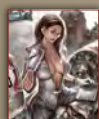




# 2d artist

Concept art, digital and matte painting magazine  
Issue 066 June 2011

Cover Image By Serge Birault



## Interview

Lee Chak Khuen



## Articles

Sketchbook of Damien  
Mammoliti

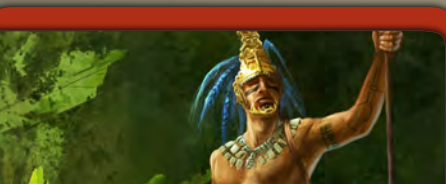


## The Gallery

Hethe Srodawa, Jason Seiler  
Min Yum, plus more!

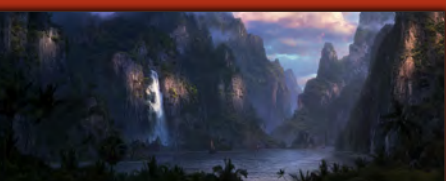
4 parts **Pin-up girl**  
1 part **Classic pose**  
and a dash of **sexiness**  
served by **Serge Birault**

# SHAKEN, NOT STIRRED



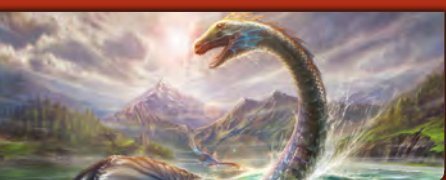
## Warriors, come out to play!

Richard Tilbury comes face to face with an **Aztec warrior** as he begins our new series on **Painting Tribal Warriors**



## Matte Painting

Piotrek Swigut kicks off an amazing new series about **matte painting** by showing us how to create the initial concept



## Photoreal Fantasy

Weiye Yin is back in this issue and shows us how to paint a realistic version of the **Loch Ness Monster**



## Editorial

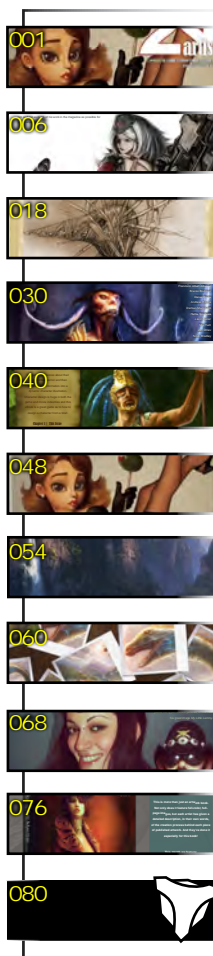
Summer is here! In the UK our summer is usually a 3 – 4 day spell of great weather surrounded by weeks of misery and disappointment! So if you are looking to add a little glow to your life don't come to the UK, instead take a look at the new issue of *2DArtist*.

This month's cover is another cracker by our Pin-up tutorial series artist **Serge Birault**. Serge set himself a high standard in chapter one of his fantastic series, but hasn't failed to continue to impress in chapter two. In this issue Serge looks back at some of the outstanding classic Pin-up artists and how they gave their paintings a retro look, and tells us how to reproduce that look in our own digital art.

This month's issue contains the final chapter of our Realistic Fantasy series. We welcome back **Weiye Yin**, who does another fantastic job and gives us a master class on how to turn something we are familiar with into a new and original concept. In this issue Weiye will be focusing on the Scottish legend; the Loch Ness Monster!

The new season sees the introduction of two new tutorial series, the first of which is a great matte painting series by **Piotrek Swigut**. Piotrek will be talking us through how he created his stunning scene in great detail, giving us some really useful tips on the way. Piotrek currently works in the movie industry and spent a large part of his career working at Blizzard in California, so he is the ideal man to be teaching us some tricks of the trade. In this issue we will be looking at how to create the concept for your scene.

The second of our two new series is Painting Tribal Warriors. Ancient tribal warriors have been the inspiration for many modern day character designs in both the fantasy and sci-fi fields. In this series our artists will be looking at how to use the information available to them to create an original and dynamic painting of their chosen tribal warriors. **Richard Tilbury** kicks things off by talking us through how he gathered information and references and used it to create his illustration of an Aztec tribal warrior.



## Contents

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## Pin-up

Classic by Serge Birault

## Matte Painting

Concept by Piotrek Swigut

## Photoreal Fantasy

Loch Ness Monster by Weiye Yin

## "My Little Lemmy"

Project Overview by Serge Birault

## "Big Blue"

Digital Art Masters: Volume 5 – Free Chapter

## About us

3DTotal.com Ltd Information & Contacts

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Lead Designer	Sub-Editors		
Chris Perrins	Jo Hargreaves Simon Morse		

Our interview this month is with an artist who I am a really big fan of. **Lee Chak Khuen**, or Puppeteer Lee, is an amazing artist from Malaysia. In this interview he tells us how his love for music and motorbikes inspires him to paint. You will love his images! He mixes the manga design style with a loose concept art way of painting that looks great.

This month's Making Of is by the ever-present **Serge Birault**. Serge leaves his cartoony pin-up style behind to show us how he paints his hyper-realistic characters. "My Little Lemmy" is an amazing example of what Serge is capable of.

I am quickly running out of space so I will just remind you to check out the amazing Sketchbook article by **Damien Mammoliti** and the breathtaking gallery featuring great artists such as **Daniel Dociu**, **Min Yum**, **Jan Ditlev** and many more.





# Get the most out of your Magazine!

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



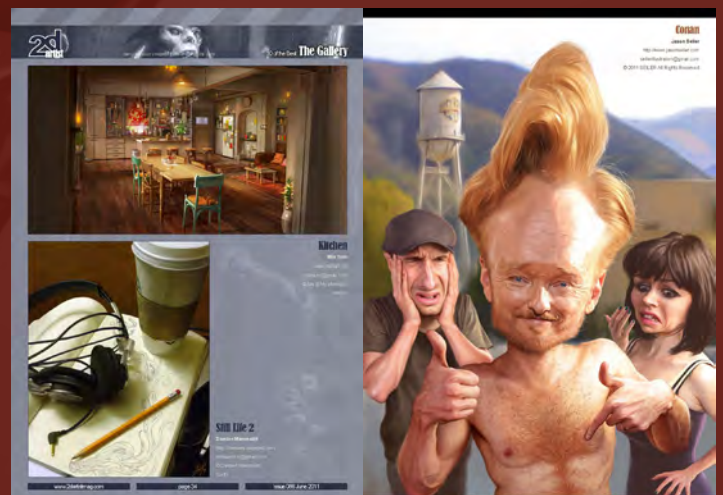
## Setting up your PDF reader

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

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

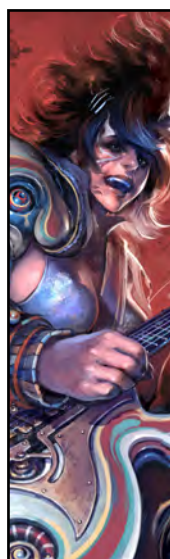
1. Open the magazine in Reader;
2. Go to the **View** menu, then **Page display**;
3. Select **Two-up Continuous**, making sure that **Show Cover Page** is also selected.



## 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 then please contact: [simon@3dtotal.com](mailto:simon@3dtotal.com)



### Lee Chak Khuen

Lee Chak Khuen (Puppeteer Lee) is a fantastic illustrator, comic book artist and character designer from Ipoh Malaysia.

Lee's fascination with motorbikes and music has always inspired his art.



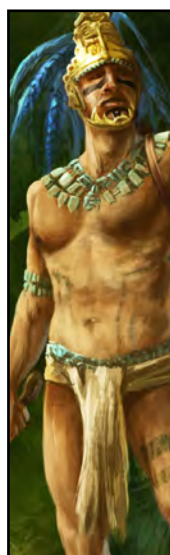
<http://puppeteer.cghub.com/>  
[waalee505@hotmail.com](mailto:waalee505@hotmail.com)



### Damien Mammoliti

Damien Mammoliti is an Academy of Art University graduate who currently works as a concept freelance artist working for companies like pixelStorm and Paizo Publishing. Art is pretty much all Damien does, aside from being a nerd with his spouse in the cold and bitter white north.

<http://nanya.deviantart.com/>  
[rivmammoli@gmail.com](mailto:rivmammoli@gmail.com)



### Richard Tilbury

Richard Tilbury has had a passion for drawing since being a couple of feet tall. He studied Fine Art and was eventually led into the realm of computers several years ago. His brushes have been dissolving in white spirit since the late nineties and his graphics tablet has become their successor. Richard still sketches regularly and now balances his time between 2D and 3D, although drawing will always be closest to his heart.

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[ibex80@hotmail.com](mailto:ibex80@hotmail.com)

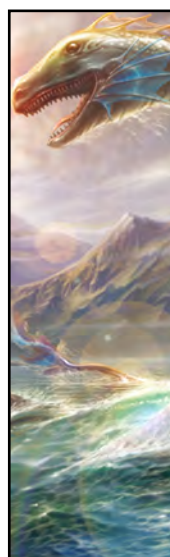


### Piotrek Swigut

Piotrek Swigut is a concept artist and matte painter from Poland specializing in work for film and video games.

Soon after graduating he was spotted by Blizzard Entertainment where he had the opportunity to create cinematics for *World of Warcraft*, *Starcraft* and *Diablo*. He recently left Blizzard to work on the new *Conan the Barbarian* (2011) movie.

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### Weiyen Yin

Weiyen Yin (Franc) is a senior concept designer and CG and image artist. Franc started as a traditional artist and then moved on to working with CG in the year 2000. Since then Franc's work has featured in many publications and won many awards. He has worked in both the movie and game industries and as a concept artist as well as an art director.

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# Lee Chak Khuen

## PUPPETEER LEE

Lee Chak Khuen, or Puppeteer Lee, is an amazing artist who has worked in both the comic and concept art industries. Since setting my eyes on his fantastic illustrations I knew that I had to interview him and get as much of his work in the magazine as possible for you to enjoy!



**"I used to struggle with the difference between comic and concept work. But now I try not to over-polish the work that I do in comics. This will save time that can be used to work on another page"**



**Hello, it is great to get this chance to catch up with you. I like to start all my interviews with a similar question: can you let us know a little about yourself, such as where you are from and how you got into the industry?**

Hey, I also have to say thank you for letting me do an interview for your magazine. I'm Chinese and was born in Malaysia. I am skinny, have an afro and live a pretty lazy lifestyle. I've been in the industry for approximately 10 years and my first job was doing some exclusive comic work for my local comic magazine. In those days I was just starting to learn CG whilst trying to increase my creative field. After that I started to do some illustration and character design for various projects.

**So it seems that you must have worked in both the concept art and comic book industries? Which of these do you prefer? Also does your style differ between comic work and concept work?**

Yeah, I love both. But comics are not that simple compared to concept art. With comics you have to clear the entire concept before you start the first page. Because of that I wouldn't do it as a main income project, if I have a choice. I used to struggle with the difference between comic and concept work. But now I try not to over-polish the work that I do in comics. This will save time



that can be used to work on another page. Also too much detail in the images ruins the dynamics of the panel. Telling the story is the main point of a comic.

**Are you a self-taught artist or were you educated at a CG school? I notice that you use Painter. Do you prefer it to Photoshop or do you use a little of both in your workflow?**

In my generation CG art schools were not popular in my country. And I couldn't afford to go to traditional art school. Instead I learned from everything I saw around me. My first piece

of software was Painter Classic, which came with a Wacom tablet. I loved it, but since it is too old for new devices I changed to Painter 11 last year. Photoshop is also an awesome piece of software, but I mainly use it just for color adjustments.

**When looking through your gallery I was blown away by the variety of images there. Are you influenced by any specific artists or have you developed your own way of painting?**

Thank you! I try to work with everything that



interests me. That is why you can see various styles and ideas in my gallery. I have been influenced by so many great eastern and western artists. Mr. Moebius, Mr. Simon Bisley and Mr. Akira Toriyama inspired me in my early days. Mr. Katsuya Terada blew me away when I first saw his digital color comic illustrations, and it was him who made me want to start working in the CG world. Most of the time I just enjoy playing with ideas when doing a piece. Then I just try to paint the image in an interesting way.

**I notice that you mention comics as one of your areas of expertise. I love comics myself. In fact I often tell my mother that I was bought up by Judge Dredd and Slain rather than her! Which is your favourite comic and have you ever thought of creating a new comic series?**

[Laughs] I think the only thing that bought was a superbike. Most of my favorite comics are from the many Japanese manga comics like *Dragon Ball*, *Slam Dunk*, *Vagabond* and all the others. Simon Bisley and Moebius are my favorite western comic artists. I'm always thinking about starting my own new comic. I have few scripts in my notebook and can't wait to start it, but cannot at the moment. Hopefully I'll be able to soon.

**That sounds exciting! What kind of comic book do you think you would create? Would it be a superhero-type comic or something a bit more gritty and dark?**

I would prefer a fantasy or sci-fi background







Fugitane



to my story. I would like to create a comic in a flexible way, with less of a rigid story so it was just like watching the characters living their own way in the world I create. There would be some heroes, but not just for justice, and there would need to be something more dynamic than that to provide a basis for an interesting story.

**“I seldom polish my own work, but rather leave it a bit rough to make it look more dynamic.”**

**Your paintings seem to have a really nice textured look to them. Can you tell us a little about the process you use to paint and specifically about the way you introduce so many textures to your images.**

Thanks again! I never merge a photo texture in my personal work. I think that it should be done with brushwork. Most of the textures are created using color strokes in Painter. I always paint with the watercolors first, and after that I use oil brushes to paint the details. Then I use watercolor again to improve the shadow and mid-tones to make it look more solid. I seldom polish my own work, but rather leave it a bit rough to make it look more dynamic.



**I think that the way you create your textures looks really nice and gives a great illustrative look to your paintings. Do you ever scan in line art and use that as a base, or do you prefer to start drawing directly into your program?**

I love to do line art before I start painting, but it's been a long time since I picked up a pencil as I do everything with the tablet. I draw directly into Painter, maybe because I am too lazy to scan. It does make my style quite different when I use a pencil and I do love both styles.

**You have listed biking and jamming as some of your hobbies. Do you find it important to get away from the computer screen from time to time, and do you feel that it is important to see new things and be influenced by them in your art?**

That is very important for me! Sure, motorbiking has influenced me a lot which is why you can always see machines in my work. I love to rev away on it for a break, but since I crashed it last year, I feel a little like I am living in a cage at the moment.





Yellow  
Cannon

Reaper





I jam with my friends sometimes, but since everybody's getting busy, it's hard to find a free hour for this. But as long as I am alive I will try to find time to do this. I like to play guitar and drums – but not well [Laughs].

**You can tell when looking at your portfolio that your hobbies inspire you a lot. I**

**sometimes like to ask artists what they would be doing if they hadn't stumbled into CG art. What job do you think you would be doing if you weren't painting?**

[Laughs]. I would like to think that I could be a racer, but I'm not rich and not talented... so maybe a musician (although I'm not talented at that either). Or perhaps a sculptor.

**Thanks for freeing up the time to speak to us and for sharing your fantastic paintings. I will definitely be keeping an eye on your work!**

You are welcome man, this is my pleasure. I also wanted to thank you for the corrections to my broken English [Laughs]! Thank you very much!















# Lee Chak Khuen

For more information please visit:

<http://puppeteer.cghub.com/>

Or contact them at:

[waalee505@hotmail.com](mailto:waalee505@hotmail.com)

Interview by: [Simon Morse](#)



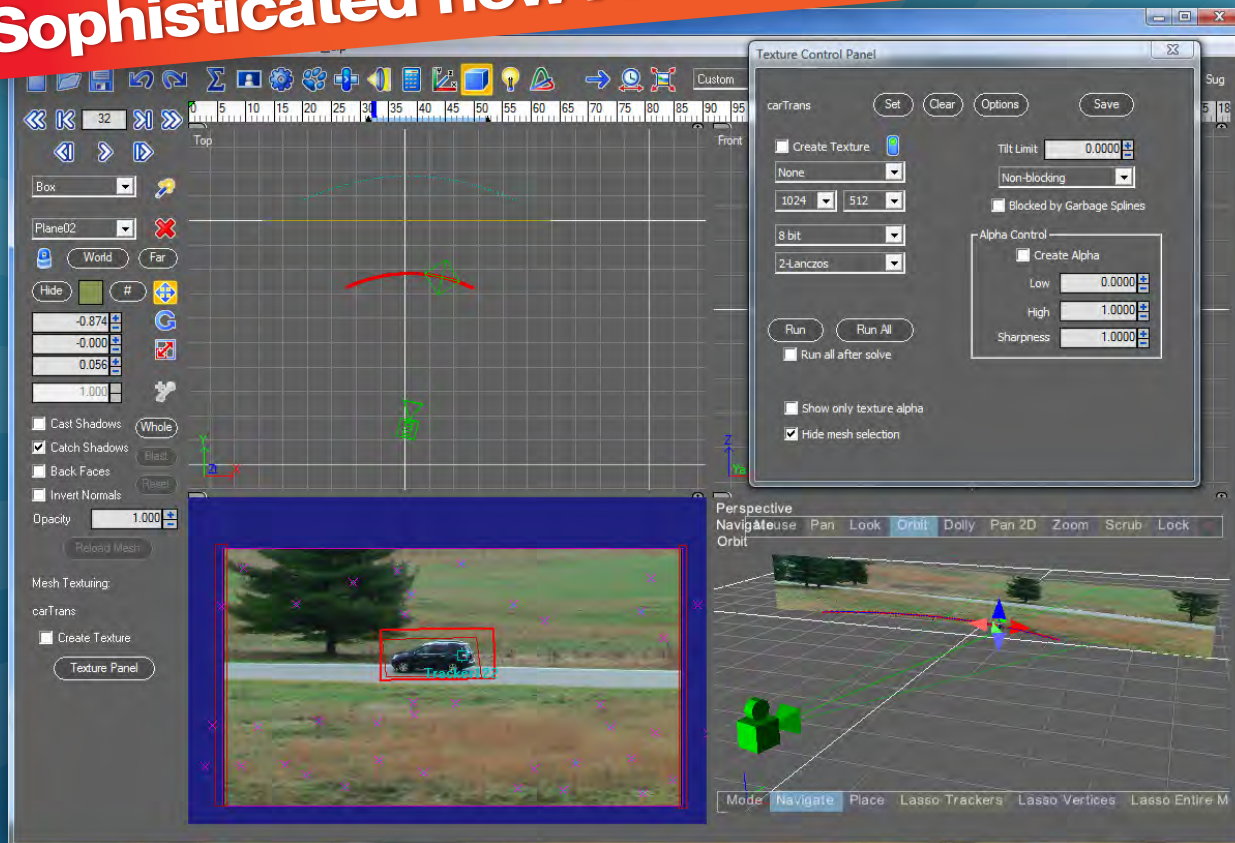




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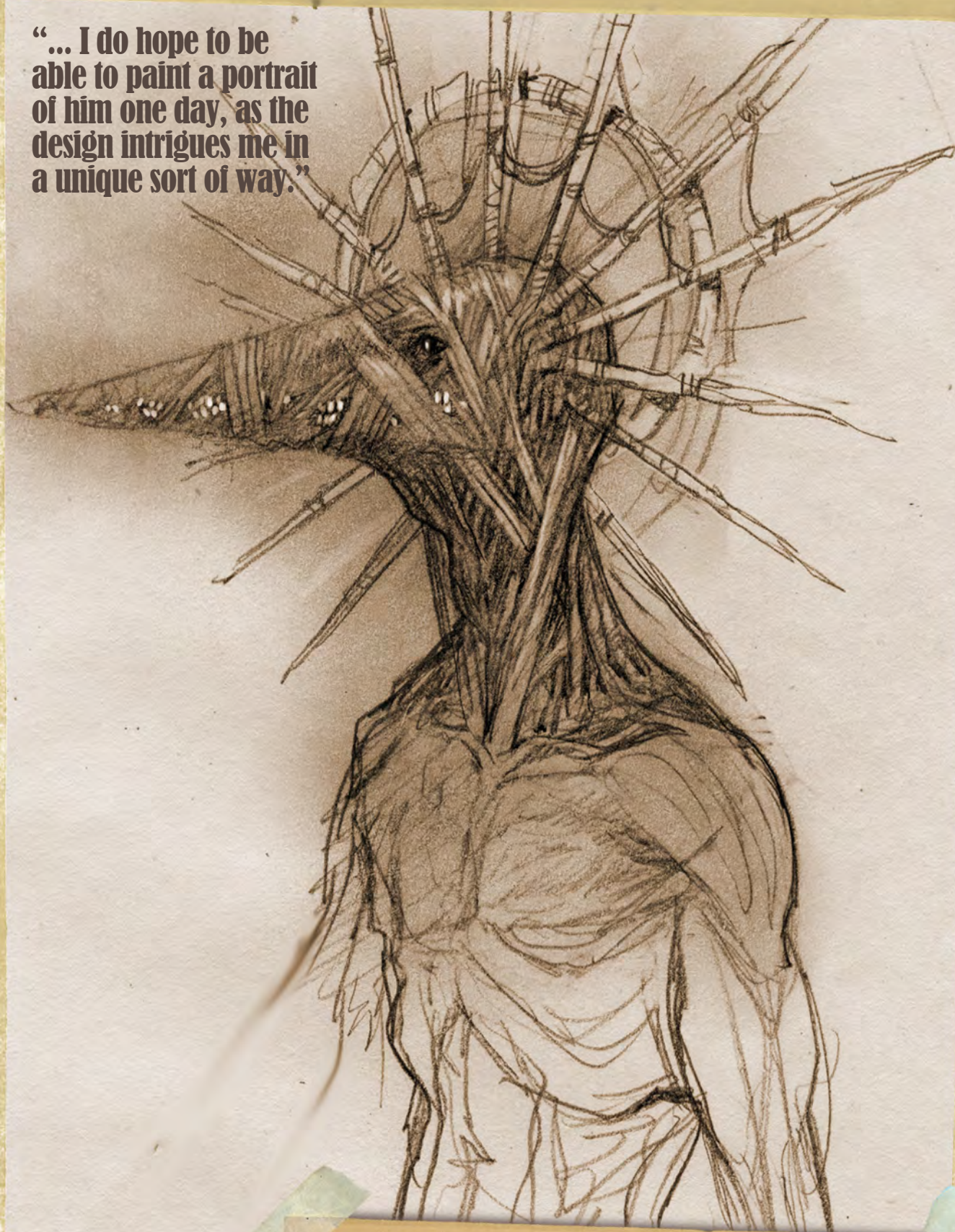
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“... I do hope to be able to paint a portrait of him one day, as the design intrigues me in a unique sort of way.”



## SKETCHBOOK OF DAMIEN MAMMOLITI

This month our sketchbook article shows off the handiwork of Damien Mammoliti. Damien seems to empty his imagination onto the page in front of him, which is great as it means in this issue we get to take a tour through his creative mind!



## SKETCHBOOK OF DAMIEN MAMMOLITI

Here's something silly I whipped up at work. The manliest taur you ever did see. I like combining different fables and cultures to make something new: i.e: a Viking centaur (Fig.01).

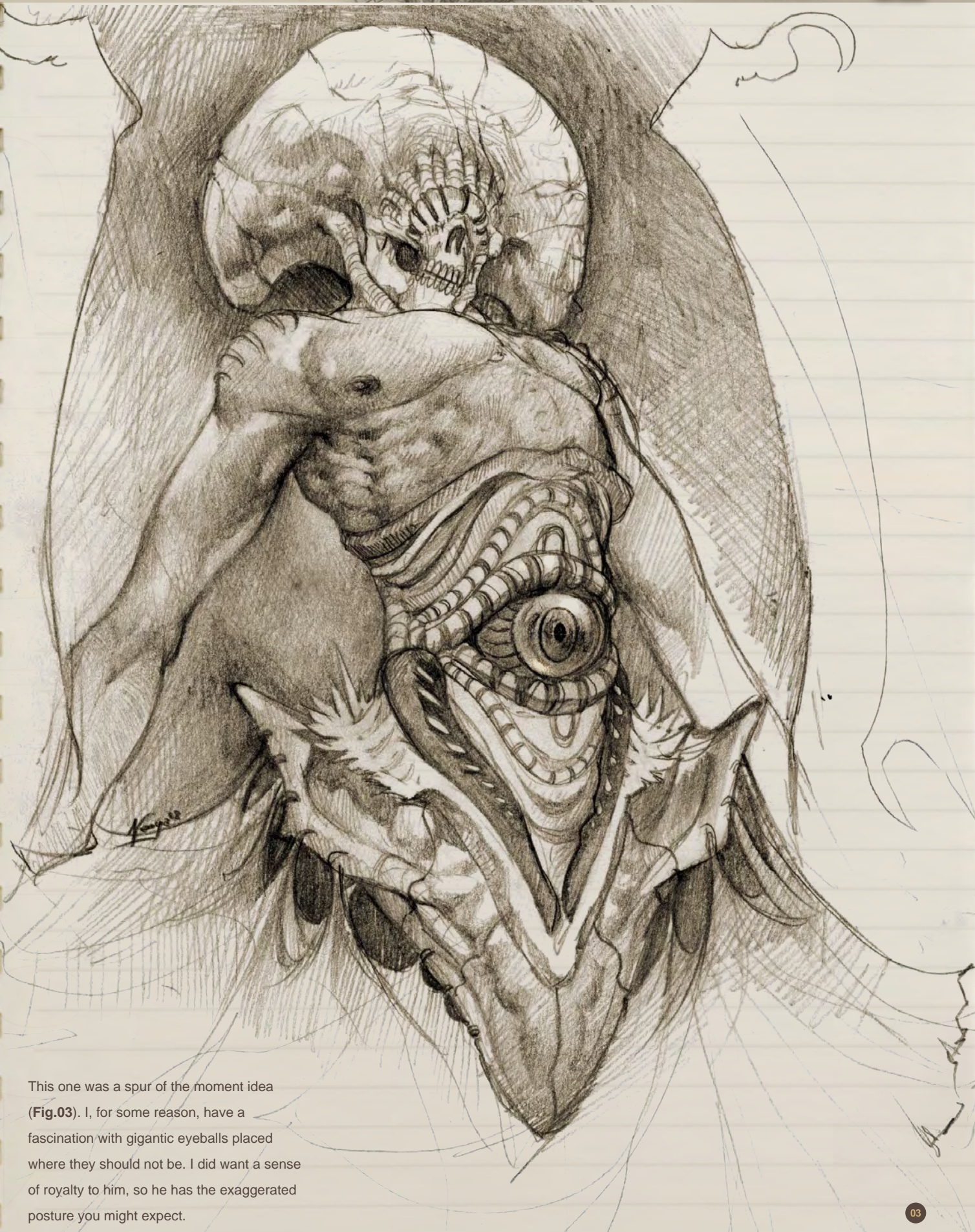




This is another undead lich-like creature (Fig.02). I've been trying to come up with the perfect lich design for what feels like eons, but nothing seems to feel right to me. He's kind of on the right track though.







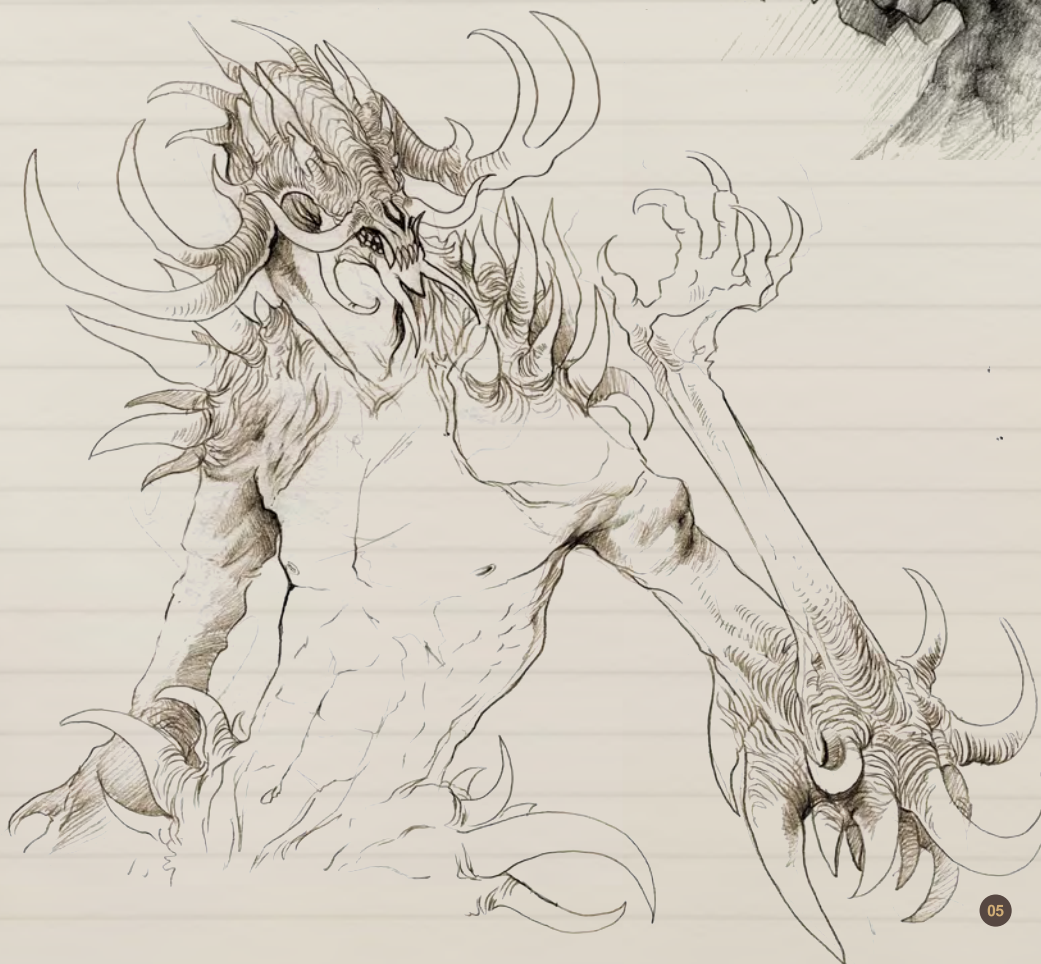
This one was a spur of the moment idea (Fig.03). I, for some reason, have a fascination with gigantic eyeballs placed where they should not be. I did want a sense of royalty to him, so he has the exaggerated posture you might expect.



Here's more undead nonsense, I can't seem to get enough of making designs for them. There's just a wealth of potential lying around (**Fig.04**).



This is a creature sketch that came to me a couple years back and won me a small contest. Again I was combining different elements to make something new, an undead dragon with human anatomy (**Fig.05**).





Here's a concept idea for a sprite character (Fig.06). Not sure if I like his simplicity now, but it's still a good starting point in case I ever return to it.

Here's a character design that was never really finished. I still like his earrings (Fig.07).

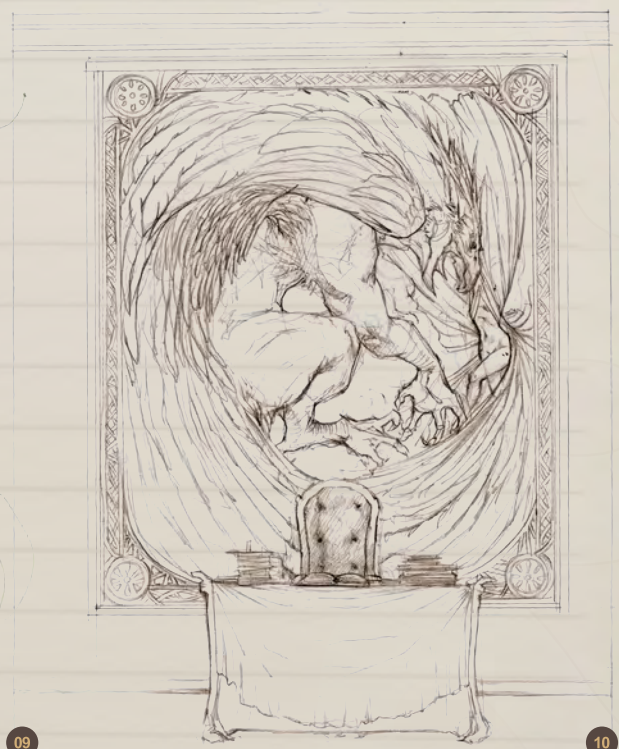




Here is a random image that was probably spawned from listening to a track one too many times (**Fig.08**). The grandest ideas, I'm sad to say, sometimes never even make it to paper.

This is a sketch for a painting I have actually completed (**Fig.09**). I liked the idea of a large, lumbering demon with his tiny rider pal. He does kind of have an animal appeal to him, knuckle-dragging and all.

This is a mural idea for someone's far too elaborate office (**Fig.10**). I was playing around with ideas for something grand but fantasy related, hence the gryphon.



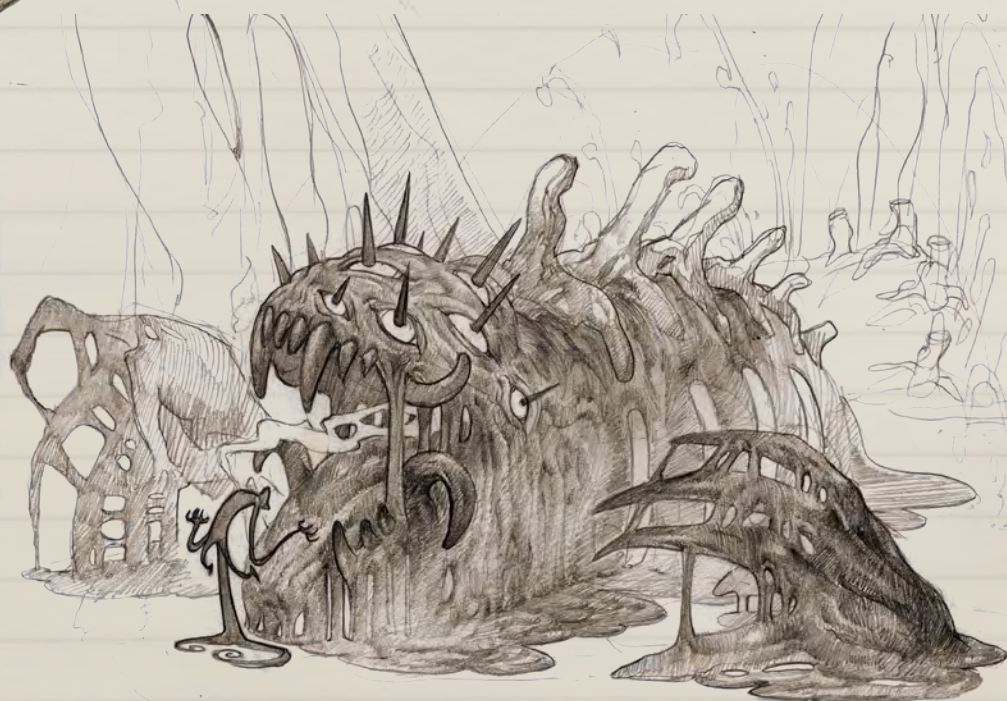




11

This guy spawned from a D&D session a while back (Fig.11). I'm not entirely sure if he was meant to symbolize the trauma of that session, but he has an amusing expression nonetheless.

Here is an idea that came and went, of a large gelatinous creature that was made of shadows and "bad memories" accumulated by the dead. This could be used again in the future (Fig.12).

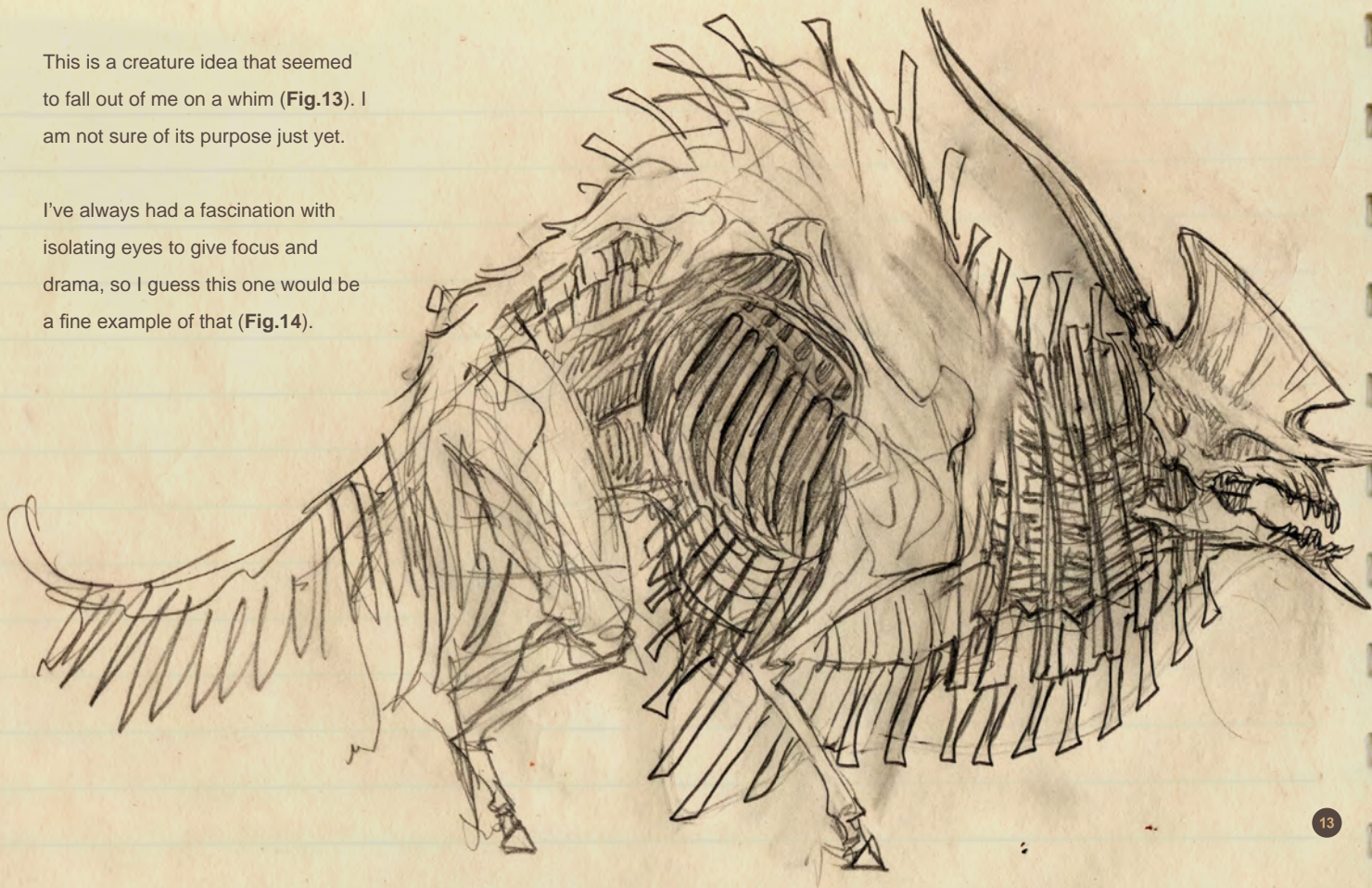


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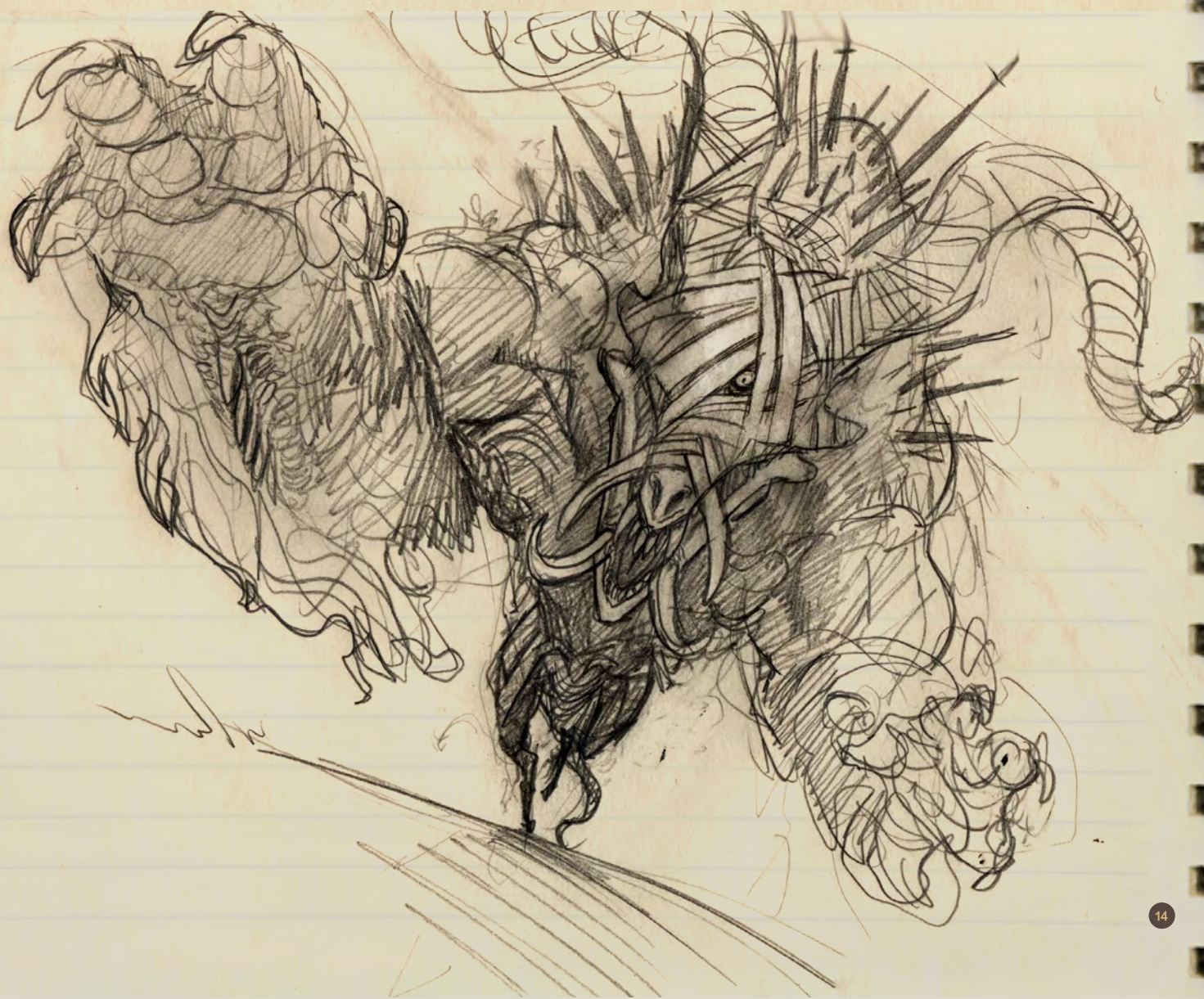


This is a creature idea that seemed to fall out of me on a whim (Fig.13). I am not sure of its purpose just yet.

I've always had a fascination with isolating eyes to give focus and drama, so I guess this one would be a fine example of that (Fig.14).

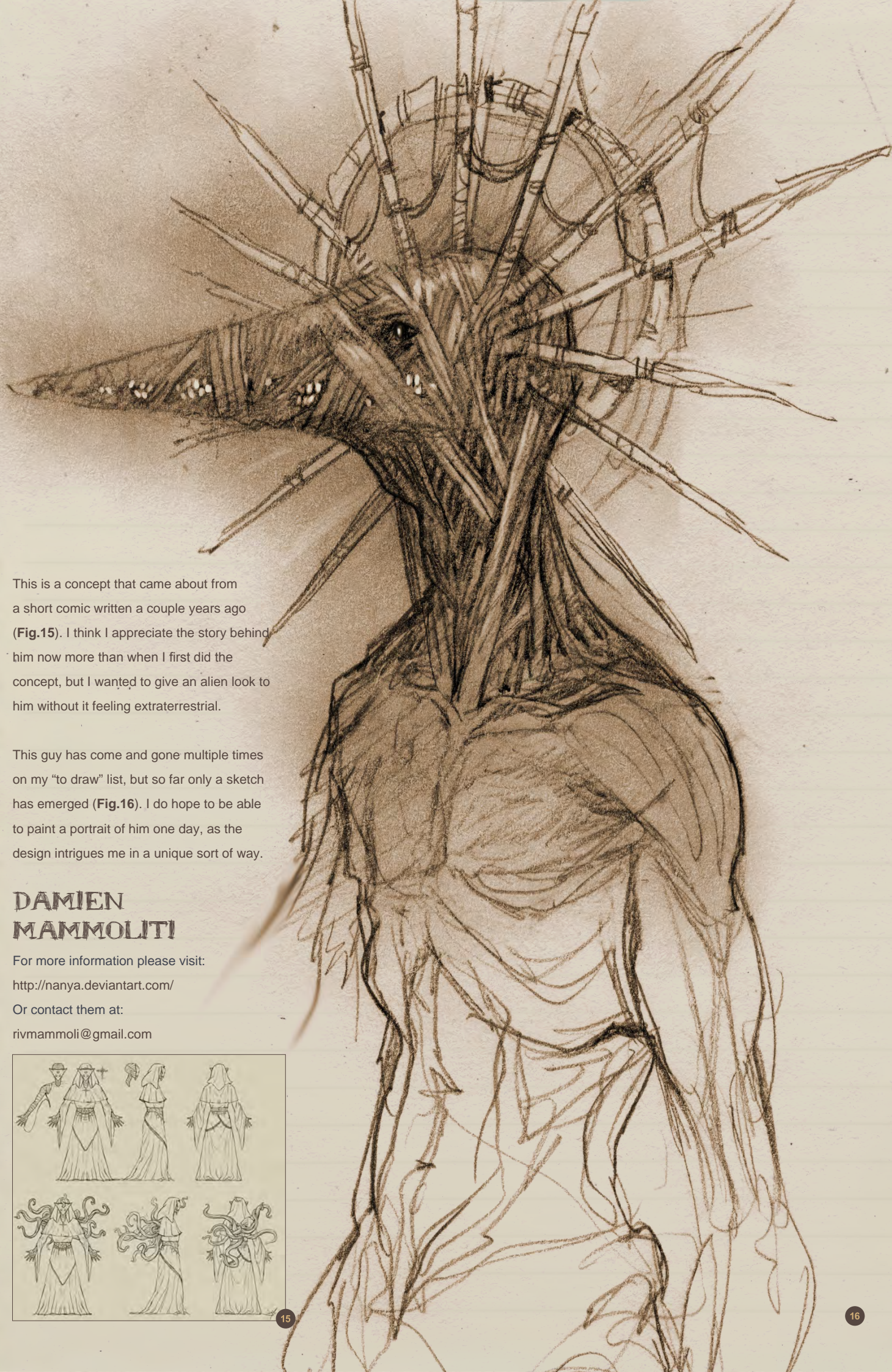


13



14





This is a concept that came about from a short comic written a couple years ago (Fig.15). I think I appreciate the story behind him now more than when I first did the concept, but I wanted to give an alien look to him without it feeling extraterrestrial.

This guy has come and gone multiple times on my "to draw" list, but so far only a sketch has emerged (Fig.16). I do hope to be able to paint a portrait of him one day, as the design intrigues me in a unique sort of way.

## DAMIEN MAMMOLITI

For more information please visit:

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

Or contact them at:

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This month we feature:

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Branko Bistrovic

Daniel Dociu

Andreas Rocha

Damien Mammoliti

Hethe Srodawa

Jason Seiler

Min Yum

Jan Ditlev

Noah Bradley



# The Gallery



## The Trials of Devotion

Noah Bradley

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(Right)



## The House of Air

Francisco Albert Albusac

<http://www.tatitati.deviantart.com>

[francis.jaa@gmail.com](mailto:francis.jaa@gmail.com)

(Below)





## Finished Sketch 570

Jan Ditlev

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## Kitchen

Min Yum

[www.minart.net](http://www.minart.net)

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© Me & My Monsters

(Above)



## Still Life 2

Damien Mammoliti

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(Left)



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## Stormy Horizon

Daniel Dociu

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(Above)

## Under My Bed

Andreas Rocha

<http://www.andreasrocha.com>

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(Below)





# Fagin's Lot

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## Tombs of Ashes

Branko Bistrovic

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In this eBook series our artists will be teaching us how to use information about tribes from the past and present to design new characters. The artists involved will gather references about their chosen tribal warrior and then translate this information into a dynamic character illustration. Character design is huge in both the game and movie industries and this eBook is a great guide as to how to design a character from a brief.

**Chapter 1 | This Issue**

Aztec

**Chapter 2 | Next Issue**

Maori

**Chapter 3 | August Issue 068**

Red Indian

**Chapter 4 | September Issue 069**

Viking

**Chapter 5 | October Issue 070**

Fantasy



# Tribal Warriors <sup>Painting</sup>



## Chapter 01: Aztec

Software Used: Photoshop

### Introduction

The Aztecs were a group of people in central Mexico who were prominent between the 14th and 16th centuries. Their civilisation accomplished some great artistic and architectural achievements, and their history demonstrated some rich traditions. Perhaps one of their most commonly known traditions is that of human sacrifice, which can be seen illustrated in manuscripts from the time. In terms of finding reference material there are obviously no photographs from the period and so you can only rely on painted manuscripts and costume recreations. For the purposes of this tutorial I thought it would be interesting to create a semi-realistic character that was part based on actual records and manuscripts, and combine this with an imaginary element.

### Blocking In

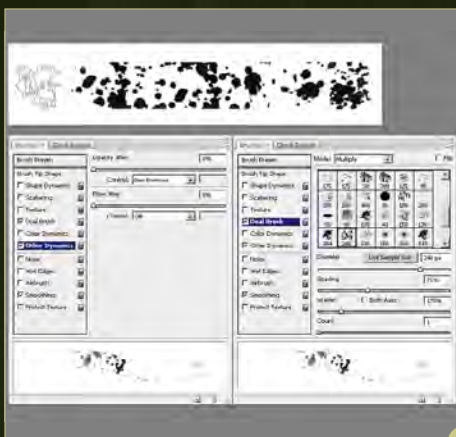
Due to the colorful nature of Aztec culture and society, together with the area that they once inhabited, I decided straight away that I wanted this painting to have a rich palette with lots of saturated colors. From looking at various reference images I got the impression of elaborate, exuberant costumes and beautiful, decorative jewellery. These were most likely used for ceremonial purposes; however I liked the idea of adorning my warrior in something similar to make him look more interesting. I therefore imagined a warrior who may be dressed up slightly for some form of ritual or ceremony.

The first stage was to fill in the background with some vivid greens and a suggestion of some jungle foliage and ground. **Fig.01** shows the initial block in using some textured custom brushes.

The brush I used to create the leaf shapes can be seen in **Fig.02**, which has some scattering

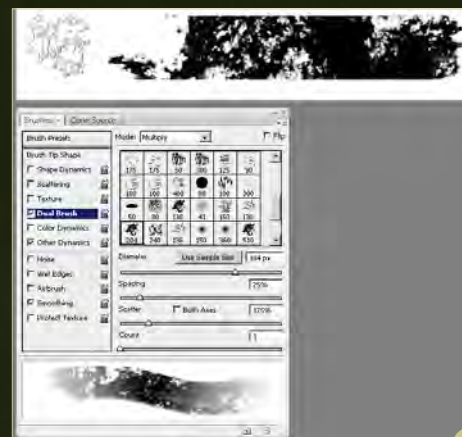


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and uses a Dual brush. The other brush I used can be seen in **Fig.03**. At this stage it was just a case of getting rid of the bland white background and providing a base to work on.



03

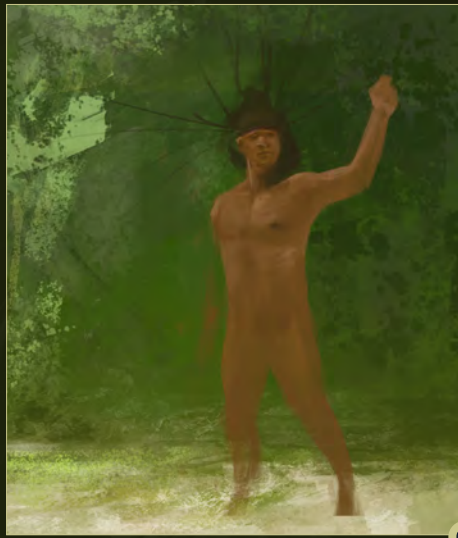
As this background would be on a separate layer to the character it didn't matter too much if it remained vague at this stage as it could always be modified throughout the painting process.



With the backdrop roughed in I started blocking in the warrior (**Fig.04**). I filled in most of the body in a single color which would be the mid-tone. Upon this base color I could work in the shadows and highlights.

## Building the Detail

**Fig.05** shows the next stage in the process which now incorporated a third layer where I began to add some clothing and accessories. If you were working in the games industry it would be a good practice to separate your painting into layers in case you are asked to change anything. Having the clothing on a different layer to the character means it can be modified with ease. Your art director may require changes to the costume and so splitting up elements can save a lot of time and headaches.

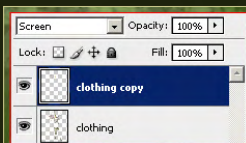


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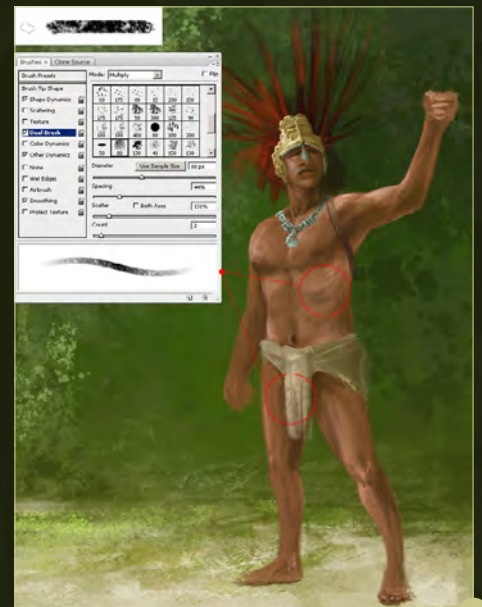
I roughed in a feathered headdress, which is something that seemed prominent in much of the Aztec art I found and was an aspect I wanted to include. I also started to develop



05



07



06

the features of the face a little more with the light source being somewhere to the left of the picture frame.

Using a textured Chalk brush I started to build the anatomy (**Fig.06**). I also moved the character slightly up and to the right on the canvas as he looked a little squashed.

I added an extension to his ceremonial headwear, which can be seen in **Fig.07**. To create a highlight across the left side where the sun is hitting it I duplicated the layer this was painted on and then set the blending mode to Screen (inset 1). I then used the Eraser to delete the areas that weren't directly in the sunlight, leaving just a small section (inset 2).

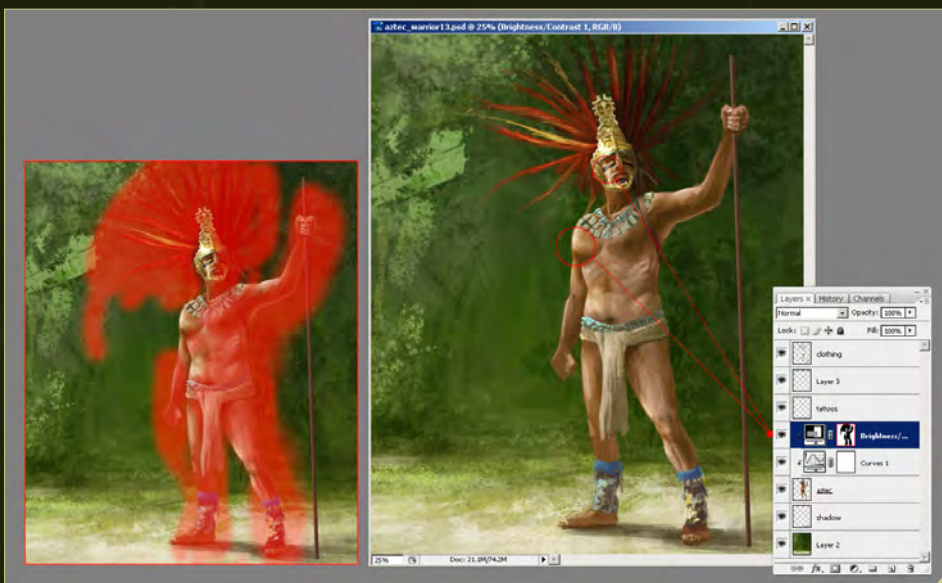




08

I wanted to add some war paint across my warrior's body and so created a new layer for this so I could experiment with the color and blending mode easily without it affecting the main image. I started with the face and in the end chose Normal as the blending mode. To make sure the paint was consistent with the lighting I used the Eraser tool to make the highlighted areas semi-transparent (**Fig.08**).

The skin tones looked a little flat and so in order to increase the contrast I applied a Brightness/Contrast adjustment layer. I increased the values by around +30 in both cases and then used black to paint into the mask and restrict



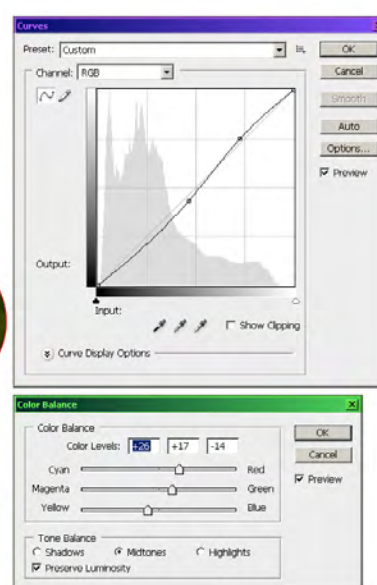
09

the adjustment layer to the left-hand side of the character (left image in **Fig.09**). You will also notice that I have added some extra decoration around his neck and chin now, labelled "Layer 3" in the palette above tattoos.

I wanted to have a few tattoos across my warrior and so created a new layer in order to experiment, as I'd done with the face paint. The Overlay blending mode is probably the most suitable setting and using a chalky green I painted some shapes across his torso and limbs (**Fig.10** – inset). You can see how these finally appear in the full image when the blending mode is altered.

The overall lighting was another aspect that was troubling me at this stage as it seemed dull and did not have the vibrancy that I initially intended. To rectify this I merged the two previous adjustment layers with the character layer and then applied two more; a Curves and a Brightness/Contrast layer. On the left is the image before these were applied and on the right is the effect of these along with their settings. You can see now that the general color scheme has been enriched and the light feels much warmer and more tropical.

During the painting process I realized that the right leg looked a little twisted and the curvature



10





11

through the lower leg seemed exaggerated. I decided to change it by making a selection area from the knee down and then rotating it (**Fig.11**). You can, of course, opt to use the Warp tool in Photoshop although this can sometimes distort the overall contours of the image. Either way works fine really; it just depends on your preference.

Once the lower leg was duplicated I rotated it and then used the Eraser tool to delete the unwanted areas on the character layer as well as blend any obvious seams. Here you can see the before (upper left) and after results (right). After doing this I then rotated the ankle decoration on the clothing layer to match the new position of the leg.

You will have noticed that I have also deleted the red feather headdress, which I felt was somewhat out of balance. I was quite keen on this part of his costume and so replaced them with a smaller bunch (**Fig.12**).

Although our character is wearing some ceremonial clothing he is nonetheless a warrior and so I thought it only fitting to supply him with a typical Aztec weapon: the Maquahuitl. This was a weapon that was somewhere between a club and a sword and was made from wood.

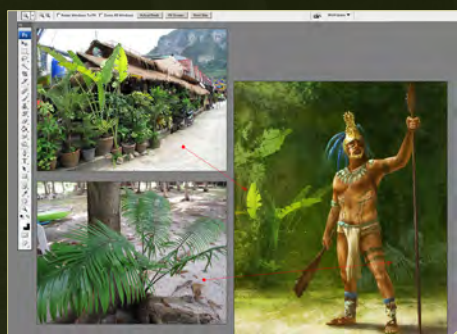
Embedded along its edges were pieces of obsidian (volcanic glass). This material was naturally robust and sharp and made a perfect material for cutting and piercing.

## Finishing Touches

The picture at this point was reaching its final stages, although there were a few adjustments that could help improve things. Although I wanted to focus the attention on the warrior and not the background I thought that some textural realism might help in the way of some foliage. I looked through the free library of photos available on 3DTotal and found the following two images which were perfect for the task:

<http://freetextures.3dtotal.com/preview.php?mi=13022&s=c:Leaf&p=2&cid=17>

<http://freetextures.3dtotal.com/preview.php?mi=13018&s=c:Leaf&p=2&cid=17>



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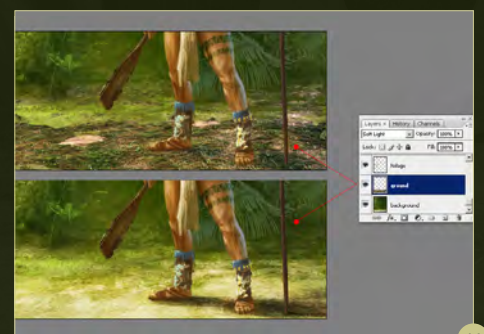


12

In the case of the first one I made a selection area around the large foreground leaves and then pasted these into the painting (**Fig.13**). Once both pictures had been pasted in, I color corrected each by reducing the contrast and also the saturation of the leaves in the lower image.

I also found a useful image of some ground with scattered grass and earth and decided to overlay this across the jungle floor (**Fig.14**). I used the Transform tool to scale it vertically in order to create a more accurate perspective and then set the blending mode to Soft Light (lower image).

I decided to increase the contrast in the Curves adjustment layer and then added one final layer which was some reflective light across the warrior's right side. With this the painting was complete.



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## Richard Tilbury

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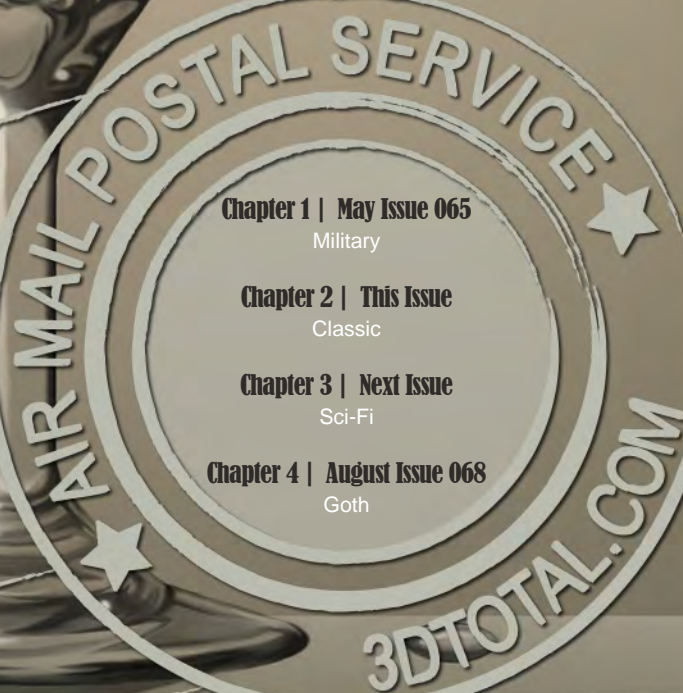
**ANIMATION  
& VISUAL EFFECTS**



# Pin-ups Classic



Pin-up art has dominated digital art forums for years. We are used to seeing it in many different styles and covering many different genres. With this new tutorial series, *2DArtist* can proudly announce their definitive guide to pin-up art. Pin-up legend Serge Birault will guide us through the different styles and influences in pin-up art, as well as giving an insight into the fantastic painting techniques he uses to make his outstanding images.



**Chapter 1 | May Issue 065**  
Military

**Chapter 2 | This Issue**  
Classic

**Chapter 3 | Next Issue**  
Sci-Fi

**Chapter 4 | August Issue 068**  
Goth



## Chapter 02: Classic

Software Used: Photoshop

### Introduction

A girl in a Martini glass... a classic in pin-up painting! In order to keep to this vintage/old school idea, I will try to emulate (a little bit) an oil painting. So I have to mix the cartoony style of Bambi with a classical way of rendering.

### Influences

Here are the artists who inspired me this time:

- **Gil Elvgren:** He was, is and always will be the best pin-up painter. This time I will try to give Bambi an oil-painting like look. The tones that Elvgren used will have a great influence too.
- **Cartoon pin-ups:** There are a lot of 2D/3D artists who do this kind of character. Andy Hickinbottom, Matt Dixon, David Dunstan, Rebeca Puebla and Shane Glines. Take a look at their work; it could be very useful.

### The Sketch

As usual, I don't spend a lot of time on my sketch. The composition will be quite simple. I will probably do some changes, especially on her face (**Fig.01**).

### Colors and Lights

The light will come from the top left of the picture. I will try to emulate interior lighting, like a photo studio. In order to make it look like an Elvgren painting I will avoid shiny skin by keeping the contrasts low. The tones that Elvgren used are very interesting: a lot of red in his dark colors, especially on the skin, and a yellow base for the light tones. You will see that my palette is very simple and logical.

### The Low Opacity Technique

In order to have an oil painting-like render I will try to avoid heavy use of the airbrush or Soft Round brushes this time. I never create custom



01

brushes; I try to use the basic ones that come with Photoshop. They usually do the job.

The only unusual brushes I like are the Ditlev brushes. You can freely download them here:

- <http://cghub.com/scripts/view/83/>
- <http://cghub.com/scripts/view/147/>
- <http://cghub.com/scripts/view/85/>

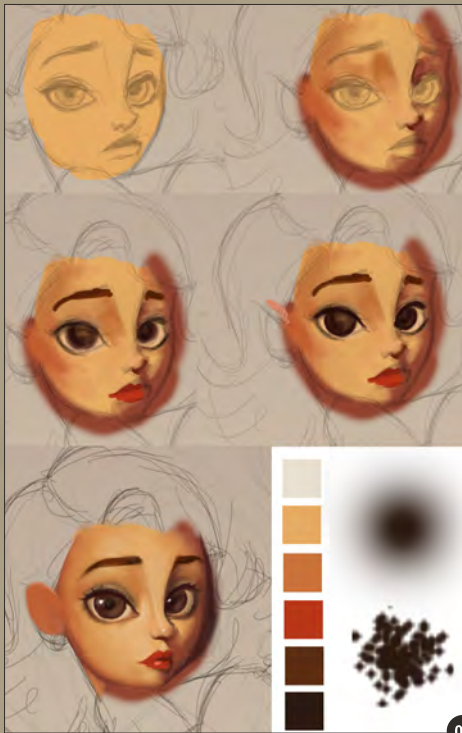
A lot of digital artists use these brushes. Ditlev have done a great job!

The problem is always the same: how do you blend colors and paint good gradients? There are a lot of possibilities, but I think using very low opacity brushes (between 0 and 20%) is a simple and perhaps the most efficient way. Airbrushes with low opacity would make the image too clean so let's try to create a more painting-like look.

### The Face and the Skin

I will change the face of Bambi a little bit. The last time, she looked a little like a vinyl toy.





02

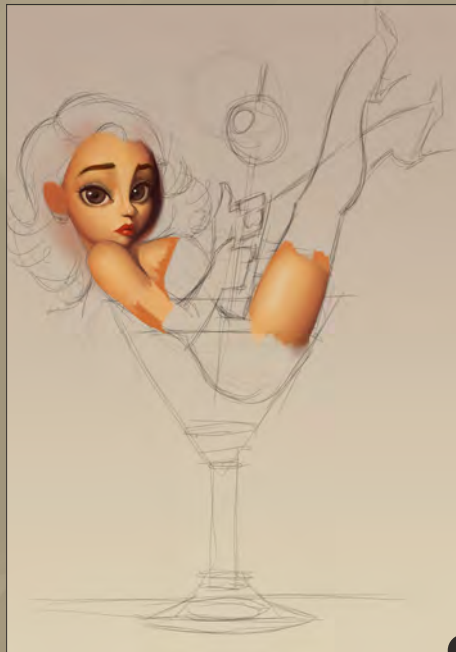
Her skin was very plastic and reflective. This time, I want her to look like a classic pin-up. I begin with a middle tone, a yellow/orange on a layer. I create another layer for the darkest tones (brown/red). Then, on separate layers, I paint the gradient by using a lot of strokes with low opacity brushes. I do cheat a little bit and sometimes use a couple of airbrushes, again with low opacity (**Fig.02 – 03**).

The eyes and the lips are on separate layers. I merge all the layers only when I'm happy with the result. I use the same technique for all the flesh tones in the picture.

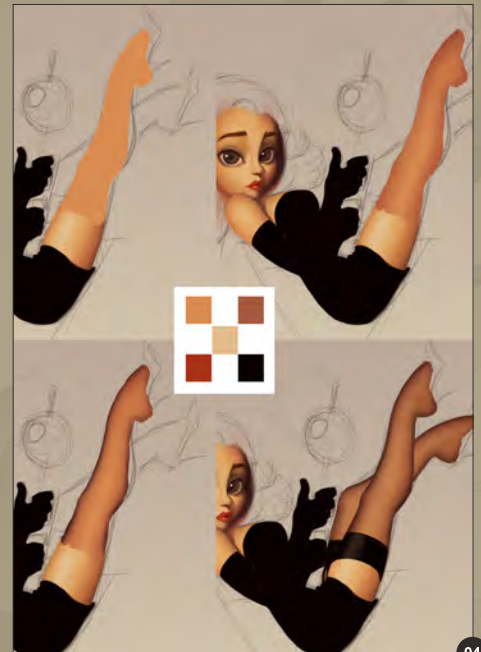
## The Stockings

Elvgren had an amazing technique for painting stockings. I am going to try to emulate it. The darkest color is a very dark brown and the lightest is the flesh basic tone. It's quite logical, but he also used to add red tones between the two. So I do the same (**Fig.04**).

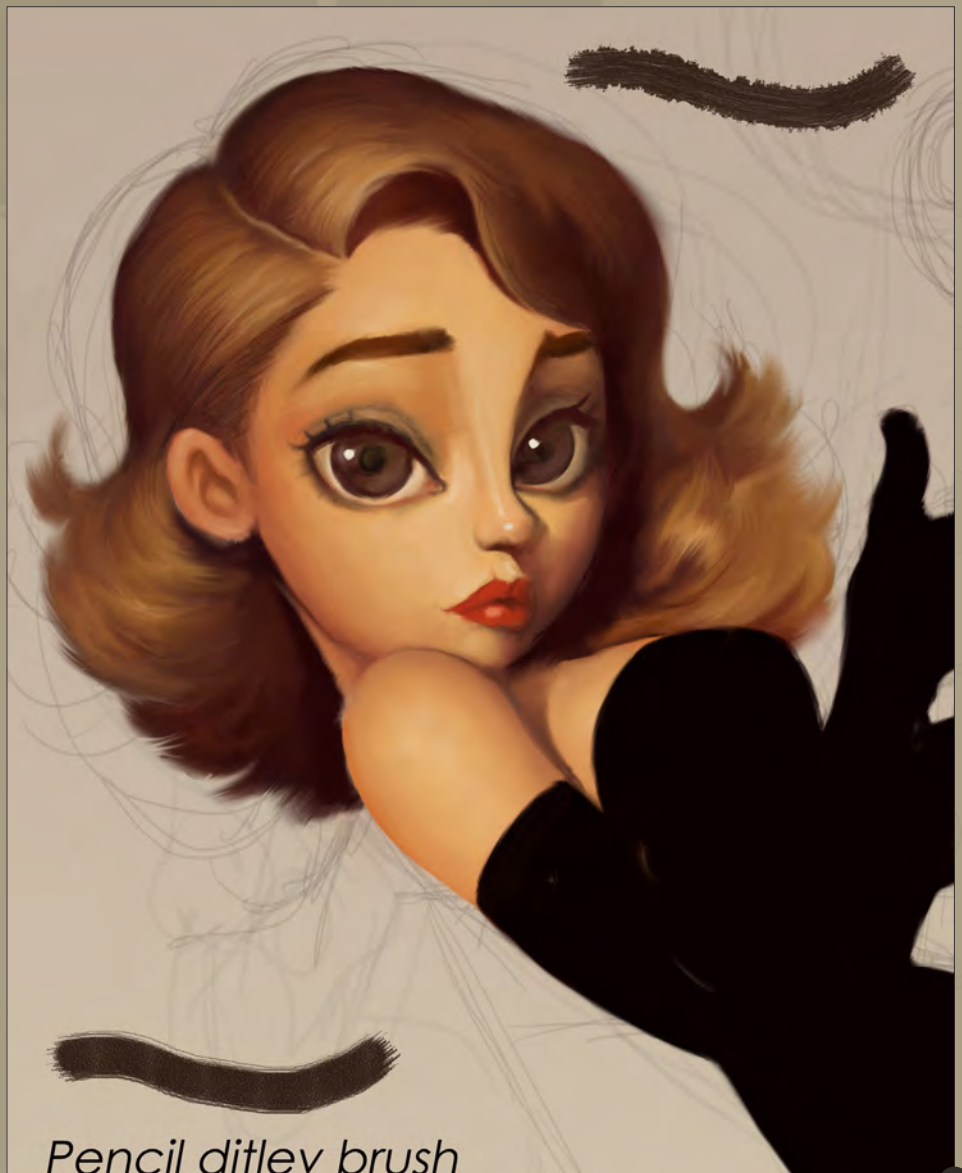
Never do gradients that contain only two colors. Try to do it with at least three! Once again I add a lot of layers and merge them when I'm satisfied with the result. I do, however, keep two layers separate, one for each leg.



03



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05

*Pencil ditlev brush*



## The Hair

The hair is probably the most time-consuming part of this picture. I use two very small Ditlev brushes (with low opacity again). For the end of the hair I use the same brushes, but I also use the eraser (low opacity again). The haircut is, of course, very much inspired by several pieces by Elvgren (Fig.05).

## The Glass

Glasses can be difficult, but there is a simple way to create them. First create a Multiply layer over the other layers. Then use pure black and basic Round brushes with low opacity.

You can find a lot of references on the internet to do with creating glasses, but the only rule is to do logical gradients. For the reflective parts use a very light color, but not a pure white. You can also use the airbrush to add little touches on the brightest parts (Fig.06 – 07).



06

The background and details (Fig.08 – 09).

I did some minor changes to the background colors and some of the missing part of the



07

composition. There was nothing difficult here.

The olive is very simple and you can use the technique we used for the glass for the reflection and the drop.



08



09





## Minor Changes

I change the shape of the leg and do some adjustments on the light and the contrast. It's very useful to have each part on different layers (skin, hair, stockings, dress etc.,) so you can do your adjustments without changing the whole picture (Fig.10).

It's done!

## Serge Birault

For more information please visit:

<http://www.sergebirault.fr/sb/index.php>

Or contact them at:

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## **Chapter 1 | This Issue**

Concept

## **Chapter 2 | Next Issue**

Adding the Sky

## **Chapter 3 | August Issue 068**

Adding Elements

## **Chapter 4 | September Issue 069**

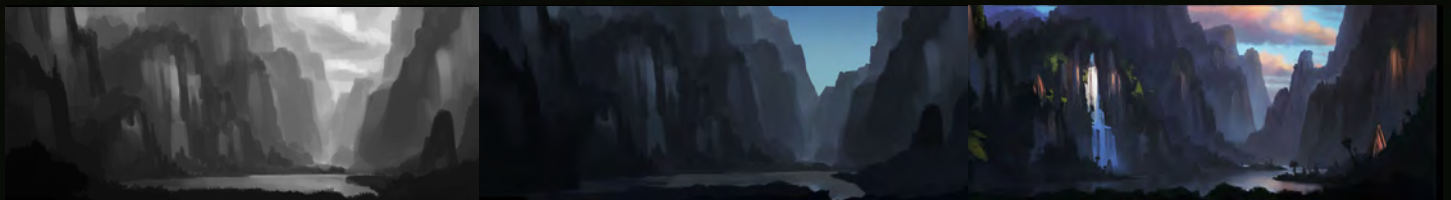
Lighting

## **Chapter 5 | October Issue 070**

Transforming the Time of Day

Matte painting is becoming more and more important in the CG industry. The backdrops of some of the most epic scenes in films have been created by matte painters who have used the techniques touched upon in this tutorial. This eBook will talk you through an entire matte painting and show you how to add photos to your canvas and then integrate them into your scene. This is a must-have for any experienced or novice matte painter.

# MATTE PAINTING





## Chapter 01: Concept

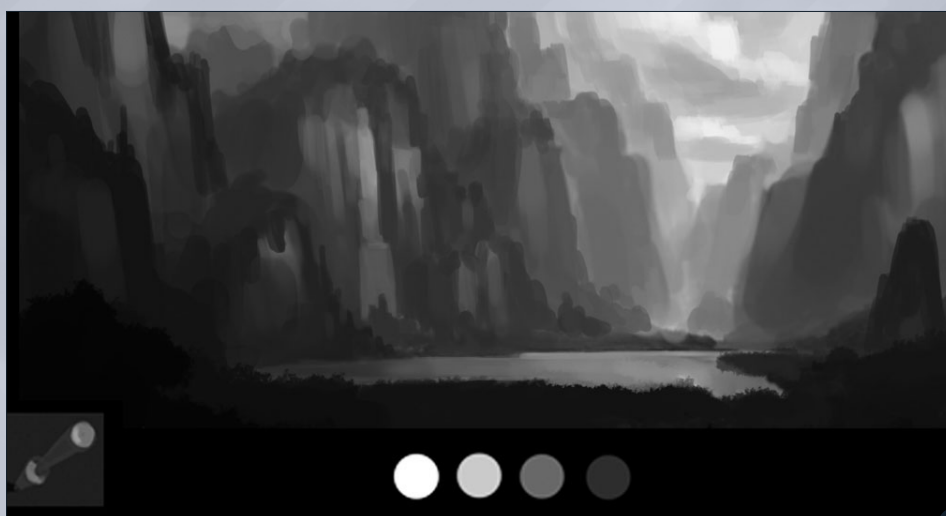
**Software Used:** Photoshop

The inspiration for this image came to me after watching Disney's 1999 animated film *Tarzan*. I wanted to create a jungle landscape with subtle light passing through big mountains that barely touched the mountain tops. I also wanted to use images that I shot during my trip to Vietnam.

### Black and White Sketch

I started with a very small black and white sketch. I usually keep them no bigger than 300 pixels wide. This way I am not tempted to go into details and rather focus on the big picture. I heard once that if the painting looks good when it's small then it will look great once we make it bigger. I usually find this to be true.

In the lower left corner I painted an arrow that reminds me of light direction (**Fig.01**). I also placed four round circles with different values in the middle. This way I am able to quickly pick different values without having to go to the color picker. I used a bit of artistic license here as to where the Sun's light hits the mountains.



01

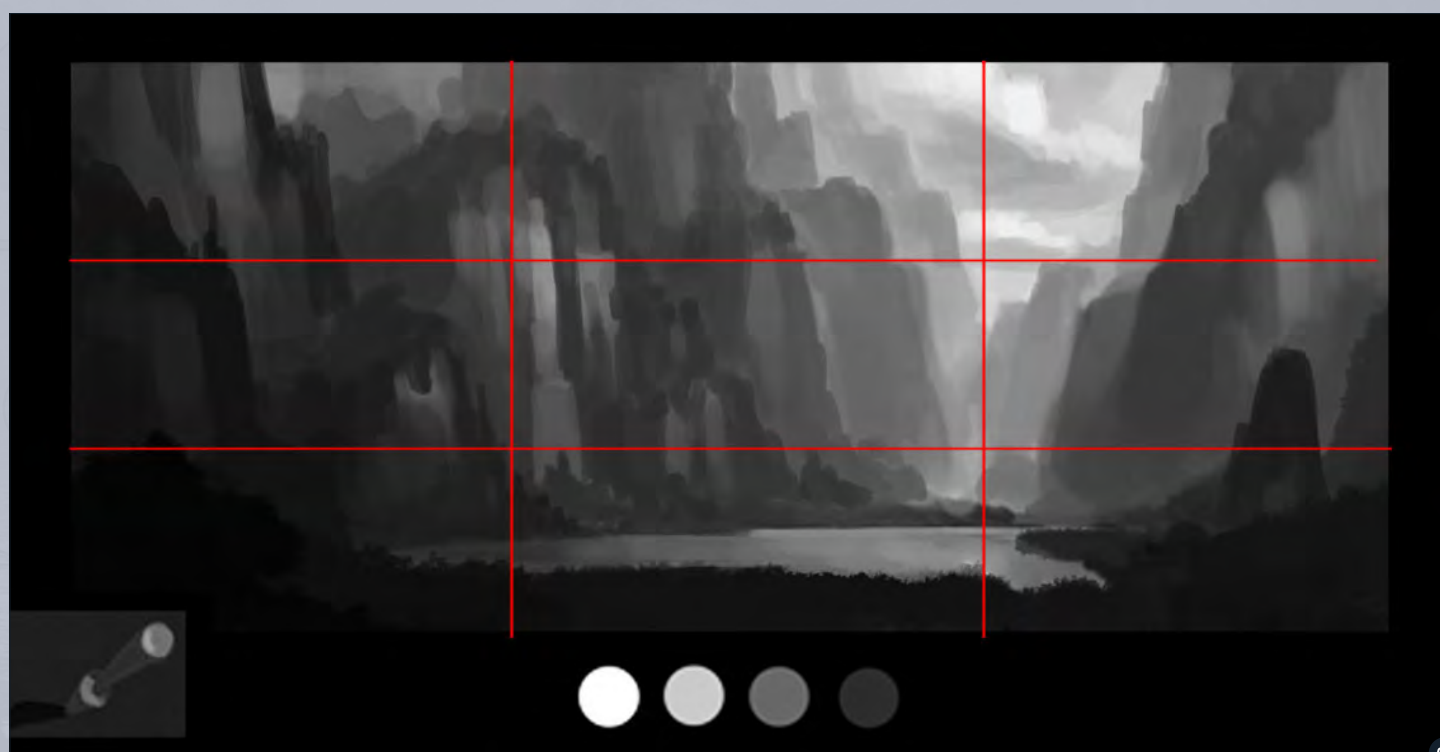
I intentionally painted clouds and placed the mountains in the valley because this way I was able to paint sunlight wherever I wanted without making it look too artificial. This way you can always say that thick clouds are casting the shadows, and if that is not enough you still have big mountains that could put the entire valley in the shadow.

I was concentrating on giving good form to the mountains and showing a light side as well as a side in shadow. Also I was trying to lead the viewers' eyes across the painting until their gaze exits at the far mountains and the sky. I

chose the waterfall to be the main focal point of the painting, and the temple in front of it the secondary focal point.

### Composition

Here I will try to explain a little bit about the composition. It is good to keep in mind the golden rule (**Fig.02**), although I don't follow any rule strictly because I find they limit my creativity. It is however very useful to learn them and use them whenever you find yourself in trouble and don't know why your picture isn't working. In this case I was trying to divide the major masses of the mountains into rectangles.



02



I found the golden rule to be useful not only for the purpose of placing the focal points, but more as a guide to make sure I did not paint any shapes with the equal proportions, particularly in reference to the masses of dark and light colors. If you squint you may find it easier to judge if the balance is correct.

## Proportions

**Fig.03** explains more clearly the idea of dividing masses. The left image is well organized. There is no question or uncertainty whether we see equality or inequality. The major rule here is when creating a good composition you should not confuse the viewers at any stage. The easier it is for the eye to understand the image the better it will be. This particularly applies to motion pictures where the shot will appear on the screen for just a few seconds. It is also good to keep in mind that sometimes the director will want to confuse the viewer, but even in that case it is better to do it intentionally.

**“It is a good idea to look at photos or, even better, peek outside your window for the best reference”**

## Balance

At this stage especially (and during entire process of painting) I flipped the image horizontally to check the balance (Image > Image Rotation > Flip Canvas Horizontal). I assigned a shortcut to this operation just to make it more accessible.

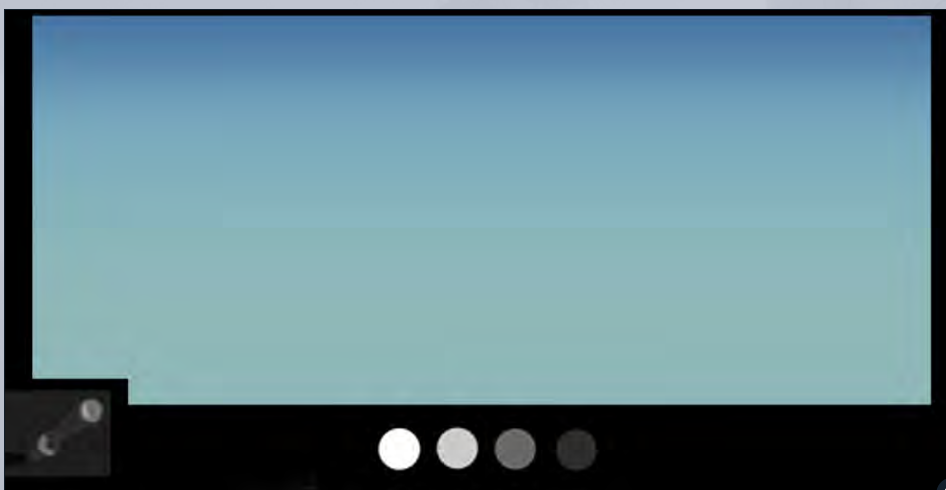
It is very important to have the image well balanced. And by that I mean the relationship between all masses (visual weight) must balance. The left rectangle represents the visual pulling forces. Try to imagine the canvas as a field of energy. If you place some objects in that field like, for example, a black circle, there are visual forces trying to pull it to one of the directions (**Fig.04**). The closer to the borders of the image the object is the stronger the forces are. That is why big objects placed in the corner



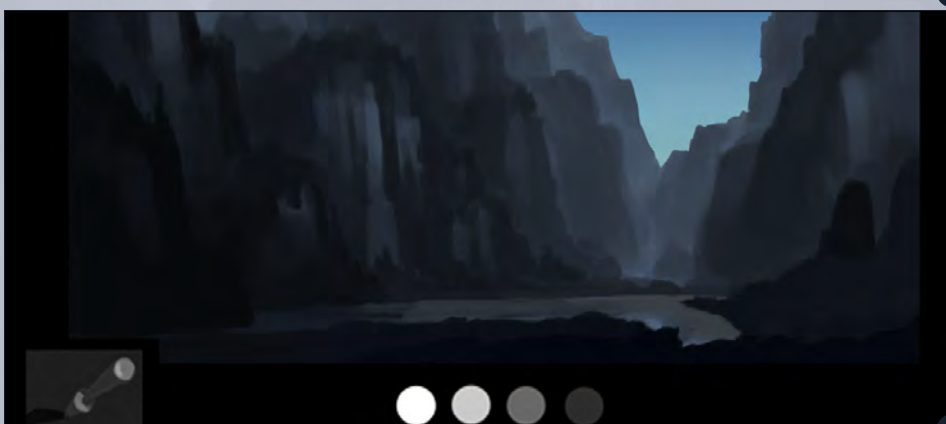
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of images do not create balanced compositions. It either needs to be placed closer to the center or balanced by another object. In this example the big circle placed in the middle/slightly left position is well balanced by the smaller circle placed way over to the right. The rules, as I mentioned, are very subjective and each of us has different tastes. It is good idea to study paintings that you like and develop our own unique style.

There are more useful rules that you can study and if, like me, you have problems remembering everything then I would advise you to put all of the rules together, print them out and keep them close to your monitor.

## Sky Gradient

When the small scale black and white painting was satisfying enough I re-scaled it to 2000 pixels. Then I started with a color gradient (**Fig.05**). I was trying to establish the sky first, as other elements in the painting were dependent on it. I decided to go with a late sunset color palette. It is a good idea to look at photos or, even better, peek outside your window for the best reference.

## Coloring the Mountains

Then I moved my black and white painting on top of the gradient and erased the portion of it with the sky (**Fig.06**). I color corrected the



sketch to roughly match the sky. To do that I selected a color from the sky and set it to Multiply on top of the sketch.

## Adding Detail and Color Variation

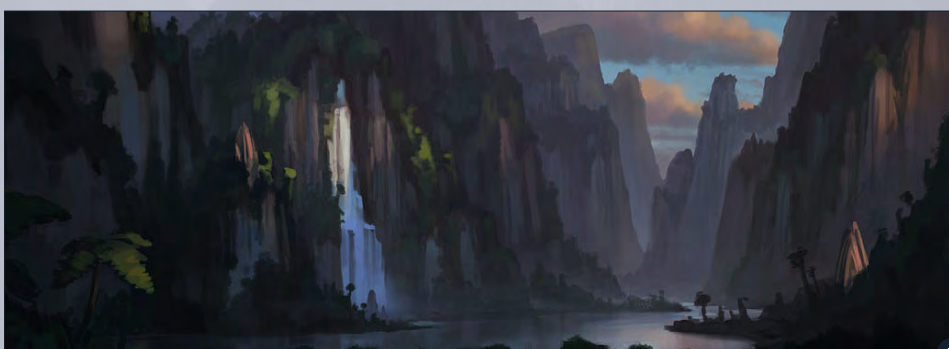
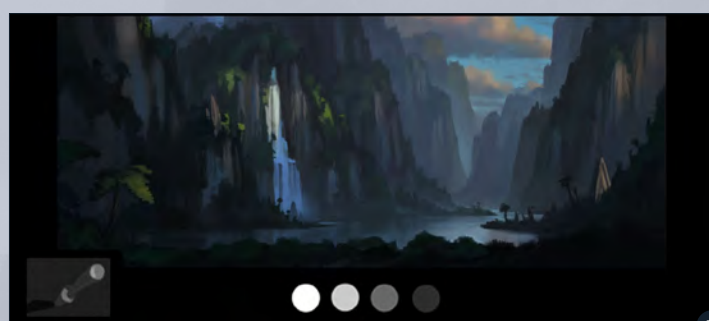
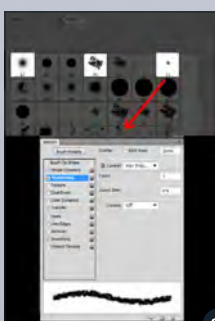
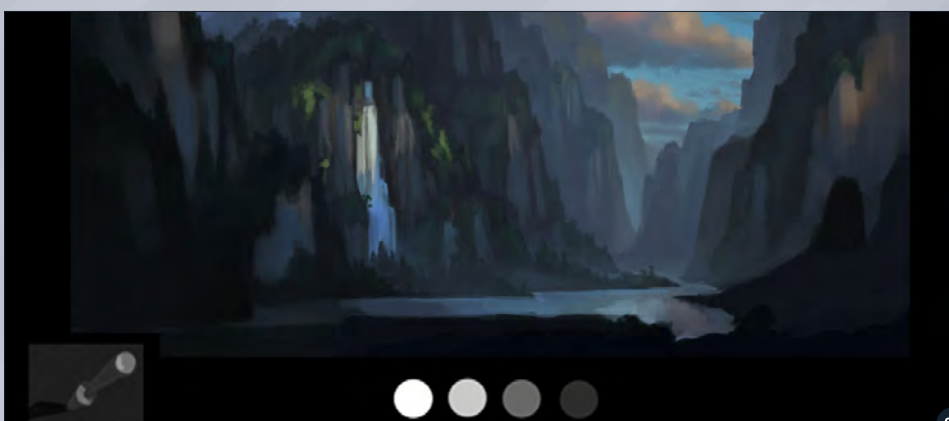
At this point I started to introduce more color and detail into the painting (Fig.07). I was not planning to make a detailed concept simply because almost all of it was going to be replaced by photographs. I also wanted to give it a painterly feel. I wanted this painting to be a decent indication for me later on when I was going to start using photographs. I needed information about the placement of key elements, where to paint my highlights, how much rock and vegetation, and the color transitions from the warm facing the sun colors and cool shadows.

I mixed the paint straight on the canvas by using Opacity Jitter set to Pen Pressure on the Wacom pen. This way I was able to color pick warmer sun colors and paint them straight on the painted shadow mountains. I was not using the value circles anymore. Instead I was color picking different colors from color picker to add more color variation to the painting. If you study similar photographs you will notice that there are thousands of colors involved in this type of image. I usually bring at least a few different hues to the canvas and that makes the process faster as I can color pick them from there.

## Brushes and Settings

During the entire process I used three standard Photoshop brushes (Fig.08):

- Round Soft brush for the haze, waterfall and soft transitions



- Chalk brush for rocks
- Chalk brush with scattering for vegetation.

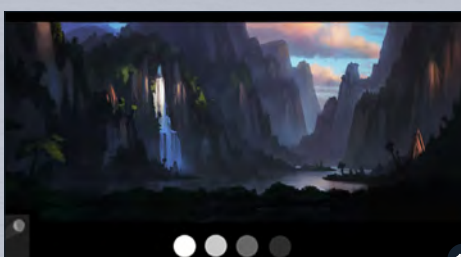
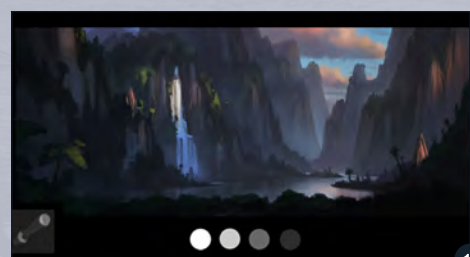
## Adding Details

Then I started to focus a little more on micro composition. I started by adding trees and temples (Fig.09). I placed them in the areas where the contrast was higher as this meant we would see them more clearly. I was trying to add as much depth as I could by overlapping trees in different planes of the painting. Also, when

painting clouds, I made sure to give them depth by placing smaller clouds further in the distance.

## Final Painting

I gave the painting a slightly warmer tone using a Curves adjustment layer (Fig.10). I also added more haze at the bottom of mountains by using the Lasso tool and painting in the selection area (Fig.11). Finally I squashed the entire painting a little bit because I felt that the mountains were too vertical (Fig.12).



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Image By Charlie Bowater





Griffin

## Giant

## Dragon

## Yeti

## Alien

## Loch Ness Monster

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.



## Chapter 06 - Loch Ness Monster

**Software used:** Photoshop & Painter

When the Loch Ness Monster is mentioned people immediately associate it with a black and white silhouetted photo of a monster on a sparkling water surface, with a sea serpent-like head.

People have been fascinated by the Loch Ness Monster since 565 AD. Although most of the persuasive photos have now been proved as being fake, people's belief in the beast has not been impaired at all.

Whether the Loch Ness Monster is a legend or just an unlocked mystery, fantasy and expectancy in people's heart will always exaggerate any existing ideas about what the creature is. As fantasy artists we can draw this legendary creature with our pen and combine tales we have heard with our imagination, and show the Loch Ness Monster we have in our mind.

According to blurred photos and the descriptions of witnesses, the Loch Ness Monster could



be described as a creature like a "Plesiosaur" (the plesiosaur is a marine reptile that lived in the Jurassic age). Images show that the Loch Ness Monster seems to float on the water's surface, revealing its long neck and huge ridge, which is different from a plesiosaur. Whether this is a habit of the Loch Ness Monster or not, it has become a symbol of the monster. This appearance has left a deep impression on people and will be considered in this image.

Before working on the illustration I find it helps to draw a sketch to define the features of the Loch

Ness Monster for reference later. To control the features and shape better I draw a plesiosaur as a prototype base (**Fig.01**).

The next step is to add some reasonable fantasy elements on the plesiosaur to make it more like the Loch Ness Monster. By reasonable I mean not too exaggerated. I say this because features of the monster might become impaired. For example, too large a horn or dorsal fin will change the basic outline which has left a deep impression on people.

I add fantasy elements such as the gill fins of a dragon, scales covering the whole body, a wing like ventral fin and a beautiful tail fin. I do this to add a mythical atmosphere to the mysterious creature. Although these elements don't change the outline of the plesiosaur obviously, it does become difficult for audiences to associate the Monster with a plesiosaur, therefore making it different (**Fig.02**).

Do not start the sketch for the illustration in a hurry after the shape is finalized. The structure of a marine creature is very special because of the control and dynamic needed in the water. The illustration's content has been decided upon already, as we want the Loch Ness Monster's head and neck to be exposed as it is shown in photos and described by witnesses. In this







03

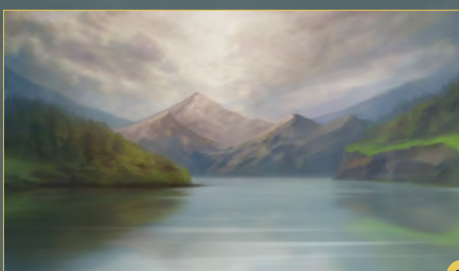
case the limbs and trunk would be under water which affects the overall dynamic and position of the monster's features. To express this all accurately it is worth doing a few practice sketches.

For the final composition I choose a gesture that doesn't only show the dynamic of the monster in the water, but also avoids a potential problem. By curving the neck I can display the monster's face from the side rather than the front (**Fig.03**).

The next step is to decide on the final composition for the illustration (**Fig.04**).

It won't be a waste as you can save the part that you don't need, but those parts need to be hidden temporarily or saved as another file so they don't influence the normal layout. I will tell you what to do with the cut part at the end of this tutorial.

Now we can begin work on the formal illustration. First paint a background, which in this case will be the peaceful Loch Ness



05

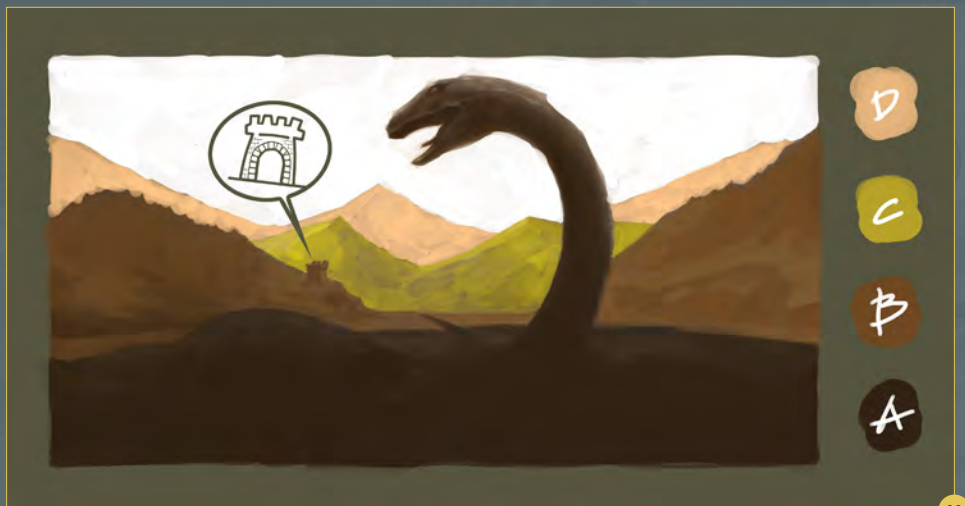


04

(**Fig.05**). Loch Ness is the largest freshwater lake in the north part of the Scottish highlands. Because of this we must include a few things like an open lake surface, surrounding mountains and mist and clouds. By doing this we show those that view the image the type of location that the monster is in.

Please pay attention to your layers in the layout stage. Take **Fig.06** as an example:

- **Layer A** is the foreground, where the main scenery and character of the illustration will be depicted.
- **Layer B** is the mid-ground. Its role is to help



06





07

put the character in the scene. This area should have some points of interest. In this case I have put in Urquhart Castle, which is on the shore of the Loch Ness.

- **Layer C** is the far mid-ground, which enhances the sense of spatial distance and connects the lake to the back-ground.
- **Layer D** is the background, which continues to add to the sense of depth and scale.

Here is the render after the first sketch is finished (**Fig.07**).

When you come to painting the water it is important to remember how the monster will affect the water around him. The sky is painted to look typically Scottish with heavy cloud cover. The sunlight therefore shines on the water's surface through the clouds.

The next step is to work on the details. I have separated the character and its environment to help show the changes more clearly. We will look at the head and neck of the monster as an example (**Fig.08**). Firstly complete the basic structure of the character and show the way the light hits him. This can be done in black and



08



09

white. Then add important details such as the scales, eyes and teeth. Such important details are not required to be very precise, but all the key features must be presented accurately and clearly. Then the color can be added.

The scales are important to get right and should wrap around the trunk and limbs. If the arrangement of the scales is wrong the overall structure of the animal depicted will be impaired (**Fig.09**). You can use the "Lattice method" to draw guide lines to determine the trend of





10

scales. You can see that the flow and direction of the scales is indicated by red and green arrows in the image. In the second image you can see the next set of lines to add indicated with a blue arrow. By adding these you should have the required guides to continue to develop your scales. These lines should overlap.

The next step is to refine the lattice. Over these guides you can start to add the shadows and highlights, and then add color and volume to make every scale stand out (**Fig.10**).

You can use the same technique for the back of the monster. Scale, direction and general movement rules should be paid attention to as they were with the neck. You can see the development of the scales in A – C in **Fig.11**.



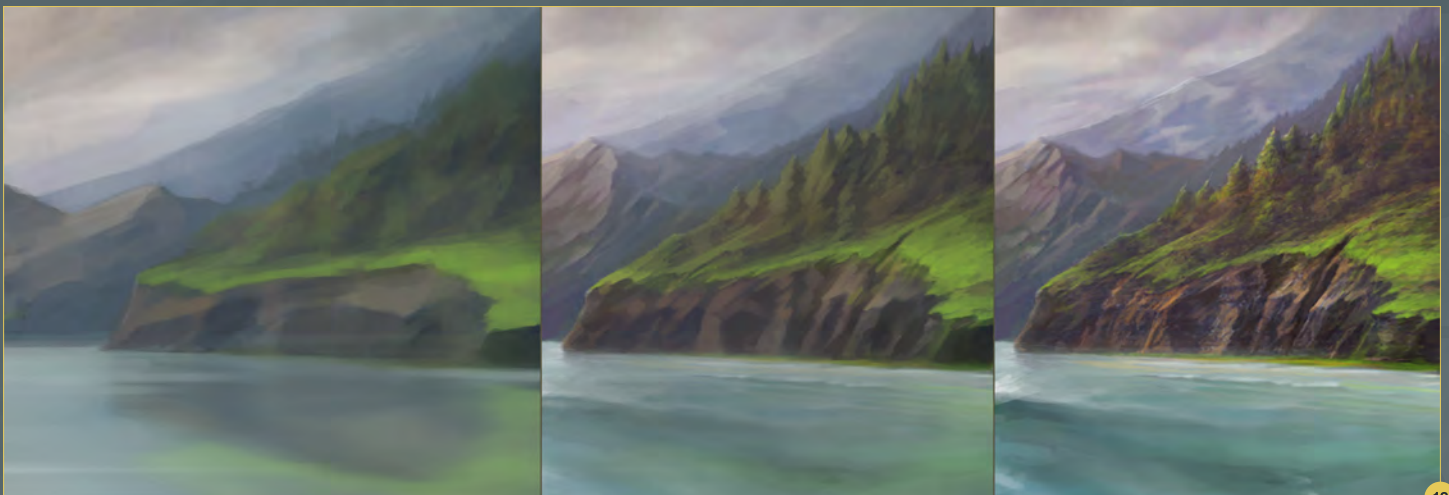
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Giving the scales a quality feeling is the easiest way to make the monster look moist. Please note that the highlight on the monster should not be shown individually on every scale, but should be shown on its overall structure.

At this point let's go back to the background to develop it. Reduce the amount of detail painted

as you move further away from the foreground. This will add to the sense of depth (**Fig.12**).

There aren't many details to be painted on the mountains as they are far away, but don't forget to pay attention to the overall lighting to enrich the image (**Fig.13**).



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13





Here's the image after the background is completed (**Fig.14**).

The water's surface in this scene is close to the viewer so it should look as detailed as the main character. I use cyan as the main tone for the water's surface. It adds a cool feeling to the image and contrasts with the background of warm colours. I have lit the water from behind as it will mean that the splashes can be highlighted

and this will help blend the character in the scene. Try not to make the colors dirty when painting the water's surface. Use fairly pure colors even for areas in shadow (**Fig.15**).

Paint waves and splashes that look as though they are reacting with the movement of the monster. I am using pure white here to do this. Also don't forget the droplets from his head, neck and tail (**Fig.16**).



Add a misty effect and halo to the lake's surface to enrich the atmosphere (**Fig.17**).

I'd like to share a solution with everyone who thought it was a shame to cut part off at the beginning. You could paint the illusion of being under the water's surface in the part you cut off. The underwater parts should be vague so strong contrasts can be formed with effect above the water's surface (**Fig.18**):

- Paint caustics effects on the trunk and limbs near the water's surface to make the image more real
- Separate the whole image into upper and lower parts with ripples
- The trunk and limbs below the water's surface should be a little larger and dislocated so they imitate deformation caused by refraction in the water.



## Weiye Yin

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# my little *Lemmy*

## Making Of By Serge Birault

Serge Birault has been wowing us in his pin-up series, but in this Making Of he leaves the stylized look behind and shows us how he paints his hyper-realistic pictures, in this case his great image *My Little Lemmy*.

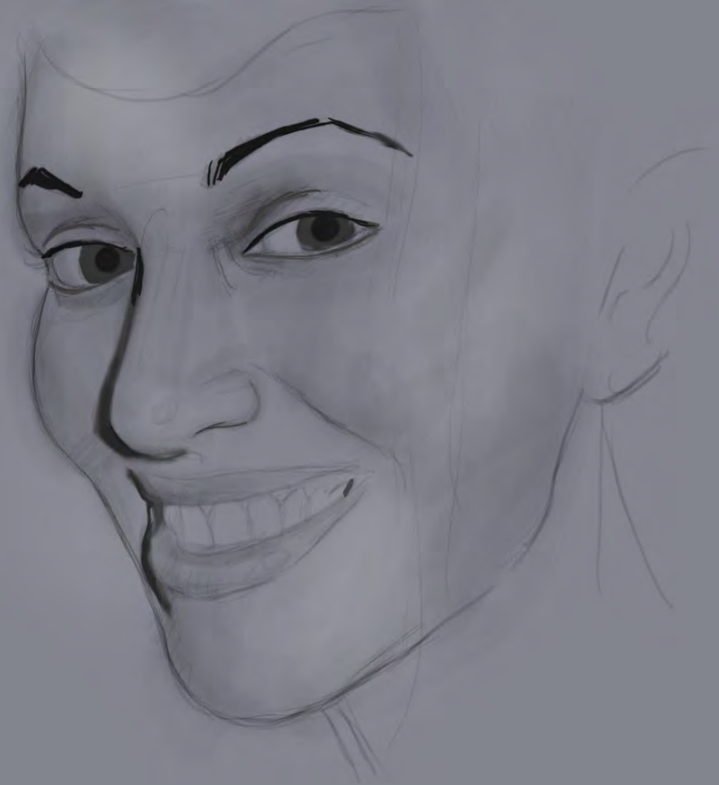


**"I worked on a very big canvas. My picture is more than 10,000 pixels tall at 300 dpi and, believe it or not, sometimes I worked with a 1 pixel brush."**





SKETCH ....



01

## Making of My Little Lemmy

Software Used Photoshop

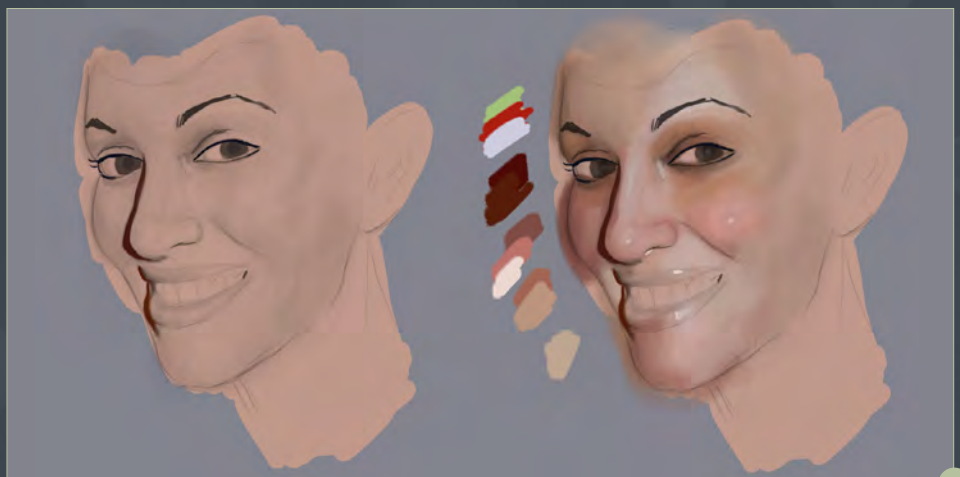
### Introduction

I'm not a big fan of photorealism because I'm not a photographer, but it's very interesting to attempt to do, at least technically. I learned a lot of new techniques when painting this image, especially for the skin texture, so I don't think it was a waste of my time.

I worked on a very big canvas. My picture is more than 10,000 pixels tall at 300 dpi and, believe it or not, sometimes I worked with a 1 pixel brush.

### The References

Of course, I needed some photo references to help with the painting. I had references of my wife's face, several haircuts, t-shirts, hands,



02

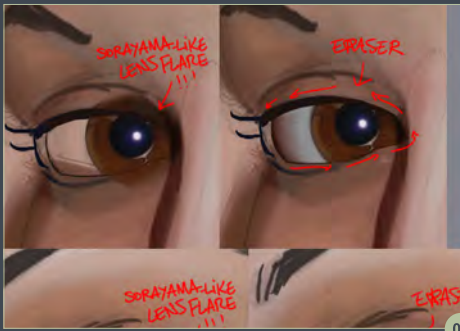
arms... I didn't copy a photo; instead I tried to compose my own picture. It's a little bit more difficult, but I thought it would be more interesting.

### The Face

On this occasion my sketch was very clean and detailed (**Fig.01**). Each part (face, hair, hands

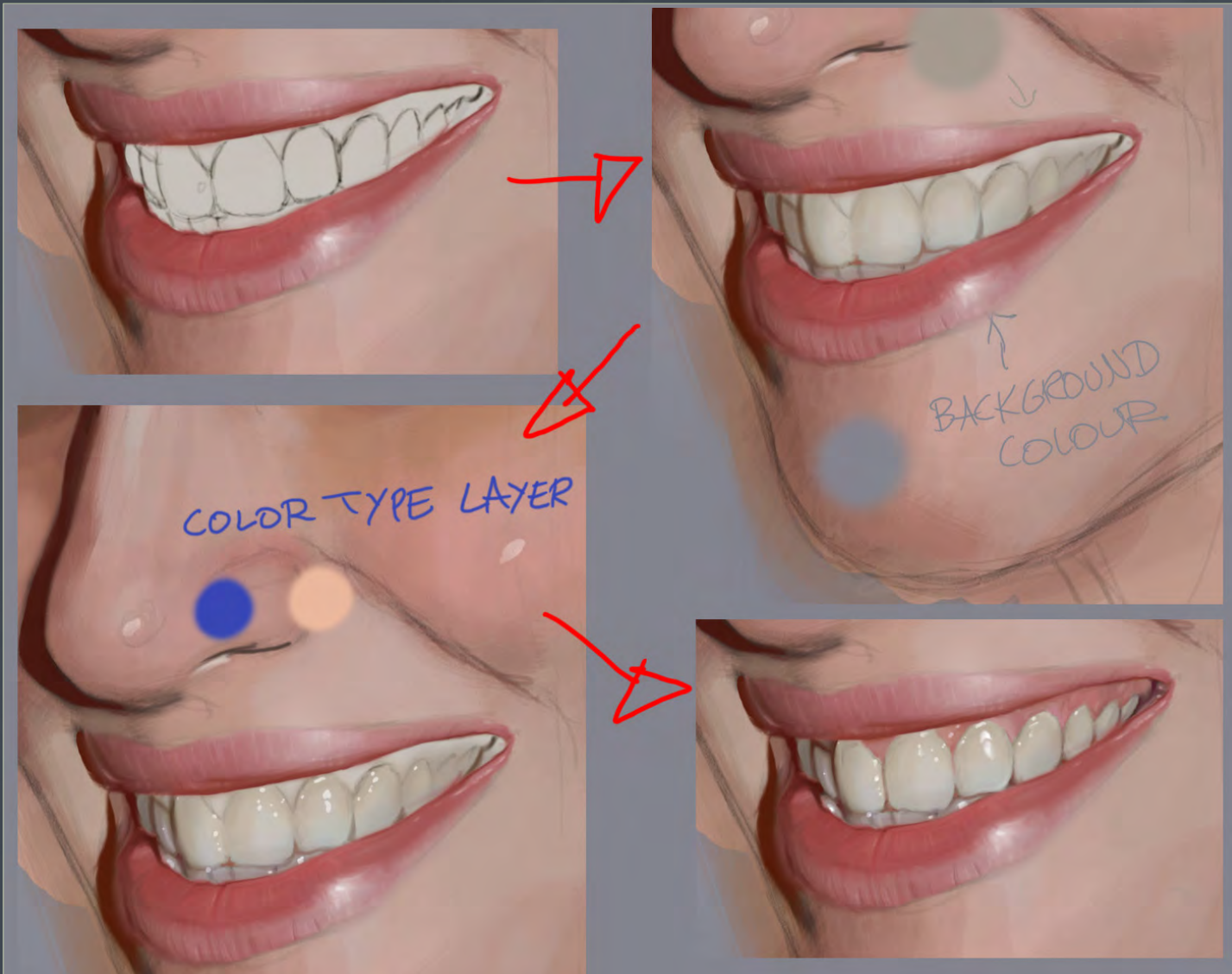
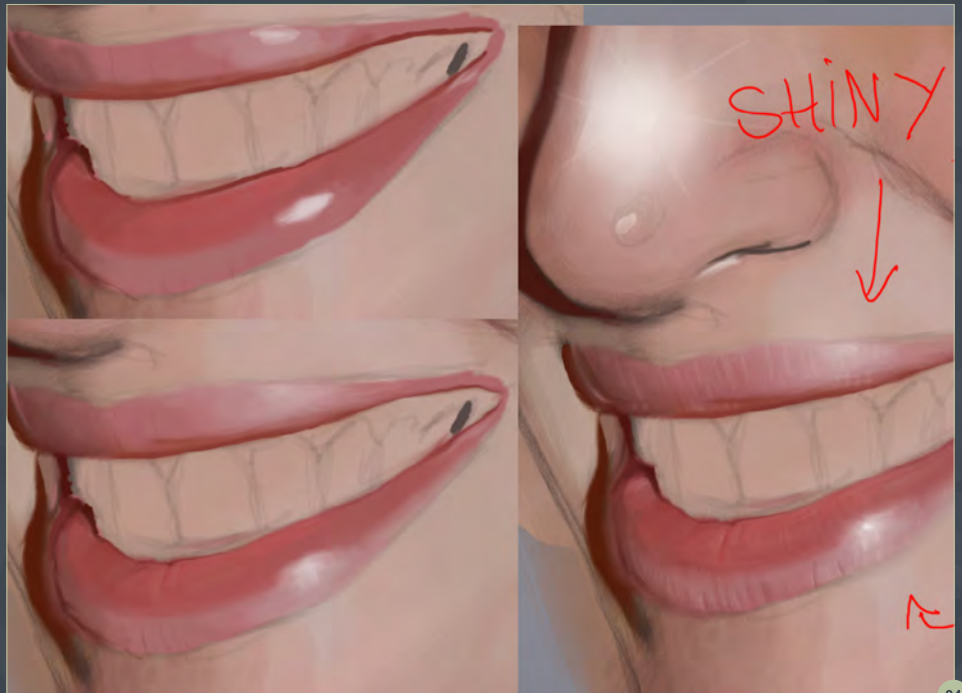
etc.,) was on a different layer. The first difficulty to overcome was the contrast. You can have very realistic rendering with strange tones and colors. The important thing is your contrast. In order to see if your luminosity and contrast is good, desaturate your picture and your photo reference. The shadow of the nose will be the darkest tone of the skin face (**Fig.02**).



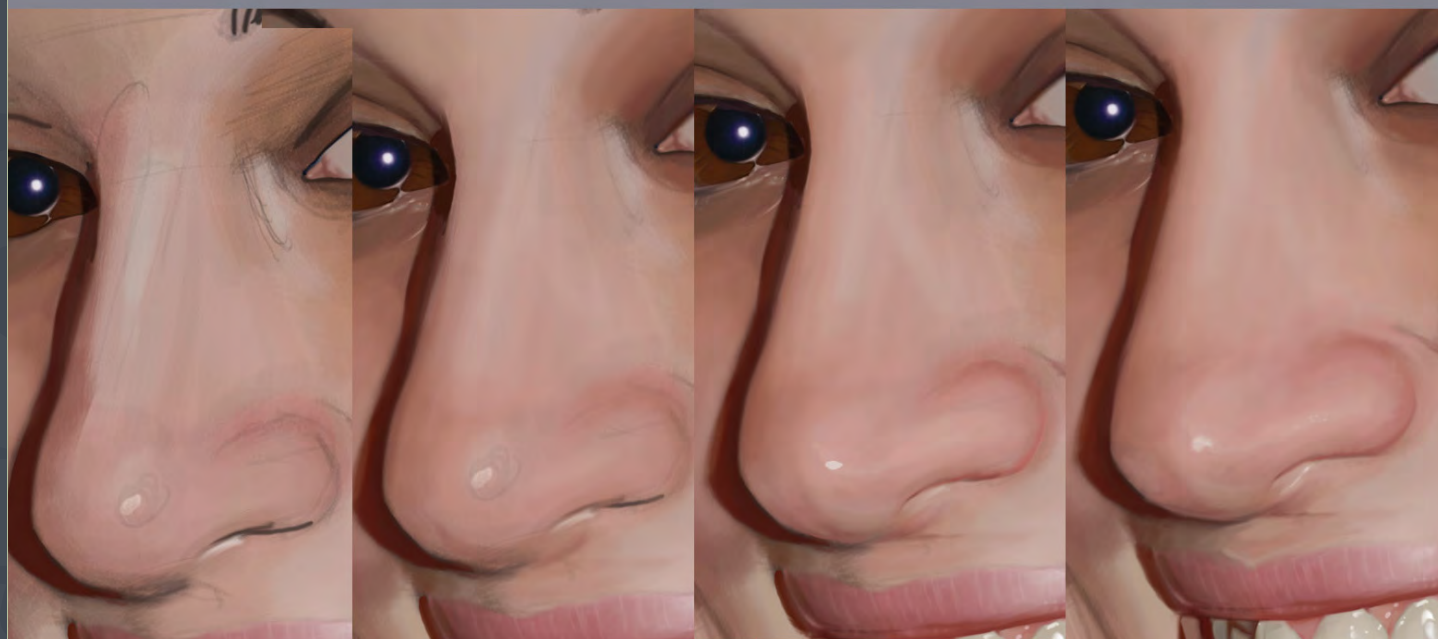


I began with the eyes because it's probably the most important part of a face. Don't use pure black, but a very dark brown (Fig.03).

The other important and expressive part is the mouth. The lips are quite easy to do, but teeth are very difficult. I spent a lot of time on them. Both the lips and the teeth were on separate layers (Fig.04 – 05).







06

In order to paint a convincing face your eyes and your mouth have to be good. So try and try again!

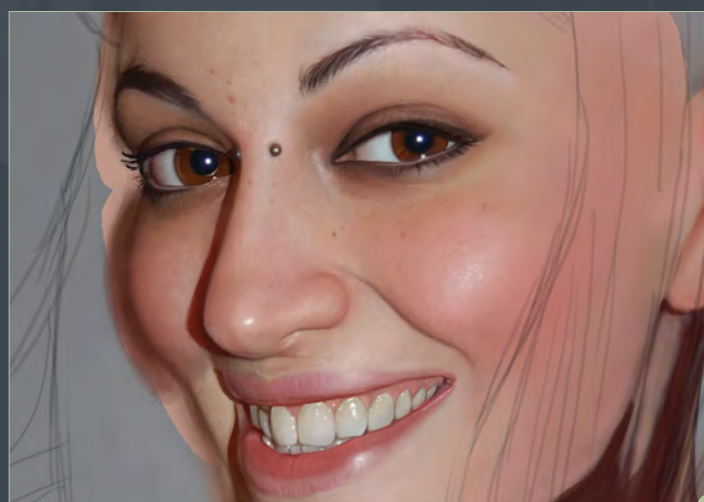
The skin tones are very strange on a face. You sometimes have to add blues, greens, oranges or reds. You can use an Incrustation or Color layer to do minor changes. The texture of the skin was done at the end of the process with the basic Dry brush. I think it's possible to obtain this result with other brushes which create a lot of little dots. Of course, it's very time-consuming. As usual, I used a lot of airbrushes and soft round brushes set with very low opacity (Fig.06 – 09). I spent eight hours in total on the face.



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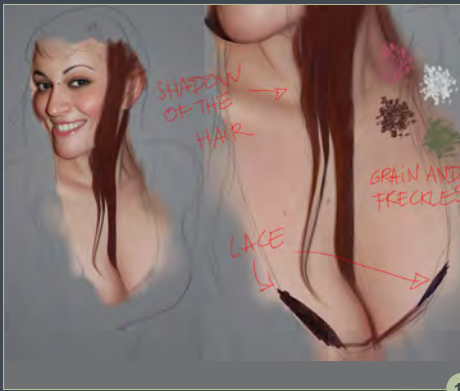


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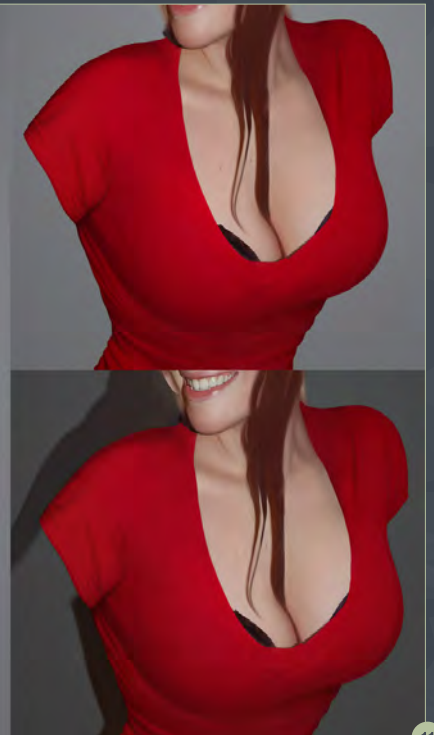




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## The Breasts and the T-shirt

The breasts were done the same way as the face (Fig.10). The first step when doing the t-shirt was not very difficult, but the Betty Boop picture was a real nightmare. I didn't have a good photo reference to copy so I extrapolated a lot (Fig.11 – 13). Once again I spent a lot of time on this part – about six to eight hours.



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## The Hair

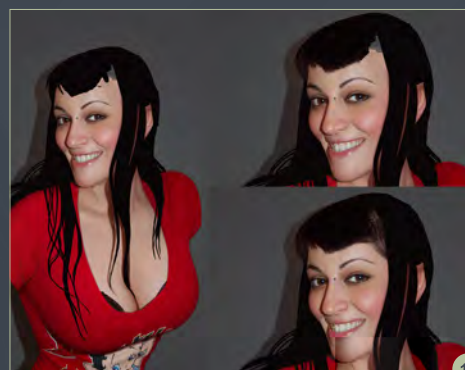
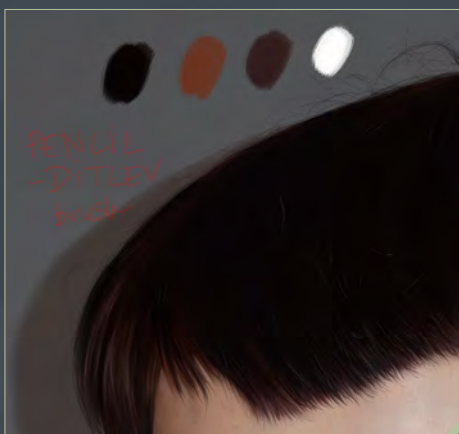
I've already done realistic hair in the past, but this time I tried to do close to perfect hair. I used no tricks here; I just gave a lot of time to the task. I used the Ditlev pencil brush (<http://cghub.com/scripts/view/83/>) because the Hard Round brush does regular strokes where as I wanted to add a bit of chaos!

Once again I never use pure black. There is a little trick I use when working on very dark areas. You can create a totally white Incrustation type layer over the hair. It will increase the contrast and the luminosity which can be very useful (Fig.14 – 17). I did all the hairs one by one: 10 hours.

## Hands, Tattoos and Lemmy

The hands were very complicated. Hands are always very complicated because the tones are very strange. There are usually a lot of greens and reds on the fingers. The textures were done with the basic Dry brush. In the images you can only see my successful attempt. I tried and failed several times on this part (Fig.18 – 19).

The biggest difficulty was the ink tones. I wanted to do tattoos which looked like old ones and, of course, my wife wanted her tattoos! The Lemmy figure is quite simple. It looks like a plastic doll. It's easy to find good references of him. I added the logo and I did adjustments in order to made the picture more interesting (Fig.20 – 21).





# *my little* **Lemmy**



**Serge Birault**

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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:

**"BIG BLUE"**

BY SIMON DOMINIC







## BIG BLUE

BY SIMON DOMINIC

JOB TITLE: Illustrator

SOFTWARE USED: ArtRage, Painter



### INTRODUCTION

What I enjoy the challenge of tight specifications, it's good every once in a while to let one's mind go wandering. With this personal piece, Big Blue, I injected this very attitude into the image itself. I had an idea about two travelers – one human, one creature – taking a break from their long journey just to sit and ponder their futures, each lost in their own thoughts.

To better convey the mood of the piece I tried to stay away from cliché, so partially-clothed babes, grressed warriors and fire-breathing dragons were immediately ruled out. I designed the male character to be somewhat nondescript with an unremarkable appearance so as not to overpower the general mood. With this in mind, I referenced a photo of myself – although I must stress that I don't own a red waistcoat. Honest. (Fig.01).

I made the creature mysterious, its origin and purpose unknown and entirely dependent on the whim of the viewer. The wings give the impression of a mythical beast and the skull pattern on its head suggests a certain danger or hidden power. I contrasted this with its calm, contemplative stance to give the impression of intelligence behind that forboding exterior.



IF SOMETHING DOESN'T SEEM RIGHT, CHANGE IT AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE BECAUSE THE LATER YOU LEAVE IT THE MORE DIFFICULT AND TIME-CONSUMING THE CORRECTIONS BECOME

### PREPARATION

Sometimes I'll create several thumbnail concepts before I start, and also collect numerous references to work from. In this instance, however, the composition and atmosphere of the piece were clear in my mind and therefore I decided to skip the concept stage and move straight to the initial sketch.

In terms of references, I only used a couple of photos of myself. The creature and the environment are entirely products of my peculiar mind.

### THE INITIAL SKETCH

I started on a small canvas in ArtRage and created a sketch of the guy and the creature. In my initial sketch I wasn't keen on the pose of the male character, so I referenced another photo and changed it. If something doesn't seem right, change it as early as possible because the later you leave it the more difficult and time-consuming the corrections become.



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### SHADING AND VALUES

Next I shaded the characters to produce a value study. Basically this indicates how the light will behave in the finished piece and how the different areas of the image will contrast with each other. (Fig.02).

### COLOR WASH

Using a brush with plenty of thinners I painted over the entire piece, ensuring that the sketch was still visible through the paint. I wasn't too bothered about the landscape at this stage so I used a broad brush to apply earthy colors to the ground and brighter hues to the sky. (Fig.03).

### ROUGH DETAIL

I suspect "rough detail" is an oxymoron, but what I did here was to start applying a thick layer of paint over the entire piece. Some of the detail applied during these stages would be refined later, but some would make it through to the final image and for this reason I resized the canvas upwards to its final print size before I began.

I started out painting the creature's body. Although I predominantly used shades of blue, I varied the color hues regularly. If I hadn't done this then the blue color of the creature's skin could have become overpowering. The paint values however (how light or dark it is), remained consistent with the value study sketch-work. (Fig.04).

### BACKLIGHTING

While painting the rocks and the male character I had the idea that a strong backlight would make the characters stand out, or "pop". Therefore I imagined a light-source situated in the lower left somewhere, shining onto the guy's back, the jutting rock and also the back legs of the creature. Where does the light source come from? Nobody knows... (Fig.05).



### SCRUFFY FEATHERS

I wanted the creature to have huge powerful wings so I was careful not to obscure its form with too many feathers. Therefore I left the upper wing mostly free of feathers and ensured the others lay relatively flat against the wing arm. I ruffled the feathers too (so to speak) as imperfections can be used to enhance the realism of a piece.

At the same time I painted some detail into the background landscape. Because I wasn't working from a reference I could create exactly the look I wanted, which in this case was misty and unobtrusive yet still interesting to look at. (Fig.06).

### FINISH THE LANDSCAPE

I completed the landscape whilst still in ArtRage because although the brush engine isn't ideal for all types of small detail, it does an excellent job on organic detail such as rock, grass and wood.



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FANTASY

I was careful not to put much background detail in the area around the creature's head so as not to muddle the focus. By keeping the regions around the creature relatively free of detail it helped the character stand out more. (Fig.07).

### FINAL BLENDING

For the final stage I exported the image into Painter so as I could make use of Painter's great blending brushes. I didn't want to blend the entire final image by any means, but the character's skin and especially the sky needed to be made much softer.

I used two brushes to do the blending. The first one blended at a low pen pressure only and when more pressure was applied it acted like an acrylic brush, laying down paint. This is so that the small, fiddly areas can be blended and enhanced as required. The second brush was a pure blending brush with the resaturation set to zero so that it didn't lay down any paint. I used this brush mostly for large areas – the sky and the main bulk of the creature.



When blending it's often tempting to go too far and start blending everything. This should really be avoided. Boundaries and intentionally sharp value and hue transitions should be left unblended so that the image doesn't become undefined and too "digital-looking". This applies equally to the type of painting brush you use because excessive usage of soft-edged brushes tends to produce fuzzy results.

After finishing the blending I went over the entire image at a high zoom looking for any little bits I could tidy up. When that was done I saved the final file, went to bed and dreamed of blue feathers. (Fig.08).

### ARTIST PORTFOLIO



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# DIGITAL ART MASTERS

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

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