Cover image by Serge Birault

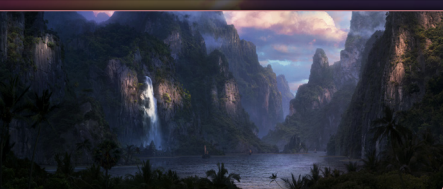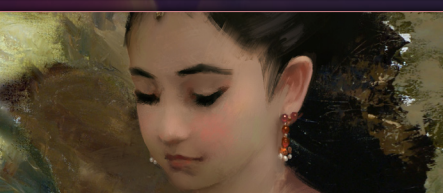**Interview**
Maciej Kuciara

Articles
Sketchbook of **Ian McQue**

The Gallery
David Munoz Velazquez, Gia Nguyen Hoang
and **Ivan Kashubo,** plus more!

The Rocket Girl

Serge Birault concludes his epic painting series

Painting Tribal Warriors
The super talented **Branko Bistrovic** brings us his interpetation of a Native American in the third part of this tutorial series.

Character Portrayal
Jason 'Wei Che' Juan show's the importance of a good base sketch to figure out composition, value and even the facial expression.

Adding Elements to your Matte Painting
Piotrek Swigut demonstrates how to add believable mountains to your matte painting as he continues with the third part of this series.

Editorial

Obviously every issue of 2DArtist is special and full of outstanding work, but this month's issue raises the bar yet again with some of the best tutorials and artwork that I have seen in the magazine since I have been here.

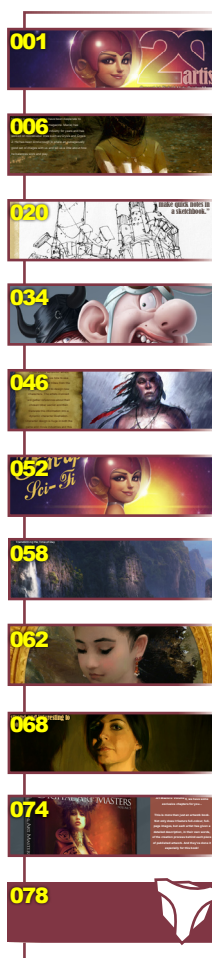When you are so excited about every article in the magazine it is hard to know where to start, but I think I will kick things off by talking about this month's jaw dropping cover image by **Serge Birault**. Serge has done an outstanding job throughout his Pin Up tutorial series and we have all learnt a lot, but sadly all good things come to an end and in this issue Serge wraps things up in style. I guess it is good to leave on a high and Serge does this with probably my favorite image of the series so far. But it's hard to be too disappointed as next month we will be starting a new series by David Smit that I know you are going to love!

We will stick with the tutorials for now and talk about the stunning Tribal Warrior that **Branko Bistrovic** has painted for us. Branko is a busy guy and has just started a new job at Ubisoft, but he still found time in his schedule to whip up an outstanding illustration of a Native American. Branko always does a great job for us and this tutorial is no exception. I am sure you will all find a few handy tips in this one, and I know you are going to love the final image.

Matte painting is a tricky subject and requires you to master a lot of different skills to come up with the best results. **Piotrek Swigut** is however giving us great detailed advice as to how to do this and in this issue he will be showing us how to start adding Photo's to your concept painting.

Our Character Portrayal series was kicked off in style last month so there is no surprise that this month's tutorial comes with another fantastic image, this time by **Jason Wei Che Juan**. Jason talks us through the unique features of a child's face and tells us how to use this information to create a cool illustration of a child. This series is a really handy series, particularly if you are into character design.

I am sure you will agree that the tutorials in this magazine are outstanding, but there is so much more to this issue than the tutorials.

Contents

Editor	Layout	Content	Sub-Editors
Simon Morse	Layla Khani	Simon Morse	Simon Morse
	Matt Lewis	Tom Greenway	Jo Hargreaves
Lead Designer		Richard Tilbury	
Chris Perrins	**Marketing**	Chris Perrins	
	Jo Hargreaves	Jo Hargreaves	

I have been very self-indulgent this month and caught up with one of my favorite artists **Maciej Kuciara**. If you are unfamiliar with his work prepare to be dumb-struck by the paintings he sent in to accompany his text.

This month's Sketchbook also features work from one of my favorites, **Ian McQue**. Ian is a talented guy working for Rockstar North and living in Edinburgh, Scotland. Ian's work is definitely unique and in his sketchbook he shows us where all his fantastic ideas start.

The Making of this month is another cracker by **Dan Crossland** and the gallery features stunning work by the likes of **Ivan Kashubo**, **Jama Jurabaev**, **Shaddy Safadi** and many more, but don't take my word for it, go ahead, get stuck in.

The Rocket Girl

Serge Birault concludes his epic painting series

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Concept Art, Digital & Matte Painting Magazine
Issue 068 August 2011

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Articles
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Magazine!

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up your PDF reader!
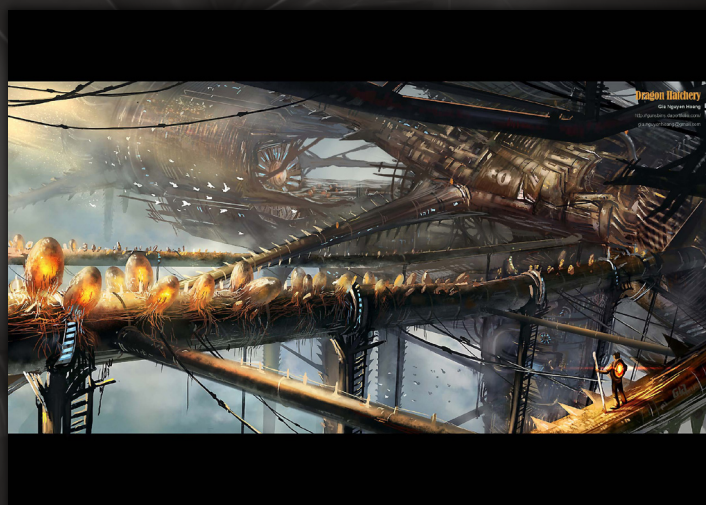
Setting up your PDF reader

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.

Maciej Kuciara

Maciej Kuciara is a Polish concept artist who has been working in the games industry since 2004. He now lives in California and has worked on successful games titles such as Crysis and Crysis 2. He currently works for Naughty Dog Inc.
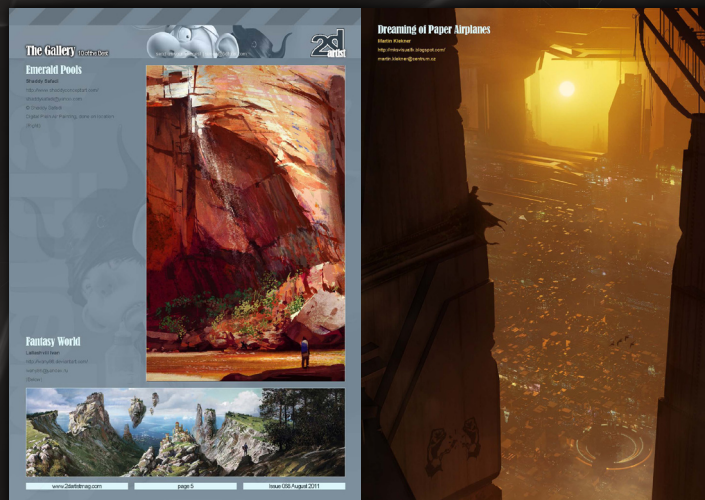
Contributing Artists

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

http://maciejkuciara.com/
fajny@maciejkuciara.com
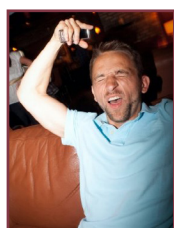
Branko Bistrovic

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.
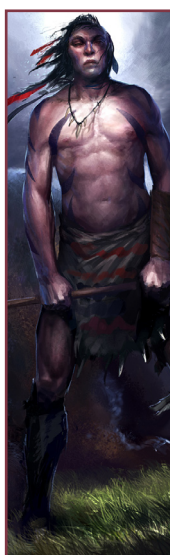
http://www.brushdreams.com/brankosfurnace.swf
bisvic@gmail.com

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 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.
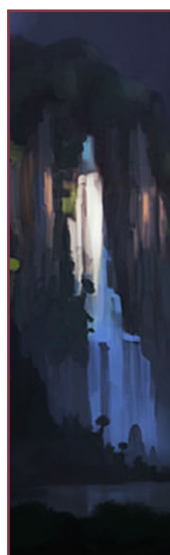
http://www.swigut.com/
pswigut@gmail.com

Jason Wei Che Juan

Is a Character Artist born in Taichung, Taiwan in 1977 who has always wanted to be an artist. After finishing a BA Degree in Maths in 2001, with his deeply embedded dream of being an artist, he decided to take his first drawing class at the Art Institute of Seattle. In 2004 he began his career, working on the Narnia DS game. In 2005, he took things further by learning oil painting. He currently works at Arena.Net as a Character Artist.

http://www.jasonjuan.com | jasonjuan05@gmail.com
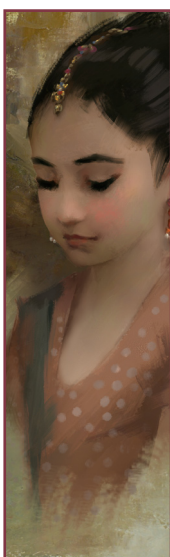
Would You Like To Contribute To 3DCreative Or 2DArtist Magazines?

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

VFS STUDENT WORK BY KAREM YAMIN

"I love to experiment and try things out. From almost every single technique I have tried so far I have taken away a few tricks and experiences that vastly benefit me and help me perform in my job"

Maciej Kuciara

This month's interview is with one of my favorite artists Maciej Kuciara. Maciej caught my attention from the first time I saw his work on the cover of *Digital Art Masters: Volume 4* and since then I have been desperate to get more of his work in our magazine. Maciej has been working in the games industry for years and has worked on blockbuster titles such as *Crysis* and *Crysis 2*. He has been kind enough to share an outrageously good set of images with us and talk a little about how he balances work and play.

Hi Maciej, it is a pleasure to speak to you. Thanks for finding space in your schedule to let us know what you are up to. When doing some research I found a list of fantastic titles that you have worked on, but I couldn't find out much about you. Could you tell us a little about where you came from and how you ended up working in the games industry?

I come from Poland where I spent most of my life until I became a video games professional. I had never thought of art as a way of making a living and I kept thinking that way until 2003, when I first became interested in CG art. At first I mainly focused on learning 3D, although I quickly figured out that it's much easier to model interesting creatures or environments from my own concepts. Every single minute outside of school time was spent in front of my CRT screen and tablet. I used forums as a catalyst for all the personal work I had been doing and I finally decided to drop 3D and focus on concept work. This is when I got my first freelance job for a German table top game in early 2004. From that moment on everything started slowly coming together. After finishing university I kept getting small projects, doing mostly 2D artwork for online games and table top games etc. In June 2004 I got my first real job at People Can Fly. That was the breaking moment, I think, that ignited my career.
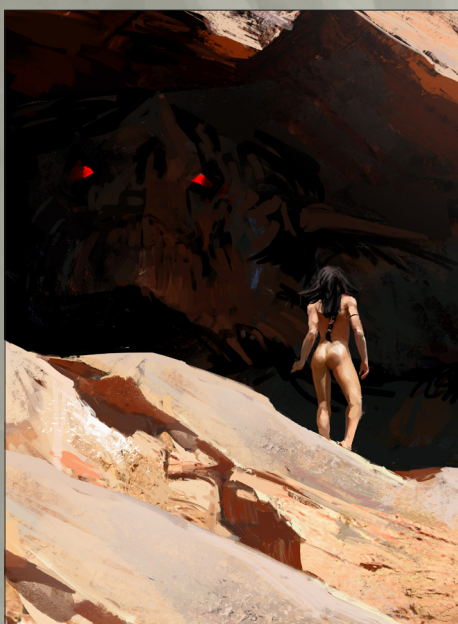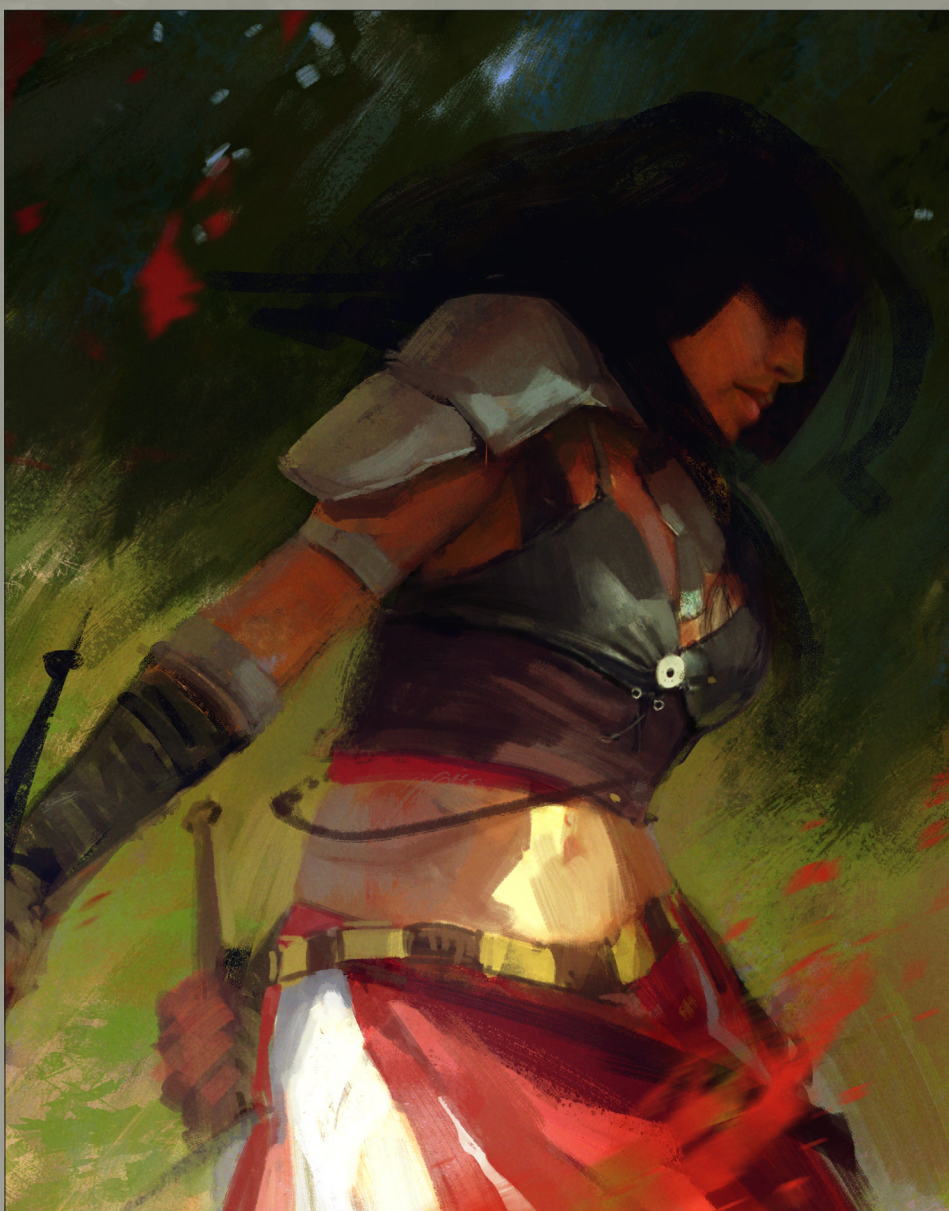
I have noticed that there are a lot of really talented artists coming out of Poland at the moment. Why do you think it is that so many talented artists come from your homeland, and is the education system over there set up to promote this kind of skill?

This is an interesting question and I don't think I could give a definitive answer to it. The artists' community has definitely been growing in Poland for the last couple of years, and it's great to see so many talented artists finding their spot in the industry.

However, I don't think it has anything to do with the education system. Most of the art universities still follow a very academic

path which doesn't have much to do with entertainment or industrial design. There is only one animation school that was only opened recently, but that's just a ripple in a big ocean considering the needs of the people in the country.

I have been flicking through the piles of your fantastic work (whilst my jaw was dropping on the desk) and I noticed that you have a large variety of styles in your portfolio, from matte painting to speed painting and everywhere in between. Is this because of a desire to try new things, or just that the way you paint has developed over time?

I love to experiment and try things out. From almost every single technique I have tried so far I have taken away a few tricks and experiences that vastly benefit me and help me perform in my job. Apart from obvious things like Photoshop tricks, or using a mix of tools in concept creation, each painting style has brought its own challenges in terms of color, composition or detail. Making concepts for games usually follows a fairly straightforward pattern; you either work on the game ideas during pre-production or layout objects, scenes and characters for 3D artists – typical production art. I spend a little extra time outside of work experimenting to keeping my daily work fresh, as the tricks I learn in my free time are the tricks I use later at work as an extra push to improve the quality of my studio's products.

It sounds like you paint during the day then come home to do some more painting. What else do you like to do in your spare time, and do you find that those things you do in your spare time inspire your art work?

There is a life/work/passion balance I usually try to maintain and I try to devote all the out-of-work

time to my family. Obviously my wife doesn't much appreciate the times when I come back from work just to work more! So I limit myself so I won't burn both my personal relations and energy to work.

Apart from stuff like movies, games or going out once in a while, we love to travel and see cool places whenever there is time and the opportunity to do that. Seeing the wonders of nature helps to relax and fuel your imagination.

I also spend a lot of time with my wife doing exercise like running, hiking etc. California is a beautiful place for things like that. Over the last year I have found that regular exercise and generally keeping myself healthy and fit gives me much more energy than any amount of sleep I ever had.

Another thing that I noticed in your work is that you don't seem to be afraid to use big strokes of bold color. Do you have any advice for anyone who would like to use this sort of technique?
The best thing to do is to observe and study your references, whether it's nature or photography. Painting with colors can be hard, as it requires you to think about the color palette from the very beginning. It also requires you to know how light behaves and interacts with objects in a scene. I think possessing that knowledge is the most difficult step in painting in general. But it benefits you hugely if you master it, as it gives you more freedom to get away from what is in the reference picture or what you see, yet still keep color and values intact.

With each artist I interview I am always intrigued to learn a little more about their technique. Do you ever sketch your ideas first or do you find that your first port of call is to get some paint on the canvas?

There are several ways to start your painting and I recommend trying all of them. In most cases, I will start with a quick black and white thumbnail (or series of thumbnails) to get the ideas down on the canvas. If my focus is to get a really interesting composition I will limit my initial sketch to only two values: black and white. For a painterly look, I would probably go with a mix of photography and random custom brush strokes to create a busy texture to start with. I do likewise with images when my goal is to achieve an ultra-realistic look, since photography can provide the details.

"I always look at work by new digital art 'heroes' as inspiration to push myself beyond the limits"

I also used to paint with flat colors (just colors, no values) to lay out good light information into my concepts. But again, it all comes down to the purpose and it's never a good idea to limit yourself to just one specific workflow. You might be missing quite a few interesting tricks that would help your art become even better.

The variety of techniques you use really shines through in your work. Are there any artists that have inspired you to get into this field or that you look at and wonder, how did they do that?

Many actually! I always look at work by new digital art "heroes" as inspiration to push myself beyond the limits. I think over a long period of time Craig Mullins has been one of those heroes. You could probably find Neil Campbell Ross, Bill Anton, Nathan Fowkes and Xaingyuan Jie among my inspirations as well.
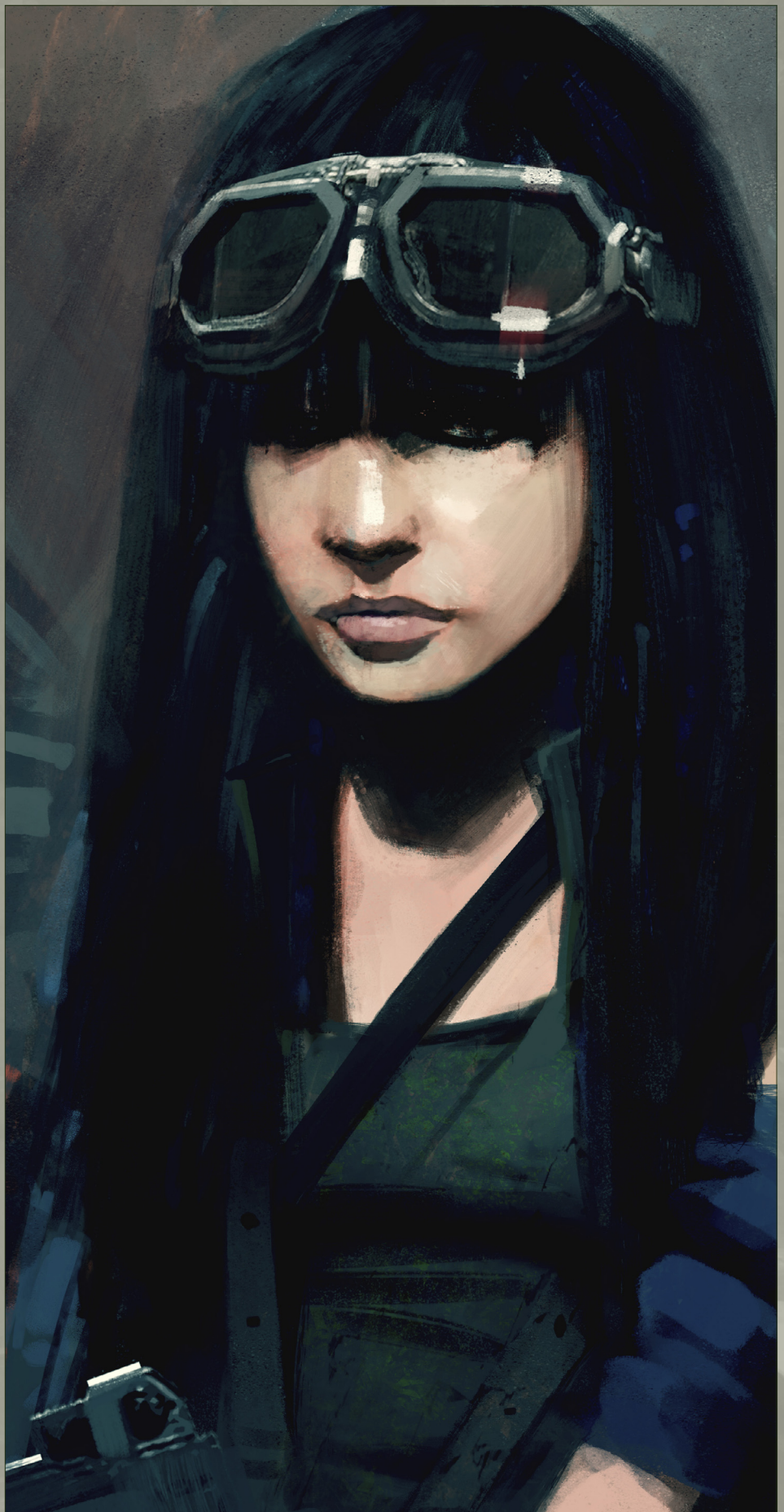
I also pay a lot of respect to traditional art masters, such as Caravaggio or Jean-Léon Gérôme, and even though I never had much to do with traditional art techniques, there is much to learn from just looking at their art. Last year I had a chance to see Gérôme's art exhibition in Los Angeles and it totally blew me away.

"I like the direction the tablet market is going and I'm excited to see how this market will look in a few years time"

I noticed on your site that you are familiar with some of the 3D programmes. What part do these play in your pipeline and in what kind of situations would you use this skill?
I use 3D mostly for very complex scenes that involve a lot of tricky perspective, which for me only happens during production time. I might use 3D to lay out some of the initial lighting in the scene as well (for example, interior concepts). Usually I would model my scene with simple objects such as boxes and spheres in Maya and then make a quick light pass before I hit render. I render most of my scenes on layers so I can separate objects later on in Photoshop.

There have been several occasions where I have used the Maya mapping technique to change the camera angle in photography and then use it later on as a base for my concept scenario. This is a pretty fun technique to work with, although probably too time-consuming for non-complex scenes.

You have worked on some outstanding projects, which of these has been your favorite and if you could choose any project to work on what would it be?
There are quite a few that are my favorites but I can't really talk about them just yet. From those that have been released however, I think the *Crysis* franchise and *Hardkor44* stand equal, since both of them were quite challenging and both of them gave me a lot of production experience.

I noticed that you have given painting on an iPad a go. What do you think of painting in this way, and do you think there is an opportunity for it to be developed in the future?
In the end it wasn't my thing [Laughs]. With my impatient nature and my desire to see quick results I found technical disadvantages with iPad that were just too frustrating. I did love the

mobility of the device and the really nice battery life however. I like the direction the tablet market is going and I'm excited to see how this market will look in a few years time.

Well it has been great to speak to you and to have an excuse to spend time flicking through your great work whilst at my desk. Thank you for finding time to speak to us; hopefully we can catch up again in the future.

Thanks for having me!

Maciej Kuciara

For more information please visit:

http://maciejkuciara.com/

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Interview by: Simon Morse

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SKETCHBOOK
OF IAN MCQUE

Ian McQue has a unique style that blows me away every time I look at his work. In this article he shows us how his process starts by giving us an inside look at his sketchbook. To say his vehicle designs are unique would be selling him short and in this article he shows us that vehicle designs are just one small part of what he is capable of.

SKETCHBOOK OF IAN MCQUE

I'll sometimes do very rapid sketches inspired by whatever happens to be on TV (**Fig.01**). This makes you feel less guilty about wasting time watching TV.

Here is a quick character design (**Fig.02**).

Here are some Highlander development sketches to tie in with the Dunscaith theme that will come up later (**Fig.03**).

01

02

03
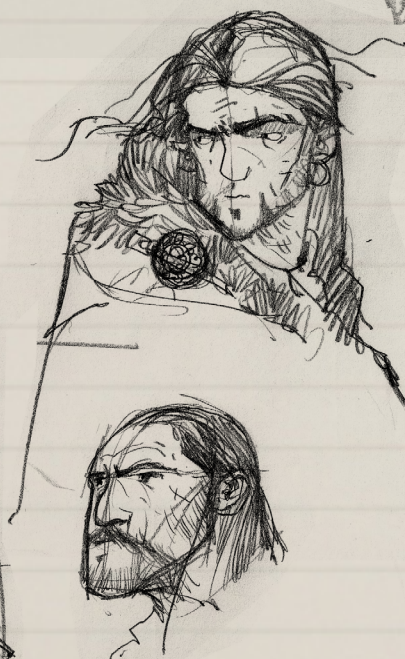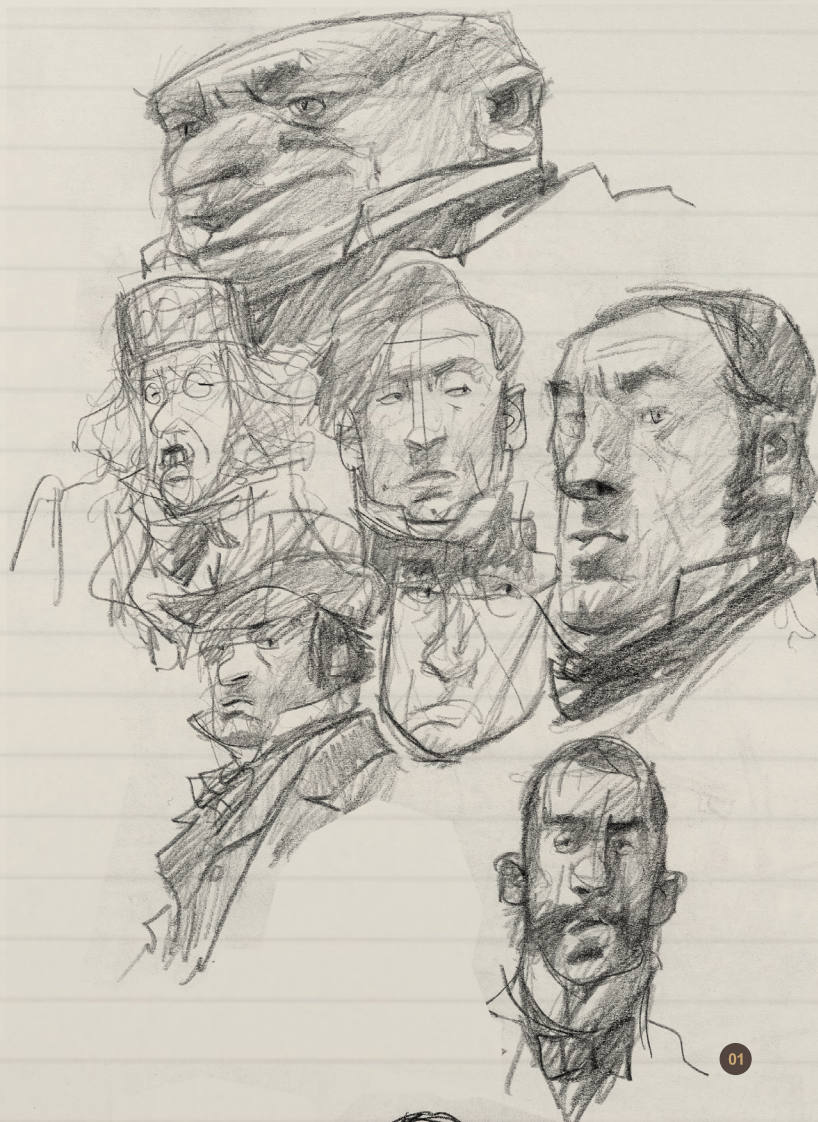
These sketches were inspired by a recent visit to the ruins of Dunscaith Castle on the Isle of Skye. There are myths about the Irish hero Cuchulainn, who had epic battles here (**Fig.04 – 06**).
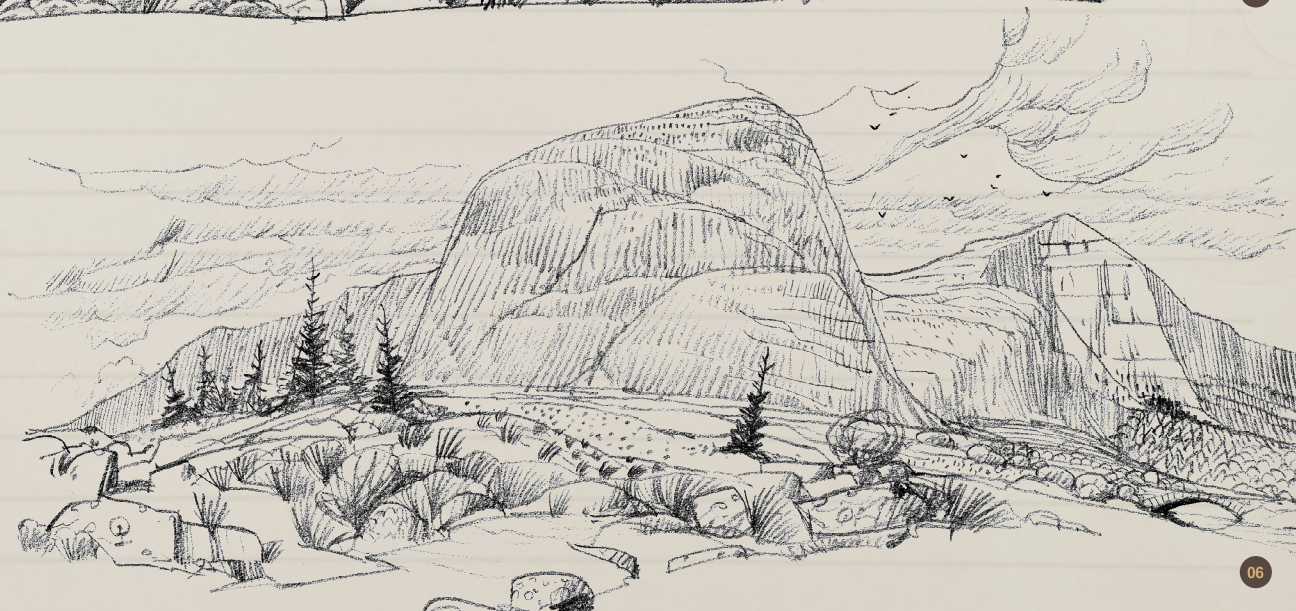
While commuting I often find myself stuck behind slow moving flatbed trucks, so instead of getting angry I've started using them as a basis for flying ships (**Fig.07**).

Here is another compositional rough (**Fig.08**). I'm drawn to the idea of a sky filled with all manner of floating ships so hopefully one day I'll do a painting of this scene!
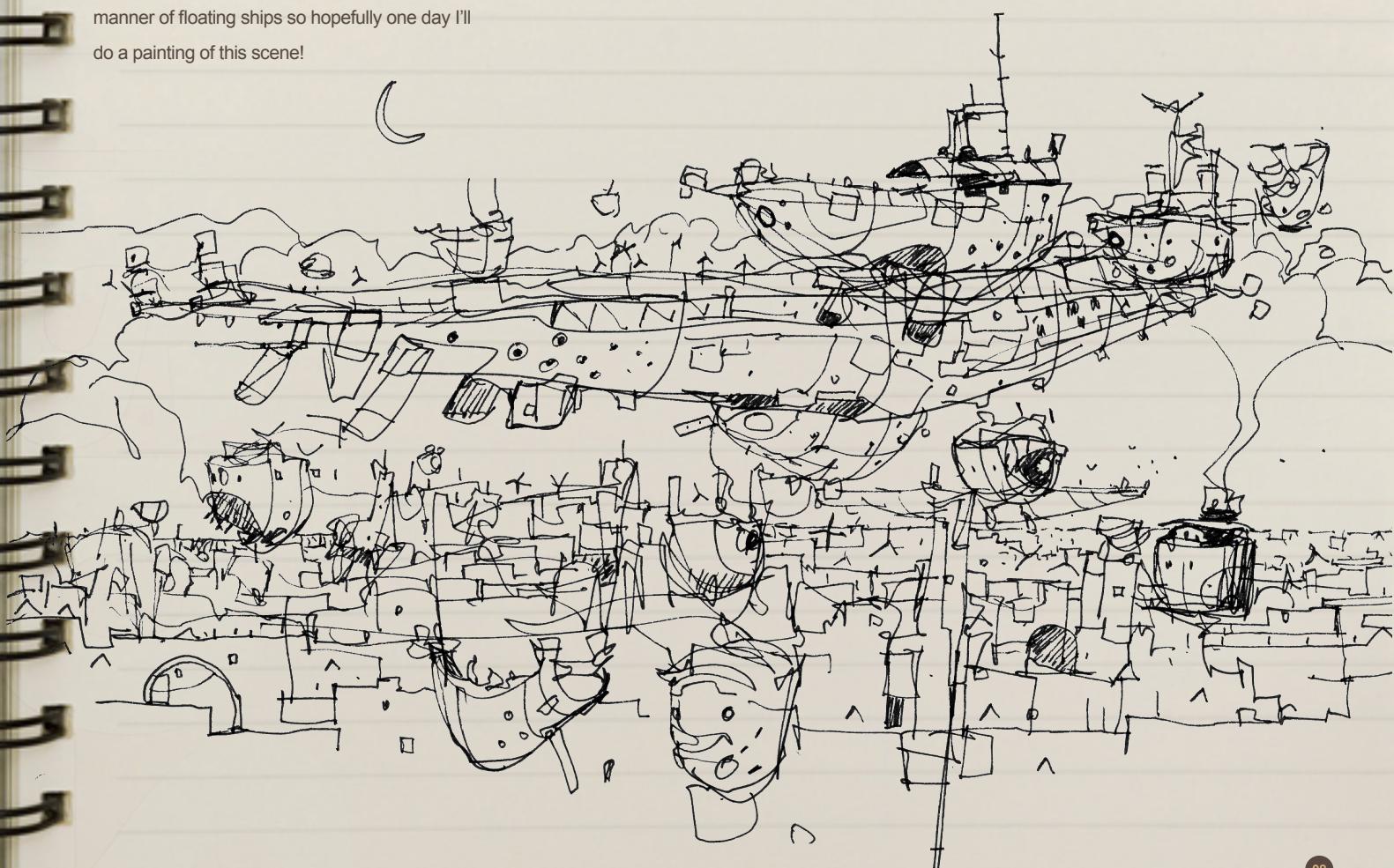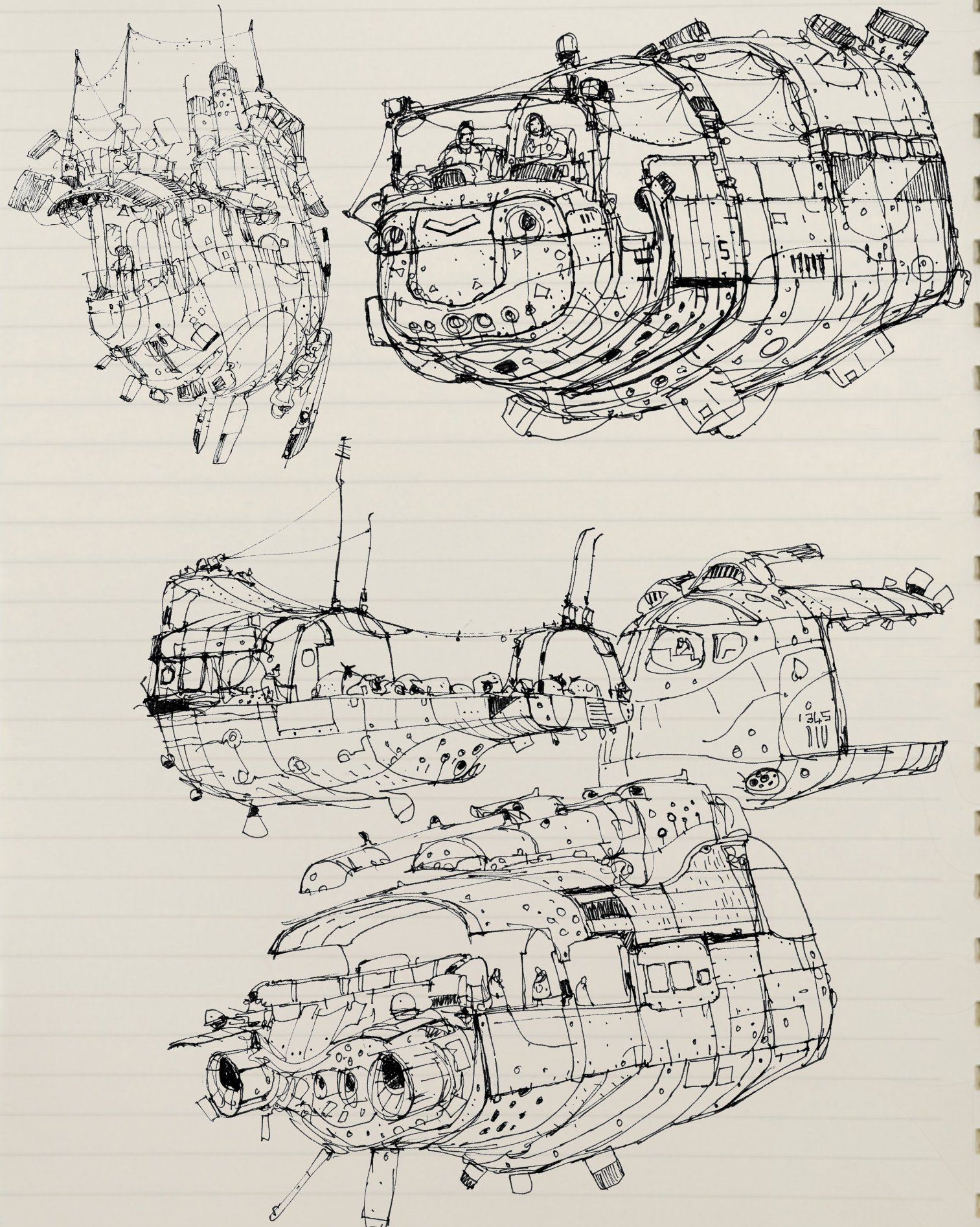
This is an observational piece drawn from my kitchen window, inspired by the ink and wash drawings of the great Arthur Rackham (**Fig.09**).

These are the initial developments for a tutorial piece (**Fig.10**).

These sketches are based on the idea of a technologically advanced vehicle that's broken down in the wilderness (**Fig.11 – 12**).
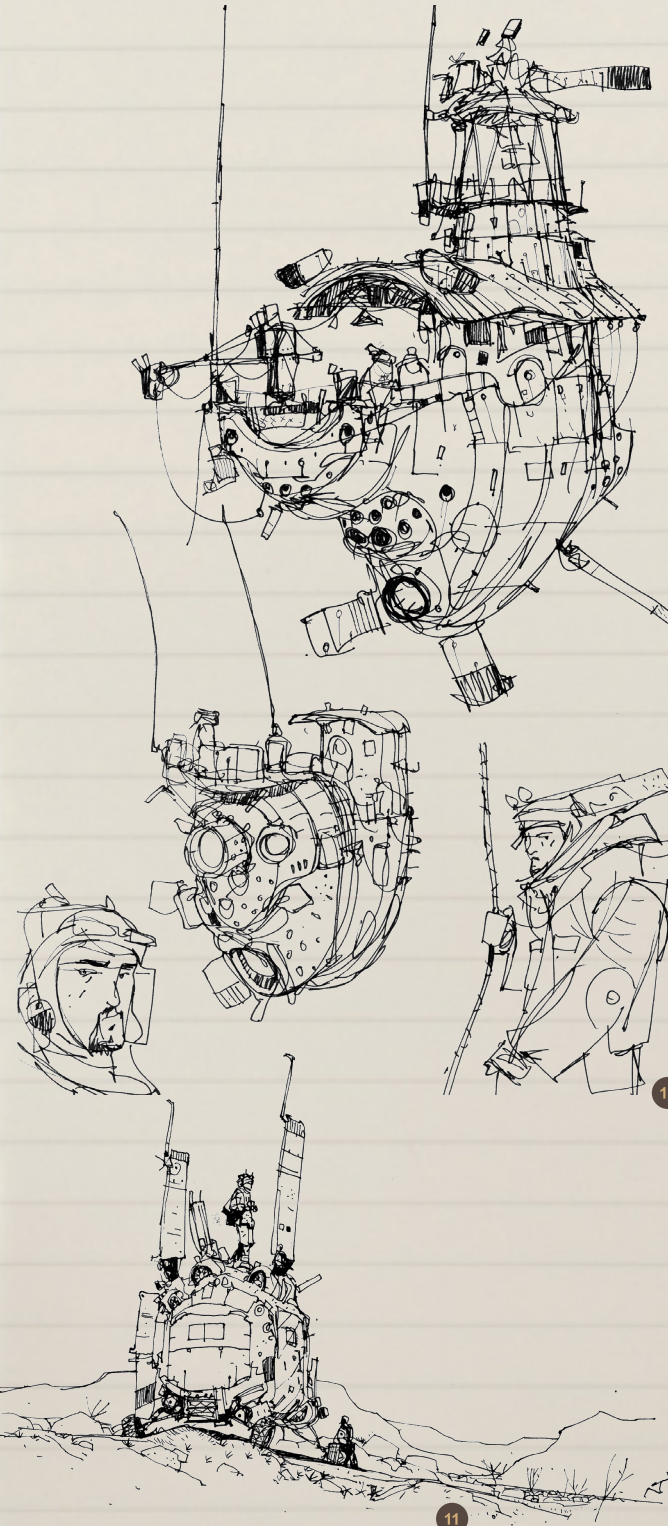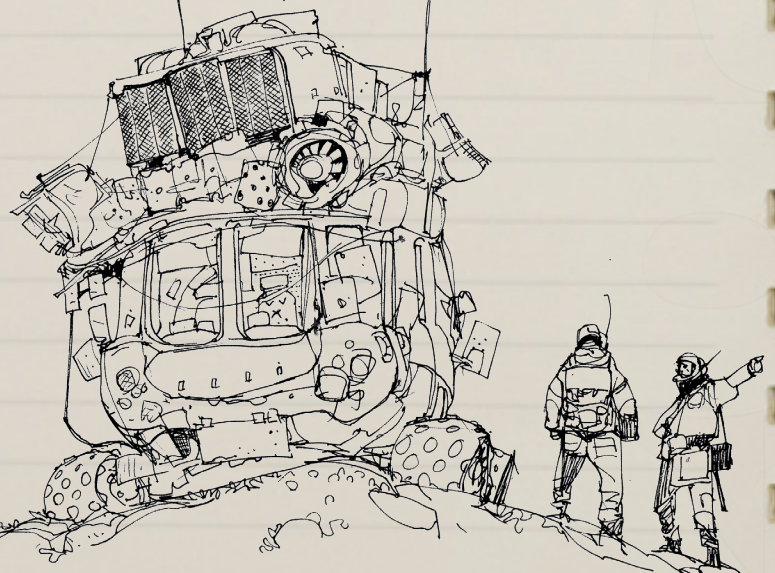
This is a Mortal Engine based on Philip Reeve's excellent series of novels. The world he describes is a rich source of imagery (**Fig.13**).

Here are some field drawings (**Fig.14 – 15**). While photographs make great reference material, it's also good to take time to make quick notes in a sketchbook. There's no better way of really getting to know a subject, and the lessons learned here help give "believability" to my flying ship paintings.

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Pittenweem, Jun 16 2010

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PITTENWEEM 16 JUN/10

![2dartist logo]
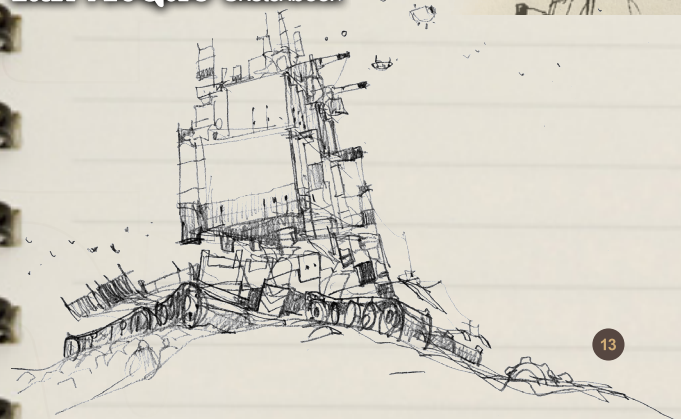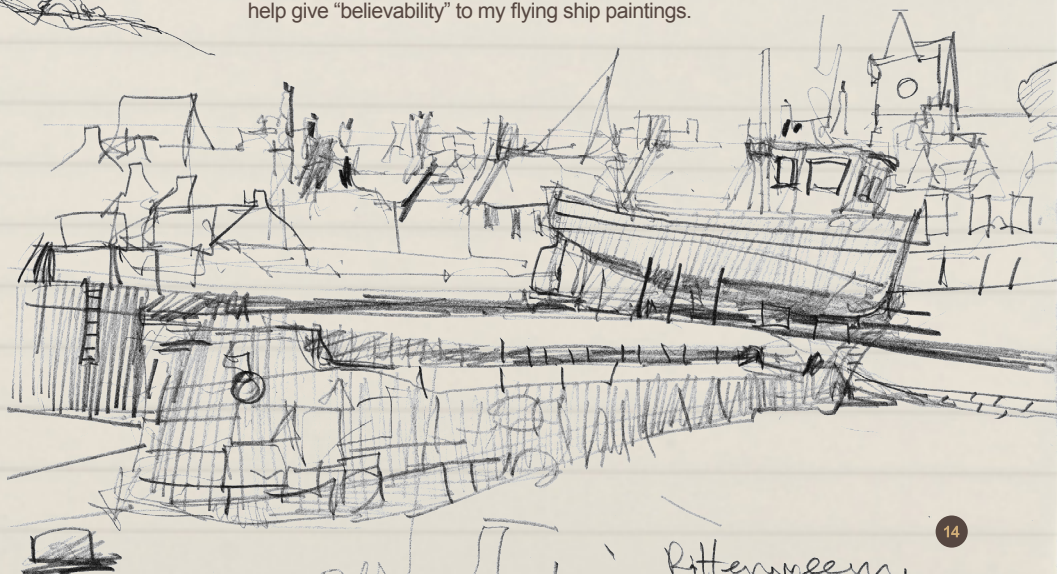
I fill dozens of pages with these warm-up sketches, just looking for interesting shapes that might eventually form the basis of a painting (**Fig.16**).

16
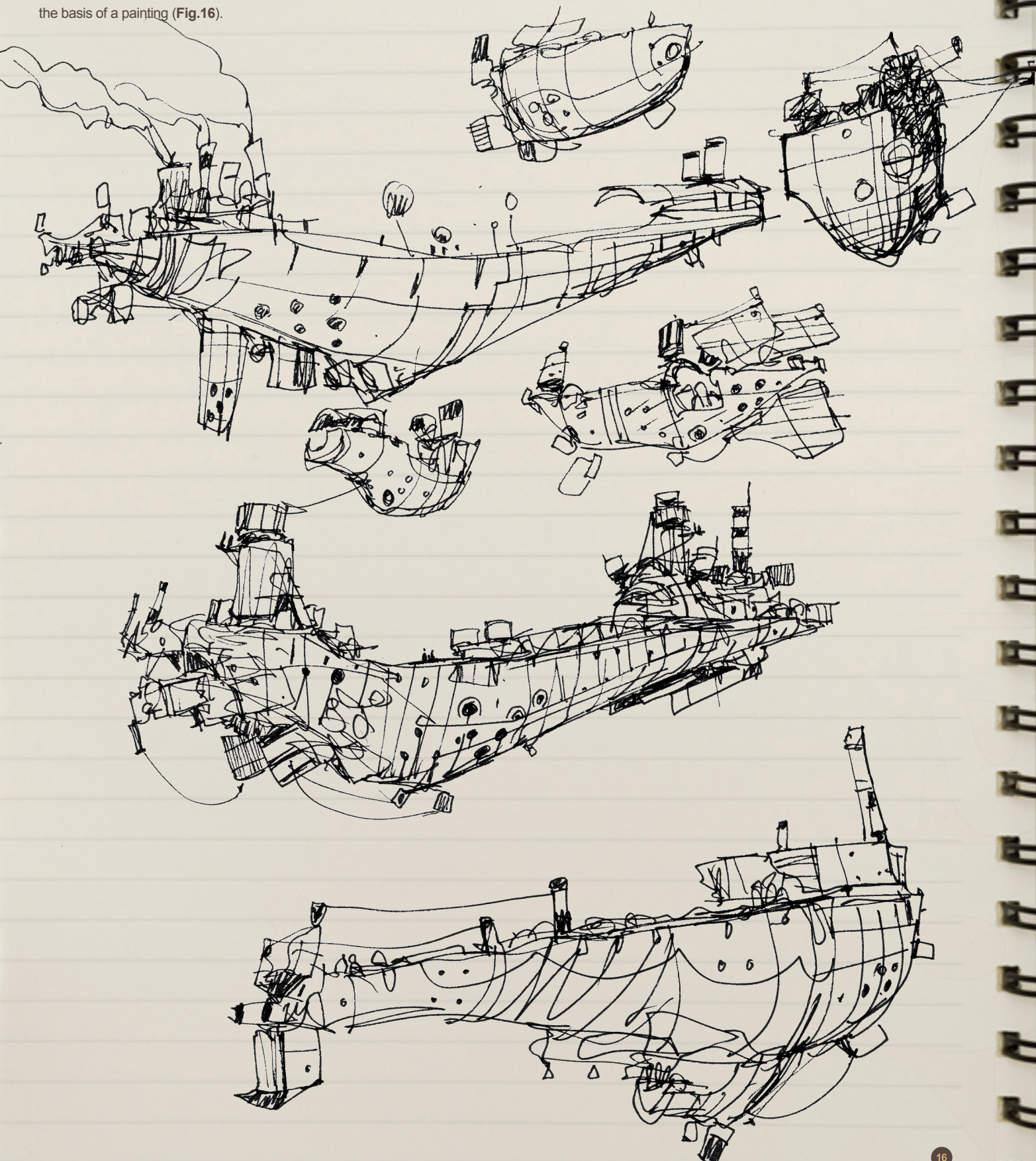
Here are some space dudes inspired by the
aesthetic of 1970's Nasa spacesuit design (**Fig.17**).
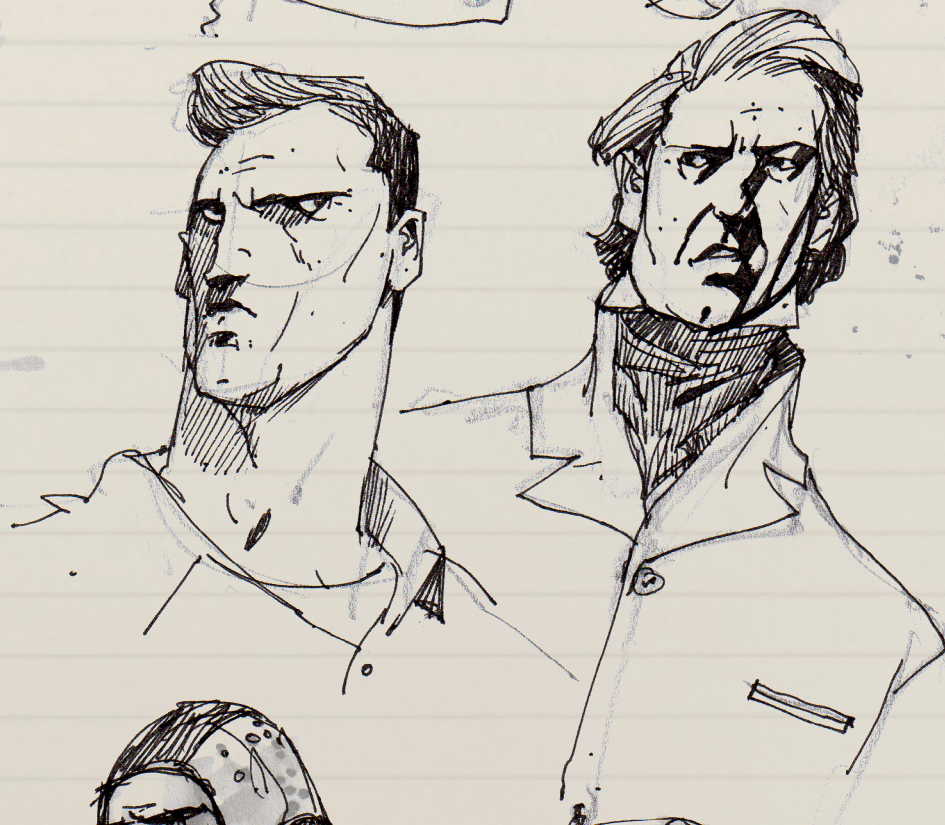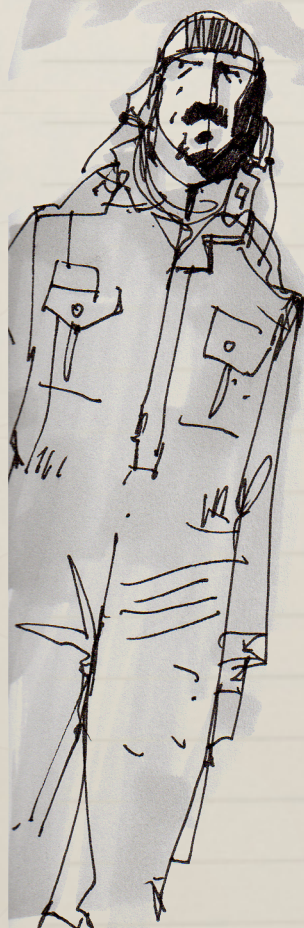
Whilst watching a medieval epic recently I was taken with how much the suits of armor echoed today's "space marine" look. These sketches are an exploration of those similarities (**Fig.18**).

Fig.19 shows how an idea progresses from a rough pencil sketch to the final painting.

IAN MCQUE

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Or contact him at:

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19

The Gallery

CARGOrilla No. 625

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Fear

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Dragon Hatchery

Gia Nguyen Hoang

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gia.nguyenhoang@gmail.com

Emerald Pools

Shaddy Safadi

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shaddysafadi@yahoo.com

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Digital Plein Air Painting, done on location

(Right)

Fantasy World

Laliashvili Ivan

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(Below)

Dreaming of Paper Airplanes

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Techadept

Ivan Kashubo

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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.

Painting
Tribal Warriors

Chapter 03: Native American

Software Used: Photoshop

It's always a tricky thing depicting historical stereotypes when character designing. How much accuracy do I lend to the concept? Do I make it entirely historical or do I suspend some of it for artistic liberty so that instead I can render something I think is more engaging?

You also have to consider what might be offensive as the wrong depiction could cause some headaches. The last time I checked, few people like headaches.

The motif of the Native American warrior has been part of Western culture for dozens of decades now and has had its own road of evolution. Initially thought of simply as a wild savage, today's Native American warrior is still considered a brutal fighter, but also one of honor and wisdom. They also have a connection to the land they live in and its wildlife. They are more like introverted survivors than savages.

Let's see if I can do the subject matter justice. As with any historical subject it's important to start with plenty of references! Search pictures online of course, but don't neglect books on the subject. They allow for a more concise breath of knowledge since they're usually accompanied by captions or full-on explanations.

Also look at films and documentaries. These are the best bet if you want to stay accurate, but if you're looking for something a little more fantastical then a good epic drama on the subject matter will help too. Anyhow, on to the piece!

I generally like to start off loose so this sketch, although quick and dirty, was actually more focused that usual (**Fig.01a**). At this stage I tried to capture the posture and the attitude of the warrior. I also considered composition, but since I knew that I was going to be changing it soon, I

wasn't too concerned with it just yet. I sketched this out in Photoshop and simply used a Hard Round brush with Size Jitter set to Pressure (under the Shape Dynamics options).

I also attempted another more dynamic pose. I'll never know if it would have worked out better; it might very well have, but I already had an idea forming in my head with the former sketch and kind of wanted to see it through (**Fig.01b**).

This is not the best way to go about starting a piece, at least from my experience. Usually, if your character is going to encompass a full scene – background and all – it's best to establish the dominant colors and lights in the scene first. This means that one should start with the background and then work on the character, as this way some of the background colors can naturally bleed through the colors of
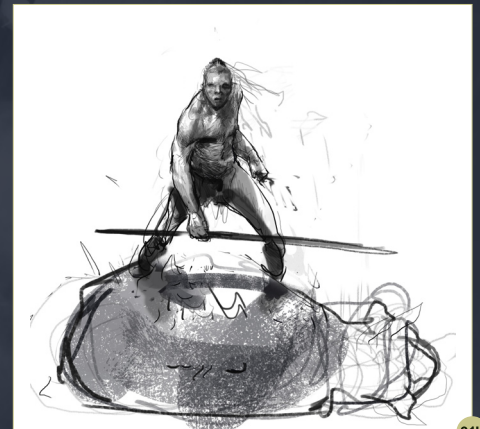
the character, grounding them to the piece. Yes, going about this image in the way I did resulted in some delightful hair tearing down the line when I tried to get the warrior to fit properly.

Speaking of the warrior, as you can see, I worked up some volume and an early indication of skin tone (**Fig.02**). I was mainly still focusing on his posture though. I was imagining a scene in which he's just killed a buffalo and he's standing on his kill. I didn't want him to look arrogant, just raw, if that makes sense. Kind of like, this is who he is and this is his element.

There was something that wasn't quite working at this stage, but regardless of this feeling I moved on to quickly sketch out the buffalo, and planted both of them on a surface (**Fig.03**). I used some warmer colors on the buffalo's coat, which I wasn't sure was the best idea as I didn't
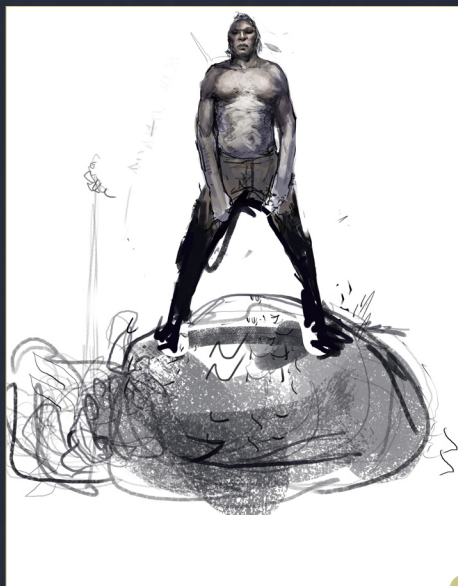
want it to feel warmer than the warrior's flesh as the buffalo was supposed to be reading as dead. I went for some vignette lighting here to add some drama to the scene. To paint the grass (for what it is) I used a Hard Edged Round brush, with the Dual Brush option clicked. I then bounced around the Dual Brush options depending on whatever secondary brush appealed to me at the time. Really, it's a very poor example of how grass should be done – the only reason it works at all is because of the light and color, which is okay. I'll be getting back to it though, don't you worry!

I then think I worked out what was bothering me which was mainly the fact that he was standing on his kill. It looked kind of cool, but like I stated earlier, I was aiming for a non-arrogant but confident air. The character standing on a dead buffalo didn't really project that, so as you can see, I lowered him in front of his kill (**Fig.04**). It took away from some of the dynamic factor, but I knew I'd find ways to work that back in later. At least now he didn't look like he was gloating.

Finally, after hours of delay, I got around to establishing the rest of the background. I was thinking of a cloudy, tempestuous, windy day on the plains. I used the Round Fan Stiff Thin Bristles brush that's native to Photoshop CS5. This is especially great if you have the Wacom art pen, since they preview the rotation of your brush, not just the tilt. On the negative side though they do have an annoying preview window that kept popping up no matter how many times I clicked off (**Fig.05**).

To recapture some of the lost dynamic I opted to tilt the whole piece about 20%. I simply grabbed all of the layers, went to Edit > Transform > Rotate and fiddled. I also continued to work up the warrior, giving him a lean build. I decided I'd probably scale it back some though as it was a tad too ripped for me (**Fig.06**). I also began focusing more on how to decorate him as I wanted to keep it simple, without too many adornments. That way the pose wouldn't be
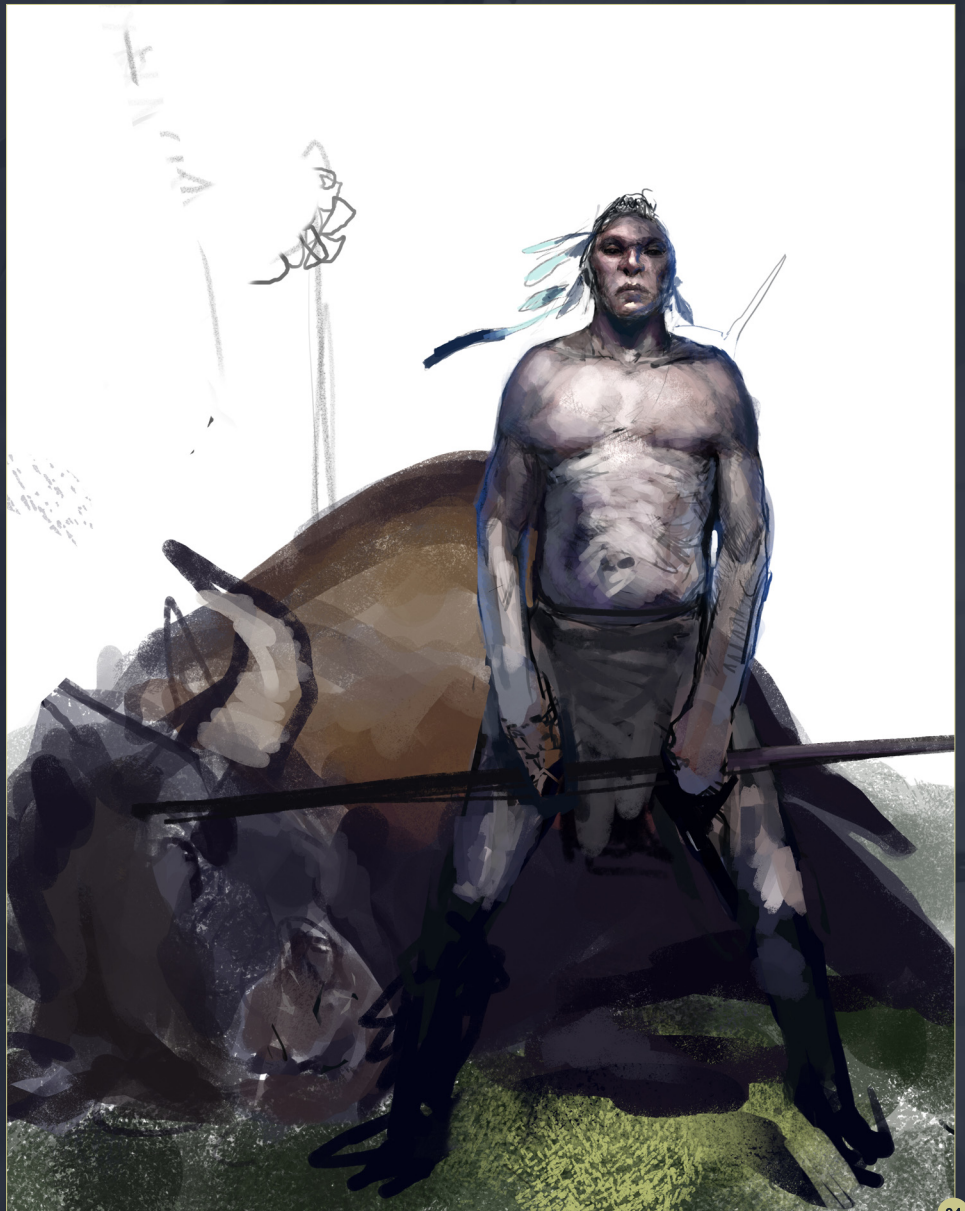
lost in a bunch of layers and nuanced details. I also worked up the buffalo, giving him a darker, shaggy coat. I started considering whether or not to just entirely darken the eyes and take out the little glint because it was quite difficult to project him as dead.

Enter doubt! I rotated the whole piece back to an even level. I wasn't sure if I liked it more like this, but I was still trying to figure out the composition. Tilted it looked a little wonky, but a part of me still liked it because it pulled me in (**Fig.07**). Regardless of this I continued to add detail, along with accent colors (the red straps coming from his hair) that helped drive more focus to his face.

Yep, back to a tilted piece (**Fig.08**). I decided to stick with this as I was starting to dig the slight sense of vertigo. I went back into the sky and reworked it, using the previously mentioned bristles brush and the Hard Edged Round brush. I kept it all loose as I wanted to give the sky a sense of motion to counteract the stillness of the two subjects. Usually if you refine something you tend to make it look more static, which is pretty logical if you consider the fact that in real life the quicker a thing is moving the blurrier it appears. I also introduced some rim lighting to add extra drama. All of this was done with the

Hard Round brush. I also cropped the canvas as I felt like we were too far away from them before.

I also started to build up the grass. I began by using the Grass brush that comes with Photoshop and angled it in the direction I wanted it to go. I also varied the size and spacing. Once the brush was set I simply began to layer it over the ground. There's not a big trick to this; you just have to study some grass references and figure out how much of it you want to accurately portray in your scene. I was going for semi-realistic, keeping it a tad on the fantastical side. After I was done with the initial laying in of the grass I grabbed a Hard Edged Round brush, set the Size Jitter and Opacity Jitter both to Control Pressure and went in to vary and touch up the grass some more. From this point onwards it was just a case of further refining.

Here we have the pseudo-final piece (**Fig.09**). I never really feel like my work is complete, and this example is no different. There's plenty I'd still like to render, but for the sake of the tutorial and time this will have to do. I pretty much just went over everything and refined it further. I solidified the clouds just a tad more, and also detailed the bison a bit more, trying to push its sheer bulk. I got the clumpy texture look by setting my Hard Round brush to a speckled

brush. To do this just enable the Scattering options in the Brush Options window and vary the sliders. Make sure to also play with the spacing option of your brush for better results.

I also added some body designs, but nothing that would cover up the physic too much. I think a warrior's greatest tool (after his mind) is his body; the better that is honed the more deadly he should be. For a quick and agile character like the one we have here, it's important to see his build.

As for the grass, I copied the former layer, put it to Overlay mode to pump up the contrast and then continued to paint on it. This gave it that extra kick of light to dark. I also made an overlay layer for the body and just painted lightly over him with the earlier mentioned speckled brush, to give him a bit more texture.

So there you have it, a rather loose take on the iconic Native American. I hope you enjoyed the tutorial and best of luck in your version!

Note: Just for the fun of it, I also made a quick version with rain in it (**Fig.10**). It is not quite accurate – the skin should be more glistening and the lighting is much too warm now – but still, just to play around. I used the speckled brush on a different layer, then used the Filter > Blur > Motion Blur.

After that I just went in and did some hands-on smudging and painting of raindrops in motion. Remember to keep them blurry!

Branko Bistrovic

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10

Pin-ups
Sci-Fi

3DTOTAL.COM

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.
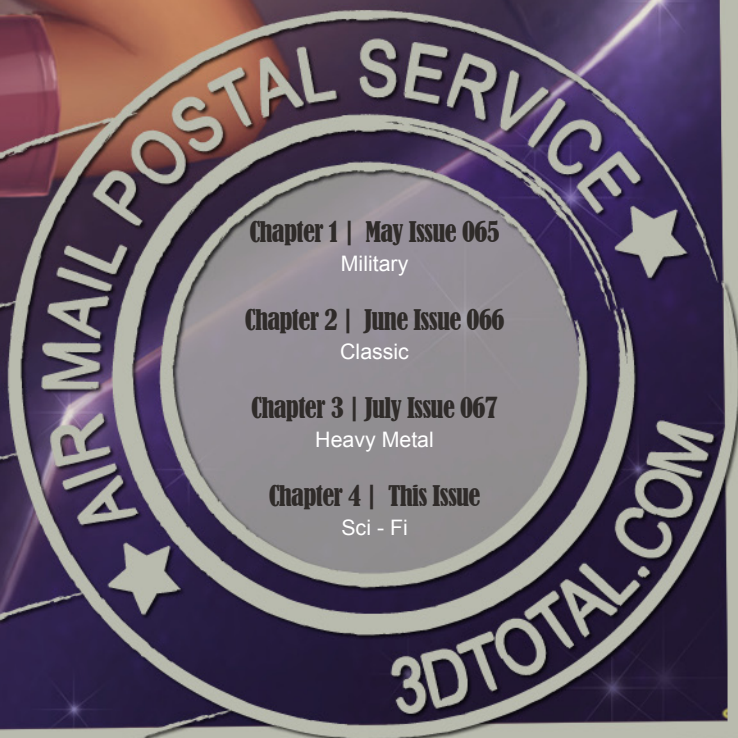
Chapter 04: Sci-FiI

Software Used: Photoshop

Welcome to the final chapter of this Pin-Up series. I'm not very familiar with science fiction but I am going to give it a go in this tutorial. I hate painting spaceships and ray guns and things like that, but I do love old fashioned sci-fi movies so I will try to use that as my inspiration.

Influences

As with the other tutorials I will start with a list of the artists who inspired me for this image.

- I looked at a lot of the work of old school sci-fi illustrators like Frank R. Paul or Pete Elson.
- Siudmak is probably one of the most famous sci-fi book cover painters. The main influence I took from him was his use of very saturated tones.
- I looked at a lot of the old covers from the magazine *Amazing Stories*, which had incredibly kitsch sci-fi covers.
- Hajime Sorayama as usual!

The Sketch

The sketch is very simple (**Fig.01**). It is a girl and a rocket. Although it's basic it's a classic pose for a pin-up that has been used by a lot


of painters. You often see military pin-up girls sitting on bombs and that is the type of style I would like to mimic.

I always work on big file, at least A4/A3 format at 300 dpi. Always keep your sketch on a separate layer and don't hesitate to create a lot of layers around it if you need to. I used to create roughly 200-300 layers even for a simple picture. If you don't have a very powerful computer, merge them when you're satisfied.

Colors and Lights

I really didn't know how to start. I had no ideas for the colors and the lighting so I changed my
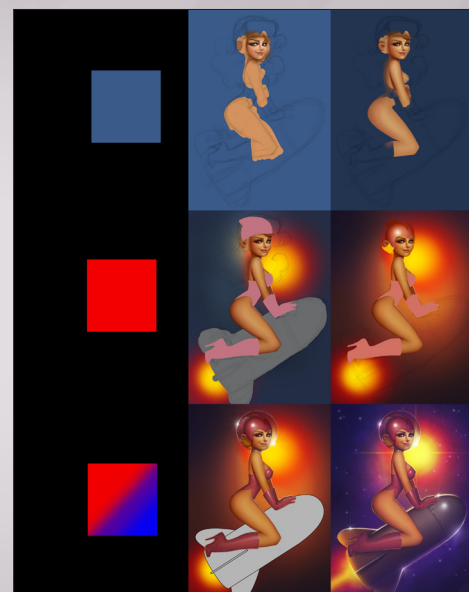
mind often (even more often than usual). As you can see, I started with cold tones and I added saturation little by little (**Fig.02**). My global light started in white and then later became yellow. It's very easy to make changes with Photoshop. Don't forget you've got the right and ability to try a lot of different things. You don't have to work in a linear way. If you come across a similar problem the best thing to do is test things out and see what you do and don't like.

As usual I worked with very low opacity brush strokes. I only used the Soft Round brush (airbrush) for this picture, with the opacity set between 50 and 100%.

The Head

Bambi's face is different in every picture I do. This time she was less cartoony than usual. I tried different proportions and skin tones. Once again I didn't work in a logical way as I think it is good to not know where your painting is going. I added details like the helmet, which I made bubble-like with very strong (and false and incorrect) reflections. I didn't try to create a realistic result, but instead tried to get the old-school look I was aiming for (**Fig.03**).
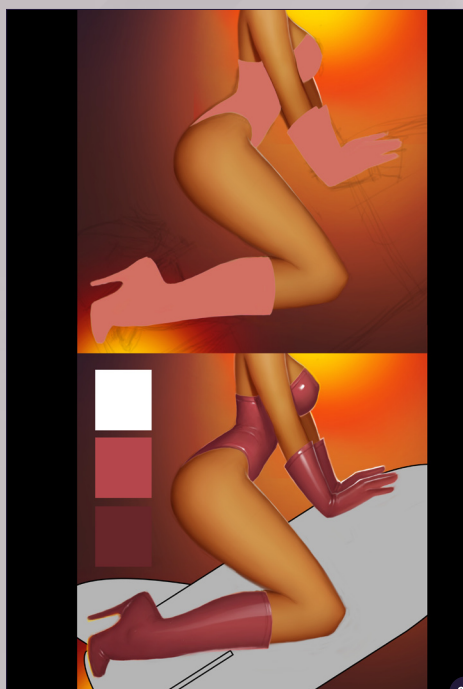
The Flesh Tones

The gradient I've used for the flesh tones is very classical in appearance (**Fig.04**). I added

SCREENSHOT IN PHOTOSHOP

IMPORT IN FLASH

EXPORT .AI FILE

IMPORT IN PHOTOSHOP
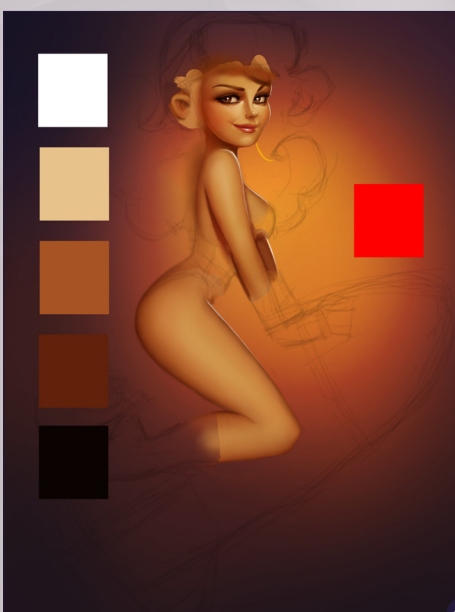
a little bit of red between the darkest tones and the middle tones. This is very similar to the technique used by Elvgren.

The Outfit

I wanted the outfit to look a bit like rubber (**Fig.05**). It's not a very difficult material to paint. You have to paint a logical gradient and then add some strong but small white reflections. There's a very easy way to paint reflections like this. Create a new layer and paint the shape of the reflection with a Hard brush with the opacity
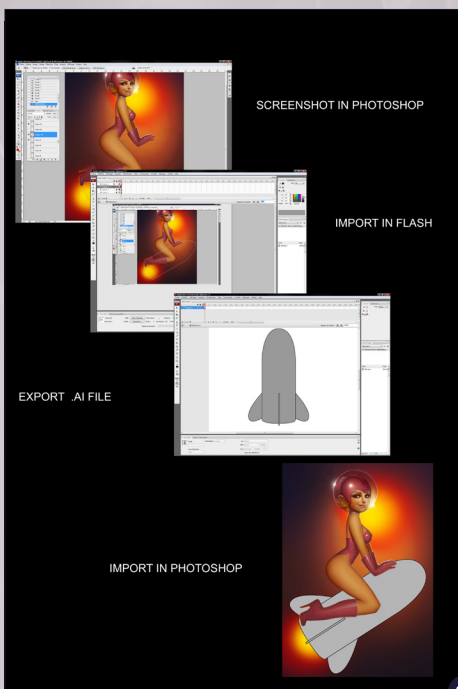
at 100%. Once you have done this decrease the opacity of the layer. If your gradients are good, it will work. Quite simple isn't it?

The Rocket

When you have to paint geometric shapes don't try to paint them, use vectors. You can work with vectors in Photoshop but there is software which works better. I use Flash Time. I just do a screenshot of my picture then past it in Flash. I paint the shape with vector tools and then export it as an .AI file. I can then import the shape in
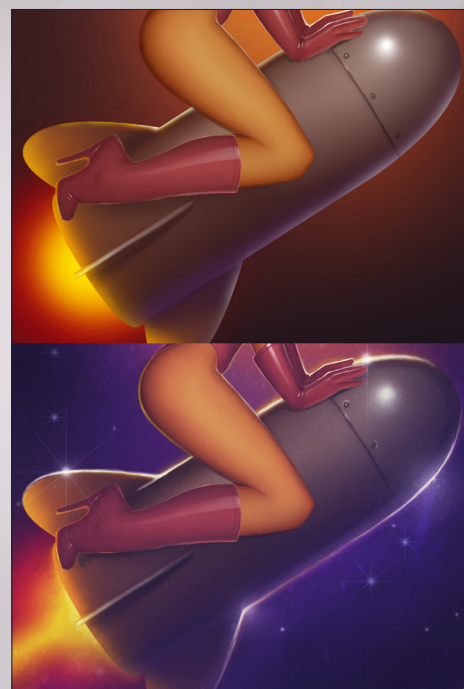
Photoshop where it becomes easier to paint over the shape (**Fig.06 – 07**).

The Stars and Halo

I wanted to add a kitsch halo to this picture. To create it I duplicated a simple line again and again, changing the opacity and the size of it every time. When I'd done this I was able to change the angle and create the desired effect. I also added a bit of noise in the background with a Standard brush (**Fig.08**).

Adjustments

As I made a lot of changes to the colors and the lights along the way, I didn't have to do a lot of adjustments (**Fig.09**). Once I had it was finished (**Fig.10**).

The four pictures of Bambi are simpler than my usual work, but the only difference is time. The more time you spend on your picture, the more precise and detailed it will be.
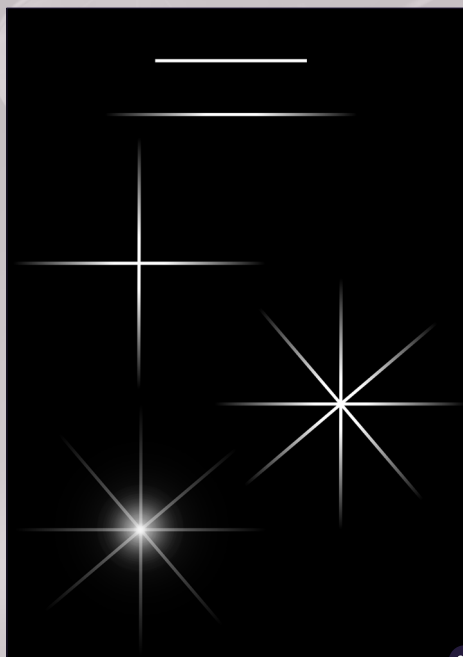
Serge Birault
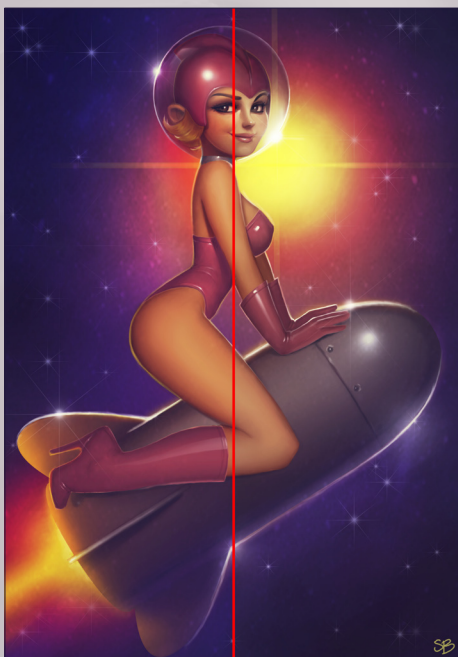
For more information please visit:

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

Or contact him at:

serge.birault@hotmail.fr

2DA next month

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

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information and to purchase current and
previous issues for only £2.75 each!

Image By Greg Broadmore

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 03: Adding Elements

Software Used: Photoshop

With the sky done I focused on the mountains. As you can see it still has the old sky with the cloud in the middle, which I decided to remove later on (**Fig.01**). As I am working on the entire painting at the same time, sometimes it comes to me after a while that something is missing or not working in the way I want it to.


Perspective

It is very important to have the correct perspective. I have found that it is little tricky to paint organic landscapes like this and have the correct perspective. Perspective, of course, applies to the mountains and any other objects, but because there are many form changes it is harder to determine the correct perspective (**Fig.02**). However this is much easier when dealing with things like architecture. You will have to use your own eyes to judge whether the perspective in the final version is correct.
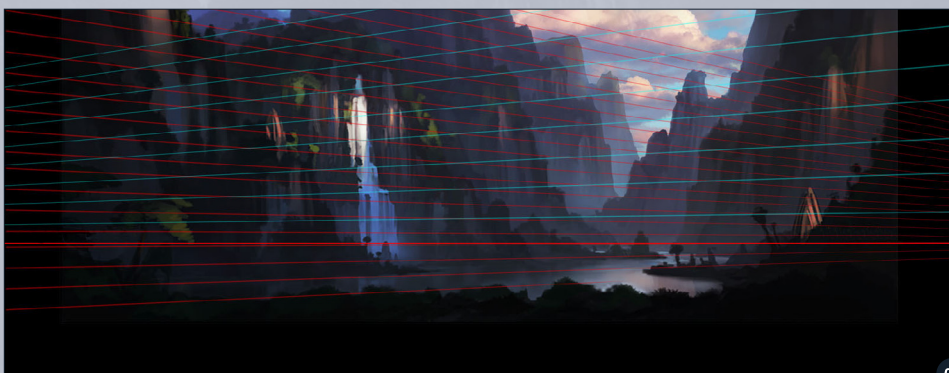

Vanishing Points

Each mountain has its own perspective with different vanishing points. I created my own perspective guides for the mountain that has the waterfall on it as an example as to how
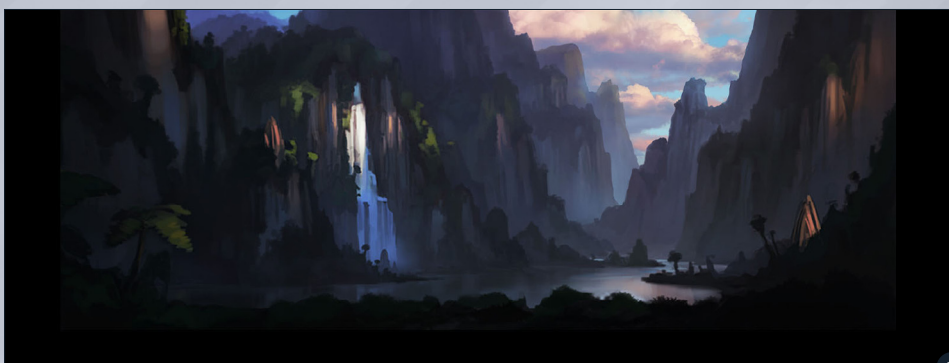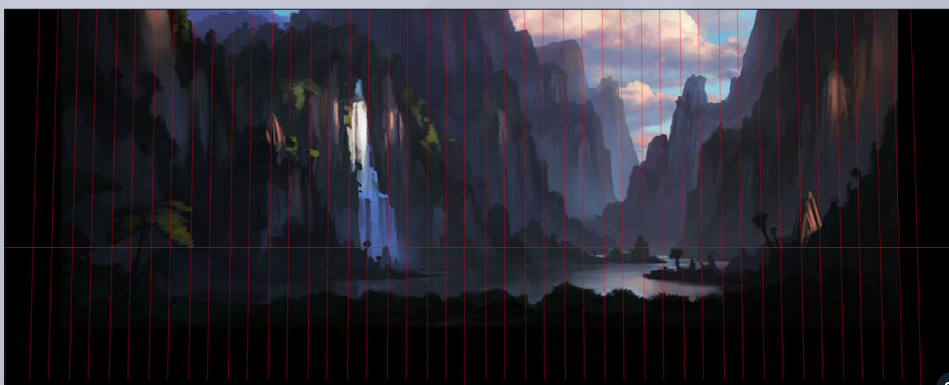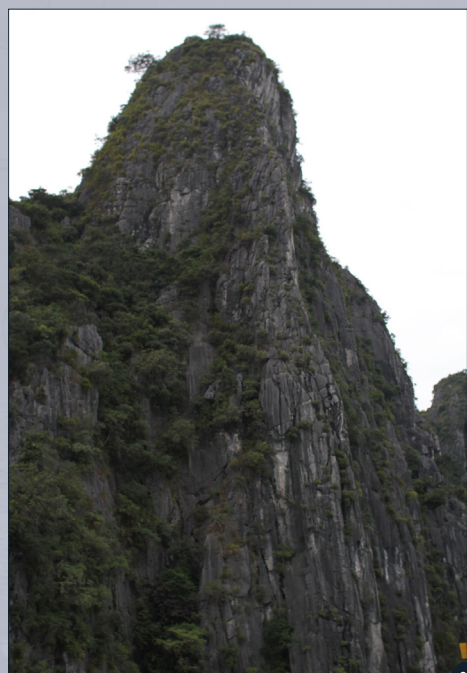

you can do this. It has two vanishing points (**Fig.03**). One is far to the left and the other is far to the right. Both of them are far outside the frame of the picture. It is useful for everyone (particularly beginners) to understand how to obtain the correct perspective for the objects in the scene before starting to add the photographic elements. It would be a good exercise to create similar guidelines for all of the mountains. Because each mountain is facing a slightly different direction the perspective will be different for each of them. If I am unsure about the perspective I find it is always helpful to create a simple 3D scene.

The way I developed this painting was to remove details from the original concept sketch

bit by bit as I added new elements. This way I kept the entire picture together. Before I start a matte painting I always gather a big library of photographs that I will use. With this painting the process was simple because I already had a good library of photos that I had taken in Vietnam and Thailand. Sometimes I need to spend a whole day searching for the correct pictures.

The Distant Mountain

I used this photo for the distant mountain because it resembled the mountain I had in the concept sketch quite closely (**Fig.04**). You will probably notice later that I also used this photo for the mountain on the right-hand side in the foreground. I really liked the form of the rocks on

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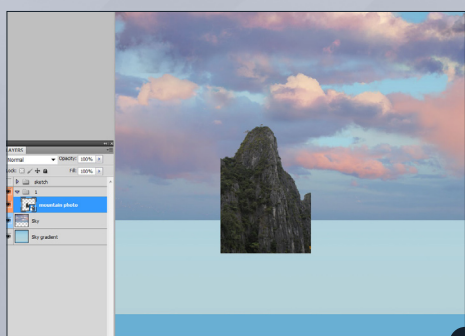
it and the mix of vegetation. Later on I re-painted the distant mountain to make it look different to the one I added in the foreground as we don't want to have cloned elements in the painting. At this point I started to think about the scale of the mountains and especially the scale of the trees. As the mountains recede into the distance the trees obviously get smaller and if you show this correctly it will greatly enhance the believability of your image.

The First Mountain

The extraction of this mountain was very simple because there was nothing but white sky behind it. I used the same extraction method as described in the previous chapter. I converted the layer to a smart object. It is a method introduced in Photoshop CS4, I believe, to preserve the layer detail after transforming it. By doing so I can transform the layer without
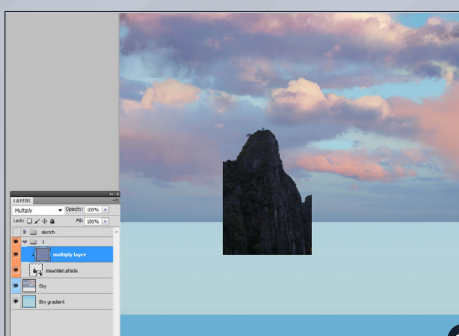
worrying about losing the quality if I decide to make the image bigger (**Fig.05**). The drawback is that it increases the size of the Photoshop file. Because of that I convert the layer back to normal mode once I am satisfied with the adjustments I have made.

Multiplying the Sky Color

I find that adding a flat layer of sky color to the image and then setting it to Multiply is the fastest was to color correct a photograph. This method is particularly useful when you want to darken your photograph and then match the color (**Fig.06**). The first step when adding this photograph was to try to make the mountain the correct color, and make it look as it would if it was in shadow. However you have to do this without adding the haze or atmosphere as that comes later. At this point I was picking a sky color from the shadowed side of the clouds. I
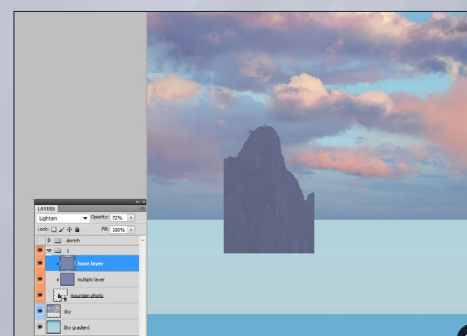
then created a new layer on top of the mountain layer and created a clipping mask. You can do this by clicking in between two layers with the Alt key (in Windows). Clipping masks let you paint in the new layer without affecting any layers below. Often I manipulate the opacity settings of this layer to achieve the desired look and to keep the colors of the original layer. I sometimes find that the multiply layer washes out the colors.

Adding Haze

I created another clipping mask using the sky color. This time I used a distant sky color instead of the cloud color. I did this because the haze layer is simply the particles in the sky lit by the sun, so the color should be lighter. I also changed the mode of this layer to Lighten. This way I kept the highlights, but reduced the black levels (**Fig.07**). I reduced the opacity of this layer to 72%. When it comes to judging the amount you should adjust the opacity it really comes down to your own judgment. You will find after doing it for a while that it becomes second nature and that you will do it without having to think about it.

Adding the Sunlight

After the haze levels and overall values were established I started to add sunlight. I duplicated the existing photo from the bottom of my stash of clipped layers and put it on the top in Screen mode (**Fig.08**). This blending mode allows you to add values that are greater than those in the layer below it. Even if the matte painting is set in a scene that is completely overcast I would still paint a slight indication of direct light on the mountains.
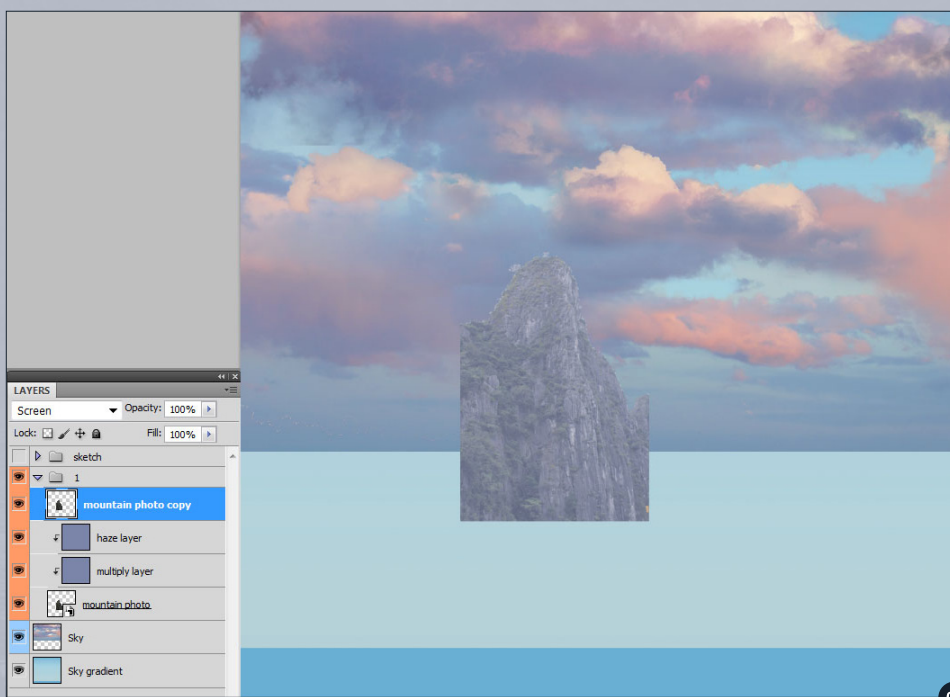
08

Color Correcting

I then created a high contrast image to be used as my light layer. I added a warm sun tone to this layer to reflect some of the warm tones in the sky (**Fig.09**).

Painting the Highlight

Once I had done some minor color adjustments I then set the duplicated mountain layer to Screen mode so that I could see the final effect of the sun on the cliff face. After that I created a layer mask and inverted it to black and painted into it my sunlight. This was to create the sunlight that touches the top of the mountains in my concept (**Fig.10**).

Creating a Light Wrap Effect

The last thing to do was to mimic the effect of a camera lens and show light washing over edges where there is a high contrast. There is a little technique to doing this which I learned while compositing. If you were to animate this shot with an airplane flying behind the mountain, for example, the effect of light bloom would change. In this case I would not add a static painted effect of light distorting the edge of the mountain, but rather incorporate layers behind it. This is why I used the sky layer and painted the light wrap in the mask to reveal it along the edges (**Fig.11**).

Final Result

Here is the final result showing the first added mountain (**Fig.12**). I proceeded with other mountain layers in a similar way as I did with this one, replacing the concept art with the cropped and adjusted photographs.
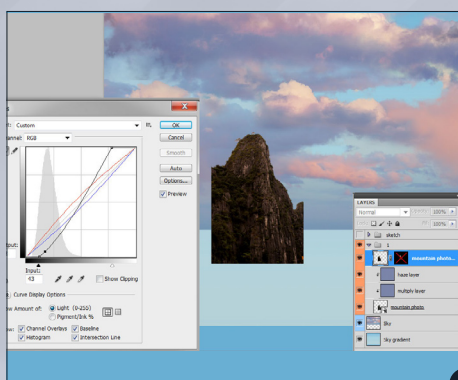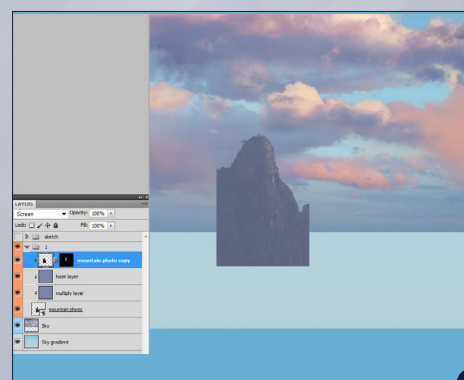
Piotrek Swigut

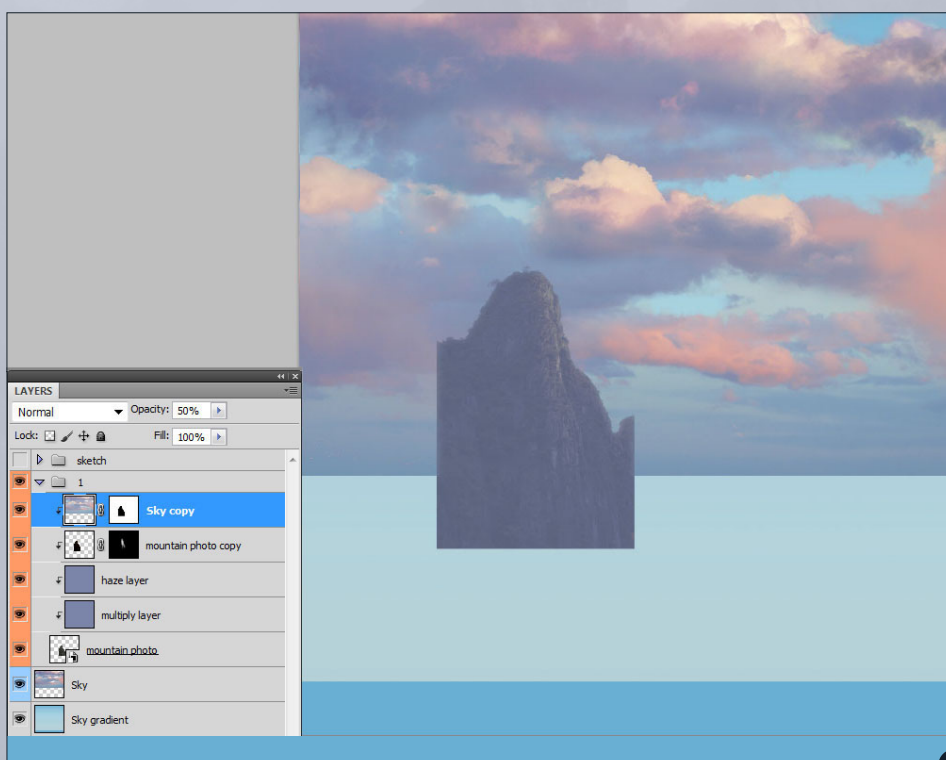For more information please visit:

http://www.swigut.com/

Or contact him at:

pswigut@gmail.com
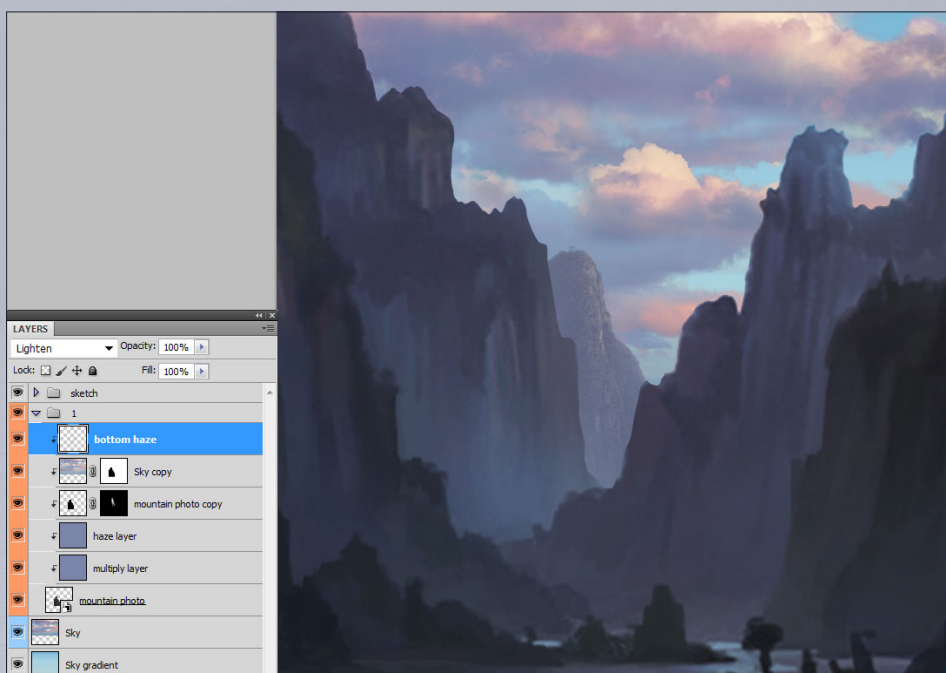
You can tell a lot about a person by their face. You can tell their state of mind, you can tell where they are from, you can even make a guess about their character. For this reason being able to portray the features of a face correctly when doing character concepts is vital. In this series of tutorials out artists will be looking at how you would tackle designing characters with very specific features, but they will not just be talking about it in the context of one character. They will be showing us how to paint certain features that can be applied to different character types such as gaunt, obese, bruised etc. If you are into creating character concepts and want to add story to the face of your design this is the series for you.


Character
Portrayal

Chapter 02 - Child

Software used: Photoshop

A good initial sketch will make a more successful finished piece and save time for tweaking and correcting later. The initial sketches can help us figure out composition, value, proportions and even facial expression. I believe it sets an important foundation when creating a nice portrait painting.

Initially I usually focus on the structure of the face and the facial expression. Here are a couple of initial sketches, the first one was from imagination (**Fig.01a**). The second and third are from my own photo references. There are several key differences between the structure of an adult's face and a child's face. When a baby has just been born, their facial features are not as strong as an adult's. The eyes, nose, and mouth are very smooth and round, and the cheeks are plumper. As for the proportions and the relation between the features, they are much closer on a child than they are on an adult. For example, a child's forehead is large and their noses are small and very close to the eyes, which in turn are very big in relation to the size of the head (**Fig.01b**).

Another key difference is that children's heads are bigger in comparison to their bodies than an adult's. You will see in **Fig.02** that their
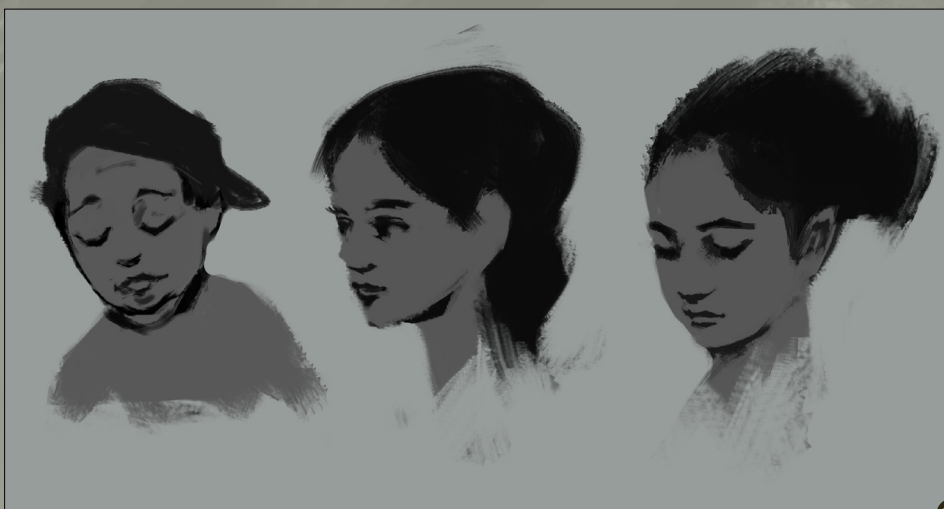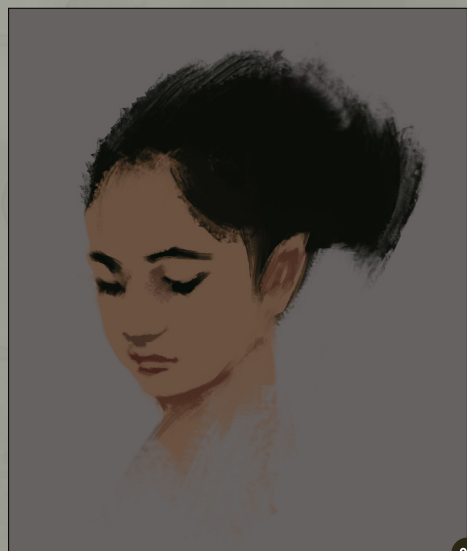
shoulders are smaller when they are younger and they get wider as they get older. The picture only shows the difference between a young child and a young teenager, but you can see that as they get older their shoulders will grow faster than their heads, their facial features will become more angular and linear, and will slowly get bigger, and their forehead will no longer be as large in relation to their features.

I started with three initial sketches of the child's face and since the third option was the most

interesting one it is the one I decided to develop into a finished portrait painting.

Once the value and the proportions were in place the color could be applied (**Fig.03**). I used the HSB (Hue, Saturation, Brightness) color system to fill in the color. I tend to apply the value range between 30-70%, and the saturation is usually lower than it should be. I like to use Overlay layers in the same way as you would if you were glazing traditional media, which means I can add more and more color

on top until I am satisfied with the result. It is important to keep the value the same throughout the painting as if you don't the image will look inconsistent (**Fig.04**).

I then went on to add shadow to the face. I started by adding a dark value and shading the face as if it were a sphere since that is the most similar shape to a head (**Fig.05a – 05b**).

In general I like to use the same brushes from the beginning to end, but sometimes I use airbrushes on a larger area. I always try to keep a little bit of texture on the canvas, even in a very smooth area like the child's skin (**Fig.06a**).

Fig.06b shows a close up of the different stages of development in the mouth area. As you can see when doing the shading you can occasionally lose the proportions that were in the initial value sketch. This is why it is important to try to keep to the areas that you want to shade carefully as you don't want to lose the shape that you liked when you started the painting.
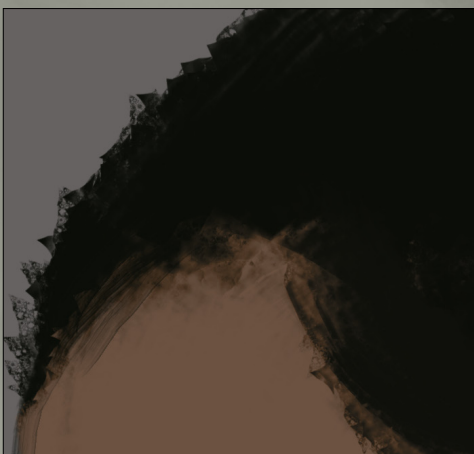
There are several techniques that you can use in Photoshop when shading. The techniques I
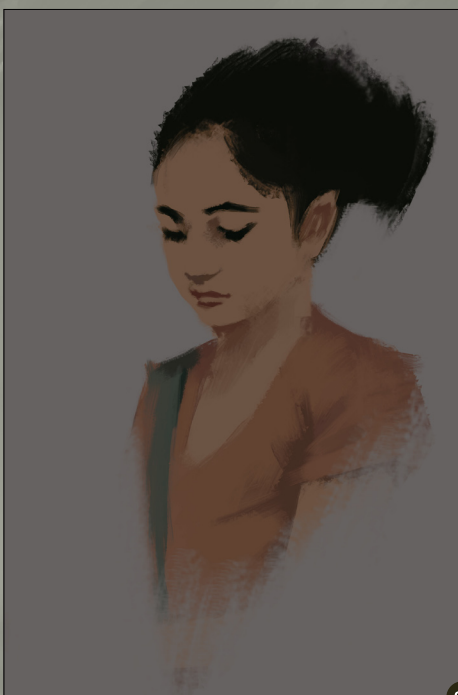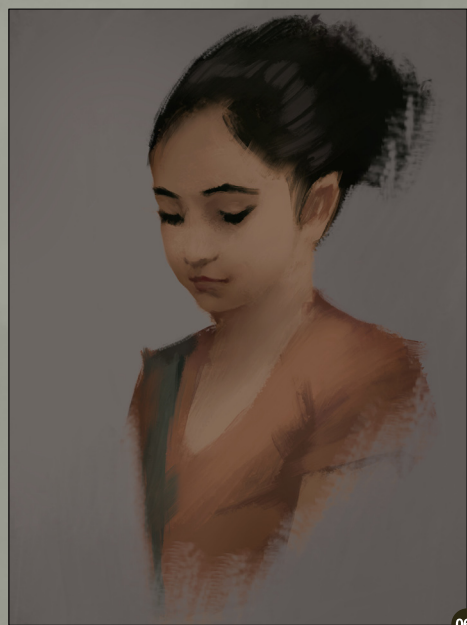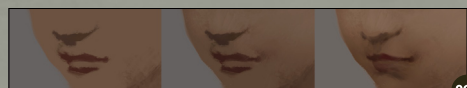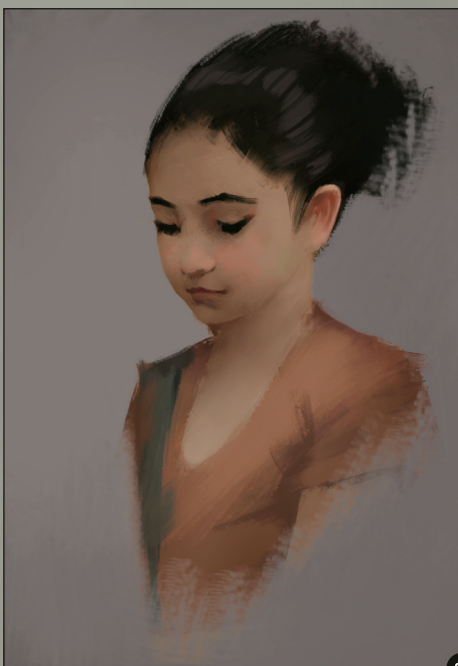

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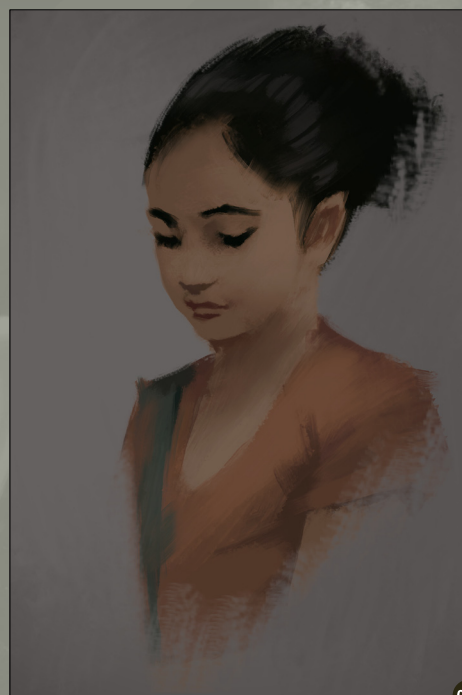
05a
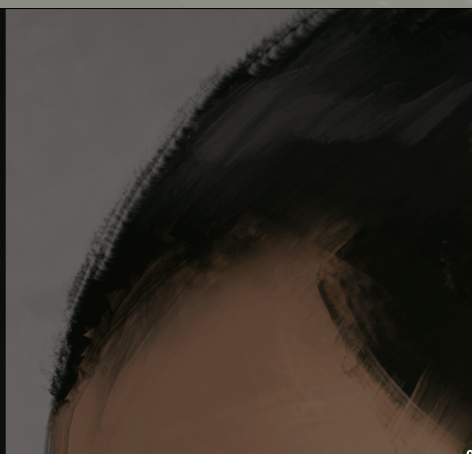
05b

06a

06b

07

use are to use clipping masks, Soft Light and Overlay mode. Clipping masks help us keep the edge quality regardless of the brushes we use and the strokes we paint. Soft Light and Overlay layers help us to add the value gradually without losing the existing layers of the painting. There isn't a great amount of difference between painting a child's face and an adult's apart from the fact that a child has slightly smoother skin, and this should be considered. A child wouldn't have wrinkles or folds of skin like an adult might.

Once you have added shadow to your painting the next step is to refine it and add more details (**Fig.07**). Adding details doesn't mean painting in more features or adding hair lines; it is about defining and demonstrating the actual shape of

08a

08b

nose, mouth, eyes and cheeks more precisely. Adding more color to the face is also important. I added more colors to the ears and nose as they are more reddish. I did the same with the eyes as they can be quite red, especially on children. They usually have red cheeks too. When you add color it is more like changing the hue and saturation rather than changing the value. At this stage the face should be solid which means the rest are just icing on the cake.

Fig.08a shows an oil painting I did a couple of years ago. There are benefits to all the different media you can create art with, and the cool thing about Photoshop is that you can take any picture and merge it into your current painting. I flipped this painting and rotated it 90 degrees to use it for the background (**Fig.08b**). As you can see the portrait became more interesting, and started to feel more vivid and fun to look at. This is one of the tricks I use sometimes. Once you have created a lot of paintings (regardless of the media) you can combine them into future paintings to make something new and interesting.

Fig.09a shows step-by-step how I painted the jewels that I added to the painting.

09a

The last things I did to the painting was to balance all the different elements, including the color, value and detail (**Fig.09b**).

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THE
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Jose Lazaro, Gavin Goulden, Lino Masciulli & **Anto Juricic** continue our **Human Anatomy** tutorial series by showing us how to create feet.

NEW!!! Vue Environment Creation
In this issue **Alex Popescu** starts this new tutorial series by creating **The Bay** in Vue.

Cover image by Sam Yang

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Making Of
Hayley

By Dan Crossland

A few months ago we featured a very painterly picture in our gallery of a girl posing in dramatic lighting. In this issue Dan Crossland shows us how he created this effect and how he created his amazing picture of Hayley.

"Experimenting with value composition early on in the painting will help to make the image strong and interesting to look at"

Making of Hayley

Software Used: Photoshop

To start I'd like to share with you how this painting was created. I come from a traditional painting background and have found that in digital painting it is not about how many brushes you can throw at an image. You would be surprised what you can get from only one brush. In this tutorial I use only two brushes. My subject is my partner Hayley. I have painted her many times and will probably paint her many more times in the future. She has interesting features and strong eyes which I am always drawn to. Plus living and working with someone day to day gives you a strong sense of their persona which helps you to find interesting compositions.

The light setup was very simple. It's a dark studio room with one strong light source casting a large shadow. I wanted a painting with a little mystery so this lighting gave it mood. I took the painting to 70% completion from life then finished it later at my leisure. I assessed the painting on day two to see if it was successful before I finished it. Looking at it on day two with fresh eyes clears my vision and helps me take it over the edge. In the last stage I added a final color pass, running paint marks, texture and a signature.

Value Composition

Tools used: Brush 30 round
This is my good all-rounder brush. The diagram shows how, by setting the pen pressure to use the graphics tablet pressure sensors, you can create subtle brush strokes (**Fig.01a**). A good variety of marks can be produced just by changing the angle and the brush shape into an ellipse. This way you can make the equivalent of a flat, round, or filbert. This one brush and a variation of pressures is all I use for the main painting (**Fig.01b**).

In general, experimenting with value composition early on in the painting will help to

01a

01b

03

02

04
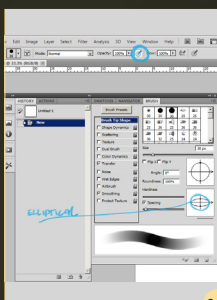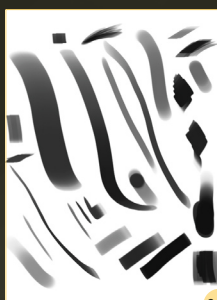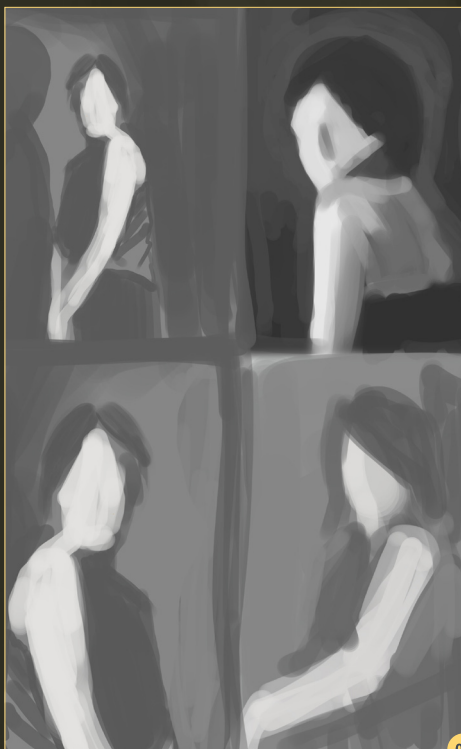
make the image strong and interesting to look at. By limiting the values to just a few I can create a powerful composition to build the painting on. I do this in black and white because I don't want the added complexity of color just yet. Just as the masters made a monochrome, what they called "dead under layer", we do the same and overlay color later. Try squinting at your model. You are trying to produce a sort of blurry photo effect on what you are seeing from the life model. Try to just block in the basic value along with the basic shapes of that value and keep brush sizes large. This will force you to only make the necessary marks for the block in. Do a few different angles and just try doing some still life block-ins for study. It will help make you a better painter and get you ahead in a painting a lot faster. This is why, when I paint, I never make a line drawing of the contours;
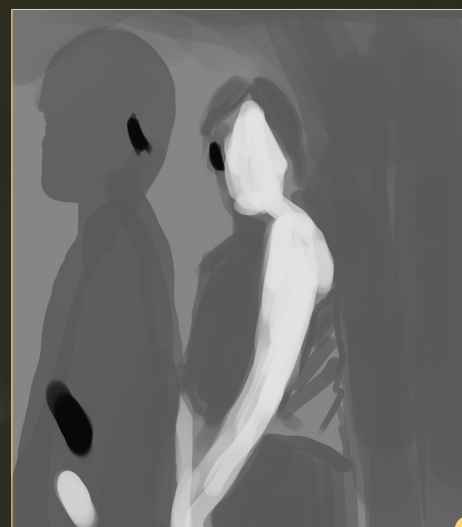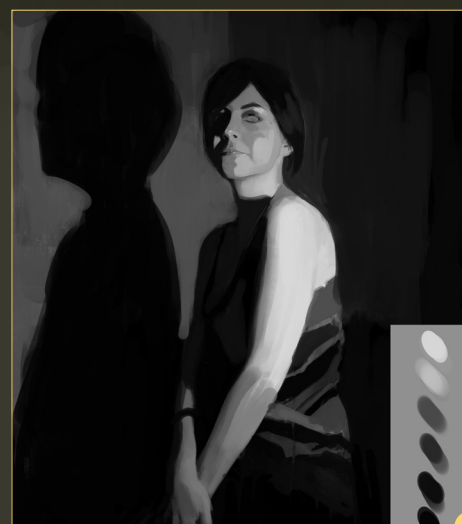
I prefer to feel for the abstract shapes. It not only eliminates the white of the canvas, but also gives me a really strong sense of how the finished painting will look. As Ingres said "The beginning in essence contains its end" (**Fig.02**)

Once I am happy with the value composition I try to hit what will be the darkest dark and the lightest light. By nailing these now I can move through the painting, refining the early shapes with more accurate shadows and also start to paint a flat half-tone value, sort of like map contours. I'm not interested in turning form yet; I just want to get the image as close and strong as I can. This will secure its success when it comes to form painting. I try to match what I am seeing; this means I need six tones to make the different values I can see (**Fig.03 – 04**). I continue to refine the image, correcting and
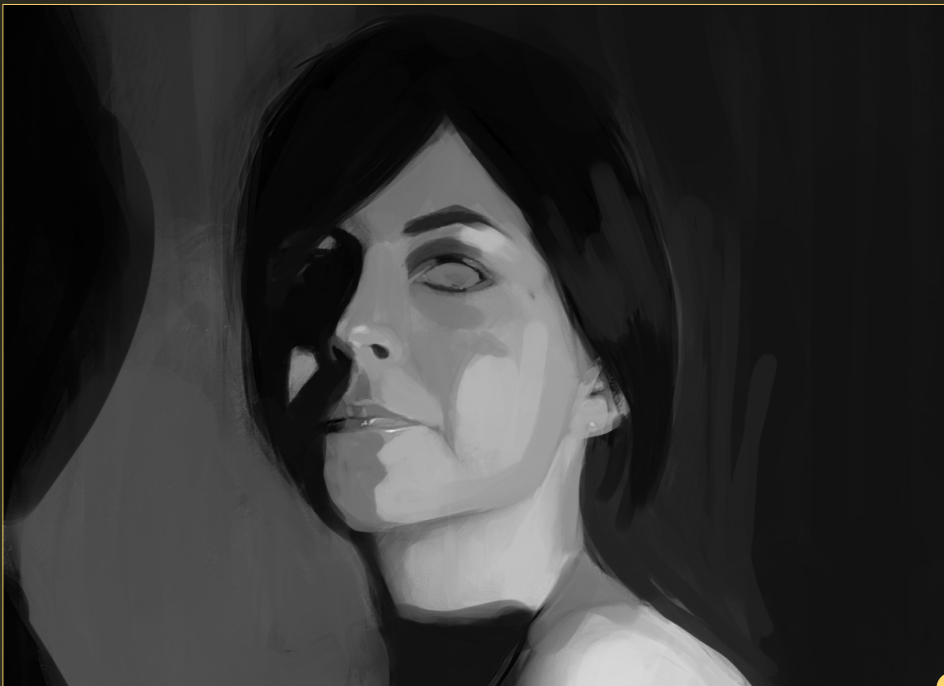
shaping the image to be more accurate and adding smaller details, decreasing my brush size as I go. Painting details but keeping the bigger picture in mind keeps the painting fresh and avoids that laboured, unrealistic look. The


main mistakes I see in both real and digital paintings, including my own, is getting eaten up too early with trying to render form and then panicking and making brush marks that don't help, consequently making the painting muddy and laboured. You have to be a little bit fearless and trust that the shapes you are making at an abstract level will come true in the end and look convincing. It's a risk, but you have to take risks to improve your art (**Fig.05**).

Turning Form

In my paintings and at this stage I sample areas of the painting and use a lower pressure stroke to turn the form and give it depth. I also like to keep the strokes of the half-tones somewhat crisp on the edges. I don't want to lose all the vitality of the groundwork I worked so hard to get in place, so this stage is done carefully and only where I think relevant. Of course you could go on and on rendering the form but in this case the study was completed. I felt it had life and a breadth of vision without making a flawless turn of form and blending all the strokes. If I went down that path the whole painting would have had to be done that way, and for me this was about learning to see a shape at an abstract level (**Fig.06**).
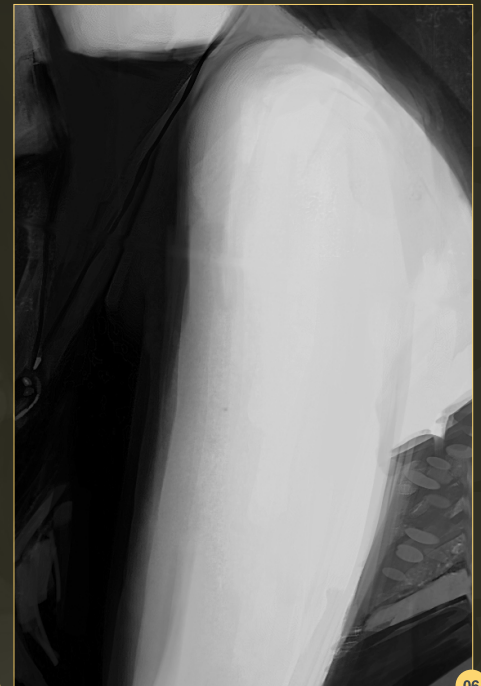
Textures

After the under layer is complete I like to add some texture. I feel this helps give the image a little more atmosphere. To do this I use a really huge brush which has texture to it. The original brush was made by artist Robert Kim and can be found if you do a search for him in Google. I use white paint on a new layer then play with the blend modes till the effect looks nice. For this texture Linear Dodge worked well and after varying the texture and blending the texture I add paint smears by using a round elliptical brush set on Smudge and dragging down across the image. This layer is then blended with the original to complete the effect (**Fig.07 – 08**).

Color Overlay 1

With the under painting complete I move onto the color layers. Firstly I have to get the right ranges for the painting. I do this by, again, squinting down, which enables me to pick out colors, starting with the lightest and working my way through into the shadows where things are getting darker but more saturated, and finally making my way to the clothes and backdrop. With the colors roughly picked and added to the swatch palette I make a new layer and change the blending mode to Color – this will add the colors only, without affecting any other of the form building I did earlier. It's like tinting a black and white picture. Now I can concentrate on the temperature of the hues and the value without worrying about the form and likeness. That part is safe and locked off (**Fig.09**).

Color Overlay 2

In this stage I look at the temperature, the hue and the value of the colors I am putting down. I

make adjustments using the hue and saturation sliders on various layers until the colors are working for me (**Fig.10**).

Final Color

I usually like to add another pass of color for my paintings. I love adding more saturated bits of bounce light into the shadow and a glow

element to the highest brightest highlights to give the image more power and realism. To do this I add a new layer and paint an orange tinge around the areas I want. I then set the blend mode to Color Dodge and after toning it down with the eraser it's finished. I add my signature to complete the painting (**Fig.11 – 12**)

Conclusion

I hope that you have enjoyed this tutorial and have found it informative. I also hope that it will help someone or maybe inspire someone to study art.

On my artistic journey I've read a lot of tutorials on digital painting and very few have actually helped me. In fact, some confused me more than helped. That's why I've come approach digital art in the same way that I approach oil paintings, and only by following traditional techniques have I found opportunities to learn and improve.

I'm no authority on painting and am constantly striving for improvement, but I wanted to share what I have found so far. That's the main reason for doing this tutorial. You may find it's what you thought already and you are on the right path, or you may be surprised that it's not the fancy brushes that make the art but consistent repetition when you're painting. No magic wand, no shortcuts – just doing it whenever you are not sleeping.

Thanks for taking the time to read this tutorial and I wish you all the best in your future endeavours.

Dan Crossland

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This month we feature:

"The Oath"

by Yigit Koroglu

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

I thought that there should be a perfect and harmonious balance between simplicity and complexity in the painting (**Fig.07**).

The details needed to be painted in such a way that they wouldn't distract the eye away from the focal point at first glance. However without them, the painting could appear too flat and uninteresting. I was careful not to allow them to become too prevalent and overpower the main subject (**Fig.08 – 09**).

Using the same color values for the non-focal points is a really good way to avoid unwanted attention. The next step was to texture the image, which was done using some custom brushes on layers set to Overlay and Multiply. Overlay layers should be approached with caution since they can easily ruin the tonal values of your image. The surface of the metal plates shielding the robot would definitely harbor some moss and dirt in such an environment and so I applied the textures accordingly (**Fig.10**).

Lighting

Lighting can make a huge difference. If we consider that light determines how we see everything around us and
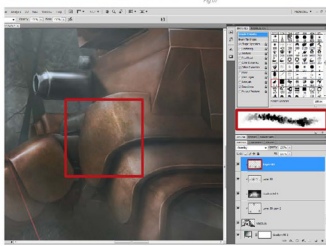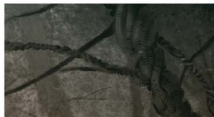
enables us to see things in three dimensions, we can assume it is a critical element above all else. God started creation by saying "Let there be light!" so it must be something important.

I added the base lights, just to clarify their positions (**Fig.11**).

This is a stage where most people may think that this level of light might be enough. On the contrary I thought that I should exaggerate it as much as possible to lend the image a more dramatic look. When you look straight into a spotlight it should have a nearly blinding effect, but in a painting this can mean sacrificing all of the detail. However, trust me; it is a risk that should be taken since the results are worth it most of the time. Also don't forget that this is digital art, hence you can revert to an earlier stage of your work at any point.

I used the Gradient tool on a layer set to Soft Light and placed this above all the other layers to make the lighting effects look natural. It is important to remember that intense light casts strong shadows.

The natural radiation of light affects the whole painting with a cold bluish blanket of color. This actually creates an overall harmony between the colors and therefore creates a more natural and less distracting look. With the addition of the lighting, the image now had a more serious and dramatic look. With a little touch here and there, it could be called finished (**Fig.12**).

Conclusion

I think that I gave this image a feeling of drama and conveyed a moment that encapsulated a child's fascination with the curiosity of a robot. Most people who see this work are curious about what will happen next. Maybe the child will grow up in the forest alongside the robots and become a next-gen Tarzan or perhaps he will teach the robots how to behave like humans? I really don't know, but this is the fun part left to one's imagination. My aim was to add another open-ended story which people could interpret in their own way and I only hope I was successful.

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