Interview
B. Börkur Eiríksson

Articles
Sketchbook of
Daniel Daya Landerman

The Gallery
Ioan Dumitrescu, Tony
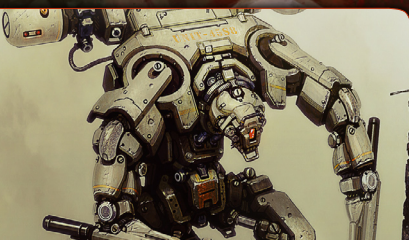Montano, plus more!

Cover Image By Blaz Porenta

He'll huff and he'll puff, but there's no way that bad wolf will blow these little piggies house's down. Take a trip with Blaz Porenta as he turns his hand to another Fairytale Classic.

THREE LITTLE PIGS

Designing Droids
Prepare yourselves for our new epic tutorial series. Follow **Alexander Iglesias** as he shows off his design prowess creating a Recon Droid.

Painting Creatures from Mythology
Markus Lovadina picks up his Photoshop brushes and sets off in search of the Leshy, in the second chapter of this fantastical tutorial series.

The Lord of the Forest
Simon Dominic Brewer lends his Painter skills to accompany **Markus Lovadina** in discovering the forest dwelling creature - The Leshy.

Editorial

Hello and welcome to the February issue of 2DArtist! I hope you had a good January. How many of you have been sticking closely to your New Year's resolution? Any of you given it to chocolate or avoided going for that early morning run yet? Well if you're looking for a worthwhile distraction to keep your mind off your vices I would strongly recommend this month's 2DArtists which is full of inspiration and advice!

The obvious place to start when discussing this month's magazine is the stunning cover! I bet your jaw hit the floor when you saw **Blaz Porenta's** stunning re-imagining of the story of The Three Little Pigs. In this month's issue Blaz continues our fantastic Illustrating Fairy Tales series for us by talking us through how he added narrative and back story to his fantastic image. I am sure that you have all enjoyed this series so far and the final images from the tutorials have been breath-taking, the last part of the series is no exception. In next month's issue Blaz talks us through his painting of Hansel and Gretel.

In this month's issue we wrap up the final chapter of the Designing your own World series with **David Smit** and **Nadia Karroue**. This series has been a real insight into how to create and develop your own projects. In this issue they show us how they turned their fantastic hippie characters into a cool full color comic book. In next month's issue we have a great new series about creating 2D animations!

Last month was finished our short series about using 3D to create cool vehicle concepts which means that we get to start our amazing new series about Designing Droids in this month's magazine. In this series our artists will be showing us how to approach designing droids as if you were doing it for the games industry. This means that they will not only talk about the design and painting of the droid, but will also show us how to create drawings which can be given to a 3D artist to help them create games characters. In this month's issue **Alexander Iglesias** gets the ball rolling with a cool Recon Droid.

I hope you all enjoyed the first installment of our Painting Creatures from Mythology series. It is really great to see how two different artists interpret the same brief. This month **Markus Lovadina** and **Simon Dominic Brewer** continue the series by showing us how they interpreted the brief for the Lord of the forest; The Leshy.

What a great set of tutorials! As if that wasn't enough, we also have an interview with the amazingly talented **B. Börkur Eiríksson**, a Making Of by **Li Biao** and a cool sketchbook featuring the work of **Daniel Daya Landerman**. This amazing quality of art is carried through to our gallery which features work by **Ioan Dumitrescu**, **Bruno Hamzagic**, **Phuoc Quan** and many more stunning artists!

Contents
What's in this month's issue?

Editor	Layout	Content	Proofing
Simon Morse	Layla Khani	Simon Morse	Jo Hargreaves
	Matt Lewis	Tom Greenway	
Lead Designer	Az Pishneshin	Richard Tilbury	**Marketing**
Chris Perrins		Chris Perrins	Tom Helme

The magazine cover features:

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
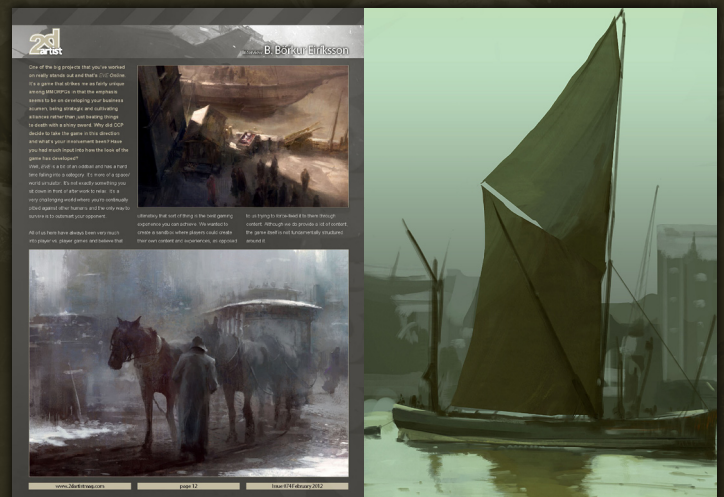up your PDF reader!

Setting up your PDF reader

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

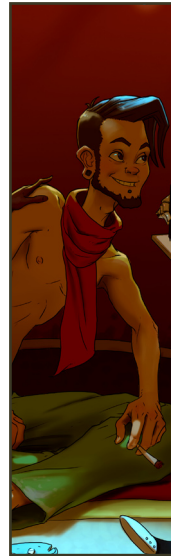You can download it for free here: **DOWNLOAD!**

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.

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.

http://www.davidsmit.com/

david@davidsmit.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
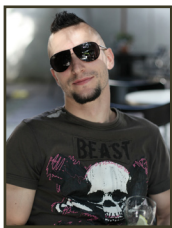
Blaz Porenta

As a child Blaz read thousands of fairy tales. Today he tells them himself but instead of writing them, he paints them. Blaz likes to create a snapshot of his world for viewers, and let them create their own story."

http://www.blazporenta.com/

blaz.porenta@gmail.com
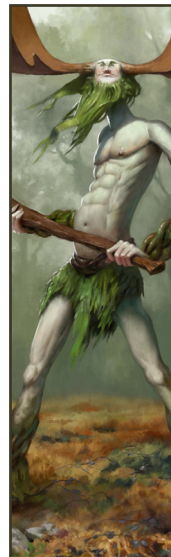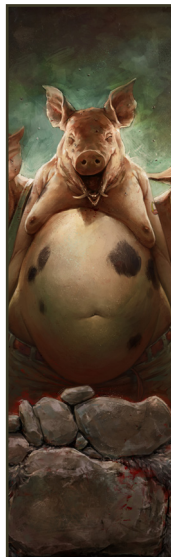
Simon Dominic

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

Markus Lovadina

Markus Lovadina (malo) is currently working as a Creative Director in the advertising industry, as well as a freelance Concept Artist/Illustrator. Over recent years he's had the opportunity to work for companies such as Acclaim Entertainment, Activision and Intel. He has also worked on a couple of movie projects and a variety of book covers too.

http://malosart.blogspot.com/

malo74@gmx.de
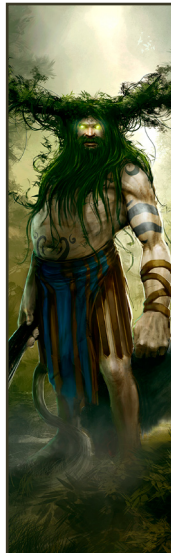
Would You Like To Contribute To 3DCreative Or 2DArtist Magazines?

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

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"We wanted to create a sandbox where players could create their own content and experiences, as opposed to us trying to force-feed it to them through content"

B. BORKUR
EIRIKSSON

When you think of Iceland, you probably think of lots of ice and snow, Björk and maybe – if you're British – volcanic ash clouds. But this small island nation is also home to CCP Games, the masterminds behind EVE Online and current home of talented digital artist B. Börkur Eiríksson. In our latest interview, Börkur chats to us about his life as an artist, how he came to join CCP Games and what the future holds for MMORPGs.

Hi Börkur – thanks for chatting to me today. Now your website doesn't give much away, so I'm going to kick things off in the traditional style by asking you to tell us a little bit about who you are, what you do and how you've come to be a successful digital artist in the gaming industry.

Hi Jo, and thanks for the opportunity. Yes, you're right; my website doesn't give much away. I don't know if that's a good idea or a bad one, but I kind of like it that way.

While studying industrial design, I discovered that I tended to lean more towards the artistic side of things rather than the functional design side, so when I graduated I headed towards art university. I started out in animation, but quickly turned toward illustration (I never seemed to have the patience for animation). After I graduated from there back in 2004 I landed a job at my current employer, CCP Games.

"I always felt pretty comfortable with acrylics. It's a very accessible and flexible medium"

Landing a job at a games studio straight out of university is like a dream come true for a lot of aspiring digital artists! How did that come about for you? Had you built up a portfolio of work beforehand? Made some useful contacts while at university?

I had already made some contact with them beforehand. I actually just showed up at their office one day while I was on vacation and asked if I could look around and speak to them (this was easier when it was a smaller company). I also followed up with them once or twice a year just to keep in touch, which helped a lot.

So I've been doing a bit of cyber-stalking and it looks like your artistic journey started with acrylics – is that right? Can you tell us a bit more about this and maybe explain how you made the transition from traditional to digital art?

I guess you're right. I always felt pretty comfortable with acrylics. It's a very accessible

and flexible medium (read: easy to learn). At the time I was also experimenting with gouache and other quick-drying mediums.

It was back in 1999 that I started noticing digital art making its way into the world and decided to try it out. So I bought a small A6 Wacom tablet, launched up Photoshop and was instantly hooked. It wasn't long until I upgraded to an A4 and started doing all my work digitally.

I hadn't touched traditional mediums for a long time until recently. I began figure drawing and oil painting again, both of which have been very humbling and educational experiences.

Even though your paintings are produced on a computer now, they have quite a traditional look and feel. Was this a conscious decision

or is it simply a reflection of your artistic roots?

I tend to find traditional artwork much more appealing than digital, so I guess I try to make my work look more that way. I'm not sure if it's conscious or not. It seems to end up that way no matter what I do.

If you could continue working in the games industry, but also switch back to using traditional mediums, would you? Or are you firmly converted to digital art now?

No way! I'm way too spoiled now to use traditional medium for commercial work. I often use some traditional elements, where I scan in something I painted, but I don't see myself relying solely on traditional mediums when doing work for a client.

One of the big projects that you've worked on really stands out and that's *EVE Online*. It's a game that strikes me as fairly unique among MMORPGs in that the emphasis seems to be on developing your business acumen, being strategic and cultivating alliances rather than just beating things to death with a shiny sword. Why did CCP decide to take the game in this direction and what's your involvement been? Have you had much input into how the look of the game has developed?

Well, *EVE* is a bit of an oddball and has a hard time falling into a category. It's more of a space/world simulator. It's not exactly something you sit down in front of after work to relax. It's a very challenging world where you're continually pitted against other humans and the only way to survive is to outsmart your opponent.

All of us here have always been very much into player vs. player games and believe that

ultimately that sort of thing is the best gaming experience you can achieve. We wanted to create a sandbox where players could create their own content and experiences, as opposed to us trying to force-feed it to them through content. Although we do provide a lot of content, the game itself is not fundamentally structured around it.

I feel I was lucky to come into the project in its earlier days, so I managed to have an influence on its visual outcome. We were a small art department for a long time and we all feel we managed to affect the look of the game. It also helps that our tastes are perfectly synchronized, like a menstrual cycle.

A thousand men just cringed at the image that statement conjured! It certainly seems that you've achieved your wish of creating a player-shaped world – I believe there's even a player-led council within the game itself, which players can use to make suggestions and improvements. Working with the community seems like a great way to reward a loyal fanbase – how important do you find the fan feedback? And how much does it shape the development of *EVE*?
It makes all the difference. *EVE* is so different today from what we thought it would be (in a good way) and we owe it all to the community. They figured out so many things we didn't even dream about.

With *EVE* Online being an ongoing project, I guess you've been involved with it for quite a long time now. Have you had the chance to work on any other games while you've been at CCP?
Yes I've been involved in all the major projects and I frequently switch between them, which suits me very well because I easily get bored (and I'm pretty sure the guys here are aware of that fact!). Just as an example, I'm doing a switch to one of our latest projects now for about one and a half months.

What do you see as being the future for MMORPGs? Some would say that the grinding/levelling quest-heavy format of games like *World of Warcraft* is becoming a bit tired now. With the more story-driven *Star Wars: The Old Republic* recently released, do you think that's what people are looking for nowadays? Something with a more substantial narrative?

That's what I hope, at least. In my case, I quickly get bored if I can't have a meaningful impact on the game I'm playing (or am, at the very least, provided with the illusion that I can). I think there will always be a market for theme park rides, on-rails storylines or grinding experiences, but I also think there is definitely a place for more emergent gameplay once people find themselves growing tired of those types of games.

B. Börkur Eiríksson

For more information please visit:

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Or contact him at:

borkur@ccpgames.com

Interview by: Jo Hargreaves

"I usually need to focus on attitude in order to capture individuality in each character. Otherwise they're just pretty sketches with no personality."

SKETCHBOOK
Of Daniel Daya Landerman

In this month's sketchbook we get a brief but insightful look into the creative mind of Daniel Daya Landerman. Daniel in not afraid to try out different things and shares his varied sketches of character designs and environments with us, as well as giving us a glimpse at how he creates the covers for his project Dakota Rawhide.

Sketchbook of
Daniel Daya Landerman

I put some quick color on drawings in Photoshop to get a good idea of the direction I want to head in, even if it is an idea for an oil painting. This helps me avoid wasting time exploring in paint (**Fig.01**).

In **Fig.02** are more thumbnails. I decided to go with the one of her facing forwards because I liked the silhouette.

This is a drawing that formed the start of an oil painting. I'm a fan of traditional book covers and decided to try one out for myself rather than painting in Photoshop (**Fig.03**).
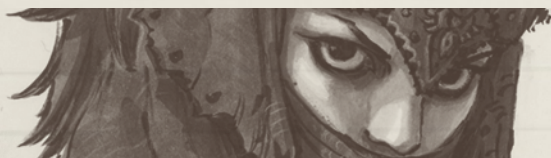

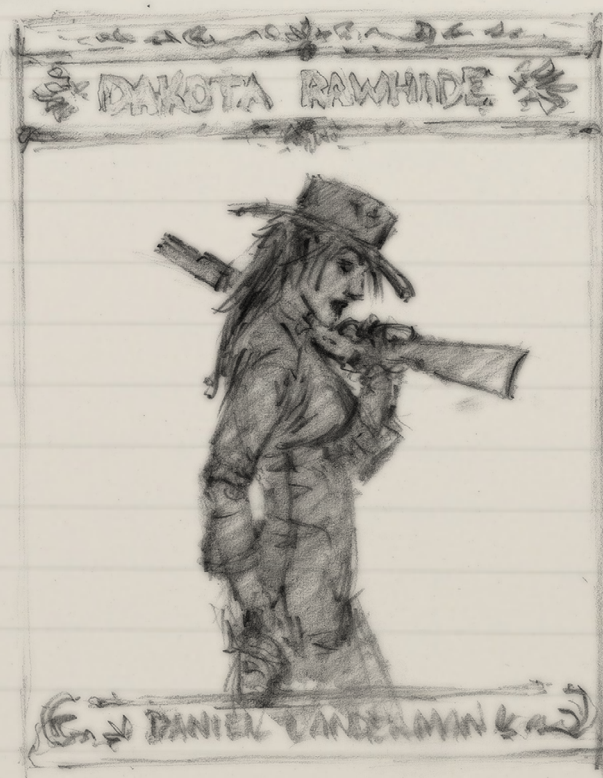Dakota Rawhide

MATURE CONTENT

Daniel Landerman
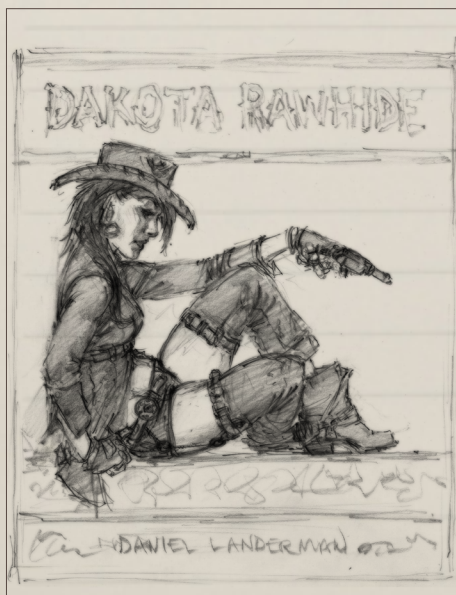
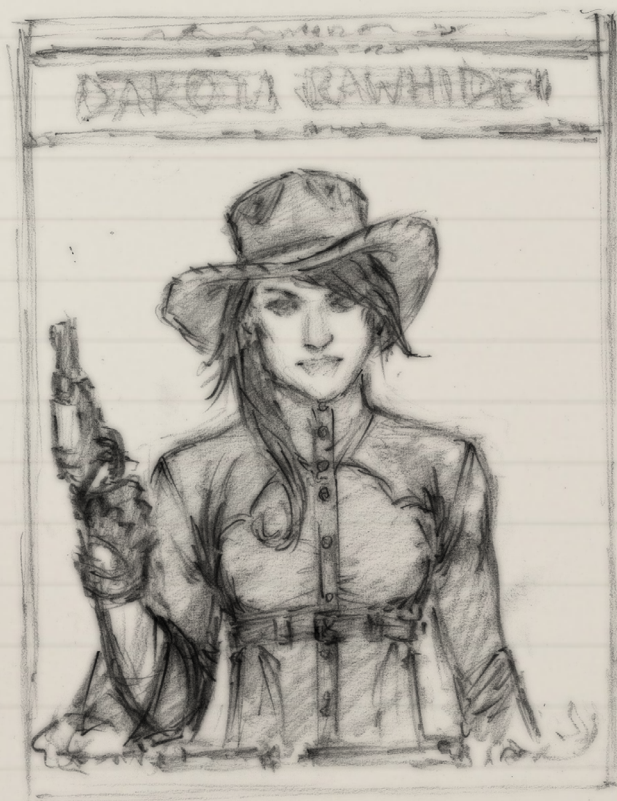In **Fig.04** you can see a line drawing for a promo illustration for *Dakota Rawhide Book III*. This is where my fascination with fashion design rears its head.

In **Fig.05** you can see some thumbnail sketches for a Dakota Rawhide book cover.

04

05
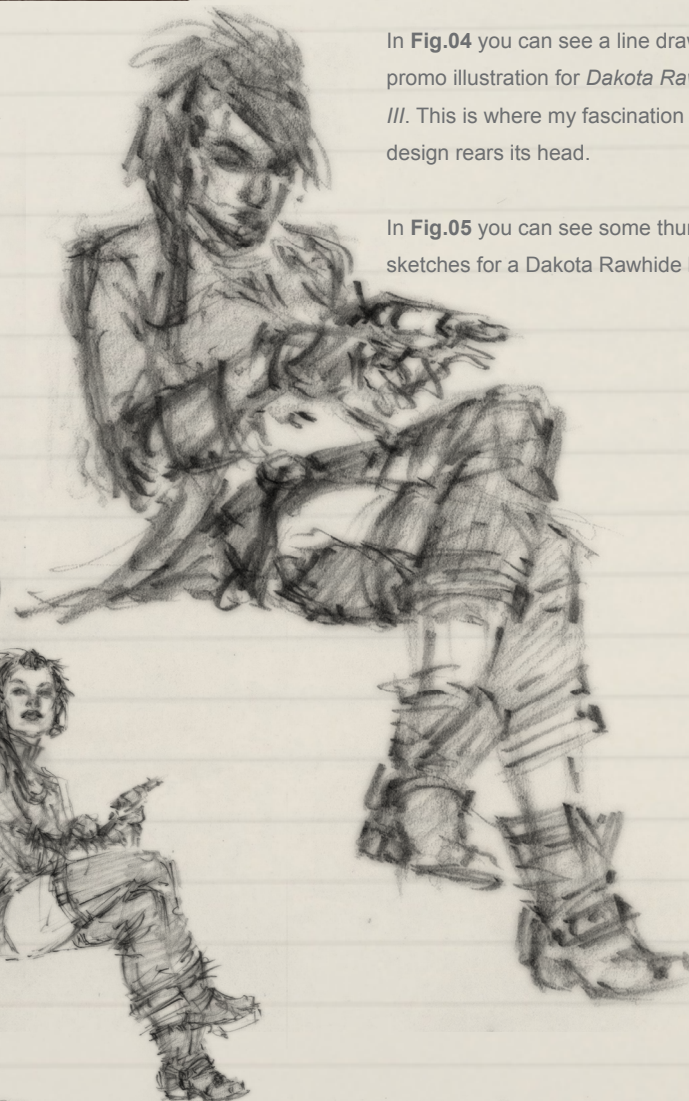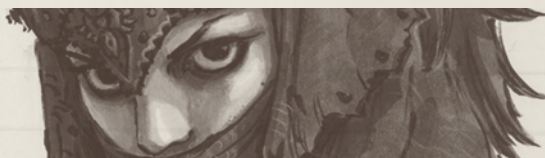
Fig.06 shows some characters from the unnamed game project. These were quick and rough character sketches, ranging from retro fashion to futuristic.
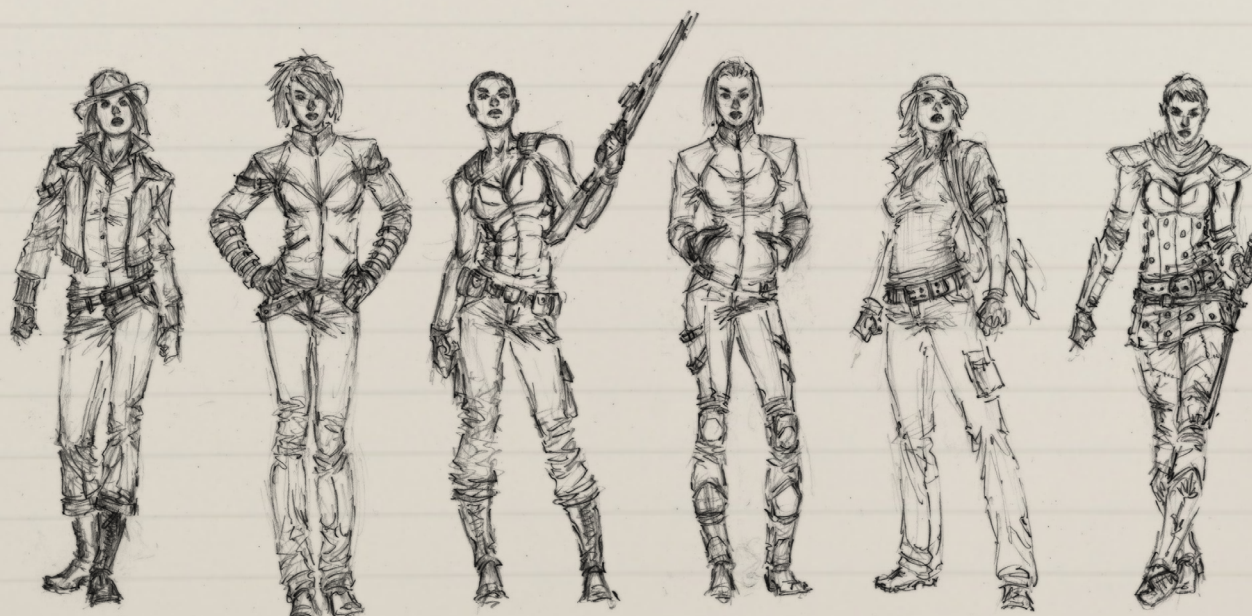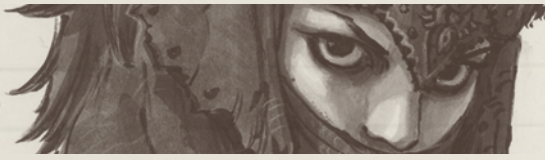
Here you can see more character sketches. The game was going to involve hundreds of character possibilities, so it was necessary to crank out concepts en masse (**Fig.07**).
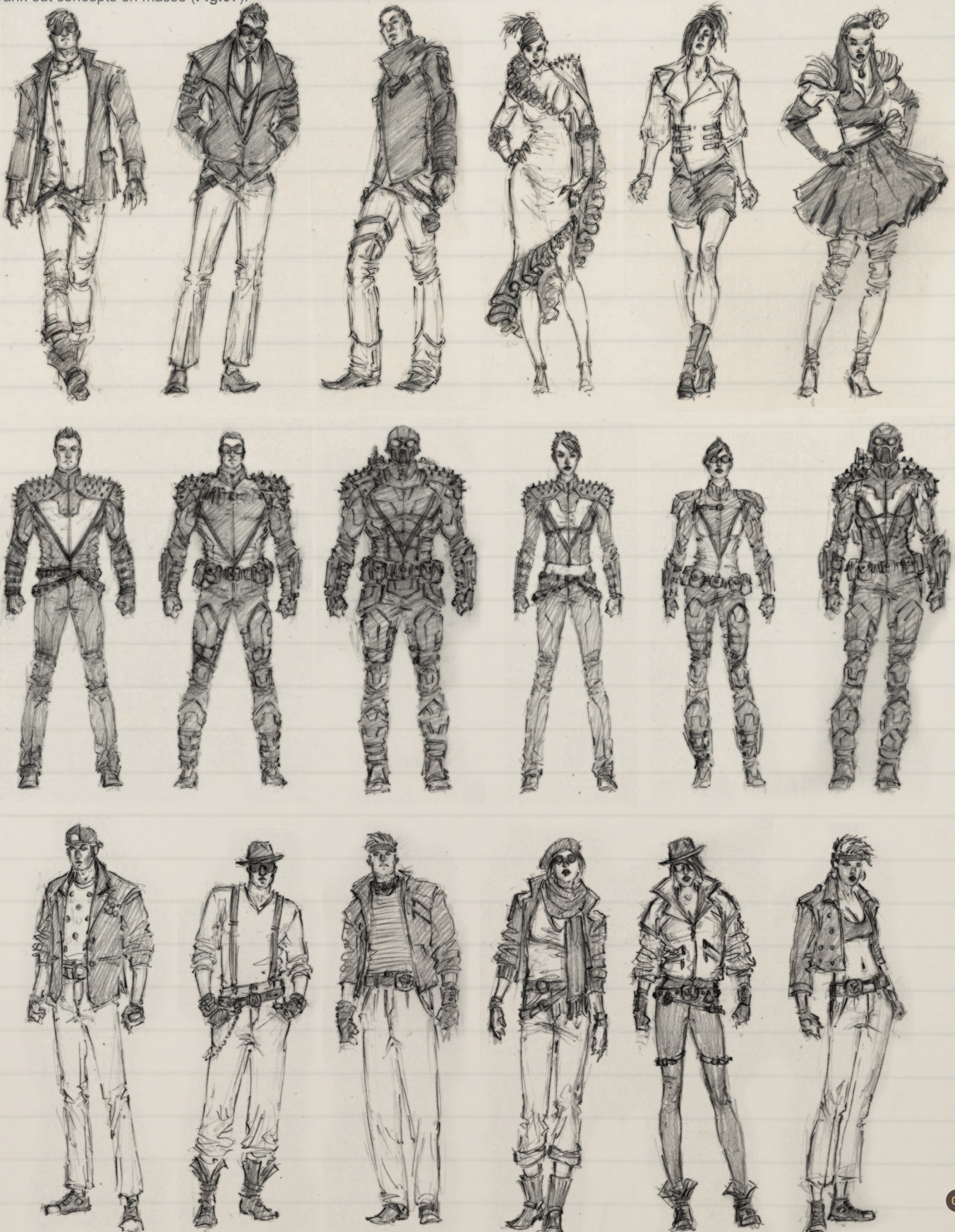
Fig.08 shows a few more pencil sketches. I usually need to focus on attitude in order to capture individuality in each character. Otherwise they're just pretty sketches with no personality.
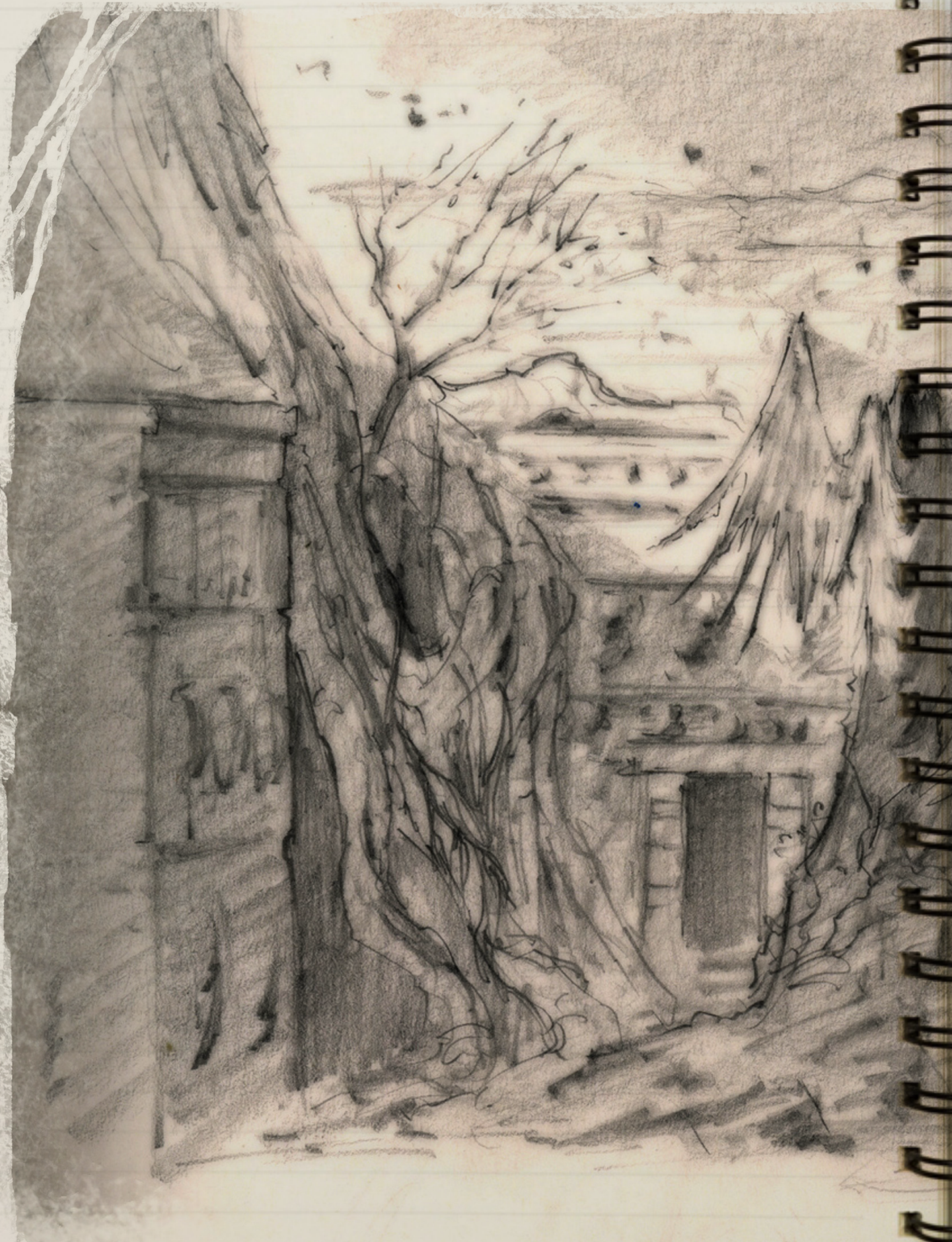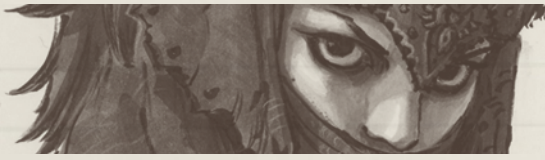
Fig.09 shows a more severe departure from the first monument concept that I was playing with.
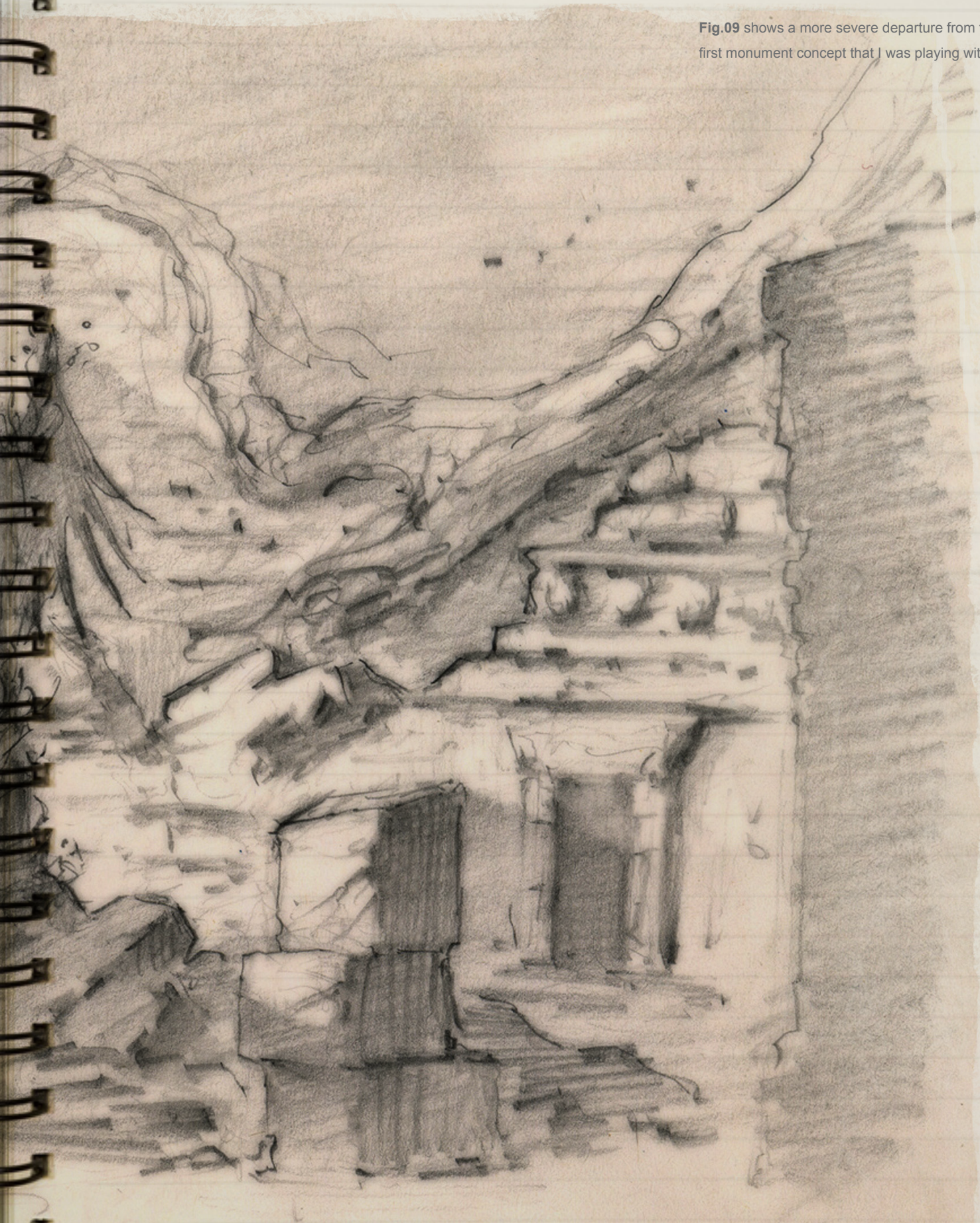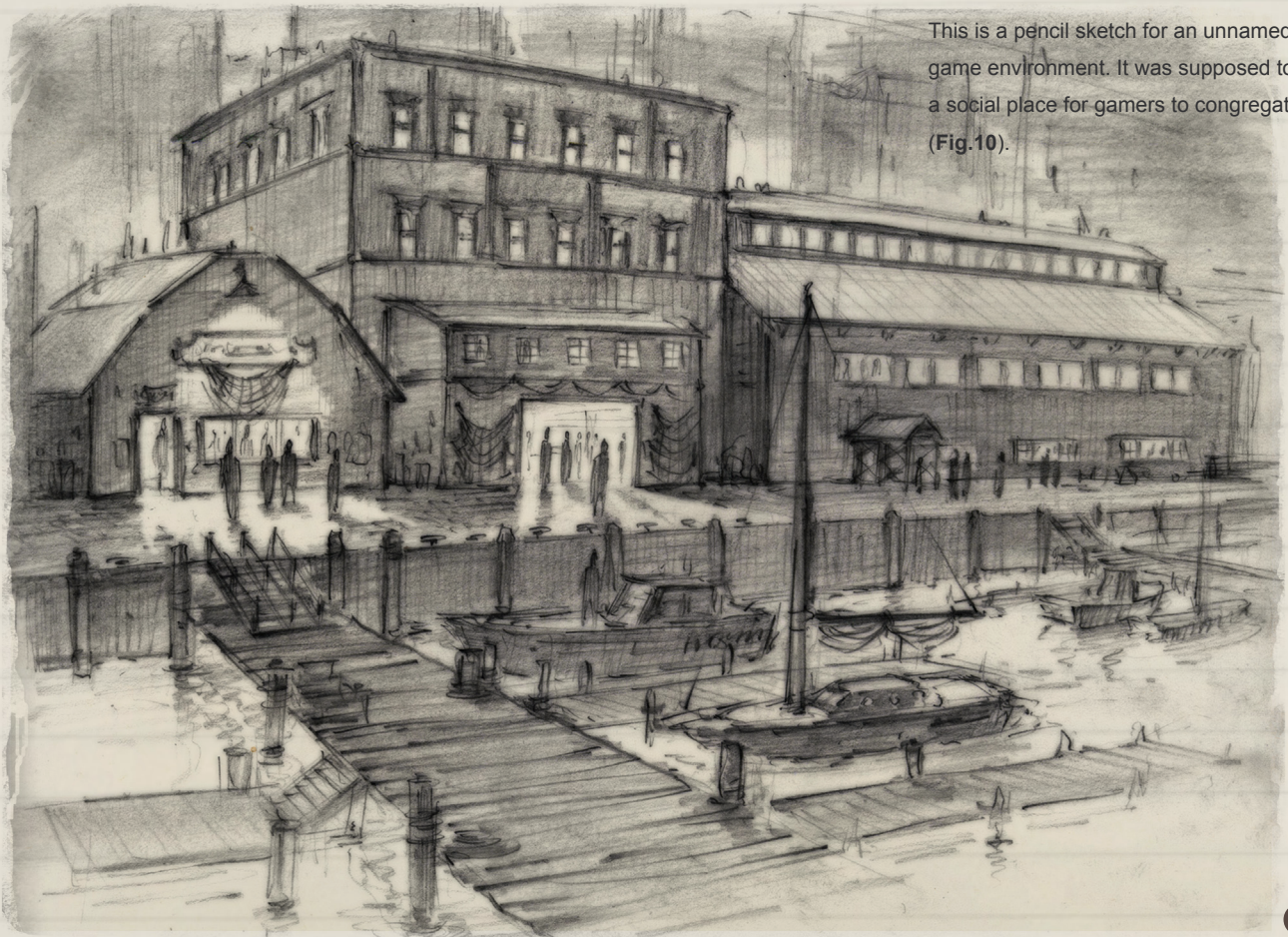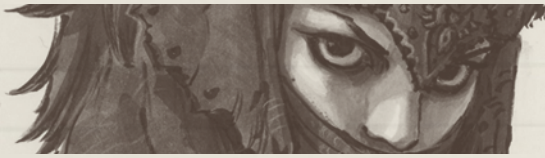
This is a pencil sketch for an unnamed game environment. It was supposed to be a social place for gamers to congregate (**Fig.10**).

10

This is another environment concept, which is a variation on the previous docks image (**Fig.11**).

11

This was another environment for that same unnamed game project, a sort of undead monument (**Fig.12**).

Fig.13 is another take on the undead monument.
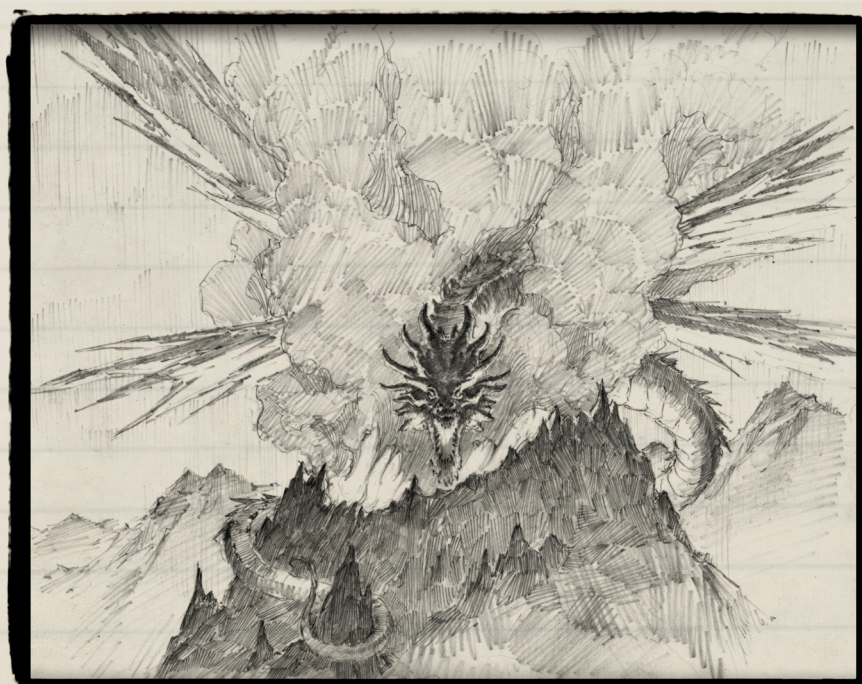
I loved *Record of Lodoss War* as a kid and when I recently re-watched them the concept of Shooting Star, a gargantuan dragon, living inside a volcano was too cool not to illustrate (**Fig.14**).

These are some brush and marker drawings for another character/story I'm developing. There is a lot of Thai influence in the headdress (**Fig.15**)

In **Fig.16** you can see Thai, Celtic and Japanese influences. This was done with a brush and marker.

Daniel Daya Landerman

For more information please visit:

http://www.artdl.com/

Or contact him at:

savagesunarts@gmail.com

The Gallery

Sci-fi City

Phuoc Quan

http://nkabuto.deviantart.com/

nkaphuoc@gmail.com

(Above)

Black Sheep is Coming

Xavier Etchepare

http://xetchepare.cgsociety.org/gallery/

xavier.etchepare@gmail.com

(Below)

Wet Rocks

Ioan Dumitrescu

http://jonone.cghub.com/

jononespo@yahoo.com

Jason Kidd
Bruno Hamzagic
http://www.cargocollective.com/brunohamzagic
jadecilcleton@gmail.com
(Right)
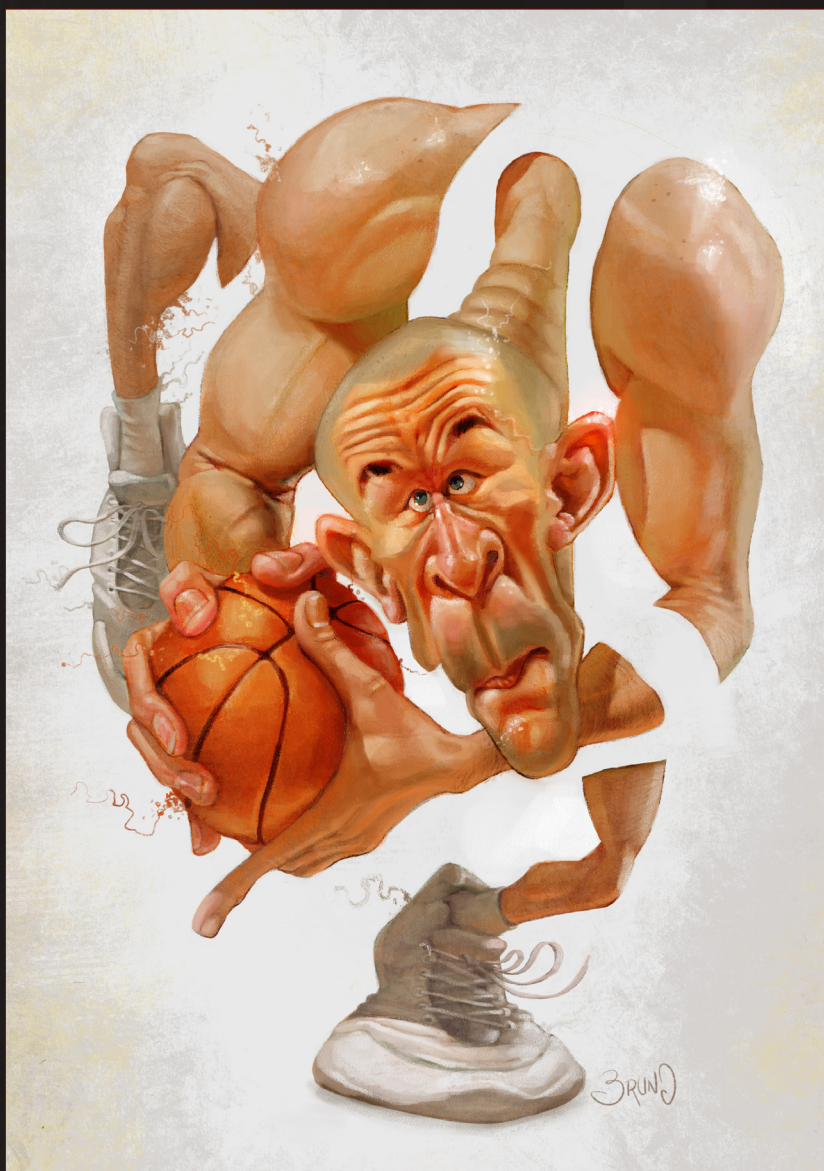
Simiave
Jordi Gonzalez
www.jordigart.blogspot.com/
jordigart@gmail.com
(Left)

Leopard Girl

Molin

molin@blackcoat.se

Degial (Antichriste)

Ali Kiani Amin

ali.kiani@gmail.com

2011

Akiko

Tony Montaño

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03

Illustrating
Fairy Tales

Chapter 4 - The Three Little Pigs

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 4: The Three Little Pigs

Software Used: Photoshop

I have always wondered how it would look if I were to portray children's fairy tales in a different way and change those cute and cuddly characters into gritty and realistic ones. I decided that I would take this approach and apply it to the story of the three little pigs and the wolf, but with a little twist.

When creating a new painting, from either an existing story or completely original one, I always try to implement something to lure the viewer in and make them think. In this particular case I decided to play with an idea that I had. Who is the real bad guy in this story? To convince the audience to feel sorry for the wolf, the pigs couldn't look friendly or cute at all! So I chose to portray them as three big, fat, redneck hogs who were dirty and nasty in all kinds of ways. Because I didn't want to forget the well known characteristics that set them apart from each other, I also decided to give the pig with the straw house a pitchfork, portray the pig with the wooden house as a lumberjack and have the third and smartest pig as a bricklayer, placed at the front of the image.

Now that the main idea was set it was time to lay down a sketch. When working on a piece I usually start painting with scattered brush strokes, waiting for elements to pop out and tell me how to move on. Since I already knew where I wanted to go with this image, I started with rough line art instead and continued from there. This didn't mean that the final painting would end up looking exactly the same as the sketch, but with the characters designed the painting process would be much quicker (**Fig.01**).

Painting realistically requires lots of observation and an understanding of what you are painting. If you are painting something for the hundredth time it is likely that you will have a clear image of the subject in your head already. If you haven't painted something many times I highly recommend using some photo references. With the internet and digital cameras in every home finding references shouldn't be a problem.

Gather as many photos as you can and study them carefully, rather than just copying them. Often different photos have different light sources, perspectives and color warmth. All that can result in a painting that looks like a bad collage, no matter how well rendered it is.

Going back to my painting process, it was time to create a grayscale scheme, searching for the right tone values in the image. Important areas

that should attract the most attention, such as the hog's faces and their silhouettes, needed to pop out immediately, therefore creating vivid contrasts around them was a must. Other less important areas could blend together or be hidden in the shadows at the back. At this stage I also started playing with textures and some custom brushes to get an idea of what kind of result I was striving for (**Fig.02**).

03

04

When I was happy with the tone values I quickly threw some colors over it. Usually I use the Color and Overlay layer modes here. The Color layer mode is for choosing the main colors whilst the Overlay layer mode is for accenting them and making them vivid so they contrast with other areas of the image (**Fig.03**).

The colors that you use will define the overall mood so it's important to choose ones that will enhance your ideas. I was going for a modern horror movie poster-like painting, so I wanted a greenish monochromatic range with some areas popping out. For these areas I used warmer hues such as red and light orange.

This is the polishing stage of the painting process. Once again if you are not doing something for the hundredth time there is nothing wrong with using a photo reference. It will help you recreate the small details that make the difference between something looking just OK and something looking authentic and believable. Study the wrinkles and textures and observe how different materials reflect light. This is probably the stage that takes the most time, but it is also the most fun (**Fig.04**).

I never limit myself to the base sketch. It is something that is good to start with, but I always look for upgrades and to make changes that will make the final piece better. At the beginning I was thinking of placing the wolf's skin in front of the hogs, but I found it too straight forward. I decided to go with a more subtle approach and

05

made the wolf the mortar between the stones. What is not seen and can be left to the viewer's imagination is always more powerful than serving everything up on a plate (**Fig.05**).

Another important thing to do was drop some more ideas into the painting to help distinguish the pig's from one another, making them diverse and pointing out hints to their profession (**Fig.06 – 08**).

Since the pig with the straw house should be the least smart I portrayed him in a goofy way, with pimples all over his face and mucus coming out of his nostrils. The one with the wooden house is a lumberjack with a trucker's hat. I made him look unshaven and gave him strong fangs that look a bit like a mustache. Last, but not least, is the smartest and most confident pig with his big smile, chipped fang and black spots to make him stand out from the rest.

I also started working on the background, adding a pine forest and grain fields behind them to distinguish the characters even more. I also did a little more to define the pitchfork and chainsaw and added flies around their heads and a McDonald's tattoo as a hidden Easter egg on one of the hogs. This is not added as advertising, but is a hint of their bizarre nature and suggests they are cannibals (**Fig.09**).

The final stage was to add some finishing touches. At this stage I took time to look at what stuck out too much and how to tie up all the elements in the painting to make it work

as a whole. This usually requires some color adjustments with Curves and means applying grainy textures all over the image. Be careful not to overdo it, which can easily happen. Think of textures as another brush stroke, only place them where they are needed and don't cover mistakes or try to replace some parts of the image. Textures are there to help define the materials otherwise they should be invisible to the eye (**Fig.10**).

This is another painting from the fairy tales series done. I hope you learned something from this tutorial and enjoyed reading it as much as I enjoyed painting those three "little" pigs.

Blaz Porenta
For more information please visit:
http://www.blazporenta.com/
Or contact him at:
blaz.porenta@gmail.com

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 06: What to Do With These Hippies?

Software Used: Photoshop

We're back again with a brand new article about the development of the HippiePippiePocalypse, a comic about hippies in space! This is our final article in this series and as promised we are going to walk you through how we made a bunch of comic pages. The world designing stage is finally over, the story has been written and now it's production time.

But let us first say that this process can differ greatly for each person. There probably isn't a right way to do things, and figuring out what works for you is a part of being a creative. That said, this is how we did things for better or for worse. We just hope it's helpful.

Idea to Script

Before we started the long process of panelling, sketching, inking, coloring and ballooning we tried to figure out in detail what we wanted to say. The more you mull it over in your head, the more detailed and rich it will become. But obviously we also needed to write it down. For us it helped to first sloppily and quickly jot down everything that's supposed to happen in a chapter. This bit reminds us a lot of the first sketch you do for an illustration. You don't want to get caught up in the details yet. You just need to know what's happening where in the composition and to have a quick overview of the situation. For us it's the same with writing. Then we rewrote it and added those nice little juicy details until our writing appetites were fully satisfied.

Apparently some comic artists go from this step immediately to thumbnailing, but we, as rookies, really needed another step in between. We took the story and started turning it into a script, trying to imagine it in a comic format as much as we possibly could. Panel by panel, page by page, we rewrote the whole deal to give us something to hold on to when going to the thumbnailing phase. What we had written so far was not set in stone, but it definitely gave us a nice base for the next step (**Fig.01**).

Thumbnailing

For us this was the most important part of the process for several reasons. When thumbnailing you can quickly and easily try out different ways of visualizing the story. Even though we had a script as a crutch, we allowed ourselves to play around and experiment a bit. And if something we had in mind did not work, we simply tried to do it differently.

Since the thumbnailing is the first visualization of the story, you can use this phase to set the genre. Will it be a dark and serious story? Or maybe a slapstick comedy? Most people probably don't have to think about this because it kind of happens intuitively. But a little bit of self analysis can't hurt either, and in this part of the process you can already tell where the whole thing is going. But if you notice it's heading in the wrong direction, you can easily go back and correct it.

You should also remember to draw in the balloons when you're thumbnailing. They are an important part of the layout and readability; you can't just ignore them until the end. If you do that, you might find you have to balloon over very important visuals. Or worse, the reading direction might get chaotic and incomprehensible. No one wants that; it would be a waste of precious time and work! So plan
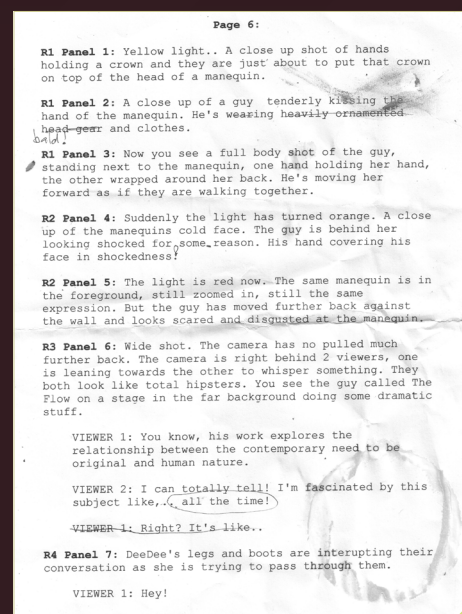
them in during thumbnailing, and you won't have any of those problems. Well... you'll have less of them, that's for sure. Probably.

We went ahead and thumbnailed the whole first chapter before we really started on any of the next steps. We hadn't even decided on a lot of the designs featured in this chapter yet! But it seemed it was the only way to see if the story had nice pacing and an exciting story arc. Maybe it's not the correct way of doing things, but being able to read the whole first chapter in thumbnail form so soon in the process was definitely worth it (**Fig.02**).
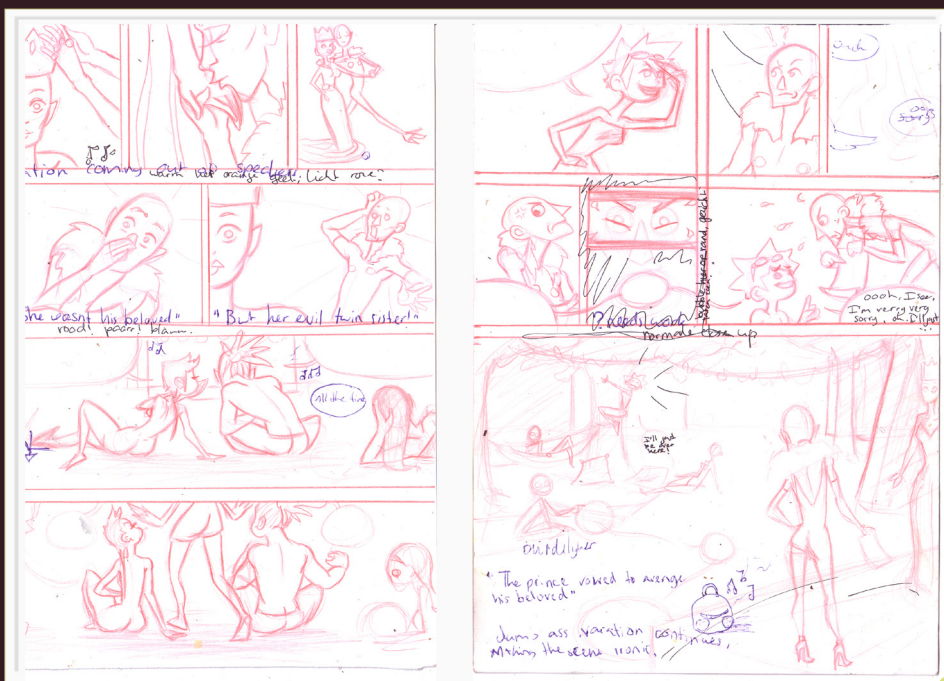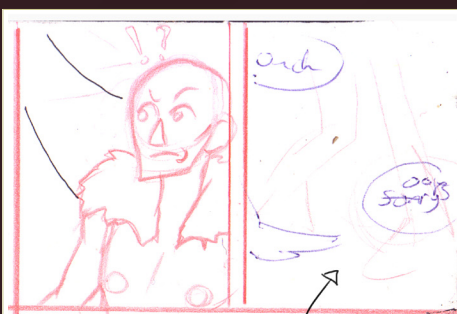
NOTICE THE LACK OF... WELL
EVERYTHING?

OUCH!!!!

GAH!
DIDN'T SEE YOU THERE!
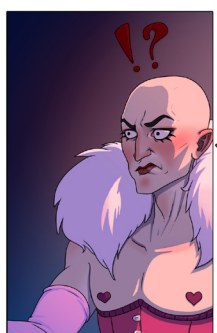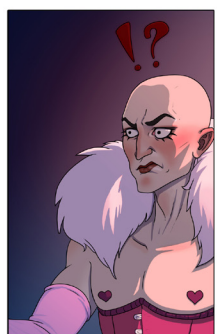
After this step, we had a pretty long break from production and went back to pre-production. A lot of stuff still needed to be designed before we could really move on, so that's what we did. We discovered something very good came out of it. Taking such a long break from the story and the thumbnails allowed us to get a fresh perspective. By the time the designs we needed were done, and we could take a look at the thumbnails again, it was quite easy to improve them and push the whole lot a bit further still.

What makes thumbnails so incredibly powerful is that you can create a small and more simply drawn version of your comic in a very short time. This gives you an overview of all the work you still have to do, but it also gives you quite an accurate idea of what your end product might be like.

Sketch

With each step you can imagine more and more of the end result. This is a pretty exciting thing, and it can be really hard not to rush ahead and completely finish one panel, because you feel too excited to wait. But wait you must.

If your thumbnails were solid, this step can be pretty easy. We found out we had some stuff pretty well figured out in the thumbnails, and they easily translated into sketches. But with one particular panel we got sloppy, and sadly

it shows. Even though before we started the sketch, we tried different new thumbnails of the panel, it just didn't work. The idea of it was just wrong, and on top of that we failed to properly draw the action (the main character is supposed to accidentally trip over people). In hindsight it could have been fixed by giving the panel more space and maybe showing the two characters involved completely. We settled for some explanatory talk bubbles instead... and we'll never underestimate thumbnails again! (**Fig.03**).

As we mentioned before there was quite a bit of time between doing the thumbnails and starting the actual sketching. This resulted in us having a much better grip on the story. We were able to add some neat details here and there that we hadn't thought of earlier. Needless to say we quickly forgot about our previous blunder and felt like kings again (**Fig.04**).

Inking

There's not much to say about inking. Lines are lines. I guess you can do your inking in all kinds of ways. Being the lazy hippies that we are, we decided to make it simple for ourselves. We don't even have dynamic line weight, it's 3.0 pixels thick for the foreground and 2.0 for the background. That's it really. Line weight usually adds a lot of character to a drawing and focuses and guides the viewer's eye. And a lack of it can definitely be seen as a weakness. But

it also makes being consistent a much easier job (remember we both wanted to participate in every step so we both had to be able to reproduce the chosen style at any point of the process). We also hoped to make up for the lack of line weight in the colors, which I think we totally did (**Fig.05**).

Colors

This part is actually pretty complex. We could write a whole new tutorial about how we colored these pages and it would be as long as the rest of this article combined! But luckily, someone else (Matthew M. Laskowski) already made that tutorial for us. You can find it at: **http://fox-orian.deviantart.com/art/Painting-via-Adjustment-Layers-114727026** and we highly recommend it if you are interested in cell shading and don't hate having to deal with layers.

So, as you might expect, you start out with the flats (if you feel like being wild you can actually

also end with the flats; whatever tickles your fancy) and you don't have to worry about what colors you pick at this point, because you can always change them later (**Fig.06**).

After this is done you can add little nuances in the skin tones like reds on the cheeks and whites on the sweaty parts. Now's a good time to add gritty details like textures on the ground etc.
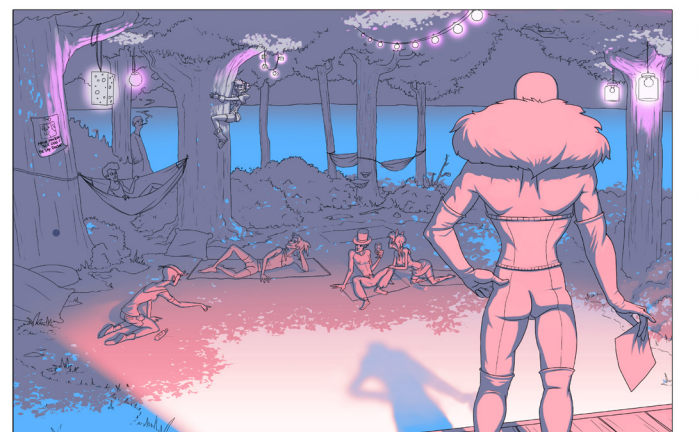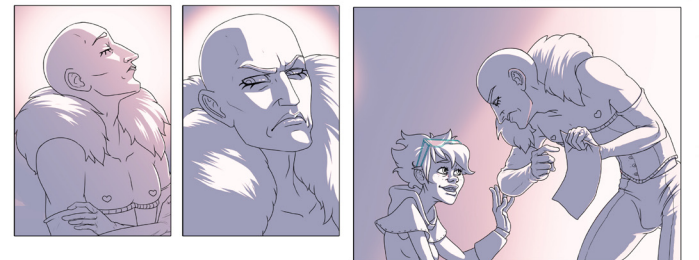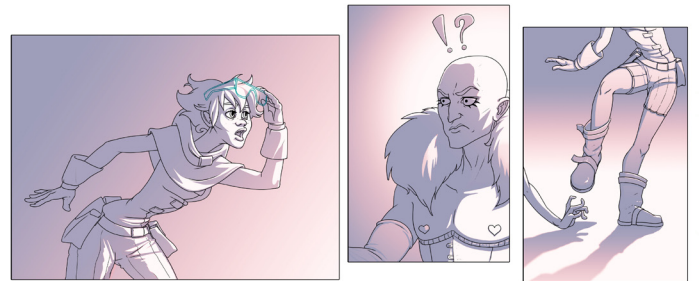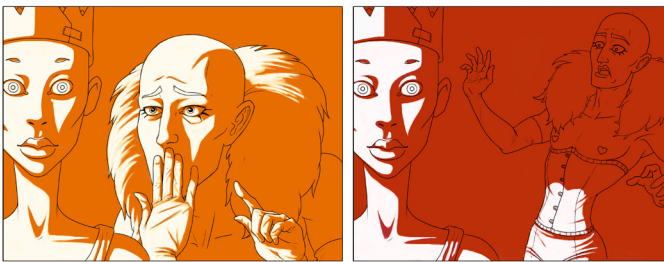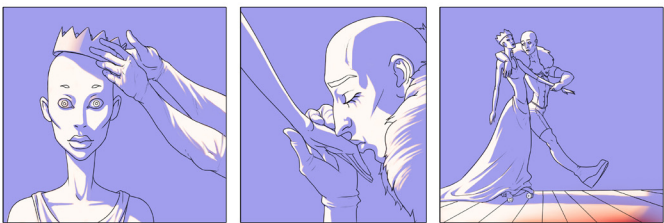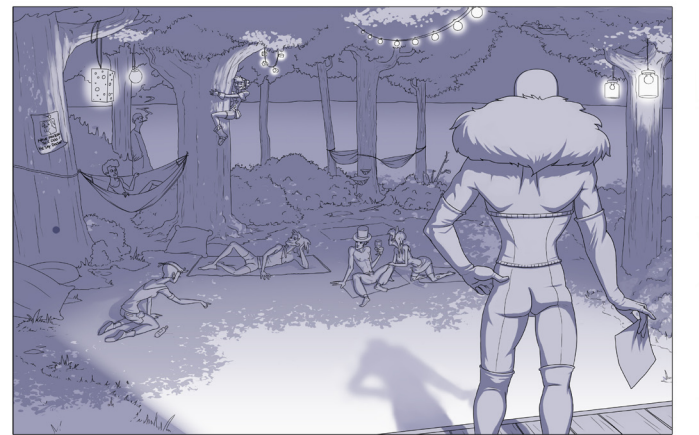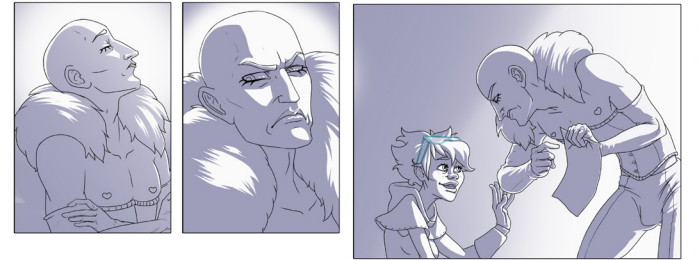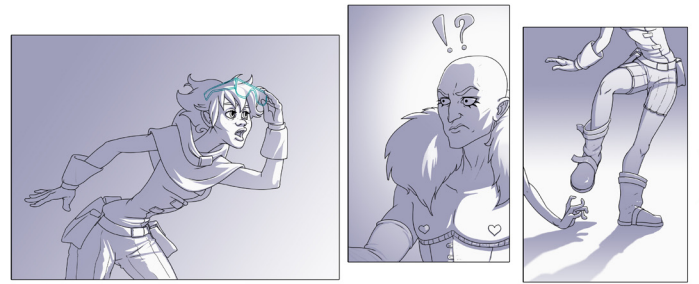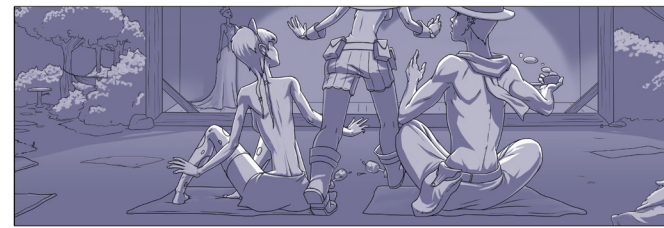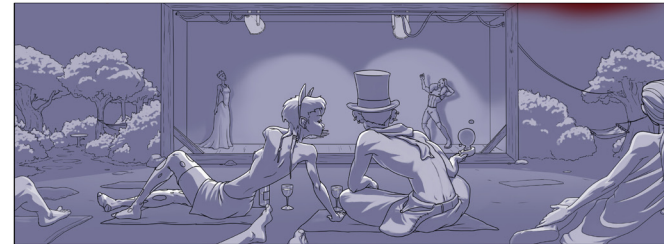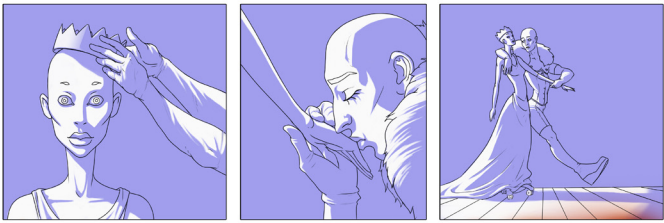
The second step is the first shadow layer. Just like with painting you have to think of the light source, but of course you can cheat a bit to make it visually more readable (**Fig.07**).

The third step is pretty easy. You invert the shadow layers and voila, you have light! Why would you do this? Because it brings the colors closer together and those funky weird colors you began with are suddenly balanced (**Fig.08**).

The fourth step is darker spots. You paint those in the spots that get less light, obviously (**Fig.09**).

The fifth is highlights to make things pop (**Fig.10**).

We really like this technique because we can both work on the same file and then just merge everything together when we're done. It's also really consistent and incredibly easy to adjust. You can change the color of the light and shadows, the intensity, everything! We love it. And that whole full feature animation vibe it has, doesn't hurt either.

Talk Bubbles

Don't underestimate them, ever! We recommend thinking about their placement in the earliest stage. They can be your friends if you give them the attention they need. They can help guide the viewer's eyes through the pages. They can add timing to a character's text. They can make words look as if they were confidently spoken, or them can make them sound shy. They can emphasize things or muffle them away.

Talk bubbles might seem harmless and unimportant, but they are not. There's a whole science behind them. Google it! We were shocked too. Oh, and pick a readable font! It should be readable even when it's small. If your ignorance about typography is the same as ours, ask someone you know to help you. Anyway, I guess what we're trying to say, once again, is don't rush through this step. Do some research and take you time – it's worth it (**Fig.11 – 12**).
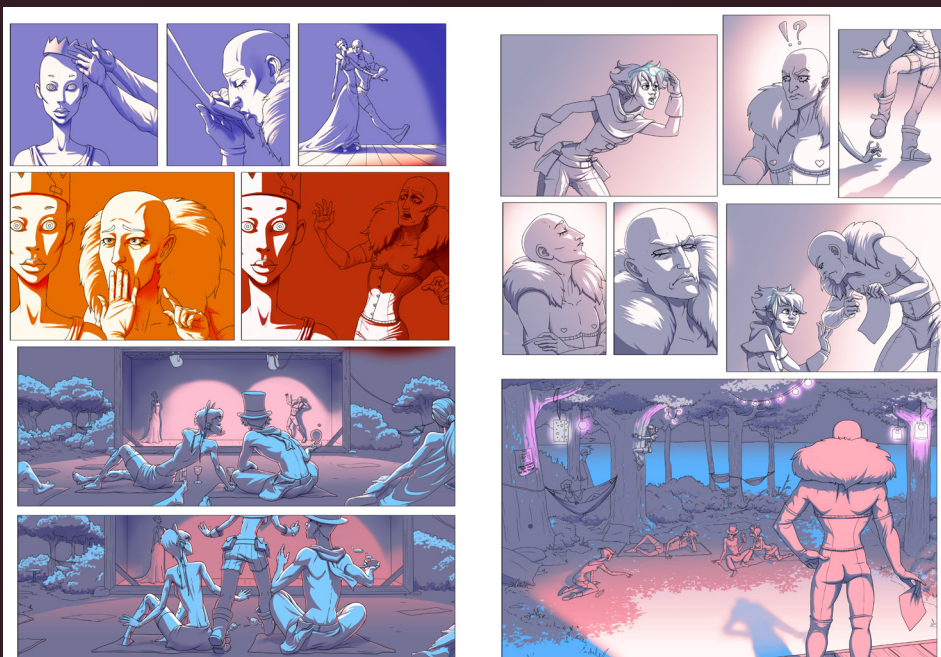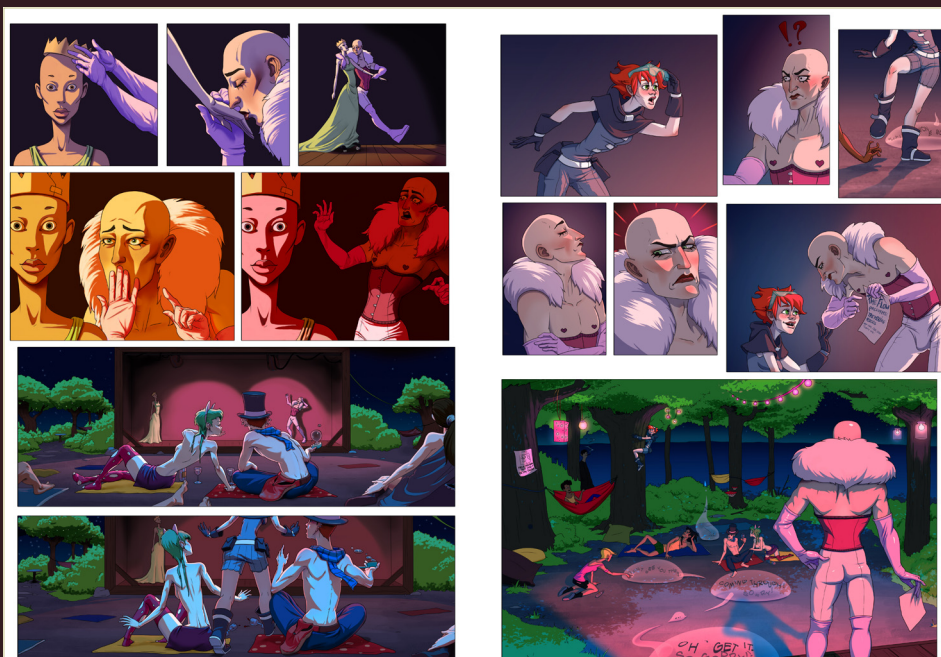
When we started out we had the optimism of ignorance and thought we would tame this comic puppy in a few months. That was a long time ago. Sequential art is difficult! Show it respect, buy it some flowers and dinner, and take it slow. Courting a comic is a daunting process, but it's very rewarding.

No matter how much you might hate the idea, you are going to make mistakes. Even the biggest movie productions have little sloppy mistakes in them. Our biggest mistake in these two pages was the stuff of nightmares. It wasn't until we almost finished with the pages that we realized we forgot to give the main character a backpack.

The backpack is kind of super-important to the story. I forgot to add it in the thumbnails, we commented about it, and then continued to forget about it in the final pages. It happens (**Fig.13**).

Signing Off

Well... that's it. Currently we're working hard on the first chapter of our comic and we still have a long way to go. But since we created a world, or rather a universe (or rather a Hippieverse?), we are planning more than just a comic. What that might be? Well, that's to be shown at a later date. But rest assured; we're not done yet!

We hope some of you might have picked up a thing or two from these articles and we would love to see and hear what you came up with.

Thanks for staying with us, and we will hopefully see you at the next ComicCon!

David Smit and Nadia Karroue

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DESIGNING DROIDS

UNIT-4580

RECON DROID

Digital art has it place in many industries, but none of these rely on it as much as the games industry! Obviously games are made of many elements, but you could argue that the most important element of any game is the characters. In this tutorial series our artists will be showing us how to design droids as if there were doing it within the games industry. This will involve them coming up with the design and showing you how to develop it to the point where they will even show you how to create the technical drawings for a 3D Modeler!

Chapter 01: Recon Droid

Software Used: Photoshop

Hello, my name is Alex. I draw mechs… a lot! Some might say it's a calling and they would be right. When you get down to it, robots are just plain fun to draw/design/model etc. It's practically a fact. Between the numerous aesthetic approaches one could take, imagining the functionality of a design, the design flexibility to make stuff up as you go and the miscellaneous cool factor that robots innately possess, it means that, at least for me, (having grown up on a steady diet of video games featuring the piloting or blowing up of mechs of every stripe) it's always been a fun endeavor. In the case of this particular robot image, the goal was to create a scout droid of some sort, so let's go on and explore that. The tools I used were an Intuos 3 Wacom tablet, Photoshop CS5 and various brushes and textures.

While not always a necessity (as it very much depends on if the piece is for fun or for a client, as well as just how much familiarity you have with the various mecha genres in general) it often helps to stop and really think about what your design ought to have. Just mull things over for a bit. Think about what kind of role this scout is supposed to fulfill; think about what sort of equipment and configurations of parts it would need to succeed in that role; think about the relative level of technology this design is supposed to be a product of.

Now, when I think of scout droids the first thing that comes to mind is something lanky, lightly armed and armored, with a considerable amount of spotting gear and electronic countermeasures. Something that looks like it would have only just enough protection and armament to affect a speedy escape. In terms of relative tech level, as a matter of preference I went for something that would look like it could potentially exist somewhere within the next 25 – 50 years.

After brainstorming for a few minutes I started messing around with various different silhouettes straight in Photoshop. When doing

01
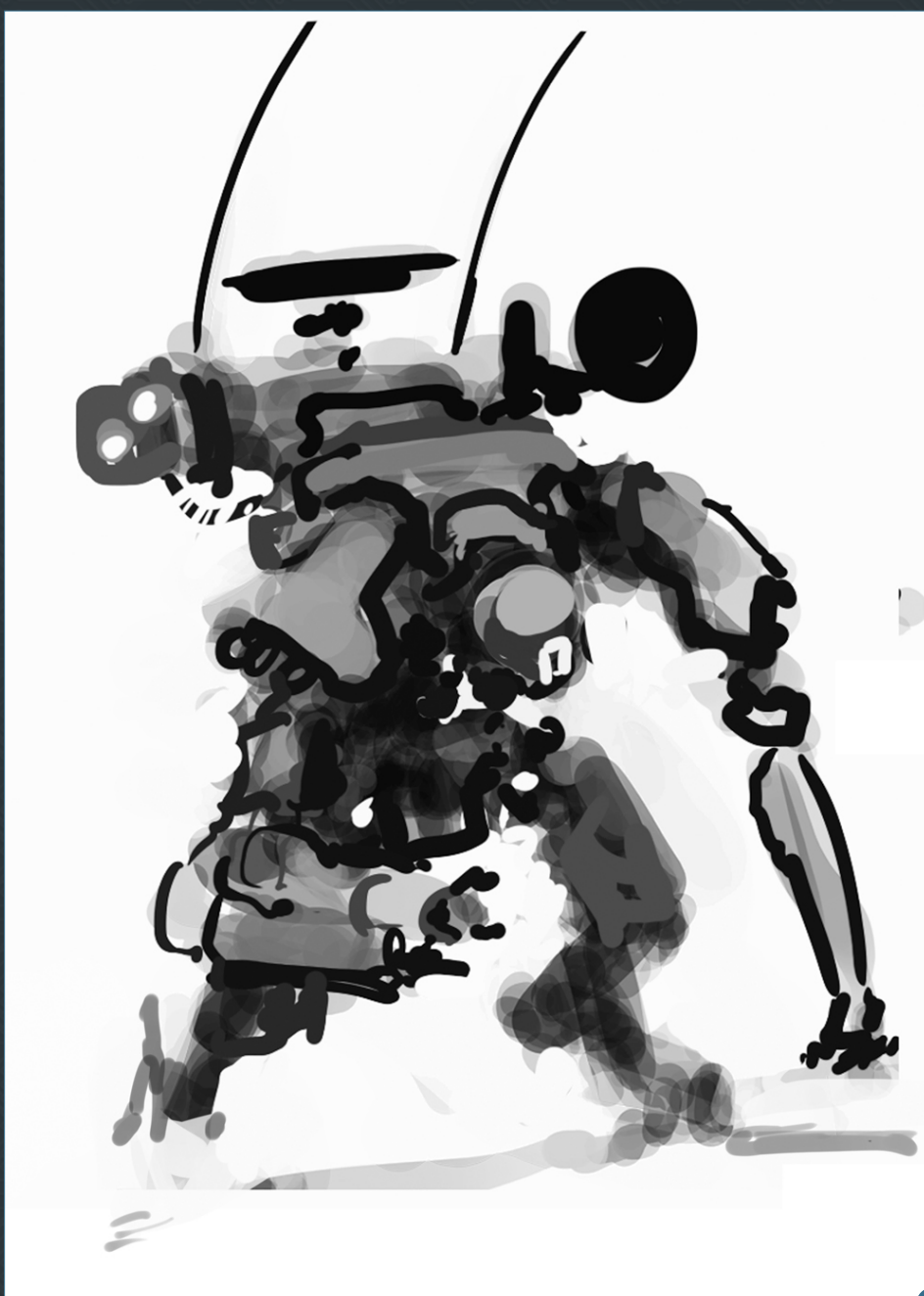
these I keep the requirements of the design in mind as I play with various shapes, poses and body configurations. More often than not if you go this route it might feel like taking a Rorschach test at the same time as you create one. As the silhouettes develop you should start visualizing the relative placement of parts and features, and begin extrapolating their general placement. In the case of this particular scout droid, I ended up going with my second design, as it seemed to convey the scout feel the best.

With the sketch decided upon I started to make a few subtle experimentations in black and white

for the pose and form. These included shrinking the left arm a small amount and seeing how the image might look running instead of standing. While there is always room for adjustments later, it does help to sort of settle on a basic form from the onset (**Fig.01**).

Now I started the clean-up of the sketch. I began by reining in the shapes, defining the angles of various parts and further interpreting the loose sketchy amorphous shapes into having a clearer function. I also established a particular shade of gray, which would become the relative base tonal value of the design that I would work off of

later. I also made adjustments to the pose and proportions, as the hip area was not looking all that great to me anymore and the left arm felt too long (**Fig.02**).

As I continued I made further adjustments and alterations as I interpreted the rough shapes of the design into more detailed forms, moving steadily into the detailing work. I also returned the pose to the original sketch's standing position as I felt it worked better.

With the main figure more or less settled upon it was time to begin establishing the environment surrounding this scout. Considering its scouty nature, I felt that the implication of an overlook of sorts would be fitting, and considering the machine's splayed feet and long flexible arms, it
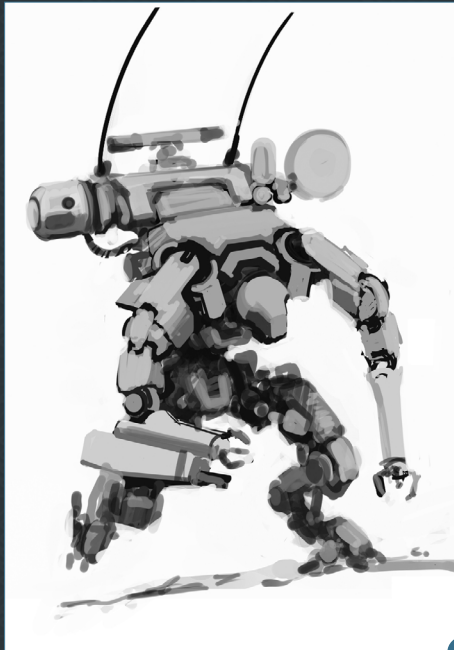
seemed suited towards picking through broken and potentially unstable terrain. So I went for a desert ruins motif. At the end of this stage, I took a sandy yellowish color and applied it as a Color Burn layer to the entire image to set the basic starting hue (**Fig.03**).

Continuing onward I began to add additional line work type details, refined the shapes further and adjusted the position, size and angle of the droid's left arm. Feeling the need to have some spots of more saturated color in an overall unsaturated image, I decided to give the droid a bright orange eye. In order to establish a more defined set of shadows and highlights on the droid, I roughly painted into two separate overlay layers – one white, the other black – where the general highlights and shadows were to go. I then used Gaussian blur to soften both layers and reduce their opacities (**Fig.04**).

Following that I copied and merged the image into a new layer and desaturated it completely. Then, using the Dodge and Burn tools as well as the level adjustment tool, I tweaked the overall contrast before setting the layer type to Overlay. I also significantly decreased the opacity so as not to make the design too contrasted.

At this stage it felt like the design needed to be made a bit more crisp, with slightly sharper looking edges. To do this I copied and merged a
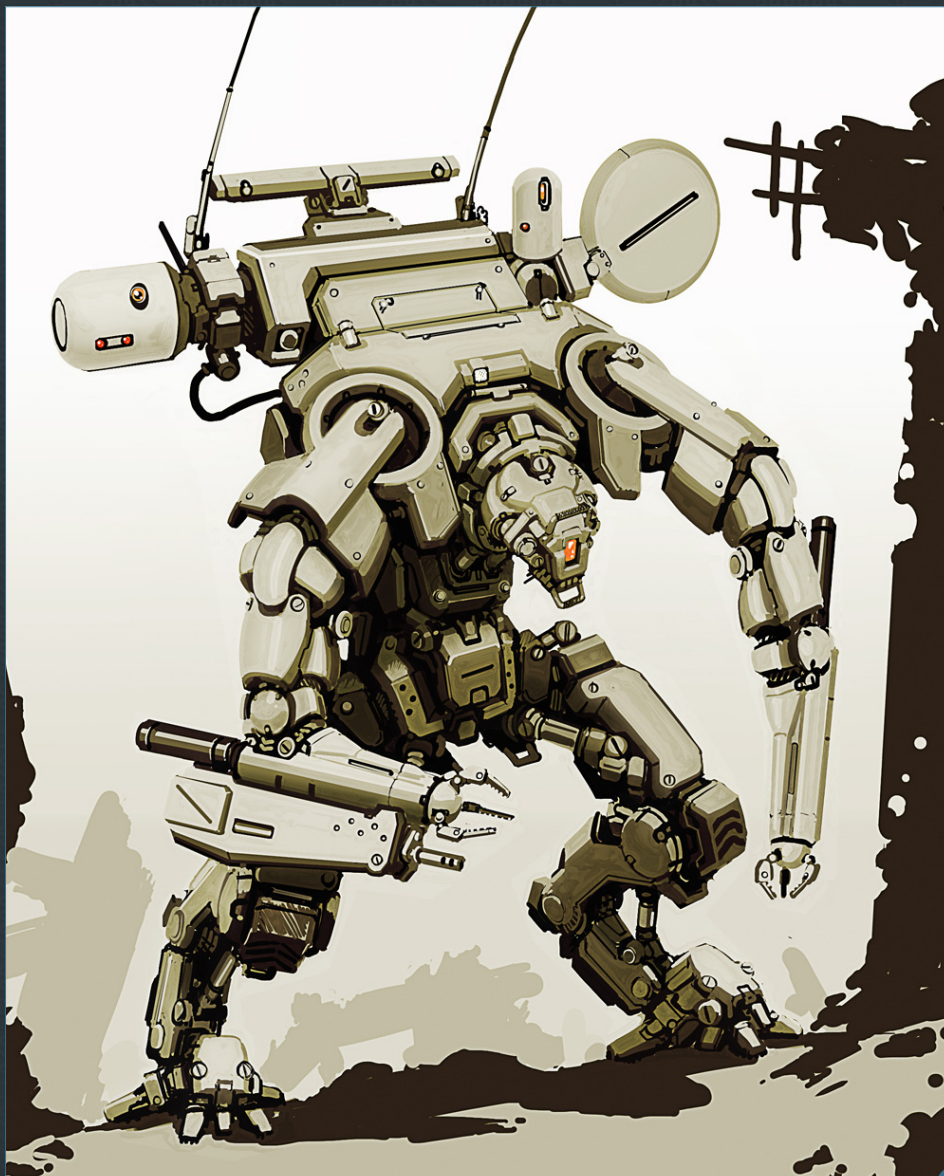
new layer and used the High Pass filter, then set the layer type to Overlay, thus causing edges over the entire image to come in a little sharper.

At this point I began to poke around the image looking for small details to correct/add and rough areas that could stand to be refined. Later secondary and tertiary colors/tones were added to the droid, namely as orange striping and bare grey metal surfaces. In order to accent the edges further and brighten up the design a small amount the image was copied and merged again, run through an accented edges filter, set to the lighter color layer type and dropped significantly in opacity so as not to be overpowering (**Fig.05**).
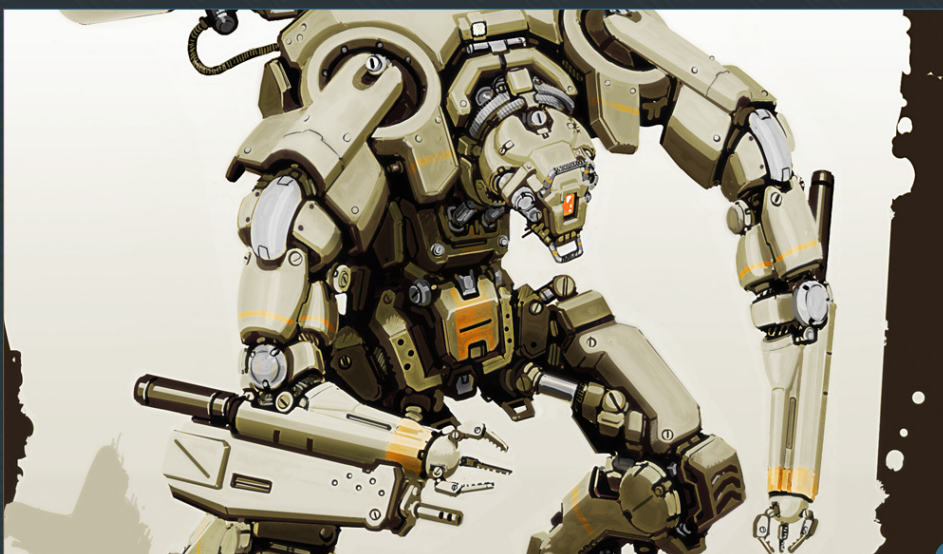
Although I continued to add small details and make slight tweaks, this stage of the image's development focused primarily on establishing some of the atmosphere in the environment that the droid was standing in. Using various sand and dirt textures set at a low transparency I was able to establish the terrain in the foreground. Various cloud textures were repurposed as drifting smoke by adjusting their hues and transparencies. I set one layer to Soft Light, one to Overlay and a third as a subtraction layer, as this gave the impression of a bit of light bleeding around the sides of the figure. Additionally the entire image was copy merged and run through a darker setting of the accented edges filter to get more of an overall grittiness. Then the opacity was dropped. At the end of this stage the image was looking rather dimly lit (**Fig.06**).
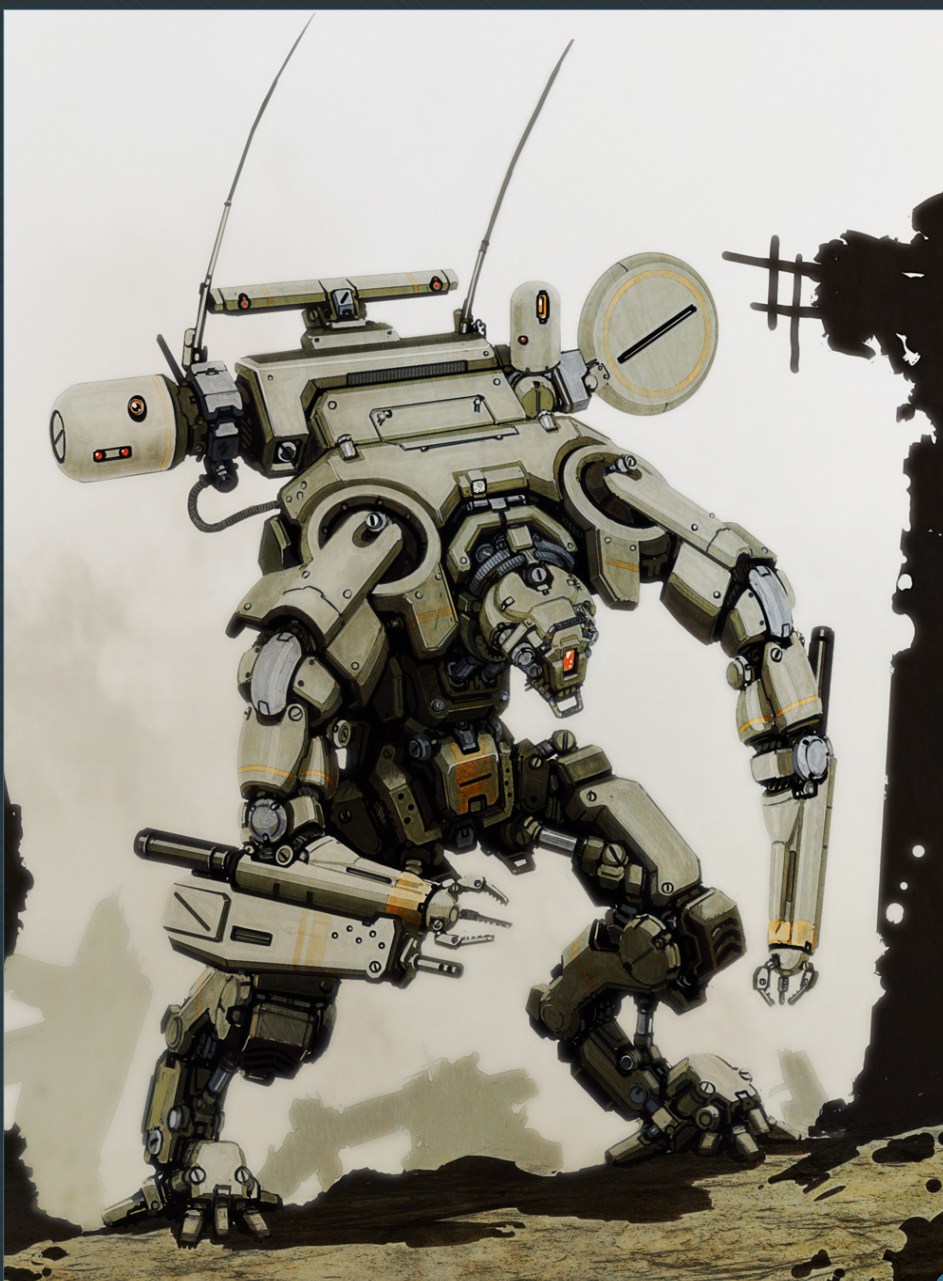
Next I began to add weathering, scratches and bullet holes for a little extra authenticity. This was done via setting a layer to the Color type and then, in the blending options, I adjusted the Bevel and Emboss sliders as well as using a grimy metallic texture with the bevel/emboss effect. I then began to paint scratches and dings where they would seem most logical to occur. For example, near joints, on areas that would likely bump into things and areas that I just wanted to look battle-damaged to some extent.

In light of the overall dimness of the image I used some Overlay layers and bright colors to

07

08

09

make certain areas pop out more brightly and to add color and highlights to the bare metal surfaces, as their specularity would be higher than the painted metal, and thus would take a hint of color from their surroundings. Also time was taken to use dedicated circle brushes to clean up some of the more irregular hand-drawn rivets, joints, bolts and assorted round areas (**Fig.07**).

At this point I was happy with the droid (though I did end up slapping a unit designation decal on it), which meant I could concentrate on achieving a good look for the rocks and broken ruins surrounding it. This was done by taking various images of broken concrete and resizing and reshaping them to match the breaks and cracks in the original silhouettes. I then erased the parts that where necessary. Certain foreground rock shapes were redone completely to make them fit the image better. The layers were color corrected from their original tones to match the sandy yellow hue of the rest of the image (**Fig.08 – 10**).

10

Alexander Iglesias

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WATCHED A BLOCKBUSTER IN 2011?

9 OF THE 10 HIGHEST-GROSSING MOVIES OF LAST YEAR FEATURED THE WORK OF VFS ANIMATION & VISUAL EFFECTS GRADS.

CLEMENT YIP — ANIMATOR
JOZEF VAN EENBERGEN — 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
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
TEH-WEI YEH — ROTO/PAINT ARTIST
YUTA SHIMIZU — LIGHTING LEAD
CHELSEA WHITTET — ADMINISTRATOR
NUNO NISA PEREIRA — VISUAL EFFECTS TECHNICAL DIRECTOR / VISUAL EFFECTS TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
KIERAN TETHER — DIGITAL ARTIST / DIGITAL ARTIST
BORAE CHO — PIPELINE TECHNICAL DIRECTOR / PIPELINE TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
BRIAN ZHENG — MODELLING ARTIST
REX FANG — ANIMATOR
JOOYONG LEE — ROTO/PAINT ARTIST
JUSTINE CODRON — LIGHTING ARTIST/TD
BILL WATRAL — EFFECTS ARTIST
SHAUN ROTH — VISUAL EFFECTS ARTIST

RISE OF THE PLANET OF THE APES
HARRY POTTER & THE DEATHLY HALLOWS PART 2
TRANSFORMERS: DARK OF THE MOON
THOR
PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: ON STRANGER TIDES
FAST FIVE
TWILIGHT: BREAKING DAWN - PART 1
CAPTAIN AMERICA: THE FIRST AVENGER
CARS 2

VISUAL EFFECTS COORDINATOR / VISUAL EFFECTS COORDINATOR — SOFUS GRAAE
LEAD LIGHTING ARTIST/LOOK DEV ARTIST — JOSHUA HERRIG
EFFECTS TECHNICAL DIRECTOR — MIKE RHONE
LEAD ANIMATOR — DAVID YABU
DIGITAL PAINT ARTIST / DIGITAL PAINT & ROTO ARTIST — DAPHNE DE JESUS
DIGITAL PAINT ARTIST / STEREOSCOPIC PREP/ROTO ARTIST / STEREOSCOPIC PREP/ROTO ARTIST — CESAR RODRIGUEZ BAUTISTA
STEREOSCOPIC NUKE BACKGROUND PREP / ROTO & PAINT ARTIST — ANNA TONRUNGROJ
TEXTURE ARTIST — JAMIE BOWERS
STEREO ROTO/PAINT ARTIST — KELSEY AYUKAWA
VISUAL EFFECTS ARTIST — LOUIS COX
ANIMATOR / PREVIS ARTIST — ANTHONY DI NINNO
ROTOSCOPE ARTIST — ANGEL VILLASENOR
EFFECTS TECHNICAL DIRECTOR — JAMES MCPHAIL
RIGGER — ALAN FREGTMAN
DIGITAL COMPOSITOR — GEETA BASANTANI
CREATURE TECHNICAL DIRECTOR — CAROLYN WONG
LIGHTING TECHNICAL DIRECTOR — RICHARD SUR
ANIMATOR — HYUN CHUL JUNG
LIGHTING TECHNICAL DIRECTOR — JULIEN STUART-SMITH
INTEGRATION ARTIST / INTEGRATION ARTIST — SAMSON WONG
MATCHMOVE ARTIST — SARA HILMARSDOTTIR
ANIMATOR — ADAM MARISETT
COMPOSITOR — DAANISH WAIN
LIGHTING AND ASSET TD — BIREN VENKATRAMAN
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Issue 078 February 2012

Cover image by Borislav Kechashki

Igor Kudryavtsev
Moscow based 3D artist

Gallery Artist
Gallery - 10 of the best images from around the world!

Desert Gas Station
Project Overview by Eugenio Garcia

ARMOURED BEAR

Ever wondered what a Polar Bear would look like armoured up, well here's your chance. Read how Borislav Kechashki took this fearsome animal and made him even deadlier, in our epic Armoured Beast tutorial series.

Power Plugs
Andrzej Sykut shows us hows add a Matrix inspired plug socket to the back of our necks, in the third part of our Cyborgs tutorial series.

Not all baking is done in the oven!
As **Gavin Goulden** draws to a conclusion in our **Sword Master 2** series, he shows us how to create texture maps commonly used in today's video games.

The Final Topology
The third chapter in **Diego Maia** insightful series, see him make final adjustments to his model, in preparation for the rigging process.

PAINTING CREATURES FROM
MYTHOLOGY

Myths, legends and fantasy creatures have always been influential when it comes to digital art. In fact, many artists will never really stray too far from these sorts of themes and ideas. In this series a selection of stunning artists will be taking this popular subject and exploring some of its more diverse and lesser known characters. Throughout the series each artist will be given a brief for a character which they will need to interpret and turn into an illustration. To make things a little more interesting this will be done by not one but two artists, one using Photoshop and the other using Painter. This will not only show some of the differences between the two pieces of software, but will also show how the same brief can be interpreted in two different ways. This month **Markus Lovadina** and **Simon Dominic Brewer** tackle the **Leshy**.

Chapter 02: Leshy

Software Used: Photoshop

Introduction

When I create a new image I usually start by blocking in some rough colors and shapes, particularly when working from a brief. The topic I was given for this project was a Leshy, a spirit from Slavic mythology. A Leshy is described as a tall man who is able to change his size and whose hair and a beard is made of living vines and grass. The description also says he's sometimes depicted with hooves, horns and a tail. This was enough information to get started.

Pre-process

Sometimes I start with some really rough pencil sketches, kind of like thumbnails (**Fig.01**). This
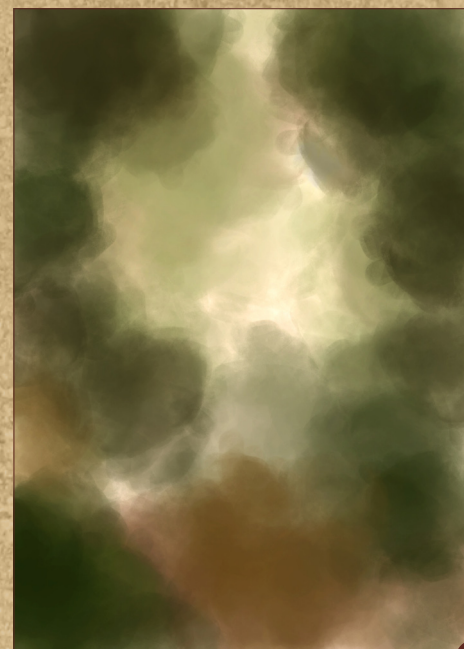
is a really good way to get a feeling for the composition, the lighting and the character's pose. My thumbnails are always very loose, but by doing this I was able to start to get a clear vision of the image I wanted to paint. So at this stage I was ready to move into Photoshop.

Blocking in

For this image I decided to start with the background and just painted in some rough color values with a custom cloud brush. The brush was set to Opacity mode. This is a good way to set down the mood and the base color palette. The Leshy is described as a forest creature so with this in mind I used some moody greens, browns and some yellows as the base tone (**Fig.02**).

Background Details

When I was happy with the color palette I started to add the first details into the background. A while ago I created a palm leaf brush with modified setting for Scattering, Opacity and Size. By using this brush, a self-made tree brush and some random leaf brushes I created the look of a forest. Picking colors from the palette on your canvas will give a consistency to the overall look and feel. For the ground I used some custom shapes I created a while ago. Both techniques allowed me to speed up the initial process and I was able to focus on the overall mood, which is important (**Fig.03**).

Details and Color Corrections

I added more detail to the background with the same brushes as described previously. By
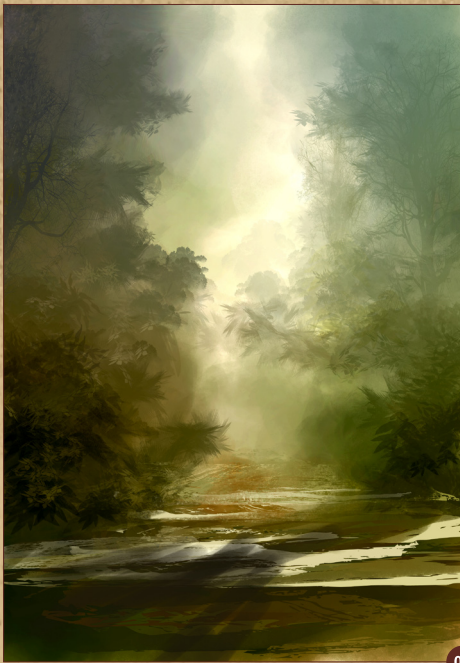
working with brighter tones in the background and darker values nearer to the camera you can demonstrate depth in your image. I again used custom shapes on the floor, but this time with brighter colors. This is an easy way to establish your light direction. To add more color variation to the background I created a new layer, set it to Soft Light and added a bluish soft round gradient to it. These layer effects will give you the option to go back and forth until you're happy with the result without repainting certain areas (**Fig.04**).

The Character

For this image I wanted to keep the background loose so I could focus more on the character. I started to block in the initial shape of the Leshy with a Hard Round brush. The brush was set to Opacity mode and I kept the size to 100%. For the smaller details I decreased the size of the brush. I also used the selection (Lasso) tool to draw in certain shapes like his leather apron (**Fig.05**).

Adding Values

At this point I was quite happy with the shape of the Leshy so I painted in the first skin tone

values. Based on the information I had for the Leshy I chose a yellowish gray for his pale skin tone. These values were pretty rough at this point and were mainly to set the proportion/anatomy. On top of the values I painted in his companion - a gray wolf. Once again I used the Hard Round brush. The wolf helps with the scale of the main character (**Fig.06**).

Foreground Elements

Flipping the canvas at this stage is quite important as it means you can easily see if you made any mistakes with the composition or scaling. Normally I'm not a big fan of the main

focus being straight in the middle, but for this image I felt that it was the best way to show the character in his natural environment.

To make the Leshy look as if he was part of his environment I created a new layer and painted in some foreground elements. This time I started with a really dark color (not black, but a really dark gray with some green tones in it) and worked in some more saturated colors. I again used the custom leaf brush. To add more depth and volume to the foreground I painted in some darker leaves over the brighter ones. I went back and forth doing this until I was happy with the overall look (**Fig.07**).

Detailing the Leshy

My usual workflow for painting skin is to use a combination of Hard Round brushes and the Smudge tool. I'm not really used to soft round brushes. I used the Round brush set to 70% opacity (still using Opacity mode) and picked colors from the painted areas. With the Smudge

tool I was able to get some pretty soft blending and some happy color accidents as well (**Fig.08**).

Further Details

By using the Lasso tool I selected the shapes that on his apron that I wanted to color. Pressing Cmd/Ctrl and J will copy just the selected areas into a new layer. Now you can easily tweak the colors using the Color/Saturation filter. When I was happy with the color I started to paint in more highlights and shadows on his apron with the Hard Round brush. To get a bit more color variation into the Leshy's skin tones I created a new layer, which was set to Soft Light mode, and started to paint in some red and blue tones. On top of that I painted in some rim light to give it a three-dimensional feeling (**Fig.09**).

Horns, Hair and Beard

For the horns, hair and the beard I used the Hard Round brush to lay down the overall shape. His horns are made of branches and

leaves, which I thought was more interesting that the typical satyr horns or horns from well-known animals. I also thought that they worked well with his hair and beard. Instead of giving the Leshy hooves (which would make him look like a satyr) I decided to just add a tail.

Until now everything was painted by using the Hard Round brush and the Smudge tool. For his club I used some photo references, which I found in my own library. It's useful to create your own photo reference library. Go out and take a photo of everything you see; you'll need it someday. To add a more dramatic and mystical light I used a second rim light, this time in blue (**Fig.10**).

The Wolf

Right now the Leshy was close to finished and it was time to start painting the wolf. Fur isn't that easy to paint, but there are a lot of ways you can create good results without painting every hair. A while ago I created a custom fur brush. This brush was made from a good reference photo which I added some brush strokes on top of to get a more painterly look. My fur technique is quiet different to my other techniques. I create a new layer for each brush stroke and deform it by using the Transformation tool or the Liquify tool. I also erase the unnecessary areas. I do this until I feel that I am happy that it looks like fur. The last step is to use the Smudge tool to smooth areas (**Fig.11**).

Final Details, Color Corrections and Atmosphere

To give the blueish rim light more plausibility I created a new layer, set to Color mode and added a soft round gradient on the lower left side of the image. I created another new layer

and picked a really bright and saturated green for the glowing eyes of the Leshy and the wolf. Adding effects on a separate layer helps you have more control when you need to adjust things. I also added some fog to this lower section by using the same cloud brush I used for the initial blocking in.

To make him more earthy and mystical I added some tribal tattoos. The tattoos were made with the same technique I used for the colored areas on his apron. This time I set the layer to Multiply and played around with the layer opacity. The

last touch was to add some color balance for a greenish forest mood and to use the Unsharp mask filter for crisper edges (**Fig.12**). At this point I was happy with the image and felt that it was complete. You can download the brushes and shapes I used to create this image from the download link.

Markus Lovadina

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Chapter 02: Leshy

Software Used: Painter

The Leshy is a forest-dwelling creature from mythology who is able to change size from the smallest blade of grass to the tallest tree. He appears in the form of a pale-skinned man with green eyes and a beard made from grass and vines, and is sometimes rumored to have a tail, hooves and horns. The Leshy is the friend of other forest denizens and is often depicted in the company of bears or gray wolves. Because his official title is Lord of the Forest he carries a wooden club, presumably in case anyone disputes it.

For this tutorial I'll be using Painter 12 to illustrate the Leshy in his native habitat. I did wonder whether to show the Leshy in miniature
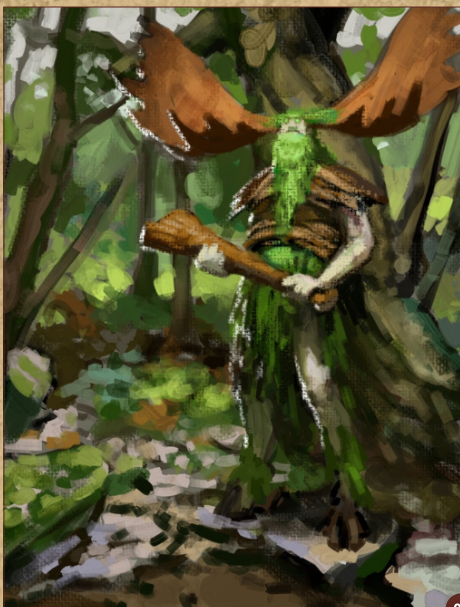
form, but I think that would make him too ineffective-looking, so instead I'm opting for full-on giant mode.

Concept Sketch

I quickly sketch several representations of the Leshy, with his grassy beard, hooves and club. I browsed some horned animals on the web and considered what different types of horn would look like. Goat and oxen horns would make him appear too demonic and bull horns too mundane, so I went with moose antlers which fit in well with the woodland environment. To simulate a pencil I use a circular brush set to Grainy Soft Cover, with Pressure-dependent Opacity set to 100% and 95% Grain. The Grain setting allows me to give that characteristic charcoal roughness when I boost the contrast of

the paper settings. I also sketch in some bright highlights to help give the concepts dimension and form (**Fig.01**).

Color Concept

I then paint another concept of my chosen character, this time in color. I paint it small and quickly, taking about 10 minutes. The idea with the color concept is that it gives me a feel of how the finished image might look in terms of color and composition. I decide that despite my initial sketch appearing OK, the Leshy strikes me as too human looking, more like an old bloke with a green beard than a mystical Lord of the Forest. For that reason I go back to my sketching and create another concept, this time depicting the Leshy as thinner and less human in appearance (**Fig.02**).

Outline sketch

I collect a few reference photos to help me with key areas such as the Leshy's pose and the forest floor. Next I create a 1448 x 2000 pixel canvas in a low value color. I don't like starting with a pure white canvas as I find it a bit dazzling and also it prevents you from adding highlights in the sketch stage.

On this new canvas I create a layer onto which I sketch my new, slim-line Leshy, referring to my character reference to get a general idea of the torso anatomy and the hand positions when gripping the wooden club (**Fig.03**).

Filling out the Sketch

Once I complete the outline sketch in black pencil I add areas of shadow. I don't press too hard as I want the texture of the paper to show through. The final sketch stage is to create another layer above the sketch layer. This is my highlight layer. I switch to white and sketch over the areas that are affected by my primary light source, the sun, which will be above the character and slightly to its right (the left as we see it here) (**Fig.04**).

Creating a Palette

After browsing my reference photos I now create a color palette. I display my Mixer palette, clear it and dab onto it a new selection of colors based on the most prevalent colors in my reference photos. I have decided my scene will be damp and misty so I keep most of my colors in the mid to low saturation range whilst ensuring they cover a full range of values (light to dark).

When I've got the basic colors down I use the New Color Set From Mixer Pad option in the Mixer panel menu. This gives me a number of swatches in my Color Set Library panel, some of which I delete to keep the size manageable. I won't be sticking strictly to these colors, but they do give me a good base on which to start (**Fig.05**).

Blocking in Colors

Still working at a relatively small level (2000 pixels high) I apply color directly to the canvas
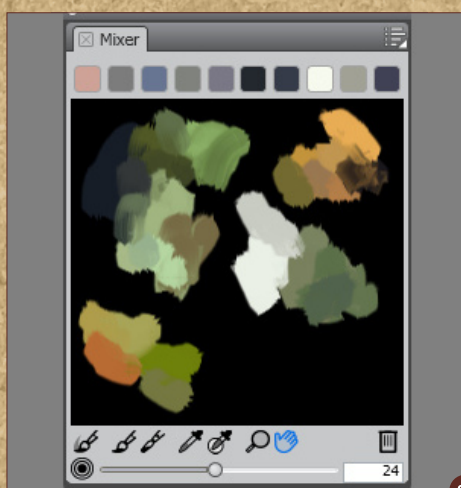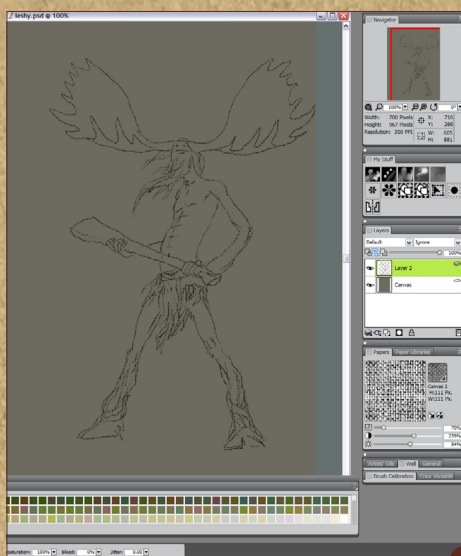

beneath my two sketch layers. So now I have the canvas, which is blank; layer 1, which contains the color; layer 2, which has the black pencil lines on it and layer 3, which has the white pencil highlights in it.

I make the decision to have my Leshy standing in a woodland clearing so that he doesn't get lost amongst the trees (or get his antlers caught; I guess that's why he finds it useful to change size). As he is very tall in his current incarnation I paint the horizon line close to the bottom of the canvas. This gives the impression that he is towering above us. As a general rule, characters who are the same height as the viewer will have their eyes in line with the horizon no matter how far in the distance they appear, assuming a flat surface.

In the foreground I slop some bright and dark colors to represent rocks. The middle distance

is dominated by grass and bracken with the odd clump of weeds and a mass of brambles thrown in for good measure. The nature of the vegetation may well change further down the line, but right now my priority is covering the canvas with paint to give me a representative base from which to go forward.

The forest itself is represented by the looming shapes of trees, painted using desaturated greens and browns to suggest distant objects on a misty day. The trees are too far away to explicitly detail all but the largest boughs and branches, so I use blobs of a lighter value to represent the networks of smaller twigs. In order to avoid the forest looking like a solid mass I dapple the edges of the tree forms with dabs of sky color, which gives the effect of individual clumps of branches through which patches of sky can be seen (**Fig.06**).
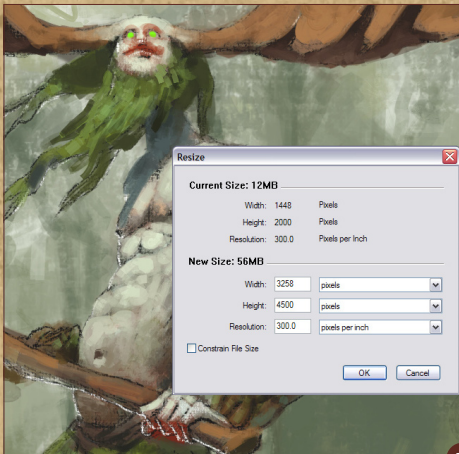
Resize Up

Once the color is blocked in I resize the image upwards whilst retaining the aspect ratio. So 1448 x 2000 pixels becomes 3528 x 4500 pixels. This is larger than my final image will be because I like to work at this size in order to easily paint fine detail. Zooming in to 100% now reveals a mess of textures and paint blobs. This is good; if it wasn't a mess I'd start to worry.

The textured, random nature of these brush strokes and blobs is very useful when painting vegetation and other non-ordered subjects. The human brain is not particularly good at inventing believable organic shapes from scratch, but it is good at finding patterns in randomness or semi-randomness. The messy brush strokes provide good stimulus from which embryonic clumps of grass, rocks and branches can emerge (**Fig.07**).

Painting the Forest

Using an Artists Oil's brush with 50% Grain I add detail to the background forest. I use value as a method of communicating depth, with trees nearer the viewer being of lower value than those further away. I keep my strokes relatively loose so that they don't overwhelm my main character with detail. Also, I make sure my brush stokes aren't too sharp, for the same reason (**Fig.08**).

Suggesting Branches

Against the outer edges of the paint blobs representing the branches I etch lines of sky color. This gives the impression of branches being present without my having to laboriously paint every one of them. I allow some of the

original texture to remain in the main body of the tree, smoothing it over very lightly with a blending brush so that no pixilation remains from the original upsizing (**Fig.09**).

Creature Detail

I now move on to the creature itself. I tend to add detail to a blocked-in color image using a three-stage process. First, I use the Artists' Oils brush to further define the forms. The grain in the brush gives a nice textured effect and the pressure-dependent opacity ensures that a soft touch will blend the strokes (I always advise that in the General panel you set your Opacity to Pressure). A good tip when using Grain with Artists Oils is to set the Grain at around 50% because, oddly enough, increasing it beyond this value starts to decrease the effect.

For the next stage, which is the very fine detail, I'll use my circular pencil brush with added Bleed and low Resaturation. I only use this in the areas that need extra detail so I don't go over the whole thing again. Lastly, I use a

blending brush to subtly merge similarly colored areas of paints in areas that need it. I'm very careful not to blend too much and to leave sharp boundaries where necessary (**Fig.10**).

Leshy Limbs

The arms and legs of my Leshy are composed partially of mossy roots that merge into the flesh of the forearms and shins. I paint these vegetation areas with darker greens, browns and reds. In order to give the impression of dark coloration rather than shadow, I include some specular highlights – little dots of bright paint reflecting the main light source (**Fig.11**).

Painting Antlers

I loosely reference the shape of a pair of antlers from a photo of a moose, simplifying and modifying them a little. The lighting in the photo does not match that of my image so I need to understand the shape of the antlers. The lower portion curves towards us and back up to point at the sky. The central and rear portion curves more gradually upwards, passing through the

vertical and, right at the tip, curving back just a little towards us. When we combine this with the position of our light source it gives a deep shadow underneath the lower points contrasting with the bright surface above. The shadow increases with height as the antler becomes more oblique to the light. Along the edges of the antlers I add thin lines of highlight and shadow to show thickness, otherwise they would look like they're made of paper (**Fig.12**).

Just Add Wolves

According to the myth, the Leshy was often in the company of bears or gray wolves. I go for


wolves and after I find a couple of reference images I paint three of the animals into the background using the small circular brush. I avoid using dark colors because the wolves are in the middle distance and therefore affected by the misty atmosphere. Because they are so far away we can't make out the grain of their fur so I use a mottling, blended effect to portray their coats (**Fig.13**).

Mossy Rocks

In a damp environment like this rocks are likely to have moss on them. One useful tip for painting moss is to initially paint it using very dark colors then partially cover them with brighter greens. This helps give the impression that the moss has some thickness and is not just green paint smeared over the rock. For the rocks themselves I again use a combination of the Artists Oils brush and circular brush, the latter used primarily for detail. I set the color variability on the circular brush using the Color Variability panel. I set Hue, Value and Saturation to 18%, 1% and 1% respectively. This has the effect of a pronounced mottling of the hue (the color), and a slight variation of value (light and dark) and saturation on each brush dab (**Fig.14**).

Vegetation

The painting of vegetation can be approached in many different ways. This time I use the basic textures and colors already down on the canvas to sketch a dark, random mass of shapes representing grass, brambles and leaves. There are already a variety of shapes and patterns present from my initial coloring and these help
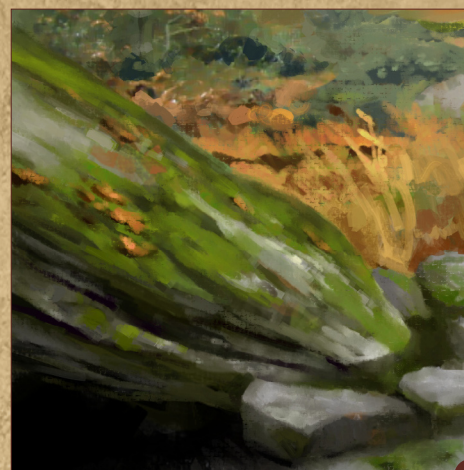
with the impression of tangled foliage. With my blender brush I smooth this paint so that it appears out of focus. This is the background for my actual vegetation, which I paint on top using, mainly, brighter colors and sharper strokes. I use some reference for the different types of plant, e.g., mbrambles, but I take care not to add too much detail to any particular area (**Fig.15**).

Appropriate Detail

As the vegetation gets further away the detail decreases until it fades into ill-defined areas of color. When combined with the color fading this gives a good impression of depth and it ensures that our main character stands out against the background (**Fig.16**).

Finishing Off

As is customary I leave my image for a day or two then come back to it to see if anything else needs doing. I apply a bit more detail to the Leshy's face and blend some background areas that I had missed before (**Fig.17**). Last of all I save a copy of my image in TIF format at the specified size of 2480 x 3425 pixels. I ensure Resolution is set to 300ppi so that the image can be printed if required. That concludes the tutorial and I hope you've enjoyed it.

Simon Dominic

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Image By Carlos Cabrera

"I had the main idea for the final image, which is a robot girl floating in a tank, surrounded by machines"

MEGA GIRL
MAKING OF BY LI BIAO

Futuristic and high-tech lighting give this month's Making Of image a stunning sci-fi look and in this article Li Biao tells us exactly how he achieved his impressive results.

Making Of Mega Girl

Software Used: Photoshop

Rough Sketch

I did all the painting in Photoshop. At the beginning I started with a rough sketch. I started by setting the background to a deep cool color and painted simple lines to create the overall shape. Then I had the main idea for the final image, which is a robot girl floating in a tank, surrounded by machines. Like Rockman (Mega Man), one of her arms has been modified into a gun or some kind of weapon (**Fig.01**).

Basic Shapes

At this stage I used a large round brush to paint the main color of the character. The focal point of the image is the character, so I used strong warm colors like oranges and yellows to draw her. At this early stage there was no need to draw with too much detail; the pose and the position didn't need to be very accurate (**Fig.02**).

Lighting

These are the main light sources in this scene (**Fig.03**). There's a warm light from the top, bottom and circle around the character. There is also a cool light from the background, which is much weaker than the warm light. Guided by the
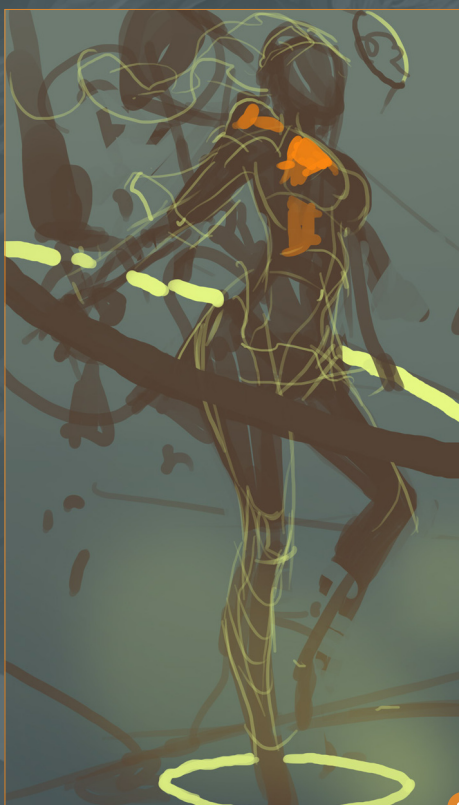
light source I used highly saturated, warm colors for the character so that the light and shadow worked well together (**Fig.04**).

The Head

At this stage I wanted to focus on the face, because I knew this would attract the most

attention. First of all, I drew the main shape of the face and then decided to change the angle of the head, to make her look as though she was focusing on the screen above her head. I also changed her skin tone. The new face is pale and lighter than before, as though a computer screen is close to her face.
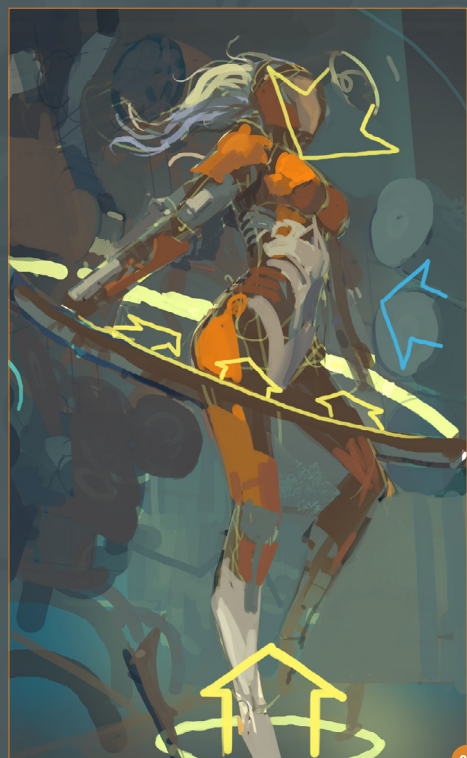
In order to give to background more depth, I added some lighting to it, which, in this instance, needed to be weaker and less saturated than the light source around the character. I didn't think too much about what these exact light sources could be as I knew I could work out these details later on. At this stage, I just drew in a small amount of light detail for the background (**Fig.05**).

Drawing the Area of Interest

During this stage, I mainly used a very small Round brush to add detail. I concentrated on her face and upper body, as I wanted these aspects to draw the most attention.

From then on, I started to think about the design of her armor. I added several deep lines to divide the armor into more intricate, smaller shapes. I concentrated on her upper arm and

chest. I wanted the texture of her upper arm to be different to other parts of the armor and so I decided to make it into an artificial muscle (**Fig.06**).

Guided by large shapes, I made the edges sharper and put some cool lights on the armor. This added a very technological look and balanced the color of the whole picture. I didn't take too long making the surface smooth or working on the finer detail.

I then put more detail on the head, especially in her hair, by adding different shades. I drew more lights on her helmet; as it's the highest area of interest, I wanted it to have a greater technological look. I cleaned up her face and added some highlights to her eyes, so she had the expression that she is looking up into the sky (**Fig.07**).

Environment and Details

I then added detail to the whole image. Within the character, I concentrated on the rest of the body design and details. I decide to keep one natural hand, as two canon arms made her seem too much like a weapon. I opened up the back of her left leg to give the impression the machine is doing the repair (**Fig.08**). I used the

default airbrush to add light and higher definition to make the surface of the armor appear smoother (**Fig.09**). For the head, I finished the screen she's looking at and with that the image was almost complete (**Fig.10**).

To finish I added more details to the background, such as some tiny pipes and stitches to make the whole scene more detailed and realistic. I shaded in some darker colors onto the machines, and made sure the contrast was weaker than that of the character. Because the environment should also be affected by the warm light source in the foreground, I drew some highlights on the machine to make it look more real. Also, because the contrast of the distant machines and objects should be lower than that of the character, I used a large brush and airbrush as there was no need to draw as much definition.

The foreground and focal point needed to have more intricate details. To make the lighting look consistent and believable was of major importance.

At last, I looked at the image as a whole and cleaned up any loose ends and missing details (**Fig.11**).

Li Biao

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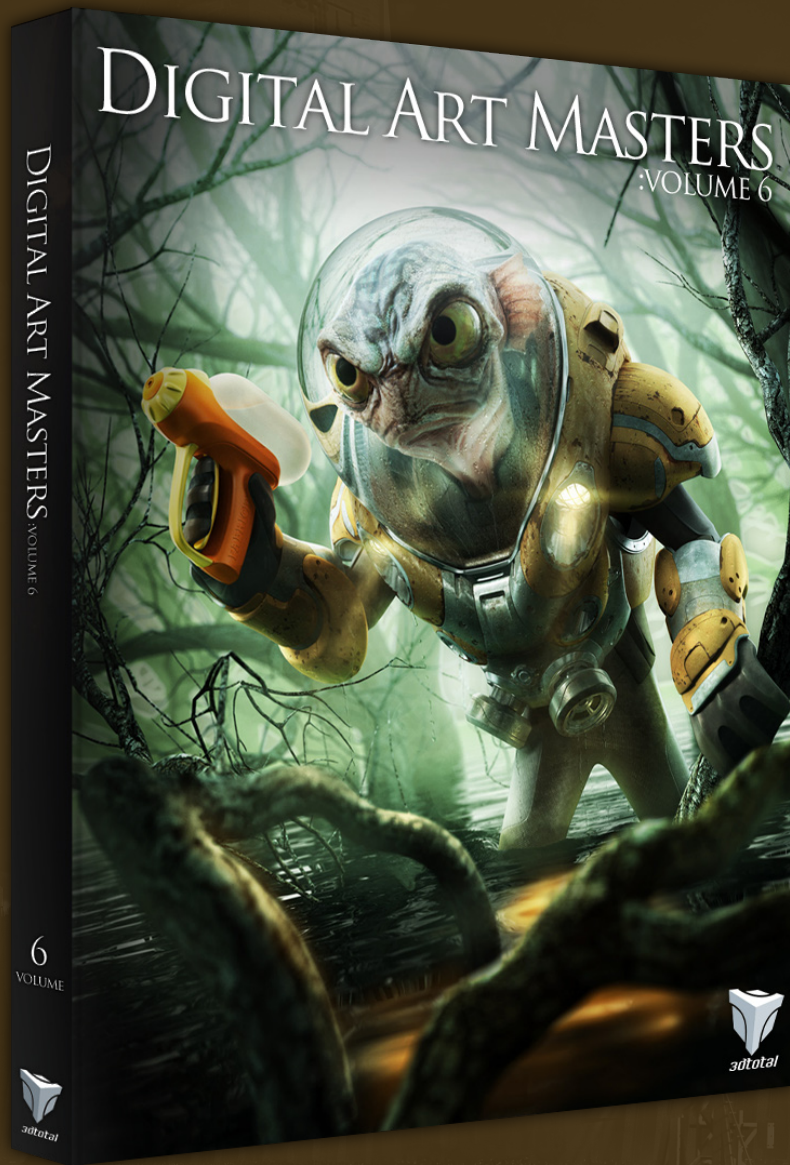
VOLUME 6

With the release of 3DTotal's new 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:

"THE DWARVES"

BY JESSE VAN DIJK

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

THE DWARVES
By Jesse Van Dijk

JOB TITLE: Senior Concept Artist – Guerrilla Games
SOFTWARE USED: Photoshop and 3ds Max

INTRODUCTION

Large scale battles are something I like to paint anyway, so imagine my joy at being asked to do an over-the-top, epic painting for a special reprint of Markus Heitz's The Dwarves series.

The four-book saga was initially released a few years ago, but since it was such a major commercial success internationally a special edition was reprinted for Christmas 2010. The idea the publisher approached me with was to

have a single illustration cover all four books at once – but at the same time they wanted each of the individual books to have a cover that would still enable stores to sell it separately.

> THIS ALLOWED ME TO HAVE THE CASTLE VANISHING INTO THE DISTANCE, INCREASING ITS PERCEIVED SIZE

Compositionally, this meant I could use a very wide angle lens – good for epic shots – but also that I had to continually work on

five compositions simultaneously; the overall shot and the four individual shots. Another challenging aspect was that the image needed to be pretty high res, with a minimum width of 7200 pixels. This isn't the problem it was a few years ago, but still made everything a bit slower and less responsive.
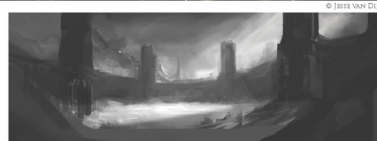
SKETCH

The publisher had outlined what they were expecting: a large siege, by orcs and the like, of a huge dwarven stronghold. There wasn't really any sort of scale limit to the scene, as long as the viewer would be able to discern individual soldiers.

What I started off with was a thumbnail sketch of a long, horizontal stronghold with four towers that would coincide with each of the four separate books (Fig.01).

However, this led to a very boring overall composition, so I tried replacing one of the stronghold towers with a line of siege towers brought to the battlefield by the besiegers. This allowed me to have the castle vanishing into the distance, increasing its perceived size considerably. Also I grabbed some photo references to create some placeholder stronghold towers.

To quickly paint a mock-up army of thousands, I took the default Round Photoshop brush and simply increased its Spacing and Size Jitter. If you keep individual rows of dots on separate layers, you can quickly light some of them with the Dodge tool, and keep others dark (Fig.02).
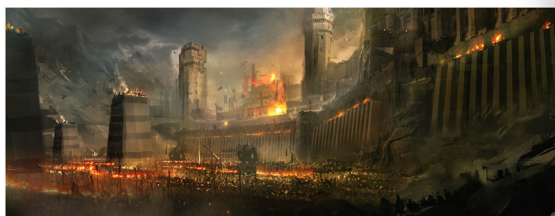

This black and white sketch, with the red frame to indicate where the individual covers would be, was approved by the client, so the composition was pretty much nailed down. The main thing to determine before moving on was the color scheme. To underline the sinister motives of the attacking army the event takes place at night, so I kept the colors generally within the same reddish range, except for some hotspots of saturation, like the many fire sources in the scene.

Also, I wanted to really emphasize the scale of the stronghold. By introducing an oft-repeating buttress along the walls, the angle at which the

camera is facing the walls became much easier to read. It also suggested heavy reinforcement to the wall, which suited the generally accepted nature of sturdy dwarves (Fig.03).

STRONGHOLD DESIGN AND 3D MOCK-UP

One of the things I really wanted to show was the fact that this was not just a generic high-fantasy castle, but a dwarven stronghold. I intended to illustrate this predominantly through the wall and tower designs. So before I went on to detailing my color sketch I started off on paper to do some sketches of the tower designs (Fig.04).
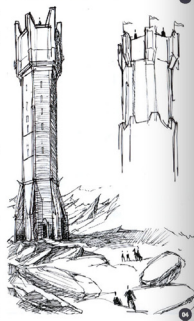
Using hard, angular and simple shapes, I ultimately settled for a design to take into 3D for a rough mock-up. Doing things in 3D has many benefits. It allows you to experiment with designs and see how well they work in the final image straight away. Rebuilding the camera also forces you to carefully consider horizon locations and lens angles. I was planning to do a rough model for the siege towers in this case (such a simple, geometrical structure can be built quickly) and having a scene in which to place them later on would save lots of time getting the perspective right (Fig.05).

However there are also many downsides to 3D, as it can be very time-consuming, and also not everything actually looks better when it conforms perfectly to perspective. This is especially the case with such wide angle lenses where lots of distortion will occur in the corners. In these cases I deliberately chose to "override" the 3D output and use painted content instead.

> WHAT I WAS LOOKING FOR WAS MERELY THE SUGGESTION OF DETAILS OF INDIVIDUAL UNITS

In the end, I did not use any of the 3D designs I had done for the towers. I figured they would be covered by the book titles anyway, so seeing as I wasn't happy with them at that point, I decided to ditch them altogether. Thankfully I liked the wall design more so I kept that.

BUILD ME AN ARMY

Although I had painted armies previously, I had never done so while looking at the scene from the attackers's perspective. This meant I could no longer use my "Scattering Round brush with Size and Brightness Jitter" approach – it worked fine for the sketch, but my client had stated he wanted to be able to distinguish individual soldiers, so I needed more detail than a simple round dot.

The first thing that came to mind was to create a "soldier brush" – but the main problem

with this is that Photoshop's brushes can only consist of a single color. You can use Brightness Jitter, like I had done in the sketch, but that will affect the entire brush tip. What I needed was to have cloned instances of soldiers that contained both shadowed areas as well as highlights. With this in mind I sketched four different levels of soldiers on separate layers (Fig.06).

I used the soldiers from the top row to place in the foreground, and the midground guys

FOREGROUND ORCS

MIDGROUND ORCS

DISTANT ORCS 1

DISTANT ORCS 2

DISTANT ORCS 1 + 2 COMBINED, SCALED, FLIPPED AND REPEATED

behind it, and so on. I deliberately refrained from putting any sort of meaningful detail in them – I felt that had I not done this, I would have had to spend far more time designing armor, weapons and such, which was never my intent. As contradictory as it may sound, what I was looking for was merely the suggestion of details of individual units – not the actual details themselves.

To separate the rows of orcs from each other I used layers of painted smoke. With regard to

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

the structure of the attacking army I liked the idea of "ordered chaos" – clearly there should be some form of organization to the army, portrayed in this case by the "paths of dust", heading towards the vanishing point, but other than that, it's mostly just blind fury and chaos. After completing the rows of soldiers, the image looked like **Fig.07**.

> THE FRONT OF
> THE SIEGE TOWER
> HAD TO BE ABLE
> TO WITHSTAND
> PROJECTILES FROM
> THE CASTLE WALLS,
> SO I SUGGESTED A
> WICKER COVER OVER
> WHICH COW SKINS
> WERE PLACED

Since I still had all the rows of soldiers on separate layers, I could manually color balance them to conform to the overall color scheme.

INTEGRATION OF ALL THE ELEMENTS
After having completed the 3D mock-up and the rows of soldiers, the most pressing problems had been solved and it was basically downhill from there.

I spent some time on the siege tower model, because it would be the set piece of one of the four books. I built the skeleton in Max, and then

mapped and textured it as well (although not carefully; but that would never show). The front of the siege tower had to be able to withstand projectiles from the castle walls, so I suggested a wicker cover over which cow skins were placed (which were usually soaked in urine to prevent them from catching fire too quickly, apparently). For the skin texture, I initially tried some photos of real cow skins, but funnily enough, what ended up looking much better was a simple rock texture on top of the wicker **(Fig.08a – b)**.

What remained was the texturing of the castle wall (which I did in 2D in Photoshop) and some unique soldiers (like the trolls and horse riders). Using a similar approach as I had for the rows of orcs, I littered the scene with torches.

In the end there was so little time left it was necessary to cut corners here and there. For example, the huge fire in the castle was put there simply because I had no more time to paint a proper castle there. Ultimately, I preferred the fire since it really "pops out". Deadlines can be a blessing!

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