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47 RONIN

Inside

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TRADITIONAL MEDIA
**BOB EGGLETON IN
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Future

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PLUS! George RR Martin reveals his favourite art

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Welcome... to a very epic fantasy



Each new series of Game of Thrones is a calendar highlight for any self-respecting fantasy fan. This April's airing of season four has been marked in mine for some time. I love the perfectly sketched characters, painted up with intriguing detail and backstory. Then there's, well, everything in the frame. The distinct

environments, the castles, the costumes, the dragons! So much thought, craft and imagination is on show, it's enough to keep an artist inspired until the next season.

So what better time to explore the art of the Seven Kingdoms, and what better way to kick things off than Mélanie Delon's stunning cover workshop of Daenerys Targaryen, sitting on the dragon-forged Iron Throne that she so covets.

On page 40 we speak to the key creatives involved in not only the TV series but the vast, ever-expanding world of Ice and Fire art: the book covers, the card art, the calendars. We also chat with author George RR Martin about his role in much of it.

On page 70 Polish artist Grzegorz Rutkowski has a crack at an epic battle, framed by a mighty wall of ice (that you may recognise). Over on page 78 we've asked Miles Johnston to explain how he creates utterly unique paintings from reference photos, and flick to page 84 to find Daren Horley's secrets in creating an original movie monster.

There's loads more, but before all that, join me in taking one more awed look at the mighty Khaleesi... Right! Let's get started.

Claire

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



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"I love all my characters. Even the ones that I kill horribly"

George RR Martin

Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART



See page 8 for the best new art ➡➡



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John Jude Palencar



FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART
ImagineFX

Resources

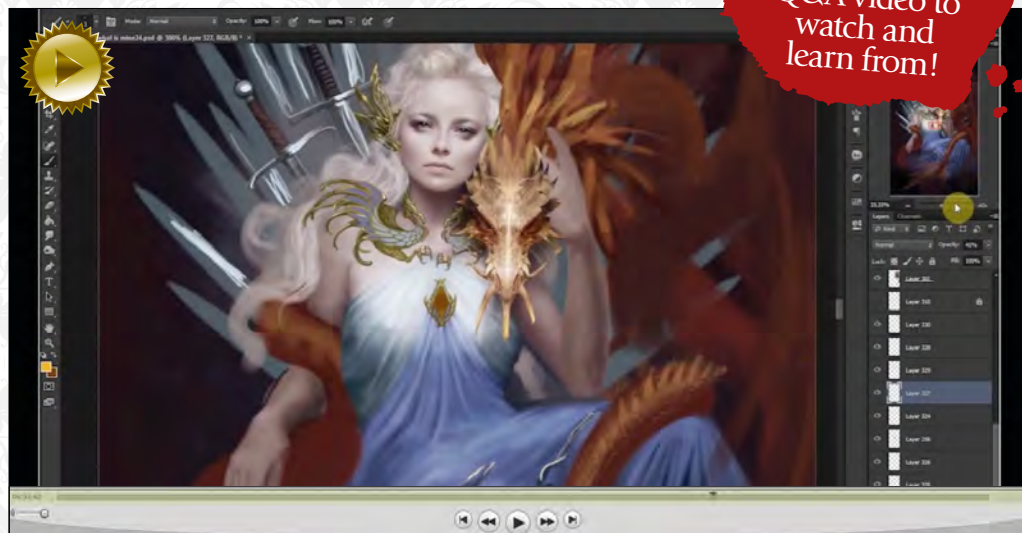
Getting your hands on all of this issue's essential resources is just a few clicks away. Just go to our dedicated web page at <http://ifxm.ag/comfy108seat>

OVER 7 HOURS
of workshop and Q&A video to watch and learn from!

COVER VIDEO

Painting a fantasy icon

Through her illustration of Daenerys Stormborn, Mélanie Delon shows how to build up a detailed illustration that features plenty of texture work. **Plus WIPs, brushes and video**



HOW TO GET YOUR FILES

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

- 1 Go to the website**
Type this into your browser's address bar: <http://ifxm.ag/comfy108seat>.
- 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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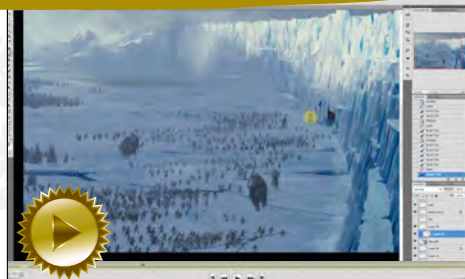




EXCLUSIVE VIDEO TUITION!

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

WORKSHOP VIDEOS



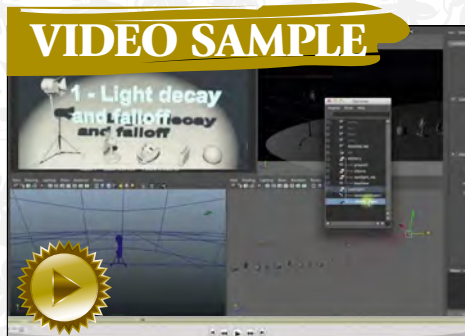
Grzegorz Rutkowski

Learn how to paint a vast battle scene from A Song of Ice and Fire.
Plus WIPs, final image and brushes



Mark Zug

The American illustrator – who's an avid sci-fi fan – explores emotive zoology, aerial perspective and natural light through the creation of his painting Spacelift.
Plus WIPs and final image



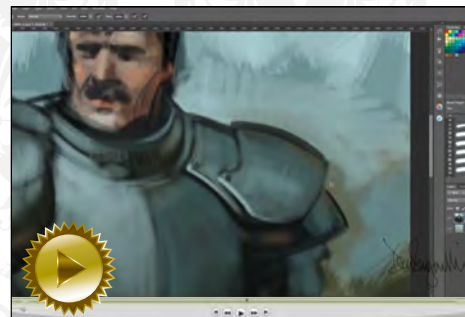
Frederic Durand

View a clip from the illuminating new training video, Light and Shadow: Lighting and Rendering Series Vol 1.



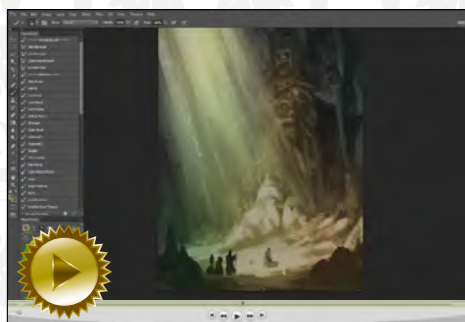
Denman Rooke

Find out how to effectively replicate the look of watercolour digitally.
Plus WIPs and final image



Don Seegmiller

Use colours and values to paint realistic-looking armour, and imply wear and tear.
Plus WIPs and final image



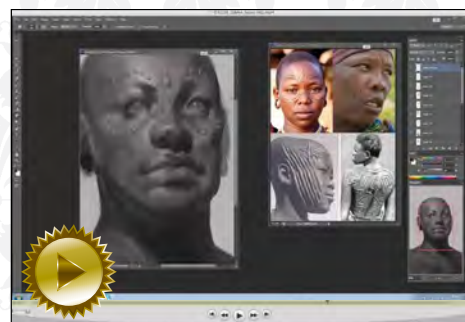
Denman Rooke

Control your light sources and successfully depict an underground scene.
Plus WIP and final image



John Petersen

Understand the secrets to depicting suitably disgusting nose slime.
Plus WIPs and final image



Sam Carr

Learn how to use light and shadows to paint realistic-looking tribal scars.
Plus final image

PLUS Videos on effective techniques for painting tropical fish, quick sci-fi concepts, bullet exit wounds, translucent ghosts and ugliness, with WIPs and final artwork from many of this month's workshop artists, including Liam Peters and Lorland Chen.

114 CUSTOM BRUSHES, INCLUDING...

SMUDGE BLEND

Miles uses this to soften edges and break up stroke marks.

SKIN BRUSH

This is great for pores, blotches and skin in general, says Liam Peters.

THE SOFT BRUSH

Mélanie Delon uses this brush to add texture to any element.



Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

Danar Worya

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Danar can pinpoint the time when he began taking digital art seriously. "October 2010," the drawing Dutchman says.

"A friend of mine showed me the works of Dan LuVisi and Kekai Kotaki. I was amazed people get paid for doing what they love." And so Danar began painting five hours a day, every day.

He took to Facebook and forum Crimson Daggers to seek the advice of fellow artists – who, he says, helped with inspiration but also with promoting his work. It's a portfolio that ranges from understated portraiture to complex mech designs. "As long as I'm painting," Danar concludes, "I'm a happy man."

1 ATHENA – PROJECT REBIRTH

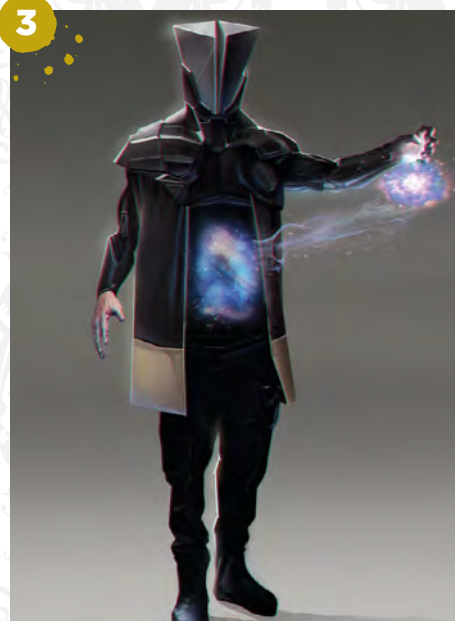
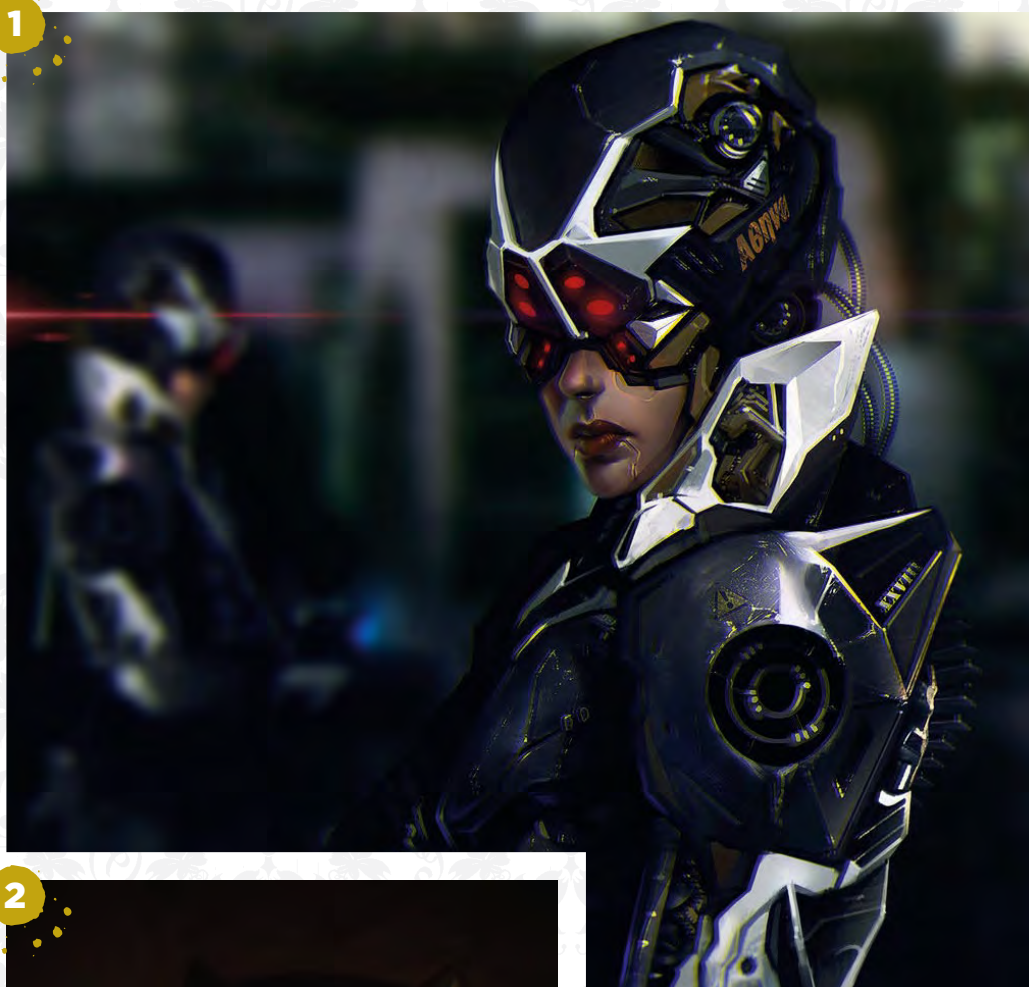
"This is a personal project. I'm still working on the story, but this gives a good idea of what the whole project would look like."

2 DARK KNIGHT RETURNS PORTRAIT

"This painting was inspired by Frank Miller's Dark Knight Returns – I wanted to make some fan art based on his work. This is one of those paintings that just came out of nowhere."

3 SUPREME BEING "I made this piece after seeing a reference photo. I used the photo as a base and then tried to work with shapes and defining what type of character it is."

4 INNOCENT "This painting is based on Brandon Witzel's work. I wanted to test out the hard versus soft edges on this one and give it a traditional feeling."



ARTIST OF THE MONTH

Congratulations Danar – 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.



ImagineFX May 2014

FXPosé submissions to: fxpose@imaginefx.com

Artist crit

Concept artist Mark Molnar praises Danar's classic use of light and shadows



"Danar's design language is up to date, but I can also feel the tradition of the old masters in his painting style. He's definitely an artist to keep an eye on."



+ Oliver Odmark

LOCATION: England

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Oliver took an unusual route into the games industry. After graduating from art school, the Swede worked in a jam factory and later a sweet shop – all the while continuing to hone his craft. The perseverance paid off. The Sundsvall-born creative landed an equally sweet job as a concept artist.

“My plan was to learn 3D at school,” Oliver says, “practising my 2D art in my spare time. During the summer break of my second year, I was offered an internship at a prominent game studio in London. Six months later I was offered a permanent contract. That was 18 months ago.”

Oliver is always adding to what is an already impressive portfolio, one that's full of charismatic character designs and scenes full of dramatic tension.

1



2



1 GAMBO STANK “This whole image is inspired by a made-up name a friend of mine blurted out one day – Gambo Stank had to be drawn. Simple as that.”

2 WEDDING CRASHER “I worked on this image on and off for a very long time. Not until I simplified the whole picture did I manage to finish it. I learned a lot drawing this piece.”

3 ESCAPE “This was a dream I had years ago. I was rowing this man in fancy dress out across a still lake. He was pointing a polished silver gun at me, but the whole thing felt very serene. I’ve wanted to paint this for quite a while.”

3



1

Chelsea Hantken

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Chelsea says each of her portraits is a self-portrait. It's something she's only just realised. "There's a deeper meaning to my portraiture," the Adelaide artist says, "and I didn't see it for a long time."

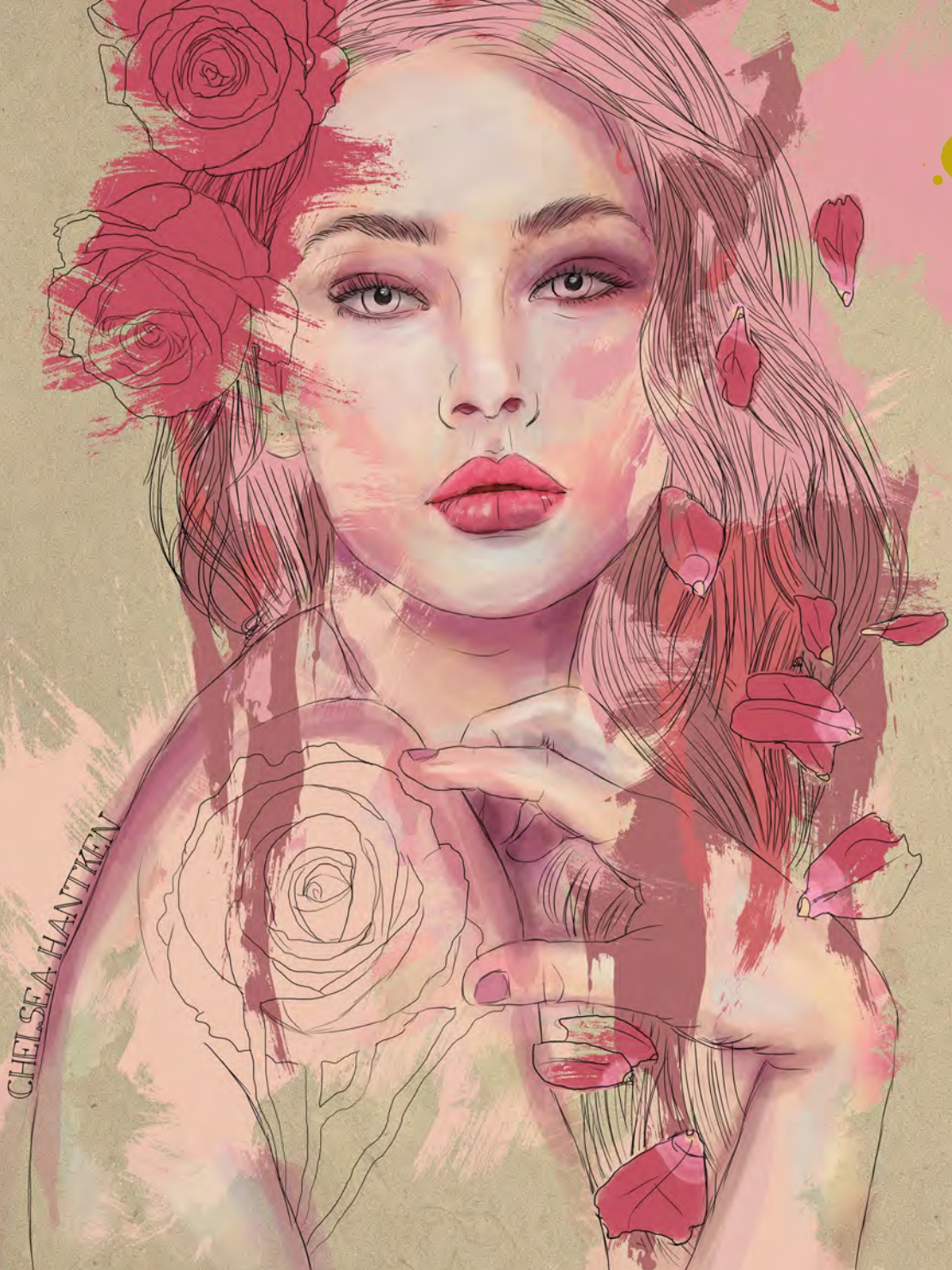
While her artwork is digital, using textured paper and her own brushes – "many created from scanned images of paint splatters created myself" – there's a traditional feel underpinning her work.

"My inspirations definitely stem from a love of romance, femininity, empowerment and emotion," Chelsea says. "Makeup, celebrities and fashion design are also huge influences in my creative process."

1 PETALS & THORNS "Even if love is full of thorns, I still embrace it. I know that in between those thorns, there's a rose that's worth all the pain. This is the most fragile portrait I've drawn and yet one with the least number of colours. I felt inspired by the time Lana Del Rey was wearing all those flower headbands."

2 LATHANDER'S LIGHT "This is my character, Skye, from when I used to play D&D (shhhh!). She was a really cool bard and followed the deity Lathander. In this moment, she's worshipping the sun."

3 FALLING TO PIECES "Inspired by the lyrics of the song by David Guetta featuring Sia – 'You loved me and I froze in time, hungry for that flesh of mine' – this portrait is as delicate as it's strong. I pushed my boundaries by attempting to draw an animal here."



IMAGINEFX CRIT



"I'm impressed by the delicate nature of Chelsea's image *Petals & Thorns*. Her limited colour palette and subtle use of line art make for an engaging figure composition. The movement of the falling petals is a lovely touch."
Cliff Hope,
Operations Editor

2



3



Marie Beschorner

LOCATION: Germany

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Marie is a freelance artist and illustrator working in advertising, book illustration and concept art for films, games and apps.

Personal work sees the artist indulge her love of environment and character design. It's in these pieces, with nature as her subject, where she excels. A string of images depicting lush landscapes and charismatic animals are the highlights of her portfolio.

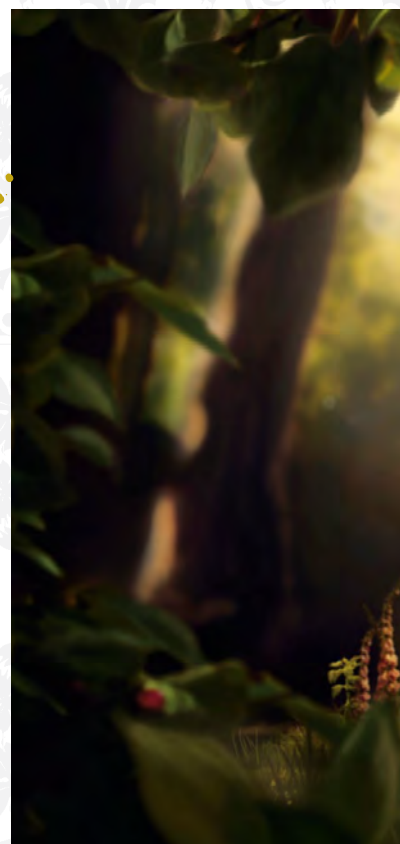
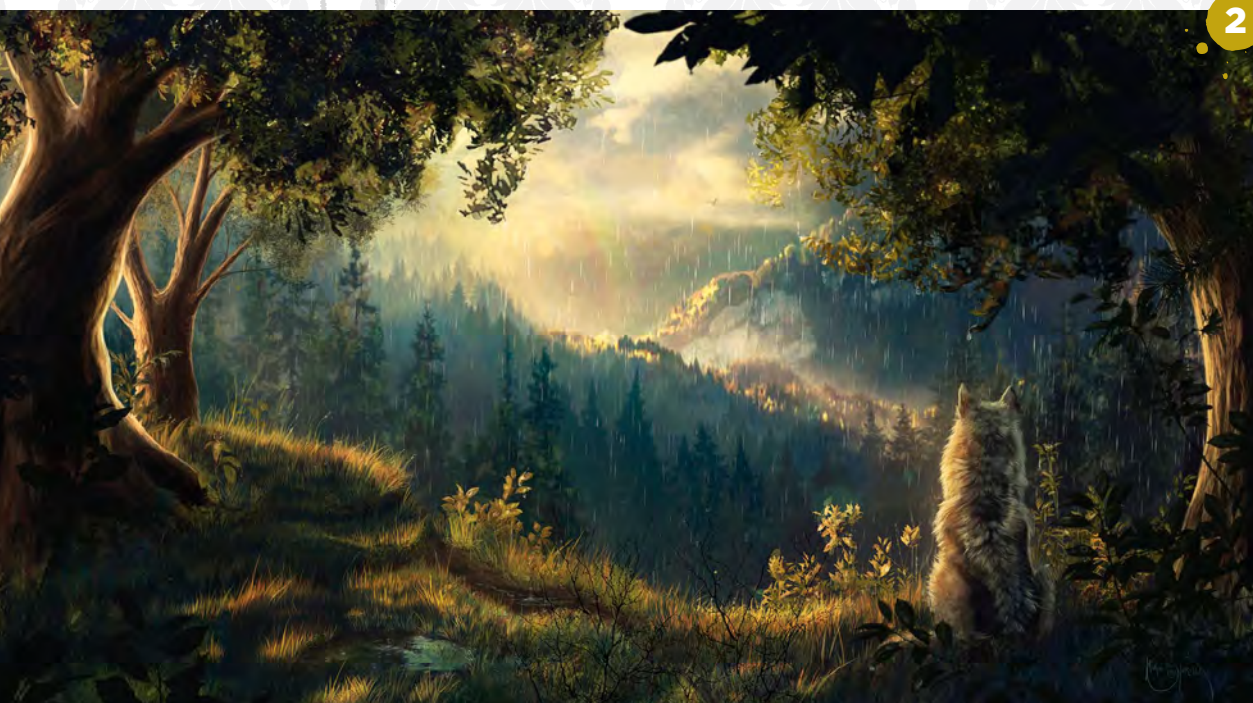
Marie also shares her art skills through numerous educational programmes, leading lectures and practical workshops.

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Marie's skill at depicting natural light is enough to take your breath away. And then there's the cute critters that inhabit her environments, with soft fur that's begging to be stroked. Although maybe not the wolf's..."

Daniel Vincent,
Art Editor





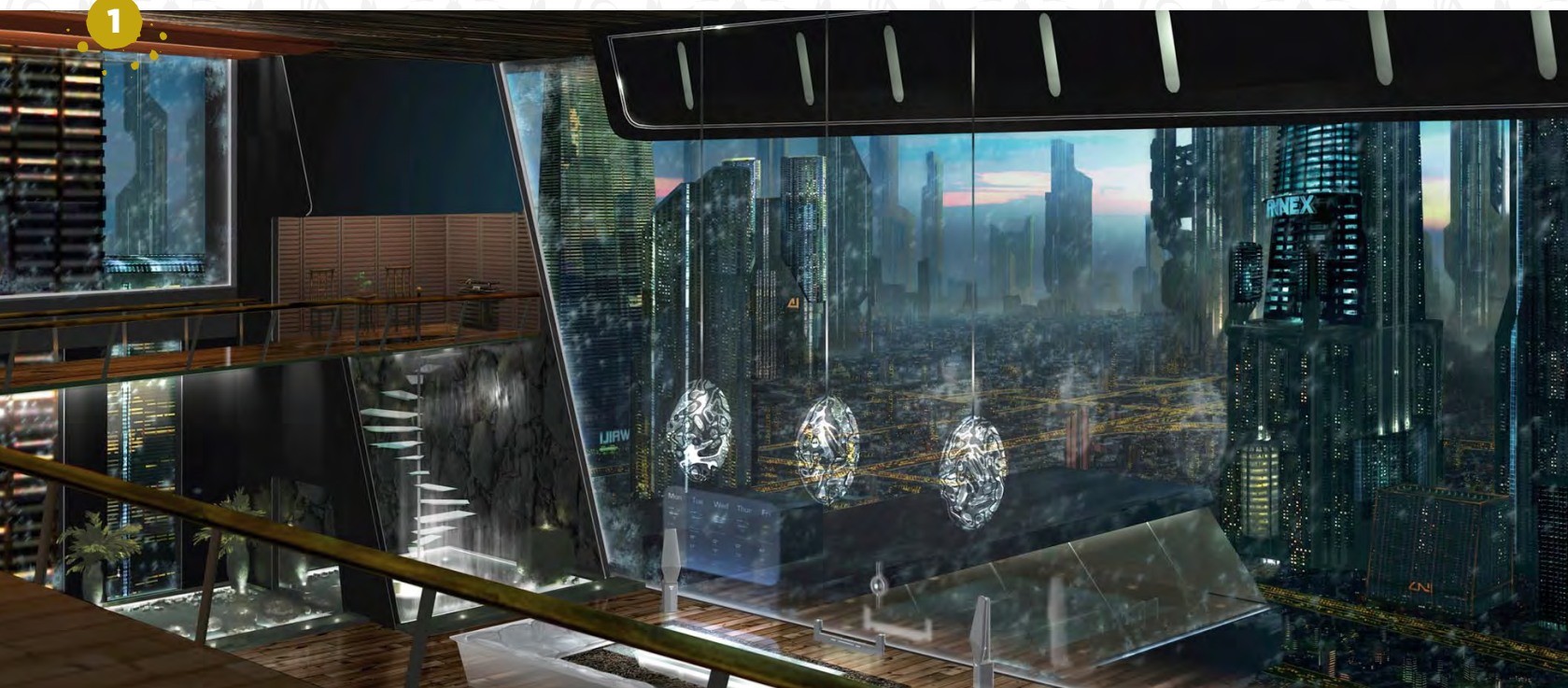
1 MEANWHILE IN THE TREES "This is an example of a cheeky but adorably cute character. The blurred frame elements, such as the leaves in the foreground, atmospheric lighting and a background with gradually increased blur, give dimension to the image and help focus on the main character."

2 SUMMER RAIN "This shows my love of environment design, and the creation of a distinct mood, triggered by the weather – the relief that often comes with a warm summer rain. I put a lot of effort into the vegetation and atmospheric light."

3 WANT A NUT? "This is a story illustration which contains lots of detail – various plants, dandelion seeds and dust particles in the sunlight and light spots. Again, blurred leaves serve as a frame for the picture and enable the viewer to peek through the vegetation to witness the scene."

4 FASTER "This image focuses on the action and the characters without abandoning the environment, which is used to create a nice, warm atmosphere and still contains points of interest the viewer might notice at second glance – for example, foxgloves, berries and dandelion seeds in the air."

1



Waiji Choo

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Singapore-born Waiji's passion for film and game art led him to the US, where he studies entertainment arts at Pasadena's Art Center College of Design.

He enjoys building tense, turbulent scenes, but strives to put his own unique spin on things. From gravity-defying train wrecks to mid-air mech battles, Waiji's work is nothing if not exciting.

"I'm drawn towards stories with a lot of action," he says. "I enjoy creating highly dramatic scenes. I'm constantly thinking of interesting camera angles and compositions that best support the story I'm telling."

2



3



1 MATTE PAINTING OF A FUTURISTIC HOTEL "First I block out silhouettes with varied shapes and values in Photoshop. Then I overlay colours to get a sense of mood. Due to the complexity of the scene, I work in multiple layers to save time. Finally, with the help of photo textures and painting, I finish rendering."

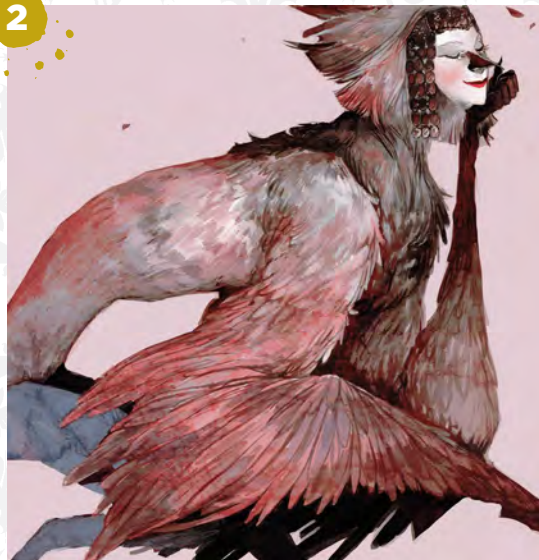
2 MECHA INVASION "Again, I block out silhouettes in Photoshop, overlay colours and find the right mood. Finally, with the help of photo textures and painting, I finish rendering the image. I try to keep the background fairly loose so the complex foreground element stands out."

3 RIDE TO THE SKY "I started out with layout drawings in pen. Next, I fix the composition in Photoshop. Then I make multiple value studies and three colour studies. Because this illustration was meant for a children's book, I used vibrant colours. Then I move on to fully rendering the image."

1



2



3



+ Rita Dmitrijenko

LOCATION: England

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Lithuanian artist Rita moved to England to study computer visualisation and animation at Bournemouth University. However, now in

her third year, she's found her creative talents are best channelled elsewhere.

"I realised," she says, "that I'm not as keen on animating as I am on creating concept art, illustrations and sculptures."

From fantasy to fashion, macabre art to mythical tales, Rita's many and varied influences find their way into her work. The thread that knits everything together, however, is a traditional approach to digital mediums. "Most of my art is digital, but I try to give my illustrations the warmth and texture traditional artwork has."

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"How can you resist Rita's preternatural Happy Harpies!

I love them! Their smug content, the hint of something sinister close at hand, and Rita's use of shapes and colours bring the compositions together. We want more!"

Beren Neale,
Digital Editor

1 GEARS "This work was created for a monthly, themed challenge. I had to draw a black and white illustration containing gears and a specific shade of purple. I really wanted to tell a scary story, but one hidden behind something really small and insignificant."

2 HAPPY HARRY "This harpy painting came out as I was learning the importance of shapes and silhouettes in art. I was aiming for a very strong and stylised character shape."

3 HAPPY HARRY 2 "I really love harpies! Despite their history of being sinister, I wanted to portray them as charming and warm creatures that are a bit cocky and playful, as birds usually are. This image was inspired by classical Baroque and Art Nouveau paintings. I really wanted to give this painting a vintage feel."

Sebastian Watzlawek

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



A recent game design graduate, Sebastian has already earned credits for work on three titles. The artist believes atmosphere and feeling are the most crucial elements of art and that it must hold the viewer's attention. If a picture doesn't do this, he says, then it's worthless – no matter how technically sound it is.

"Artworks are windows to new worlds," says Sebastian. "Our job is not just to clean the window, but to open it. Let in the heat, the cold, the wind, the sunshine, the rain. It doesn't matter which technique you use, as long as you can make the picture work and appeal to the viewer."



1 BRITISH SLOOP "This was created for a board game about pirates and a British fleet. The intense south-sea feeling wasn't planned. But the client liked it so much that all the other pictures of British ships were changed to have the same atmosphere."

2 GLOOM BROOK CHARMER "I've been a fan of trading card games for a long time. The illustrations on the cards really do it for me. So I decided to practise this type of illustration, and they're a ton of fun to do."

3 THE FLYING "This piece depicts a scene from Norse mythology: all the gods are invited to a feast, when Loki starts messing things up. He insults every single one of them until they eventually gang up and detain Loki. That's how the gods and Loki became enemies forever."





1

Loïc Bramoullé

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EMAIL: animaliok@gmail.com

SOFTWARE: Photoshop, Maya



Loïc says that, as a fledgling artist, you don't need to have mastered your tools to express yourself. You should start creating and exploring the things you're passionate about, and you'll hone your technique as you go.

"The process," Loïc says, "of creating a precise image of a world in my head and then finding the techniques to realise it is, to me, thrilling."

The Paris-based concept artist and animator learned this first-hand while working on his own short film *Space Cat Hob* – a process of trial and error. "This is the best way to learn," he says, "by being excited about a project, believing in it and building it one brick at a time."

2



IMAGINEFX CRIT



"I like Loïc's attitude to art: start expressing yourself straight away and worry about the rest later. Sage advice. And judging from his own images, it clearly works. Even when created at speed, there's much to enjoy in his vivid worlds."

Gary Evans,
Staff Writer

1 BLADES CITY "A quick concept – based on a pencil sketch done on the train – for my short film *Space Cat Hob*. I prefer to look for ideas on paper, and doing it on the train is a great way to refresh your vision and stay creative during this important stage."

2 BABY CHIMERA "This is an illustration created for a contest, where I came fourth. It's my first clean illustration. I used a CG rendering-based technique to achieve a clean and realistic look in less than eight hours. I painted the different silhouettes, then the raw diffuse textures inside, an occlusion pass, a light pass, and then lastly I polished some details."

🇨🇦 Enrique Plazola

LOCATION: Canada

WEB: www.refinethedesign.com

EMAIL: omegaman20@gmail.com

SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Mexican-American illustrator and concept artist Enrique watched a lot of science fiction and horror films as a child.

They made a lasting impression on him and ever since he's been compelled to create strange creatures and characters of his own.

Enrique describes himself as an entrepreneur as well as an artist, devoting much of his time to helping fellow creatives develop new types of art supplies.

"I believe the most important quality in art is honesty," he says. "Being true to yourself and to others is the way to get ahead in your creative life."

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Yikes! If there's one thing to take away from Enrique's art, it's his love of very sharp teeth. They instantly pull the viewer into the scenes, who can then explore the engaging character designs that are on show."

Claire Howlett,
Editor

1 DANGEROUS GROUND "This was a personal project, done just for fun. I enjoy watching giant monster movies and wanted to create my own. I started with line art for the monster, then went into detailed shading over time."

2 STREET SHARKS "This is a painting dedicated to one of my favourite cartoon shows as a child. I started with a base colour, then added details and textures by shrinking the basic brush. I used only basic brushes on this piece."

3 WOLFENSTEIN "This piece was done spontaneously, based on a dream I had. It started messily, like a sketch in paint, and I slowly tried to pull out a focal point. I wanted the viewer to experience a slight feeling of tension."





SUBMIT YOUR ART TO EXPOSÉ

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.



Exchange, by Android Jones
– the artist who says the internet is the best and worst thing to happen to art.

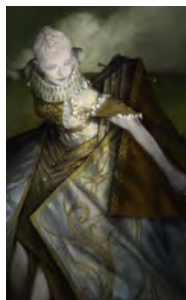
Are you an artpreneur?

Digital digs Where to find your online home and how to make a success of it: we ask artists and experts who make it happen

Around 10 million people a year visit the Louvre. The Metropolitan Museum of Art manages almost seven. The Tate Modern, just over six. These are the world's most-visited art galleries.

Now imagine a gallery that attracts over 60 million visitors – a month. That's the figure deviantART boasts, trumping Paris, New York and London's finest. The venue may be virtual, its artists somewhat less distinguished, but it puts into perspective the power of online art communities.

"deviantART has given rise to the artpreneur," says the CEO of the highly



Tobias Kwan's Braid painting comes from his fantasy artbook project, Motherland Chronicles.



successful art community, Angelo Sotira. "These are artists who no longer have to rely on galleries, shows or pavements to earn fans.

"We have top sellers in our print programme. We have top sellers using our digital download tools and virtual currency. Hollywood producers buy art from the site directly from members. Book publishers scour the site for illustrators. Virtually every comic book publisher in the world accesses talent through deviantART – as do CGI studios, animation studios, gaming

companies and creative departments in major corporations."

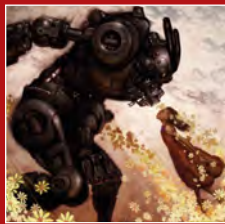
deviantART is just one of many thriving online art communities. Behance, Cargo, Creative Finder, Dribbble, our very own ImagineFX.com: with so many sites vying for your art, and so many artists sharing work within those sites, which one do you choose and how do you make yourself heard?

"Remember," Angelo says, "deviantART is a community, not a comment machine. You don't get anything out of it if you don't put something into it. We've seen an upsurge in the careers of artists who have learnt to build their own brand, and it's paid social and financial dividends."

GO BEYOND SELF-PROMOTION

Building your brand may not sound like an artist's endeavour, but it's key to the success of any 21st-century creative. Angelo explains that this means not just self-promoting, but also participating. Comment on artwork and user pages. Use the chat room and the shout box. Offer constructive criticism and people will return the favour. This is brand building.

"Depending on the art you want to do," Tobias Kwan says, "some sites will benefit you



SADDLE UP, ARTISTS!

Find out what's planned for the second Trojan Horse was a Unicorn art festival, taking place in Portugal with a slew of big-name artists in tow.

Page 23



GO BEYOND THE GAME

A new book names the artists who created game art for Atari titles in the 1980s. And if the imagery rarely matched the gameplay – well, who's complaining?

Page 25



A CREATIVE RELATIONSHIP

When he's not making jewellery, sculpting or working with metal, Craig Elliot incorporates images of his girlfriend Tooba into his art. And why not?

Page 26



Tobias Kwan's Firewalker. The concept artist advises showcasing your work on as many sites as possible.



Skulltula Ambush! by Nate Hallinan, who found success on CGSociety.



deviantART attracts an amazing 60 million visitors per month, creating 2.5 billion page views. Phew!

“You should start uploading as early as possible and take in the feedback so that you can hone your craft”

more than others: CGHub, Conceptart.org and CGSociety are tailored towards game and movie art; deviantART or Tumblr cover a broader range of artists and styles. Share your work on all these sites, but focus on the community that matches your work.”

Tobias, a concept artist at Californian game developer Ready at Dawn, maintains profiles and pages on deviantART, CGHub, Tumblr, Blogspot, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. He's found work – or work's found him



– on every one of those sites. “I like to think that when you put out enough quality work,” he says, “people will eventually notice it and opportunities will present themselves.”

Once you've selected which site or sites to sign up for, you have to decide what to post. Tobias says it's good to share sketches and WIPs as well as finished pieces. It gives art directors and employers invaluable insight into your creative process. “You should start uploading as early as possible and take in the feedback so that you can hone your craft.”

Your portfolio – if you keep one – should be distinctly and exclusively your best work, demonstrating the full breadth of your abilities as an artist. Tobias also advises against overdoing it with personal information. Give just enough to tell people who you are and what you do.

Andrew ‘Android’ Jones says the internet is both the best and worst thing to



INDUSTRY INSIGHT

PATRICE LEYMARIE

The IT'S ART founder on showing your work and how to get noticed

How does an artist go about attracting the right kind of attention on your site?

I'm always trying to find new talent. I'm proud to have interviewed people such as Raphael Lacoste, Michael Kutsche and Loïc Zimmermann. But there are no rules to gaining notoriety online. Anyway, the goal should not to become a CG star. Most of the artists picked on IT'S ART have simply produced stunning artworks. They don't see the site as a means to be famous. It's a complementary sort of recognition.

You no longer host forums on your site. Why is that?

There are too many forums and discussion-based sites, and artists don't have the time to spend all day on more than two places. Once they like one site it's hard to attract them to another if you offer nothing new. So, I've slowly killed forums on IT'S ART, to focus on content and news. The most important aim is to provide a different take on news. It's to be expected that people won't discuss the news on my site if it's exactly the same as on social networks or other websites. If you're one of the first to deliver fresh quality content, people come back to your site and share it. That's the content part sorted, in my opinion.

Finally, what's your top tip for online success?

Share your work on as many websites as possible. If you only post in one or two, just because they're the biggest, you have less chance of being noticed. The bigger a site, the harder it is to get noticed. It's like with Facebook feeds: it's hard to find sense in so much surrounding noise.



Patrice is the founder of IT'S ART, the site sharing digital art inspiration, interviews, tutorials and workshops.

www.itsartmag.com



happen to art: "The interchange of ideas, techniques and skills is remarkable. You now have access to more artists, images and education than anyone has ever had in the history of the world."

(Android) – a former ILM and Nintendo employee who co-founded Massive Black Inc – says his online presence has been integral to his rise. But he also advises exercising restraint.



"Practise discipline and discernment in your actions. If you're spending more time online than you are at the drawing table, then I suggest it's time to re-examine your priorities. If you reference more photos of nature than actual nature, take a walk."

With the cost of further education – especially art schools – increasingly out of reach to most, community art sites can take up the slack, offering tutelage from first-rate teachers at a fraction of the cost of formal studies.

In 2002, Android founded non-profit ConceptArt.org with Jason Manley. The site



has over 80,000 registered users and attracts more than 1.3 million visits per month.

"ConceptArt.org is where artists come to learn," Jason says. "The site was the first of its kind to offer live streaming of online education, the first to offer massive scholarship programmes, the first to do downloadable educational content for artists. We created the ConceptArt.org Workshops and even a full college from within the community."

FORUMS STILL MATTER

ConceptArt.org is a forum-based community. While it has recently been given a facelift, the site has stuck to its original format. Jason maintains that forums, far from being anachronistic, offer artists a more considered, contemplative

Android Jones says you can have too much of a good thing, and the internet is no exception.



You Picked up the Wrong Bed Monster, by Aamir, as seen on IT'S ART.

“Posting on ConceptArt.org gets an artist embedded in Google, where you can be found for years to come”

alternative to social media's instant but fleeting feedback.

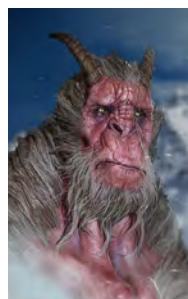
"Facebook and Twitter," Jason says, "can be a waste of time. Your posts just disappear. Posting on ConceptArt.org gets an artist deeply embedded in Google, where you can be found for years to come."

Jason points to Jonathan Hardesty – aka MindCandyMan – as an example. The artist, with no formal art training, began posting images of his work as a beginner back in 2002. The thread is still live today. It's attracted over 2,000 posts and three million hits, and shows how he's grown into a gifted professional.

"If an artist posts and gives back to the community," Jason says, "we help them to succeed. It's a pay-it-forward mentality."

They're sentiments echoed by Andrew Plumer, head of Ballistic Media and the Computer Graphics Society. The forum, he says, is far from finished.

Yeti by Bryan Wynia, one of the stars of forum-based art community CGSociety.



"We haven't seen any dramatic decline in traffic to our forums," says Andrew. "The



web has become very noisy and we believe people will continue to seek informed discussion and advice, which is what well-moderated forums

offer. I feel that as social platforms continue to evolve, become busier and attempt to find ways to commercialise their operations, we'll see more people move back to forums, searching for signal over noise."

Even with a swell of noise, Andrew says there are steps you can take to aid success online. It's a numbers game: produce enough good work and somebody will eventually take notice. Challenges and competition are a good way of getting noticed and to practise working to deadlines. Make the most of learning opportunities such as these.

But the key is to share, not spam: critiquing and encouraging others raises your profile among peers and potential employers, and can also provide a link to your heroes.

"What never ceases to excite me is seeing the goodwill that's shared by artists on our site," Andrew adds, "especially between established and emerging artists." ●

Unicorn rides again for 2014

Art event This year's Trojan Horse was a Unicorn will be better, but not bigger



Founder André Luis says there are no VIPs at Trojan Horse was a Unicorn. That's why 2013's event was such a success. That's why the four-day festival had a family feel. And that's why 2014's THU is set to be even better.

The get-together for artists, game and film developers and animators returns to Portugal, after last year's inaugural event. An improved format sees the addition of morning workshops, mentorship sessions, private lessons and "legends" – a new category of speaker. But André stresses THU will stay true to its boutique roots. Everyone – artists and attendees – are equal.

"We never want a big event," he says. "We only have 500 tickets, so we want to give our attendees the best experience possible."

“Answering questions helps me understand my process better”

The event boasts 32 speakers and over a dozen companies looking to recruit.

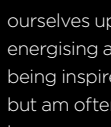
Concept artist **Ian McQue** thinks festivals like



this are vital for artists of every standing. "It's good to get out, meet up with your peers and talk to them about their practice," he says. "I've found

that doing painting demos and answering questions from students helps me understand my process better. But the main thing is they're great fun."

While the full line-up is yet to be announced, **Christian Alzmann**, art director for Industrial Light & Magic, is looking forward to it. "Events like THU are important for artists because we can be a solitary group, locking



ourselves up and working away. It's energising and renewing. I often anticipate being inspired by one of the key speakers, but am often surprised to be equally inspired by someone I've yet to hear about or by someone who's still in school."

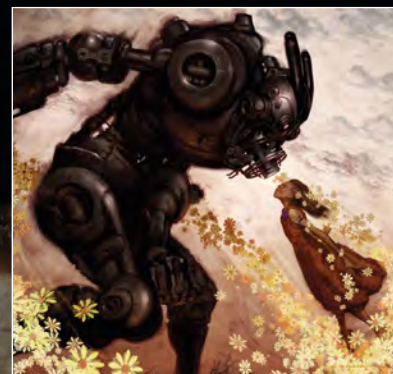
To book tickets for this year's THU, visit <https://trojan-unicorn.com>.



Christian Alzmann will be explaining how he put together pieces like this one at THU 2014.



A dynamic piece by Ian McQue, who's one of the confirmed speakers at THU 2014.



For Christian, festivals like THU help break up an artist's otherwise solitary life.

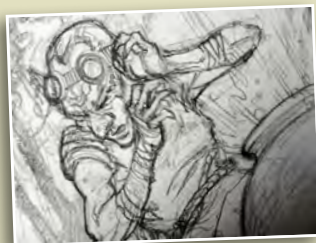
FRESH PAINT

Your art news that's grabbed our attention



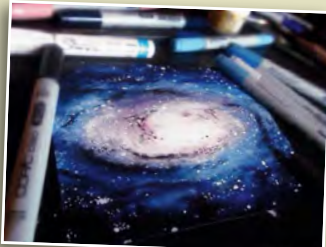
John VanHouten
(@John_VanHouten)

"Sneak peak of a WIP."
#art #drawing #linefebruary
<http://ifxm.ag/fp-VanHouten>



Amy McCullough
(@rubberducketc)

"Starry sketch with Copic markers."
<http://ifxm.ag/ljLgHrC>



Gris Grimly
(@GrisGrimly)

"Working on Sherlock Holmes illustrations for my new book, A Study In Scarlet."
#astudyinscarlet #elementary
<http://ifxm.ag/fp-Grimly>



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



Hatboy
by Vaughn Pinpin



Fantasy talk Explaining the inexplicable

"I start thinking of a vampire's lust for human blood as an addiction as much as it is a physical need"

We like Liam Peters's two-pronged – or should that be fanged? – theory behind the bloodlust... Page 76

Anatomy from all angles

Body of work Do you regularly struggle with anatomy studies? An innovative book aims to help you capture the human form



An artist from Arizona aims to reinvent the anatomy book. And he needs your help to do it.

Concept artist Bryce Frits has launched a Kickstarter project to fund Super Anatomy, which he describes as "the ultimate anatomy reference book for artists." "Other books out there show poses from just one or two angles," Bryce says, "which is a take-it-or-leave-it approach. We want to make a book where artists can find the poses and the angles they need reference for."

The book depicts male and female models in 100 positions, from 24 different viewpoints. That's over 2,400 poses, giving artists a reference for almost every conceivable anatomical position.

For that reason, Bryce says the book will prove an essential companion for creatives of any standing, no matter which media they work in.



There will also be a DVD included with the book, featuring all the poses contained within.

The use of 3D figures, rather than photographs of life models, ensures complete consistency.

"Whether you're a professional, intermediate or beginner artist," Bryce says, "if you work with human anatomy then you'll find Super Anatomy to be an invaluable resource."

For more information about Super Anatomy and to back the project visit www.artistshideout.com.



Opening up the game world

Graphic design A new book chronicles how a group of artists brought Atari's wildest fantasies to life



Tim Lapetino's love affair with Atari 2600 boxes began with his first console, back in 1983. He's felt its influence throughout his career as an artist and graphic designer – so much so in fact, that the American felt compelled to write a book charting the history of console's classic game covers.

Part of the artwork's beauty, Tim says, lies in its use of long-forgotten techniques – as seen on covers for cult games like Video Chess and Defender and Warlords.

"The art was so powerful and excellent that it has stood the test of time visually. Those early games were almost crude by today's visual standards, but the artwork

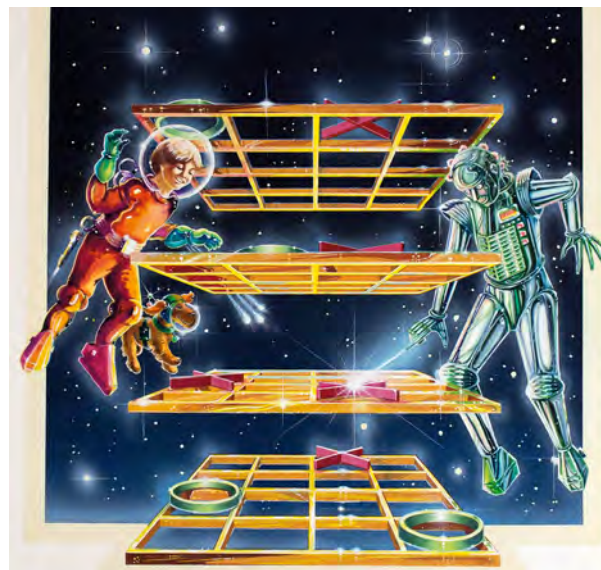
itself wasn't. These beautiful, striking images acted as a powerful bridge between the game players' imagination and the gameplay itself, fleshing out the overall video gaming experience."

The making of the Art of Atari saw Tim playing detective, as the manufacturer didn't always credit its design and illustration teams. It was worth the extra effort, though. The book is a fitting tribute to some of game art's forgotten heroes.

"Atari's artwork was originally designed to stand out on store shelves and sell video games, and it has transcended that original purpose."

To see more of Tim's work and to order the Art of Atari visit www.hexanine.com.

3-D Tic-Tac-Toe featured floating grids, but the characters and slick rendered look was, unsurprisingly, absent.



The 1987 re-release of the classic game Centipede sported this fun image on the boxart.



+deviantWATCH

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



aenaluck

www.aenaluck.deviantart.com

After cracking the spine on a brand new sketchbook, this is aenaluck's first drawing. What a start. And it's made all the more impressive as she drew it in just a single night. The artist used coloured Pentel pencils on A5 paper. The image is based on aenaluck's character in Skyrim.



PatrickBrown

<http://ifxm.ag/p-brown>

"A buddy of mine was playing Fallout 3 and it sparked all the great memories I have of the game," says Patrick. So much so that the Australian was compelled to create this stunning piece of fan art – an action-packed, ground-shaking scene which indulges the artist's love of creature designs.



JonasDeRo

www.jonasdero.deviantart.com

Dragons aren't aggressive, merely misunderstood, yet humans have hunted them almost to extinction. Laws are passed to protect the species, but poachers persist. Here we see an adult and its offspring slain for their body parts. It's a piece that's well lit and composed, like much of Jonas's work.

My collection of sculptures and maquettes, including several porcelain anatomy figures from Italy. They're great for quickly double-checking muscle structure.

Two printers produce Gicleé prints for shows and for sale on my website. One prints smaller 13x19in prints while the other, to the right of me, prints very large prints for oversized limited editions.



© Greg Preston



The desk to the left of me is a convertible table built by my grandfather for me in college, which can be used flat for things such as sculpture, or tilted at any angle for drawing or painting.

This is a standard rolling tool chest with drawers that you'd find in any mechanic's garage. It's great for storing art supplies because of the multiple shallow drawers, which can hold all my tubes of paint.

Craig Elliott

Art order The American artist tells us about his well-organised working setup and explains why he prefers a room with a view



Most workdays are spent at the computer or the easel. I look at the garden through the window next to my computer and enjoy a bit of nature while stuck inside working.

I've tried computer setups with two or three monitors, but have found that one

very large display – an Apple 30-inch – serves me best. I can look at my art as large as possible, and see flaws more easily.

I have three places to draw: my convertible table and two antique portable drafting tables. These have heavy cast-iron tripod legs, so they don't move or wobble when I'm drawing. One has a rotating top,

Artist news, software & events

My two pyramids are Gold and Silver awards from Spectrum Fantastic Art, and nearby are a Gold and Bronze from the Society of Illustrators's Illustration West 52 contest, to help inspire me to further heights.



These large magnetic-dry erase boards are for reference while painting or to pin ideas to

and the other has a shelf that stays level no matter what angle I tilt it at.

I usually use the one with the shelf to put my oil palette on. It's the exact same model that Norman Rockwell used for a palette stand when he painted.

I have a lot of supplies and references, and keep them very organised. I would never be able to find anything if things were in heaps everywhere. My plastic bins have labels naming their contents and are mostly kept near the area of the studio in which they're used.

One side of the studio has a sort of all-purpose table, built by my grandfather, with drawers full of small tools and supplies.

This dimmer switch operates either a large halogen lamp, or an expensive photo light called a Source Four. This light has the ability to widen or narrow the beam, and accommodate gobos and coloured gels.

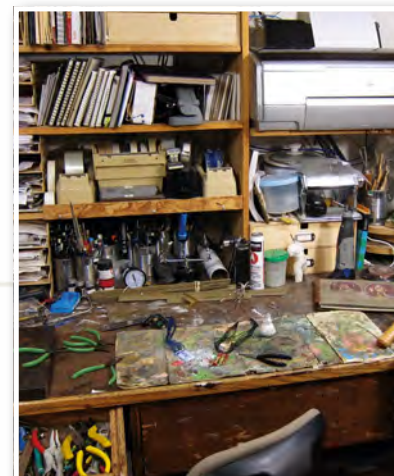
I draw and paint portraits between this desk and the easel, because there's no space for someone to sit with the easel against the wall.

To keep me entertained during long days of work, I have stereo speakers hooked to an amp that my computer can run. They're great for music, podcasts or Netflix. I also have two flat-panel TVs mounted on adjustable arms so they can be seen from any spot in the studio.

Illustrator, visual development and fine artist Craig lives in Los Angeles, California. He's worked on films for Walt Disney Animation and DreamWorks. You can see more of his art at www.craigelliottgallery.com.



Here's my 30-inch Apple Cinema Display – its hefty screen size enables me to spot those elements that are working in my WIPs, and those which still need a bit of tweaking.



I use this table when working on jewellery, miniatures, repairing electronics or small machines, sculpting or small metal-smithing. It's my most flexible area in the studio.



Here I have a little room to pose a model, in this case my girlfriend Tooba. I use a portable easel that rests on my cast-iron tripod drawing table.

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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Trad: here to stay?

I began as a traditional artist before making the move to digital around six years ago. I've been very much enjoying the new trad section in ImagineFX and it inspired me to dig out my brushes and return to the easel. I was wondering if it's going to be a permanent feature and if there's any way to read them all together?

Crispin Hills, Spain

Claire replies Thanks Crispin, you're not the only one – we love the artists who have featured, too. Although things can always change, we really hope it's going to be a permanent fixture... we're even thinking of collecting some of the workshops and releasing them in a one-off special (but more on that later!)

Theme talk

I've been a reader since issue 26 and have always wanted to see something on different myths from around the world, because they're something I like to draw. Is that something you would ever consider?

Deirdre Adams, via email

Claire replies Good call, Deirdre. We love to hear about issue theme ideas from readers. Myths from around the world sounds fun – watch this space...

Crispin felt inspired by our traditional Fantasy Illustrator section – the equally good news is, it's very much here to stay.



DID YOU MISS ISSUE 107?
See page 53 for details on how to get hold a copy.



The previous six issues of the print edition and numerous digital editions are available from our website.

Back issues?

A friend of mine recently recommended your magazine. I'm new to digital art and really like the tutorials and advice from professional artists, because I'd like to turn professional one day. I was wondering, where can I grab some old issues?

Juan Sebastián, via email

Claire replies Thanks for getting in touch, Juan – always great to hear from new readers. Your best bet for buying older issues is through digital magazine outlets and the information you need is here: <http://beta.imaginefx.com/shop>. This is also where you can buy the past six print editions and additionally you'll find our special edition magazines, featuring all the best stuff from our back catalogue.

Desktop digest?

I'm pretty sure this isn't the right channel, so I apologise, but thought that maybe you could help anyway? I just want to know, is there a way to read ImagineFX on a desktop. I've had the iPad subscription for a couple of years, but I've been waiting for the magazine to become available on my computer screen. Is this possible now or will there be a way in the future? Thanks to everyone.

Mike Seaman, via email

Claire replies Hello, Mike. This is the right channel and we read you loud and clear. ImagineFX on a desktop, you say? Allow us to nudge you gently in the direction of our Zinio service – go on, this way: <http://bit.ly/zinio-iffx>.

FXPosé

I've been a fan of the magazine for many years and have been trying to build up the courage to send my work in for consideration in the FXPosé section, but I'm not sure what to send. How many images should I submit?

Peter Groves, England

Claire replies We very much welcome reader submissions, Peter. You can find everything you need to know about sending us your work on page 19. We look forward to seeing your art soon!



Our star letter writer wins a dA Premium Membership!

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My own IP

I'd like to begin by saying how much I enjoyed issue 107. I was really inspired by Han-Yuan Yu's cover workshop and also the tips from Genzoman, who is one of my favourite artists. So much so that I've decided to take the plunge and develop my own IP.

It's an idea I've had for years, always in the back of my mind, and I've been slowly filling sketchbooks and writing back-stories without ever getting round to starting the project properly. I guess this is partly because I don't really know where to begin.

I have some characters and their stories and a rough title, but what next? I think it would make a great comic but I don't know who to send it to. Do I need to be a professional with contacts at big studios to create my own comic? What about the legal stuff? Do I need to hire a lawyer?

Viktor, via email

Claire replies Thanks for the email, Viktor. It's an interesting one. The brilliant Dan LuVisi recently penned a series of blog posts titled 'The Road To Creating Your Own IP'. It breaks down the process into sections – everything from character development to story building to getting your story out there – and shows how he created his own IP, the problems it posed and how he overcame them. We defer to Dan's superior knowledge on this one – he has answers to all your questions: <http://iffm.ag/dan-ip-advice>.



Viktor felt inspired by Han-Yuan Yu's cover workshop in issue 107.

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Artist Q&A

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The FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX panel

Denman Rooke



With a background in freelance illustration, Denman now works as the lead concept artist at Dublin-based game studio Digit.

www.denmanrooke.com

Don Seegmiller



Don is an artist and instructor at Utah Valley University, and has worked on five digital-painting books, including *Advanced Painter Techniques*.

www.seegmillerart.com

John Petersen



John studied biological/pre-medical illustration, and is now an animator and designer for Demonstratives, Inc., and a freelance illustrator.

www.petersenart.com

Ville Ericsson



Ville is a freelance illustrator and concept artist from Stockholm. He's working on an indie game called *20,000 Leagues Above the Clouds*.

www.ville-ericsson.se

Sam Carr



Sam is a full-time freelance illustrator from England currently working for *Wizards of the Coast* and *Applibot*, as well as other private clients.

www.samcarr.net

Viktoria Gavrilenko



Originally a freelance illustrator from Sweden, Viktoria now lives in England, where she works as a concept artist for *Atomhawk*.

www.viccolatte.deviantart.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

How can I replicate the look of watercolour digitally?

Jemima Dice, US

Answer

Denman replies



When trying to replicate traditional mediums on the digital canvas, we need to first pick apart what makes that particular medium unique.

Watercolours are typically a transparent medium, and when painted wet on dry, often have granular diffused brushstrokes with a dark edge. The dark edge is caused by the pigment collecting due to surface tension. A popular approach to watercolour is the application of washes or glazes of colour, to achieve detail and colour variance.

By using textures, transparency and Photoshop's layer modes, you can achieve a watercolour effect.

First let's get a nice paper texture and import it into our canvas in Photoshop, because that also plays an important part of the traditional effect. Take a photo of watercolour paper with a light watercolour wash to capture that grainy pigment texture, or find a free watercolour photo texture online. Next let's sketch in our subject. I've decided to go with a mermaid (mermaid and mage – I know, it's genius!).

As for when to use this method, use it whenever you like! But generally, it'd be for any finished illustration that needs to have a soft, traditional aesthetic.

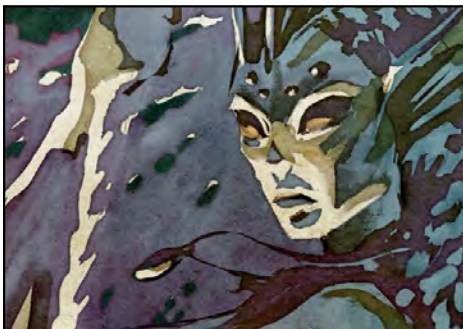
Step-by-step: Make your digital art look traditional



1 After sketching out your subject, block in some large areas of colour. I like to start with a high chroma shadow and reserve the white of the canvas for my lightest values. It's not necessary, but I usually prefer to work with Photoshop's Natural Media Brushes, because I can achieve a nice brushstroke aesthetic.



2 Add a watercolour photo texture (set to the Color Burn layer style) to capture that grainy watercolour look. Apply a thin Inner Glow on Multiply to depict the dark edge-effect of watercolours. Then lock the layer's transparency and blend in some lighter value of the same hue into the middle of the colour space.



3 Tighten up the details and add more layers of colours to enhance the watercolour glaze effect. I've set my top layer of detail to Multiply to achieve this. For extra realism, use gradients of colour and slight hue changes in your colours to simulate the slightly inaccurate blending of pigments on a palette.

Question I'm having troubling painting armour realistically... please help!

Patrick Peters, England



To paint armour successfully, the metallic colours should reflect the environment; values and colours should not be over-blended; and reflected lights need to be secondary in importance to the main light.



Answer Don replies



Painting armour, whether on horse, man or another creature, can be one of the most difficult things an artist can paint. However, there are some tips that will make your task easier.

First, consider the environment of the painting. Any colour found in the environment will be reflected in metal armour, so just painting armour in grey will look unrealistic.

Second, don't over-blend the edges of your colours and values. Metallic objects tend to reflect values and colours with crisp transitions. Over-blending the edges will soften the appearance of the metal and lower its believability. The shinier I want a surface, the more abruptly I paint these transitions.

The third point to remember is to keep reflected lights less intense than the main light. The main light source should reflect very brightly compared to other lights.

If you can remember these three simple things – use the colours in the surrounding environment, don't over-blend the edges of your values and colours, and keep your light sources under control – you should have little problem painting armour.



Keep the edges of metal plates sharp and well-defined.

Artist's secret

APPLY SOME WEAR 'N' TEAR



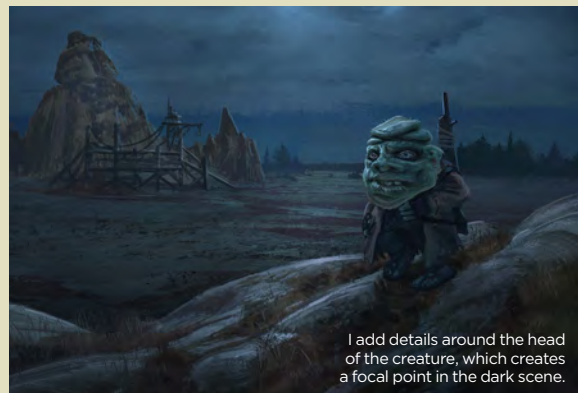
Rarely is armour unblemished. Usually there's rust, dents, scratches and other imperfections visible. I always add these finishing touches after the armour itself has been painted. If I paint various imperfections as I go, I can easily lose the overall shape of the armour.



Question

What's the best way to depict a scene set at night?

Sarah Tilloite, France



I add details around the head of the creature, which creates a focal point in the dark scene.

Answer

Ville replies



An important thing I keep in mind when painting night-time scenes is avoiding limiting my values too much. In paintings we have to account for the smaller range of values that we have to work with, compared to the huge range our pupils can perceive (by their ability to allow in less or more light, depending on the ambient lighting conditions).

I don't necessarily go all the way to pure white or black, but I keep the value range broad enough for the form to read correctly. I also keep the colours fairly desaturated, especially reds, which appear much darker and less saturated under moonlight. This enables me to add details to the painting while still maintaining a night-time setting.

I restrict myself to not going overboard with adding details. Our eyes aren't very good at seeing small details in low-light situations, so simplifying larger masses and using a lot of soft edges can help to sell the night-time mood. Put the details where they really count: the focal points



I start the painting by blocking in the main forms, keeping the values tight and nailing down the colour palette.

Question

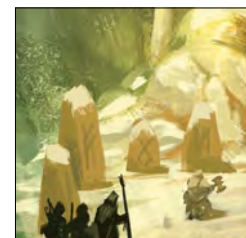
Can you help me paint a dusty, gloomy underground room?

Halle Burt, US



The light in a dusty room becomes an obvious feature in any image. Your directional lines need to be parallel to each other, because the beams are travelling in the same direction.

If objects lie in the shaft of light, their values are reduced. Objects that lie beyond the light almost get lost completely. Add textured brushstrokes to depict dusty air.



Answer

Denman replies



As I quickly sketch out my perspective, I plan out how my directional light will play a part in the composition. With a dusty room, light almost becomes an object, because it's caught up in all the dust particles that fill the air.

I quickly lay in my values and make sure I draw bright directional light values, from the opening in the ceiling to the spot where the light hits the ground.

I prefer to use a Photoshop textured brush when doing this, because it gives the air that distinctive dust-particle effect. Most importantly, when dealing with a dark environment that's being lit by a singular strong source, it will create some fantastic bounced light.

For this scene the warmer sunlight reflects off the ground and then upwards to cast a warm light on the cool colours of the cavern interior.

Question

Do you have any tips on drawing slime?

Shrill Torstén, Denmark



Answer

John replies



Slime is a fun but tricky substance to paint, because it's highly glossy and somewhat translucent. It's neither quite solid nor liquid.

If it's dripping or flowing down then you'll be able to see faint traces of object shapes and light sources behind it. Regarding light interaction, slime behaves very similarly to stained glass. It's generally considered greenish-yellow, but you could apply these principles to any colour, and since it's very glossy it will also have very sharp highlights.

I have my character already composed here, and I know that I want the slime to trail from his nose to the totally inadequate handkerchief. My approach is to lay down a basic diffuse colour and then let the light come through where you'd expect it to, applying shadows and background shapes accordingly.

Then it's just a matter of adding those glossy highlights and reflections. I've drawn the goblin in a coloured, line-art style using Photoshop, so I also want to make sure the slime matches the background when it's done.

Question What's the key to painting lizard skin?

Gabrielle Tindler, US



Answer Don replies



Painting the shiny texture of lizard skin isn't very difficult if you approach the task in a logical manner. The first thing I do is paint the scales. This is easy to do with Corel's Painter X3, using custom Paper textures.

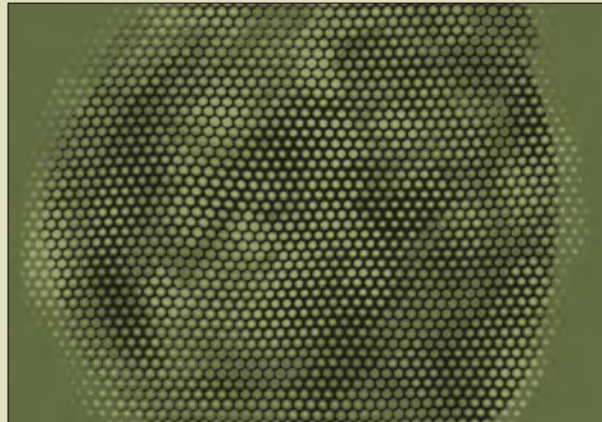
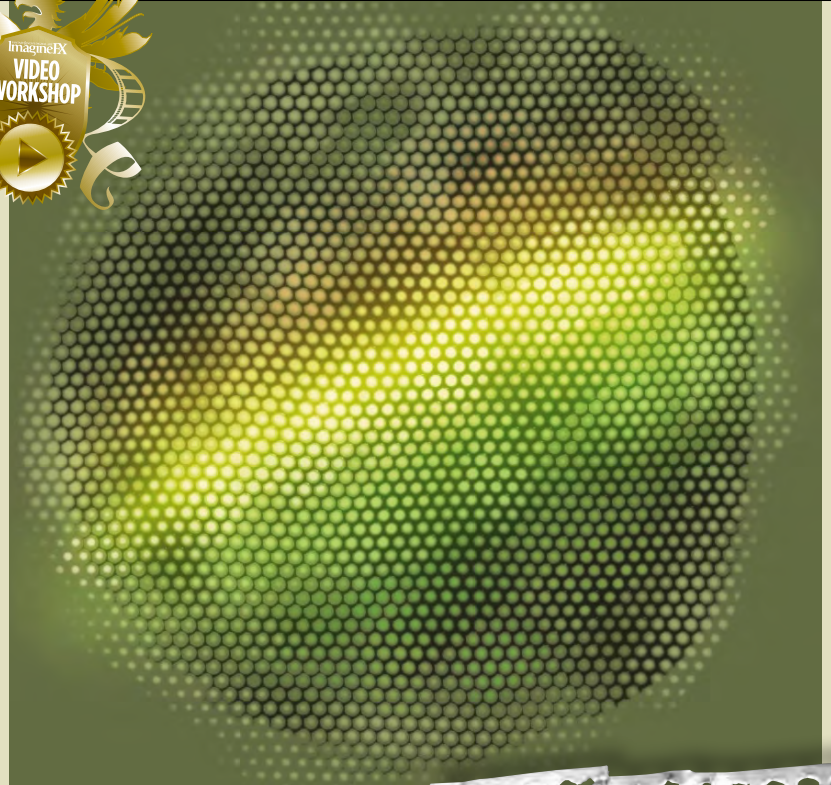
I select a scaly looking paper texture from a custom Paper library that I created earlier, then choose a brush that interacts well with the paper texture. The Variable Chalk brush, which is a variant of the Chalk and Crayons brush category, works really well. I start by filling the canvas with a mid-tone green colour.

Next, I create a new layer for the dark areas between the scales and paint this with a darker green than the background. Then I create a second layer for the top part of the scaly texture. I invert the paper texture, select a green colour lighter than the background and paint the top areas of the scales.

I then drop the two layers onto the canvas. I choose the Glow brush from the FX brush category. Picking a very dark green colour, I lightly paint over the areas that I want to appear shiny. I vary the colour to give a chameleon-like feel to the scales. Usually, I would make the highlights follow the contours of the creature; however, in this case I just paint across the scales.

Here I've dropped the scale layers onto the canvas and painted the highlights across the scales with Corel Painter's Glow brush.

The canvas layer is filled with green and both the dark and light scales are painted on separate layers above.



Artist's secret

ILLUSTRATE SCALES USING THE DIRECTION TOGGLE IN COREL PAINTER



I can paint scales with the impression of a light source using the Direction Toggle button on the Paper Palette. Paint in the light side of the scales with

strokes from the top and the shadow side with strokes from the bottom.

Step-by-step: Creating viscous-looking nose slime



1 Create a new layer and use Photoshop's Pen tool to draw a selection path that will become the outline of the slime trail. I fill this selection with a slimy green colour, which I use as my diffuse colour base. Then I lock the transparency of the layer.



2 Brush in dark values where there's less light, sampling from the background and painting in some of that light colour. I'm suggesting translucency by lightly painting in what's behind it. I avoid using an airbrush because I like having painterly edges in my art.



3 To reflect the main light source, which is from the top left, I add crisp, bright point highlights. Then to match my line-art style I outline the shape of the slime trail. To further suggest volume I add rim light reflections, from the secondary light source to the right.

Question

I want to draw the ugliest face ever! But how?

Teamdigit, Germany

Answer

Tony replies



Before we start, I'd like to point out that the entire concept of ugliness is a very subjective thing. I recently read an article on the "ugliest celebrities" and I was practically throwing my fruit snacks at the laptop screen (Gary Oldman? Really?). If there are people who think those actors are ugly, then there's no sense in stressing out over any objective idea of unattractiveness! That said, I love a lot of the old EC Comics horror issues. When I try and picture ugliness they are the first thing that comes to mind, so I'll be using that as my inspiration here

Trying to get to the root of what "ugliness" is can be an interesting mental exercise in itself. It's much like trying to figure out what it means to be "pretty" or "handsome".

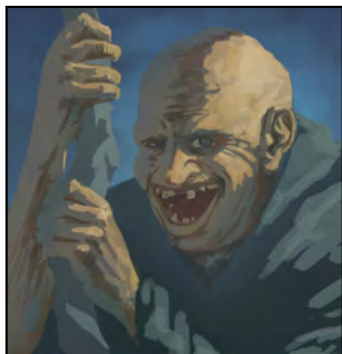
For one thing, many aspects of what modern Western culture regards as ugly are natural aspects of the aging process. Exaggerating wrinkles, cataracts, hair loss, liver spots, lost teeth and almost anything indicative of decay is also something we as a culture associate with ugliness.



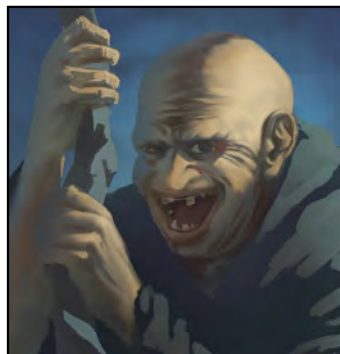
Think of everything photo retouchers use Photoshop to hide in fashion and beauty magazines, then simply do the opposite.



Step-by-step: Give your character a repellent appearance



- 1 When putting down your initial colours and values, don't worry about keeping things tight. Painting beauty demands every feature be placed just right, so the less you're striving for beauty the less you should worry about clean lines and symmetry. In fact, making all of the features smooth and symmetrical is something you should actively avoid.



- 2 High-key art tends to feel soft and light because of its lack of contrast, so adopt the inverse of that idea to create more uncomfortable images. You don't need to cover everything in shadow, though, because that can also soften a lot of edges. Quick jumps from light to dark add tension to an area, so don't be shy when aging a face. Dark lines mean deep wrinkles.



- 3 Signs of decay are an easy way to make people look creepier. Drawing an uncomfortable posture, removing teeth, exaggerating the ears and nose, spotty patches of hair (not to mention hair growing in strange places), and pretty much anything rotting, will enhance the effect. Avoid giving your character anything that implies a personal cleanliness routine.



- 4 Again, the idea is to make the character appear as unhygienic as possible. If it looks like they've showered any time soon, make them a little more repulsive with some appropriate textures. You can make some areas of the skin slippery and slimy, have some mucus running out of a few orifices, or add lots of pores and bumps to the skin. Have fun with those icky details!

Question

I need help getting the translucence of my ghostly character right

Kenny Gilbraith, England

Your choice of colour palette has a huge part to play in creating a creepy and ethereal ghost girl.



Answer

Sam replies



Before I go into it further, there's one key rule to bear in mind when trying to achieve this effect.

You're painting the light hitting your ghost and because it's not a solid form we don't see anything in the shadow areas that the light doesn't hit.

No value on your ghost should be darker than the background behind it. You can achieve this effect by painting on a Lighten layer, making it impossible to paint anything darker than the background.

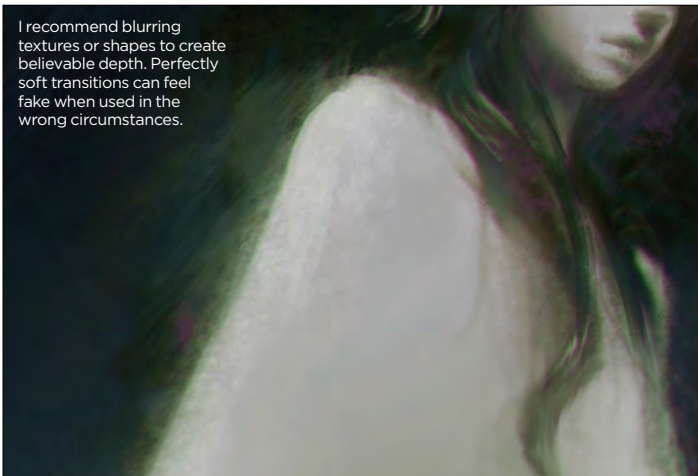
There are also a number of tricks to achieve the ghostly effect you're after. You can use the Opacity function, found in the Layers

window, to create the effect of light passing through your ghost. This is good for showing shapes in the background, driving home the message that we're looking through the ghost.

This will, however, create a washed-out feeling, which leads me on to the next trick. Try outlining your ghost character with bright edges that soften on the inside edge, to create a glowing effect.

This is the best way of creating a silhouette because you're not able to use darker values. In addition, try losing edges around the silhouette to create the impression that the ghost isn't a solid figure.

I recommend blurring textures or shapes to create believable depth. Perfectly soft transitions can feel fake when used in the wrong circumstances.



Question

Can you help me come up with an original brooch design please?

James Turner, England

Answer

Viktoria replies



As an artist it helps if you keep your antennas out at all times for inspiration and unusual ideas. I begin by taking a look online, browsing for brooch references. I find that flowers, precious stones, birds and insects are already commonly used in brooch designs.

So to come up with something more original, I think about what I haven't yet seen as a brooch. You wouldn't believe the crazy ideas I come up with – some too crazy to mention here. I finally settle on an idea that I've only seen once before.

That idea is a brooch in the shape of a hand, like the one belonging to the Hand of the King in Game of Thrones. Taking that brooch as my inspiration, I sketch down a couple of rough ideas and give it an interesting twist by mixing in an antique clock hand.



The pointy ends are inspired by an antique clock's hands.

First I focus on getting the anatomy of the hand right. It may not be a real hand, but the anatomy should still be accurate.

Question

How would you paint a bullet exit wound?

Liz Tucker, Scotland



Answer

John replies



Hollow-point bullets leave a large, messy exit wound. You're going to have all sorts of blood, skin, bone, viscera and other debris flying all over the place. It's a fun opportunity to add visual energy to an action piece. In Photoshop, you have a chance to play with different, messy-splatter brushes.

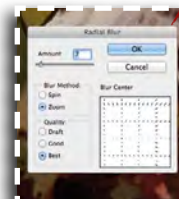
Working from big to small, I take a chunky, textured brush and start by roughly blocking in a large blood-red mass that will burst outward in a cone shape. Then I add some variation in value and saturation, avoiding painting in much detail because we don't want the viewer to get lost in anatomy.

I add some glossy highlights here and there, and use a Scatter brush to paint blood droplets spraying all over. Then I add a Camera Blur to the droplets for energy.



The process involves blocking in large chunks of bloody red colour, then adding glossy highlights, debris and blood spray, applying motion blur if desired

The splatter layer, just a Round Scatter brush with various Jitter applied, is converted to a Smart Object so I can apply Filter> Blur>Radial Blur and make tweaks.



Question

What's a good way of coming up with sci-fi concepts quickly?

Tom Beef  te, France

Answer

Ville replies



If I quickly want to generate unique and interesting sci-fi designs I like to use a technique called photobashing.

Essentially I make a collage of photos that I transform and paint on top of, to come up with shapes that I might not have thought up otherwise.

I start by blocking in the silhouette of the character, then I incorporate parts of photographs I've taken during field trips. I've found that sides of motorcycles in particular provide a near endless amount of shapes for sci-fi designs. Although virtually anything cool or techy-looking can be used as source material.

After I've laid out the sampled parts of photos and found a design that I'm happy with, I start to paint on top of the photos, further refining the design and lighting. Don't be afraid to try weird designs on separate layers– it just might work! I often find that the best designs are happy accidents that I would never have come up with if I hadn't experimented.

It's still important to keep some sort of overall logic for the design, though. Keep it cohesive or else it runs the risk of looking goofy. Then again, who knows what kind of weird and extraordinary technologies will be invented in the future? So don't lock yourself down too much.

For this design I imagine a futuristic maintenance worker. I introduce repeating elements to convey a techy look.

This is an earlier stage of the design that features cutouts taken from a couple of motorbike photos, which I took while out and about.



Question

How do you paint tribal scar markings?

Huang Pe, Taiwan



I use sharp cast shadows to push her chin and nose out from the plane of the face. The overlap creates even more depth.



Answer

Sam replies



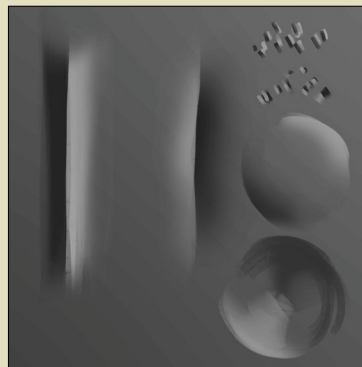
My first thought is that I don't know! It's common to be asked by a client to paint something you don't know much about, so the ability to teach yourself about a subject is valuable.

Tribal scarification isn't something I see everyday, so a quick search on the internet reveals all I need to know about the practice. The main things I observe are the designs of the patterns and how the scars look in different lighting situations.

I notice they're mostly convex. I create a layer containing imperfect circles in a pattern, and then used Lock Transparency to work inside those shapes without affecting them.

I use a Soft brush to highlight where the light catches the bumps of the scars, and then the same on the other side of the circles for the shadow. I then soften some of the edges where necessary, especially on the shadow edge.

Always remember that you only need to know enough to create the illusion of what you've been asked to paint.



Having a good knowledge of light and form enables you to easily give the illusion of scars or any other interesting grooves.

Question

I need a hand with painting tropical fish. What advice can you give?

NestOfVipers, Wales

Answer

Viktoria replies



My most important tip is to sit down and gather some references of tropical fish. Many of the tropical fish that we

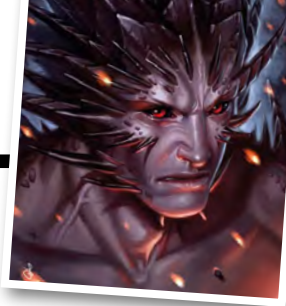
know of live on the world's coral reefs, so Googling "The Great Barrier Reef", for example, should be sufficient to get you started on gathering inspirational material.

You'll notice from the photos that many tropical fish are, of course, colourful. My second tip is therefore to have your fish swimming in fairly bright, happy colours.

Tropical fish often feature diverse patterns across their bodies, which you can use as inspiration to create some cool fantasy patterns of your own. In addition, keep in mind the often flat, leaf-shaped bodies of the fish. Using that shape in your design would make the fish look like they belong in more tropical waters.

My third and final tip for you is not to make your fish design overly complicated. To make something fantasy doesn't mean you have to go insane with the design and create something so abstract no one but you understands it.

It's always a good idea to base your fantasy design in reality – especially with animals – and then throw in a mix of elements that your viewer might not have expected to see. As an example, why not give your fish wings? Or a unicorn horn? Or make it a fairy fish? Or just about anything else that tickles your imagination. Digital painting enables you to try out all these possibilities, and more!



Next month
ON SALE: **25 April**
Make your character
work in close-up



I bring a fantasy touch to the fish with simple but effective ideas, such as fairy wings and a unicorn horn.



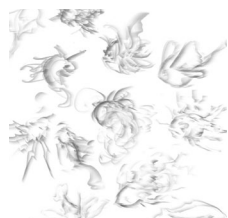
Artist's secret

STAY ZOOMED OUT

Avoid zooming in too much in the early stages of colouring in Photoshop. Zoom in and you risk losing sight of the big picture. Zoomed out, it's much easier to see whether the colours work well together or not.

Step-by-step: Paint fantastical tropical fish

1 Start scribbling! I simply go a little crazy and do random strokes and shapes with a wispy brush on a separate layer in Photoshop. This is just to let the imagination flow to see what comes out



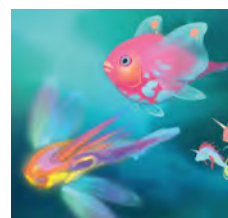
and what happy accidents I can bring on. Don't worry about anatomy just yet – instead, relax and have fun. These are only the first scribbles, after all.

2 I pick out my favourite scribbles, lower the Opacity to 20 per cent, create a new layer on top of the scribbles and start sketching. I add more detail, while also taking out anything that doesn't



make sense to me. Now is also a good time to start thinking about perspective and anatomy and whether the shapes work well together or not.

3 I lower the Opacity of the sketch layer and, on a new layer below, add saturated colours with a Soft brush for a smooth transition between the different hues in the fish's scales. After establishing



the base colours, I merge the sketch and colour layers and then begin rendering with a simple oval brush and a select few textured brushes.

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.**

VISIONS OF ICE AND FIRE

From the thrilling TV show to a thriving Fantasy Flight Games series and 14-month calendars by the best in the business, *A Song of Ice and Fire* has become an inspiring fantasy tale for artists



Tobias Mannewitz took to crossing the street in his lunch break – whenever he had time for one – and entering a veritable village of craftsmen forging swords, testing catapults, painting murals and preparing four huge sets for filming.

“Essentially, all of Northern Ireland is the set for Game of Thrones,” says the visual effects concept artist. “But at the heart of it is the former wharf building Paint Hall,” located on Belfast’s reclaimed Queen’s Island. “Being able to walk into these sets gives you such a great feeling of being involved in the process, and our work on the CG pieces greatly benefited from that,” says Tobias.



While the series locations include Malta and Iceland, it was his Belfast-inspired



MANCE RAYDER'S CAMP

Tobias and team paint The King-Beyond-the-Wall's makeshift stronghold for season three of the TV series.

second season work that won Tobias an Emmy for special visual effects in 2012. Yet he nearly didn't work on it at all.

Restless after years of generating concept art for games, Tobias was looking for a new challenge. In 2011 his Berlin-based studio Karakter was told about a potential job for a new fantasy TV series, and it was, understandably, intriguing. In fact, hiring artists for the new HBO series *A Game of Thrones* wasn't going great. “The team had a very difficult time recruiting VFX concept artists for the show, because no one knew

“Walking into the sets was a great feeling and our CG work really benefited”

whether it was any good, or whether it'd be worth spending a full summer in rainy Belfast,” admits Tobias. Then, inspired by a poster of a troubled Eddard Stark sat on the Iron Throne, Karakter threw its hat into the ring, and got the job.

THE SOURCE

He's not the only artist to fall under the spell of George RR Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* novel series – a fantasy epic fuelled by power-lust and deceit with all-too-human characters looming large, only to vanish like breath on a razor blade. Since the 1996 publication of the first book *A Game of Thrones*, artists have been seduced by its gritty, uncensored action.

Fantasy Flight Games (FFG) released two art books-worth of inspired art. Six



DANCE WITH DRAGONS

A Song of Ice and Fire book cover artist Marc Simonetti shows us a scene to come!



THE FALLEN

Among the many beloved characters George R.R. Martin has "killed horribly", the stalwart Eddard Stark, painted here by Michael Komarek, was the first to go.



WALK OF SHAME

In this painting from Marc's 2013 calendar, Cersei seeks atonement.

➤ towering fantasy artists, including Michael Komarck and John Picacio, worked on as many calendars, with Donato Giancola currently finishing one for 2015. The imminent release of the massive encyclopaedia *A World of Ice and Fire* is the latest in a string of books featuring original art, with French illustrator Marc Simonetti leading the charge.

“It’s like a parent choosing a favourite child, but I have a lot of affection for Tyrion, Arya and Daenerys”

At the heart of it all is George RR Martin, although he’s keen to tell us that his duties as Overseer Of All Ice and Fire Art aren’t what they used to be. Speaking from his Santa Fe, New Mexico home, at the desk



where he’s penned every word of the series so far, he admits, “It’s just become too much! Remember, I’ve been doing this for a long time. When

I started with Fantasy Flight Games, I was very heavily involved, approving every painting. In theory that’s fine, but then you’re doing nothing but approving and commenting on paintings. I just do specific characters now.”

And what characters! Divine, grotesque, chivalric and nefarious – in a genre fond of depicting morality in terms of black and

white, Martin likes it when opposites collide, casting his gaze over the far more interesting greys. Of course, he has his favourite forms of this complex colour. “It’s like a parent choosing their favourite child, but I’ve got to admit I have a lot of affection for Tyrion, I have a lot of affection for Arya, and for Dany [Daenerys]... But I love all my characters. Even the ones I kill horribly.”



KING’S LANDING

Kimberley Pope offers an aerial view of King’s Landing, the capital of the Seven Kingdoms and the site of the Iron Throne.



ARYA STAR

Artist John Picacio: “I created this artwork shortly after my daughter was born, hoping that she would possess some of Arya’s spunk – and she sure does!”

With the continent of Ice and Fire art shifting and expanding apace, the author says he’s become more liberal in allowing how artists depict his beloved offspring. Speak to anyone who’s had an official commission however, and there’s a good chance they’ll recall a crit from the author on how their work stands next to what’s in his head. It seems that, like some of George’s more wily characters, old habits die hard.

MAKING A CLASSIC

For the HBO *Game of Thrones* TV series, art director Gemma Jackson and supervising art director Paul Inglis, had a



list of things to consider before deploying their legion of artists and VFX teams. Remarkably, the expectations of millions of fans wasn’t ➤

THRONE ROOM

Tobias painted images for the desolate Harrenhal castle, the largest in all Westeros. Although it’s seen better days...



THE HOT SEAT

Marc's first attempt at the Iron Throne, for a Mexican edition of the book.



A THRONE MADE OF SWORDS

"I don't give a shit if it's 1,000 or 8,000 swords. It really is the Iron Throne the way I see it."



"Before being an illustrator I'm a fan. I'm a reader," says French artist Marc Simonetti. And as a fan, it made sense for the artist to get in contact with the man who came up with the ideas he was depicting.

"George said to me that in the book the throne had to be massive, so that the king was high above his subjects, and to have the look and feel of a hunched beast, all twisted metal... In a way," admits Marc, "it's an impossible thing to represent."

"As a prose writer I'm describing things in my book not as a technical writer would, but in more metaphoric terms," explains George. "The throne is huge and it's hunching and it gives this impression of dominance. The artist needs to translate those abstracts - how to make it look like a giant-like beast, and all that stuff."

Marc's first stab at the throne was for a Mexican book cover. Wanting the metal 'beast' to stand out, he picked a classic environment. "I used pictures of the papal throne in the Vatican as reference."

For World of Ice and Fire - the most recent release - he went back to George for feedback. "It's said that it's made of 1,000 swords, and in the beginning I worked to make the throne exactly 1,000 swords," says Marc. "But George he said, 'I don't give a shit if it's 1,000 or 8,000!'" The character of the thing was everything. Once Marc got that, the author had to admit, "it really is the Iron Throne the way I see it."

WORK IN PROGRESS

Here's a WIP of the dragon-forged Iron Throne, for the forthcoming A World of Ice and Fire book.



LITTLE TROUBLE IN BIG WESTEROS

Marc captures the looming surrounding of everyone's favourite Lannister, Tyrion.

WORLD-BUILDING, ONE WORD AT A TIME

GEORGE RR MARTIN

We talk to George RR Martin about his love of art, Ice and Fire, and obscure steamboats



You were inspired by authors such as Isaac Asimov and HP Lovecraft as a child, but what fantasy and sci-fi art made an impact on you?

There wasn't a lot of art around other than cover art. I learnt very early on – we're talking around the 1950s – that there were two types of primary packaging for sci-fi and fantasy. There were the Richard Powers covers that were surreal, kind of abstract, with floating shapes and twisted things. Then there were the more illustrative work by Ed Emshwiller and Frank Kelly Freas. I have an original Powers in my collection here and several Emshwillers and a Freas, but certainly as a kid I preferred the Freas/Emsh approach, where you were actually seeing spaceships and aliens.

I didn't start getting into the sci-fi art per se until I started going to the conventions – the first was 1971. And of course then they had the art show, where you could go in and see a lot of the originals without the typography. A lot of artists in those days would put their original paintings in there for ridiculously

low prices. I wish I had any money back then, but I didn't, so I couldn't buy any of it for these really low prices!

Ice and Fire seems born of a medieval time. Do you like the art of that time?

In terms of classic art I respond more to the later period: the Dutch masters and the Flemish masters, and the Pre-Raphaelites. When we talk about artistic movements, some of them are just scholars grouping artists together and saying, "They were a movement". With the Pre-Raphaelites they actually were a movement. They all hung out together and said, "We are the Pre-Raphaelites." I went to a show about them last year and it was amazing – all of that lush, romantic stuff. You know: knights and ladies and all of that. That stuff's gorgeous.

You seem quite generous in allowing artists to interpret your world...

I think at this point, yes. I was a lot more protective at the beginning. I went through an experience on my 1982 novel *Fevre Dream*. It's a historical horror novel set on the Mississippi River in the 1850s. And it all centres around a steamboat called the *Fevre Dream*. Now, in that period there were two types of steamboat: the Stern Wheelers and the Side Wheelers. The *Fevre Dream* is a Side Wheeler, with two big paddle boxes on the side – none exist today. The surviving steamboats are all Stern Wheelers, so when the covers of *Fevre Dream* started coming out everybody was painting Stern Wheelers. And it drove me crazy! "No, no! It's a Stern Wheeler! When will you get this thing right?" But at a certain point I noticed that some of these covers, the covers that were wrong, were beautiful covers. And some of the covers that had got it right, were some of the most hideous covers I'd ever seen! So I said, "You know, I'd rather have a good cover with a beautiful piece of art than one that's ugly even though it's technically correct." That gave me a lot of perspective that I took forward with *Ice and Fire*.



STEAMING IN

Woe betide anyone who gets their 1850s steam boats confused in the vicinity of George RR Martin.



A WITCH'S SPELL

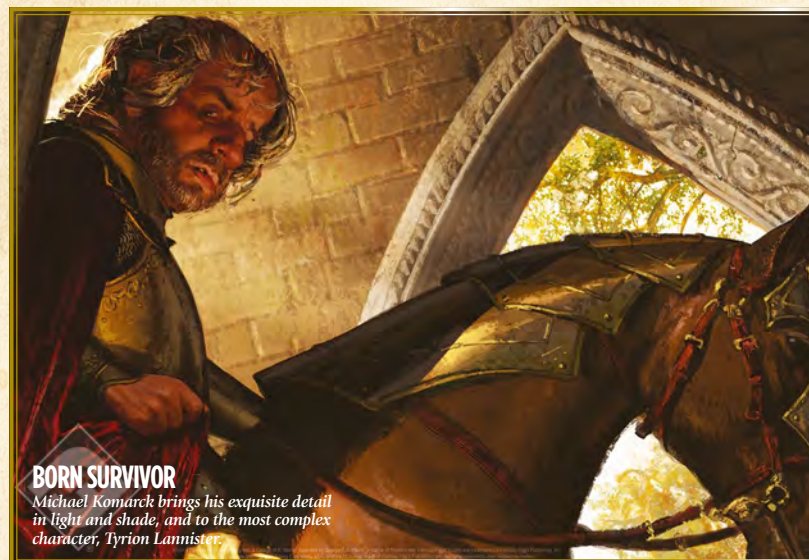
Donato Giancola painted Melisandre, the Red Priestess, 12 years ago, but recently came back to Martin's world.

➔ their first concern. "With a normal film, there's 120 pages of script, and everything you need to discover and work from starts there," explains Paul. "With *Game of Thrones* there was so much more to consider."

As every serious artist knows, you start with shapes, not detail. Getting the philosophy of each main part of George's Known World was step one. The producers wanted to avoid using subtitles to cue viewers as to which part of the world was being shown. "We used colour, texture, level of decoration, styles of set dressing, weight of architecture and choice of

landscape to help define each main area of the world," says Paul. King's Landing was warm-toned and lavish, with a "fecund feel," whereas Essos, although also warm, was arid. The Dothraki world was based on temporariness – buildings made from woven materials and lashed timbers. "We made Winterfell solid and squat, with a granite-like determination," says Paul. Castle Black was deteriorating, its interiors showing the ravages of every aspect of life spent inside: "The walls almost dripping with rendered fat and tallow".

By now revelling in the change of pace from game art, Tobias started on some



BORN SURVIVOR

Michael Komarck brings his exquisite detail in light and shade, and to the most complex character, Tyrion Lannister.



A ROOM FOR DRAGONS

How a Sri Lankan fortress became the unlikely inspiration for Stannis Baratheon's stronghold

For season two of Game of Thrones art director Gemma Jackson and co needed to design and make Stannis Baratheon's stronghold, made up of dragon shapes of black volcanic material. Gemma's research took her to Sri Lanka's stone fortress Sigiriya for inspiration.

Michael Eaton hand-drew several maps of Westeros, and "a preliminary drawing for the map table, which is what Kimberley Pope then turned into her amazing concept piece".



To get more of those dragon shapes in, he also drew a design that was then carved straight out of the volcanic rock – again, worked up by Kimberley before morphing into the wall sculpture by Gemma, Tina Jones and the prop team.

© HBO

ADDED DIMENSION

Working from hand-drawn maps, Kimberley designs the main feature of Stannis Baratheon's map room.



MAP OF THE WORLD

Left, Michael worked on several maps of the continent Westeros, where most of the action takes place.



THE MAP ROOM

Kimberley Pope's final concept piece can be seen here in her painting of Stannis's hideout on the island of Dragonstone.



initial sketches of the giants – the latest, but certainly not the least, character addition to the fourth season. They were worked up by studio teammate Robert Simon, who also created "a fantastic range of new creature designs that we can't talk about until season four has aired," Tobias reveals. "I'm very envious of Robert's character work, that's all I can say."

JOHN AND GEORGE

Ted Nasmith admits bias in choosing his favourite fantasy writer. As a teenager he sent a letter to JRR Tolkien along with an original Lord of the Rings-inspired painting. The author's generous feedback encouraged a passion that had already formed roots in the verdant Middle-earth.



Having since given much of his career to depicting Tolkien's universe, Ted has recently moved to Martin's – particularly painting

“He offers rich imagery – castles are huge, unusual, on mountains or sea stacks”

the castles scattered around the three continents of the Known World in the 2011 calendar. "For an artist he offers rich imagery – the castles are great flights of fancy, impossibly huge, unusual, perched on mountains or sea stacks, or next to the massive ice wall," he says.

Although it's more than the middle two initials that link George Raymond Richard Martin with John Ronald Reuel Tolkien, the similarities can be overstated. "It's known that Martin was a reader of The Lord of the Rings, but to his credit, he avoided trying to imitate Tolkien."

IN THE HOUSE OF DUST

Fans of the books may recognise Marc's depiction of warlocks in this book cover painting.



© Random House

A STROLL DOWN EASTWATCH BY THE SEA



Artist Ted Nasmith takes us through painting a castle that George RR Martin hasn't even fully visualised yet

1 For Eastwatch by the Sea, the castle guarding the eastern terminus of The Wall, I had little to go on from the novels. George RR Martin admits there's no proper description of the castle, though he says it's clear in his mind. My version is not accurate, he told me, while conceding that was understandable.

It wasn't part of the official series, but a private commission by a fan. I draw thumbnails to quickly establish the basic composition, with elements of castle, ice wall and seascape. I chose the sketch that had a better balance of the three elements.



2 I consulted photos of Arctic and northern landscapes, knowing the ice wall would appear blue-green, and saw it under brooding, windblown cloud, strategically lit from behind.

The castle stone and cliffs would be dark in contrast, and with indications of woods, rugged hills and almost black seas, I quickly worked up a colour sketch. It establishes the colour, composition and light balance, and general detail, creating the template for the final art. Often I'll paint two or more colour studies, but here I felt confident with the one sketch.





“Martin admits there’s no proper description of the castle, though he says it’s clear in his mind”

3 The final artwork conforms quite closely to the sketch version. I elaborated on the castle to give the focal point of detail, with a small, sheltered port town in front, as hinted in the sketch. The Wall’s end should be something less than a simple, squared-off design, so I kept the angled corners that I sketched out in a previous thumbnail.

The distant shoreline and hills were refined to better serve the image, and for the breaking waves. I consulted the rich tradition of seascape art by such masters as William Trost Richards and Alfred Thompson Bricher. I also consulted a picture book I own titled *Superior: The Haunted Shore*. A collection of narrated photos, it evocatively captures Lake Superior’s wild winter darkness, a mood I readily adapted to *Eastwatch*.

For me, such imagery is deeper in my DNA, perhaps due to being Canadian. Harsh, lonely wilds and colder, more forbidding landscapes seem to arouse my happiest artistic instincts and haunt my thoughts.

KEEP IT IN THE FAMILY

The fine art of creating a clan's sigil and banner

Jim Stanes worked on the season's pilot, creating each family's sigil, then Michael Eaton worked them up to banners. George chose the symbols, Jim the style: "The stylistic reference ranges from Babylon to modern logo design," he says.



© HBO



THE OTHERS

"I think this piece was the inspiration for the Others in the official graphic novel adaptation," says John.

© Bantam Spectra

➔ Coming from an architectural background, Ted appreciates Ice and Fire's "believable continental mass: sophisticated, logical. As with Tolkien, Martin describes not only its breadth but its deep history and lore. Martin's elaborate detail offers excellent material for the artist to base imagery upon." Of the two titans' masterworks, Martin's is the more narrative driven – a fact that Marc Simonetti used to his advantage to produce one of George's favourite paintings.

“The art is inside the book. I’m making an image that’ll make someone want to grab the book”

"The minute I saw Marc's work on the French book editions I thought to myself, 'this guy is great, let's hire him for some more,'" says George.

If it wasn't for Marc Simonetti's single-mindedness, this recognition might not have happened. He trained as an engineer, and one day while formulating the coatings for non-stick frying pans he decided to jump ship and start from zero. He was



already painting every spare moment and had devoured Terry Pratchett's best-selling Discworld books, before turning his attention to Ice and Fire. That was a good start. After "tons" of FFG Game of Thrones card art jobs, an impressed publisher gave him carte blanche on international Ice and Fire book covers. With an intimate knowledge and love of the text, given further force by a rare humility, he got



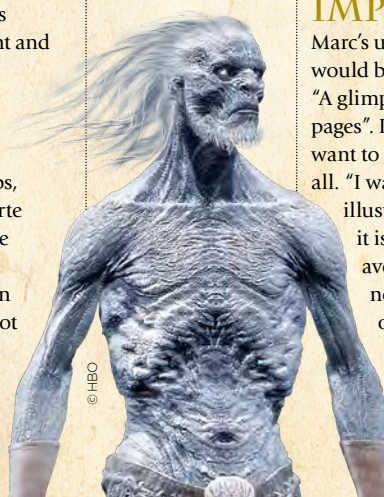
FIRST RANGING

Jean Pierre Targete took the developing character Jon Snow for this FFG card piece.

© Fantasy Flight Games

COLD AS ICE

3D artist Martin Rezard worked up initial designs of the fearsome White Walkers for the TV series.



© HBO

stuck in. "I'm not making art," says Marc today. "The art is inside the book. I'm making an image that'll make someone want to grab the book."

IMPRESSIONISTIC

Marc's usual approach to such a vast world would be to pick on the smallest detail: "A glimpse of two lines from a thousand pages". Indeed, for Ice and Fire he didn't want to represent a scene from the book at all. "I wanted to make a generic illustration to give the idea of how big it is, of how adult it is – it's not the average fantasy book," he says. "It's not about a classic scene of fighting, or a wild effect. It's about

➔



THE WALL

Marc takes on the great white wall of ice, a man-made fortress guarding against the dangers of the North.



DAENERYS
John worked on his 2012 calendar while the first TV series was in production, creating unique interpretations.

© Random House

PICTURES IN THE SAND

Visualising the “truly vast and awe-inspiring” Qarth was given tangibility by detailing the imagery of a long-past people



Of all the work that Kimberley Pope did on *Game of Thrones*, *Dragonstone*, *Pyke* and *Qarth* – the trading city on the south coast of Essos – all stand out. “They all had a distinctive atmosphere and I really love going from an initial concept to working on a layout for a tapestry or mural,” she says.

“Qarth was a slightly tricky set, as the description in the book is of something truly vast and awe-inspiring. We tried a lot of quick initial sketches, but there was a certain limitation to what could be built. The main gate and walls either side were only about 60ft wide in final construction,” she reveals. “It needed to combine a sense of grandeur and a taste of Eastern decadence, so we used a lot of reference from Egyptian ruins,

Islamic and Moroccan architecture as well as traditional Indian art.”

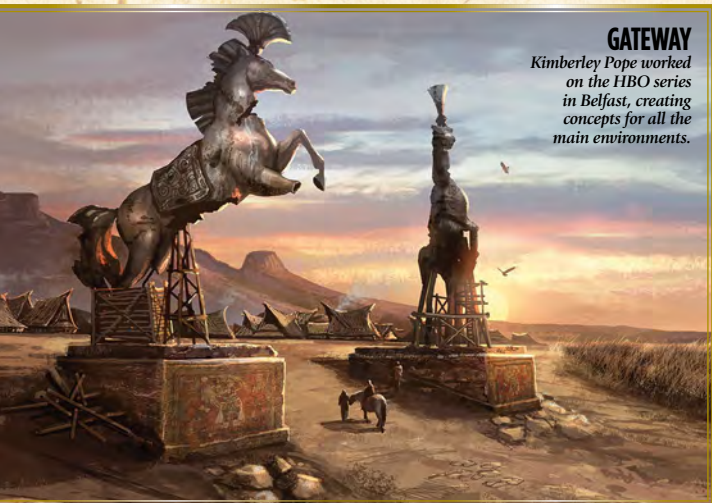
The latter was also used to create the mural. Art director Gemma Jackson wanted a scene involving mythical animals in a monumental struggle. “We had these great traditional Indian paintings that had a similar feel so they became the starting point. I simply elaborated from there.

“I think these images were intended to look like they had existed for a long time. Just as real murals and tapestries exist primarily to tell a story of a culture, and secondarily to show off their riches, expertise and sophistication – we wanted that for the sets. They provide a sense of history and tradition, executed by the local craftsmen probably in the past. It’s very effective,” says Kimberley, “Gemma was always great at that.”



DESERT PARADISE

Art studio *Karakter* worked on many matte paintings of Qarth for season two – when Daenerys and her pets confront *The Spice King*.



GATEWAY

Kimberley Pope worked on the HBO series in Belfast, creating concepts for all the main environments.

➤➤ intelligence, people – real characters. That’s why I tried to stick to a more traditional feeling, Impressionist, Sergeant, Sisley, Whistler.”

For a Mexican edition of the books he painted the Iron Throne – made of a 1,000 swords. George was impressed, but it wasn’t quite there yet. An exchange of emails between the two preceded Marc’s second attempt, for forthcoming book *The World of Ice and Fire*. The result was spot on. “The second version of the Iron Throne that he

did, it really is the Iron Throne the way I see it,” declares the author.

VALAR MORGHULIS

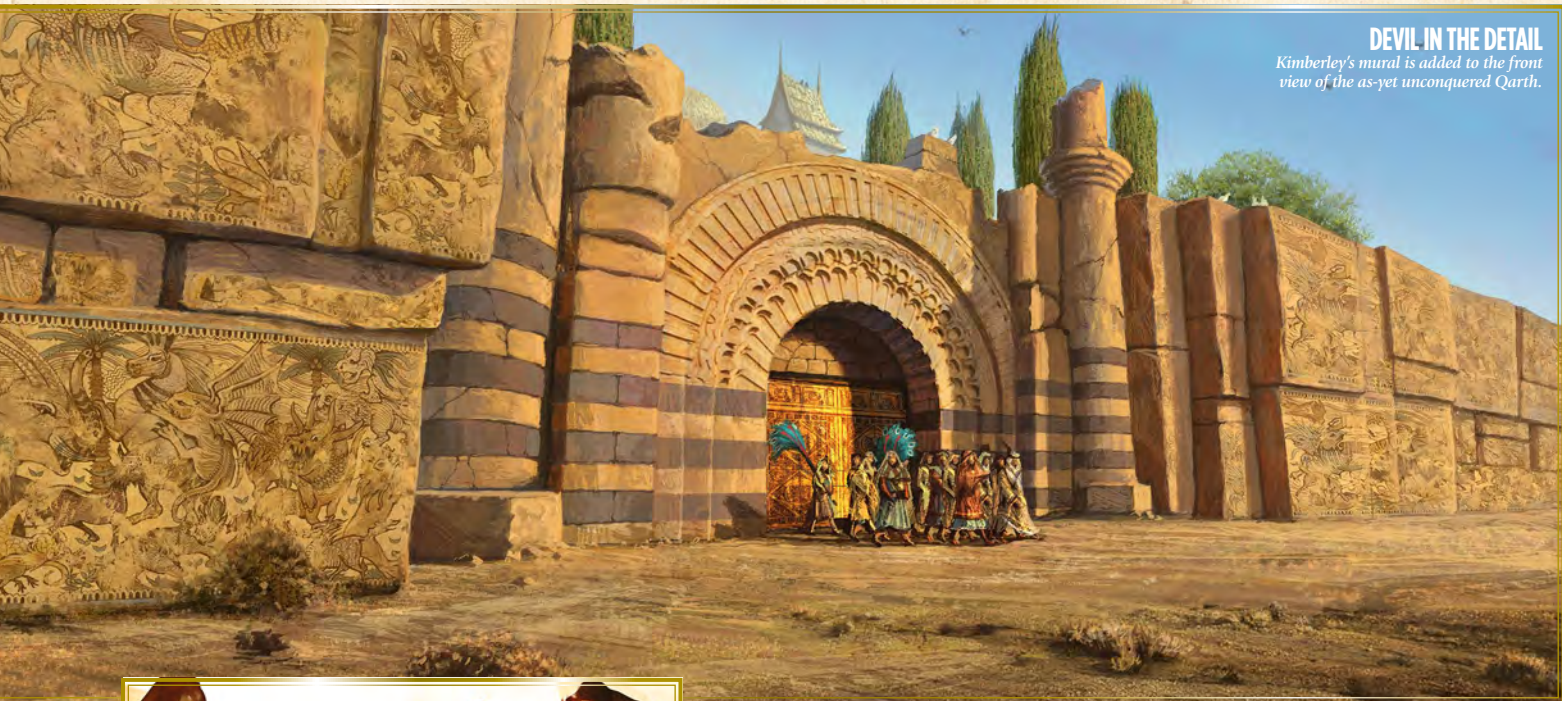
The future looks healthy for Ice and Fire art. Donato Giancola is enjoying his work on the 2015 Ice and Fire calendar – he’s even



trying to change the fabric of time so he can extend the project. “I’ve been working on sketches and concept drawings for the past two months,” he

“George is a fan of artists and believes that you prime the pump and then let the artist do what they do best”

© HBO



DEVIL IN THE DETAIL

Kimberley's mural is added to the front view of the as-yet unconquered Qarth.

© HBO



MOTHER AND SON

Marc Simonetti has painted several of the characters, as well as his iconic take on King's Landing's Iron Throne.

DANY

The moment Daenerys becomes the Mother of Dragons – as depicted by Michael Komarck for the Game of Thrones FFG card game.



© Fantasy Flight Games

says, "and I jokingly told George that Westeros should have 14 months to their year, just so I could create more paintings."

Long before trying to establish the Donatonian calendar, the artist took to this fantasy world some 12 years ago with a commission to paint Melisandre, Red Priestess of the Lord of Light. It should come as no surprise who was on hand to give him some pointers. "George is a fan of artists and believes that you prime the pump and then let the artist do what they do best," says Donato. Those old habits again!

And unlike the other popular fantasy epic that's long since closed its enchanted stone doors on events, there's no end in sight for this densely webbed story or the accompanying artwork.

With the sixth book of the series imminent, and the fifth TV season already snapping at the author's heels, many more brushes and styluses will be wielded to help visualise what George RR Martin continues to see in his mind's eye. ●



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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 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.

Issue 106 March 2014



We all judge a book by its cover, so let Wylie Beckert show you how to compose a fantasy one that genuinely captivates. Speaking of which, we investigate what makes children's books so appealing to fantasy artists, take a peek inside Brian Froud's sketchbook, and help you paint a pulp character.

Issue 107 April 2014



We celebrate artists who take the road less travelled. Han-Yuan Yu adds beautifully detailed costumes to his manga art, Christopher Moeller paints a comic panel traditionally, Serge Kolesov depicts a mermaid from a breathtaking new perspective, and there's much else besides.

*Resource files are only available from issue 85 onwards.

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

Bob Eggleton

Flick through examples of this master artist's drawings, which hint at where he plans to take his art next...

Artist PROFILE

Bob Eggleton

COUNTRY: US



The American sci-fi, fantasy and horror artist has won Chesley and Hugo awards for his rich, detailed art, which adorns book covers and playing cards. He's illustrated a themed attraction in Las Vegas - Star Trek: The Experience - and is known for his distinctive depictions of Godzilla.
www.bobeggleton.com

CTHULHU SIX EYES

"Here's HP Lovecraft's monster Cthulhu, but drawn the way Lovecraft actually described him and sketched him himself: with six eyes in total. Sometimes it's fun to just go crazy with a pencil."



GODZILLA WITH TRAIN

"This is a sketch of everyone's favourite Japanese giant monster. I had an awkward moment and basically ran out of paper on one side, because I was unsure where it was going. This is what sketching is for. If I wanted to proceed with a finished work I would photocopy the sketch and then simply add more to it."



ASSIGNMENT IN ETERNITY

"A nice sketch that became a cover painting for Robert A Heinlein's book of the same name."

DRAGON SARAH IDEAS

"My friend Sarah did some posing for me in some of her draped clothing and dresses. I love fabric folds and drawing them is especially fun to do. This also helps improve my figure skills."

"I had an awkward moment and basically ran out of paper on one side"



SNOWBOUND MAMMOTH

"I love mammoths. So this is one trudging his way through the snow. Much like our winter..."



SEA MONSTER HEAD

"This came as a result of wanting to do a larger painting. I was unsure how the beast in it would look, but sketching the head was a nice exploration and helped define the creature."



Sketchbook

VOYAGE OF FIRE AND ICE

"This was inspired by volcanic eruptions and airships - one that's traversing a massive ice abyss to some adventure. Sketches are great for exploring story ideas."



DRAGON ON TALL ROCKS

"This was an idea I saw in my head and I sketched it down before it faded away. The dragon's looking down on a passing ship. The people on board are not looking up..."



VOYAGE OF FIRE & ICE
J.B. 2013

THE DEEP ONES

"One of HP Lovecraft's strange men-fish creatures, which will wind up being for something."





MOUNT DOOM CONCEPT

"This is going to be a major epic piece, inspired of course by The Lord of The Rings. I love volcanoes."

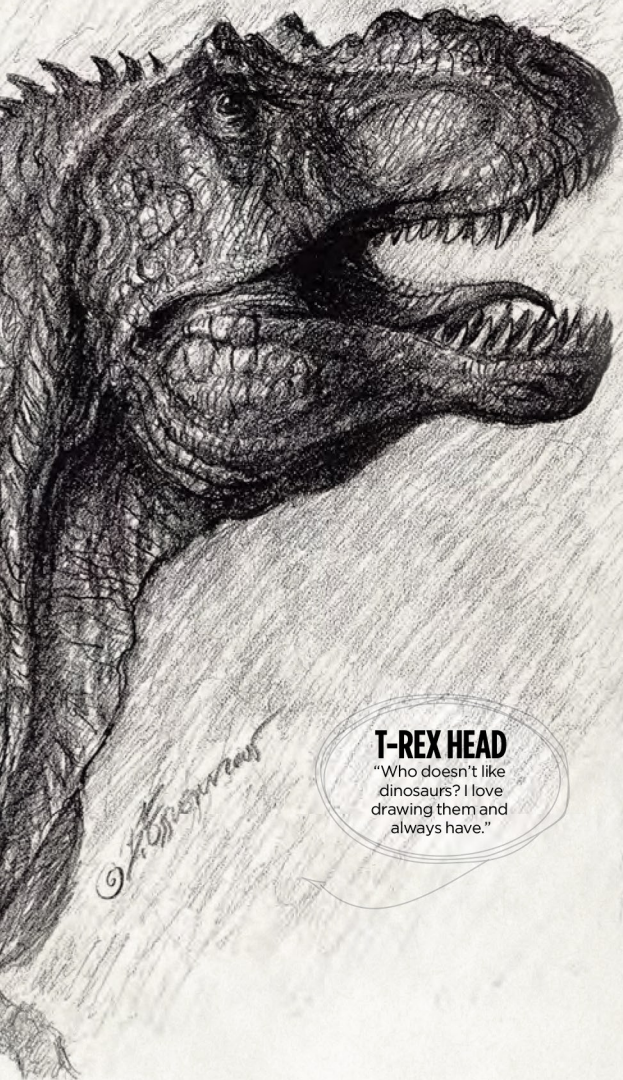
SMAUG HEAD

"A head study of the enigmatic dragon from The Hobbit."



DAGON

"This is a sketch I came up with for the Lovecraft short story."



T-REX HEAD

"Who doesn't like dinosaurs? I love drawing them and always have."



"Sometimes it's fun to just go crazy with a pencil."

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



Denman Rooke gets on with the job at hand: creating action-packed concepts.

STUDIO PROFILE

DIGIT GAME STUDIOS

As a new game studio with a veteran line-up at its helm, Digit is ready to indulge its love of dark medieval fantasy

LOCATION: Dublin
PROJECTS: Kings of the Realm
OTHER PROJECTS: N/A
WEB: www.digitgaming.com



For the past few years Ireland has gradually earned an enviable reputation for being a technological powerhouse, with companies such as Google, Twitter and Facebook choosing to base their European operations there. But it's not just software giants that are booming – game development in Ireland is also big business, as relatively new company Digit Game Studios can attest.

Based in Dublin, Digit itself is not just any old start-up game company. It was co-founded by Martin Frain, David McGovern, Richard Barnwell and Fergus Duggan, all of who have extensive experience in the industry. Between them they've developed for and launched RuneScape, Tomb Raider, Mirror's Edge, Battlefield Heroes, Bejeweled and many

more. So why walk away from a cushy job to start all over again as a relative nobody?

"It's always great to be able to take your own path and create a game of your own,"



says Martin. "We've known each other for a while and our skills complement one another. And it's fun to build something from scratch."

Digit's first release is Kings of the Realm, an ambitious fantasy strategy title full of knights, archers, castles and, well, realms. It's currently in open beta. Using Digit's own "seamlessly cross-platform" technology, Kings is designed from the ground up to be playable on any device – iPad, Android tablet, a web browser, Facebook app and so on – so no matter where you are, you can pick up and carry on playing.

Here be dragons... and their designated riders. Just some of the monster concepts that Digit has produced for Knights of the Realm.



“It’s always great to be able to take your own path and create a game of your own”

Eriodna is one of the main commanders who control vast armies of troops. Each has their own back-story.



DENMAN ROOKE

The Rising Star on his “fantastic adventure”

How did you end up working with Digit in Ireland, having grown up in the US?

It still seems a little surreal. Firstly, I’ve had dual Irish citizenship through my dad for a few years, so naturally, Ireland was one of the first places, along with the UK, that I researched. I subsequently came across a new video game studio in Dublin looking for a lead concept artist. So I sent my stuff their way and within a couple of weeks they flew me over for an interview, and to my surprise a month later I arrived in Dublin with the wife and all my stuff. It’s been a fantastic adventure ever since. I loved Digit’s vision and vibe, so it’s a perfect fit.

What are the best and worst things about working on a new IP such as Kings of the Realm?

One of the best things is definitely full creative control. As a studio we can decide what kind of world we want to create, and what kind of characters we can build a story around. It’s bliss, really. But the counter to that is we have to start from scratch at building our brand. You have to be very careful that you don’t get lost in the wave of mediocre fantasy games, and instead build something that’s unique, engaging and fun.

What makes Digit a great company to work for?

Digit encourages everyone to be a part of the whole – not just in your skill set, but also in your ideas. Being a smaller studio helps facilitate that. It cultivates participation and collaboration. We all work together well and everyone is inspired to pitch in to the overall vision and development of our games. Digit has made a very strong effort to gather people who ultimately love games and are great at what they do. It’s fantastic to be a part of a team who all share that passion.

What do you miss most about the US art scene?

I miss the conventions the most. Being on the east coast was nice because there were a few conventions within a day’s drive. I really missed attending IlluXCon this year, especially since it was in my home state of Pennsylvania, which made it convenient to get to – but even more so because of seeing and hanging out with other sci-fi and fantasy freelancers and listening to great talks from other artists and art directors and the like. I would love to see more conventions like that in Ireland and Europe in general.



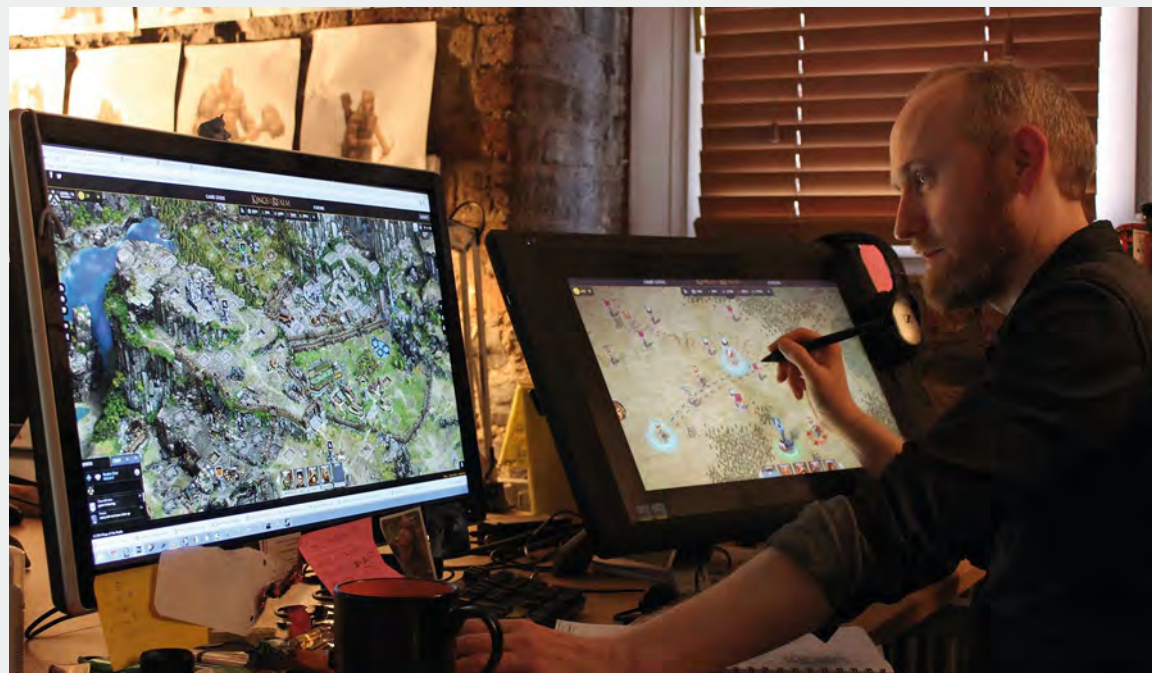
Born and raised in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Denman was one of ImagineFX’s Rising Stars of 2013 and is now Digit’s lead concept artist.

www.denmanrooke.com





Commander Hord embodies all the gruffness and power of a fantasy dwarf.



Fergus Duggen maps out Digit's plans to create high-profile game art.

"Stylistically, Kings of the Realm is a more mature dark-fantasy art style which pushes the brutal aspects of medieval war while still having a fantasy edge,"



says Fergus, Digit's art director. "The most obvious visual inspiration would be Game of Thrones, but we also look to great games such as Diablo III as the benchmark for quality and consistency."

“From the very beginning we decided Digit would focus on creating high-quality, gritty fantasy artwork”

Digit draws on a massive database of historical imagery as the basis for all the designs in the game, and the team also regularly attends medieval re-enactments. "Small details such as the layering of padding around the neck to stop the skin being chafed by chain or plate, or how tired and dirty everyone looks after only a few hours of just wearing the damn stuff – never mind fighting a seven-foot orc – reminds you that warfare is an uncomfortable business," Fergus adds.



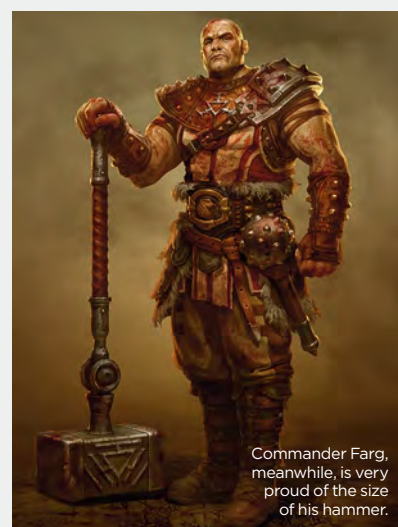
Concept art for some of the various troop types within the game, including the Brute and the Man at Arms.

The fact that Kings has to look good and remain playable on virtually any device brings extra challenges. "Most of the time the player will only see a small thumbnail of your image," says Fergus. This means each character is designed with a strong silhouette from the outset. The buildings and backgrounds are rendered as 3D elements at high resolutions, along with the 2D character illustrations, and these are then used as master templates for each platform.

"But you also have to look at each platform in isolation," adds Fergus. "Simply scaling an image down and assuming it will work on an iPhone as nicely as it did on your 22-inch Cintiq can lead to some very ugly graphics and a frustrating experience for the player. This is especially important for the UI elements, which must take into account a huge variety of screen ratios."

ART VACANCIES

Kings of the Realm is the sole focus for Digit at the moment and the company is expanding rapidly in all areas – a senior artist and 3D artist are just two of its



Commander Farg, meanwhile, is very proud of the size of his hammer.

current vacancies. Digit's lead concept artist, for instance, is Denman Rooke (see page 59), who was one of ImagineFX's Rising Stars at the end of last year.

"From the very beginning we decided Digit would focus on creating high-quality, gritty fantasy artwork," says Fergus. "This immediately pushed us into a pretty demanding genre with some of the best and biggest companies in the world as competition. This is a huge challenge for a small independent studio such as Digit, but it also means an artist can have a lot of creative input into moulding an ever-evolving and expanding game world."

There are distant plans to expand the Kings universe even further – a book deal fleshing out its history is already in place. "But to be honest, we're just focused on building a great game at the moment," says Martin. "We have a ton of features to add and we'll be guided by the community on how these should be implemented."



More powerful

Designs on the armour have to look more powerful for each upgrade. However, some aspects, such as the face, have to be consistent to ensure the character looks the same throughout the upgrade process.

READY FOR BATTLE

Denman Rooke explains how to design a character for Kings of the Realm



Denman and Fergus spent hours on the look of each unit in the game, including the spectacular Commanders. "A big challenge for Kings of the Realm is maintaining a gritty, realistic look while still having a clear game language," says lead concept artist Denman. "We tackled this by focusing upon the actual story of the world before designing any art assets."



Rough 'n' ready

The first step to creating a commander for our game is by painting very rough drafts with loose shapes, to define the silhouette. The face is important, so we refine it to capture the attitude and character.



Throwing shapes

We then refine the shapes and pull together loose ideas for the finished lighting and armour style – adding hints of details where needed to aid us in the final polish stage later.



Change of mind

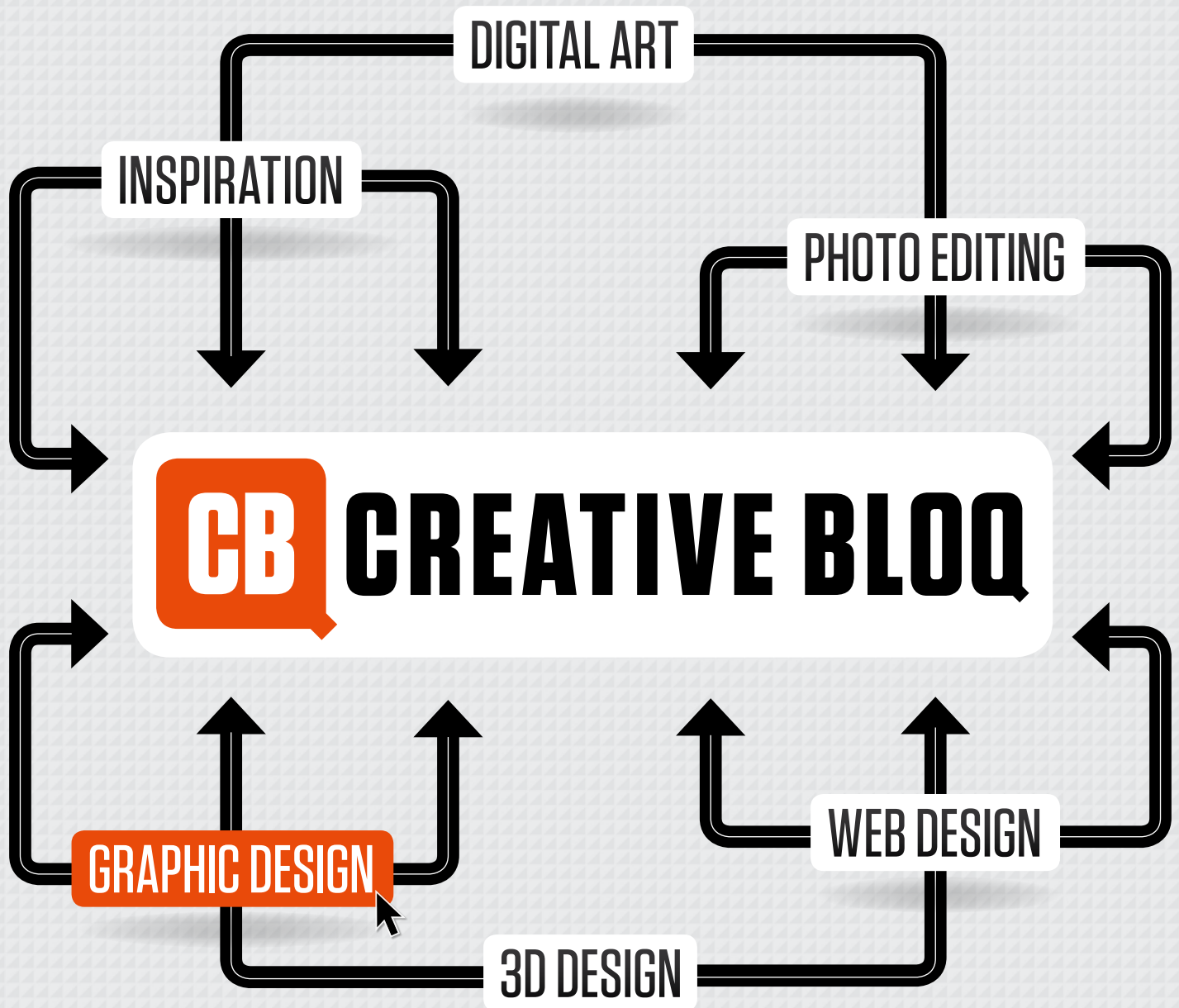
After checking the basics, such as anatomy and forms, we sometimes rework various aspects of the piece, and maybe even try some different armour ideas or costume styles if needed.



Pulling faces

Now comes the polish stage. We nail down the character and attitude by refining the face and expression. Then there's colour correction and a backlight layer, which will be affected by the in-game engine.

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Advice from the world's best artists

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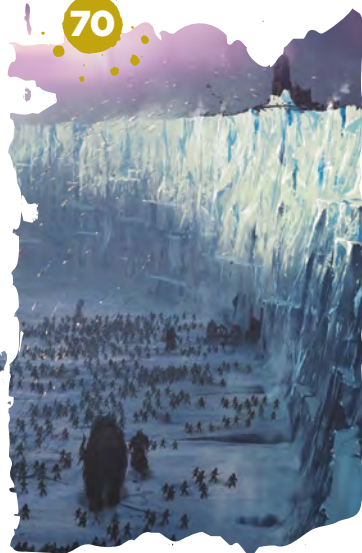
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Photoshop

DEPICT AN ICONIC BOOK CHARACTER



Through her illustration of Daenerys Stormborn, **Mélanie Delon** shows how to build up a detailed illustration that features plenty of texture work

Being a long-time fan of George RR Martin's A Song of Ice and Fire book series, it's perhaps no surprise that Daenerys Stormborn is my favourite character. She's determined, ruthless, beautiful and clever... and she's got dragons. So it's really exciting to be asked to paint her.

The process begins when I receive some composition ideas from the ImagineFX team: they want her sitting on the Iron Throne with a dragon in the scene. Crucially, they stress that she doesn't look like the gorgeous actress

Emilia Clarke from the TV adaptation. I agree that it would have spoiled the fun of creating the character: I want to paint Daenerys how I imagined her when I first read the books.

It's the same for her winged companion. Because it'll be my very first dragon, I know before starting anything that it's going to be the most difficult part of the painting process. I want him to look strong, realistic and interesting. With this in mind, I have to do a lot of research for the beast. It's crucial to have a strong base before starting the painting, just to

know where I'm going with him. It'll save a lot of time in the long run.

Once everything is clear in my head I can start sketching. There are a lot of details in this painting and it's easy to become overwhelmed by the amount of elements involved, so it pays to be organised in my approach. I need to work on a big canvas: this illustration is 3,756x6,199 pixels at 300dpi. A 3,000 pixel-sized image is the minimum if you want to introduce details to your painting. Okay, it's time to bring the beautiful Daenerys to life... my way!

Artist PROFILE

Mélanie Delon
COUNTRY: France

Mélanie works as a cover artist for a range of publishing houses including Tor Books and Random House. Her main aims are to develop her art and make her web-based shop a success.

www.melanieadelon.com

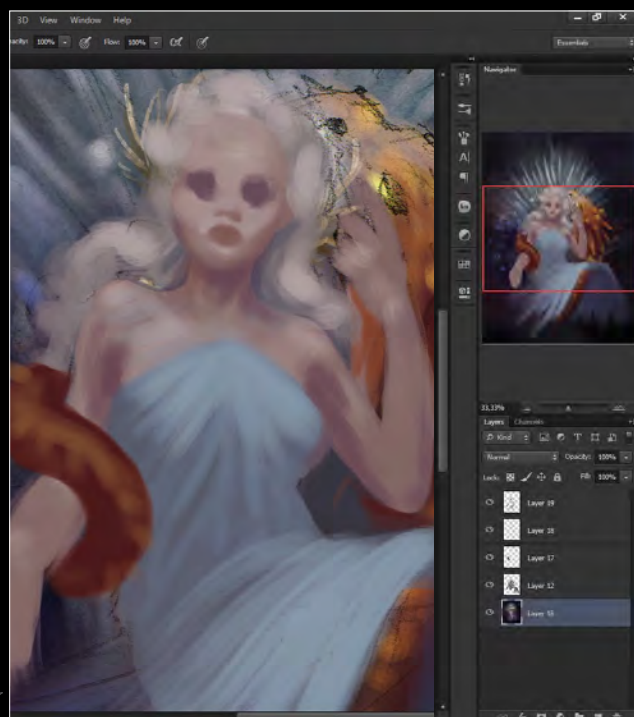
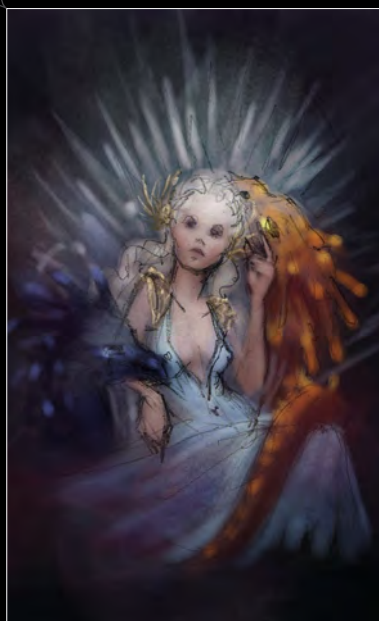
1 Ideas on paper

I quickly sketch my first idea out on paper. It's neither detailed nor proportionally correct, but it helps me to see if what I've imagined is workable. I don't try to perfectly realise my idea – it's more a sketch of the real sketch. I'm a firm believer in sketching impulsively and naturally. I never overthink my sketches on paper.



2 The colour scheme

I continue with my paper sketch, then scan it and open it in Photoshop. At this early stage I want to choose a basic colour scheme and decide on the lighting. Again, I don't need to have details in place – I simply pick my colours and apply them to my line art. I use a basic Round-edged or a very smooth textured brush, and set them to a large size.



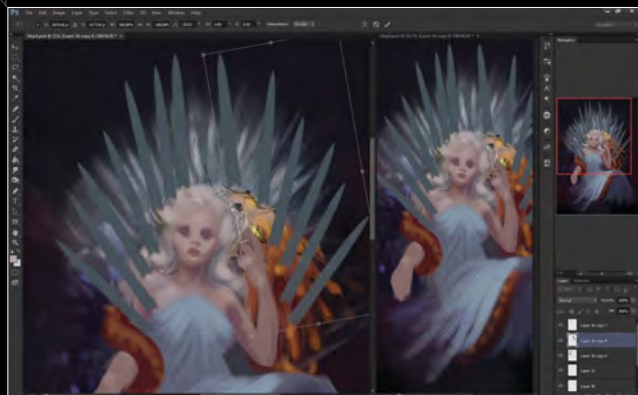
3 Starting for real

Once my preparatory sketch is done I can begin on the real painting. I'll be painting over the sketch in this instance, but I could have done this on a new layer. Speaking of which, I rework all the parts of the sketch on a new layer, this time paying attention to the anatomy. I even take photos of myself sitting in the right position. Again, I don't need precise strokes so I use a basic Round-edged brush.



4 A collection of swords

I now tackle the Iron Throne. It's not your usual fantasy throne – in the books it's said to be made up of a thousand swords, but I won't be painting all of them! I simply paint one or two basic sword shapes on a different layer, then duplicate the layer and place it next to the first one. I repeat this step several times until I cover the back of the throne.



5 Defining the face

I want Daenerys to look young and innocent like an angel, but also determined and quite dangerous. To achieve this I play with my colours and contrast. The character has white hair so I decide to apply pale, tender colours to her face, and keep the rest of the painting very dark. I add some very light purple around her eyes mixed with a pale blue, to increase the realism of the skin tone.



DOWNLOAD RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

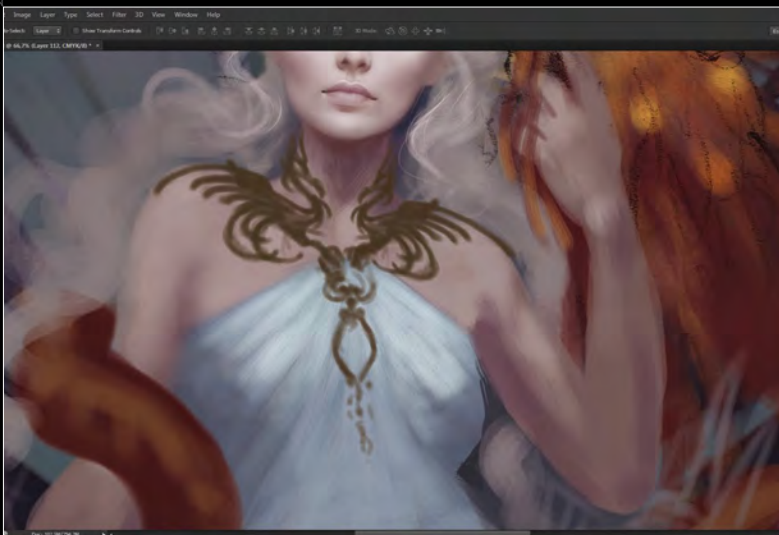
CUSTOM BRUSH: THE SOFT BRUSH

I use this brush almost all the time. It tends to replace my basic Round-edged brush. I like it because it brings enough texture to any element.



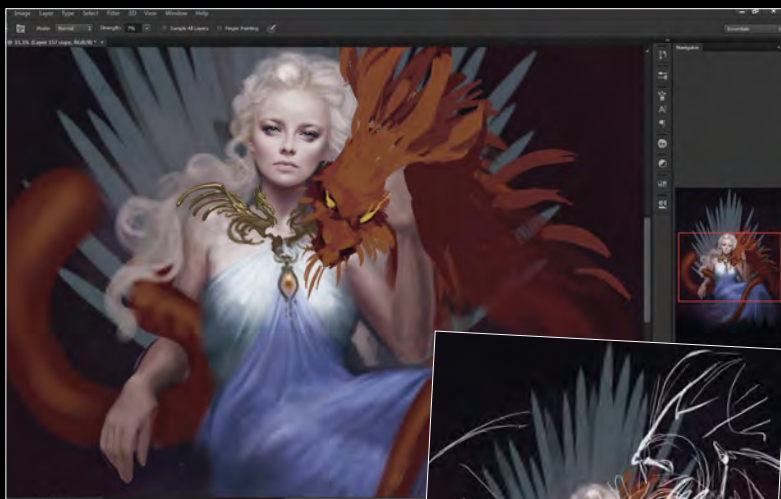
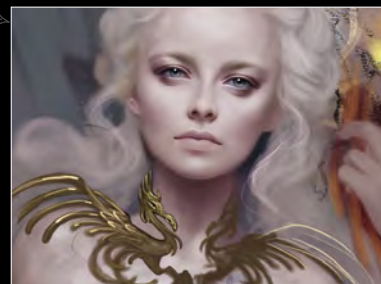
6 Making the necklace stand out

I want the queen's jewellery to convey her importance, and my solution is to create a collar/necklace combo with golden dragons. I do a quick line art over the painting to visualise my idea, and then with a textured brush I start on the base. I choose a mid-tone for it instead of giving it an overly bright or dark colour, because it'll be easier for me to add light and shadows to it later on.



7 Refining the face

I carefully add some volume to the face, by increasing the lights and shadows. I use a very soft brush for the skin, mixed with some spackled effects to add more colour variations and texture. For the eyes, mouth and nose details I work with a basic Round edged brush. I set Dynamic Shape>Minimum Diameter to 0 per cent, which is perfect for applying fine details.



8 The dragon

At this stage, I have to change the dragon's position. He needs to be looking at the viewer, so I have to rethink it entirely. I quickly sketch new line art over the painting to see how it can work without ruining everything I've already done. Then on a new layer I start depicting the dragon's revised shape. I work from a limited colour scheme for the moment, because I need to find the right composition first.





9 A dress for royalty

I always work on my illustrations as a whole when I have a lot of elements. It's the best way to unify the image, ensuring that everything looks like it belongs in the scene. So now I need to work on the dress. I keep the shape simple, then add some embroidery to the bottom of it. To save time I draw some patterns, and then duplicate and place the layers where necessary.



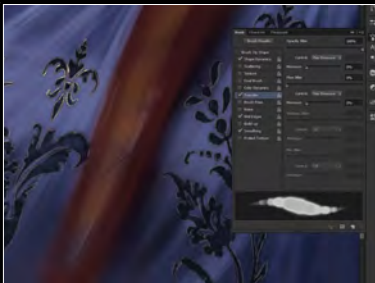
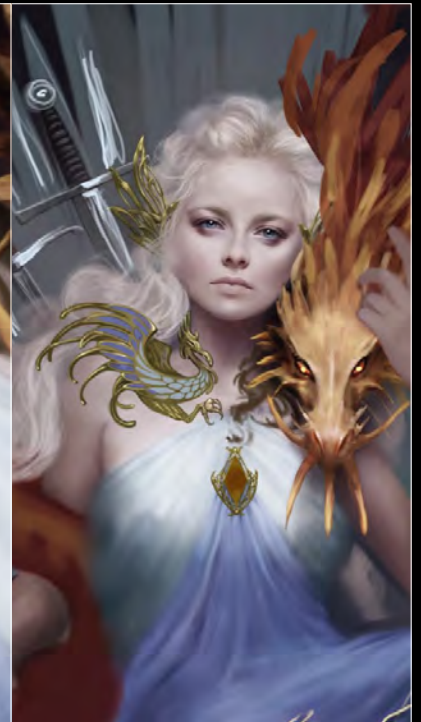
Shortcuts

Color balance

Ctrl+B (PC)

Cmd+B (Mac)

Useful for correcting and adjusting colours when I've almost finished a painting.



10 The dragon's head

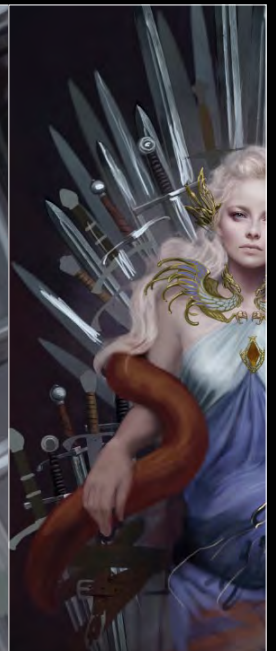
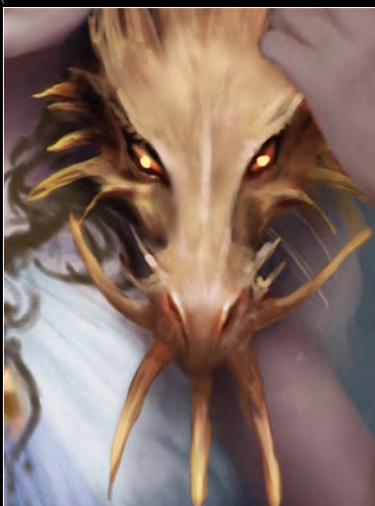
It's time to go back to the dragon, whose head needs a bit of work. This step is the most difficult for me, because it's not a creature I'm used to depicting. I try different shapes and styles until I find the one I like. It's a mix of Chinese and reptilian dragons. I choose to enhance its scaly skin by adding some pale pink to his nostrils and a very bright orange on the top of his snout.

11 Adding more jewels

I go back to Daenerys's dress and her jewellery, and decide to add a big orange gemstone, to symbolise fire. The design is inspired by the Art Nouveau movement because she needs to have some feminine, almost girly elements on her – reflecting the queen's youth. I also add some blue stones in the collar dragon, instead of having something in solid gold.

12 Texturing the dragon

The dragon's head needs a lot of texturing if he's to look real. I want him to be covered with scales; he must have a strong-looking, thick skin. So I build it up layer by layer. The more scales and details I add, the better the end result will be. During this stage I change my mind and decide to paint him with real eyes, instead of glowing ones that are perhaps slightly too fantastical for the composition.



13 The throne

The characters are important but the throne is also a key part in this scene. I need to add more swords and blades all around it. I introduce more swords next to her left arm, with different pommels, hilt designs and colours. I don't texture the blades too much for now – I simply use a basic Round edged brush to paint the different bases. I duplicate swords where appropriate to save time, which is crucial when working to a deadline.

PRO SECRETS

The right white hair

This hair colour can be easily achieved, simply by using the right colours. I don't want Daenerys to look old, so the only thing I have to do is to think about very light blond instead of white. I pick a very pale yellow for the hair base and an ultra-bright yellow for areas hit by the light. I use a dotted brush to paint the strands of hair.



14 Add texture to the swords

The swords must look used, so on another layer and with a very small brush I scribble all over the blades and pommel to mimic the intense wear and tear of battle. This is also a good way to create variations when painting iron or any other kind of metal. This texturing process takes me a long time. I also use some Screen layers to make the light brighter on the edges of the swords.

Shortcuts

Duplicate layer

Ctrl+J (PC)

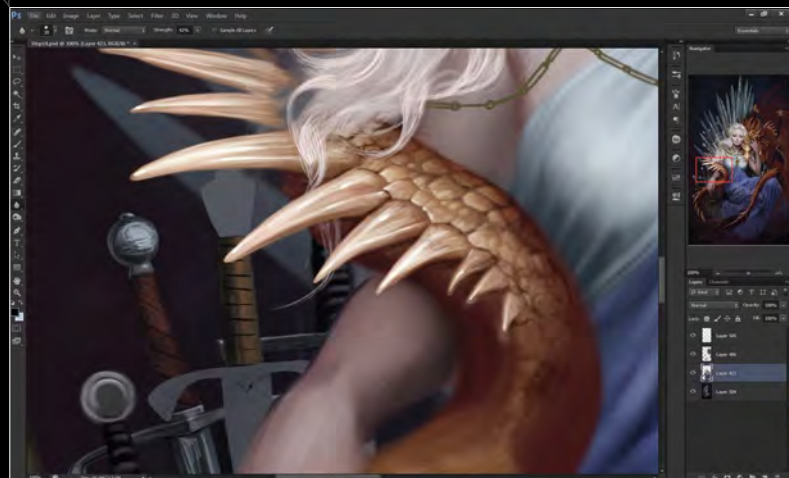
Cmd+J (Mac)

This shortcut helps to speed up my workflow when I work on textured objects.



15 The dragon's body

The dragon needs to have more detail elements too, such as scales and huge horns all over his body. I paint those on a different layer, just to maintain control over these new elements. So, for example, if I need to resize a single horn I can do it without modifying the whole element. I use a textured brush for this step, because I don't want the dragon's skin to become smooth and shiny.



PRO SECRETS

A scaly solution

Painting scales can be a time-consuming and difficult task. The trick is to create a special brush that features the scaly texture you're after, enabling you to paint swathes of scales at a stroke. Of course, this technique only creates the base of the scales - you still have to paint lights and shadow on each scales. Change the size or flip the brush to avoid generating a repetitive pattern.

16 Extra details

I continue painting the queen's trappings of her reign, giving her a golden chain over her arms and a simple crown on her head. This crown is also a symbol of fire - the golden waves are like flames. I add dots of light to the jewels, because those elements need to be shiny. To create this effect I select a bright yellow colour and set the layer to Screen mode.



17 Final adjustments

Once the details are done I play with the light. I'm keen to depict a glowing effect around her face and also on the upper part of the throne. I choose a bright pastel green and then, with a large diameter size brush, I paint over all the areas where I want more light. I set the layer to Color Dodge on a very low Opacity and add the light that will bring the scene to life. Behold, the majestic Daenerys Stormborn!



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Photoshop

CAPTURE THE FEEL OF AN EPIC BATTLE

Grzegorz Rutkowski shows you how to paint a vast battle scene, as described in George RR Martin's A Song of Ice and Fire fantasy series

The old art masters painted royalty and heroic battles. They tried to capture the essence of the Middle Ages; rough, bloody and cold were key adjectives in their visual vocabulary. In this workshop I'll try to capture these attributes in a fantasy scene from George RR Martin's fantasy series A Song of Ice and Fire: the Battle of Castle Black. I'm drawing the moment where the Wildlings, with the help of giants and mammoths, breach the Night's Watch's gate in the great Ice Wall.

When creating this type of painting it's important to view the image like a thumbnail. It'll enable you to successfully tackle the three key elements of a battle scene: scale, perspective and composition. Doing so will help you to define the size and depth of the scene.

I'll also look at lighting and values, and plan the work carefully. I try to establish a lighting scheme during the early sketches. I consider those areas on the battlefield that I want to be lit up, and those that will remain in the shadows. The scene could be gloomy, bright or a combination of the two, like in a dark sunset. Indeed, there are countless lighting options available to you – but first come the sketches! ➤

Artist
PROFILE

Grzegorz Rutkowski
COUNTRY: Poland

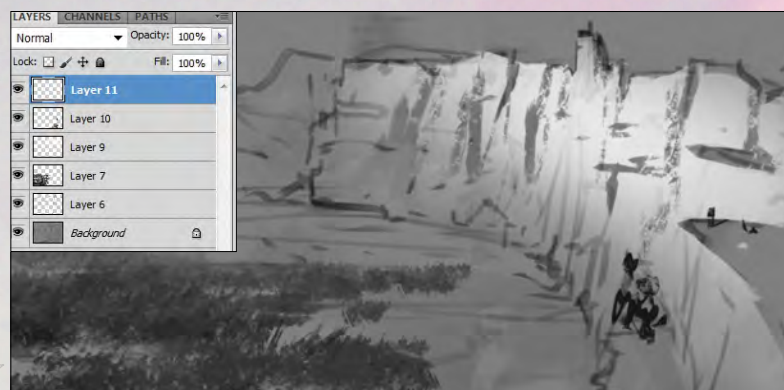
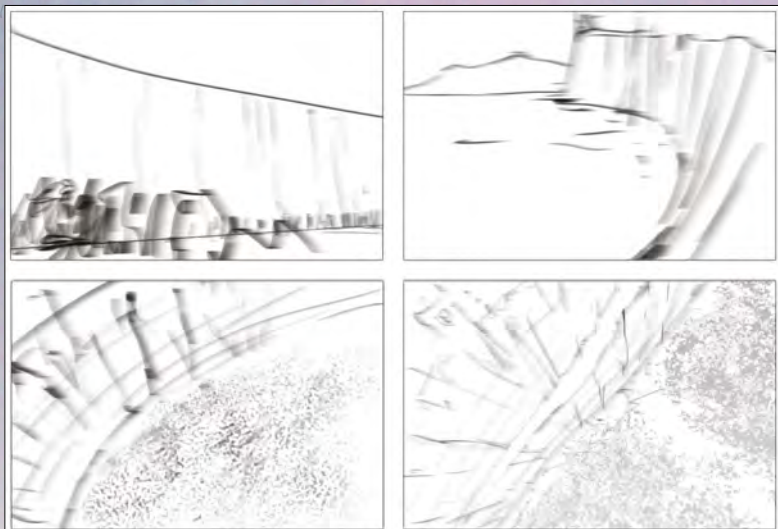


Grzegorz is a full-time freelance artist. He started to paint as a kid, and for the past five years has taken digital art seriously.
<http://ifxm.ag/88grzes>



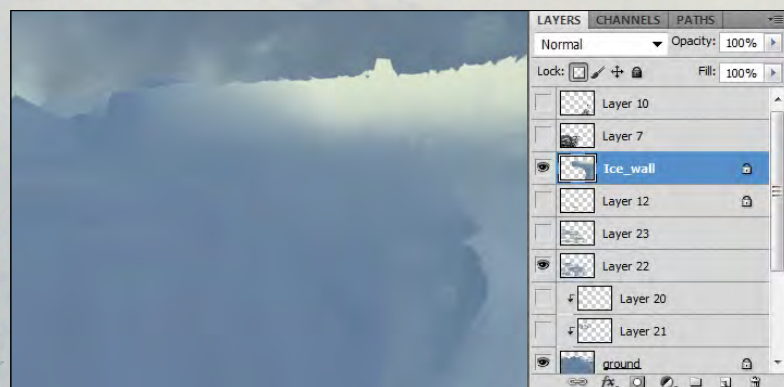
1 A solid composition

Before my compositional sketches, first comes the brief. It is to paint a key battle in the fourth season of Game of Thrones that involves the Wildlings fighting a depleted Night's Watch, defending the wall from on high. I'm given a few key details that give me an idea of the scene. It's best to focus on the composition and the most important elements of the fight – for now that means making the wall the main character.



2 Think about the light and shapes

I need to consider the lighting setup. Don't be afraid to experiment. If it's an outdoor setting then bear in mind the time of day, which will help you when setting up the value. Because the light and value are connected, always consider these two factors together. If you've chosen to incorporate a bright spotlight, think about bounced light, reflections and so on. Lighting will always be a core part of any scene, so give it the attention it deserves. The viewer will appreciate it!



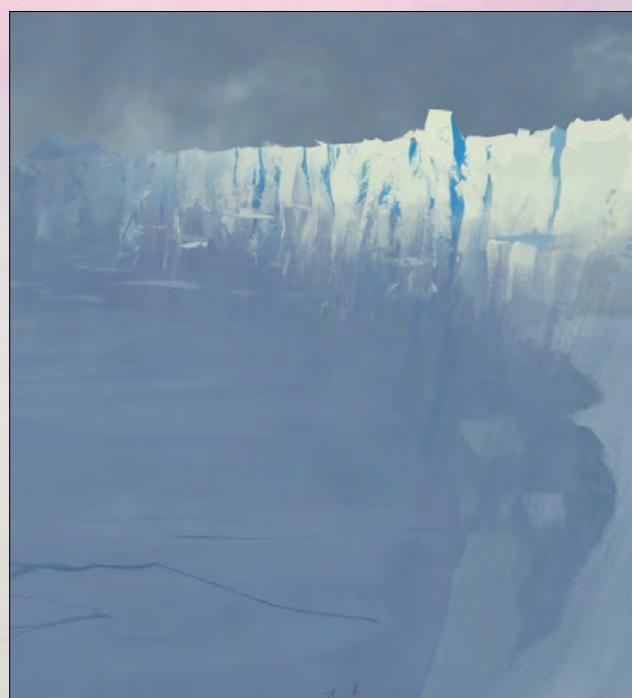
3 Separating layers for a more efficient workflow

I begin to separate my layers. I start simply by establishing the basic background, which is the sky and ground, and other elements – in this case the ice wall and an army. Were I to start painting all my elements on a single layer, then sooner or later I'd have to cut and paste certain features on to their own layer. This approach simply saves time.



4 Adding colour and more shapes

After separating my layers, I can start adding colours and shapes. Note that base colours can be introduced in the previous step. Now I think about the finished painting, and imagine what colour will best suit the scene. I track down some references if I'm unsure how certain shades will look under either shadowy or well-lit conditions.



5 Depth and perspective

Portraying battle scenes takes a certain amount of skill. The large-scale environment and numerous small figures make it difficult to give the painting a sense of depth. My solution is to select some of the main structures on the ice wall and add fog to make them stand out and look three-dimensional. Elements placed closer to the viewer should be larger and well-defined; those objects further away should be smaller and less detailed. It's common sense stuff that should help you correctly define multiple elements in a large-scale composition.

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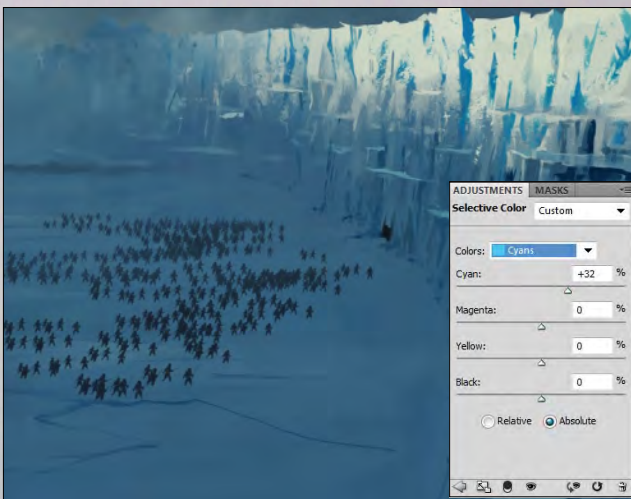
CUSTOM BRUSH: SAMPLED BRUSH 71 2

I used this brush to paint the aurora (see step 13). I changed Flow to 40-80 per cent and increased Spacing to 10 per cent.



6 Painting an army

I decide to save time and create a custom brush to paint the countless wildlings – the army of soldiers – in the scene. I start by setting a new document's size at 500x500px and painting a few characters in slightly different poses. I ensure that the space between them is varied and irregular. Once I've painted three or four characters, I click Edit>Define Brush Preset. I can later make additional changes to the settings of my brush in the Brush options menu. This type of custom brush comes in handy, when I know I'll be dealing with a large number of small silhouettes.

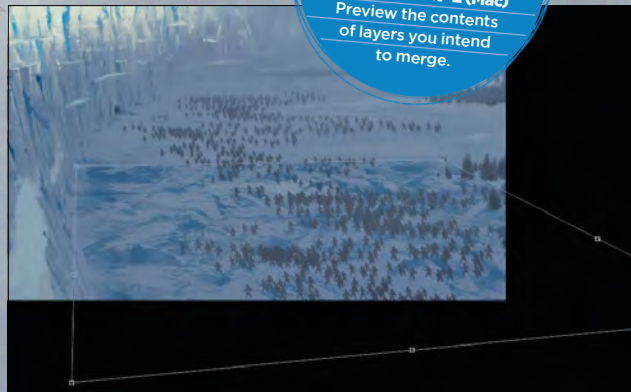


7 Checking the value and colours

I create a group of adjustment layers. I think it's appropriate for this particular artwork, although I've not taken this approach on every digital painting I've completed. Curves, Selective Color and Hue/Saturation are the most important Photoshop adjustment tools for me. They may be basic components of the software, but when used correctly they can achieve amazing results. I also experiment with the brightness, colours and the saturation in the scene.

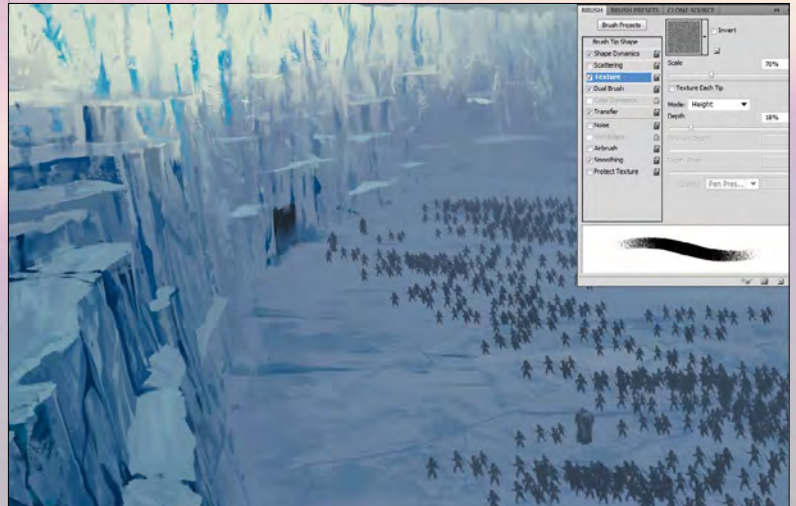
8 Ice structures and environment textures

In this illustration I'm not using any photo textures or other external media – just custom brushes. To make a ground texture, I select a square on a separate layer with the Selection tool. I fill the selected area with a custom brush, which gives me an interesting texture with transparency. Next I select the Free Transform tool and adjust the layer to match the perspective of the scene, by clicking the corner of the selection while holding down Ctrl.



9 Defining solid objects

Imagine that everything you paint is solid. You can envisage elements as either a 3D object or a simple block. Try to visualise how the light will affect every surface of your solid. I have this in mind when painting the ice wall, and especially its various outcrops. These are uncomplicated solid shapes, so it's not difficult to make them look spatially realistic. I recommend practising painting simple solids such as LEGO blocks. Start with basic forms and then move on to more complex shapes.



Shortcuts
Stamp

Visible Layers

Shift+Ctrl+Alt+E (PC)

Shift+Cmd+Alt+E (Mac)

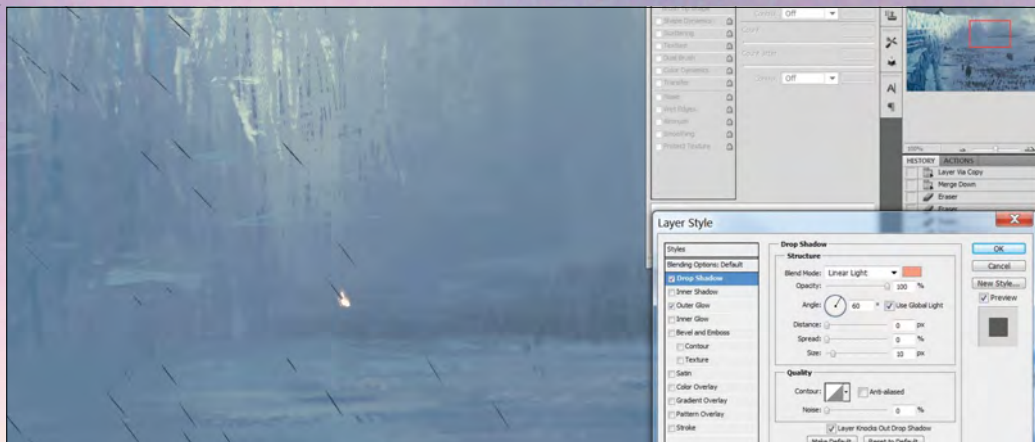
Preview the contents of layers you intend to merge.

10 Introduce details

As I go along I add more detail – giants and mammoths are a great addition to the fight, but I've also added an encroaching army on horseback in the background. Who could be flying those red flags, I wonder?! I'm trying to achieve interesting effects of scale using more structure brushes. Many digital artists apply different styles or painting to their work: some try to achieve photo-realistic results, while others paint simple shapes and maintain a more painterly look.

11 Flame on!

In the book, the Night's Watch use flaming arrows. Depicting fire can be tricky for those artists who are just starting out. A common approach is to paste in a photo of fire, or paint the flame using oranges and reds. Neither technique works well. Instead, experiment with Photoshop's Blending options. Here, I paint simple white shapes with clean brush stroke. Then, in Blending options I select Drop Shadow and Outer Glow, both set on the Linear Light blending mode. I now try to create different shades of orange or reds, and the result is that the layer glows like a real fire.



12 Maintain the overall look of your initial sketch

Throughout your painting process, make sure you regularly refer back to the thumbnail of your image. It'll help you keep everything in scale and perspective. Furthermore, I remain zoomed out of the scene while painting the illustration. The old masters used to assess their painting's proportions by stepping away from the canvas. I'm doing the same, zooming out to see everything at once, even to the extent that my painting is reduced to the size of a thumbnail.



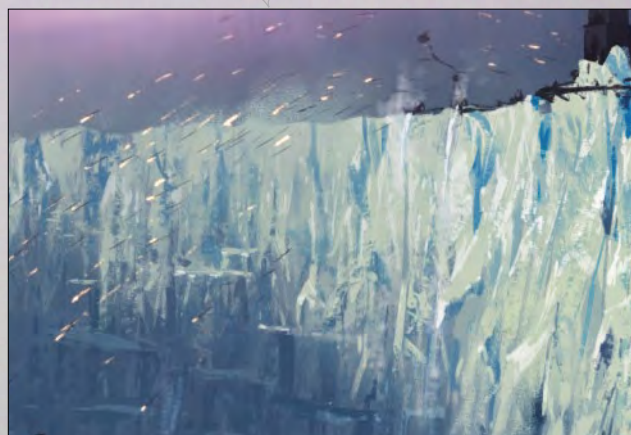
13 Depicting the aurora above the battlefield

Feedback from ImagineFX is to lift the main area out of shadow by painting an aurora – those heavenly natural light shows. To give it a realistic shape I need to depict its most noticeable features. It has a smooth gradient between the top and bottom areas, and a more irregular horizontal gradient; there are areas where the aurora is less dense. I use a custom brush to paint this: I increase Spacing in the Brush Settings and decrease Flow, which gives nice, smooth brush strokes – just the effect I'm after!

Shortcuts
Duplicate layer
Ctrl+J (PC)
Cmd+J (Mac)
This enables you to quickly make a copy of a selected layer.

14 Final touches

Having placed all the elements on my illustration, I start to make some final touches. The key to achieving the right amount of detail is in the light. Highlights are painted as dots, lines and small, sharp shapes. Remember that there will be more highlights and details in well-lit areas than in the shadows.



15 Grain and lens correction

Some people don't like these filters and some people love them. I wholeheartedly place myself in the second camp. Now that I've finished painting the whole piece, it's time to make some tiny changes. I create a new layer, fill it with 128RGB (pure grey), and choose Filters>Texture> Grain. I set up the blending mode of my Grain layer to Overlay or Soft light. The final filter that I use is Lens Correction, to add some chromatic aberration to my battle scene. All I can say now is, good luck to the Night's Watch!



Manga Studio 5

ADD TONES TO YOUR COMIC ART



Tones – dots that represent shades – are a key feature of comics. Learn how to add them in Manga Studio with **PJ Holden**

Known as Letratone in the UK, Zipatone in the US, or to use its original name, Ben-Day dots are a uniform series of dots that are used to represent shades of grey on a printed page. This distinctive print feature was originally named after Benjamin Henry Day, who came up with the technique in the late-1800s, fact fans.

Modern techniques mean that print is more able to reproduce greyscale using dots so small they're naked to the human eye. Yet there's still a certain amount of charm associated with the repeated pattern of black dots representing a 25 per cent shade on a page that are big and bold enough to be obvious.

Here's the process of adding tones to your page in Manga Studio...

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.

www.pauljholden.com

STONE BASICS



Number of lines: **B** 60.0

Density: **C** 40 %

Type: **D** Circle

Angle: **E** 45

Size: **F** 10

Factor: **G** 0

A. Preview window

This will show the tone as specified in your chosen settings.

B. Number of Lines

This specifies the size of the pattern. A larger number makes a smaller pattern. At a small enough size the individual dots appear to merge into a grey pattern.

C. Density

How dark the pattern is to be. The larger the percentage, the darker the pattern: 100 per cent is pure black.

D. Type of Pattern

The standard is circle, but you can also use diamonds, lines, squares and various other patterns.

E. Angle

The angle of the pattern to repeat.

F. Size

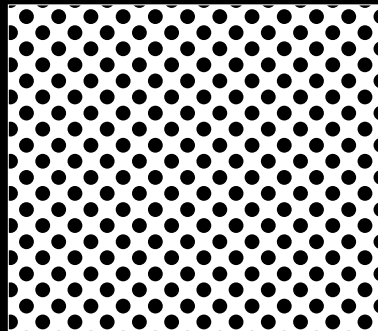
If you've specified the pattern Noise, this sets the size of the Noise.

G. Factor

If you've specified the pattern Noise, this determines the distortion factor for it.

1 Start by creating a pure tone

I've preloaded an image of mine that I want to add a tone to, so now I just have to generate the appropriate tone. Selecting New Layer>Tone in Manga Studio, I'm presented with the Simple Tone Settings dialog. These enable me to set up the tone as I initially want it. Don't worry about getting this stage wrong, because these settings can be altered at any time.



2 Quickly edit the shape of the tone

Having dropped a tone layer on to the page featuring my image, I now need to chip away at the areas of tone that I don't want, such as most of the background. I find it easiest to blank all of the tone (pressing Backspace will quickly clear a layer) and then, using any of Manga Studio's draw or fill tools, I simply draw the tone in place as though I were drawing with a normal brush.



3 Take control of the tone layers

Now that I'm happy with the areas in my image that feature tone, I can go back into my artwork and alter the density of the tone, using the layer's tone settings. I find that setting the tone lines to 30 gives the most pleasing result. You can also add more tone layers: as long as the tone lines remain the same for each they won't moiré and you can then have multiple shades of grey.



Ensure your skin looks realistic

For skin I use a speckled brush. I use a soft-edged brush to first lay down skin tones and then the speckled brush to lay down the pits and highlights of pores. Finally, I add a few brush strokes by hand to further refine some of the surfaces and highlights to the contours of the skin.



Animal parallels

Like those on a great white shark, I add some scarring on the face and around the mouth to give the idea of pain in the service of hunger. I also depict some pulsing veins running down the face towards the fangs.

Approach the hair in stages

When painting the hair, I first use a basic Soft brush to establish the general shape and colour. Then, by adjusting the Angle Jitter and Spacing of one of the skin brushes, I can lay down some hair detail followed by a few thin strokes by hand with a basic Hard brush.

Predator and prey

I want a lot of contrast between the vampire and his prey. So I create some Overlay and Multiply layers to provide cool-coloured discoloration in his hands and face. I use blues and greens for the veins, purples for the fingertips and slight yellows for the nails and knuckle joints.



Photoshop USE SYMBOLISM IN YOUR VAMPIRE ART

The ever-popular vampire genre receives an injection of fresh blood from **Liam Peters**, who applies a deeper meaning to his bold composition

Although I've always wanted to paint a vampire piece, given the saturation of vampires in the media there's a real need to try and set myself apart. While taking inspiration from my favourite vampire movie, Bram Stoker's Dracula, my overarching aim is to create something contemporary in composition and concept without being too far removed from my usual style.

I start thinking of a vampire's lust for human blood as an addiction as much as it is a physical need. Through this I start designing a red woman who's symbolic of this bloody vice. What develops is an image of a vampire embracing this woman and her, in turn, gently holding his arm, urging him to keep going.

I try to push the composition a little more with the use of black encompassing the woman and shaping the flow of visual interest. This dark space prevalent in the image is not only a part of the vampire himself, but also symbolic of the empty hole within him that can never be filled. This insatiable lust for blood gives way to the title, The Great White.



Light and symbolism

This top-down perspective features two light sources: one main light coming from above, which represents a possible choice of redemption; and a weaker, orange-red light from below. The latter symbolises the path of indulgence.

Artist PROFILE
Liam Peters
 COUNTRY: US



Originally hailing from Australia, Liam is currently self-employed producing a range of digital illustrations from his home just outside of Dallas, Texas.
<http://ifxm.ag/l-peters>

DOWNLOAD RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES:
 SKIN BRUSH1



Used at different opacities, this is a great brush to depict pores, blotches and the skin's surface in general.

SKIN BRUSH2



By reducing Spacing and Angle Jitter, this brush can also be used for hair. Sergey Kolesov created both of these brushes.

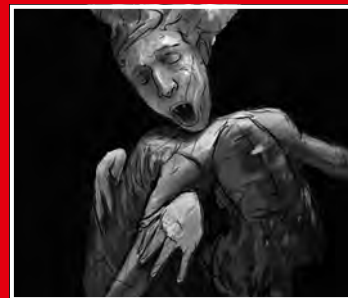
How I create...

A BLOODY EMBRACE



1 Initial concept

Originally, I imagine the woman as a human rather than a symbol and have the vampire's darkness forcing her against the side of the picture, to emphasise the futility of her situation. However, I want to push the meaning a bit more and make things a little less literal. Furthermore, it wasn't obvious that this figure was a vampire.



2 Misplaced attention

In this particular sketch the woman is more symbolic, but is too submissive with no real power - just like an addiction should have. The vampire seems too detached and showing his entire face may bring too much attention to him as a character, and deviate from the main concept of blood lust and addiction.



3 Figure alterations

Using the first sketch, I angle the vampire's head backwards to show his fangs and also give his mouth a euphoric expression. Limiting the view of his head not only leaves something for the viewer's imagination, but also keeps the focus on the concept rather than character backstory. Further adjustments to the woman also leave her looking less fearful.



Photoshop

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR REFERENCES

Learn to utilise photos in a brand new way with **Miles Johnston**, who successfully transforms his grandmother into a young fantasy figure

For me, working from imagination is always the end game. I find it the most enjoyable aspect of painting and I believe it enables you to express yourself the most openly. However, we're all human and sometimes a lack of technical knowledge can hold back a painting's potential.

This is when it can be a good idea to use a reference image, to inject fresh information into the way you solve issues and to inspire new creative choices –

without ever resorting to direct copying. I've taken a liking to practising this principal by shooting reference pictures that are totally unrelated to the subject I'm painting.

I use information from the reference picture, such as the structure, values, colours or textures, to inform the way I paint an image. I try to make these decisions intuitively, trusting my gut for what I want to take from the picture and what's unimportant. I find this approach enables me to come up with results that

are radically different from the original photograph and still flavoured with my own personal tastes, avoiding that obviously photo-referenced look.

To demonstrate this idea, I have taken some photographs of my grandma wearing a hat from a Christmas cracker, and I'm going to paint a young elf based on information in the photograph and my own imagination. I suggest trying the same yourself. Especially if you find it difficult to draw from imagination, this might act as a useful exercise.

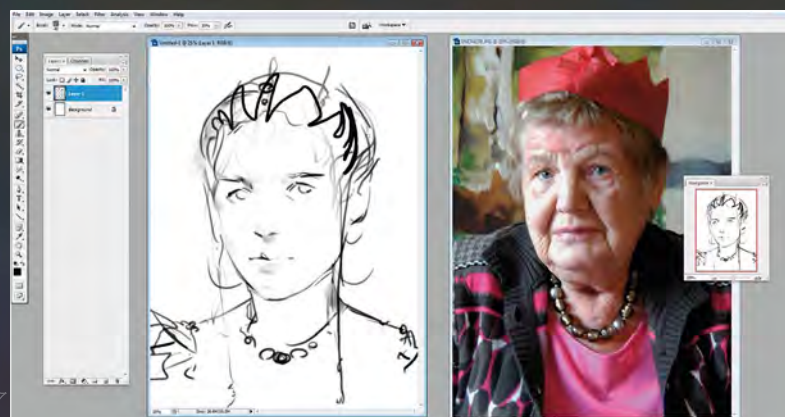
Artist PROFILE

Miles Johnston
COUNTRY: Sweden



Miles is an illustrator from England. He spent his teenage years

self-teaching art and then moved to Sweden to study at an atelier. He's now finishing his studies and freelancing.
<http://ifxm.ag/miles-j>

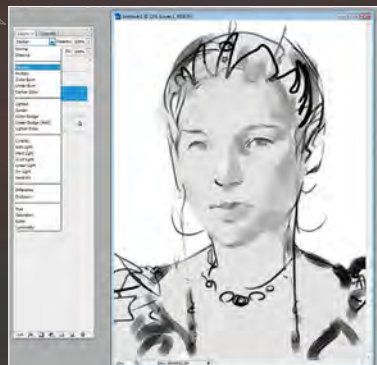


1 Loose line block-in

I lay the pictures side by side and start a line drawing on a separate layer. I think of features from the reference that I want to use – I like the idea of using the strong overexposed light from one side and similar jewellery. I keep everything very loose and quick at this point, which ensures it's straightforward to make changes later on.

2 Create a silhouette

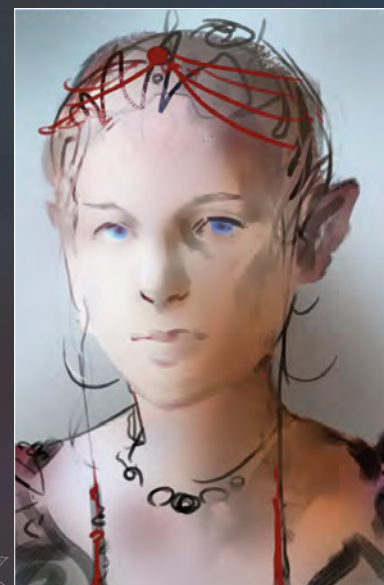
Underneath my lines I opaquely fill in the silhouette of the head with a light grey tone, then merge the lines down so I have a single opaque shape. This will help speed things up if I want to alter the background later on in the painting process. Using a mixture of Darken and Multiply layers I start to suggest the direction of the light. I also frequently use the Smudge tool, set to a Blender Brush, to push shapes around easily.



PRO SECRETS

Special effects

Click the little line that's between two layers while holding Alt, to create a Clipping Mask. Anything painted on the layer on top will only affect areas contained within the silhouette of the layer below. Use this to quickly add colour and all kinds of effects on top of a simple line drawing. You can link as many Clipping Masks to a base layer as you like, so get creative with how you use them!



3 Introduce colour

Using Clipping Masks I make new layers set to Multiply and Color Dodge. By using big Soft brushes on these layers I'm able to introduce colour and push the sense of light further without losing my line drawing yet. Multiply layers are useful for making areas darker and Color Dodge mode is useful for bringing out areas of light. Big brushes allow for a smooth look, which I find ideal for painting on top of. I consider this stage to be a digital underpainting.



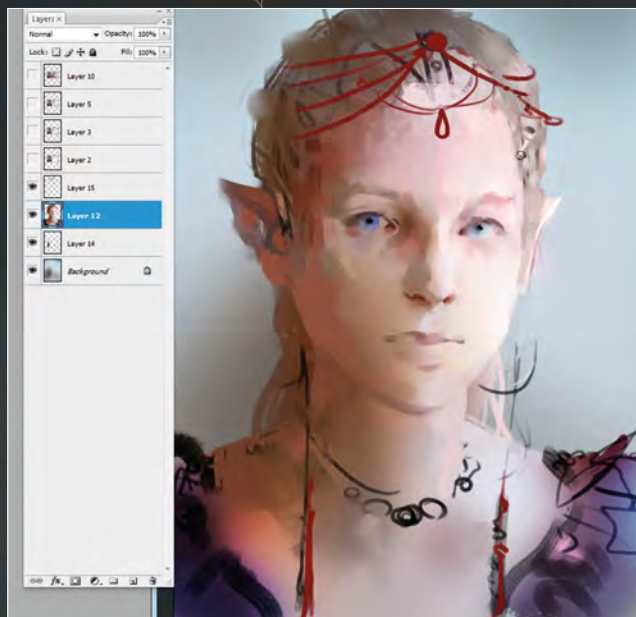
Shortcuts

Hue/Saturation
Cmd+U (Mac)
Ctrl+U (PC)

This tool often produces happy accidents when used with adjustment layers.

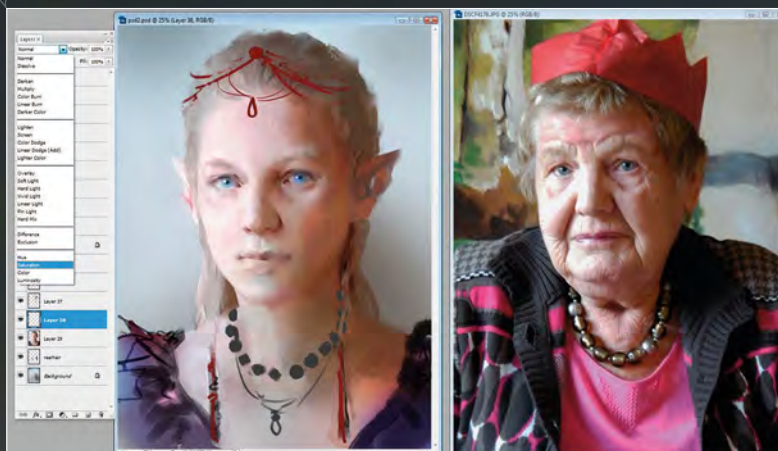
4 Flat painting

At this point I merge all the masks down onto the head layer to create a single opaque layer for the head, which I can begin to paint flatly on top of. I make sure that I flip the painting and the reference every now and then, to get some fresh eyes on it and look out for any obvious errors, especially if I was loose during the drawing stage.



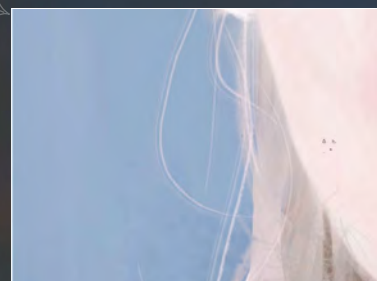
6 Flesh out the figure

I try to continue to develop the painting, using a mixture of the features of my reference model with those of the character in my head. It's important to resist the temptation to use the Color Picker. It'll only hinder your observational abilities and you'll cheat yourself out of the opportunity to learn about values and temperature.



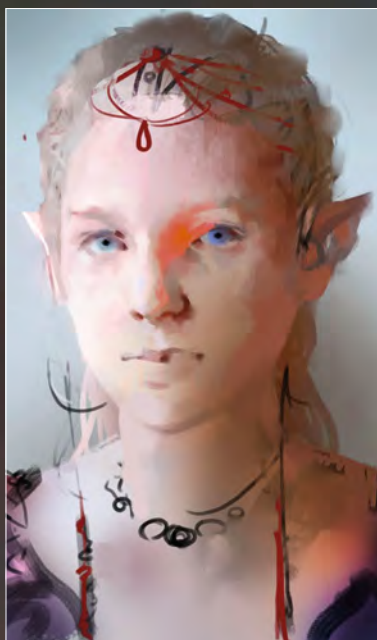
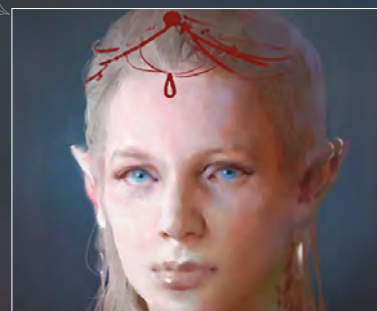
7 Materials and edges

I change brushes from time to time, to find new ways of suggesting different materials and effects. It's the little details that help to bring an image to life. It's not necessary to paint every hair, but I try to suggest it with careful attention to the silhouette, edges and quality of the hair. Soften up a little and use sharp edges sparingly for a more naturalistic look.



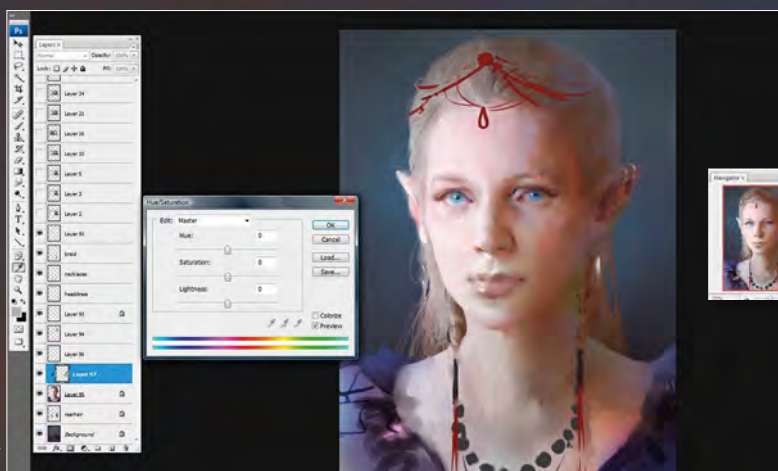
8 Move beyond the reference

At some point I find it's a good idea to close the reference I'm working from and spend some time looking at what I've got so far. Remember that the goal isn't a study so I can change it in any way I like. The reference is there for you to refer to, not to make you its slave. I want to push the otherworldly feel of the image and make her look a little less human.



5 Develop skin tones

One technique to bring more saturation and warmth into the skin tones is to use Lighten layers like this. I paint with a bright orange on a Lighten layer, which only affects areas that it can actually make lighter. Then I use a big, soft Eraser to cut away at the shape until I have subtle spots of high saturation right on the edge of my highlights, like those in my reference image.



9 Come up with original colour schemes

I like to involve a little chance now and then, to compensate for the overly clean nature of digital painting. One way to find interesting colour schemes is to paint in sections on a new layer, then use Hue/Saturation to search for colour combinations you might not have thought of. Trust your instincts for what works and go crazy.

DOWNLOAD RESOURCES
WORKSHOP BRUSHES

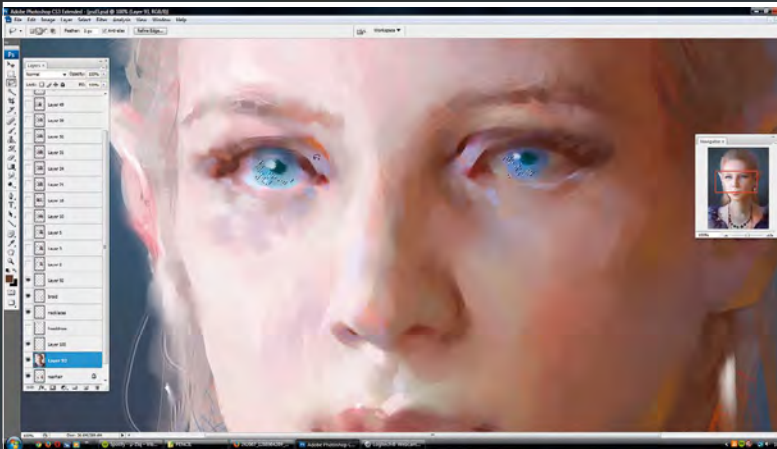
PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSH:
SMUDGE BLEND

Incredibly good for softening edges and breaking up repetitive brush strokes. Use it with the Smudge tool with intensity set to 80 per cent or more.

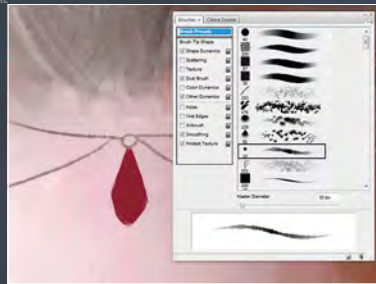
10 Develop focal points

Eyes are key to a portrait. Use combinations of Lasso shapes and Smudge tool marks to come up with expressive textures and edges. When it comes to sharpness, less is usually more. I tend to work zoomed out to about 25 per cent to keep my work soft until nearer the end, when I conservatively pick edges to sharpen and bring forward.



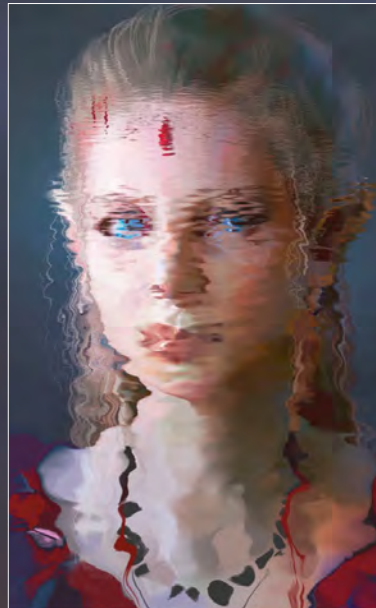
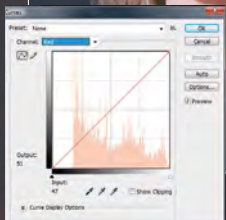
11 Paint the jewellery

Just like with hair or any other material, it's often unnecessary to render out every little detail, and depending on the results you're aiming for, they might even be distracting. A small scratchy Round brush gives the right kind of edge quality to suggest tiny chain links. When combined with sharp, sudden value shifts it produces a silvery metallic look.



12 Using Curves

The Curves tool is one of the most powerful adjustment features at your disposal. It enables you to individually tweak areas of your value range, either across the whole image or for specific colour channels. Here I boost the reds in the shadows using the Red Channel. It'll probably take a long time to fully wrap your head around the extent of the functionality of this tool, so start playing around and see what works for you.



13 Generate texture

I like to allow for as many happy accidents as possible. Chaos can be your friend and it's fun to play the role of a filter, making as many strange effects as possible and seeing if anything worth keeping catches your eye. By combining filters and layer types and as many means to generate random information as possible, you can discover amazing finishing touches. This effect ended up as part of the background texture.

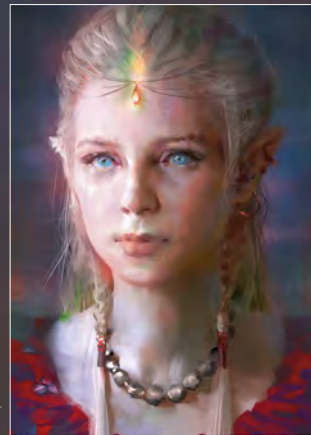


14 Devil in the details

Little drop shadows and subtle touches make a painting believable. Now is a good time to play with texture and expression. Small changes in angle and placement of tiny details change the whole nature of an expression, be it a subtle smile, a slight asymmetry in the eyes or strands of hair falling across the face.

15 Adding effects

I prefer to save the more noticeable special effects to the end, when I'm satisfied with the painting. Here I use a Rake brush with Angle Jitter set to Pen Pressure to introduce a flame-like magic effect around the jewel on her forehead. I do this on a layer set to Color Dodge placed over the top, in combination with big, soft Round brushes.



16 Finishing up

I flatten the image and look for any final aspects of the reference I want to incorporate. It's interesting to reflect on how the light source and colour scheme have been retained a little, while other aspects have changed radically. I hope you've enjoyed my workshop!

PRO SECRETS

See small to think big

Stay zoomed out! The most important thing about any painting is the initial impression. Generally people will see your work much smaller than full resolution or even at a thumbnail size, so focus on working the image as a whole to become a lot more efficient. Details must work together to support the image as a whole. Generally, your brushwork will be better when you paint zoomed out with bigger brushes.

Shortcuts
Curves
Ctrl+M (PC)
Cmd+M (Mac)
Photoshop's Curves tool is useful for fine-tuning values and colour.

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ImagineFX

Comic art!

Celebrating 75 years of Batman and the artists who have drawn the Dark Knight

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Woodland nymph

Devon Dorrity reveals his techniques for creating an ethereal nymph sculpture.





Artist insight

HOW TO CREATE A MOVIE MONSTER

Daren Horley reveals how he cherry-picked elements from real-world animals to create his Kirin forest creature design for the film 47 Ronin

Artist PROFILE

Daren Horley
COUNTRY: England



Daren has worked on numerous big-budget films,

including Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets, Gravity, Superman Returns, The Golden Compass and The Dark Knight.

<http://ifxm.ag/dhorley>

Universal Studios asked Framestore to do the VFX for the film 47 Ronin. It also wanted design for many of the film's elements, including the two main creatures: a dragon and a forest-dwelling Kirin.

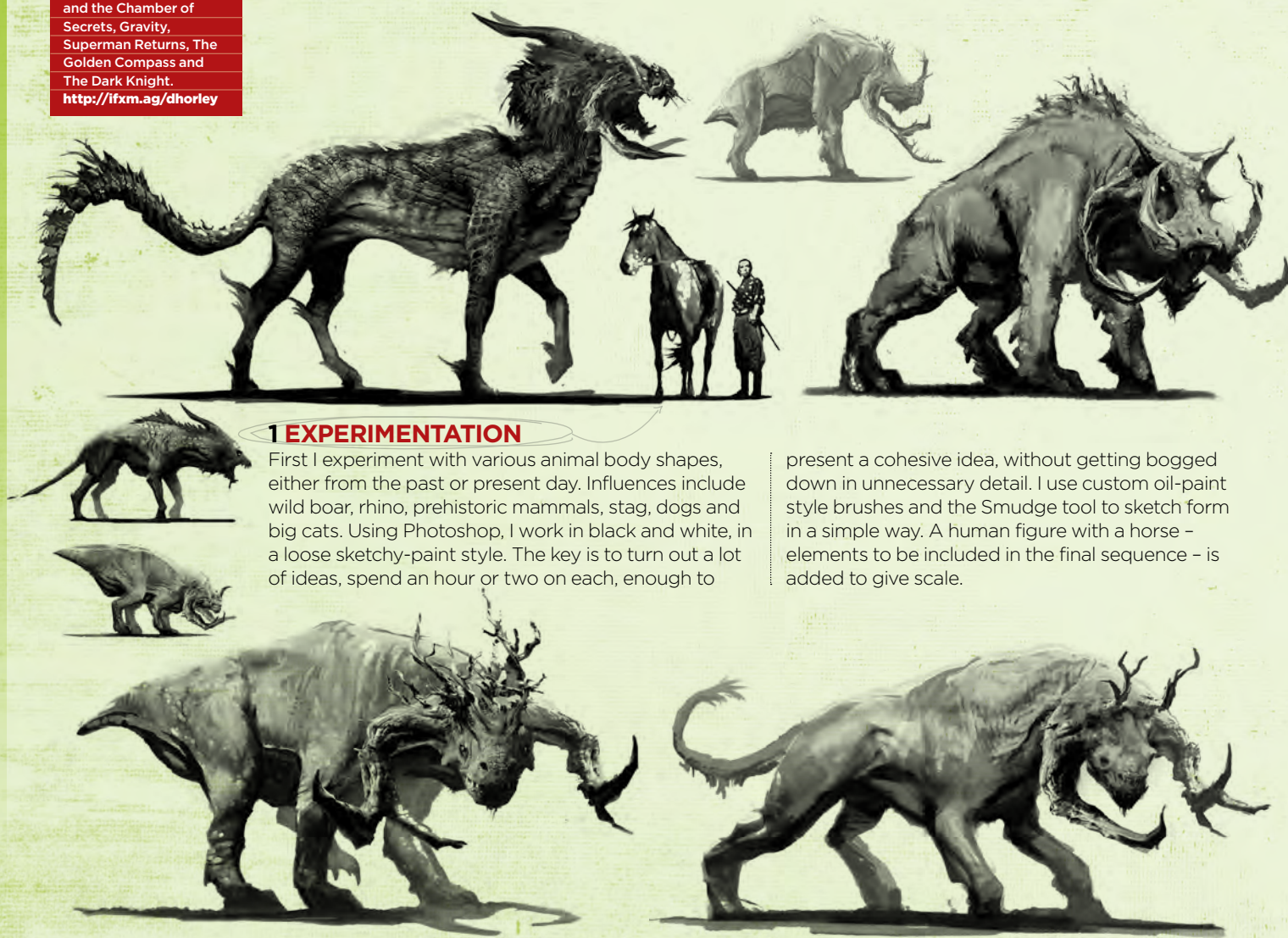
I was part of the Framestore art department team who brainstormed

looks for the creatures. The brief for Kirin was to create a mythological horned beast in the style of Hayao Miyazaki, incorporating a chimera-like mixture of animals, a stag and a reptile being the main elements.

The design veered from a stocky, rhino-like, squat animal, to a more graceful, yet still muscular, stag. Along the way it

adopted a lion's face, (later abandoned) and crocodile skin.

The creature entered asset development after a design was agreed upon, but the head carried on being refined. I followed the Kirin from concept design to model development, painting the skin textures and redesigning the head, and in this workshop I'll detail that creative process.



1 EXPERIMENTATION

First I experiment with various animal body shapes, either from the past or present day. Influences include wild boar, rhino, prehistoric mammals, stag, dogs and big cats. Using Photoshop, I work in black and white, in a loose sketchy-paint style. The key is to turn out a lot of ideas, spend an hour or two on each, enough to

present a cohesive idea, without getting bogged down in unnecessary detail. I use custom oil-paint style brushes and the Smudge tool to sketch form in a simple way. A human figure with a horse – elements to be included in the final sequence – is added to give scale.



2 COLOUR AND SETTING

This painting is a next-step image. A wild boar is a template, incorporating colour and a forest setting, photographed on location and supplied by the client. Two avenues are being explored: stag and boar. A simple model is built by the Framestore art department, which I use a render of as a base for this painting, though I paint the head from

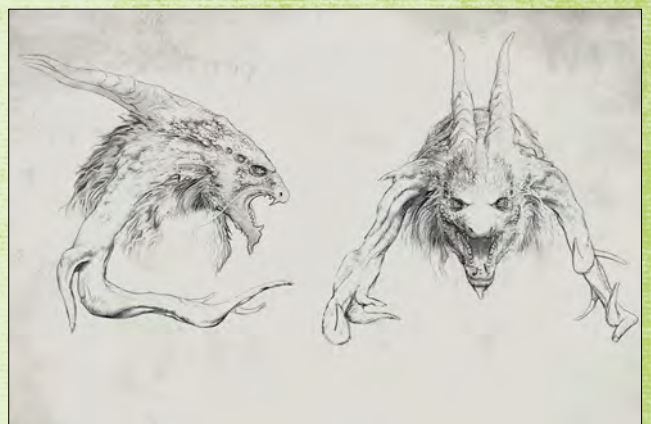
scratch. There's a request for multiple eyes, at this point four, with a splash of iridescent pigment. The technique for this image is a blend of photography, 3D model render and Photoshop painting. I include some atmosphere, something that helps to sell an idea to a client. I want to begin showing what it might look like in the film.

3 STILL SKETCHING

A decision is made to go with the stag look. Then various images are created to show the anatomy and discussions are had about how each element could work. Here I concentrate on the head. Colour isn't an issue at this point, so I opt to create a pencil sketch. It's painted in Photoshop, with a charcoal brush

and a simulation of parchment/paper as a backdrop, because it looks better than a sterile white. There is now a set of sharp-looking teeth. This isn't a passive herbivore – the film-makers want a menacing, wild and crazy look. And the antlers/horns to be made of gnarled wood. This is a forest creature, so the client wants this reflected in the design. In the script, the Kirin crashes through the forest, felling trees as he goes, so a sturdy set of horns will do the trick. As we play with ideas, I keep it as a sketch, enough to stimulate discussion, without spending too long on each image.

“I include some atmosphere – something that helps to sell an idea to a client”



All images © Framestore

4 ADDING DETAIL

At this point, the Kirin leaves the art dept and is now in VFX production. The final model is being built and plates from the shoot, with lighting references, being used. The head is still without a definitive design, so I continue to play with ideas, painting images in 2D with Photoshop over renders of an incomplete model. A dragon

look is being discussed, along with some lion influence. Some elements are locked: the eyes, horns, mane and barbles (those catfish fleshy whiskers). But other elements are still in flux. I paint in a very detailed and photo-real way, which helps the client visualise how it will look as a final asset in shot.



5 FINAL APPROVAL

This is the final approved design for the Kirin head. It provides a template for the development of the asset, so all VFX developers refer to this image as a guide. The placement of the hair, anatomy of the face, colouration, texture and

even the snarling attitude are approved. This painting enables the Kirin asset to progress to a shot-ready state. It undergoes some slight modifications, mostly with the intensity of the colouring, but essentially this is it.



6 FANTASY AND REAL FACIAL FEATURES

This is a 2D painted study of the anatomy and colouration of the six eyes. There's a request for the skin to be iridescent in key areas. I try to make this painting photo real, to eliminate any guesswork with the look. I use a soft-focus depth of field to simulate what may occur in a tight, close-up shot. I try to create an angry, wild-eyed look, with elements of an Asian dragon, fleshy protuberances to emulate a moustache, and crocodile horns over the eyes. I look at cows for inspiration and paint a pink mottle on the nose and lips. Referencing nature is essential when designing fantasy creatures. It helps to anchor the look in reality, adding familiar signatures that make it believable.



“I try to create a wild-eyed look, with elements of an Asian dragon, fleshy protuberances to emulate a moustache, and crocodile horns over the eyes”



7 PAINTING TEXTURE MAPS

I paint the texture maps, using a combination of MARI and Photoshop. There are around 25 8K texture-patches. I use photographic reptile references as a starting point and paint layers of detail over these. The map types include colour, two specular, bump, sub-surface scatter and various ID masks. The fur is painted using a separate UV layout from the skin. The rendering is done using Arnold and the look dev artist is Caroline Thoumire. I'm moved on from this project before completion, so I hand the texture baton to Michael Borhi, who adds the finishing touches and adds client detail-tweak requests. ●





Photoshop WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR COMPOSITION

Lorland Chen draws on a range of ideas and influences to help him produce a stunning original

Artist PROFILE

Lorland Chen
COUNTRY: China



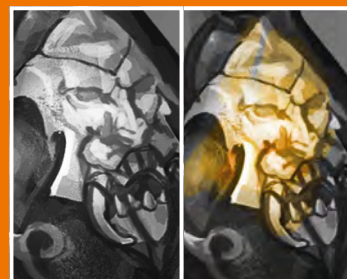
Lorland is a digital artist and college teacher who has trained

over 800 digital students. His work is known for its distinctive styling and elaborate detail, and has been used by Blizzard and Tencent, among others.
<http://ifxm.ag/chen-w>

I've always had a soft spot for classic children's tales such as *The Wizard of Oz*, in which a clever girl accompanied by friendly folk go on an adventure. I also believe in reincarnation, and perhaps in my past life I was a young woman. It might explain why I like painting females in a fantasy setting.

When I was studying in college, I fell in love with classic oil paintings, especially the aesthetic that the artists conveyed in their work. It affected my views of

feminine beauty, which continues to this day. So, for example, for this piece I'm not keen on painting a cartoon-like scene, but rather a realistic and classic image. The model is one of my students, who was cosplaying when I first photographed her. The results inspired me, and I asked her to hold a particular pose and made her act like an elegant lady, even though she was wearing a larger-than-life cosplay costume. This proves that artists can be inspired by a range of sources – you just have to look beyond the obvious. ●

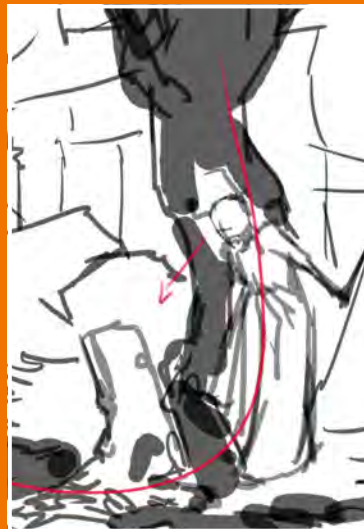


Clever colourising

When painting a piece it's tempting to zoom in when colouring your line work. The trouble is that you can become lost in the image, literally not seeing the big picture. For best results, remain zoomed out and colour your art on a new Color Burn layer. You can always make adjustments later on.

How I create...

A WOODLAND FANTASY SCENE



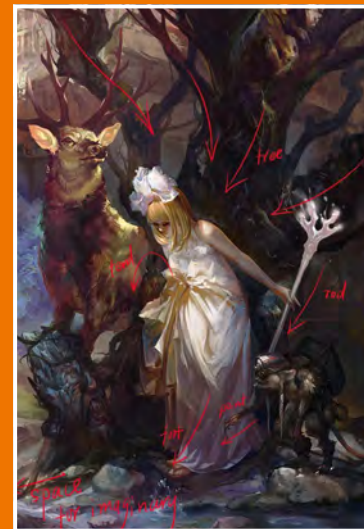
1 Sketch your ideas

My first sketch is a landscape, and the deer is actually on the far left. This stage is when a lot of elements can be changed, and some artists spend too long trying to finalise the composition. I believe that a drawing is an adventure. Take one step, and let that decision affect what you draw next.



2 The Golden Ratio

The latest version of Photoshop features the Golden Ratio (or Section) tool. This works best between two characters looking at different objects in the scene. If you overlay the Ratio over the characters you might even find that all your elements are in their ideal locations already.



3 Pull in the viewer

Each of my figure's gestures results in what I call a feeling of gravity. The main character is bending forward, and the secondary elements follow this motion. Leave a space for the viewer in which they can place themselves in the scene. This further increases the viewer's affinity with your composition.

DOWNLOAD RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES J-1

Very useful for depicting fine detail such as moss on trees, or blood vessels on characters.

SAMPLED BRUSH 2

For quick texturing, I paint with this brush and then select the Smudge tool. Clean and blurred textures present a wonderful contrast.

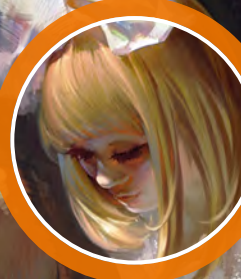


Realistic fur

Fur is like grass, and should be painted with random brush strokes. However, this is no excuse for messy or chaotic strokes. As shown here, every stroke appears loose, but if you study them more closely you can see that they all concentrate on one point. Note that this point only exists in my mind's eye.

Clever contrast

Different shapes in a space necessitates depicting different levels of contrast – not only using colour and black and white, but also with blurring or sharpness. Sharp brushes such as Photoshop's scattering dots or a specific shape will grab the viewer's attention, while a blur brush will instil a sense of distance in their mind. I call this visual psychology. So when I use clean and blur brushes together, it naturally creates a strong sense of space.



Complementary colours

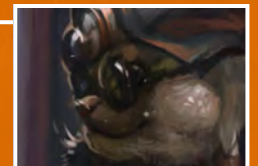
Zoom in to the details of the composition and you'll notice my use of complementary colours. This is very important if you're aiming to create a realistic-looking painting. Remember that such colours should be placed on different greyscale areas.

Fold your clothes

If you want to depict folds in cloth realistically, make every shape different. An object is made up of a range of shapes, such as a triangle or rectangle, and diverse shapes occupy varying amounts of space in the real world. If you make two shapes too similar, then in the eyes of the viewer they would occupy the same space, and the outcome would be visually jarring.

Lighting decisions

A back-lit character will help to give them an air of mystery, and also ensure that the scene doesn't end up looking flat. To do this, create a Multiply layer and then paint on it with a pale colour. If you find that the face becomes too dark, draw a light line that follows the side of the face nearest the background, as shown here.



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Artist's Choice Award
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Lighting artist Frederic Durand turns to the dark side for an illuminating class on shadows.



RATINGS EXPLAINED Magnificent Good Ordinary Poor Atrocious



UltraSharp 24

SHARP SHOOTER Millions of pixels in a normal-sized monitor. But are modern computers ready for such high-definition displays?

The picture quality of the UltraSharp 24 is utterly incredible, and even standard-definition media and images look almost real.

Price £870 **Company** Dell **Web** www.dell.co.uk **Contact** 0844 444 4699

Apparently 4K is the next big thing in displays. It's less cumbersome and whimsical than 3D, and more inclusive and sociable than virtual reality headsets. Its big selling point is that it includes a lot more pixels than a current HD screen, so everything looks deeply impressive.

Dell's UltraSharp 24 is the smallest 4K monitor we've had time with, at just 23.8 inches, pretty much the standard for desktop monitors. The small size works in its advantage too: those pixels have to be remarkably small for all eight million of them to fit in such a comparatively small area.

While the resolution is Dell's big selling point here, it's backed up with lots of other high-end specs. Dell custom-tunes its UltraSharp monitors in the factory to get colour and contrast spot-on, even supplying a

print-out of the calibration results in the box. And it really does look astonishing: it boasts 99 per cent AdobeRGB and 100 per cent sRGB coverage, so images look as good on-screen as they do on paper. Basic option windows are also sharp and clear.

Dell includes various practical features. The weighty stand keeps the screen firmly planted on your desk, but it takes a mere fingertip to adjust its height, and it'll rotate 90 degrees for working on long, tall things. It also acts as a USB hub, so you can connect your keyboard and mouse to the monitor and avoid a spaghetti of cables. And there's even a built-in card reader.

So while Dell has thought of just about everything, it's a shame Microsoft and Apple haven't. The biggest problem here is that neither Windows 8 nor Mac OS X plays all that nicely with a 4K screen. Both fail to



The UltraSharp 24 works as a USB hub, too, meaning it's goodbye to cable spaghetti.

recognise that there's a whole load of pixelly goodness going on. Some individual programs – such as Photoshop – work fine, and films look jaw-dropping. But menus and windows within the operating systems suddenly become fiddly and impractical. It's without a doubt the best-looking and most comprehensive monitor we've seen – it's just up to the operating systems to catch up now.

DETAILS

Features

- Size: 23.8-inches
- Resolution: 3,840x2,160
- Brightness: 350cd/m2
- Response time: 8ms
- Viewing angle: 178 degrees vertical/178 degrees horizontal
- Pixel per inch (PPI): 185
- Backlight technology: LED
- 4 USB 3.0 ports
- HDMI, Mini DisplayPort and DisplayPort
- Media card reader

Rating



Samsung's panel is bright and sharp, but as a touchscreen device for artists it's unconvincing.



LED 24-inch 10-Point Touch Monitor

TOUCH ME Is Samsung's interactive monitor a gamechanger?

Price £500

Company Samsung

Web www.samsung.com

RATING

Touchscreens are only just finding their way onto desktops and for good reason: a monitor generally sits at arm's length, making constant touches and gestures a surefire way to get RSI.

Nevertheless, Samsung has incorporated 10-point touch into its 24-inch monitor. Despite our doubts, a really well-tuned touch monitor could be a boon for artists able to ditch the Wacom and draw directly on the screen.

Samsung's monitor tilts back 60 degrees, though there's no height adjustment. The panel itself is good. The viewing angles are great, colours are spot-on and it looks sharp and appealing.

As a screen it's fantastic. But as a touch device it's clear that it's not going to shake up the art world just yet. It works well enough in Windows 8, but it doesn't allow the level of detail artists require, detecting chubby fingertips rather than tiny, pressure-sensitive styluses. It would be at home in a kid's play area, but not on an artist's drawing table.



Just two HDMI ports, so you'll need adapters for DisplayPort or DVI-equipped computers.

Anime Studio 10

MAC & PC

MOVING SUBJECT Can Manga Studio publisher Smith Micro's animation software bring your drawings to life?

Price £30 (Debut) £179 (Pro) **Company** Smith Micro **Web** <http://animeanime.smithmicro.com>
Contact +1 949-362-5800

Unsurprisingly, Anime Studio comes from the makers of Manga Studio, one of our favourite drawing programs. Animation is notoriously tricky, but Anime Studio covers all the basics of turning your static images into moving ones – and with a degree of simplicity. It's already found its way into feature-length animations, and it's often used for commercials and music videos.

'Bones' are key to the way it works. As their name suggests, they act a little like the metal skeletons inside claymation puppets. The idea is that you take a vector image, add bones and then the parts they're connected to move around. You can add as many bones as you like, drilling down to fingers, and you can set father/child relationships, so moving a finger doesn't end up wagging a whole hand.

It's a simple concept and tutorials give you an understanding of how to use bones to create animations. It also supports Flash-style 'tweening,' for other objects, so a cloud can move across the sky and change shape at the same time, for example. Object movements are specified via the timeline, which makes it easy to see what's moving where and when.

Where it gets quite clever is in its ability to turn Photoshop PSD files into



This may look a bit awkward, but it's surprising how fluid and realistic Anime Studio's animations are.

animated characters and scenes. It imports all your layers across, and you can group layers together into a coherent whole. It works better with vectors than it does with more detailed images (support for Illustrator is built-in, too), but it can work with your more detailed creations. There are a few more things to bear in mind – you'll have to consider angles and filling blank spaces behind moving parts – but it'll work with a little elbow grease and lateral thinking.

There are a few minor issues with the software – our animations disappeared from the workspace on two separate computers, but they'd reappear with a little clicking. The learning curve is a little steep, too, but the end results make it worth persevering. Overall, though, it's a great way to find out about animation and give your images a little movement.

DETAILS

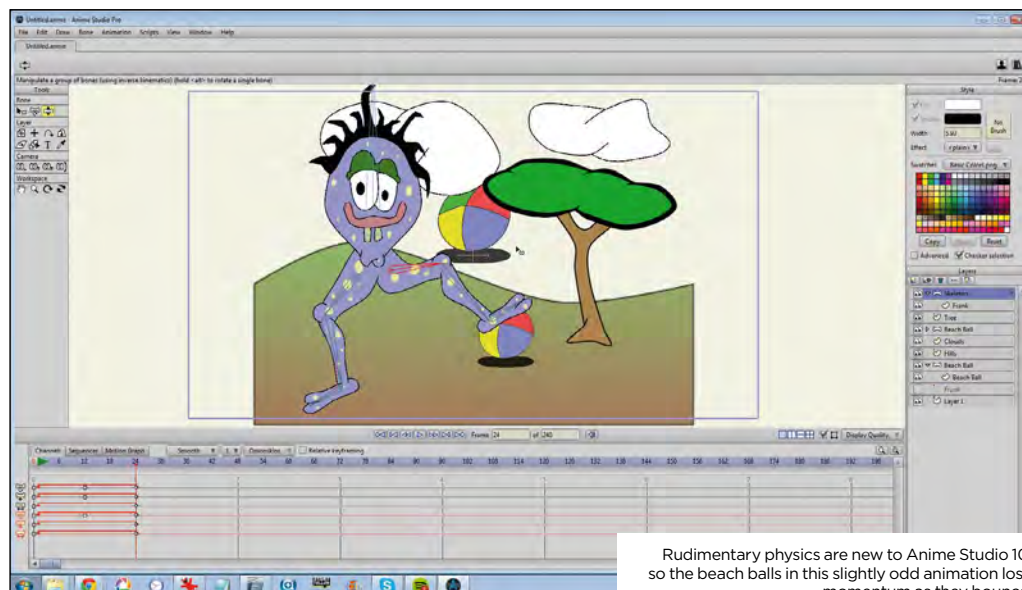
Features

- Smart Bones
- Photoshop PSD file support
- Manga Studio file support
- Vector art creation
- Motion curves
- Audio with automatic lip-synching
- 3D object support
- 64-bit improvements
- GPU acceleration
- Wacom multi-touch support

System Requirements

PC: Windows 7, 8 or 8.1, 1.3GHz Pentium 4 or Athlon 64 CPU, 2GB RAM, 1.6GB free hard disk space, OpenGL enabled GPU, 1,280x800 display, DVD drive, internet connection, Internet Explorer 9
Mac: OS X 10.8 or 10.9, 64-bit OS required, 1.3GHz Intel CPU, 2GB RAM, 800MB free hard drive space, 1,280x800 display, DVD drive, internet connection

Rating



Rudimentary physics are new to Anime Studio 10, so the beach balls in this slightly odd animation lose momentum as they bounce.



The Art of DreamWorks Animation

DREAM TEAM Ants, ogres and dragons: how DreamWorks Animation took on Pixar to become one of Hollywood's biggest creators of family-friendly entertainment

Author Ramin Zahed **Publisher** Abrams **Price** £30 **Web** www.abramsbooks.com **Available** 15 April

Founded by Steven Spielberg, Jeffrey Katzenberg and David Geffen in 1994, DreamWorks has become one of the biggest independent film studios in the world. It subsequently created an animation arm – DreamWorks Animation – in 1997, with the release of its first film, *Antz*. This huge compendium celebrates the 20th anniversary of the studio, covering some 30 feature films in the process.

Although DreamWorks and Pixar comparisons are inevitable, it's clear from *The Art of DreamWorks Animation* that they're different beasts. Whereas Pixar films are entirely computer generated, DreamWorks utilises a range of formats, including traditional animation and claymation. Pixar's work is also rather distinctive,



How to Train Your Dragon was directed by Dean DeBlois and Chris Sanders, who also worked together on Disney's *Lilo & Stitch*.

while DreamWorks' feels larger scale and more artistically adventurous.

DreamWorks Animation's big hitters (*Shrek*, *Madagascar*) are likely to be the sections in the book that people turn to first, yet it's the studio's lesser projects which tend to have more striking artwork. 2003's *Sinbad: Legend of the Seven Seas*' cityscapes combine Persian architecture with Venetian canals and waterways in a manner that feels functional and believable.

The sewer-based world of Aardman Animation's *Flushed Away* is similarly aquatic, albeit on a far smaller scale. Here the heroic rats have assembled a crude version of London using trash they've found in the sewer, including replicas of Tower Bridge and Big Ben made from reclaimed portaloos and washing machines. It looks dirty and second-hand, but the concept art is lit with warm colours to make these dank environments feel almost homely.

An inevitable consequence of covering DreamWorks' huge body of work is that the book can't go into a lot of detail on specific films, with each title receiving between eight and 14 pages. The only text comes from the producers and artists involved with the films – there are no descriptive captions for the concept art. So for



Kung Fu Panda was "a comedy that had poetic and dramatic bits", says its production designer.

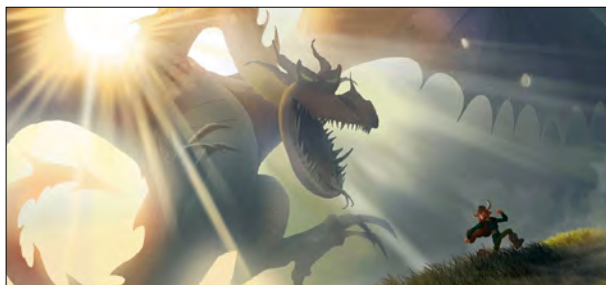
example, the purpose of the intriguing physical maquettes created for *Shrek 2* goes without explanation.

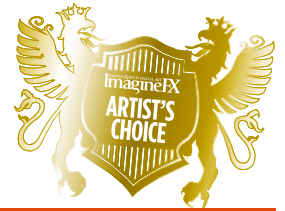
For this reason, it's a book that's best suited to the coffee table, so you can compare and contrast concept images while you watch the films at home. It's also arguable that each image tells its own story.

This isn't a major problem, and the art is beautifully presented and laid out, even if it does lack context and explanation. The book's also bang up to date: it concludes with art from *Home* and *How to Train Your Dragon 2*, both due for release later this year.

RATING

© Photos courtesy of DreamWorks Animation





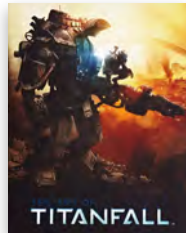
The Art of Titanfall

BIG TALK Respawn's revolutionary game throws giant robots and menacing aliens into the mix, resulting in a whole load of art to gawp at

Author Andy McVittie **Publisher** Titan Books **Price** £30 **Web** www.titanbooks.com **Available** Now

Titanfall's central concept is such a simple one that it makes you wonder why no one thought of it before: as well as your standard Call of Duty-style men shooting each other, the game throws giant robotic armour suits into the mix. If your team's losing you can simply jump in a giant mechanised suit of armour and pepper the opposing team with lead.

This Making Of book covers every aspect of the game: the human



The remains of a Leviathan provides the backdrop to one of the game's battlefields.

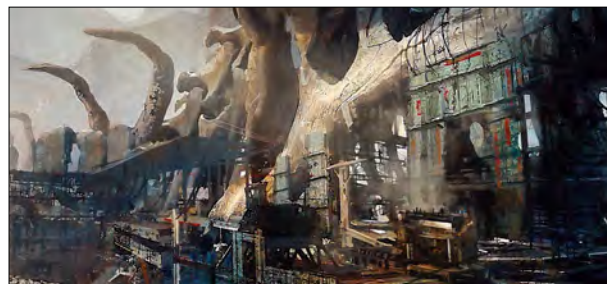


characters, their ridiculously oversized robo-suits, the threatening alien inhabitants of the game's setting, and the sci-fi universe all these things inhabit. Developer Respawn Entertainment has certainly put a lot of effort into making the entire game look unique, and some of the concept art is stunning: Tu Bui's Leviathan – an elephantine creature many times taller than mountains – is terrifying in its humongousness.

The book also drills down to the smaller components, such as weaponry, armour and logos and concludes with maquettes by Joel Emslie, and even the creation of a full-size Titan for the E3 2013 trade show.

It's a great example of what a game-making book should be, and Titanfall looks a world away (literally) from the current crop of first-person shooters.

RATING 5/5



The Art of Thief

IT'S A STEAL Master thief and stealth progenitor Garrett returns in Square Enix's reboot of the popular video game franchise

Author Paul Davies **Publisher** Titan Books **Price** £30 **Web** www.titanbooks.com **Available** Now

The first Thief game, released in 1998, revolutionised first-person gaming by introducing Garrett. The character was more adept at sneaking in the shadows and knocking people out than blowing them away with a stupidly large rocket launcher. Some 16 years later it's been rebooted, and even if the new version misses the point there's still a lot of great artwork around it.

As the book points out, the most important element in the Thief universe



is the design of Garrett's hands, which occupy the majority of the screen, switching between lock picking and nabbing goods. They receive an entire four-page spread in the book, discussing how they're designed to look impeccably neat, and almost like a pianist's delicate digits.

Of course, the scope of the book goes far beyond Garrett's dextrous fingers. It's explained that the character himself went through a

number of redesigns to make him less scary, and it highlights enemy and location design. A couple of mission breakdowns is a nice touch and they explain how different actions result in altered consequences.

Thief's triumphantly dark and brutal aesthetic shines through the whole tome, and it's a must-have if you're a fan of Garrett's adventures.

RATING 4/5



The book reveals, among other things, how much work went into making Garrett less frightening.

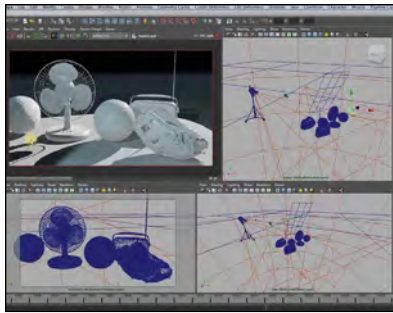
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Developer of the Year Designer of the Year Outstanding Contribution
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www.thenetawards.com



In *Light and Shadow*, Frederic Durand shows how 3D software can precisely control light distribution.

Many of Frederic's techniques are inspired by the physical blocks used by cinematographers.



Light and Shadow: Lighting and Rendering Series Vol 1

FADE TO BLACK Lighting artist Frederic Durand turns to the dark side for an illuminating class on shadows



Publisher The Gnomon Workshop **Price** £35 **Format** DVD/Download **Web** www.thegnomonworkshop.com

You might be better off starting at the end of Frederic Durand's lighting masterclass. In the brief chapter six, he talks about how light, shadow and the points where they meet form the basis of drawing, photography and other visual disciplines. That two-minute postscript cuts to the heart of why it's worth investing your time in this technical but revealing video.

Frederic's focus, in this first of a projected series on lighting, is not on light itself, but on the shadows it casts. He takes you through a sequence of CG scenes, each designed to reveal an aspect of how shadow functions and the ways that you can take command of it, to either reveal forms or support your artistic intent.

He uses Maya, the tool of choice for pro animators. But many of his ideas and techniques apply to other 3D software such as ZBrush or CINEMA 4D, even if you have to do some



DETAILS

Topics covered

- Light decay
- Solving the problem of overexposed areas
- Blocking light to create shadows
- Direct and indirect light explained
- Advanced lighting options in Maya

Length

206 minutes

Rating



legwork to suss out how to reproduce the visuals that he achieves.

Frederic kicks off with a look at how light decays with distance and how you can control this in CG, before giving an overview of the various techniques you can use to create shadows cast by objects outside the scene itself. He draws many ideas from cinematography, where the light reaching the camera is controlled with precision. Indeed, film terms such as "barn doors" and "gobos" (both physical tools for directing light) abound, but it's never off-putting.

By showing you all the relevant tools and options available in 3D software to control shadow, Frederic has made a deeply technical video that goes beyond the three-point lighting tips you'll encounter in most CG training. Even if not every technique is relevant to the software you use yourself, you'll learn a lot about the properties of light, and gain inspiration for staging your scenes more effectively. ●

ARTIST PROFILE

FREDERIC DURAND

Frederic has worked on commercials, as well as animated and feature films for the past 20 years, and has been employed by high-profile companies such as Sony Pictures Imageworks, Walt Disney Animation and DreamWorks. As a lighting artist, Frederic's approach is technical and artistic, and he integrates aspects of cinematography into his approach. Frederic graduated from the École Nationale des Arts Decoratifs in Paris, France, and is the co-founder of Noroc Studio.



www.fredericdurand.com

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FANTASY

illustrator

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ENHANCE YOUR ART WITH
**PERSPECTIVE
AND EMOTION**

Discover how Mark Zug visualises a story in
which the past and future collide **Page 106**

FXPosé *Traditional*

SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL FANTASY ARTISTS

+ Chris Dunn

LOCATION: England

WEB: www.chris-dunn.co.uk

EMAIL: contact@chris-dunn.co.uk

MEDIA: Watercolour, gouache



"There's nothing better than a book with tattered edges," says Chris Dunn. "A shabby armchair with ripped seams and worn-out arms. My characters are always worn-out, well used."

The artist works primarily as an editorial illustrator, but has recently begun a series of detailed watercolour paintings loosely based on scenes from *The Wind in the Willows* and Beatrix Potter stories.

Chris has exhibited his work in galleries throughout the UK, picking up a string of awards along the way, and offers private art tuition at his studio in Corsham, Wiltshire.

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"I really like the warm tones and charismatic characters Chris's illustrations are built around. His rakish Ratty, in particular, with his cream suit and closed-eyed smile, is brilliant. Super stuff."

Gary Evans,
Staff Writer

1 SETTLING IN

Watercolour and gouache on Arches watercolour paper, 9.5x12in

"This painting is loosely based on Badger's dwelling in *The Wind in the Willows*. I tried to bring across a warm and cosy feeling by repeatedly glazing yellow ochre and burnt sienna. I had quite a bit of fun with the newspaper headlines, too."

2 MESSING ABOUT

Watercolour and gouache on Arches watercolour paper, 9.5x12in

"Mole and Ratty on the river is an iconic scene and a joy to illustrate. However, the challenge of depicting water reflecting light and what goes on underneath the surface at the same time was a challenge. In addition, finding reference for a laughing water vole was no mean feat."





Chris Seaman

LOCATION: US

WEB: www.chrisseamanart.com

EMAIL: chrisseamanart@att.net

MEDIA: Medium-acrylic on board



From Applibot and Blizzard Entertainment to Wizards of the Coast and Warner Bros Studios... in a 14-year career, Chris

Seaman's work has found fans in the biggest of big-name clients.

Chris splits his time between commissions and personal work, which reflects a "lifelong interest in the classic fairy tale". Educated at the esteemed Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, Craig loves to paint nature and the human form. He's also painted comic book and cover artwork for Dark Horse Comics and World of Warcraft trading cards, and is a Spectrum Fantastic Art gold-medal winner.

"I work in themes personal to me," he says, "and issues such as body image, environmental preservation, and social and psychological repression weave themselves throughout my work."

1 THE SEVEN RAVENS

Acrylic on board, 17x22in

"The Brothers Grimm wrote over 200 fairy tales, many of them obscure. This one stuck with me and I had to illustrate it. It's a story of a daughter making amends for her father's bad choice, which cursed her brothers and turned them into ravens."

2 POISON APPLE

Acrylic on board, 18x17.5in

"Everyone knows Snow White and the Seven Dwarves. I wanted to have a little fun with how far the dwarves would go to protect her, building a suit of armour. But in the end it wasn't a knife blade or arrowhead that did Snow White in..."

3 THE FAIRY WITH THE TURQUOISE HAIR

Acrylic on board, 16x20in

"In Carlo Collodi's original Pinocchio, the Blue Fairy was introduced later in the book as a mother figure. While Geppetto, Pinocchio's creator, represented the father figure. Here I chose to interpret the love between mother and child."

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IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Chris Seaman first appeared on my radar when he painted a frog princess for ImagineFX in issue 104. His work is full of delightful details, storytelling and humour."

Cliff Hope,
Operations Editor

Creative Space



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Are you a part of
a regular art class or
group? Email us at
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feature here!

SKETCH UP: LONDON

Founder **DANIEL MORRIS** introduces Sketch Up and its high-flying life models – the art jam where it's all a bit of a circus

Superheroes willing to sit for portraits are scarce. That's what Daniel Morris found. So he decided to set up an art group featuring the next best thing: circus performers.

Daniel enlisted the services of Gravity Circus Centre's Yam Doyev. With the exclusive use of his circus training space in London, and its performers as models, Sketch Up was born.

"When I want to sketch a superhero pose," the Sketch Up founder says, "it's difficult to get accurate source

material. I realised the potential of using circus performers – tightrope walkers, trapeze artists – modelling positions that simply can't be seen in a typical life-drawing sessions."

The group was also conceived to give artists a sense of community, an environment encouraging the exchange of ideas and opportunities to collaborate on more ambitious projects, such as graphic novels and animations.

"This doesn't happen sat alone behind a computer screen," Daniel says. "I was always a little envious of the huge art



Masked crusaders: group founder Daniel Morris says London was lacking a good artist get-together.

communities in places such as the US. They seem to often meet face-to-face and share their passion for art. I found it odd that, in London, people were content to communicate solely through forums.

"Maybe I'm being a little traditional, but I value the social aspect of art as much as developing my art, so I was keen to place a flag in the ground and say: let's meet here."

For more information on Sketch Up visit www.meetup.com/sketchup and for more about Gravity Circus Centre visit www.gravitycircuscentre.com.

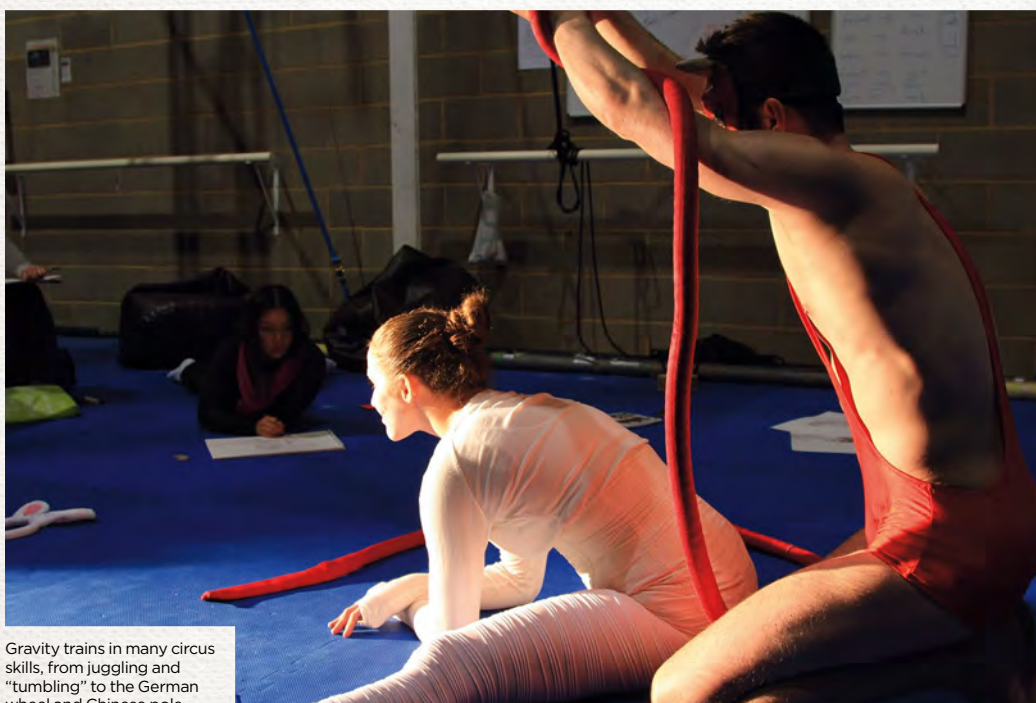
Creative Space Sketch Up: London



The performers from Gravity Circus Centre are strong enough to hold unusual poses for long periods of time, for the benefit of the artists.



The first seeds of Sketch Up: London were sewn when artist Daniel Morris realised how difficult it was to accurately draw superhero poses.



Gravity trains in many circus skills, from juggling and "tumbling" to the German wheel and Chinese pole.

CIRQUE DU SKETCHY

A selection of works from a recent Sketch Up get-together



Sketch Up sketcher Teri Su's skilful line work.

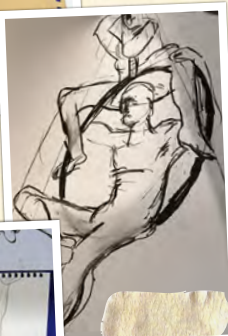
Another Teri Su piece - this time looking at the man in a mask.



Steven Beaumont's sketch is almost as dextrous as its subject.



Daniel Morris draws tangled limbs with neat lines.

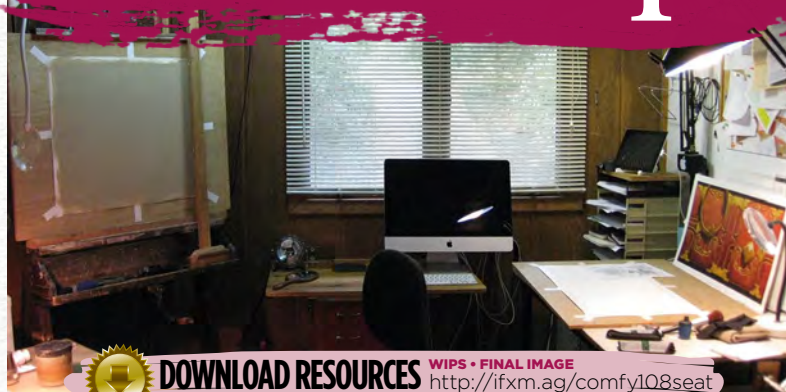


Teri jumped into Sketch Up with both feet, unlike this circus performer.

Steven Beaumont's sketches show how performers' poses mirror superheroes.



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Oils



PAINT SCI-FI WITH FEELING

MARK ZUG explores emotive zoology, aerial perspective and natural light

Being both an avid science fiction fan and a devotee of the Brandywine School of illustration, I welcome any chance to make the two collide. In this painting, *Spacelift*, I want to explore the sci-fi conceit of Palaeolithic man in contact with alien starfarers. Our would-be ancestors are departing Earth, unsure whether they will ever return, experiencing a mix of ambivalence, anxiety and pangs for the old country.

To do this, I need to get close enough to my human subjects to convey emotion, yet also display the alien presence somehow. It must also be clear that my humans are embarking.

Assigning myself this subject matter has put some of my favourite things in my path: space aliens. However, I'm unsure of their anatomy or whether I will even show them, although I'll need to design elements of their technology. I'll also have to imagine prehistoric man, their clime, race and culture. And there'll be a culture clash – one of my favourite topics,

rife with possibilities. And there's the era itself, either in landscape, biota (such as sabre-tooth tigers) or both.

I'm a realist painter, so I need to do some study on all these elements to put across a scene that's superficially plausible, but also has an undergirding of truth that convinces the subconscious.

To get myself rolling I bracket my possibilities: the time is 100,000 years ago and the place is Africa. I soon discover there were no sabre-tooth cats in Africa at this time. Furthermore, the people there didn't resemble Neanderthals, but probably native Africans of today, dressed for a colder climate. The discipline of realism demands making treasure out of unexpected knowledge.



Mark is a fantasy and science fiction artist and illustrator who draws inspiration from America's Golden Age of book

illustration. As well as Harlan Ellison's *I, Robot*, he's produced art for *Magic: The Gathering* and the *Septimus Heap* series.

www.markzug.com





1 Prepare the surface

I'm working on 300lb watercolour paper, which needs to be protected from the linoleic acid in oil paint. I coat the paper with acrylic gesso, working it deep into the tooth, rolling it out flat with a foam roller, then sanding it smooth when dry.



2 Create a ground tone

If you work on a mid-tone rather than on white, your first brushstrokes have less heavy lifting to do, contrast-wise. So I mix a warm grey shade of oil and alkyd mixture and coat the gessoed surface, evening out the finish with a fan blender. I let it dry.



MATERIALS

SURFACE

- 300lb Fabriano Artistic hot-press watercolour paper
- White acrylic gesso
- 150 grit sandpaper and sanding block

BRUSHES

- House painting brush
- Foam paint roller, 3in
- Hake brushes, 6in
- Hog bristle filbert, size 50
- Synthetic filberts, sizes 16-4
- Synthetic brights, sizes 12-4
- Synthetic rounds, sizes 10-4
- Hog bristle bright, size 7
- Mongoose blender rounds, sizes 20-4
- Mongoose blender fans, sizes 6-4
- Synthetic blender fan, size 6
- Sable long-handle rounds, size 8
- Kolinsky Sable short-handle rounds, sizes 2-1



PAINTS

- Winsor & Newton: Griffin Alkyd Titanium White, Titanium White, Mars Black, Alizarin Crimson, Raw Umber, Burnt Umber, Burnt Sienna, Winsor Orange, Winsor Yellow Deep, Bismuth Yellow
- Williamsburg: Phthalo Green, French Ultramarine
- Old Holland: Transparent Oxide Yellow Lake

OTHER

- Rubber-tipped clay shaper, size 2
- Kemper Wipe Out Tool
- Angle spatula palette knife, 5-3in
- Glass scraper, 4in
- Triangular engraver's scraper

3 Transfer the drawing

I use an Artograph projector to project an image of the drawing onto the dry oil ground. I use the projector only to obtain a tracing, then I pencil the image freehand in greater detail.



4 Create an underpainting

At this point there's no white paint in my palette. It consists only of the umbers, Burnt Sienna, and Mars Black mixed with a bit of Alizarin - all applied thinly with a lot of solvent, like a watercolour. I allow this to dry.



5 Mix up the first full range colours

Now I enter into the full range of my palette. In this case I've chosen to start with the rhino, so I prepare a colour spread reflecting the ruddy tones indicated by cave paintings of woolly rhinos.



ARTIST INSIGHT

BRUSH SELECTION

My rugged daily drivers for every stage of the painting are synthetic brushes: Winsor & Newton Monarchs, Da Vinci Top-Acrylics and Blick Masters. For fine detail, I use Winsor & Newton Series 7 Kolinsky Sables, 1-2.

OIL TIP

LINSEED USE

To use your linseed oil, smear it out on your palette with a knife, rather than dipping directly from the jar or bottle.



6 Work down from the lighter values

Having explored the darks and midtones in the underpainting, I now stake out the upper part of my contrast range with the whites and the more thick, opaque mixtures. This helps my eye quickly apprehend the piece's overall tonal spread.



7 Preserve your original tone plan

My tone plan calls for the humans to be silhouetted against a brilliantly lit ground, so the main colour in the background will be a mixture of white, Bismuth Yellow and Raw Umber, as well as some brilliant spectral tones to spike the tundra surface. The cast shadows on the ground will contain bright reflections of the blue sky.



Background tone and texture

8



8 Background tone and texture

I want a rugged texture for the background. In addition to some improvisational broken colour, I use a rubber tool to create a hatched look, complementing the suggestion of grasses and undergrowth.



ARTIST INSIGHT

BRISTLE BRUSHES

For areas of thick, light-value paint I sometimes use hog bristle brushes for the texture they impart; usually Robert Simmons Signets. I blend with perfectly dry brushes, using a variety of Langnickel Royal Sable mongoose-hair blenders, both round and fan.

10 Break out the fine tools

I use a gooseneck magnifier to help me get deep into the detail of my human faces and figures. This is also where my Winsor and Newton Series 7s get their heavy use. Note that the palette of these human figures ranges from dark to mid-tone, because they're catching only indirect light.



TOOL TIP

RUBBER-TIPPED

I use rubber-tipped tools to squeegee shapes into the paint. My favourite fell apart, but I use the tip in a charcoal holder.



9 Make the circuit of your subjects

The saucer door element catches full sun, so I mix up a light palette modelled on the shades of abalone shells. Once again, the rubber tool comes in handy for creating sharp textural effects. Be sure to obey the 'darks thin, lights thick' rule throughout.





ARTIST INSIGHT

USE A DRY BRUSH

Sometimes use a brush that's absolutely dry and free of paint, to fade and soften shapes. If your painting is small enough, you can rest it on a plywood panel and dry it in a pre-heated kitchen oven at 200°F (or 95°C) for two hours.

12 Savour, contemplate, double-check

An important stage, I take maybe 20 minutes to just let my eyes roam over the piece, making sure everything is as I want it. If not, now is the time to go back in and make corrections.

11 Wind down with secondary characters

While savouring figures that turned out well, now is a good time to attend to completeness. I paint that extra buffalo and make sure there's meat and structure inside the shadows. I add some extra variegation to the tundra surface.



BRUSH TIP

STAYING SOLVENT

Weber Turpenoid Natural is a great brush cleaner.

It also works as an all-around dried paint solvent.

13 A apply retouch varnish

Retouch varnish is simply damar varnish diluted with turpentine. It glosses up the painting, deepening the blacks and rendering every brushstroke visible. I apply it with a 2in hake brush, taking care to pick out the inevitable hair fragments with tweezers before the varnish becomes sticky. ●



Pencil

Watercolour

INTRODUCTION TO COLOUR SKETCHING

CHRIS LEGASPI helps you build on your core anatomy skills by presenting his tips for sketching the human form in colour

Colour separates painting from drawing, bring life and vibrancy to paintings and sketches. Yet because colour is so complex, I prefer to simplify colour and limit the colours I use as much as possible. And to do this I must first properly shift a colour's temperature.

Temperature is a property of colour that's often misunderstood. It refers to how warm or cool a colour is. I define warm colours as red, yellow and orange. Cool colours are blue, green and violet.

Temperature is relative, so any colour has a warm and cool version.

One way to apply this to figure painting is by starting with only two colours, using burnt umber as my warm and ultramarine blue as the cool. They enable me to create a range of warm and cool greys of varying value and intensity. Once I complete the first pass of colour, I'll then add variations and temperature shifts.

Variation and temperature shifts are the secret to making colour feel

MATERIALS

- Watercolour paper
- Graphite pencil or red Prismacolor pencil
- White sable brush, #5 or #8 round
- Burnt Umber, Alizarin Crimson, Yellow Ochre and Ultramarine Blue watercolours

believable. For example, I'll add a wash of yellow to the light side of the skin to enhance the colour. Next, I'll add reds and pinks to the blood-rich and sun-tanned areas such as the hands, face, knees and feet. Finally, I'll add subtle cool colours like blue and green to the half-tones: this helps to make the skin more alive and realistic-looking.



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



Warm colours

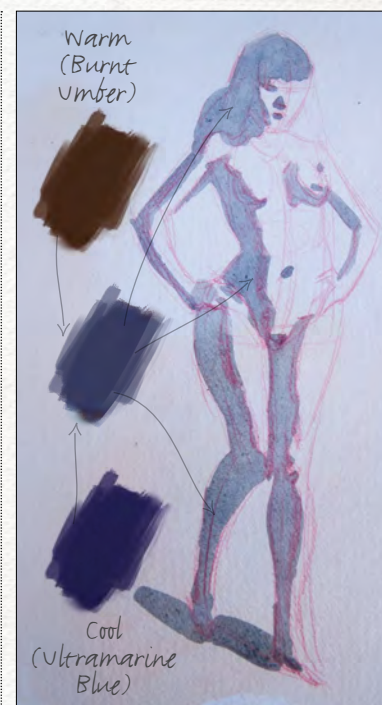
Cool colours

Warm and cool are relative

Warm/cool yellow orange red purple blue green

1 Understanding temperature

Temperature is relative, so any colour can have a warm or cool version depending on the colours around it. Even warm colours such as red, yellow and orange can look cool, and likewise blue, green and violet can be made warm by using them in conjunction with other colours.



ARTIST INSIGHT

VENTURE OUTSIDE

To rapidly improve your colour skills, paint outdoors in natural light. Spend between 10 and 20 minutes a day and do quick studies of landscapes, gardens, parks and urban scenes.

2 Block in shadow

Once the drawing is established, I block in the shadow. For the colour of the shadow, I mix Ultramarine Blue and Burnt Umber to create a medium dark value, blue-grey. Because most art studio lights have a warm colour, the cool shadow creates dynamic colour contrast.



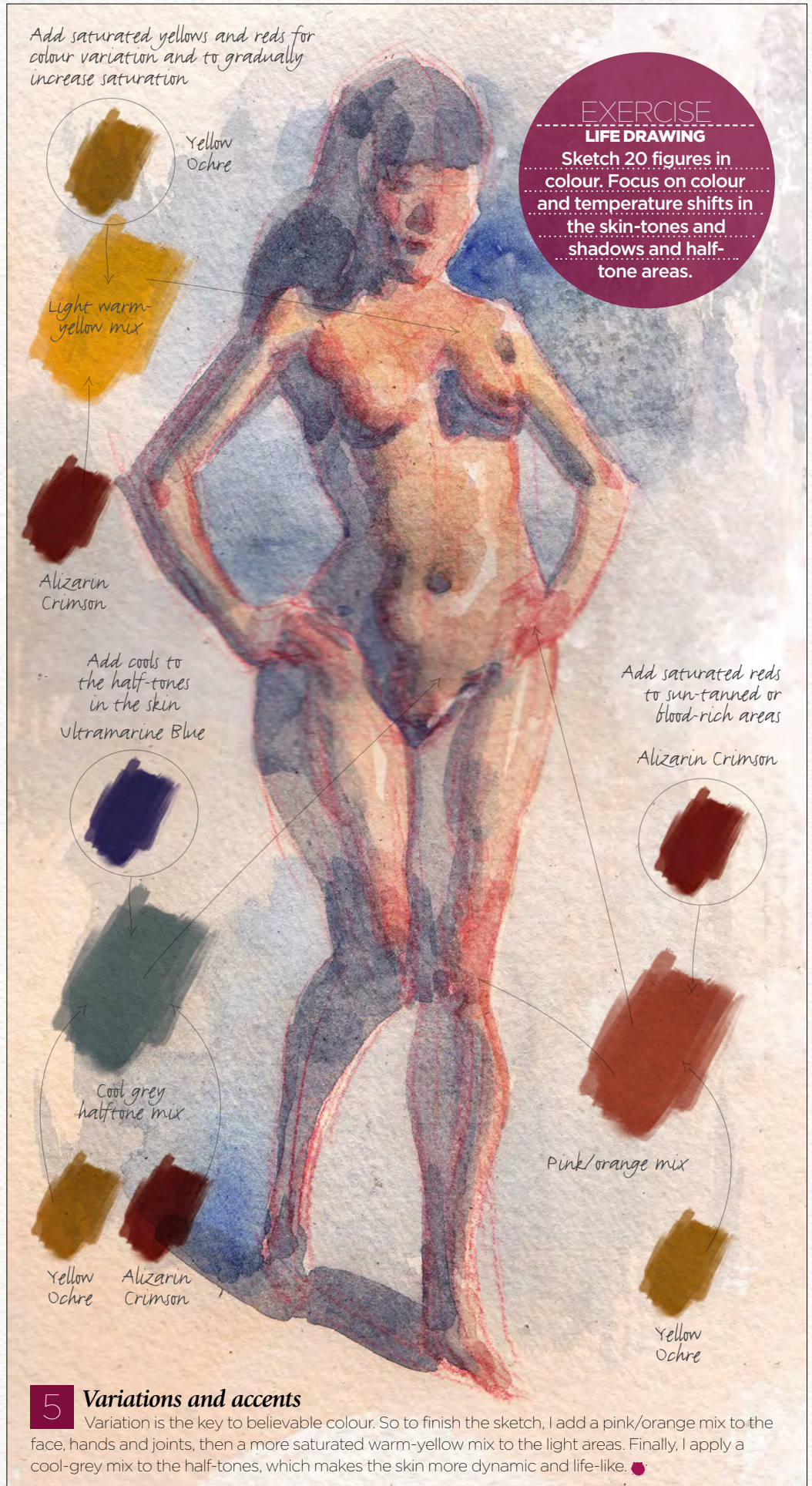
3 Transition tones

I put a wash of dark, blue-grey on the border of the shadow shape. This softens the edge and creates a transition of value from dark to light. To mix the darker tone, I use Burnt Umber and Ultramarine Blue again, but with more pigment and less water.



4 Half-tones and lights

To create a base flesh-tone, I use a mixture of Alizarin Crimson, Yellow Ochre and Ultramarine Blue. I add more yellow to the light-facing planes, which results in a more life-like colour. For the half-tones, I add more red and blue for greater colour saturation and a darker value.



EXERCISE LIFE DRAWING

Sketch 20 figures in colour. Focus on colour and temperature shifts in the skin-tones and shadows and half-tone areas.

5 Variations and accents

Variation is the key to believable colour. So to finish the sketch, I add a pink/orange mix to the face, hands and joints, then a more saturated warm-yellow mix to the light areas. Finally, I apply a cool-grey mix to the half-tones, which makes the skin more dynamic and life-like.



First Impressions

✧ John Jude Palencar ✧

John believes the best compliments about art come from those who don't know they're giving them...



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

Mostly they mistake my quietness for arrogance.

Once you get to know me, you can't shut me up. I'm very critical of my own work, as much as I am of other artists' work. That may be why some people think I'm a bastard. At my age, it takes a lot to impress me. I have a good eye for evaluating artwork, but I'm most critical of my own. When it's not successful, I'm annoyed at myself for days. Even months.

Which artists inspire you?

Who are the artists I can't stomach? That's a better question. But I don't think I'll share my answers here. My earliest influences were Andrew Wyeth and Salvador Dali. My tastes have grown broader with maturity. I'm more open-minded now and appreciate anything done well. But if you're an artistic phoney, take a hike.

Do you have a painting ritual?

Not really. I try to work everyday in the studio, and prefer working at night. I usually get up in the afternoon – unless I'm pulling an all-nighter – check emails and write a to-do list. I work in the evening, into the wee hours. Rinse and repeat. Hey, I guess I do have a ritual.



PROPHET NO. 2

John first had his art published as a 15 year-old, when he won a local newspaper competition in Ohio. He's been freelance full-time since art school.

When did you first realise that you wanted to be an artist?

Like most artists, I've been doing it since I was very young. In first grade, I'd watch an artist on TV (search for Jon Gnagy's Learn to Draw on YouTube) so my parents bought me his deluxe art set. I was thrilled and on my way. You grow into it. You are passionate. Obsessive about it. Art was the only thing I did well and had half a chance in.

Who was your first artistic crush?

Probably Jon Gnagy, a TV artist, then my high school art teacher, Frederick C Graff. Mr Graff is also a practicing artist and made a good portion of his income

from his art. He truly saved me from being a juvenile delinquent. He was an award-winning watercolourist and I still use many of the techniques he taught me. He's like an older brother and we have been good friends for over 30 years.

Do you remember the first image where you thought you'd nailed it?

I think it was a watercolour landscape in high school. There have been many paintings like that over the years. The key I find to "nailing it" is working toward the image you have in your mind. I've never fully captured my interior vision, but when I'm close the paintings have been very successful and well received.

What was the first bit of praise you received that spurred you on?

Winning awards is gratifying. That encourages you. Also, at an exhibition, having someone commenting positively while you're standing nearby and they don't know you are the artist. If the discussion that you're eavesdropping on is constructive then you can learn something about yourself and your art. It could be something you weren't aware of, and that's good.

And your first knock-back?

At an exhibition, having someone commenting negatively while you're standing nearby and they don't know you're the artist. You can learn something from that as well. I always try to evaluate all of these opinions by consensus and source.

What was the last thing you painted, and were you happy with it?

I can't say what the last thing was because it hasn't been published yet. It was a surreal piece. It was okay. We tend to work in clichés in this business. I will reserve more detailed comment, that may incriminate me, about the cover in question. Currently I'm working on a personal painting: it's an assemblage of items, sort of a surreal, still-life figural thing. It's not complete yet, but it's going well. Also I'm doing sketches for some upcoming book covers and interiors paintings for an author's collected works. All hush-hush, of course.

The art of American artist John Jude Palencar has appeared on over 100 book covers. www.johnjudepalencar.com

“That may be why some think I'm a bastard. At my age, it takes a lot to impress me”



ROADS TO MADNESS

This painting of John's was used as the cover for HP Lovecraft's Roads to Madness novel.

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