

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX

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TUITION!

Sketchbook
BRIAN FROUD

Inside
IS NEW SOFTWARE
MISCHIEF ANY GOOD?
INSIDE TOR BOOKS'
ART DEPARTMENT
FIVE QUICK STEPS
TO DRAWING HANDS

THE ART OF

FANTASY BOOK ILLUSTRATION

Paint a story using **Photoshop** and traditional tools
PLUS! The stunning art of children's book illustrations

Future

TONY DITERLIZZI COVER ART SECRETS FROM THE AWARD-WINNING ARTIST

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Welcome... to art that tells a story



One of the first children's book illustrations that made an impact on me was a Tony Ross painting of Roald Dahl's *Fantastic Mr Fox*. Although Quentin Blake went on to create the ultimate Foxy for many in the 90s, it was Tony's cheeky Mr Fox, carrying a succulent chicken away from the moody, sallow-faced farmers,

that lodged in my brainbox. I can't recall every story detail, yet that image is as clear in my mind as it was waaaaaaay back then! And who knows? Maybe Wylie Beckert's delightful dreamlike cover painting could have a similar impact on some of our younger readers... Go to page 62 and see how she created it.

That's the power of book illustration, and the strand of art found in kid's books especially. And it's something we celebrate in this issue. We start on page 42 by speaking to some fantastic artists working in this magical medium – from the ethereal art of Cory Godbey, to Tony DiTerlizzi's motion picture-inspiring *Spiderwick Chronicles* art, and the imagery of European star Lisbeth Zwerger.

Cory takes a masterclass on creature design on page 68, and turn to page 76 for Tony's book cover workshop. There's also a studio profile on the mighty Tor Books, Charles Vess takes on the state of fantasy art, and Brian Froud's sketchbook literally speaks for itself... With the inimitable Nick Harris exploring the software *Mischief* on page 82, I'd say that's a pretty good start for embarking on your own creations, whatever the age of your audience.

Claire

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



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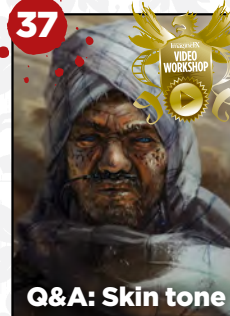


"The main idea is to keep creating honest work that connects with people"

Cory Godbey



Sketchbook: Brian Froud



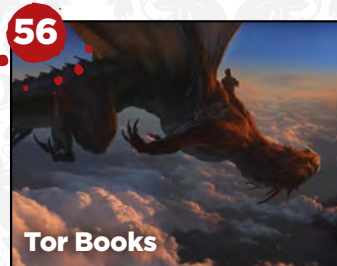
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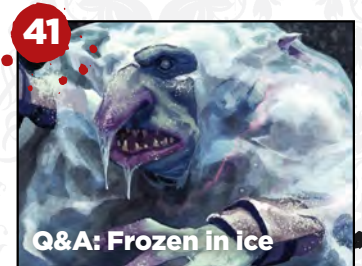
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Tor Books



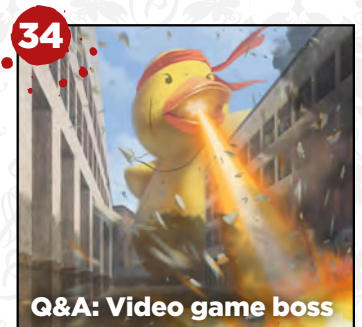
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Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART



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Nick Harris tests Mischief



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FANTASY illustrator

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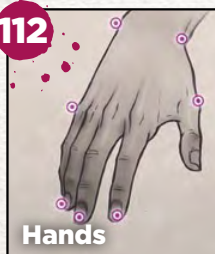
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Dr. Sketchy's: Chicago



Hands



Bob Eggleton



Classic pulp characters



FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART
ImagineFX

Resources

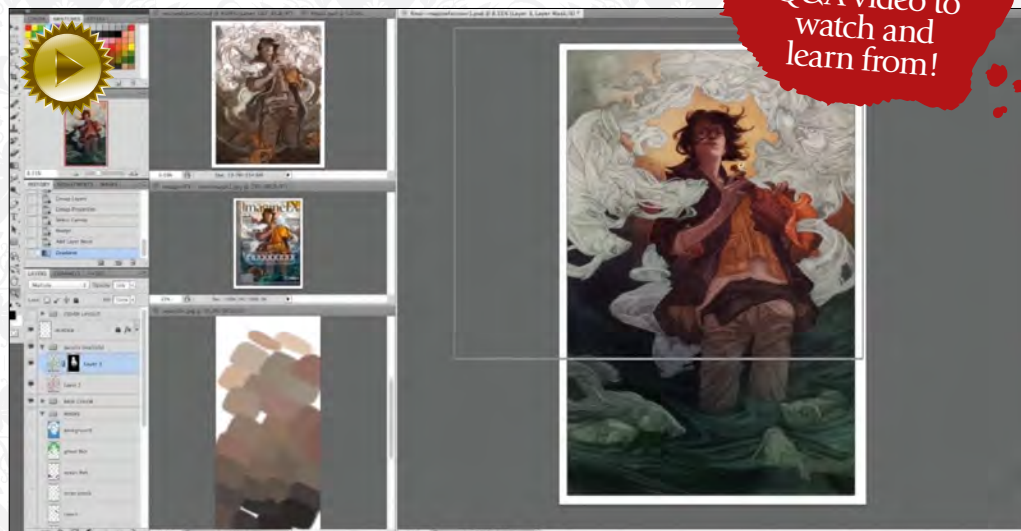
Getting your hands on all of this issue's essential resources is now easier than ever. Just go to our dedicated web page at <http://ifxm.ag/sto106ry>

OVER 6 HOURS
of workshop and Q&A video to watch and learn from!

COVER VIDEO

Covers with a narrative

Watch and learn how to combine digital and traditional art techniques to create a captivating fantasy book cover. Wylie Beckert is your painter and storyteller...



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/sto106ry>.
- 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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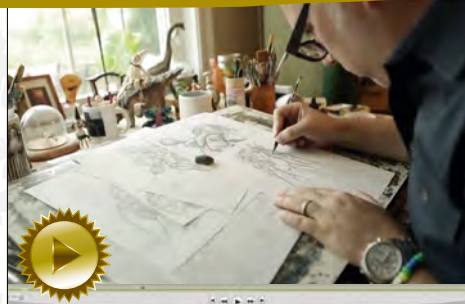




EXCLUSIVE VIDEO TUTORIAL!

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

WORKSHOP VIDEOS



Tony DiTerlizzi

The Spiderwick artist takes us back to the Golden Age of children's book illustration. **Plus WIPS, final image and palette**



Nick Harris

Nick Harris test drives fledgling software Mischief to create an image on an infinite canvas that features ogres, a pixie and a girl in a bit of a pickle. But how does it work? **Plus WIPS and final image**



VIDEO SAMPLE



Simon Scales

View a clip from the first volume of Introduction to Digital Painting and Theory from Concept Design Workshop.

Q&A VIDEOS



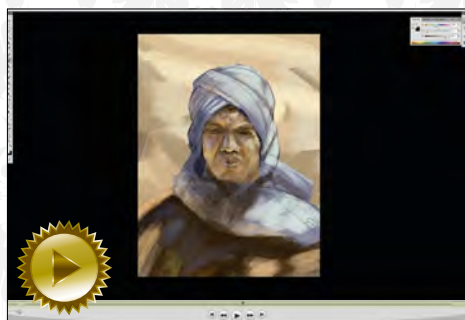
Nacho Molina

Create an interesting space scene using nebulas as a colourful background. **Plus WIPS and final image**



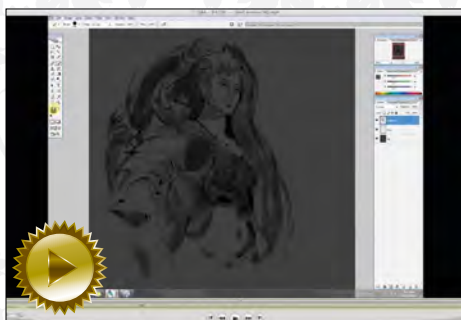
Estefania Pantoja

Enhance an atmospheric forest scene with the careful application of lighting. **Plus WIPS and final image**



Mark Molnar

Using light to influence highlight and shadow colours for skin tones. **Plus WIPS and final image**



Donglu Yu

Discover how to give armour materials a mottled, tortoiseshell-style colouration. **Plus WIPS and final image**



Mark Molnar

This time, Mark explains how to bring life and light into an alien creature's eyes. **Plus WIPS and final image**

PLUS Extensive WIPS, brushes and final artwork from Matt Dixon, Paco Rico Torres, Tony Foti, Wylie Beckert, Will Murai, Daren Bader, Cory Godbey, PJ Holden and Chris Legaspi.

12 CUSTOM BRUSHES, INCLUDING...

CHAIN-MAIL

Donglu Yu use this brush to take the hard work out of warrior outfits.

ANGLED PENCIL BRUSH

Wylie Beckert enjoys using this versatile, chisel-shaped brush.

ACRYLICS ON CANVAS

Will Murai favours this brush for achieving a painterly feel.



Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART



Alfonso Elola
LOCATION: Venezuela
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SOFTWARE: Photoshop, SketchBook Pro, 3ds Max, ZBrush



Alfonso asks you to read between the lines of his art - a nightmarish body of work full of writhing, skinless figures and

twisted, grinning skeletons.

"I'm a lover of composition, complexity, spaces full of details and stunning light," he says. "All of my work has elements of surrealism and Baroque-inspired light - a use of tenebrism."

The young artist studied illustration at Caracas Institute of Design and splits his time between his native Venezuela and Spanish capital Madrid. He cites Diego Velázquez and Caravaggio as his biggest inspirations, but his interpretation of anatomy is, "more emotional than scientific. A breakdown of almost theatrical expressions."

1 ANATOMICAL PHASES "These characters are capable of duplicating themselves over and over again. They represent emotions such as bravery and courage. It's Baroque-inspired and mixed with surrealism."

2 ORGANIC PORTRAIT "If we view organic as the essence of everything, we see anatomy in a completely artistic way. Everything relates to the plant and animal world in this portrait, to show characters with a peculiar beauty."



ARTIST OF THE MONTH

Congratulations Alfonso - 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.

1



ImagineFX March 2014

FXPosé submissions to: fxpose@imaginefx.com

Artist crit

**Orbit Books creative director
Lauren Panepinto loves the
intricacy of Alfonso's work**



"I enjoy the unique texture. The dramatic lighting makes it look sculptural, almost 3D-modelled. A great mix of simple and complex that reads incredibly well."

Lisa Buijteweg

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Lisa has been painting for just three years. During that time she's honed a vivid, emotive style, demonstrating a good eye for anatomy and lighting.

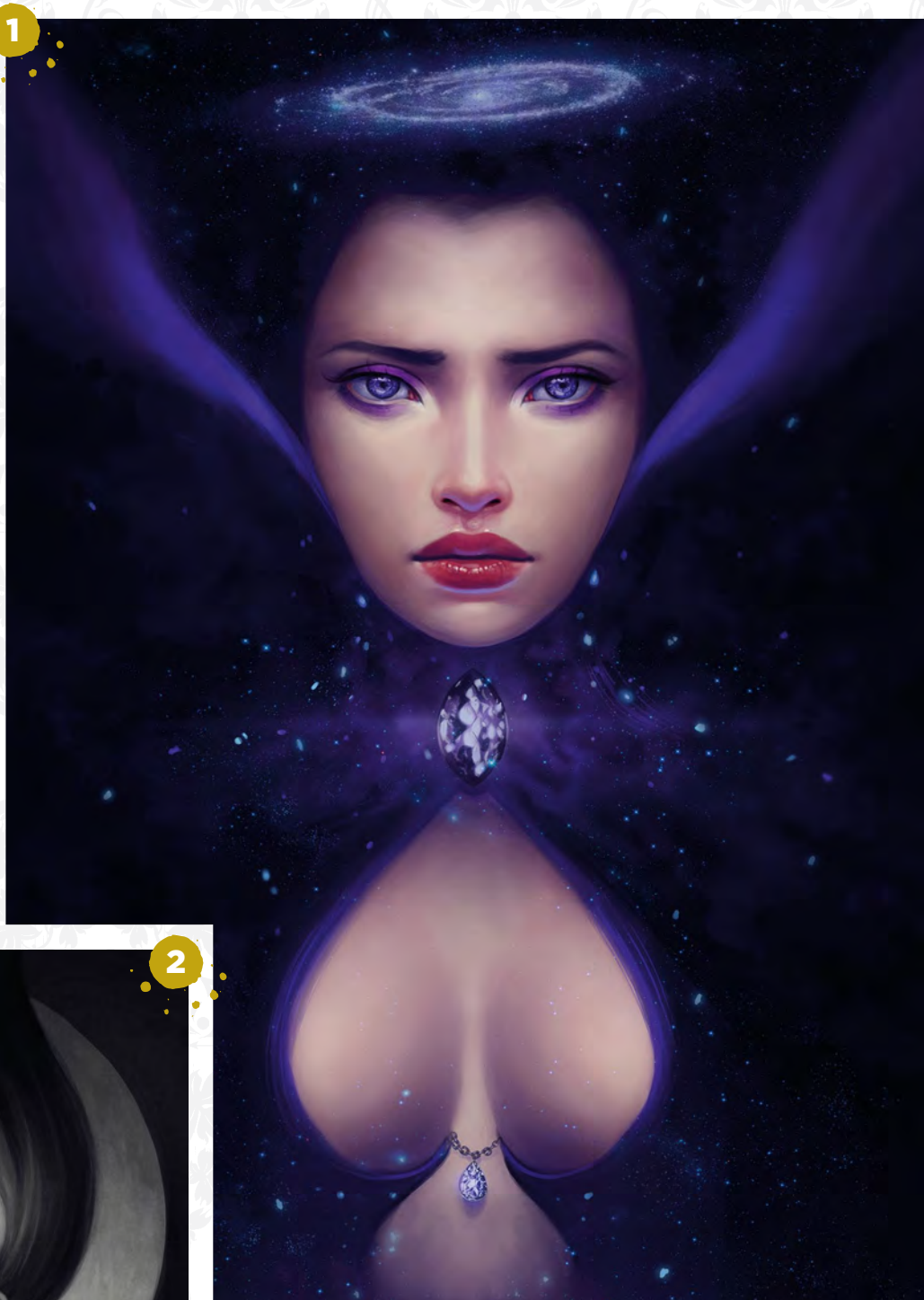
She paints in her spare time – having just qualified as a social worker – and got into drawing by penning Final Fantasy fan art.

"I love to make paintings based on different emotions," she says, "which come mostly from the music I listen to."

1 MYSTERIES ABOUND "This shows my love for painting portraits, alongside my love for stars. I imagine she's in some other state of mind or being, but everyone can see something different in it."

2 THIS DREAM "This is one of my monochrome paintings – one of my favourite things to paint. With these, I can really focus on the emotions of the character, which is a challenge, especially to make it captivating. But it's also a way to relax."

3 MIDNA "This is one of my favourite characters in the Legend of Zelda series, which I've been playing since I was five. I couldn't resist painting Midna in action, while trying to capture her character, power and beauty."





IMAGINEFX CRIT

"Filippo is an artist with a great story – we can all relate to his parents telling him to 'get a proper job' – and that comes out in his work. His art, while very elegant, has elements of humour which really appeal to me."

Gary Evans,
Staff Writer

4

Filippo Vanzo

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop, Painter



Drawing was Filippo's big passion growing up, but his parents didn't want him to attend art school. He was, he says, "fool enough to listen to them."

This year Filippo fulfilled a lifelong ambition by leaving his job to work full-time as a freelance illustrator, steadily building up a client base and, "making up for all those inactive years".

Inspired by Rackham, Dulac, Bauer and Doré, the Italian is working in book illustration and other commissions – from tabletop games to album art. As Filippo says, "It's never too late."

1 AY GALANOS! "A piece inspired by Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*. I thought it would be interesting to use an unrealistic point of view, showing what's going on both above and under the water."

2 THE WIZARD "I was studying one of my favourite artists, Arthur Rackham. I inked the line art on watercolour paper, then scanned it and digitally coloured it – trying to achieve a traditional watercolour effect."

3 ROUJIN TO UMI "Another piece inspired by *The Old Man and the Sea*. I wanted to show a dramatic composition, while drawing inspiration from Japanese ukiyo-e prints' flat and dull colours. I scanned my pencil line art then coloured it in Photoshop."

4 SHED YOUR LEAVES "This was for a magazine competition with a theme of *A Frail Shedding of Leaves*. I depicted the relationship between man and nature, including the inevitability of ageing and death, but also with a humorous twist and a sense of renewal."

1



Darek Zabrocki

LOCATION: Poland

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Darek is a student at the Academy of Fine Arts in his hometown Gdańsk. He's been drawing for as long as he can remember and began experimenting with digital art in his teens, as well as building up his charcoals, pencils and ink skills. Darek has gone on to develop a dark and gothic but classic and refined style, put to use on everything from grandiose cathedrals to domesticated dinosaurs.

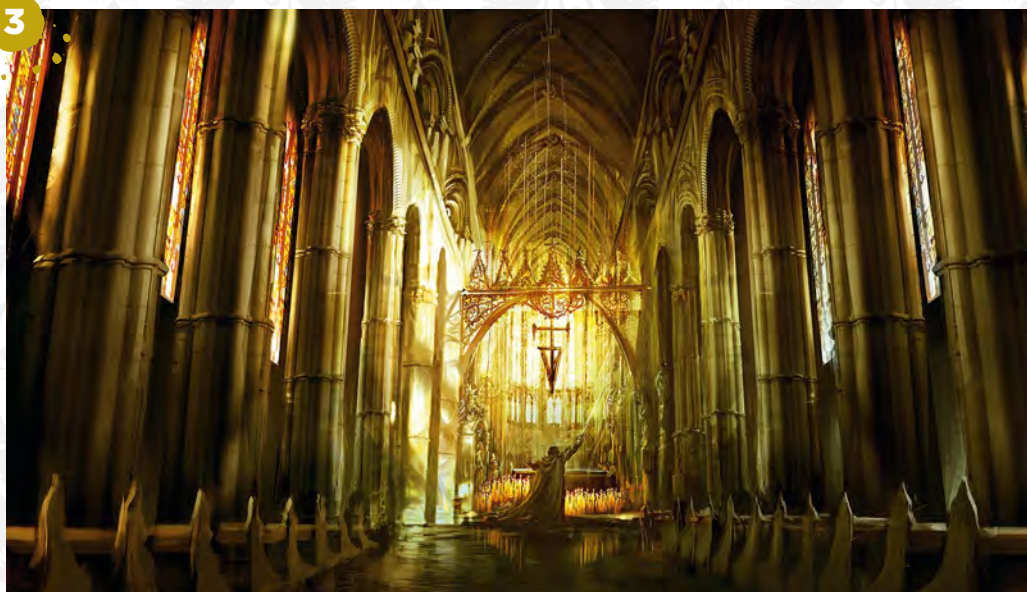
"I love challenging tasks," Darek says, "which give me the opportunity to discover and learn new things. Exploring a variety of styles and subjects enables me to broaden my horizons and become better at what I love and am utterly devoted to: art."

2



© 2013 Fantasy Flight Games The Lord of the Rings: Black Riders

3



© 2013 Prodos Games Ltd Mutant Chronicles Warzone Resurrection project

1 DINO RIDERS "This personal project tells the story of scientists who managed to create a time-gate machine and travel millions of years back to Dino World. Now they are investigating the planet with the help of the dinosaurs."

2 BLACK RIDERS "The nine Nazgûl are obstacles to those who want to reach Rivendell. This was created for Fantasy Flight Games' card game The Lord of the Rings: Black Riders."

3 CATHEDRAL "This is the interior of the monumental Brotherhood Cathedral where Commander Durand raised his bloody sword. I created it for the Mutant Chronicles Warzone Resurrection, which was a successful Kickstarter project."

1

Colin Ashcroft

LOCATION: Belgium

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



A student of illustration and animation, Colin has also worked in the fields of animal and marine biology. Combining these experiences with his love of Norse and Saxon history and mythology, the Manchester-born freelancer specialises in book illustrations, creature designs and concept art.

While he was studying for his degree, Colin moved to Antwerp in Belgium as an exchange student. It gave him the opportunity to develop his skills in life drawing, portraiture, anatomy and landscapes.

"I'm inspired by oil painting masters from the past," he says. "But equally I find inspiration in card, film, game and concept art."

1 WEREWOLF "I love werewolves and I painted this for the Book of Beasts by Ticktock Books. I tried to capture the moment of change between man and werewolf. I had to adapt my colour palette on this project, making it brighter and more vivid than usual."

2 DRAUGR BEAST "This image of an undead draugr riding his beast also features in Book of Beasts. I tried to give a zombified, demonic feel to this character. I also wanted to capture a powerful beast being driven to the brink of madness."

2



IMAGINEFX CRIT



"In Werewolf, Colin shows the key moment of fur-sprouting change with vivid colour. Draugr Beast has a similarly bright palette. In both images the marriage of lively tones and dark subject is pure fun to look at. Great job!"

Beren Neale,
Digital Editor

Benedick Bana

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop, Illustrator



Benedick works in illustrations and concept art for games, infomercials and apps. But he's also created a vast personal collection of character designs that are dark, abstract and menacing.

"Right now," the Filipino artist says, "I'm really into creating mechanical designs - mechs, cyborgs and so on. But what separates me from other artists is the way I use brushes: I want them to be more dynamic, to have a feel of continuous motion."

The freelance digital artist, who predominantly uses Photoshop and Illustrator, achieves this by using flat brushes and a limited number of colours. Benedick can also be found teaching at Ateneo de Naga University in Bicol, Philippines.

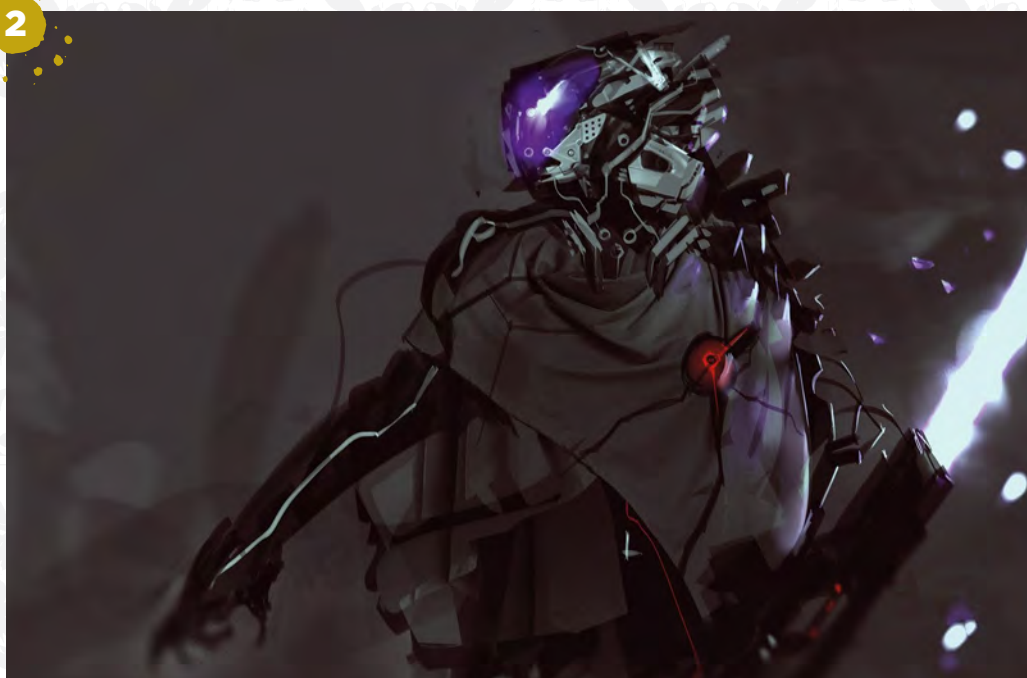
IMAGINEFX CRIT



"I hope Benedick's students are as impressed as I am at how he's able to create such striking sci-fi concepts just by using an energetic brush stroke and a few key colours. I'd love to see the figures brought to life in a game or film."

Cliff Hope,
Operations Editor

2



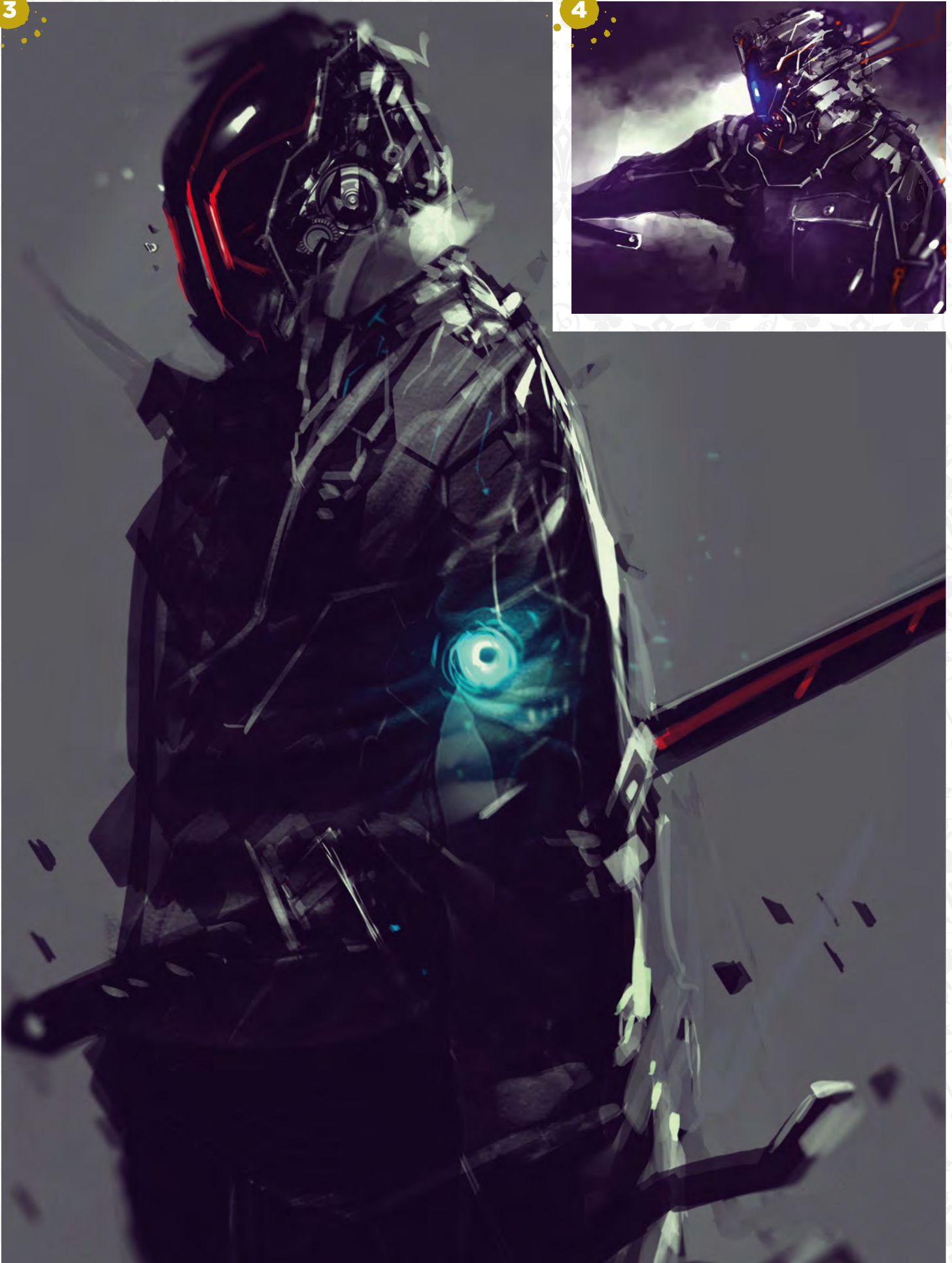
1 OVERHAUL "This is the first image I created using an overlay painting approach. I always customise my brushes to match the character I'm creating."

2 FIREFLY "This is one of my favourite character designs, using a photo-bash over-paint technique. I wanted a unique design for the character's visor and weapon."

3 DARKFALL SANDMAN "In this piece, I aimed to create a hybrid human-robot swordsman, with the use of minimal colours and with just one brush stroke."

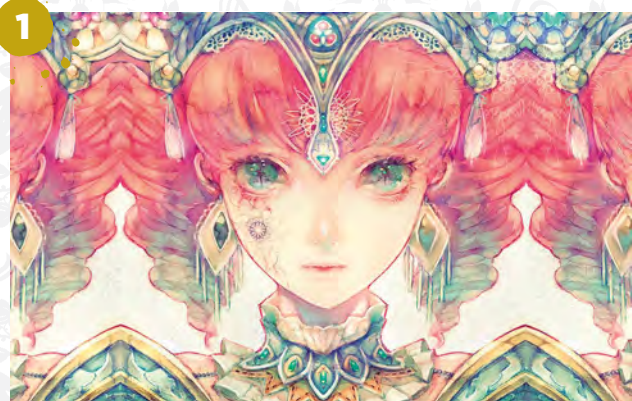
4 DARKFALL SANDMAN EXISTENCE "I wanted to have a dark mix of emotions in this guy, so I played with the brushes and colours, and used a range of photo textures."

3



4





1 Yogisya

LOCATION: Japan
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SOFTWARE: Painter



Yogisya is a Japanese illustrator who describes her work simply as "a search for the beautiful". Her deviantART posts – which include everything from sketches and WIPs to complete commissions and competition entries – regularly attract hundreds of comments. And it's not hard to see why.

Her work is a kaleidoscope of colour, featuring beautiful but forlorn subjects rendered with indelible line work. Her secret lies in a mix of old techniques and new media.

"I like to use watercolours," Yogisya says, "but mix them with digital. I'm trying to draw illustrations that incorporate both the academic and manga techniques."

Yogisya's work has attracted the attention of TCG, the toy and games company, which has invited her to draw illustrations for card game Last Chronicle. Her art has also appeared in various books and mobile games.



1 PRINCESS "Princess is the artwork that appears on my business card. It's an illustration I created using my preferred mix of media – watercolour and Painter."

2 CONCERTO FOR US "With the musical instruments in your heart, a person can play the sounds of the soul. Again, it was created using watercolours and Painter."

3 QUARTERLY PIXIV 10 "Pixiv is an online artist community for anime and manga illustrations. Quarterly Pixiv is the magazine it produces and this is my contribution to issue 10. The theme was simply Sea."

1



IMAGINEFX CRIT



"It's funny that Wojtek mentions the word organic in his description, as that's exactly the word which sprang to mind when viewing his images. The delicate shimmers and feathers are just beautiful."
Claire Howlett,
 Editor

Wojtek Fus

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Wojtek strives to "maintain the soul of traditional media, while using the latest Photoshop techniques". The Gdańsk-based illustrator and concept artist works freelance in the games and animation industries.

"After hours," Wojtek says, "I paint what moves me: female portraits and cyberpunk-themed illustrations. I love to mix organic and poetic forms - feathers and beautiful women, high-tech costumes and equipment."

The Pole is a versatile artist, equally at home creating understated portraiture as he is coming up with futuristic landscapes.

2



3



1 THE QUEEN'S RETURN "A piece I've been working on for two weeks between jobs. It's based on a Rob Goodwin ballet-costume design. The shiny parts were fun to paint."

2 AGATA "This is a portrait of my girlfriend, painted for her birthday. I was going for a traditional feel in this piece. I tried to remind myself of lessons learned at Watts Atelier, where I studied traditional media painting and drawing."

3 SURROUNDED "This is an illustration for my personal project Horus. The goal was to use any tool to achieve the highest level possible. I used photos, a little bit of 3D and a lot of overprinting to get it done."

Han-Yuan Yu

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



"I want to create compelling illustrations by using brilliant colours, interesting compositions and dynamic gestures,"

says Han-Yuan Yu. "My work focuses on storytelling. I want my audience to enjoy my art on a deeper level, and to discover meanings beneath a beautiful exterior."

The Taiwanese artist – also known as B.c.N.y. – is studying for a master's degree in illustration at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City.

Influenced by anime, classical painting and Chinese culture, recurring themes in his work are "beautiful girls in aboriginal costumes." His art has been exhibited in museums and galleries around the world.

1 KARMA "In order to show my country's culture, I combined Taiwanese and Chinese aboriginal accessories to symbolise the importance of life and spiritual significance. The idea comes from Christianity, Buddhism and my imagination."

2 FOUR SIDES LIGHT "This is the cover image for my fourth portfolio of personal artwork. I combined the four seasons with the four characters I'd previously created and the black and white cats also represent the concepts of T'ai chi."

3 AZURE BLUE PSYCHIC "She is a psychic. As a summoner, she calls the birds as her servants. It shows my Aboriginal influences. The canvas looked slightly empty, so I thought the birds would be a good idea to fill space. You could call this one a pleasant accident."

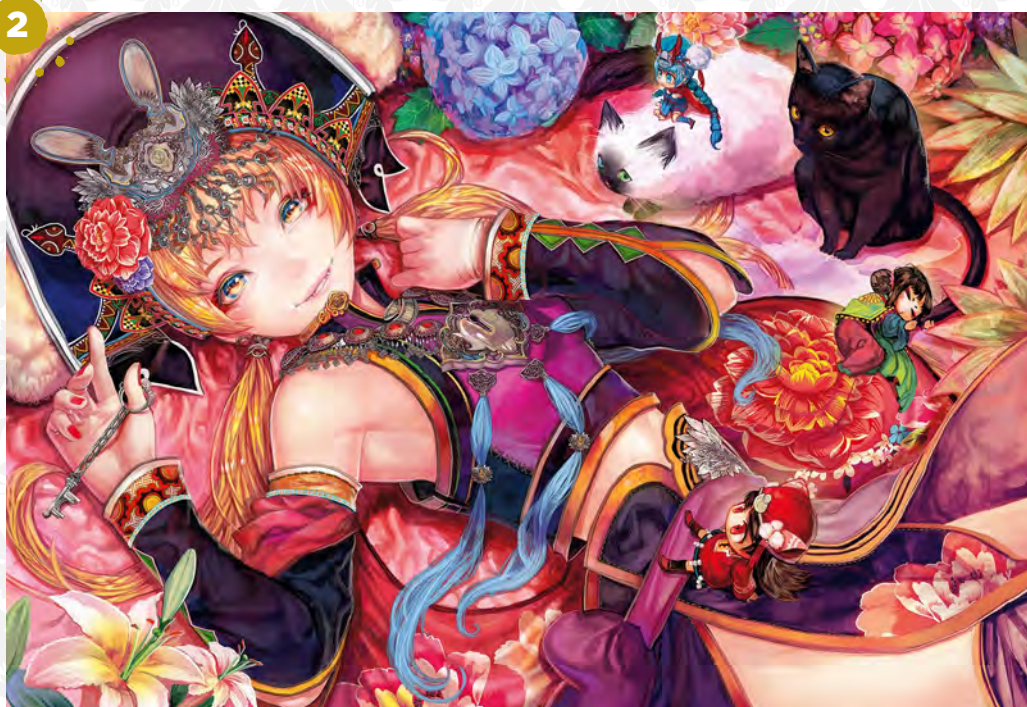
SUBMIT YOUR ART TO FXPOSÉ

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):
FXPosé
ImagineFX
30 Monmouth Street
Bath
BA1 2BW, UK

All artwork is submitted on the basis of a non-exclusive worldwide licence to publish, both in print and electronically.





IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Composition, colour, texture, mood... Han-Yuan nails the lot. And he packs engaging storytelling and elegiac elegance into each beautifully rendered exterior, no matter how 'dark' the theme. Watch out for this guy!"

Daniel Vincent,
Art Editor

WARNING: SOME ART MAY OFFEND

Vicious visuals Does your art go too far? We explore what Charles Vess has called a “great preponderance” of violence in fantasy art



Charles Vess will no longer submit his work to Spectrum. The American fantasy artist and comic book illustrator says he feels “totally out of place” in the illustration annual dedicated to contemporary fantastic art.

After receiving Spectrum 20, he posted on his Facebook page that the “dark and gothic” imagery in the book troubles him. “I just don’t feel comfortable anymore,” he writes, “seeing my art set amongst all those violent images. So I won’t be submitting any more work to the venue in the future.”

Winona Nelson’s Artifice appears in Spectrum 20. Former judge Charles Vess says he feels out of place among the darker images published in the fantasy art annual.

Anyone can send work to Spectrum. A jury of top artists chooses which entries are published. Charles is a long-time contributor and juror. But he’s now calling for a more lyrical approach, and the need for a “lovely book filled with lovely art.” He concluded: “I’m tired of being surrounded by darkness.”

After five years in a background role, **John Fleskes** is Spectrum’s new art director, editor and publisher – taking over from previous owners Cathy and Arnie Fenner. He believes that fantasy and sci-fi art with violent themes is in



© AMW Comics



CREATURE FEATURE

Meet the Ichneumon – the dragon-slaying creature that won a competition held by Helpful Bear and judged by illustrator Terry! Whitlatch.

Page 23



TELLING HIS OWN STORIES

Jim Burns reveals that a desire to paint more personal pieces was the drive behind his Lost Narratives art series, which has 'a hint of the macbre' about it.

Page 24



INTRODUCING SKINNY AL...

We take a look around the rural Australian studio of Loopydave – otherwise known as David Dunstan – and meet a couple of his inanimate muses.

Page 26

Ruth Sanderson's cover for fairytale *The Twelve Dancing Princesses* is an example of what Charles Vess has called more 'lyrical approach to art, and an alternative to 'dark and gothic' imagery.



the minority, and that there's a wealth of non-violent imagery to be found in *Spectrum's* pages and beyond. He notes that our fascination with stories and images that are "scary and wicked as well as fun and playful" is nothing new.

VIOLENT PAST

From religious texts to ancient tapestries, Goya to Andy Warhol: for as long as marks have been made and stories told, there's been violent imagery. Some of the earliest known paintings are found in the Chauvet Cave in southern France. They're over 30,000 years old and depict predatory animals. They illustrate the hunt. They show woolly rhinos butting horns. They're scenes of the every-day violence of ice-age life.

The moral panic surrounding such images is a more recent development. In the 1950s, psychiatrist Fredric Wertham wrote a book called *Seduction of the Innocent*. It claimed that comic books were exposing children to violence and causing them to become delinquent. The media may change, but the idea prevails.

The Campaign Against Censorship is a body that believes, "What is acceptable for adults to read, see or hear should be decided by personal judgement and taste." It also fights for the "Freedom for creative artists to present their perceptions, interpretations and ideas."

These are sentiments John agrees with, which is why *Spectrum* doesn't "pre-screen or filter" its submissions. Judges see every



© Games Workshop

Bloodsworn is another of Winona Nelson's contributions to *Spectrum 20*. Winona says it's up to both artist and viewer to decide what they're comfortable with.

single entry. It's never received anything deemed too inappropriate to publish. And, in its 21-year history, the publication has received only a handful of complaints – none of which had anything to do with violent imagery. It's for these reasons he sees no need to censor the publication in any way.

"I wouldn't want to see a parental advisory label on the *Spectrum* art book annual," he says. "Nor do I think it's needed, or an appropriate label.

"My goal is for *Spectrum* to continue to serve as a full-range representation of the year, and to be something that can be enjoyed by as wide an age group as possible. As a parent of a young child, I find ratings for TV, films and games very helpful. Age classifications for books and magazines are not so much the question or concern as much as who would be setting those classifications on us and what would their guidelines be. But in the long run, I don't think an age classification on *Spectrum* would hinder our sales, since we're not trying to hide anything or pretend to be something that we're not."

INTO THE LIGHT

In his Facebook post, Charles Vess pointed to a handful of *Spectrum 20* contributors whom he was happy to have his work sit alongside – those who also eschew the darker elements he dislikes. One of

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

CORY GODBEY

The US illustrator believes today's artists should focus on storytelling

Is violent imagery increasingly widespread in fantasy art?

I would say yes. I'm not all that hung up on it, I just don't have time for it. In my opinion, overly violent imagery is a cheap shot. Most of the time I can't shake the feeling the artist took the easy way out. It's much harder to do something beautiful and elegant with heart that's not saccharine.

Is the use of violent imagery really a new thing?

Not exactly, but I do think it's intensified. Playing it safe in fantasy art means macabre, violent and, at times, terribly sexist imagery. To me, it's just lazy and uncreative. The struggle between good and evil never ceases to be exciting. But when the grotesque is glorified and beauty is seen as childish or weak, then we've taken a serious misstep.

So how should an artist express certain darker moods?

I'm drawn to this field because I believe 'imaginative realism' prizes draftsmanship, storytelling and imagination: the absolute magic and mystery of Charles Vess, the dark waterfalls of Paul Bonner, the gorgeous figure work of Rebecca Guay and the wondrous creatures of Tony DiTerlizzi – they all inspire my own creativity. I have no time for gore and despair.



South Carolina-based artist Cory creates fanciful illustrations for picture books, comics and animation.

www.corygodbey.com

➔ which was Ruth Sanderson. The illustrator says Spectrum should come with an age rating. Her concern is that we are “injuring our children’s spirits” with violent



imagery. She promotes an alternative. “Let’s get back to story,” she says. “We do need dramatic stories – I’m in agreement with that, and conflict is the core of a good story – but it doesn’t have to be as visually graphic and offensive as it has become today.”

Ruth works mainly as a book illustrator. “Fairy tales have some very dark images,” she says, “but I think because they’re in books, they feel more safe to the child.”

It’s an interesting distinction, and one that Laura Kipnis, professor of media studies at Northwestern University, expanded upon in a recent article for the New York Times: “The lower the cultural form, or the ticket price, or – let’s just say it – the presumed education level of the typical viewer, the more depictions of violence are suspected of inducing mindless emulation in their audiences, who will soon re-enact the mayhem like morally challenged monkeys, unlike the viewers of, say, Titus Andronicus, about whose moral intelligence society is confident.”

Ruth Sanderson says artists need to “get back to story.” Any violence in her work is implied rather than explicitly described.



“I enjoy painting gothic horror images, but not modern horror, because that does tend to go over the line”

Ruth says she has never been able to sit through horror films, and sees illustrations depicting graphic violence in a similar light. But, ultimately, she says it’s all down to personal preference. “I don’t have to buy, read, look at or watch the stuff,” she says, “and freedom of expression is important, even if it is not to everyone’s taste.”

Winona Nelson contributed two images to Spectrum 20. The first depicts a blood-soaked, dagger-wielding vampire. The



second, a man and woman separated in a sea of riot police. Like much of Winona’s work, they’re beautifully rendered, almost photo-real.

HYPER REAL

Another point Charles raised was how he feels some of the work in Spectrum is “over-rendered.” Winona says this trend towards a more realistic style of fantasy and sci-fi art comes down to the facts that it’s easier than ever to learn these techniques and find high-quality references, also pointing to the games industry as an influence.

“Another,” she says, “is that realism is an avenue of art where something can be more obviously impressive on a technical level,

Heart of the World by Ruth Sanderson, a Spectrum 20 contributor who Charles Vess feels comfortable seeing his work alongside.



while styling is more subjective and personal, and therefore can be more intimidating for a young artist to pursue once they start focusing on landing professional work.”

The debate between Charles and John Fleskes has been an amicable, intelligent one. John plans to explore the subject further in his Spectrum 21 year in review. Winona says it’s a shame Charles feels he has to quit Spectrum, because, in doing so, “he contributes to the narrowing of styles represented in the collection.” But her overriding message is simple.

“There’s room for all kinds of imaginary worlds, so it’s up to both artist and viewer to decide what they’re comfortable with.

“It’s up to personal taste and the requests of the client. As artists, part of our job is to choose clients and jobs that we feel comfortable with. For instance, I enjoy painting gothic horror images, but not modern horror, because that does tend to go over the line for me. But I’m not going to be offended by others producing work in that field. It’s all about finding where you fit in, which is exactly what Charles is doing by leaving Spectrum.”



Jan Vidra's Gray Beast was the worthy runner-up in Helpful Bear's creature design contest.

Bear necessities

Fantasy bestiary Meet the dragon-slaying creature that won a competition judged by Terryl Whitlatch



Helpful Bear Productions has been on the hunt for new art talent. The studio specialising in creature and character design recently held a contest to find the best in beastly creations. Illustrator Terryl Whitlatch helped judge the competition.



The overall winner is concept artist and illustrator Katie Pfeilschiefter, for her take on the Ichneumon – a mythological medieval predator of dragons.

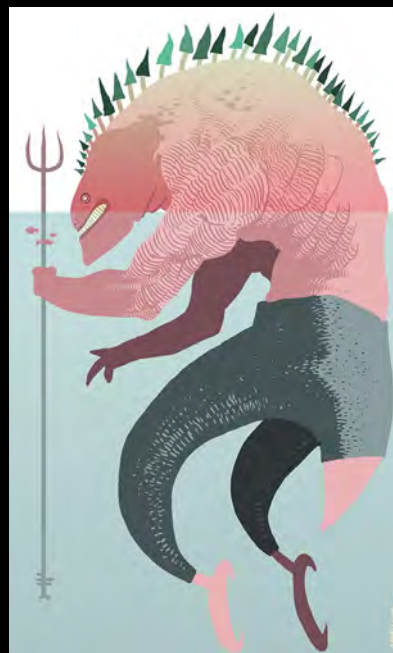
"My main inspiration was the Egyptian mongoose," Katie says, "and I extrapolated from there, coating its fur with quills, giving it a venomous bite and inferring

an exaggerated patagium between its front and forelegs for surviving long falls."

Katie wins a host of prizes – including a one-on-one critique with Terryl, who liked the way she rendered the fabled creature with a naturalist's eye: "Beautiful at every level: texture, anatomy, environment, lighting and character. Katie's love and observation of real animals brings this creature to life."

The second-prize winner is the elegant Gray Beast by San Francisco-based Jan Vidra, with third spot going to Aleksandar Petrikanovic's design, the Amphibious Giant.

To find out more about Helpful Bear Productions go to www.helpfulbear.com, and see more of Katie's art over at www.katepfeilschiefterart.com.



Her depiction of an Ichneumon, a medieval slayer of dragons, secured Katie Pfeilschiefter first place in the contest.

This hefty looking Amphibious Giant bagged the third place berth in the creature contest for artist Aleksandar Petrikanovic.

FRESH PAINT

Your art news that's grabbed our attention



Greg Newman
@gregnewman

"Spent a little more time on this pastel study this evening. [Here] is a crop to show the light hatching."

<http://ifxm.ag/greg-newman>



Mike Jasnowski
@MikeJasnowski

"Some of the first life sketches for 2014. #sketch #pen #study"

<http://ifxm.ag/mike-jasnowski>



Chantika
@drawingtheme

"@imaginefx and thus inspired, I whipped up this sketch with my old ball-point pen."

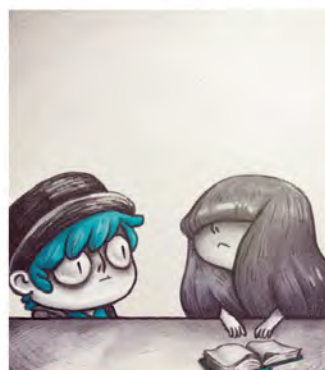
<http://ifxm.ag/chantika>



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



Hatboy
by Vaughn Pinpin



Fantasy talk Explaining the inexplicable

"Getting the balance right between delivering enjoyable thrills and inflicting PTSD on young minds can be a tightrope to walk"

Nick Harris ponders just how much it's advisable to scare the wits out the young... Page 42

Short 'n' sweet

Story telling Jim Burns shares the 'lost narrative' of his sci-fi annual cover



Jim Burns puts a unique spin on the Frankenstein story in narrative-filled cover art for a book celebrating the year's best sci-fi fiction.

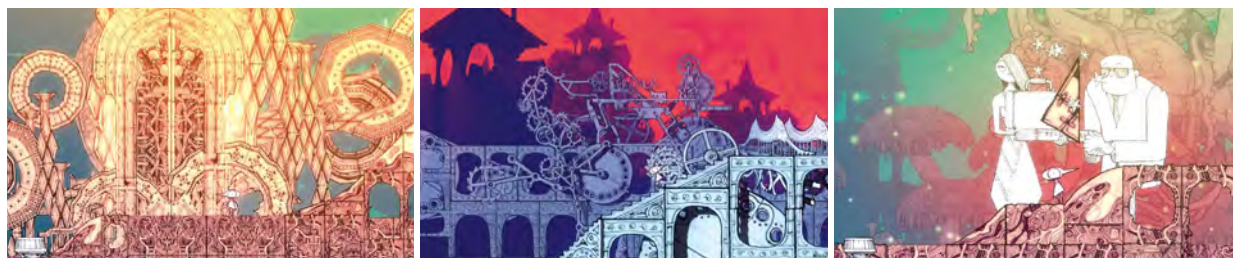


Jim says he's trying for darker themes here: "A lot of atmosphere, detail for the curious eye to wander over, a striking central character, a hint of the macabre."

St. Martin's Press, the publisher behind the Year's Best Science Fiction & Fantasy: Thirty-First Annual Collection, features Jim's Homuncularium. The piece is part of the Welsh artist's Lost Narrative series.

"Creating these personal pieces enables me to give more rein to my own imagination, rather than being bound to narratives written by others."

The book includes stories by Robert Reed, Alastair Reynolds, Carrie Vaughn and more. You can see more art from Jim Burns at <http://ifxm.ag/jimburns>.



What at first seems like simple scribbles soon turns into a colourful and complicated world of gaming frustration!



These massive complex gaming worlds are all based on scans of the original ballpoint pen doodles of developer Leo Dasso.



The never-ending doodle

Quick draw How an illustrator took a pen sketch that he created during a college class and turned it into a playable universe

In an era of increasingly realistic video game graphics, one studio has gone seriously against the grain and created a platformer that's made entirely out of ballpoint pen drawings.

California studio Arachnid Games is the team behind Ballpoint Universe – an infinite

Academy of Art University in San Francisco, California. "I found that doodles came quickly and freely, and wanted to base a game in their world. The art was literally just scans of the ballpoint sketches. We did quick transparency cutouts in Photoshop, then slapped it into the game."

The game itself sees players guide the main character Doodle through a surreal 2D universe – running, jumping, sliding and shooting his way around an increasingly surreal and intricate world. The game succeeds in being both delightfully lo-fi and visually impressive at the same time, and is a joy to play.

Ballpoint Universe is out now and available to buy through Steam for £2.99. You can see more from Arachnid Games at www.arachnidgames.com.

Environments like this came to Leo while he was doodling in class at his San Francisco university.



Ballpoint Universe is an infinite platform-shooter adventure that follows the aptly named main character – Doodle – around a bonkers 2D world.

“I found that doodles came freely, and wanted to base a game in their world. The art was scans of the sketches”



platform-shooter adventure game in which every last asset was drawn with the humble ballpoint.

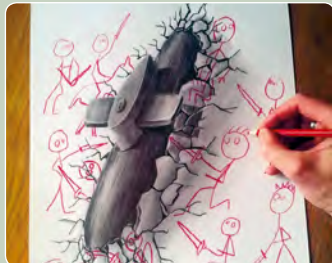
The idea came to developer and founder Leo Dasso while he was doodling on a notebook during a class at the





+deviantWATCH

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



JJKAirbrush

www.jjkairbrush.deviantart.com

JJKAirbrush has a gallery full of beautifully rendered sketches, in which he has fun with composition and perspective to create pieces that are as much optical illusions as they are works of art. Titles include Shark Infested Furniture and the very funny A Submarine Ruined My Drawing, seen here.



Darkhikarii

www.darkhikarii.deviantart.com

Darkhikarii's utopia in the sky, Garden City, depicts a world of spaceships, floating highways and blues skies, a place where plants grow "with and against gravity." It's just one of many wonderfully composed and lit landscapes in her portfolio. "I hope the future looks like this," she says. So do we!



CaesarsNail

www.caesarsnail.deviantart.com

This super-sized sketch – a huge 14x17in, using ink on Bristol board – is the biggest CaesarsNail has ever attempted. And we think it's a resounding success: it's full of intricate line work and painstaking detail. It's also available to download so you can zoom in and check it out for yourself.



Skinny AI, the plastic skull, is another very handy resource who also keeps me company while I work. At one stage I toyed with buying a complete replica skeleton.



Loopydave

Garageland Australian illustrator David Dunstan, aka Loopydave, opens up to his stylish studio and introduces his headless muse...



When I first started as a freelance illustrator, I would visit clients or, occasionally, they'd come to my studio. Now everything's done over the phone or internet, and it's enabled me to move to a small country town where I can reduce my living expenses and increase my chances of being trampled by runaway horses or rabid sheep.

My converted garage studio fits a four-meter-long work desk, seven bookshelves and Harriet the headless mannequin. My previous studio was larger, and it was quite challenging to rehouse the extensive collection of art and reference books when I moved. The result looks like someone crammed a computer desk inside a crowded second-hand bookshop, lowered the ceiling, stole the lightbulbs and ran away.

Artist news, software & events

This replica Viking helmet was part of the payment for doing some illustration work for a sword and movie prop company - less a reference and more a just-coz-it's-cool kind of thing.



I tend to listen to music, audiobooks and podcasts during the day, and play DVDs or TV shows on the second computer in the evenings.

I've been collecting art and reference books since my teens and unfortunately had to ditch a couple of bookshelves full when I moved to this smaller studio. Now I have to think quite carefully before buying any new books, because it'll most likely mean I'll have to displace another one.



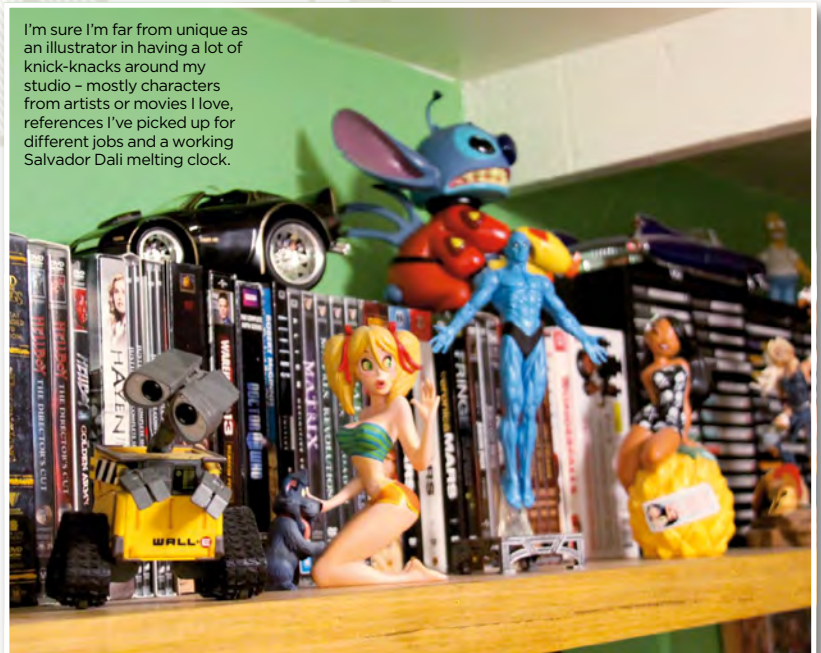
I always thought it would be cool to have a mannequin in a studio, and have found Headless Harriet surprisingly useful as reference over the years.

I currently have a two-computer setup: a 13-inch laptop running a 30-inch external monitor for work and a 20-inch screen, using another computer, for emails, music and TV. There's a scanner, laser printer, one of those multifunction colour printers that claims to do a thousand things but does none of them well, and a drawing desk, just off to the right. You may have noticed there's no tablet or digital drawing device. I create my roughs and detailed sketches on paper, scan them in and paint them using a mouse.

I usually start working around 10am, when I'll deal with emails and check the internet for any new grumpy cat memes. Around lunchtime I'll take a walk - avoiding any runaway horses or rabid sheep - and begin illustration work when I return, stop for tea and then work until 2am - my own stuff if things are quiet, and client work if it's not.

Loopydave used to be a graphic designer before becoming a full-time freelance illustrator. Check out his work at www.loopydave.deviantart.com.

I'm sure I'm far from unique as an illustrator in having a lot of knick-knacks around my studio - mostly characters from artists or movies I love, references I've picked up for different jobs and a working Salvador Dali melting clock.



FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART

ImagineFX Forum

Winners

Join in!
www.imaginefx.com/forums

Image of the month

Spirit guide Discover how this month's winning artist wrestled with his portrayal of a Native American's encounter with the spirit world...



WIN PRIZES!

Congratulations Tyl - you've won two ImagineFX specials of your choice! To get your hands on similar prizes, see our Forum challenges at www.imaginefx.com/forums.



Tyl Destoop's forum-winning creation isn't quite as he'd originally envisaged it. "The concept I had in mind didn't turn out the way I wanted," the Belgian artist explains of his work. "It was quite dark and macabre, and suddenly I didn't like it anymore. So the concept lost direction early on in the painting process."

But Tyl stuck at it, and eventually completed what is a beautiful and emotive piece; the character designer, digital artist and illustrator from Petegem showing skills in mood and expression.

"The character had a good pose," Tyl says, "but no interesting characteristics, so I kept him and experimented on the background with a big brush. The brush's size prevented me from losing myself in details and helped me focus on colour and larger shapes."

MYFX TITLE: Reborn

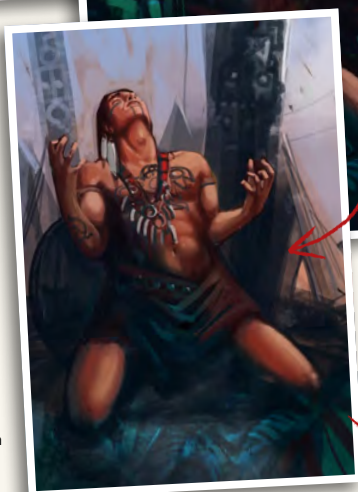
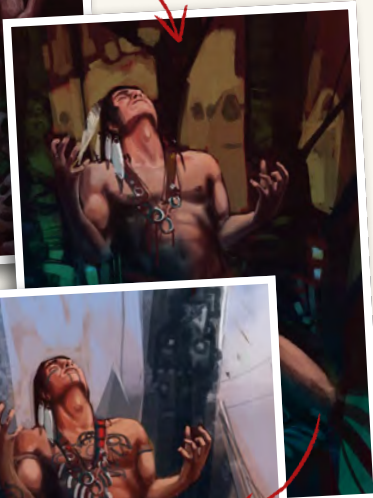
WINNER: Tyl Destoop (Tyl)

GALLERY: <http://ifxm.ag/tyl-destoop>

ALL ENTRIES: <http://ifxm.ag/reborn-challenge>



Tyl scrapped his original concept for the challenge, because he felt it was looking too "dark and macabre".



Tyl depicted the internal struggle of his character through a deft use of body position and facial expressions.



Tyl Destoop's entry won a close vote to take the spoils in a challenge focusing on the theme Reborn.

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"The pose and colouring of Tyl's piece masterfully portray a sense of real struggle to accept the spirit within."

Marie Streeting



This 'accomplished dwarf' by Bevin Akers impressed judge Emma Vieceli enough to award it with the top prize, and a place in her forthcoming book.

Wacom competition winner

Three's a crowd Emma Vieceli selects the reader whose work will appear in her new book



In a recent workshop, comic artist Emma Vieceli explained how to create tension in a group scene. We then invited you to add your own character to the image for the chance to



Runner-up John McGuinness brings in another female dwarf, this time to add to the tension.

win a Wacom Intuos Manga and a place in the British artist's forthcoming book.

The image shows two characters engaged in "quiet dispute." It was your job to create an elf or dwarf to join this scene, paying particular attention to the design elements and racial traits mentioned within the workshop, and showing well thought-out expressions and body gestures on your new character.



All three artists have won themselves an Intuos Manga tablet.



Vanessa Erdenberger's runners-up design showed an elf male attempting to broker the peace in the scene.

After careful consideration, Emma has chosen her winner: US artist Bevin Akers.

"This is an accomplished dwarf," Emma says, "clearly higher-ranking than Kolinarr, explaining why he'd be standing back silently fuming as she tries to sort the situation out."

"Her pose speaks volumes about her opinion in this debate, and her colour scheme is beautifully matched. This is such a wonderful approach to creating a female version of the dwarven outfit, but so clearly matching the males. The repeated rings throughout the design bring it all into cohesion, and the tattoos are the cherry on the cake."

Bevin wins an Intuos Manga and a place in Emma's new book. Our two runners-up, Vanessa Erdenberger and John McGuinness, also receive an Intuos Manga.

You can see more work from Emma Vieceli at www.emmavieceli.com.

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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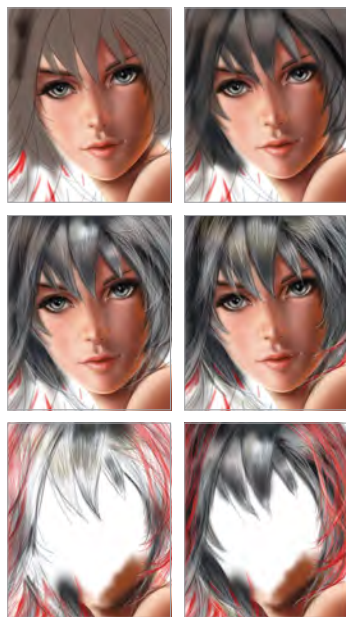


Tell us your thoughts on:
www.facebook.com/imaginefx

Manga faces

Please pass on my compliments and gratitude to Cris Delara, for her piece on manga style faces, in the Comic Artist special. I've been trying to learn how to draw faces. It may be a little more difficult for me as I'm face blind. (I can't recognise myself in the mirror and whenever I look away I can't picture a face.) But her piece is the first that's made sense to me, especially the mapping of the nose. Would you consider publishing a similar map of profile, three-quarter views or male faces?

Katy, via email



Claire replies Hello Katy, glad we could help you. Great idea on the workshop! We have a manga edition of ImagineFX on the horizon, so I'll see if Cris can provide a workshop on painting manga males.

Tools for the job

I got myself a new Adonit Jot, in order to draw with my iPad. It's a miracle! This pencil, yes a pencil, is my new instrument to do numerical drawings – and I saw it first in your magazine, which is full of great advice!

I have an Inking too, but it's not a big success. Maybe a pro such as Jim Lee could show us some of his skills with it?

Donald Lachance, via email

Claire replies Donald, thanks so much for taking the time to write in. We're glad that you take our advice on digital art software tools and hardware.

Traditional praise

I really like the new traditional art section and in particular I love the type of paper



Would you want all of ImagineFX printed on the rougher paper that we use in the traditional art section?

you use there. I wish that the rest of the magazine used the same paper. It makes it so much easier to look at an image when I don't have to continually shift it around to avoid the glare from the high-gloss paper.

Olivia, via email

Many thanks for the new section of the magazine! The traditional art coverage is wonderful. It was just what was missing for ImagineFX to be perfect.

Jeferson Santos, Brazil

Claire replies Olivia and Jeferson, thank you for your kind words on our new section. We love it too.

More Manga Studio 5

Just wondering if you're going to continue printing articles on Manga Studio 5? It's the software I use, but finding tips and tricks is pretty difficult, so the ones I've found in the magazine are super helpful.

Jodie Boutin, via email

Claire replies Hi Jodie, we're impressed with Manga Studio 5 too – there are a few more Core Skills on it to come from PJ Holden (page 75), and a full workshop using Manga Studio 5 is a great idea!

Digital access

I'm currently a subscriber to the print version of your magazine and was considering subscribing to the digital version. But before moving from the old road to the new one, I'd like to know: is it possible to read the digital magazine on my Mac too, or will I only be able to access the content on my iOS device? Will I be able to download the PDF version of the magazine as I do now from your website?

Antonio Bifulco, via email

Claire replies If you want to read the magazine on your Mac, you'll have to subscribe via Zinio. If you want to read on your iOS device, you'll need to subscribe via Apple Newsstand. You can switch between Apple devices using this (say, an iPad and an iPhone), but you can't read it on your Mac. Furthermore, digital subscribers don't have access to the premium content on our website. Hope this helps.

You can still get hold of our Comic Artist special edition at beta.imaginefx.com/shop



DID YOU MISS ISSUE 105?
See page 96 for details on how to get hold of a copy.



Our star letter writer wins a dA Premium Membership!

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- And more!

Check your values properly

I just wanted to say what a fantastic issue 104 was, especially the workshop by Jennifer Healy whose work is sublime – she's certainly an inspirational artist.

One thing that I wanted to mention from Jennifer's workshop was her excellent tip for the Value Check. However, there was a vital part of this useful artist insight missing (in both the video and magazine): you need to fill a new layer with white and set the Blending mode to Color.

I know it's only a minor detail to point out among a very detailed workshop, but I just wanted to follow this up as the Value Check is extremely helpful. It took me a while to work it out and that's why I wanted to help other readers who also may not know this.

Paul Oldridge, via email

Claire replies Paul, we're always happy when artists share their tips and secrets – it's this sort of openness that's just one of the reasons why our art community is so great. Thanks for sending this in.



Jennifer's art from issue 104 caught a lot of our readers' eyes, including our star letter writer's.

COMIC
ARTIST



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Artist Q&A

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The
FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART
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panel

Donglu Yu
Donglu is a concept artist at Ubisoft Montreal. She's worked on Deus Ex: Human Revolution and the Assassin's Creed franchise.
www.donglu-littlefish.blogspot.ca

Estefania Pantoja
Estefania is a Spanish artist in the UK working digitally and traditionally. She's worked on book illustrations and in commercial art.
www.estefaniapantoja.blogspot.co.uk

Nacho Molina
Nacho is a Spanish freelance illustrator and concept artist working in Liverpool. He's created art for films, games, card games and book covers.
www.bit.ly/ifx-nmolina

Matt Dixon
Matt first created artwork for a video game back in 1988, and has since worked for Blizzard. His pin-up art can be seen in his book Girls On Top.
www.mattdixon.co.uk

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.co.uk

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

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



Question

Please help me design and paint a totally original-looking video game bad guy!

Marguerite Blooth, Belgium

Answer

Tony replies



A common question! And considering that I've decided to design this particular destructor in the form of a bath toy, it'll have to be blowing something up or the whole piece will be too adorable. It's in our nature to trust cute things, but some rubber ducks just want to watch the world burn.

On the upside, reference won't be too big of a deal. If you can find a toy store, they probably have one. Aside from the duck, it's really just a matter of finding the right environment for the chaos.

Come up with a list of three key elements for your baddie before starting. My guy is big, powerful, and a natural-born destructor!

Composing the elements should reflect what you're trying to say about the monster. If the message is, "He's big, he's powerful and he's going to destroy us all," then focus on how you can specifically convey those three things.

To get the sense of 'big' across, we show our duck towering above the buildings. For 'powerful', a focal point should be his ability to blow things up. As far as 'he's going to destroy us all' – well, in this instance we can just put the two previous parts together and let the magic happen.



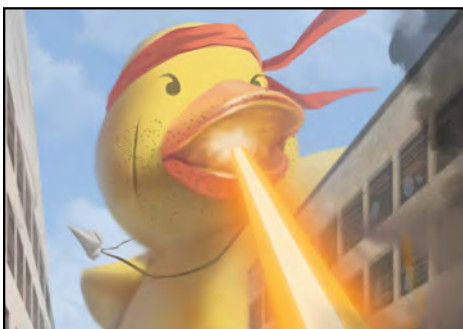
Step-by-step: Unleash the Destructor Duck!



1 I consider having him rise from the ocean like Godzilla, but if there's only water around we have nothing to compare sizes with. Conveying the enormity is one of my primary concerns, so I move the whole thing into a city where buildings will set the scale. Since he's large and far away, make sure the edges aren't too hard.



2 He needs a terrible power, but what to choose? Flame breath is an old standby. He could bounce on top of the buildings, have laser eyes, or even sonic screams. In lieu of the Godzilla theme, though, I've gone for something else. The skyscrapers are no match for the death beams that burst from his bill like hellfire.



3 Giant things can also be considered adorable, so this can't be where we stop things. It's time to accessorise. Any of these items alone may not seem intimidating, but adding a headband, a facial scar, stubble and a shark's tooth necklace will say everything we need to know about this rough character.

Question Can you help me paint an interesting space scene? *Hank Jones, US*



Answer Nacho replies

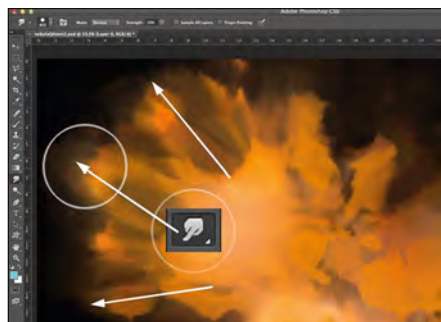


Nebulas could be used as a background in your sci-fi art. They can fill up empty gaps in your scene and help connect other elements.

From an artist's point of view, there are a few things to consider before starting. First, nebulas aren't solid objects. Instead, like smoke, they float around creating graceful curves and lines that become brighter and more intense as you near the core. Second, you can use them as your primary source of light if the composition calls for it. Finally, nebulas are organic and irregular in shape, but they still have their own distinctive structure, such as a helix or even a double cone.

I start off with a dark value for the background that I'm going to light with some gradients and textures. This will establish the core of the nebula. Then I use the Smudge and Gradient tools to smooth my colours and spread them out towards the edges.

I try to stick to the double cone structure of my nebula. I repeat the process on a Screen layer to make the textures look more interesting. If you're happy with your work so far, try copying, pasting, merging, and then transforming and erasing some parts to reveal the layers underneath. I use a Soft Light layer to bring back some dark tones and saturated colours.



If you use the general shapes of your nebula correctly, it could become the crowning jewel of your sci-fi illustration.

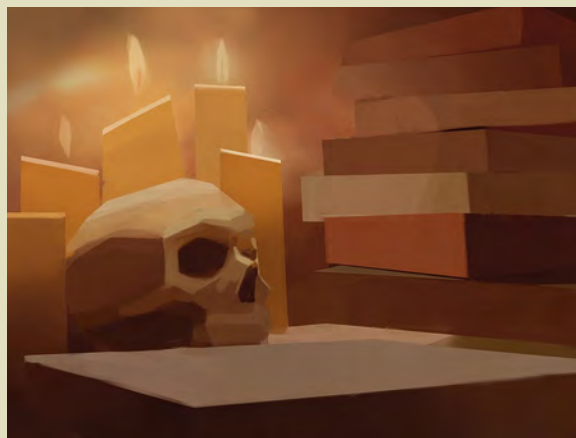
Artist's secret

USE THOSE HAPPY ACCIDENTS...
When you paint complex organic structures such as this one, you don't want to copy exactly how they look in the photos. That's virtually impossible, anyway! Instead, try to take advantage of any happy accidents to help achieve the same feeling.

Question

Please help me to paint a stack of old books

Frankie Gleeson, Ireland



Thinking of the stack as a pile of boxes may help to understand how the perspective and the lighting should be applied to the scene.

Answer

Nacho replies



In this close-up of a wizard's untidy parlour, the first thing I would suggest doing is to figure out how a stack of books reacts to light. To do this you'll need to understand its basic structure.

So think of the scene in simple terms. A stack of books is a pile of boxes, so if you light them from the upper left, the top sides would be highlighted, the front would be in light and the right-sided ones in shadow. I set up a basic scenario with some books and a couple more elements that will help to support the dusty, aged setting.

I draw the stack of books as a simple pile of boxes first, trying to get the three-point perspective right (use a grid if you need it). I don't like all the books aligned neatly, so I slightly rotate some of them to give the image a more natural, casual look. Remember that each book may cast a shadow on to the one underneath.

Once I have the basic lighting right, I continue rendering out the details. Put some scratches close to the edges of the book covers and some stains on the pages. Some ripped and tattered edges help add to the fantasy atmosphere.

Another good tip is that old book covers tend to bend slightly at the edges, so try to avoid lines being too straight, especially when you paint the stack's silhouette.



Realism comes from a good depiction of lighting, so the better you get at this, the more real the stack of books will look.

Question

How do I make my character art look more interesting for my portfolio?

Kenny Cale, US



The upper image features the character and some alternative viewpoints. The lower image is the same, but the presentation is more appealing.

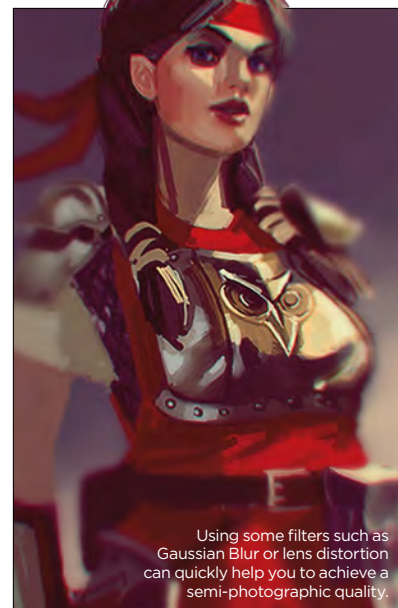
Answer

Paco replies



The most important thing is to apply the basics of visual composition. If you have a finished character study and you want to make it look interesting on a character sheet, then include elements that will balance the composition and fill it out. These could include a turnaround, early sketches or the name of the character.

There are some other tricks, such as using some texture for the background, adding a close-up of the character behind it, using



Using some filters such as Gaussian Blur or lens distortion can quickly help you to achieve a semi-photographic quality.

photographic filters such as Gaussian Blur or lens distortion to simulate the depth of field, or the chromatic aberration effect to give it a cinematic look.

Indeed, there are plenty of effects that you could apply to your character concept – it all depends on the style you're aiming for. But remember that those are just cheap tricks to make a character sheet more eye-catching. Nothing can improve a poor painting of a poorly designed character. Don't forget what's important.

Question

Any ideas for depicting an atmospheric forest scene?

Etienne Troufaut, France



Answer

Estefania replies



An intense source of light in a dark landscape can be an excellent composition approach to create an obvious point of interest in your landscape.

As with any painting, the only thing you need to see apart from the light is some shadows, or in this case some dark tones to contrast it with. This could be easily achieved in Photoshop by using different layer modes, such as Screen, Soft Light or Overlay. You can also paint them traditionally, just by choosing colours with a high value of luminosity.

Be aware of the depth in your landscape, though. Objects in the distance tend to be paler and bluer because of the air in the atmosphere, while elements that are closer to the 'camera' will look darker, with more contrast and saturation.

Paint the scene as if there were no obvious source of light in the scene. The intense ray of light will be your last step. Bear in mind that any forest or vegetation scene is made up of open shapes, so let the brushstrokes do the work rather than depicting every single leaf. In other words, suggest rather than describe literally.

Question

What are the factors that influence highlight and shadow colours for skin tones?

Shepherd Grimley, Switzerland



Answer

Mark replies



The key for painting realistic skin tones is to be aware of the lighting conditions around your character. The original skin colour only appears in the areas unaffected by direct or reflected light. Yet even these areas are affected by light. This reddish or orange-coloured fine glow is called sub-surface scattering, because the light is scattered around in the tissues and illuminates the skin from the inside.

In this example, I'm painting a character for my Dune-inspired series and I want to create a portrait without showing the iconic desert in the background. I imagine the character standing on the sand, but in front of the rocks near his village. Such an environment results in an almost

classical lighting set-up with three main light sources: key, fill and rim light.

My first key light source is the sun with its slightly yellowish colour. The second is rim light – the warm, reflected light from the sand. The fill is the desaturated blue-grey colour of the sky. My approach is to break up a character into surfaces facing the different light sources. In this case all the surfaces facing the upper right are lit by the sun, and the surfaces facing downwards or in the opposite direction are affected by the light bouncing up from the sand.

All the planes facing upward are lit by the sky (reflecting back its colour). But we can only see this colour in the shadows, because the light of the sun is much stronger on the lit surfaces. The same thing goes with the colour of the sandstone rocks – this colour also appears only in the shaded surfaces.



Bear in mind that even your shadows are affected by light. Furthermore, the actual colour of the different surfaces are influenced by their surroundings.

Artist's secret

PORE IT ON!

You can easily give an extra level of realism to your character's appearance by adding pores to their skin. The easiest way to do this is using a Round brush on a high scattering setting on an Overlay layer, with varied lighter and darker tones.



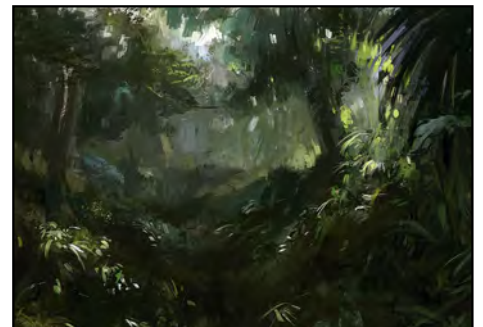
Step-by-step: Create an interesting light for your forest



1 I start with a basic green landscape, just focusing on the composition and giving the right luminosity to each part: the background (1), middle (2) and foreground (3). I imagine that it's a cloudy day, which means that little light will reach the floor of your landscape. Everything becomes pale and unsaturated.



2 In this shot, all the colours are relatively unsaturated – it's what I'm aiming for now. Try to use middle and dark tones to paint your mid- and foreground without getting lost in depicting any details. Once I'm happy with the result, I create a new layer and select where the light comes from.



3 Be careful when setting the highlight, because it'll grab a lot of attention. Choose interesting places and don't have too many of them, because your composition may lose visual interest. Note that a leaf is translucent when light reaches them directly. Its upside gets highlighted while its back will show a saturated colour.



Question

Can you help give my warrior's armour a mottled shell look?

Seb Laughton, England

Answer Donglu replies



To emphasise the armour design, I open up Photoshop and start working on a character pose that will sell the design.

Usually a three-quarter view of the character is best because one side of the shoulder plates and the chest plate would be clearly visible, with plenty of detailing on show.

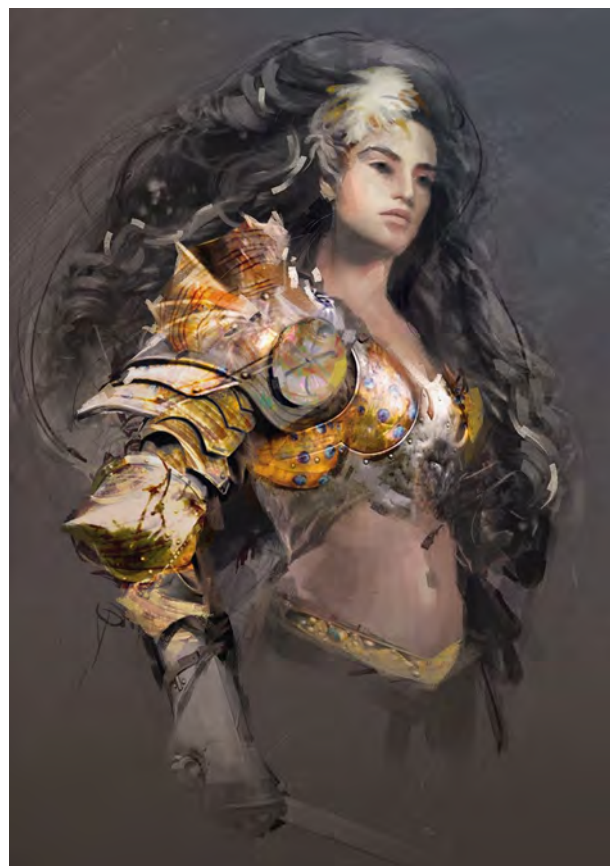
I sketch out the figure's pose and the armour pieces first, making an effort to integrate some shell shape outlines to the basic armour design. Then I do a black and white sketch, which is good for determining the volumes of the design. I always start with a mid-tone background, and use dark grey and light grey to bring in the shadows

and highlights. This method is similar to the traditional oil-painting process.

Then I start to gather a range of interesting shell references from diverse sources such as books, magazines and the internet. Then I create the basic colour palette from these images and start the basic colouring phase.

Once the primary colours are all down, I carefully integrate some photo textures on the armour pieces to further enhance the mottled shell quality, which mostly comes from the subtle colour nuances and its overall shininess.

And finally, I paint over the photo textures so that they're better integrated with the drawing base.



Here's the final result - notice how I've ensured the armour looks like it's made from the shell material, rather than looking like a shell layer has been pasted on it.



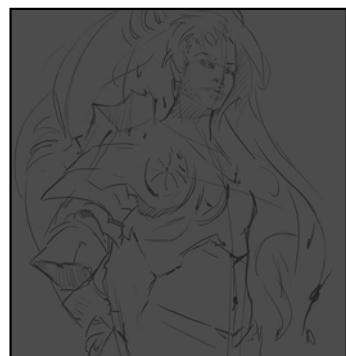
Artist's secret

CREATE YOUR OWN COLOUR SWATCH



I remove all pictures from my reference board and reduce it to 300 pixels. I go to Filters > Texture > Patchwork and increase square size to 10 and reduce Relief value to 0, producing many little squares of the basic colour swatch.

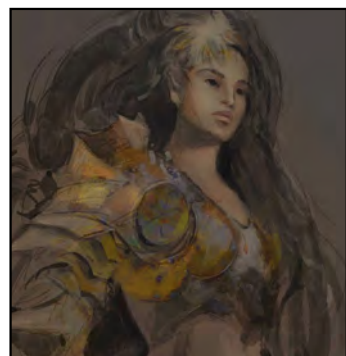
Step-by-step: Paint shell-inspired armour



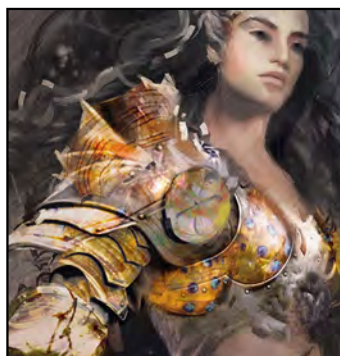
1 I start to paint the character in Photoshop using a small Round brush. An engaging pose will show off the armour design to best effect. I also try to give some of the armour pieces a shell-like silhouette. This sketching step usually takes me around 20 to 30 minutes. I keep the lines loose, so that I'm not locked down with the line drawing for the next steps.



2 Giving volume to the fine work can make the colouring process much easier. Because I have a traditional oil painting background, I prefer to begin this step with a medium grey background. Now I can carve into volumes with a dark grey and bring out volumes with a light grey. It gives me greater control by avoiding the extreme values such as pure blacks and whites.



3 Now I start the basic colouring process with the colour swatch I've generated from my photo references. I maintain the same colour temperature and use medium saturation, which ensures that my colours work together. I concentrate the colours on the armour pieces that I want to show off, so that the character isn't competing with the final armour design.



4 Finally, I carefully integrate some photo textures to my basic colour painting. Then I erase the textures in the shadow areas to achieve a better blending result. I select Color Dodge mode for my brush, to introduce shine and highlights to the armour pieces. For a final polish, I use a textured charcoal brush to blend together the colours from the photo references.

Question

I'm want to create an alien mask for a warrior race. Any ideas?

Rob Jones, US

I've used two different types of glossy surfaces and some straight light to achieve a futuristic look. I also add some marks - some scratches and dirt.



Answer

Estefania replies



The first thing to keep in mind when creating an alien mask is the owner of the mask. Think about their personality, their anatomy, the purpose of their mask, when the alien will be wearing it and so on.

Spend some time looking for references and organising your ideas. Here I start off by deforming the human skull proportions, modifying its size, length and shape to make it look otherworldly. Common portrayals of aliens feature a domed head and curved organic shapes, so insects such as a grasshopper, wasp or fly may help you to visualise your creature.

Another question you need to ask yourself is what kinds of materials are used to manufacture the mask. More than one material can bring extra visual interest to your design, so find a good balance between them and always pay attention to how light interacts with each to achieve a



To add some clean curve lights, paint a thin straight line and then use the Warp tool (Edit>Transform>Warp) to curve it until it fits the object below it.

realistic look. Finally, add some believable objects to the design, such as breathing tubes or perhaps some unusual lights, to enhance its futuristic origins. The key thing is that pretty much anything is possible when it comes to alien artefacts!

Question

Can you help me paint a delicate, lace-like material?

Beth Hubble, Estonia

Answer

Matt replies



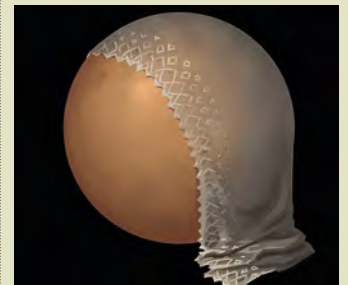
Lace presents two challenges: the semi-transparent fabric and the detail of the pattern.

Whenever a material needs to show the form beneath it, I roughly render the underlying surface first. Here I use a sphere for simplicity, but the principle applies for any shape. With the basic form rendered out, select the area where the material will lie. Copy this to a new layer, colour, then flatten and work drape and fold into the material.

With the material area defined, add pattern detail. Don't be tempted to paint in precise patterning across the whole material, because unless there's similar detail elsewhere this will prove distracting. Instead, choose one or two highlight areas to show detail and allow it to break into broader marks as the material falls away from the light.



After colouring, use the Eraser tool while the new area is on a separate layer, to make some of the under-surface show through.

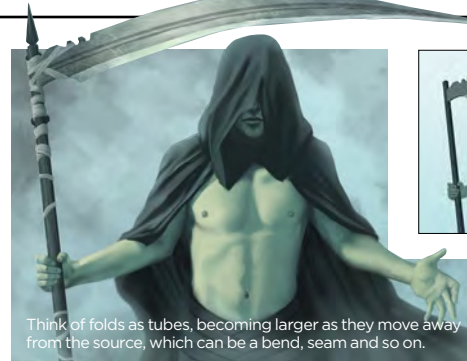


Add lace detail sparingly. That will be much easier on the eye and help support the form over which the material lies.

Question

How can I paint a hood without it looking formless?

Nebs Messoud, US



Think of folds as tubes, becoming larger as they move away from the source, which can be a bend, seam and so on.



Note how material builds up wherever it rests on the body, such as the bottom of the hood and over the character's arms.

Answer

Tony replies



Nothing is as good a tool as solid reference. If you can't get a hood of a similar material, a well-lit photo will give you pretty much all you need. Before drawing the cloak, sketch out the head beneath. Lightly draw in the placement of the cranium, ears and the rest. Study your reference to get a feel for how gravity pulls on the folds. Draw silhouettes with a sensitivity for the

weight of the cloth. Once the outline feels right, begin painting in the larger folds. Don't get caught up in small crinkles and detail yet. By initially focusing on large shapes, it's easier to make sure the bumps and turns are descriptive. Look into all the points where cloth is being stretched, contracted and bent. Find where each fold begins and ends, which parts cling to the body and which folds are hanging free.

Question

My creature's eyes always end up looking dull and dead – help!

Brian Quast, Poland



Answer

Mark replies



Eyes are often the first thing a viewer latches on to, so pay close attention to their appearance and make them the focal point of your image and character design. If the eye-nose-mouth triangle area is done well, the viewer will forgive or maybe even overlook faults or looseness in other parts of your illustration.

Use references for the structure of the eyes and study the shape and proportion of the pupil, iris and sclera (the white area) of various animals. Paint them as realistically as possible within the reality of your imagined world.

For this creature design I'm using a 3D sculpted base, but without any textures. Before I start I only have big grey spheres as eyeballs – I intend to solve everything with painting techniques.

First I block in the colour and shape of the iris and the recognisable pupil of the goat eye. I use much more saturated colours than the skin or the horns, but try to stay within the same palette to keep the face consistent. This already gives me a characteristic eye. But I want to mix it slightly with the humanoid eye, so I hint at the sclera, which a goat eye doesn't have.

After I finish painting the eyeball I add the reflections in multiple passes, going from the slightly blurred reflections of the surroundings towards the sharp highlights of the light source. A lot of people forget that the eyeball reflects the edge of the lower eyelid and any light that originates from the side of the nose area, so adding these can be a nice subtle touch.

As a final touch I paint thin eyelashes, to enhance the human side of the creature.



Artist's secret

FACIAL HAIR

You can add an extra level of realism to your creatures by adding barely noticeable hairs to various areas of the face. In real life all mammals have some kind of facial hair. Sometimes it's short and thin, so it's hard to notice from afar.

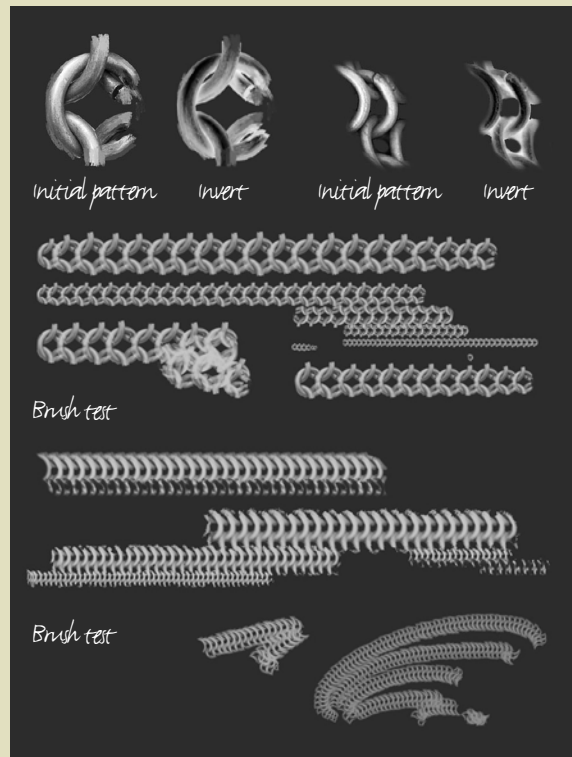


The best way to create fantasy realism is to reference a familiar thing and slightly alter it. Here I've combined the key features of a goat's and a human's eye.

Question

Can you explain how to depict chain-mail?

Gibson Healey, US



Here are the two steps I use for creating the chain-mail brushes, in which I create the initial pattern and then paint an inverted version of it.

Answer

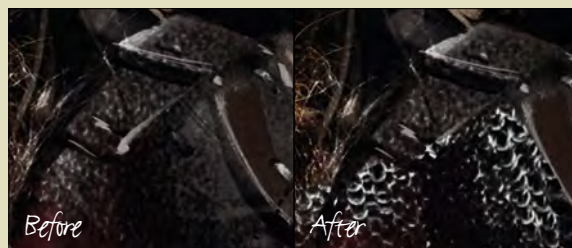
Donglu replies



The trick is to create a few different chain-mail brushes, to introduce some interesting patterns to the image. For this image I make a selection of a single metal ring of the chain-mail and use a soft Eraser to fade the contour. Then I double check if this single metal ring is tillable. This step is crucial, because I have to play with the Brush Spacing setting later for the individual metal rings to hook up with each other.

Once I'm happy with the initial pattern, I make an inverted version before defining the brush. This is also an important step because Photoshop reads the values differently when creating the brushes. Even though you can use photos for painting the chain-mail, you're limited by the references that are available.

When generating an interesting armour design, my best solution is to combine the chain-mail with other dark leather or metal parts, so the contrast can bring out the shininess of the armour even further.



This before and after image shows how a dark background can give the chain-mail a more pronounced, shiny quality. I use different chain-mail brushes, and the result is partially erased with a textured brush.



Question

What's the best way to realistically paint someone frozen in ice?

Dieter Wolf, Germany

Answer

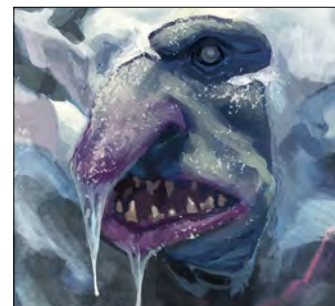
Paco replies



Ice is mainly translucent, so you should be able to see the character inside – unless the ice is covered with snow, frost or something else. Light passing through ice is refracted in one way or another, so the thicker and more irregular the ice is, the more distorted the things inside will appear. Furthermore, although light can pass through ice, it's not totally transparent, so lights and shadows will be cast over it, just like any other solid object.

Find some pictures of ice and objects frozen in ice, and observe how the refraction usually distorts how we see the objects inside, common shapes of ice, how the light passes through it, and how it shines when it's clean. Once you're familiar with the material, you can start painting it.

I would advise painting the full figure (you don't need to put too much details on the parts that will be inside the ice) and then, using different layers, begin painting the ice encasing your creature.



Before I finish the image, I add details such as icicles and snowflakes to boost the feeling of a cold environment.

Artist's secret

ADD MIST TO ENHANCE THE SCENE
Very cold objects are usually surrounded by mist. You can add mist to your ice by pasting a photo of smoke over a dark background on a screen layer over your painting, and then retouching it.

Step-by-step: Illustrate a figure encased in ice

1 First I paint the character, then I paint the ice over it on a low-value Opacity layer. Then, using the Smudge tool, I distort the figure, trying to mimic the manner in which ice usually distorts the



way we see objects that are inside it. I try to do this according to the shape of the block of ice that I'm painting. It's essentially a matter of observation.

2 After that, using a combination of Screen, Multiply and Overlay layers, I start to paint the lights and shadows of the ice. For this example I use some textured brushes to achieve a thick-ice



texture. I paint the highlights on the surface of the ice, attempting to follow the shapes that I think my block of ice should have, using a bit of intuition.

3 When the ice layer starts to actually look like ice, I use normal layers to paint additional reflections of light, trying to add more information about the shape of the block of ice on the areas that look a



bit empty. I also start to paint details in order to solve minor imperfections in the image. And with that I'm able to finish the core of the ice structure.

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.**

HIDDEN PEOPLE

The Walking Hill seemingly emerges from nowhere – from The Hidden People series by Cory Godbey.



Child's Play

Some of the world's most inspiring illustrators have plied their trade in children's books. So what makes this audience so appealing for fantasy artists?

When the English illustrator Grahame Baker-Smith was at school, the careers officer told him not to expect anything of himself. "You're basically a plodder," he said.

It sounds just like the sort of thing the downtrodden hero in a children's story might be told early in the book. And it's something plenty of young fantasy artists have heard from parents and teachers over the years. However, Grahame persevered with his art and in 2011 was awarded the

Kate Greenaway Medal for *FaRtHER*, a children's book he wrote and illustrated.

"In it, a father pursues the ancient dream of flying, but

never achieves it no matter how many wonderful flying machines he makes," says Grahame. "The obsession makes him at times absent to the needs of his son. He's called away to war and never returns. His son grows up and is visited by the same dream. He achieves it by making a few adjustments to his father's inventions. Flying quickly becomes a commonplace, everyday experience. When he in turn has his own son he wonders what he'll do, how will he go farther."

Like so many other fantasy artists, illustrating children's books was Grahame's goal for a long time. For him, the satisfaction comes from bringing together words and pictures in his own stories. "I'm inspired by the thought of other worlds ➤➤

FaRtHER

A spread from Grahame Baker-Smith's aviation obsessed, award-winning book FaRtHER.



WALK WITH ME

Vietnamese artist Turine Tran illustrates children's imagery straight from her imagination – this is one of her personal works.



“I’m fascinated by the possibilities of other dimensions, other life, time, future and past”

➡ and the many mysteries and miracles of this one. I’m fascinated by the possibilities of other dimensions, other life, time, future and past,” says the Bath, UK-based artist.



Over in America, South Carolina’s Cory Godbey is another illustrator who just wanted to create children’s books, pure and simple. He



THE NUTCRACKER

A great example of Austrian illustrator Lisbeth Zwerger’s surreal and affecting fantasy images.

loves drawing monsters, but not the terrifying kind you’ll see in other strands of fantasy art. Cory has been illustrating the Jamie’s Journey books by Susan M Ebbers. “In the books, a boy dreams his way around the world and visits all sorts of different places. One of my favourite images is from the second book where I got to illustrate a trio of ice creatures on the top of Mount Everest,” explains the artist.

HISTORIC INFLUENCE

Cory certainly isn’t alone when he cites Arthur Rackham and Maurice Sendak not just as influences, but as reasons why he’s an illustrator. Growing up on the other side of the world in Ho Chi Minh City, the Vietnamese artist Turine Tran also looks fondly on Arthur’s work. Her other influences include Randolph Caldecott, Jiri Trnka and Mary Blair. Meanwhile, the award-winning Austrian children’s illustrator Lisbeth Zwerger also lists Rackham among her top influences, along with Edward S Hewitt, Heath Robinson, Edmund Dulac and Winsor McCay.

Many of these names hark back to the Golden Age of children’s illustration, which

TURN TO
PAGE 68 FOR
CORY GODBEY’S
MASTERCLASS
ON CREATURE
DESIGN



JAMIE’S JOURNEY

Beasts and adventures feature in the second Jamie’s Journey book, which was illustrated by Cory Godbey.

began in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. During this period, printing technologies were being developed that enabled drawings and paintings to be reproduced en masse and in colour, at a relatively affordable price. The likes of Rackham, Kay Nielsen and Dulac could now illustrate books like Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland, tales by the Brothers Grimm, and the poetry of Poe. ➡

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1983 © North-South Books

TIMELINE

Historic landmarks in the history of children's book illustration...

1865

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland – Sir John Tenniel

He took some convincing, but Lewis Carroll eventually asked Punch cartoonist Sir John Tenniel to illustrate his famous book. The first printing of 2000 wasn't released in 1865, because the artist wasn't happy with the print quality, but the following year the public got its first glimpse of his Cheshire Cat, Mad Hatter and, of course, Alice.



1902

The Adventures of Uncle Lubin – William Heath Robinson

Although William Heath Robinson illustrated many of the standard children's stories by Hans Christian Andersen and the like, he's best known as a creator of unlikely machines. These were introduced – alongside all manner of twisted creatures – in *The Adventures of Uncle Lubin*, which he wrote and illustrated.



1907

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland – Arthur Rackham

Even today, when we think of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* most artists tend to think of the world Arthur Rackham depicted. Like many other artists, he visualised the stories of the Brothers Grimm and Hans Christian Andersen, but Alice fighting off a deck of living playing cards – observed by a mouse, a bird and a lizard – is a true classic in children's illustration.



THE WHITE KNIGHT

Cory Godbey produced this evocative illustration for John O'Mara's ambitious poetry project, *Chocolate Chips and Rocket Ships*.





THE WILD DAISIES
Nature and imagination in Turine Tran's own illustrated book, *The Wild Daisies*.

“First I think about the subject – but not too much, because to me, the looser I start the better”

➤ While today's fantasy illustrators discover these older works through their art courses or by reputation, even stronger influences are drawn from the artists they enjoyed as children. “The three that immediately spring to mind from my childhood are Dr Seuss, Maurice Sendak and Shel Silverstein. All were imaginative revolutionaries in the field by pushing what could be done in a picture book,” says



Tony DiTerlizzi, co-author and illustrator of *The Spiderwick Chronicles*.

While the children's book illustrators of the 50s, 60s and 70s display inventiveness and varied styles, when it comes to technique, the influence of the likes of Rackham and Dulac is more pervasive. Their skills with watercolour in particular remain breathtaking, even in

today's digitally enhanced world. Sketching their outlines, they'd block in the main shapes, eventually finishing a stronger line drawing with ink. Then watercolour paint would be applied over and over again, with the artist subtly building up layers of translucent colour.

FAIRIES BY CANDLELIGHT

The completed images often look deep and moody, to match the shady and mystical nature of the content. Although there's plenty of lightness in their works, frequently it does feel like you're looking into a fairy world by candlelight.

An artist like Turine Tran, who illustrated her own book, *The Wild Daisy Field*, uses a similar building-up process to Rackham, but in her process the watercolours have been replaced with virtual brushstrokes. “I usually work



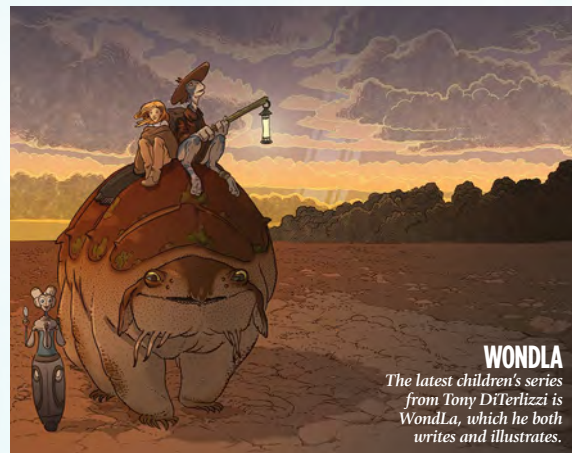
in two stages: pencil sketch and digital colouring,” she says. “For the sketch, first I think about the subject – but not too much, because to me, the looser I start the better. Then I consider the form, getting interesting shapes and



1911

The Little Mermaid – Edmund Dulac

A French émigré in London, Edmund Dulac was a prolific illustrator, but his most stunning work can be found in *Stories from Hans Christian Andersen* – in particular *The Little Mermaid*. Here he created an undersea world full of beauty, imagination and sadness, just like the story itself.



WONDLA
The latest children's series from Tony DiTerlizzi is *WondLa*, which he both writes and illustrates.

SPINNING A THRILLING YARN

Tony DiTerlizzi, the artist behind *The Spiderwick Chronicles*, reveals how Arthur Rackham inspired the legendary children's books...



Early in your career you were illustrating for *Dungeons & Dragons*. What made you decide to move into creating children's books?

Despite getting my start illustrating for role-playing games, my dream since high school was to become a children's book author and illustrator. It started with a project assigned during my senior year: reinterpret a classic story through illustration. I chose Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, and my life changed. You see, I had always enjoyed drawing, but after completing that assignment I had a direction and a purpose – to one day create imaginative books for young minds.



You're most famous for *The Spiderwick Chronicles*. Can you tell us what they're about?

The *Spiderwick* stories focus on a trio of siblings who discover a long-lost field guide detailing the natural history of fairy-folk and other mythological creatures. It was launched as a series of middle-grade chapter books culminating with the publication of the field guide itself – a lavish 100-plus page, heavily illustrated tome of sprites, goblins, trolls and dragons. A series of sequel books followed shortly thereafter.

Where did the idea come from?

I had been developing the idea for many years and, with my editor, formed the myth of Arthur Spiderwick – the man who wrote the field guide. Since I had conceived of this world and its backstory, I had insight into the visuals – an unusual role for an illustrator. When we brought Holly Black in to write the stories, it was understood that she and I would be working together to craft these books. This approach was much different than the usual process. Typically, the author creates the story through writing and then the illustrator enters the project afterward to add visuals, but Holly and I worked in collaboration.

Where did you find creative inspiration?

For the chapter books, inspiration came from the Golden Age of Illustration and turn-of-the-century masters such as Henry Justice Ford, Arthur Burdett Frost and Arthur Rackham – whom Arthur Spiderwick was modelled after and who I dedicated my art to. I rendered pen and ink illustrations every couple of page spreads so that the text would be broken up for the younger readers.

For *Spiderwick's* Field Guide to the Fantastical World Around You, I studied the work of John James Audubon and his contemporaries. Antique books served as inspiration in design and appearance.



SEE PAGE 76
FOR TONY
DITERLIZZI'S
BOOK COVER
WORKSHOP



SPIDERWICK

One can only admire Tony DiTerlizzi's Rackham-esque illustrations for the incredibly successful *Spiderwick Chronicles*.



ROSEPETAL

Early images by Lisbeth Zwerger are reminiscent of Rackham's, such as this one from *Rosepetal*. Her style became more colourful and adventurous in later years.

➤ rhythm into the composition. Once the basic forms are there, then comes my favourite part: the details. Lots of fantastic details. Later, when it comes to colouring, more details are added. I love details. I feel fun, spontaneous, childlike and free when I do the details."

Based in Gloucester, England, Nick Harris has been illustrating children's books for 30 years. Today he works digitally, and like Turine, is drawn to detail. It's an element of his style that he puts down to his personality. "Because my work



revolves around linear drawing and I prefer things neat, it tends to lead to wanting to explain all the details visually," Nick

ponders. "Or is it that I choose to work that way because it's just how my particular brain ticks? Rather OCD really... but then I believe we all operate at differing levels, dependent on how we each interact with the world. My images have also always tended to be character driven, and with character goes the need for a back story, if you really want to bring life to them."

WORK THE DETAIL

Whether it arrives through playfulness or obsession, detail is something that works to your advantage when illustrating a children's book. Unlike an advertising illustration that usually needs to communicate something quickly and create a strong impression, a children's



THUMBELINA

A bullfrog becomes a menacing monster in Nick Harris' *Thumbelina*, for Soft Press.

book illustration can be filled with subtlety. Of course, advertising can be subtle too, yet you're never confronted by four-year-olds demanding you read them ads for Colgate Total Advanced Whitening Toothpaste. But they will want to pore over pictures of *Thumbelina* or *The Gruffalo* 15 times a night. Evidently, detail is an advantage because young readers can have fun spotting something new every time they look at the page. ➤

“I believe we all operate at differing levels, dependant on how we each interact with the world”

1915

The Princess and the Trolls – John Bauer
Swedish artist John Bauer defined a certain look in children's fantasy art that can easily be seen in later work by the likes of Brian Froud and Paul Bonner. *The Princess and the Trolls* accompanied a story called *The Boy and the Trolls* written by Walter Stenström, in which the mother troll presents her lovely boys to a princess.



1926

Winnie-the-Pooh – Edward Shepard
Everyone knows that AA Milne wrote *Winnie-the-Pooh*, but many illustrators cite the illustrator he worked with, Edward Shepard as an influence. He modelled the bear on Growler, a toy bear that belonged to his son, though AA Milne wrote about a bear owned by his own son, Christopher Robin.



HOW DARK IS TOO DARK?

Painting images that thrill young readers is one thing. Giving them nightmares is another...

The children's fantasy illustrator walks a fine line between scaring and terrifying their audience. On the one hand, the words in the book may describe creepy or horrifying events, but the artist always has to consider their reader's tender years. So how do they balance these concerns?



© Willy Puchner

"Once a young woman told me she was traumatised by one of my illustrations as a child. I myself remember old illustrations from my childhood that shocked me. My aim is to intrigue and not to shock. I find it more interesting to leave things up to one's imagination. To be explicit doesn't necessarily mean that a picture is better," says Lisbeth Zwerger.



"Getting the balance right between delivering enjoyable thrills and inflicting PTSD on young minds can be a tightrope to walk," adds Nick Harris. "Sex and violence are facts of life that do need to be introduced, but the raw form that adults can handle isn't suitable for fledgling minds. If it's handled well it affords a brilliant opportunity to help develop a balanced perspective."



And in this regard, illustrator Cory Godbey tends to think along the same lines: "The tension, as I see it, is the desire to preserve the innocence of a child until they're old enough to be emotionally ready to deal with a subject, while at the same time telling stories that can develop a child's imagination, character and intelligence."



LIKE A BALLET

The nutcracker beneath the Christmas tree, painted by Lisbeth Zwerger.



FROZEN

One of Cory Godbey's favourite images saw him painting icy mountain beasts for the book series Jamie's Journey.

1942

Grimm's Fairy Tales – Jiri Trnka

Although known as a puppeteer and filmmaker, Jiri Trnka is remembered by illustrators for his colourful and surreal visualisations of fairy tales by the Brothers Grimm, Hans Christian Andersen, and tales written in his native Czech. He illustrated over 130 books, in addition to his films.



1955

The Cat in the Hat – Dr Seuss

Theodor Seuss Geisel was a witty American writer and poet, but aside from his rhymes he'll always be remembered for his expressive cartoon style and hilarious off-beat characters. The Cat in the Hat helped children learn to read by drawing them into the strange and imaginative Dr Seuss universe.





INSPIRED BY SALVADOR DALI

The devil really is in the detail when it comes to children's illustrated books like Bug World...



Two of Nick Harris's most complex projects were the Dragon Quest and Bug World puzzle books. Each project saw him painting intricate double-page spreads that were full of action-packed imagery. For young readers, finding key details in the images creates the story in their imaginations. Nick took us on a tour of a strange spread found in Bug World.



The story is set in a theme park where giant, genetically mutated insects escape their enclosures when all the systems fail. Reading it, the child is challenged to find the necessary tools to reinstate the security system before the creatures escape from the park.



The imagery was created by laying watercolour washes directly over the inked line. The drawing was done first in pencil straight on to hot press watercolour board, which is pretty resilient to repeated use of the eraser without significantly destroying the surface.



The mechanical elephant-walker was in the brief, but the design was left up to the artist. "It afforded a nice opportunity to introduce a bit of Dali. His spindly-legged elephants from Swans Reflecting Elephants are a wonderful bit of surrealist escapism," says Nick.



Two science boffins, who are responsible for looking after the park, and a hapless window cleaner are left to face the ravaging insects. The latter repeatedly finds himself in tight scrapes that he has to escape from. Humour is an invaluable tool for engaging young and old minds alike.



The main images were originally created at around 125 per cent of the required size. This is done to help deal with the necessary complexity of the compositions. This extra scale was a boon for Nick in his artistic process, enabling him to create an extra-busy image just packed with fine detail.

DRAGONSONG

An operatic dragon from Cory Godbey's Menagerie series.



INTRODUCTION

The enormous creature with the floppy pink basset hound ears arrives in Tony DiTerlizzi's 2001 book, *Ted*.

“After a while I realised I couldn't go on forever doing small, dark illustrations”

➤ Another aspect that captures the imagination is texture. The worlds that Grahame has visualised are intriguing because not only are his stories touching, but you feel as though you can touch the materials in his pictures. This is something that the transition to digital has brought to the artist's work.

MIXING IT UP

"For most of my career I used natural media," Grahame explains. "Then in 2005 I taught myself Photoshop. It was a light bulb moment. Suddenly I could combine elements in ways that I'd tried – and failed – to do physically! From then on the process has been one of combining paint, drawing, found and photographed textures, and anything that will fit on a scanner."

Lisbeth Zwerger began illustrating books in the 1970s and is one of Europe's most



© Willy Puchner

accomplished children's artists. Although Lisbeth hasn't yet migrated to digital like Nick and Grahame, her style has evolved from

early Rackham-esque watercolours to more dreamlike pieces.

"After a while I realised I couldn't go on forever doing small, dark illustrations," says the artist. "They became a lot lighter. Eventually, I became bored with that technique and attempted to use more colour. At some point I had a blue phase; never much of a pink phase though. The work has to stay interesting to do. I used to use just watercolour. Nowadays I use everything in sight: pencil, watercolour, coloured pencils and gouache. I used coloured papers in Grimm's Fairy Tales and, in my last book, *Leonce and Lena*, sepia ink."

© Big Fish, 2000

1963

Where the Wild Things Are – Maurice Sendak

The great Maurice Sendak passed away in 2012, having influenced generation upon generation of children. Where the Wild Things Are is still popular, and was made into a film in 2009, having sold over 19 million copies worldwide. The wild creatures he drew were based on caricatures of his aunts and uncles.



1984

St George and the Dragon – Trina Schart Hyman

Gallantry, beauty and adventure reign supreme in the work of Trina Schart Hyman. A talented designer as well, her illustrations to begin with were highly stylised, but grew more realistic throughout her career. *St George and the Dragon* won the Caldecott Medal for picture book illustration in the US, in 1985.





NICK HARRIS HAS FUN WITH MISCHIEF, AN INNOVATIVE ART PROGRAM, ON PAGE 82

Just as illustrators have been evolving their techniques, new technology has arrived that's changing how children enjoy books. We've all heard stories about two-year-olds trying to swipe the pages of a book, or shaking them hoping to activate a sound or animation. Other media vie for their attention, from YouTube to iPads, smartphones to PlayStations.

For Cory, it's an interesting and challenging time to be a children's illustrator. "We live in an increasingly visually dense world, which for the artists means the appetite and demand for images has never been stronger. This presents you with countless possibilities and distribution channels for your work. At the same time there's a danger of reaching a saturation point where we're so inundated and overstimulated with images that they become like white noise."

Cory concludes: "I think what matters most for me is the main idea that I always return to: keep creating honest work that connects with people." ●

DREAM OF FLIGHT

The son realises his father's dream in Grahame Baker-Smith's book *FArTHER*.



Sketchbook

Brian Froud

We take a peek at some of the creatures that will appear in the artist's forthcoming book, Brian Froud's *Faeries Tales*

Artist PROFILE

Brian Froud

COUNTRY: England



Brian began his career in book illustration. He went on to design the award-winning and cult films *The Dark Crystal* and *Labyrinth* for Jim Henson. Brian has exhibited in museums and galleries throughout the world, and he's been the recipient of many awards including the Hugo award, Chesley and Inkpot as well as the American Society of Illustrators.
www.worldoffroud.com

TOADSTOOL MEN

"Not to be mixed up with the Mushroom Men, of course. The effects could be fatal."



HERE'S LOOKING AT YOU

"One of a series of Lookers that feature in my new book. Has he caught your eye yet?"



TAKE ANOTHER LOOK

"This Looker has a significantly different appearance to his neighbour, but he'll still win in a staring contest."



**A
SMALL THIEF**

"Despite his criminal nature, there's an honest, salt-of-the-earth look about him, wouldn't you say?"



"In my sketchbooks I draw loosely in pencil, letting the line take its own emotional journey"

**ONE OR
THE OTHER**

"In my book this royal courtier balances the Queen's hand mirror on one hand and her prodding sceptre on the other."

**FAERIE
COURTIER**

"Another member of the royal household, who attends to the many needs of the faerie ambassador."

**DAMPPE
THING**

"This green fellow accompanies Mistress Damppe and the Salmon of Wisdom at all times."



Sketchbook

TWO TOE TWEAKERS

"These two characters guard the Bird Claw Toe-Tweaking Tongs that are used on naughty faerie children."



BUTTON EYE

"This long-faced fellow accompanies a particularly guilty-looking faerie titled I Have a Story."



LOOKER

"Another character whose gaze will follow you around the room, wherever you stand."





LOOKER

"There's more to this faerie than he's letting on. Buy him a drink and let him tell you his story."

A SERIES OF SMALL PIXIES

"Because it's not all about the faeries, you know!"

"I want the viewer to experience the emotional heart and meaning of each faerie character"

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

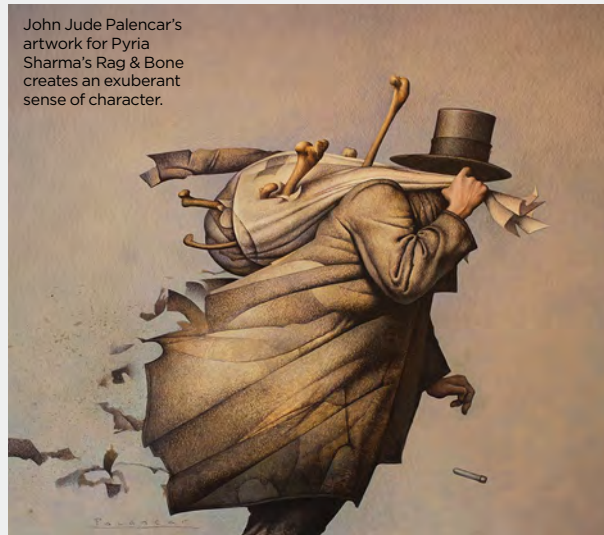


STUDIO PROFILE

TOR BOOKS

The hugely successful sci-fi and fantasy publishing company reveals its work ethic and its vision for the future of fiction

John Jude Palencar's artwork for Pyria Sharma's *Rag & Bone* creates an exuberant sense of character.



LOCATION: New York, US

CURRENT PROJECTS:

The Bloodline Feud

PAST PROJECTS: The Writ of

Years, Friedrich the Snow Man

WEB: www.tor.com



Established by Tom Doherty in 1980, Tor Books has become a publishing house mecca for science fiction and fantasy artists and writers. Among its best-selling authors are luminaries of the genres such as Orson Scott Card, George R R Martin and Terry Goodkind. Take a glimpse at its gallery and you'll see commissioned work from the likes of Dan Dos Santos, Justin Gerard and Scott M Fischer.



Pulling all this together is Renaissance woman Irene Gallo, Tor.com's associate publisher and creative director at Tor Books. She studied art and graphic design at a small New York

production house whose main client was Tor Books. "After about eight months, Tor wanted to hire me directly," she says. "I was 23 at the time. At 24 I became the art director. Twenty years later I'm still here. And it's more exciting than ever."

More has changed in publishing in the past 20 years than in the past 200. The internet, for better or worse, has completely shifted the way we search for and encounter stories and their accompanying art. The recent introduction of e-readers has muddied the waters further. But, as you'd expect from a forward-thinking sci-fi and fantasy publisher, Tor has embraced this brave new world rather than shivering behind a fort made of paperbacks.



David Edison's *The Waking Engine* includes mind-blowing art by Stephan Martinière.

A big advantage of online stories is that illustrations don't have to fit certain dimensions, as demonstrated by Sam Burley's panorama for *Slayers: The Making of a Mentor*, by CJ Hill.

RICHARD ANDERSON

This versatile, distinctive freelance artist tells us what it's like to work for Tor

What's your background?

I grew up in Montana, and moved to Seattle in 2000 to start school at the Art Institute of Seattle. I graduated in 2002 and started working as a modeller and concept artist for ArenaNet in early 2003. Through a lot of work and luck I started as a full-time concept artist in 2007 working on the *Guild Wars* franchise. In 2008 I began a new role as senior concept artist and illustrator on *Guild Wars 2*'s cinematic team. I love working in the media arts and feel privileged to be a part of the industry, and I still find time for freelance work on the side.

When did you start working for Tor, and what projects have you worked on so far?

I started working for Tor in 2007. It was my first opportunity to do a cover. The projects I've worked on so far have included *Grey Moon over China*, *The Iron Shirts*, *Faster Gun*, and *The Last Boat*. *Cartography* is the latest.

How did you get noticed by Tor?

I was part of an online community (ConceptArt.org). One day in the grocery store I walked past the books and I saw a cover I liked. I looked into the publisher, artist and art director, and found out the latter was Irene Gallo. I wrote her an email, and I guess she had seen some of my work already, and she gave me a chance. I was lucky, and I'm always grateful to her for the opportunity.

What's been the highlight of working for Tor?

I love it when someone says they bought a book just because of my cover. My family are always taking pictures when they see one of my books in the store, too, it feels good! It was always a big goal of mine to do at least one book cover, and now I've done plenty!

Outside of work, what do you like to do?

I love going out and drawing at cafés or pubs. It's also fun to just work in Photoshop by yourself without having a bullet list to go over.

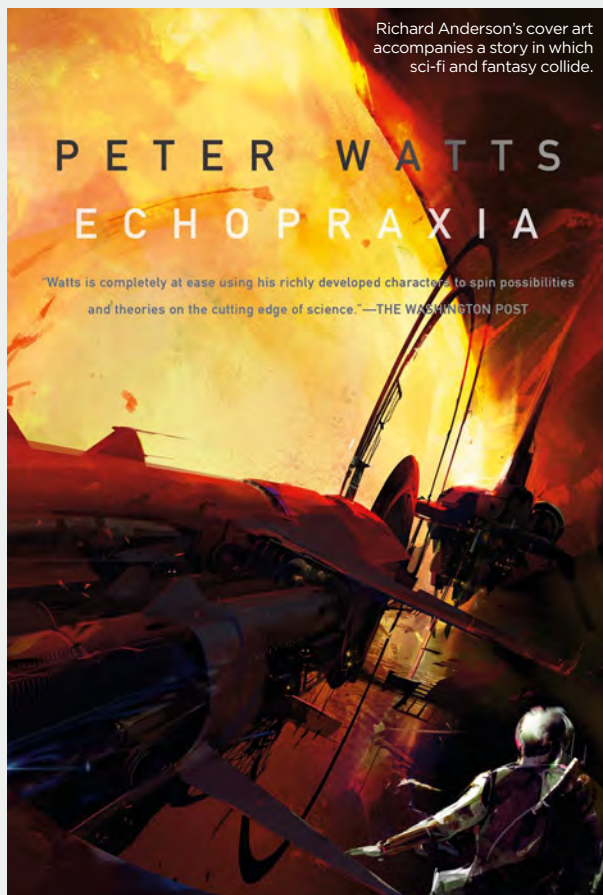
What advice would you have for someone wanting to be an artist, considering the state of the industry right now?

Stay focused on the right disciplines. A lot of people take the easy way out and learn little software tricks, but you can never beat just holding down and working hard on drawing. It's the key foundation, and it will flow from there.



As well as working for Tor and ArenaNet, work-hungry Richard has created concept art for the movies *Prometheus* and *Thor: The Dark World*.

www.flaptrapsart.com



Richard Anderson's cover art accompanies a story in which sci-fi and fantasy collide.

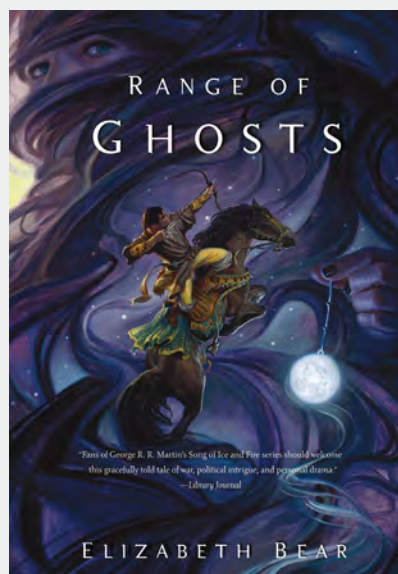
PETER WATTS
ECHOPRAXIA

"Watts is completely at ease using his richly developed characters to spin possibilities and theories on the cutting edge of science."—THE WASHINGTON POST

“At 24 I became Tor's art director, after an incredible amount of support from my boss”



The iconic Flatiron building couldn't be a more perfect home for the publishing company.



We love the contrasting greens and purples in Donato Giancola's *Range of Ghosts* cover.

➔ "You can still find the big bestsellers," says Irene, but readers and artists are less likely to stumble across a mid-list book that looks interesting to them. "It's one of the reasons we started Tor.com. We wanted an online place for people to discover books that they might not hear about otherwise."

For artists looking for the latest book cover art or an updated gallery with monthly featured artists, Tor's website will probably be a familiar destination, and Irene is behind it as well. What you may not know is the site is publisher-neutral, in the belief that it will help every book company, and not just serve as a promotional platform for Tor's publications. However, running the site adds to Irene's workload.

A FLUID APPROACH

"All of this requires original art to market well and I can honestly say that my commissioning has risen steeply in the past five years," says Irene. "We're still publishing books like we always did, but digital publishing has let us be much more fluid about how we present stories."



Mari Ness' alternative take on the Robin Hood legend is succinctly reflected in Allen Williams' cover art.



Tran Nguyen's image for *Insects of Love* is at once creepy and melancholic.

“We wanted an online place for people to discover books that they might not hear about otherwise”

Through Tor.com we can publish short fiction, poetry and comics in a way that we never could before. All of which we accompany with original artwork."

Artists looking for work, listen up! Tor doesn't employ in-house artists for its titles, and instead works with freelancers. Realist



painter Donato Giancola first worked with Irene on David Drake's *Queen of Demons*, published in 1998, and since then he's created "too many covers to list – or remember!" The fact that Donato has stuck with Tor for so long is telling. Not only has it paid for him to indulge in his passion for the past 20 years, but it also gives him a certain amount of freedom when it comes to new covers.

"The association with Irene has enabled me to push boundaries with book cover art



Top, Kekai Kotaki's cover for *The Pilgrims*; above, *A Natural History of Dragons* features Todd Lockwood's art.

that I likely wouldn't have done with another client," Donato says. "Irene provides an opportunity for you to spread your wings and fly on your own, to your greatest capacity. She supports our visions and is willing to back challenging and controversial content. I have produced more great art for her covers than any other client, by far. When you work for a friend, you do your damndest not to let them down!"

Tor's approach to the ever-changing publishing industry is refreshing, forward-thinking, and it's got a lot of tantalizingly secretive projects up its sleeve. "We're going to redesign Tor.com – give it a good facelift and add some needed navigation and functionality," Irene says. "But I really can't say much beyond that at this point. Suffice to say, we'll need more art!" Now there's a call to action if ever we heard one. ●

Victo Ngai's illustration for Marie Rutkoski's *Jacks and Queens* at the Green Mill is testament to how varied Tor's art can be.



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Photoshop COMPOSE A COVER WITH A NARRATIVE

Combine digital and traditional art techniques to create a captivating fantasy book cover. **Wylie Beckert** is your painter and storyteller...

I've always been a reluctant digital painter – it's tough for me to build a satisfying image through digital means alone, and hours in front of a screen never slip away as easily as those spent hunched over a drawing table. Still, it's hard to resist the allure of digital art-making: applying smooth washes of colour with just a click of the mouse and bringing my entire workshop with me in a laptop case beats waiting around for paint to dry any day.

1 What angle to take?

I want my image to be more than just a figure – I want it to tell a story. Often the project I'm illustrating will dictate that story for me, but in this case the brief is open-ended, calling for a girl surrounded by a swirl of sea creatures. I come up with a few angles: our protagonist could be summoning the creatures, offering something to them, or she could be fighting them off.

2 Quick thumbnails

I develop these concepts into one-sentence stories – for example: "girl offers the soul of her dead fighting fish to its warrior gods" – and then begin translating them into thumbnails. I focus on composition and value structure, making sure there's a strong focal point in each image – my thumbnails should read instantly, even at a small size.

Artist PROFILE
Wylie Beckert
COUNTRY: US

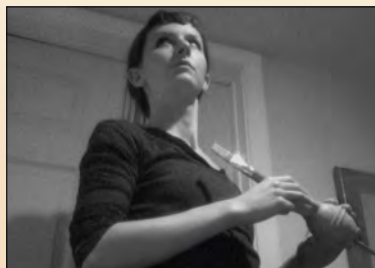
Wylie is a freelance illustrator with a love of all things fantasy. Her art has most recently found itself in books, card games, advertising and animation, but is at home anywhere there's a story to be told.
www.wyliebeckert.com

Combining passion with practicality, my work exists in the limbo between traditional and digital – my pencils, erasers and pads of paper are as dear to me as my tablet and copy of Photoshop, and both sets of media are crucial to the look and feel of my illustrations.

In this workshop, I'll be detailing some of the quirks of my hybrid process as I build this month's cover illustration from the ground up. I'll take you through the stages of turning an art brief into a

detailed pencil drawing, and explain how I bridge the divide between traditional drawing and digital painting with my colouring process.

I'll also be delving into some of the prep work I do to help me develop a strong illustration before the pencil hits the paper: brainstorming a coherent narrative, using reference images effectively and approaching revisions with a plan – all of which can be used to give your work added impact in any medium.



3 Reference material

Since my style isn't photo-realistic, I'll be using photo reference loosely. I don't need my reference material to be pretty – the aim is to get a better handle on pose, lighting and camera angle. I also nail details like hands and drapery, which can be tough to portray convincingly from imagination. Referencing details of architecture, clothing and other objects ensures my illustrated world will be full of specific, believable details.



4 Tight sketch

I sketch digitally with my Angled Pencil Brush tool over a scaled-up copy of the thumbnail. I stay close to my original composition, but make adjustments to the character with an eye on my reference materials. I avoid tracing unless absolutely necessary – translating a pose with gesture and stylisation in mind usually results in a more interesting figure. Revisiting my story helps guide the details and generate new ideas.





5 Get out the lightbox

Once I'm happy with my sketch, I print it out at full size – about 25 per cent larger than my finished painting. Creating it on a larger scale will help camouflage imperfections and give the final a more polished look. I use a lightbox to transfer it to Bristol paper, starting with a light hand and tracing loosely to preserve the energy of the sketch. Exact details are copied only in crucial areas.



6 Start the render

For the final pencil drawing, I use a combination of pencils and powdered graphite (applied sparingly with a brush and blended well with a paper towel). To blend tones further and soften the lines, I rub the page with a paper towel. This helps establish a slightly grey base value, which I can then pick out with a kneaded eraser and sharpened eraser pencils to establish lighting and create dramatic highlights. Then I scan the art in at 600PPI.

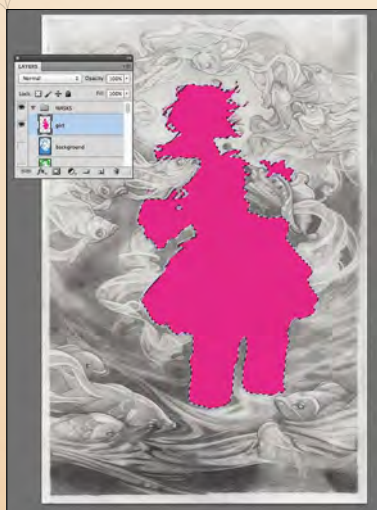


7 Get organised

I tweak the image using Levels, Curves and Hue/Saturation to achieve a clean, high-contrast image. In addition to my Pencils layers, I'll be working with Base Colours (grouped with or placed below the pencils) and Accent Colours (placed above the pencils).

8 Masking it off

I then create a mask layer for each major shape to give myself a simple means of selecting a complex shape quickly and easily. I give the layers descriptive names, group them, and turn the visibility off.



Shortcuts
Eyedropper tool
Alt (PC)
Opt (Mac)
In Brush mode, bring up the Eyedropper tool for colour picking on-the-fly.

PRO SECRETS

Back up your WIPs

Use a file hosting service like Dropbox (which has both free and paid options) to store your working files. It not only backs up your work automatically, but will also enable you to restore previously saved versions – all but eliminating risk of losing files through user error (so for example, accidentally saving over your layered working file with a flattened or low-resolution copy of the same name).

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES: ANGLED PENCIL BRUSH

This is a versatile, chisel-shaped brush with a rough texture and one soft edge.

ROUND PENCIL BRUSH

If I need a less-calligraphic effect, this Round brush creates a more uniform line, but still has plenty of texture.

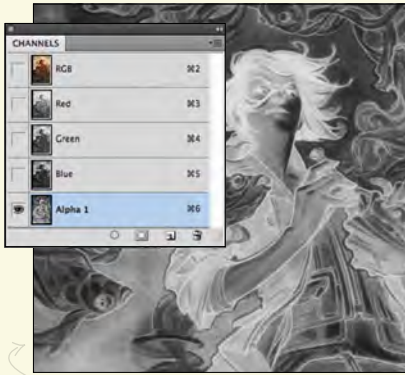
9 Values first

A strong value structure will give my illustration impact, so I apply a monochromatic underpainting to nail the values early. I set my Adjusted Pencils layer to Multiply, drop a layer of mid-grey underneath, and start roughing in the lights and darks. I use the Magic Wand to select shapes from my hidden mask layers, then apply tones with the Gradient tool for large areas, and paint smaller details with the Angled Pencil brush.



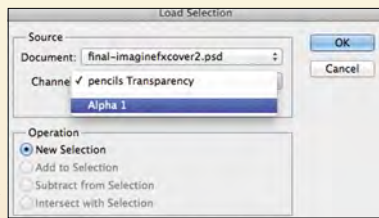
10 Base colours

I add colour in transparent layers above the Values and Pencils layers. Although I establish most of my rough colours on a Soft Light layer, I also apply tints in Darken, Overlay and Screen layers. My values are becoming obscured, so I start painting them back in (this time keeping my developing colour scheme in mind) in a new Normal layer at the very top of the Base Colour group.



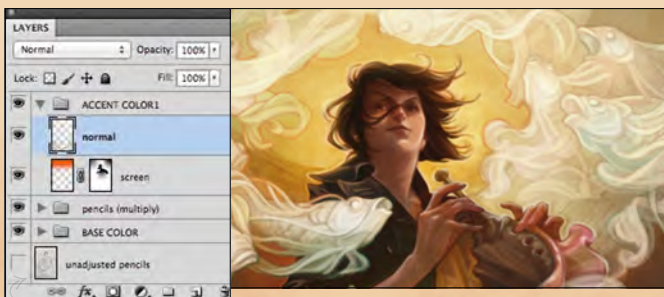
11 Punch up the line art

To bring back some of the intensity of the pencil art, I'll be duplicating it above my Base Colour group. Although a Multiply layer could do the trick, I'll have more flexibility with colour if I use Alpha channels. I copy my adjusted pencils, bring up the Channels palette, and paste into a new channel. I invert the pencils (Cmd+I) and click the RGB channel to exit the Alpha channel.



12 Load selection and colorise

Back in the Layers palette I create a new layer, load a selection from the Alpha channel (Select>Load Selection>Channel: Alpha 1), and fill the selection (Alt+Del). I now have a layer of opaque pencil lines with a transparent background. Using the Adjustments>Hue/Saturation dialog, I can play with the colour of my pencils, lightening them so that they pop against a dark background. Here I keep it simple and set my new Pencils layer to Multiply.



13 Establish accent colours

Building a digital illustration on a pencil drawing lends a great traditional feel, but pencil lines on every inch of the canvas can make things look unfinished. I paint highlights above the pencils on Normal/Screen layers, with a gold gradient over the background to highlight my character. But this makes it too smooth. To restore some pencil texture and warm the colours, I copy my pencils to a new Multiply layer and colorise them yellow.

PRO SECRETS

Rethink if necessary

If something in your image isn't working, take the time to backtrack. Don't be afraid to make major revisions, try a new direction, or start your image over from square one – there's nothing wrong with a circuitous working process as long as it results in a great image. Just make sure your client is onboard with the revisions!

14 Recycled textures

One downside of working digitally is sacrificing exciting accidents and flaws that give life to a traditional piece. If part of my painting starts looking lifeless, I'll borrow line art from an older piece to add texture and depth. Here, I enhance the sky by copy/pasting my recycled pencils into a Multiply layer, erasing to lose the edges and colourising (using the Adjustments>Hue/Saturation dialog) to blend seamlessly with my colour scheme.



15 Visual note-taking

At this point, the ImagineFX team has some revisions – mainly to the character. They'd like to see wider eyes, a slimmer neck and a more feminine look. Before tackling these changes, I take a screenshot of the face and use it to explore my options with a quick paintover. Once I'm happy with the results, I place them side-by-side and use my visual notes as reference for repainting the adjustments in my Accent Colours group.



16 Engraving layer

As a final touch I like to add cross-contour engraving lines throughout my image. It's a fun, stylistic technique that adds subtle textural variations and rewards viewers who examine my art up close. I create a new layer with blending mode set to a Overlay at 30 per cent Opacity. Using my Angled Pencil brush set to white or pale orange, I etch delicate lines to play up the face, hands, or anywhere else that needs some extra texture.

17 Final adjustments

On a new layer, I use my Angled and Round pencil brushes for touch-ups, colour picking from within my image with the Eyedropper tool set to sample All Layers. To patch larger areas, I use the Clone Stamp tool (set to sample Current & Below) to preserve the textures that I've built up. A Levels Adjustment layer (to make sure my image isn't too dark and muddy) tops it all off.





Photoshop ILLUSTRATE A GAME CARD CHARACTER

Will Murai shows how to get the right balance between light and dark – and add the necessary details – for a compelling female fighter

Artist PROFILE

Will Murai
COUNTRY: Brazil



Will is a freelance illustrator and concept artist. He has

worked for clients such as Wizards of the Coast and Applibot, and is passionate about fantasy art, sci-fi movies and games.
www.willmurai.com

Demon stopper Oliveira is a character created for the mobile card game Legend of the Cryptids, developed by the Japanese publisher Applibot. She is the warrior who prevents demons and monsters coming up to the surface of Earth. In her backstory, Oliveira spent time in Hell and was

rescued by a sacred warrior who also taught her how to fight.

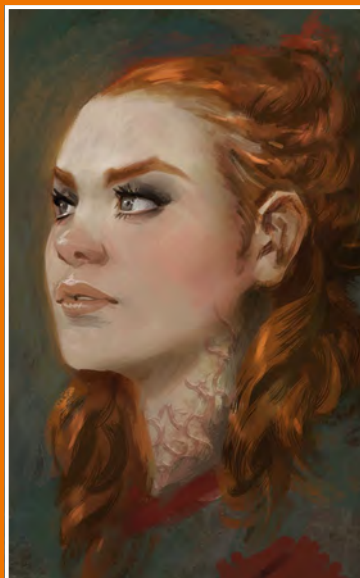
In this painting I'm depicting a scene where she is receiving the magic katars from her master. They will help her battle against monsters, as she tries to stop them rising from the depths of the Underworld.

As well as telling this particular story in the illustration, I came up with the idea

that she should have scars over her body as a vestige of the time she was in the hands of the demons. Every scar, besides being a physical mark, is a little story in its own right. I wondered if this type of attention to detail and character depth could attract players' curiosity about her and lead them to identify a little bit more with her. ●

How I create...

A DEMON STOPPER



1

Character design

Before getting into the illustration itself, I like to start laying out the character design. It's easier to balance the importance of the visual elements if you already know how the composition will take shape. This means you can be sure that an important feature won't be too subtle in the final image.



2

Composition

I sketch two versions. But in this one I realise the camera angle isn't dramatic enough and the scars would be tiny. A front shot will feature direct light and one-point perspective, which are good for emphasising a character. Sometimes classic solutions are better than dynamism.



3

Character details

I start detailing with large brushes, gradually picking smaller ones – I find this makes it easier to keep track of the overall look and feel. There aren't many secrets here: set your brushes to smaller sizes and patiently render ornaments, freckles, hair and drapery. The deeper the detailing, the richer the piece.

DOWNLOAD RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES:
SIMPLE ROUND BRUSH

Used from the composition sketch to the most intricate detail.

ACRYLICS ON CANVAS

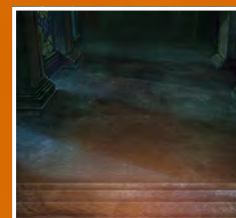
Great to give a traditional acrylic texture and to smooth out the overly harsh pixel feel. It can be tweaked to be used in many different ways.

A consistent look

I usually take hours, even days, before declaring a single element finished. When you spend this amount of time with your attention focused on a small bit of the design, often the colours and tones don't match your original ideas. So I create a series of layer adjustments in a group named "Post-Production" above the final painting. Color Balance, Gradient Map, Textures and Noises help put everything under the same light and equalise the contrast. It also ensures I can apply further adjustments with ease.

Colour structure

The briefing was that Oliveira should be red-headed. To highlight this, I give the background a wash of green tones, the complementary colour to red. In fact, this decision ended up guiding the whole colour structure. The painting has colder hues in the background and warmer hues in the foreground.



A well-worn armour design

To achieve a realistic metal texture, I use a custom brush in a layer set to Overlay mode above the painting. Another layer, set to Color Dodge mode, provides the specular treatment. Some random dirt textures enhance the armoured look.

Darks and lights balance

When designing an illustration that will be used on cards, be it printed or digital, you must always consider shapes and contrast. The proper balance between darks and lights gives the elements enhanced readability. Overlapping highly illuminated elements over light surfaces will make them disappear at smaller sizes.



Artist insight

CRITTER CREATION MASTERCLASS

Cory Godbey offers up a series of tips and thoughts to help you incorporate fantastical, creature-centric elements into your work

Artist PROFILE
Cory Godbey
 COUNTRY: US

Cory creates fanciful illustrations for picture books, covers, comics, editorials, animated shorts and films. Most of all he seeks to tell stories with his work. He also likes to draw monsters.
www.corygodbey.com

Whether you're exploring an exaggerated human form or adapting existing animals, few things are quite so visually satisfying as a well-realised creature. From trolls and mermaids to gryphons and dragons, creatures from folklore have one foot in the fantastic and the other in the mundane. Learning how to effectively translate the reality of what

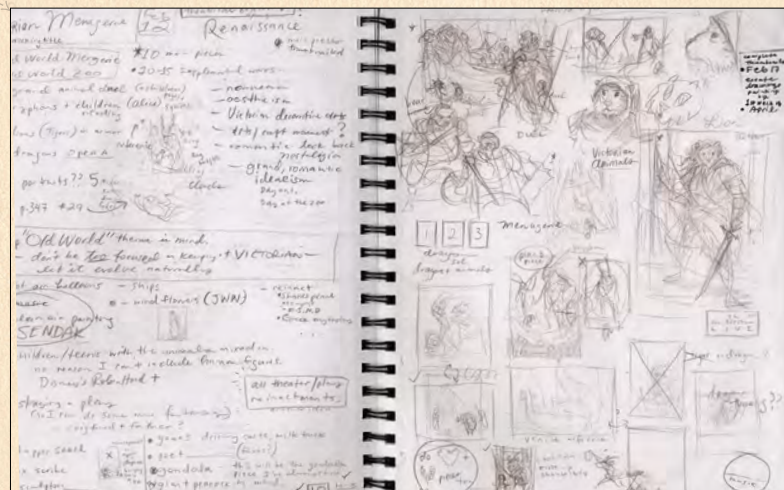
you see in front of you for imaginative purposes is an essential element in the creative artist's toolkit.

It might sound counter-intuitive at first, but by grounding your work in reality you can create a more real, believable and ultimately more interesting creature. Why do we like goblins and trolls? Because we can connect with a human element at work. Fantastic beasts? Gryphons can

help us to see with fresh eyes the real world magic and majesty of eagles and lions. Everything from the enchanting undine to the sneaking goblin, all extraordinary creatures have grounded, natural world, identifiable elements at play. But how do you get there? What does it take to create a creature? Here are a few steps I follow to bring in fantastical, creature-centric elements into my work.

1 CREATING A THEME

When I'm planning a new creature, that piece is usually in the context of a larger body of work. I prefer to think and plan my work around a new series of related images. The benefit of taking this approach is that I can explore different visual relationships in a body of work, not just a single piece. Furthermore, it helps satisfy my desire to draw a lot of monsters! I usually write down my ideas first.



2 GATHERING REFERENCE

You can't reconstruct or exaggerate what you don't understand. Gathering reference is key for developing your understanding of any given subject. This stage is crucial, and harkens back to our first idea: exploring the human form or adapting animals. By studying real-world anatomy (whether through life drawing or photo reference), you help to create a working visual vocabulary for yourself.





“ Create studies of real life animals. Are you exploring giant birds? Research the staggering variety of avian examples and find one that fits ”

3 REAL ANIMAL OR HUMAN STUDIES

Once you've settled on a creature, the next step is finding real-life examples and drawing studies. Are you exploring dragons? Mermaids? Giant birds? From your reference, create studies of real-life animals. Dragons? Draw lizards and snakes. Mermaids? Take photo reference of a friend and then draw a series of studies. Giant birds? Research the staggering variety of avian examples and find one that fits your plan. Focus on drawing and studying – don't worry about adapting yet. ➡



4 INCORPORATING FANTASTIC ELEMENTS

Once I've got a decent handle on the main idea, I start playing. This part is all about incorporating an unusual element into an otherwise normal study. Here I want to keep the birds fairly natural, so I begin to play with the scale of the creatures. This stage underscores the importance of step three: if I jump right to here I'm usually missing out on valuable information I should have gathered beforehand. Real reference tends to spark new ideas.



“It's all about building a visual vocabulary so you're able to do what you mean to do”

5 SET THE REFERENCE ASIDE

You've built up your visual vocabulary. You've understood how a snake's scales work together or a bird's feathers can form some kind of wild crest. Now's the time to lay the reference aside, unhook the safety harness and jump. You may find that you're able to think through the fantastical creature more completely. You've filled in the gaps with knowledge of anatomy and ideas inspired by tangible examples.

6 DRAW FROM IMAGINATION

Everything has been leading to this stage. All the work has gone into building up your understanding of anatomy, so your imagination is unencumbered by technical things. With this little undine I'm relying on the knowledge I've gained from previous studies. It's all about building a visual vocabulary so you're able to do what you mean to do.

DRAWING CLASS

Getting your shapes down in three easy stages...

PENCIL ROUGH

We're all going to draw differently. My method tends to fall neatly into three steps. Using my digital rough as a guide, I'll switch back to working traditionally. I also tend to work large, usually 16x20in (40x60cm) or bigger. I lightly lay in all my shapes. I'm thinking about details here, but I'm not overly concerned with them, just keeping them in mind. I use a brown Col-Erase pencil for the pencil rough.



UNDERDRAWING

Once the brown pencil rough is done, I begin my first pass at the finished drawing. I'm going back over the whole piece, bit by bit, and starting to refine it. Keep a light hand at this stage. You'll notice that at long last I'm getting into areas of the drawing that I had left vague. Here's where you'll begin to make the line choices that will determine how the rest of the piece will go.

THE FINISHED PIECE

After the underdrawing is finished, I go back over the whole piece for a final, detailed pass. I really get into the drawing, strengthening the line, pushing the value and rendering. I've experimented over the years with jumping right into the finished drawing, but I'm never quite as satisfied with the results. There's something about the two stages working together: the lighter, more careful first pass and the stronger, bolder final drawing that achieves what I'm after.



7 CREATURE STUDIES

Using my imagination I like to explore creature studies. This is pretty much as simple as it sounds. Here I'm setting up the scene, really finding who this creature is and what they're about. I would draw a distinction between this step and the previous tip in that the focus here is finding the character; it's refined exploring. Yes, you're drawing from imagination, but this stage is chasing down that elusive bit that is going to take the piece from regular to extraordinary. In many ways you're finding the magic here.





8 THUMBNAILS AND DOODLES

You've gathered reference, done studies, found the characters... for what again? Oh yeah! It's because you're planning a new piece. It can be so easy to get caught up in building the scaffolding that you forget why you're doing it. Studies are essential, but don't treat them like an end unto themselves. They're exercises for a purpose. At this stage I like to take a step back and quickly doodle through a few thumbnails and ideas to dress the set and prepare my creature actors for the play.

10 DECIDE ON THE NATURE OF THE BEAST

I tend to think of creatures as ultimately falling into one of two camps: benevolent or menacing. Where the fun begins is muddying the waters a bit. Think through the story of your creature. Is the beast misunderstood? Does it look menacing yet act benevolent? (Or more frighteningly, look benevolent and hide a secret menace?) Understanding who or what your creature is inside will only serve to make the work stronger.



“Only by sustained, consistent effort will you progress and improve”

11 CREATING MOMENTUM

Okay, so you've finished a new piece and created a fantastical creature. Great job. Now get back to work! Only by sustained, consistent effort will you progress and improve your work. That's one of the main reasons I usually work with a series in mind – it keeps me moving forward. Now have a good stretch, take a walk to clear your head, and start planning your next creature! ●

9 THE HUMANISING ELEMENT

Whether it's posture, attitude or even a simple expression to suggest some level of sentience, one big thing to keep in mind is to add some manner of humanising element in your work. No matter how wild the creature, we want to be able to connect with it on some level. "The eyes are the window to the soul" or some old poetry like that. Think about the sort of soul that inhabits your creature.





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Manga Studio 5

COLOUR YOUR COMIC ARTWORK



In last issue's core skills you flatted a page of your comic in Manga Studio – now you need to render the colours. **PJ Holden** explains all...

Following on from the flattening core skills walkthrough in issue 105, I'm now going to take you, step by step, through the process of using those flats as a mask to render the final image. How you render your artwork is really up to you. Building textures, using 'cuts' (which involves selecting areas and then shading them using various intensity of

graduations) or using any of the dozens of other colouring tools Manga Studio has, will all result in nicely rendered artwork. However, having a pre-flatted page will enable you to isolate elements of the image piece by piece, making colouring those elements much easier. And anything that saves you time when creating art – comic or otherwise – has to be a good thing!

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

HOTKEYS

As with Photoshop, Manga Studio has a full set of quick keys that can be used. They will also enable you to press and hold a key to use a command function temporarily, before returning you to the tool you were already using. The tool will default to the sub-tool most recently used, so, for example, pressing W for Magic Wand will select the Select from Reference Layer sub-tool, assuming that it was the last Magic Wand sub-tool you used.

W – Magic Wand

G – Gradient

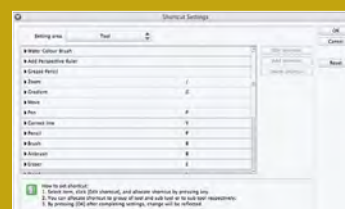
F – Fill

P – Pen/Pencil

(This will cycle through either tool if used repeatedly)

H – Hand

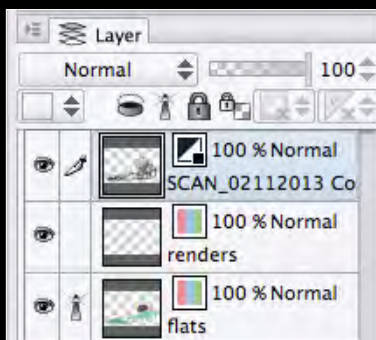
Pressing this enables you to use the mouse cursor to move the canvas area around.



You can also add your own preferred shortcut keys to Tools, Tool Options, Menu items and Actions using Manga Studio's Shortcut Settings option.

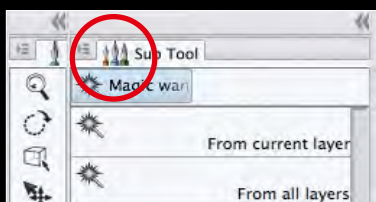
1 Layer cake

Select the 'flat' layer and make it a Reference Layer. You can either do this using Layer Settings>Set as Reference Layer, or by using the Reference Layer Toggle option. Ensure that your line art layer is set to 100 per cent Opacity. Now create a new full colour layer between the line art and flats layer and call it 'renders'.



2 It's a kind of magic

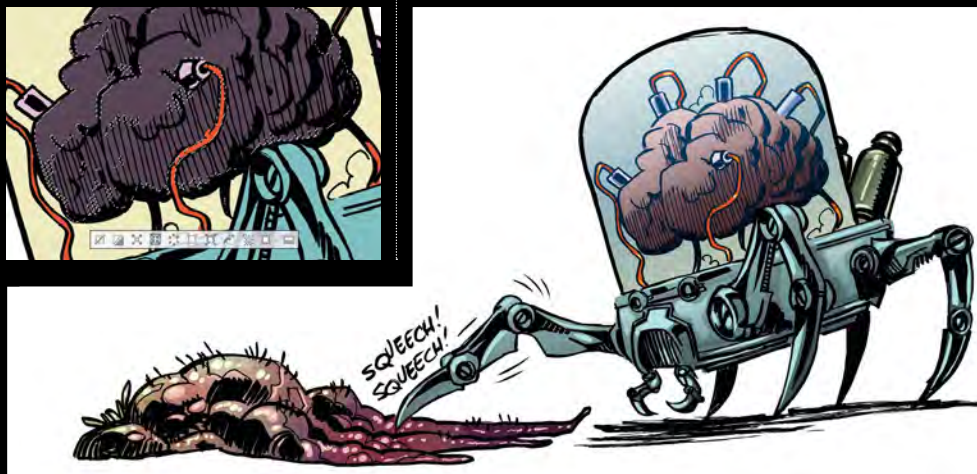
Using the Magic Wand sub-tool Select from Reference Layer, ensure that the colour margin is set to 0 with no area scaling. Now, on the renders layer (which to begin with, is empty) you can select any element that you've laid flat colours on by simply selecting. You'll see the 'marching ants' selection appear around that flatted area.



Flattening and rendering your art in Manga Studio is a good technique to learn.

3 Colour, Select and repeat

Now you're free to colour your image, using your preferred tool of choice. Any colouring will, of course, be applied to the renders layer only on the selection that you've made. If you want to make it a little easier to see what you're doing, you can toggle the marching ants visibility using View>Selection Border. Once you've finished with a particular colour, you can use the Magic Wand again to select a different area and continue to colour. Colours on the 'renders' layer will have no impact on your selections.





Photoshop

PAINT A COVER FOR A CHILDREN'S BOOK

Award-winning illustrator **Tony DiTerlizzi** harks back to the Golden Age of children's book illustration using a blend of traditional and digital tools

Every story contained within the pages of a book has a certain mood or emotion that it conveys to the reader. The task as an illustrator is to embrace that mood and bring it to life visually with art.

By far the most challenging illustration of all is for the book's jacket. In the jacket's singular image, the illustrator

must capture the emotion of the story in such an enticing way that it'll inspire a reader to pick the book up off of the store's shelf and leaf through its pages. And if it's inspiring enough, perhaps it's then only a short trip to the till, to ring up another sale for the author.

For the final instalment of my middle-grade sci-fi trilogy, *The Battle for WondLa*,

Artist PROFILE

Tony DiTerlizzi
COUNTRY: US



Best-selling author and illustrator Tony has created

fanciful picture books like Jimmy Zangwov's *Out-Of-This-World Moon Pie Adventure* and *The Spider & The Fly*, to chapter books like *Kenny and The Dragon* and *The Search for WondLa*. His series, *The Spiderwick Chronicles*, has sold millions of copies and been adapted into a feature film.
www.diterlizzi.com

I have the luxury of knowing the mood and emotion of the story – because I wrote it. Regardless, the steps taken to create the jacket image are no different to those I'd use to illustrate another's words. So in this workshop I'll take you through those steps, and hopefully give you an insight into how I approach each of my book illustration assignments.

1 Find the perfect idea

The process of determining what the cover image could be is a workshop in itself. For me, multiple ideas are explored and refined. The jacket of a book is the primary visual tool for sales, so there can be much feedback from the publisher on what it feels will work best in selling the book. I lean towards iconic imagery with a clean silhouette, so that it can read easily both from a crowded shelf in a bookstore, or as a small image for an online retailer's website.



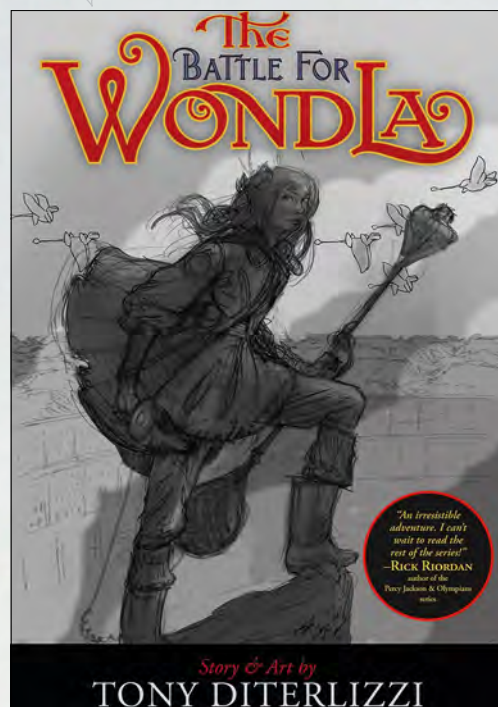
2 Gathering reference

I pride myself on my rich and well-fed imagination, but I still need actual reference to create a believable drawing. I gather images from books and the internet. Furthermore, I employ the use of models. With my original sketch as a guide, the costume of the main character, Eva Nine, is replicated using household items. Note how the model's pose helps me to create a more dynamic, final drawing of Eva.



3 The tonal study

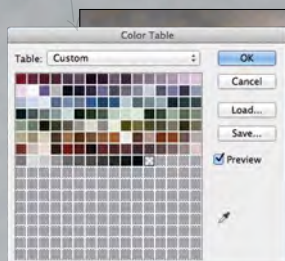
Before I consider my colour palette, I have to determine the graduated tones that will establish the depth and composition of the image. I scan my pencil sketch and bring it into Photoshop. The sketch is placed in its own layer and the blending mode is set to Multiply. I create tonal fields for the character and background elements on separate layers. From here, I can adjust the various elements to achieve tonal harmony.





4 Creating a palette

With my tones established, I can begin to explore how colour will affect the emotion of the image. I study successful paintings from master artists that give a similar mood to the text of the book I'm illustrating. Because *The Battle for WondLa* is a story of conflict, I research the palettes of various famous war paintings. Emanuel Leutze's 1851 painting *Washington Crossing the Delaware* displays a rich combination of colours that are both cold and bleak, but also warm and earthy. It becomes the custom palette for my piece. This palette is available for you to download.



PRO SECRETS

Generate a colour palette

I locate an image online of the original painting of *Washington Crossing the Delaware* and open it in Photoshop. By indexing the colour, I can create a custom colour table that can serve as the basis for my palette. The lower the number on the table, the fewer colours you'll have in your controlled palette.

7 Scanning the line art

I scan my vellum ink drawing in as a 600DPI bitmap. Because the artwork for the jacket will be used for a variety of marketing materials, such as bookmarks or the in-store floor display, I create the entire jacket at 600DPI so that there's a large, detailed file to work with. I also clean up any drawing errors during this stage. Sometimes sections are erased and redrawn digitally while the image is in bitmap mode. Finally, I convert the finished ink drawing into a greyscale image and remove the white background, leaving only the line art on a layer.



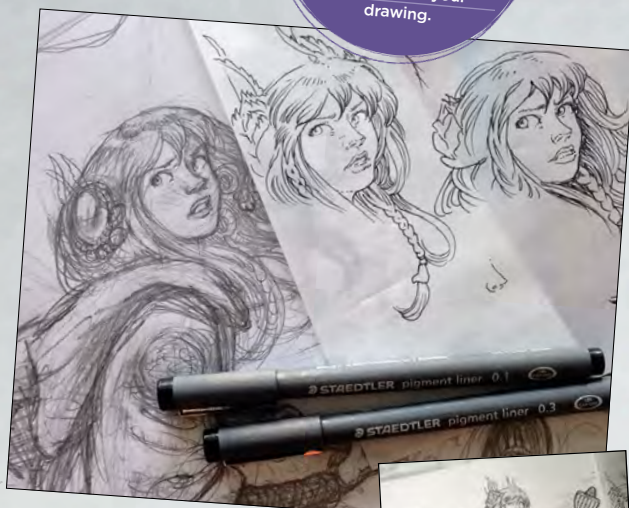
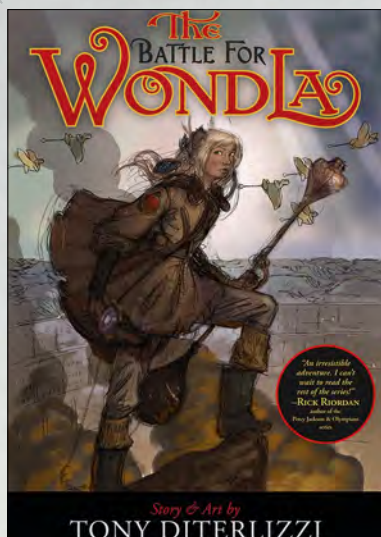
Shortcuts

Isolate line art

Select > Color Range > Select Shadows (PC & Mac)
Do this for a greyscale image to separate the line art from your drawing.

5 The colour study

Now I render a colour study using the tonal sketch as my guide. This is an exploratory process that can take some time, but it's vital to completing the final art. I create each component of the sketch as a separate layer in Photoshop. The Hue, Brightness and Blending mode of these layers are adjusted until I'm satisfied with the overall feel. When this stage is finished, I have a colour guide – a cheat sheet, if you like – that will aid me during the final stages.



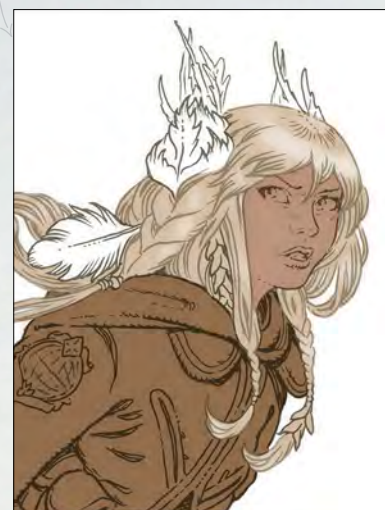
6 Inking the drawing

With the artwork in this trilogy of books I evoke the graphic, linear art style of Walter Crane, Alphonse Mucha and Jean Giraud (aka Moebius). Like these masters, I begin my final image with an ink drawing. I enlarge my final drawing to a size I feel comfortable at inking (usually 200 per cent larger than the printed version) and lay a sheet of vellum over the drawing. I ink on vellum using Staedtler Pigment Liners. These technical pens lack the sketchy flow of my preferred dip pens, but their tight, constricted line width is perfect for a science-fiction story.



8 Flattening the colours

The file is converted to RGB and the local colours are painted in as a flat tone on individual layers (in comics this process is known as flattening). Here, the file can grow greatly in size and it's important to label your layers as you go along. For instance, on *Eva Nine* many pieces of her flattened colours are on separate layers, including her hair, skin, eyes and cloak. This may seem excessive at this stage, but it comes in handy when textures, lighting and shadows are added. Sections of line art are also coloured now.



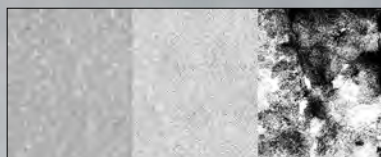
Shortcuts

Quick select items on a layer

Click+Ctrl (PC)

Click+Cmd (Mac)

To select all items on a specific layer, click its thumbnail.



9 Adding texture

The art for WondLa is influenced by the likes of Walter Crane and Alphonse Mucha. Their art would have been reproduced using lithography, a printing process used over 100 years ago. This process utilised some great shading textures that I use as well, including stippling, spatter and mottling. I create these textures by hand and scan them in as bitmaps at various thresholds. When applied over a flattened area, they give the feel of a handmade, less-digital style.

PRO SECRETS

Recreate traditional inking

If you look closely, many traditional ink drawings have a subtle bleed around the line when colour (especially watercolours) is applied over it. This leaching of the ink can be recreated by adding a Drop Shadow to the line art in the same colour that you've chosen to fill the line with. I set the Opacity to 20 per cent, the distance and Spread to 0 and the Size to 20 pixels.

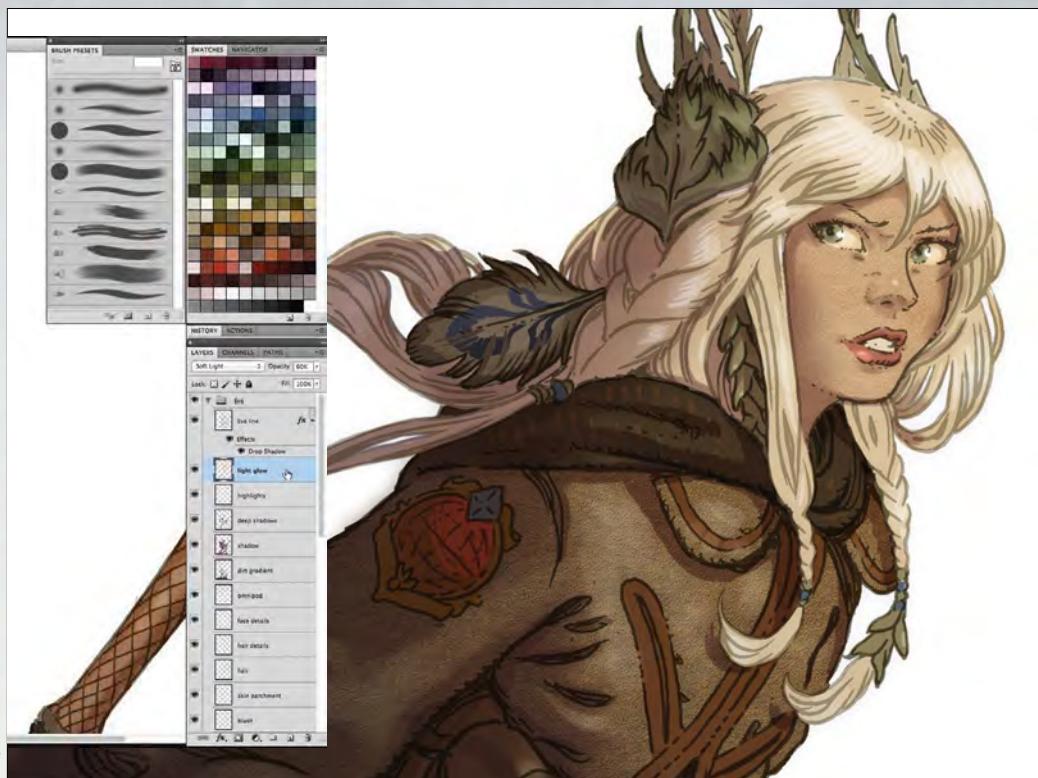
11 It's done when it's done

I wish there was a magic clue that informs me that my piece is done. Unfortunately there isn't, and so I have to rely on my artistic instincts and feedback from artist pals and the publisher. Yet there's usually a moment when I feel that I've finished. I then close the file, leave it alone for the night and look at it the following day. If there's something amiss, it'll usually pop out when I study it with fresh eyes. Of course, for this workshop I've focused on the central figure. I still have to integrate her with the background.



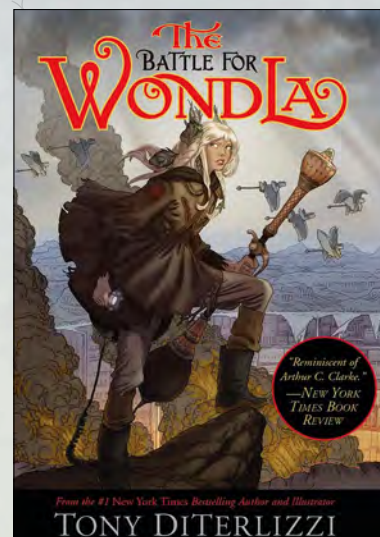
12 Not just a pretty picture

As you may have noticed throughout this process, I've dropped the art into a design comp of the jacket to see how the title and text work with the art. Although these design elements aren't always available to the illustrator, I like roughing out some sense of placement and typography for the art director to see how I envision the art integrating with these components. In the end, all elements must work in harmony with one another, to create a successful package for the book.



10 Shadow and light

The other benefit of having the various elements of the piece flattened in on separate layers is that I have greater control when creating the shadow and light layers. I can select any part I like when painting in the shadow. For this piece, I use a cool colour and set the layer's Blending mode to Multiply. I build up several layers of sharp shadows and gradients to add form and depth. To contrast the cool shadows, I use a gradient glow of warm golden light. The Opacity is adjusted and the Blending mode for the layer is set to Soft Light.



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Next month in...

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART

ImagineFX

New manga art skills

Make 2014 your year for manga art creation
with unmissable advice and techniques!

ISSUE 107 ON SALE 28 February 2014



80

ImagineFX March 2014



Artist B.c.N.y. reveals his
unique manga art secrets
<http://bcnyart.deviantart.com>

Featuring...

Genzoman's back in town

Art superstar
Genzoman shares
his tips for painting
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It's time to man up!

Learn how to depict
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Cris de Lara.

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concept designs
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using Photoshop.

Claire Wendling

The enigmatic
French artist talks
about her beautiful
and delicate style.



Mischief MAKE MISCHIEF ON AN INFINITE CANVAS



Nick Harris test drives fledgling software Mischief to create an image featuring ogres, a pixie and a girl in a bit of a pickle...

Artist PROFILE

Nick Harris
COUNTRY: England



Nick has been illustrating for the children's book market for over 30 years, working full time through an agent as a freelancer. He turned from watercolour to digital just after the millennium.
www.nickillus.com

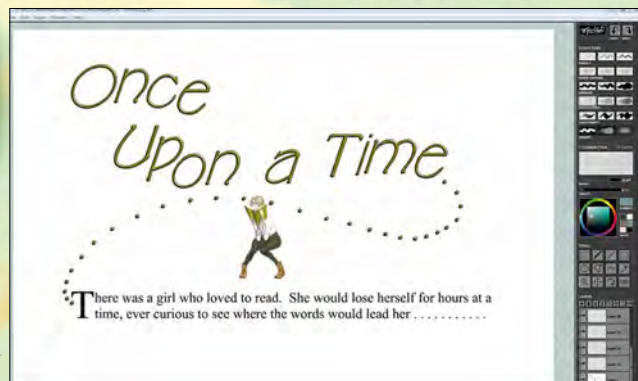
Every now and again something new comes along that starts you thinking. Fledgling software Mischief is such a thing. First impressions present a basic drawing and painting setup like many others, and indeed it is. The program's small range of brushes respond very nicely, but it's not about to have the likes of Corel or Adobe quaking in their boots. Layers don't offer blending modes nor even some basic functions such as Duplicate or Lock Transparency.

So what has this innocuous, modestly priced newcomer got to offer to make it worth a look? The simple answer is infinity. And by that I mean that the limitation of edges has been removed. Mischief delivers endless canvas in any direction and at any scale you want. You can zoom and pan infinitely, creating remarkably small, native file sizes. Export files are bigger. What's more remarkable is that results are also resolution independent. Somehow the development team behind it has produced brushes that respond like bitmaps, but are vector based. Download the 15-day trial at www.madewithmischief.com and try it to understand what this means, and how you might be able to exploit it yourself.

In this workshop I'll run through some basic operations to introduce you to the software, and I also provide audio commentary on the supplied video. ➡➡



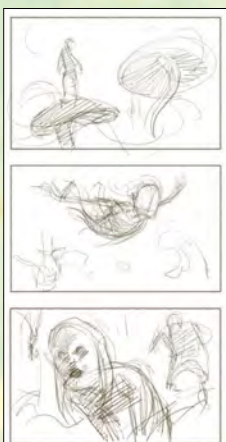




First things first. Let's get you to understand just what Mischief is offering that is different. I produced this splash screen for the video for you to zoom into. I created the text in DrawPlus X6 because Mischief doesn't boast that function yet. Download the trial, open the file and try for yourself. Zoom into the circle on the front of the small figure's book to get to three thumbnail sketches. There's some sort of vector architecture under the bonnet that makes this possible.

2 Thumbnails

It's always a good idea to start with thumbnail sketches, to get the juices flowing. There's no art brief tying me down, so I throw down some thoughts using the character idea from the splash-screen. Giant mushrooms (Alice in Wonderlandish), the ability to fly and an encounter with a pixie are what spring to mind first. I try to vary the eye level in each sketch to keep things interesting.



3 Go with your gut

Not a medical suggestion, but advice I was given at art college. The third thumbnail just feels more right than the other two to me, so I pursue that idea. Using Mischief's incredible zooming ability I enlarge the thumbnail without having to create a new, bigger file. I can simply tighten up the drawing on or over the actual thumbnail. I reduce the opacity of the layer and create a new one to redraw over the top.



Shortcuts Zoom canvas

Space+Ctrl and drag (PC)
Space+Cmd and drag (Mac)
Handy shortcut to use with
express keys if your
tablet has them.



4 Keep it loose

While I'm reasonably happy with the idea of a lurking ogre about to exploit the encounter between the young girl and the pixie, I'm not decided on how he's going to look or stand yet. Don't panic if you haven't resolved everything beforehand. Yes, that's the ideal, but sometimes it just doesn't work out that way. View it as an opportunity to respond to how the image develops as you go.

5 Block and wash over

I tend to block in opaque body colour layers under the drawing, then using semi-transparent layers on top of that to build up tone and shadow. Mischief doesn't boast layer-blending modes, but I've worked without them in the past in SketchBook Pro before they arrived. Furthermore, Mischief does have Highlighters that offer a workable alternative for building up translucent values. I also work volume into the body colour layer.



6 Against the grain

Mischief also lacks textures, save the variety of Papers you can access through the icon to the right of Current Brush. Once a Paper is selected you can change its colour. Here, I don't think it's looking textural enough for my rock, so I import a photo and rotate it, irregularly transforming it to lie along the shape that I've blocked in. Cut away areas you don't need with the Erasers, then work into it over the top on another layer to add interest and have it fit the lighting.





7 Ins and outs

As the layer count rises, so navigation becomes more sluggish. I zoom in on the girl and the pixie to work out the dynamic between them. It's important to ensure the girl's eyeline is looking straight at our little chap. I get it pretty wrong for a while, but keep at it until it reaches an acceptable state. I then block in the body colour using the Markers and Conte Crayons, and add tone using Conte Crayons again, as well as Highlighters.



8 Change what doesn't work

Not working out that ogre better in the thumbnail stage comes back to bite me. He simply isn't appealing, isn't well drawn or posed, and isn't providing the fun tension I want. I experiment with altering his scale and position, but that doesn't work either. Time to bite the bullet and wipe those layers using the X option in the buttons above the Layer palette. As soon as I start sketching two ogres the scene starts to work better.

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

MISCHIEF

DEFAULT BRUSH:
MID-SIZE MARKER



This can be very responsive at around 6-10p width, delivering finer strokes than the small tip if applied with a delicate touch.

PRO SECRETS

Think around any problem

Stuff goes wrong all the time, whatever line of work you're in. Digital art is no different. I had a mini-crisis doing this workshop. Part of the job is getting round difficulties caused by technical issues with software. When my system resources ran low, the software wiped an important layer that couldn't be recovered. Having saved regularly, I simply copied it from a previous version and dropped it back in as a JPG. Some tweaking here and there and we were back on course.



9 Wash and go for it

As a converted real media watercolourist, I still use washes. Even without layer blending modes they're useful here. I block in a dark purple/blue tone across the entire image on a new layer with reduced Opacity, and save the colour by dragging the swatch from Current into one of the free slots below. I'll need it to repair mistakes. I cut into the layer using the Erasers. It all looks completely over the top, but can unify an image.

10 Keep on tweaking

With more erasing, the image begins to make sense. Changing the ogre from one to two also alters the story idea behind the image. Now they're using their captive human as bait to catch the pixie. It feels like a better fairy tale idea to me. I keep cutting into the wash layer with the Erasers, but also add another lowered Opacity layer above that to accent the darkest areas with the Conte Crayons.



11 Lightening strikes

I continue to work in the same way, isolating the base colours, tone and line of the characters where possible. However, there is a definite limit on how many layers you can have, and occasionally I merge two together to free another for use. I bring warm, mottled hues into the ground plane at the bottom to bring it forward, while trying to add leafy textures without too much detail on the base layer to make those areas recede. The image gradually becomes more sunny.





12 Change of emphasis

Truth be told, I thought only a video of my process was needed, which means I get the layout for a workshop spread later than usual. No problem. I've been expanding the composition sideways, but now drop a JPG of the image into my page guide to define the dimensions. Dan, ImagineFX's art editor, has done a great job of cropping the image in a way that works on its own and with print constraints such as the gutter (where the pages are bound together).

13 That's handy

The change of composition dimensions introduces a gap on the left, which we agree to fill with another ogre. Positioned in the foreground, he's necessarily large and so I draw ideas for him using light colours on a new layer that show up easily. I quickly go with a reaching up pose and set to blocking in a thick-fingered hand, using bold colours. The shadow layer knocks them back. It's a bit close to the gutter, but it should work.



PRO SECRETS

It's not about raw power

While it's nice to have the latest all-singing, all-dancing software, I would argue that less can sometimes give more. If an art package has good touch response, reasonable layer functions and has enough basic tools to handle a range of mark making, your imagination and drive are the only two other things you need. I'm not saying don't use the powerhouse software if you like and can afford them. Yet sometimes simpler software encourages more direct, creative freedom. That's all.

Shortcuts

Tool palette

Ctrl+T (PC)

Cmd+T (Mac)

Turn the Tool palette on and off to see your whole painting on-screen.



14 Small wonder

An ongoing niggle is that the pixie in green refuses to stand out enough from the green background to focus the viewer on him. I add yellow stripes to his jacket, and lay a light coloured wash over the area around him to accentuate contrast. I erase as needed for crisp edges. Sharp edges and tonal contrasts are generally accepted to work towards bringing elements of an image closer to the viewer.

15 An end in sight

I change Pixie's coat to red and this helps a bit. I darken the front ogre with more shadow and strengthen the dappled light around the girl. This helps to draw the eye across to that side of the spread. Don't forget to zoom in and out to assess the overall feeling of the piece. I add warmer colours to the foreground, but also yellow to the left background, fading as the eye travels right. It helps lift the pixie more.



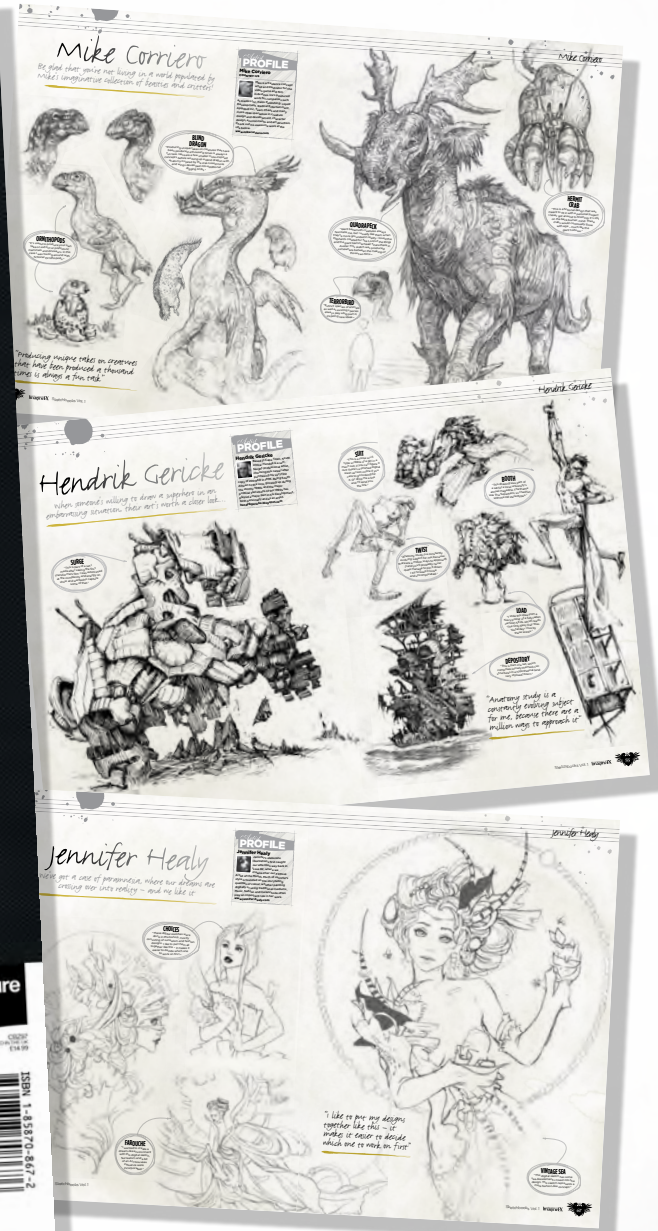
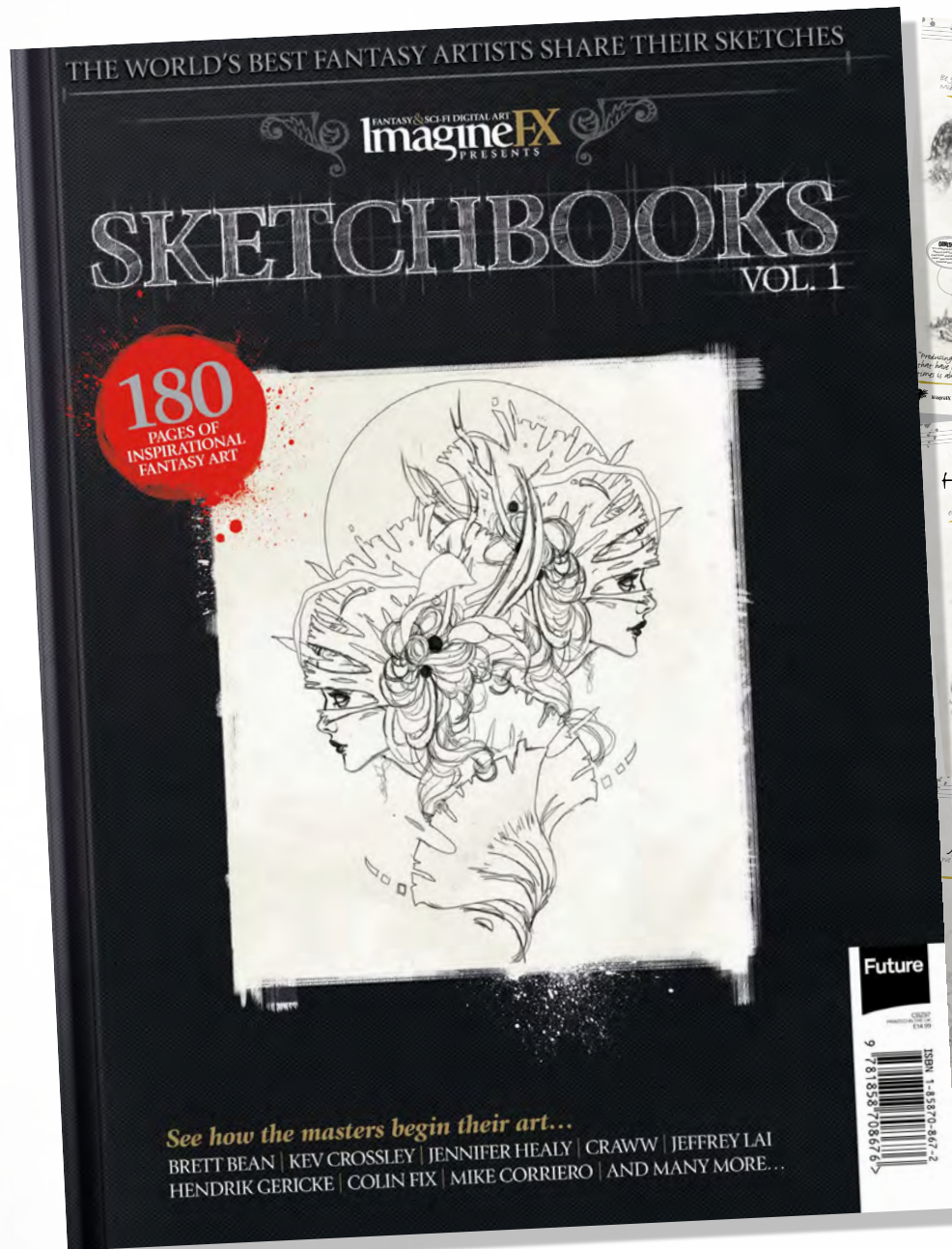
16 The fat ogre sings

A bit more work on the girl's hands, some general crisping, and a few bright accents here and there and I call it a day. I make a selection and go to file/Export Selection, altering the longer dimension to the maximum 10,000px, with resolution at 450dpi. It should provide the biggest possible file to work with. I process the image using PhotoPlusX7, adjusting the levels before exporting. And I'm done. ●



Where great art begins...

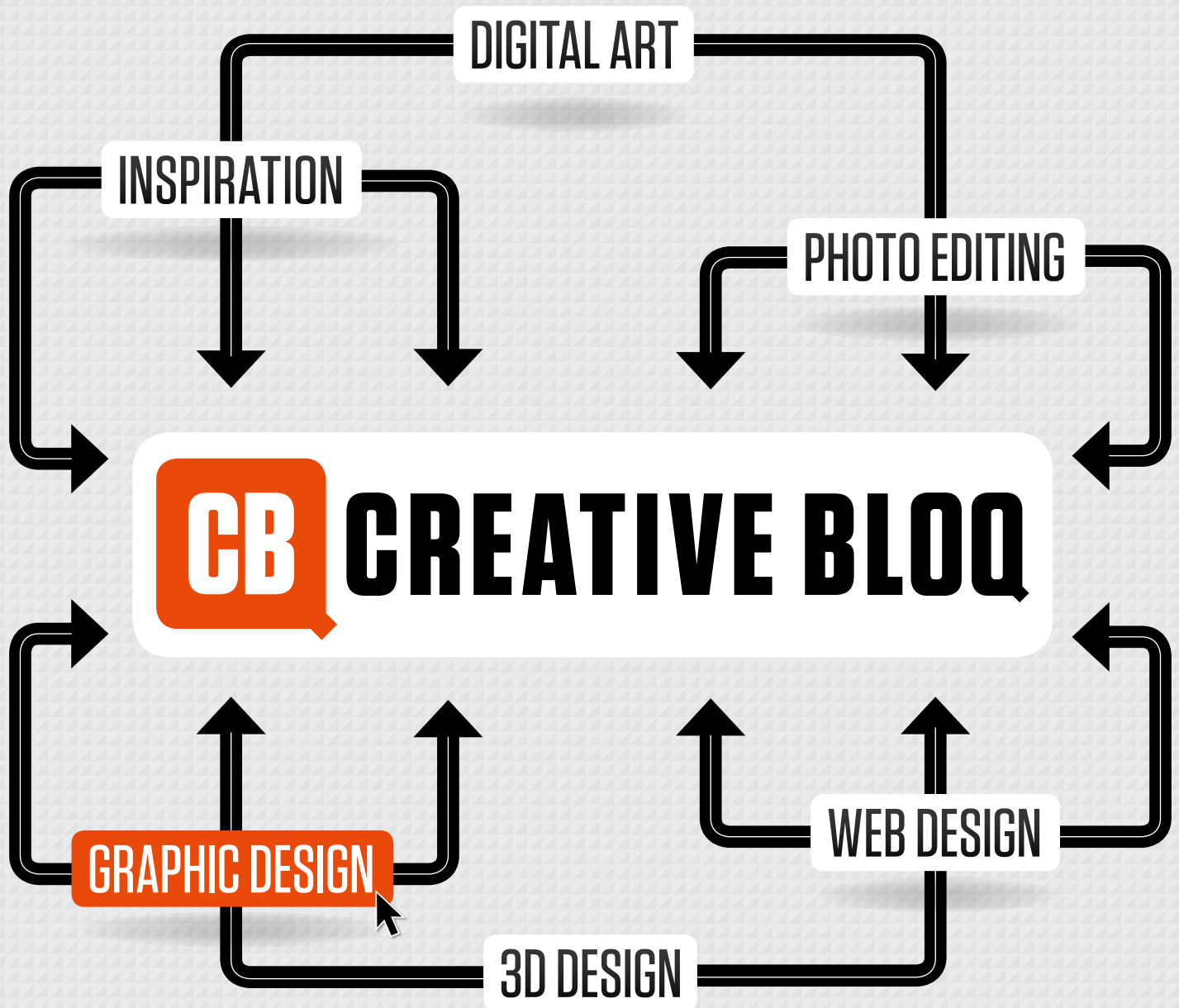
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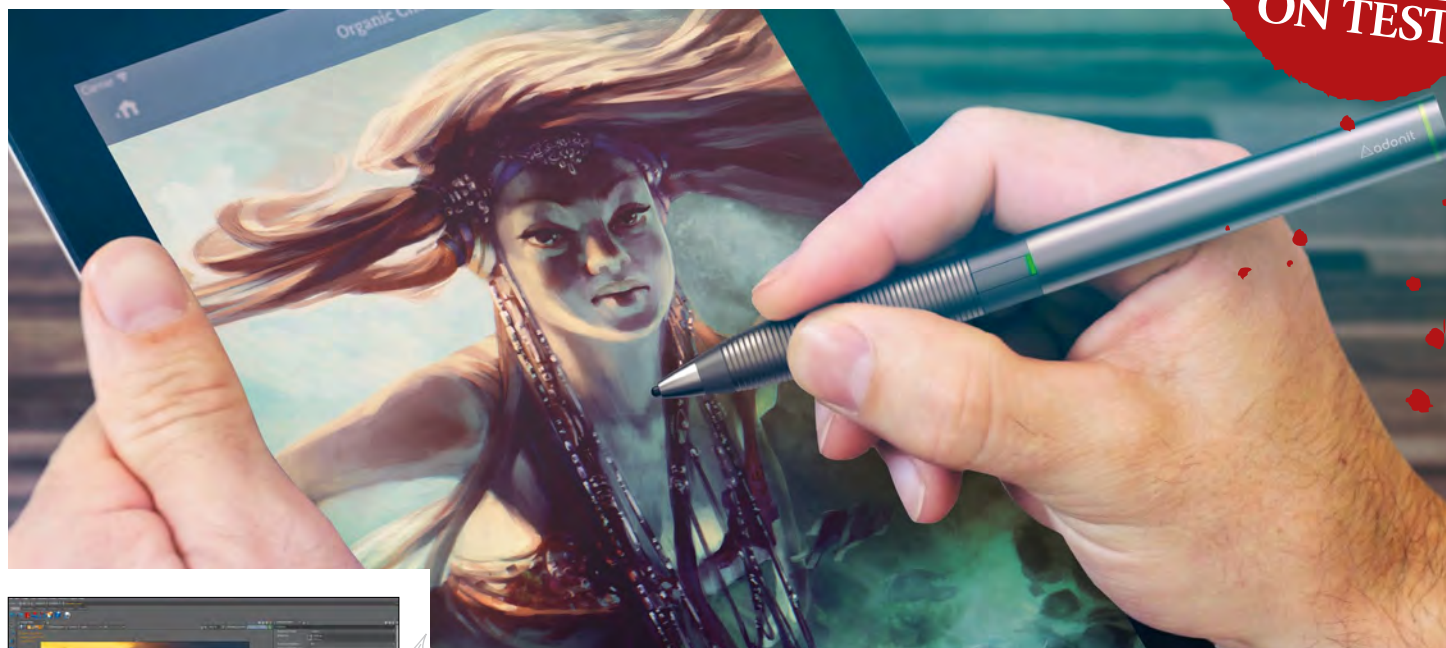
FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX Reviews



Artist's Choice Award
Software and hardware with a five-star rating receives the IFX Artist's Choice award!

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

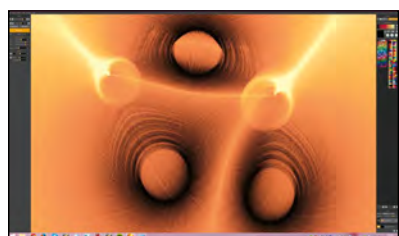
**8
PRODUCTS
ON TEST**



HARDWARE & SOFTWARE

90 Jot Script Evernote edition

We see if Adonit's tech-packed writing implement fulfils promises made by a company continuing to create the best styluses.



92 Clarisse iFX

By tapping into today's advanced computing technology, could this example of ultra-fast 3D software change the way you render?



93 Amberlight

Following the success of Flame Painter, Peter Blaškovic turns his hand to something more surreal – yet equally versatile.

93 Fuji XQ1

This tiny-bodied, big-sensor compact camera with a super-wide aperture gives high image-quality and great low-light functionality.

BOOKS

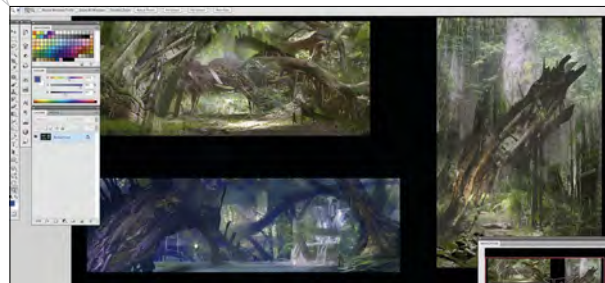
94 New reads

Spectrum 20: The Best In Contemporary Fantastic Art; The Silver Age of DC Comics; Guillermo del Toro: Cabinet of Curiosities.

TRAINING

97 Introduction to Digital Painting and Theory Vol 1

Concept artist Simon Scales explains not just how to paint digitally, but how to create fantasy and sci-fi images that work.



RATINGS EXPLAINED Magnificent Good Ordinary Poor Atrocious



Jot Script Evernote Edition

STYLUS COUNCIL Adonit's tech-packed writing implement fulfils promises made by a company continuing to create the best styluses

iPad
&
iPhone

Price £68 **Company** Adonit **Web** www.adonit.net **Contact** help@adonit.net

Where most stylus makers are happy to attach a bit of rubber on to the end of a vaguely pen-like metal tube, Adonit has turned the touch-screen interaction device into a piece of exquisite engineering, packing it with technology and working the shaft to near-ergonomic perfection.

We were rather impressed with the company's Jot Touch, reviewed back in issue 91, but thought it had some

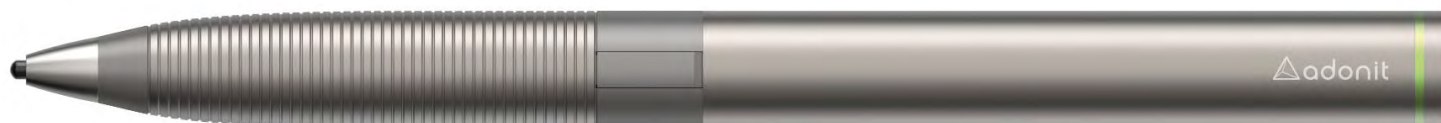
drawbacks. While its pressure-sensitive precision tip worked well, the little plastic disc that surrounded it sometimes got in the way, and its USB charging dock that magnetically held the stylus, though a great idea, was ungainly. With the Jot Script, Adonit has shed both these features to offer a streamlined stylus.

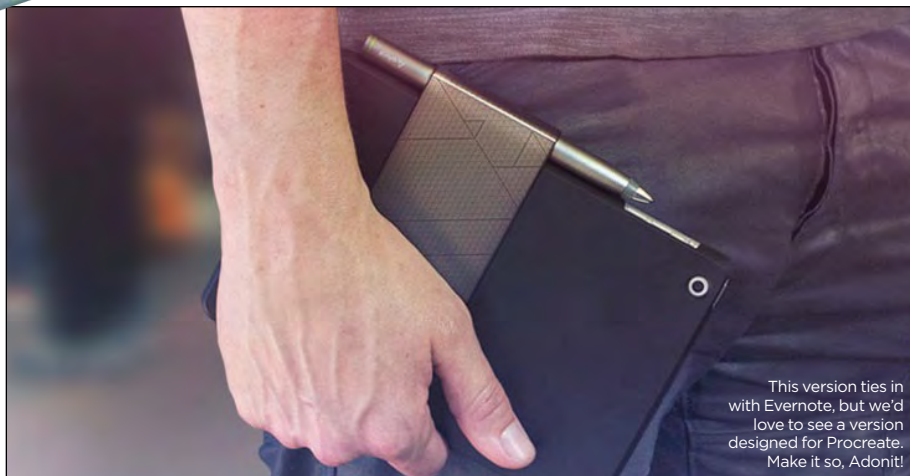
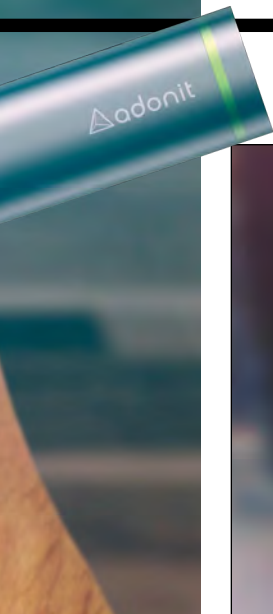
At first glance the Jot Script resembles a normal pen. It doesn't have a squidgy, marker-sized tip like

The Jot Script's bullet-like design is a joy to hold and use, and it feels like a premium ballpoint pen.

More than just a simple tube with a hefty nib on it, the Jot Script has been ergonomically designed to sit comfortably and balanced in the hand.

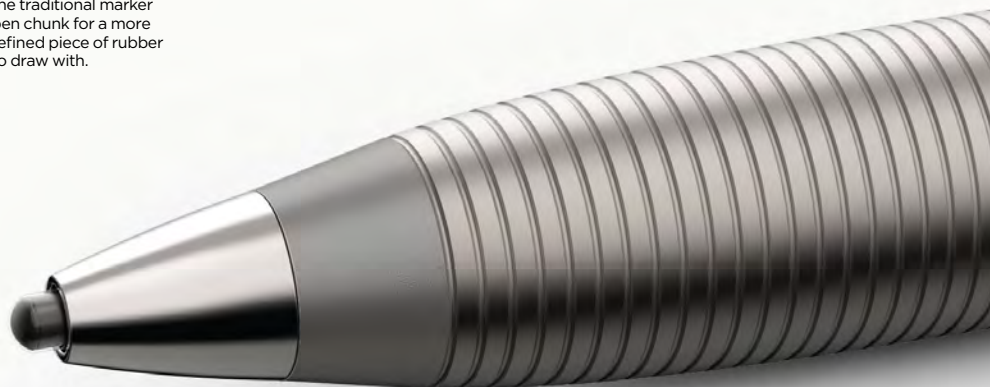
other, cheaper styluses. Instead there's a tiny 1.9mm diameter nib that makes it look more like a ballpoint pen, and behind this lies a lot of clever tech. The iPad and iPhone have always been designed with chubby fingertips rather than precision-engineered metal in mind, but Adonit has found a crafty way around this issue: the Jot Script mimics the low-voltage capacitive nature of touch screens, enabling it to deliver a more focused touch point.





This version ties in with Evernote, but we'd love to see a version designed for Procreate. Make it so, Adonit!

The Jot Script's nib is a revelation, trading in the traditional marker pen chunk for a more refined piece of rubber to draw with.



“It mimics the low-voltage capacitive nature of touch screens, enabling it to deliver a more focused touch point”

Because of this technology, which Adonit dubs 'Pixelpoint', the Jot Script requires a single AAA battery, and it won't work at all without being turned on. We were concerned that the battery would offset the stylus to the rear, but it's actually balanced and light. However, unlike its predecessor the Jot Touch, which has a battery that can recharge on the magnetic dock, the Script opts for non-rechargeable batteries. This feels like a bit of a step back, unless you're painting outdoors.

The Jot Script's full title includes 'Evernote Edition', although at time of writing there isn't another edition that we can see. As such, it ties into Evernote's Penultimate note-taking software, and as a result it's promoted

as a handwriting tool rather than one for artists. It's responsive and fluid, and it includes clever palm rejection so you don't end up doodling all over the page with your wrist. Penultimate is limited to simple line drawings and notes, but the Pixelpoint technology also works with SketchBooks Pro and Ink, Procreate and Adobe's Ideas.

The big omission, though, is the pressure-sensitivity of the Jot Touch, which worked incredibly well. For now it's a trade-off between a high level of accuracy and ink flow control, but we're sure Adonit has something more suited for iPad art up its sleeve. This is the most comfortable and accurate stylus we've used, but we'd hold out for a more artistically inclined version.

DETAILS

Features

- 1.9mm Pixelpoint Tip
- Bluetooth LE
- Accelerometer
- Adonit SDK support
- Aluminium barrel
- AAA battery power
- Palm rejection
- On/off switch
- One-year warranty

System Requirements

All iOS devices:
Requires iPad third-generation or newer, iPad Mini or iPhone 4S or newer for Bluetooth palm rejection

Rating



STYLUS ALTERNATIVES

UNDER PRESSURE

Want a pressure-sensitive stylus? We check out the best options

Intuos Creative Stylus

Price £85

Web www.wacom.com



Its nib isn't as small as Adonit's, but this stylus still competes. Like

the Jot Script, it connects to your iPad via Bluetooth for nifty palm rejection and features an astounding 2,048 levels of pressure sensitivity. Integrated apps include SketchBook, Procreate and ArtRage, as well as Wacom's Bamboo Paper for notes and sketches. It comes in blue or black, too.

Galaxy Note S Pen

Price £20

Web www.samsung.com



Designed exclusively for Samsung's Galaxy Note ranges, the

S Pen includes clever magnetic field technology to work out where the stylus is in relation to the device's screen. This also means it can include buttons which don't require a battery to function (unlike the Jot Script), and it offers 1,024 levels of pressure sensitivity.

Surface Pen

Price £25

Web www.microsoft.com



This great stylus works exclusively with the Surface Pro

and Surface Pro 2 from Microsoft, making it easier to draw and take notes on those tablets. A mash-up between Samsung and Wacom's efforts, it employs the former's magnetic field technology combined with the latter's design knowledge. We love the way it magnetically clips on to the side of the Surface.



Animation tools include blurs and fur animation, which makes Clarisse suitable for filmmakers as well as for artists.

Clarisse iFX MAC & PC

THINK BIG By tapping into today's advanced computing technology, this ultra-fast 3D software has plenty of room for 2D artists – and a hefty price tag

Price £611 **Company** Isotropix **Web** www.isotropix.com **Contact** Via website

Traditional renderers enable artists to block out scenes and sort out lighting before spitting it out as a 3D scene. It's a great approach because the main muscle of the computer isn't required until the very end, and it made sense when an army of supercomputers was needed to create a single frame of, say, *Toy Story*. But in the age of ultra-powerful desktop PCs it feels positively prehistoric.

Clarisse aims to revolutionise this facet of 3D artistry by utilising the multi-core nature of modern processors. Fire it up and a scene renders within seconds. Once done, you can then select objects in the viewport, then move and rotate them as you wish, with the scene re-rendering almost instantaneously. Complex scenes take a little longer, but you still get a rough, pixelated idea of how it's going to look before it's refined by the rendering engine.

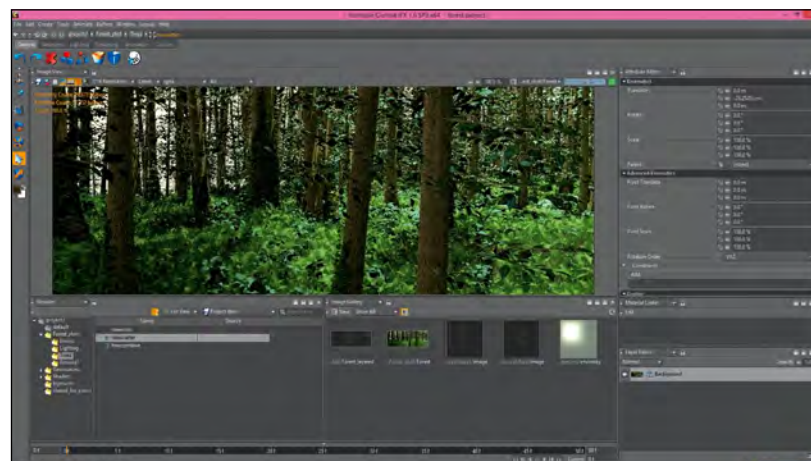
Clarisse includes an animation engine for 3D filmmakers, but developer Isotropix reckons it's also the perfect tool for 2D artists. Truth be told, we can see where the company's coming from: it's easy to build complex

backdrops and mattes with strong perspective and realistic lighting, and the fast speed of the engine means you can develop complex scenes by cutting and pasting objects, or procedurally generate leaves and branches of trees, for example.

However, there are still a couple of drawbacks with it at the moment. Because this is a mere renderer, you'll need to create your 3D assets in another program such as Lightwave. At £611 it's also rather expensive,

although this is a reduced price – Isotropix aims to attract a wider audience with its product.

As it stands Clarisse is a niche product, then. But we found it stable and intuitive, which is impressive given that it was developed by a handful of programmers. There's a lot of potential here – Isotropix says that the software has been used by some major graphics companies, but won't say who. If it could include a 3D modeller, Clarisse could become an essential purchase.



This image contains a whopping 29 million pieces of geometry and 31 billion primitives, and yet you can edit it almost immediately.

DETAILS

Features

- Interactive 3D rendering engine
- 32-bit compositing engine
- Multi-threaded optimisation
- Direct image manipulation
- 3D geometry tiles
- Asset file dependency
- Animation system
- Custom HDR spherical maps
- Level of detail switching
- Customisable layouts

System Requirements

PC: Vista Business SP2 or above, Linux Red Hat/CentOS 6, Intel or AMD based x86-64 CPU supporting SSE2, 2GB RAM, 500MB space, OpenGL 2.0 compliant graphics card with 32MB of video memory
Mac: OS X 10.8 or above, Intel CPU, 2GB RAM, 500MB space, OpenGL 2.0 compliant card with 32MB of video memory

Rating



To begin with, images exhibit a grainy texture, which is smoothed out as they're rendered. But pretty soon they become smooth and fluid, and it's fascinating to watch them grow.



Amberlight

MAC
&
PC

SHAPES Peter Blaškovic turns his hand to something more surreal.

Price £12

Company Escape Motions

Web www.escapemotions.com

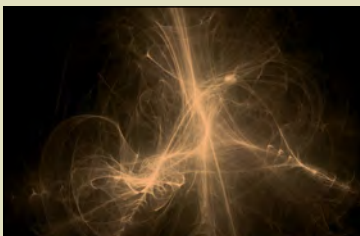
RATING

Escape Motions – aka Slovakian developer Peter Blaškovic – first caught our attention with Flame Painter, a fairly simple tool for creating realistic, procedurally generated flames.

His latest program, Amberlight, pulls a similar feat, using some undoubtedly complex algorithms to create objects. To be honest, we're not sure what kind of objects Amberlight creates, but this is part of the attraction – they can be whatever you want them to be. Fire it up and you're given a blank canvas with up to 12 movable points, and an ongoing animation as they do their thing and make, well, things. You can adjust their force, intensity and cut-off using slidable axis, and you can tweak colours.

You can pause the program while it's building the image, so you can get it at just the right moment, but we'd love to see a rewind button so you can go back to earlier renders.

Amberlight is easy to use and the results look amazing and organic right from the word go. We're not sure if it's for everyone, but it's pretty cheap and you can download a demo from Escape Motions if you want to see how it works first.



While Amberlight's fractals look random, you've actually got a lot of control over how it works.



Fuji XQ1

MAC
&
PC

HAPPY SNAPPY This tiny-bodied, big-sensor compact means high quality for your reference gathering

Price £345 **Company** Fuji **Web** www.fujifilm.com **Contact** Via website

There's an appetite for premium-quality compact cameras, with buyers eager for well-built bodies giving the impression of detailed control, a high-performance lens and additional features. A super-wide aperture is just one of the features that users are craving for, as is a maximum opening of f/1.8 – and they're both here in the Fuji XQ1.

Why should digital artists be interested in all of this? Well we're always looking for the perfect compact to take on location to take myriad reference photos for future projects. Not only is this camera effortless to use, the large aperture lens can create shallow depth of field – another

creative option that tends to be pretty rare on cameras this size.

It also features that second most-desired additional feature: a larger-than-usual imaging sensor, along with the processor of a model much further up the camera hierarchy.

What's also appealing is that you can start playing with the image before you transfer and open it up in Photoshop. Those of you who remember using film will like the image settings that simulate the colour and contrast of Provia, Astia and Velvia transparency emulsions, as well as the black and white tones of Neopan – a heady mix indeed! Overall, this is a cracking camera to help you capture the foundations of your next digital masterpiece.



The XQ1 provides in-camera raw processing, enabling you to add film 'looks' to images post-capture, and to alter contrast and colour settings.

The XQ1 offers some neat retro control rings around the lens, for useful things like aperture, ISO, white balance, zoom and a whole lot more.

DETAILS

Features

- 25-100mm (35mm equivalent) lens
- Aperture range of f/1.8-4.9
- 2/3in X-Trans CMOS sensor and processor
- 12 million pixels
- Higher ISO settings (maximum 12800)
- Save images as RAW and JPEG files
- Camera film settings
- Wireless connection
- Rotating rear wheel that doubles as a four-way rocker-switch
- Retro control rings around lens, for aperture, white balance, exposure compensation, ISO, drive modes, colour modes and zoom

Rating



Spectrum 20: The Best in Contemporary Fantastic Art

END OF AN ERA The world's best sci-fi and fantasy art compendium returns for its 20th edition – but its creators are stepping down

Editors Cathy and Arnie Fenner **Publisher** Underwood Books **Price** H/bk £30, P/bk £24 **Web** www.underwoodbooks.com **Available** Now

The 20th edition of **Spectrum's wonderful science fiction and fantasy art annual begins on a slightly sad note: creators Cathy and Arnie Fenner are passing the mantle of editing the compendium on to long-time collaborator and art publishing stalwart John Fleskes.**

Although it's their final publication as editors, Cathy and Arnie haven't rested on their laurels and *Spectrum 20* is every bit as good as the 19 that preceded it. Arnie contributes a fine introduction in which he discusses the highs and lows of editing the book for the past 20 years, including complaints



Terese Nielsen updated Hanna, Ship's Navigator for the Duels of the Planeswalkers 2013 expansion set.

from artists that their work wasn't included, and even moans from those who feel more of their art should have been featured.

ImagineFX favourite Brom receives this edition's Grand Master Award, which feels long-overdue given that his work has featured in every edition of *Spectrum*, and he's the only artist to have achieved this feat. Dan dos Santos also contributes a touching tribute to the late Jean 'Moebius' Giraud.

Cathy and Arnie then get into what they do best: rounding up the best art in the field. It kicks off with a chapter on advertising, then moves on to books, comics, concept art and dimensional art. Editorial, institutional and unpublished works follow. Each chapter begins with a handful of winning images, selected by *Spectrum's* panel of industry experts.

The judging of images takes place in a single day in *Spectrum's* home of Kansas City, and we imagine this event to be intense. Nonetheless, the judges have chosen some of the best art here. Android Jones' techno-serpent Ganeshatron, created for Sporganic, is incredible, combining fine lines with an almost negative colour scheme. David Palumbo's Fed, for 44 Flood, tops out the book awards with an unsettling



Donato Giancola's *I Threw Down My Enemy* looks sumptuous on the book's thick, glossy pages.

image of a naked woman apparently leaving the scene of a crime.

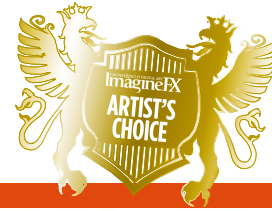
But *Spectrum's* never about the winning images. Every page is a world in which to lose yourself, or a character to get to know, and it serves as both an overview of industry trends and a collection of excellent images. And it's as essential a purchase as ever.

RATING



The Silver Age of DC Comics

IT'S GROOVY, MAN How the writers and artists of Batman and Superman reinvented the iconic characters for the swinging 60s



Author Paul Levitz **Publisher** Taschen **Price** £35 **Web** www.taschen.com **Available** Now

I just fell in love with comic books. I didn't expect to," says legendary comic artist Neal Adams in *The Silver Age of DC Comics*. It's easy to see why: following the Golden Age of DC Comics in its early years, it experienced a resurgence in the 1960s, when writers and artists tapped into more sci-fi themes.

Author Paul Levitz has trawled DC's archives from 1955 until 1970 to create



The Legion of Super-Heroes find themselves in a tight spot, as scripted by a young Jim Shooter.

this in-depth yet accessible compendium, and it's a terrific journey for the publisher from graphic novels to tie-in TV series, movies and merchandising. There's something rather quaint about seeing the pen-drawn and hand-coloured comics of yore, but they nonetheless deliver a strong sense of character and story.

Of course, you could pick up the original comics themselves if you really

wanted, but Paul's bite-sized, knowledgeable curation fills you in on important backstory and snippets of information. It's part of a five-volume series on DC's history, which covers its inception to the present day. Based on *The Silver Age* we'd say they're essential – if weighty – additions to any comic fan's bookcase.

RATING 5/5

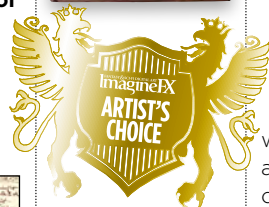
Guillermo del Toro: Cabinet of Curiosities

MAGICAL MYSTERY TOUR The ultimate guide to the inner workings of the visionary *Hellboy* and *Pacific Rim* director

Author Guillermo del Toro with Marc Scott Zicree **Publisher** Titan Books **Price** £40 **Web** www.titanbooks.com **Available** Now

There's a lot to admire in the film work of Guillermo del Toro. The Mexican filmmaker is able to switch between intimate thrillers (*The Devil's Backbone*, *Pan's Labyrinth*) and gargantuan blockbusters (*Hellboy*, *Pacific Rim*) almost effortlessly. That he manages to maintain his themes of man versus nature and the supernatural world beneath makes him all the more impressive.

Cabinet of Curiosities is an autobiography-cum-making-of, and



Guillermo's hand-written notes and sketches make up a large proportion of this fascinating book.



what's clear from it is that Guillermo is as good an artist as he is a storyteller. It compiles hundreds of his sketches and storyboards for his movies, and compares them with the finished product – and more often than not there's nothing lost in translation. There's also a tour of his impressive LA residence, Dickensianly dubbed Bleak House, which is home to larger-than-life movie props and memorabilia.

The book is peppered with tributes to the man from the likes of *An American Werewolf in London* director John Landis, *Hellboy* creator Mike Mignola, James Cameron and Tom Cruise. However, Guillermo's larger-than-life personality dominates proceedings, and it's a fascinating insight into his incredible imagination.

RATING 5/5

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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 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 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 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 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.

Issue 104 January 2014



This month's artists will help you push your painting skills into previously untapped areas, with advice on developing your artistic voice, creating art from smoke brushes, and more. Simon Dominic breathes life into an old concept, and we reveal the winners of this year's Rising Stars contest.

Issue 105 February 2014



Loopydave's glamorous roller derby figure leads the way in our pin-up issue, as we talk to the new wave of artists who are carving out a name in the genre. We discover why tattoos are back in a big way, help you to use humour in your fantasy art, and improve your Photoshop brush skills.

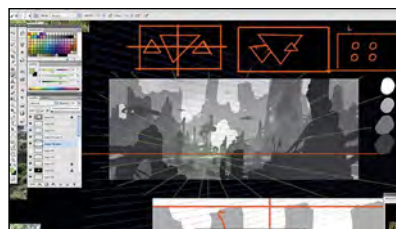
*Resource files are only available from issue 85 onwards.

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

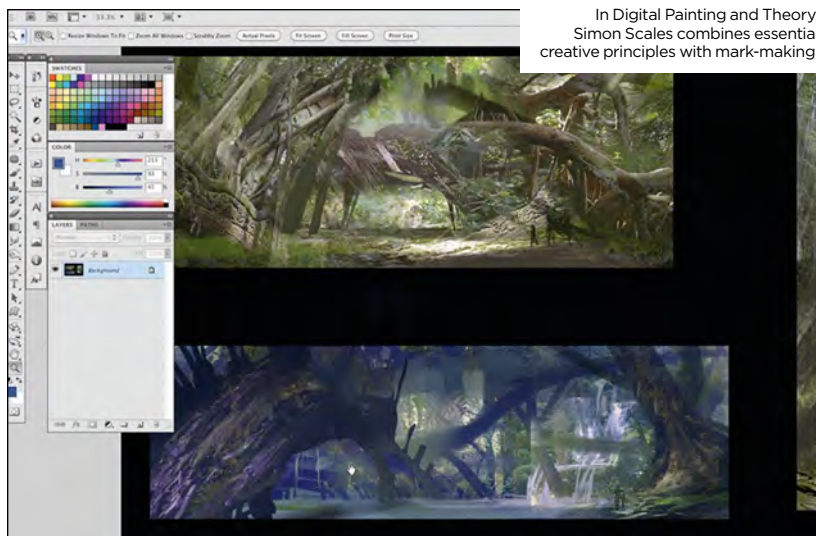




DOWNLOAD RESOURCES VIDEO SAMPLE <http://ifxm.ag/sto1Q6ry>



You'll see how this piece evolves from thumbnail to concept artwork.



In Digital Painting and Theory, Simon Scales combines essential creative principles with mark-making.



Value studies are where Simon ensures that the basics of the image work.

Introduction to Digital Painting and Theory, Vol 1

ROCK-SOLID Concept artist Simon Scales explains not just how to paint digitally, but how to create fantasy and sci-fi images that work

Publisher CDW Studios **Price** £30 **Format** Download **Web** www.cdwstudios.com

Simon Scales's four-hour workshop, edited down from a series of live presentations, starts with the simplest of scribbles before reaching a sumptuous level of detail in the final minutes. Simon starts with the most basic of shapes and shows how even simply overlapping them creates a sense of depth. From here, he successively builds up a set of images from thumbnails and value studies to colour breakdowns and finished concepts.

By taking you through the entire creative process, Simon helps you to understand why even the most polished painting techniques can't rescue a poorly conceived image. Treating composition as a more intuitive process than simply following the Rule of Thirds, he shows in the first few chapters of his video how shape, scale and perspective interact to create a robust structure for your picture. It's as good an explanation of



DETAILS

Topics covered

- Composition basics
- Creating thumbnails
- Value studies
- Creating a design language
- Custom brushes
- Planning paintings
- Incorporating textures and photos
- Lighting

Length

252 minutes

Rating



the fundamental theories of image-making as you'll find anywhere.

Once you've got the basics spot-on, it's time to work on the detail. Developing a few concepts before choosing one to take to completion, Simon uses the tried-and-trusted concept art approach of photo-bashing, bringing textures and references into his image through blending and manipulation, then working over them. There are plenty of practical Photoshop tips along the way, such as creating custom brushes, but it's the manner in which Simon develops his vision for each image that impresses.

It's a shame that CDW's video watermark obscures the Navigator in Photoshop, which Simon frequently stresses is a crucial part of his creative process, so we can't see what he sees. That minor irritation aside, this is a hugely educational video that will help you not just paint well, but create images with rock-solid foundations.

ARTIST PROFILE

SIMON SCALES

Simon is a freelance video game concept artist and matte-painter. In 2008 he attended the Concept Design Academy in Pasadena, California. Since then he's provided key concept art and matte-paintings for LEGO, also working on the game De Blob 2: The Underground for THQ and creating freelance concept art for numerous video game companies and publishers. He's also the director of CDW

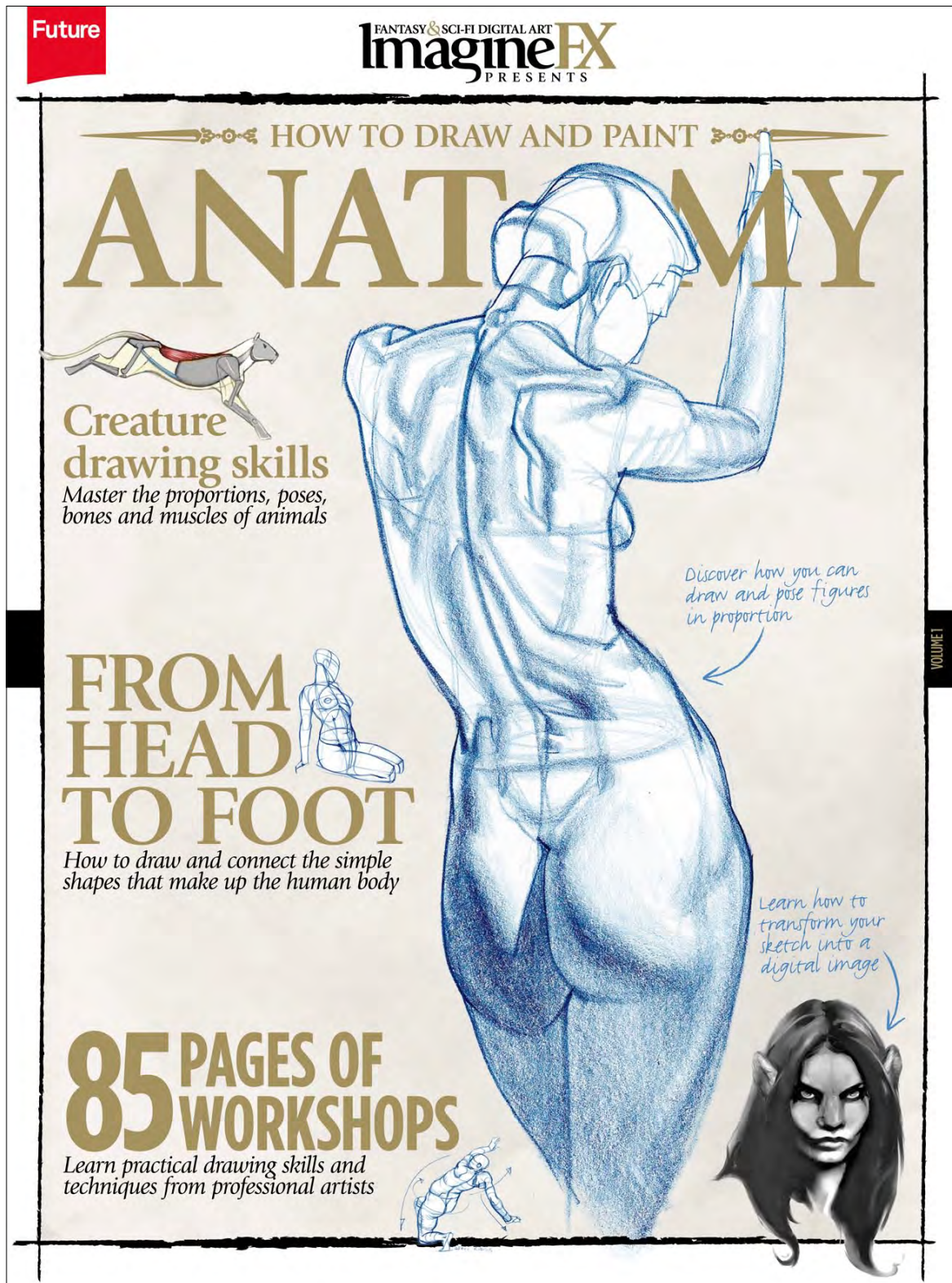


Studios, a private school for visual effects and entertainment design in Adelaide, Australia.

www.simon scales.com.au

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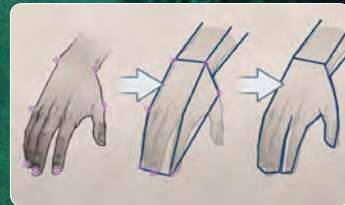
This issue:



100 FXPosé Traditional
The best traditional art revealed.



104 Creative Space
We visit Dr. Sketchy's: Chicago.



112 Anatomy advice
Getting to grips with hands.



114 First Impressions
Bob Eggleton explains it all.

LEARN HOW TO PAINT A
**CLASSIC PULP
CHARACTER**

See how Darren Bader works up an evocative painting of Tarzan of the Apes **Page 106**

FXPosé *Traditional*

SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL FANTASY ARTISTS

🇨🇦 **Edith Lebeau**

LOCATION: Canada
WEB: www.edithlebeau.com
EMAIL: edithlebeau@hotmail.com
MEDIA: Acrylics



After many years spent living in the countryside, Edith's work often features fauna and flora. The Canadian artist, now based in Montreal, combines these aspects to her portraiture of strong women. Edith also draws inspiration from pop culture and mythology to give her work a surreal, almost hallucinatory aesthetic. She extends this ambitious and conceptual approach to gallery shows. "For a recent show," she says, "I wanted to create my own neighbourhood, my own world – paintings that are interacting with each other, telling stories."

Her work has been exhibited across North America and Europe. Summer 2014 will see an exhibition in California.

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"I like the contrast that Edith has created in these artworks. The characters' relaxed, almost wistful expressions are at odds with the fantasy elements – but in a good way, of course!"

Cliff Hope,
Operations Editor

1 HIDE AND SEEK

Acrylic on wood, 9x12in
"This one is about friendship – more specifically, the friends we lose. It has a fairy tale feel to it, and something that's very comforting to me."

2 THE ANIMAL IN ME

Acrylic on wood, 11x14in
"This one was created for the Animal in Me PRISMA artist collective group show. I guess the title says it all. This is probably my favourite at the moment. I'm just very happy with the rendering and the emotion expressed."





Tom Babbey

LOCATION: US

WEB: www.tombabbey.com

EMAIL: tom@tombabbey.com

MEDIA: Oils



Tom's passion for painting began after college. He attended Watts Atelier of the Arts, in California, where he indulged his love of mythical monsters.

"If I had to choose a favourite subject to paint," Tom says, "it'd be dragons. There's an infinite amount of design possibilities and a slight change in features can change the creature's entire personality."

The San Diego-based freelance artist is currently working on a series combining his fascination with the fictional fire-breathers and real-life nature. The project approaches the painting of fantasy creatures with a naturalist's eye. "By doing so," Tom says, "I hope to help the viewer rediscover some of the magic that exists in our own natural world."

1 THE ENCROACHING WILDS

Oil on masonite, 18x24in

"This is from a personal project that explores wildlife art through fantasy. The dragons are not protagonists or antagonists, simply wild creatures."

2 TITAN

Oil on masonite, 11x14in

"Background stories help with concepting. Here immense primordial statues are reactivating after millennia of dormancy, ready to reset civilisation."

3 WAR PRIEST

Oil on masonite, 11x14in

"I had a great model for this painting, which enabled me to really lose myself in the brushwork and enjoy the tactile process of laying down paint."

4 KING OF WYRMS

Oil on masonite, 24x18in

"To explore characterisation in dragons, I drew inspiration -and reference from vultures, mummified cats, arthritic hands, ancient headdresses and skulls."

SUBMIT YOUR ART TO FXPOSÉ

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IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Tom's work has a distinct voice, with a strong colour palette and tone that makes it unmistakably his. I like the concept of looking at fantasy creatures with a naturalist's eye – a very interesting idea."

Gary Evans,
Staff Writer

Creative Space

HEY YOU!
Are you a part of
a regular art class or
group? Email us at
mail@imaginefx.com
if you want to
feature here!



Photo by 'Easy' Ethan Coal

DR. SKETCHY'S: CHICAGO

Drinking, drawing and nudity – all in the name of art. **ETHAN COAL** introduces us to the Chicago branch of the world's premier alt-drawing movement

Dr. Sketchy's began life in a Brooklyn dive bar in 2005. Founded by American artists Molly Crabapple and AV Phibes, the anti-art school was conceived as place for sketchers of any standing to meet up and draw "glamorous underground performers in an atmosphere of boozy conviviality." Its mix of art, burlesque and theatre has since spawned events in over 100 cities around the world.

Ethan Coal, organiser of the Chicago branch, says we're living in increasingly puritanical times. Not only is Dr. Sketchy's a reaction to this, it also gives artists the opportunity to get out of the studio and away from the computer.

"The human figure is not just bones and muscles," Ethan explains, "but incredibly sexy and alluring. And Chicago's burlesque community celebrates women (and men, occasionally) of all shapes and sizes, which is an important reminder to artists who may have been using airbrushed photographs of women as reference.

"I find it incredibly rewarding to meet both new and experienced artists who are thrilled by the new challenge of drawing burlesque models."

Dr. Sketchy's Chicago takes place at the Everleigh Social Club, where the city's art and burlesque communities work side by side. As with similar events around the world, it features life models in unique



Dr. Sketchy's encourages artists to stop using airbrushed photographs of women as reference and draw what they see.

costumes, often centred on a specific theme and often nude – at least, in those cities that allow nudity. But more than that, it enables pros and non-pros alike to sharpen their skills and gain confidence in drawing, and have fun while doing it.

"Traditional figure drawing can often be a solemn affair, Ethan says, "with very little social interaction. Dr. Sketchy's gives artists of all skill levels an opportunity to draw in an irreverent but dedicated manner, and encourages them to interact with each other. It also brings a little danger and excitement to art."

For more details on Dr. Sketchy's and to find your nearest event go to www.drsketchy.com, and visit www.drsketchy.com/branch/Chicago to see more from the Chicago event.

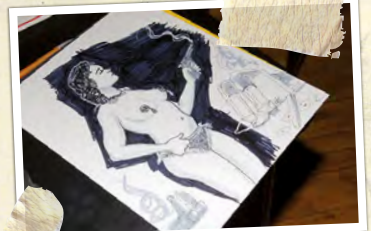
Creative Space Dr. Sketchy's: Chicago

Dr. Sketchy's anti-art school has branches in over 100 cities around the world - each of them offering an atmosphere of "boozy conviviality."



DOCTOR'S ORDERS

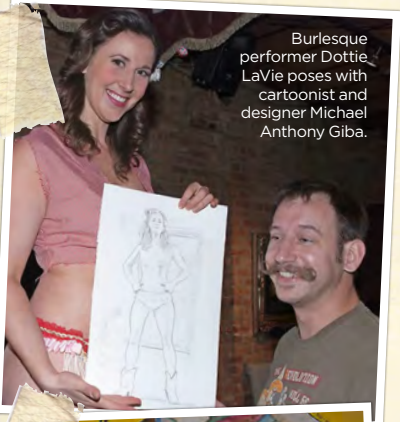
Some of the best work from the good doctor's Chicago group...



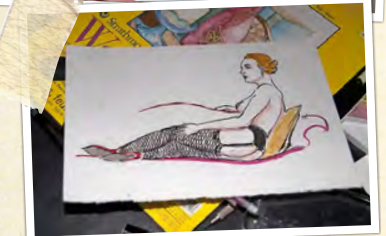
Storyboard artist Archangelo Crelencia injects some humour to his drawing.



Archangelo at work at Dr. Sketchy's Chicago's Draw Me Deadly event.



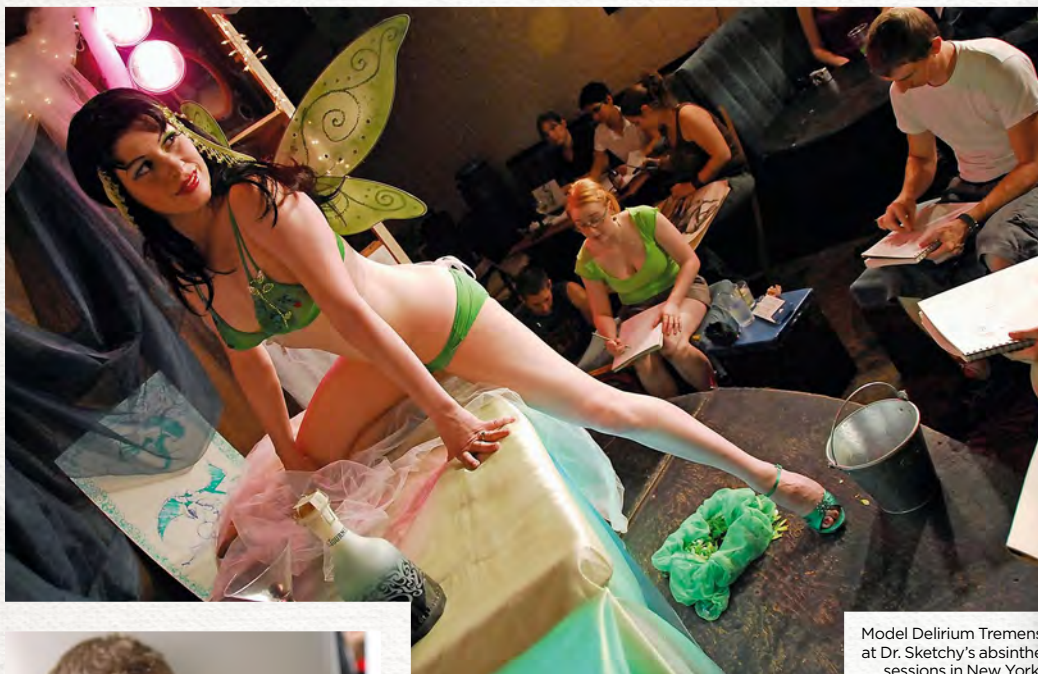
Burlesque performer Dottie LaVie poses with cartoonist and designer Michael Anthony Giba.



A pen, ink and watercolour sketch of model Deanna Déadly, by Archangelo Crelencia.



Chicago-based concept artist and designer Marco Nelor shows off his skills with pencil and paper.



Model Delirium Tremens at Dr. Sketchy's absinthe sessions in New York.



Open to all abilities, the event is as much about socialising as it is sketching.



"Glamorous underground performers" are at the heart of each Dr. Sketchy's event.

Photo by Steve Prue

Photo by Steve Prue

FANTASY
illustrator

Workshops

Acrylics

Oils

PORTRAY A CLASSIC PULP CHARACTER

Forced to improvise on an artistic retreat, **DAREN BADER**
works up an evocative painting of Tarzan of the Apes



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When I was a child I used to walk in the woods and climb trees barefoot, pretending to be Tarzan. Of course, I would cut my foot on a pinecone, then go home and put some shoes on like anyone else with half a brain. But for as long as I can remember I've had an affinity with nature, both real and imagined. And I've always been drawn to stories such as Tarzan.

Combining those interests with the imagery I was seeing in the early 70s shaped my artistic sensibilities. Those early pulp adventure covers and

paperback novels made huge impressions on me. From NC Wyeth to Frank Schoonover and Frank Frazetta to Jeff Jones, my artistic path was well set.

This piece was a small oil (5x7in) for a Society Of Illustrators: MicroVisions charity auction. I was pleased with it, but knew someday the image needed to be approached on a much larger scale.

Typically I work in my small studio, where undertaking a large painting isn't easy. But as fate would have it, I was going on a painting retreat – the perfect opportunity to bring Tarzan up to scale.

We set up in a huge old barn, with whatever lights were brought or found in

the loft and portable easels. I only brought a large role of primed canvas, a few brushes, painter's tape and a squirt bottle to mist the acrylic paints.

The painting would need to be finished in oils, but I wasn't going to take a 30x40in wet oil painting home on a plane. So I would block in the piece with acrylic and save the final oils for home.



Daren Bader lives in San Diego, where he works for Rockstar Games. He's also designed cards for Magic: The Gathering, and provided art for Dungeons & Dragons, Blizzard, Games Workshop and many more.
www.darenbader.blogspot.co.uk

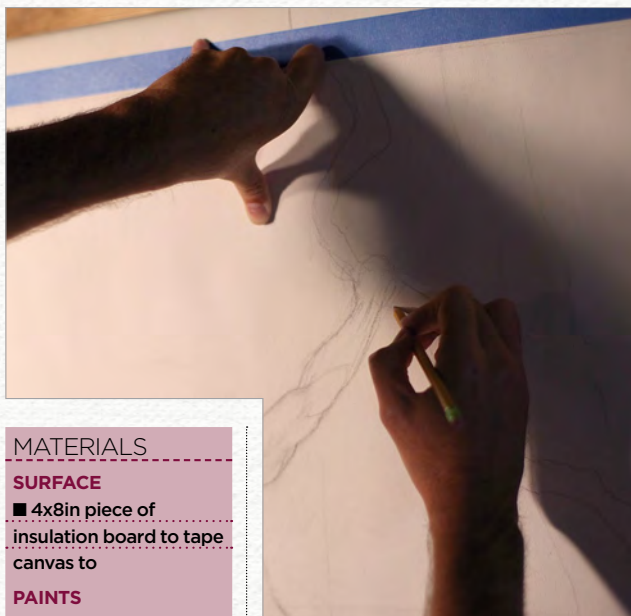
1 Capture the idea in a pencil sketch

Sketches are magical because they contain both the spontaneity and the initial idea in its purest form. I try my best to capture and promote these qualities throughout the whole process (but rarely succeed).



2 Produce an oil colour comp

Even though the colour comp is used as a guideline, I will allow myself latitude to make changes during the process of the final painting. But I do my best to stick to the parts of the comp I feel work well.



MATERIALS

SURFACE

■ 4x8in piece of insulation board to tape canvas to

PAINTS

■ Acrylics: Liquitex and Golden paints

■ Oils: Grumbacher Max, and Winsor

& Newton water mixable oils

■ Liquin and linseed oil

■ A foil pie tin for a palette

BRUSHES

■ 2in house painting brush

■ Grumbacher Filbert #8, #4 and #2 brights

■ 1in student quality Liquitex flat

■ A few smaller fine brushes (#2 and #4 chisels)

3 Getting the drawing right first time

I take my time as I begin to sketch the character out, after blocking in the larger compositional shapes first. It's essential to continually step back to look at the drawing to make sure it's properly composed and well proportioned, especially on a piece as large as this one.

PRO TIP STEP BACK

View your work from distance, in the mirror and upside down, to keep an eye on composition and value structure.



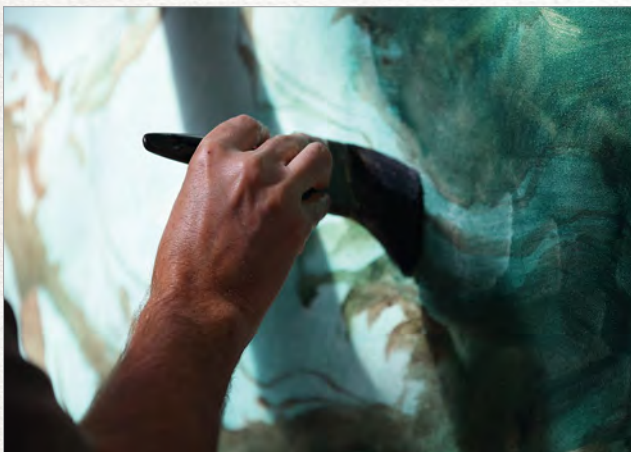
4 Drawing with paint

I use Burnt Umber, Viridian Green and Thalo Green to block in the darker areas. This is just an extension of the drawing process with the composition still being the main focus.



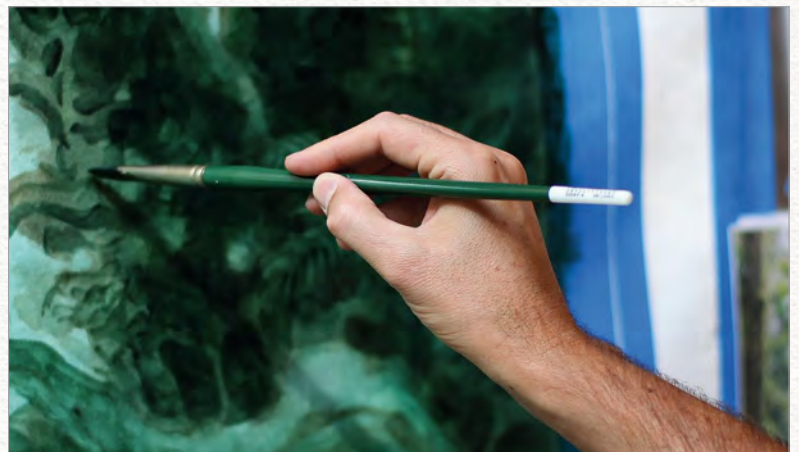


Drawing with paint 4



5 Killing the canvas

At this stage I need to get rid of the white of the canvas, so I begin to layer in medium and dark values over the entire canvas. I use a large brush with lots of pigment and water, allowing as much spontaneity and gesture as possible.



6 Early refinement

While the canvas is still wet, I slowly begin to refine some of the smaller shapes in the foliage, letting myself enjoy the abstract nature of the shapes and textures without getting bogged down with too much detail at this stage. It's coming along nicely.





**BRUSH TIP
TOOL MAINTENANCE**
Get in the habit of
treating your brushes well.
Wash them with soap and
warm water after
each session.

7 Layering washes

Because I'm using acrylics, my approach is to apply layer after layer of dark washes. In doing so I am continually honing the overall value scheme of the painting to create a ground on which I can begin to apply the opaque lights.



8 Adding visual interest to the foliage

At this point, I can get more specific with the details of the foliage, the idea being to add various textures and shapes that trigger extra interest in the viewer's eye. I use jungle reference, from an image search on the internet, in an attempt to add some authenticity to the environment.

ARTIST INSIGHT

KNOW YOUR MEDIUMS

Acrylic dries fast, oil slowly, so use each to your advantage. (Remember, you can paint oil over acrylic, but not acrylic over oil.)



9 Blocking in the birds

I use small pieces of tape at first to indicate the bird placements, moving them and arranging them until I'm happy with the overall flow of the flock. Then I remove one piece of tape at a time, blocking in a bird shape in its place.

10 Turning the corner

Up to this point, the entire painting has been monochromatic and cool in tone, and the process has been about darkening with thin paint and washes. Now I begin to introduce warm tones and lighter values into the piece with more opaque paint.





11 Further refinement of the character

I mix and apply the mid values first, then brighten as I go along. It feels almost like sculpting as I lay consecutive brighter layers on top of each other with what is essentially a dry-brush technique. Sometimes I need to knock it all back again with another dark wash, which is simple to do with fast-drying acrylics.



12 Detailing the birds

I made sure to bring plenty of reference for the birds. So I begin to strengthen their silhouettes and flesh out their details, pushing their finish to completion. I know I will need to eventually break out oil paints to finish the painting, but these birds are very likely to remain 100 per cent acrylic.

13 Putting away the acrylics

I continue to refine the painting in acrylics to the best of my ability, knowing some desired results will be much easier to complete with oils once I get home. Taking a break from a piece can also be helpful, because it enables me to have a fresh perspective on it once I return to it.



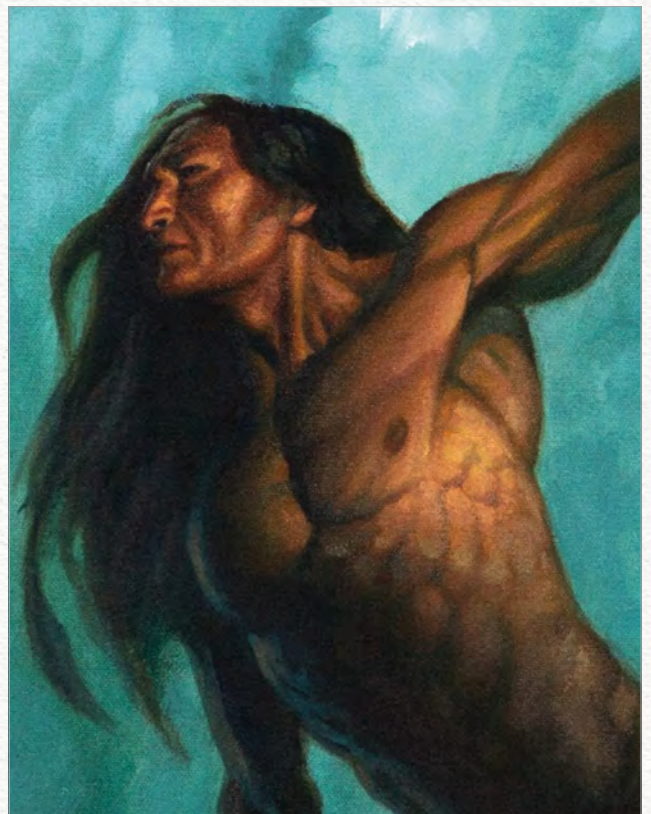
ARTIST INSIGHT

BE SPONTANEOUS

Have a clear idea of what you would like to achieve, but allow for the journey to take its own twists and turns.

14 Bringing it all home

Once I'm back home in my studio, I finish off the waterfall in the background by adding more solid water shapes and edges, being careful to maintain the vertical light-to-dark gradient. This would have been difficult to achieve with acrylics because when working with white, they tend to dry a shade or two darker than when wet. It was a piece of cake with the oils!



15 Final tweaks

Unhappy with the face, I take reference shots of some action figures I have lying around. As I treat all of my reference, I try to use it loosely as a guide instead of a precise copy. Then I finalise a few more anatomical odds and ends and sit back to see what else might need adjustment. ●



Pencil

Ballpoint pen

Charcoal

DRAWING HANDS FROM LIFE

They're often cited as the most difficult part of the human body to depict, so **CHRIS LEGASPI** is more than happy to help you draw hands from life or observation

Because of its sophistication and incredible range of movement, the human hand is complex to draw. When I draw complex forms, I like to simplify as much as possible, especially when drawing from life.

To begin, I prefer to first note the outer shape. I look for key landmarks such as the knuckles, fingertips and the bones of the wrist. Then I draw a shape that captures the outer form. Once I have the hand blocked in, I refine my drawing by

adding details, anatomy and fingers.

I also want to note the gesture of the form, using simple marks, such as straights and C-curves, as much as possible. These help me to capture the gesture and construct my simple shapes.

The fingers are a unique challenge, because they can move in a variety of ways, which can make the pose very complex. To simplify this, I like to group the fingers as much as possible. I'll often begin with the wrist and palm only. Then, I group all the fingers together into one

MATERIALS

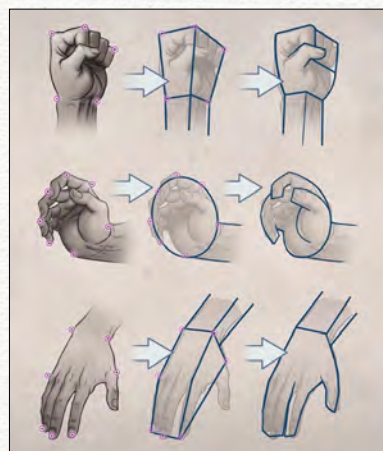
- Smooth newsprint paper
- Carbothello pencil, black (or Conte B) or Willow charcoal sticks (medium grade)
- Kneaded eraser
- Ballpoint pen
- Sketchbook

mass. When I have time, I'll then refine the drawing by separating the fingers and adding details.

To make the hand feel solid and three-dimensional, I'll emphasise the structure using simple 3D forms such as boxes, spheres and cylinders. I'm keen to define corners and planes because it helps when I'm ready to add lighting and shading.



Chris is keen to share his knowledge of art theory. You can see more of his work at www.freshdesigner.com.

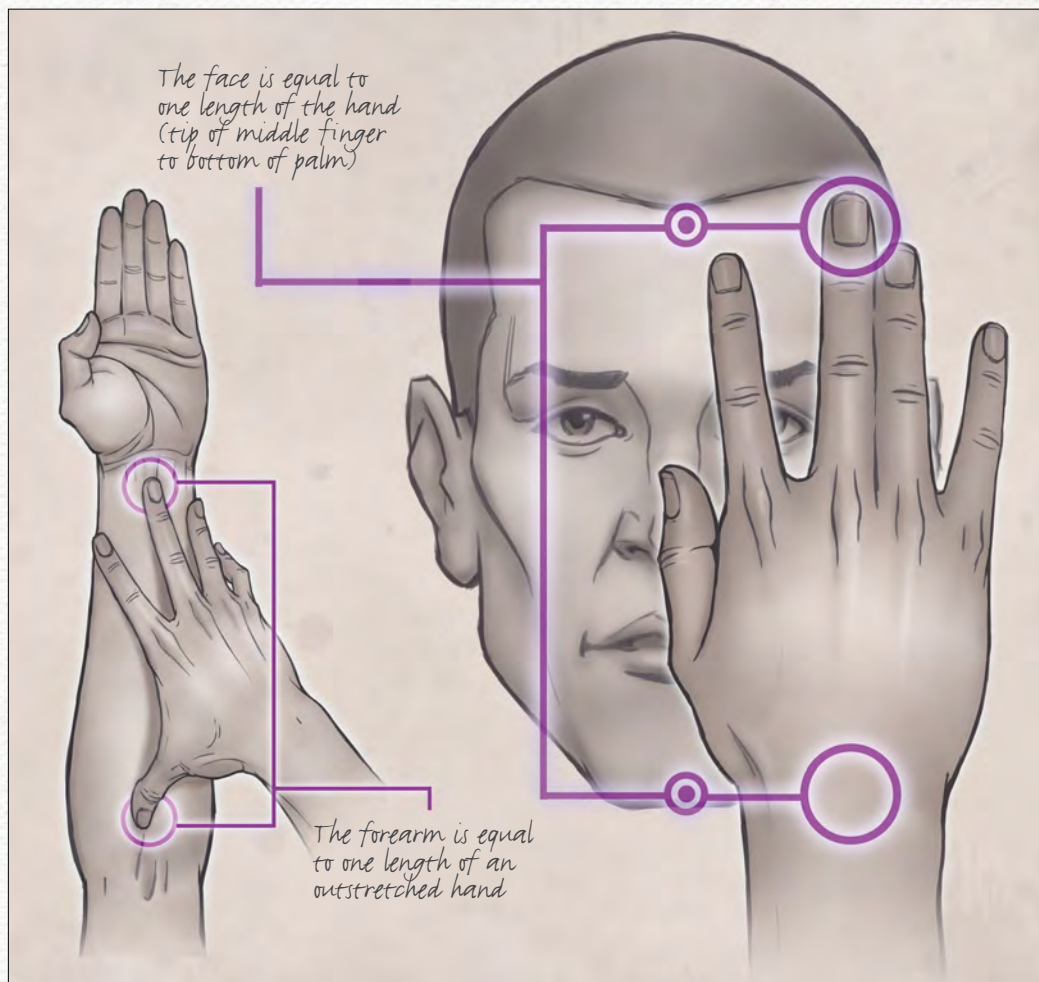


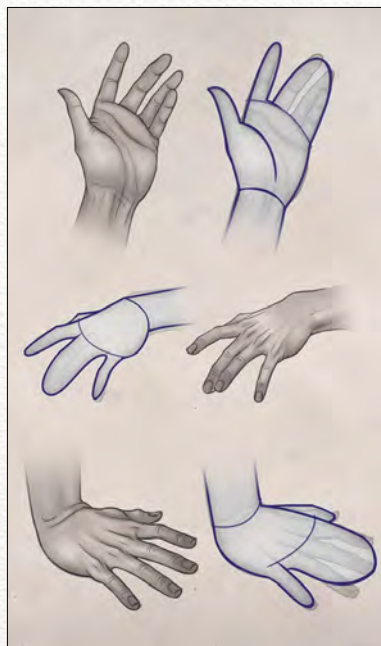
1 Focus on the shape

I begin by first observing the outer landmarks and imagining a geometric profile that resembles the outer shape the hand makes. A simple box, circle or triangle is often enough to capture and describe the essence of the hand as a whole.

2 Basic proportions

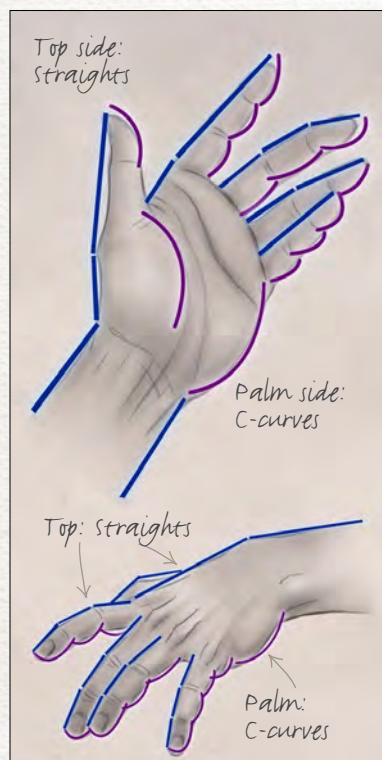
I compare the size of the hand to the model's head and their forearm, which helps me achieve accurate proportions. The hand, from middle finger to wrist, is about the size of the face. When outstretched the hand measures the length of the forearm.





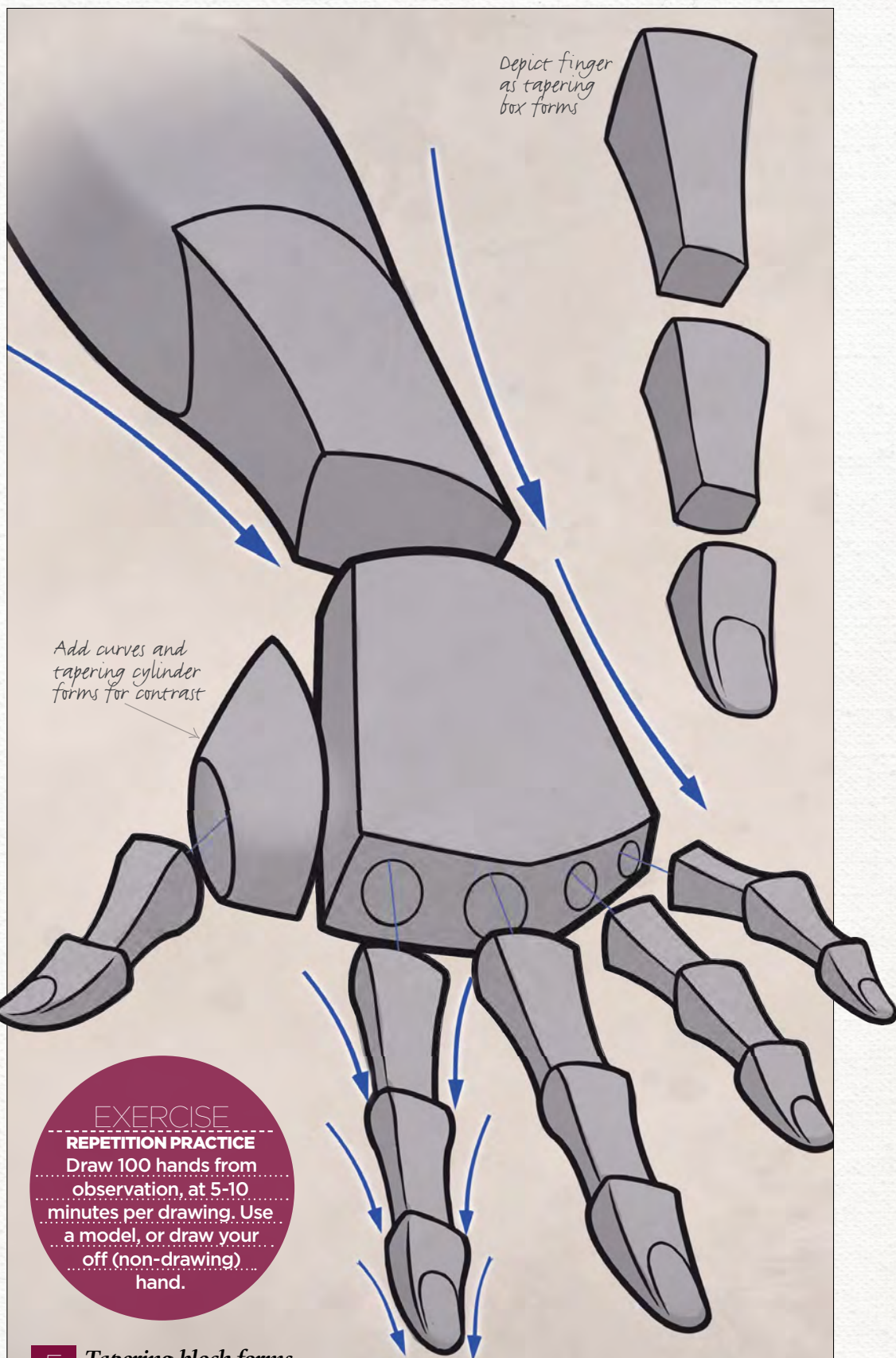
3 Grouping fingers

To simplify the hand, I group as many fingers as possible. This is known as the glove technique. I first imagine the fingers contained inside a glove, and then begin the drawing with the simplified glove shape.



4 C-curves and straights

Straights and C-curves help me capture the gesture. Because the top of the hand and fingers are bony, straights work well. C-curves are better suited for the underside, though, because the palm is meaty and fleshy. These marks quickly give the feeling of a life-like, organic form.



EXERCISE

REPETITION PRACTICE

Draw 100 hands from observation, at 5-10 minutes per drawing. Use a model, or draw your off (non-drawing) hand.

5 Tapering block forms

I use tapering block forms to help me to construct the hand. All forms on the body naturally taper, including the hand. Block forms are ideal because of the bony nature of the hands, fingers and knuckles. They also help to show form by defining corners and plane changes.

ARTIST INSIGHT

MIRROR IMAGING

For practice and self-study, I like to draw my off hand using a mirror. This simulates drawing my strong hand, and gives more variety of hand poses.



First Impressions

✧ Bob Eggleton ✧

Discover how this artist struck out on his own after giving up on art school...



What do you think people's first impression is of you?

Some see me as just the Godzilla Guy. Others view me as an overgrown hippie. I see myself as an outsider. I don't go along with a lot of the trends in illustration. I just paint what I can have fun with.

Who are the artists that inspire you?

It's a toss-up between JMW Turner, John Martin or Gustave Doré. They did fantasy art before it was called that. That's not to say I don't admire great artists now, but my first inspirations are those guys.

Do you have a painting ritual?

I start everything differently. Art is always evolving, and experimentation needs to be encouraged just to keep it from becoming bland.

What did it feel like when you first saw your art published in a book?

It was pretty cool. I approached Paper Tiger in 1994 or 95. I'd won a Hugo and figured this was the time. It was all quite easy. I did several books with Paper Tiger, and they sold really well. And the



DRAGON'S RING

"This piece from 2009 is a benchmark painting of the way I love creating art."

best royalty out of my first book was that I met my wife. She bought the book Alien Horizons in Australia and wrote to me. Next thing I knew, I was jetting down to see her and well, here we are!

How did you feel when you first won the Hugo Award in 1994 for best artist (and then a further seven times!)?

I didn't expect to win. Then I got this frantic call late from a friend screaming,

“Between ages six and eight I devoured those Walter Foster ‘How to draw’ books”

“You won!” So I flew there on short notice to pick it up the next day. These days it's all different, but back then they used mail and paper ballots. The work was seen on covers in bookstores and such. There were no internet sites. Now, people actually campaign for the award.

When did you first realise that you wanted to be an artist?

When I was four. My dad showed me how to draw pictures, perspective and things like that. Between ages six and eight I devoured those Walter Foster

ESCAPE FROM THE RIM

"This piece was my first science fiction painting. Until this painting I primarily worked in ink and pencil."

‘How to draw’ books. I drew a lot in school and collected comics, and I knew then I wanted to do art for a living. I went to an art school for 18 months and it was a fiasco. The focus was on 1970s modern art and when you mentioned names like Frazetta you were laughed at.

Who was your first artistic crush?

Because my mother was British we went over to England a lot. I can never forget seeing these amazing Bruce Pennington covers on the old Pan Science Fiction line of books. Bruce really set me alight. The thrill was this past November I got to meet the man himself at the Brighton World Fantasy Con.

Do you remember the first image that you thought you'd nailed it?

I sold my first professional sale when I was 15. I painted an English landscape in the Cotswolds for a family friend and they paid me well. My first sci-fi painting [below left] was inspired by a lot of British sci-fi artists of the day. It's dodgy looking, but it was also my first cover image for a German publisher in the early 1980s.

What was the first bit of praise you received that spurred you on?

It came when I got to meet an artist named Eric Ladd, who made something of a name for himself around 1978. Eric told me to start “really painting” and do this stuff. He loved what I did. Then I went to the World SF Con in Boston in 1980, put up some drawings I did for fun, and won Best Amateur Artist.

And first knock back?

Back in 1979 a professor of modern art told me I had no talent and I should do something else. It drove me into a deep depression because I had this silly idea that to be any kind of artist I had to go to art school. He was one of the reasons why I left school.

What was the last thing you painted, and were you happy with it?

I am, at this point, pretty happy with my work, relative to what it is. If it suits the job and the client is happy that makes me happy. I have gotten more into fantasy and that makes me pretty happy.

Bob is a eight-time Hugo Award-winning artist. You can see more of his art at www.bobsartdujour.blogspot.com.

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