





Editorial

With the movie and games industries bursting with vibrant and exciting characters that tie narratives together, it's hard to know where to start with your own designs.

2DArtist is full to the brim with exceptional content and inspirational tutorials to provide you with the starting point you need!

In this issue we bring you a new series in evolutionary design, where the artists will be exploring how factors in differently evolved worlds could affect and influence a human character's evolution and anatomy. To begin with, **Chase Toole** takes us through his thoughts and design process in creating a subterranean character that has evolved with a lack of light.

We also have a stunning step-by-step Making Of from concept painter and illustrator, **Donovan Valdes**, who shares some useful techniques and tips along the way. Why not also check out the rest of our vibrant tutorial and gallery section where we continue to bring you visually stunning work from some of the most exciting names in the industry, including an exclusive interview with experienced Spanish concept artist **Nacho Yagüe**. Nacho talks to us about the gaming world and shares his experiences from working at Ubisoft!



Contents

What's in this month's issue?

Nacho Yagüe

Interview - 2D Artist

Sketchbook

The sketchbook of David Munoz Velazquez

028

The Gallery
10 of the best 2D artworks

10 of the best 2D artworks

Heroes and Villains
The Cursed Quill by Richard Tilbury



Designing New Worlds
Rural Settlement by Gerhard Mozsi



Costume Design

062

Alchemist by Andrey Pervukhin

Evolution Subterranean/Lack of Light by Chase Toole



"Confrontation" Project overview by Donovan Valdes



"Dock Station"
Digital Art Masters: Volume 7 – Free Chapter



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Nacho Yagüe

Nacho Yagüe is a Spanish concept artist who lives in Canada working as a Concept Artist at Ubisoft Toronto. Nacho is currently wrapping up the upcoming Splinter Cell: Blacklist, and starting new



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and exciting projects.

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: jess@3dtotal.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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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



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Andrei Pervukhin

Andrei Pervukhin is a 25 year old Russian artist who in 2007 graduated from the Veronezh art College. Andrei has worked as an illustrator for a Moscow

based publisher and does traditional and digital artwork. He has been doing digital artwork for 2 years. In his spare time he enjoys boxing, watching movies and playing computer games.

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Chase Toole

Chase Toole (aka tooled) is a concept artist and freelance illustrator working out of Montreal Canada. Chase is currently working on AAA titles

with the immensely talented team at THQ Montreal. He enjoys storytelling and creating moody images, and is always looking for inspiration in strange places and new experiences."

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"Take your time. Don't run. Know yourself, your skills and your limits"

NACHO YAGUE

In this month's interview, Experienced Spanish concept artist, Nacho Yague, talks to 2DArtist about creative processes, up-and-coming projects and his experiences of working at one of the world's top games studios: Ubisoft.

Nacho Yagüe Interview



Hi Nacho, thanks for taking the time to have a chat with us! Could you tell us a bit about yourself and how you got into the digital art industry?

Hi! Thanks for the interview. Well, I'm a Spanish concept artist who works in the video game industry. I've been living and working in Spain, Bulgaria and Canada. Currently I'm working at Ubisoft Toronto.

When I completed high school, I was a bit lost for a while. I loved to paint, but I wasn't sure how to focus my passion into a future profession. After considering the pros and cons, I decided to go to university and study Fine Arts in Valencia (Spain). In that time I could barely find a simple Photoshop tutorial on the internet (YouTube didn't exist guys) that would help me to start painting with Photoshop and a mouse.

While I was studying, I started working in a small graphic design studio. There I met someone who told me about a modest game studio in Mallorca, in the Balearic Islands, that was looking for new members. I applied and they hired me, so I decided to move to the Island before I finished university to start my career. This is how everything began.

What was it about digital tools that made you want to work with them, and how do you feel it enhances your work?

By that time I wanted to know which techniques those artists were using, and then I realized that it was digital painting. What I discovered was that tools like Photoshop allowed me to finally emulate their painting techniques. The possibilities with digital painting are infinite; I'm much faster and I don't need any special tools, just a computer and my tablet.

Could you tell us about your creative process and the software that you use?

My process varies depending on the task requirements. I work in the video game industry, so I must adapt my technique and style to the project I'm working on, but preferably I love to work with a loose, painterly style with big brush strokes. Generally I use Photoshop and sometimes Google SketchUp for creating a fast perspective guide for complicated compositions.

What do you feel is the most important part of this process that you like to focus on?

The beginning is, in my opinion, the most important and most enjoyable part as well.

Defining the light, value, color and composition,

on the very first step is essential for me. It's time that you will save for the future. After having everything set up, the rest is just about rendering the details.

Where do you draw your influences from for your personal and professional work?

From everywhere! I have folders with plenty of photographs, concept art, graphic design and movie stills. When I'm stuck or I'm running out of ideas, I open those folders to get an extra dose of inspiration. I never forget about enjoying some traditional art from painters like Velazquez, Rubens, Sorolla, Sargent or Fechin.

What's your favorite project that you have worked on to date?

Assassin's Creed 3: Liberation was a fantastic project to work on; I had total freedom and the setting was extremely appealing. Recently I've been working on Splinter Cell: Blacklist with an amazing concept art team here at Ubisoft Toronto. It has been an exciting experience as well. I feel very lucky for having the opportunity to travel and work with such talented people.

Do you have any advice for anyone wanting to start a career in the industry?











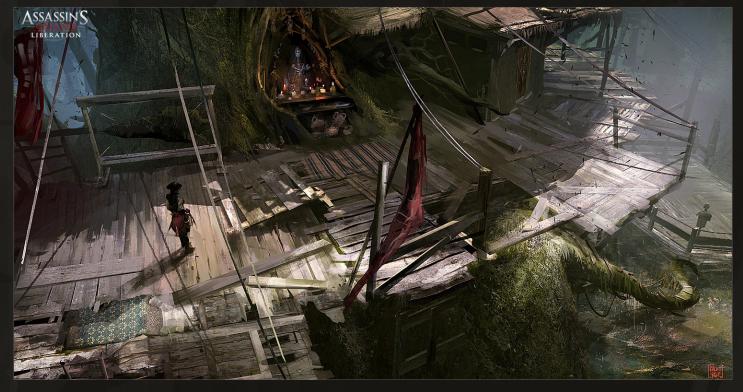


Take your time. Don't run. Know yourself, your skills and your limits. Once you know yourself you can work on improving your skills. Any evolution takes its time, and learning is a continuous experience. Try to be versatile and adaptable. Try to master some different techniques, topics and styles. Don't be afraid of new challenges, face them. Once you lose that fear, you will start enjoying, instead of just drawing the same thing that you already know

again and again. And the most important for me: be honest with yourself and with others, be respectful, learn from everyone, and accept the critics. I have seen too many fallen "untouchable stars" in this industry. This world is pretty small, so you will cross paths with other mates, probably in other studios. So treat others as you like to be treated. Never stop learning – this industry is constantly changing!

Could you tell us about any projects you are working on at the moment or what you have coming up in the future?

We are wrapping up *Splinter Cell: Blacklist*, (release date August 2013), which is probably the best game I've ever worked on. I hope to show some of the stuff I've been doing for it soon. Now I've just started working on an unannounced (and amazing) project. Sorry, I can't tell you anything else for the moment.







Is it difficult to design in a way that appeals to customers, while meeting your own tastes and expectations?

It depends on the project, and the team, of course. In general the art director gives a lot freedom to the concept artist. We usually work pretty close, and follow some general artistic guidelines compiled in some documents (art bible).

A concept artist is a key element for an art director, and the art director is a key element for the concept artist as well, so we work in parallel. We both have to trust each other's artistic criteria, and find the best options that will make our game shine.

What can you tell us your experiences at Ubisoft?

I've been part of the "Ubi family" for almost four years, and I've worked in three different Ubisoft studios (Barcelona, Sofia and Toronto). Each studio is different; they belong to the same company though. What I can say in general is that I feel very lucky for working for this company. I have the opportunity to travel, learn and meet amazing and talented people all the time. I'm working on some of the biggest and









most interesting franchises from this generation. It's a real dream come true, and one of the reasons why I'm always going to work with a big smile.

Working in the game industry do you consider yourself a gamer? And if so what are your favorite games from a design perspective?

That's a good question. I've been a hardcore

gamer for many years, but right now I rarely play more than five hours a month. I try to keep updated about what's new in the game industry though.

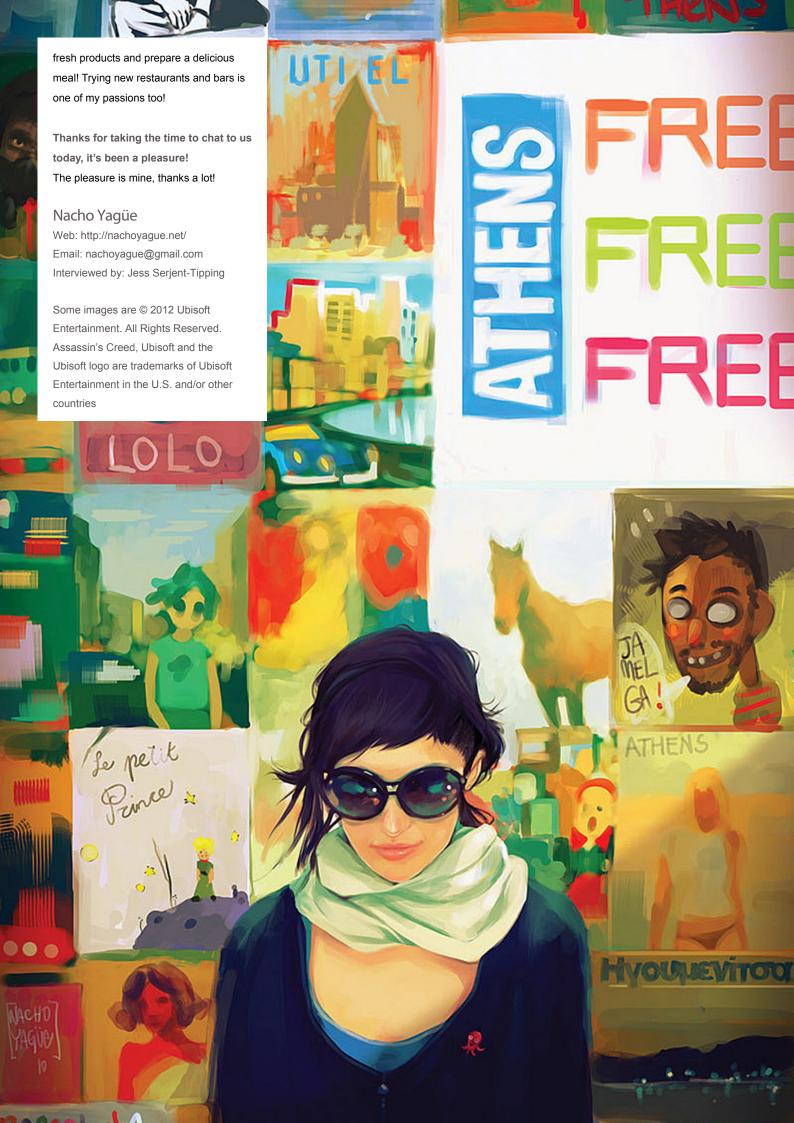
I check video game blogs everyday and watch game videos. I love everything related to this industry, but I don't play so much! I try demos and eventually buy a game and play it, but more for researching than actually playing!

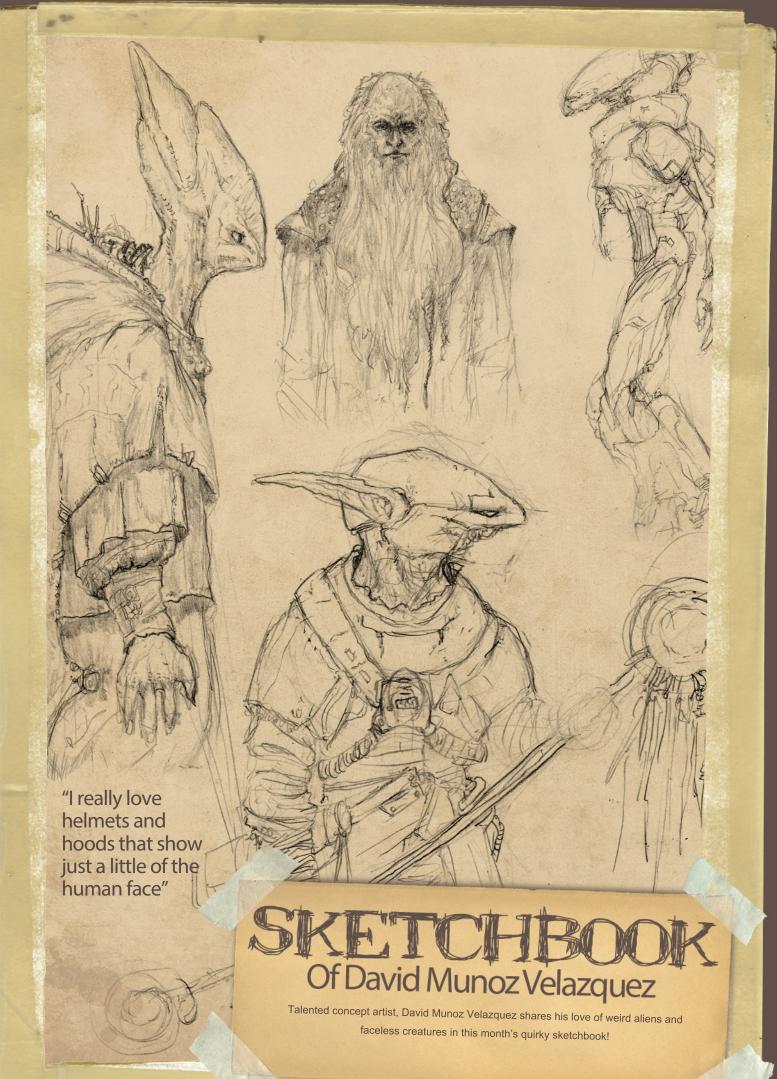
If I have to give you a name, *Journey* blew me away. It's a game that goes directly to your heart. It shocked me on so many levels.

How do you like to spend your time when you're away from your computer?

I try to go out with my bike or my long board now that the summer is here. I love to have a beer on a patio with some friends, go to concerts, and go to the market as well, get







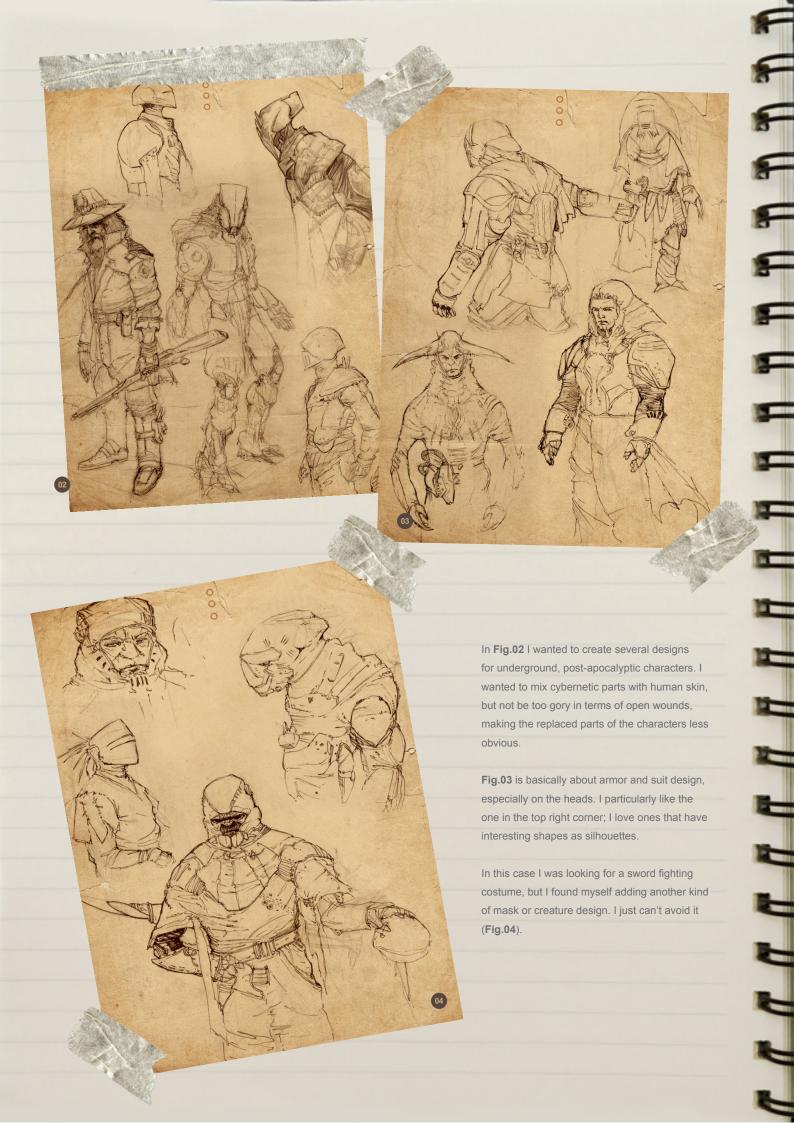


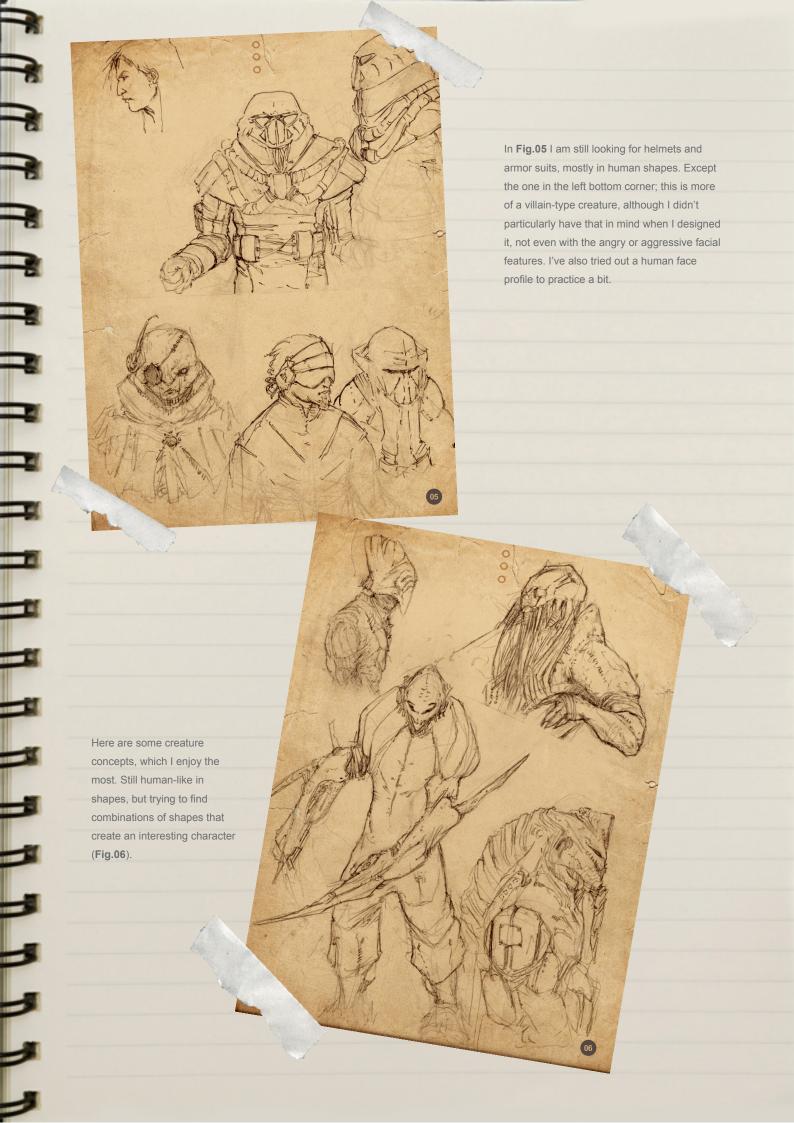
Sketchbook of David Munoz Velazquez

I used pencil shading for these four characters, who are more humanoid than robots (Fig.01). The first character pretends to be more wizard like; the one in front of him is another kind of wizard, but in this case with armor. The third is

less human, but with the same intention, and the last one on the right bottom corner is more of a creature. I simplified the average wizard look of decoration and cloth all over the character.











In Fig.08 you can see different types of characters. One is human, but trying to get over having disproportionate parts. The second is a robot with some sort of cloth, which is a concept that I've liked since I remember. The third is a masked figure dressed in a tunic. I couldn't get the mask how I wanted it, so I left it alone before I made a hole in the paper.



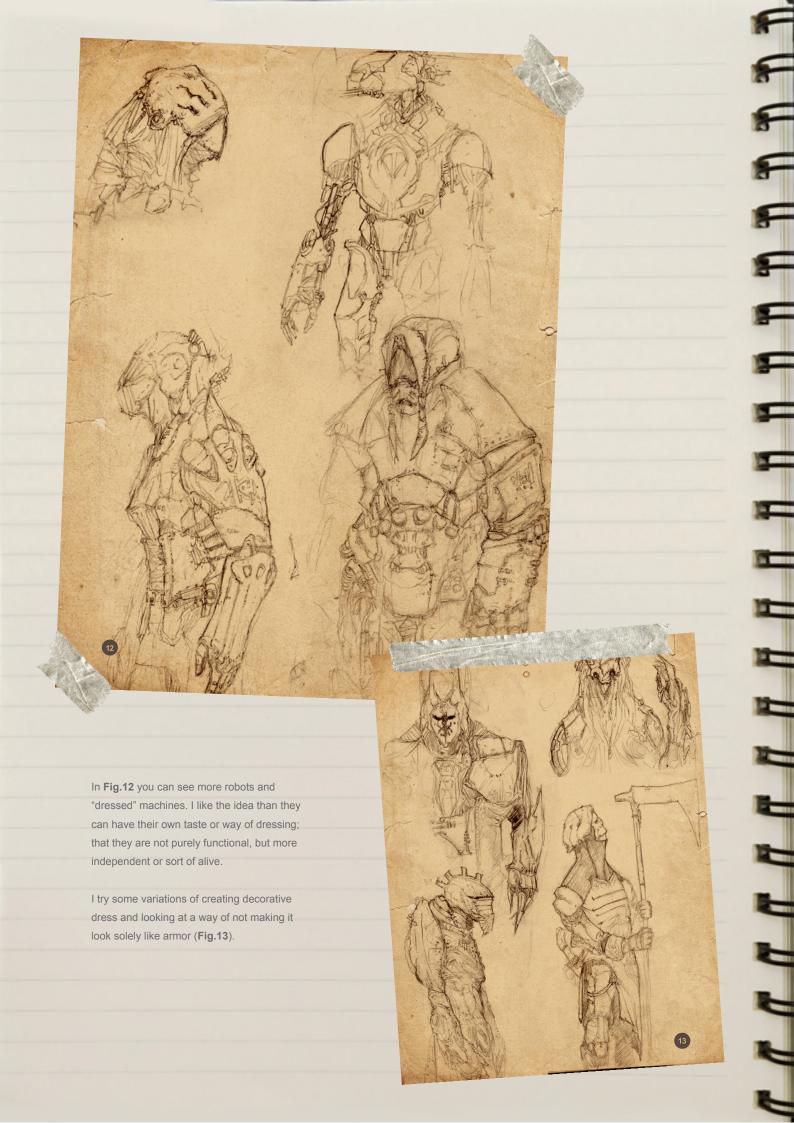


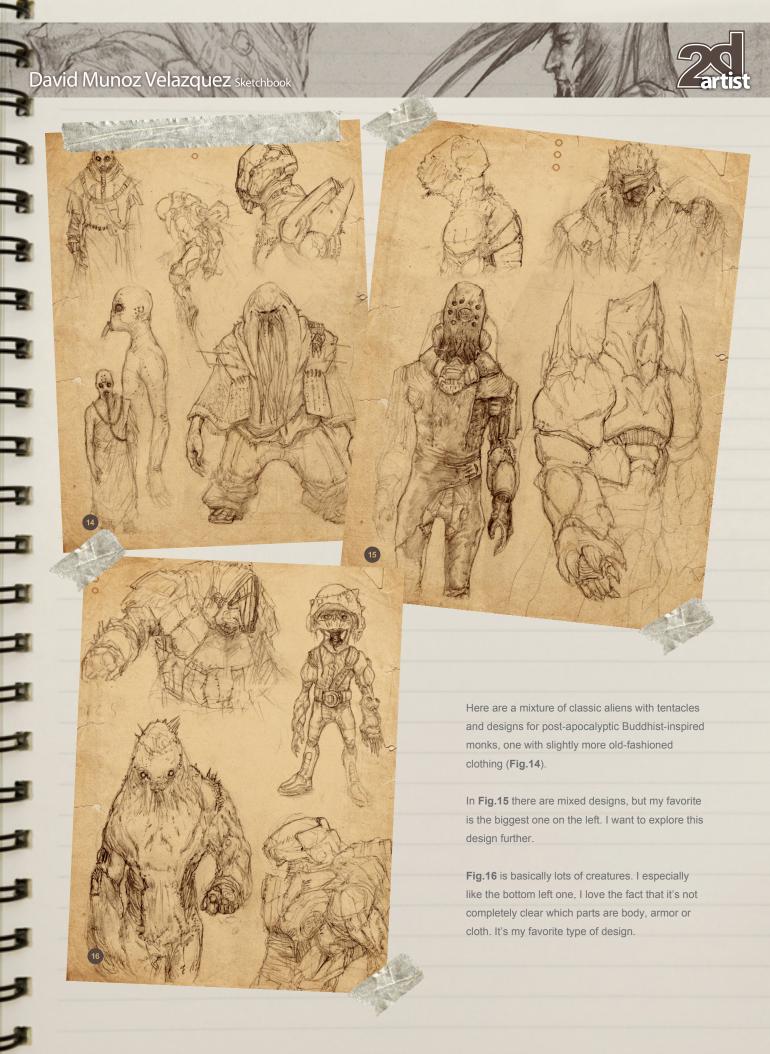
There are mostly creatures in Fig.09, some with a bit more armor and more of my favorite weird alien characters. Sometimes, if I have time, I like to shade them in a little bit. Here are two I would like to do a proper illustration or even a model of.

More creatures and some humans with their heads covered. I really love helmets and hoods that show just a little of the human face (Fig.10).

Fig.11 is mostly suit design; I like to give the helmet or mask a personality as if it has natural expressions.







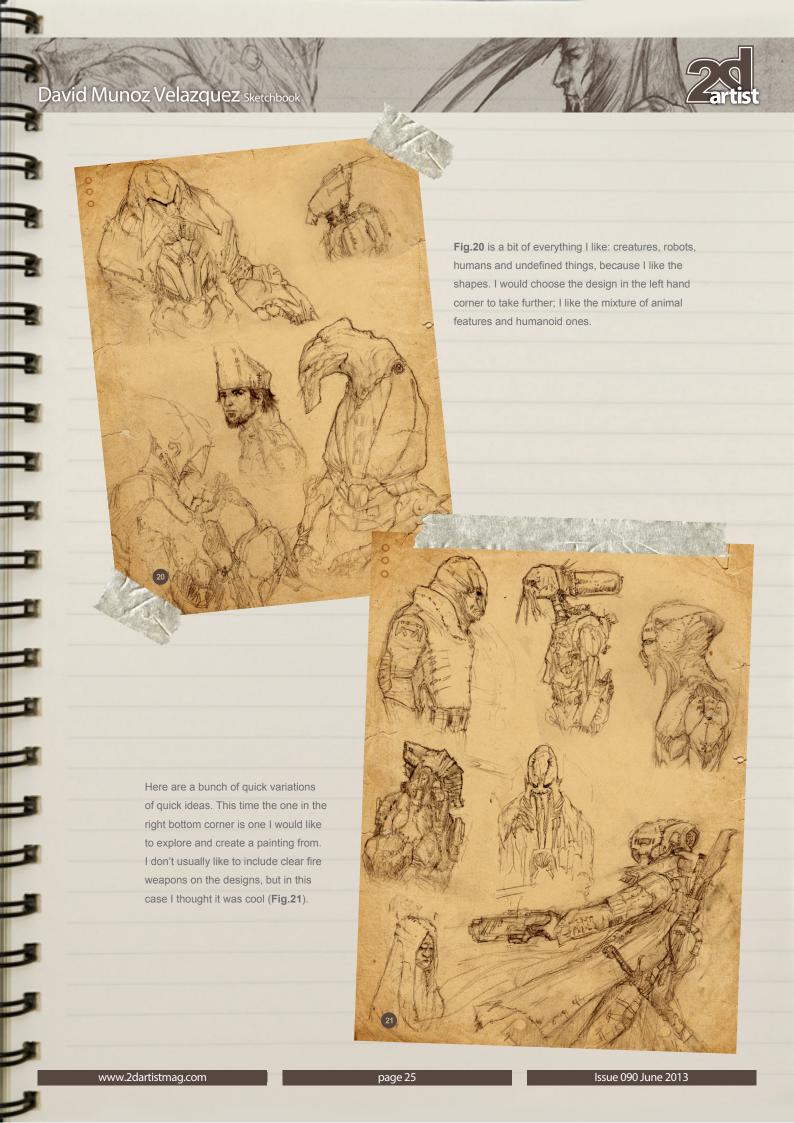




The most interesting design in Fig.17 is the one at the bottom of the page, again trying to create a face from his helmet or

with armor. Most of them were made from inspiration and

The sketch in the top left is the one I really like: a sort of space suit, but with creature elements. The circle on his back is supposed to be an airscrew, but I left it as an idea to work on it for a 3D model, so it will need a better description and shape modifications (Fig.19).





sketchbook David Munoz Velazquez



In this group I think the top left character is very cool because it's dressed, but the head is quite simple and still works as a recognizable character. And, of course, I love big forearms and hands (Fig.22)!

Out of the several creature sketches in Fig.23, I like the bottom left and right top ones most as both have more personality. But the top left one was interesting because I had the impression that the mouth could sort of have teeth hanging and I liked this idea to take further.

That one is the most "human" section; I was looking for a kind of magician or a hermit, trying more complex and heavy costumes, as well as lighter ones (Fig.24).

David Munoz Velazquez

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Faun of Healwood Envr Concept

Christopher Balaskas

https://www.facebook.com/balaskas cbalaskas@gmail.com (Above)

The Golden Fleece

Jose Cabrera

http://brujulacromatica.blogspot.com.es/ llowee@hotmail.com (Below)





























Shapes, color and theory are an important part of character design. You can create a feeling of good or evil in visual design by changing the combinations that you use. In this tutorial series each artist has been presented with a games-like brief describing a hero or villain, and their challenge is to use this brief to design a character while conveying the elements that make them recognizable.



Chapter 01 – The Cursed Quill

Software Used: Photoshop

Introduction

"This character's skin should be covered with hieroglyphics or calligraphy and the costume should resemble parchment. He or she uses a quill like a wand to trace sacred or ancient texts to curse a victim or have them bound in parchment, which is then swiftly inscribed to form a supernatural barrier used to constrain them."

As you can see from the above, this project came with a specific description and so I already had three clear facts that needed to be incorporated into the design:

- 1. Some kind of script covering the skin
- 2. A costume resembling parchment
- 3. A quill as a weapon

Beyond these criteria the design was open for interpretation, but as often with superheroes (or villains) they are meant to look dynamic due to their unusual powers. This naturally brings into question their movement and form of attack, and as a result raises the issue of posture and how to portray their characteristics.

This character was intended to a villain, but it didn't really matter what his alignment was as much as it did his description. His superpowers and form of attack were the crucial aspects that would help determine an interesting posture, as well as his style of fighting.

His costume description and weapon suggested a certain delicacy, while still being deadly, and



staying away from a heavy-handed, brutish nature. It was this that suggested a refined fighting ability akin to martial arts and so helped when it came to exploring various stances.

I imagined him to be quick and dexterous, light on his feet and able to scrawl his quill at lightning speed. With this in mind I started looking at martial arts references, such as the infamous Shaolin monks as well as ninjas who epitomize both grace and deadliness at the same time.

Fig.01 shows a number of quick thumbnails exploring different postures. I added some

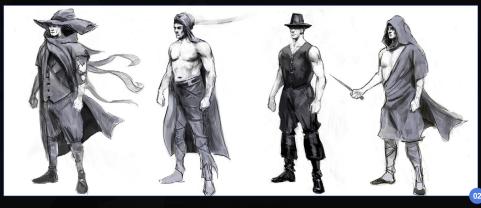
flowing lines around the upper-left sketch alongside a tattered cape, which created a nice dynamic. The static nature of his pose contrasted well with the rhythm of the flowing brush work and generated a certain tension.

I imagined that he could conjure rolls of parchment, which unwind from his costume to wrap around victims, binding their hands and legs.

Some of the thumbnails resembled Kung Fu stances too overtly that I was not keen on, but another issue which needed resolving was that of costume. I didn't want him to look like a monk with traditional robes, but was not sure what kind of period to base him on.

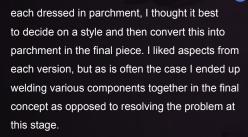
I started combining clothing from various periods and character classes with influences ranging from Tudor gents through to musketeers and pirates, as well as more Oriental flavours.

In **Fig.02** we can see this mixture of influences with each drawing on different periods and costume types. As opposed to trying to draw









I liked the flowing lines on the far-left character, a remnant from Fig.01, but also liked the idea that the trousers on the character to his right could be made from parchment coiled around his legs. I wanted some form of head wear and the fact that the smaller of the two hats concealed his eyes added a sinister quality, which also felt appropriate. A semi-clothed body was more interesting to me, as was the hood, which looked less theatrical.

Despite not having a fully resolved design, I felt I had enough information to begin the final piece. Fig.03 shows the initial sketch, which draws on the lower right thumbnail from Fig.01. I chose this pose because it suggested a startled moment preceding an attack; a kind of pregnant pause before our assailant unleashes his quill in a frenetic encounter.

I opted to include the shin strapping and hood from the far right character in Fig.02, but devised some clothing made up of parchment roll (top left Fig.01). I imagined this whirling and twisting around him independently as he moved, like a flock of seagulls around a fishing boat.





I kept the clothing on a separate layer to begin with so I could change the color scheme quickly. **Fig.04** shows two initial phases, one light and one dark. Although I liked the contrast of the dark one it didn't suggest parchment, so I rejected it.

At this stage I was using four layers: the background, character, clothing and color. This way I could easily change elements independently and experiment with the color palette. Once I was satisfied I started to flatten certain layers, which in this case were the color and character ones. Because the clothing was unresolved at this point, I decided to keep it separate.



I started to add some rim lighting to the left side of his torso, as well as building some volume into the torso and limbs. At this point there were a few anatomical issues including a problem with the deltoids, which were in the wrong place, the shape of the rib cage and the perspective of the legs. These could have been amended here, but with the Warp tool it was easy to move things around at any point and alter proportions.

Fig.05 shows a more developed stage in the clothing, but before refining it too much I needed to address the torso and face – two crucial areas. When focusing on details it is always worth taking a step back and looking at the overall picture to check that the foundations

www.2dartistmag.com page 40 Issue 090 June 2013





are correct. In this case the basic shape of the rib cage was incorrect due to the awkward relationship between the shadows and highlights.

In Fig.06 you can see the problematic contour of the torso in the upper right and the shape it should assume in the center, indicated by the red lines. I also modified the face here, again focusing on planes and establishing volumes.

I was less than happy with his balance and so, using the Lasso and Warp tools, I rotated the upper body clockwise (**Fig.07**). I retained the tilt of the head, but leveling the shoulders lent him a more assertive posture as opposed to puzzled or curious. You will also notice that I began tidying up the lower leg area, making it more consistent with the rest of the costume.

The one remaining section that lacked definition was his trailing arm, which seemed very unexpressive. I wanted to have him holding his quill, but deciding on a position was difficult. I tried with him holding it in a conventional



manner, but it looked somewhat whimsical and lacked real punch. I then experimented with a more unusual pose and after trying to place the quill across his palm, realized it looked more sinister floating above his hand. This suggested a supernatural power and was more in-keeping with his description (**Fig.08**).



The image at this point was looking fairly complete, although there were still a few important issues that needed resolving, not least of which was the right arm. I merged the clothing and character layers and then, using the Lasso tool, selected the arm and re-positioned it (Fig.09).



Because the parchment roll was quite narrow with a consistent width, I decided to widen certain sections to make it look less like bandages (he's not meant to be a mummy!). I also added some extra strips on the left hand side to help balance the composition. One other modification involved increasing the contrast by way of a Curves adjustment layer. Alongside this I also varied the background to help emphasize the light and dark areas across the character, and create a better sense of volume.

One of the key elements included in the description and so far missing was some evidence of text or script across his skin. To do this I searched the internet for some medieval manuscripts, which I then copied into a new layer and color corrected before setting to Multiply. By isolating and selecting specific areas I was able to use the Warp tool to curve it around different regions to better match the contours of the skin. You can see these in Fig.10 (main image) alongside a detail (inset).

This concluded the inclusion of all the key components, but one thing that remained fundamentally wrong was the angle of the lower legs. The angle or curvature of the strapping was inconsistent with the bend in the knees, which suggested a more frontal view.

In **Fig.11** you can see the adjusted view on the right, showing the correct perspective compared to the original on the left. The purple overlay shows the angle of the lower legs in relation to his thighs and highlights the problem.

The image was all but complete at this point, but one last addition I wanted to include was some evidence of a force-field or supernatural energy surrounding the quill's motion. To do this I created some curved strokes with a simple brush and then added an outer glow by way of a layer style. To help integrate it into the scene, I painted in some reflective light across his left side using the same color as the outer glow, but with the blending mode set to Linear Light.

The final version can be seen here in Fig.12.





www.2dartistmag.com page 42 Issue 090 June 2013





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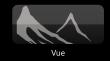






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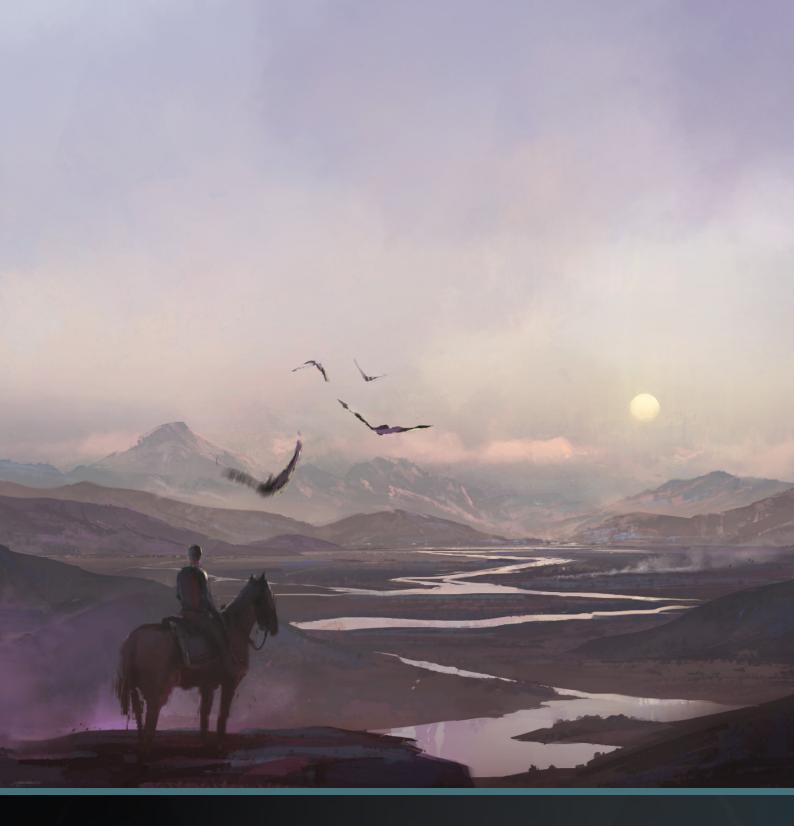


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NEW WORLDS

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.

Designing New Worlds Chapter 06 - Rural Settlement



Chapter 06 – Rural Settlement Software Used: Photoshop

The Introduction

In this installment of our series we will focus on creating a rural setting for our modern day Mongol Empire. The expanses of the tundra shall be the focus and we shall pay particular attention to composition. From the onset it can be said that even a badly rendered image with a great composition will always look better than a well rendered one with a poor composition. This is the idea that will guide our article today.

In this tutorial we will examine how to structure your composition, how to understand what you're actually painting and why. An exploration of the conventions that govern this notion of "composition" will hopefully provide you with a greater understanding of your own art process, but more importantly impart a greater ability to convey an artwork's intention to its respective viewer. That is to say, to allow for greater clarity of narrative in one's art.

Irrespective of whether a narrative is explicit in terms of a story or more subtle, as in a portrayal of a mood and feeling, these themes and their success, to a large extent, are dependent on an individual artist's understanding of the theory of composition. In this article we shall explore these broad themes and see how they affect our final image.

The Concept

The hordes of Genghis Khan rode forth from the endless plains of the great steppe, to create the world's largest contiguous land empire. As a rural setting is the focus, it is fitting that we choose these grasslands as our setting. In terms of our narrative, we will assume that the steppe is sacrosanct. Despite the modernity and cultural achievements of worldwide Mongol dominion, the steppe is kept unburdened by development. This area remains as virgin a territory as it was when young Temujin (Genghis Khan's name) first rode upon its green expanse.

The beginning is always research and from these studies we develop an understanding of





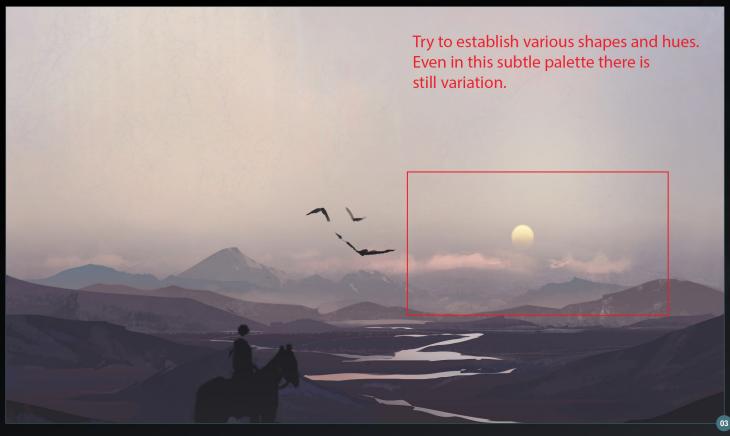
the subject matter. By understanding our subject matter we are able to execute our painting.

Thematically I hope to capture the vastness of the steppe and the peace that comes from such limitless space. Hopefully this shall be conveyed in the composition.

The Composition (Broad Themes)

The composition encompasses all aspects of an artwork. The composition is the artwork. It's the harmonious arrangement of the various constituent parts of an artwork. Composition is line, color, shape, hue, value, etc, set in accord to certain principles of proportion. Now that's no small thing to attempt to explain as I, for one, still have a vast amount to learn. But I can say that proportion is key. Any serious art student should take time out to study the golden section or the golden cut. This sphere of study lends any conscientious student a solid foundation in understanding the notion of proportion, hence composition.





Applying this to an Artwork

An understanding of proportion leads us to harmony and it's this ability to harness "harmony" that creates a balanced composition. For the most part, as with any artwork, this is all subjective, but as we are attempting a degree of naturalism in our painting, this idea of harmony holds firm.

It can be said that the natural world is asymmetric, as opposed to symmetrical. This is a core principle that should be adhered to. In the composition present notice how nothing is centered (Fig.01).

It's a human tendency to organize things and put things in order, but when attempting to replicate the natural world we are attempting to organize our image in accordance to the seemingly chaotic nature of the world where nothing is symmetrical. This is where our study of the golden section comes into play. Without going into the detail (though it can be easily referenced) we understand that all things must

be offset. Meaning nothing is centered, there are no converging planes (Fig.02), hues and values exhibit a degree of counterpoint (Fig.03) and line work, if any, is varied. These are broad principles, but the essence of it is to capture the randomness of nature.

In the following example we can see how simple brushwork with broad strokes can be used to capture the detail of a mountain (**Fig.04**). By setting your texture and Dual Brush modes in your Brushes palette in Photoshop (**Fig.05**),









you are able to replicate the randomness of nature. Here we have an algorithm (via the brushes) producing our detail for our low laying mountains. All is kept fresh and random with a simple stroke of a brush.

The question is, can we control this randomness in our composition? This may seem like a contradiction, but it's the essence of what we are trying to do. Painting is structured from elements (mountains, buildings, the sky, people

etc) in such a way that it allows the viewer to interpret the content, meaning or theme of the image. A successful composition, from my perspective, is when there is instant clarity or understanding of the image by the viewer. This is achieved by structuring your painting according to certain rules that govern composition. These rules loosely revolve around the concepts of proportion, harmony and finally, symbolism. A painting is attempting to (when attempting naturalism) replicate 3D space on

a 2D plane. It's your use of these symbols that allows you to do this. Symbols guided by the idea of proportion to achieve harmony.

The Composition Part Two: Symbols and Specifics

The use of symbols is a critical aspect within any composition. A symbol is purely visual language that we all share and it has both subtle and obtuse qualities. If we look at the use of the river (**Fig.06**), we can see it directs the eye





into the scene, but it also creates depth within the image. Furthermore it also has the affect of flattening out the ground plain. It creates horizontal lines, which inform us that the area is flat (Fig.07).

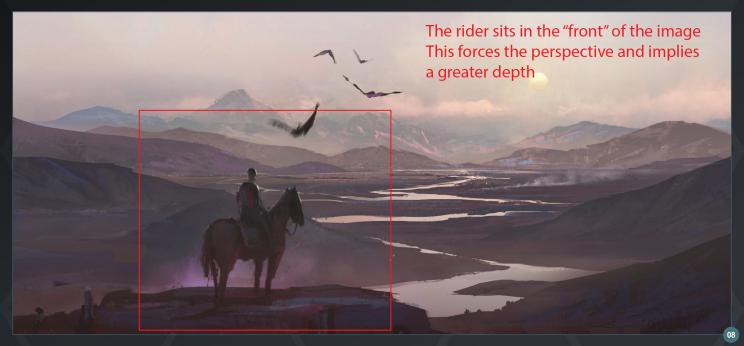
Whilst this sounds very obvious it's important to point it out as it illustrates how a river is used for its symbolic value to achieve a variety of effects. On a real-world level we all know that rivers are flat and run across a landscape, though within our painting we are using its symbolic value to achieve the illusion of perspective. In reality the river is a vertical mark on a monitor; it's the symbolic quality that creates the depth.

Whilst I don't want to emphasize the point too strongly, it is crucial to understand these fundamental ideas. It's from this that we can extrapolate out and discover how you harmonize or arrange these said symbols to create a painting.

On a side note, this idea extends out to all aspects of art creation. Space precludes a detailed discussion of how color and value, or even pattern and line, also have a symbolic value, which imparts certain ideas to the viewer. It's understanding these and combining them according to certain principles of proportion that helps to achieve harmony in your painting. Let's look at some specific examples.

By placing the rider in the foreground we force the perspective (**Fig.08**). It tells us that the rider is close to us, while the mountains are in the distance. The rider also indicates the scale of the area. We have a river, which leads the eye into the picture and at the same time suggests space.

The mountains themselves inform us that the area is large. They are stacked in such a matter to further promote the idea of distance; they recede into the background. The mountains have a certain value and hue, which further lends itself to emphasizing the perspective in the image (Fig.09). Notice how the foreground has a darker value as compared to the distant



Designing New Worlds Chapter 06 - Rural Settlement



mountains. This is another method by which the illusion of perspective is enhanced.

The idea of proportion is explored with the sky, or rather the amount of sky there is in relation to the ground. The horizon is cut at about the bottom third of the canvas; mountains notwithstanding, the sky takes the other two thirds of the canvas (**Fig.10**). This reinforces the idea of space, openness and vastness. Put simply, the sky encompasses most of the frame.

Conclusion

The above examples serve to demonstrate some of the themes that I have discussed.

Moreover, they should be taken as a launching point for individual investigation. Profound ideas like the golden section and the use of symbolism in art are quite complex, but their study will greatly inform your art. This is especially true



when it comes to composition. There are no hard and fast rules, rather broad themes and concepts that get applied in unique and bespoke ways every time an artwork is created. The more you know and the more you apply them, the better your artwork will be.

Gerhard Mozsi

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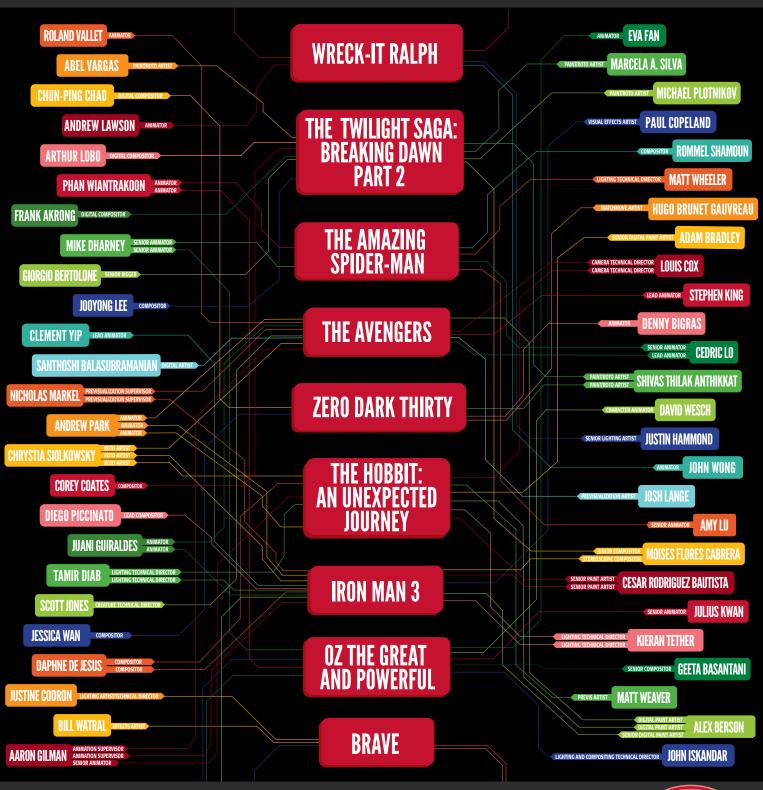
In this two volume series, Scott Patton shows the processes he uses to create a 3D character for feature films. The first volume explores Patton's fast and efficient method for concept sculpting, skipping the 2D sketch phase all together and designing the character entirely within ZBrush®. He covers everything from blocking out the forms and fleshing out the muscles, to adding props, detailing with alphas and posing the character. The second volume covers methods for creating a final color rendering using ZBrush and Photoshop®. Patton shows how he squeezes the most from ZBrush's powerful renderer to create both a wide and close-up shot of the character. He then shares creative Photoshop tips and tricks to quickly get to a finished piece of concept art from the ZBrush renders, covering topics such as adding and refining skin texture, hair, eyes, shadows and scars. Patton also discusses how to create backgrounds that enhance the character and overall composition.

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04 ALCHEMIST

-COSTUME DESIGN-

Costume design is an important element to character design as it helps to enhance a character's personality. You can create an evolving plot of color, changing social status, or period through the visual design of garments and accessories. In this tutorial series each artist has been presented with a games-like brief describing a character from a certain section of a fantasy medieval world, and they must design clothing suitable for that character's job description.



Chapter 04 – Alchemist

Software Used: Photoshop

Hello, my name is Andrey Pervukhin and I am a concept artist. I have experience in making illustrations for comic books, novels, games and magazines. Here is my approach to how I would make a costume for character.

The first step was to work out the pose and gesture, which needed to reveal all the features of the costume. In my opinion, when you're doing something like this it shouldn't be approached too much from a profile view, but more from the front, and should not contain large areas of clothing that could overwhelm the character

You could work on paper with a pencil, and then scan the image in to continue working in Photoshop. Many artists do this and it's your choice, but on this occasion I chose to do the sketches in Photoshop, because I have a few brushes that simulate pencils and it speeds up my work process. These are standard Photoshop CS6 brushes, whose names are Pencil, Charcoal and Hard Elliptical. As you can see in Fig.01, I made a few linear character figures. I felt that the red one was the most appropriate.

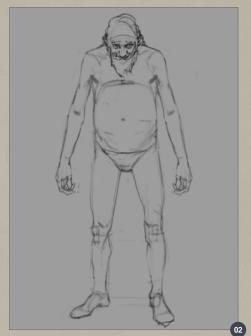


In Fig.02 I made the character more detailed so I could dress him up like a doll and it looked like I had some sort of old man who was wearing shorts. Here I started making adding some anatomical details. It looked very funny, but I knew that it would help me work on an accurate costume design later. The result I was left with was a crazy old man!

Once I was satisfied with the pose, I began to draw the costume itself. I did six variations,

which I felt was enough, then chose the most interesting and unique one. With other concepts I've noticed that the more versions I've done, the more difficult it is to choose which one works best (Fig.03).

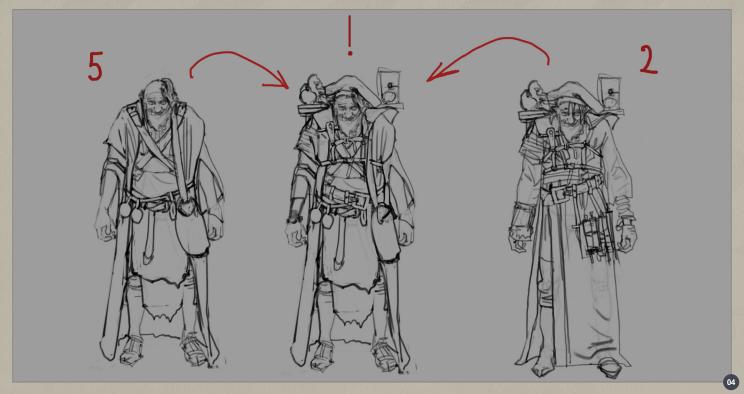
Let's talk a little more about each version. I gave him a leather apron over his rags, a potion bag, dried mushrooms round his neck, glasses with medication and gloves. At this stage I could have stopped and continued with this one, but





www.2dartistmag.com page 57 Issue 090 June 2013





my art director said I need a few new versions, and what I'd done wasn't how he'd imagined it.

In the second version I had the idea to make a portable alchemy table for him, so that he could use it at anytime. I liked this idea. In other versions I experimented with clothes, belts, hats and all sorts of details.

I felt that they all looked good, but I only needed one design. I liked both the second and fifth, but couldn't decide which I liked most, so I

combined them into one concept. From the second I took a hat, device with the flasks and a belt; from the fifth I took the clothing (**Fig.04**).

When I was happy with the concept of the costume, I needed to apply colors. I made





www.2dartistmag.com page 58 Issue 090 June 2013

Costume Design Chapter 04 – Alchemist



twelve different color variations of the costume. Every element of the clothing was painted on a different layer with the Overlay mode, because then I could easily change the colors by using Hue/Saturations. The only color I kept the same was the one I used for the leather elements, such as the belts, the pinafore he's wearing and the bag.

Finally I chose the version I was most happy with, which is the one marked in Fig.05. The costume was supposed to match with medieval times, so I thought the colors shouldn't be very bright. In order to get the right colors, I used the color theory rules as well as my own feelings. For instance, I used combinations of red-green, red-orange and a tint of blue and yellow. The hat and the mantle have the same blue color, but the hat is darker. Also, I used gray on the robe as it helped me to achieve a two color combination of blue and a tint. I thought it shouldn't have more than two colors otherwise it might become too busy.

To make my concept look more three-dimensional, I created a layer with the Multiply mode and painted with a soft round brush. After that, I made another Overlay layer and added more colors on it. When I was working in the Overlay layer, I put cool hues on spots where the light was going to be and warm hues on shaded areas. This is because if light has cool hues the shade is supposed to have warm ones and vice versa (Fig.06).

The next step was creating a new Normal layer and putting more details on it. Once I was satisfied with the result, I created a new Overlay layer and added more saturation on it. Going further, I put another new Normal layer on the top and continued to paint.

I had to redesign the costume a little bit. I added a rag underneath the portable alchemical table so it can't rub his shoulders, and then I also put a rubber glove on his right hand. Without that rubber glove, he can't do his stuff. To emphasize



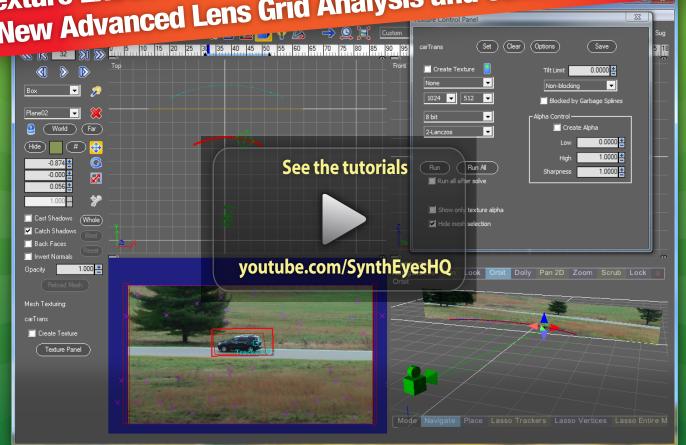
his negligence, I gave him different shoes. He doesn't really care about what he looks like because the most important thing for him is the alchemy (Fig.07)!

Andrey Pervukhin

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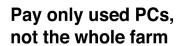
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When designing characters for movies or video games, it's important to think about the different possible worlds and how a human character could have evolved to cope with his/her environment. In this tutorial series, each artist will take us through their design process, exploring a variety of factors that would effect and influence the character's evolution and anatomy, to convey a visual idea that could be passed on to a 3D modeler or art director.

Evolution Chapter 01 – Subterranean



Chapter 01 – Subterranean

Software Used: Photoshop

One of my favorite parts about being a concept artist is solving problems, whether it's visual or conceptual. Using the information we know and merging it with new information, we learn to create interesting solutions that can be just as rewarding as creating an awesome design.

Creating a design for a subterranean human was a very interesting task that could go many ways. The creature could be high fantasy or realistic in nature. While both would be a great challenge, I chose to go with a creepy, realistic approach to the design.

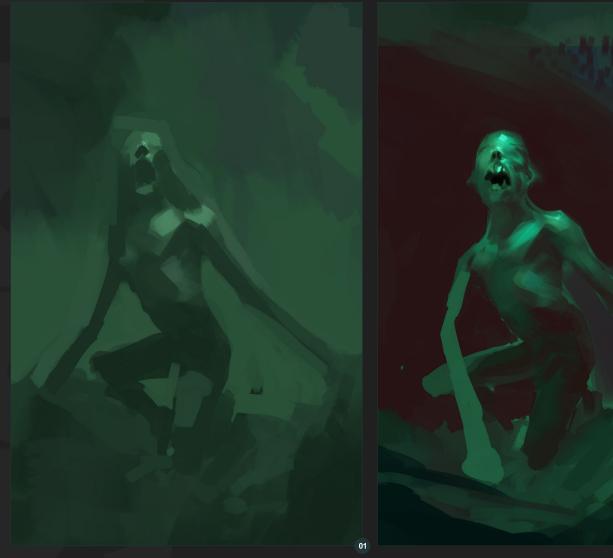
When I first got the brief about the creature I immediately had a flood of ideas, and quickly started sketching really rough thumbnails in my

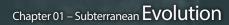
sketchbook. A handful of questions quickly came to my attention, so I created a list that needed to be answered before I started on fleshing out some designs. How would it evolve? What would it eat? How would it move? Would it travel in packs or alone? Would it live in the dark all its life or only partially? I found once you start asking the right questions, more tend to just materialize out of nowhere.

For reference I started looking at isolated cave species and subterranean mammals, as well as some reading material on the evolutionary processes of cave animals and nocturnal animals. Poor vision, echo location, sense of smell, and incredibly an accurate sense of touch are all very common and well-known traits of subterranean creatures that I wanted to fit into the design.

When I started the sketch I had an image stuck in my head of a blind, Gollum-like creature eating a bat. I thought it would be cool if the creature stood completely still, waiting for a bat to pass it, then snatched it out of the air like a praying mantis. I started the image by blocking in some shapes really quickly and dirtily. I quickly sketched the creature in a slightly awkward pose where he could be ready to pounce or is just trying to locate lunch (**Fig.01**).

I'm never truly sold on a pose until the very end because I find there's always something that comes up that should be changed (most people solve this issue by doing a finished drawing first). In Fig.02 I changed his pose because I thought the first pose was too stable and seemed too safe. I also started laying in some dark tones to try hint at things like the cavern









ceiling and a bat colony, as well as a few places on the creature. I gave the creature Nosferatuesque teeth because I thought it was creepy and seemed logical since its teeth would evolve to a point where it needed to do a lot of meat tearing.

In **Fig.03** you can see more pose shifting and shape blocking, because I felt the creature's pose was still kind of flat and thought a little more action was needed.



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The proportions were actually trickier to establish than I thought, because while it is human in origin it has gone through many changes to get to where it is now. I also took a minute to move my arms around to mimic catching a bat (this was accompanied by awkward looks from my girlfriend), but I did this to see what muscle groups I would use. I adjusted the musculature in the shoulders and neck as well as the legs. I couldn't see him



page 64



being much of a sprinter, so I gave him skinny, stilt legs so he could reach those flying tasty treats. I guess that would be a good example of a design question and solution: how does it hunt? It hunts standing still, but uses bursts of arm speed to snag its prey (Fig.04 – 05).

A small detail I added in **Fig.06** was long whiskers. I thought they could be used for sensing changes in air pressure and movement



Issue 090 June 2013

Evolution Chapter 01 – Subterranean







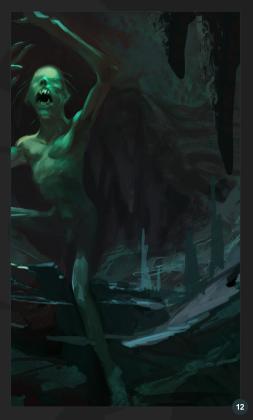


(it's a little detail, but stuff like that can snowball designs in a really good way).

I found that the background was competing with the foreground too much, so I made a few adjustments in Fig.07 – 08 to push the background further back.

In **Fig.09** I started to establish some scale by adding some stalactites (remember stalactites have a "C" for ceiling, and stalagmites have a "G" for ground). I figured that due to its living conditions and food source the creature would be a fair bit smaller than a normal human, maybe something around five feet tall.

At this point in the painting I started really revising the lighting and larger details. I usually paint on two layers, the bottom being the painting and the top layer being my "working" layer, where I can freely experiment and not worry about anything being permanent (**Fig.10** – **11**).





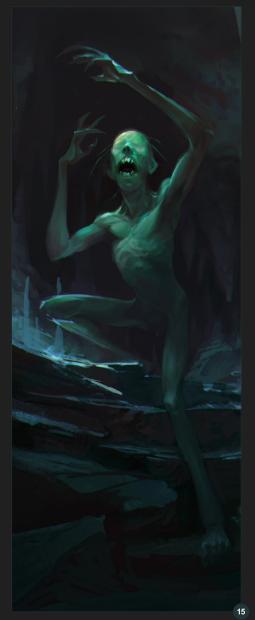


page 65



Issue 090 June 2013





In Fig.12 – 13 I started adding more background elements like the stalagmites to make the environment seem a little more dangerous and less cuddly. I also started dropping a few lighting shapes in to break up some of the tones and create some compositional flow. After a while the palette was getting on my nerves because it was too warm and flat, so in Fig.14 I did a color adjustment where I added some more cyan and took the yellow down. Play with the sliders as much as you can and you'll be happily surprised with the amount of interesting color palettes you come up with.

I continued to refine the character, and background elements and details (Fig.15 - designs. This happens to be one of the greatest

16). In the final stage I added the bats and

(Fig.17).

did another color balance to get the final look

Conceptually this design won't be the end; this is only one out of an endless amount of possible

page 66

parts of our job: nothing is ever definite or done. It's always evolving in new and interesting ways, and will always keep us on our toes.



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Issue 090 June 2013









Here is what's in the next issue of 2DArtist **Interviews** Donglu Yu Sketchbook of Nicolas Weis Chapter 2: Moonshine by Charlie Bowater Chapter 1: Characters by YongSub Noh Chapter 5: Magicianby Takumer Homma Chapter 2: Arctic by Richard Tilbury Landscape Speedpaint by Byz Wader another 10 of the best **Images from around** the world! visit www.2dartistmag.com for full information and to purchase current and previous issues for only £2.99 each! Image By Tobias Trebeljahr





Confrontation

Software Used: Photoshop

The initial impetus for this piece was to challenge myself by including an animal or beast into a quick painting, with some implied action or story. Living creatures are not often called for in the assignments I receive, and I wanted to push myself to try something new. I wanted to work with a vertical format, which is also out of my usual comfort zone. A few thumbnails gave me a composition I was happy with (Fig.01).

I liked the danger and menace implied by having the creature up top, looming over a warrior-knight of some kind. Although originally just a foot soldier, I decided to make it a little more complex by placing him on horseback. The trouble was I had practically zero experience drawing horses, so this wasn't so instinctive for me. Though very common in fantasy art, horses are amongst the trickiest creatures to draw. We are very familiar with their movement and anatomy from movies and television, but if you've never drawn one, getting their anatomy

right is deceptively difficult. I went to the web and dug up dozens of horse pictures and poses, searching for anything that might help me render a realistic animal.

The result was a far more dynamic pose than the one I initially sketched out and far more accurate as well (Fig.02). The pose also helped establish my story a little more: A rider suddenly stopping and pulling back at the sight of this beast emerging over him. Confident in my direction, I moved on to the beast.





www.2dartistmag.com page 71 Issue 090 June 2013



The design here wasn't as important to me as the implied action (Fig.03). I wanted to portray the beast as a predator on the hunt, convincingly crouched atop the rock, and poised to strike the rider. This led me to give the beast some extra limbs, and pose them reared back in a ready position. The added tail also served to nicely fill the negative space on the left of the image.

Happy with the poses, I separated the subjects by bringing the rider to the foreground with a darker value, and establishing the rock and beast as the mid-ground with medium values. To make the horse pop further, I pushed the base of the rock back in space with some lighter brush strokes (Fig.04). The resulting misty fog effect gave me the idea to place the action in a snowy environment.

In Fig.05, I started to flesh out these details in the rock with fallen snow using some favorite textured brushes, which can leave a nice random and organic feel to the surface. Much of the detail and texture in my work is generated through trial and error, and letting the texture in the brush produce some interesting shapes as I go. The trick is to recognize these "happy accidents" when they occur, and leave them be. I also used some brushes from my tree and foliage collection, and stamped a few wintery trees in the background to further establish the scene.

When the background is not a critical focus of a painting, having an assortment of tree and branch presets is a great way to save time and effort. There's no need to spend hours on branches and leaves that aren't the focus of the piece.

I also laid down some base color tones to establish saturation levels. Keeping the foreground colors more saturated than distant colors helped to further sell the depth of the piece. Fig.06 takes this a step further, with more snow detail, and mid-ground branches













and grass. As with the horse, I collected some inspirational snowy photos as a guide to help me choose colors and values. References that are live or from photos can be extremely useful for finding those little cues that help make a convincing scene.

Having resolved the background, I moved back to shaping the main characters with blocks of light and texture. Once I carved out my silhouettes with a solid, opaque brush, I could toggle on the Preserve Transparency option in my Layers window and begin painting inside detail (Fig.07). This feature allows me to work within the confines of the silhouette without worrying about painting outside the lines, giving me a tremendous amount of freedom to use loose brush strokes within an established shape. At the same time, I try to keep the dominant light source in mind when painting highlights — any surface planes perpendicular to the sky, in this case, would receive the most light.

As you can see in the close-up in **Fig.08**, I relied on a few flat, textured brush strokes to imply

cloth or chainmail, or whatever I needed. You'll notice the marks are not exact, but they don't need to be. For the purposes of a quick concept, the most important thing is to communicate and idea effectively and efficiently, without wasting time on individual chainmail links or details too small to notice. I actually love painting this way, since it keeps the sketch fresh and my mind moving forward. As long as the forms read well when I step back and look at the painting as a whole, then it's working. For this reason, I also suggest not zooming in too often. Painting with the entire canvas on-screen at one time helps me avoid the temptation to focus on one tiny area for too long.

I fleshed out some small but important details, and made a few last minute changes (Fig.09). I enhanced the shield, and exaggerated the red reflecting on his helmet. The little hot spots on the metal help sell the material, and distinguish it from the duller fabric and wood. I also gave the horse his bridle and enhanced his mane to complement the blustery weather. The vertical spear was bugging me throughout the painting





www.2dartistmag.com page 73 Issue 090 June 2013





process, so I angled it down. I feel this small change really helped. Before, the spear shaft was rigidly dividing the composition in two. Now it feels more natural in his hands, and leads the eye a little more elegantly.

In addition, I rearranged some branches on the left border. Originally, they were obstructing the beast's tail along with the right-hand branches, which made the scene feel closed in. Simply adjusting the branches helped to open the space up, and gave the beast's form some room to breathe.

Once finished with the subjects, I painted a couple of layers of falling snow particles, and used the Motion Blur filter to add a sense of movement and wind. In **Fig.10**, I added a foggy haze to push back certain elements, while allowing the key areas to pop. To wrap the piece up, I used an adjustment layer to raise the overall contrast level.

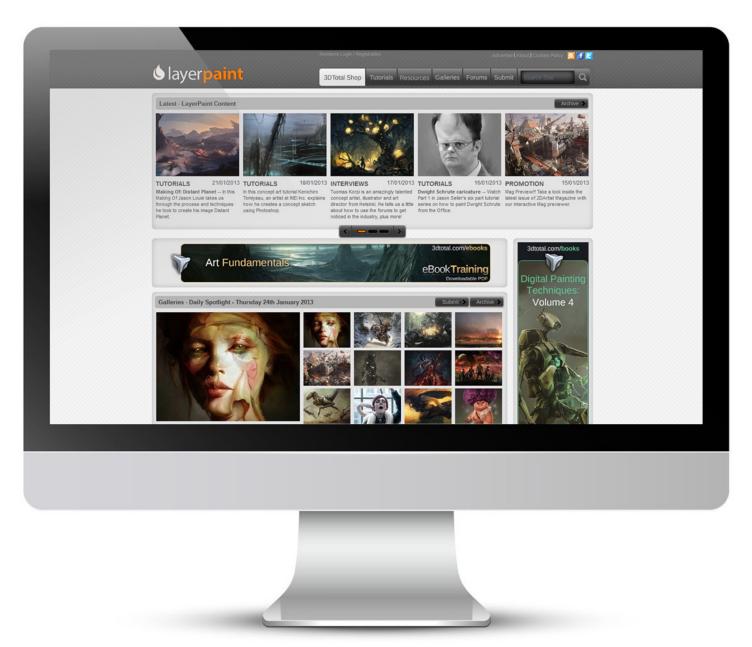
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www.2dartistmag.com page 74 Issue 090 June 2013





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Docking Station

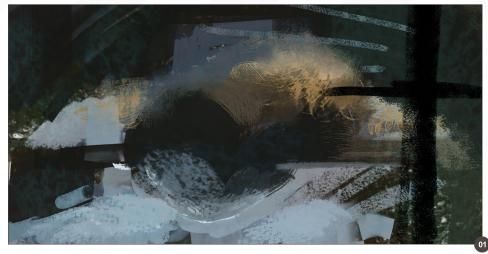
Software Used: Photoshop

Introduction

Dock Station is a personal development, sci-fi piece. I've always liked the genre, but I feel that I neglect it sometimes. So with that in mind I chose to practice by developing a story with some familiar designs and concepts. Practicing outside your comfort zone can be really tricky because it's not very organic and can feel forced, but as an artist you have to adapt. The trick I've learned is to find the similarities in the work you gravitate towards with the work that doesn't come as easily. After you find that key, practicing across genres becomes really easy and enjoyable.

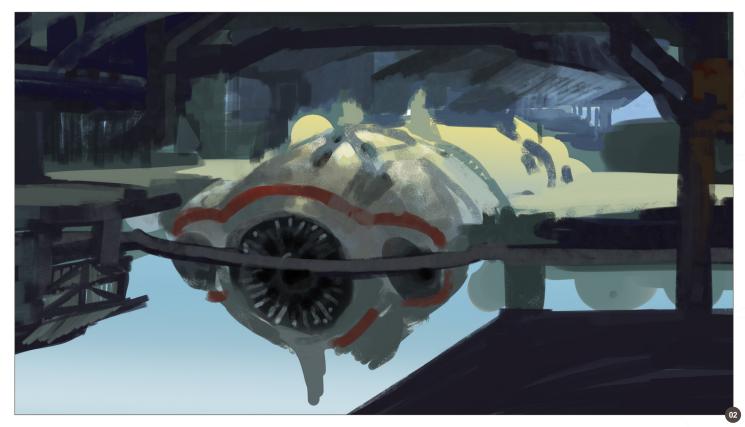
Idea

When I begin an image I think about how I am going to tailor my process to the job (do I create line drawings, abstract shapes or find references?). I don't think it's a good idea to have just one way of achieving a goal because that essentially limits the journey. However, one thing that I almost always do is sit back for a few minutes and picture what the overall piece is going to look like. If I can't really see anything right away I might take a coffee break and go



sit in my backyard, just recapping what it is that I am trying to achieve. Meditating (aka chilling) allows you to focus on what is important and lets you block out all the excess noise.

I envisioned that the ship was docked over open sky in a floating base where workers could carry out maintenance. I also imagined a warm light radiating from the top of the dock, with a cooler light emanating from underneath. I thought it would be interesting if the station was like a hive that releases waves of fighter planes. That's about it; everything else is in the details and context (**Fig.01**). I remember seeing some WWII fighters and was impressed by how aggressive and powerful they looked. They don't have the same elegant shapes and proportions of commercial planes or even the newer fighters. They are just an engine with a cockpit. This idea inspired the design (or at least the feeling) for my ship (Fig.02). I wanted a bulky, ugly and aggressive shape, but something that still looked as though it belonged in a battle and not a showroom. I love concepting this way, using memorised experiences together with some knowledge of the subject matter, and combining them to create rich and layered ideas. I mix in references after I have established the basic









composition because I don't want the detail of the design clouding my focus (design is very important, but not the point of this exercise, which is why I tailor my process).

Painting

I always like to start in color because I think it's a very powerful tool. I think it should be taken into consideration from the start because thoughtful color choices can really swing the mood in the right or wrong direction. Color also creates interesting challenges that you can address early on. When I started painting this image I rapidly put down some very large, blocky strokes of color with some texture to create the abstraction of what I envisioned (Fig.03). I kept this abstract on a separate layer so I could refer back to it in case I started to get too focused on the details.

Planning out where certain colors are going to be early on is something I find really helpful as it means I can have some of the under painting show through in the final image (Fig.04).

Color temperatures are also something I like to plan out. Color and temperature are great ways of leading the eye around the canvas and



creating depth. In this piece I felt it made sense to have the overall painting in a cool light, using warms to pull out certain details and guide the viewer's attention (Fig.05).

Generally I try to make the values work in a similar way as I find it's easier to check these compared to color, because I can squint and see the parts that I want to focus on. When I squint (or blur in Photoshop) at one of my paintings I look to see if the image closely resembles my original idea or some mutation of that idea. If it doesn't I adjust it accordingly (**Fig.06**).

Adding details can get really tricky, because without restraint it can get overwhelming and burn out your eyes. I always try to leave a place for the eye to rest after areas of noise and detail so that my head doesn't spin. Once again though, this depends on the situation because on some occasions you require chaos and at other times you need simplicity.

When I had achieved the balance I was going for and the detail was in the correct place, the piece was finished.

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