

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART

ImagineFX

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Future

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AMAZING
DINO-ART

ATTACK YOUR

CREATURE DESIGN

How to paint bigger, better monsters!
Simon Dominic shares his art skills

Workshop

**PAINT EPIC
WORLDS**

Inside

**COMPOSE A ZOMBIE
APOCALYPSE SCENE
CONTROL CONTRAST TO
PAINT A GIGANTIC BEAST
DESIGN A VEHICLE BY
MIXING REFERENCES**



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Welcome... to inspirational art



Inspiration drives our art and comes from many places. So this issue we dig a little deeper into where to find it and how to harness it once you have it cornered, trapped and tied.

We start with a look at the world of paleoart on page 42, a discipline built on science, infused with human imagination

and adopted by artists for decades to inspire their fantasy creatures. It's a fascinating look into a world where fact and fantasy share common ground.

Our workshops section plays host to inspiration, too – whether you're inspired yourself by the amazing creature painting of Simon Dominic on page 60, or follow Christian Pearce on page 76 as he draws on 40s aeroplanes and trucks to construct a fantastical vehicle set for a fight with aliens in the Bermuda Triangle. A personal favourite this issue, Katie De Sousa seeks her inspiration in the patterns of the Aztecs to paint a lost world princess on page 82.

I'd like to take the chance to announce the launch of this year's Rising Stars 2013 campaign. Once again we're seeking 10 new, amazing artists to promote in the pages of ImagineFX. There's also a Standout Newcomer award this year, for young artists. Turn to page 56 to read up on this year's prizes, judges and entry details.

If you need to be inspired to enter Rising Stars 2013, then turn to page 23 to begin our issue 100 celebrations and discover how you can vote for your favourite artists and most-loved ImagineFX covers!

Ian
Ian Dean, Editor
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Our special cover for subscribers this issue.

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Fantasy illustrator and creature designer Brynn Metheney loves drawing beasts while sipping her morning cuppa.

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Pick your five greatest images, update your portfolio and send it to us today, and you could end up being one of this year's 10 Rising Stars!

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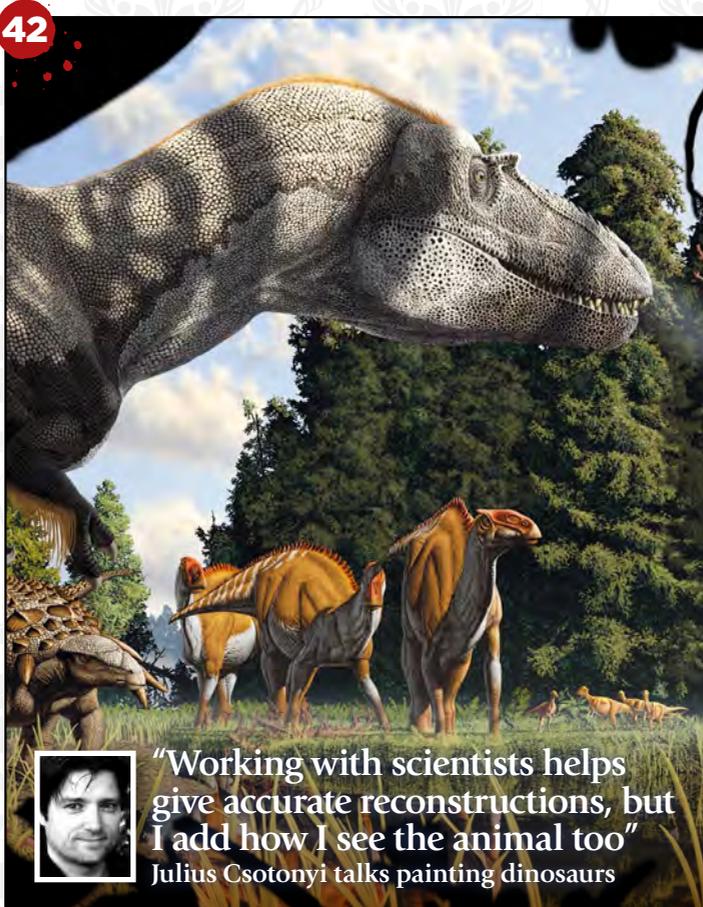
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"Working with scientists helps give accurate reconstructions, but I add how I see the animal too"
Julius Csotonyi talks painting dinosaurs

Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART



See page 6 for the best new art >>



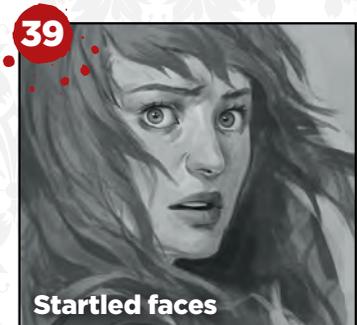
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FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART
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Workshops

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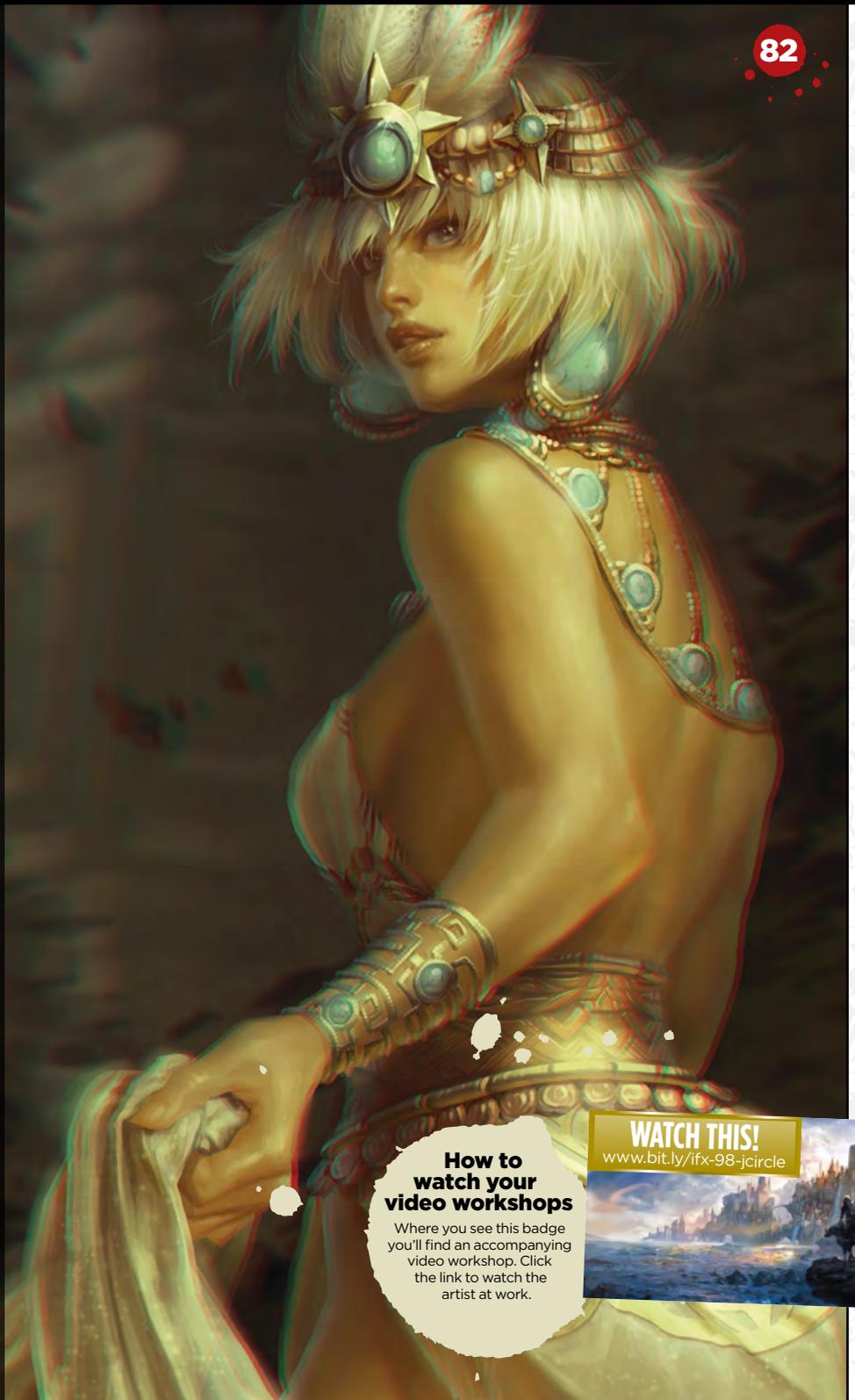
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Artist Q&A

34 This month's topics...
 How to paint non-sexy nudes, shadows on the face, fatigued eyes, colour partnerships, realistic anatomy, the eye of the storm and much more!



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.



66 Paint a zombie scene



88 Create a world for your art



Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR FANTASY ART



+ Robert Nicholls

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MEDIA: Photoshop, ZBrush, acrylic paint, mixed media



Before he could even spell his own name, Bob began drawing prehistoric animals - and that must have been young because it isn't hard to spell Bob! Today his illustrations and sculptures are exhibited and published throughout the world, with an ever-growing reputation for producing unique and exciting dinosaur artworks.

While primarily working as a traditional artist, the keen-eyed may notice a few digital tweaks here and there. "My portfolio mainly comprises traditionally painted artworks, but with a little help from ImagineFX workshops I've recently begun to produce digital artwork and mixed-media pieces."

1 BAIT BALL "In a desperate attempt to avoid capture, thousands of Thriassops fish swarm together into a bait ball. Trachyteuthis belemnites and Pectinatites ammonites also take action to leave the scene as three ichthyosaurs hunt for prey. The youngest ichthyosaur darts into the bait ball, causing the Thriassops to separate."

2 THE KRAKEN'S WRATH "Here, Captain Nemo and his magnificent Nautilus narrowly escape the clutches of the monstrous Kraken. This piece was commissioned by Merlin Entertainment in 2009."



ARTIST OF THE MONTH

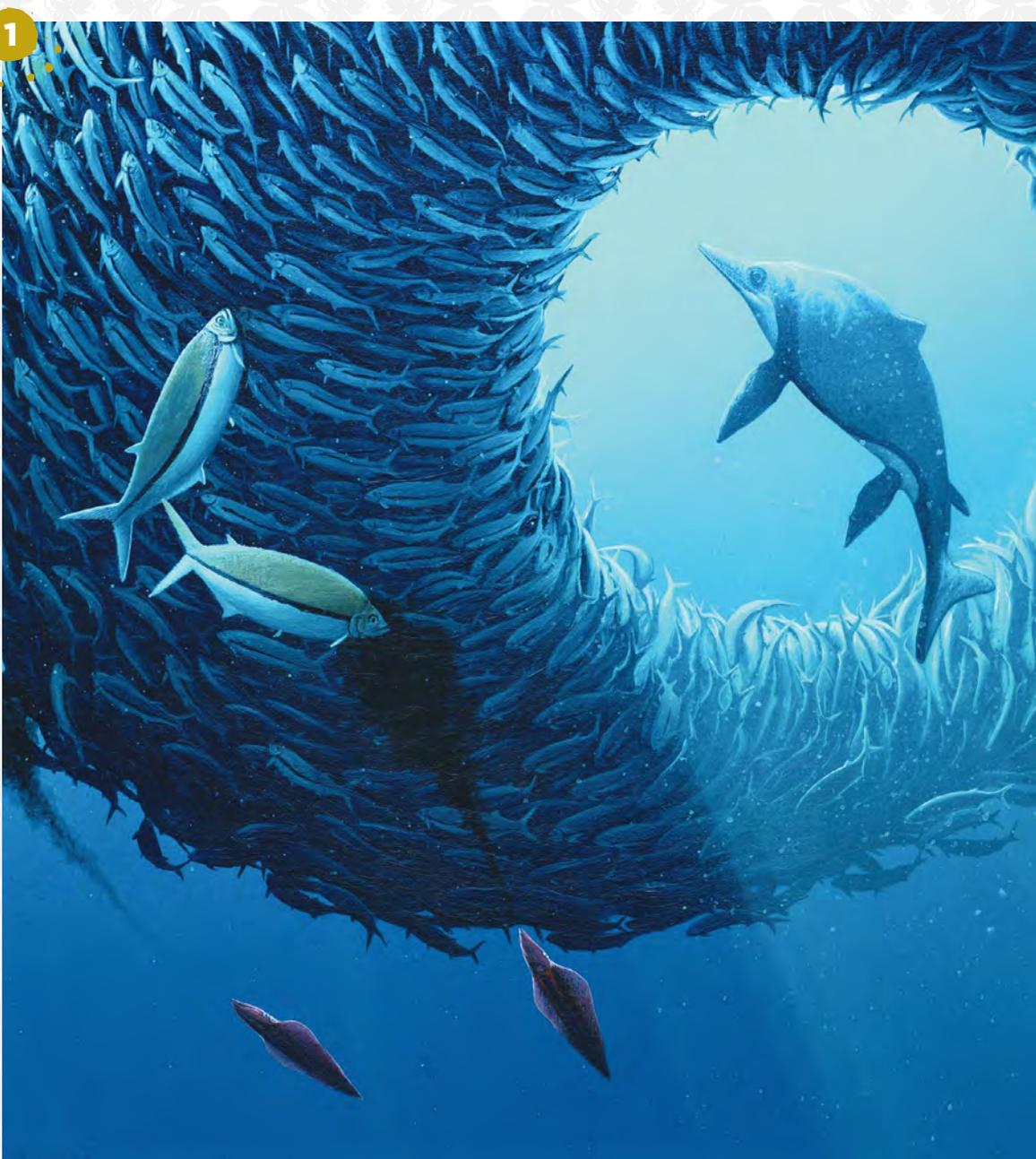
Congratulations Robert - you've won yourself a copy of *Exposé 10* and *d'artiste: Character Design!* To find out more about these two great books, go to www.ballisticpublishing.com.

Artist crit

Freelance illustrator and concept artist Mark Facey casts an appreciative eye over Robert's imagery



"Robert's clever composition keeps everything working together. I especially enjoy the spiralling fish within the bait ball that curve inwards, drawing the viewer's eye towards the creature in the centre."





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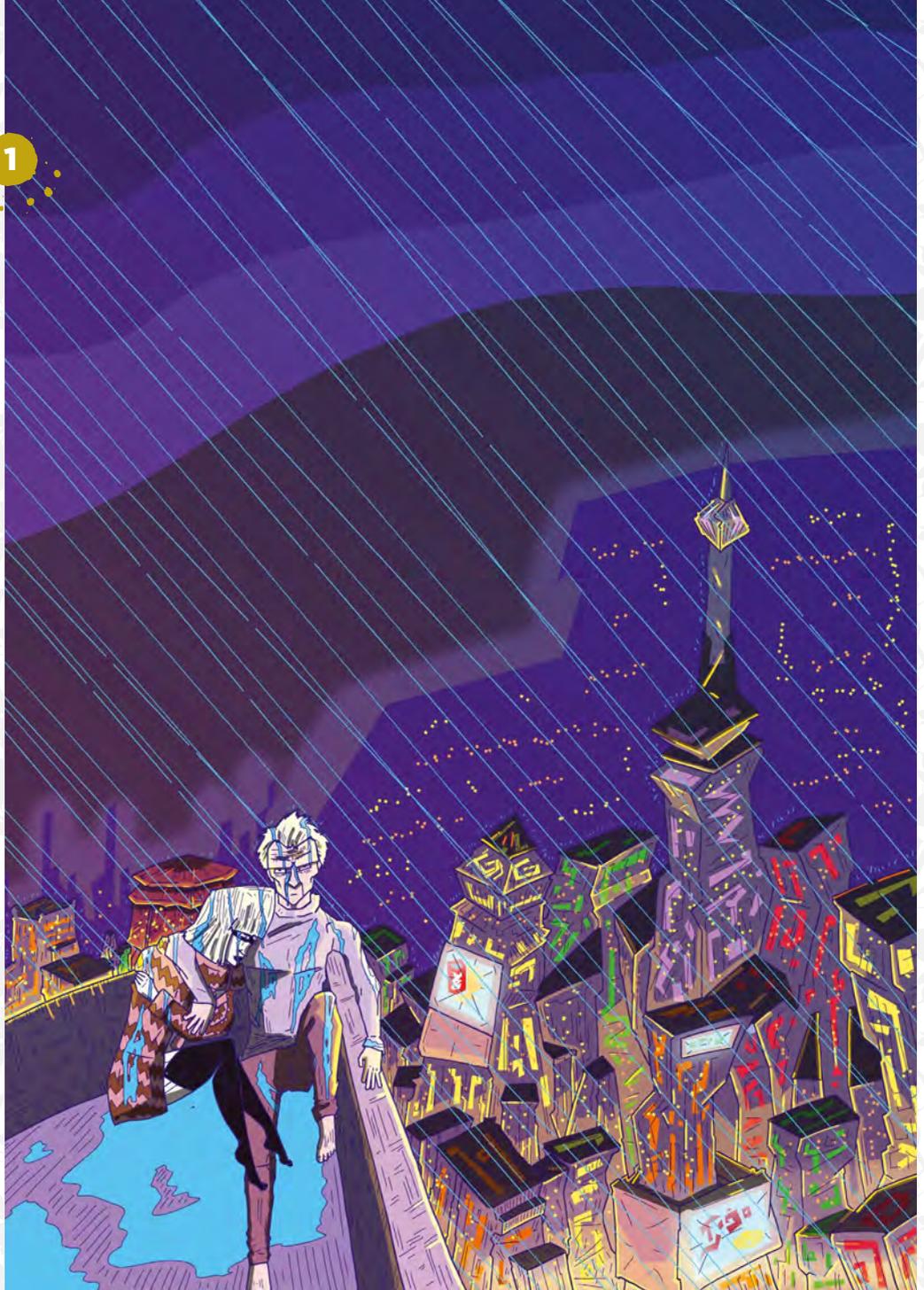
+ Andrew Thomas

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MEDIA: Photoshop, Painter, Illustrator



Andrew soon discovered that working as a manager wasn't the kind of career direction he wanted to take, so he headed back to university to follow his creative passion. Studying illustration made all the difference as Andrew's natural skills improved beyond measure, with the added bonus of Accent UK including the aspiring student's work in the comic *2ombies*.

"Being at university enables you to grow as an artist like no other environment, and since getting my degree I've been working on many freelance projects." You can find more of Andrew's work in the self-published comics *Cave* and *Spot*, with preparations underway to pitch *Spot* to publishers.



1 ALMOST HUMAN "This was done as a piece of commissioned fan-art based on the film *Blade Runner*. I wanted the focus to be on the bad guys, because they're the true stars of that epic film."

2 ON A BED OF SKULLS "This is one of the pieces I'm using for my *Spot* proposal, featuring the main protagonist. I'm referencing a favourite film of mine in the composition in this pin-up. I tried not to make it too obvious, but it is there."



IMAGINEFX CRIT

"Using a striking graphic style and mixing Photoshop and Illustrator, Andrew has managed to give us a new take on some worn ideas, such as a neon-lit futuristic dystopia."

Ian Dean,
Editor

+ Heidi Muranen

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MEDIA: Photoshop

1



For an artist as bold as Heidi it's no surprise that digital art opens the door to freedom and limitless creative possibilities. "It's my artistic weapon of choice," she explains, after first unleashing her creativity with traditional mediums such as pencils and oils.

Although not a dedicated painter by trade, Heidi currently works in the media, editing TV programmes and suchlike, along with freelance work on the side. "Drawing has always come naturally to me. I tend to take inspiration from spiritual growth and I love to drag myself out of my comfort zone every now and then. I'm still searching for my place in this world."



2



1 THE DAY WHEN "I made this one after a period of not wanting to draw, which never normally happens to me. The image was supposed to be called The Day When I Fell in Love With Myself. I couldn't relate to it at the time, so I dropped the end of the title."

2 VICTORY "I got fired from a job that I had for six years. The firm needed to save money. I was hurt. After two months, I took a photograph of myself wrapped in my winter coat, which I used as my model. This painting was my statement that I'm going to turn this into a victory."

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Heidi's characters share the same searching quality as the artist: figuring out how to deal with the crappy parts of life. Her two pieces are filled with personal meaning, and that makes them all the more interesting for us."

Beren Neale,
Features Editor

© Heidi Muranen
2012

+ Ray Sinclair

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MEDIA: Oils, Photoshop



Even though he's a traditional painter through and through, Ray is no stranger to the digital side of the canvas. "After I finish an oil painting, I put it in Photoshop and make alterations, which is something that I might not want to risk doing in real paint first. The line between digital and traditional art is very fine and I suggest to anyone to do both, as it gives you fresh experience."

Along with a lifelong passion for the arts, a desire to learn is at the heart of Ray's artistic approach, with the wonders of the internet playing a vital role. "I have gained so much useful knowledge about painting, and an artist never stops learning."

1



2



3



IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Artists have long been commentators on society and current affairs. Given the far-reaching effects of 2008's financial crisis, it's perhaps no surprise to see a talented fantasy artist like Ray produce his own take on the situation."

Cliff Hope,
Operations Editor

4



1 BOY WITH AN APE "This is about evolution and consciousness. For me, an idea is the most important aspect behind an image. Charles Darwin and science play a huge part in my work."

2 BOY WITH A BULL "The bull represents aggression while the people on the left symbolise peace. I was inspired by the state of the banking system to paint this image."

3 BOY WITH A HORSE "The painting has a theme about perception. The boy beckons the horse to move, but it remains stubborn. It's a reminder to allow for change and not fight it, as the boy represents new values."

4 GIRL WITH THE FLOWER SCARF "This is a portrait of a friend I know. I really like the challenge of portrait painting. I went to see Vermeer's paintings in Cambridge and felt compelled to paint as realistic an image as I could. I'm still evolving and learning in this area."

1



 **Alejandro García**

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MEDIA: Photoshop, Illustrator



Alejandro is a graphic designer, and is still relatively new to the world of digital painting. "Before painting digitally I was under the impression that to improve, the only thing I needed to do was to draw better," he says. "But I soon discovered this is just the tip of the iceberg! To be a successful artist, you need to keep practising and continue to be inspired by other artists. I find it encouraging to see work from so many people around the globe."

Alejandro says his artistic goals are always changing, but he's always striving for new ways to improve.

2



IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Partial silhouettes and movement in the hair create a dramatic, intense Sauron. His sinister expression, the hand grasping a magical power source, together with an aggressive colour scheme, bring the Dark Lord's personality to life."

Daniel Vincent,
Art Editor

1 WELCOME BACK "The sweet feeling of coming home after a long journey. This started out very rough, but it eventually got to a point where I was happy with the hills and mountains. It needed a focal area, which is how the castle and rider came to be."

2 DARK ELF "I wanted to create an armoured character and, in my mind, this is how Sauron from The Lord of the Rings could have looked like before he turned completely evil. I wanted the light to highlight specific areas of the character to give him a darker feel."

1



+ Rinehart Appiah

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MEDIA: Photoshop



Currently working as a concept artist for The Creative Assembly, Rinehart graduated from the University of

Portsmouth with a degree in animation, after a childhood filled with happy art-related memories.

"From a young age I would spend most of my time watching cartoons and creating characters for my own comic books and video game ideas," he says. "I'm inspired by almost anything, from music to film. I often draw creatures and crazy images that appear in my dreams."

Rinehart feels the beauty of digital art is that artists are only as restricted as their imaginations, which enables him to try out new styles and techniques.

1 EARTH COLOSSUS "I wanted to design the biggest and baddest end-of-level boss you could imagine. I chose the element of earth and constructed this guy from rock, interwoven with wood and vines. I wanted to give it the look of a kind of minotaur, but with a slight twist."

2 BEAST HUNTER: "This image depicts courage and facing your fears. I was inspired to create a tense battle scene between a beast and a skilled archer. My beast is a baboon-hyena hybrid, as both animals portray fear, aggression and beauty. The two sets of arrows suggest that another hunter was previously unsuccessful."

2





 **Kelley McMorris**
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MEDIA: Photoshop



In true fairy-tale fashion, Kelley has transformed from a child obsessed with pretty princesses into an accomplished illustrator – although she’s still very much in love with all things pretty.

“When I was young, I was obsessed with drawing super-girly fairies and mermaids,” she says. “I’m not that much different today, except that I’ve traded my crayons for a Wacom tablet and I try to give my fantasy characters a bit of an edge.”

As an aspiring children’s book illustrator, Kelley is looking to graduate with her Masters degree from the Academy of Art this summer, and hopes to illustrate book covers for middle-graders and teens, along with writing and illustrating her own children’s book.



1 SURPRISE! “I’m not really sure where the idea for this came from. I knew I wanted to practise drawing dragons, but in the end the wife’s expression is the part that everyone comments on. She totally stole the show.”

2 THE WILD SWANS “For my thesis, I’m illustrating my favourite fairy tale by Hans Christian Andersen, *The Wild Swans*, and setting it in India. I designed this as a wraparound book cover that would appeal to middle-grade girls.”

3 THE SNOW QUEEN “When I was having trouble with the pose, I got my husband to pose for a photo reference with me. I stood on a table behind him, using a fuzzy blanket as a cloak, and pretended that I was freezing his heart. It was funny! For me, anyway.”

IMAGINEFX CRIT



“It’s easy to imagine how Kelley’s soft and whimsical painting style would translate into children’s books. *The Wild Swans* piece is especially brilliant, with a beautiful balance between crisp detail and emotive colouring.”

Nicola Henderson,
Staff Writer

1



Bobby Myers

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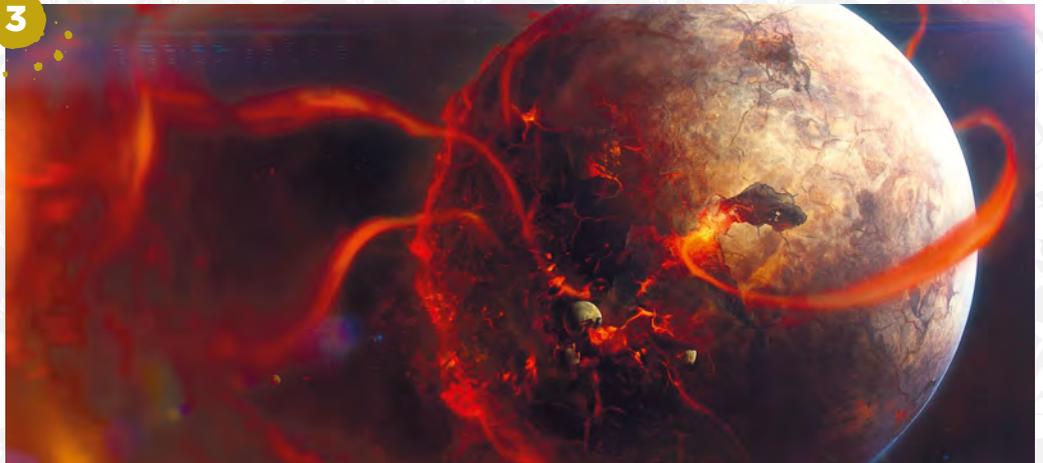
Not to be confused with the late NASCAR racing driver from the 1950s, Bobby is a self-taught digital artist originally from Orlando, and currently based in Atlanta. "I've been studying visual effects at the Savannah College of Art and Design and should be looking to graduate within the next year," he says.

With such a natural talent for epic environmental set-pieces and an eye for detail, a career in the media would be ideal for Bobby, and that's exactly what he intends to do. "I'd absolutely love to create artwork for films and video games in the future, so fingers crossed."

2



3



4



SEND US YOUR ARTWORK!

Want to see your fantasy 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. fxpose@imaginefx.com

SEND YOUR ARTWORK TO:

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ImagineFX
30 Monmouth Street
Bath, BA1 2BW
UK

1 THE LONG JOURNEY "I have a thing for waterfalls, so any excuse I can find to include them within a piece, I'll jump on and not look back."

2 DRAGON'S NEST "This was created as part of an exhibit for an online art group called The Luminarium. This was a nice break from the usual sci-fi work."

3 ERADICATE "Another image created for The Luminarium. A planet is being ripped apart from the inside and outside by an unknown entity."

4 DISCOVERY "This image is about a group of scientists who are excavating a site on another world. It was fun seeing all the different pieces come together in the end."

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ADAPT SURVIVE PREVAIL

True grit We could all learn a lot from an artist who refuses to let adversity dampen his creative spirit

The story of how Frank Frazetta defied physical limitation by retraining himself to paint with his left hand has become as legendary as the artist himself. The truth is, there are many artists out there who find themselves in situations that jeopardise their abilities, and it takes tremendous determination to defy the odds and adapt. But just as Frank proved, it can be done.

The slogan 'adapt, survive, prevail' embodies the journey Francis has taken since his diagnosis.



Such is true of the comic book artist Francis Tsai, who was diagnosed with ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease) in 2010, a degenerative condition

leading to total paralysis. Having lost the ability to paint with his hands, arms and feet, Francis is now able to paint with his eyes.

An incredible form of eye-tracking technology translates Francis' eye



DEFINING MOMENT?

It has troubled philosophers and artists for centuries: what's the definition of art? Game studio Futurlab has a theory that it thinks pinpoints the answer. **Page 22**



SPECIAL ACCESS

Don Seegmiller, artist, instructor and author, lets us have a cheeky peek into his studio, with its accompanying weird and wonderful curiosities on display. **Page 24**



JUST PLAIN LAWFUL

Many artists in the UK are concerned about the passing of the Instagram Act, which could have drastic copyright implications for art on the internet. **Page 26**

One of Marice's favourite things that Francis has ever said was "Fatal disease? Step aside. I have work to do."

movements into painting instructions, which enables him to keep on creating art. "Drawing is such a big part of who I am," says Francis. "There are so many digital tools available today that I knew there had to be a way to create artwork, even in my situation."

The mobile setup was designed by Teddy Lindsey (see sidebar, right), and comprises a Tobii eye-tracking camera and processor, and an enhanced tablet PC fitted to a modified mounting frame. "It took a little getting used to, but within a couple of weeks, I was beginning to draw. It's an exercise of patience as each shape and line has to be formed bit by bit."

Each piece is started in SketchUp, which responds well to the eye-gaze mouse

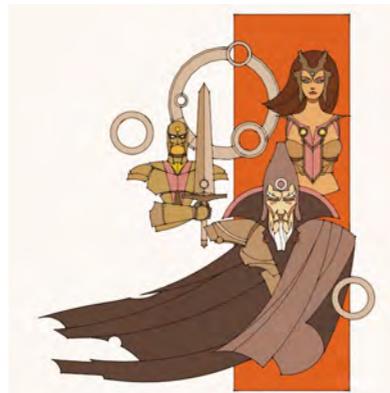


“Having lost the ability to paint with his hands, arms and feet, Francis paints with his eyes”

emulation software. Shapes and outlines are created before moving to Photoshop for effects and tweaks, with layer styles and texture overlays added for painterly effects.



To help fund the costs of medical care and research, Francis's sister Marice Pärchen set up an online store offering merchandise and prints featuring the eye-gaze artwork, which



Friends, art lovers and fellow artists have all shown their support to Francis and his family.

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

TEDDY LINDSEY

The man behind Francis's setup explains how it became possible

What does the eye-tracking setup consist of?

The tracking technology is made by Tobii and consists of an eye-tracker camera and software for translating eye movements into specific behaviours, such as cursor movements, clicks or mode changes. The self-contained units aren't robust enough for creative applications and the stand-alone unit isn't easy to move, so I created a custom mounting that would enable a powerful PC to integrate with the standalone camera into a single, mobile unit. It's powerful enough to drive either SketchUp or Photoshop.

How does the technology work?

The eye-gaze trackers are incredible devices that emit infrared light, which is reflected from the eyes and then processed, analysed and translated into movements of a cursor on screen. It still requires intense concentration by the user and can be tiring to run for extended periods. There's room for improvement and the scientists at Tobii are working hard to make the system more accurate and portable.

Has helping Francis had an impact on your outlook?

There's no known cure for ALS and it leaves family and friends of victims feeling helpless. I feel lucky to have been able to help Francis in some small way. Seeing him suffer from this terrible disease has increased my appreciation for simple joys. Something as trivial as scratching an itch on your arm, or the ability to smile has been robbed from him. Yet his sense of humour and energy for creating have been an inspiration and a testament to his indomitable spirit.



Teddy is the vice president in R&D at Ntrepid Corporation, with a background in technology.

www.ntrepidcorp.com



Everything you see across these pages was created using the incredible eye-gaze technology.

Continued from previous page...



Francis is pictured here with Teddy Lindsey and wife Linda, the artist's main source of inspiration.

has also helped increase awareness of their cause. "As word spread about the art, we saw people from all over the world visiting the store, sending support and expressing their appreciation," says Marice, who along with her brother, is touched by the incredible support the art community has shown. "There's so much mutual respect out there, and artists have rallied to drive traffic to the store to help us out."

Before his condition emerged, Francis was an active member of the online art community, regularly providing feedback and advice on forums, which Marice feels may have also contributed to the store's success. "I have seen a number of posts from people who've said he had given help or encouragement in the past that really changed things for them, and it feels like Francis is seeing it come back to him."

No obstacles seem large enough to dampen their spirits. "All I have ever wanted to do is draw," says Francis, "and the universe has come up with a surprising number of ways to try to keep me from doing that. I find that the older I get, the less willing I am to put up with obstacles that keep me from doing what I love. Fortunately, in addition to the technology that keeps me alive, I have access to technology that enables me to put together line, shape, colour and value to create images. That's what I do - I'm an artist. Always have been, always will be."

To find out more about Francis and check out the store, visit <http://teamgt.com>.



Clouding judgement

Bold move? The news that Adobe sees Creative Cloud as the future of the Creative Suite hasn't exactly been welcomed with open arms...

Adobe's radical revision of Creative Suite access has been met with mixed responses from the digital art community.

Whether you're a Photoshop user or dabble with the entire suite, it will now be mandatory to subscribe to Adobe's Creative Cloud service, meaning you'll have to pay a monthly fee to use the software. All future upgrades will only be available through Creative Cloud membership.

"I hate these half-baked anti-piracy solutions," reader Jirka Stibor tells us. "Adobe should be happy it has a solid customer base. It might bring a few more people in by this step, but lose many more."



The new model may encourage existing users to try alternative programs, just as fellow reader Joshua Pinkas suggests. "I vote with my wallet, and I won't vote for the perpetual payment treadmill."

For more information, head over to www.adobe.com.



Photoshop has long suffered at the hands of piracy - could this new structure change that? Either way, the new payment plan seems to be decidedly unpopular with the art community, among who Adobe's Creative Suite is - or perhaps was - much used.



Four Wacom Inklings to be won!

Get sketching Enter our special Wacom challenges for your chance to win an ingenious bit of kit!

We have teamed up with our friends at Wacom for a special chance to win one of four Inklings - and all you need to do is sketch!

Over the next four weeks, we will be holding four, week-long challenges with the winner of each challenge picking up the prize. Each challenge will have a specific theme (see below), and we want you to sketch something that you feel embodies the subject.

You can use the designated forum thread to post works in progress, but you must submit your final sketch through our competition page. The details will be listed in the forum thread. At the end of each challenge we'll pick the winning sketch - could it be you?

Competition details

The details are as follows:

- **Monday 24 June - Sunday 30 June:** *Summertime in Middle-earth*
- **Monday 1 July - Sunday 7 July:** *Forest Nymph*
- **Monday 8 July - Sunday 14 July:** *Shore Leave*
- **Monday 15 July - Sunday 21 July:** *Fantasy Festival Band*

The Inking enables you to translate your sketches straight into a computer, without having to use a scanner.



Details of each challenge can be found at our forum: <http://community.imaginefx.com/forums>, where you will also find entry details to submit your final sketches. We'll announce the winners in a future issue. We look forward to seeing what you come up with!



Once you've finished drawing on paper, your sketch will be translated directly to your computer as a raster or vector graphic. To find out more information about the Inking, visit www.bit.ly/ifx-inking.

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The true definition of art

Hot debate Could we finally have a definitive answer to one of life's burning questions?

The definition was created after countless debates between colleagues on the nature of art and entertainment.

After centuries of fierce debate, the precise nature of art remains as elusive as the meaning of life itself. Until now.

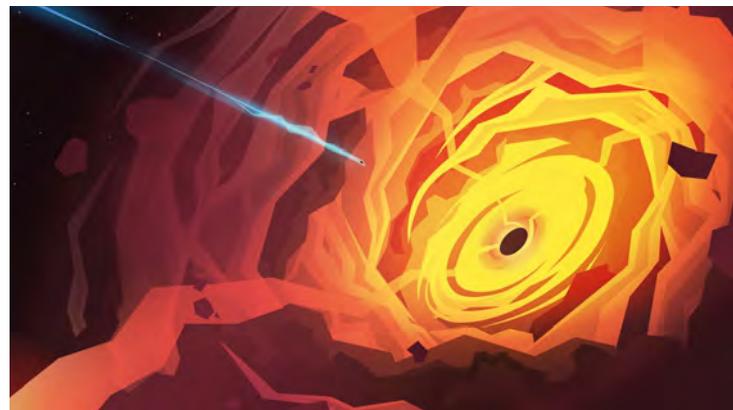
Award-winning game studio FuturLab has a theory that it thinks pinpoints the meaning of art (complete with capital A). According to FuturLab's Bullet Proof Definition of Art, "Art is the satisfying experience that happens between an artefact and a person experiencing that artefact."



As managing director James Marsden explains, the theory isn't restricted to the visual arts. "Our definition states that it's justified to call

Heston Blumenthal's work Art, as is the design of an Audi engine. The point being that Art is in the eye of the beholder." The theory is based on the grounds that an artefact can be anything man-made, with the "satisfying experience" being more flexible than you might assume. "Many people assume that satisfying means pleasurable, but it really means the satisfaction of criteria - and that criteria can be anything at all."

James says that the purpose of the definition is to state that everything is subjective, and we're inclined to agree - what about you? Find out more about FuturLab over at www.futurlab.co.uk.



It all comes down to the premise that one man's trash is another man's treasure - and the ability to admire other people's views.



James says that the response to FuturLab's theory has been positive, with the nature of satisfaction causing the biggest reaction.



Once you get your head around how a satisfying experience may not be a positive one, the definition suddenly makes a lot of sense.

100th issue vote

Get involved Vote for your favourite artist and the ImagineFX cover that hit the spot

ImagineFX is celebrating seven years of bringing to the world the best in fantasy and sci-fi art, as we turn 100 this August.

So what better time to ask you - the readers that have made all this possible - who your favourite artists are, and what your best-loved ImagineFX cover is.

Place your vote now over at www.bit.ly/ifx-100-vote. Reacquaint yourself with seven years of ImagineFX covers

on our voting page, and select the one that stands out for you. Perhaps it's the first issue you bought, the one that featured your art, or simply the issue that was packed with your favourite workshops and artist interviews? We also want to find out your favourite artists. With your help we're going to make a list of 100 artists that have most inspired and delighted ImagineFX readers over the years. This is a chance to hear from the thousands of readers around the world - the more votes, the more accurate the final results.

Visit the voting site now and we'll print the results in our special 100th issue on 16 August.

Once you've voted, join the discussion on your favourite memories of the past seven years of ImagineFX on our forum: www.bit.ly/ifx-100-forum.

Don't delay - visit the site and get involved in what promises to be a very special issue!



If issue one's cover is your favourite, let us know at www.bit.ly/ifx-100-vote.





+deviantWATCH

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



Yuuz

www.yuuz.deviantart.com

Perhaps it's the dizzying effects from all of that rainbow-coloured manga art or the hypnotic cat-whiskered web cam, but either way Yuuz's gallery puts a smile on your face. You'll also find some great portraits that bring out her more serious side, making this a wonderfully balanced collection.



CoyoteMange

www.bit.ly/ifx-cmange

This is a lovely collection of nature-inspired artwork, packed with softly crafted studies, botanical motifs and striking graphic pieces. There are even a few familiar faces hidden in the shrubbery, including one of the most unique pieces of Sonic the Hedgehog fan art we've seen in a while.



Tomstrza

www.tomstrzal.deviantart.com

Tomstrza is a real fiend for elaborate textures and mesmerising concepts, which is why his collection is so compelling. The themes and style of his work are similar to the incredible Kris Kuksi, with the culmination of intricate elements fitting together to create something remarkable.

Creepy artist's mannequin peeking around the corner.

Cool photo from one of my colleagues.

Galvanised steel drawing board with magnets to hold drawings. I hate leaving holes in wooden drawing boards, using pushpins or tacks.



Messy glass oil painting palette and a few of my brushes. About as clean as the palette ever gets.

A Prismacolor Pencil sketch from one of my sketchbooks.

Don Seegmiller

Treasure trove There are all kinds of weird and wonderful curiosities on display that make Don's studio so interesting to explore...



I have two different office/studio setups. The first is located in a room above the garage. During the summer I move my computer setup to the basement, where it is much cooler but not very interesting.

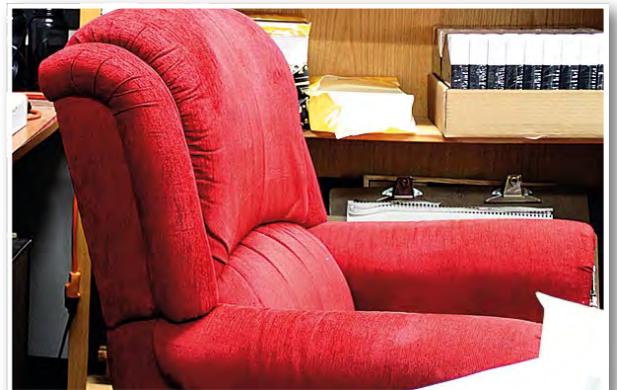
The second is my workstation at the school where I teach. What you see here in these photos is that setup; it's located in a rather strange triangular-shaped room, and is filled with lots of stuff that's important to me in one way or another. I work both digitally and traditionally in this setup, with a large easel at one end and my computer filling the top of my desk.

It usually takes me around 30 minutes to warm up properly before I'm able to concentrate and work well. Those 30 minutes consists of looking at art books, cleaning palettes, answering emails - just about any small chore that can get me

moving. Once I'm in the art groove, time passes quickly and I often work for hours without taking a break. I always have a trusty Diet Coke at my side while painting.

I use both a Mac and PC for my digital work, although I prefer the PC. I'm lucky enough to have a very fast machine, which

Here's my all-important La-Z-Boy nap chair.



Artist news, software & events

Photo of a sailfish I caught in Guatemala a few years ago. He was released safely.

One of the only paintings I've done over the years that I have liked enough to keep.

A small robot character that I designed once upon a time, long ago, in a faraway place.



I like to use these skulls for drawing.



A bronze sculpture of Pegasus.



This is a small demo oil painting.



This is my stuffed raven, who watches over everything.

I built. It features two solid-state hard drives: one is dedicated to the OS and the second is a scratch disk as well as temporary storage for my current projects. In addition, I have three 2TB hard disks for all the other stuff. I use both a Wacom Cintiq and Intuos 4. They're always connected and I use whichever one suits my fancy at the time.

There are lots of small objects scattered throughout the space that either have a history or I find visually interesting. These include a few skulls, mounted insects, woodcarvings, lots of books and a stuffed raven. There's also a red La-Z-Boy reclining chair when I need a short afternoon nap. What you see in the photo is about as neat as the space ever gets.

As well as being a successful traditional and digital artist, Don is also an instructor and accomplished author. You can see his latest work at www.seegmillerart.blogspot.com.

There are several digital paintings I've made over the past few years dotted around the studio.



FRESH PAINT

Your art news that's grabbed our attention



Tom Heard
(th_illustration)

“Inspired by ImagineFX Presents Digital Painting, I painted a bit of St Ives this afternoon.”
www.bit.ly/ifx-th_illustration



Kasia Słupecka
(Manequim)

“My practice environment for a CGMA workshop with Jason Scheier.”
www.bit.ly/ifx-manequim



Federico Piatti
(fpiatti)

“Today's quick study: Toledo!”
www.bit.ly/ifx-fpiatti-study

Just finished something you want us to shout about? Send it our way on Twitter (@imaginefx), or find us on Facebook!



Hatboy
by Vaughn Pinpin



Fantasy talk Explaining the inexplicable

“I consider using a World War II-era jet, but they were so rare that I can't justify it and stick with the big ol' V12”

Hats off to Christian Pearce, who designs a historically accurate, crazy fantasy vehicle... See page 76

Hard act to follow

Lawful conduct? The passing of the Instagram Act could have drastic copyright implications for artists on the web

The integration of the Instagram Act in UK law could provide a loophole to use an artist's work without prior consent or knowledge, creating major concerns over image ownership and copyright violations.

The Act is in the latter stages of becoming a solid regulation in a bid to streamline the copyright process. It states that if an original creator cannot be contacted after an extensive search, artwork will be free to use for any purpose.

“This Act is frightening in what it could do to the creative industries if it becomes law,” says illustrator Nick Harris. “Changes in the industry necessitated many of us to become freelance and put our work out there to allow collaboration and self-promotion.”



Nick, along with many others, feels that the new strategy fails to protect the rights of original creators, effectively legalising the ability

to steal material. “It could decimate the UK's freelance community and drive them out of the business. I'm not sure how the government thinks this is going to help the creative industry or economy in any way.”

As Nick Harris sees it, if the Instagram Act becomes law, artists could lose control of their work.

You can find out more about the Instagram Act and copyright law at: www.parliament.uk. Tell us what you think.



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FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART
ImagineFX Forum

Winners

Image of the month

Bat in time A mysterious vigilante with a penchant for mechanical engineering... it seems that Batman was always destined for a steampunk redesign



NEW PRIZES

We love all your Forum challenge art, so we're now giving the Image of the Month winner two brand new bookazines: Digital Painting and Fantasy Illustrator. Anyone entering the weekly or monthly challenges is eligible, so get entering! Look at what you can win: www.bit.ly/ifx-store.



If anyone was crying out for a steampunk makeover it's got to be Batman. A brooding anti-hero with a taste for homemade contraptions and theatrical trickery? Sounds about right!

But winner Jason wasn't always so sure. "Batman seemed like an obvious choice for a steampunk superhero, but I was initially reluctant to tackle such an iconic character." After sketching out Batman wearing a leather cap with goggles, Jason's fears were soon put to rest and the rest of the composition soon followed.

"The biggest challenges were satisfying the steampunk theme without going overboard, and getting his cape to look right. I also wound up using a far simpler background than I started with, but I think the end result was much more effective."

MYFX TITLE: Steampunk Superhero or Villain
WINNER: Jason Lee (Vektor)
GALLERY: www.bit.ly/ifx-vektor
ALL ENTRIES: www.bit.ly/myfx-feb2013



We're certain that the mean streets of Gotham in the 1800s would be just as deadly as their future counterparts, so it's a good job that the Dark Knight keeps the criminal underworld at bay.



Jason's initial uncertainties were calmed once he found a way to make Batman's costume look authentic, rather than corny.



IMAGINEFX CRIT



"That the image nails the essence of both Steampunk and Batman is a feat in itself. The fact that it's also so technically accomplished really made this the obvious winner. A superb piece."

Josef McKerral (Mangle)

Join in!
www.imaginefx.com/myfx



MYFX TITLE: Chiaroscuro
WINNER: Vince Hewitt (Midscrawl)
GALLERY: www.bit.ly/ifx-midscrawl
ALL ENTRIES: www.bit.ly/myfx-april



"Chiaroscuro means to strongly contrast light and dark shades. Normally, the monthly challenge is a subject, but this one seemed to be a style instead. I decided to lay down a dark background and put down a few random chalky shapes on to it. I then smudged them randomly to see what would appear. The image literally emerged from the dark. When I had something to work with I realised that the image seemed to fit the idea of light and dark quite well. Victor Frankenstein, attempting to cure death, creates an emissary of death instead. Light and dark indeed."

MYFX TITLE: Wish You Were Here
WINNER: Alastair Reid (harlequin)
GALLERY: www.bit.ly/ifx-harlequin
ALL ENTRIES: www.bit.ly/myfx-321



"This might be the kind of greetings card that Batman receives from the Joker now and then. The idea of creating a postcard-style image enabled me to practise some simple perspective techniques with the asylum building, although my core idea was to draw the Arkham inmates inside the lettering. A few tips from issue 95 were fresh in my mind as I worked on the piece, especially Derrick Chew and PJ Holden's workshops on comic art skills. I started and finished the image in Manga Studio 5 and had a crazy amount of fun doing it!"



MYFX TITLE: The Ark
WINNER: Varuna Darensbourg (adventuregoat)
GALLERY: www.bit.ly/ifx-adventuregoat
ALL ENTRIES: www.bit.ly/myfx-317



"The challenge was to design a vessel with the sole purpose of saving as many creatures as possible. I knew that I wanted to develop something in keeping with sci-fi, but I also wanted to convey a sense of scale and dreary desperation.

"One of the biggest challenges of the piece was to subtly suggest that this ship was a last-ditch attempt to preserve life on a troubled planet. With the vessel design, I tried to incorporate certain shapes that might be similar to the more traditional-looking Ark."

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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Thanks for the help

I'm a huge fan of your publications and I have had so much success with my own digital art because of your many helpful, insightful articles. I just want to say thank you for making this magazine. Because of you guys, I have a new-found confidence in my own works as a novice artist. I've even decided to make a career of digital illustrating and animation, so thanks!

Ana Rivera, via email

Ian replies: Hi Ana. It's always wonderful to hear from readers who've been inspired. I'm so pleased you find our little magazine so helpful, why not send in your art to show us or apply to feature in FXPosé?



More anatomy

Hey, I bought one of your Anatomy Essentials specials from WHSmith. How can I buy the How to Draw Anatomy part two? **Marium Jasmin, via Facebook**

Ian replies: Thanks for getting in touch, Marium. We actually sold out of copies of both volumes of How to Draw and Paint Anatomy, but we are reprinting both editions and they should be in stores very soon, or you can order a copy from <http://beta.imaginefx.com/shop>. And they're both available as digital editions!

Quickie

Just got the June issue and it looks great! **Leif H Larsen, via Facebook**

Finally found you

I'm so pleased I've found you! I've been looking for a magazine like ImagineFX for years and stumbled across your fabulous Comic Art issue on Google. The mix of helpful insights and great art, not to mention my favourite comic hero on the cover, is a joy. You've got a new reader! **Rebecca Fielding, via email**



DID YOU MISS ISSUE 97?

We've still got a few copies, but you need to move fast! See page 51 for details on how to get hold of one.



The Comic Art special (issue 97) found us at least one excited new reader, in Rebecca Fielding. Welcome!

Digital art newbie

I've been painting traditionally for years and never imagined I'd dabble in digital art. But after issue 96 (fantasy art legends) I bought a copy of Painter 12 and am busy finding my feet. Will you be doing any more Painter tutorials?

Jason Wilson, via email

Ian replies: Hi Jason. I'm glad you've joined the digital art party! We will be doing more Painter workshops (this issue's cover was painted using Corel's software), but don't forget your traditional skills. Painter is just a tool – your experience will lead you through!

Big thank you

I'd like to say a massive thank you for Ash Thorp's 'Learn to beat creative block' workshop (issue 97). I struggle with getting a painting off the ground, usually undoing all my good work in a vain effort to get inspiration. So it was great to read a professional artist's approach. I'll be putting his advice to good use!

Melanie Davis, via email

Ian replies: I'm sure Ash will be glad to hear that. Hopefully other readers have found our workshops equally helpful.

Where's Marta?

I've bought your magazine for years but have been wondering what's happened to Marta Dahlg? I always find her work inspirational and enlightening.

Sarah Walton, via Facebook

Ian replies: Sarah, you can see into the future. Marta is doing a special workshop, very soon. Keep your eyes peeled!

Almost there!

I let out a squeal of excitement when the latest ImagineFX landed on my doormat, because it's issue 97 which means only three more until issue 100. Can't wait! Squeal!

Leigha Coombs, via Facebook



Our star letter writer wins a dA Premium Membership!

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Calculating your worth

Regarding Milind's letter about being paid for freelance work ('Helping hand', issue 96), I think anyone pricing their work should remember they're selling their experience. Too low a price can be worse than too high. The client will forget the bargain and look at the work, or they will remember the price and won't respect the work.

Estimate the time it will take: professionally it's four times the minimum hourly wage: one hour doing the job (including making mistakes), one hour on business-related work (like talking to the client), one hour on vacation, sick leave or coffee breaks (don't work yourself into the ground) and one hour for overhead expenses.

Don't work for peanuts. Or idiots. And remember that virtually every problem in pricing comes easier as you gain experience.

David Sansom, via snail mail

Ian replies:

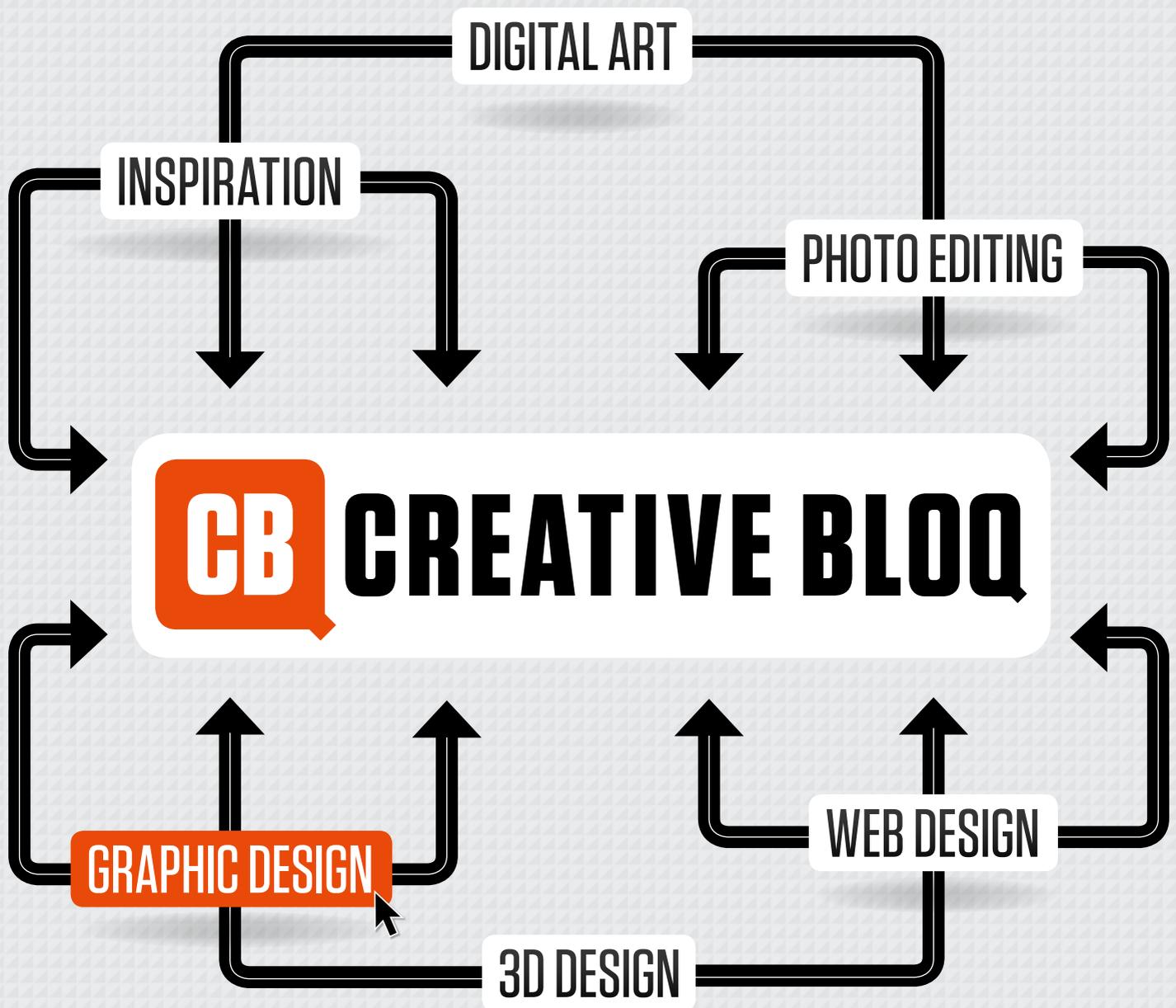
Wise words David, and I think many of our readers will be eager to take them on board. When you take your first steps in the world of

freelance work it can be hard to judge your own worth. Many reputable companies will have standard fees and practices from which to negotiate, but this isn't always the case. Perhaps start by working out an hourly rate for your time and use this as a sounding board for any work you take on.

Also, remember to negotiate your copyrights and be sure you know where you stand before any work is started. Do any other readers have advice about starting out freelance? Please write in and share your tips.



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The FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX panel

Charlie Bowater
Charlie lives in the northeast of England. She works as a concept artist for Atomhawk by day and is a doodler of everything else by night.
www.charliebowater.wordpress.com

Daniela Uhlig
Daniela works in the games industry, where she create concepts for characters and backgrounds. In her spare time she's an art freelancer.
www.du-artwork.de

Mark Molnar
Mark is a concept and visual development artist. He's busy doing freelance work for international film, game and animation companies.
www.markmolnar.com

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

Manon Delacroix
Manon is a busy freelance illustrator who specialises in high fantasy, horror and portraiture. Werewolves are her favourite.
www.artbymanon.com

McLean Kendree
An ImagineFX Rising Stars winner in 2011, McLean now works at Kabam studios, and has produced concept art for THQ, Hasbro and 38 Studios.
www.mcleanart.com

Tony Foti
Tony is a US freelance illustrator who contributes to D&D, and Fantasy Flight Games' Star Wars and The Lord of the Rings lines.
www.tonyfotiart.com

Question

Can you tell me how to paint tired-looking eyes – bags, wrinkles and so forth?

Guyneth Fantastic, England

Answer

Charlie replies

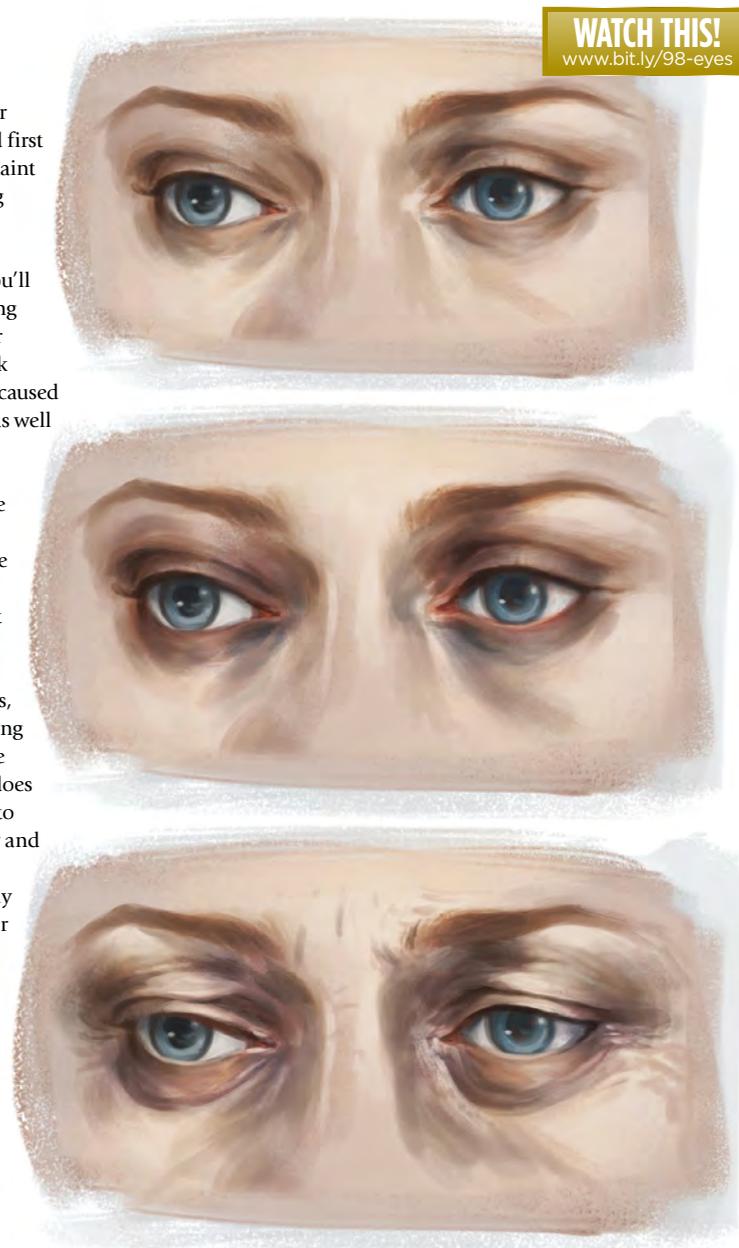


I'll split this answer into two parts, and first deal with how to paint tired eyes. Painting wrinkles and bags is another kettle of fish entirely!

When painting tired eyes you'll mostly need to focus on making the shadows under the eyes far more obvious than usual. Dark circles around the eyes can be caused by a variety of medical issues as well as general fatigue, but as far as painting purposes go, adding them is a sure-fire way to make someone look tired. Try to keep the lid of the eyelid a little hooded, too – you don't want to make the eyes look too alert or awake by giving the subject wide eyes.

As for wrinkles and eye bags, you'll need to approach painting the skin in a different way. The skin will have aged, and as it does it will lose elasticity and start to sag. As the skin sags both over and under the eyes, wrinkles and creases start to form. Definitely gather some references of older people, either by hitting the internet or by taking photographs of elderly friends and family – it will certainly help!

Here's a range of tired eyes, which probably belong to artists who have spent too long staring at their works-in-progress!



WATCH THIS!
www.bit.ly/98-eyes

Step-by-step: Make your characters look really fatigued



1 To start things off, I keep the lids slighted hooded so the subject doesn't look too alert. I add in some darker shadows than normal under and around the eyes. The skin surrounding the eyes is thinner here, so you can emphasise the sockets and bring out the blues and purples in the shadows.



2 I make the shadows around the eyes much more dramatic in this stage. I add in far more blue and purple tones in the skin on a low-opacity Overlay layer, building up the colour as I see fit. I also add a bit more redness to make the eyes look more tired and puffy, and some darker shadows into the inner corners.

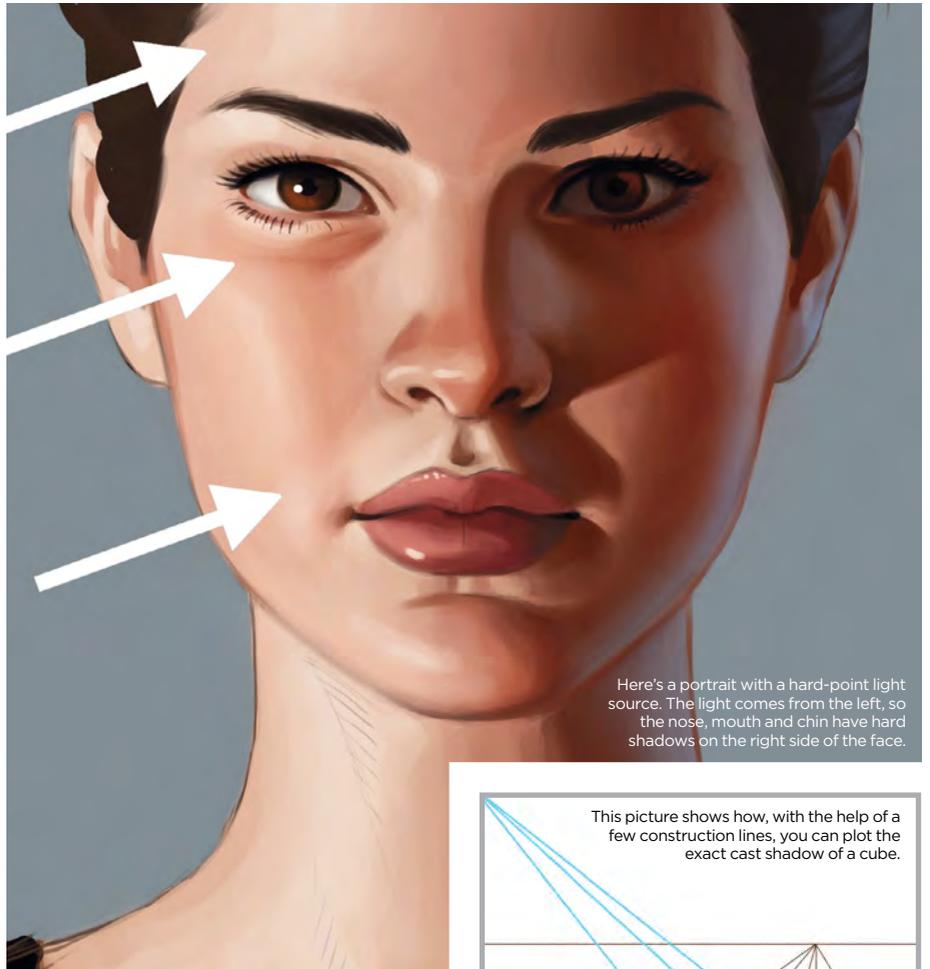


3 I now want to make the eyes older, rather than tired. I repaint the skin of the eyelids and the surrounding area. As skin becomes older it sags over the eye. Skin will also droop under the eye and create a pronounced eye bag. Once I've established the biggest differences, it's just a case of adding in some finer lines.

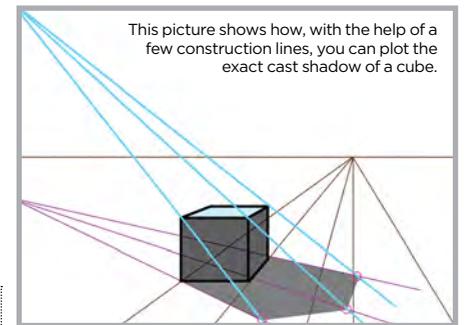
Question

How do you know when a character's shadow is in the right place?

Kadence Williams, US



Here's a portrait with a hard-point light source. The light comes from the left, so the nose, mouth and chin have hard shadows on the right side of the face.



This picture shows how, with the help of a few construction lines, you can plot the exact cast shadow of a cube.

Answer Daniela replies



The shadows on a face or an object are important. They give more information about the form and three-dimensional construction. If a

face is illuminated by a hard-point source of light, the shadows will be clear. These shadows help to describe the structure and contours of the face more clearly than diffuse light.

I think about which direction my light source is coming from. As an aid, you could draw line demonstrating the direction of the light. The direction is key for the placement of the shadows. Everything that faces the light source is bright and everywhere the light doesn't strike is dark.

When I paint a face without reference I examine my own face with my fingers, which tells which parts curve inwards or outward. The most difficult part of a hard shadow is the cast shadow. The shadow of an object (in case of a portrait, the nose) is more elongated than the object itself.

The more the light in my example comes from the side, the longer the cast shadow of the nose becomes. The more the light source comes from the front, the shorter the cast shadow.

A good tip (especially for portraits) is to use a small table lamp and a mirror. When you alter the position of the table lamp, you also change the cast shadows on your face. It's important to understand the different ways in which shadows fall. This awareness and understanding is the basis of placing a shadow correctly.

Artist's secret

CHANGE YOUR BRUSH STROKE SETTINGS AFTERWARDS

Sometimes you can create the perfect line that has exactly the momentum you want, but with too much coverage or in the wrong mode. In this case simply click Edit > Fade Brush Tool. This opens a new window in which you can alter the opacity and mode.

Question

Can you please help me paint transparent clothing?

Chris Bowen, England

Answer

Daniela replies



When I want to paint a transparent piece of clothing, such as a pantyhose or pair of stockings, I start by painting the naked leg. When the pantyhose are tight, they follow the same light and shadow rules as the leg. Then I mark the leg and paint my stockings in black (or another colour) on a new layer above. I set this layer to roughly 50 per cent opacity. The higher the opacity level, the more opaque the pantyhose will be. On a Layer Mask I add a little more transparency to the calf and thigh area. I then create another layer and with the Airbrush, gently paint along the contours of the leg so that the pantyhose are darker in these areas. If it's too dark I just reduce the Opacity level afterwards. For opaque areas such as the lace band, I usually add these on a new layer, because they have little or no transparency.

When a transparent material falls more loosely, wrinkles and folds are created. The areas in which the material overlaps will become more opaque. This effect can be easily created using different layers of varying opacity. Finally, it's important to paint the figure underneath the clothes because this will determine how the clothes fall.



This screenshot shows the painting with the stockings, as well as the order of the three individual layers.



This image is an example of how I can quickly paint a transparent skirt using just two layers that are set to 30 per cent opacity.

Question

What advice can you give me for depicting an old and wrinkly face?

Pascal Delacroix, France



This guy has clearly smoked a pipe all his life, so he's got some great wrinkles happening around his mouth. He's also a bit miserable so I've exaggerated that.



Is this the face of a happy chap or a grump? Notice how wrinkles appear on different faces and where they crease naturally.

Answer

Manon replies



With old faces the best thing to do is to study them! Go on a search engine and have a good browse for 'old wrinkly face' and do some sketches and doodle ideas from these photographs. Using photo reference is very important, especially when you're trying to make something or someone look realistic. Decide on what kind of character you want - do you want them to be grumpy or happy? Aged faces tend to reflect the personality of the

subject, so decide before you start to paint and find references that will help you to support your character's demeanour.

Old faces are the most fun to draw; they're much easier to depict than youthful ones because they have much more character. I use a textured overlay (a grunge texture) over the whole image using a Multiply layer and lower the opacity on this to create more texture to his skin. Don't hold back and don't be afraid to exaggerate some of the character's features.

Question

How can I paint realistic characters without knowing about human anatomy?

Nils Carson, Poland

Answer

Paco replies



You don't need to know about every single muscle to paint a realistic character. There's fat and skin over the muscles, so you can save time by painting muscles in blocks. Furthermore, unless you're painting naked characters, their clothes will hide some of the musculature, so you'll only need to know the proportion and overall body shape. So, as long as you have a basic knowledge of anatomy you should be fine. Gather as much reference images as you need, though. The less you know, the more you'll need to trust in your eyes.



Question

I've heard the term 'greebles', but I have no idea what it means. How would you explain it?

Frank McElroy, US

Answer

Mark replies



Greebles are elements that add surface detail to a simple object, and it originates from the sci-fi genre. They add visual interest and increase the scale in the case of large, geometric structures. The best examples are the Imperial Star Destroyers and the Death Star from Star Wars.

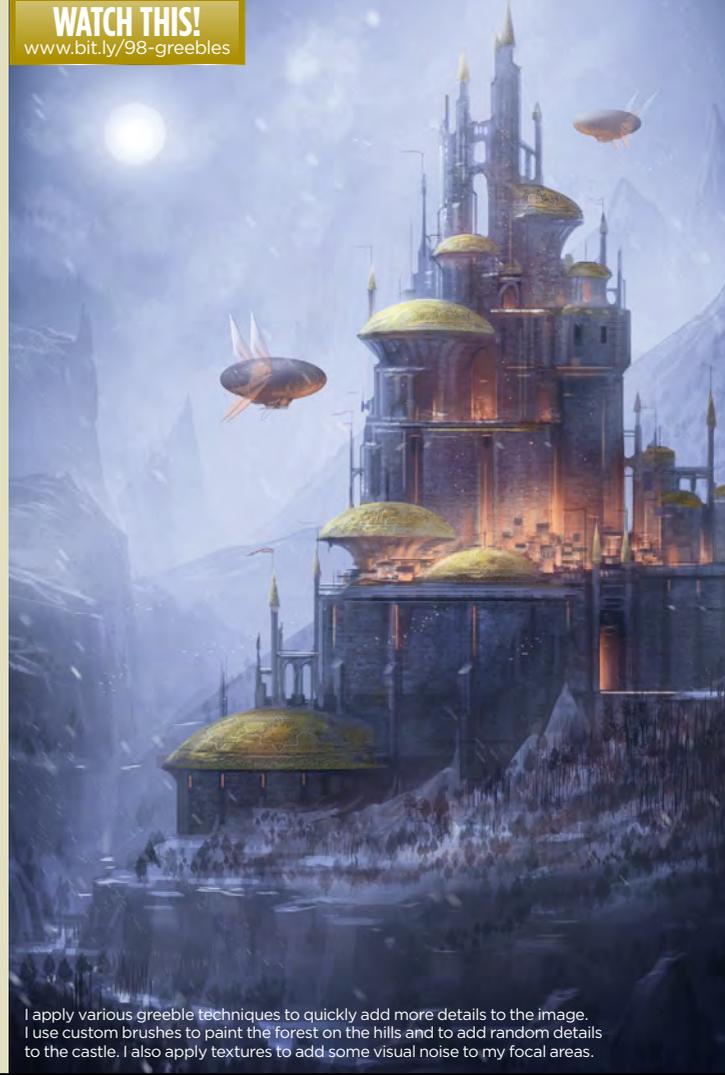
I also call this fake detailing, because instead of going into tight rendering, you suggest the details in certain areas. I use greebling for developing visual concepts, where I don't have the time to work out all the small details of the artwork, but I'd still like to show what I have in mind about the final environment or scene. The technique works well when you have to paint lots of similar geometric objects, such as a whole city of houses or a forest, but it can also be used for creating various materials where there's repetition or visual noise in the structures. Brick walls, rock surfaces and ocean ripples are all good examples.

There are two ways to paint greebles. The first is to create a custom brush with a brush tip that roughly resembles the shape of the main base object – in the case of a house it could be a simple square – and then add various modifiers to give the brush stroke the required variability. The most commonly used modifiers are Size Jitter, Scattering and Color Dynamics.

The other method is to add photo textures to certain areas of your painting, which creates visual noise to enhance the richness of your details. Sometimes I use unrelated textures for my objects, such as microscopic images of crystals for city aerial shots, but it's important to have a similar geometrical structure on the texture, because otherwise it can easily break up your painting and make it look confusing.

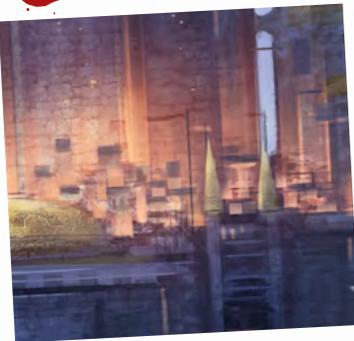
WATCH THIS!

www.bit.ly/98-greebles



I apply various greeble techniques to quickly add more details to the image. I use custom brushes to paint the forest on the hills and to add random details to the castle. I also apply textures to add some visual noise to my focal areas.

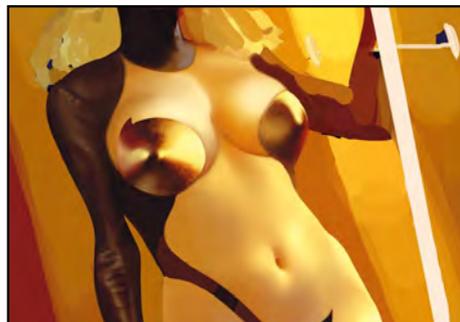
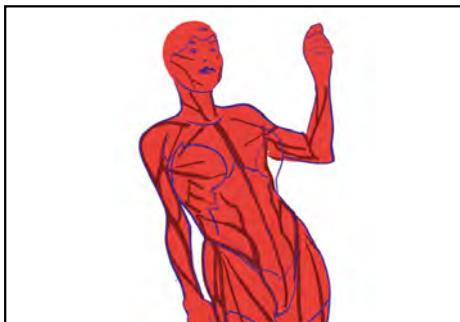
Artist's secret



CLEVER USE OF GREEBLES

By using higher contrast both in colours and the amount of details around your focal areas you can easily guide your viewer through your artwork, and leave your outer areas more loose-looking.

Step-by-step: Paint with just a basic knowledge of anatomy



- 1 First I sketch the figure, trying to keep realistic proportions and silhouettes. As you can see on the image, on which I've applied a muscular scheme, the figure is anatomically correct, but I don't need to know about every single muscle to know that. Just a basic knowledge of anatomy and a bit of observation will be sufficient.
- 2 Then using photographic references (or a live model if you're lucky to have one) I start painting, paying attention to the light, atmosphere and detail. Musculature only comes into its own around the abdominal area. The rest of the painting will involve depicting leather, metal, hair and a face.
- 3 In this example, even if the character is quite realistic, the muscles don't have an excessive presence; the basic proportion and shape (the silhouette) have a greater importance. The details of the figure and the correct depiction of the light are more important than realistically portraying every single muscle.

Question

Can you help me design an original sci-fi character?

Toby Leaman, US

Answer

McLean replies



For my answer, I opt to depict an alien character with humanoid anatomy. It'd be interesting to make her clearly alien, but to also try and make her attractive to the human eye.

From the outset I'm keen to ensure a strong colour contrast between her skin tone and the colour of her uniform. I want to incorporate more tribal aspects into her costume, as if she had crash-landed somewhere and was adjusting to the environment. However, as the character evolves I tone this approach down. This idea is still there in small amounts, from

the feathers collected and fastened into her sleeve, to the hand-made stone knife lashed to her belt. I decide to pass on doing more than that though, because her anatomy is already going in a forest-looking direction. If not for her sci-fi outfit, she could pass as a magical forest inhabitant.

My original idea is a balance of future clothes and nature, and I think if I'd started to add leaves and animal hides to her costume, then the sci-fi element could have gotten muddled or buried. For the sake of this article I simplify the rendering style.



Artist's secret

SHOULD I RENDER EVERYTHING?
Rendering looks great, and can get you lots of praise from peers and clients. However, when you're on the job, pick your battles. You don't need to render a character's feet to the same painstaking degree as you painted their face. Sometimes it even looks better that way.



Keeping individual elements on their own layers can be a pain in the beginning, but can save you a lot of time if you change your mind about something at the very end, like I did.

Step-by-step: Design an extraterrestrial character



WATCH THIS!
www.bit.ly/98-alienconcept

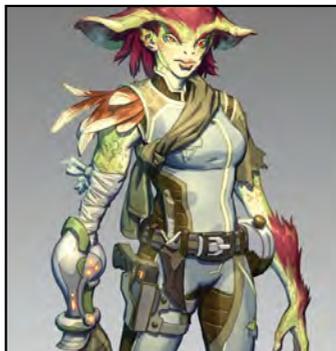
1 My first thumbnails usually don't make sense to anyone but me, so they don't get shown to clients yet. I don't even know what some of the shapes are going to be yet - I'm just putting them down if I think they look cool or promising. I'm also trying to find the gesture or attitude of the character at this stage, because it's tough to inject those qualities later.



2 As I redraw the design I try to figure out what those shapes could be. I change course a couple of times, most notably when I had giant leaves stitched together on her lower legs, and switched them out for mechanical parts. Ultimately I push her outfit so that it's more recognisably sci-fi, instead of getting complicated with too many tribal-looking modifications.



3 Once I'm happy with the line drawing, I block in the silhouette of the character in a single flat tone. Next I create a Multiply layer and paint in the shadows. If I wait to do this until after local colours have been blocked in, I could become distracted and forget to put in certain shadows. I keep different colour elements on their own layers, in case I change my mind later on.



4 My current favourite way to quickly paint form on a character is by using a Linear Dodge layer, and just painting the form over the entire character with the same colour, in a similar fashion to how I did it earlier with the shadows. I also apply a gradient to the entire character to darken her toward the bottom, so as to help her head and torso pop with contrast.

Question

How should I paint a startled expression on my character?

Vladimir Drozd, Russia

Answer

Charlie replies



When painting a character's startled expression, my aim is to exaggerate certain features of the face without making it look too over the top. I'd say my main focus is first and foremost the eyes. This is where you can really catch the viewer's attention and play on that surprised or startled expression some more.

I'm going to paint the subjects eyes looking directly at the viewer, I'm confident this will help with conveying that expression across. I'm

giving her very tiny pupils – it somehow helps with her looking more focused. Because she's wide eyed, I need to take her eyebrows into consideration and raise them up a fair bit. I'm also painting them with a bit of a furrow because it feeds into the expression well, giving her a surprised and slightly worried look.

Finally, giving my character a slightly open mouth helps the scene. It doesn't have to be a huge scream, but just enough to suggest she's been caught off guard and might have been gasping for a breath!

Here I'm focusing entirely on the face and trying to bring out the startled look in her eyes. Just a little bit of white around the iris helps with the wide-eyed expression.

A great way to back up a startled expression is to think about the body language. I'm adding a slight flick of the hair as if she's just whipped her head around.



Question

How can I draw a non-sexualised nude who's either strong or shy?

Liezl Bohnen, South Africa

Answer

Paco replies



A painting of a nude woman or man will always have at least a hint of sexual connotations about it. If you want to paint a naked woman and you want to minimise any sense of the erotic, because you want her to look strong and independent rather than provocative or lascivious, then focus on the facial expression and her attitude. If you want to depict a strong and independent female, for example, just ignore the fact that she's not wearing any clothes. Paint her in a pose that reveals her self-confidence, without trying to exhibit herself or care about what the viewer sees, and with a face full of determination.

For a shy and reserved girl, paint her trying to cover her nudity (for example), with a defensive attitude and an embarrassed expression –



The pose and the facial expression are the key to depict nudity without resorting to the sexy pin-up cliché, or erotic or even distasteful art.

show her blushing, for example. You should also try to depict the nudity with some delicacy, so avoid exaggerating the erotic features of the body.

Question

How would you go about painting a character in the eye of a storm?

Francis Durham, England

Answer

Tony replies



Painting a storm is similar to painting anything in movement. Rather than thinking in terms of objects, you want to be painting the motion. Hard edges will slow things down, while soft edges speed them up. Fast-moving objects tend to blur, so when we see hard edges, our brain assumes the object we're looking at must be still. The direction of the wind (or lack thereof) will show in almost every part of the scene. The way each tassel, hair, dress, and leaf blows gives personality to the wind.

When you want to show motion, choose a background that will support the idea. Even shapes not directly affected by the wind can be painted in a way that suggests movement. By using sweeping cirrus clouds, it keeps the eye from slowing down as it passes over them.



The simple act of dragging and softening edges will create a sense of motion. Varying the degree of blur on each object shows they're moving at different speeds.

Question

Can you help me portray a winged horse that looks realistic?

Ranyun Wang, China



Horses have complicated anatomy, so it pays to study them. There's no muscle below the knees/hocks and the head is bony, so do lots of sketches first.

Answer

Manon replies



I can't say this enough: when you're trying to paint something realistically, you must use photo references. It's the only way you'll create a convincing Pegasus/winged horse. Horses are one of the more difficult animals to draw and I see a lot of fantasy art where the horse has a soft, squishy face or extra joints in its legs, or legs that bend the wrong way! If you use references and study a horse's general anatomy then you won't get it wrong. It just takes lots of practice.

Try out some sketches first for the position of your horse. Make sure you paint

the horse first, before thinking about the wings and how they attach. I've found that the wings of swans look good on the winged horses that I have painted in the past – they're strong and clean looking, as well as being the right colour if you're painting a white creature.

Think carefully about where you'll be attaching the wings. I think that the shoulder area feels most right, but play around with it. If your winged horse is at rest then study wings that are folded back or perhaps stretched up, as if the horse is preparing for take off.

Artist's secret

CHOOSING THE COLOUR PALETTE
A little trick I use sometimes is to take the colours from an image I like the palette of. With this image I used the variety of whites, purples and peachy pinks so that the horse picks up the same colours as the surrounding clouds.



Question

How can I easily introduce movement into a scene?

Paul Wren, Canada

Answer

Mark replies



The easiest method of increasing the dynamism of a character piece is to apply cinematic effects. The most common effects are the various blur options, such as Photoshop's Motion Blur, Gaussian Blur or Lens Blur, and the extra particle effects – for example, dust particles in the air, smoke and vapour – that you can easily paint on top of your finished illustration with custom brushes. All these can increase the depth of your artwork and give it an extra sense of realism.

Because I come from a traditional art background, I like to keep my illustrations more painterly. That's why after adding these effects I flatten down everything and start to roughly paint on top again. I add more traditional-looking brush strokes around the focal point, ensuring that I follow the forms and the direction of the movement with my strokes. This approach means that I'm not only enhancing the amount of detail, but also supporting the dynamism of the piece that I previously established with those cinematic effects.

I want to paint a fast-moving and energetic creature, so I apply various basic blur filters and painted effects to give it that extra dynamism.



You can create the sense of movement by using harder edges (A) in the focal areas and softer, blurred edges further away towards the background (B).

Next month
ON SALE: 19 July
 Paint a selection of faces
 using edge techniques



Question

What are your favourite colour partnerships and why?

Alex Horac, Czech Republic

Answer

Tony replies



No two particular colours would be considered my favourite. It's more about the value, chroma and temperature relationships between the colours.

Whatever hues you use should be based on what you want to say and where you want the viewer's eyes to go.

One chance to introduce contrast is with value, which is intrinsically linked to colour. Value (in art, at least) is how light or dark something is, and every colour has its own inherent value. For example, say you want red light pouring out of a window. When you start painting, you'll notice that any red at high value starts to cool down (pastel pink). That's because pure red is lower on the value scale. To lighten it without losing as much saturation, you can add yellow. This will keep the lighter values more vibrant, although you also begin to move into other hues. That being said, you pretty much always want to link a value change with a colour change, so it's not a bad thing.

Keeping saturation levels high in a key area is one way to attract the eye, but you could do the same thing by painting everything except the key area in brilliant colour. All that matters is that your focal point is somehow different from the rest of the piece.

It's important to remember that, in general, colour theory is subjective – as with almost all aspects of art. What makes one colour feel warm and passionate to one



My main strategy with this piece is to place all of the most vibrant colours around the focal point, which in this case is the model's expression.



I originally set this up without the blue area, but the transition from yellow to black had more contrast than the focal point.

person may be dull and lethargic to another. Some of it seems to be cultural, but a lot is still a mystery. Like taste in music, it just seems to be an extension of each artist's personality.

Artist's secret

REMOVE THE CLUTTER

Placing a blank layer below the one i'm working on temporarily gets rid of elements that i don't want to be distracted by during the painting process.

Step-by-step: Aspects of colour

1 The colour wheel is a good starting point when figuring out which hues have the most contrast when placed next to each other. Any two in the same third of wheel are analogous and feel harmonious.



Located opposite the wheel from any pure colour is its complement. Placing two complements next to each other brings more attention to them.

2 Colour temperature is the idea that some colours feel warmer than others when you look at them. Basically, the closer to blue a colour is, the cooler it is, and the closer it moves towards orange, the warmer it is.



Placing colours of similar temperature near each other creates unity, and using colours of opposite temperatures create contrast.

3 Colour is described by its hue (red, green, blue), and chroma is how intense the hue is. Every colour at its purest (highest chroma possible) has a different value. Pure violet is very dark, while pure yellow is very light.



If you want a lot of value and colour contrast in a specific area, it's important to understand beforehand what a hue will allow.

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.**

CRETACEOUS HANGOUT

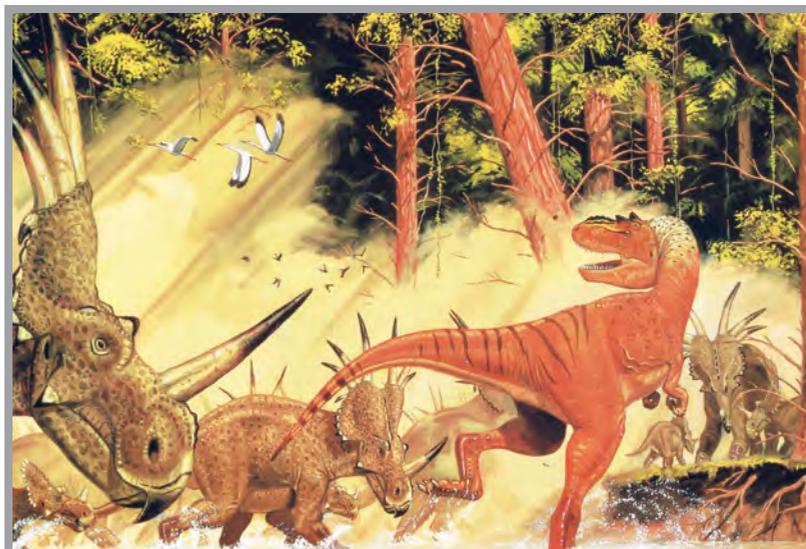
Julius Csotonyi made this digital piece for a museum exhibit showing (from left to right) a Gorgosaurus, an armoured Edmontonia, a trio of Brachyophosaurus, the dome-headed Stegoceras, and the ceratopsians Chasmosaurus and Styracosaurus.



THE EVOLUTION OF



Since their first public depiction, the face of dinosaurs has dramatically changed, but they've always captured the imagination and inspired the world of fantasy



A REBIRTH OF DINO ART

After John Ostrom linked theropods (T-rex, Velociraptor) with birds in 1964, the depiction of dinosaurs changed forever, with leading Dinosaur Renaissance artists such as Gregory S Paul (above) leading the way.



becoming the accepted face of dinosaurs. Created from partial fossil findings and rapidly dating theories, the Crystal Palace dinosaurs are quaint by today's standards, but they ignited a worldwide fascination with prehistoric creatures.

One hundred and forty years later, the film Jurassic Park propelled dinosaurs into the public's imagination again. They looked real, built upon centuries of expert knowledge. No longer the lizard-influenced lunks of Crystal Palace, but bird-like killers. Yet the film was guilty of bending truths: the sneezing Brachiosaurus (a mammalian trait), the Tyrannosaurus rex as fast as a jeep, the over-sized, door-opening Velociraptors. This was Hollywood after all.

Throughout, paleoart has advanced side by side with palaeontology: the theoretical breakthroughs, the gradual piecing together of fossilised skeletons. Unlike the solid statues or celluloid drama, paleoart has morphed and shifted with each minor advance; often artists have reworked previous art to remain relevant. At times it has led the charge by informing palaeontology instead of just documenting it. Today, if you want to see dinosaurs and other extinct creatures as they once were, paleoart is your best bet.

A RENAISSANCE

It wasn't always that way. At the beginning of the 20th century Charles R Knight was producing stunning art based on new, often incomplete, fossils, and influencing a generation of fantasy artists such as the late Ray Harryhausen. The Czech artist Zdeněk Burian followed, conceiving more active, less lizard-like dinos through the 30s, 40s and 50s, working his creatures up from anatomical studies, yet still limited by the day's theoretical shortcomings. ➔

In 1854 the Crystal Palace dinosaurs were unveiled to a stunned London audience. Walking around the park's lake, peering in at the beasts, some looked beached on the lake islands while others stood on all fours, their hulking lizard-like bodies confronting the Victorian sightseers.

Word spread, and the 15 extinct species sculpted by Benjamin Waterhouse Hawkins seeped into the public's imagination,



PALEOART TIMELINE

In the footsteps of dinosaurs: following the changing perceptions



CRYSTAL PALACE SCULPTURES

Unveiled in 1854, Benjamin Waterhouse Hawkins' Crystal Palace dinosaurs were sculptures based on already-dating theories of the limited fossil findings of the day. It predates the unleashing of Darwin's theory of evolution by six years, and inaccuracies include giving the Iguanodons horns out of what was their thumb spikes.



DEVIL TOAD

He may have worked on Mötley Crüe's album covers, but Todd Marshall loves illustrating newly discovered extinct animals, such as the Beelzebufo.



There were very few paleoartists up to the early 70s, and most were using the reptilian model Gregory S Paul

being warm-blooded. Thanks to Robert and his student Gregory S Paul, paleoart became a reflection of this latest school of thinking. "There were very few regular paleoartists at a given time up to the early



A TIME BEFORE DINOSAURS

Here Mauricio Antón depicts the Permian *Inostrancevia* (alive millions of years before the dinosaurs) attacking a *Scutosaur*.



Then a tectonic shift in thinking occurred. In the early 1960s John Ostrom made convincing links between Theropods (a popular suborder of dinosaurs including T-rex and his even bigger brother the Spinosaurus) and birds – not reptiles. This changed how anatomy and movement were depicted. The most effective advocate of this idea was palaeontologist and artist Robert Bakker, who brought John's findings to the world of dino-reconstruction, along with his own thoughts on some dinosaurs



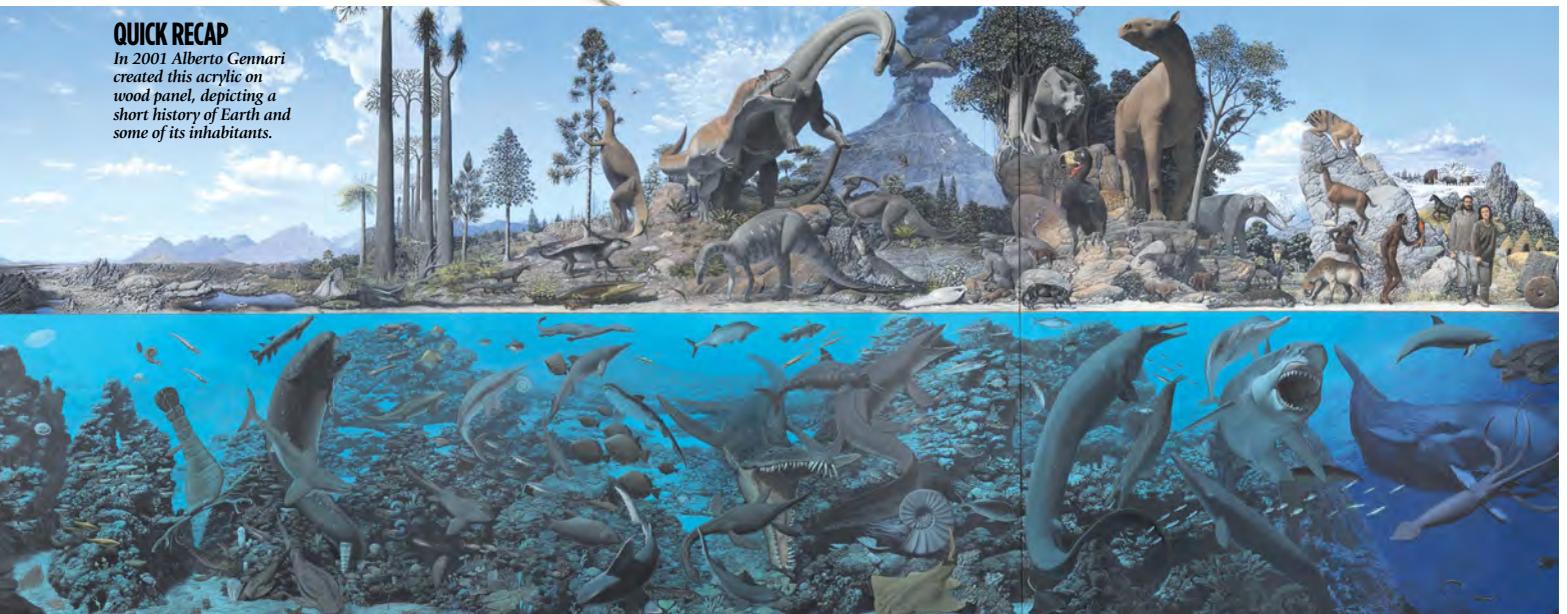
70s," says Gregory today, "and most were using the reptilian model, which was never supported by substantial science. Now we're at the point that even the colour of the feathers that adorned the most birdlike dinosaurs is being determined." He adds: "but there's some controversy over that."

OVERBOOKED

Today, paleoartists such as Todd Marshall and Luis Rey are as likely to fire up Photoshop as reach for the acrylics – two-time Lanzendorf PaleoArt Prize winner Julius Csotonyi has worked digitally since 2007. But the advent of digital art has created new problems. After Jurassic Park made dinosaurs a prehistoric cash cow, under-funded 3D animations and a glut of 2D artists flooded the genre, "which is a business problem," says Gregory, "because the market is actually quite limited."

QUICK RECAP

In 2001 Alberto Gennari created this acrylic on wood panel, depicting a short history of Earth and some of its inhabitants.





Spanish illustrator **Mauricio Antón** distils the current situation: "On the bright side we see a lot of promising young talent.

On the dark side, some clients readily take advantage of the abundance of young artists eager to show their work, resulting in cheap labour that lowers the market's prices and the standards of quality."

Artists like Gregory, Mauricio and Julius aren't giving up just yet, though. They have more than just decades of experience producing art on their side – they're palaeontologists in their own right, publishing their findings in industry journals, lecturing at universities, and working closely with teams of palaeontologists and archaeologists.

CHICKEN AND EGG

In recent years Mauricio has discovered a knack for dissecting big cats: lions, tigers, lynxes. Growing up in Spain he was always

fascinated by sabre-toothed tigers, and luckily his country had more fossil sites from the Cenozoic Era, or the Age of the Mammals (66 million years ago to the present), than dinosaurs. Peeling back the skin of pumas, jaguars and even modern-day tigers, to study their muscles and bones, Mauricio and his colleagues discovered new facts about the appearance and movements of the sabre-toothed tiger. He made the transition from artist to scientist.

"Colleagues told me the results were ground-breaking and deserved to be

published," he says. "That's how I got involved in research." The seasoned palaeoartist's need to recreate the appearance and habits of extinct animals often thrusts him into the role of detective and researcher.

Palaeontology is puzzle solving, and sometimes 'mistakes' only become apparent after new information arises.

Two similar-looking remains thought to be contemporary are in fact distantly related; different species are misidentified as being the same. Gregory identified such a conflation with everyone's favourite sauropod (that's a long-necked dino to you and me).

The *Brachiosaurus* was identified from a dig in the mid-West of America in 1903. In 1988 Greg printed his finding that what was thought to be *Brachiosaurus* in

CHARLES R KNIGHT

Still admired as an inspirational artist, Charles R Knight's illustrations of dinosaurs may have inaccuracies in them by today's standards, but they were nonetheless a move away from the tail-dragging, swamp-haunting giant lizards of Crystal Palace.



ARTISTIC FLAIR

Czech artist **Zdeněk Burian** created dynamic art from the 1930s to the 1970s, depicting extinct creatures without detailed reconstruction.



DINOSAUR RENAISSANCE

John Ostrom's findings and subsequent studies of a *Deinonychus* in 1964 convinced him of the link between theropods and birds, and revolutionised contemporary understandings. His pupil Robert Bakker illustrated the new face of dinosaurs (pictured) and added that dinos were warm-blooded. Bakker's student Gregory S Paul also contributed new findings.



WALKING WITH DINOSAURS

How artists such as Alberto Gennari and Julius Csotonyi have brought dinosaurs to life

There are many faces to paleoart. Stunning, original artwork in its own right, it can illustrate new findings and theories in journals, or form a dominant visual to museum displays.

Hungarian-born paleoartist Julius Csotonyi's panoramic painting of the mammal-like reptile *Placeras* getting in a spot of bother with a *Smilosuchus* is a case in point, giving another dimension of realism to the skeletal display (below).

But paleoart can do more than that. In 2005 Alberto Gennari was asked to paint the outline and skeleton of a *Tyrannosaurus* by Italy's University of Salento (above). With casts of T-rex's lower jaw and hind leg bones, what started as a skeletal wall painting turned into something entirely different.

"I wanted to show people what palaeontology and paleoart really is: a science that starts from a fossil and ends with the restoration of a living organism," says Alberto.

The result is a neat cross section of the many skills of the paleoartist. Combining installation, painting and sculpture, the Salento T-rex documents a lot of what we know of the life of the T-rex, from muscle mass to its egg nesting. Ten months later, the 11-metre long, 3.6-metre high T-rex was complete.



SCIENCE IMITATING ART

In their labour-intensive research, paleoartists have made substantial contributions to the study of dinosaurs. As well as being the most famous artist of the Dinosaur Renaissance, Gregory S Paul discovered a brand new sauropod (long-necked) dinosaur, the Giraffatitan – an African relative of the North American Brachiosaurus.



➔ Tendaguru, Africa, was in fact a different subspecies. And the Giraffatitan was born.

ARTISTIC LICENCE

Paleoart isn't a dry, visual manifestation of academic research. There's plenty of room for artistic licence – look at Luis Rey's colourful, playful paintings. Or you can



just channel the drama of the subject you're depicting. "Just look at some of the amazing fossil finds," says Julius, "like the articulated Protoceratops skeleton found in the grasp of the articulated remains of a Velociraptor in the Gobi Desert in 1971." These dinosaurs look like they died while locked in combat.



Todd Marshall's online portfolio has sketches of sci-fi weapons alongside some of the 20 newly discovered animals that he's illustrated, like the 'Devil Toad' *Beelzebufo* ampinga.

EXTINCTION EVENT

The death pose of the famous mummified *Brachylophosaurus*, which was preserved so well that the texture of its skin could be mapped and its gut contents analysed to describe its last herbivorous meal. Julius Csotonyi won a Lanzendorf Prize in 2010 for his art.

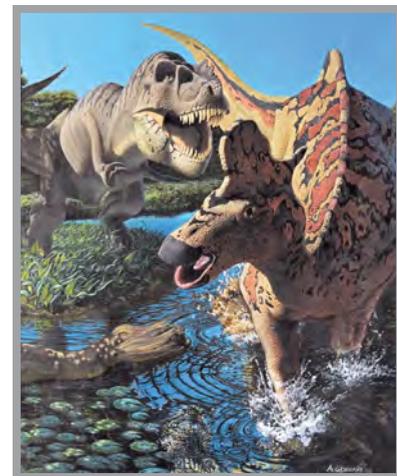


FEAST YOUR EYES

Alberto Gemari depicts the most famous dino, T-rex, attacking the lesser-known hadrosaurid, *Lambeosaurus*.

Todd sees nothing wrong with imparting an artist's style to a piece, as long as the details are right. "There's room for interpretation as far as colour and some dermal ornamentation is concerned," he says. "Working with scientists helps you give the most accurate reconstruction, but then I like to add how I see the animal existing in life."

Some basic commercial art rules apply. "I restrain myself from putting too much detail in there, as I believe in leaving some of an illustration to be completed by the viewer's imagination," says Fernando



Understanding the anatomy of the real gives you the wings to exaggerate the imaginary

Terryl Whitlatch

Correia. That doesn't stop the artist incorporating the gritty reality of prehistoric life – healed scars and signs of diseases – in his paintings. After all, these are extinct animals that largely died by predation or from disease. Images of vibrant, healthy dinosaurs at home in their environment are clichés.

"When you understand the anatomy of the real it gives you the wings to interpolate and exaggerate the imaginary,"



says renowned creature artist Terryl Whitlatch. For her, the paleoart of Jay Matternes and Mauricio serve to both inspire and inform.

THEY BE DRAGONS

Dinosaurs have influenced fantasy from the start, whether warped interpretations – dragons to Godzilla – or depictions more akin to paleoart. "They fit the dragonish archetype on many different levels," continues Terryl. "Pterosaurs, while not ➔

FANTASY

From Ray Harryhausen to Terryl Whitlatch, the dynamic world of dinosaurs, as depicted by paleoartists, have informed fantasy art. Some artists, like James Gurney, straddle the two worlds.

EYE ON THE TIGER

Mauricio Antón gathered a lot of anatomical data before depicting the pliocene sabertooth cat *Megantereon*, eschewing action for a dignified repose to convey its elegance.



IMAGINING A REALISTIC MOSASAUR TYLOSAURUS

Artist and author **James Gurney** is best known for his fantasy-style dinosaurs in *Dinotopia*, but here he paints a sea creature with realism



At the Illustration Master Class in Amherst, I demonstrate for the students how I reconstruct extinct sea creatures for the National Wildlife Federation. One of the oil paintings shows the giant mosasaur Tylosaurus grabbing a plesiosaur called Dolichorhynchops in a breach attack from below, similar to the way killer whales catch seals. A specimen of Tylosaurus was found with the skeleton of a "Dolly" inside.

1 SKETCHES

Like the students, I come to the workshop with only sketches and references. I want to do the final drawing and painting there. The sketches are small, coloured-pencil thumbnails, as well as larger oil studies to explore lighting and colour. These are drawn out of my head after researching the life of these ancient creatures that once lived in the seas that covered Kansas, US.



3 FINAL DRAWING AND OIL LAY-IN

While at Illustration Master Class, I draw the final pencil drawing on heavyweight illustration board, based on all the sketches, photo reference and the maquette. Then I seal the drawing with workable fixative and a thin layer of acrylic matte medium and I lay in the colours thinly in oil to establish the overall colour scheme. Next up, on my slanting drawing table, I surround the painting with photo references of water effects and breaching humpback whales to get ideas for colours, textures and effects.

2 MAQUETTE

To get the pose and lighting right, I make a small reference sculpture, or maquette, using Sculpey, an oven-hardening clay. I shape it over an aluminium wire armature. After the maquette is cured, I paint it in acrylic and hot-glue packing foam to simulate water foam. I photograph the maquette in outdoor light using a single lens reflex camera. This enables me to experiment with lighting ideas and to choose between front or backlighting.



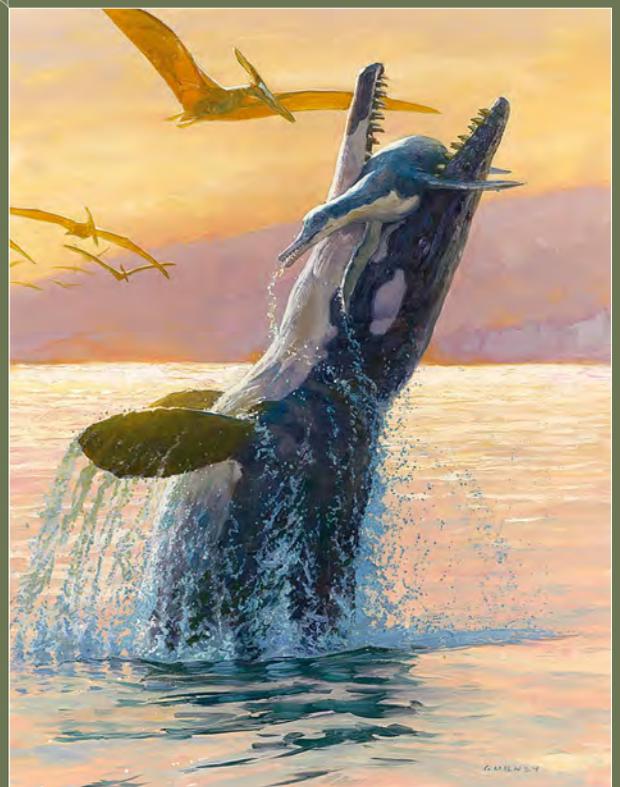
4 REFINING THE PAINTING

With all the areas established, I finalise the rendering of the water and the foam. To achieve a feeling of very bright sunlight bouncing off the water in the distance, I use a colour corona effect, lightening the dark colours of the extended fin. The flying pterosaurs and the mouth area of the Tylosaurus are still in the lay-in stage.



5 FINAL PAINTING

Note that in the final paint layer, I suppress the top edge of the mountain by darkening the sky where the two areas meet. I don't want to attract attention to this edge. All the light and colour effects of edge lighting in the final painting are meant to make the painting look like a wildlife photo. Indeed, the painting will appear in a wildlife magazine, which is mostly filled with photographs, so I want a photographic look, even though I'm painting a scene that existed millions of years ago.





CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

James Gurney painted the 10-metre long Titanoboa taking on a crocodilian for the magazine Ranger Rick.



DEEP BREATH

Many of Alberto Gemari's paintings give a good sense of scale, such as this Megalodon scavenging on a young sperm whale.

➤➤ themselves dinosaurs, remind me of the two-legged mythical creatures wyverns. Some are just darn cuddly, like the rhino-esque Triceratops, even though it was at least 30 feet long, and recent evidence strongly suggests that it continued to mature into an even larger version of itself – the Torosaurus.”

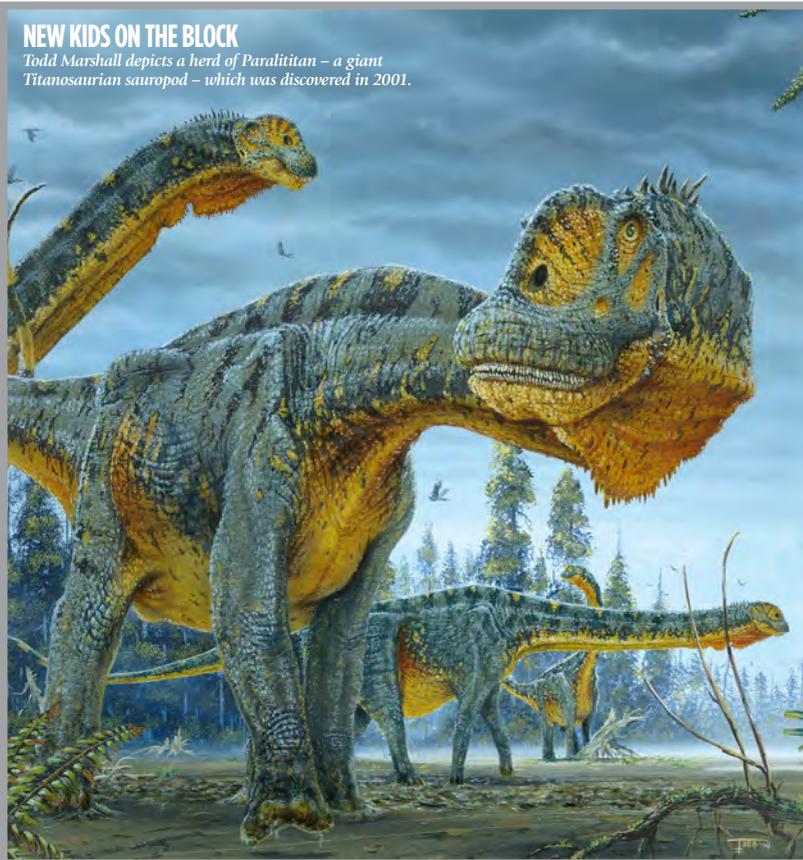


For Dinotopia creator James Gurney, the appeal is inhabiting the land before time. “Part of the fun is projecting myself into their world to see how they look and behave in their environment. The other part is being exposed to science on the edge of discovery. A lot of people don’t realise what fine-tuned imaginations scientists have.”

PREHISTORIC POULTRY

With characteristic playfulness Luis Rey illustrates John R Hutchinson's theory that the T-rex, like a 10-tonne chicken, simply couldn't have been a fast runner, as shown in Jurassic Park.

Looking back to the art of the Dinosaur Renaissance, this viewpoint is evident –



NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK

Todd Marshall depicts a herd of Paralititan – a giant Titanosaurian sauropod – which was discovered in 2001.



FANTASY DINOSAURS

Paleoartists may restrict themselves to the known facts, but fantasy artists such as Justin Gerard can let their imagination lead the way.



“Paleoart is fuelled by a longing for a wild but pristine world, long before humans tamed the Earth” *Mauricio Antón*

literally. The point of view is usually always just above the ground looking on: a human sneaking a peek at extraordinary creatures, a world where he has no right to be.

PALEOART EVOLUTION

Yet this human viewpoint must be able to change. Paleoart, although rigorous, must allow room to move as fossil discoveries shed new light on assumed theories. Artists such as Gregory have responded to constant change by revisiting their art, altering a vertebrae here, some muscle mass there.

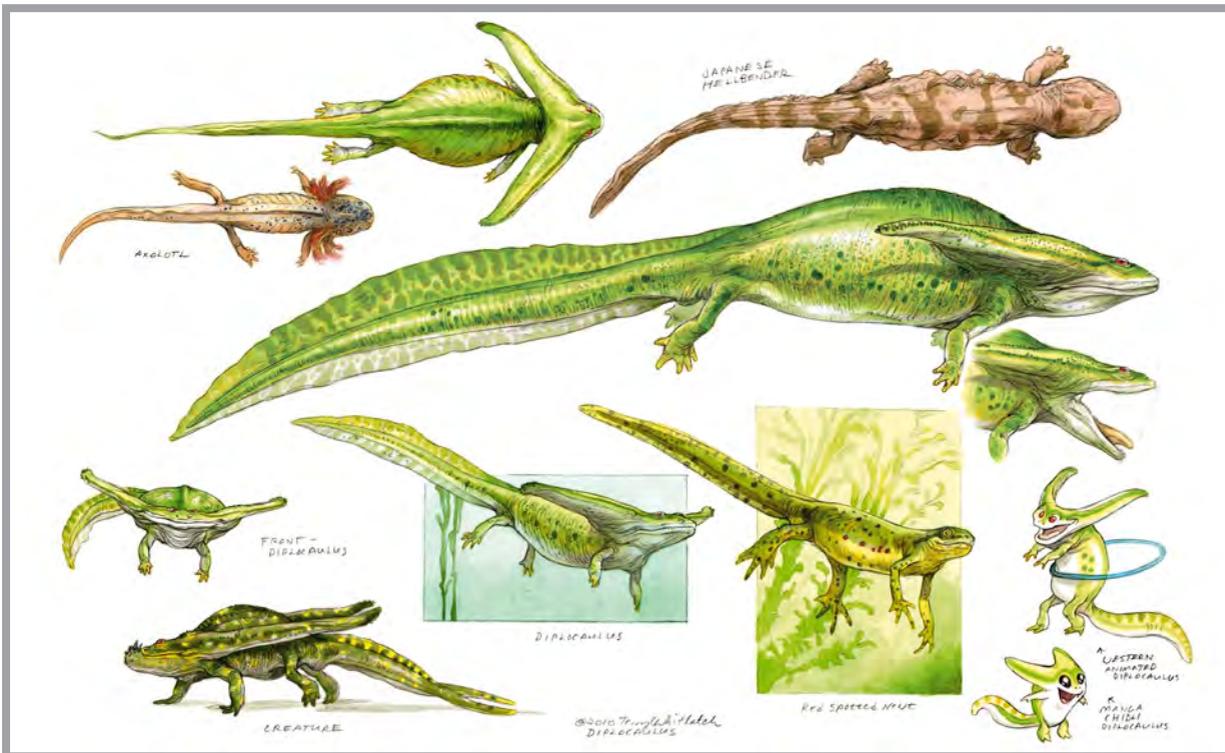


NUMBER ONE FAN

Weta artist Greg Broadmore still finds inspiration from Dinosaur Renaissance artist Gregory S Paul whose work, although “seemingly free of frills and speculations, informs the fundamentals of my dino art.”

With China increasingly opening up its sites and findings to the world, this will be the pattern for the foreseeable future. And that’s already made an impression in fantasy. James Gurney’s 2007 book *Dinotopia: Journey to Chandara* included many of the feathered dinosaurs such as the hand-clawed *Therizinosaurus* and the tiny four-winged *Microraptor*, that have come out of the Liaoning province of China.

Regardless of how fresh the fossilised skeleton, the fundamental appeal of imagining dinosaurs hasn’t really changed since the unveiling of the Crystal Palace statues. “I think that paleoart is fuelled by a sort of longing for a wild but pristine world, long before human civilisation tamed the Earth,” says Mauricio, “and there is an affinity between that nostalgia and the wish to escape to worlds of fantasy.”



CREATIVE WINGS

Creature artist Terry! Whitlatch uses the anatomies of the modern-day salamander and the prehistoric boomerang-headed *Diplocaulus* to create something completely new... that can also hula hoop!



FANTASY
illustrator



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Issue 92 February 2013



Combine 2D and 3D in your art, improve your backgrounds, mix up your fantasy genres, master backlighting... these are just some of the techniques that you can learn in this month's packed issue. We also talk to Adrian Smith and Edward Howard about their inspirational fantasy art.

Issue 93 March 2013



In our sci-fi special, Admira Wijaya designs believable mechs, Serge Birault paints a Barbarella pin-up, Clint Cearley creates a mechanical wizard and Nick Harris tries to put goblins in space with SketchBook Pro. We also have an interview with delightfully eccentric artist Ian Miller.

Issue 94 April 2013



Our workshop artists will give your anatomy skills a real boost this month. Cover artist David Gaillet, teacher Charles Hu and ex-Disney artist John Watkiss all endeavour to sharpen your figure drawing techniques. And Corrado Vanelli helps you depict better faces in Corel Painter.

Issue 95 May 2013



Manga and mechs make up a large portion of this month's cracking issue. Our workshop section will give you the skills to compose manga fight scenes and heroic characters, and explain the secrets of manga's masking techniques. And we discover what it takes to paint the perfect mech.

Issue 96 June 2013



Immerse yourself in the world of classic fantasy art with the help of John Stanko, who channels the skills of Frazetta to produce this month's stunning cover. Our workshop artists will also help you depict moving fabric, paint a magical forest and give your digital paintings a traditional feel.

Issue 97 July 2013



How could ImagineFX not celebrate the 50th anniversary of Marvel's X-Men, or 75 years of DC's Superman, in this month's comic special issue? And with workshops on mood lighting in your comics, how to pose two heroes and beating creative block, you'll soon be a digital art superhero!

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Sketchbook

Brynn Metheny

While many people enjoy biscuits with their tea, Brynn prefers to draw beasts while supping her morning cuppa!

Artist PROFILE

Brynn Metheny

COUNTRY: US



Brynn specialises in creature design and fantasy illustration for film, games, books and magazines, including *Wizards of the Coast* and *Dark Horse Comics*. She helps manage the blog *CreatureSpot.com* and is working on a project called *The Red Valley*. She enjoys reading about large carnivores, building worlds and drinking tea.
www.brynnart.com



TEA TIME

"I like to draw creatures while I drink my tea. I'm a big advocate for warming up before I start client work, and I find that if I take the time to loosen up and have some fun, my workday is more enjoyable and more productive."

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

"Practising this mode of working every day has helped me generate ideas quickly. I use a permanent, fine-tipped pen like Microns or Staedtler. This forces me to commit to the line and just go with whatever shapes come out."

TOOTHY

"I'm using an ink-like brush and pencil brush presets in Photoshop to sketch out creatures, to keep them feeling spontaneous."



I SEE YOU

"Sometimes I ask friends or folks in my social media circles for colour combinations to help generate coloration for my creatures. Mostly, I look to nature for inspiration."

Sketchbook

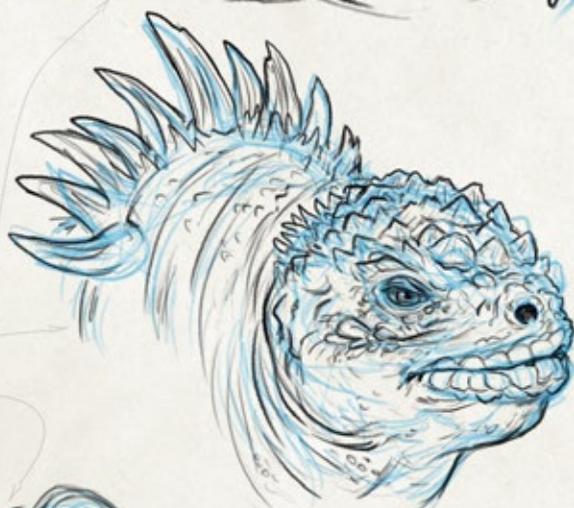
HANGRY

"This blue-faced critter was inspired by the cassowary and hyena."



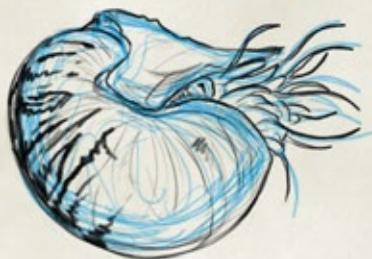
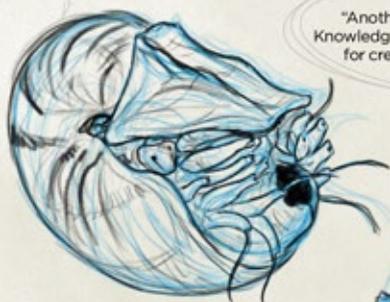
BLOAT

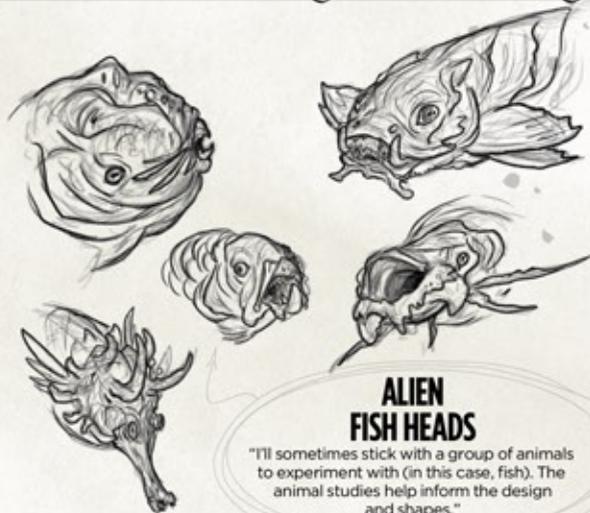
"Along with pencil sketches, I also sketch things out in Photoshop."



ANIMALS

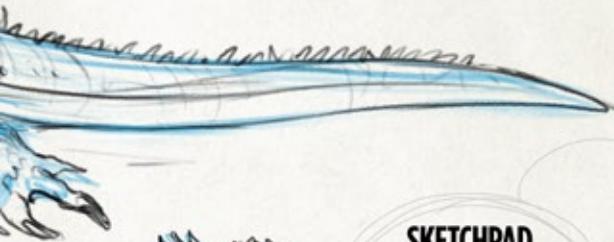
"Another way I warm up is with studies of animals. Knowledge of animal anatomy and behaviour is essential for creature design. It's nice to take time to study for warm-up!"





ALIEN FISH HEADS

"I'll sometimes stick with a group of animals to experiment with (in this case, fish). The animal studies help inform the design and shapes."



SKETCHPAD

"These small scribbles are all drawn in a small moleskine sketchbook. I like the size because a spread doesn't take long to fill up and it's rewarding to see them all done together."



"I like the size of a moleskine sketchbook because a spread doesn't take long to fill up"

Want to share your sketches? Then drop us an email, with a selection of your artwork, to sketchbook@imaginefx.com, or upload your drawings at www.imaginefx.com/sketchbook.

RISING STARS

Enter now and become one of our 10 outstanding artists of 2013!

2013



With a commitment to supporting and promoting new artists, the Rising Stars campaigns have helped artists get noticed and go on to successful careers in the art industries. This year is our fourth Rising Stars campaign. There's no age limit or restriction on software or tools, be it digital or traditional. Rising Stars 2013 is free to enter and all ages are welcome.

As well as our 10 final winners, we'll be promoting new artists in the Newcomer category and selecting one noteworthy entrant for the Highly Acclaimed award.

New this year is a digital Rising Stars app to showcase winners and notable entrants. Not only will you be promoted through



RÁN'S EMBRACE
 Elisabeth Alba's traditional illustration of the Norse sea goddess helped win her a 2012 Rising Star award.

ImagineFX, but also on tablets in a standalone special digital magazine.

We have a team of professional judges on hand to examine your portfolios, and they'll all be looking for different things from entrants. "I look for passion," says Bobby Chiu. "When an artist loves his or her work, it comes through. Do the portfolio pieces look like the artist loves what he or she does? Everyone likes

“When an artist loves his or her work, it comes through”

working with passionate people, so that's the first and foremost thing I look for.”

Jon Schindehette, from Wizards of the Coast, is looking for "folks who bring a new vision or voice to the arts. I'm looking for artists who have a unique point of view, who can deliver a vision that goes beyond the expected. Competitions are great opportunities. They enable you to compete with a higher level of participant, get seen by a larger audience and get judged by industry influencers.”



SKYCITIES

Tuomas Korpi won a 2012 Rising Star award with the help of this sci-fi painting – inspired by a water tower and oriental patterns.

There are more words of wisdom from fellow returning judge Christian Alzmann, a seasoned art director in the film industry. "I would like to see someone with a clear voice and who's a storyteller. And hopefully someone who sees things differently," he says, adding: "Be fearless. Show us your best and your boldest. You will not get noticed playing it safe. Use any honest trick in the book to make your artwork great."

Other judges on the panel this year include comic legend Dave Gibbons and Blizzard art director Sam Didier. ●

Closing date: 14 October 2013

NEW!

STANDOUT NEWCOMER AWARD

Although for 2013 there are no specific categories, this year we're introducing the Standout Newcomer Award, sponsored by Wacom. This award will go to one entrant under the age of 25 who the judges feel deserves special recommendation. So please remember to state your age on your bio when entering, to be automatically put through to the Standout Newcomer Award (if applicable).

The winner of the Standout Newcomer Award will receive a Wacom Cintiq 13HD (pictured).

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More prizes are being added each month, so keep popping back to see what you could win!

- Corel Painter ArtRage 4
- GoSmart Stylus
- DrawPlus X6
- Course with Bobby Chiu's Imaginism Studio





ALONE ON THE ROAD

Bastien Grivet's environment concept made him a 2012 prize winner. Not bad for someone kicked out of art school.



MONKEY KING

Blizzard's Sam Didier saluted Lu Hui for his "bad-ass ball whompers", including this fearsome, Chinese-style creation.



ZERO

Chang Lip Wei was praised for being a "master at maximising space" by judges, who made him a 2012 Rising Star.

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THE JUDGES



SAM DIDIER

The Blizzard Entertainment art director has a track record of spotting new artists on forums and turning them into pros.

www.blizzard.com



BOBBY CHIU

An illustrator and concept artist for the film and toy industries, Bobby runs Imaginism Studios and teaches around the world.

www.schoolism.com



CHRISTIAN ALZMANN

War of the Worlds, AI, Star Wars: Episode II... Christian Alzmann worked on all of those films.

www.christianalzmann.com



JON SCHINDEHETTE

Senior art director at Wizards of the Coast, Jon's a great supporter of the art community and his blog is considered to be required reading.

www.theartorder.com



DAVE GIBBONS

A comic artist since the late 1970s, Dave started on the first issue of 2000 AD, drew Watchmen and continues to be an influence in the industry.

www.davegibbons.net



LAUREN PANEPINTO

With 11 years of designing and art directing book covers, Lauren has worked in illustration, concept art and in the sci-fi/fantasy genres.

www.laurenpanepinto.com

HOW TO ENTER

Entrants are invited to submit five pieces of portfolio work and a short biography. You can submit digital or traditional art, or a mixture of both. Each image needs to be 2MB or under. We hope to see thousands of amazing artworks, so make sure you pick pieces that best reflect your skills. **The deadline is midnight GMT, 14 October 2013**

Enter online today at:

www.futurecomps.co.uk/rising-stars-2013

Postal entries should be sent to:

Rising Stars 2013, ImagineFX, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW, UK

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1. Employees of Future Publishing Ltd, and their immediate families or agents are not eligible to enter this competition. 2. Only one entry per person. Multiple entries will be discarded. 3. Entries must be received by 14 October 2013, which is the closing date. 4. All entries will be judged by the ImagineFX team and an independent panel (see list). Their decision is final. 5. The winners must agree to allow their images to be used in ImagineFX and in any promotional or marketing material. All entrants retain the copyright to their art. 6. ImagineFX and Future Publishing reserve the right to postpone the selection of the winners indefinitely if the standard of quality is not to the required level. 7. The editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into. Unfortunately we are unable to return the CDs or DVDs containing your artwork. 8. All information is correct at the time of going to press. The competition prizes and the prize value may be subject to change. 9. By entering Rising Stars you retain copyright of your images but grant ImagineFX permission to use and reuse all images in future publications, including digital editions and products, that relate to Rising Stars 2013.



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Advice from the world's best artists

60



This issue:

60 Learn to speed up your workflow

Use colour and detail at the sketch stage to save time later, says Simon Dominic.

65 Start using custom brushes

Paul Tysall discusses how to create bespoke brushes with Procreate.

66 Compose figures in a zombie scene

Marco Nelor explains how to place two characters in an urban setting.

70 Portray a dramatic encounter

Use composition and contrast to paint a rock giant from Norse mythology, suggests Rasmus Berggreen.

72 Paint depth and scale in a scene

Park Jong Won depicts a giant vessel arriving in an ancient civilisation.

76 Place your art in a larger world

Christian Pearce talks about his design process, and how environment and purpose can drive a concept.

82 Illustrate exotic tribal clothing

Katie De Sousa creates a beautiful character from a mysterious lost world.

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Painter

LEARN TO SPEED UP YOUR WORKFLOW

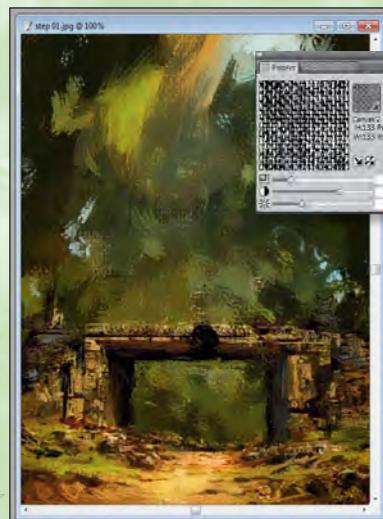
If you work with colour and detail during the sketch stage you'll save yourself time later on in the painting process, says **Simon Dominic**

My day-to-day work, like that of any artist or illustrator, is subject to deadlines – and sometimes they can be pretty tight. For this reason I'm constantly on the lookout for workflow methods that increase my productivity, while maintaining a consistent level of quality.

The approach I'm going to use today is one I've adopted over the years. It revolves around using as much of the sketch as possible in the final image. Think of it as like making turkey soup the week after Christmas or Thanksgiving – everything

in the fridge gets used up and nothing goes to waste.

A common approach is to begin with a small sketch, upsize it and then add colour and detail using the lines of the sketch as a guide. In this workshop I'll cram as much colour and detail as possible into the sketch prior to upscaling, and then use the resulting textures to inform my fine detail work. I find that the textures generated by the upsized brush-strokes not only help the eye define new patterns, but also speed up the painting process by presenting a more coherent base image.



1 Set the scene
I begin with a 700 pixel canvas in the correct aspect ratio. Using the Bristle brush and a handful of photographic references for stone, I set about creating the scene. I decide upon an ancient gateway in a forest, spanning a well-worn path. I reduce the Bristle brush Thickness setting to around 25 and force in detail on the stone using single pixel bristles. I leave the foliage rough because the creature will obscure most of it. The Paper texture seems heavy and overpowering right now, but that's okay because we'll need it later.



2 Introduce the beast
I increase my canvas size to 1,000 pixels and rough in the creature on a new layer, just so I can start afresh if needed. I base it on a T-Rex to fit in with the Lost World theme and add some fantasy elements such as horns and an extra pair of eyes. I base the horns on those of a mountain sheep. On a separate layer I store the ImagineFX cover template so I can develop the composition to take account of the cover format. The text of the template dictates the head be a little more central than I'd otherwise go for.

Artist PROFILE
Simon Dominic
COUNTRY: England

Simon is a self-employed illustrator working mainly on fantasy artwork for social gaming and trading cards. He took up art as a hobby in 2003, working with digital only, and enjoyed it so much that he went pro in 2010.
www.painterly.co.uk

DIRECT LINK FOR WORKSHOP FILES
www.bit.ly/98-cover

Shortcuts
Temporal Color Palette
Ctrl+Alt+1 (PC)
Cmd+Opt+1 (Mac)
Place the colour wheel on the canvas for quick selection.

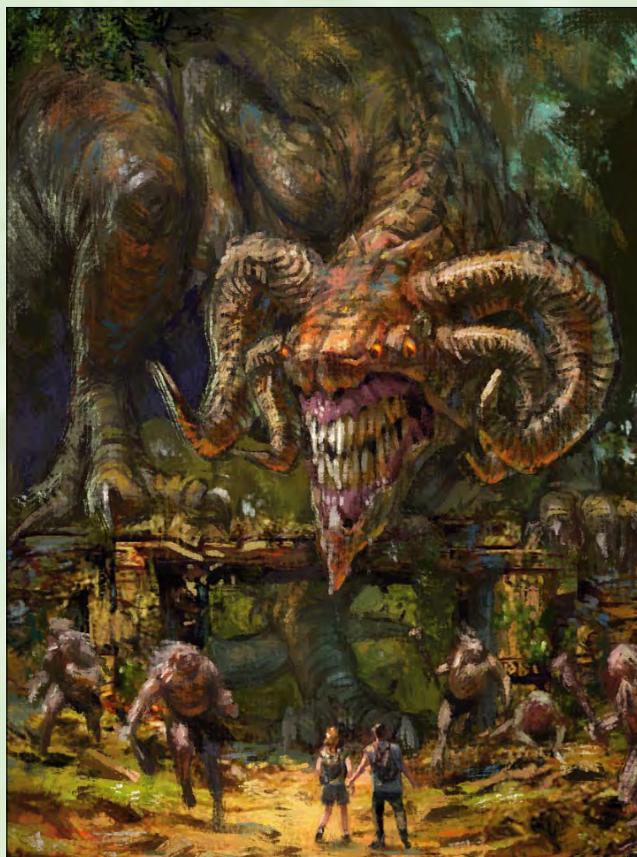
A key consideration when taking this approach is the application of textures. Both of the brushes I use have their Grain settings linked to a canvas-type Paper texture. It's this Paper pattern, which when up-sized after the initial sketch, produces much of the texturing effect that's so helpful when adding fine detail. I also recommend adjusting the Brush Calibration settings to find the pressure settings that best reflect your painting style.

With my basic approach set, it's time to have some fun and start sketching my monstrous creation...



3 Develop the focus
The creature's head is the primary focus, so I concentrate on getting that right before moving on to the peripheral elements. Using the Detail and Bristle brushes I jam in as much detail as I can, zooming in to 150 or 200 per cent where necessary. I dab in some higher value, high-contrast colours so that the head will stand out from the shadowed background. I've also chosen the direction of sunlight to provide a strong light/shadow contrast on the creature's head that makes the focus really pop. ➔





4 Storytelling developments

Two distinct sets of minor characters introduce a story into the piece. A couple of explorers, who form the secondary focal point, have stumbled into a scene of chaos where a band of Neanderthals are fleeing from the enraged dinosaur creature. I sketch one of the Neanderthals glancing at the explorers as he runs by, thereby creating a bond between the two sets of characters and drawing them together into a coherent narrative.



5 Minor adjustments

I shift some of the small characters around to optimise the composition against the cover template, and strengthen the focus hues and contrasts to give the image more impact. I also tilt the whole painting a little to convey a sense of dynamism. Using the Glow brush I dab a little highlight over the creature's head and the explorers.

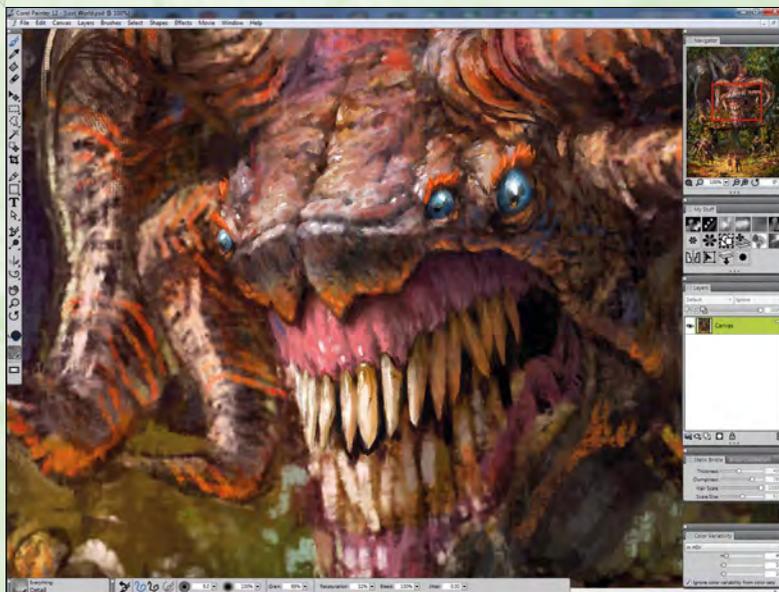
PRO SECRETS

Tailor your brushes

It's important to spend time playing with your brush settings before you begin to paint in anger. Several factors beyond the Painter brush settings influence how a brush performs, from tablet configuration to personal painting style. By all means take someone else's brush definitions and see what happens, but don't make the mistake of thinking that using the same brush configuration as another artist will automatically give you the same results. Besides, it's fun to play with brushes!

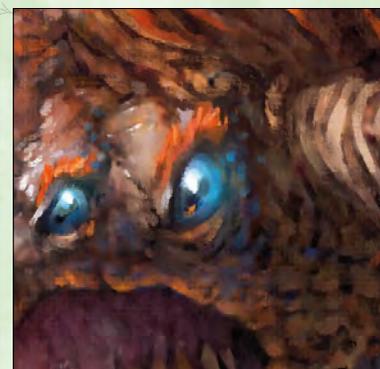
6 Upsize the image

After cramming in as much detail as possible I flatten all layers and upsize the image to 4,200 pixels. Any size equal to or greater than the final specified dimensions will work fine; I just prefer this size from experience. When I zoom in to 100 per cent I can see that the brush-strokes I applied previously have turned into a wealth of texture, and I can now use this texture to inform the fine detail stages.



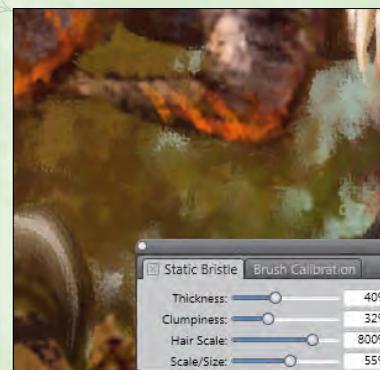
7 That's the hard work done!

Maybe that's an exaggeration, but the expanded detail provides me with a great textured framework on which to complete the image. All I have to do now is enable this texture to guide my brush, a process that I find much quicker than adding new detail on to an undeveloped base sketch. For the most part I pick colours from the canvas, but on occasions I boost the contrast or hue by picking from the pop-up Temporal Color palette.



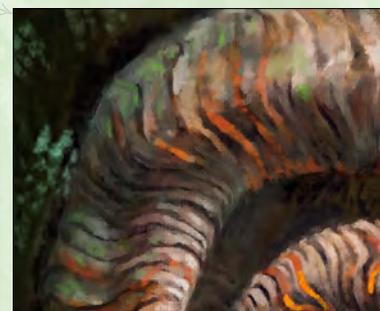
8 A sense of depth

One way to help convey a sense of depth, and also to promote detail to the viewer's attention, is to blur distant objects. Here I want to depict the background trees as slightly out of focus, and for this I use my Bristle brush. I set the bristle Thickness setting to around 40 per cent and dab in areas of sky and greenery to represent distant foliage. This will contrast with the sharper form of the creature and hopefully enhance the illusion of three dimensions.



9 Unify the elements

One trick to get all the elements of the image working together is to unite them via colour. The creature only shares a few colours of the forest, so introducing some green tint on to its horns makes it seem like it's part of the scene and not pasted in as an afterthought. The effect of adding this mossy coating is subtle, but it does help to associate the creature with its natural environment.



10 Refine the skin texture

The skin texture on the creature's limbs and body is a great example of how upsizing detailed brush strokes results in an authentic pattern that I can subsequently build on for the final piece. Artefacts in the paint have become cracks and creases in leathery skin. There's very little in the way of thinking needed – I just colour-pick from the canvas and enhance what's already there. It's fast too, and when you're painting to deadlines it's important to work quickly without sacrificing quality.



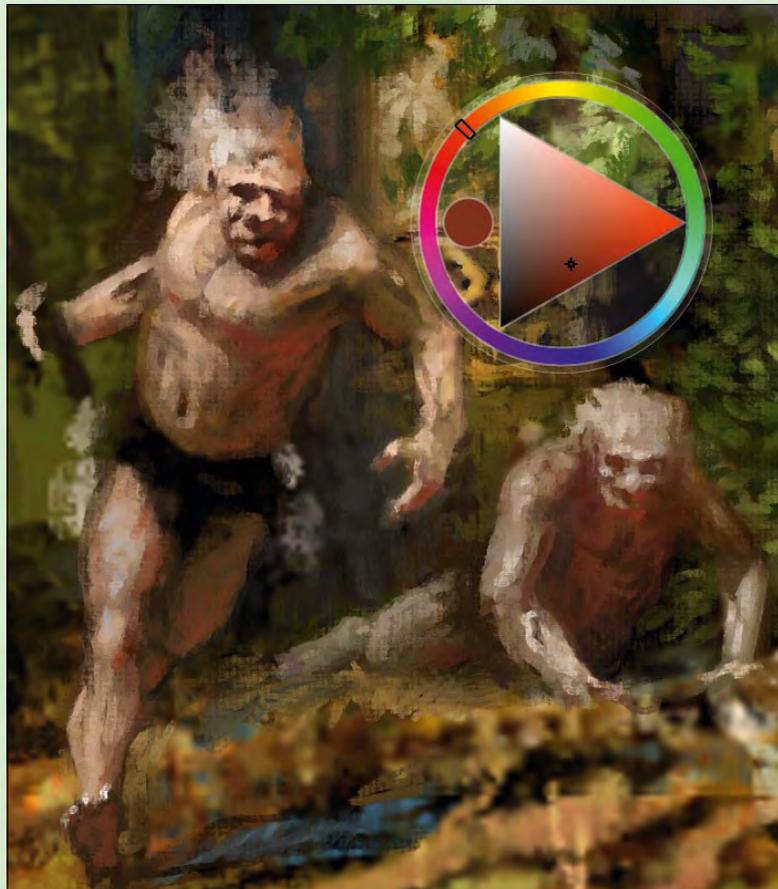
11 Apply detail to the scene selectively

Although the whole piece will be detailed I reserve the finest detail for the central portion. As well as using the Detail brush on a five or six pixel size setting, I reduce the Bristle Thickness on my Bristle brush and use that at a similar size to achieve sharp edging. Increasing the size of the Bristle brush and applying less pressure is also a great way to achieve dust effects, such as where the stonework is crumbling under the creature's weight.



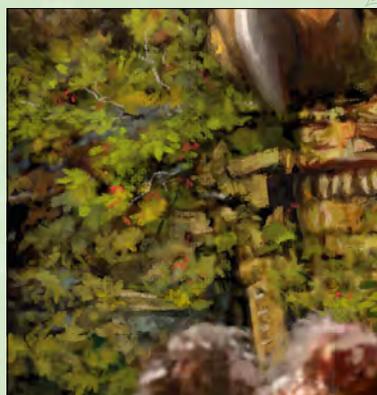
12 Vary the hue

In a bright, high-impact painting it can pay dividends to introduce unexpected colours into the mix. Back in the sketch stage I added some blues and oranges of varying contrast into the shadows of the stonework. Now, having expanded the image, those colour dabs are areas of texture that I refine into worked stone and architecture. Some of the green dabs I use to form foliage, creeping vines and overgrown bushes. I tend to work the blue dabs in as cool shadow, while the orange becomes stained stonework.



13 Reflected light

Another method of making your image coherent is to use reflected light. Here, I pick a red/orange hue and use it to tint the shadowed areas on the Neanderthals' bodies. This simulates the bright sunlight bouncing up off the parched earth, effectively anchoring the characters to their environment. The effect is exaggerated and not particularly accurate, but used sparingly it can really help a piece hang together.



14 Nature is messy

It's tempting to laboriously define every leaf, stone and twig so that the viewer knows what they're looking at, but this can result in a rather clinical-looking, contrived painting. Look around the next time you take a walk in the countryside. You'll see that it's often impossible to tell rocks from earth from foliage, or to distinguish one tree from its neighbour. With this in mind I try to suggest natural elements in my paintings, often keeping boundaries nebulous, rather than opting for explicit definition.

Shortcuts

Rotate Canvas

Hold **E+drag** (PC & Mac)
Simulates angling your canvas, giving you a comfortable trajectory for your pen strokes.

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PAINTER

CUSTOM BRUSHES: DETAIL



A circular, all-purpose textured brush. Great for anything from fine detail to blocking in large areas. For best results, use with Paper texture.

BRISTLE



A versatile, textured static Bristle brush that works well for very fine detail, foliage and fur, as well as blocking in. Use it with reduced pressure to create dust or blurring.

SOFT BLEND



A smoothing brush that blends without digital smear. Like the other brushes it depends on pressure sensitivity and produces the best results when its Grain is linked to a strong Paper texture.

15 Dynamic character poses

When you run you're off-balance. If you weren't then you wouldn't move at all, because movement is a rapid progression from one unstable state to another. Look at a photo of a person running and you won't see them braced with both feet on the ground – you'll see them angled in mid-stride with their centre of gravity tilted in the direction of motion. Holding true to this effect can really improve the dynamics of your figures.



16 The secondary focus

The warm nimbus I added earlier using the Glow brush helps draw the viewer's attention to the explorers. The strong sunlight from slightly left of centre further defines the form of the figures' limbs where they're angled along the viewer's plane of reference. There's also some interaction between the characters – the man has reflexively grabbed the woman's wrist – and this help portray a sense of tension, shock and urgency.

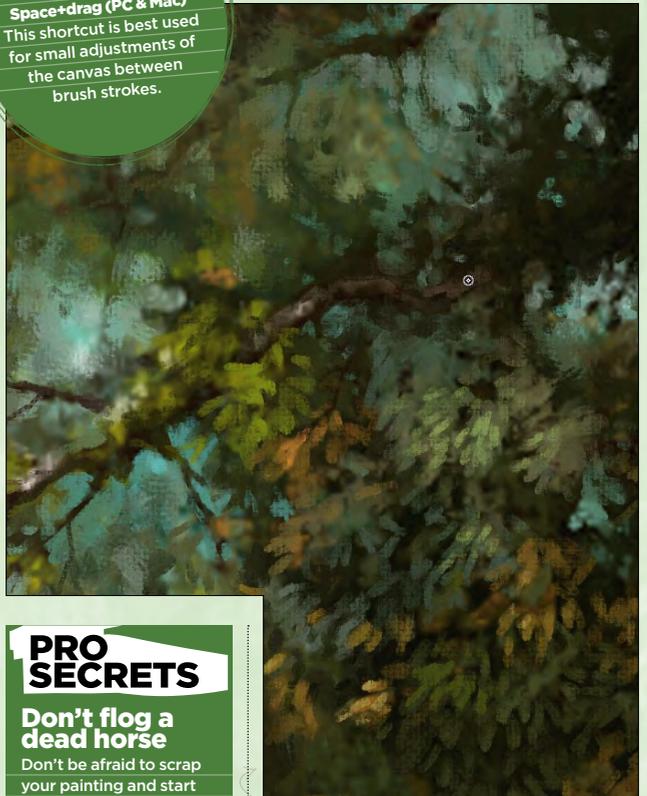


Shortcuts

Drag Canvas

Space+drag (PC & Mac)

This shortcut is best used for small adjustments of the canvas between brush strokes.



PRO SECRETS

Don't flog a dead horse

Don't be afraid to scrap your painting and start again. One common error learner artists make is to press ahead with a piece when it's clearly not working out, often making a series of tweaks that do nothing to address the core problem. Ignoring the warning signs not only makes for a flawed result, but often wastes time. One way to minimise restarts is to sketch a series of thumbnails before deciding on the path to take.

17 Painting trees

It's important when painting foliage to take account of the play of light across the scene. Are the leaves lit directly by the sun or in shadow? If it's the former, where is the shadow they cast? If it's the latter, how much reflected light is reaching them? Do some leaves have specular highlights? Might others be dry and non-reflective? Dealing with these factors is essential to avoid the flat cut-and-pasted look that will arise if the same treatment is given to every bunch of leaves.



18 The final pass

I review the detail for the entire image with a view to tweaking and fine-tuning. In some areas I add extra detail, often with the Bristle brush on a small size setting, while in other regions I blend away harsh edges using light pressure on the Soft Blend brush. Finally, I adjust the contrast and resize down to the specified dimensions. The scene is complete! ●





Procreate START USING CUSTOM BRUSHES

Procreate has one of the most advanced brush editors available to today's digital artist. Here, **Paul Tysall** shows you how to create bespoke brushes

Used wisely, custom brushes can send your digital art down some very interesting and unique paths, or help remove that digital feel that comes from pushing pixels. Either way, they're the core component of painting digitally that Procreate has fully embraced.

Set aside some time to create new custom brushes. You'll soon discover that

as you familiarise yourself with Procreate's Brush editor, as well as checking out the Pro Library button (which contains all the parts Procreate uses to create its Preset brushes), a brush that starts life in one direction can easily head down another. It helps to stay focused on what you need the custom brush to do, but equally a little experimentation can lead to some happy accidents!

Artist PROFILE
Paul Tysall
 COUNTRY: England

After four years as ImagineFX's art editor, working with the elite of the digital art world, Paul is now a busy freelance designer and illustrator.
www.tysall.com

1 Brush shape
 I'm going to create the brush shape in Procreate, but you could also import a pre-made shape – more on this in the next stage. Make a new canvass at 1,024x1,024 pixels, fill the background to Black and with a brush set to white, start to describe the shape you're after. It helps to think about this shape in continuous motion, which is why I've added small marks to the edges to fracture the line quality.



2 Export, Import
 Tap the Actions button, select Share and export the image as a PNG to your iPad's Photos library. With a new canvas select Brushes and click the Plus icon. The first view is the Source options, and under the 'Import shape from...' you need to navigate to your shape in the Photos library. Next up is adding the grain. Think of this as your canvas texture; a good grain is one that seamlessly repeats.



3 Edit it
 Here you can define the properties of your brush's characteristics. Under Stroke take the Spacing to 12 per cent. Now when you go back to General you can set Max and Min size limits. As you work your way through the settings, test each alteration by making several marks, fast and slow, on your blank canvas. Note that if you're editing properties such as Wetness, be sure to test it using different hues. You can always go back into these settings to refine the brush behaviour.



BRUSHES: DYNAMICS

Dynamics is one of six editable properties assigned to each Procreate brush.



A. Stroke speed: Opacity
 Set the slider to 100 per cent Inverse if you want slow strokes to appear transparent, or Max if you want transparency to occur with faster strokes.

B. Stroke speed: Size
 The Max settings will give you thinner stokes with quicker gestures, while the reverse is true with 100 per cent Inverse.

C. Color mix: Load
 This is the amount of virtual paint that's on your brush, so a low setting means the brush mark will run out quicker than a fully loaded one.

D. Color mix: Wetness
 A brush with a high Wetness setting will mix more paint for the duration of the stroke and apply less of your current colour.

E. Glazed
 With this selected your custom brush loses its grain properties and will paint in a more uniform, transparent manner.

F. Pressure: Size & Opacity
 Works the same way as the Stroke settings (see B and C above), but only applies if you're using a pressure-sensitive stylus.

Photoshop

COMPOSE FIGURES IN A ZOMBIE SCENE

Marco Nelor explains how to place two characters in an urban setting, before ramping up the excitement by adding the threat of the undead!

While composing one figure can prove, at times, challenging enough, what happens when one lone figure simply won't cut it? In this workshop I'll not only be explaining the techniques involved in composing multiple figures, but sharing some compositional ideas, tips and tricks to make sure that your composition is both strong and full of impact.

There's a huge difference in creating concepts and fully rendered illustrations.

1 Securing the composition

Four or five sketching compositions should be enough, but do go further if necessary. I've jotted down some notes of what I like about each pose, as well as what may not be working. I also take care to avoid any tangents. Pick a pose that says exactly what you want to say.



Artist PROFILE
Marco Nelor
 COUNTRY: US

Marco graduated from the SafeHouse Atelier in San Francisco, where he was taught by great teachers such as Carl Dobsy and James Kei. Now Marco lives in Chicago, working for NetherRealm Studios.
www.bit.ly/ifx-mnelor

DIRECT LINK FOR WORKSHOP FILES
www.bit.ly/98-zombie

Certain key ideals come into play, such as composition, storytelling, and conveying a message to a viewer about a situation that is happening, rather than simply creating a character in a leisurely pose. With practice the artist can begin conveying what's needed; however, it can be a tough skill to master.

It's useful to do a lot of thinking beforehand. A sketchbook enables me to jot down ideas and quick composition choices while on the bus or at lunch.

Doing this beforehand can take out a lot of the guesswork, and can confirm that you aren't painting yourself into a corner with a composition that doesn't work. It's important to abandon a great composition (in sketch form) and try to hit it from different angles, just for iteration sake.

Often, your first idea won't be your best! Compete with your last composition and try to top it by figuring out a better way to say what you're trying to communicate. Now let the fun begin!



2 Starting the scene

I begin sketching my figure, while referring back to the chosen sketch. I sometime set up lighting in my house and take reference photographs of myself. When creating a 'realistic' pose, it's helpful to take the pose yourself. This will help you understand the feeling of the pose, where the tension is, where the flow happens, and most importantly, if there's a movement that feels simply unnatural.

3 Tackling the values

On a Multiply layer over the top of my line drawing, I begin to shade my image according to a single simple light source. While choosing a complicated lighting scheme may seem smart, it's often smarter to keep it simple and choose a straightforward, top-down lighting. Our character will be in sunlight, on a regular day, so I know this choice will be a solid one.



4 Pushing on

I know that I tend to work too lightly, so I add a Multiply layer with a light grey over my figure. This helps me to check that none of my values are becoming too bright, too fast. Furthermore, you must make sure that nothing is too dark this early on in the painting process.



6 Begin lighting

I create a new layer beneath my figures and begin using my Soft Round brush to sketch in how I think I want my lighting to be. This helps keep my focal point composed, and enables me to experiment with how I'll need to compose my lighting so that my figures pop out of the background.



PRO SECRETS

Layer locks

Before I learned to use the Layer Lock tool, I spent many hours cleaning up edges of materials, trying to paint backgrounds over characters, and trying to keep colours separated. With Layer Lock, one can use more of his entire arm while painting without worrying too much about colouring out of the lines, and this is a huge time saver. The Marquee tool is also a tool that's great once mastered. Use all of your edge management tools at your disposal.

Shortcuts

Hue/Saturation

Cmd+U (Mac)

Ctrl+U (PC)

Enables you to quickly adjust colours of newly painted objects.

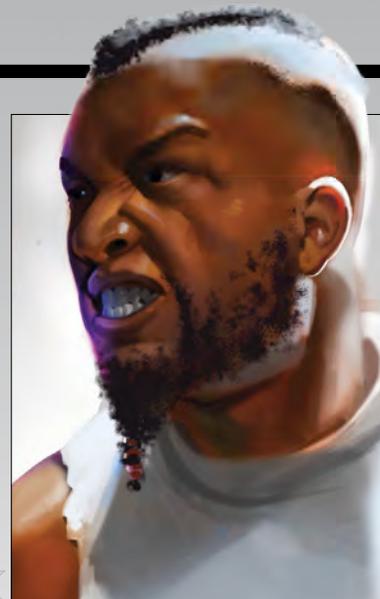
5 Cutting out the figures

Just below the figure layers I place a solid pink layer and begin erasing out the grey background on each of my figures layers. I choose pink because it's the easiest to see any stray strokes that may be hard to spot now. Once the male figure is cut out, I do the same for the female figure, and place them on separate layers.



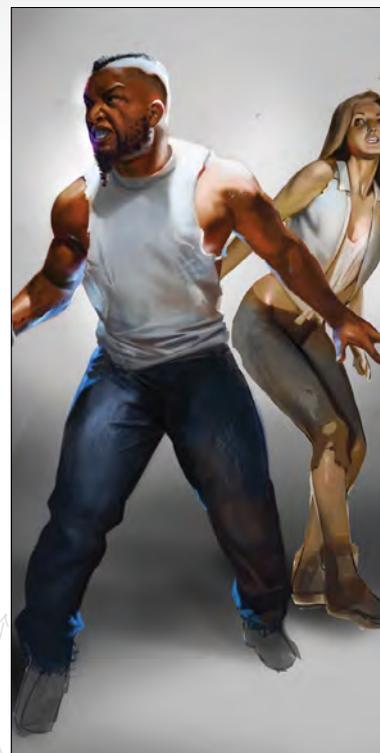
7 Start colouring

I create a Color layer, pick a mid-tone for the skin and colour it uniformly. I press Ctrl+U to bring up the Hue/Saturation tool, and adjust my colour until I feel it looks like a solid, local colour. Then I create an Overlay layer, which helps me get in some nice warm colours, and some colour variation by selecting colours that are close to the local colour, but have different hues and temperatures. Remember that this is only a preliminary base coat, not the final step of colouring the skin.



8 Working opaquely

Now that I've solidified my base tone with my colour layers, which tend to be a bit more transparent, it's time to apply opaque paint over my skin tones. I add a new layer, set it to Normal and paint with whatever brush I feel most comfortable with. It's a long process, but there are a few tricks that will help make the transition go a bit smoother, such as adding warm, cool and grey midtones.



9 Keep on keepin' on

Here, you can see that I've been painting for quite some time now, keeping those principals in mind. I've painted my male and female figures, and so I begin to add in some sky colour to his highlights and bounce lights. I don't usually recommend adding too much bounce light or making up too much lighting here until you know what your sky colour and ground colour will be.

10 Make up some ground

I place an image of ground and a garage under the feet of my characters, and using a Layer Mask I begin to paint out the parts of the ground covered by our figures. Then I place an image of dirt and grass, with the same perspective, over my last ground image, and remove areas of the grass layer, again using a Layer Mask. Then I drop in a picture of some rough grass and use the Hue/Saturation tool to slide the colour of the grass to a more brownish-burned colour.



11 Fire and stone

Now that my grass texture is in place, it's time to set it on fire. I do this using a brush that I think looks a lot like fire. I paint in a few strokes, and set the fire layer to an Additive Color or Linear Dodge layer. I also paint in a large concrete barricade by selecting a rectangular shape with the Marquee tool and roughly scribbling with a grimy textured brush.



PRO SECRETS

Single minded

Rather than dabbling in a lot of programs I find it easier to master just one. Photoshop has the greatest range of tools that I need and prefer, so this is my choice. Feel free to experiment, however, because there's no right or wrong way!

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSH: BRUSH 254



I've used this brush throughout my piece to add lots of grain, small dots of speckle, or drops of sweat on the skin.



13 Simple buildings

I create two buildings in the distance by using the Marquee tool, locking the layer, and painting textures in roughly and loosely. I again keep in mind the surrounding areas, and paint into my buildings with a Large Soft Round brush. I use subtle sky colours near the tops and earth tones near the bottom. On the left building, I also reflect the light of the fire.



12 Layer locks

I create a long metal pole by making a new layer, and drawing a straight, thick line (done by holding Shift, which turns any line into a straight line). Then I press the Lock button located under the Layer Mode option. This ensures that any marks I make stay within the confines of the line that I drew. I now roughly scribble in a lot of textured strokes, bearing the lighting in mind.



14 Bring on the zombies!

So it's time to add in the threat to my two desperate characters. I begin by painting in some rough humanoid shapes in the background, and lighten the top of them with a light from the sky. I also rough in its shadow shapes in accordance with the figures and their location in my image. Now that the general shape of my zombies are there, I use the Layer Lock button and begin roughly painting in details.

15 Bring it all together

Now that all of the main elements are in place, the last thing to do is simply keep painting, adding elements where I see fit. I begin adding speckles, dust, and dirt, and losing edges with the Blur tool until the image is where I want it to be. I also add debris on a separate layer and add a Motion Blur to it by selecting Filter>Blur>Motion Blur and selecting an angle that gives the debris motion.



16 The final touches

The skin of our characters and their clothes needs a bit of dirt and grime. This stage comes last because I don't want to make it too difficult to adjust all of my other details. I create an Overlay layer, then experiment with different brushes to create splatters, oil, wetness and grime.

Nail the composition

Is your composition strong enough? Look at a black and white version of your image, and make sure it reads well at thumbnail size. If it does, you're on the right track.



Add fog

As a final stage I add fog on top of the silhouette to better control the dynamics of the scene. I use a custom fog brush created by Jan Ditlev, who I work with.



Controlling the use of texture

A good trick to apply texture is to have a black silhouette layer, and then apply the layer with texture on top of this. You can do this by holding down Alt and clicking between the two layers, and then it only applies to those pixels. Don't just apply texture, though, use the Stamp tool. I've found it's great for painting in texture, because you can follow the forms easily. Sometimes I also use the Liquefy tool.



Photoshop

PORTRAY A DRAMATIC ENCOUNTER

Use contrast and composition to paint a rock giant from Norse mythology, suggests **Rasmus Berggreen**

Norse mythology is filled with drama, and I try to incorporate this into my art. For this piece I've been studying lava rock formations, and how this extreme condition creates a lot of steam. I imagine creatures materialising in the steam, which inspires me to paint this fire giant, who I want to feel bulky and heavy, and to have lava for blood.

A good way to kick things off if inspiration doesn't come easily is to import some images and turn down the opacity. Then zoom in and be inspired by the shapes that you see. Doing this triggers my imagination almost every time.

At this point in the story everything seems hopeless, so I try to emphasise this feeling by making the giant seem overwhelming in the framing. He's leaning towards the small hero, thus creating a dynamic energy from left to right that almost pushes the small character to the edge of the frame. In addition, the shapes around the giant are chaotic and create tension in the scene, which contrasts with the pure white plane that the hero is riding on. Contrast often makes a picture more interesting.



Story details

Including a figure to show scale is a good technique. Here I make my figure active: he's riding away from the giant, and lends a story and purpose to his inclusion.

Artist PROFILE

Rasmus Berggreen

COUNTRY: Denmark



Rasmus is from Denmark and is employed as a concept

artist in Copenhagen for IO interactive. He works on the Hitman franchise, creating environment art, storyboards and character design.

www.bit.ly/rberggreen

DIRECT LINK FOR WORKSHOP FILES

www.bit.ly/98-anno

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSH:
CHALK BRUSH

I mostly paint my picture with this Chalk brush set with Pen Pressure on.

How I create...

A NORDIC ROCK GOD



1 Think about the composition

I sketch this scene rapidly, just thinking about composition. I use a Chalk brush in Photoshop, which is quick and dirty to use, so I don't become too concerned with details. In the beginning I have some rock pictures in the background set on a very low opacity that inspire me to create some of the shapes.



2 Balance shapes and colour

I now think about the silhouettes of the creature and the man, and the overall colours. To make the creature scary, I need the shape of it to feel dynamic and to have a strong silhouette. I also roughly paint in the colours, still using the Chalk brush. I already know I want the ground and the dark lava rock to contrast strongly, so I try to work with the balance, creating an almost overexposed look in the process.



3 Apply detail to the giant

I find some references of cool lava shapes. Because I want the look to be semi-realistic and not too painterly, I apply a lot of textures. I use the Lasso tool to create a clean silhouette and then apply texture on top. Then I use a custom fog brush to paint in steam. Finally I merge all layers and then go to Filter>Sharpen>Smart Sharpen. This gives the image a pleasing finish.



Photoshop
PAIN **DEPTH** **AND**
SCALE **IN** **A** **SCENE**

Park Jong Won mixes genres by depicting a giant space-faring vessel arriving in an ancient civilisation



How can I make a standard scene feel more dramatic or impressive? This is the task ahead of me as I plan this workshop. I know I'll be focusing on perspective but I want to do more...

What follows is a reinterpretation of my own style. I'll explain my concept art process as I paint an alien spaceship that has served the gods of the ancients.

Usually when a spaceship image comes to mind the subject is in the future. But I thought it would be interesting to visualise how a spaceship might be seen by a civilisation from the past.

I'll give some insight into composition, sense of space, perspective, colour theory and other aspects that are required to complete a piece of concept art.

You shouldn't find this workshop difficult if you have a basic knowledge of Photoshop and especially if you have a passion for concept art!

Artist PROFILE

Park Jong Won
COUNTRY: South Korea



Park is a concept artist who's worked at Webzen and NCSOFT.

His art has appeared in Ballistic Publishing's EXPOSÉ and EXOTIQUE book series.

www.j-circle.net

DIRECT LINK FOR WORKSHOP FILES

www.bit.ly/98-jcircle

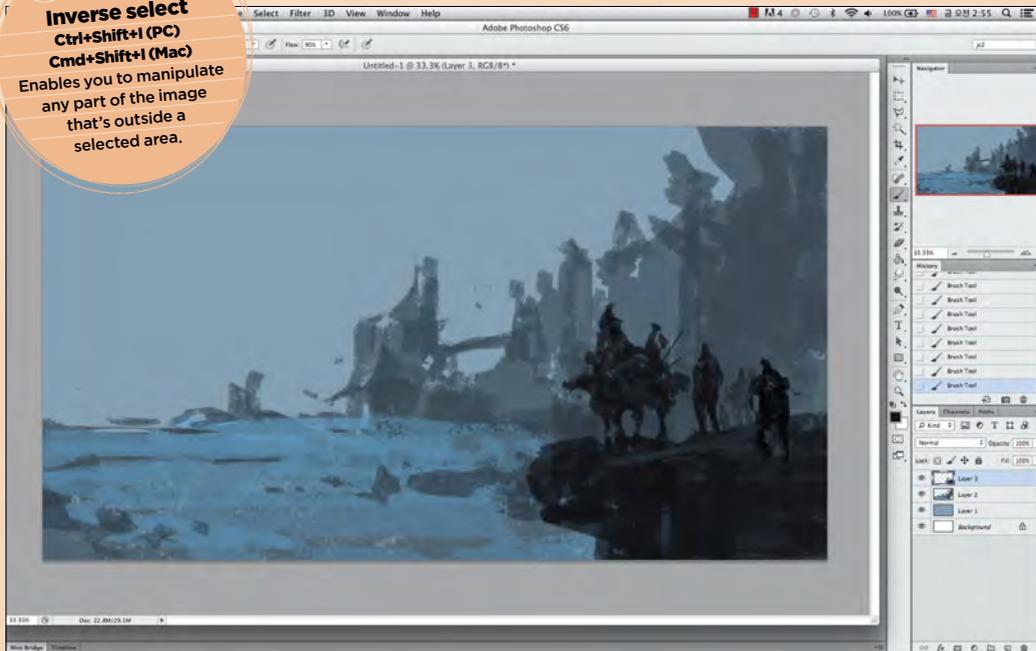
Shortcuts
Inverse select
Ctrl+Shift+I (PC)
Cmd+Shift+I (Mac)
 Enables you to manipulate any part of the image that's outside a selected area.



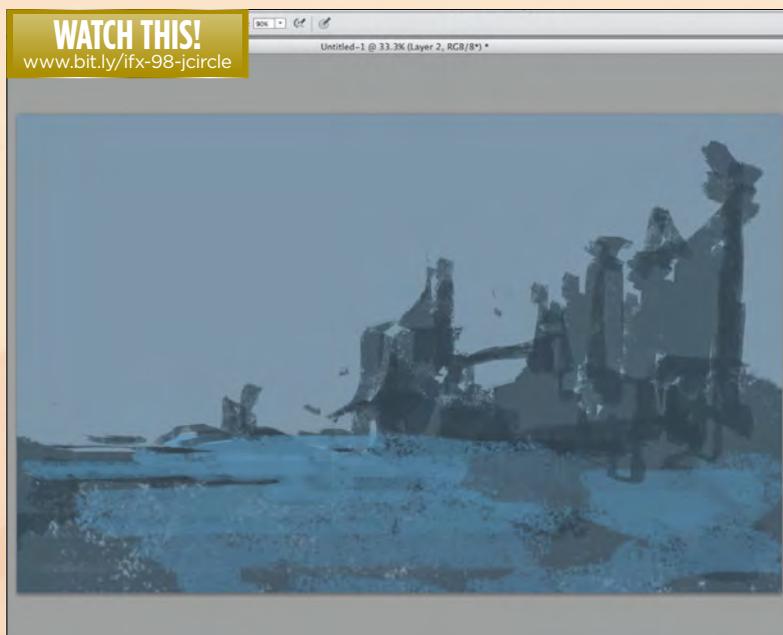
1 Set up the canvas
 I create a 3,360x2,100 pixel-sized canvas with a resolution of 300dpi (keyboard shortcut Ctrl+N). If there's a chance of the image being printed on quality paper then it needs to be at least 300dpi. I don't need to make the size of the canvas any bigger than this for a magazine commission.



2 Choose a base colour for the scene
 I place another layer on top of the background layer and set a colour tone. When I'm choosing a colour tone I always try to think about how the final image will look.



4 Foreground figures
 Next I sketch in a silhouette-based section of the foreground area, which features a group of armoured knights, with one riding a beast of burden. Notice how a greater level of contrast helps to differentiate between the foreground, middle ground and background. I draw quickly, considering the scale and composition first and excluding for now any thoughts of colour and contrast, instead focusing on the silhouette, ensuring that it has a strong shape.



3 Starting in the middle
 Now I add another layer for drawing most of the middle-distance structures on. I quickly create the architectural structures of the sea and some of the background shapes. At this point I'm thinking more about the silhouette and the composition than detail, shape and colour. The shapes will also work in separating the sea from the buildings. I consider the eventual position of the spaceship, which will be drawn on later. I use a rough Chalk brush because it's great for creating shapes quickly.

5 Hint at a spaceship
 I quickly draw silhouettes for the foreground, middle ground and background, each on different layers. I draw the silhouette of the spaceship in the distance, but it needs to be brighter. I tend to draw background objects with relatively high brightness, to help contrast them from the middle and foregrounds. (As before, I focus on the silhouette.) I don't zoom in much as I work because you can easily get lost in irrelevant details.



6 Lighten up the sky
 I set the direction of light coming from the distance and express the feeling of a huge spaceship visible behind the clouds. I draw the sky in yellow tones, following the light direction of the sun shining in the distance. (I draw, then add a Lighten layer between the middle distance layer and the distant layer to express a sense of distance.) If I need to add detail, I use a default brush. For a soft perspective, I tend to use an Airbrush.

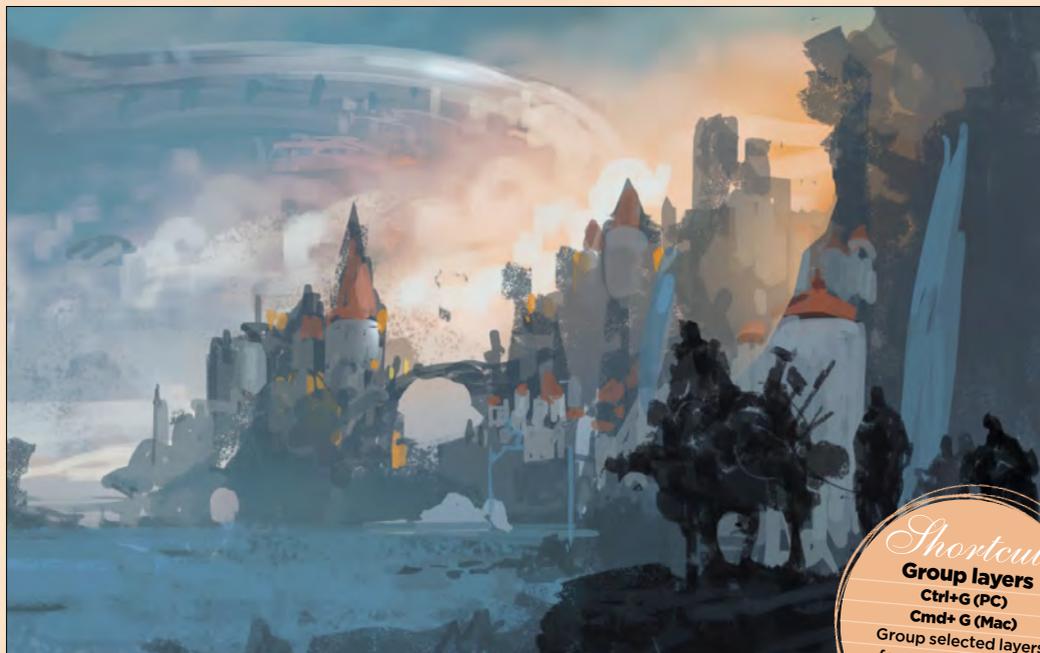
WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

DEFAULT BRUSH:
CHALK



This brush is useful for expressing rough texture, and for early sketching. It works like a thick crayon.



10 Enhanced perspective

I clean the edges of the buildings' silhouettes and add detail such as windows. I try to depict the buildings as being more in the distance, to give a sense of perspective to the scene. This indicates a sense of scale, to take advantage of the contrast between large and small structures – the same is true of the flock of birds. I now refine the light that's reflected on the waves of the sea.



Shortcuts

Group layers

Ctrl+G (PC)

Cmd+G (Mac)

Group selected layers for ease of working, if you don't want to merge them.

7 Apply details

I add a little more detail to the form of the middle-distance structures: a more distinct silhouette of the building, some perspective of the building, and some colour for the building, wall and roof. I also add some light on the right wall of the building and on the ship, both under the influence of the backlight.



PRO SECRETS

Avoid excess layer usage

An abundance of layers in an image will make it difficult and time-consuming for you to correct any errors once you step back and review your finished artwork. So think about merging your layers regularly.

8 Colour the spaceship

I want to make the colours on the spacecraft darker and more consistent, so I press Ctrl, click the spaceship layer and spread the same colour tone elsewhere for a more harmonised look. I also add detail to the group of characters and add a wave in the foreground. I make the light from the surface of the sea in the distance. Here the light comes from the back of the middle-distance structures on the right.



9 Design tweaks

At this stage I decide to change some of the spaceship's design. With structures this big, it's an effort not to lose the sense of scale. I also increase the contrast in the foreground.

PRO SECRETS

See the bigger picture

During the sketch stage, resist zooming in and adding details. Your image will soon become unbalanced. Instead, stay zoomed out and paint the image until you're happy with the overall composition, then tackle those details.



11 Refine the look of the sky

Here I add more detail to the clouds and buildings and to the wave affected by the light shining from the right. I further define the spatial divisions between the foreground, middle ground and background (playing with atmospheric perspective using the Airbrush.) I add stronger highlights with a bright orange colour on the Overlay layer in the centre of the light source behind the middle distance. I add more, close to the sky, using a dark blue colour to represent the perspective of the sky.



12 Last-minute tweaks

During this final stage I fine-tune the overall colour balance, perspective and composition. I want the viewer's eyes to flow naturally from the characters on the promontory, to the range of towers and other building structures, and then on to the spaceship. My aim for this workshop was to blend the real with the fantastical and hopefully I've achieved that in this concept painting.

Photoshop

PLACE YOUR ART IN A LARGER WORLD

Christian Pearce talks about his design process and how considering environment and purpose can drive and inform a concept

I find that even a small-scale object such as a vehicle benefits from creating an imaginary world and context for it to exist in. Coming up with a situation for the concept to inhabit, however far-fetched, can help with believability and make for a more interesting design.

For this workshop the brief is pretty open: paint a vehicle cobbled together from various wrecks in a Bermuda Triangle-type situation. Oh, and alien technology and UFOs also need to be involved! I start by giving the vehicle a purpose: it's going to be a vehicle for the Resistance – a high-speed armoured transport. It would be used for evading and striking back against alien invaders, while being able to transport survivors to safety.

The chosen time period is just after World War II, which gives me access to the wide range of interesting vehicles that were produced and lost during this era. In addition, limited communication technologies could conceivably enable a series of islands to exist in isolation from the rest of the world.

I pick a bunch of era-correct vehicles to pull parts from: a B-25 Mitchell bomber fuselage, a Merlin engine from a de Havilland Mosquito, the landing gear from a Mitsubishi Ki-30, and the chassis and cab from a Dodge WC-62. This Frankentruck has been created by a Japanese engineer who's made the choice to stay in the UFO-inhabited area. He's lost his fellow soldiers and wants to inflict some sort of revenge on the invaders, while helping others flee.

Although very few of these thoughts are apparent in the final illustration, I find that doing this low-level world building and then setting a few rules and restrictions can really help me to focus during the painting process. And it makes for a more fun-filled assignment!

Artist PROFILE

Christian Pearce

COUNTRY: New Zealand

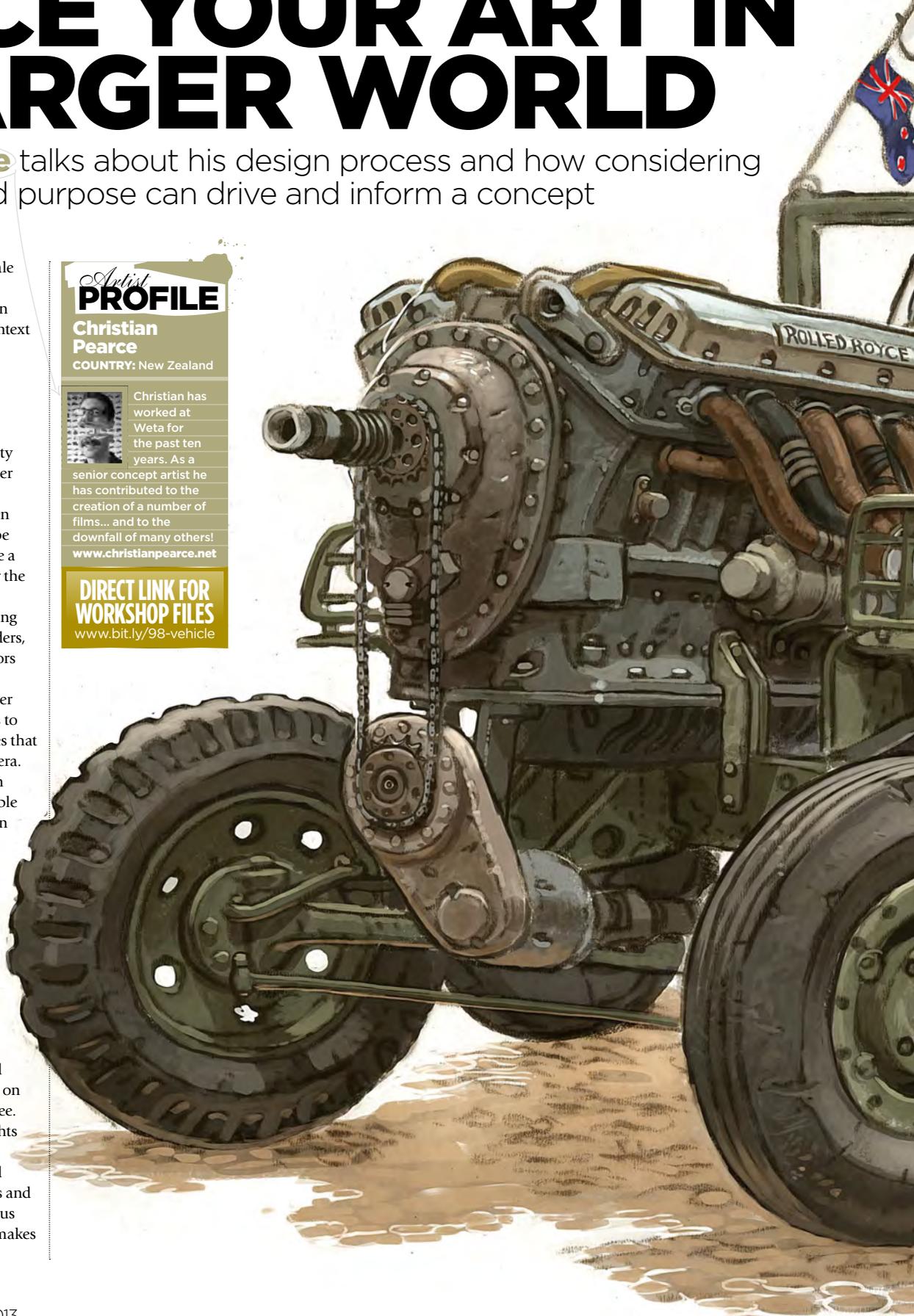


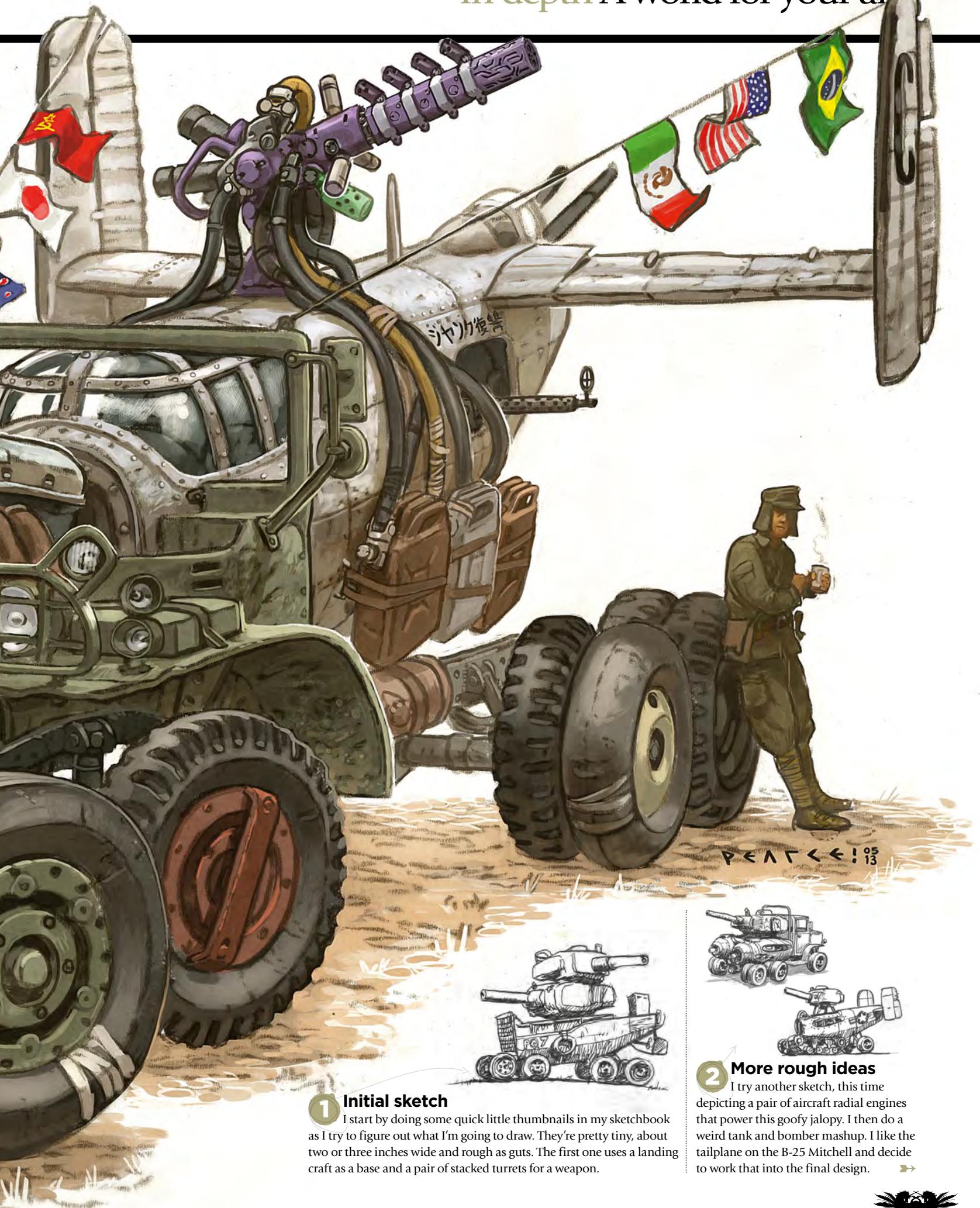
Christian has worked at Weta for the past ten years. As a senior concept artist he has contributed to the creation of a number of films... and to the downfall of many others!

www.christianpearce.net

DIRECT LINK FOR WORKSHOP FILES

www.bit.ly/98-vehicle





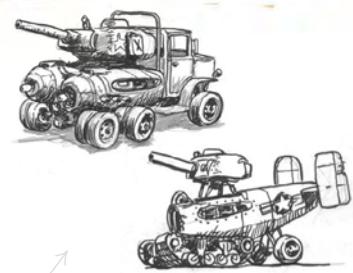
1 Initial sketch

I start by doing some quick little thumbnails in my sketchbook as I try to figure out what I'm going to draw. They're pretty tiny, about two or three inches wide and rough as guts. The first one uses a landing craft as a base and a pair of stacked turrets for a weapon.



2 More rough ideas

I try another sketch, this time depicting a pair of aircraft radial engines that power this goofy jalopy. I then do a weird tank and bomber mashup. I like the tailplane on the B-25 Mitchell and decide to work that into the final design.





PRO SECRETS

Tell a story

Give your design context even if you're not illustrating the environment. Lock it to an era, invent a little bit of a story, set yourself some limitations and then stick to them.

Working within confines forces you to be a little more inventive.

3 Spoiler alert

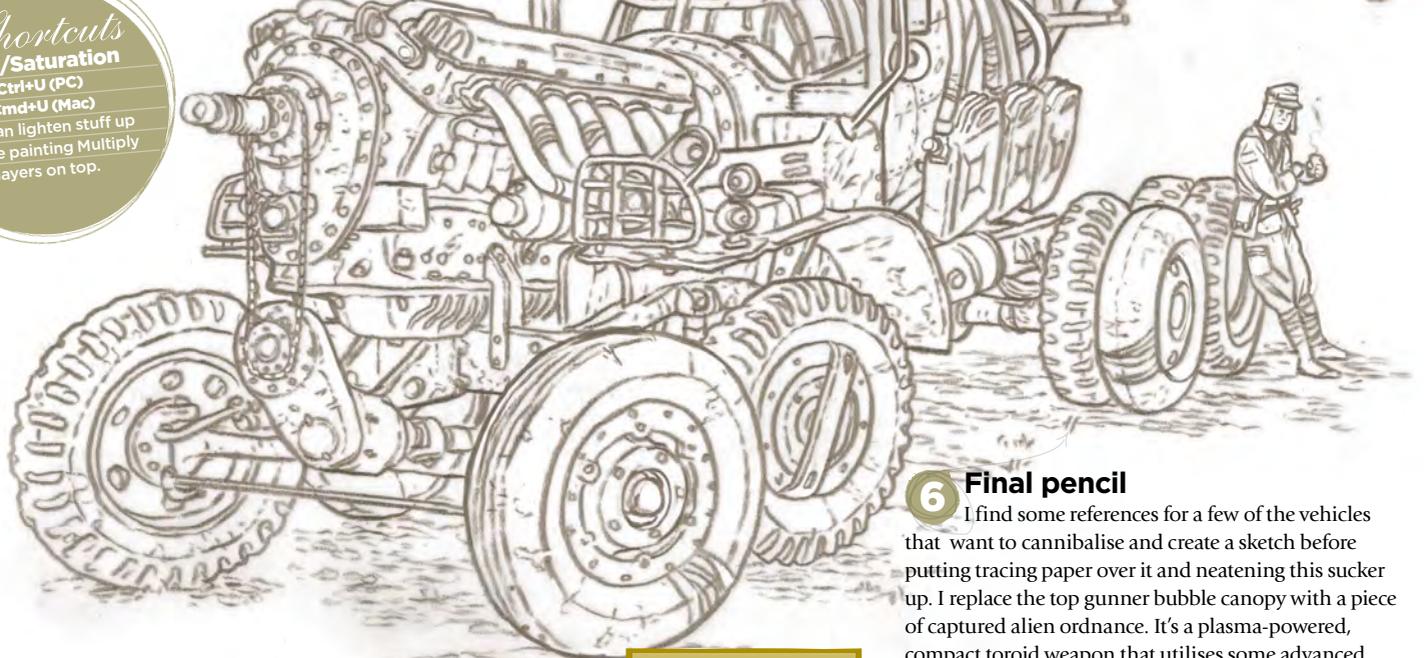
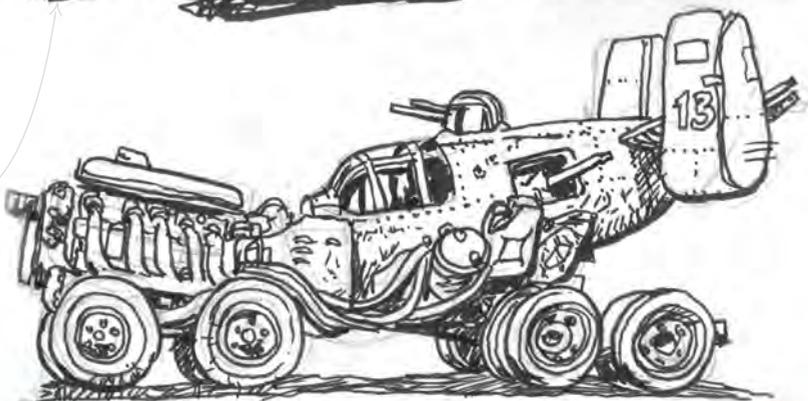
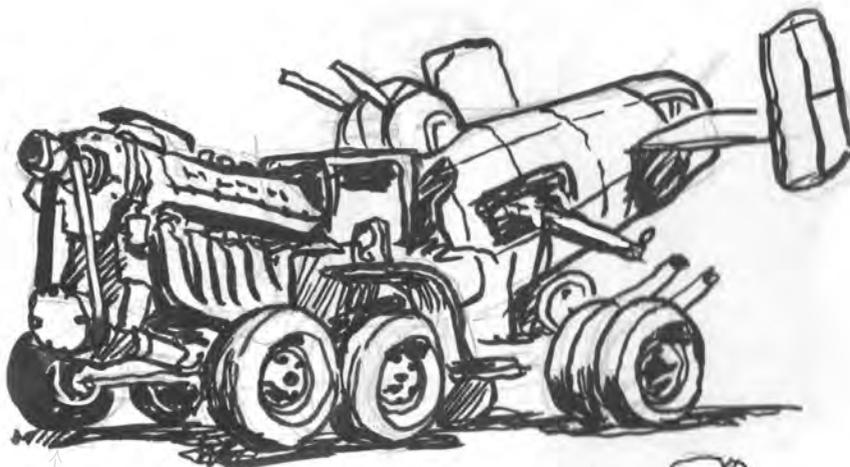
I'm getting a bit closer to something that I think works now. I like the idea of the inverted tailplane to provide downforce, like a Formula One spoiler. This one doesn't look particularly fast with the tank tracks, though, I guess there's a reason Lewis Hamilton doesn't use 'em. Pitstops would be a nightmare!

4 A weighty issue

This little scribble is almost indecipherable, but there's a nice shape that's starting to evolve. I chuck a Rolls Royce Merlin engine in this one and like how it gives it a hot-rod feel. I figure the extra weight of that gigantic V-12 up front could use a bit more support, so I put another axel in there to share the load.

5 Problematic design

Well looky there! I reckon this is pretty close. Four axles with the fuel safely stowed on the outside of the fusela... WHAT?! That's not safe! It might be cool to bring in the intake shape from an F-86 Sabre at the front, but of course that aircraft was from a later era. I consider using a World War II-era jet, but they were so rare that I can't justify it and stick with the big ol' V12.



6 Final pencil

I find some references for a few of the vehicles that want to cannibalise and create a sketch before putting tracing paper over it and neatening this sucker up. I replace the top gunner bubble canopy with a piece of captured alien ordnance. It's a plasma-powered, compact toroid weapon that utilises some advanced alien fusion technology reconfigured to be powered by a mish-mash of Earth-based fuels.

WATCH THIS!

www.bit.ly/ifx98-vehicle

Shortcuts

Hue/Saturation

Ctrl+U (PC)

Cmd+U (Mac)

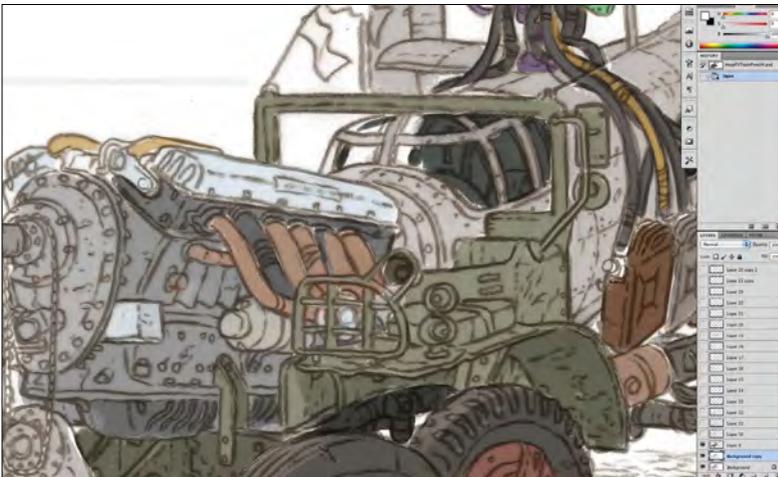
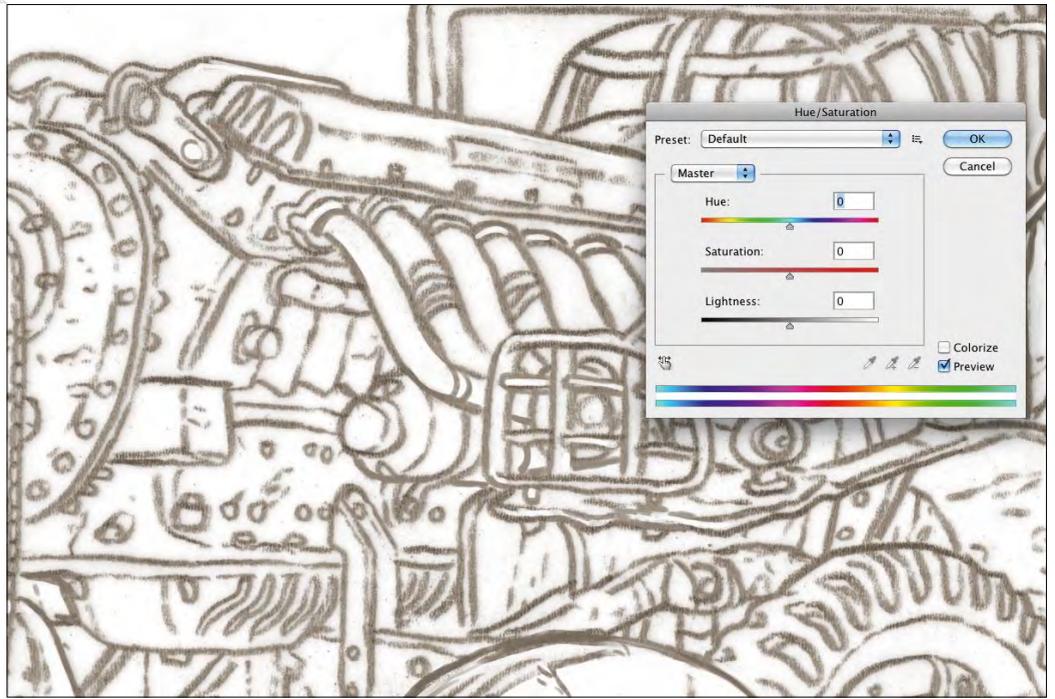
You can lighten stuff up before painting. Multiply layers on top.

7 Cleaning the drawing

Once I've scanned the drawing I open it in Photoshop and start cleaning it up, neatening up the hairiest bits, painting out some of construction lines and correcting as much wonky perspective as I can. Once it's tidy-ish I use the Hue/Saturation (Cmd+U) tool to colourise it and lighten the whole thing. I'll be painting over the image with a Multiply layer later on, so I don't want it to get too dark straight away.

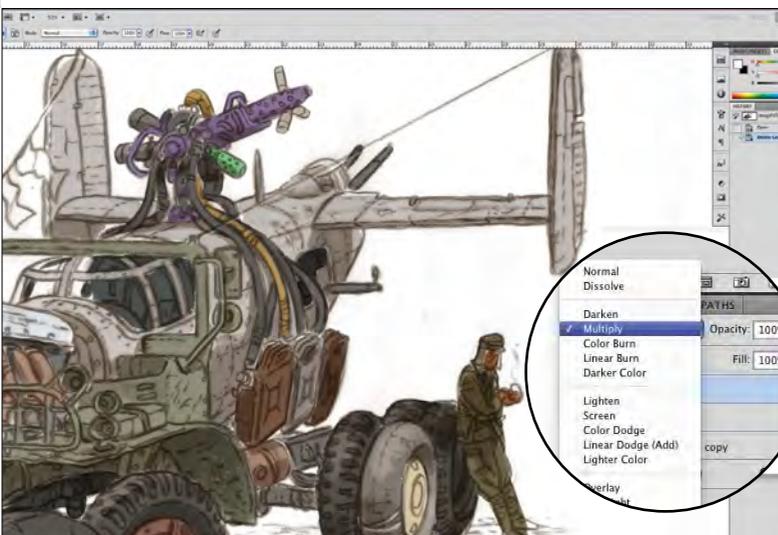
8 Colour, my old enemy

Just chuck it on there! This part is super loose and quick. I create a Multiply layer above the pencil that I treat like watercolour and start blocking it in. I keep it pretty low in contrast and saturation for now, because I'll be using Multiply layers later that'll ramp up the intensity of the colours. I'm not thinking of a light source yet, either. Indeed, I'm not thinking about much of anything really, except burritos. Always thinking about burritos.



9 Shady business

I put another Multiply layer on top of the image. I use this to get some shadows in there and start defining form. I pick a warm colour, as if there's some light bouncing up from the ground beneath my truck.



WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES: AIRBRUSH3

This is a simple Soft Round brush that uses pressure to control size and opacity. I use it for all kinds of things, but mostly for atmospheric and soft shadows.

THE IDIOT

A dual brush that I don't really understand. Created by and named after my colleague Greg. I use it all the time - it has a nice, textured effect.

THE SIMPLETON

This is probably my most-used brush and the first one I ever made. A squashed circle with pen pressure controlling size and opacity.

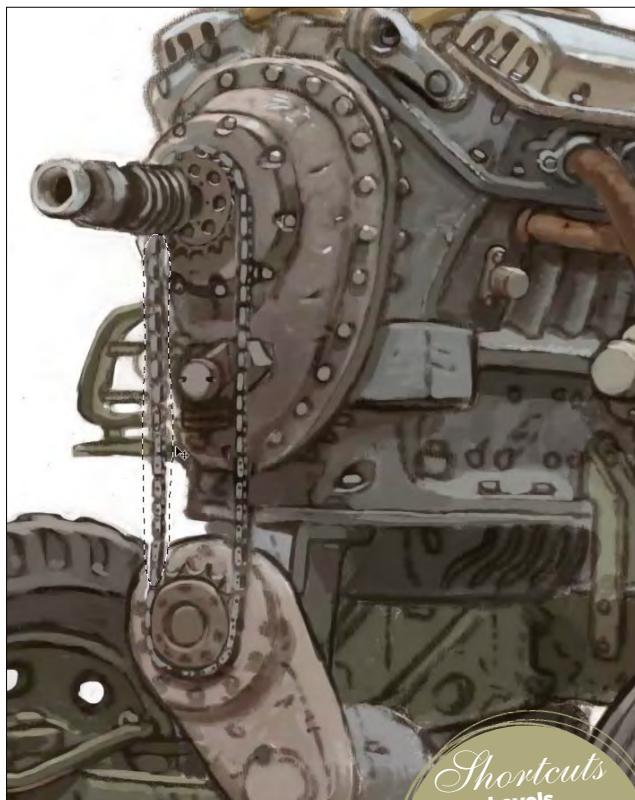
YOU'RE AN ARTIST NOW!

My newest brush that I'm really starting to like and use a lot. It does some 3D tip modelling that came in with CS5. It feels more like my old acrylics, and can achieve quite painterly effects.



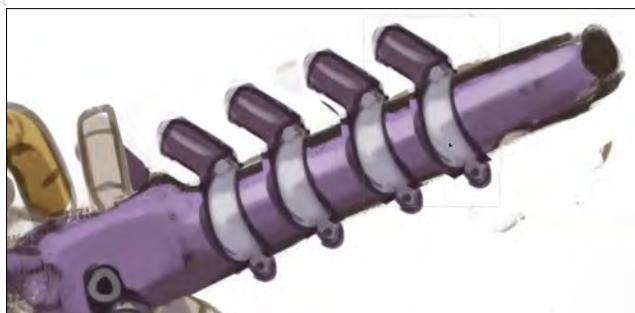
10 The hard yards!

Right! I'm starting to get a bit of shape happening now, so I make a new Normal, opaque layer on top and just start putting in the work. I concentrate on tidying things up, defining edges and building up texture. No shortcuts or tricks at this point, just plugging away. Lots and lots of brushstrokes. This is the shoulder-cramping, spine-compressing, RSI-inducing part. Hey, this almost makes it sound like actual work!



11 Yankin' my chain
I draw this monstrosity with the drive coming directly off the propeller shaft via a chain to a gearbox, and then to the driveshaft. The chain is hanging on there rather loosely, so I use the Lasso tool, select the offending area and do a 'super-copy' (Cmd+Shift+C). I paste this back on a new layer and use Transform (Cmd+T) and then Warp. I push it around until it's hanging a bit straighter. It's still a ridiculous way of harnessing that colossal V12, but I guess my engineer's options were limited.

12 Running repairs
I don't like that gun. No sir! I paint over it and start messing with its design until it's less offensive to my eyes. No guns on earth are purple, so that means all alien guns must be, right? I add an accelerator cylinder to the barrel and immediately want to repeat them along its length. I paint one on a new layer and then copy-drag it (Cmd+Opt) a few times before lightly painting into them, so that this bit of cheating isn't so obvious.



Shortcuts Levels

Ctrl+L (PC)
Cmd+L (Mac)

Use it to reduce contrast so things don't get too dark when watercolouring over the top.

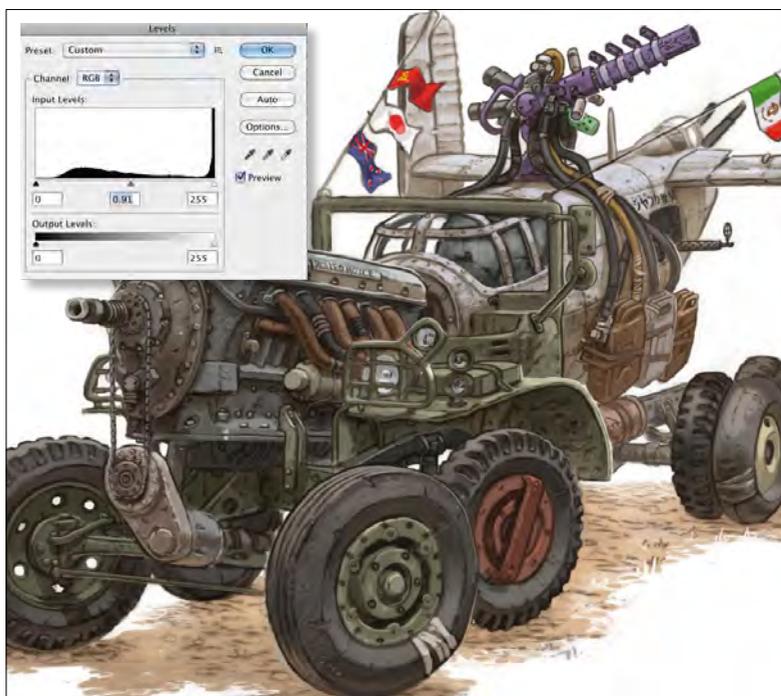
PRO SECRETS

Keep on sketching

If you have time, play with quick sketches before you get stuck into your final design. They can be super speedy and terrible looking. You're the only one who has to see them! Except in this case, in which I've forced you to look at my sloppy scribs. Oh, the shame! I usually have an idea right at the start that I think is the one I want to fully paint up, but if I have time to do a few early sketches I'll almost always come up with something I like better.



13 Pushing bits back
I usually bring in a bit of fake atmospheric depth when I'm getting near the end of a piece like this. I nab a light earthy tone and use a Soft brush to paint over parts that are further away from the viewer, such as the end of the fuselage and the engineer. Then I use the Eraser to cut out parts that are closer, like the tires and fuel lines. I change the layer to Soft Light and knock the Opacity back a bit. Bizzaow! It looks like it's further away!



14 The home straight!
Pretty much all the painting is done now – a few tweaks to finish her up and I can hit the hay. I copy everything to a new layer and bring up the Levels tool (Cmd+L). I slide the middle handle around a bit, just enough to give a little more mid-tone contrast. I get in there with the Dodge tool just an itty-bitty bit, run a Sharpen filter over it to make the pencils pop out slightly more, tweak a bit of warm yellow into the highlights and then Flatten it like it was a little kid's sandcastle. You're all done, you big bully! ●

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ISSUE 99 ON SALE 19 JULY 2013

Photoshop ILLUSTRATE EXOTIC TRIBAL CLOTHING

Detailed clothing and interesting textures can help you create a believable character from a mysterious lost world. **Katie De Sousa** leads the way

Painting a character from a lost world is a challenge, because I have to find the world myself first, and that takes a lot of exploration. While difficult, it's also thrilling to have the freedom to paint not just a character, but a character from a world I've contrived myself. There's more work involved, but fewer limitations and I get to be especially creative.

For this painting I imagine a hidden civilisation – one that's elegant, yet close to nature. A mix of Aztec and Art Deco shapes the visual language that carries through their world, affecting everything from the great temples to their silverware, and naturally their attire.

It's important for me to take some time to think about the little details before I start painting. Where are these people

from, what's the weather like there? If it's hot and humid, what kind of clothing would be comfortable? What materials would be available to create objects from, and what kinds of fabric and precious metals and stones would they have access to? The answers will inform my character design and I'll have a much easier time visualising a design that's unified under one cohesive theme.

Artist PROFILE

Katie De Sousa
COUNTRY: US



Katie's a Canadian artist who moved recently to LA

to work as a concept artist and illustrator on League of Legends for Riot Games. Previously she freelanced for a range of clients and dabbled in indie game development.

www.katiedesousa.com

DIRECT LINK FOR WORKSHOP FILES
www.bit.ly/98-aztec1



2 Planning ahead

I try to do all of my thinking upfront. It makes the process so much smoother when you iron out all the wrinkles early on. I start with a clean pencil drawing, then bring it into Photoshop and throw a rough colour scheme on it. I want her to be a bright focal point against a dark background, and paint here using warm colours.



3 Prep time

Using my drawing as a guide I put every material I'm going to render on a separate layer. I do this so that when I start painting I can lock the transparent pixels and not have to worry about painting outside the lines. This enables me to use large brushes and I don't have to constantly keep my edges clean. It's a bit of effort upfront, but can save a lot of time later.

1 Brainstorming the character's lifestyle

At this early stage of the creative process I like to do my thinking with pencil and paper as my character emerges. I know what her world is like: she's from a peaceful place, deep in the rain forest and hidden from the rest of the world. She is noble-born, and her lavish lifestyle has enabled her to live in a carefree manner. She's inherently a little headstrong and is curious about what lies beyond. That's where we're meeting her, and she's in equal parts thrilled and scared to make our acquaintance.



WATCH THIS!
www.bit.ly/ifx98-aztec





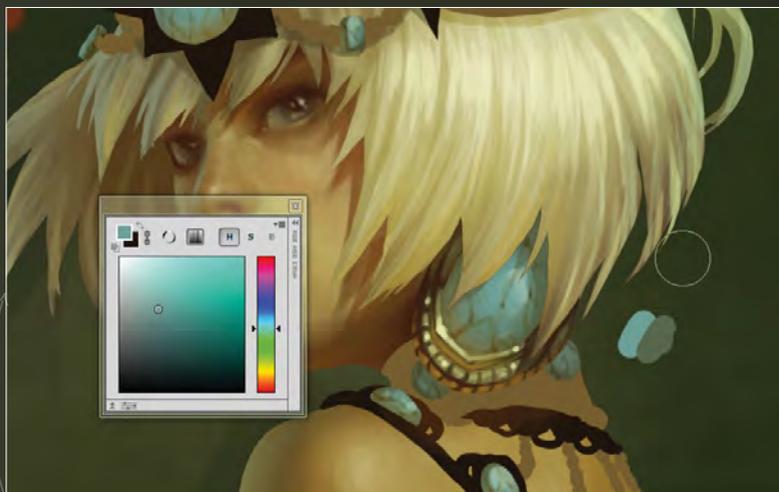
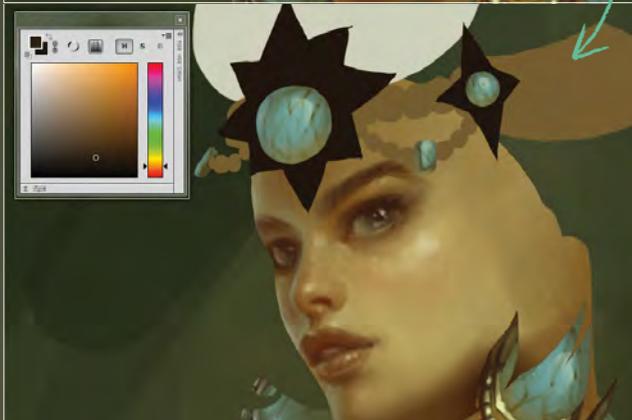
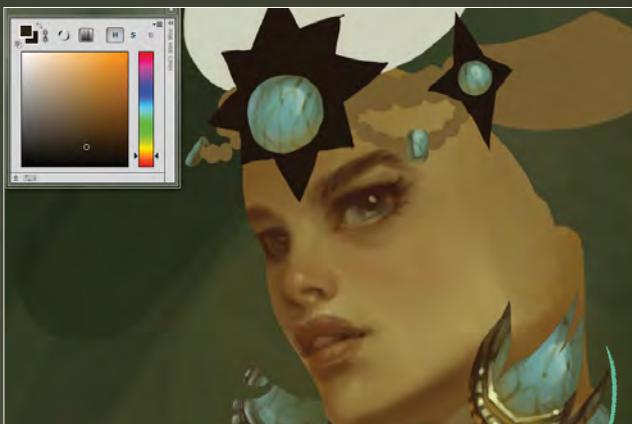
4 Let's start painting

I always jump into painting the skin first. I create a Clipping Mask on a skin layer and drop in some basic gradients. When rendering I like to go from big to small. Begin with big brushes and big shapes, and slowly refine them down. I'm rendering one light source at a time on her skin, starting with the bright light on the right of the image, and later I make a new Clipping Mask for the cold, grey environmental bounce light that's over on her left side. My favourite Photoshop brushes for skin are the Hard Round and a Cloudy Soft brush.

PRO SECRETS

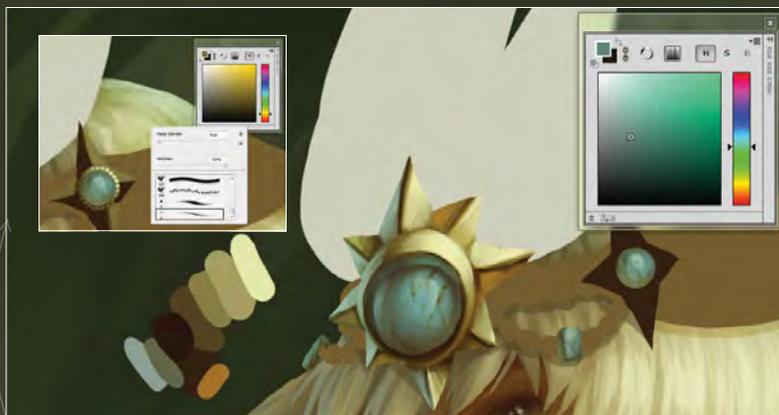
Value range for materials

When painting different materials, your values are key. A matte material will have a much smaller value range, and the highlights and shadows (excepting some areas of occlusion), will stay within a small range. In contrast, a glossy/shiny material will have a wide range, from bright highlights to dark shadows.



6 Breaking new ground

I've never actually painted turquoise before this painting, so I'm looking up some reference images online. If I have time, I'll do a couple of studies of the material to grow used to painting it. Luckily, turquoise is a pretty simple material to wrap my head around; it's opaque with a slight texture and subtle specular.



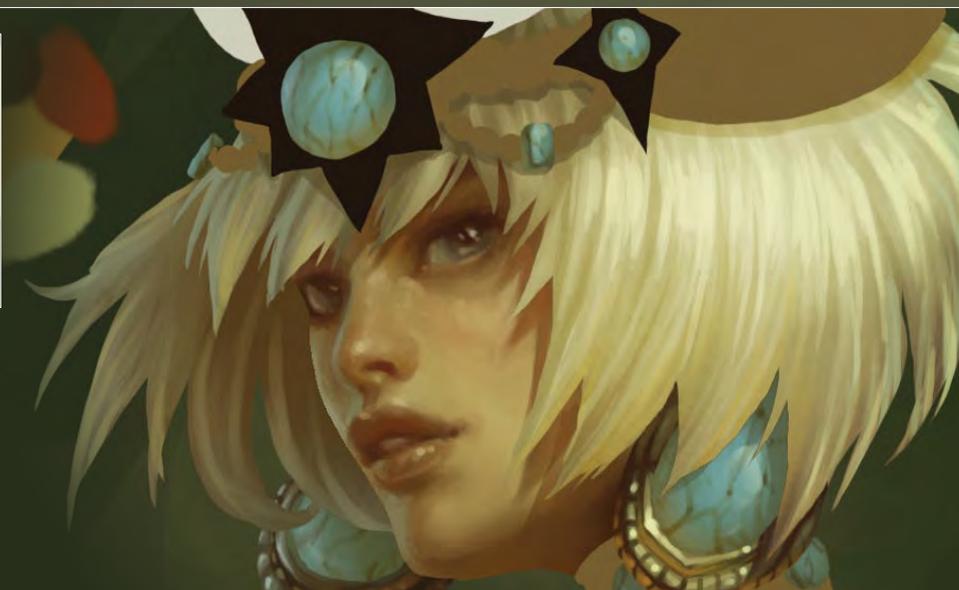
7 Depicting shiny objects

I've painted metal in every colour and finish, but it's still one of the toughest things to represent. Reflective materials always are! I start with the main light source and then any bounce light from the environment. Next, I decide which pieces of highly polished copper, bronze or gold are going to be reflecting nearby colours or objects. I use my two favourite brushes again, but if I want to do any little details, such as millegrain, I'll use a custom brush if I know it'll save me time.



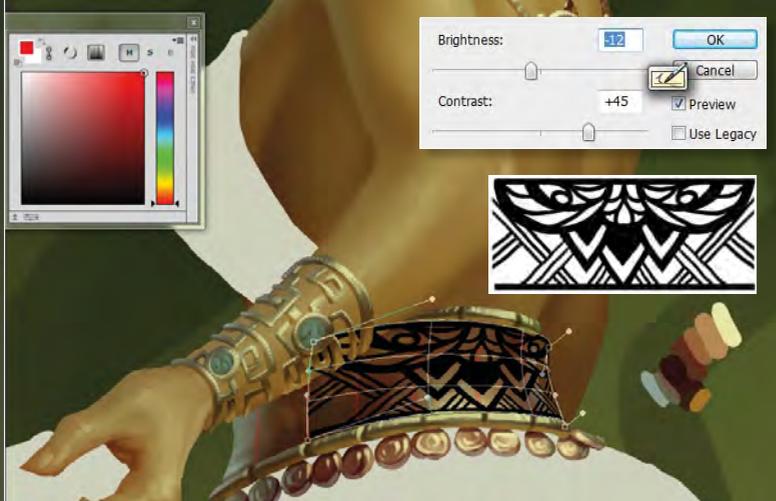
5 Painting her hair

Hair is almost as fun as skin for me – I really enjoy painting it. I block out those larger locks of hair first, then the smaller ones, and then the tiny flyaway strands. The same brushes that I use on her skin are also my favourites for hair. I try to keep in mind that hair is a reflective material, which will pick up on a fair bit of the surrounding environment colours.



8 Belt upgrade

I want to add a pattern to the belt, but don't want to paint it in by hand. In a new Photoshop file I draft a pattern that I can pop into my painting and warp around her belt (Edit>Transform>Warp). I keep the pattern on its own layer, then copy the belt layer and drop it on the pattern layer as a Clipping Mask, I can then adjust the hue/value so that it looks like a pattern of a different kind of material. Because I've already rendered the belt in full, I'm saving time by reusing it so I don't have to render the pattern and make it match the lighting of the belt.



9 Make those patterns look realistic

The pattern looks a little flat at the moment, so I create a new layer on top. This enables me to manually paint in any small details, such as speculars and shadows, to make the pattern look etched into the belt and not just pasted on top.



Shortcuts
Copy All and Paste
 Ctrl+Shift+C, Ctrl+V (PC)
 Cmd+Shift+C, Cmd+V (Mac)
 Great for post-rendering adjustments like colour balance.

10 Painting cloth

Cloth is always a wonderful challenge to get right. That's why I always try to get hold of the actual cloth I'm depicting, so I wrap and drape it as close as I can to what I'm painting, and create something believable. I start with blocking in the basic shapes of the folds and wrinkles, and then start adding the darker occlusion shadows and rendering all the smaller wrinkles. However, I decide that the colour isn't exactly what I'm after, so I play around with the colour balance until I find a warm, creamy colour that satisfies me.



WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES: FOLIAGE BRUSHES



Use them like stamps, and mix and match them to achieve the foliage silhouettes you're after.

TAPERED ROUND

The tapered ends enable you to get into a lot more detail, compared to the Basic Round brush.

MILLEGRAIN

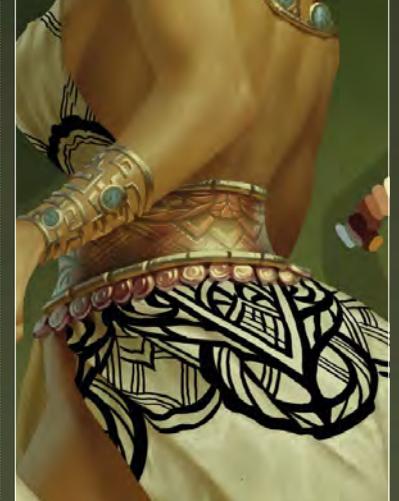
Ideal for adding small details such as millegrain on metal edges, or any kind of sparkly pattern.

SPARKLES

Good for sparkles on material, dust particles suspended in air, and even freckles on skin!

11 The dress pattern

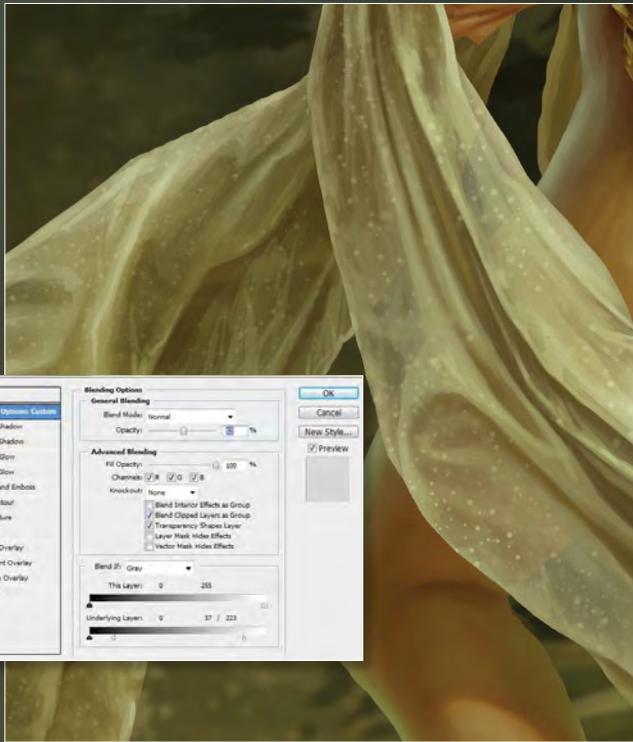
I'm going to use the same technique that I used on her belt to add a pattern to her dress. I'm really trying hard to wrap the pattern properly onto the cloth, because I want to keep in mind that it will fold when the cloth does. Parts of it will overlap and be obscured.



12 Make it gold

When I'm happy with how the shape looks I grab the cloth layer and place it on the pattern layer as a Clipping Mask. I'm after a shiny gold pattern, so I open Color Balance (Ctrl+B) and pump up the yellow and red. I know it needs to have a bigger value range than the matte cloth, so I mess around with the levels until it looks right. Next, I make a new layer and add any shadows and cloth tugging/puckering, reflections on the gold, and anything else I can think of to integrate the pattern into the dress believably.





13 Understand translucency

Instead of trying to create a translucent cloth from scratch I paint it opaque, and then paint everything behind it before copying the background layer and dropping it onto the cloth layer as a Clipping Mask. I then use the blending options to make the background look as though it's showing through the darker, sheer parts of the cloth. I make the highlights opaque and the shadows translucent, remembering that the more the cloth layers over itself, the more opaque it'll become. I drop another layer on top to add some final touches and little textures.

PRO SECRETS

Blending options

Painting transparent materials can be a challenge. I paint the background behind my object, and then my object or material on a new layer. The blending options in Photoshop do a lot of the work for me! Double-click the layer of your object and adjust the sliders. Transparent materials usually show more of the background in the material's shadow areas, and less where it's being hit by a light source, where it'll seem more opaque because it's bouncing back a lot of light. Try using blending options on a Color layer to change the shadows or highlights to a unified colour!



14 Setting the scene

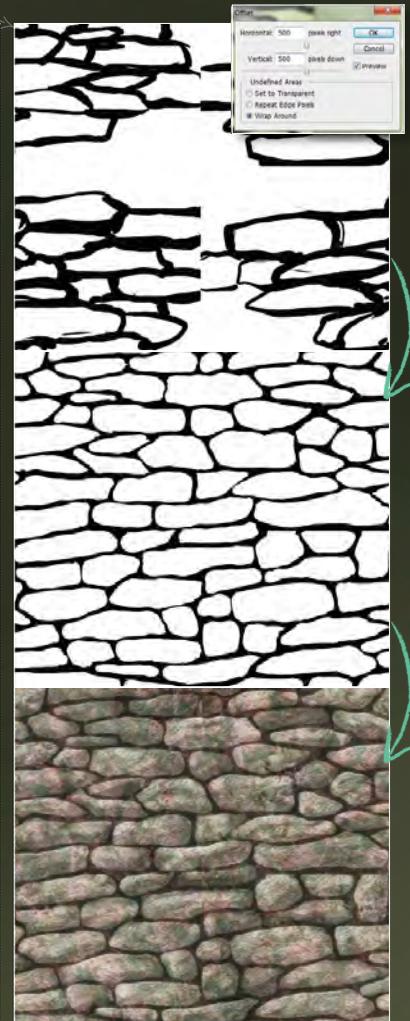
To start blocking in the background, I don't feel like worrying about hue. It's easier to just start with value and so I put a Greyscale layer over everything (I can switch this off later). I'm starting with the farthest thing away: the ruins. I'm just blocking in the forms. Each face of the structure on a different layer, I'm not concerned about texture at the moment. Instead, I'm looking for interesting, large shapes and attempting to get the perspective right.

15 Creating tiled stone

After I have my layers all set up for the ruins behind my character, I create a tiled stone texture. I open a 1,000x1,000 pixel document and start drawing in the shapes for the stone pattern. I'm happy with how it's looking and want to work on getting it tiled, so I go into Filter>Other>Offset and offset the image by half vertically and horizontally (so by 500) and then you can see if it lines up or not (and it never, ever does). So I paint in the changes so that it does tile, and I check by offsetting again and again until I'm satisfied. Finally, choosing the Edit>Define pattern option turns this into a pattern.

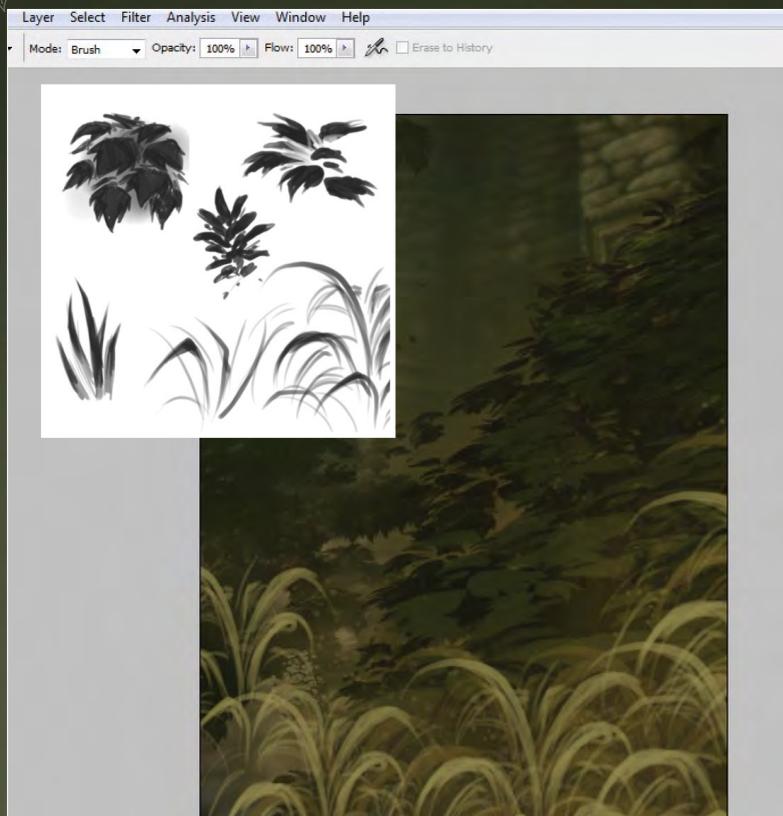
16 The Distort tool is my best friend

I take my newly created stone pattern and fill in the faces of my structure that I want to be stone (Clipping Masks again), and then I choose Edit>Transform>Distort to match it up to the perspective of the scene. I have a cool photograph of a tile I took at a museum that I've been itching to use, and so drop it onto the structure and distort it into perspective, too. Then I drop a layer on top and start painting over everything: even though I've used textures for all of this, I don't want it to look like it! Another layer goes on top for atmospheric perspective, such as fog and dust, and to push the background further back.



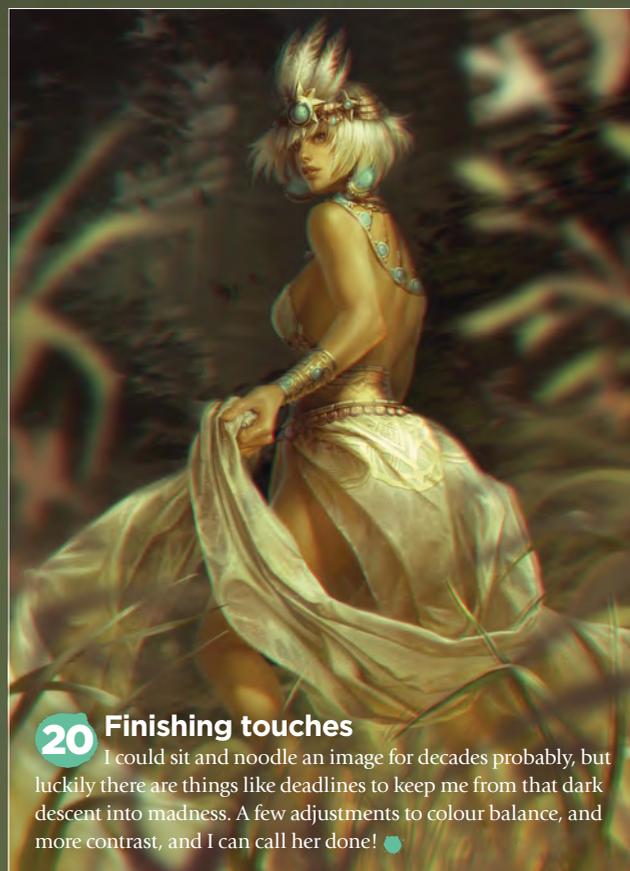
17 Quickly add foliage

I have a few brushes that I created for this painting so I wouldn't have to paint all these leaves by hand! I start by blocking in some shapes for the trees, and I distort them so they match the perspective of the background. Then I zoom in and start adding some leaves by hand. I always try to finish up by hand, because it makes whatever I'm painting look less like it was Stamp-tooled into existence – even if 80 per cent of it was!



19 Add foreground

I've painted in some foliage in the foreground, I know the 'camera' is quite close to the ground to be looking up at her, so to really push that I introduce a lot of plants that stretch quite high up. I want to try and give this image a cinematic look, so I'm blurring the closest plants and furthest background elements for a depth-of-field effect.



18 She's really there!

After I'm happy with the background, I make a layer group above the character and paint over it. I want her to look integrated into the scene, so it's time for lots of edge softening, fading, and bloom from the light hitting her.

Shortcuts Clipping Masks

Alt (PC & Mac)

Put your cursor between two layers, click the layer on top and it becomes a Clipping Mask for the layer below.



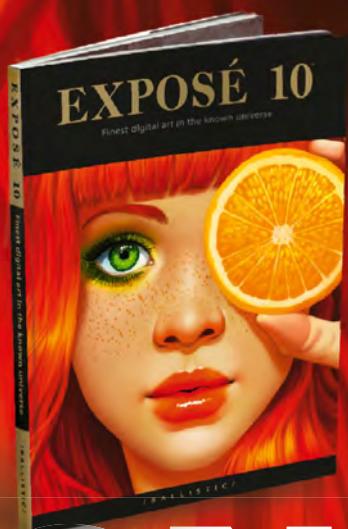
20 Finishing touches

I could sit and noodle an image for decades probably, but luckily there are things like deadlines to keep me from that dark descent into madness. A few adjustments to colour balance, and more contrast, and I can call her done! ●

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Reviews



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The latest digital art resources are put to the test by the ImagineFX team...

10
PRODUCTS
ON TEST



HARDWARE

90 PowerShot A3500 IS

This compact camera's Wi-Fi capabilities make it a smart addition to any outdoor artist's toolset.

SOFTWARE

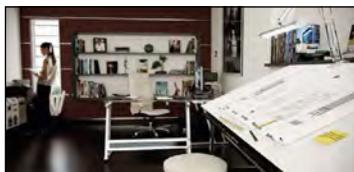
92 Flame Painter 2.0

It's adept at painting flames, but what else can this fiery software do?

SOFTWARE

92 V-Ray 1.6 for SketchUp

V-Ray's new software makes SketchUp feel photo-real.



TRAINING

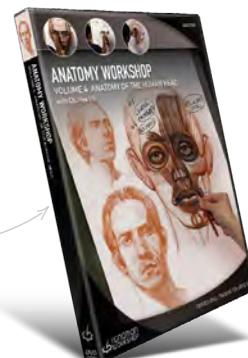
93 Anatomy Workshop: Anatomy of the Human Head

Charles Hu's comprehensive guide to one of the most important elements every artist must master.

BOOKS

94 New reads

The Art of Turbo; The Art of BioShock Infinite; Dragon Age: The World of Thedas Volume One; Half-Sick of Shadows; Sandman Slim trilogy; The People's Will.



RATINGS EXPLAINED Magnificent Good Ordinary Poor Atrocious



PowerShot A3500 IS



SUPER SNAPS This compact camera's Wi-Fi capabilities make it a smart addition to any outdoor artist's toolset

Price £129 **Company** Canon **Web** www.canon.co.uk **Contact** 01737 220000

Digital artists working au naturel face something of a dilemma when out and about. Do they use their camera phones to take pics or should they invest in a proper snapper?

Canon's A3500 IS could represent the ideal compromise for followers of the digital plain air movement. It includes all the advantages you'd

Being able to whip out a camera and press a button - rather than using a smartphone - feels like something of a novelty to begin with.



expect from a dedicated compact camera over a smartphone, such as a 5x optical zoom and a 16MP sensor, but it also includes a nifty Wi-Fi feature. This means that with a dedicated iOS and Android app you can connect the camera to your smartphone or tablet. You don't need to worry about cables or swapping memory cards. Instead, just fire up the CameraWindow app, connect your camera and start transferring your images right away. With the sheer number of image-editing apps available it's a definite boon.

Away from this neat feature the A3500 certainly holds its own - even if it's a little fiddly and difficult to get used to. The camera is remarkably compact, especially in an age when smartphones appear to be experiencing growth spurts in all directions. It feels stout enough, and although it doesn't match the robustness of the Nikon CoolPix AW100 we reviewed a few issues back, we felt confident enough to slip it



We found the A3500 perfect for capturing textures, and the macro mode is great for close-ups.

unsheathed into the front pocket of our jeans. When you're out shooting, the camera's menu operates in one of two flavours: a simple Automatic mode for pointing and snapping, which offers quick access to flash and image size settings; and a Program mode that enables you get into the nitty-gritty of ISO, exposure and focus modes. There are no DSLR-style shutter speed or F-stop adjustments here, but there's enough for gentle tinkering without ruining your images.



The three-inch screen is great for reviewing your images and videos, but don't go trying to prod it - this camera lacks a touchscreen.



Fashionistas will be pleased to see that the A3500 comes in a range of colours, but we were happy with the black hue of our test model.



“It's great for whipping out and taking shots of inspiring scenes, and compact enough to take with you anywhere”

Photo quality, on the whole, is exceptional. We tested it in both modes and found that everything worked as it should. The macro mode reveals close-up detail and the optical zoom makes it possible to focus on objects in the near distance - although, as expected, images become a little blurry and noisy at digital zooms.

Unfortunately, video mode proves to be a bit of a let-down. It only records at 720p resolution, so it's not full HD, and moving the camera resulted in blur and

over-exposure. It's fine if the camera's still and you're capturing a moving subject, but we wouldn't want to use it as a dedicated video camera.

Best thought of as an augmentation to your cameraphone, it's Canon's Wi-Fi capabilities that puts it head and shoulders above the current crop of compact cameras. It's great for whipping out and taking shots of inspiring textures and scenes, and it's compact enough to take with you wherever you go.

DETAILS

Features

- 16 megapixels
- Optical image stabiliser
- Wi-Fi
- 720p HD movies
- 32 smart auto scenes
- Eco mode
- Creative modes
- 3-inch LCD display
- 5x optical zoom, 10x digital zoom
- Face detection

System Requirements

PC: Windows 8/7/Vista/XP
Mac: OS X v10.6-10.8

Rating



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This neat little gizmo functions as a tripod for digital cameras, but also doubles as an easel for your tablet or smartphone. So you can take level and clear shots for reference and then paint like a digital van Gogh.

Canon Selphy CP900

Web www.canon.co.uk
Price £100



Connect an optional battery pack to Canon's Selphy printer and it becomes a brilliant little travel printer, capable of printing postcard-size photos and art. It uses a thermal transfer printing system, so your prints are robust and waterproof.

Apple iPad 4

Web www.apple.com
Price £399



As a tablet for artists the iPad 4 still has the edge over its Android rivals. Its Retina display is stunning, and if you buy one with a cellular package then you'll be able to upload your pics from the field.

STM Scout

Web www.stmbags.com
Price £35



Designed for the iPad and 11-inch laptops, this sturdy bag includes enough space for a stylus and digital camera. The Scout features a decent amount of padding and a felt lining to keep everything cosily protected.

Flame Painter's interface takes its cues from the colour scheme of Photoshop.



Flame Painter 2.0

MAC & PC

YOU'RE FIRED It's adept at painting flames, but what else can this fiery software do?

Price \$30 (Personal) \$60 (Professional) **Company** Escape Motions **Web** www.escapemotions.com
Contact blaskovic@escapemotions.com

Flame Painter first showed up on the ImagineFX radar a couple of years ago. It began as a simple web project by Slovak developer Peter Blaskovic, which used Java so artists could create stunning images with flame-like brushes.

The project is still available on the internet at www.bit.ly/ifx-fpainter, but its huge success has understandably seen Blaskovic release it as a standalone, paid-for piece of software as well.

Anyone who's ever attempted to create flames in Photoshop will know how tricky it can be. There are a few shortcuts, but generally it involves heavy manipulation and blurring of simple jagged shapes, and the results



Images can be imported into Flame Painter so you can add stunning and subtle light effects on top.

never look quite right. Flame Painter's approach gives you a constantly moving brush which cleverly replicates the random nature of fire, resulting in long-exposure blurs of light or intense scorchers.

The size of the brush changes according to how quickly you move your mouse or stylus, which makes it feel organic and fluid, meanwhile parameters such as speed, size and chaos can be dialled down to create more intimate details. It's not just for creating flames either - inbuilt brushes can help you to produce everything from calligraphic words to psychedelic rainbows.

The standalone versions of the software add a lot more functionality. Both include PNG, JPG and BMP exports and Photoshop-style dockable tool tabs. The personal version (\$30) includes three layers, whereas the professional version (\$60) comes with unlimited layers, vector editing and super-smooth anti-aliasing.

While Flame Painter goes far beyond its raison d'être and enables you to add varied effects to your artwork, it's still a little limited, by its very nature. We would recommend trying the free web version first of all before investing in this one, although the relatively cheap nature of the personal version makes it good value. ●

DETAILS

- Flame, follow and ribbon brushes
- Normal, lighten and darken modes
- Gradient transitions
- Saveable brush presets
- Drag and drop brushes
- Unlimited layers (professional)/three layers (personal)
- Vector layers (professional)
- FPA, PNG, JPG, TIF and BMP import
- Dockable tool tabs
- Full-screen mode

System Requirements

PC: Windows 8/7/Vista/XP, Intel Pentium 4 CPU, OpenGL 2.0 graphics card, 1GB RAM, 30MB disk space
Mac: OS X Snow Leopard or Mountain Lion, Intel CPU, OpenGL 2.0 graphics card, 1GB RAM, 30MB disk space

Rating



V-Ray's dome light and streamlining scene complexity make detailed, realistically lit scenes.



V-Ray 1.6 for SketchUp

RENDER FARM V-Ray's software makes SketchUp photo-real

Price £500

Company Chaos Software

Web www.chaosgroup.com

RATING ●●●●●

SketchUp has become hugely popular with 3D artists, for good reason. It's easy to use, has a huge library of custom-created models, and creations can be exported to a wide range of software. However SketchUp's built-in renderer makes everything look like it's come from a LEGO manual.

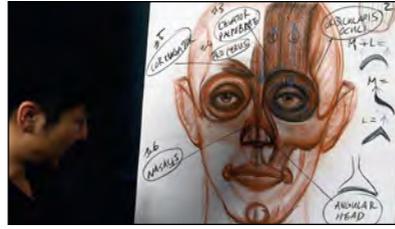
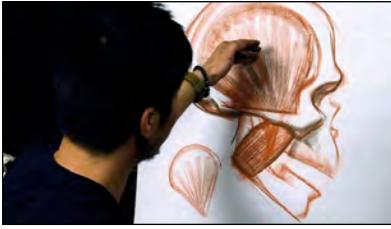
This is where V-Ray's renderer comes in. The company has already created awesome renderers for Maya and 3ds Max, and SketchUp's plugin is similarly brilliant. It introduces more shader types to SketchUp, so you can render convincing metal textures, procedural textures such as dirt, realistic reflections and refractions.

The result is stunning. SketchUp renderings go from being chunky and boldly coloured to a Pixar-level of realism, with soft shadows and depth-of-camera field effects. We found it was able to render scenes fairly quickly, too.

If there's a sticking point it's V-Ray's extreme pricing: at £500 it's obviously aimed at professionals. If you've already used SketchUp for blocking scenes or creating backgrounds it could add a lot to your images, but there are cheaper, if less-powerful, alternatives.



Angular interiors and exteriors can be made to look photo-real, and it includes a tree renderer.

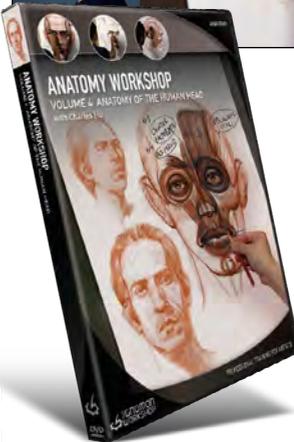


Charles pays close attention to the underlying structure of the human head.

In his latest Anatomy Workshop video, Charles Hu explores every aspect of rendering the head correctly.



You'll see how to draw heads in a way that feels solid and real.



Anatomy Workshop: Anatomy of the Human Head

HEAD-ON Painter and illustrator Charles Hu offers a comprehensive guide to one of the most important elements any artist must master

Publisher The Gnomon Workshop **Price** \$39 **Format** DVD/download **Web** www.thegnomonworkshop.com

Charles Hu is busy building one of the definitive sources of anatomy reference in his *Anatomy Workshop* video series. His previous three releases have focused on general proportions, drawing the figure and understanding the skeleton. (We reviewed the first two parts in *ImagineFX* 89 and 90.) In this session, he lavishes over four hours on the head.

It's a particularly tricky area for artists to master. Our brains are so attuned to faces that we're instinctively put off when the depiction is somehow 'wrong' (3D artists call this response to a face that doesn't quite look real enough The Uncanny Valley.) So Charles's focus in this video is on mastering the proportions that enable you to draw a convincing head from any angle.

The first hour of the session is the most crucial. In it, Charles builds up from the most basic of egg shapes to

create a fully realised, shaded portrait. You may be familiar with the initial principles, such as finding the proportions for the eyes, nose and mouth, but Charles uses these landmarks to seamlessly develop a rich network of reference points and landmarks, while making it all feel comfortable and logical. He also keeps all three dimensions in mind the whole time, helping you move towards drawings of solidity and weight.

A lengthy middle section applies the concepts to a real-life model, before Charles wraps up with a look at the muscle groups in the head. This is critical to understand if you want to render expressions.

As with previous instalments, it's a shame that the drawings are uniformly of males: perhaps Charles has a follow-up series on the female body in mind? But the quality of teaching and the depth of knowledge is so great that this remains essential reference for any artist. ●

DETAILS

Topics covered

- Planes and landmarks
- Mapping out proportions
- Drawing from life
- Observation skills
- Muscle groups

Length

284 minutes

Rating



ARTIST PROFILE

CHARLES HU

Charles is a figure painter and art instructor. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California, and he began his instructional career at LA Academy of Figurative Arts. In 2007, he co-founded 3Kicks Fine Art Studio, also in Pasadena. Charles's commissions include portrait paintings, and character designs for film and game pitches. He currently instructs at Art Center College of Design and Gnomon School of Visual Effects in Hollywood.



www.bit.ly/ifx-chu



The Art of Turbo

SNAIL'S PACE Discover how an unlikely tale of gastropod racing is brought to life for one of this year's animated children's films

Author Robert Abele **Publisher** Titan Books **Price** £25 **Web** www.titanbooks.com **Available** Now

Hollywood animation loves the unlikely underdog. A rat who wishes to be a chef in *Ratatouille*. An ogre who falls in love with a princess in *Shrek*. The lonely robot of *Wall-E*. Joining these eccentric heroes is *Turbo*, a snail who wants to compete in the *Indy 500*.

As *Turbo*'s voice artist Ryan Reynolds explains in his foreword, getting the audience behind such a ludicrous story was one of the film's biggest challenges. "You can't expect them to suspend their collective disbelief for 90-plus minutes," he says.

Snails themselves aren't exactly noted for their emotional range, and the idea of adding arms to the creatures was toyed with, but rejected



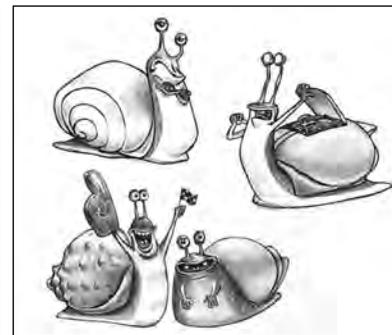
Concept art by Dominique R Louis depicting the tomato plant where a bored Turbo spends most of his days working.



on the grounds that it was "too creepy". Instead, the snails' eyestalks were employed as do-it-all stand-ins to express emotion and carry out tasks. "Eyelids could act as eyebrows, stalks might double as hands in measured ways - as when Turbo hammers futilely at his TV when it won't work - and the cartoon flexibility of the snail's body could make for a nice juxtaposition with the authentically rigid, shiny shell renderings," says Robert Abele.

Throughout the movie, *Turbo* encounters human characters. *Indy 500* champion Guy Gagne is based on driver Ennio Torresan, and his smug expression matches the real-world driver. Other characters, such as the taco-loving Tito and curvaceous greasemonkey Paz, are equally well-designed, and you get a good sense of their characters simply by looking at the detailed illustrations and renderings.

The movie also took an interesting sideways look at its Los Angeles setting, avoiding clichéd Malibu sunsets and wealthy Beverly Hills suburbia and instead going for a more dilapidated and less-seen look at the city's strip-mall culture. "If it seems like a bad neighbourhood, at least they keep it



These sketches by Philippe Tiliikete feature snails with arms, which were thought to be "too creepy".

clean," explains art director Richard Daskas. "We wanted it to feel like there's a sense of ownership there."

The *Art of Turbo* is peppered with insightful sections, such as a pull-out guide to *Turbo*'s transformation, and a breakdown of the film's snail race, which give a great insight into how the film came together. It's well-written, too, but if there's a problem it's that the majority of images - in our review copy at least - seem a little blurry and washed-out, which is a disservice to the artists who are featured.

RATING

The Art of BioShock Infinite

LOOKING UP How the shockingly disturbing world of one of our favourite games was brought to vivid life

Editor Philip R Simon **Publisher** Dark Horse **Price** £30 **Web** www.darkhorse.com **Available** Now

Visceral Games' decision to reboot its BioShock franchise in mid-air has led to one of the best triple-A games in recent memory. BioShock Infinite proves there's still a place in the medium for intricate story telling and detailed art. This book looks at the latter, covering the broken sky city of Columbia and its inhabitants.

As we'd expect from publisher Dark Horse, the book is light on text and

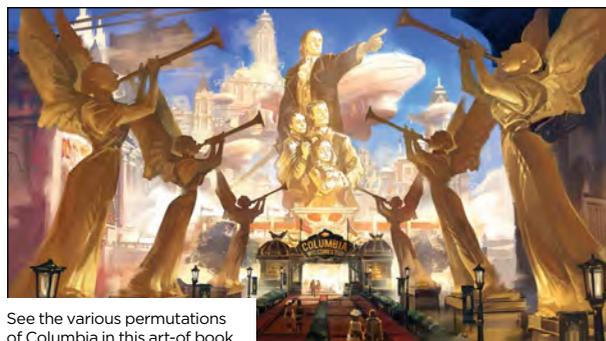


heavy on imagery, and it covers just about every aspect of the game. Sidekick Elizabeth is given a few pages, explaining how her plunging neckline was used to express her status in Columbia.

Elizabeth's cartoony beauty is juxtaposed with page upon page dedicated to Visceral's more monstrous creations. The development of the horrific automatons known as Motorized Patriots show them being fleshed out – or more accurately, unfleshed out – from innocent theme park-style animatronics to repurposed mobile killing machines.

A section is dedicated to in-game art, such as posters for skill potions that can be imbibed by the player. It's beautifully laid-out, a joy to flick through. Best of all, it feels like a tome that could have dropped out of the game's aerial setting.

RATING



See the various permutations of Columbia in this art-of book.

Also look at...

Get inspired by the latest recommended fiction

The People's Will

Author Jasper Kent
Publisher Bantam Press **Price** £13
Available Now



If you've had your fill of vampires who look like they've fallen off a Gap ad, then turn the pages of Jasper Kent's fourth book in the Danilov Quintet series. Set in prerevolutionary Russia, The People's Will is a blend of historical fiction and dark fantasy that revels in the spray of fresh blood as much as it does the classic themes of the human condition. The grandeur of Russia's domes and spires features throughout. Beautifully dark.

Half-Sick of Shadows

Author David Logan
Publisher Corgi **Price** £8
Available Now



This Terry Pratchett First Novel Award-winning tale of childhood promises and time travel finally arrives in paperback form. But readers be warned: although it's described as a comical tragedy, it can be hard to see the funny side with such devastatingly heartfelt paintings of loss, innocence and hope. The story may have its flaws, but Logan's witty contemporary baroque style is bound to transport your mind elsewhere.

Dragon Age: The World of Thedas Volume One

FIRE READING An exploration of EA's uber-RPG's setting and characters proves to be an engaging read

Editor Dave Marshall **Publisher** Dark Horse **Price** £30 **Web** www.darkhorse.com **Available** Now

Sitting somewhere between an art book and a game guide, The World of Thedas looks at Dragon Age's Tolkein-esque fantasy landscape. It's kicked off with introductions from lead writer David Gaider and creative director Mike Laidlaw, before delving into the game and its lore in great detail.



Chapters cover the geography and climate of Thedas, the various races which inhabit it and its history. The World of Thedas treats the land as a real place in a way that feels a little like fan-fiction, but is in fact developed with input from the games' designers. Backstory is embellished with quotes from the characters who inhabit Thedas, and forthright passages from religious texts.

It's unfortunate that art often takes a back seat to the thoughtfully planned rules that govern this world, although there are a few pages dedicated to nice big illustrations. However, it's great to read if you're a fan of the games, or if you simply want to gain an understanding of how to create your own fantasy mythos.

RATING



Ever wondered about the history of Kirkwall, or what the Fourth Blight was about?

Sandman Slim trilogy

Author Richard Kadrey
Publisher Harper Collins **Price** £8
Available Now



Richard Kadrey's caustic trilogy, Sandman Slim, Kill the Dead and Aloha from Hell get a fresh paperback treatment, with Crush Creative providing pulp movie poster-esq covers. It's the tale inside that will stay with you the longest, though – of James Stark's journey from hell to seeking revenge in LA to eking a living as a monster-killing bounty hunter. As much Constantine as The Master and Margarita, this is addictive stuff.



LOCATION Voronezh, Russia **RECENT PROJECTS** Ex.Gods, Pathfinder **WEB** www.grafitart.com



Oh, those Russians... Grafit has made a name for itself by creating dreamy-looking art.

Grafit Studio

THE RESISTANCE This Russian art studio may be based in a small town, but its mentality is all about embracing the wider world

Grafit's story began in March 2008, in a small house on the outskirts of Voronezh, Russia, where Roman Tulinov, Lev Boyko and Viktor Titov worked on their first project together. The job was modest enough - a series of Russian detective book covers - but even in those early days, the artists' ambition for Grafit was huge. "Our main goals?" says Viktor, "First of all it was to take over the world, of course."



Roman suggests another point of view on their success. "We are hard

workers, and sometimes there were a lot of nerves involved as the projects grew bigger, but everyone enjoys their work here," he says. "We're enthusiasts. We believe that we've only just begun."

Two years after those initial book covers, the 10-strong studio of artists was already working on game and illustration projects. Its big break came with a partnership with Virtuos, "which opened the door for new level of projects," recalls Roman.

Nowadays, Grafit is an outsourcing company, working with companies such as Pixonic, Revontuli Toys, 2Reallife and, thanks to Virtuos, with LucasArts, Ubisoft, Electronic Arts, Tencent Inc and Zynga.

Co-founder and art director Lev breaks down a typical Grafit project. "Depicting a whole new world in an illustration is hard work. It's not only about the



“The idea has to be brought to life, become filled with realistic details...”

Grafit founders Viktor, Roman and Lev throw themselves into their artwork - and tanks, if the job requires it!



idea - the idea has to be brought to life, become filled with realistic details that are hard to build from scratch. Ultimately, we love to dive into the work. Not only because the results turn out great, but it's also a lot of fun."

An example of this approach in action is the recent S.T.A.L.K.E.R. book series. The Grafit team worked with their friends in the military, and borrowed chemical protective suits, equipment, uniforms, weapons, and then bought extra accessories. "Everything, even parachute lines," says Viktor. "We also asked a welder friend to make a radiation warning

ARTIST INTERVIEW

VIKTORIYA BUZAKINA

Grafit's lead artist on her work ethic and foresting the office!

How have you made your mark since joining Grafit?

I'm always happy to help and to teach... and I've filled our office with plants.

What does an artist need in a portfolio to get noticed at Grafit?

My portfolio has been formed during my work, because when I was hired, I was inexperienced in digital art techniques. I only had some traditional portraits, some clay figurines and some photo of my student works. As for an applicant's portfolio, showing your skills is the key. Creativity and working knowledge are a must. Your art has to be affecting!

What work are you most proud of so far, and why?

I have to say that it's the work I did for 2reallife. Many characters were developed over two years and the company's standards are set pretty high, so I couldn't hit kick back and the snooze button!

Why would you recommend working at Grafit?

There's a warm and friendly atmosphere here. Everyone learns from each other, the projects are very different and interesting, and our directorship is very sensible and understanding. We also have an opportunity to develop our own projects, and a lot of attention is paid to education.

What are you working on and what challenges do you face?

Right now I'm working on projects for 2Reallife and Applibot. The only difficulty is a lack of time because of the huge amount of work.

What advice do you have for aspiring concept artists?

You should work hard and be open to criticism. I try to be diligent and modest. It's important to keep your balance even at the most trying moments, be communicative and friendly and always strive to learn and improve your skills.



Viktoriya used to teach drawing, painting, and surface anatomy at universities until 2007, when she joined Grafit.

www.grafitart.com



PROJECTS Zynga Vampire Wars, Perfect World Russian localisation poster, Rise of Heroes, GodSend



sign, with holes burned in to look like bullet holes. It was more like preparations for filming a movie."

Keeping the inspiration flowing is more than picking cool-sounding projects, though. Grafit spends a lot of time on education and improving the skills of its artists. "This is the real community of gifted and bright people," says Roman, "whose curiosity touches a lot of themes. It's

Grafit has worked for several different companies, including the Japanese online card game new kids on the block, Applibot.

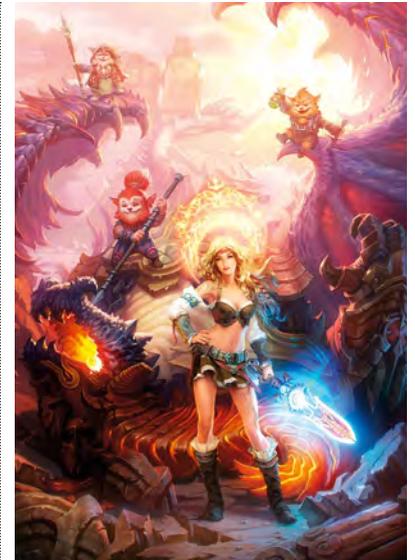
“Some days we put our work aside and dedicate a whole day to personal projects”

to keep these talents alive that 30 minutes to an hour a day is dedicated to quick studies, and the basics. Some days we put all our work aside and dedicate a whole day to personal projects and studying."

For senior artist Natalya Gorshkova, Grafit's 'open-leave' schedule is a convenient way to work. "We award bonuses to successful and diligent artists and always help those who are experiencing some trouble," she says. "Our



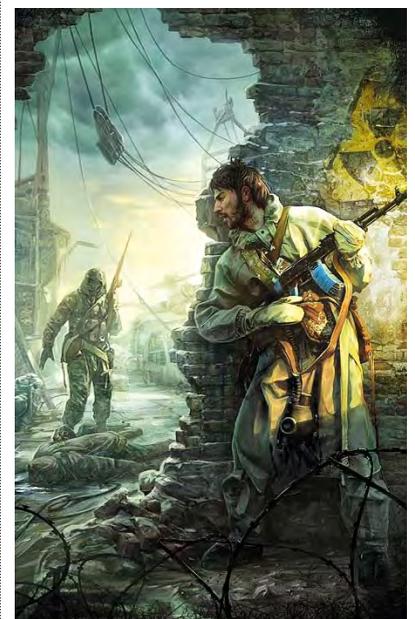
The team use each other for reference, including parading around with a huge gun (see top of page).



Stunning women, colours and crisp detail – Grafit produces highly polished game art as well as more gritty urban fare (below). Whatever it takes...

artists arrive at the office whenever they like. Nobody blames anyone for that – the main goal of the company is to work effectively and to deliver the results in time."

Although world domination may be a way off, for now Grafit continues to strive for perfection through its unique mix of education, inspirational and hard work. "Grafit is the only art studio in Voronezh whose projects reach worldwide," says Natalya. "And that fact speaks for itself." ●



Website

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Manon uses photos of octopuses to depict HP Lovecraft's monster: www.bit.ly/ifx-cthuhlu.



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Get an insight into how Will Murai created this stunning cover image: www.bit.ly/ifx-pulp.



Use colour effectively
Helen Rusovich employs colour theory and photos of butterflies: www.bit.ly/ifx-colour.



Professional tutorials

Watch and learn with our library tutorials from your favourite artists, including Raymond Swanland, Charles Guan and Mélanie Delon: www.bit.ly/ifx-mermaid.



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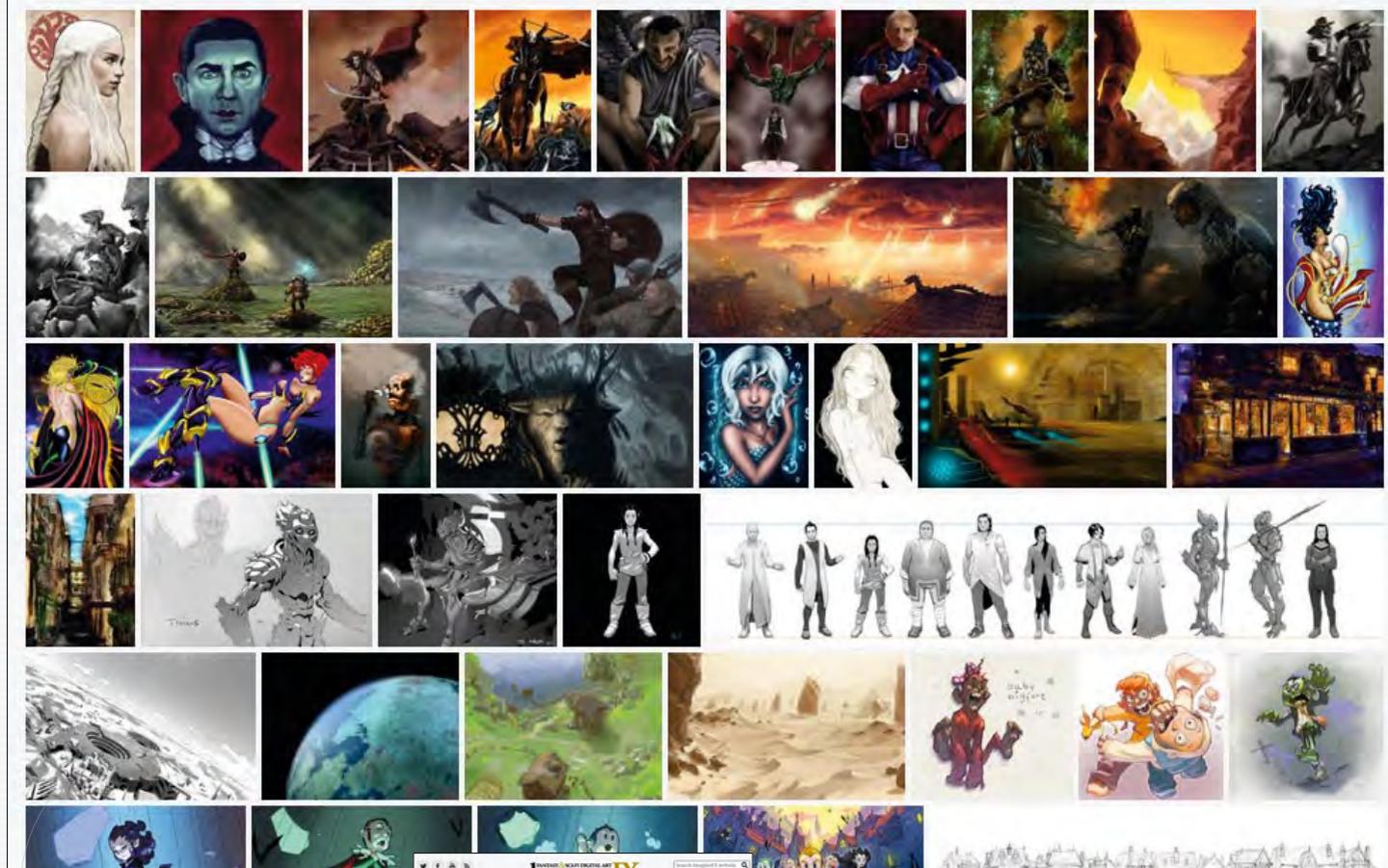
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Steampunk Boba Fett

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