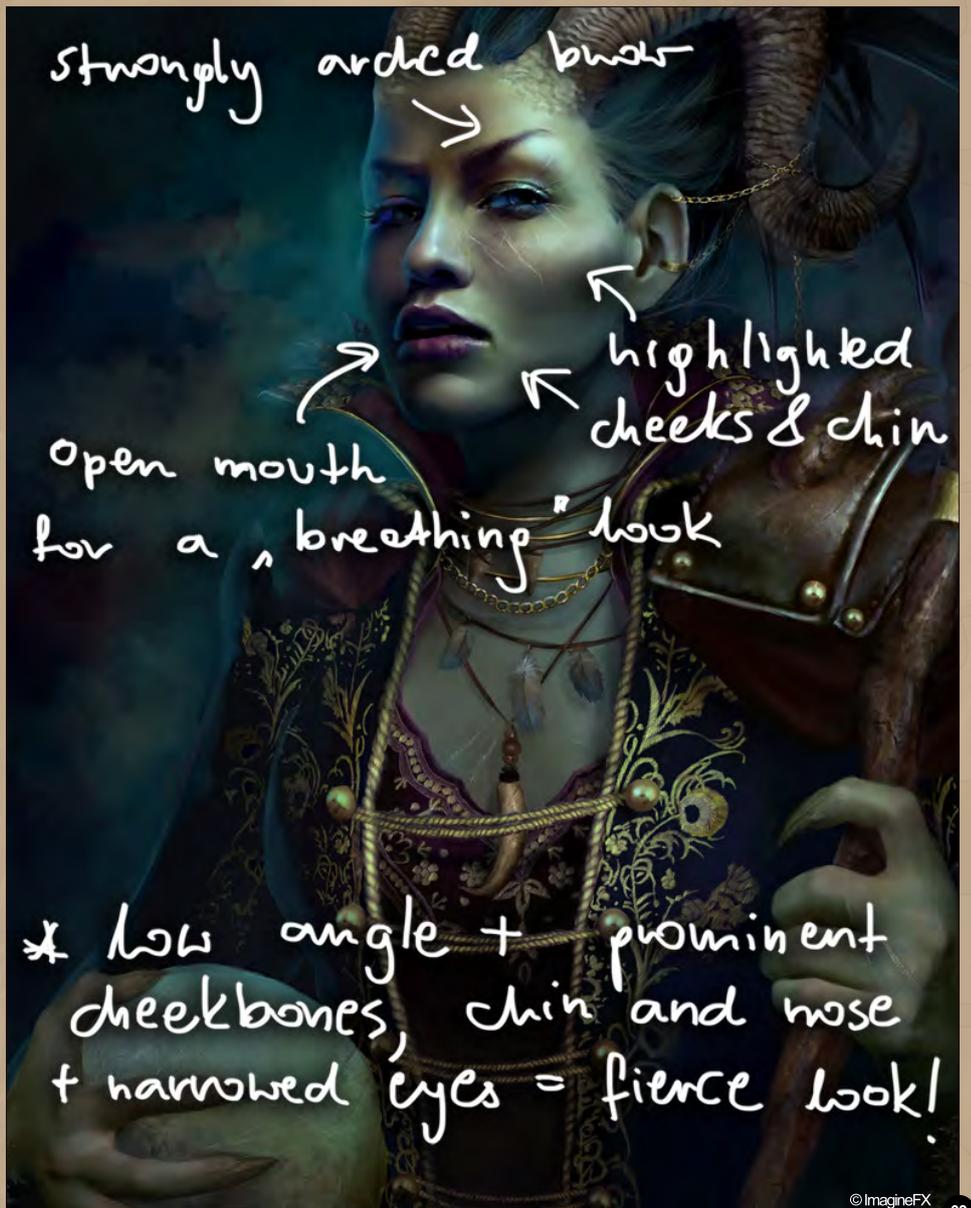
smile, aside from the stretched lips and slightly narrowed shape of eyes, you have to depict their context – the facial structure changed by the tightening of muscles. I marked all the “easy to forget” parts on the sketch in Fig.02.

Now, let's move onto the more subtle means of conveying emotion – modeling of the facial anatomy. This element of painting is complementary and can be used to underline certain features of your character. If you are to paint a delicate, or intimate, scene you might want to make the character's face reflect this. For example, small chin and nose, and huge sad eyes will always look good if you want to express sadness. On the other hand, if you

are painting a fierce warrior, you might want to do the absolute opposite – paint a strong jaw, smaller eyes, thicker eyebrows and very prominent cheekbones (Fig.03). If I was to compare this stage to anything, I would say it's much like picking actors for movie roles - the person has to "fit" the role they play, just like the artist has to match the physiognomy to personality of their characters (Fig.04).

The third aspect that can be used for conveying emotion is character anatomy and posing. I find it a good idea to slightly exaggerate the pose if I want to achieve a more dynamic or dramatic atmosphere (Fig.05). For example, I usually depict my character with their muscles tightened. If you want to see why I do this, stand in front of a mirror, make a loose pose, and next make the same pose, this time tightening all your muscles. Do you see how your posture has changed, even though the pose itself remains unchanged? This trick is especially helpful when painting hands – depicting tightened tendons will add a great impact to your character (Fig.06).

Moving on to another element of depicting emotion, we have the color theme of a painting. As most of you probably already know or at least feel, there are certain situations where some colors perform better than others. And so,



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05



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for sentimental or sad paintings you will more likely use colder tones (grays, blues, violet), while to express energy, enthusiasm you might pick warmer hues (Fig.07). Extremely saturated colors and high contrasts can add a nice magical feel to a painting, while monotonous themes with a few contrasting hues are great for modern compositions. Understandably, all of the above are generalizations, but they work in most situations and can be used as a loose guideline for picking palettes.

Last, but not least, we have the actual composition of the painting. I would like to concentrate on two aspects that I believe play the most important role: perspective and storytelling elements.

The very same object depicted from a high and low angle perspective will look completely different. Low point perspective is a great means to underline a gloomy or menacing atmosphere. When portrayed from below, a human will naturally look taller and authoritative. That is why I always try to use the low point perspective when depicting stronger, bolder characters (Fig.08).

Another element that you should keep in mind is the narrative quality of your paintings. The main emotion does not have to come from your character, but can be underlined, or even fully created, by additional scene elements. To give an example, let's say we have a female character sitting at the window, looking somewhere into the distance. If we place a book and a dried flower on her lap, we will have a character drowned in thought over a bit of literature. If, however, we add some torn cloth and a smashed lamp at her feet, as well as a few scratches on her arm – we will hint that our character is in a state of trauma (Fig.09).

The narrative is very rewarding for an artist, but the hardest element to pull off successfully. It requires a much deeper thought process than the other elements as you cannot be



straightforward. The artist cannot transmit their message directly by depicting raw emotion. Instead, it's about merely passing a hint which the viewer will have to chew on and deduct himself.

Now that you know how to create an emotional impact with your painting, you might wonder when each of these should be used. Truth be told, there are no golden rules for this! Generally, if you want a striking painting you might want to use all the mentioned ways. If you prefer an ambiguous image, you might want to use a limited number of techniques, or even stick to a single one. It is all a matter of the personal taste of the artist and the strength of the depicted mood. After all, we are talking about emotions, not painting techniques. So do not ponder too long on this, use the means that come naturally to you, and remember that the content of your paintings is equally as important as your technique!

## Marta Dahlig

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**“The same things are important each time, like shape, likeness, and values, but the approach may differ. In the end what matters is the final piece.”**

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 05 | Male Caricature | Jason Seiler

## Portraiture - Chapter 05: Male Caricature

Software used: Photoshop

### Introduction

I have done many tutorials and step-by-step guides on creating and painting caricatures, and each time I share a different technique of how this is done. This may frustrate some, but I do not have a set way or formula that I stick with. The same things are important each time, like shape, likeness, and values, but the approach may differ. In the end what matters is the final piece.

### The Painting

As a subject for this tutorial I chose my friend Ben, who is the owner of Deluxe Tattoo in Chicago. He has a great face and I thought he would be perfect for this demonstration. When I start a caricature of someone, one of the first things I do is make sure that I have more than just one reference picture to work from. I went to Ben's shop and took about fifteen or so pictures of him, from various views and angles. This gives me a solid idea of what his head looks like in 3D. I also have a few skulls that hang out with me in my studio. My favorite skull to sketch with is a small skull that fits comfortably in my left hand as I draw. I bought it at AnatomyTools.com for those of you interested. I don't always draw caricatures or portraits while holding a skull, but every once in a while it really comes in handy. It is important when sketching a caricature that you understand the structure and foundation



01

of what lies beneath the skin and muscles. So having a small skull that you can hold and tilt with one hand while you sketch is a real advantage.

When starting this piece, I first thought I would do a finished line sketch similar to the style and look of a sketch I recently did of my friend Brian (Fig.01). But as I began sketching I felt it would be more interesting to show how I draw and paint caricatures under the tight deadlines that I have to deal with on a weekly basis.

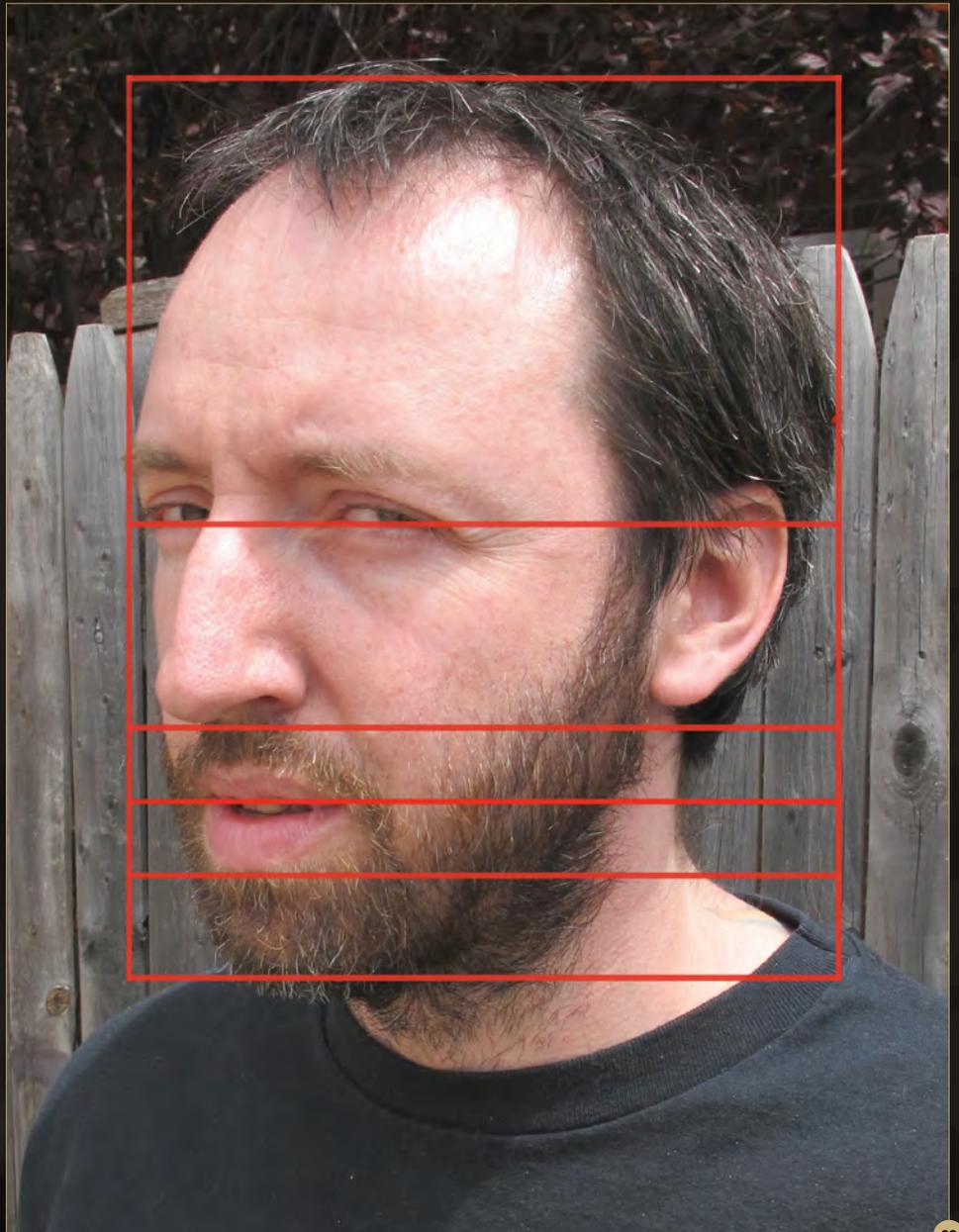


02

To get warmed up, I decided to draw a few quick thumbnail sketches, as seen in Fig.02. These sketches were done in two to five minutes each, with the exception of the sketch on the far right. The purpose for these quick doodles is to familiarize myself with my subject. Sometimes it is a challenge to put down the

exaggerations and shapes that I see in my head with a drawing or sketch done only with line, as was the case with this caricature. When under a quick deadline I don't usually spend much time sketching the accuracy of the features. Instead I put down a basic shape, and merely suggest where the features will go. Then I begin to block in the shapes with broad brush strokes. I cover ground much faster this way and can easily make adjustments whilst I paint.

But before I get into that, let me explain what I look for when starting a caricature. First ask yourself, what is the shape of your subject's head? For example, Ben's head seems to have the shape of an upside down egg. Next I'll ask myself, where is the weight on Ben's face? Meaning, does he have a higher forehead which would mean that the weight is in his forehead? Or does he have a smaller forehead and a larger chin? In this case, I decided that the weight on Ben's face is in his forehead. In fact, he doesn't have much of a chin at all. If you look at **Fig.03**, you will see that I created a rectangle which goes around Ben's head. I then put in a few horizontal lines, first starting with the top of his head, then with one going through his eyes, another just beneath his nose, one through his mouth, another under his mouth, and the last under his chin. This diagram shows the head divided in a way that will help make your choice of exaggeration easier, and help distinguish the relationships between the features. This isn't something that I normally do; eventually caricaturing will become natural and you will begin to draw and exaggerate with feeling. If you

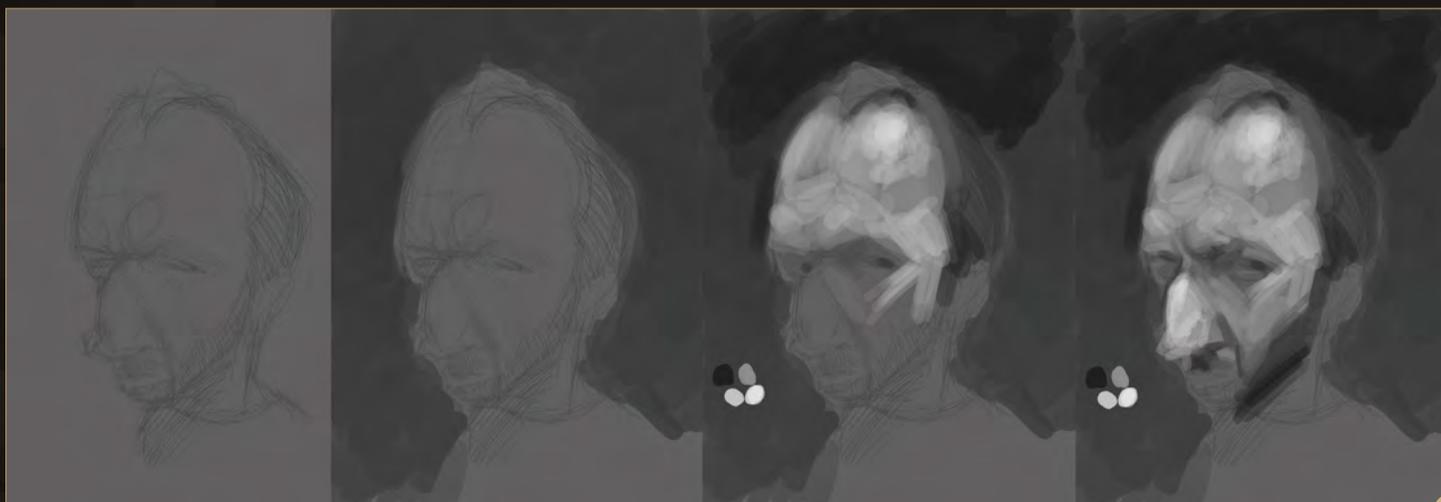


look at Fig.03 you will see that Ben has quite a big forehead, mostly due to the fact that he has a receding hairline. Notice how there isn't a big distance between the nose and the mouth,

but the space where the nose lies is quite long. Also, if you look at the space from the bottom of his lip to the bottom of his chin, you will see that he doesn't have much of a chin at all.



For another example of this I took a picture of myself and did a ten minute sketch, see **Fig.04**. Similar to Ben, I too have quite a big forehead. But you will also notice a few differences, such as a shorter nose, and the space between my nose and mouth is slightly less than that of Ben's. The space from my bottom lip to chin is greater than the space between Ben's lip and chin. Understanding these relationships will give you a good place to exaggerate from.



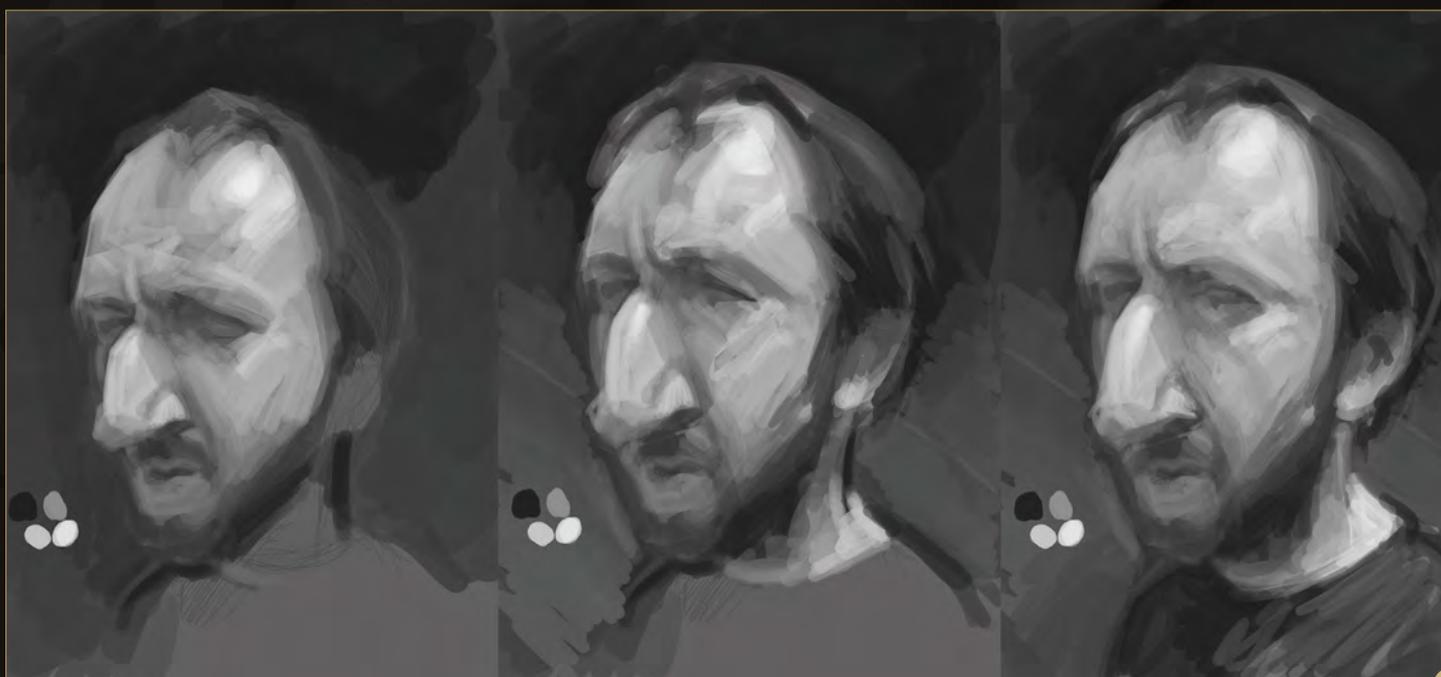
05

Going back to Fig.03, after establishing where to put the weight and placement of features, I now question the shape and size of the features in relation to one another. For example, how close are the eyes, are they small, sunken, or are they large? What shape are the eyes, what shape is the nose? Are the nostrils large or small, do they have large or small wings? Does the subject have creases or wrinkles on their face, and if so what kind of shapes are they creating? Don't forget about the ears – how big are the ears in relation to the nose and the rest of the face? What shape are the ears? Take a look at Ben's ear in comparison to my own. You can see just how different ears are from one person to the next.

I believe there are three things that are the most important to get right in order to create a strong and accurate likeness. Head shape, eyes, and the mouth. If any of these are wrong, the caricature's likeness will no doubt suffer greatly. I mainly focus on the eyes and mouth. If you get the eyes wrong you can kiss your likeness goodbye, and the mouth is just as important. Think about it like this. When you talk with a friend or watch someone on T.V., where do you look? I know that I look at the person's eyes quite a bit and when they talk I watch their mouth. What is fun though with both the eyes and the mouth is that they both can be used to enhance expression and character. By accurately exaggerating the eyes and mouth

you achieve greater likeness as well as the humor that is necessary in a caricature. After all, caricaturing is exaggerating the truth, or understanding the truth of what you are seeing in your subject and then pushing it further.

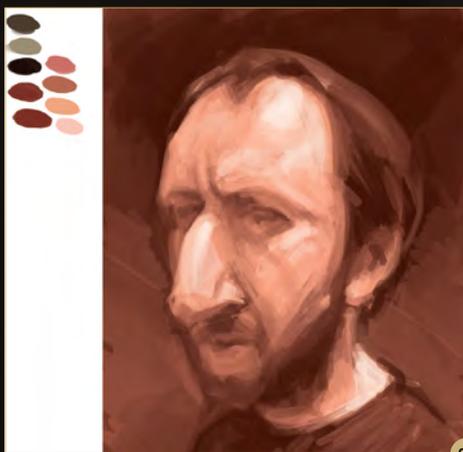
Back to creating my caricature of Ben, if you take a look at Fig.05 – 06 you will see the gradual steps that I saved while blocking in with a round paintbrush. After sketching the thumbnails, I realized that I wasn't capturing what I was seeing in my head, so I decided to move things along by painting in shade and values rather than spending more time drawing with line. I use this time to establish my values, using black, white, and a couple of lighter grays



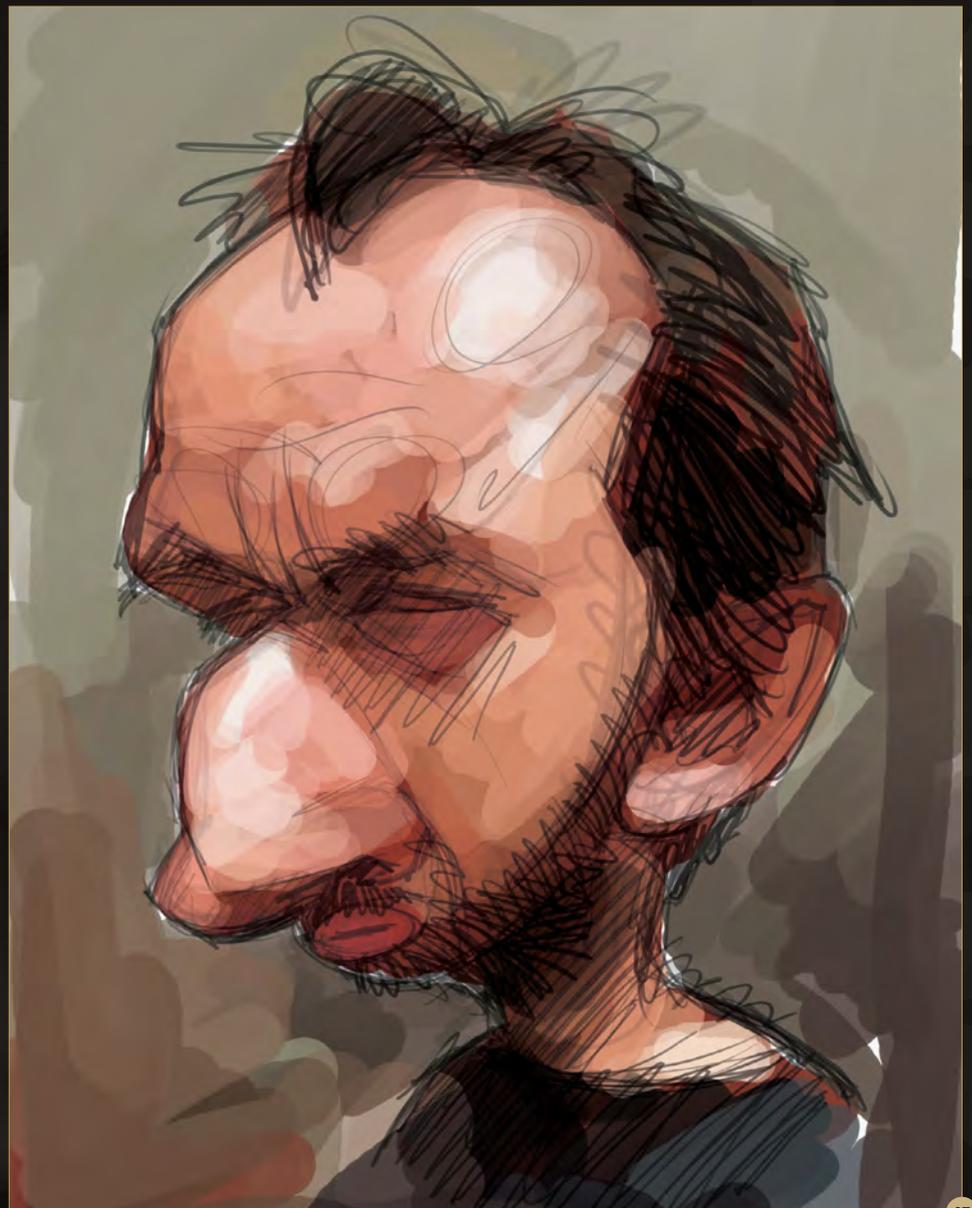
06

that fall in between. I set my brush to 90% flow and 90% - 100% opacity. At this stage I am only using a round brush, and only painting with larger brushes. There is no need to use smaller brushes or to zoom in for that matter – don't get caught up with details until later on. As I have decided to draw with large paint strokes rather than thin lines, it means I can capture both drawing and values all at the same time which saves time. At this point I am still painting all in one layer. I usually create a new layer for a small palette of values that I select from while painting. Once I have enough values painted into my painting I won't need the palette, and I delete the layer. To select my values from this point on I use ones that already exist within my painting, and if I have to make any adjustments I make them in the color picker.

If you look at the progression of my value painting in Fig.05 – 06, you will notice that I made a lot of changes to structure as well as the placement of Ben's features. My first feeling was to give Ben a much larger forehead, but as I painted I began to realize that I was neglecting the size and unique qualities of his nose. To fix that I quickly painted the eyes higher on the head and extended the length of the nose. It's not that Ben's forehead isn't important, but as I developed the shapes I realized that it was his nose that needed more attention. You may find it helpful to create a list showing the order of importance. In Ben's case the list would be as follows: larger nose that takes up most the face, large forehead, small mouth, and basically no



08



07

chin. Once you have the main idea of how your subject's face works, you can then decide how far you would like to push the exaggeration. For this demonstration my purpose wasn't to make fun of Ben, but instead capture his essence. So I decided to exaggerate less. For further options of exaggeration, I did a three minute doodle of a more exaggerated Ben (**Fig.07**).

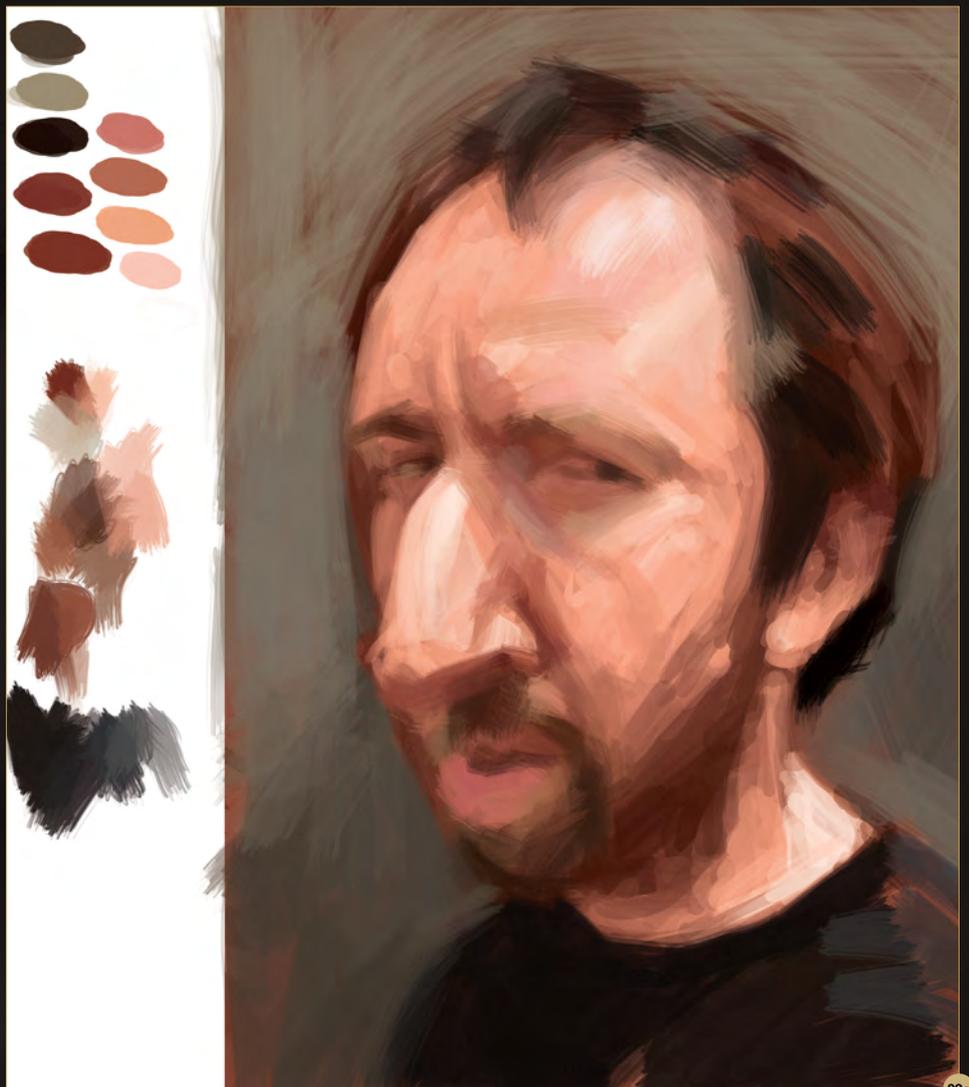
Values are the lightness or darkness of a color, rather than the actual color itself, and at this stage of the painting I am preparing a foundation of values to build off of once I begin using color. When blocking in my values I slightly close my eyes, blurring my sight so that the detail of what I am looking at is softer. I

look for the darkest darks and the lightest lights. Once I have those established, I block in a few mid tones. You can see that my last version of Ben in Fig.06 is still very basic; there are no real details, only suggested detail. The face and values are close enough to move onto the next stage: painting and finishing in color. The time that I have spent so far on these first steps is about thirty minutes.

By this stage (**Fig.08**) I have prepared a rough black and white value painting, with enough values and structure to move on to the color. To begin painting in color I create a new layer above my value painting, and fill it with an orange-like brown, specifically 20% cyan, 66%

magenta, 67% yellow, and 1% black. I choose this color randomly, depending on how I'm feeling at the time. My reference pictures felt a little cool in temperature and I wanted a warmer painting. Next, I change that layer mode from Normal to Color. Now the orange-like brown is transparent, changing my black and white image into a monochromatic block-in. Next, I extend the left side of my painting, to create a palette and area to mix and create my colors. A lot of what I do is by feeling, and I know that the most important thing to get right is the values. It's been said that if the values are right, you can pretty much paint with any colors that you want. To create my palette I select the flesh-like colors that were created by layering the orange-like brown over my value painting. Next I select a few more colors that I feel I will need for the painting, like reds and greens as well as black. It is important that the colors I choose harmonize with one another. For example, I won't choose a bright red; instead I'll pick a red that shares the same values and tones as are seen in Fig.08, and likewise with any other color I choose.

Next I create a new layer (**Fig.09a**) and fill it with 75% gray. I then go into my filters and select



09a



09b

Add Noise. After this I select Blur More, set the layer to Soft Light and bring the opacity down to 26%. There is no set way of doing this; you will have to mess with these settings to get the look you desire. The reason I do this is to give my digital painting a slight texture that helps it feel less digital and more traditional as this is the look that I prefer to achieve. Without this Noise layer the painting would still look nice, but it would look too slick for my taste. This isn't something that I do on all of my paintings, but I would say that I do it on most of them, some with more noise, and others with just a touch. After this I create another layer that is placed above the orange-like brown layer and under the Noise layer. This is the layer that I will begin to paint on. Up to this point I have been using a round brush, but at this stage of the painting, I begin to use brush #24, which is a standard

Photoshop brush. Years ago my friend Bobby Chiu at Imaginism Studios created a really nice texture that can be used with any brush that has the same texture as real paint. I don't know how to create brushes, so Bobby was nice enough to share this texture with me. So occasionally I will add this texture to brush #24 to give my digital painting a texture like that of a traditional painting. I adjust the levels of opacity to my liking. Sometimes I want a lot more texture, other times, just hints of it (**Fig.09b**). I also use another brush quite a bit, and to tell you the truth, I don't even know where this brush came from. It is similar to brush #24, but a bit more brush like, I call this brush "my favorite brush". You can see in Fig.09a that I have begun to block in the painting quite a bit in comparison to Fig.08, mostly using my favorite brush with a bit of paint texture added.



10

At this stage I am still squinting my eyes quite a bit and focusing on the values, but I am also concentrating on color temperature. I prefer to keep it simple, so I quickly block in a cooler gray-like green into the background.

As I do this I purposely let some of the red from the background show through here and there; this helps the painting feel more traditional than digital. My colors at this stage are basic browns and flesh-like colors to cool and warm where it is needed. At this time I also start to define the features and structure of his face. I locate

important areas of the skull to keep in mind as I paint, such as the Superciliary crest (or brow ridge), Temporal line, Zygomatic process of the frontal bone, the Zygomatic bone, the Orbits, and of course, the Nasal bone. If you don't understand what I am talking about, I suggest you invest in a few human anatomy books, because I find it very important to understand what it is that you are painting.

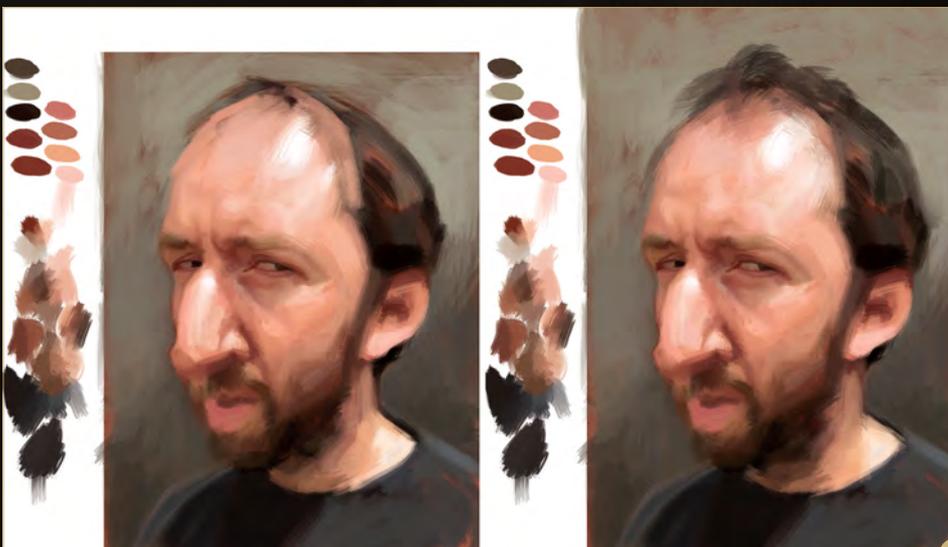
I continue the same process of adjusting the face in **Fig.10 – 11**, adding more layers of paint, and making adjustments where they are



11

needed. You can see by comparing **Fig.10** to **Fig.11** that I began to mess around with his shoulders, and in **Fig.11** I have now started to work on his eyes using a smaller brush. It is important to note that I have not yet zoomed in to detail the eyes they are still more of a suggestion than anything else.

In **Fig.12** I decided to increase the size of the canvas size and add more space around Ben's head, adjusting the composition as well. I also felt that Ben's forehead could use a bit more work as well. This brings us to **Fig.13 – 14**.



12



13



14a

There are not many things that change between these images, but you can see that I continue to draw and adjust the structure and likeness while trying to mix accurate values and color. Also in Fig.14 I start to detail and develop Ben's eyes (Fig.14a – c).

Up to this point I have only used large brushes and have painted from a distance. To paint the eyes I zoom in and begin to use smaller brushes, but my technique hasn't changed at all, the only difference is that I have to now slow things down a bit in order to focus on the details of the eyes. This is the part of the painting where you need to be patient. I can easily spend a couple hours just painting eyes, but for this painting I wasn't interested in a photo realistic



14b



14c



14d

look, instead I wanted to end up with an image that looks realistic yet painterly. I enjoy brush work and work hard to create brush strokes that are pleasing to the eye. You may notice that

there are all sorts of soft edges, and a lot of subtle changes in color and value? In the photo reference in Fig.14b, you can see that there is a variety of colors. Don't let this overwhelm you. To simplify I again squint my eyes and as the photo blurs, the colors unify and pull together. Those are the colors and values that I focus on.



15

Continuing on to Fig.15, you will notice that I develop the areas around the eyes a bit more but also begin to work on the nose, mouth, and ear. I don't stay in one particular area for more than a few minutes or so. Rather than just finishing one of the features, such as the nose or mouth, I prefer to move back and forth between the features. This way I can see how the painting is coming together as a whole. This is important as you don't want to overwork one area over another.



16a

Moving on to **Fig.16a**, I no longer have a need for the palette of colors that I created on the left side of the painting. From this point on, I will use the Eye Drop tool and eye drop colors that already exist within the painting, and adjust the values by going to the color picker. You will notice that I have begun to add details such as pores in Ben's nose (**Fig.16b**).

For this I switch back to a soft round brush. Remember, my intention isn't to create a photo realistic painting, but instead a painting that feels and looks more like a traditional painting. So instead of getting in there and painting



17



16b

every single pore and crease, I merely make suggestions. This is the fun step, painting hair. I love painting hair; there is always an opportunity to add humor and character just in how you paint the hair. For the majority of the steps, you will notice that the hair and facial hair were solid shapes of color. I always wait until the end of a painting to add details such as pores and little hairs. I start detailing only when I am happy with my colors and the values, and when the eyes, nose, mouth and ears are finished. To paint the hair, I created a new layer above my main layer and switch to a soft round brush. I make sure that Shape Dynamics is clicked on giving my brush a point. After selecting the colors that I want to use for the hair, I begin painting in small hairs on top of what I have already blocked in. After I put a layer of this down, I select the Blur tool and set it to about 20% and then lightly pass it over the layer of hairs. I then select the Eraser tool, turn opacity to at least 50%, and make a light pass over the hairs. What this does is soften the hairs slightly and push them back a bit into the painting. Repeat this process a few times to create depth (**Fig.17**).

To bring my painting of Ben to a close, I make a new layer and set it to Multiply (**Fig.18**). I continue to use a soft round brush, but click off the Shape Dynamics option. To create freckles, I eye drop the color of skin that I will paint the

freckles on, and then randomly paint in freckles of all sizes and shapes. Once I am finished, I select the Eraser tool and lightly pass it over the freckles until they are softened into the skin. I felt that his hair still needed a little more work, so I created another layer for hair and repeated the steps I mentioned for Fig.17, adding more hair to the back of his neck as well as to his beard and neck. Once the painting is in a place where I feel it is finished, I like to zoom out so that I can see the painting from a distance and see how it looks at a smaller size. I will also flip the painting horizontally as well as vertically to see if anything strange catches my eye. After my approval, I sign the painting and call it a day.

I am so honored to have been asked to do this step-by-step. I do not consider myself to be a master of anything; instead I think of myself as a student for life. I will continue to work hard and to push myself to learn new and better ways to create my art. It has been a passion of mine ever since I can remember, and I hope that what I have shared here will inspire and re-fuel your passion for art, whether you are interested in caricature or not.

## Jason Seiler

For more from this artist visit:

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

Or contact them at:

[jseiler@jpusa.org](mailto:jseiler@jpusa.org)

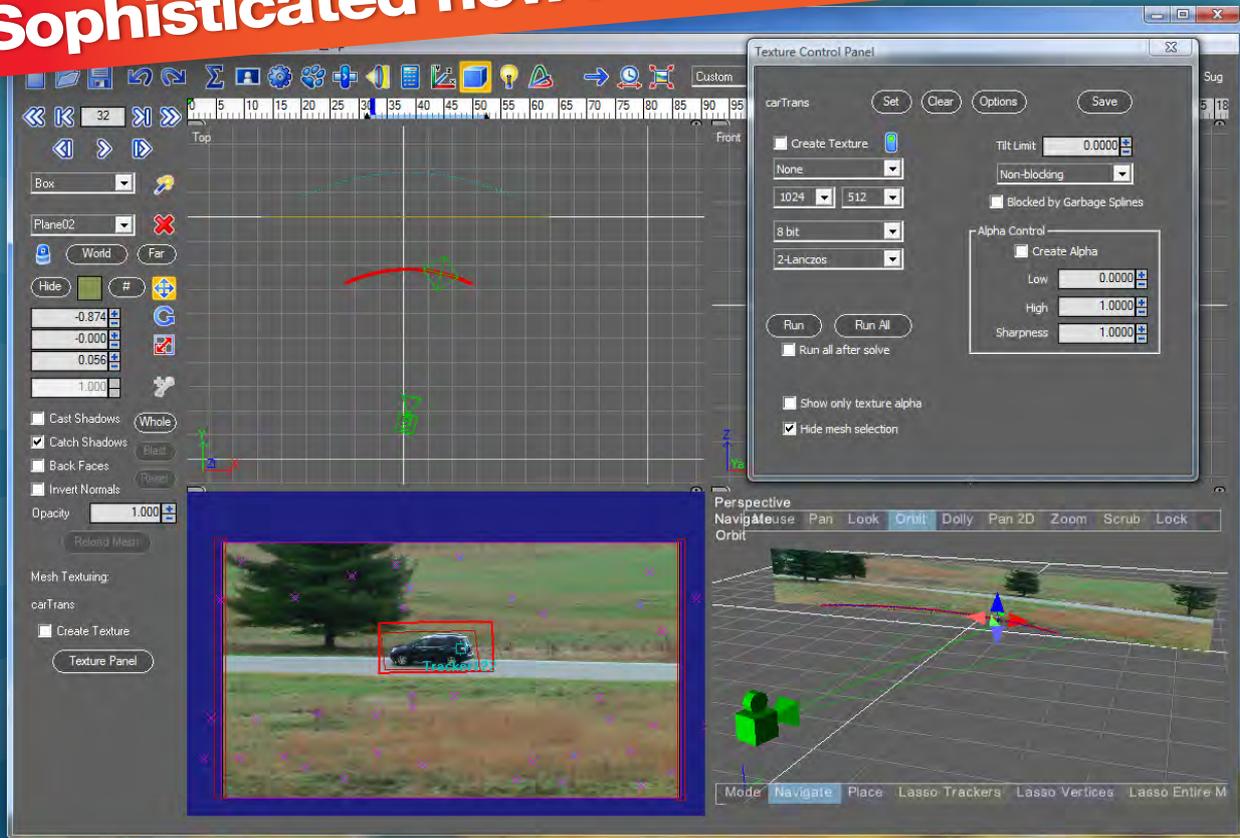




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LIMITED EDITION MARCH # 01

# MASTERING COMIC ART

**Chapter 01: Sketching | This Issue**  
**Chapter 02: Inking | April Issue 064**  
**Chapter 03: Colouring | May Issue 065**

The comic industry is huge! You only need to take a few seconds to think of the countless films that have been made off the back of successful comics to realise their importance in modern media. Comic book art is a real skill, and requires an understanding of techniques that may not be familiar to every digital artist. This series will talk you through the whole process, from creating a sketch, to inking, through to coloring your comic book.



# MASTERING COMIC ART

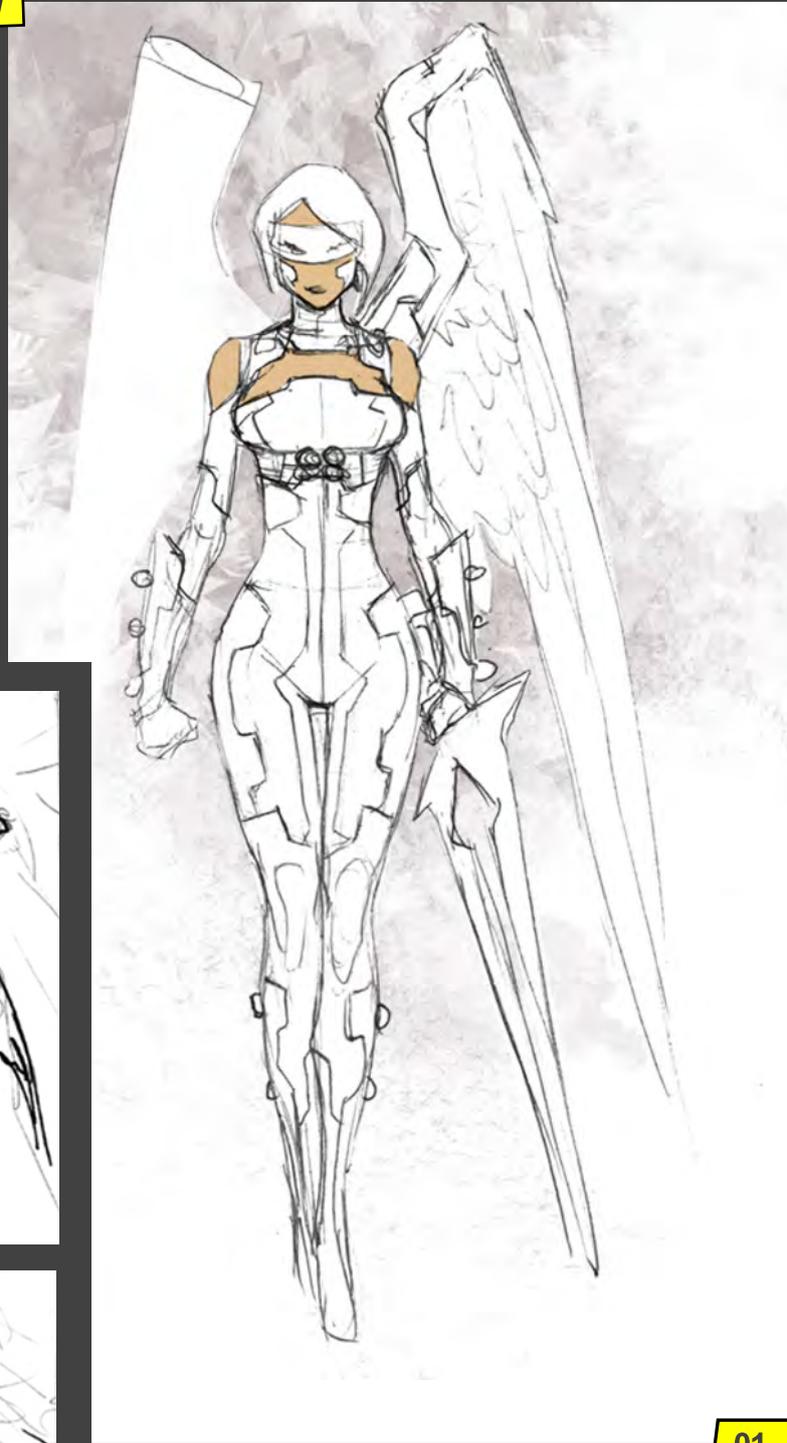
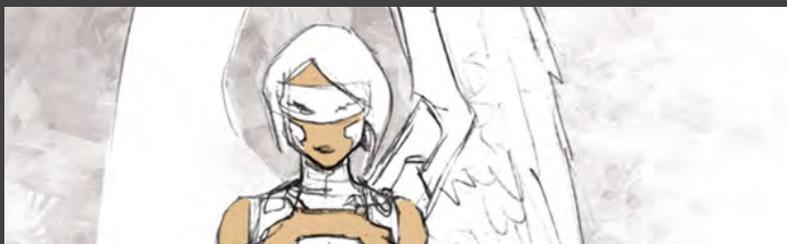
## CHAPTER 01 - SKETCHING

SOFTWARE USED : PHOTOSHOP

### DESIGN

In designing a super-hero from scratch, I try to keep two essential guidelines in mind. Firstly, the costume must communicate everything you need to know about the character and his/her special abilities at a glance, and secondly, it needs to feel iconic. Superheroes, after all, are SUPER they've got god-like abilities and tend to embody some big concept or another (be it an elemental force, animal savagery, patriotism, death, etc..) so the clothes really must convey the notion of being bigger-than-life.

In the case of "Tech Angel" here, I've created an interesting thematic mash-up by combining techy shapes and hard-energy holography with angelic wings and an all-white palette.

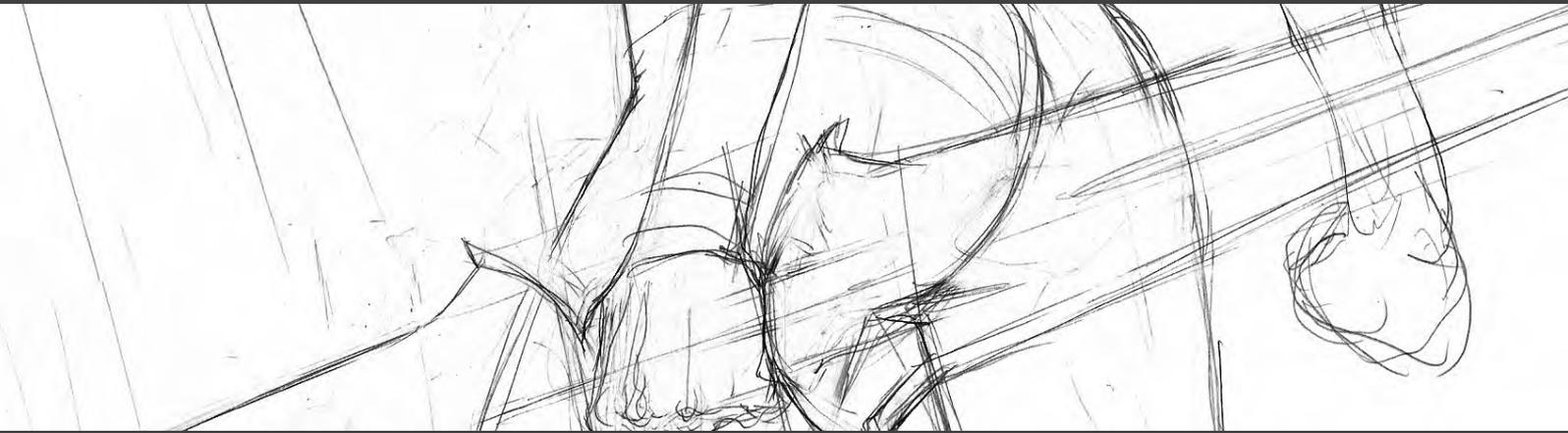


01

For me, this hits exactly the right notes for a super-heroine: sleek and sexy, but also very strong and appropriately geared for combat. I leave the shoulders, upper chest, and face bare to help draw the focus upward, which will help later during the coloring phase.

### CHOOSING A POSE

For any comic page, editors expect to see and sign off on layouts before an artist commits to final pencils. With a cover, you'll often provide several options and the editor will either choose a favorite or provide notes for a second go-around. Layouts should be simple gestural drawings around 2-3 inches tall, and the idea is to communicate pose and a general story – and that's it. Shading and detail would be a waste of time at this point and detract from the primary goal (Fig.01).



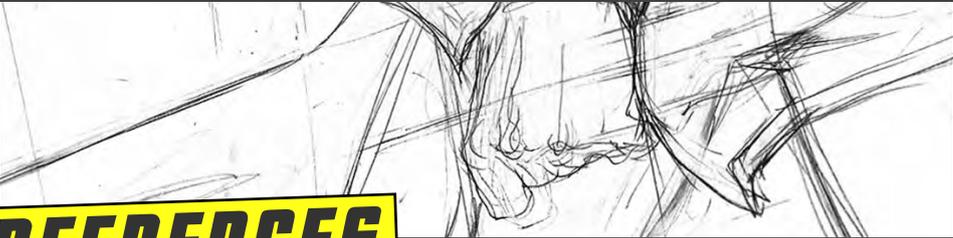
I'm treating this cover like a #1 issue, and because we're meeting this character for the first time, a portrait type of composition makes the most sense. I try out various ideas exploring warrior and angel poses, and, ultimately, my editor and I settle on #2. It's a sexy side/back shot, which will definitely help attract eyeballs on a crowded comic stand, and we get a nice close-up look at distinctive costume details like her wings and sword. An intense light source (from heaven or a Tron-like computer environment perhaps?) fills out the background.

Incidentally, note that on each of these layouts I've taken into account where the logo will go. Never forget about the logo – treat it like part of the composition.

In the past, I used to begin each full-sized penciled piece by projecting the layout onto a blank page taped to the wall. Now that seems like a waste of time and overly-precious as well. Try to avoid crutches like these.

Rather, begin with loosely-drawn lines focusing only on recapturing the proportions and energy of the original layout. I look back and forth between sketch and full-sized image constantly to make sure the bouncy, organic quality remains intact. At some point during the process, I decide that the sword has better balance as a dual-blade, and I spend some time figuring out a convincing pose for her hand (**Fig.02**).





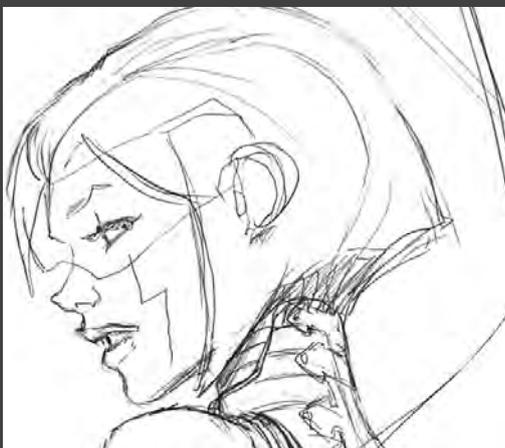
## REFERENCES

Do I use references for the pose of the body? Absolutely! In drawing a curvy female or ripped male, it's almost impossible to get all the nuances right without some real-life examples to draw from. I spent years worrying that this was somehow "cheating" and I'm here to tell you: get over it. Study anatomy carefully and begin each drawing on your own. When it's time to add details, use references to aid you. I have a large collection of photos categorized by viewing angle (front-on, profile, back, etc.) and with a combination of these on my drawing table, I have the information I need to refine the character's form.

## CORRECTIONS + ADJUSTMENTS

But I'm far from finished. Stepping back from the art, I see that I've made some significant errors in my proportions. This can happen sometimes when you're drawing at a large scale; because the top of the paper's tilted down and away from you, it's easy to overcompensate and draw things near the top too large. Held at an angle, the art looks fine, but seen straight-on, it's warped. And that's what's happened here; the head's too large and the neck is too long, especially given the low-angle we've got on this character (**Fig.03**).



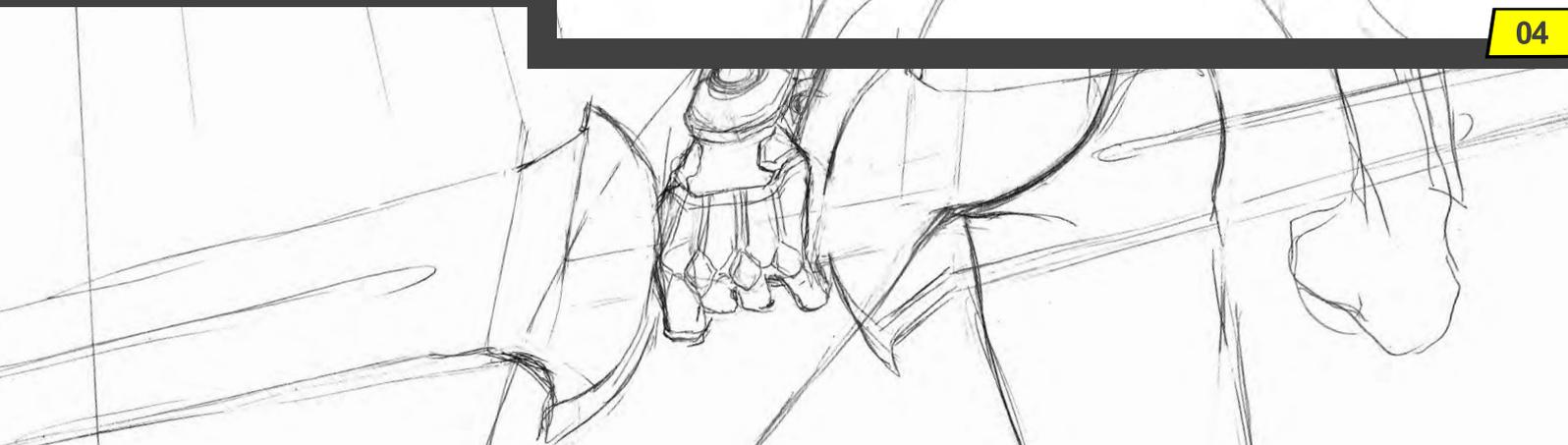


So I scan the image and bring it into Photoshop where I can easily transform the scaling and adjust the head. At the same time, I use Liquify to push a few other things, like her shoulder, into a more naturalistic position.

Another helpful trick at this point is to flip your canvas horizontally or likewise hold your drawing up to a mirror. Mistakes tend to jump out like sore thumbs when the image is viewed this way, and you should do it often. In Photoshop, I've mapped the flip command to the F5 key as an Action, and this greatly speeds up the process.

I make one last adjustment to the basic pose, by pulling her right leg outward a bit, and then I'm ready to start on her outfit. It might be tempting to add costuming details before this stage, but I wouldn't recommend it. Make absolutely sure that your pose is sound before continuing, or you may have to redo work later (**Fig.04**).

Using my original front-view design as inspiration, I begin to apply similar shapes to the character's back, designing as I go but informed by two useful rules of thumb: firstly that costume elements work best when they reflect and flow with the shape of the underlying anatomy and secondly, it helps to establish a visual "language" and stick to it. In this case, my design vocabulary consists of triangles,



half-hexagons, and the occasional circle – all geometric forms, in other words. Organic lines would probably feel out of place on this tech-based character.

## ADDING THE DETAILS

More surface details. I continue to use the hexagon motif established earlier, as I render the sword and leggings. Recently I've noticed that the hexagon – and particularly hexagon mesh patterns – have become an all too common visual shorthand for the sci-fi genre. I'm deliberately using the shape in a different way here, because I think the standard mesh thing's pretty played-out. If I use a texture overlay during the color phase, I'll definitely go with a different pattern (**Fig.05**).





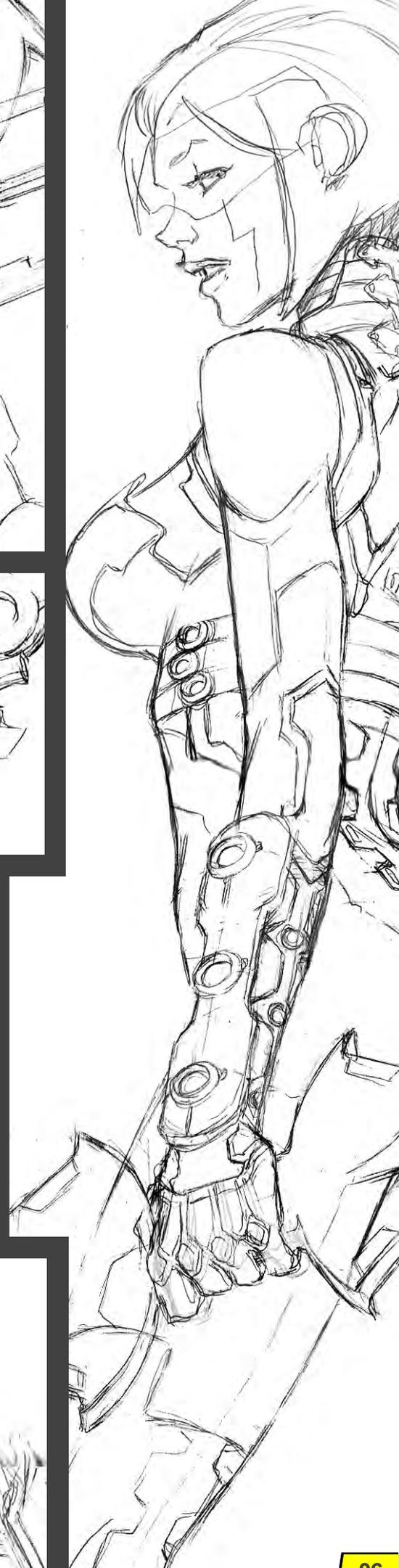
Note that it helps to juxtapose areas of dense detail next to areas that are more sparse. This gives the eye a “breather” so to speak, as it moves around the form.

It also helps me focus the viewer’s attention where I want it (which, in this case, is her \*ahem\* shapely behind).

All this time, I’ve been debating whether to interpret Tech Angel’s wings as metal or hard light, and you can tell from the sketch that I originally had feather-like shapes in mind

(Fig.06).

Well, at this point, I commit to complex, machine-like forms made of hard light, sort of combining the best of both worlds. I feel like the sword and wings are shaping up to be her coolest, most unique assets, and I want to put a literal spotlight on them. I complete the right leg and arm, but try to leave the line weight and level of detail a little lighter here to help sell the idea that they’re further back in space. If you look at the left vs. right wing, you’ll notice that I pulled the same trick there. This really helps complete the illusion that one object is closer than another.





# EXPRESSIONS

All that remains is the face and head. Fortunately, I hit the expression just about right in the sketch phase, and all I really have to do at this point is tighten up the hair and some of the finer details. But because they're so critical let's discuss faces for a moment. For female characters, the important thing to remember is



that "less is more." Even a single unnecessary line can age your character 10 years. This means that you have to nail the lines you do put down (**Fig.07**).

Another thing to keep in mind is that facial expression is one of only two key tools you've got (the other being body language) in communicating a character's state of mind, personality and intent. In this case, the "story" is about strength and, to a lesser extent, sex appeal. She looks back at the viewer as if to say: "Don't mess with me", but you could just as easily read it as: "Hey, eyes up here, buddy."

So there's a little built-in viewer interaction, and that's absolutely vital if you want to engage people. Other strategies for this might include a visual gag, pop culture reference, or just a metric ton of detail – in each case, you're asking the viewer to bring something to the table and to invest some thought in your art, and ultimately, that's what makes a cover memorable.

## David Nakayama

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# 2DA next month

Here is what's in the next issue of 2DArtist

## Interviews

Atomhawk Design

## Articles

Sketchbook of Robbie Lawrence

## Tutorials

Art Fundamentals

Chapter 4: story Telling by Tomasz Jedruszek

Portraiture

Chapter 6: Female by Charlie Bowater

Mastering Comic Art

Chapter 2: Inking by David Nakayama

Photo Real Fantasy

Chapter 4: Yeti by Weiye Yin

## Making of

Soul Hunting

by Songnan Li

## Galleries

another 10 of the best  
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Image by Atomhawk Design



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# PHOTOREAL FANTASY DRAGON

**Chapter 1 | January Issue 061**

Griffin

**Chapter 2 | February Issue 062**

Giant

**Chapter 3 | This Issue**

Dragon

**Chapter 4 | Next Issue**

Yeti

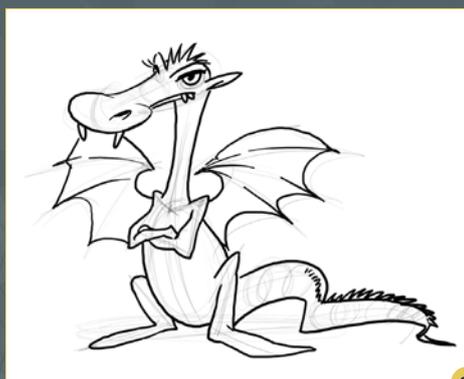
**Chapter 5 | May Issue 065**

Loch Ness Monster

**Chapter 6 | June Issue 066**

Alien

The fantasy genre is hugely popular in the CG industry and has been showcased in hundreds of movies, computer games and artworks over the years. With such potential for magic, monsters and imaginations to run wild, it's easy to see why fantasy is such an attractive subject. But giving fantastical ideas enough of a basis in reality to be convincing can be difficult. In this series our talented artists are going to take one aspect of fantasy – legendary creatures – and show us how they would tackle this problem. Some use photo integration, others paint the creatures very carefully with a steady hand, but all share the benefits of their experience and reveal the tricks and techniques they use to make the unreal seem real.



01

## Photoreal Fantasy - Dragon

Software used: Photoshop

Today we going to paint an unreal creature, a dragon to be exact, and place him in a realistic scene to make him look believable and real. Before we begin with the scene we have to design our creature. Dragons are a common subject matter within art, so it is important to design them from scratch. You may say, "why should we design it from scratch?" I think it is the first step towards making it original and believable.

What makes something believable? This is an important question and we will follow a couple of steps to develop our flat drawing into a realistic being.

### Base Drawing

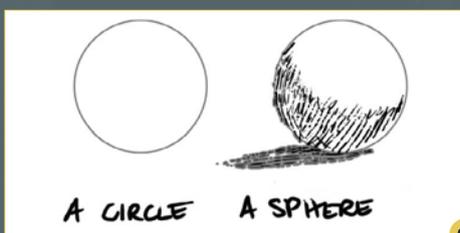
What we have here is nice fella, but he isn't very realistic is he (Fig.01)? Why? Because we do not come across many cartoon creatures! What we do meet a lot of, however, are birds, dogs, cows – perhaps even more – and all these are creatures that can be looked at and we can work out how much they weigh, what color they are etc. We can also work out what they eat and how they move.



05



02



03

Our first step into creating our realistic creature will be to transform our fantasy being into something we can relate to real things. We have to rebuild the dragon's anatomy so it looks like some of the creatures walking and breathing on our planet. The art of creating great fantasy creatures is to keep them a balance between unlimited fantasy and pure biology.

Do you think Fig.02 is any better? That is not the best dragon design you have ever seen, but it is definitely more realistic. Our client should be able to tell how evolution created this kind of creature. Even if our target is pure fantasy we should still give it real-world features. For example, if you are painting creatures living on an alien planet, you must understand that alien planets have very physical aspects; after all, the entire universe is built out of the same material. Let's say our creature lives on Mercury. It may have thick skin, no eyes because of strong sunlight or armored feet to walk through acid rivers. But it is rather less probable it has nine wings or wheels instead of legs.

Another example is deep ocean creatures. They look weird, but still they have the same



04

anatomy features as mammals or regular fish. Species may develop different forms depending on their environmental conditions, but when it comes to anatomy they are all the same: bone joints, muscles and skin. Relating our fantasy creature to real animals is the best way to make it convincing.

### Making it 3D

Since we are 3D creatures living in a 3D world, everything that is flat doesn't seem real enough. Our dragon so far is pretty realistic, but still kind of cartoony. Let's change that by taking it into 3D. What determines if an object looks 3D or 2D? Shadows (Fig.03 – 04)! Ok so now we are ready to believe it is a real creature. It is quite convincing, but still needs a final touch.

### Color

Since we do not see many line art grayscale creatures around us, we need to bring our dragon into the color world. Once again, even with a fantasy creation we should still keep it reasonable and make sure it relates to our world. Let's see why (Fig.05). Beautiful isn't it? But be honest, would you ever believe in a creature with that set of colors? It looks like

a pretty rare combination to me. What we are trying to do here is make it easier for your eyes to accept that this is a dragon. Let's see some more combinations that are perhaps a little more natural (Fig.06 – 09).

As you can see, our creature will look much better in toned, dirty earthly colors and in a limited palette. In this world every creature is trying to blend into the environment it lives in. But as you can see, even in this narrow palette the amount of possible color combinations is countless, and this is how nature is.

## Match the Creature to the Situation

What is left is to place our imaginary creature in the real world. To keep it realistic you must focus on a couple things. Perspective; we humans see the world in perspective and it is basic logic to show this in a picture. Everything further away is smaller and everything that is nearer is bigger. If we want the scene to be realistic we must reflect some sort of perspective. In this case we use a low point to make it look more dramatic. Right, now we can see the entire situation with the "victim's" eyes!

The next step is the palette. Use natural colors. In the real world there are more bluish and greenish colors than red or pink tones. Of course they still exist and you should use them, just keep the overall tone in between the green and blue area.

Reflecting realistic lighting is critical, and adds to the feeling of the scene. The key to this is to be a patient and good observer. This is not easy to understand and you can't understand all existing light phenomena, but it is worth a try!

The atmosphere also has a large impact. Haze, distance, fog and air density all help a lot to make the scene believable and realistic (Fig.10).



06



07



08



09

## Tomasz Jedruszek

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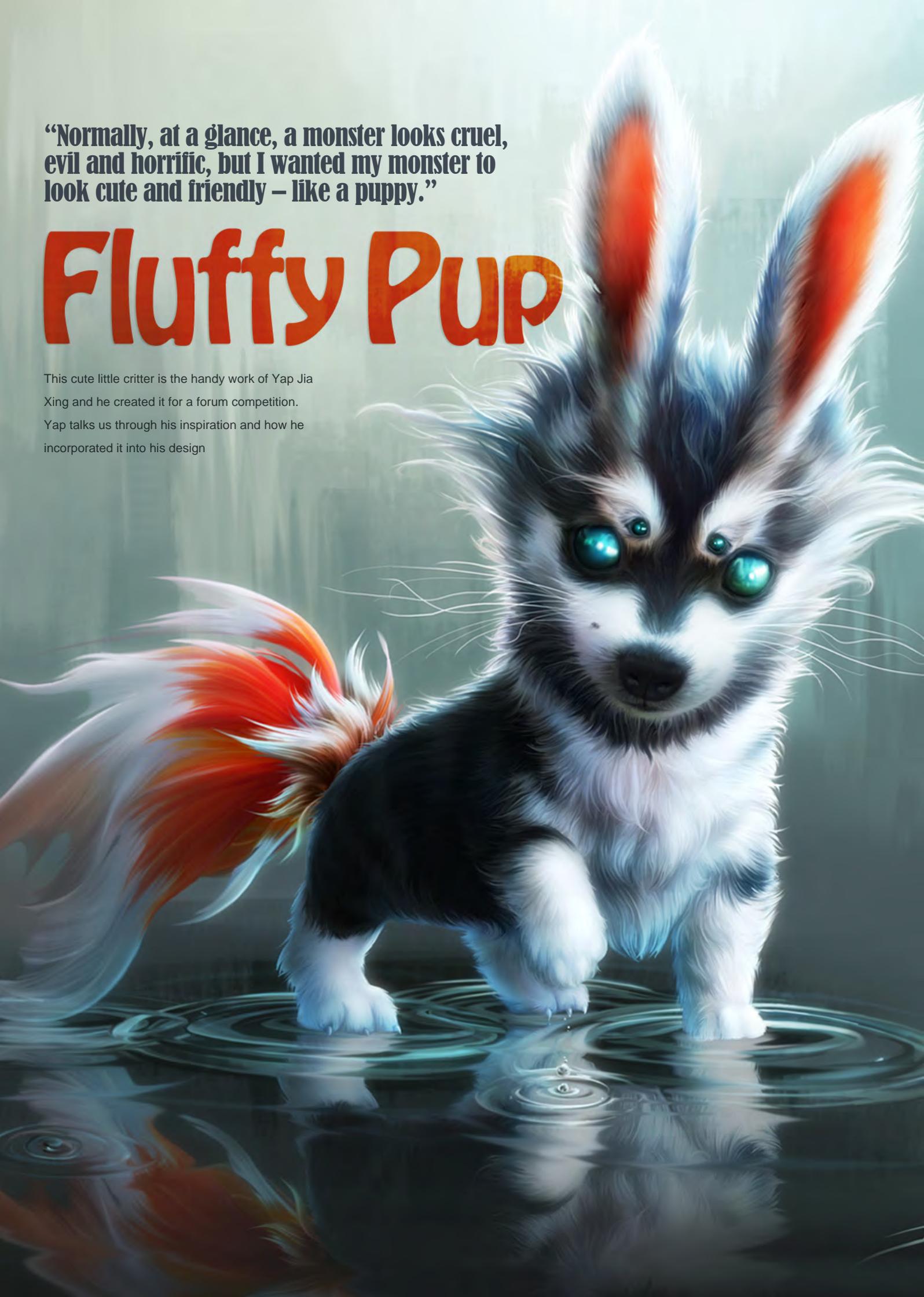
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**“Normally, at a glance, a monster looks cruel, evil and horrific, but I wanted my monster to look cute and friendly – like a puppy.”**

# Fluffy Pup

This cute little critter is the handy work of Yap Jia Xing and he created it for a forum competition. Yap talks us through his inspiration and how he incorporated it into his design



## Making of Fluffy Pup

Software Used: Photoshop

I drew this character design because of a Wacom contest where the brief was to design a monster as your own pet. This contest attracted me not because of the prize, but because I like using my imagination especially when doing character design.

Normally, at a glance, a monster looks cruel, evil and horrific, but I wanted my monster to look cute and friendly – like a puppy. I did a lot of research before I started and finally settled on a cross between a husky and corgi because the husky has a cool face (**Fig.01**), the corgi looks short and cute (**Fig.02**) and both of these are dogs I like. To make it original and special I made its ears long like a rabbit's (**Fig.03**), and I added two small eyes on the forehead (**Fig.04**). Some might say it still looks a little disturbing, but I hope it adds a sense of mystery. To make it prettier, I tried to add a goldfish's tail because I think that the floating look of a fish's tail looks beautiful (**Fig.05**). For me fishes floating in the air are unique and amazing, and at the time I thought it would suit my little monster. You may notice that I have drawn a small mole on the right-hand side of its face. This is to add a little humor because it reflects my characteristics too.

Another reason for this design is I wanted to draw something with fur. Looking cute was my first aim, but I actually also wanted to add to my



portfolio a drawing which shows my skills when drawing fur. Fur is hard to handle and it is hard to make it look smooth and beautiful. Fur is harder to handle than drawing a woman's hair!

I chose to light the image from behind as I think this helps to show off the character and its characteristics, particularly the fur. This also

enhanced the translucent ears. All of these are important to enhance the mood of this simple design. I made the tail a bit transparent to help enhance the material and lighting. I used a blue color to paint the fur and chose a cold color range for the base because I wanted to make the dog look like it could be aquatic, and it contrasted with the color of the tail.

For the painting I basically used the Airbrush tool to paint the puppy and a Wet brush tool for the background. Sometime I will do adjustments to the brushes like the blending modes, Opacity, Shape dynamics, other dynamics etc. For the body I used photographs of puppies, merging them together and modifying them with the Transform and Liquify tools until I had created the shape I wanted. When I had the base for my character I used paint and the Smudge tool to paint the fur.

Due to the fact that the character is the main focus of the image, I decided that I would put the main focus directly in the middle of the page. I chose the pose because it made the dog look friendly. To hold the viewer's eye, I finished off the background with some simple brush work and lighting, added the reflection of my puppy on the background and made it look like it was standing on the water (Fig.06). I also added some splash, ripples, and water dropping from its paw to enhance the feeling. It gave my illustration more life and made it more interesting (Fig.07).



05

In conclusion, even though I didn't win any prizes in the competition I did get a lot of praise, support and consolation from my friends and that was enough for me. But it was a pity because I had used pictures of real dogs to do this art work, and due to some personal problems I started to draw with just a few days

left before deadline. I am very glad to feature in this magazine, so thanks to 3DTotall!

## Yap Jia Xing

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06



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# 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-color, 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:

**"ICARUS DAY"**

BY TOMASZ JEDRUSZEK





# ICARUS DAY

BY TOMASZ JEDRUSZEK

JOB TITLE: Digital Artist

SOFTWARE USED: Photoshop



## INTRODUCTION

My name is Tomasz Jedruszek and what follows is a comprehensive look into the working process behind one of my latest and most successful images, *Icarus Day*. The image was created for the CGSociety "Steampunk" challenge and luckily it won the "Digital Painting" Category along with a "CGS Choice Award". Aside from the technical issues, you may be interested in why this image is so powerful and so I will try to explain this also.

## THE APPROACH

Just like for all the other CGS challenges, the most difficult part of creating an image was coming up with an idea. In this particular challenge the task was to take a mythological story or legend and translate it into a steampunk style, creating something fresh and new. I had some candidates of course – mainly from classical mythology – but as it is less commonly known I opted for Greek mythology, using a more widely known story about Daedalus and Icarus.

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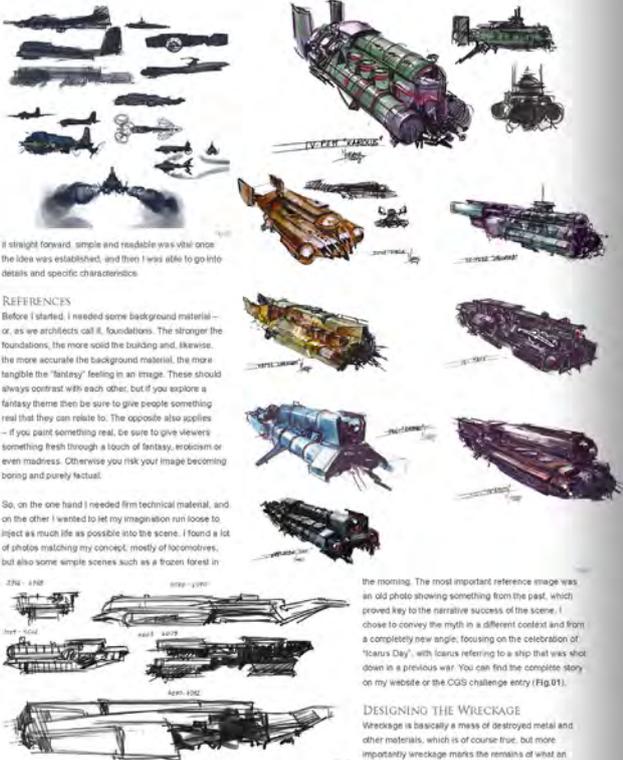
WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT IS THAT I HAVE A LOT OF EMOTIONAL TIES TO THIS WORLD AND ITS CHARACTERS, WHICH IS CRITICAL TO THE FINAL SUCCESS OF THE IMAGE

Those who know me might already be tired of me talking about my Venhells project, but it's actually appropriate on this occasion. Why, you may ask? Somehow those CGS challenges and their subjects always seem to match my story perfectly, but what is most important is that I have a lot of emotional ties to this world and its characters, which is critical to the final success of the image. For this challenge I decided to tell a story that takes place in my Venhells world to make it easier due to its familiarity, but with a link to Greek mythology – simple, isn't it?

Now don't get me wrong – I undertook this challenge in haste. But this approach would have enabled me to solve any issues, even with months to complete the image. Making

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is straight forward, simple and readable was vital once the idea was established, and then I was able to go into details and specific characteristics.

## REFERENCES

Before I started, I needed some background material – or, as we architects call it, foundations. The stronger the foundations, the more solid the building and, likewise, the more accurate the background material, the more tangible the "fantasy" feeling in an image. These should always contrast with each other, but if you explore a fantasy theme then be sure to give people something real that they can relate to. The opposite also applies – if you paint something real, be sure to give viewers something fresh through a touch of fantasy, eccentricism or even madness. Otherwise you risk your image becoming boring and purely factual.

So, on the one hand I needed firm technical material, and on the other I wanted to let my imagination run loose to inject as much life as possible into the scene. I found a lot of photos matching my concept, mostly of locomotives, but also some simple scenes such as a frozen forest in

the morning. The most important reference image was an old photo showing something from the past, which proved key to the narrative success of the scene. I chose to convey the myth in a different context and from a completely new angle, focusing on the celebration of "Icarus Day", with Icarus referring to a ship that was shot down in a previous war. You can find the complete story on my website or the CGS challenge entry (Fig 01).

## DESIGNING THE WRECKAGE

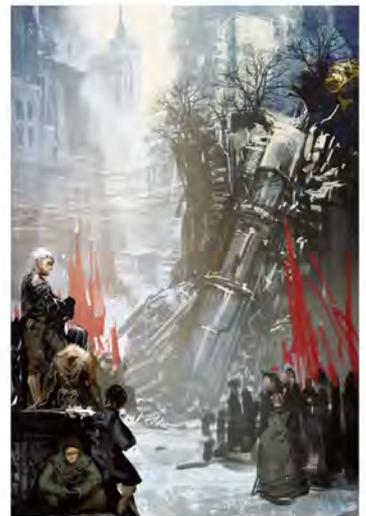
Wreckage is basically a mess of destroyed metal and other materials, which is of course true, but more importantly wreckage marks the remains of what an

object once represented. I tried to show a believable mood of an ancient ship styled in a steampunk fashion, with evidence of its previous beauty and power when in service. Now destroyed and forgotten. I was tasked with creating the ship's personality and encouraging the viewers to feel sympathy for the destroyed wrecked age, missing the days when it flew overhead. In other words, I had to create a convincing narrative.

NEVER BE AFRAID TO LOSE SIGHT OF THE IDEA IF YOU FEEL THERE COULD BE A SUCCESSFUL SOLUTION; IT ALWAYS PAYS OFF IN THE END

That's why I needed some recognizable shapes, my choice being the famous B-17 Flying Fortress bomber, with its almighty beauty. There was, of course, always a risk that no one would share a similar passion for this machine, but it was my job to convince them. I had the challenge of inviting people who weren't fans of aviation to see the beauty of these flying machines. Luckily we are all dreamers and one of the most popular dreams concerns flying, but other things I hoped would help were the shininess of iron or even the gold finishing on the pipes and other elements such as glossy paint. These types of things are mostly pleasing to the eye, after all (Fig.02 – 03).

As you can see from these sketches, I had been struggling to combine the B17 with steam engines, and of course there are always a number of ridiculous, but not less important, ideas explored during this process. Never be afraid to lose sight of the idea if you feel there could be a successful solution; it always pays off in the



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end. After some time I finally locked down the basic idea of the flying machine by copying a steam engine around one of its axes and duplicating it two or three times. This spawned a multitude of detailed design variations almost automatically.

One more thing came to mind while I was sketching – why not show the destroyed Icarus next to a new generation of flying fortresses, just to make the story more nostalgic? I had to go all the way back to pre-history for these types of machines ... or did I? The answer was no, but again this helped to create something both logical and believable instead of a random design that could have made the story unnecessarily complex. (Fig.04)

#### SKETCHING

Finally I could get down to the serious work: setting the scene for the image and its actors. My idea was to show the wreckage outside the city, not as a monumental statue of glory, but lost and lonely. I tried to think about places like Auschwitz, which has been left almost as it was after the end of the war. One can walk between blocks and barracks in the museum and almost feel the deaths of the hundreds and thousands of men, women and children killed there. I wanted to convey similar feelings in my image, showing the wreckage as a tomb containing the crew who had given their lives a long time ago.

The first idea revolved around a vertical composition, but it looked a little empty so I added a few kids in front (Fig.05). This was another key component for a successful narrative. Why not show this entire celebration



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from the point of view of a band of homeless kids or orphans? The story actually had its start in the nostalgic world of Venhells, which demonstrated these kinds of differences, but as you can see it almost accidentally worked in the image and fitted perfectly. Never be afraid to follow those spontaneous additions to your picture. Just be careful that they do not become too important, as in this case, where the kids have become more important than the Icarus itself, which was not quite what I wanted.

Consequently I tried a horizontal aspect, which although different was still a celebration. However, the VIPs were still more important than the wreckage. Apart from this, the frame was way too wide and I could barely see what was happening (Fig.06).

**PAINTING IS ALL ABOUT ILLUSION; AFTER ALL, EACH PAINTING IS A MOSAIC OF BRUSH STROKES THAT COMBINE TO CREATE AN IMAGE.**



I tried another vertical composition, but this one looked too similar to the reference photo to me (Fig.07).

Finally, as always, success was the fruit of compromise: I used the settings from the first sketch but made it horizontal, which solved most of the problems. (Fig.08)

The main two compositional accents take our attention from the wide view of the celebration towards the main character, the wreckage and then to a group of orphaned children who helped to decorate Icarus (Fig.09).

#### BOILING PART

All I had to do now was finish the image. I know for most beginners this might be painful – hours of painting details and cleaning that loose sketch work. Well, it doesn't have to be like that at all, remember, you decided to become a painter because you loved it. Even later in life when you paint for a living as a freelancer or regular employee, it is still something you like to do more than anything, isn't it? By thinking this way the image almost grows naturally in your hands. Just keep these few tips in mind, they may well speed up your workflow and save your health:

- The level of detail needed depends on what is recognizable. You do not have to paint each hair on a character's head, instead, ask yourself what is important. How many hairs are there on that head and what is their color? Think this way and paint it this way.
- Use textures and custom brushes to add dual, natural textures or crispness to your objects, as they imitate the effect of detailed surfaces and in most cases the human eye won't even be able to tell the difference. Painting is all about illusion, after all, each painting is a mosaic of brush strokes that combine to create an image.

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- Establish an order of importance and do not paint details where they are not required.

Another key to successful images, and something that is fun to try, is to assume the roles of your characters. When you paint those soldiers, try to feel their pain as they stand there for hours, maybe cold, and their hands probably frozen to those standard poles. Think along, these lines when painting and you will add life to your image.

#### FINISHING

It is important to keep your image on a consistent course during the entire creation process. Once you've reached this point, there is no time to make changes – it's all about crystallizing the scene. Adding depth of field, fixing the light, painting details and adjusting colors are areas to focus on. Most of these are as simple as adding global effects in your Photoshop layers. You gain full control in this way and if you do not like the effect you simply turn off the lighting layer, for example. I usually spend another few hours on finished images adjusting and adding effects (Fig.10a – d).

#### FINAL

I must say that, even though I was very happy with the final version of this image, I never expected it would be so well received by viewers. What was crucial here I think was the deep story, a simple but effective composition, and a fresh approach to an old myth. In this "making of"



I've been trying to direct your attention to those moments that determine whether an image becomes stunning or just remains good. I also learned through painting Icarus Day that thorough research and a collection of good references are important. Creating a strong narrative to support the image and giving life to your characters will be well rewarded. I hope you will also learn from this too.

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#### ARTIST PORTFOLIO



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# DIGITAL ART MASTERS

## : VOLUME 5

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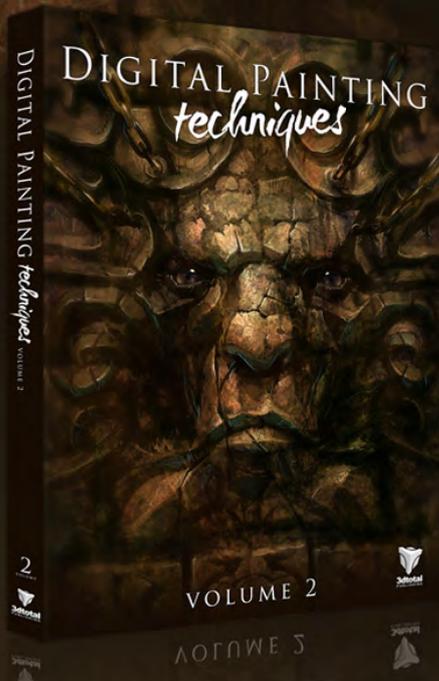
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