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FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART **ImagineFX**

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

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VS NINJAS**

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WORKSHOP

SHADING TIPS

Add light and shadow to your portrait work

Future

PAINT AMAZING COMIC ART

Sharpen your art skills! How to break into comics with DC's **Ken Lashley**

INSIDE

**SIMONE BIANCHI'S
SKETCHBOOK**

EMBRACE CHANGES
TO YOUR ART

**IMPROVE YOUR
KEYFRAME SKILLS**

75 YEARS OF BATMAN! THE ART OF GOTHAM'S HEROES AND VILLAINS



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Imagined by
Neville Page

Welcome... to an art crusade



This issue we're turning our attention to comics. 2014 is the 75th anniversary of Batman's creation, so over on page 42 we take a look at the dark art history of arguably the world's most enduring comic character. Which artistic era of Batman you prefer will probably depend on your age, so our feature on the Caped Crusader

delivers imagery for every type of fan – from the likes of Jock, Frank Miller, Neal Adams and many more brilliant artists.

Taking you back a little, in 2011, on the bustling convention floor at San Diego's Comic-Con, I stood silently in awe behind artist Ken Lashley as he set about using marker pens to draw a Star Wars mural on a car (if you haven't seen it, Google it – it's a thing of beauty). Three years later and Ken is using his intricate and unique skills to depict Batman on our cover. Subscribers of ImagineFX will get the full effect of his detailed work (see below). You can also turn to page 66 to see how he created this extraordinary piece of art.

Our comic fest continues with a flick through Simone Bianchi's sketchbook on page 60, a delve into creating a Wolverine fight scene on page 72, and a look into how the gorgeous cover art for Fables gets created – George Pratt shares his process on page 76.

Elsewhere, Kan Muftic reveals how he creates a scene from a film script, and Chris Legaspi helpfully passes on his shadow and light knowledge so you can incorporate it into your art. All in all it's another packed issue, which I sincerely hope you enjoy.

Claire

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



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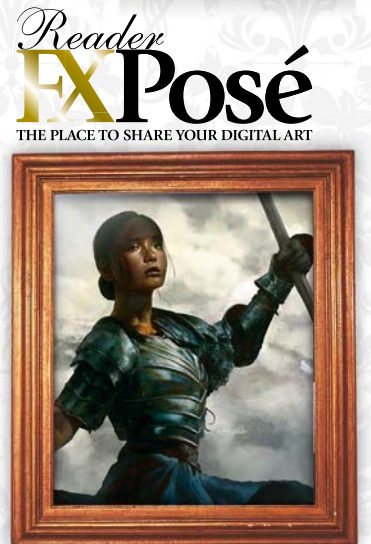
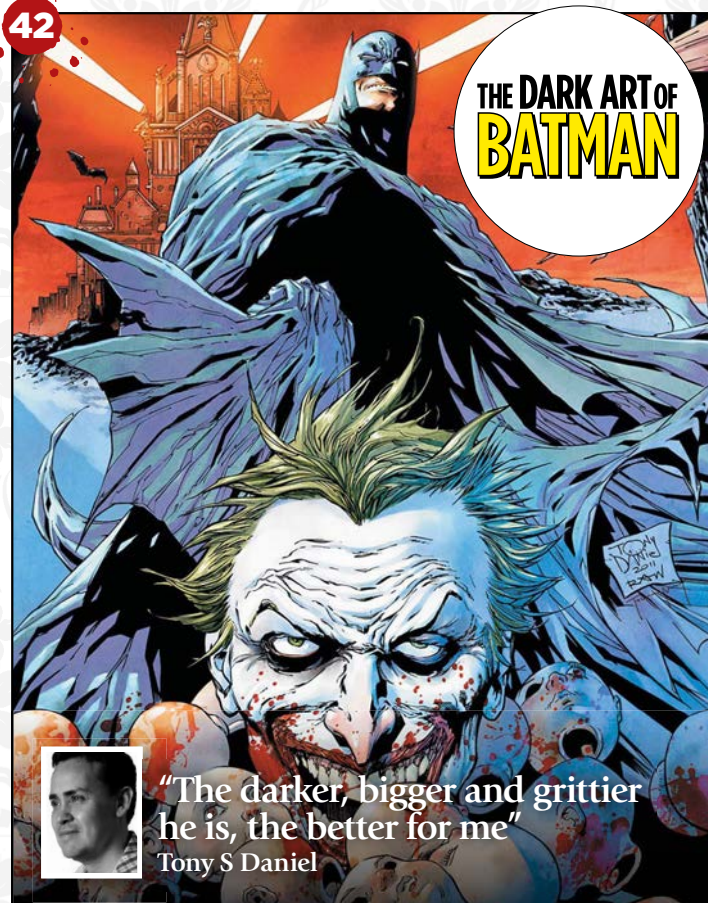
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Add texture and grit to an image

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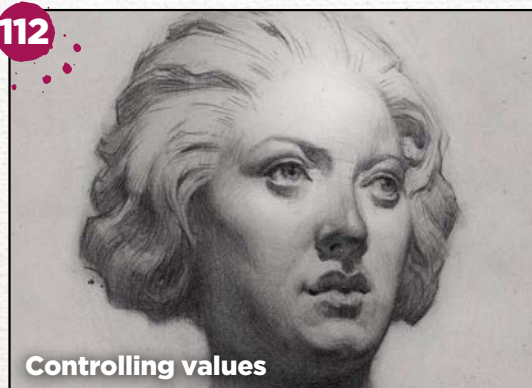


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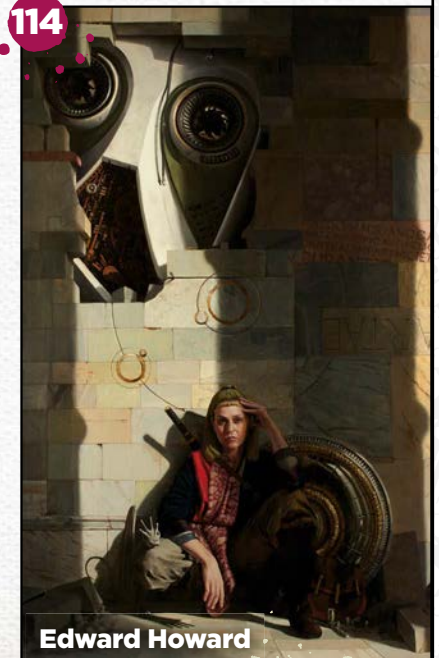
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Edward Howard



ImagineFX Resources

Getting your hands on all of this issue's essential resources is quick and easy. Just go to our dedicated web page at <http://ifxm.ag/goth109am>

OVER 12 HOURS
of workshop and
Q&A videos to
watch and
learn from!

COVER ART VIDEO

Add texture and grit

DC Comics artist Ken Lashley reveals his process as he pits Batman against the many faces of The Joker.



HOW TO GET YOUR FILES

Get your resource files in three simple steps...

- 1 Go to the website**
Type this into your browser's address bar (not the search bar): <http://ifxm.ag/goth109am>
- 2 Find the files you want**
Search through the list of resources to watch or download.
- 3 Download what you need**
You can download all of the files at once, or individually.

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX

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EXCLUSIVE VIDEO TUTORIAL!

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

WORKSHOP VIDEOS



Kan Muftic

Learn how to depict a scene in a story and convey emotions through gestures.
Plus WIPs, final image and brushes



Mukesh Singh

Tips and suggestions for creating visually exciting and dynamic fight scenes.
Plus WIPs, final image and brushes



Devon Dorrity

The process of bringing a sculpture to life – from inspiration to the finished piece.
Plus WIPs and final image



Ben Mauro

Enjoy this clip from Ben's highly informative video tutorial, ZBrush for Concept Artists Vol 2.



Nick Harris

Learn how to use clever visual clues to describe the action in this image.
Plus WIPs and final image



Elena Berezina

Simple skills required to accurately depict the effect of sun-drenched hair.
Plus WIPs and final image



Melanie Maier

Consider new methods to make your character design suit the environment.
Plus WIPs and final image



Paco Rico Torres

The importance of anatomy when creating expressions on your character's faces.
Plus WIPs and final image



Sara Forlenza

Focus on features and pay less attention to backgrounds for your character close-ups.
Plus WIPs and final image

PLUS Videos on techniques for painting twisted metal, how to make your characters stand out, and guiding your viewer around the image, with WIPs and final artwork from many of this month's workshop artists, including Artyom Trakhanov and George Pratt.

11 CUSTOM BRUSHES, INCLUDING...

FLAT_WIDE_SOLID

Sean Andrew Murray's brush enables you to sketch at many different widths.

PENCIL THICK BRUSH

Mukesh Singh uses this versatile brush for most of his colouring.

TEXTURED SQUARE

Kan Muftic created this brush as a handy tool to cover all bases.



Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART



Josu Hernaiz

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Josu grew up on Chiloé Island, located in the southern half of Chile: "There, I was always surrounded by nature and the mythology of the people. It's probably why I'm such a big fan of all things fantasy-related. Although discovering *Magic: The Gathering* at the age of eight also had something to do with it!"

Painting became a realistic proposition for Josu in his early 20s, although acquiring a formal education in the subject never appealed. He instead studied photography and films – and his skills with a stylus soon followed.

1



1 BARON SENGIR "I've always wanted to work with *Magic: The Gathering*, so from time to time I think that redoing old cards would be a good idea. This is my take on Baron Sengir from *Homelands*."

2 TRAUCO "This is the first piece of a series of illustrations based on the mythology of Chiloé. The ugly little dude is the Trauco, who gets women pregnant when he finds them in the forest."

3 LADY OF THE FALLEN "This piece is important to me because it's the one where I finally had an artistic breakthrough, getting closer to the kind of art that I've always wanted to do."

2



ARTIST OF THE MONTH

Congratulations Josu – you've won yourself a copy of *Exposé 11* and *d'artiste: Character Design*! To find out more about these two great books, go to www.ballisticpublishing.com.



ImagineFX June 2014

FXPosé submissions to: fxpose@imaginefx.com

Artist crit

Jason Manley, who launched Massive Black and ConceptArt.org, is impressed...



"The hand gesture and feeling of wind in the drapery are excellent, and the glossy highlights on the chain mail get the light to dance. Great job!"



Alexandrescu Paul

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop, ZBrush



Alexandrescu's first experiences of art were far from positive and stemmed from his parents' decision to "randomly" send him to a local art school. "I didn't like it, but after three or four years, the crazy kid changed and art became everything," he says. "Now, I wouldn't do anything else. I love what I do."

After a year working as a freelance artist, Alexandrescu landed a job at Gameloft. "Freelance is great," he says, "but working in a studio is even better – and I'm learning loads!"

2



1 LANDING STATION "This alien landing station was a cool environment to do – I had Mars in mind when I painted it. The hardest aspect of the creative process was keeping the perspective accurate."

2 WIZARD "The Wizard Queen and her companion are searching for a lost civilisation and magical artefacts. This was a personal illustration and I spent a lot of time bringing my fantasy world to life."

3 DISTANT WORLDS "Another illustration of a landing pad on an alien planet. This environment features floating rocks and cutting-edge technical structures. I was keen to introduce an intense vibe and vivid colours to the composition."



3



1

Marcel Mercado

LOCATION: US

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Focusing on art at high school and a subsequent degree in computer arts formed the basis for Marcel's talents as a digital artist. "I started working on a video game outsource house down in Florida," he says. "I started doing texture work for a lot of AAA games and eventually moved up to being an art director. I left that job after seven years to become a freelance illustrator."

"I'm following my passion of working on fantasy worlds and telling stories. I've been fortunate enough to have clients that understand and feed that passion."

1 SNOW QUEEN "I had in mind a high-key, low-value image. I wanted to play around with different whites, hence the wintry setting and the queen's dress."

2 CITY OF DISCORD "I wanted to create this as if it were a book cover, depicting the moment when the Valkyries arrive to take the fallen heroes away."

3 THE STASH "Every once in a while I like to show a bit of character and story, rather than just fighting or heroic action poses. I also wanted to push my colours with this one."



IMAGINEFX CRIT



"While Marcel's work is action-packed, he always finds a way to lead your eye around the image, enabling you to take in each piece in all its intricacy. I also like his willingness to experiment. Good stuff."

Daniel Vincent,
Art Editor



Benoit Godde

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Gustav Klimt, Egon Schiele, John Singer Sargent and Lucian Freud are among the artists who most inspire art director and concept artist Benoit. "Their work with women and light is inspiring," he says.

His professional experience includes providing visual development for AAA next-gen game titles, films and commercials. Benoit's busy working on an unannounced AAA PS4 title at Quantic Dream in Paris.

"Sci-fi is an attractive subject to me," he says. "From a young age, robots amazed me, starting with the Great Mazinger, Metropolis, Star Wars, Robocop, Terminator and I, Robot. I later discovered two short films called Tetra Vaal and Tempbot from District 9 director Neill Blomkamp. These films really struck a chord with me."

1



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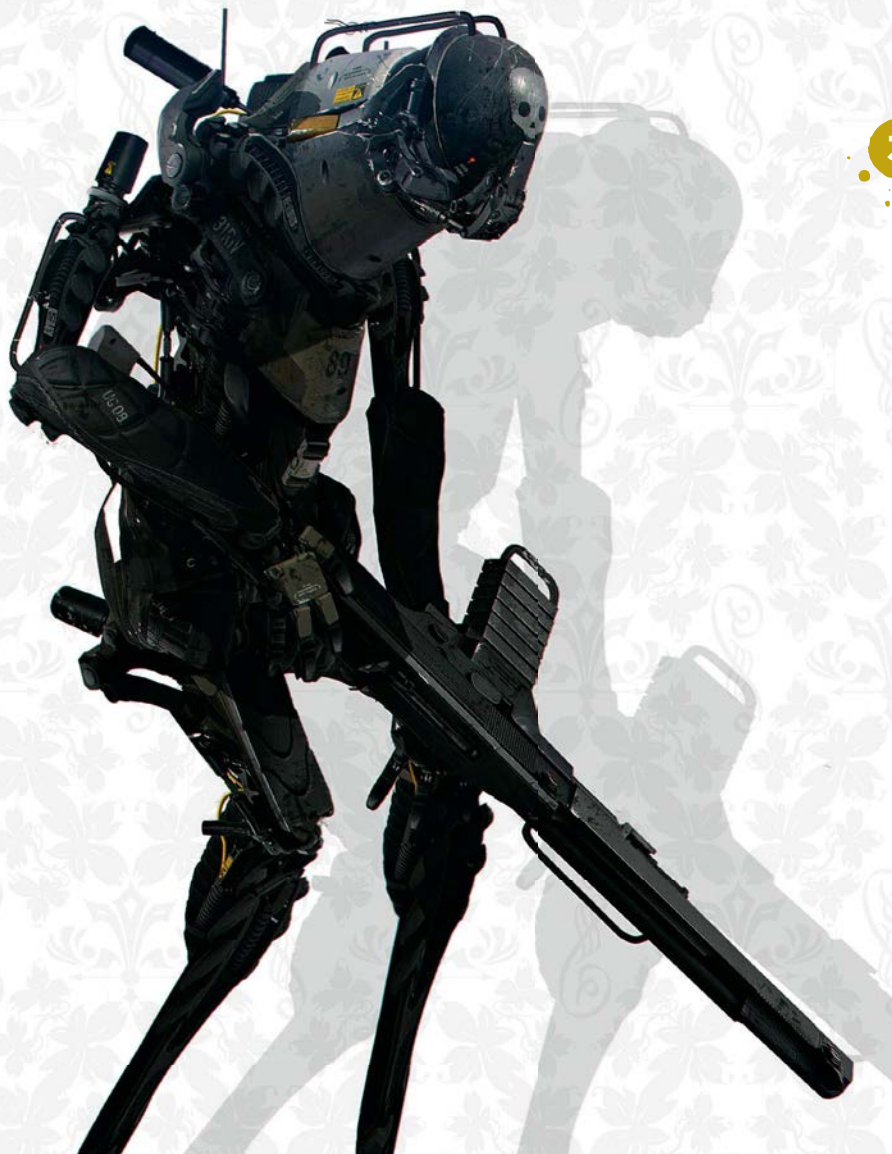
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IMAGINEFX CRIT



"It's interesting to see how a human face manages to soften the look of the menacing military tech designs that Benoit has created. His MM41 scout suit looks particularly Grim Reaperish!"

Cliff Hope,
Operations Editor



1 WRECK "Wrecks, robots, aircraft and spaceships have always been of interest to me."

2 MM45-1 "This is an exoskeleton suit for a Russian scout. I wanted to depict a new kind of suit - one that's composed of metal and rubber."

3 MM41 "This is a scout and one of the first models that I painted this way."

4 MM44.JPG "My idea for this painting was to remove the human element of the MM45 vehicle and create a fully armoured machine."

4



+ Darran Holmes

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Darran began drawing at an early age and was influenced by the covers of the Fighting Fantasy books. In the late 90s he travelled to New Zealand and became a prosthetic artist, working for Weta Workshop on The Lord Of The Rings films.

"During this time I learnt loads from the genius team who work there," says Darran. "I was even allowed to submit several pieces of conceptual art and the team were very encouraging."

In recent years he has worked as a freelance artist, providing images for greeting cards. His ultimate aim is to become a storybook and fantasy artist.

1 CENTAUR GUARD "After scanning in the pencils, I coloured the image up and mixed the colours using my trusty Blur tool in Photoshop."

2 BEAST IN THE STORM "This image started life several years ago as a concept sketch drawn in watercolours and pencil. I scanned the image in, striped out the background and using the Blur tool mixed the pencil colours together. After playing around with the colour levels I painted in a background, again using the Blur tool to create the swirls."

3 CENTAUR HEAD CONCEPT "Part of a collection of concepts I created and sent into Richard Taylor at Weta Workshop, whom I worked for many moons ago."

1

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"What strikes me most here is the colour palette

Darren uses throughout. It adds an extra dimension to his art, making the mythical creatures and otherworldly environments all the more fantastical."

Gary Evans,
Staff Writer



2



3

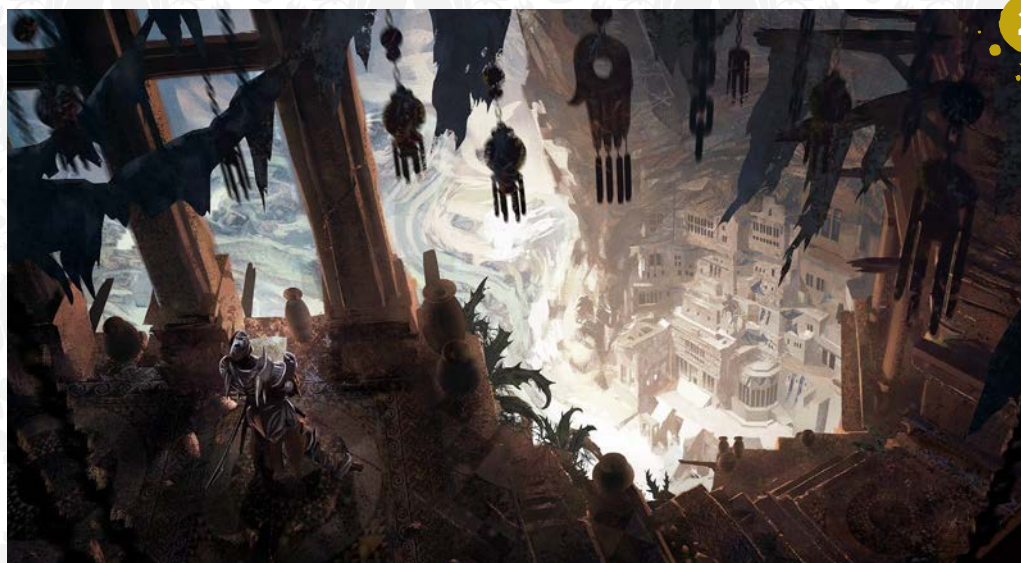


1



©Levitated Toy Factory

2



©Mojo Game Studios

Josh Eiten

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Josh is pursuing two parallel careers: one in visual development and another in communication design, which he's studying at Pittsburgh's Carnegie Mellon University. The artist constructs narratives through drawings, paintings, motion graphics, typography and games. While much of his work to date is fantasy art, he is open to exploring all sorts of genres and styles.

"When it comes to visual development, I'm inspired by the works of Sparth, Hayao Miyazaki, Jaime Jones, Theo Prins, Tom Scholes, Ling Xiang, Raphael Lacoste and Thom Tenery. There are many more."

3



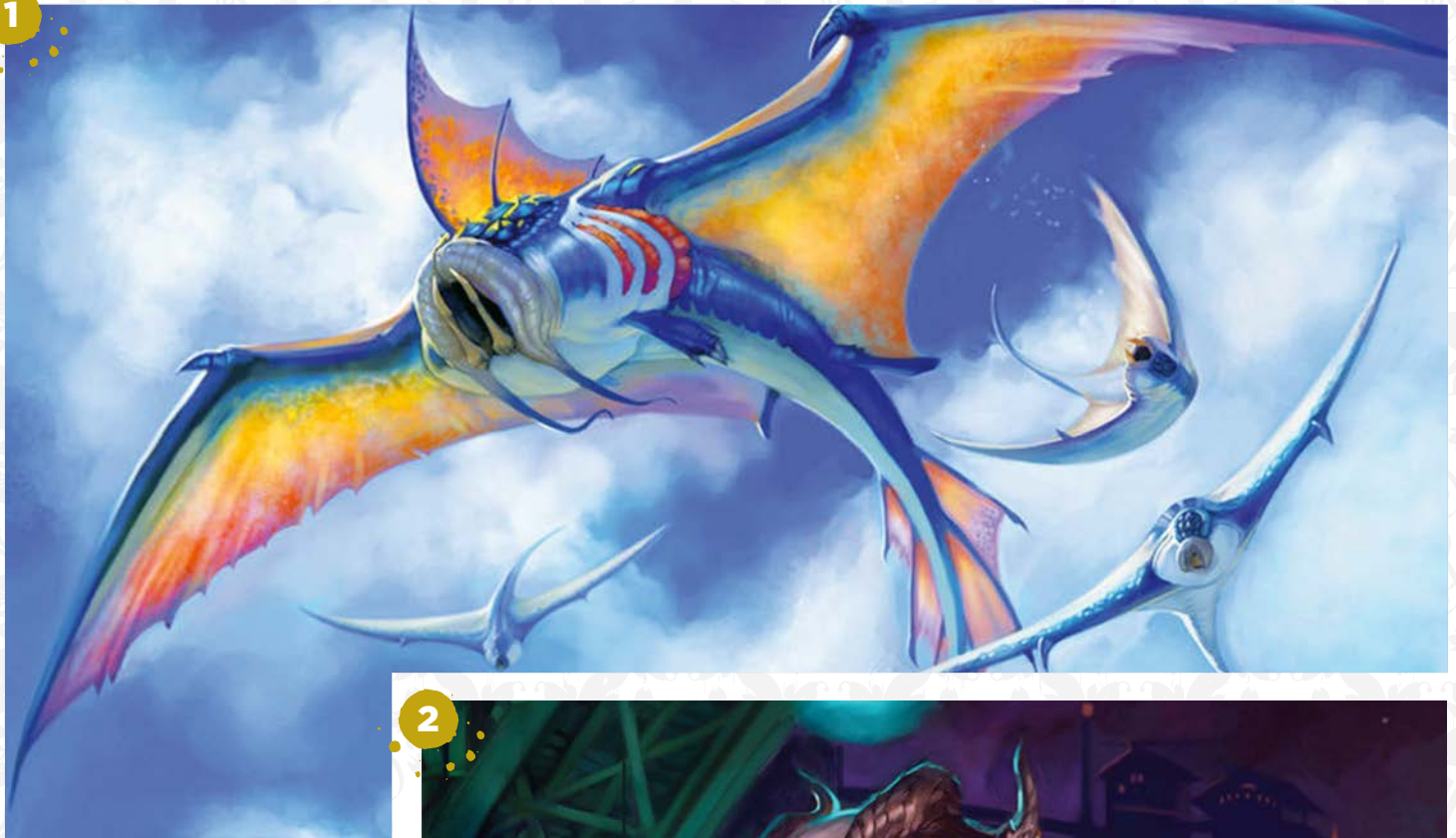
©Mojo Game Studios

1 CUBE WORLD "I did this as the first in a series for a computational design startup, the Levitated Toy Factory. I wanted to capture a sense of awe and discovery while adhering to the theme of computational design (hence the cubes). While painting this, I had fun playing with scale and depth."

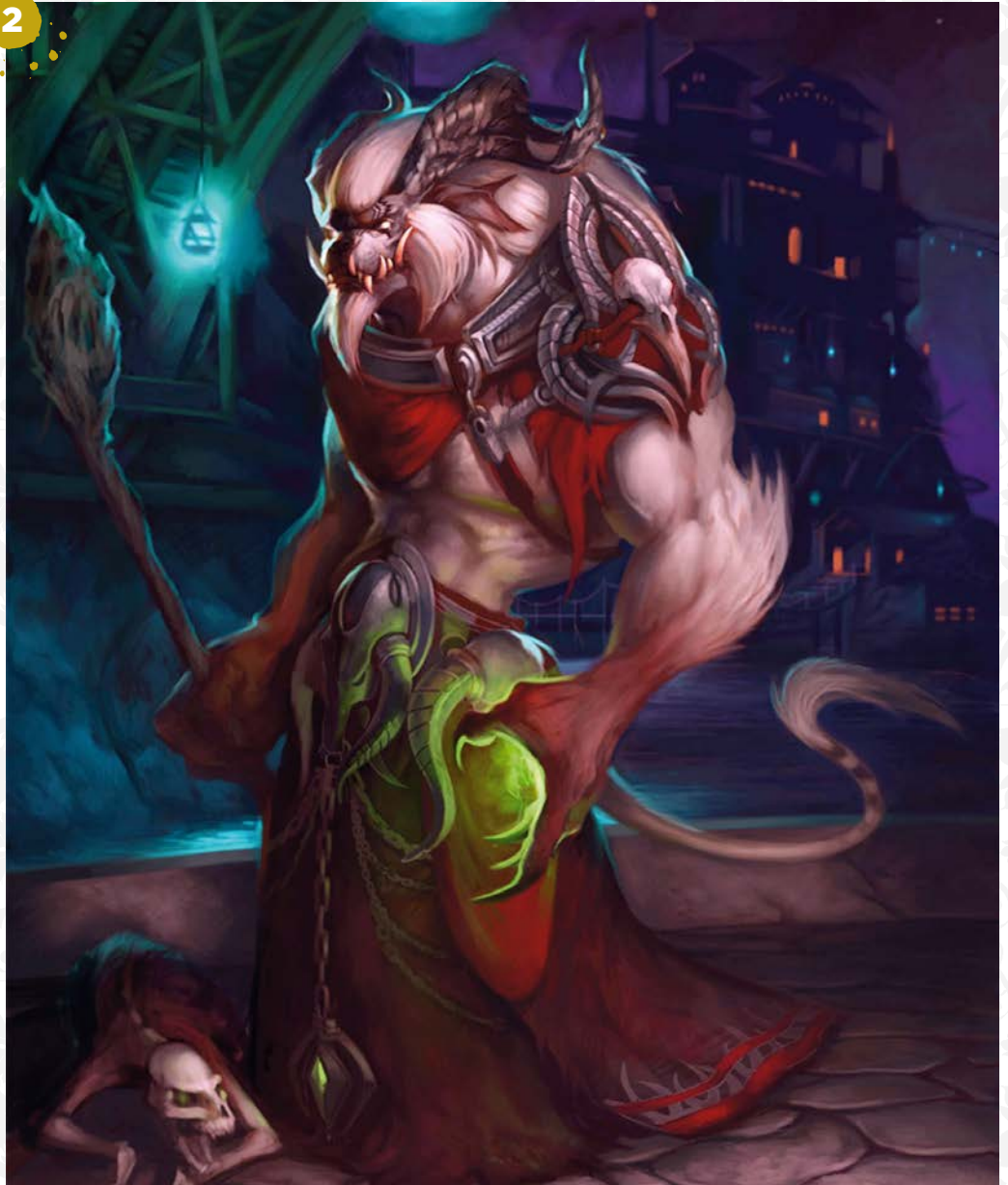
2 THE CITY OF SELEDOA "I painted this for Mojo Game Studios' up-and-coming title, Aderyn's Cradle. The scene is a depiction of a player looking at their map, high above the ruins of an ancient cliff city in one of the four open worlds the game will feature."

3 UPGRADE TIME "This is another scene from Aderyn's Cradle. It's one of many locations where players can upgrade their weapons by performing a ceremony that involves bathing their weapon in a sacred medium - in this case, piping-hot lava."

1



2



Lisa Cunha

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



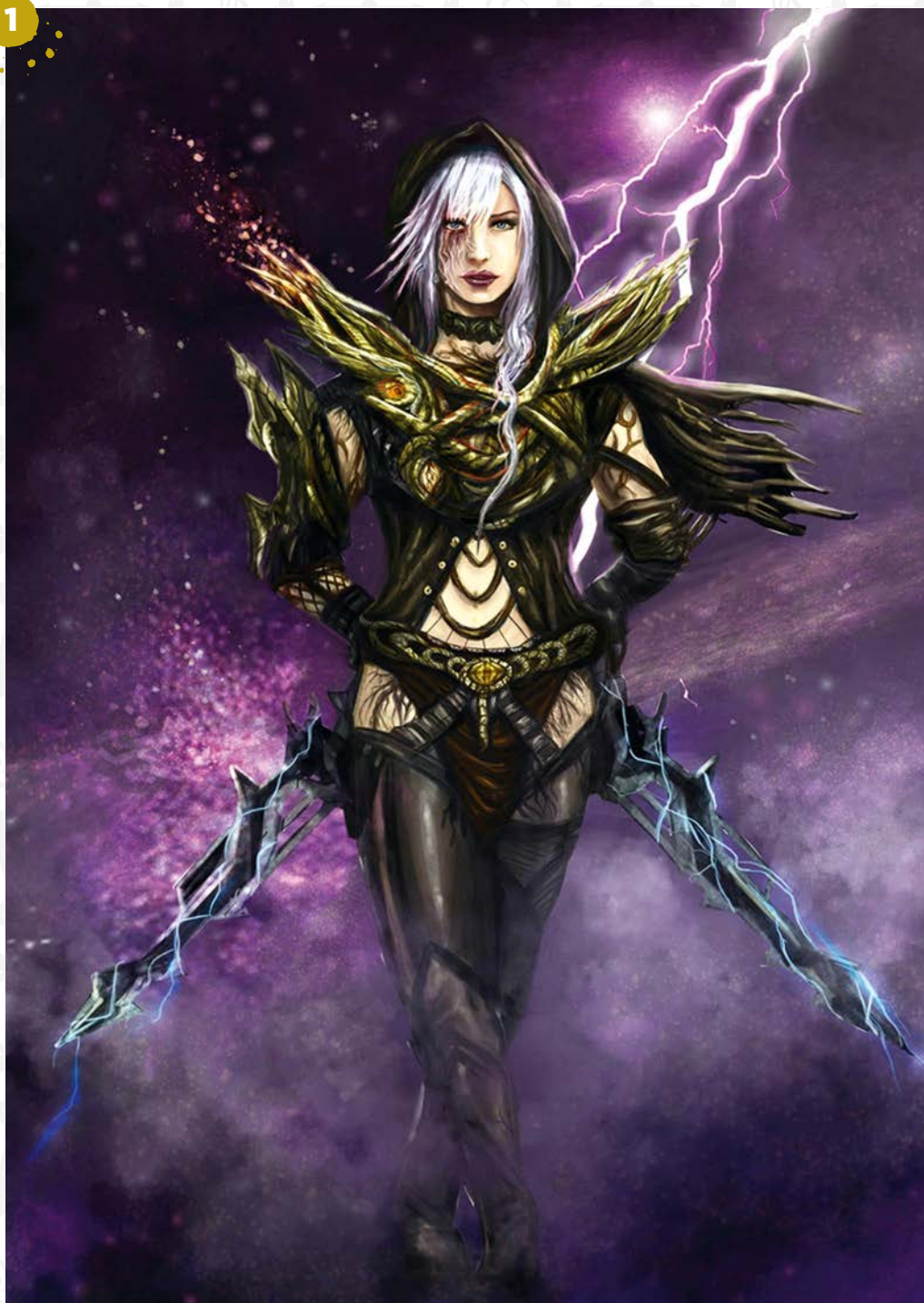
"An MMO fanatic and RPG roleplayer," is how freelance artist Lisa describes herself. "A lot of my personal work is based on collaborative stories and characters I've played over the years. I produce creature design for Stormlight Workshop's Flight Rising project. Drawing critters all day is pretty much my dream job."

Lisa graduated from Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) in 2009 with a degree in illustration, and was inspired by the talent of her fellow students. "Being around such talented folk was a real eye-opener. Seeing them succeed has been an inspiration to keep painting, learning and striving to improve."

1 RHUNI "This was also created for one of CGHub.com's Creature Corner challenges. At the time I was still at odds with my creature designs and worried about making things too creepy-crawly. The outpouring of enthusiasm for my alien creatures was an incredible confidence booster. Eventually, I became a volunteer for CGHub.com, and got the opportunity to run contests of my own. It was a great learning experience."

2 LION'S ARCH "This was fan-art done for ArenaNet's Guild Wars 2, based on the colours and atmosphere of the in-game environment."

1



+ Sunil Kainth

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop, SketchUp



After graduating with a masters degree in Concept Art for Games and Animation, Sunil now hopes to become a concept artist/illustrator.

"I paint every night and at weekends, as my day job is in a school," he says. "I use Photoshop and my trusty Wacom graphics tablet to draw and paint. I've recently started learning 3D modelling and used it as a base for my sci-fi bedroom painting. I have been trying for three years to get my art in FXPosé and I hope this time I'm successful." It's good to finally see you on these pages, Sunil!

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"It's great to see all Sunil's late-night work paying off in the painting Lightning. In his second piece, the story he so carefully constructed seeps through – from the space battle outside to the human narrative inside the med room."

Beren Neale,
Digital Editor

2



1 LIGHTNING "This was done for a competition on deviantART celebrating the release of the new game Lightning Returns. I started off with thumbnails and designed three different characters before settling on this one. I enrolled on a Skillshare class by Charlie Bowater earlier this year, and her tips and techniques have improved my character design. I stayed up all night rendering the figure, but made the deadline!"

2 WHILE YOU WERE SLEEPING "I love sci-fi films, and one of the first concept art books I read was the one for The Revenge of the Sith, which is full of moody, atmospheric art. I modelled this image in SketchUp, then painted it in Photoshop. I wanted to tell a story showing the human sacrifice of war."

ScarletGothica

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



The International School of Comics in Rome provided a valuable source of training for Claudia, more commonly known as

ScarletGothica. After graduation, she went on to gain a masters degree in digital colouring in 2009 and then became a comic colourist for IDW, Marvel and Image. She currently works as a freelance artist for companies such as Editions Ricordi, Polizia di Stato, Ares Film, ALIA, KOF, Ballistic, and as a comic colourist, mostly for US companies.

"My visual research stems from classic fantasy, with gothic and Pre-Raphaelite influences and a hint of steampunk from time to time," she says. "Anatomy - especially female - is the thing I like drawing most. I love playing with composition on each illustration that I create, trying to find new solutions and mixing graphic elements with a more realistic style."

1 OZ "This artwork was commissioned as cover art for Kingdom of Fantasy magazine. I'd been told to do a cover about the Wizard of Oz, so I tried to mix old movie elements and characters with some from the recent prequel, Oz the Great and Powerful."

2 WHY DON'T YOU DO RIGHT "Tribute art for the comic Sacro/Profano, by Mirka Andolfo. Angelina is one of the main characters, a sexy female angel engaged with a male devil, Damiano. Because she's curvy and provocative, I painted her as a modern Jessica Rabbit."

3 MONATISIA "I produced this illustration in collaboration with the Gioconda Project (a not-for-profit art collective). The theme was the famous painting by Leonardo da Vinci and I thought mixing the Mona Lisa with Morticia Addams could be something exciting and new."

SUBMIT YOUR ART TO FXPOSÉ

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

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

Post: (CD or DVD):
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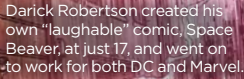


IMAGINEFX CRIT



"While the settings of *Why Don't You Do Right* and *Monatisia* are worlds away from each other, they both depict a female character facing the viewer on their own terms. Their expressions and confident poses speak volumes."

Claire Howlett,
Editor



Self-help From rags to riches by drawing pages: artists and publishers who have succeeded in the indie comics business explain how it's done

"If you're chasing a dollar, you'll be running your whole life," he confides. "Comics have never been more competitive.



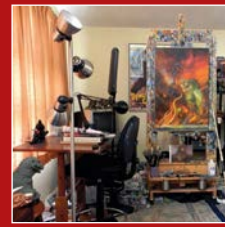
GET SWIPING IN GOTHAM

See how e-publisher Madefire put a spring into Batman's step, adding a new slant to the Arkham Origins experience by using movement and sound. **Page 23**



SINK, SWIM - OR CHARGE!

Stephan Martinière explains how he gave the brand new action movie sequel 300: Rise of an Empire its distinctive and recognisable aesthetic. **Page 25**



MONSTER ARTIST

Bob Eggleton, Hugo Award-winning artist and big Godzilla fan, shows us around his studio, and says why he likes having things he can touch around him. **Page 26**

Darick Robertson and Garth Ennis's creator-owned comic, The Boys, published by DC and later Dynamite Entertainment.



The digital age is a mighty equaliser – the talent pool got a whole lot deeper. But when it's my own idea, my own creation, and it succeeds, I know it's the result of personal hard work and a validation of those original ideas. I'm not riding the coat-tails of a well-established character or publisher."

But where to begin? Darick says it's as simple as sitting down with a pen, a blank page and an idea. "Make it about the story,

“The distinction between the mainstream and the independents is perhaps not as distinct as it once was”

about creating something that's personally fulfilling, so your hours spent creating are enjoyable. A strong sense of storytelling and dramatic lighting will help. As will the ability to draw consistently, with a good knowledge of anatomy, proportion and perspective, and a flair for the dramatic. You're ready for the mainstream once your drawings are on par with your favourite artist."

The distinction between the mainstream and independents is not as distinct as it once was. "What are indie comics, anyway?" Carrie Cuinn recently asked in the Hugo Award-winning blog SF Signal. A simple answer is those not published by DC or Marvel. Carrie offered more precise definitions: mainstream comics are the big boys – not just Marvel and DC, but Image, Vertigo, IDW. Indies produce "work based on individual tastes and originality, not dictated by the will of fans or marketing departments." There are also several



subcategories: alternative, small press, web comics, digital comics, mini-comics... but these definitions are open to interpretation.

GERMINATE THE CONCEPT

Creator-owned comics are those where the artist or writer behind the title retains the rights to it. It's these publications that Scotland's leading independent comic book publisher Black Hearted Press specialises in.

Art director and publisher Sha Nazir says

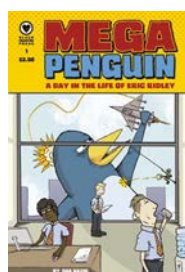


success hinges on simple ideas. That's what he's looking for: a concept expressed clearly and succinctly. "If you can boil your core idea down

to a single line," Sha says, "then you're doing well: a peasant farm boy journeys across the galaxy to rescue a princess; a family is trapped on an island where cloned dinosaurs run amok; billionaire dresses up as giant bat to fight crime because his parents got killed by a mugger."

A sound understanding of the visual language of comics is essential. This, the art director adds, should come naturally... if you're reading enough and observing how artists arrange pages. He also recommends referring to Scott McCloud's book

Mega Penguin, one of Black Hearted Press's signature titles.



INDUSTRY INSIGHT

KIERON GILLEN

The comic expert reveals his tips for devising your own title

What does an indie comic offer that a mainstream one doesn't?

Control. You have a vision. You can actualise your vision, as you intend. The joy of working in comics is that the playing field is relatively equal compared to fields like animation or film, where money is a huge thing. Here's 22 pages. Fill them. Paper, ink, ideas and the inside of your head. It's the most democratic visual storytelling form on Earth.

What are the benefits of creating comics collaboratively?

Collaborating is an interesting one. As a writer, I'd certainly like to encourage all artists to collaborate with writers – ideally me. But in reality that's a question you have to ask yourself: do you want to just tell your own stories? If so, you may still want a writer along if you're not sure of your abilities in various areas; not least the organisation side. In most writer-artist teams I know, the writer takes on a lot of the admin work because, in terms of pure hours, the artist normally puts in much more.

What's the most challenging thing about creating comics?

Artists with enormous experience in creating single images can have a tendency to underestimate the difficulties in creating comics. There's a different language there, and there are things that make you perfect for creating a single image which can actively work against you when creating an effective comic. Luckily, there are a lot of resources on comic creating now – plenty of tutorial or theory-lead things, which I'd encourage you to devour – as well as reverse analysing comics you like, to see exactly how they create those magical effects that leave you all a-quiver.



Kieron is a journalist and comic author. He co-created Phonogram with artist Jamie McKelvie for Image Comics.

<http://gillen.cream.org>

Dynamite Entertainment, publisher of *Legendary*, has "more freedom to push the envelope" than either DC or Marvel.



➤ Understanding Comics. If you're not a confident writer, collaborate with someone who is. But it's discipline that Sha values above all else. "Be sure when you start a project that you'll be able to see it through to the end. It's easy enough to get through the first few pages on the high of starting a new creative venture, but weeks down the line when time is dragging and there are still pages and pages to do, it can be harder to push yourself on. Forward planning can save a lot of heartache later."

It's at this point where a good editor who believes in your work can help. When DC stopped publishing Darick's *The Boys*, Dynamite Entertainment picked it up and published it for a further five years.

"While we exercise good judgment on content," senior editor Joseph Rybandt says,



"we have more freedom to push the envelope and explore the medium to its fullest potential. But understand that you'll be expected to produce

on a consistent schedule, week in, week out."

Joseph says starting from the ground up is difficult, which is why he advises gaining experience on an existing property before going it alone. This presents a paradox: to have your work published, you often need to have previously published work.

DO IT YOURSELF

Alternatively, you could circumvent publishers altogether, retain total creative freedom and self-publish your comic. That's what Mikael Bergkvist did. The Swede has

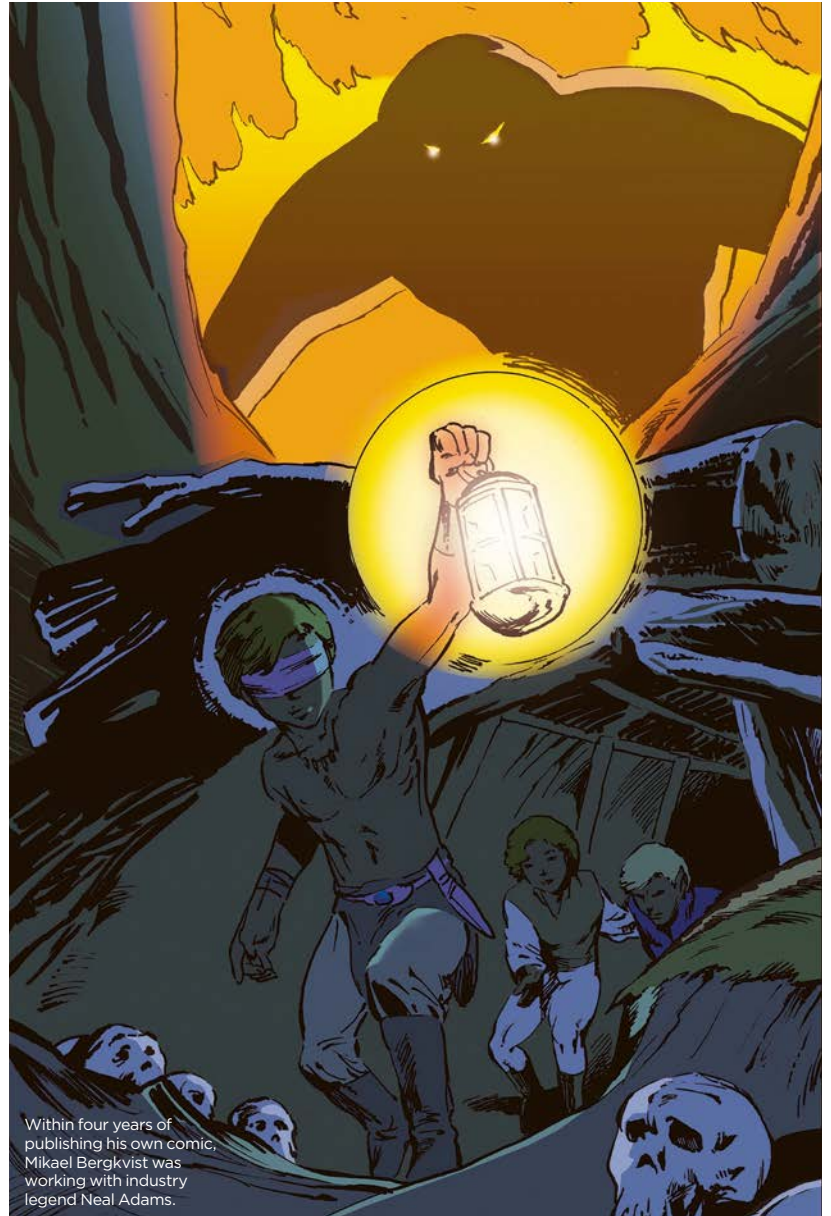
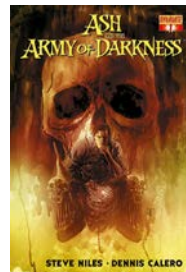


been making comics for just four years. In that time, he's sold the rights to his first creation, earned a deal with an American publisher and gone

into business with iconic artist Neal Adams.

The former web developer came up with character Agent Marc Saunders in 2010. He wrote the story, did the pencil and ink work, the lettering and the layout for each of the 108-page issues he sent to the printers. He

Based in the US, Dynamite Entertainment publishes *The Boys*, *The Shadow* and *Bad Ass*.



Within four years of publishing his own comic, Mikael Bergkvist was working with industry legend Neal Adams.

“If you want a regular pay cheque, go to an established company. Do what they tell you to do. Get paid”

published four stories a year, each a single concluded narrative, before Swedish publisher Serieplaneten snapped up the rights. He went on to work for Ardden Entertainment, currently at concept publishing house Deadline, of which Neal Adams is co-owner.

The artist says creating your own comic acts as a good portfolio. It shows you how your art works on the page. It'll also serve you well when meeting an art director or editor in person. It's something physical to take and talk over at conventions and conferences. Whether to act on their advances is up to you.

"It really boils down to this," Mikael says. "If you want a regular pay cheque, go to an established company. Do what they tell you to do. Get paid. You will get that pay cheque, but that's all you'll get."

Starting your own comic, he says, is like starting your own small business: it's liberating to be your own boss, but by no means financially stable. But it's possible to make a success of it, as Mikael proves.

"Reality catches up with you real quick," he says. "Do breakdowns, do covers, just do. Everything is steps. And check your market; be a bit cynical and crass about that. I was depressed and broke when I created my comic. I had nothing. I was as poor as one can be without dying. I created the comic on used A4 copy paper, using old markers, inking with worn-out Pilot Fineliner pens. Things moved fast. From nothing – just an idea, creativity and some bad materials – came a life. Desperation feeds innovation, and innovation can create a career." ●

Making comics move

Motion graphics See how e-publisher Madefire put a spring into Batman's step, adding a new slant to the Arkham Origins experience

Madefire was founded with the aim of bringing about a "new storytelling era." It's since brought to life Superman, Hellboy, Star Trek and Transformers as motion books.

Its latest project stems from the best-selling Batman: Arkham Origins, and is a new tale in an all-new format, set just before the storyline in the video game begins.

"We kept testing," co-founder Liam Sharp says, "and arrived at the conclusion that any



motion should generally be under two seconds. Then it should settle and let you read the words and study the art.

And no voiceover either, as that would dictate the pace. Everyone reads at different paces. This is really important."

With art by Christian Duce, it's available for iPhone and iPad, the motion book is full of memorable scenes, some of which are interactive – Batman's bloody attempts at amateur dentistry – extracting teeth and information from his patient, being one.

Editor Ben Abernathy picks his favourite:



"Batman's staking out a poker game hosted by Detective Flass," Ben says. "A young detective named James Gordon crashes the game.

It's nicely executed, written well, has great art, perfect motion-book pacing and some amazing music. It's tense and fun to finally see the iconic Gordon."

Find out more and download Batman: Arkham Origins at www.madefire.com.

Madefire's motion book concept adds action and music to a comic scene – but voiceovers are a no-no.



Movement is kept to a minimum in the Madefire motion books, so as not to overwhelm the story.



FRESH PAINT

Your art news that's grabbed our attention



Sergio Lopez
(@Mainloop)

“Started this painting from an old plein air study today and already got really far on it.”

<http://ifxm.ag/fresh-sergio>



Brian Taylor
(@CandykillerNews)

“Random digital sketch and colour study.”

<http://ifxm.ag/fresh-brian>



George Jimenez
(@GeorgeWJM)

“Longest master study so far. Lots of hands and subtle things going on. Still many errors.”

<http://ifxm.ag/fresh-jimenez>



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

“His fists look like they would smash your face in with one punch. He doesn’t need super powers in order to hurt you”

Batman artist Jason Fabok on why he loves Frank Miller’s tough guy caped crusader... Page 42

Noah’s art

High-water mark How Niko Henrichon brought Aronofsky’s Noah to life

Noah is the comic adaptation of an early script written by Darren Aronofsky and Ari Handel for their movie of the same name.

When work began more than four years ago, the artist Niko Henrichon was unsure if



the movie would ever be made. So he decided to put his own stamp on the story.

“Comics and movies being two different means of

expression,” Niko says, “we had to adapt the script a little bit, to make the story fit the comic book format.”

The Canadian comic book artist has previously worked on titles including New X-Men, Sandman and Spider-Man, and contributes covers for DC and Marvel staples such as Fantastic Four and X-Men.

Noah presented its own very specific art challenges, but the end products make for interesting reading, especially when



The graphic novel of Noah may be based on an early draft of the movie’s script, but the story was modified to fit in with the comic book idiom.

compared to the film. “There are some really hard scenes in there. It’s compelling for those really into storytelling. Noah is out in cinemas now, and those who want to delve a little deeper into movie making will find the graphic novel very interesting. Specifically, how a script can evolve in two different projects, with similarities and differences.”

Visit www.nikohenrichon.com to see more of Niko’s work. Noah, the graphic novel and movie, are out now.

Stephan portrays Athenian hero Themistocles as he charges the Persian warriors on a horse, among the ropes and mayhem of the raging sea battle.

The art of an Empire

Stormy seas Stephan Martinière explains how he gave *300: Rise of an Empire* its distinctive aesthetic

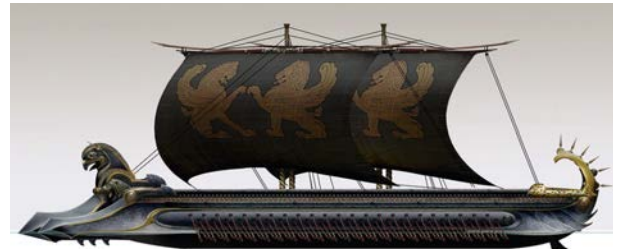


When Stephan Martinière was asked to come up with concepts for the new movie *300: Rise of an Empire*, he immediately had a clear vision of how he thought the sequel should look and feel.

"Conceptually," Stephan says, "it was important to keep a monochromatic feel. I was very interested in exploring a colour palette that mixed black, dark grey and greens to bring a stormy and ominous feel

to the scenes. Storm, the battle scene painting, is a good example."

The Dallas-based creative is a 25-year veteran of the entertainment industry, having worked for Disney, DreamWorks and Universal on projects such as *TRON: Legacy*, *Star Trek* and *Star Wars: Episode II and III*, picking up a string of art's top awards along the way. Stephan was approached by long-term collaborator and *Rise of an Empire* production designer Patrick Tatopoulos to join the project.



Stephan wanted to combine an historically believable Persian ship, with fantasy elements.

This battle scene, set in a raging storm, was one of the key moments in the movie. Stephan created it with a stormy, muted colour palette.

"I was asked to do two things: establish the design of the Persian fleet - including the generic ships and Artemisia's more elaborate one; and to paint key scenes bringing the fleet into context and defining a mood, details, textures and colours for other parts of the ships, such as the deck and Artemisia's quarters."

To see more great concept work from Stephan's time on the film, visit www.martiniere.com. *300: Rise of an Empire* is out on DVD and Blu-ray in June.





deviantART

+deviantWATCH

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



365-DaysOfDoodles

<http://ifxm.ag/dev-sketch365>

Sketch 75, How to Train Your Dragon, is part of an attempt by the artist 365-DaysOfDoodles to put pen to paper every single day in 2014. So far Toothless takes centre stage in this deft piece of fan art. It's definitely worth spending some time clicking through this gallery.



Eddy Shinjuku

<http://ifxm.ag/dev-shinjuku>

This dynamic work, which took 10 hours to create, comes with the answer to the question, "Why are the bullets intact?" Eddy answers: "These aren't ejected bullet casings to begin with - she just does the cool-guy-walks-away-and-doesn't-look-back-at-explosions' thing." Of course.



Wang Ling

<http://ifxm.ag/dev-wlop>

Chinese artist Wang Ling has a gallery full of moody, narrative-led pieces like this one, each rendered with an eye for details and soft, cold colours. Light and Darkness attracted hundreds of comments within hours of posting - debating everything from who's who, to what the necklace symbolises.

My drawing table. I tend to work flat when drawing or working with watercolours or markers, and I work upright at the easel with oils and acrylics. I also have a TV to watch old sci-fi films on.

My working paint area is an old cabinet repurposed. There's no method to my madness - I just find colours that work. Yes, that's a snooker cue I use as a maulstick. Works a charm.



Brushes galore. There are art materials, sketches and canvases everywhere you look. I'm always thinking about a million things at any one time.

The painting is for a cover of a book coming out called The Baen Big Book of Monsters, an anthology about giant monsters. Dream job.

Bob Eggleton

Keeping it real The nine-time Hugo Award-winning artist on why he prefers things he can touch, things he can feel



In 2009, my mother passed away very suddenly and I inherited her house. Rather than selling it for a low price in a bad housing market, I turned it into a studio - one that functioned not just as an art studio, but also with a kitchen and other rooms, so that I'm able to sleep over when working late on a project.

I also have a shipping area and a photography area downstairs. My wife and I had to learn to photograph our own work, when art photographers folded up business.

I've been a professional artist for over 30 years, winning numerous awards, including the Hugo Award nine times. I work traditionally and have done so throughout my career. I've stayed so busy that doing

Artist news, software & events

Bookcases: there are never enough. There are always new books needing cases I don't have (yet).



Books outgrow bookcases in my world, so they stack up – books about movies and some classic fiction books, usually HP Lovecraft, Jules Verne and others. But the art books always occupy the lion's share of things.



On the drawing table, books recently used for inspiration are on view, as is a sketch of something I'm currently working up.

a digital learning curve is something I've simply not had time for. That said, we own something like six computers - mostly for email and processing photographed art via Photoshop, to send to clients fully colour-balanced.

I stand when I work, usually at an easel. You see it in the centre of this room, which has northern lighting exposure. Standing is better for you, generally speaking.

The best thing about separating where I work from where I live is that I feel like I go to the 'office' on a nine-to-five basis.

During that time, I get things done, which means that I eat and sleep normal hours, unless I'm super busy.

The pictures show the main studio. My wife's also in the same room, off to the extreme right. Outside is a completely unsuspecting bucolic neighbourhood. Inside, on canvas, I create monsters and destroy worlds.

Bob Eggleton is one of the most decorated artists of his generation, and even has an asteroid named after him. Go and take a look at his work at www.bobeggleton.com.



I listen to music and even watch movies when working. I own something like 4,000 CDs and DVDs. I'm old school. I like physical things. Some of them can be seen here - and of course, toys that inspire me on a daily basis.

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART

ImagineFX Forum

Winners

Image of the month

Watery grave What do you get if you take a scene of a long-abandoned city and place it underwater? The winner of this month's Forum challenge, of course!



WIN PRIZES!

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



Wayne O Connor has been trying to brush up on his environmental pieces, which is why the theme of Ruined City appealed to him so much. "I was aiming for a kind of calm, serene setting," he says, "so losing the submersible, which was part of the initial plan, was the only major change. It felt like a distraction."

In the end he decided to let the ruins, which he drew first, tell the story. The water and fish were worked in later. But Wayne, ever the perfectionist, thinks the piece could still be better.

"The only part I'm not totally happy about is the fish shoal. The idea is good, but my execution a little lacking. I'll probably readdress that in the future. It was a fun challenge, and the feedback I've received from fellow forum users was invaluable for the final touches."

MYFX TITLE: Ruined City

WINNER: Wayne O Connor (DoctorDark)

GALLERY: <http://ifxm.ag/doctor-dark>

ALL ENTRIES: <http://ifxm.ag/ruinedcity>

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"I'm loving this. It's neatly painted and has that genuine ancient ruins feel. A clear winner, for me"

Charlotte Ahlgren (Voluspa)



From the outset, Wayne – aka DoctorDark – aimed for a "calm, serene" image, developing nicely here.

Looking to sharpen his environment skills, Wayne jumped at the chance to take on this challenge.



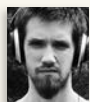
Here's Wayne O Connor's winning entry for the theme of Ruined City, for which he's received positive feedback from fellow forum members.

Property of
Wayne O Connor
2014

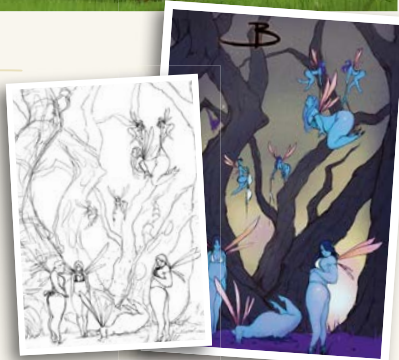
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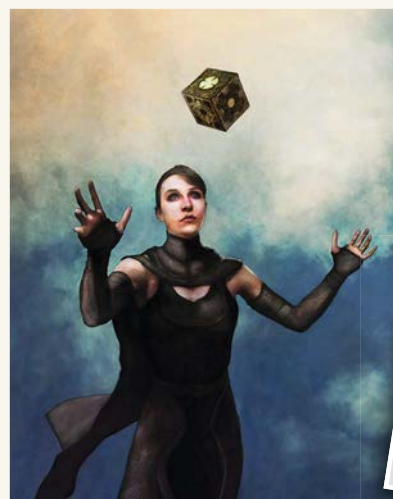
MYFX TITLE: Booty-full!
WINNER: Chris Kapp (Wreckluse)
GALLERY: <http://ifxm.ag/wreckluse>
ALL ENTRIES: <http://ifxm.ag/booty-full>



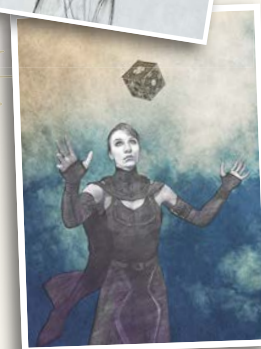
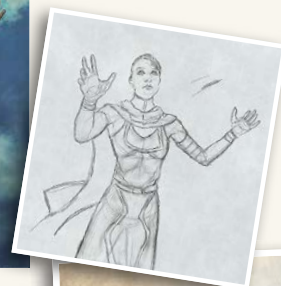
"When I first read the topic of the challenge I immediately thought of Mitch Byrd's work. His plus-size women are fantastic. He's long been a favourite artist of mine and was certainly an inspiration in the making of this piece. I had been working on a sculpture of a pair of little fairies trying to lug a humongous apple back to their home prior to the challenge, and the idea for this piece just kind of popped into my head. I like to make people laugh as much as I like to paint, so when I have the chance to combine the two, I can't pass it up."



This very unique theme brought out Chris Kapp's creative side, inspired by the art of one of his favourite artists, Mitch Byrd.



Antonio Fernandez, one of two winners of the Eternity theme, with his "surreal" entry.



MYFX TITLE: Eternity
WINNER: Antonio Fernandez (HansNomad)
GALLERY: <http://ifxm.ag/hansnomad>
ALL ENTRIES: <http://ifxm.ag/eternity2>



Initially, Antonio Fernandez, found Eternity a difficult concept to visualise. "My first attempt," he says, "was to include as many eternity symbols as I could manage. Then I tried to give it a sci-fi spin, but then dropped that concept as well." Eventually, Antonio decided on a "clean, simple and surreal" image - giving a nod to René Magritte and Clive Barker.



MYFX TITLE: Eternity
WINNER: Cassandre Bolan (Cassandre Bolan)
GALLERY: <http://ifxm.ag/casbolan>
ALL ENTRIES: <http://ifxm.ag/eternity2>



"For this piece," Cassandre says, "I wanted to combine the ethereal mood of Jeff Simpson's portraits with some classic eternity symbols." The Dubai-based artist's multi-layered piece symbolises the "evanescence of life," something that "simultaneously terrifies and fascinates" her protagonist.

Cassandre Bolan shares the spoil in this contest, with her piece symbolising the "evanescence of life".

Letters

YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS



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



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www.facebook.com/imaginefx

Illustrator required

I would love to see a reoccurring section devoted to Illustrator. I use Illustrator as much as I use Photoshop. I start all my illustrations by hand so that I can feel the life of my characters flow from the pencil. Once I've sketched out the details I scan everything into Illustrator so that I can build it digitally to achieve a very precise and crisp line. Then I export it all into Photoshop and do all my rendering. I would say that at least half of my time is spent in Illustrator, and because of that, I would love to see tutorials, tips, and suggestions for that program.

Michael J Cole, US

Claire replies Michael, your request is duly noted. It would have been good to know if you had a particular Illustrator artist in mind to share their techniques. Do any readers have an artist that they'd like us to approach for a workshop? Let us know.

Taken the shine off

In the recent pin-up issue (#105), there was a Q&A on shiny latex on page 39 that didn't go into enough depth for me. I've tried for ages to achieve that look, both on and off the computer, with no real success, so I wondered if it was possible to do a video showing how different artists manage it. What paper, board, brush, paint, ink, program, and how they choose light source, direction and so on. I suggest more than one artist because in the same issue you can see Sorayama's shiny is different to Serge Birault's, and Miss Mosh (page 52), Pink Amazon (page 55) and Lady Dynamite (page 77) are all shiny but different. It would be so good to have something to refer to when I'm trying for that shiny look.

Chris Gray, via email

Claire replies You're right Chris, each artist will have a different way to create that shiny effect, and it would seem that the tips we



Reader Michael J Cole has great success creating images like this in Illustrator, and would like a regular section in IFX devoted to the program.



DID YOU MISS ISSUE 108?

See page 55 for details on how to get hold of a copy.



The advice of Gotti Montes in issue 105 on how to paint shiny latex didn't quite work for reader Chris Gray.

provided in 105 were not for the shiny effect that you were after. We'll see if we can get another artist to show how they do it in another issue soon.

Download bundle

Because I love the magazine so much I want to submit this simple idea, which I hope might help improve it slightly. I loved the old disc of assets and miss this form of delivery, but rather than gripe about the new method I'd like to help improve it. My issue is the work needed to download it. Hours of videos and tutorials are split over a dozen or so links that, for a guy stuck with terrible internet, takes ages to manually download and save every link. I don't believe fixing this issue would require any work at all. All you'd need to do is to include one download link at the top of the page labelled All Assets for ImagineFX of monthX/yearY. And that link would deliver just one compressed file with all the download material in one organised folder. Don't most of the people who use the service download every file anyway?

Guðbrandur Magnússon, via email

Claire replies Hello Guðbrandur. Good idea. We will add a 'download all' option for readers who want to download everything at once. It will be a large file size, though, so we will still provide the downloads separately so that readers can pick and choose the files that they want too.

Fist bump to IFX

"I wonder what Claire has for me this time?" That's what I ask myself every time I'm off to pick up the latest issue of ImagineFX. And to find you're doing a pin-up issue and that you're featuring my all-time favourite pin-up artist, Sorayama, I knew I was in for a treat. A mega fist bump goes out to Serge Birault for some great questions! And to Loopydave for a killer cover page!

The magazine is my absolute favourite and I treat each one as a reference guide for future works placed ever so neatly on my shelf. Thank you to all the people involved in the best resource mag ever!

Michael S Bartosiewicz, via email

Claire replies I'll pass on the fist bump to Serge, Michael. I'm sure he'll appreciate it.



Our star letter writer wins a dA Premium Membership!

- Browse more content more quickly
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- Receive exclusive discounts & offers
- And more!

On the up!

I wanted to thank you. I applied to art school in the UK and although I was accepted, I couldn't go. It was too expensive and the tutor who interviewed me shocked me. My style of work back then was mostly manga-based, and although I was told I was "clearly very handy with a pencil," I was also informed that "manga isn't accepted here as a form of art," and they "see this sort of work a lot and it is such a shame". I was more than a little annoyed. Not only were they obviously wrong, they'd insulted something I've loved since I saw my first manga book in 1996!

A few days later my fiancé spotted your special manga and anatomy issues, and I set to improving myself with your help. My art has gone from simple and lifeless to somewhere where I think this could end up being a living for me. I could see the improvement every few pieces of work and I couldn't have done it without all of you. I'm also pleased to say that my 11-month-old daughter is already loving IFX. I'm sure she'll be a subscriber when she's older!

Nicola, via email

Claire replies Nicola, it's lovely to hear that we have helped you get back on track with your art, but it really isn't all down to us! It's your perseverance to improve and to continue creating that has paid off. We can't take the credit for that. By the way, my daughter (22 months) is loving drawing, too. Maybe they'll become future cover art stars?



We may have given Nicola some pointers, but her art is entirely down to her own hard work!

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Artist Q&A

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The FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX panel

Paco Rico Torres



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

www.pacorico.blogspot.co.uk

Melanie Maier



Melanie is a freelance artist with a strong interest for character designs and illustrations. Her clients include Applibot, Volta and Ulisses.

www.melaniemaier.de

Nick Harris



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

www.nickillus.com

Mark Molnar



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

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Sara Forlenza



Sara is a freelance illustrator living in Italy, where she works on book covers, digital card products and role-playing games.

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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

Elena Berezina



Elena, also known as sharandula, lives in Russia in the southern city of Voronezh and illustrates for the video games industry.

www.sharandula.deviantart.com

Question

Can you help me draw facial expressions for a character who has a skull-like face?

Michael Jaramillo, US

Answer

Paco replies



Humans interpret different facial configurations as specific messages. For example, when the levator anguli oris (caninus muscle) contracts, raising the upper lip and making the fangs visible, it's sending a message of anger. When the corrugator supercilii contracts, it raises the inner parts of the brows to express sadness.

This applies to every human face, including a skull-like face. The main difference is how the skin over the muscles and bones of the head react to these complex muscular movements. When there's little or no fat under the skin, the bones become more visible, as do the muscles and tendons. The eyes appear sunken and the veins more prominent. The expression wrinkles are still there, but they're smaller and not as deep.

I'd advise studying the expressive values of the face's anatomy, either using online sources or reference books. This will enable you to paint the expressions accurately. If you also analyse photos of thin and/or older people then you'll gain an understanding of how different skins react to certain expressions, and which bones and muscles are the most prominent. Do this and your task will become much easier.



Painting expressions on a skull-like face is easy if you know the shape of the skull and which muscles are responsible for specific expressions.

Artist's secret

ANATOMY IS IMPORTANT



Learning anatomy is one of the most important things that you can do if you want to paint characters. That doesn't mean painting characters who are completely anatomically accurate, but knowing what's going on under the skin will help you significantly in your artistic endeavours.



First sketch the head with a neutral gaze, then add a suitable expression.

Step-by-step: Paint a range of facial expressions



1 The zygomaticus minor muscle curves the mouth downwards and the corrugator supercilii pushes the inner parts of the brows upwards, giving to the face a sad look. In a normal face this would cause deep skin folds on the sides of the mouth, but in a skull-like face, I minimise them. Less fat under the skin results in smaller folds.



2 The procerus muscle lowers the inner part of the brows. Combined with the caninus muscle and triangularis muscle, which raises the inner part of the lips, it also helps to flare the nostrils. This creates a look of anger. The foldings on the mouth and brows are inevitable, but vertical foldings on the lips can enhance the thin look.



3 The zygomaticus major muscle raises the edges of the mouth, creating a cheerful expression. The occipitofrontalis muscle raises the brows and the orbicularis oculi muscle lifts the lower lids. I paint some horizontal skin folds over the brows, and make some muscles more visible under the skin to make him look thinner.

Question

How can I make my elf character fit in with her environment?

Jessica Ballston, England



When painting an elf, always make sure to show the ears, even if headgear would make better sense!



Inspire yourself by looking at fashion collections or your favourite fantasy art. Think about interesting shapes and patterns.



Answer

Melanie replies



Start by considering the environment you want to depict. For my character design, I chose to move away from the typical forest elf theme and draw an elf who lives in a snowy environment.

Then I research existing cultures and tribes who living in a similar environment to the fantasy character I want to picture, such as the North American Inuit. I gather references for clothing, weaponry and other relevant details, then analyse how the tribes use natural resources such as fur, leather and bones.

The next step is to sketch a typical and dynamic gesture that will fit the environment you want to put your character in. Make sure that you don't copy your reference sources wholesale.

During the painting process, I consider suitable lighting schemes and how the environment and the profession of the

characters might affect the colours of her design. I use bluish colours to indicate the cold temperatures, and fair colours to merge the character with the background because I imagine that she's a hunter. Then I make a tight drawing to check if my idea of the design works, before adding colours.

Artist's secret

BUILD YOUR OWN CULTURE

Develop a comprehensive reference library on your computer and read up on history, archaeology and cultures to widen your overall knowledge base. It will help you create authentic designs and to come up with new ideas more quickly.

Question

My close-ups seem to lose the feel of my subject. Any ideas?

Aby Abdul-Muid, United Arab Emirates

Answer

Sara replies



To set the picture in the best way I help myself with diagonals and medians. Here, my evil demon's facial expression should be consistent with a malignant personality. So I paint him with furrowed brow, nose curled and clenched teeth. At this point, I proceed with the colours. Because cool colours appear more distant, I choose a blue-greyish colour for the background, and use a warmer colour for the skin of the character to make it stand out and bring it up to the viewer's eyes.

To focus attention on the character I add more details on the face and leave other areas in the picture less defined. I choose a direct cold lighting with very strong shadows to better define the shape of the character, and introduce vibrancy with the contrast between light and shadow. I focus the brightest point near the eyebrows, cheekbone and nose. Finally, I choose red as the eye colour, to emphasise the evil features of the character.



To add liveliness and dynamism I choose a top-down view, and I make the eyes coincide with the centre of the image, to focus attention on that point.



I add a warm light from below, and some sparks as a final touch, suggesting the presence of fire that also gives movement to the portrait.

Question

Can you offer some tips on painting twisted metal?

Barnaby Dobson, Isle of Man



Using a deep shadow to disguise the gore also enables me to accentuate the glints of light on torn metal, making the scene more dramatic.

Answer

Nick replies



For me, the trick is deciding what type of metal you plan to depict and just how it has been damaged. It can be a good idea to have intact metal elements in the composition, to help inform the viewer. Most of us aren't used to seeing mangled metal in everyday life, so it has to be recognisable for what it is.

Furthermore, metal behaves differently under stress, depending on how it has

been prepared. For instance, cast iron can be brittle, and as a result this might be more likely to shatter than tear. How thick is the metal? What shape did it take originally? All these factors should affect your mangled metal's look. Thinner, sheet metal tears with jagged, sharp edges that may pick up the light. It may dent with sharp creases that also catch the light. Think of how the light in your composition falls on your example.

Question

What's a simple way of depicting sun-drenched hair?

Mark Tillman, US



Answer

Elena replies



I often use the free Paint Tool SAI to create my art. The program's Standard brush is ideal for depicting hair. You can also choose the Circular brush, which is designed for painting hair and wool, but I prefer the Standard brush, because it gives me more freedom.

I draw on one layer, over which I create several layers with light effects. When you paint human hair, don't forget that it follows the shape of the head and has volume. I carefully do all my strokes along the hairline.

I start to paint with a Soft brush, and then move onto harder and thinner brushes. Where sunlight hits the hair, it results in a strong speck of light and reveals the hair's many shades. It's not necessary to draw every strand of hair. Instead, lay down a suitable foundation on to which you later draw a few strands and stray hairs.

Consider the effect of glare on hair. Using an Overlay layer creates an interesting effect of white soft spots. I also add shades of hair on the face, and drop shadows over the forehead from the character's bangs.

Question

How can I spruce up my undead designs?

Danny Winters, US

Answer

Mark replies



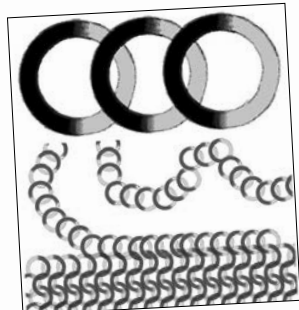
If you hang around a favourite fantasy character for too long, you risk limiting your techniques and, more importantly, your imagination. But there are ways to keep painting your favourite life-challenged feet-draggers, and still keep things fresh. Pick an element you usually wouldn't, and go to town on it!

Here I've picked on the costume of a living-impaired chap, and decided he'd look good in fantasy soldier attire. A good way to paint chain mail is to create a custom brush shaped as three rings together with two different levels of opacity on each one of them (one side very opaque and the other quite translucent) and with some Spacing and the Angle Jitter option controlled by direction. If you use this brush by painting brush strokes in alternate directions you'll soon create a chain mail surface.

Once the chain mail is painted, put lights and shadows on it using Burn and Dodge tools. To finish, add some extra highlights and details manually. There are many ways to paint chain mail, but this is the fastest technique I can think of, and will hopefully put some life back into your passion for the dead ones.



Use the custom chain mail brush to paint the basic chain shape, and then Dodge and Burn tools to integrate it into the painting, by illuminating it.



Artist's secret

WHATEVER WORKS
If you're reading this and following every word - stop! Explore and experiment. This is how the tip of my custom chain mail brush looks like - the one that works best for me - but try others for interesting results.

Step-by-step: Light up a head of hair



1 I draw the face and establish the hair's colour, the light source and the main area of glare. I also apply the colours of the environment to the hair. I paint strands of hair with a Soft brush, especially those close to the glare. I paint the darkest areas of the hair and add reflections.



2 I smear strands that are further away from viewer with a little brush water. This results in a more artistic look. I illuminate the glare on the forelock with the Soft brush on a separate layer, and lighten the background. I add volume to the forelock with Overlay layers.



3 To finish, I add detail to the hair using a separate Overlay layer. For shady areas, I prefer to add a little purple colour. I continue to add rays of light sparks, dust particles, reflections in the eyes and details to the skin. I aim to give the picture a tangible air of fantasy!

Question

I need help picturing someone who's eaten far too much!

Jared Timiney, US



Answer

Nick replies



This is probably a sign of my age, but the first thing that popped into my head when I read this question was Monty Python's Mr Creosote, from *The Meaning of Life*. He's a glutton who explodes when persuaded by a waiter to finish off his enormous meal with an after-dinner mint.

Although an exaggerated and overweight caricature for comic effect, his later lethargy induced by excessive eating perfectly describes what's in my head. I want to avoid a caricatured, fat person though, so I'm going for some average build types to tackle. The idea is to have them slumped at the table, almost unable to move.

Putting the detritus from the enormous meal that they've just eaten around them should hopefully help explain what's going on. I don't want the viewer to think they are just drunk, so I'll avoid any obvious evidence pointing to that. Their lethargy and slack jaws require other clues to be placed around. This scene is set during a Dark Age feast. They've been eating with their hands, which can be suitably grubby, and are too full to feel like even wiping their mouths. Bits of food and other stains are down their fronts.



These medieval diners are full up, not drunk, so I've avoided putting empty flagons of mead on the table.



Artist's secret

KEEP AN EYE ON THE WHOLE THING

If your software supports it, have the image open alongside as a view showing the entire image while you work close in on details. It helps you see the impact (or not) that your work is having on the composition.



Step-by-step: Picture the carnage after a heavy feast



1 I sketch out a rough composition, using a raised eye level so the viewer's looking down on the pair. This is a well-worn trick for making the subject seem more vulnerable and suits the scene. Things like that can add to the overall effect. I resist exaggerating the pose because I intend to make the point without resorting to caricature if possible.



2 I block in a base colour and hint at some shadow areas very early on, and then move on to consolidating some of the colours. I block in colours on the helmet-wearing character's clothes. I do this by painting on a layer above, set to Multiply Blend mode and using the Oil brush, as I have for the base. A Multiply layer enables me to 'glaze' the scene.

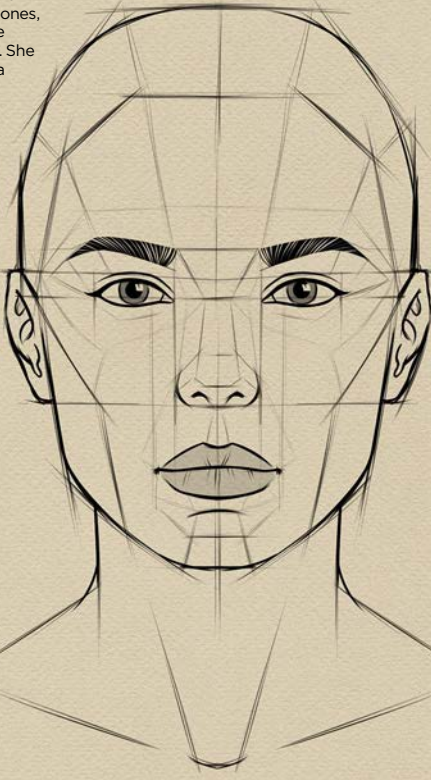


3 I need our main man to be rather slack jawed, so delicately is he balanced between feeling full and feeling sick. I zoom in and tweak his lower lip and simultaneously angle his brows up slightly. This expression should help the effect of looking rather helpless. Spend time on expressions. People notice them. I mark in some food splatters down his front.



4 Thinking medieval banquet or Viking feast, I mark bones discarded this way and that. The idea is to have everything eaten apart from one grape. I block their shapes in with solid oil paint on a layer above the base layer. I bring several layers of shadows (Multiply Blend mode) using a warm ochre. Finally, highlights go over everything to crisp things up.

This girl has coarse facial features. She has wide cheekbones, a big chin, a large nose and full lips. She looks a little like a young man.



Question
I'd like some tips on blocking out the main shapes of faces for portraits
Kath Bennie, England

Answer
Elena replies



For proper head construction, first draw a vertical line, which sets the centre of the face. Then determine the location of the major parts of the face: eyes, nose, lips and ears. They should follow the formula that a face is divided into three equal parts in height, bisecting the line of the forehead, eyebrows and nose. The eyes should be properly positioned relative to each other, with the distance between them being the width of an eye.

From the inner edges of the eyes draw vertical lines. The intersection with the line of the nose gives you the width of the nose. The nose is divided into three sectors in the form of a trapezoid. The mouth is determined by vertical lines, drawn from the edge of the irises. The line of the mouth extends somewhere in the lower face but sometimes higher, depending on the nature of the character you're drawing.

The most pronounced planes are the cheekbones, forehead and nose. The forehead is determined by three



This woman has classic feminine facial features. She has the same proportions as the figure pictured above, but the result is a different character.

main planes that start from the beginning of the eyebrows and the acute angle of the eyebrows. To define the cheekbones, draw a line from the top edge of the ears to the ends of the mouth. Determine the border and the proportions of the upper and lower lips, and don't forget the groove between the nose and upper lip. Of course, you need to remember that people are different, and each character requires an individual approach.

Question
I need help depicting a freezing cold day. Do you have any advice?
Nick Lewis, Australia

Answer
Viktoria replies



Coming from Sweden, I'm used to putting up with four months of freezing cold every single year. So I know exactly how you can paint a horribly cold day. Simply paint a horribly freezing person or people in an ice-cold environment. That should make the image feel really frosty, because it gives people something to relate to.

To paint a freezing person it's good to either draw from memory or put yourself in that person's shoes if you've never experienced a cold winter. Imagine how you would feel being chilled to the bone. You'd probably be shivering. Your nose would be running and your eyes would water in the cold air. You'd probably hunch up in your thick winter jacket, maybe hug yourself in a futile attempt to

Red cheeks, ears and nose hint at the freezing temperatures, and don't forget the watery eyes!



warm up a little. Your cheeks and nose and ears would be reddened, and your breath would condense in a cloud before you. There could be snow falling and everything in your scene could be covered with frost, snow and icicles.

Question
How would you paint a hand that's been immersed in water?
Ben Kift, Wales



Once I've painted the full hand, adding the wrinkles is quite easy. I just need to pay attention to the light direction.



The shape of the wrinkles is distinctly soft and rounded, and they usually form a vertical or whirled pattern.

Answer
Paco replies



To paint a shrivelled-up fingertip, you can paint a basic normal fingertip and then add some suitable details, bearing two things in mind. First, fingers become slightly paler, and second, wrinkles cast shadows like anything else.

So after you paint the finger, note where the light is coming from and then start painting wrinkles here and there, applying the lights and shadows accordingly. Wrinkles form vertical or whirlwind-shaped foldings; paint them using a relatively soft brush and subtle tones, because you may not want to add too much intensity to the wrinkles. Tweak the colours using light, cold colours on Screen and Soft Light layers. Finally, note that fingertips shrivel faster than the rest of the hand, so you may want to put more wrinkles there.

Question

Please help me guide the viewer around an image

Chin Hu Lim, Taiwan



The bridge acts as the viewer's introduction into the painting.

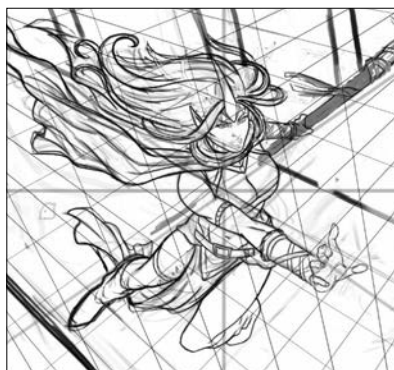
Answer

Sara replies



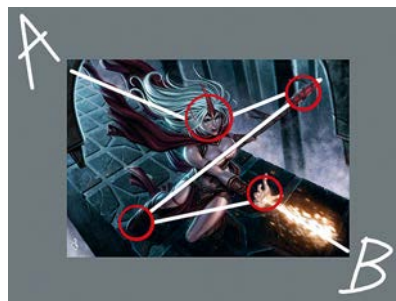
Start by defining the setting of the image. In my country people read from left to right, so I know that my eye will finally alight on the bottom right corner. In countries where reading goes from right to left, you can simply mirror the image setting.

Now that I've established the final point for the viewer's eye, I just have to create a guided path. The easiest way to accomplish this is to use oblique lines that cross the entire drawing. I decide to draw a sorceress who's casting a spell. In this case, I think a good idea is painting a bridge crossing the picture. Placing the character on the bridge, I follow the oblique line with the cape and the arm that casts the spell.



The sketch is an important stage. It doesn't need to be a completely accurate image, but it should help you complete the image.

To stop the viewer from stepping immediately from point A to point B (see below), I insert some elements that balance the movement of the image. I use a second virtual line that starts from the magical staff to the foot. Now I only have to emphasise the path with colour. The brightest spots are the point of origin and the final point. I paint the sorceress with warmer colours, but use the warmest, most contrasted colours for the end point (B).



Here's the path that the viewer follows in this image. It moves over a good part of the painting and also creates dynamism.

Question

How can I make my fantasy art stand out?

Noah Tekkon, Japan



Answer

Melanie replies



Creating a unique fantasy design can be a tough task, but there are some basic guidelines that you can follow. The most important is not to come up with a generic version of a design that people have seen hundreds of times before. A good approach is to base your design on an existing historic culture and then add mythical and fantastic elements. Don't be shy to exaggerate some body features to enhance the overall expression of the character. Give them superhuman strength, draw them as a sexy figure or make them as creepy looking as your worst nightmare.

I decide to paint a fusion of an Assyrian priest and the common fantasy theme of a beast-warrior, to show the important role of cows and bulls in their mythology.

To make the design work I apply another common rule: recurring patterns, shapes and materials. I use Assyrian circular patterns for the priest's clothing and jewellery. I also make sure to stick to a single metallic material (in this case gold) instead of mixing metals, such as iron, silver, bronze and copper. I give the Assyrian priest bullhorns and ears to enhance the fantasy feel and bulk up his body shape.

To build up the values I first paint the character in greyscale. Carefully planning the lighting scheme helps me to bring out three-dimensional forms. As soon as I'm satisfied with the values, I go forward to the colour stage.

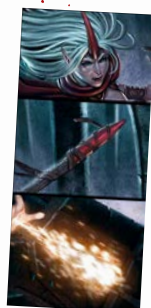


Adding bovine elements to the human priest gives the character a strong fantasy feel.



A well-defined greyscale sketch gives me enough value information to take the image into colour.

Artist's secret



FOCUS DETAILS IN THE RIGHT PLACES

Apply details in areas where you want the viewer's eye to remain the longest. In my example the hair, the sorceress's face, the sceptre and the spell are rich in detail, helping to guide the eye on to these parts.

Next month
ON SALE: **23 May**
How do you paint a
modern war shoot-out?



Question
Can you help me paint a sandstorm without it looking like a brown blob?!
Summer Norton, Sweden

Answer
Viktoria replies



Painting a sandstorm using Photoshop is relatively easy. However, making a sandstorm look interesting can be a bit trickier, since we're basically talking about a rolling cloud of dust and... well, sand.

So consider adding some element of story to your sandstorm painting. Is the sandstorm on Earth or an alien planet? Is it engulfing the ruins of an ancient city way out in the desert? How about painting a desert nomad becoming engulfed by the sandstorm?

Hopefully, you'll have some ideas of how to paint more than just an orange dust cloud. Now for the process. What you need to think about for a background scene of a sandstorm is that it basically looks like a rolling cumulus cloud, but one

that's much more fuzzy around the edges, and significantly denser. You won't get much light scattering in a sandstorm, and you won't see very far inside it. Basically, it'll be like looking at a scene that's affected by thick, sand-coloured fog.



An obscured figure is one way to give your sandstorm a sense of depth and volume.

Step-by-step: Depict a figure caught in a fierce sandstorm

1 In Photoshop, I start off by producing a very quick sketch of a lone cloaked figure, some rock formations and indications of the sandstorm cloud. I then colour the main shapes with a Soft



Round brush that's set to Noise. I concern myself only with the lighting in the scene and achieving the right orange colours for the desert sand.

2 I choose three grainy brushes and work only with them when defining the shapes of the rocks, the sandstorm and the nomad. Using textured brushes gives the right feeling of a dry and sandy environment and it also makes the

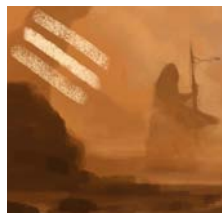
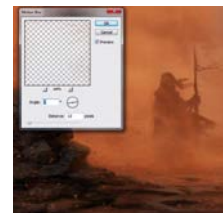


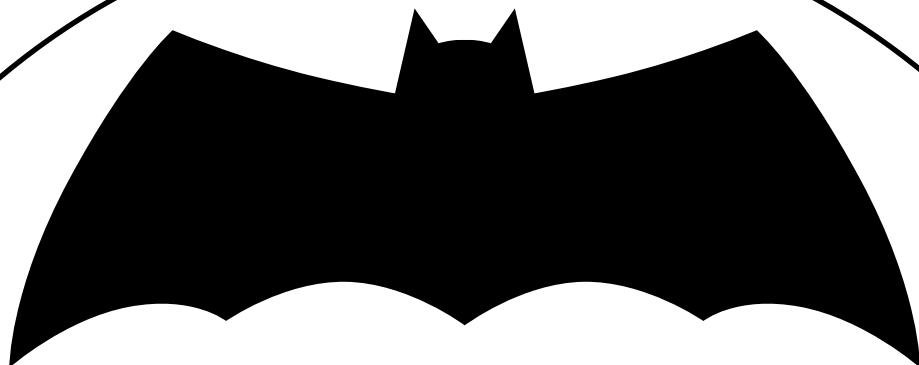
image a bit more interesting. It also makes it clear to the viewer that this is not a cloud of water, but of sand.

3 After rendering everything, I start painting grains of sand. Using two different speckled brushes on a separate layer, I lightly brush over the ground where the heavier sand in the storm is. Finally, to



make the grains look like they're blowing around, I blur the layer with Gaussian Blur and Motion Blur, setting Distance to 12 pixels and Angle to the wind direction.

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.**



THE DARK ART OF BATMAN

The Dark Knight may be 75 this year, but Gotham's vigilante remains an enigma. Here are the art styles and storylines that made him a comic book legend



The 27th issue of Detective Comics appeared on America's newsstands during May 1939. Its bright yellow and red cover featured a caped figure swinging into view and two gangsters in the foreground. For 10 cents, American kids could forget the Depression and the war brewing in Europe, and enjoy 64 pages of hand-drawn action.

Eye-catching? Certainly. But who could have predicted that this oddly dressed character would become an icon of the modern age. For 75 years he's entertained millions of fans in print, on the radio, on TV, in cinema and in video games. He's

been drawn in countless styles and survived thousands of strange perils. Yet he remains at once an inspiration and an enigma.

The main Batman series today, drawn by Greg Capullo and written by Scott Snyder, still harks back to the original character of the late 1930s and early 40s. Two years ago, DC rebooted Batman as part of its New 52 scheme and Batman faced a cult of assassins in the Court of Owls storyline. There in the artwork he's got that square-ish face, gritted teeth, an expansive cowl and shadows all around – just like back in the day.

Of course, square faces were the only kind the original Batman creator Bob Kane could really draw. And those shadows ➡➡

All artwork © DC Comics unless stated



BLACK & WHITE

*A stark piece of concept art
for the film Batman Begins
by British artist Jock.*

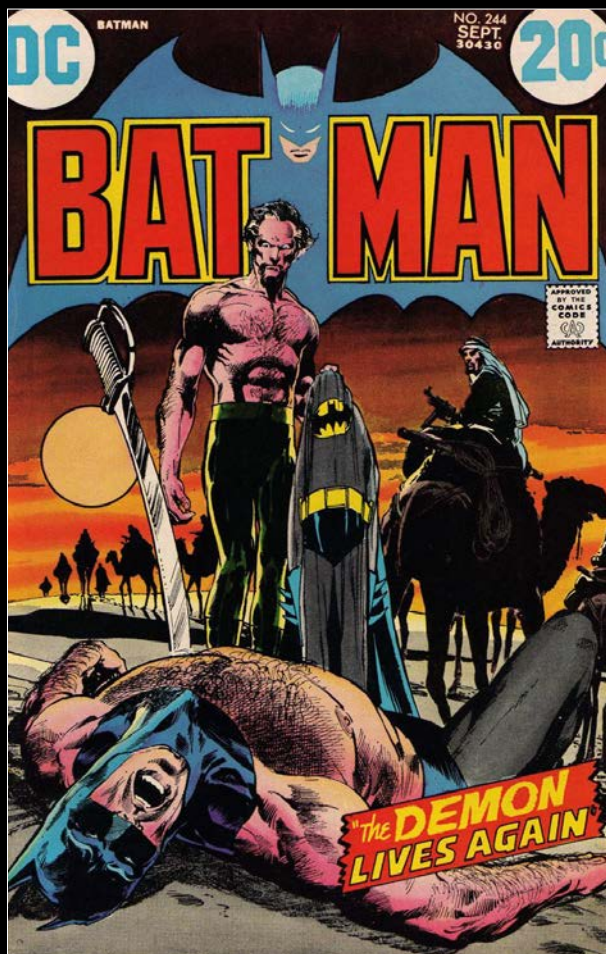
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➔ concealed his draughting deficiencies along with baddies such as Doctor Death, Hugo Strange, The Joker and The Cat. Yet Bill Finger's writing gave Batman and his alter ego Bruce Wayne humanity. He hones his intelligence to become a great scientist and detective, and develops the physique of an Olympian. They're attributes needed to protect Gotham's backstreets from the kind of scum who killed his parents.

This vision of Batman resonates strongly with today's artists. "The darker, bigger and

RA'S AL GHUL

Reducing the number of clown villains in the comics, Neal Adams helped create the assassin chief Ra's al Ghul.



grittier he is, the better for me," says Tony S. Daniel, who first worked on the Batman series in 2007. "I think Batman has a lot of anger within. The murder of his parents shaped Bruce Wayne into the man he became, and created Batman. Batman shouldn't smile. Bruce Wayne can. And when he does, that's his real mask, to me."

Juxtaposed with Superman – a benevolent alien with supernatural powers

“The darker, bigger and grittier he is, the better. Batman has a lot of anger”

beyond our world – Batman is human and his strength comes from within. "I think readers identify with Batman because he's a regular man – he isn't an alien, a god or a mutated superhuman," says

Jonathan Duran, who's the founder of

Comicsastonish.com. "When faced with devastation and loss, he focused on a single goal, and through his own willpower and determination

was able to build himself to the peak of human potential. That's an obvious draw for people, because we would all love to see



HAUNTING

In August 1971, Irv Novick and Dick Giordano mixed pencil shading with more classic line art for this spooky Detective Comics cover.



GOTHIC LEGEND

An internal panel by Edward Hamman from Legends of the Dark Knight, which became the third ongoing Batman title following the success of Tim Burton's Batman in 1989.



SOUTHERN NOIR

Batman headed south to Florida to bust up a gang of gunrunners in the Haunted Lighthouse of Death story.

this discipline and these grandly altruistic qualities in ourselves."

WHOLESAOME STUFF

Yet not long after his inception, the tougher face of Batman was put to one side. In those early stories, Batman shot and killed people – strong stuff for 10-year-olds. Under scrutiny from US censors, there was pressure across publishing to tone down the sex and violence in titles aimed at children. Batman and his sidekick Robin – created by Kane's assistant Jerry Robinson – became wholesome and heroic.

MEET THE MAN WHO REDEFINED BATMAN

We asked hugely influential comic artist Neal Adams about his vision of Batman, designing Ra's al Ghul and more...



What was your characterisation of Batman when you started drawing him in the late 60s?

Well, he didn't hang around in the daytime in long underwear. He had a cape that flowed like Dracula's cape. He was drawn more realistically. He had good anatomy. He was a better detective.

In fact, he was always a good detective, but when you make a cartoon of it you hardly even notice. Batman is, after all, the Sherlock Holmes of today. He is Sherlock Holmes and an Olympic champion if you want to put the two together.

So what did you want to change about the Batman in the comics, as opposed to the TV show?

We decided we were going to make the real Batman – a Batman who was involved in real cases with semi-real people, and for a while we would avoid the clowns, because they really don't reflect well on Batman. When we began to consider reviving Two-Face and The Joker I had a long conversation with Julius 'Julie' Schwartz at DC and I said: "Julie, look, before we get into the clowns, don't we need a Moriarty?"

Is that where Ra's al Ghul came from?

Yes. Julius came in one day and he said: "Ra's al Ghul!" and I said: "Okay, Julie, it sounds Arabic to me, what is it?" And he said: "Well, it's our villain. That's our Moriarty. He's just an evil genius who wants to help the world, and unfortunately he's willing to sacrifice lives to do that." So I went off and indeed created the look of Ra's al Ghul that we know so well in the comic books now.

You recently revisited Batman in your own series, *Batman: Odyssey*. What were you aiming to do with the artwork there?

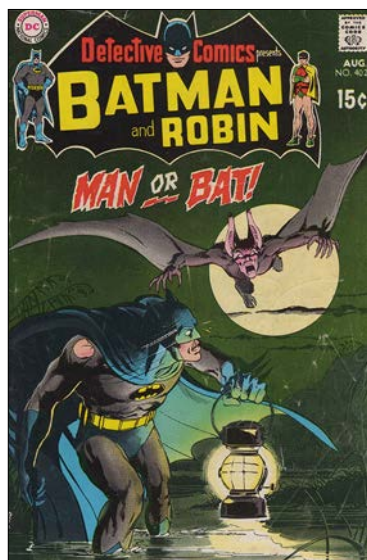
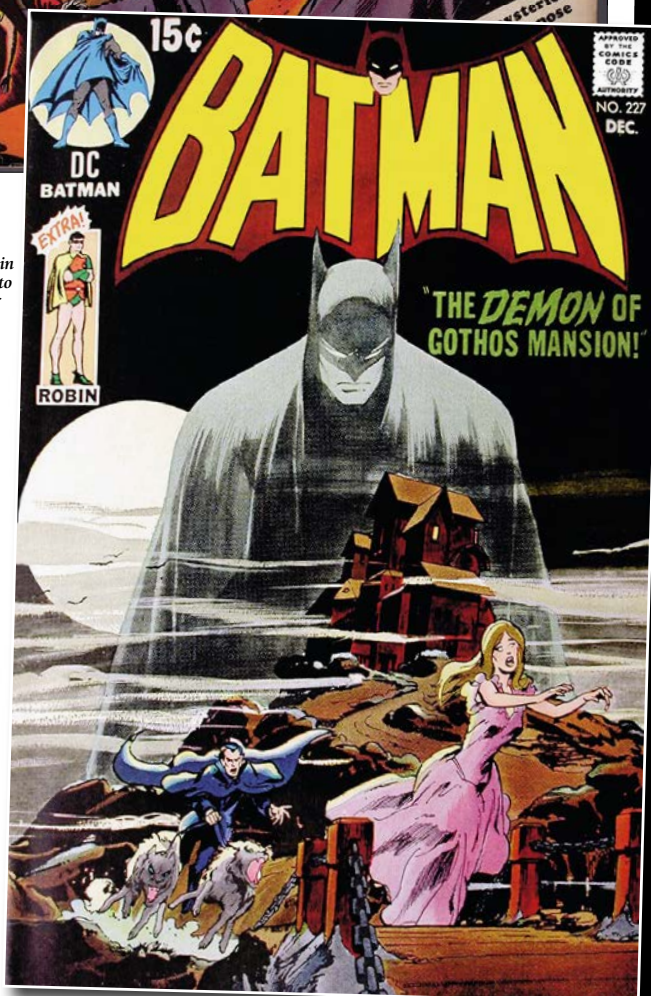
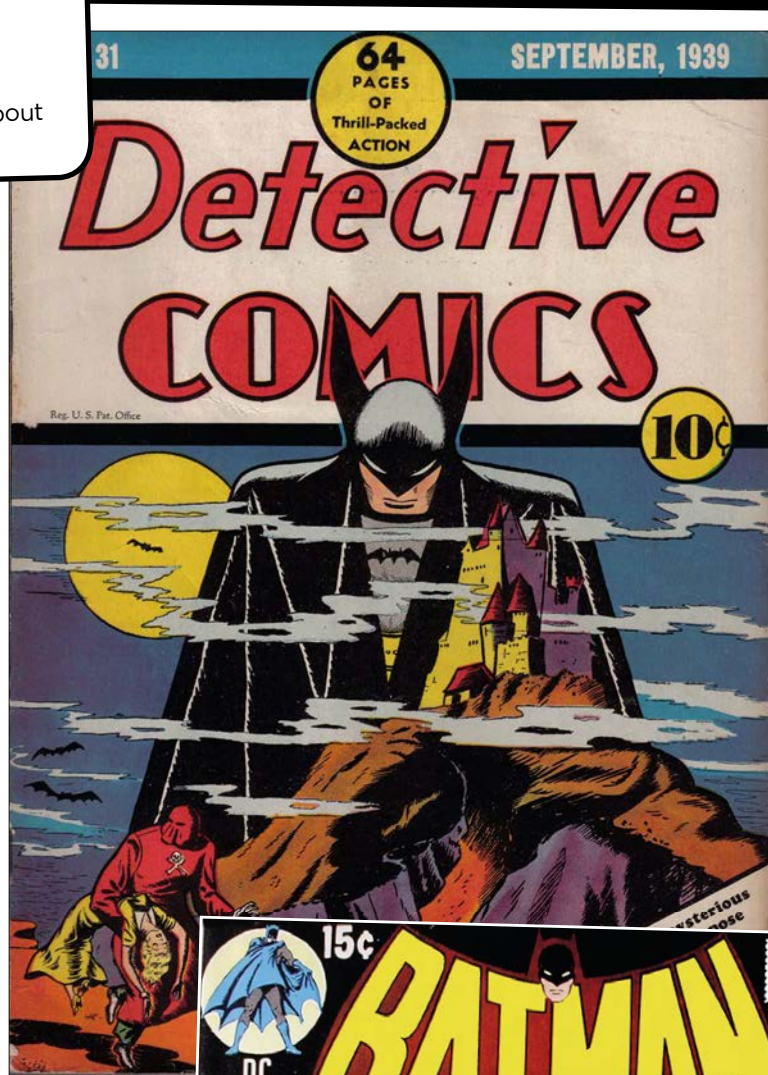
Well, I wanted my artwork to be worth the money they were paying me, which was a lot more than they were paying me back in the old days. So I went into a lot more detail with things and it became richer and fuller. I always felt the work I did was worth reading a second time and a third time. In this I nailed it. I nailed the richness of it. If you hit Aquaman you go: "Wow, this is interesting." You get to see dinosaurs – there's so much in there. It's an exercise in the artist's joy, and that particular artist is me.

What are you doing next?

I'm about to do a Superman series that's going to include the New Gods. This will be a six-part Superman series, and it involves New Krypton, it involves New Genesis and it involves Apocalypse and Dark Side, and it's a romp and it's a tribute to Jack Kirby from yours truly.

HOMAGE TO A KANE CLASSIC

Batman 227, published in 1970, is Neal's homage to Bob Kane's cover art for issue 31 of Detective Comics, from 1939.



THE MAN BAT

In *Detective Comics* issue 402, Neal drew a story featuring one of his favourite characters: Man Bat.



BATMAN: ODYSSEY

Expressive and postmodern, Neal both wrote and drew the artwork for *Batman: Odyssey*.

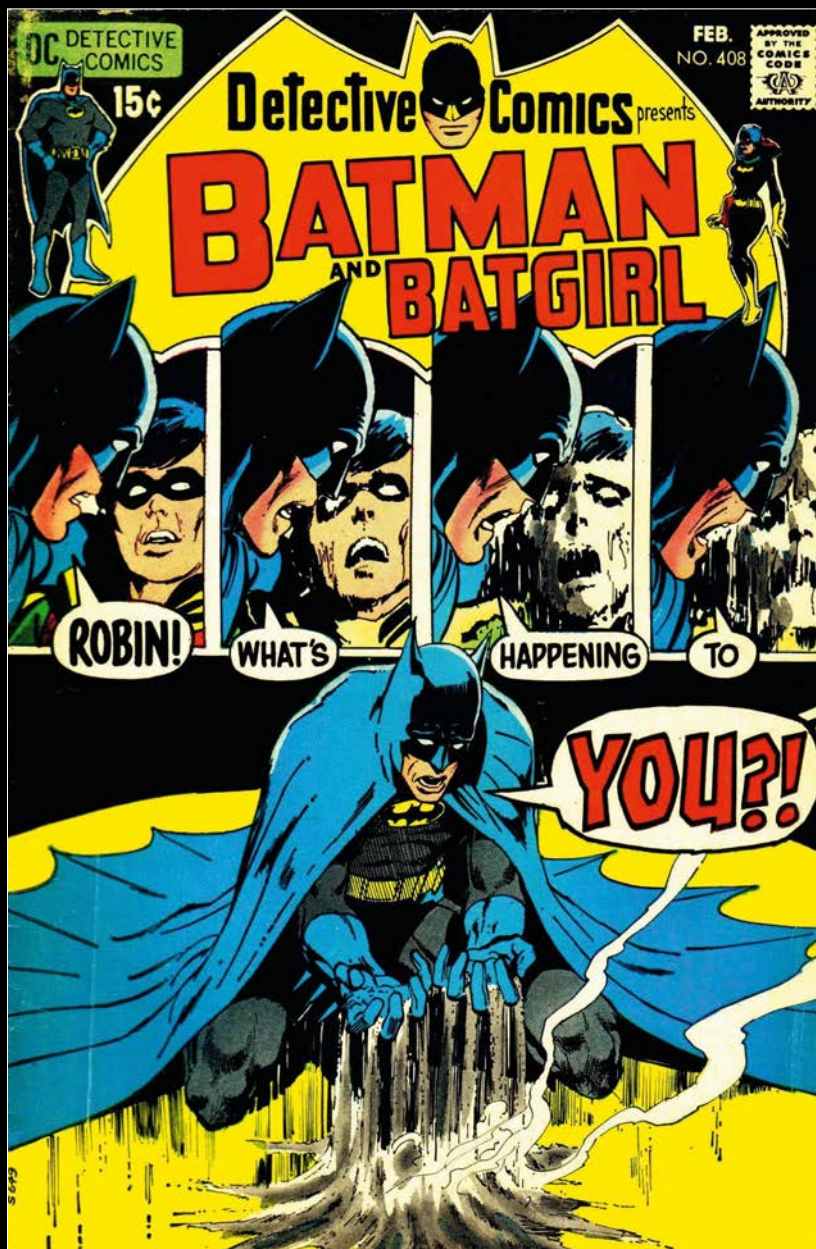


WATCHING THE DETECTIVE

Artists like (left to right) Joe Orlando, Irv Novick and Norm Breyfogle created striking covers during the 70s and 80s.

ACTION PACKED

Internal panels from *Legends of the Dark Knight* issue 2, drawn by Edward Hannigan.



ROBIN'S DEAD?

Just as with Paul McCartney in *The Beatles*, rumours of Robin's impending death have flourished in many of Batman's storylines.

That year saw the height of camp Batman with the TV series starring Adam West. Eartha Kitt, Cesar Romero and Burgess Meredith played Catwoman, The Joker and The Penguin, respectively, with 'BIFF!' and 'POW!' comic-type overlaid on the fight



scenes. "It was a satire, it was funny, it was a take-off of the campy side of comic books, and it was successful for what it did," says Neal Adams.

You could see the writing on the wall. This was not going to be a serious Batman

➤ They were made honorary members of the Gotham Police Department. They supported campaigns to sell war bonds during World War II. The dynamic duo foiled the plans of The Joker, Two-Face and The Penguin, but the villains became clown-like and their schemes were just bizarre. Artist Dick Sprang had Batman duelling with knights and teaming up with the Three Musketeers. His bright panels thrived on cinematic angles and set pieces. He introduced a surreal, almost Alice in

Wonderland-like feel with giant clocks, typewriters and playing cards.

By the late 50s, there had been an alien alter-Batman, Zebra Batman, Negative Batman and even Rainbow Batman, with a different coloured costume every day. Questions were raised about his sexuality, and so Batwoman was introduced in 1956 as a possible love interest. Yet Batman just couldn't find a mate, not even the knockout kisser Poison Ivy, an eco-terrorist who arrived in 1966.

who started drawing Batman for DC during the mid-60s.

He continues: "But at the end of the first show when Jill St John leapt into the cyclotron in her go-go outfit, and Batman said, 'What a way to go-go,' you could pretty much see the writing on the wall. This was not going to be a serious Batman."

MONEY TALKS

However, the series did spell serious money for DC. Issue 183 of *Batman* came out in August 1966 to coincide with the broadcast of the first episode, with artwork by Carmine Infantino and Joe Giella. It sold 1,134,000 copies, compared to 351,000 in August 1965. Revenue poured in from ➤

GARGOYLE

Concept artist Jock brought the gargoyle pose, so favoured in the comics, to his concept art for *Batman Begins*.

NOLAN'S BATMAN COMES TO LIFE

Concept artists discuss adapting The Dark Knight for a more modern movie-going audience



Going from comic book to silver screen is anything but easy for a Golden Age hero, and what works for film-goers doesn't always impress hardcore fans of a given comic book character.

Christopher Nolan's recent run of films – *Batman Begins*, *The Dark Knight* and *The Dark Knight Rises* – has certainly been a success. The Scottish comic book artist Jock, who's worked on numerous *Detective Comics* covers, was drafted in for some concepts for the first film. "My brief for that was to imagine a real guy in a bat suit, and what he might look like in a Gotham environment. I hadn't seen Christian Bale's costume or anything, so I had total freedom to come up with different shots. It was to show Christopher Nolan where the comic artists were coming from, to inform his decisions with the suit. It was interesting applying a comic aesthetic to a more real-world approach."

© 2005 Warner Bros

Moving on to *The Dark Knight*, it was Rob Bliss who contributed to the film's most notable character, The Joker. "You just start drawing, producing as much of it as you can with the hope that someone above you in the food chain likes some of it," says Rob, whose main comic book influence was Simon Bisley. "It changes every time depending who you are working with. The ideas just come out of your head or conversation as you're talking it over."



He continues: "My approach with The Joker was to try and produce someone who looked crazy, like a person who was half hyena. I was mainly interested in him from the neck up. The Joker was a great character in that film, but I'm not sure how close mine is to the one in the film. Heath Ledger's is probably more functional. The one in my head was barely holding it together."



UNHINGED

Concept artist Rob Bliss helped director Christopher Nolan settle on a look for the Joker and his bank-robbing goons.

MAKING TWO-FACE

Another Rob Bliss piece, this concept of the creation of Batman's arch foe Two-Face set the feel for the movie bad guy.



© 2005 Warner Bros

THE JOKER: DIARY OF A GIGGLING MADMAN

Bruce Wayne may have a tortured soul, but he's not getting any light relief from this clown whenever he's in town...

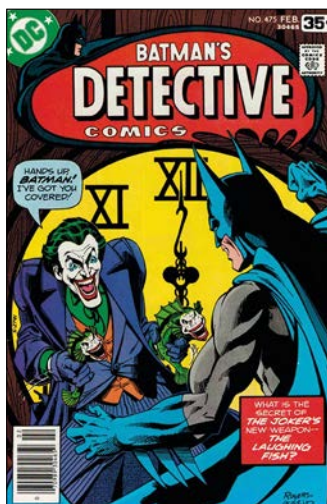


Batman's nemesis The Joker first appeared in issue 1 of the Batman comic, in 1940. He had a white face, a perpetual grin and everything about him shrieked 'fun gone wrong'.

In February 1978 The Joker took centre stage on the cover of Detective Comics issue 475, holding two fish as though they were pistols. Sinister and scary but loopy enough to be funny, the plot tells of how he's poisoned the fish so that they develop faces just like his. Then he demands a cut of all fish sales in Gotham.

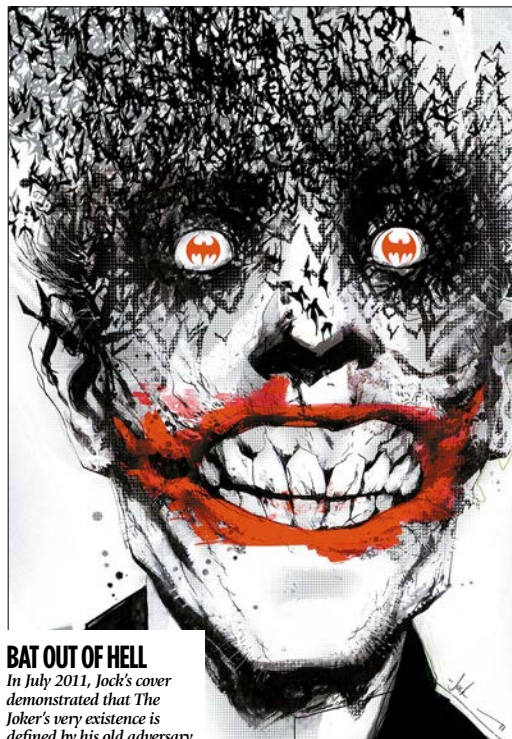
Recent decades have seen a far darker side to The Joker, epitomised in the 1988 graphic novel *The Killing Joke*, pencilled by Brian Bolland and written by Alan Moore. The following year, Dave McKean and Grant Morrison's *Arkham Asylum* arrived. Dave had painted the 128-page treat in his inimitable multimedia style. Here The Joker and Two-Face take over the asylum.

Of course, while Batman is obsessed with keeping The Joker behind bars, the mad clown himself is obsessed with bringing down the bat. This is reflected in artist Jock's striking, graphic cover for Detective Comics 880. "I just wanted to try and show the most unhinged Joker image that I could. The guy is a total nutcase, so I feel I wouldn't be doing my job if I didn't make it slightly unsettling to look at," he says.



ON A SCALE OF ONE TO CRAZY

Marshall Rogers and Terry Austin worked on *The Laughing Fish*, a kooky Batman classic.



BAT OUT OF HELL

In July 2011, Jock's cover demonstrated that The Joker's very existence is defined by his old adversary.

➤ countless items of merchandise, too – costumes, figurines, Batmobile toys, sunglasses, lunchboxes...

While DC counted its money, Neal pondered Batman's troubled soul. He pushed to work on the Batman and Detective Comics titles, but was constantly rebuffed. Then editor Murray Boltinoff offered him *The Brave and The Bold*, which featured Batman alongside various other DC characters such as Aquaman, Sgt. Rock and Deadman.

"Murray said: 'Shall we change the scripts?' So I said: 'No, don't change the

scripts, but I just want to tell you this: don't have anything happening in the daytime because Batman doesn't go around in the daytime. And Batman doesn't walk through doors. He can come out of a closet, he can come through a window, but he doesn't walk through doors because that's just not Batman," explains Neal.

WELCOME TO THE DARKNESS

Fan letters arrived saying that the only real Batman was the one in *The Brave and The Bold*, so editor Julius Schwartz soon moved Neal on to the key Batman titles. The

Neal Adams was drawing superheroes who looked like real people

character was gradually steered back towards the darkness.

"Neal Adams was drawing superheroes who looked like real people," states

Jerry Bingham, artist on the 1987 graphic novel *Batman: Son of the Demon*. "The Joker handed someone a cigar and the explosion killed people. His cinematic style seemed



BATMAN TIMELINE



1939

Issue 27 of Detective Comics appeared with a new hero nobody had ever seen before on the cover. Bob Kane had been inspired by pulp magazines such as *The Shadow*, and a 1926 silent film called *The Bat*.



1940

With Bob Kane on pencils and Bill Finger writing the stories, Batman got his own comic in spring 1940. Robin and The Joker participate as Batman kills three giants marauding in Gotham.



1943

Drawn by Jack Burnley, the cover of *Batman* issue 16 displays Batman and Robin in an iconic pose that has since been recreated by artists such as Alex Ross. The issue introduced Bruce's butler, Alfred Pennyworth.



1954

Artist Dick Sprang loved to draw giant-size objects. Here he plays on Two-Face's famous coin toss motif, only the coin is massive and Batman and Robin are strapped to it. Some iron spikes complete the scene!



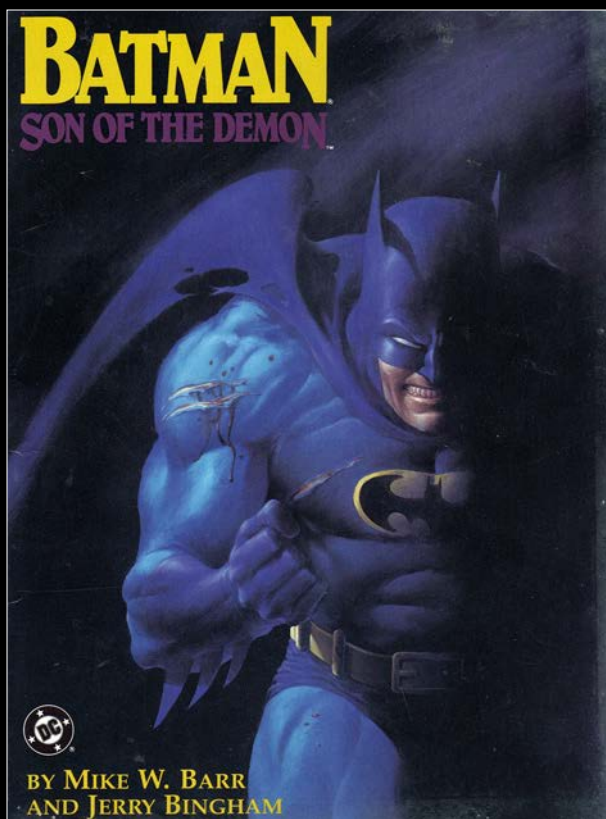
1958

Pretty much anything could happen to Batman during the Silver Age – as long as it didn't involve overt sex or violence. In Detective Comics issue 251, with cover art by Sheldon Moldoff, he was turned into an alien.



1966

In August 1966, issue 183 of *Batman* was released to coincide with the television series that started on ABC that month. Carmine Infantino and Murphy Anderson went to town on the small-screen tie-in.



perfect for the time, and his 1970s comics will always be the definitive Batman for me. No one has improved on the character, visually, since."



Neal managed a gradual shift towards realism, tinged with horror, in the 1970s. But the real revolution took place in February 1986 when Frank Miller delivered the first of six comics entitled *The Dark Knight Returns*.

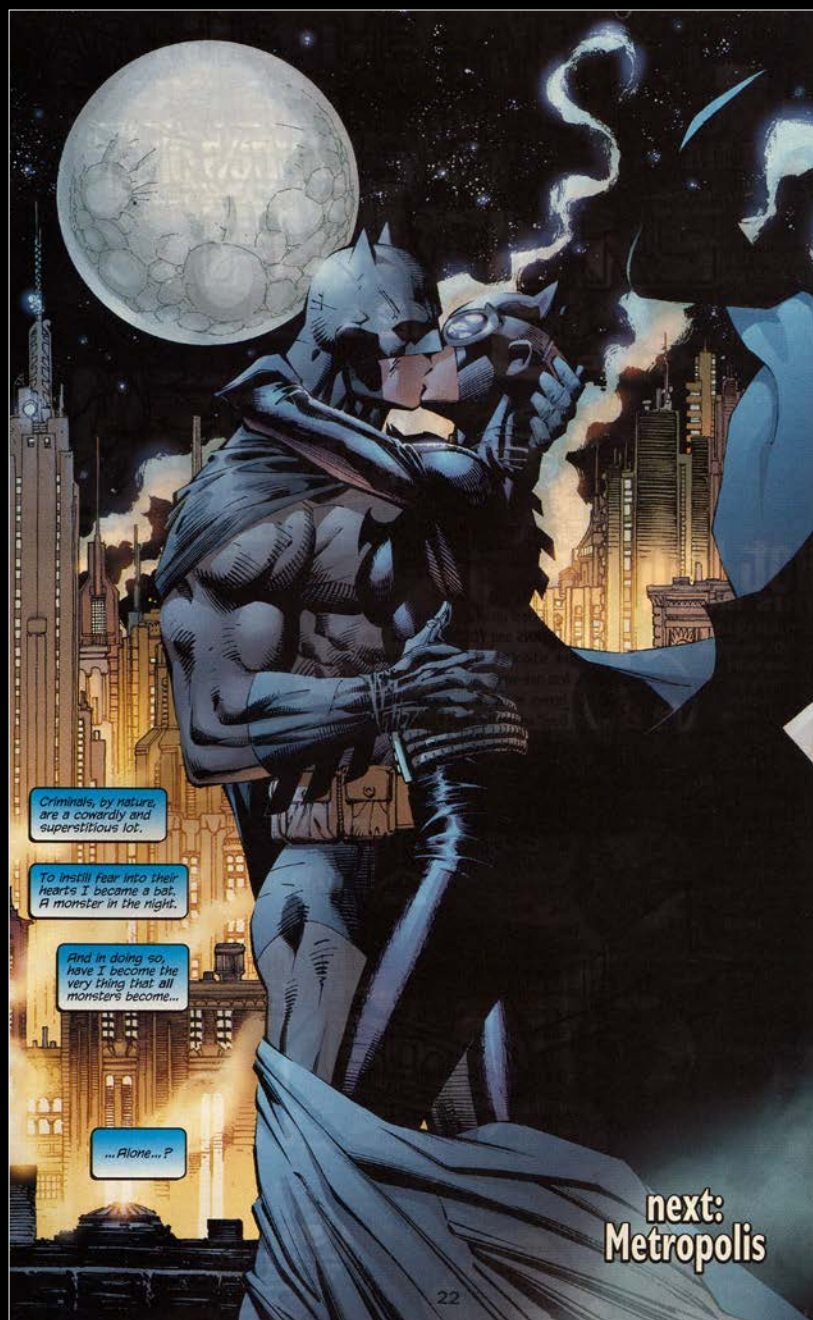
Each issue was 48 pages – 20 more than an average comic – with a proper spine. Frank was thinking like a novelist, not a comic book writer. A 55-year-old Batman comes out of retirement with shadow, fear and human frailty placed at the

SON OF THE DEMON

In 1987, Mike Barr and Jerry Bingham produced the first Batman story that went straight to graphic novel format, skipping release as comic episodes.

HUSH

The flirtatious relationship between Batman and Catwoman comes to the fore in the 2002 storyline *Hush*, drawn by Jim Lee.



next:
Metropolis



1978

It had happened time and again, but with issue 300 of *Batman*, Dick Giordano and writer Dave Vern Reed threatened an end to the character. In it, Batman and Robin battle a criminal band called *Spectrum*.



1980

The Untold Legend of the Batman was a three-issue limited series drawn by John Byrne and written by Len Wein. It was one of the very first limited series in comic books – an idea taken from television.



1986

Chunky and haggard, 55-year-old Batman returned under the penmanship of Frank Miller in *The Dark Knight*, a special limited series that changed comics forever. This is the cover to the second issue of six.



1988

During Mike Mignola's time on the title, DC held a phone-in vote on whether or not Robin should live or die. Readers narrowly elected to kill the character off, hence Mike's iconic *Death in the Family* cover.



2002

Originally drawn in issues 608–611 of *Batman*, the *Hush* storyline by Jeph Loeb and Jim Lee made an impact thanks to the latter's detailed pencil work and shading, and Batman's romance with Catwoman.



2008

In May 2008, writer Grant Morrison gave the comic world the smelling salts with his *RIP* story, drawn by Tony S Daniel. The first issue, *Batman* 679, featured an outrageously slick and unusual-looking cover.



SILKEN SPIDER

Batman learns of the return of Ra's al Ghul from the Silken Spider in Grant Morrison's *Batman* number 670

►► fore of the story, not to mention the character's moral code.

"I wanted to create things that would last," Frank says in a Goodreads interview. "They were still stuck on the yellow circle on his chest and then I came up with an excuse for him, dramatically, to lose his costume, so that he showed up with just a big old bat on his chest, which he's worn ever since.

"Somehow I'd internalised the idea that you can throw the pamphlet over your shoulder and say goodbye. If your story's 28 pages long, that's great. If it's 148 pages long, that's great," he adds.

Batman became a craggy, cynical, bulky redeemer of Gotham. "When Frank drew Batman, he made him this big, bulky tank," says Canada's Jason Fabok, who's drawn a whole range of recent Batman titles. "His



fists look like they would smash your face in with one punch. He doesn't need super powers in order to hurt you. But at the same time, you



NEW SKILLS

Up and coming Batman artist Dustin Nguyen's work in *Batman* 28, under the New 52 banner;



THE NEW 52

The new issue 27 of *Batman*, with artwork by Greg Capullo, explodes with colour as Batman tries to solve a mystery dating back to World War II.

know he's on your side. He's fighting for the good guys. He has a high moral code, and sticks to it."

Neal also loves Frank's Batman. "He pushed even more grit into it and I really appreciated what he did. To a certain extent he took what I did and pushed it further," he says. "I think that was very classical. I'm surprised that more people haven't done older Batman stories after Frank did it because I think it's a great character."

Single issues of *The Dark Knight Returns* were reprinted time and again, as was the graphic novel that combined them, and soon other artists were exploring Batman in new ways. Jerry Bingham and Mike Barr's *Batman: Son of the Demon* was the first graphic novel to appear that wasn't a compilation of prior comics. In it, Batman's liaison with Ra's al Ghul's daughter results in a son. In 1988,

“When Frank Miller drew Batman, he made him this big, bulky tank”

The Joker was explored in *The Killing Joke* by Brian Bolland and Alan Moore.

BAT YEAR

1989 was dubbed The Year of the Bat, with Tim Burton's *Batman* hitting the big screen. Gothic and mysterious, Burton's film starred Michael Keaton and flirted with the campiness of the TV series. However, Anton Furst's concept artwork brought a vision of Gotham that would inspire future comics.

"Recently I sat down and watched the original Tim Burton *Batman* film and realised just how much that movie

IT'S MILLER TIME

If you ask today's top comic artists and aficionados about the art of Batman, one name crops up time and again...



"Frank Miller's astounding one-two punch combo of *The Dark Knight Returns* and *Year One* with David Mazzucchelli was a key moment in Batman's history," says Jonathan Duran of

Comicsastonish.com. "Both of these stories managed to refocus the character and took all the gravitas that people were once again beginning to ignore and put it under a magnifying glass, cementing - for better or for worse - a darker take on the character."

In the first of Frank's two ground-breaking graphic novels, *The Dark Knight Returns* looks at an older Batman as he comes out of retirement, cynical and disappointed with the world around him. It was written and drawn by Frank.

Year One, meanwhile, was written by Frank but pencilled by David and was originally printed in *Batman* issues 404 to 407. It takes a look at the damaged psyche of the young Bruce Wayne as his parents are murdered. The ambition in the writing, and in the artwork, brought maturity and creative credibility not just to Batman but to comic books in general. It inspired artists and made them crave working on a Batman title.

Tony S Daniel agrees. "I remember seeing Frank Miller's *The Dark Knight Returns* and

being blown away," he says. "I always like Batman to be drawn rather big however, so I think I gravitate towards the imagery of Frank Miller. But I try to keep in mind that I don't want to look like my influences."



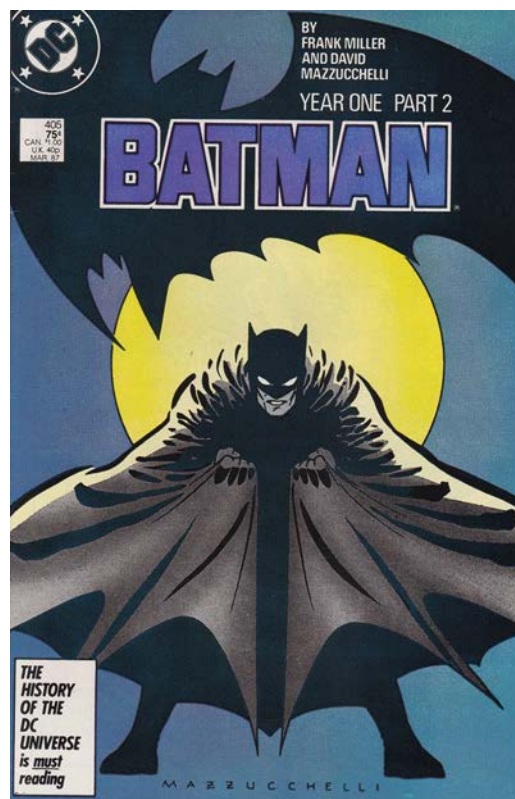
Tony continues: "When people tell me my work reminds them of Frank Miller, that's not what I'm going for. I'm always looking to craft my take on Batman to be the most natural for me."

Jerry Bingham's artwork for the graphic novel *Batman: Son of the Demon* was in progress in 1986 when *The Dark Knight Returns* came out. Although he's always admired the Neal Adams Batman the most, he instantly knew that Frank's work was a game changer.

"Frank altered Batman forever," says Jerry. "His isn't a drawing style I'd seek to emulate, but I remember as I was working on *Son of the Demon*, getting those first issues of *The Dark Knight Returns* in the mail and being astounded by what I was reading. I knew it was breaking new ground in many ways."

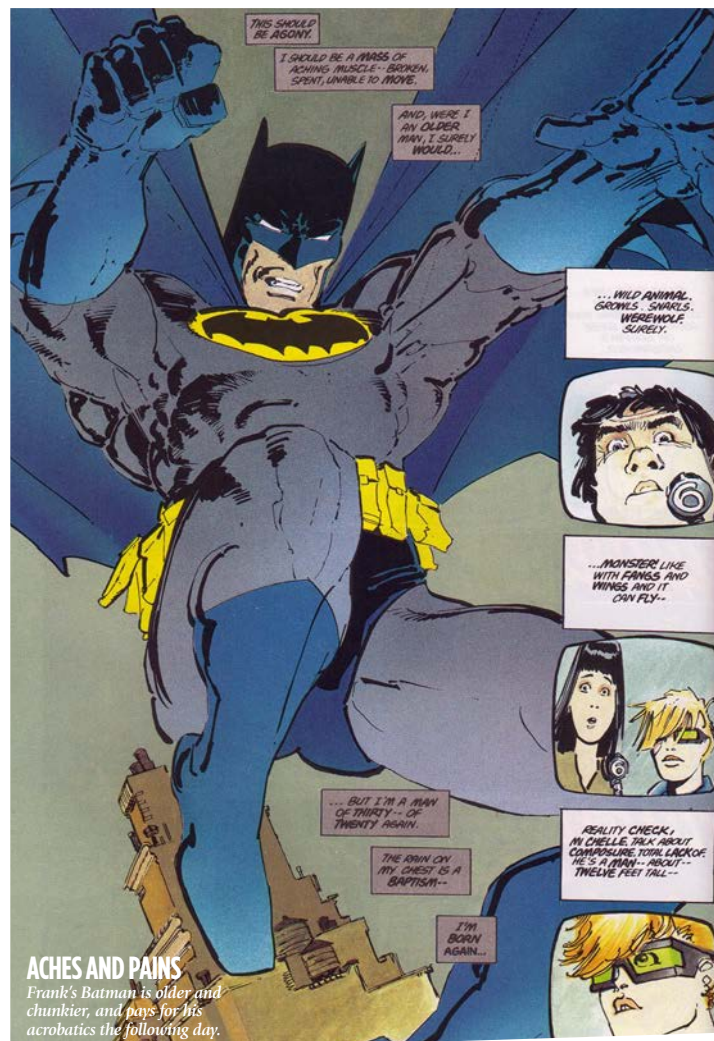
YEAR ONE

Written by Frank Miller and drawn by David Mazzucchelli, *Year One* shed new darkness on Batman's origins.



THE DARK KNIGHT RIDES AGAIN

Frank Miller couldn't resist having his knight on horseback in *The Dark Knight* storyline in 1986.

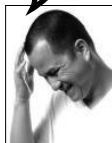


ACHES AND PAINS

Frank's Batman is older and chunkier, and pays for his acrobatics the following day.

L'IL GOTHAM

Keeping Batman visually diverse, Dustin Nguyen's comic is squarely aimed at a younger audience



Colourful, expressive and sketchy... not words you'd associate with some of Dustin Nguyen's influences such as Frank Miller and David Mazzucchelli.

However, the Vietnamese-American artist came up with a new concept for DC when he started designing some Batman snow globes in 2006. That idea never took off but the sketching he did around the project developed into a whole new take on Batman. "I wanted to take a break from dark, moody Batman," he explains.

DC Digital decided to experiment with a download-only Batman comic. Dustin was asked to create both the artwork and the stories for a series called L'il Gotham, where Batman and the other inhabitants of the city face various not-so-noir adventures.

"I wanted to keep the look and feel of the sketchier style I'd been doing. It's all done with watercolour and coloured pencils for line work. It's looser to keep that same energy going," says Dustin.

The lower age-range targeted was something he had to adapt to. He continues: "It was a bit tricky at first - not so much the illustrative side, but more in the stories and premise of the book. Most characters in Gotham are pretty dark, with some gruesome past stories that have made them who they are. So we've sort of had to work around those, and pull apart the funny, lighter side of things. A lot of it is dark humour polished into colourful panels."



DIGITAL

L'il Gotham started life as a digital-only publication, but because of its popularity DC made it available to its regular print readership.

PLAYFUL

With a naive approach to the artwork, L'il Gotham by Dustin Nguyen brings a child-like quality to his artwork, which is meant to appeal to a younger audience.



BOBBLE HEAD

Toy designs were an influence on Dustin's novel-looking series.



DAWN ARCHER

In Greg Capullo's cover art for *Savage City*, the second chapter of *Batman: Zero Year*, the Dark Knight adds a bow and arrow to his personal arsenal.

➤ influenced not only my approach to drawing Batman, but also my life," says Jason. "It made me a lifelong Batman fan and introduced me to the comics. This vision of Batman has influenced my work most. I still love that costume, how the character moves, and the world that Tim Burton built."

Three further films were made with Keaton reprising the role again in *Batman Returns*, followed by Val Kilmer in *Batman*

What Batman really needed was cohesion. With thousands of storylines behind him, how could fans make sense of Batman? Scottish writer Grant Morrison took on the challenge. With stories such as *RIP*, in 2008, Morrison mixed the ridiculous Silver Age concepts in with the more serious realism that followed.

"I really enjoyed working with Grant," says Tony S Daniel. "He would take these old, sort of psychedelic ideas and

❖ I base Gotham on the way Christopher Nolan presented it in the newer films, to give it a modern feel ❖

Forever and George Clooney in *Batman & Robin*. Together, the pictures grossed over \$1 billion. Meanwhile, on television, *Batman: The Animated Series* reprised comic book stories, in the bold graphical style of Bruce Timm, between 1992 and 1995. A new generation was introduced to Batman. In comic shops, *Batman Black and White* appeared in 1996. In each issue, different artists drew Batman in their own styles, from Moebius to Frank Miller, Walt Simonson to Simon Bisley.

modernise them. It made me go back and find them, to try and figure out what he was up to in *RIP*. There was a lot of background to research for the fans and that is partly what made it so special. It was such a layered story."

Batman continues to be one of the richest franchises in any medium. Based mainly on the work of Julius Schwartz, Neal Adams and writer Denny O'Neil in the 1970s, Christopher Nolan's films *Batman Begins*, *The Dark Knight* and *The Dark Knight Rises*



BATMAN 66

The nostalgia around the 1960s TV series is so strong that there's a monthly comic done in that camp style.



DETECTIVE COMICS

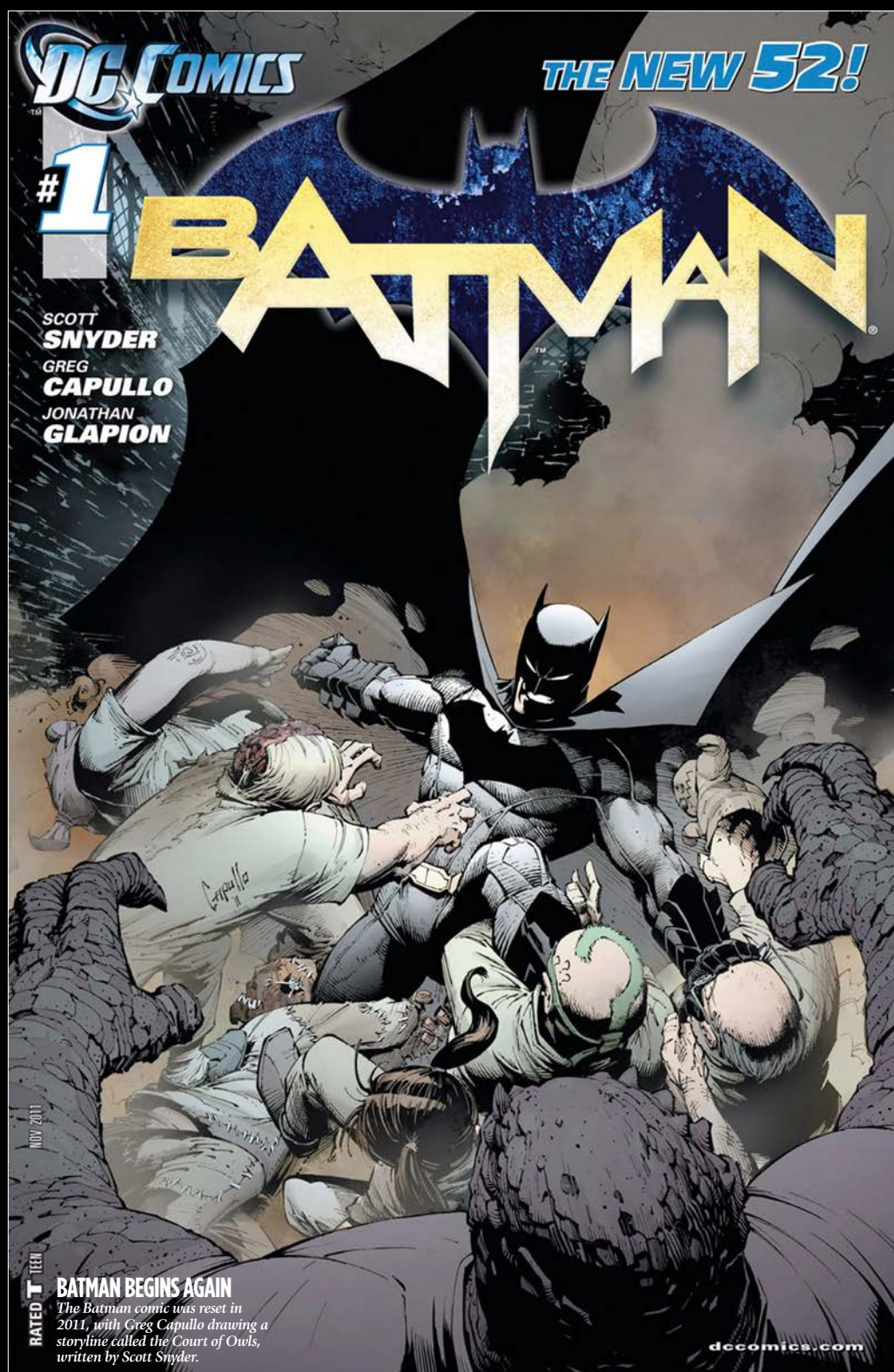
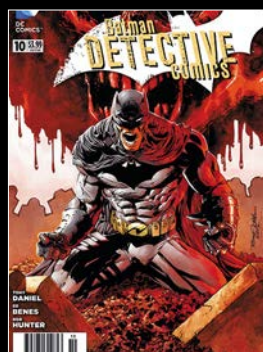
The New 52 issue 1 of Detective Comics – a new beginning with this striking Joker cover by Tony S. Daniel.

have been hugely successful, netting over \$2.3 billion at the box office. The Dark Knight won two Oscars. Meanwhile, there are 12 Batman and Batman-related titles on the newsstand. Nolan's rendition of Gotham resonates with current artists.

"I base Gotham on the way Christopher Nolan presented it in the newer films, to give it a modern feel," says Jason, who's working on the new series Batman: Eternal. "For Batman: Eternal, I hope to pull some more gothic elements into the visuals and to take things to another level again. I always try to push myself with every issue I draw and change things I don't like. This is the biggest project I've done and I want it to be the best. This is going to be one epic story, and I feel fans will really dig into it and love it." ●

MODERN BATMAN

Some recent covers by Tony S. Daniel, who's one of today's top Batman artists.





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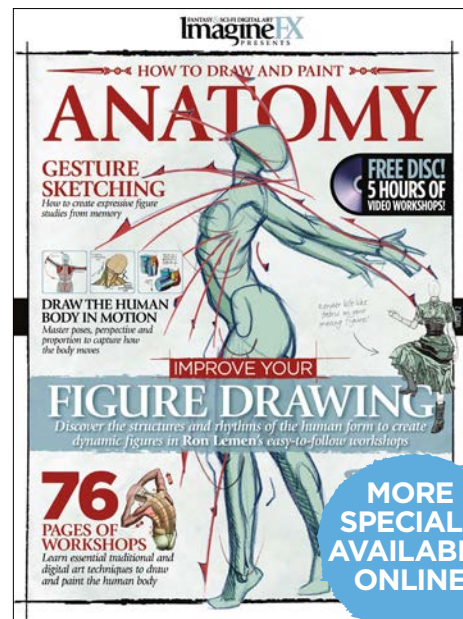
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BACK ISSUES

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 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 Beckett 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.

Issue 108 May 2014



This issue we explore the art of the Seven Kingdoms with a Game Of Thrones special. Mélanie Delon paints Daenerys Targaryen for our cover, we talk to the key creatives on the show, and even chat with its creator George RR Martin about his vision for the stories. All this, plus even more great art!

*Resource files are only available from issue 85 onwards.

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

LOCATION: New Jersey, US
ALUMNI: Stephen Bissette,
 Dave Dorman, Steve Lieber,
 Alex Maleev
WEB: www.kubertschool.edu



The son of Joe, Adam Kubert has made a name for himself mainly drawing characters such as X-Men, Hulk and Wolverine at Marvel.

STUDIO PROFILE

THE KUBERT SCHOOL

How an iconic cartoonist left a legacy extending far beyond the pages he created, and inspired several generations of artists

Joe Kubert says he received \$5 a page for his first paid gig as a cartoonist. That was good money in 1938. That was great money for an 11-year-old.

It was the beginning of a glittering career that would take the American comic-book artist from Manhattan's High School of



Music and Art to the Comic Book Hall of Fame – via DC Comics and his own creations, including Tor, Son of Sinbad and Viking Prince.

Joe founded the Joe Kubert School of Cartoon and Graphic Art in 1976.

"I've always had the thought that it would be great if there was a formal school situation where an aspiring artist could gain this knowledge," he said in a 1994 Comics Journal interview. "I knew nothing about setting up a school, or curriculums, or teaching... that abysmal ignorance was devoid of fear. So I just rolled ahead."

Joe spotted a house for sale in his hometown Dover, New

Jersey – an old 23-room mansion built in the early 1900s. It had a carriage house with two apartments over a four-car garage, set in over seven acres of land. It was, he and wife Muriel decided, the perfect place to set up a school.

When Joe died in August 2012, sons Adam and Andy – respected comic artists

in their own right – took over the school. They pride themselves in staying true to their father's vision.

"It really hasn't changed," ➤



THE KUBERT SCHOOL

The students at the school are taught a range of disciplines relating to the comics field.



ALUMNI ADVICE

Kubert graduate Steve Lieber share his memories of the school, and explains why it works so well



What was your time at Kubert like?

I was in the comics and illustration programme at the Kubert School from 1987 to 1990.

I went in completely ignorant of even the basics of art. I didn't understand how to draw basic forms. I didn't know how perspective worked. I had never drawn with a brush. I'd never been exposed to basic colour theory. I had a faint grasp of storytelling from reading lots of comics, but I couldn't tell why some things worked and some things didn't. At the end of my three years there, I landed a storyboard job at the very first ad agency I visited, and I've been a steadily employed freelance artist ever since. I can't say anything about what the school is like today, but at the time they gave me exactly the education I needed to launch my career.

What are your lasting memories of your time at the School?

My main memory of the Kubert School – or the Joe Kubert School as it was then – is of long and very intense discussions with a few of my classmates. We'd spend hours and hours discussing what we'd learned, scrutinising and criticising each others' work and sharing our obsessive interests.

What advice would you give to those thinking of enrolling, and what will they get out of their time there?

My advice would be to get as much extra feedback as you possibly can from the teachers you click with. Just because you did something for one teacher doesn't mean another can't give you a critique on it. Also, the hard-ass, highly demanding teachers are very often the best ones. You should seek them out.

Dave Dorman's art has graced the covers of everything from Star Wars to Aliens, Indiana Jones to Heavy Metal.

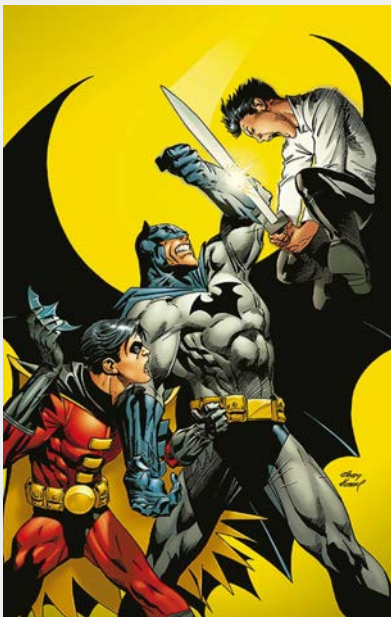


© Lucasfilm

“I knew nothing about setting up a school, or curriculums, or teaching”

Andy Kubert has worked on high-profile titles for both DC and Marvel, and is busy tackling DC's Batman line of titles.

Alex Maleev has carved out a niche with his instantly recognisable style on comics such as Daredevil, Moon Knight and Scarlet for Marvel, and more recently, drawing Batman at DC.



© DC Comics



© Oni Press

Comic book illustrator Steve Lieber remembers his time at the school fondly.

Scott Kolins made his name drawing The Flash for DC. He has just finished a run on DC's comic series Threshold.



© DC Comics

► says Andy, whose own credits include Batman & Son and Marvel 1602. "The passing of my father leaves a huge gap – not only with the school but within our family. Both he and my mom are sorely missed. We run the school pretty much the same way my father did."

It clearly works. Stephen R Bisette (Swamp Thing), Dave Dorman (Star Wars, Indiana Jones), Steve Lieber (Whiteout and Hawkman), Alex Maleev (Daredevil) are just some of the school's esteemed alumni.

It's a family-run business with a family-run feel. Where Andy and Adam took over the running of the school from father Joe, Andy's wife, Theresa, has taken over from their mother Muriel. Class sizes are small. One-on-one instruction is paramount.

"We have 95 students in total," course



© DC Comics

Amanda Conner has worked on Power Girl and Birds of Prey for DC and X-Men Unlimited for Marvel.



Everyone who studies at the school has the opportunity to hone their skills in subjects such as digital painting, using state-of-the-art tools.

“Many of our applicants would rather focus their energies simply on cartooning and nothing else”



leader Mike Chen explains. "That's first-year, second-year and third-year students combined."

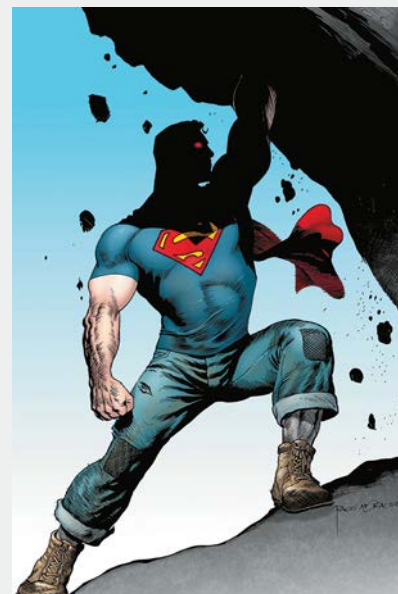
Mike says the Kubert School is unique in its purist approach to cartooning. He says courses similar to the ones that Kubert offers are available elsewhere, but usually only as part of "large and impersonal liberal arts programme"

Ralph Morales has built up a reputation as one of the most in-demand superhero artists currently working, and his work has been seen in titles such as JSA, Action Comics and Identity Crisis.



© DC Comics

Teacher Andy Kubert leads by example, as his captivating vision of Batman and Robin ably proves.



© DC Comics

and often imposing lessons in other unwanted subjects and disciplines as a condition of enrolment.

"Many of our applicants would rather focus their energies simply on cartooning," Mike says, "and nothing else. And we are the only accredited school dedicated to training students in all aspects of the cartooning business."

"This is the only one focusing directly on the mainstream comics medium," he continues, "Marvel, DC, Dark Horse, Dynamite-type titles. But we also facilitate other storytelling genres and mediums along with self-publishing ventures. We try to cover as many bases as possible."

"The team and I are committed to continuing what Joe started in 1976 and the School's future is bright. It's a fitting tribute to Joe." ●

THE KUBERT SCHOOL

Adam Kubert has worked not just for Marvel, but also DC and Dark Horse.



© Marvel

LIFE AT KUBERT

Adam Kubert on what to expect if you enrol with the illustrious Kubert School



"The Kubert School has a very varied curriculum. In its first and second years it includes subjects such as basic drawing, the human figure, narrative art, methods and materials, advertising and lettering. In the third year of its full-time programmes, it also teaches subjects such as sequential storytelling, the business of art, and advanced techniques and creation of style.

As well as its full-time teaching, The Kubert School also offers correspondence courses, summer sessions, Saturday classes and evening classes. Evening classes teach topics such as life drawing, basic drawing and graphic storytelling. The school's teachers include Andy Kubert and myself, illustrator Brian Buniak, illustrator and cartoonist Mike Chen and established comics artist Jan Duursema. We offer a range of experience and skills to students."



© Comic the Comic Book Company

Art by Mike Chen, illustrator, cartoonist and academic supervisor at Kubert School.



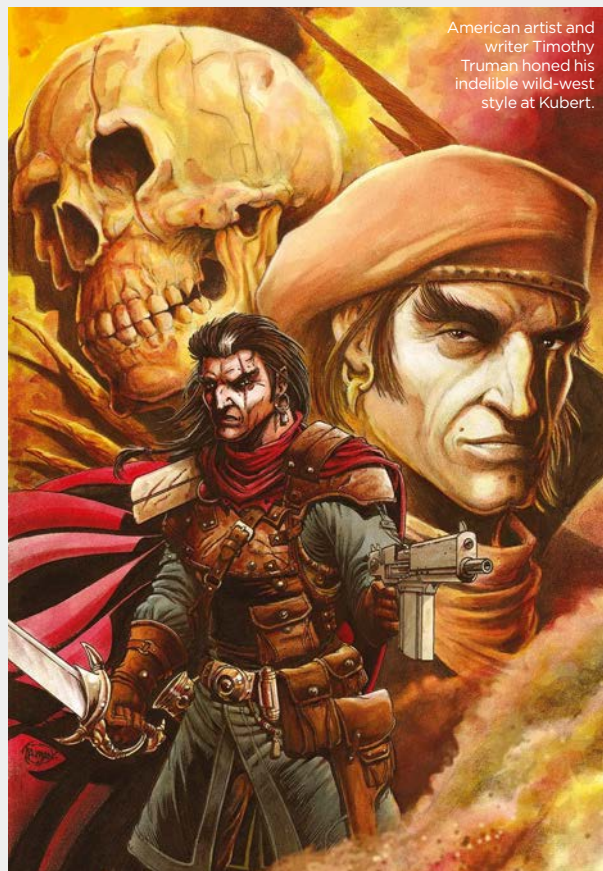
© DC Comics

During Tom Mandrake's career he's worked on DC's The Spectre and Martian Manhunter.



© Rick Veitch

Kubert graduate Rick Veitch says Joe Kubert had a profound influence on his life.



American artist and writer Timothy Truman honed his indelible wild-west style at Kubert.

© IDW Publishing

Sketchbook

Simone Bianchi

The Italian comic book artist opens up his sketchbook, giving a masterclass in process and composition

Artist PROFILE

Simone Bianchi

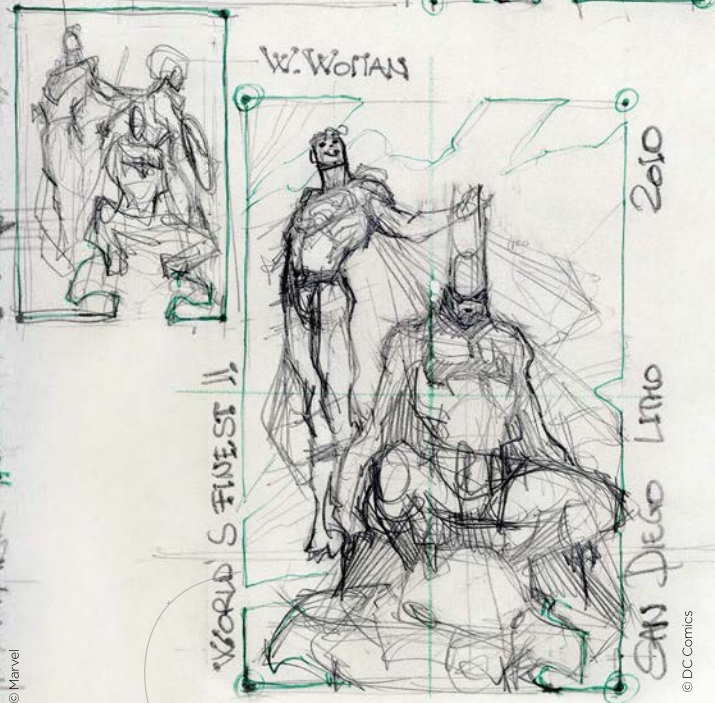
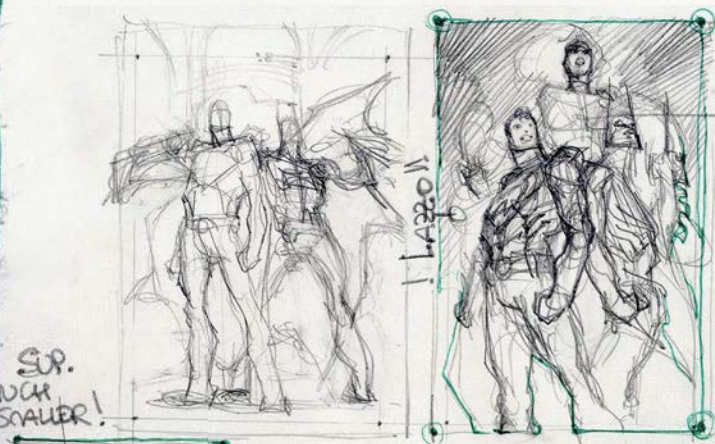
COUNTRY: Italy



Comic book illustrator, painter and art instructor Simone has worked for DC and Marvel, contributing to titles such as Detective Comics, Green Lantern and Wolverine. He lives and works in Tuscany, with studio manager, art dealer and wife Gloria Bianchi.
www.simonebianchi.com

FANTASTIC FOUR

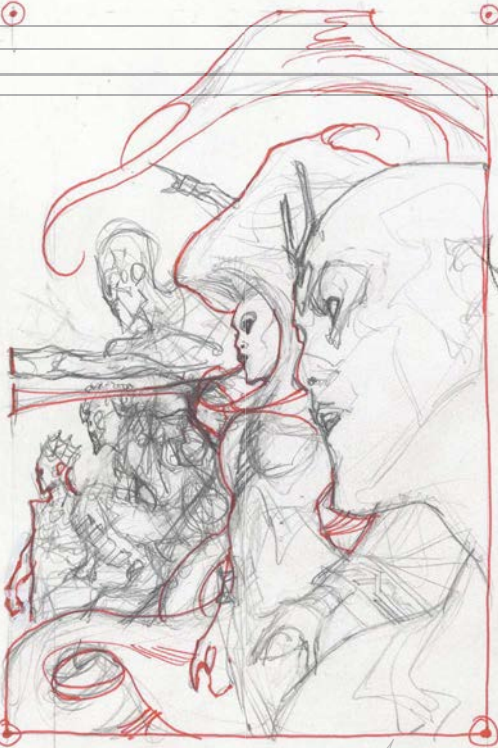
"This sketch was inspired by Alex Ross's profile composition. Originally, Sue Storm was in the foreground. But I thought it was more interesting to bring the characters together, to draw them like flames."



SUPERMAN AND BATMAN

"I gave a static framing to an idea of the two characters' weight and importance in the comic Olympus."

© Marvel



INHUMANS

"Another example of a Fantastic Four-style composition. It's more static because I wanted to give the right weight to this royal family."

HULK

"In the final version cover you only see the big Hulk, because my editor considered it more effective. In my original composition, his figure was incorporated into his profile."

IND. + HULK

#2



© Marvel

"There are simpler solutions, but doing things the hard way often leads to new and exciting ideas"

15A

"This sketch is a conventional headshot: there are obviously simpler, more instinctive solutions, but doing things the hard way often leads to new and exciting ideas."

© Marvel

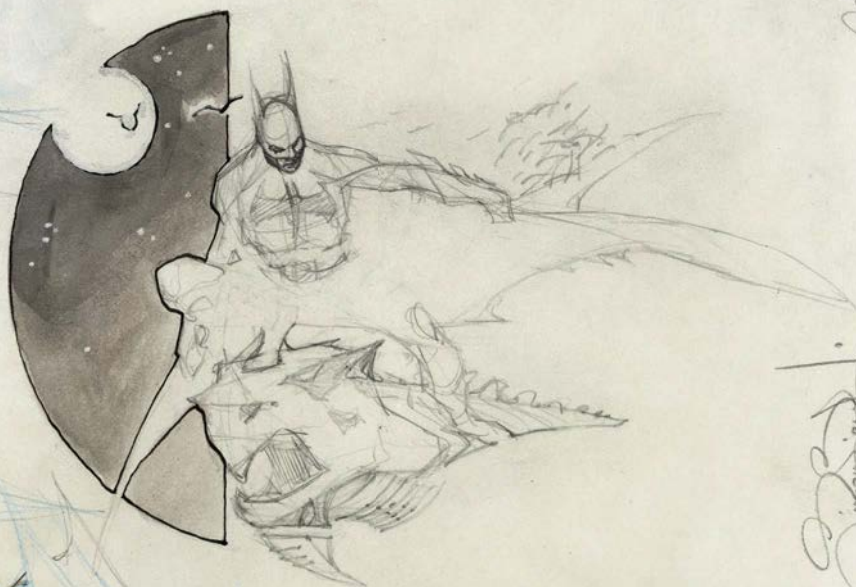
Sketchbook

© DC Comics



BATMAN VS JOKER 2012
CHRIS NORDEN/SAN DIEGO COMIC.

BATMAN



2012

THANOS #2



CLEANING UP HIS
MOUTH/CHIN FROM
BLOOD...

STRONG LIGHT
FROM THE TOP..
DARK, VERY DARK
ON THE BOTTOM
AND IN THE
BGROUND
WITH ONLY
EXCEPTION OF
THE FLAMES

© Marvel

THANOS

"I wanted an iconic framing of this character; it had to convey his satisfaction looking at the destroyed Titan's ruins."

BATMAN

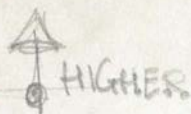
"I tried to achieve a more realistic way of rendering the battle in motion. In the lower part of the sketch is my attempt at reinterpreting the iconic sight of Batman on a gargoyle."

"I wanted to focus on the main theme: Thor not being able to raise his hammer"

THANOS COVER



THE TWO SKULLS ARE LIKE AN ALLEGORY OF THANOS'S FATHER AND MOTHER..



THOR FOR ASGARD #6

"This was the last cover I had to do for my Thor For Asgard run, and I wanted to focus on the main theme: Thor not being able to raise his hammer. It's floating over the column because the lighting seemed, to me, the best solution to conclude the run's last chapter."

sketchbook simone Bianchi

THOR: FOR ASGARD #6



WOLVERINE ORIGINS

"These covers were inspired by my run on Detective Comics. These extreme close-ups reveal the creases on Deadpool's mask, for example."

CAPTAIN AMERICA

"This is one of the few cases where I managed to leave a larger empty space, compared to the size of the characters. It's an experiment that I want to try again in the future."

Very DARK Background!!!

WOLVIE'S CLAWS IN THE VERY FOREGROUND!!



© Marvel

WOLVIE #22

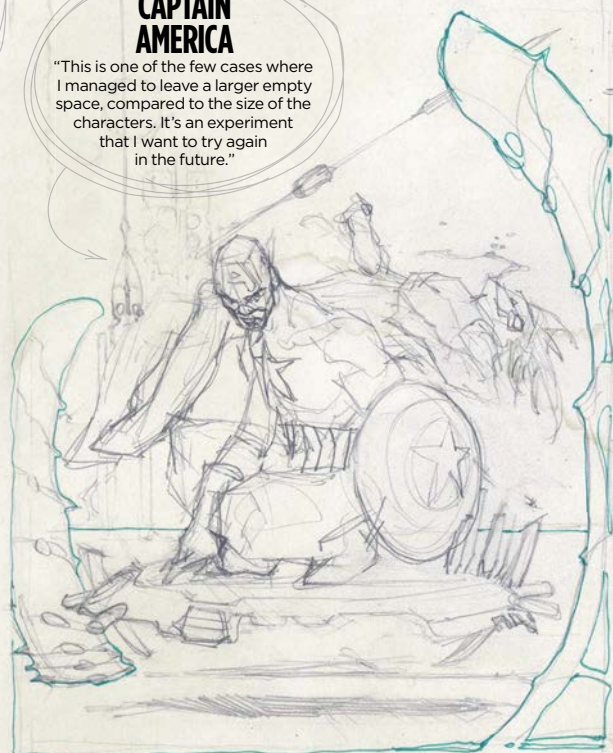
TAKE A DIFFERENT SOURCE OF LIGHT TOO



WOLVIE #23

Very LIGHT Background!!

As OPPOSITE TO THE OTHER ONE DEADPOOL'S GUN HERE IN THE FOREGROUND



#3

CAP VARIANT COVER

© Marvel

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.

Willow by Cris DeLara
CGWorkshops Instructor

CGWORKSHOPS
cgworkshops.org



Online Learning 2014
VFX and Entertainment Design

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FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX Workshops

Workshops assets are available...

Download each workshop's WIPS, final image and brushes by visiting this link. And if you see the video workshop badge, you can watch the artist in action, too.



Advice from the world's best artists

66



This issue:

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Pencils & Photoshop

ADD TEXTURE AND GRIT TO AN IMAGE

A defiant Dark Knight faces off against multiple visages of his long-time nemesis the Joker, in DC Comics artist **Ken Lashley's** striking image

There was a time when I treated my digital canvas just like a traditional canvas. I'd work without layers and build up the image through my line work and filled areas. I didn't concern myself with layers, but that became problematic as I moved forward and tried to make changes.

These days I'm continuously improving my use of layers and applying different digital art techniques. Yet I still treat each digital painting as a single-layered image. To me it's the easiest way to figure out how to do it. I think that's

the way you should start. If I had followed the recommended path to painting digitally, this would have slowed down my growth quite a bit.

ImagineFX is the magazine that I picked up when I was starting to learn and improve my digital art skills. By this time I was well into my career as a traditional illustrator when I made the decision to tackle the digital canvas.

I've learned a lot over the years. The last work I did for Lucasfilm was for the annual Celebration event in Germany. I painted Groovy Galactic Love all on

Artist PROFILE

Ken Lashley
COUNTRY: Canada



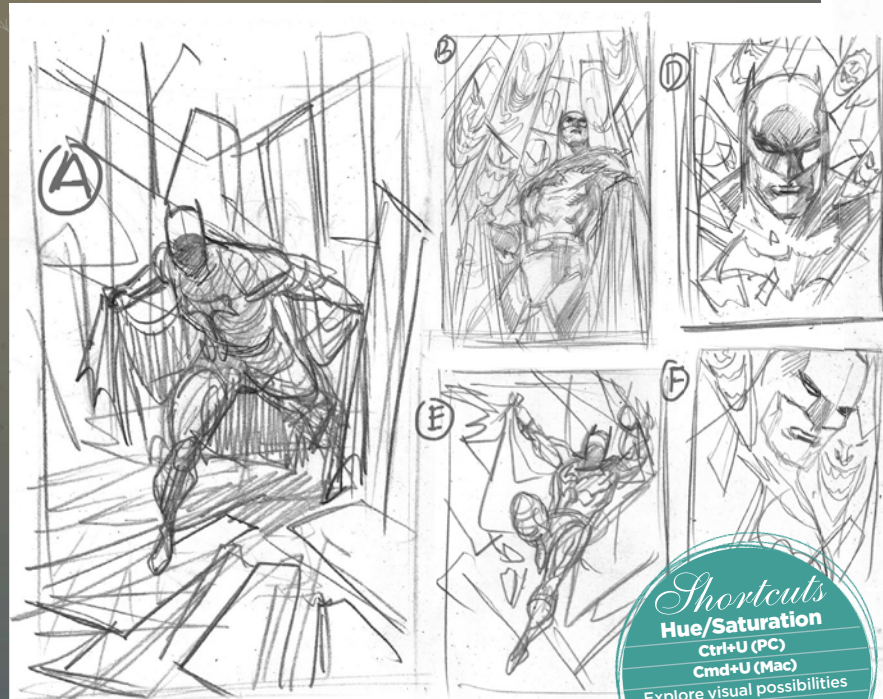
Ken, known online as Ledkilla, has been working in the field of comics and illustration for over 20 years. He's busy doing covers for DC on titles such as Earth 2, Superman and Ravagers.
<http://ifxm.ag/ledkilla>

my own and am rather proud of that piece. It was done digitally on my Cintiq. I noodled in some places and then realised that I was working too close to the image. I had done these beautiful details in the scene, but when I zoomed out it was all but impossible to see them. Still, that's just part of the learning process.

Diving in and making mistakes paid off for me – funny as that may sound. You have to be willing to make mistakes and produce awful-looking results, so that someday you can look back at them and recognise how much you've improved.

1 Make a rough start on the image

I usually start a painting assignment with a series of roughs, probably four or five. My role as a cover artist at DC is to develop as many ideas as possible. Sometimes they're off the beaten track, yet some have the potential to influence the original concept. Take this cover, for example. I was given lots of different ideas to play with, and the broken glass fun house was just one of those.



Shortcuts

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

Explore visual possibilities by quickly changing the flat colours of the background



Batman™ and The Joker™ © DC Comics



2 Just a tool from the digital art box

I decide to produce the image digitally, using my Cintiq. I was very lucky to be given one by a co-worker, because he wasn't using it – lucky me! It took me the best part of seven months to learn how to use it properly. I didn't just grab a stylus and start drawing on it right away, either. I was a little intimidated by it, to be honest. The solution was to change how I looked at the device. It's just a tool to produce art, nothing more, nothing less.



3 A gritty scene

By creating loose-looking roughs I'm able to work out the image's colour scheme and general layout. From here I progress to the pencil stage. I then decide not to ink the illustration; it makes more sense to colour over the top of my line art. I don't want my image to feel like a page from a real comic book. Instead, I'm keen to for it to have a hybrid appearance, and I can achieve this by keeping the raw pencil marks visible. It adds to the texture and grit of the piece.

PRO SECRETS

Mistakes are good for you

Don't be afraid to make mistakes. Photoshop is a tool, your Cintiq is a tool, your computer is a tool; they're not going to make you a better or worse artist. You have to learn how to use the tools of the trade. In other words, don't be afraid.

4 Time to call in extra art help

This is turning out to be an interesting job. I have a monster deadline with a number of other jobs on the go, so I decide to bring in my team on this project to help by laying down flats. It becomes a collaborative effort. Andrea Errico, my colourist, lives in Italy so this piece has a real international feel!



Shortcuts

Deselect Layers

Ctrl+D (PC)

Cmd+D (Mac)

Quickly remove a selection and move to another one, for a more efficient art workflow.

5 Achieving the right feel in the image

Now the colour flats are in place. I like the feel of the piece at this point – I can see what the final is going to be after just a few selections and adjustments. The next lighting stage sets up the tone. Sometimes it's not about being true to the subject matter, but rather establishing a certain feeling or emotional tone in an image. You can't colour Superman and Batman the same way. If you do then it just won't feel right.



6 Exploring colour options

The highlights in this painting are crucial. At the moment there are a lot of flat tones, and the colour palette is subdued. Myself along with my colourist try a crazy red in the early stages on the glass with yellow in the area surrounding Batman, but it's just too strong a look that doesn't play well with the rest of the piece. So we go back to the opaque greenish colour I came up with during the rough stage. If you look closely there's a hint of Joker green in the final piece. The fun house could have been stronger in some areas, but overall I'm happy with the effect.



7 Discussions over glass

Here's the most crucial part of the cover: the broken glass. This area takes the most amount of thinking about. There's a lot of back and forth between myself and the ImagineFX team. We throw ideas around as well as colours, but in the end it's a more traditional approach that wins the day. Indeed, I think this makes the image.



8 Making the Dark Knight pop

Batman's face really changes when we add the highlight. I thought the figure was completely finished, but then realise that he doesn't pop out of the scene. So I take a white or a true light, or a rim light, and place it inside the framework of the image. The result: the Dark Knight comes to life. As soon as I do this, the image progresses from a solid piece to something that's both striking and strong.



9 Quick turnaround

I manage to complete this image in under 48 hours. The one thing about comic book work is that it has to be done fast. I've done illustration work for Lucasfilm and other clients that's taken weeks, but this was a true comic assignment. Sometimes you only have hours to get a piece or page completed. I've done covers in as little as three hours. I think the longest I've ever had to work on a cover is a couple of weeks, and that's always when I'm working on licensed properties such as He-Man. There's always more back and forth because of the extended approval process. But when you're working on the superhero books you have to get in and get out, and get things done quickly. ●

PRO SECRETS

The right tools

It's almost impossible to work today without an FTP site, a scanner and Photoshop. You can't do the job without the proper tools. I'm asked to scan in and send WIPs all the time. Clients assume I'm capable of doing this, so you have to be ready to be your own production team. As for traditional tools, I use hard leads like a 2H or 4H - they don't require as much clean up after you scan. The softer leads are great for drawing, but harder to scan.

Manga Studio & Photoshop SHOW A CLASH OF CULTURES



Brush strokes

I love the particular feel when my colour strokes look like they were done with the actual dry brush, just like my traditional inks on the line art. Those clouds were coloured from the strict black layers at Manga Studio, and this enables me to preserve the sharpness of each stroke I need.

Artyom Trakhanov draws advanced explorers fighting a group of cavemen, in a scene from the comic **UNDERTOW**

This is a spread from a comic series called **UNDERTOW** (written by Steve Orlando, drawn by myself and published by Image Comics). **UNDERTOW** is a story about a modern water-breathing Atlantis civilisation, and a group of rebel scientists, warriors and artists escaping from its cruel regime. Those people search for the new life for their group, and even go to the forbidden Dry Land to discover how to breathe air and set up a colony.

In essence, it's a space exploration story in reverse, with the group of underwater creatures in their bulky landsuits, filled with water, exploring a completely alien world that's teeming with humans from the Stone Age and dangerous creatures. The story continuously gives me the chances to draw weird and gritty stuff. This piece from the third issue of our series (out now), for example, shows an ambush carried out by the ravenous cavemen, as they attack our Atlantean explorers at dawn.

Panels without any panels

Even when a comic page is just one picture spread without panel separation, there's still the opportunity for timing and advanced eye movement that you can direct. These red circled areas are equivalent of in-cut comic panels, emphasising the act of violence of the battle. The crowd on this spread is intentionally coloured in monotone, enabling the composition's centre to stand out in the lights of the rising sun. The red elements make it possible to anchor the secondary attention of the reader.

Artist PROFILE

Artyom Trakhanov

COUNTRY: Russia



As well as drawing comics and freelancing on a commission

basis, Artyom runs a weekly Russian webcomic series called **MAD BLADE** and also works on **UNDERTOW** for Image Comics.

<http://ifxm.ag/trakhanov>



Inking in Manga Studio

I don't use any interesting custom brushes in Photoshop, and my Manga Studio arsenal is pretty standard, but here's a hint: I often want to emulate my traditional inks with the digital instruments of Manga Studio, and so may you. Create a new layer with the Black attribute, and try drawing with the standard Pen, Brush Pen (Light), and a Pattern Brush called Large Airbrush for the scratchy shadows. Adjust the last two with the Change Width option (set Thicken To Specified Width to at least 0.14mm), and the very authentic dry brush will be at your service. You can also try changing the Dark Brush Pen options, but I think that by itself it's really dull and far too simplistic looking.

Colour palette

I never aim for realism in my colouring. I want my comics to be vibrant and eye-catching, but also atmospheric. And so I still try to 'stylise' the reality. The beautiful sun looming from the horizon means that the next pages will all be painted with red palette of the morning sun, but here I try to catch the first light's movement. In addition, I don't like leaving all the line art totally black, so there are a lot of nuances of darker shades of colours.



How I create...

A BATTLE SCENE AT SUNRISE



1 Page layout

In this tiny thumbnail I'm building the composition of the page and also trying to catch the feel and motion of the scene. That's why I always break down the full issue in colours with these tiny roughs (many comic artist do these only in black and white). These layouts are crucial for the body of story, and most of my conceptual decisions are made during this stage.



2 Detailed sketch

This is my pencil stage! I love this step because when painting digitally you still have a ton of work ahead of you after this, but in comics you usually just need to cement your sketch. I draw the cavemen separately, and then combine them into one composition. I like the feeling of uncertainty in this spread: the Atlanteans seem to be handling the attack, but there's a lot of wild humans to deal with, and our heroes' postures indicate sheer exhaustion.



3 Get inking

Usually I do 90 per cent of **UNDERTOW** with traditional ink. But for a piece this large I print some of the main parts of the pencils on A4 paper, ink it with a couple of brush pens, scan it, compose my working file and then finish it with digital inking. I do most of my digital work in Manga Studio EX 4.0, because it's ideal for black and white graphic and colour flats. The final colour rendering takes place in Photoshop.



Photoshop

CREATE DYNAMIC FIGHT SCENES

Everyone's favourite adamantium-enhanced mutant takes on a horde of katana-wielding ninjas in **Mukesh Singh's** action-packed artwork

There was something about the rippling, confident energy in a drawing that opened a gateway of possibilities to the seven-year-old me. It was the front page of a Superman comic book drawn by the inimitable Gil Kane. The dynamic pose, the taut muscles, the sheer believability of what was just ink on frayed paper sparked a flame that guides my work to this day.

In this workshop I'll show you how I develop an image of a fight between Wolverine and ninjas belonging to The Hand, a supervillain organisation based

in Japan. The underlying guiding forces will be the essence of the character, the superhero genre and a classic comic book splash page that features multiple characters. I'll go through the basics of my workflow, and look at my decision-making process while painting the scene.

Composing an image with multiple characters is often a challenge. My solution is simply to treat every figure as the hero. They're not just a bunch of pixels and inks and graphite. They're a living being. Believe it yourself and your drawings will, too. Onwards!

Artist PROFILE

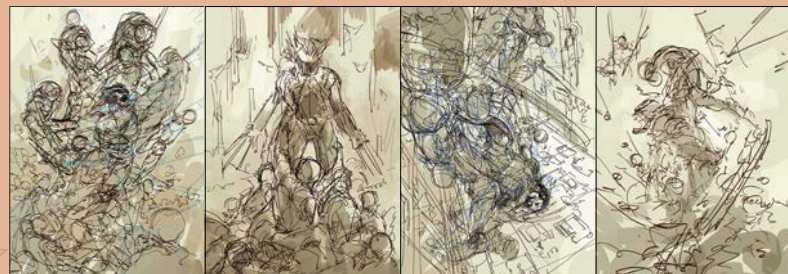
Mukesh Singh
COUNTRY: India



Mukesh, aka Nisachar, loves comics. He also believes

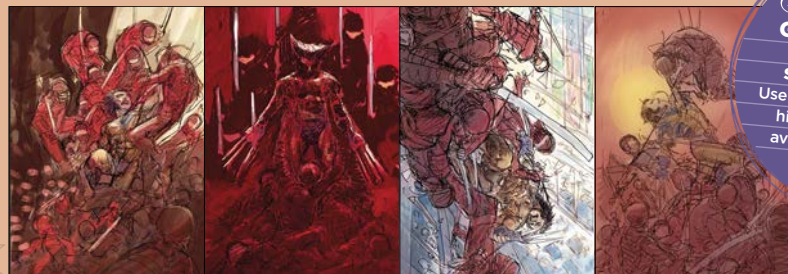
there's a doomed planet exploding right now, and a small rocket with an infant Superman is headed for Earth.

<http://ifxm.ag/m-singh>



1 Stream of consciousness

Without worrying about accuracy, I scribble a few sketches to explore the characters and the layouts. The aim is to visualise the ideas as they develop in my head as fast as possible. I look for force and dynamism, but also clarity. Because the image will feature multiple figures, I start with Wolverine's stance to maintain the focus on him, and then work out the reactionary poses of the ninjas around him.



2 Bringing things together

I refine the doodles and develop colour keys for the thumbnails, roughly working out the overall colour scheme, mood and lighting for the images. Fortunately, Wolverine's costume colours are different to those of the ninjas, so this will help to make his figure stand out. Deciding on an image's colour scheme beforehand, however loosely, will help you to make appropriate decisions come drawing time.



Shortcuts

Gamut Warning

Shift+Ctrl+Y (PC)

Shift+Cmd+Y (Mac)

Use this in Color Picker to highlight colours not available in the CMYK colour space.

3 In the palm of The Hand

The first thumbnail of the four I draw works out the best in my eyes. It features an easily identifiable, front-on pose of Wolverine at the centre of the image, striking out at one ninja, classic Logan style! You might notice that some of the ninjas are arranged like the fingers of a hand. I say might, because it's meant to be a subtle feature. ➔





4 Maintaining energy
I decide to revisit the layout. Once again, I scribble Wolverine's figure first and then arrange the ninjas around him. I try to keep the energy of composition consistent with the thumbnail.



5 Time to get serious
I add another layer on top of my sketch, essentially light-boxing it. To better see the results I convert the red of the sketch into cyan using the Hue/Saturation tool. I draw Wolverine without his costume to check his anatomy. I keep his traditional short and bulky frame, exaggerating his fingers to almost twice the size of those of the ninjas. I want to obscure Wolverine's feet because showing them kills the impact of his action. I redistribute the other ninjas while trying to avoid tangents, which can be a problem for an image with multiple figures.



PRO SECRETS

Save your selections

To save selected portions of your image that you'd like to access later on, go to **Select > Save Selection**. Alternatively open the **Alpha Channel** dialog and press the **Add New Channel** icon. Photoshop will add it as an alpha channel in the file.

Shortcuts

Soft proof

preview

Ctrl+Y (PC)

Cmd+Y (Mac)

Gain a rough idea of what the image will look like when printed.



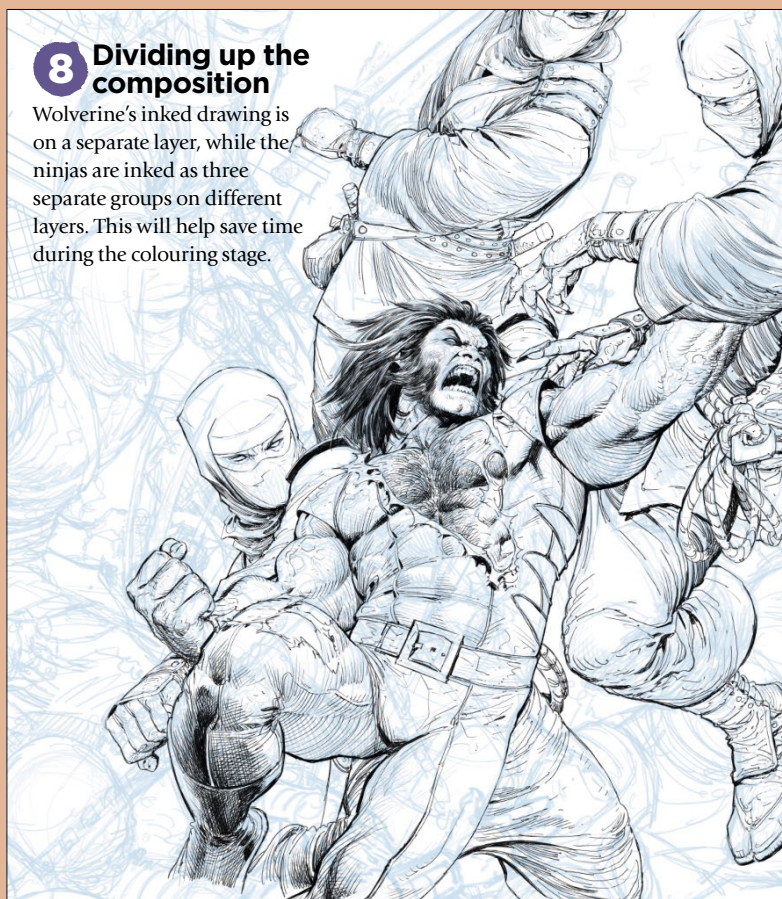
6 Refining the drawing
I redo the ninja near Wolverine's feet because his horizontal pose kills the main action line going from the bottom left to the top right of the image. I could fix this during the colouring stage because his costume is red and will blend in with the rest, but I redraw him all the same. I arrange the weapons of the ninjas in a way that complements and draws attention to Wolverine. Similarly, all the ninjas are looking towards his direction, which adds one more layer of focus to his figure.

7 Narrative details

Because I'm working digitally I treat the pencil and ink stages interchangeably, tweaking details here and there. I show some tearing in Wolverine's costume to indicate that some time has passed since the fight started. I overlay it on top of the anatomy drawing, which helps me visualise how the costume and its design elements flow over his body.

8 Dividing up the composition

Wolverine's inked drawing is on a separate layer, while the ninjas are inked as three separate groups on different layers. This will help save time during the colouring stage.



9 Split the workload down the middle

I thicken some of the figure outlines to define them more strongly. I ink the background elements, as well as filling it up with less-detailed ninja figures. I normally don't go this heavy during the inking stage (even this level of inking is considered mid-level by industry standards) because my current style uses colours for the heavy lifting. For this artwork I split the workload 50/50 between them.



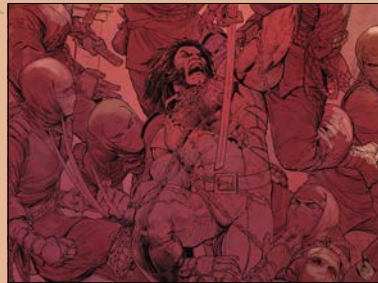
10 Flattening my colours

Using the Lasso tool I select each figure and apply a flat colour on a separate layer, saving them as a selection. I then collapse the flat colours into two levels: foreground and background. I add a layer group for the ninja groups, Wolverine and the background. Then I select the saved Alphas and add them as masks for the group folders. This will ensure that the colours won't show up beyond the white portions of the group layer mask. I then discard the superfluous flat colour layers.



11 Rough colour pass

Using a large grunge brush I add some colour splotches as a rough pass. Think of it as using tinted papers for your pastels and pencils or laying in the first, big wash of a watercolour painting. Because a large portion of the image will feature the ninjas' red costumes, I decide to use some shades of reds ranging from crimson to vermillion for this pass.



12 Colouring on the canvas

I quickly add transparent colours, between 30 and 60 per cent Opacity, to Wolverine's figure using Photoshop's standard Pencil thick brush. I layer in the colours, essentially mixing colours on the canvas itself. Then I quickly lay in a mid-neutral tone of red for the shadow parts and a light reddish-orange tone for the lit portions of the ninjas. I use the angle of the light to gauge which parts will either be in shadow or light. This stage gives me a good idea of how the overall colour scheme and the values will look in the final image.

13 Coaxing the forms

I continue to push towards light tones for the lit area and dark tones for the shadows. Part of Wolverine's face and upper torso should be in shadow, but because he's the main figure I ignore it. To diffuse the focus on his figure so that he doesn't stand out too much, I distribute his costume colour scheme elsewhere in the image. I use the dull blue shade for the gear portions of the ninja costumes as well as their skins. I finish the spiked ninja first and then use the tones and colours from his figure for his companions.



WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSH: PENCIL THICK BRUSH

I use this for most of my colouring works in Photoshop. It's versatile enough to mimic matte media such as pastels and transparent ones like markers. Play around with the settings first.



14 Further refinements

I add another pass of tweaking to the figures, going over each to refine the strokes, shades and highlights. As in my original thumbnail I use dull, dark tones in the background to add punch to the saturation of the foreground figures. I use the reds of the ninjas as the overall basic mid-tone of the image, the yellow of Wolverine's costume for the portions facing the light, and the blue of his costume for the shadow portions.

15 Detailing minor elements

I add colours to the swords, chains and other miscellaneous elements in the drawing. I apply some blood splatter to Wolverine's costume, which adds one more touch of drama to his figure. Using a Curves Adjustment layer, I then tweak the highlights and the shadows to bump up the contrast. This is essential because whatever colours I see on my screen will print about 20 per cent darker.



PRO SECRETS

Previewing print colours

If your image is intended for print it can be useful to convert it every once in a while, to shift the colours to CMYK. You can do this by going to Edit>Convert to Profile and then choosing your CMYK preset. Repeat the same process to return the artwork colourspace back to RGB. Thanks to ace colourist Alex Garner for this tip!



16 Finishing up

As a final step I add some atmosphere to the image using a large wispy brush. This helps recede the background and pops out Wolverine and the foreground ninjas. And now my one-sided fight scene is complete!



Oils & Photoshop

DEVELOP YOUR ART ON THE CANVAS

Discover how one artist is able to bring their own style to an established comic series, as **George Pratt** explains how he paints a Fables cover

For a long time now I've enjoyed the artists that Vertigo has used for the Fables comic covers. James Jean's covers were spectacular and João Ruas is no slouch. I had heard that João had left the series and was surprised – and pleased – when Vertigo editor Shelly Bond decided I should create a cover for Fables issue 127. Mine would be the last of that particular story arc, with the other three

covers being supplied by John Van Fleet, Greg Ruth and Dan Dos Santos. Pretty good company!

Shelly forwarded me some notes by writer Bill Willingham, which gave me a clear sense of the story. They were originally looking for a Battle Royal scene with quite a few characters from the series. Not quite the type of image I produce, really. My images are more iconic, dealing with one or two

characters. I felt the main thrust of the piece was the fight between Rose Red and Prince Brandish. I chose to focus entirely on Rose Red and the feeling that her battle is also an inner struggle.

I'm a traditional artist and decided to work the final in oils, although I blended in other media. Working with Shelly on this cover was a joy. Her insights were wonderful and she was pretty hands-off throughout the process.

Artist PROFILE

George Pratt
COUNTRY: US



George teaches full-time at Ringling College of

Art and Design, and during the summer months spends time with the Illustration Academy in Kansas City.
<http://ifxm.ag/g-pratt>

1 Sketch with photos

Before I send sketches I'll work out ideas very simply, focusing more on gesture than actual drawing. Once I'm happy with a few of these I'll go ahead and shoot reference to work from. I shoot digitally these days and work from black and white images. I've included two of the reference shots here with the blessings of the model, Onoh. My sketches are never very detailed and luckily the editors I've collaborated with trust my instincts enough to work with looser sketches.



2 Taking the next step

I was hired to do this cover as I was leaving to go teach at the Illustration Academy, which I do every summer in Kansas City. We have life drawing two nights a week there and I was able to hire Onoh to pose for Rose Red. Turns out she's a fan of the series, so she was excited to work with me on this. I spent a good deal of time playing with the light while shooting. Moving it about constantly looking for something that would solidify the silhouette and accentuate the forms nicely. It's designing with the light – pushing shadows and trying to show more with less.

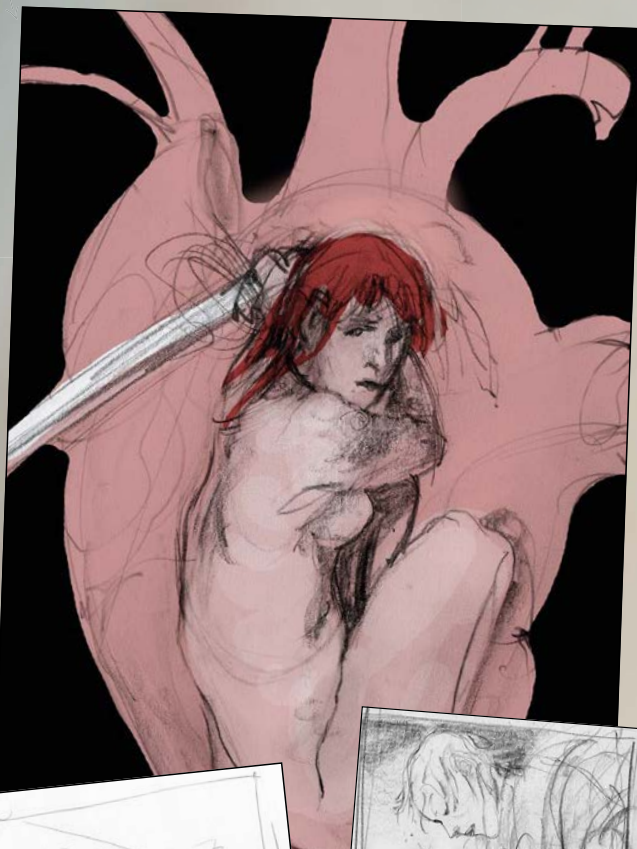


All images © Vertigo



3 A thorny situation

There are three sketches that I'm happy with. The first is of a nude Rose Red with a sword hacking her way out of a forest of thorns and roses. The second was of Rose Red in battle armour, the third was of a nude Rose Red with a sword in protective fetal position inside of a giant heart. I was surprised that they chose the nude of Rose Red in the giant heart, although they asked me to put her in another setting because one of the other four covers by John Van Fleet, unbeknownst to me, contained a giant heart. So I sort of combined the first sketch with the last sketch and placed her in a womb of thorns.



PRO SECRETS

Don't be clever, be clear

One of the things that helps my students is pushing the idea of the power of the silhouette and how it should be self-descriptive. I don't focus on details, but rather the whole image.

4 Beginning the final image

Using the same reference that I used to produce the sketches, I begin the piece as a pastel drawing using Nu-Pastels. Working on toned paper I focus on the silhouette of Rose Red, paying particular attention to the figure's gesture, tonal values and temperatures. I'm concerned with detail at this point, but rather a sense of solidity with the figure as a volume – its presence.



5 Apply varnish layers

Once I'm happy with this initial statement, I seal the piece with Krylon Crystal Clear spray, lightly dusting it on top of the pastel in several coats. When this is dry I brush Spar varnish (Sail Boat polyurethane) over the whole piece. You need good ventilation for this because it's very toxic. I use a cheap brush when I do this because it has to be thrown away afterwards. I put two coats of this on the piece, letting each dry completely. This is usually several hours for each layer. Spar varnish lends a nice yellow glaze over the piece and also creates an interesting surface to paint on.



6 Mass and shape with oils

I then paint the figure, bringing in more juicy paint in some areas. Again, less is more and I'm not painting details as much as mass and shape. I'm working to hold my figure's silhouette and to play with edges in a substantive way. A softer edge to enable the eye to travel past and turn the form. A harder edge for the eye to bump up against and follow, directing the eye to a point of interest.



7 Pushing and pulling

Lots of subtle work with temperature here, as I tackle the warm and cool relationships to turn the forms, and push and pull the viewer's focus. I'm constantly painting, then destroying, obliterating one passage to get to something better. Sometimes I'll paint something that I'm very happy with, but in trying to save that passage you can destroy the rest of the piece. So you have to not be so precious, and be willing to kill the thing you love to make a better piece.



8 A splash of red

Most of my attention is on the face, pushing the expression and colour, letting this be the spot of detail that would lock the viewer's interest. I spend a great deal of time working the warm and cool relationships, and paid particular attention to the eyes and lips. I see the red hair as being the final touch on the piece, although that comes later.



9 The home stretch

For the final attack I need to bring in the thorns. Using a paint roller or brayer, I roll Carbon Black etching ink around the figure. Using Gamblin's Gamsol, I then pull the ink from the image, allowing the greenish colour below the black to be revealed and creating the vines and thorns in the process. I need only to add some highlights and paint in a few opaque vines to give them a little more presence. I paint the hair next. I want it to be less about reality and more an interesting, punchy shape.



10 Scanning for reproduction

I scan the final piece on my home scanner (Epson 1640 XL 12x17-inch) using Silverfast software. I have to scan images of this size in about four to six scans, then let Photoshop's Photostitch feature put them together seamlessly. I then tweak the final file, pushing the contrast a bit, so the final file is darker than the original. Compare the detail of the vines with the printed cover and you'll see that the background was darkened quite a bit. There's no digital manipulation of the image other than playing with colour and levels. ●

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

USE WHATEVER BRUSH WORKS

As far as brushes go (since this is a traditional piece), I like Filberts and flats, and will use whatever I have at hand. Sometimes I'll make use of nice brushes such as sables, but I'm also happy painting with synthetics. I have a Raphael Kolinsky Sable watercolour brush #2 and #3 that I use for detail work, like eyes.





Photoshop

EMBRACE CHANGE TO BUILD AN IMAGE

Sean Andrew Murray explains the range of techniques he uses to construct an urban fantasy landscape that evolves as he paints

Cities – whether real or imaginary – are a subject I often tackle in my art. But I especially love creating deep layered, fantastical city scenes. In this workshop I'll demonstrate my various digital drawing and painting techniques, and you'll see how an idea can evolve over the course of working on an illustration or concept. Being willing to modify or throw elements out that aren't working is key. Allowing the momentum

Artist PROFILE

Sean Andrew Murray
COUNTRY: US



Sean is a freelance concept artist and illustrator who's worked

in the game industry for over 13 years. This year, he's releasing his first self-published illustrated book called *Gateway: The Book of Wizards*, which was funded through Kickstarter.
<http://ifxm.ag/sa-murray>

of the piece to guide you is essential to making successful, dynamic images.

Just like natural environments, architecture-based environments should be designed in an organic way that draws from the same principles as those used in character design, creating an interesting interplay of shapes and negative space. Urban environments are fascinating because they combine elements of nature, engineering, architecture, anthropology, culture, art and history. The way cities

evolve and grow over time should factor into your design choices.

Showing what daily life is like in your city scene is a great way to add depth to the image, but it can also be fun to show some sort of conflict or narrative event to draw the viewer into the world you're depicting. City scenes also provide the chance to tell multiple stories.

Here, I'm going to depict a scene from the world I created for my upcoming book: *Gateway – The Book of Wizards*.

1 Roughing it

To start off, I use a fairly large, versatile flat brush to block in a basic layout with interesting positive and negative shapes. I establish a simple horizon line and some quick perspective lines, but I don't like to go overboard because worrying too much about plotting precise perspective lines for every building ends up killing a fresh, dynamic composition. I use staggered horizontal and diagonal lines to lead the viewer's eye around the image.



WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSH:
FLAT_WIDE_SOLID

This brush is made using a flattened Hard Round brush. Using the pen tilt feature, it makes thin, crisp straight lines, or chunky wide lines for versatile sketching. It's like a calligraphy pen, only bigger. The brush enables you to sketch at different widths without having to either switch to a new brush, or change the diameter constantly.



2 Places everyone

Once I'm happy with the basic background layout, I begin to integrate the characters in the foreground and middle ground. I imagine a confrontational scene between a magic-wielding Fish-person, and a portly pistol-packing passer-by with an armful of groceries. I want the characters to be expressive and eye-catching, to get people interested in looking closer. In addition, a bystander taking a smoke break while leaning on a pedestal in the background will draw the viewer deeper into the image.

3 Changing gears

After struggling with a few attempts to tighten and refine this initial composition, I finally decide to try something else with characters that aren't as close to the foreground. Sometimes you have to recognise when an image is fighting you, and fight back by changing the approach. I remove the characters from the foreground and rough in a new composition. There's now a more dynamic conflict between an Imperial Inquisitor and a thieving wizard fleeing the scene with a coveted book of spells.





Shortcuts Layer Blending

Modes

Cursor keys (PC & Mac)
Enables you to quickly step through different blending modes for your layer.

4 Don't forget your lines

I'm primarily a line artist, so to execute a finished painting with confidence, I require a fairly tight, finished drawing first. I use a medium thickness Flat Round brush with little or no fade to it to make my lines. Usually, I'd go one more step and print this out on paper to draw even tighter lines with a 0.3mm mechanical pencil, but I want to keep this piece all-digital. I focus on the middle and background elements first.



PRO SECRETS

Play with your sketch

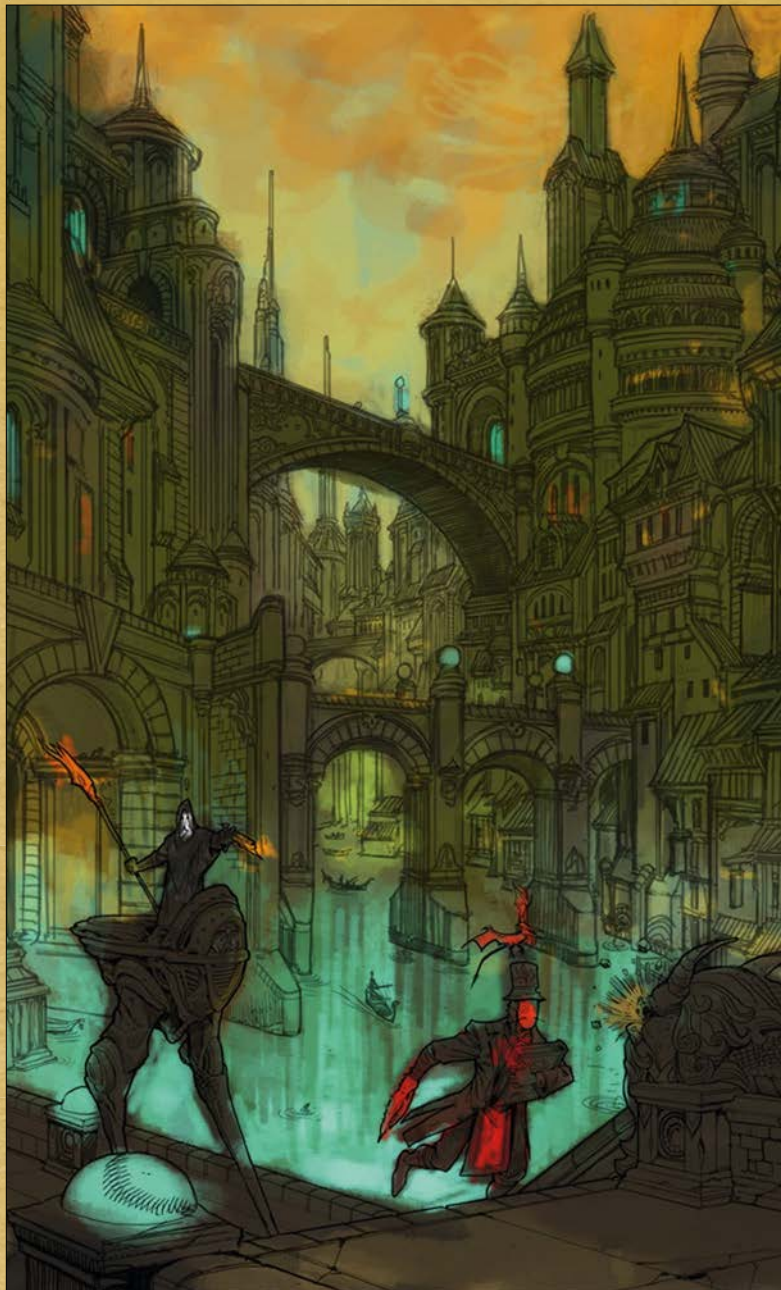
Sometimes you have a sketch that works in some places, but not in others. A good habit to get into here is chopping up your sketch and putting the pieces on different layers. This enables you to push and pull different elements of the image in different ways. You may want to bring the characters forward while dropping the background further back, for example. This flexibility is the advantage of working digital!

5 The stars of the show

Next I use a tapered inking brush to draw in tight line work for the foreground characters. These lines are more refined and darker than the ones I use in the middle and background. I'm trying to mostly define shapes, volume and design, and not use line work to do much shading in this case. At this stage, the foreground elements are on a layer separate from the background elements. This makes it possible to play around with the layout and the Opacity of both.

6 Introduce colour into the scene

Once I'm satisfied with the drawing, it's time to start adding colour. In a layer underneath the drawing, I block in a basic colour scheme. Right away I produce something I like, but sometimes this process can take a while as I experiment with different palettes. I also usually work on the image fairly zoomed out, perhaps even on a separate scaled-down copy of the image. This ensures that I only focus on the overall image, instead of getting caught up too early on details.



7 In the spotlight

Using light is a great way to focus the viewer's eye in the right places, especially with complex environment scenes. I imagine a warm setting or rising sun's light bouncing off of the buildings on the left, while dropping the buildings on the right into shadow. I also make sure that my characters are popping off the background using contrast. Note that the dark figures in the foreground pop off the background, which is mostly made up of bright saturated colours.

Shortcuts

Copy All Layers

Ctrl+Shift+C (PC)

Cmd+Shift+C (Mac)

Instead of merging down or flattening, paste the merged image into a new layer.

PRO SECRETS

Pick colours from within

I don't really use colour palettes. Instead, I tend to establish my colours in a small colour study. But I do like picking colours from within the image once I'm happy with the direction of the piece. This prevents me from straying too far from the original colour study, which could end up killing the piece. If you do introduce a new colour, make sure you vet it by zooming out and comparing it to earlier versions.

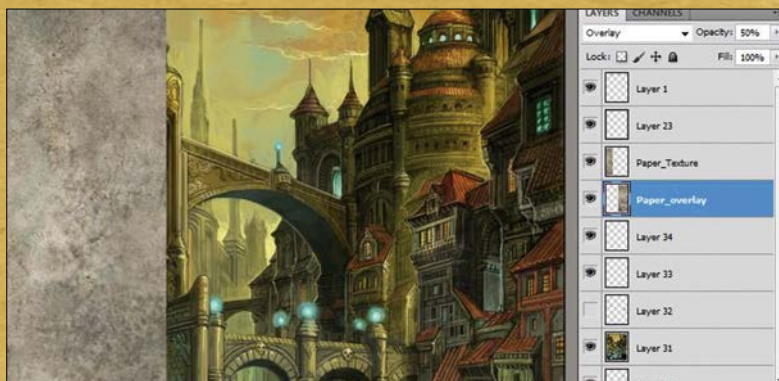
8 Start the smoke machines

Layers of fog and mist can be your best friend, or your worst enemy. They can be used to push elements into the background using atmospheric perspective and to enhance the depth of your scene, but apply too much and things can quickly get out of hand. I use separate layers to mask or erase out foreground elements. I'll sometimes even have separate layers for middle ground, background and distant background atmosphere, and then play around with the Opacity of each layer until I'm happy with it.



9 Get the balance right

Now is a good time to balance my colours in the piece before I head into the finishing touches stage. I feel like the image is too saturated, so I play around with the saturation levels, even creating a saturation Adjustment layer. I then tone down the saturation in the background and sky, while keeping the saturation for my foreground characters so that they pop. I also tone down the fog again, in order to show more activity in the water.



10 Achieving the right textural quality

At this stage I'm painting in a lot of information and defining the textures of the surfaces and materials in the image. I also place a paper texture over the entire image and set it to Overlay at 50 per cent. It helps to bring some cohesion to the entire piece. The slight noise of the paper texture bridges the gap between the variety of painted surfaces, and helps to downplay the look of digital paint.



11 Adding those all-important details

Finally I add in some fun details to the image, such as signs and people walking across the bridges. I also go around the piece to see if there are any areas that just have glaring omissions. Honestly though, a piece like this could be worked on easily for another five or six hours if you really wanted to, but it isn't necessary seeing as how the image works as is. A good rule to keep in mind is that you should be able to stop working on an image at just about any point along the process and feel proud of it.

SketchUp

GETTING STARTED IN SKETCHUP

SketchUp's intuitive Push/Pull tool will help you take your first steps on a three-dimensional canvas, says **Mark Roosien**



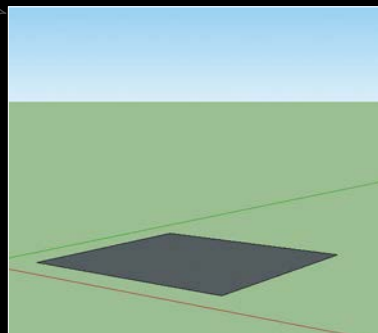
The aim of this new series of Core Skills is to introduce the 2D digital artist to an easy-to-use 3D software. SketchUp enables you to achieve great-looking results quickly. It's free for personal use, so if you haven't done so already, download it from www.sketchup.com.

By using the Push/Pull tool, you can manipulate 3D objects very easily. Select

the Push/Pull icon from the toolbar and click an object's surface on your screen. This makes it possible to either push the surface away from you, or pull it towards you. Even when you're unfamiliar with SketchUp, the Push/Pull tool will enable you to create a simple 3D model – let's say a rudimentary house – in just a few minutes, and over three easy steps, as I'll demonstrate here.

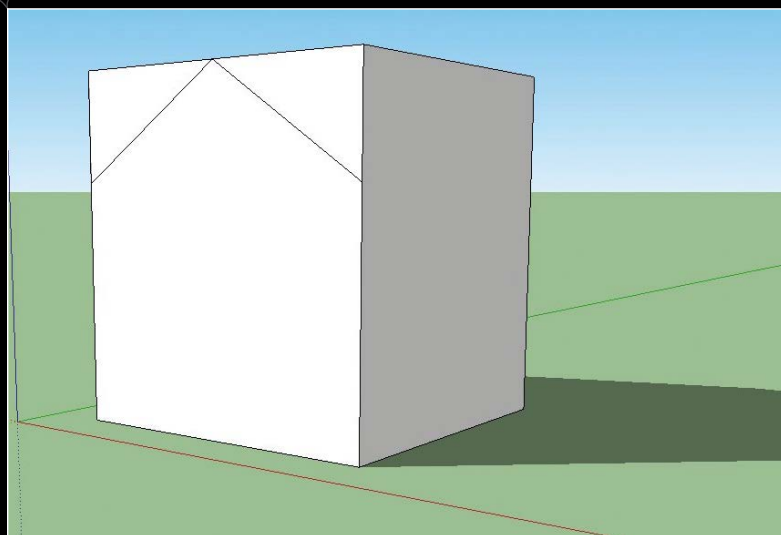
1 Draw a rectangle and pull up

Start by creating a new document and selecting the Rectangle icon in your toolbar. To create a rectangle on the ground, just click and move the mouse until your rectangle has the desired shape. Now select the Push/Pull icon. Place the cursor on the rectangle, click and pull the rectangle up by moving the mouse. You just turned a 2D surface into a 3D object.



2 Draw a roof and push

Draw the outlines of a roof on the front of the object, using the Line tool from the toolbar. Start at the lower left and draw the line upwards towards the middle. SketchUp will show you the centre point. Now draw a line towards the lower right. Use the Push/Pull tool to push both triangles towards the rear of the object.



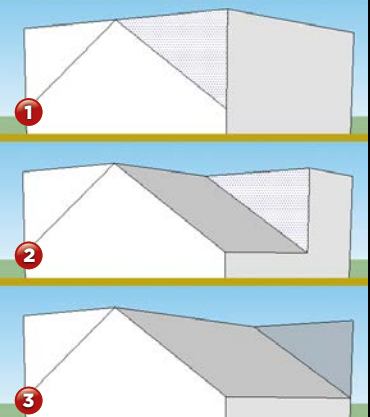
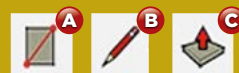
Artist PROFILE

Mark Roosien
COUNTRY: Netherlands

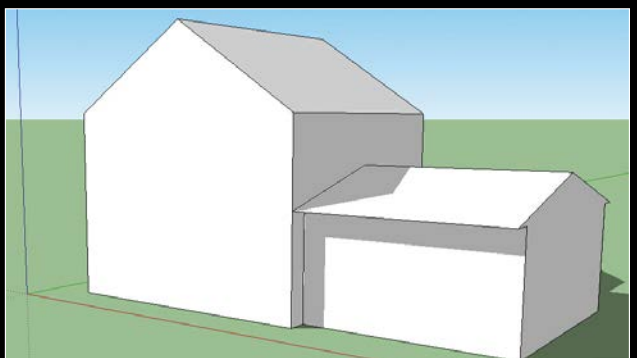


Mark is a self-taught artist who jumped from traditional media to SketchUp seven years ago. He specialises in nuts 'n' bolts sci-fi art. <http://ifxm.ag/mroosien>

THE PUSH/PULL TOOL IN ACTION



In this article I use the Rectangle tool (A), the Line tool (B) and the Push/Pull tool (C). When you click a surface with the Push/Pull, it becomes highlighted with blue dots (1). Move your mouse to the right and the triangle slides to the back (2). When you've reached the back, the message 'Off-set Limited' will appear on your screen. Click to make the triangle disappear (3), or use the Eraser tool. A slanted surface remains.



3 Create a home

Draw some outlines on the side of the house. Select the Push/Pull tool and place the cursor on the side of the house. Now pull, just like in step one, to create a decent-sized extension to the house. It's really that simple. Hold the scroll wheel while moving your mouse, to have a look at your model from different angles. ●

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mythological
creature using iPad's
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illustrator Mark Behm.

Monochrome

Tran Nguyen paints a
fantasy portrait image
using a muted palette
in colour pencils
and watercolour.

Block by block

How to quickly
concept and build a
structure for a fantasy
vista with master artist
Raphael Lacoste.

ISSUE 110 UK ON SALE *FRIDAY 23 MAY 2014*



Photoshop

IMPROVE YOUR KEYFRAME SKILLS



Film and video game artist **Kan Muftic** depicts a scene in a story and conveys emotions through gestures



Artist PROFILE

Kan Muftic

COUNTRY: England



Kan is a film and video game concept artist who's worked on

Godzilla, Guardians of the Galaxy, Edge of Tomorrow, Residue, Batman: Arkham Knight, and Batman: Arkham City.
<http://ifxm.ag/k-muftic>

Films, TV programmes, video games and even 30-second adverts need great stories. In most cases, these stories are written and handed over to an artist, whose task is to transform the words into a single example of engaging imagery: the keyframe. The main goal here is for the image to be able to tell a moment of the story without any additional description.

This is what I love doing the most, because it requires all of my skills: composition, light, colours, character design, anatomy and suchlike. It's also important to mention that keyframe illustration doesn't always require a huge amount of detail, as long as it describes the scene.

These days it's quite common to achieve this by combining a collection of

photographs, resulting in a quick and dirty painting. Indeed, I do that myself a lot for my clients. However, in this workshop I won't use any photographs because I believe a lot of originality becomes lost through photo-bashing. It's our responsibility as artists not to let this speed technique take over the more traditional approaches, and to paint whenever possible.

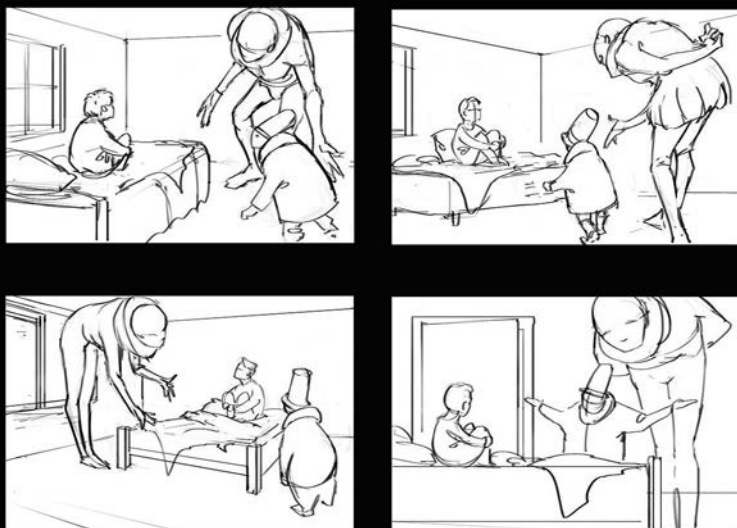


1 Read and digest the script

The first step I normally take is to read the script. It's an incredibly important stage because it sets up everything I do from now on. For the purposes of this workshop I conjure up a moment in a story called *The Pyjama Knight*. Jack is sitting on his bed at night, staring at Clownface and his friend Chubuscus. A strip of light from the hallway indicates a slightly open door and Jack's fear of the dark. Clownface is saying, "They have taken everything. We have no one else to go to, Jack..."

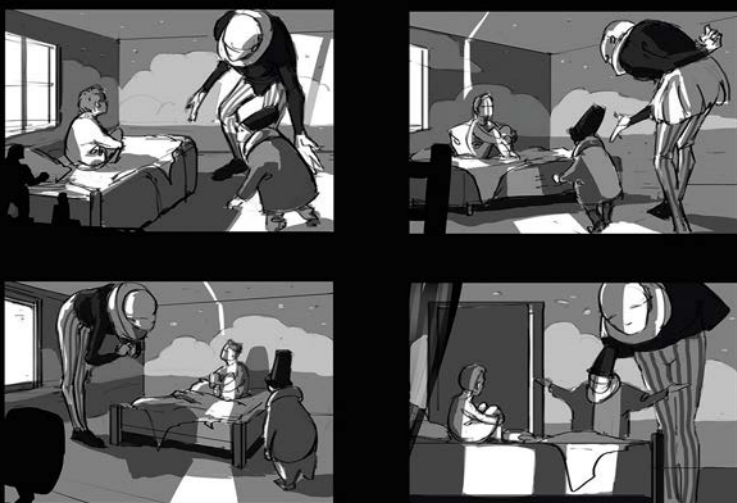
2 Imagining the scene

I don't just jump in and start doodling. Drawing is a form of communication, therefore I think first before I start saying anything with images. I relax with a cup of tea, close my eyes and imagine the scene unveiling in front of me. And soon, the important questions start popping up. Where would I observe this from? How do those characters behave – are they hectic or calm? What do their voices sound like?



3 Sketching out ideas

Having answered some of those questions, I decide to go for a Spielberg meets Miyazaki type of scene. A fragile kid is visited by some bizarre but friendly characters from a different realm. They're seeking Jack's help, which is the main point of this keyframe illustration. So I centre the two characters around Jack's bed, which will make him stand out as a protagonist – and the eventual hero of the story.



4 Designing the light

I always try to use light as a design tool, just like I do with shapes and colours. In this scene, I want to illuminate the room with the moonlight, but I also want to have a secondary light coming from the hallway. Cool moonlight will complement the warm interior light. For this stage, I use very flat but clear values – all in black and white.

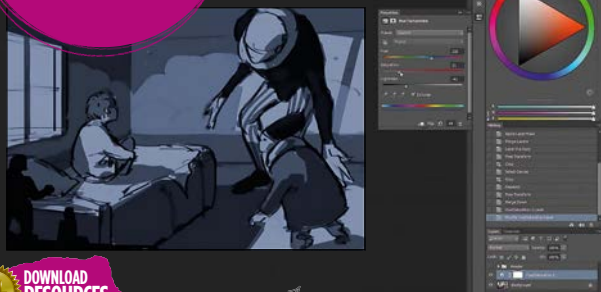
Shortcuts

Curves

Ctrl+M (PC)

Cmd+M (Mac)

One of the best ways to adjust values and correct colour in Photoshop.



DOWNLOAD RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

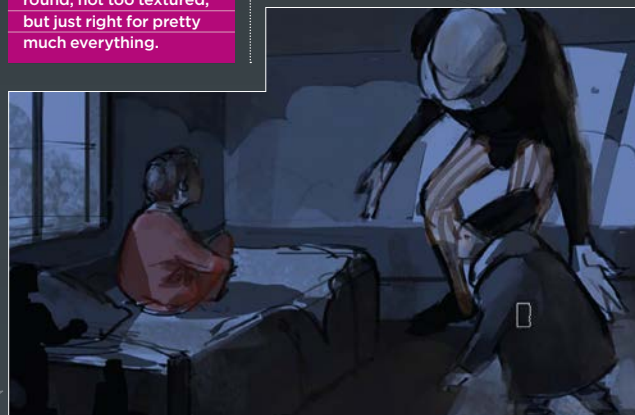
PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSH: TEXTURED SQUARE

I made this brush a while ago and I'm using it a lot. It's not too crisp, not too round, not too textured, but just right for pretty much everything.

5 Colour base

Moonlight will illuminate most of the room, so I create the base with a simple bluish tint. I do that by going to Image>Adjustments>Hue/Saturation and checking the Colorize box. Then I play around with sliders, finding the right tone. I always establish my base colour from the predominant light source. If this were an exterior scene set in daylight, I'd start with a warm colour.



6 Begin blending

Now that I have my base, I move the Color Picker slightly towards grey and start blending in the warmer tones. I say warmer tones because grey next to a cool colour appears warm. I don't jump straight to reds and yellows – instead, I approach them gradually to keep the overall harmony. This is usually the messiest part of my process.

PRO SECRETS

Start crisp and clear

It's one thing to create your personal art and experiment with abstract shapes, but even if you're very skilled at it, your clients can't tell what a messy sketch is going to become. Crisp edges are easier to blend into smooth and lost edges (and it's harder to do it the other way around). A simple black and white sketch with a clear value hierarchy usually does the job.

7 Warming up

I decide to bring in more warmth to the room, because I don't want the scene to look frightening. I create a new layer and set it to Overlay. Then I pick an earthy colour and start blocking it in from the lower left corner, away from the window with the cool moonlight. I place my strokes where I believe the cool light doesn't reach. However, there has to be some mixing, so I carefully blend in the strokes with the background.

8 Apply rim lights for clarity's sake

I want to further downplay the bluish tint, so after warming the room up I add bluish rim lights that suggest at outdoor light. They also help to define edges and the location of objects. When doing this stage, the colour progresses towards the colour of the light, not just towards plain white. I still keep everything fairly low in saturation.



Shortcuts

Color Balance

Ctrl+B (PC)

Cmd+B (Mac)

Use this shortcut to quickly unify colours in your image.

9 Hallway light

I roughly place in a stripe of warm light coming from behind Chubuscus and over the bed and Jack's face. The idea is to lead the viewer to Jack and present him as a character who's hiding in the shadows. All of this works on a subconscious level and it's exactly the kind of thing that helps tell the story better. Some of the light is reflected on Chubuscus and Clownface.



10 Body language

Jack stays slightly obscured by the stripe of light, but I want the other two characters to be expressive and connected to Jack. Clownface is a gentle giant while Chubuscus is a bundle of energy. When telling stories with characters, posture is everything. Jack is displaying insecurity, Chubuscus is curious and Clownface is exposing weakness.



11 Window projection

I decide to get rid of the bright patch behind Clownface. It's an unwanted focal point and also it isn't quite accurate. So I simply paint it out by extending the colours and the tone of the wall on the left. I want to make this fantasy encounter as realistic-looking as possible – even if that sounds like a contradiction in terms!

12 Interesting faces

As I mentioned earlier, I want to make those two characters slightly strange-looking but friendly. I'm making Clownface look very gentle, adding large lashes and a harmless mouth expression. Chubuscus gets more puppet-like features, such as nose and chin. Getting his facial expression to look tense is tricky.



13 Wall poster

Jack is a bit of a geek and I imagine him being a fan of video games. Perhaps that's where he meets strange people who reveal incredible mysteries, maybe even an unseen world that Clownface and Chubuscus are from. And what if there's a yearly gathering of similar-minded kids like Jack? Surely he would have some sort of poster as a memory or a statement?



14 Refining Clownface

I work on some details, mainly his face. I add a hint of his upper teeth, which instantly gives him more personality. I get caught up in rendering his hands, but realise what I'm doing and simplify them so as to not break the overall distribution of the detail. As I darken the whole environment, some of the highlighted features pop out. I'm achieving quite a cartoony palette and I'm happy with it.

15 Finishing up

I tweak the colour scheme towards yellow and place superhero toys in the lower left corner, for more visual interest. Next I fix the wallpaper and make the clouds on it smaller and cleaner. I add details here and there, but don't overdo it because I want to keep the focus on the scene as a whole. And there it is. Our Pyjama Knight keyframe illustration. ●

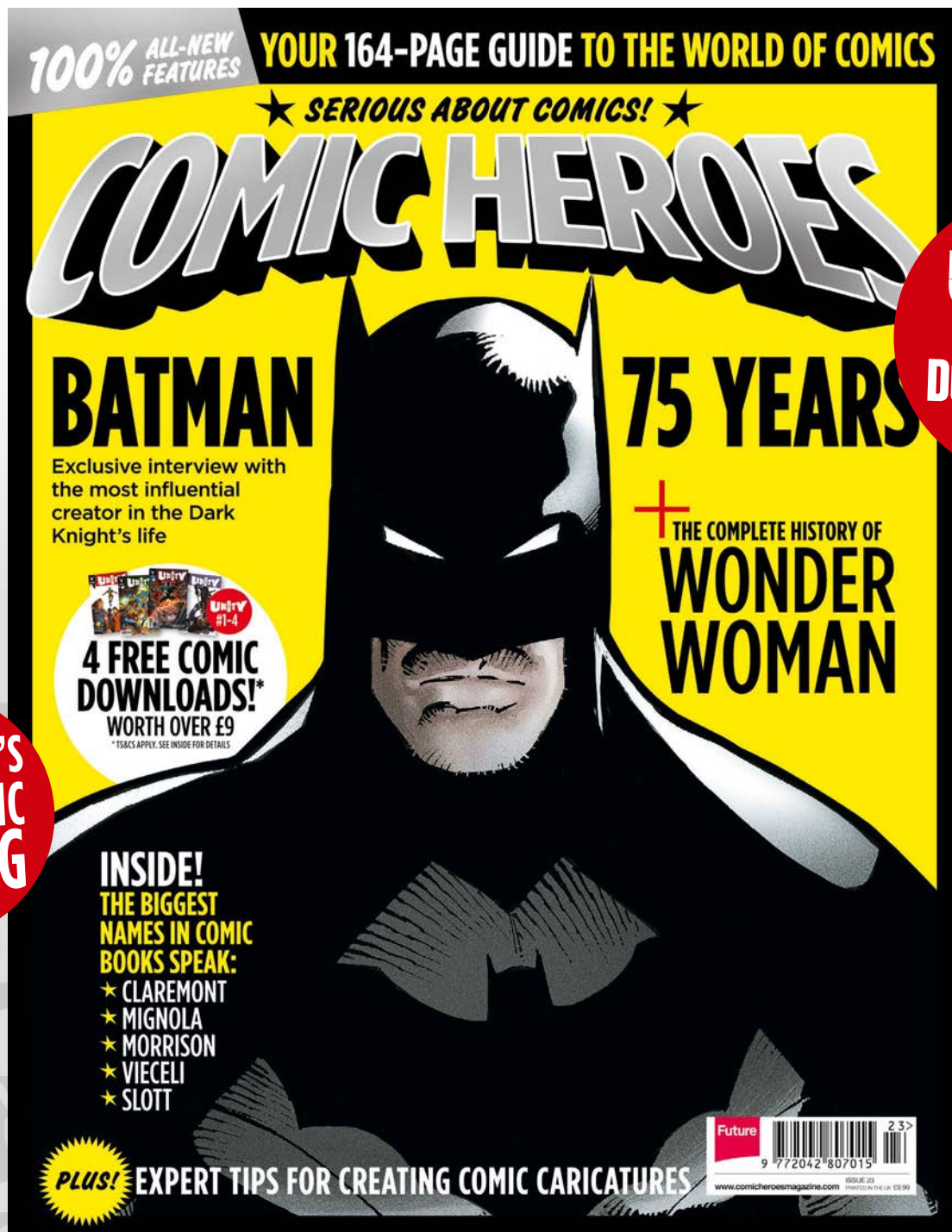


PRO SECRETS

Power of sketching

Never underestimate the flexibility of sketching. It's very tempting to grab photos, but they will never enable you to quickly change everything in the picture. Very often, and particularly in the film industry, you'll be expected to use photos for your concepts. I would advise telling your clients that you'll add them later on in the process, once the layout has been established.

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT 75 YEARS OF BATMAN!



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FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX Reviews



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

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



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PRODUCTS
ON TEST



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Samsung throws everything it's got into the fledgling maxi-tablet category. But will it succeed?

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Ben Mauro's second guide to ZBrush in concept art is so complete that you might not need the first part.

RATINGS EXPLAINED Magnificent Good Ordinary Poor Atrocious



Galaxy Note Pro 12.2

STAR STRUCK Yes, it's significantly cheaper, but is that enough of a reason to consider Samsung's latest über-tablet as a serious alternative to Wacom's Cintiq Companion?

Price £649 **Company** Samsung **Web** www.samsung.com **Contact** 01932 455 000

Wacom's Cintiq Companion – reviewed in our January issue – has a lot going for it. As well as functioning as a dedicated digitiser, it can be unplugged from your computer and used as a standalone Android device. However, its biggest drawback is its ridiculous price tag: a wallet-emptying £1,200. Samsung's Galaxy Note could be the next best thing – and it's half the price.

At 12.2-inches it's smaller than Wacom's 13.3-inch tablet, but its

screen is of a far higher resolution; Ultra HD (2,560x1,600 pixels) instead of normal HD (1,920x1,080 pixels). We've seen Ultra HD resolutions on laptops and monitors, but having it packed into a tablet is an incredible experience.

Load up an image and you see every brush stroke in fine detail, and you notice minute details in even the humblest of cameraphone pics. The Galaxy Note Pro runs the latest version

The Galaxy Note Pro 12.2's large size makes it slightly impractical, but that's the price you pay for so much screen real estate.

Samsung's styluses are co-created by Wacom, which can be a little dismissive about the standard of its rival's drawing instruments.

of Google's Android operating system, which is the one that finally catches up with Apple's iOS in terms of ease-of-use and slick aesthetics. Samsung then overlays Android with its TouchWiz interface, which fluctuates between being useful and being annoying. If we're honest, we prefer the stock Android installation on Wacom's tablet.

Samsung's styluses are co-developed with Wacom, and the latter



New to the Galaxy Tab Pro is a faux-leather plastic case. We like the feel of it, but the fake stitching is a bit cheesy.



Slide the stylus out and the tablet automatically launches a little menu to choose common stylus activities, such as capturing a portion of the screen or making quick notes.



As well as packing 32GB of internal storage, there's a micro-SD slot, so you could potentially add another 64GB.

“Load up an image and you see every brush stroke in fine detail – in even the humblest of cameraphone pics”

believes the magic pen supplied with the Cintiq Companion is far better than anything Samsung does. We're inclined to agree, but we still find Samsung's styluses pretty darn good. They use clever magnetic fields, so they can run without batteries and still have a usable button. They also feature pressure-sensitivity, enabling you to subtly adjust the flow of virtual ink or paint.

While Samsung's S Note software includes a variety of brushes and pencils, it's a bit too much of a general note-taking app to be suitable for digital art. Autodesk's SketchBook hasn't been updated for a while, and it lacks the pressure-sensitivity of other

apps. ArtFlow, an art app that's unique to the Android platform, unsurprisingly works really well, with a decent grasp of pressure levels, instantaneous responses and effective use of the large screen.

The problem Samsung's got is that the Galaxy Note Pro is simply too broad in its uses to be as good as Wacom's dedicated art tablet. Android's art software is catching up, too, but we still prefer ArtRage and Procreate on the iPad to ArtFlow with a pressure-sensitive stylus. The Note Pro may be great for looking at images, then, but it's not so good for making them. ●

DETAILS

Features

- Screen size: 12.2 inches
- Screen resolution: 2,560x1,600
- Processor: 1.9GHz quad-core
- 3GB RAM
- 32GB storage space
- Operating system: Android 4.4.2 (KitKat)
- Size: 0.8x29.6x20.4cm
- Weight: 730g
- Wireless type: 802.11a, 802.11b, 802.11g, 802.11n
- Cameras: 8MP rear, 2MP front
- Sensors: Accelerometer, Geomagnetic, Gyro-sensor, Light sensor, Hall sensor

Rating



TABLET ROUNDUP

THE BEST OF THE REST

Weighing up the competition in the tablet market

Panasonic UT-MB5

Web www.panasonic.co.uk

Price £4,000



The 20-inch behemoth is powered by Windows 8 and is aimed at professionals. Its 4K display is sure to wow everyone who lays eyes on it. It also boasts a stylus with pressure sensitivity, and it's built to Panasonic's rugged Toughpad standards.

Sony Xperia Z2

Web www.sony.co.uk

Price £399



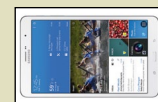
For those who don't want to remortgage for Panasonic's

monstrosity, consider the waterproof and dust and scratch resistant Z2. Although it lacks a stylus, a cool feature enables you to use a traditional graphite pencil to draw on the screen.

Samsung Galaxy Tab Pro 8.4

Web www.samsung.com

Price £349



The 12.2's little brother is easier to slip into a large pocket or small bag, for half the price. It still includes cool features like the same 2,560x1,600 resolution, a colour depth of 16 million and an 8-megapixel camera, and is far more affordable, too.

Nvidia Tegra Note 7

Web www.nvidia.co.uk

Price £140



This is Nvidia's first venture into tablets. As you'd expect, it

packs a super-fast mobile processor, but the boon for artists is the Nvidia DirectStylus, which is responsive and includes advanced features such as finger and palm rejection.



The Art of Rio

CARNIVAL ART Discover the illustrations and designs behind Blue Sky's animated hit children's film Rio and its sequel Rio 2

Author Tara Bennett **Publisher** Titan Books **Price** £25 **Web** www.titanbooks.com **Available** Now

As the colourful and charming world of Blu, the rare Blue Spix Macaw, returns to the big screen in Rio 2, fans can now enjoy the artistry behind both movies in this lavish 192-page hardback. Featuring over 300 pieces of concept art, character sketches, paintings and interviews with artists, this is a detailed, predominantly visual guide to how Blu and co were brought to life.

The book opens with an engaging forward from Carlos Saldanha, the film's director, who passionately describes how both movies ended up being a love letter to the vibrant city of his childhood. And how, even though having only three Brazilians in a visual crew of over 300, each artist became immersed in Rio's colourful culture, which inspired a wealth of amazing artwork.



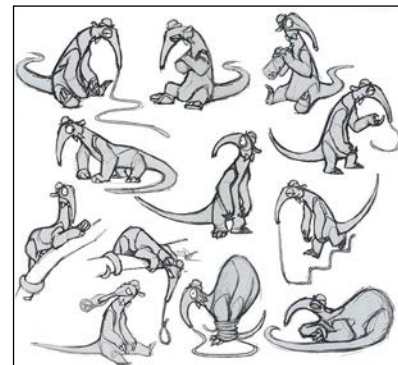
From basic body shapes, the art team used a range of crest designs and colouration to produce these exotic song birds.



The first chapter – and the best of the lot – is on characters. These pages are overflowing with inspirational imagery, including rough sketches, early concept art, paintings, final renders, sketches of gestures and poses, the detail of which you could pore over for hours. The dedicated bird section in this chapter is particularly noteworthy, featuring beautiful illustrations of all kinds of species of Blu's feathered friends, complete with a stunning early colour variation chart by artist Vincent Di Nguyen. There's no denying the amount of wonderful artwork on these pages. However, we'd have like to have seen some initial storyboards from both films, along with a few more early iterations of certain characters, just to see how each was developed over time.

The copy that runs throughout the book is extensive but not imposing, and doesn't distract from any of the artwork. With interesting movie facts and insights from the film's artists, it's definitely worth a read.

The locations section is also well done. It opens to multiple pages of intricately drawn pencil sketches of buildings and interiors, before moving



The tongue of Charlie the anteater, a henchman from the second film, gave him extra personality.

on to lush, colourful landscape painting and illustrations. True to Rio's roots, it's here where you can see the amount of influence the city had on the film's artists, with the essence of Brazil's capital captured in the most beautifully stylised way, making it recognisable while not resorting to photorealism.

As an accompaniment to Rio and its upcoming sequel, this book does a beautiful job of showcasing the amazing craftsmanship and talent behind both films.

RATING ★★★★

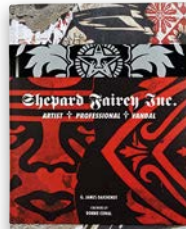
Shepard Fairey, Inc.

STREET LIFE This luxury hardback provides a comprehensive insight to the career of one of the most influential street artists of our time

Author G James Daichendt **Publisher** Titan Books **Price** £25 **Web** www.titanbooks.com **Available** Now

If you have even the slightest interest in street art, then you'll almost certainly have come across Sheperd Fairey. The man behind OBEY and the famous Obama Hope artwork, Sheperd is one of the most famous street artists in the world and this lavish book documents his rise to success in incredible detail.

Behind every piece of Sheperd's artwork is a story that, in turn, means there's a considerable amount of copy in this book, which includes a wealth of



information on everything from his inspirations and the origins of OBEY to interesting facts about the artist, such as when he was arrested.

The majority of the artwork is given the space it undoubtedly deserves, with every piece commandeering at least one full page, printed in rich colour on thick, glossy pages. However, there are a couple of double-page spreads accompanied by a quote that's

written vertically and covers almost a third of the imagery on show – something that's entirely unnecessary. Luckily, these are few and far between, with the majority of the photography allowed to bask in its full glory. For Sheperd Fairey and street art fans alike, this comprehensive guide to the artist's career is a real treat.

RATING



The artist's familiar OBEY image originated from a street campaign that used an image of Andre the Giant.

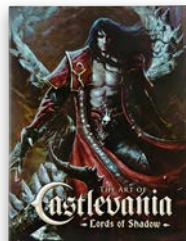
The Art of Castlevania – Lords of Shadow

GOTHIC BEAUTY Featuring hundreds of hauntingly beautiful illustrations, this book is a veritable tomb of dark and macabre art

Author Martin Robinson **Publisher** Titan Books **Price** £30 **Web** www.titanbooks.com **Available** Now

Based on the multi-generational video game series developed and published by Konami, this gorgeous hardback takes readers on a visual journey through the supernatural world of Castlevania.

With the subject set in AD 1047, this fang-tastic book is rich in gothic and medieval imagery, including concept art, game stills and promotional material, all of which are printed on thick, luxurious paper, showcasing the detail of each beautifully.



The artwork has been well-chosen to highlight the talents of the artists who worked on the game. In particular, the opening section that focuses on Dracula is stunning, and the descriptive copy accompanying each design equally engaging. Many of the major Castlevania figures are revealed in detail, but it's the exquisite imagery of non-Belmont clan character Laura that leaves a lasting impression.

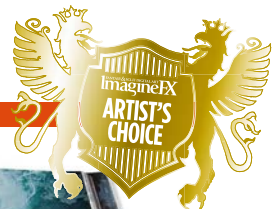
For such a dark subject, the book is surprisingly rich in colour. The bestiary section highlights this particularly well, with vibrant imagery of zombies, gargoyles and other hideous creatures.

Overall, this book is a visual treat, a masterclass in dark and macabre art, and a must-have for horror and supernatural fans alike.

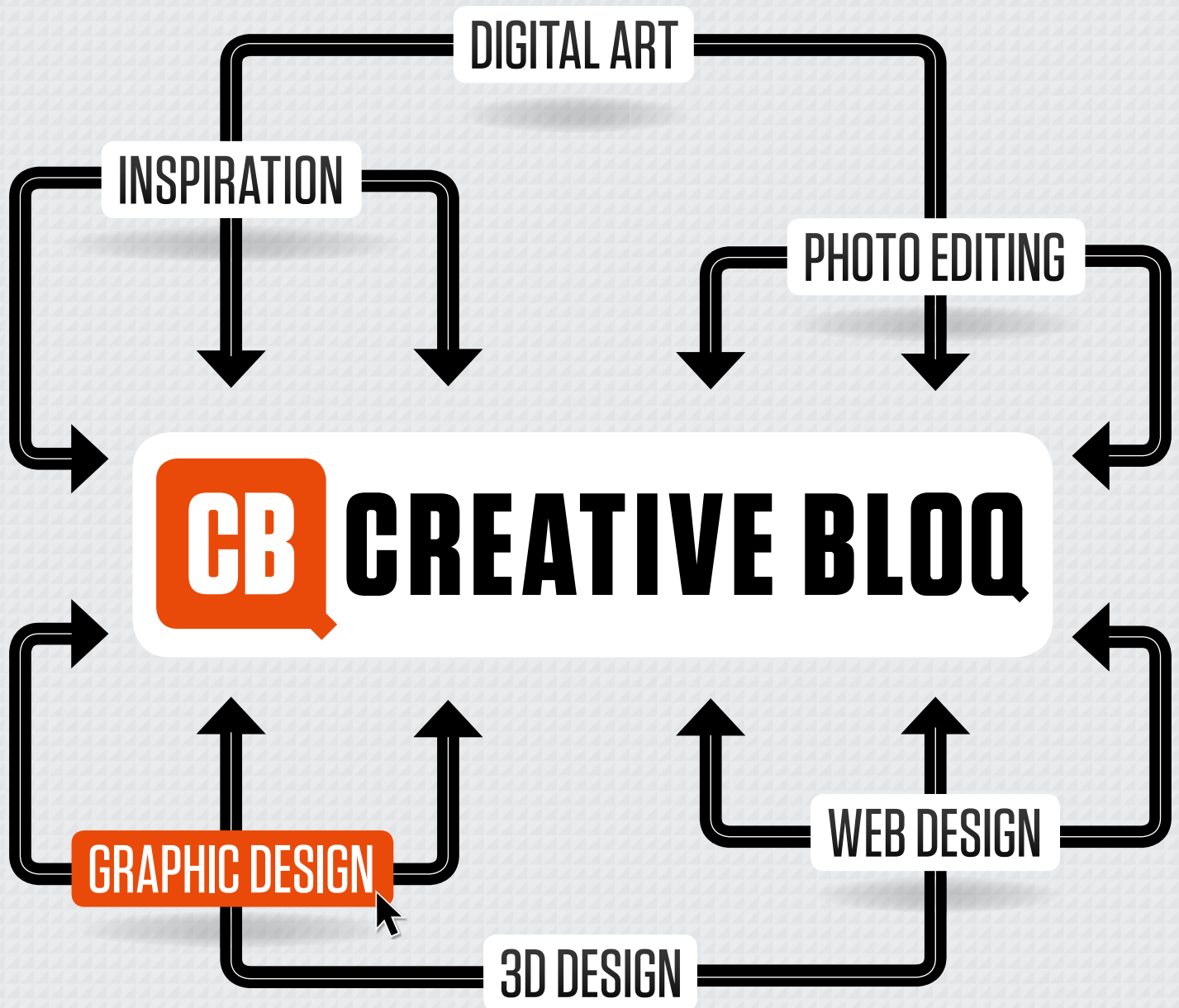
RATING



Almost a quarter of the book is devoted to exploring the environments that feature in the game.



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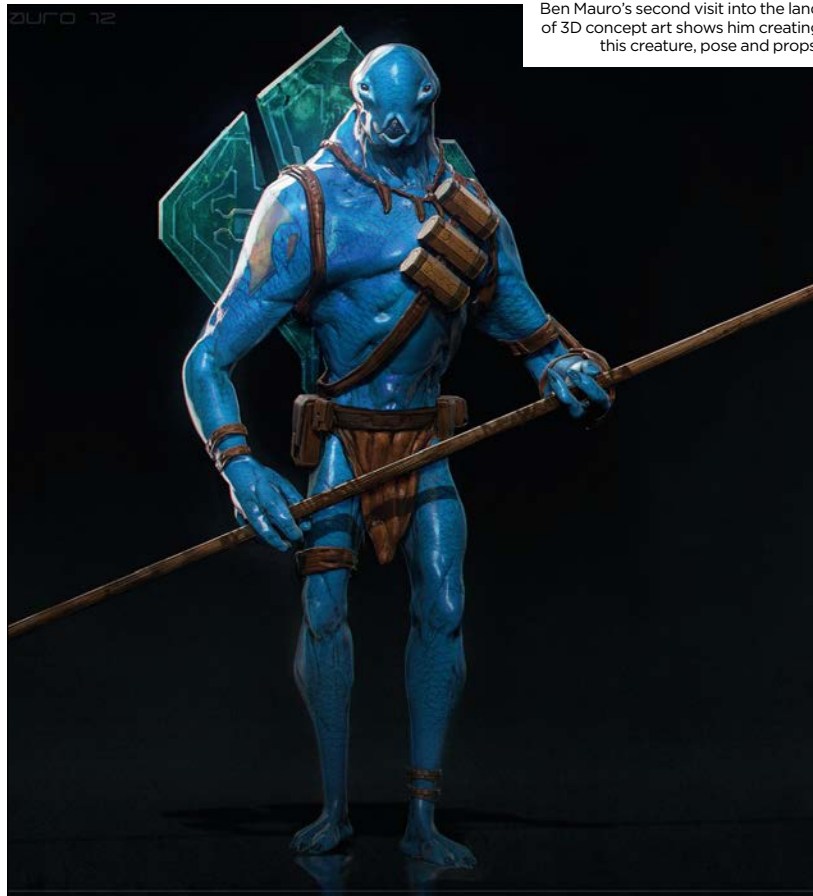
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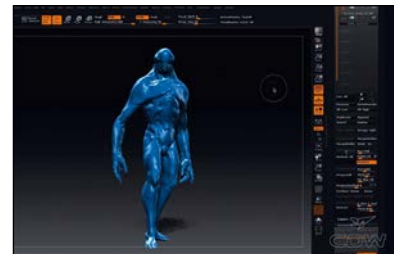
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Ben Mauro's second visit into the land of 3D concept art shows him creating this creature, pose and props.



In the early model (above), sections are coloured for easy masking-out.



ZBrush enables Ben to portray his designs in a realistic manner.

ZBrush for Concept Artists Vol 2

BODY-BUILDER Ben Mauro's second guide to ZBrush in concept art is so complete that you might not need the first instalment

Publisher CDW Studios **Price** \$49 **Format** Download only **Web** www.cdwstudios.com

Change has come to the field of concept art. In this video series, Ben Mauro shows how 3D packages such as ZBrush help him to deliver the realism that art directors now ask him for, even at the character design stage. The first part (which we reviewed back in issue 99) showed Ben creating a prototypical bust for a creature design; in the second part, the design is expanded to the entire body.

There's a degree of overlap between the two videos, with both showing the basics of ZBrush for newcomers, then blocking out the form, sculpting and refining detail, texture-painting and Photoshop post-production. However, the extra length of this instalment (it's over 90 minutes longer than the first) gives Ben room to explore other areas.

To give an example, there's a particularly useful session where he uses ZBrush to change the creature's



DETAILS

Topics covered

- ZBrush overview
- Blocking out
- Sculpting detail
- Setting the pose
- Adding costumes and props
- Lighting and materials
- Painting the skin texture
- Post-processing effects

Length

222 minutes

Rating



pose from its initial neutral stance to one that brings out its personality. Taking this two-step approach saves time because you can do more sculpting with the symmetry function activated, which ensures that the anatomy is properly thought out.

The audio suffers from the same affliction as the first part, noticeably switching between a live workshop and a later recorded session. But on the upside, the edits are less frequent than last time, making this a more enjoyable experience. There's also more scope for questions from the audience, which always yield some great insights.

If you're looking for a broad overview of ZBrush's role in concept art, this is complete enough to make the first part redundant – although anyone looking to dig deeper will still appreciate the earlier video's emphasis on character design. For most viewers, however, this is a pretty definitive exploration of its topic, from an artist who really knows his stuff. ●

ARTIST PROFILE

BEN MAURO

Ben is a concept designer and digital sculptor. He recently left Weta Workshop in Wellington, New Zealand, and now works at Treyarch in Singapore. Ben has contributed to game projects, TV and films such as The Hobbit Trilogy, Elysium and Valerian. Before working at Weta, he worked as a freelancer for many clients, including Lucasfilm, Rhythm & Hues, Activision, Universal



Pictures, Sony Pictures Animation, Insomniac Games, Design Studio Press and Vishwa Robotics.

www.artofben.com

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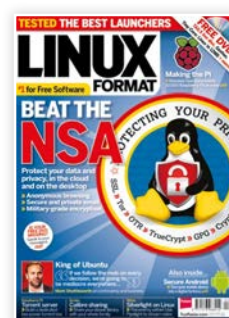
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FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART
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PRESENTS



FANTASY

Illustrator

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FROM INSPIRATION TO
**FINISHED
SCULPTURE**



Devon Dorrity demonstrates the process
of bringing a tree spirit to life **Page 106**

FXPosé Traditional

SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL FANTASY ARTISTS

Sergio Lopez
LOCATION: US
WEB: www.themainloop.com
EMAIL: sergiolopez@themainloop.com
MEDIA: Oils



"I enjoy discovering new vistas," says Sergio. "Setting up my easel. Creating a piece on the spot. There's no better way to discover the truth and essence of a scene than by standing before it and studying it carefully."

The Santa Rosa-based artist is equally enamoured with the female form, his still-life oil paintings alive with colour and swathed in light.

A compulsive sketcher, Sergio's work is a compelling mix of observation and imagination. He's exhibited paintings throughout California, around the US and in numerous publications.

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"You don't just stare at these paintings. With the split vision of Angel Face my eyes scan to see a woman in motion. It's disconcerting, but when they rest, it's the colour, light and patterns that flood in. Clever stuff."

Beren Neale,
 Digital Editor

1 ANGEL FACE

Oil on linen, 22x30in

"This painting was shown in Sarasota, Florida, for the American Masters Invitational Show. I was really proud to show alongside some big names in the fine art world, such as Jeremy Mann."

2 PARHELIA

Oil on linen, 30x24in

"This is part of another series of mine, Natural Patterns, which has also been well received."





Allen Williams

LOCATION: US

WEB: www.ijustdraw.com

EMAIL: ijustdraw@gmail.com

MEDIA: Graphite



Illustrator and concept artist Allen's credits include Guillermo del Toro's *Pacific Rim* and Darren Aronofsky's *Noah*.

When the American isn't helping shape Hollywood blockbusters, he turns his hand to paintings and drawings that are characterised by their dark elements and surreal themes.

Every piece begins in graphite – a medium that, the artist says, doesn't cover his page but "infects" it. "Many of my drawings grow out of organic or chaotic experimentation. This led to the phrase 'graphite-infected paper' – which is how I describe my work.

"I've tried as many different brands of graphite and paper as I can find and I love collecting different types of materials, but almost any pencil will do and almost any paper."



1 THE GIFT

Graphite on Stonehenge Paper, 8x10in

"This was an exploration of figure and chaos that grew out of a central point. Like a virus."

2 IF BEAUTY WERE A BOOK

Graphite on Stonehenge Paper, 14x16in

"What if the Beast found his freedom in the love of a book, like so many people."

3 THE ENOCHIAN

Graphite on Stonehenge Paper, 14x16in

"Your spirit is my arrow. As you fight the battle of your daily existence, I fight the demons behind your woes. My only weapon is your spirit, your being. I am only as strong as you. So many times I have drawn my bow on your behalf, but not loosened my arrow because you would not let go."

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34



IMAGINEFX CRIT



"The detail in Allen's art – the texture, the light and shade – is stunning. I can see why Del Toro's a fan: they both blur the line between fairytale and horror, the majestic and the macabre."

Gary Evans,
Staff Writer

Creative Space

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CENTRAL PARK SKETCHING: NEW YORK CITY

Meet the art group dedicated to depicting New York City in all its glory.
Central Park Sketching organiser **JESSE RICHARDS** tells us more...

You'll find Draftsmen's Congress on the fourth floor of New York's New Museum. Conceived by experimental Polish artist Pawel Althamer, the collaborative exhibit was a white space that visitors have slowly but surely covered with drawings and paintings. Local art group Central Park Sketching was recently asked to leave its mark on the installation, and duly obliged.

Tom Kovalski, with Jesse Richards assisting, founded the group in 2007. Jesse has since taken over organising duties, but its original ethos remains: to provide artists – whether absolute

beginner or distinguished pro – a place to draw regularly, inexpensively and without pressure.

There are no formal critiques. Just an informal "atmosphere of mutual appreciation," Jesse says. People talk. Share ideas. Make friends. Feel like they're part of something.

"I find artists are extremely shy and nervous and embarrassed about the quality of their work," the organiser explains. "It's irrational, and its causes are fascinating to ruminate on. But, on a practical level, it prevents many people from attending anything. A lot of my time is spent reassuring people that we are a non-judgemental community, and



The two great passions in Jesse Richards' life are art and New York, which he combines as organiser of the Central Park Sketching group.

that no one minds if they are the worst artists in the world – and that the concept of best or worst in expressive art doesn't even make any sense."

Jesse is passionate about New York City and what he likes to describe as its innumerable "nooks and secrets, surprising history, stunning architecture and beautiful parks". But before Central Park Sketching there were hardly any groups dedicated solely to drawing the city's landscape. The get-together was a direct response to this.



Draftsmen's Congress: an installation by Polish artist Pawel Althamer, at New York's New Museum.

Creative Space Central Park Sketching



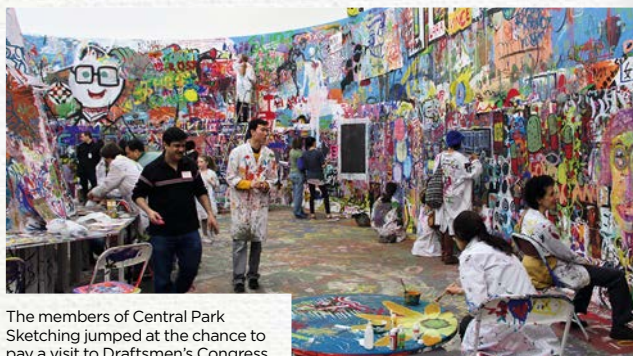
Incredibly, Draftsmen's Congress was once entirely white space – until visitors and art groups were invited in to decorate.



Whether pro artist or fledgling doodler, all are welcome to make their mark on this unique installation.

However, the group has gradually become a victim of its own success. Once it could sneak into parks and museums unnoticed. Now it turns up in such numbers that arrangements must be made well in advance. Jesse isn't complaining. "We're now the largest art meet-up in the world, and every day more and more people join the group, so I only see it continuing to grow and expand."

For more details on Central Park Sketching, visit www.meetup.com/sketching. To see Jesse's work head to www.jkrweb.com.



The members of Central Park Sketching jumped at the chance to pay a visit to Draftsmen's Congress.

ART ATTACK

Central Park Sketching's all-out assault on Draftsmen's Congress



Kerri, from Staten Island, working on a rather rakish-looking dog.



Anika, who likes to work in multiple media, taking it to the walls.



Mercedes Vega Villar says that Central Park Sketching is the perfect excuse to indulge her love of drawing.

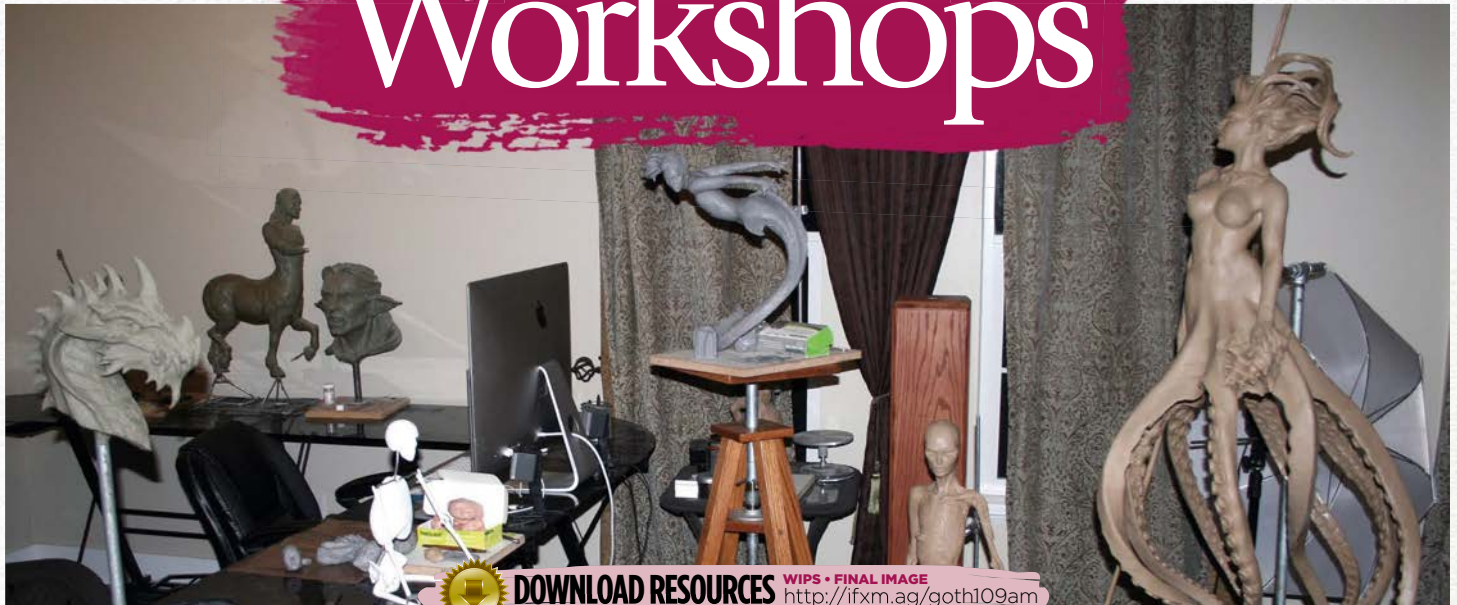


Deborah Graham stands proudly by her finished work.



All smiles from Cheri Dannels as she works on her colourful addition to the exhibit.

Workshops



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SCULPT A WOOD NYMPH BUST



From inspiration to finished sculpture, **DEVON DORRITY** demonstrates the process of bringing a tree spirit to life

From the time of my early youth I've been enamoured with fantasy art. In seventh grade, my middle school's art teacher brought in Frank Frazetta to do a live painting demonstration. I was awestruck. Since then, I've rarely been able to complete a work of art without adding an element of the fantastic.

Along the way, I've discovered that if you stay true to what inspires you, others stop to admire the view, even if the subject matter is foreign to them. When working on Queen of the Seas, I began with a very classical pose from a beautiful model named Jessica. But when I started with the tentacles, many thought I was ruining it – yet when it was finished, it captured the attention of people who wouldn't otherwise appreciate fantasy art. It was later featured in Spectrum.

For this workshop, I want to show how an aspiring sculptor goes about making a classical bust with a touch of the fantastic thrown in for good measure. Before we start with the steps, I'd like to emphasise

ARTIST INSIGHT
PROCURING A MODEL
You might also try asking a model if they would like a sculpture in their portfolio. Many will provide reference photos at no charge if they like your work. ModelMayhem.com is a good place to start.

how important it is for sculptors to find specific subject matter that's exciting to them. Sculptures, depending on their complexity, can take hundreds of hours to complete. If you aren't excited about it then you can't expect others to be, either.

I also want to stress the importance of getting good reference material. For human anatomy, you need multiple angles of the same model and pose. The human form is too complex to do an accurate sculpt without reference. For this project, I'm collaborating with Zienna Eve, a beautiful young model from Denmark. Her natural beauty provides the initial inspiration that will sustain the vision while developing the final concept: a spirit of the forest takes hold on a tree, and causes a transformation, allowing it to commune with man.

In this workshop, I'll show the materials, tools and techniques to kick start your sculpting project. From inspiration to final lacquer, I'll show the processes you can use to sculpt something you can proudly put on display.



Devon is the president and CEO of hh2 Web Services, a mobile software company that serves the construction industry. He

lives in Utah, and sculpts in his spare time.

www.ddorrity.deviantart.com







1 Find your inspiration

It doesn't matter where it comes from, but it must excite you enough to complete your sculpture project. In this case, it was a digital painting from my brother, Dennis.

MATERIALS

ARMATURE:

- Threaded steel rod
- Steel base and wood screws
- Styrofoam ball
- Wood doll head
- Aluminium armature wire (16 gauge)
- Aluminium armature wire (10 gauge)

CLAY

- Super Sculpey Firm Gray
- Apoxie Sculpt

FINISH

- Bronze C metal voating
- Tiffany Green patina
- Verde Green non-ferrous wax
- Black non-ferrous wax
- Brown non-ferrous wax
- Blue iridescent powder
- Clear Guard protective lacquer

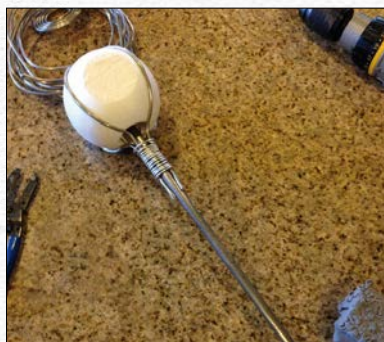


TOOL TIP BLUNT EDGES

Use a wooden doll head to blunt the steel rod and prevent it from punching through the top of the sculpture.

3 Plan your armature

I build my armature at a specific scale so that it makes measurements easy. In this case I use 1:2 scale. The steel rod enables me to attach it to any sort of wood base. The Styrofoam ball is for structure and bulk.



4 Assemble the armature

I cut out enough space for the doll head and shove the rod into the Styrofoam ball. I use 16-gauge aluminium wire to secure it in place. I then coat it in Super Sculpey and use a heat gun to harden it.



2 Get reference material

I regularly visit a studio where a group pays a model to come in and pose. Photos aren't as good as a live model, but they'll work in a pinch. In this case Zienna provided lots of photos.



5 Building a profile

I start the build up by sculpting an initial profile. I print out a photo at the right scale and make sure my profile matches the model. I then start building the basic structure of the skull.



6 *Sculpting the basic facial features*

I take my time sculpting the details of the face. I constantly refer to the profile, side view and three-quarter reference views for accuracy.



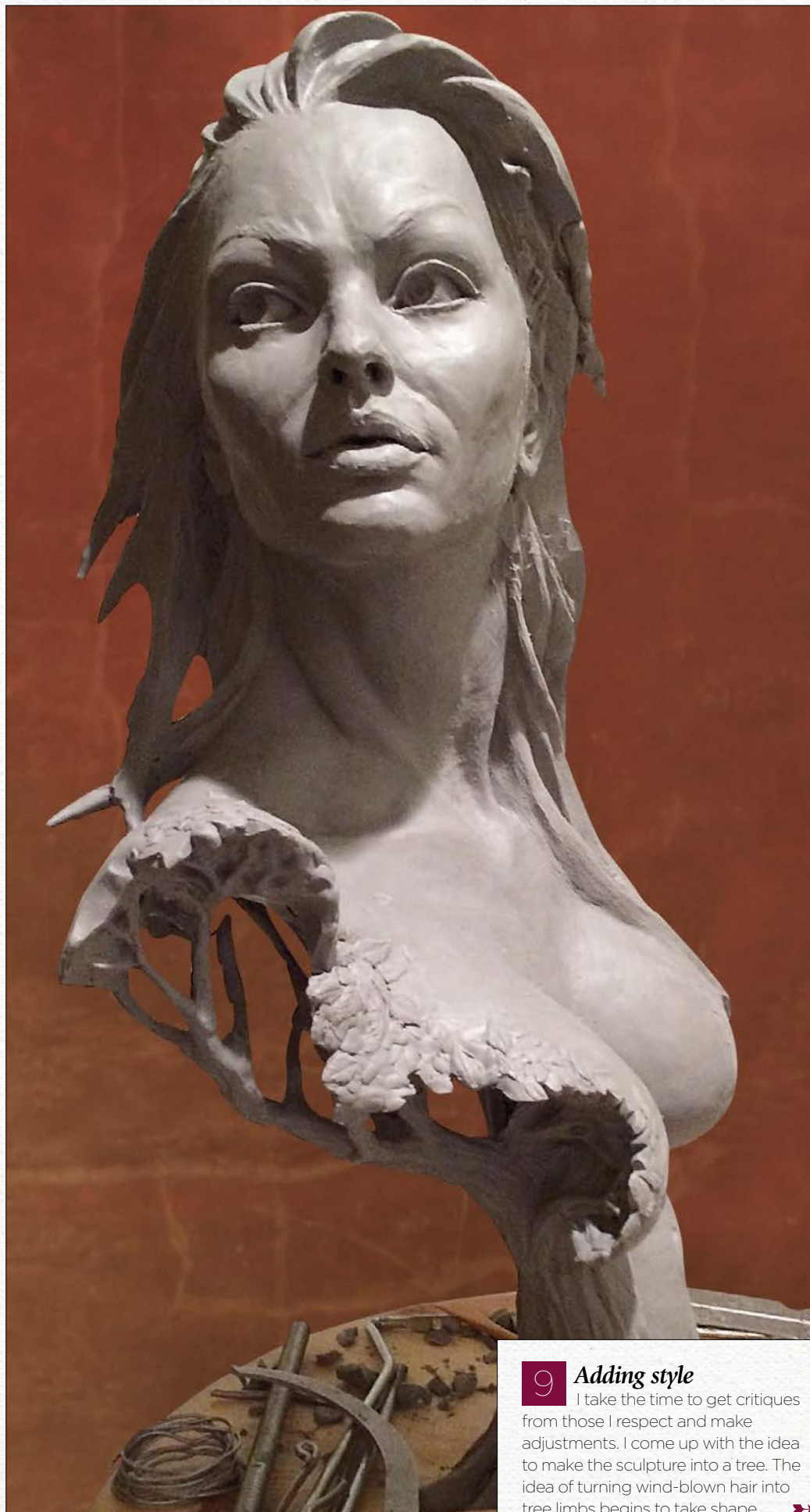
7 *The head and neck*

It's important to get the shape of the skull right. Don't rush to work on the hair – it'll come soon enough. If you don't get the skull looking right now, you'll have to redo it all later.



8 *Hair strategy*

Sculpting the hair takes a long time. Don't try to sculpt individual strands of hair. I focus on the large clumps and stylise the strands. I use armature wire when necessary to hold up the strands.



9 *Adding style*

I take the time to get critiques from those I respect and make adjustments. I come up with the idea to make the sculpture into a tree. The idea of turning wind-blown hair into tree limbs begins to take shape. ➡



11 *Hardening the clay*

Super Sculpey must be hardened at 200+ degrees Fahrenheit. I boil it in a large 60-gallon pot on my kitchen stove. It doesn't quite fit, so I cover it with tin foil and the top steam hardens.

TOOL TIP QUICK COATING

Spraying on the bronze coating is easier than brushing it. I use a cheap spray gun meant for car body work, and a compressor.



ARTIST INSIGHT

ARMATURE WOES

I purchase a threaded steel bar from the hardware store and embed it inside the base, replacing the straight bar I started with. It was a pain, but it was worth it. Deon Duncan, a sculpture friend of mine, said it best: "You always fight the armature."

10 *Finish what you started*

No one appreciates a sculpture you never finish. Put in the time. Put in a few hours a day, even if you're not in the mood. In some cases, this means sculpting in the kitchen, or late at night.

12 *Applying the bronze coating*

The coating is actual bronze powder in an acrylic binder and a hardening agent. After curing, I scrub it with steel wool to make it shine.



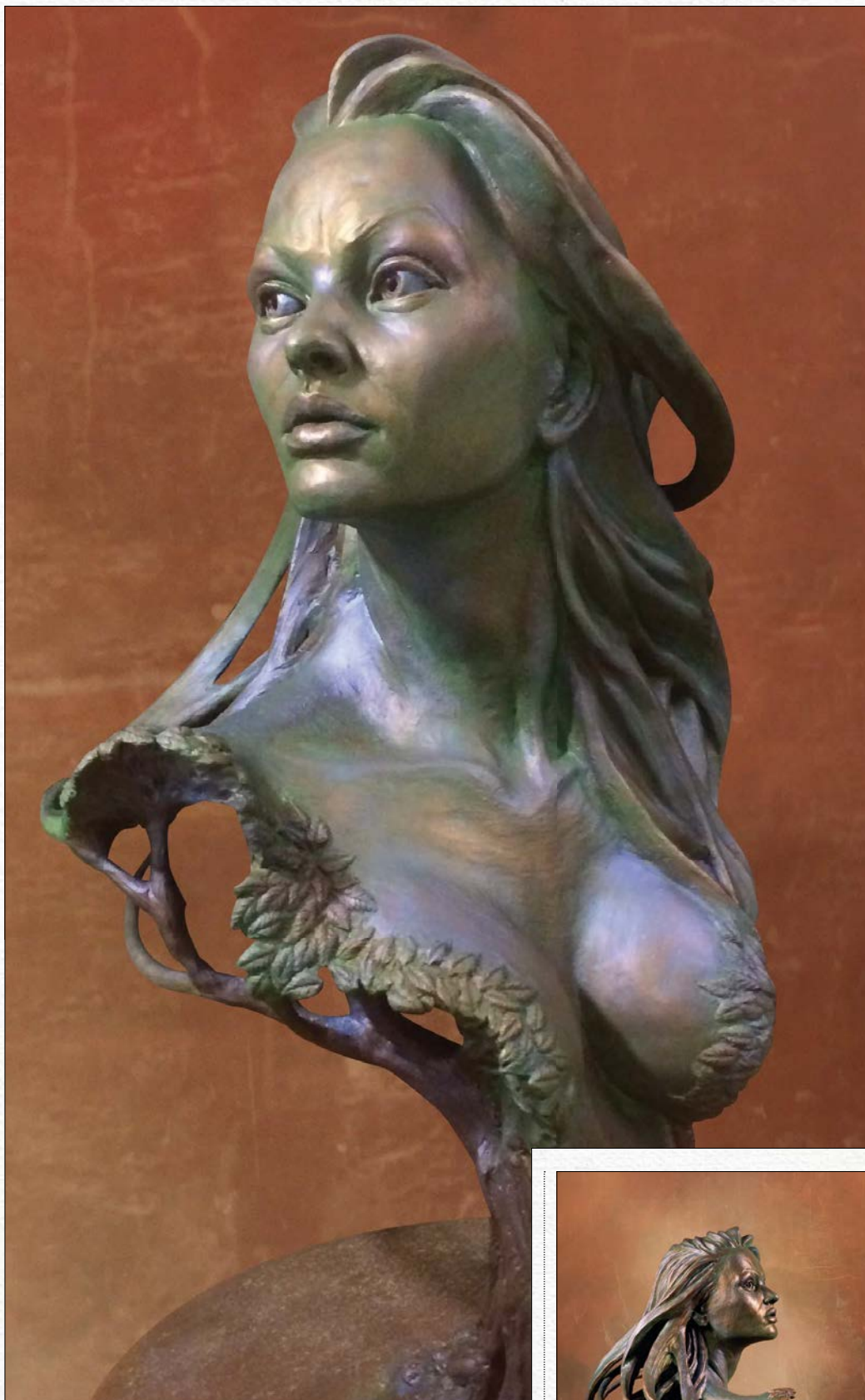
13 *Spraying on the patina*

I go outside and spray on the patina, where it reacts with the metal surface. I could make the reaction stronger by further scrubbing with steel wool to expose more of the metal.



14 *Applying the wax*

Once the patina has dried I apply the Verde Green wax generously and allow it to set up for a few minutes. Then I scrub it back with cloth to reveal the bronze underneath. Note that this type of wax hardens on permanently.



15 *Finishing touches*

I apply the blue iridescent powder by hand in selected areas. I then spray the whole sculpture with several coats of protective lacquer. Finally, I use the Apoxie Sculpt self-hardening clay to fill in the gaps after attaching it to the base. ●

ARTIST INSIGHT

PUBLICISE YOUR ART

Don't forget to get professional photos taken. Spread the love. Let others enjoy the fruits of your labours.





Pencil

Ballpoint pen

Charcoal

LEARN TO CONTROL YOUR VALUES

CHRIS LEGASPI shares his expert advice on how to shade your figures with realistic values, which will take your art to the next level

Value control is what gives drawings and renderings that beautiful feeling of light and shadow. To control values, I must first train my eye to accurately see values. I also want to be clear about where the light source is, and identify the darkest and brightest areas of the scene.

To better see the values, I'll squint at the model or subject. This will simplify the values I see, and big masses or shapes of values will start to appear. I identify

three distinct values shapes: shadow (darks), half-tone (mid-tone) and light. These value shapes are what I'll use as a guide during the rendering process.

Next, I can begin to draw the shapes I see. During the early stage, I'll ignore the subtleties and variations with the shadow and half-tone, instead filling them with a single, uniform tone. As the drawing develops, I can then add subtle variations to help me render and model form.

To complete the rendering, I want to enhance the illusion of fall-off, when

MATERIALS

- Smooth newsprint paper
- Carbothello pencil, black (or Conte' B) or Willow charcoal sticks (medium grade)
- Kneaded eraser
- Bristle brush, round #4 (or 6)
- White charcoal pencil (or white pastel)
- Ballpoint pen
- Sketchbook

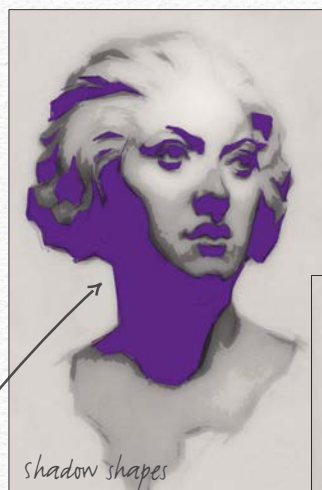
values away from the light are darker and values closer to the light become brighter. I'll use a subtle wash of charcoal and a brush to add a smooth gradation of tone that becomes darker as the forms move away from the light source. Finally, I'll use white charcoal on the brightest areas to create highlights. If fall-off is done is well, it makes the rendering feel believable.



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

1 Observing value shapes

To control values I must first observe value shapes accurately. Squinting helps me to see the simplified value shapes and patterns. Next, I'll group the values that are close together into big masses of dark, mid-tone and light. It's these value shapes that I'll use to render the drawing.

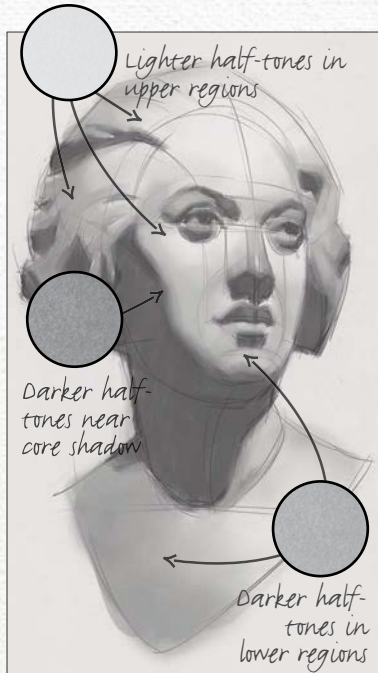


EXERCISE LIFE DRAWING

Draw a value study from life. A three-hour (or more) pose with single source lighting on the model is ideal.

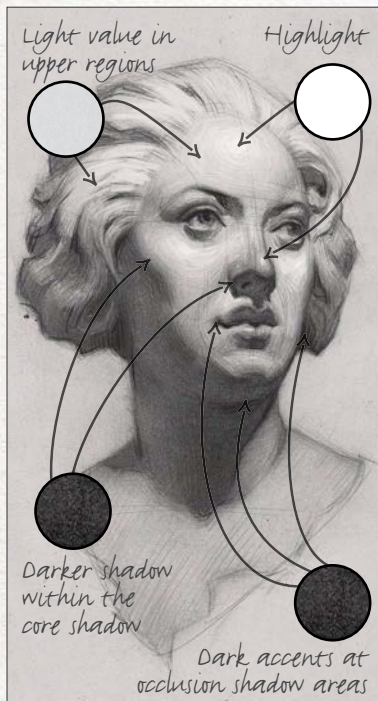
2 Block in the shadow shape

I start my value renders with the shadow shape. To begin, I'll design the shape to emphasise form and plane changes, especially in the small detail areas such as the eyes. Next, I'll ignore the nuances I may see, instead filling the shape with a uniform dark tone.



3 Half-tones

The next shape is the half-tone. Half-tones have many subtleties and variations, but I prefer to simplify the half-tones at this stage into one uniform tone. I'll use a slightly darker tone only on the areas that are furthest away from the light and for transition areas near the core shadow.



4 Full value range

To complete the render I'll need a full range of values from the darkest dark to the lightest light. I'll add the lights and highlights in the upper regions and then the darks in the core shadow and dark accents. The dark accents help the make the shadow areas recede.





First Impressions

✧ Edward Howard ✧

The US artist tells us what his main goal is when applying different colours to a flat surface...



You're a kid. You see a painting that changes everything. What are you looking at?

Frederic Remington's

The Stampede. I was intoxicated by the art, and it – and many other works – fed my desire to pursue art. I also marvelled at Antonio Mancini's Resting, John Singer Sargent's An Interior in Venice and Frank Brangwyn's Buccaneers. All these works say so much with such beautiful and seemingly loose brushwork. They don't paint things, they paint the mere suggestion of things. The viewers unconsciously fill in the blanks. I remember being stunned by that little realisation, and I'm still in awe of it.

Name one person who's helped you on your way?

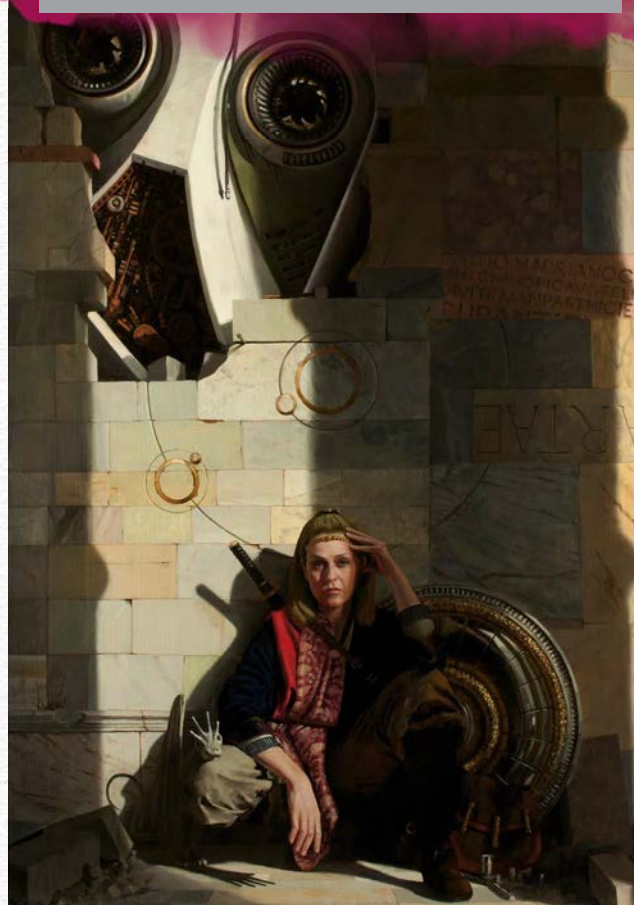
Rachel, my wife, is my biggest fan and my greatest critic. I'm here because she had faith in my ability. Everyone has that one person who's their cheerleader, who supports them and keeps them pushing onward.

Who's tried to get in your way?

Me. I'm my own worst enemy and perhaps my harshest critic. This can be good and bad. The good is that I always ask the highest standards of myself. The bad is that my standards might be too high, resulting in very few pieces ever making it out the door. However, the more experienced I become, the more I learn to not get in my own way.

Your art is always evolving – what's the most recent experiment you've made?

I'm coming to the realisation that I'll probably always be experimenting. When you step back you realise all you're doing is applying different-coloured viscous pigments to a flat surface and hopefully in the end you've arranged those colours in such a manner as to



SECRET REVEALED

This is the painting that Edward considers his first success at visualising the composition he saw in his mind's eye.

evoke an emotional response. The quest for the artist is to convey this non-verbal, visceral message more precisely.

Do you remember the first image where you thought you'd nailed it?

Secret Revealed seemed to strike a chord with people. I feel like my technique and

“I'm my own worst enemy and perhaps my harshest critic”



DISCOVERY

This recent painting eschews the artist's usual fantasy trappings in favour of more emotional beats.

execution came into focus, and I was finally able to translate what was in my mind to canvas. I still get great pleasure from listening to people tell me what they believe the story of the piece is, and I also love seeing them make new discoveries when they view it in person.

What are your painting rituals?

Organisation and preparation are imperative to me. When I begin a piece I already know my palette, I've already done colour studies, have determined my colour gamut, and know my composition and lighting down to the last centimetre of canvas. I use as many references as I can, to study the interplay of light and shadow, texture and depth. Painting is hard enough without having to guess on the fly. I just want to focus on painting. I don't want to have loose ends in my head while I'm working.

What's wrong with the industry?

A lot, but recently there's been a concerted effort by many to begin the process of reform. I'd recommend all aspiring illustrators to look at Art PACT (www.artpact.com), a community dedicated to helping the illustrator navigate their way through the industry and help them achieve a living wage.

What advice would you give to fantasy artists just starting out?

Paint what you love. Paint what drives you. Paint what inspires you. When you do that it will come through on canvas. People will see that passion and will be drawn to your work. And don't be afraid to explore different genres, different styles. What's on the canvas is something that no one but you has ever seen before. We want to see what your unique ideas and dreams are. Don't hold back – paint them!

What's the first thing you teach a pupil?

Don't guess. Trust me, you'll almost always get it wrong. Try to observe it in nature and then replicate that on canvas. The amazing thing is that if you get it right, it probably won't be noticed by the viewer at all. It's only when you get things wrong that the viewer notices.

Edward Howard lives and works in Los Angeles. He's a graduate of the American Academy of Art and studied at the Florence Academy of Art. www.eshoward.com


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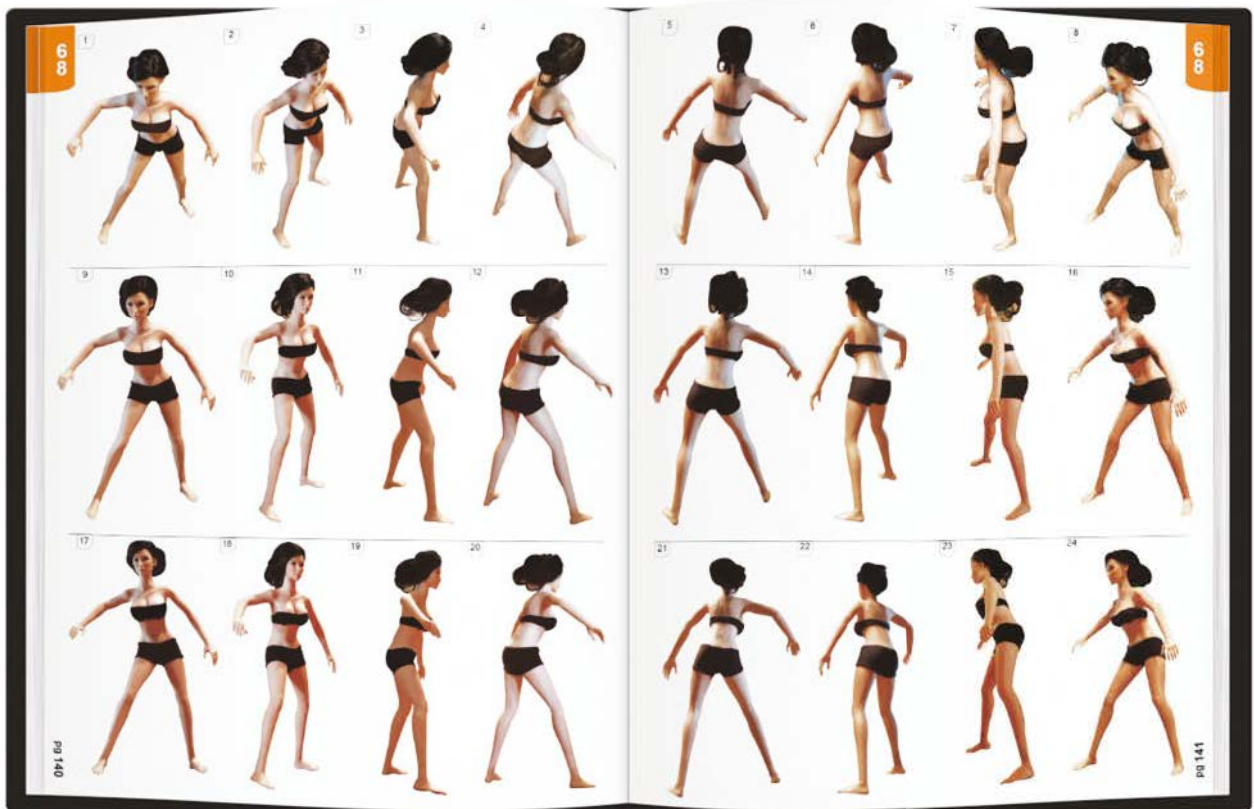
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