Interview
Andree Wallin

Articles
Sketchbook of
Aekkarat Sumutchaya

The Gallery
Andrey Pervukhin,
Edvige Faini,
plus more!

THE **SEAPORT**

NEW!

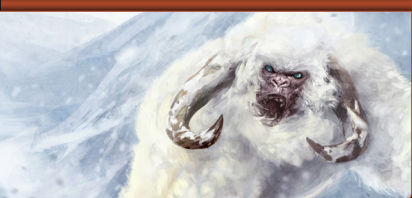A brand new series by **Ignacio Bazan Lazcano**, walking through how to paint a complex scene, step-by-step.

Harpoons and Spear-based Weapons
In the final part of our Weapon Design series, **Daniel Baker** talks us through how to design a sci-fi harpoon.

NEW! Designing New Worlds
This brand new series focuses on designing an alien world, from concepts to final illustrations. **Gerhard Mozsi** kicks off by looking at characters.

Custom Brushes for Characters
We've reached the penultimate part of this series, and **Bart Tiongson** delivers this scary-looking Yeti, whilst talking through his processes.

Editorial

Welcome to the January issue of *2DArtist* and Happy New Year! We hope you enjoyed the festive break and that you're looking forward to an exciting year with 2DArtist as the new year brings new and exciting tutorial series from some very talented artists.

This month's awesome cover image is by **Ignacio Bazan Lazcano**, created for a brand new, two-part tutorial in which Ignacio illustrates a step-by-step guide to creating a detailed seaport scene in Photoshop.

In the final installment from our Weapon Design series, **Daniel Baker** demonstrates how to create harpoon and spear-based weapons. Over the course of this series our artists have been demonstrating how to design different weapon concepts to fit various situations and environments for the games industry. Daniel talks us through the design and concept stage of his science fiction harpoon, and continues to demonstrate how to color and final touches to help you in your work and creation of new concepts.

Our second new tutorial series is Designing New Worlds, which will take a comprehensive look at the aim of creating a world from a concept perspective. This chapter and the following five will investigate the progresses and techniques that can be employed to create an extraordinary society, from the initial idea to the finished image. **Gerhard Mozsi** begins the series by demonstrating how to design and paint characters.

We have reached the penultimate chapter in our Custom Brushes for Character series, in which our artists are showing us how to create different custom brushes to texture a character. In this chapter **Bart Tiongson** starts by designing his Yeti, and continues to demonstrate how to use different brushes to add detail and texture to the character.

The excitement doesn't end there, as we also have a Making Of by **Ali Kiani Amin**, and a gallery full of stunning images by **Liam Peters**, **Andrey Belarus**, **Soheil Danesh** and many more!

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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 Maxim Kozlov

3dtotal.com

2d artist
Digital Painting Magazine
Issue 085 January 2013

Cover Image by Ignacio Bazan Lazcano

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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!
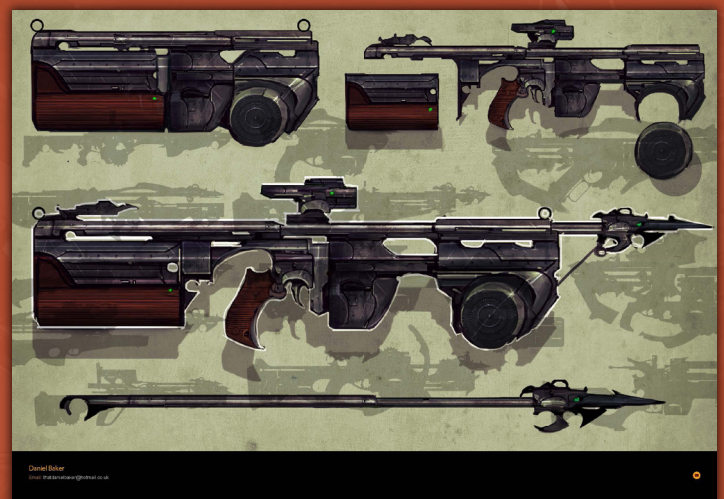

Setting up your PDF reader

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.

Gerhard Mozsi

is an Australian artist who has worked both remotely and on-site for studios in the USA, Austria, Germany, Australia, and the UK. He studied traditional art at university before exchanging the paintbrush for a Wacom, and now works primarily in the digital medium. He has been working as a concept artist and matte painter for film and games development for the last years, and his work can be seen on his website and blog.

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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

Ignacio Bazan Lazcano

Lives in the beautiful city of Buenos Aires where he has been working for four years in the games industry as an illustrator and concept artist.

He currently works for TimeGate Studios where his tasks include developing the aesthetics of the game from the beginning of the process. In the future he'd like for Argentina to become well-known for its artistic talent.

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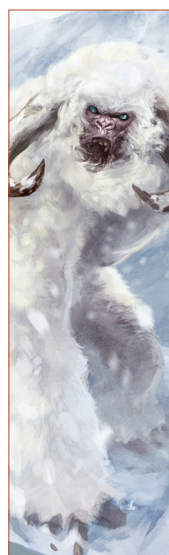
Bart Tiongson

Bart was born in the Philippines and raised in Toronto, Canada. Currently employed as a concept artist at Robot Entertainment, Bart was the lead artist on Halo Wars at Ensemble Studios and has over 10 years of industry experience. Bart loves to eat!

http://riceandeggs.blogspot.com/
btiongson@robotentertainment.com

Image by Edvige Faini
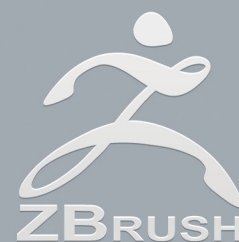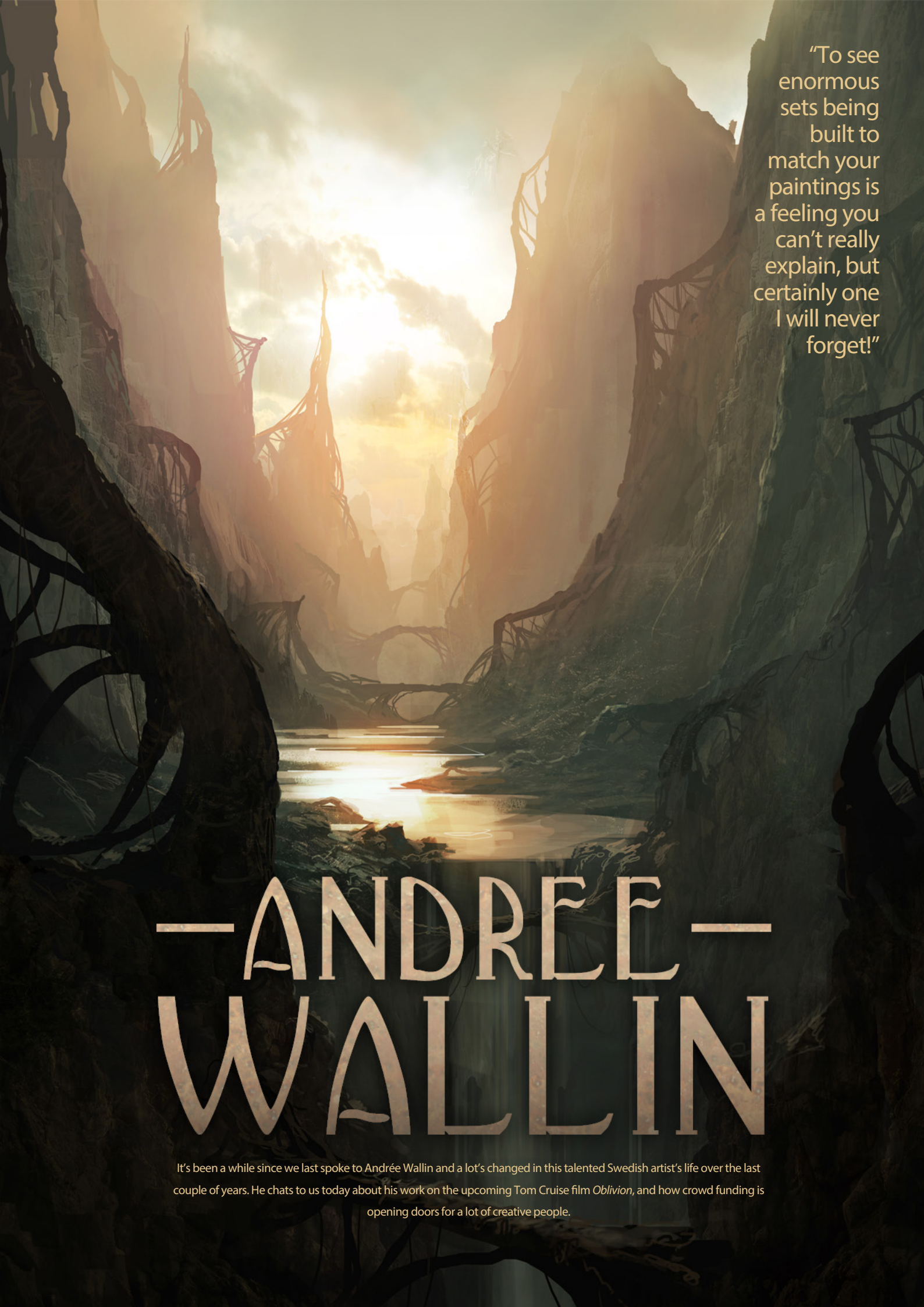
ZBrush

ANDRÉE WALLIN

It's been a while since we last spoke to Andrée Wallin and a lot's changed in this talented Swedish artist's life over the last couple of years. He chats to us today about his work on the upcoming Tom Cruise film *Oblivion*, and how crowd funding is opening doors for a lot of creative people.

Hi Andrée, how are you? I can't believe I'm saying this, but it's been over four years since I first interviewed you for *2DArtist* – time flies! So what have you been up to since then? The last time we spoke you were working in UK after spending some time in Stockholm studying 3D. Are you still in the UK now?

I know; it's crazy! I remember doing that interview like it was just last week. I'm back in Sweden; I left the UK in 2009 to pursue a career as a freelancer and have been doing that ever since. I've worked on a lot of different projects since then, but I suppose the biggest one is *Oblivion*, which is a project that started out as a graphic novel back in '09 and eventually turned into a movie starring Tom Cruise, due in theaters in April 2013. I just wrapped up work on it last week and it's been an amazing journey from the very first illustration.

Wow – that sounds like a hell of a project to be involved with! What kind of work did you get to do? Have you seen any of it on the big screen yet?

It really was/is. Since I've been involved from the very first day I've done many, many concept paintings, mainly designing the world itself. I've also done a lot of pre-vis art and even been working on a couple of poster designs. I haven't seen any of the polished material yet, but I've seen some rough cuts and I got to visit some of the sets when we were in pre-production in Louisiana earlier this year. To see enormous sets being built to match your paintings is a feeling you can't really explain, but certainly one I will never forget!

Vanquish Interactive – tell me everything! The idea of interactive comic books and graphic novels gets my inner geek very excited.

Well, Vanquish Interactive is not "my" company, so to speak, but I am an honorary co-founder, which means I'm onboard as a producer of sorts/consultant art director. Jay Douglas came to me with this idea and showed me the early progress of *Telikos Protocol*, and right away I knew I wanted to support these guys. Issue 1 has been released and I'd recommend it for anyone who enjoys a cool sci-fi story with gorgeous art!

Now you've been experimenting with Kickstarter to fund a project in summer 2012, right? How did that go for you? And what do you think about crowd-funding in general? It seems to be a growing trend recently; we've even done a Kickstarter project of our own.

Oh really, I wasn't aware of your project, but I hope it was successful! I've not been involved with the whole Kickstarer thing personally, but I've done my best to spread the word though and made sure to pimp every Kickstarter project I've been involved in. So far I think Kickstarter has been amazing, it's opened a lot of doors for a lot of people. As long as the backers get what they pay for I'm sure crowd-funding is here to stay.

"As long as the backers get what they pay for" – that's an interesting point. On the surface it's difficult to see any negatives about crowd funding, but I guess that by pledging money upfront the backers have to put a certain amount of trust in the project. So which other Kickstarter projects have you been involved with? And have you ever been tempted to use it yourself? "The Art of Andree Wallin" – I can see it now...

Well, the biggest one for me was *Wasteland 2*, which raised almost 3 million dollars. I did a bunch of promotional /concept images for it, which was a lot of fun. No plans regarding a kickstarter project of my own though. I do have something I'm working on, but I will fund it myself. I can't say much about it at this stage though, but I think it's going to be pretty cool!

I was reminded how great your work was recently when we took delivery of a couple of

massive prints of your work from our friends at Wall Art Rockers. They're all ready and waiting to be put up on our new office walls – just got to finish with the decorating! What can you tell us about the way you work? I guess with concept art you've always got a brief to follow – how much scope is there for personal interpretation?

I'm honored to have my art up on your walls!

"...generally I'd say that I'm getting more and more freedom when it comes to putting my own touch on things, which is of course very flattering!"

As always, it totally depends on what you're working on and who you're working for, but generally I'd say that I'm getting more and more

freedom when it comes to putting my own touch on things, which is of course very flattering! I'm always putting my soul into every painting I do and I think that people notice when you really do care about what you're working on. Pre-production is my favourite phase of any project, since you're allowed to be creative and try different ideas. Once the look and design is locked down you're more restricted.

My job is usually keyframe, pre-vis or environment work and I always try to focus on soft, atmospheric lighting and simple compositions. Lighting is key and will make or break any type of environment painting. I start off with thumbnailing/sketching, getting the overall tone approved and then going into detail. Business as usual!

Now that you've finished working on *Oblivion*, what's next in the pipeline for you?

Back to various other freelancing jobs?
Right now I'm taking some time off to focus on my own stuff for a while, as well as just enjoying life. I've been dying to do some personal art all year so I'm actually looking forward to be my own boss for a while. But in terms of actual client work, I'll be doing more freelancing, yes.

I remember that one of questions I asked you last time was about your ideal project and you mentioned you'd love to do some

concept work for the upcoming *Halo* movie. **Now I understand the movie's still stuck in development-hell so you've not had the chance to turn that dream into a reality, but there is an interesting entry on your website about working on trailers for *Halo 4*... can you tell us about this?**
Oh that's right, the *Halo* movie. It really was a long time ago! Yeah, I did some concepts for Digital Domain on one of the early trailers, and then some matte painting work on one of the

more recent live-action trailers. The first one was thanks to Joseph Kosinski, the director of *Oblivion*, who also directed the debut trailer for *Halo* and asked if I could do some keyframe concepts for him. It was fun to finally get to do some work on it for sure, even if it wasn't the actual movie!

Do you think the *Halo* movie will ever get made? So many great names have been attached to it over the years that it would be a shame for all that planning to come

to nothing.... although, given some of the pretty terrible video game adaptations that Hollywood has churned out in the past, maybe *Halo* has had a lucky escape! That's a good question. From a studio perspective, video game adaptations aren't exactly box office gold. Hollywood doesn't want another *John Carter* fiasco, so getting a project of this magnitude off the ground is probably close to impossible. On the other hand, if the film adaptations of *Assassins Creed* and *Splinter Cell* do well there might be some hope.

I think the biggest problem is that it would be an extremely expensive endeavour. Huge set pieces, lots of costumes and big suits, and loads of CGI would probably make it *Avatar*-ish in terms of budget. But you never know. I'm keeping my fingers crossed.

One last question to round things off: If, like me, you'd been born with pretty much zero artistic talent, what do you think you'd be doing for a living right now? Do you still think you'd be in the games/movies/comic

Andree Wallin

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Interviewed by: Jo Hargreaves

industry somewhere?

I would not be anywhere near the entertainment industry, I'm quite sure of that. I have no other talents and never had any real aspirations. I would most likely still be working at the same warehouse I worked in back in 2007, being miserable and playing drums and video games to escape reality. Needless to say I'm happy I found something better to do!

"When it comes to my art, I am inspired by my lifestyle, experimenting and the environment around me."
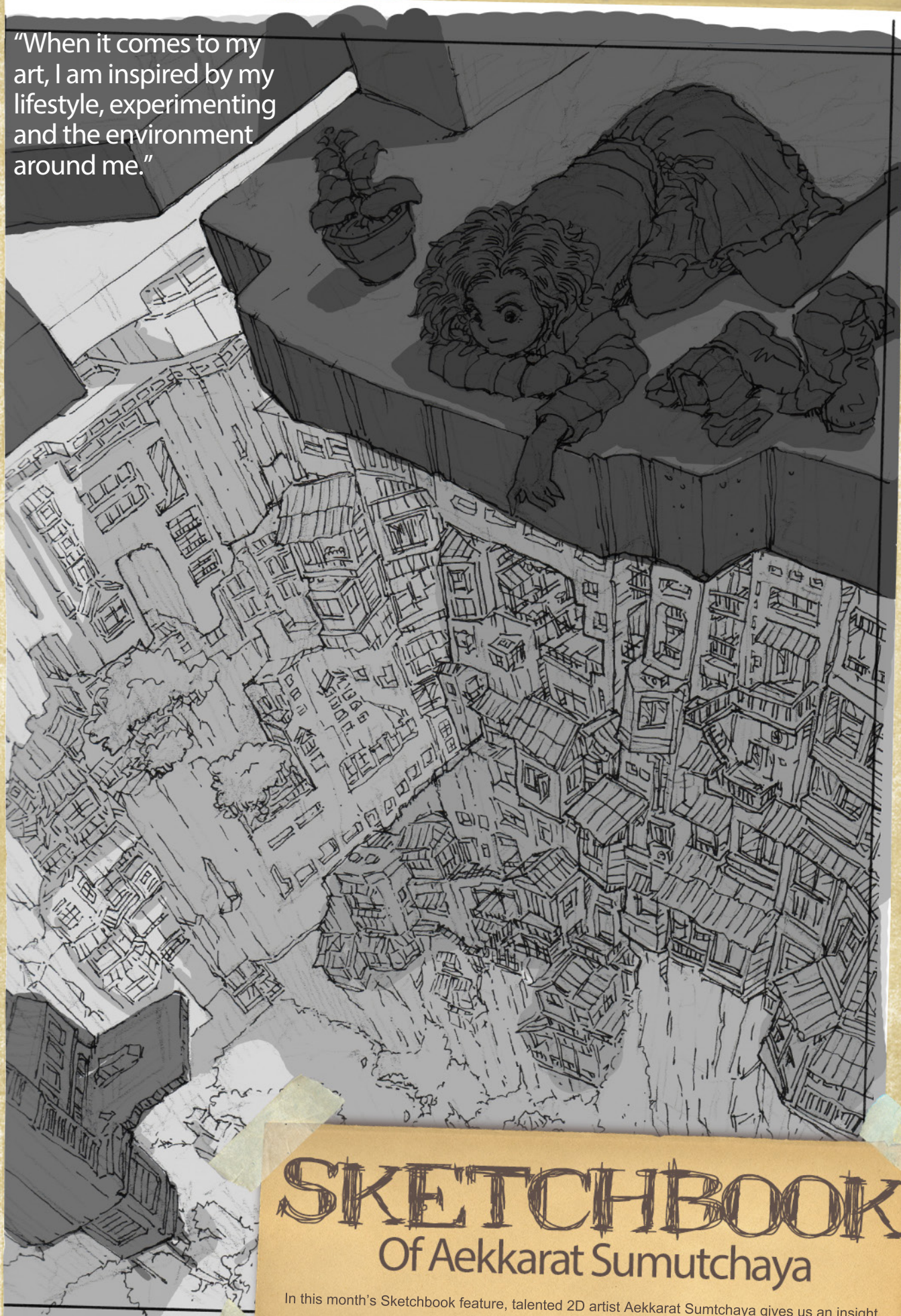
SKETCHBOOK
Of Aekkarat Sumutchaya

In this month's Sketchbook feature, talented 2D artist Aekkarat Sumtchaya gives us an insight into his wild imagination and fantasy worlds, as he shares the pages of his sketch book with us.

Sketchbook of Aekkarat Sumachaya

Sawasdee ("hello" in Thai)! My name is Aekkarat Sumachaya, art director and co-founder of Animania, an animation studio located in Bangkok, Thailand.

When it comes to my art, I am inspired by my lifestyle, experimenting and the environment around me. I then layer ideas on top with stories, personal opinions and my wild imagination. I hope people will enjoy my work and get my message.

One day, I left a pack of instant noodles on the floor. Moments later, I came back to pick it up only to discover a colony of ants having a picnic in my food. When there was nothing left to do, I took the opportunity to observe their behavior and that's how I came up with the idea of Princess Ant. Her armor is an exaggerated version of a real-world jewel beetle's wing. Its color is a remarkable metallic green, which corresponds to the characteristics of the tribe's civilization. She carries a fork from a dollhouse as a weapon (**Fig.01**).

01
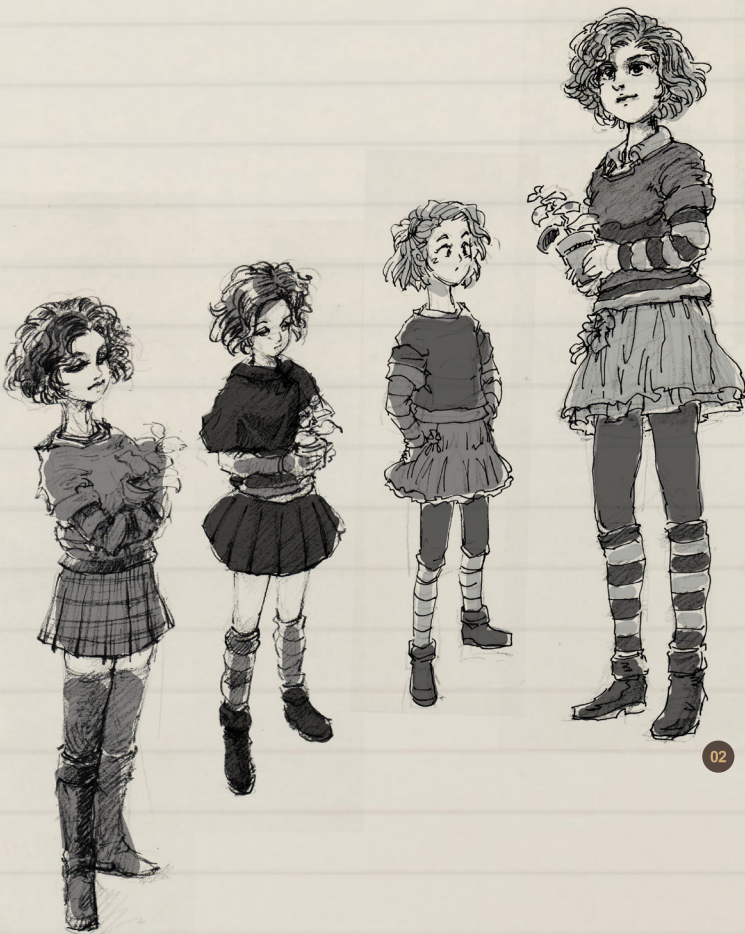
In **Fig.02** is a character for The Magical Beans Story, a children's adventure. They live in a location that resembles a volcano and the leader of the group is a 16 year old girl.

I love vintage vehicles. Despite modern technology, I think vintage materials were more dependable and built to last (**Fig.03**).
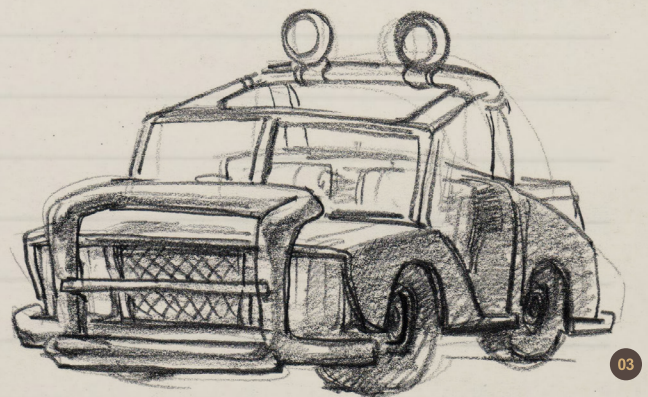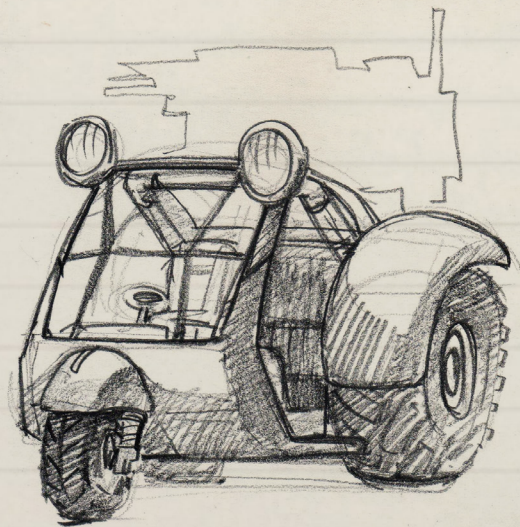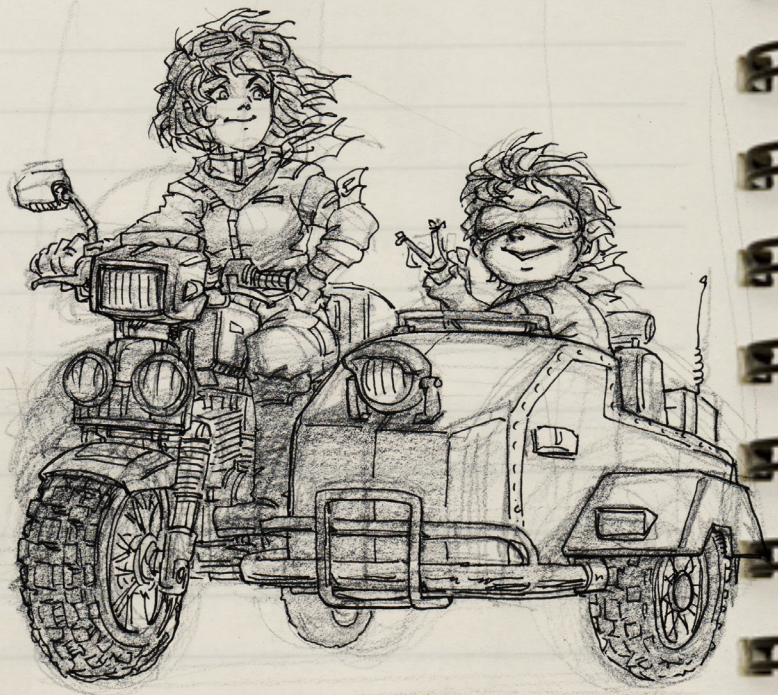
In **Fig.04** are a lot of characters. There are many groups, therefore many stories, such as the tribal group, semi machinery humans and alien.
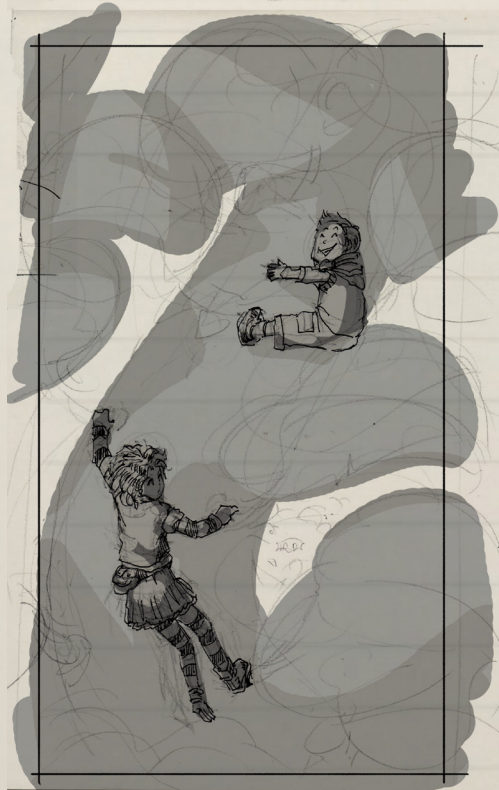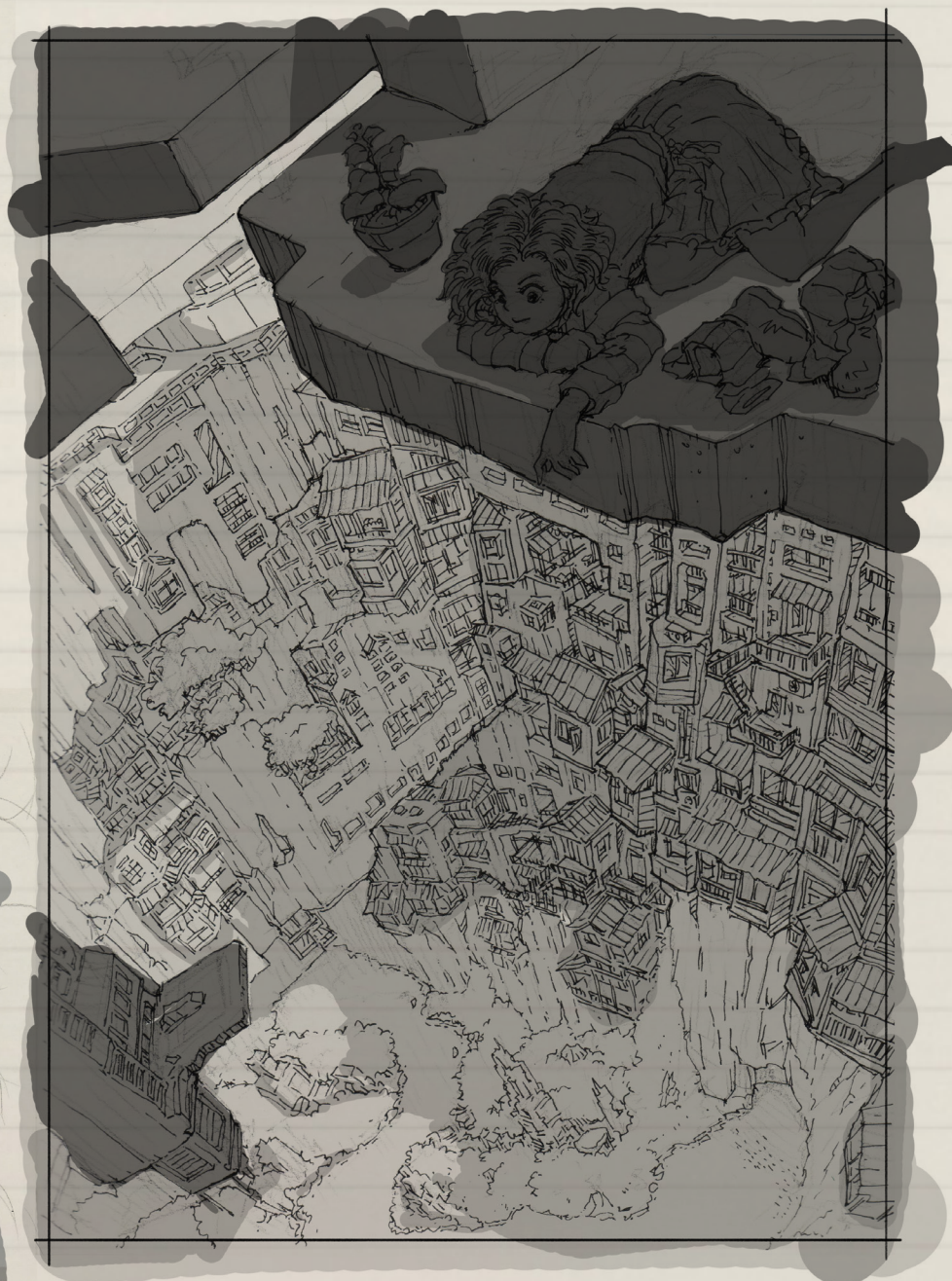
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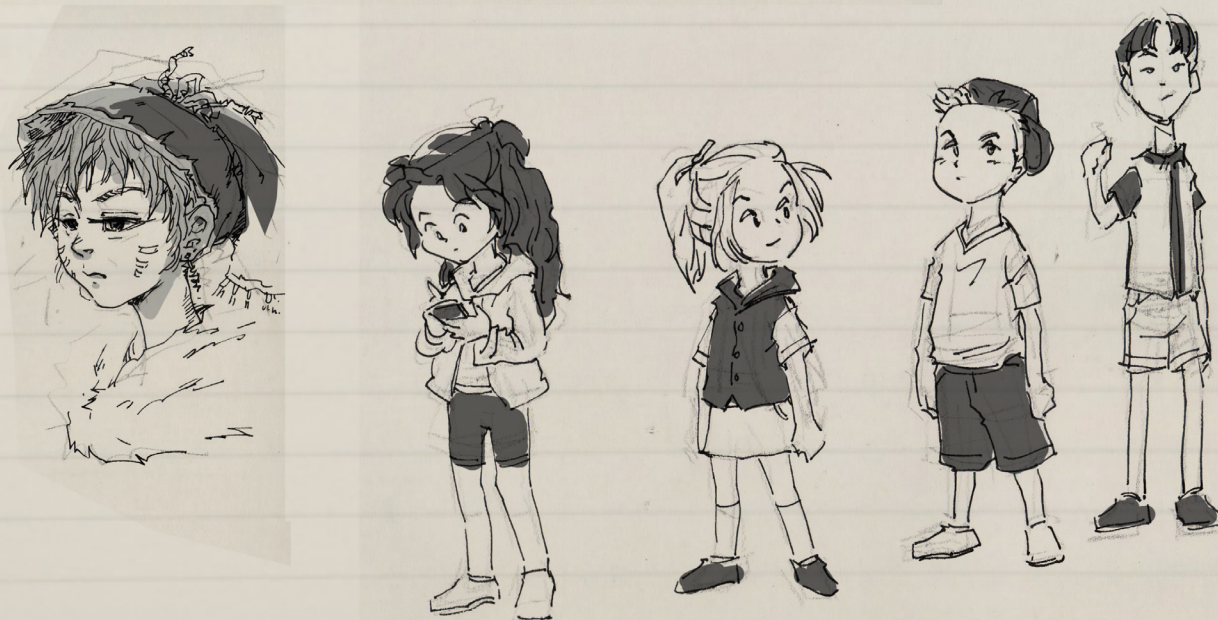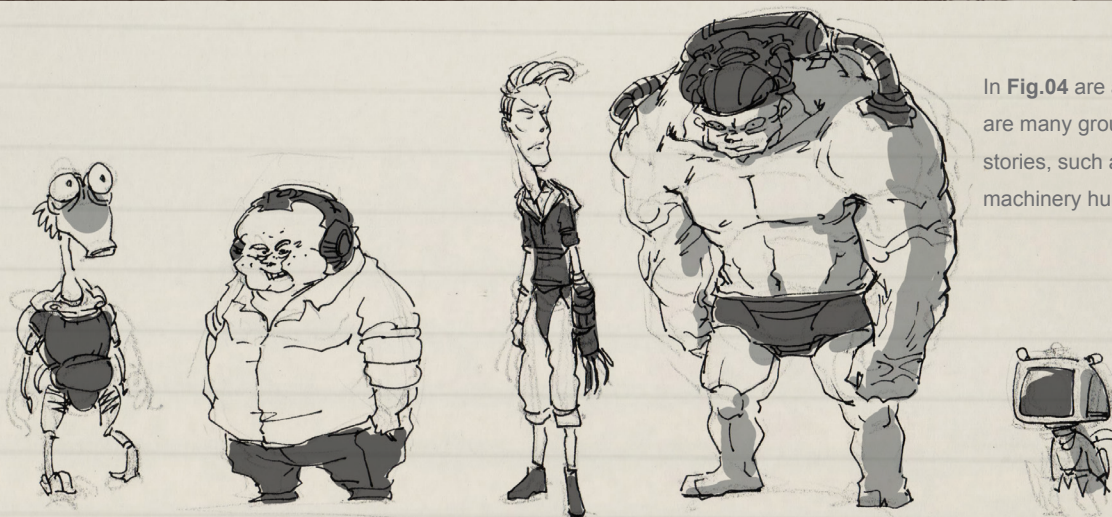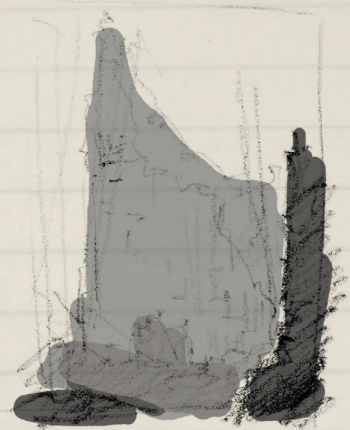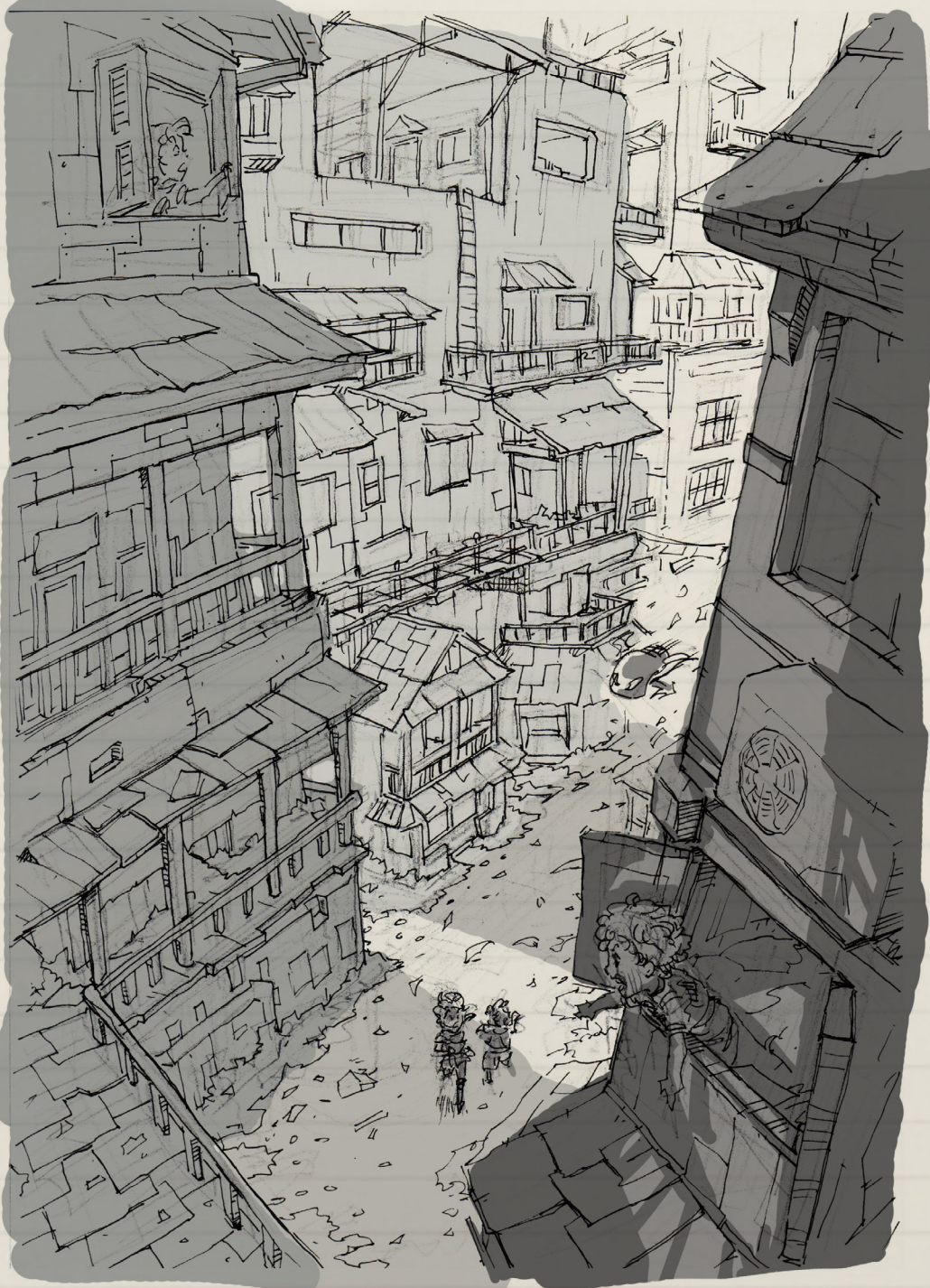
I start my work with a rough storyline. This is a scene where the main character runs away from aliens. The next scene takes place at night. The main character is reading a journal, while others are sleeping. My intention is to show her passion and courage (**Fig.05**).
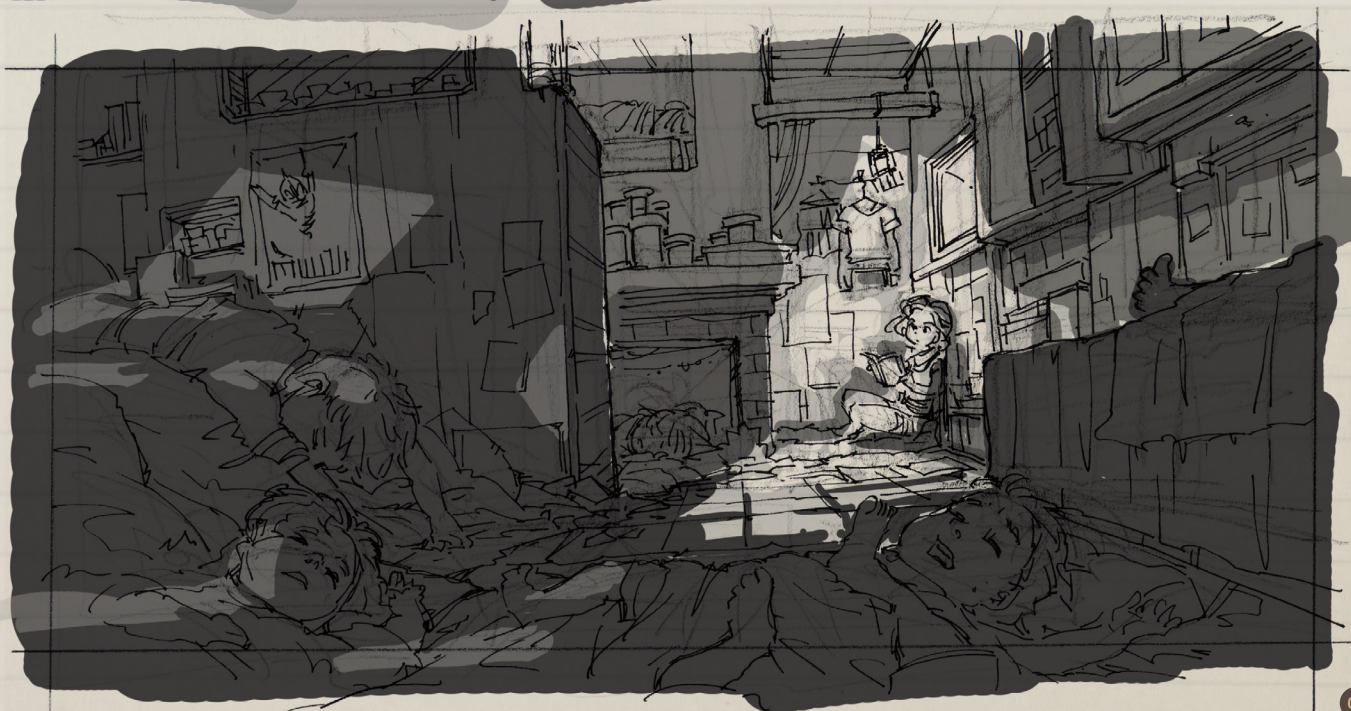
06

07

In **Fig.06** is a scene with giant plants. It is a key scene in the story, but what adventures will they have before they reach the end?

Check out the view straight down from the vertical living community to the spacious green area below. I can only imagine what it would feel like to take off my shoes and walk barefoot in grass that has soft leaves and make a physical connection to the earth (**Fig.07**).
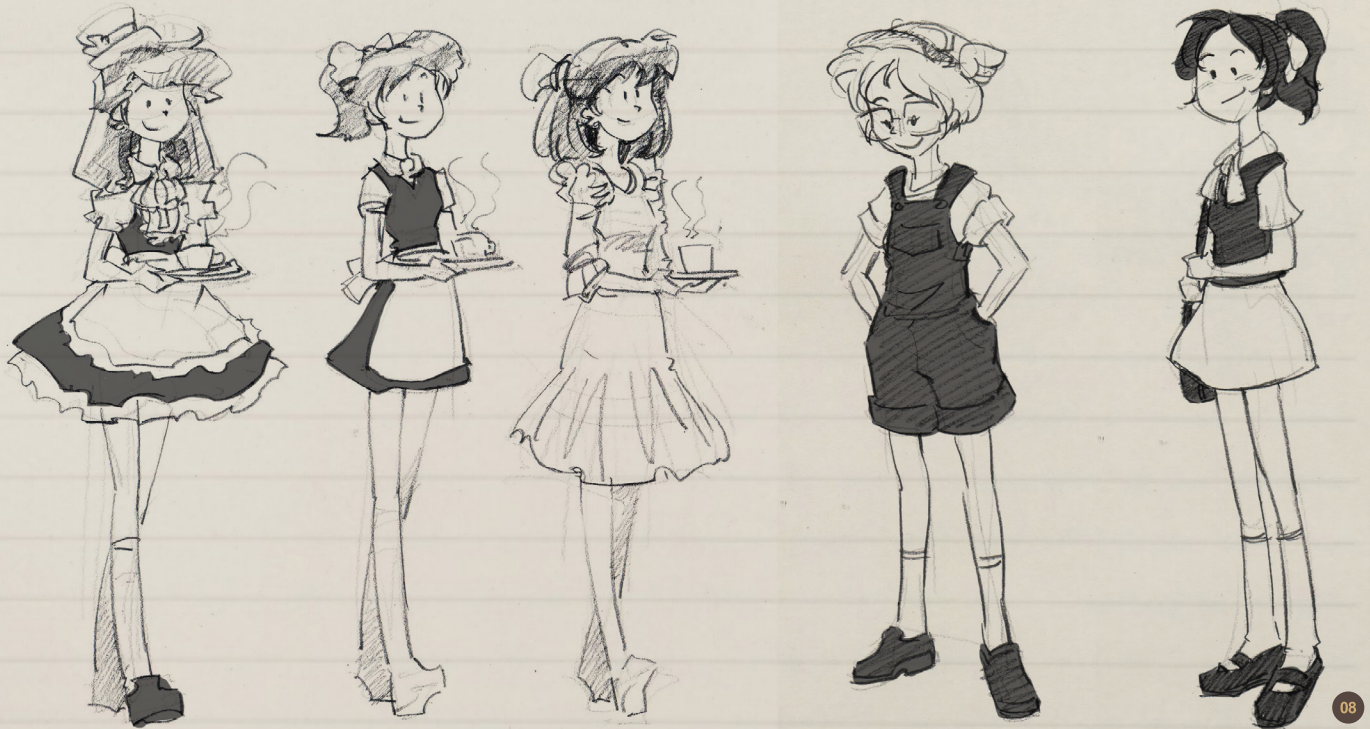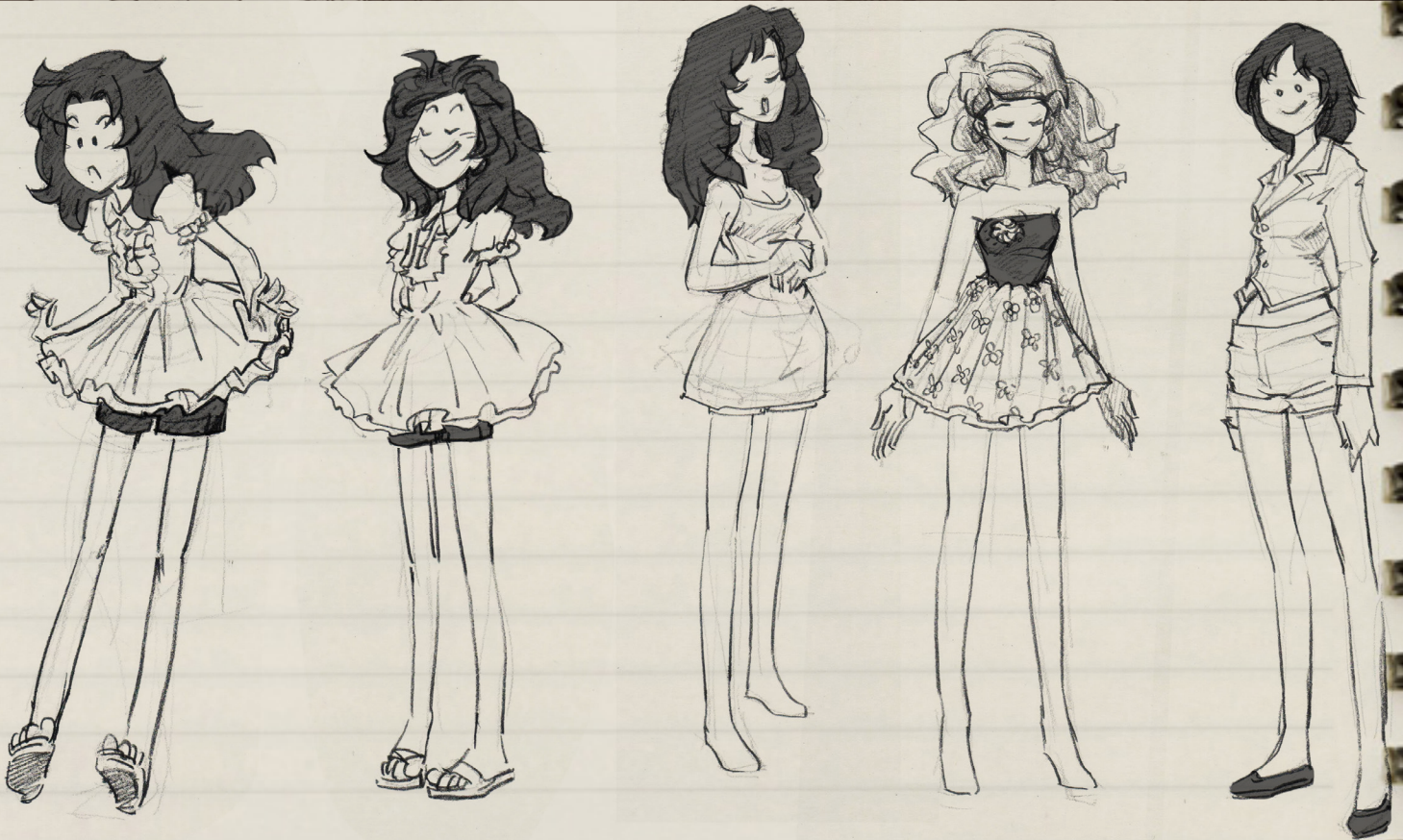
In **Fig.08** is a character from my new work! I designed the costume and shape to look modern and popular.
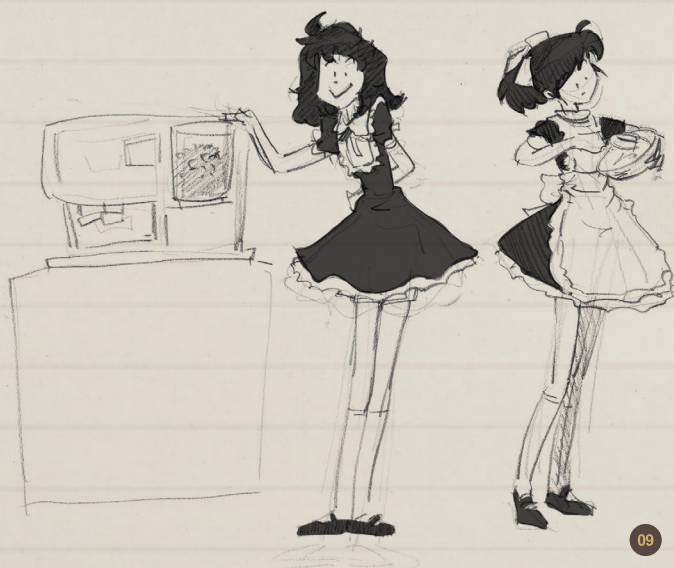
BK Sweetie is a story about a bakery shop. I got inspired
by the quote, "think big but start small".
I'm still working on the story development (**Fig.09**).

09

My favorite movie genre is fantasy, which commonly uses magic and supernatural phenomena as a primary element of the storyline. I am thrilled by stunning visual effects and the realism of computer generated characters that can evoke emotions and audiences can fall in love with (**Fig.10**).

In northern Thailand, the old kingdom of Lanna has a remarkably colorful and sophisticated clothing style. The traditional garb of Lanna had evolved from a migratory process, tracing back to southern China, Myanmar and Laos centuries ago. I'm intrigued by the unique beauty of Thai textiles; the weaves have an ethnic feel, along with exquisite fabric (**Fig.11**).

12

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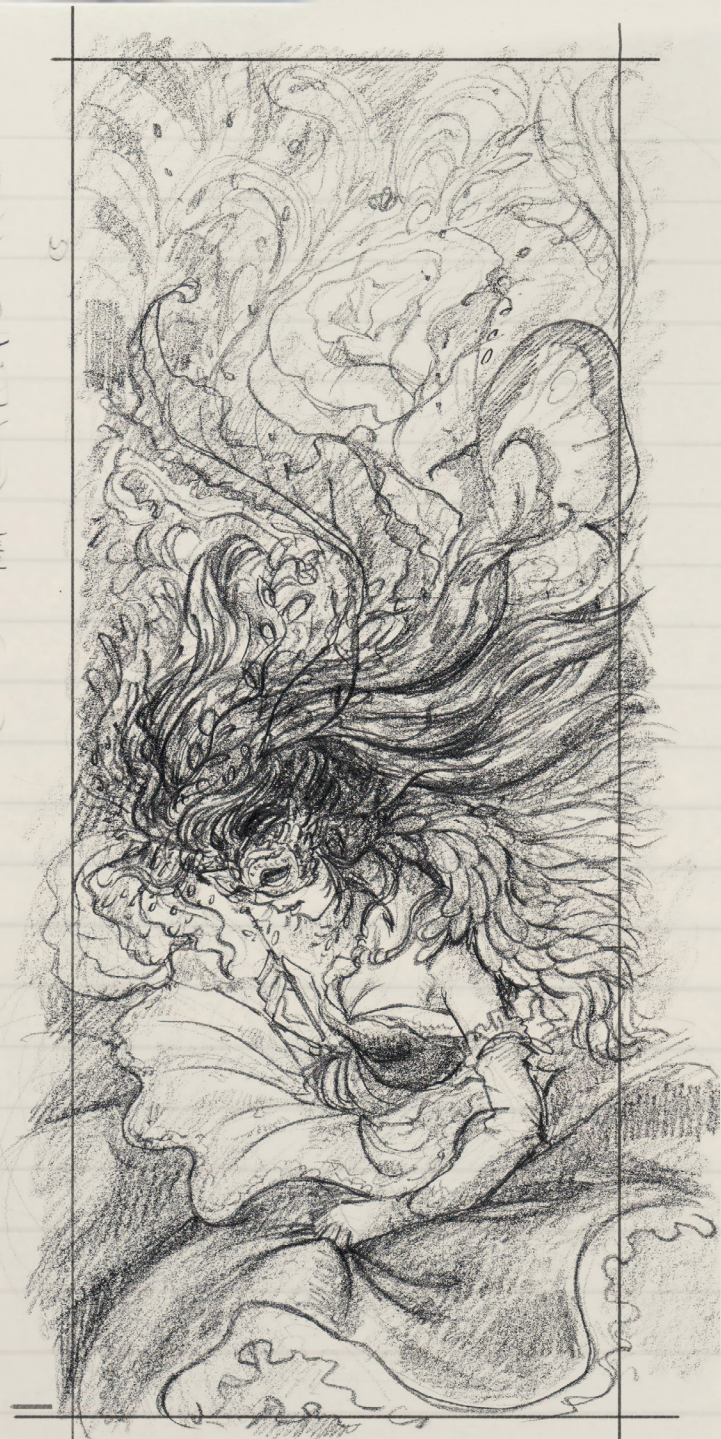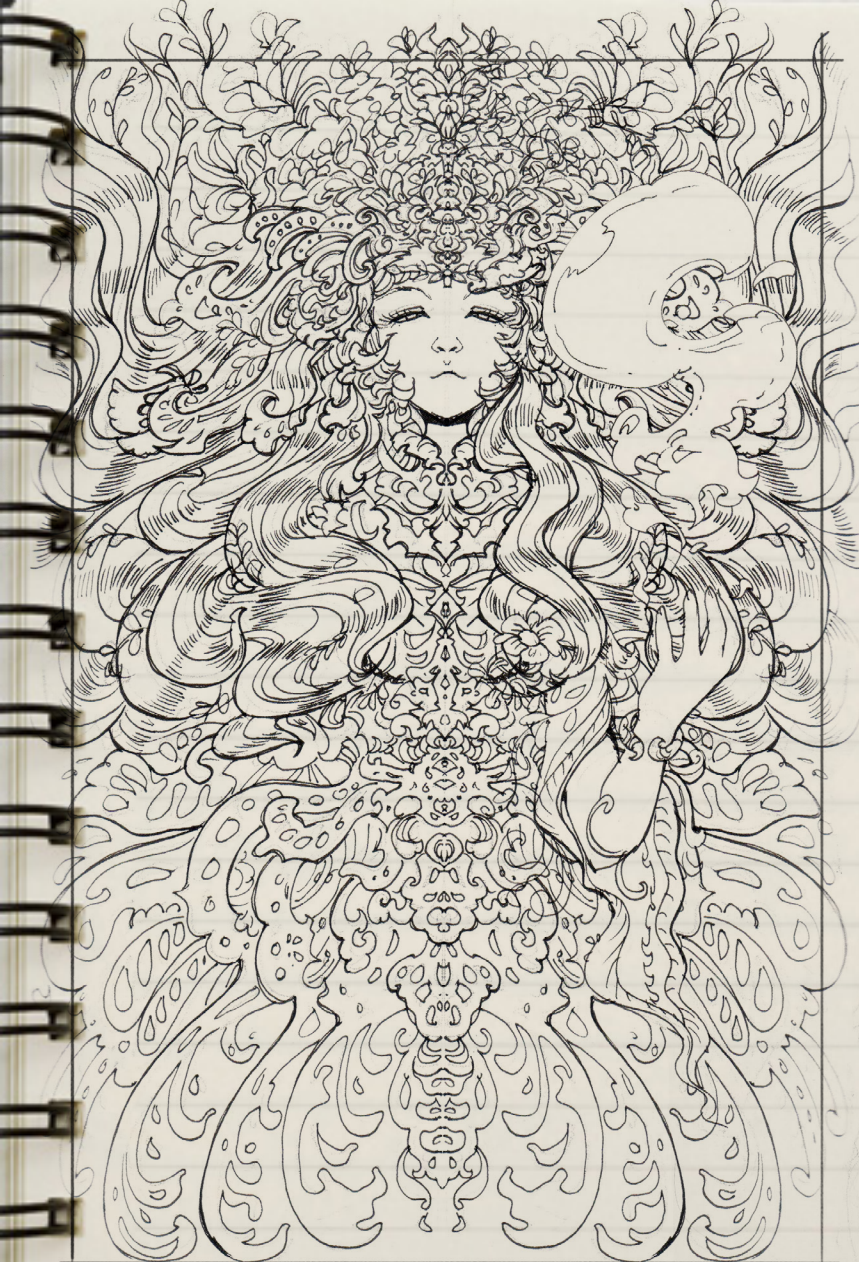
In **Fig.12** I used beautiful floating patterns to indicate a character's expression.

Has it ever occurred to you that when you're out killing time at the mall with your friends, by the time you finish, you're surrounded by stuff you don't need and, in some cases, don't even really want? Then you start to realize what a waste of money. Too often we come up with excuses to justify buying whatever we want, and I strongly believe that we make emotional decisions and then justify those decisions by rationalizing them after (**Fig.13**).

In this dynamic, emerging world where society and culture is constantly reinventing itself, I admire people who act rather than speak (**Fig.14**).

Virtual and real pets: each comes with their own set of pros and cons. On the upside, virtual pets can always be resurrected if somehow we end up losing them. On the downside, living in a world filled with digital technology, humans may soon not be able to recognize the importance of intuitive affection between humans and animal companions (**Fig.15**).

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THE GALLERY

This month we feature: Liam Peters | Edvige Faini | Seyyed Ghassem Farhany | Gediminas Pranckevicius | Andrey Belarus
Giorgio Grecu | Aziz Maaqoul | Maxim Kozlov | Cyril Rolando | Soheil Danesh

The Curse

Giorgio Grecu

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(Left)

Don't Trash Your Dreams

Cyril Rolando

http://www.sixinside.com

(Below)

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Mercenaries

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(Right)

Hell Warrior

Aziz Maaqoul

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(Below)

WEAPON
DESIGN

05

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.

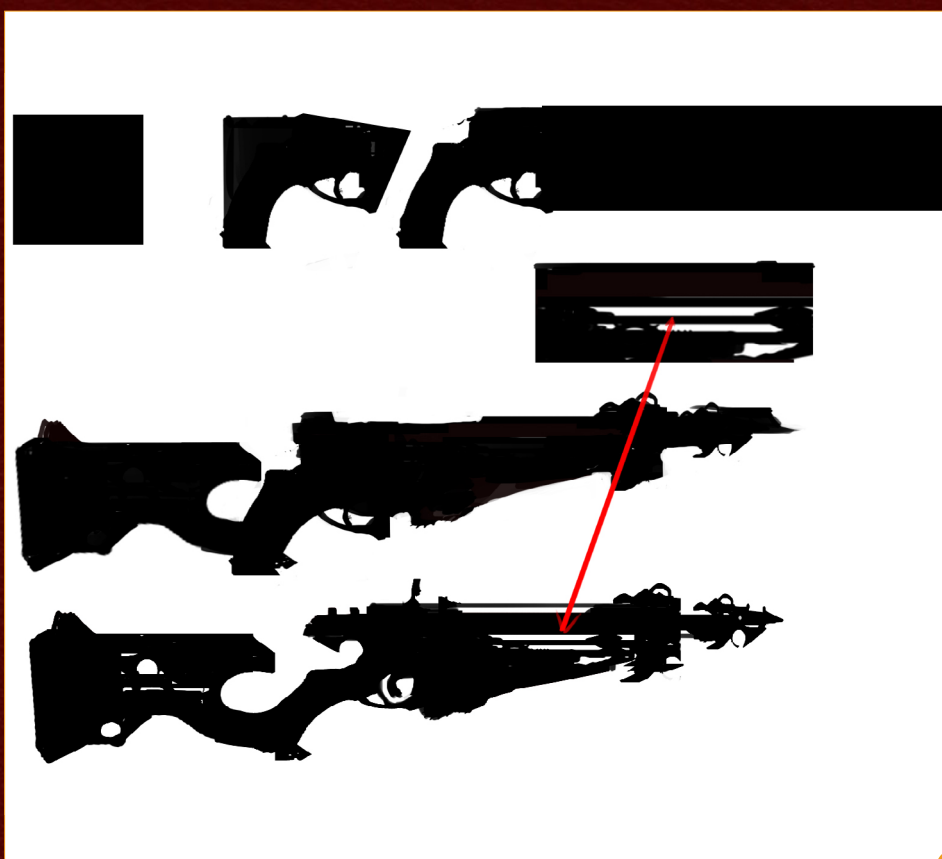# Chapter 05 – Harpoons and Spear-based Weapons

Software Used: Photoshop

While working as a senior concept artist at Ninja Theory, I'm often asked to design weapons – everything from swords to sub-machine guns – so when 3DTotal asked me to do a tutorial for a science fiction harpoon, I leapt at the chance.

For this project I'll be starting off with simple black and white silhouette work, mainly because it's fast, fun and the results are easy to interpret and modify according to feedback, etc.

I decided early on that it would be cool to see maybe a mix of design approaches; maybe harpoons for two opposing forces in a future alien war, where large, shelled creatures would need to be mounted and ridden in to war.

So early on in the design process you will see some very familiar shapes for the human weapons, then some more bizarre, otherworldly approaches for the alien versions.

I'll usually begin a weapon starting from the grip or stock, and work outwards. I'm not sure why, but it seems to work for me. I do this by creating basic squares and rectangles with the Marquee tool, then using the Eraser tool with a solid edged brush selected to start cutting into the shapes, at the same time adding parts to build up a very basic silhouette (**Fig.01**).

If you look at **Fig.02**, with all the different silhouettes collected together, you will probably notice that I've used some of my favourite aspects from one weapon and used it on another.

To me this makes a lot of sense. Stealing a piece from one harpoon, flipping it upside down or rotating it and putting it in a totally different area can really help to achieve shapes and structures that you might not have thought of before.

Like most concept artist, I'm a huge *Star Wars* fan and some of my favourite weapons came from the series. I think the reason for this is because many of them are based on real weapons from our world.

With that in mind, don't be scared to get some references together of weapons you have seen that have strong shapes. You can then use as much or as little as you want in your own silhouette sheets.

So after looking at the pages of collected silhouettes, I've decided on the design in **Fig.03** Definitely one of the more human-looking objects, but I like the idea of a weapon that can be made more compact and in this compact mode look quite non-threatening. I think it would open up lots of great possibilities for a great reveal when somebody takes it off their back and opens it up!

Okay at this point I've noticed I've made a rather silly mistake: you can see that the power supply is at the front of the weapon, with the line reel built into the stock. It's my job as a concept artist to really rationalise a design, and this is clearly not a rational design – in fact it makes little to no sense at all!

So although not quite as aesthetically pleasing, I've swapped the layout so that the heavy power source acts as a stock with the line reel at the front and the line can be connected to the harpoon head without getting in the way (**Fig.04**).

With that little snag sorted, I can move on to adding some really quick line work. I do this by duplicating the original silhouette and bringing the opacity down to 50% or so. Then, in a new layer, add some really quick line work. You could even do a few versions of this and see which works best for you (**Fig.05**).
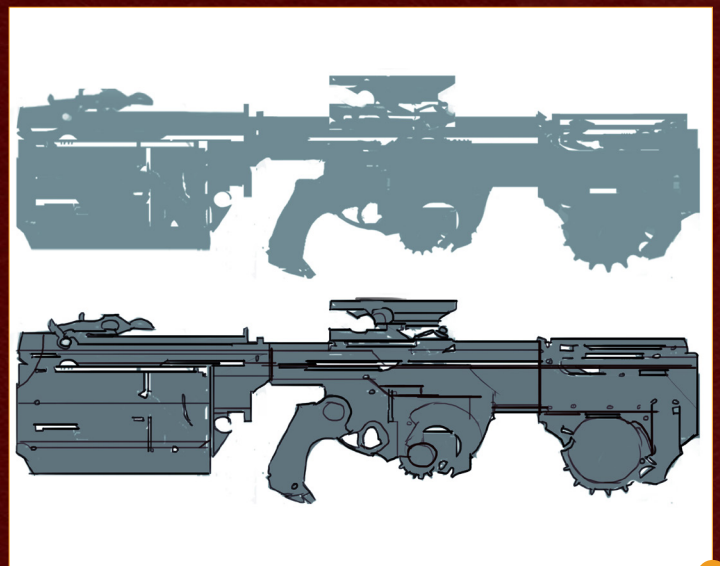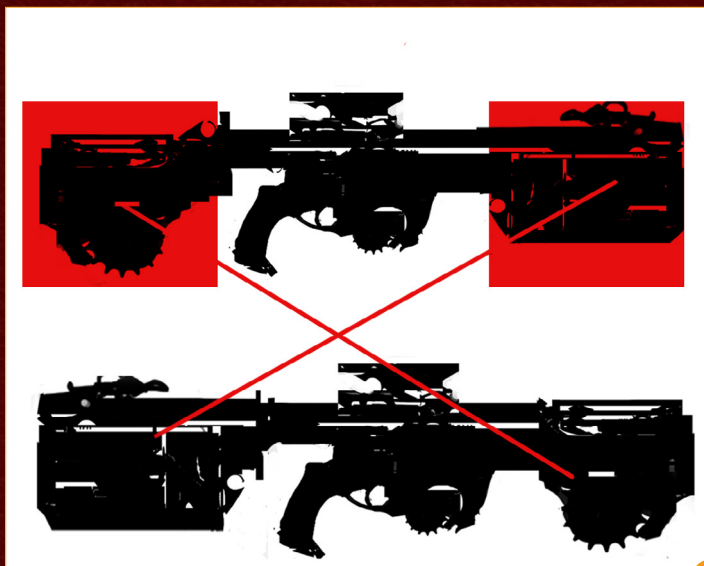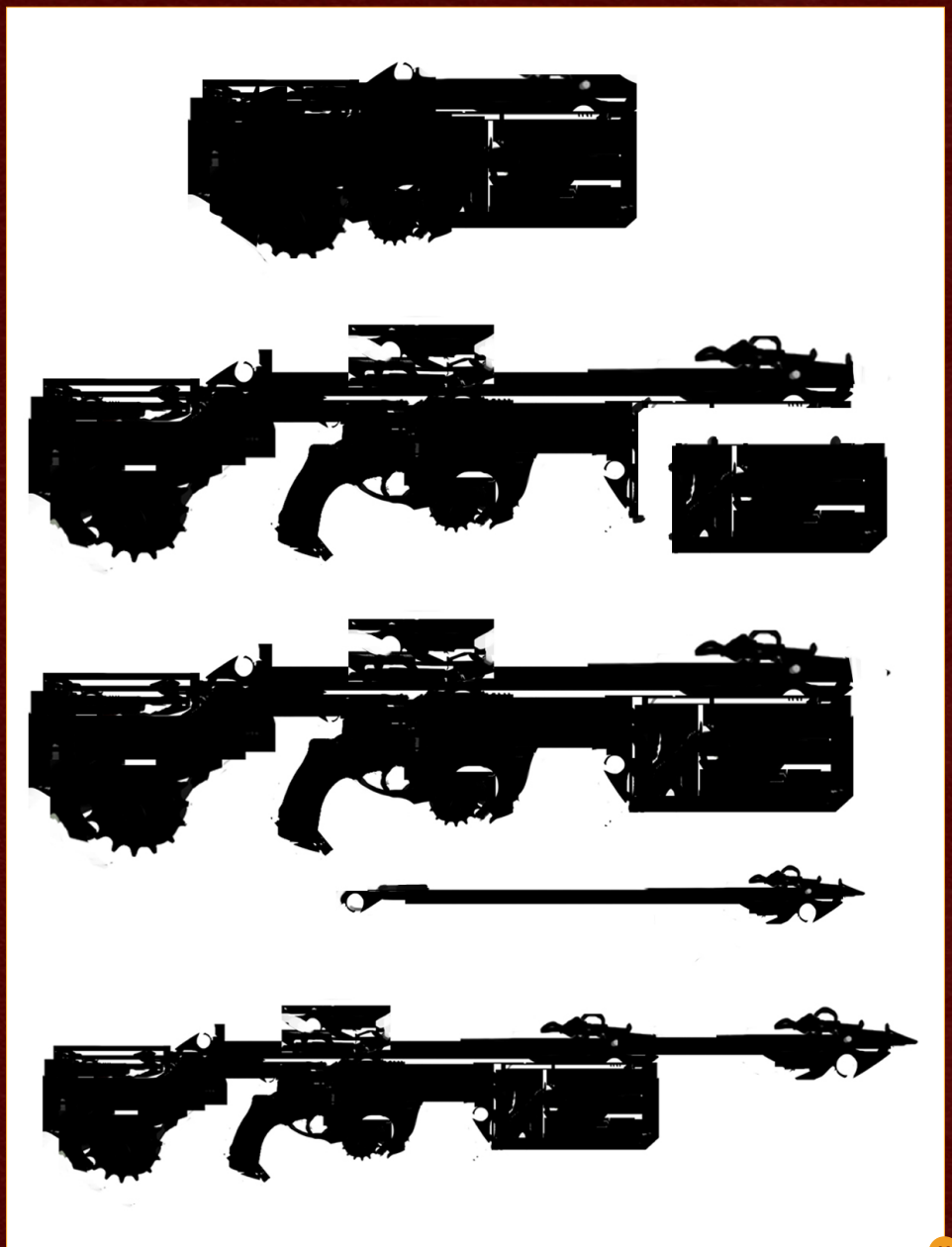
Once you have decided on the best line work you can move on to adding some really quick values.

Make a new layer again, put the opacity down to 50% and the layer in Multiply mode, and with a hard edged brush start painting in the darker areas. Once you have this, make a new layer, put it in Overlay mode, and start adding in light areas with a white brush.

At this point you have a really basic, but clear-looking concept. The next stage is to add photo textures to bring in a real sense of reality (**Fig.06**).

I want quite a retro feel to the finish and detailing on the harpoon, so we have a sort of alternative history feel, so I'm going to go for WW2 weaponry – in particular, the Thompson machine gun, which has some really nice detailing.

So here, I've literally just cut and pasted the parts from the weapon I like and placed them on to my concept.
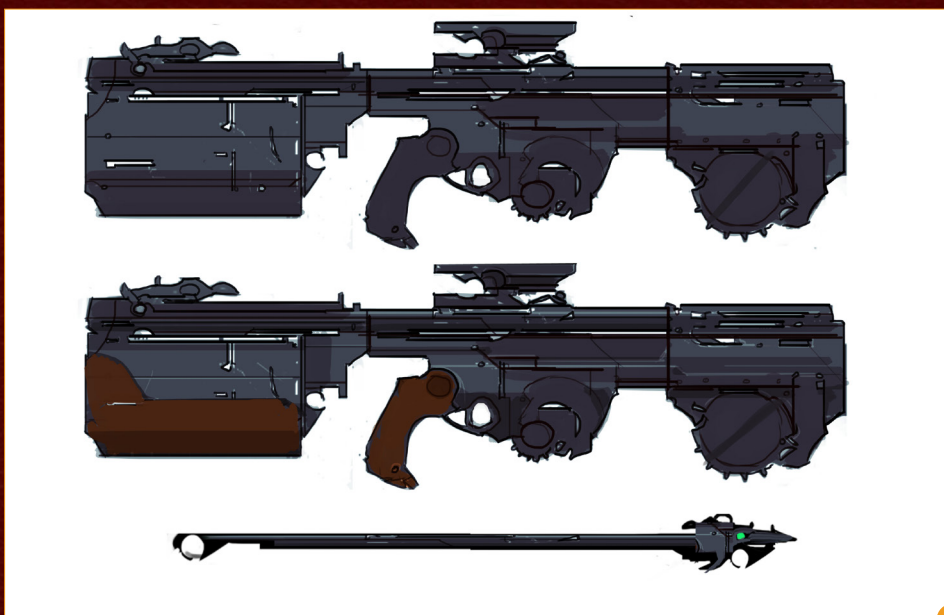
You will notice at this point that I'm not sticking too closely to the line work. I find that at this stage the process becomes more liquid as you start to see more appropriate shapes coming out of the photo reference.

Also at this point, the silhouette is starting to look a bit heavy. After all these warriors would need to be able to carry these things over long distances, so I start to cut some shapes in the

mid sections to lose a bit of weight and give the whole thing a much lighter feel (**Fig.07**).

That's the design phase pretty much finished, so with all that out of the way, I add a few extra lines here and there for definition. Then I create a new Color Burn layer, with some more earthy tones to try and get that "used" feel. Finally I add the unused silhouettes as a Multiply layer, just to show the evolution (**Fig.08**).

Compact Mode

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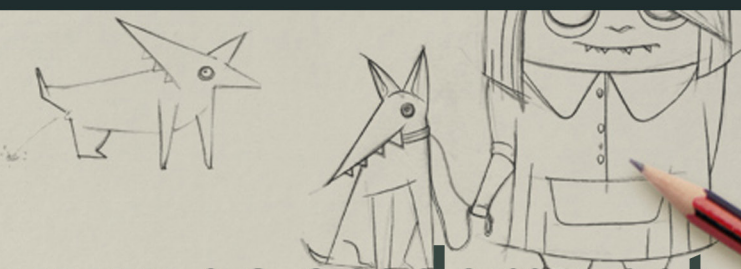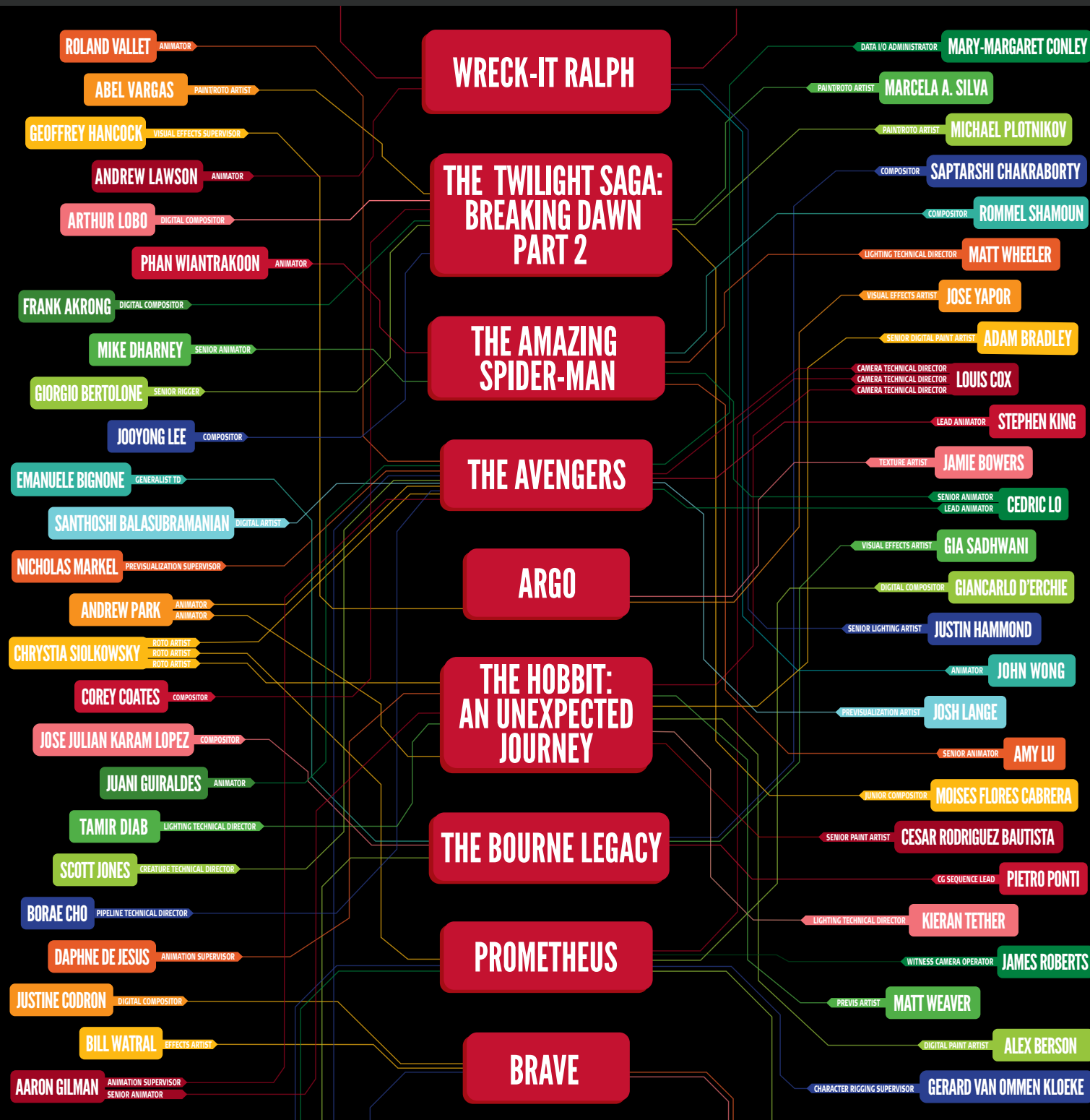
NEW WORLDS

Games and films are made up of many different features such as characters, environments and vehicles, and it is important that all these elements work together to demonstrate a consistent visual language and therefore create a believable environment and society to engage the audience. In this series our artists will take a comprehensive look at creating a new world from a concept perspective, and investigate the processes and techniques that can be used to create all the major features of a game or film.

Chapter 01 – Characters

Software Used: Photoshop

The Introduction

This will be the beginning of a series, which will take a comprehensive look at the somewhat lofty aim of world creation from a concept perspective. This and the next five articles will investigate the processes and techniques that can be employed to create a fantastical society, from the initial idea to the finished illustrations.

Whilst the focus will be primarily on digital art techniques, some time will be also be spent on how to refine ideas and make them applicable to a production environment. Characters shall be the focus of this installment.

The Concept

All things start with an idea. So the initial concept is fundamental. The over-arching theme throughout this series is a "what if" scenario. In this instance the premise of our world or society is: "What if the Mongol hordes had never been defeated?"

Our premise or concept is that in the 21st century the Mongol Empire is the dominant force in the world. The Mongol hordes have maintained and augmented their initial 12th century empire and now in the 21st century they have established a true worldwide empire.

What would this world look like? There are a host of questions that come to mind, essentially the "Who, what, when, where and how?" The process can be somewhat exhaustive, depending on the level of depth that is desired.

This world, due to its historical grounding, means that a degree of realism is required. However, as it is to be fun, it also means that the conceptualization of this 21st century world empire shouldn't be taken too seriously. We do not want to lock things down, especially in the concept phase.

01

The First Step

The beginning of a project is always tricky. When you get a brief, or if that desire to paint hits, the process has to start with an idea and once clear, this idea has to be made real. In most cases the crucial element is reference and research. The time spent doing the background research and reference gathering always pays dividends. This is particularly true for any long form project.

In fact, with a project that encompasses a whole world it would be inconceivable to start without some research. In the age of the internet it is thankfully an easy and pleasurable process. It opens your mind to possibilities that you wouldn't have thought of yourself and allows for a greater depth in your work.

So, after a host of research has been assembled and a comfortable rapport has been established with the subject matter, you begin with a sketch.

The Sketch

The more accurate the sketch, the easier the final render will be. This is the premise anyway. In the case of the modern Mongol warrior this was the process employed. The theory is twofold. One, you want to clearly identify where all the "bits" will be (e.g., the costume detail). Two, you want to capture the gesture or feel of your character (**Fig.01**).
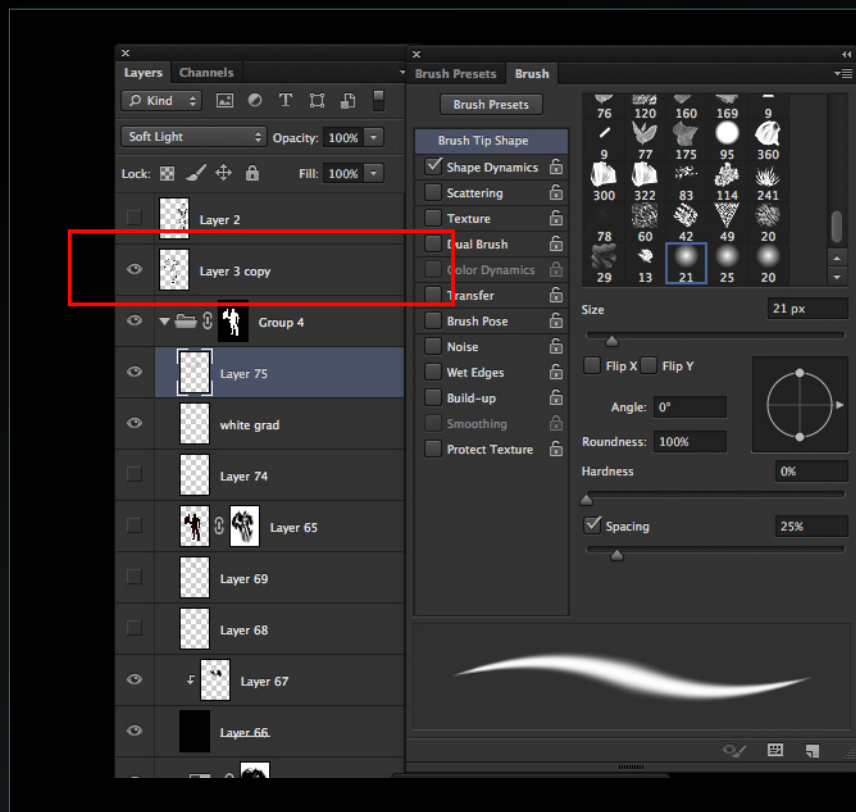
It's quite easy to lose the freshness of a sketch by the time you're well into your color render. A detailed sketch serves as that pivotal grounding

point on which you can check your render to ensure that it doesn't get too rigid and stale. So before we take a detailed look at the sketching and rendering process, here's a super-brief summary.

Do a solid sketch that gets the detail, character and flavor of your concept, and then render it out. But always refer to your original sketch, so that your render always maintains that freshness.

This is done by always having the original sketch as the top layer in the Photoshop layer stack, either in Normal or Multiply layer mode. This way you can always superimpose the sketch over your developing render and check your progress. While the detail may change, the overall feel and confidence in the initial sketch should never be lost (**Fig.02**).

Though this is all jumping ahead somewhat. The sketch or initial line drawing gets you into the picture. The sketch has to get you excited about what you're going to be rendering.

The Design

The character design has to have "character". This may sound obvious, but once established in the early part of the process it's a lot easier to carry through to the final render. This character is established through a host of methods,

though primarily though stance and expression (**Fig.03**).

In the case of our warrior, it will be a simple yet solid stance, a nonchalant expression, and the most ubiquitous of bad-ass apparel: an eagle resting on his arm.

What is it that will make this character look and feel like a 21st century Mongol warrior? This is the conceptual part. In this instance it

is mostly costume design. This is where the research and references start to pay off. The character is envisaged to have an organic and textural feel, blended with modern materials. He has a hardy and robust uniform that should reflect the utilitarian ethos of the culture: practical and simple. Finally, it should be relatively realistic.

The point to all this is that the character must look engaging. Essentially, the design should

always look cool. Of course, this is subjective, but some basic notes can be made. The costume design or even simply the design will generally look pretty good if it reflects the natural flow and rhythm intrinsic to the human body (i.e., the natural aesthetic of the human form). So all your hours of toil studying anatomy pay an even bigger bonus – better fashion design (**Fig.04**)!

The design employed, as illustrated by the red, seeks to extenuate the natural flow of the human anatomy, thereby making it easier for the design to be digested by the viewer. That is to say that by harnessing natural forms the design is clearer and easier to understand.

The sketch should display a solid stance (or pose) and the character should be designed or dressed/equipped, even if this is indicated in the most basic way. The reason for this is that it is easier to play around and explore a design with black and white line drawings or simple grayscale renders, than with color versions. So once all these basic elements are in place, the color render can commence.

The Render

This is where most of the time will be spent. Having your character designed ensures that you can focus on harmonizing your palette and most importantly, establishing and executing your lighting scheme. Some time should be

spent on playing with different color schemes (**Fig.05**).

The choice of colors should reflect the flavor of your character. The warrior that is developing

should have quite an earthy feel; warm hues offset with neutrals. This should grant a nice range of colors and give quite a good scope to play with the light.

This character study is going to have a neutral background; that is to say that he is not going to be in a scene. When undertaking this sort of study it's a good idea to create an alpha channel for the character (**Fig.06**). This will make it easy to change the background color, but more importantly, it will allow you to grade the character with greater ease towards the end of the render process.

Much can be said about the rendering process. It generally takes a while and can be quite challenging, especially if you want to maintain a balance between detail and the freshness or looseness of the painting. It is difficult to get a super-detailed, hyper-rendered character study that still has a lovely loose and painterly feel to it.

For the most part, the previously mentioned elements are diametrically opposed, but a balance can be struck and it involves working out what you can get away with. By starting with broad paint strokes and keeping things loose, whilst painting the whole figure (**Fig.07**), you can see the whole render develop and you can
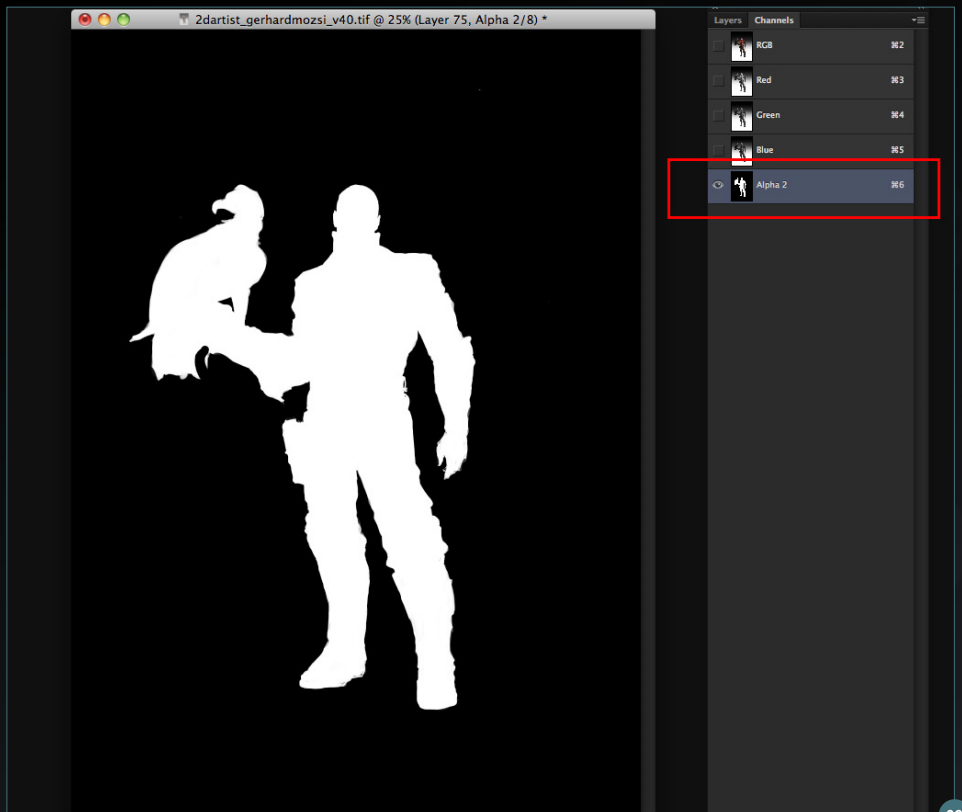
determine what can be left and what has to be worked up further.

Not all aspects of the character have to be rendered to a porcelain finish. It's about

judgment and simply seeing what you can get away with.

The basic theory is that you start with a medium value (**Fig.08**) and you modulate the values
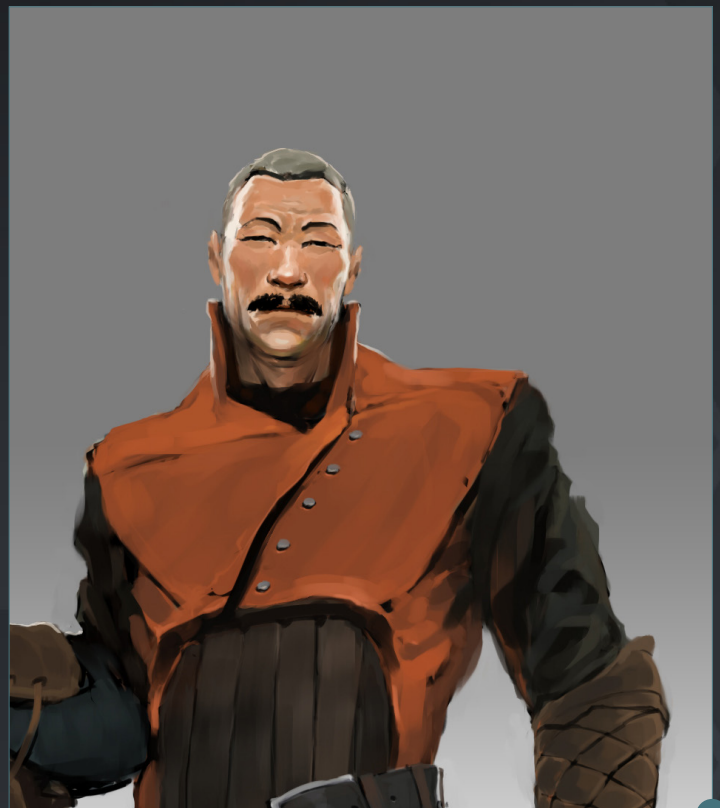
either higher or lower, to model the form that you desire. This becomes complicated by the introduction of hue or color. It has to be remembered that color also has a value that, at times, isn't too apparent.

We can see how in **Fig.09** the hues and values are modulated to shape the form of the face. It is critical that a clear light source is worked out from the onset. This will determine how you model the form.

The lighting setup for the warrior is slightly back lit with a frontal fill light. This lighting structure allows for the detail of the character to come up, but also allows for some drama via the rim light, courtesy of the back lighting (**Fig.10**).

Once the figure is rendered to a degree that you are happy with, you can start to play with the grade. This is where your skillfully wrought alpha channel (or mask) comes into play. The process I employ is to set up a group within

my Photoshop layer stack (**Fig.11**) and place a mask on the group. Within that group I set up all the adjustment layers that will be employed to tweak the image and it should be just that, a tweak. Adjustment layers are a powerful tool, but they cannot compensate for what's lacking in the actual illustration.

This technique merely gives the work that final lift. In this particular image I have used Color Balance, Exposure, Black and White, and Levels to instill a greater contrast and to play with the hue a little. Playing with the adjustment layers can be a lot of fun, as you can lend your image that extra spice. The trick is not to get too carried away!

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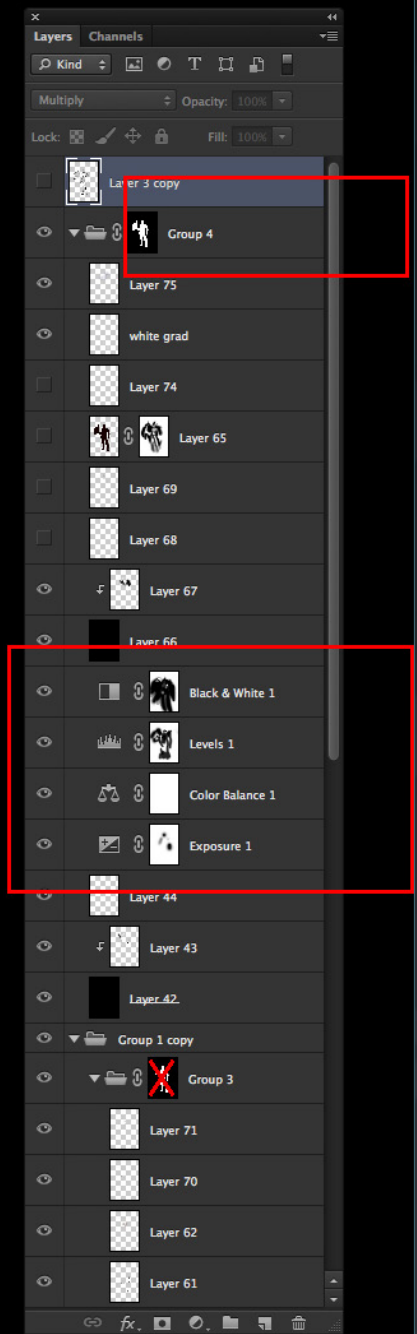
The
SEAPORT

A step by step guide to creating a detailed scene in Photoshop

A two part tutorial in which our talented artist demonstrates techniques and processes to paint and form the core structure to building a detailed scene.

Chapter 1 – Concept, Development and Lighting

Software Used: Photoshop

To address a scene containing a lot of detail and information, you need to have an order to work in and above all, patience. For this tutorial I was commissioned to draw a seaport – an original place, with an invented civilization, showing different situations, crane movements, people, vehicles; many elements together interacting with each other. To deal with something of this magnitude, with so many things to draw in the same composition, you have to plan in advance.

This tutorial will explain how to draw a complex scenario step-by-step. I'll talk about how ideas arise, what the sources of inspiration are, how to work with perspective, composition, digital painting techniques, brush management and final details. Although almost all the issues can be found in art books or manual drawing, I'll show different techniques and ways to address a drawing. The goal is that the tutorial should serve primarily as a guide for those artists who are getting started and need some order in which to address their projects with.

In the first part of this tutorial I'll be looking at coming up with the initial idea, developing the scene and adding light and shadows.

Ideas and Sources of Inspiration

First, we need to know what topic we will draw and what concept we want to express. From there we can find ideas and inspiration. Not all artists proceed in the same way when they start an image. I like to find different pictures, which do not necessarily have to do with what I want to draw. Sometimes I only have an idea of what the sky should look like and thus, I look for different skies: sunset, night, cloudy ones, etc (**Fig.01**).

Other times I'm just interested in color, and look for photos where the colors awaken a feeling or ideal climate for the topic I'm researching for my drawing. Looking for images on the web for

You can use any image as:

Color Base

Forms

Texture

Image inspiration

this image, I found a very interesting scene: the sight of a battleship parked in a yard. I found the color of the image was great, as well as the composition and the feeling of vastness (**Fig.02**).

In this picture I found my idea and I realized what I was looking for. The world that revolved in my head, that I could not yet identify, was great, majestic and something that showed power and distance.
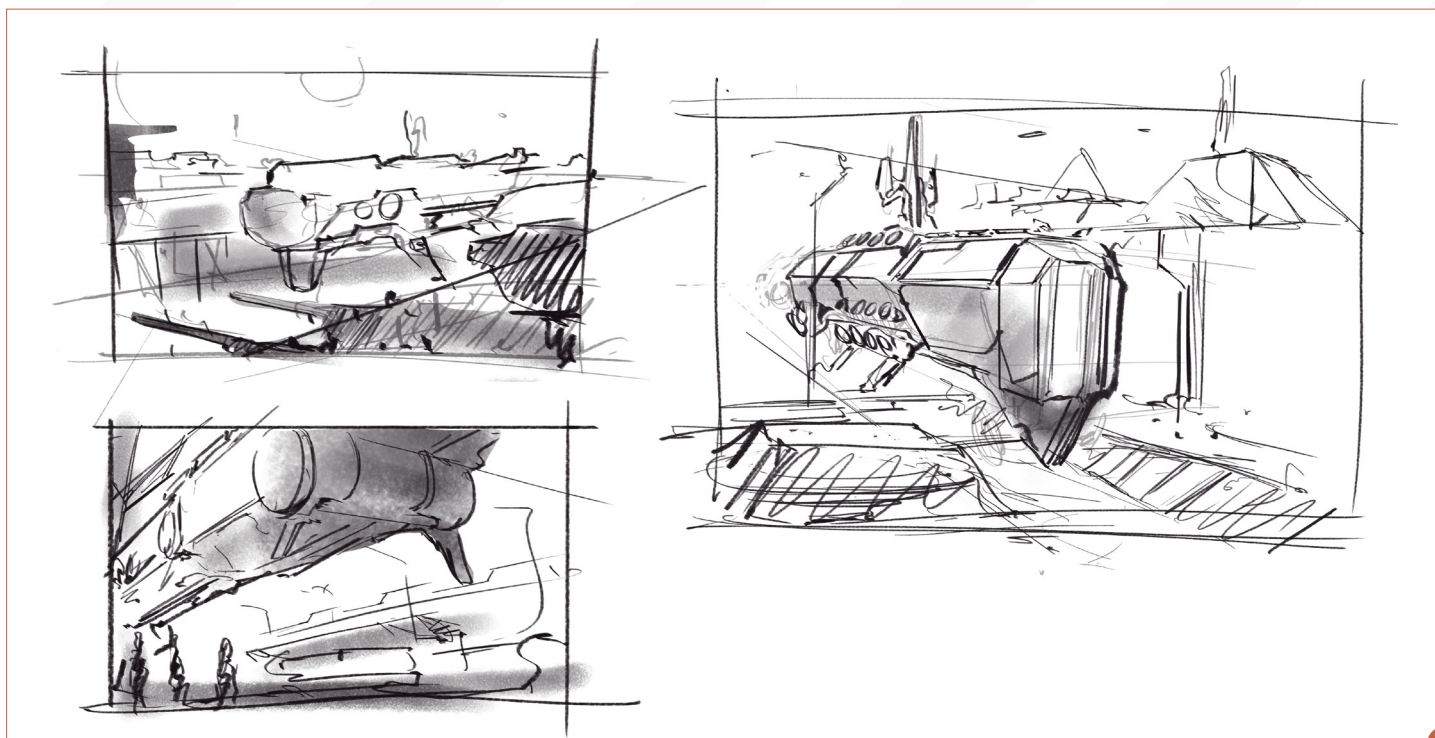
Raising the Scene

Based on the picture I found, I decided to have a huge ship as the central focus and thereafter arrange all the other items relative to it. So, I produced a sketch of my initial idea (**Fig.03**).

As the image would show the greatest amount of detail and elements, I chose an aerial perspective, because in this view I could increase the size of the ship and provide greater detail on the scale of things. Basically, to make

an aerial view we should move the horizon up, so we generate the "airplane" effect (**Fig.04**).

To begin detailing each object with the lines of perspective, I use boxes and buckets for

Aerial perspective
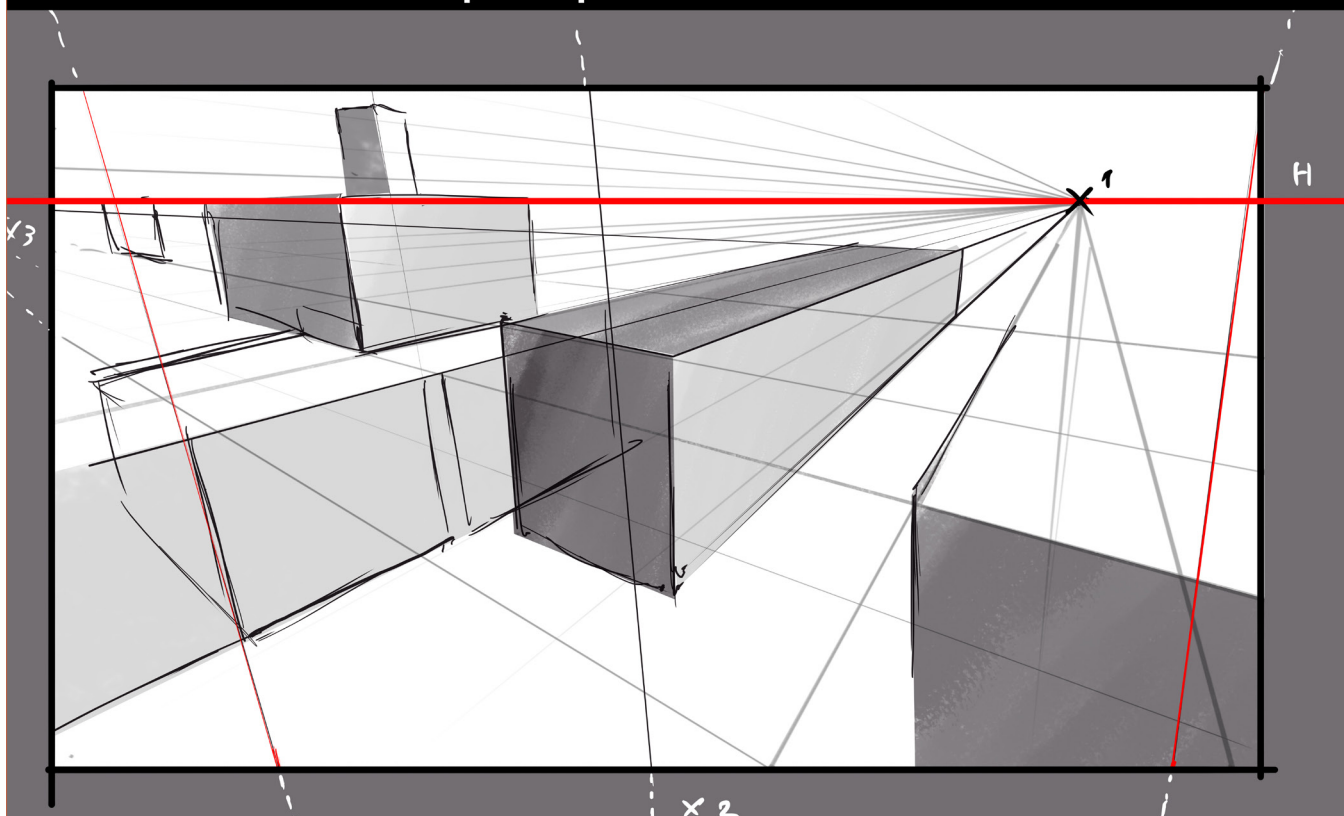
the initial composition, and I break them down into more interesting shapes afterwards, using the lines as a guide to reach the final design (**Fig.05**).

If we use simple geometric shapes, it will be simpler to detect faults and it will help us to have a better understanding of proportions and distance. I almost never have a clear idea of what I'm going to draw inside a cube. This is a way to explore your designs and ideas throughout the process, which takes patience. For more accurate work it's necessary that you have the shapes and structure of your image correct at the beginning of your drawing.

As we draw things, ideas appear that serve to define other ones. Sometimes, I like a building or design and what I do is repeat it again in another part of the drawing to create uniformity and consistency in style. It doesn't necessarily have to be identical; if we maintain the same or similar parts then we will be respecting the aesthetic of the original design. Furthermore, repeating the same object in a scene helps to accentuate distance. In **Fig.06** you can see the
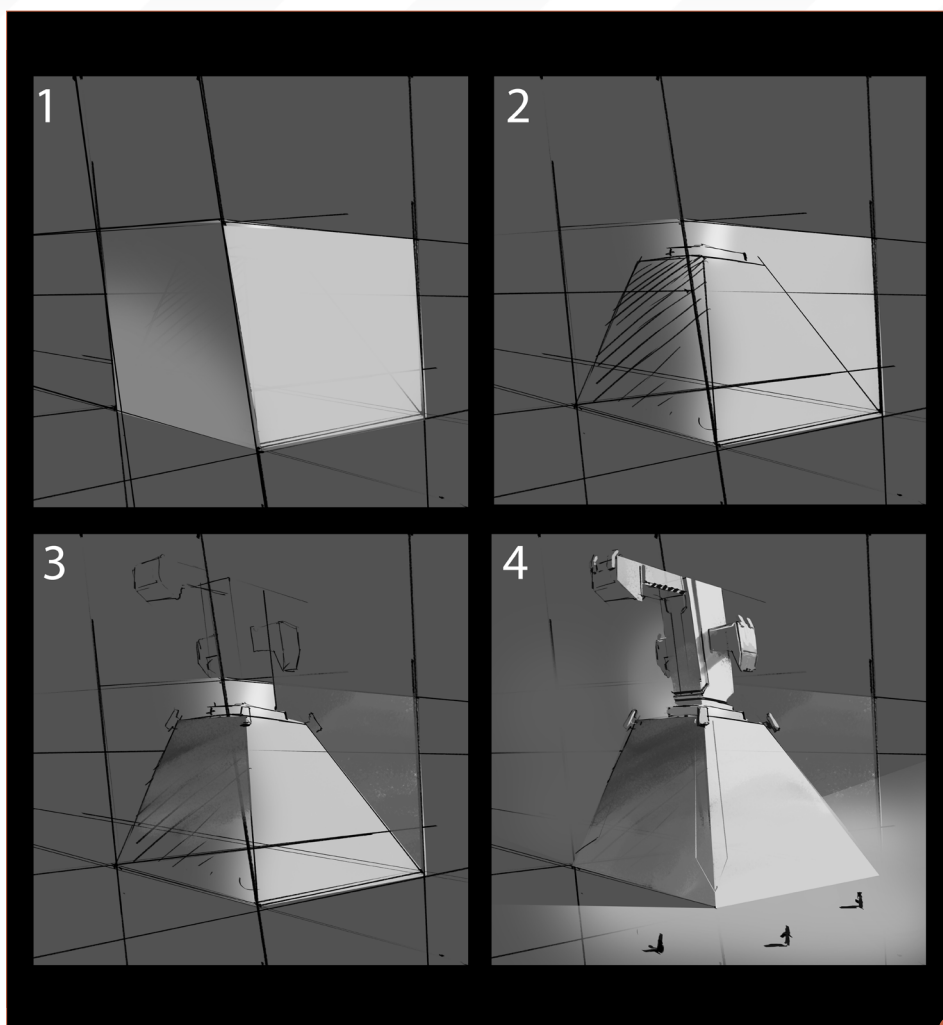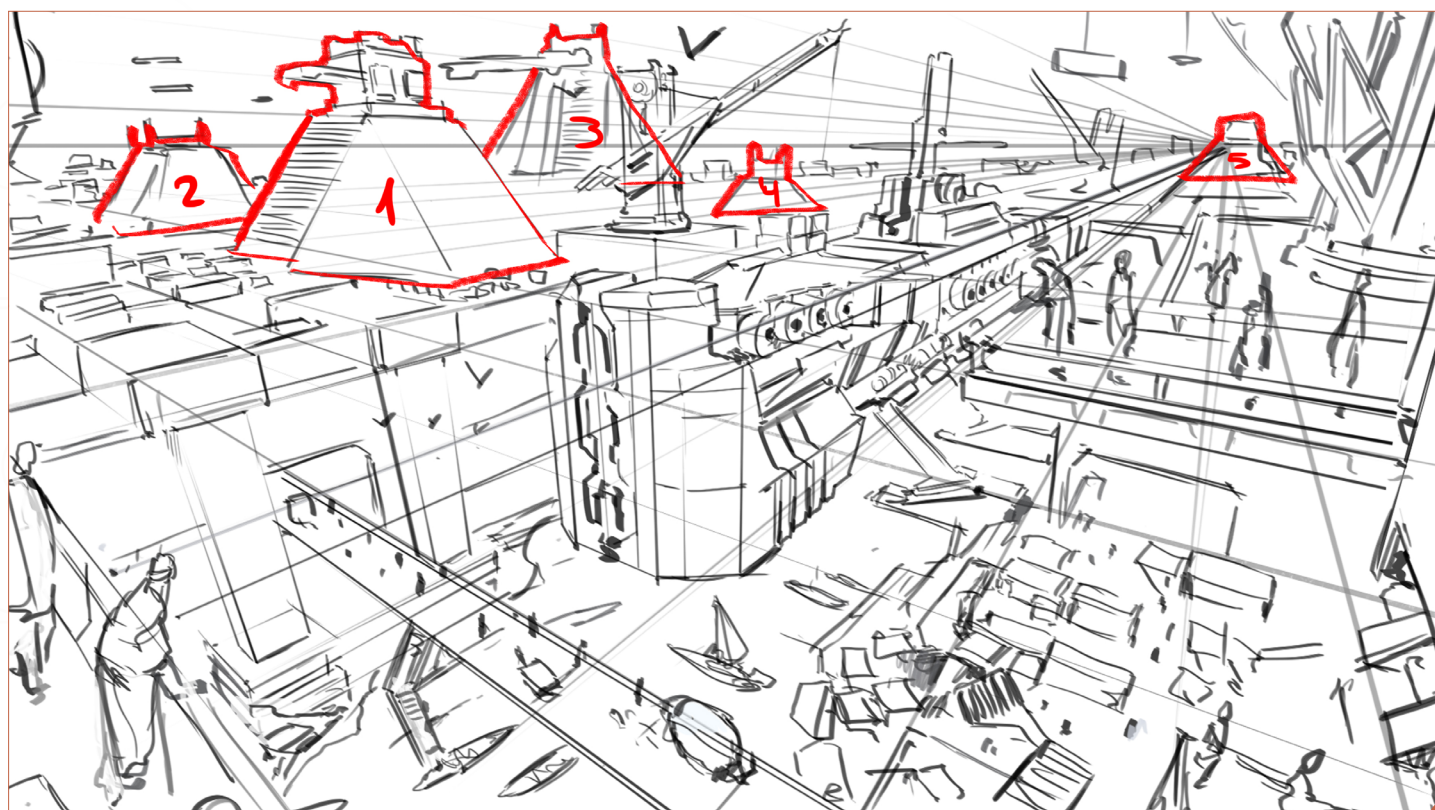
complete drawing and the red markings indicate where I have repeated buildings.

Lighting

When we have an image as complex as this one, it is much easier to pass into color if we have previously defined the shadows and volumes in black and white. This is one of the great advantages of digital technology; it accelerates our work and makes use of color easier.

For my picture I chose evening light, because it produces stronger contrasts and lengthened shadows in objects, creating beautiful spaces of light and shadow that help our composition. As always, what I do first is to define the position of the sun in the picture. When we know where the sun is placed, we can cast shadows and mark points of light and volumes in each subject (**Fig.07**).
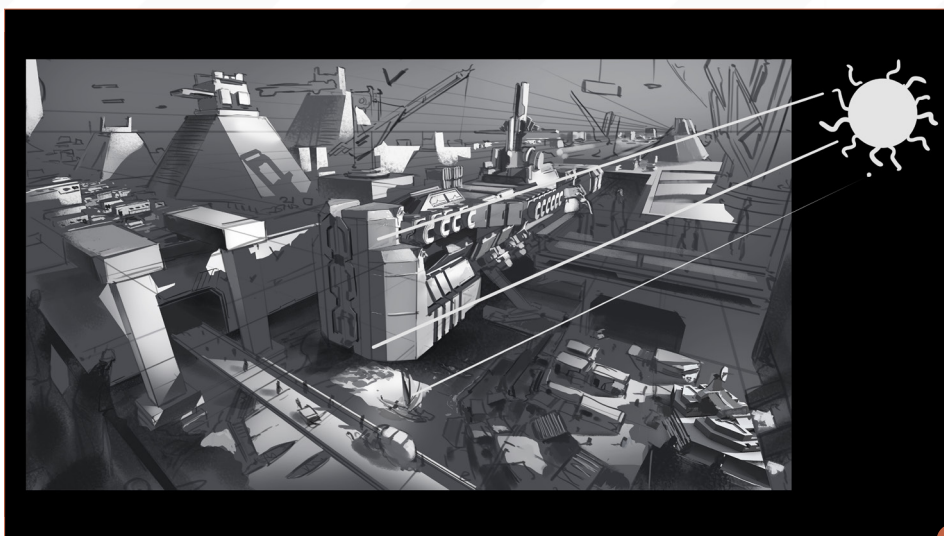
Again we can define and sculpt each element in more detail, because light and shadow will act as a guide to help us to achieve this process. **Fig.08** shows the before and after of this process, from line to volume, using an element of the drawing.

I generally work with a certain degree of uncertainty, unsure of how my final image will look.

Cast shadows

I have often been asked how I know where shadow should be placed, as well as how I can

Natural Light

Artificial Light

Parallel shadow

Radial shadow

09
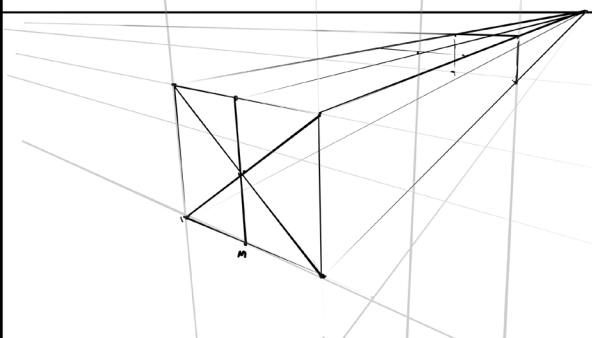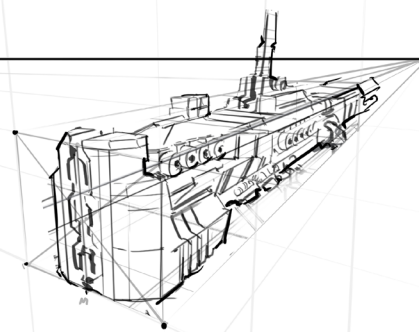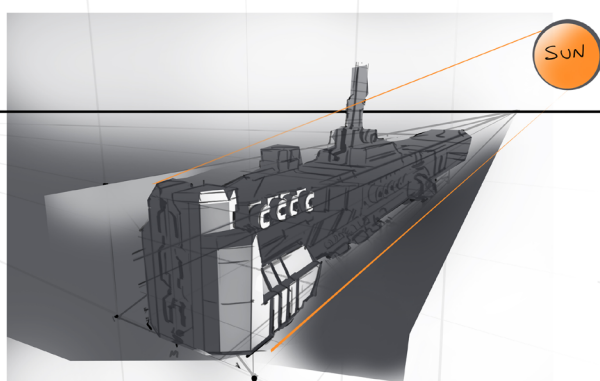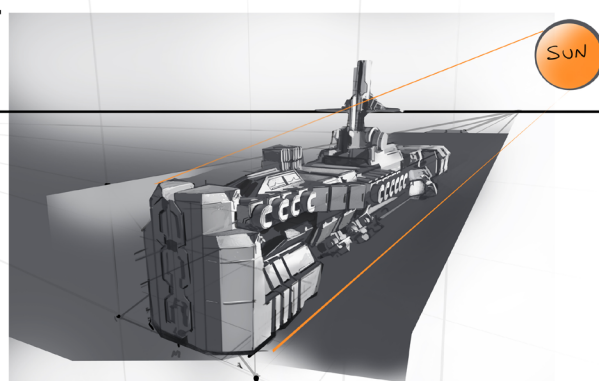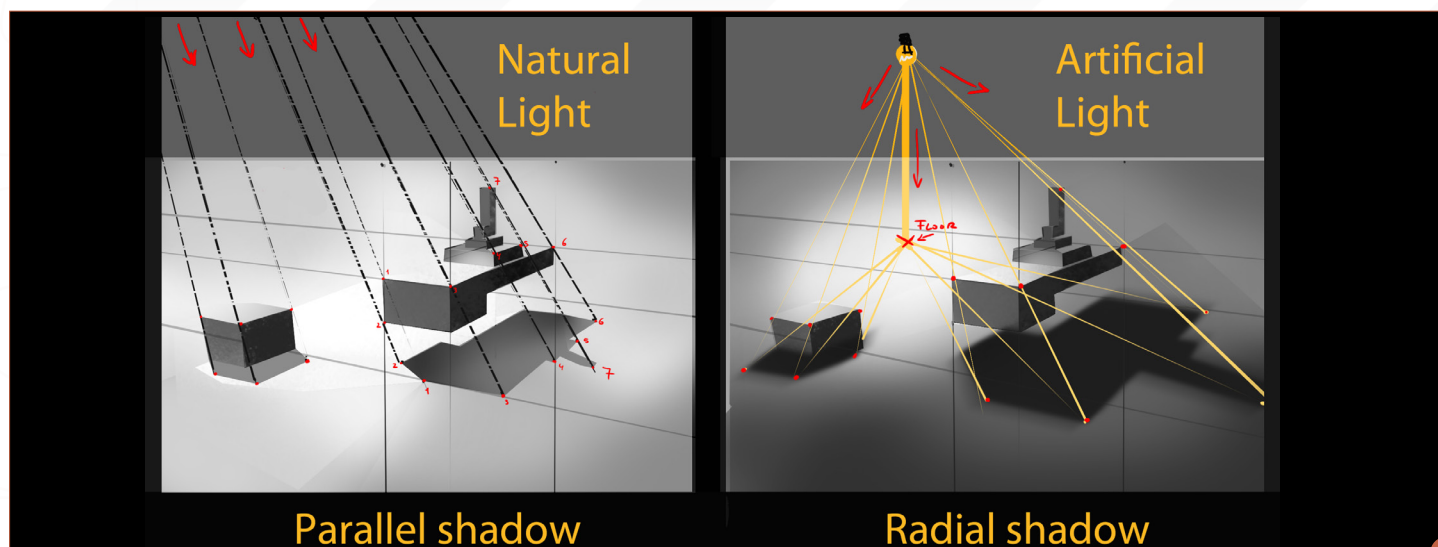
detect it. To do things well, we must first know where the light source is and also whether it is natural or artificial light, because its intensity and the way its casts shadows varies according to this. Natural light casts shadows in parallel and artificial light projects radial shadows, since the latter is closer to the object (**Fig.09**).

Considering where the sun is, we can draw lines starting from the direction of the sun to the object. With this technique we can define where the light and shadow of the object itself falls, and what is cast by it (**Fig.10**).

You can also cheat with the shadow's location; it does not necessarily have to match the light source. We can use this resource to compose images from spaces of light and shadow to make our work more striking. **Fig.11** shows the image with harsh shadows.

In the second part of this tutorial we'll move on to looking at adding color, managing brushes and telling a story through your painting.

LIGHT AND SHADOW

SUN

10

POINT OF INTEREST LIGHT

POINT OF INTEREST LIGHT

POINT OF INTEREST LIGHT

11

03

Custom Brushes for
Characters

Chapter 05

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 05 – Yeti

Software Used: Photoshop

In this tutorial I am going to paint a Yeti and show how I use six brushes to get varying degrees of texture, and what I call "noise", to achieve a painted feel, along with atmosphere and realism. I sometimes use textures/photos to gain the grit and texture that I want in my images, but for this specific tutorial I'm going to rely solely on brushes and in-program techniques.

All of these brushes are set to have pressure sensitivity, because when I paint digitally I like it to feel similar to drawing with a graphite pencil. I like to control the darkness or size of my brush strokes with the amount of pressure that I apply.

You'll also see how some of the brush settings can be adjusted, so that some very cool effects are created depending on how hard or soft you are pressing on the tablet (**Fig.01**). 1 is just the default round brush that I use most of the time; I find that I have the most control with this brush. 2, 3 and 4 are "noise" brushes that I often use to help with textures for rock, or dirt, or atmospheric density. 5 is a brush I found online created by artist, Yang Xueguo. It's nice for abstract shapes that I'll talk about later in the tutorial. Finally, 6 is a soft brush that I use to create foggy or misty effects.

I do some quick thumbnails to see what type of composition or design I want to go for. Any brush will work for thumbnails. Sometimes I like to use a brush with some subtle abstract shapes because it creates little unplanned strokes, which I can later use to create specific designs. The number 5 brush is perfect for this and not only does it give abstract shapes, it also creates some variations in value that I like when I don't want to be super tight and precise.

Thumbnails are the perfect time to just relax and have fun with the image, and be very loose and gestural (**Fig.02**)!

After I decide on a thumbnail, I start to block out the large value areas. In this case I know that I
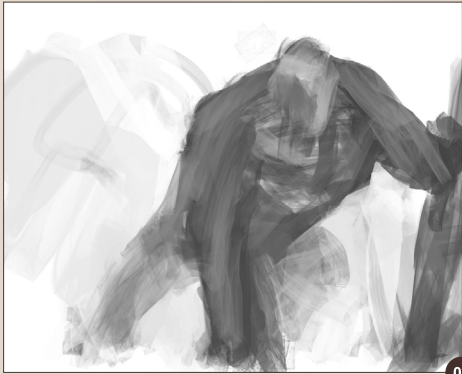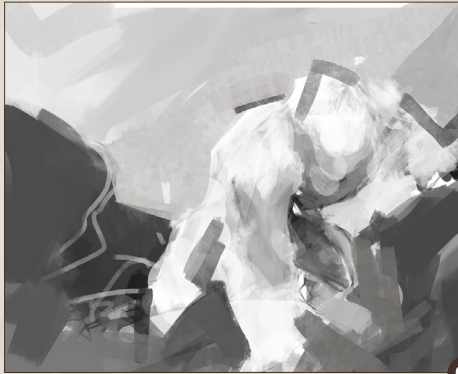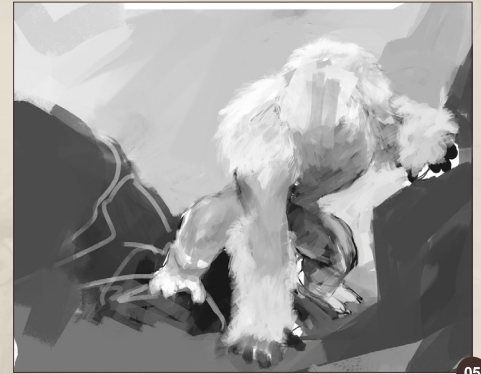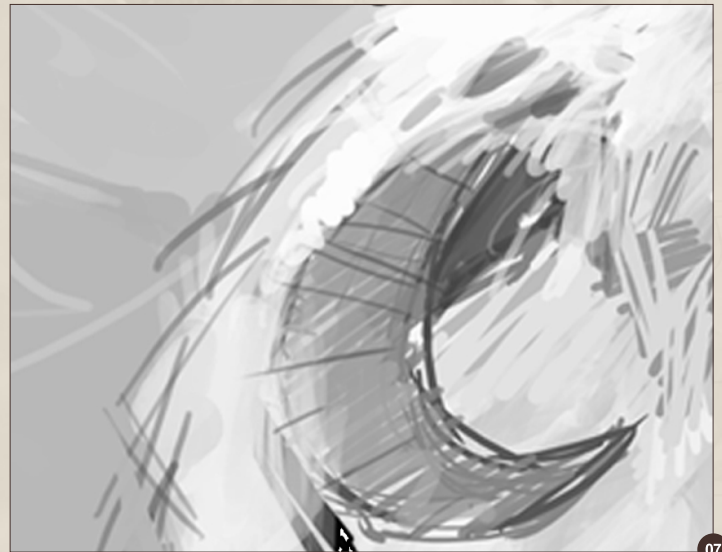
want to eventually put the Yeti in a snow scene and, of course, he'll be white as well. I want there to be a nice amount of contrast between the character and the background, so I start blocking in some dark rocky areas (**Fig.03**).

I try to keep the main focus on the Yeti, but I don't want him to be smack bang in the middle. While it's possible to create visually interesting imagery with symmetry, and having the subject perfectly centered, usually (unless I want to create a sense of unease, or there's a specific reason to center the image) I'll offset the focal point slightly to the left or right (**Fig.04**).

I'm starting to rough in some bushy fur, just to get an idea of how far I'm going to push the design elements. At this point I'm still really only using brush number 1 for control (**Fig.05**).

Tip: Early on in the painting, try keeping your shapes big. Stay away from the details, and concentrate on the silhouettes and the compositions. I like to use big, broad brush

strokes at the beginning of a painting – this helps me to not focus in on the tiny details, which are fun to paint, but may be smart to stay away from until later in the process.

I've painted in some more background elements and I've established some details on the Yeti itself. At this point I've used my primary round brush for most of the painting, along with the

number 5 brush to scribble in some fur. Since that brush creates different values with each stroke, I find it's really helpful when creating the fur. I'm able to get a feeling of depth with that brush, and the very subtle illusion of strands of hair and tufts of fur (**Fig.06**).

Fig.07 uses the round brush to sketch in the fur, and **Fig.08** uses the number 5 brush for fur.

It's a very subtle difference, but sometimes that subtlety is the key for getting the desired effect.

I take the brushes previously used and begin to paint in blowing snow and fur. These brushes work well both for their abstract shapes and very subtle strokes. Again, the varying values help to create depth and shadows for a more realistic texture (**Fig.09 – 10**).

I'm starting to add color to the image. While still very minimal at this point, the cool and warm colors allow me to see how and where I can take the painting. I also begin to paint in the details of the far off mountain range (**Fig.11**).

Tip: Make sure to create your own unique shapes for brushes. Experiment! If you try various settings, you never know what your brushes will end up creating. Play around with all the different brush settings; it's fun to see what you can come up with, and you may just create a brush that you will use over and over again. Adjust the sliders and discover the various effects that you can achieve through experimentation!
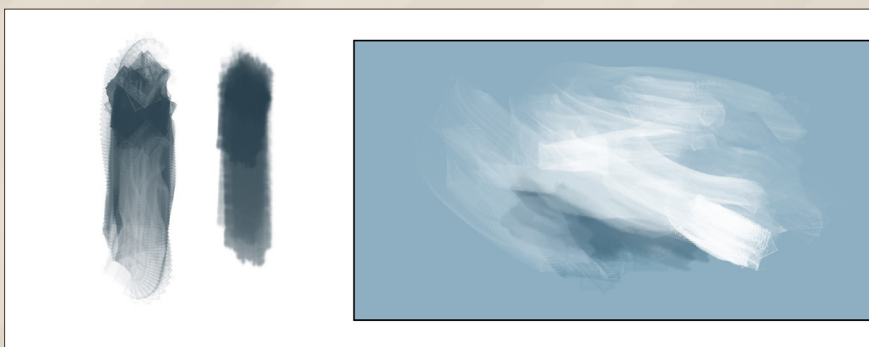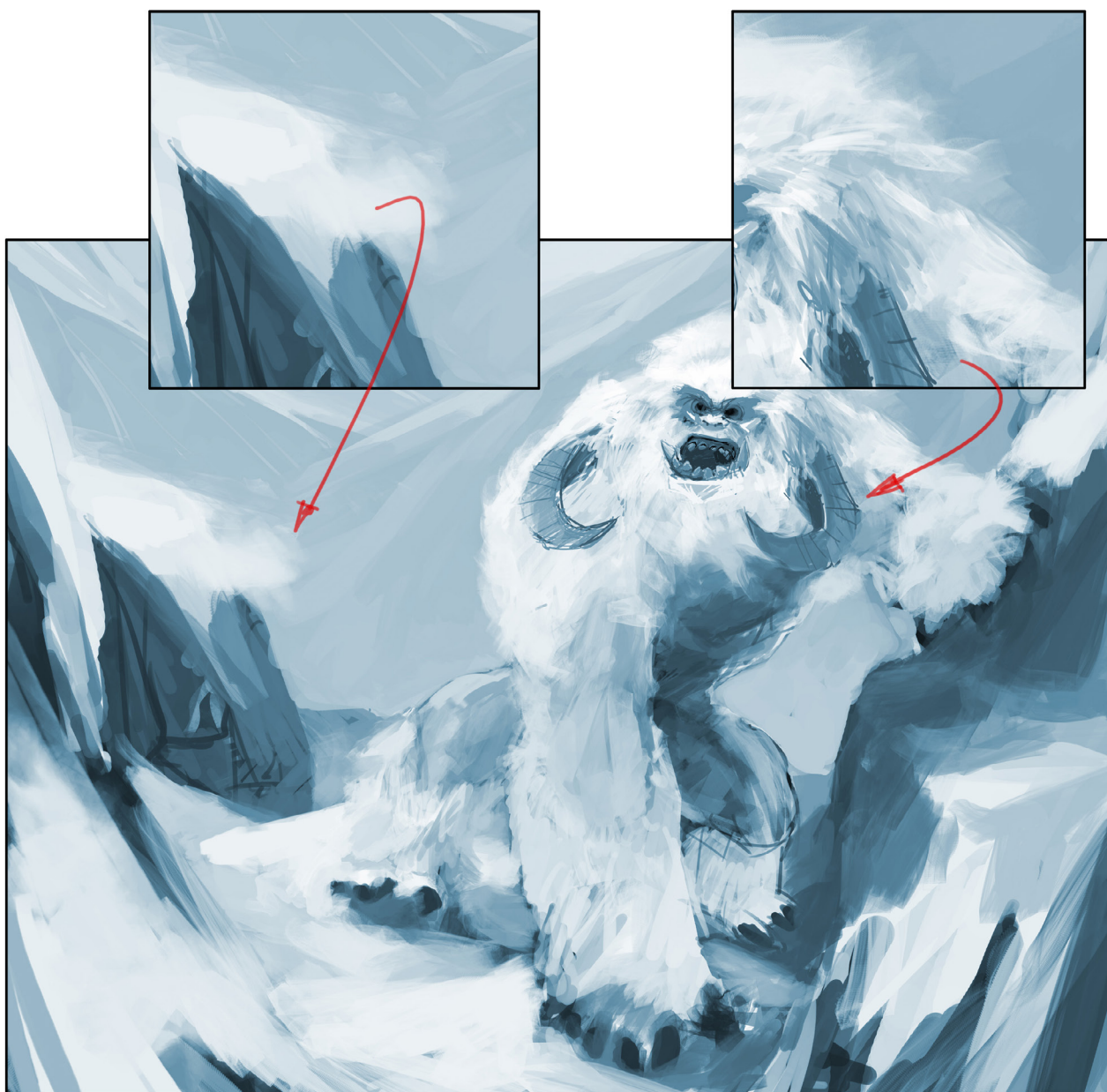
At this point in the image the face is pretty temporary in terms of design. I always knew that I was going to develop it somewhat, so I decide to polish it up and throw in some specific details. I have the Yeti in a stage where I've roughed in the face, but in **Fig.12** I take it in a different direction somewhat. This isn't unusual in my process and I often change the direction my designs go in. It's very important though to know when to stop doodling and begin to focus, and commit to a design.

I start to picture a giant gorilla covered in white fur; after all, nature has some of the best references that an artist could ever ask for, so why not use them? I also start to move forward on the horns and fur surrounding his face. This is the area of most interest, so I want to make sure that I give it the necessary and appropriate amount of attention.

I want the dark horns to provide a nice amount of contrast to the white fur and I further accentuate the contrast by placing snow onto the horns. Use of brush number 5 is perfect for this situation because it spreads areas of thin and thick paint, allowing for some of the boney material to show through.

In **Fig.13** I've decided to take the facial expressions of the Yeti even further. Rather than having a rather relaxed face, I decide to show him mid-ferocious scream.

In **Fig.14** you can see where I'm starting to take the brushes and really get specific about the details, like the stray bits of fur. Even in the shadow you should be able to recognize the texture or material of any given object.
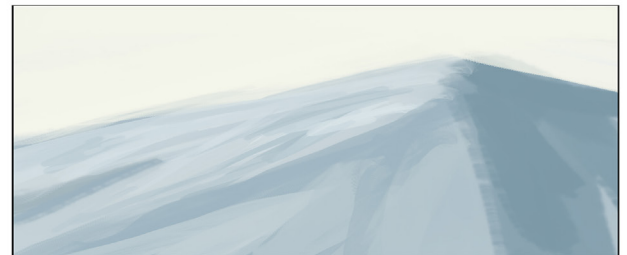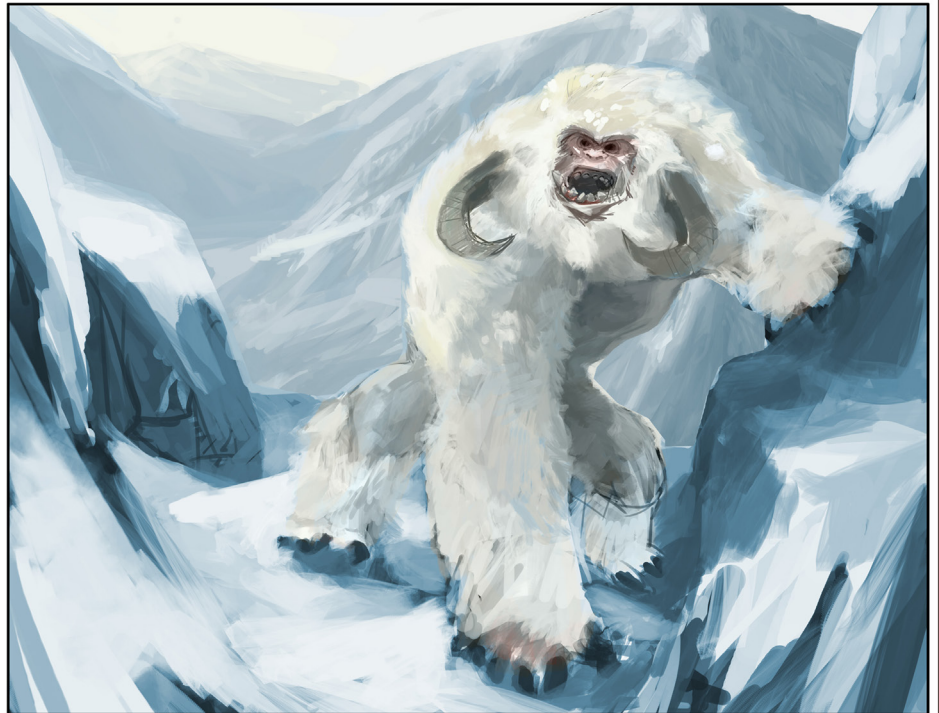

Tip: I often use photo references to help when painting something I'm not super-familiar with; in this instance, a gorilla. However, be careful not to over-use your photo references. The last thing that you want is for your painting to appear as though you have just copied an image that already exists. This holds especially true when creating a unique creature. Be imaginative and do your own take on an animal, don't simply copy it. After all that's what being hired as an artist is all about: creating something new that hasn't been seen before!
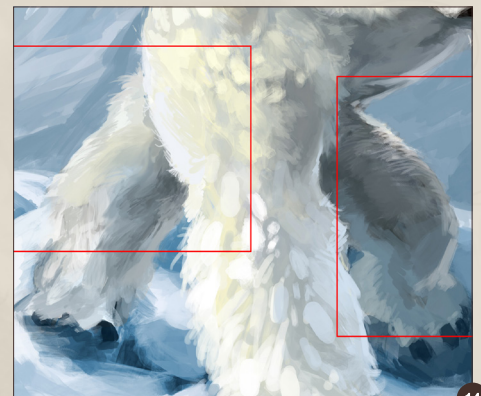
Here are more examples zoomed in close to show how important it is to paint in grit, noise and the various elements of texture that exist in the world around us. I like to think of this as the icing on the cake. I'm getting close to
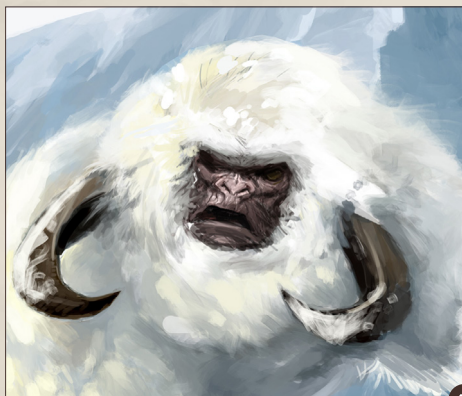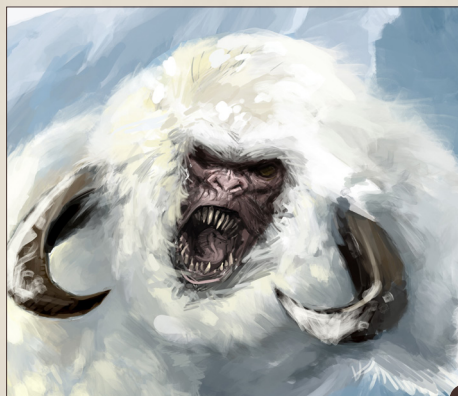
finishing the painting, but it just doesn't quite have the detailed polish that I want to achieve yet (**Fig.15**).

For the really fine, minute and subtle details I use my "noise" brushes and just scale them up or down to get a variety of sizes in the textures. The amount of contrast and details are being added more and more in **Fig.16**, but it's important not to overdo it. I'll add these "noises" on a separate layer and adjust the degree of opacity, so that it doesn't become too extreme or heavy handed. Also, remember that as you move further into the distance, the contrast and values become more subtle. Even color begins to lose its hue the further away you go.

I've started to ramp up the blowing snow effects. I want this to feel cold, so I add more blowing snow throughout. Subtle brush strokes, along with using the Blur filter in Photoshop, can go a long way to creating that blizzard effect (**Fig.17**).
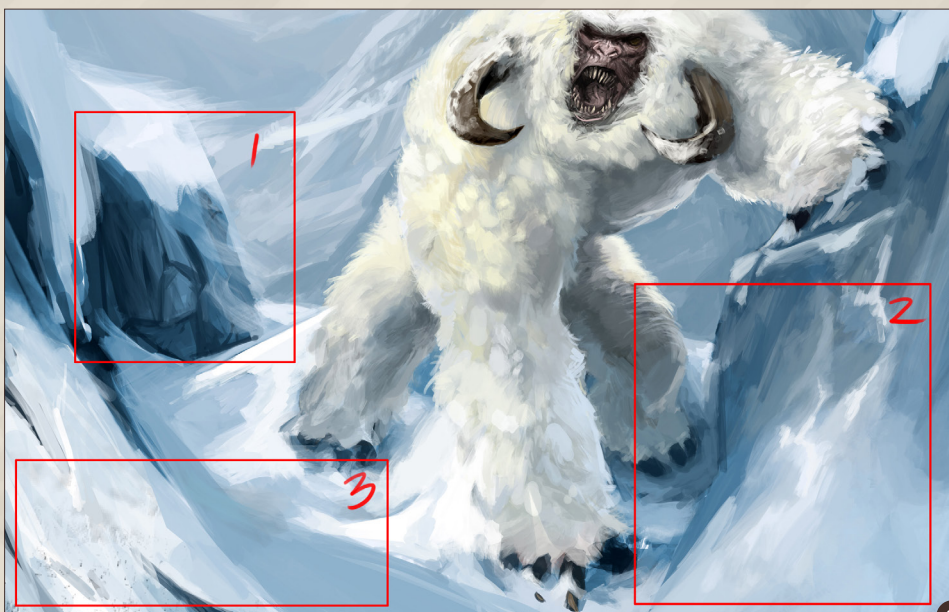
In **Fig.18** I've painted a foreground element to help create some depth, while at the same time guiding the viewer's eye to the focal point of the image. I use all my different brushes to get the rock texture I want and then I blur it slightly, so that it doesn't take attention away from the Yeti. Finally in **Fig.19** I adjust some of the colors in the shadows and I add some debris blowing along with the snow. I also paint in the details of his fingers, since some of it got lost in the process. I also make sure that the levels of detail close to the Yeti aren't so subtle that they become non-existent, specifically the area of rock underneath his hand.

Remember, use different brushes for different effects and textures, but don't rely on them to do the real work for you!
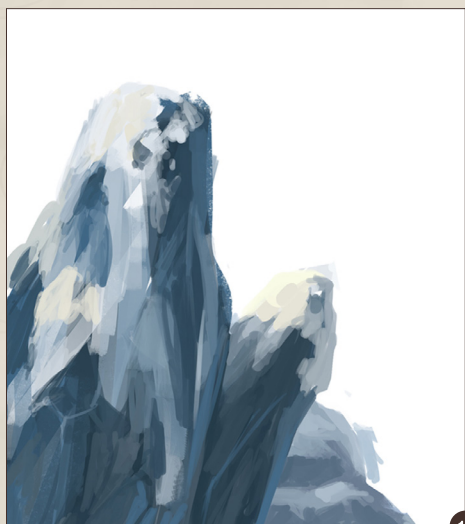
Bart Tiongson

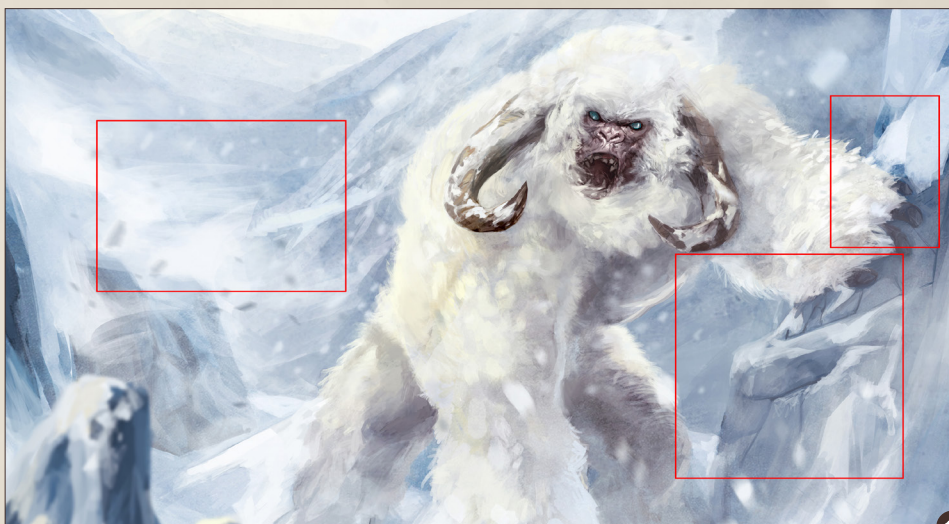Web: http://riceandeggs.blogspot.com/
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Image By Matt Tkocz

"For me, shading is always the most important part of painting and is always done in grayscale tones."

PUTREFACTION OF
KING AJIDAHAK
MAKING OF BY ALI KIANI AMIN

Ali Kiani Amin shares the process he used to paint his image Putrefaction of King Ajidahak for this month's Making Of. He takes us through the steps he took from the initial concept through to the coloring process.

Putrefaction of King Ajidahak

Software Used: Photoshop

Introduction

I'm going to explain the process I used to paint my image *Putrefaction of King Ajidahak*. I have changed the idea many times, so the process is not a regular process. I often do this, frequently changing every element by the time I'm satisfied by the final result.

So let's start! I had a sketch, which was a study of the angel Gabriel (**Fig.01**).This angel had been on my mind for a long time. One night I decided to complete the sketch, so I began thinking about how to continue this painting.

At the same time I was thinking about "The Dragon's Lair" – a challenge that an Iranian community (**www.cgart.ir**) had started. The great John Howe was the judge of this challenge, so I thought I'd better do a cool job!

Construction

I made some strokes here and there, following some inner inspiration, which always makes me

feel free whilst sketching. This sketch looked like something architectural, so I decided to build a construction. I duplicated and mirrored it, and it began to look like a bridge between mountains. It began to look like it would be a cool background for King Ajidahak (**Fig.02**)!

I drew a figure in as a pre-sketch of the king. The whole emotion of the body was not bad, but the head needed more attention (**Fig.03**).

Long ago I had taken a photograph of a friend whose face was very inspiring, so I decided to choose him to portray King Ajidahak. I did
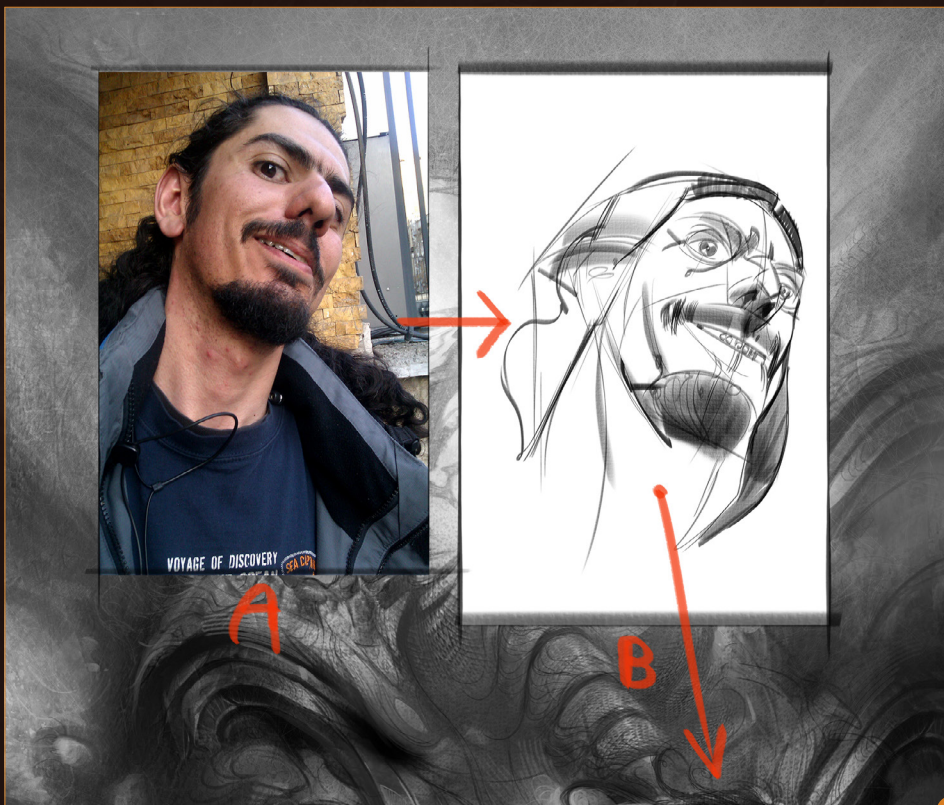
a quick sketch, shaded it and blocked it with some mid-tones and textures. I continued to composite the sketch into the main artwork, as the head of the king (**Fig.04**).

Shading

Also I started to add some creature-like elements to the two dragons on his shoulder. The forms needed to have both a robotic and ancient look; I always follow this path when designing creatures (**Fig.05**).

Now I added more details and shading of the elements, adding highlights, etc (**Fig.06**).

Don't forget to do a sketch to study important elements like hands (**Fig.07**).

I usually use default Photoshop brushes; I also have a set of pencils and chalks, which were

05

06

07
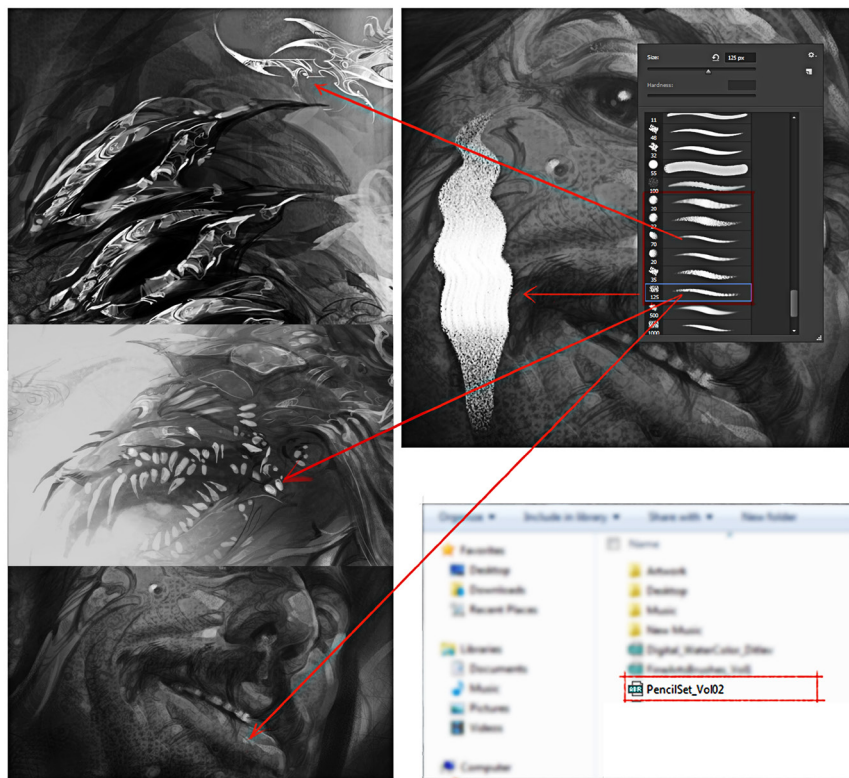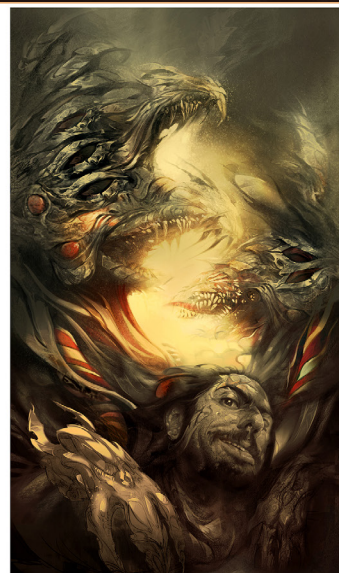
downloaded from **www.cghub.com**. They are really cool and useful. Using these brushes, I continued painting and adding more details (**Fig.08**).

Coloring

For me, shading is always the most important part of painting and is always done in grayscale tones. I will add some transparent color layers later, including Multiply, Overlay, Color and Darken. I continued changing elements, refining the composition and adding details. I also tested some color schemes until I found my favorite theme (**Fig.09 – 10**).

Now the painting was about to be finished, it was time to add some details, highlights, dust and a glowing effect. I always use Corel Painter at this stage; it really is a magical application (**Fig.11**).

With that, the mission was completed and after three weeks, I was satisfied to hear the good news that Master John Howe had chosen this artwork as the winner of the challenge!

Ali Kiani Amin
Email: ali.kiani@gmail.com

2012

11

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Exclusive Making Of

Battle Ready

by Puppeteer Lee

Battle Ready

Software Used: Photoshop

Introduction

I like to create realistic paintings where you take something recognisable from the real world and give it a futuristic twist. Usually I like to paint some sort of made up event that I have created in my imagination. That event could involve a totally different culture with different values and ethics in a different environment and an alternate world.

I am never really sure if my work counts as concept art or illustration. I usually paint illustrations as they are my own ideas on the canvas, but I guess they are also concepts for new and original environments and worlds. I like to portray machines and in particular motor bikes. The reason I love to draw things like this is because my hobby is to spend time with bikes which in turn makes them more fun to paint.

I like to create my personal images without using references and believe that the imagination is capable of creating cool, fresh things we haven't seen before without the use of outside influences. Usually the entire image is pretty firmly in my mind before I start to paint, however even with this vision it can be hard to design some of the structures and details.

I haven't graduated from any formal courses; my teachers have been the artists whose

work has inspired me over the years. I guess I should thank the internet for making it so easy to see these artists work and learn from their processes. I do however sometimes regret the fact that I didn't take the opportunities that I may have had to further my art skills.

Painting

Most of my illustrations are driven by a main focal character as I feel that it adds to the story if there is someone in the scene you can make presumptions about.

The idea behind this image was that it depicted a scene where a mechanic and driver were

preparing for a desert race. In the final image you will see that the bike is covered with weapons and that the driver's suit is for her protection. This is a big hint at the type of race that these drivers are about to participate in; they don't just have to race, they also have to survive.

As touched upon earlier, I had already imagined this image and it had been spinning round in my head for a while before I finally found time to start work on it. I tried to ensure I included every good idea before I forgot about it. In **Fig.01** you can see that the buildings in the background were done pretty early on in the process. I always find that if you have a good idea of what you want to paint you can work quite fast. It took me about one hour to get to the point you see here.

I then created a new layer to separate the bike from the background. I honestly find it quite hard to choose colors for things like the bike but in this case I settled on a sharp blue and yellow which I thought looked quite sporty. I think it's great to leave some steel colors in there too to make it look more mechanical. The bike was designed to be huge and heavy but also look agile and capable of coping with desert conditions (**Fig.02**).
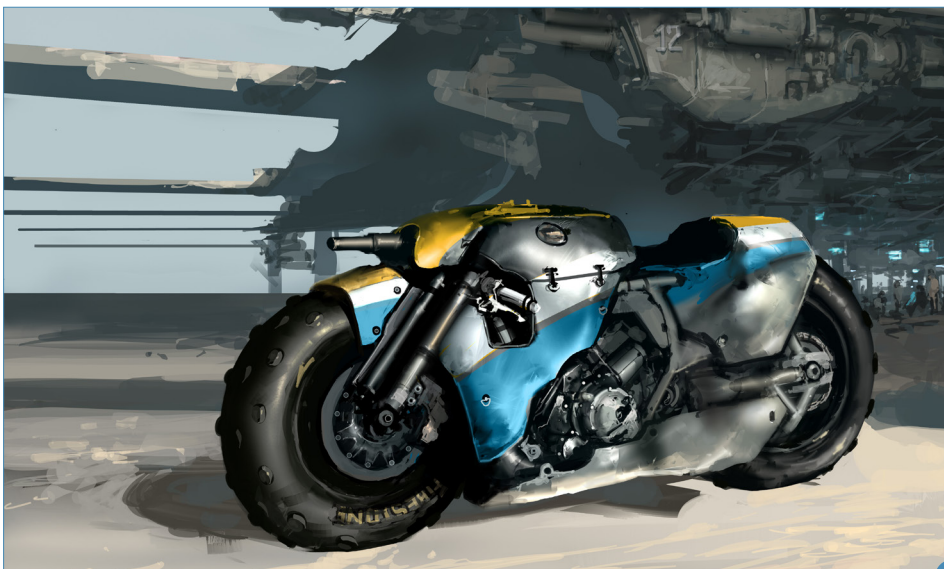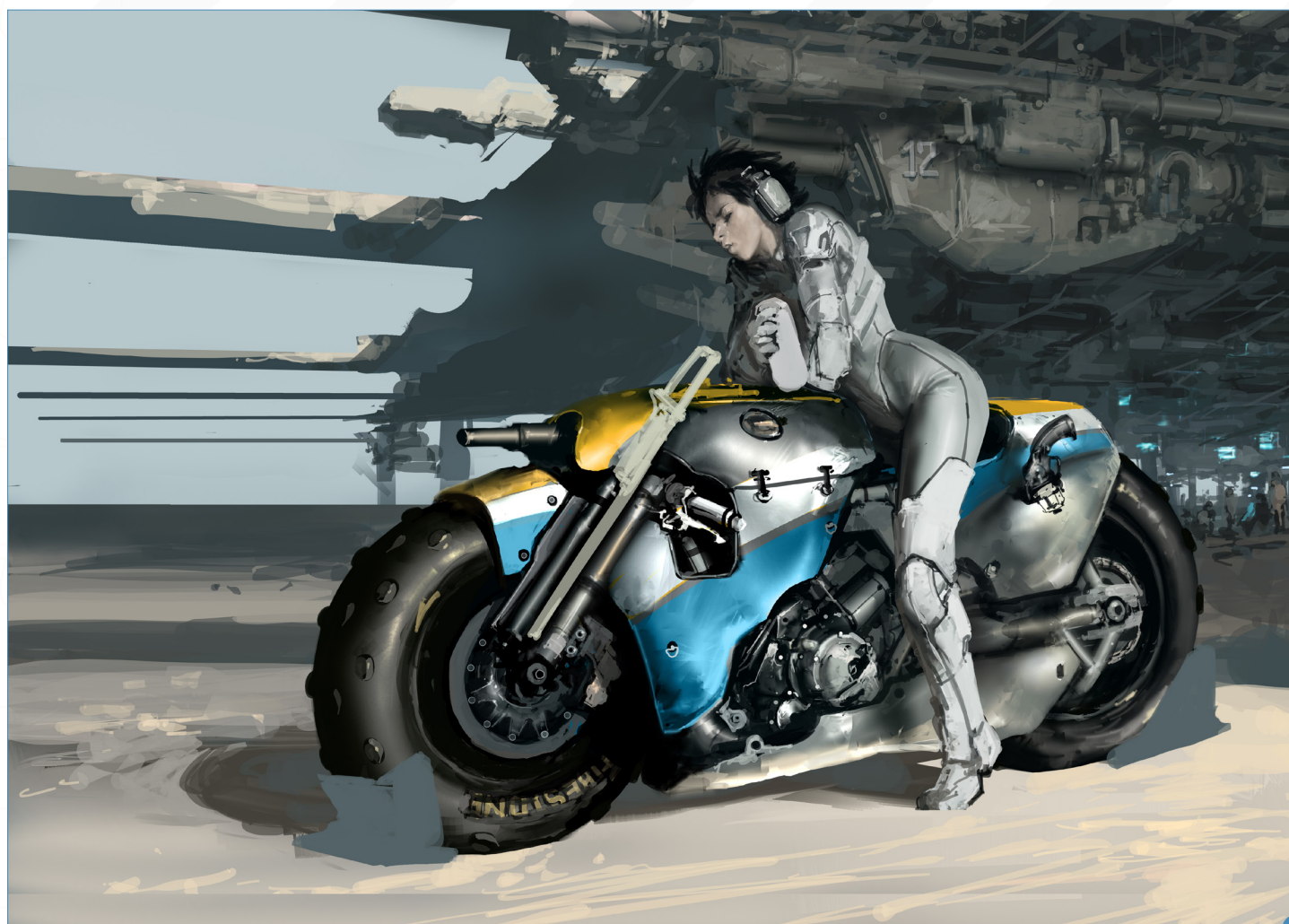
It was then time to start working on the rider. I decided to give her a gray coloured suit to match the metallic parts of the bike which I already knew would work well with the yellow and blue. I wanted the character to look brave and confident. In the image she is listening to music, having a drink and relaxing, which shows how confident she must be as she's about to go into a deadly race (**Fig.03**).

On another separate layer I painted the mechanic. Again I started with a gray tone for her costume which I blocked in before adding details. My aim was to make her look cool, experienced and mature in a sexy way! (**Fig.04**)

Because the main focal points of the image were now in place I could start to think about the rival vehicles and the team of mechanics that they would have with them. At this point I started to work on the background without adding too much detail (**Fig.05**).

Sponsors logos are always really important on race vehicles. They can really add to the overall sporty look and add dynamic color variations to your image. They also help to tell a little story and provide a little more information about the world these characters inhabit. For example the ELECTO logo looks like it could come from some sort of electric energy company, maybe
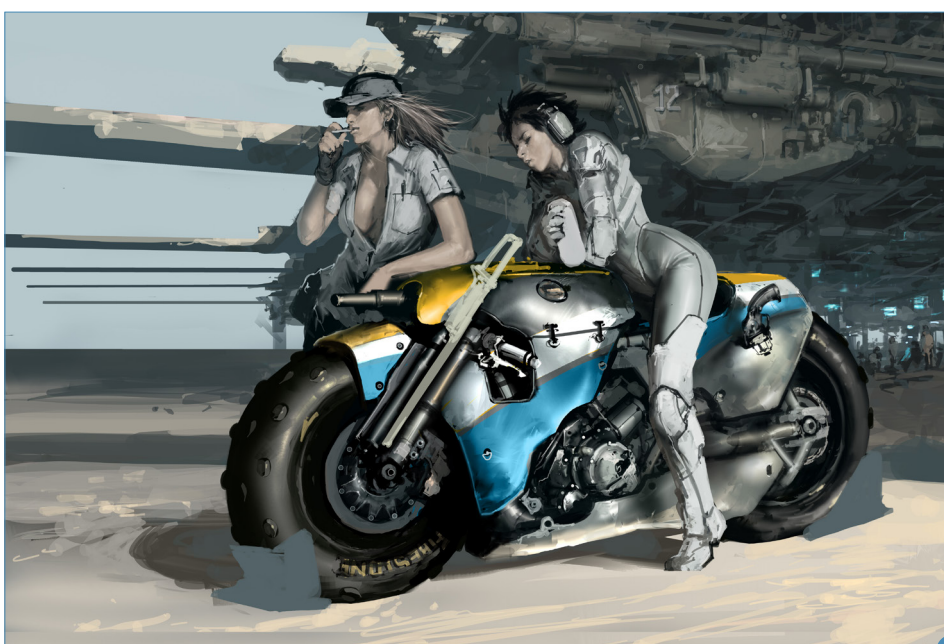
the world is out of petrol and this company have a lot of control. The other logo is for Cerberus and their logo's are on the weapons. You don't really see weapon advertising at the moment which might imply that the world's attitude towards arms is very different from our current one (**Fig.06**). I always find it hard to create logos, but I think they are really important in this image.

Finishing the Image

During these final stages I do a little more painting to make some of the surfaces look smooth, but not too much. My more recent work looks a bit rough compared to my old stuff. But I think this is because I am always trying to balance the fact that it is a personal illustration in a concept style.

I like to use a Watercolour tool to add some rust and dirt to the steel to make it look more natural (**Fig.07 – 08**).

After I have painted all the details I take the image from Painter into Photoshop and adjust the brightness and colours. This is the only point at which I utilize Photoshop as I generally use Painter exclusively, however I do find that Photoshop is better for these types of adjustments.

This image was made up of three main layers; the character layer which is always the sharpest, the the middle layer with the buildings, background characters and vehicles and the final layer composing the sky.

I recall noticing the perspective was wrong on the bike once I thought the image was complete and you can see how I adjusted this if you compare Fig.04 with the final image.

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