

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART

ImagineFX

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

11

RISING STARS



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FROM CHAOS



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ART CONCEPT



NEW SERIES

TRADITIONAL ART SKILLS

Future

Inside

**MATTE PAINTING
IN PHOTOSHOP**
CROWD SCENES
IN SILHOUETTE
**USE COLOUR IN
SUBTLE TONES**

BEAT REJECTION HOW TO TURN A NEGATIVE ART CRITIQUE INTO A POSITIVE



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Welcome... to art in ascendance



Don't laugh, but it was only relatively recently that I realised people actually read this bit. I just assumed that you'd leap straight into the glorious innards of the mag: the art. Please turn to page 39 immediately to see the 11 astonishing artists we've chosen as our Rising Stars of 2013. It's much better than reading this.

If you're still here, there might be a few of you who didn't submit your art to this year's contest. Was it for fear of rejection? If you've had your fingers burned when previously showing your art, turn to page 16 where you'll find kindred spirits who share their rejection stories and reveal how they overcame the hurt that it brings. It happens to the best of the best, so don't be disheartened.

The voyeur in me always looks forward to our Artist in Residence feature. I love a guilt-free snoop around peoples' art spaces to see what tools and art books they've chosen, or to discover what paintings fill their studio. But this issue's featured artist – Tom Kidd – takes the prize for best open-mouthed gawping ever (by me, I might add). I warn those prone to jealousy to avert their green eyes from page 22.

To further fuel my addiction to nosiness, I've created another feature where I get to look at people and art. Yes! If you're part of a traditional art group (whether it be a school or college class, or a get-together in a bar) who meet to create art, take a look at Creative Space on page 104. If you think we should feature you, then please get in touch. Just try not to make me gawp too much...

Claire

Claire Howlett, Editor
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*Our special cover for
subscribers this issue.*



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THE WINNERS!
RISING STARS 2013

"John Petersen brings the best of comic style into the land of illustration, spicing it way up"

Rising Stars judge Jon Schindehette

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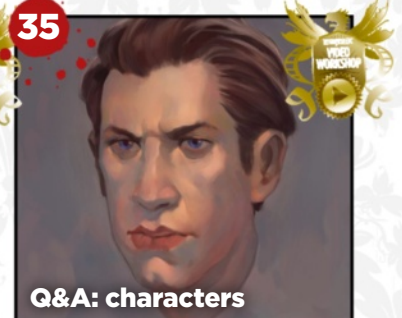
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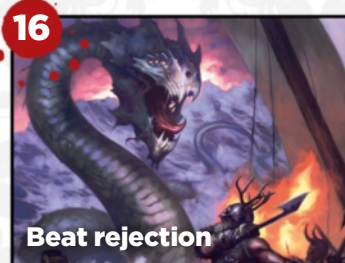
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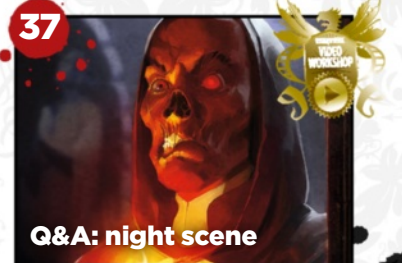
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THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART



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Let your artistic voice be heard



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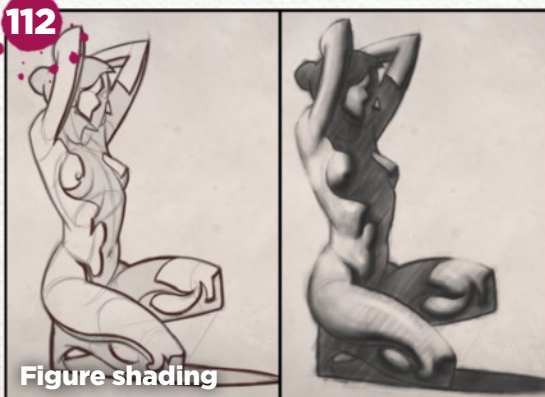


Figure shading

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Rebecca Guay

NEW
SECTION

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for more...





FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART
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Resources

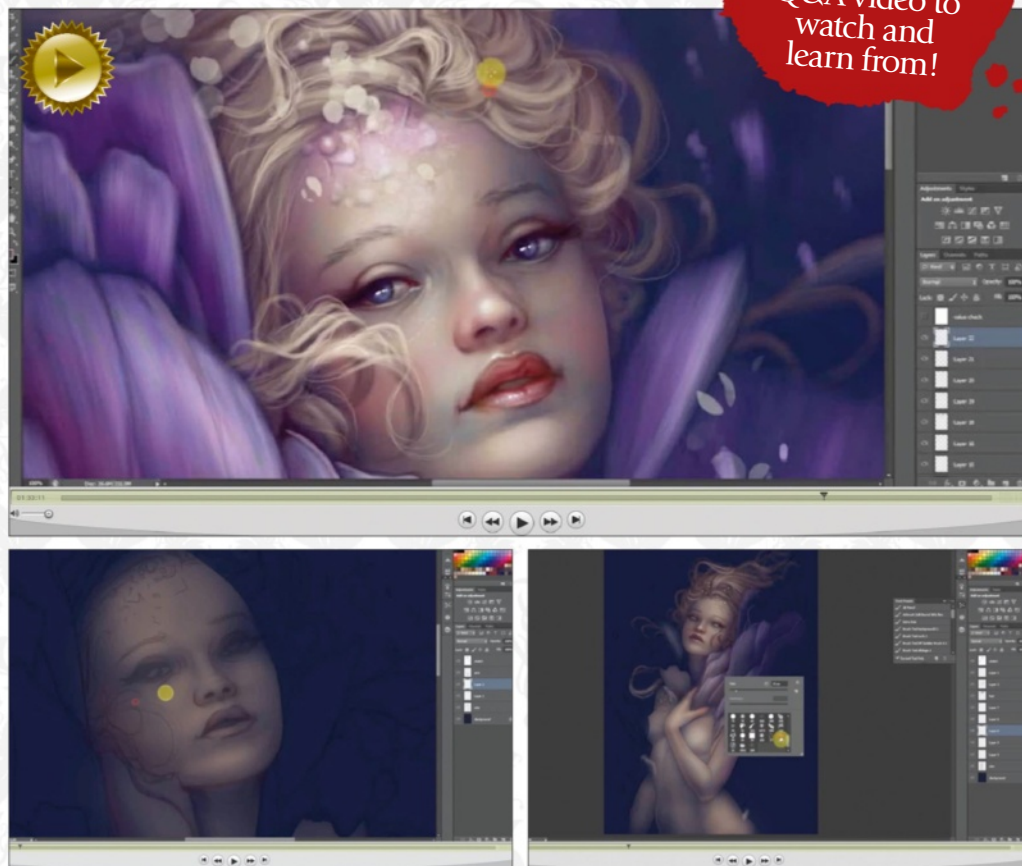
Getting your hands on all of this issue's essential resources is now easier than ever. Just go to our new dedicated web page at <http://ifxm.ag/ste104llar>

OVER 8 HOURS
of workshop and Q&A video to watch and learn from!

COVER VIDEO

Find your artistic style

Watch Jennifer Healy paint this issue's stunning cover art, and see how she employs Photoshop's Lasso and Liquify tools, and Blur filters in her painting process.



HOW TO GET YOUR FILES

How to find the video and workshop files in three simple steps...

- 1 Go to the website**
Type the URL into your address bar: <http://ifxm.ag/ste104llar>.
- 2 Find the files you want**
Search through the list of resources to watch or download.
- 3 Download what you need**
Click the asset download button or watch the videos online!

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART
ImagineFX

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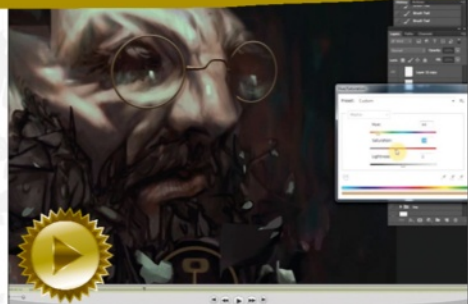




EXCLUSIVE VIDEO TUTORIAL!

Watch our videos to gain a unique insight into how our artists create their stunning art

WORKSHOP VIDEOS



Rafael Sarmento

Discover how this illustrator expresses his inner art mythology through his work.
Plus WIPs, brushes and textures



Chris Seaman

A frog princess is the unusual subject of this traditional art portrait workshop.
Plus WIPs and final image



James Paick

View a clip from the second volume of Environment Design for Games and Film, from Concept Design Workshop.

Q&A VIDEOS



Mark Molnar

Discover how it's possible to subtly enliven a painting with colour.
Plus WIP and final image



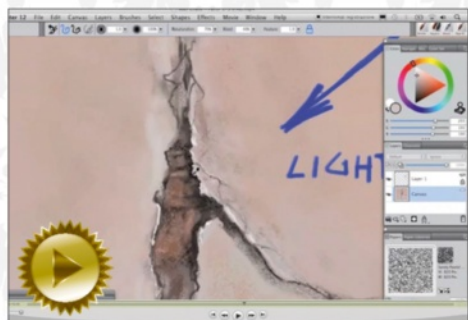
Sean Andrew Murray

Create small silhouettes of people to help fill out your crowd scenes.
Plus WIP and final image



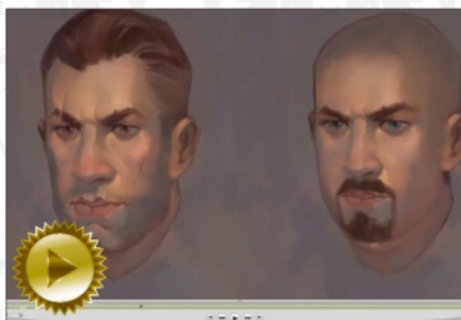
Peter Stapleton

Learn how to depict water in motion by paying attention to your light sources.
Plus WIP and final image



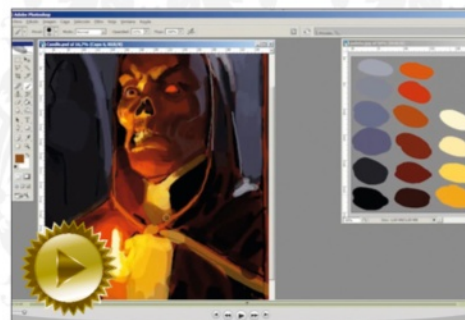
Corrado Vanelli

Find out how shadows will help you to realistically illustrate cracks in interior walls.
Plus WIPs and final image



Emrah Elmasli

Quickly generate a range of convincing character concepts with this expert advice.
Plus final images



Paco Rico Torres

Introduce a single light source to your night scenes and ramp up the atmosphere.
Plus WIPs and final image

PLUS Videos on differentiating between fur and velvet, creating tension in a scene and painting bubbles underwater, along with extensive WIPs and final images from Angela Otto, Rasmus Berggreen, Alex Chaudret and Simon Dominic.

148 CUSTOM BRUSHES, INCLUDING...

SMOKE BRUSH 66

Angela Otto uses this smoke brush to help generate figures in her digital art.

PINCEAU BROUSSE POIL 1

This brush helps Alex Chaudret achieve a traditional look in his art.

SKIN SOFT

Jennifer Healy paints soft-looking skin with this custom brush.

Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR FANTASY ART



Tim Löchner

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MEDIA: Photoshop



"When I paint something," Tim says, "I put myself into the world I'm creating. I experience it like it's real. When I draw a character, I see it moving and talking. I see its feelings and how it would interact with me."

Berlin-based Tim says it's his competitive streak that drives him on. Whenever he sees fellow members of the concept art community showing improvement in their work, it encourages him to sharpen his own skills. And it seems to be working. His gallery shows an artist with a good eye for character and environment design. His images are full of backstory, too.

1 THE FINAL BATTLE "This shows the final battle of Maria against her insane son G.Sus, who's about to eliminate humanity. After I designed the two characters I wanted to put them into action, so I painted this scene. I chose a dramatic and dynamic angle to show the tense nature of the battle."

2 WARRIOR FROM HELL "This demon uses her female charms to confuse male opponents, which enables her to strike them down with her deathly blade. In this illustration I focused on the figure and tried to keep the background simple to support the character."



ARTIST OF THE MONTH

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



Artist crit

Tim's Warrior From Hell warms the cockles of Paco Rico Torres' heart



"Here's a perfect example of how good lighting can make a simple illustration stand out. The illumination is so accurate and the colour palette is so pleasing, that I can't stop looking at it!"



Amanda Kihlström

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MEDIA: Photoshop



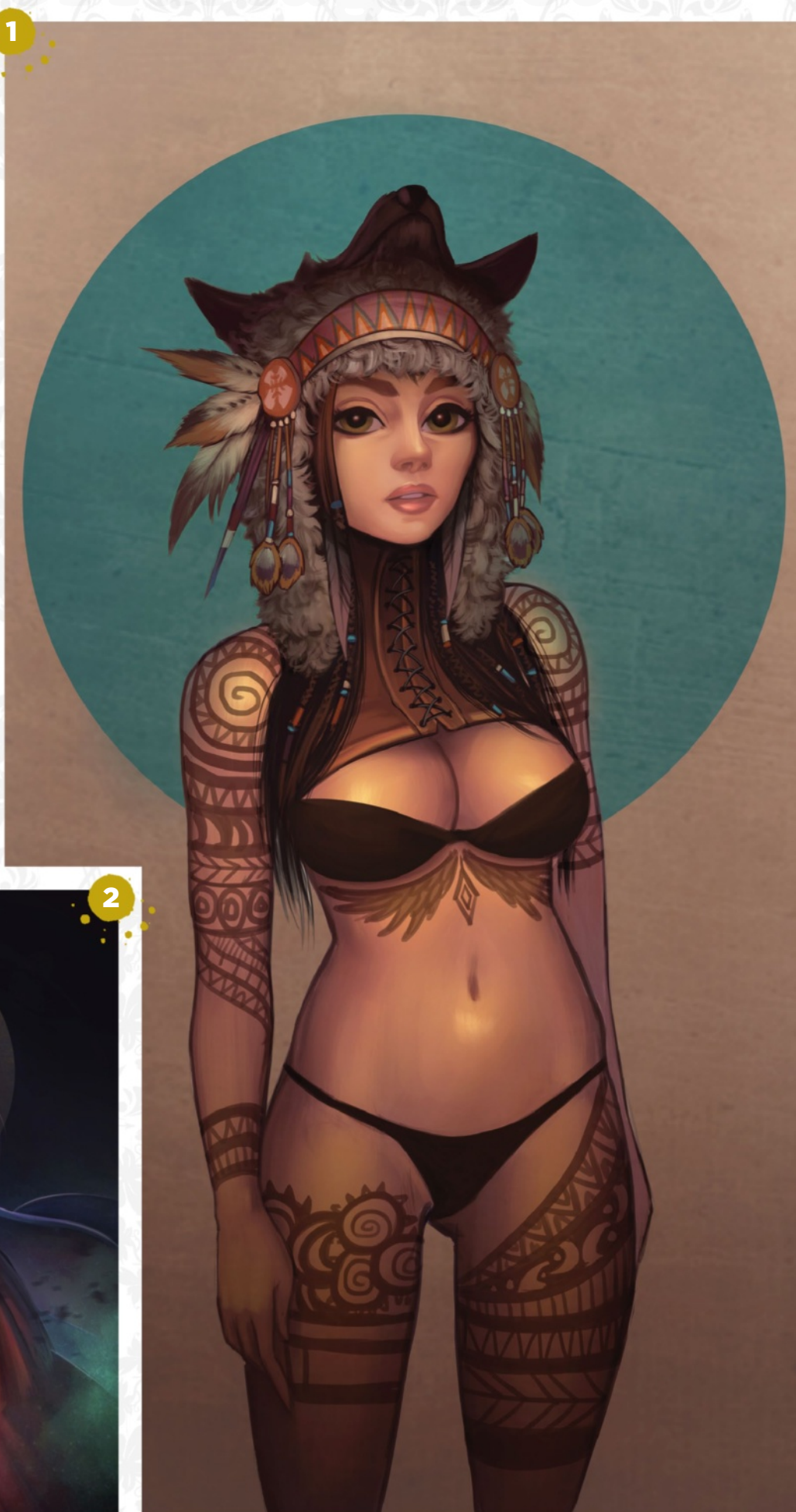
Amada draws inspiration from an unlikely source: 16th and 17th century clothing. The Swedish artist is particularly keen on dresses from the era, which feature heavily in her work.

Amada's been working as a professional game artist for the past two years, specifically on mobile and Facebook social games. "I've always loved to draw and play video games," she says, "so trying to find a career in the game industry just felt natural. Fantasy is my absolute favourite genre, and I love painting anything set in a fantasy world."

Indeed, the Swedish artist is working on a fantasy strategy game, which will be released on mobile platforms.

1 FOXY "A personal piece I did just for fun. She has Maori-inspired tattoos, which I thought complemented the rest of her tribal look very well."

2 WITCH "I wanted to draw a witch, but in a subtle manner. I worked in complementary colours, trying to achieve a good symbiosis with the green fog and her red dress. The lantern in her hand is used the same way as cultures have done so through the ages: as a focal point for the dead in their search for guidance in the afterlife."



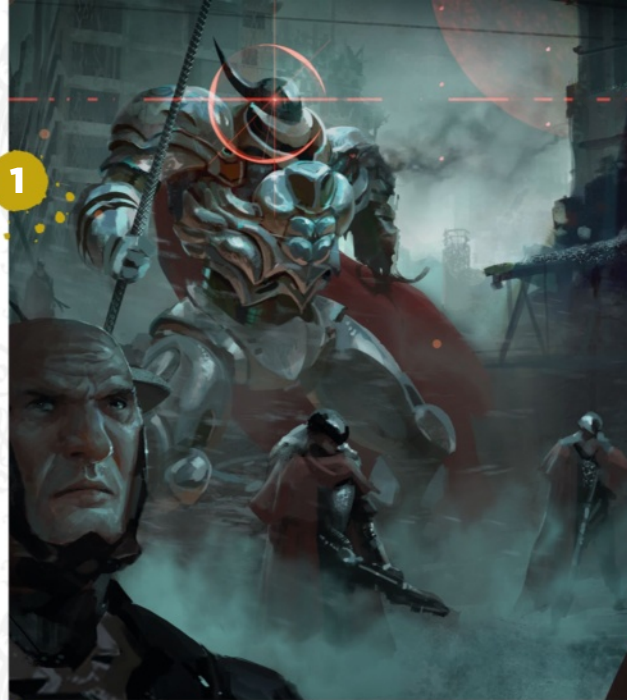
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EMAIL: www.robin-choy.com
MEDIA: Photoshop, SketchUp



We last featured Robin's work way back in issue 21. The concept and visual development artist has since gone it alone as a freelancer, honing his style and landing big-name clients such as Microsoft, Applibot and Universal Pictures.

"I love creating art that depicts chaos in an over-the-top way," Robin says. "There's nothing better than having chunks of debris from a building flying through the air and impacting or disrupting another building or person. The imaginary physics that comes into play is something I love to simulate in my head and transfer to my paintings."

1



IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Woah! Robin's brilliantly titled Ouch is quite amazing. Not just because of the ramped up nastiness of this clearly upset dude – but past the ferocity there's all that background action going on!"

Beren Neale,
Digital Editor

2



1 THE HUNT "With this image I wanted to push myself into using a different palette, and to try and imply what season might be taking place within the context of the image. I had a fun time making the little anime-esque lens flare on the robot."

2 OUCH "A homage, of sorts, to ultra-violent games such as Mortal Kombat and God of War. I really enjoyed playing up the ferocity and the strength of the main character."

3 GARAGE "This was an exercise to connect several separate concepts. So some of the characters and vehicles were conceptualised independently and then thrown together."

3



Kamil Jadczyk

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MEDIA: Photoshop



Polish artist Kamil is a graduate of Norwich University College of the Arts, where he studied games art and design. It was at university he began creating his very own Viking IP.

"I'm working on the aesthetics of the world," Kamil says, "as well as the characters and the historical accuracy."

The artist has worked for a number of small publishers, particularly in card and book art, and is actively seeking more work to sustain life after studies.

1 GO TO HELL DAVE "This image is a commission for Falchion Games. It's about a guy called Dave, who goes through hell to find his girlfriend. It's not as bad as it sounds. The game is full of very British humour."

2 ONEYE "It's a portrait of Norse god Odin. I wanted him to look at the viewer and give the impression he knows everything about them."

3 RHUPERTH THE ITEM STEALER "This is a card for Legacy TCG and it's pretty self-explanatory. I need to thank Awesome Horse Studio for giving me some crits. The team was extremely helpful in the creation of this image."



1



Adam Ferrando

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MEDIA: Photoshop



Adam thinks of the bigger picture. The US artist likes to weave a narrative thread through his work, something to tie his portfolio together. His biggest source of inspiration? His peers.

"I see the bar being raised on digital art everyday on websites like CGHub and in my Facebook feed, and it pushes me to produce better work."

Adam wants to improve technically, while continuing to develop his story-led style. But ultimately, he has only one goal. "Going forward, I just want to attract new clients," he says.

1 VICKY HUNTRESS "I was going for a mixture of classical portraits and sci-fi. She's partly inspired by the books of Neal Stephenson."

2 DEAD PRESIDENTS "A scene from a sci-fi robbery - inspired by heist films and a cyberpunk aesthetic - in which I was trying to do something dynamic."

2



IMAGINEFX CRIT



"What's so striking about Adam's imagery is that there are so many elements working together to make his artwork sing. The colours, composition and surreal objects combine to brilliant effect."

Claire Howlett,
Editor

Houston Sharp

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MEDIA: Photoshop



Houston strives to imbue his work with emotion. Influenced by video games, the American artist wants his characters to appear alive, to jump off the page.

"The exponential rise of quality and ambition in video games as an art form and narrative experience has been nothing short of incredible," he says, "and is very inspirational to me, to the artwork I create and to the stories I attempt to write."

Houston is an illustration and entertainment design student at Art Center College of Design in Pasadena. He also works as a freelancer on everything from card art to promotional illustrations. "Within a year or two," Houston says, "I want to be working in the feature film and game industries, as well as be developing my own personal projects and IPs."

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"From the horror of Lara Croft's first kill to the dead-eyed menace of Deus Ex, Houston's work is built on emotion. It's no surprise he's attracted the attention of Applibot – Feini demonstrating the full breadth of his talents."

Gary Evans,
Staff Writer

1



2



1 FEINI "This was one of the paintings that I was recently hired to do for Applibot. I was asked to depict a female character that was physically appealing despite having a grotesque mutation and a sense of incredible brutality."

2 TOMB RAIDER "This painting was created for Square Enix and deviantART's Tomb Raider: Reborn contest. I wanted to depict Lara Croft at her turning point from a naïve college student into a survivor: her first kill."

3 DEUS EX "One of my favourite games from this generation of consoles is Deus Ex: Human Revolution. The overall tone, atmosphere and art direction are incredibly immersive and inspiring. While I was playing, I kept thinking of paintings I wanted to do as fan art for the game. This is one that I came up with."

SUBMIT YOUR ART TO FXPOSÉ

Send up to five pieces of your work, along with their titles, an explanation of your techniques, a photo of yourself and contact details. Images should be sent as 300DPI JPEG files.

Email: fxpose@imaginefx.com
(maximum 1MB per image)

Post: (CD or DVD):
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30 Monmouth Street
Bath
BA1 2BW, UK

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ARTIST NEWS, SOFTWARE & EVENTS

ImagineNation

AT THE CORE OF THE FANTASY ART COMMUNITY



Jon Schindehette responded positively to harsh criticism early in his career. He now offers feedback to other artists - including illustrator Nicholas Gregory.





QUICK OF THE DRAW

Art book Spectrum 21 is inviting entries – from you. They're looking for quality art rather than big names. But time's running out, so you'd better get scribbling...
Page 18



NO SLÁINE NO GAIN

Hell raiser, berserker, time killer, horned god and eternal wanderer. What's not to like about Sláine? Artists come together for his 30th anniversary special.
Page 19



LET THERE BE LIGHT

US traditional illustrator Tom Kidd built his own art studio. Everything's on wheels and sliders, and there's lots of space and light. Cue open-mouthed gawps.
Page 22

Dealing with rejection

Art attack Every great artist was once a bad one, and the only way to improve is by learning from criticism and rejection



Jon Schindehette was an aspiring photographer in his junior year of art school, but an instructor told him he had "no innate skill or talent for

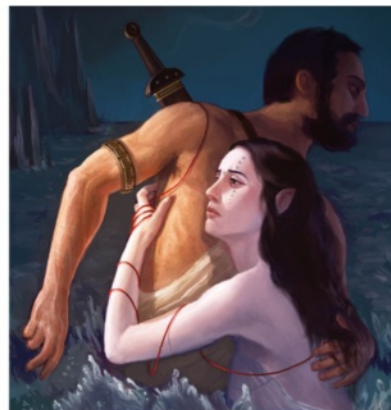
the medium". Desperate to prove him wrong, Jon spent "every waking hour" practising in the studio and the darkroom.

His persistence paid off. A leading beer company bought one of his images and used it in a billboard campaign. As part of his final assessment, he personally delivered the transparency from the shoot and the cheque received as payment to his instructor. "It felt really good," Jon says, "telling him he was wrong."

It was only later Jon realised his instructor wasn't wrong. If he hadn't redoubled his efforts, making up with hard work what he lacked in natural ability, he would never have made a success of it. "That lesson guided me for the rest of my career," Jon says. "And it guides me in my reviews of artists: it's my responsibility to give artists an honest assessment of their work."

Each year, IlluXCon invites students to apply for one of its scholarships. Successful applicants receive an all-expenses-paid trip to the fantasy art symposium – funded, in part, by money raised from the sales of artist donations. Jon, then senior creative director on iconic RPG Dungeons & Dragons, contributed by offering one-hour email portfolio reviews for \$25. For illustrator Levon Jihanian, who dreams of working for the Wizards of

A painting by Levon Jihanian. "Accepting you're not as good as you think is hard," says the illustrator.



the Coast staple, it was an opportunity too good to miss. "It was like he had X-ray eyes," Levon says. "He could see through my creative process. And he tore it apart."

Rendering, composition, posing, depth, anatomy... Jon pulled no punches in highlighting Levon's shortcomings. The Los Angeles-based illustrator had been out of art school for 11 years. He's a professional.

He's even created his own comic, Danger Country. The review was "a tough pill to swallow." But an artist who Levon has a deep respect for prescribed it.

"I want to make art for D&D," Levon says. "This was it. This was the D&D guy. I couldn't just shrug and say, 'He doesn't understand my style' and go on with what I was doing. There's no other place to go."

Levon now works with a printout of Jon's email as a checklist. He's more than doubled the amount of thumbnails he comes up with for each of his illustrations. He's rereading the books he "glossed over" at art school. And he took to his blog to write a brilliant post based on the experience.

"Accepting you're not as good as you think is hard," Levon says. "But Jon's



Paintings by Danny Moll and Nathalia Suellen, who were determined to impress Jon.

“He had X-ray eyes and could see through my creative process. He tore it apart”

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

LAUREN PANEPINTO

What Orbit Books's creative director looks for in a portfolio

What are the biggest mistake artists make when putting together portfolio?

The two biggest stumbling blocks are the amount of work and pacing. Put in as much of your top-tier work as possible, showing your full range and skills. There's no golden number. It's better to have five great pieces in your book rather than five great and five mediocre. Art directors don't hire you on the basis of the best work – they hire you based on your worst. Your portfolio should tell a story. So show both artists and non-artists and take notes on what they respond to.

What follow up questions should you ask after a rejection?

Artists showing an art director their portfolio want to know if they're good enough to be hired. If the answer is no, they should be given at least a general reason why. If not, they're entitled to ask. Ask either what you should be working on, or if they know of a company that your work would be better suited to. Art directors will always be happy to see you again in the future, as your work progresses.

What advice would you give to someone on the receiving end of a scathing critique or rejection?

Being a professional artist is a tightrope walk. You need just enough detachment to keep critiques of your work from feeling like critiques of you as a person. But you also need to keep emotion and enthusiasm in your work – otherwise your creativity flounders. You can't be so thin-skinned that fear of rejection paralyses you. But you also can't be so thick-skinned that you turn into a soulless, client-pleasing robot.



Lauren has over a decade of designing and art directing book covers across the fantasy and sci-fi genres.

www.laurenpanepinto.com

Continued from previous page...



Noah Bradley advises artists use social media to solicit feedback.

critique removed the toughest part of improving: knowing what needs to be improved."

So where should you go to receive honest and objective evaluations of your work? Concept artist and illustrator



Noah Bradley says art schools are too expensive now. He advocates alternatives, such

as atelier schools and online courses such as The Gnomon Workshop, CGMA and SmART School Mentorship.

Noah, whose clients include Deep Silver and Triptych Games, says social media is one of the best and most accessible ways to get some instant feedback. Follow a mix of professionals and amateurs. Join Facebook art groups. And critique other artists as you'd like to be critiqued yourself.

Noah also has a small, trusted group of friends and fellow professionals who he sends work to for evaluation. For critiques to really carry weight they have to come from someone you respect, those who'll give an objective but unflinching assessment.

However encouraging or discouraging the assessment of your work may be, it's important to realise "no" often means "not right now". Noah advises taking a step back, allowing the critique to soak in before attempting to put suggestions into practice. The only way to improve is by reacting to criticism and rejection in a proactive way.

"Every great artist started out as a terrible one," says Noah. "We don't know what we're doing. We attempt to do something, we fail, we learn from our failure, we get better. Rinse and repeat."

Making dreams reality

Crowd pleaser The former Lucasfilm Games artist takes his graphic novel to Kickstarter



Gary Winnick was the first artist that Lucasfilm Games (now LucasArts) employed, and is perhaps best known for his work on cult classic Maniac Mansion.

His latest project, *Bad Dreams*, is a five-part fantasy-adventure serial published digitally through iBooks and Amazon earlier this year.

The comic book writer, illustrator and game designer plans to release a printed collection, full of bonus material, but has chosen to circumvent traditional publishing, funding the project through Kickstarter.

"I can bring my vision direct to an audience of like-minded folks – without jumping through the usual publishing hoops. I think *Bad Dreams* is my best work and would love to see it on the printed page. I hope the audience agrees."

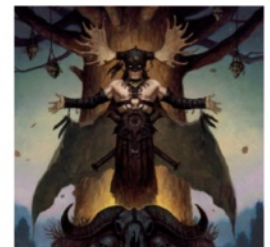
Visit www.baddreams.com to find out more, and follow Gary's Kickstarter progress at <http://ifxm.ag/baddreams>.



Gary is taking his five-part fantasy adventure to a "like-minded" audience on Kickstarter.



The artist wants to see *Bad Dreams* on the printed page.



A Brom painting from Spectrum 20 – entries are wanted for #21.

Spectrum 21 call for entries

Business as usual Flesk Publications takes over Spectrum Fantastic Art, but the ethos – of diversity, talent and skill – remains the same



The secret to Spectrum's enduring success, John Fleskes says, is that it embraces diversity. The publication puts skill before style. It values talent not trends.

After five years in a background role, John is the new art director, editor and publisher, taking over from previous owners Cathy and Arnie Fenner. The Flesk Publications founder has revamped the Spectrum website and formed a new advisory board, which includes Brom, Mark Chiarello and James Gurney. Now he's inviting artists of any standing to submit entries to the 21st Annual Spectrum International Competition for Fantastic Art.

"There is no unacceptable way to create art." That's the Spectrum mantra. Work based on the themes of science fiction, fantasy, horror and the surreal, using any media, are eligible for selection.

What's the five-judge panel looking for in prospective pieces? "The best work an artist is capable of," says John. "We feel it's the quality of the art, and not the artist name, that should determine if a piece is selected by the jury."

Any published or unpublished art may be submitted and work must have been finished or first published between 1 January 2013 and 1 January 2014. Deadline is 24 January. For more information, visit www.spectrumfantasticart.com.

Three decades of Sláine

Dream team An all-star line-up for the Celtic hero's newest adventure

It was 1983 when Sláine first wielded his axe across the pages of 2000 AD. To mark 30 years of his adventures, a special anniversary book brings together a new story from creator Pat Mills with artwork by a dream team of the title's artists.

Sláine: The Book of Scars sees one of British comics' most popular characters return to key moments from his past, facing off against the familiar foes attempting to change his future. Artwork is beautifully rendered by Mick McMahon, Glenn Fabry, Simon Bisley and Clint Langley.

"I was asked if I'd be interested in celebrating Sláine's 30th birthday," Clint



says, "with some of the top artists from the warped man's history. How could I say no?"

His photo-real art combines elements of painting, photography and digital art. Clint has also worked on Judge Dredd, Sinister Dexter and covers for Marvel Comics.

The Book of Scars collects every 2000 AD Sláine cover, pin-ups, sketch and other rarities. But why has the warp-spasming warrior endured for so long? "Because he's a hell raiser, berserker, time killer, king, horned god and eternal wanderer," the artist says. "He's probably good in bed, too, and I bet he can drink like a fish."

For more information and to order your copy visit www.2000adonline.com.



Clint Langley's Sláine combines elements of photography, digital art and traditional painting.

“He’s a hell raiser, berserker, time killer, king, horned god and eternal wanderer”



All images © 2000 AD



Sláine celebrates three decades of axe-wielding mayhem by encountering familiar foes in The Book of Scars.



The 30th anniversary hardback book features a new story by Pat Mills, in which the hero goes back in time to prevent his enemies changing his future.

FRESH PAINT

Your art news that's grabbed our attention



Greg Newman
(@gregnewman)

“Winding down the day with some speed sketches. Approximately 15-minute pencil study.”
<http://ifxm.ag/gregnewman>



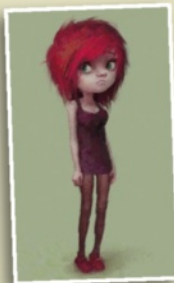
Christof Grobelski
(@gloominati)

“Another weird little experiment and day 16 on the studyblog is up.”
<http://ifxm.ag/christofgrobelski>



Zac Retz
(@ZacDRetz)

“A colour and character study.”
<http://ifxm.ag/zacretz>



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



Hatboy
by Vaughn Pinpin



Fantasy talk Explaining the inexplicable

“[My dream] has always been to have a TV show like the ones that make you travel around the world eating all sorts of crazy dishes”

Victor Adame, one of this year's Rising Stars, has a very different dream job to most artists... Page 49

Marvellous work

Thor film art Atomhawk Design reveals Marvel Studios' unique approach to film art on blockbuster Thor: The Dark World

As feature film debuts go, it doesn't get much better than contributing to a global box office number one. That's the enviable position that Atomhawk Design finds itself in after helping to create key scenes, locations and sets for Marvel Studios' production of Thor: The Dark World.



Company director Ron Ashtiani says that while it was a dream come true for him and his team, it was also a baptism of fire. Marvel required scores of first-rate paintings for each element of every scene. “Marvel doesn't work to the WIP-image method,” explains Ron. “Every image we created was to the same standard – and produced in just one day. Rather than iterate on something, Marvel had us paint hundreds of images for each item, before reviewing them and picking the best one.”

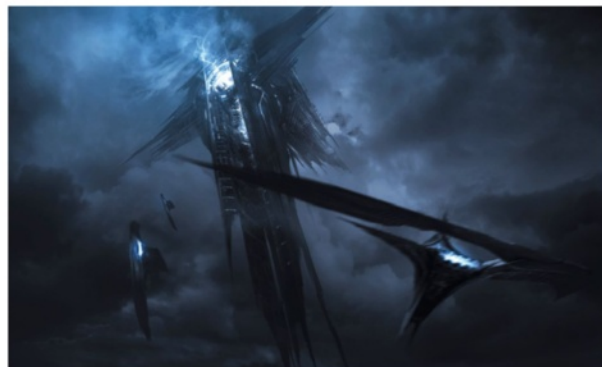
The Gateshead-based studio began working on the film back in January 2012.

Harrow Ships being deployed from the Dark Elf mothership – Atomhawk's art for Thor: The Dark World.

It was responsible for “previsualisation” – coming up with illustrations for many of the movie's intricate scenes – and focused on the Asgardian and Dark Elf spacecrafts.

“It was a crazy introduction to the world of big budget movies,” says Ron.

You can see more from Atomhawk Design at www.atomhawk.com.



© Marvel Studios

Curiouser and curiouser

Lifting the lid Guillermo del Toro's new illustrated book, *Cabinet of Curiosities*, reveals the inspirations behind the innovative director's creative process

Guillermo del Toro has opened up his notebook to reveal the secrets behind some of modern cinema's most memorable monsters. *Cabinet of Curiosities* is a compendium of drawings and handwritten notes by the visionary filmmaker, sharing the ideas and inspirations that went into films such as *Blade II*, *Pan's Labyrinth* and *Hellboy*.

The book begins with a tour of Bleak House, the home Guillermo bought for his collection of books, artwork and props. The second half features the director's notebooks, offering everything from screenwriting tips to glimpses of unreleased projects.

Oscar-winning visual effects animator



Hal Hickel was part of the team responsible for bringing Guillermo's vision to life in summer blockbuster *Pacific Rim*. "Guillermo draws well," Hal says. "He's very visual. He's the sort of director who can always explain to you where he wants things to go. For a visual effects artist, that's the dream. That's what you want. He's highly collaborative."

Guillermo says *Cabinet of Curiosities* aims to show how his home, books and films are connected by "a single piece of narrative". See <http://ifxm.ag/toro-book> for more details on the book and judge for yourself.

Pacific Rim is out now on DVD and Blu-ray.



© Titan Books



Guillermo del Toro's Bleak House includes a writing room that uses sound and projection effects to simulate a stormy night.



Named Fear at the Foot of the Bed, this image has haunted Guillermo since childhood – and will now haunt us through adulthood.



While filming *Pan's Labyrinth*, Guillermo left his precious notebooks in a London cab. Luckily, the driver returned them to him.



Many film ideas, including *Pan's Labyrinth*, have come directly from the director's elaborate notebook doodles.



+deviantWATCH

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



Nele-Diel

www.nele-diel.deviantart.com

"Practising, practising" reads the description of this piece by illustrator and concept artist Nele. And this determined approach appears to be paying off, judging by the German's deviantART page – a portfolio full of beautifully lit landscapes and weird and wonderful character designs.



Muju

www.muju.deviantart.com

Singaporean artist muju counts Jason Chan, Jen Wang and Ken Wong among his influences. He's developed a strong following on deviantART for his collection of fan art, such as this piece created to celebrate N7 Day – the recent five-year anniversary of the release of the original Mass Effect.



Neisbeis

www.neisbeis.deviantart.com

Neisbeis has over four years' experience working on AAA games for PlayStation3, Xbox and PC. The Argentinean illustrator has worked for a string of studios and publishers. It's not hard to see why he's in such demand, looking at one of his most recent pieces: the brilliant Desert Bike Rebel Camp.

I've filled my rolling cart – and former TV stand – with paint, rags, brushes and other regularly used items. You'll usually see a cup of tea there, too.



My iPad and computer are used for reference, importing photos, research, music and audio books. Bluetooth headphones sit on the computer.



A comfortable chair for reading manuscripts. I do a lot of book covers and book illustrations, so I do a lot of reading and historical research.

This is my main computer, stationed on a rolling platform. I can tether it to my camera to photograph art. On the rolling platform is a Wacom I use mainly for colour sketches and the occasional finished piece done digitally.

Tom Kidd

Paint engineer The sci-fi and fantasy illustrator says a studio is a machine for making art, which is why he's just built his own...



As a fantasy artist, my job is to imagine all manner of exotics, and then make them believable. Having done this for many years,

I felt I had the skills to build a custom studio. I visualised myself in the space, imagined it working exactly how I wanted.

The town I live in – New Milford, CT – has snowy winters and warm, humid summers.

I've built a studio with that in mind. My workspace was built to fulfil both my traditional and digital needs. I primarily paint in oils, but still need to get my work onto my computer to send it off for publication.

I need good light, plenty of space – primarily to back up and look at my work – and a high ceiling to accommodate the extra big jobs and my oversized easel. To photograph my art I use a digital camera. It's

A ceiling fan keeps the air moving and disperses unwanted distillates, but I'm actually quite careful with my mediums. It also helps keep me cool in the summer.

The ceiling has five fluorescent 'cloud' lights that give me the correct light wherever I'm working, placed so my shadow isn't cast on my painting as I work.

This is my main rolling art taboret – its original function was as a rolling kitchen cart. It holds my palette, which I made to snap into its extendable shelf, the brushes I'm currently using, and my mediums.



I use this old computer as a turning monitor that enables me to look at pictures vertically, and for scanning and playing a slideshow of pictures to put me in the mood of what I'm painting.

A well-worn easel built to hold large paintings. The ceiling height here is 14ft. It would be a bit awkward, but I could do a painting 24ft wide in this studio.



My studio has been designed to be usable throughout the year.

tethered to a computer on a rolling cart so I can monitor my shots. For drawings and watercolours I use a scanner. I paint standing up, so my computers are set at eye level. My computers are used for research and reference. Often I'll import my art to see it in reverse or to test colour schemes. Everything in the studio is on wheels or sliders, enabling me to adjust things for whatever project I'm working on.

My old studio is now used for matting, framing, storage and as a library. I also sell original paintings, so it's nice to have a separate area for crating them up for shipment. I try to keep only the things that

I'm currently using or use regularly in the new studio.

I have an outside deck I use for drawing on nice days, and a covered area beneath it used for doing messy work such as sanding and gessoing. At the back of the studio, I have cabinets and closets to hold paintings, supplies and photography equipment. Heat and cooling comes from air conditioners, but the studio floor is heated separately. I like to ensure my studio is a pleasant place to be.

Tom has won seven Chesley Awards and one World Fantasy Award for Best Artist. You can see his art at www.spellcaster.com/tomkidd.



This is for doing drawings, watercolours or flat work. I also move it next to the easel and use it to hold printed references.



MONSTER MASH

HP's powerful workstations were more than capable of bringing 2D fantasy concept art to 3D life.



BRIGHT 'N' BREEZY

The atmosphere at events was lighthearted and relaxed.

HP'S POP-UP STUDIO HELPS GIVE ARTISTS SUPERPOWERS

This autumn, top sci-fi and fantasy pro artists rubbed shoulders at **ZED**, HP's pop-up creative space in London. Find out what you missed and how you can get involved next time around...

Zip-a-Dee-Doo-Dah was too long. Zoinks belonged in Scooby-Doo's Mystery Machine. But ZED felt just right as the name for HP's pop-up studio for the thriving creative community.

ZED's origins lie in the fact that sci-fi and fantasy have never been so popular, and that's not just good news for fans, but those with a passion for creating it, too. From concept sketches to 3D modelling, through to designing visual effects, there's a huge

range of people involved in getting those initial concepts into finished video games and card art, TV and film productions.

But there's one thing noticeably absent from this enthralling field: an opportunity for all the various creatives to meet up in an atmosphere of relaxed learning and inspiration. So this autumn HP, maker of high-end workstations used by most VFX professionals, decided to do something a little different. Together with ImagineFX's sister title Creative Bloq.com, it opened a unique space in London's central Soho district. ZED was born...

The aim of ZED was to help creatives "turn imagination into reality". And some big names were drafted in to help out. There were talks from the likes of Alex Huguet from Passion Pictures, who discussed how to bring a character sketch to life, while Andy Morely from The Imaginarium demonstrated motion capture technology. MPC's Adam Davis revealed how the breathtaking visuals for zombie blockbuster World War Z were created, and Milk lifted the curtain on its effects work for the latest series of Doctor Who. And that was just a few of the great speakers who

FEEL THE POWER

Attendees were able to try out HP's powerful new creative hardware for free.



STEP INSIDE THE WORLD OF ZED...

ZED was a beacon of creativity and innovation in the heart of London, and attracted a host of digital artists.





greeted the audiences at ZED over a month of inspiring events.

As well as looking back at the creation of well-known characters, ZED saw the creation of some brand-new ones. To take one example, Adam Dewhirst, a 3D modeller for Framestore, took part in a unique challenge over 10 days, using the latest HP workstations to create speed sculpts of the community's choosing via social media. We tweeted it, he created it – against the clock, with an eager audience watching. No pressure there, then.

Then there was London's Hero, an epic collaboration in which six teams of animators from all over Europe worked together to create London's first superhero (okay, possibly the second, if you want to count Captain Britain). Again, in front of a live audience, multinational animators from Mummu, Golden Wolf, Fred & Eric, Blackmeal, Territory and Animade were tasked with imagining a different stage of the hero's life, from baby to senior.

UP, UP AND AWAY!

Six agencies collaborated on the creation of a new superhero for London.

“ ZED was a chance for creatives to meet and chat over free drinks, and play with HP's impressive portfolio ”

The teams were given just a few minutes to sketch out their heroic vision. Then, in a series of five-hour sessions, they were asked to create a 10-second clip, which was eventually joined together to create a whole – and you can see the final video here: <http://ifxm.ag/londons-hero>.

The result was truly original, and very true to the UK's capital. The new superhero carries an umbrella (a nod to the country's famously unpredictable weather) while in his senior years he develops a heavy paunch. This reflected a consensus among the multinational competitors that no British male can reach old age without getting a beer belly – not even a superhero.

As such silliness might suggest, while creative events can often be serious,

high-minded affairs, ZED was anything but. Those who came spoke of its relaxed atmosphere – a chance for creatives to meet and chat over free drinks, and have a play on some of HP's impressive portfolio.

All in all, ZED was a real shot in the arm for London's creative community. But if you couldn't make it, then don't kick yourself too much. We can't promise anything, but we've got a sneaking suspicion that ZED will return. So keep an eye on the @imaginefx Twitter account, and we'll be sure to bring you news of future events as soon as we hear of them!

[Get the full ZED story at hp.co.uk/zed](http://hp.co.uk/zed), where you can also learn about the full range of powerful yet affordable digital creative solutions that HP has to offer.

Letters

YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS



Contact the editor, Claire Howlett, on claire@imaginefx.com or write to ImagineFX, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW, UK



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www.facebook.com/imaginefx

Bravo, people!

Claire, I just wanted to applaud you on issue 102 of ImagineFX! Just when I thought you guys had proven yourselves innovative and useful, you go one step further in design and ease of access to assets. This issue really raises the bar for all other publications – also the standard by which I personally choose my reading material. Congrats!

David Curbis, via email



Issue 102 certainly had a fan in David Curbis, who sent the sort of email that makes all the long hours in the office worthwhile.

Claire replies Glad to be of service David! Myself and the team really work hard to give you the best magazine each issue, so an email like this makes it all worthwhile.

Submit my art?

Are we allowed to send in work to your magazine? I always see a lot of artists' work on your cover, or within your wonderfully beautiful pages. I was just wondering. Thank you!

Damon Crawford, via email

Claire replies Damon, we absolutely recommend that artists submit their work to us. We have contact details of how to do this on our FXPosé pages on page 15. Also, just as a side note, can I remind artists who are emailing in asking if they can submit – make sure you provide some small examples of your work, or a link to your art online and a bio. We need to see your art!

I don't want a disc!

Hey, I got a copy of ImagineFX Presents... Comic Artist and I was following a tutorial when I decided that watching the video on the provided CD may help with the step I was on. I've got a MacBook Pro Retina display, which as I'm sure you know comes with no disc drive. It can borrow another disk drive from a computer on the same network, but I'm kind of a solo hermit type.

Do you have any recommendations? And at what point will you cross over to the very



DID YOU MISS ISSUE 103?
See page 74 for details on how to get hold of a copy.



The debate continues: Grey bought Comic Artist (see p.74) and was disappointed the resources were on a disc.

practical world of iTunes store download codes? You do it with your online subscription editions, so why not have the disc contents available in the same way? A little sealed envelope glued inside to prevent tampering or stealing of the code. Just a thought. Thanks for any help you can provide. Keep up the great work on the magazines – I love them.

Grey Alexander, via email

Claire replies Grey, I have good news and bad news for you. The good news is that as of issue 102, we have replaced the disc on the magazine with downloadable content. The bad news is that it won't happen on the magazines and bookazines that are already in circulation. From next year, however, we will provide our bookazine resources content in the same downloadable way as the magazine.

Digital editions

I'm retired, and trying to learn to draw. Fantasy art is what I'm interested in. I bought your magazines from the store. I keep them because I love to look at them periodically. My question is about ordering ImagineFX digitally. Will I be able to keep them like I keep my magazines? Is it cheaper compared to magazines?

Keep up the good work. Hopefully, I'll be able to see my art work in your magazine. That is my dream.

Terry LL, via email

Claire replies Hello Terry. When you buy magazines digitally you have to download an app or container to store them all in, so yes, you can keep them stored in this device. The containers vary depending on which one you buy through – you can discover the various outlets on page 28. The savings depend on whether you subscribe or buy individual magazines. Generally single digital issues are £1 cheaper than the printed version. Hope this helps.



Our star letter writer wins a dA Premium Membership!

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New traditional art section

I absolutely love your magazine! I'm new to digital art, and I've been getting all the ImagineFX Presents... bookazines too, as I love how accessible your tutorials are. I love traditional art, so I was very happy to see the new traditional art skills section! I liked the tactile nature of issue 102, too: the thick, textured paper for the new section and the soft-feel matte cover with the shiny lettering makes it a pleasure to read.

One of my favourite sections is Artist in Residence, so the new Creative Space in the traditional section is brilliant! It inspires me to see how others work. Hopefully my traditional skills will be enhanced or even replaced by digital art, and this magazine is going to help me do that.

Also, I'm a bit on the fence about the loss of the CD. For people like myself who don't have unlimited data packages, downloading everything in HD now will cost me a lot in bandwidth usage. What about a CD, but just adding extra content to a site? Because extra high-quality content is always welcome, of course.

Claudine Curran, Ireland

Claire replies Claudine, the Artist in Residence and Creative Space features are personal faves of mine, too (turn to page 3 to read more of my thoughts on this very subject). As for the disc, I understand how you feel about this, but once we started to provide our content online for our digital readers it seemed obvious to do the same for all of our readers.



Creative Space, in our new traditional section, Fantasy Illustrator, has a fan in Claudine.



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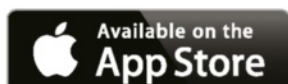
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Artist Q&A

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EASE YOUR ART-ACHE AT **HELP@IMAGINEFX.COM**

The FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX panel

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

Emrah Elmasli



Emrah is a freelance concept artist and illustrator based in London. He has over eight years' experience in video games and publishing.

www.emrahelmasli.com

Mark Molnar



Mark works as a concept and visual development artist for the entertainment industry. He also freelances for film, game and animation companies.

www.markmolnar.com

Peter Stapleton



Peter is new to the freelance game, having started only working professionally this year. He specialises in illustration and concept art.

www.artofstapleton.blogspot.com

Ross Tran



Ross is a designer and artist for film, games and television. He's also attending Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California.

www.rosstran.net

Sean Andrew Murray



A freelance illustrator and concept artist, Sean is also the creator of Gateway: The Book of Wizards, and has worked for WoT, EA and Turbine.

www.seanandrewmurray.com

Corrado Vanelli



Corrado works full time in a factory and only paints in his free time. He's worked with digital media since the 1990s. Art for Corrado is a passion.

www.landofsecretarts.com

Question

I just want to paint an angry giant destroying things with a club. Can a pro show me how it's done?

J Stevens, US

Inject dynamism into the scene with careful use of the Motion Blur filter.



Answer

Emrah replies



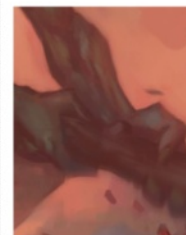
The most important thing to convey here is the action. The viewer needs to see the anger on the giant's face and debris getting scattered around the scene with the devastating power of the strike.

An easy way to convey the intensity of the action is to use the Motion Blur filter that's available in Photoshop and Corel Painter. Applying it on the giant's arms will amplify the swinging effect. It would also help to apply it on the pieces of the house that are thrown up into the air. Using this filter successfully – in other words, without

overdoing it – will bring your scene to life and make it look more realistic.

The giant's pose and facial expression is also very important. It would be a good idea to use reference at this point. The easiest way to do this is to take pictures of yourself posing as if you're swinging a club and then using them as your reference material. Take as many pictures as you can until you're happy with at least couple of them. Getting the expression right is especially tricky, so make sure you have a good number of face references at the ready. Have a bit of fun by practising in a mirror!

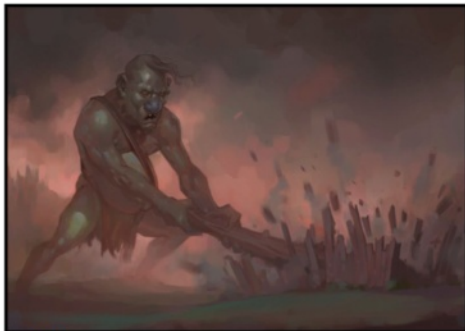
A few quick reference photos will ensure that the giant's grip on his club looks convincing.



Step-by-step: How to add action to your demolition



1 In Corel Painter, I use a thick square brush to block in the main shapes and then start outlining the giant to refine his proportions and pose. It's crucial to figure out the composition and the giant's pose now, because it might be difficult to alter it later. The house is rough at this stage: I plan to focus on that in subsequent steps.



2 Still using Painter, I start painting in more details in the scene. I focus on the giant's expression and the little shards of wood scattering around with the power of the hit. I make sure that the shards fly away from the centre of the impact. Adding some rough dust and smoke trails is also a good idea at this stage.



3 I switch to Photoshop and use the Lasso Tool to select the giant's arm and his club. Then I duplicate it to a new layer with Cmd+J and go to Filter> Blur>Motion Blur. Note that the blur's direction must match the direction of the swing. Then I apply the same technique to individual wood pieces.

Question

How can I enliven a painting with colour, but still maintain some subtlety?

Dave Nation, England



A traditional painting approach towards complementary colours helps me to create this autumnal scene that's full of light.

I use cold colours to roughly paint the key elements of the scene, and use this to guide me as I paint the actual image on top.



Answer Mark replies



Because I come from a traditional art background, from time to time I revert to using traditional painting techniques even with the digital mediums. In this case I want to depict the vibrant colours of the autumn forest path, but without relying on too many filters and Photoshop numerous layer effects.

This is the main reason why, to answer this question, I've chosen an unusual painting approach, which involves creating a rough base painting with the complementary colours of the painting scheme of your subject. With this in mind I study some references to find the hidden colours and then I use those cold blues and purples to paint the composition first. After this step I create another layer and simply start to paint my image on top.

This may seem a rather odd technique at first, but the end result is that all those complementary colours 'shine' through my painting in the shadows and less-detailed areas, and this is what brings even my less-saturated colours to life.

I try to create a rhythm in the use of my colours as I move between cool and warm tones. I keep all my warm values in the mid-tones to create a pleasant visual feel, and push the colder colours in the shadows from my under-painting. I also use slightly colder yellows and light, desaturated greens in the lit areas to create a secondary colour contrast and to pop those parts even more.

Artist's secret

PLACE DETAILS WITH CARE



If you're painting more details into the lit areas (1), then you can create more depth in the scene by keeping the shadowy parts (2) loose.

Question

Any tips on creating small silhouettes for a crowd scene?

Frank Boguslaw, Poland



Try pointing your crowd in one direction to tell the viewer a story.

Answer

Sean replies



When drawing or painting a crowd, keep it simple. Remember that the human form can be reduced down to some simple shapes. Try drawing a wedge-shaped triangle with an oval on top of it. There – you just drew a person in 10 seconds!

Use layers in Photoshop to help create a sense of depth. Crowds have perspective, too – so use atmospheric perspective to really drive home the sense that the crowd recedes into space. Watch your scale: generally speaking, people in the front of the crowd should be bigger than those behind them, but the difference can be subtle, especially because of things like different body types. A short person may be standing in front of a very tall person, but as long as the entire front row isn't shorter than the second row, it shouldn't read as unnatural.

Go out and look at crowds of people and how they cluster. Don't have everyone standing in one area, but also don't evenly space each person out the same – this will feel contrived. Try to show people leaning in towards one another, looking in different directions, gesturing with their hands, and so on. What is the crowd doing? What would you be doing in that situation if you were part of the crowd?



Start with a simple shape, then push and pull to add features like limbs and clothing. Quick pops of highlight and detail will help to add believability and depth to the characters, but don't go overboard.

Question

Can you show me how to depict water in motion please?

Mary Jane, US



The key thing about painting water is to use the colours and values from the background as well as the light source.

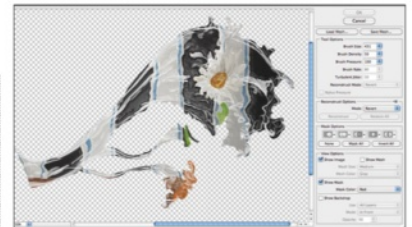
Answer

Peter replies



Water is transparent, but will refract light passing through it, distorting and reflecting the light in weird ways. It will reflect light from every direction and focus it, causing bright specular highlights as well.

I start off with a completed background before adding water effects. I paint the main body of the thrown water using smooth curved lines of bright light, making sure to keep the background poking through in areas. I use hard-edged bushes. Around where the water ends its journey it starts to break up into smaller blobs and drops. I render this with more random strokes, resizing the brush as I go along. I then make



Putting the water on its own separate layer makes it easy to transform and distort. I create a duplicate of the background image and paint on that, so I have a clean copy without the water.

a lasso selection around the water and put it on a separate layer. Now I use Liquify, Plastic Wrap and Glass filters to distort the water. It's best to play around with a combination of filters to get the right effects. I then finish up with adding white spray and droplets.

Question

Can you help me to realistically paint a damaged interior wall?

Megan Pope, US

Answer

Corrado replies



The important thing to keep in mind is to proceed with progressive steps. Your first sketch must be a simple draft in which you define the main colours of the wall and the main shape of the cracks. Remember that damaged plaster presents two different colours: the colour of the paint on the wall and the colour of the plaster (usually light grey).

The secret is to use brushes and tools with a grain effect. Painting strokes must be irregular to simulate a plaster effect. In Corel Painter the perfect tools are Smudge,

Smearly Wet Sponge and Square Conte – all these tools are sensitive to paper grain.

Another key point is the light effect. Drawing an arrow on a separate layer will help you to define the direction of light rays. The borders of a crack are in relief, and it's important to paint them with the proper shading effect. Remember that shadows are darker when the borders are more lifted, and that the borders of the cracks will reveal the real colour of the plaster.

Of course, the best way to produce a realistic wall is to study reference photos and real walls in your city.

Question

I'm after some advice on painting bubbles underwater

James Docherty, Ireland

Answer

Ross replies



It's important to understand the basics of how reflections and shadows work on bubbles. To simplify this: bubbles are just pockets of air; most of what we see is the light cast on it and the shadows reflected off it. They are created in various forms, so there's a lot to play with: bubble streams and big air pockets, for example.

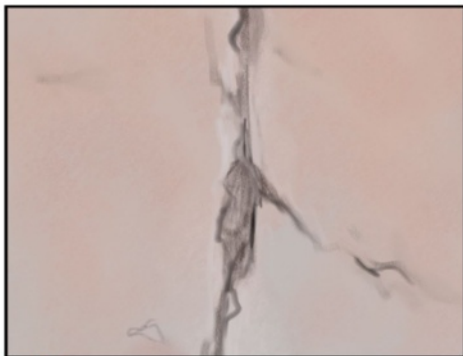
Story and gesture is the most important aspect. Give your bubbles a direction and flow. Here, I want the bubbles to flow out of an air hole, so I make sure my bubbles follow the line of gesture. It's important never to forget the idea that you're going for. Sometimes I tend to noodle around and forget what I'm trying to achieve. The base colour should be the same hue/colour scheme as your surrounding.

Now think about the bubble as if it were a mirror. What would it reflect? Here I indicate the shadow reflection with the biodiversity below it. The dark structures give it a darker bottom reflection. My light source comes from above, which means I'll put the light reflection on top.

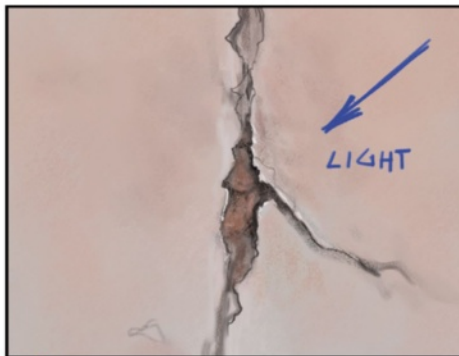
After you have your basic flow of bubbles done, feel free to experiment with effects! This is the time to dig through your brush collection and try things out. Look at some reference and go wild. Bring your piece to life!



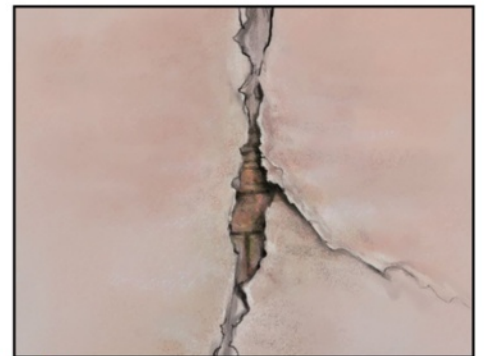
Step-by-step: Portray cracks in a plastered wall



1 First define the base colours and draw a few lines to create the main shape of the cracks. Paint using a single layer - this makes it easier to smudge your colours. You should use three main colours: a light grey for the plaster, a colour for the wall and a dark colour for the cracks.



2 You should also show the brick wall beneath. The bricks should be damaged. Remember to use brushes with a rough effect and use different paper grains to simulate the surface of the wall and plaster. Create a layer with an arrow to help you to define the light direction.



3 Scratches and bulges are useful for injecting realism. Remember to picture them as objects with depth of their own - shadows can make all the difference. This is a typical painting topic in which quick and 'dirty' brush strokes give the best results.

Question

I need help working in a scattered, improvised style

Kendrick Alabaster, Portugal

Answer

Sean replies



The advantage to working in a scattered approach is that you allow the paint, lines or brushes to guide your imagination and do a lot of the heavy lifting for you, so you don't over-think the image and lose that sense of energy and freshness.

The best way to achieve this is to work fast and loose and to try several different brushes or approaches. Allow randomness to happen – you'll find that your mind tends to assign meaning where previously there was none. You may find that you've solved the problem of giving your character dramatic lighting without even trying! It's like when Bob Ross used to talk about happy accidents. You want to make a lot of deliberate happy accidents: try something, see if it works; if not, erase it and try again, or just paint right over it!

When you have something you like – a figure in a particular pose, say – but you don't know what you want to be in the background, or what the character's holding, just create a new layer and experiment. That way you can save what was good while creating something new using those happy accidents.



Using a rapid, improvised push-and-pull method of sketching can produce great results, both in terms of creating interesting forms, and also in forcing yourself to think of value in its most simple terms.



Artist's secret



SPEED TREES

Want to make some quick trees? Use negative space to your advantage! Make a solid shape to define the form, then erase away at the edges and the interior to give the impression of light shining through the gaps in the leaves.

Step-by-step: Work fast and loose



1 First I create a border or bounding box. I like doing this because it gives me a little stage to work within, even though I don't have to be bound to it. I use a pencil-like line tool (which is essentially just a flat Round brush) and I start moving the brush around, finding interesting shapes within that border. The key is to let the forms present themselves.



2 Using a variety of brushes, I begin to bring that same randomised approach to adding internal forms and to rendering quick, early values to the form, giving the figure weight and solidity. I have to be either willing to experiment with various shapes and forms to fill out the individual details, or leave things alone for a while if I'm not sure where to go with it.



3 Don't be afraid to change the dimensions of your work area. If the composition starts to feel cramped, then either change the size of the bounding box or increase your canvas size. If you were working on paper then you'd add another sheet if you started to get too close to the edge – it's no different when working digitally! Use simple forms and shapes to express ideas.



4 Allow the speed of working in this improvised approach to add emotional impact to your image. Don't worry if some elements are looking too rough or haphazard right now – those things can be refined later. Instead, I'd advise embracing the chaos on the canvas and turning it to your advantage. The initial impact of an image is what's most important.

Question

How can I quickly create different character concepts?

Jim Harris, England

Answer

Emrah replies

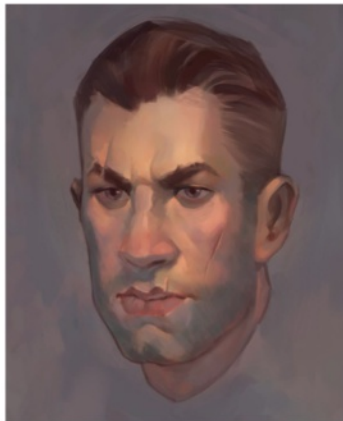
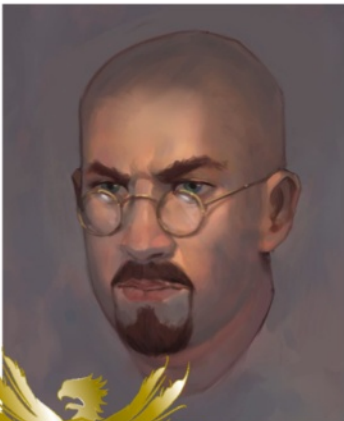


There are a couple of ways to achieve this: the easy way and the hard way. The hard way is painting over the portrait and altering the form and appearance of the character manually. This takes longer, though. In the easy way, I use the Transform tools to help me alter the shapes and sizes of the character's facial features. I still have to paint, but it's minimal.

I start painting the portrait of the main character in Painter. I try to keep it basic so I can make the other two

variations more interesting. I switch to Photoshop, duplicate the head a couple of times and align the heads next to each other so I can compare them while I make the changes.

For the first variation, I decide to depict a tougher-looking guy. To convey this, I paint in a couple of scars on his face and add stubble. Then I duplicate his jaw and use the Distort tool to widen it. Then I erase the long hair and make it shorter on the sides. For the second variation, I employ the same techniques to achieve a "fleshy" look.



I mostly use hard-edged brushes when painting male characters, to convey the masculine and chiselled look better.

Question

I need help making a sunset look different to a sunrise – any tips?

Kathy Fell, Australia

Answer

Paco replies



It's quite difficult to distinguish between a sunset and a sunrise just by looking at a single image. The two events are quite similar and you can't be totally sure of what you're watching unless you can see if the sun is going up or down. That said, most people associate colder, softer and brighter colours with sunrises, and darker, warmer and more intense colours with sunsets. Technically speaking, that's not an absolute truth, but that's the way it goes most of the time.

So if you want to paint a sunrise, put some yellow in your palette, as well as bright orange, pink and blue. You can also make interesting contrasts using dark blue on the sky and yellow on the horizon. And if you want to do a sunset, use warm and dark saturated colours, like red,



Both images could be either a sunset or a sunrise, but the upper one is more recognisable as a sunrise and the lower as a sunset thanks to the colour palettes.

orange, magenta and purple. Try to paint the sun (if it's visible in the image) a little higher in the sunrise and a little lower in the sunset. This will make it even more clearer what you're trying to depict.

Question

How do you know when to add detail to concept art?

Titch, Malaysia

Answer

Ross replies



This is a thing that comes with experience. Over time it will become second nature. Ideally, we want to draw the viewer's eye towards contrast. Contrast can come from different things, such as colour, shape, light and, in this case, detail.

Whenever I feel my piece is too detailed, I try to give areas of my painting breathing room, so the viewer can breathe and not become overwhelmed by detail. When I feel that there's no focal point, I start detailing the area that helps reinforce the story of my image.

Remember, the story is the most important thing, so everything you do should centre on that. If we look at a piece and the focal point doesn't reinforce the story, then create a different story for your piece or reinforce your focal point. After you

produce a significant number of paintings, it starts to become second nature. You begin to develop an eye for it with each passing piece, so make sure you keep painting and drawing. It will come with time!



I try to focus attention on the face and provide just enough detail in the character's clothing to not overwhelm the viewer.

Question

How can I clearly differentiate between fur and velvet?

Lukas Koertig, Canada



Answer

Peter replies



Velvet and fur have some unusual qualities that make them interesting to paint. Velvet has some especially weird ways of reflecting light. Without going into too much of the science behind it, velvet will absorb direct frontal light, but the edges of the forms will reflect light very easily. This causes the values of the form to look like they've been reversed.

I make the line art for the velvet jacket a lighter version of the jacket colour and then blend it in. This is a great starting point for the lighter edges. I make sure the creases in the fabric are each receiving the right

amount of light, and I blend them into the rest of the clothing.

There are many different types of fur, but generally it'll diffuse any light and so there won't be any strong highlights or specular reflections. I don't paint every strand but am sure to follow the direction of the fur. A great thing about fur is that when it's backlit it seems to glow around the edges.

I start with some flat colour and add just enough fur texture to give the right impression while making sure the fur follows a logical direction. The edges of the form require extra attention to create believable fur.



For this image, I regularly used references to get an idea of how each of the materials should look.

Here are two material balls to give a basic idea of how to render velvet and fur.



Question

Please help me portray anger and tension in a character scene

Frankie Apples, US



By having both characters face towards the viewer, we have the chance to show off their facial expressions and create an uneasy feeling in the scene.

Answer

Mark replies

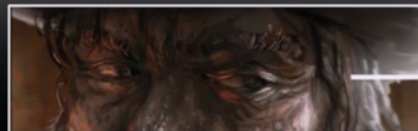


Whenever I get the opportunity, I always like to create a narrative in my character-led pieces – for me, it's more interesting to tell a story without actually showing the action. Playing with the gestures, expression and eyes of the characters can be a great help to build tension in a key frame, especially if you're creating comic book panels or storyboard frames.

In this case I want to show the reaction of the bandit when he becomes cornered by one of the sheriff's posse. It's a situation that he can't escape from, and I want to support this feeling of being trapped with multiple key visual elements.

I build up the whole composition to show that the room's only exit is blocked by the lawman. He's surrounded by cold bluish light that nicely contrasts with the more cosy feel of the warm, open firelight of the interior. The two figures are at roughly the same height, but the good guy's eye level is slightly higher than the bandit's, which suggests that he's the one who is firmly in control of the situation.

Even if the characters don't see each other directly, positioning the eyes of each looking towards the direction of the other can suggest that they're somehow connected in the story.



Artist's secret



ADDING PARTICLES EFFECTS

The air is full of dust and moisture, so for extra realism I always add subtle particles to my art. For this I use a scattered Round brush on a Color Dodge or Screen layer, and then blur out parts of it to create depth.

Question

I want to paint a moody night scene that's also readable. Please help!

Everett Trance, Austria

Answer

Paco replies



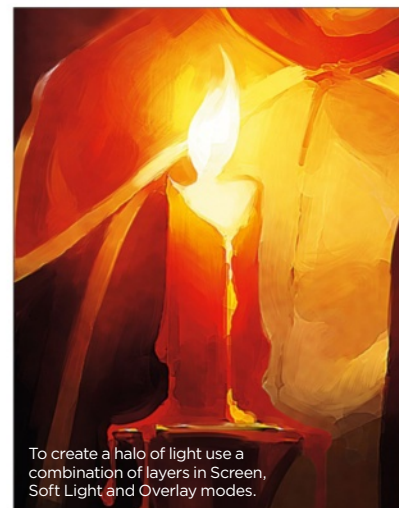
When illuminating a night scene, try using a single flame, like a match, cigarette lighter or candle. Remember, though, that a flame doesn't produce a lot of light: only the closest objects or characters will be affected by its light, and not to any great extent, either. So you should try to either put all the important elements of the image close to the flame or add a secondary source of light (like the moon, for example – it doesn't need to be a bright source of light, just enough to be able to see something in the darkness).

If you add two sources, you should create two different areas in your painting with two different colour palettes (warm colours in one and cold colours in the other, like orange and blue), because chromatic contrasts always look great when applied to this type of image.

It's also important to place the lights and shadows in the right places. When you want to create a tangible atmosphere in a painting you need coherent, accurate illumination. Take the time to look through as many references as necessary – the final result is the only thing that matters.

To create a sensation of foreboding, the easiest way is to illuminate the scene (or the characters) from below. Obviously, you can choose to illuminate the scene from above and still create a scary-looking painting, but illumination from below is always associated with terror, so it's a good choice if you want to enhance that mood.

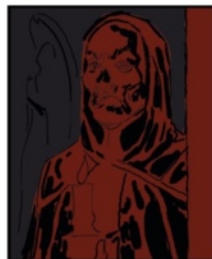
To illuminate a scene like this, make the flame the brightest element on the image. Use medium or dark tones for the rest (unless you have a secondary light).



To create a halo of light use a combination of layers in Screen, Soft Light and Overlay modes.

Step-by-step: Light up the night

1 After doodling a sketch featuring a character lit by a candle, I determine which areas are going to be affected by the light of the flame (I'll paint these using a warm palette), and which are not (I'll use cold tones). Then, in a new document, I create a reference colour palette to maintain the colour harmony of the image.



2 Now I start to paint the scene, trying to achieve realistic and interesting illumination. If I get the illumination wrong now, everything else fails. So I don't waste time trying to polish the image or adding details, I simply focus on illuminating the scene. When this is done well, the rest is straightforward – it just takes time.



3 Now it's just a matter of adding details, adjusting some colours, polishing the surfaces and so on. I do these things last, because at the beginning of the process it's vital to spend time experimenting, trying to get the core things right. Adding detail earlier in the process makes little sense.

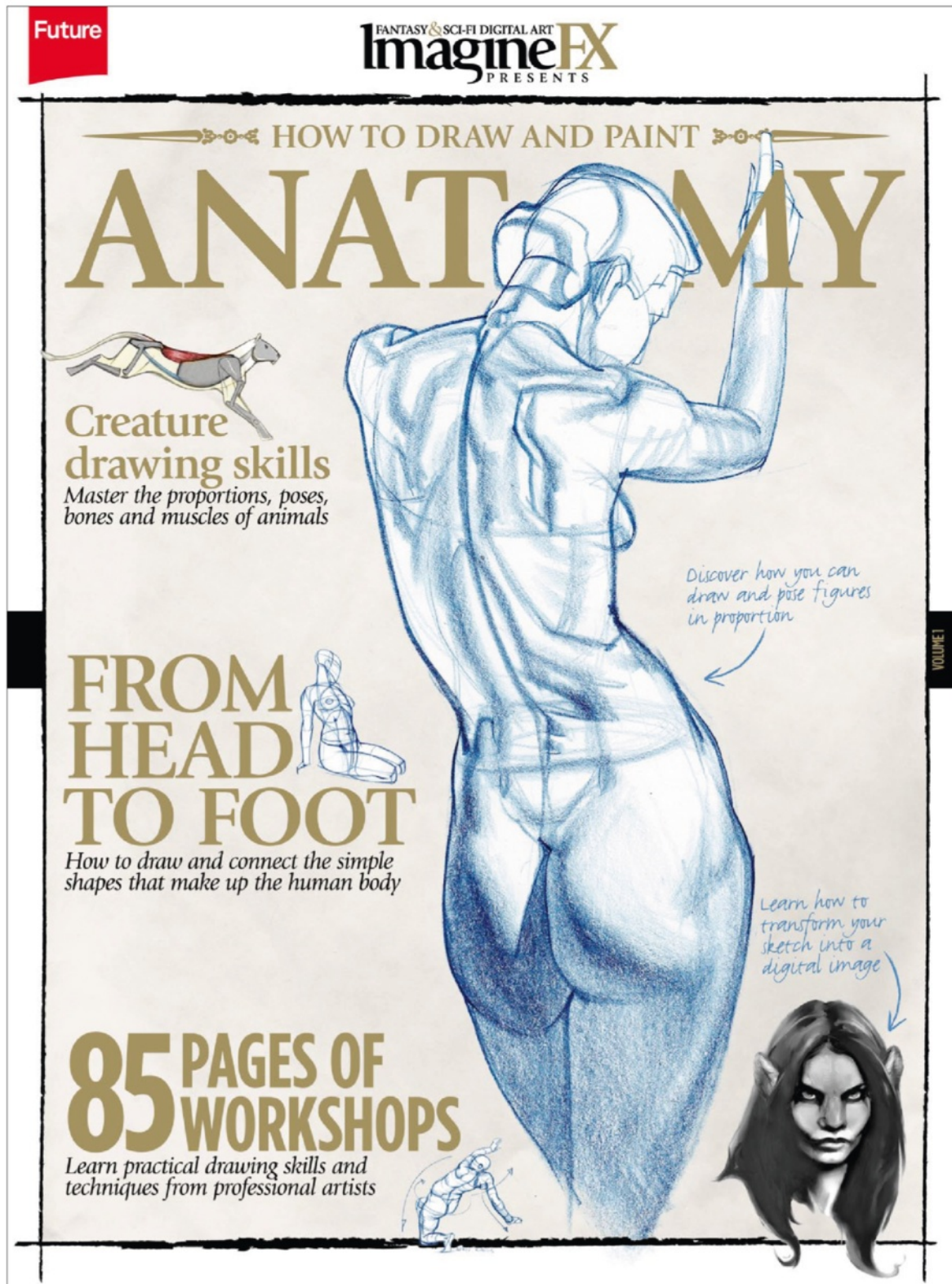


Got a digital art problem? Is an image giving you art-ache? Our panel can help. Email your question to our experts at help@imaginefx.com or write to **Artist Q&A, ImagineFX, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, BA1 2BW, UK.**

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THE WINNERS!

RISING STARS 2013

We reveal the next big names in sci-fi and fantasy art

For the fourth time, we round up the year's best new artists, and choose 11 of them to feature as our Rising Stars for 2013. Once again it's been a record year for entries and we've received a massively diverse selection of brilliant fantasy and sci-fi art. Some of the entrants were students, some were freelancers, others had day jobs outside the industry.

Looking through the excellent entries was the fun part. The hard bit was in narrowing them down to just 11 winners (10 Rising Stars and one Standout Newcomer). Fortunately, we had help from our expert panel of judges: Bobby Chiu, Jon Schindehette, Christian Alzmann, Dave Gibbons, Sam Didier and Lauren Panepinto – who discussed, bickered and (politely) argued their corner. And now we can reveal the 11 finalists who get to divvy up the prizes – and, more importantly, showcase their work to the ImagineFX community. We've also selected more artists who we feel deserve honourable mentions.

We hope you enjoy this year's ImagineFX Rising Stars as much as we do!

The Rising Star prizes

Each Rising Star receives a copy of Corel Painter X3, ArtRage 4, a course with Schoolism.com, a GoSmart Stylus and DrawPlus X6. Thanks to the sponsors below:

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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.

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CHRISTIAN ALZMANN

War of the Worlds, AI, Star Wars: Episode II... Christian Alzmann worked on all of those films. So he knows a thing or two.

www.christianalzmann.com



JON SCHINDEHETTE

Creative director for Treehouse Brand Stores, Jon creates killer collectables for video games and other entertainment properties.

www.theartorder.com



DAVE GIBBONS

A comic artist since the late 1970s, Dave started on the first issue of 2000 AD, drew Watchmen and is a big 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



JOHN PETERSEN

Former military man John creates paintings that look like stills from a film

LOCATION US

AGE 40

WEBSITE www.petersenart.com



As with many of our Rising Stars, a career in art has been something of a lifesaver for John Petersen. These days he employs his artistic skills both in his day job as an animator and illustrator, and in his freelance guise of fantasy artist – but it wasn't always so.

"I was always conflicted as to whether I wanted a career in science or art," he explains. For a long while he did neither, joining the military instead, until he found that the Biological and Premedical Illustration programme at Iowa State University was tailor-made for his interests. Even more fortunately, the same town was home to Demonstratives, Inc., a company

JUDGE CRIT



"Brings the best of comic style into the land of illustration, spicing it way up. Glorious action and good compositions for complex scenes"

Jon Schindehette

that produces courtroom graphics and animation. A job there was almost a given.

John's action images are bursting with life. "I try to capture that one split-second of physical tension or emotional zenith where everything converges just so," he says. "Illustration is a powerful storytelling instrument and a clever artist can tell a whole story with one image."

But John is capable of more reflective work too, as evidenced by his portraits and graphic designs pieces. As for his long-term plans, he's embarking on a sci-fi graphic novel – in which the Cuban Missile Crisis wasn't averted. "There's a lot of sci-fi elements with '50s retro design inspired by Geof Darrow's artwork in *Hard Boiled*," he enthuses. We can't wait...



BULLSEYE

"Diablo fan art. The Demon Hunter is crafty, confident, accurate and, above all, agile. I wanted to make flipping in the air and scoring a kill shot seem effortless to her."

PERSEUS AND MEDUSA

"I've long been a fan of Greek mythology, and Ray Harryhausen's *Medusa* from the 1981 film *Clash of the Titans* frightened me as a kid. I always wanted to render my own depiction of the famous gorgon."

VITAL STATS

John Petersen

Software: Photoshop and Illustrator.

Tech setup: Pencils, custom PC desktop, MacBook Pro and Wacom Intuos4.

Favourite current artists:

Duncan Fegredo, Jeremy Mann and Android Jones.

Favourite past artists: William Bouguereau, Norman Rockwell and Alphonse Mucha.

Fantasy art in five words:

The unlimited special effects budget.

Celtic Dragon © iStock.com/green216



DEATH FROM ABOVE

"More fan-art, inspired by a character from Diablo III. The Barbarian is this wild, berserker character with an intense blood lust. I wanted to reflect that energy and rage here."



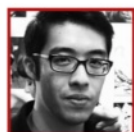


ANDREW MAR

The precocious artist with surprisingly dark paintings is benefitting from an early start

LOCATION US
AGE 24

WEBSITE www.andrewmar.blogspot.com



At the age of just 24, Andrew Mar is certainly a Rising Star, though his accomplished personal pieces belie his age. This might have something to do with his extremely early introduction to art training. "I started learning Chinese calligraphy when I was five years old," he reveals, "and more Western drawing and painting in middle school, before attending the Academy of Art University in San Francisco, straight out of high school."

By day he's a concept artist at GREE, the international mobile gaming company, and when he's not drawing there, he's busy with personal pieces, portfolio challenges and more. Much of his personal work has a melancholy or even threatening edge,



ESCORT

"Antlers fascinate me. Armour is fun to paint. Throw in a couple of travelling exiles and you've got a good time."

JUDGE CRIT



"Andrew has a flair for dramatic images using strong composition and lighting to reveal a story that leaves us wanting more"

Christian Alzmann

although Andrew says this isn't something that happens deliberately.

"I would say I'm more influenced by darker and slightly surrealistic or dreamlike images, and that probably comes out a lot in my paintings," he admits. "Melancholy and menacing? I suppose the reason, if any, would be that I've had a relatively happy and quiet childhood, and that the opposite side of the spectrum speaks louder to me." Maybe the long, cold winters of his childhood in Minnesota had something to do with it, too.

For Andrew, fantasy art inspires a feeling of nostalgia, particularly for that childhood. "I loved to browse libraries and book stores for all the fantasy and sci-fi paintings on them. Fire-breathing dragons and mysterious forests in particular held me in awe."

Now that he gets to create those images as well as just admire them, Andrew's thinking big. "Just let me paint some Magic: The Gathering cards!" he laughs. "The only reason I played the game as a child was because of the illustrations."

VITAL STATS

Andrew Mar

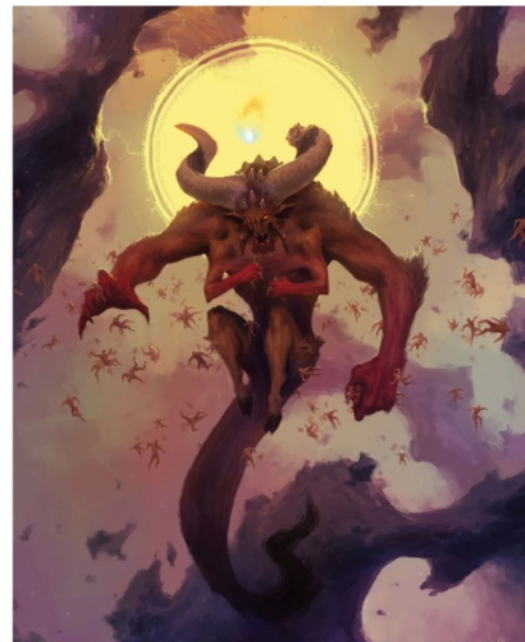
Software: Photoshop.

Tech setup: Wacom Intuos5, but ink whenever I get the chance to be away from the computer.

Favourite current artists: Mike Mignola, Claire Wendling and Kim Jung Gi.

Favourite past artists: John Singer Sargent, Sergio Toppi and Gian Lorenzo Bernini.

Fantasy art in five words: Magic, knights, dragons and nostalgia.



HE, OF GENOCIDE

"A portrait of an enormous demon grabbing fistfuls of little humans just seemed like a very fun image to paint."

HONOURABLE MENTIONS



Oliver Cuthbertson

Location England

Website www.cuthbo.tumblr.com



Romana Kendelic

Location Croatia

Website <http://ifxm.ag/romanak>



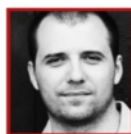
MAX KOSTENKO

The Russian artist who excels at caricature is determined to make up for lost time

LOCATION Russia

AGE 27

WEBSITE www.max-kostenko.com



Max almost missed out on his calling as a Rising Star. Although like most artists, as a child he loved

copying characters from cartoons, he never considered that this could ever become a genuine way to make a living – surely people that make art just do it for a hobby?

"I realised that this could be my profession when I was 22 and it inspired me very much," says Max, who is currently living in Moscow. "Before that, I worked for two years as a web designer, and I don't have to tell you which one I prefer."

JUDGE CRIT



"I love the rendered cartoon vibe here. It has a 3D feel, but they're not made in Max, they're made by Max!"

Sam Didier

As a result of his initial web-based work, Max has had no formal art education, and has instead taught himself by studying contemporary and classical artists, online and from various books. "I think that the lack of education has undoubtedly slowed my progress," he says. But obviously not too much, as he's currently an illustrator and character designer with clients including BBDO Moscow, Channel One Russia, Visa and Skoda, not to mention a favourite of the judges in this year's Rising Stars competition.

Max's bright cartoon characters take on a much more detailed aspect in his personal art, while retaining an element of playfulness. His favourite topics are what he

MEMORIES OF YOUTH

"This is the story of an old man who sits on a tree of his childhood and remembers his youth. I tried to focus on his eyes, as the old man's eyes can tell much without using words."



MONSTER OF PARADISE FALLS

"I was just playing with silhouettes at first. When I realised it would be a bird, my daughter suggested the man was Kevin from Pixar's film Up."

VITAL STATS

Max Kostenko

Software: Photoshop.

Tech setup: MacBook Pro, Wacom Intuos.

Favourite current artists: Carter Goodrich, José Manuel Fernandes Oli and Michael Kutsche.

Favourite past artists: Rembrandt, William-Adolphe Bouguereau and Ivan Kramskoy.

Fantasy art in five words: The worlds I can create.

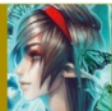
calls fanciful animals: "I like to invent them and then try to portray them as realistically as possible. In my spare time I try to paint more realistic pictures, but they still have an element of caricature. I think it gives them a more unique look."

The results are certainly distinctive, with a hint of Bobby Chiu's bizarre animals about them, mixed with the warm colouring of Pixar movies. "In general, digital painting attracted me because you can imagine absolutely anything and give this idea life, with the help of drawing skills," adds Max.



WALRUS

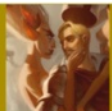
"Initially this was a comical picture of a dog. But I decided to make it a serious depiction of a walrus."



Valentina Remenar

Location Slovenia

Website <http://ifxm.ag/tin-m>



Victor Maury

Location US

Website <http://ifxm.ag/vmaury>



WYLIE BECKERT

Having discovered her true calling as an artist, there's no stopping this storytelling illustrator

LOCATION US

AGE 26

WEBSITE www.wyliebeckert.com



"I was uniformly miserable in my past life of non-art-related gainful employment," smiles Wylie, who lives

in Maine, US, with a dog, a cat and a scientist. "So two-and-a-half years ago, I made the decision to pursue freelance illustration full-time."

Since then, she has steadily built up a portfolio of personal images, working with both digital and traditional media, and has produced many intricately detailed and beautiful images, such as those you see here. Many of these seem to depict moments from a larger story rather than simply being action shots, and Wylie reveals that a sense of narrative is vital for her imagination to work.

"I'll often have a story in mind when I start a piece, but many times the story will change or evolve as I work," she explains. "There are so many details that are both informed by the underlying narrative and can influence it in their own turn."

As well as creating a book cover for Annick Press, Wylie is working on a

JUDGE CRIT



"There's a lovely sense of mood in these pieces and I love the creepy green colours of Whispers, and the subtle lowering of the sword by the ghost on the left"

Bobby Chiu

WHISPERS

"This is the oldest of my current portfolio and the piece that helped me nail down my working method of colouring a detailed graphite underdrawing with transparent layers in Photoshop."

number of other commercial commissions, many of which will be "under the cloak of secrecy that is NDA" for some time. In the meantime, she maintains a comprehensive art blog on her own website, detailing many of her processes.

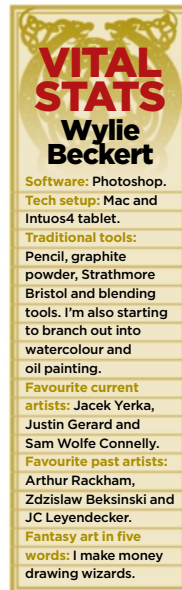
"I love resources that reveal what goes on behind the scenes – blogs like Muddy Colors and Gurney Journey, for example. They show that being a great artist is the product of hard work and a set of skills that can be learned and perfected – not a beam of light from heaven that shines on one person but not another."

And the future? "I like to imagine illustrating the work of my favourite authors," she says. "Terry Pratchett, Susanna Clarke or Neil Gaiman would all be a dream to illustrate."



BALANCE

"The balance between light and dark is one of the go-to themes in my work, but this piece takes the idea a bit more literally than most."



VITAL STATS

Wylie Beckert

Software: Photoshop.

Tech setup: Mac and Intuos4 tablet.

Traditional tools:

Pencil, graphite powder, Strathmore Bristol and blending tools. I'm also starting to branch out into watercolour and oil painting.

Favourite current artists: Jacek Yerka, Justin Gerard and Sam Wolfe Connolly.

Favourite past artists: Arthur Rackham, Zdzislaw Beksincki and JC Leyendecker.

Fantasy art in five words: I make money drawing wizards.



GASLIGHT DOGS

"A book cover assignment for Marc Scheff and Lauren Panepinto's SmArt School course. It was a fun puzzle to create a sense of movement in a static composition."

HONOURABLE MENTIONS



Angela Rizza

Location US

Website www.angelarizza.com



Bohdan Jankovic

Location Ireland

Website <http://ifxm.ag/bjankovic>





LURKING IN THE DEEP

"I wanted to design the most terrifying creature I could. And so, the giant angler fish was born. The character is 3D, environment 2D."



HENNING SANDEN

Taking art back to basics helped Henning become a master of the sub-aquatic

LOCATION Denmark

AGE 22

WEBSITE www.henningsanden.com



A fascination with the ocean is a recurrent theme in Henning's work – and it's not surprising given Denmark's famously rugged coastline and turbulent naval history. "I live and study in Viborg at The Animation Workshop," he tells us. "It's a small town, but the creative environment is the most amazing I've ever had the pleasure to be a part of. It's also considerably less rainy than the west coast of Norway, where I'm from."

Combining 3D digital art in ZBrush, and 2D details in Photoshop, Henning loves to explore dramatic portrayals of the underwater world, as well as turning his hand to classically styled busts, which have

a touch of Norse grandeur to them. His distinctive style was borne through the slog of learning how to use 3D and 2D software at the same time – quite a feat for any artist, let alone a 22 year-old – and then returning to the basics of creating art.

"After several years I developed good technical knowledge of the software I was using, but realised I had to go back to art fundamentals to improve," Henning says. "Doing so was extremely tough, but so very worthwhile. My artistic level would be far lower today if I hadn't taken the bull by the horns and gone back to basics."

JUDGE CRIT



"The amount of work gone into the detail of these pieces is apparent in the best possible way with his dramatic lighting"

Lauren Panepinto

If there's another key influence in Henning's life, other than the ocean, it's Lawrence Marvit, one of the design teachers at The Animation Workshop who helped Henning master the very basic shapes he was playing with.

"He was really pushing the concept of knowing what your work is supposed to feel like and being able to turn really complex designs into abstract shapes and symbols," says Henning. "I feel that my art is significantly stronger because of this way of thinking."

With his combination of detail and strong characters, the ImagineFX team and the judges can't wait to see which weird and wonderful underwater creatures Henning comes up with next.

MOODY CONRAD

"A character from the abyss, who's rather moody after somebody stole his butterfly collection. Sculpted in ZBrush and rendered in MODO."



VITAL STATS

Henning Sanden

Software: MODO, ZBrush, Maya, Photoshop and Mari.

Tech setup: Mid-range workstation, dual monitors and a Wacom Intuos5.

Favourite current artists: Sergey Kolesov, Nathan Fowkes and Dave Rapoza.

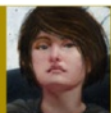
Favourite past artists: Bernini, John Singer Sargent, Rembrandt.

Fantasy art in five words: Your imagination will flow freely.



BARNABY

"This started out as a sketch in ZBrush, which I decided to finalise. I wanted to show some kind of absolutely disgusting business man. It was a fun project."



Carly Mazur

Location US

Website www.carlyjanine.com



Chris Rallis

Location England

Website www.rallisart.com



FERDINAND LADERA

Inspired by fine art and architecture, Ferdinand's aim is to create spectacular paintings

LOCATION Philippines

AGE 39

WEBSITE www.ferdinandladera.com



Ferdinand's work stood out thanks to its combination of immense structure and a great eye for depth and composition, as well as judicious use of light and colour.

His love for drawing began "at a very young age", but after a brief dalliance with architecture he returned to his original passion. "I took up architecture because my dad is a civil engineer," says Ferdinand. "So he thought if I took that course we could be a tag team of some sort. But I shifted to fine art after two years. I'm not

quite as smart as my dad when it comes to numbers!"

Ferdinand's interest in building design and structure certainly shines through in his art, though. After moving to fine art, Ferdinand scooped up a couple of prizes for national painting contests, before embracing digital mediums.

Ferdinand is most proud of *Monster Raid* (above), which depicts an enormous octopus attacking a fortified town. "The composition and lighting is just right," he says. "I wanted to make it look somewhat like a classical painting. The atmospheric

MONSTER RAID

"He gave up his life for his people's freedom, only to have it taken away. His vow is to protect the people of the place he once called home."

perspective, the proportion of the elements and how the monster was created so dynamically, brought the art to life."

Even without hideous monsters, Ferdinand's work certainly captures strange worlds, which meld the organic and the man-made. "The most important thing I learned about art is that I can create my own art style and all my works are originals," he says. "In the world of digital art, I really push myself and strive to learn how to create beautiful art."

Both the ImagineFX team and the judges agree architecture's loss is digital art's gain.

VITAL STATS

Ferdinand Ladera

Software: Photoshop.

Tech setup: Windows
7, Intuos3 Medium.

Favourite current
artists: Fenghua
Zhong, Feng Zhu and
Ryan Church.

Favourite past artists:
Peter Paul Rubens,
Rembrandt and
Johannes Vermeer.

Fantasy art in five
words: Amazing,
breathtaking,
unbelievable, magical,
enchanting.

JUDGE CRIT



"Ferdinand's work is really atmospheric, enticing and simply bursting with organic grandeur – whether it's a monster octopus or a fantastical tree alive with colour and light"

Dave Gibbons

TREE OF LIFE

"Standing tall and proud, this tree provides shelter to the inhabitants of this undiscovered world filled with beautiful yet dangerous surroundings."



THE SIX SWANS

"In The Six Swans fairy tale, six brothers are transformed into swans and their sister must turn them back by weaving shirts for them."



Standout
Newcomer
Award

ROVINA CAI

A young new Australian artist who loves variety, poets, and the romance and magic of the past

LOCATION US

AGE 24

WEBSITE www.rovinacai.com



In 2009 Rovina discovered that you could make a legitimate career out of making art. Like a flash of lightning, the prospect of receiving money from the thing she loved doing illuminated her future. "That's when I began to take art seriously," she says.

In 2011 she moved from Australia to New York to study illustration at the School of Visual Arts. "In May I graduated," she says, "and now I'm just getting started as a freelancer in Brooklyn."

A glance at Rovina's blog and you'll see sketches of 19th century poets alongside painting of big budget film stills. "My interests are varied, and it comes across in my art," she tells us. "In addition to

JUDGE CRIT



"These pieces are lovely, light, airy, beautiful... then with the saint image with the crows, the light and beautiful gets dark and beautiful, yet feels completely at home with the other paintings" **Christian Alzmann**

RAVENS

"I enjoy contrasting something dark or macabre with something beautiful. It creates an intriguing image that makes the audience stop and linger."

painting, I also have a drawing style that's a little different, and I design things and go off on crazy craft-project tangents." A common theme is the past: "Everything about the past is a little romantic. It brings a bit of magic into the present day."

Rovina believes what eventually comes through in art is a voice: "An amalgamation of an illustrator's interests and their view of the world around them."

As well as a Rising Star, Rovina has been awarded the Standout Newcomer Award by our judges, winning a Cintiq 13HD. So what's the first image she'll create on it? "Something epic and challenging," She says. "I like to throw myself in the deep end. A shiny new Cintiq is the perfect tool to push myself further."

VITAL STATS Rovina Cai

Software: Photoshop.

Tech setup: Intuos4 and MacBook Pro.

Favourite current artists: Kinuko Y Craft, Shaun Tan, Alan Lee.

Favourite past artists:

John William

Waterhouse, Edwin

Austin Abbey and

Gustav Klimt.

Fantasy art in five

words: Everything you imagine is real.



FIG TREE

"This image was inspired by Sylvia Plath's The Bell Jar poem, in which the protagonist imagines a fig tree where each fig represents a direction in her life, and she's unable to decide on one."

Standout Newcomer Award

Although there are no categories in this year's Rising Stars, we still wanted to celebrate the young talent in today's digital art, so the judges have selected their favourite artist under 25 out of the hundreds of entries.

Congratulations Rovina! As our Standout Newcomer Award winner you've won a Wacom Cintiq 13HD (pictured).



ANGELIC RETRIBUTION

"I'd never done an angel before. I was lucky in meeting Dash, a model, whose angelic face gave me the final push the piece needed."



VICTOR ADAME

Hailing from a tiny town in Mexico, Victor proves great artists don't need to live in big cities

LOCATION Mexico

AGE 25

WEBSITE www.victoradameart.com



Victor's based in a small town in central Mexico – something which inspired him to take up art as a child to fill his spare time.

"There was not much to do in this little town and I was never really into sports, so I was a stay-at-home kid," he says. "Boredom, more than anything, made me really get into creating art."

As with most children with active imaginations, the landscape around him inspired new takes on familiar locales – something which continues to this day.

But as his paintings *Angelic Retribution* and *Champagne Havoc* attest, Victor is all for jumping headlong into the unknown, choosing subjects that he's never depicted before. "I did most of my recent work for

CHAMPAGNE HAVOC

"I was born and raised with Robotech, so mechs have always been important to me – but I'd never painted one before this."



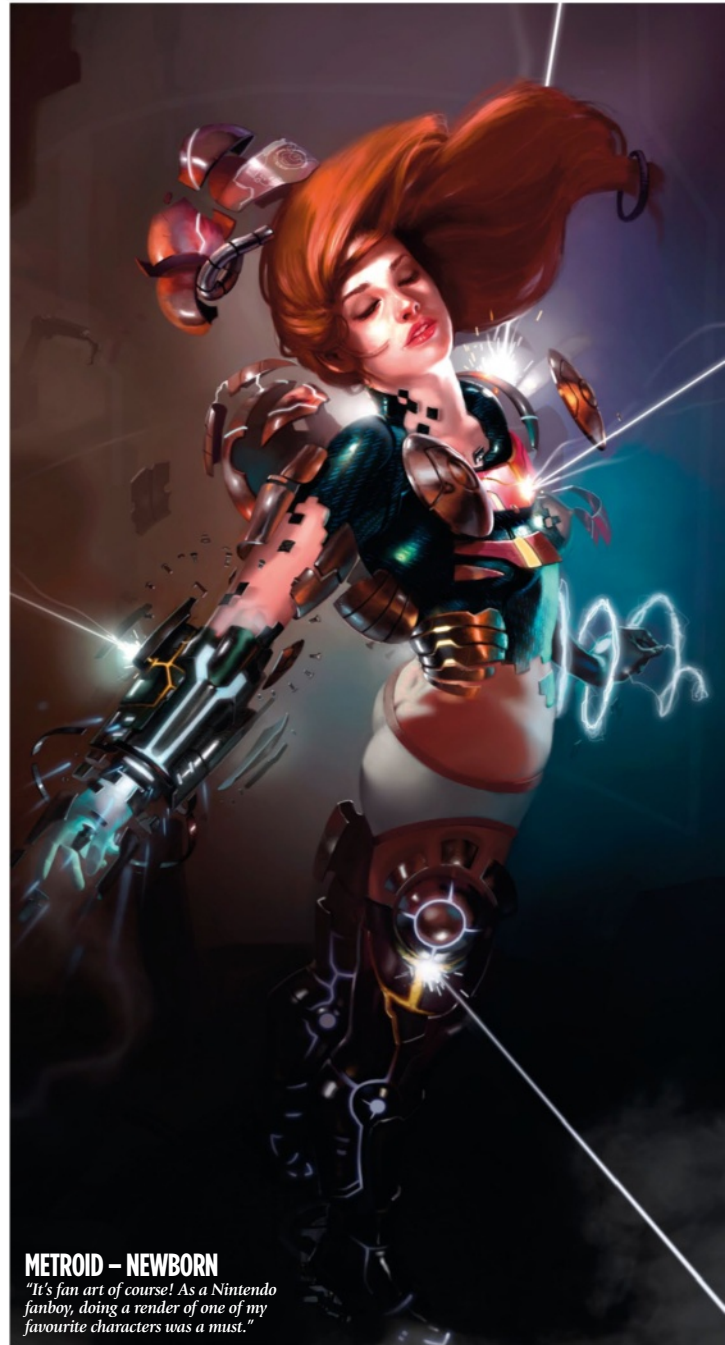
my portfolio with several fantasy publishers in mind," he says. "I have never done the usual stuff such as angels and mechs, so needless to say I had to include them here."

While Mexico's exotic and alien landscape continues to provide a setting for his work, Victor has also been influenced by films, games and his peers

JUDGE CRIT

"This was my top pick out of a consistently strong bunch of entries. The reason? Victor's five pieces of art are consistently badass, all the way through!"

Sam Didier

**METROID – NEWBORN**

"It's fan art of course! As a Nintendo fanboy, doing a render of one of my favourite characters was a must."

VITAL STATS

Victor Adame

Software: Photoshop.

Tech set up: Toshiba Satellite and a Wacom Intuos5 Pro.

Favourite current artists: Gottfried Helnwein and Brom.

Favourite past artists: Bekinski, Caravaggio and Frazetta.

Fantasy art in five words: Play by your own rules.

in the art world. "My style is mine and not mine at the same time – I've borrowed so much from other artists," he says. He cites Gerald Brom as a key influence, but also Guillermo del Toro's ludicrous mech movie *Pacific Rim*.

Despite his broadening horizons he still loves the tranquillity of his little Mexican town. "It's peaceful, but there are plenty of things to do, or places to work in," he says. "Living is cheap and the people kind."

As for his dream job? "It has always been to have a show on TV, like the ones that make you travel around the world eating all sorts of crazy dishes."

HONOURABLE MENTIONS



Ethan Harris

Location US

Website <http://ifxm.ag/epharris>



Jason Rainville

Location Canada

Website www.jasonrainville.com



IGOR GRECHANYI

Igor's work adorns trading cards and online games, but he still feels he has much to learn

LOCATION Russia
AGE 46

WEBSITE www.igor-grechanyi.cghub.com



Igor's playful but beautiful artwork was inspired by a lifelong love of reading, and his wish to bring the fictional people he read about to life. "I've loved reading books and drawing since childhood," he says. I used to imagine what characters would look like in reality. A love for books led to drawing."

Over the years, Igor has developed a distinctive style that blends traditional techniques and architectural education. "I think that if I have a style, it's manifested unconsciously and intuitively," he says.



DRAGON MASTER

"I wanted this man-dragon hybrid to show a combination of aggression and speed. The picture won first place in a contest for artists working on Berserk, a collectible card game."

"I try to stick to realism and traditional methods of building shapes, light and colour, and the correct anatomy. I like to keep the liveliness of the line, brush stroke and a handmade feeling. To me, that animates the picture."

The majority of Igor's work is for companies specialising in online and collectible card games, and it's obvious from his work that he's got a good eye for character design and a talent for creating fantasy realms and landscapes. "Being curious is the most important thing I've learned about art," he says. "Constantly

VITAL STATS
Igor Grechanyi

Software: Photoshop.
Tech setup: Wacom Intuos4.
Favourite current artists: Viktor Titov, Jean-Baptiste Monge and Laurel Tully Austin.
Favourite past artists: Ilya Repin, Valentin Serov and Mikhail Vrubel.
Fantasy art in five words: Creating new images and universes.

exploring the world and learning from nature is the recipe for self-improvement."

However, he's always keen to get a little better. "My main objective is to improve my drawing technique," Igor says. "Developing solid technical skills gives me more freedom, and makes the creation and expression of ideas and images easier."

We love Igor's images for their sense of drama and storytelling, and he knows how to use colour and perspective to draw the viewer's attention to specific details. The ImagineFX team and the judges can't wait to see what he comes up with next.

JUDGE CRIT



"I connected with Igor's art because it's rich, tactile and dense with detail. There's so much colour and texture in there to enjoy with each viewing"

Dave Gibbons



GOBLIN SCOUT

"A goblin on a night patrol with his guide animal. A little ironic expression added expressiveness to this image. The picture was painted for Berserk."



YERSHOV: THE LITTLE HUMPBACED HORSE

"An illustration for Russian fairy tale The Little Humpbacked Horse, created for a competition on CG-Warrior.com. I got carried away, so some elements and characters are invented by me."

HONOURABLE MENTIONS



Joesph Descallar

Location US

Website <http://ifxm.ag/jdescallar>



Kelly McKernan

Location US

Website <http://ifxm.ag/kelly-m>



GABRIEL VERDON

This artist's stunning work caught the attention of the judges – as well as some companies

LOCATION Canada

AGE 23

WEBSITE www.gabrielverdon.com



At the tender age of 23, Gabriel has already built up a portfolio that would make even the most established of artists green

with envy. He's worked in a variety of disciplines, creating art for Atlas Games and covers for role-playing games and ebooks. What's more he's completely self-taught – which he sees as something of a mixed blessing.

"The disadvantages and advantages of being self-taught are much the same," Gabriel says. "Nobody told me the correct

JUDGE CRIT



"There's a really nice command of darks and lights – some pieces feel almost Frazetta-like – also some great narratives. I want to know more about these worlds"

Lauren Panepinto

way to paint, which means I may try things trained artists wouldn't think of. But it also means it's taken me a long time to learn basic tried-and-true techniques that a trained artist would take for granted."

Gabriel feels his Crusaders piece represents his biggest challenge as an artist so far. "It was a big step up for me at the time," he says. "I managed to achieve a level of realism, a level of depth with the foggy atmosphere, but also a level of painterliness that I was trying to get. Everything came together very nicely – there's enough detail to suggest a real thing, but it's loose enough to be a nice energetic painting, too."

CRUSADERS

"I was feeling really inspired by Brom and Justin Sweet, and wanted to paint something that would pay homage to them."



VOICE

"This was another piece for fun. I modelled the central character on Bec Hyatt, the MMA fighter."

Finding work is always a struggle for new artists, but Gabriel's put the effort in to make sure he's a go-to guy. "I get a lot of my work from clients and companies situated in the communities I spend the most time in," he says. "I also like to make portfolios tailored to specific clients to show that I would be a good person to work with and that I understand their culture."



LIBRARY

"A book cover for an anthology. I wanted it to feel both intimate and grandiose at the same time."

VITAL STATS

Gabriel Verdon

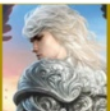
Software: Photoshop.

Tech setup: A Wacom Intuos4, and dual monitors.

Favourite current artists: Justin Sweet, Aron Wiesenfeld and Brom.

Favourite past artists: Frank Frazetta, Paul Delaroche and William Blake.

Fantasy art in five words: Don't know, it's a compulsion.



Lius Lasahido

Location Indonesia

Website <http://ifxm.ag/lasahido>



Nikolai Ostertag

Location Germany

Website www.nimo.cghub.com



DENMAN ROOKE

Denman has moved from punk to fantasy, and across continents – and he's only just started

LOCATION Ireland

AGE 27

WEBSITE www.denmanrooke.com



"Pursuing anything aside from art never really occurred to me," says Denman, an American artist living in Dublin.

"My family always encouraged me to draw and create, be it Ninja Turtles or Mario."

His early start wasn't promising though. Having gone to college with an aim to becoming a 3D modeller and animator, he dropped out after one term and joined a punk band instead. But it was actually this that got him started in the business. He began designing merchandise for the band and soon got noticed by other bands wanting designs.

After a first, pretty dismal, try at being a freelancer at the age of 21 in 2007 – "I had

JUDGE CRIT



"I love Denman's storytelling. He's telling traditional fantasy tropes, but doesn't let this limit his creation of a rich, and often subtle, visual narrative"

Jon Schindehette

no direction, no plan and no clue of how to run a sustainable freelance business" – he got a job designing T-shirts. Nowadays he's lead concept artist at Digit Game Studios in Dublin, but has also designed for Paizo's Pathfinder series and VFX studio Animal.

He works with Photoshop and traditional oils: "For a finished illustration, I prefer traditional materials. However, if the purpose of the piece is to convey an idea or concept, digital just makes more sense."

High fantasy of the traditional kind is his favourite subject to illustrate. "Dwarves, elves, dragons, orcs, wizards and armour are fun to draw. Lately I've been illustrating tough chicks in realistic and appropriate armour... because it's awesome!"



BLOOD OF THE NIGHT

"I loved the challenge of a thin vertical template. It forces you to plan out your composition. And who wouldn't like painting vampires, bats, wolves and rats?"



MYTHIC HEROES

"My favourite illustration I've done and the first time I've used a photo shoot. I fell in love with the brief: 'Classic Frazetta-style fantasy pose complete with typical warrior, sorceress, magic and skeletal warriors...' All so fun."



VITAL STATS Denman Rooke

Software: Photoshop.

Tech setup: Windows PC and Intuos5 at home. A Cintiq 22HD at work. My on-the-go setup is an iPad 2 and Jot Touch Stylus.

Traditional tools: Oils at home. My on-the-go setup is a Moleskine Sketchbook, Microns, a Pentel brush pen, graphite pencils, watercolour pencils and a water brush.

Favourite current artists: James Gurney, Jaime Jones and Justin Sweet.

Favourite past artists: NC Wyeth, John Singer Sargent and Anders Zorn.

Fantasy art in five words: An adventure into the unknown.



BEAR WARRIOR

"Bear Warrior is very special to me. It symbolises the defining moment in my career where I realised 'I can do this'. This piece was the gem of my portfolio as I set off to conventions to attempt to get my first commissions. It also got into Spectrum 19, which was terribly exciting."

Sketchbook

Kim Jung Gi

Kim has a string of viral videos to his name, each showing him spinning a complex web of interwoven drawings...

Artist PROFILE

Kim Jung Gi

COUNTRY: South Korea



Kim's virtuoso drawing skills have made him a YouTube sensation. His time-lapse videos show the art and design

graduate covering vast canvases in intricate freehand sketches. His work has appeared in numerous short stories and comic books, including the six-volume Tiger the Long Tail, as well as his own exhibitions.

www.kimjunggi.net

MY WORLD

"I was born in Goyang-Si, in the South Korean province of Kyongki-Do. This is part of a comic series about my neighbourhood. This is what it's really like. I saw it with my own eyes!"





SPEED DRAWING

"I have a lot of fun sketching at speed. This drawing, for example, took me just 40 minutes to complete."

"I have a lot of fun sketching at speed..."

MY NEW BOOK

"This drawing shows me receiving delivery of my 2013 sketchbook collection. It's the third one I've released. I hope it sells well..."



UNSEEN FORCES

"Like all men in South Korea, I had to do national service. I was in the Special Forces section, where I memorised an amazing number of vehicles and weapons. I've always enjoyed drawing mechanical parts. This is more of a military dream - I'd love to be part of a history-making operation."

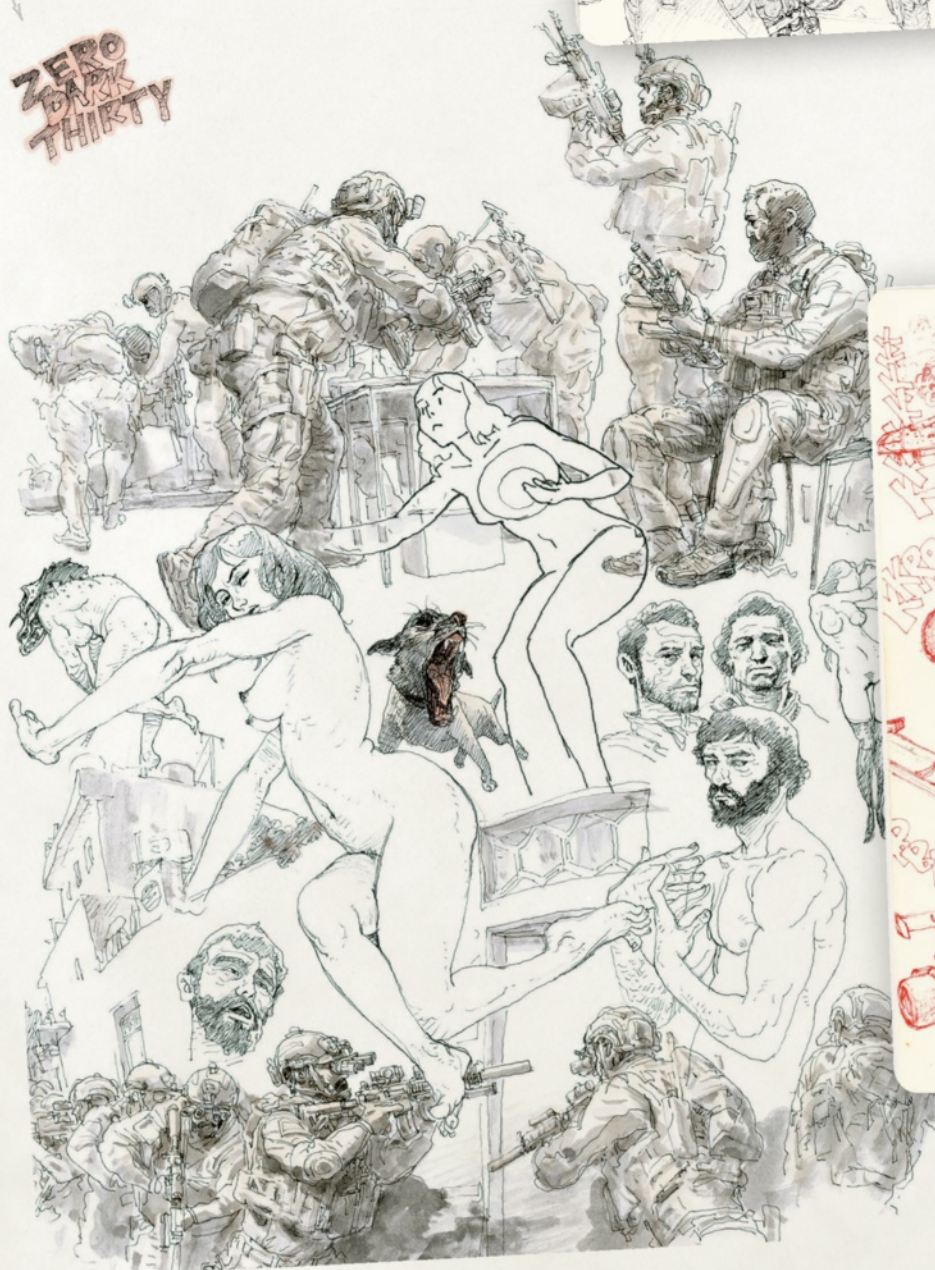
FAN ART

"I really love the film Zero Dark Thirty, and I created this piece after watching it. The DEVGRU did not disappoint me!"

**ZERO
DARK
THIRTY**



"My advice: have fun while you're drawing. Don't force it"



PEN

"I often draw using a ballpoint pen, which I really like. But I also use felt pens. It depends on the sketch. My advice: have fun while you're drawing. Don't force it."



THOUGHTS FROM ABROAD

"This drawing is also based on real-life events. It shows me shopping for souvenirs in Malaysia, where I recently visited. It's a really nice country."

CAREER PATH

"I'm the oldest son of the family, so my parents didn't allow me to choose art as an occupation. It's kind of a Korean tradition that the oldest son tends to be the bread winner. But I was always doodling with my pencil, and eventually they realised that I was never meant to be a scholar."



Want to share your sketches? Then drop us an email, with a selection of your artwork, to sketchbook@imaginefx.com, together with some information about yourself.



Blue Dragon was created by in-house artist Sandara and commissioned by Pastimes.com.

STUDIO PROFILE

LIKSTUDIOS

This enthusiastic collective of international artists is determined to make its mark on the world of fantasy art



Ding Jiaying's brief for this painting was to explore a new style for one of LiKStudio's unannounced projects.

LOCATION: Taiwan
CURRENT PROJECTS: Path of Exile
PAST PROJECTS: Reign of Dragons, Wind of Witches
WEB: www.likstudios.com



For your info, LiK is pronounced as 'like,' says LiKStudios' website, rather helpfully. In fact, clarifies managing director and co-founder Kai Ng, it can be pronounced as both 'like' or 'lick'. "But of course it would be weird to name it as Lick Studios."

It's one of the few linguistic niggles at this otherwise very cosmopolitan design studio, which is based in Taiwan but made up of artists from all over the world.

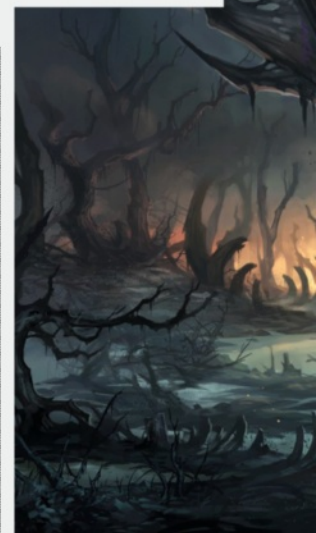
Creating conceptual art, marketing art and illustrations, matte paintings, storyboards and more – most notably for prestigious game publishers such as Square Enix, LucasArts, Wizards of the Coast and Paizo – this enthusiastic team of 15 is led



by veteran Kai, who has previously worked as a concept designer at LucasArts Singapore.

"After working in the art industry for some time, I felt the need to grow my own team and explore possibilities with my business partner Yen Ling," he says. "We brainstorm frequently with one another and explore possibilities together. Whenever we feel the need, we just create quick sketches and throw ideas at one another. In LiKStudios, there's no hierarchy when it comes to generating ideas and we respect everyone's input."

"A huge part of my team is very experienced in the design industry, and many of them have a very intimate





Casimir Lee's Moon and Samsara is one of many illustrations produced for an art book that's set for release in 2014.

The lower picture shows the team unwinding with an RPG. Below, Yen and Kai work on a project.



“In LiKStudios, there's no hierarchy when it comes to generating ideas and we respect everyone's input”



This black dragon is another piece commissioned by Pastimes.net. It adorns play mats, laptop skins and cushions.

CASIMIR LEE

Concept designer Casimir has been in the games industry for nearly 10 years

How did you get involved with LiKStudios?

I chanced upon Kai's work online and felt he was a very good artist, so I took the initiative to get acquainted with him and Yen Ling.

Then you started work for them?

I worked part-time for them at first due to my full-time job commitment with a Taiwan games company. Subsequently, I went full time with LiKStudios. I just clicked with their goals and ideology. That stuff is so important to help you commit to a job with your whole heart.

And presumably it helps when working with other artists?

Yes. The other artists in LiKStudios are very active, lively and passionate in what they do. Our gatherings are always full of laughter. Working with them inspires creativity, as the atmosphere is very positive and we all have the same mindset and beliefs. Within the team my works are mostly fantasy based and my forte is character design.

What's the best thing about working at the company?

The cool thing about concept art is that inspirations are everywhere and I can create anything through my own creative thoughts. Seeing my work being taken to another level by another artist down the pipeline and finally realised as an actual game product gives me the greatest satisfaction. In the process there are many difficulties, but the pros outweighs the cons.

What do you enjoy doing outside of work?

I mostly immerse myself with personal non-commercial artwork and exploring concepts. I love the art style of the Vienna Secession - it influenced me a lot during my time as an art student and that art style reflects a lot in my work. I would also love to do clay sculpting pretty soon!

What advice would you give to someone looking for a similar job?

Concept artists face competition on a global scale, greater than any time in history and in the future it will only be greater. Not only do we need to be proficient in the ability to illustrate and stay imaginative, we need a lot of passion and perseverance to stay in the industry. Sometimes, we might run dry on ideas and be unsatisfied with our own work. So we have to find a way to re-energise ourselves and get inspired to create more, excellent artwork.



Previously art lead on a major title for Softstar Entertainment, Casimir works with LiKStudios full-time and lectures at the INCG Academy, Taiwan.

www.likstudios.com



A concept design for a game level's boss, by Kai Ng, focusing on how the boss will make its entry into the stage.

➡ knowledge in providing freelance services. But by working as a team we can handle projects more systematically and provide more accountability."

Right now its clients include Drecom Co and Applibot, for which LiK is creating trading card illustrations and concept art. There's also an ongoing relationship with New Zealand studio Grinding Gear Games and its free-to-play MMO Path of Exile – including new character and item models for an expansion – as well as discussions with Konami about its games output.

THE RIGHT PERSON

It was early on in the studio's life that Jonas De Ro – from Belgium – suggested that one of its strengths should be finding the right person for the right job, both by ensuring they had a wide spread of abilities, and also a wealth of different experience from their own cultural backgrounds. "For me, a highlight would be to be able to do more



Duc Truong Huyen created this concept work for a game pitch – and used it to practise his details.



A personal painting of a street in Nanjing with a sci-fi touch to it, by Jonas De Ro.



Casimir, Kai, Yen, Ding and the team spend their lunch brainstorming, over their favourite toys.

“LiKStudios is pronounced the same as the Chinese character for strength”

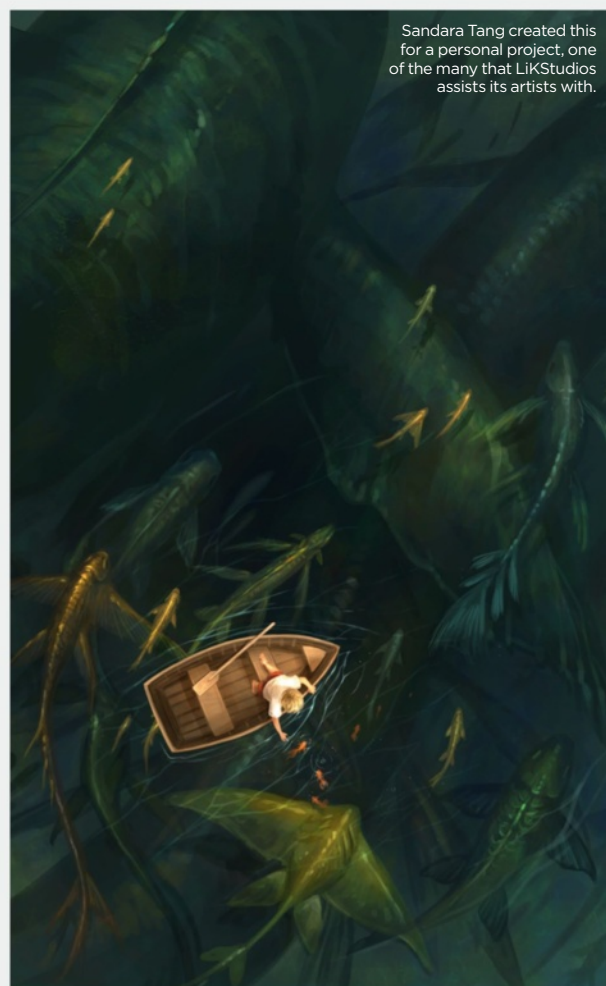


work in the Asian entertainment industry," says Jonas. "As a European-based artist I've only been able to work for companies in Asia a couple of times, so having a Taiwan-based studio like LiKStudios acts like a gateway to the industry in the East."

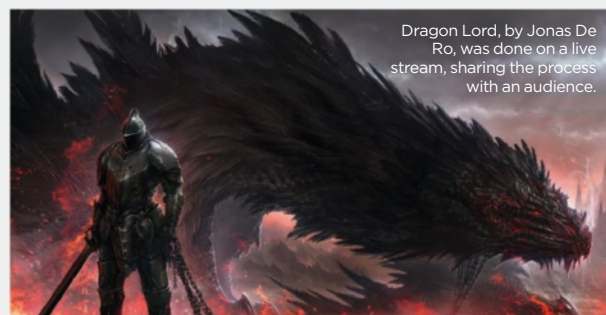
For his part, Kai believes that smaller, more versatile studios are slowly but surely replacing the lumbering, AAA-game focussed monolithic agencies of the past – a process that he likens to the extinction of the dinosaurs.

"Of course, many big companies are going to stay, but their working method will definitely change," he adds. "I think that many companies will look at outsourcing as an alternative to hiring full-timers. LiKStudios exists because we can provide that variety and flexibility."

LiKStudios certainly looks set to prosper from their position in the near future and – who knows – it might just have something to do with that name again. "It has the same pronunciation as the Chinese character that stands for strength," says Kai. "And as a team we have strength: we have strength in numbers, in our intellectual prowess, and in our ability to execute and produce great work. Our voice will be heard strong and clearly."



Sandra Tang created this for a personal project, one of the many that LiKStudios assists its artists with.



Dragon Lord, by Jonas De Ro, was done on a live stream, sharing the process with an audience.

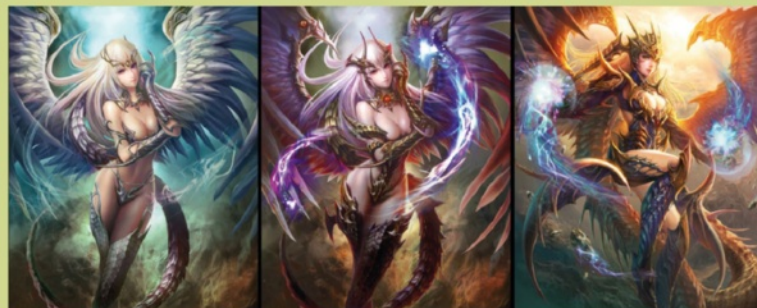


SNAKE LADY

Follow the thinking behind the creation of a LikStudio original...

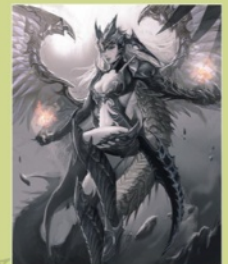


Senior artist Chen Yanting shares the process of creating Midgardsormr for Reign of Dragons. "We needed to create a character that was part snake and part beautiful girl. For this game, we had to design and create upgrades too. So the challenge is convincing the viewer that she's a snake, while also retaining her familiar identity through all the upgrades."



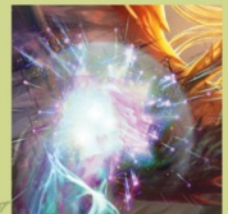
Sketch phase

We're asked to provide more details than in the sketches we normally do. We focus a lot on the rough design, silhouette and lighting. A single image needs to convey a story well, so we place a lot of emphasis on the poses of the character and what she's doing.



Bringing in details

With the composition and mood ironed out, we need to bring in the details carefully, making sure every aspect is believable. Does the armour work? Is she recognisably Midgardsormr? These are the type of questions we're constantly asking.



The final

Most things are pretty locked down in this stage. But there's still a lot of work to be done to bring the character to life, by colouring it and adding finer details and effects for spells and explosions.

Upgrades

Upgrades are very common in Japanese card games. We create variations of the base design, usually with stronger weapons, armour and spells. Every new image design has to have obvious differences, and yet still look like the same, familiar character.

COMIC
ARTIST



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Advice from the world's best artists

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Photoshop

LET YOUR ARTISTIC VOICE BE HEARD

Discover how to find your own style of painting by being inspired by the world around you, as this month's cover artist **Jennifer Healy** explains...

The key to being a successful artist is to take in the beauty and aspects that you admire from other artists or even from life itself. Nature, birds or flowers are a given, but dirt, spiders or alligators – things that you normally wouldn't call beautiful – can be just as useful to an artist's muse. Everything has beauty. The trick is to keep that inspiration inside of you and use it to your advantage. To use that inspiration as motivation.

As a girl I saw the work of surrealist painter Johanna Pieterman. She sparked something inside me and I took it upon myself to become an artist. Her artwork inspired me to pick up a pencil and start drawing and creating things. The key is to keep pushing yourself along your journey to find your artistic voice and blossom into the artist you're striving to be. Keep practising! Even when you think you've made your masterpiece, keep going. You'll develop your own style over time.

Artist PROFILE

Jennifer Healy
COUNTRY: US

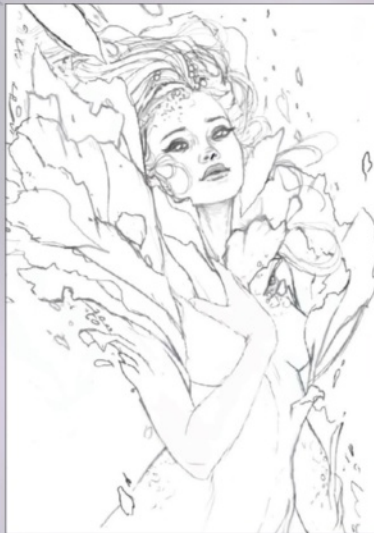


Jennifer works in traditional and digital mediums, and loves them both. She enjoys adding strange ethereal surrealism to her art whenever she can.
www.jennifer-healy.com

I like to get lost in the thrill of creating and this is where you can find your own style. Discovering your own artistic voice will take time, but the journey is a fun and satisfying one. My painting process contains a lot of playing around, and with any luck will inspire you to do some of your own experimenting once I'm done. With this workshop I hope I can help you learn some tips and tricks with layers, skin, hair, brushes and filters to speed you along your way!

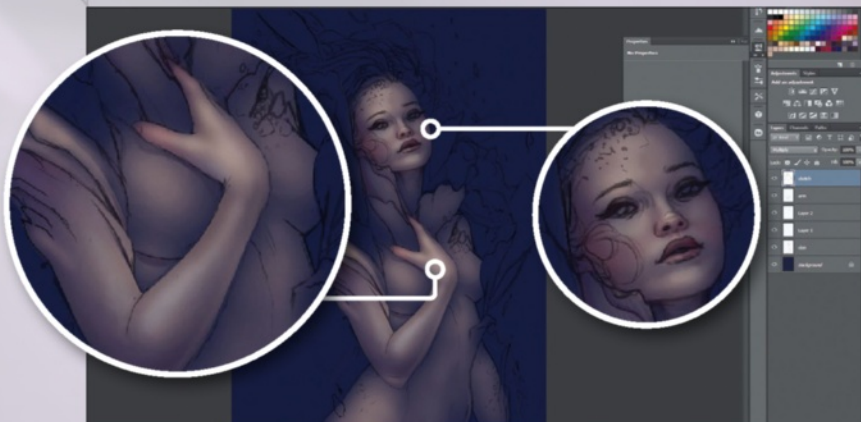
1 Begin with a sketch

I always start with a couple of sketches. I sketch out the concept to get an idea of the general composition and where specific objects should be placed, such as her arm and her head. These elements may change in due course, but at least for now I have an idea in place before I begin painting.



2 Starting the skin

Once the sketch is finished I begin painting the skin. I set my sketch on Multiply so I can see the layers beneath it. I block in the bulk with a Soft Round brush set on 6 per cent Opacity, layering multiple times until I feel it's right. The Lasso tool enables me to keep the soft brush from straying into unwanted areas.



3 Blocking in the hair

For this stage I want to use a dotted brush with the Space Setting set to 2 per cent (access this via the Brush Tip Shape option). This creates a nice, hair-like effect. I choose a medium to dark colour to block in the first layer of hair and then add a couple of thinner strands of even lighter shades on top of this layer.



Shortcuts Brush Settings

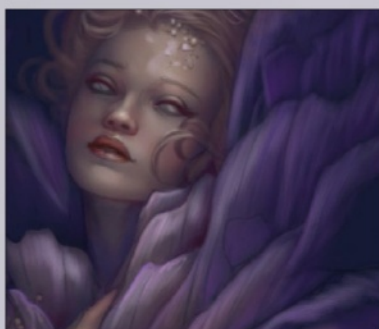
F5 (PC & Mac)

This is a quick way to pull up your brushes and adjust their settings.



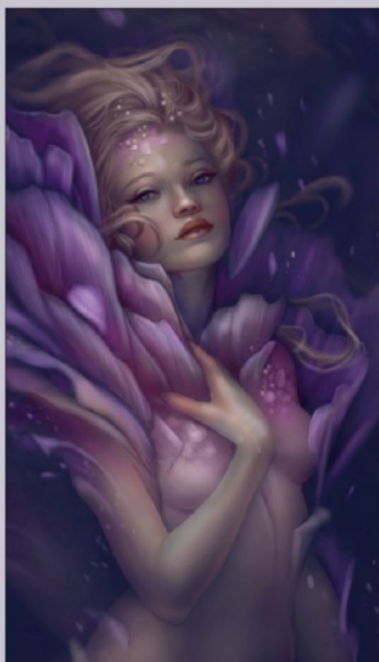
4 Begin blooming...

Here I continue to use the hair brush to begin work on the petals. I find the texture is a better fit for the petals than the Soft Round brush. I also need to keep in mind where I want my lighting to be. This needs to stay consistent throughout the painting. I like to work from dark to light, and so while working on a low Opacity I softly build up layers of lighter colours.



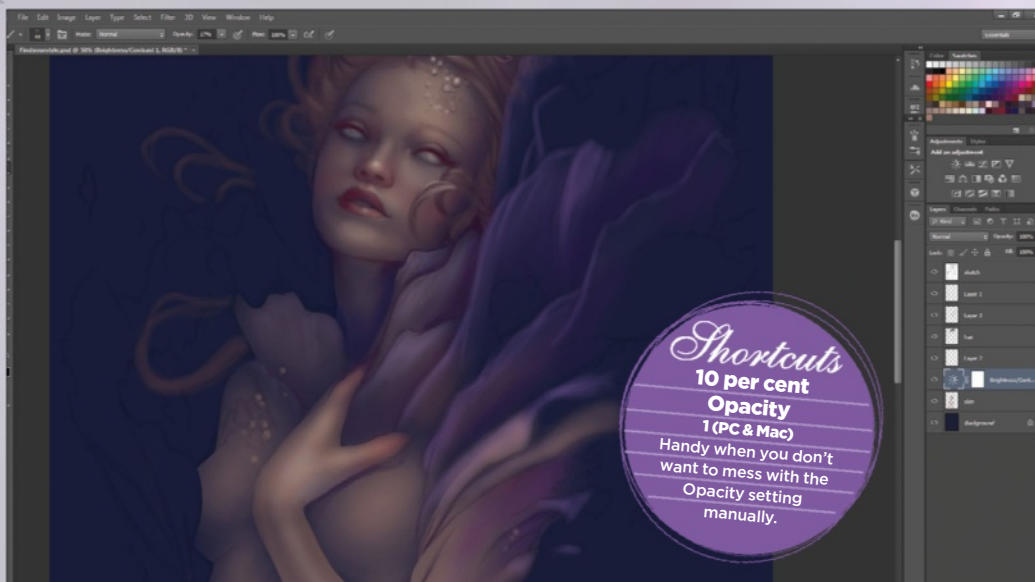
5 ... and keep blooming

I add layers upon layers of paint to fill out the petals that are blooming and flaking from her skin. I'm starting to add more details to the petals, such as lines of creases, to help define them better. I add more hair strands here, as well as flakes on her chest and face, and continue to keep my sketch layer visible so I can blend this in later.



6 Blur and colour

Now it's time to use a blur filter. I do this by copying the whole painting and pasting it on the very top layer. Then I click Filter>Blur>Motion Blur. Adjusting the dial determines how strong the blur effect is. Now I add a new layer set to Color and start adding in colour on top of the petals.



PRO SECRETS

Face up to those errors

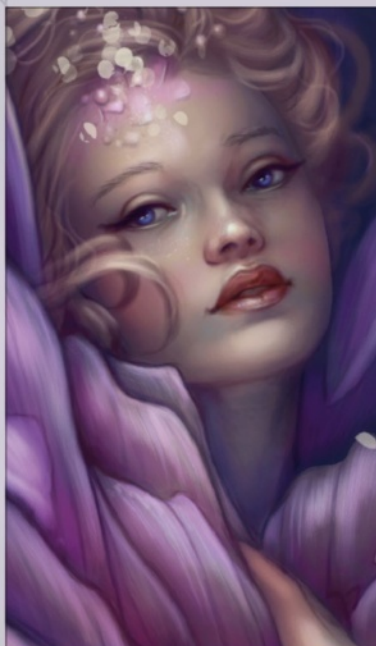
Don't forget to flip your image many times when you paint, particularly if you're painting faces. This enables you to see mistakes sooner rather than later, when they would be more difficult to fix. Consider creating a hotkey to do this.

7 Sparkles and light

I decide it's time to add in some sparkle and glimmer. I use a Round brush with the Brush Tip Shape Spacing set to 56 per cent. Scattering is checked, Scatter is set to 1,000 per cent and Count is set to 3. The Dual brush option also helps to provide some interesting textures to my brushes. After this I add a layer of brightness and contrast to help push out some of the highlights and make the image become more dramatic.

8 Facial details

I go back to the face to add in more details and definition around her mouth, nose and eyes. I also decide to apply some subtle sparkles to her skin to help illuminate it. Placing another Color layer on top and painting her skin gives it more life. To do this I use a soft brush set on a low Opacity setting.



9 More hair definition

As well as refining more of her face and introducing more colours and definition, I'm starting to add even more hair strands. I'll need to depict thinner, detailed strands, ensuring that the ends taper off so I don't create big chunky ends when I paint. I can do this by pulling up the brush settings and making sure the Shape Dynamics box is checked and that Size Jitter is set to Pen Pressure.



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WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

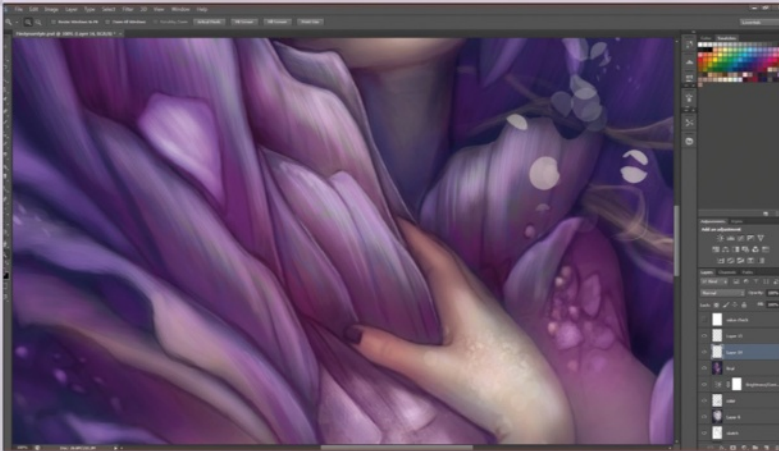
CUSTOM BRUSH:
SKIN SOFT



I use this at around 6 per cent Opacity when painting skin. This produces a soft porcelain effect for skin. You can also use this when applying a Color layer.

10 Refining the hand

I start shaping the thumb area and add more highlights and contrast to the petal areas. I use a more rounded brush, which gives me more control, to add the finer details, such as the creases on the petals and the shadows around the hand.

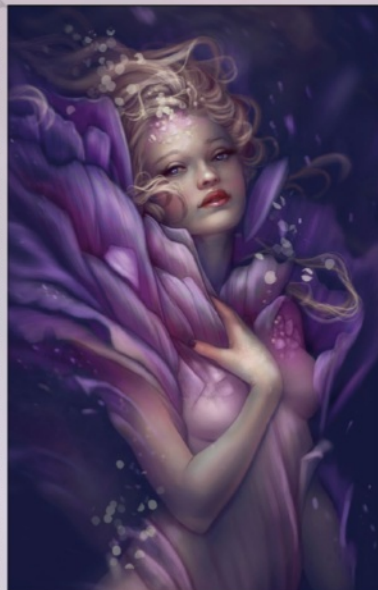


11 Layer, layers, layers

Here I want to keep applying more details all around the image. I'm adding definition to her face, her hair and the petals. I introduce more layers of colour and intensify the colours that are already on the Canvas with the Vibrance option (Image>Adjustments>Vibrance). At this point I also decide that I need to cover up her body a bit more, through the addition of more petals.

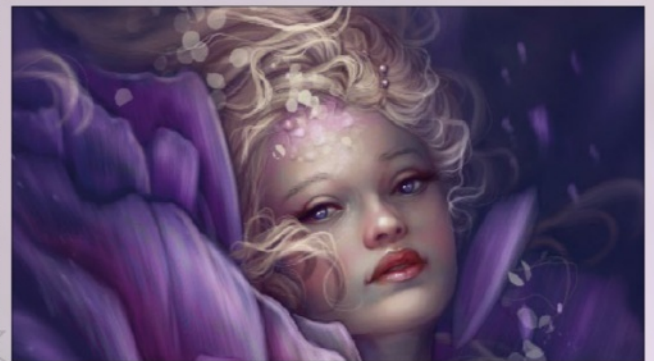
12 Even more strands

Now it's time for more strands to be added to her hair. I continue to use my hair brush that I used for the details previously. The smaller the strands, the lighter the shade. I'm using a Soft Round Eraser brush on a low Opacity to erase the ends so that they look natural and blend in evenly with the rest of her hair.



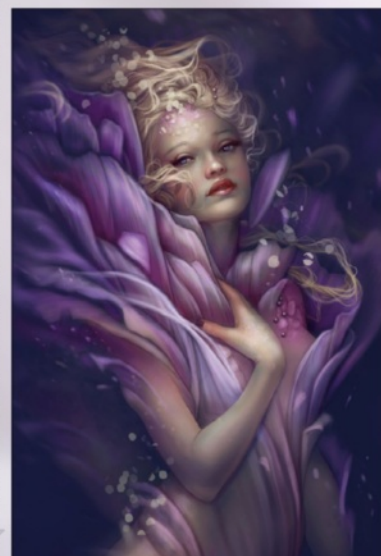
13 More coverage

I want to continue incorporating the petals around her body. I go back to the hair brush for this, so that the texture matches the rest of the petals and helps keep them unified. I want to maintain the colours and flow so that everything has a pleasing, organic feel to it. I also flip the image, to ensure that I'm seeing the painting with a fresh eye.



14 Details, details, details

I paint small pearls on her hair and shoulder, then decide that I need to use the Transform tool to move her petal coverage over her shoulder slightly, because I don't like where it sits. I do this by selecting the Lasso tool, right-clicking the image and selecting Free Transform. Once in Transform mode I right-click again and select Warp.



PRO SECRETS

Check your values

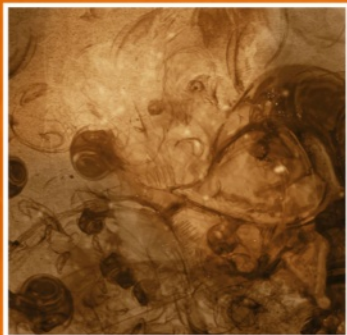
To do this, double-click your layer, then select Blending options>Blend mode>Color. Place this layer at the top so you can click it on and off, enabling you to check your values throughout your painting process. This makes things much easier and helps as a learning aid as well.

15 Final checks

Almost done! I give the image another look over and add in all my last details and refinements. More colours, strands of hair, highlights, sparkles and so on. Now I want to add a touch of warmth to the overall image so I click Image>Adjustments>Color Balance and choose a yellowish colour to help pull out the yellow and golden tones. This helps to complement the purples throughout the painting. And now I have blossomed! 🌸

Eye of the beholder

Perception is the interplay between the information gathered by the eye, and conclusions and constructions of your brain projected onto the image. When your eyes and brain start enjoying the game, multiple objects and creatures seem to appear around your main character, such as the light monkey head on the upper left, for example. There's also the guy with the helmet and the clown-like nose in the middle, and the hidden elephant's head or the Sphinx-like female with caterpillar feet, just to highlight the most obvious objects.



Strike it lucky

With a skilful eye you might get lucky and even find something that seems like a perfect face already. I always try to preserve those details and just add whatever comes to mind on a separate layer – as long as it's in keeping with the original concept.



Floating details

To give my painting a vivid and three-dimensional look, I add light and highlights, such as little particles floating through the image. I do this by setting up a light-coloured gradient layer and layer mask, which means the particles only shine through where they're meant to.



Photoshop

GENERATE IDEAS OUT OF CHAOS

Angela Otto encourages you to look past conventional composition techniques and create art that literally appears before your eyes

Artist PROFILE

Angela Otto
COUNTRY: Germany



Angela is a freelance illustrator and graphic designer.

After she graduated in communications and media design, she focused on illustration and its relation to storytelling. Her thesis, *The Inversion of the Illustration Process*, was awarded gold by the German Art Directors Club in 2011.

www.hoploid.com

My illustrations are usually based on coffee, tea, juice and paint splotches. These chaotic patterns provide my brain with the basic material to illustrate fantastic animals, weird creatures and surreal scenes. It's like seeing faces in the clouds – we all remember doing that as a kid – or figures in the famous Rorschach experiments.

Psychologists have a term for this ability of the brain to detect meaning and

form in meaningless, even chaotic context: apophenia. I've channelled this ability into my drawings and paintings, using traditional tools.

I start by preparing my paper or canvas with random coffee drops or paint drippings until the pattern reaches a certain depth. The motifs that I find in the structures are then extracted from the texture by drawing with coloured ink. Although they're often carefully worked out in detail, the pictures always provide a

wide range for interpretation, different approaches and scope for the viewer to "see more".

When the editor of ImagineFX dropped me a line to see if I could recreate my painting technique using digital tools instead of the various splotches and ink that I usually work with, I jumped at the chance. So I started to play with some digital brushes to create a visually stimulating background. Let's see what appeared on my canvas...

How I create...

ART OUT OF SMOKE



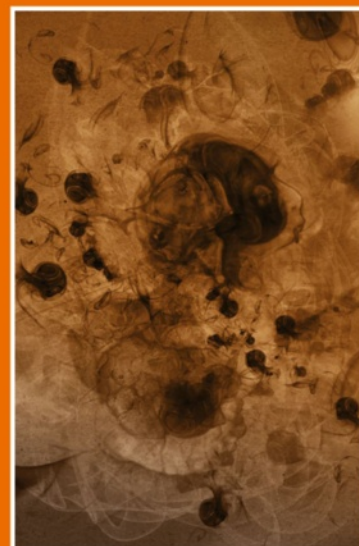
1 A face in the clouds

I choose a random smoke brush from a free brush set at Photoshop Tutorials (<http://ifxm.ag/smoke-b>) and start messing around. After a while I notice a little creature or face that's upside down, which I extract and start to rearrange. Its appearance pleases me, so I look to see how I can push it further.



2 Hidden art

I set up a new background based on a paper texture and use my smoke brushes to create an interesting background structure with smooth lines, a liquid feel and fluid forms. This should give the viewer the opportunity to uncover figures and objects in my art.



3 A smoky figure

I focus on a cartoon-like figure who's wearing a cap and smoking a cigarette, and start bringing out what I see until it's clearly visible. While doing this, other characters' eyes, faces and beaks pop up in the texture. I keep painting to distinguish my figure from the background, and add some details.



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WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSH: 66



I use this brush, which contains a repetitive pattern of the original form at several size and angle jitters, to create the nebula.

*Cinema 4D & Photoshop*

GET TO GRIPS WITH MATTE PAINTING

Matte painting techniques are useful for creating grand fantasy environments quickly. **Rasmus Berggreen** shows how it's done

This workshop will give me the opportunity to explain how I use matte painting techniques to generate concept art. It's a quick process that gives a semi-realistic feel to the image. To demonstrate, I'll be producing an image from my personal project *Fall of Gods*. It's a story about a young man, Vali, who sets out to rescue his murdered family from the underworld, but finds himself part of a bigger plot. My story is inspired by Norse mythology, which often contains epic and grand landscapes.

Matte painting is widely used in the film industry to create everything from backgrounds to full three-dimensional sets. It involves using a lot of photo stitching, which is also helpful when

creating concepts. Learning these techniques will give you in-depth knowledge of value, lighting and colour, because you have to be able to blend together images seamlessly and ensure the finished work is visually coherent.

Furthermore, the process is very fast, and you can show off a finished piece quicker than if you had to paint it conventionally.

Even though I do paint a lot, I like what this approach can do for my imagination. In addition, a lot of directors appreciate the fact that they can quickly see what the final image more or less will look like. In the games industry many studios need this kind of clarification when outsourcing their 3D assets. So all in all, becoming familiar with this field of art should be well worth your time.

Artist PROFILE

Rasmus Berggreen

COUNTRY: Denmark



Rasmus graduated from the Danish Design School where

he studied production design. He's since worked as a concept artist in both games and film, and he more recently opened MOOD, a visual development studio that offers art services to the entertainment industry.
www.ifxm.ag/rasmusb



1 Sketching

A good way to start is by getting your thoughts down on paper, or in this case on the canvas in Photoshop. For the sketching I use an ink brush, which is fast and ideal for blocking in value. Here I'm arranging the elements. I try out different angles and imagine how it would look through a camera. I like how the shadow from the statues covers the warriors – it helps add to the story.



2 Evolving the sketch

In my story the Jotuns (Norse mythological creatures) are at war with the Aesir Gods, and after a brutal battle the warriors are returning to their country Jotunheim. I want the image to have a sense of grandeur, as they enter the gates to their home, guarded by large, fierce-looking statues. I continue the sketch, trying a lower angle, and I decide that this makes the statues feel larger and more monumental. There's nothing pretty here just yet, it's just rough ideas at this stage.



3 Value sketch

I'm not sure yet how I want the light to look exactly, so I spend five minutes producing this value sketch, to see if I want to take things in another direction. However, I think this one's too dark – I want a contrast between the light hitting the ground and the shadow. This will bring a little warmth to their home, a place of safety to return to after a long battle. The first thing I notice is the difference in value: when exploring value options it's important to strike a balance between light and dark. Often, because of the atmosphere, objects in the background will be lighter than the foreground, which in most cases will have higher levels of contrast.



PRO SECRETS

Take a break

Get away from your image for a day or two, before you make those final changes. You'll often see your image in a new light and this can help you be open-minded on what you need to improve. Too long spent looking at your art means you can fail to notice any mistakes, so it's good to take a step back once in a while.



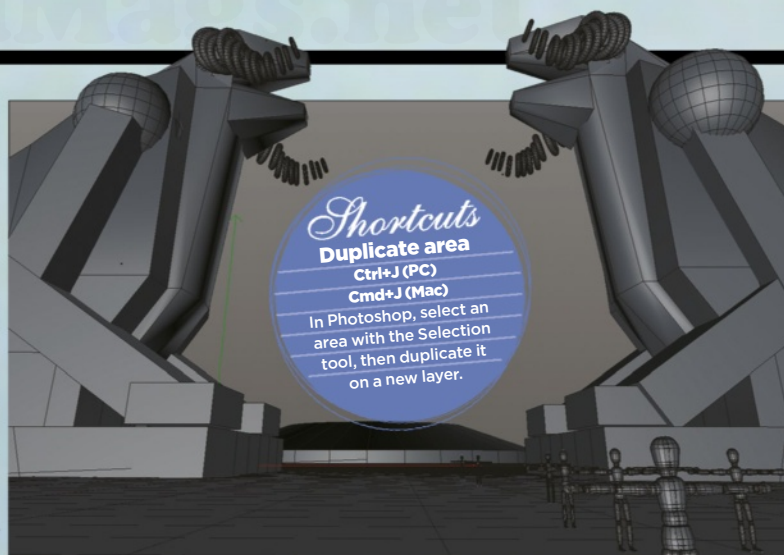
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PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSH:
ROUND INK BRUSH

This is very efficient for sketching, because it has a nice flow. You can make thin lines and also block in value when using it as a large brush.



Shortcuts Duplicate area

Ctrl+J (PC)

Cmd+J (Mac)

In Photoshop, select an area with the Selection tool, then duplicate it on a new layer.

4 3D mock-up

After trying out my ideas in Photoshop, I mock up a scene in CINEMA 4D to acquire a better camera placement and get some help on perspective lines and structures. It's a fast way to generate some basic shapes and a lighting setup, and so I'd encourage everyone to learn the basic skills of 3D software. I'm no 3D guru, but it's a great tool for testing your perspectives and getting the best angles, because this way you have the freedom of the camera.



5 Lighting

Still working in 3D, I create a simple lighting setup, to help me define the direction of the light and shadows. In addition, I use the figure mock-ups to gain a sense of how large I want the creatures to be. I want a good balance between the two statues and the figures – to make them seem large and scary.



6 Colour block-out

In Photoshop I now use a basic Chalk brush for blocking in colour. It's a favourite of mine because it's fast and dirty so I don't become distracted by details. I try to block out the main colours, and I like how some light hits the statues. Furthermore, the stronghold is also hit by the light, making it a focal point in the image. Always try to imagine how a viewer would look at your image, and what you want them to focus on. Most of the time you can control this process. I decide that lighting should be cold overall, with just a little bit of warmth from the winter sun.



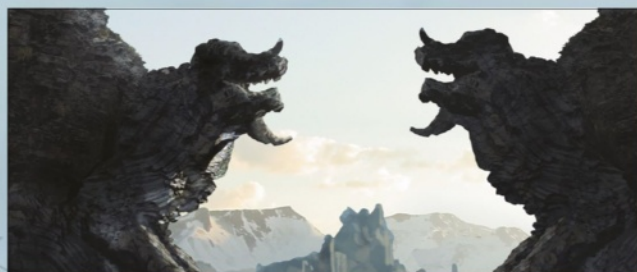
7 Rough colour sketch

I've now changed the image to have the characters walking from left to right. To my mind this fits the composition better and gives it more movement towards the focal point of the painting. However, the statues block a lot of the sun hitting the ground, so this is something I will have to work on a bit later.

8 Applying textures

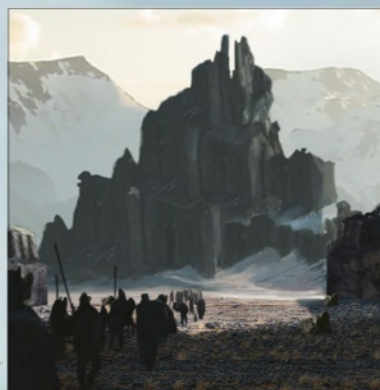
My experience with photo textures tells me this is a good time to apply them. I start by defining the main light source and the primary structures. Both the Stamp and Warp tools are useful for depicting the rock. I try to follow my sketch closely, using my 3D shapes as a guide. The rocks follow the shape of the statues, giving them a good sense of movement – even though they're rocks!





9 More textures

I continue this step by mirroring one statue to the other side, and then manipulate it so that it's sufficiently different, especially where it's hit by the light source. I use the same technique for the ground. It can be helpful to paint with the Stamp tool, to erase patterns that are looking too repetitive and obvious.

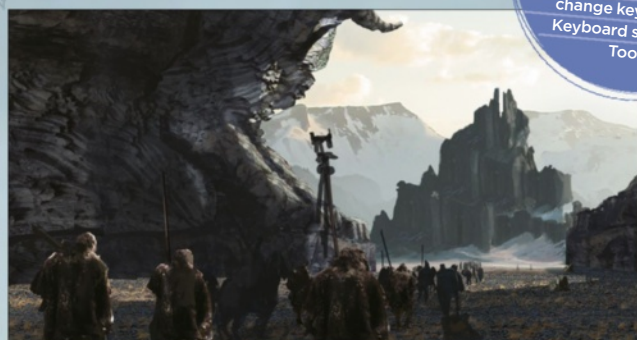


10 Defining the stronghold

I want the stronghold to feel like it was shaped out of the landscape – that it's ancient and mysterious. I use different rock elements, which I stitch together and then erase into the shape, to achieve a strong silhouette. This is what you see the most, rather than every single detail. I concentrate on getting the shadow right, breaking up the shapes where light hits the structures.

11 Composition tweaks

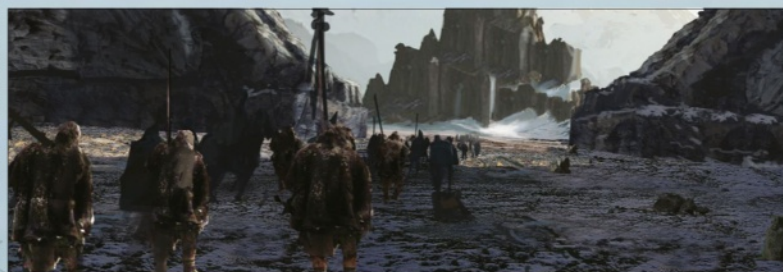
As I work on the image I decide that the composition could be better. I move everything to the right, which reinforces the movement from left to right by the returning warriors. Beforehand, everything felt a bit crammed together, so these changes give the whole image better movement and a chance to breathe. I now turn my attention to the creatures, giving them a stronger silhouette. I think of the Jotuns as tribe people, so I use pelts for their clothing, indicating that they hunt animals in the surrounding mountains and hills. This is also a way to show that they are a tough people.



PRO SECRETS

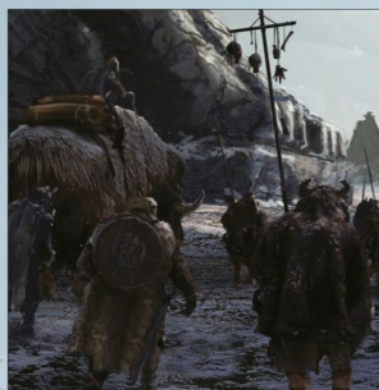
Set up a picture bank

Take a lot of photos and ask friends who have travelled to exotic places for their holiday snaps. It's helpful to have a picture bank when doing grand fantasy images like this. For concept work it's not always necessary to have really detailed scenes – just hinting at something can be just as effective. Sometimes a rough feel is what brings the dynamic to the image.



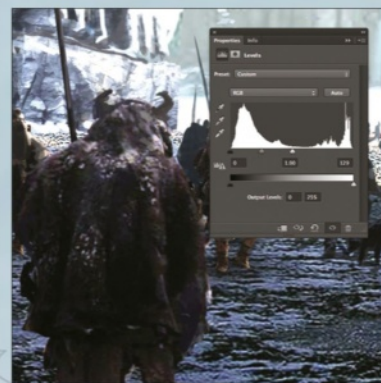
12 Snow on the ground

The characters are almost lost in the shadow on the ground. So it makes sense to lighten the ground by adding snow. As with the base ground, I stitch together multiple snow elements and use the Stamp tool to paint on top of them. It helps the issue with the shadow, as well as emphasising the sense of cold. It's important to keep the patterns in the snow going from large in the foreground to smaller in the mid- and background, to sell the idea of perspective.



13 Characters

I now focus on the different characters in the image, and introduce a large ox-like beast that's loaded with the Jotuns' gear. One guy is carrying some sort of banner, decorated with bits and pieces of old enemies. The first sketch didn't really have much variation in movement, so I have tried to vary the patterns and give them some rhythm.

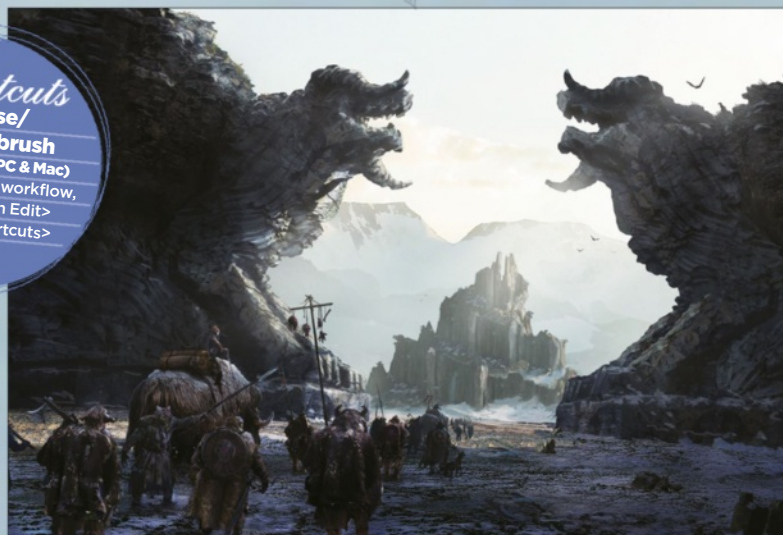


14 Continue detailing

I continue to work on all the details, improving the characters and adding more visual interest to the foreground. I also move the mountains in the background up slightly, so it doesn't create a tangent to the stronghold. I then lighten the foreground, so the characters stand out more. A good way to do this is to create a level filter and crank up the whites, fill the mask so you can't see the changes, and paint in those areas that need to be lightened.

15 Final touches

I add some 'god rays' and some more atmosphere using a Soft brush and erasing afterwards on a lower Opacity to achieve the exact density I'm after. I also introduce a new character who faces the camera. This will help lead the viewer into the image, because a face is often the first thing that catches the eye. With these changes I consider the image finished.



Shortcuts

Increase/decrease brush

Customisable (PC & Mac)

For better brush workflow, change keys in Edit > Keyboard shortcuts > Tools.

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART The ImagineFX Shop

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Comic Artist



Fantasy Illustrator



Anatomy: Volume 1

BACK ISSUES

If you want a print back issue, only the previous six (below) are available. We provide a much larger back catalogue with our digital editions*

Issue 98 August 2013



Be inspired by Simon Dominic's monstrously good cover art, then discover how paleoart has evolved over the years, as we talk to the artists who paint dinosaurs as realistically as possible. Workshops from Katie De Sousa and Weta's Christian Pearce also riff on the Lost World theme!

Issue 101 November 2013



Let our sci-fi artists take you to strange, new worlds: John Berkey, Peter Elson and Chris Moore visit a galaxy called 'Inspirational'. Our workshop section includes art from Keith Thompson, Emma Vieceli and Thom Tenery, and we chat to the artists of imaginary Friends Studios.

Issue 99 September 2013



To celebrate Magic: The Gathering's 20th birthday, we talk to some amazing card artists, such as Jason Chan, Scott M Fisher and John Stanko, while workshop artists include Aleks Briclot and Volkan Baga. Elsewhere, Sparth 'sculpts' a sci-fi vista and Dave Rapoza paints a dark, brooding scene.

Issue 102 December 2013



Traditional skills meet digital methods in Jean-Sébastien Rossbach's cover art, which also heralds a new section in the magazine that's devoted to bringing you the best in traditional fantasy art. We talk to Keith Thompson and Daren Bader, while Jim Pavlec brings an Eerie gothic creation to life.

Issue 100 October 2013



Our bumper 100th anniversary issue looks back to our past, and casts an eye over the artists of the future. There's a countdown of your 100 greatest artists of all time, a review of your favourite covers, plus workshops from Jason Chan, Raymond Swanland and the mighty Genzoman!

Issue 103 Christmas 2013



Discover the skills you'll need to break into the video games industry, as we speak to the people behind The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt, Star Wars: The Force Unleashed, Remember Me and Mass Effect. Traditional fantasy artist Tom Kidd paints a book cover, and Dave Kendall puts Manga Studio 5 to the test.

*Resource files are only available from issue 85 onwards.

Visit <http://beta.imaginefx.com/shop>



Manga Studio 5

APPLY COMIC SOUND EFFECTS



Join **PJ Holden** as he shows you how to add bangs, crashes and thuds to your comic creations, to give them a bit of extra oomph!

Crash! Kapow! Zap! You may not have seen these sound effects in comics recently, because comics have grown up. And that's a bit of a shame really, since one of the great joys of drawing comics is adding sound effects.

Sound effects can be one of the most creatively rewarding parts of drawing the page. Integrating sound effects into your

art can help you direct the reader's eye, enhance the feel of the art work and generally do something that only comics can do. Whether you letter these onomatopoeic words in silence or whether you find yourself saying, "Bang!" or "Bdam!" as you draw them (which your author almost certainly doesn't...), I'll take you through the art of adding sound effects in Manga Studio.

1 Badoing!

Create a new layer and design your sound effect in digital pencils. Try to draw the sound effect as though it's coming from the location where you'd expect it to come from, and draw it as though it feels like that sound. Why not say the sound out loud while you're at it? A window 'Krash!' would have a jagged appearance; a 'Splash!' would look watery; while the 'Krump!' of a rock falling to Earth would have bits of lettering breaking off!



2 Kerzaaaap!

Create a new layer for the lettering inks. Ink the sound effects, making sure to add texture to the shape of the letters, and fill them in. At this stage you want black lettering on the art – don't worry, we'll add some fancy frills in a moment. The next step is to make sure the letters are distinct and the sound effect is easily readable. It doesn't matter how much it'll be shrunk – for now, big and bold is better than small and timid!

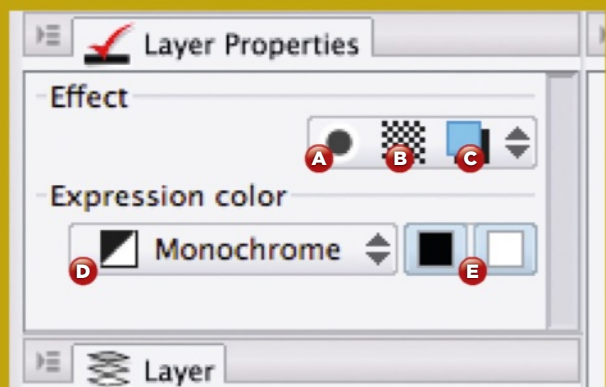


3 Sploooshhh!

In Layer Properties, select Layer Colour and set this to white. Then select Edges, set the edge colour to black and thicken the edge. You should now have white letters with a black outline. You can rasterise this layer. To add a second outline, add another white edge, rasterise, then add a black edge and rasterise that. This will ensure the letters pop off the page. And now you can go in to the letters and add any extra texture you wish.



THE LAYER PROPERTIES



A. The Edge

Toggling the Edge places an outline around the non-transparent art on the layer. This can be any thickness and have any colour.

This is a useful way to convert a layer into blue line for later inking.

B. Setting the Tone

Toggling the Tone mode renders any tone on the layer into dots. The darker the tone, the heavier the dots will become.

D. Expression Color

This dictates whether the layer can contain monochrome, greyscale or full-colour art.

C. Layer Color

Toggling Layer Color shows the layer as if it were in the selected colour.

E. Black and White

In monochrome and greyscale the Black and White buttons enable you to specify whether the layer will either contain black and white, or whether black or white should be treated as transparent.

4 Classic sounds!

If you're looking for inspiration, some of the best sound effects can actually be found in older comics. Todd Klein's lettering blog is a great source of examples of hand-lettered sound effects: see <http://kleinletters.com>.



Artist PROFILE

PJ Holden

COUNTRY:
Northern Ireland



PJ has been a professional comic artist for over a decade, drawing predominantly for 2000 AD on Judge Dredd, Rogue Trooper and more. He's also the co-creator of Numbercruncher with Si Spurrier.

www.pauljholden.com





Photoshop

DISCOVER YOUR VISUAL SIGNATURE



Look beyond your artistic skill set and join **Rafael Sarmento** on his journey to reveal the legends within you, in the search for your inner art mythology

The search for your style – a subjective set of visual and intellectual codes that might make you stand out in the art world – isn't an easy one. It's the quest for our own content, the personal mantra that drives our will to create. For that, we must look not only for the means to create, but also for the source of our own inspirations. And often the answers lie within ourselves.

Style isn't just about artistic knowledge and technical prowess – it's a whole

collection of interlinked experiences, influences and discoveries that distillate into recognisable marks and ideas. What gives artists a signature look is, I believe, the ability to represent reality through their own specific sensibilities, which will make the art look and feel unique.

I'm fascinated by Byzantine and baroque art. It's become the epicentre of what I call my personal myths, which I deconstruct and rearrange through my own fantasy/sci-fi bending. My love for these art movements has created a solid

Artist PROFILE

Rafael Sarmento

COUNTRY: Brazil

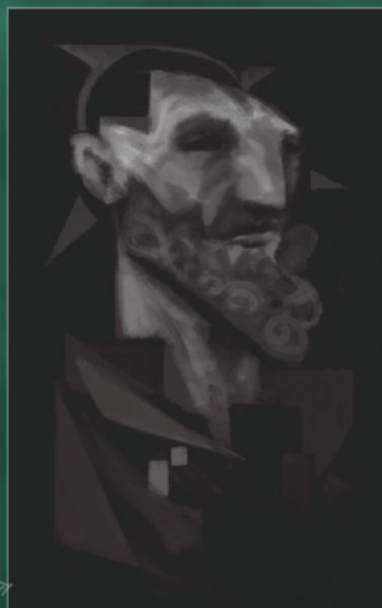


Rafael is an artist from the south of Brazil. He's been featured in

notable art annuals such as Spectrum and Café Salé, and has freelanced for clients all over the world. Rafael is forever on the look-out for the ultimate double espresso. <http://ifxm.ag/sarmento>

background that helps me to bring these influences together, enabling me to make my own statements on fantastical worlds, and filling them with life.

Throughout this workshop, I'll show you how I tap into my inner universes to create a sci-fi baroque portrait, approaching my influences (with a twist), and how I make use of my visual vocabulary to bring it to life. I hope that this will help you with your own art process, and hopefully ignite the inner myths within each and every one of you.



1 Base sketch

I usually start out by producing a preliminary sketch, which I'll create from three variations of the composition. This one feels like it has the right balance to kick things off, and because I'll be using it as a starting point rather than a defined goal, I'll experiment a lot and make changes along the way to fit the atmosphere, look and feel that I envision for the portrait. The key is to tap into the emotion and vision of the idea.

2 The right balance

I start experimenting with some abstract ideas that help me to balance the composition and develop a story. One technique that I discovered on my many art experiments was the fragmentation aspect. This can produce chaotic results, but I now keep it under control, so I can make it work for any image that I paint.

3 Start painting

I block the elements and make the colour decisions that will help me to achieve the mood that I'm pursuing. Since I'm fond of iconographic art and baroque portraiture, I'll build up the values and colours to recreate that mood, while adding my own twist on the genre.



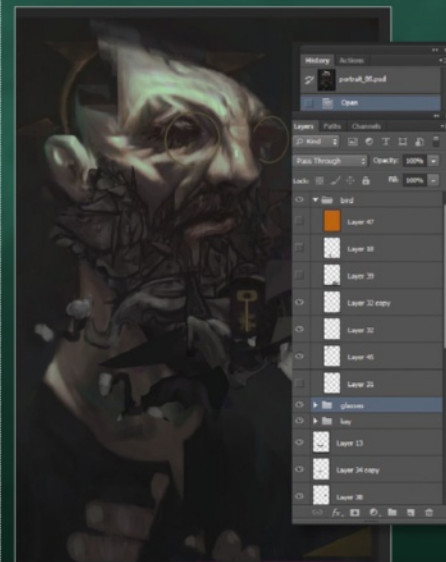
PRO SECRETS

Think laterally

This is probably one of the most epiphanical pieces of advice that I've ever received, and it's certainly one thing to always keep in mind. Train yourself to always think outside the box. Try to find parallel solutions to your creative challenges. Start seeing things differently, and come up with unusual solutions and ideations. This collection of lateral thoughts will eventually enable you to build up a strong visual identity. Be silly, be creative, be you!

4 Adjusting the composition

I develop the idea a little further and add hands to the character. Because I've decided to get rid of the earlier fragmented clothing – which was diverting attention from the face – it's cleared up a nice area to work in, but I'm trying to keep it simple so I don't divert attention from the head. Now I duplicate the head layer and offset it with reduced opacity, creating some happy accidents that reveal some interesting marks. ➡





Shortcuts

Copy Merge

Ctrl+Shift+C (PC)

Cmd+Shift+C (Mac)

This Photoshop feature enables you to merge all visible layers into just one single layer.

5 Developing the figurative and abstract

One of the things that I've managed to develop is the balance between figurative and abstract elements. It helps me to deconstruct the way of portraying certain things in a slightly unconventional way, which usually (if not always) creates space for more abstract ideas within the context of the image. Maintaining a balance between the representational and the abstract or geometric is a challenge, but it can generate happy accidents, and eventually even change the concept of an illustration.

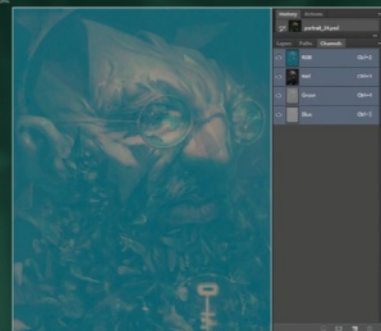


6 The key of knowledge

The main focus of this portrait will be the scholar's beard, which I'll use to tell the story of the character. I'll give more attention to the secret key – which will be explained only to you, the reader: it's a beard full of experience, which he uses to conceal the key to higher knowledge. I will make use of the beard/key relationship as a metaphor for the wisdom that this old scholar has garnered over the years.

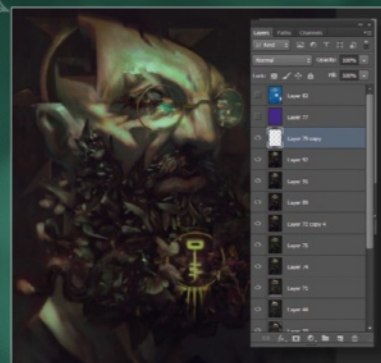
7 Atmospheric tweaking

For me, it's all about the mood. After creating a new layer filled with a very saturated blue, I change the layer mode to Exclusion, drop down the Opacity to around 70 per cent, and put a merged copy layer on the top. I set the new layer to Darken, and play with the Levels to see how the blue-ish effect will affect the overall atmosphere and temperature of the scene.



8 Enhancing the scene's baroque feeling

Here I'll push the chiaroscuro (the Italian word that describes the use of strong contrasts between light and dark in art), which will enhance the baroque feeling on the scene, without compromising any of the details. I give the hands a little more definition, although I'm still not convinced of their position, or even if I'll keep just one. Taking both hands off isn't an option, because I want them to give a bit more substance to the character.



9 Rebalancing the character

The intentional anatomy mistakes that I've brought to the character is something of my own taste – I really love pushing the boundaries between the real and the surreal (as I dance between the figurative and the abstract), and using these figure distortions brings something new to the game. But in some areas, I feel I must reconsider some of the features, or else the overall image may look unintentionally odd. I use the Lasso tool to shorten down the neck, which brings the head down a bit.



Shortcuts

Flip the image

F1/F2 (PC & Mac)

These are my shortcuts for Flipping Horizontal/Vertical. Go to Edit > Keyboard Shortcuts to make your own.

10 Rearranging the masses

Continuing the rearranging of the bust, I use the Liquify tool to rearrange some parts of the head. This minimises any awkwardness about the anatomical distortions – even if they're there for a reason. I can't push them too much, so I use the Liquify tool to mould some of the masses, saving me time from painting entire sections. And filters are made to be used, so don't be afraid of applying these wonderful digital tools!

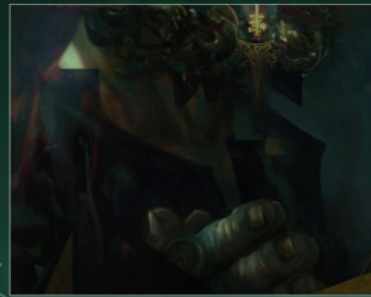
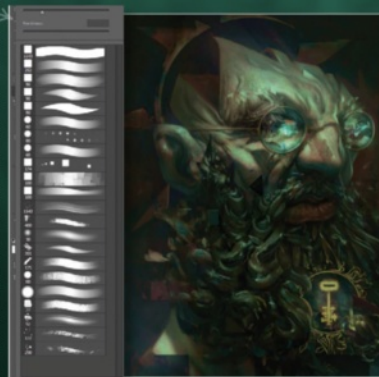
11 Starting the refinements

Here, I reach the point where I consider that the whole composition and idea are coming together. If I make any changes from now on, they'll probably be minor ones. I finally start focusing on the detailing, tackling the beard in particular. Note how I've maintained its semi-abstract architecture, while allowing some improvements on the curls. This gives the beard a more sculptural feel.



12 Brushing and texturing

I usually use a small selection of brushes to achieve specific effects. Some are my own, but most of them are a collection of seriously nice brushes from other artists. For this whole illustration I'm mostly using one custom brush, but from time to time I'll grab a brush with some fun, painterly texture and use it to add bite, also to get an almost solid feel to the surface. I also use some scanned handmade textures.

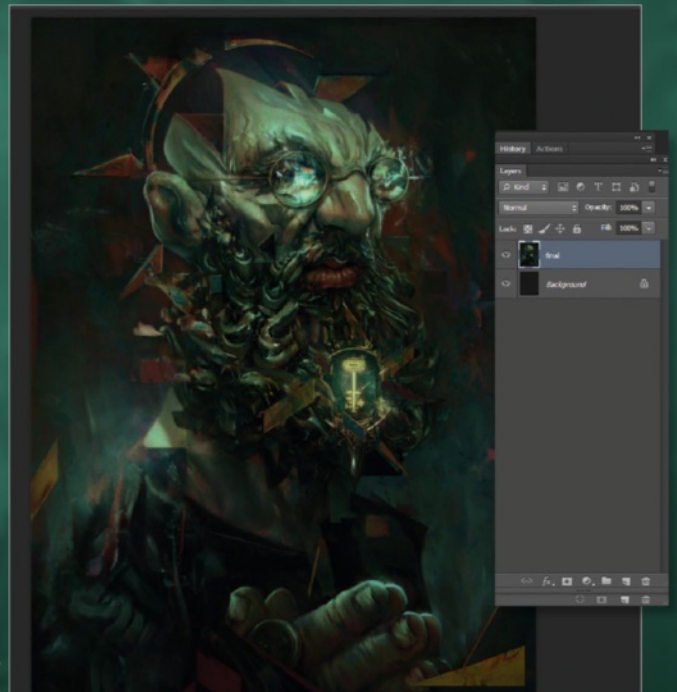


13 A small revolution

Even when I'm focusing on achieving a certain goal within an image, I don't worry about having to change certain areas. It's all about keeping the elements true to the feeling I originally envisioned. Here, I've decided to change the hands, putting them in a prayer-like position. This religious accent reinforces the baroque drama of the scene.

14 Overall adjustments

Now it's just a matter of arranging all the details, to boost the 'futuristic Flemish' feeling and mood of the final portrait – we're just a few tweaks away from the finish. I carefully utilise my scanned textures in a range of layer combinations to achieve an organic grain and to enhance the painterly look. The contrast and colours are now set, so I apply an extra coat of painting for detailing. The scene is coming to life!



15 Final consideration

Here we go! The final image is not quite what I expected from the beginning (in a good way), but as I've said, the journey is what counts, and letting the idea be driven by this stream of consciousness way of working not only prevents me from repeating myself, but also brings new discoveries with every new illustration. My surprise at the end result is really rewarding. Now I sit back and drink a fresh cup of coffee. I hope you enjoyed the journey! ☕

PRO SECRETS

Make the most of those layers

A layer's properties dialog opens up an array of effects and possibilities. It's one of the benefits of digital art. One thing that I usually do is to create a separate layer on top of the image, fill it with a very saturated colour, and set this layer to different modes, such as Darken or Exclusion. Play around with the Opacity and combine it with other effects!

How I create...

A FLYING WARRIOR SCOUT



1 Dynamic sketch

I always start my paintings with a quick sketch. This is sometimes very rough, sometimes a little more advanced – like this one. I concentrate on the composition, the dynamism and the curves of the silhouette. I decide what will become more realistic and what will remain stylised.



2 Painted colours

Usually, I start with a greyscale value step before the colour stage, but because I have a good idea of what I want to achieve, I paint the tones I need directly. It helps me to confirm that the design works, along with the textures. I almost always use one layer at a time, flattening the image as I work.



3 Dynamic design

I place the silhouette against a pure white background, to focus the eye on the design and the dynamic curves. I paint and then detail the textures and the different materials before applying the final lighting scheme, and revise how the elements of the composition work together until I'm satisfied.

It's all about the curves

The dynamic of this composition follows a double-curve structure. The different elements and shapes have the same construction flow, and the final silhouette maintains this aggressive style.





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Photoshop PORTRAY A WARRIOR IN MID-FLIGHT

Find out how to concept and illustrate an armoured scout, as **Alex Chaudret** channels classic RPG designs into the Crimson Rider!

For my design of the Crimson Rider, I have a specific idea of what I want to depict: a fearless warrior riding an organic-mechanic creature. The character design will be achieved using a detailed painted approach while still maintaining a dynamic composition.

As I mull over my concept, the rider becomes an armoured scout who's able to take down enemies on the battlefield. It becomes a red storm wrapped up in a fancy design. As I paint, the design of video games such as the first Final Fantasy or Vagrant Story is forefront in my mind. These games are a melting pot of sci-fi, medieval fantasy, epic grunge and sheer bad-assness that I love to put in my compositions.

I quickly focus on composition and dynamism, keeping the silhouette pure with a white blank background, and introducing a striking red cape to catch the viewer's eye. To achieve the strongest contrast between the different materials, I choose to add rusty and shiny metal elements against the root-like members of the creature.

I hope I'll be able to pursue several different designs in the same universe, to follow the Crimson Rider in epic battles. But that's another story!

Organic textures

For some parts of the multi-limbed creature I use photo references such as fish scales or guts. I copy and paste them on a low opacity, before painting over them on another layer, and then flattening. It's a quick way to generate some interesting shapes and colours, as long as you blend them carefully into the composition.



Artist PROFILE

Alex Chaudret
 COUNTRY: France



Alex is a cinematic artist and character designer at Spiders Games, France. He's worked on RPG titles such as Of Orcs and Men, Mars: War Logs and Bound by Flame, and illustrated Warhammer products and other trading card games.
<http://ifxm.ag/chaudret>

DOWNLOAD RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSH:
 PINCEAU BROUSSE POIL 1



I usually use brushes with a double texture, to introduce a traditional painting effect in my art.

Armour design

I try to strike a balance between believable armour design, a fantasy approach and having fun with shapes on the human character. Everything is about harmony and composition, and illustrating the right amount of details – even though the subject is roughly painted. I prefer to give the viewer a global impression, rather than focus on realism.



Painter

TRAVEL BACK TO A LOST WORLD

Don't ditch those old ideas! Here, **Simon Dominic** revives an old concept image, taking it back to the sketch stage and then onwards to completion

A short while ago I was asked to paint the ImagineFX cover. I began by submitting a number of thumbnails depicting a variety of different creatures and environments. The ImagineFX team and I then decided on a concept to take forward: a giant octopus-like beast emerging from undersea ruins to surprise a trio of hapless divers.

I next produced a full colour concept sketch and cover mock-up of the chosen

image, and although we all liked it, we agreed it lacked the focus and colour punch that a cover needs to grab the attention of the viewer. With this in mind, I ended up going back to the thumbnails and developing another theme, which can be seen on the cover of issue 98.

For this workshop I go back to my octopus concept and use it as a base for a new image, keeping as close to the original as possible. As a slight variation from my usual approach of blocking in

Artist PROFILE

Simon Dominic
COUNTRY: England



Simon is a freelance illustrator who works mainly on fantasy artwork for social gaming and trading cards. He took up art as a hobby in 2003 and enjoyed it so much that he went pro in 2010.

www.painterly.co.uk

colour and sculpting it to create detail, I'll be starting off with a traditional sketched outline, albeit a rough one. I find the sketch method useful when painting more complex images such as this one.

One technique I always use is to keep the canvas as small as possible for as long as possible. By using textured brushes to cram detail into the image prior to upsizing, I'm able to produce some great textures that not only enhance the final image, but speed up the detail work, too.

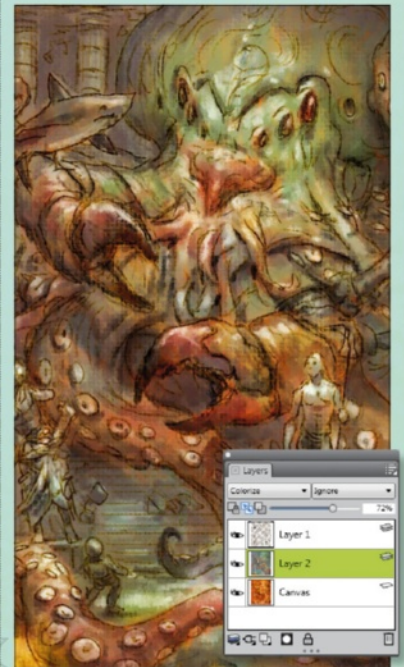


1 The outline sketch

I create a canvas and colour it a mid-value orange. On top of this I create a Gel layer and, using my old concept image as reference, sketch out the scene using the small Bristle brush. I take advantage of the fresh start to make some improvements, such as altering the creature's claws and beefing up the sharks a little. Other than that, I stick close to the original concept. I use a few references, including octopus tentacles and statues of Poseidon.

2 Setting the values

Directly onto the canvas, beneath the outline layer, I use the medium-sized Detail brush to dab in areas of light and shadow. I don't worry about accuracy or working between the lines, because all I want to do is highlight the areas of interest and add dimensionality to the sketch. I reserve the highest values for the primary focus – the octopus's head – and the secondary focus, which is the patch of bright sand by the right-most statue.



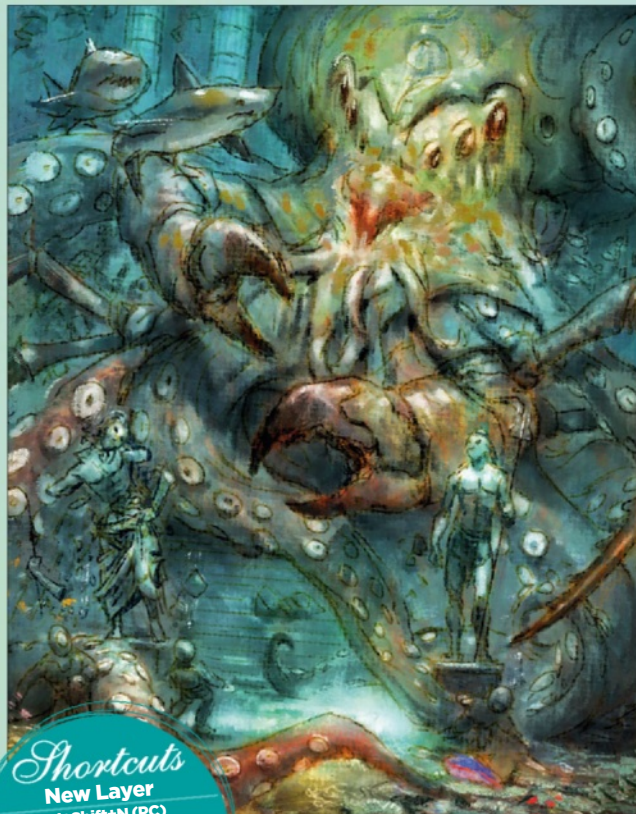
3 Adding a colour wash

This step and the next one could theoretically be combined, but I find that breaking the process down into two or more stages gives me a bit more control. I create a second layer between the outline layer and the canvas and set it to Colorize at about 70 per cent Opacity. Using the Detail brush, I work in some greens and pale blues over the orange background.



4 Beefing up the colour

I repeat step three with another layer below the outline layer, this time leaving it as Default. The colour wash provides a good grounding for my final colours that I choose to simulate lateral depth. I tint elements more distant from the viewer with a strong blue hue, while those that are closer become more varied in tone with oranges, greens and reds all putting in an appearance. Then I flatten all my layers.



Shortcuts
New Layer
 Ctrl+Shift+N (PC)
 Cmd+Shift+N (Mac)
 Creates a new Layer. Don't forget to drag it if you need it positioned in a specific order.

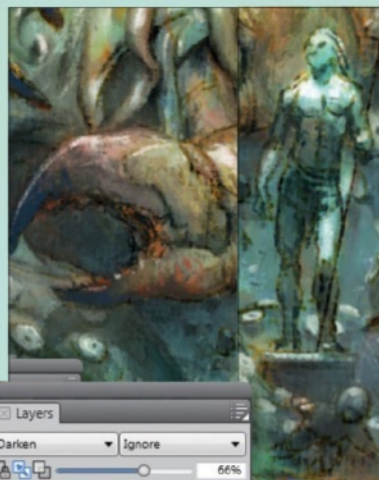
5 Artistic licence

The head of the creature is in the middle distance, and therefore its colours should be blue-tinged and relatively muted. However, because it's the focus of the piece I employ a little artistic licence and boost the colour contrasts so that it catches the viewer's eye. We're not after a photo-realistic result, so doing this is acceptable. Painting directly onto the canvas using the small Detail brush, I apply greens, reds and oranges to the octopus's head – always mindful of the location of my light source.



6 Zooming for detail

I want to shoehorn in a lot of detail before I upsize the image, so for certain areas I zoom to 200 per cent and use the small Bristle brush. This gives a gritty texture that, when resampled, will create interesting textures, making for a quicker workflow and a more painterly result.



7 Shadow layers

On reviewing the image I see that, despite my colour depth work, it's still looking a bit flat. I resolve this by adding some shadows. There's an easy way of doing this and there's a hard way. I choose the easy way. I create a Darken layer and set it to around 65 per cent Opacity. I colour-pick one of the dark blue areas and dab in shadows beneath the creature's claws and around the statues. When I'm happy with the result I flatten the layer.

8 Foreground colours

I've deliberately chosen a bright, vibrant reef to make up the foreground, complete with colourful fish. As well as enhancing the sense of depth, the strong colours balance the more subdued tones of the undersea ruins and help add interest to the piece. In terms of hue I focus on yellows, dark blues and reds – pretty much any colour that's not well represented in the rest of the piece.



9 A fresh perspective

I occasionally flip the image horizontally throughout the sketching and painting process. In the early stages this proves useful in identifying areas of composition that need attention, and as the image progresses, mirroring can also be handy for ensuring that detail and colouration are properly represented. Of course there's nothing to stop you flipping your image vertically if you find it helpful.



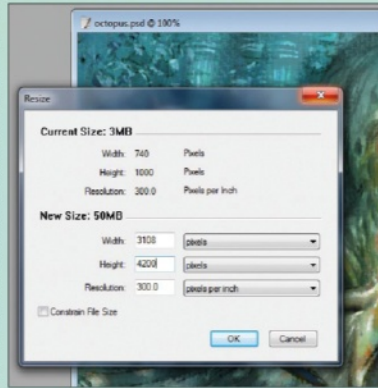
PRO SECRETS

Save your work regularly

Storage space is so cheap these days there's no excuse not to do regular backups of your work. When I say backups I mean saving your work to a separate device, not saving multiple copies on the same drive. It's all too easy to overwrite your files by accident or lose them in the event of a device failure, and backing up only takes a moment. I use a memory stick for my backups, but of course you could just as easily use an internal or external drive.

10 Upsizing the canvas

Using the Canvas>Resize option I upsize the canvas to 4,200 pixels tall. There's nothing magical about the figure 4,200, it's just that I judge it to be the optimum size to work on fine detail for an image of this type. The key points to remember when upsizing is first, that you must keep the same aspect ratio; and second, your upsized dimensions must be equal or greater to your final intended dimensions. Upsizing after you've added detail is a big no-no and will result in your image become fuzzy or pixelated.



Shortcuts Dynamic Brush

Resize

Alt+Ctrl (PC)

Alt+Cmd (Mac)

Drag your pen to dynamically resize your brush.

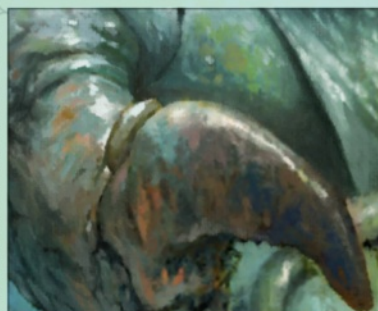


11 Starting on the detail

I zoom in on the creature's head, working with the Detail brush at 100 per cent zoom. As soon as I zoom in I can see that a lot of the detail I crammed in during the early stages has expanded to create a pleasing base texture that I can work on for the finer detail. Most of the time I colour-pick from the canvas, but occasionally I'll go back to the colour wheel and up the contrast so that my hues don't become too muddy.

12 Subtle is good, too

Subtle variations in tone and contrast can produce convincing organic effects. Here I focus on the creature's claws and work with the existing low-key colour variations to produce a more natural-looking surface than if I'd restricted myself to a single sector of the colour wheel. Indigo, orange, cyan and grey intermix to help give the chitin of the crab claws a more authentic appearance.



13 No flat fish here

Painting the fish all the same size and the same brightness would lead to a flattening effect. To combat this I create a Darken layer and set it to 50 per cent. I colour-pick a low value cyan from the background and work it into the layer, applying more pressure (and therefore darker paint) onto the smaller fish and leaving the larger fish untouched. In this way it looks like the fish are swimming out towards the viewer from the murky depths. When I'm done, I flatten the layer and continue to paint directly onto the canvas.



14 Reflected light

My lighting scheme is pretty basic – a single light emanating from above and representing sunlight refracting down from the surface. We can see its bright, specular effect on the heads of the sharks, for example. If we fail to consider reflected light then the areas not affected directly by this light source would be black and that would make for an unrealistic result. The sharks are a good example of how this reflected light is depicted. Despite their bellies being in shadow from the main light source they are lit by a soft, blue-tinted light reflected from the bright sand at the base of the image.



DOWNLOAD RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PAINTER

CUSTOM BRUSHES: DETAIL

A circular, all-purpose textured brush. Great for anything from fine detail to blocking in large areas. 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.

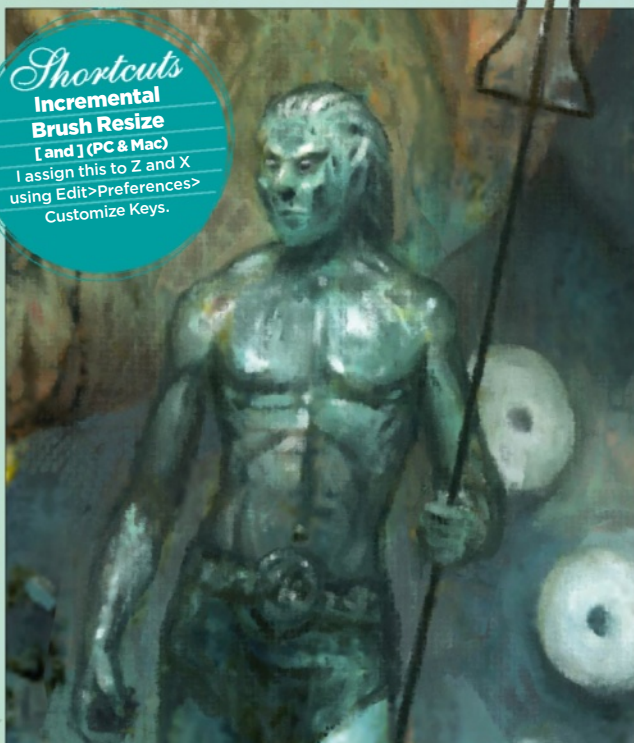
SOFT BLEND

A smoothing brush that blends without digital smear. Its Grain setting works best on a strong Paper texture.

Shortcuts

Incremental Brush Resize

[and] (PC & Mac)
I assign this to Z and X
using Edit>Preferences>
Customize Keys.



15 Painting statues

Painting a statue is much the same as painting a live character, but with a couple of differences. First, being a statue, the figure won't be reacting to what's going on in the scene. This might sound obvious, but if you exploit this by combining a relaxed pose with an action-packed environment, this will reinforce the impression that the figure is made of stone rather than flesh. Second, remember that the entire figure is hewn from the same material and therefore its hair, skin and clothing will be of the same colouration and texture.

16 Fix those mistakes

If you see something wrong, even at a late stage, then don't be afraid to tackle it. You're only fooling yourself if you notice a problem and you skirt around it, thinking nobody will notice. I say this from experience. On this occasion I spot that all the tentacles seem to be angled so we can see the suckers, making the octopus seem awkwardly posed, not to mention causing the scene to be overly busy. So I take a big brush and paint over a couple of tentacles, effectively reversing their orientation.



17 Clumsy characters

I've depicted the human characters wearing those bulky, Jules Verne-type diving suits with bubble helmets. I'll admit I've never worn such a get-up, but I'd imagine they're heavy and unwieldy – even underwater. So I try to communicate this in the image. Whereas an unencumbered person would have full flexibility of their limbs and torso, the diving suits restrict the movements of the characters and stiffen their limbs in an ungainly manner. In a way it goes against instinct to make a figure appear stiff, but in this instance it's required to fit in with the scenario.



18 Foreground detail

As well as high contrast colour in the foreground, we should also be able to see sharper detail. Distance and darkness diminish detail, whereas light and close proximity increase it. In this instance, the variations in hue provides an ideal opportunity to show off the fishes and coral reef using the small Bristle brush. When working at full size, I reserve the Bristle brush for very fine detail only; the rest of the time I use the Detail brush.



19 Finishing touches

I pan around the image and use the Soft Blend brush to smooth areas including the creature's tentacles and the bellies of the sharks. I add a few air bubbles rising from the humans' diving suits, to enhance the underwater feel, and slightly adjust the contrast with Effects>Tonal Control>Brightness/Contrast. Then I resize the image down to print size – 2,622 x 3,543 – and save it as a separate file. I keep the 4,200 pixel working copy just in case I want to make a change to it in future. And with that I call it a day. I hope you've enjoyed the workshop!



PRO SECRETS

Don't fear reference

Using reference correctly is an art form in itself. Over-reliance on reference means that you end up with derivative, unoriginal work, whereas under-reliance can rob your images of that crucial edge that lends them authenticity and makes them believable. The way to learn how to reference is the same way you learn how to paint – that is, do it all the time. By immersing yourself in the process and learning from other artists you'll soon come to see reference as just another tool in your virtual toolbox.

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ImagineFX

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Pin-up art

Create your perfect pin-up painting with help from the world's leading artists

Loopydave reveals how he illustrates his sassy ladies
<http://ifxm.ag/loopy-d>

Inspiration and advice

The making of modern pin-up

The artists behind some of your favourite pin-up images share their art secrets.

Ed Hardy's sketchbook

The legendary Sailor Jerry tattoo artist lets us take a peek at his detailed doodles.

Discover new traditional skills

We continue our 16-page section with advice on dark images and foreshortening.

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FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX Reviews



Artist's Choice Award
Art resources with a five-star rating receive the ImagineFX Artist's Choice award!

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



HARDWARE & SOFTWARE

90 Cintiq Companion & Companion Hybrid

Wacom seeks to strengthen its dominance in the pro-tablet market with the release of two Cintiqs. We give both products a test drive.

92 ArtRage 3 for iPad

The must-have natural media painting app for the iPad undergoes further tweaks and refinements. Is it worth a purchase?

93 SymmetryWorks 6

Pattern creation in Illustrator becomes a far easier task, but your wallet will take a beating.

93 RaySupreme

Find out how this low-cost 3D design software enables you to spell out what you want to depict – literally!

BOOKS

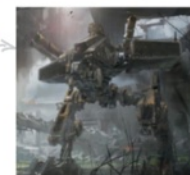
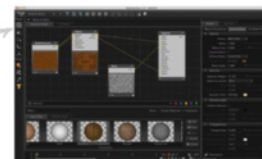
94 New reads

Middle-earth Envisioned; Nemesis the Warlock: Deviant Edition; Spectrum Fantastic Art Live 2.

TRAINING

96 Environment Design for Games and Film Vol 2

Watch as concept artist James Paick helps you to bring a piece of artwork to a whole new level.



RATINGS EXPLAINED Magnificent Good Ordinary Poor Atrocious



Cintiq Companion & Companion Hybrid

TWO'S COMPANY With three tablet-sized Cintiqs released in a single year, surely Wacom has made at least one of its products redundant. But which one?

Price See individual details boxes **Company** Wacom **Web** www.wacom.com **Contact** 0207 744 08 31

In November Wacom released two tablet-sized Cintiqs – the Companion and the Companion Hybrid – just eight months after the 13HD. In doing so, the company's flooded a market it already dominates.

The two recent additions may look identical, but a quick glance at their specifications, not to mention their price tags, suggests there are plenty of differences inside.

In Wacom's own evolutionary March of Progress, the Hybrid is one step ahead of the 13HD, with up to 12 hours of battery life and either 16 or 32GB storage with 2GB RAM. Plugged into your Mac or PC, it's a fully functioning 13.3-inch Cintiq – vertiginously high-resolution, speedy stylus response and little to no heat. So far, so 13HD.

That is, until you unplug it. Disconnect it from your PC or Mac and you can use its Android 4.2 Jelly Bean OS wherever you want. Fire up Photoshop Touch with impressive speed and start sketching. Taken away from your desktop computer and it loses its Cintiq clout, but the addition of mobility is what you're paying for. Yet since you can pick up a 13HD for £650, you're paying a lot just to move around.

The next evolutionary step is the Companion. It's a Windows 8 PC, so you have the full Cintiq specs wherever you go, without connecting to a PC.

Battery life is around five hours, and again the heat is minimal, although you'll want to wear a glove to effortlessly glide over the matte surface holding your Pro Pen (you can also use the multi-touch control to zoom in and out on both).

The Companion has two USB 3.0 ports, a microSD memory card slot and a micro DisplayPort, enabling you to attach to a second monitor or projector. And with Photoshop's interface appearing small on the screen, this might be an option for when you want to give your eyes a rest.

“They may look identical, but a glance at their specifications and price tags suggests there are plenty of differences”

DETAILS

Cintiq Companion

Price: £1,650 (250GB), £2,000 (512GB)

■ HD 1,920x1,080

LED display

■ 16.7 million colours

■ Pro Pen with 2,048

levels of pressure

sensitivity

■ Cameras: front (2MP

HD), back (8MP HD)

■ 8GB RAM

■ Two SuperSpeed

USB 3.0 ports

■ Can be used left- or

right-handed

■ Detachable stand

with three angles

■ 3-in-1 cable system

for PC or Mac setup

System

Requirements

Not applicable

Rating

★★★★★



The Companion and the Hybrid look identical, but their Windows 8 and Android operating systems make them very different under the hood.



The Companion model has two USB 3.0 ports, and a mini display port for connecting to bigger screens or projectors.



At £1,650 for the 256GB and £2,000 for the 512GB options, running Windows 8.1 and 8.1 Pro respectively, you'll be wanting to take this portable Cintiq out of the office, helped by a great anti-reflection screen.

With the power button on the bottom right (if the wheel is on the left), you can accidentally turn it off when adjusting the tablet, but it's hardly a deal breaker. The Companion is a great bit of kit that's fun to use and unbelievably powerful. But with the 13HD selling well - "unexpectedly" according to Wacom - the Companion prices will have to lower dramatically before most ImagineFX readers can enjoy them. When that happens, the future is for all to see on Wacom's Cintiq tablet timeline: the 13HD will be the first to become extinct.

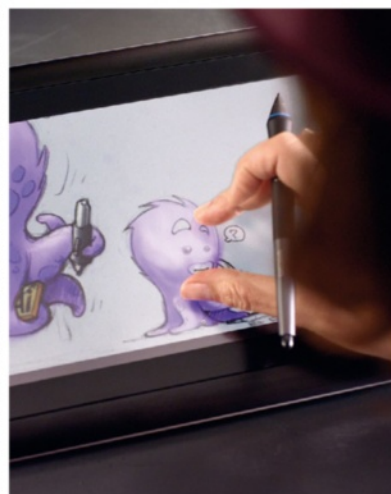
DETAILS

Cintiq Hybrid
Price: £1,200 (16GB), £1,300 (32GB)
 ■ HD 1,920x1,080 LED display
 ■ NVIDIA Tegra 4 quad-core processor
 ■ NVIDIA GPU with 72 graphics cores
 ■ Cameras: front (2MP HD) and back (8MP HD)
 ■ 2GB RAM
 ■ One USB port
 ■ microSD card slot
 ■ microHDMI port

System Requirements

PC: Windows 7 or 8 (32- or 64-bit configurations)
Mac: OS X 10.6 or later, HDMI port, USB port

Rating



Both models boast multi-touch features, and a file manager enables you to save off files created on your Hybrid into the cloud. Handy for when you're out and about sketching on your tablet.

ARTIST INTERVIEW

BOBBY CHIU

The creature master takes the Companion for a test drive...

Which of these new Cintiqs have you been using, and what have you been using it for?

I've been using the Companion while out in Brazil for one of my Schoolism workshops for about four weeks now, so I can continue working on a Disney movie project. I've used it outdoors, and the matte screen reduces sun glare, so you still see all that high definition even in the Brazilian light!

What's impressed you the most about it?

As an owner of several different Cintiqs and various art tablets over the years I can confidently say that getting my Wacom Companion has become a must-have for me. It's a portable Cintiq!

Are there enough distinctions between these two and the 13HD, and don't all three flood the market?

I'm not sure if these different products flood the market, but I was deciding between the 13HD and the Companion, and ended up going with the Companion because of how much more powerful and portable it is.

Is the heat and battery okay? How many hours have you worked constantly?

In Brazil I found myself spending up to two hours at a time on the Companion, and the heat and batteries seemed okay.

Wacom's newest product seems quite intuitive to use...

I found myself sketching on the sofa because of how little fuss I had to deal with. I just unplugged everything and put it on my lap. I wouldn't do that before with my small, 12-inch Cintiq (2011's 12WX) because of all the wires and my laptop getting hot. I think that might be a problem for the 13HD. With these two Companions there's more freedom to create on the move with no fuss.



Bobby Chiu is an illustrator and concept artist for the film and toy industries. He also teaches via Schoolism.com.

www.schoolism.com

ArtRage 3 for iPad

iPad



ALL THE RAGE The natural-media painting app's regular updates mean it's still popular with artists on the move

Price £2.99 **Company** AmbientDesign
Web www.artrage.com **Contact** Via website

While ArtRage may never have become as successful as Corel's Painter on desktop computers, it's flourished on the iPad. Part of its success is down to its paint options, which act just like the real thing. It's become an essential tool in the plein air art movement, and it's well suited to portable painting.

Its success is thanks largely to developer AmbientDesign keeping it updated, with 24 updates since its launch in 2010. The most recent version, 1.6.2, adds support for Wacom's Intuos Creative and Ten One's Pogo Connect styluses. That's on top of working with the Adonit Jot Touch stylus, a product which we loved but wasn't immediately compatible with most software. These styluses add useful features such as pressure sensitivity, using clever Bluetooth technology to interact with your iPad and turning it into something more akin to a computer digitiser.

This is on top of a whole host of tweaks behind the scenes. Rogue taps – a frequent annoyance on any tablet art app – have been dismissed, with the canvas only recognising strokes when you double-tap it. Colours can be selected by pressing and holding on them, rather than going through the rigmarole of choosing the Eyedropper tool, so you can quickly make any necessary adjustments to your work.

ArtRage's operation and use remain the same, and this is no bad thing. Start painting with a brush, and you can then either smear it with the palette or squirt down a whole virtual tube of colour. ArtRage remembers the state of every line and stroke, so you can go back and change something even if you've nearly finished.

There are handy options for importing reference images which are pinned to your work, Post-it style, or displayed as a transparency for you to trace over. Both features are essential when you're working in plein air.



There are a few features we'd like to see added in the future, though. Android's ArtFlow successfully replicates pressure-sensitivity by using your finger's contact area with the screen to produce a thicker line – we're not sure why other art apps haven't followed suit. Tablet apps also seem averse to copy and paste, but this might have something to do with memory restrictions. Yet it feels nice to be working in the old-fashioned way, without having to rely on copy and paste to populate dense scenes.

ArtRage is still the best iPad app for creating realistic paintings, and the fact that its developer is so keen to keep it updated means that it's only going to get better with age.

ArtRage for iPad puts all the natural media you'd expect in easy reach, including oils, watercolours and ink pens. Hockney by Paul Kerckel shows what can be achieved



Here's how Bo Paweena created Pick Me step-by-step in ArtRage for iPad.



ArtRage for iPad leads the way when recreating traditional paint effects on the tablet platform.

DETAILS

Features

- Paint roller
- Palette knife
- Airbrush
- DHLS and RGB colour pickers
- Canvas presets
- Tracing/reference images
- Infinite layers
- Multitouch gestures
- JPG/PNG export
- Script recorder

System Requirements

iPad: iOS 4.3 or later

Rating



It's easy to specify the sort of pattern you'd like, and it's fun to experiment with the presets.



SymmetryWorks 6

MOTIF MAKER Pattern creation gets far easier – if harder on the wallet

Price \$249

Company Artlandia

Web www.artlandia.com

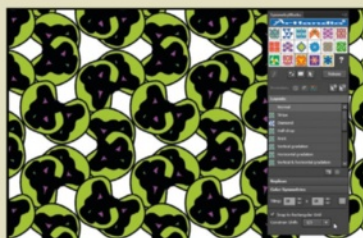
RATING

As awesome as Illustrator is, creating symmetrical and flowing patterns is still an ordeal. By the time you've copied, pasted and rotated a part of a pattern you're usually about ready to give up on grander designs. Enter SymmetryWorks, which promises to make pattern-creation a lot easier.

You start with a single detail – and it's best just to work with a little squiggle to start with – and then fire up the SymmetryWorks plug-in to create kaleidoscopic mosaics, which can then be used in Illustrator or exported to Photoshop. It's a superb tool for anyone who's struggled to create unique patterns for dresses or armour, and it's preferable to grabbing textures from the internet because it's all your own work.

Cleverly, the patterns scale automatically based on the first squiggle, and if you wish to make changes then they'll be reflected in the rest of the pattern – something that would become a huge problem with ye olde cut and paste.

Our only sticking point is the ridiculously high price, which feels almost extortionate. Fortunately, you can download a demo to see how it works before splashing out.



The plug-in works best with small multi-coloured objects that can be turned into a huge canvas.

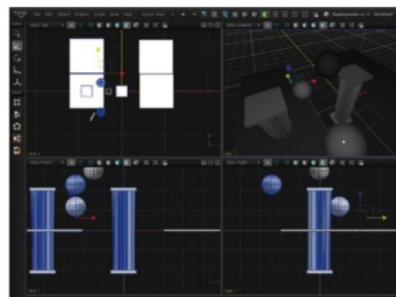
RaySupreme

A LOVE SUPREME Low-cost 3D design software that literally enables you to spell out what you want

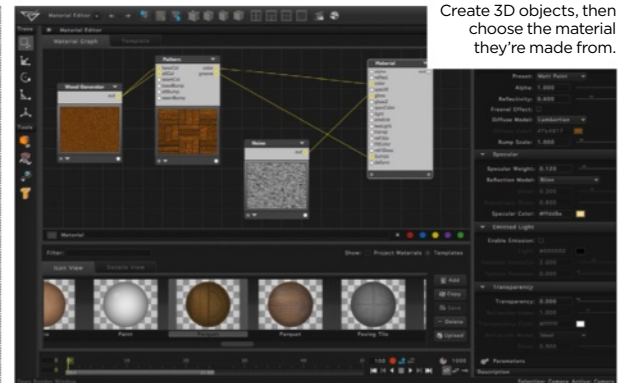
Price \$40 **Company** BrainDistrict GmbH **Web** www.braindistrict.com **Contact** Via website

At first glance, RaySupreme looks just like a simplified 3D package, and it takes little more than a cursory glance at the help file to get started with placing and texturing primitives. Where it becomes a little cooler is in its text-to-3D interface, which promises to nip itinerant thorns of 3D software in the bud. Hey, we're artists, not botanists.

The text-to-3D idea is pretty simple: instead of going through the rigmarole of arranging and redesigning objects to within a pixel's breadth, you can literally spell out what you want a scene to look like. So, for example, you could type in 'a 4 metre long and 5 metre wide and 2 metre high room' and it'll create a room. You can add 'an armchair in the middle of the room' and it'll conjure said seating device in



It may look confusing, but RaySupreme will have you building orb-filled Colosseums in no time.



Create 3D objects, then choose the material they're made from.

the centre of the abode. You can even specify the year and time of day.

To do this RaySupreme relies on a SketchUp-style community uploading and tagging their models correctly. At the moment the library is a little thin and limited to simple objects such as light fixtures, doors and windows, and until it includes a 'gurt big spaceship' option it's not suitable for creating sci-fi or fantasy backdrops.

Where it shines is as a beginner's tool, and you can get to grips with the software and create some fairly stunning 3D scenes quite quickly. At \$40 it's extremely good value for money, and while the text-to-3D concept feels like little more than a novelty at the moment it's sure to become better in the future.

DETAILS

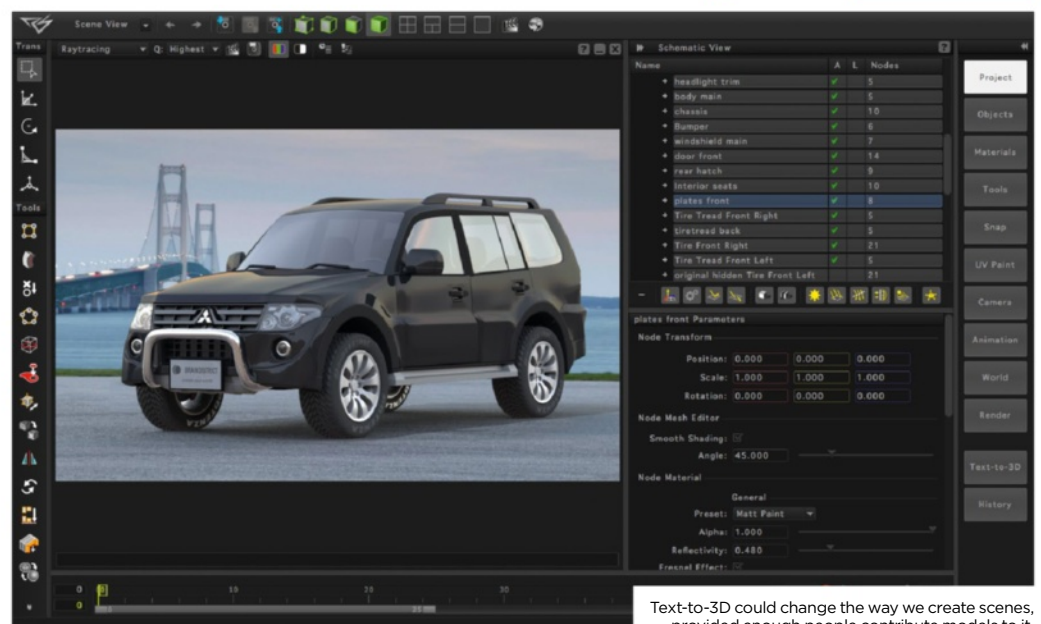
Features

- Text-to-3D Engine
- Node-based features
- Free object database
- Adjustable primitives
- Polygon-based modelling
- Free materials library
- UV mapping
- Multithreaded processor support
- HDR lighting
- Object editor

System Requirements

PC: Windows 7 or 8, Linux (64-bit only)
Mac: OS X 10.7

Rating



Text-to-3D could change the way we create scenes, provided enough people contribute models to it.



Middle-earth Envisioned

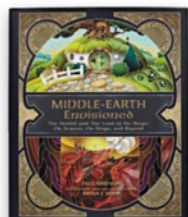
OLD FRIEND Tolkien's world has been inspiring adaptations for the past 60 years, yet this release still manages to surprise



Authors Paul Simpson and Brian J Robb **Publisher** Race Point Publishing **Price** £25 **Web** www.racepointpub.com **Available** Now

The world of Middle-earth is so vast that even JRR Tolkien never quite knew where it ended. So this book, which attempts to catalogue just about every interpretation of it, is a brave endeavour.

Middle-earth Envisioned is a comprehensive history of adaptations of The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings across radio, television, stage, film, music, audio books, comics and games, from the first unauthorised Canadian radio broadcast in 1953 right up to the present day. Naturally, there are major sections on Ralph Bakshi's and Peter Jackson's films, but there's lesser-known stuff too, such as a bizarre-looking Russian TV rip-off.



John Howe's Shadow of Mordor can be seen on a card from the Middle-earth Collectible Card Game.

Peppered throughout is a fantastic selection of paintings, sketches and photos. Some of the real treats are the pictures of Mary Fairburn, shown for the first time in print. She was an English art teacher who, during the late-1960s, created a series of illustrations for The Lord of the Rings and sent them to Tolkien. The author liked them so much, he offered to buy them.

The technical skill behind these images is far from brilliant – in fact, they look almost childlike in places. Yet it's fascinating to see just how much they influenced later artists. Looking at Fairburn's interpretation of Galadriel at Lothlorien or the inn at Bree, for instance, you could easily assume they were taken from Peter Jackson's blockbusting films.

Of course, there's plenty of other classic art to fixate upon here. John Howe, the Brothers Hildebrandt, Alan Lee, Ted Nasmith and other less-famous artists are all shown due respect, often with glorious double-page spreads.

The only real problem with the book is that it leaves you wanting more – and ironically, often that means more words rather than more pictures. While most of the text is richly detailed with information, some of the sections read like a laundry list of who did what and



An oliphaunt lumbers into view in this painting by Alan Lee.

when, without much further discussion. On the other hand, devoting a whole page to a picture of Annie Lennox holding an Oscar, or yet more press images of the films' cast is, at best, unnecessary. Nevertheless, you won't find a better round-up of all things Hobbit; in retrospect, it amazing that no one's thought of doing this before.

RATING

Nemesis the Warlock: Deviant Edition

ALIEN SYNDROME A classic 2000 AD comic strip gets a revival, with all-new and glorious colour

Authors Pat Mills, Kevin O'Neill and Jesus Redondo **Publisher** Rebellion **Price** £30
Web www.2000adonline.com **Available** Now

Unless you're a reader of a certain age, you may not have caught Nemesis in its original run from 1980 onwards – and even then, its analogies to the Spanish Inquisition and the Ku Klux Klan would most likely have sailed over younger heads.

Created by Pat Mills and Kevin O'Neill (with help from Jesus



Redondo), this newly coloured collection of the Eagle Comics editions details the efforts of Nemesis to protect the people of the planet Termight from the mad machinations of their leader, Tomas De Torquemada, whose only goal is to wipe out all 'deviants' in the form of non-human life.

Kevin's manic art revels in depicting the various grim creatures on the planet. It's rumoured that he spent so much effort on the strip that it was often delayed, and other artists had to step in. Meanwhile, Pat has his usual subversive fun in dealing with themes of conformity, while still telling cracking stories.

It's a little overpriced, but any fan will lap up this edition. Remember: be pure. Be vigilant. Behave.

RATING

The book's glossy paper means that Kevin O'Neill's colours leap off the pages.



Spectrum Fantastic Art Live 2

LIVE FANTASY Spectrum Fantastic Art Live 2 is the handsome book of the live fantasy art event of the same name

Editor John Fleskes **Publisher** Flesk Publications **Price** \$30
Web www.fleskpublications.com **Available** Now

Both a commemoration of the second annual Spectrum Fantastic Art Live show and a showcase of six very different fantasy artists, this is a superbly produced limited edition. The show took place in Kansas City, with the idea being that "fantasy belongs to everyone". The broad range of subjects and styles here neatly demonstrates this approach.



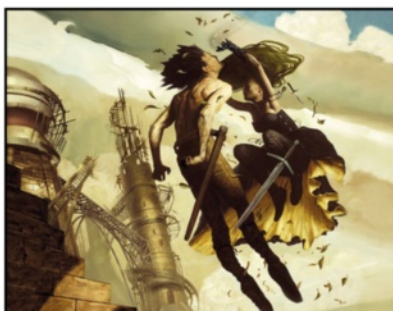
Jon Foster, Peter de Sève, Tara McPherson, Charles Vess, Michael Whelan and Terry Whitlatch have all picked their favourite images for each of their sections. So we get the surreal flights of fancy from Michael Whelan rubbing shoulders with the lively pencil sketches of Peter De Seve, or the feminine visions of Tara McPherson.

It's a bit puzzling that each section is introduced by a guest writer rather than the subject themselves. It would have been nice to have given the artists the option to write one if they wanted to. However, there are some snippets of direct quotes from the subjects scattered throughout, ranging from the philosophical to the technical.

It's the images that shine, though, and if that's what you've come for, you won't be disappointed.

RATING

Jon Foster used oils and digital techniques to paint Magehound for Wizard of the Coast.



Also look at...

Mad film art, sketching skills and manga advice

Draw Manga: Complete Skills

Author Sonia Leong

Publisher Search Press **Price** £15

Available Now



No single book can truthfully claim to teach everything, but this is a good start, with plenty of step-by-step tutorials involving both traditional materials and digital tools. The much-hyped tie-in to 28 fairly short online video tutorials takes a bit of effort to get through, but ultimately this extra instructional media is well worth your time.

Crazy 4 Cult: Movie Art 2

Editor Gallery 1988

Publisher Titan Books **Price** £25

Available Now



There's something of a broad remit here: images inspired by, or in many cases directly taken from, cult movies. This is the second such volume culled from Gallery 1988's annual Crazy 4 Cult art show in California (of course!), and the technical skill of the images vary greatly. Some could have been taken straight from fan-art forums, and there are many genuinely impressive and original takes on the idea. The end result is a joyful passion for cult art.

Sketching from the Imagination: An Insight into Creative Drawing

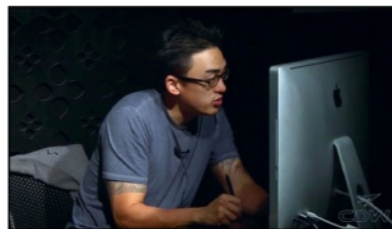
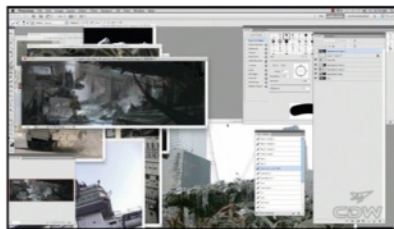
Editor Emalee Beddoes

Publisher 3DTotal **Price** £18

Available Now

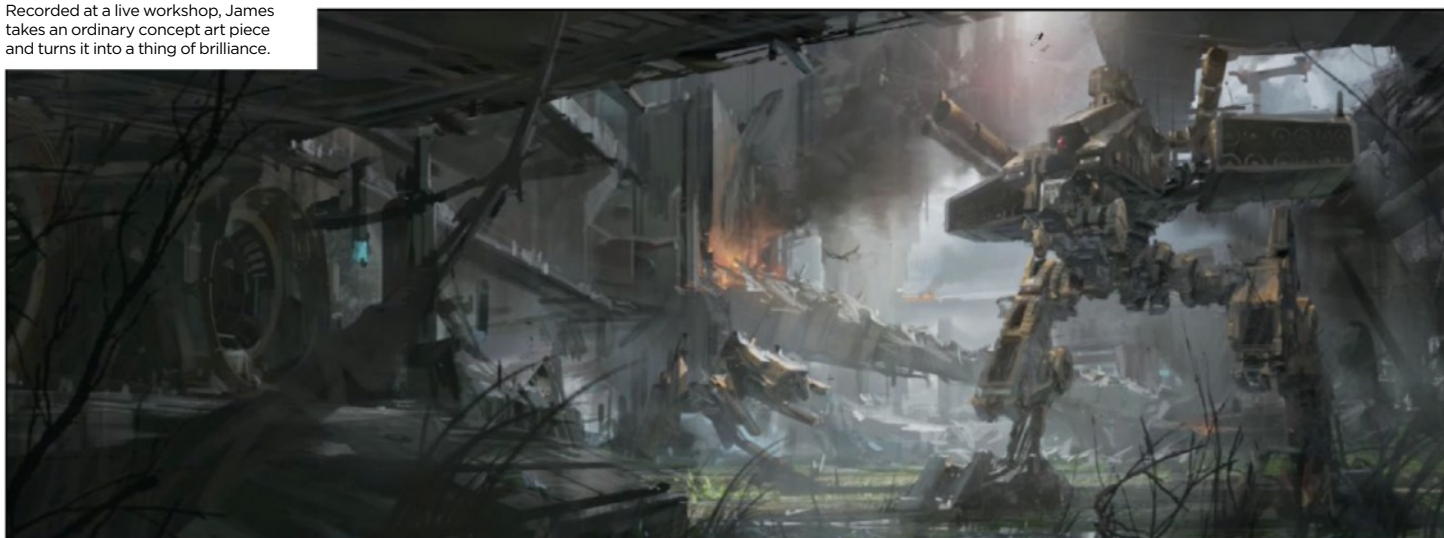


Avery Coleman, Loopydave and Serge Birault are among a stellar lineup of 50 artists extolling the virtues of the humble sketch. Each one of them opens up their sketchbook and explains why great ideas begin life on paper. This is a wealth of inspiration that you'll return to again and again.



James shares many of his core concept art techniques, including the use of photo reference to add convincing detail.

Recorded at a live workshop, James takes an ordinary concept art piece and turns it into a thing of brilliance.



Environment Design for Games and Film Vol 2

HONED TO PERFECTION Concept artist James Paick helps you take a good piece of artwork and make it even better



Publisher Concept Design Workshop **Price** \$49 **Format** Download **Web** www.conceptdesignworkshop.com

Like the earlier volume in this series, which was released several months ago (and reviewed in issue 96), this video is derived from a live concept art workshop James Paick gave in Australia. Professionally filmed and edited, the format has a livelier feel than standard narrated training videos, with questions from the audience prompting some of the best passages. Although this second instalment builds on ideas discussed in the first, it works perfectly as a stand-alone session.

The topic James explores in Volume 2 is imprecise, but vital for any artist who cares about their work: how to bring out the best in your piece by paying close attention to value, colour and composition. It sounds scholarly, but James gets his points across with plenty of practical examples, taking an existing concept art piece that many would regard as finished and making it look even better before your eyes.



DETAILS

Topics covered

- Creating depth
- Refining values and colour
- Enhancing the composition
- Mech design
- Rendering techniques

Length
205 minutes

Rating



You'll see how he drops in a reflective ground plane, for example, designing pools of light across the surface to add depth; and corrects elements of the design to guide your eye around the frame. There's also a great sequence where James shows how easy it is to add vegetation, and explains why its presence in the scene matters.

The big set-piece of this session, though, is a mech that James inserts into the scene to establish a new focal point. From checking the initial silhouette so that it reads well, to adding detail to draw the eye through kit-bashing, you'll see how to introduce a major new element to a scene and make it feel like it belongs there.

Along the way are plenty of ideas to help you develop your skills, either on your own or joining with other artists to learn together. The result is over three hours of video from a master of his craft, which should inspire anyone to take a fresh look at their work and strive even harder to improve.

ARTIST PROFILE

JAMES PAICK

James runs Scribble Pad Studios in Los Angeles, specialising in concept art and design consultation for film and game production. His client list includes Naughty Dog, NCsoft, Trion, Sony Computer Entertainment America, Liquid Entertainment, EA and Sucker Punch Studios. His past projects include Prey 2, Rift, TRON: Evolution, inFamous, Uncharted 2: Among Thieves and Rise of the



Argonauts. James also holds regular live workshops, enabling him to pass on his experience.

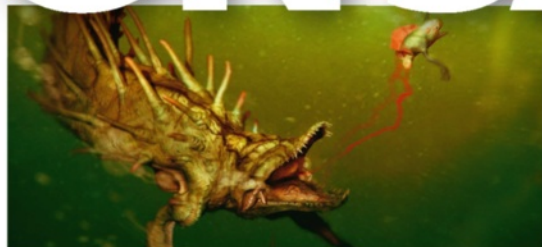
www.scribblepadstudios.com

ESSENCE^{CREATIVE™} creatures

Squidsect, Josh Herman, USA



ON SALE NOW



Creative Essence: Creatures is the definitive book on sculpting creatures and takes the Essence series to another level. It features the private work of some of the best creature concept artists and 3D modelers working in the CG industries today: Bryan Wynia, Andrew Baker, Aris Kolokontes, Ian Joyner, James Van Den Bogart, Josh Herman, Martin Rezard and Simon Webber. Their list of production credits includes killer game and film titles such as *Avatar*, *God of War: Ascension*, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, *Prometheus*, *Gladiator*, *The Matrix* and *The Hobbit* trilogy. This is an unprecedented exploration of these artists' decision-making processes, and a stunning visual record – a vivid cornucopia of previously unimagined creatures.

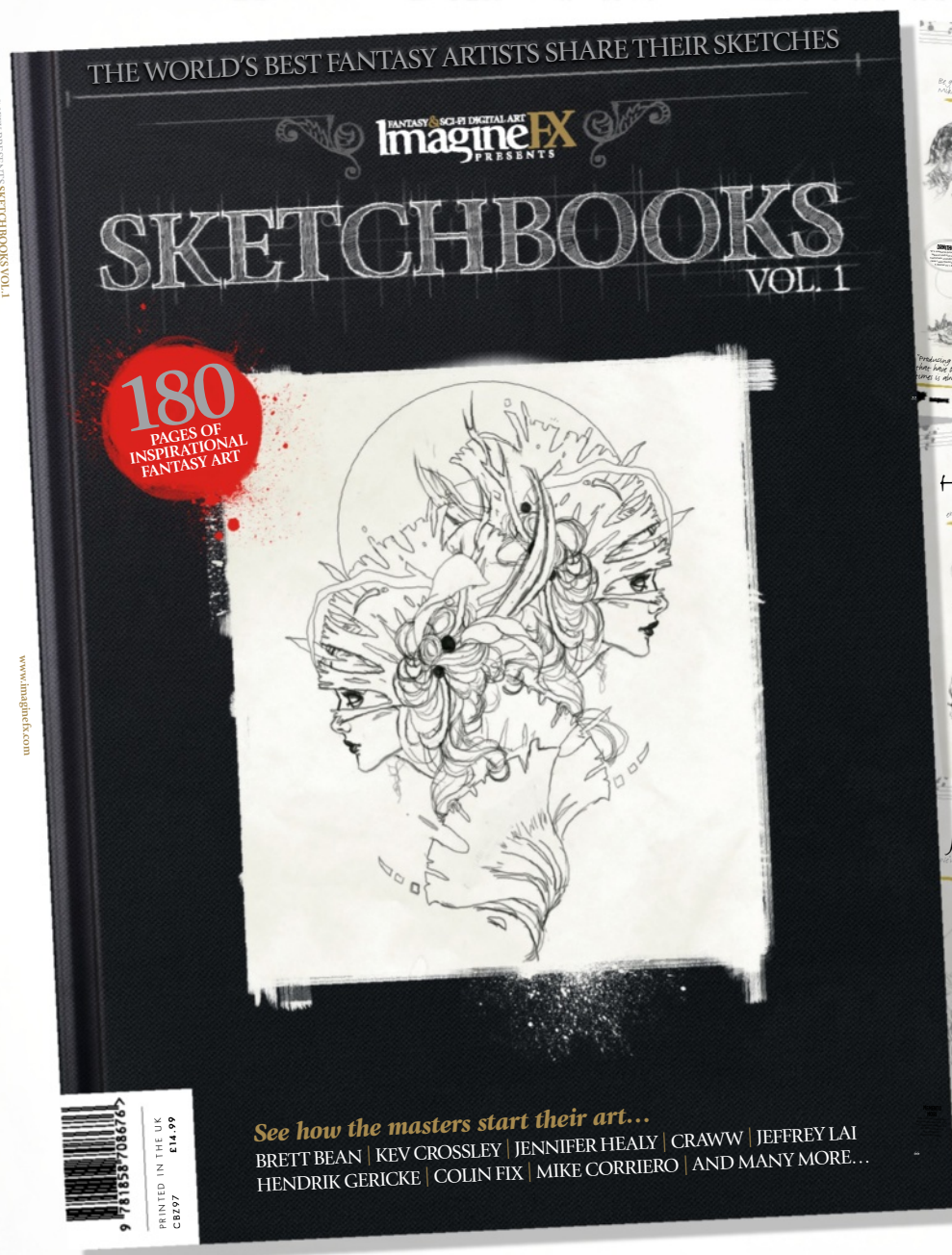


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/ B A L L I S T I C /

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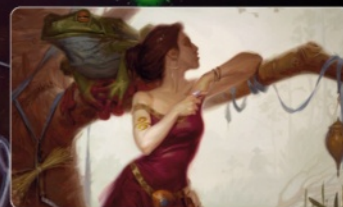


FANTASY

illustrator

NEW
SECTION

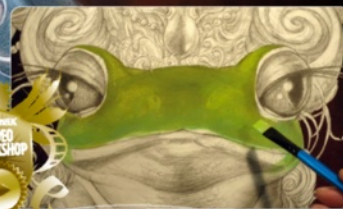
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The best traditional art revealed.



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We drop in on Urban Sketchers.



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Chris Seaman portrays royalty.



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Use shading to define form.



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Rebecca Guay on artistic crushes.

FXPosé *Traditional*

SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL FANTASY ARTISTS

Rob Rey

LOCATION: US

WEB: www.robreyart.com

EMAIL: rob@robreyart.com

MEDIA: Oil



With influences ranging from science and nature to psychology and mythology, Rob's work mixes factual elements with more surreal and abstract concepts.

Originally from Chicago, the artist Now lives and works in Providence, RI, and is a graduate of the illustrious Rhode Island School of Design. Rob has a string of honours and awards to his name, and regularly exhibits his work throughout America.

"Careful attention to edges and working wet into wet are important to getting the look I love most but, above all, I feel a successful painting must convey emotion in order to connect with the viewer in a lasting way."

1 A BARGAIN KEPT

Oil on board, 18x24in

"A shadowy sorceress and a strange companion. It's not a large leap to guess that this frog of unusual size may have not always been a frog. But who's that in the mist beyond? Is it someone spying upon her activities, or an unfortunate soul forced to come and keep their end of a bargain?"

2 FALLING FIRE

Oil on board, 18x24in

"Inspired by the astronomer Carl Sagan, who proposed that a star looks not unlike a campfire from a great distance and that early civilisations may have seen stars as distant campfires of the gods. We tend to take for granted our knowledge that stars are burning balls of gas, but what if we didn't know?"

3 ATHASIAN FAMILIARS

Oil on board, 12x24in

"Created for Dragon Magazine, I wanted to put enough emotion into this character to make it more than a standard character portrait. Pushing the style of the magic effects was also an enjoyable part of this piece."





© Wizards of the Coast

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"I really like the way Rob contrasts elements of fact and fiction in his work. Falling Fire beautifully demonstrates how far our understanding of the universe has come in a relatively short space of time."

Gary Evans,
Staff Writer

Julianna Menna

LOCATION: US

WEB: www.juliannamenna.com

EMAIL: juliannamenna@yahoo.com

MEDIA: Oil, acrylic, tempera, graphite, coloured pencil



"I like to make surrealistic and fantastic imagery that alludes to a broader narrative context," Julianna says. "I try not to spell too much out for the viewer. I hope the images I create serve as a touchstone for people's imaginations."

Julianna is a professional painter from Philadelphia. She trained as a designer at the Stieglitz Academy in St Petersburg, although her painting skills are mainly self-taught. The artist has exhibited her work in numerous galleries along America's east coast, and her illustration work has found clients in the likes of Heavy Metal and Lenox Collectibles.

Like the media used to create it, her portfolio is diverse. Julianna's current muses, however, are "skull-like creatures" which she dresses in period clothing. The series is ongoing.

1 THE DUKE

Oil on board, 2.5x4in

"This is another early skull study and oil technique experiment. I'm new to the medium, but feel very comfortable with it. I'm excited to see what it can offer the more I experiment."

2 THE LADY

Oil on board, 10x7in

"Having completed a series of studies of skull-like creatures in period costume, I decided it was time to start working on some more realised paintings to further explore the theme. I enjoy each piece and learn as I go from one to the next."

3 THE CLOWN

Oil on board, 9x7in

"When doing commissions, I follow the theme of the assignment. When doing originals, I can let my imagination roam free. I don't usually have a preconceived notion of what it'll be, but I do engage in a lot of exploratory drawings before committing to oil."

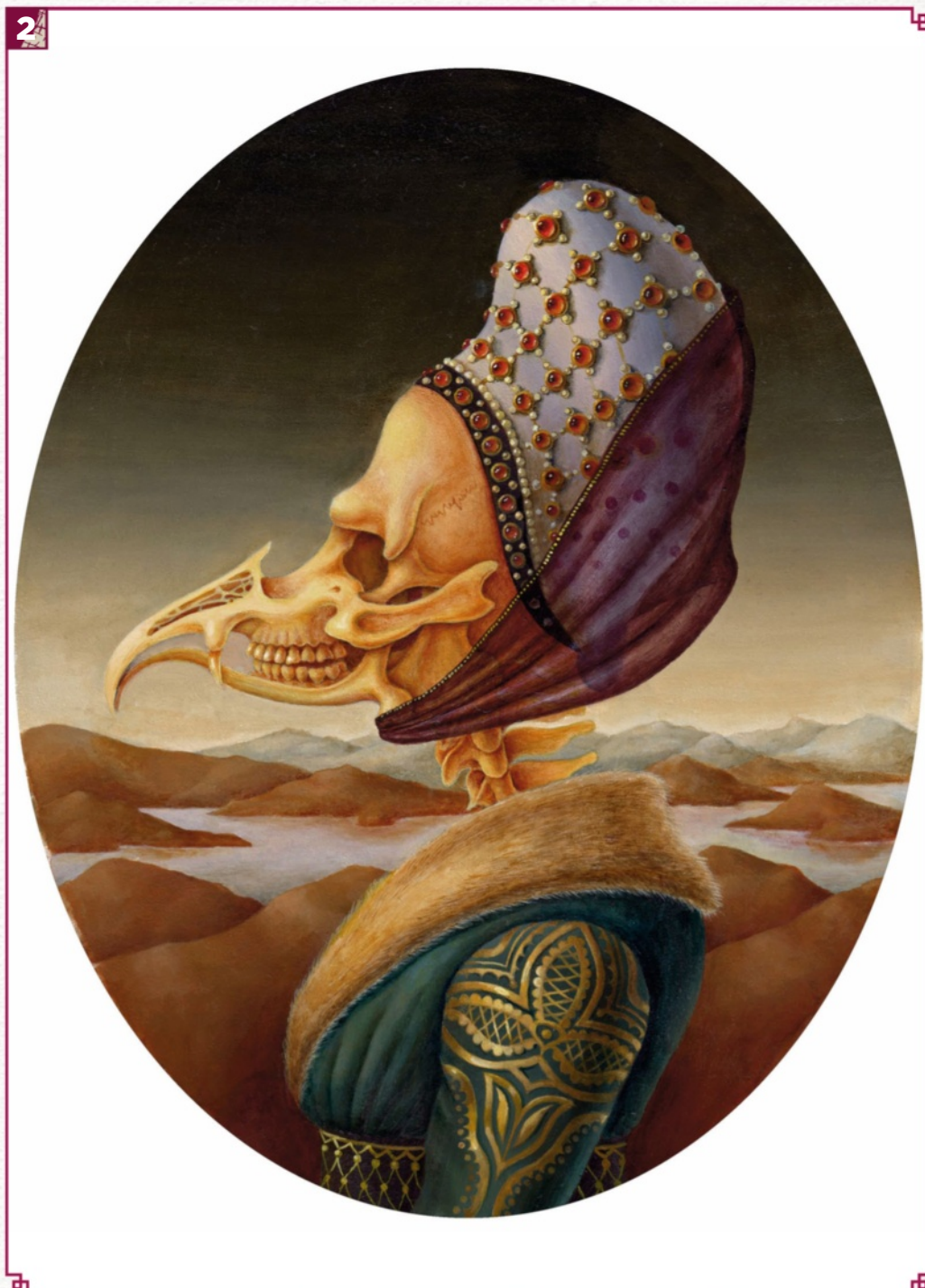
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34



IMAGINEFX CRIT



"The manner in which Julianna has captured the personality of her characters in the designs of their skulls is inspired. Their distinctive hair styles are the cherry on the cake – I won't ask how this works, mind!"

Cliff Hope,
Operations Editor

Creative Space



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URBAN SKETCHERS: BARCELONA

From a Flickr group to a globe-trotting symposium. We chart the rise of Urban Sketchers with founding member **MARC TARO HOLMES**

For its fourth annual symposium, Urban Sketchers took to the streets of Barcelona. Over 200 artists from around the world descended on the capital of Catalonia, taking part in a three-day drawing tour of the city's most famous sights.

Founded by Seattle Times staff artist Gabriel Campanario in 2007, Urban Sketchers is a non-profit organisation that champions the art of 'on-location drawing.'

"It's just plain fun," founding board member Marc Taro Holmes says. "Getting out there, meeting other artists. Drawing on location is great training for an artist: you learn perspective first-hand, memorise light and specific detail, see things you wouldn't think to make up. It all enriches the work that you do back in the studio."

Urban Sketchers began life as a Flickr group, but then quickly grew into a successful group blog. One hundred specially invited artists were recruited as correspondents, regularly sharing their direct-observation drawings and the stories behind them.

A succession of meet-ups followed. Urban Sketchers has since spawned over 50 "chapters" around the world, each with their own Flickr groups and blogs. Its first annual symposium took place in Portland in 2010. After events in Lisbon and Santo Domingo, the sunny coast of northeastern Spain was selected as the setting for 2013.

Each day began with a three-hour workshop of participants' choosing – on topics such as architecture, picture design, storytelling, reportage – with afternoons dedicated to demos, lectures and a further



A sketchbook needn't be limited to featuring black and white line drawings, as this group member demonstrates.

workshop. Evenings were open drink and draw get-togethers.

Urban Sketchers' central website is now in its fifth year, and Marc advises Googling for your town followed by USK to find your closest regional meeting. Brazil plays host to 2014's symposium; the town of Paraty was selected for its "historical subjects in a tropical setting."

"I frequently hear people enthusing about how great it is to go in a group, to kind of take over a space," Marc says. "What can seem weird solo is much more positive in a group. How often do you get to draw with a bunch of people that love it as much as you?"

Go to www.urbansketchers.org for more information on Urban Sketchers and visit www.citizensketcher.wordpress.com to see artwork and insights from freelance artist Marc Taro Holmes.

Creative Space Urban Sketchers



The Urban Sketchers group temporarily take over public spaces – all in the name of art, of course!

WORKS OF ART

The Urban Sketchers make the most of their time in Barcelona...

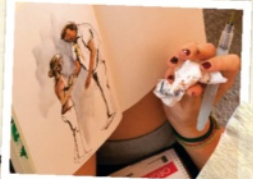


Kiah Klean with his sketch of Barcelona's Arc de Triomf.



Marion Rivolier's colourful rendering of its famous skyline.

Marta Castro working on her 'on-location' drawing.



A Barcelona street scene, filtered through the pen of Norberto Dorantes.

Suhita Shirodka deep in thought.



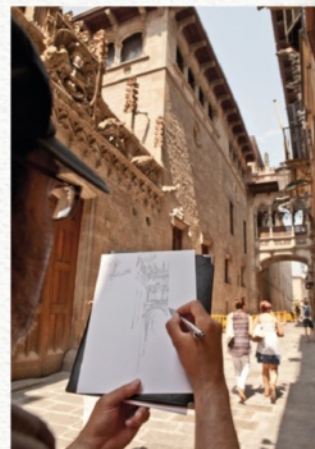
Founding board member Marc Taro Holmes created this stunning painting of Casa de les Punxes.



Sketching and painting in the warm Spanish sun – what better way to spend the day?



Sketches are made, advice is shared – that's what Urban Sketchers is all about.



Barcelona's historic architecture proves to be a great sketch subject.



Workshops



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<http://ifxm.ag/stel04llar>

Pencil

Watercolour

Acrylics

ILLUSTRATE A FROG PRINCESS



CHRIS SEAMAN reveals the range of traditional painting techniques he uses to craft a classic portrait with an amphibious twist

Portrait paintings have always fascinated me. Every time I see one, I wonder who these people were, where they came from, who painted them and for what reason. Often, the artists painting these portraits were treading a thin line between the reality of what the person looked like and the fantasy of how that person saw themselves.

As I try to get to grips with this workshop, my thought process takes me to a strange place: an anthropomorphic frog with a pet snail-dog! Weird, I know, but a lot of fun. Beautiful but just a little off. I, too, am treading that line between reality and fantasy.

While I research frogs and historical dresses I realise that I need to leave clues behind in my painting, like the master portrait painters of old, which would help tell this elegant lady's story to future viewers. The idea for the eggs in her wig comes from the idea that she was royalty and often has to make unpopular decisions that affect a minority of her

MATERIALS

DRAWING

100 Crescent Cold Press illustration board, mounted on 0.25-inch foam core
Mechanical pencil HB 0.5 and 0.7
Kneaded eraser
Plastic eraser

PAINTING

Air Brush Frisket paper
0 Round Watercolour brush
1 & 3 Liner brush
3/8th, 1/4th, 1/2th, 1 and 2 Flat Watercolour brush
Complete collection of Delta Ceramcoat
Acrylic Crafters paint
Matte medium
Workable Fixatif
Water cup
Palette
Paper towels



populous for the greater good of her subjects, and vice versa. Rather than a devil and angel on her shoulders I decide to make her conscience a dragon and fairies tending their eggs. The future generation of good versus evil is perched atop her head, and thus is always on her mind.

My goal is for the viewer to take an interest in her story. If the viewer doesn't understand what they're looking at in the

first five seconds, you've lost them. Giving them a visual focal point is what makes a fantasy portrait work.



Chris has been an illustrator for the past 13 years in the hobby gaming industry. He's worked with such clients as

Wizards of the Coast, Blizzard Entertainment, Upper Deck, Applibot, Hasbro and Warner Bros. Studios.
www.chrisseamanart.com



1 *Sketching royalty*

I prefer to finalise my sketch before I begin painting. This gives me a base to start with my lighting and an indication of value. I also like to use my pencil sketch as part of the painting.

ARTIST INSIGHT

BLOW HOT AND COLD

The type of paint I use is Crafters paint. It has similar properties to gouche, but dries permanent. It can be applied thick or in washes like watercolour. But it isn't like painting with chemical pigment acrylic paint. These paints are manufactured with the basic colour wheel and then white and black is added to the pigment to shift its value and chroma. So you can mix these paints, but I often I find myself warming up with an orange or yellow wash or cooling off with a purple or blue wash.



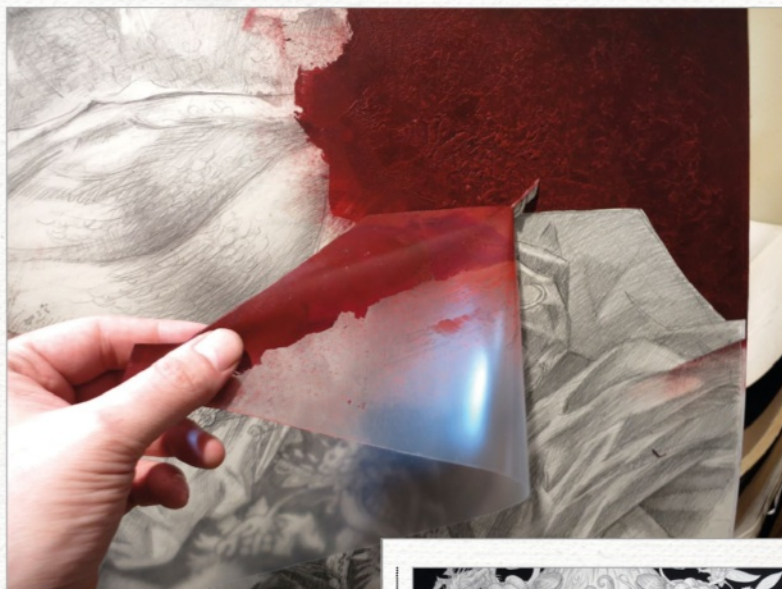
2 *Slip, prep and trim*

Once my drawing is complete I fix it in place using Workable Fixatif. I take some airbrush frisket paper and lay it over the area that needs to be covered, to avoid painting over edges. I then trim out my foreground character with a fresh Exacto blade.



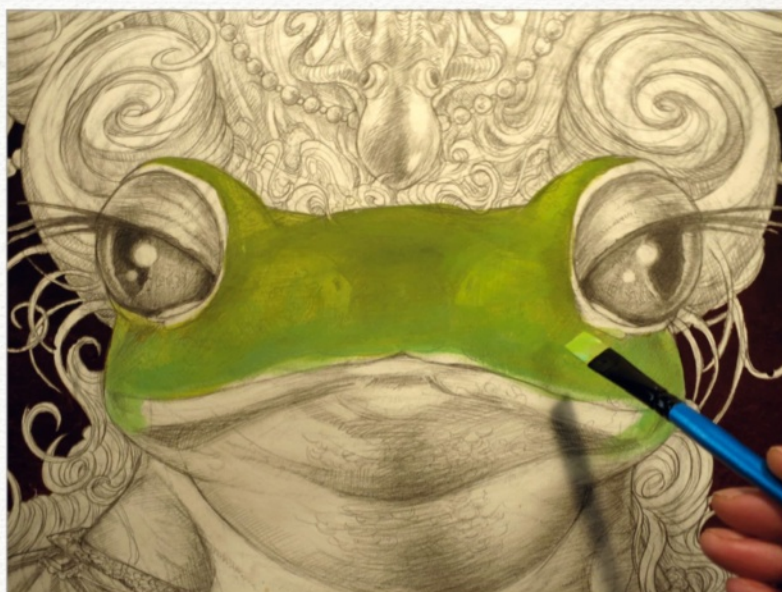
3 *Carving out a princess*

I like to work large areas of colour and value with a palette knife. It's a great way to get the paint on fast, add a great texture and make a gradation of colour more interesting.



4 *Her royal highness*

Once the paint has dried, I carefully removed the frisket paper to reveal my drawing that's underneath and still intact. This keeps my surface clean and ready for the next round of painting. I use different tools to create an interesting texture – none of them are brushes.

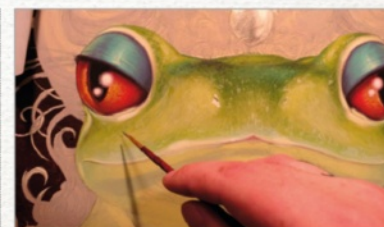


5 *A smooth complexion*

I like to paint directly on my white board in thin layers. This creates a value and enables me to still see my drawing underneath. Using a 1/2 flat, I mix in water to thin out the paint in layered washes.

6 *Princess and paint*

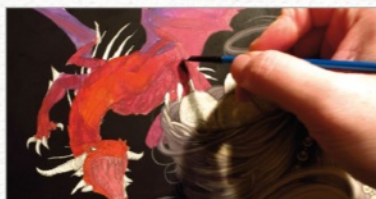
I switch over to my 1 Liner watercolour brush and start to build up the opaque paint in the eye, adding subtle details over the top of my blocking. I reduce the amount of water that I add to the paint, and apply more detail as I go along.





7 *Whispers of evil*

My approach is to block in an area first before I start my detail work. Blending my paint from a cool to a warm sets the tone for the space I'm trying to create. I detail an area using a 0 round watercolour brush.



8 *Clothing fit for a queen*

I wash in the shadow elements on the collar before I add my detail over the top. Using an opaque off-white with my 0 round watercolour brush I add in the lace detail. See how the wash underneath adds to the folds and dimension.



PAINT TIP

WATER TRICKS

When blocking, water down your paint slightly. This helps you see your drawing underneath and enables you to add details.

9 *Depicting an elegant fabric*

Over the years I've found that using a 3/8th flat brush is ideally suited for carving with the paint. I wash in my dark areas with subtle blacks and browns. I then paint in some opaque mid-tones and highlights with my 1 Liner. I use hard edge angular strokes when painting the fabrics in the scene, such as the frog's lace collar.



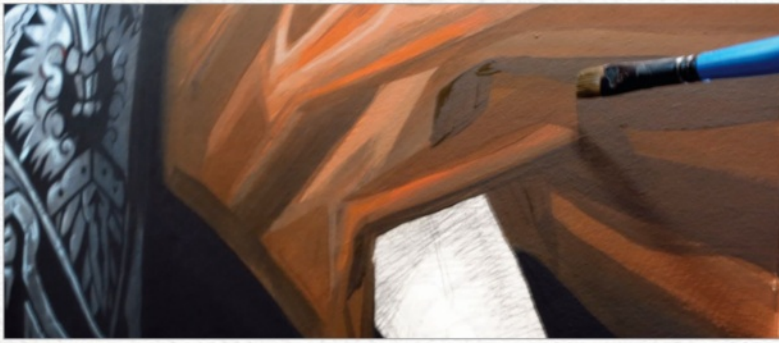
10 *Never look her in the eye...*

I've now got the lower portion of my painting blocked to a degree that I'm happy with. I now add highlights to the design of her corset using my 1 Liner brush. Keeping the lower portion of my painting in shadow will better help establish my painting's focal point: her lovely green face.



Never look her in the eye...

10



11 A material girl

Once again I'm using angular strokes with a flat brush in a painterly carving fashion to create the fabric effect. Staying loose the farther I get away from my detailed focal point – the head – reinforces the importance of the portrait.



TOOL TIP

ADJUST THE CANVAS

When I work on a drawing and I'm having a hard time reaching an area, I turn my board and bring it closer.

14 Snips and snails...

I use my 3/8th flat brush to block in the colour in a series of washes. I build up to opaque and allow my drawing to show through. Adding opaque dark areas with my 1 Liner brush, I start to carve out the hair around the eyes and ears.



12 A delicate touch

I decide to follow my frog reference closer and notice the shifting colours in the arms and hands. This adds a great connection for the overall feeling of the piece. It ties colours together without distracting from the focal point.



ARTIST INSIGHT

PAINT ADVICE

When adding detail I draw with paint. It's much easier to control where and how I want it to lay. I'm able to create a mottled effect by stippling the watered-down paint onto the surface. And when I want thick acrylic paint to dry quickly, I use a hair dryer.

15 The finishing touch

Detailing is my favourite part of the painting process. Here I use my 0 round watercolour brush and finish up by adding mid tones and highlights to Her Royal Highness' pet snail-dog. Finally, I use a feathering technique to achieve a fur-like texture.



13 Snail grooming

To create the snail shell texture I used a smaller palette knife with thick paint. The cool and warm paint colour created pits and grooves. Later I can push and pull the shape of the shell using warm shadow washes and warm highlights.



Pencil

Charcoal

SHADING THE FIGURE TO DEFINE FORM

Continuing our new series, **CHRIS LEGASPI** explains his approach to rendering light and shadow to create the illusion of three-dimensional form in the figure

Shading or form rendering is what creates the illusion of light and shadow on the figure. There are two principles in rendering: value control and edge control. Values refer to the darkness or lightness of the shadows and tones. Edge control refers to the hardness and softness of the borders where light and shadow meet.

The key to good values is first simplify the values you see and then limit the values you use. Especially when drawing

from a live model, I like to begin by assigning one value to the entire shadow mass and leaving the white of the paper as the value of the light. As the drawing develops I can then add a third value for half-tones and/or mid tones.

To me, though, rendering equals edge control. I like to exaggerate and vary my edges as much as possible. I make core shadows, or shadows on form, really soft at times, and hard edges like cast shadows much harder than they need to be. This play of hard, soft and even lost edges not

MATERIALS

Smooth newsprint paper
Carbothello pencil, black (or Conté B) or Willow charcoal sticks (medium grade)
Kneaded eraser
Ballpoint pen
Sketchbook

only makes the drawing look three-dimensional, but creates dynamic and compelling contrast, too.

Once the values and edges are established, I then take some time to add subtleties and edge variation. This creates 'randomness' which makes the rendering feel more natural, dynamic and life-like.



Chris says he's obsessed with figure drawing and painting, and loves sharing information on art and picture making.

See more at www.freshdesigner.com.

Group dark-coloured forms (like the hair) with the shadow



The key is to picture the shadows as a flat, 2D shape

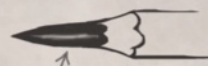
1 Separate light from shadow

The most important step in shading is to first clearly define what is in light and what is in shadow. To do this, I first observe shadow shapes on the figure and then simply try to copy or recreate the shapes I see onto my drawing.



The shadow shape alone can often describe the forms underneath

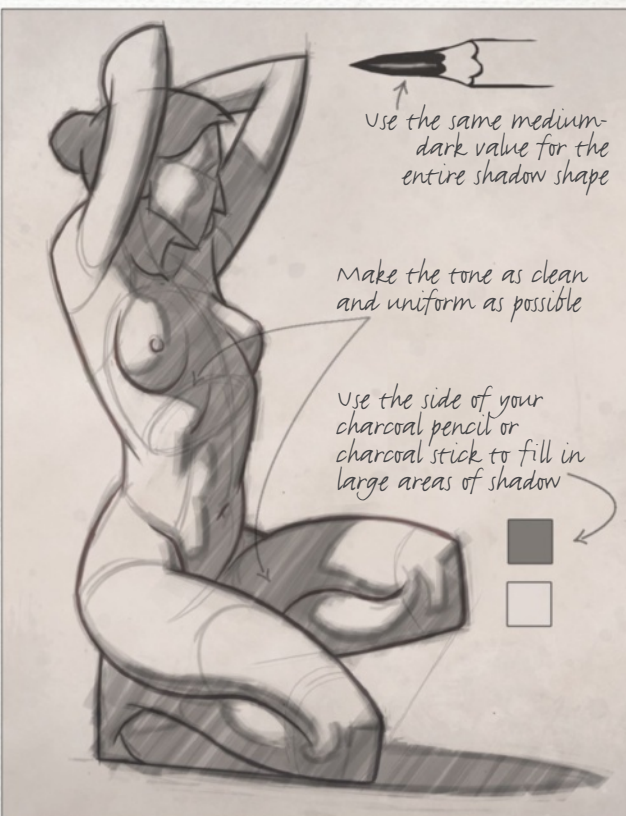
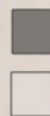
Be sure to include any cast shadows



Use the same medium-dark value for the entire shadow shape

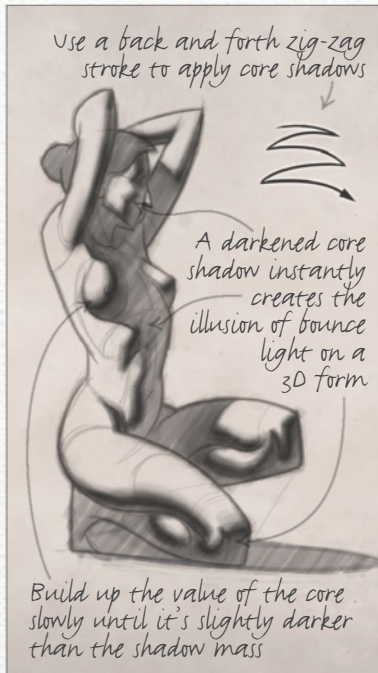
Make the tone as clean and uniform as possible

Use the side of your charcoal pencil or charcoal stick to fill in large areas of shadow



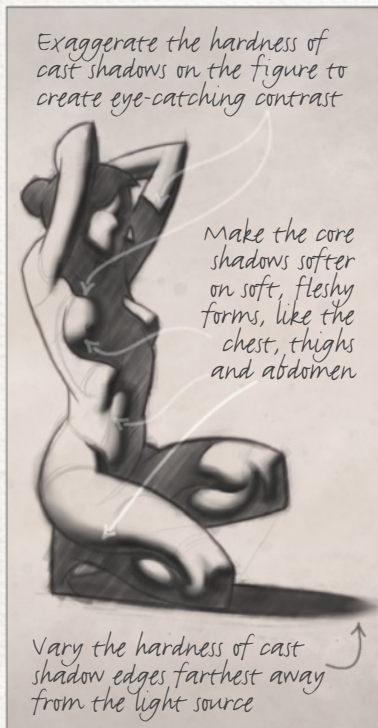
2 Mass in the shadows

Once the shadow shape is defined, I then mass in, or fill in, the shadow shape with a mid-value tone. This will not only define my dark value or tone, but it will also clearly define and separate light from shadow and begin to create the illusion of form.



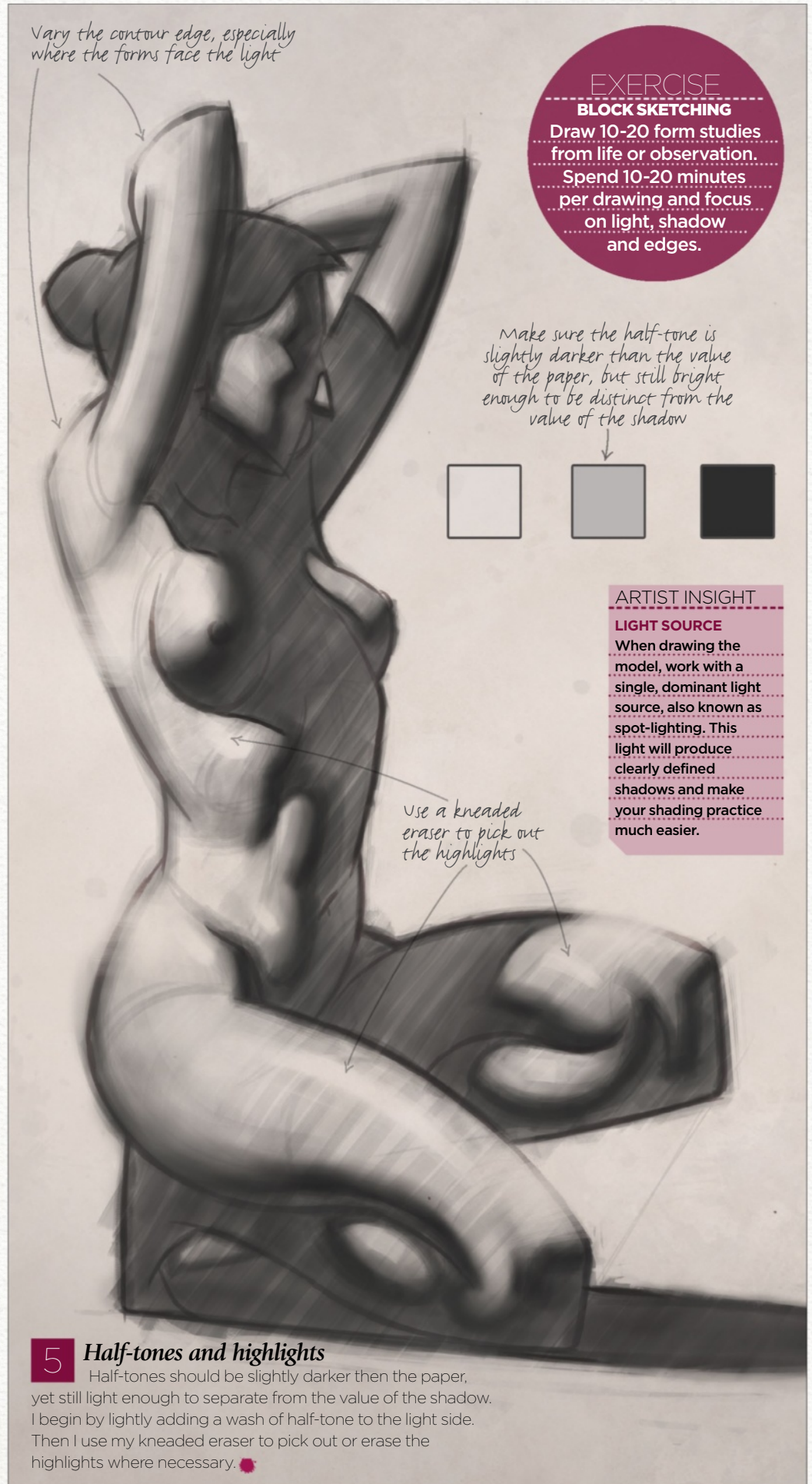
3 Emphasise the core shadow

The core lies at the border where light and shadow meet. Emphasising or slightly darkening the core shadow helps to define form by quickly creating the illusion of bounce light or ambient light on a 3D form.



4 Refine edges

Edges create the illusion of light on form. As a rule, I make edges of form shadows relatively soft, and cast shadows hard. I like to soften the core shadows on fleshy/round forms. Then I exaggerate the hardness of cast shadows to create compelling contrast.



5 Half-tones and highlights

Half-tones should be slightly darker than the paper, yet still light enough to separate from the value of the shadow. I begin by lightly adding a wash of half-tone to the light side. Then I use my kneaded eraser to pick out or erase the highlights where necessary.

First Impressions

✧ Rebecca Guay ✧

Known for her watercolours, Rebecca talks rejection, inspiration and Wonder Woman



When you first started Illustration Master Class, what were your hopes?

I wanted to provide a place where aspiring

illustrators and early professionals could connect with teachers who would push their work forward fast, as well as connect with industry professionals who would give them work when they were ready. It's a big tent, this industry, and everyone's welcome and the community is supportive. But you do need to get to know this community and the people who help make things happen – and that's where the IMC comes in.

What was your first paid commission?

It was for a story for Cricket Magazine, titled Spider at the Well, directly after I got out of Pratt in 1992.

Do you have any painting rituals?

I usually go from a sketch to establishing values, all with a book on tape or a movie playing. If I don't have something going to keep my butt in the chair I'll wander off. Although I need total silence to get the concept in place.

When did you first realise that you wanted to be an artist?

In first grade, when I won the 'Draw a portrait of your teacher' contest.

Who was your first artistic crush on?

Anyone who was drawing Wonder Woman, then Paul Smith's run on The X-Men, then more serious love affairs with Egon Schiele, Klimt, Solomon J Solomon, Waterhouse, Dulac and more.

Do you remember the first image where you thought you'd nailed it?

It was a piece I did in my junior illustration class, a portrait of Sarah Bernhardt. My teacher took it off the wall and walked it around the class just



THE VISITOR

Rebecca prefers silence for conceiving, but not for painting.



SARAH BERNHARDT

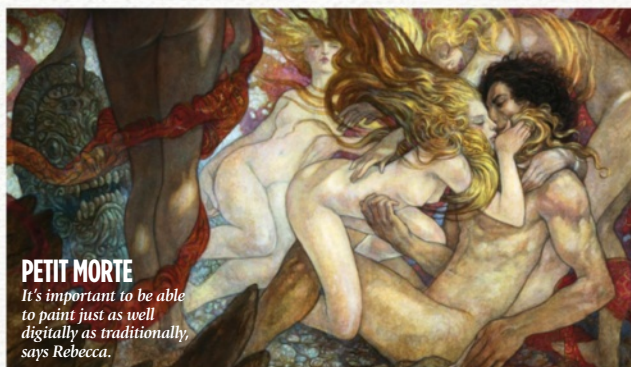
Rebecca's portrait from her junior illustration class. Her teacher showed it around the room without a word – it was a key moment for the young artist.

showing it to everyone without saying a word. It just blew me away. That year so many things started clicking in my work. I'm better now, but I think it still has merit. If one of my students brought it in to me, or something that showed similar spirit and craft, I'd be happy.

Do you remember your first bit of praise that spurred you on?

My mum went to Massachusetts College

“I've had so many rejections from publishers – especially early on – it's hard to count”



PETIT MORTE

It's important to be able to paint just as well digitally as traditionally, says Rebecca.

of Art and Design and when I was about 11 she said my work was already better than hers ever was – that was so encouraging. She was a great teacher too: she showed me all the ways I could improve right from the very beginning. Although in my professional career it was probably that event with my teacher that was most significant.

And your first knock back?

I've had so many rejections from publishers – especially early on – it's hard to count. Everyone who makes it has also been rejected and dissed a hundred times. The hardest part is holding yourself together and being resilient in the face of rejection. In another year you may have that book deal or gold medal or big original art sale, but if you crumple and give in then it'll never happen.

What advice would you give to artists just starting out?

Be dog determined, persistent and never give up in the face of rejection. Also, make sure you paint as well traditionally as you do digitally. Original art sales are a big part of a successful artist's income, so do both well. And be honest with what needs to happen to make your work better – what areas in craft or concept you need to push more in.

Who's the first artist you turn to for inspiration or to beat creative block?

There are so many. But currently I just love John Currin, Sam Wolfe Connelly, Greg Ruth, Will Cotton, Josep Sert, Vincent Desiderio and Frank Duveneck.

What's the first thing you teach a pupil?

Don't let the daily demons in your head eat you alive and keep you from working. Everyone has them, everyone struggles with the “I hate it” moments in a piece. The test of whether we thrive or fall is how well we get through these challenges, so dig deep and go long – manage your demons and remember it's a marathon not a sprint.

How do you know an image is finished?

When it takes my breath away.

Visit www.rebeccaguay.com for Rebecca's art or www.illustrationmasterclass.com for details of its next event.

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