

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

Future

ARTIST SECRETS

**DONATO
GIANCOLA**

hobbit

AN UNEXPECTED JOURNEY

John Howe and Alan Lee's film art explored
PLUS! How to paint Middle-earth's heroes

Inside

**DEPICT ATMOSPHERIC
CLOUDS AND SKIES**

**USE COLOUR TO
DESCRIBE A MOOD**

**POSE AND PAINT A
DRAMATIC BATTLE**

Workshop

**DRAWING
DRAGONS**

LEARN NEW WAYS TO RENDER REALISTIC SKIN TONES IN **COREL PAINTER!**

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Welcome...

to artists old and new



JRR Tolkien's words have conjured pictures in the minds of fantasy artists for decades. His descriptive text has inspired the foundations of modern fantasy. This issue we tracked down legendary Tolkien artists John Howe and Alan Lee to the set of *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey*, where they shared with us their sketches

from the latest Peter Jackson film. Whether you're interested in film concept art or just intricately designed fantasy art, John and Alan's portfolios are inspirational.

With Tolkien on our minds, we wanted to discover new ways to paint the characters of Middle-earth. In this issue's workshop section our cover star Woonyoung Jung digs into his DreamWorks box of tricks to imbue his portrayal of Gollum with cinematic lighting on page 72. On page 76 Donato Giancola reflects on the Old Masters to share his painting techniques, while on page 82 you can find Nacho Molina's pin-up inflected depiction of Éowyn's battle with the Witch-king. Corel Painter artists should turn to page 92 where the very modest Corrado Vanelli explains how he paints the beautiful skin tones of his Middle-earth elf queen.

Looking to the future, this issue sees the reveal of our 10 Rising Stars 2012 winners. Our externally judged competition drew in over 1,000 amazing entrants, but 10 had to be picked and on page 49 you can see why they stood out for our judges. Do you have a favourite?

Ian Dean, Editor
ian.dean@futurenet.com

Our special cover for subscribers this issue.



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Introducing...

In progress

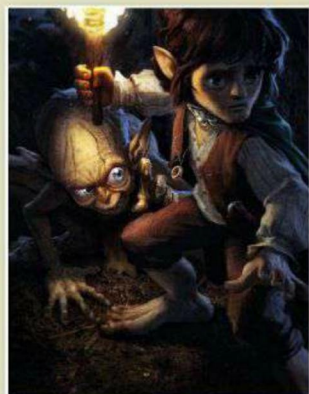
Our cover features a sneaky, slimy creature...



Woon begins to explore how he'll approach his depiction of Gollum and Frodo, as inspired by reading Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. Woon's early sketch in Photoshop reveals a strong story element.



A quick colour composition shows us how Woon intends to light and fill his scene. It's very rough, but we can already see the areas where cover lines will run and how the characters hope to attract readers' eyes when on the newsstand.



The final image is complete. But we need Woon to make last-minute adjustments to the colours and balance. Frodo's face is hidden in the shadows, so Woon lightens it, but carefully because we don't want to take the viewer away from the devious Gollum.



ImagineFX Cover artist

As a character artist at DreamWorks Animation, Woonyoung Jung has a knack for creating charming characters – perfect for our Tolkien cover



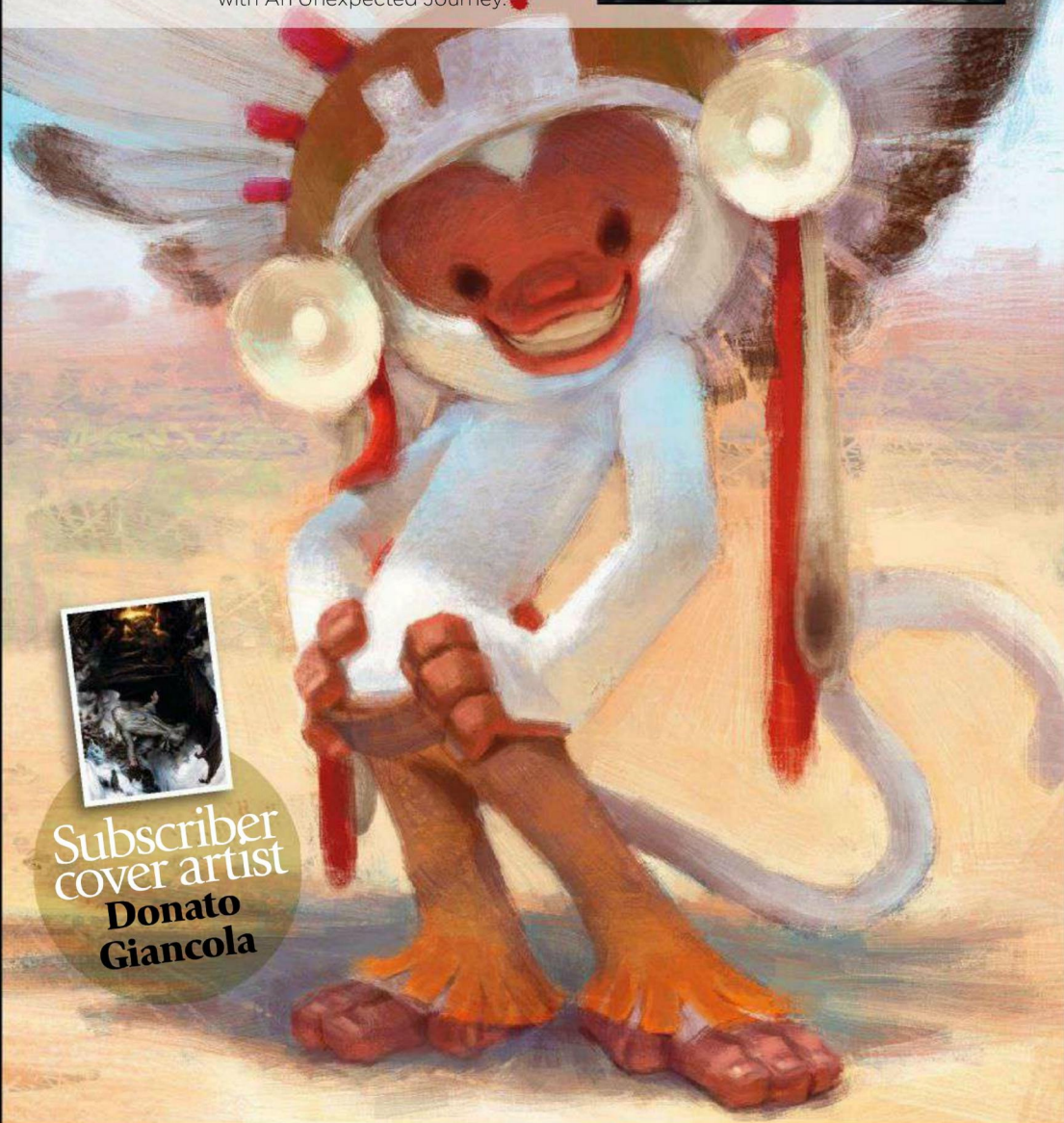
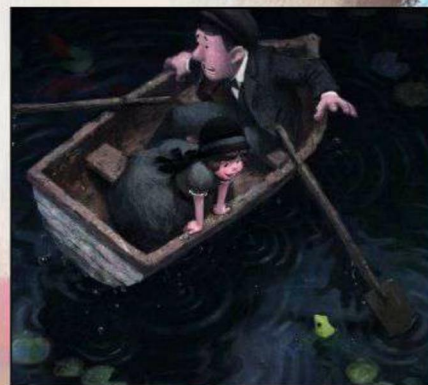
Woonyoung Jung

COUNTRY: South Korea

SOFTWARE: Photoshop

WEB: www.bit.ly/ifx-wjung

After leaving South Korea for the US to study concept design, Woon joined DreamWorks Animation where he has designed characters for *Puss in Boots* and *Rise of the Guardians*. For us, Woon's charismatic illustrative style was the perfect choice to tackle a new interpretation of Gollum, to coincide with *An Unexpected Journey*.



Subscriber
cover artist
**Donato
Giancola**

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Contents



FXPosé

8 Reader FXPosé

ImagineNation

16 News

24 Forum winners

26 Letters

30 Artist Q&A

Features

38 **The Hobbit**

Tolkien artists John Howe and Alan Lee take us behind the scenes of Peter Jackson's new Middle-earth movie.

49 **Rising Stars 2012**

The results of our annual competition to find the most promising new artists are in. So, who won?

64 **Ilya Nazarov**

The Lord of the Rings: War in the North video game artist tells us why a year off helped his art most of all.

68 **Development sheet**

Wen Li talks us through the creation of his manga-inspired woman warrior for Anima Project Studios's table-top RPG.

112 **Studio profile**

The search for the perfect work environment led to the formation of the Cartel Artists studio, in Sydney, Australia.

Reviews

106 **Hardware**

108 **Books**

109 **Training**

110 **Films**

111 **Video games**

Regulars

3 **Editor's letter**

4 **Cover artist**

28 **Subscribe today**

47 **Back issues**

48 **Digital editions**

97 **Next month**

49



"It helps when you're painting your favourite things in the world – the world of fantasy"

Lu Hau, one of this year's Rising Stars

Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART



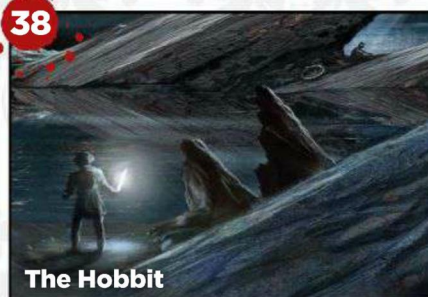
See page 8 for the best new art ➡➡

30



Out of the darkness

38



The Hobbit

68



Dev sheet

33



A 'real' tattoo

64



Ilya Nazarov

16



Become a cover artist

36



Zombie flesh



ImagineFX Workshops

Advice and techniques
from pro artists...



72 Learn to recreate cinematic lighting

Woonyoung Jung on
the importance of light.



76 Be passionate about your art

Donato Giancola reveals
his painting process.



81 Tips for using SAI's brushes

Paco Rico Torres highlights
three key brushes.



82 Capture the drama in a scene

Nacho Molina visualises
Éowyn and the Witch-king.



88 Draw a dragon with character

Justin Gerard says dragons
have personalities, too.



92 Improve your portrait skills

Corrado Vanelli creates
an elf queen in Painter.



98 Paint an epic world

Noah Bradley on using
colour, light and scale.

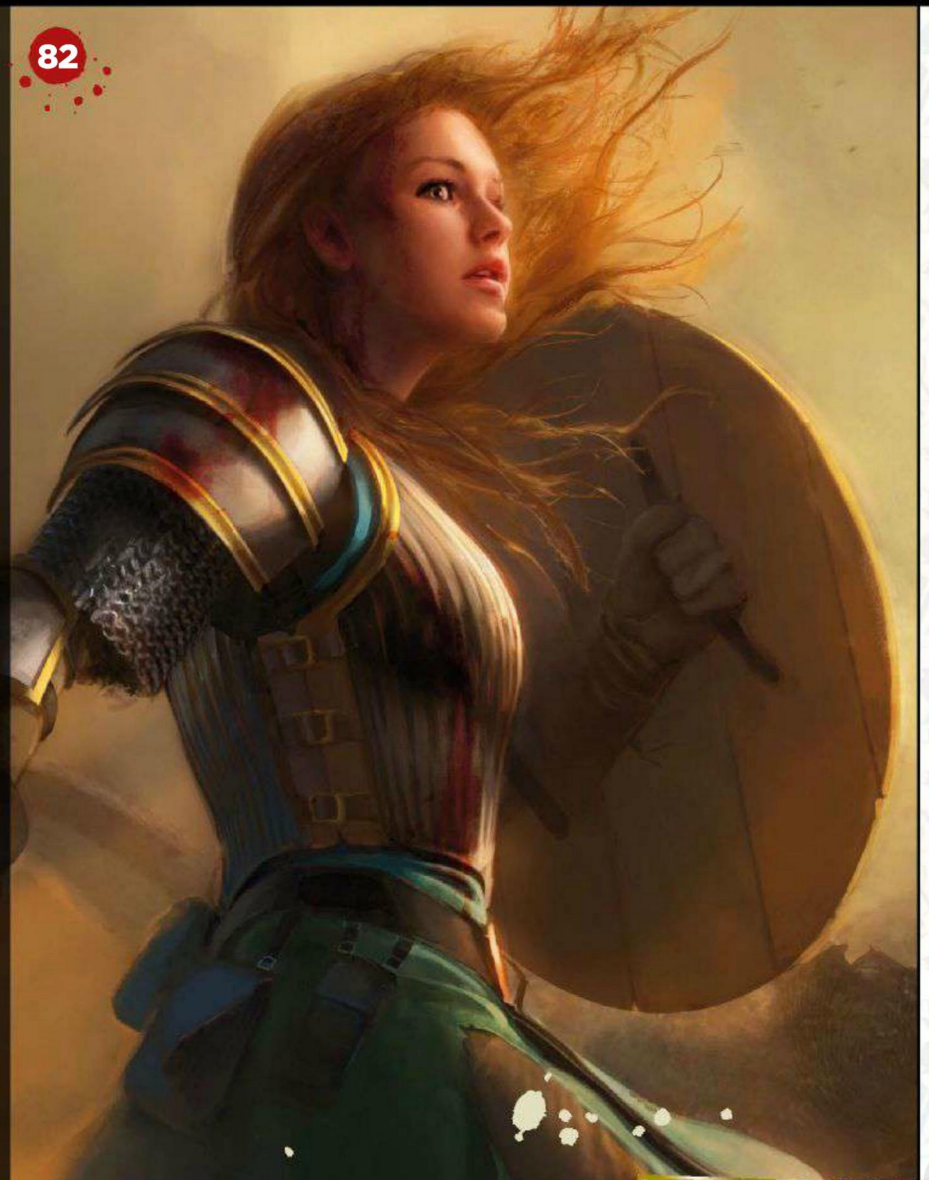
Artist Q&A

30 This month's topics...

How to paint skull thrones, cobwebs,
blocks of light, fog, colour and
personality, flying creatures, height
differences and much more.



82



How to watch your video workshops

Where you see this badge
you'll find an accompanying
video workshop. Click
the link to watch the
artist at work.

WATCH THIS!
www.bit.ly/ifx91-epic

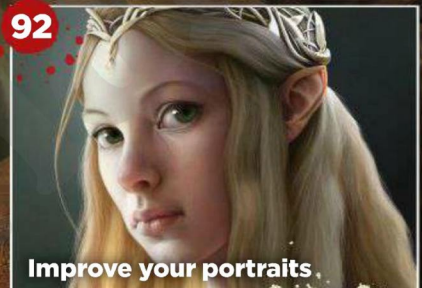


88



Draw better dragons

92



Improve your portraits



Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

ImagineFX
ARTIST
MONTH

+ Eamon O'Donoghue

LOCATION: England

WEB: www.eamonart.com

EMAIL: eamon@eamonart.com

SOFTWARE: Photoshop, Illustrator,
Bryce 3D, Poser

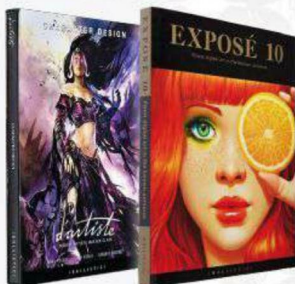


Since studying graphic design in college, Eamon has found success working as a freelance illustrator by not being afraid to try out new ways of working. "There are just too many ways to produce cool imagery and I love to mix things up," he says.

The diversity of Eamon's freelance work enables him to experiment with styles and push his abilities further. "My freelance work ranges from book covers, such as Conan and the SF Masterworks series for Gollancz, to animated DVD covers to toy design for Hasbro. I recently got my first video game project, which has been exciting."

You can catch Eamon's work at the Jingle Belles: Pin-Up Showcase at the Resistance Gallery, Bethnal Green, London from 6 December.

1



ARTIST OF THE MONTH

Congratulations Eamon - you've won yourself a copy of *Exposé 10* and *d'artiste: Character Design*! To find out more about these two great books, go to www.ballisticpublishing.com.



ImagineFX January 2013

FXPosé submissions to: fxpose@imaginefx.com

Artist crit

**Henning Ludvigsen approves
of Eamon's clean visuals**



"Space Girl Vera is a feel-good piece of art. Eamon's use of complementary pastel colours on top of an almost white backdrop gives this piece a wonderful retro-futuristic feel. This piece is easy to love!"



Kental Catherine Du Preez Gomes

LOCATION: South Africa
WEB: www.bit.ly/ifx-kgomes
EMAIL: keda@kgomes.co.za
SOFTWARE: Photoshop



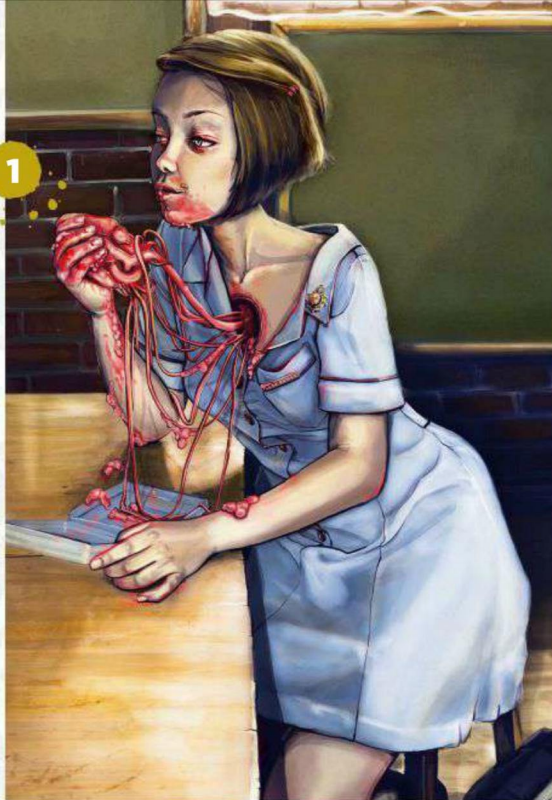
For fine arts teacher Kental, sharing her passion for art is inspirational for both her students and her own artistic perceptions.

"Teaching really helps with your own creative thinking and process, because you have to think creatively for over 50 budding artists every day."

After studying fine art at university, Kental fell in love with digital painting and an introductory course encouraged her to explore the medium further.

The teacher hopes to eventually become a full-time digital artist. "I want to see my art everywhere, inspiring and wowing others. Watch this space!"

As for inspiration, Kental's quirky tastes serve her well when dreaming up her latest creations. "Despereaux girls and dark corners, bendy straws and tentacles – these are a few of my favourite things!"



IMAGINEFX CRIT



"The combination of Kental's natural creativity and the emotional antics of her students is an excellent mix. It's great to see an artist capture so many personal experiences and shape those thoughts into highly original concepts."

Nicola Henderson,
Staff Writer

1 EAT YOUR HEART OUT "This image was inspired by Valentine's Day surrounded by 13- to 18-year-old girls! Oh the horror! I wanted to show the dichotomy of innocence and madness."

2 A STORM IS BREWING "Lewis Carroll's White Queen seems so sad and constricted. I searched for a young queen, having to smile and play the powerful yet graceful leader."





Rahman b Idris Abas

LOCATION: Malaysia

WEB: www.bonggo.deviantart.com

EMAIL: rahmanidris86@gmail.com

SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Rahman has loved art ever since primary school, and went on to study a degree in fine art. Even though he has a background in the

traditional forms, the artist has discovered digital art best suits his style. "I've always loved to create illustrations, and I've really taken to the process of sketching and painting on a computer."

Years of playing video games and watching films inspired Rahman to become a concept artist, and now that he's working as a senior background and concept artist for a 2D animation company, he's on the right track.

1 MONSTER ATTACK "This piece was my first attempt to create a more realistic scene, balancing fantasy with reality. It took me over a week to completely finish, and I'm happy with how it turned out."

2 REIGN OF FIRE "I painted this piece after watching the movie Reign of Fire. The concept came from my imagination, after the dragon escapes from underground, which isn't shown in the film."

Aaron J Riley

LOCATION: US

WEB: www.aaronjriley.com

EMAIL: aaronriley75@gmail.com

SOFTWARE: Painter, Photoshop



"I'm a professional, mercenary vampire, specialising in fantasy illustration, and I don't like garlic. Hire me, and I won't be forced to consume your soul."

Well, we can certainly figure out why it's not just artistic talent that makes freelance illustrator Aaron stand out from the crowd.

The good-humoured artist is working out of The Art Department studio in Richmond, Virginia. "I keep good company there such as Sterling Hundley, Josh George and Jeffrey Alan Love, to name only a few. Edward Kinsella III just left the studio when I arrived. I'm convinced it wasn't my fault."

Aaron's vivacious personality carries across straight into his art, which is as full of energy and expression as he is.

1 RUN AWAY LITTLE GIRL, RUN AWAY! "If you've played World of Warcraft, you'll probably know what this is. If not, it's from the Big Bad Wolf Opera Event in Karazhan. I just wanted to paint those wooden cut-out stage trees, and make it look cool."

2 NIGHTSISTER LYSSA "This was created for an TheArtOrder.com contest. The brief was simple: 'Lyssa - A young female human wizard with black hair who always wears white trimmed in gold.' I tried to go a little off of the beaten path from what I thought others would do with that description... and look cool."



1

Melissa Martinez

LOCATION: US

WEB: www.tommeldesign.com

EMAIL: info@tommeldesign.com

SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Night and day represent two different approaches to art for graphic designer Melissa. Once the working day ends, Melissa turns to the deepest corners of her imagination, creating dark and brooding pieces that explore her love of the supernatural. "Sleep is a rare commodity," she says. "My imagination is overactive, so concept art and design offer the perfect way to open the floodgates."

Melissa has many fantastical and macabre pieces, building towards a new, ambitious project. "I've been co-developing a few IPs on those subjects and will be bringing them to life as comics, and hopefully animation and film, soon."

ZOMBIE "The concept series is based on a world of zombies. The deceased linger, slowly rot and devolve into flesh-hungry savages. Their surviving loved ones try to keep them chained and protected, but the population of undead grows out of control and there's a zombie apocalypse."



+ Rezwana Shirmeen Khan

LOCATION: England
WEB: www.rez-san.deviantart.com
EMAIL: Rez1990@hotmail.co.uk
SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Rezwana discovered digital art around the age of 16, and was prompted by her love of anime to discover the secrets of creating manga-inspired art.

"I bought a cheap tablet and an old version of Photoshop," Rezwana recalls. "It was only after I graduated from university, with a BA in 3D digital design and animation, in 2011, that I wanted to move out of the flat cell-shaded style. This was when I really knuckled down."

Rezwana considers herself an aspiring digital artist who's keen to improve. "I look at game art and try to soak up the aesthetic like a sponge. However, that's easier said than done!"

1 THE WATER BENDER "This is Katara from Avatar, I like to draw anime characters in my own style - I don't intend to replicate the art 100 per cent. This was one of my first attempts to incorporate a background into my art! I'm really happy with her intense stare."

2 INDIAN DREAMS "Sometimes I have vividly colourful dreams, and these are the types of dreams I remember. With that, I bunkered down on the computer sketching the most intense part of the dream. I almost felt my roots. An alternate history filled with taboo and emotion. Slave and master."

3 JAFAR "I wanted to make Jafar from Aladdin a more appealing character. Would you fall for his charms and ignore his evil, or would his evil nature affect his outward appearance?"

4 ELVEN NATURE "I wanted to produce something soft and gentle: an elven woman. I felt monochromatic colour would create a gentle sense of life. The half-finished style draws the viewer to her face and hair."

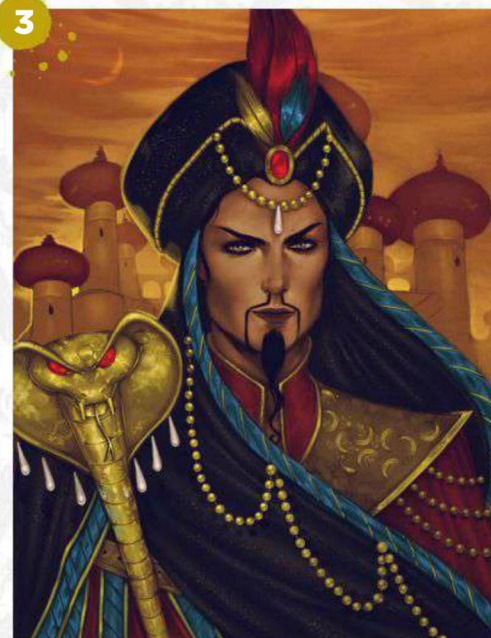
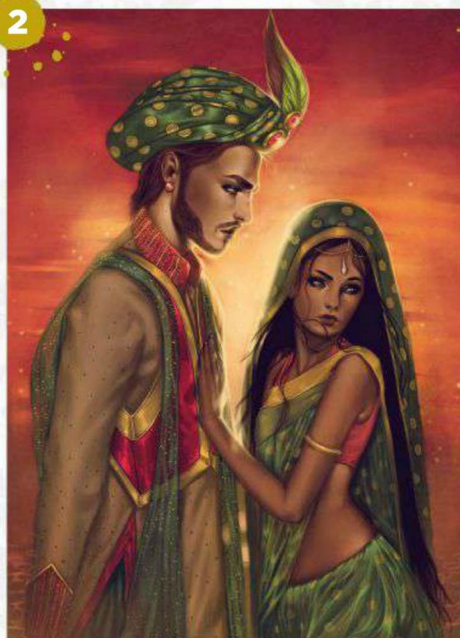
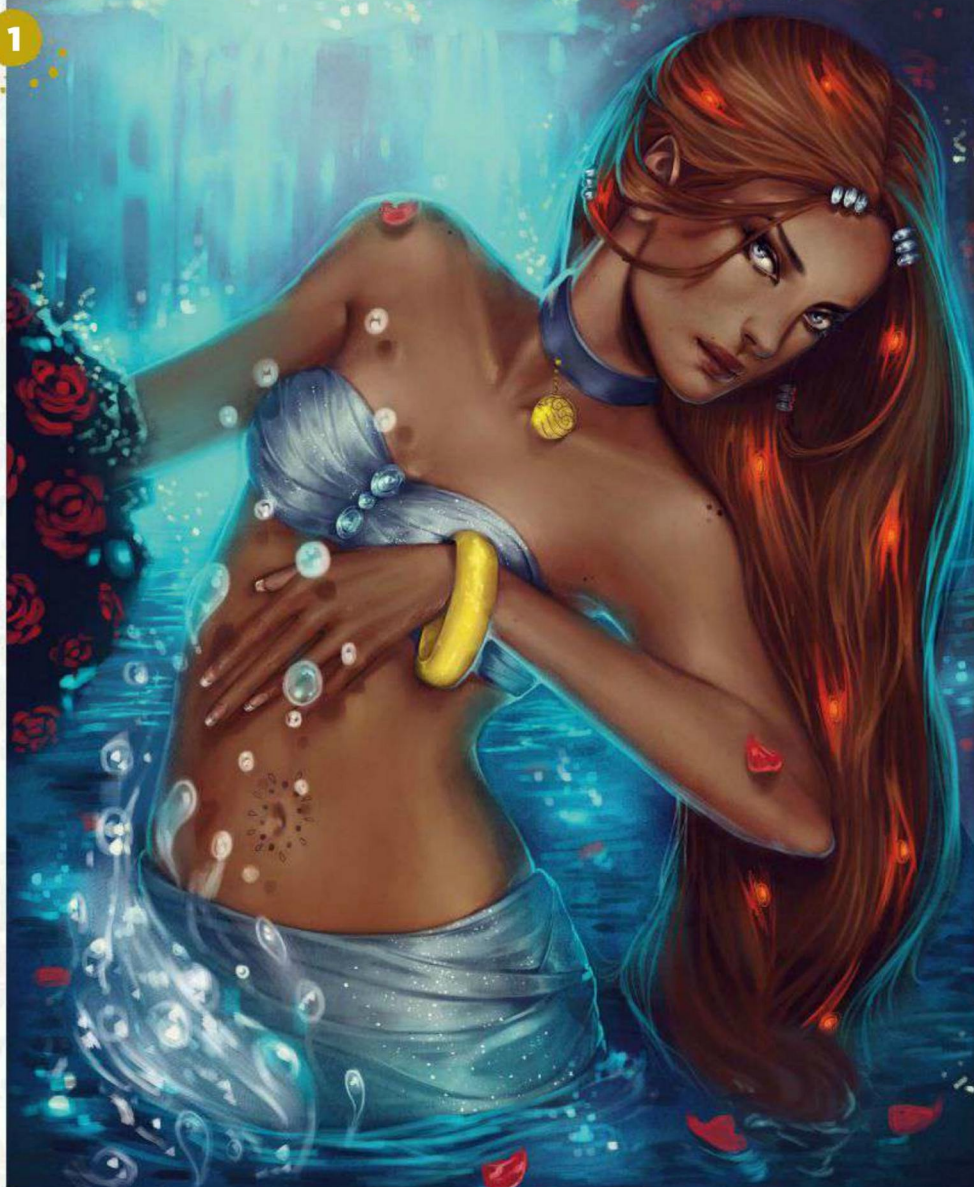
SEND US YOUR ARTWORK!

Want to see your digital art grace these very pages? Send your work to us, along with an explanation of your techniques, the title of each piece of art, a photo of yourself and your contact details. Images should be sent as 300dpi JPEG files, on CD or DVD. All artwork is submitted on the basis of a non-exclusive worldwide licence to publish, both in print and electronically.

You can also email submissions for FXPosé. Bear in mind that files must be no more than 5MB in total, or we won't receive them.
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"I love how Rezwana has cleverly used a strong light source to draw your attention to the character's face. The use of linear spirals, textures and a monotone palette has really set the mood to Elven Nature."

Daniel Vincent,
Art Editor



ARTIST NEWS, SOFTWARE & EVENTS

ImagineNation

AT THE CORE OF THE FANTASY ART COMMUNITY

John Picacio's striking cover art for Michael Moorcock's novel *Elic: The Stealer of Souls*.



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ImagineFX

January 2013



EXPANDED UNIVERSE

What will a new Star Wars film mean for concept design? Episode I contributing illustrator Terry Whitlatch speculates on the look of the saga.

Page 19



HELPING HAND

Sadly, comic book artist and concept designer Francis Tsai is very ill with a debilitating disease, but we can do some small things towards helping him.

Page 20



CONJUGAL PHOTOSHOP

To end the shouting across the apartment, married freelance illustrators Vinod Rams and Emily Fiegenschuh moved into one office. Let the art fun begin!

Page 22

If you wanna be my cover

Cover stars The world of book cover illustration is a competitive one, which is why it's vital to stay true to your artistic roots



© Property of Orbit Publishing

It may seem shallow, but a strong cover can have a major effect on which books we choose to pick up. For many artists, creating cover art can be a rewarding experience with more creativity than you might think.

A common route into cover illustration is by grabbing the attention of a publisher or agency representing the author — a decision often based on thematic research leading its way to your portfolio, with the best matches being those that form a happy marriage between story content and artistic style.

Nathalia Suellen (also known as Lady Symphonia) was hired to create artwork for the upcoming *Splintered*, by AG Howard, after the art director at Abrams book publishers felt her style perfectly reflected the tone of the novel. With *Splintered* being a dark take on Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures* in



Beauty, darkness and madness lie at the heart of Lady Symphonia's gothic art.

Wonderland, Nathalia created a piece inspired by one of her muses. "My artwork is very inspired by Tim Burton," she says, "and I was thrilled to learn the book was going to be Alice-related. I tapped into Burton's interpretation of Alice with my vision of AG Howard's characters, making them crazy and beautiful." The final cover piece fits in wonderfully with Nathalia's portfolio, using digital painting and photo manipulation to create a colourful slice of gothic fantasy.

Nekro creates his striking art by fusing photography and digital art together.

“A personal style is a good signature. It's a seal of authenticity, distinguishing you from other illustrators”

Likewise, the monochrome and scarlet stylings of surrealist Borja Fresco Costal



(more commonly known as Nekro) caught the attention of book publishers Orbit, landing him the role of official illustrator for Kristen Painter's *House of Comarre* series.

"Even though the covers were supervised by the publisher, I was able to remain true to my own artistic identity," he says. Both cases point out the essential truth: that to land that commission, you need to stand out. "A personal style is a good signature for your work," Borja tells us. "It's a seal of authenticity that distinguishes you from the other illustrators."

So how does the game change when you're free to illustrate your own work? ➔

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

JOHN PICACIO

We talk to one of the industry's most in-demand book illustrators

Are you approached by authors, or are agencies involved?

The first point of contact is usually a publishing house art director (AD), who emails or phones to ask about availability.

How closely do you work with the author?

When dealing with ADs at big companies, the artist generally should dialogue with the AD, and get his or her permission before talking with the author. That said, some of my best covers and richest experiences as a pro artist have been interactions with authors, brainstorming for their cover art.

Can you tell us about your experiences creating artwork for the *Elric* books?

Michael Moorcock's *Elric* is one of the seminal icons of fantasy literature and art. *Elric* made goth cool before goth even knew it was cool. My *Elric* cover work was an opportunity to connect this character with today's audience. If *Elric* walked into your room, and you saw those glaring red eyes and that bone-white skin, he would change the emotional temperature of the room. I wanted to somehow convey that power and that beauty, whether he was in brooding repose or swashbuckling action.

Is it important to tailor artistic styles with the author or publisher's needs?

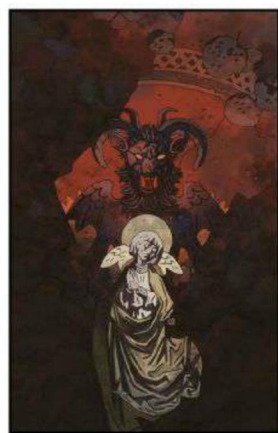
If the AD hires the artist to do cover art, the AD already trusts the artist's vision. The best thing an artist can do is find the strengths of the manuscript and evoke those in a compelling image that connects the book with its rightful audience. That's easier said than done, but that's the joy of book cover art.



John is a multi-award winning artist and currently the official illustrator for Michael Moorcock's *Elric* novels.

www.johnpicacio.com

Continued from previous page...



The cover art for Mike Mignola's *Father Gaetano* combined his ink drawing with colourist Dave Stewart.



Comics legend **Mike Mignola** recently released his third novel co-written with

Christopher Golden, *Father Gaetano's Puppet Catechism*, along with cover art and illustrations. "It's much easier doing covers for my own projects," he says, "because I can do whatever I want!"

Author or not, the ability to pinpoint a particular theme or character is what makes a great book cover, and that's easier when the story is yours. "With *Father Gaetano*, this was easy," Mike says. "The book is about Heaven and Hell. And puppets. The only question was whether to put an angel puppet with a demon image behind, or the other way around. I think the angel is better — innocence with evil looming in the background."

The most eye-catching book covers are those that make full use of an artist's individual style, and to some of us, the person illustrating the cover is as important as the author. Mike sums it up neatly. "For myself, I want to stay true to my style, at least for something like *Father Gaetano*. This is my kind of subject matter, and it's clearly meant to appeal to the people who like my comics."

Check out Nathalia's art at www.bit.ly/ifx-nsuellen; Nekro's work can be found at www.nekro.es; and go to www.artofmikemignola.com to find out more about Mike's latest work.

Draw on the memories

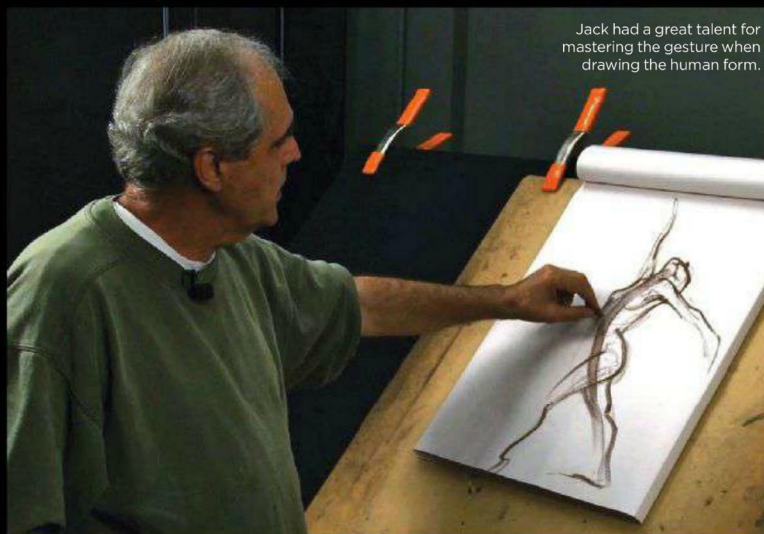
Favourite teacher As we say goodbye to our friend Jack Bosson, we take a moment to remember his extraordinary gifts

From abstract expressionism through to classical theory, Jack Bosson had a vivacious gift for creativity, and the sudden news of his passing was a shock to us all.



Professional figurative model Stacy E Walker worked alongside Jack at the Gnomon School of Visual Effects in Hollywood, and the two shared a strong connection borne from their desire to create narrative driven art. "Together Jack and I would push the students to explore

the endless storytelling possibilities they saw in front of them. Many of the students would take his classes over and over just to continue to have the opportunity to watch and learn from him. Jack was more than just a great artist and teacher, he was an amazing human being who loved and appreciated all forms of art. He'll be so greatly missed by all of us who knew and loved him and take comfort in knowing he will live on in the brilliant art he created and through the countless students he inspired."



Jack had a great talent for mastering the gesture when drawing the human form.



Jack created this sketch and many others during classes held with Stacy.

Arigatou Wacom!

Special edition The Bamboo Manga is the latest tablet designed with manga artists firmly in mind

Wacom has released the Bamboo Manga, a special edition tablet that includes software packages Manga Studio Debut 4 and Anime Studio Debut 8.

Rüdiger Spohrer, vice president of marketing at Wacom Europe, tells us that the decision to release an exclusive tablet came from the expanding Western manga scene.

"Drawing manga is now more and more popular among professional creatives and young people who are fascinated by Japanese pop culture," he says. "With the launch of Bamboo Manga, we can now offer manga fans a complete solution to create exciting digital art."



In line with the Bamboo Pen & Touch range, the new addition includes the 1,024 pressure-sensitive Bamboo pen, multi-touch functionality and four ExpressKeys that provide quick shortcuts to customisable functions.

"Feedback from our users has been very positive so far," says Rüdiger, "from both professional manga communities and people who simply love to draw in a manga style. We expect the new tablet to be a huge success."

To learn more about Wacom's new Bamboo Manga tablet go to www.wacom.com.



The latest addition to the Bamboo Pen & Touch range may be ideal for enthusiasts and professionals alike.



A new hope

Star Wars Will Episode VII be going back to the saga's 70s design roots?

When news broke that Disney had bought Lucasfilm in November, the concurrent announcement that *Star Wars: Episode VII* was scheduled for theatrical release in 2015 was a major surprise.

Speculation aside, one thing we can certainly expect to see will be a high calibre of concept design. With having a history spanning over 35 years, artists will be tasked with balancing new artistic visions with the iconic original concepts.

Illustrator Terry Whitlatch can relate, after being approached to design the creature concepts for Episode I. "The advantage that we have nowadays, as opposed to the late 70s, is of course the digital revolution," she says, "which can be applied to the original 70s designs."

"Regarding Episode VII, I would think that the design approach would be not appreciably different from that of Episode VI, as it just wouldn't make sense to do a complete aesthetic 180 turnabout. Rather, it would fit naturally into the existing Star Wars ethos."

"One thing that Star Wars has is visual grit, which gives it that sense of reality that so captivated us." Either way, very exciting times are ahead.

Head over to www.starwars.com for more information.



We look forward to seeing what kinds of concepts are created for the new Star Wars instalment.

Terry's creature contributions to *Star Wars: Episode I* included creating the pod-racing pilots, such as Teemto Pagalies, seen here.

@2011 Terry Whitlatch

January 2013

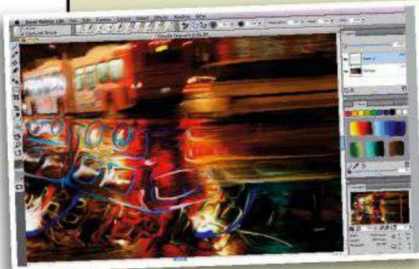
IMAGINEFX



19

In short...

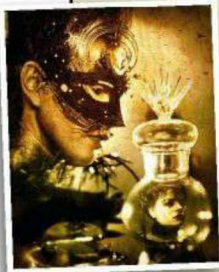
The latest news in brief for digital artists



Software Painter Lite

Corel has introduced Painter Lite, an all-new design package designed for aspiring digital artists. Available for both Mac and PC, the program offers an affordable way to create digital artwork based on Painter 12, featuring 97 brushes, traditional paint effects and a user-friendly interface. For more information head over to www.corel.com.

Website Mighty McKean



It's been a while coming, but the new website for English illustrator and filmmaker Dave McKean is now live and fully interactive. The new portal enables fans to enjoy many aspects of Dave's

work ranging across his 25-year career, including exclusive material from his upcoming film Luna. We recommend that you check out www.dmask.com now!

Software CorelDRAW Business Edition



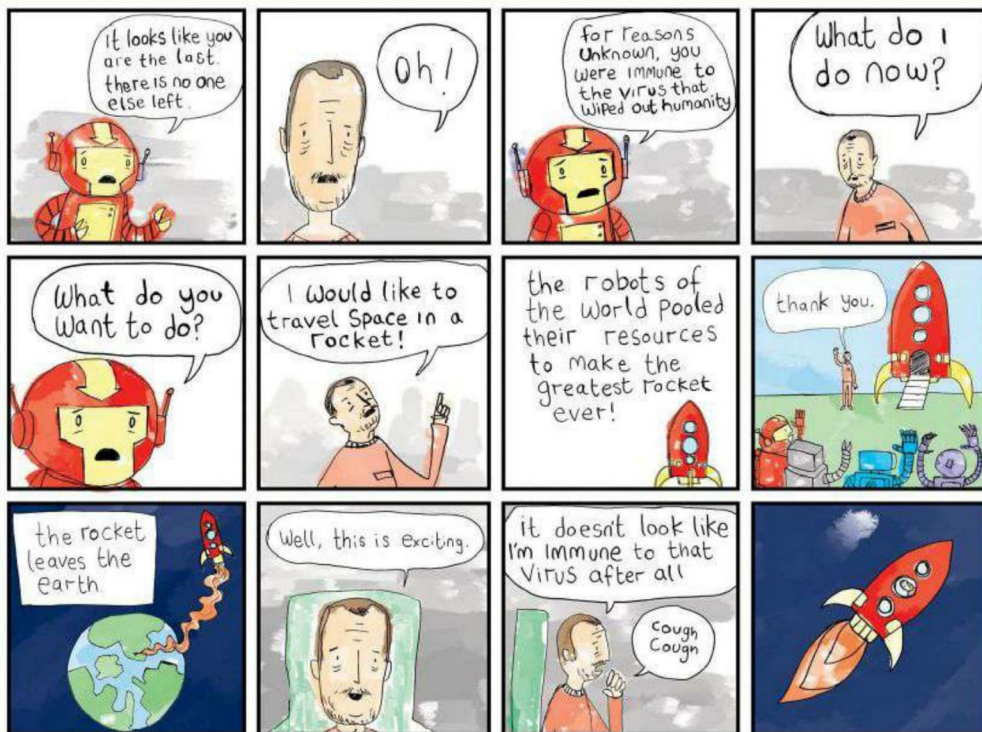
More Corel news! Design firms can now benefit from the new CorelDRAW Graphics Suite X6 Small Business Edition. Offering up to three installations per business, the latest CorelDRAW

package provides professional graphic design, photo editing and web design tools – ideal for communication and marketing. Further details about the release can be found at www.corel.com.



Life is Humiliation

by Matt Boyce



Fantasy talk Explaining the inexplicable

"Drawing from life is hard. And drawing from life that insists on being alive and wandering off or slithering away is even harder"

Justin Gerard wishes crocodiles would adopt a more professional work ethic when posing... See page 88

Doing it for Francis

Good deed With your support, you can make a real difference to the life of our friend and comrade Francis Tsai



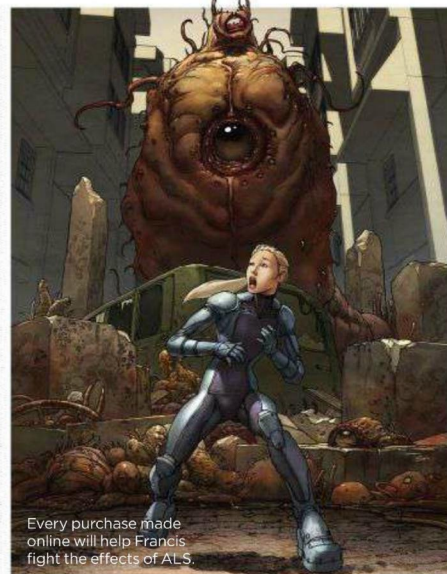
Comic book artist, concept designer and long-term contributor to ImagineFX

Francis Tsai has given the art community many amazing pieces of art throughout his career. Now it's time to give something back.

In 2010 Francis was diagnosed with ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease). It's a fatal condition that causes total paralysis, and has no known cure. A year ago, Francis lost the ability to use his arms and hands, leading him to paint with his toes. Since then, the disease has spread, and Francis is searching for new ways to create art. In a bid to raise funds for care, an online store has been launched offering merchandise featuring Francis's striking art, with new lines added regularly.

In a statement on his Facebook page, Francis remains optimistic. "To help generate some income while I wait for science to get its stuff together, my sister Marice has put together an online shop featuring some of my artwork. Please consider picking up some cool Tsai swag and sharing this post!"

We urge you to do the same. Please visit the store at www.francistsaistore.storenvy.com.



Every purchase made online will help Francis fight the effects of ALS.

Tales from Topographic Oceans

'Appy days It's time to travel beyond the page and into new frontiers with Roger Dean's Dragon Dream app

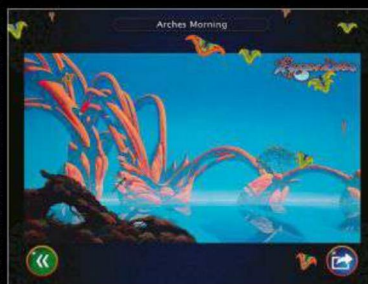
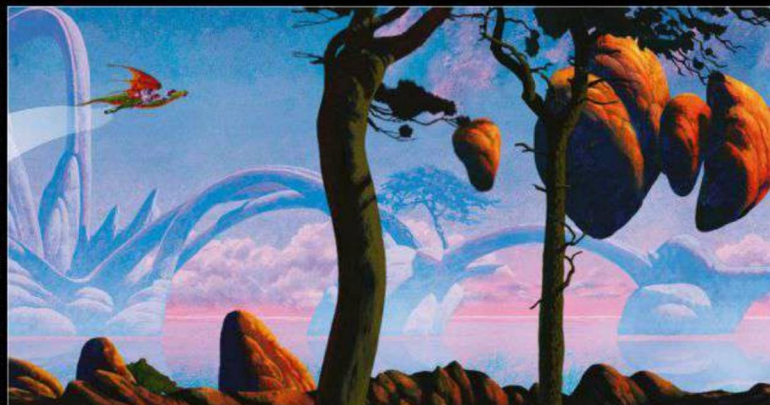


In collaboration with English media studio Moshen, the landscapes of the legendary Roger Dean have been brought to life in the form of an interactive game. In it, players guide a dragon through the iconic landscapes that were depicted in Roger's 2008 seminal collection, *Dragon's Dream*.

The decision to expand Roger's art into an interactive format was an unexpected but fulfilling move. "The team didn't just copy my landscapes – they redid them as digital paintings from scratch," says Roger. Using his iconic style as a guide, two new landscapes, the Oceanic Arches and Forest of Mist, have been carefully crafted to convey Roger's distinctive style. "Consistency was important, as we wanted the two new worlds to allow players to recognise the paintings they relate to."

With the project taking to an experimental format, the team isn't ruling out future expansions of the Dragon's Dream universe. The app is available to buy through iTunes, and you can find out more about the project at www.rogerdean.com.

Players get a fun game set among Roger's dream-like landscapes. It's a win-win situation!



The game designers also created new levels that were closely based on Roger's iconic art.



Lands beyond the wall

To Westeros! The latest must-have for fans of Game of Thrones really does put the world in your hands...

Map making is a skill in itself, but to create accurate representations of landscapes of the imagination is an entirely different ballgame, especially when the landscapes in question are those of George RR Martin's seminal *A Song of Ice and Fire*.

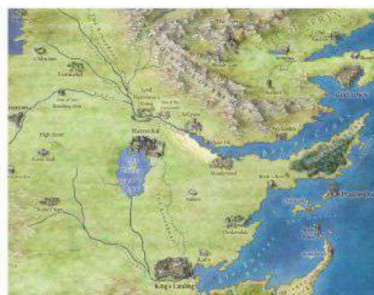
Jonathan Roberts, the artist behind The Lands of Ice and Fire, has created 12 overlapping maps that depict the lavish



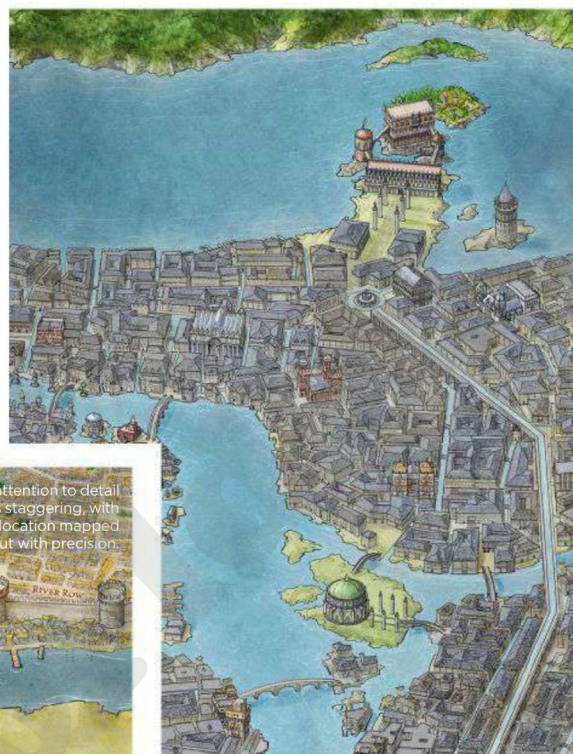
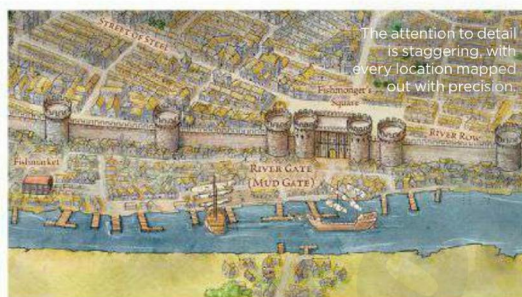
locations found in the book. "I started with the full world map, and then used that as the base for each of the detail maps to ensure consistency."

"Once all the locations were laid out, the trick was to add style, detail and colour without getting in the way of presenting the information." The maps span a huge 72 square feet, which gave Jonathan plenty of room for artistic creativity. "I prefer the freedom you get with a more illustrative map style – it provides the opportunity to convey a feel for the landscape."

You can find out more about Jonathan's work at www.fantasticmaps.com.



Part of the continent of Westeros, one of the three landmasses in George RR Martin's celebrated novels.



The maps also include journey trails that point out key locations for important plot points.



+deviantWATCH

Here are some of the many gems we found on the pages of deviantART...



Nadezda

www.nadezda.deviantart.com

The worlds of anime and western cartoons collide in the expert hands of Mexican artist Nadezda, resulting in bright and quirky artwork brimming with style and personality. Nadezda's work is light-hearted and fun – you'll definitely find something to make you smile.



JonasDeRo

www.jonasdero.deviantart.com

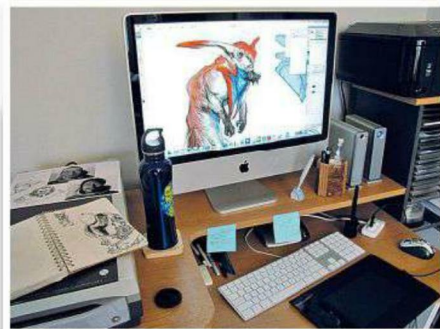
Jonas clearly has an eye for a dramatic composition, which is unsurprising because he works full time as a concept artist. His portfolio fully demonstrates his natural ability to capture the beauty of different kinds of environments, from bustling, neon-lit cities to Gothic castles.



Neisbeis

www.neisbeis.deviantart.com

Also known as Ignacio Bazán Lazcano, Neisbeis is a professional artist with an extensive and varied portfolio, which includes a thrilling collection of personal and commissioned works. From high-fantasy to sci-fi, it's clear that Neisbeis is one talented



This is Vinod's basic digital art setup: a Wacom, iMac and a scanner. He uses a Cintiq at work, but has yet to buy one for the home studio.

There's a drawing hidden among all that reference!



Here are the books that Vinod and Emily refer to the most: anatomy books, weapons and armour and animals. Emily says, "There are way too many art books to keep in our studio. Most of my favourites are in our living room."

Vinod Rams and Emily Fiegenschuh

Two's company For married couple Vinod and Emily, sharing a studio is as important to their relationship as it is to their work



"Our studio is ever changing," says Vinod. "It's not perfect, but now we have everything we need to run our freelance illustration business."

"Dividing a studio into our own personal workspaces can sometimes be a challenge.

Earlier in the year we lived in an apartment where we had separate studios, but that wasn't much fun because we'd have to yell across the apartment to talk to each other.

"Our mutual interest in art sparked our relationship and nurtured our development as professionals. After all these years, we think making art alongside each other

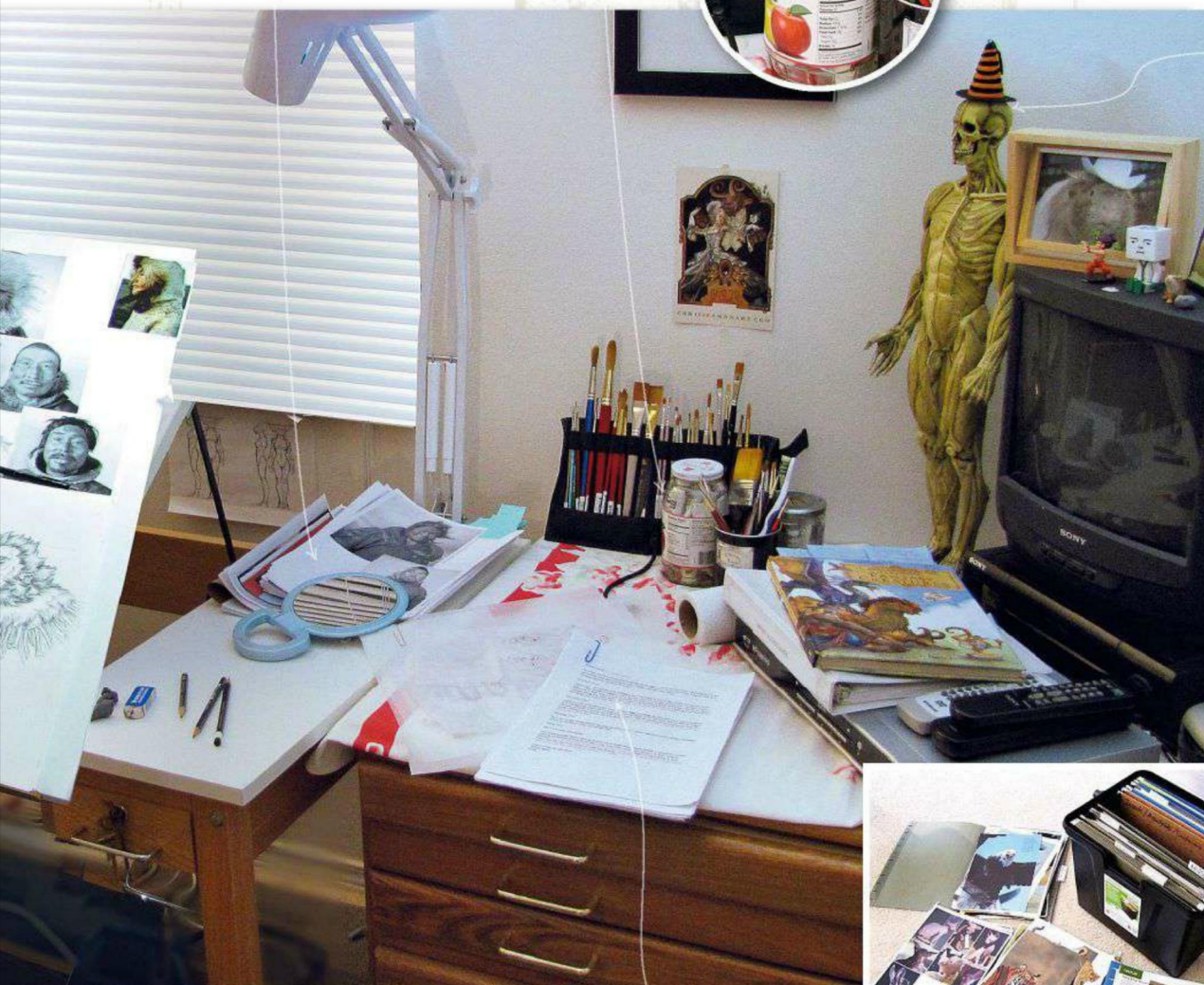
Artist news, software & events

Emily keeps a small mirror by her desk to help her draw expressions.

Everything you ever wanted to know about the nutrition facts of gouache.

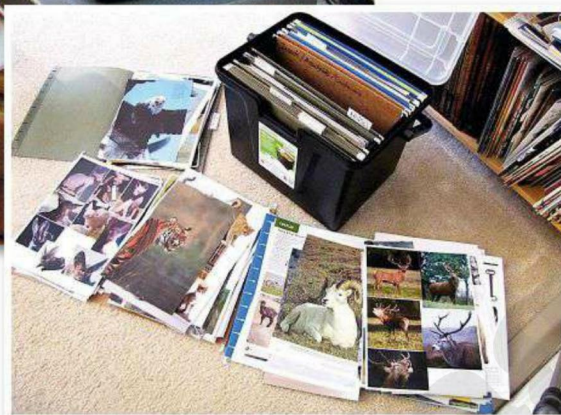


An anatomical model that Vinod and Emily have nicknamed Mortemer (as in post-mortem).



Vinod explains that they have two collections of photo reference – this one is for anything animal related. The other one (not pictured) is for anything human, historical, cultural and environmental.

Emily reveals that this area becomes progressively messier as she works on a project. "Usually by the end, piles of reference and books are scattered across all nearby surfaces and the floor," she says.



is one of the best ways to spend time with our 'better halves'."

Emily takes up the story: "I have the studio to myself while Vinod is at his day job. Working alone can be a double-edged sword. Sometimes it's easier to concentrate, other times it can be boring. It's also easy to get distracted by chores!"

"In addition to having another artist in the house to bounce ideas off of, having a partner working on his own projects makes my job more fun. Much like turning on some music or half-watching a movie, a companion in the room encourages both of us to work for longer stretches."



Vinod says, "My time is split between working as a

video game concept artist and illustration work, so my drafting table only gets used when I work on personal and freelance projects. I tend to pile reference books in a badly balanced Tetris-like layout, and when I'm painting with gouache there's always a paint palette crammed on there as well!"

"Since I do more digital work than Emily, I like working on the computer while she's painting. The only downside is that the internet can be very distracting and there can be a lot of, 'Hey, turn around and check this out!' while we work."

Both Emily and Vinod are freelance illustrators, with Vinod also working as a senior concept artist at Monolith/WB Games. Take a look at Emily and Vinod's art at www.vinodrams.com and www.e-figart.com.



The flat file the artists share is packed with artwork – a sure sign that their freelance business is a successful endeavour.

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART

ImagineFX Forum

Winners

Image of the month

New Frontiers If space travel was possible during the Industrial Revolution, the Enterprise may have looked a little something like this...



The iconic look of the Enterprise had to be captured before Helen's retro makeover could begin.



Being a huge Star Trek fan, Helen couldn't resist the opportunity to give the iconic USS Starship Enterprise a steampunk makeover. The artist is studying graphic design at university, and so the challenge presented an opportunity to experiment with 3D modelling software and digital painting. "I first created a 3D model in 3ds Max," she says. "Once I was happy with the model, I took a screen shot at the preferred angle and opened it in Photoshop to paint over. I had to create a 3D model because my perspective drawing is atrocious!"

To create a galactic background, Helen turned to Procreate on her iPad, which includes a Nebular brush. "One of my favourite finishing touches on this image is the NCC-1601 on the underside."

MYFX TITLE: USS Steampunk Enterprise
WINNER: Helen Mills (MiissZass)
GALLERY: www.imaginefx.com/MiissZass
ALL ENTRIES: www.bit.ly/myfx-295



IMAGINEFX CRIT



"The artwork is awesome. Giving the USS Enterprise a steampunk look was really a challenge and this artwork was finished perfectly. The metallic body and parts showing classic steampunk features are brilliantly constructed and connected together. Great work!" **Amol Walawalkar (Aims)**



The combination of 3D modelling and digital painting makes Helen's piece really stand out.

Once the 3D model was complete, Helen was free to imagine how the ship would have looked over 400 years ago.



MYFX TITLE: Opposing Forces

WINNER: Ethan Patrick Harris (Octobull)

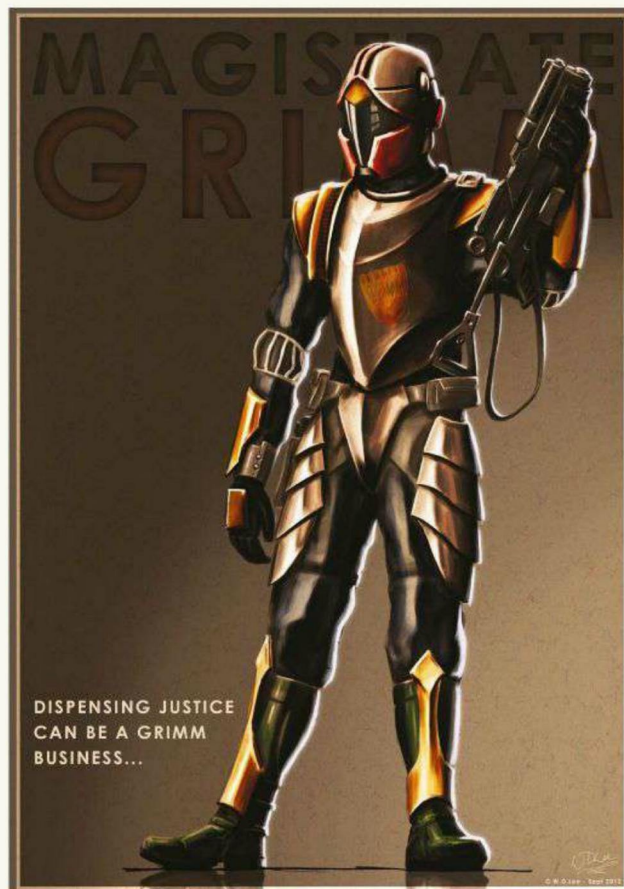
GALLERY: www.imaginefx.com/Octobull

ALL ENTRIES: www.bit.ly/myfx-august



"I watch a lot of the challenges as they progress, to see how people are tackling the subjects, but I don't always have time to get involved in them myself. With this one, when I saw the topic, the first thing that popped in my head was life and death, and a moment later I could see this image in my mind. I couldn't help myself - I was compelled to paint it. With the mother bird watching over her nest of new life, resting in the gut of an unfortunate warrior, I feel like it shows a contrast between life and death: the ultimate in opposing forces."

Join in!
www.imaginefx.com/myfx



MYFX TITLE: Magistrate Grimm

WINNER: Warren Lee (Thulsadoom)

GALLERY: www.imaginefx.com/thulsadoom

ALL ENTRIES: www.bit.ly/myfx-296



"I saw this as an opportunity to design an armoured character who was a little different from what we usually see, as well as being good practice for video game concept illustration. I started with pencil sketches, then refined pen drawing that I scanned and shaded/coloured in Photoshop. I went for an Elizabethan feel and to maintain the Judge Dredd link I subtly used his colours."



MYFX TITLE: Deep Sea Danger

WINNER: Mert Gurkan

GALLERY: www.imaginefx.com/GURKAN

ALL ENTRIES: www.bit.ly/myfx-297



"I wondered how I could depict one of the world's darkest and most mysterious places. I liked the idea of using familiar small sea creatures and a strange gigantic monster in the same composition. A half-snake and half-anglerfish creature hypnotises its next victim while strangers awaken its enormous cousin! I should name the piece Awakening of the Sea Terror."

Letters

YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS



Contact the editor, Ian Dean, on ian.dean@futurenet.com or write to ImagineFX, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW, UK



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Going digital

I go digital – what a surprise! The digital edition is so real, so awesome. I will never regret it! I have read your magazine since the first issue. I was afraid the digital copy would be a little bit dull, but no, it's awesome! Your magazine is my inspiration. When I read it, the world changes, life is better. I own all of your issues. I don't want to miss one. Continue working well and long life to ImagineFX. Thanks again ImagineFX!

Donald, via email

Disc request

I have just bought my first copy of your magazine and I love it. I bought a hard copy so I could see what it was all about. I'd like to start buying the digital copy for my Android device but it does not come with a disc. Why is this? Would it not be cheaper for you to make the disc online? You could make a site where you could link an account with your subscription that would allow you to get the contents of the disc. This is the only thing really holding me back from starting a year's digital subscription. So far I really like the magazine and would like to buy more.

Andrew, via email

Ian replies: Thanks to Donald for going digital! Andrew, all our digital editions, including Android, now come with video and workshop resource files. If you have an iPad you can try it out yourself by downloading ImagineFX issue 86 for free on Apple Newsstand! You can get it here: www.bit.ly/imaginefxapp.

Doing the basics

First, let me say that your magazine is quite simply inspirational. Second, I have a request as someone new to digital art. I look at your mag for inspiration and tips but I feel that the articles and workshops, although good, don't necessarily help the beginner or



ImagineFX digital copies now come with video and workshop resource files. Issue 86 is free on Apple Newsstand, why not try it for yourself!



DID YOU MISS ISSUE 90?

We've still got a few copies, but you need to move fast! See page 47 for details on how to get hold of one.



Hopefully Corrado Vanelli's portrait workshop will quench Roger's thirst for more Painter tutorials.

point them in the right direction. I realise the articles are aimed more at intermediate users than noobs, but it does get frustrating when an artist talks about blending the skin and there is no example of how to blend in Photoshop or Painter. So I was wondering if there are any plans to put a beginner section in the mag with in-depth tutorials showing these techniques in more detail?

Another request I have (no more after this I promise) is whether you know of any exercises to help with using a graphics tablet to get one's hand-eye co-ordination up to scratch? I am really struggling to make the transition from pencil to tablet.

As I'm sure you understand, and have experienced yourself when starting out, the journey ahead can seem rather daunting, even to get the basics right. So any help or advice your mag can give to us newbies would be greatly appreciated. Anyway, thanks again for a great and inspirational magazine.

Roger Yates, via email

Ian replies: Hi Roger. We try and get the balance right each issue – for example this month I would recommend reading Corrado Vanelli's Painter workshop on page 92, which contains some basic advice on painting hair and brush use. Or dip into our Q&A section for simple tips. More so, you'll only improve through practise, so keep using your tablet and soon you'll adjust. Keep at it!

Background noise

Love the magazine. It's the only publication I really enjoy getting as a hard copy (particularly the subscriber covers without all the text – don't change that). I've enjoyed the last couple of issue's themes, so keep doing these. As an artist, a possible theme I would love to see is on backgrounds.

When art doesn't have backgrounds, it's noticeable. When the backgrounds are there, it just adds to a piece. I think there would be a lot of scope on how to do them; loose, quickly, impressionistically, yet still get bang for your buck. Just a thought.

Matt, via email

Ian replies: Great point! There'll be a background workshop popping into ImagineFX soon, Matt. Any other workshop topics readers want to see?



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Artist in need

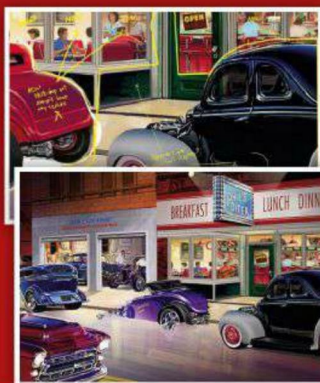
I've been inspired by Syd Mead and have been painting traditionally with gouache on illustration board for many years (I'm an old guy). I started using Photoshop and Painter about 10 years ago (I'm also a professional technical illustrator and graphic designer), but want to maintain the feel of gouache on board.

How do I get the texture of the board, the crisp edges and the trailing brush strokes? I've tried adding texture to Photoshop brushes, but don't like the obvious, stamped, repeating pattern and soft feel. Can I get the texture and grain of my airbrush that I use with gouache?

I love Painter, but find it hard to get used to after Photoshop. I also work at the size of traditional paintings, about 20x30 inches, so things go very slowly, even with a fast Mac Pro quad-core. What size do most digital painters work in? I reproduce my art as 20x30-inch prints, so they have to be crisp.

Bruce Kaiser, via email

Ian replies: We usually answer these questions in the Q&A section but I thought it would be fun to open this up to everyone for discussion (and it means we can show you Bruce's beautiful 50s Americana car art). So, here's the challenge: send in some tips for Bruce and we'll reward the best ones with some art books!



Here's the traditional image Bruce is trying to update. Can you see the digital and trad areas?

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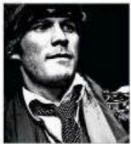
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Artists' opinions



"ImagineFX is the best published source of conceptual art information that I have ever seen. The magazine is a must-have investment for any aspiring concept artist who wants to take their skills to the next level."

Andrew Jones, concept artist



"ImagineFX is a unique resource for the science-fiction and fantasy community. It has invaluable tips and techniques for a range of software, and encourages aspiring artists to get their work in print and receive international exposure."

Jonny Duddle, freelance artist

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Artist Q&A

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The FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX panel

Donglu Yu



Donglu is a concept artist at Ubisoft Montreal. She's worked on Deus Ex: Human Revolution, as well as the Assassin's Creed franchise.

www.donglu-littlefish.blogspot.ca

Paco Rico Torres



Paco is a freelance illustrator living in Spain who's produced art for several card games, books, role-playing games and magazines.

www.pacorico.blogspot.com

Nick Harris



Gloucestershire-based Nick went digital in 2000 after 18 years working with traditional methods. He works mainly on children's illustrations.

www.nickillus.com

Mélanie Delon



Mélanie is a freelance fantasy illustrator. She works as a cover artist for several publishing houses, and on her personal artbook series.

melaniedelon.com

Francesco Lorenzetti



Francesco works at Atomhawk Design as a concept artist. He works in traditional media and often goes to life-drawing sessions.

www.bit.ly/ifx-francesco

Cynthia Sheppard



Cynthia is a freelance digital artist. With a background in traditional painting, she likes to bring classical techniques to her digital artwork.

www.sheppard-arts.com

Lauren K Cannon



Lauren is a freelance fantasy artist who specialises in the surreal. She lives in a small woodland village in New Jersey, US.

www.navate.com

Question

How do you paint a creature emerging from the dark without it being blurry?

Oliver Harris, US

Answer

Paco replies



To paint a creature coming out from the shadows, the only thing you need – and this may sound contradictory – is a

source of light. If there's no light then the creature can't come out of the darkness!

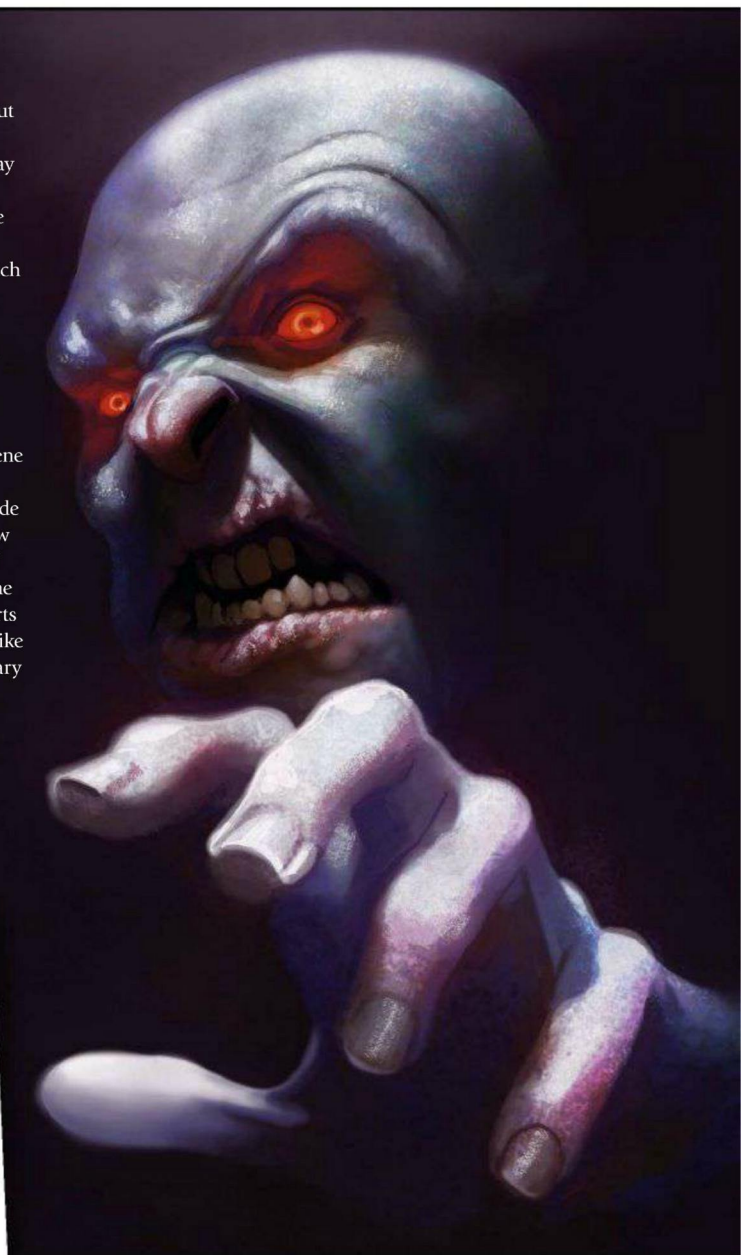
You need to illuminate the scene in such a way that you end up having a clearly defined area of light surrounded by shadow. Or you can do the opposite and paint an area of shadow surrounded by light, such as a dark alley that's next to a well-illuminated street.

In either case, the aim is to create a scene where the creature can exit from the shadows. Think of shadows as a wall made of dark water: you have to determine how much of the creature's body is outside of that wall and how much stays within. The parts within should be black, but the parts outside should be affected by light, just like anything else in the scene. To create a scary atmosphere try painting a hard illumination with projected shadows.

Artist's secret

THE REFLECTED LIGHT

Even a creature of the shadows reflects some light. To achieve a more natural atmosphere don't paint the background next to an illuminated area totally black. Add a light colour to represent the light reflected by the creature (using blurred low opacity layers in soft light, overlay and/or screen modes).



Step-by-step: Depict horror in the shadows



1 First, I imagine the image I want to paint. Once I have a draft of the painting, I determine how much of the creature will be in the light area. I create an imaginary wall of darkness, which works as a barrier between light and shadow. Everything behind that wall won't be particularly visible, so don't worry about it.



2 I imagine a light source for the parts outside the darkness. I want a hard light coming from above, such as moonlight coming from a window in the ceiling, so brow, nose and fingers are illuminated. Projected shadows should hide the mouth and eyes, at least partially. References can be useful for shadows.



3 Once you have the shadows sorted out, you can start painting. For artwork that features a complex lighting scheme, planning becomes very important. You'll save a lot of time and produce a better piece of art. Don't be afraid to use references: a camera, mirror and desk lamp can be your best friends.

Question

I've got loads of reference photos. How can I make something using them all in one image?

Erica Sanders, US



Here you can see the original photo with which I started the whole process. In the final image, you can almost find no trace of the original, except the base shape for the building.



Answer

Donglu replies



It's certainly great to have a lot of photo resources, but you can quickly become overwhelmed and be left wondering how to use them effectively. I find it helpful to classify all the photo references I collect in the following categories: mood (for lighting schemes), structural shapes (for composition ideas) and details (for refining purposes).

Within each main category you can have many sub-categories: for example, morning, sunset, night time, fog, sunrise and cloudy, all for the mood category; city, forest, village, desert, tunnel, modern building and historical architecture for the structural shapes; and finally, mechanics, engines, branches and construction parts for the details category.

I find that the trick to combining photos is to break them down in terms of composition, lighting and scale. Don't use them as they are, because you'd be restricted by the existing information rather than be able to use them to your artistic advantage.

Let's think of a few examples. Take a close-up of a car engine with all that mechanical details. Scale it up and transform it, and it can easily become a huge mechanical structure in a sci-fi city. You've got a nice rock photo? Rotate it, flip it and use it as a mountain. You like the lighting in a store reference picture, but want to make an interesting painting out of it? Change the image size, paint around the store, give it a cityscape setting and you'll have made something completely different.



In six steps I changed the canvas size, lighting source, reflection on the ground, overall Level adjustment, then added touches of highlights for a coherent final image.

Artist's secret

TRAIN THE VISUAL MEMORY

When I want to improve my artistic abilities and take a break from painting, I just look through all my reference photos. With time, you can effectively train your visual memory, so that when you want to tackle certain subject matters, interesting shapes and patterns will automatically come to mind.

Question

How can I make a cowering figure look really terrified?

Fran Madeley, England

Answer

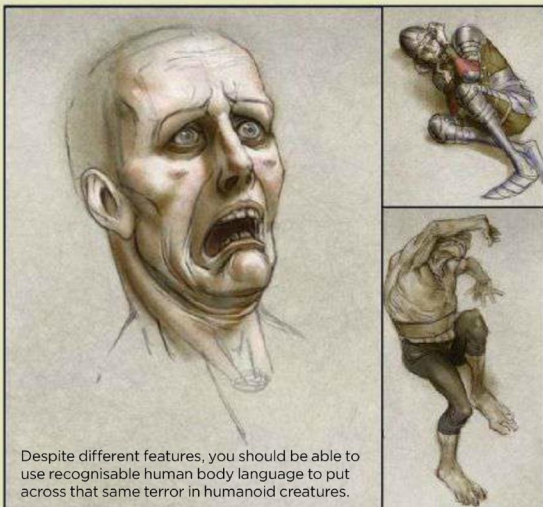
Nick replies



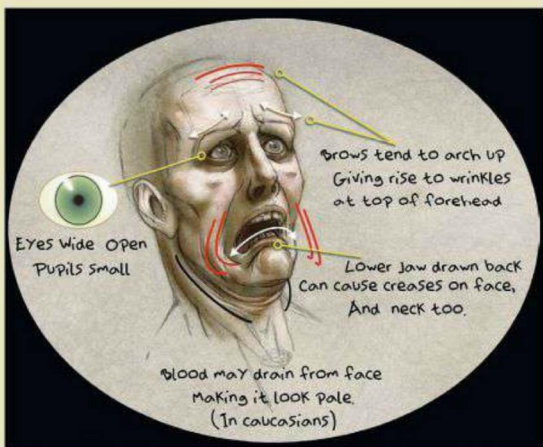
Although it's always best to tailor each figure specifically to its scene, there are a couple of basic staples that can get you started here. We're talking body language and facial expression, and if you can't see both then the other needs to get the message across.

The word cowering is normally associated with fear, either so debilitating that it denotes an acceptance of one's fate, or pleading to be spared whatever the particular terror is. It's natural instinct in that position to arch away from the threat or curl up into a ball, rather like the foetal position, trying to make yourself as small as possible a target.

Either body-language stereotype should work if correctly placed with respect to the peril. Suitable facial expression should consolidate the message. For some examples of interpretation of abject terror, you could do worse than seek out some of those classic horror B-movie posters with screaming girls in them. Eyes wide open, eyebrows angled up at the brow and mouth agape mid-scream. To illustrate, I've shown what I mean in the images below.



Despite different features, you should be able to use recognisable human body language to put across that same terror in humanoid creatures.



Although the sketches are rather caricatured, and only represent one starting option, these simple guidelines should help lead you to a convincing impression of being terrified.

Question

Do you have any suggestions for incorporating a skull into my fantasy art?

Philip G Avery, France



I start with a stone colour scheme, very cold and desaturated. I keep it very simple at the beginning, as I need to stay focused on the composition.

Here I choose a very basic stone, but you can have fun with some different kinds of stone - marble, for example.

Answer

Mélanie replies



The skull shape isn't an easy one to work with, but with some guidance you can easily use it for elements, such as a throne.

The best way to start is to work up the concept. I always do some study sketches when I'm not sure of a design and this is such a case. So first of all I quickly do some tests before finding a good composition.

I've decided to use the upper part of the skull as the top of the throne, and I sit my character on the lower jaw (which will be

almost completely hidden by the character). The trick is to have fun with the design: you can play with the skull, turn it about, and use some parts to make it suit your original idea.

Once I'm happy with the design, I then work the texture to make it look like real stone. For this stage I'll use layer modes and custom texture brushes. I don't push the detail too far because the main subject here is the character, but I add enough information to get the feeling of stone.

Question

How can I paint an organic creature using three-point perspective?

Izzy Reza, US

Answer

Francesco replies



For a three-point perspective you need two points on the horizon and one on the vertical axis. Convert straight lines from any intersecting point and our grid is ready.

With a creature this size we tend to keep it simple. As a trick for huge objects with spatial dimensions, I like to imagine being a bee exploring a forest or building and imagine how huge these structures seem. To paint this huge creature I used a tuber as reference (a bulb in the centre of a main root and a bud that grows upwards). I then make her more fleshy and scary.



Question

How do I make tattoos on my characters look like they are coming alive?

Daniel Horsburgh, Australia

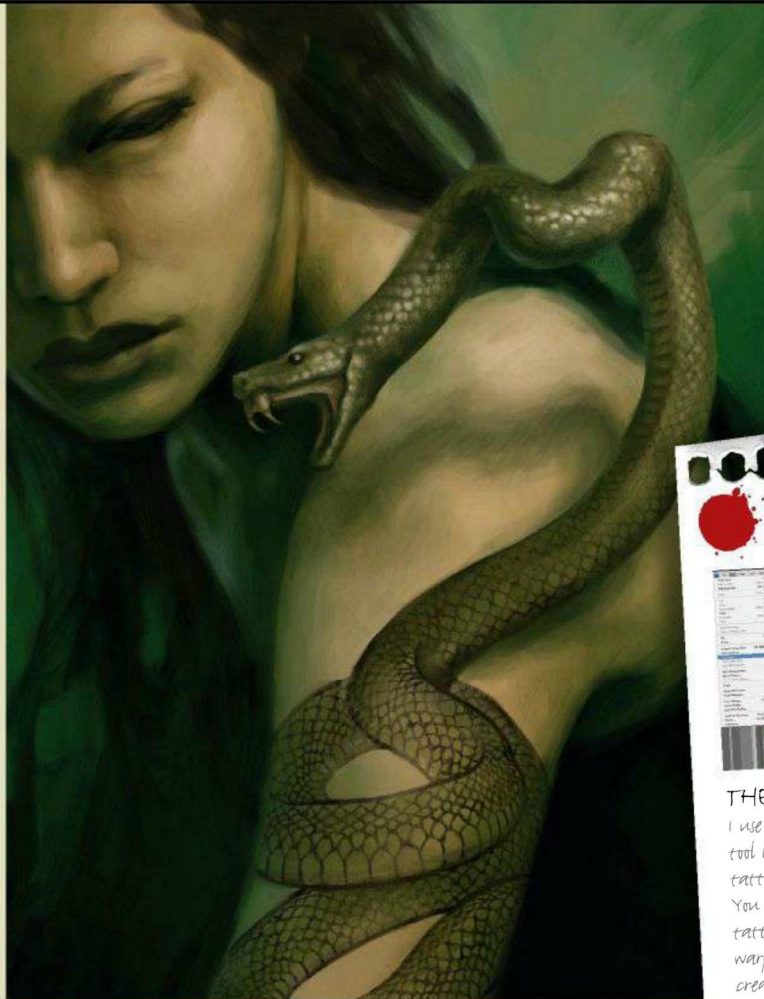
Answer

Lauren replies



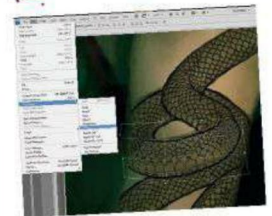
The big trick here is to nail the transition from the normal tattoo to the 'living' tattoo. But since even painting tattoos realistically can be a challenge, some tips on that first. Unless a tattoo is extremely fresh, you can have the skin colour to encroach a bit to really make it look like it's part of the skin, not just pasted on top. I usually do small hatch marks on the edges of large tattooed areas, or use a semi-soft brush instead of a hard-edged brush for line work to achieve this effect. Make sure the highlights and shadows of the body are also present in the tattooed area and that the tattoo wraps over the body's form in a convincing way, and avoid using full opacity.

You need to make the tattoo come to life gradually. Don't paint in the 'living' part separately and then try to connect it to the rest of the tattoo. Instead, slowly bring the tattoo you already have to life. Whether the tattoo is going to be lifting off the skin or staying put, you want to make the transition from 2D to 3D slowly for it to be believable. Use layers to your advantage, so you can slowly build up depth and form of the tattoo itself as it appears to become more solid. This will leave the actual tattoo intact if you make a mistake. Choose one or two focal points of the tattoo to render fully.



There are many ways to approach the idea of a living tattoo. The secret is nailing that shift from tattoo to living entity.

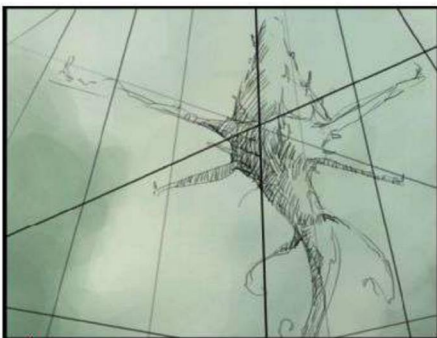
Artist's secret



THE WARP TOOL

I use the Edit>Transform>Warp tool in Photoshop to make tattoos wrap correctly on skin. You can also use this to make tattoos come off the skin - warp away from the body to create a great base transition.

Step-by-step: Using three-point perspective



1 I start to insert a picture of the environment as a background, so I have a good starting point as regards colours and composition. Then I compose the three-point perspective grid and a new layer on top to draw the creature laying on the grid.



2 I begin to paint over the line drawing, trying to have a good balance with values to create convincing depth. Clouds are always a good way to make the sky more of an interesting space. Remember this is an early stage so don't worry about changing shapes, colours and design.

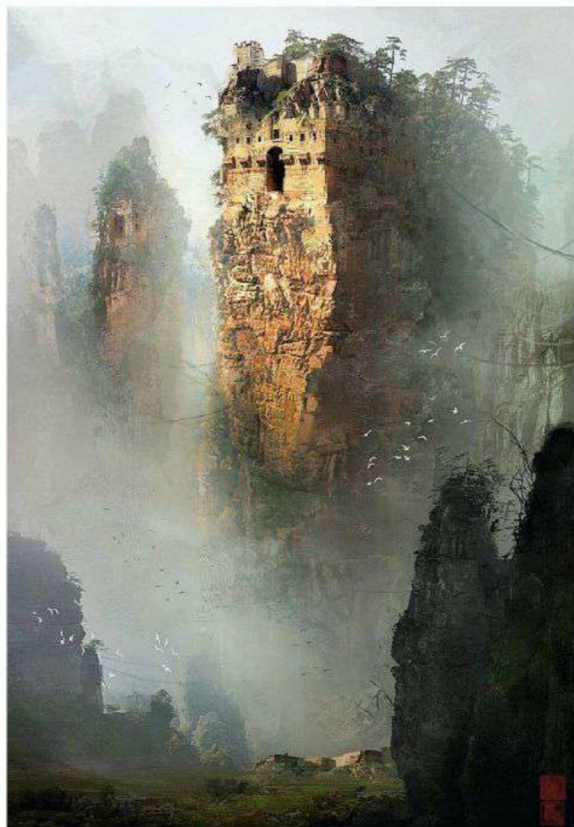


3 I continue to paint over the scene by changing the tail of the creature. I add a bit of atmosphere, modify the land and give our beast a more meaty tone to define the anatomy better. Remember, things that are in the distance tend to be desaturated colour and have a lighter tone.

Question

How do I use Photoshop to construct an epic, fog-laden composition?

Mason Levi, US



Answer Donglu replies



It's crucial to have two or three fog/cloud brushes at the ready in Photoshop, so that you can create the desired foggy effect.

Don't simply use those brushes to draw – also use them to erase and paint over layer masks to introduce subtle nuances in the fog area.

During this process, don't be afraid to leave the fog at 100 per cent Opacity in some areas. This doesn't only make the foggy scene more believable, but it can also simplify a few details in the painting and give the viewer's eyes spots to rest upon.

It's also useful to study the natural behaviour of the mist by observing photo references. You'll soon notice how objects

disappear in the background as they get further away from the viewer, and the details on those objects decrease accordingly or just completely disappear at some point.

Generally speaking, there are two different kinds of misty scenes in nature: one without any direct light source, composed by overlapping layers of monochromatic tones; or the type with a medium intensity of sunlight breaking through the fog. They're both interesting to play with. In my example, I've chosen to give it a sunlight source hitting the top of the mountain to give it a golden-tone touch. This can also make the subject matter pop out from the mist.

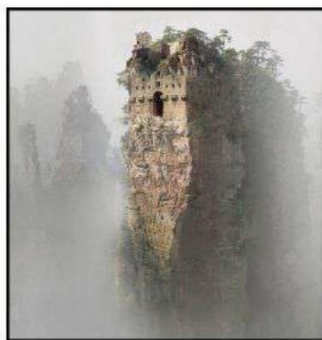
I have a vague idea of painting some massive structure in a foggy set before starting the work. I usually don't start with a rigid pencil line sketch, because it limits the fun of the creation process.



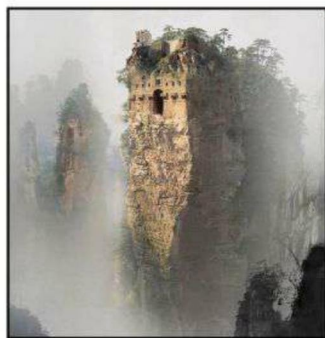
Step-by-step: Paint a foggy scene



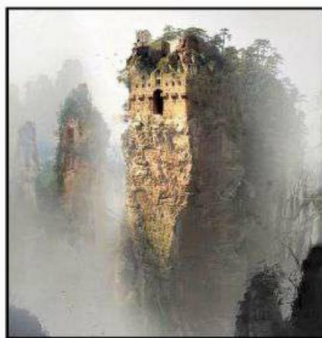
1 Layer grey tones on the canvas to suggest the mist using my cloud/fog brushes. The Gradient tool leaves the image too digital-looking, so I tend to avoid it for this purpose. I'm doing this step roughly, because the goal is to generate composition ideas, not to set a rigid start point. I also use some photo texture as the ground so I can gauge a rough idea of the scale.



2 Then I start to paint a huge castle that's built on top of the mountain. I look through reference photos that I gathered or photographed to find interesting rock texture and architecture references. It's impossible to get it right first time so I have fun playing around with different elements. I use the Free Transform tool intensively until I find some intricate shapes.



3 Adding some darker foreground shapes keeps the viewer focused on the castle. Such shapes also increase the contrast range in the painting without disturbing the mist effect. It's essential to keep some areas of the fog at 100 per cent Opacity, such as at the base of the main mountain. Adding extra details in these areas would dilute the atmospheric effect of the mist.

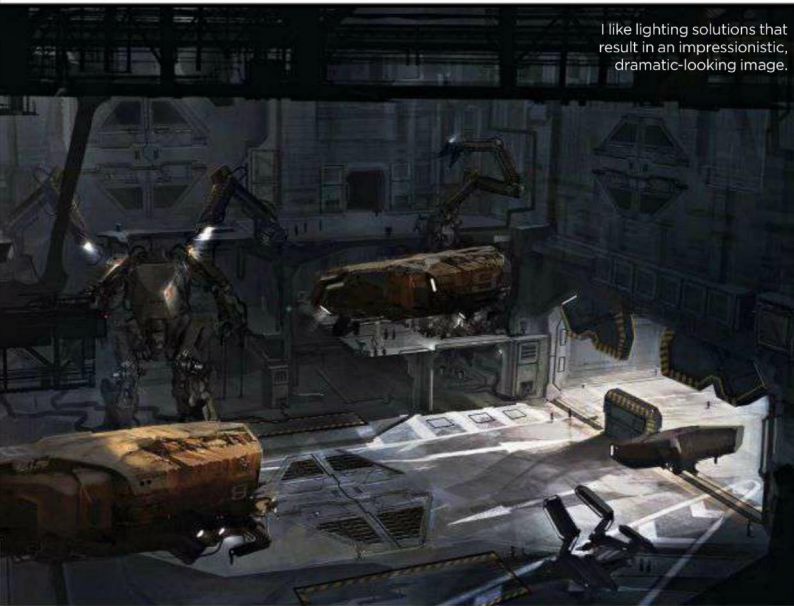


4 I increase the intensity of the direct sunlight, using value contrast. This can further enhance the feel of the mist effect at the mountain's base. I push some elements further away by painting over them with the cloud brush, and add some foreground branch details. Finally, I paint a few birds to give an indication of scale – something that's always useful in landscape scenes.

Question

Can you help me use blocks of light to make an impressionistic scene?

Farah Osman, Malaysia



I like lighting solutions that result in an impressionistic, dramatic-looking image.

Answer

Francesco replies



Lighting a scene is like playing a game of chess: knowing in advance where to put your pieces will enable you to say checkmate before you know it!

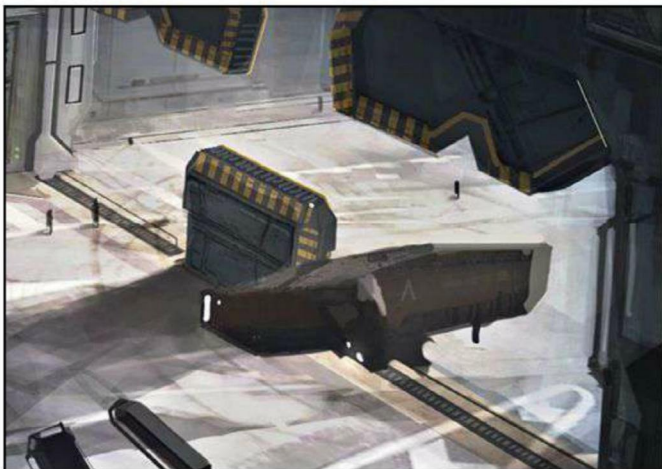
Lighting emphasises the aspects of a painting, such as composition, storytelling, impact and realism (including material, visual effects and atmosphere). The use of blocks of light can also help to affect the painting's mood, making for a more dramatic composition.

In this image that I've created for a personal project you can see two

masses of light, while everything else is immersed in shadow and penumbra (partial shadow).

One of the blocks of light is ambient, and the source is so great that it sheds light on all sides (like the sun or a big explosion). The second is a block of artificial light: the light is directional and may be generated by luminescent panels, or a strong source of energy.

It's fun to play with artificial light, especially in a space painting. But you must place them in a strategic manner to create the most engaging and refined image.



I used dark silhouettes to create spaceships surrounded by light and tones, which is an effective way to create contrast and depth between elements and the environment. Clean silhouettes and strong contrast helps to give a more realistic feeling to the painting.

Question

In what ways can I use colour to represent a personality trait?

Abraham Aarde, Tunisia



Using different colour palettes, you can add different nuances to a character, even with a neutral expression such as this.

can define a character just by focusing on facial expression for example, and not pay attention to colour at all. But colour can be a useful card up your sleeve to boost the expressive potential of your art.

Some concepts commonly associated with colours are passion and anger (red), sadness (blue), pettiness (acid yellow), vitality and energy (bright orange and bright green), boredom (grey), and goodness (golden yellow). But all of those associations are subjective and need to be accompanied by other elements (expression, clothing, pose) to have real meaning. So you can combine opposite elements to transmit more complex concepts. For example, golden colours on a character with a wicked, evil expression can be used to transmit the idea of hypocrisy.

Answer

Paco replies



There are lots of theories and studies about the meaning and expressiveness of colour.

Colour can be used to represent a character; for example, red is an intense colour and when associated to a character it can suggest a passionate personality. Of course, that's not a hard and fast rule – you

Question

What brushes do I need to paint realistic cobwebs?

Adam Dugan, US

Answer

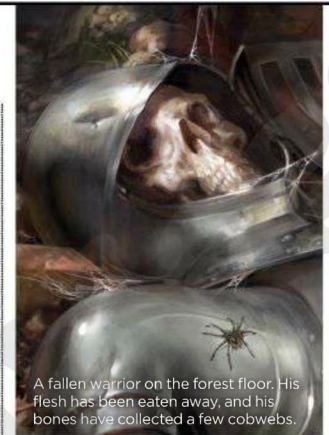
Cynthia replies



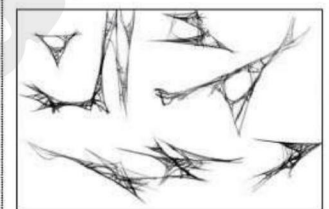
I suggest using a brush with hard edges, such as a Hard Round or Hard Square, and avoid too much texture. However, as long as you understand the basic anatomy of a cobweb, you can render one with any hard brush.

When a spider builds her web, she affixes a thicker silk thread to a handful of stable points, and weaves the rest using those as the foundation. If you map out three or more points on your canvas to represent the places where the strong threads are attached, you can draw solid lines between each, then smaller erratic lines between those for texture.

I suggest creating a practice page in greyscale, then taking the web shapes that you like best and making a set of your own custom cobweb brushes.



A fallen warrior on the forest floor. His flesh has been eaten away, and his bones have collected a few cobwebs.



These basic cobweb shapes use lines that connect to three or four main points. Smaller threads add texture to the webs.

Question

I need advice on perfecting the sunken, rotten flesh on my zombie characters!

Bill Foster, Scotland

Answer

Mélanie replies



Ironically, I always tend to start with a strong base when painting a zombie's rotten skin.

By that I mean a finished character with a normal skin. This is because it's easier to play with the skin by destroying it instead of constructing the whole character while trying to paint rotten flesh at the same time.

Once I've got my character ready for the transformation I can start the fun part. I select some areas of the skin and leave some a neutral colour, but you can do this almost anywhere on the character. I pick a red tone to quickly sketch the base of my rotten flesh. I don't paint one huge hole of missing flesh, but rather several small ones with different shapes and sizes, which will increase the impression of decay. I also add some cold colours such as green, blue and

violet to add a more rotten look to the skin. You can also play with the muscle and the bones, making some visible, but you must follow the anatomy underneath.

After sketching the rotten parts, all I have to do is work the details. I paint some flesh threads here and there, following the shape of my flesh holes.



I sketch the rotten flesh with a basic Round edge brush. This enables me to easily add, remove or modify some parts before painting in the details.

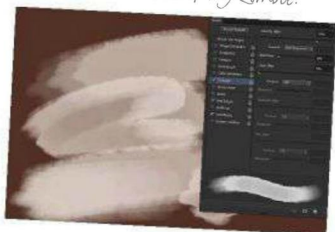
Your rotten skin's colour scheme is important, because it needs to blend in with that of the character's normal skin. Otherwise it won't look natural.



Artist's secret

SKIN BASIC BRUSH

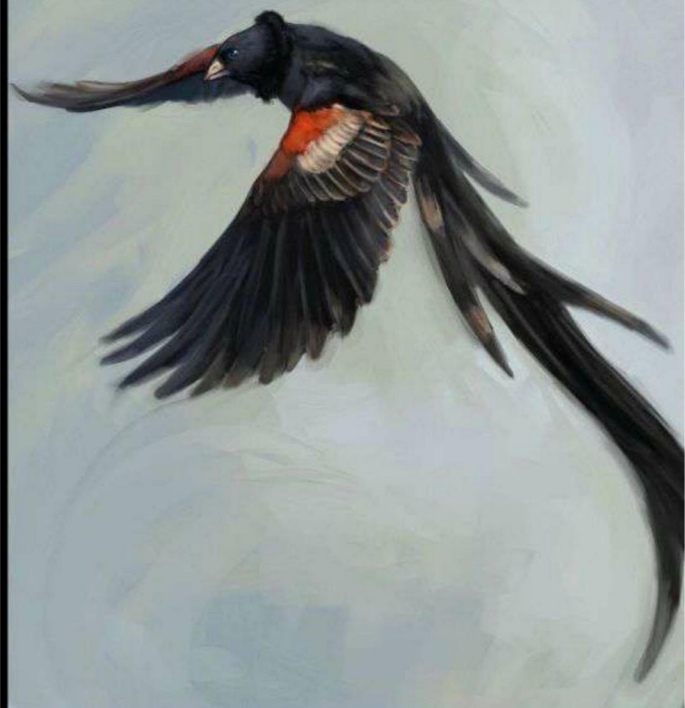
This is the kind of brush I tend to use more and more for the skin base. It's soft and textured enough to bring some interesting colour variation to the brush strokes. I sometimes use the Wet Edges setting when I need to add details on the skin, such as some dots of light on the wounds of my zombie.



Question

My flying creature looks unrealistic. Can you help?

Sharron Yu, Malaysia



Answer

Lauren replies



You'll need to consider a few different things to ensure that your creature looks convincing while pictured in flight. Think about the overall design and proportions, what kind of wings the beast has and what sort of movements those wings have to make to keep the creature aloft. For example, a vulture's wings move very differently from a hummingbird's, even though the basic structure is the same in both creatures.

If you're trying to depict a fantasy creature, then you want to make the wings appear big and strong enough to support the creature. Alternatively, if they're comically undersized, have them flap extremely quickly to compensate! The film *How to Train Your Dragon* is worth a look for inspiration, because the wing movements and shapes vary across each breed of dragon according to what their body looks like.

If you're just trying to depict a natural creature, make sure you understand how the wings move to support flight. Make motion studies – not just of the wing positions, but also the animal's body. The spine, shoulders, tail and legs all play a part in creating proper posture for a creature in flight.

Consider the animal's body language when showing an animal in flight. Motion blur can help add to the illusion of being airborne.

One of the best ways to better understand how a creature's body looks in flight is to study wing motions in different real-world creatures.



Question

How can I show two characters of different height in conversation?

Charlie Harris, England

Answer

Nick answers



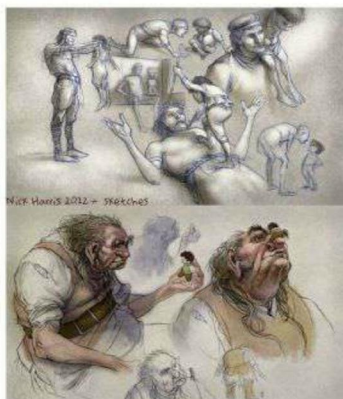
Intimate conversation to me implies the two characters talking should have their heads close enough together to allow privacy. The interesting part of this is how you choose to arrange it.

With both standing up straight on flat ground next to one another, the taller character would need to crane his or her neck down, while the shorter cranes his or hers up. Now while that's okay, there's much more fun on offer than that.

Not only can you show the nature of the conversation, but express something about the characters by staging everything more creatively. Just how big is the height differential? What might the conversation be about? Does the nature of the conversation mean one or both characters are cross/happy/worried? How does that affect their body language and their attitude to one another? Are there any props to help overcome the height difference? Where are they having the chat? Indoors or outdoors makes a big difference to how the conversation can take place.

I've doodled a few ideas proposing some different ways that could put two such characters in a position to have a tête-à-tête. Hopefully I've hinted at some different dynamics too. Here, I've gone for an interior setting that provides a suitable prop and a plausible situation with the two discussing something in the wizard's hand. The two characters in sentry pose are there to add to the sense of secrecy and suspense.

Consider how you can use familiar scenes and props to have fun to make what might be an unlikely meeting both more believable and engaging.



Taking a bit of time to investigate angles and character combinations for an idea like this can open up all sorts of interesting possibilities. Sketching is always a great exercise.

Artist's secret

KEEP YOUR DISTANCE

For something like this where the pattern of light is key to the composition, it's a good idea to develop it as far as possible without zooming in too much, and paint with the largest brush you can bear to use.



Step-by-step: Paint a secret discussion in ArtRage

1 This off-kilter composition still focuses on the two main figures. I'm aiming for a conspiratorial feel with both heads tucked under the brim of the wizard's hat. In this instance the height difference is



resolved by how they use the bench. I slap down a simple tonal pattern over a sketch in ArtRage, using the oil brush.

2 I build up volume while keeping a muted palette that I think will suit the mood. As I do this, I try to ensure that the most interesting part visually will be the area where the two main characters are



studying something. During this phase I let the wizard's head get a bit big and have to put it right. Good old digital editing!

3 I use the image's brightest light source from the small window to drag the focus more towards the right on the main figures. I do this with thinned Oil Brush layers set to Multiply over an opaquely



painted base layer. I pick out glinting details last on a layer over the top. That's always the fun bit that might just make the thing pop.

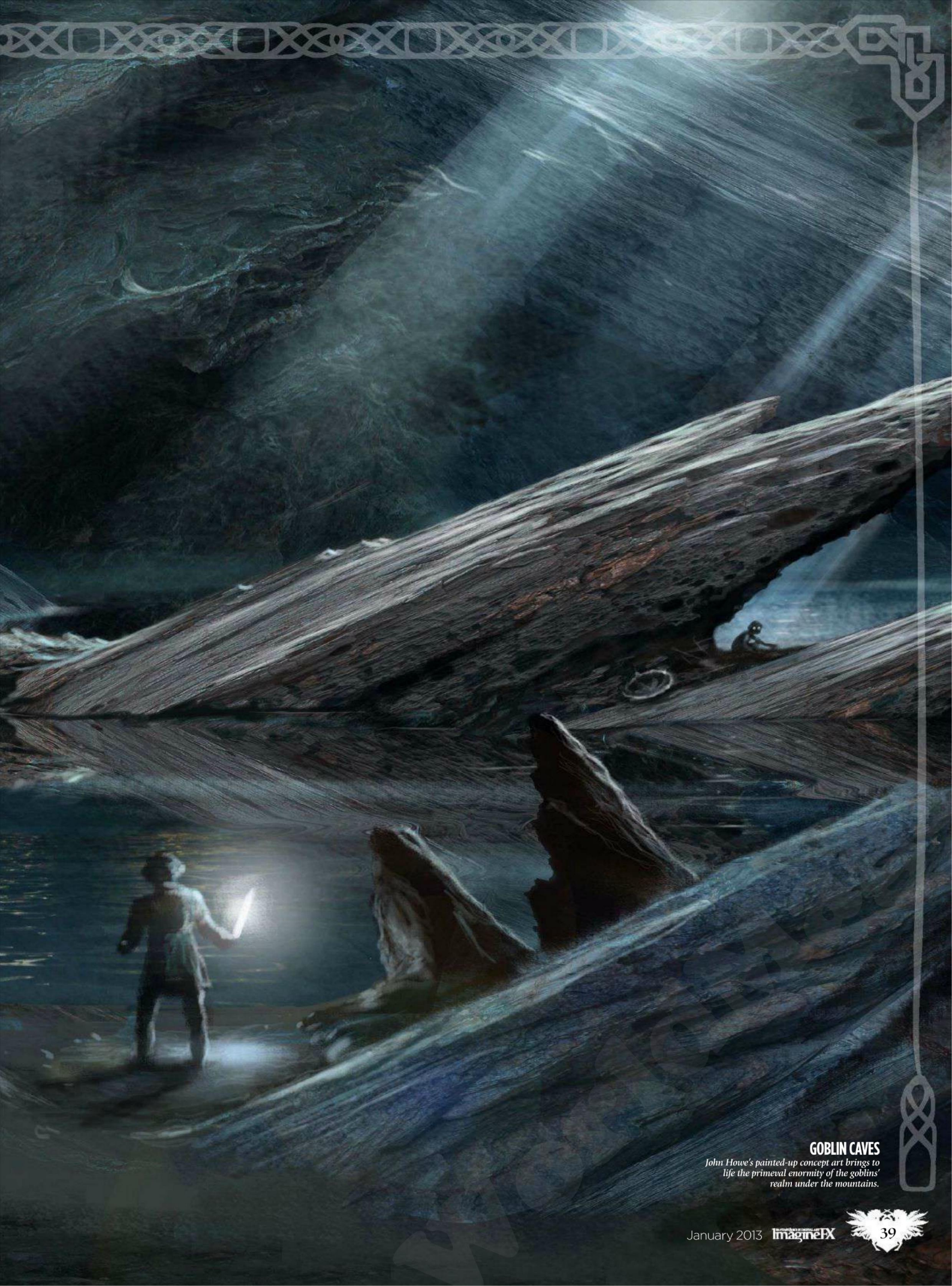
Got a digital art problem? Is an image giving you art-ache? Our panel can help. Email your question to our experts at help@imaginefx.com or write to **Artist Q&A, ImagineFX, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, BA1 2BW, UK.**



an Unexpected Journey

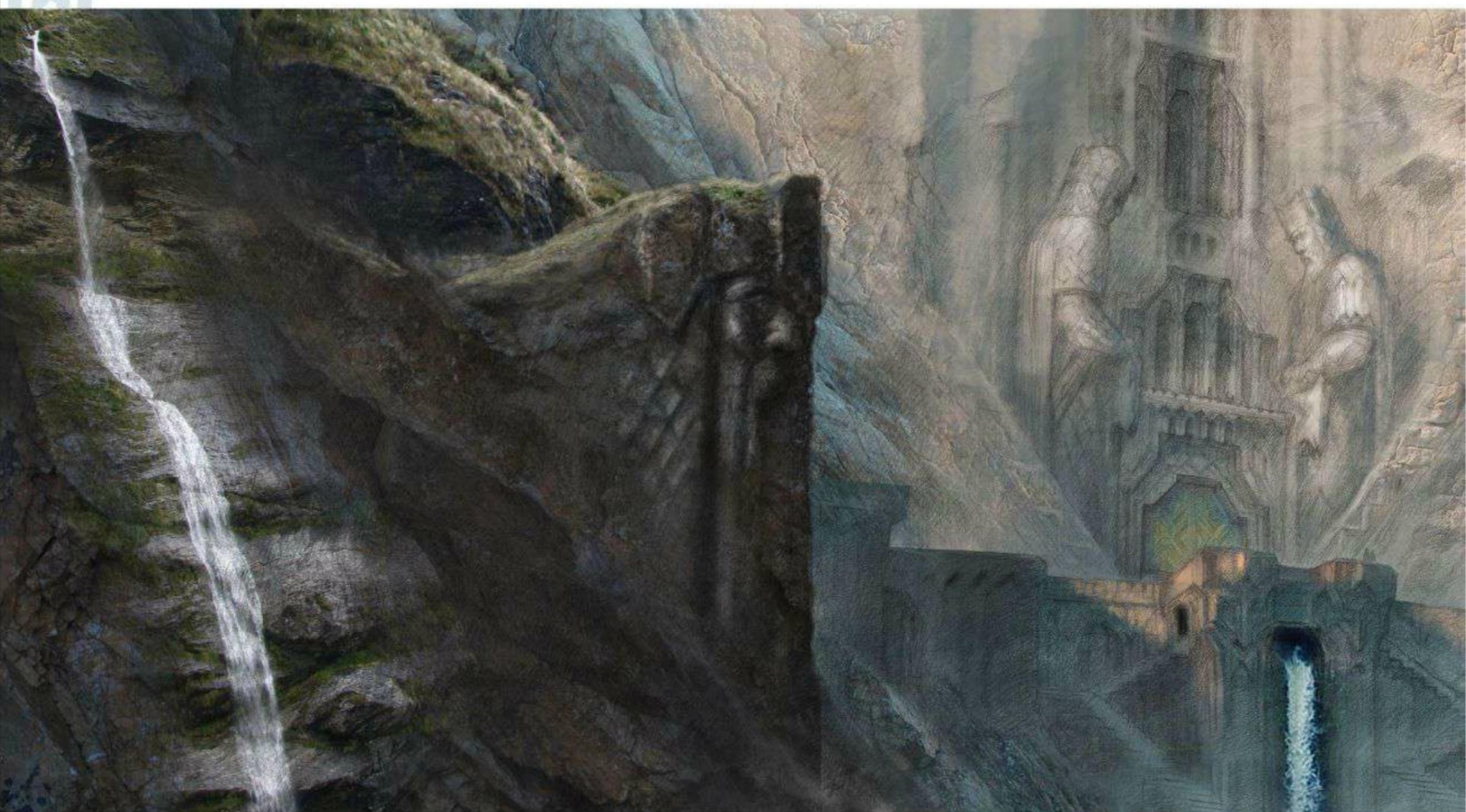
For concept artists **John Howe** and **Alan Lee**, helping to make The Hobbit films has been an epic undertaking. Fitting, really...

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GOBLIN CAVES

John Howe's painted-up concept art brings to life the primeval enormity of the goblins' realm under the mountains.



Filmgoers and Tolkien fans alike were somewhat surprised when director Peter Jackson revealed that *The Hobbit* would not be one film, but three. Yes, what is on paper a children's story of little more than 300 pages is being turned into three feature-length films and they're going to be every bit as ambitious as the director's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, released between 2001 and 2003.

For John Howe and Alan Lee, the LotR concept artists who returned to New Zealand to work with Peter Jackson on *The Hobbit*, the past three years have been busy. As the project has grown, the



politics and economics behind the three films – entitled *An Unexpected Journey*, *The Desolation of Smaug*, and *There and Back Again* – will provide material for some very interesting ‘making of’ books.

“I thought it would be a lot shorter, and simpler, but it has turned into another epic – on screen and off screen,” says Alan. “My part of the job has been pretty much the same: drawing all day long, concentrating mainly on the places, rather than characters and creatures.”

Alan and John have produced well over 5,000 pieces of concept art. As we go to press the films are in post-production, and although *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* is close to completion, the artists

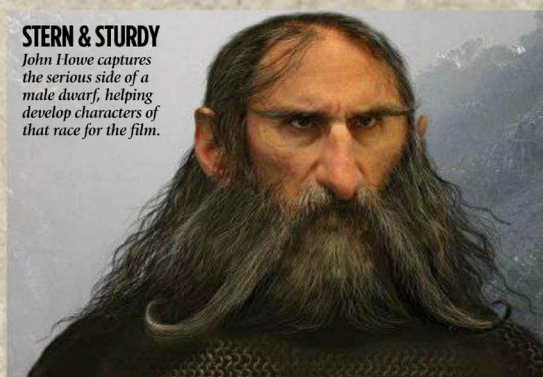


BEARDED

A dwarven lady as sketched by Alan Lee.

STERN & STURDY

John Howe captures the serious side of a male dwarf, helping develop characters of that race for the film.



Character building

Drawing the world of the dwarves, plus wizards and werebears!

While hobbit, elven and human characters were developed very well in the LotR films, the only dwarf to speak of was Gimli. However, in *The Hobbit* the dwarves and their history underpin the storyline. John Howe is predicting that *The Hobbit* films will do for the dwarves what Tolkien's writing in general has done for elves in the fantasy genre. And John spent a lot of time developing the race, from depicting statues of their heroes in their underground cities, to drawing their musical instruments, weapons, kit bags, lanterns and, of course, their beards.

Alan Lee also drew the dwarves, as well as a wizard who's only mentioned in passing in *The Hobbit*. “I did a fair amount of work on Radagast the Brown – an old friend and ally of Gandalf,” says Alan. “I’d never drawn him before, so it was a treat to have this wonderful, eccentric character turn up in *The Hobbit*.” You’ll see this wizard of the woods drawn through Mirkwood on a sleigh pulled by large rabbits.

Meanwhile, John looked at Beorn, the great warrior who can turn into a bear, and is another important inhabitant of the woodlands of Middle-earth.



GATEWAY

An ancient entry into a dwarven realm under the mountains, rendered by John Howe.

ARTIST TIP: JOHN HOWE

"One word: draw. There's a lovely phrase by a Maori philosopher: 'Bind within, bind without, bind above, bind below...' Sketching and drawing should connect you to your thoughts in the same way it connects you to what's around you."



UNDER THE MOUNTAIN

John Howe expresses the engineering complexity inside the dwarven mines.

are still drawing away feverishly. They're supporting the film's CG teams in the last-minute creation of digital sets for scenes that still need work. Stepping one generation back into Middle-earth's history means there will be plenty of stunning new environments, characters and monsters for us to enjoy. The goblins, Beorn, Smaug and the mysteries of Mirkwood are all going to make their debuts on the big screen.

"We're well past 2,500 drawings each by now – and counting," says John. "While The Hobbit takes place in Tolkien's Middle-earth, it's still a world not only inventing itself but a rather wilder one, all told. Rather than Frodo's reluctant journey south, Thorin and company head east,

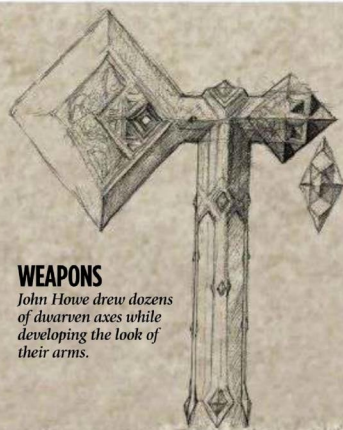
“My part of the job has been pretty much the same: drawing all day long”

back to their homeland, to a part of Middle-earth that's entirely new. New territory, new characters, new cultures – but it still needs to feel as though it's in the same world."

Early in the project, both artists sketched the same scenes loosely from the book as Peter Jackson explored not just the look ➔

WEAPONS

John Howe drew dozens of dwarven axes while developing the look of their arms.



FIERCE AND HARDY

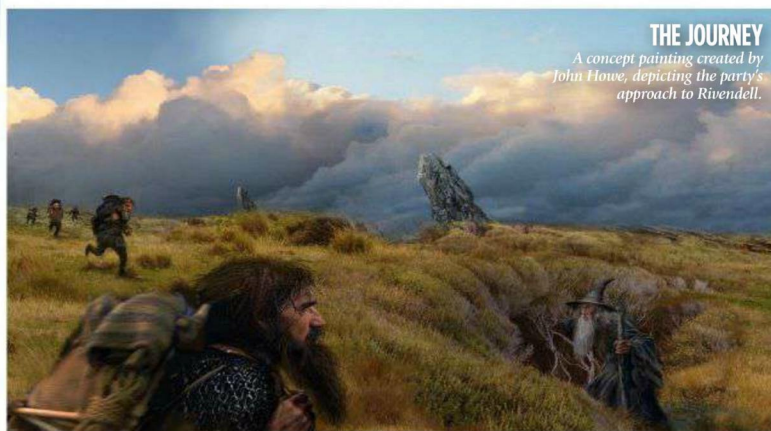
The very nature of the dwarves would be told through their battle gear, as drawn by John Howe.



RADAGAST

The druid-like wizard Radagast the Brown, sketched here by Alan Lee





THE JOURNEY

A concept painting created by John Howe, depicting the party's approach to Rivendell.

➔ and feel of this period in Middle-earth's development, but the emotions surrounding it. Later on, they worked separately, making specific environments, characters, props and events their own.

For instance, Alan worked a great deal on areas of Rivendell not seen in LotR.

"Rivendell plays quite a large part in The Hobbit," he says, "as it did in The Lord of the Rings, and it has been enjoyable re-

world and their work depicting Middle-earth is loved by fans precisely because it is so detailed. While they might have felt in their element when asked to examine Middle-earth in such depth, having set builders standing around, waiting for the sketches meant that images couldn't be rendered to a highly finished state.

This wasn't a source of frustration for Alan, though. "There is a pleasure in

“It's possible to evoke some storytelling elements within even a small sketch”

visiting that environment. But only one set was rebuilt – Elrond's Hall. The other Rivendell scenes are in parts of the elven citadel that we didn't go in LotR. One of the main differences is the extra definition of the filming processes. At an early stage, Peter did some tests in 3D and at 48 frames per second, and it became obvious that we would have to pay extra attention to the finishing of the sets and props.”

These extra technical demands meant much more detail had to be applied. On top of being concept artists for the LotR and The Hobbit trilogies, Alan and John are among the most famous Tolkien illustrators in the

taking a drawing to the point where it has communicated exactly what is necessary for the next pair of skilled hands to take it further,” he explains. “The drawings aren't done as illustrations – often they're depictions of objects the actors may carry around with them – but it's possible to evoke some aspect of the character, and some storytelling elements within even a small and simple sketch. The actors always appreciate having something personal they can handle, which adds another tiny layer of history.”

Meanwhile, John worked on Bilbo's home in Hobbiton. Bag End is the setting for ➔

sketching ON SET WITH alan lee

The esteemed artist explains his drawing process while working on The Hobbit



"I work in pencil in sketchbooks and on A2 or A1 sheets of paper, often without a strong or clear idea of how I want to proceed. I work in quite an intuitive way, watching some lines and tones appear on the paper before deciding what they are going to be. A line will get some distance before it has decided whether

it's the sleeve of a garment, a branch of a tree or a mountain range. But I'll have some mood, or sense of scale or movement in mind, usually creating a sense of a possibility that something dramatic may happen, rather than aiming directly at a moment of high drama.

"A lot of my illustration is like setting the scene, so helping to create a film set is a fairly natural extension of that. I'm also thinking about events that may have happened in that place, that have left their mark in some way. By the time I've finished the drawing I'm carrying the whole history of that imaginary place around with me. Then in drawing the same place from a different viewpoint, more ideas emerge, and revisions are made. As I add to and extend the buildings, they become more real. I'll draw a town square, and then imagine myself in a corner of it, looking up the next street, and start to draw that. That's just the start of the process. If Peter likes the ideas then there will be many more drawings, focusing on particular details.

"We would get a schedule and advice from Dan Hennah, the production designer, on what would be the most useful things to concentrate on, and meetings with Peter to gain insight on how he envisaged certain scenes. In the early stages, before there was a script, we just worked through ideas in more general and exploratory ways. For example, knowing that mountain giants were likely to appear, I started putting emerging rock faces into the Misty Mountains' cliffs, so we could start to talk about the nature and physiology of these creatures – were they made of flesh and blood or of stone, or were they just metaphorical?

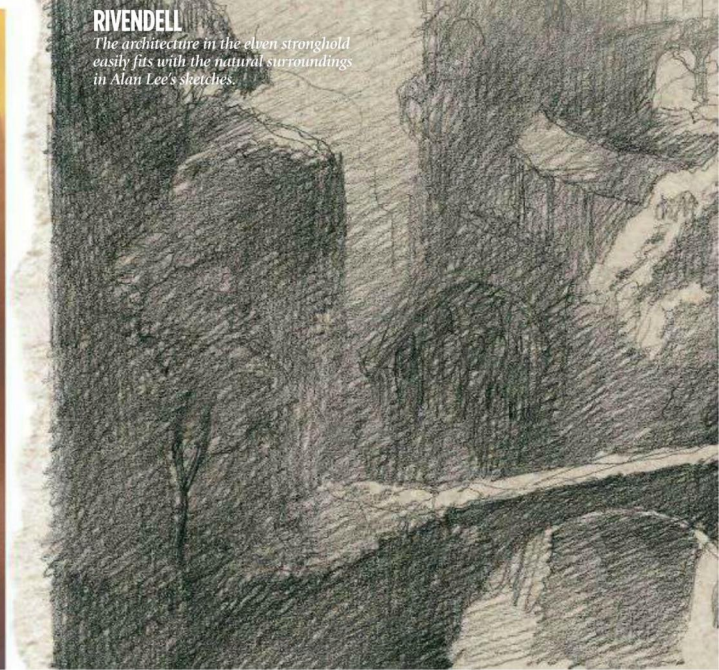
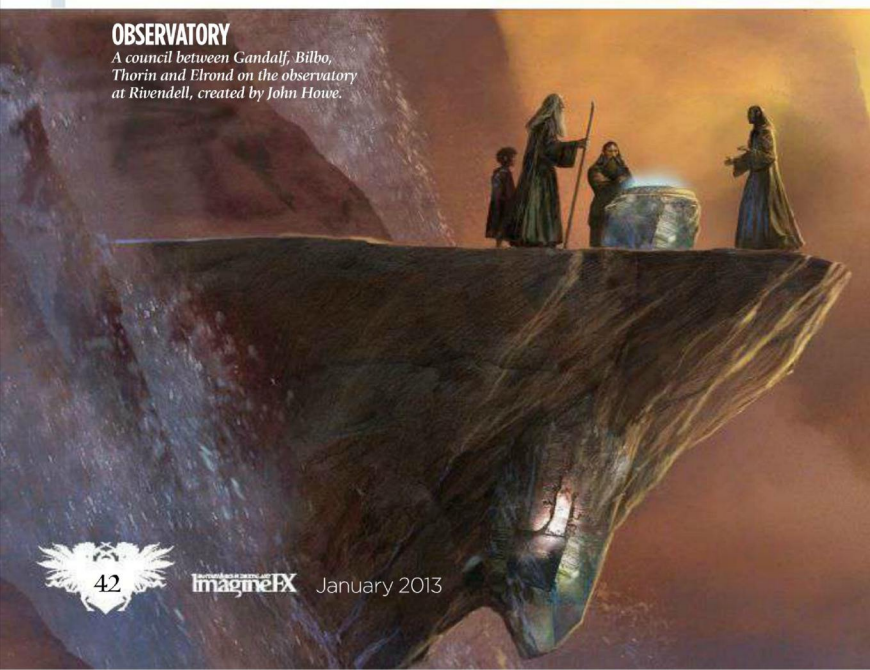
"A lot of the time, drawing is a way of asking questions, rather than answering them. We worked closely with Dan, and Ra Vincent, who as set decorator is responsible for the dressing of the sets. And also with the set designers, who complete the working drawings, mostly in CAD, which are issued to the construction teams. And then there are the model-makers who will produce a detailed model of every set. These are crucial in getting a sign-off from Peter so that full-scale building can start."

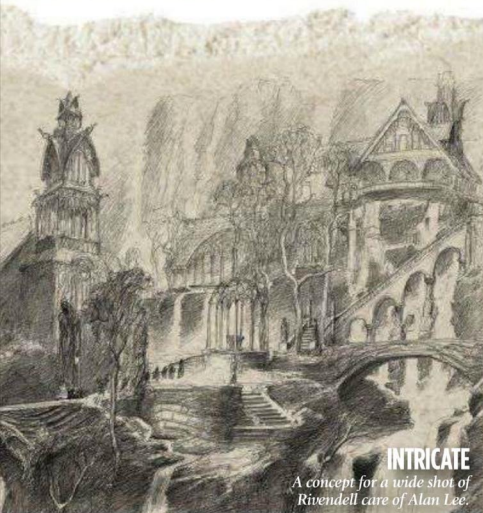
RIVENDELL

The architecture in the elven stronghold easily fits with the natural surroundings in Alan Lee's sketches.

OBSERVATORY

A council between Gandalf, Bilbo, Thorin and Elrond on the observatory at Rivendell, created by John Howe.



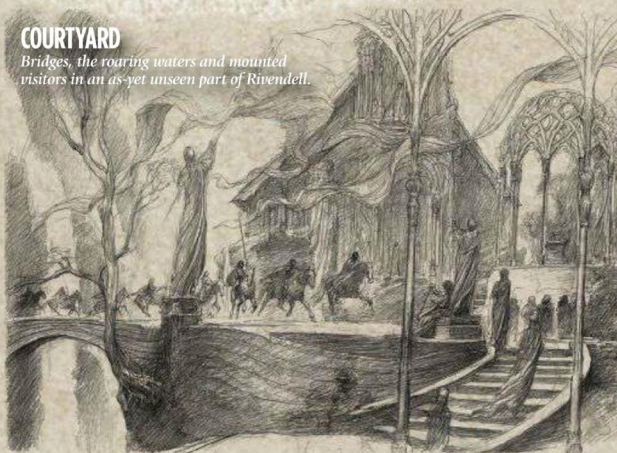


INTRICATE

A concept for a wide shot of Rivendell here of Alan Lee.

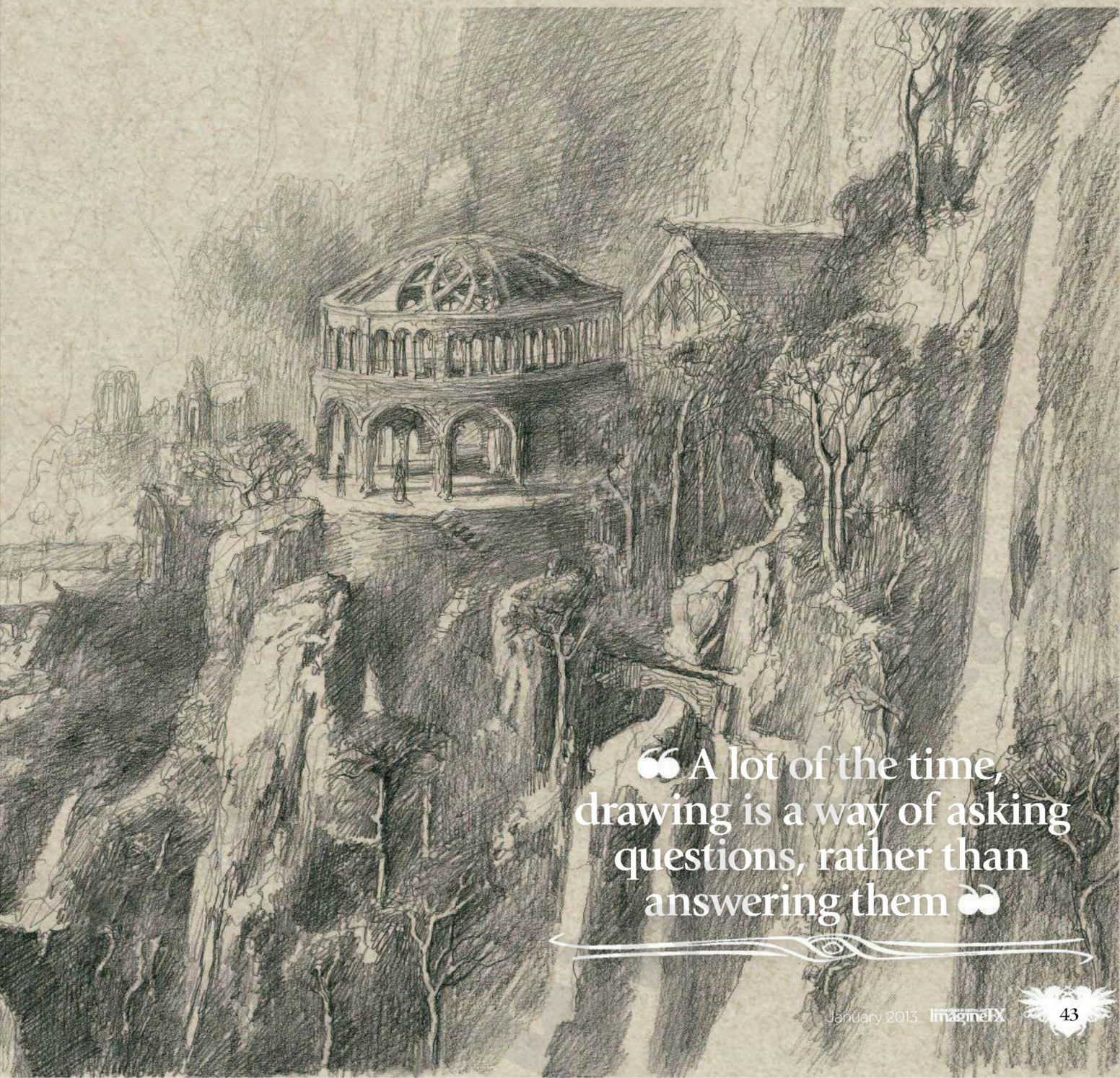
COURTYARD

Bridges, the roaring waters and mounted visitors in an as-yet unseen part of Rivendell.



NOBLE AND POWERFUL

The elves depict their heroes with more grace and less stoicism than the dwarves.



“A lot of the time, drawing is a way of asking questions, rather than answering them”



APPROACHING PERIL

The party's path through the mountains heads towards the realm of the Goblin King in John Howe's concept art.

hepE BE MONSTERS

The denizens of Middle-earth are finally revealed – apart from a certain dragon...

"In *An Unexpected Journey*, the bad guys I spent most time with were the mountain giants, and their neighbours, the goblins," says Alan Lee. "The giants aren't bad, just a little rowdy at times, but the goblins are a pretty nasty and unhygienic bunch. The work on them was more about their environment and habits than how they looked."

Indeed, The Great Goblin will be one of the key villains of the first film. Furthermore, it's in the goblin caves that Bilbo becomes lost and meets Gollum, a character whose fate runs right through to the end of *LotR*. Although the CG visage of Gollum was well established for the blockbusting trilogy of films, both artists sketched out his cave, and the little boat he paddles around in.

But what about Smaug? The last ancient dragon in Middle-earth is a focal point of the book but is still being kept under wraps as far as the films are concerned. "Sorry, top secret that one," says John Howe. "I'm afraid you'll have to wait until the next film to really see Smaug properly. It seems very important that we see him as he was seen in the book, through the eyes of a very resolved but nevertheless thoroughly terrified hobbit, deep under the Lonely Mountain. This said, it never does to leave a dragon out of your calculations..."

Trolls and wargs have already been seen in the *LotR* films, but extra characters have been given to both artists, with John working on wargs – the attack beasts of the orcs – that are noticeably less hyena-like in their appearance this time around.



DARK LORD

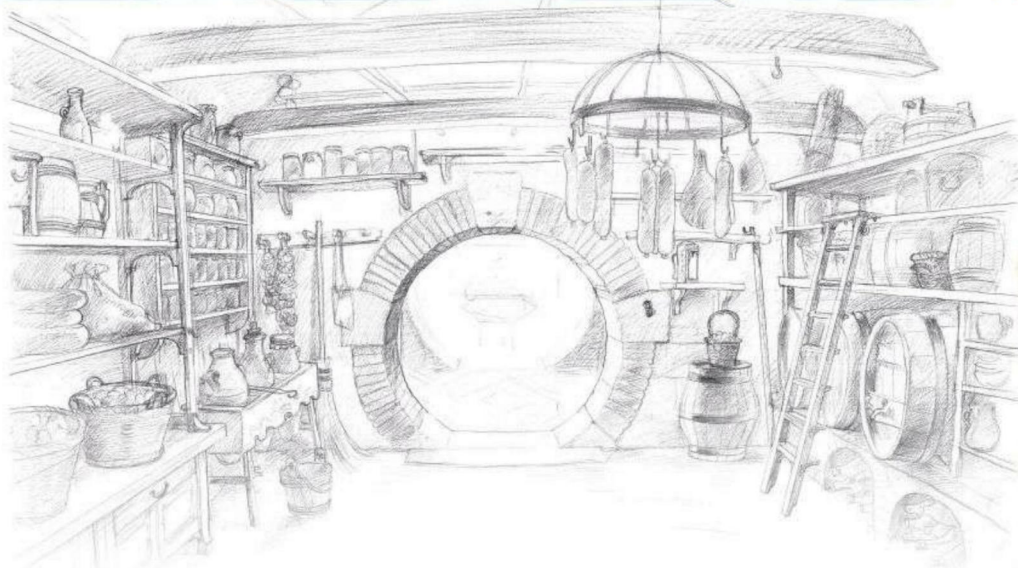
The Goblin King has a touch of Louis XIV about him in Alan Lee's sketch.

SNARLING

The wargs in *LotR* seemed a little like spotted hyaenas, but John Howe's drawing them a bit more wolf-like here.

GOBLIN WARRIOR

John Howe's goblin warrior has an insect-like helmet and armour.



PANTRY FIASCO

Rooms at Bag End not seen before include the pantry, which the dwarves raid, sketched here by John Howe.

➔ the opening chapter of the book, where we discover the nature of the dwarves' quest. John sketched out the rooms not seen in LotR, such as the pantry, which the dwarves raid, and the dining room where Bilbo is seduced by their heroic tales. He also drew five new hobbit holes in the village.

Beyond that, he took on visualising the wizard Radagast's home. Part of Peter

Rings [films] – it was built straight after Bag End and Rivendell – and it's not in the novel, either. It felt incredibly hobbit and very much in keeping with the spirit of the book," says John.

He continues: "The characters were generally the domain of the designers down the road at Weta Workshop, and of course the Stone Street Studios costume

“There's a density to Tolkien's work that is thoroughly appealing”

ARTIST TIP: alan lee

"The best way of improving drawing skills is to alternate observational drawing with drawing from the imagination. What you absorb while looking at a tree or a face will add to the realism of your imaginative work, and help it to be less generic."

Jackson's mission in making the three films has been to integrate the storyline of The Hobbit with that of the LotR films. We'll witness some of what Gandalf gets up to when he abandons the dwarves at various points in the story, and see things either trimmed from LotR, or newly created based on what's inferred in the books.

"Radagast's house was the first Hobbit set that was not derived from The Lord of the

department. We did amuse ourselves by kicking off a whole Photoshop saga by repainting ourselves and other members of the crew as dwarves, just by enlarging noses, ears and beards."

Working with Peter Jackson on The Lord of the Rings trilogy a decade ago, Alan and John have already had a huge impact on fantasy art around the world. A whole generation of artists see orcs, wizards, elves,

radagast's house

Both artists worked on the wizard's dwelling

The Hobbit films will fill out elements of the history of Middle-earth that aren't cohesively covered in the book. For instance, John Howe and Alan Lee worked on the character Radagast, and the setting he lives in.

Another member of the council of wizards that Gandalf occasionally attends, Radagast's magic springs from nature. He's almost like the druid of the piece – all about wood, leaves, moss and woodland creatures. It's no surprise that both artists envisaged his home would be in the grips of a mighty tree!



TREE HOUSE

Radagast's house almost has a face here in John Howe's painting.



SKETCHED

In Alan Lee's sketch you get a sense of how integrated with nature the wizard's existence is.

MYTHICAL

Tolkien's wood elves and their strange mounts painted here by John Howe.

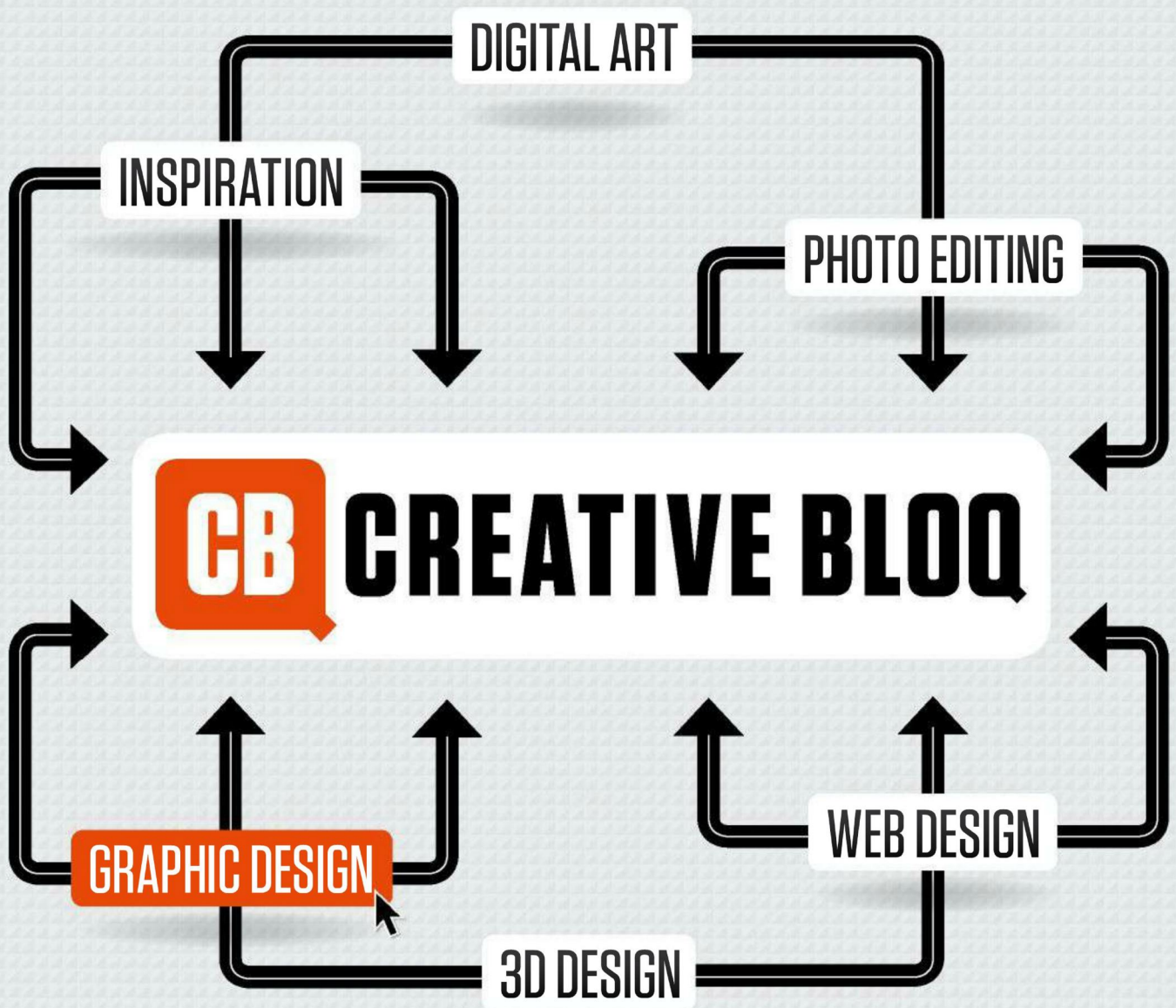


dark riders and a legion of other fantasy staples in a particular way. And they're about to make another huge impression upon the edifice of the genre with the Hobbit films. But for both the artists, it all goes back to Tolkien and the immensity of what he imagined in creating The Hobbit, The Lord of the Rings and The Silmarillion.

"Tolkien's work has an eternal, classical quality to it that will ensure it will be read widely for many years," says Alan. "His profound understanding of myth and wonderful storytelling skills make his work so enjoyable to illustrate. It is the layering of history, legend and folklore that gives such richness to his work."

And John concludes: "There's a density to Tolkien's work that is thoroughly appealing. Scratch the surface and you discover the depth and breadth of the influence, and references discernible in his fiction, which makes it incredibly fascinating to try to illustrate, because every description is just the first page of a whole volume of history and myth."

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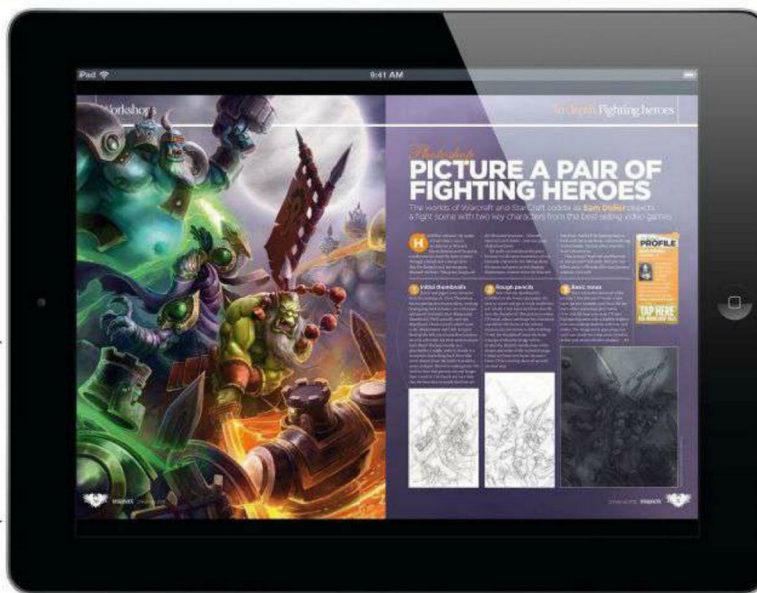
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Issue 85 August 2012



This manga art special bulges with fantastic art and advice, ranging from Sakimi Chan's colourful cover character to Feng Zhu painting four images at once, and Jack Bosson's priceless advice for drawing costumed figures. We also talk to comics legend Joe Madureira.

Issue 86 September 2012



We celebrate the gaudy, over-the-top world of pulp art, and embrace the genre with workshops from Will Murai and Dan D Evans. Weta's Christian Pearce dirties up his art, ex-Disney artist Jack Bosson draws jazz dancers, and Thom Tenery paints a snowy alien landscape.

Issue 87 October 2012



The age-old problem areas of colour and light are tackled head-on this issue, with excellent workshops from Emmanuel Malin, Phroilan Gardner and cover artist Helen Rusovich on the subjects. We also talk to rule-breaking poster boy Simon Goinard and lots, lots more.

Issue 88 November 2012



It's a trip down memory lane this issue as we track down artists behind the Fighting Fantasy gamebooks. Workshops include Francesco Lorenzetti on three-hour speedpainting, Simon Webber on 3D creature concepts, James Gurney on fantasy architecture and more.

Issue 89 December 2012



Our game art special includes some of the world's leading video game artists. There's Remko Troost on Assassin's Creed 3, Hoyjin Ahn reveals Guild Wars 2 techniques and John Park discusses HAWKEN. Epic Games's Shane Pierce explores the art of Gears of War and we visit Ubisoft.

Issue 90 Christmas 2012



In our Blizzard issue, the video game publishers give us the green light to show off new art from Alex Ross, Simon Bisley, Syd Mead, Alex Horley, Paul Bonner, Craig Mullins and other great artists. Sam Didier paints a Warcraft-StarCraft mash-up, and Laurel D Austin composes a group of spiky alien characters.

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Rising Stars judges

CB Cebulski

Famed for being able to sniff out comic talent before even opening his inbox, CB used his many years of experience as the Marvel talent scout to help us this year. He reveals to us his Comic choices on pages 53 and 54.

www.bit.ly/ifx-cbcebalski

Sam Didier

Blizzard art director, ImagineFX workshop artist and all-round art wolverine, Samwise tells us why he was taken by Corel Painter artist Paulo Torres on page 62.

www.blizzard.com

Jon Schindehette

Having seen around a billion portfolios over the years, we were confident to give another thousand to Wizard of the Coast's senior art director to mull over. Skip to page 52 for his Environment category choice, and page 61 for his pick in the Corel Painter category.

www.theartorder.com

RISING STARS 2012

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THE WINNERS!

We reveal the 10 Rising Stars of 2012, as chosen by ImagineFX and our all-star panel of judges



his has been the biggest ImagineFX Rising Stars competition to date. And with a record number of entrants came the most diverse selection of art we've seen – oils and acrylics, Photoshop and Painter, comic and illustration, from every age group around the world. We had the pleasure to look through over 1,000 entrants, tomorrow's top fantasy and sci-fi artists. But there can be only 10 winners, two from each category, to bask in the well-deserved community kudos and divvy up the

£20,000-worth of spoils. Deciding on the winners was a hard job, but luckily we had the help of a panel of incredible judges: Kekai Kotaki, Samwise Didier, Lou Anders, Kevin Jenkins, Christian Alzmann, CB Cebulski and Jon Schindehette.

It doesn't end there though. As well as the 10 winners, we've chosen artists that we all felt deserved an honourable mention for their sterling artwork. Over the next month we will be featuring all their artwork online. For now, though, enjoy the ImagineFX Rising Stars winners of 2012. ➡➡

Kekai Kotaki

Award winning, and not easily impressed, Guild Wars concept artist Kekai had plenty of good things to say about this year's entrants. On page 60 he selects his favourite artist in the Video Game category.

www.kekaiart.com

Kevin Jenkins

Finding time away from leading Framestore's art department, Kevin gave sound advice for all categories, but see who he picked as a winner in the Illustration section on page 57.

www.framestore-cfc.com

Rising Stars 2012

Tuomas Korpi

Chris Houghton

Michael C Hayes

Elisabeth Alba

Lu Hau

Jon Norton

Christian Alzmann

Film concept artist and senior VFX art director, Christian gave us plenty of detailed crits on the artists he felt impressed the most. Turn to page 51 to see who he chose as his Environment winner.

www.christianalzmann.com

Lou Anders

Art and editorial director, Lou, like all our judges, picked his top 10 based on what they brought to each specific category. He comments on his Illustration winner on page 55.

www.louanders.com

Bastien Grivet

Chang Lip Wei

Miklós Földi

Dudu Torres

SKYCITIES

"A water tower and oriental patterns inspired me for this. I started in 3ds Max, sketched the mood, palette and atmosphere in Photoshop, then it was mainly painting. I had lots of fun with the details, and the light."

ARTIST'S ADVICE

ANALYSE EVERYTHING

"Be switched on at all times, ready to get your pencil and pad out at any time. Draw a lot, because all the painting, lighting and beautiful colours achieved in Photoshop can't fix it if there's something wrong with your basic form and design."

ENVIRONMENT TUOMAS KORPI

With a passion to work as a film concept artist, Tuomas's movie frames blew the judges away, including Christian Alzmann

LOCATION Finland **WEBSITE** www.tuomaskorpi.com **AGE** 27

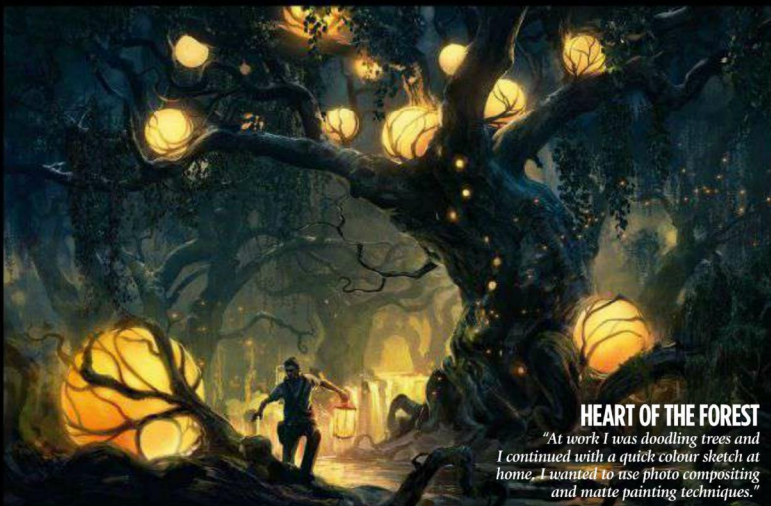


Likening his personal art to "frames of yet-to-be-made films" that leave space for the viewer's imagination, Tuomas's passion for environment art is simple yet compelling. "There's always little stories going on in the details or in the background," he says, "they're not just pretty images."

It's hard to miss the professionalism of his pieces. "Something clicked for my art

around 2005 when I was doing designs for an indie game," he says of his first professional job. "Refining my work in a production pipeline really helped me to push forward and find my style."

Growing up in a suburban area of Espoo, near Helsinki, in Finland, Tuomas was always close to dramatic environments. Although supported by family and friends to pursue his passion for art, Tuomas doesn't recall much artistic influence in his youth. But nature was always there.



HEART OF THE FOREST

"At work I was doodling trees and I continued with a quick colour sketch at home. I wanted to use photo compositing and matte painting techniques."



“Skillfully painted, Tuomas's images are full of imagination”
Christian Alzmann

"As a child I was a bit of a loner and had a curious mind, interested in nature and things around me. I drew a lot," he says.

Looking at Tuomas's grand constructions, it's no surprise that he studied art at college and architecture at university. But he feels education from online sites was equally important.

Upon these foundations, he became lead designer and art director at animation studio Piñata. "My strengths are definitely in strong composition and use of light and colour," he says. "I push to create interesting lighting and colour palettes, aiming to invent atmosphere and mood. Interesting lighting and palette can really bring out the right kind of story element in the image, and I think artists should utilise it more."

The ImagineFX team and the judges, including film artist Christian Alzmann, couldn't agree more.



ARTIST'S TOOLS PHOTOSHOP SQUARE CHALK BLENDER

A basic brush for sketching; great for blending colours and colour transitions.

ROUND CHALK

A brush with character. Works nicely for nature and when refining a painting.

PAINT STROKE

A little different. I use it for refining gradients or round surfaces. Quite a flexible brush.

TUOMAS'S PORTFOLIO

NEWS FROM THE HORIZON

"I wanted to explore architectural and design ideas for a civilisation living in a desert. I drew my inspiration from the stone-carved houses of Jordan and Tunis mixed with dynamic wind-carved forms from the Arizona desert, for an alien look."



CALL TO PRAYER

"Painted for the Assembly '11 demo party graphics competition. I did rough 3D models in 3ds Max, everything else was painted in Photoshop."

ENVIRONMENT

HONOURABLE MENTIONS



Noah Bradley
Location US
Website www.bit.ly/rs-noah



Victor Mosquera
Location Colombia
Website www.bit.ly/rs-victor



ALONE ON THE ROAD

"A personal work, done with Cinema 4D and Photoshop. I brought a story to this: a big flood, a big separation between rich and poor, and this guy with a crashed car."



ENVIRONMENT

BASTIEN GRIVET

Calling Steven Spielberg: if you want jaw-dropping environments, this is the man for you!

LOCATION France WEB www.grivetart.com AGE 23

ARTIST'S ADVICE TAKE YOUR TIME

"I always take a night before saying 'it's finished'. Fresh eyes are important. You can see little mistakes you may have missed when you've been working on your art non-stop."



Bastien Grivet was kicked out of art school. "I studied art in Geneva and at the end of the term I was fired," laughs the Swiss artist.

"I wanted to make scenes like Dylan Cole and Christian L. Scheurer, make things that made sense to people. But that was not a good idea in this school."

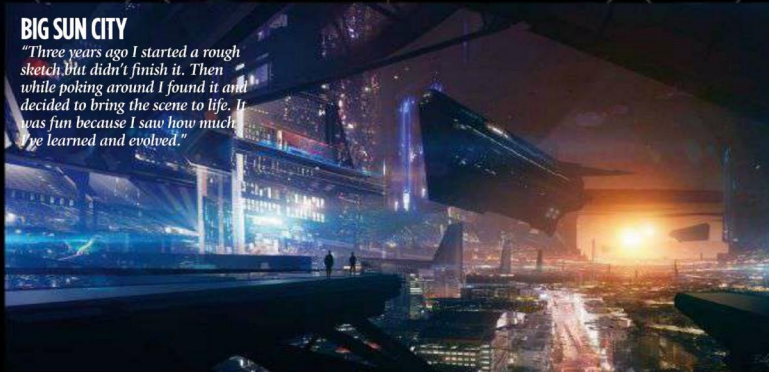
It was, insists the artist, the best thing to happen to him. In an institution geared around luxury goods design and contemporary art, Bastien's visions didn't fit. "I drew the stuff I wanted to draw clandestinely during the course," he says. "In the end I was kicked out of the art school for being 'inattentive, and drawing during the lectures'. Four months later I was hired by Ubisoft."

The French-based games company saw that Bastien's art was the opposite of his school's ideal. There's a grand openness to his paintings, a space that the viewer can't wait to get lost in. At 19 Bastien worked as concept artist on Ubisoft's as-yet-unreleased *Beyond Good & Evil 2*, and another big sci-fi project that was cancelled.

That may have been Bastien's first break, but he's only just started. "I've always followed my dream list," he says, "and at the top of that list, in first place, is 'work for Steven Spielberg'." There are other goals, but this leads the way, pushing Bastien to always be better, always keep his skills fresh. "One day I'm going to take my list and put a big tick next to that step."

BIG SUN CITY

"Three years ago I started a rough sketch but didn't finish it. Then while poking around I found it and decided to bring the scene to life. It was fun because I saw how much I've learned and evolved."



“Bastien captures the essence of a space, while his light and shadow go from dark foreboding to majestic nobility” Jon Schindehette



ARTIST'S TOOLS PHOTOSHOP

Over the years, I've collected a load of brushes from everywhere, including some by artists Barontieri and Mathias Verhasselt. I've added some of my own creations in there, too.

ENVIRONMENT

HONOURABLE MENTIONS



Alexander Chelyshev

Location Russia

Website www.bit.ly/rs-alexander



Francesco Corvino

Location US

Website www.bit.ly/rs-francesco



COMIC CHRIS HOUGHTON

This freelance artist is inspired by Saturday morning cartoons and the allure of European comics

LOCATION US WEB www.chrishoughtonart.com AGE 24



Since quitting his job at a gym, aged 18, Chris hasn't looked back, or stayed still with his art. "I've been supporting myself as an artist for

six years, I only wanted to make money from my drawings and somehow I was able to do it and I haven't had a real job since."

He may not know much about the nine-to-five world, says the artist, but the life of hand-to-mouth freelancer – of constantly shifting personal goals to satisfy various projects – has provided all the incentive Chris needs to become a better artist.

"My art style is still evolving quite a bit," says Chris, "in fact it's weird to think of myself as having a style at all, because I'm a bit of a chameleon thanks to working in animation and all... I look back at the work I was doing just two years ago and see such a massive difference."

Growing up in America's heartland prepared the artist for a life in art, ironically



“Exactly what I look for in artists: seamless storytelling using body language and facial expressions” CB Cebulski

that was through the lack of art scene. "My brothers and I grew up in a small farm town in mid-Michigan and I wasn't exposed to a lot of art. Other than some Saturday morning cartoons, all I ever saw was comic books and Magic: The Gathering cards."

With a healthy dollop of European comics added to the mix – "the work of modern French artists such as Denis Bodart and Pierre Alary influence me incredibly," confirms the artist – Chris has focused on animation and comics ever since. Currently he, writer brother Shane and colourist Josh Ulrich create Reed Gunther for Image Comics, while also working for Disney TV.

Chris's artistic confidence is kicking in more and more as he gains experience. "Starting out it takes a lot of work to build those first client relationships, network and secure work. After six years, I feel more confident I won't be living in a dumpster surviving off stray cats."

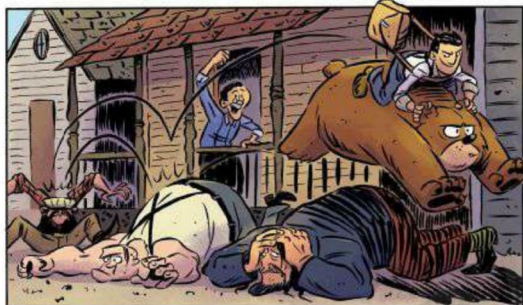
REED GUNTHER, ISSUE 6, PAGE 20

"I remember drawing this page behind my table at the APE convention in San Francisco. I like that there isn't a background and all the reader's attention is focused on the fun, domino-like action going on."



ARTIST'S ADVICE CHOOSE THE MIDDLE PATH

"When you're feeling down, don't compare your work to others. When you're feeling too confident, it's time to compare your work to the best. It'll show how much work you have left to do. That and, go after a section of the art industry that's going to continue to excite, inspire, and challenge you each day regardless of what anyone else says you should do with your art."



REED GUNTHER, ISSUE 10, PAGE 4

"I tried to create a swooping line of action that runs from the guy's raised hand, through all the characters."



ARTIST'S TOOLS TRADITIONAL

My panels are mostly done with the Pentel Pocket Brush Pens, as well as other Pentel pens, though the names of those are written in Japanese. I use Microns for the borders and small details, and lots and lots of white-out!

(Colours by Josh Ulrich, © Shane and Chris Houghton)

(Colours by Josh Ulrich, © Shane and Chris Houghton)

COMIC HONOURABLE MENTIONS



Kevin Molen
Location US
Website www.bit.ly/rs-kevin



Neeraj Menon
Location India
Website www.bit.ly/rs-neeraj

ZERO

"I turned Zero into a zombie-robot for Udon Entertainment's Mega Man Tribute art book. I sketched the composition and scanned it into digital, using my Wacom for the outline and colours."

COMIC CHANG LIP WEI

Co-running a studio means Chang is realising his dream to work as a comic and concept artist

LOCATION Malaysia WEB www.claw0208.blogspot.com AGE 25



Chang may have been working professionally for five years, but it's thanks to his determination not to take his position

for granted that he's one of the 10 Rising Stars this year. "Since my first job, I've continued to try different jobs – storyboard, illustrations, concept designs, even teaching," he says, "and I've been drawing an unpublished comic for three years."

Gaining experience from all those angles of art, Chang says he woke one morning to find that his comic skills "improved much more than I had expected". He had found his own way of creating comics: "more cinematic environments, more details". When you have Marvel's senior talent scout, CB Cebulski, singing your praises, you're definitely doing something right.

This broad skill-set has given Chang the confidence to set up his own art studio, with his girlfriend, that specialises in comic and concept art. Momomonster Studio offers Chang a chance to create, while lecturing in art at the local college and keeps him in touch with new artists.

He also gets his inspiration from outside his front door. Going back to where he grew up, in Penang, Malaysia, Chang recently took to life drawing the local hot spots of Georgetown's old town area and St Anne's church in Bukit Mertajam, which attracts thousands of pilgrims to its annual Feast of St Anne celebration.

As CB says, Chang knows about the details, and importantly, the timing of comic panels: "The beats he chooses to illustrate keep the pace of the story moving with a clearly calculated rhythm."

ARTIST'S ADVICE PATIENCE!

"Have patience, especially with details and backgrounds. I'm interested in storytelling through subtle things like camera angles. It's the often overlooked elements to an image like that which can make it really stand out."

ARTIST'S TOOLS

PHOTOSHOP

I don't really use customised brushes, but my favourite default brushes are Hard Round Pressure Size, Soft Round Pressure Opacity, Hard Round Pressure Opacity (with Transfer: Pen Pressure on) and Dry Media Brush: Soft Oil Paster (with Transfer: Pen Pressure on).



COMIC COMP

"A comic I made for a competition. I sketched, then used a G-Pen for the outline, and rendered it digitally."



"Chang is a master at maximising space. He packs in more panels than most, but each is there for a reason and there's no clutter or waste" CB Cebulski

COMIC

HONOURABLE MENTIONS



Sally Thompson
Location England
Website www.bit.ly/rs-sally



Jarreau Wimberly
Location US
Website www.bit.ly/rs-jarreau

ARTIST'S ADVICE EFFORT

"Some aspiring artists sell themselves short. I often see a lack of love and effort put into work, usually in the details and backgrounds. A lot of what I do involves no great skill, but a willingness to put the effort into every square inch of a painting. 'Good enough' is never good enough, to me."



JOAN OF ARC

"I went with a standard triangle composition to convey her strength, relied on her facial and hand expressions to convey emotions and let the details tell the backstory."



LOVE NEVER DIES

"Death and mourning are themes across my work. I feel they're among the better ways of connecting with an audience and drawing them into your world."

in Love Never Dies. I don't know these narratives but I'm roped in and unwittingly supplying their stories in my mind."

Although he studied digital art, Michael moved to traditional with five years at Watts Atelier of Arts, with EM Gist as a mentor. Doesn't he know digital art is quicker? "Would you cook a steak in a microwave because it's quicker?" he retorts. "I work traditionally because I have a passion for working on a real physical object. My discipline and persistence stem from this passion and without those I'm nothing artistically."

ARTIST'S TOOLS TRADITIONAL

I paint everything on cotton paper mounted to masonite, sealed with acrylic medium. I use a combination of small white nylon brushes, for details and taklon flats, and royal sable filberts for general painting. Galkyd Lite with odourless mineral spirits is my medium of choice.

© Wizards of the Coast

STEALER OF SECRETS

"This was commissioned for the Magic: The Gathering TCG. It was a great exercise in costume design, combining all the character's disparate elements."

ILLUSTRATION MICHAEL C HAYES

Michael turned to the traditional mediums as an outlet for his creative strengths: "determination and persistence"

LOCATION US WEB www.artofmike.com AGE 30



ImagineFX first spoke to Michael C Hayes, and marvelled at his artwork, back in our September 2010 issue. We were reporting on

the amazing artists who attended that year's Illustration Master Class.

This, it turns out, was important for Michael. In his late twenties, things were falling into place just before and during the course. "That's where I painted Joan of Arc (above right), and really began to understand my own artistic voice," he says. "Since then things have exploded for me."

Michael didn't start drawing until he was 18, and even then only a few days

a week as part of a degree in digital arts and animation. He retains this measured mentality today. "Eventually I'd like to paint whatever I want, whenever I please," he says, "though I'm content to just enjoy the journey and give it my all along the way. I wake up most days and wonder how the hell I made it this far."

The judges have something to say about that. Lou Anders, an editor and art director at Pyr publishers, knows a storyteller when she sees one. "Michael's work seems to freeze the moment of transition in his subject's life," he says, explaining why he picked Michael as a winner. "I want to know who's behind the door in Stealer of Secrets, and I mourn with the woman



"These are compelling visions, forcing me to do more than just observe. They move me to feel joy, tension and suspense" Lou Anders

ILLUSTRATION

HONOURABLE MENTIONS



Lindsey Look
Location US
Website www.bit.ly/rs-lindsey



Dominick Saponaro
Location US
Website www.bit.ly/rs-dominick



Herman Lau
Location US
Website www.bit.ly/rs-herman

THE GIRL IN CAIRN WOODS

"I recently completed an eight-month mentorship with Rebecca Guay. Every other month she brought in a guest art director who gave an assignment, then critiqued us. This piece was assigned by Irene Gallo of Tor Books and is based on a short ghost story."



ILLUSTRATION ELISABETH ALBA

The dreamy, perfectly composed paintings by this freelancer took one of the two highly sought-after Illustration category spots

LOCATION US WEB www.albailustration.com AGE 28



The past may be a foreign country, but it's also choc-full of inspirational characters and cultures for artists. Elisabeth Alba has

been mining the past for inspiration since forever. "I have an interest in history and culture throughout the ages," she says, "and I love historical fiction, drawing historical subjects, researching costume and architecture."

It helps that Elisabeth's parents passed on their passions, taking her around Europe's great museums, to the opera, theatre – generally encouraging her to enjoy the finer things. She took in a lot from America's pop culture too. "I grew up in Orlando, Florida, and we went to the Disney resort almost every weekend. I love everything Disney, and it's been a huge influence."

From these roots grew Elisabeth's warm, intimate and unashamedly classic illustrations. "I think my art has an emotive quality," she says. The ImagineFX team agrees, and when we saw her art we were struck by her harmonised colour and composition – everything, it feels, is just as it should be in her paintings.

After a successful 2012, with a string of paid projects, Elisabeth aims to eventually move from her day job at a private school in Manhattan to full-time freelance from her apartment in Queens, which she shares with artist boyfriend Scott Murphy.

"I'm not a beginner, but I'm definitely nowhere near the height of my career," she says. "I haven't got my dream job yet, but right now I'm just concentrating on

ARTIST'S ADVICE KNOW YOURSELF

"Don't change your style for particular markets. Follow your instincts and interests. The work you enjoy most will be your best."



“Elisabeth's work reminds me of classical illustrators such as Arthur Rackham. Yet is original, too” Kevin Jenkins

building my portfolio, my clients, and recognition."

We hope this competition will help Elisabeth on her way, but with a dual degree in visual art and English with a focus on children's literature, and recent Illustration Master Class studies with mentor Rebecca Guay under her belt, Elisabeth's rise seems inevitable.



RÁN'S EMBRACE

"I'm really into Vikings and I decided to illustrate Rán, the sea goddess known for drowning sailors. Here she's creating a storm that would sink a ship."



ARTIST'S TOOLS TRADITIONAL

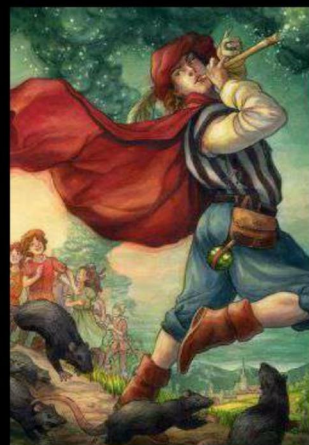
I mainly work with watercolour, sometimes ink. I usually print a light sketch onto watercolour paper, then draw a nicer version on top of that. Rebecca Guay (tutor at Illustration Master Class) introduced me to acryla gouache, which I don't think I can stop using now – it's that fun and versatile to use.

ELISABETH'S PORTFOLIO



THE SERPENT'S RING

"I was hired by my high school art teacher HB Bolton (www.hbbolton.com), to illustrate the cover of her fantasy book, *The Serpent's Ring*."



THE PIED PIPER

"I like the Pied Piper because there's so much history behind it. I had my boyfriend dress up and leap around for a photo reference."



NIGHT SONG

"I don't have many birds or animals in my portfolio, so I decided to illustrate a scene from Hans Christian Andersen's *The Nightingale*."

ILLUSTRATION HONOURABLE MENTIONS



Laurent Pierlot
Location France
Website www.bit.ly/rs-laurent



Mike Burns
Location US
Website www.bit.ly/rs-mike



Jason Rainville
Location Canada
Website www.bit.ly/rs-jason

MONKEY KING

"Based on the famous Chinese legend, this scene tells the story about his adventure in heaven. I used bright colours, inspired by pictures of ancient Chinese frescoes, to make the painting maintain a mythic feeling."



VIDEO GAMES LU HAU

With experience in creating game art for the online marketing of Hollywood films, Lu's artwork certainly sold his talent to us

LOCATION China **WEB** www.hualu.cghub.com **AGE** 32

ARTIST'S ADVICE FRESH IDEAS

"Extraordinary imagination, solid skills and an unyielding enthusiasm are the most important things for digital art creation. It's not easy to have a steady flow of fresh ideas, but making yourself brainstorm helps."



ARTIST'S TOOLS PHOTOSHOP

I just use Photoshop's default brushes. It's a simple approach but I find it's enough for me to draw using my basic traditional skills. You may not find a variety of brush marks in my paintings, but it's all about the finished look!



Senior illustrator, concept artist and art director at Triggerglobal, Shanghai, Lu Hau is in charge of several of their high-profile titles. "I'm responsible for the Hollywood film-related projects, such as web games, websites and mobile phone applications," says the understandably chuffed artist.

A perusal of recent projects reveals concept and illustration work for The Amazing Spider-Man and Ghost Rider games, plus web-specific art for Green Hornet and Dredd. But Lu keeps his feet firmly planted on the ground. "My family and my wife have cultivated in me a love of art," he says, "so making them proud is my biggest motivation."

Lu started in the advertising industry after graduation, but after three years he quit, to search for his dream job. "I caved in to the feeling I had to do something I yearn for from my heart – drawing."



GOD OF THUNDER

"This is from a personal project, a series of Chinese legends. He has the mouth and wings of an eagle. This work has traditional Chinese elements, but realism too."



"All Lu's images are bad-ass ball whompers! I would love to play as one of them in a video game and I would hate to face them (except Lu's Werewolf – my Barbarian would beat that character down!)" Sam Didier

During his studies, and his time in advertising, Lu studied the masters: Brom, John Howe, Craig Mullins. Brom's art offered Lu a masterclass in a "perfect combination of realistic gothic style and fantastic aesthetic". Lu says he wouldn't be in this business if it wasn't for John's "exquisite painting style." About Craig he says: "His knowledge on creating atmosphere is enlightening."

What struck a chord with the ImagineFX team and the judges was Lu's eye for where the action should be, and where the finer details are needed. In Monkey King, precise detail of the titular character is thrust forwards in front of loosely sketched fighters. Lu achieves depth and movement by directing your eyes, but also through sound anatomy. "I guess that's my strength," he agrees, "nice solid skills in character designing, and a pretty good approach to colouring. It also helps when you're painting your favourite things in the world – the world of fantasy."

LU'S PORTFOLIO

ROCK DEMON

"Rock Demon is a piece from a series of personal illustrations from a magical and fantastic world. He's a leader of demons from hell. I wanted to create a character with great strength, so I depicted him in a dark, heavy, colour tone, and further stressed this theme by drawing elements such as black rocks, rough steel and exaggerated muscle."



WEREWOLF

"I love this World of Warcraft character. He switches between human and wolf-man and here he's transforming, about to hunt beneath a full moon."

VIDEO GAMES

HONOURABLE MENTIONS



Chen Sa
Location China
Website www.bit.ly/rs-kdash



Ivan Laliashvili
Location Russia
Website www.bit.ly/rs-ivany86

FLOATING GALLEONS

"Primary school wall art. When composing large groups I try to be mindful of the composition as a whole."

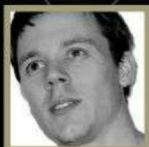


VIDEO GAMES

JON NORTON

He had a helping hand at school, but hard graft and experimental artwork have won Jon a Rising Star

LOCATION England **WEB** www.jondoodles.blogspot.co.uk **AGE** 30



"I've experimented with lots of different ways of producing artwork in different styles over the years," says English artist Jon. "But

about a year ago I began working in my style – a culmination of all the things I've discovered that are of any value through experimenting with different types of artwork."

The UK may be wet and miserable during big stretches of the year, but the budding

artist found inspiration in its bucolic countryside, growing up around Swindon. He also benefited from a remarkable example of favouritism at school. "I had a primary school teacher who put a drawing board in the classroom exclusively for me to use," recalls Jon. In fact, when everybody else was taking morning maths, Jon was allowed to draw scenes inspired by Martin Handford's *Where's Wally* books.

This experience left its mark, as today Jon teaches art in primary schools, as well as taking art commissions from local



“His work stood out in the crowd, especially with the increase of indie and mobile games art styles out there. Too many times game art looks the same, but to see a creative take like this is really refreshing” Kekai Kotaki

VIDEO GAMES

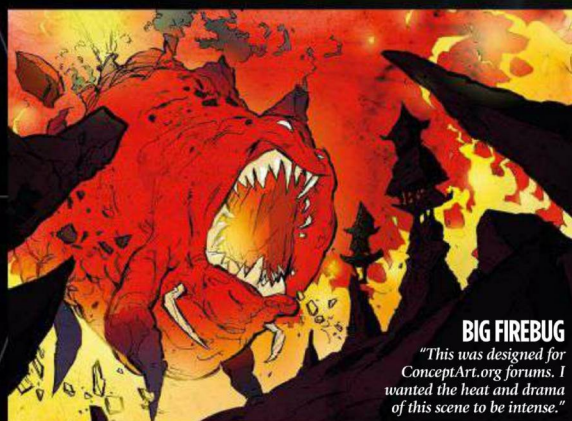
HONOURABLE MENTIONS



Kate Pfeilschifter
Location US
Website www.bit.ly/rs-kate



Callum MacKendrick
Location Canada
Website www.bit.ly/rs-callum



BIG FIREBUG

"This was designed for ConceptArt.org forums. I wanted the heat and drama of this scene to be intense."

ARTIST'S ADVICE

DON'T BE AFRAID OF CHANGE

"If you change your mind about an image at any stage of the painting process, don't be afraid to alter it. It's extra work, but it's worth it. Be confident with your sketch by the time it comes to pouring in all that detail and colour work."



ARTIST'S TOOLS

TRADITIONAL

Although I'm using more digital processes as I go along, I've not experimented with digital brushes yet. For me the most important tool I use is a pencil. The first lines I draw informs everything that follows.

businesses, edging into creating animation and concept art for games developers.

In Jon's opinion, it's necessary to go through distinct phases, where you only draw one thing, or in one style, just as long as you learn from that and remember to move on. "Up until now I've produced very self-indulgent, experimental artwork as a way of developing skills I felt I needed," he says. Because of this approach he feels confident in taking on a variety of commissions.

But it's not all sober strategy. "I try to have a sense of humour with my artwork, and people usually pick up on that," Jon says. "My art has a lot of energy, and the lines I put down at the beginning of any drawing to suggest the movement and expression in the image are what give my artwork its life."

Corel® painter™ MIKLÓS FÖLDI

With a decade of toil, moving from traditional to Painter-inspired digital art, this Hungarian artist has hit his stride

LOCATION Hungary **WEB** www.mikipetur.com **AGE** 36

ARTIST'S ADVICE EXPECT THE WORST

"Sometimes you won't get the feedback you need. If you have little confidence, or you don't have support around you, learn to stubbornly believe in yourself! Search and find your own way."



Winning the Corel Painter category of Rising Stars is important to Miklós for two reasons. The first is that he becomes a Corel

Master artist – an accolade he's literally dreamt about getting. The second is that this interview marks his first outside his native Hungary.

The recognition has been a long time coming. Some 12 years ago Miklós was approached by a gallery that liked his oil paintings, and they wanted him to create similar-looking images using the then-new digital medium. "I had to teach myself



“Miklós's use of colour, especially bold saturated colour, gives his images life”

Jon Schindehette

these new digital painting techniques," he says. "The pace of work was exhausting, but everything I know is a result of this period."

Miklós was working against the grain from the start. Growing up in a small village in Hungary, dreams of becoming an oil painter were not generally encouraged. Even today it's in an international client base the artist looks to for art projects.

Elated by his double win, Miklós is now thinking of striking out into uncharted territory, including the "ambivalent world of fashion. It has an incredible effect on me: the glamour, the dark side, the so-called ideal faces and the stories behind them."

This could open up the next chapter in his career, but right now Miklós is happy basking in the present: "The esteem I've received from this competition means it's perhaps the biggest milestone of my career."



Photography: Péter Nagy

HORNS

"This was inspired by Joe Hill's novel of the same title. I asked a great friend, Radosi Milán, to model for this project. This is the first piece of a series that Péter Nagy and I would like to create in the near future."

STRENGTH (HORSE STUDY)

"I had started experimenting with red underpainting. I took special care on this one, especially my use of light and depicting the power that the horse represents."



ARTIST'S TOOLS

PAINTER 12

I love to use the Impressionist brush in Corel Painter. Other favourites of mine are the Sargent brush, the Camel Hair Round, Camel Oil Cloner, and the Blender Bristle combined with the Oil Brush Cloner.

COREL PAINTER HONOURABLE MENTIONS



Allen Douglas
Location US
Website www.bit.ly/rs-allen



Fiona Sansom
Location England
Website www.bit.ly/rs-fionas

DUDU'S PORTFOLIO



THE SECRET FILES OF LUCKY FORD

"This is a poster/book cover. I worked with different scales, with the main characters in full colour and in a warmer palette."



GANONDORF

"A character from The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time. My goal was to experiment with lightning, texture and expressions."



QUEEN OF CLUBS

"I created a portrait series of royal families for playing cards. For Clubs I made an exotic tribe, full of bones, feathers and body paint."

© World of Card Games from Talbaria, Inc.



ARTIST'S TOOLS PAINTER 12

ROUND CAMELHAIR

From the oil brushes category, this is one of the most versatile brushes.

SIMPLE WATER

Like watercolour, this allows you to darken value and increase saturation in the same layer.

GLOW

This raises the value with colour, creating an overlay effect on the same layer.

VARIABLE CHALK

Good for laying out sketches and experimenting with thumbnail compositions.

Corel®
painter™

DUDU TORRES

Thanks to Corel Painter, which provided a bridge from trad to digital, this Brazilian artist is enjoying a double win

LOCATION Brazil WEB <http://blog.dudutorres.com.br> AGE 26



As well as being one of the 10 Rising Stars of 2012, Dudu (aka Paulo Eduardo de Oliveira Torres Filho) is also a Corel Master Painter –

the top accolade from the software makers.

Having discovered the software in its eighth edition, Dudu found it the perfect bridge from traditional mediums to digital. "I have a very long love history with Corel Painter," he tells us. "I had a traditional

education with art, painting with oils, watercolours and inks." Seeing all those pastels, gouaches and wide variety of emulated brushes, not to mention the familiar paper textures, in Painter, provided a smooth transition.

As you can tell from Dudu's winning five entries, the artist has a soft spot for drawing human anatomy. "I want to depict personality and atmosphere through posture and expression, and in this way create a story for the viewer to engage with."



"Dudu's art reminds me of posters on my teenage bedroom wall. Happy Halloween says Tales from the Crypt, Spielberg films and thrash metal album covers" Sam Didier



WASTELAND ANGELÔ COVER

"For a game project for Octane Games I created a female character who drives a bad-ass customised sports car. The challenge here was to composite an interesting cover, which could feature all of these elements, making a mosaic that could tell the game's mythology."

In fact, Dudu has held on to his passion for comics and concept art, for which he thanks his film-fan father, despite studying at his local art collage. "Here in Brazil the options for an illustration career, specially towards game art, editorial and comics, is very restricted," he explains.

"When I discovered I could take international jobs and freelance work without relocating, I realised this could all turn professional for me," he continues. "My goal was to make a career of illustration and not just a hobby, but I didn't consciously follow a particular path, or style. One of the advantages of working as a freelancer is the variety of projects. To be able to shift between approaches each time always makes a new project fresh."

Right now Dudu is working on different projects, always trying to challenge himself, especially in the games art industry. "Besides that I want to explore some personal work too, mainly in comics, which is one of my passions."

COREL PAINTER
HONOURABLE MENTIONS



Melanie Rose
Location Canada
Website www.bit.ly/rs-melanie



Terry Brown
Location Canada
Website www.bit.ly/rs-terry



HAPPY HALLOWEEN

"I'm a big horror film and Halloween fan, so I decided to create a portfolio piece that had that kind of childish fear of monsters, with a little bit of humour, and gore. The intention was to create a scene that told an interesting story, something that could continue in the viewer's mind."

ARTIST'S ADVICE BECOME DISCIPLINED

"Focus and hard work are key for any artist to achieve a professional level. It's great to be among people who share the same passion, so your motivation stays high. Getting different points of view is also essential, whether a live conversation or an internet forum chat."



MYSTICAL TREE The Brown Mage's tree is a key setting that Ilya created concept art for in *LotR: War in the North*. [Close](#)



All Lord of the Rings images are © Warner Bros Games 2011

ILYA NAZAROV



From Russia with talent – Ilya Nazarov brings his concept art skills to the video game industry

Artist PROFILE

Ilya Nazarov



COUNTRY: US

AGE: 27

FAVOURITE ARTISTS:

Robb Ruppel, Nathan Fowkes, Kevin Dart

SOFTWARE USED: Photoshop

AVERAGE TIME PER IMAGE:

Five days

WEB: www.ilyanazarov.com

Looking at the atmospheric images Ilya Nazarov created for the video game *The Lord of the Rings: War in the North* and you'd be forgiven for thinking they were illustrations rather than concept art. Full of nature, textures, deft lighting, detail and, yes, a touch of magic, his digital artwork could easily grace the pages of a fantasy art book.

So it's no surprise to learn that the Ilya's own approach to concept art is to make each image as illustrative as possible. Whereas many concept pieces look scratchy, sketchy and impressionistic here and there, varying in intensity and quality, it's not often you'll spot areas of Ilya's work

that look unfinished. "I approach all of my concept work with two main goals in mind," he says. "My first goal is to create a compelling illustration. My second goal is to solve a visual problem in a way that will be most appreciated by the audience."

In fact the entire team he worked with on *War in the North* were dedicated to a quality finish and that's why these scenes of Lothlórien, the Dwarven ruins and the citadel of Carn Dum look so convincing. "They were a lot of fun to work on!" says Ilya. "I used Photoshop to create all of them. Our art director and talented team of concept artists set the bar very high. We approached each image with a lot of care and paid a lot of attention to both



WORLD OF MEN War in the North takes players to the town of Bree, depicted here. It's a place familiar to any LotR fan. [Close](#)

“The year that I spent travelling and sketching helped me to gain confidence and find my voice as an artist”

exploration and execution. In a lot of ways our process was very illustrative, and The Lord of The Rings books, films and art were huge inspirations.”

GAP YEAR ARTIST

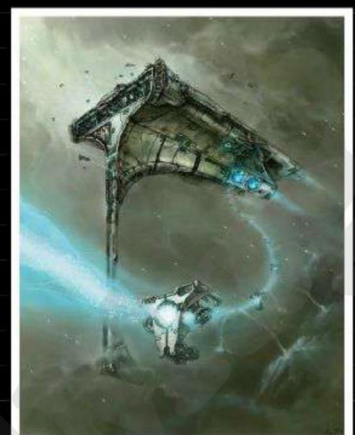
Ilya's Lord of the Rings artwork was created while he was with Warner Bros Games, where he spent a year and a half. Prior to that he's also worked on games concept art at Retro Studios. Now he's working on secret projects with Bethesda Softworks, and is based in Rockville, Maryland. Ironically, his favourite period creatively was when he took a year off work, from 2008 to 2009.

“I believe that artists greatly benefit from taking time to experiment and to internalise what they've learned,” he says. “The year that I spent travelling and

sketching helped me to gain confidence and find my voice as an artist more than any project that I've worked on. I spent most of that year with a pen and a sketchbook. For the last four months, I painted at least one sketch from life or TV every day on my tablet PC using Photoshop. As a result, I put together a portfolio that got me a full-time concept art job at Warner Brothers.”

Growing up in Yekaterinburg, Russia, Ilya received classical art training before coming to the US to study at the DigiPen Institute of Technology, in Redmond, Washington. Before he'd graduated from his computer animation course in 2004, he'd landed a job at Retro Studios, working on projects for Nintendo.

It was there that he gained confidence, helping see the visuals for Metroid



METROID A mothership concept Ilya developed for the game Metroid Prime 3. [Close](#)

© Nintendo 2004

Gallery





PREPARE FOR BATTLE An army assembles in a cold, mountainous environment, digitally painted by Ilya for *LoTR: War in the North*. [Close](#)

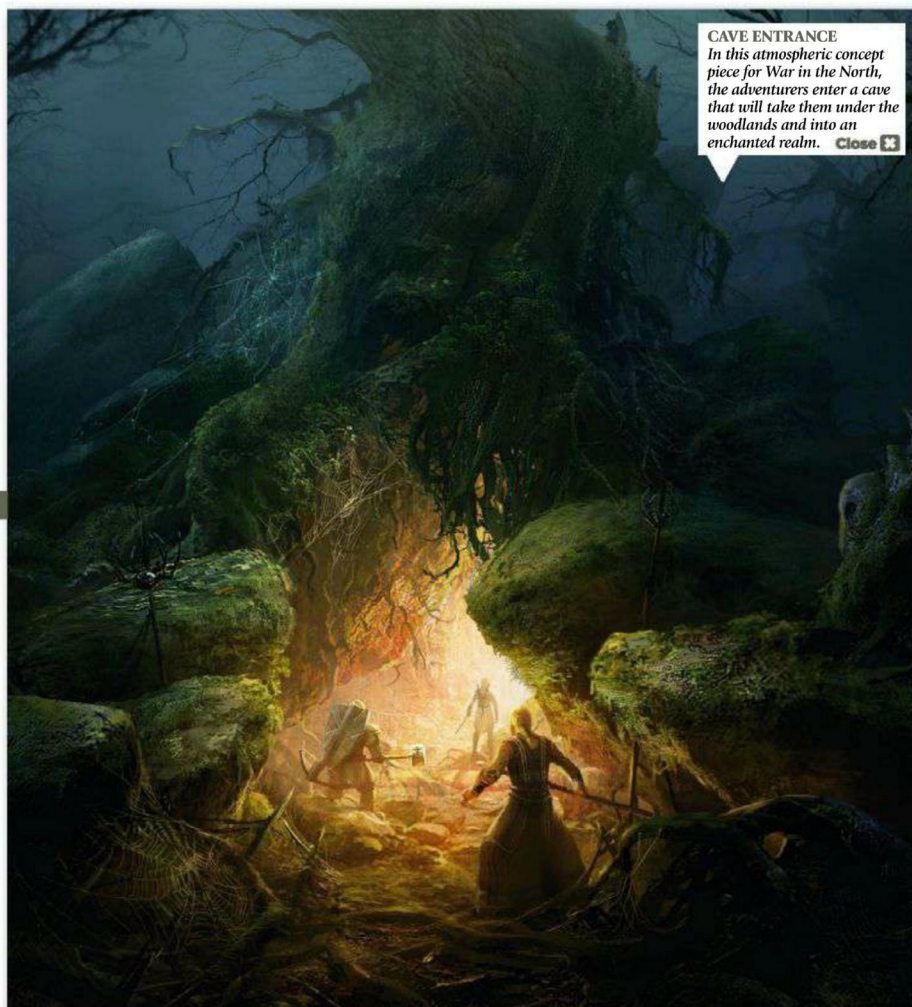
LORD OF THE RINGS: WAR IN THE NORTH

Ilya had to hit the ground running with his first project as a staffer

One of Ilya's most impressive projects was his concept art contribution to role-playing game *The Lord of the Rings: War in the North*.

"It was my first project as a full time concept artist," he says. "The biggest creative challenge was learning how to produce new ideas every day without ever having a moment to catch my breath. I learned so much, from myself and from the incredible artists around me. It helped me grow tremendously as an artist and it has put me on the map in concept art."

Developed by Snowblind and published by Warner Bros, the game came out in 2010.



CAVE ENTRANCE In this atmospheric concept piece for *War in the North*, the adventurers enter a cave that will take them under the woodlands and into an enchanted realm. [Close](#)

Comments



Cliff Hope
ImagineFX

"Eight-legged critters give me the heebie-jeebies, yet I'm compelled to take a closer look at Ilya's depiction of Mirkwood, the home of giant spiders. That's quite an achievement, which says a lot about the quality of his art."



Ralph Horsley
Pro artist

"Ilya brings great focus and immediacy to this image. The warm orange light draws our eye to the adventurers, contrasting against the surrounding darker values, green and cool blues. The detail of the impaled spiders and bones keeps our attention and lets the viewer develop their own narrative."



Jon Braskett
ImagineFX reader

"Ilya's use of lighting is outstanding. He's a truly talented artist who knows how to draw his viewers into the worlds he creates. I truly feel as though I'm standing there about to enter some subterranean maze of tree roots right along with those adventurers."

ILYA NAZAROV

CARNDUM The monoliths of Carndum – another key setting that Ilya painted for the *LotR: War in the North* video game. [Close](#)



➡ Prime 3 all the way through the production process, trying his hand at various tasks. "I really loved that team and I got to work on everything from 3D character art, 3D environment art, user interface and concept art," he says. "I used Maya and Photoshop and it was challenging to create art under the constraints of hardware, software and the needs of game design."

DONKEY WORK

Donkey Kong Country Returns was another high-profile project he worked on, creating concept art using pencils, pens and Photoshop. It wasn't so much the creative challenge he relished, but the freedom he had on a game early in its development. He was able to experiment with tones, colours and creative styles.

Over the years he's refined his way of working, and today he uses Photoshop as his main creative tool. "I like to tackle images one problem at a time," he explains. "At first, I scribble basic thumbnails in order to define my idea. I then resolve my composition and values in a simple sketch – in black and white, if

pressed for time. Next, I make a line drawing that I keep on a separate layer in Photoshop and use as a guide. I work on my image from large shapes to small, keeping an eye on reference and the thumbnail, always trying to evolve the image until the last finishing touches. I find that the better I prepare for a painting, the faster and smoother it goes."

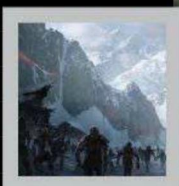
His favourite Photoshop feature is Clipping Masks. He uses layers in his images to define edges and make changing things easier, and Clipping Masks simplify that process, enabling him to paint within shapes and keep a hierarchy of layers.

When it comes to influences, Ilya name-checks plenty of contemporary concept art talent. "Robb Ruppel and Nathan Fowkes are insanely inspiring. Every time I visit their blogs I just have to paint," he says. "Kevin Dart has been a constant inspiration. The biggest influences are the concept artists I've had the pleasure of working with closely – Ray Lederer, Adam Adamowicz, Andrew Arconti, George Rushing and Steve Firchow. Philip Straub, my art director on *War in the North*, was also a big influence on a lot of images."



GUNDABAD The treacherous mountain entrance to the keep of Gundabad. [Close](#)

Gallery



Development sheet

PROJECT TITLE: ANIMA: BEYOND FANTASY

Working on Anima Project Studios's table-top RPG Anima: Beyond Fantasy, artist **Wen Li** created his very own addition to the game – a manga-inspired woman warrior named Berangere...

Artist PROFILE

Wen Li

Country: US



Wen says he got his key knowledge, in art and in life, from his friends and teachers in high school and college. Wen-M, as he's known on the web, continues his art education with the help of books and online tutorials, honing his skills in any spare time that he finds.

www.wen-m.deviantart.com

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART
ImagineFX

Initial character concept

Here's the original sketch that I scan in. The idea is simple: a sensual-looking female knight, with a rose theme. To add to the feminine feel I use a chained mace. Her armour is form-fitting because I have in mind a ball gown that has a fitted top and a long draping bottom. I notice her body is shorter than eight and a half heads, so I correct this digitally. I move her eyes closer together, make the body wider and slightly taller, and tweak her position. At this stage I'm unaware that one arm is longer than the other, so I fix this during the next stage.



Metallic elements

I add shading and more details in layers – it's been 16 hours up to this point. Then I start the render and place the blacks in the metal, to create the shine and feel of metal. Some details are added as I work, such as the outlines around the roses. I also change the colour of the lace on the thighs.



Focus on the face

I work on the character's face and hair, laying down flat colours. I normally have to put in the hair when I work on a face, and I can't judge the whole design well without it. This is a tedious stage, as I try to figure out the size and border of everything. The mace balls were not in perspective on the sketch, so I digitally sketch the guidelines and lay out the colours for those.





A sense of realism

In an attempt to make the armour appear more real and used, some scratches are added in the areas where the pieces rub against each other. This also hints at how the pieces move to accommodate the bending torso. I finalise details on her hair and face, and change the colour of the reflected lights on the torso armour to show the environment it is in. The pieces near the flesh have a hint of skin colour, as does the area aligned with the roses. I add dirt and scratches to the mace balls, and even more to the shoes, the area most regularly in contact with another surface.



Unify the design

Now it's on to detailing each part and layer. I add the edge of the armour pieces – each piece has its own. I change the colour of the lace again and do minor work on the hair. I decide to unify the design with the colour purple. The roses take most of the time up at this stage – around two hours on both the real ones and the metal ones on the ankles. It's subtle, but you can see that the edge of the skirt is thicker, too.



Apply shadows

I finish detailing and add cast shadow, adding solidity to the figure. This takes a while, since I try to make every piece have its own shadow layer. I make one shadow and copy it to every layer, then add fine details to the body. I add noise to the skirt to create a better feel of fabric, as opposed to the smooth, plastic look.

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Advice from the world's best artists

72



This issue:

72 Learn to recreate cinematic lighting

Woonyoung Jung paints Gollum and shows how to add a new dimension to your fantasy art.

76 Be passionate about your art

Donato Giancola brings together Middle-earth and the Old Masters to create stunning oil paintings.

81 Tips for using SAI's brushes

Continuing his look at the program, Paco Rico Torres highlights three key brushes.

82 Capture the drama in a scene

Tolkien's fight between Éowyn and the Witch-king is visualised by Nacho Molina.

88 Draw a dragon with character

Justin Gerard says dragons have personalities and you should show that in your art.

92 Improve your portrait skills

Corrado Vanelli uses Corel Painter to create a study of a young elf queen.

98 Paint an epic world

Use colour, light and scale to create epic environments, with Noah Bradley.

82



88



98



Photoshop LEARN TO RECREATE CINEMATIC LIGHTING

Without light there would be no image to see. Here, **Woonyoung Jung** shows you how easy it is to add a new dimension to your fantasy art

If someone asks me why lighting is so important in my painting process, I'd say that nothing can be seen without it. Light creates value and changes hue in objects. Light isn't an absolute element to make an image, but it's the most powerful element in image development. I have more fun when I create the illusion of depth in my painting

with lighting, because only through light can my thoughts become a tangible object. It's a powerful experience when you see the realistic interpretation of your own imagination.

In this workshop, I'll explain how I use and approach light to create a believable scene, which I want to call my own way of creating a cinematic lighting effect. I've been fortunate enough to work

with some talented cinematographers in lighting. I've learned a lot from them and have borrowed many concepts of lighting from their film-making process.

I've broken down my process into a few simple steps – I promise that it'll be a fun and logical approach. I say logical because it's not an artistic colour-picking process, but more akin to setting physical lights in a real location or on a film set.

Artist PROFILE

Woonyoung Jung

COUNTRY: South Korea



Woon was born in Seoul, South Korea, and came to the US to

study concept design. He worked on Puss in Boots and Rise of the Guardians as a visual development artist, and is currently employed by DreamWorks Animation. www.bit.ly/ifx-wjung

DIRECT LINK FOR WORKSHOP FILES
www.bit.ly/91-gollum

1 Deciding on the composition

Although I start each piece of art in different ways, recently I've noticed that sketching helps a lot towards the end of the process. Drawing is like a map for my painting journey. I always put my drawing layer on top to check my progress while I'm painting. It's easy to lose your way during the painting process and go in the wrong direction. For this workshop, I'll go with the second composition.

2 Creating shapes

Before I start painting, I fill in the background with any value but white, and create shapes with the Lasso tool that will become useful later on. I don't worry about producing perfect shapes – it's more about getting big shapes from the drawing, which will enable me to see the composition in a different perspective. The drawing layer is on top, but I lower the opacity to concentrate on shapes rather than the lines.

PRO SECRETS

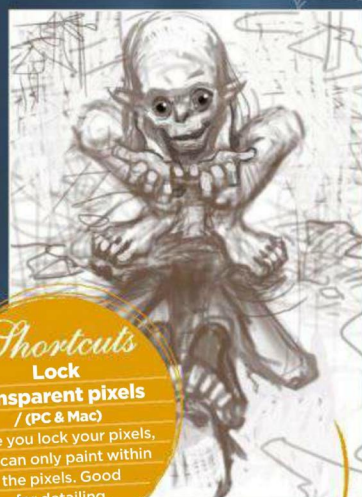
How to beat creative block

I sometimes have trouble maintaining momentum during my painting process. If I hit a mental brick wall then I go back a few steps to when I still felt creative and rebuild my layers from there. Rebuilding may mean deleting layers or erasing areas I was working on before I came to a halt, but the results are usually worth it.



3 Dividing shapes

I now split the shapes into different layers, which will give me more control further down the painting process. For instance, if I want to add some more details to Frodo's left hand, I could just load the selection from the hand layer and paint those details without worrying about ruining the trousers and sleeves. When I disassemble my shapes, I give each one a random value or colour to make them more readable. Then I label each layer so that I can find them easily, especially later on.



Shortcuts Lock transparent pixels (PC & Mac)

Once you lock your pixels, you can only paint within the pixels. Good for detailing.

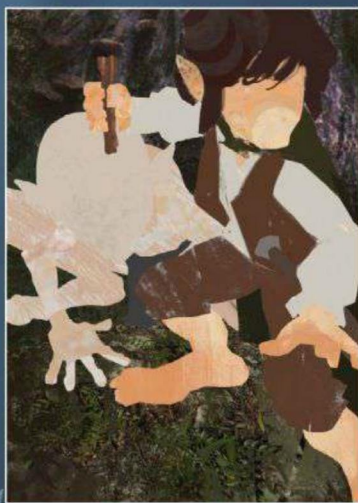






4 Starting on the background

For this piece, I only know that these characters are in a forest, but I still don't know what kind of forest I want to paint. So I find forest ground photo textures and start to place them randomly on to the background. On top of those, I paint with some texture brushes to integrate different photo textures. It's all about the big idea, and the feeling that I develop.



5 Introducing textures

Now I go back to my shapes and loosely fill in the local colours. My aim is to create interesting textures, because I'm expecting happy accidents later on when I paint on top of these shapes. I know that when I have any sort of texture on my painting, my piece will be warmer and I'll avoid that cold, CG feeling.

6 Applying shadows

I want a strong moonlight to come in from the right of the screen, which should create a fantasy mood. The main light source is Frodo's torch, but before I light the torch, I think about the shadows that are created by the moon. I create a Multiply layer on top of the shapes and fill it with dark blue, to indicate that it's night-time. On top of that I set up another Multiply layer with a darker blue for the moon's shadow. I need to start thinking about values now. To check them, I create a Color layer, fill it with black and put it on top. I regularly turn this layer on and off to assess my values.



7 Creating warm light

I have lots of cool areas in my image. Now I need to add warm light from the torch. To do this, I create an Overlay layer under the night-sky fill layer, click Select>Load Selection with both characters and fill the selection with a warm, orange colour that I've picked from a fire photo reference. My warms aren't obvious yet, because I've got lots of dark blue Multiply layers above the orange Overlay layer. So I create a layer mask on each blue Multiply layer and remove the blues. Once a colour has been multiplied, the original becomes lost. Layer masks enable me to retain the original colour.



8 Balancing my colours

My warm colours still aren't strong enough, so I increase their saturation. I also paint the torch fire and moon light on the characters, to balance out the warm and cool colours. Now I have solid value and colour information. This idea makes more sense to me than a traditional block in, which is blocking in with your own choice of colours. Because the colours are logically created by combining different layer modes, I don't waste time choosing colours. When I start my images in black and white, I end up painting them over again in colour because I have a poor sense of value. Starting an image with colour quickly gives me a working colour and lighting setup.



WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES: COLOUR TEXTURE ROUND BRUSH

I use this brush a lot when I do big strokes. It's a simple textured Round brush that has Color Dynamics turned on to produce some different colours. It's useful for early block-ins because it gives me textures and random colours at the same time.

RECTANGLE TEXTURE BRUSH

This brush is ideal for rendering and detailing. It creates unique, blocky brush strokes that fit well with my own style. I often use this one for final touch-ups.

9 Sculpting characters

Now that I've got a solid foundation, I start to think about the basic anatomy of the characters and fabric details. I focus on getting the right forms and planes. To do this properly, I look up some fabric and human face references and even strike a pose myself to achieve the look I'm after. I regularly turn my drawing layer on and off to check that I'm on the right track. From this point on, artistic decisions are being made.



10 Applying visual noise

Rendering is all about getting the right shape, hue, value and texture, so I came up with the idea of throwing in textures earlier in the process. I grab a concrete texture and apply it to my painting. The texture helps to move things along, especially with Gollum's forehead, which already feels good to me.



11 Signalling a range of surfaces

One of the most important things in the detailing process is indicating different materials. I know Frodo's sleeve should feel like a thin, soft fabric, so I soften the shapes and folds. I also want to take advantage of the torchlight to indicate the thickness of the fabric, or in this case, the translucency on Frodo's left cuff. Eyeballs are fun to paint, because they're not only focal points but also complicated surfaces – they're glossy, clear spheres. I make sure the opposite half of the pupils, away from the light, are lighter than the other half, because light penetrates the pupils and brightens the inner surface. Frodo's ring and leaf accessory will bring another level of detail. I set my Brush mode to Color Dodge and paint highlights, because it gives me a promising highlight quality.



PRO SECRETS

Constant value check

To me, value is the most important aspect of your art that you need to understand. You can see an image without colour, but not without values. When I produce a solid value structure, colour comes naturally. When I can't see my problems, but know that something's wrong, I always check my values because they simplify my image, and simplicity helps me identify my problem. I make a Color layer and fill it with black for my value checker. I put it on the very top and check my values whenever I need to.

12 Photo realism

The forest ground has many layers of detail and I'm failing to capture those rich details, so it's time to use a photo texture. This time the purpose of my photo collage is to preserve the photo's details to produce a realistic texture. So the integration method should be different. I usually put on a slight Blur filter and gently paint in some darks, extra leaves and dirt to achieve this.

13 Visual effect

Now that I'm in the final stages of the piece, I make a colour correction and add a camera effect. From the beginning, I've been using the lighting concept from the filmmaking process so I think of my piece as a movie still. After the colour correction is done, I blur some edges and sharpen others to emphasise the focal point. A light haze around the fire and a few subtle sparks are also added.



14 Final touches

I have a rule to finishing a painting. I try really hard to ignore my piece for a while, to evaluate my painting with fresh eyes. Only by doing this can I identify any mistakes. I notice Gollum's pose could be a little bit more gestural and Frodo's facial expression has some issues. So I change their poses slightly and add some fine details, such as dirt on their bodies, buttons and the sword. Finally it's done.

Traditional skills **BE PASSIONATE ABOUT YOUR ART**

Donato Giancola invites you into his studio, where the worlds of Middle-earth and the Old Masters collide to create stunning oil paintings

Artist PROFILE

**Donato
Giancola**
COUNTRY: US



Much of Donato's art has deep historical roots linking

the past to the contemporary. Through his teaching, exhibitions, live demonstrations and educational films the artist aims to reflect the role that science fiction and fantasy plays in modern culture.
www.donatoart.com

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From the beginning of my career as a young artist, the worlds of JRR Tolkien have inspired me to create art. From Frodo to Boromir to Saruman, I love to delve into their psyche and create images reflecting the turmoil and conflicts that rocked their world, and in a way mirror our own. My earlier attempts at portraying the riches of Tolkien's writings had always fallen short, not just at the technical level but on the conceptual as well. Yet still I pushed on, for my love of the story overcame any limitations I felt in my artistic skills.

This, I feel, is the most important message for you to take away from this workshop: that although you may glean some wonderful new insight into how to improve your art, these images and words can never supplant the passion and belief you must have for your own personal visions. Dig deep into what you love about your subject matter and find a way to express those innermost feelings. It's this passion that will drive you to new experiences, challenge you in discoveries and bring you the greatest joy – it should also be enough to sustain you through all the downturns.

I couldn't be the artist I'm today without the inspirational trail-blazing by previous artists. I've learned from the best of contemporary figurative realists through to the greatest of the Old Masters. The following insights provide a distillation of what I've gleaned from these studies and illuminate my approaches to contemporary figurative narration, draftsmanship, aesthetics of abstraction and imaginative development. May they benefit your creative development as other such knowledge elevated my own work. Enjoy the journey!

1 ABSTRACTS

My image creation begins with play in abstract forms. I prime my mind with relevant literature or from visual experience. I'm never sure what I'm seeking, but let the shapes, lines and mental images lead me where they may. For this reason it's good to generate numerous compositions. Derivatives, experimentation and tangents eventually lead away from typical solutions.



2 ROUGH DRAWING

After selecting an abstract composition, I begin to resolve how to populate the image with specifics. I prefer to work mostly from imagination at this stage, freeing decisions for compositional play of forms. I'll introduce challenges to the art here, pitching curveballs to my assumptions. Can

I use six instead of three figures? Rather than a simple colour field background, will an ornamental architectural structure work? What if a pattern of massive horizontal lines replaced that shape? Engineering the difficult into the drawing here creates a foundation that's easier to build upon later.



3 REFERENCE GATHERING

One of my favourite aspects of creating art is the research into props, costumes, environments, textures, architecture, character types, cultures and any other inspirations needed for elements in the illustration. I seek out influences from other art forms – Islamic textile patterns, East African clothing, Chinese architecture, to name a few – and will purchase books loaded with references, if needed. Researching the diversity of the world in museums, libraries and on the streets of New York, and finding a way to weave it into my art, is what I love most about painting.



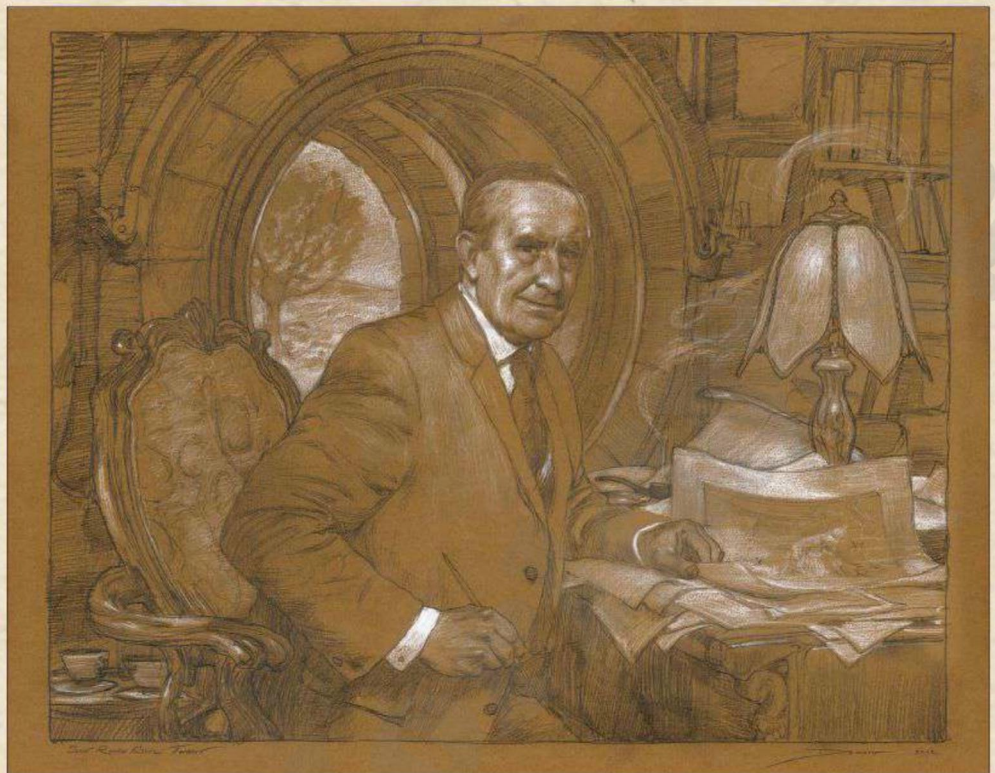
4 MODELS AND ACTING

One of the cornerstones of my art is reference sessions with models in costumes. The interactions between people are highly complex and our imaginations can't fathom them all. So I let my models act out the emotions and scene, given my parameters. The accidental tilt of a head, casting of a shadow, or flesh on flesh compressions are what I live for during these sessions. When you hit upon the perfect human engagement it can make a painting scream to life.

“ Researching in museums, libraries and on the streets is what I love most ”

5 CARTOON - PRELIMINARY DRAWING

With all the reference material gathered and the rough composition and abstract studies nearby as guides, I then create a cartoon for the painting. A cartoon in this context is a large drawing produced at a 1:1 ratio to the final painting (a preparatory step I borrow from medieval and Renaissance artists, like Hans Memling and Michelangelo). I begin sketching in vectors and volumes of shapes and progress by adding details from the photographs and observations I've made. This is a stage that enables quick experimentation in greys and abstract vector placement to determine movement, values, scale, lighting and composition. Playing around in pencil saves me from hours of corrections that could occur in the final oil painting. The most critical concept to emphasise here is bending the reference to fit the will of your initial impulses in the abstract and rough drawings. ➡



PRO SECRETS

Socialise

Some of my greatest client connections have come through interactions with other artists. Science fiction and fantasy artists form amazing groups of talent willing to trade secrets and business practices (look at ImagineFX here!), so take advantage of these networks to build your career. Consider attending themed events such as conventions or workshops. These will advance your artistic skills, but also put you in face-to-face contact with pros in the industry who may one day recommend your work to another pro, who may just hire you!

6 FALLING IN LOVE

One of the most difficult aspects of working as a freelance artist is falling in love, so you can spend hours in the presence of that which you so desire - I'm not talking about another human here. The amount of time we spend with our art is greater than any other relationship. If you dislike your project or commission, it can be a torment spending hours with it. Finding a way to personalise and

make the art desirable is key to staying happy and inspired. Sometimes it can be a little inclusion, like the face of a friend on a background character, or a pattern or lighting effect (here it's the drawings and manuscripts Tolkien used in the creation of his books). These inclusions force you to learn something new in the execution. Whatever it is, try to fall in love with your art, or at least offer it a little hug!

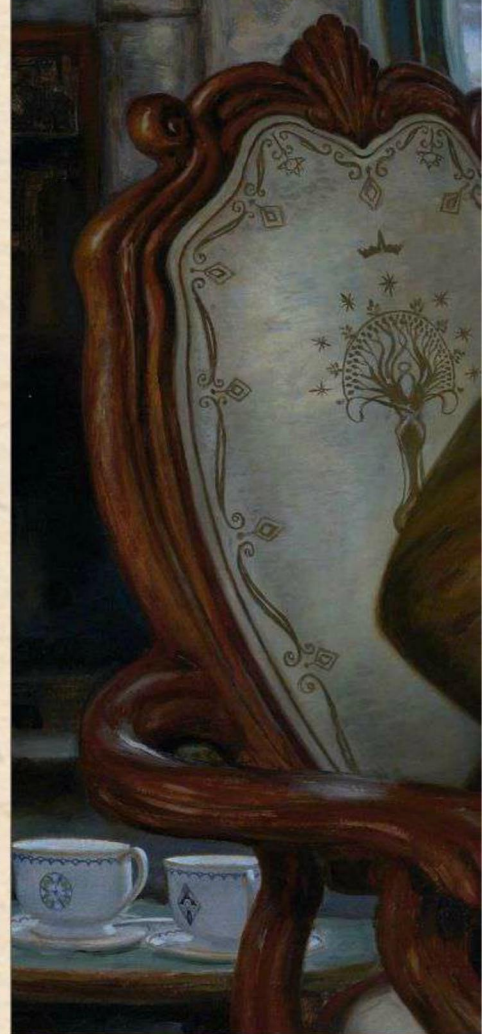


7 INITIAL LAYERS

With the transfer of the drawing completed, the messy work can begin - and I mean messy. The cartoon drawing, typically fixed beneath a layer of clear acrylic gesso or matte medium, holds key landmarks to the work allowing for a liberal play of colour and texture. I'm conservative in my approach, but the need to carefully follow a contour is out the window as I slosh around the paint and feel what my image needs for a colour direction.



“Whatever it is, try to fall in love with your art, or at the least, offer it a little hug”



8 MEDITATION

Time slows down now as I break out the minimalist music of Steve Reich or Philip Glass to set my mind to intimate, repetitive tasking. Filling in links on a suit of chain mail or similar is about careful observation and patience. Take Yoda's advice here and concentrate on where you are now, what you are doing. Forget about emails and suchlike. Focus on what the art needs from you and give it back.



9 SECOND PASSES

I find that practice tends to lead to perfection, so here I plan to rework any critical area if it falls short on the first pass. Let each part breathe for a while as you move onto other areas of the work. After the entire image receives its first layers, you can better assess the balances needed to harmonise the painting and come back in for a second, third and even a fourth reworking. I usually plan on making at least three passes on a main figure's body and face, that's even after I attempt to make it perfect the first time.



10 EXAGGERATED COLOUR

Enter the mind of an impressionist such as NC Wyeth and try to visualise colours in the shadows. I've learned from impressionists and realists, such as Peter Paul Rubens, when it comes to exaggerating colour in the cracks of objects, folds of skin and cast shadows. The use of colour in these areas helps me describe a shadow by replacing a dark shadow with a complementary contrasting colour higher in value. It's hard to describe, but easier to understand visually!

PRO SECRETS

Hard-earned cash

Be willing to spend money to place your best work forward – be that through framing, a quality portfolio or a special leave-behind booklet. If you're deciding between the £15 plastic portfolio or the £75 leather bound one, spend the extra money. It will make your images look more professional, and make you want to fill it with quality art. When you're willing to spend money on your own work, others are more likely to do so with commissions or purchases.

11 GLAZING

Glazing has traditionally been used to describe the process in which a small amount of pigment is suspended in a larger amount of medium, creating the visual effect of tinting an image without completely obscuring the lower surface. Paints are composed of varying pigments, and can range wildly as their application as a glaze. Digital technology allows nearly all brushes and colours to be easily manipulated as glazes and endlessly modified until flattened. Oh, how I envy the digital artist for this! I use glazes during the entire painting process, providing saturation increases, opaque fogging effects and darkening tints to unify objects and shadows. Glazes are an exciting way to get messy again without sacrificing your image's structural integrity.



“ Impressionists and realists have taught me about exaggerating colour ”



12 I SEE DEAD PEOPLE...

As a commercial artist, it's easy to get caught up in the swirl of your client's needs – following the art order to the letter and implementing change suggestions from marketing directors – and in doing so losing your artistic voice. My professional career has been strengthened by solving client's problems while at the same time injecting more of my own voice into the art. My first images for Magic: The Gathering incorporated hands

that I love to paint, and now I illuminate anticlimactic moments portraying protagonists as vulnerable and non-heroic. These may not be the perfect solution for my commercial clients, but for better or for worse my work has become recognisable for these traits. I feel an intense need to push in this direction – clouding my vision with dead or near-dead figures as elements of composition as if they were normal. ●

*Paint Tool SAI***TIPS FOR USING SAI'S BRUSHES**

Continuing his look at the low-cost art program, **Paco Rico Torres** highlights three key brushes and how to achieve good results with them

In issue 89 I explained what Paint Tool SAI's Pencil tool, the Marker tool and Bucket tool do. Now it's time to talk about the AirBrush, Brush and the Watercolor options.

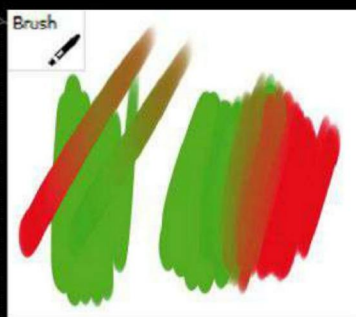
Using the Brush and Watercolor tools can be frustrating if you've never used blending brushes before. They're tricky to control if you don't know exactly what

they do, and how their use differs from Photoshop's brushes. Their main abilities are to blend and to dilute the colour. You can modify the way in which they do that using the Brush parameters, and I'll cover this next month. But for now, let's focus on how to use the Brush itself.

The first thing to note is that the Brush and Watercolor tools can create really artsy effects, but they aren't very precise.

1 Brush tool

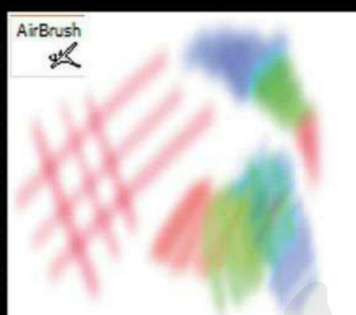
The Brush tool in SAI works a lot like oils. If you paint on a clear layer, it'll be like an ordinary brush. But if you paint over a painted surface, the colour you're painting with and the colour on the layer below will blend together, not only on the canvas that you're using, but also on the brush itself. Depending on how you move and use the brush, you'll produce different results. This is a good tool to use if you want to experiment with your art.

**2 Water Color tool**

The Watercolor tool works a lot like the Brush tool, with the added functionality of being able to dilute the colour on the layer. In other words, you can blend your colour in until it's transparent – this is like adding water to a wet watercolour painting. The more you press, the less you dilute. Remember that with these tools, like in traditional painting, how you move the brush is very important.

**3 AirBrush tool**

The AirBrush is the easiest of all the tools in Paint Tool SAI to use. Although it doesn't blend or dilute, it's a great soft brush that works pretty much like an actual airbrush. The more you press, the more opacity you produce. This can be especially useful if you want to add some subtle colour hues over a detailed painting. And since SAI doesn't have blur filters, this is a pretty important brush to be familiar with.

**Artist PROFILE**

Paco Rico Torres

COUNTRY: Spain



Paco is a freelance illustrator who's worked on art for

several card games, magazines and books.
www.bit.ly/ifx-paco

It's hard to do perfectly clean or highly detailed stuff with them, so be patient and spend some time familiarising yourself with the controls before attempting to paint with them.

Furthermore, try to use the right tool for the right task. The Brush and Watercolor tools can quickly create traditional-looking paintings through colour blending and brush stroke effects.

DIFFERENT BRUSH MOVEMENTS AND THEIR OUTCOMES**A. Pressure points**

Using the Watercolor tool, starting over the green spot, with a left-to-right, red brush stroke. The first one is made by pressing the pen just a little; the second one pressing a lot.

B. Zig and Zag

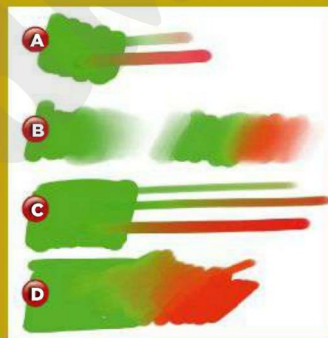
Select the Watercolor tool and over a green spot, make zig-zag brush strokes with the same green colour, pressing just a little. On the right, it's the same but using red colour over the green spot. First with low pressure, then with high pressure.

C. Pure blend

With the Brush tool, start over the green spot and make a left-to-right, red brush stroke, with low, medium and high pressure.

D. All mixed up

With the Brush tool, over a green spot next to a red spot, make several red zig-zag brush strokes in different directions with different degrees of pressure to mix them. If you paint from the red to the green, you'll extend the red paint, and vice versa.





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Photoshop CAPTURE THE DRAMA IN A SCENE

The tense showdown between Éowyn the shield-maiden and the evil Witch-king in Tolkien's Return of the King is visualised by **Nacho Molina**

JRR Tolkien's work is famous for its richness when describing a character's feelings and the emotion of a scene. His sensitivity for storytelling makes it possible for readers to imagine his heroes, villains and locations in great detail. Whether it's the majestic eternal clash between good and evil, or a classic home-loving scene from Hobbiton, the author's work is a never-ending inspirational source that has set a precedent in both fantastic literature and the world of illustration.

Éowyn versus the Witch-king may be one of the most intense and frequently depicted encounters from The Lord of the Rings. In this workshop I'd like to do my own version of that particular scene while explaining my painting process. I'll cover technical and composition aspects, and touch on techniques related to storytelling.

Art is about interpretation, and so it's always possible to adapt the source material to achieve a better visual result. However, it's important to respect the

basics of the story, because this in turn will enable the viewer to recall the emotion they felt when they first read Tolkien's vivid prose.

As well as researching armour, swords and aspects of medieval life, I encourage you to read up on the Lady of Rohan and the Witch-king, as well as study the chapter from The Lord of the Rings in which these two characters famously meet. After doing this I'm sure you'll come up with some cool ideas of your own. Okay, let's go to work!

Artist PROFILE

Nacho Molina
COUNTRY: England



Nacho is a freelance illustrator and concept artist, originally

from Spain. He's created art for movies, video games, card games and book covers for Blizzard Entertainment and London's Moving Picture Company, among others.

www.bit.ly/ifx-nmolina

**DIRECT LINK FOR
WORKSHOP FILES**
www.bit.ly/91-eowyn



1 Basic considerations

These four sketches are simple tonal schemes in which you can see the different relationship between the figure and the background. Because my image is outdoors and Éowyn will be wearing dark clothes, I choose the first one. Notice how the darkest shape on the bottom creates a base for the figure, which pops out of the light background and gives it a cleaner outline. Despite looking basic, it's a good indication of the direction I intend to take.

2 Initial sketch

I start with a simple line sketch to place the main figure and elements. It doesn't need to be perfect because it'll be lost at some point. I look for a cool composition and pose that connect to the story behind the scene. I try to find an engaging silhouette for the main character that combines diagonal elements. I also think about what I'm going to paint in the fore-, mid- and background.



WATCH THIS!
www.bit.ly/IFX91-eowyn



3 Establish the image's general tones

During the painting process, bear in mind that the illustration must work as a whole. Avoid concentrating on a particular area before you've decided on the general tones, lights and shadows. To create the scene's dusty mood I paint some blurry colours in neutral brown tones. This helps to get rid of the blank canvas, and gives me a sense of an epic battlefield.

4 Creating masks

I set up some masks that enable me to select different areas of the picture quickly and easily. I then start to add some colour variations in green to pop the main character out. Now I need to think of a cool costume design. For that, I recommend using references to make it more credible. Different materials such as metal, leather and fabrics, in conjunction with skin or hair, will create visual interest.



PRO SECRETS

Try to be organised

My illustrations usually end up with more than 100 layers. That's why I try to separate them into groups, such as 'Figure' or 'Background'. It saves time and makes the painting process easier.

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES: CUSTOM BRUSH 1

This brush is useful for depicting objects that have little texture.

CUSTOM BRUSH 2

I use this brush to paint here and there on top of an existing texture.

CUSTOM BRUSH 3

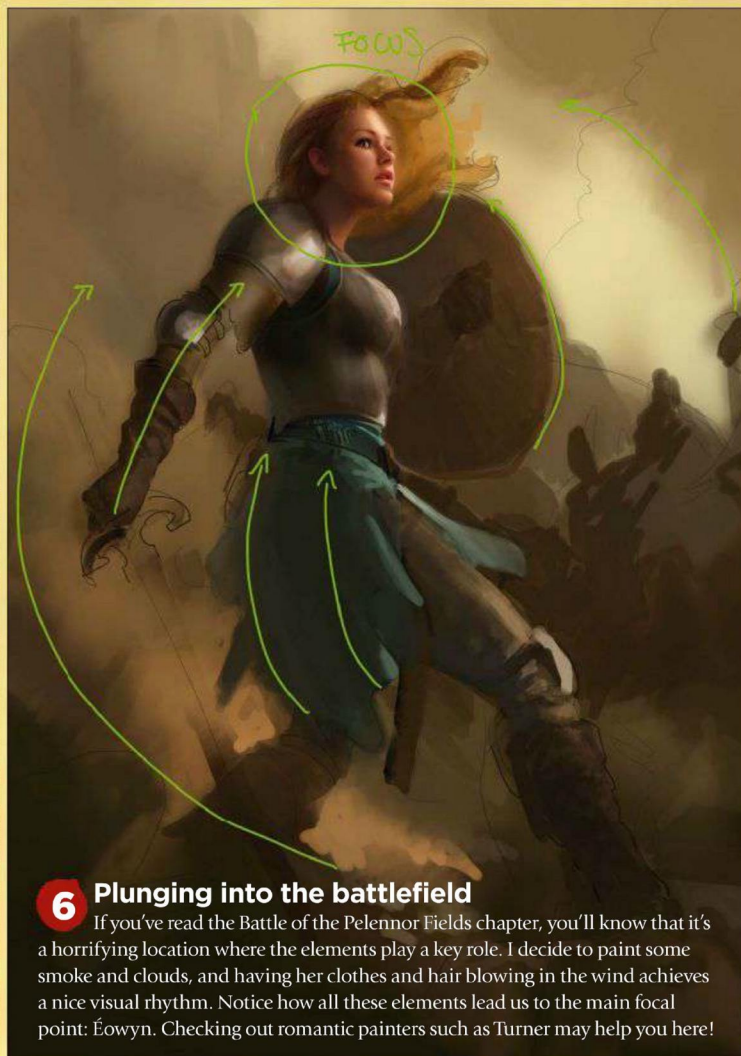
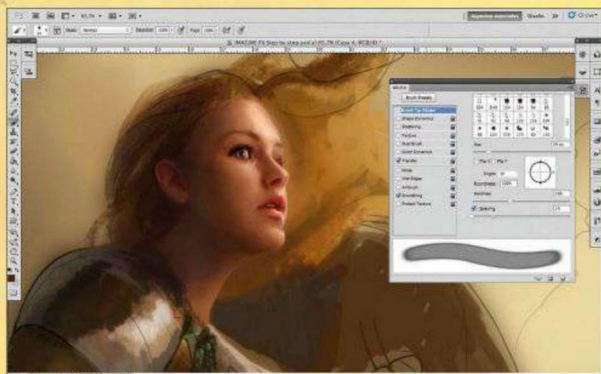
Good for implying dirty textures. I used this brush on the shields.

CUSTOM BRUSH 4

One of my regularly used brush that's ideal for painting skin and robes.

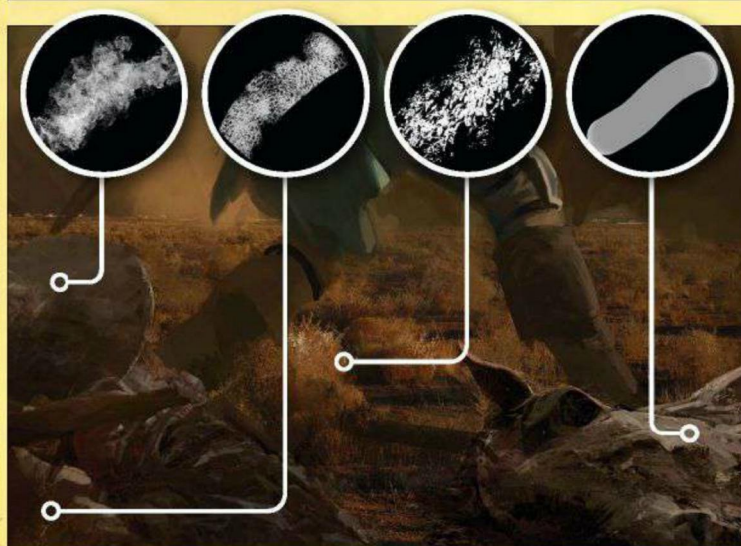
5 Éowyn's portrait

Every illustration has a focal point that grabs the viewer's initial attention, such as a bright area or the face of the main character. Get this right and you've won half the battle. The general look of the painting seems okay so far, so it's time to start with the main character. Put yourself in Éowyn's situation. Facing up to a Nazgûl is anything but funny, so our shield-maiden should look scared, but still beautiful. With this in mind I depict her face with a wide-open mouth, big eyes and slightly raised eyebrows.



6 Plunging into the battlefield

If you've read the Battle of the Pelennor Fields chapter, you'll know that it's a horrifying location where the elements play a key role. I decide to paint some smoke and clouds, and having her clothes and hair blowing in the wind achieves a nice visual rhythm. Notice how all these elements lead us to the main focal point: Éowyn. Checking out romantic painters such as Turner may help you here!



7 Environment elements

It's time to introduce the elements on the floor. Using the Clone Stamp tool, I duplicate some weeds and stones from a real photo, making sure that they match the perspective and light direction. Then I paint some objects in the foreground for three main reasons. First, it'll create more sense of depth in the image. Second, because I'm painting them in dark tones it'll settle down the composition. Third, it gives the viewer more information about the battle's ferocity.



8 Visualising the armour

Painting metal is tricky and it usually gives some coolness to an illustration. To achieve a good metallic surface you should remember that it reflects surrounding colours, as well as highlights and shadows. I start by setting up a few tones that match the light scheme. Then I continue painting with a Soft brush to blend the colours, before adding some texture in a medium opacity Soft Light layer. Finally I paint over the armour to make it look more 'arty'.



9 On to the sword

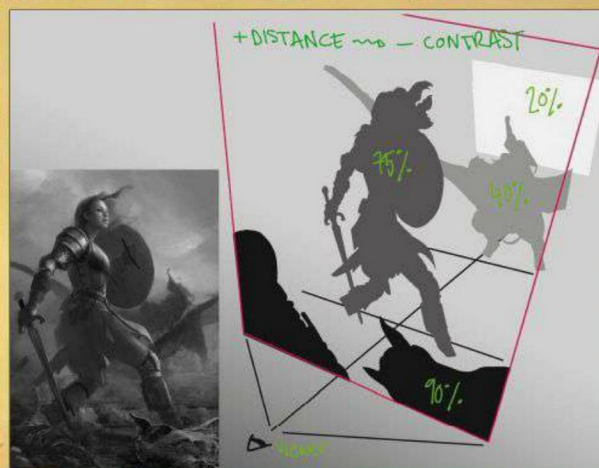
Painting swords and spears are ideal for creating obvious diagonals that will fit the composition nicely. I introduce a design in the hilt that makes reference to Rohan (the two horses that are facing each other). As for the blade, I select the area and then paint some gradients. Rotating the canvas and using Shift with the Pen tool while painting with the Photoshop blending brushes enables me to easily achieve a decent sword effect.

10 The Witch-king

When painting any kind of beast you should think about real creatures. Nature is the best designer and gives us brilliant references. The Witch-king rides a nasty and slimy flying creature, so I need to understand how animals such as reptiles, birds or even fish look. The rider is the secondary figure in the background, so I avoid detailing him too much and keep his contrast levels down, otherwise he'll appear too close to the viewer.



Shortcuts
Hide selection
 Ctrl+H (PC)
 Cmd+H (Mac)
 Keep painting on a selected area without seeing any distracting lines or guides.



11 Rendering the background

The same is true for the background. The atmosphere is made up of air and dust, so an object's contrast is reduced the further it is from the viewer. Try to be subtle and paint the sense of something, rather than the thing itself. For painting distant mountains, scattering and colour dynamic options come in useful because they may provide you with pleasing colour variation effects. Don't try this approach everywhere though, and consider the general appearance of your painting.



12 Use textures wisely

Just as with your colours, hues and saturation, you should find a balance in your textures. A repetitive texture element may lead to a boring image. To counter this, try to combine different finishes. For instance, metal is usually strong and rigid, which implies sharp edges. In contrast, hair or robes are fluffy and delicate, which necessitates painting them using softer brush strokes. Notice what happens with the sky and the ground when I do this.

13 Éowyn's coat of arms

Minor elements such as coat of arms on a suit of armour or a shield can actually tell us more about a character. Because Éowyn's shield isn't facing the viewer, the one that's lying on the floor is an alternative area to paint some heraldic elements. So I start designing a simple silhouette that's reminiscent of a horse. Then I transform and match it with the shield's perspective. Finally, I select that shape and paint it on a new layer using a custom brush that imparts a dirty, irregular texture.



14 Pay attention to those details

Small details can make the difference between a rather good illustration and a magnificent one. How far to go with them is a personal decision, but remember that sometimes less is more. To depict details and polished surfaces I'd recommend zooming into and out of the image regularly, checking that your detailing is working up close as well as from a distance. In addition, I use the Selection Lasso and a low opacity brush (between 15 and 20 per cent) to achieve clean shapes with sharp edges. This will give the sense of a more finished illustration.



PRO SECRETS

The Golden Spiral

Have you heard about the Golden Spiral? It's a visual proportion technique that's been used throughout art history. Try to set up your composition using it and you'll soon see how your art looks more aesthetically pleasing.



15 Keep persevering!

Detailing may be the toughest part of the painting process, but if you bite the bullet it'll be worth it when you print out your image. I keep working on the chain mail, shoulder pad and hair, trying to make these elements visually richer. This won't be too difficult because there's a good base in place. That's why it's important for emphasising the general look of the image. It also enables me to find different nuances without losing the sense of unity.

16 Enhance the atmosphere

Finally, I add some small details like blood and dirt to make the scene more believable. I use a Soft Light layer and paint in a dark red colour around the shoulders, chest or cheekbones. I then strengthen the highlights on a new Soft Light layer, but this time using bright yellow. This gives the impression that Éowyn is illuminated by divine golden light, which will contrast with the evil creature in the background.

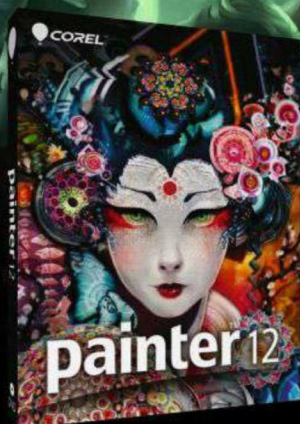


17 Final colour adjustments

When you've been busy working on an image for a lengthy period of time, it's sometimes difficult to see things that aren't quite right. I recommend leaving a painting for a couple of days before continuing to play with light and colour adjustments. I use Layer>New Layer Adjustments>Selective Colour during the final stages of my painting process. It may reveal a completely different aspect to your image. Try it!



BODY LANGUAGE created in Painter™
by Howard Lyon



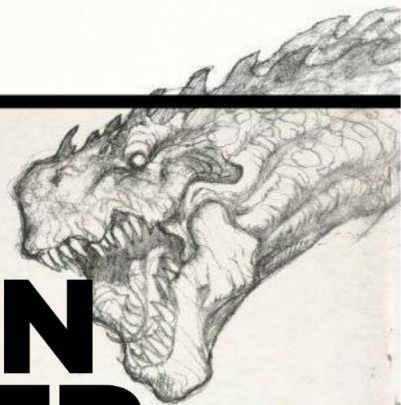
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Traditional skills

DRAW A DRAGON WITH CHARACTER



Justin Gerard says dragons have personalities – they're not just lizards with wings – and encourages you to reflect this in your art

Artist PROFILE

Justin Gerard
COUNTRY: US



Justin has travelled the world in search of the perfect medium to paint in. He's not found it, but he's met some fascinating people, seen some interesting places and had a chance to paint a lot of great subjects. He enjoys good music, chocolate chip cookies and tank battles.

www.justingerard.com

DIRECT LINK FOR WORKSHOP FILES
www.bit.ly/91-dragon

I've always loved dragons. And I've always loved dinosaurs, too. But dragons are not the same as dinosaurs.

While I love studying the creatures of this world for clues on how to make a fantastic creature feel like it could exist in it, I think that by making dinosaurs and

dragons interchangeable in our work, we're losing integral parts of what have made each one special in history, myth and fantasy. In this workshop we're going to examine why character and personality are important in dragons, and then work through examples on how to imbue them with character.

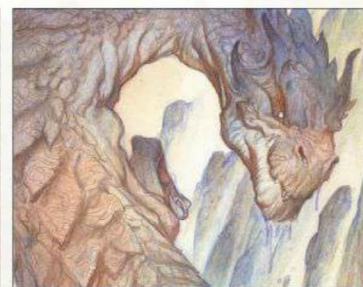


GIVE YOUR DRAGON A STORY

JRR Tolkien makes a compelling case for a distinction between dragons and dinosaurs in his essay, *On Fairy-stories*. In it, the author recounts how when he was introduced to the subjects of zoology and palaeontology at an early age he was told by his elders that dinosaurs were, in fact, dragons.

Tolkien wanted adults to recognise the distinction between fact and fantasy, and

not to dismiss one in favour of the other. He wrote: "I was eager to study nature, actually more eager than I was to read most faerie stories. But I did not want to be quibbled into science and cheated out of faeries by people who seemed to assume that by some kind of original sin I should prefer fairy-tales. But according to some kind of new religion, I ought to be induced to like science."



DRAGONS HAVE MOTIVE

In Smaug, Tolkien's dragon from *The Hobbit*, we find a creature that provides more than just the mere threat of physical violence. He also offers a personification of greed – and a distinctly aristocratic greed at that (he refuses to share or redistribute his wealth, instead pointlessly hoarding it for centuries in his vast cave).

In John Gardner's *Grendel*, the dragon is even more of a philosophical threat over a physical one. The dragon reveals to Grendel philosophical principles that he wrestles with, and is ultimately overcome by. This leads him to choose to become, and even embrace, his position as the villain in the Shaper's story.

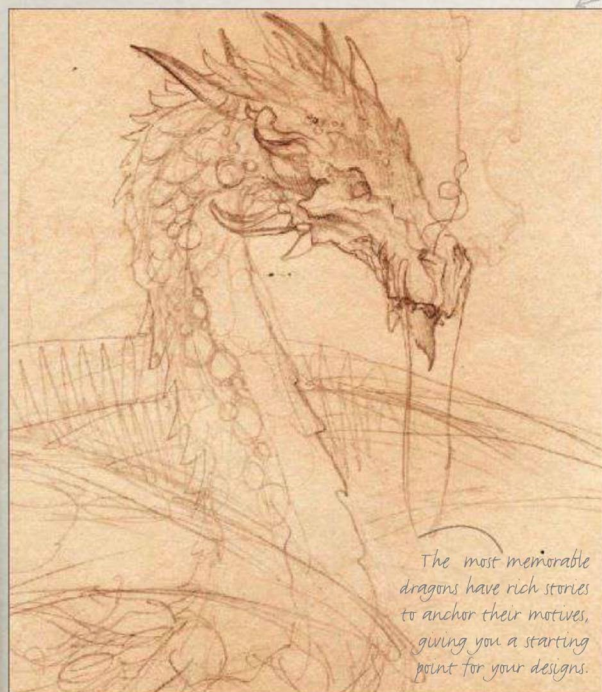
The dragon in *Grendel* personifies a deeply nihilistic view of the world: his final argument is about the purpose of life being that all human values are baseless and

“Dragon symbolism is fantasy at its best: a physical example of man's internal struggles”

that everything we do will be made irrelevant. His best advice to Grendel therefore is to, "Seek out gold and sit on it," as nothing really matters anyway.

Gardner cleverly uses both the imagery and the archetype views of the dragon to convey how threatening and dangerous the idea is, and this belief is ultimately played out through Grendel's own final meeting with Beowulf.

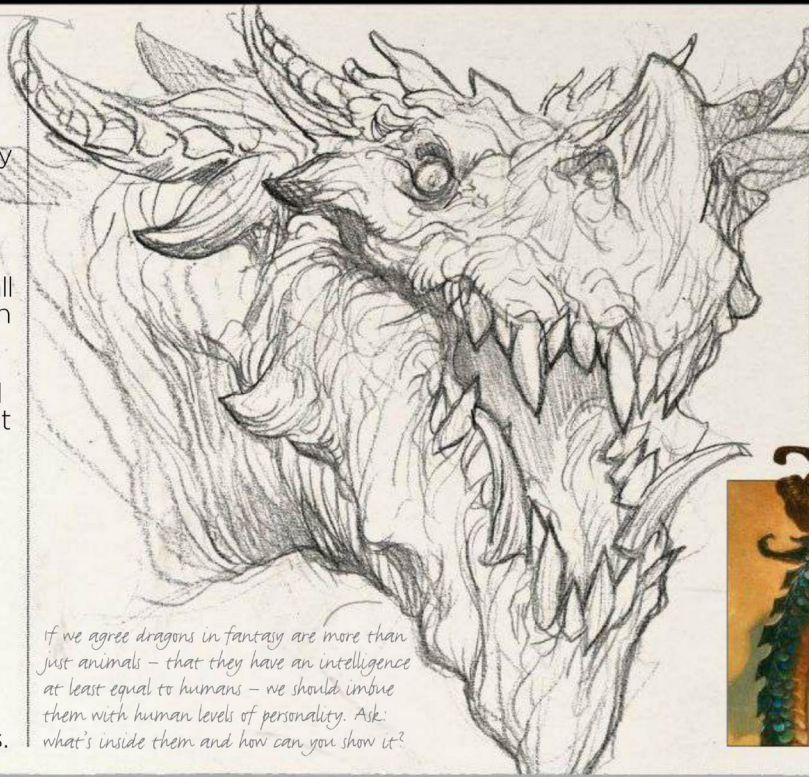
Like these excellent examples, give your dragon a story.



The most memorable dragons have rich stories to anchor their motives, giving you a starting point for your designs.

USE SYMBOLISM

Dragon symbolism offers something far more than a struggle of man versus nature. It does what fantasy does best: offers physical examples of man's internal struggles. It also reveals a wealth of other conflicts, external and internal. Not all dragons are evil. In Kenneth Grahame's *The Reluctant Dragon*, the writer acknowledges the classical archetype for a dragon, but flips it on its head to give the dragon a good heart. The dragon in this story understands her design is one of evil, but chooses to rise above it. She prefers tea parties and poetry recitals to pillaging and burning. A wealth of personality can be poured into a dragon, all the while keeping its sinister features.



If we agree dragons in fantasy are more than just animals – that they have an intelligence at least equal to humans – we should imbue them with human levels of personality. Ask: what's inside them and how can you show it?

PRO SECRETS

Rough is good

Don't worry about making these rough studies really tight. These are meant to be loose. Rough drawings like this are a great way to study expressions and to slowly build a mental library of expressions. As I do this, I ask myself what is it that makes this character look sinister, deceitful or devious?

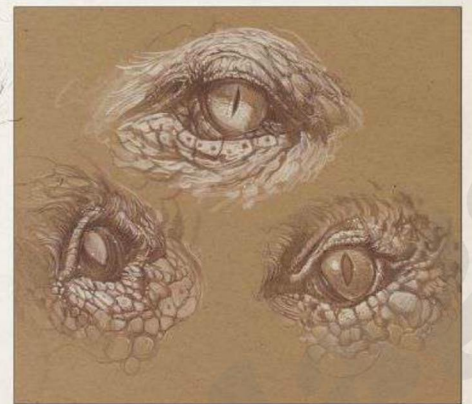


IMBUING DRAGONS WITH CHARACTER

We're searching for a visual balance between a creature that captures our sense of reptilian evil and human intelligence. For humans, I'll occasionally use pictures of myself (I can look shockingly sinister at times). But I also keep a folder of images from the news of sinister-looking political figures – there are some wonderfully sinister politicians out there! So, a brief foray onto political websites turned these curious figures up.



By making studies of human faces and expressions you'll soon find they creep into your creature art.



USING HUMAN REFERENCE

Now that we have good references for human expressions of deviousness, we can turn to our dragons. As I'm going through these sketches, I keep in mind the expressions of the human figures I drew before. And even if I wasn't deliberately trying to, their expressions would still be finding their way into the corners of the smiles and the eyes of the dragons. The human studies I did now inform the expressions on the faces of the dragons.

DRAWING DRAGONS' EYES

The first place almost all biological creatures look when they identify another shape as a biological form is the eyes. They have been called the window to the soul. The same holds true for when we look at a character in a painting: we will generally always try to look at the eyes first, before we move on to the other aspects of the image. This is hard-wired into us as creatures.

So, it's important to capture the eyes correctly. Take some time and make studies of reptile eyes and human eyes. Find which ones are the most expressive. Which ones communicate what you're after the best? Try combining them to achieve something new. ➡

DRAWING DRAGONS FROM LIFE



While dragons have a largely spiritual dimension to them, they also exist in the actual world. Therefore we should seek to make

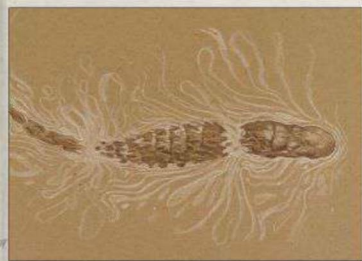
them look like they belong here.

When we're searching for something to use as physical reference for dragons there are many creatures alive today that provide us with a great wealth of material. Crocodiles offer what, is perhaps, the best and most threatening example. Of all modern-day lizards they are some of the most brutal and terrifying in appearance.



1 ON LOCATION

These drawings were done at a reserve called Alligator Adventure in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. This reserve is home to one of the largest crocodiles in the world. Utan is 20 feet long and weighs one ton. He is now in his own spacious exhibit, because he ate everything else.



2 STUDYING THE SUBJECT

This crocodile is a genuine monster, a horror from another age – they apparently kill around 2,000 people each year. I doubt the chicken wire used to cage him would really do much if he wanted to eat me. But I'm not that worried. As you can see (in the picture at the top of the page), I'm wearing a camouflaged hat, which renders me invisible to him.



3 ANIMALS IN MOTION

Here I got the head done, and then Utan decided he'd like a swim. This was inconvenient, but you don't argue with 20-foot crocodiles. Drawing from life is hard. And drawing from life that insists on being alive and wandering off or slithering away is even harder.



4 DIRECT OBSERVATION

But it can be highly rewarding as well. There's a wealth of information you glean from direct observation that you just can't get any other way. Doing this enables me to see how reptiles breath, how they interact with one another, how they act when they are startled, or how they sit with jaws open to cool off – not in the hope I'll carelessly step there.

DRAWING A LIFE-LIKE DRAGON

Now that I have collected my reference and done studies from life to commit the details of real-life dragons to memory, I am ready to begin. I won't need reference for my thumbnails and I leave it all to the side so I can work from imagination alone.

1 THUMBAILING

I begin with a very small thumbnail. I'm not worried about the details, just the overall flow and balance of my dragon. Next to this, I'll do a larger version, (roughly twice the size of the thumbnail) using the thumbnail as my guide.



I occasionally stop to compare my new drawing with my thumbnail to make sure that I have not lost the essence of what made the thumbnail attractive.

2 FINDING THE EXPRESSION

As I draw I begin to explore the details, the shadows and the expression. I'm not concerned with sharp refinements here, only the exploration of the character. By having the small thumbnail next to me, I can always keep in mind what I was originally after, even after erasing and redrawing. This is when I push and pull the expression of the character the most. I don't want to be exploring later. I want to be executing the drawing.



PRO SECRETS

Life drawing

As you draw from life or photos, make mental notes about your subject. How far are the eyes from the mouth? How large is the upper jaw compared to the lower? As you draw these details you're adding them to a mental library you'll be able to pull from in future. It also broadens your overall understanding of the construction of living things.

3 EXPAND THE THUMBAIL

After I've finished this rough exploratory drawing, I scan it into the computer and then print it out at a larger size. This print out is then transferred onto a new sheet of drawing paper. For this, I'm using Strathmore 400 Series Bristol (regular vellum). I'll sometimes use Saral graphite or a chalk transfer, but this time I chose to use a light table to keep the mess to a minimum.



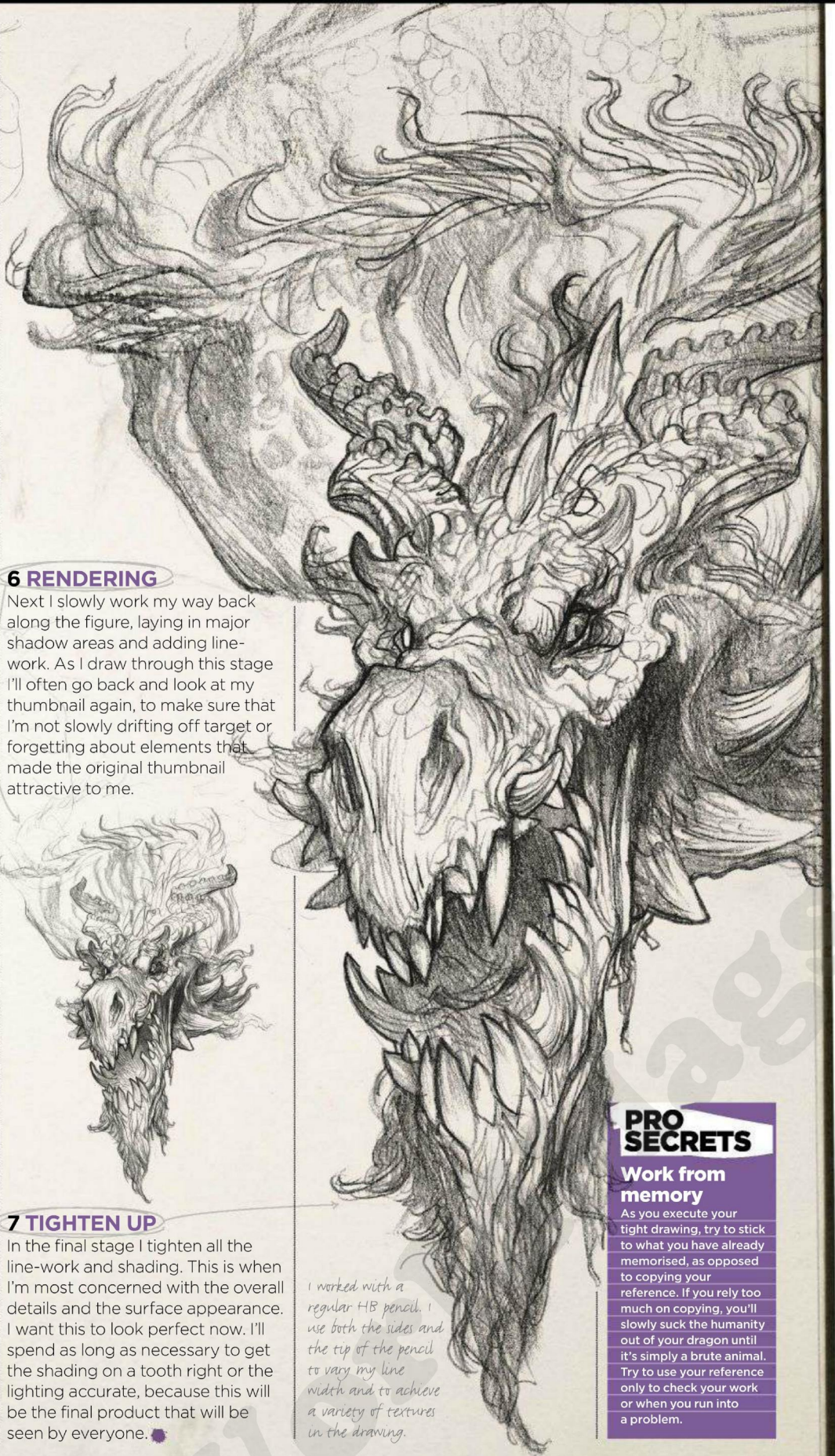
4 TRANSFER

I transfer only minimal shapes and lines down. I don't worry about shading or fine details. Those will all be drawn in freehand. Once I'm locked into a tight line drawing like this, the shadows and details are much easier to focus on.



5 BEGINNING THE TIGHT DRAWING

Using an HB pencil, I begin in the face, which is the area of greatest interest and because everything else is dependent upon the success of this area. Since I've already done most of my exploratory drawing in the previous stages, I'm less concerned with finding the character as I am to accurately communicating his form. The most important thing now is getting the line-work and shading right, so that the shadow areas recede and the highlight areas spring forward.



6 RENDERING

Next I slowly work my way back along the figure, laying in major shadow areas and adding line-work. As I draw through this stage I'll often go back and look at my thumbnail again, to make sure that I'm not slowly drifting off target or forgetting about elements that made the original thumbnail attractive to me.



7 TIGHTEN UP

In the final stage I tighten all the line-work and shading. This is when I'm most concerned with the overall details and the surface appearance. I want this to look perfect now. I'll spend as long as necessary to get the shading on a tooth right or the lighting accurate, because this will be the final product that will be seen by everyone.

I worked with a regular HB pencil. I use both the sides and the tip of the pencil to vary my line width and to achieve a variety of textures in the drawing.

PRO SECRETS

Work from memory

As you execute your tight drawing, try to stick to what you have already memorised, as opposed to copying your reference. If you rely too much on copying, you'll slowly suck the humanity out of your dragon until it's simply a brute animal. Try to use your reference only to check your work or when you run into a problem.



Painter

IMPROVE YOUR PORTRAIT SKILLS

Corrado Vanelli uses Painter's standard tools to create a portrait of a character from Middle-earth, focusing on skin tone and hair rendering

Artist PROFILE

Corrado Vanelli

COUNTRY: Italy



Corrado works as a designer in a factory and only paints in

his free time. He's worked with digital media since the 1990s. Art for him is a passion: he likes the idea of a job that enables him to visualise his dreams as well as pay the bills.

www.bit.ly/ifx-cvanelli

DIRECT LINK FOR WORKSHOP FILES

www.bit.ly/91-painter

I can't imagine the world without Tolkien's books. His stories and creatures have inspired countless artists, and most of what we consider a "classic" fantasy style comes directly from the stories based in Middle-earth. So when Ian Dean, the ImagineFX editor, asked me to create a portrait of an elf girl in the style of The Lord of the Rings, I accepted immediately.

To be honest, I was a little surprised when Ian made contact. I mean,

ImagineFX workshops are usually written by big-name artists, whereas I'm only a poor Italian guy who just paints in his free time... but anyway, I'm here now and I'll try my best to share my working process and techniques with you. The subject of the article gives me the chance to explain and describe two key points of character rendering: skin tone and hair.

My workshop is divided in three parts. In the first part I create a rough sketch and an initial lighting study. In

the second part I add colours, and finally I define the details.

I've used Painter 12 and its standard toolset to create this character image. Even though the software has plenty of amazing tools, I always end up working with Bristle Oils and Circular Brushes. My art background is in traditional media and my approach is very simple and linear. I'm not used to working with sophisticated techniques and effects. I'm just a stubborn old donkey!



Medium Bristle Oils
For general use



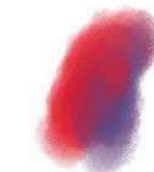
Bristle Oils
Ideal for working in fine details



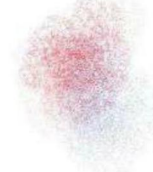
Cover Pencil
Helps to refine shapes, and to add lines and small details



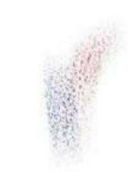
Charcoal Pencil



Smeary Wet Sponge
Perfect for introducing details to a monochrome surface



Sponge
Easily add noise



Real Fat Chalk
To add grain to a surface



Marbling Rake
Use to create fine distortions



Smudge
To combine colours with grain



Soft Blender Stump
To combine colours without grain



Glow
Good for defining highlights



Sharp Triple Knife
Great for hair and fine details



Palatte Knife
Use to create fine distortions

PRO SECRETS

Get the light right

Doing a lighting study on a black and white image makes sense because it enables you to focus on getting the light right. Colour can wait until later in the process. It's important to define the positions of the light sources. Consider drawing some arrows on the image to indicate the direction of your light.

1 Before you begin...

Starting out with large, complex brushes can be frustrating as you wait for the brush stroke to appear on-screen. It's better to use simple, circular brushes to fill a large, empty area of the canvas. Start the painting on a downsized canvas: 1,000/1,500 pixels wide is enough. This enables you to experiment without any lag. You can resize the final image once you've defined the key elements and are ready to add the fine details – this is when complex brushes come into their own.

2 Reference photos

Characters, skin, hair and muscles are complex subjects and to achieve a good result it's crucial to spend time studying reference photos. Having some photos in front of you during the painting process can be inspiring and help you to define details. For this workshop I go online and find a couple of photos of Cate Blanchett playing Galadriel from The Lord of the Rings. I use them too as a reference for the hair, diadem (the crown) and skin tone.

3 Working tools

For the first sketch I only use the Charcoal Pencil. For my black and white study I employ the Cover Pencil, Smudge and Soft Blender Stump brushes. For the colour painting I use Medium Bristle Oils, Bristle Oils, Cover Pencil, Sharp Triple Knife, Palette Knife and Glow brushes. Finally, for the background I use the Real Fat Chalk, Smeary Wet Sponge, Sponge and the Knife brushes. I stick with the default Painter paper with its standard grain.

4 Concept and canvas

I create a new canvas (1,310x1,770 pixels) with a grey background (RGB 95,95,95). Coloured paper aids any lighting study, because the canvas represents the mid-tones and so you only have to manage the highlights and shadows instead of the entire shadow range. I now play with traditional framework/composition schemes. The red lines represent the framework that I'll use in this workshop. Using the Charcoal Pencil I draw some lines to define the shape of the face, and the position of the eyes, nose, ears and mouth.

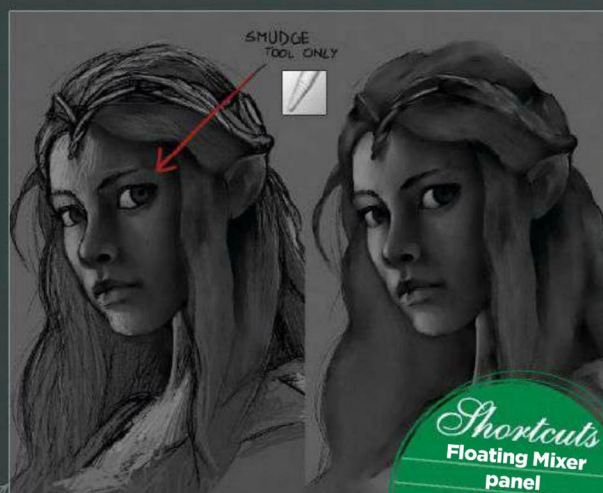
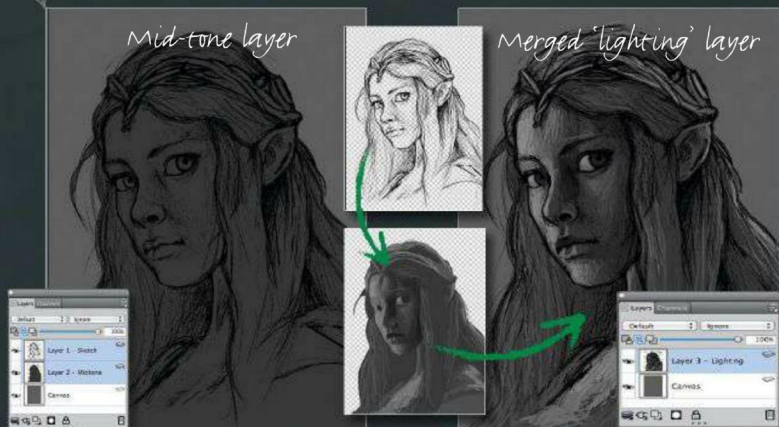


5 First sketch

During my sketch development process I try to better define my shapes. Flipping the illustration (Canvas>Rotate Canvas>Flip Canvas Horizontal) enables me to solve proportional and shape problems. I work on the flipped image and when I'm satisfied with the result I flip it back to its original orientation. When the first sketch is finished I move on to a lighting study.

6 Lighting study

I usually draw the lighting study in black and white. I create my mid-tone layer and place it between the sketch and canvas layers. I set this layer to uniform grey (RGB 59,59,59), which represents the basic mid-tone of the light. Now I start to paint quick, rough strokes using the Cover Pencil to define highlights and shadows. As soon as I've defined the main lighting areas, I merge the sketch and mid-tone layers, and call this new merged layer 'Layer 3 - Lighting'.



7 Smudge the light

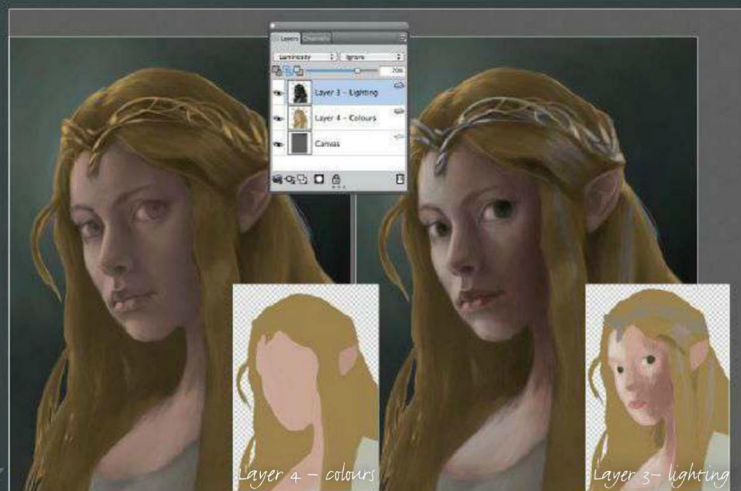
My favourite traditional tools are charcoal and stumps, so I'm also partial to their digital counterparts in Painter. The two stumps I use are the Soft Blender Stump, which creates a very smooth effect, and Smudge, which imparts grainier effects. I change the opacity of the stumps according to the level of smoothness that I want to obtain.

8 Light details

When the image is smoothed over, I start to add lighting and shadow details using the Cover Pencil and Stumps. I focus my attention on small portions of the face and slowly retouch the entire image. Finally, I move on to the hair. Even in this preliminary study it's important to quickly define the highlighted areas on the hair, which takes just a few brush strokes. This refined study now acts as a guideline for the next stages in the process. I also work a little bit on the background to emphasise the portrait.



Shortcuts
Floating Mixer panel
Ctrl+Alt+1 (PC)
Cmd+Alt+1 (Mac)
This enables you to adjust colour directly on the canvas.



9 Adding colours

It's time to add some colours. I change the Composite Method of the Layer 3 - Lighting layer from Default to Luminosity. After that I create a new layer (Layer 4 - Colours) between the background and character layers. Now I can start to paint with simple, uniform colours. Three colours are enough: a basic rose colour for the skin, a neutral beige for the hair and a desaturated light green for the dress. My Layer 3 - Lighting layer becomes a useful guide for defining the subtleties in my colours. At this point in the process it's also important to define a basic colour palette with three or four light/shadow variants for each colour.



10 Main colour definition

Using the same technique I employed during the lighting study, I add different colours on the Colours layer. I then merge the two layers to create a new layer: Layer 5 - Final. The image is a little dark, but I can increase the luminosity with either the Glow or Dodge tools, or by using a temporary layer with Composite Method set to Overlay, Soft Light or Hard Light. Painting on this layer with a light colour will increase the luminosity of those layers underneath it. You can use a simple circle brush and adjust the effect by working on layer opacity, or remove colour with weak strokes of the Eraser brush.

11 Resize and refine

Now the image needs to be resized for the refinement step (the final resolution is 2,622x3,542 pixels). I want to focus on my character's skin tones. One secret for achieving a realistic skin tone is to use different colours. It can seem an obvious thing, but we often tend to pick existing colours from the canvas and this can result in a monotone-looking skin. Real skin isn't uniform: some parts are more saturated than others, with areas that are redder (the cheeks, nose and ears) and other parts that feature grey or blue, such as the eye sockets.



12 Paint skin tones

I imagine a desaturated rose as the basic colour for skin, and bear in mind the position of any light source. Note that light passes through the skin and "illuminates" it with vivid colours (especially if you're using backlights). The Glow, Dodge and Burn tools are fantastic for achieving this, but check the results. Often it's necessary to correct overexposure mistakes and unwanted artefacts. Remember that light bounces on all surfaces, so two nearby objects will generate reciprocal diffused shadows, caused by the occlusion of ambient light.

PRO SECRETS
Smoothing big areas of colour
Rather than using large, complex brushes to fill and create smooth colours on big areas, use simple circular brushes with the Flat cover subcategory turned on. To smooth banding effect of hard brush strokes, I employ a Stump with or without grain, depending on the image's requirements.

13 Shave and haircut

The secret to painting hair is to spend a lot of time doing it! My method consist of creating a first colour sketch with flat and uniform surfaces, which helps to define the highlights and shadows. It's like a smooth, plastic cover upon the head. With its shape I can define the main features of the character's haircut.



14 Defining the hair

Now I start to define details. The first tool I use is the Sharp Triple Knife with the parameters shown. I use a high Resaturation value if I want to paint details, and reduce this value if I want to smudge in my details. To increase the final rendering quality I paint a lot of single lines using the Cover Pencil with different colours. The Dodge and Burn tools are useful for hair rendering: they help me to add either shots of light or thin dark strips. And that's it - my character is finished! Thanks for your attention and time.



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Zombie Playground, Jason Chan, Massive Black

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ISSUE 92 ON SALE *FRIDAY 4 JANUARY 2013*

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PAINT AN EPIC WORLD

Learn how to use colour, light and scale to create epic fantastic environments, with **Noah Bradley**

Artist PROFILE

Noah Bradley
COUNTRY: US



Noah's a freelance concept artist. He travels extensively

while freelancing so he can be inspired by all of Earth's landscapes.

www.noahbradley.com

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I love epic stuff. Whether it's the massive, sweeping, panoramic establishing shots from *The Lord of the Rings* films, or the grand paintings of the Hudson River School, or even a great soundtrack, there's something about the truly epic that never ceases to stir my feelings.

It follows, then, that I also love to paint epic things. Clients come to me looking for that single piece that captures the grandeur of the world they're creating. Something that tells a story that's far larger than any single person. In fact, I think that in a great establishing shot the world itself becomes a fascinating character in the story.

Great lighting makes for a great scene. The most incredible things can be made dull with a thoughtless approach to the lighting. So take time to study and practise your lighting. Look at your favourite films, paintings and even old photographs and try to analyse how the lighting is working in them. Then the next time you're working on one of your own pieces, take that knowledge and apply it. I promise you that your work will benefit.

If you can, visit epic places, too. I've had the great pleasure of visiting both New Zealand and Switzerland this year. Both are astonishing landscapes that now inspire my work. Get out there. Travel. See this world so you can paint your own worlds.



1 Get a big brush

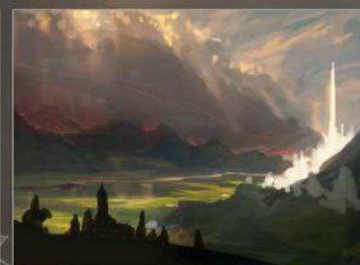
Whether working digitally or traditionally, always grab the biggest brush first. There's a time and a place for small brushes, but that's not at the beginning. At the start use large, general marks to vaguely imply things. When I begin I don't even think about what things are. I think about shapes. I think about colours. I treat it almost like an abstract painting. Only later do I have to figure out what these blobs are going to be.

2 Vague to specific

Big to small, loose to tight. This is my approach to every painting. I never dive into the little details first. I know it's tempting to start on the fun little details, but you have to resist! Once you establish the whole painting you can begin to make things more specific. But try to push the entire painting along at the same pace. Working on several pieces at a time is difficult to do. Take the easy road.

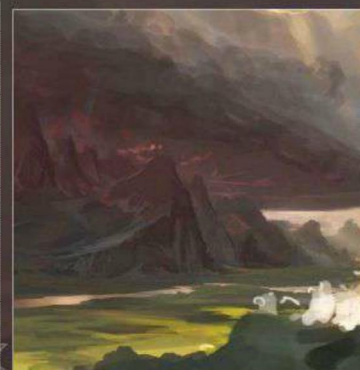
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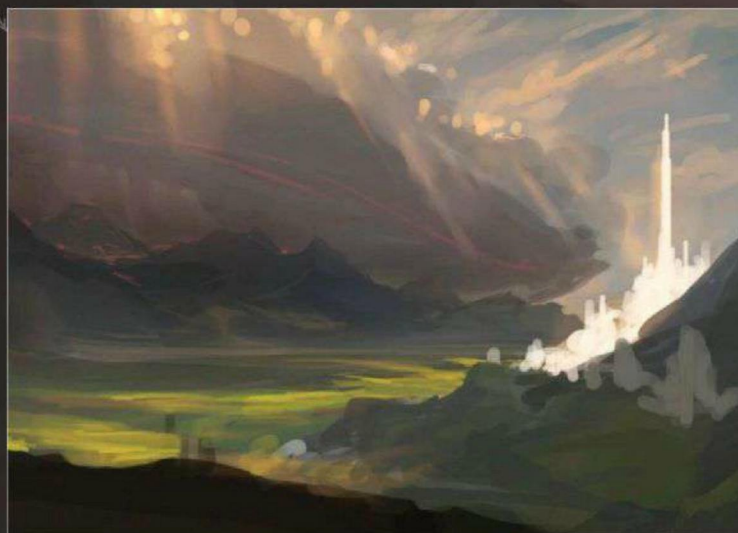
4 Fore-, mid- and background

Always think of your compositions in these three terms. Usually people will have the tendency to leave one of them out. Character artists will forget about backgrounds and environment artists will forget about foregrounds. But it's the contrasting layers of the picture that give us that wonderful sense of depth. The objects up close make the distant objects seem even more distant.



3 Lighting first

Lighting is not an afterthought. It affects every single thing in every single painting you ever do. If you want to create epic work you need to master lighting. So while you're starting out, try several approaches to lighting in a single piece. Imagine you could move the sun around. What would your piece look like at sunset, sunrise, or on a cloudy day? What about a night-time scene, or with storm clouds approaching?



PRO SECRETS

Don't rush

I'm impatient about a lot of things. Sometimes about my paintings, even. But if you want to make great art, you need to take your time. You need to slow down, think about things and go at whatever pace lets you do the absolute best work you can. A friend made me a little sign with the words 'Don't rush' that I now have stuck next to my computer. Any time I start to compromise quality for time, I see that sign, stop myself and slow down.

5 Atmosphere

Atmospheric perspective is your new best friend. In general, things tend to become less detailed, softer, a bit more bluish and less contrasty as they become farther from us. Understanding and applying this very simple rule will immediately give your work a tremendous amount of depth. Without a doubt, this is one of the first things every aspiring environment painter should learn.

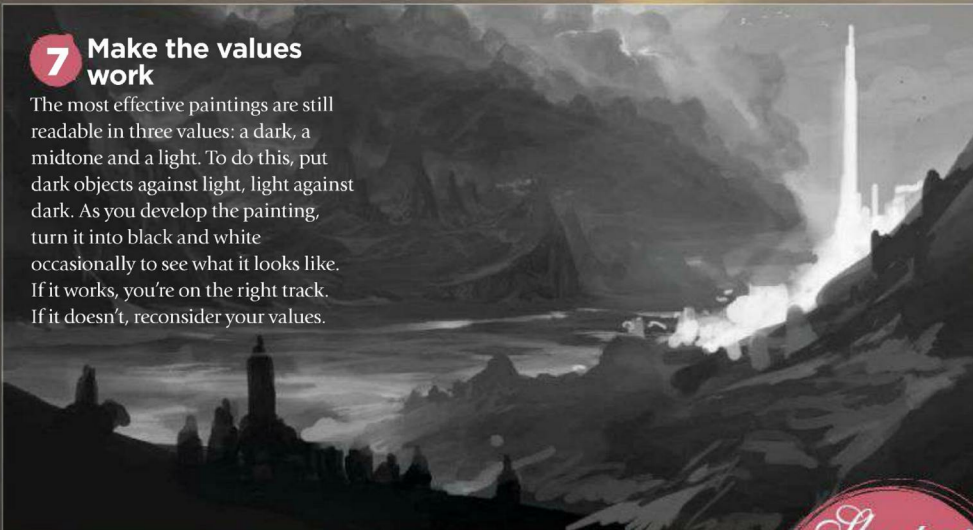
6 Clouds are shapes, too

Don't think of clouds as flat, formless objects way up there in the sky. Instead, think of them as three-dimensional objects that have form and are affected by light. The best way to see this in action is to hop on an aeroplane. The next time you're flying through the clouds, take a look out the window and see them up close. I love staring at these massive, floating mountains drifting by the aeroplane.



7 Make the values work

The most effective paintings are still readable in three values: a dark, a midtone and a light. To do this, put dark objects against light, light against dark. As you develop the painting, turn it into black and white occasionally to see what it looks like. If it works, you're on the right track. If it doesn't, reconsider your values.



8 Have fun with colour

Don't be scared of colour! It's a beautiful, wonderful gift we're all given. And while it can be intimidating and daunting at first, try to have fun with it. Study Old Masters and see how they used colour. Visit a museum if you can to see those paintings in person. There have been countless amazing artists who've come before us who had to tackle the exact same problems as us. Steal from them.

Shortcuts

Color Picker

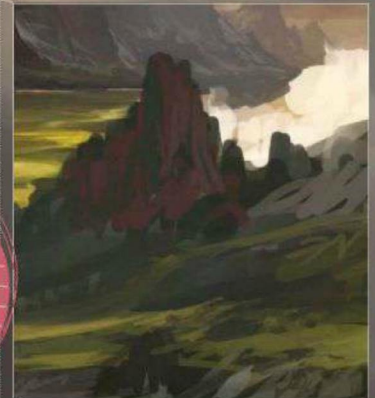
Alt+click (PC)

Cmd+click (Mac)

Once my basic colour scheme is chosen, I use Color Picker for most of my colours.

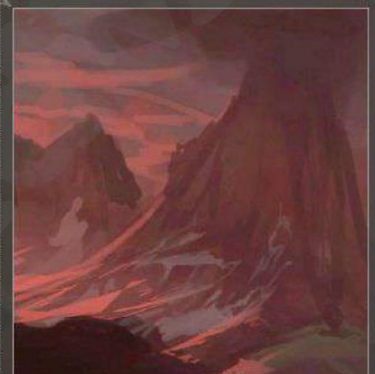
9 Imply detail

I hate painting details. But I love implying details. I like a painting to look rough and abstract when you're right next to it, and then extremely tight when you're far away. I find a painting much more interesting when I have those two experiences. So I don't paint every blade of grass perfectly. Instead I imply as much as I can. If you get the right colour, shape and edge, you can get away with murder.



10 Don't skip anywhere

Don't slack off when you get to a less exciting sections. Take your time and give those areas love and attention as well. By bringing everything up to a decent finish, the viewer will look where you want them to. If you leave an area sloppily done then it's going to be distracting, and detract from what you've painted. So spend the time to paint all the boring stuff, even if it's only carefully implied. ➡



Shortcuts

Hand tool

Spaceclick (PC & Mac)
While I'm zoomed in, this is how I pan around the image. It's the fastest way to get around.



13 Populate your world

Figures add story, life and scale, so throw some people into the piece. Even work that's primarily about the landscape can benefit from some figurative work. By putting people into your work, you give something for your viewer to connect with. When they see figures, they picture themselves standing in the painting, rather than on the outside looking in.

PRO SECRETS

Never stop learning

No matter where you get in your art career, you'll never run out of things to learn. In fact, the better you get the more you'll realise you don't know. So get used to spending a tremendous amount of time learning new things. Learn to enjoy the process rather than simply the end result. If you do this, it'll be a much easier road for you.

11 Put yourself in the painting

Live in your paintings. Imagine walking around in the worlds you create. Imagine what it would be like to be standing there on that mountain or in that distant city. What does it feel like? What does it smell like? What do you hear? Would you feel the wind against your face? The more you can dive into your paintings, the more your paintings will sing with personality.

12 Be subtle

The best way to make certain areas of your painting stand out is to be extremely subtle with the rest of the piece. In the shadows I paint with a very small range of colour and values. I keep things very subtle so that the large, general shapes hold together. Squint your eyes at the piece and you'll find almost everything in the shadow blending together. Let some things be subtle so others can shine.



14 Check your work

Never stay zoomed in for too long on your piece. Zoom out so that you can get a good feel for how the piece is coming together as a whole. It's easy to get wrapped up in the minutiae of the painting and totally forget about the big picture. Be a big picture kind of person. When the big picture is working, the details will seem much less important. All the way to the end of the painting, keep zooming out frequently.



15 Finishing touches

Take your time at the finish. Don't rush to wrap things up. Slow down and make sure there aren't any areas bothering you. I typically like to stare at my work for a while and see what pops out at me. If anything stands out as wrong or just doesn't quite seem to fit in with the rest of the piece, I take care of it now. Sign it and call it done! And don't forget to show it off on the internet.



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**11
PRODUCTS
ON TEST**



HARDWARE

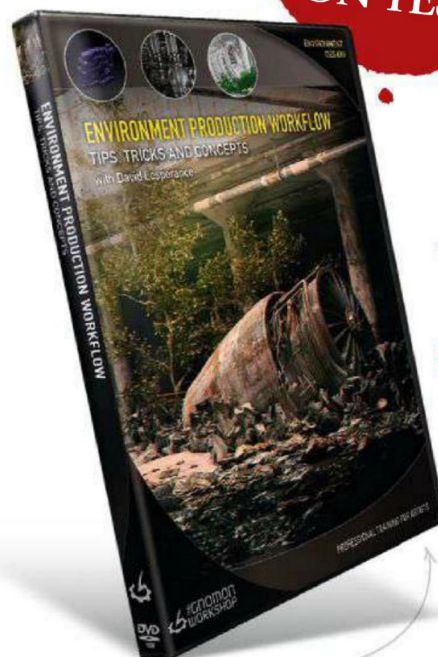
106 Jot Touch

Adonit's precision stylus adds that all-important pressure sensitivity to the Apple iPad via Bluetooth, as well as some really clever technology.

BOOKS

108 New reads

Dinotopia: The World Beneath: 20th Anniversary Edition; 101 Top Tips from Professional Fantasy Painters; Digital Painting Techniques Volume 4.



TRAINING

109 Environment Production Workflow: Tips, Tricks and Concepts

Master environment designer David Lesperance shares his techniques for improving your own virtual sets.

FILMS

110 New movies

Brave; Arthur Christmas; Total Recall.

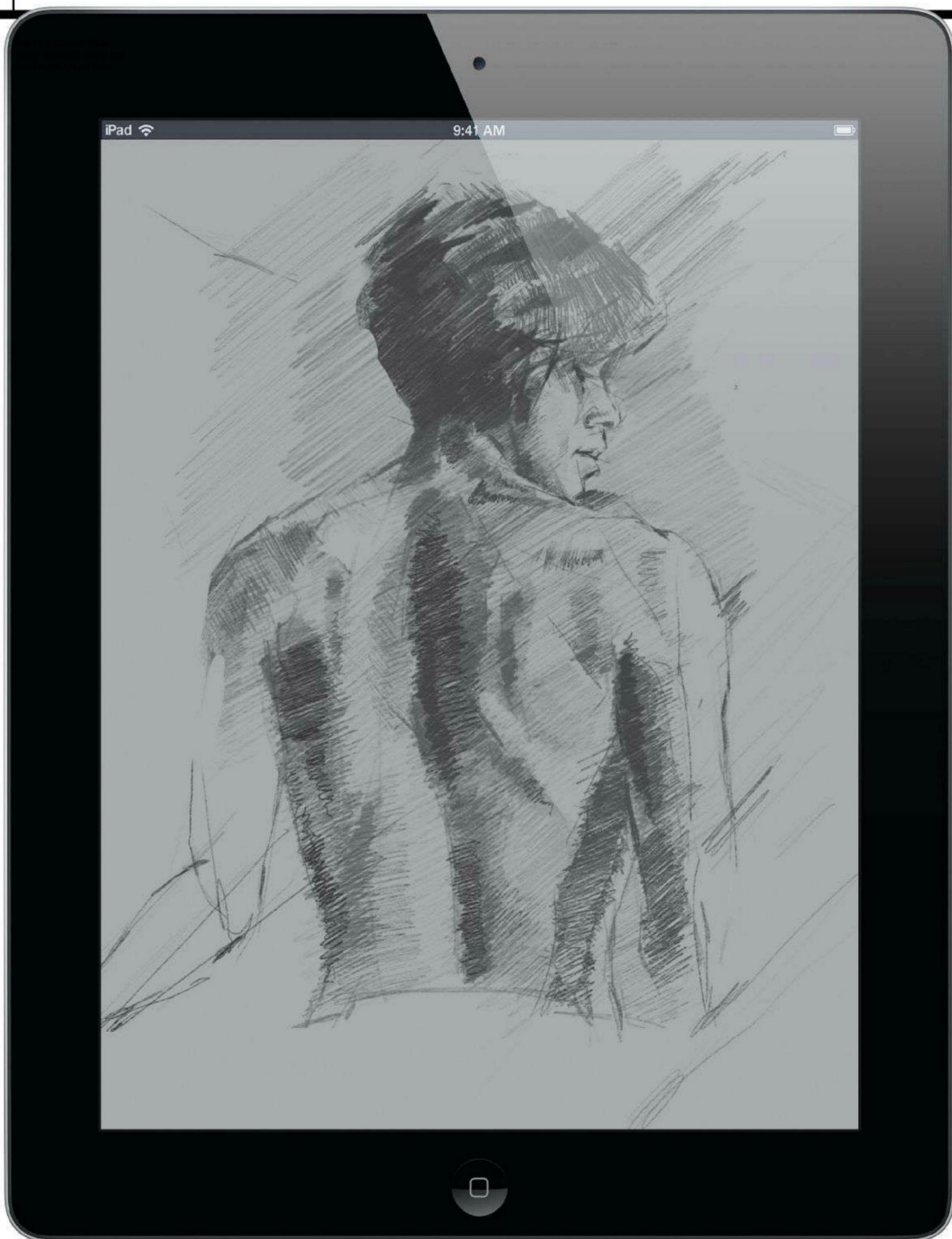
VIDEO GAMES

111 New games

Halo 4; PlayStation All-Stars Battle Royale; ZombiU.



RATINGS EXPLAINED Magnificent Good Ordinary Poor Atrocious



iPad is a trademark of Apple Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries. App Store is a service mark of Apple Inc.



Jot Touch iPad

PENNED IN Adonit's precision stylus adds all-important pressure-sensitivity to the iPad, via Bluetooth

Price £75 **Company** Adonit **Web** www.adonit.net **Contact** +44 (0) 844 880 3971

Jot Touch manufacturer Adonit will be rubbing its hands with glee at Apple's decision not to fit the iPad Mini with pressure sensitivity. The Jot Touch's stylus has been expressly designed to offer the variable strokes that Apple has failed to include in its iPads, and in a way it feels like a pair of fingers thrust in the air at the fruity tech company.

At £75 a pop, this may sound like a lot for a stylus, especially compared to the 10-a-penny touchpens that you can pick up on eBay. In its favour though, the Jot Touch – necessarily – packs an impressive dollop of tech into a small form-factor. It connects to

SketchBook, Procreate and ArtRage. All these apps include Adonit-endorsed pressure-sensitivity, but the Jot Touch will work as a normal 'dumb' stylus with apps that don't, such as Photoshop Express.

The pressure-sensitivity works well, especially if you've set up custom brushes in ArtRage. You don't have to press too hard to achieve a better flow on your virtual ink, but there's a slight amount of give as you touch the Jot Touch to the screen. The tip itself features a small transparent plastic disc with a metal centre, which allows for accurate drawing because the iPad screen essentially thinks you're working with a really weird finger.

Connecting via Bluetooth is simply a question of activating the Jot Touch and pairing it with your iPad.

“It solves the iPad's biggest problem for digital artists, and feels natural and smooth to hold and use”

your device via Bluetooth, and thus includes a (non-accessible) battery to charge the device. It's about the same length as a ball-point pen, but chunkier and heavier.

A small USB charging base is integrated, which the Jot Touch magnetically clamps on to, to fill the battery with tasty electro-juice. It's a clever piece of design, but because the stylus connects at a right angle to the USB port it can look a little ungainly. Connecting the Jot Touch via Bluetooth is a doddle, however.

From here, you'll need to install specific apps to work with the Jot Touch. At the time of writing, this list includes digital artist favourites such as

There are a couple of problems in its design, though. If you hold it at too shallow an angle the nib loses contact with the screen, resulting in line breaks. We've also heard anecdotal evidence that it can scratch the iPad's screen, so it may be worth investing in a screen protector as a precautionary measure.

The Jot Touch is never going to match a Wacom tablet's levels of sensitivity – the iPad is too much of a one-size-fits-all device, and there's a little lag in all the compatible apps. However, it solves the iPad's biggest problem for digital artists, and feels natural and smooth to hold and use. We think that it'll become an essential part of most toolkits.

DETAILS

- Features**
- Pressure-sensitivity
 - Bluetooth connection
 - USB charger
 - In-built battery
 - Precision disc
 - Replaceable tips (two included)
 - Dampening tip
 - Shortcut buttons
 - Replaceable cap
 - One-year warranty

System Requirements
iPad 2, New iPad, iPad Mini

Rating
★★★★★

ARTIST INTERVIEW

PAUL TYSALL

The freelance artist and illustrator talks iPads, apps and art

How do you find the iPad for creating digital art?

Most of my illustrations now begin life on the iPad, from composition thumbnails to base sketches or rough preliminary paintings.

Do you use a stylus or your finger more often?

I never use my finger to paint. For drawing I use the PenGo stylus. If I'm going to paint in ArtRage I'll reach for the Nomad Brush.

How did you find the Jot Touch to hold?

The weighting feels sturdy. The functions buttons are a tad too shallow, and they could do with moving back up the shaft a bit – basically they could learn from looking at the Wacom Grip Pen.

Does the pressure-sensitivity make a noticeable difference?

I was dubious at first, until I started sketching with Procreate's pencils. It works, but can be a tad random at times. You need to tweak the tool settings with ArtRage brushes to find a sweet spot.

How is the battery life on the stylus?

Good, but when it runs out naturally it still works as a stylus but you lose the pressure-sensitivity, which initially had me wondering what had happened to my brush settings.

Which apps did you use?

I tested it with Procreate and ArtRage. I used it mainly to sketch seeing as the Jot Touch is engineered for precision – hence the clear plastic tip and pivot design – and both performed well.

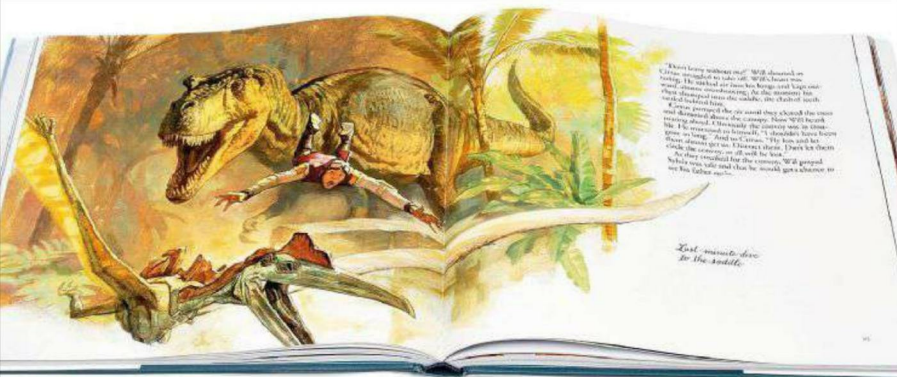
Did you find yourself assigning the shortcut buttons?

ArtRage hasn't equipped them yet. Procreate has them preset to Undo/Redo, which is handy, but it would be good to assign the functionality you want, such as brush size.



The ex-ImagineFX art editor is a busy freelance designer and illustrator. He's also working on a graphic novel.

www.tysall.com



Dinotopia: The World Beneath: 20th Anniversary Edition

JURASSIC LARK James Gurney's palaeontological masterpiece receives a welcome reissue

Author James Gurney **Publisher** Calla **Price** £28
Web www.doverpublications.com **Available** Now

Just as Steven Spielberg resurrected dinosaurs in Jurassic Park, James Gurney's classic *Dinotopia: The World Beneath* has been reanimated by those good folks at Dover Publications. The process didn't require DNA and dodgy science, though. Instead, the book's been tarted up and reprinted with a new introduction and afterword.

If you've not come across *Dinotopia* before (which, surely, makes you a cultural dinosaur), it's a seminal work, combining Renaissance man Gurney's abilities as a storyteller and an artist. *The World Beneath* is, in fact, the 1995 sequel to *A Land Apart* from Time, which was published three years earlier and received a similarly lush reprint last year. Both concern the titular continent, in which humans and dinosaurs coexist.

In *The World Beneath*, Gurney tells the story of Professor Denison, *A Land Apart* from Time's original protagonist. Denison decides to investigate the mysterious caves beneath *Dinotopia*, which promise ancient technology and machines. He's accompanied by his son Will and a fiery human *Dinotopian* named Oriana Nascava, as well as Bix, a friendly Protoceratops.

What's so utterly inspiring about Gurney's books is how detailed and

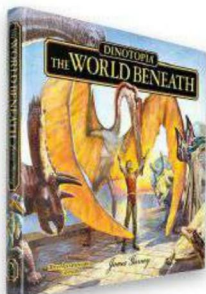
well-researched the world is, and he even goes so far as to include maps and diagrams of places and items. Palaeontologist MK Brett-Surman – a consultant to Gurney – contributes a foreword, stating that *Dinotopia*'s artwork is not “for a ‘kiddie’ book on dinosaurs, but a series of masterworks suitable for any museum!”

ImagineFX hero James, it seems, can turn his hand to just about anything in the world of *Dinotopia*. His characters are distinctive, and *Dinotopia*'s cities and environments were rich and steampunky before the term was coined. But the dinosaurs take centre stage, at once proud and primal, and – apparently – anatomically correct.

Gurney's new afterword is worth the cover price alone, even if you own the original publication, for its insight. As well as sketches and colour scripts, he created maquettes of the dinosaurs, characters and buildings to deliver the correct proportions and postures.

The World Beneath was followed by three more volumes, all of which deserve a similarly rich edition. It also inspired a well-received TV series and made-for-TV film, but the books are the best starting place. And while kiddies will enjoy them, they're stunning and inspiring for any artist.

RATING

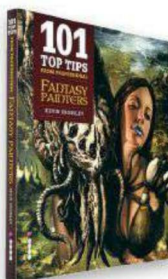


Further reading...

Tips and techniques aplenty in two new books, for beginners and pros alike

101 Top Tips from Professional Fantasy Painters

Author Kevin Crossley
Publisher Ilex Press **Price** £15
Available Now
RATING



ImagineFX contributor and acclaimed fantasy artist Kevin Crossley has compiled this tome with help from artist pals, including Liam Sharp, Lee Carter and Greg Staples. He begins with the basics before moving onto the techniques and concepts that can breathe life into your art.

Kevin covers both conventional and digital art, often bringing the two together to stunning effect. He's also keen to point out inspiration in the mundane: a clump of upright carrots becomes an otherworldly forest, and a CD player is a hideous alien. It works best as a reference book, and it's perfect if you're the sort of artist who struggles with the specifics of texture or scale.

Digital Painting Techniques Volume 4

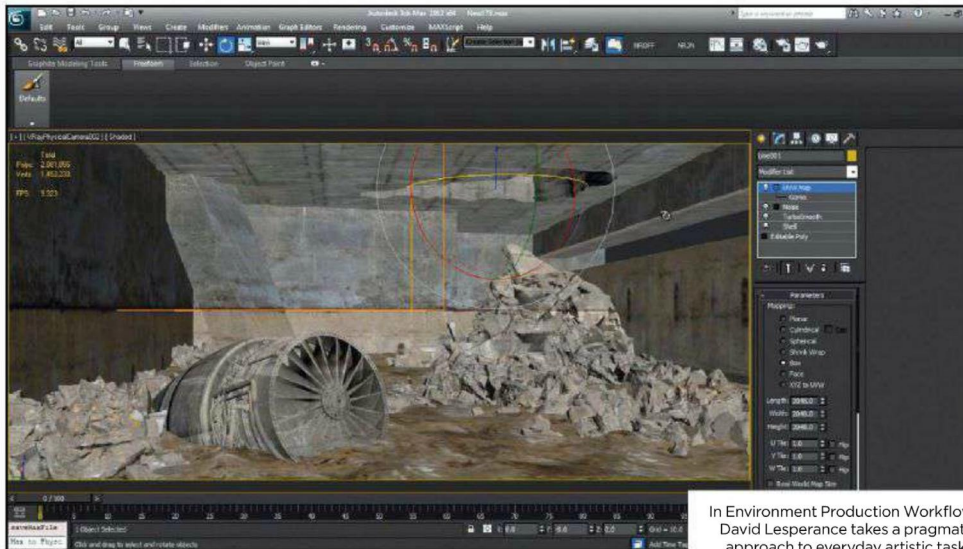
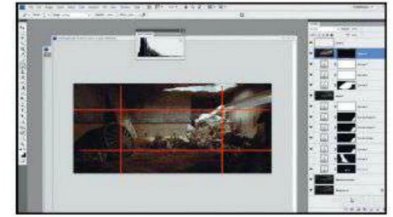
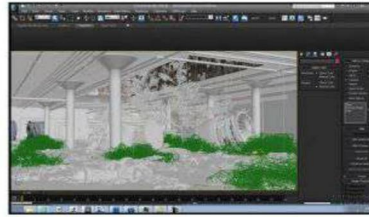
Editor Simon Morse
Publisher 3DTotal Publishing **Price** £30
Available Now
RATING



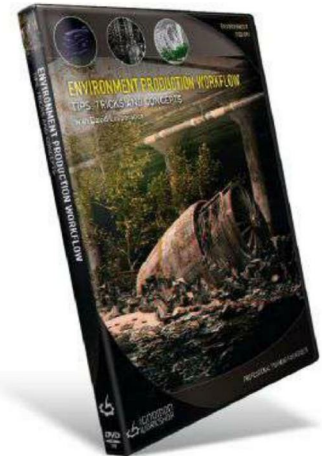
Digital Painting Techniques presents tutorials from 37 artists, including ImagineFX regulars Ian McQue, David Nakayama and Patipat Asavasena. Each contributor delivers an in-depth deconstruction of one of their images, explaining the minutiae of their techniques.

There's no single theme or style running all the way through. Serge Birault's cartoon-proportioned pin-up girls contrast dramatically with Jeremy Love's gritty realistic droids, but well-written explanations accompany each. There's little in the way of introductory how-to articles, but artists with a bit of experience will gain from reading the book because it offers a great deal of insight into the processes of creating digital paintings.

David covers a broad range of topics to help you create sets, from composition to lighting.



In Environment Production Workflow, David Lesperance takes a pragmatic approach to everyday artistic tasks.



Environment Production Workflow: Tips, Tricks and Concepts

BOX OF TRICKS Master environment designer David Lesperance shares no-nonsense techniques for improving your own sets

Publisher The Gnomon Workshop **Price** \$69 **Format** DVD/Download **Web** www.thegnomonworkshop.com

At one point in his three-hour video, David Lesperance refers to this collection of tricks and techniques as “an encyclopedia”. It’s an apt description: while you may watch the video all the way through when you get your hands on it, its real purpose is in providing a resource that you can dip into as the need arises.

The assumption behind David’s lessons is that you’re a working artist, most likely in a games development team, and are already au fait with the basics of constructing and staging environments, and the software at your disposal. This isn’t a video where you’ll learn from scratch how to make environments; instead, David’s aim is to show you how to make better environments. With his help, you’ll iterate designs more quickly and create sets that are better suited to their role within your creative project.

Unlike most training videos, where the artist either takes you through a

single project or has a structured agenda, David covers a grab-bag of topics, from composition and lighting to working with refractive materials and shaping mountains. He covers a broad range of software, including 3ds Max, V-Ray, Photoshop and ZBrush, challenging the ways you might use these packages at present and proposing more efficient techniques for getting the job done to a high standard.

The material is let down by some ropey production quality, which is surprising for a Gnomon Workshop release. The audio is poorly recorded in places, and later chapters include disconcerting glitches such as a short excerpt where David’s voice is sped up and a passage where the audio and video fade in and out repeatedly within the space of a single sentence. If you can forgive the technical issues and the haphazard structure, there are tips here that could save you a lot of hassle as you shape your own environments.

DETAILS

Topics covered

- Composition and layout
- Look-dev and lighting in Photoshop
- Set lighting in 3ds Max
- Generating materials with V-Ray
- Terrains in World Machine
- Rock formations in ZBrush
- Shaping roots in ZBrush
- Wall textures in ZBrush
- Iterating your design

Length

212 minutes

Rating



ARTIST PROFILE

DAVID LESPERANCE

David is an environment artist who has worked in the CG entertainment field for almost eight years. He has a degree in fine arts and is active in the CG community. David is now working with Microsoft and the 343 Industries team on the Halo franchise. His games experience includes Mortal Kombat DC, Tony Hawk Ride and StarCraft 2, and time spent with Blizzard Entertainment’s cinematic division, on such best-sellers as Diablo 3, World of Warcraft Cataclysm, and the StarCraft projects.



www.davidlesperance.blogspot.com



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Brave has voice-acting from Billy Connolly and Emma Thompson.

Brave

CHILD'S PLAY The Pixar animation puts safety first as it aims at the young 'uns – but the visuals shine

Distributor Disney **Certificate** PG **Price** £10 (Blu-ray, £15) **Available** Now

The marketing machine behind Pixar's *Brave* may be happy with the usual 'aimed at kids of all ages' sell, but the studio's 13th feature film is definitely one for the younglings.

That is, of course, no bad thing, but it does mean the universality of their previous masterpieces is absent. And that's frustrating, because the ingredients for a classic Pixar tale are all here. For starters, the heroine of the piece, Merida, is a young princess, bursting with character, at odds with her prescribed destiny – a playful inversion of the inert Disney princesses of yore.

The voice cast all come correct too, with Billy Connolly as Merida's likeable dad King Fergus, and Emma Thompson as the stifling Queen Elinor,



determined for her daughter to follow tradition and marry into one of the three neighbouring clans.

Even on lowly DVD, the visuals of *Brave* seem like a leap in sophistication. The rich purples and verdant greens of

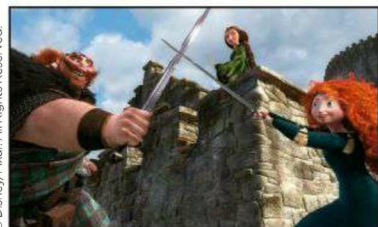
Steve Purcell and Steve Pilcher's concept art are brought to the screen with saturated perfection. It's hard to take your eyes off Merida's impossibly complex ginger locks, an innovation thanks to Pixar's brand new hair simulation engine Taz.

As Merida buys a witch's spell to change her overbearing mum

– turning her into a bear – we strap in, ready for the flights of fancy that have thrilled Pixar fans over the years. But sadly all the five writers (the three directors plus two) deliver are follow your heart platitudes.

There's great physical comedy from Merida's three little brothers, and digital artists will find plenty of visual splendour to geek out about. But it'd take a kid's strength of emersion not to notice the plain script that is, a little too ironically, more sentimentally safe than it is brave.

RATING



Flame-haired, sword-fighting, rabble-rousing Merida isn't your average Disney princess.

Also look at...

An adult-friendly Christmas tale and a remake of a classic which isn't one



Arthur Christmas

Distributor Sony Pictures

Certificate U

Price £10 (Blu-ray, £15; 3D Blu-ray, £18)

Available Now

RATING



Father Christmas has to give every child in the world a present. That's the deal. But the global hi-tech operation overlooks one girl's gift, then puts it down as a statistically acceptable error. It's left to young Arthur Christmas to deliver on the promise.

Aardman's celebrated claymation roots are married with wonderfully textured digital imagery, resulting in well-thought-out character designs and rich, varied environments – it's a road flick led by reindeer, after all. Arthur's journey hits emotional peaks, too, with the film touching on the relationship between father and son, the dangers of business targets and efficiency drives, and what Christmas really means to the Santa clan. Indeed, adults may get as much out of the film as children.

Proceedings are wrapped up neatly without becoming over-sentimental – and given the film's specific seasonal setting, that's a minor miracle in itself.



Total Recall

Distributor Sony Pictures

Certificate 12

Price £20 (Blu-ray, £25)

Available Now

RATING

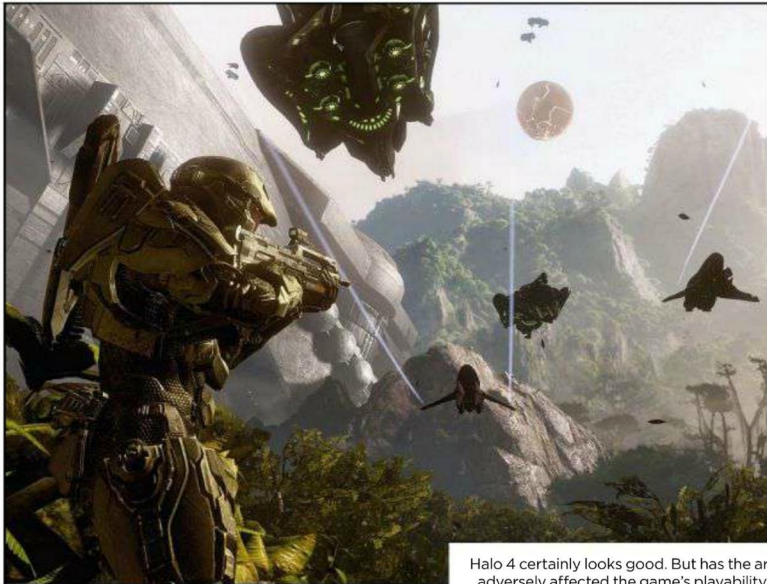


This isn't the pulpy take on the Philip K Dick short story many of us remember from the 1990 film. As before, Douglas Quaid is still a bored factory worker who dreams of being a superspy – a

fantasy that becomes reality when he visits the Rekall company and the line between real and unreal is blurred.

The two-hour chase across the Stephan Martinière-designed dystopian future is a spectacle, but proves the only highlight in a dour, self-consciously important sci-fi hunt. The stars struggle with a dull script: Colin Farrell looks confused, Kate Winslet looks angry and Jessica Biel looks confused and angry. Len Wiseman is the director whose John McClane threw a car at a helicopter in *Die Hard 4.0*, and you're itching for something as fun.

Blu-ray extras include VFX featurettes, and science facts behind the science fiction, but it only reinforces the feeling that this remake offers style over substance.



Halo 4 certainly looks good. But has the art adversely affected the game's playability?

Halo 4

FOUR STAR Halo gets a fresh look from a new art director as the series takes its first great leap

Format Xbox 360 **Publisher** Microsoft
Price £40 **Available** Now **Web** www.halowaypoint.com

Microsoft built a whole new studio – 343 Industries – with a whole new art team to pick up where Bungie left Halo with Reach. Blue and green are traded for black and orange, Bungie's sploidy aliens are replaced by the cast of TRON and the game engine barely stands up beneath the weight of the most ambitious art design in Halo history. Yet it all works, with one exception: it doesn't feel like Halo.

It's not the art that's at fault. Art director Kenneth Scott – formerly of Doom 3 – achieves something Bungie didn't manage once

in the four games following Halo: Combat Evolved. Halo 4's world of Requiem feels genuinely alien. Indeed, it's a world inside a world where colossal structures rise up from the Requiem's surface and dangle from its outer sphere. Massive skyboxes present truly huge vistas where ancient machines reshape the environment in real time – a perk of Halo 4's upgraded engine.

The new Promethean enemies – all black armour, punctuated by glowing fault lines – are as alien today as the Covenant

were back in 2001, even if their designs seem less inspired now in light of 2010's TRON sequel. At least the Warthog isn't replaced by a light cycle... In its unfamiliarity, Halo 4 looks like Halo should, but the extraordinary demands of the art team has stifled the game's level design and made for the narrowest Halo levels ever. It'll take a new console generation for Halo 5's level design to match the scope of 343's art direction, but for now it's a technical barrier rather than a creative one that's standing between the studio and the best Halo ever.

RATING



Behold one of the Promethean bad guys you'll be up against in the latest Halo instalment.

Also look at...

A drab, uninspiring fighting game and a thoroughly British zombie outbreak



PlayStation All-Stars Battle Royale

Format PS3, Vita

Publisher Sony

Price £40

Available Now

RATING

No amount of careful art direction could save PlayStation All-Stars Battle Royale from being an explosion of brown and grey. Even a good workman couldn't make anything from these tatty old tools.

Battle Royale is Sony's uninspired but well-made version of Nintendo's fighting game, Smash Brothers. But where Nintendo has colourful and distinct characters, Sony's are non-descript. Nathan Drake from Uncharted is brown, Raiden from Metal Gear is grey, Cole from Infamous is grey except when he's brown, and on it goes.

Put them together in a four-player rumble on a fully animated background and there's no tracking anyone or anything. You're forced to play by following the coloured



number above your character's head. Superbot's artists tried their best, but the faithful replicas of the PlayStation's heroes don't belong together on the same screen.



ZombiU

Format Wii U

Publisher Ubisoft

Price £40

Available Now

RATING

London is an original backdrop for a zombie outbreak... if you haven't seen 28 Days Later. However, ZombiU's zombies aren't sprinting beasts; they're shambling Dawn of the Dead zombies with British makeovers.

You know what zombies look like, right? Good. So does art director Florent Sacré, whose team has drawn dozens



of the decaying undead and wrapped them in British rags. There are tattered Grenadier Guards, tattered beefeaters and a tattered bowler hat or two, and it's all quite sweetly naïve – like an all-British

zombie theme park. It's just odd enough to be unsettling. You've never seen the undead quite like this.

As a launch game for Nintendo's Wii U it does a good job of showing off the hardware. But Ubisoft is a long way from mastering the new tech. When they get there, it'll be with an art team with enough humour and talent to make ZombiU a long-running series.



LOCATION Sydney, Australia **RECENT PROJECT** Halo 4 Live Action Commercial **WEB** www.cartelartists.com



© Method Studios and Microsoft

The Cartel artists worked on the Halo: Reach - Deliver Hope live-action commercial.

Cartel Artists

BLOCKBUSTER Starting its life as an artist collective with a love of film, Sydney's Cartel Artists has since ventured into new art territory

Evan Shipard had spent 12 years in the digital art industry as concept artist, matte painter and art director, perfecting his craft in Australia, New Zealand and the US. Yet after working for several companies in a range of mediums, he was still seeking something more: the perfect work environment.

Although this image looks like a piece of finished concept art, it's one of the many development pieces that the Cartel Artists team work on to keep their skills tuned.

"I spoke at length with various studio heads about what I was after," Evan explains, "and eventually the best advice I got was: 'Build it yourself.'"



It helps to have a team ready to go onto the breach with you, and that's exactly what Evan had with a group of

Sydney artists from the film industry who were already meeting up regularly. "Having a crew ready to tap into during the initial stages was paramount to our success as a boutique art studio. It couldn't have been built without these guys."

It could have been different, however. For one thing, they could

have been called Titanium Spider! With everyone on board, names were bandied back and fore for a week via email. Psychedelic Ocean was a favourite for a while, then The Thought Train. "Maybe there was something in the cookies we were consuming at the weekly café meetings," says Evan.

Finally they looked to themselves. As artists and illustrators working with hybrid setups, the name Cartel Artists seemed to capture this diversity. After all, there are an assortment of classical busts dotted around the studio for atelier-style study, they operate regular life-drawing sessions, and all artists have Photoshop running alongside their easels.

Concept artist and matte painter Gerhard Mozsi sees the multi-disciplinary nature of the studio as one



of its main appeals. "It means you skill up fast," he says. "And you work with fun people which, from my perspective, is the most you want out of any job."

True, but working on games like Halo and big budget films like The



ARTIST INTERVIEW

SIMON COWELL

New Cartel Artists recruit talks fine art and a film fan's devotion

How do the team members complement each other?

Everyone has an appreciation for similar styles of artwork here, which really brings everyone together and aids the work process. Also, each person is happy to collaborate on an image and bring it to a consistent finish in the most efficient way possible.

Why would you recommend working at Cartel?

The environment! There's a very obvious appreciation for classical realist fine art and painting in general at the studio, which for me is an amazing thing to be around each day. Being among like-minded and inspiring individuals makes it a great place to learn and grow. The projects also tend to be exciting and rewarding to work on.

What have you worked on?

I've worked on a few illustrations for games and also provided matte painting assistance on a major feature film project (can't say too much, sorry). The illustrations were naturally the highlight, and it was especially enjoyable working back and forth with other artists on a single image.

How much freedom do you have when working on a project?

That will always vary depending on the project and client, but the illustration work for me had a fairly large amount of room to bring my own ideas to the composition.

What advice do you have for aspiring concept artists?

Keep striving for the goal. And I would suggest it's just as important to be honest with oneself. You have to assess how good your work really is and where your strengths are. It's different for everybody and some people are better than others. This doesn't mean that an individual can't find their niche, but an honest view of oneself will hasten the process.



Cartel Artists newcomer Simon is a graduate of Sydney's Julian Ashton Art School, to which he won a scholarship.

www.bit.ly/jfx-scowell



PROJECTS Battlefield 3 commercial, Assassin's Creed: Revelations cinematic, The Great Gatsby

Here's another Halo: Reach - Deliver Hope concept piece.

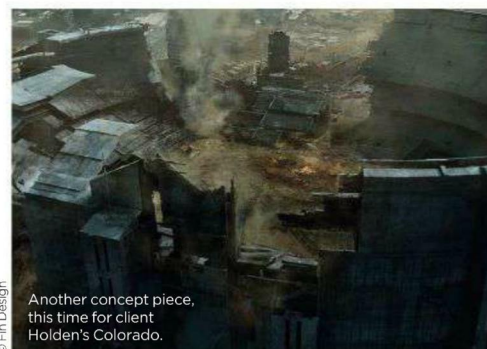


© Method Studios and Microsoft



© Method Studios

Cartel work on prime time TV adverts, like this post-apocalyptic matte painting for Chevrolet's Silverado Super Bowl ad spot.



© Fin Design

Another concept piece, this time for client Holden's Colorado.

“I spoke to various studio heads about getting the perfect work environment. The best advice was: ‘Build it yourself’”

Great Gatsby is a welcome sweetener for Gerhard and co, too. Operating as an outsource company for game and film art, and TV commercials, the past few years have reaped a number of high-profile projects for Cartel Artists. “Most notable are the Halo: Deliver



Development art for an as-yet undisclosed Cartel Artists intellectual property.

Hope and Assassins Creed Revelations cinematic spots,” says Evan, “and we’ve also worked for amazing creatives like [film directors] Baz Luhrmann and Alex Proyas.”

With The Crow director Alex Proyas's film Paradise Lost currently shelved, not all of Cartel's hard work can be shown to the public. Yet showing off is not high on its priorities. “Our point of difference is our filmic, mood-based aesthetic that resonates with directors and production designers,” says Evan.

It's not just Cartel's ability to impress the right people with concept art that sets it apart from its competitors. “We have a 4k [high resolution] video pipeline and fully kitted RED cameras for capturing elements that we integrate into our work,” says Evan. “This also gives us the technology to create our own narrative content. Watch this space.”

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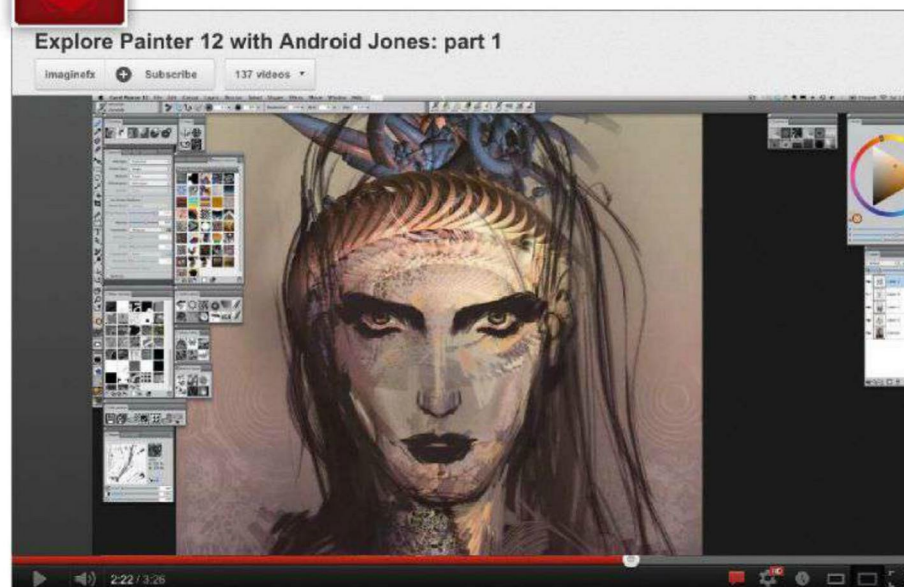
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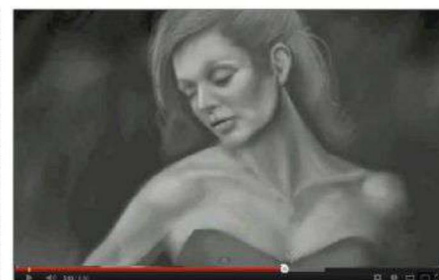
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