**Interview**
Adam Burn

**Articles**
Sketchbook of
Errol Rich Jr.

**The Gallery**
Serge Birault,
Ken Barthelmey,
plus more!

**Johannes Helgeson** paints his version of an Opera Singer to bring our Cartoon Creation 101 series to a close.

## CARTOON CREATION 101
# IT'S NOT OVER UNTIL...

### Throwing Blades
**Vadim Sverdlov** shows us four different designs for throwing blades, as he delivers the latest chapter of our Weapon Design series.

### The Jungle Realm
In our sixth and final trip, **Ioan Dumitrescu** transports us to the Jungle Realm, bringing our journey, and the series, to an end.

### Alien Character
**Richard Tilbury** paints a gruesome looking alien, and also gives away free brushes in this month's Custom Brushes for Characters tutorial.

## Editorial

Welcome to the December issue of *2DArtist* and Merry Christmas to you all! To get you in the festive mood, this month's *2DArtist* is filled with treats that will help you on your way to having a very creative Christmas!

The voluptuous lady that graces our front cover this month is the conception of **Johannes Helgeson** for the last chapter in our Cartoon Creation 101 tutorial series. Over the course of the series our talented artists have shown us how to design and paint basic cartoon characters. To conclude the series Johannes takes us through his exploratory designs and demonstrates how to capture and reflect the personality of an opera singer, and the message she is trying to convey, through expressions, costume and design.

Next up is another thrilling installment from our Weapon Design series, where our artists are demonstrating how to design different weapon concepts to fit various situations and environments for the games industry. In the penultimate chapter **Vadim Sverdlov**, aka Tipa_Graphic, talks us through the design and concept stage of his throwing blades, and continues to demonstrate how to add textures and final touches, to help you in your work and creation of new concepts.

We've also reached the penultimate chapter in our Custom Brushes for Characters series, in which our artists are showing us how to create different custom brushes to texture a character. In this installment **Richard Tilbury** starts by showing us how he designed a basic un-textured alien, and then demonstrates how to create brushes to add areas of texture and detail to the alien.

In our Six Realms tutorial series our artists have been showing us how to design six diverse, fantasy realms from the same world, while also describing their own painting process. **Ioan Dumitrescu** finishes off the series in this last installment, in which he demonstrates how to paint a jungle environment.

In this month's interview we have a chat with UK-based artist **Adam Burn**, who tells us a little bit about his journey into the CG industry and chasing projects to achieve his goals.

If all that isn't enough to keep you going until the New Year, we have a whimsical Making Of by **Gediminas Pranckevicius**, and a gallery full of stunning images by **Serge Birault**, **Andrei Pervukhin**, **Ken Barthelmey** and many more!

## Contents
What's in this month's issue?

### Free Stuff!
Wherever you see this symbol, click it to download resources, extras & even movies!

**DOWNLOAD RESOURCES**

Image by Alexey Egorov

# 2d artist

Digital Painting Magazine
Issue 084 December 2012

Cover image by Johannes Helgeson

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# Get the most out of your
# Magazine!

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

## Setting up your PDF reader

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

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

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

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

## Errol
## Rich Jr.

A love of cartoons and comics from an early age, have led to Errol Rich Jr's overactive imagination that time and time again finds its way from pencil to paper.

http://errolrichjr.blogspot.com

drawomatic@yahoo.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
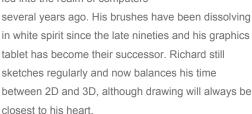
## Johannes
## Helgeson

Johannes Helgeson is a freelancing concept artist based in Sweden. He has worked in the game development industry since he graduated from University in 2008. Johannes started taking drawing seriously when he became involved in the www.conceptart.org community in 2005, and has been practicing as much as possible since then.

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helgesonart@gmail.com

## Richard
## Tilbury

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

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ibex80@hotmail.com

## Gediminas
## Pranckevicius

Born in Panevėžys, Northern Lithuania Gediminas lived with his family until he had completed his studies at high school. Being highly interested in fresco art Gediminas left his family behind to study fresco studies at the Vilnius Academy of Art. Gediminas spent 6 years studying intensively but it paid off as he now works freelance.

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## 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

ZBrush

# ADAM BURN

"If I do find myself working to a strict brief on a commission, I will often take myself away from that work and do speed paintings to loosen up."

Adam Burn is a UK-based artist, specializing in sci-fi art. In this interview he tells us a little about his route into the CG industry and how he has been pursuing his own side projects to achieve lifelong goals.

**Hi Adam, thanks for agreeing to chat to us. I have taken a quick look at your Deviant Art page to find out a little about you, but couldn't find a great deal about your career up to now. Can you tell us when you first became interested in art and how you found your way into the CG industry?**

Thanks for the opportunity. Well my journey into art, like lots of artists, started when I was very young. When I was about six I would come home from school with piles of books with detailed images of diggers and machinery, and ask my dad to draw them for me, but after a period of a few weeks he got a bit fed up with it and told me to go draw them myself. That was really the first push I got into art and I was hooked instantly; I would draw all sorts of things.

I was supported by my parents and my teachers early on to push my artistic skills, but I never really took it seriously until my A Levels. Due to the nature of the briefs I was given, I was able to do almost as I pleased, which was very important to me; I was told off constantly in GCSE art classes for not following the very strict and linear art briefs.

I decided to pursue a course in computer game art at Teesside University in the UK, but due to the course's focus on 3D and animation I dropped out. However, while I was there I began to use Photoshop and started on my path to becoming the artist I am today. I am totally self-taught, except the odd little tips I have picked up from other artists along the way. I started doing just space scenes, but after a few years ventured into more illustration-based stuff, like the stuff I focus on today.

**You mentioned the restrictions that were placed on you when doing GCSE art and how they were frustrating. When you do work for clients do you still find strict briefs frustrating, and how do you satisfy your creative urges on projects that aren't as appealing to your artistic tastes?**

With many commissions there are strict guidelines. The client will usually have an image in their head of how it should look, or you are working within an established universe and therefore have to make sure each aspect is perfect, and the design of ships and environments are exact.
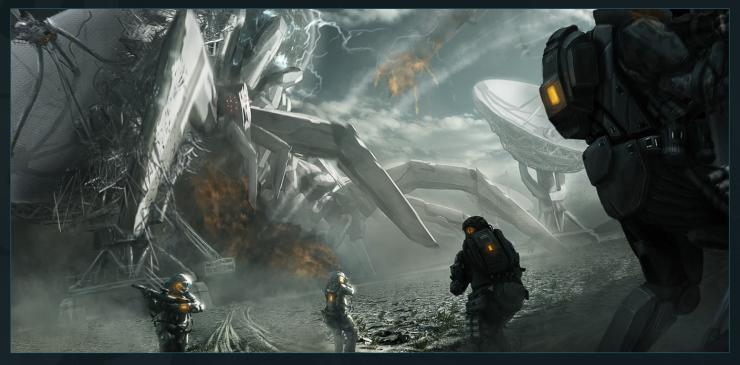
I worked on a *Star Wars* card game and that was by far the most linear brief I have ever had. It was a great opportunity, but there was no room to move at all, no creativity allowed.

If I do find myself working to a strict brief on a commission, I will often take myself away from that work and do speed paintings to loosen up.

**I noticed on your Deviant Art page that you have worked for some impressive clients in the past. What has been your favorite project to work on and why?**

My favorite project would have to be working for the indie developer Taitale Studios. I was brought onto the project early on to do some small paintings for use in a trailer and when that contract was up I left, like I did with most of my contract work. I had worked on a lot of indie projects before and sadly 99% of them I never heard from again; they just didn't last. I was therefore very happy and surprised to get an email from the CEO a year later asking me to return on contract, and later as a full-time, senior 2D artist.

I worked with them for about two years, creating detailed concept art for massive space ships, which I loved, as well as epic battle scenes for promotional use at conventions like PAX. I was able to travel to Seattle and Boston, where all the team would meet (as the studio was remotely run we usually only met online, which was a challenge, but it worked).

**Although you have a varied portfolio, it is clear that you are a fan of sci-fi. Would you say that there was one point in your life when you decided that you were going to go down the sci-fi route, and what was it that made you make that choice?**

I can't quite put my finger on the point in my life where I decided sci-fi was to be my main focus and interest. I have always been interested in space; from a young age I knew all the planets, had many books on space and loved sci-fi movies. *Independence Day* was probably what really tipped me face first into sci-fi, and I had managed to watch *Alien, Aliens* and *Alien Resurrection* by age 10, whilst my parents were out. I liked them, but didn't sleep right for a year [*Laughs*]! I also played *Master of Orion* and *X-COM* when I was young and that just added to my obsession. It was a combination of many things, but generally it was just an overriding interest in the unusual, the distant, the unexplored and the possibility of advanced life out there, that led to my interest in sci-fi art.

**I often find that artists who are fans of sci-fi art have one specific movie or game project that they wish they could have worked on. If you could have worked on any sci-fi-based**

project in the past what would it be?
*Halo*, without any doubt. I used my very first pay cheque to buy an original Xbox and got *Halo* with it. I had heard about it before, but as it was a console FPS I wasn't too interested as I was mostly a PC gamer, but I felt like giving it a go. By the time I finished the game I was hooked and that was the start of my obsession with the *Halo* universe. The games are great, but it was always the universe that intrigued me most. The mysterious Forerunners and their massive creations; it is a huge inspiration to me and to be a part of that is my dream. Who knows, maybe one day – there is a new trilogy after all!

> "I had managed to watch *Alien, Aliens* and *Alien Resurrection* by age 10, whilst my parents were out. I liked them, but didn't sleep right for a year!"

**Can you tell us a little bit about the approach you take when creating your images? Do you use many photographs in your work and do you ever start your images with a 3D base?**
Over the years I have tried many different



techniques to try and find one that I feel most comfortable with, and that feels totally natural for my workflow. I used to paint using nothing but standard round brushes, but whilst I did like the outcome it took ages and I often got bored

after a while and would stop an image and start on another.

After a while I began to look at artists like Sparth and Daniel Dociu and the way they mix "standard" Photoshop painting techniques with photo references. Then I began to build a library of industrial reference files and textures to mess around with, and fell into the style I use now, which is split between the use of photo references, custom brushes and a custom shapes technique Sparth had created.

I fell in love with the style and my workflow increased. I was able to create more intense images more quickly and loosely than before, but still keep the high levels of detail I love. I have by no means perfected it, and I learn new stuff every time I create an image. That's the one aspect of this that really excites me – what will my images look like five, ten years down the line? Exciting!

**How important do you feel it is to keep watching the artists around you, and developing your own techniques and processes?**

As I was self-taught I developed a lot of my techniques by watching those around me, looking at their work develop and slowly, over time, understanding how they have done it. That process meant I was able to take in a lot of different techniques and styles, and eventually fall into a style of my own, which will always improve and evolve with the work that I do. Don't treat other artists as a threat; just because some shift from one style to another to attract more clients does not mean you have to do that as well. They made that choice, so if you're comfortable with your own work and style then stick with it.

**I understand that you have recently been involved with a successful project on Kickstarter. Can you tell those who don't**

VERUNAS CAPITAL SHIP
FORTRESS CLASS



NOVUS ÆTERNO

HUMAN CAPITAL SHIP CLASS - PIRATE FACTION PREMIUM SKIN
BASILISK (BLACK SERPENT)
LONG RANGE HEAVY WEAPONS PLATFORM

TAITALE STUDIOS

already know what Kickstarter is, and a little about your project *Telikos Protocol*?

Well, Kickstarter is a service set up to support people's crazy ideas – some awesome, others not so much – but there is often a lot of talent on there. You set up an account and you post up a page about your project, what it is about, what you want and what you will do with the funds raised. People will then pledge money to the project and receive rewards depending on how much they pledge. You set a goal to reach and if you hit that goal within 30 days then your project is funded. If not, then it's not.

In our case we wanted to raise $9,500 to cover the print run of our new nine-part graphic novel. It was written by Peter Cooper and all the artwork was done by me, using the same high quality cinematic style of work I have come to be known for. The money would get the first issue out the door, but what happened over the course of the next 30 days shocked us and many onlookers. We hit our target within three days and went on to raise over $50,000, which is almost unheard of for a debut comic series that few people have seen before. We got a Staff Pick award on Kickstarter, as well as several articles put out about the projects success on sites such as Bleeding Cool.

As for the series itself, *Telikos Protocol* was an idea I came up with two years ago, but it only became serious when Peter Cooper jumped on board as the writer. We turned my rough ideas into an epic sci-fi series that would start very much like a disaster story, but eventually

escalate into full intergalactic war against a mysterious alien race, whose motives are unknown.

The story is set 300 years in the future and due to massive ecological disasters, the Earth's surface is a hostile wasteland and humanity has been forced into living in huge, subterranean cities. In the meantime, an ancient alien artifact, millions of years old, is found at the bottom of the sea bed and it is studied in secret under one of these massive cities. They believe they can use what they learn from it to up-lift the human race and take it to a new planet, but just as they are about to implement this plan the aliens return to reclaim what is rightfully theirs. It's a very epic story and is by no means as simple as bad guys verses good guys.

**What lessons do you feel that you have learned about using Kickstarter to launch a project? If there was anything that you could do differently the second time around, what would that be?**
I have learnt many things. We were thrown into the deep end with this. We went from being just an unknown comic to the highest-funded debut comic on Kickstarter, which meant we had to adapt as the project went on. One thing that helped us achieve that was connections. Both myself and Pete have a big fan following. Pete's work within the *Halo* community meant he had many friends who loved sci-fi and I had my Deviant Art following; with these assets we were able to spread the word of the project far and wide. Pete spent almost every waking hour tending to Kickstarter, plugging every possible

chance for exposure and making as much noise as possible. It paid off.

As for what we would do differently... we would spend more time on the rewards structure. We found out that some of the limited rewards went within hours, while others barely saw a single pledge, and as we broke more and more milestones we had to create new rewards to cater for the extra demand. This now means we have a hefty job fulfilling those rewards, but I always like a challenge and so far we have managed perfectly.

**Do you have any advice for artists who are inspired by what you have achieved and want to give it a go themselves?**
The best advice I have to give is probably the

most overused answer: practice, practice, practice! It's a cliché, but it really is true. You can study the fundamentals of art all you like, but until you begin to create it yourself you will get nowhere. Study other people's work. Look at how they created an image and experiment with creating similar techniques. Don't copy an image, but instead try to reproduce the techniques used to make it.

You will likely pick up some interesting results as you get used to the way your selected

program works. Learn the basics of programs like Photoshop by using tutorials, but don't rely on them. Learn from them, then ditch them and develop your own style by taking what you have learnt from others and tutorials. Just paint until you begin to fall into a style you feel comfortable with. Your style and workflow will find you and everyone is different, so don't try to emulate someone else.

You will suck at first – I look at my first few images and cry. You will also not always be
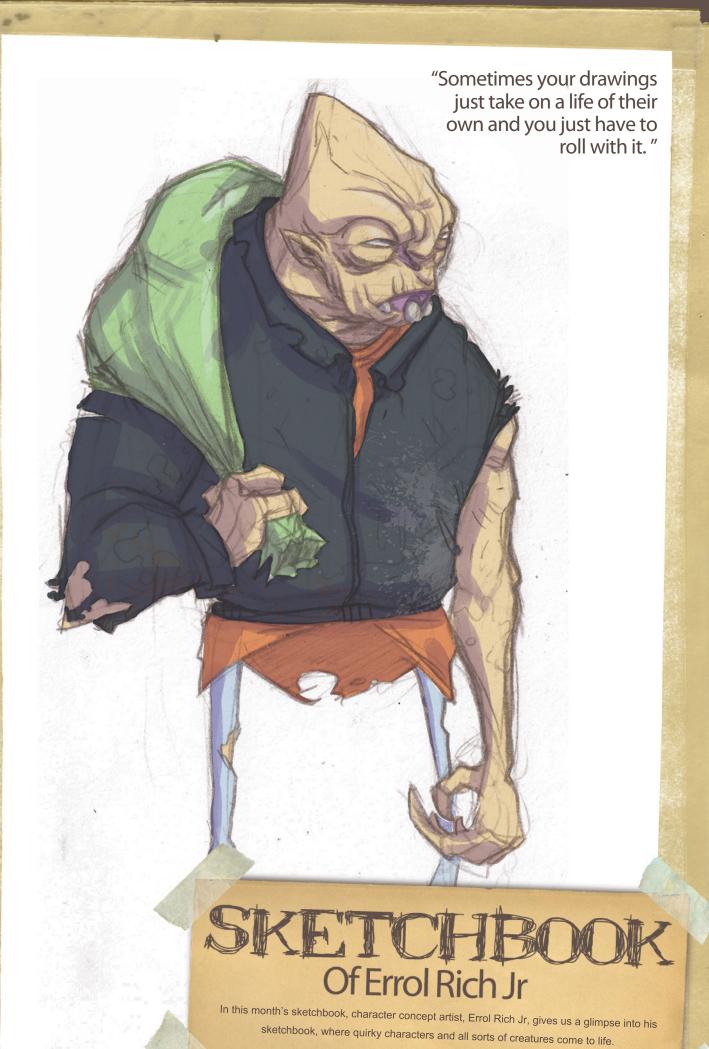
satisfied with your work. I still create images that I am not 100% sure about once completed; this is perfectly natural as every artist is their own harshest critic.
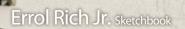
**Thanks, Adam. I hope that *Telikos Protocol* continues to be a big success.**

## Adam Burn

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Email: adamburn.art@gmail.com
Interviewed by: Simon Morse

"Sometimes your drawings just take on a life of their own and you just have to roll with it."

# SKETCHBOOK
## Of Errol Rich Jr

In this month's sketchbook, character concept artist, Errol Rich Jr, gives us a glimpse into his sketchbook, where quirky characters and all sorts of creatures come to life.
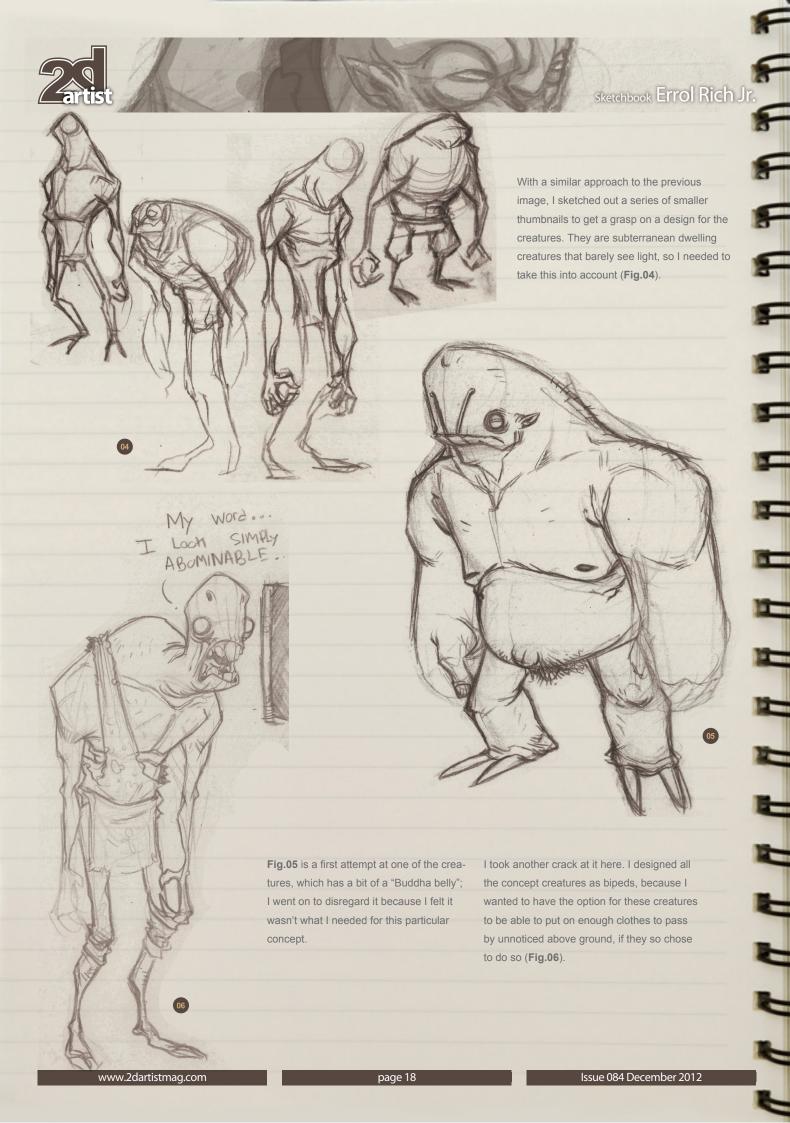
HRMM..

## Sketchbook of Errol Rich Jr.

I decided to flesh out a concept that was once a running gag between a friend and me. The concept was about NYC's homeless fighting an unseen battle with creatures living in the subway system (**Fig.01**).
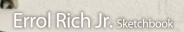
An idea I had when I was first fleshing out the concept, was to have the creatures simply being displayed as large silhouettes wearing tatters of human clothing, their faces being completely obscured and unseen (**Fig.02**).

However, I decided to go in another direction because I felt there was only so many ways to hide someone's face; plus it would just be more interesting to see exactly what the main characters would deal with (**Fig.03**).

04

With a similar approach to the previous image, I sketched out a series of smaller thumbnails to get a grasp on a design for the creatures. They are subterranean dwelling creatures that barely see light, so I needed to take this into account (**Fig.04**).

My word...
I look simply
ABOMINABLE..

05

06

**Fig.05** is a first attempt at one of the creatures, which has a bit of a "Buddha belly"; I went on to disregard it because I felt it wasn't what I needed for this particular concept.

I took another crack at it here. I designed all the concept creatures as bipeds, because I wanted to have the option for these creatures to be able to put on enough clothes to pass by unnoticed above ground, if they so chose to do so (**Fig.06**).

07

08

09



Sometimes your drawings take on a life of their own and you just have to roll with it. After, you shake your head in a way that suggests, what was I thinking (**Fig.07**)?

In **Fig.08** there is another version, which screamed more Wolf-man then anything else, however I didn't want to completely dismiss it because you never know how one image will help to influence the creation of another.

**Fig.09** was another one of those "what was I thinking" moments. The result was looking more alien, then anything else.

**Fig.10** is a collection of idea sketches I made for the head.

10

Another collection of sketches I made in search for the creature's head (**Fig.11**).

The final head sketch I did was moving more in a direction I liked. After finishing it though, the thought crossed my mind that what if these weren't creatures, but people who went horribly wrong somewhere along the line (**Fig.12**)?

Having spent an unprecedented amount of time living in long-since-forgotten subway tunnels, and feeding off everything and anything, what if there was just an entire community of sub-humans living down there (**Fig.13**)?
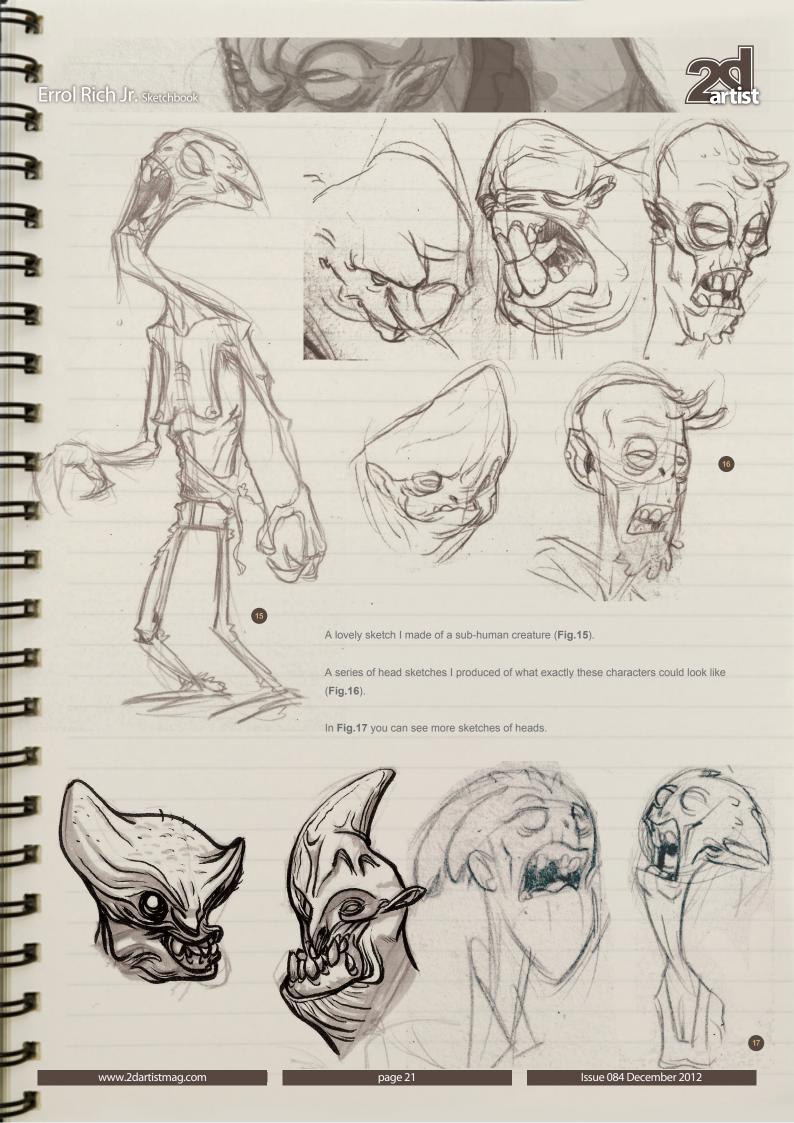
Well, obviously they wouldn't be the prettiest bunch. Physical and bodily distortions would be a plenty (**Fig.14**)!

A lovely sketch I made of a sub-human creature (**Fig.15**).

A series of head sketches I produced of what exactly these characters could look like (**Fig.16**).

In **Fig.17** you can see more sketches of heads.

There would be a protagonist in the concept; they would be the one to face all manner of beasts. In **Fig.18** you can see some ideas for this character I have sketched out.

A sketch I made of a mysterious, hooded character, which could have a place within the concept (**Fig.19**).
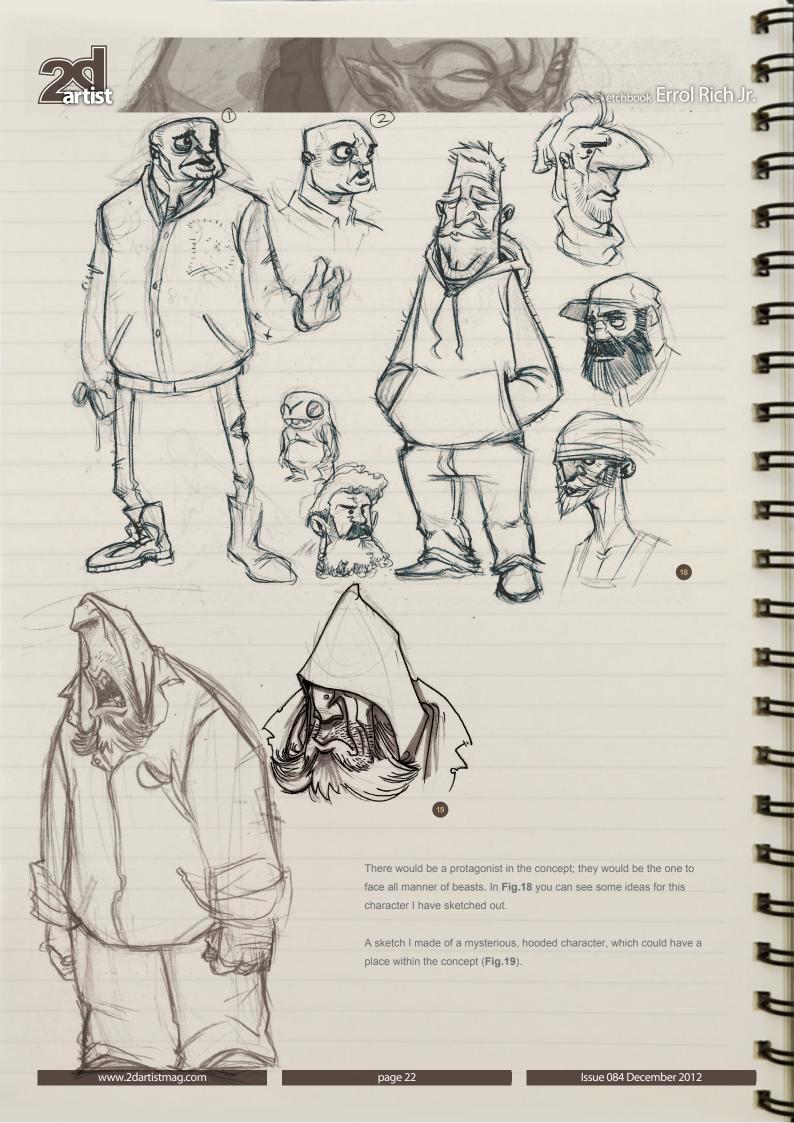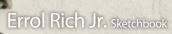
We can't forget the ladies in the story now, can we? So I produced some sketches of female characters that could appear in the concept (**Fig.20**).

In **Fig.21** are some sketches of possible baby creatures.

## Errol Rich Jr.

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Email: drawomatic@yahoo.com

# THE GALLERY
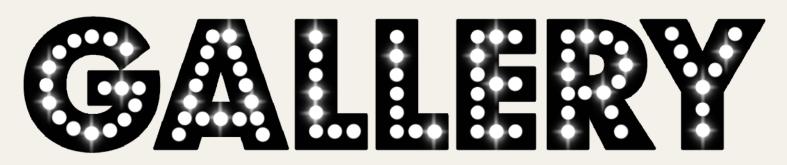
## Happy Moving House #2

**DangMyLinh**

http://dangmylinh-art.blogspot.com

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(Above)

## The Travel by Dark River

**Andrey Pervukhin**

http://firstear.cghub.com/images/

earfirst@gmail.com

(Below)

Getting Colder

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The Magic Box
**Aekkarat Sumutchaya**
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Alexandra Potter and Tentacle
Serge Birault
http://www.sergebirault.fr/
serge.birault@hotmail.fr

## Seyyah

**Memed (Mehmet Ozen)**

http://memed.daportfolio.com

memed@inbox.com

(Left)

## Real Steel

**Alexey Egorov**

astron-66@mail.ru

(Top)

## Column Cyclops

**Su Yeong Kim**

http://kimsuyeong81.deviantart.com/

agonist.ksy@gmail.com

(Above)

# WEAPON
## DESIGN



sharp "teeth"

foldable handle
by pressing button

curved handle

razor sharp blade

comfortable grip

lightweight

04

There are many industries that hold a place for digital art, but none of these rely on it as much as the games industry! Lots of different elements go into making a game, but in many, weaponry is an exciting and integral part of game play. In this tutorial series our artists will be showing us how to create weapon concepts for different situations and environments, as if they were doing it within the games industry. This will involve them coming up with a concept and design, then demonstrating their techniques.

# Chapter 04 – Throwing Blades

**Software Used:** Photoshop

Hello, my name is Vadim Sverdlov (also known as "tipa_graphic") and I'm an illustrator and concept artist. Today I am going to tell you how I paint and develop concepts from scratch, through to the final result.

Our brief for today is to make four throwing blade concepts.

First of all, once I receive a brief to make a piece of concept art, I start researching to get as much information as I can. I am looking for everything that may help; how it looks now, how it looked in the past, how it looked in its most recent development, how it works, from which materials the object is made, etc.

Even if I think that I know a lot about the object, I still spend time doing lots of research, until I fully understand its purpose and how it works. This is especially true when the object is related to weapons or is some kind of technical item. The weapon has to work; it has a purpose and it has to be fully functional.

After searching for information about throwing blades, I also looked for some types of fighting
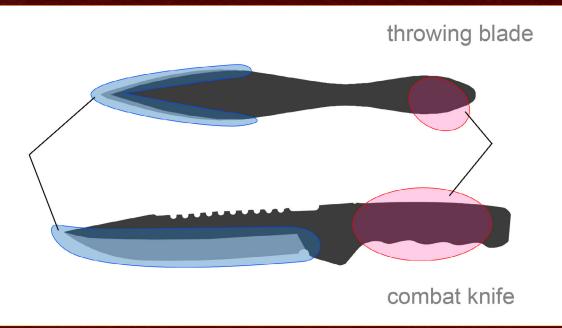


knives. Both have much in common, but the usages are different. However, sometimes simple knives are made of interesting materials and have various design solutions.

Once I had gathered all the required information, I made some guidelines, so that the final result will actually be the one requested by the client (for example, if the object is a handgun, then it has to be short, it must have a handle and a hole, which the bullet will be fired from. If it's a car, it must have wheels).
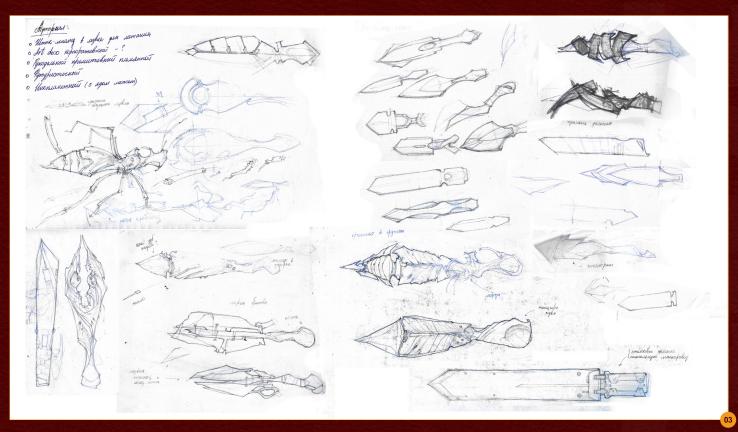
In our case, unlike a simple knife which is used for cutting and is held by hand, the throwing blade is used against people in order to kill

them or make some serious injuries. It has to be thrown from some distance, and penetrate the human's body with the sharp side in order to cut or break some bones.

I have chosen a few existing examples (**Fig.01**), and tried to find common ways to achieve its goal.

As you can see in **Fig.02**, unlike a simple knife, the throwing blade hits the target with its edge. The bulk of the knife is concentrated on the sharp edge, and the handle is pretty small, so that only a few fingers can fit. This is in order to increase the probability of an accurate hit.



throwing blade

combat knife

03

I have decided to make four different concepts. This way I can show you various designs and materials. Only after I choose exactly what I am going to draw, do I start drawing sketches and ideas. If I am not near my computer, I draw on paper in my sketchbook (**Fig.03**).

I can do it on my way to work, or in a pub – sometimes great ideas can be born after a glass of beer. I'm not trying to draw accu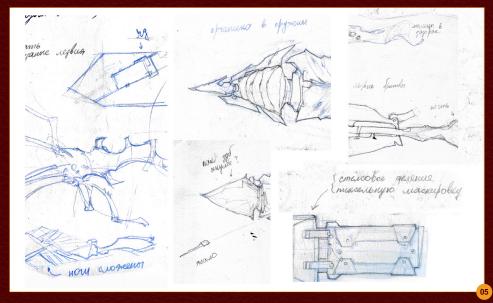rately as I'm only drawing the ideas, looking for shapes and sketching my thoughts, in order to use this stuff later. However, when I'm near my computer, I make thumbnails (**Fig.04**).

Draw even if you will never use it, because often good ideas come when you see several variants in front of you. You start thinking about combinations of different parts, designs and concepts. Sometimes it's possible to create a great concept right from the first sketch, but if you do then you are really cool.



04
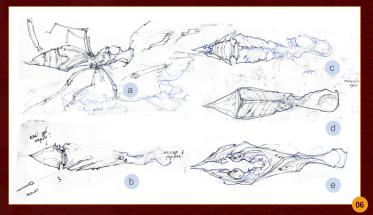
If no ideas are coming out, then put everything to one side, close your eyes and try to relax; your brain will take a small break and then it will supply you with a bunch of ideas. Sometimes I'm trying not to just create concepts, but also give them some functionality. I'm trying to write down all that comes into my head (**Fig.05**). For example, there are hundreds of various fighting knives, and the Russian Special Forces have a knife which can fire a bullet. This solution makes it differ from other knives of this type.
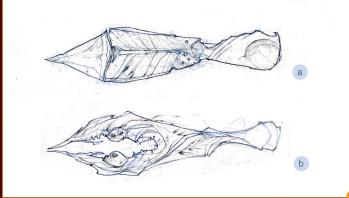
First, will be a throwing blade for aliens; they might use them too, right?! This way it's possible to use some new textures and ideas. Within this concept I can combine a blade with something living, like some poisonous thorns, so that the enemy will be paralyzed or dead for definite. Or



05
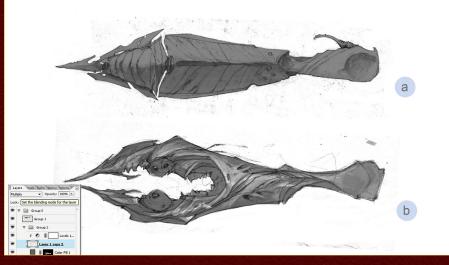
maybe the blade would be drive much further into the body, making it harder to remove it (**Fig.06**).

Later I choose two variants which I like the most, and start to develop them (**Fig.07**).

I start with a layer with lines, which were drawn using Multiply (the white color becomes transparent and the black lines remain), and under it I start to fill the painting with gray colors (**Fig.08**), I give it volume, looking for shape, direction and light.



During the first steps it's sometimes easier for me to draw in grayscale, because it's too early to think about colors and textures when there is no particular shape. Don't be afraid of remaking, erasing or repainting again and again; it's only the searching stage, which will later lead us to a better result.

Even at this point it's possible to imagine how the blade concept will look (**Fig.09**). It looks fine, and you could even show it to a client or boss at this stage. However, if we look more closely, we can see many things that can be improved. Please don't forget that many clients can't imagine the final result until they see it with colors and textures. If this object is to be modeled in 3D later on, a concept closest to the final result will be very helpful.
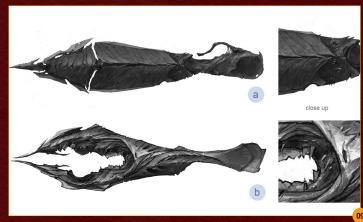
Now let's take one design, and develop it. If the blade was combined with something alive, then I think it would be an insect of some sort. In order to capture the textures in a realistic way, look at many pictures of beetles, scorpions and body tissues (**Fig.10**).

I've decided that on the top, it will be covered with a shell like a beetle, but also there will be some soft tissue and thorns.

There are several ways to start painting your grayscale concept. For basic colors I often open a layer above another layer, while I put the



close up

close up

concept in an Overlay layer and start painting. A few trials are needed in order to understand how it works.

I also put many of the textures in an Overlay layer above my painting. If it makes your painting too dark or too light, you can edit your texture using Levels, so it will fit your painting

without destroying it. If I need to add some blinks or scratches (something white), I put it in a Screen layer. This is the best way to create some mucous surfaces or scratches.

Sometimes, you can just cut a part from a photograph, paste it onto your design and draw above it. As you can see, there are many ways

of doing such things, and you can use what's best for you, as long as it leads to the desired result.

Consequently, we've created a very cute throwing blade (**Fig.11**). Hooray! Now you can set it as your background, and send it to the client (**Fig.12**).
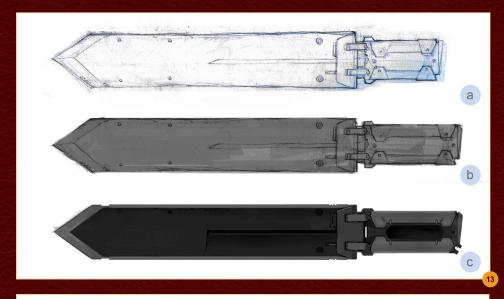
The next concept I we're going to make is a military blade. I would not say that it is very futuristic (maybe placed somewhere five years from now).

I've decided to pick a design from the sketches I made before and finish it. There can be a lot of variations, but I'm going to take one with a simple form. It's not out of laziness; it's because I know that everything that sticks out, and has potential to tangle with the rifle or the vest, will do so, and will be very uncomfortable.

As you can see in **Fig.13**, the designs are different, but the initial steps and workflow are very similar. As we have already traced, added texture and fine details, our design is looking quite good, but even a new weapon coming straight from the factory will soon be covered with scratches and the paint will wash out on protrusions and edges (**Fig.14**).

If you are doing a handle, think about what material it needs to be made from, because it should sit firmly in your hand. The blade I've made from a dark iron. In the army they try to paint over or mute the shiny parts, so they won't shine or sparkle from the ambient light, giving away their position to the enemy.

After adding some scratches, metal and rubber textures, the throwing knife now looks much more believable and much more like something
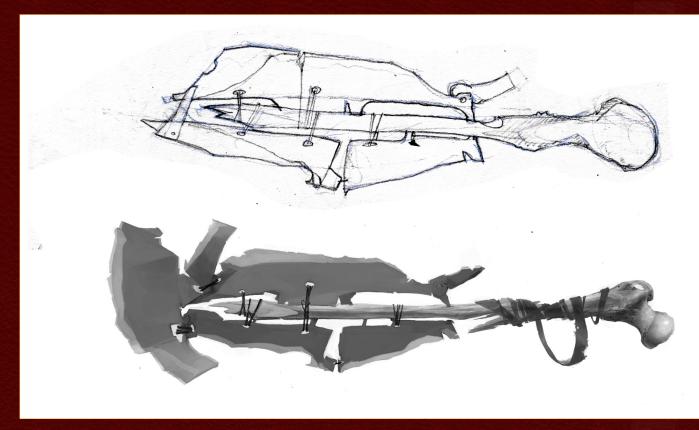




that would belong to a person who has really been using it (**Fig.15**). If you look closely, you will notice that there is a button on the blade. This will detach it from the handle, allowing you to replace it with another blade, perhaps more

suitable for the intended purpose. Modularity and the possibility of replacing the parts are always good functions. The only thing remaining with this concept is to send it to the client for approval.

Another concept we're going to look at is a grimy, ragged and crooked blade, ideally suited for a possible post-apocalyptic cannibal tribe. These forms are easier for me to do with calligraphy brushes, so that's what I'll be using.

In this kind of world, all the resources that are to hand would be used to create weapons. I think that a human bone would make an excellent handle, as cannibals would have these readily to hand. The blades would be made of iron, which they would have foraged (**Fig.16**).

If you get speared by one, and you don't die instantly from the hit, you'd probably die from the infection. As you can see in **Fig.17**, keeping their weapons clean is not a priority to our cannibals; I've added a lot of scratches, rusted iron and dried blood.
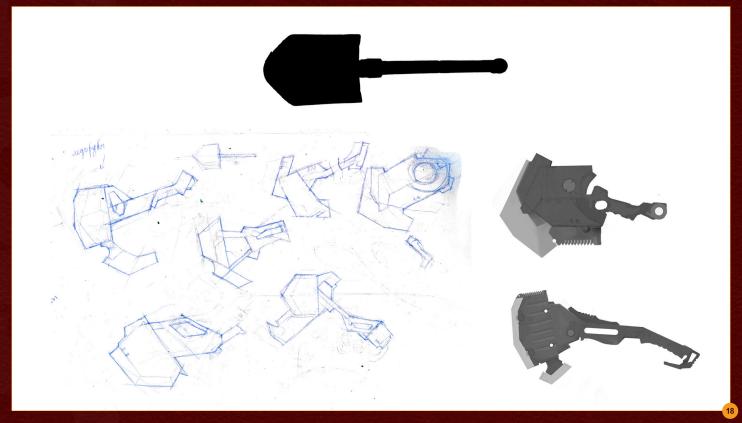
For the last concept I got my inspiration and idea from the Russian paratroopers. Who said that a throwing blade should be small? It's a piece of iron that is thrown at a target. There can be small knives, and there can be something as big as a machete.

In general, try not to limit yourself or the final outcomes possibilities. Think outside the box. Who said that the grass must be green?

2d artist
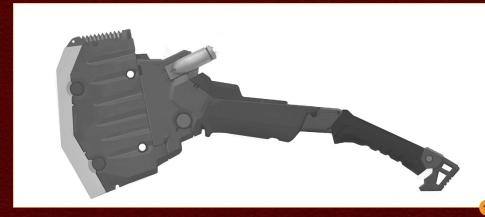


The Russian paratroopers use a small shovel, not only for digging, but also for throwing at a target. If you get hit with a great mass of iron, it will not only pierce the body, but will also break your bones on the way. It's almost an axe, but with the cutting edge positioned differently.

I take the silhouette of a shovel and draw some sketches in order to understand where it can be improved, and where and how it should be gripped, so it'd be comfortable (**Fig.18**).

I've checked out a few axe examples of tomahawks and ice picks, etc. For me, a curved handle is more convenient when you need to hold the axe for a long time, so I've decided to use it in my concept. As you can see, the design development steps are the same as before.

Think about your concept as a product that you would like to implement and sell. Not only should it be functional, but it should also be comfortable. If there is a handle, it should have a comfortable grip. For example, an M16 handle has suffered many changes in recent years in terms of comfort ability. From a simple piece of



plastic, it has become a useful accessory, with ergonomic spaces for your fingers, while also doubling as storage space for small spare parts.

It won't improve your marksmanship, but it'll make sure your weapons are more aesthetically pleasing. Design should be beautiful and comfortable, without any unnecessary excess.

In my design, I've tried to make the handle more comfortable and if you need it, there is also a place for gripping with a second hand (**Fig.19**).

The only step that remains is to add color and texture, and our weapon is ready (**Fig.20**). In

order for the weapon not to be too long, and for it to able to be attached to the army vest, I've added the ability to fold the handle in two by pressing the button, as many rifles feature a folding butt.

That's it. I hope that what I have shown and described will help you in your work and creation of new concepts. Do not stop generating new and interesting things – do what you love.

Wishing you all the best!

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03

# The Six Realms

## Chapter 06 – Jungle



One of the appeals of many modern computer games is the ability to explore vast worlds created by talented teams of artists and designers. You can wander around, venturing from one realm to another, absorbing impressive landscapes while tackling challenges and enemies of every description. One of the challenges faced by the concept artists working on a game like this is creating a variety of environments that still look consistent design wise. Within this series of tutorials our artists will be showing us how to design six diverse, fantasy realms from the same world while also describing their own painting process.

## Chapter 06 – Jungle
Software Used: Photoshop

Every image, even personal work starts with some sort of brief or idea. The brief for this image was that I needed to paint a jungle environment that contained some structural buildings and a beacon.

Immediately I started to imagine a huge landscape covered in rainforest and ancient structures that formed a city. The images that demonstrate the development of this image will show clearly how a changing mindset, emotions and circumstances can influence your design choices. This was the case with my image as it was created over a long period of time. The only thing that stayed consistent throughout the creation was the time of day.

The process started with a simple thumbnail painting, within which I wanted to establish the composition and general tone of the painting quickly (**Fig.01**).

The thumbnail showed some sort of conquistador's ship arriving at a remote part of South America where there was dense rainforest surrounding an ancient city. I have



seen a lot of sunrises through my window recently which helped speed up the process when painting this.

I had already gathered some references to help me develop the image further. I gathered images of the Mayan Temples and Aztec structures. The immense detail on these structures inspired me to think about bulky structures that looked like they formed part of a rich, ancient empire.

I sometimes find it useful to add a lot of pictures of forests and architecture to the

painting quickly, just to get the scene started and to stimulate my imagination. That's how the composition started to change and gain more depth and substance. This is one of the ways I start an image, especially when the requirements of the brief are not too specific. This method keeps everything organic and easy to modify if a better idea arises (**Fig.02**).

Now that I had the planes of my image pretty much established I knew I had to start designing the main elements and buildings in the image. Using parts of photo's that I had cropped, scaled and pasted into the painting I started

to experiments with different proportions and shapes. At this point I was experimenting with big heavy bulky shapes.

I left the image for a few weeks and my inspiration began to change. I decided that I wanted to work with a more alien like world and structures. My first idea was to develop structures which almost looked like they had been consumed by enormous parasites (**Fig.03**).

Although this was interesting I wasn't sure that it was what I wanted as I wasn't happy with the shapes that I had created. For this reason I left the image for a while and thought about how it could be developed. When I returned to the image an idea hit me like magic. It is easy to get a mind block when you are painting and sometimes it is hard to find the solution you want, but by trying new ideas and by going in a totally different direction you might come to a good conclusion you hadn't thought of before.

I had become a little bit lazy when working on this image and didn't go back to it for a few weeks. When I looked at it again the short structures seemed clumsy and boring, so I turned them into tall vertical towers by scaling them (**Fig.04**).

Using quick strokes and scribbles is a great way to find a better solution to a problem. This solution seemed better so I started re-working the structures. Sadly though this didn't work,





after about an hour I was looking at the piece thinking that it was looking regular and boring again especially in the foreground.

I decided to start to work on the atmosphere, depth and micro-composition. I started using repeated shapes which got smaller as they went

further into the painting to show depth and to make it look as if the structures had been there for a long time (**Fig.05**).

As much as I tried to refine the image I couldn't save it. I had to start working on the image from the base up again. I started by adding a huge

mass to the foreground which had a tighter, less fragmented structure. This looked strong, but also consisted of organic lines to make it fit with its environment (**Fig.06**).

This seemed much better so I replaced the squid like structures with the tall strong towers. Using vertical towers in the distance helped keep the focus on the foreground and also meant I would have an idea place for my beacon.

The next step was to refine these structures, firstly by working on their silhouette, then by looking at their design. This approach helps to ensure that that viewers' eye is drawn to the important areas and then held there by interesting design (**Fig.07**).



To balance the heavy dark shape of the foreground I added more clouds and atmosphere to the beacon and its platform. This gave it a more mystical feel to it as well. Once I had the silhouette shape of the buildings sorted I started to add photos of car parts to the structures to give them a slick appearance. By stretching and transforming them to size I created an interesting look. The images needed to be adjusted etc, but by doing this carefully I achieved the look I was going for.

By adding a few highlights to the edges of the structures so that it contrasted with the darker color of the buildings. This also helped with scale, depth and atmosphere. To make the composition work I kept the structure vertical, but I also added some diagonal lines on them

to help lead the viewers' eye around the image and help the composition.

The next step was to start to think about the beacon. This was added to a structure in the background. The beacon was added as a little blue light and a lens flare to make it look bright. I also added another smaller beacon light next to it. I could then also work on smaller areas of the image refining them and developing the micro-compositions.

From this point on it is a balancing act of making sure that the image looks consistent and that there is detail where there should be and that there is shadow in areas that shouldn't draw attention. I also played with the clouds a bit so they looked like they were sitting around the structures. I also made them look slightly illuminated by the lights on the buildings. Of course if you are going to be a professional sci-fi scene painter, you need to add some flying birds to your scene.

And with that the image is pretty much done. The image was a blast for me to do. It's good to reminder that you should always focus on the essentials parts of an image and eliminate whatever is not necessary, and think before you paint (**Fig.08**).

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# CARTOON

## CREATION 101

04

Everybody loves cartoon characters, at one point or another we've all appreciated them. Whether they were in childhood shows or films, cartoons allow us to experience stories that are beyond limits. In this tutorial series our artists will show us how to design and paint basic cartoon characters. This will involve them producing numerous exploratory designs and showing you how to capture and reflect the personality of the character through expressions, costume and design.

## Chapter 04 – Opera Singer
**Software Used:** Photoshop

I wish to implore all readers of this tutorial to question what I write and to realize that I, in no way whatsoever, hold any truths. I have been wrong many, many times in the past, and making mistakes is an inherent part of my artistic growth. The process outlined in this tutorial is merely one of many, and I emphasize that I think everyone needs to find their own way of working. That said, I hope I can highlight some techniques or mindsets that might be of use, and give something back to the digital art community, which has been of such great importance for me.

### Story and Purpose
The first step is to read and understand the brief. What does the client want? What brief have I been given? In this case, my task was to design and paint a cartoon opera singer, and outline my process for artists at a beginner to medium level.

I decided to start with figuring out the story that the opera singer would be telling/singing to her audience. This dictates everything from the design of her clothes and her gestures, to her shape language, expression and colors. The story is my red thread; without this, my design will be empty and meaningless – a technical exercise at best. My goal is to entertain my viewers, much in the same way as the opera singer I have depicted.

A story is a sequence of events leading to a conclusion. The conclusion is the story's point; the message you aim to communicate. I don't think a story is good without it. I wanted this to be an honest statement deriving from my own experiences in life, so I spent several days thinking about what I actually wanted to say. In the end I decided to try communicating the idea that loyalty has a high price.

My ambition was to depict the moment when the character shares this message with the audience. An opera singer is lamenting (through song) the high cost of loyalty. I crafted the events of the story around this statement. I decided upon drawing a geisha in ancient Japan; it was something I had never drawn before and I like to challenge myself. The story's events, briefly described, went something like this:

"A geisha, who is the proprietor of an entertainment establishment, realizes one of her maiko (an apprentice geisha) is being subjected to severe physical abuse (her life is in peril), by one of her most prominent clients, the son of the region's daimyo (a feudal lord with immense political and military power, subordinate only to the shogun). She decides to protect her maiko, by rushing to her aid and stabbing the daimyo's son in the throat with her hairpin. She knows that by doing so, she has doomed herself and all of her workers; the daimyo's revenge will be relentless. She sings out loud her lamentations, as she thinks about what to do next".

Next up, I had to do some research. What does a geisha look like? What was ancient Japan like? I looked at some of my favorite Akira Kurosawa movies, like *The Seven Samurai* and *Ran*, as well as *Memoirs of a Geisha* by director Rob Marshall. I read about the era in general and geisha culture on Wikipedia, trying to understand more of the world I was trying to depict. I spent about two days doing this, gathering reference images as I went. Hopefully I could fool everyone into believing that I had some sort of knowledge about this subject matter!

### Character Thumbnail Sketches
Finally I felt ready to draw. The purpose of these sketches, made in Photoshop, was to figure out the silhouette, shapes, colors and overall features of the design as quickly as possible. I was not working on the pose or the expression, or doing any type of rendering. I was not being high-brow in the least; I was just having fun and staying relaxed. As dictated by the story, on one hand my character is an opera singer, and on the other hand she's a maternal geisha.

The singer aspect was difficult to communicate without the use of a pose, but I decided to make her bosom large, adding some weight and making her short. This is a cliché used for female opera singers, but it served its purpose well I think. The whole big voice/small frame is a nice visual contrast. Her big lips would also insinuate the singing nature.

For kimonos (the dress of a geisha), purple is a color used in autumn and winter, and since this geisha is in the autumn of her years, it had a reasonable color symbolism. I made her shapes primarily round and convex, a trope often used for kind characters. The orange/gold was nice to communicate wisdom, and the white would have really highlighted the blood, but in the end, purple felt best, so that's what I went with. The torn sleeve tells the story of a battle recently fought. I like to make the background gray, as this color or lack thereof, is unlikely to mess with my perception of the colors of my design. 90% of what I did here ended up in the trash can, so adding finish was pointless (**Fig.01**).
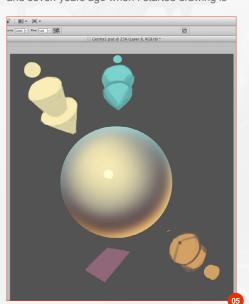
## Line Art Drawing

Having the design pretty much figured out, I could start to focus on the storytelling aspects of the pose. I thought about verbs and adverbs, not nouns. Singing mournfully, leaning dramatically, etc. I was very much concerned with the major directional flow of the pose, trying to make sure all the prominent lines flowed in the same direction. I stood up and struck the pose myself, feeling where the weight and tension went. I didn't wish to obscure important parts of the design either. A clear and readable silhouette is of paramount importance.

Putting a square on the ground plane helped me place my character in 3D space and not forget about the perspective. I drew four failed versions, with my 0.7 colored lead mechanical pencils on regular copy paper, until I arrived at a drawing I liked. I think drawing is very difficult, and one of the major differences in myself now and seven years ago when I started drawing is



that I'm much more stubborn now; I don't stop trying as easily. Creating thumbnails and drawing took about a day (**Fig.02**).

## Masking the Positive Shape

Having scanned the drawing into Photoshop I used the Polygonal Lasso tool to mask out the drawing from the waste space of the paper. I find this is the quickest way for me to do it. I put the drawing on top in Multiply Blend mode and simply filled in the Polygonal Lasso tool selection with a red color on the layer beneath. By Ctrl + clicking on that layer, I got a convenient selection. With that selection intact, I clicked on the line art layer, then inverted the selection (Ctrl + I) and pressed Delete. Voila, the negative, wasted space was gone (**Fig.03**).

## Local Colors

Again using the Polygonal Lasso tool, I blocked in the local colors using the Fill and Paint Bucket tools. The local color is the "true" color

of an object, uninfluenced by reflected light, shadows or the main light; It's 100% self-lit. I put this layer beneath the line art layer (still in Multiply) in Normal mode, and above the mask layer from the previous step. I hit Alt and clicked between this layer and the mask; this limits the contents of this layer to the positive space of the underlying layer (**Fig.04**).

## Lighting Guide

I thought about what sort of lighting I wanted the scene to have. In order to try to be consistent (which I am usually not), I quickly painted a "reference lighting ball". This is similar to what I did in university when we had to incorporate 3D animation into real life footage. In order to make the 3D model fit in the scene, it had to be lit according to the light of the camera footage, and so we made sure to shoot some footage with a white plaster cast ball in frame as reference. I kept this in a separate layer, and referred to it often during the painting process (**Fig.05**).

## Shadow Blocking

Using two different Multiply layers, one for the shadows which are cast and formed, and one for the ambient occlusion, I mapped out with the shadow pattern. I tried to be consistent with the lighting guide I established in the previous step. I was being rough on purpose, knowing that I would polish this later. Ambient occlusion happens where the ambient light is being occluded/blocked, for instance in crevices, and where different surfaces touch upon each other (**Fig.06**).

## Combine and Flatten

Besides flattening the layers that I had up to this point, I also added some secondary light sources as Screen layers. In addition I made a rough block-in of the main light with a warm orange color in an Overlay layer. In this lighting setup, surfaces reached by the main light source are tinted towards warmer hues, and the surfaces hidden in shadow are shaded towards colder hues. The image looked kind of indistinct,

but it gave me a decent base that I could start rendering from.

My next move was to flatten the layers again and start painting, trying to clarify the forms and getting rid of the line art (**Fig.07**).

## Rendering the Head

I started by rendering the head. It's the most fun part for me, and once it's done, I kind of have

a reference point for the rest. I rendered mostly using the standard round brush with opacity set to Pen Pressure, and did some softening with the default airbrush. For the hair I used the Smudge tool with a custom painterly brush in an attempt to suggest it was hair without painting the individual strands (**Fig.08**).

## More Rendering

I simply kept on painting, using the same technique that I'd used for the face. I wasn't afraid to push and pull stuff around; for instance, I changed the far away arm, which was too long. For me, a drawing isn't set in stone when the line art is done; I keep changing and fixing the drawing as I'm painting. At this stage I almost always feel like throwing the painting away, because it looks like a mess. I've worked on building patience over the years, and I can sort of push through these moments now, hoping that the final piece will look okay. With every finished piece I have ever made, at one point or another, I have always felt like scrapping it (**Fig.09**).

## Even More Rendering

It's great to flip your image to get a fresh pair of eyes, and see it in a new light. I think it's easy to become blind to errors after a while, and changing the perspective can often reveal embarrassing flaws. I've made Flip Canvas horizontally into a keyboard shortcut (**Fig.10**).

## Changing Stuff and Rendering More

I decided to make her kimono longer, thereby removing the feet. I felt the white socks created too much of a contrast near the bottom of her, and that's not where I wanted the viewer's focus to be. Also, the longer kimono put further emphasis on her shortness (**Fig.11**).

## Atmospheric Perspective and Selective Desaturation
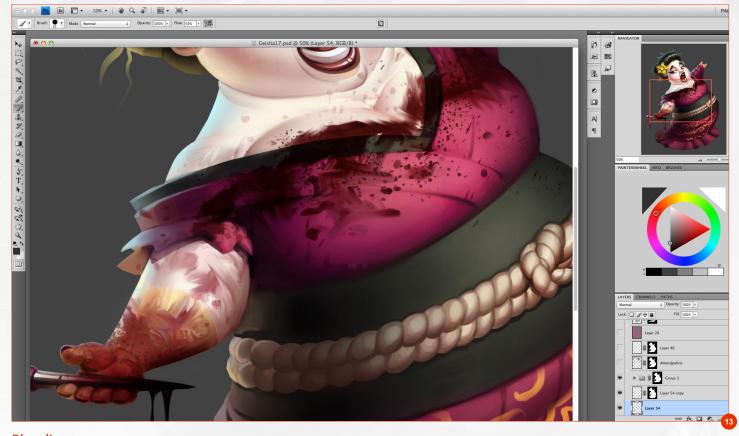
In an attempt to further emphasize the face and hand with the hairpin, I slightly desaturated everything else. The eye tends to focus at the points where there's most contrast (in value as well as hue, chroma and shape), and being aware of this can help direct the attention of the viewer. Keeping a uniform saturation and chroma throughout the design can be disastrous. In a Screen layer I made the parts farther away from the camera fade into the atmospheric fog of the scene, further creating an illusion of depth (**Fig.12**).

## Blood!

On a separate layer set to Multiply, I started painting blood. I painted this using a custom splatter brush, as well as by using the Smudge tool set to Finger Painting. I intentionally overdid it, thinking of it as part of her opera costume. In addition, there's a bit of shock value to it, as images in a cartoon style and blood aren't usually displayed together. This is not an opera for kids (**Fig.13**).
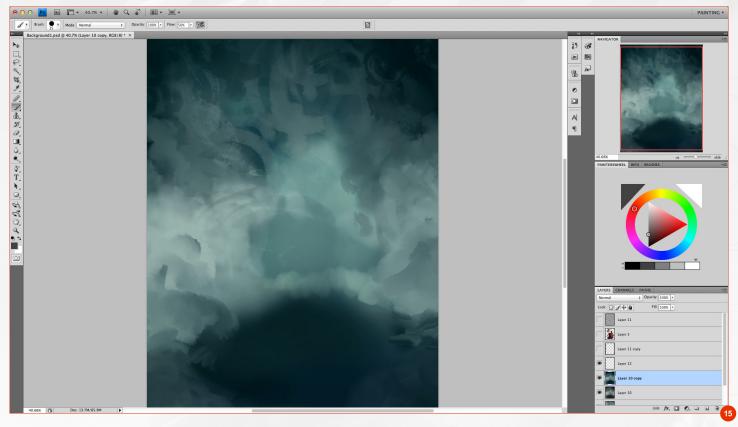
## Dragon

On a layer set to Screen, I painted a dragon-type creature. In order to have it blend with the folds of the fabric I created a layer mask and, with a soft airbrush, I knocked it down in the shadows. Not only did this motif symbolize the horror to come in the story, but the tail, sort of wraps around her similar to what a boa constrictor snake would do: a symbol of her situation. Also, dragons are cool (**Fig.14**).

## Background

Using a wide assortment of custom brushes, along with the Smudge tool and some textures that I took from www.cgtextures.com, I tried to create a smoky and ominous background (**Fig.15**).

## Final Steps

Finally I went in with the Blur tool on some edges, which I wished to recede into space, and I added a fabric texture to her kimono. On top of everything, in an Overlay layer, I put a subtle paper texture. I think the smooth rendering style that I predominantly used requires some variation so it doesn't become boring (**Fig.16**).

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# Custom Brushes for Characters

# Characters

## Chapter 04

A custom brush can add that special texture or help speed up your workflow. You can use a combination of custom brushes to quickly add cracks, dirt and scratches to textures or images, or use them to paint an underlying texture such as skin, cloth, leather and metal to a section of a painting. In this tutorial series our artists will show us how to create different custom brushes to texture a character. This will involve them starting with a basic un-textured character that they have designed, and then demonstrating how to create brushes to add areas of texture and detail.

**DOWNLOAD RESOURCES**

- Free Brushes

## Chapter 04 – Alien

Software Used: Photoshop

## Introduction

The theme of this tutorial concerns custom brushes and, specifically, those that could be used to add detail to an alien, describing skin patterns, markings and camouflage. The objective is to create an array of brushes, which can be used to provide some textural variation. The brushes can be modified and combined to create further adaptations and become the basis for a more extensive library.

We shall begin by designing the creature on which we will demonstrate the custom brushes. Because this tutorial requires a version of the alien on which you can apply these brushes yourself and create your own interpretation, I will compose a line drawing before adding any color. This is not normally how I would approach a painting, but on reflection it seemed like the best way of providing a template for people to experiment with.
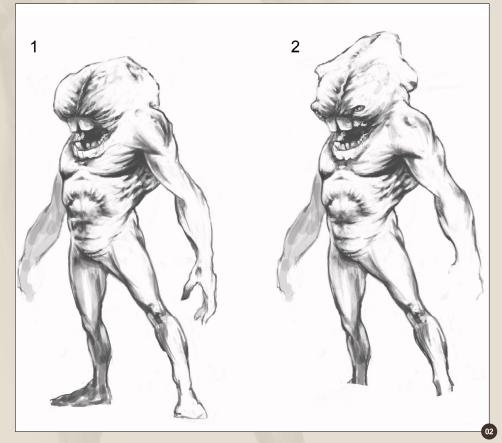
Often the first step I take is to create a number of thumbnail sketches and perhaps sketch a group of silhouettes to help flesh out the general proportions and overall shape of the character. Alternatively, as in this case, I fill in a background and then start to draw on a separate layer using a hard round brush.

I have the Opacity Jitter set to Pen Pressure and simply start doodling until a design begins to emerge. Repeatedly drawing random shapes and flowing lines will usually result in some sort of concept or idea taking form, which can serve as the foundation on which to build a more elaborate design.

**Fig.01** shows an initial "metamorphosis" on the left, which originated from repeated doodling, and on the right, is the more refined version. I restricted myself to the brush mentioned earlier, simply because it was necessary to provide a template drawing.

This concept went through a number of transformations, involving subtle changes in





the proportioning, alongside a reorientation of the muscle groups. You will also notice that the posture has changed from left to right. The initial character seemed a little whimsical and somewhat subordinate, and so I opted to give it a more domineering and assertive stance. I decided to replace the gray background with pure white in order to see the creature's outline better.

**Fig.02** shows two further stages during the process in which the anatomy and proportions have evolved. I decided early on to create a humanoid alien, but I felt that the hands and feet in illustration 1 resembled humans too closely and so deleted them. The other aspect that looked wrong was the articulation of the deltoid, or shoulder muscle, with the pectoral or chest muscle. Although I was trying to achieve

a hunched appearance devoid of any neck, the shoulder nevertheless looked too high compared to the chest and so I lowered the deltoid, which is evident in illustration 2.

I also changed the shape of the arm, as the relationship between the biceps and triceps looked wrong. The other main modification was to the head, which although still lacking a neck, now at least seemed to articulate more realistically with the shoulders.

The drawing at this point was almost resolved barring the hands and feet, and so these needed to be added.

In **Fig.03** you can see the completed template alongside a color overlay, which provides a descent mid-tone to begin working with.

The next step is to start painting in some texture, but before doing so I will briefly run over some of the brush presets (**Fig.04**).
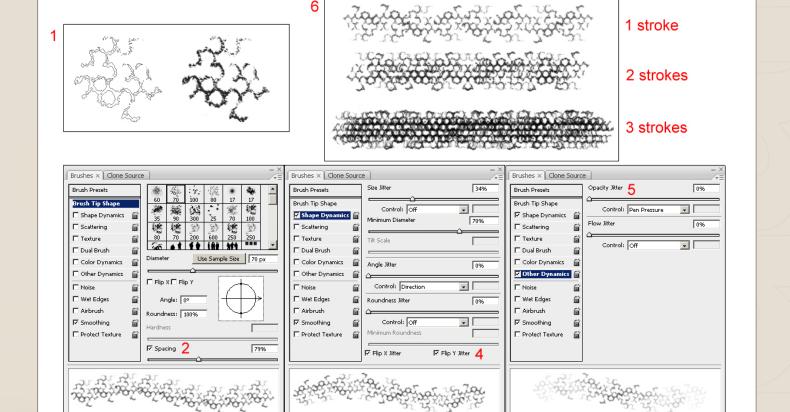
The first brush I chose to use was derived from a photo of fish scales, which can be seen in box 1. This shows the brush shape itself on the left and the corresponding "stamp" when single clicking on the canvas.

Whenever you create a new brush, usually the first port of call will be the Spacing under Brush Tip Shape (2). This is where you can separate out the shape of the brush to be identifiable throughout the stroke. If the Spacing is left at its default setting, then the stroke overlaps the brush shape producing the effect of a loaded brush being dragged across a canvas, in an almost unbroken block of color (3). You can see here that the Spacing is set at 79%, which has produced a string of brush shapes throughout the stroke.

The next aspect worth changing are the X and Y Jitter settings under Shape Dynamics (4). This effectively alternates the vertical and horizontal orientation of the brush throughout the stroke,

in order to create some variation and avoid an obvious symmetry. Compare the stroke in the lower window to the previous one highlighting the Brush tip Shape.

The last area to consider is the Opacity Jitter under Other Dynamics, which I generally set to Pen Pressure; a preset suited to graphics tablets (5). You can now see that the tonal range throughout this stroke varies.

This brush now has the ability to paint a patchwork of scales, the density of which can be determined according to the number of overlapped strokes (6).

With this brush and its modified settings now saved, it is time to start adding some details and patterns across the skin.
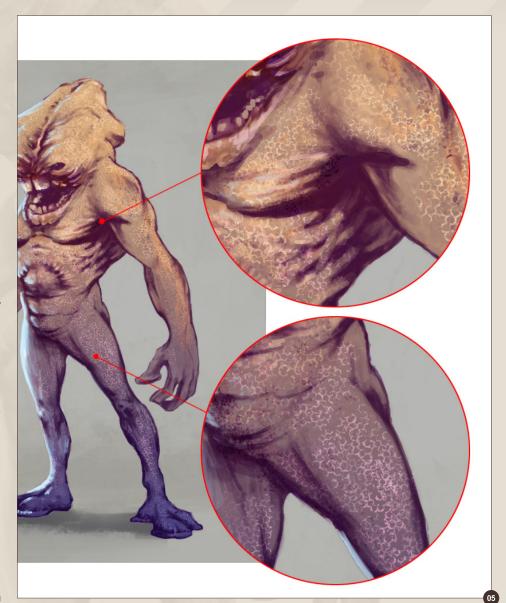
**Fig.05** shows the first stages of using this brush, which I painted on a new layer set to Normal mode. I changed the color of the brush to reflect the variation across the legs and torso, as well as modifying the size. The best method is to lay down some strokes without worrying too much if they are exact, and afterwards use the Eraser to refine and tidy up things.
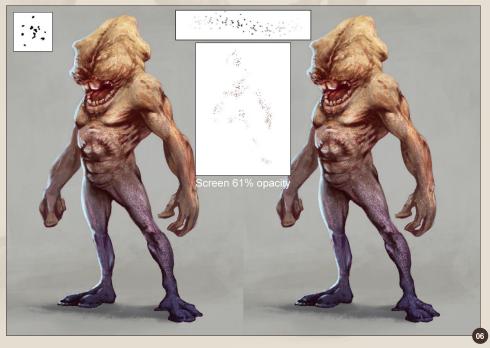
As this is a tutorial I have separated the texture brushes into layers in order, so that you may see their individual contribution.

The next is made up of a few randomly spaced dots, which can be seen in the upper left box in **Fig.06**. This brush uses a spacing of 104%, but only takes advantage of flipping the Y Jitter. You will also notice from the stroke (center, top) that the opacity is set to Pen Pressure.

I chose a dull, reddish brown and painted in some spots across the alien, predominantly along the arms and chest. The layer was eventually set to Screen Blending mode, but the small image in the center shows it at Normal mode on a white background in order to reveal where it was used. The creature on the right shows the layer applied compared to the one on the left, which represents an earlier version.

Although subtle, each one of these texture layers will contribute a little towards the final effect and if you removed all of them you would notice a marked difference. The secret is to avoid exaggerating details such as these.





Screen 61% opacity
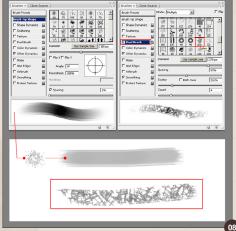
Overlay 81% opacity





With this layer now complete it is time to move onto the third brush, which is somewhat different to the previous two as it involves a Dual Brush. I will explain what this means shortly, but before that let's have a look at the new brush.
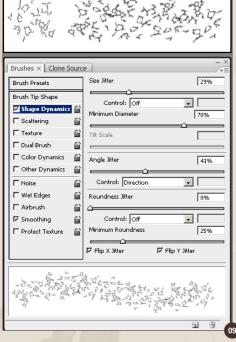
Fig.07 shows the brush in the upper left and its resultant stroke to the right (centre, top). This time around I used a pale yellow set to Overlay, but have also included a detail in black and white to show where the brush has been applied (center). You can see how it has created some highlights across the head and shoulders, as well as some subtle patterns across the arms and legs.

As already mentioned, this brush incorporates a Dual Brush, which is a great way of creating variations.

With the brush palette open, scroll down to Dual Brush (below texture) and tick the small box on the left. Fig.08 shows the brush on the left before Dual Brush is active, which as you can see creates a stroke resembling a paintbrush. The right window shows the same brush, but with Dual Brush now enabled. The sampled brush was extracted from broken glass, but more importantly you can see how this function completely transforms the brush stroke.

By experimenting with the dynamics and combining different presets it is possible to swiftly create an array of very different qualities, all of which stem from a single brush. There are several brushes included with this tutorial, so I would encourage you to experiment with these as well as developing some of your own versions.
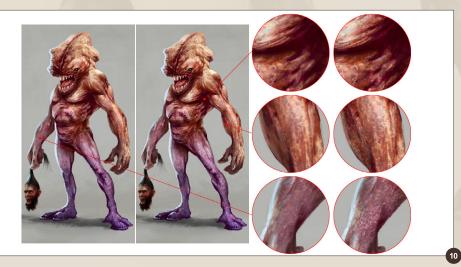
One other brush I developed during this tutorial is pictured in Fig.09, which I used to add another layer of detail. You will notice that the Shape Dynamics employ some Angle Jitter and also have the X and Y Jitter flipped. The brush tip can be seen in the upper left alongside the resultant stroke.

Fig.10 illustrates how this brush has lent another dimension to the skin and injected some delicate variation. The character on the left shows the stage before the brush was applied, with the adjacent copy showing the new texture.

As I was painting the creature and creating the brushes, I was continually revising the design and trying new variations. In this example I amended the mouth, as well as adding an eye

and some gruesome detail in the form of a trophy head!

The alignment of the knees had been wrong since early on and should have been addressed at the beginning, but it is never too late to fix a problem. The other area for concern was the perspective and so to account for foreshortening, I reduced the size of the left hand and also altered the curvature of the furrow that runs up through the center of the head.

With some color corrections and a handful of small refinements, the character was finished (**Fig.11**).

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"Sometimes the journey itself is more important than the destination."

making of by gediminas pranckevicius

# MR WOLF

Skillful illustrator and concept artist, Gediminas Pranckevicius, talks us through the creation of his amusing image, *Mr Wolf*, from the initial concept stage, through to adding final details and highlights to this whimsical image.

# Mr Wolf

Software Used: Photoshop

Good day, dear ladies and gentlemen, today I'll tell you a story of how my drawing *Mr Wolf* came to be. It was a regular day just like any other, when I accidently stumble upon a CG competition. The topic was "Werewolf", which, let's be honest, is a boring topic.

The competition held a tight deadline, with only seven days to present the final work. No prizes were available, it just offered a good time with fellow artists from all over the world. Sometimes competitions like this are a great opportunity to exercise, maybe make new friends, have some good discussions, etc. Sometimes the journey itself is more important than the destination.

For better or worse, one of the most popular topics in our industry is horror, with all kinds of evil guys and monsters. I decided to try and go in a different direction with this image and convert the topic into something less, ahem, horrifying.

Just like raindrops hit the ground randomly, I sketched out an idea really quick. At this point composition and proportion were of least importance; sometimes it helps a lot to completely relax in this initial stage (**Fig.01**).

An urgent need to see a lovely werewolf in an awkward situation made my hands move quickly and without further ado I chose the following path. I created a new layer for simple Photoshop

brush action. Bearing in mind that the wolf was standing in the night, with a few strokes I created a rough depth to the image (**Fig.02**).

I included some additional details on a different layer. At this point I merged those two layers and created a new one on top with Multiply blending mode. Now another challenge lay ahead! I needed to create some volume, or as it's called in 3D modeling software, ambient occlusion. I

used Photoshop's standard round brush, with its opacity set to something around 70%, and worked out the path of the light little by little, darkening where it should be darker (**Fig.03**).

Even though it might be a very boring – and rather long – process, it's crucial, so you have to find patience in yourself and keep working. It's not a bad idea to duplicate this layer and just hide it, because later on it can save your life.

As a common saying says, where shadows are there is also light, so I began working with light on another layer. I painted the areas where they should be illuminated by bounced light; at this particular point the main light source was the sky (**Fig.04**).

I did not bother myself with the details at this point; I concentrated on the areas that should be made lighter or darker by the light source. You

can cheat here and there a little bit if you believe it looks better (**Fig.05**).

Now it was time for some additional details and textures. I did that by using an interesting eraser on the shadow and light layers. "Oh, yes!" I thought to myself when I finally saw the complete picture in my head. Suddenly everything felt clear and beautiful, so I cleaned up and merged the layers together.

As you can see in **Fig.06**, there was an area where I positioned the moon and a place where I added an owl. I also added a victim in the hollow of the tree. After a brief play with the details, I enhanced the whole image with the Dodge tool over the moon, and Burn tool around the shadows.

The time came to color the picture. At this point all layers were merged into one, so I made a copy of the image. Now I edited the top layer with the Curve tool (Ctrl + M) by decreasing red and blue channels, which gave me a kind of bluish-greenish color. I made the lower layer redder (**Fig.07**).

By having those two layers I was able to color the trees by erasing some parts of the top layer; its more ergonomic to use a layer mask for that. For other shades, such as for the wolf's clothing, I made a new Overlay layer, which I merged into one again. I was trying to avoid too many layers because having too many layers floods your head and your head has to be clear.



I created a new top layer and with a few small brushes, I illuminated the forest with direct moonlight. There was lack of vegetation in the forest, so I found and used the Leaves and Veggie Brush Pack by charfade, which came in very handy. These days you can find some really great, high quality and free brush packs, so I'd like to offer a big thanks to their talented creators. I created the wolf's fur with a simple thin brush.

Before saving what for me was the final image, I highlighted illuminated areas with the Dodge tool. It still remains a mystery to me why this poor fellow is hiding in the middle of the forest at night, but I believe that everything will be just fine (**Fig.08**).
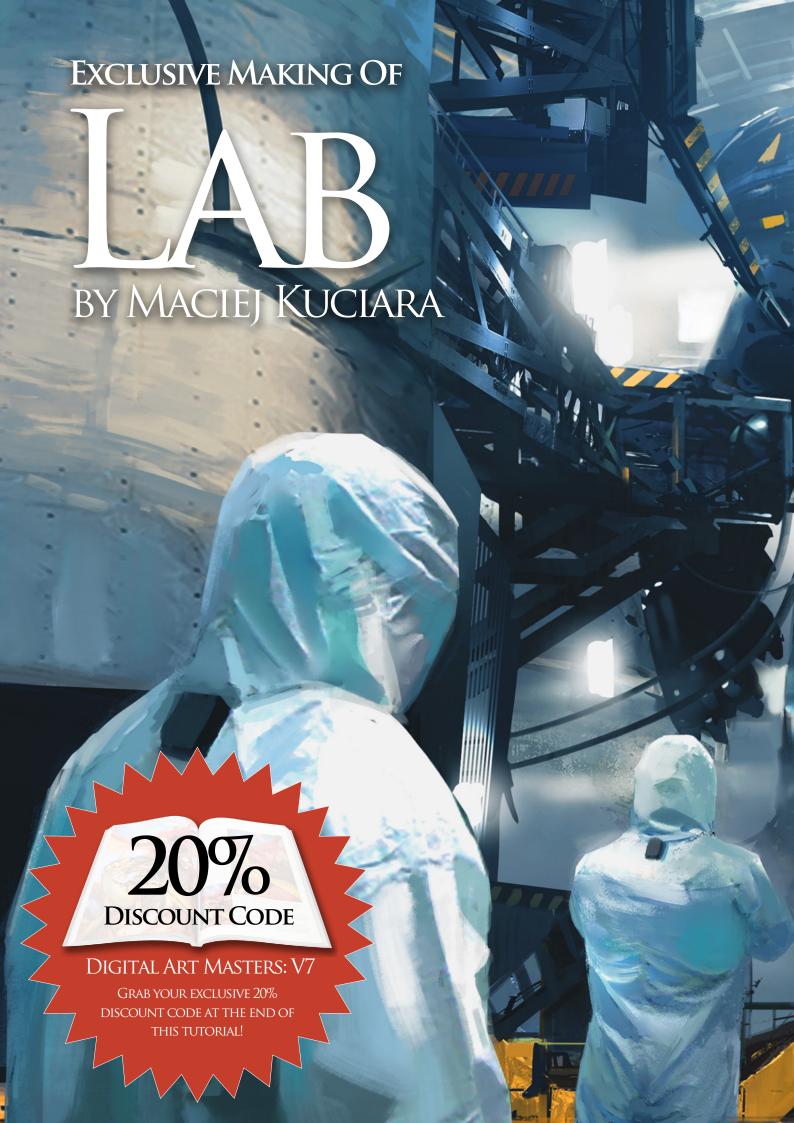
If you're interested, you can see other artists work from the same competition at: http://cghub.com/forum/showthread.php?t=11247.
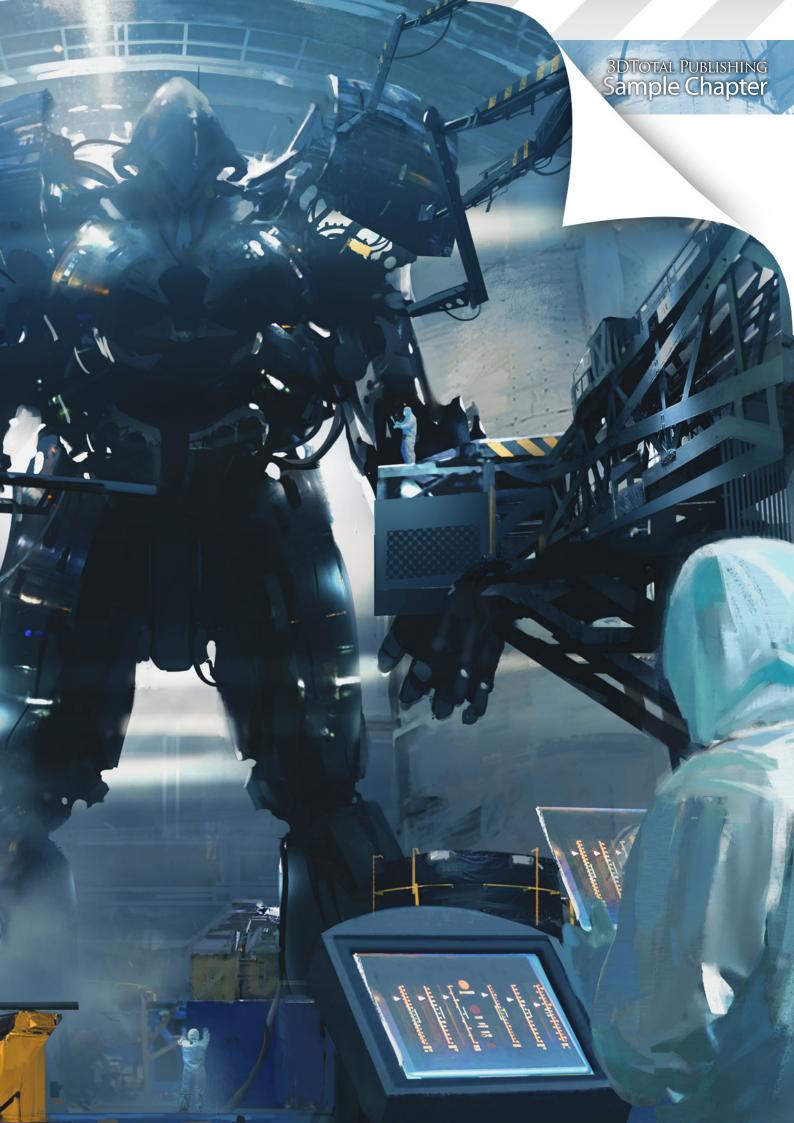
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## Lab

**Software Used:** Photoshop

## Introduction

Working in the entertainment industry as a concept artist can be fun, but it can also be quite challenging at times. It's the final quality of those paintings that require you to go outside your comfort zone that will eventually evaluate how good a concept artist you are in your supervisor's eye.
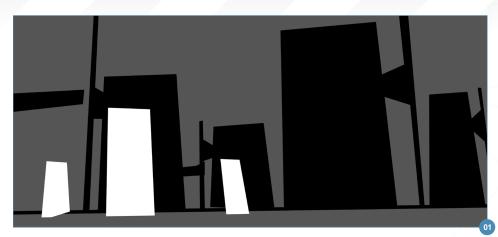
I try to challenge myself with things I haven't tried before as often as possible. Whether it's trying new styles or genres, or simply putting in place artificial boundaries such as time limits, it doesn't matter as long as it's something that won't make me feel comfortable at all during that time.
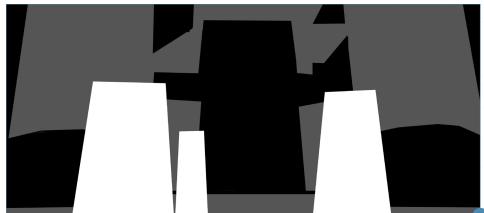
The same principles were true for the image I'm writing about in this Making Of. The idea behind the scene I wanted to paint was actually quite simple, a secret government laboratory in which scientists are making final tests on their new powerful weapon; a giant robot. The challenge I had was to make this idea come to life in the shortest amount of time possible, while preserving a realistic look and quality that made it look as close as possible to a still from a Sci-Fi film.
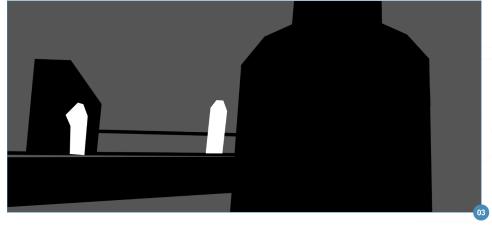
## Composition

With limited time and quite high quality expectations I had to approach each creative step carefully in order to prevent myself from going back and forth due to unwise decisions. With that in mind I started working on very quick composition sketches, using only very simple suggestive shapes and just three basic values; white/gray/black.

I made quite a number of very quick thumbnails, where each of these didn't take more than a couple of minutes. After creating quite few of these I selected the images that you see in **Fig.01 – 03** which I liked most and then







eventually chose one that I felt looked most like my government lab idea (**Fig.02**).

I kept all of these sketches in aspect ratios close to what you would see on a cinema screen.

## Sketch

Once I was happy with the initial compositional sketch I decided to proceed with a quick greyscale painting to get a more defined idea of what would appear in the scene. At this point I didn't pay too much attention to the accuracy of straight lines, but rather tried to bring out the

basic shapes and suggest the basic lighting. I knew I wanted to use artificial indoor lighting that would bounce from object to object creating semi-sharp highlights and diffuse bright areas. Because my initial composition sketch already suggested a good balance of values, I knew that I could use dozens of small beam lights everywhere. I didn't have to spend extra time carefully placing highlights and shadows in order to make the scene readable. The contrast of bright and dark materials in the scene allowed me a lot of freedom.

I decided to put two "bunny-suit" scientists in the front, one on a second plane somewhere in the middle distance and lastly one figure in very close proximity to the robot, situated on the construction bridge around the robot's arm (**Fig.04**). The placement of characters helped me to create a good sense of scale in the scene as well as lay the base for the painting.
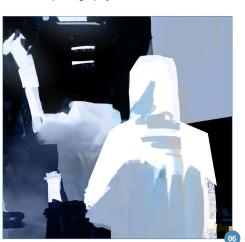
Creating the sketch is crucial and when you have to be absolutely sure you're happy with the results and that everything in the scene is well balanced.

## Hues

Immediately after I was finished with the sketch I decided to layer the hues. I used three layer's set to Color blending mode and then simply used Standard brushes to paint the colors I wanted to see in the final image (**Fig.05 – 06**). Because of the way the Color blending mode works, this step is pretty quick but helps to keep the image integrity in the long run. This was also an important step, because it took away the guess work later on when working on different parts of the painting.

## Details

Because the goal was to create a realistic look in the shortest time possible, using photography to suggest more definition in shapes as well as details was inevitable. At this point I usually start looking through my personal photography, previous artwork and eventually royalty free stock photography on the web. Then I





incorporated the elements that I found and filled in areas with custom brushwork that were missing texture. On several mechanical objects such as the construction bridges I used a mix of photography and the line tool to create grid looking textures. Then with a brush set to Dodge mode I painted in highlights. To save time I re-used some of these elements in other parts of the painting, mirroring them, flipping them and adjusting them to fit.

Having undertaken these steps I didn't have to worry about spending infinite amounts of time on hand painted detail to capture a realistic look, but instead focused on the big picture.

Rendering the details was the most time consuming part for obvious reasons. On the other hand, having undertaken the previous precautions I avoided a lot of headaches that could easily have double the time spent on the image (**Fig.07**).

After all the details were done I simply used a Soft white brush to add some extra volumetric light on the robot and used two Adjustment Layers (Levels and Hue/Saturation (**Fig.08**)).

Using the latter adjustment I was able to take out some of the unwanted hues by changing the options from Master to specific colours.
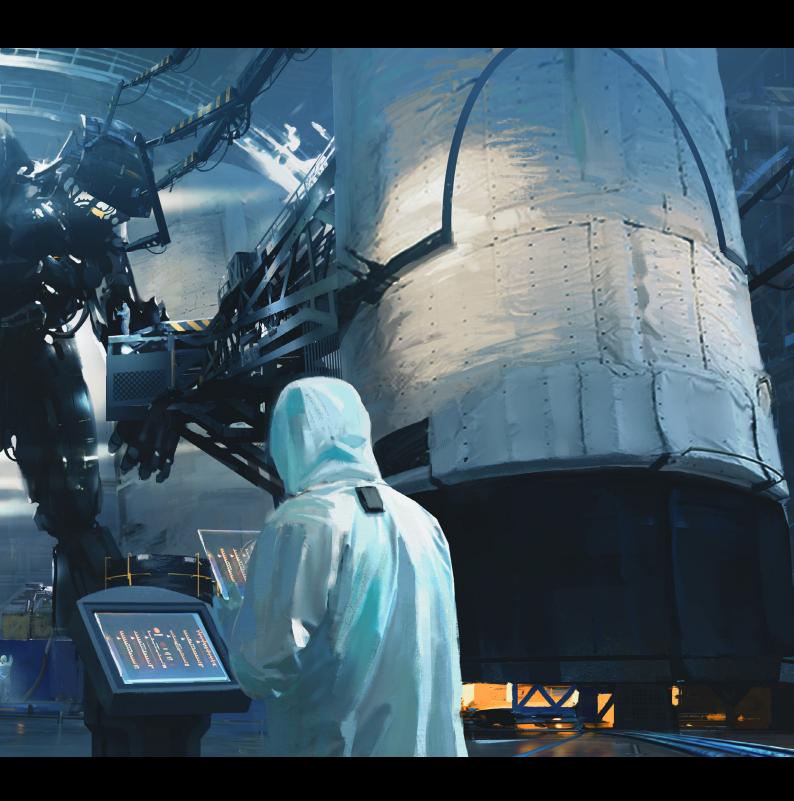
## Results

Not every painting will end with the results you wish for, especially when you have to step out of your comfort zone in order to complete it. Over the last several months I've been testing myself by creating realistic results in a very time limited environment and needless to say, about half of these attempts have failed. The concepts were not realistic enough, the colors didn't sit well and the lighting was unsatisfactory. It takes time and quite an effort to improve and it's never a waste of time to just try and become more versatile in your work.

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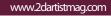http://www.3dcreativemag.com

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