Interview
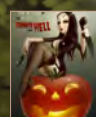A.J Trahan

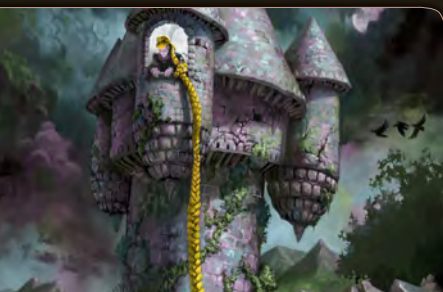**Articles**
Sketchbook of John Park

The Gallery
Roarti, Serge Birault
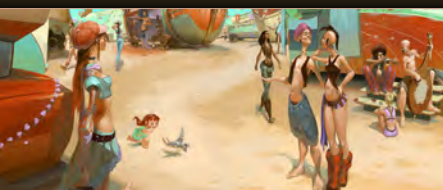and Andreas Rocha, plus more!

REALM

We get an exclusive behind the scenes look at Atomhawk Design's wonderfully epic future project Realm.

Illustrating Fairy Tales
In this month's installment of Illustration Fariy Tales **Simon Dominic Brewer** shows us how to paint the tale of Rapunzel.

Creating New Worlds
David Smit and **Nadia Karroue** continue their cool series by showing us how they tackle the illustrations of their new world.

Character Portrayal
In the final chapter of our Charcter Portrayal series **Irvin Rodriguez** tshows us how to paint a tatooed character.

2dartist

Contents

Editorial

Hello and welcome to the Christmas issue of 2DArtist. I hope you are all feeling festive and are well prepared for the holidays. This month's 2DArtist is here, and to help you get into the Christmas mood it is full to the brim with treats and surprises.

I hope you all enjoyed the first installment of our Illustrating Fairy Tales series. **Simon Dominic Brewer** is back again this month, and in this issue shows us how he tells a story in his amazing illustration of Rapunzel. This is a really cool series so if you are into illustration this is a must ready article.

David Smit and **Nadia Karroue** are back again in this month's issue. I hope you are all picking up lots of techniques and tips to help you design your own world and the characters in it. In this issue they will be showing us how to gather all of your ideas and influences together to create exiting illustrations.

Painting over 3D is a real skill and a technique that can create outstanding results. I am sure you all enjoyed the first chapter of our Futuristic Vehicles series where this technique was explained with stunning results by Levi Hopkins. This month's installment continues to impress as **Juha Rasanen** shows us how he used 3D as a base to create his amazing illustration of a Sci-Fi Drop Ship. In next month's issue we dive into the depths of the deep blue with an amazing Submarine created by Carlos Cabrera.

We say a fond farewell to our Character Portrayal series this month and in this issue **Irvin Rodriguez** talks us through how to paint tattoos in a cool and illustrative way. In next month's issue we change to something really quite different, Painting Creatures from Mythology.

In this month's interview we had the pleasure of catching up with the amazingly talented **A.J Trahan**. A.J has worked for some of the biggest names in the industry including Steambot and Disney. He tells us how he caught the attention of potential employers and how he still loves painting digitally outside!

Contents

What's in this month's issue?

From one amazingly talented artist to the next, in this month's sketchbook we get a brief insight into the creative mind of **John Park**. It's hard to describe in words the jaw-dropping quality of John's work, so the best thing to do would be to take a look at some of his sketches and the few final images we have in this issue. I know you will love his work.

I am sure you are finding it hard to contain your excitement so I will only briefly mention the fantastic making of by Jaime Martinez and the stunning gallery containing images by **Ioan Dumitrescu**, **Serge Birault**, **Andreas Rocha** and **Markus Lovadina**.

I hope you enjoy this month's issue and have a very happy Christmas.

Interview
A.J Trahan

Articles
Sketchbook of John Park

The Gallery
Roarti, Serge Birault
and Andreas Rocha, plus more!

R E A L M

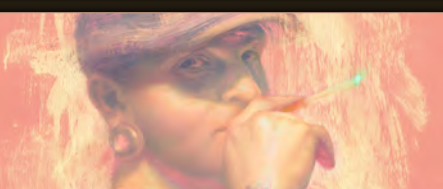We get an exclusive behind the scenes look at Atomhawk Design's wonderfully epic future project Realm.

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Get the most out of your
Magazine!

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

Setting up your PDF reader

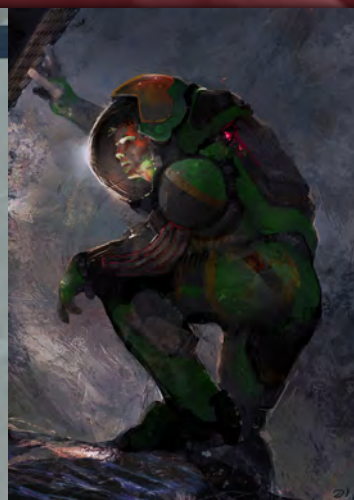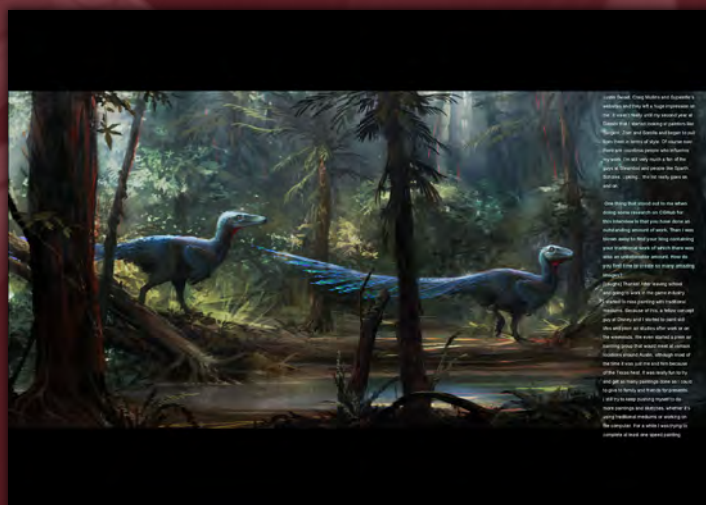For optimum viewing of the magazine it is recommended that you have the latest Acrobat Reader installed.

You can download it for free here: **DOWNLOAD!**

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

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

Jaime Martínez

Jaime is a concept artist and illustrator from San Fernando in Spain. He has had a passion for drawing since he was a couple of feet tall. He studied Fine Art at Sevilla University and now he works for a video games company in Madrid as a concept artist.

http://www.dabanaworks.com/
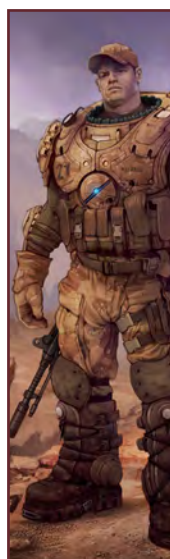jaime@dabanaworks.com

Contributing Artists

Every month many artists from 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

John Park

At a young age John Park's dream was to become an artist just like his father and older brother. He majored in Product Design and began pursuing his dreams and goals in Entertainment Design. John started his career as a concept artist at Design Studio Press. Ever since DSP he continued to pursue his goals and has been involved with major studios for various projects in the film and game industry.

http://jparked.blogspot.com/
jpforjohnpark@aim.com
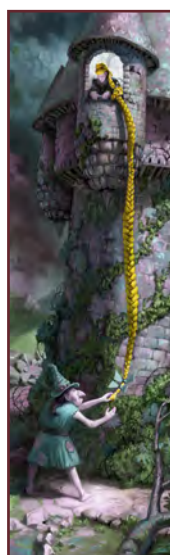
Simon Dominic

Simon is a freelance illustrator specializing in fantasy, sci-fi, horror and the generally bizarre. He paints digitally, applying traditional techniques through use of digital tools. He has worked on game art, book covers, editorial and magazine workshops since going pro in 2009.

http://www.painterly.co.uk/
si@painterly.co.uk

Image by Atomhawk Design

JP
Räsänen

Juha Rasanen is a Finnish illustrator/technical artist who currently works at Rovio Entertainment.
He is interested in concept art and visual design in all kinds of forms. He wants to broaden his artistic perspective by working on various projects and different design subjects.

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juhis_r@hotmail.com

David
Smit

When not traveling or working overseas, David resides in Amsterdam, freelancing in concept art, illustration and art direction jobs. It's only when he sleeps that he's not busy! He is always on the search for great projects, opportunities, stories, good music, and a nice cold beer.

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david@davidsmit.com

Irvin
Rodriguez

Irvin Rodriguez is an artist who currently lives and works in New York City. He studied academic drawing and painting at the Grand Central Academy of Art and the Guild Atelier and received a BFA in Illustration at the Fashion Institute of Technology.

http://irvin-rodriguez.com/

irvone@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

Image by Atomhawk Design

A.J TRAHAN

In this month's interview Anthony Jay Trahan or A.J as he is known, tells us a little about how he got into the industry and how he caught the attention of industry giants Steambot Studios and Disney. A.J has a vast and stunning portfolio, and in this magazine he shares some of his digital work with us, as well as letting us know a little about his traditional work.

"I still try to keep pushing myself to do more paintings and sketches, whether it's using traditional mediums or working on the computer"

Hi A.J, it's great to speak to you. I have spent a bit of time doing some research about you and realized that you have worked for some great clients. How did you end up in the industry? Also how did you catch the attention of big studios like Steambot?

Thanks for taking the time to check out my stuff! I was lucky enough to go to a really cool little art school called Gemini just outside of Austin, TX, which is where I'm from. The school is run by the Spanish master Roger Barcilon, who is good friends with the Steambot guys. My concept art teacher at Gemini was Manuel Carrasco who also worked with Steambot, and after I left Disney he recruited me to start working with them. I remember Roger showing me some of David Levy's early speed paintings and thinking, "Damn - I've got to learn how to do that!"

"I've been influenced and inspired by so many different artists with different styles..."

I don't think there is any artist that hasn't been affected by David Levy's work in that way. Which artists would you say have had the greatest influence on your style and also is there one artist in particular that you are a fan of at the moment?

Hm... well I'm not really sure about that one. I've been influenced and inspired by so many different artists with different styles and backgrounds. I would say my instructor Roger Barcilon had a huge influence on the way I learned to paint, but even before that the book *How to Draw Comics the Marvel Way*, cartoons and dinosaur books all played a huge role in my style since that was what I was copying whilst I was learning. When I was in high school I found

Justin Sweet, Craig Mullins and Supalette's websites and they left a huge impression on me. It wasn't really until my second year at Gemini that I started looking at painters like Sargent, Zorn and Sorolla and began to pull from them in terms of style. Of course now there are countless people who influence my work. I'm still very much a fan of the guys at Steambot and people like Sparth, Scholes, Lipking... the list really goes on and on.

One thing that stood out to me when doing some research on CGHub for this interview is that you have done an outstanding amount of work. Then I was blown away to find your blog containing your traditional work of which there was also an unbelievable amount. How do you find time to create so many amazing images?

[Laughs] Thanks! After leaving school and going to work in the game industry I started to miss painting with traditional mediums. Because of this, a fellow concept guy at Disney and I started to paint still lifes and plein air studies after work or on the weekends. We even started a plein air painting group that would meet at various locations around Austin, although most of the time it was just me and him because of the Texas heat. It was really fun to try and get as many paintings done as I could to give to family and friends for presents. I still try to keep pushing myself to do more paintings and sketches, whether it's using traditional mediums or working on the computer. For a while I was trying to complete at least one speed painting

per day, but these days it's hard to find time outside of work to do many personal pieces.

I've sketched outside many times, but have never considered taking a laptop out and doing some digital painting. Do time restrictions because of things like battery life and weather conditions force you to develop a looser and faster flowing approach in this kind of environment? And does this help you when doing professional work?

Yeah, it sure does. There is nothing that helps get the creative juices flowing faster than a tight deadline. Things like changing light and weather conditions when doing plein air studies helps prepare you for having to work fast in a studio.

> "With digital you can start a painting a thousand different ways, whereas with oils it's usually the same two or three techniques"

I think a lot of digital artists maintain a passion for traditional work, however not many get time to continue to experiment with it. Do you find it easy to switch from digital to traditional and do you think that practicing traditionally improves your digital work? Well, my first love and initial training was in traditional illustration. I didn't even really spend much time on the computer for the first two years of my training, so for me painting with oils or acrylics comes very naturally – although it is

much more time-consuming. I'm not sure that painting with oils really helps my digital work, but it's different and uses a different part of the brain. With digital you can start a painting a thousand different ways, whereas with oils it's usually the same two or three techniques. I still have dreams of becoming a full-time fine artist, but knowing myself I'd probably get bored and switch back to concept art within a few years.

You and I are of a similar age (although I am a little bit older). I sketched day and night when I was younger, and my sketches were usually copies of Judge Dredd, X-Men or the
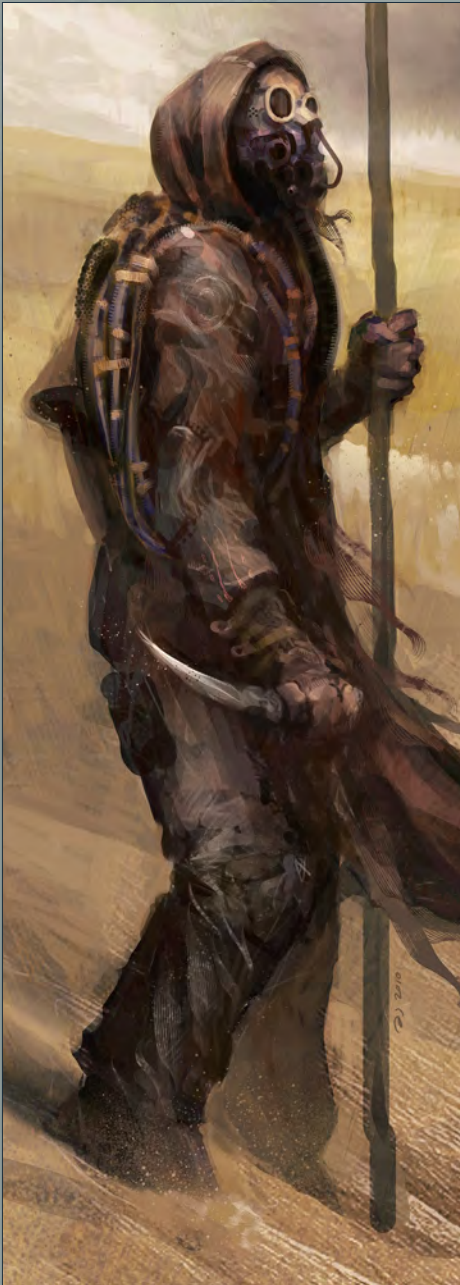
Ninja Turtles. **I was wondering if you drew the same things and if not is there anything that stands out as being inspirational to you at a young age?**

[Laughs] Yeah, for me it started out with Ninja Turtles and football players. I would do little trading cards, and my buddy would take them to his school and sell them for 50 cents each then give me 25 cents. After that I moved on to Spiderman, Batman and dinosaurs. I was, and still am, very inspired by the work of Douglas Henderson, who is a fantastic dinosaur artist. I would also always be on the lookout for the coolest comic book artists at the local HEB or Half Price Books. There was one Spiderman series which had a very painterly feel to it that I loved as a kid, and I wish I still had them.

> *"I think most commercial artists probably go though something similar in their careers since every client wants something different"*

Comic books must be responsible for creating many young artists. Do you ever think that you would like to have a go at creating your own? Do you think that this is more of a possibility now, as comic books these days are much more painterly than they were when we were growing up?
Sure I'd love to do a graphic novel of some sort.

In fact I've been playing around with a few ideas in my head although I haven't started painting anything just yet.

When looking at the projects you have worked on I noticed that one of them was *Epic Mickey*. **Can you tell us a little about this project and how you became involved? It seems like an unusual one to work on, particularly for someone with a distinct painterly style such as yours.**
Mickey was a definitely a strange one to work on! Initially I was hired because the art director at the time really wanted the world Mickey was running around in to feel like it was painted by a traditional painter, and since I was trained in those techniques he thought I was a good fit. It didn't take long for the Wii limitations to snuff most of those ideas out. In the middle of production the studio decided to try and sell the game to a much younger audience and go for a much more cartoony style ,which was a big challenge for me to get used to. It was kind of fun though, pushing myself in a direction I wasn't completely comfortable with. I think most commercial artists probably go though something similar in their careers since every client wants something different. In the end I just had to adapt.

Do you find it helpful to push yourself from time to time and try to create a painting

that would be the opposite of what you usually try to do? I have heard that some studios do it and I have always wondered how helpful it is.

Well, I guess it depends on the person but I do find it helpful to try different things than what I'm used to, and most of the time I've found that games studios like to see a wide variety of styles in your portfolio unless of course they are hiring you for a particular style that you are good at.

It never hurts, that's for sure. But for me, when I'm working on personal work I usually just like to have fun while I'm painting and

most of the time that means experimenting and trying out new things, new software, new brushes and so on.

I know this is a tricky question, but if you could pick any of your paintings as being your favorite, which one would it be?

Well to be honest I'm not really 100% happy with any of my work. I always see things in them that need improvements or that I wish I'd have done differently. But if I was forced to pick I would probably say that my favorites are the ones where I was just having fun and not thinking too much about the end result or whether or not it was a good painting, but just

letting it flow out of me. The two blue dinosaurs walking by the stream was like that. Also I just love painting dinosaurs [Laughs]!

Thanks very much for answering my questions and for sharing your work with us.
Yeah, no problem – it was fun!

A.J Trahan

For more information please visit:

http://www.ajtrahan.blogspot.com/

Or contact him at:

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Interview by: Simon Morse

"Usually when I settle on a design I try to extend my thought process further by doing another round of variations"

SKETCHBOOK
OF JOHN PARK

In this issue's sketchbook we get a small insight into the creative mind of the amazingly talented John Park. John shares some really cool sketches of droids with us, as well as letting us see a few of his stunning final images.

SKETCHBOOK OF JOHN PARK

Usually when I settle on a design I try to extend my thought process further by doing another round of variations. In this set (**Fig.01**) I tried to showcase as many details as I could in a thumbnail sketch set.
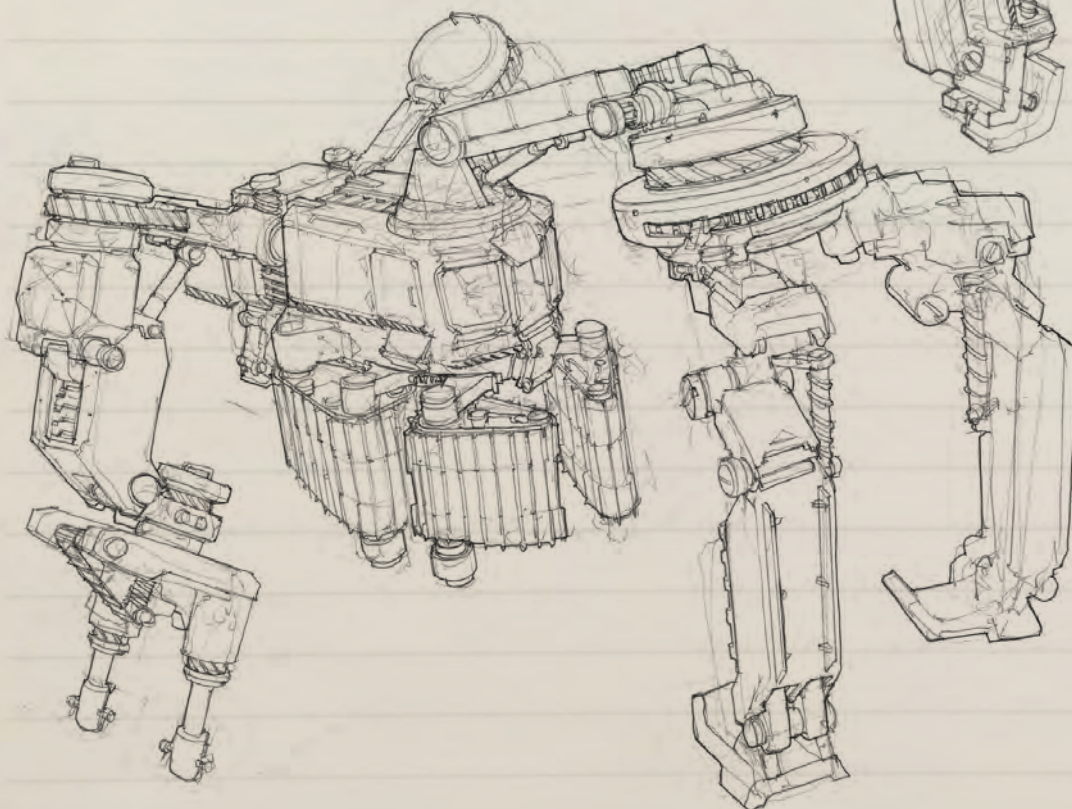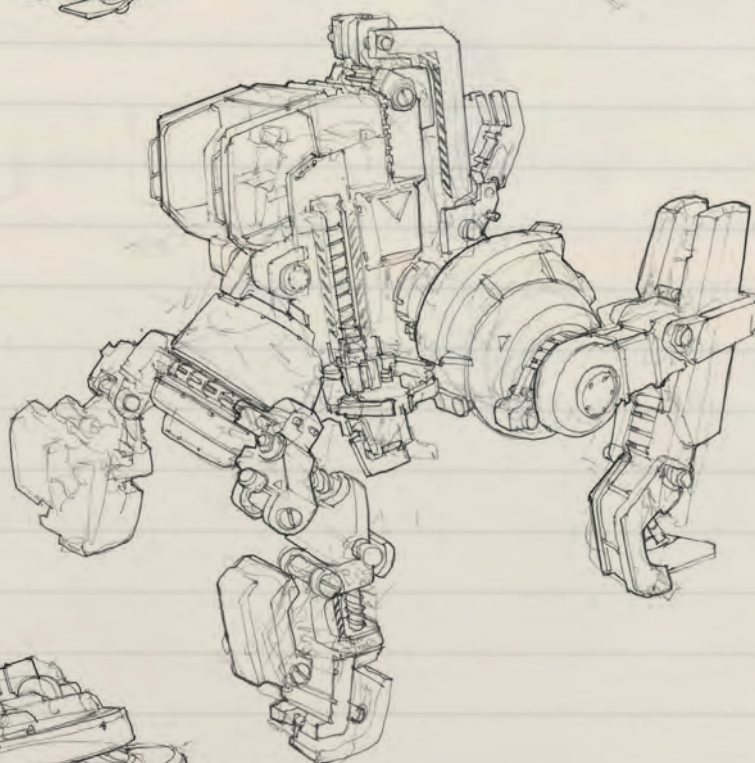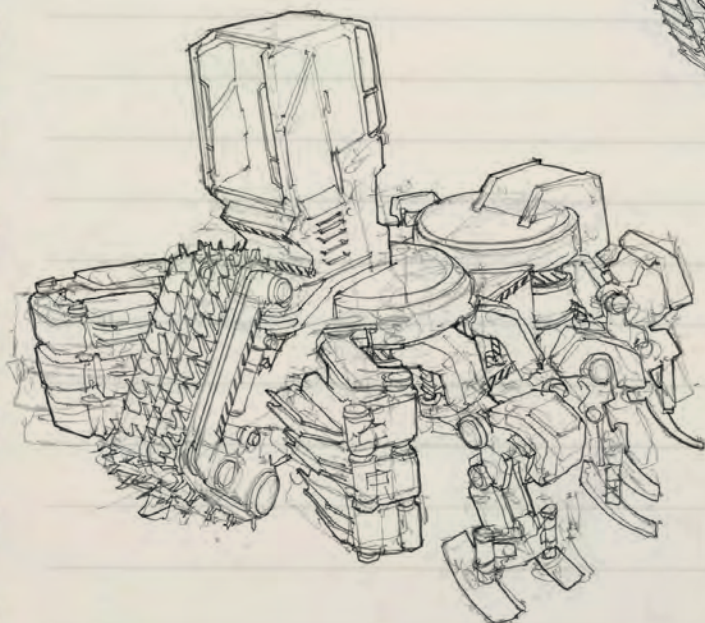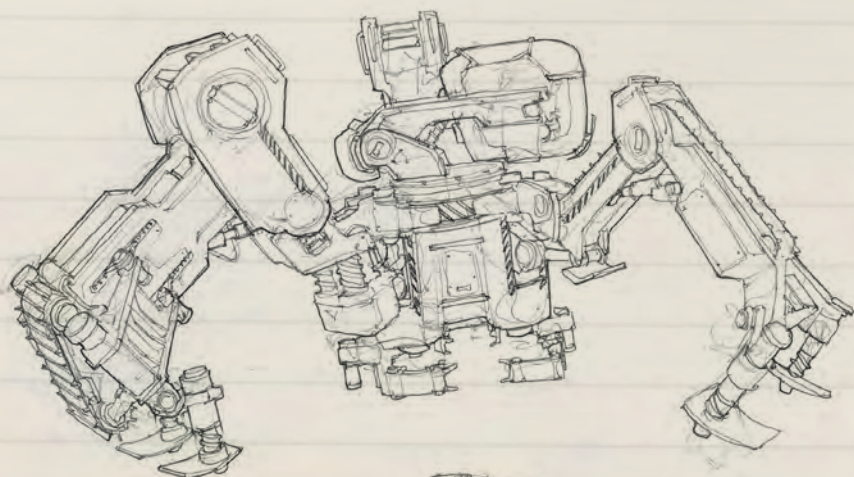
Fig.02 shows some ink thumbnails where I was exploring designs in a graphic style, using light and shadow to indicate information.
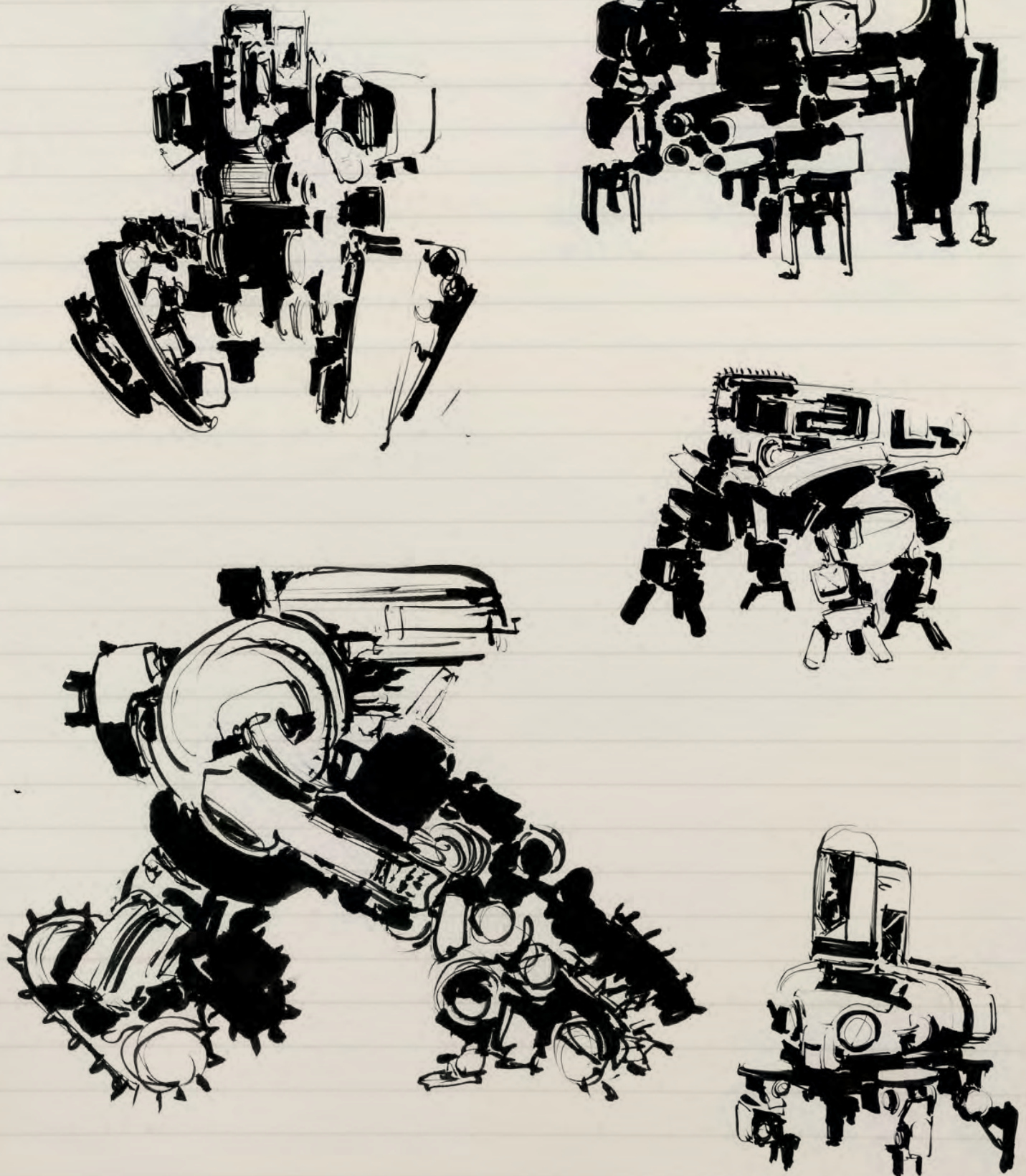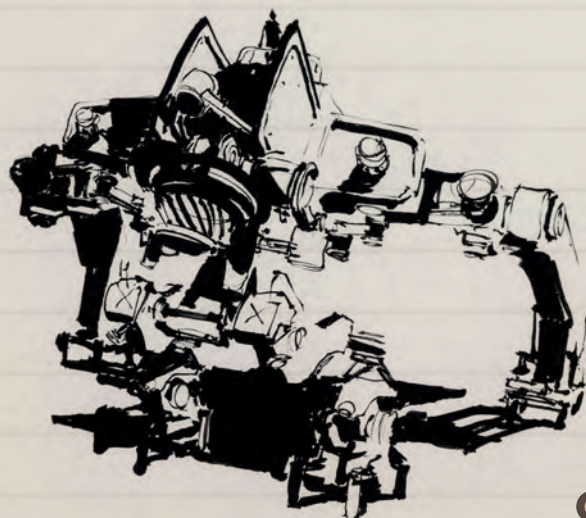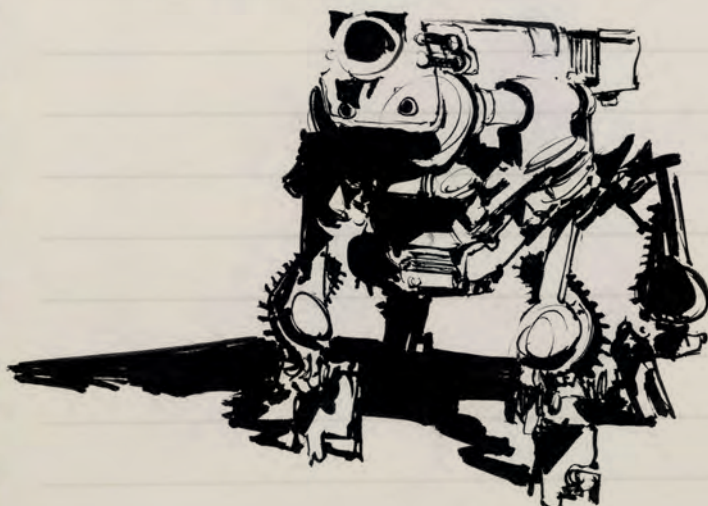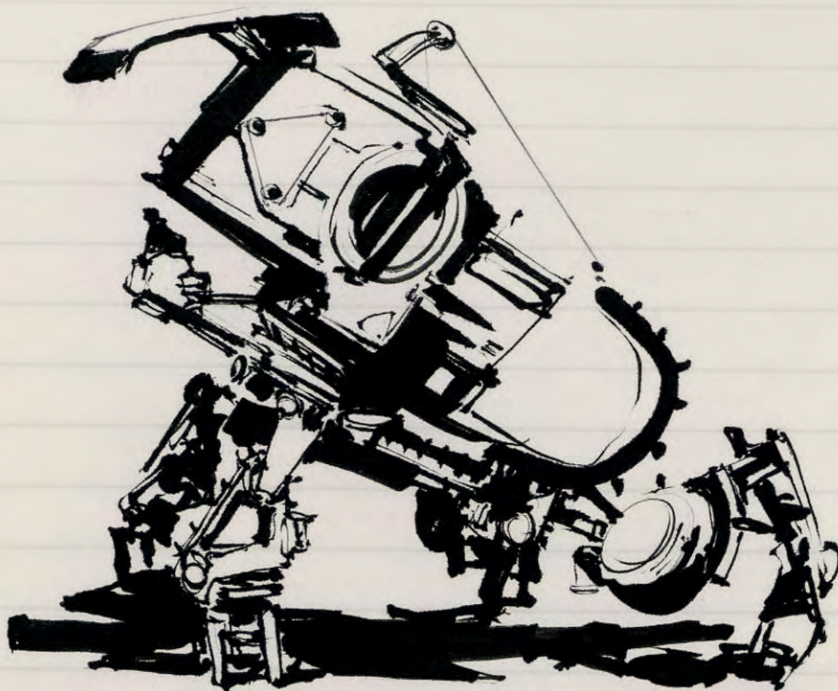
Fig.03 shows some loose sketches. The goal was to be as loose and interpretive as a sketch can be. I'm usually used to doing more defined drawings, but in this exercise I wanted to see how much I could define my design details through several scribbles and strokes.
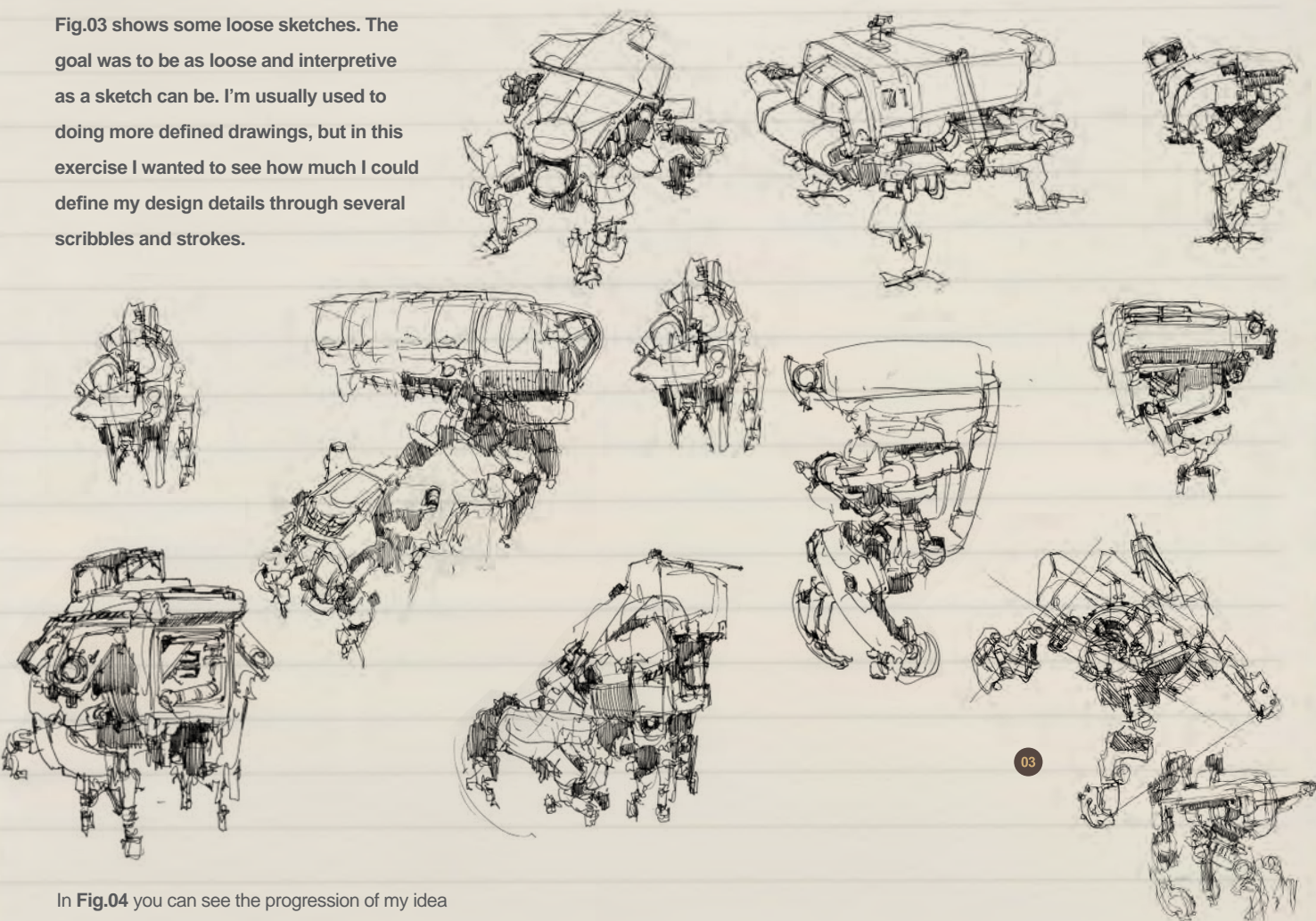
In **Fig.04** you can see the progression of my idea from thumbnail through to the design for my image *The Wheel.5*. I like to start off broad and loose, and then commit to a final design.
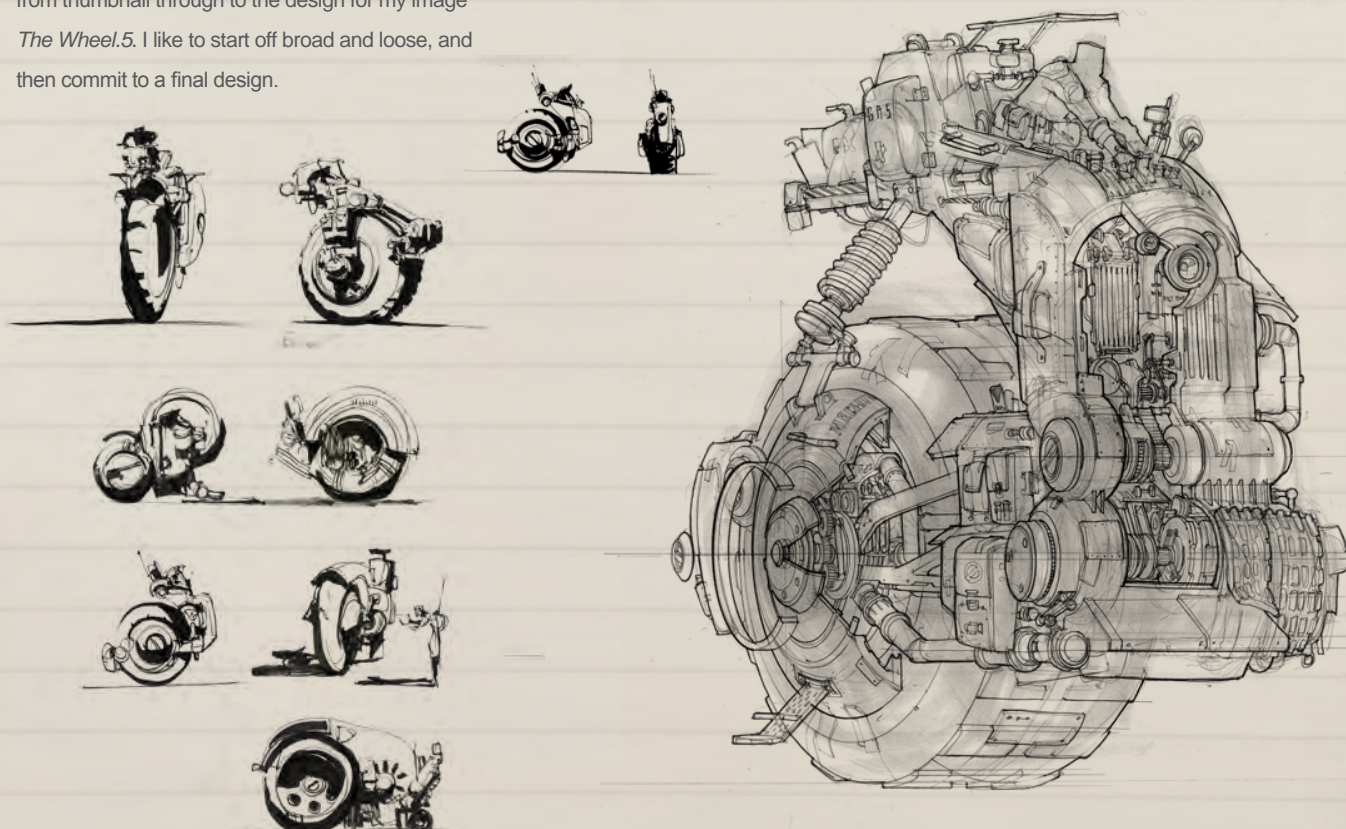
Fig.05 shows a similar exercise to the one in Fig.03, but this time I wanted to start the design with a pure silhouette to dictate the overall design and gesture.
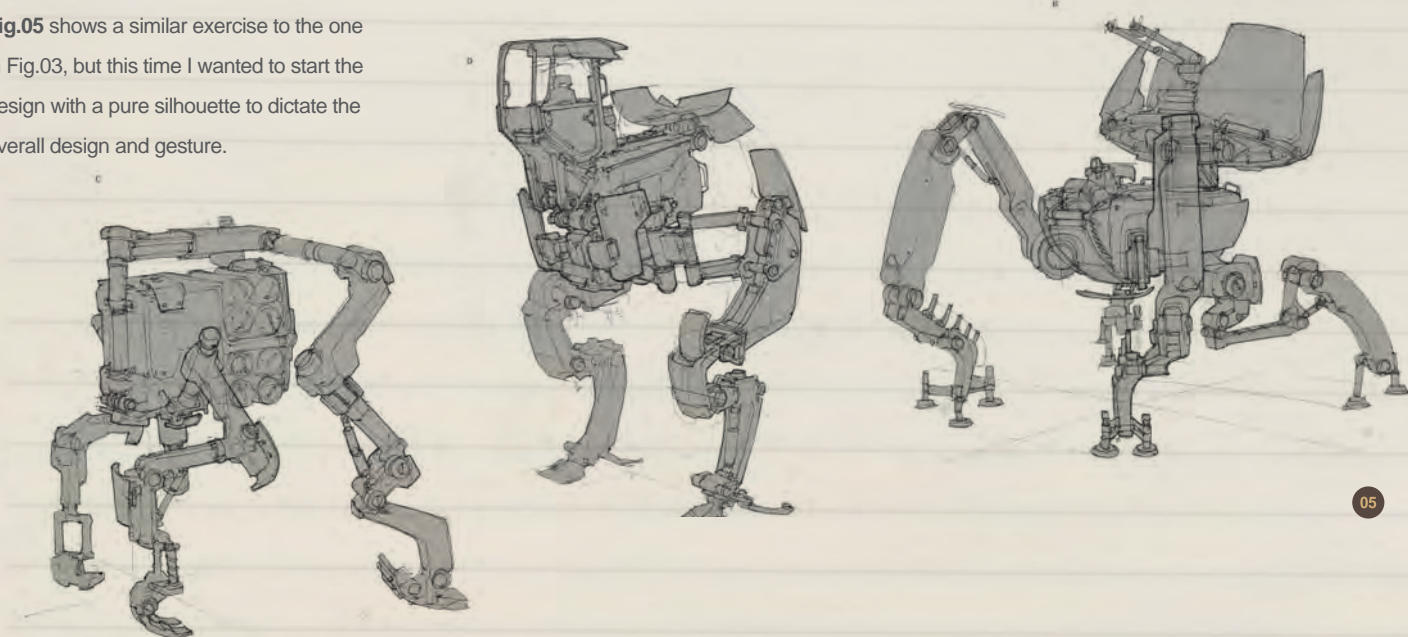
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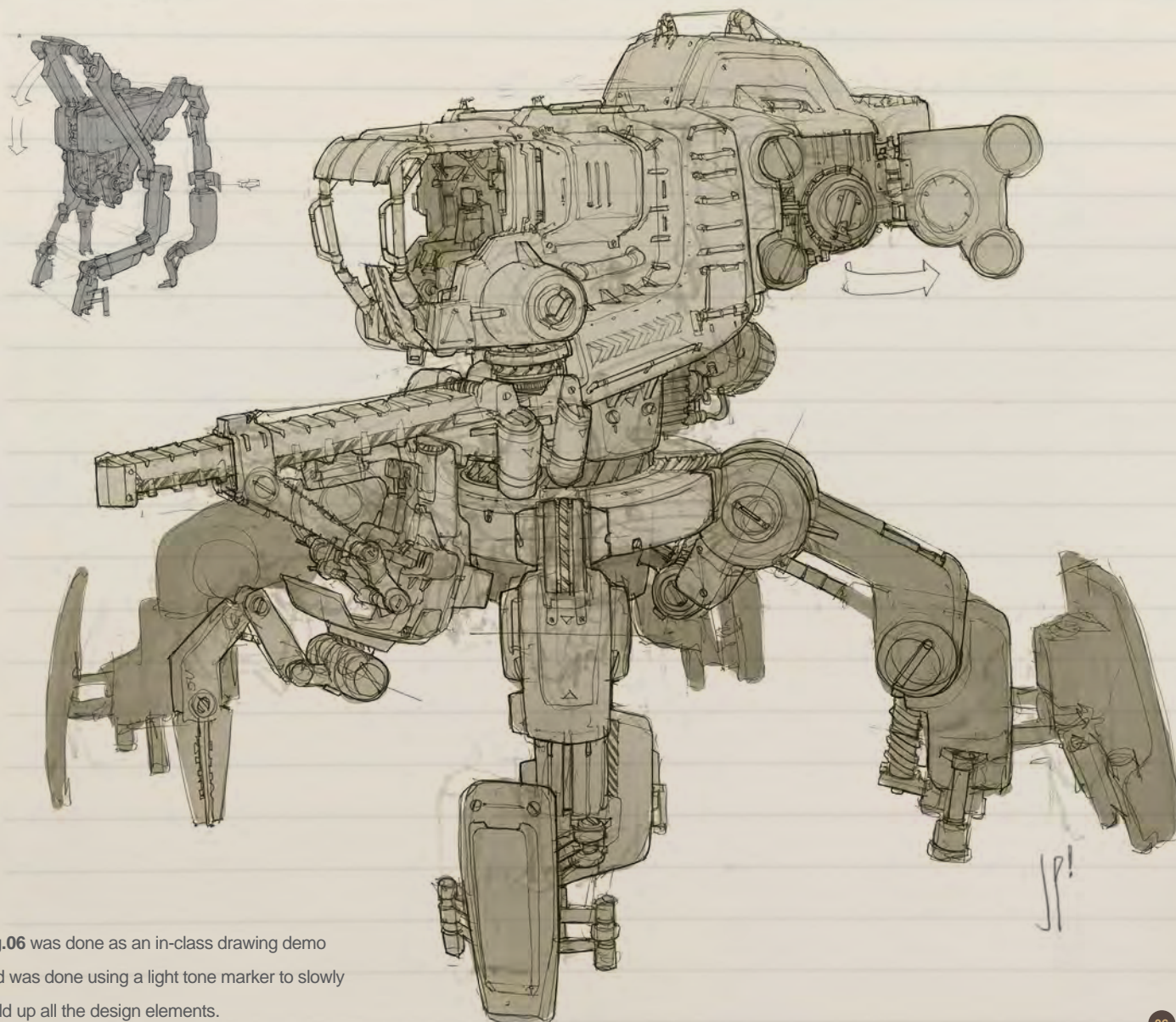
Fig.06 was done as an in-class drawing demo and was done using a light tone marker to slowly build up all the design elements.

06

Fig.07 was also done for a sketch demo, but the reason I wanted to showcase it wasn't because of the execution, but because of the backstory of its design. One thing that I try to keep in mind when I design vehicles is what is the initial purpose? What are the secondary and tertiary functions?
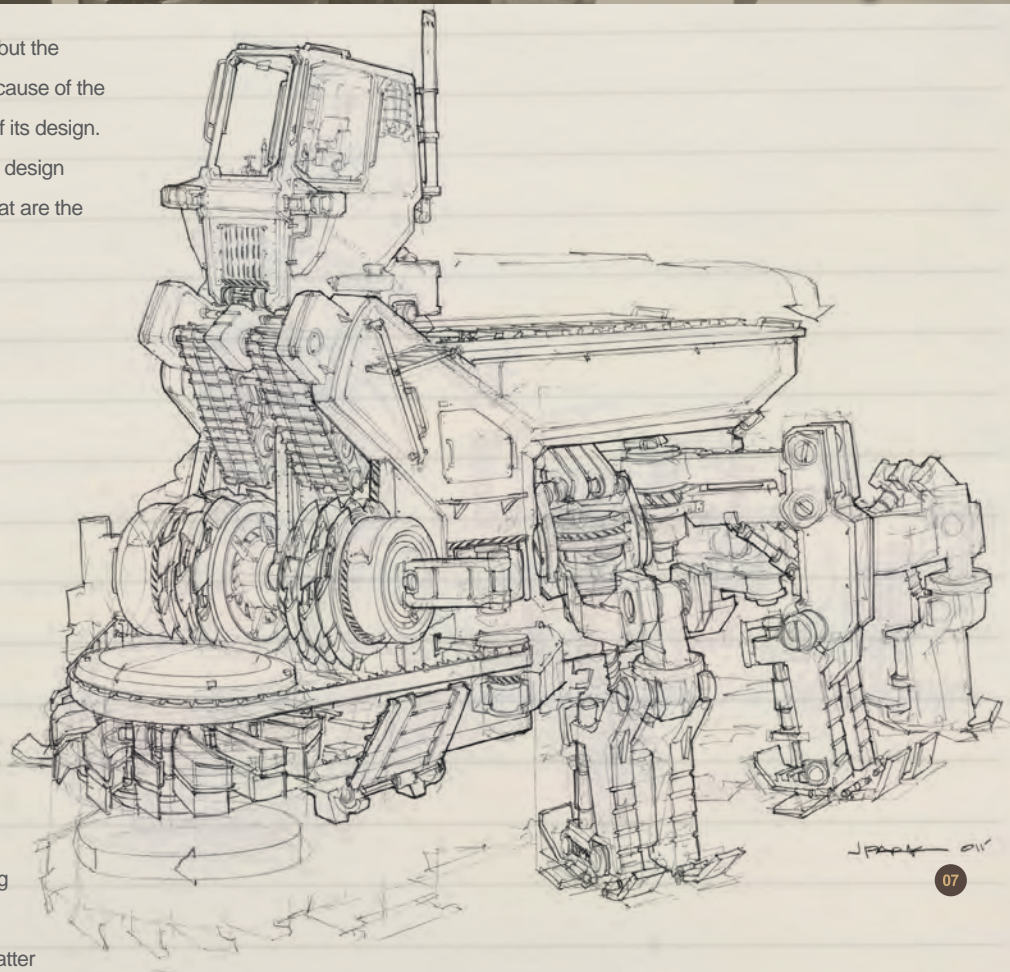
Fig.08 – 11 show some different rendering styles that I wanted to explore. It's always interesting to explore the same subject matter using a variety of styles and approaches.

RED ENGINE

10

11
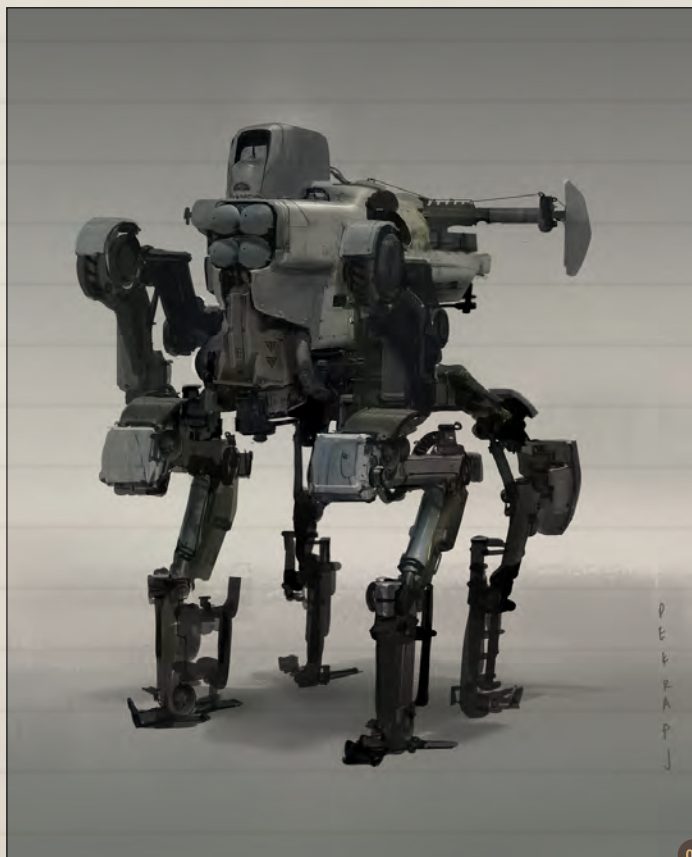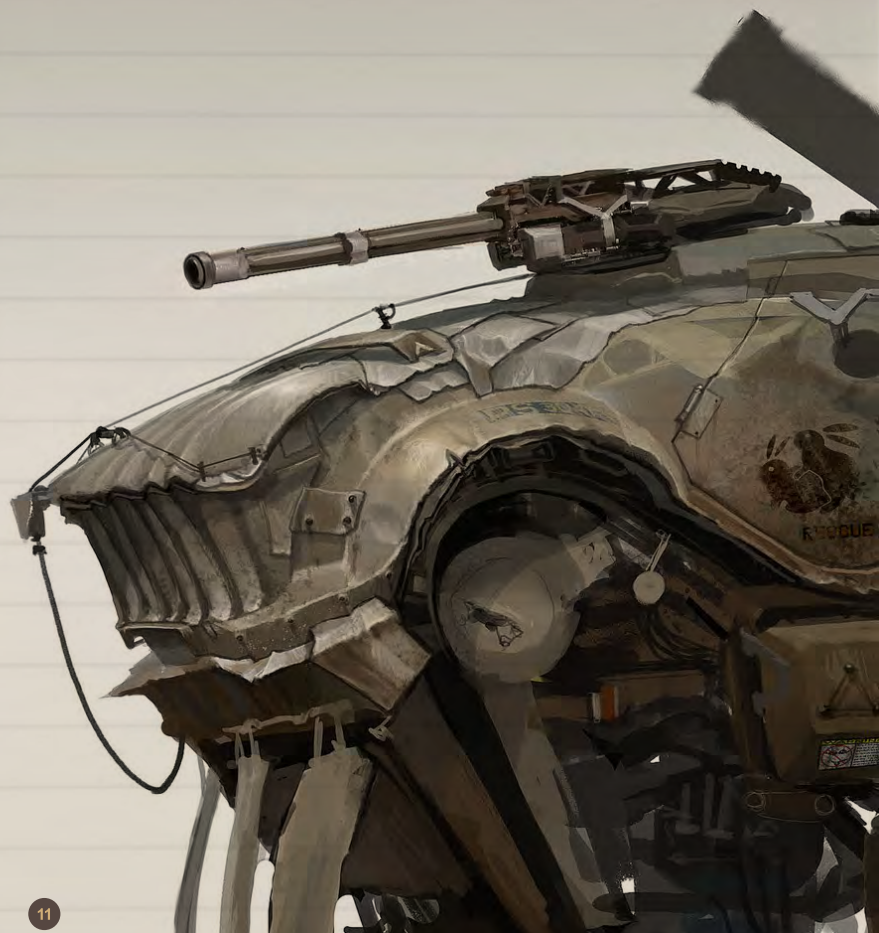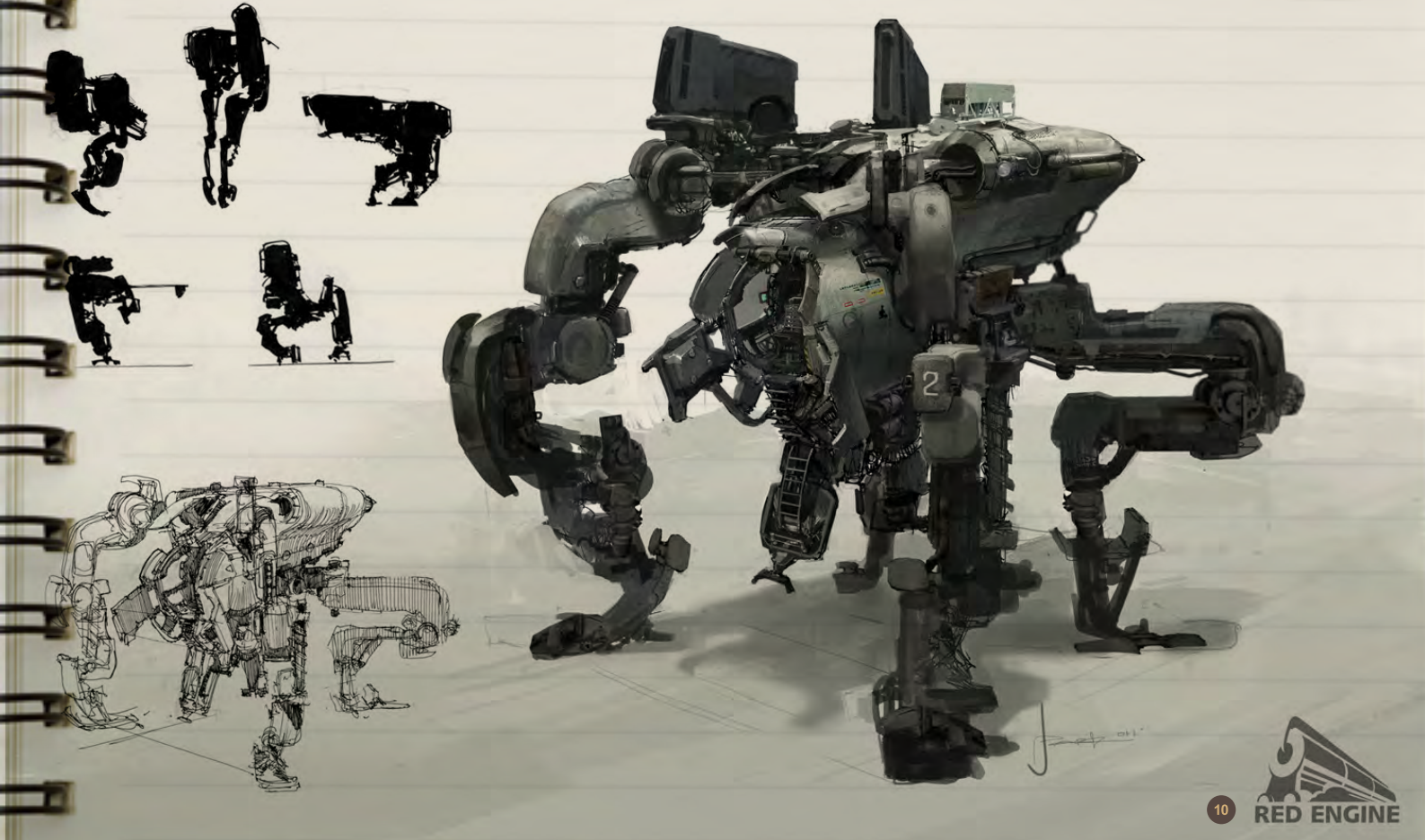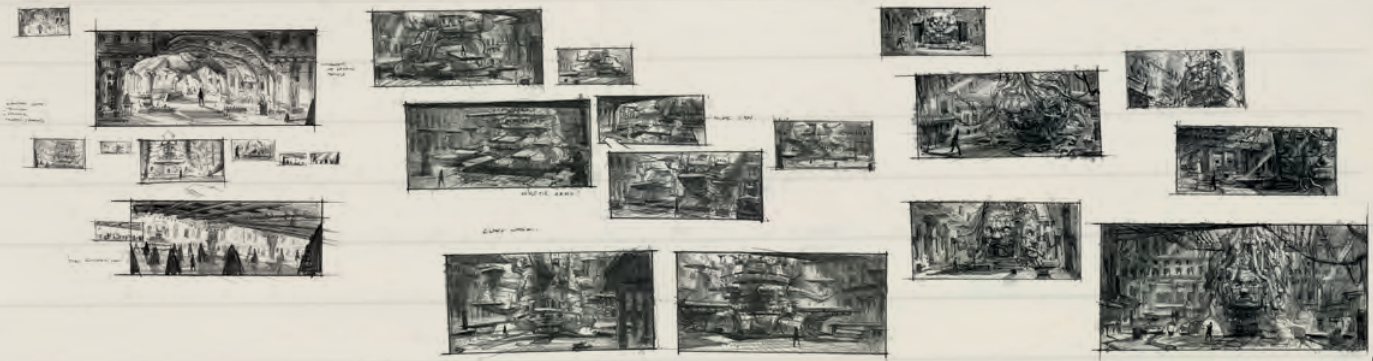
Fig.12 shows an exercise that was done for a class I was taking back at the Art Center College of Design. The goal was to establish a sense of basic composition and light in a small thumbnail based on a project of our own choice, so I decided to go with *Uncharted 3.* The challenging part of this task was to generate many thumbnails on the same theme, but still retain a different space in each and every one of them.

In **Fig.13** you can see an experimental sketch that I did. I gathered all the model kits I had and after a bit of "kit-bashing" I put all the parts together to build a mech in the proportion and stance I wanted. Then I painted over it in Photoshop.

INTERIOR - ENTRANCE OF THE VISHNU

DETAIL
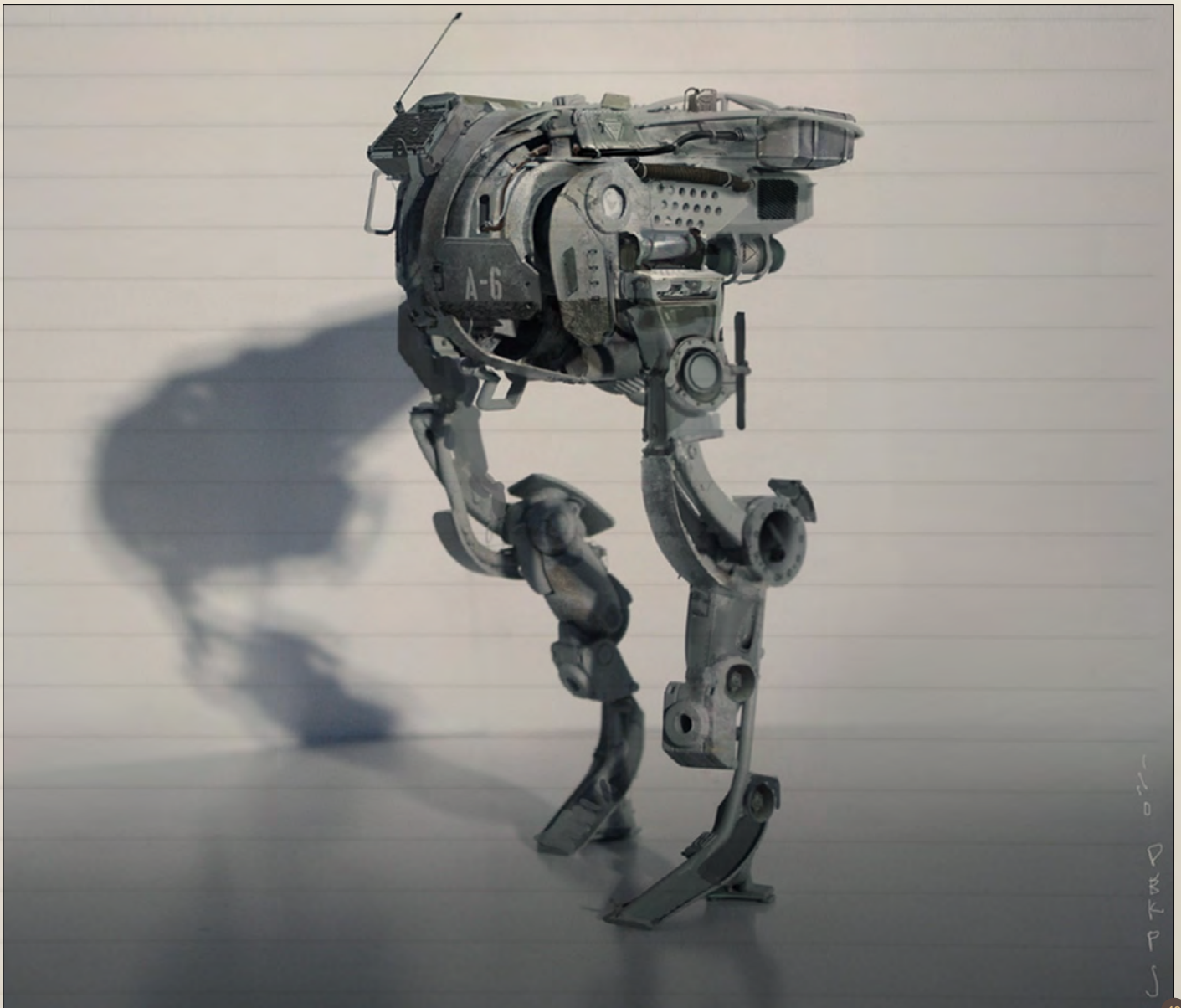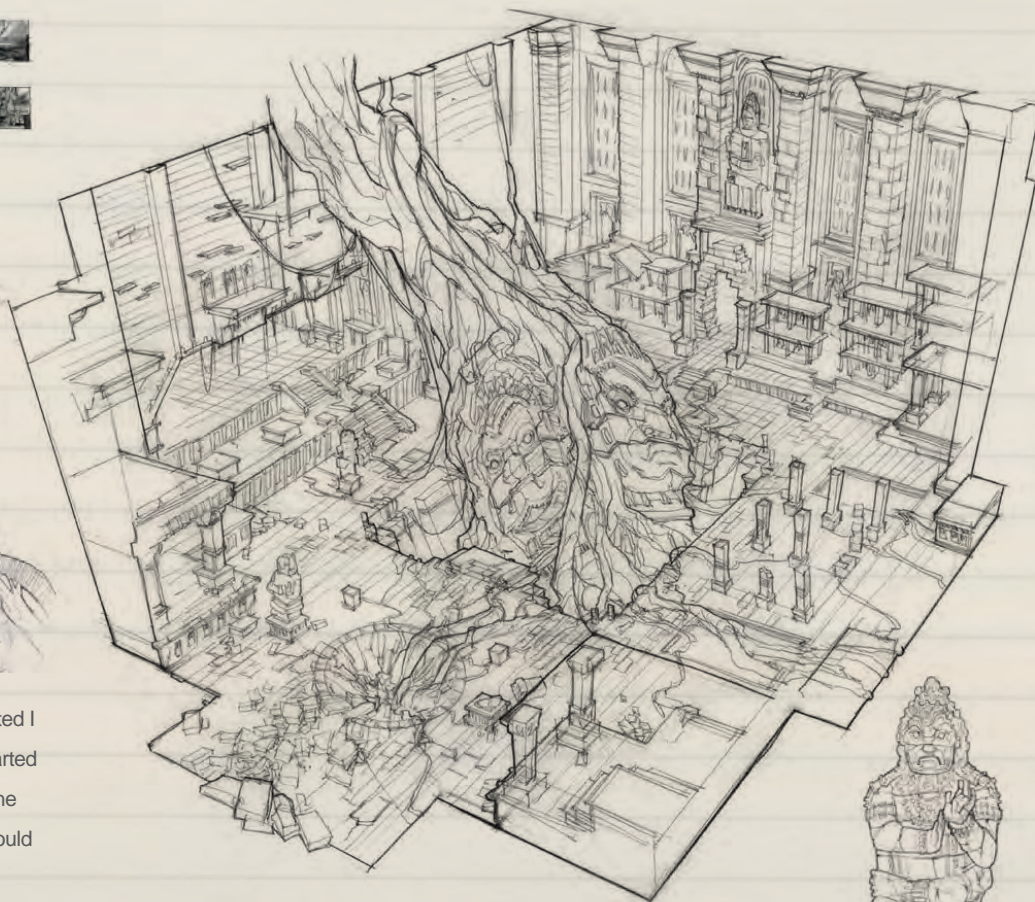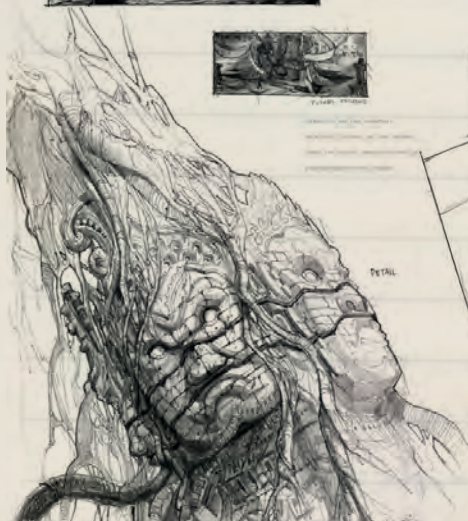
After establishing the composition that I wanted I then pulled in another sheet of paper and started laying out the design space, thinking about the different planes, structures and props that would exist in this environment (**Fig.14**).

Fig.15 is a refined line drawing of one of the thumbnails that I based my design space on.

STATUE DETAIL
OF THE VISHNU TEMPLE

14

INTERIOR - ENTERANCE OF THE VISHNU'S MIND
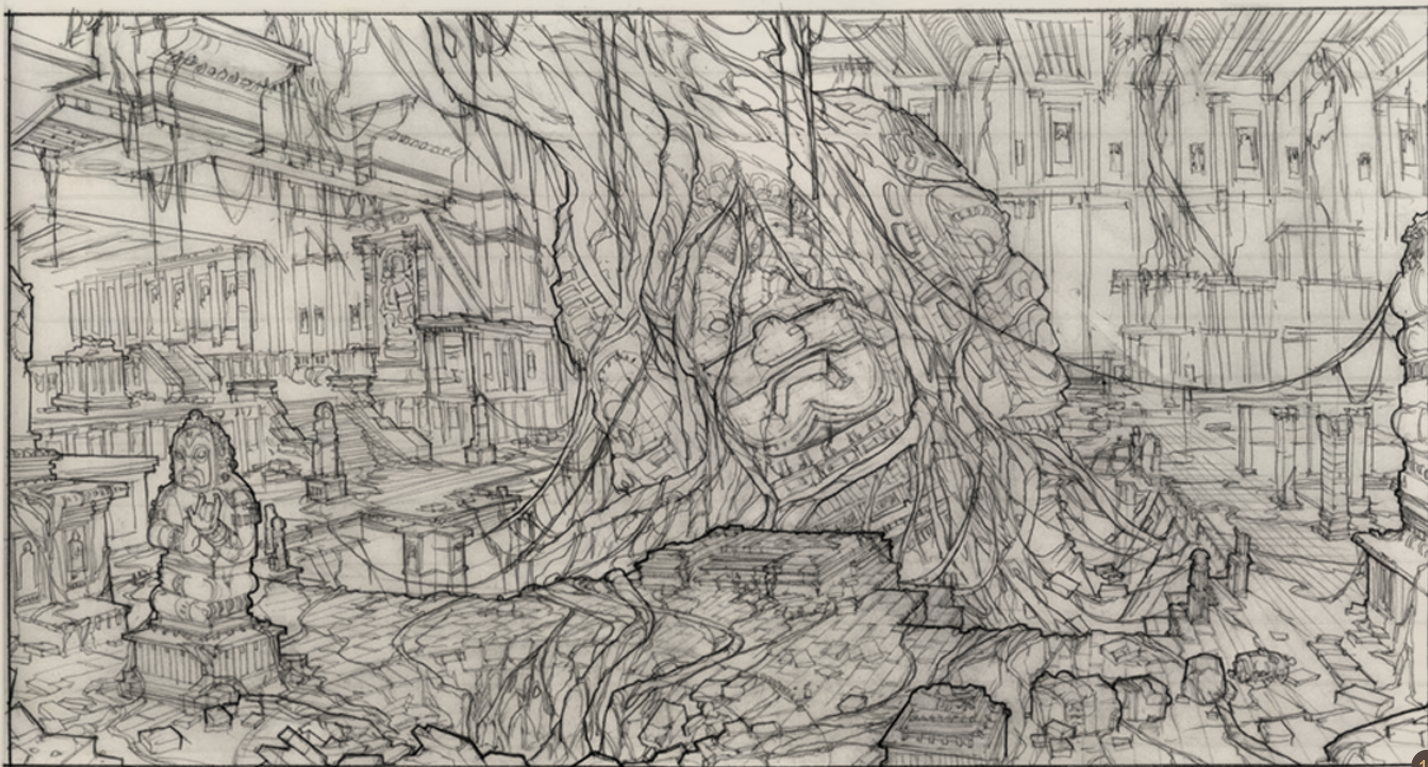
15

After drawing out all of the elements, I then went into Photoshop and established my lighting and mood for this space (**Fig.16**).

I've always been intrigued by photographs of various market places. Just imagining all those details and different pockets of things going always had a visual impact. After getting sucked into these photographs, I went back to my computer and had a go at a painting based on what I observed. The challenge was thinking about all of these various pockets of spaces within a space, and the cluster of materials and color that were interacting (**Fig.17 – 18**).

Fig.19 shows my image *The circus that once was.* Have you ever imagined what Disneyland would look like if it was shut down? In this painting I wanted to create a visual scenario where the festival-like environment has disappeared and what you are left with is an empty shell.

JOHN PARK

For more information please visit:
http://jparked.blogspot.com/
Or contact him at:
jpforjohnpark@aim.com

Left column:

- CLEMENT YIP — ANIMATOR
- JOZEF VAN EENBERGEN — PIPELINE DEVELOPER / PIPELINE DEVELOPER / PIPELINE DEVELOPER
- KRISTIN SEDORE — LIGHTING TD / SENIOR LIGHTER
- KEVIN MAH — EFFECTS TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
- TAMIR DIAB — LIGHTING TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
- PEDRAM DARAEIZADEH — DIGITAL PRODUCTION ADMINISTRATOR / VISUAL EFFECTS COORDINATOR
- WILL TOWLE — CAMERA TRACKER / CAMERA TRACKER
- SERGUEI KALENTCHOUK — RIGGING LEAD
- HENRY SOUTH — CG MODELER / CG MODELER / TEXTURING & MODELING
- CHUN-PING CHAO — DIGITAL COMPOSITOR
- HENRY PENG — MATCHMOVE TD
- HENRI TAN — CREATURE TECHNICAL DIRECTOR / CREATURE TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
- ABDULLAH ECIRLI — DIGITAL COMPOSITOR
- JELMER BOSKMA — CHARACTER MODELER
- SCOTT JONES — STEREO COMPOSITOR
- BEN DISHART — SENIOR TEXTURE ARTIST
- TEH-WEI YEH — DIGITAL ARTIST
- YUTA SHIMIZU — LIGHTING LEAD
- CHELSEA WHITTET — DIGITAL PRODUCTION ADMINISTRATOR
- KIERAN TETHER — DIGITAL ARTIST / DIGITAL ARTIST
- NUNO NISA PEREIRA — VISUAL EFFECTS TECHNICAL DIRECTOR / VISUAL EFFECTS TECHNICAL DIRECTOR / VISUAL EFFECTS TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
- BORAE CHO — PIPELINE TECHNICAL DIRECTOR / PIPELINE TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
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- REX FANG — ANIMATOR
- JOOYONG LEE — ROTO/PAINT ARTIST

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- HARRY POTTER & THE DEATHLY HALLOWS PART 2
- TRANSFORMERS: DARK OF THE MOON
- THOR
- PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: ON STRANGER TIDES
- X-MEN: FIRST CLASS
- RANGO
- TWILIGHT: BREAKING DAWN - PART 1

Right column:

- SOFUS GRAAE — VISUAL EFFECTS COORDINATOR / VISUAL EFFECTS COORDINATOR / VISUAL EFFECTS COORDINATOR
- JOSHUA HERRIG — LEAD LIGHTING ARTIST/LOOK DEV ARTIST
- MIKE RHONE — EFFECTS TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
- DAVID YABU — LEAD ANIMATOR
- DAPHNE DE JESUS — DIGITAL PAINT ARTIST / DIGITAL PAINT & ROTO ARTIST
- CESAR RODRIGUEZ BAUTISTA — DIGITAL PAINT ARTIST / STEREOSCOPIC PREP/ROTO ARTIST / STEREOSCOPIC PREP/ROTO ARTIST / DIGITAL PAINT ARTIST
- ANNA TONRUNGROJ — STEREOSCOPIC NUKE BACKGROUND PREP / ROTO & PAINT ARTIST
- JAMIE BOWERS — TEXTURE ARTIST / TEXTURE PAINTER
- KELSEY AYUKAWA — STEREO ROTO/PAINT ARTIST
- LOUIS COX — VISUAL EFFECTS ARTIST
- ANTHONY DI NINNO — PREVIS ARTIST
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- SAMSON WONG — INTEGRATION ARTIST / INTEGRATION ARTIST
- SARA HILMARSDOTTIR — MATCHMOVE ARTIST
- ADAM MARISETT — ANIMATOR
- DAANISH WAIN — COMPOSITOR
- BIREN VENKATRAMAN — LIGHTING AND ASSET TD
- STEPHEN KING — ANIMATOR / ANIMATOR
- MATT WEAVER — ANIMATOR / ANIMATOR

REA

Here at Atomhawk, we spend most of our waking hours lovingly crafting concept art for the world's leading entertainment companies. This in itself is a dream come true for all of us, but working as a professional concept art team in such a competitive world means that we've had to learn how to create, and then let go of that creation, as quickly as it came to us.

I think as an art studio it is easy to fall into being "art guns for hire" and that comes with a sense that we're letting go of our own ideas in return for glory in the commercial world.

The "Realm" project is, however, something different. This year we decided that to ensure we keep our creative wits extra sharp we would set ourselves an internal project of our own. We embarked on creating our first Atomhawk-

owned IP and this is a snapshot of our work so far, along with some insight into our decisions and influences.

Firstly I guess we should explain why we've done this. As an art studio, we are only ever as good as the client projects we work on and we've been very lucky to work on some great client projects. However IP creation has the chance to become something even bigger. It would be great one day to see one of our own creations come to life and the development of this project is our first attempt. Consider the work you see in this article as a teaser, a view into our work-in-progress that we hope fellow artists out there will enjoy.

Our key goal is to create an appealing universe for all ages that is not overly explained. We

weave in elements of a history, of a culture and of legend in the hope that it will inspire the viewer to invent their own theories on the back-story and so enjoy it all the more.

I'm not going to give away too much about the story just yet, but the core thread features an unusual hero: a brave young girl who must set out on a difficult quest to find a powerful object that can save her family and her village. Her journey is arduous, but on the way she makes an unexpected friend and together they manage to achieve what would have been impossible for our hero to do on her own. However, as we all know, quests like this are never simple and as the story unfolds it becomes apparent that not all is as it was told by the village elders.

The key art style influences are the epic scale and colorful rendering look seen in Miyazaki's films (less so the watercolor sketches in the art books) and Eastern video games like *Zelda* and *Ico*. The very pure beauty seen in Eastern artwork is here coupled with a more detailed western look, drawing influence from the works of Pixar and DreamWorks.

The world is set in the very distant future. A great event has happened to the world as we know it and society has returned to a tribal structure. Technology is just a myth for these people. Fairytales and folklore are as much a part of this world as TV and mobile phones are in ours, and the lines between science fiction, fantasy and good old-fashioned storytelling have blurred.

The setting is loosely based on old English and Scandinavian legend, mixed in with the epic landscapes of Northumbria, hence the Nordic/Saxon influence. We love those wandering, exploratory, lose-yourself-in-a-world experiences and hope we have created the beginnings of a world which, while we can still hold on to it as our own, will also resonate and grow in the imagination of others.

Dan Gilmore – For the logo I wanted to capture the sense that the modern world has returned to nature. Although it is a world that has seen lots of destruction, it's also very beautiful and the logo reflects that in its form.

Charlie Bowater – You might not be able to tell at this point, but the logo is mammoth! After our designer (Dan) came up with the logo design
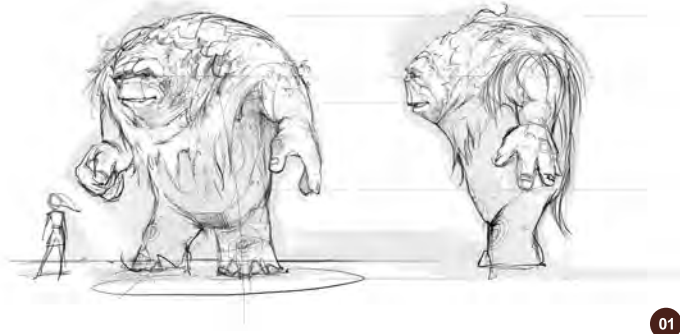
itself, it was my turn to take the logo to a much higher resolution and hand paint all of the details. It took a fair amount of time and effort, but it's really cool getting to see all of the moss, vines and flowers in such close up detail.

Cumron Ashtiani (Art Director) – I always think that a logo should be a teaser for the story or the product it represents, and I think Dan and Charlie did a great job on this. The font choice is classical, but the swooping line and the removal of the crossbar in the A and changes to the R and M give it a more contemporary look (see title image).

Roberto F Castro – This is a quick sketch made to explore the proportions of the giant. The face is located in the front of the body, not over the shoulders. It keeps some elements from previous sketches made by Pete, Charlie and Shaun (**Fig.01**).

Pete Thompson – This is the second round of exploration sketches for the giant. I was focusing on the way the golem would stand or what his posture would be in different circumstances. At this point he doesn't have a great deal of structure to the face, but the character emotion is getting there (**Fig.02**).

Charlie Bowater – These were my first sketches of the giant character. My initial thoughts were to have the landscape (rocks and plant life) as a part of his form. I wanted to give him a big and hulking appearance as a contrast to his very friendly vibe and curious nature (**Fig.03**).

Pete Thompson – These are very early designs of the "threat element". Our process at that time was quite free-form. We just came up with menacing creatures until something stuck. This is only one page of many different incarnations.

Cumron Ashtiani (Art Director) – This is one of many early representations of the "threat", when we envisaged them as being evil sprites rather than the more soulless "Lamp Heads". In the end these were deemed cool, but too expected and stereotypical (**Fig.04**).

Charlie Bowater – I took a slightly less detailed approach with the next round of sketches of our young female protagonist. As a group we started leaning towards the character on the far right, although she still needed a few more tweaks. She was looking a little too tall (and older) than she should have been at this point.

Cumron Ashtiani (Art Director) – Here are some early costume designs. The costume on the left was deemed too close to *Ico* and so the ones on the right were preferable (**Fig.05**).

Charlie Bowater – These were my first sketches of the young female character. I've always had a love of characters, so I was really excited to start working on her. Although as a group we decided that she was a little too detailed at this point, I really liked these as a starting point.

Cumron Ashtiani (Art Director) – Here are some of the early designs for the heroine. These girls were just a touch too young to be believable (**Fig.06**).

Charlie Bowater – Here is one of the frames from the animated trailer we've started working on. I particularly enjoyed working on this shot. It's a nice close-up shot of the girl. I loved working with the soft lighting and bounce lights (**Fig.07**).

I think as a group we were definitely close to deciding upon a final design for the main character at this point. It was really enjoyable to take the design we liked the most from the sketches and work that into color. I tried to give the painting a very bright and colorful feel. I also included a few sketches to show some more of her expressions and character.

Cumron Ashtiani (Art Director) – She's just beautiful; only Charlie could have created such a character (**Fig.08**).

Charlie Bowater – These sketches were part of an exploration into the style of the villagers that would inhabit the world of the Realm. At the point of drawing these my main focus was to explore the different types of clothing the villagers would wear, full of natural materials like skins, leather and fur, while still maintaining a sense of uniformity in the style (**Fig.09**).

Corlen Kruger – One idea for the "threat" was for it to be comprised of decay, so my idea came from a dead tree. If you look at a tree that has died it loses its leaves and color, and only the branches and roots remain, so that formed the bases of this creature. He is basically a combination of roots and branches, and they entangle dirt and debris. The debris was from our civilization now long forgotten.

To make the creature more interesting I added crows that constantly follow it and nest in its branches.

I was trying to create a non-uniform design so it would create more interest in its silhouette as because of its size it will mostly be in shadow.

Cumron Ashtiani (Art Director) – This design for the "threat" has some really interesting ideas. I love the organic and random secondary forms. My current thinking is to merge the messy, asymmetrical and bulky design elements from this one into the "Lamp Head" design (**Fig.10**).

09

Roberto F Castro – For the "threat", I wanted to create something unique and get away from traditional evil creatures. I decided on tall and scary giants without faces. They look for humans in the night using their "spotlight eyes".

Cumron Ashtiani (Art Director) – This is our current design for the "threat". This creature is the keeper of the precious object our heroine must take back to her village. I think this is getting close and I love the light replacing the face. We probably need another iteration of these guys to get them perfect. What I like about these is that they are faceless, without feeling. They are neither good nor evil. They just have a single purpose. We nicknamed these characters "Lamp Heads (**Fig.11**).

11

Pete Thompson – This was the very first finished shot from the animated trailer. It was also a way of establishing the look of the giant in action. He's only playing with the sheep, but in a later scene he gets severely told off by the girl for his antics (**Fig.12**).

Charlie Bowater – This was a fun little color exploration of the giant. Although we hadn't decided on his design at this point it was still great to throw a little color into the mix and start creating the very bright and colorful palette that the Realm has.

Cumron Ashtiani (Art Director) – I really loved this early version of the golem; it is more naive and full of character than some of the more realistic approaches, but then a friend of mine threw a spanner in the works. My friend suggested that our golem bears a close resemblance to the creature in *Majin and the Forsaken Kingdom*. I had a look and he was right; all I can say is that great minds think alike (**Fig.13**)!

Shaun Mooney – This image was my first attempt at working on the Realm, and the painting here looks quite different from the original. Once we saw the artwork side-by-side with other pieces I had to paint a lot of it again, as the original had a slightly more pronounced look to the brush strokes on the foliage, and the colors were way too saturated. Now the leaves and bushes have a softer, more painterly, look to them and the image looks better for it (**Fig.14**).

Charlie Bowater – This was one of my early environment explorations. I loved working on all the natural elements within this piece; the light reflections, shadows, overgrown moss and trees are contrasted by the rusted-over car and tires being hidden by the overgrowth (**Fig.15**).

Roberto F Castro – I painted over a photograph of Dean Street in Newcastle to create this painting. I think is important to show that the plants have grown everywhere after many years and their relation to the architecture. I like to create vegetation with a wide range of colors and not use only one tone greens for the foliage.

Cumron Ashtiani (Art Director) – Nature gone wild! Here is one hint to the backstory and that nature has not only reclaimed the world, but seems to be bigger and stronger than ever before. For anyone who knows Newcastle, you may recognize this as the view from the bottom of Dean Street (**Fig.16**).

Charlie Bowater – I loved working on the Sage environment! We had decided to have part of the story set in Newcastle, in a different time. Whilst it's not the main focus of the story, it's still really enjoyable to be able to recognize certain scenes and architecture. It's also really fun to paint them in a completely different light.

Cumron Ashtiani (Art Director) – One of our little nods to the North East, this building interior is actually based on the Sage in Gateshead, which is a very modern building. We wanted to show how nature would reclaim it (**Fig.17**).

Charlie Bowater – This started out as a rough little sketch of a possible design for the village, which I then took to color. I tried to convey a cozy and close-knit village, and also something that wouldn't look too out of place being nestled in the countryside.

Cumron Ashtiani (Art Director) – This was a different approach for the village, more akin to an actual ancient settlement rather than a re-invention like the others. This was part of the process of evolution that got us to the modern Nordic/Saxon look (**Fig.18**).

Roberto F Castro – For the village I was inspired by the backgrounds in Japanese animation films. I've tried to avoid blacks and whites, and use just bright colors instead. I think the color palette is one of the key issues in the Realm (**Fig.19**)".

Cumron Ashtiani (Art Director) – This was one of our key moment shots. It portrays the world and shows the influence Newcastle/Gateshead had on the design. It also shows our heroine and her unlikely friend and protector. He dotes on her and is incredibly gentle, although he's not to be messed with by anyone else.

Roberto F Castro – I've used a reduced color palette for this painting to create a sunset scene. I like the idea of Newcastle being like a huge swamp. After thousands of years the city is flooded and full of plants and trees. In spite of the fact that the characters are showing their backs, I have tried to paint an interesting pose. The giant is giving a flower to the girl and she tries to take it (**Fig.20**).

Roberto F Castro – As with other elements I have designed for this project, I wanted to design a unique architecture. It is a mix of English, Nordic and Japanese styles. They have well-built and sophisticated architecture, and at the same time the buildings are made with traditional and natural materials. The scene captures the idea of a busy market; colorful and dynamic in a sunny summer day.

Cumron Ashtiani (Art Director) – We wanted to make sure that the return to tribal life didn't also mean that all knowledge of technological times was lost. These people are intelligent and skillful; they just don't have computers. Their architecture is an evolution of modern building techniques, but using ancient materials. It's basically a modern take on the Nordic/Saxon style (**Fig.21**).

Roberto F Castro – In this speed painting, the girl and the giant have met in the forest. The girl in the backlight position is the important element in this scene. She is framed by the trees, the waterfall and the giant. It is a simple composition that works well for this intimate scene.

Cumron Ashtiani (Art Director) – I love this image; it is my favorite. This is the point where our heroine, who has enchanted an ancient golem, loses her purpose. At first she is terrified, but the golem is kind – he hasn't had a master for centuries and is inquisitive. I love the way the warm colors in her dress cut a contrast against the waterfall (**Fig.22**).

Atomhawk Design Studio

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http://www.atomhawk.com/
Or contact them at:
Info@atomhawk.com

The GALLERY

This month we feature

Gia Nguyen Hoang

Markus Lovadina

Prosenjit Mondal

Ioan Dumitrescu

Andreas Rocha

Alexey Egorov

Serge Birault

Juraj Molcak

Roarti

Journey to the End of the World

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(Right)

TAKE_FIVE…

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http://malosart.blogspot.com/

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Tree House
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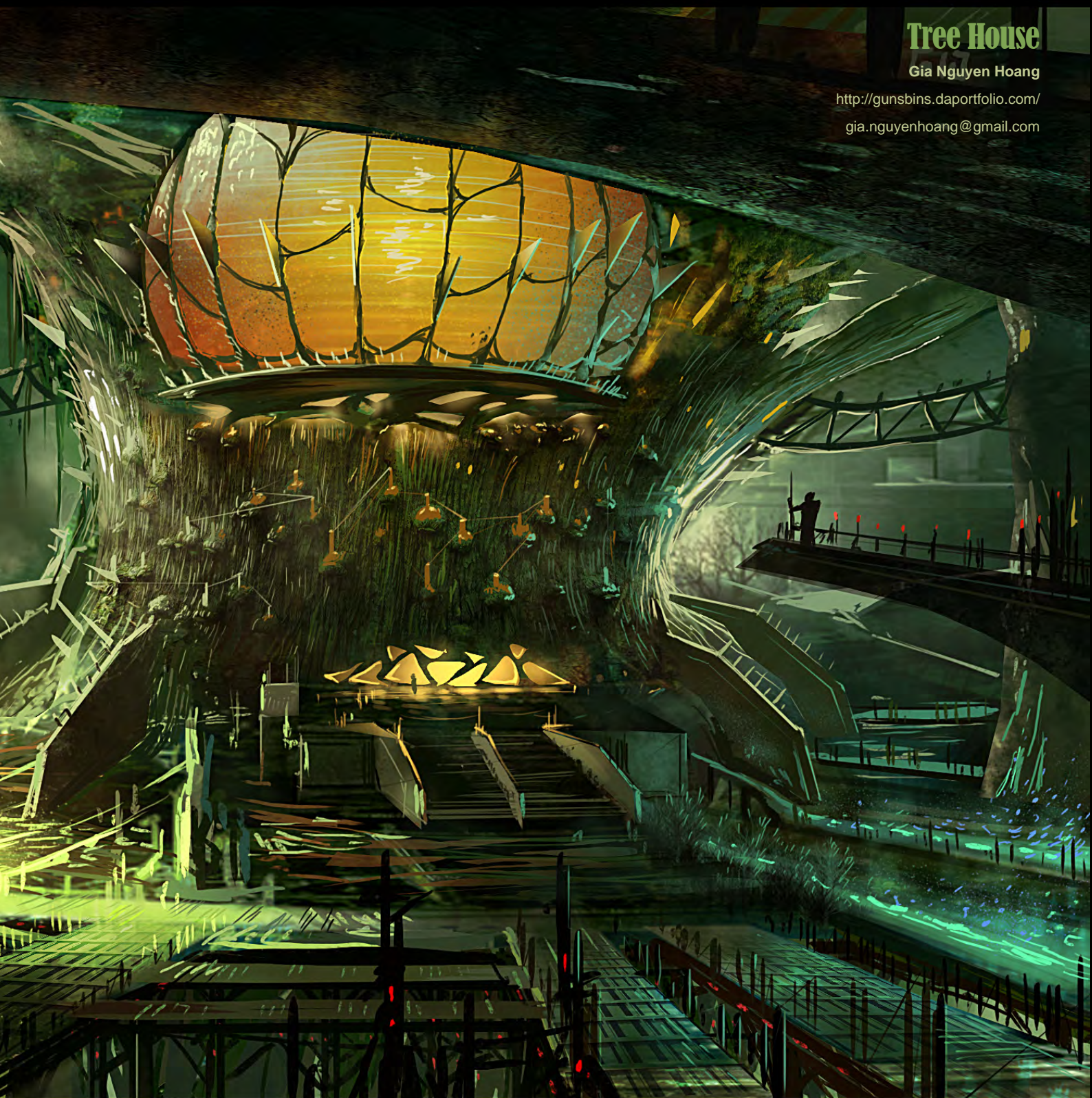
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Halloween Monster

Roarti

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THE RETURN OF THE BLOODTHIRSTY TOMATO FROM HELL

Tomato from Hell
Serge Birault
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Vue image by Kazuya Hashimoto (winner of the 3D Environment Competition 2011)

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Illustrating
Fairy Tales

Chapter 2 - Rapunzel

The ability to tell a story within your image is a real skill. There are so many things that need to be taken into consideration, the overall composition, what you do and don't put in the scene and how to portray the emotion of those in the scene. These are all things you must consider if you plan to lead the viewers gaze through the scene and make them understand the story behind it. In this series of tutorials illustration experts Simon Dominic Brewer and Blaz Porenta will be talking us through how to tell a story, using well known Fairy Tales which they will re-invent as the subject matter. This series could totally change the way you approach a digital painting.

Chapter 2: Rapunzel

Software Used: Corel Painter 12

Introduction

In this tutorial I'll be illustrating a scene from the well-known fairy tale: *Rapunzel*. Like most fairy tales *Rapunzel* has been retold in several variants over the decades. In one version the old enchantress is replaced by an ogress and in another the prince gets up to some really quite un-princely behavior in the tower. For this illustration however, I'll be depicting the scene where the prince finds out how to scale the tower in which Rapunzel is imprisoned. For many an evening since he first discovered the tower he's secretly listened to Rapunzel singing and this particular evening he happens to catch the old woman paying her a visit. He hides in the bushes and watches as Rapunzel wraps her hair around a hook on the window ledge, then lowers her braid so that the old woman can climb up.

Color Scheme

First I set up my color scheme. I want the atmosphere to be bleak, to convey the concept of imprisonment and isolation. I'm also thinking of a moonlit scene, so I've decided to use a very limited triadic complement of colors. This basically means three colors that roughly
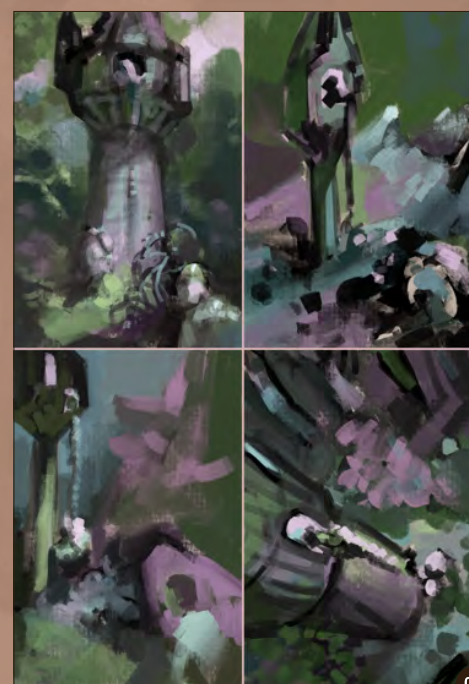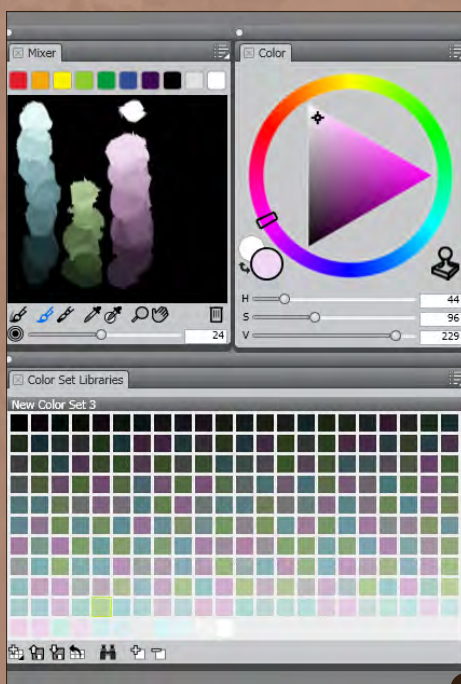
form an equatorial triangle on the color wheel. I choose cyan, purple and a yellow-green. For each of the three colors I dab a range of values from dark to light onto the Mixer palette. When I'm done I choose the Create Color Set From Mixer option, which gives me a set of 256 swatches in the Color Set palette. I delete some of these so I'm left with a representative sample of a manageable size. For the rest of the painting process I will mostly work from the Color Set palette (**Fig.01**).

Concept Thumbs

Very quickly I paint some small, rough concept thumbnails. These thumbs aren't meant to show detail, but they should give a general idea of the composition and value distribution (where the lights and darks will appear). I decide to go with the layout depicting the larger, central tower with the prince kneeling in the corner (**Fig.02**).

Rough Sketch

I create a small canvas at 700 x 967 pixels, which represents the same aspect ratio as my final image will be. This will serve as a base for my rough sketch and rough color work. When it comes time to add the details I'll resize up to my working dimensions. Sometimes when the subject matter is complex or you're working for

a client with a strict specification, it's a good idea to spend time on a detailed sketch. In this instance, however, a quick value study is all that's needed.

Although there's still no detail at this stage I scribble in my main elements: the tower, Rapunzel at the window, the enchantress and the prince. It's crucial to remember at all times that we're telling a story, so what's happening needs to be as clear as possible. The prince is secreted in the dark underbrush, suggesting he's watching proceedings whilst keeping a low profile. I position Rapunzel very close to the top of the canvas to give the impression that she's isolated in the tower, a long way from the ground and too far up to jump. By having the old woman at the bottom of the tower and over to the left I create a path from her to the prince, and then to Rapunzel. Later I'll enhance this path using tonal shading on the tower, in particular with Rapunzel's golden braid (**Fig.03**).

Adding Color

I add color to the whole image at an early stage in order to minimise surprises later on. Working directly onto the canvas I use an Artists Oils brush to dab on the paint, picking my colors from the Color Set panel. I don't pay much

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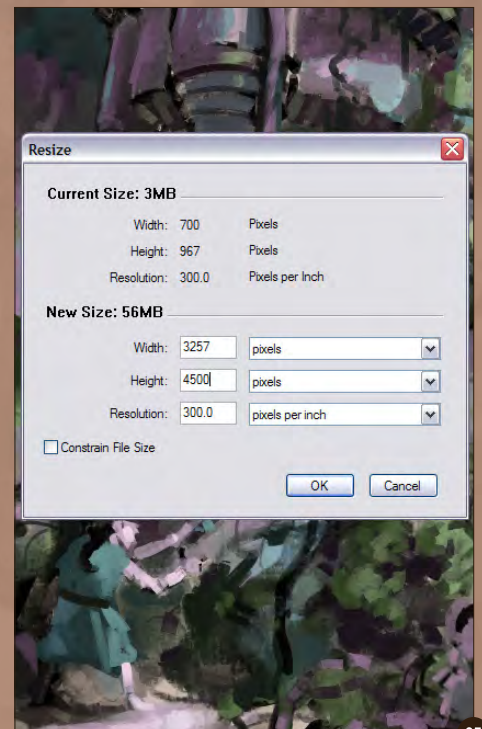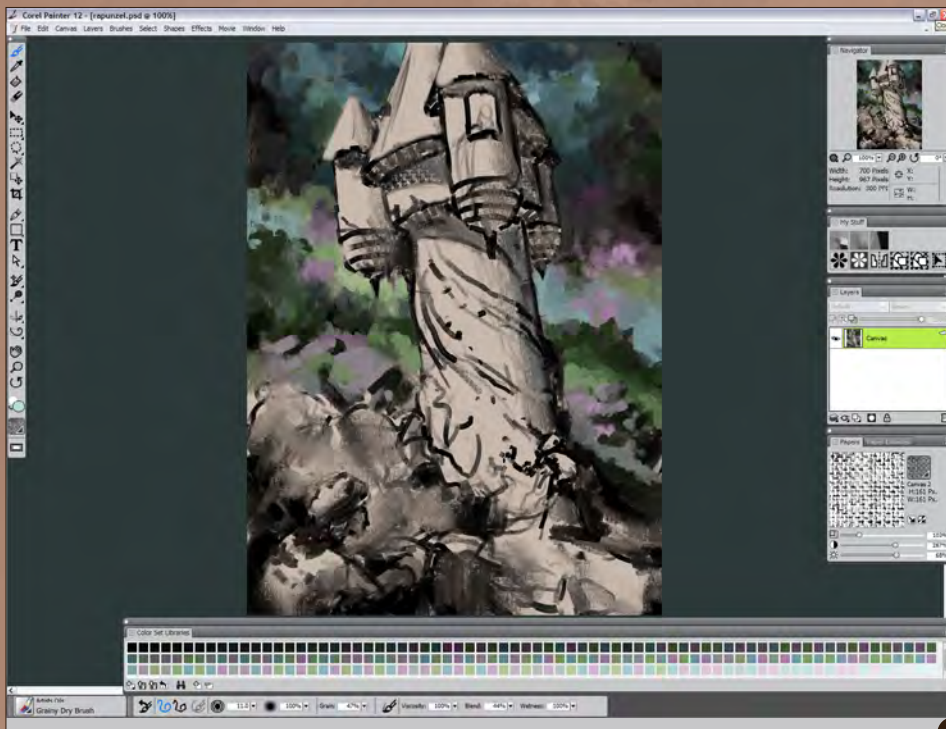
attention to the color's hue (e.g., green, purple) and instead concentrate on the value, ensuring that it broadly matches the value I put down in my rough sketch.

Of course, when painting generally it's often essential to pay close attention to hue and saturation as well as value, but value tends to make or break a picture and in this particular instance I'm emphasizing that theme to produce a very much value-oriented result. In other words, as long as your lights and darks are in the right place, your picture should work on a technical level.

If we were trying to accurately represent a scene lit by moonlight we would be working with far fewer hues and almost entirely in the low value range. However, as this is a fairy story we can allow ourselves some leeway. From this point on I will occasionally flip the image horizontally. This gives the eye a fresh perspective and helps identify problems early on (**Fig.04**).

Resize Up

The next step is to resize to my working size: 3257 x 4500 pixels. My working size is larger than the specified dimensions for the final image because it means I can add fine detail without resorting to unfeasibly small brushes (**Fig.05**).

Rough Detail

There's no right or wrong way to approach adding detail in terms of which part to do first. Sometimes I start with the main character and sometimes I'll flit at random from one part of the image to another. This time I'm going to work from the top of the image down, just for variation.

I zoom in to 50% and with a 20-30 pixel Artists Oils brush, start blocking in the detail. At every stage we must bear in mind the story we're

telling without losing sight of the technical aspect as both go hand in hand. Here I'm depicting the tower as old and decrepit, not quite derelict but certainly in need of some TLC. A few cracks in the brickwork combined with creeping tendrils of vegetation do the trick. I pick frequently from the Color Set palette, concentrating on value as I mentioned earlier. This gives the brickwork a pleasingly mottled effect, thereby communicating age and weathering (**Fig.06**).

Making the Tower "Pop"

The tower is comprised of the same basic hues as the sky so we need to use value to distinguish them – to make the tower "pop". I do this by applying deep darks to the tower's shadow and bright highlights on the moon-lit side.

The sky, by contrast, is composed of a narrower value range spanning medium darks to medium lights. What I also do is juxtapose light and dark areas of tower and sky, so that on the upper left I balance the shadowed edge of the far spire with an area of light sky, and on the right I do the reverse. One useful tip to painting shadows is to try and dab a little reflected light into the

shadow areas. This helps give the impression of added solidity. Here, I add a little reflected light onto the shadowed areas of the tower, balancing them as required with deeper darks (**Fig.07**).

Rapunzel

To paint Rapunzel I zoom in 100% and reduce the size of my Artists Oils brush to around 7 pixels. The fact that our primary light source is located above and to the right causes a small problem when rendering Rapunzel, as strict adherence to our lighting model would mean that most of her face and torso would be in shadow. The solution to this is simple: I cheat and paint her face with an up-lighting effect so as to better emphasise the form of her face and hair.

I frequently stress the importance of consistent lighting throughout an image and for good reason, but on occasion it's perfectly acceptable and even desirable to cheat a little, as long as the affected area is not too extensive. This might take the form of an enhanced intensity of reflected light, an ad-hoc increase of value in a localized shadow area (maybe accompanied by a hue change) or a spotlight effect as seen here. The ultimate test of course is: "does it look good?" If it does, it's OK. If not, you need to paint over it and try again.

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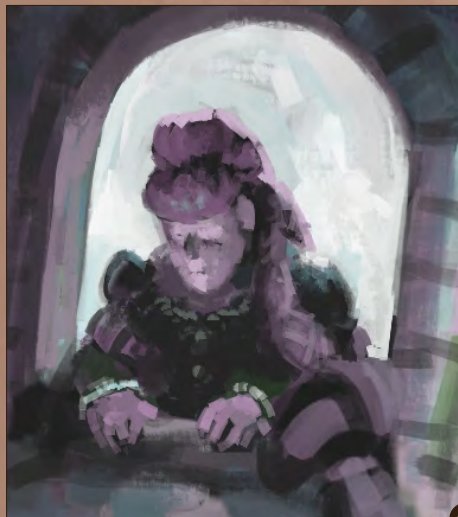
As far as Rapunzel herself goes, I've left her expression neutral and largely undefined, for two reasons. Firstly, in the final image she will appear quite small and a detailed facial expression would either be lost or appear too fussy or contrived. Secondly, and more importantly, the story does not call for any overt expression of emotion for her in this situation. Rapunzel is resigned to her captivity and whilst she's likely in a glum mood there's no requirement for her to be shouting or crying or laughing or expressing any other emotion that would be obvious on such a small character (**Fig.08**).

Stonework

The tower is an ancient edifice constructed from roughly-hewn stone. The best way to

show this is to "suggest" the stonework rather than explicitly paint each block as if it's a 3D render. In some areas I paint the staggered pattern reminiscent of stone buildings, yet other areas I leave bare, textured only by the color variations. Not only does this help to avoid an overpowering texture effect, it gives the impression of age and the viewer can imagine the tower being worn down by the elements over many years (**Fig.09**).

Vegetation

In order to make the creeping vines stand out I color them mainly green, with a bit of blue thrown in for the shadows. I stress the age of the tower by scribbling in some grimy streaks running down the stone from beneath the roof tiles (**Fig.10**).
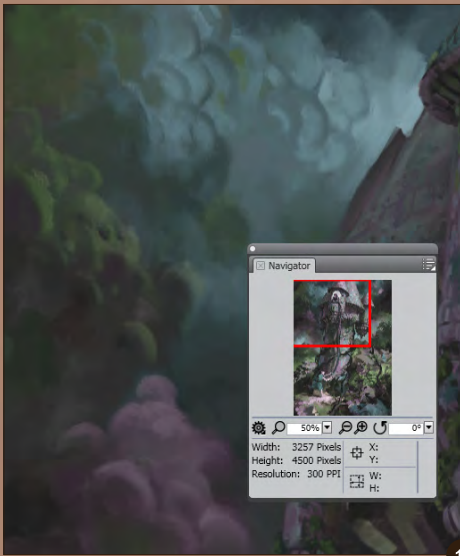
Stormy Clouds

I've already painted the rough outline of my clouds and now comes the time to smooth them a bit. For this I use a duplicate of my Artists Oils painting brush, except I set the Amount of paint to 0 and reduce Blend a little. When combined with the paper texture this creates a nice, textured transition. A good rule for blending is to not go too far. Exactly what constitutes "too far" comes with experience, but a guideline is that if two colors differ a great deal in hue or value then leave them un-blended.

So here, I blend the cloud bodies but leave the contrasting colors of the edges (the billows) relatively sharp, with maybe just a dab here and there to soften some rough edges. This method of selective blending ensures you don't get the dreaded digital painting effect where everything is smoothed to within an inch of its life and one object blurs into the next (**Fig.11**).

Remove Hard Edges

Sometimes the Artists Oils brush creates hard-edged strokes that appear discordant with a painterly image. To fix this problem I use my Artists Oils blending brush and tease the sharp edges. In **Fig.12** you can see I have smoothed the edges of the mountains a little more than the foreground elements in order to give the image more depth and to help ensure the background doesn't overpower the foreground.
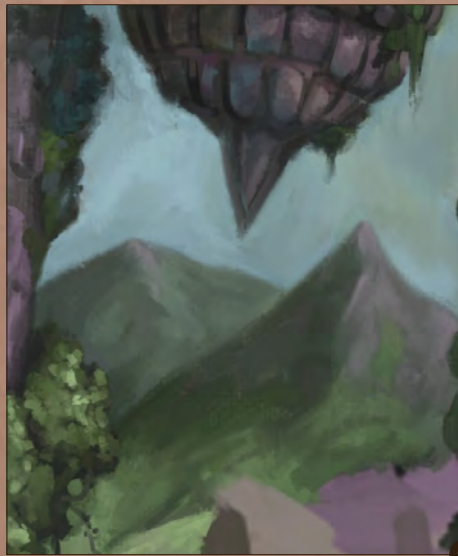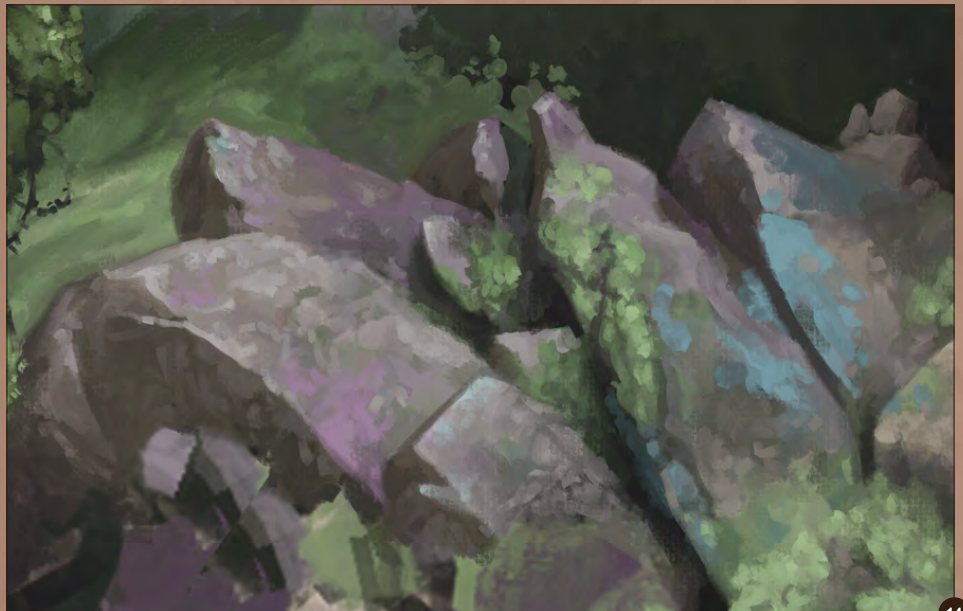
Painting Vegetation

To help enhance the feeling of depth I include some bushes in the middle distance. For foliage that is some way from the viewer it's often not desirable to try and render each leaf and each branch. The way I've painted these bushes is to first block in a general, dark shape using a larger brush and then, with a smaller brush, paint negative space into the dark foliage shape. This gives the impression that the sky is showing through clumps of leaves and branches. I color pick regularly from the juxtaposed areas of sky on the canvas to achieve the effect of the sky continuing behind the bush (**Fig.13**).

Rocks Needn't be Boring

In order to demonstrate the remote location of the tower I include some jagged rocks in amongst the bushes and weeds. It's easy, if you're not careful, to allow your rocks to appear boring and lifeless. To counter this I balance the desaturated colors of the rock with splashes of higher contrast hues, such as blue and purple. I add some moss and creeping vegetation so the rocks don't appear too sterile and I also vary the shape of each rock so that no two appear identical (**Fig.14**).

Don't Forget Your Story

If you bear in mind the tale you want to tell you'll find that even relatively late on in the process

you can make subtle tweaks to communicate the back story to your viewer. In this case I the brush strokes in the lower left resemble a little path. Being that any tower would normally have some sort of access route I decide to embellish this area with edging stones and a couple of flat stone slabs (**Fig.15**).

Leaning Tower

During the painting process I sometimes zoom out and flip the image horizontally to get an idea of how the whole thing is progressing. What I've just noticed is that the tower is leaning too far to the right, even accounting for the slightly skewed camera angle. To be truthful I should have spotted this earlier but still, it's no big deal.

One option to correct this is to use the Transform tool to rotate the canvas to the left, then use Edit > Transform > Commit Transform to retain the transformation. The problem with this is that the default canvas color will be visible along some of the edges. So what I do is to select the entire image using Ctrl/Cmd + A, copy it (Ctrl/Cmd + C) and paste it (Ctrl/Cmd + V) as a new layer. I remove the selection with Ctrl/Cmd + D and use the Transform tool to rotate the layer and then commit it. Lastly, I drop the layer to the canvas. This has the advantage that the original image shows through at the edges, making it much easier to blend the changes in (**Fig.16**).

Old Woman

I depict the old woman as ugly and vaguely hunched because whilst she is clearly not a very likeable character (having imprisoned Rapunzel in the tower in the first place), she doesn't come across as being actively evil. An old crone with blood dripping from her fangs would have been fun to draw, but would have been overkill for this particular story (**Fig.17**).

Focusing on Key Elements

Central to the Rapunzel story is her long, braided hair. It could be argued that Rapunzel's hair plays more of a role in the story that any
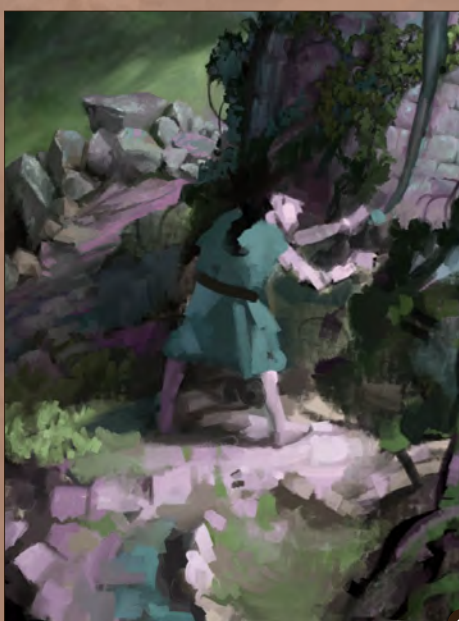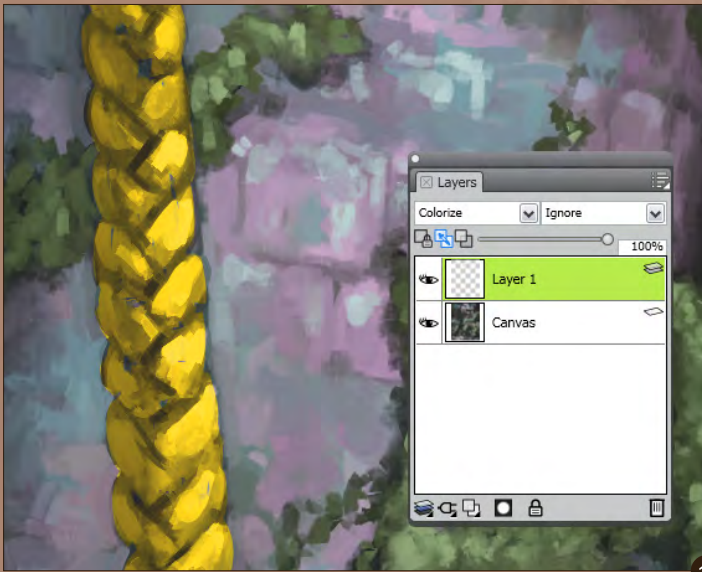

other character, herself included, because take away the hair and you take away the element around which the whole tale revolves. For this reason I decide to indulge in a bit of

experimental artwork (experimental for me, anyway) and highlight Rapunzel's hair braid in vibrant corn-yellow. I could do this by repainting the whole thing, but I don't fancy dealing with all

those braids again so I create a Colorize layer and paint onto that. When I'm finished I set the layer opacity to around 75%, otherwise it would be too garish, and drop it to the canvas (**Fig.18**).

The Prince

We have a bit of a dilemma here. On one hand, the prince is a very important character in the story, yet on the other he's hiding in the shadows. In other words, if we draw too much attention to him it will work against the premise of secrecy, but if we understate him excessively he'll be lost in the foliage and the viewer won't see him.

I deal with this by firstly painting his clothes in distinct yet not overly bright colors. I add a little trim to his jacket and princely headgear whilst ensuring there's nothing too flashy to immediately draw the eye. In terms of lighting I again emphasize the reflected light from the scene to define his features. Because he's in the shadows our main light source does not affect him directly, so we don't have any sharp light/dark transitions to grab attention (**Fig.19**).

Final Details

When I'm happy and the image is almost done I check it at 100% zoom and add some tighter
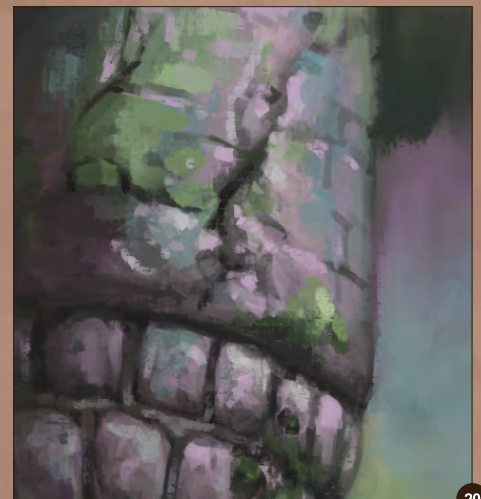
detail where appropriate. For example, I use a small brush to accentuate the cracks in the stonework and the mortar in between individual blocks (**Fig.20 – 21**).

AOB

The final step is my Any Other Business stage. I leave the image for a couple of days then come back to it and see if anything leaps out as needing to be changed or finalized. I'm happy with the detail, but now I come to think of it, the enchantress is looking too much like a tramp. Therefore I give her a fetching witch's hat to make sure the viewer knows who she is. I add a few more details too, such as a moon peeking out from behind the clouds and three crows flying off to roost. I resize the image down to my final dimensions (2480 x 3425 pixels), increase the contrast a touch and call it done.

03

DESIGNING YOUR OWN WORLD

Almost every artist gets to a point when they decide that they want to start a new and unique project that they have total creative control of. When you get to this point it can be hard to decide what exactly it is that you would like to do. How do you come up with ideas? And how do you develop them and make them interesting? In this series David Smit, with the help of Nadia Karroue, will be showing us how to create an idea and turn it into a unique and interesting project. This series will be concentrating on David's visually stunning self-made world called the Hippie-Pippie-Pocalypse and will have something for everyone, from idea generation techniques to design and painting advice.

Chapter 4 - Illustrations

Software Used: Photoshop

Welcome back to yet another article about the HippiePippiePocalypse! In case you're a first time reader, you have stumbled upon the 4th in a series of six articles about the HippiePippiePocalyse. A science fiction world (and at some point a comic book) in which hippies inhabit alien planets and make road trips in space vans. But whether you are unfamiliar with this space hippie concept or not, this article will cover the illustrations we've made for this project.

Some of the earlier illustrations started out as just random thoughts, but then had an inspirational effect on the world and sometimes even the story. Other illustrations that came later had very coherent concepts from the beginning, because we already had all the information we needed for them.

A Girl and Her Van

Sometimes a painting just happens. It's like pressure building up inside your body without you knowing it until it becomes too much and you let it out in the most horrible way you can. Well I guess it was sort of like this with the Girl and her Van painting (**Fig.01**). This is the very first HippiePippiePocalypse related painting that was made. There was no story and the idea for it was still very vague. I think the key words I searched were something like, long haired surfer girls with hot pants, roller skates and Volkswagen T1 inspired motor homes. It was just David back then doing the paintings, and the decision to make this into a comic hadn't been made yet.

But this painting had an interesting effect on our imagination. The clothing line that you see in the painting was added at the end. But it completely changed the painting from a girl sitting on a large vehicle, to a girl sitting on her motor home, waiting for her clothes to dry while taking in the scenery (**Fig.02**).

That thought really triggered something. What if you can have the freedom and adventure of a nomadic lifestyle, but with the comfort of always having a place of your own to retreat to. Your own bed, your own work space, your books, everywhere you go. It gave us a sort of longing that I think we always had, but didn't realize we did because it didn't really seem like an option. I think it's safe to say that the rest of the development of the hippie universe was heavily powered by that longing. The more we worked on it, the more we could see how it could work, and the more we longed to live in a society like that… sigh.

We then also realized that those details like the clothing line, were key to showing how the hippies lived. They showed the concept as no single design could. All those little paintings on the vehicles, random objects dangling from the windows, door bells, curtains, they all add to the feeling that someone is really living and making their home in that vehicle.

Dingo Walking

Fig.03 was made much later in the development time ladder, so I guess we're not doing this in a chronological order (do we ever?). By then we already had a couple ideas for stories and

characters. They were by no means final, but this painting did seem to finalize parts of the design we thought really worked. So this painting had a huge effect on the characters and also a bit of an effect on the story.

A character similar to the guy you see in this painting had been showing up in sketches and paintings quite early on in the process (**Fig.04**). We didn't really know much about him except that he seems like a goofy guy and he probably

loves food. David had also already named all those other guys in the sketches who looked like him; Dingo. So when this guy happened (yup, another one of those "oops not sure what just happened, but it did!"), we somehow knew that this was Dingo too, probably because he has the same face. This Dingo had an advantage over the other Dingo's. This one had a little robot with him to better show off his personality. And once again the robot just happened while painting.

We knew we wanted robots in the story because zombies are just so incredibly main stream these days. Robots and animals are an easy way of adding comic relief to a story, and we're lazy people.

The Robot (who was mysteriously named Gippy for no good reason) is a Navigation-Bot. Even though he always somehow knows the way, he's rarely taken seriously. He's tiny and depends on anyone with legs for mobility and has illusions of grandeur. You'll often find him yelling with his tiny cute robotic voice that all humans are his slaves and they ought to obey him because he knows "the Way" and they do not! The idea of a little immobile robot that thinks he's the master of all humans, but needs those same humans to lift him from place to place just made us chuckle. We could totally imagine him yelling at humans 30 times his size to set him down on a high shelf so he can keep an eye on his minions. And then those same minions just leave the room because he's so tiny, they just forgot he was there. It was just too rich.

So this one painting helped us finalize the design of a character we were already toying with. But it also inspired a new character from scratch. The scenes we could imagine with these too were endless! And they kept making us chuckle. Dingo and Gippy were keepers.

Misanscene

Fig.05 was a direct result of visiting GOA-festivals where the hippie spirit is as alive as it has ever been. People having mini parties, playing music together, the caravan parks looked like little villages. Fashion also added to this amazing festival vibe, but really the word 'festival' is an understatement.

One of the things that we think makes these festivals so different from others, is the presence of children and elderly people. For some reason it seems that if you have a large group of people who are of the same age celebrating something, it's just a party. When you add some children and older people, well… it seems to become something else. Like a culture, or a tradition… a happening maybe? I don't know. But it definitely exceeds the 'party' label. In hindsight we should have had more children, old people and dogs in the painting. That's something we'll definitely try to do better in the next one (**Fig.06**).

Another important detail about the festival you see on the painting, is that it happens everywhere. It does not limit itself to stages and organized activities. People park their caravans, buses, and motor homes, and build little communities all around. You can have a full festival experience without ever visiting a stage. That's what's going on in this painting. It's not the actual festival, it's just one of the many parties within the party!

The people in the painting are mostly wearing comfortable clothes. Of course eccentric costumes can be worn as well, but comfortable is the standard. It's a big difference to the fancy 'stiletto heels and freshly shaved everything' you see in night clubs that we are accustomed to in this day and age. We're not saying that one is better than the other, but I guess it's our privilege to show in pictures what we prefer!

In the end this painting didn't have much influence on the story we were writing, but it did however make it easier to imagine what a space hippie festival could be like. It also has an early version of the character Dingo in it, can you tell? But what it mostly did was visualize what we had come up with at that time, and gave us something to build more concepts on.

A Lonesome Scientist

I'm guessing you already noticed there's a big difference between **Fig.07** and the other paintings. There is of course the obvious visual style difference; the others were paintings and this is a more comic style illustration with line art and cell shading. But this illustration is much more specific. The reason for that is that this illustration didn't just happen. It was planned (F**ig.08**).

This character (named DeeDee) is part of the comic book project. And for the comic we decided to work on a style we could both recreate and get consistent results with. That doesn't mean that all art related to the comic from now on will be in line art and cell shading, but since we're both pretty new to this, we thought a bit of practice couldn't hurt.

This illustration is very specific as direct result of already having all the info about the character we needed. We know what she's like, what she does, what she looks like. We just wanted to make an illustration to show her off!

After doing some thumbnail sketches of several different scenes, we decided to go for a

simple pose in the style of Norman Rockwell's painting 'Rosie'. It suited us best to show off the character's casual way of going about her science business.

So the Lesson of Today is…

These illustrations are great fun to and can be really helpful when getting a clearer idea about the world you're building. They can also be a medium through which you show off what you've already come up with.

Sometimes we set rules and limit ourselves for the sake of consistency. And sometimes we go wild and allow ourselves to explore ideas without setting limitations at all. Amazing accidents can happen during those explorations that turn out to be very useful sometimes! We want to learn to stay on topic and not waste too much time painting pictures that barely add

anything to what we're trying to do. Yet we have to be careful this whole thing doesn't turn into a tedious chore. It's incredibly easy to fall into this attitude in when you're slaving yourself for the sake of productivity.

In the next article about the HippiePippiePocalypse, we're finally going to talk about how the story spawned from all these little ideas we had about space hippies.

David Smit and Nadia Karroue

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Image By Tuomas Korpi

SCI-FI VEHICLES

CREATIVE CONCEPTS USING GOOGLE SKETCHUP

To many 2D artists using 3D in your pipeline will seem very alien. However in certain situations it can provide you with the help you need to create quick and accurate concepts. 3D can be used as a base in many forms of 2D art, but it is never more useful than when creating illustrations of non-organic structures and vehicles. In this series our artists will be showing us how to use Google's free modeling software SketchUp to create a base for our Digital Paintings of a Vehicle. If this is something you have never tried before it could open your eyes to new and exciting possibilities.

November Issue 071 Chapter 01 | All-Terrain Vehicle

This Issue **Chapter 02 | Drop Ship**

Next Issue Chapter 03 | Submarine

Download
Introduction to
Google SketchUp

Chapter 02: Drop Ship

Software Used: Google SketchUp and Photoshop

Introduction

As you know, there are plenty of tutorials available these days that teach us about painting techniques in Photoshop and modeling, texturing and rendering techniques in a variety of softwares. The different pieces of software are like different tools in your toolbox. The better you handle them, the easier and maybe even faster you can develop your images. Instead of just talking about how to use these tools, I'd like to take this opportunity to share my thoughts and techniques about how I usually approach these design topics and how I try to develop my way of thinking.

When I have a subject for an illustration I usually think about how to achieve the goal in the best possible way. This basically means that I try to decide how the subject should be represented and what the point of the image is. Now when I think about this particular subject, a drop ship, I have to decide what is necessary in the design, and I do this using moodboards. They can be as simple as just a bunch of ideas in my mind or they can be a couple of reference images. It really depends on the subject and if I am designing something for myself, someone else, or a larger group of people. I like to think of a moodboard as an embodiment of ideas, thoughts, goals and features that I want to achieve in my design.

I usually have the final composition in my mind when I start to develop an image. At first I concentrate on the things that I think are the most important. In this particular case I was thinking about the fact that a drop ship needs to have a drawbridge, a doorway or some kind of ramp that can be used to load and unload vehicles and other things. The ramp is like the center of everything. It's a starting point for a design. I also have to concentrate on things like,
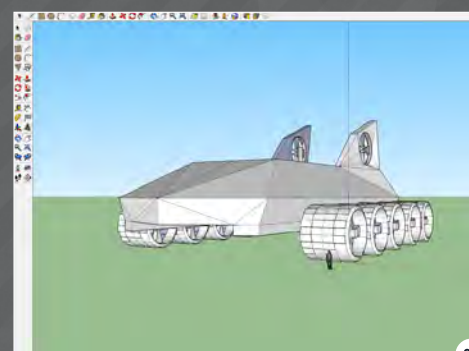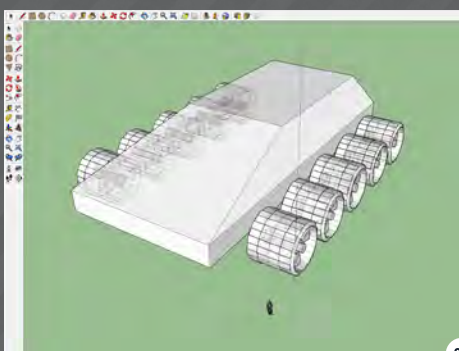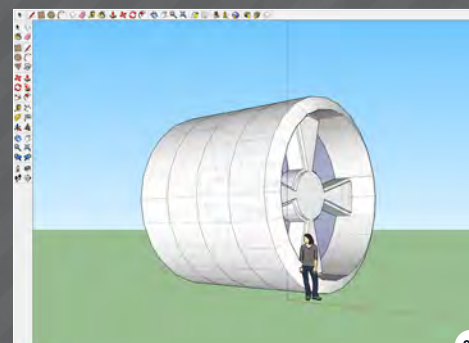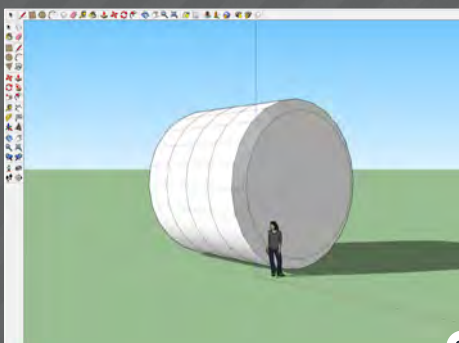
how would I like to show the drop ship? What kind of camera angle should I use? What about the cropping of the image? What other elements do I want to add in? And so on.

I could adjust the camera to be inside the drop ship, to show how the ramp works and how vehicles use it to get in and out. I could also select another camera angle to show how big the vehicle is or how it operates in air or on land. These are the decisions that define what kind of impression I want to create. In this case I was trying to tell as much as I could in a single image, so I ended up using a camera angle that shows a few harvesters coming back to the drop ship, along with a couple of men and a few more drop ships in the air. I also wanted to add glowing plants in the field to support the story about harvesters coming back to the ship with silos full of grain. These elements help achieve the wanted perspective, scale and depth.

Modeling

I usually start by figuring out how big the vehicle is going to be. In this case I chose to model the tires first because they are the closest big entity and can be compared to human scale. Also they are easy to adjust (**Fig.01**).

After choosing the scale I started blocking out the spokes, which I also designed to act like rotor blades. The blades are one of the key features of the drop ship so I wanted to make sure that the form is simple enough to be recognized (**Fig.02**).

After I had the basic shapes of the tires defined, I copied them a few times and made the first block of the body of the vehicle. Then I figured out how many of these tires I would need to have. The key point here was to create a basic setup that I thought would be believable. It means that I'm constantly trying to think of things like how big the wheels have to be to carry the body weight, what kind of wheels are needed, how they look and so on. I also try to think about aspects like where the center of the mass is to make sure the vehicle looks balanced. In this case I ended up copying the tires five times on both sides of the body (**Fig.03**).

Fig.04 – 06 show the final form of the drop ship. I started from a basic rectangular shape and used the Push & Pull tool to create the wanted shape. Because I designed the vehicle to operate both on land and in the air, I tried to
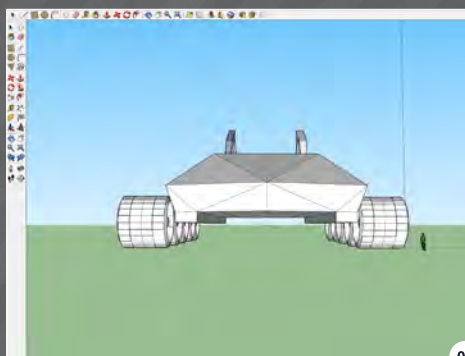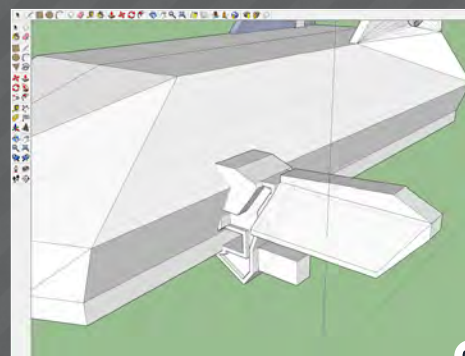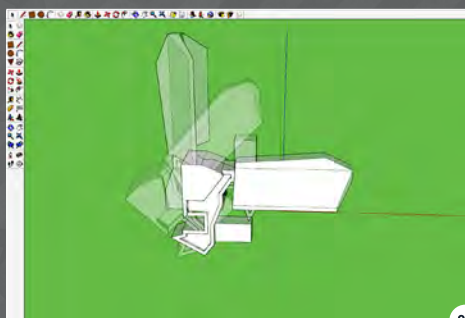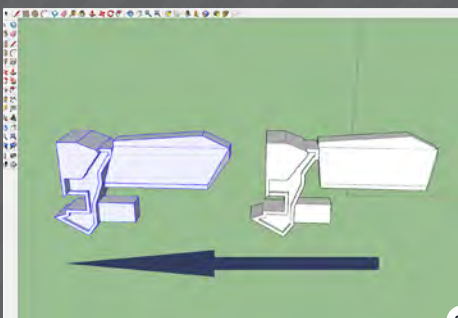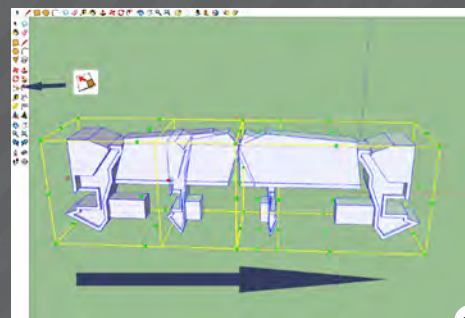
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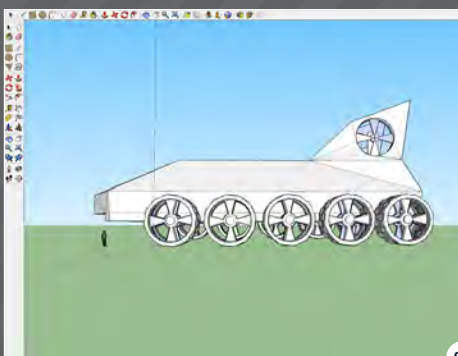
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achieve forms that would serve both of these purposes. Therefore I added a pair of small rotors to the rear of the vehicle.

After the body shape and the wheels were ready, I designed a mudguard that had a dual role in the design, because it functions as an engine or a transmission mechanism for the blades and for the wheels. I wanted it to be tiltable so the wheels/engines can be tilted like landing gear on a airplane. The form was made by defining a basic slice plane. After I had the wanted shape I used the Push & Pull tools to get the final forms (**Fig.07 – 08**).

When the shape of the mudguard was ready I copied the shape. Copying can be done by pressing the Ctrl key while dragging the object in the desired direction. Then you just place the copied object where you want it to be (**Fig.09**).

Another useful trick in SketchUp is to use the Scale tool for mirroring objects. First select the Scale tool and then select the element or the shape you want to mirror. When you have done this you have to select the direction (red, green and blue) you want to scale to (**Fig.10**). When scaling is active press 1 and then hit the Enter key to get an exact mirrored object.

Fig.11 shows the final model before the texturing step. After mirroring and copying the mudguards for each tire, I finalized the model by adding some details to the front side of the vehicle. I added a few silos at the top of the vehicle and modeled the ramp underneath the vehicle. At this point of an image I'm pretty sure of what kind of camera angle I'm going to use so I know how much detail I'm going to need and where I need to put it. Details can be added gradually if needed. For example, if I know that I'm going to illustrate some kind of vehicle in

motion, I don't want to put too much effort into details because they can not be seen in motion. Instead, if I want to concentrate on the vehicle itself, I might need to model more detail. The level of detail really depends on the purpose of the design.

The final step for the vehicle was a very basic texturing job. When I do these kinds of overpaint images, I usually try to get some basic colors and values by using certain textures. Even if I create something metallic, I might select some
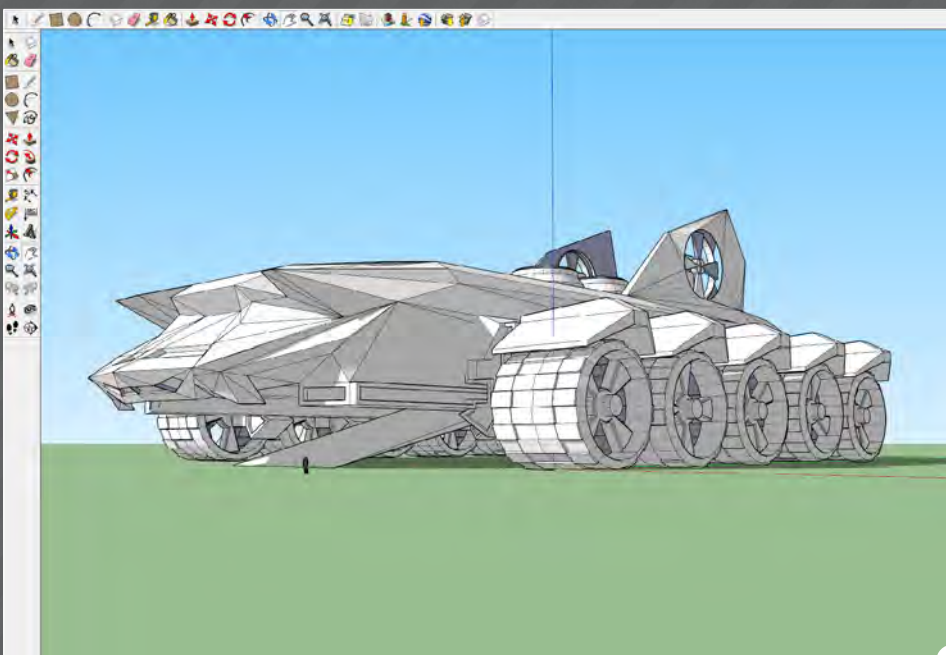
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sort of concrete textures that contain nice tones, colors and details. The basic texturing helps me to get a simple base where I can start the overpaint process (**Fig.12**).

Fig.13 shows the vehicle in the air and shows the functionality of the wheels/rotor blades while it is off the ground. Also the ramp has been closed.

After finishing the main model I developed a harvester unit, which has a dual role in the design and overall composition. I used the same wheels from the drop ship. The harvesters and details in them help to unify the image's elements. I can also use them as a perspective tool to adjust the overall scale (**Fig.14**).

Fig.15 shows the final composition. After testing a couple of camera angles and positions I ended up using this particular angle because it supports my goal to create the impression of a massive drop ship. As I mentioned before I wanted this illustration to tell a story about harvesters that are coming back to the drop ship with the silos full of grain. I also added a couple more vehicles in the air to add story and perspective to the image.

Painting

When I have rendered the required layers I usually do some adjustments on them and select a photo that can be used as a background for the image. I also like to select
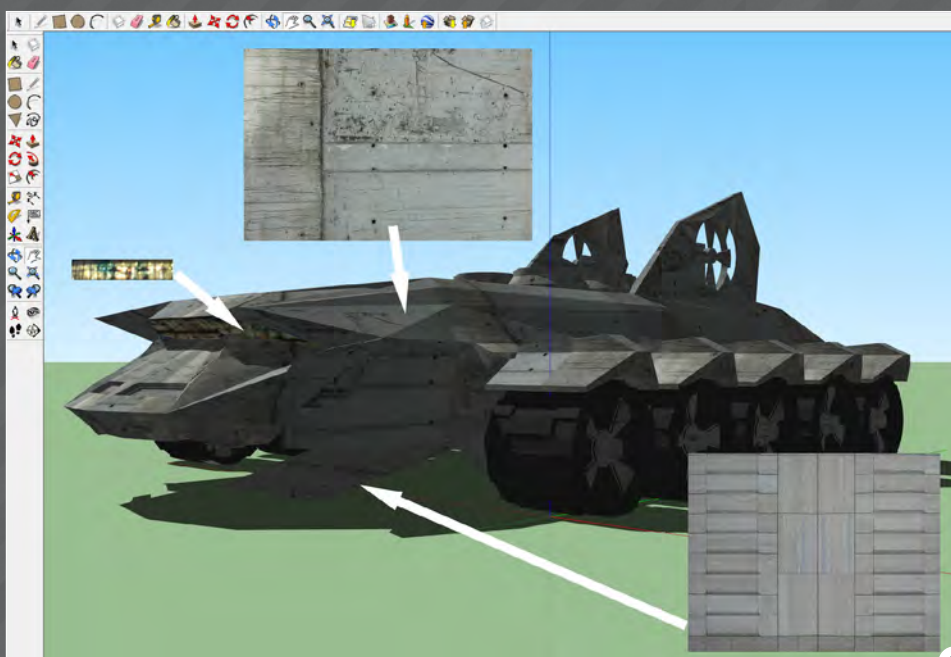
at least one photo that I can use as a basic starting point for the overall lighting. When I know what kind of lighting conditions I want to achieve, I can now use the Brightness and Contrast tools to adjust the rendered layers to the same lighting conditions. I decided to create a sunset scene so I'm interested in photos that show different objects under sunset

conditions. They are all useful because I can use them as a reference as to how to integrate rendered objects into the scene. At this point I'm interested in the overall mood and feel, not so much about texturing or details (**Fig.16**).

After getting the overall mood right I decided to expand the image to the left and add some sort

of blocking element, which helps to move the viewer's eye towards the main vehicle and it's ramp. The headlights and the lights underneath the ship have a similar role. They have also

been designed to catch the viewer's eye as the brightest spot in the image. Now it's time to set up some basic textures by overlaying them over the objects (**Fig.17**).

When the composition felt right, I decided to change the overall color tones to something more like a nightly blue. This is a simple trick that can be done by adding a blue layer in

Overlay mode on top of the image. I usually like to use gradients or even gradients from photos instead of solid, even colors (**Fig.18**).

After the texturing and painting had been done, it was time to add more depth to the image. I constantly try to think about the overall mood, feel, scene, location, time and other things that can provide any kind of help to achieve the final look and feel of an image. One of these things is haze or fog, which can be used to separate elements from each other and therefore get more depth into the image. I try to create spaces between different elements. This is a fundamental part of any form of art. Haze or fog

helps to create spaces, but it also flattens the contrast. **Fig.19** represents the value changes from front to back.

Fig.20 represents another way of changing the tones between different surfaces or objects. This is like mimicking an Ambient Occlusion map by using different color tones on the bottom of the object than on the top of the object. It's like rendering the light so that there is less light on the bottom of the object and more on the top.

At this point of the process we are very close to getting into the finishing touches and the overall fine-tuning. I basically make sure that

everything looks right and I usually do things like tweak textures, clear edges, make hue and saturation changes and brightness and contrast changes. I try to highlight things that I feel are important from a storytelling point of view and try to fade out things that steal the attention from the key areas. For example, if you look at **Fig.21** you can see that I didn't paint any light on the vehicles in the air (green circles). I wanted to keep them clean and simple so that they wouldn't steal the attention too much. As you can see on the left in the image, the human looking at the ramp is also leading the viewer's eye in the wanted direction and the three harvesters have the same purpose.

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 our 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
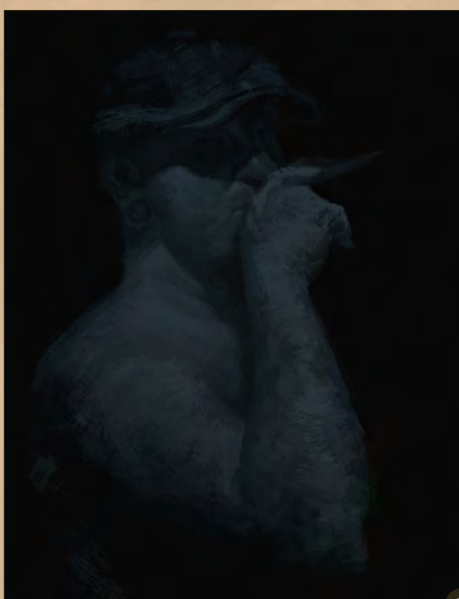
Chapter 06 - Tattooed

Software used: Photoshop

This is a painting of Rodney Davis. He is a tattoo artist and draftsman who lives and works in New York. I try to keep somewhat true to real life as far as the characters in my paintings go. He is actually covered in tattoos and therefore he was a perfect fit for this piece.
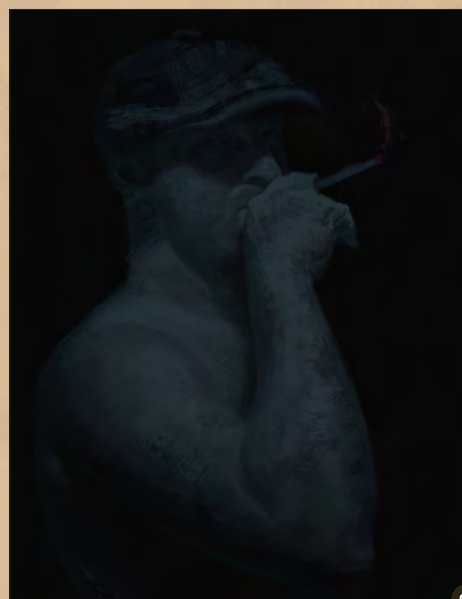
Initially I was going for a very dark and gritty look to this piece, as seen in **Fig.01**. I started painting on a black background with subtle tones of muted blues, trying to stay minimalistic with the amount of information that I was putting in. I aimed to describe the major planes and forms with large, aggressive brush strokes. I continued to refine the drawing and created subtler plane changes while maintaining simplicity (**Fig.02**). Something still didn't feel right. I decided to make a U-turn and change the entire color scheme of the painting.

I don't know what came over me, but I felt like the color pink was the answer to my unhappiness and sure enough it was. I added a few adjustment layers including Color Balance, Exposure and Selective Color and set the new tone for the piece (**Fig.03**). I made many copies of this new pink paint layer and overlapped them in different blending modes including Soft Light, Color and Color Dodge to achieve the color and value effects seen in **Fig.04 – 05**.

Now that I had achieved a color scheme that seemed to be working I proceeded to paint another pass in an opaque color. Using cool colors in the shadows and warm tones in the light areas, the flesh tone began to feel a little more like skin. I tried to keep some of the rough brush strokes from the first pass in and around parts of the refined pass. I experimented a bit with erasing and scraping paint from the deep shadow areas to get a sense of airiness and transparency. By this point most of the form painting was completed (**Fig.06**).

Something to get into the habit of doing is double-checking to see if the value structure is working. Without proper values, no painting can be successful; it doesn't matter how nice the color choices may be. It is something I do with all of my work as I progress through them. It can be done very easily, especially with Photoshop. Just go to Layer > New Adjustment > Hue/Saturation. Once in the Hue/Saturation menu drag the saturation lever to 0 to drain all color from the painting. Set this layer up at the top of the Layer palette to use as a reference to check your values. Turn it on and off as necessary to ensure your value structure maintains some kind of order (**Fig.07**).

I continued to proceed by painting some traditional textures on watercolor and black papers. I used gesso and a large brush to obtain the rigorous brush strokes seen in **Fig. 08**. I specifically painted with white gesso on black paper with the intention of inserting it in with the Screen layer blend mode in Photoshop. This blending mode makes everything but black disappear. This was a perfect way to get every stroke of paint in the original texture of the paint transferred over to digital (**Fig.09**). The hat shape texture was used in a similar fashion except the Multiply blend mode was used to achieve the effect instead (**Fig.10**).
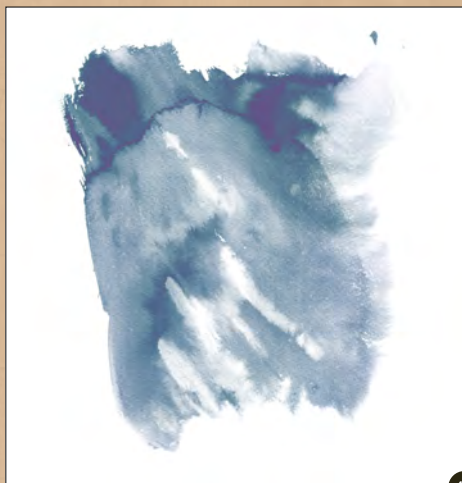
The tattoos were drawn using graphite on a piece of tracing paper laid over an 8.5 x 11 print of the painting. The drawing was then scanned at 600dpi (**Fig.11**). Using a layer mask, I painted color into the lines with the intention of leading the viewer's eye into the shoulder area where the focal point of the tattoo is (**Fig.12**). I used some ink in a watercolor style to paint a subtler graduating texture then, using the selective color in Photoshop, I was able to manipulate the values and colors to the blueish color I was looking for (**Fig.13 – 14**). I went with a marine theme for the tattoo because I wanted to entertain my fascination with octopuses. You can see this on his forearm as well as the koi fish wrapped in the octopus tentacles and subtle waves running in between them (**Fig.15**).

To finish off the painting I used two adjustment layers of selective color to bring more harmony to the color palette. I also did a light final pass

in opaque color to add extra textures as well as refine certain parts that I felt needed a little more work (**Fig.16**).

Well, I hope you found this tutorial useful. It was certainly a pleasure doing this tutorial for *2DArtist* magazine, so many thanks once again.

Irvin Rodriguez

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DIGITAL ART MASTERS
:VOLUME 6

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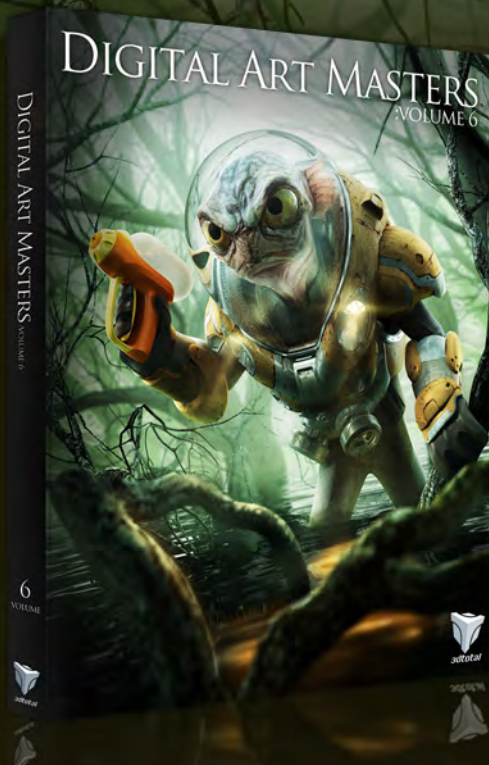
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"I started to draw in the detail, zooming in and out often, because it is important to see and work the whole image at the same time"

MAKING OF BY JAIME MARTÍNEZ

SNIPER

In this month's Making Of Jaime Martinez shares the process he went through to create his cool, desert-based sniper with us, from initial sketch, to grayscale, to the finished full color image.

Making Of Sniper

Software Used: Photoshop and Corel Painter

When I set out to create this image I wanted to represent an elite soldier (a sniper) that was operating in a desert-like area. What I had in mind was somewhere like Afghanistan or Iraq, but in the near future. The general idea was to paint a soldier wearing body armor, a baseball cap and big boots. I searched the internet for all kinds of images of soldiers with different weapons and uniforms, looking for references. I think that reference images are very important if you want to create a realistic image.

I normally use Corel Painter and Photoshop simultaneously. It's my belief that Corel Painter feels more like painting traditionally and I really like that. On the other hand, Photoshop is a wonderful tool that I use to transform the image, apply textures and correct colors. Both programs are complementary and by using them together I can work really quickly.

Fig.01 shows the brushes that I used in Painter:

- **Pens –** Scratchboard tool: I use it all the time.
- **Chalk –** Square Chalk: for the background and general volumes with textures.
- **Digital Watercolor –** Broad Water brush: for the base color.
- **Airbrushes –** Digital airbrush: for shadows and create atmosphere.
- **FX – Glow:** for lights and atmosphere. The Glow tool is extremely powerful.

The Sketch

With the idea of the soldier in my head I started to work. The first thing to do was the general line work (head, feet, waist, arms, legs and shoulder lines). You can see my sketch in **Fig.02**.

Shoulders and waist lines are paramount, because they outline the position of both legs. After that, I started to dress the character.
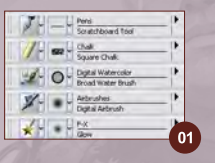
General Form

With the Broad Water brush I applied gray tones. I work from dark to light areas. At this stage I don't care about the color, it's only a matter of lights and volumes. I use the Scratchboard tool at the same time to draw.

I added shoulder and arm protections in Photoshop. I used some textures and then I painted over them (**Fig.03**).

Color Base

I selected the parts that I wanted to be colored in Photoshop and then changed the color with the Hue/Saturation (Ctrl or Cmd + U) tool with the Colorize box selected. I always start with a general base tone and, if needed, I can always edit it later in Photoshop. I used Levels to adjust the image (Ctrl or Cmd + L) as it was a bit too dark. You can see the original and the adjusted image in **Fig.04**.

I applied warm colors to the areas that would be hit by the sun and cooler tones in the shaded areas. To help me see the dark and light areas more clearly, I added a flat black layer to the top of image and set it to Color blending mode. In **Fig.05** you can see the effect when this layer is turned on and off. I use this technique continually through the creation of the image and it helps me to spot the areas that lack contrast and require more attention. I learnt this technique from a Feng Zhu tutorial.

Background

I then started to work on the background. My first idea was to paint a city on the horizon. I then changed my mind and went for a classic zigzag composition that gave the image depth and balance (**Fig.06**). The eye should go first to the face and then move side to side as you gaze down the image.

Character Detail

Now that I had set the tone for the character and put it into a believable scene, I started the detailing phase using Corel Painter. I particularly use the Scrat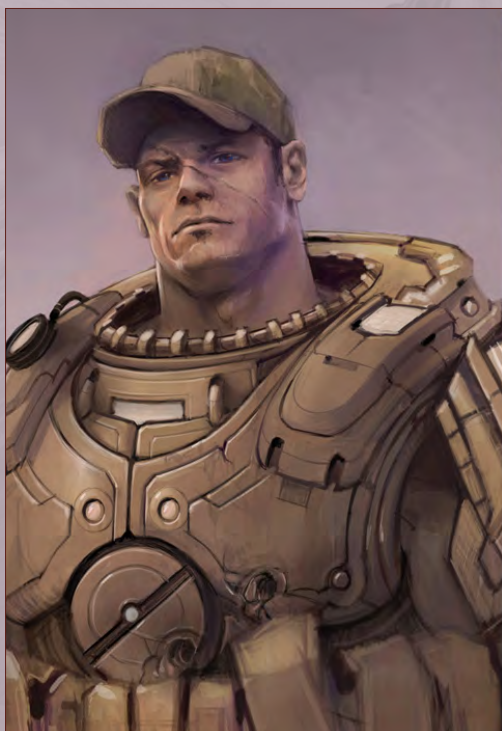chboard tool for this. I started to draw in the detail, zooming in and out often, because it is important to see and work the whole image at the same time (**Fig.07 – 08**).

Textures

I applied textures to the character using Photoshop. The main texture is the desert camouflage on the uniform. I applied these textures in different layers set to Overlay

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blending mode with an opacity of 30%. I then applied dirt and damage textures to the boots and knees (**Fig.09 – 10**). I also obscured the arms and changed the color of the ammo pouches and the uniform with an ocher tone.

Final Details and Background

In the final stage I added a sniper rifle on the back of the character. I changed the background a little bit, but still wasn't sure of the final results. A sniper would usually operate in a rough terrain where there are more places to hide. Therefore I decided to add more rock to make it look like a mountainous area (**Fig.11 – 12**).

I changed the face (**Fig.13**) and used some textures on certain areas of the scene to generate depth. I wanted it to look overcast, which is why I added shadows that fade away instead of being hard and sharp. I also changed the shoulder armor because it seemed to be too small (**Fig.14**).

I hope that this helps you. Thanks to 3DTotal and the *2DArtist* team.

Jaime Martínez

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DIGITAL ART MASTERS
VOLUME 6

With the release of 3DTotal's book, *Digital Art Masters: Volume 6*, 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!
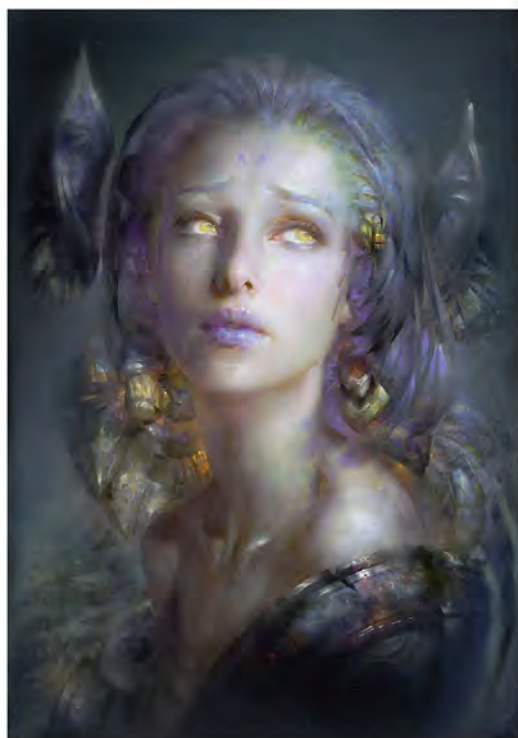
This month we feature:

"RUAN JIA"

BY JAIME MARTÍNEZ

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

VANISHNESS
BY RUAN JIA
JOB TITLE: Artist at Volta Studios
SOFTWARE USED: Photoshop 8.0

CONCEPT
The character in this picture is a maiden who is constantly waiting for someone she loves to return and find her, but even after a long period of absence they are yet to appear. Despite this, she never gives up hope due to the everlasting love she holds in her heart. It is just this kind of feeling that triggered me to start drawing, and with this mood in mind I finished the first draft in a relatively short time (Fig.01 – 02).

MY PAINTING
The idea behind the picture comes from a role-playing computer game called *Planescape: Torment*. It is an amazing game, which interests me a great deal. When I discovered it in 2007, I was so impressed and became hooked. It really is a wonderful game, which I find fascinating, and I couldn't stop playing it. At that time I had to work during the day and had a lot of trivial stuff to deal with, so it wasn't until
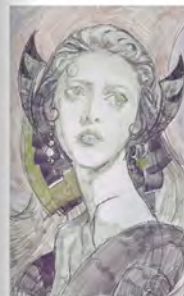
very late at night that I was able to settle down and play, and I would usually play until early the following morning. I was totally enthralled whilst playing the game and was especially impressed by a character called Deionarra, a ghostly apparition. I'm not really sure why, but

perhaps it was because each time you met her the music in the background would become much louder.

Whilst trying to depict the idea in more depth, I came across some problems. Due to my

CHARACTERS   79

loose painting technique, I made repeated attempts to depict the face the way I imagined, but each time it proved unsuccessful. This is the most important part of the picture and so I made a number of studies starting from the fundamentals such as skull structure and then working on towards completing the face. (Fig.03 – 05). I sketched everything in black and white and over the course of one year, created a lot of drawings. I then continued to develop my image (Fig.06 – 07). When I got to picture Fig.08 I decided to stop, but later realized that the orientation was not right, so I continued to make further adjustments. I finally came up with Fig.09.
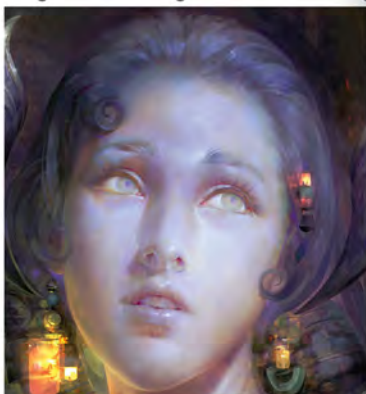
Yellow and purple made up the main color scheme, but during the process I began to find it a little dull and so I added in some blue. In order to emphasize the purple I adjusted the saturation and darkened the values.

The earrings were intended to be shiny at first. However, after much deliberation I opted to reject the decision, because I felt that they might distract the eyes from the focal point, which was the face.

The most enjoyable part of the process was superimposing and refining the colors which gradually improved the image. My choice of brushes included Blur's Good brush and some Massive Black brushes. I used a transparent watercolor brush to overlay colors depending on the situation. Throughout the process I superimposed colors and subdued the light.

As mentioned earlier, the most painstaking part of this picture was the face. Since I wasn't able to find an appropriate model to refer to, most of the details and colors were conjured from my imagination. I often spent several days painting, only for the results to prove unsatisfactory and consequently prompt me to restart.

I hope this insight into my creation process has been interesting and given you some tips that you can apply to your own work.
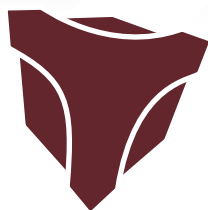
ARTIST PORTFOLIO

80   CHARACTERS

CHARACTERS   81

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