FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART

ImagineFX

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

DRAW AND SHADE IN 3D

Inside

BUILDING SKILLS IN GOOGLE SKETCHUP
CHARACTER ART IN WATERCOLOUR
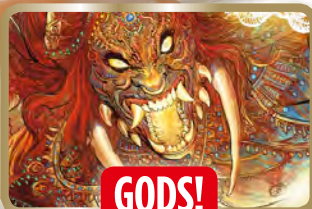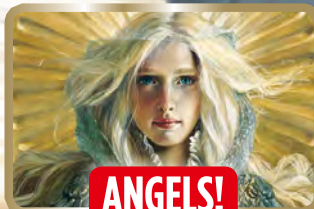**PAINTING ADVICE ON YOUR IPAD**

Future

LEARN TO PAINT

MYTHS & LEGENDS

Become a master painter with our expert advice
PLUS Artists share their inspiring mythical visions

GODS!   ANGELS!   KINGS!   MONSTERS!   WARRIORS!

RAPHAEL LACOSTE! CONCEPT & PAINT AN UNDERWATER CITY IN PHOTOSHOP

Welcome. . .
to your own take

Sometimes in art it can feel as if everything has already been done. You'll set out to create a painting, but end up questioning the validity of your work.

It doesn't have to be like this. Whichever artistic route you choose, remember that while many things have already been created, they haven't been created by you. You are unique, and how you develop an image can only come from you. Which brings us to this issue's theme of myths and legends.

We've brought together a wonderful array of artists who share their thoughts and inspirations around this topic. Certainly, there are stories we all know and love, and have seen before, but I've had fun discovering the lesser well-known tales. Revisiting these stories of old can help add a new spin to your creations. What stories have inspired your art? Did we miss one of your favourites? Let us know.

Also this issue, thanks to a drawing group in Ireland called Sceitse (Gaelic for 'sketch') I was introduced to the term 'sketchbook adventuring'. In essence, this group of intrepid artists combine doodling with a varied diet of outdoor pursuits. Of course, it's nothing short of handy when the backdrop to this sketching includes some of the most beautiful places in Ireland, but I'm sure wherever you live, you'll be able to uncover a beautiful place that will inspire you to create. Find out more about the group on page 104.

There are many adventures to be had in this issue. I hope you embark on a few of your own…

Claire

Claire Howlett, Editor
claire@imaginefx.com

Our special cover for subscribers this issue.

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART

ImagineFX
Contents

"We long for meaning, to know our place in the universe. Myths and legends feed that passion"
Fine artist Heather Theurer

Reader FXPosé
THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

See page 8 for the best new art
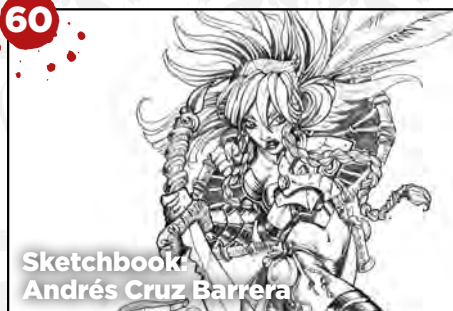
Q&A: Rooftop scene

Sketchbook: Andrés Cruz Barrera
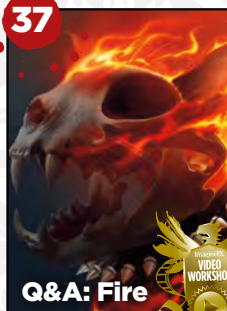
Q&A: Fire

Q&A: Horror humour

Art school alternatives
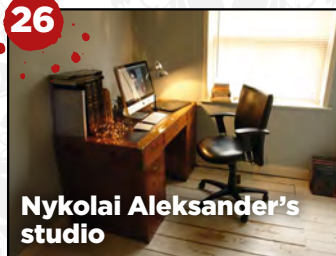
Nykolai Aleksander's studio

Q&A: Muddy feathers

Workshops

Advice and techniques from pro artists…
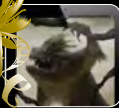
Paint a mythical figure

FANTASY
illustrator

Inspiration and advice from the best traditional artists

Sceitse: Ireland
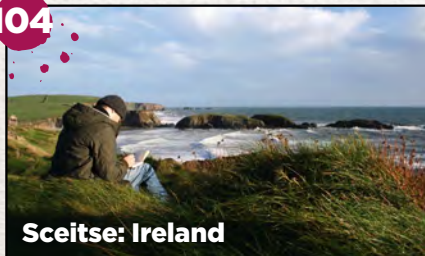
Emotional art

Draw in 3D

Donato Giancola

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART
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/my110ths**

OVER 5 HOURS of workshop and Q&A videos to watch and learn from!

COVER ART VIDEO

Paint a Greek goddess

Cynthia Sheppard goes through her process of creating a powerful image of a mythical deity.

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/my110ths

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.
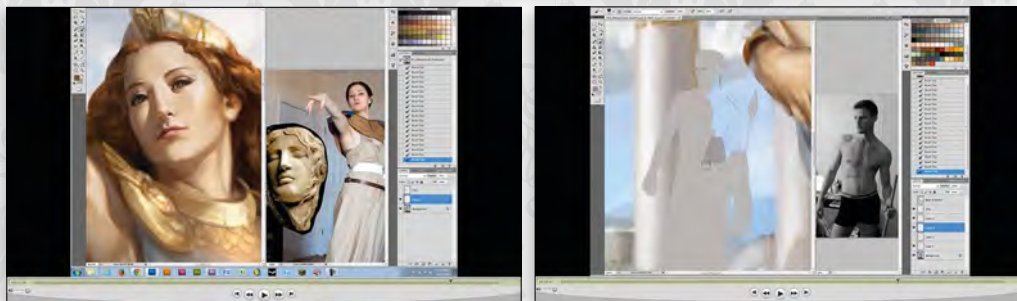
FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART
ImagineFX

EDITORIAL
CLAIRE HOWLETT EDITOR
claire.howlett@futurenet.com

DANIEL VINCENT ART EDITOR
daniel.vincent@futurenet.com

CLIFF HOPE OPERATIONS EDITOR
clifford.hope@futurenet.com

BEREN NEALE DIGITAL EDITOR
beren.neale@futurenet.com

GARY EVANS STAFF WRITER
gary.evans@futurenet.com

CONTRIBUTIONS
Nykolai Aleksander, Mark Behm, Sarah Clark, Nadia Enis, Vaughn Emerson, Sara Forlenza, Tony Foti, Damian Hall, Nick Harris, Richard Hill, Richard Hood, Kerrie Hughes, Dave Kendall, Raphael Lacoste, Chris Legaspi, Fraser McDermott, Mark Roosien, Don Seegmiller, Cynthia Sheppard, Derrick Song, Alex Thomas, Paco Rico Torres, Garrick Webster, Henry Winchester, Donglu Yu

PHOTOGRAPHY Future photography studio
DAN OLIVER editor-in-chief
STEVE GOTOBED group senior art editor
ROBIN ABBOTT creative director
JIM DOUGLAS editorial director

CIRCULATION
DANIEL FOLEY trade marketing manager
RICHARD JEFFERIES head of international newsstand

ADVERTISING +44 (0) 207 0424124
CHARLIE SAID advertising sales director
charlie.said@futurenet.com
JAS RAI sales manager
jas.rai@futurenet.com
JULIAN TOZER account manager
julian.tozer@futurenet.com
SUZANNE SMITH account manager
suzanne.smith@futurenet.com
VICTORIA SANDERS senior sales executive
victoria.sanders@futurenet.com

MARKETING
PHILIPPA NEWMAN group marketing manager

PRINT & PRODUCTION
STEPHANIE SMITH production co-ordinator
MARK CONSTANCE production manager
NOLA COKELY ad production manager
NATHAN DREWETT ad production co-ordinator
MICHELLE ROGERS operational purchasing manager

LICENSING
REGINA ERAK licensing and syndication director

FUTURE PUBLISHING LIMITED
DECLAN GOUGH head of creative and design group
NIAL FERGUSON managing director, technology, film and games
ZILLAH BYNG-MADDICK chief executive

NEXT ISSUE ON SALE FRIDAY 20 JUNE
Printed in the UK by William Gibbons & Sons Ltd
Distributed by Seymour Distribution Ltd +44 (0) 207 429 4000
2 East Poultry Avenue, London EC1 9PT
ImagineFX is the registered trademark of Future Publishing Ltd. All Rights Reserved.

CONTACT US
PHONE +44 (0) 1225 442244
EMAIL mail@imaginefx.com
ART SUBMISSIONS fxpose@imaginefx.com
WEB www.imaginefx.com
TWITTER @imaginefx
FACEBOOK www.facebook.com/imaginefx
POST ImagineFX Magazine, Future Publishing Ltd, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW, UK

SUBSCRIPTIONS
UK, EUROPE & REST OF THE WORLD
UK PHONE 0844 848 2852
OUTSIDE OF UK +44 (0) 1604 251045
EMAIL contact@myfavouritemagazines.co.uk
WEB www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk

SUBSCRIPTIONS
US AND CANADA
PHONE (toll-free): 1-800 428 3003
WEB www.imsnews.com/imaginefx

abc Print 13,137 Digital 2,708
The ABC combined print, digital and digital publication circulation for Jan-Dec 2013 is
15,845
A member of the Audited Bureau of Circulations

{ **Want to work for Future?**
Visit www.futurenet.com/jobs }

EXCLUSIVE VIDEO TUITION!

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

WORKSHOP VIDEOS

Raphael Lacoste
Raphael sketched castles in Scotland to generate architectural shapes for his city.
Plus WIPs and final image
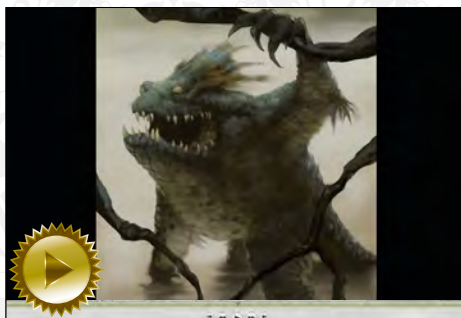
Mark Behm
Discover how to push your iPad to its limits by painting the mysterious bunyip.
Plus WIPs, final image and brushes

Dave Kendall
Use Ivan Aivazovsky as inspiration to draw Poseidon rising from the depths.
Plus WIPs and final image

TRAINING

Q&A VIDEOS

Patrick J Jones
Kicking off a new series, Conan the Conquered Part 1 gives great insight into the preparation for painting a masterpiece.

Nick Harris
Use ArtRage to get the lighting right for an atmospheric rooftop scene.
Plus WIPs and final image
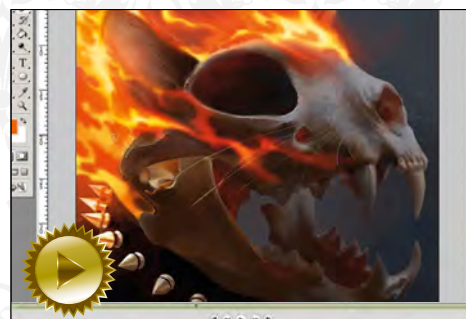
Paco Rico Torres
Watch real flames, and use dark tones and correct lighting to paint a creature on fire.
Plus final image
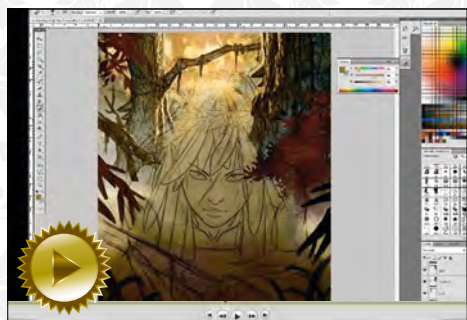
Sara Forlenza
Use strong lights and shadows to paint convincing-looking muddy feathers.
Plus WIPs and final image

Donglu Yu
Quickly create strong compositions for a city scene using imported textures.
Plus WIPs and final image
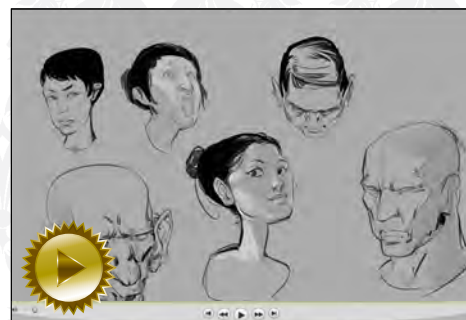
Nadia Enis
Use the "main planes" to draw a realistic head without reference.
Plus WIPs and final image

PLUS Videos on techniques for painting a horror scene with humour, dislocated shoulders and creating art from random markings, with WIPS and final artwork from many of this month's workshop artists, including Tony Foti and Don Seegmiller.

11 CUSTOM BRUSHES, INCLUDING…

STREAKY
Mark Behm uses this brush as his Source Shape in Procreate.

SAMPLED BRUSH
Dave Kendall created this one from a Photoshop Chalk brush.

VEGETATION BRUSH
Derrick Song uses this brush for painting a jungle environment.

Reader
FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR FANTASY ART

Darius Kalinauskas

LOCATION: Lithuania
WEB: www.behance.net/scoobydoo
EMAIL: kalinauskas.darius@gmail.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop, 3ds Max

Darius counts veteran artist Feng Zhu as his biggest inspiration. So much so that he sold his computer, car and flat to fund one year's study at the Feng Zhu School of Design in Singapore. "I finally emerged as who I am today: a concept artist. I love every aspect of what I do."

He's always been willing to make sacrifices for his art. While in his first year at the Vilnius Academy of Arts, he supported his studies by creating furniture and interior design 3D visualisations. But video games and game art are his passion, an influence found throughout his intricate, narrative-lead concepts.

1 OFFICE SEND "This is part of my personal project, The Abandoned. It's the president's office, where he can overlook his empire. It started life as a 3ds Max model before being exported into Photoshop for painting."

2 OLD COURTYARD "This is a Photoshop painting of a rebel base. The concept was to create a courtyard guarded by soldiers."

3 TRAIN "My idea was to design a safe haven for survivors of a Siberian train crash. I started by doing some line work, then designed the elements and came up with some ideas for the crash. I then took the image into Photoshop and pushed some details by using a selection of photo references."

ARTIST OF THE MONTH

Congratulations Darius – 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.

Artist crit

Polish environment and character artist Grzegorz Rutkowski says size matters

"Darius has a great sense of perspective and scale. He's clearly a flexible concept artist who can handle environment scenes as well as character concepts."

3

1

2
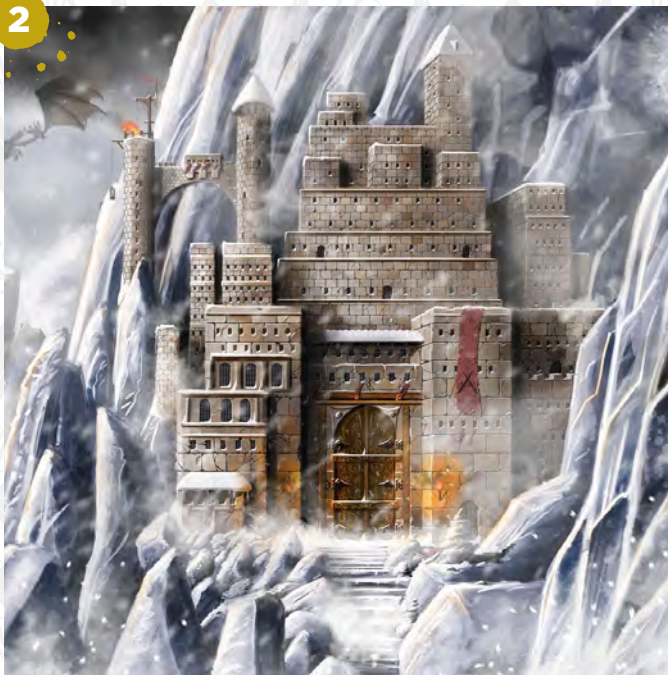
3

Shirow Di Rosso

LOCATION: Belgium
WEB: www.mentalpictures.be
EMAIL: wacko_shirow@hotmail.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop

For 14 years Shirow (otherwise known as Stef Van Rossem) worked as an IT engineer. In 2013 he quit to follow his passion for art, and became a freelance illustrator. "It has been a great adventure," the artist says. "I didn't go to any art schools and had to learn everything through books and online tutorials."

Shirow has found success relatively quickly, creating a string of illustrations for video games. This year he published his first children's book.

"I like to combine comic book and manga styles with digital painting. All my work is digital, since I don't have a big workspace."

1 CYBORG REPAIR "This was my very first digital work. I love the nonchalance of this piece."

2 THE ALAMUT "The buildings from the game Skyrim inspired me to paint my first environment piece."

3 CENTAUR KHAN "I wanted to make a badass centaur, one who could conquer the world."

FXPosé submissions to: fxpose@imaginefx.com

Jackson Tjota
LOCATION: Indonesia
WEB: www.tjota.deviantart.com
EMAIL: jacksontjota@gmail.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop, After Effects

Jackson is a graduate of Melbourne's RMIT University, where he studied to be a 3D animator and visual FX artist. It was here, however, that he discovered his true passion lay in drawing and painting.

"I enjoy learning all things scientific: astronomy, psychology and advanced technology. I also love contemporary art forms, such as US comics and graphic novels," Jackson says.

Other influences include fantasy and sci-fi movies and video games. The Jakarta-based creative currently works as a freelancer, primarily in the fields of trading-card illustrations and book covers.

1 FIRE MAGE "Part of the Elven Mages set. This was done partly to test out some custom fire brushes. The staff was inspired by an actual fire rod in science labs. I always liked the idea of magic or magical objects that are supported by a little bit of realism."

2 EARTH MAGE "I painted this image simply to test my art skills by trying to push the quality as far as possible. In addition, my animation background has meant that I've always had a fascination with fancy lighting. Depicting a magical being in a magical forest was a great way to tick both boxes."

3 AVEYOND – EAN'S QUEST "This was commissioned by Amaranth Games for the main title screen for one of its games. It's an eight-bit style PC game that doesn't contain many details, so the client gave me a degree of freedom in terms of visual design, which was much appreciated!"

IMAGINEFX CRIT

"Jackson elevates his female fantasy compositions with excellent lighting and movement. Case in point: the Fire Mage's fiery swoosh that neatly takes the viewer around the dynamic scene."
Cliff Hope,
Operations Editor

© Amaranth Games

✚ Leonardo Calamati

LOCATION: England
WEB: www.alihai.viewbook.com
EMAIL: alihaiart@gmail.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop

From the banks of the River Arno to the quayside on the Tyne, Leonardo's art has taken him from studies in Florence, Italy, to a busy career in Newcastle, England.

He was in Italy when his first comic book illustrations were published. It was then that Leonardo realised he was more interested in "the creative part of art instead of the act of drawing itself". So he moved into the fields of concept art and design.

This led him to England, first in London working for a number of video game studios, and later to the northeast with Tyneside studio Atomhawk, where Leonardo remains as a freelancer.

1 SAFE AREA "Almost every concept artist has a zombie phase, and I wanted mine to be as cinematographic and realistic as possible. The safe area isn't that safe…"

2 PLANNING ROOM "I decided to challenge myself on how an environment such as a simple room can tell a story without a visible character."

3 OH, HI THERE! "Like most of my personal works, this one started with simple shapes and a focus on composition. It was only then that I realised I could create an epic sea scene, even if I usually can't take these things too seriously – which explains the title."

Matthew Dorad
LOCATION: France
WEB: www.karbo.deviantart.com
EMAIL: travinkal@hotmail.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop, Manga Studio

Freelance concept artist Matthew began his career working on book illustrations. He's since moved into video game development, specialising in backgrounds and landscapes.

"I especially like building up a strong atmosphere in my pictures," he says, "that grab the viewer and take them far away, to explore strange and fascinating lands. Whether it's commissioned or personal, I love to try new things, new ambiances, new palettes – and learn something new by the end."

Working almost exclusively digitally, with his trusty Wacom, Matthew is currently focusing on developing his own fantasy world.

1 **PAST GLORY** "A group of adventurers enters the ruins of a once gigantic and powerful city. Who knows what dangers lurk in the countless cracks and crevices of those crumbled buildings? I wanted to create a composition that looms over the characters, creating a distinct feeling that they're entering a place that Mother Nature has claimed back from humans, and where humans now find themselves to be the intruders."

2 **MAJESTIC WATERFALLS** "The immense waterfalls crash in the distance, creating many streams and rivers that flow gently through the lush forest. I was aiming to create a very atmospheric piece, in which I wanted the viewer to be able to hear the flow of the stream and the roar of the waterfall, bathed in an almost ethereal light."

IMAGINEFX CRIT

"It's atmosphere Matthew strives for in his work, and it's his atmosphere that pulls me in to both Past Glory and Majestic Waterfalls. Colour and lighting set the tone for each piece perfectly."
Gary Evans,
Staff Writer

🇺🇸 **Cassandre Bolan**
LOCATION: US
WEB: www.cassandrebolan.com
EMAIL: art@cassandrebolan.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop

Cassandre has had a busy year. Not only has she returned to the US from the UAE, where she spent seven years, but she has also been placed as a finalist in the recent L Ron Hubbard Illustrators of the Future contest. Now she's set to launch her own Kickstarter campaign exploring gender roles in mythology.

"I believe that art should empower the heck out of women," says the Pennsylvania-based illustrator, "and I love painting amazing, strong female characters, so bring 'em on."

Cassandre's passions away from art are feminism, mismatched socks, hot jasmine tea – and pulling faces. "Email me your silliest silly face," she says, "and I'll email you one back."

1 GODDESS HADES "This is a piece from my new art campaign Reverse Mythology. Hades is reimagined as the reigning Queen of the Underworld, haughty and cold as she watches Cerberus bat a dusty skull around the throne room."

2 AZRAEL'S CIG BREAK "The Angel of Death has to take a break now and then, and rest his weary wings made of a thousand eyes and a thousand tongues. I actually painted this in college using my husband as the dashing model, and then repainted it in Photoshop years later."

3 GODDESS ZEUS "Zeus reimagined as the female supreme deity of Mount Olympus, brewing up a thunderstorm with her eagles wheeling overhead. This is part of my upcoming Kickstarter campaign Reverse Mythology."

4 BENEATH THE SURFACE OF TWO KILLS "This piece is my finalist entry in the 2013 L Ron Hubbard Illustrators of the Future Contest. It illustrates a short story, parallel narratives of a kidnapped girl and a hunted fantasy creature. Along with a bonus illustration of mine, it's featured in the publication Writers of the Future Volume 30 alongside all the other amazingly talented finalists."

3

4

IMAGINEFX CRIT

"It's clever how Cassandre adds to the power of her strong female characters with her use of perspective – making sure we're looking up to each character and, of course, they're looking down at us. Impressive work."
Claire Howlett, Editor

1

2

🇺🇸 Frankie Perez

LOCATION: US
WEB: www.perezfrankie.weebly.com
EMAIL: perez.frankie24@gmail.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop, SketchBook Pro

Freelance concept artist and illustrator Frankie is a recent graduate of California's Cogswell Polytechnical College. "My art is all about trying out new techniques and methods of painting to challenge myself and to keep myself on my toes," he says. "My day usually consists of me sitting in front of my computer and painting all day, everyday, with very little sleep. Many artists can probably relate."

Frankie spends much of his free time working on his own series titled The Crazy Ass Adventures of Binky and Olive, featuring a shotgun-wielding little girl and her gun-slinging polar bear partner. "They are quite unusual characters," he says.

1 BINKY AND OLIVE IN RABBIT SEASON "This was inspired by an episode of Looney Tunes where Daffy Duck is trying to convince Elmer Fudd that it's rabbit season. Except in this piece the rabbits aren't so lucky. You've got to pay homage to the greats!"

2 MELVIN CONCEPT ART "This is a personal character of mine. I was testing out a brush pack I had recently downloaded and then, poof, Melvin was born. It's always fun playing with other artists' brush packs and trying to figure out why they have certain brushes in their set."

FXPosé submissions to: fxpose@imaginefx.com

Derek Poole

LOCATION: US
WEB: www.derekgpoole.com
EMAIL: derekgpoole@live.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop, SketchUp

"Growing up," Derek says, "I feel like I had the best of both worlds. I spent much of my time outside playing and exploring, but I also let my imagination run free reading books, playing games and drawing."

He went on to study fine art at Louisiana Tech University before moving to LA and entertainment design at Gnomon School of VFX.

The Louisiana-based artist counts Yoji Shinkawa's concepts for Metal Gear Solid and Doug Chiang's work on Star Wars: Episode I among his biggest inspirations, alongside filmmakers like Christopher Nolan, Michael Mann and Quentin Tarantino. "Storytelling is everything to me," he says.

IMAGINEFX CRIT

"Exploring the great outdoors and the interiors of his mind isn't the only contradictory thing about Derek's art. His work is a fine mix of old and new, and gets across loads of character in a static image."
Beren Neale,
Digital Editor

1. **AS GHOSTS** "This was my initial vision for a personal project, As Ghosts. I knew I wanted to combine old and new, organic with technology, and that there had to be a boy as the central character. Outside of Zelda and Shadow of the Colossus, I don't see much of that."

2. **MOON – CHARACTER SHEET A** "Here I took my first silhouette and after drawing over it, began to add value, colour and texture. I tried to make sure that the most contrast was around the head and hands. Characters should read well from a distance, and also in black and white."

Randy Vargas

LOCATION: Spain
WEB: www.vargasni.com
EMAIL: randyvargas89@gmail.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop

Randy – aka Vargasni – is an illustrator, comic book artist and concept designer who cut his teeth working as a freelancer in video games, books covers and graphic novels.

More recently, Vargasni has taken on projects for US indie publisher Zharmae Public Press and Spanish small-press outfit Nowevolution Editorial.

The artist has a passion for cinematic, story-led art, and has been experimenting with matte painting techniques. His work usually begins as grey scales, before using various blending modes and applying colour.

1 KENRATH "This guy needed to have an aggressive look. I used a lot of references to try and achieve the correct lighting and expression."

2 AMBUSH SURVIVORS "This piece was my very first time experimenting matte-painting techniques. It was a lot of fun."

3 WHITE SORCERESS "There are so many awesome illustrations all over the internet relating to trading card games, and this is my contribution. I tried to make it original. As with almost all of my paintings, I started in greyscale. Later on, I used different blending modes, then added my colours."

4 CROWNED BY THE MOON "I was looking to achieve a more painterly look in this piece, with the focus on strong storytelling."

4

IMAGINEFX CRIT
"Randy's single character images show a variety in colours and styles, but it's in Crowned by the Moon that his storytelling skills shine through. Add an alluring composition and it's a portfolio gem."
Daniel Vincent,
Art Editor

Art students graduate with "crippling debt," says Noah Bradley.

Graduate Juliana Xavier says art schools charge too much.

School's out?

Classroom debate Is conventional art school worth the outlay? We gather post-grad artists and lecturers to make a case for your cash…

Noah Bradley says you don't need to go art school to be an artist.

Those wishing to attend the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) must complete its infamous "two drawing home test". On white paper – measuring exactly 16x20in – applicants are asked to reference a bicycle and then sketch one of the following: a made-up drawing instrument; a piece covering both sides of the sheet; or 11 related items drawn in a single day.

Pass and they're accepted into one of America's oldest colleges, a world-leading art school whose alumni include Shepard Fairey and Seth MacFarlane. But it comes at a price: more than a quarter of a million dollars. More than MIT. More than Harvard Law School. Just a few thousand shy, in fact, of Oxford and Cambridge combined.

"Artists are neither doctors nor lawyers," Noah Bradley wrote in a recent blog post titled Don't Go to Art School. "We do not, on average, make six-figure salaries. We can make liveable salaries, certainly. Even comfortable salaries. But we ain't usually making a quarter-mil a year. An online debt repayment calculator recommends a salary exceeding $400,000 to pay off a RISD education within 10 years."

After graduating from RISD, Noah built a successful career as artist and art teacher. So why is he against others doing the same? "I got lucky," he says. "I was given a pile of scholarship money, and went to an in-state school with low tuition-to-graduate costs. I also happened to get to a professional level fast enough that I was able to graduate and freelance full-time immediately. The majority of students aren't half so lucky. They go to expensive schools and graduate without any job prospects. And while they could be spending the time working on their portfolios, most of them have to work insane hours just to keep up with their loan payments."

A GLOBAL TREND

Fees and living costs per year – as shown on RISD's website – total $63,434. That's $253,736 for a typical four-year undergraduate degree programme. But it's not the only college with high costs. A recent report by the US Department of Education found over a third of the country's 25 most expensive colleges are art schools. It's a statistic mirrored around the world.
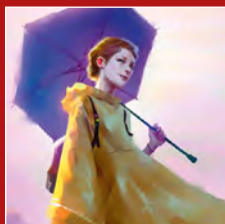
"I think it would take multiple lifetimes for most artist to be able to pay off art school fees with the wages from art jobs themselves," says recent art graduate Juliana Xavier. "It's not a fair trade."

The Brazilian studied sequential art at the Savannah College of

Chuck Pyl teaches at the Academy of Art University, an art school that doesn't differentiate between on-site and online courses.

The Academy's "asynchronous learning environment" replicates the studio experience virtually.

Art and Design in North Carolina. Despite leaving with a good degree and running her own webcomic (**www.luckylupin.com**) she has struggled to find paid work. "I find it ridiculous that the most expensive schools turn out to be art colleges," she says. "Although I absolutely loved my professors and learned a ton from them, I can't really say that was enough for the price we paid. Too often, I felt like I was paying to attend the school itself and not for my programme of study. If there had been a way to separate my course from the school, I think I would have gotten a lot more out of it."

"I look at the artists and students around me," Noah says. "The artists, whether they're professional or still trying to break through, are saddled with immense, crippling debt. The students are being led down this path towards debt, almost unaware that it's happening. Schools have the audacity to call loans 'financial aid'. It infuriates me."

Noah stresses you don't need to go to college to become an artist, and it's time students turned their backs on the traditional art school model. Work produced should be an artist's only concern. He's never needed to show his diploma to land a job.

The American was moved to put together an alternative: The Ultimate $10k Art Education. It promotes a mixture of online and atelier learning. Noah has also set up his own back-to-basics art camp. It focuses on refining fundamental skills, which should give artists the tools needed to make a living from their work.

"The students are being led down this path towards debt, almost unaware that it's happening"

San Francisco's Academy of Art University offers both on-site and online degrees in all its majors. It doesn't differentiate between the two and even offers hybrid degrees in which students take a mix of classes convenient to their schedules.

"The university," says Chuck Pyl, director of BFA illustration, "has a custom-built, online asynchronous learning environment, which is meant to replicate the in-studio experience: contact hours, work done and teacher-student interaction.

"Asynchronous means students in different time zones may post and get responses within any week's module content – the class session – without having to show up to a live conference on West Coast time. Teacher critiques are visible to the entire class, known as 'the wall crit'. so that everyone can learn from them."

Estimated expenses per year for an undergraduate, which are shown on the ➡➡

Watts Atelier's Erik Gist says studio time is an essential part of an artist's development.

With 30 years' experience, Marshall Vandruff increasingly finds himself teaching online.

66 Teaching online is fun. Everyone has a front-row seat. Online classes attract students seeking skills over degrees 99

Academy of Art University's website, come to $22,086. That includes art supplies but not living costs. The system may be designed to save time, but it doesn't save money.

American artist Marshall Vandruff, who has over 30 years' teaching experience, is increasingly moving away from face-to-face seminars and towards online learning. "It's a new world of students," he says, "and some have shown the quickest progress I've seen in over 30 years of classroom teaching. Teaching online is fun. Everyone has a front-row seat. Also, online classes attract students seeking skills over degrees. I love that vibe because it creates an involved atmosphere. I feel kinship with online students."

Marshall takes seminars on everything from anatomy to drapery, draftsmanship to artistic development. Rather than the all-encompassing approach adopted by many degree programmes, he says students should master skills that will prepare them for careers in their chosen fields. And the best way to do this is through a kind of bespoke, self-directed apprenticeship.

"Once you define your goals, choose teachers who will help you reach those goals," says Marshall. "Every profession is different: concept artists need more anatomy than cartoonists, who need lots of ideation training, for example. A self-learner can create a custom education."

"What about the camaraderie?" asks illustrator Erik Gist. "I gained as much from the other people in class as the class itself. I can't believe how accepting and encouraging the classroom environment was – and the healthy sense of competition that comes with it."

Erik is a former student at Watts Atelier of the Arts, where he now teaches. He says some face-to-face tuition is essential if he's to instruct students to the best of his abilities.

"It's very valuable," he says, "to be able to see the student at work. By only seeing the end result I'm stuck guessing at what causes the problem. Through experience, our

Marshall says he loves the vibe of online learning and its "involved atmosphere".

instructors are very good at this 'guessing', but seeing the student work in real-time is immensely helpful."

LEARN ONLINE AND ON-SITE

Classes at Watts start from $385 – online from $99. A Platinum Pass is $3,950 and offers unlimited classes. While Erik recommends fledgling artists find at least some time for classroom study, many skills can be learned and honed online.

This means a comprehensive programme of learning, tailored to an individual student's needs, can be put together a lot more cheaply than attending even a mid-range art school. Artists then have the best possible chance of making a career from their craft, without worrying about balancing the books and paying off debt accrued during studies.

"Our online programme is very affordable," Erik concludes. "And our brick-and-mortar school is equally affordable when compared to comparable programmes. Where our online school is most valuable is for those who are unable to relocate or as a guide for additional study for those who do take our face-to-face classes. Either way, it takes a special sort of person to stick with it day after day, week after week, year after year, with the kind of dedication becoming good at art requires."

Alexandre Diboine admits to not be able to paint shiny surfaces in his podcast...

...while Dan LuVisi discusses his constant struggle to make his character designs resonate with the viewer...

...as podcast junkie Miles Johnston listens in, happy to go wherever the conversation takes him.

The art of conversation

Creative chats English artist Miles Johnston's unplanned, unscripted podcasts with fantasy art's biggest names are proving to be a big draw

Dirty Sponge is a new podcast from Miles Johnston, the illustrator turning interviewer who's talking to some of fantasy and sci-fi art's leading lights.

Artists Dave Rapoza, Whit Brachna and Alexandre 'Zedig' Diboine are just some of the guests who've taken part, each sitting down for what Miles describes as casual, long-form conversations.

"They're artists I find inspiring," says Miles. "Listening to someone who you look up to, who's creatively talking for a few hours... it's incredibly humbling and motivating."

The podcast began earlier this year. Episode one features US artist Dan LuVisi, which sets the tone for the series. Miles says that he does little preparation. There are no planned interview questions – he just sees where the conversation takes him.

"You have a real sense they're just another human being. In your head, it raises the bar of what you can aspire to. Especially when you can hear them speak honestly outside of the restraints of a formal interview.

"I'm not claiming to be to teach anything, or even be particularly informed on any subjects discussed. I just hope that you find these conversations fun to listen to."

To hear Dirty Sponge for yourself, visit **http://ifxm.ag/dsponge**. To see more art from Miles see **http://ifxm.ag/m-johnston**.

On the subject of developing an art career, Dave Rapoza tells Miles that, "It's up to you to take whatever got you excited and make it happen."

FRESH Paint

Your art news that's grabbed our attention

Phil Buckenham (@RobZomComics)

"Ken Lashley-inspired #ImagineFX #Marvel #WinterSoldier #pinup "
http://ifxm.ag/fresh-phil

Anthony Nelson Art (@MacAnthonyArt)

"A redditgetsdrawn figure study in ink and watercolour wash."
http://ifxm.ag/fresh-anthony

John VanHouten (@John_VanHouten)

"Work in progress. Yes, that's a giant baby. #headlock #ouch"
http://ifxm.ag/fresh-john

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

YAWN!

I AM CHRONOS! GOD OF TIME

REJOICE, MORTAL! FOR THIS EVE, I BLESS THEE WITH MORE HOURS IN THE DAY!

SO YOU MAY MEET YOUR DEADLINES!

YYYYEEEEEEESSSSSS

NOOOOoo...

Fantasy talk Explaining the inexplicable

"It's as if I'm submerged in a frenzy of emotions, each tearing my psyche in opposite directions"

Tran Nguyen describes how she feels when stressed. Sounds just like our press week! See page 106

New SketchBook Pro

Secret seven We ask the Autodesk team what to expect

Autodesk has unveiled plans to release SketchBook Pro 7 this summer.

"We were able to address a number of big customer requests," says Autodesk product manager Toby-Lei Wang. One new feature is the Flipbook Animation, making it easy to create sketch animations. Elsewhere, there are improvements to the layer editor, with more blend modes and grouping, and performance improvements that will enable artists to work on 64-megapixel canvases.

American concept artist Scott Robertson worked with Autodesk, conceptualising tool functions. "It's a very fluid sketching program," says Scott, "with an elegant UI that can be quickly picked up by anyone. With the new tools, professionals can also push imagery created in the program to a much higher level."

SketchBook Pro 7 is released this summer. For more information about the software visit **www.sketchbook.com**. For more from Scott visit **www.designstudiopress.com**.

Adding gradations, lighting effects and perspective drawing grids has expanded the sketch options.

© Cat's Pyjama's Books

SketchBook Pro 7 – developed with collaboration from Maya – makes it easier to create animation.

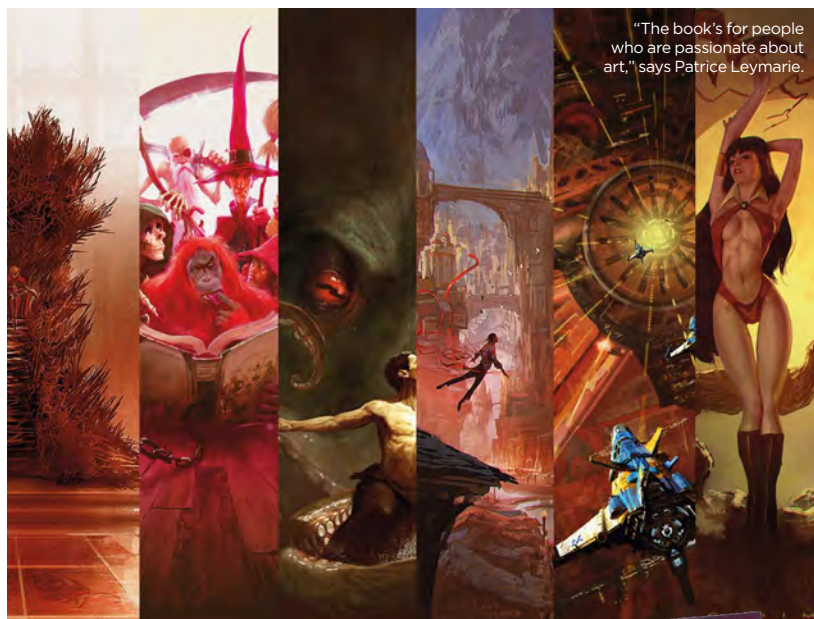Marc's book will include his most famous works, but also previously unseen pieces.

"The book's for people who are passionate about art," says Patrice Leymarie.

Art's a touchy subject

Covers collection French artist Marc Simonetti explains why you can't beat the magic of a book

Art books are to artists what dictionaries are to writers. So says Marc Simonetti, unveiling plans to publish his work in print for the very first time.

Coverama is a new crowdfunded project put together in collaboration with digital art website IT'S ART. It aims to raise $10,000 to publish a 240-page collection of Marc's work. "I've got tons of art books," the French artist says. "They're an essential source of inspiration and reference. They educate our eyes. As human beings we still have a strong relationship with real objects. There's something physical about enjoying an illustration on paper, or a real painting, that we miss with a picture on a computer."

The book cover artist has worked on hugely successful titles such as Terry Pratchett's Discworld books and George RR Martin's Song of Ice and Fire saga, but says Coverama's publication would be a major milestone in his career. He plans to share not only his most famous works, but also previously unseen pieces, with sections explaining how he made them.

"A book such as Marc's is something rare," says IT'S ART founder Patrice Leymarie. "It's for collectors. For people passionate about art. You just don't have the same feeling looking at a PDF or a screen. There's something magic about paper, and this book is all about magic: how creation happens – it's the theme of the book."

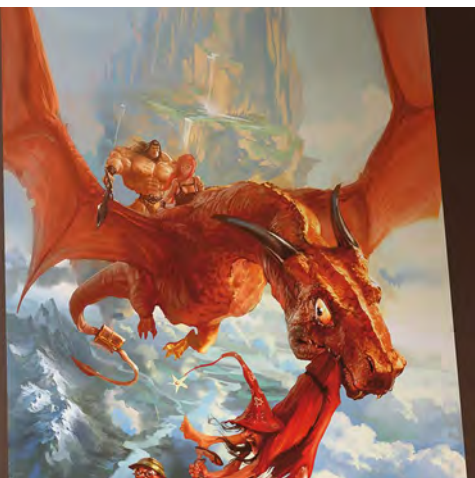For more info and to back the project visit **www.itsartm.ag/marccoverama**. To see more of Marc's work visit **www.marcsimonetti.deviantart.com.**

Coverama is a crowdfunded project in collaboration with digital art website IT'S ART.

Marc has painted book covers for Terry Pratchett and George RR Martin, among others.

"There's something magic about paper, and this book is all about magic," says Patrice.

+deviantWATCH

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

Wavesheep

http://ifxm.ag/dev-wavesheep

Wavesheep's linework manages to pack a lot into a small space. This piece is fan art for Trinity Blood, a series of Japanese light novels written by Sunao Yoshida and illustrated by Thores Shibamoto. While not an inch of space is wasted, the illustration succeeds in leading your eye around the page.

Ariel Flores

http://ifxm.ag/lonefirewarrior

Every time Ariel Flores hears Jimi Hendrix's All Along The Watchtower he sees images of silhouettes moving through the rain. He decided to create a piece inspired by this vision: And The Wind Began to Howl. It's a star-studded, shadowy work framed by driving rain.

Izzy Medrano

http://ifxm.ag/dev-izzy
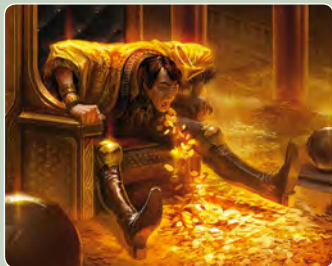
Beautifully lit and coloured, Greed is Izzy Medrano's Magic: The Gathering-inspired piece. "It was interesting how easy it was to overly Color Dodge everything," Izzy says. "There was a lot of push and pull trying to get the materials to work and feel magical. Yay for gold-based throat damage!"

When I don't paint, I like to dig around any books and documents I can find on Leonardo da Vinci – in particular, his own notebooks.

This is an extra-heavy desk. I've had my share of flimsy desks, glass desks and dinner-table desks, and they all drove me crazy. When I saw this one I just had to have it, and I've not regretted it.

A couple of my larger Leonardo books. While I'm not overly inspired by his paintings, I could browse his written works and sketches for hours. His personality shines through in both: complex yet strikingly unfussy, subtle yet beautifully bold.

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

Nykolai Aleksander

Night owl The Stellar Art Award-winning artist invites us into her digital workspace and explains why she prefers to paint after sunset

I work in a 250-year-old building. It's nestled between the North Sea, just a few hundred metres away on one side, and old castle ruins, a mile up a hill on the other. Minimalist, high-tech interiors don't sit well with me. Neither do large, open spaces. That's why the smallest room on the second floor of my house is the perfect place to set up my digital workstation.

Another bonus: it's north facing. There's nothing more annoying than sun glare on a screen while trying to work on the rare occasions that I sit at the computer during the day, because I'm either in my studio

Southbay (and the North Sea) just behind my house, with its harbour and lighthouse. It's perfect for studying lighting conditions.
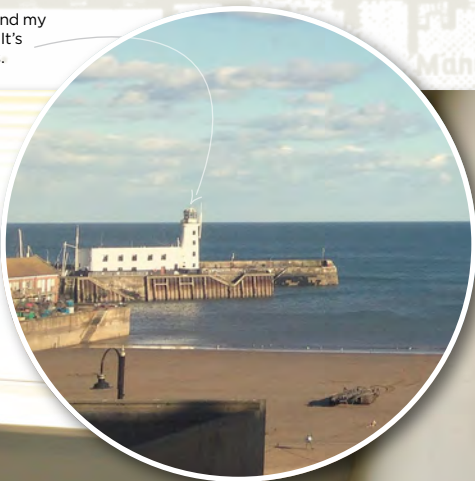
A little collection of art books where my work features, bar the two Assassin's Creed concept art books. It's incomplete, with two or three books being with my parents, and another one that I don't remember where.

My walls are bare because I want nothing to distract me from my own imagination. It really is as simple as that.
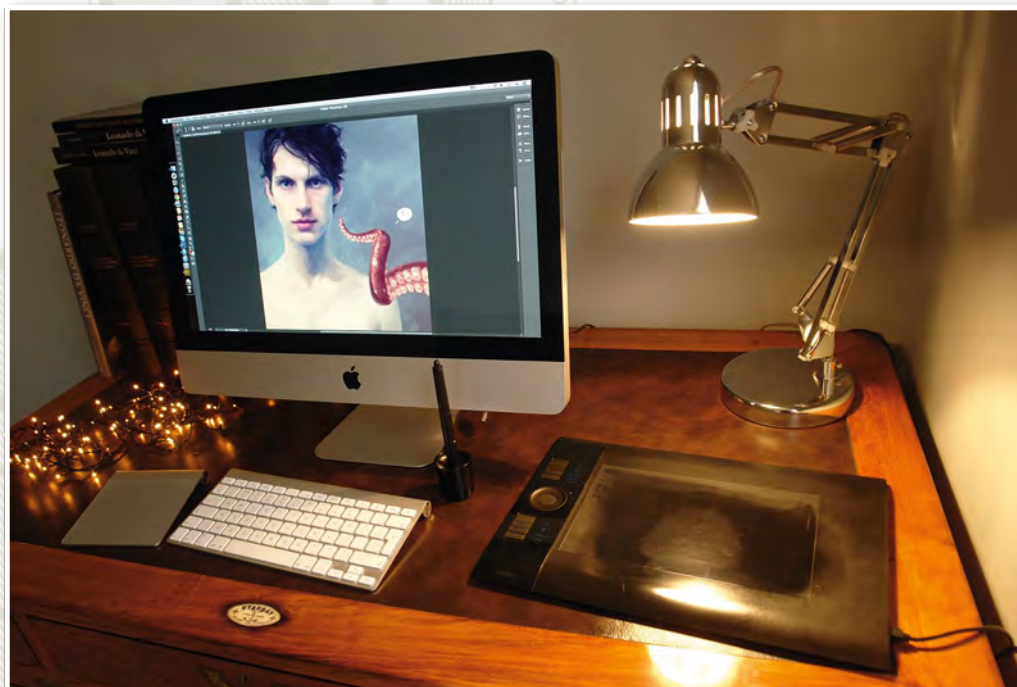
What, no Cintiq? Nope. This baby's travelled halfway around the world with me for the past five years, from Pretoria, via Montreal, to Los Angeles, and it works perfectly fine. I'm just stubborn like that.

assaulting one or the other canvas with real paint, or more likely, sleeping.

I'm a night owl by default. Usually, I get the best ideas some time after midnight. With everything around me dark and quiet, I get a lot more done. I've never been one to organise my work or follow a strict schedule, even when working to deadlines.

In the same vein, brainstorming – as the term suggests – happens in my brain, not in sketchbooks, which is why you won't find anything near my desk, other than the tablet, that might hint at me doing any kind of visual art. Odd? Maybe. But it works for me. And while it may be a perfectly normal sight to most digital artists, it's still strange for me to see an iMac on my desk, as I've only ever had PCs up until 18 months ago. Perhaps it's a little ironic that since having the Mac, I've barely been working digitally, where I used to spend almost all day in front of that desk, every day.

Having said that, over the years I've learned that painted floorboards and office chairs – mine's been with me for 15 years – don't mix well. But the thought of putting carpet down never really appealed to me. I like things once they look lived in, like they have a story to tell. It's my world: comfortable and sometimes a tad chaotic. **Find out more about Nykolai and see more of her art at www.admemento.com.**

This printer only gets connected when it has to be. I usually use it to produce sketches for transferring to the canvas.

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX Forum

Winners

Image of the month

Short story This month's winner depicts a diminutive character telling the tall tales behind his facial scars

WIN PRIZES!
Congratulations Hazel – 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.

Hazel Gumble won a recent forum competition with the challenging theme of asking artists to look beneath the Earth's surface for inspiration.

"They dug too deep?" Hazel says. "Come on. What's not to love? Dwarves are fantastic, a great subject matter for depicting strong characters and emotions – and beards."

Although the challenge description initially suggested darker scenes, Hazel opted for what she describes as a "survivor angle".

"He's an old dwarf explaining how he earned his scars long ago, the scene being played out in the shadows he casts. This was my first attempt at working in greyscale first before adding colours. My approach was very much inspired by many of the workshops that I've read in ImagineFX."

MYFX TITLE: They Dug Too Deep
WINNER: Hazel Gumble (Hazelgee)
GALLERY: http://ifxm.ag/hazelgee
ALL ENTRIES: http://ifxm.ag/dugtoodeep

"You should have seen the other guy!" Hazel's dwarf recounts the story behind his old wounds.

IMAGINEFX CRIT
"Great work, Hazel. I really love the character, and the backstory leaves me wanting to know more."
The Man Chuck

Hazel's piece began life in greyscale, with the colouring coming later – it was the first time she'd tried this.

Dwarves are great for depicting strong characters and emotions, says Hazel – and for beards.

MYFX TITLE: March Battle
WINNER: Sutat Palama (AslanJ)
GALLERY: http://ifxm.ag/AslanJ
ALL ENTRIES: http://ifxm.ag/march-battle

"I chose to create conflict between a traditional and a digital painting. I began by sketching on paper. The piece was then painted in monochrome to focus the values. I chose a simple colour scheme, one that's the same for both the background and the characters, and then slowly constructed the composition. I started adding colour using different layer types. Color or even Overlay layers are how I usually get the base colours down. The next process is the final detailing and clean-up of rogue lines, highlights and deep shadows."

Sutat sketched on paper, then painted in monochrome, before working on the composition and then the colours.

MYFX TITLE: Titan Family
WINNER: Antonio Fernandez (HansNomad)
GALLERY: http://ifxm.ag/hansnomad
ALL ENTRIES: http://ifxm.ag/titan-family

"This piece started out as a dual portrait of Zeus and Hades. However, the original concept evolved to concentrate on Hades (the bad guys tend to be more interesting). I purposely wanted to avoid the traditional view of Hades as a rather shoddy-looking underground dweller – think the Clash of the Titans film – and display him in a more Olympian style, while retaining the recognisable symbolic elements of the character – specifically the helmet he always wore to make himself invisible."

Antonio Fernandez's winning piece is based around the idea that baddies tend to make the most interesting subjects.

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

Follow us on twitter:
www.twitter.com/imaginefx

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

Matt thought Mark Zug's oil painting video in issue 108 was the best he's seen – and got him excited about using his oils again.

Your best video yet

I'm a concept artist at IllFonic in Denver, US, and I love your magazine. I've just finished watching Mark Zug's oil painting workshop from issue 108 and it was probably the finest oil painting video tutorial I've ever seen. Mark's explanation for his actions and great narration made it a complete joy to watch. Now, I'm a digital painter 90 per cent of the time, but I started with oil paint and still do it on occasion when time permits. But there was so much to take away from that workshop that could be applied to any medium. It's also made me really excited to start a new oil painting. Thank you so much for taking ImagineFX into the traditional realm. Even digital artists like myself appreciate it.
Matt Hubel, via email

Claire replies Matt, thanks so much for getting in touch. I forwarded on your kind words to Mark Zug, who was very happy that you liked his video workshop. We're loving the traditional art section too.

Monster request

My name is Magnus and I'm the owner of the Icelandic Sea Monster Museum (**www.skrimsli.is**), in the small village of Bildudalur in the west fjords of Iceland. We've been looking for some fine sea monster art to decorate our restaurant. I'm a

Sea monster aficionado Magnus would like to display this dynamic image by Wayne Reynolds in his museum.

great fan of your magazine and in issue 107 there's a beautiful drawing on page 47. Do you think the artist would be willing to give us a permit to use his art in our museum, and what do you think that will cost? The file resolution needs to be rather good as the printed size will be about 2.50x4m.
Magnus Oskarsson, via email

Claire replies Magnus, I've taken a look at your museum (only online, sadly) and it looks wonderful. If I'm ever in Iceland (it's on my list of places to visit) I will definitely add it to my itinerary. The image you mention is by Wayne Reynolds. Only he can say whether he's happy for you to use his image, so I've forwarded on your request.

Slam dunk!

Slam dunk! You guys have done it again! Great, informative and helpful articles by some really great artists. I especially enjoyed Genzoman's article in issue 107, I've followed him on deviantART for years. I enjoyed looking at his energetic style and composition, and the great insight he gave into his thought process. This magazine should be a part of every artist's periodical collection, hands down!
Dave Curbis, via email

Claire replies Well, you can't get much better than a slam dunk, can you? Unless it involves gin. We love Genzoman too, Dave.

Beginner tools

Your magazine is excellent. It's inspired me to get back to traditional artwork as well as try a new line in digital painting. What I would love, though, is for you to do a special issue devoted to budget art applications. Because I'm just starting to get to grips with the basics, I find it hard to justify the heavy price tags of some software, and I'm currently using GIMP (free) and PaintTool SAI (£30) for my art. If you could do an issue devoted to these programs, and any others you could suggest for newbies, it would help us all no end.
Kelvin Moore, via email

Claire replies Thanks for your suggestions, Kelvin, I'll see what I can do. Have you seen our beginner's guide series to Google's SketchUp? It's on page 77 and a brilliant introduction to this free tool.

African artpreneur

I'm a self-taught digital artist from Kenya who works in advertising. Your magazine is the lifeline to my art and I've been reading it for years. I buy it from a vendor locally here, to try and support him, which is why I don't subscribe.

I'm writing to you for two reasons. Firstly, it's been my dream to be featured in your magazine as Africa hardly features and I've submitted my work twice before with no response. Are Kenyan digital artists not meant to be in your magazine? ImagineFX is my inspiration and will always be. Thank you for inspiring Africa.
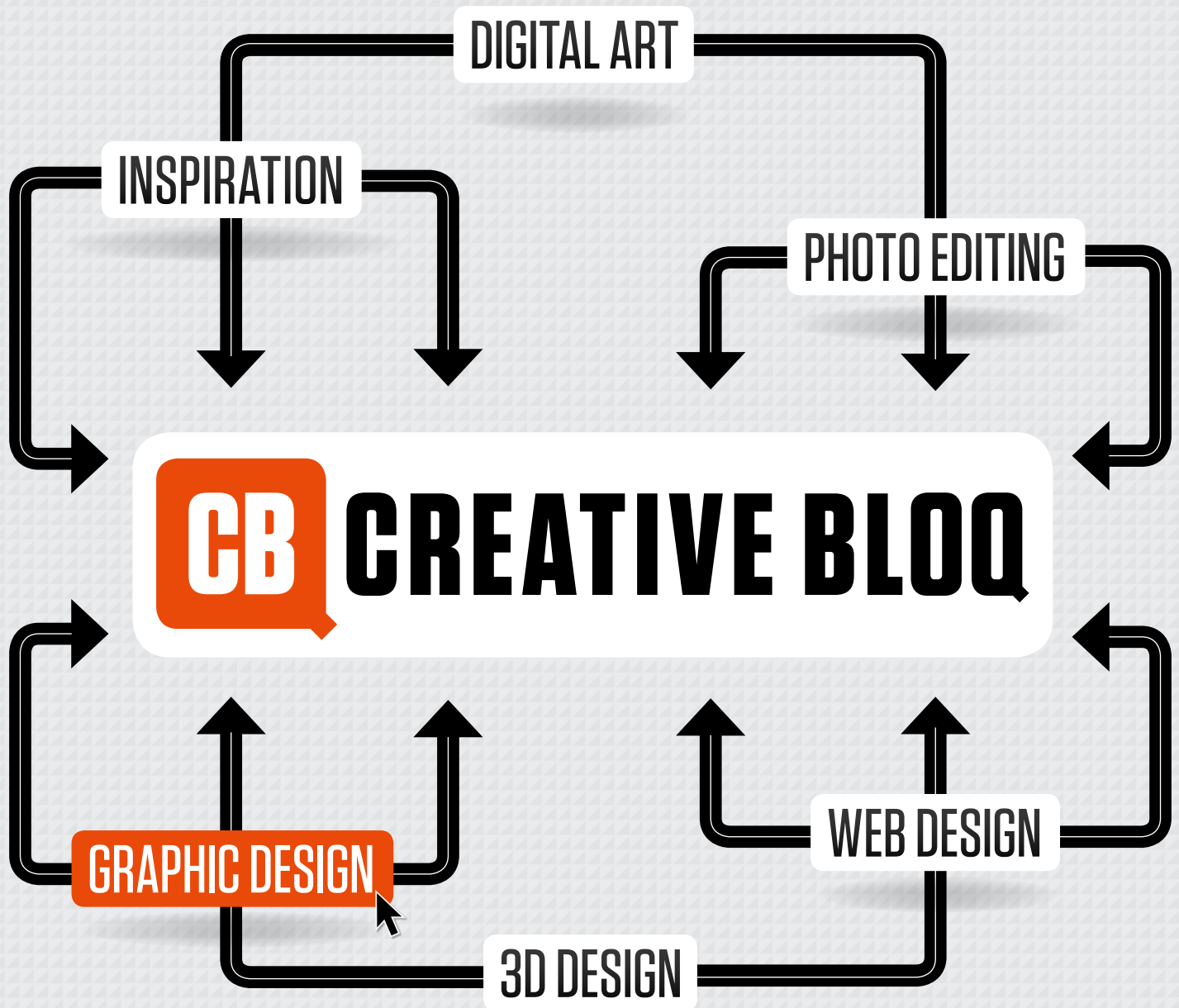
Secondly, I'm writing in response to a letter in your Game of Thrones issue (108), called Theme Talk by Deirdre Adams. Kenya and the African continent have so many amazing myths that are both scary and fantastic and they're all waiting to become art. So myths from around the world, as you coined it, sounds amazing and I would love to be a part of it.

I produce a lot of concept art and my style varies. I love sketching. My pin-up art is based on DAZ 3D base renders that I then paint, because I'm not strong on human anatomy drawing just yet. I also really love environment art, and loved the ImagineFX article on being an artpreneur (issue 108). Here is my gallery: **http://ifxm.ag/fey-sal**. Please let me know what you think.
Feysal Anthony Nair, via email

Claire replies Thanks for getting in touch Feysal. We don't choose art on the basis of region, we just choose the best art that we receive. I imagine that your art hasn't been chosen for ImagineFX in the past because we don't really feature DAZ 3D renders. But that's not to say your art isn't good! You clearly work hard at your art studies, and I wish you all the very best for the future.

YOUR DAILY DOSE OF DESIGN TIPS & INSPIRATION

DIGITAL ART

INSPIRATION

PHOTO EDITING

CB CREATIVE BLOQ

GRAPHIC DESIGN

WEB DESIGN

3D DESIGN

CREATIVE BLOQ
NETWORK

computer arts .net FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX 3D WORLD

Artist Q&A

GOT A QUESTION FOR OUR EXPERTS? LET US
EASE YOUR ART-ACHE AT **HELP@IMAGINEFX.COM**

ImagineFX
VIDEO
WORKSHOP

The ImagineFX panel
FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART

Don Seegmiller
An artist and instructor at Utah Valley University, Don has worked on five digital painting books, including Advanced Painter Techniques.
www.seegmillerart.com

Nadia Enis
Berlin-based Nadia works as a freelance artist for the games industry. In her free time she daydreams about drawing her own comic.
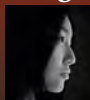www.minosch.deviantart.com

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

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

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

Paco Rico Torres
An illustrator living in Spain, Paco has produced art for several card games, magazines, books and role-playing games.
www.pacorico.blogspot.co.uk

Sara Forlenza
Sara's a freelance illustrator living in Italy, where she works on book covers, digital card products and role-playing games.
www.saraforlenza.deviantart.com

Question
I'm determined to paint an atmospheric rooftop scene, but can't get the light right. Please help!
Corine Westly, US

Answer
Nick replies

There's a passage of writing early on in Titus Groan, the first part of the Gormenghast trilogy, where the author and illustrator Mervyn Peake describes the magical rooftop vista that greets kitchen menial Steerpike after he escapes through a window. It's the first thing that springs to mind when reading this question.

Rooftops offer a great alternative environment when you want a change of angle. They have an atmosphere all of their own and will vary according to their particular location: Eastern architecture versus New York skyscrapers, for example.

Go above street level and present the viewer with a different view of a fantasy city scene.

For my answer I'm depicting a European town suburb, but you should choose whatever environment suits your narrative. We want atmosphere, which can be a lot about lighting and aerial perspective, so let's go for sunset. This will result in a low, dramatic light source and give me the opportunity to draw silhouetted shapes.

Working in ArtRage, I sketch out shapes over a tinted base, before laying watercolour washes on layers set to Multiply blend mode. I build more tonal contrasts in the foreground that diminish into haze into the distance. Finally, I add highlights for extra visual interest.

Step-by-step:
Create an atmospheric rooftop city scene
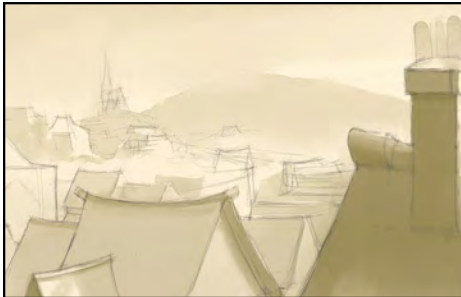
1 I draw roof shapes, concentrating on larger foreground elements, but indicating where focal points such as a distant church will feature. The setting sun will be on the right behind the foreground roof and chimney stack. I use the Precise variation of the ArtRage pencil on a layer over a tinted, canvas-textured background. This colour becomes the base white.

2 I consolidate the foreground shapes and build up tone and colour. I also introduce some textural interest using appropriate stencils. ArtRage doesn't yet support irregular transformation of stencils, so I paint through it on a separate layer and transform the result afterwards. Work into the layer to boost the effect with your chosen paint tools.


3 To both contrast and emphasise the strong yellow colour cast, I introduce some blue/purple in the sky. I also add a highlight layer to pick out edges where I want them. I start with adding some form to the clouds. I repeat these processes, including applying an overall colour wash for coherence near the finish. Finally, I work back into it to strengthen the effect.

Question
Can you help me paint a dislocated shoulder? When I do it, it looks like bad anatomy!
Joe McCarthy, Scotland
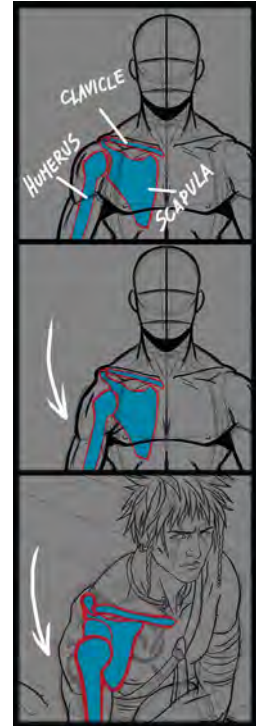
Here you can see what happens to the shoulder when it's dislocated. The humerus moves away from the shoulder joint.

Once you've depicted the injury accurately, you can turn your attention to the story of the scene.

Answer
Sara replies

Knowing what happens to the human body when a shoulder is dislocated will help you achieve your goal. In essence, the injury is caused by a displacement of bones.

The shoulder is made up of three main bones that move around each other: the humerus, scapula and clavicle. When the humerus is moved forwards from its seat it causes an anterior dislocation, and when it's moved backwards it results in a posterior dislocation. When this happens there are a number of visual clues you can paint to indicate the injury.

First, the two shoulders of the subject will look asymmetric. The deltoid muscle will appear thinner and be moved downwards, and above it the clavicle and the acromion (part of the scapula bone) will protrude. The shoulder will appear rotated towards the interior or exterior part of the torso, generating an unnatural bend on the chest. These are the features that you need to paint.

I think that one of the most important things you have to do when adding colours is to enhance the lighting on the clavicle and acromion, to indicate to the viewer the unnatural position of the shoulder.

Once these elements are in place, you can emphasise the injury by adding more details, such as a rigid posture of the arm. You could also paint some bruises, but these must be in keeping with how the character has suffered the sprain.

Artist's secret

PLACE THE FOCUS ON THE SHOULDER
Because the dislocation of the shoulder can be represented only by a series of very precise anatomical details, choose a simplified view of the character to better show their injured shoulder.
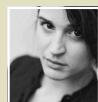
Question
How can making random marks on the page create art?
Ed Davies, US

Answer
Nadia replies

The technique you describe is based on tapping into your subconscious and generating random shapes and lines, but I can't teach you how to do this. Instead, I'll suggest that you use the free program Alchemy (**http://al.chemy.org**). It was developed with Andrew Jones to give artists a new approach to sketching.

Start by checking the box next to the line and use following modes: Speed Shapes, Pull Shapes, X Shapes and Type Shapes. Under Affect you'll also find mirroring tools. Play around with the Transparency setting. If you're having trouble producing something useful, try to keep things simple. Create one random blob and try to see something in it. As soon as I produce an interesting shape I switch to Photoshop and work it up.

When your problem appears at the rendering stage, you might have to do some studies first. I like to work with the Freehand Lasso tool and Airbrush, and for details I use textured brushes to give it a charm without making it too clean. Use Photoshop layers with your early Alchemy pieces, so that you can amend your art if it's not working out for you.

Move away from your initial sketch, create new layers and separate out your images. Produce as many as you can. There are no bad ideas, just unformed ones.
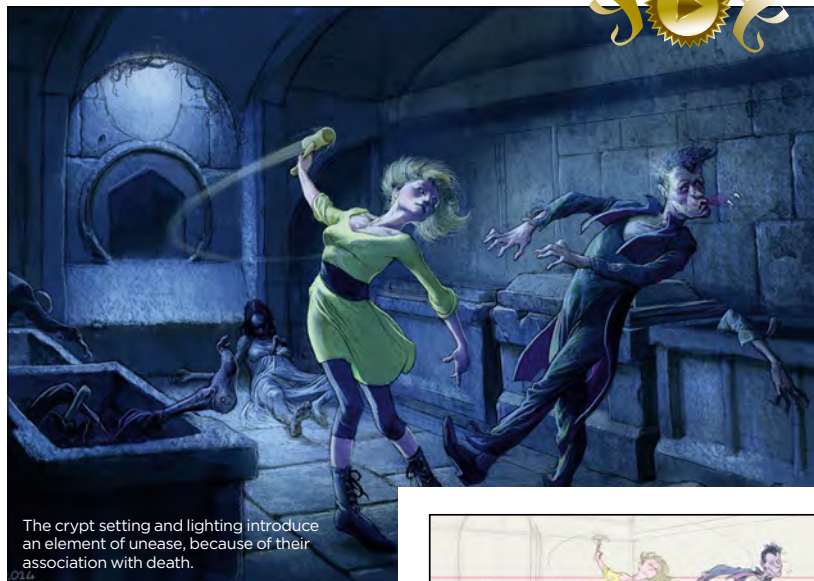
There are many approaches to using Alchemy, so it's well worth doing a little online research to see how others fare with it.
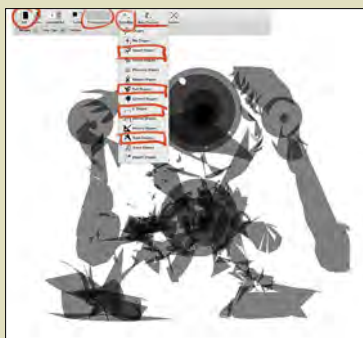
Question
How can I mix horror and humour in a scene?
Deon Ellis, Wales

The crypt setting and lighting introduce an element of unease, because of their association with death.

Answer
Nick replies

Horror and humour have a proven track record of being great bedfellows. Yet at the same time we all have senses of humour that depend on individual personality and cultural influences.

Visual humour such as slapstick crosses more cultural boundaries than jokes related verbally, and has proven to be fairly resilient over time. The same general rules apply to horror. Our thresholds can be very personal. This can make combining and balancing the two a hit-and-miss affair. Go with what

Without the trappings of terror, the two characters and their postures can be more clearly seen for just how ridiculous they really are.

works for you. That's assuming you aren't bound by genre constraints such as your creation being destined for a specific market – children's publishing, for example. Each genre comes with its own guidelines, and will need to be factored in. Still, try and keep it fresh. Try and keep it you!

Question
How would you approach painting a battle featuring modern-day soldiers?
Cindy Soumeru, Netherlands

Answer
Tony replies

Depicting a modern war shootout is, like with many sci-fi or fantasy battle pieces, a mix of chaos and storytelling. As a general rule (and, to be honest, most art 'rules' are nothing more than that), you'll want to establish who the fighters are, what they're doing, and what point in the story would be the most interesting to depict on the canvas.

Because this is a more realistic battle scene set in modern times, you'll want to research images of war. The soldiers' gear, weapons and vehicles being used are a big

help, as well as pictures of real-life battlefields. Fair warning, though: there are a lot of pretty gruesome photos to be found. War is an ugly thing, and if you're going to paint it you might want to be familiar with at least some of the superficial horrors of it. That doesn't mean you need to add bodies that have been torn in half, for example, but the environment can suggest a similar level of violence.

Keep a few key focal points in mind while working up your composition. This will ensure that the hectic environment doesn't overtake the story.

Question
Can you help me depict a creature in flames please?
Mani Chaudhury, India

ImagineFX VIDEO WORKSHOP

Answer
Paco replies

First, bear in mind that, unless there's a strong source of light in the scene, the fire should be the brightest element. The burning object should be painted in dark tones, even if it's a light colour. This is crucial because if the image isn't lit realistically then the fire isn't going to look like fire.

Once the object is finished, it's time to add the flames. I surround the object with orange or red flames, and then paint the bright yellow flames behind, to envelope the object without hiding it completely. When painting the flames, use Soft brushes and mix layer modes such as Screen, Soft Light and Overlay. This makes it easier to blend the flames and the object together.

It's important to spend some time trying to understand the shapes of fire, because not all the flames are the same. Watch videos of fires and you'll notice long, sinuous flames alongside short, fast-moving flames. Adjust your brush settings to achieve the right shapes. As a final touch, adding some incandescent ashes flying around the fire can really sell the idea.

Artist's secret

THE SMUDGE TOOL

Are you having trouble painting the flames? Try using the smudge tool to distort the flames as you paint. Sometimes this tool can be useful to obtain a natural look, which can be tricky to recreate manually with a brush.

Paint the fire with a combination of Soft Light, Overlay, Screen and Normal layers. This is a good way to deal with light and colour.

Step-by-step: Compose an urban battle scene
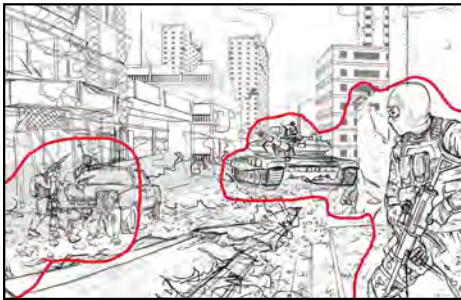
1 Showing the most intense point in the story can be a good subject for your piece, but often painting the moment right before or after the height of action can create more tension. For this scene, I'm painting a group of soldiers being surrounded as a tank approaches. You can group the different factions together for more obvious focal points.

2 I've left a few places on the canvas that aren't damaged. The buildings, roads, cars and sky all suggest that this battle has been raging for some time, and the aeroplane wing on the ground says there's powerful weaponry being used. I've even left remnants of the sketch throughout, because tattered building guts are mostly abstract, busy shapes.

3 Loading the edges with scenery elements that are mostly cropped out of the image, such as seeing just the top of a nearby fire or having buildings that stretch behind the viewer, also give the impression that the action is much bigger than what's contained in the picture plane. If everything is sectioned off too neatly, the action can feel staged.
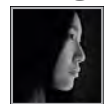
Question
What are your favourite textures to import into Photoshop?
*Eija T, Finland*

ImagineFX VIDEO WORKSHOP

Answer
Donglu replies

Despite continuous innovations in digital painting software, textures have always played an important role. If I were only able to choose two textures for a specific project, I'd choose one organic texture, such as that of a rock or tree; and a geometric texture made up of building elements or mechanical parts. By creating a custom shape in Photoshop, I can then use those two simple textures to create endless possibilities of shape combinations.

This quick way of generating a strong composition is especially useful during a hectic production phase. Within a couple of hours, you would be able to show your art director dozens of useful thumbnails.

In the following walkthrough, I'll explain the technique of creating custom shapes in detail. Then you'll be able to come up with your own sets of custom shapes by extracting diverse textures from your collection of photo references. Here, I've chosen two photos from some cityscapes and one photo of a tree texture that I took in Texas. The main elements in each photograph are all clearly defined, which makes the selection procedure that much easier.
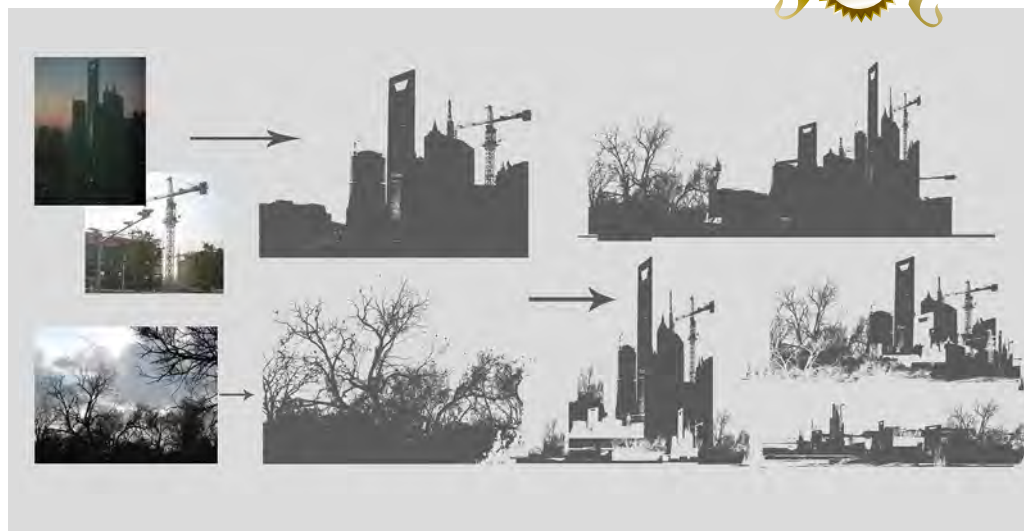
You can see how I've simply extracted the texture elements that I need and turned them into vector-based custom shapes.
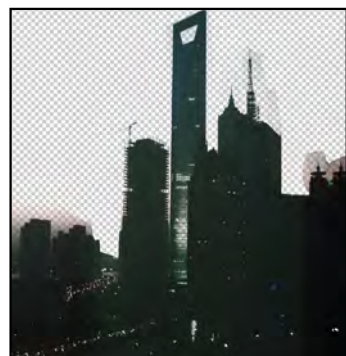
Artist's secret
CREATE A CLEANER SHAPE
Some selections are hard to carry out and they can leave some noisy pixels around the contour. The solution to this problem is boost the brightness and contrast of your selection.

## Step-by-step: Quickly create a city scene using textures

1 I take the main element out of its original background. You can use any selection tool that you feel happy with. The Lasso and Extract tools can isolate the relevant elements. You can also combine two selection methods, which often works for me: I mask the rough part first, then select the details with the Lasso tool. This approach gives me much more control.

2 For adding complexity to the cityscape texture, I take a crane element from another photo and combine it with my art. Its shape is clearly recognisable, and it makes the scale easier to read for both the viewers and the production artists such as modellers or level artists. I'm always thinking about the needs from other artistic departments to speed up the production process.
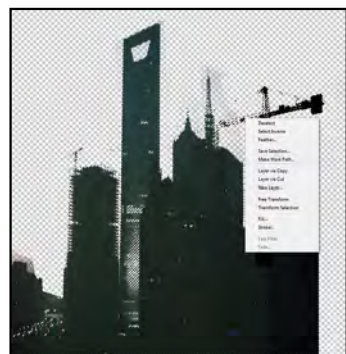
3 Now that the preparation stage is complete, the Photoshop fun begins! Select the texture, press M and then right-click your mouse. From the pop-up menu that appears select the Make Work Path... option. To achieve a precise path type 0.5 in the Pixel Tolerance box, but be sure to try out different tolerance settings to generate a range of path results.
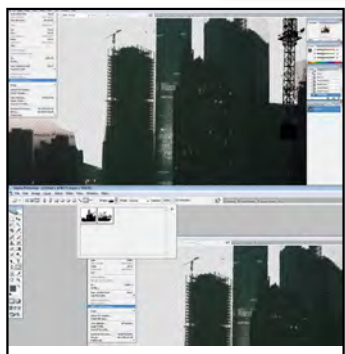
4 Go to the Edit tab, click Define Custom Shape... and give a name to your shape. You can manage your custom shapes the same way as you manage your brushes. Now if you pick the Shape tool, you can see your shapes in the drop-down menu. Select any of them and then start to drop and drag freely on your canvas to create your fantasy compositions!

Your questions answered...

Question
Can you help me paint wind as a superpower of a character?
*Jawaria Hashmi, Pakistan*

The hair and the scarf waving can suggest a windy scene, but to make it clear that the character is generating the wind, you can use kinetic lines.

Answer
Paco replies

Wind itself isn't visible, but what you can see is the effect it has on objects around it, so the first thing you should consider is how the wind interacts with elements of the painting. Capes, skirts, hair, trees… anything that can be moved by wind should be painted according to its direction.

However, if that's not enough, you can try to paint the wind. I know, I said that it's not visible, but this is a case of invoking artistic licence. You can do this by painting lines – much like kinetic lines from a comic – that follow the desired direction, but try to be subtle. Copy your whole image on to a new layer and use a Blending
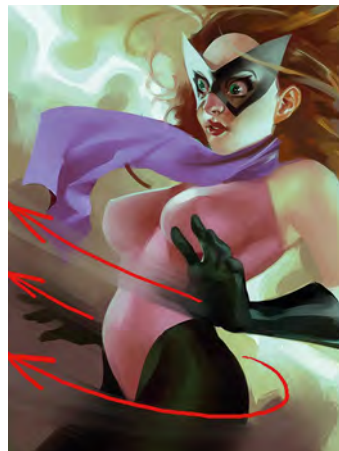
If you're going to paint kinetic lines for the wind, try to use clean curves to mark the direction, and avoid clumsy or excessively straight lines.

brush to distort the image to suggest the lines. Then reduce the Opacity of this distorted image for a more subtle effect. Don't forget to relate the wind to your character, perhaps by using a hand gesture.

Question
How do you draw people, while keeping your lines to a minimum?
Kenny Harrison, US

Answer
Tony replies

If you're just going for the simplest image that can represent a human face, one thoughtful line can do the trick. The goal of many pioneering animators was to convey emotion and depth of character with as few lines as possible, so the films could be animated relatively quickly. This economy of drawing resulted in many of the cartooning styles we know today. See Milt Kahl's original sketches for Alice in Wonderland to see how much can be done with just a few lines.

Considering how sensitive our ability to see faces is, you can get away with just drawing the features that you think are the most important. Maybe it's just eyes and a mouth, or a nose and some eyebrows, but the idea is to boil your subject down to its most important bits.

Use colour to spice up your lines a bit. Lock the layer first to keep everything nice and tidy.
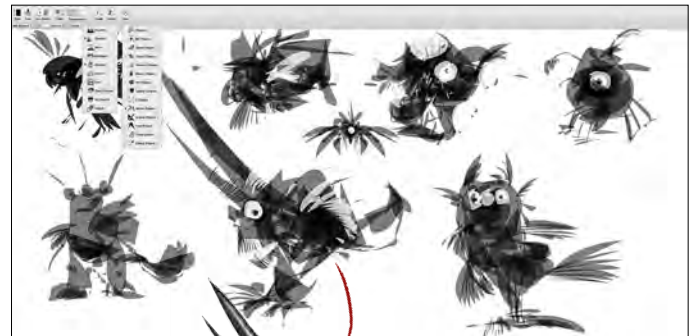

Shapes that echo the eyes, nose or mouth can engage viewers, and putting enough information in your line(s) to suggest all three will create a face.

Question
I need some ideas for shapes to use for creating an alien species
Daddy Mac, England

Answer
Don replies

There are a number of programs that I use to jump-start my creativity. I'll often turn to Alchemy. It's easy to use and you'll soon be generating interesting abstract images for original designs.

There are plenty of options that produce different effects and I find myself trying new combinations
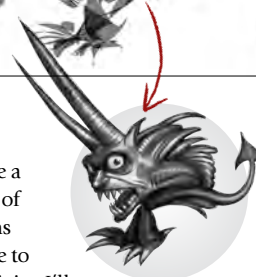
Above: I create these ideas quickly – some abstract, others more representational. Left: I choose to work up one of my shapes into a spiky-looking alien critter.

every time I dip into the program. Indeed, I create some interesting alien shapes in just a few minutes, using the options in the Create and Affect drop-down menus. Spend just a little time with this program and you'll soon be having a lot of fun as you create your alien concepts.

ImagineNation Artist Q&A

Question
How should I paint feathers that are muddy?
Jenny Conquest, England

Answer
Sara replies

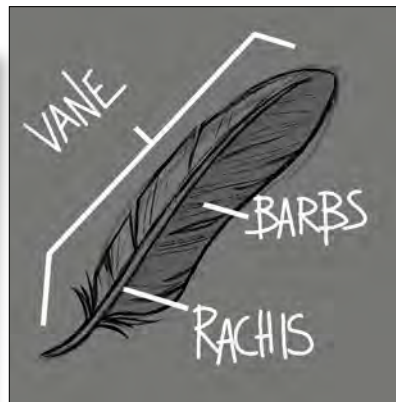It's not easy to paint dirt and mud realistically, so having some references to hand is essential. The same goes for feathers. Let's start with the latter and try to understand their construction.

Feathers have a rigid, thin central part called the rachis (commonly known as the shaft), which is joined to the skin of the bird, and a soft part called the vane that stems out from the rachis. We perceive the vane of the feather as a single thing, but it's actually formed from a set of soft barbs. You'll need to depict these features carefully if your feathers are to look realistic.
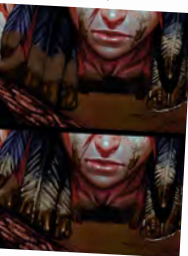
I roughly paint the feather without too much detail. I'm going to get it dirty with the mud, using brownish brushstrokes that follow the shape of the feather. When painting the mud, I bear in mind that it's neither solid nor liquid. Mud is shiny and irregular, and contains lumps of earth. When it dries it leaves a lighter, dusty mark.

In my image I use a dark colours to depict the wet mud on the drooping feathers, and choose a lighter colour to paint the mud that's dried on other parts of the headdress. I finish with a textured brush that gives a rough idea of the earthy and dusty component of the mud.

To make the mud look irregular and slimy, I add some lumps and drips. I use very strong lights and shadows to accentuate its wet look.

Artist's secret

DRY AND FRESH MUD
The encrusted mud will appear more realistic if it's made up of fresh and dried mud. The dried mud is light compared to the fresh stuff, and its sandy and dusty look contrasts with the shiny and viscous look of the fresh mud.

Knowing a feather's construction will help you understand how it'll appear when it's dirty.

Question
Can you give me some advice on creating depth please?
Velvet Tiger, US

By desaturating the original painting, you can see how different levels of contrast are distributed within the image to reinforce depth.
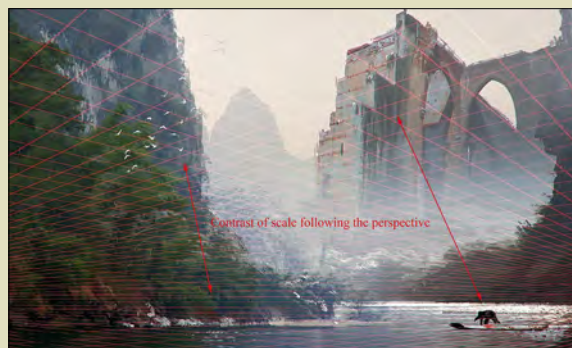
Answer
Donglu replies

There are usually two ways to reinforce the depth for your painting: atmospheric depth and perspective depth. Atmospheric depth mainly deals with the values of the painted elements. The more the elements are further away, the less they're contrasted. This is because of atmospheric elements such as fog, rain or humidity. To better understand the effects of those natural phenomena, do some tonal studies. Put the design aspects aside and focus only on the black and white values by laying down layers of transparent greys on the foreground and background elements.

The perspective depth is the depth information that eyes can perceive or analyse according to the perspective grid that you've established in your painting. By following the perspective, you can make use of the contrast of the scale to further enhance the distance relationship between the elements to create believable depth – a small fishing boat contrasting with a huge building, for instance.

You can see how all the elements are lined up perfectly with the perspective grid, and how the contrast of scale is used within the painting.
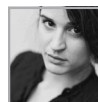
Question
What's the best way to approach drawing a head from imagination?
*Nathan McGinley, Canada*

Answer
Nadia replies

You can't skip the theory, so I'll explain how to understand faces. In my examples I use Photoshop for sketching and colouring, together with my Wacom Intuos graphic tablet. But what I want to teach is a way of observing your surroundings and then make notes for yourself visually. Use whatever technique you're most comfortable with, but don't use erasers while studying.

The common problem with depicting faces and their volumes is that most people have no knowledge about the empty spaces between eyes, nose and mouth and all around them. You have to be in control of these flat surfaces, and know how they behave and fit together. If you could draw these empty surfaces then the main facial elements would be pushed into the right position automatically. But how can you draw something that isn't there? The answer is to translate volume information into lines and use them as a construction basis for your drawing. I'll give you one thing to observe for each step, that you later have to turn into lines. I'll also provide some examples of how I do it.

First I cut out the main planes around the actual face: they're the most ignored part of the human head and the main cause for incorrect perspective. In the second step, you'll draw eyes, nose and mouth in relation to each other, to get their position right. And in the final step, I'll show how much you're able to rely on these lines, even in rendering and shading.
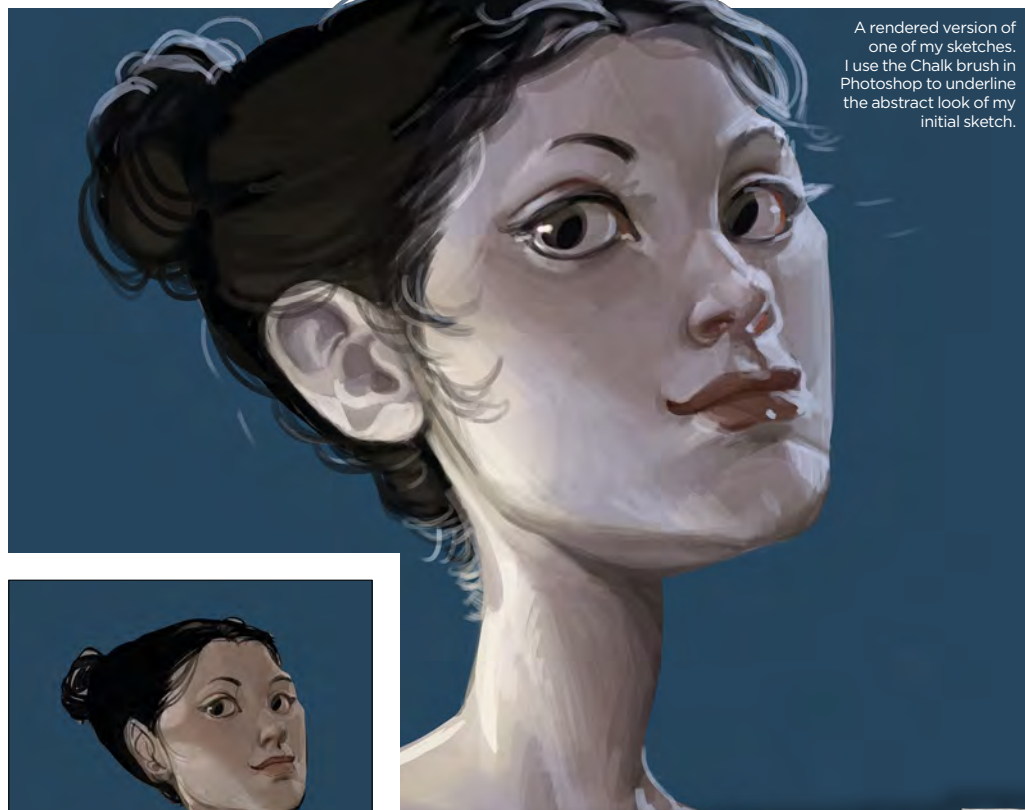
A rendered version of one of my sketches. I use the Chalk brush in Photoshop to underline the abstract look of my initial sketch.
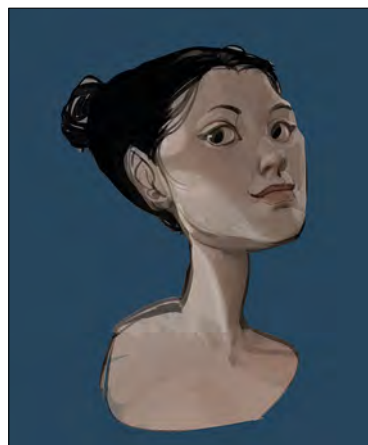
I've added a colour layer and set the mode to Overlay. This means that I don't have to redo anything and can start painting intuitively.

Artist's secret
STRENGTHEN YOUR STROKES!
Know and stick to the set of boundaries, but use everything else as your playground. Exaggerate first – you can come back to realism after you've had your fun. And in the end it's your stroke that matters the most.

Step-by-step: Depict faces correctly

1 Here are the main planes of the face. Notice the empty space between eyes and ears, and how small the face is. For the surrounding planes I use shadow lines – the area where light turns into shadow. Even under different lighting some shadows share the same lines. Some ethnicities have their own shadow language. Collect and use them.

2 What I won't teach here is how to draw eyes, nose and mouth. Rather, I add the idea of using mimic and gesture lines to locate the face. The base for my lines here are wrinkles, folds, mimic folds and highlights. Don't skip the studying of proportions here – take a ruler and a book and start making up your own rules!

3 Here I ink the construction lines and add shadows and volume. Since I employ shadows and mimic lines as construction for my face, I can now use them to find the fitting rendering for the face. It makes life so much easier. If you study the face by yourself you'll know how to use these lines. Don't worry, you will get there!

NEXT MONTH: PAINT SILVER CONVINCINGLY | **TEXTURING YOUR ART** | ENGAGING CITY SCENES
PERSPECTIVE TECHNIQUES | ADVICE FOR DRAWING EYES | **CREATURE DESIGN AND MORE!**

Willow by Cris DeLara
CGWorkshops Instructor

CGWORKSHOPS
cgworkshops.org

Online Learning 2014
VFX and Entertainment Design

CGWORKSHOPS
cgworkshops.org

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART
The ImagineFX Shop

You can buy ImagineFX in print, for your computer, or iPad, Android and nook tablets. We also offer a selection of apps and special issues!

Comic Artist

Digital Painting: Volume 2

Anatomy: Volume 2

MORE SPECIALS AVAILABLE ONLINE

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 104 January 2014

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

Issue 105 February 2014

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

Issue 106 March 2014

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

Issue 107 April 2014

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

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. Plus Bob Eggleton's sketchbook.

Issue 109 June 2014

On Batman's 75th anniversary we bring you highlights of the Dark Knight's art history, including imagery from Jock, Frank Miller, Neal Adams and others, while Ken Lashley paints our cover. The comic fest continues with Simone Bianchi's sketchbook, a Wolverine scene and a look at Fables cover art.

*Resource files are only available from issue 85 onwards.

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

The Art of
CLAIRE WENDLING

One of France's most popular comic artists is in a state of rude health and keen to get back to her pencils...

ack in the summer of 2013, the world of comic art nearly lost one of its finest. Claire Wendling found herself in hospital with kidney failure. She also suffered from lung edema and other infections. It was the culmination of three years of serious illness for the French artist, who'd already been dealing with a heart condition. To top it off, she was being driven mad by chronic tinnitus.

She was at her lowest ebb, but thankfully she pulled through and recovered. Today, not only is she getting back to full health, but she's also drawing again. Everybody on the French comics scene and beyond is looking forward to seeing what she'll come up with.

"I'm better, but everyone who has experienced this kind of stuff will tell you that it takes time to jump back into your life, your routine and your work," says the artist says. "I have had to learn how to live again, I guess."

OUT OF PRACTICE
Claire continues: "It's taken a lot of work to be able to draw again. I was only drawing on and off for three years and that's definitely not enough to keep your imagination and skills going. I've spent four months trying to recover all of that, doing one or two small jobs besides practising every day. I'm like an athlete who was forced to stop doing their sport

after an injury. You can train, but you have to wait for the Olympics."

Despite her hiatus from the industry, just about anyone who knows comics will bring up Claire's name when they think about the scene over in France. Yes, there have been great works from the likes of Moebius, Jean Claude-Fournier and Fred, but Claire has always been regarded as an artist's artist. Perhaps it's the way her talent for drawing comes through in everything she does. Her style is all about figurative, natural and expressive line work, sometimes finished in inks and watercolours, but often left in raw pencil sketch format. It's comic art, done simply and beautifully.

> ❝ I'm like an athlete who was forced to stop doing their sport after an injury ❞

WILDCAT
In 2005, Delcourt reprinted the Les Lumieres de l'Amalou graphic novel with a fresh cover, drawn by Claire. Another reprint appeared last year.

Right now, Claire is working on a retrospective book that's coming later this year from Galerie Daniel Maghen, a French publisher of special editions by comic artists. She's also considering reviving the Alice in Wonderland project that went on hold when she became ill, and doing some smaller personal projects. She hopes to publish a book of sketches soon.

LEADING LIGHT
One of the projects that Claire is best know for is a series of comics drawn throughout the 1990s entitled Les Lumières de l'Amalou, or The Lights of Amalou. It was her first major work after leaving l'Ecole des Beaux-Arts d'Angoulême, where she was a prize-winning artist. Working alongside writer Christophe Gibelin she drew five books in total, which were later released as a stunning 250-page graphic novel.

As she drew Amalou, Claire was able to express her passion for nature, which ➤➤

WHAT DID THE FOX SAY?
*Playful forest creatures come
together with little human
characters in Boit à lettres, one of
Claire's recent images.*

TEATIME
Claire's upcoming sketchbook release will feature this feline character, who has a strong affinity for teacups.

2006 © Marvel Comics

dates back to when she was a child. The artist grew up in the countryside in the south of France, and remembers running around the fields, and all the animals that she encountered. If she had to stay indoors, she spent all her time drawing. "The revelation came one Christmas when I was given a small, plastic projector with part of a Robin Hood movie that I could watch on my bedroom wall," she says.

Claire's interest in nature meant she wanted to study biology, but she couldn't achieve the grades required. So she fell back on her prodigious drawing skills and attended art college at Angoulême. While there she launched her own comic, and did a range of small jobs, even demonstrating drawing pencils at art and toy fairs. People were offering to buy the work even then.

THINKING BIG

At college she met Christophe and after they'd made a few contributions to comic collections, the publisher Delcourt asked

them to think about a bigger piece. Amalou was born, and drawing it filled up half the 1990s for Claire. In 1997, she went to Los Angeles to work as an freelance concept artist for Warner on the 1998 animated production Quest for Camelot, which featured the voices of Celine Dion and Gary Oldman. She also did some work on The Iron Giant. "I was happy to draw again," she says. "Comics had driven me away from

ONCE UPON AN X-MEN
Claire Wendling pencilled the covers for the mini-series X-Men Fairy Tales. This image is taken from issue four, featuring Rogue and Gambit.
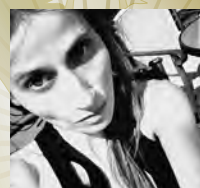
then in France by Soleil. It contained twice as many drawings as Drawers, relating to posters I created for fairy tales or music conventions we had here. I indulged myself sketching and doodling more than I had been asked to do."

You'll find more of her work in two tomes of blood-sucking imagery entitled Chasseuse de Vampires, and in several collections by Delcourt. In 1996 she released a book of sketches entitled

66 For my book Daisies, I indulged myself sketching and doodling more than I had been asked to do 99

drawing a little. I even held a small exhibition at Warner showing some of my personal work. My book Desk is full of this kind of work."

Claire returned to France and continued doing an array of small projects including comics, posters, illustrations and further collections of her own work, such as Daisies and Drawers. "Drawers was a selection of jobs I worked on in animation and illustration, including some work-in-progress sketches. It went back to my first years in the job," she explains. "Daisies was first printed by Stuart Ng Publishing,

2000 © Les Humanoïdes Associés

DRAWING A FANTASY ECO-TALE

A real-world setting provided the backdrop to Claire's successful series of comics, Les Lumières de l'Amalou

The most extensive work in Claire's portfolio is the premium comic series Les Lumières de l'Amalou, created alongside writer Christophe Gibelin during the 1990s. It comprises five books in total, of 48 pages each: Théo, Le Pantin (The Puppet), Le Village Tordu (The Twisted Village), Gouals and Cendres (Ashes). The five books were later released as an extensive graphic novel.

Throughout the project, Claire was able to let her love of nature take over. "We were pissed off by the destruction of entire valleys with huge dams in places we loved," she says. "So our characters were confronted by that, becoming homeless after their world was destroyed.

"I had to create that world and I was challenged by every page because I was still learning my trade. What I liked the

© Delcourt 1997

WILD CHARM
Claire has chosen to evolve her style since L'Amalou's artwork announced her arrival on the comic scene.

most was creating a story in a setting that I knew. It takes place in the south of France. It was hard to draw it correctly and everything was challenging, but instead of drawing real human beings Christophe got me to draw fantastic ones. I prefer fantasy characters – they help me handle the real world."

APHRODITE
An image from volume three of a series called Aphrodite, in which Claire drew a range of erotic images illustrating a story by Pierre Louÿs.

SEA LIFE
Creatures real and imaginary fill the pages of the L'Amalou comics – nature is one of Claire's main themes.

© Delcourt 1997

THE END OF THE TALE
A poster that Claire produced in 2007 for a festival in France, which later featured in her book Daisies, published by Stuart Ng Books.

LOOKING GLASS
Fans are hoping that now she's recovered from her illness, Claire will return to her Alice in Wonderland project.

BACK AT WORK

Her illness behind her, Claire is now busy drawing and hopes to complete several new projects...

Claire's fans are still wondering about the Alice in Wonderland project she was working on before her illness. Sketches from the book have appeared online, and they look sublime.

"Damn!" exclaims Claire. "This is the project I had to stop three years ago. It was more illustration and miscellaneous sketching around the original text, rather than the entire story. I would like to complete it eventually, if the publishers are still interested."

She continues: "Right now I'm doing my small personal projects, and maybe printing a sketchbook soon, just to have something material in my hands. I miss that."

Watch out too for a retrospective to be published by Galerie Daniel Maghen, a comic art gallery in Paris. Back in 2010 Claire held an exhibition there, accompanying her book Daisies.

2009 © Marvel Comics

AVENGERS FAIRY TALES
*Captain America and the other Avengers took part in this Marvel mini-series alongside Peter Pan.*

➤ Iguana Bay, and in 2003 she revisited them, reworking and correcting many of them in pastel or ink. This collection was released as Iguana Bay 2.0 in 2003.

SCARY MONSTERS

She also worked on the computer game Alone in the Dark IV: The New Nightmare, developed by Darkworks. It was part of one of the biggest series in French video gaming, and came out in 2001. You could play as either the hero Edward Carnby who takes on an action role, or as Aline Cedrac whose gameplay involved more puzzle solving, like the previous Alone in the Dark titles. They delve into a horrifying mystery involving reptilian monsters.

Claire got to work on the title by chance. "It's a fun story. At first a friend of mine was supposed to create the monsters, but he was too busy and was not as comfortable

2000 © Les Humanoïdes Associés
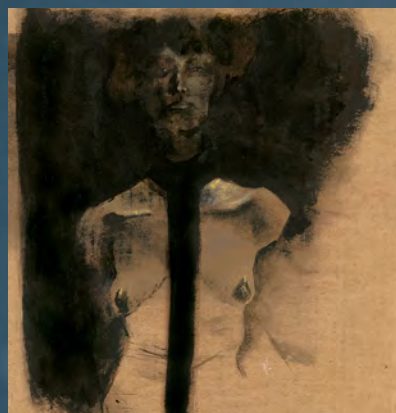
DARK LOVE
A rare glimmer of the sinister appears in Claire's artwork for the book Aphrodite.

drawing animals to do the job quickly, so I told him, 'Hey, I can give it a try.'

"So I drew the creatures logically enough to be 3D animated. It was fun to create things that the players would kill at first sight. I have worked on a few other games too, like Kaos, but these contributions were smaller and I'm not really a gamer at all."

From comics to films and on to computer game artwork, the variety of media in Claire's portfolio just goes to show that if you can draw well and can apply yourself, there are endless opportunities. She sees her own approach as highly adaptable, and

even as she recovers her health she's talking about developing her style.

"Generally I try to adapt the style to what I want to express, and that's the biggest part of the job," she says. "I'm still passionate about learning too." She continues: "When I have something in my head, instead of finding a reference I just draw, trying hard to visualise how what I'm imagining would work. When I'm done with that, if I'm not convinced, I'll check some references to make corrections. I know it sounds silly, but I didn't take academic drawing lessons at school. I did it my way."

> ❝ I just draw, trying hard to visualise how what I'm imagining would work ❞
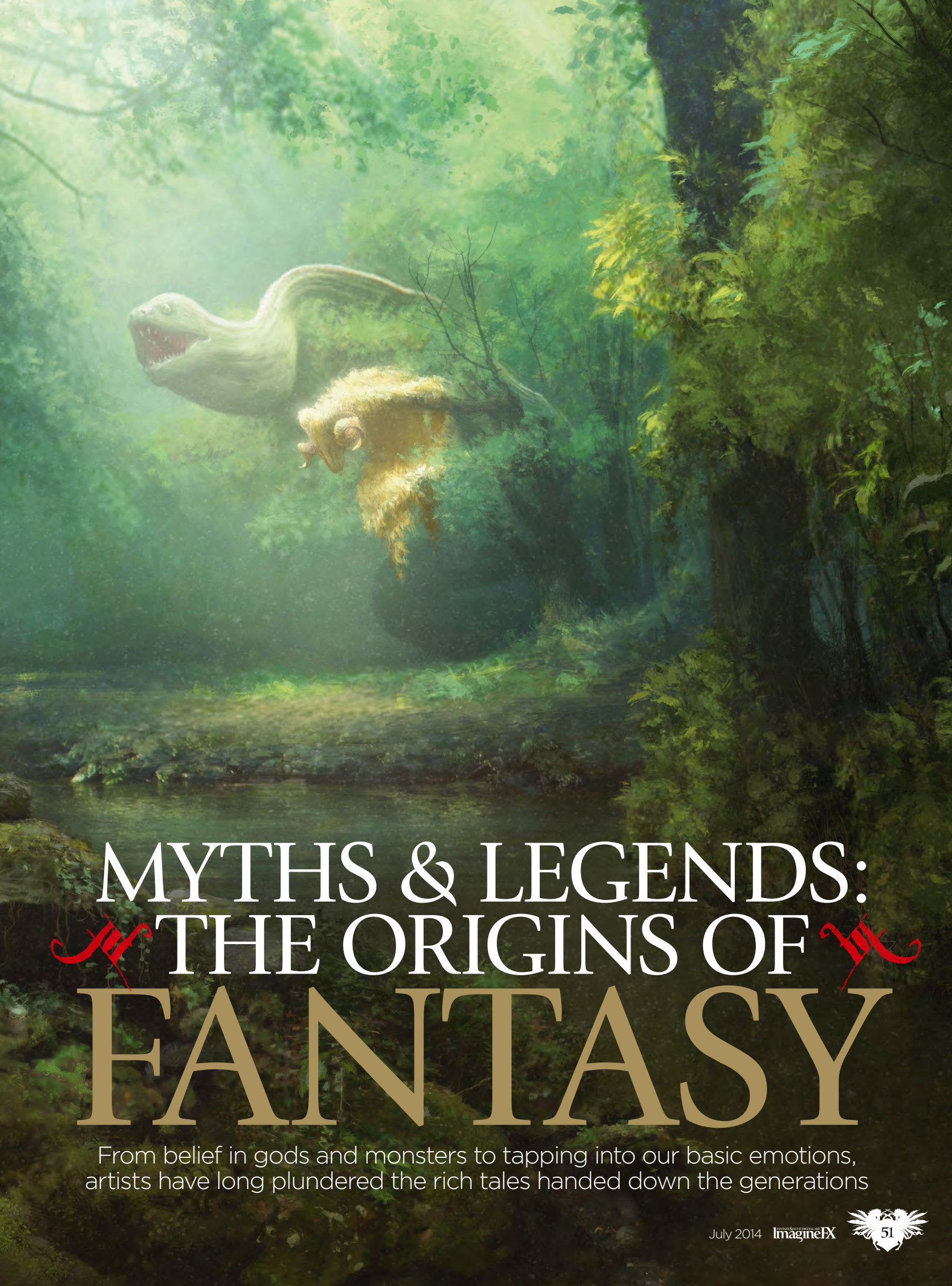
RODENT ORCHESTRA
Another brilliant image inspired by nature, this one was originally a poster in France and was later included in Claire's book Daisies.
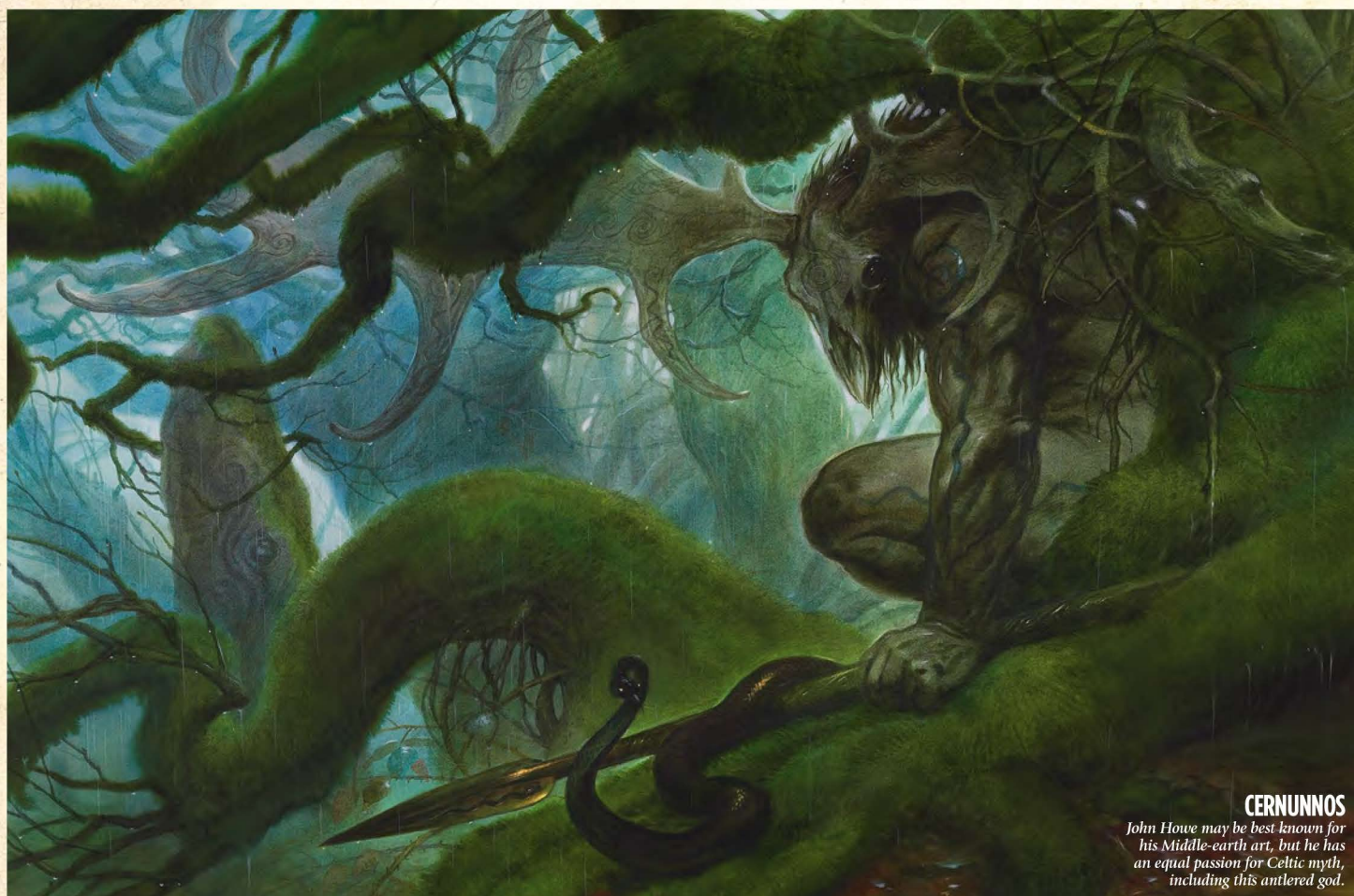
MYTHS & LEGENDS: THE ORIGINS OF FANTASY

From belief in gods and monsters to tapping into our basic emotions,
artists have long plundered the rich tales handed down the generations

Made from a mixture of ochre, minerals and vegetable dyes, the rich reds, blues, greens, yellows and blacks are still vivid on the walls of The House of the Vettii. In the doomed town of Pompeii, frozen in time by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in AD 79, the colourful mythological paintings live on: symbolic tales of a fighting Heracles, Pentheus torn asunder by his mother Agave, the punishment of the kin-killer Ixion turning forever on a fiery wheel.

evoking creatures and elements," says illustrator John Howe. "Now we take them for granted. They're used, abused, manipulated, commercialised, bought and sold like other commodities. We associate them with immaturity. We believe serious imagery deals with life, not with imagined things. But fantasy art is the inheritor of that original magic, language and truth. Fantasy is now the realm of archetype."

Fantasy's rich heritage is often overlooked. Canadian artist, writer and art

> ❝ I think images were once magic,
> were language, the earliest letters
> evoking creatures and elements ❞

The two wealthy merchant brothers who lived in the house were not the first to find intrigue and comfort in myths and legends. Bronze Age Sumerians put down their creation myth in The Epic of Gilgamesh some 2,000 years earlier. People have been making sense out of life's mysteries through wondrous stories and beautiful images ever since. These tall tales are nothing less than people's first attempts at religion, philosophy and comprehending human nature. They are also the origin of modern-day fantasy.

"I like to think that images were once magic, were language, the earliest letters

historian Charles Moffat has a pretty good idea why. "Fantasy is seen as lowbrow because people treat the subject matter as a meter for what they consider to be quality art," he says, "even though its broad spectrum includes mythology." For Charles, fantasy's Year Zero can be traced back to a popular screen-printing patent in 1907, spelling out future inexpensive reproduction of images and text. But there's always more to a legend than a single point of view.
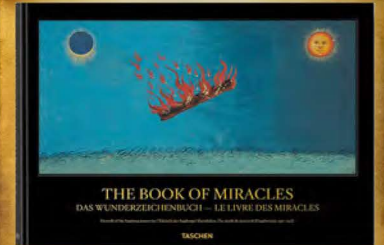
THE BOOK OF MIRACLES
DAS WUNDERZEICHENBUCH — LE LIVRE DES MIRACLES

TASCHEN

BOOK OF MIRACLES

The fears and wonderings of Renaissance Europe, written down for all to see

The Book of Miracles is a 16th century art gem. Compiled in 1550, and then lost to the world until its recent discovery a few years ago, it's also a fascinating look into old tales of unexplained phenomena.

The original manuscript has since gone into a private collection, but not before being reproduced and published by Taschen. This ancient art book depicts tales of celestial phenomena, floods, sea monsters and other natural catastrophes that have fascinated and terrified mankind since the dawn of time.

And we've got a copy to give away! To be in with a chance of getting your hands on the book and reading about Tiber Monster, the dragons over Bohemia and more, visit **http://ifxm.ag/book-o-m**.

MYTHICAL MANUSCRIPT
The book draws on years of European myths and tall tales of gods and monsters.

TRIUMPH
Heather Theurer's symbolic painting of overcoming evil and receiving eternal life speaks as much of her love of Christianity as of mythology.

OEDIPUS & THE SPHINX
Greek myth flourished in 19th century imagery, as French artist François-Xavier Fabre's painting shows.

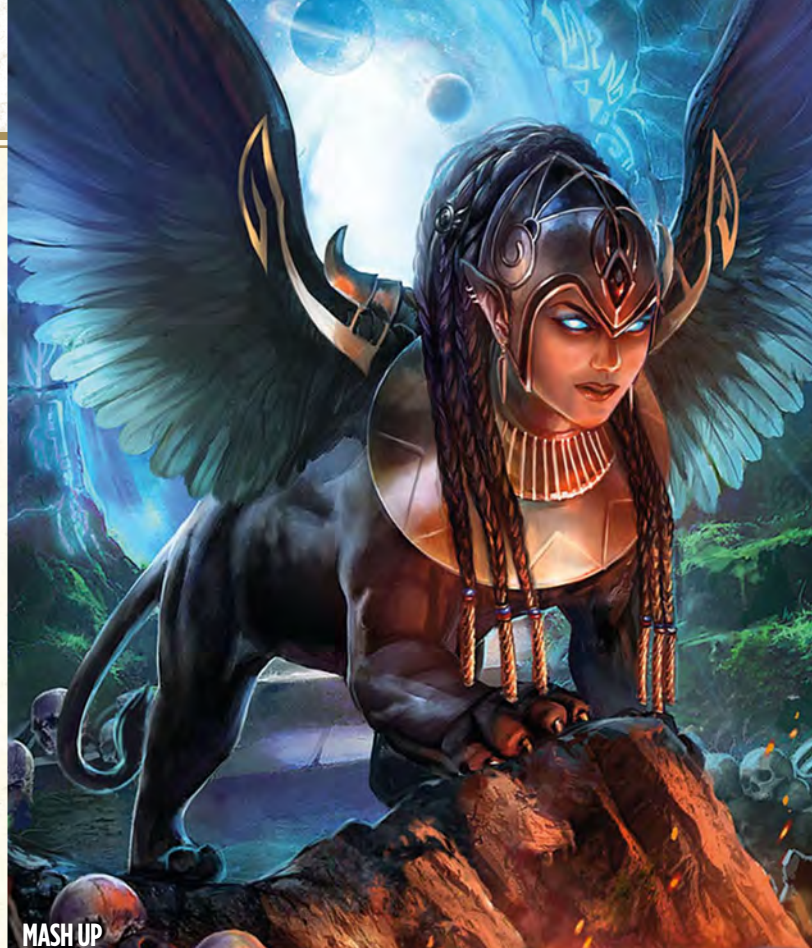**HOUYI THE ARCHER**
Chinese artist Lorland Chen reconnected with his country's myths in his adult life.

MASH UP
Anastasia Kustova's take on the mythical creature mixes Greek and Egyptian elements with a modern twist.

> ❝ **Modern fantasy and sci-fi art as we know it was born out of the literary world** ❞

THE GROOM SNAKE
Serbian artist Vanja Todoric has painted for books on his country's myths and fairy tales.

Ideas of low- and highbrow have a distinct Western feel to them, for good reason. With the fall of the Western Roman Empire around AD 400, myth paintings – like the paintings in Pompeii – were frozen in time. Biblical imagery deominated with the Catholic Church deciding what paintings were created and who got to see them.

The future of art was destined to be enjoyed by more than a select few. With the Protestants undermining the total rule of the Catholic dogma from 1517, the church's tight hold on artistic expression was further loosened. The Renaissance was outgrowing Italy, flowering in Europe. A growing band of wealthy, merchant middle-class was commissioning more morally charged, non-Biblical paintings. The classical world of Greek and Roman myths, with their human ideals and weaknesses, were the perfect subject for money-makers eager to reflect their increasing wealth and genius.

PRINTING LEGENDS

Johannes Guttenberg had brought the moveable type printing press to the West around 1450, and with it easier access to stories, old and new. "Modern fantasy and science fiction art as we know it was born out of the literary world," explains Charles. "Literary icons such as JRR Tolkien and the creator of Conan, Robert E Howard, have inspired artists for eight decades with their characters and fantastic plots." Again, that's not the whole story. Looking beyond the Western borders, China had invented its printing press some 300 years earlier.

Chinese artist Lorland Chen admits that Chinese myths don't demand the same respect from his generation as they once did. As one of the first artists to teach digitally in China, it was by looking back to an imagined past that he learnt about life. "Growing up under Chairman Mao and the fear of Western countries waging war, families were ordered to build secret factories and facilities in hills, underground," he recalls.

Despite a sense of isolation, Lorland's desire for information from non-party channels brought him to his country's old myths. Characters such as Houyi, the celestial archer, and Luo Shen, the beautiful goddess who brought kings to their knees, helped Lorland out of his shell. "People around the world have the same question: where are we from? The answers from myths are much more vivid than the ones from science."

TODAY'S HEROES

It's not all ancient tales of moral courage and action – modern myths are alive and well

First appearing in US magazine in 1912, Tarzan was the noble savage creation of Edgar Rice Burroughs – a wild character untainted by society's corruptive influence. Meanwhile, Robert E Howard's Conan the Barbarian first wielded his sword in Weird Tales magazine in 1932. With his thievery and his odd murdering spree, he reflected the trends a growing pulp fiction craze in America.

Fantasy artist Brom wrote and painted his Krampus: the Yule Lord story, a reimagining of the old Santa Claus tale filled with new demonic characters. The appeal of mining the mythical seam for Brom is self-evident: 'Myths and legends were the fantasy tales of old, handed down the generations,' he says. "The fact that they've been around a long time, or are widely known, gives them a certain legitimacy. Makes them a bit more real."

KING OF THE JUNGLE
Although Edgar Rice Burrows created the character Tarzan in 1912, the noble savage has inspired artists like Loopydave ever since.

THE YULE LORD
Dark fantasy artist Brom took myths as a starting point for his original Christmas story.

CONAN THE BARBARIAN
Written at the height of fantasy pulp fiction, Conan is the distant descendent of mythical hero Heracles. Here's Joe Jusko's version.

TALOS
José Cabrera painted the bronze giant, who was created to protect the beautiful Europa from pirates.

"Every kid in India knows about the Mahabharata," says Mukesh Singh of the epic tale with origins in 9th century BC, that he and Grant Morrison reworked in the comic 18 Days. "It's a philosophy and the longest poem in the world," he says, "about a power struggle between two royal groups of cousins. This struggle, seeded during their

Gonzalo Ordoñez Arias, or Genzoman to his fans, likes his country's myths the best – wild and wonderful stories from Aymara, Quechua and Inca cultures. "I was born in Arica, northern Chile, where the oldest mummies in the world were found, belonging to the Chinchorro culture," he says. "I come from a land where ancient myths tell of giants

❝ We get to depict only the most beautiful people and most decadent objects and weapons ❞

childhood, results in the epic 18-day war that pits brother against brother, grandsons against grandsire, teacher against disciple."

As with any good yarn, there are broad strokes and detail. "It's a story full of grey, no simple black and white characters here," Mukesh says, "no clear, convenient villain to fight and defeat. It points to our little failings, whether human or superhuman. Yet it lifts our spirits by fantastic tales, stories within stories, of great heroic deeds."

and demons that live inside caves – and dragons and spirits." Many of these myths continue to this day, he says. "Where people say they have seen an apparition and generate the wonderful feeling that there's a thin line between reality and fiction."

THE SUPERMEN

From the Labours of Heracles, the Mahabharata, to the Monkey King, myths are filled with superhuman characters.

THE MONKEY KING
Daren Bader's take on the Chinese king is based on Katsuya Terada's manga version.

"That ideal has a powerful draw for artists," says Rebecca Yanovskaya. "We get to depict only the most beautiful people and most decadent objects and weapons." In these worlds exaggerated emotions like rage, vengeance or mournful sorrow are safe from entering the realm of cliché. "In all myths there are so many interesting characters, heroes, monsters, demons and weapons that can be the starting point to develop fantasy art in a modern way," says Corrado Vanelli.

MYTHICAL MONSTERS
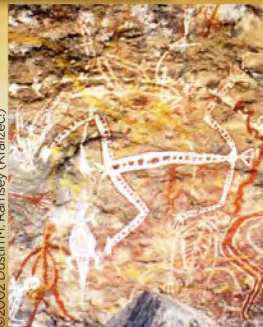From the obscure to the well-known, we present 10 of the best

BAKHTAK
If you've had sleep paralysis you can blame the Persian ghost Bakhtak. Here's John Henry Fuseli's take.

WEREWOLVES
Thought up in medieval Europe due to wolf-riddled woods, the werewolf remains a classic monster today.

MIMI
The Australian mimi is fairy-like, tall and thin, and taught Aboriginals how to hunt. They can be naughty.

BIG FOOT
Known as the yeti in the Himalayas, this hairy fellow may be based on a really old descendent of man. Or not.

CHIMERA
First referenced in Homer's Iliad: "Not human, lion-fronted and snake behind, a goat in the middle."

KARNA VS GHATOTKACH
The ancient Hindu epic legend Mahabharata gets a retelling by Mukesh Singh in 18 Days.

But if mythologies once formed the base of working religions, does that make fantasy an ironic imitation? "Myths may provide an ancient understanding of the world," says Mukesh, "but they are bejewelled with hard-won truths, handed down over the ages to caution and inspire. Artists are part of that timeless gifting tradition."

Myths show the diversity of humanity, which sits on the same rock pondering the same thoughts. Where do we come from? How should we live? "Humans are creatures of curiosity," says fine artist Heather Theurer.
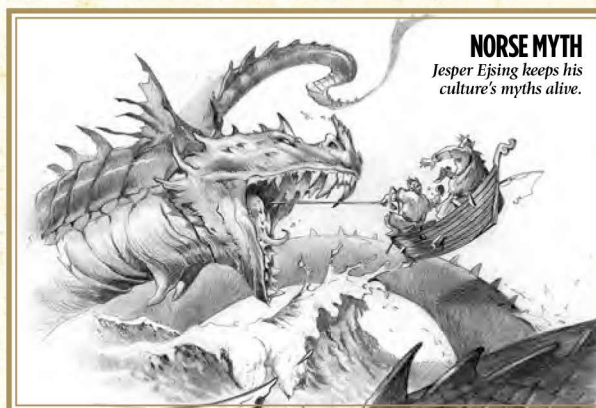
NORSE MYTH
Jesper Ejsing keeps his culture's myths alive.

AYAYEMA
Manga artist Genzoman is inspired by Chilean myths of desert demons and monsters.

UNICORN
It's one of the few creatures that's purely good. First mentioned in the Indus Valley Civilization 3000 BC!

John Howe

LOCH NESS MONSTER
No matter how much science disagrees, some people still believe in this Scottish lake cryptid.

© iStock.com/Matt84

LEVIATHAN
Mentioned in the Old Testament, it's been described differently throughout time, but always as very, very big.

DRAGON
Western dragons are associated with evil, but in China since 1500 BC they've been considered ace!

Lorland Chen

LESHY
A wood spirit from Slavic legend, this chap protects animals and forests, but also likes to tickle people to death.

DAY OF THE DEAD

This Mexican festival shows that ancient cultural myths can play a part in the modern day's celebrations and festivities

Día de Muertos is a Mexican festival that celebrates the dead. It's also increasingly popular outside Mexico and has become a favourite subject for many digital artists.

The long weekend of celebrations provides a chance for family and friends to remember the deceased by building alters decorated with sugar skulls, marigold flowers and the dead's favourite foods.

In fact the modern holiday can be traced back to Aztec festivities geared around the goddess Mictecacihuatl who ruled over the afterlife. With the influence of the ruling Spanish, this ancient festival morphed into what it is today.

DANCE WITH DEATH
Alix Branwyn, top and right, and Jason Juta, far right, take the Day of the Dead festival as inspiration.

LANCELOT
John Howe's depiction of Lancelot. The fearless knight was added to the story in the 12th century, some 700 years after Arthur.
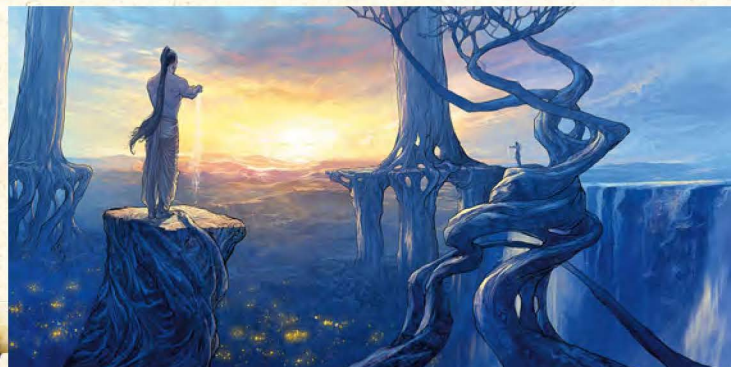
➤➤ "We long for meaning in our existence, to know our place in our own microcosm and in the overwhelming scope of the universe. Myths and legends feed that passion for understanding truth."

A NEW CAST OF HEROES

John Howe has a soft spot for the legend of King Arthur and his supporting cast of gallant knights, princesses and kindly wizards. While it's unlikely the sixth century king existed, it's certain his tales of chivalry and heroism have been constantly added to through the ages. From Geoffrey of Monmouth's 12th century History of the Kings of Britain, NC Wyeth's work on The Boy's King Arthur in the 20th century, to the current TV series Merlin, Arthur's is an ever-changing storyline.

ONE WITH NATURE
Working from 'the longest poem in the world', Mukesh Singh could depict battles and moments of spiritual calm alike.

VALHALLA
Pavel Spitsyn took the Scandinavian myth of Valhalla as the backdrop to a story of his own.

THE GUARDIAN
Rebecca Yanovskaya used classic archetypes, "from Heimdallr, Athena, to the Sphinx" to create this painting.

ISIS AND OSIRIS
Corrado Vanelli painted this book cover for Cinzia Baldini's reimagining of the Egyptian myth.

Although Arthur the Briton was said to have beaten the Anglo-Saxons, they in turn chose him as a symbol of pride when the Danish Vikings invaded England, bringing with them tales of Valhalla, Odin and Thor.

You may know hammer-wielding Thor best through Jack Kirby's 1962 pencil work, or perhaps by Australian actor Chris Hemsworth in the current film franchise.

Danish illustrator Jesper Ejsing has a deeper relationship with the Norse god. "When I started my career I literally stepped onto the bridge of Bifröst and walked into Valhalla," he says, describing his first job as a colourist on the Danish comic book Valhalla, which retold the Scandinavian myths. Today he tells his kids the same stories on walks in the woods.

Careful not to exhaust their relatively young legends of the Wild West, North America has done an amazing job of taking the core of mythical tales and beaming new versions around the world. Myths are referenced (Clash of the Titans), subtly retold (the Coen Brothers' O Brother, Where Art Thou?), or just invented through superhero storylines.

"But enchantment is not simply entertainment," warns John. It's an

> ❝ I literally stepped onto the bridge of Bifröst and walked into Valhalla ❞

opportunity for deeper understanding of the world and humanity's place in it."

On the same land but in a parallel world, Native Americans today are taking pains to re-establish a relationship with their myths from a time before the West was won. The trickster Old Man Coyote, who made people out of the mud and stole fire from the gods for them, continues to unite and inform young people about Western Native American languages and cultures.

Whether from the annals of time or straight out of your imagination, depicting fantastical images is just as important today as it was in Pompeii. "Advances in science and technology have provided so much good, but they've also made people arrogant," says Italian artist Corrado. "Many myths are the base of a lot of habits, ideas and concepts that we still have in our modern lives. Often we forget this. Myths informed philosophy, philosophy has informed science. So you see, the most modern of our knowledge is linked with our ancient stories. If we forget them we lose a part of ourselves." ●

Sketchbook

Andrés Cruz Barrera

From sci-fi stories to guerrilla groups, Andrés shares the many and varied inspirations behind his sketches

Artist PROFILE

Andrés Cruz Barrera
COUNTRY: Colombia

Bogotá-based illustrator Andrés directs and produces 2D art for mobile games and applications. His clients include Mattel, Nestlé and Coca-Cola. Andrés also illustrates and animates graphic novels as part of multimedia studio Sharpball. His personal work demonstrates his love of character and creature design.
www.cruzartbook.com

MONSTER CAMP

"Doing research before starting any project is one of the most rewarding experiences in the creative process. I had a great time reading and sketching myths from the entire world."

POST-APOCALYPTIC

"My true passion is working epic fantastic stories. Here are some concepts I'm working on from my graphic novel Condemnarum. It's always important to sketch and work on your personal projects."

FAN ART

"I love creating fan art about classic old stories; it's perfect as a warm-up exercise. It enables me to explore other styles and put my stamp on family favourites."

AMAZON WARRIOR

"This was an application test for Gameloft. I combined Greek and South American myths for this character design. My comic book-style comes in rather handy when sketching stuff."

"Researching a project is one of the most rewarding experiences in the creative process"

STYLE
"One great thing about sketching is the chance to experiment with proportions and exaggerating them, but always sticking to the anatomy fundamentals. This way you can find your own style."

NATURE
"Besides other existing artwork, I'm always inspired by nature. Learning how to see things in the real world affects the way I'm drawing and how I represent reality."

ODYSSEY
"There's nothing more inspiring than a good book. My favourites are sci-fi and horror novels. The Shadow Out of Time by HP Lovecraft is a great example of both."

RIFT COLOSSUS CONTEST

"I usually try to mix several creatures for concepts. If I'm happy enough with a sketch, I paint directly on top of it so I preserve its traditional essence."
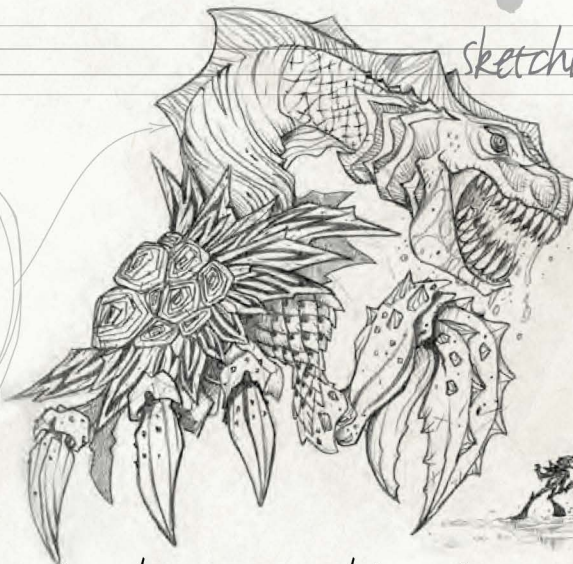
"Learning how to see things in the real world affects both how I draw and represent reality"

CHALLENGES

"Once in a while, I visit drawing blogs and look for sketching challenges or contests. It's a great way to keep me busy and drawing."

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.

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART
ImagineFX
Workshops

VIDEO WORKSHOP

Advice from the world's best artists

66

72 **78** **84**

This issue:

ImagineFX
VIDEO
WORKSHOP

Photoshop
BRING A GREEK GODDESS TO LIFE

Gain an insight into **Cynthia Sheppard's** art process as she paints a mythical deity while introducing plenty of heroic symbolism into the mix

When given the task of painting a character, many questions come to mind: "Who is this? What does this character do? Where do they live? In what time period do they exist?" Even if it's just a relatively simple portrait, there's always an opportunity to include information or symbolism in your painting that tells the viewer more about the character than just what he or she looks like.

Athena has classically been associated with war, and is often depicted with a spear and armour, but the usual road isn't always the most appropriate for an assignment. In asking my questions, I begin to see her more as a wise strategist and protector, standing in a planning room of sorts, with scrolls and maps, releasing an owl familiar to scout some distant land. This workshop will continue to explore some of the other choices that I make and how they're rendered.

In addition to composition and symbol choices, the workshop will serve as a step-by-step guide to the way I work on all my

Artist
PROFILE
**Cynthia Sheppard**
COUNTRY: US

Cynthia is a full-time freelance fantasy illustrator working out of her home studio for clients such as Magic: The Gathering and Call of Cthulhu. She specialises in creating figurative art for books, role-playing games and card products.
www.sheppard-arts.com

illustration assignments. I've learned over the years how essential it is to have a solid process to rely on; it's the only way to make strong, consistent paintings throughout varying deadlines and life's other myriad challenges. I'll discuss how to hit the ground running with the planning phase: you'll create thumbnails, gather reference and draw a line sketch. From there you'll move into adding value, choosing a colour scheme, painting the background, and finishing the painting using a variety of techniques.

1 Start with a plan
Every painting should begin with a good plan. This will involve both knowing about your subject matter and figuring out how to compose that subject matter in a scene. That's where the thumbnail sketch comes in. Do as many of these quick drawings as you can, so you have plenty of ideas to choose from. I like using pencil because it helps me stay loose and not become too concerned with details this early in the process.
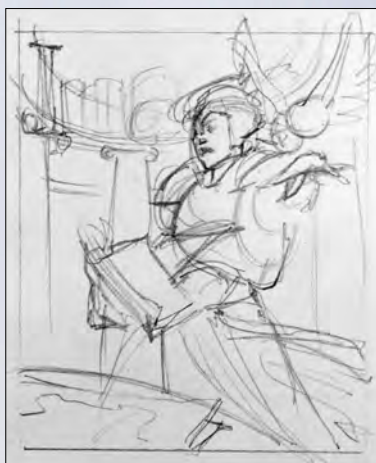
2 Gather references
I collect at least two kinds of reference before starting any painting. The first is photographic reference of either a model or objects, and the second is general inspiration. For a piece like this, I carry out an image search on Greek sculptures and motifs before sketching anything. I keep the figure and style references handy throughout the whole painting process, because I'm constantly looking back and forth to get visual information from them.

3 Take risks with poses

Making Athena look powerful and elegant means posing her at an angle where the viewer looks up at her. That angle on the face and neck poses a lot of challenges, because the jawline isn't a hard edge but rather a collection of soft ones. Foreshortening the arm is also a calculated risk; be sure that if any limbs of your characters are shortened, they're balanced out by other long limbs or the body's length.

4 Draw a line sketch

It's fine to begin a painting by delving straight into value and/or colour, but I like to begin with line. It's a personal preference that gives me visual notes on where my hard edges will eventually go. I like to scan in my thumbnail sketches and work on top of them, because it gives me some guidelines to follow. I move forwards by interpreting and recording what I observe in my reference images.

5 Add value

Placing the lights and darks in the right places in your painting is the next essential step after the line sketch. Create a new layer under your lines and fill the background with a medium grey. Using a toned background will put the middle values in place for you and keep them consistent, enabling you to concentrate on painting just the highlights and shadows without having to worry about blending them together as much.

6 Choose colours

In ancient times, blue dyes and pigments were expensive or non-existent, but Athena isn't a mere mortal, so having her wear a blue dress seems appropriate. The rest of the colours are chosen around the dress in a split-complimentary colour scheme, resulting in blue, orange (its complement on the colour wheel) and slight variations on each (warm gold, blue-green, and so on). It's a traditional colour scheme that works well for grabbing attention and co-ordinating with text.
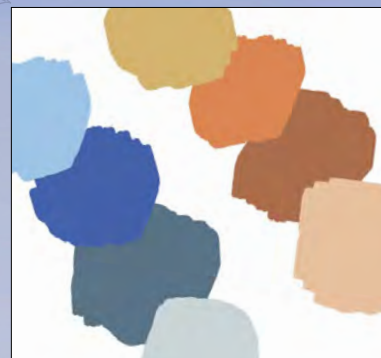

7 Work the background first

It's tempting to jump right in and render foreground details, but it's always best to set the stage before the actors arrive on it. Even if it's just a suggestion of an environment or landscape, begin by looking at reference images of similar places and getting a feel for lighting and colours. Here, I use a rich blue sky, an even richer blue to show the mountains in the distance, and increasing value and colour contrast of the buildings and rocks as they appear closer to the viewer.

8 Glowing clouds

The lighting on glowing clouds doesn't necessarily follow convention. For glowing clouds, begin by imagining that the clouds are their own light source: the lightest part of each cloud shape should be towards the centre, not around the edges. When other cloud shapes overlap those bright centres, it creates the edge contrast that gives them depth. If you're rendering clouds in a blue sky on a sunny day, also try making the clouds a warm yellow toward the glowing centre.
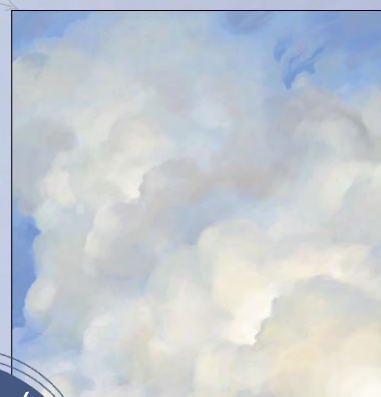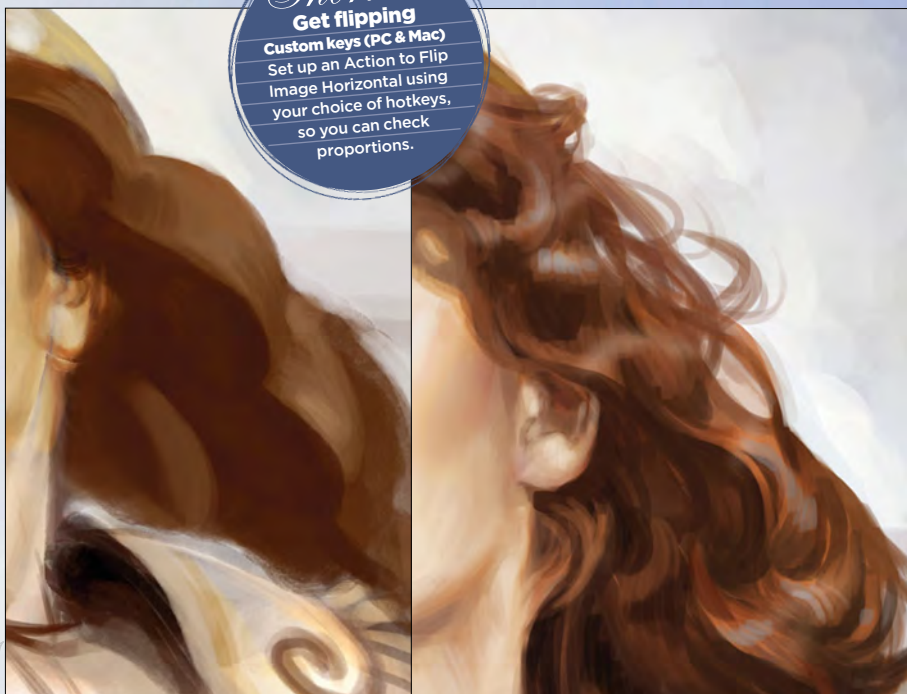
9 Shape and texture hair

You may have heard the advice 'clumps not strands' when rendering hair, meaning you should think about hair in terms of sections instead of painting a line for individual strands. I like to take that theory a step further, and plan for the entire mass of hair as one solid object, then break it down further from there. When it comes to curls, instead of long strands I treat each curl as its own separate rounded shape.

10 Create curling paper effects

Depicting realistic-looking leaves of paper is all about edge control. Start with an outline of the edge of the paper – the less straight the edge, the older and more distressed the paper will look. Next, shade only on one side, leaving the edge very clean. For an even cleaner edge, trace along your outlines with the Lasso tool to mask off one side. Finally, add colour and/or distress marks using a layer set to Multiply.


11 Achieve marble-textured skin

You can give a non-reflective object the appearance of smooth stone by adding highlights in the right places, both smaller and brighter in the lightest areas, and more pronounced in the darkest. Imagining that the background Greek statue's surface is reflecting its environment, I sample some of the blue from the sky and brush it into the shadows. I also add smaller specular highlights on each of the muscles, to give them a glossy appearance.
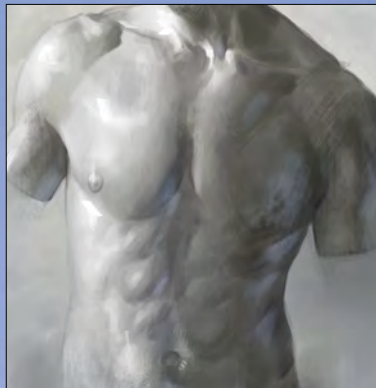

12 Paint an animal companion

Because the owl is a symbol closely associated with Athena (and probably why we still think of owls as being wise today), I create an owl familiar on a new layer. Keeping this part of the painting on a different layer means I can't use colours from the background to blend into the bird, but instead use semi-transparent brushstrokes at the backs of the wings to create the effect of motion, no matter where in the painting the owl ends up.
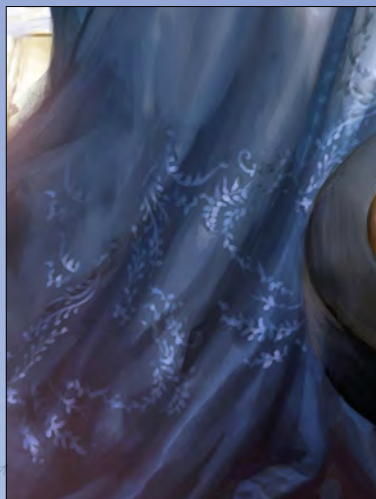
13 Create realistic embroidery

Athena is not only the goddess of wisdom, but also of crafts, so it seems fitting to picture her in a richly embroidered gown. First I draw a stylised olive branch motif in a single colour. Next, I lock the layer and paint highlights and shadows following the folds in the dress. This will make the pattern look like it's directly on the surface of the fabric. In most cases you can also set the layer to Color Burn for a shinier, silky effect.
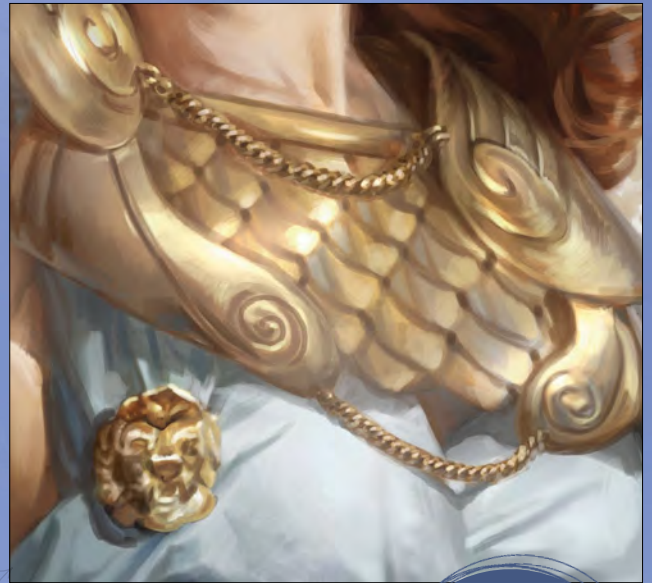
14 Remember to accessorise

Much like embroidery and other embellishments, using pieces of jewellery in a character's costume can add a lot of visual interest. If the character comes from a specific culture, spend some of your research time looking up design motifs and details often worn in that era, and work them into the jewellery. Athena's brooch, for example, is fashioned after a lion's head carving and an ancient coin, and the scales around her neck from an Athenian statue.

15 Tell the story throughout

Don't ignore details in the background. Even if the focus of your piece is a single figure or prominent foreground object, elements such as architecture or a landscape can enhance the story, or help reinforce traits in your character. In the frieze behind Athena, I want to play up the theme of protection of the city by depicting a hero fighting and defeating a fierce beast. To give the appearance of a marble relief, I'll keep the value range very light, even in the shadows. ●

Shortcuts
Fade
Ctrl+Shift+F (PC)
Cmd+Shift+F (Mac)
If a brush stroke is in the right place but too strong, use Fade to reduce the Opacity.

PRO SECRETS

Doubling up
If your work is looking too loose or unfinished, try doubling the resolution of your next painting. This has the same effect as zooming out 200 per cent – even your messier brushstrokes will look sharp in the final product. If you don't want to work that large for the whole piece, try rendering just a face or other important focal point at a higher resolution, then scale it back down and paste it back into the painting.

Colouring the hair

I paint the hair layer by layer, starting with a dark red-brown tone at the base, before adding brighter colours to brush out the hair line. As I slowly pick up my brighter colours I create an extra four layers, and paint on each one to make the hair look more solid and richer in colour.
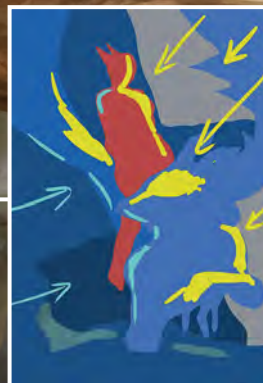
Depict the correct lighting

Because the main character and creature are hiding in the jungle, I'm not keen on using strong, dynamic lighting. Instead I want ambient light that creates an atmosphere of harmony and softness. The yellow line is the main lighting from the top right. I also create a second light from the bottom left (the blue line).

Colouring the earring

To colour the base of the earring I start with a yellow-orange. I choose a stronger, brighter yellow for the details, changing the Blending mode to Color Dodge and Overlay. Color Dodge is too strong though, so I shift to Overlay to reduce the shininess.
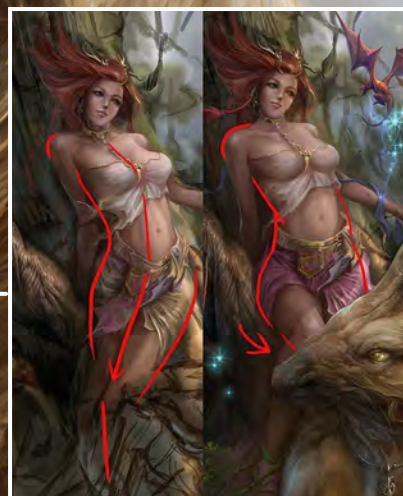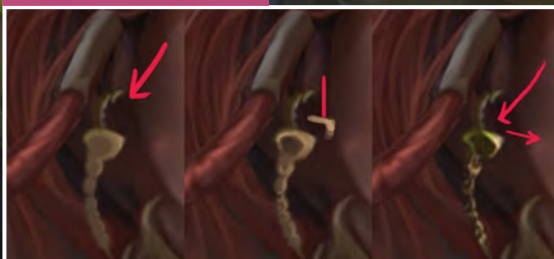
Character pose

I decide the initial character's pose is wrong – it seems too long and the upper body doesn't connect to her pelvis and legs very well. I correct this anatomy problem by changing her body posture and making the upper body slightly shorter. The new changes make the body flow more accurately and lead the viewer's eye more smoothly to the creature's head.

Photoshop
LEAD THE VIEWER AROUND YOUR ART

Derrick Song explains how the use of some well-placed compositional elements can direct the viewer's eye to your main character

Artist PROFILE

Derrick Song
COUNTRY: Singapore

Derrick is an art director at Singapore's 3dsense Media School, where he teaches two diploma programmes. He's proficient at creating 2D and 3D art.
http://ifxm.ag/d-song

F or this workshop I want to paint a female fantasy character who's accompanied by an intelligent but powerful creature. I often imagine characters partnered with creatures, but they're always a wicked or male character. To be honest, I've strayed away from placing a female figure into such a scenario for one reason or another, and so I relish the challenge of trying to make this fresh idea work here. I recommend taking this approach for all your artwork, so that you don't become stuck in an art rut.

I start with a rough outline, to block out the overall shape of the concept. It can be very rough and I usually don't focus on the small details for now – everything is just a guideline at this stage.

Once I have the outlines of my idea down in a simple grey tone, I think about the overall colour scheme. I decide to use earthy tones: brown, green-yellow, orange-brown and grey-yellow. My characters will be in a jungle setting, and so the earthy colours are suitable to the overall mood. I lay down basic values and colours. I like to keep the outline layer on a low Opacity so I can keep track and paint new elements on top easily. In this case, I set my outline layer to Multiply Blending mode and paint the colour on to this outline layer.

How I create...
A COMPELLING CHARACTER
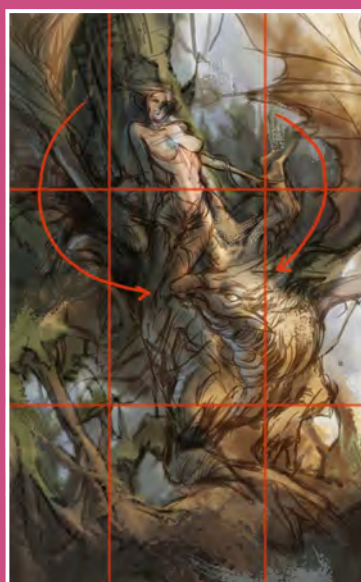
1 The composition
I apply the Rule of Thirds and place my character inside a rough circle. I feel she should be protected by this circle, and it will lead the viewer's eye towards her. I put my character on top of the creature and use a tree branch and the creature's wing to create the circle. Two small dragons enhance the circular structure.

2 Initial details
Before I start colouring, I paint the face. I study the proportions of a female Asian; the distance between the eyes is the same as the distance between the centre of the eyes and the nose. I call it the T-line. It's my guideline for how long the face should be. A cat's face has similar proportions.
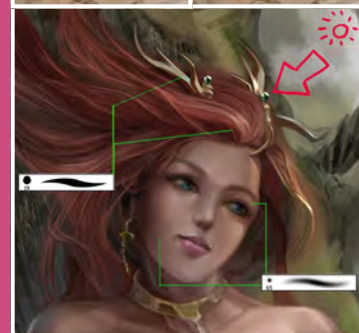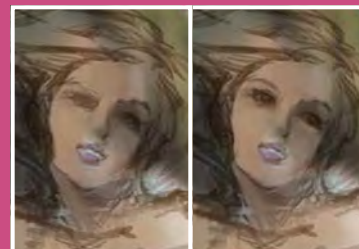
3 Adding colour
I start with the base colour and focus on the eyes, nose and mouth. I also form more of the basic shapes of her hair and around her face. I use the default Soft-edge brush to paint the face, but for details such as the eyebrows I use a Hard-edge brush. I also add texture and colour to make the face look interesting.

Photoshop
CONCEPT A GRAND UNDERWATER CITY

Take to the ocean depths with **Raphael Lacoste**, who reveals how he uses light and atmospheric perspective to create a moody fantasy scene

The aim of this workshop is to explain how I go about creating an interesting architectural composition set in an usual landscape – or seascape! By the end of it I hope to have produced a memorable image of a fantasy setting – depicting a moment that could be taken from a movie or video game.

You need to have an eye for a good composition and a particular interest in environment design, if you're to turn a simple sketch into a detailed image. Key points in the creative process include using contrasting shapes, applying the golden rules of composition such as the Rule of Thirds, and utilising an interesting colour palette. Don't underestimate the importance of your early sketches. They'll help you identify strong and weak compositional elements, and which colours are working or not.

Your checklist should include the following: an interesting topic; a good balance of shapes, proportions and contrasts in the volumes; and inspiring references. The latter can be photos, the work of other painters, or even masterpieces that you see in museums. I prefer to use my personal photo database as much as possible to avoid copyright issues, but if you're looking at references purely for mood ideas, then the world is pretty much your oyster. Watching films is also a great way to pick up lighting and mood ideas.

Tackling the details is part of the painting process, but in my experience it's not key to the creation of a realistic-looking scene. Instead, I'd say get the basics right and the small stuff will follow. So have fun and enjoy this workshop!

Artist PROFILE

Raphael Lacoste
COUNTRY: Canada

Raphael has worked on Ubisoft titles such as Prince of Persia and Assassin's Creed, and as a matte painter and senior concept artist on films such as Terminator Salvation and Immortals. He's now the brand art director on the Assassin's Creed franchise.
http://ifxm.ag/rlacoste

1 Draw on paper

Using a pen I produce several thumbnails on paper, trying out different compositions. I give myself a range of options, from landscape to portrait, applying the Rule of Thirds, switching foreground elements, and so on. I decide that I want to create a vertical setting with elegant lines. It's perhaps a little full-on, but I like the illustrative look that it gives to the architecture. It's not that I don't want to work on perspective, but I find this produces a more charismatic and impressive image when the framing is simple and the composition lines are head on. ➤➤

Workshops

4 Block out the composition

I scan in and place my paper sketch as the uppermost layer, setting it to Multiply mode. This enables me to follow the original concept closely, and means that I won't have to recreate every element from scratch. However, I'll use several materials to establish scale, and use references for details and realism. I plan to have a statue in the foreground, and also introduce architectural elements such as viaducts and large domes in the background, so I look in my personal photo database for these kind of elements. While referring to my original sketch I'm aware that I need to maintain a consistent perspective when placing my chosen elements in the composition.

2 Black and white sketch

I produce a more elaborate sketch in Photoshop, using only black and white. I prefer to use a brush with Opacity turned off, so I can focus on positive and negative spaces. This also helps me develop contrasting elements. When I draw I switch between black and white, define the masses and then add light to surfaces. This creates volume and light direction quickly without spending too much time on details, and results in plenty of interesting shapes on the canvas. The brush I use is a standard one with a slight rotation on Pressure and Size. The edges are sharp and this helps me to create strong shapes.

5 Palette and mood

References are key when you want to build up a credible palette and atmosphere. Luckily for this workshop, I've taken many underwater photos and videos during my trips to the Caribbean. Underwater scenes are pretty simple in terms of a palette; the range of colour is mainly limited to blue and greens. Warm colours are still visible in the foreground, but they soon disappear into the distance. Several methods can be applied to blend the elements together and give them a harmonious palette. Try placing a blurred image or airbrush painted layer in Color mode over your textures and drawings, colour correcting each layer using the Color Balance tool, and then blending them together.
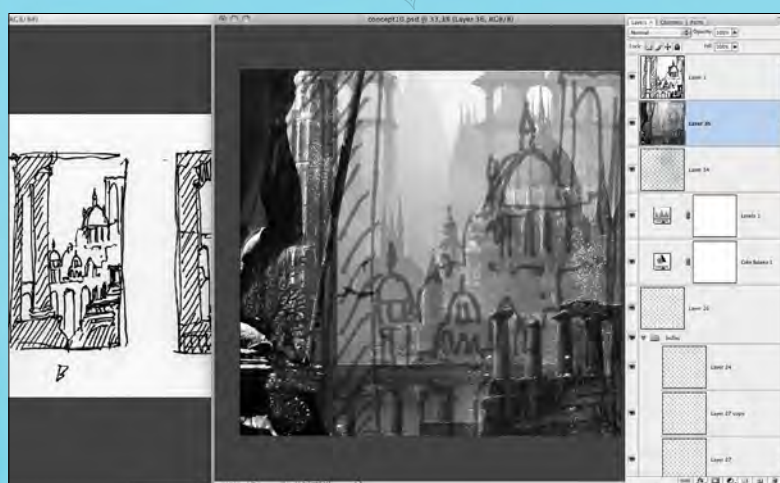
3 Look at references

When painting an environment with recognisable elements such as man-made structures, it's important to have plenty of references to hand. As artists, you should be able to identify the right images to help you to create your own original compositions. Finding the right photos and references were almost 60 per cent of the job when I was working on films as a matte painter. Once you have a manageable collection of references and are able to quickly select useful elements, your painting process will become noticeably streamlined.
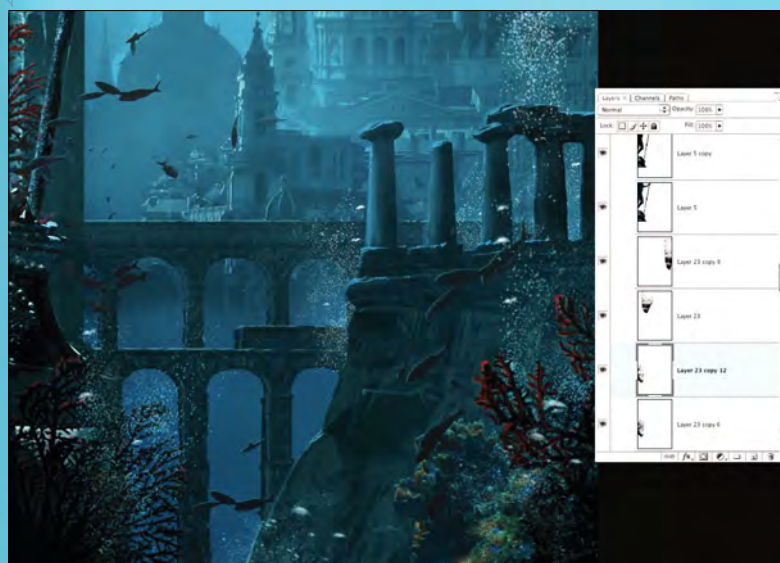
6 Refining the silhouettes

I've used various materials to create this image – now it's time to refine the composition in its separate layers. This also enables me to give the image a particular mood and style. I use domes from Eastern European cities, but I want to move away from the original reference as much as possible. I echo the statue's trident on the tops of several buildings. The great thing about working with Layers on separate levels is that you can Color Balance them separately and fake atmospheric depth. You can also lose details in the background, and this is how I create more mysterious shapes that are only just visible in the distance. I also generate layers of mist between layers of architecture to separate them, and backlight the silhouettes of the buildings.

7 Implying scale

One way to help bring the viewer into the scene is to have a good scale reference. In regular buildings it's details such as windows and doors that provide a sense of scale, but for this fantasy setting I need to further define the scale in the foreground. So I add organic details such as coral, seaweed and fishes that add life and relatable proportions to the overall setting. This also creates an interesting contrast in the image: a colourful foreground with organic elements sits against huge architectural structures that are almost monochromatic because of the underwater mood. Another interesting element are bubbles, which is a great way to add another layer of detail and depth to the image.

8 The paintover stage

Refining the shape and making everything look more painterly is the fun part of the painting process. It enables me to remove much of the photographic textures, and to refine and stylise the volumes. I add more erosion, break the shapes and snap the lines. I also add colour variation. I look at underwater references and notice that even if blues and greens are the most dominant colours, some vibrant colours can still exist in the foreground. I use a Color layer to apply local colours to the shadows. This is also a great way to develop a richer palette. Yes, an underwater environment is mainly monochromatic, but it'll look more interesting if there are reds and orange touches on the foreground layer that contrast with the overall cyan feel.

9 Step back

I realise that I've spent a long time working on this image, so I take a break and flip the image horizontally and vertically. This enables me to see the image with different eyes, and spot any composition errors. I also think that before finishing your artwork, it's helpful to show it to other people whose opinions your value. At this stage in the process you can still modify important elements of your picture, before you spend time polishing the scene.
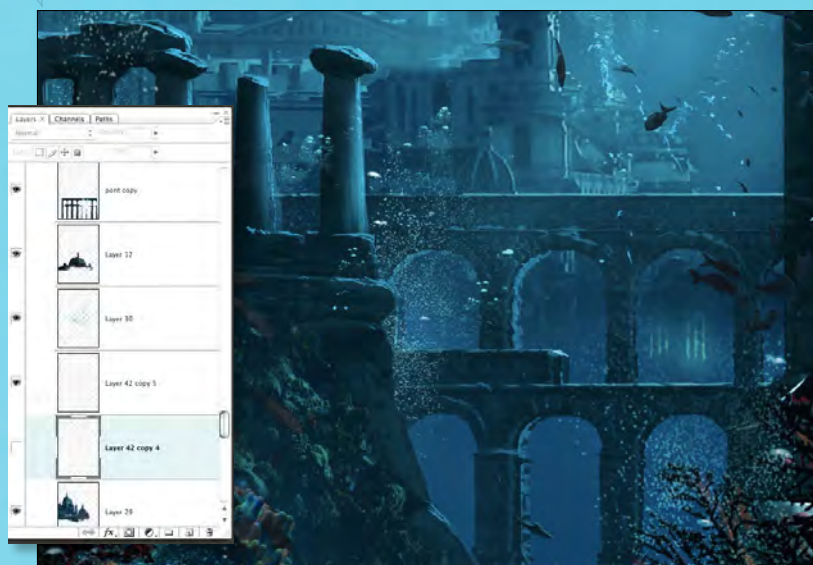
12 Lighting polish

I accentuate some light on the edges of the arches, the top of the viaduct and on the side of the pillars. I also want to have a stronger focal point, so I use the Dodge tool to darken some areas and lighten others. I also place vignettes in the corners where less attention is needed, using the Dodge tool in Highlight mode at 10 per cent. Pressing Alt enables me to switch between darkening and brightening. I then add a couple of god rays from behind the big statue, to further enhance the atmosphere and light direction.
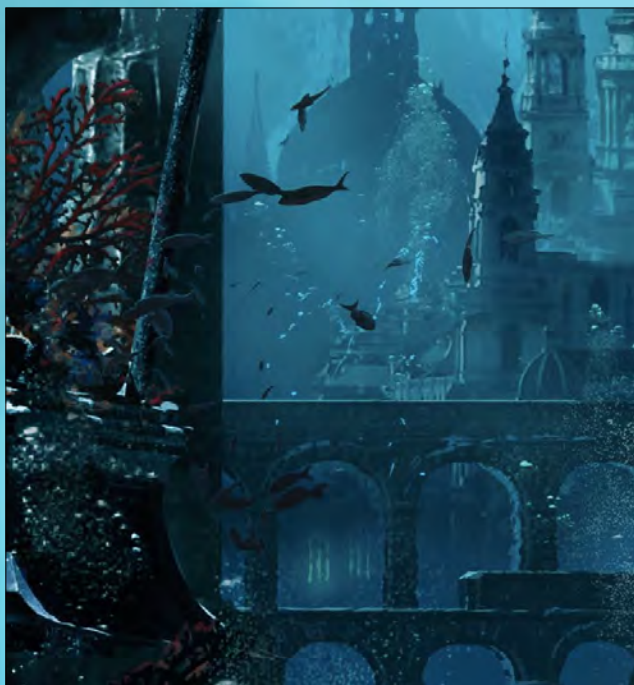
10 Blending the image

Painting with layers enable you to work on elements without compromising the entire image, but generating too many layers featuring lone elements can be overwhelming and slow you down. So there'll come a time when you can either choose to collapse your stack, reduce the number of layers and paint over everything, or you can continue to work with separate layers. I recommend picking some values and colours from the background and painting over your layers with a soft airbrush on a very low Opacity. This will affect the local colour and simulate a fog that brings colours together. It's also good to redefine the edges of your shapes and elements, so that the light is cohesive and blended correctly.

13 Different crops and texture filters

I've almost finished, but I just want to try out some filters and experiment with different crops of the image, to see if I've missed a trick along the way. I sometimes find that if I'm working with lots of elements then the corners become too busy, and they become a distraction to the viewer. This is the time to eliminate such mistakes and crop into the interesting part of the image. Filters can be applied to add some texture and blend the colours further. I prefer to simplify the details with a subtle use of the Smart Blur filter. You can also apply textures such as stucco in Overlay mode on a separate layer at a very low Opacity to add complexity in the blending of the colours.

PRO SECRETS

Saving grace
Always duplicate your image when it's nearing completion, when you know you need to apply filters to it, or reduce it in size for publication purposes. Too often have I ended up with a finished work at a less-than-ideal resolution – it's hard to recover the image at this stage.
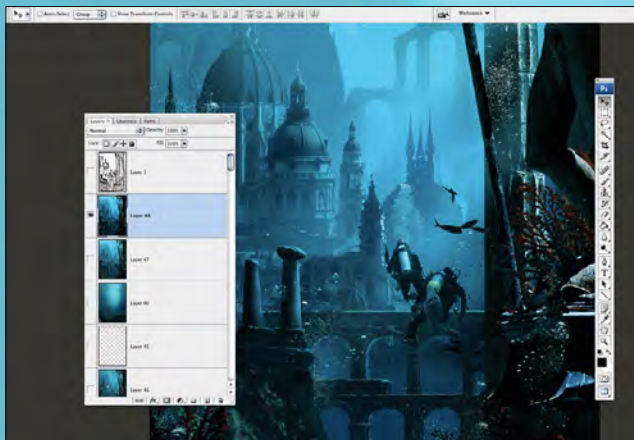
11 Introducing modern-day characters

I'm happy with the mood of the piece, but I still need a focal point. My solution is to add the divers, who establish a scale reference in the image. It also helps the viewer identify with the scene if there are human figures present, and creates an interesting contrast between these contemporary characters and a more fantastic background. To give more life to the setting, I add mysterious lights in the buildings, so it looks more fantastic and less realistic.

SketchUp

USE A PATH TO CREATE 3D SHAPES

SketchUp's Follow Me tool is simple, straightforward and can be used to quickly create recognisable shapes, as **Mark Roosien** explains

The Follow Me tool is a great addition to your SketchUp toolbox (the free version of the software, SketchUp Make, is available from **www.sketchup.com**). It enables you to extrude a two-dimensional shape along a path. This may sound similar to the Push/Pull tool that we discussed in a previous article, but there's more to it than that.

The key difference is that the Follow Me tool doesn't only work in one direction. You can use any line, or series of lines, as a path to guide a two-dimensional shape along. By extruding a small circle along a curved line, for example, you can create ducts for a sci-fi industrial scene. Alternatively, by extruding a shape along the edges of a square, you can create a pot for your three-dimensional garden design.

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

JUST FOLLOW THE PATH

In this article, we use the Rectangle tool **(A)**, the Line tool **(B)**, the Push/Pull tool **(C)**, the Two-Point arc **(D)**, the Select tool **(E)** and the Follow Me tool **(F)**. You now know how t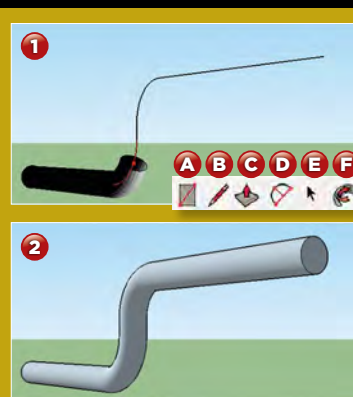o select a path and let SketchUp create a solid object automatically. However, in the images above **(1)** I've created the curved duct manually by extruding a circle.

Draw a path, starting from the centre of the circle. Select the Follow Me tool, click the circle and follow the path you've drawn with your mouse. The path will light up in red as you follow it. Click at the end of the path to complete the duct **(2)**.

1 Create a two-dimensional shape

The Follow Me tool needs two things to work properly: a two-dimensional shape and a path to guide this shape along. In this example I want to create a plant pot. So let's set things up. Draw a square on the ground. Select the Push/Pull tool and pull the square upwards to create a three-dimensional column. Use the Line and Arc tools to create a shape on the left side of the front face.
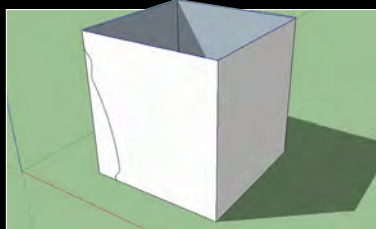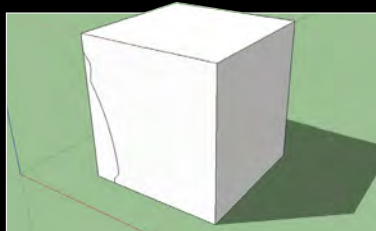
2 Select a path to shape your pot

Pots are hollow, so select the top face of the column, right-click and erase the face. When using the Follow Me tool, the two-dimensional shape needs to be perpendicular to the path that you have in mind. In this case, the two-dimensional shape will be extruded along the upper edges of the column. Use the Select tool to select all four upper edges.

3 Generate a pot

Activate the Follow Me tool by selecting the Follow Me icon in the SketchUp toolbar at the top of the screen. Click the two-dimensional shape you've drawn and SketchUp instantly creates the end result, by following the selected path. This enables you to create a reasonably complex model in only a few minutes. By varying the two-dimensional shapes and using circular paths, you can easily create a range of pots.

Procreate

PAINT A MYTHICAL BEAST ON AN iPAD

Discover how to push your iPad to its limits by painting the mysterious Aboriginal bunyip. It's a win-win situation, says **Mark Behm**

As tablets grow more powerful and tools for artists begin to mature, we're able to find ways to use these devices to make art. Apps such as SketchBook Pro and Procreate have opened up new doors for ultra-portable little art studios capable of producing print-resolution work. It's no Cintiq, but with some patience and practice it can be a satisfying experience to paint on an iPad.

I'm creating this piece on an iPad Air in Savage Interactive's Procreate. My stylus is a Wacom Intous Creative pressure-sensitive model. It's not perfect and it will take a little getting used to, but it's better than the others I've used and much more intuitive than using your finger. Initially, it feels as though there's too much play or travel in the tip, but by being gentle with your pressure you can produce some subtle interaction.

Oh, and in case you're wondering what a bunyip is, it's a hostile creature from Aboriginal mythology that's said to live in creeks, swamps and other murky watering holes. Its appearance differs, depending on who you talk to, but it seems to share elements from crocodiles, dogs, horses and even starfish. The bunyip is not something to share a cooling dip in the river under the afternoon sun with, that's for sure!

Artist PROFILE

Mark Behm
COUNTRY: US

Mark is a freelance illustrator and concept artist living in the Seattle area. He spends his days painting heroes and making monsters.
www.markbehm.com

1 Creature research

I begin by researching bunyip lore online and find interesting stories from native culture and old European explorers. There's no physical description that everyone agrees on, which gives me some freedom in my depiction. I decide to place him in the waters of the Australian Outback and will keep mostly to the shadows. This suggests that it exhibits a mysterious and skulking behaviour.

2 Animal reference

The mythos mentions scales and feathers, which sounds like a fun combination to me. I collect reference from reptiles and birds of the Outback: I want genetic similarities to local animal morphology to come through in my final idea. I'll use these not to paint from, but rather to inform the end product. While I'm browsing these animals, forms and textures quickly start to inspire ideas.

3 Sketch ideas

I begin the sketch loosely with a Small Medium Airbrush. Most of the brushes in the Drawing toolset supplied by Procreate have limits on their maximum size. With this brush I'm able to make it larger. Because I'm painting at a fairly large resolution a tiny brush isn't practical because I can't see the lines when I'm zoomed out. I try to spend most of my sketch time with the canvas pretty small so I focus on the important aspects and don't get caught up in detail. My goal is to work out gesture, composition and personality of the creature: it's lurking in an aggressive manner. He's an animal but also something more – there's a touch of the sinister about him.

© iStock.com/eshannonplummer

© iStock.com/mstay

© iStock.com/eeqmcc
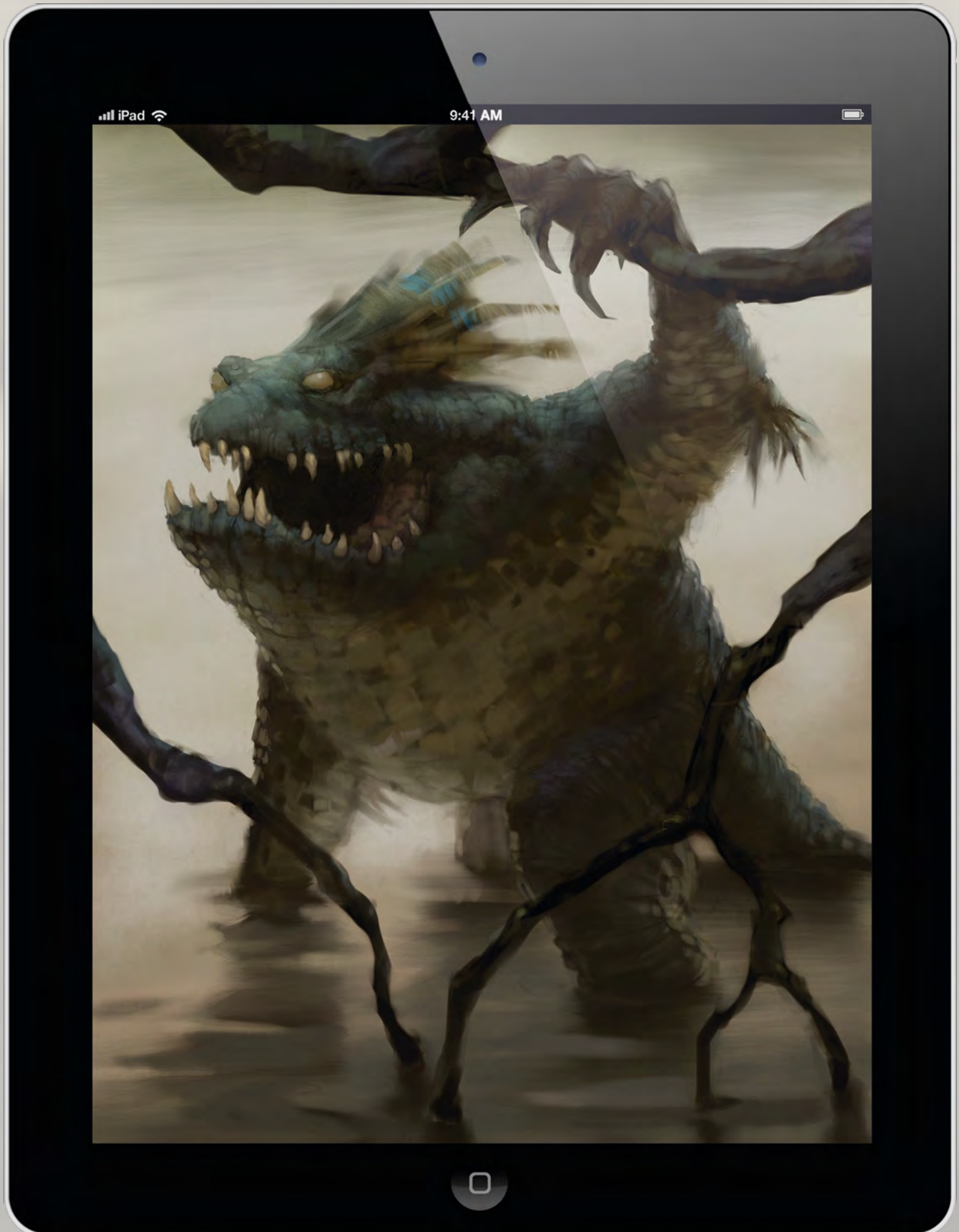
4 Silhouette work

After laying in a rough background I begin cutting out the foreground. In a layer under the drawing using the same brush and a Hard Eraser I cut out the silhouette of the binyup and branches, right up to where they meet the water. I drop the sketch onto this layer, clean up extraneous lines and lock the Alpha (Layer>Lock Alpha). This can be used as a mask. Now I'm free to use larger brushes to scribble around but not spill over the edges. I'll turn this on and off as I work.

5 Block in the beast

This is an important stage because it'll define the image, as well as communicate everything I need to say. Many decisions will be made now: where the light comes from, discovering the overall form, and setting a tone and value range. Things that I only have a rough idea about now must be worked out. Using a large custom, flat brush and medium hard Airbrushes I start to establish what I think will be the range of light and dark in the character. I also introduce some temperature contrasts. I'm not sure where I'll go with colour yet, but I think I'll just use the reflection of the sky and water on the top of his head. This would give him a wet appearance.

6 Stylus approach

A pressure-sensitive stylus makes this stage and those after it go much smoother. Without the stylus I tend to rely on Procreate's in-app dynamics, such as letting Speed define my brush's Opacity. It can certainly be done, but the learning curve is much higher.

7 Pattern placement

I want to play with the odd checkerboard camouflage pattern I see in my crocodile and lizard reference. The teeth are also going to show up as a pattern. They may feel random, but I'm being intentional with placement. Both of these textures need to have an interesting rhythm that's appealing to the viewer. I want a distribution of big, medium and small shapes in the patterns. I paint these in with a hard Airbrush for crisp edges. Try to see the image as a whole as you construct detail and patterns.
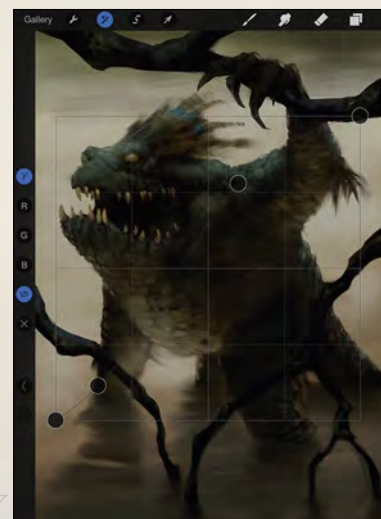
8 Image refinement

Earlier I had decided to keep the value range smaller, but I see that it's feeling too dull. I play with the Curves tool (Magic Wand>Curves) to add overall contrast. I begin to refine the modelling of my form in two ways. I use a large softer brush on a new layer to model the large shapes of the head, cutting away at this with an Eraser for any sharp edges. This, along with Lasso selections and masks, can also be a useful technique if you don't have pressure sensitivity.
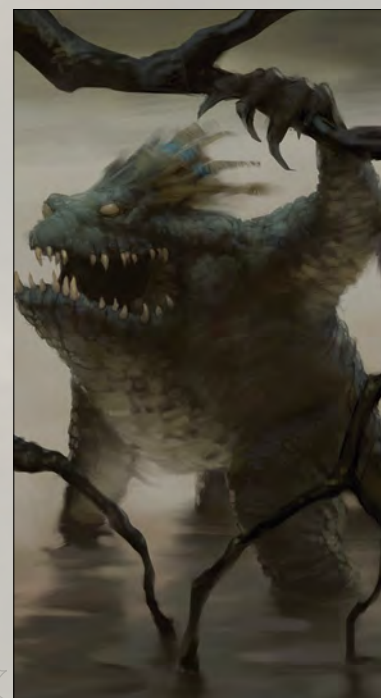
9 Skin texture

Now that I have the large forms defined I zoom in to find the scaly skin texture, holding down so that my Color Sample tool picks up values which are slightly lighter or darker than my new base value. I drop this layer as soon as I've established what I'm after, because I'm conscious that this is still an iPad and I'm working at quite a high resolution.

10 Bring out the living creature

I spend a good bit of time on the eyes, trying to get just the personality I'm after. It's great to be able to pinch-zoom into the image. Your audience will always be drawn to eyes and the barest change in shape or lid angles can shift the message they deliver.

11 Keep your smudging in check

As I paint I occasionally want to soften an edge. Procreate has an amazing Smudge tool for this. Use it sparingly or you'll end up with something that mushes out or looks like a robot with an airbrush painted it.

12 Into the finish

I feel that the contrast could use more punch. I give it one more subtle pass of the Contrast tool, then use a Sharpen filter to tighten some things up. I've overused a Flat Round brush and given the piece a sterile feel, so I modify the Grunge brush and pick a source from the Procreate library that's more splattered. I choose some richer colours and go over areas catching light, to bring out some more colour, light and interest. I work back into this with a harder-edge brush so that things don't become too soft.
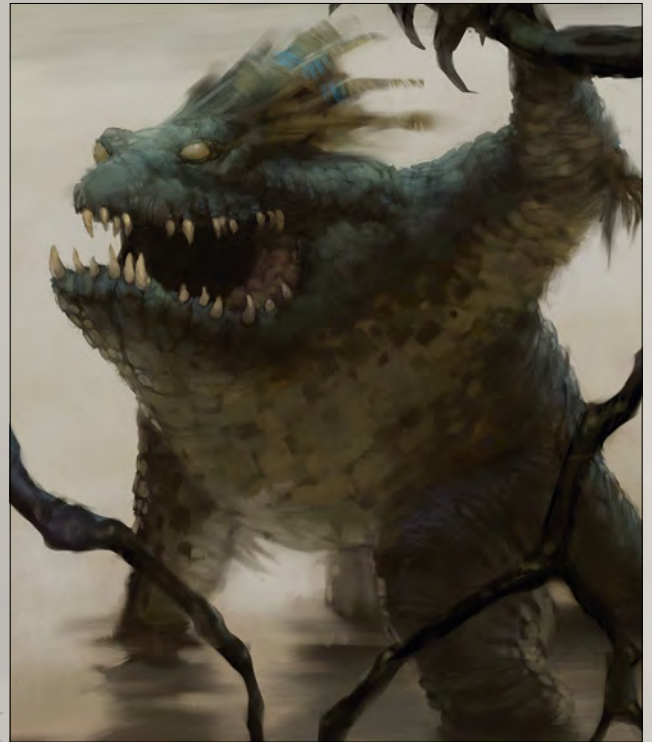
13 Correcting mistakes

I feel like I've lost something important from my blocking. It's important to constantly evaluate the piece as a whole. The belly is now too ambiguous and not making a statement. I decide to repaint it entirely using the Flat brush I made. I paint the lighter underbelly back in, catching the light reflected off the water and re-establishing some of the lost scale patterns. I make sure that the lines and strokes define the form of the side and belly. Using pattern is a great way to do this, even without value. It's a nice, large area to leave some expressive marks and also helps to keep the surface alive and painterly.
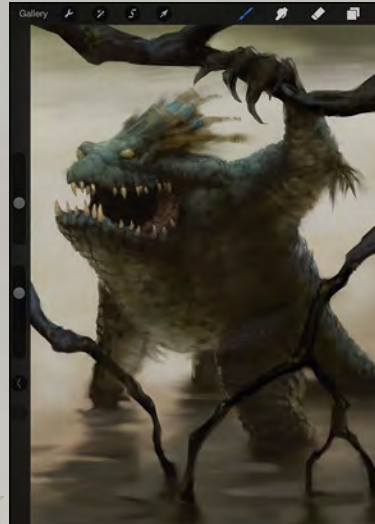
14 Finishing up

In the end I take a pass to make sure everything is working the way I want, tweaking values and edges just a bit to push and pull attention and form. Then I select the Wrench icon>Share>Save to Photos, where you can choose PNG or JPG format. You can also Export Video to an M4V. Procreate constantly saves every stroke you make, so you never have to remember to turn on Record.

Shortcuts
Flip canvas
Wrench icon>Canvas>Flip Canvas Horizontally
Flipping the canvas horizontally gives me a sense of perspective and objectivity.

PRO SECRETS

DIY palm rejection
If you want to rest your hand on your device, buy cheap cotton gloves and cut off the thumb and first two fingers. This cleans your fingerprints off the screen as you draw. Make sure they're a material that won't slowly buff and scratch your screen! This isn't an excuse to draw or paint with your fingers, mind. Use your whole arm whenever possible.

Created for professional designers by professional designers, the Computer Arts Studio Training series brings you expert tutorials in Illustrator, Photoshop and InDesign. Complete your set today!

On sale now at WHSmith, Barnes & Noble, www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/design and for iPad at http://goo.gl/sMcPj

Next month in...

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART
ImagineFX
Dark fantasy

We delve into the underbelly of fantasy art to help you vanquish your artistic demons

Discover how Jeff Simpson creates his dark materials in an exclusive workshop!

Also

Past masters
How to get inspired by the darkness within the pages of Victorian horror fiction with Edward Binkley.

Fright night!
Renowned horror film poster artist Graham Humphreys explains the creative process behind his imagery.

Les Edwards
The leading horror and book cover artist reveals his inspirations – plus insight from his career in fantasy art.

Perfect portraits
Master artist George Pratt shares his bold and unique portraiture skills using Procreate on his iPad.

ISSUE 111 UK ON SALE *FRIDAY 20 JUNE 2014*

Photoshop & Painter
DEPICT AN IMPOSING SEA GOD

Follow **Dave Kendall** as he paints Poseidon rising from the depths to aid Jason and the Argonauts in their heroic quest

Artist PROFILE
Dave Kendall
COUNTRY: England

Dave is an illustrator who started his career by helping to create Psycho Killer for the British comic anthology TOXIC! He utilises a mixture of traditional and digital techniques, and his clients include Sony, Wizards of the Coast, Blizzard and 2000 AD.
www.rustybaby.com

Workshops

When the request to paint Poseidon landed in my inbox, the first image to come to mind was of the scene in the 1963 film Jason and the Argonauts, when Poseidon rises from the sea to hold the Symplegades, otherwise known as the Clashing Rocks, apart. Although I initially moved away from this concept, I quickly returned once it was clear that ImagineFX wanted a dynamic and action-packed image.

I want to explore aspects of painting waves and seascapes, drawing on the amazing paintings of the Russian painter Ivan Aivazovsky as inspiration. He produced some of the best seascapes or raw power ever committed to canvas, and is my first stop if I want to paint waves. Every time I see his work, I wonder at the fact they were painted before photographs and film even existed.

I approach this image in a traditional sense, in as much as it's a rendering of a carefully planned drawing. As I paint this image I try to keep in mind the dynamic nature of the scene and its environment. There's a clash of three powerful elements:

water, rock and a Greek god. Each are deadly, yet have very different natures. I want to show the insignificance of the ship and that it's at their complete mercy.

I choose to update Poseidon and remove some of the elements that give him his usual human appearance, but I want to ensure that he shares the grandeur and classical lines of ancient Greek statues. This is why he has a powerful stance and a heroic facial structure. My figure needs to look like a powerful mythological figure, in full control of his dynamic and dangerous sea realm.

PRO SECRETS
Apply the High Pass filter

A professional photographer passed on this tip. It's an ideal way to sharpen in a controllable way. Duplicate your image on a new layer. Using that layer choose Filter> Other>High Pass. Alter the slider and you'll see the flat grey image gain detail. Convert this grey image layer to Overlay after applying the filter. If you look closely you'll see the image sharpen. You can adjust the sharpening effect by altering the layer's Opacity.

3 Drawing out the god

I draw Poseidon in my sketchbook and I like the image enough to use it as the basis for the final composition, which I compose digitally. I then take this rough image and transfer it to Bristol board, to draw the image traditionally. Drawing for me is the basis of my work. I thoroughly enjoy the process and I feel it's the purest way to put your individual stamp on an image.

1 Something fishy

I want to design a distinctive look for my Poseidon. I trawl through a number of books on marine life and stumble across this picture of a sturgeon catch. I'm instantly taken with the diamond patterning on the fish and their strong triangular ridges along their length. This image alone provides a strong design foundation on which to base my sea god. The limited colouring also evokes some of the more powerful sea predators.
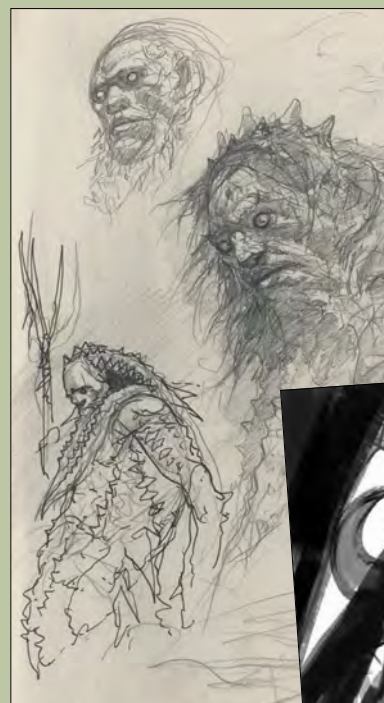
2 Sketchy beginnings

Before I start any image I tend to fill a number of pages in my sketchbooks. They provide a visual diary and enable me to explore ideas. Although my first thought was a dynamic scene, I eventually decide to explore a couple of more sedate and atmospheric images. The Lovecraftian idea, of large beasties hidden in the depths, is a starting point. With some editorial direction I decide to return to the Clashing Rocks concept.

4 Washing in the background

At last I have the final image ready to be painted. I haven't drawn the sea in any detail because using brushes will give a greater impression of waves when I get round to painting them. The colour scheme is inspired by an Aivazovsky painting and I brush these colours in using Painter and some of its watercolour brushes. Using these brushes ensures that I start with a watery direction. In my opinion, Painter has one of the best watercolour brush engines around.

5 Building up the layers

Painter's watercolour brushes have the wonderful ability to be used wet. Once you dry them you're able to layer another colour on top without damaging your initial brush strokes. This feature enables me to build up darker passages that increase the values and help to establish the whole feel of the image early on in the process. It also means the pencil drawing shows through, which is something I like to see.

6 Rendering a sea god

I switch to Photoshop and start rendering Poseidon in detail. I already have a colour scheme and value passages established in the watercolour underpainting. Using a basic brush and referring to the sturgeon photograph, I start building up the form of Poseidon. I pay careful attention to the light direction to render it with a three-dimensional feel. At this stage in the painting process I'm establishing midtones, with the underpainting providing the shadow areas.

7 Scattering the light

Once the midtones are established I add some strong highlights and specular areas of wetness to Poseidon's skin. In my brush presets I have a Color Dodge Chalk. This will add strong highlights. I want to create a speckled and scattered effect. Photoshop has the ability to scatter your brush strokes with a couple of sliders. Pressing F5 will bring up the Brush panel. If you click Scattering it'll bring up a slider with which you can alter the Scatter setting of your brush tip. ➤➤

PRO SECRETS

Utilise your tool presets

I've always found the Brush library in Photoshop a little clunky. It doesn't remember information such as Blending modes. Use Tool Presets to save your brushes with Blending modes intact. Go to Window and ensure Tool Preset is checked.
As you use and modify a brush you can save them in this palette with their blending modes intact. You can save numerous sets.

DOWNLOAD RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSH: SAMPLED BRUSH

I created this brush by adjusting the Scattering and Texture settings of one of Photoshop's default Chalk brushes.

8 Increasing contrast

At this stage I'm trying to nail the final values of Poseidon. Using a simple Round brush set to Multiply I brush in darker values around the highlights. This should give the figure the visual pop I desire. I experiment with the Scattering slider to provide a little more organic feel to the skin. You can further enhance the colour and glow with layers set to Overlay. For me it's an instinctive process of painting until the image feels right. I refer to it as a Goldilocks effect – there's nothing too saturated or dull.

9 The Argo's journey

Having established Poseidon, it's time to give some love to the Argo, Jason's boat. I work this in much the same way as the initial underpainting. Using a Multiply layer I lay a darker wash over the body of the boat. This establishes the darks, and enables me to use mid-tones and highlights to bring out the structure of the boat quickly. The people steering the boat can be suggested with a few highlights picking out heads and shoulders.
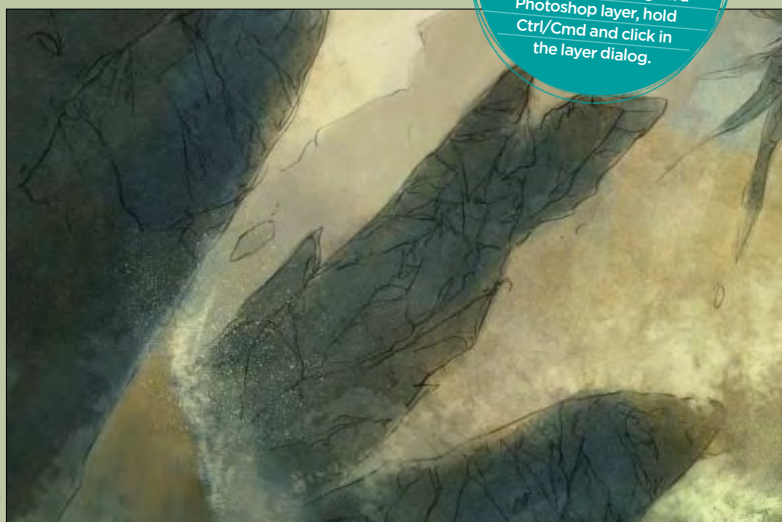
10 Depicting the watery peril

We now come to one of the most important parts of the image: the waves crashing around the boat and the cliffs. By studying Aivazovsky's paintings I'm able to establish an effective technique for rendering realistic waves. It's important to take account of the light, and understand how it scatters and diffuses through the thinner parts of the waves structure. However, I start with the darkest part of the wave.

11 Solid waves

The waves must be thought of as three-dimensional objects. These waves are also very broken and incredibly choppy, so scattered foam plays a large part in telling the story. I lay in the darkest passages and try to describe the basic pattern and shape of the waves. Once this is done I choose a dark yellow ochre where the waves are thinning and breaking. This describes the light that's shining through the thinnest part of the wave. I can already start to feel the movement in the water.
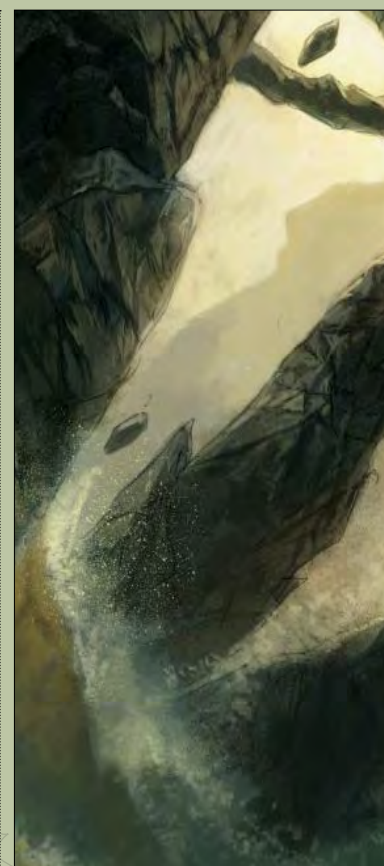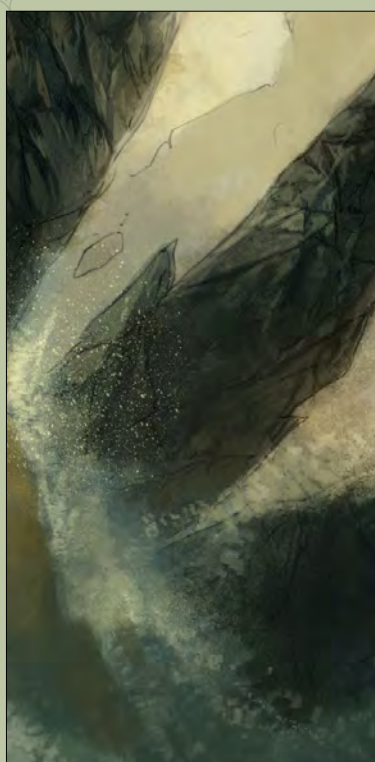
12 On the crest

To finally nail the waves I need to add the crests of foam. I use the Scattering part of the Brush menu to create the most random, displaced foam. A rough Chalk and a spattered Airbrush give me the best results. I work on a separate layer because it's very much a case of trial and error before I create the desired effect. Erasing parts of the foam also enhances its organic aspect.

13 Rock face

I turn my attention to the cliff face. While I paint this I keep in mind the nature of rock, which is hard edges and defined planes. The foreground rocks should contain the highest contrast and greatest detail. I use some of my own reference photos of hard black cliffs taken in Cornwall. They are wonderfully cracked and damaged, which is exactly what I want for the Clashing Rocks.

14 Tackling the trident

I have a number of ideas for the trident, but because my Poseidon is literally fish-like, I want it to possess an organic aspect. Furthermore, the fact that the trident is directly in front of the light source results in muted details and reduces much of the trident to a silhouette. I also suggest that the trident is made of rock, so that it has the strength to brace the cliff.

15 Applying those finishing touches

The painting is almost complete. I spend some time painting in some extra light effects. I create a new Overlay layer and gently increase the light diffusion throughout the image. I decide to add some water running off to Poseidon, especially around the side that's receiving the greatest light. This increases the dynamism of the image and adds extra movement to Poseidon.

Inside! 17 step-by-step workshops from leading artists, dedicated to helping you improve your digital painting skills in Photoshop, Painter and more!

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART
ImagineFX
Reviews

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

7 PRODUCTS ON TEST

HARDWARE

92 Spectre 13 x2 Pro
Hewlett Packard has a stab at the laptop/tablet two-in-one – but is the design up to date? And does it work for digital artists?

SOFTWARE

93 CorelDRAW Graphics Suite X7
We find out if Corel's updated vector drawing software can challenge Photoshop and Illustrator.

93 Oil Paint v.2.0
Turn photos into believable masterpieces without spending hours with brush in hand.

BOOKS

94 New reads
The Art of John Harris: Beyond the Horizon; 100 Illustrators; Ys: The Art Book.

TRAINING

97 Conan the Conquered Part 1
This is the first of 11 video instalments on how to paint a traditional fantasy masterpiece, with Patrick J Jones.

RATINGS EXPLAINED ✍✍✍✍✍ Magnificent   ✍✍✍✍ Good   ✍✍✍ Ordinary   ✍✍ Poor   ✍ Atrocious

It comes into its own in tablet mode, but the Spectre 13 x2 Pro should be sold with a pressure-sensitive stylus.

Spectre 13 x2 Pro

TURNING PRO Hewlett Packard has a stab at the laptop/tablet two-in-one – but is the design up to date? And does it work for digital artists?

Price £1,138 **Company** HP **Web** www.hp.com **Contact** 0845 270 4215

We're growing to love Windows 8-powered tablets. To begin with they were jarringly awful, with the clunkiness of Microsoft's operating system giving us nightmares in a tile-based format. However, the Windows 8.1 update has fixed many issues, and the prospect of running full-bodied versions of Photoshop and Painter on a portable device is still tantalising.

A lot of it depends on the hardware, though. Unlike Apple, Microsoft licenses its software out to third-party manufacturers, which results in many weird and wonderful Windows devices. HP's Spectre 13 x2 Pro certainly has the weird stakes nailed – it basically splits in two – but how wonderful is it?

First impressions are rather good. HP has nailed a classy aesthetic, and the art deco logo and brassy finish make it look like something from the retro-modern world of Watchmen. If you don't want to stray too far from the Apple tree it's also available in good ol' brushed-aluminium silver, but we're far fonder of the brown hue.

Its versatility is part of the attraction. All the important bits are packed behind the screen, so you can use it in tablet mode without a keyboard. This is when the tablet's at its best: Windows works fluidly, and because it includes laptop components such as an Intel Core processor and a graphics chip, it keeps up with more demanding tasks.

❝ It can certainly run Photoshop – unless you load a 42MP image ❞

It's certainly up to running Photoshop, unless you load a 42MP image, in which case it slows down a little. The screen is beautiful, too. It's only standard HD resolution, but the all-important colours, contrast and viewing angles are spot-on. Unfortunately, it doesn't include a stylus, but you could connect a Wacom tablet. However, that might look a little odd.

Connect the keyboard and the Spectre becomes more like a full-

blown laptop. The keyboard contains an extra battery pack to keep it topped up – we achieved eight hours of battery life with it plugged in, and six-and-a-half without.

The keyboard is the Spectre's big failing. Because all the technology is packed into the upper portion the Spectre becomes fatally top-heavy – even a slight prod tips it backwards, which isn't a good thing if you're making adjustments via the touchscreen. It also has a weird metal ridge that digs into your thighs, making it the first laptop we've seen that's too uncomfortable to use on your lap.

It's a shame because we adore the overall design and the hardware is sprightly and decent. For the same price you can pick up Microsoft's Surface Pro 2 with identical specifications and a decent pressure-sensitive stylus. The Spectre is less than wonderful, then – especially for artists.
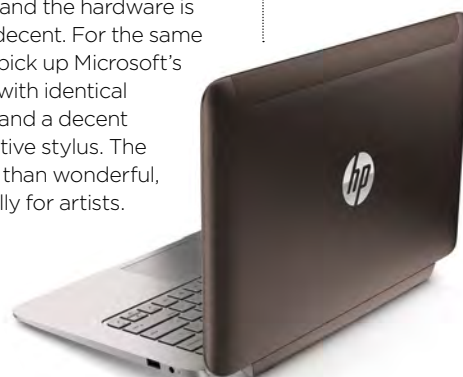
The Spectre 13 x2 Pro's two halves lock back together with a satisfying clunk.

DETAILS

Features
- Intel Core i5 CPU
- 4GB RAM
- 256GB hard drive
- Windows 8.1 Pro 64
- 13.3-inch LED-backlit touchscreen
- 1,920x1,080 display
- Intel HD Graphics 4200
- 4G Mobile Broadband
- Bluetooth
- 34x23x1.8cm (laptop mode), 34x21.7x 0.69cm (tablet mode)

Rating

You can edit brush strokes, add textures or text to your image, via the panels on the right.

MAC & PC

OilPaint v.2.0

BRUSH OFF Quickly turn your photos into masterpieces

Price £41 (Home), £56 (Home Deluxe), £72 (Business)
Company AKVIS
Web www.akvis.com

RATING ✍✍✍

Available as a standalone app (and a plug-in for image editors such as Photoshop and Painter), OilPaint gives you greater flexibility than traditional filters, thanks to sliders that enable you to alter parameters such as brush thickness and paint density. You can replicate a variety of artistic styles and turn your photos into works of art.

Rather than previewed live, your image is rendered each time, with brush strokes appearing before you on screen. This is a little frustrating because you can't easily see the variations you're changing, except via a preview window, but it means the results are much more realistic than traditional filters.

You can further improve your paintings by assigning brush directions before you render and post-process them, using Blur and Smudge tools or a History brush to paint detail back in. You can also batch process multiple images using existing or saved presets for converting multiple images.

The Business edition reviewed here (which includes all the tools) costs £71, but it's more versatile than your average image editor plug-in.

Use the Brush Stroke tool to direct brush strokes along the correct contours of the image.

CorelDRAW Graphics Suite X7

OK COREL We find out if Corel's latest update to its vector drawing software brings it up to Photoshop and Illustrator's level

PC ONLY

Price £399 (full version) **Company** Corel **Web** www.corel.com **Contact** 0800 0488984

Back in the late-90s, **CorelDRAW was the go-to software for illustrators and digital artists. It was – and still is – a vector-based drawing package, which tapped into a new kind of clean, shiny digital art based on solid curves and graduated fills. It also included a host of other features, including PHOTO-PAINT for manipulating images, and bitmap-to-vector scanning tools.**

Fifteen years later and little has changed about the software, but Adobe's Illustrator and Photoshop are far more popular. Tellingly, both CorelDRAW and PHOTO-PAINT have incorporated Illustrator- and Photoshop-style workspace layouts, to assist migration from Adobe's mightily similar market leaders.

CorelDRAW is still good for creating very particular kinds of images. Text can be broken apart into its constituent shapes so characters can be manipulated like objects. Draw a squiggle and you can extrude it to give it perspective, then rotate it and turn it into something interesting. It's great for

creating posters, or 3D text to plop atop a building, but it's less useful for fluid and organic works.

New additions in X7 include tailor-made workspaces, better fountain fills and a neat 'font playground', which shows a piece of text in a variety of different fonts. PHOTO-PAINT includes pressure-sensitive tools and improved camera effects. These are all good features that aren't on the scale of Photoshop's handling of 3D objects.

CorelDRAW hasn't moved on a great deal from the 90s, while Adobe has advanced in leaps and bounds. It's still a robust vector editor, but Illustrator and Photoshop have more features.
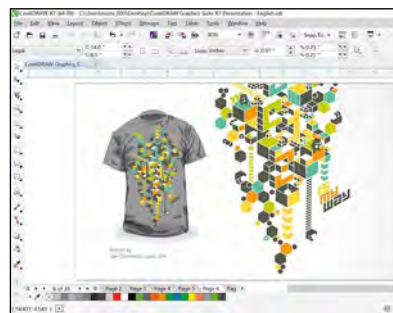
DETAILS

Features
- Fully customisable interface
- Vector editing
- High-resolution and multi-display support
- 10,000 clipart images
- 2,000 high-resolution photos
- Barcode wizard
- Duplexing wizard
- 1,000 fonts
- Website creator
- Font playground

System Requirements
PC: Windows 7 or 8, Intel Core 2 Duo or AMD Athlon 64 CPU or better, 2GB RAM, 1GB hard disk space, 1,280x768 screen resolution

Rating ✍✍✍

The program's better for designing character's T-shirts than it is designing the characters themselves.

Artwork by Lineking, Russia

LINEKING
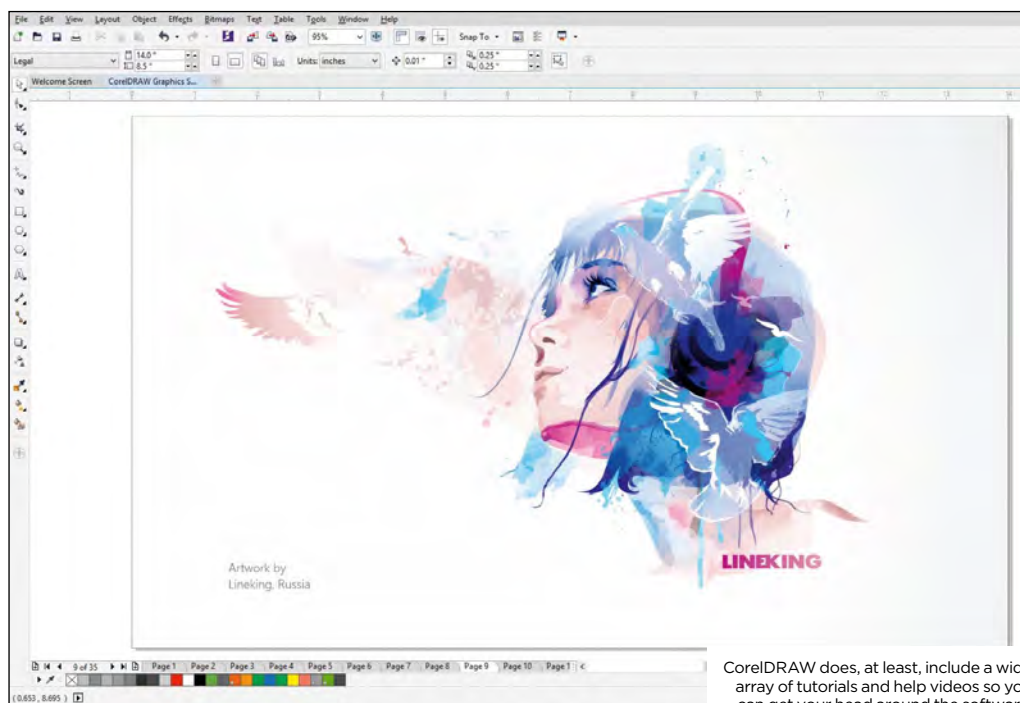
CorelDRAW does, at least, include a wide array of tutorials and help videos so you can get your head around the software.

The Art of John Harris Beyond the Horizon

FUTURE FANTASTIC The world-renowned artist's enviable talent is beautifully displayed within the pages of this book

Author John Harris **Publisher** Titan Books **Price** £25 **Web** www.titanbooks.com **Available** Now

Die-hard sci-fi fans will no doubt be familiar with the name John Harris. He's been creating stunning imagery in this genre since the mid-70s, and this lavish hardback features a carefully curated selection of that artwork.

Inside you'll find everything from vast landscapes and towering cities to floating worlds and satellite-inspired imagery, with the focus mainly on John's futuristic watercolour and acrylic paintings, as well as a number of impressive pencil sketches.

The book leads with a passionate introduction by American sci-fi author John Scalzi, followed by a word from the artist himself, who explains how he

As well as his colourful spacescapes there are plenty of the artist's sketches and paintings.

was introduced to the genre in the 60s, growing up with books by Arthur C Clarke, Alfred Bester and Isaac Asimov. Hugely inspired by these authors, "their preoccupations became mine," John says, with "expansive perspectives, big spaces and bigger questions." These elements are evident in his own work, capturing the universe on a breathtaking and magnificent scale.

John's work has a surreal, sometimes abstract, quality to it, which is for the most part vibrant and rich in colour. Eye-catching and truly inspiring, it's not hard to see how his unique illustrative style has graced the book covers of esteemed authors including Ben Bova, Jack McDevitt, Orson Scott Card and many more. Interestingly, John also found a fan in NASA, which invited the artist to attend the launch of a Space Shuttle and provide a painting to the evoke the event back in 1984. This led to the creation of a number of pieces, some of which the artist also shares within these pages.

It's impossible to separate the book's chapters in terms of quality, each being equally as brilliant as the next. However, we found the opening Floating Mass and Dust to Dust chapters particularly

The beautiful painterly style of John Harris can make the fantastical seem almost commonplace.

noteworthy, the latter highlighting just how diverse John's artistic skills are. Mainly leaving the artwork to do the talking, the accompanying copy provides a nice touch, giving a small but interesting insight into the mind of this super-talented artist.

This is not your average, generic science fiction fan art book, filled with images of spaceships and robots (that said, if you're partial to a spaceship or two, this certainly won't disappoint). What's featured in these pages is something altogether entirely different: gorgeous, dream-like imagery that's rich in detail and perfectly executed.

RATING 🖌️🖌️🖌️🖌️🖌️

100 Illustrators

INSPIRATION OVERLOAD You'll be entertained for hours as you take in the work of some of the biggest names in modern illustration

Authors Steven Heller and Julius Wiedemann **Publisher** Taschen **Price** £35 **Web** www.taschen.com **Available** Now

These two massive, shiny bundles of inspiration are a result of the Taschen team and American author and art director Steven Heller completing the tricky task of narrowing down a field of 600 illustrators to a selection of the 100 most significant.

"These were the legendary ones, the ones who not only had a stunning body of work, but also played a significant part in the history of
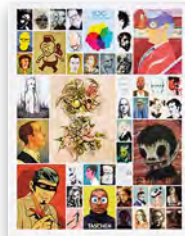
The two hardcover volumes are presented in a slipcase.

contemporary illustration," notes Taschen director Julius Wiedemann in the opening pages.

What follows is more inspiration in any one place than any artist could wish for. Whether you like abstract, cartoons, impressionist, comic or gothic art, this is an impressive and diverse collection, including artists such as Gary Baseman, Mirko Ilić and Anita Kunz. Each entry starts with a self-portrait, which leads into six pages

of the artist's best work printed on heavy, opaque paper. There's also a short yet interesting profile of each illustrator from Steven Heller.

The people at Taschen have done a fine job at choosing and presenting the final 100 in these two huge hardcover volumes. It's a visual treat and a fine survey of worldwide contemporary design.

RATING ✎✎✎✎✎

Ys: The Art Book

FANTASY FRANCHISE This gorgeous book charts how the look of the venerable Japanese role-playing game Ys has developed over a 25-year period

Managing Editor Matt Moylan **Publisher** Udon Entertainment **Price** £25 **Web** www.udonentertainment.com **Available** Now

This extensive art collection celebrates 25 years of Ys, the flagship series of Japanese role-playing video game publisher Nihan Falcomi.

The thick 280-page softcover book displays artwork from more than a dozen titles in the Ys franchise, from the first game in 1987 right through to the latest one in 2012. The book highlights the evolution of the game's art over two decades primarily through character designs. There are hundreds

Although this book centres mainly on character art, the scenery is also amazing.

of vibrant illustrations, which include rare concept art, storyboards and character poses, the detail of which you could pore over for hours. While dominated by characters, it also features a small yet brilliant selection of miscellaneous art too, including props and locations.

Commentary is sparse, with the only text being short notes next to some of

the illustrations. While this doesn't take anything away from the artwork, we would've liked some more information about the games that they've inspired. Overall though, this is an excellent collection of manga art and a worthy investment, recommended to character designers and Ys fans alike.

RATING ✎✎✎✎

The finished painting will take Patrick 11 chapters of video to demonstrate.

In part one of this ambitious training series, you'll see how Patrick J Jones prepares to make large-scale artwork.

Photographing models for reference is a crucial part of Patrick's creative process.

Conan the Conquered Part 1

BY CROM! Fantasy artist Patrick J Jones kicks off a massive training series with insights into getting ready to paint a masterpiece

Publisher Patrick J Jones **Price** £6 **Format** Download only **Web** www.pjartworks.com

Brace yourself for the beginning of an epic. The latest in Patrick J Jones' regular video workshops comes in 11 instalments, each on sale separately and each lasting at least an hour. It'll take you all day to watch the set. The topic is up to the scale of the project: a monumental oil painting of one of fantasy's most iconic heroes as he's captured by an Amazon-like tribe.

This first chapter is split into two, covering the preparation Patrick undertakes before painting, then watching him in the studio as he lays down his first brush strokes. From the off, it's clear that Patrick subscribes to time-honoured artistic principles, with meticulous research designed to make the eventual painting as strong as it can be. He reveals a selection of thumbnails and sketches, explaining the process that led him to the final design.

A photo shoot session with models is full of insight. Patrick discusses the foreshortening effect of camera lenses at short or medium focal lengths, and shows how he works with the digital images, cutting out and moving limbs to correct the perspective.

A full photo-composite with all the figures arranged sets the stage for the video's second half, in which Patrick gets painting. You'll see him mix his colour palette; the limits that this process imposes will set a challenge to any digital painter who freely uses all the colours at their disposal.

After laying down the underpainting, Patrick gets to work on the rocky backdrop to his tense scene. What's fascinating even at this early point is how Patrick works to create contrast at every opportunity: soft against hard, light against dark, smooth against textured. The obvious expertise he's developed and his willingness to share it bodes well for the remaining 10 chapters. This is a brilliant start to an ambitious and important training series.

DETAILS

Topics covered
- Thumbnails
- Photographing models
- Correcting lens distortion
- Mixing an oil palette
- Underpainting
- Using solvents
- Painting with rags
- Creating contrasts

Length
67 minutes

Rating

ARTIST PROFILE
PATRICK J JONES

Patrick was born in Belfast. Strongly inspired by the art of Boris Vallejo and Frank Frazetta, he moved to London, the first step on a path that would see him travel the world as an illustrator and artist. He's worked for most major sci-fi and fantasy book publishers and film companies. Conan The Conquered, the subject of this video workshop, was the winner of this year's IBA grand jury prize.

Patrick's first book, Sci-Fi & Fantasy: Oil Painting Techniques, will be published in July.

www.pjartworks.com

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT 75 YEARS OF BATMAN!

100% ALL-NEW FEATURES

YOUR 164-PAGE GUIDE TO THE WORLD OF COMICS

★ SERIOUS ABOUT COMICS! ★

COMIC HEROES

BATMAN
Exclusive interview with the most influential creator in the Dark Knight's life

UNITY #1-4

4 FREE COMIC DOWNLOADS!*
WORTH OVER £9
* TS&CS APPLY. SEE INSIDE FOR DETAILS

75 YEARS

+
THE COMPLETE HISTORY OF
WONDER WOMAN

FREE **UNITY** COMIC DOWNLOADS!
WORTH OVER £9
* TS&CS APPLY. SEE MAG FOR DETAILS

THE WORLD'S
#1 COMIC MAG

INSIDE!
THE BIGGEST NAMES IN COMIC BOOKS SPEAK:
★ CLAREMONT
★ MIGNOLA
★ MORRISON
★ VIECELI
★ SLOTT

Future

9 772042 807015

23>

www.comicheroesmagazine.com

PLUS! EXPERT TIPS FOR CREATING COMIC CARICATURES

BRAND NEW ISSUE ON SALE NOW!
AVAILABLE AT WHSmith

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART
ImagineFX
PRESENTS

FANTASY
illustrator

This issue:
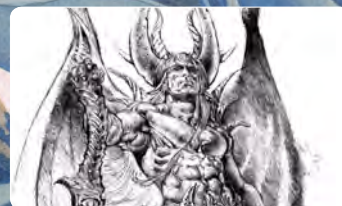
ENHANCE YOUR ART WITH
WATERCOLOUR AND ACRYLICS
Tran Nguyen paints a convincing damsel in distress using dynamic elements **Page 106**

July 2014 **ImagineFX**   **99**

🇺🇸 **Danny Cruz**
LOCATION: US
WEB: www.dannycruz4.deviantart.com
EMAIL: deecee4_4@yahoo.com
MEDIA: Graphite

Self-taught artist and self-confessed fan of all things 80s, Danny Cruz built his career on the back of a huge deviantART following. His dynamic, intricate comic-book style has since earned him covers with publishers IDW and Valiant.

"I prefer drawing lightly traditionally," Danny says of his technique, "and then darkening digitally, if necessary – instead of the other way around. I find that way gives me more range with regards to contrast."

IMAGINEFX CRIT

"Yes! There's nothing quite like a scantily clad muscle man, wielding a flipping massive weapon in a bed of skulls – naked lady optional. And Danny's images are insanely detailed throughout."
Beren Neale,
Digital Editor

1 INTO THE PIT
Graphite on paper, 8x11in
"This was created for a gladiator-themed trading card set. Drawing these muscular characters is always a lot of fun for me. Some of the people who influenced my figure work are Frank Frazetta, Simon Bisley, Bengus, Katsuya Terada and Michelangelo."

2 DEVIL KING
Graphite on paper, 8x11in
"This is an updated version of a ballpoint pen sketch I created a few years back. In the older version, the Devil King character was more beast-like. For this version, I made him look more arrogant and condescending. A character that's not only physically formidable, but mentally so as well."

© Mierce Miniatures

FXPosé submissions to: fxpose@imaginefx.com

© Mierce Miniatures

🇺🇸 **Lucas Graciano**
LOCATION: US
WEB: www.lucasgraciano.com
EMAIL: lucasgraciano@yahoo.com
MEDIA: Oils

Lucas began his career as a visual development artist in the video game industry. These days he divides his time between teaching at Watts Atelier and completing freelance commissions, including card art and book cover illustrations for Upper Deck, Blizzard Entertainment and Wizards of the Coast.

Picking up a string of prizes along the way – including two Chesley Awards – Lucas has worked on some of sci-fi and fantasy's most esteemed licences, including Star Wars, The Lord of the Rings, Magic: The Gathering and Dungeons & Dragons.

1 DRAGON QUEEN
Oil on masonite, 16x20in
"I painted this promotional piece for Magic: The Gathering's Grand Prix event in Mexico City, held earlier this year. The idea was to paint something that represented the Mexican culture while still having the Magic flavour."

2 DRAGON SWARM
Oil on masonite, 18X24in
"This cover art for a Pathfinder book won silver in the Institutional category for Spectrum 20 last year."

3 FLAMESPEAKER ADEPT
Oil on masonite, 16x20in
"This artwork was done for Magic: The Gathering's expansion set Theros."

4 THE LAST STAND OF THORIN OAKENSHIELD
Oil on masonite, 30x40in
"This work started as a cover for a Hobbit board game. I had wanted to do my own version of this scene at some point. So I planned out what Ares Games would need from me and then expanded on the original painting for my own goals. In the end, Ares Games liked the expanded image so much that it decided to go with that one as its cover instead."

3

© Wizards of the Coast

4

© Ares Games/ Lucas Graciano

IMAGINEFX CRIT

"Watts must be a pretty exciting place to be at the moment: Lucas, EM Gist, Thomas Babbey and Michael C Hayes – four of the best trad artists around – all teach at the atelier. Lucky students."
Gary Evans,
Staff Writer

SCEITSE: IRELAND

Sceitse founder JG O'DONOGHUE tells us why the sky's the limit for his intrepid group of sketchbook adventurers

Sketching is a sedentary pastime. You sit. You observe. You draw. The more dynamic artist might stand; few will work up a sweat wielding a pencil. Sceitse was set up to change that.

"What the group really does," organiser JG O'Donoghue says, "is sketch adventuring. That's what each one of our events feels like: an adventure. They're explorations of what's around us, done one sketch at a time."

Sceitse – the Gaelic for 'sketch' – formed around two years when a small gathering of artists and illustrators from local professional group Islander Art got together to draw outdoors. It's grown from there and now welcomes sketchers of any standing.

So far the group has tackled sketch caving, sketch sailing, sketch mountaineering, and will soon attempt sketch cycling. "There is no reason that sketching can't be done on a boat, in a cave or on a bike. Each one feels different, has different challenges, but also enables us to experience both what you can only experience while drawing or painting, and the specific activity. We experience the world around us in different ways,

Sketching Clodagh Castle, a small Gallowglass warrior stronghold located near the village of Crookstown in County Cork.

giving a deeper appreciation of what's out there, on our doorstep."

After its biking adventure, Sceitse has plans to rent its own island for a weekend of uninterrupted outdoor drawing. JG even has aspirations of somehow sketching in the air.

"Who knows what the future will bring, but I'm sure each one is going to be brilliant and we'll have lots of fun doing it, while making great friends. Whatever happens, it's guaranteed to be one big sketch adventure."

To find out more about Sceitse visit www.facebook.com/groups/sceitse.

Members of Sceitse ignore the plentiful fish that inhabit Lough Allua, County Cork, and spend their time sketching on the peaceful waters.

ACTIVE ARTISTS

The Sceitse members take in the sights of south-west Ireland…

Inchinlinane Gallán, as drawn by JG O'Donoghue.

Sceitse member Kevin Gough drew some quayside buildings on a day out with the group.

Michael Nolan sketching Labbacallee wedge tomb, an ancient megalithic burial monument in north County Cork.
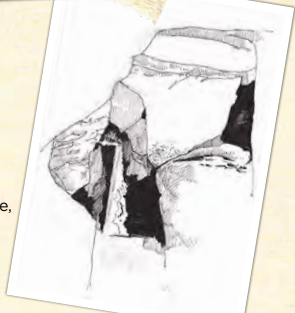
Another view of Aillwee cave, as drawn by Donal Fallon.

Jay Penn produced this study of Ballykinvarga Fort.

Eoghan Beausang, Eleanor, Tara Fox, and Saoirse Patricia O'Driscoll sketching at the foot of the mountains on the Cork/Kerry border.

The group take plenty of inspiration from Aillwee cave, which is heart of the Burren in County Clare.
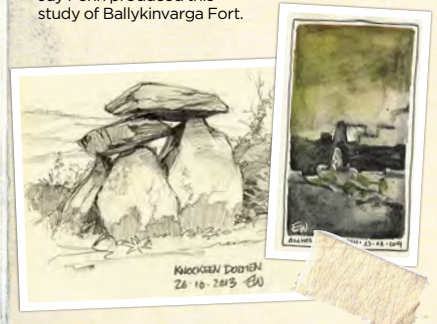
Eva Widermann's sketches of the Knockeen Dolmen tomb and exploring Ailllwee cave.

DOWNLOAD RESOURCES WIPS • FINAL IMAGE
http://ifxm.ag/my110ths

Watercolour   *Acrylics*

PAINTING AN EMOTIVE DAMSEL

TRAN NGUYEN reveals how she captures the essence of a maiden's distress through the use of body language, dynamic elements and a rich blend of colours

Therapeutic imagery – visuals that can be used as a psycho-therapeutic support vehicle in healing the soul – has always held a deep fascination for me. The capturing of complex human emotions such as dismay intrigues me, and this inspires me to illustrate the classic damsel in distress.

Now that I've decided on the subject, I want to create an interpretation of a damsel in distress that's different from how she's been traditionally depicted in the past. When I find myself in a tight spot, my mind reacts chaotically. It's as if I'm submerged in a frenzy of emotions, each tearing my psyche in opposite directions.

To convey this complex idea, I'll represent the damsel's woe through the billowing of her dress, as if she's been cast into a void of emptiness. Her physical state will convey a feeling of weakness, as she fights to pull arrows out of her body. These arrows symbolise the many

MATERIALS

DRAWING
■ Prismacolor graphite pencil (HB, 2B)
■ Bristol paper
■ Paper Mate Tuff Stuff Eraser Stick
■ Tracing paper

PAINTING
■ Golden Fluid Acrylics Colors
■ Winsor & Newton watercolours
■ Prismacolor coloured pencils
■ Prismacolor Verithin pencils
■ 12 Filbert, 6 Round, 1 Round, 8 Round and 1-inch Washer
■ Workable fixative
■ Paper towels
■ Rives BFK paper
■ Light table
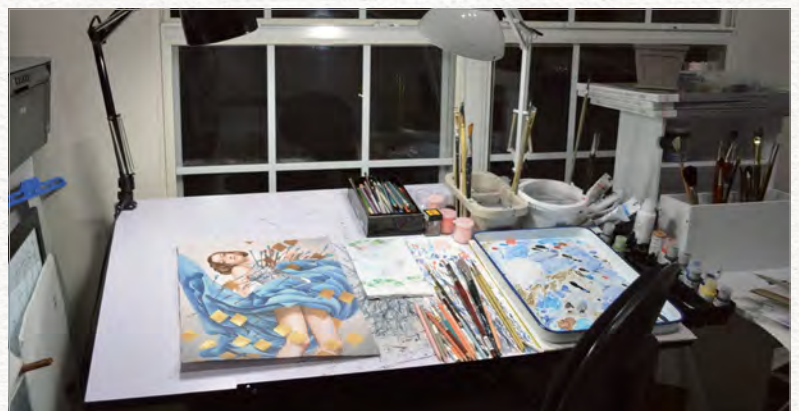
adversities that have brought on my character's state of vulnerability. Keeping the face emotionless and letting the body and surrounding elements support the narrative should result in a more intriguing image.

My aim is for the viewer to be able to relate to this imagery and foster feelings of well-being from it. It's similar to listening to a sad song when you're

heartbroken. I want my audience to have a visceral response when they view it, to help them overcome whatever obstacle life has put in their way.

Tran is a freelance illustrator and gallery artist based in Georgia, US. She has exhibited with galleries in Seattle, New York City, Los Angeles and Barcelona. www.mynameistran.com

1 Conceptualising a distressed damsel

I start off with a very loose sketch that I refine into a tight line drawing after I'm happy with my composition. In my experience I find that clean lines are easier to transfer via my light table.

2 Tighten, transfer and tone

Once I'm happy with the sketch, I scan, resize and print it to the actual size of the painting. The drawing is transferred on to Rives BFK paper with a red Prismacolor Verithin. I then add a light glaze of coral pink as an undertone with a 1-inch filbert. This undertone will keep the colours harmonious with each another.

COLOUR TIP
OUTLINE ADVICE
I outline the edges of shapes and objects with a saturated colour rather than black. This gives the painting a sense of volume.

ARTIST INSIGHT
IMPROVE YOUR GLAZING METHODS
I prefer using Golden Fluid Acrylics Colors instead of its standard line of Heavy Body Colors, because they're better suited for glazing. The liquid colours are less viscous, and easier to mix and dilute. In addition, if I need the paint to dry slower, I'll mix in a small amount of Golden's retarder to increase the drying time.

3 Colour-blocking whimsicality

I like to fill in all the parts of the painting with flat colour using a 6 Round brush before I begin any detailing. This helps me visualise what colours will work best and where values should be pushed or lifted.
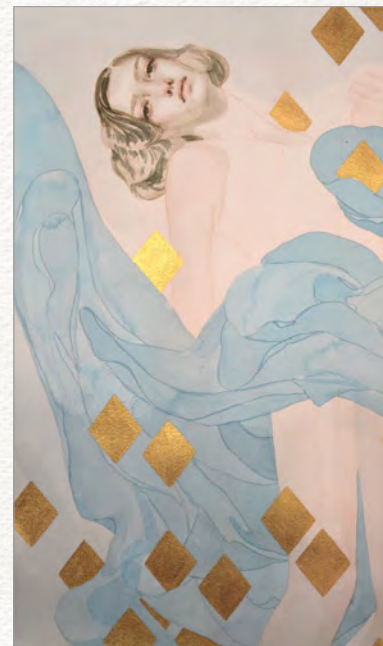
4 A fair maiden

By diluting the paint with a lot of water, I'm able to create a soft gradient that's perfect for rendering fair skin complexions. For an even more subtle gradation, I use Winsor & Newton's watercolours. Here, I lay down six glazes of raw umber and cadmium red for her skin tone.
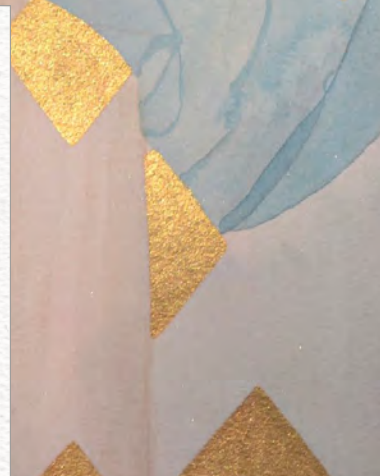
5 *Her courteous clothing*
I switch to a 1 round brush and paint in intricate floral patterns on her top. After this, I add in subtle folds of Payne's Grey, which gives the fabric some volume.

6 Billows of a deep-seated dress

To add depth to her dress, I focus on its lights and darks. I keep to the same light source and make sure that every fold casts a shadow. The rounded part of a fold will produce a highlight, which I render with a white coloured pencil.

BRUSH TIP
WRIST TECHNIQUE
When painting, rotate your wrist. You'll utilise every angle of the brush and create a more fluid and organic stroke.

8 Her fixated gaze

Usually after 20-plus glazes, the paper tends to lose its tooth. This is when I spray it down with Blair's Workable Fixative in a well-ventilated area. After it dries, I go back in with another layer of coloured pencils and continue to push the shadows.

9 Arrows to her heart

My approach is to work on each component of the painting simultaneously. This helps me see how one area is working alongside another. Here, I lightly paint in the arrows so that I can quickly lift them if they're positioned wrong. I use the colour pencils over them to create cast shadows on her body and dress.

7 Even greater depth

Diluting acrylics can makes it difficult to produce deep values. To help push them, I go over the shadows in her dress with brown and blue Verithin pencils. What's so good about Verithins is that they react like watercolour-soluble pencils when you paint over them.

10 Painting a billowing dress

Now that I have more tooth to my surface, I can add several glazes of brilliant blue to the dress to give it a fuller look.

BRUSH TIP
BUY THE BEST
Princeton Artist Brush Co.'s synthetic mongoose and red sable series feel natural and absorb more water for glazing.
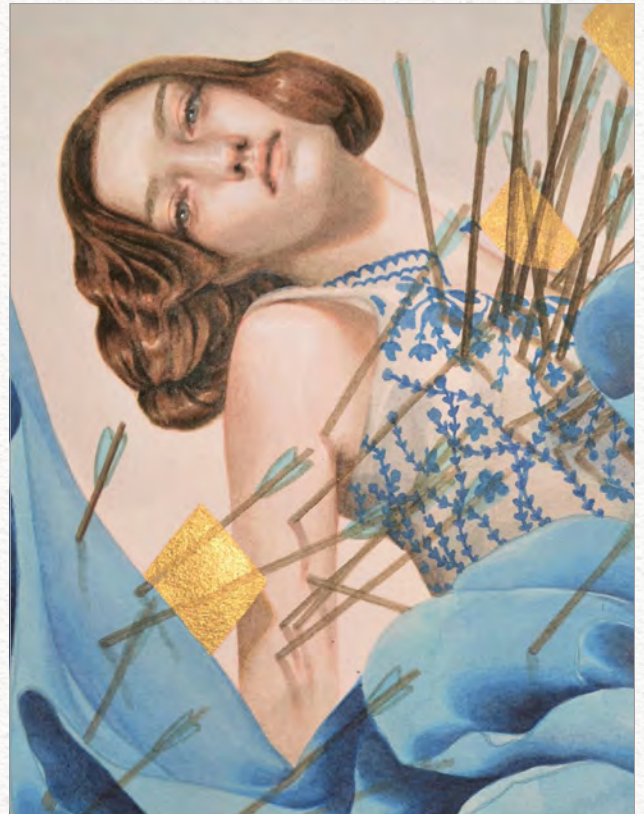
11 A four-cornered affair

I'm usually careless when it comes to painting around the geometric shapes, because I know I can refine them when the image is close to being finished. I've found that painting cast shadows can help create cohesion between abstract and representational elements.

12 The end of the fairy tale

12 The end of the fairy tale

Happy accidents will happen every so often, but when they don't, I remember to correct stray marks and overlapping issues. Here, I repaint the arrow's shaft over the gold diamonds. A lot of last-minute refinements such as adding more highlights to her hair takes place. Then I scan the work, edit it digitally and send it to the client.

DOWNLOAD RESOURCES WIPS http://ifxm.ag/my110ths

Pencil   *Ballpoint pen*   *Charcoal*

HOW TO DRAW AND SHADE IN 3D

If your figure art is looking rather flat, then it's time to take it to the third dimension. CHRIS LEGASPI is on hand to improve your drawing and shading techniques

As a figurative artist, I want every one of my drawings to feel three-dimensional. One method I use is constructing and shading the figure using three-dimensional forms.

First, I look for the key landmarks on the figure: corners and direction changes, apexes of forms, and overlaps and intersections. These will help me to develop the drawing.

I start the drawing with simple, geometric forms: cylinders, boxes and spheres, for example. Depending on the pose and effect I want, I'll begin with either a boxy or rounded form. Next, I'll refine the construction by adding secondary or compound forms. I use a combination of spheres, cylinders and rectangles and blend them together, transitioning from one form to another.

For the shading, I start by separating the shadow shape and emphasising the core shadow. The core shadow is vital because it defines the plane change from light to shadow.
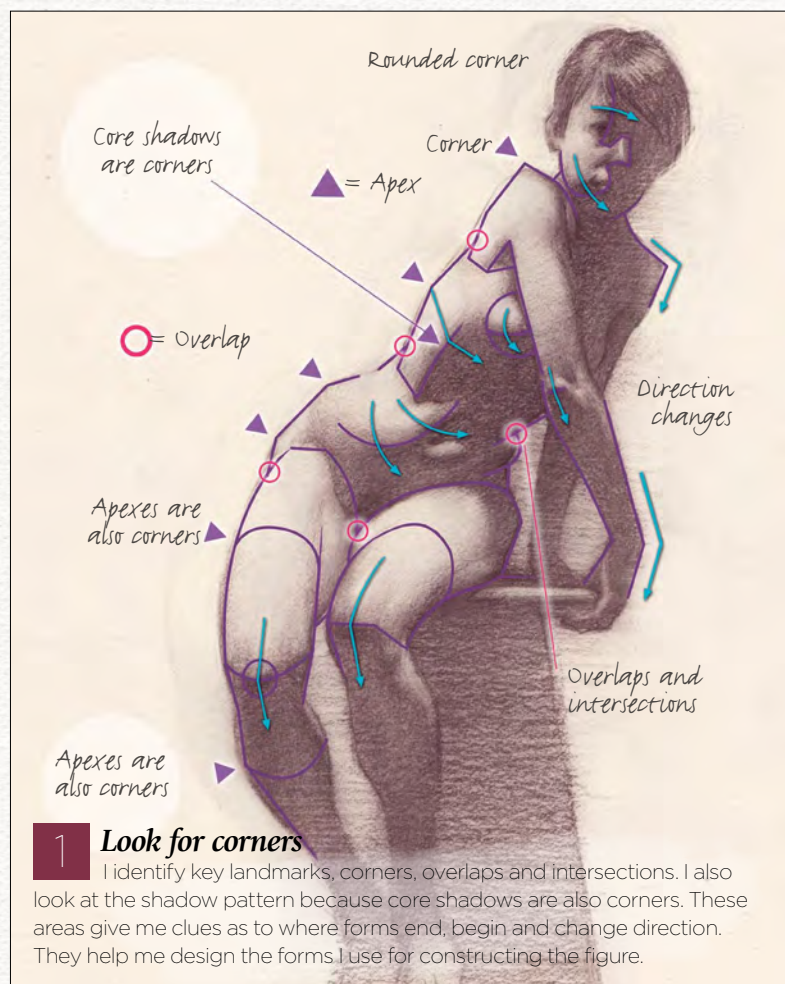
To complete the rendering, I'll add a wash of half-tone using simplified spheres and cylinders as a guide. For example, I'll shade the head as a sphere, and the torso and arms as cylinders. This will not only soften the core shadow, but also model and round the form, and further enhance the feeling of a three-dimensional object.

Chris admits that he's obsessed with figure drawing and painting. He also loves sharing great information on art and picture making. www.learn-howtodraw.com

MATERIALS
- ■ Smooth newsprint paper
- ■ Carbothello pencil, black (or Conte B)
- ■ Willow charcoal sticks (medium grade)
- ■ Kneaded eraser
- ■ Bristle brush, round #4 or #6
- ■ White charcoal pencil or white pastel
- ■ Ballpoint pen
- ■ Sketchbook

Rounded corner

Core shadows are corners

Corner ▲

▲ = Apex

○ = Overlap

Direction changes

Apexes are also corners ▲

Apexes are also corners ▲

Overlaps and intersections

1 Look for corners
I identify key landmarks, corners, overlaps and intersections. I also look at the shadow pattern because core shadows are also corners. These areas give me clues as to where forms end, begin and change direction. They help me design the forms I use for constructing the figure.
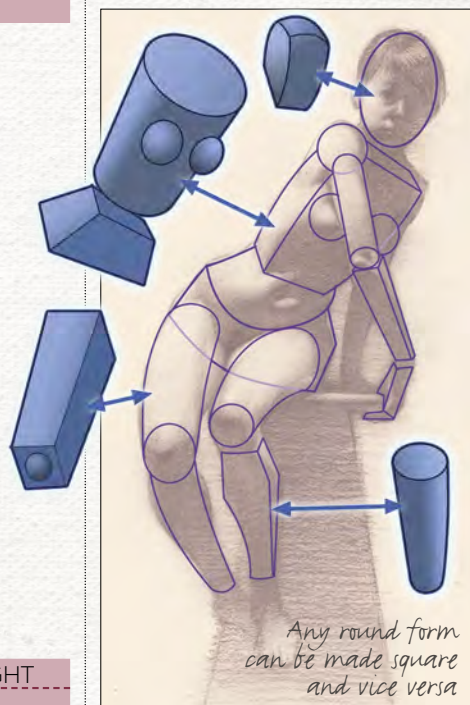
ARTIST INSIGHT
GO STRAIGHT
Be bold with straight marks and use them often. Even though the body is round and organic, straights can quickly communicate form by defining the contours, corners and direction changes.

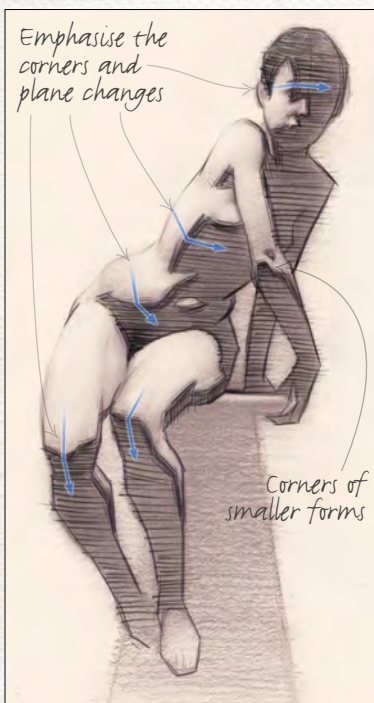Any round form can be made square and vice versa

2 Simplify the base forms
I start with simple, geometric forms such as cylinders, boxes and spheres. Depending on the pose, I'll use either boxy forms or rounded forms. While drawing, I can also make any round form square or vice versa. This helps to create different effects and moods in the drawing.

Forms seamlessly blend from square to round and round to square

small forms blending and transitioning

sphere and egg-like forms can quickly describe complex curved forms of the body

3 Compound forms

Next I'll refine the construction with more complex compound forms. I like to use a combination of eggs, spheres, rectangles and boxes together and make them transition and blend together. This helps the drawing feel more natural, because the body already works this way.

For half-tones, shade a simple cylinder, sphere or box

Emphasise the corners and plane changes

Corners of smaller forms

4 Define the corners

I continue by defining the corner of the light and shadow, which is the core shadow. By emphasising this shadow, I'm able to create a dramatic three-dimensional effect on the canvas. I'll begin with more boxy core shadows and then round and soften them as I develop the drawing.
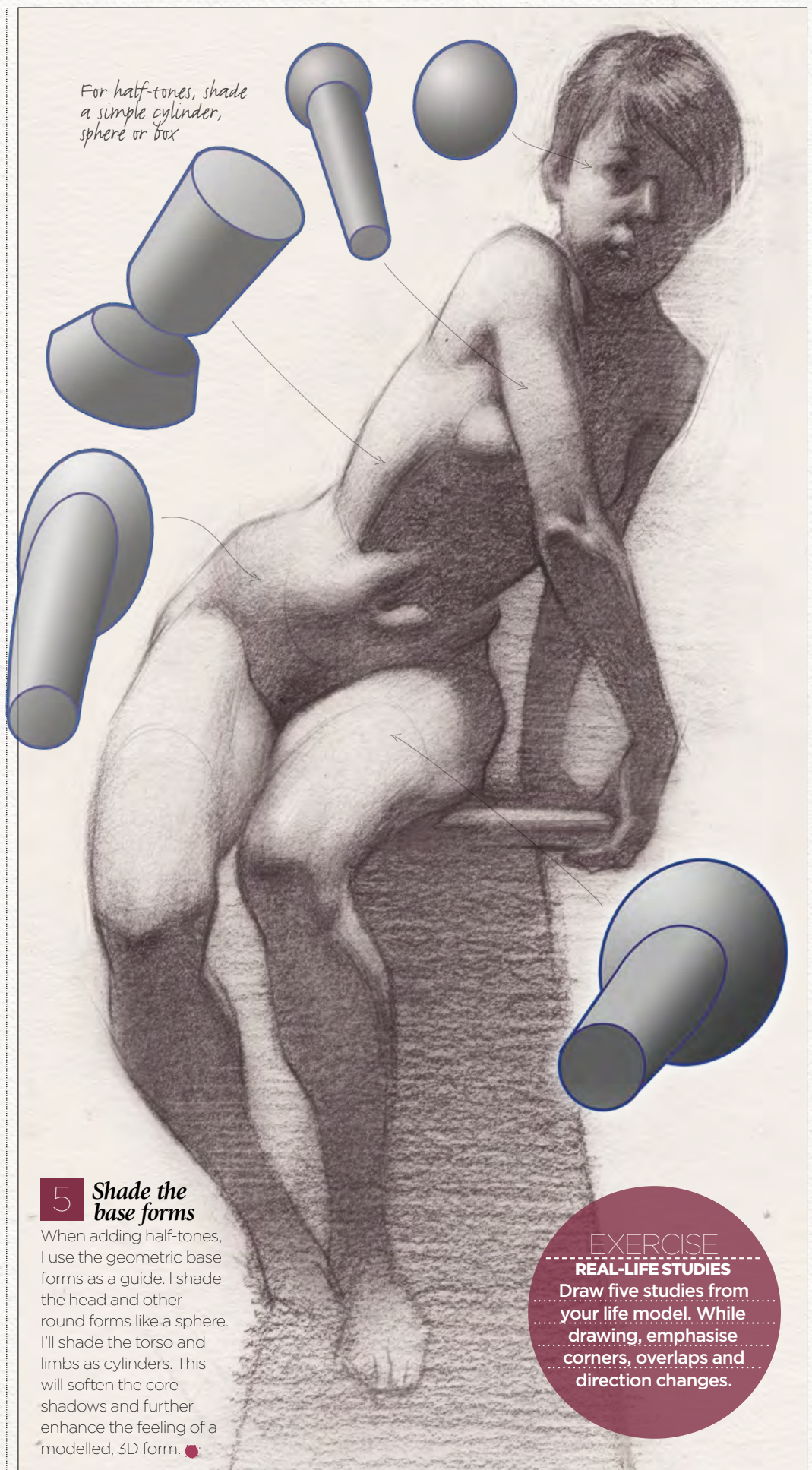
5 Shade the base forms

When adding half-tones, I use the geometric base forms as a guide. I shade the head and other round forms like a sphere. I'll shade the torso and limbs as cylinders. This will soften the core shadows and further enhance the feeling of a modelled, 3D form.

EXERCISE
REAL-LIFE STUDIES
Draw five studies from your life model. While drawing, emphasise corners, overlaps and direction changes.

FANTASY *illustrator*

First Impressions

�֍ Donato Giancola ✖

The fine artist on selling his first drawing at the age of 14, and the problem with globalisation

What art-related event changed everything for you as a child?
Watching Star Wars for the first time at a local drive-in. Little did I know how strongly that movie would resonate with me as a young boy. I can't think of a more perfect movie to have watched as an inspired ten year-old. I still get chills when I hear John Williams' opening refrain – that's powerful stuff to tap into as an artist.

Tell us about the one person who helped you on your way?
At 19 I enrolled in a drawing class – my first formal art training. I enjoyed the challenges the teacher, Chris Campbell, placed upon us. She saw my passion and potential, and recommended that I 'go somewhere else' to study art more seriously. Chris's advice resulted in a transfer into Syracuse University two years later, where I blossomed as an artist, and built my confidence to then move to New York City, where I still live.

**What was your first paid commission?**
It was a drawing inspired by The Lord of the Rings. I was 14 and showing my friend Tony an image of a ring wraith I'd just finished. Tony's mum was a fantasy reader and picked up the drawing for $5!

What's the last piece that you finished?
My latest works have included 12 images for the 2015 George RR Martin Calendar for A Song of Ice and Fire. The final piece, Forging the Iron Throne, was delivered in early March. George has been wonderfully supportive, giving me freedom to interpret his visions.

What's changed in the industry of fantasy art the most in the 20 years that you've been working in it?
As much as you may be tired of hearing it, the internet is the greatest change –
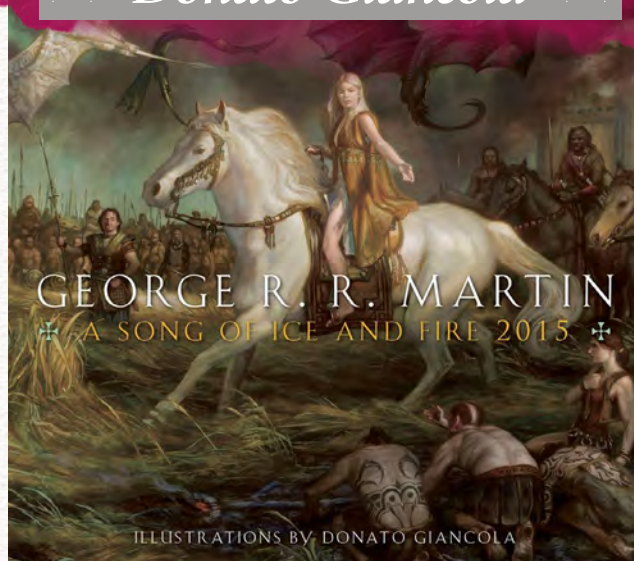
A SONG OF ICE AND FIRE
The cover for the recently released George RR Martin calendar 2014.

from how we shop for art supplies, to research content, to advertise our work. Imagine back when you emptied a tube of paint: you had to leave the studio and go find one out in the real world, like some primate looking for food. Now you press a few images on a glass screen and it shows up the next day at your doorstep. Magic! And most importantly, no time is lost from the studio work hours.

> ❝ **The pleasure of creation is enough to keep me happy and eager for the day to begin** ❞

When did you become a teacher of art, and what's the most important thing that you've ever taught someone?
I first began to lead classes a few years out of college – what a disaster! I was too young and inexperienced to truly teach the students in attendance. I began to teach properly about six years ago, after spending countless hours presenting, lecturing and demonstrating my art at conventions. A decade refining the various aspects of my skills, business and maturity as an artist enabled me to more

Next month
James Gurney

effectively share what I had learned with others. The most important issue I stress in becoming an artist is to be prolific – keep making the art. It's through this process that an artist will find their audience, and their voice, in what they wish to passionately create.

What advice would you give to your younger self to aid you on the way?
Take more chances. Shoot higher for your dreams.

What are your painting rituals?
Wake up and hit the studio! I don't need any rituals to be motivated to create art. The pleasure of creation is enough to keep me happy, inspired, and eager for the day to begin, and regretful as the sun sets that there's not more daylight, because I work in a natural light setting. If there are any rituals to my labours, it's the pleasure taken in laying out a new palette, or the contemplative assessment of the art at the end of the day as I wash my brushes and close down the studio.

What sucks about the illustration industry right now?
What sucks is also a boon. The industry is huge, massive, global! Need an artist for a commission? Which country would you like to hire them from? Competition in the commercial field reaches far beyond geographical and language barriers – there are thousands of artists to choose from. The flip side of that is the potential is nearly limitless in regards to the worldly influence, popularity and business dealings an international market can offer. Being savvy to what's happening in the marketplace is smart business for a freelance artist. Reach out, advertise and share your art, and others will find you and support you. For good and bad, it's now the world we live in.
Visit www.donatoart.com to see more of Donato's sci-fi and fantasy art

BOBA FETT AND HAN SOLO
Pencil and marker from 1982 – another old art piece from my early days.

Cannes Lions, Silver Award

evian.
Live young

PPA

MAGAZINE
ADVERTISING
SPEAKS
FOR ITSELF

ppa.co.uk/lovemagads

#lovemagads