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illustrator **Jeff Simpson**

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As part of my job, I'm often required to ask an artist to make changes to their painting, be it a cover or workshop image. I'll admit that sometimes I've felt reticent to do this – despite my confidence that my requests will improve the image. I'm aware that the artist may be upset by my suggested alterations.

Most of us would admit to being apprehensive about change – especially if it's related to something we have an emotional attachment to. Do you recognise this in yourself? It's easy for our defence mechanism to tense up ready for battle before a word is even spoken in these situations. I think most people would admit to that.

It's hard to let go of that feeling, but let go of it we must. Change will always bring a positive, a development or an advancement. It will make you realise what your work means to you. A good shake of the tree may uproot a great deal, but will also reveal what holds firm.

In his brilliant cover art workshop, Jeff Simpson ponders the fate of an artist who doesn't try to bring something fresh to their work. What can you do to add something different to your art? Can you be the artist who brings about changes to their own images? We're not always talking about massive game-changing alterations, here. It could be far less seismic: if you always paint characters, try working on an environment. Or could you try a new colour palette, or paint using different brushes than your normal set?

Give that tree a shake and see what happens...

Claire

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



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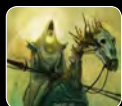
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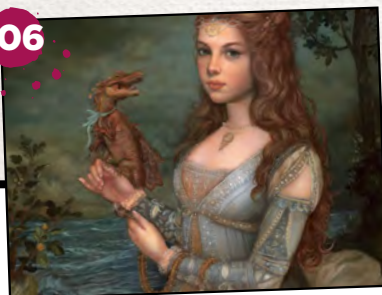
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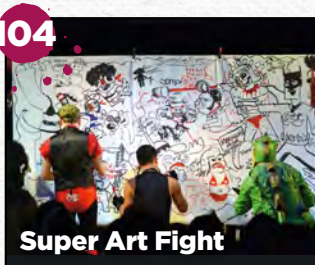
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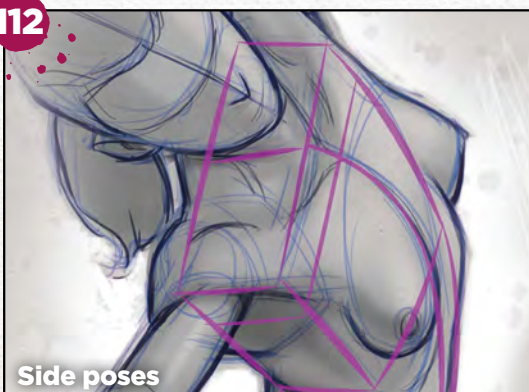


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James Gurney



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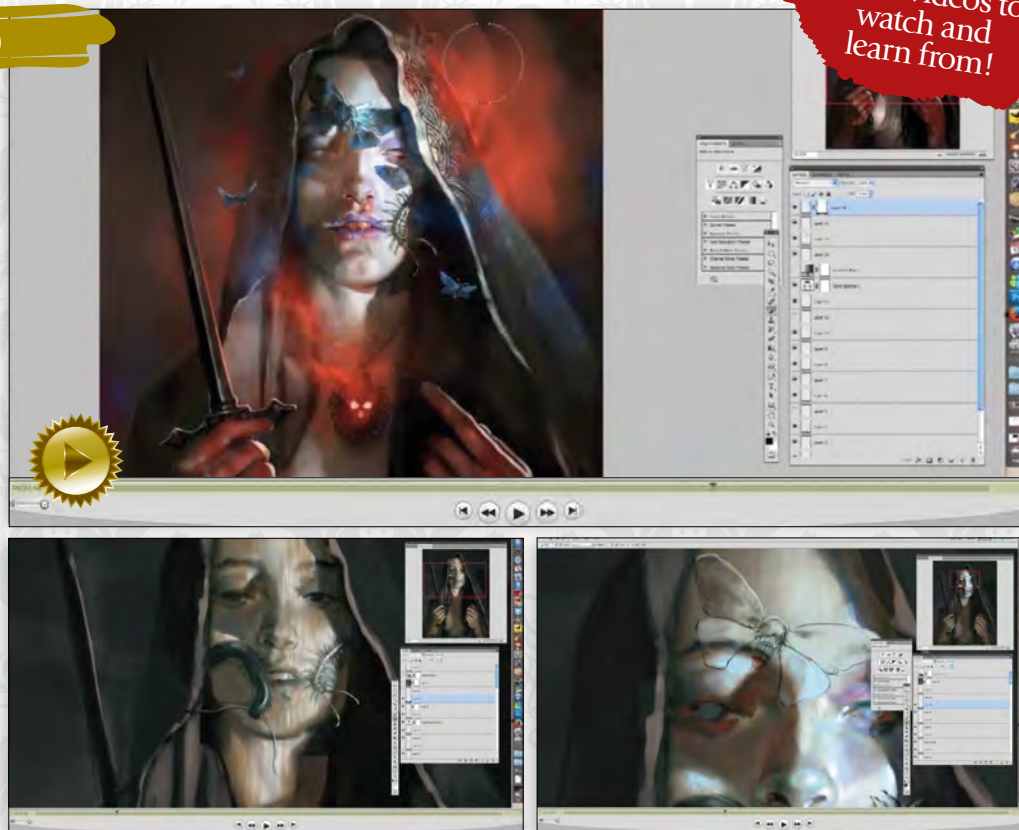
Getting your hands on all of this issue's videos, artwork and brushes is quick and easy. Just visit our dedicated web page at <http://ifxm.ag/spo111oky>

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

COVER ART VIDEO

Atmospheric, textured art

Jeff Simpson reveals his process for creating a dark fantasy image that's full of textures and lighting effects.



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- 2 Find the files you want**
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FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX

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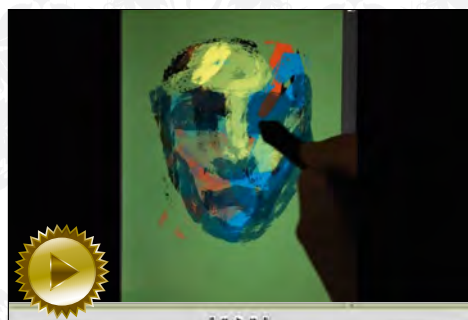




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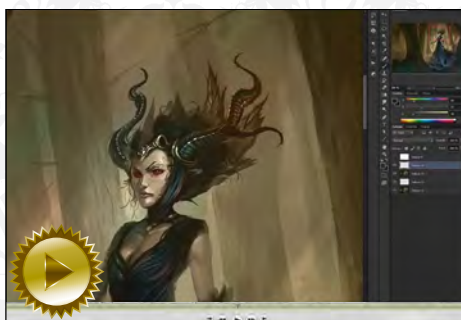
Watch our videos to gain a unique insight into how our artists create their stunning art

WORKSHOP VIDEOS



George Pratt

Discover how a traditional painter goes about creating a portrait in Procreate.
Plus WIPs, final image and brushes



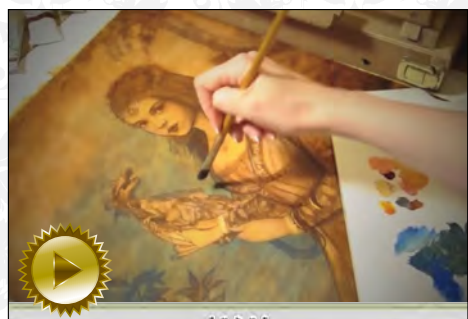
Xavier Collette

Streamline your painting process and depict a dark faerie into the bargain.
Plus WIPs, final image and brushes



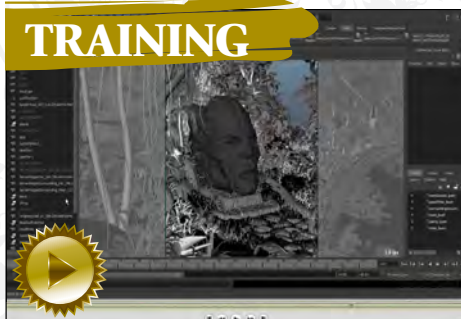
Ed Binkley

Enter the world of Victorian horror and learn how to paint Marley's ghost.
Plus WIPs, final image and brushes



Annie Stegg

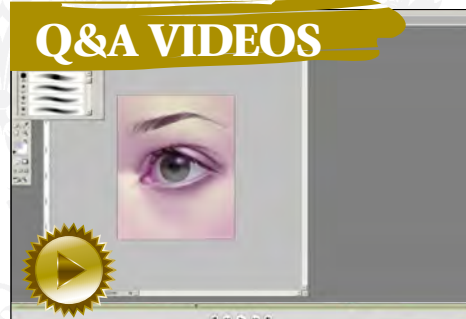
Take inspiration from Greek mythology and put a fantasy spin on your art.
Plus WIPs and final image



TRAINING

Alex Alvarez

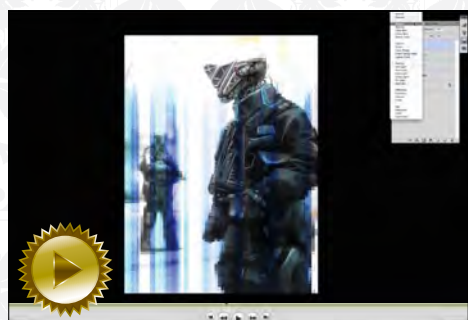
Watch a clip from the Gnomon supremo's workflow for creating a lush jungle scene for our sister title, 3D World.



Q&A VIDEOS

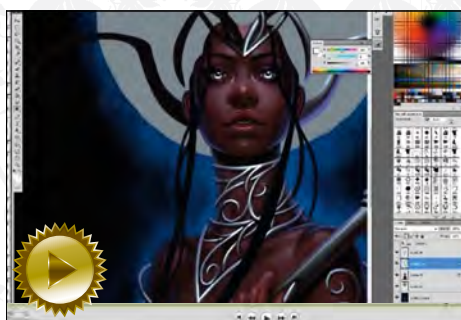
Paco Rico Torres

Once you understand the basic anatomy, painting an eye will become as easy as pie.
Plus WIPs and final image



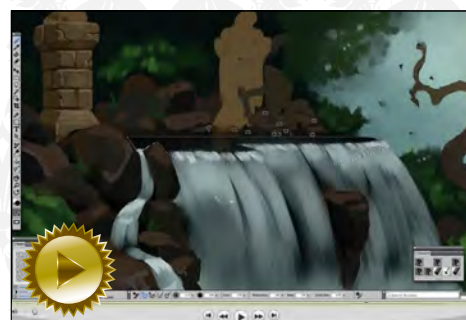
Mark Molnar

Give your sci-fi art an interesting pixelated look, while maintaining the resolution.
Plus WIPs and final image



Sara Forlenza

Learn how to paint a silver object that reflects light realistically.
Plus WIPs and final image



Peter Stapleton

Capture the movement and energy of a waterfall on the digital canvas.
Plus WIPs and final image

PLUS Videos on texture application, perspective grids, strong value structure, painting tree bark, reducing your use of colours, pencils in Photoshop and depicting suede, plus WIPs and final art from Graham Humphreys, Anthony Scott Waters and Chris Legaspi.

22 CUSTOM BRUSHES, INCLUDING...

HARD PENCIL

Melanie Maier recreates the look of pencil digitally.

NOISE

Xavier Collette uses this to quickly apply texture to his art.

SCRAGGLY HAIR BRUSH

Ideal for creating large masses of hair, says Ed Binkley.



Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR FANTASY ART

ImagineFX
ARTIST
MONTH

Soheil Danesh

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MEDIA: Photoshop, SketchUp



Soheil studied Graphic Design at Tehran University of Fine Arts, before turning his attention to illustration, character design and concept art.

"I have had the opportunity to work in many styles," Soheil says, "but I prefer sci-fi and fantasy themes. I mostly use Photoshop for painting or sketching and SketchUp for some 3D models I use as a base for my designs."

Working in everything from film and animation to book and comic illustrations, the Iranian has earned a string of prizes and competition wins. He now works mainly as a concept artist and art director for video games, and cites Simon Bisley, Christian Alzmann and JC Leyendecker among his many and varied influences.

1 GARSHASP TEMPLE OF DRAGON

"This is a painting I did for the video game Garshasp: Temple of The Dragon. In this scene the dragon is being disturbed by Garshasp and his brother, who are attempting to steal the Plate from the dragon's lair."

2 DO NOT DISTURB "An adventurer explores the depths of a cave, where he upsets nature's harmony and years of darkness and solitude."



ARTIST OF THE MONTH

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



ImagineFX August 2014

FXPosé submissions to: fxpose@imaginefx.com

Artist crit

Freelance artist Tony Foti can't help but notice the dynamism in Soheil's work.



"This has a great feeling of intensity. The rhythm Soheil uses throughout the composition brings out the action and moves the eye around in an engaging way."



Tin Salamunic

LOCATION: US

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MEDIA: Photoshop, Manga Studio



Born in Bosnia, part of the former Yugoslavia, nine-year-old Tin moved to Germany with his family just before the outbreak of the civil war. After seven years in Münster, it was on to America where he studied communication arts at the Virginia Commonwealth University.

"I carry a sketchbook everywhere I go," Tin says, "and consider myself a sketchbook artist first and an illustrator second. Some of my biggest influences are Heinrich Kley, Jacques Tardi and Barry Windsor-Smith."

He still resides in Richmond, Virginia, where he creates commercial illustrations for national and international clients.

1 THE WRATH OF KLAHN "I was hired by Sterling Publishing to create a mock-up cover for the Wrath of Klahn crossword puzzle series. The project was nixed halfway through, but I still finished the colouring for myself."

2 JAPANESE ROOFTOPS "I like drawing architecture and in 2008 I spent two weeks exploring Japan and sketching various landmarks. This is a fleshed-out sketch that I refined in Photoshop."

3 MODEL DRAWING "If I'm not working on assignments for clients, I'm sketching everything around me. This is a quick, early morning digital warm-up figure study. I try to squeeze in a sketch each day before tackling bigger projects."





1



2

Bogdan Marica

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MEDIA: Photoshop



"I can't recall the day I started drawing," says Bogdan. "I have just flashes of memories – my brother and me scribbling on the walls and the furniture of our home with coloured pencils. Luckily, our parents encouraged us to pursue an artistic career."

It's a career that's led both Bogdan and his brother Vlad – whose work appears on page 12 – to the door of esteemed Japanese game developer Applibot, where he works as a concept artist and illustrator. Previously he worked at Ubisoft Romania as a texture artist, before stepping up to a concept art role. Bogdan has also worked for Gameloft, CI Games and Fantasy Flight Games.



3

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"If 'Movement' isn't Bogdan's middle name, then it ought to be, on the strength of these images. His heist scene is particularly engaging – one hopes the jangling keys on the thief's belt won't attract anyone's attention..."

Cliff Hope,
Operations Editor

1 BRIGAND EMPRESS "Being obsessed with motion, I try to find dynamic poses for my characters and immersive compositions. This image shows a female Robin Hood type of character stealing the so-called Mask of Invisibility. Wanting to illustrate a thief swinging on a rope, Lara Croft was the next thing that came into my mind. So, yeah, I guess she was a source of inspiration for this piece."

2 THE WARLOCK "A master of the dark arts, the Warlock uses fire spells and summons minions to serve his purposes. So I played with these elements and the overall mood to achieve a burning image."

3 THE PERSIAN ARMY "Another action-packed illustration I did for Legends of the Cryptids. The image captures the very beginning of the battle between two armies. As the main focus, I placed the supreme commander of the Persian army in a dynamic pose, jumping with super-human abilities into the battle."

Images © Applibot

Vlad Marica

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MEDIA: Photoshop



Like his brother Bogdan (see page 11), Vlad graduated with a master's degree in sculpture. But the Romanian says he always knew, deep down, it was digital art he wanted to pursue.

"Even as a child," the Romanian says, "I had a dark edge to my drawings. Then I discovered video games such as Undying, Painkiller and, most important of them all, Diablo II. These games are the reason I wanted a concept art career, and I knew that digital media would be the perfect environment to express myself."

Having worked for video game companies Ubisoft, Gameloft and CI Games, Vlad is currently employed as an illustrator by Japanese games company Applibot.

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"As dark fantasy goes, Vlad's hit the nail right on the head of the spiky beast. His Sewer Demon is a glorious visage that's full of grisly life, and the honourable Samurai figure looks like he takes no nonsense from anyone."

Daniel Vincent,
Art Editor



© Applibot

1 SEWER DEMON "A former swamp creature who dwells in the sewer of a great city. Evolved to hunt and slice his pray, he uses strong jaws to squeeze flesh then drain the blood with his many, thin tongues. The Sewer Demon inflicts terror into the hearts of the citizens."

2 ASMODIAN "The Elite champion of Hell waiting at the bottom of the pit for the opening of the Gates of Barathrum. He sacrificed his wings for the opening of the Gates of Mammon, 12 blades forged in the heart of Hell from pure obsidian and with the power to cut through angelic auras."

3 SHAMASH NINJA "I tried to capture the dynamic movement, grace and precision of a technologically enhanced ninja, a master in almost every known combat and sword technique. He controls drones equipped with whip swords, giving him long-range control over his surroundings."

4 SCI-FI SAMURAI "A samurai who moves at amazing speed. The camera gives his victim's perspective, looking into his eyes as he delivers the final strike. The image distorts as the victim loses consciousness."



© Applibot



© Applibot



+ Carl Ellis

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MEDIA: Photoshop



Carl has a straightforward outlook on art and why he feels compelled to create things. "Whether it's using a cheap HB pencil or a tablet enabling me to paint without any limitations," he says, "I simply like drawing and painting things - and always have."

Norwich-based Carl is particularly interested in creating characters, landscapes and environments, and has a diverse portfolio that proves he's equally adept in each of these areas.

"Bringing worlds, or portions of worlds to life, is my passion," the artist says. "Four years of serious digital painting have passed, and I intend to never stop."

1



2



IMAGINEFX CRIT



"I like Carl's philosophy on art: it's just exciting making things, especially when starting from scratch. *Burning Beauty* is a particular favourite. As a standalone portrait it'd be great, but added flourishes really set it off."

Gary Evans,
Staff Writer

1 LIFE ENCOUNTERS "An alien world depicting the importance of organic life-forms. Here, some beings - alien to the planet itself - have set up a campsite to study this peculiar tree. Note that the structure in the background indicates they've been around for some time now."

2 BURNING BEAUTY "The 'piercing factor' was what I wanted to go for in this piece, so I really emphasised the blue in her eyes and made them glow towards the bottom half. Note the subtle but striking markings, which add story."

Ekaterina Pushkarova

LOCATION: Bulgaria

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WEB: <http://ifxm.ag/epushk>

MEDIA: Maya, ZBrush, Photoshop, Painter, TopoGun



As a freelance illustrator, Ekaterina has contributed to cult trading card game Order & Chaos Duels, while her credits as a digital artist include special effects work on movies such as Righteous Kill and Conan the Barbarian.

"If you're able to see the worth in a piece of artwork, you can learn from it. Fleeting popularity is insignificant, but the things we create can last forever and inspire those who come after us."

Ekaterina has picked up a string of awards for her art, including a 3DTotal and CGArena excellence awards.

1



1 THE FRAGILE WORLD OF A GEISHA

"The inner life of a geisha, hidden behind thousands of different masks, charming moves and perfect clothing. But what's inside her soul? Is she crying or is she falling in love? I guess no one will ever know."

2 WOULD YOU PLAY WITH ME, MISTER?

"'Oh, wonderful! He has a weapon!' 'Hey, mister, play with me for a while?' Death's jaw drops and claps. 'Oh... get it done already!' mumbles the old man."

3 OLLIE SHUTEYE AND THE SPOOKY

"Softly, softly, Ollie Shuteye tells the Spooky a story about a distant land, where children live. 'Oh really? The children do exist?' said the Spooky. 'I though they came in our dreams, to frighten us when we are bad.'"

2



3



🇹🇷 **Memed Ozen**

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MEDIA: Photoshop



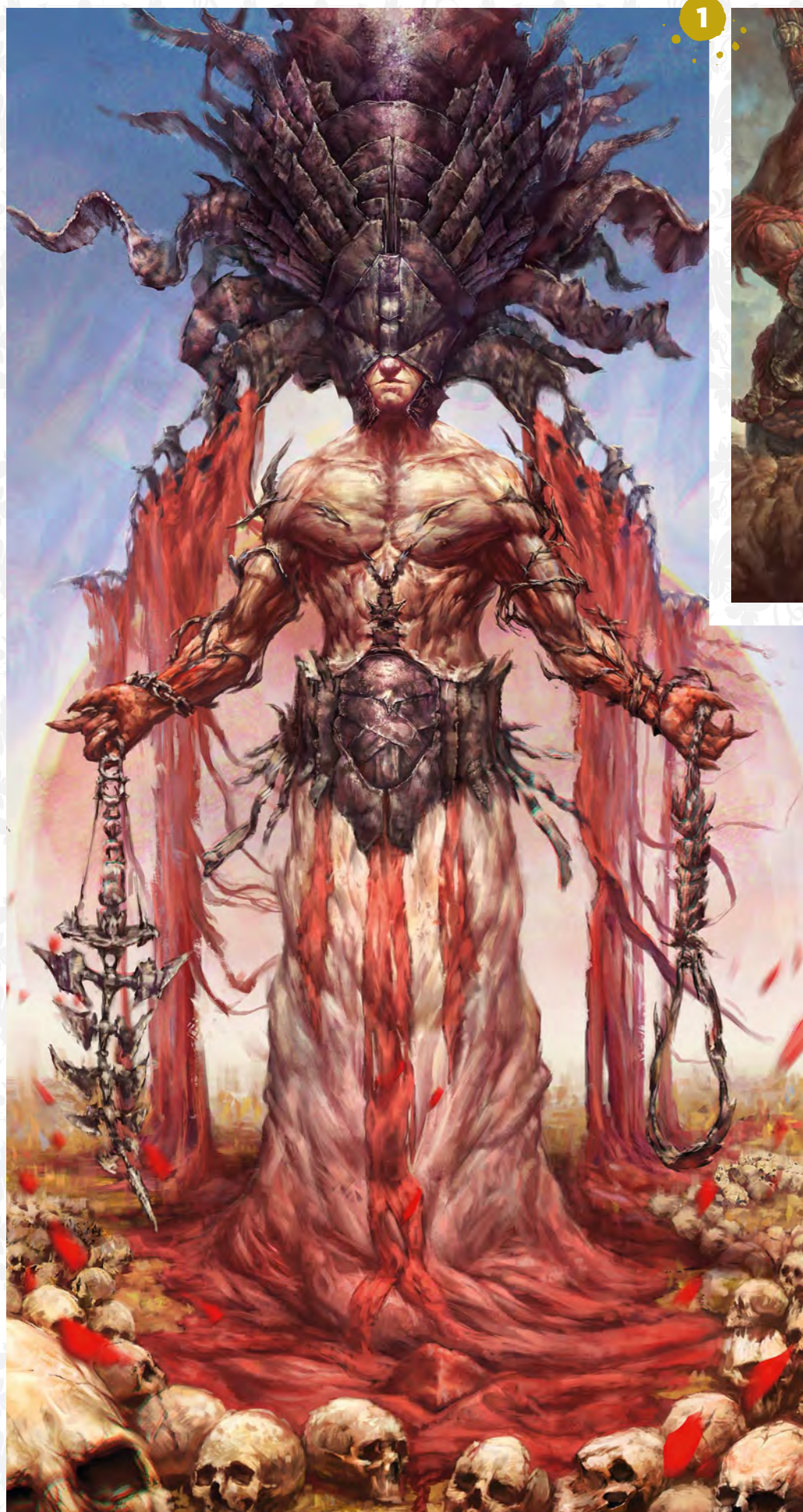
Istanbul-based artist Memed separates his career into three specific areas. He's a freelance illustrator working for a string of big-name clients, including ongoing projects for developer Riot Games. He works extensively on comic book covers and had chalked up no less than 100 so far. And it's in comics where he envisages his future.

"I'm focused mainly on my own graphic-novel projects," Memed says.

"The one I'm working on is called Seyyah. But there are lots of stories I want to tell, and eventually I would like to realise them all."

1 THREE SISTERS "An illustration I did for my graphic-novel project Seyyah - unusual stories about an unusual traveller - which is still in progress."

1



1



2

Mark Akopov

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MEDIA: Photoshop, 3ds Max, ZBrush



Mark is a Moscow-based artist studying at the Russian State University of Cinematography. He's particularly inspired not

only by film, but literature and the work of artists Ruan Jia, Sergey Kolesov, Maxim Verehin, Oleg Vdovenko and George Redreov.

"I paint in a realistic style," says Mark. "I worked as a modeller and animator for short films while at university."

As well as working as a freelance artist and illustrator, Mark has ongoing video game projects and is busy creating a new short, *As They Continue to Fall*, with director Nikhil Bhagat.

1 EXECUTIONER "My graphic tablet was out of action for a while and this work helped me to get back in line. This art was inspired by the songs of the band Digimortal and published in the digital edition of *Render Magazine*."

2 BARBARIAN HUNTER "I drew inspiration for this piece from the works of Fenghua Zhong and Sergey Kolesov. I wanted to paint a fantasy artwork with a humorous touch and without working on the details too much. I think I succeeded."

Pei Gong

LOCATION: UAE

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EMAIL: 55017000@qq.com

MEDIA: Photoshop



Pei is a concept artist currently working in Dubai. But it's images from the artist's native China that characterise his art: from armour and weaponry, to scenery and architecture. "I'm always looking to expand my skill set and try new things," says Pei. "I like sketching because it can help record and communicate your ideas quickly."

The artist prizes discipline above all other attributes, and compares his training to that of a martial artist. "For me, the most important thing is to keep practising my drawing skill. Art is like kung fu: it's a long path to excellence."

1 WEST LAKE "This is a calm lake surrounding a quiet and mysterious landscape garden."

2 STAR CITY "Concept art for Unearthly Challenge III. The theme is the star and the idea is from the Celestial Globe, part of Chinese culture."

3 KUNGFU "Here we see rebels surrounding the hero. The fight will kick off at any moment."





IMAGINEFX CRIT



"An environment should convey a sense of space and a narrative. Pei gets this done with great depth, an assured POV, and subtle use of colour. Then there's his eye for detail! These are places you want to spend time investigating."

Beren Neale,
Digital Editor



3

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ARTIST NEWS, SOFTWARE & EVENTS ImagineNation

AT THE CORE OF THE FANTASY ART COMMUNITY



The backlighting of horror B-movies is something that Dave Rapoza aims to channel in his own art.

B-MOVIES AND BEYOND

Horror show On the cheap and off the cuff: how low-budget horrors inspired a generation of artists

When country boy Duane Bradley arrives in New York City and checks into a down-at-heel hotel, its resident boozers, hookers and wrongdoers all ask the same question: what's in the basket?

Duane is unusually protective of his large wicker basket; he talks to it, feeds it with food. It contains, it transpires, his small, severely disfigured, brother Belial. The pair, Siamese twins separated against their will, are now bent on revenge against the doctors who carried out the procedure.

The plan goes awry when the brothers find themselves locked in a love triangle with the doctors' comely receptionist. The film is 1982's *Basket Case*. Its plot is, at best, shaky – like the acting. It's cheap and crude, fast and furious. And very, very bloody. It contains all the key elements of the quintessential 80s B-movie. It's notable for another reason: its artwork.



"The poster has no shame, coyness or embarrassment," says **Graham Humphreys**. "It recognises no boundaries in

taste, palette or subject. It's free of taboo, censorship and dignity. And it demands to be seen."

Graham – whom one critic has described as "the last great name among Britain's film poster artists" – worked on UK campaigns for *Basket Case*, *The Evil Dead*, *A Nightmare On Elm Street* and *Frankenhooker*. The short deadlines and shorter budgets proved invaluable training for a fledgling artist. Graham says there's much to be learned from B-movies' DIY ethos.

WORKING WITHOUT RESTRICTION

"B-movie posters offer no time to wallow in technique. I've learned to work fast. When I begin I imagine what would interest me personally: from basic imagery and outside referencing – subliminal or otherwise – to colour palette and composition.

"I learned to work without restriction. B-movies and B-movie art were the voice of revolution and dissent, sticking a finger up at authority, convention, politics and religion. Go with your impulses and refuse to



The *Basket Case* film poster was created by Graham Humphreys, who says it had, "no shame, coyness or embarrassment".

© 1987 Palace Pictures. All rights reserved.



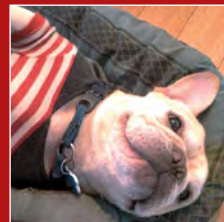
GOODBYE TO GIGER

The death of HR Giger in May 2014 meant the world lost one of its most innovative artists. We celebrate his often disturbing, always distinctive body of work. **Page 24**



A CHANCE ENCOUNTER

Aly Fell attended Illustration Master Class looking for cover work. He ended up creating the art for a six-part comic series from Dark Horse. Nicely done, Aly! **Page 27**



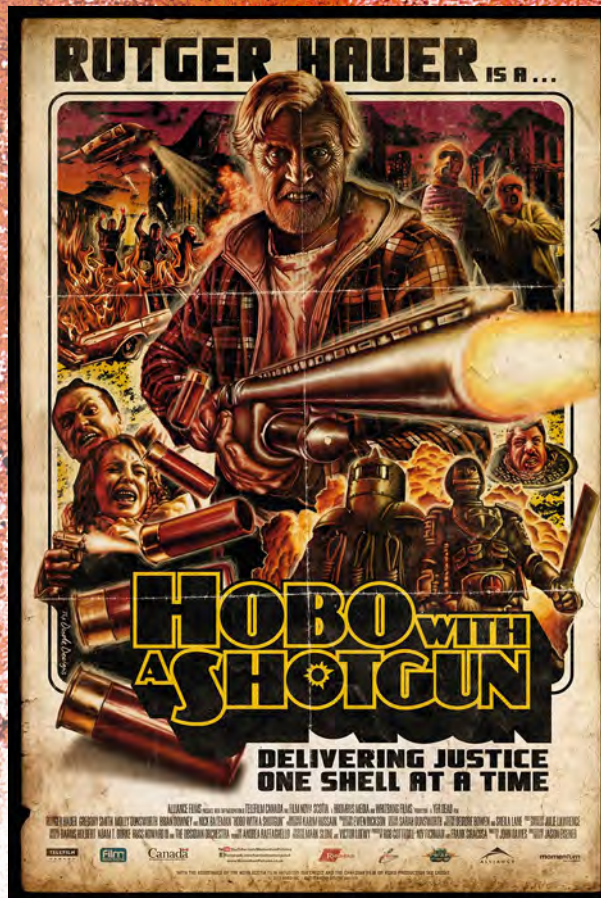
DOG TIRED BUT HAPPY

This is Loki. Not the Nordic god of mischief sporting a new look, but Camilla d'Errico's studio mascot, who helps to bring her workplace to life. **Page 28**



The poster art for *The Nightmare on Elm Street* and its sequel were painted by Graham Humphreys.

TM and © New Line Productions, Inc. 2004. Courtesy of Warner Bros. Entertainment, Inc.



© 2011 Alliance Films

conform. Look at the colours, see how playful the images are – exaggerate. If something needs to be big, make it massive. If it's a violent, hose it in blood. If it's sexual, add necrophilia."

B-movies were born out of the Great Depression. When attendances dropped and theatres began to fold, proprietors had to be creative. The most successful marketing technique proved to be the double header.

Traditionally created off the cuff and on the cheap, B-movies sat at the bottom of the bill in a double or even triple header of

“If something needs to be big, make it massive. If it's a violent, hose it in blood. If it's sexual, add necrophilia”

feature films. They were warm-up act for their big-budget counterparts. Many found their perfect setting when the popularity of drive-in theatres peaked in the 50s, 60s and 70s, and later enjoyed a resurgence on VHS. Horror, sci-fi, suspense, exploitation: these are the staple B-movie genres. Plots were often formulaic, the dialogue as hammy as its delivery. But they had a unique look and feel, a certain charm.

Directors Robert Rodriguez and Quentin Tarantino are vocal champions of the B-movie. Graham now works closely with Creative Partnership, the central London-

Tom Hodge got the job of creating *Hobo with a Shotgun*'s poster art simply by emailing the film's director.

based film and production company that worked on the Rodriguez and Tarantino collaboration *From Dusk till Dawn* – which wears its B-movie influences on its blood-soaked sleeve. *Grindhouse* – 2007's double header that featured *Planet Terror* and *Death Proof* – is the pair's most obvious tribute to exploitation film.

Ahead of the launch of the films, they held a competition to create a fake trailer. *Hobo with a Shotgun*, directed by Jason Eisener, won and was eventually developed into a full-length feature. Artist Tom Hodge sent Jason a message saying he'd like to contribute artwork and Jason accepted.

EXCITING THE INNER CHILD



"For me," Tom says, "it's all about the 80s VHS video art: moustachioed muscled men, buxom beauties, big explosions, phallic guns and nightmare-inducing monsters. It's an unabashed creativity in design. The perfect B-movie art is a descriptive form that tells a story about the film – often better than the film does. It should excite your inner child."

Freelance illustrator Tom, known as The Dude Designs, aims to bring back the

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

JUSTIN FIELDS

How B-movies art influenced his work in films and games

What comes to mind when you think of B-movie art?

Undeniably the art of Drew Struzan and Graham Humphreys comes to mind when thinking about B-movies. Films such as *Big Trouble in Little China*, *Mad Max* – those posters were great and gave you a glimpse into what was in store for you. I always loved the poster for *Fright Night* as well. It's stunning work.

What does the perfect B-movie poster look like?

The perfect poster should be well executed, not just procedural. *Oblivion* was an amazing poster that was recently done. But, mostly, posters these days lack the imagination and fun that the 80s brought. My first job was in the movie theatre: my co-workers and I would constantly collect them and critique posters. Posters today don't have as much love put into them. Candykiller is an artist I follow and he's defiantly bringing some of the old magic back with his style (www.candykiller.com).

What can artists today learn from those posters?

Films have had such a strong hold over me since I was 12. Growing up in that era has not only influenced my art, it made me want to help create worlds that people can escape to. That element of escapism is important. Movie posters always seemed larger than life, with amazing composition and bold colours. They sucked you into their world. So, composition, imagination and colour theory are central. Tease the audience without giving everything away. It's a fine line when it's been done before. But let's do it again and do it better.



Justin 'Goby' Fields is a concept artist, illustrator and graphic designer who works in the film and video games industries.

www.justinfields.com

➤➤ "lost magic of film poster and video cover art". While he has a "more is more" approach to art, he stresses the importance of composition. Tom leads the viewer's eye around his designs so they can absorb – but aren't overwhelmed – by its intricacies. "If the inner child squeals and you're entertained, you're on the right track."

THE LO-FI LOOK AND FEEL

B-movies were the training ground for movie men on both sides of the camera, and the artists who provided the promotional material. Up until the 1950s, major studios owned theatre chains and so set up specific B-units to create low-billing movies to maximise profits. When studios were no longer allowed a monopoly on theatres, the B-units disappeared. The term B-movie began to be applied to any cheap, lo-fi film.

Dave Rapoza never actively aims for a B-movie poster feel in his work, but along

“The horror movie posters look like people had a lot of fun designing them. I think that style is due a comeback”

with 90s video game advertising, he feels it's always subtly there. "There's this one



amazing scene in The Video Dead," says Dave, "where this zombie's head is coming up through a TV screen lying on the floor. There's mist

everywhere and the light from the TV underlights him. This is what inspires me most about horror B-movies: the lighting effects, the hard saturated backlights."

If artists can learn anything from 80s B-movie art, Dave says, it's that art can have an element of irreverence to it. "There's something about it just accepting how dumb the idea is, but taking it so seriously with the rendered artwork. The hand-

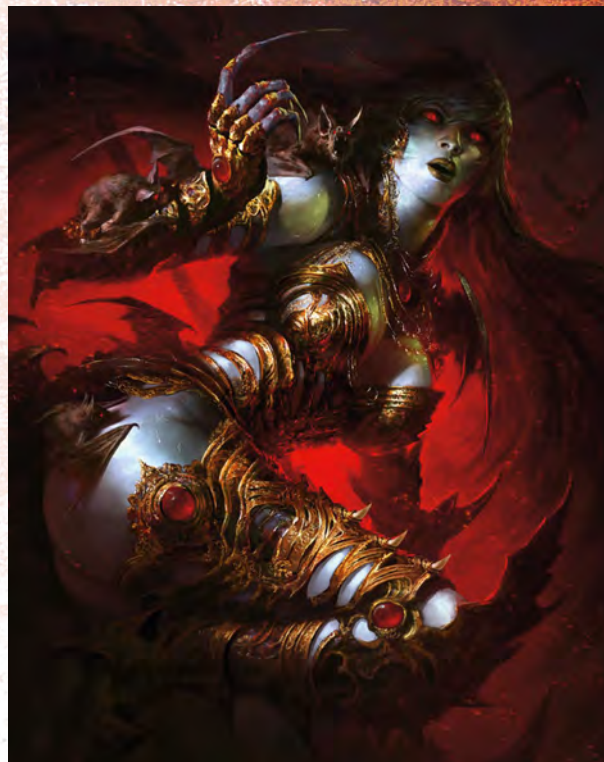


Tommy Lee Edwards drew Vandroid the comic, which was based on the b-movie that never was.

Art by Tom Hodge for this year's Wolf Cop, who wants to bring back "the lost magic of the poster".



© CineCoup Media Inc. 2014

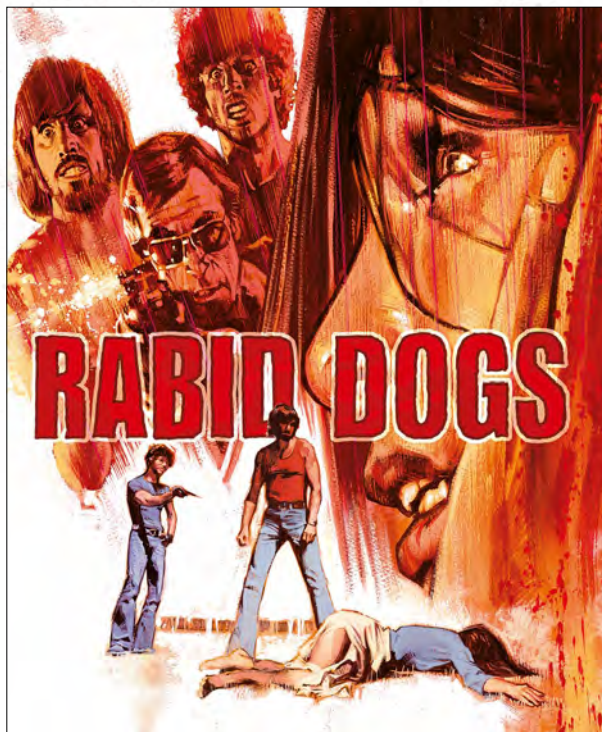


Dave Rapoza is a fan of depicting "simple, direct concepts" in his fantasy art.

Painted horror movie posters really pull me in: simple, direct concepts that reminded me of comic covers. They all look like people had a lot of fun designing them. I think that style is due a comeback."

B-movies in the 50s were concerned with alien invasions and atomic bombs. The 60s looked to the moon. The 70s offered up exploitation films – Blaxploitation (initially targeting an African-American audience) and Bruceploitation (starring Bruce Lee look-alike actors) were among its subgenres. In the 80s, production costs rose for bigger

Graham Humphreys painted the cover art for the 2013 rerelease of Rabid Dogs, which originally came out in 1998.



films, making it harder for B-movies to reach the big screen. But VHS helped secure a cult, almost underground, following. And B-movies made at this time seemed to revel in their new status.

OUT OF THE ASHES

Vandroid is a legend in B-movie circles earning cult status as the greatest film that never was. In 1984, Palm Springs Entertainment studios burned to the ground, taking with it any chance of its release. That was until artist Tommy Lee Edwards helped it rise from the ashes. He has created a Dark Horse comic-book series based on the original screenplay.

For Tommy, B-movie artwork was often better than the movies themselves and they do a better job of selling the film than most big-budget studio posters. The illustrations often attempted to give a taste of the story – something, along with an innate sense of child-like wonder, that's absent from today's promo material. "The posters typically have that little something that doesn't quite fit,"



says Tommy, "a weird mix of genres. A barbarian in outer space, or the hero's giant hand on the Low Blow poster.

There's often fun sex appeal, too, such as Bob McGinnis' Barbarella poster.

"I continue to surround myself with that stuff because it's a constant source of inspiration that keeps me close to my childhood roots. To make comics, animated films and write stories, I have to remember being a kid. You've got an uninhibited creativity as a kid. No idea is too silly and you don't have to please anybody but yourself. That's the spirit of B-movies."



At START Eduardo Peña, who painted the above, will present an industry insider's view of the concept art process.

Under starter's orders

Island life A new Singapore event sees artists and illustrators from comics, cinema and video games come together to share ideas

Spread over three days, hosting nine speakers and over 500 attendees, START is Asia's first digital design festival.

The event, organised by art college 3dsense Media School, brings together artists and illustrators from the worlds of comics, cinema and video games to share their ideas and inspirations in Singapore.

"It's not about who is more successful,"

Stanley 'Artgerm' Lau says, "nor who is more talented. But to inspire a new generation of artists in an authentic manner."



That said, Stanley is one of Singapore's most successful

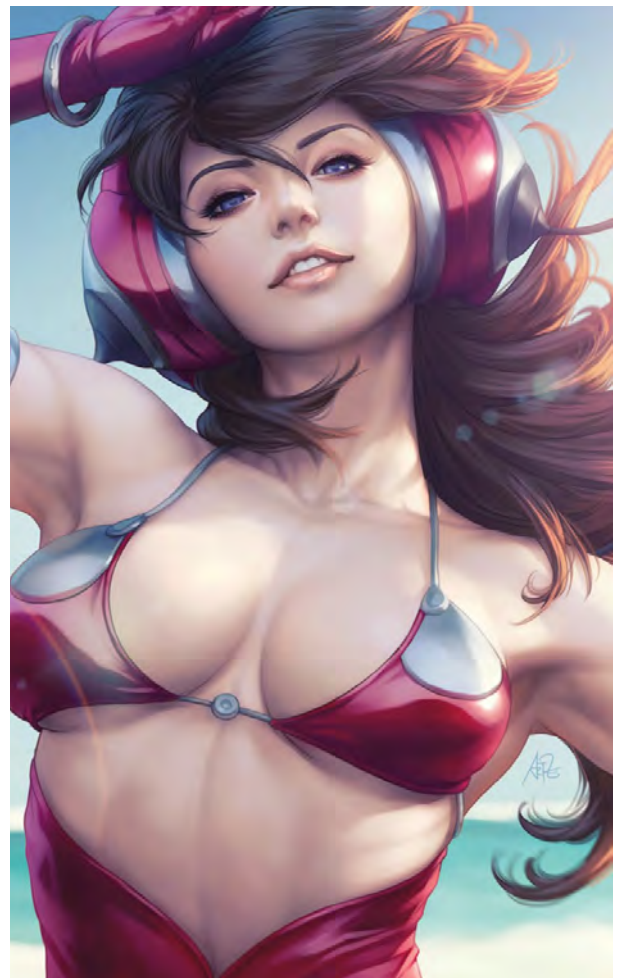
digital artists, having worked on AAA games and blockbuster films. "I'll be taking a tongue-in-cheek look at the importance of building a fan base and a brand," he says. "I'll also talk about fan art and how it can facilitate an artist's career. For my masterclass, I'll be explaining how I create my attractive female artworks and make them come alive."

Chino Rino Visual Lab co-founder Eduardo Peña is also on the bill. He'll be explaining what concept artists do - from project conception to completion.


START runs between 26 and 28 June. Find out more at www.startevent.sg.



Stanley, who painted this image, wants START to "inspire a new generation of artists in an authentic manner."



This artwork, featuring Princess Peach, is the cover of Stanley's Kickstarter-funded, debut art book, due to be published later this year.



Giger's dark visions are unmistakable, particularly in his disturbing blending of the organic and the mechanical.

Dark night falls

An iconoclast to the end, HR Giger changed the industry he worked in forever with his dark arts and unapologetic visions. We pay tribute to the artist.

Alien director Ridley Scott was inspired by Giger's Necronomicon.



Photo © Annie Bertram



When Hans "Ruedi" Giger died from a fall at his Zurich home on 12 May, aged 74, the world lost a visionary who had made a unique impact on popular culture.

Giger won an Oscar in 1980 for his work, including his xenomorph design, for Ridley Scott's film *Alien*. Yet his art influenced more than Hollywood, and spread into the worlds of interior design, sculpture and tattoo art.

"For me," says film concept artist Wayne Haag, "HR Giger was the perfect example of an artist being true to their vision. And that vision was so unique, so strong, that no amount of design-by-committee employed by the film industry could dilute it. His work remained intact from concept to screen."

BEGINNINGS

Born in 1940 in Chur, Switzerland, Giger studied architecture and industrial design in Zurich. He graduated in 1970, and soon began producing art that featured dreams, nightmares, naked desires and the cold brutality of machines. His 'biomechanic' paintings stand at the crossroads of organic matter and mechanics.

"Many of his ink and airbrush works just stick in your head," says comic artist Andy Brase, also familiar with depicting the darker side of things. "Giger had such an original style and voice through all of his art, that it's hard not to instantly recognise his designs."

It was the ability of this art to sear itself into people's minds that led to his most famous work. A Spanish friend of his was at the surrealist painter Salvador Dalí's house and brought some of Giger's work. An impressed Dalí passed it on to filmmaker Alexandro Jodorowsky, which led, in 1975, to Giger creating concepts for the filmmaker's

“His vision was so unique, so strong, the industry could not dilute it. It remained intact from concept to screen”

doomed version of Frank Herbert's grand sci-fi novel *Dune*.

As the production of *Dune* collapsed, scriptwriter Dan O'Bannon headed back to Los Angeles. Giger's startling visions stuck in his mind, and he called upon them when he started writing his next project – *Alien*.

PURE MOVIE MONSTER

Looking at Giger's 1977 art book *The Necronomicon*, it's amazing to think that these sensual yet hideous works could ever make their author a world-famous artist. But it was exactly these images that inspired director Ridley Scott to fly to Giger's Zurich home and convince the artist to work on *Alien*. The result is one of the most iconic movie monsters of all time.

Yet even if Giger had never worked on *Alien*, his art would still have been seen by millions of people. His art has adorned Emerson, Lake and Palmer's *Brain Salad Surgery* (1973), Debbie Harry's LP *KooKoo* (1981), and Dead Kennedys' *Frankenchrist* (1985). Two bars bear his interior design in Gruyères and Chur, Switzerland, myriad tattoos have been inspired by his work, and he created many canvases in airbrush and then later in pastels.

People he worked with also remember HR Giger the man. "He was a real artist and great eccentric," director Ridley Scott told *Time* magazine, "a true original. But above all, he was a really nice man."

GIGER ON GIGER MEETING THE MASTER

In July 2008 ImagineFX spoke to HR Giger about Alien and more...

Early influences...

"When I was a kid, there was a mummy in the museum in Chur that fascinated me. It wasn't in a very good state – there wasn't much flesh, so the bony structure seemed stronger. It fascinated me..."

Trapped in dreams...

"The strongest thing in my work, I think, is the claustrophobic stuff. I still sometimes have shitty dreams with that in... being inside rooms that are like graves, a stone grave, a tomb. That's more important to me than the erotic stuff."

Trusting his gut...

"In the beginning I had no idea what I was doing. I just did some clouds or whatever, and then I would make an eye or something. It just came, you know, from the belly."

Painting big...

"Some of them were very big. The bigger ones could be 2x2.4m. That was important to me somehow, because at that size you're surrounded by the image. I liked to say these works went from one ear to the other! The size makes them more impressive."



Alien audience...

"When I worked on *Alien*, I was in Shepperton Studios for about seven months. If you want to do something effective, then you have to travel and work with the people making the film. If you work long-distance, it's really not possible to get a good result."

Retirement in 2008...

"It might sound very strange that an artist can say he's retired, but just because I'm not doing any more paintings, it doesn't mean that I'm not thinking about things. I still write my diaries and my dream book, where I record my dreams. And drawings too, sometimes. But now I'm mostly concentrating on sculptures and overseeing my bar and museum."

FRESH PAINT

Your art news that's grabbed our attention



Akin Adekile
@AkinAdekile

"Landscape study
#landscape #q8art
#q8artists #painting
#photostudy #digitalart"
<http://ifxm.ag/fp-Adekile>



Kuvshinov Ilya
@KR0NPR1NZ

"A fast #gunkanjima study."
<http://ifxm.ag/fp-Ilya>



Alex Bond
@StudioBond

"Quick thumbnail study of the film Alien in honour of HR Giger. RIP."
<http://ifxm.ag/fp-Bond>



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



Hatboy
by Vaughn Pinpin



Fantasy talk Explaining the inexplicable

"The debonair fox and his fanciful monocle said, 'Come help my friend whose bulbous head is stuck in a tree hole'"

Pesky bulbous heads and fanciful monocles, eh? The bane of our lives too. Tsk. More on page 50

Little shop of horrors

Freak show Greg Staples' 2014 World Horror Con highlights



Illustrator and comic artist **Greg Staples** was one of the guests of honour at this year's four-day World Horror convention in Portland, Oregon, which took place last month.

Greg's well known for his work on 2000 AD's Judge Dredd, as well as World of Warcraft and Magic: The Gathering, and he was thrilled to be part of such a unique event. "It's important," he says, "for artists to represent our field in all its diversity, to keep illustration fresh in people's minds."

"There were many highlights. But for me the biggest was being among such a distinguished line-up of horror writers. I also enjoyed talking to Victoria Price, daughter of Vincent Price, about her father's movies."



Here are two of Greg's atmospheric artworks from The Horror Stories of Robert E Howard.



© Robert E Howard Properties Inc.

Greg has worked extensively in the horror genre, including illustrating The Horror Stories of Robert E Howard, and creating art for film and television projects such as World War Z, Solomon Kane and BBC's The Fades. But he feels it's important to get out the studio from time to time.

"I just enjoy meeting new and exciting people, whether they're fans or people I'm working with in the industry."

For more information about World Horror Con visit www.worldhorror2014.org. To see more of Greg's artwork, please visit www.gregstaples.co.uk.

Aly Fell's new six-part comic series, published by Dark Horse Comics, is set in the 16th century.



© Dark Horse Comics

From the shadows

Comic dream How a chance meet led to a series deal for Aly Fell



Aly Fell met Dark Horse Comics editor-in-chief Scott Allie at the week-long Illustration Master Class in Amherst, Massachusetts. So

impressed was Scott with Aly's work that he snapped it up as a six-part comic series.

"I'd taken a rough draft of *The Shadow Glass* along with the intention of working on a cover idea," Aly says. "Scott read a couple of pages and became interested. When I returned to the UK I sent him the whole thing and we started talking about it more seriously. By the end of the summer Dark Horse had made a firm offer. I kept thinking it must be a dream and I'd wake up."

The Shadow Glass is the story, Aly explains, of a girl looking for an answer to the time-honoured question: who am I? She just happens to live in the 16th century.

Aly was also asked to produce a convention-special cover from the comic book version of *Buffy: The Vampire Slayer*, with the reverse featuring a teaser for *The Shadow Glass*. The deadline was tight, but it was an opportunity too good to miss.

"I had two days to do it," the English artist says. "Tips for short deadlines? Drink lots of coffee. Some good music helps to get you in the zone. Before you know it the sun is rising to the sound of blackbirds twittering."

To see more of Aly's art take a look at www.darkkrising.co.uk.



© Dark Horse Comics

Aly produced a convention-special cover from the comic book version of *Buffy: The Vampire Slayer*.



I get caught up in my paintings and don't realise an entire day has passed. My husband's texts and phone calls are really the only thing that snaps me out of my trance.

Other artists, nature and photography inspire me, but I'm very careful not to copy any of these images. This is just a beautiful collage I like to look at.



I have filing cabinets to keep my drawings organised. In each of the drawers I have pages and illustrations of various old and current projects. There's also an entire drawer full of imagery that I've collected from magazines or prints.

Camilla d'Errico

Happy place We drop in on d'Errico Studios, in Gastown, Vancouver, to see what makes the Canadian artist tick



My studio is my sanctuary. I have an incredible corner space that has water and mountain views. I look out on to North Vancouver and watch the cruise ships sail by and dogs playing in the park across the street.

When inspiration hits, I'm a slave to it. I'd be the hardest person to stalk, because I keep such strange hours. Some days I arrive before most people have woken up, often leaving long after they're asleep.

Summer or winter, I'm always sipping tea when I work. It's part of my routine. I go

through emails and organise my projects and appearance schedule with my assistant. I love speaking to fans online. It's inspirational to read people's comments and see what other artists are posting. The rest of my day is spent working: drawing or painting, based on how I'm feeling that day.

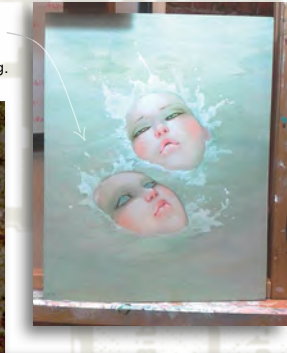
I never force creativity, unless I'm on deadline. Some weeks all I want to do is paint. Then I'll be in a mad rush to complete a drawing project, pulling a few all-nighters to make my deadline. If I could focus my mind to be creative when I wanted it to, it'd be a lot less chaotic.

Speaking of chaotic, my work space is usually quite messy. I often have books everywhere, drawings and reference scattered on my desk. It's both unnerving and energising. Images pop into my head when I'm jogging or having a coffee with friends and I immediately sketch them out when I get back. A lot of my ideas are rubbish, so I don't always follow through. The story appears to me as I create it. It's a very mysterious process. Even to me.

Camilla is a Canadian comic book illustrator, painter and visual artist. To see more visit www.camilladerrico.com.

Artist news, software & events

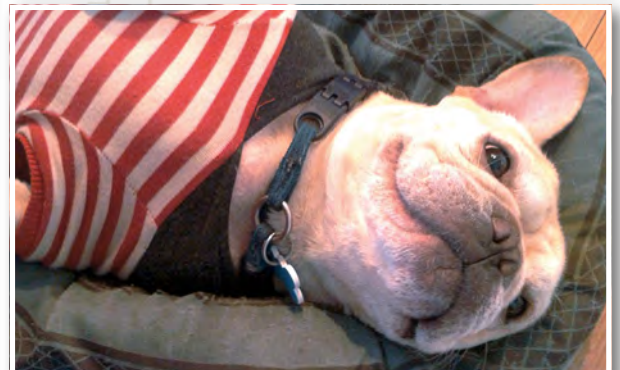
I paint on birch plywood panels, purchased from my local art supply store. I sand them down for a smoother surface then sketch with watercolour pencils and start my painting.



Holbein DUO are amazing oil paints that blend with water, so I can create washes and impastos at the same time. I can also blend them with acrylics, for painting solid colours that have to dry quickly.



I love art books and manga. I keep a small part of my collection at my studio and I switch out the books as I buy more or when I revisit certain ones for inspiration.



The best part of my work space is my studio mate, my little French bulldog Loki. He's my companion and source of endless entertainment. Without him I'm sure that my work place would feel much less alive.

Letters

YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS



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



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The full monty

I'm an avid subscriber of ImagineFX, but I remain shy about submitting any of my own drawings, despite getting recurrent encouragement to do so.

Anyway, I write because I have two requests. Is there any possibility of featuring Ray Caesar's art? And secondly, I'm aware some digital back issues of ImagineFX can be accessed through Zinio, but I desperately want the full set from conception. Is that possible somehow?

Ray Galactica, via email

Claire replies Hello Ray, nice to hear from you. Firstly, Ray Caesar – he's wonderful isn't he? – has been in the magazine already. Way back in issue 16! It might be worth speaking with him again. As for digital editions, Zinio simply won't take our older editions, so what is there is all that's available I'm afraid. Our magazine goes way back to 2006 (I started on issue 3!) and the largest collection of back issues is only available through Apple Newsstand. Sorry about that.

Love the Core Skills!

In recent issues of ImagineFX I discovered the SketchUp tutorial and I found it very useful. I had wanted to use SketchUp as a base for my digital illustrations, but didn't

Reader Ray wants us to feature namesake Ray Caesar (who appeared in issue 16 of ImagineFX). Who do you want us to feature? Let us know!



DID YOU MISS ISSUE 110?
See page 49 for details on how to get hold of it.



Mark Roosien's SketchUp Core Skills are popular. What software do you want us to feature in Core Skills next?

know how to use it properly. So I want to thank you ImagineFX for launching the Core Skills section!

Patricia Heffler, via email

Claire replies Patricia, we love these core skills too. Mark Roosien has done a great job in going back to basics with SketchUp. There's more to come, too!

Android app workshops

The art apps available on Android devices get a lot of disrespect. I think they are actually pretty good. I know everyone is awaiting the release of ArtRage for Android, but the ArtRage team is in no rush. As such I would greatly appreciate a few tutorial articles on the available apps for Android: LayerPaint HD, Infinite Painter, Clover Paint or ArtFlow.

All of these apps have their pros and cons. Despite how one feels about the quality of these apps, they are what's available on the Android platforms currently and I think it would be instructive to see some information about their use.

Not everyone has, or wants to have, an iPad, no matter how much people gush about it and its apps. I recall there were immediate articles about the first few art apps released for the iPhone. Sadly, however, I don't recall seeing anything for even the first few minor apps when the Galaxy Note first appeared, a device I think is superior to the much smaller and non-pressure sensitive iPhone.

LeShan Jones, via email

Claire replies Hello LeShan. We're not biased towards Apple products. We simply have to think about which software apps are being used by our readers. While there are certainly more Android users, this doesn't translate into users of Android apps. I suspect that's why ArtRage has been in no rush to create an Android version of ArtRage. The Galaxy Note has, though, helped bring about a rise in popularity of the Android tablet. So if I feel a high proportion of our readers are using Android art software, I'll provide workshops for them. What do other readers think of this? Please email in and let me know...



Our star letter writer wins a dA Premium Membership!

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- Customise your profile page
- Receive exclusive discounts & offers
- And more!

Pencil mistakes

I love your magazine. However, in the June 2014 Batman issue I noticed some incorrect art credits. Page 44's Haunting was pencilled and inked by Neal Adams (not Novick and Giordano). For page 46's Watching the Detective (from left to right), the first cover is actually pencils and inks by Jim Aparo. The middle cover should be pencils by Marshall Rogers, inks by Terry Austin. The third is correct (Norm Breyfogle). In the main story, under Money Talks (also p46); in issue #183 of Batman, both stories were pencilled by Shelley Moldoff (not Carmine Infantino), inks by Joe Giella (as printed).

Sorry to point these out, but I just couldn't let this go without some comment. Anyway, keep up the good work with ImagineFX.

Paul Wing, Melbourne, Australia

Claire replies Thanks for getting in touch Paul. Firstly Haunting. We have the comic here and the art credit is Irv Novick and Dick Giordano – there's no credit for Neal Adams. Did DC get it wrong, perhaps? You are right about p46 though – our mistake. In the third instance, we credited the cover artist and inker rather than the internal artist, who was indeed Moldoff. We focused on cover artists as they're the images people tend to remember.

We try very hard to correctly credit artists, but we are only human and do get things wrong. Apologies.



Our Batman feature in issue 109, contained a few mistakes, but was still a cracking good read!

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Please note: Resource files are now available from issue 85 onwards.

August 2014 ImagineFX



ImagineFX Back Issues

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previous editions are available
for you to download today!

Issue 110 July 2014

Find out why so many artists, including John Howe, Lorland Chen and Brom, are attracted to illustrating stories that have passed down the centuries. We explore the comic art of French artist Claire Wendling, Cynthia Sheppard brings a Greek goddess to life, and Tran Nguyen presents her take on the classic narrative of a damsel in distress.



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Issue 109 June 2014

On Batman's 75th anniversary, we look at the dark art of Gotham's infamous vigilante, with imagery from Jock, Frank Miller, Neal Adams and more, while DC Comics' Ken Lashley creates our cover. We also explore Simone Bianchi's sketchbook, draw a Wolverine fight scene and find out how a Fables cover is painted.



Issue 108 May 2014

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



Issue 107 April 2014

By adding in beautifully detailed Taiwanese aboriginal costumes, cover artist Han-Yuan Yu has given his manga art a distinct look. Christopher Moeller paints comics in a traditional way, Serge Kolesov depicts a mermaid from a new perspective, and Wayne Reynolds tells us how he turned a boring art job into something fun!



Issue 106 March 2014

Celebrating the power of book illustration, we speak to Cory Godbey about his ethereal art and to Tony DiTerlizzi about his motion picture-inspiring art. Cory and Tony give us tutorials, too, on creature design and book covers, respectively. There's a studio profile on Tor Books, and a look at Brian Froud's latest work.



CATCH UP ON WHAT YOU'VE MISSED!



Issue 105

February 2014

We talk to the artists behind some of the most beautiful female paintings in the universe in our pin-up special - from a sassy roller-girl covergirl to amazing art from Adam Hughes, Serge Biraault and Sorayama. Elsewhere, we delve into the world of tattoo art, and give advice on artist's block and softening your painting style.



Issue 104

January 2014

This month's artists will help you push your painting skills into untapped areas, with advice on creating art from smoke brushes, developing your artistic voice, plus our traditional art workshop on painting a frog princess! Simon Dominic revives an old concept, and we reveal the winners of this year's Rising Stars contest.



Issue 103

Christmas 2014

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



Issue 102

December 2013

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



Issue 101

November 2013

We boldly go into a galaxy of space art, highlighting the artists who made their name in the genre and talking to the digital painters who were inspired by them. Our workshops section reveals how to paint an epic environment, alien figures and use references, while our Q&A section covers horror, skin and futuristic hair styles!



Issue 100

October 2013

Come join the party and celebrate 100 issues of ImagineFX! Jason Chan, Raymond Swanland, Marta Dahlig, Dan LuVisi and Genzoman head up our workshop section, we reveal which cover you liked the best, look back over the history of the magazine, and present the results of your 100 favourite artists as voted for by you, dear reader!



Issue 99

September 2013

We celebrate card art by speaking to some of the artists who've painted for Magic: The Gathering. Cue insights from Jason Chan, Brad Rigney, Terese Nielsen and more. We also feature art from game card newcomers Applibot, while Aleks Brictor, Sparth and Dave Rapoza number among this issue's workshop artists.



Issue 98

August 2013

We explore the world of paleoart and talk to the artists who paint dinosaurs based on the latest scientific theories. Things take a turn for the fantastical with Simon Dominic's beastly cover art and Christian Pearce's motor mash-up workshop, while Katie De Sousa reveals how to depict a mysterious jungle princess.

Artist Q&A

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



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

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

Dave Braggalla



Dave is a graphic designer and illustrator from Stockholm. He recently organised the Northern Light Workshop series.

www.pixelhuset.se

Melanie Maier



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

www.melaniemaier.de

Peter Stapleton



Peter started working professionally in 2013. He's an Australian freelance artist who specialises in illustration and concept art.

www.artofstapleton.blogspot.com

Mark Molnar



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

www.markmolnar.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 What's the best way to depict a silver object?

Stephanie Bui, Sweden

Answer Sara replies



Start by gathering some references, so that you can observe real-life examples of silver objects. The metal reflects light, and the intensity of this reflection depends on whether its surface is polished or unpolished.

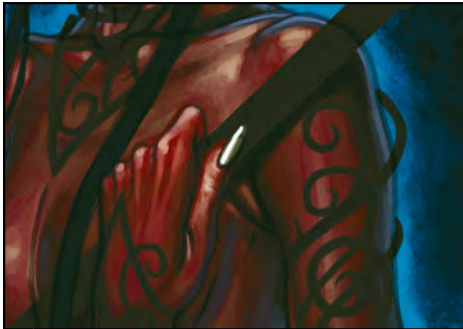
In ancient times, silver was used to make mirrors and this gives us more clues on how

As well as capturing the smoothness of silver objects, you'll need to ensure that they reflect light accordingly.

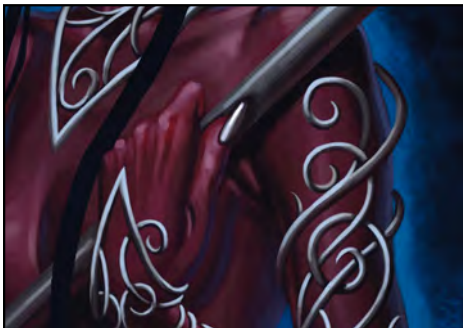
to paint it. Here I've chosen to represent the polished silver as an ornamental piece. It's a soft metal and so unsuitable for the manufacture of weapons and shields

I'll need to use brushes that feature no special texture or effects, because I want the silver to appear smooth, and I'll use strong contrasts of light and shadows to suggest that it's shiny.

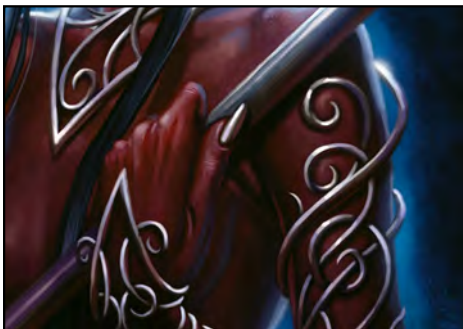
Step-by-step: Paint an intricate silver object



1 I start with a darker colour as the metal's base, and finish by painting the highlights. The ambient light in my picture is a cool colour, so I choose a dark, warm grey as a base. On any silver object a cold-to-warm contrast between light and shadow will be particularly noticeable, because of the metal's reflective nature.



2 I select my silver colour and start to paint the lighter areas, bearing in mind the shape of the metal as it curves around the character's body. I pick a dark bluish grey because the silver colour is influenced by the scene's dominant colour: a dark blue. In certain areas I paint the reflected colour of the character's skin.

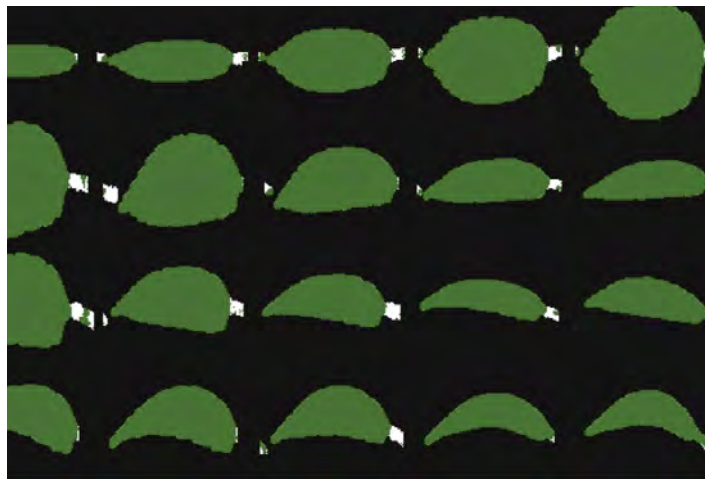


3 I define the silver's surface using a very light colour, which is almost the same colour as the light. I use a hard-edged brush to emphasise the reflected light. I push the skin's reflections and from the light behind the figure, and with a very soft brush add flashes of light where the metal is closer to the light source.

Question

Do you have any advice on how to paint shrubbery and other small plants?

Julian Swift Spankweight, England



This is my process for painting foliage. It starts at the top left with a dark colour, and culminates at the bottom right with a complete tree top.

The first time you create a nozzle file it might look strange. Don't worry! Here's the leaf nozzle I use to paint the foliage.

Answer Don replies



The Image Hose in Corel Painter X3 is the perfect tool to paint realistic foliage, because it doesn't limit me to a single shape brush. This Image Hose uses a nozzle file with 20 different versions of a leaf. They bend and twist such that a natural look is achieved when it's used to paint foliage.

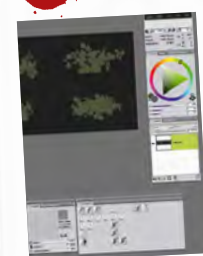
To create a leaf nozzle file I start with one painted leaf on its own layer. A photo of a leaf could be used, but I like to paint mine. I duplicate the leaf layer a number of times. In this nozzle there are 20 layers. Each layer is transformed in some way. The layers are then grouped together. From the Nozzle drop-down menu I select Make Nozzle from Group. A new file is created and individual leaves placed on an invisible grid. I save the new file including the nozzle in the Painter .rif format.

From the Nozzle drop-down I choose Load Nozzle and select the file I've just saved. I then choose a brush from the Image Hose category and paint with the leaves.

To change the colour of the leaves I make the Additional colour active by clicking it. I then select a dark green colour and lower the Grain slider to 0 on the Property bar. I paint foliage from dark to light by raising the value of the Additional colour. The result, I find, is very realistic-looking foliage.

Artist's secret

RECYCLE YOUR NOZZLES
Using a single leaf Nozzle I can set up a number of multiple leaf layers that can then be used to create a new Nozzle file, which can be used to quickly paint forests of foliage.



Question

Please help me create a pixelated effect in my art

Dez Philips, England

Answer

Mark replies



Producing a pixelated yet high-resolution image is simple in Photoshop and it's a great effect, which you can't achieve with built-in filters. For cover art or a marketing image I usually have to push an original image or concept art further, which makes it more stylised.

For this image, of two futuristic police droids, I want to generate a retro, sci-fi vibe by partially pixelating the image. I copy the final illustration into another file and resize it to one-hundredth of its original dimensions. This results in a low-resolution version of the same image – exactly what I'm after.

Now I only have to preserve these pixels. So I resize the image again, and in the Image Size dialog change the Resample Image option to Nearest Neighbor (preserve hard edges). The result is a pixelated version of the original image, which I can copy back into the original file as a new layer.

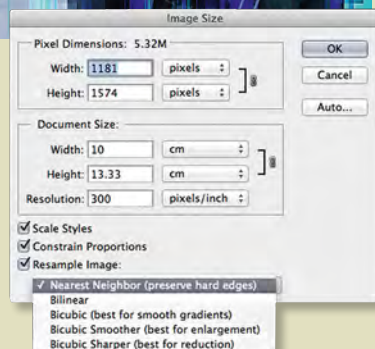
I create another pixelated version at a slightly better resolution and a pixelated effect layer by painting some blue stripes. Then I add these to my original image and sharpen all of them with the Unsharp Mask (Filters>Sharpen>Unsharp Mask) to generate much harder edges and a more digital look.

I mask out parts of my new effect layers, add the extra graphic elements and carry out final colour and contrast adjustments.



Using hand-painted effects and simple Photoshop techniques to stylise illustrations is more effective than built-in filters and photo-textures.

By changing the type of resampling of the image before resizing, you can quickly produce effective results.



Question

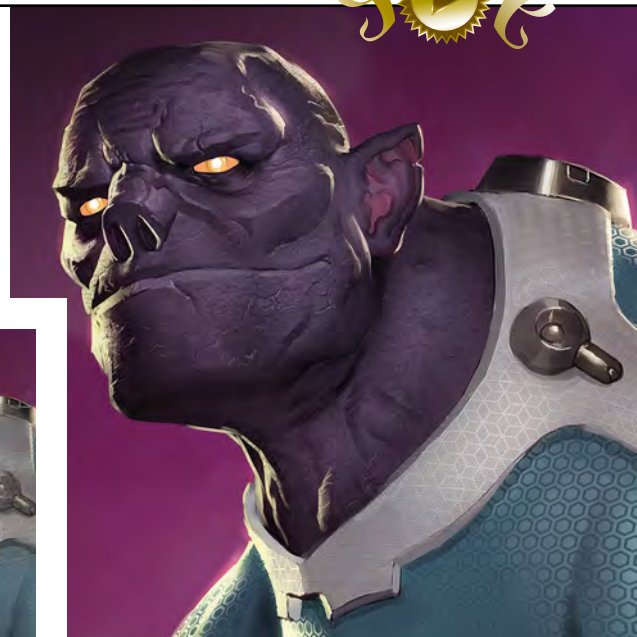
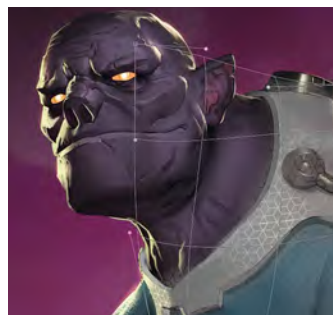
When should I stop adding textures to a painting?

Hayley Tashara-Charles, US



I use elephant and rhino skin textures for my character's face, and geometric patterns for his suit. Notice that the textures are subtle and quite low in contrast.

This is the Warp Mode in action. It gives the texture a 3D form and helps with one of the many problems when using textures – when the texture looks flat.



Answer

Peter replies



The trick with using textures is to blend them seamlessly into the rest of the painting. You know you've gone too far when the underlying form starts to become lost. They should be used subtly. One thing I do to figure out if I've gone too far is to squint at my painting. The textures should be the last thing I make out.

I always paint over my textures. I erase parts out where they wouldn't be standing out, such as in shadow, for example. I make

use of varying the opacity if the texture is standing out too much.

One useful technique is to wrap textures around the subject I'm painting. I use the Warp Mode in Photoshop's Free Transform tool. If you're only using texture in a certain part of a painting, keep in mind that detail and complexity will draw the eye, so use it at the point of interest.

Most importantly, textures should never be placed and left alone. They should mostly be used as a starting point.

Question

Please help me to paint eyelids and the skin around eyes correctly

Javier Change, Spain



Answer

Paco replies



In order to paint eyelids properly, you first need to fully understand the shape of a human eye – but also the shape of the skull and likewise the shape of the flesh over the skull.

The eye area has several volumes and shapes. These are created by the bone of the skull, the eye itself, and by the surrounding flesh and muscles – knowing which is which can be very useful knowledge to the artist.

The eyelid itself is just a piece of flesh. If the eye is closed, it simply covers the

ocular globe. If the eye is open however, the eyelid is folded inside the eye socket, over the ocular globe, and this creates a fold just above the eye and below the supraorbital. Once you know this key bit of physiological detail it shouldn't be too hard to paint eyelids.

It's important though to also bear in mind that not everyone's eyes are exactly the same shape. Analyse a range of pictures that depict people of different ages, genders and races, look properly at their eyes and try to imagine how you'd approach painting them.



Question

How can I build up an interesting perspective of an environment concept using a grid?

Fabia Zobel, Germany

A three-point perspective can often offer more drama and therefore interest.

Answer

Melanie replies



Before I start laying down my perspective grids, I draw sketches to explore the composition and possible vanishing points. I take into consideration the type of perspective I want to apply. I decide on a three-point perspective to create more interest and drama – it makes buildings look taller.

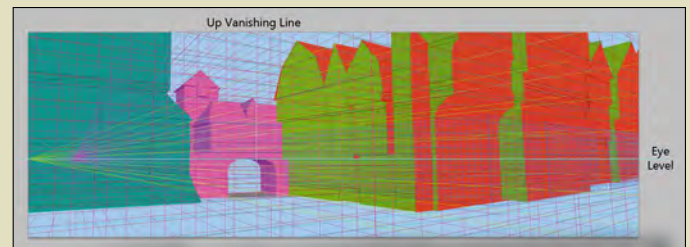
I build up guides for the eye level and the vanishing point. Using guides means you'll never miss the exact vanishing points with your Line tool when establishing vanishing lines. Make sure to check the Align to Guides option

and use a new layer for each vanishing point, so you can adjust them.

To produce the second vanishing point I use Photoshop's Vanishing Point filter. I create the grid for the plane where I've already set the vanishing point. Holding Ctrl while clicking the edge of that grid and moving it creates an orthogonal plane.

I use a Hard brush on 100 per cent Opacity to block in the silhouettes of the planes. Then I render the piece.

I recommend you get to grips with SketchUp, to establish your perspective and cast shadows more effectively, once you're able to build up your own perspectives.



Artist's secret

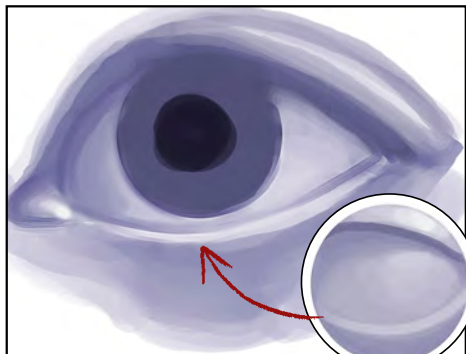
STAY ORGANISED

Every building group has different vanishing points. To keep things manageable I colour-code the silhouettes to the matching vanishing lines and then arrange all my perspective line layers in one group.

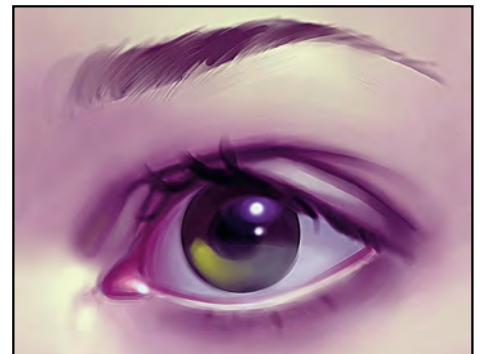
Step-by-step: Depict eyes accurately



1 Notice how the eyelid bends inside the eye socket, causing a horizontal folding over the eye – that's the key. The ocular globe is basically a sphere that's half inserted inside the eye socket surrounded by two very prominent areas: the supraorbital and the cheekbone.



2 Once you've grasped the physical structure, try to simplify the volumes of the eye to understand them better. The ocular globe and the eyelids can be depicted as a sphere with a depression in the middle. Eyes are spheres, so there will be highlights, shadows and so on.



3 Once you understand the basic shape of the ocular globe, the eyelid, the supra orbital, the cheeks and nose, painting the eye should be easy. It's just a matter of representing the volumes using lights and shadows, according to the light sources. Studying references will help.



Question

How can I capture the movement and energy of a waterfall?

Eva Hughes, Germany

Answer

Peter replies

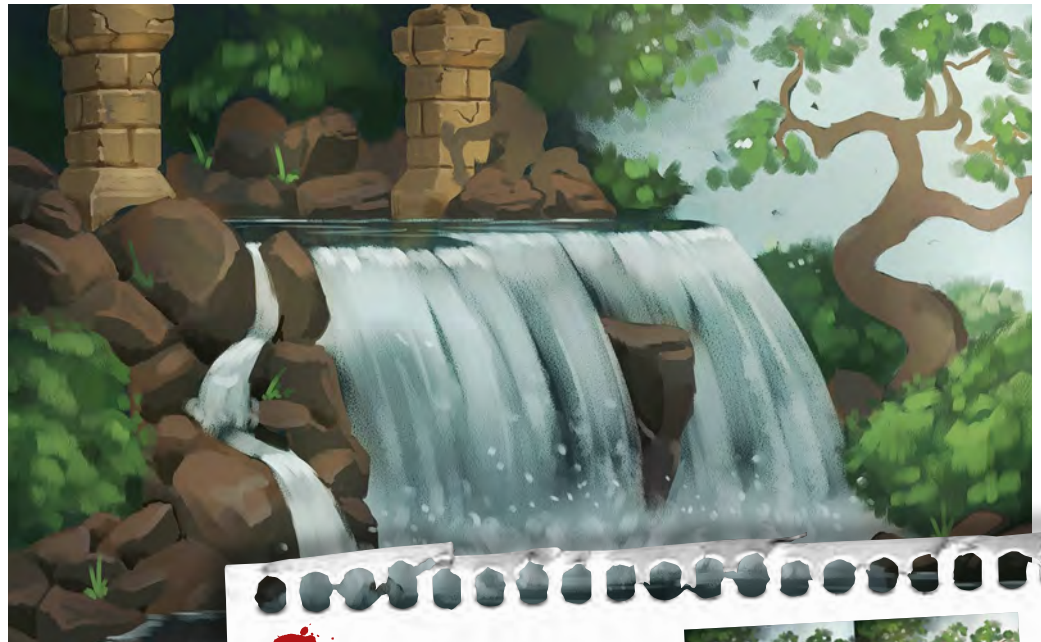


There are many different waterfalls, of all shapes and sizes. Photographers will often use a slightly longer exposure time to achieve an ethereal look with the impression of movement. In contrast, with a short exposure the photographer can capture the water as if it were frozen in time. Both techniques can be beautiful and interesting to recreate on the digital canvas.

As with any painting, I make sure that I've got as much reference images as I need to paint my waterfall. I soon notice that the water reaches the edge of the waterfall and then falls in an arc, during which it will start to break apart. It will depend on the height of the fall, but most of the time it will turn to white water as it descends. When it hits the bottom of the waterfall it will splash, causing mist and water to be thrown upwards.

I also need to make sure that the waterfall fits in with its environment, make sure that it falls where it should, and create a pleasing arrangement of rocks and cliffs. I gather a reference for these areas as well.

I'm using Corel Painter X3, and I use textured brushes to give a good indication of the water breaking apart.



I chose to paint a smaller waterfall with a short drop. Of course, this is just one kind of waterfall, so look at lots of reference for others.

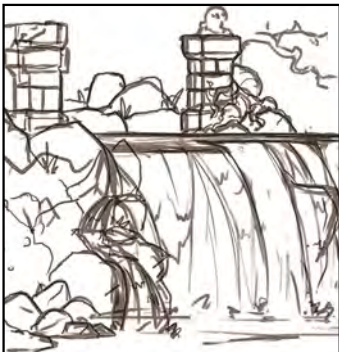
Artist's secret

USE OVERLAY LAYERS

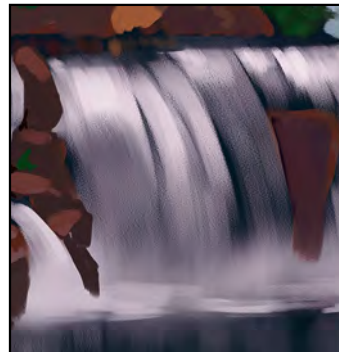
I use a bright warm yellow or orange colour on an overlay layer with a large airbrush, and subtly add light and vibrancy to the points of interest. It's also a great way of creating a bloom effect to bright light sources in my paintings.



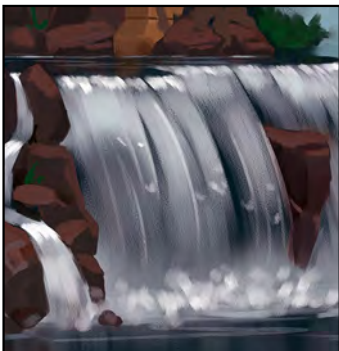
Step-by-step: Illustrate a waterfall



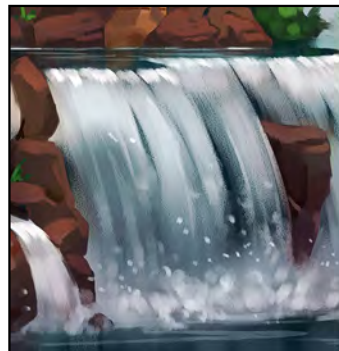
1 I begin with a very rough sketch of the waterfall and the surrounding environment. I'm keeping it rough, because I want to maintain the spontaneity when I move on to the proper painting stage. I always find happy accidents when I paint an environment like this. I keep this sketch over the top as a Multiply layer, just to act as a guide. I plan to delete it later.



2 I block in the very basic streams of falling water. Using a textured, medium-size brush, I choose a very light blue, almost white, for the falling water. My strokes are slightly varied but mostly uniform. Pen pressure set to Opacity also helps with the variation. I also add some very basic indications of the mist and disturbed water at the bottom of the waterfall.



3 I move on to smaller brushes and begin adding a bit of detail. I use the brightest white at the crest of the waterfall because this is where the water is still a solid body, but is beginning to be broken up. I also add some water splashing up from the bottom with varied and random small strokes. I paint some reflections to the settled water at the very top and bottom.



4 I select an even smaller brush for the droplets of water that are thrown around and I then break up some of the streams near the bottom of the waterfall with a few randomised, jittery strokes. While I've been painting I'm bearing in mind how the water moves around the rocks that are at the base of the fall and so I paint some of this darkness showing through.

Question

How can I create a simpler, stronger value structure in my images?

Jonty Hatt, US



The shadow areas of the knight and the pine tree flow together, and the brightly lit clouds behind the figure provide contrast and focus.

Answer

Dave replies



Clear value organisation can lend real impact to your work, making it both easier for the viewer to take in and more memorable. One powerful technique for achieving this is to group areas of close values together into larger, simpler value shapes. James Gurney coined the term "shape welding" to describe this method. Our own vision often works this way, especially in very bright or dim light when we see only the greater contrasts. The idea is simple: paint as much as you can in the same value! If two shapes near each other are almost the same value, then make them the same and let them merge into a larger shape.

These larger shapes will create your simpler structure, and then you can easily use bits of shadow in the light and highlight in the shadows to suggest form. If you're unsure what values to use within the various areas, try making your highlights in



Posterising the image shows me that the image is still recognisable because of the basic value arrangement of larger shapes.

shadow the same value as a shadow tone in your light areas, and that should provide you with the key.

As you advance with this method, you'll find that you can use less detail to successfully suggest the various elements in your image. One can say so much with just the edges of the shapes and the suggestion of form within, and the overall simplification of value will instantly make your painting more cohesive.

Question

Please help me get the anatomy right on my fantasy beast

Dehong Splendid, Indonesia

Answer

Paco replies

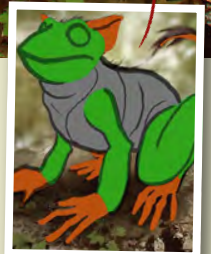


I'd advise referring to the photographs of real-life animals as a way to understand their anatomy so you can then use this as a base to deform it. If you study the bone structure of a range of animals, you'll realise that they're similar. Yes, the proportions of a frog's and human's skeleton are different, but the elements are essentially the same.

Start by thinking of an animal and then deforming it to create another one. You can even use the anatomic information of many animals to deform the base animal more accurately. Once you have that, unify the structure with a skin. Try to be creative when combining animals: for example, mix the anatomy of three very different animals, and use a skin that doesn't belong to any of them.



By distorting the various body parts harmoniously, I'm able to create a fantasy creature that the viewer can relate to.



The torso is based on a pug, the legs and skull on a frog, and the hands and tail on a squirrel.

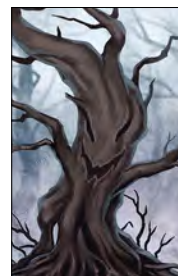
Question

What's the key to painting tree bark?

Emanuel Warburton, Wales



The vein pattern that I trace has to follow the shape of the tree in a natural way, so it shouldn't look too tidy.



The key is suggesting the bark's roughness. Photoshop's basic sponge brushes are ideal.

Answer

Sara replies



Tree bark differs from species to species so you need to decide what kind of tree you want to represent. For this example I've selected the bark of an oak tree.

Oak bark is covered by deep fractures that divide the surface into smaller, rougher areas. Within these fractures there will be moss, dust or wood of a different colour.

I start by selecting the right colour of the trunk. I avoid choosing a brown that's too saturated. Once I've sketched my lights and shadows, I create a new layer where I trace the veins of the bark with a darker colour. I always use hard-edged brushes with rough textures. Then I create a new layer and add lighter areas. As a final touch I paint traces of moss and knots to accentuate the irregularity of the whole tree.

Question

Can you help me tie an image together using one or two colours?

Jamal Muhammad, India

Answer

Dave replies



An easy way to approach this is to consider your main light source. If it's warm, the shadows should be cool, and vice versa.

You can assign a hue to the shadows that complements the hue of the main light, and reinforce this relationship throughout the piece. This will give you a basic one- or two-colour scheme, and the way these colours interact with the local colours of objects in the picture will provide visual variation and interest.

Here I've used a ruddy-golden light throughout the top part of the image, then dusted various cooler purple-blues into the shadow areas.

I enjoy working with reduced palettes, and they can help make this effect easier to achieve. Whenever you apply a colour or tint, also take time to look over the image for other places where that colour can appropriately be placed.

And remember to adhere to your chosen value structure. Combining a limited palette with a strong value organisation can produce striking imagery, and you'll find it easier to produce much more pleasing results, too.



Artist's secret

LOOSEN UP!

Resist the temptation to render everything precisely, and try working more loosely as you move away from your area of focus. This leaves something for the viewer's imagination, making them feel engaged with the image. Don't tell the whole story!



Question

How do I recreate the texture of pencils digitally?

Gustav Aschenbach, Germany



This may look like a pencil sketch, but I drew this female character entirely in Photoshop.



Answer

Melanie replies



There are many ways to mimic a traditional look on the digital canvas. I'm going to show you a simple way of creating your personal pencil brush in Photoshop and I've also supplied my custom

Photoshop brush so you can try it out. Please turn to page six to find out how you can get hold of it.

First, have a close look at the characteristics of real pencil strokes. Either use a magnifying glass or carry out a high-resolution scan of one of your pencil drawings. Look at the grainy texture, the varying line thickness, and the different flow levels (light versus dark lines) and try to understand why it looks the way it does.

Then create your brush tip and apply all the features that you've observed. The Photoshop brush menu comes with a huge amount of customisable settings, and the Scattering of the brush tip and the Shape Dynamics are the most crucial settings

for producing a good pencil brush. Take your time to explore these settings as much as you can.

Leave the Opacity on 100 per cent and adjust the Flow to 25 per cent. The flow is how much graphite sticks to your paper with one stroke. I've drawn this image digitally to show the abilities of my new pencil brush.



With my newly created brush, I use 25 per cent Flow and 80 per cent Black to prevent it from becoming too dark.

Question

Can you please help me paint the texture of suede?

Wolf-Laser-Ninja, Scotland



Answer

Mark replies



I fancy illustrating a Viking chief and a bit of research tells me pre-medieval Nordic tribes preferred leather, for both

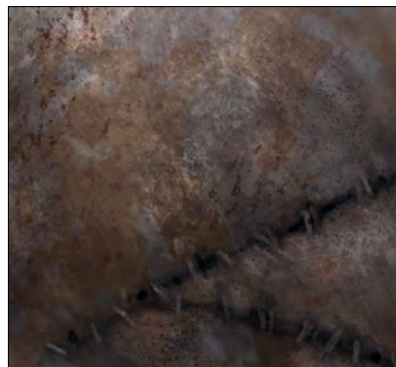
amour and everyday clothing, because of its lightweight and versatile nature. Because of this I need to paint plain leather surfaces, but also introduce some variation, which keeps the character simple but interesting.

The key for painting suede/matt leather lies in capturing its surface qualities properly. You need to understand how the material was made and what it went through. The surface of the untreated, raw leather is usually matt and the Vikings only had access to a limited number of preservation and surface-handling techniques. So the garments they created were all from full-grain leathers, which still had the slight imperfections of the original material, such as uneven thickness and natural marks. Furthermore, instead of wearing out, it developed a recognisable patina over time. By showing these imperfections – the uneven edges, the grainy-type matt surface and perhaps even larger patches of discolouration or the remnants of the animal's hairy hide in some places – you can capture the essence of the material.

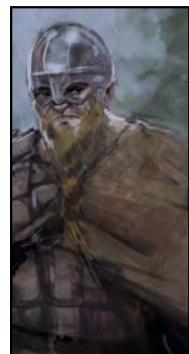
Use basic brushes to block in the main colours then work with textured charcoal brushes to achieve the typical grainy look of the leather. You can easily add the extra patches with scattered custom brushes using Overlay and Multiply layers.

Avoid rim lights and other reflections, because they would suggest a more shiny and sophisticated material, which wouldn't be appropriate for this material and character.

Try not to simply paint a texture – try to show how that piece was made (sewed together) and what it's been through (patches of dirt and blood). Small visual touches add to your character's backstory.



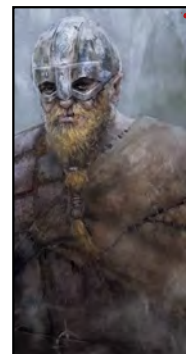
Step-by-step: Paint a Viking wearing leather armour



1 I do a quick line drawing and block in all the main colours. The scene is set under an overcast sky with even lighting conditions, so I avoid noticeable differences between the values and tones. I want to keep the character simple and realistic, so I limit the colours and level of contrast.



2 I focus on the materials around the focal area and leave everything outside this area rough and sketchy. I try to capture the surface qualities of the different materials and also draw the garments and armour pieces, which all serve to add an extra level of story to the piece.



3 I add stripes on the arm, blood splatters on the armour and subtle engraving and scratches on the helmet. This is another level of detail without making it too fantastical a piece. Then I push the contrast around the focal areas and finish the painting with some extra effects and colour correction.

NEXT MONTH: HORDES OF UNDEAD | AN OLD FEMALE CHARACTER | THUMBNAIL TIPS WATERCOLOUR EFFECTS | A STRONG WHITE LIGHT SOURCE | AN EMERALD SEA, AND MORE!



Les Edwards

A painter who brings the macabre to life, Les has won awards for his dark arts... as two different people

Les Edwards is taking stock of his 40-year career in art. "I don't know about passion," he says, "but I'm certainly quite obsessive. And I don't know what I'd be like if I didn't have art to absorb that obsessive side."

A look at his finest horror art and we shudder to think. But obsessive is definitely the word. It's in the delicate play of dark and light that's more demonic aura than simple sunrise in *List of Seven*; it's in the momentum of his maniacal Croglin Vampire as he peers into the viewer's room hell bent on terror. His obsessive detail to drama is in every cavernous environment and supernatural portrait that he paints.

DARK VOICES #4

This contemplative chap was painted for the anthology, including stories by Les Daniels and Nicholas Royle.



And it's been his companion since the beginning. Watching the film *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* in 1954, Les first set eyes on the Nautilus, Captain Nemo's submarine. "Last year I finished building a model of the Nautilus that took me nearly two years to complete. So there's an enthusiasm lasting nearly 60 years there... Is that obsessive?"

A GOLDEN GLOW

The British artist has worked professionally since he left art college in the early 70s. Although discouraged by his tutor to pursue art, Les hit the ground running and joined the Young Artist agency in London. In the 70s and 80s Young Artist represented the likes of Jim Burns and John Harris, a generation of artists eager to make their mark on the books, cards, posters and private collections of the day. Les specialised in horror, bringing form to a surge in literature with shadowy demons and violent insanity.

"Ah, the golden glow of nostalgia," he half jokes. "We definitely had a great deal more artistic freedom, and art editors actually had some clout and could make decisions. They could also communicate!" Things were more easygoing and artists could fall into a career, so the rose-tinted story goes. The flip side is that Les has got nothing but respect for artists today. "Young people starting work ➡➡

Artist PROFILE

Les Edwards

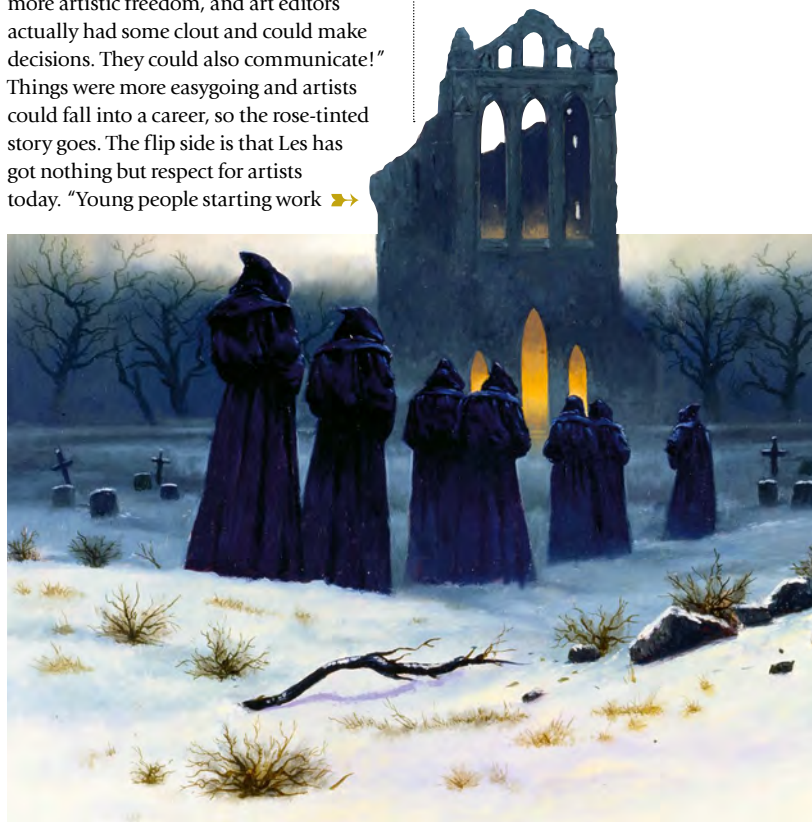


Obsessive, but not schizophrenic, English artist Les has used his oils and acrylics to win best artist awards from The British Fantasy Society seven times, and a World Fantasy Award as his alias Edward Miller.

www.lesedwards.com

LIST OF SEVEN

A fittingly eerie cover for *Twin Peaks* co-writer Mark Frost's first novel.



SON OF CELLULOID

Clive Baker's short story was turned into a graphic novel, with Les on illustration duties.





GRAVEYARD SHIFT

This is the UK poster art for the Stephen King film based on the author's short story.



CITY JITTERS

Commissioned as a book cover, this piece was also used as an album cover.

CREATURE OF HAVOC

Les painted this cover art for the reissue of one of the more celebrated Fighting Fantasy gamebooks.



➡➡ these days seem to be under a lot of pressure, but then, I still feel just as insecure. You never quite know where the next job is coming from – or if there will be one."

Things have changed. Horror isn't the niche, anti-establishment irritant to out-of-touch politicians and terrified suburbanites it once was. Les fears that it's been co-opted by teen girls, game producers and the mainstream Saturday night cinema crowd. You don't need to seek it out in obscure magazines and banned video nasties anymore: take a walk and you'll probably see it on a billboard. For the artists that made a crimson splash in the 70s and 80s, there was a lack of weird tales to electrify their imagination when they were growing up. Their nightmarish visions came first, the market followed.

DEMON SEED

"I first encountered Batman in a serial," Les says of his beloved serialised films, which ran at the local Saturday matinees when he was a nipper. "It was years before I realised he was a comic book character." For the price of six old pence he watched cartoons, a comedy short, the main film and then a serial: an instalment of a genre film.



NIGHTBREED

Les's poster art for the 1990 cult horror film, written and directed by Clive Barker.

HEROQUEST

The art for the 1988 board game endures, but creating it wasn't a straightforward experience for Les

"I probably get more enquiries about this painting than any other. I'm sure I could have sold it ten times over. Unfortunately, the client bought all the artwork for this game as part of the deal so I no longer have it. Now that fans of the game are grown up they often get in touch wanting more information. Apart from making me feel ancient, it's quite a boost to realise that something I painted is remembered with such affection by a lot of people.

This wasn't a particularly easy job as the client was very demanding. It was chiefly concerned that the background characters should accurately reflect the miniatures in the game, which had already been designed. My main concern was dealing with what was, for someone used to painting book covers, an unusual shape. Fitting the central figure into the landscape shape of the box was something of a problem, as I wanted him to be large enough to dominate the composition so his pose is a bit more crouched than I'd like. On the other hand it was great to be let loose on something like this and I really got my teeth into painting it."

© MB Games, 1988.



“I absolutely loved the serials because they often had a sci-fi theme or featured a mysterious masked villain”

"I absolutely loved the serials because they often had a sci-fi theme or featured a mysterious masked villain. I remember watching The Undersea Kingdom, The Lost Planet, The Fling Disc Man from Mars, Zorro's Fighting Legion, and my favourite Captain Video: Master of the Stratosphere."

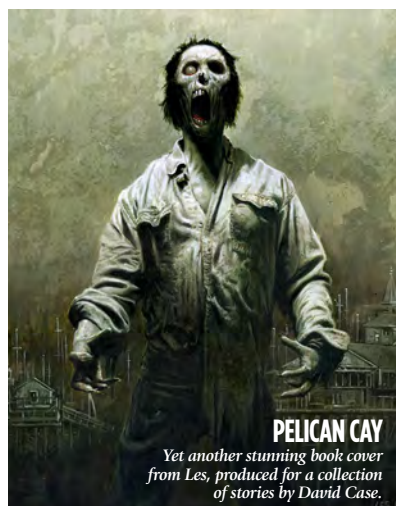
When he got home he'd spend hours drawing what he had just witnessed. Or there was always one of his parents' books lying around. "They were often unsuitable for youngsters, and exposed me to grown-up literature at an early age. Then there were comics, which were really quite dull with the exception of the wonderful Eagle, the mention of which renders most male Brits of a certain age misty eyed."

At the age of 10 Les's pal introduced him to Famous Monsters of Filmland, the genre magazine edited by SF fan-legend Forrest J Ackerman. "It was full of stills from films that we weren't allowed to see. At about the same time I discovered gothic author Edgar Allen Poe, as there was a copy of Tales of Mystery and Imagination in our bookcase. So I had both visual and literary influences working on me." His course was set.

CINEMATIC STUFF

Les's artwork for films includes art for John Carpenter's The Thing, and work for horror writer/director Clive Barker. His relationship with Clive started as many do in this industry: at a convention. Games Workshop was publishing a collection of Les's art called Blood & Iron in 1989, and was looking for someone to write the book intro. "As a big fan of Clive's collection of short stories Books of Blood, I suggested him," recalls Les. But then body horror film director David Cronenberg and a gang of demonic alien freaks got in the way...

Clive's underground film Nightbreed, which featured Cronenberg in an acting role, was sapping all his time, so horror aficionado Kim Newman got the intro gig. "Clive remembered me though," says Les, "and when it came to doing a graphic novel of his short story Son of Celluloid he suggested me for the job. We followed that up with Rawhead Rex and I also did the poster for Nightbreed. I liked the movie so it's a bit of a shame that it seems to have ➔





LOVECRAFT IN BRITAIN
Here's Les's cover for the
British Fantasy Society book.

➤ almost disappeared. I know there are plans to bring out a definitive version, but it hasn't happened yet as far as I know."

JEKYLL AND HYDE

Wading through blood and guts can take its toll, and with horror commissions flatlining Les took a trip to the light side. He invented an alter ego: Edward Miller. He could start from scratch, and with this upright and respectable-sounding pseudonym came a new audience from beyond the fringes.

"Much as I enjoy working in horror, it came to the point where clients wouldn't consider me for any other work," says Les, "so I invented Edward in order to do something different. While no one knew we were one and the same, it worked well. Ed did anything but horror to start with, but then slowly began to gravitate towards fantasy covers."

Then someone spilled the beans. "I have a good idea who. I was a bit worried that clients might feel they'd been hoodwinked. But no one cared very much," he says. Since then Les and Edward have coexisted happily, "as long as I can remember who I'm supposed to be on a particular day. I don't feel particularly schizophrenic... but I'll ask Ed what he thinks."

UNCERTAIN TIMES

Back in the artist's cherished bloody pulp throne, things are a little strange at the moment. Although the public face of horror can be seen on prime time TV shows like *The Walking Dead*, and in endless literature with an eye on film adaptations, Les still sees people looking down their nose at him. "I know some writers who would use the word ghetto rather than niche," he says. "There's still a tendency for fans of one genre to be a bit

“I find the distinctions between sci-fi, fantasy and horror a bit tiresome and irrelevant”



THE CREW

Les's art accompanies
Robert McCammon's
1980 novel *The Night Boat*.



VAULT OF THE VAMPIRE

Nope! He's not Dracula.
It's the cover illustration
for a *Fighting Fantasy*
gamebook, featuring the
charming Count Heydrich.

sniffy about another. I find the distinctions between sci-fi, fantasy and horror a bit tiresome and irrelevant."

Yet donning those rose-tinted glasses, there was a distinct horror genre that really did scare the hell out of people. Not so today. "How can you be subversive if everything's acceptable?" Les asks. "It's everywhere, no longer confined to a niche. If such imagery is commonplace it makes it a lot harder for writers and artists to shake people up. I'm sure horror will survive, but its natural state is as a minority interest and the boom of the 70s and 80s was something of an aberration." ●

FROM THE DEEP

Turning HP Lovecraft's detailed descriptions into a fantasy composition was a challenge...

"This is the sort of thing that happens when I'm left to my own devices. I painted it in about 2006 and it's derived from HP Lovecraft's *The Call of Cthulhu*. Lovecraft is a rich source for some artists, but I've always found him tricky. His description of horrors may be convincing in the written word, but if you try to interpret them too literally you can wind up with something that looks quite silly rather than cosmically horrific, or is just disappointing. I've found this to be true of other authors, too.

Despite my long-term desire to illustrate his work, I don't think that Lovecraft is a very visual writer. However, I had this image in mind for a long time and decided I'd better give it a try. The depiction of a distant menace rather than a close-up monster appealed to me and I had a feeling it would work out well. I also enjoy painting strange ruins and it made a change to have the landscape dominate the figure. While I always look at paintings after a time and think I could have done it better, this remains one of my favourites."





Willow#2 by Cris DeLara
CGWorkshops Instructor



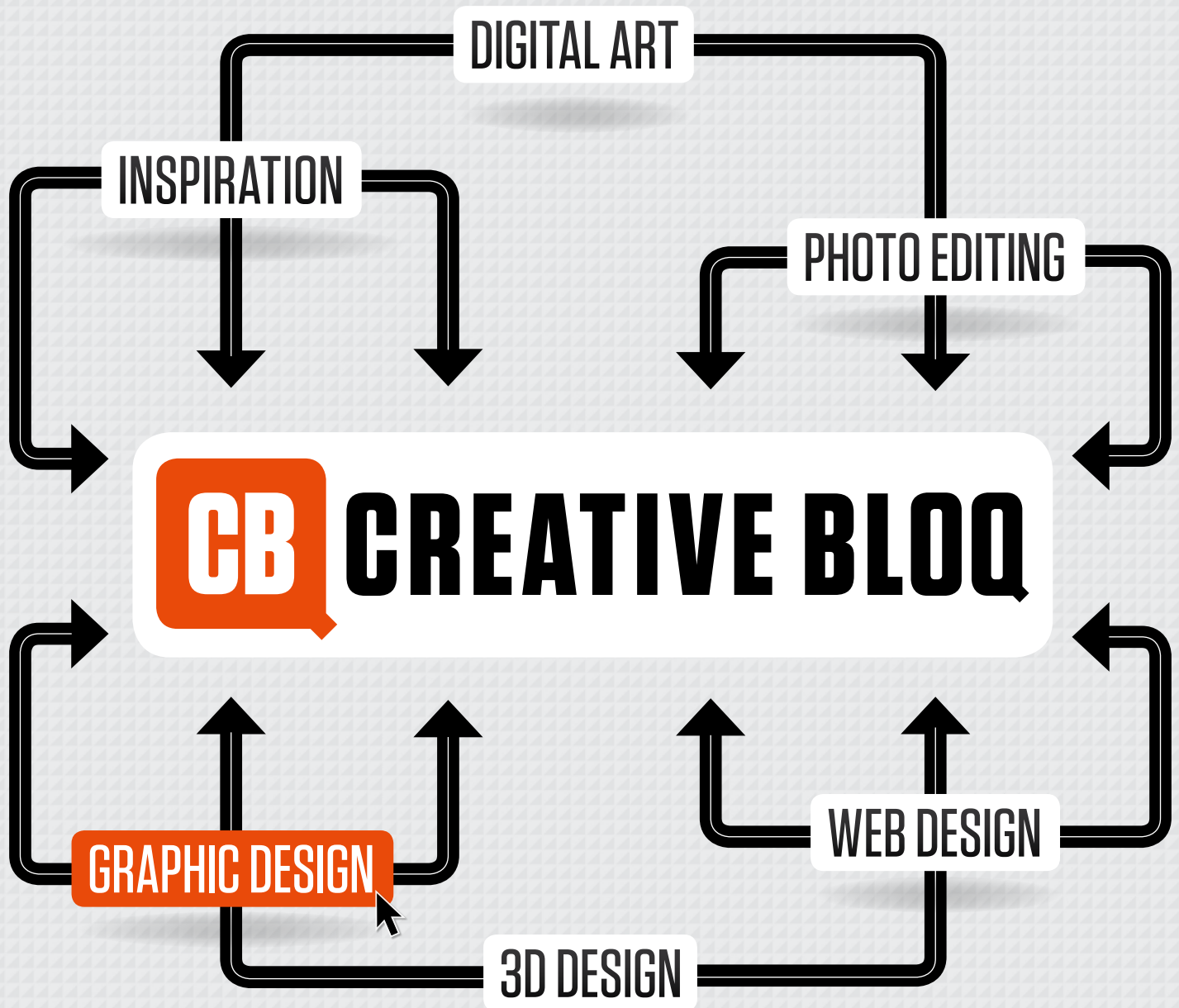
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Sketchbook

Tran Nguyen

Tran's sketches explore themes of memory and emotion, and almost always end up as completed paintings

INSECTS OF LOVE

"These three thumbnails and the rough final sketch were completed for a short story over at Tor.com."

LIVE FOR THE SAKE OF YOUR SOUL

"Live for the sake of your soul, because doing otherwise would be irreverent. And if we don't, it will slowly but surely dissipate from our body, leaving a vacant shell bare of existential aesthetics. If you've no family or friends worth living for, then live for the sake of your soul."



"Live for the sake of your soul, because doing otherwise would be irreverent"

Artist PROFILE

Tran Nguyen

COUNTRY: US



Tran is a Vietnam-born artist who's living in Georgia. The painter is represented by Thinkspace Gallery in California, where she exhibits much of her work. She is inspired by the paradox of modern living, and believes that art can be a vehicle for psychotherapeutic support.

www.mynametrans.com



**TREADING
THROUGH AN
UNTRIMMED
MEMORY**

"This is one of my favourite sketches, created for a series that explores the wonder of nostalgia and distant memories."

**WANDERING
ACROSS A
BORROWED
BELIEF**

"One of the preliminaries for a two-person show I did at Thinkspace Gallery in California. The series emphasises mental rapture and turmoil."



MY SOUL IS
VOMITING OUT ALL
OF OUR SYMPATHY.

ENVELOPED BETWEEN A PLEATED THOUGHT

"Illustrates that particular moment
when we're caught in between
two emotional complexities."

MONTAGE

"I seldom sketch freely
without the intent of it
becoming a finished painting. This is one
of the few."





NOSTALGIA

"This is another sketch that illustrates my deep interest in nostalgia and distant memories, but one which wanders off into nature as opposed to suburban surroundings."

DREAM

"I came across a debonair fox and his fanciful monocle. He took me by the hand and said: 'Come, come, help my friend whose bulbous head is stuck in a tree hole'. Ducking, turning, twisting, churning, we came upon the peculiar girl and her peculiar situation. 'Save me!' she exclaimed..."

"I seldom sketch freely without the intent of it becoming a painting"



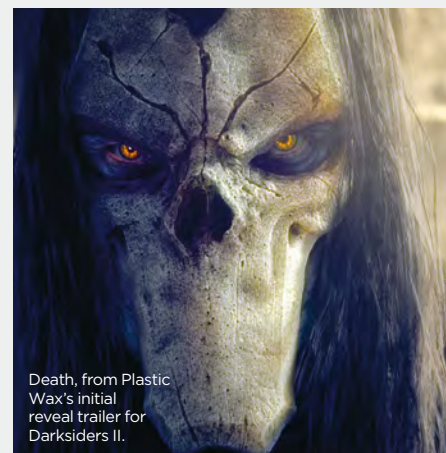
JUST ANOTHER OSCILLATE DISPOSITION

"I rarely paint multi-bodied paintings, but this is one such occasion - tighter than usual, this sketch showcases three figures struggling through a sea of billowing fabric."



Want to share your sketches? Email us with a selection of your artwork, to sketchbook@imaginefx.com
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Death, from Plastic Wax's initial reveal trailer for Darksiders II.

STUDIO PROFILE

PLASTIC WAX

This family-run animation, concept art and storyboarding studio's work has featured in many AAA-games, although you may not have realised it...

Creativity doesn't occur in a vacuum, so offering creative freedom in a like-minded environment is a big focus," says **Dane Maddams** of Plastic Wax – based in Sydney, Australia but with other offices in Los Angeles and London. "Trying to be controlling, or micromanaging each and every team member, is a quick way to see lacklustre results. I'm a big fan of instilling trust into our artists to spread their wings."



This approach has obviously paid dividends for the studio, which is now in its 15th year and is positively thriving. Plastic Wax's speciality is creating in-engine cut-scenes, CG intros and trailers for a variety of games, although it's happy to branch out

into scriptwriting, concept art duties, box art and many other art-related activities.

Plastic Wax was founded by and is still run by three brothers – Nathan, Dane and Tyrone Maddams. Nathan, the eldest, is creative director, Tyrone is the lead character designer and Dane deals with the business end of things.

TRAILERS FOR TOTS

"We began working in the local children's television market in the 1990s, creating trailers for Australian shows Bananas in Pajamas, The Wiggles and Hi-5," says Dane. Word of mouth spread about the studio's capabilities, and soon it was moving into more game-related areas, including cinematics and in-game animation for the pioneering MMORPG Ultima Online.

Since then, Plastic Wax has contributed to a number of top game titles. Keen gamers might be surprised to hear that many of the cinematics and cut-scenes from their favourite games were created by Plastic Wax, rather than the primary developers. Work for BioShock and BioShock Infinite, Tomb Raider, Fallout New Vegas, Neverwinter and every Warhammer cinematic in the past decade all feature on the studio's CV, among many others.

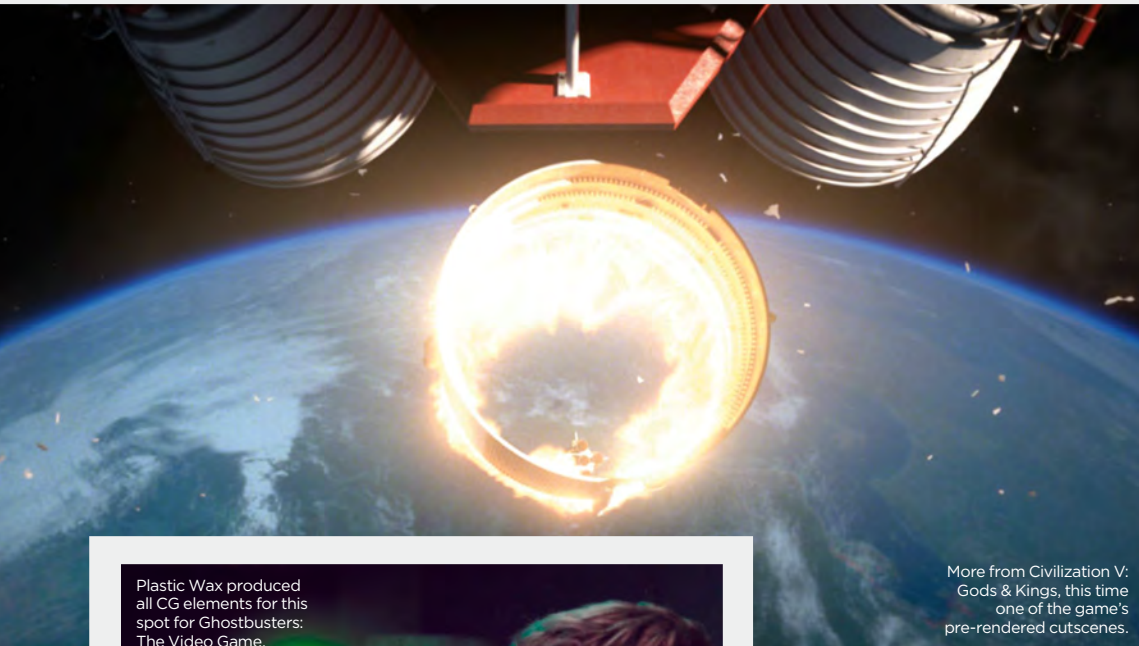
But Dane isn't worried about this relative anonymity, at least among the general gaming public. "The benefit of being able to work on such incredible titles with hugely talented development and publishing teams is rewarding enough," he says. "It's also great to see immediate responses via YouTube once your project goes live. ➡



Graphic development for the Civilization V expansion pack Gods & Kings.



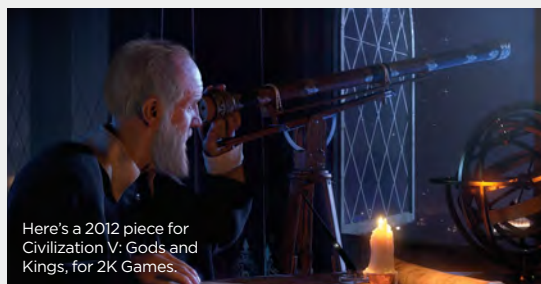
The Plastic Wax studios in action, looking more like a classy restaurant than a workplace...



Plastic Wax produced all CG elements for this spot for Ghostbusters: The Video Game.

More from Civilization V: Gods & Kings, this time one of the game's pre-rendered cutscenes.

“It’s great to see immediate responses via YouTube once your project goes live”



Here's a 2012 piece for Civilization V: Gods and Kings, for 2K Games.

NATHAN MADDAMS

Plastic Wax's creative director always gets a thrill out of seeing the studio's work on the shop shelves...

What would you say Plastic Wax offers artists (either as full-time employees or as freelancers) that makes you an exciting and interesting company to work for?

As an artist myself, joining a team of other very high-calibre artists is important. It gives you the ability to constantly learn and develop among a group of your peers that always push and inspire you. The variety of work keeps things exciting as well. From cover art for Tomb Raider and BioShock, to pre-rendered work on Borderlands bandits, Warhammer's chainsword-wielding spacemarines, through the gamut to LEGO, Mickey and DC characters, there's always something new and varied to challenge you.

Conversely, do you look for anything in particular when it comes to hiring artists?

Of course it comes down to skill, but raw talent and a passion for what you do is a factor I'm always looking for. I think anyone can learn a discipline, but it takes someone special to keep developing and train that keen eye for detail.

Does the lack of public recognition from gamers ever irk you a bit, or is the work itself reward enough?

Although our marketing guys may disagree, as an artist, I don't mind being a little off the radar. We love the work we do, and that's where our focus is, and I feel that having the privilege to work with so many great brands, stories and characters is its own reward. Being able to walk into a store and see many of the top titles are ones you've contributed to still brings a smile to my face. All of that said, I do get a kick out of being asked what I do, and watching that person's face light up as I rattle off titles we've worked on. Usually they're surprised to learn that some of their favourite titles were worked on here in Australia.

What are the overall goals for the studio for, say, the next year? Are you working on any exciting projects that you can tell us about?

Unfortunately, as with most companies we are always under NDA, and are sometimes working on titles, helping developing tech, scripting and storyboarding components, well before they become rumours. All I can say is that there are a few well-known brands and projects that have a few surprises to come in the not-too-distant future...



As one of Plastic Wax's co-founders, Nathan tells would-be concept artists to "Never stop learning, stay curious and keep observing the world."

www.plasticwax.com



Trailer for Infinite Crisis, the new DC Comics multiplayer game.



A slain Big Daddy and its distraught Little Sister from BioShock, as rendered by Plastic Wax for promotional materials.

➤➤ There's no better feeling than to put your heart and soul into a project and have the fans enjoy and celebrate it."

As Dane points out, the developers are usually concerned with the core of the game itself, leaving Plastic Wax to concentrate on marketing materials, trailers and cut-scenes. "Having a cinematic studio that you're partnered with makes a lot of sense," he continues. "Creating trailers tend to have a specific employee skillset and large hardware overhead costs. Our rendering farm has a hefty price tag!"

Plastic Wax employs 55 full-time team members, and most of them have been there for an average of seven years. If a project demands it, that pool might grow to around 75, including freelancers: "We have a team of illustrative people we can call on for storyboarding, concept and matte jobs."

When it comes to concept art, he says no two jobs are ever the same. The initial ideas can be anything from quick scribbles on napkins through to fully fleshed-out storyboards to work from. This means Plastic Wax's staff has to be able to deal



An epic shot from one of the many cutscenes in Civilization V: Gods & Kings.

with a variety of challenges. "We look for skill, passion and communication when checking out new artists," says Dane. "Combine that with an appropriate, high-impact and compelling demo reel and you're a fantastic candidate."

ARTISTIC ADVICE

So what tips does he have for an artist looking to move into this area? "Focus on the awesome stuff in your portfolio. Anything that you're feeling may not be up to par with the rest, leave it out. It's all too common to see several great pieces and then one very questionable one."

For newer or younger artists who may not have many projects in their portfolio,

he recommends creating some personal projects to showcase their talents. "For instance, for a storyboard artist I'd advise coming up with your own sequence," he adds, "then build the materials required: concept art, character design illustrations and storyboards."

With games becoming ever more mainstream as well as complex in terms of required art assets, Plastic Wax's future looks secure, although Dane says it's not resting on its laurels. "I feel that to remain relevant you not only need to be on top of your game, but have the foresight to remain nimble with the direction the industry is headed," he says. "So our focus will continue to be on premium storytelling." ●

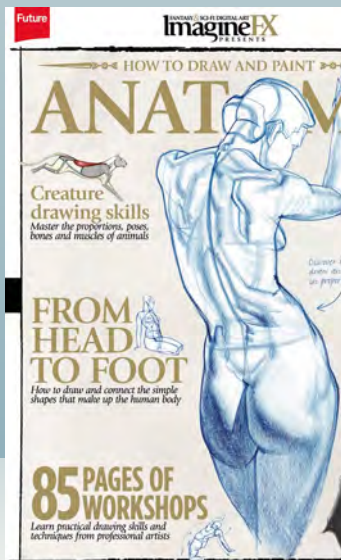


Most of Plastic Wax's artists are based in-house, rather than being freelance.



Plastic Wax worked on the trailer for 2009's *Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen* video game.

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Advice from the world's best artists

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This issue:

60 Create textured, atmospheric art

Jeff Simpson creates a dark fantasy image full of engaging textures and lighting effects.

64 15 ways to add evil to your art

Examine the darkest aspects of human nature and make art that truly disturbs, with Anthony Scott Waters.

70 Capture the mood of a horror film

Graham Humphreys on his soundtrack cover art for Zombie Flesh Eaters.

72 Portrait skills in Procreate

George Pratt puts down his brushes, picks up his iPad and paints with Procreate.

78 Streamline your work process

Xavier Collette efficiently brings a dark faerie to life in a woodland setting.

85 Use components to build a model

Components help save time when creating SketchUp models, says Mark Roosien.

86 Draw and paint Marley's ghost

Ed Binkley conjures up the magic of recognisable Victorian-era horror.

64



78



86





Photoshop CREATE TEXTURED, ATMOSPHERIC ART

Jeff Simpson takes you through his process for creating a dark fantasy image that's full of engaging textures and lighting effects

Artist PROFILE

Jeff Simpson
COUNTRY: Canada



Jeff is a concept artist and illustrator who works at

Eidos Montreal. His clients include Ubisoft Montreal, Universal Pictures, Lionsgate, MPC, The Mill and Wizards of the Coast.
<http://ifxm.ag/jeff-s>

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 6 now!

My process for painting personal work gets a lot of scrutiny. "How do you make it not look like a digital painting?"

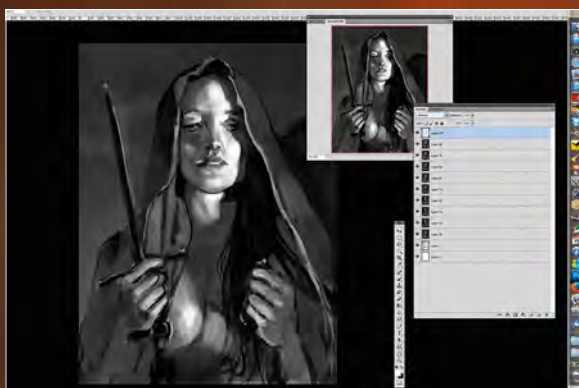
"How do you achieve those textured ghostly effects?" I always try very hard to make my images look like they weren't created digitally, or at least make them transcend the medium in which they're created. Digital painting often has a tendency to look flat, synthetic and lifeless. I always put an emphasis on

making my characters and textures look rich and full of raw, chaotic energy.

It may be a cliché, but I feel that happy accidents are one of the main driving factors in my work, and since I'm using a digital medium, the ability to experiment is almost infinite (which can, however, be a problem in its own way). In the course of this workshop there will be many points where things don't go as planned or take an unexpected turn. However, since this was done for a magazine cover

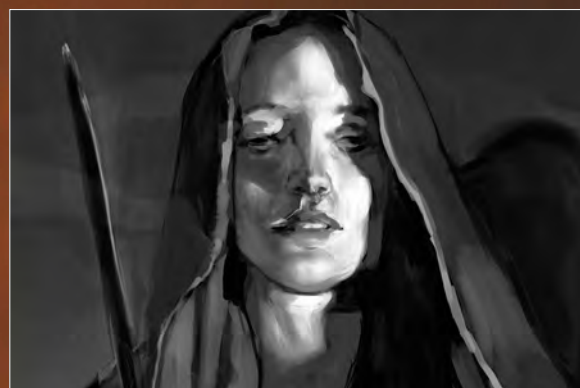
with very specific goals and guidelines, I may not be able to play around with the image as much as I normally would.

The tools I use to paint this image are pretty straightforward. I never deviate from the basic Photoshop Hard Round brush for rendering, and the textures I use are generated from a few photos of my acrylic paint palette. Most of the experimentation comes simply from altering the colours and playing with the various layer settings.



1 Sketching and planning

I put down the basic composition of the image, trying not to get into any irrelevant details, because I know that the focus will most probably be on the woman's face. I'll try to make sure the rest of the image supports and doesn't distract from her expression and gaze.



2 Colour considerations

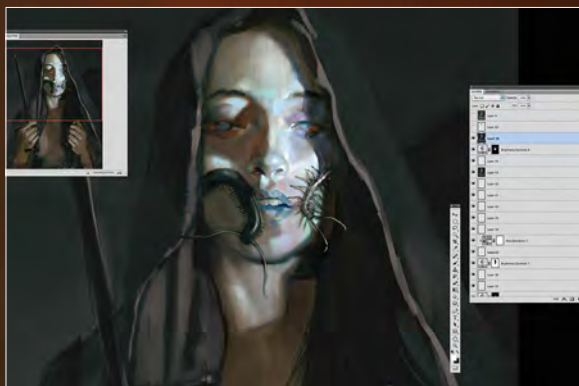
At this point I'm not really thinking about colour – I know that I'll play around with it for the entire duration of the creation process. The more plans I lay out for myself at the beginning, the less enjoyment I'll get out of the image and the less interesting it will look. This is probably pretty terrible advice for illustrators, but it's how I like to work.



PRO SECRETS

Experiment!

The ability to undo and save countless variations gives us a near-unlimited range to experiment and explore with. That said, the industry, while claiming to be about fantasy, imagination and wonder, can be extremely close-minded and resistant to change. Ideas, aesthetics or themes that don't fall into one of the handful of established genres are often dismissed or ignored. I urge young digital artists to do what they can in expanding or shaking up our notions of what fantasy, sci-fi or digital painting really is.



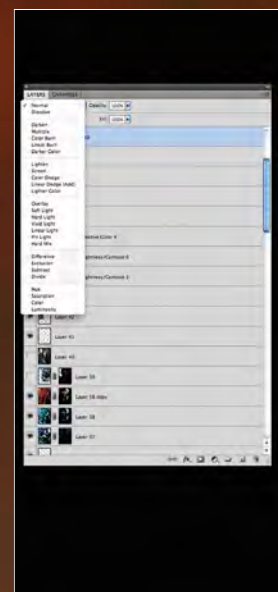
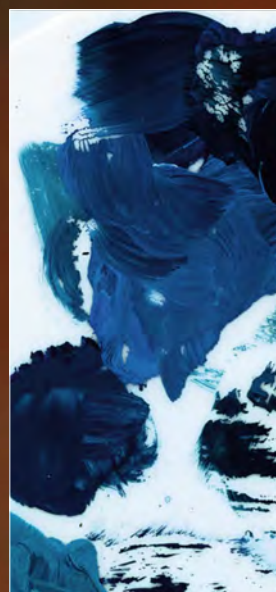
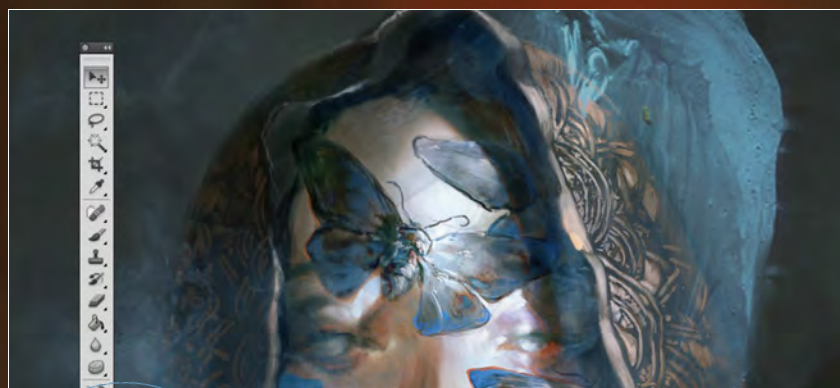
3 Begin rendering

I begin rendering the face. The colours are fairly arbitrary – they'll change many times before I'm finished. Sometimes I do all my rendering in greyscale before adding colour, but that's pretty boring. Building up colours gradually generates more depth and gives the image more life. I was going to have a lot of insects crawling from her mouth, but abandon this for clarity.



4 Adding facial details

I begin to add more details – in retrospect, probably too early – to cloth and face. A colour scheme that I like is beginning to emerge. After some experimentation with the layer styles I come across a dark blue/metallic type of effect I like and stick with it for the moths. Somehow I managed to end up with over 200 layers by this point. I never claimed to be very organised!



5 Adding effects

I start adding effects. I use two or three scans of my acrylic paint palette – their random colours and textures are really good for experimentation. I overlay them on the image and play with the layer modes until I see something I like, then paint over the top. Multiply, Overlay, Saturation and Subtract are my favourites, but you never know what will create something interesting.

Shortcuts

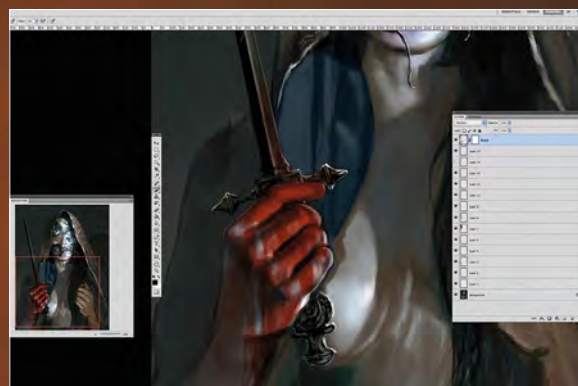
Layer modes

Select Layer mode, then arrow keys (PC)
Select the Move tool, then Shift+[+] or [-] (Mac)
Do this to cycle through layer modes



6 There will be blood

After rendering, I add the blood by painting over the hand with red and setting the layer mode to Multiply. I then add the rim lights on top, as well as some specular highlights to make it look glossy and suggest that it's drenched in blood.



7 Sword play

I try to keep the sword's design ambiguous and not too distracting, because I still want the attention to be on her face. I'll usually paint the weapon vertically and then rotate it into position to keep things looking straight.

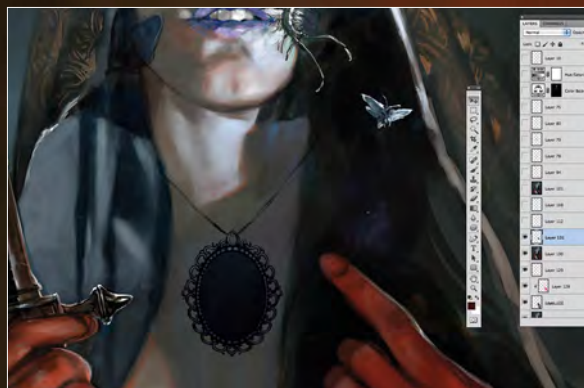
WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

STANDARD BRUSH: HARD



The Hard Round brush is the only brush I use.



8 Adding details

I add a necklace, planning to have it emanate some sort of magical/ghostly mist. I keep it dark so that the effects will show up on top, using the same paint texture-overlay technique as before. I edit the face, readjusting the moths and insects so that she's more readable at a distance. I now have enough elements for me to feel comfortable developing a colour scheme.



9 Establishing a colour scheme

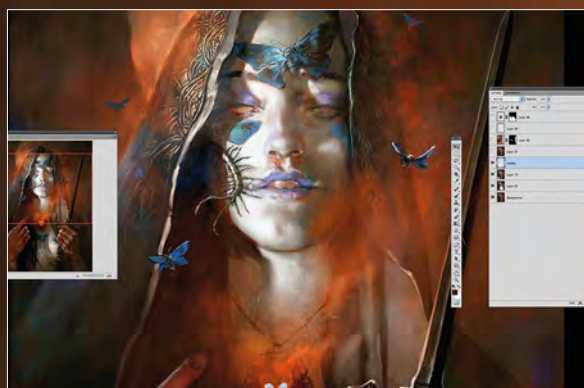
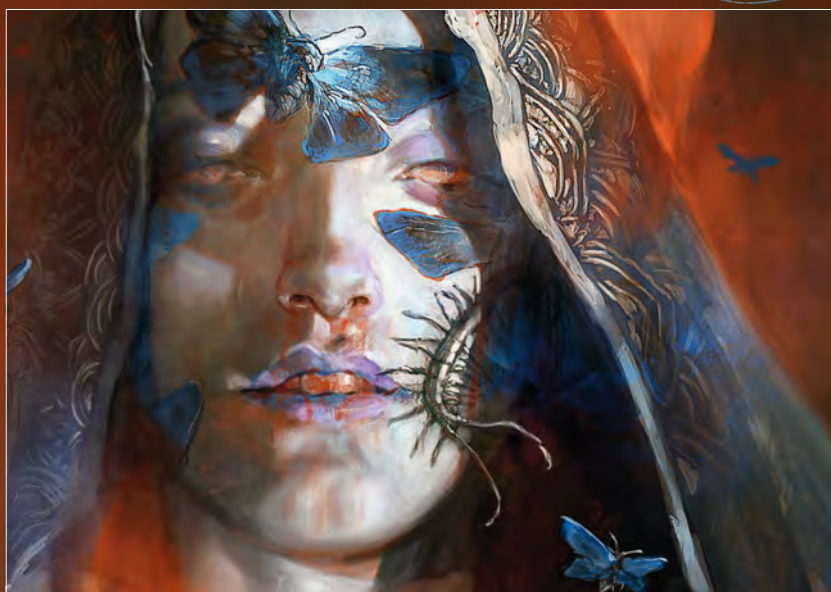
I decide to use an orange-red to highlight elements I want to stand out (the lips, eyes, hands) and keep the rest of the image generally cold and blue. I'm still exploring ways to have the mist emanate from the necklace, and play with the idea that it's been slashed with her dagger. However, the cold blue hues are making the image feel a bit too flat and uninteresting.

Shortcuts
Combine layers
Ctrl+Alt+Shift+E (PC)
Cmd+Alt+Shift+E (Mac)
Creates a new, flattened layer combining all the visible layers below.



10 Colour adjusting

I select the areas around her and hue-adjust them into a warmer, fiery colour. This adds better atmosphere and energy, and makes her feel like she's part of a scene. I use Image> Adjustments>Color Balance to unify my colours and give more warmth to the scene. I might also use gradient maps or Selective Color in the same menu to help pop out the red highlights.



11 Flipping out

I flip the image for compositional reasons. After flipping I notice a lot of flaws in the proportions or elements that simply bug me. Ideally, you want to be flipping your image as much as possible, something I find myself forgetting to do quite often. I refine the face and add effects to help the character stand out even more, such as lightening the skin and adjusting her hood.



12 Final pass

I continue to adjust the face, trying to bring back elements I liked from previous iterations that got lost, like the purple on her eyelids and nose. I apply either a High Pass layer or Unsharp Mask on a new flattened layer to boost the details and texture in certain areas. I add more insects to the bottom of the image and readjust the moths on her face so her eyebrows come through.

PRO SECRETS

Make it personal

Having a unique style and standing out is a huge leg-up. It's possible to be successful doing an established style, but artists taking a risk and using their own voice are the key to helping this industry evolve. Keep producing personal work and don't be afraid if it ends up looking weird. Instead of painting what people expect a dragon to look like, paint what the idea of a dragon means to you. Make things outside the usual and you'll end up with much more rewarding and interesting pieces.



Artist insight 15 WAYS TO ADD EVIL TO YOUR ART

To make a work of art that truly disturbs, says **Anthony Scott Waters**, you need to examine the darkest aspects of human nature

What do you mean by horror? You've got to know that before you get rolling. Are we talking HP Lovecraft? Scooby-Doo? Twenty-five years in art has taught me that it's the thinking that counts the most. Iteration without knowing where you're coming from is just spitballing – you're just wasting time.

I've had the pleasure of creating some scary critters for a variety of projects and I'm deeply curious about what scares us

and why. Humans are wired to recognise bilateral symmetry. Deviate from the standard human form in any way and it makes us feel uncomfortable, even scared. As a person with a deformity, I know the truth of this first hand. Everybody has an in-built desire for security. Take that safety blanket away and you'll have one terrified body on your hands.

Keep in mind there's some subjectivity here. Our perception of what's scary changes as we grow up. We're given

concrete reasons for some of our fears (divorce, injury, violence). These can become transcendent (child abuse, rape, murder) in the way they alter our view of the world. Horror's a kaleidoscope. In one setting it might mean a monster erupting from a coffin, but for a parent whose child has been abducted, to look upon the body of that child would be more horrific still. Context gives us the measure of a concept and helps us figure out where to go next.

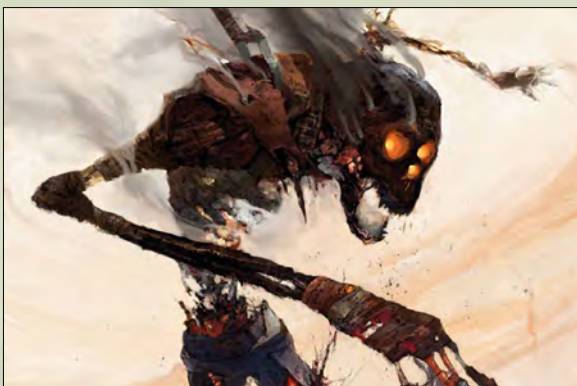
Artist PROFILE
Anthony Scott Waters
COUNTRY: US



Anthony has a successful track record in the entertainment

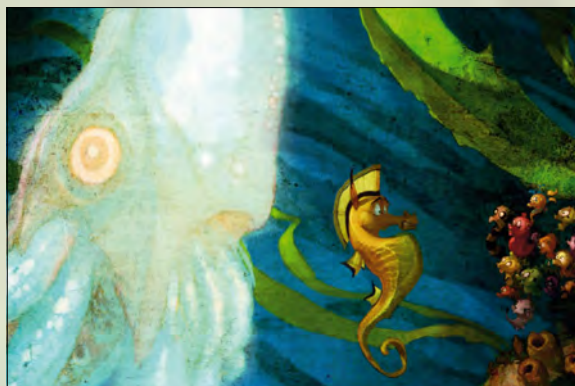
industry, working for such clients as Hasbro, Red 5 Studios, Nihilistic Software, the WB, Blizzard, Sony and Wizards of the Coast.
<http://ifxm.ag/aswaters>

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 6 now!



1 THE SHAPE: WHO'S YOUR AUDIENCE?

Ask yourself: who am I trying to scare? Your answer defines your audience, which helps set your imagination boundaries. This is primarily about age. As we age thresholds are raised. For teenagers, knowing the witch plans to cook Hansel and Gretel isn't enough. We've got to see a chopping block and bloody cleaver.



2 THE SHIVER: WHO IS VULNERABLE?

On stage, the Shiver comes before the Scare and the body floods with adrenaline. Kids are most susceptible, but we stay open to it as adults. Only the context changes. Kids can see what might be, at the same time they see what is – for example, a dangerous dog blocking the sidewalk, a block away.





3 THE SCARE: HOW ARE THEY VULNERABLE?

You know the Sesame Street song, One of These Things... (is Not Like the Other)? This is the opposite. The thing that's different leaps out at us. Our eyes are drawn to things that frighten us – it's programming from our biological past. "That's not a hummock of grass, it's the mane of a lion, you idiot! RUN!" The Scare establishes a baseline for the menace. The Shiver is a shark's fin in the distance. The Scare is seeing the shark from underwater 30 yards away.

4 THE SHOCKER: WHAT'S THE TRUE NATURE OF THE THREAT?

The Shocker clarifies how great the threat is. The head popping out of the hole in the boat in *Jaws*. It drops hints of how severe the gross-out will be, or defines the high water mark where there's no gross-out (see the final scenes in Robert Wise's classic film *The Haunting*).



“The shiver is a shark's fin in the distance. The Scare is the shark only 30 yards away”

5 THE GROSS-OUT: WHAT'S THE WORST POSSIBLE OUTCOME?

Here's the touchiest (pun intended) subject matter of the horrific. I say touchiest not for the gut-churning qualities of the gross-out, but for the dangers of using the gross-out in the

first place. Gross-outs take us straight to the bottom level of shocking. Our fears of blood, of pain, disfigurement and dehumanisation are brought right into our face when you roll out the entrails. The more we get to see, the faster the shock wears off. Without a good, solid context

for the viewers to care about it, the gross-out becomes bowel theatre. *Cabin Fever*'s a good example, or the reboot of the *Evil Dead*. (That does suggest a whole subcategory of horror – the horror of being jaded to suffering – but there's only so much we can discuss here.)

FURTHER VIEWING

Artists who have produced eye-catching, unsettling imagery over the years

Medieval Painters

Hieronymus Bosch
Bruegel the Elder

Old School (from the 1800s to the 1950s)

Sidney Sime
Austin Osman Spare
Alfred Kubin
Max Klinger
Walter Schnackenberg
Odilon Redon

Modern School (from the 1950s to the 1980s)

Charles Keeping
Albín Brunovský
Zdislav Bekskinski
HR Giger
Peter Gric
Wally Wood

Contemporary School (from the 1980s to the present):

Ruprecht von Kaufmann
Yuriy Pikul
Arnau Alemany
Adrian Ghenie
Justin Mortimer
Santiago Caruso
Tony Sandoval
Jerry Wayne Downs
Wayne Barlowe
Mike Ploog



6 GETTING TO THE HEART OF IT

The next logical question is what's at the heart of the choice you've made? Are you going for the Gross-out? What's the context for Gross-out? How about the Scare? These states of fright are all related. What differs is the degree to which you emphasise one element over the others (deciding this will be a scary image, a disturbing one and so on.)



7 DISTORTION OF FORM

This is the easiest way to generate goosebumps. The Pale Man from Pan's Labyrinth had eyes in his palms. Genius. We leave our comfort zone when we alter the mathematical relationships of the human form. Consider what your monster is meant to do and exaggerate the appropriate parts of the human form, like the Martense clan in HP Lovecraft's The Lurking Fear, with arms and shoulders grotesquely overdeveloped to serve their subterranean needs.



8 MIXING AND MATCHING

Another method for bringing horror to the ordinary is to blend elements that don't normally belong together. Pyramid Head from Silent Hill is a great example. The Borg from Star Trek are another. Don't limit yourself. Dig on the internet for good reference, then put everything up in front of you and draw some striking visual connections. Note how HR Giger's Alien design references modern industrial design in the details of torso, arms and legs.





9 THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX

Can objects be made horrific? What about machines or buildings? Anything can be made to appear scary. Don't believe me? Google the Paris Catacombs, Beelitz-Heilstätten Hospital, or Pripyat. Decay and defacement help to make a place creepy, but with places such as Pripyat you're aware something terrible must have happened there even if you don't know anything about the Chernobyl disaster. It's all in how you choose to depict the subject. Zdzisław Beksiński's cathedrals are terrifying. I wouldn't touch the puzzle-box from Hellraiser if you paid me a billion dollars. It's not just the story behind these two examples that frightens. The intended fear was consciously used to sculpt the design.



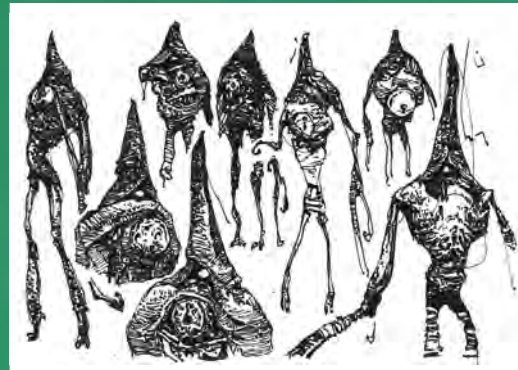
10 DECIDING ON A THEME

How wild should your designs be? It depends on the vibe the client wants. Subtle forms of horror call for careful blending of visual elements. Contrast the revenant from *The Woman in Black* (which fitted with the understated atmosphere of Edwardian England) with *Frankenstein's Army*, which had some of the most bizarre monster designs seen in years. A theme is a spine for a project in the same way a value structure is the spine for a good work of art.

11

CREATE AN AWFUL CREATURE

How to turn a quick sketch into a fully formed, horrifying, character concept



A Meeting an old friend

Years ago I made a noodle in Photoshop of a strange, one-eyed beast. Years later I began working on a personal project called a *Memory of Dead Reckoning*. Glancing through my old files one day I came across that old one-eyed jerk and realised he had a role to play. Step one: determine who – or what – he was.



B Refining the design

I already knew enough about my project that I could set the tone for approaching this fellow. I want an old backwoods, American style, folk-tale vibe, like the tales of Silver John, mixed with a strong dose of HP Lovecraft. I also want an iconic shape. Time for more scribbling...



C Room for self-improvement

I move to digital paint once I've got the shape going in the right direction. I use my painted versions to change the Hookhander's outfits (improving my skill at painting clothing and accessories) and experiment with the textures of the design (wet and mucky, or dry and brittle, or translucent, and so on).

© Wizards of the Coast



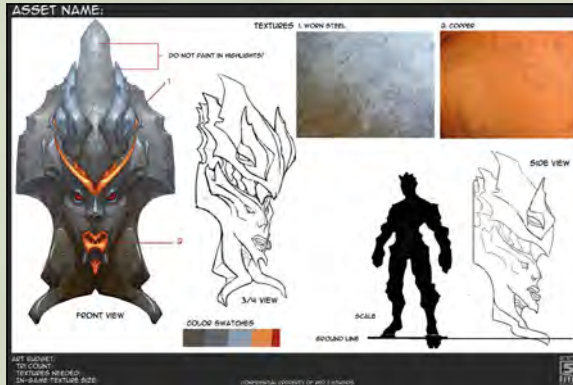
12 EXPOSE THYSELF

Films are like veins of minerals. Tap them for ideas and inspiration, especially ones with rich visuals, such as *Stalker*, *Aliens* or anything by the Brothers Quay. Read authors known for imaginative worlds. China Miéville, Michael Moorcock and HP Lovecraft come to mind. Look for artists who explore the uncanny and horrific.

14 BRING ON THE UNEXPECTED

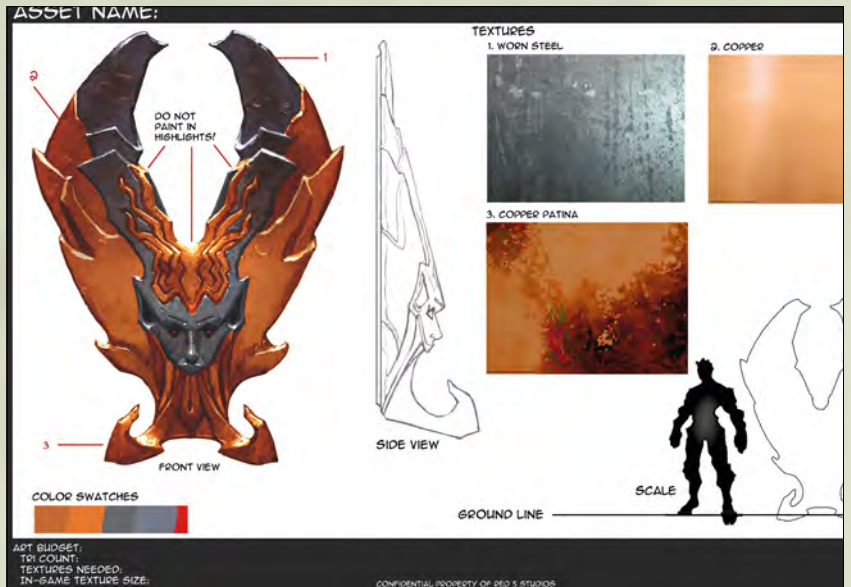
Let's play one of my favourite Photoshop games. Import an image into the monster or setting you're trying to make horrific. Now repeat the steps outlined in tip 13 and begin moving the sliders around. The resulting patterns always give me something useful. By being something I don't want, they help me see what it is I'm after. Often I produce unusual shapes by blending images of leaves and metal with my drawings. This trick is one of the best I know for generating happy accidents.

“Films are like veins of minerals. Tap them for ideas and inspiration, especially those with rich visuals”

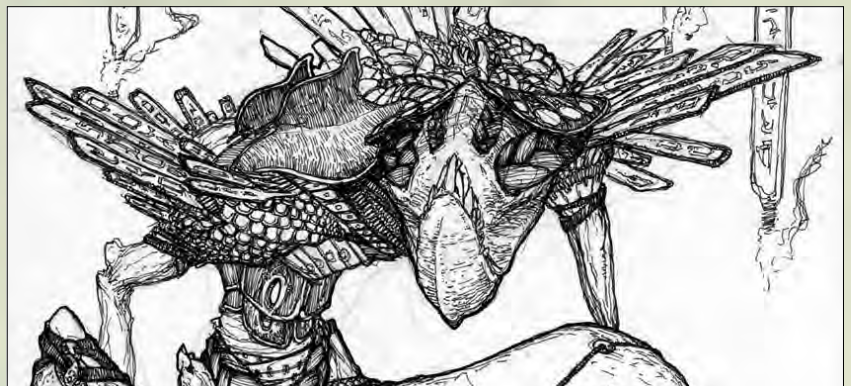


13 LAYER ON LAYER

Double-click a layer in Photoshop and it brings up the Layer Style dialog. You'll notice three sub-menus, offering interesting options. Experiment with the lot, but here I'm going to limit my lesson to the Blend it option. Notice those sliders have a line running through them. Put your cursor over one and hold down Alt, then move the slider. Note how the slider is now in two pieces? This permits you to fine-tune how your selected layer blends with the layer beneath.



© Red 5 Studios



15 IMPROVE YOUR POSTURE

We create so many figures and forms at a high velocity that if we're not careful, shorthand for poses and composition becomes limited. The solution is to go back to the beginning. Resume drawing figures if you've let that go (or animals, perspective, architecture). Given a chance to design a character, try creating a pose that speaks for the character. Tough guys don't stand like slackers, or professors like zombies. Make the pose match the man, or monster! ●

Traditional skills CAPTURE THE MOOD OF A HORROR FILM

Graham Humphreys reveals the thinking behind his soundtrack cover art for the film *Zombie Flesh Eaters*

Artist PROFILE

**Graham
Humphreys**
COUNTRY: England



Graham made
a name for
himself by
painting the
poster art for

films such as *The Evil
Dead* and *Basket Case*.
<http://ifxm.ag/gh-poster>

**GET YOUR
RESOURCES**

See page 6 now!

The Death Waltz Recording Company commissioned this artwork for its launch release. Rather than reuse known campaigns or posters for its catalogue of film soundtracks, the concept is to create new art by a variety of illustrators, with no specific instruction apart from that it should conform to a square format for the 12-inch sleeves.

The film *Zombie Flesh Eaters* remains a firm fan favourite and features one of the most bizarre zombie moments ever filmed: a zombie shark attack. My intention beyond capturing the imagery itself is about creating an atmosphere through colour and texture – something

fetid and uncomfortable. I want it to feel humid and rotten. There's almost a hint of the Spaghetti Western about the film, and the stylised sun is a nod to the films of Sergio Leone.

I begin the process by taking screen grabs from a DVD, to collate a library of reference and inspire the layouts. I present nine sketched options; the choices prove more enticing than I expected and thus two illustrations are commissioned: one for the cover and one for a fold-out insert poster. This is going to be the cover art. I enlarge my selected sketch via a printout on a couple of A3 sheets and trace it on to the watercolour paper. I'm now ready to bring the idea to life. ●



How I create...

ALBUM ART FEATURING ZOMBIES



1

Prepare for colour

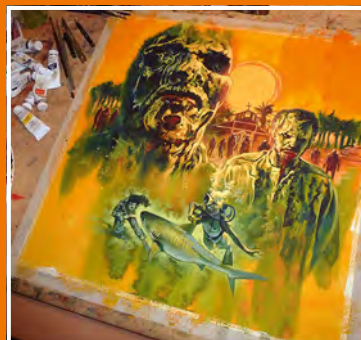
As with all my work, I begin with brushing water on to the surface. The gouache, although traditionally used for opacity, nevertheless provides a good, though basic, watercolour effect.



2

Set the focal points

Referring to the DVD screen grabs enables me to give form to my shapes, and I can now begin to make further decisions about the palette and focal points, using contrast and colour.



3

Bubble device

Notice how I use the bubbles from the diving figure to link the two scenarios. They float towards the sun and help create a strong visual spine. Finally, I add highlights to boost the contrast and dimension.



Setting sun

I convey flare and heat from the light source by warming the edges of the two heads.



Hint at detail

Although I intend the background zombies to be silhouetted, there's a suggestion of faces that's enough to offer the suggestion of detail.



Use of marks

Look closer and you'll see that my marks are building the suggestion of form and surfaces.



Keep it loose

My crude marks are intended to convey the sense rather than the literal image. I'm aiming to keep a fluid, shifting illusion – something that's more akin to life than photorealism. I also use the original wash as part of the design and work within and alongside the random marks.





Procreate PORTRAIT SKILLS IN PROCREATE

Traditional painter **George Pratt** puts down his brushes, picks up his iPad and explains how he creates artwork using Procreate

Artist PROFILE

George Pratt
COUNTRY: US



George is an award-winning painter, writer and photographer. He teaches full-time at Ringling College of Art and Design, and during the summer spends time with the Illustration Academy in Kansas City.
<http://ifxm.ag/g-pratt>

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 6 now!

Recently I produced a workshop on painting my Fables cover for Vertigo Comics (see issue 109). On a whim, I sent ImagineFX some images I'd done using Procreate on the iPad, thinking it would be interesting for the readers to hear how an app intrigued a traditional painter enough to dive in digitally and have fun.

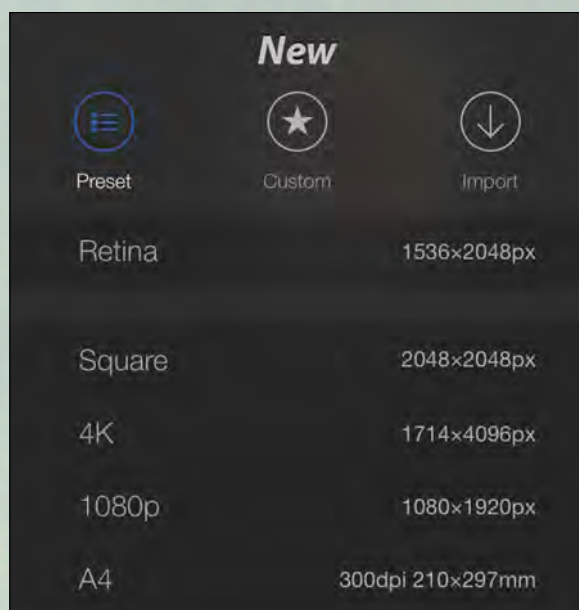
I'm no stranger to Photoshop, but find that I have to jump through too many hoops to accomplish simple tasks. When painting traditionally I grab a brush, mix paint and go. I longed for that kind of simplicity in a computer program. Ringling College of Art and Design,

where I teach full-time, has the largest installed base of Cintiqs in the country; however, it still requires that I use Photoshop, and the lag drives me nuts. Same hoops, different day.

Along comes the iPad. Artist Ron Lemen had me try ArtRage, which he swears by (I've tried all the various drawing/painting apps on the iPad: Brushes and SketchBook Pro, to name but two). Ron achieves beautiful results with ArtRage. During the Illustration Academy out comes his iPad and he paints the restaurant, the bar... beautiful stuff. So I tried it. Again – too many choices and the interface gets in my way.

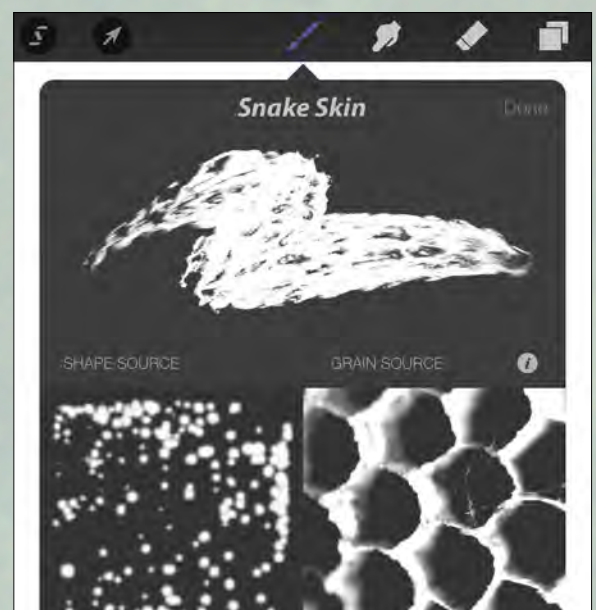
Along comes Procreate! I immediately found myself loving how the interface gets out of the way, enabling me to enjoy the act of drawing and painting.

In my classes I've used Procreate for simple tonal plans and colour studies. I use it to do paint-overs on my students' works. I've used it to illustrate value or colour ideas using the Color Picker on a painting by Harvey Dunn, to show the palette used as well as the tonal and saturation range. It's an incredibly helpful app. So in this workshop I'll lay out the general steps I go through in painting on the iPad using Procreate and how to create a brush in the app as well. Let's go!



1 A new canvas

Rather than go into detail about Procreate's interface I'll get straight to the demonstration. For more in-depth information download Procreate's manual under the Actions menu (the icon that looks like a spanner): select Action>Help>Download the Procreate Handbook. When you launch Procreate you see the Gallery. Create a new canvas by tapping the + icon (top right).



2 Create custom brushes

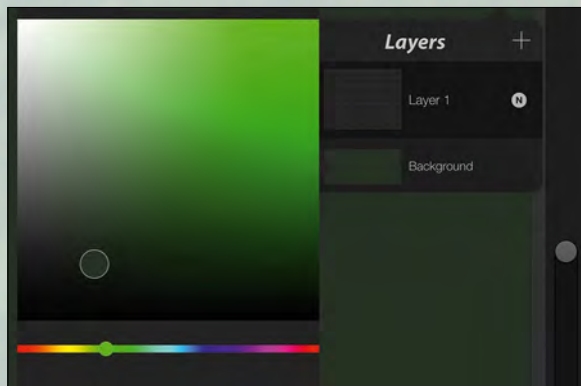
Tap the + in the Brushes menu or swipe left on an existing brush and tap Duplicate. This will carry over the settings from that brush, which you can tweak. Tap the new or duplicate brush to access Brush Behaviors. Tap Source and import an image into either the Shape Source or Grain Source well. You can rotate it by rotating your fingers. Now tweak Behaviors and Dynamics. ➔



PRO SECRETS

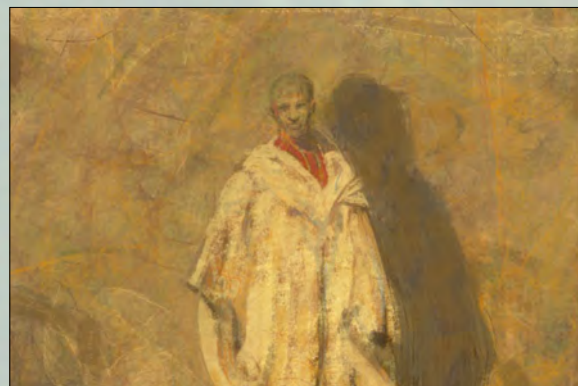
Silhouette and overlap

While not necessarily used in this workshop, these are essential in making a picture as readable as possible. Silhouettes describe the figure and their actions. If the figure/object doesn't read as a silhouette then change the pose or orientation. Overlap occurs when one object that's in front of another creates the illusion of depth. See the art of Howard Pyle, NC Wyeth, Harvey Dunn, Dean Cornwell, Frank Frazetta and Jeff Jones, among others.



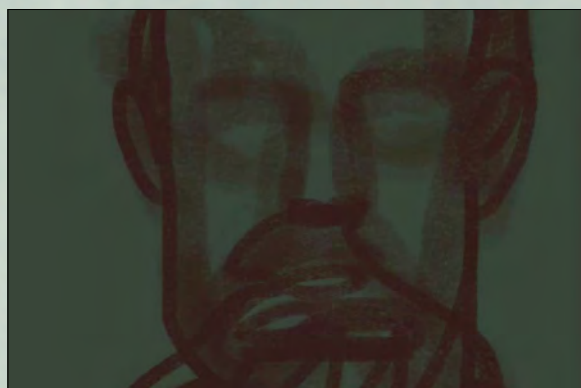
3 Background layer

I decide on a colour space, which is the overall colour of the piece. I think of it as either a volume or a space. Then I choose simple colours: primaries and secondaries. Once I make that decision there are a plethora of variations: warm, cool, neutral, light or dark. This can be changed while working, but it's a great starting point and quickly sets the mood.



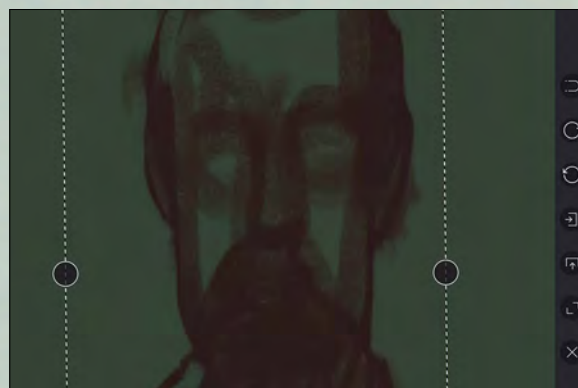
4 Colour space

Do a tonal plan/greyscale value study of the piece: try to make it work without lines. Shape against shape, value against value. Light thing on a dark thing and vice versa. In this earlier painting of mine, the background layer's fill colour sets up the middle value and colour space. The middle value is where the middle value light begins to roll into the dark or shadow values.



5 Start with simple shapes

Begin with an interesting shape, establishing a silhouette. With the default Blunt Charcoal brush I quickly work value and temperature into the mix, thinking about composition. I place one eye in the centre of the canvas, which ensures the head isn't centred. I like the shapes and throw blunt tone down, thinking of light on the form. I use the Eraser tool to redesign the shape.



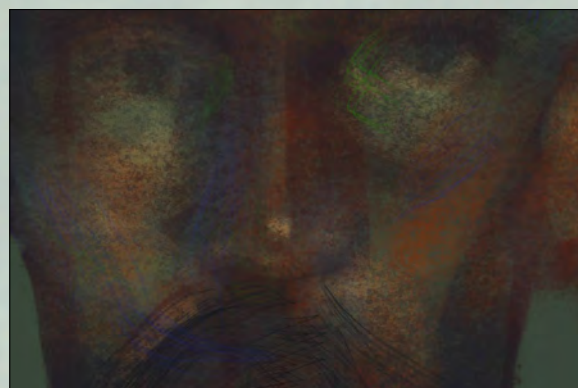
6 Transform the head

I use the Transform tool to distort, shear, stretch, rotate, enlarge and exaggerate a layer. I stop when it's most interesting. Next I add the shoulders. It's not about details, but shapes and values, mood and suggestion. I work middle values for a while, finessing the relationships. Working the big stuff – shape, value, colour and temperature – means I won't get ahead of myself.



7 Colour approach

My application of colour is haphazard and comes from years of scribbling in sketchbooks. This zombie piece of mine is a good example. Light bounces and reflects on to every other colour to a greater or lesser degree. The scribble removes the guesswork. I have an unconscious swirly stroke. If it hits in a weird way I'll paint over it and begin again. Digitally I hit Undo.



8 Streamline layer usage

I don't use many layers. Mostly I forget to! Here I'm limited to seven layers. In my second layer I bring light into the figure. The third is usually a glaze: I fill it with intense opaque colour, set it to Multiply, tweak the Opacity and selectively erase out of the layer. This can make the overall colour turn on a dime or accentuate colours already there, altering the mood/emotion.

RESOURCES WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PROCURE

CUSTOM BRUSHES: SNAKE SKIN



This was created using a photo of a wasp nest.

PALM FROND

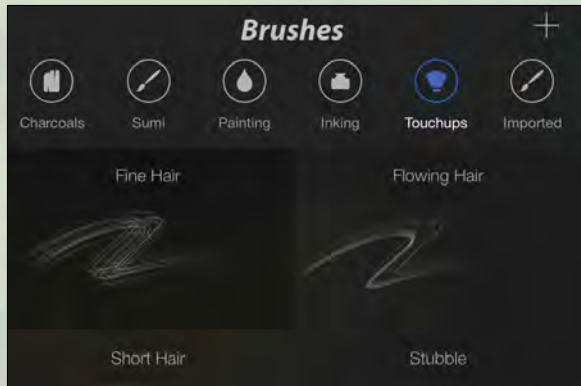


This brush makes a great cloth texture. I used a photograph of a dead palm tree frond or leaf.

PALM 2



Slight variation of the Palm Frond brush.



9 Paint quality

As with oils, I'm looking for texture, shape and visual interest. I switch to the Fine Hair default brush under Touchups. I use this sometimes for hair, but more to add texture and optical mixtures: two pure colours sitting side by side, so the eyes do the mixing. Physically mixing two colours kills their purity. Optical mixing retains purity. The colours vibrate and tickle the eyes.



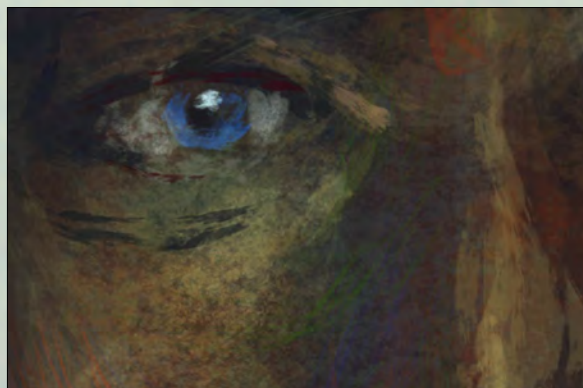
10 The trouble with digital art

What I dislike about digital work is the slickness and cold, inhuman quality. Artists seem to use typical brushes and let the program dictate the look and feel. But some artists' work stands apart: Craig Mullins, Jon Foster, Justin Sweet, Vance Kovaks, Justin Coro, to name a few. They're aware that objects are made of different materials and that the paint itself is a consideration.

PRO SECRETS

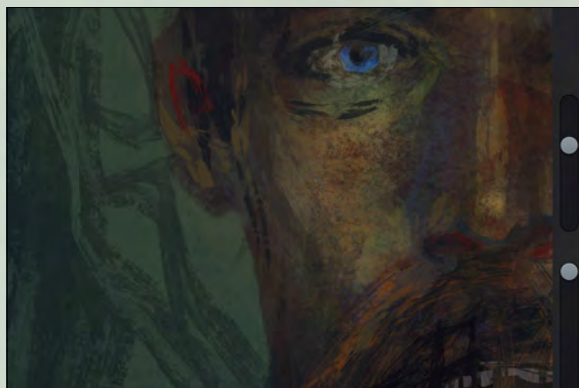
Tone/value and colour

Have a tonal plan/value structure and stick to it. The eye will go to the spot of highest contrast. This is a good place for saturation, in keeping with the value structure that you've figured out. Many people confuse saturation with value. Saturation is the purity and intensity of a colour without dilution with white. If every colour is saturated then the eye doesn't know where to go. Add a desaturated area in the middle of a saturated piece and the eye will go to the desaturated area first. Invert the formula and it works the same way.



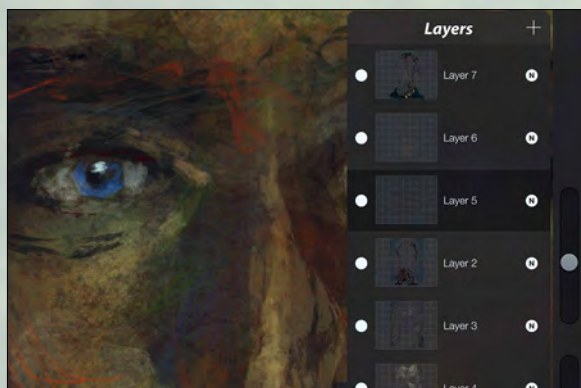
11 A little detail

These artists have a dialogue with paint. I try to do the same here. Now I tighten up the structure, work form and colour. Some detail can be added now. I tweak the eyes, and work the nose and mouth. There's a balance between readability and spontaneity. Energy in the brushwork is important – painting is drawing. Then it's time to tackle the background.



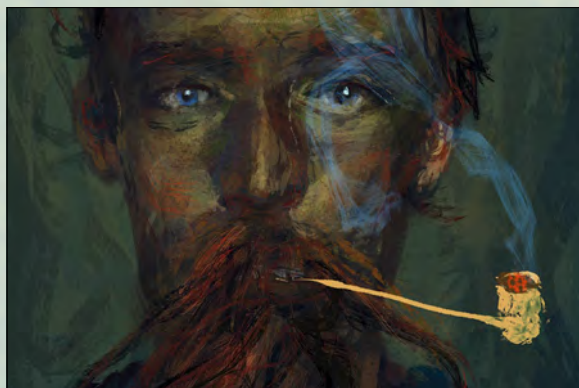
12 Work the background

I add another layer so I don't have to worry about messing up my figure, and I can also erase from the layer. I use the Snakeskin brush here because I like the texture, which contrasts nicely with the flesh and tunic. Next I adjust the Opacity, letting the background settle behind the figure and then push it forward. From here on it's all about what I like to call tickling.



13 Merging and transforming

I merge several layers, add more hair, and work the form and volume of the flesh on his cheeks. On separate layers I add teeth to peek beneath the moustache, and a smoking pipe. It'll be fun to transform these elements before playing with Opacity. I'll squash him and reconfigure the head in the composition, reducing or enlarging it. I might even reshape the tunic.



14 Finishing up

To finish, I add some blood spatters using the Flicks brush that's under Spraypaints. I set it to its largest size and splatter away. Any stray splatters are easily erased. And the face is finished. The final image makes the character more depraved, whereas before the distortion he was a much more sympathetic character. I like them both.

PRO SECRETS

Purchase a good stylus

Using the Pogo Connect or the Wacom Stylus I've enjoyed pressure sensitivity and varying opacity, and been able to produce thick and thin lines effortlessly. You have to tweak the brushes to achieve the full benefit of pressure sensitivity, but this takes very little time and is worth it.

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Corrado Vanelli shares
his sumptuous art tips
and techniques!

Refresh your art

Take inspiration from the
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work with colour and detail!

Inspiration and advice

The Lady of the Lake

Katarina Sokolova
details her process on
recreating the doomed
noblewoman Ophelia.

Creature imaginarium

Discover how to critter
up your creatures with
unmissable guidance
from Mike Corriero.

Photoshop textures

Build a unique city
using textures in
Photoshop with
Donglu Yu.

Get clever with your pencils

Artist Wylie Beckert
shares how she creates
her intricate and
delicate traditional art.

ISSUE 112 ON SALE IN UK FRIDAY 18 JULY



Photoshop STREAMLINE YOUR WORK PROCESS

Xavier Collette explains how to make your painting process more efficient, as he brings a dark faerie to life in a woodland setting

Artist PROFILE
Xavier Collette
COUNTRY: France



Belgium-born
Xavier is a full-time freelancer
who works on book covers, boardgames, RPGs, children's titles and comic books.
www.xaviercollette.com

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See page 6 now!

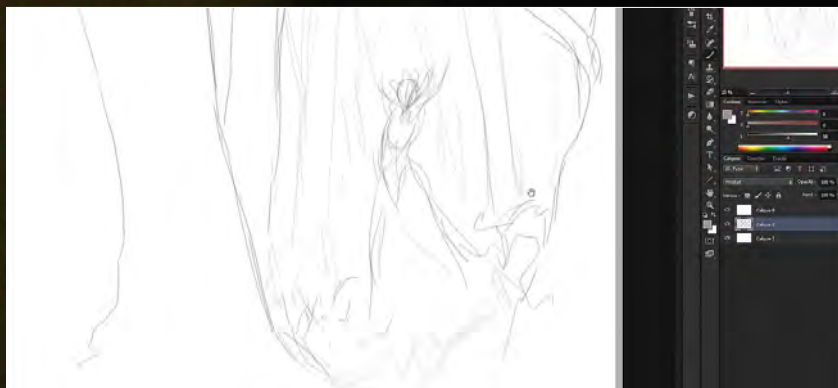
This workshop is an opportunity to take you through my painting process, and give you some tips that will make your workflow more efficient and easier to manage. As I develop this illustration I'll talk about taking an instinctive approach to producing a painting.

I think following art rules can help you develop your skills, but sometimes they conspire to restrict you. Trying to meet a range of artistic criteria, such as engaging character designs, compelling compositions and effective colour schemes, can slow you down. The best way forward, I think, is to learn how to do things instinctively. With practice, it becomes second nature to see the things that are working in an image, and identify those elements that still need tweaking.

The only thing I do before starting to paint this image is flick through a lot of illustrations and photographs, just to kick-start my subconscious so that it begins to generate ideas. After that I launch straight into the painting.

It's always a real pleasure to enter the world of fantasy art, because it's how I started out in digital painting about nine years ago (time's going too fast...). At around the same time I was working on a personal project about a dark faerie, and I wasn't happy with the way it turned out. I'm happy to be able to revisit the topic for this month's ImagineFX! ➡➡





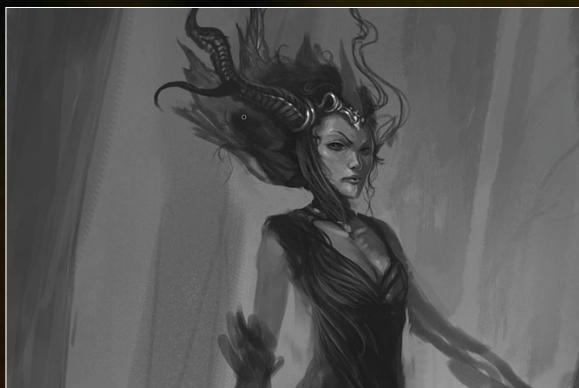
1 Initial sketches

I don't know where I'm going with this illustration. I just know that I want the main character to be a kind of queen – someone who gives you the feeling of fear when you look her in the eyes. So I start with a rough sketch, just to give me a composition. She's walking in the woods and sees you. Well, let's draw something that'll give you a sense of dread!



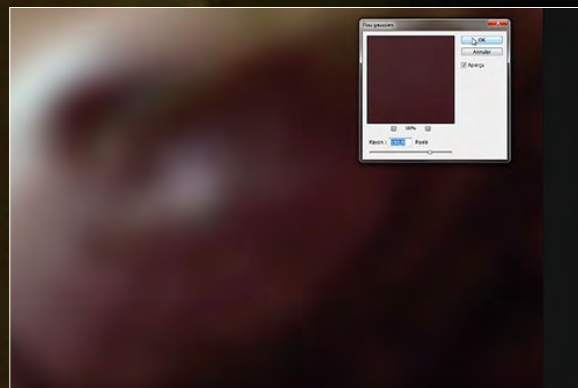
2 Fifty shades of grey

It's important to consider the depth of an image and define the planes: the background, with two or three levels of depth; the main plane with your character; and the foreground. I start in mono – it's quicker, and easier to modify. I put in large grey values and start defining the character, giving her horns and a full-length dress. At this stage I just want to capture a feeling.



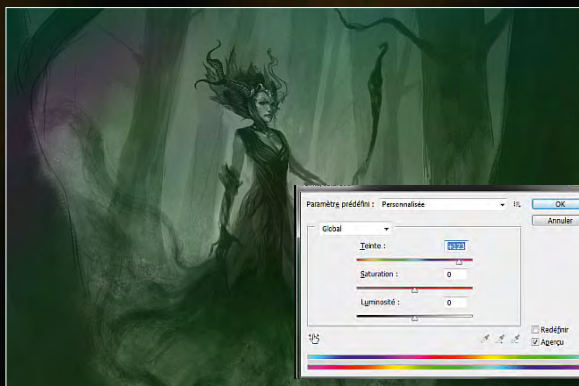
3 Starting point

We all have little foibles, and one of mine is that at an early stage I can't resist painting the face of a character. It's often said that detailing elements in isolation isn't good, because you end up not seeing the bigger picture. Useful advice, I won't deny it. But I can't go on if the face doesn't have just a bit of detail. So I spend a little time on her face, crown, horns and hair.



4 Colour advice

Sometimes it's difficult to decide on what colours to add to an illustration. So here's a little tip. Take an old painting or even a photograph – no matter what the subject. Duplicate the image layer, and apply Gaussian Blur to the duplicate. Then change the Layer Blending mode to Color, Overlay or Hue, and see if the results inspire you for your current painting.



5 Finding the colour theme

After doing this, I adjust the Hue/Saturation, and paint with a brush set to Color mode to find what I'm looking for. One other tip is to apply Auto Levels or Auto Contrast, and then play around with the layer's blending modes. Sometimes, happy accidents will inspire you to take things further when you've run into a creative brick wall.



RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSH: NOISE

Using this brush set to Soft Light or Color Dodge mode can easily apply texture to your painting's background.



6 Adding details

I start to apply details to my character, starting with the head and bust, before moving on to the dress design. I'm not using any specific references for the dress but, as I said, simply flick through a large set of images to get my creative juices flowing so that I can come up with an original design. ➡



7 Contrast

It's good to have contrast in an image. More specifically, contrasting shapes, luminosity and colours. A little blue light will be my choice for this image, which will indicate my faerie's magical power and control over the creatures in the scene.



8 More details

Now that I'm happy with my choice of colours, I can complete the design of her costume, adding details such as jewellery and depicting a range of materials – shiny ones, furs, leather, metals – which together will make the design more interesting. I also tackle the look of the arms. I want something that hints at vegetation. After all, she's not a human character.

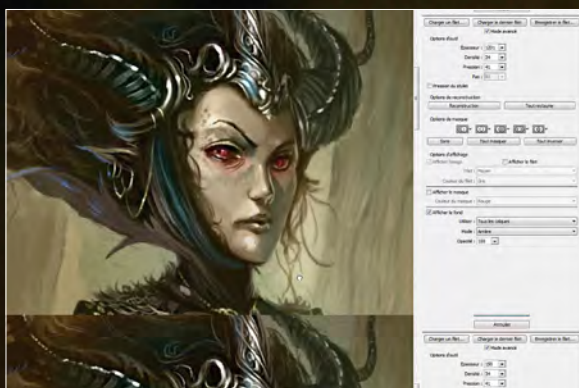
Shortcuts

Duplicate image

Shift+Ctrl+Alt+E (PC)

Shift+Cmd+Alt+E (Mac)

Creates a new layer containing a flattened version of your multi-layered image.



9 Liquify is your friend

Remember to take advantage of the features in a digital painting program. For example, Photoshop's Liquify tool is a powerful editing option. Here, I use it to fix the faerie's face, which I have decided is too long.



10 Finish her

Time to add the final details to the character. I lay down the last brush strokes on her corset, finalise the look of her skull sceptre, fix the little glows of blue light on her costume, and so on. Now is a good time to add some life to the background with rays of light and some noise – a spotted brush in Color Dodge mode will do this perfectly.

PRO SECRETS

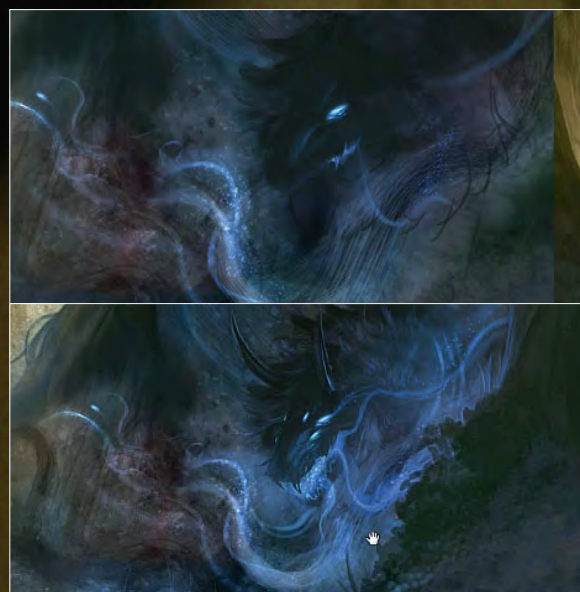
Flip your art

It's important to flip your image horizontally on occasion as the painting progresses, because it'll give you a fresh view of your work. In Photoshop choose Image>Image Rotation>Flip Canvas Horizontal. I highly recommend mapping a shortcut to this function (I use Ctrl+Shift+Alt+R).



11 Creature feature

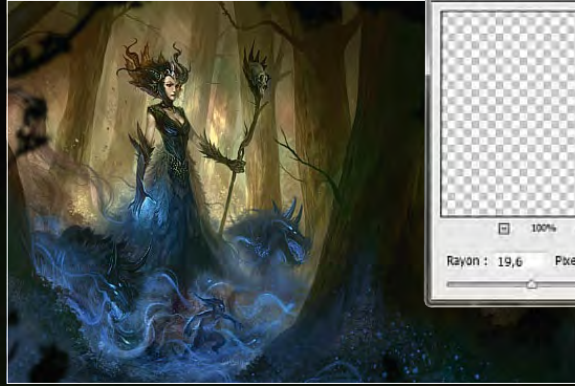
I want my dark faerie to have some... pets. The bottom of the composition is a little loose, so it's the ideal area to introduce creatures that have been brought to life through her dark magic. I don't have a definite idea of what I'm going to do, so I sketch with a dark brush, then use a brush set to Color Dodge to add details such as eyes and a mouth with some magic coming out.





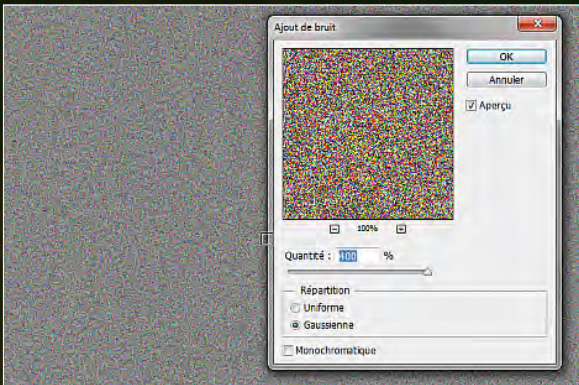
12 A menagerie of monsters

I just work on instinct until I'm happy with the design of my creature. Then I can add another one. I apply the same work process: create a little sketch and then add details using a brush set to Color Dodge. I also add another creature – a kind of faun – and create a magical wispy cloud that straddles the background and foreground. This adds further depth to the scene.



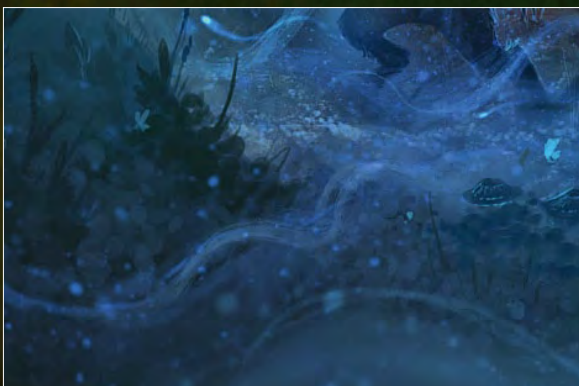
13 Blurry elements

I've almost finished this illustration, and now I'll apply some little tricks that I've learned over the years. I want my faerie to see the watcher – the viewer – who's hiding in the forest. So I draw some branches with a Hard Stroke brush. There's no need to paint in details – I simply use big, flat strokes. Then I add a Gaussian Blur to it, and that's done!



14 Grain adds texture

I like to apply texture to my paintings. Sometimes it's just a paper texture on an Overlay layer. But here I'll do something different. I add a neutral grey layer (Saturation 0, Luminosity 50) and apply Filter>Noise>Add Noise twice (set to maximum) and Filter>Blur>Blur three times. Then I set the layer to Overlay and tweak the Opacity, settling on five to six per cent.



15 More magical life

I decide that the painting needs more life. My solution is to quickly paint some butterflies in the foreground, again to give the scene more depth, together with smaller ones around the magical cloud and the main character. I also introduce a range of forest flora, such as small vegetables, leaves, herbs and mushrooms. I'm happy with these late additions.



16 Final trick

One last piece of advice. Variations are good, and a simple way to add little more variety to your art is to create a new layer and fill it using a cloudy brush. Set your primary colour to a light grey and your secondary to a dark one, and use the cloudy brush to generate a decent amount of contrast. Then set the layer to Overlay. I follow my own advice, and finish the painting!

PRO SECRETS

Take regular snapshots

When starting a new stage in your work, or experimenting with a certain area in your composition, make use of Photoshop's History Snapshot feature. It's a good way to create steps in your work, and you can use the Art History brush to recover a portion of your work from a previous step too.

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DIGITAL

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VOLUME 2

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SketchUp

USE COMPONENTS TO BUILD A MODEL

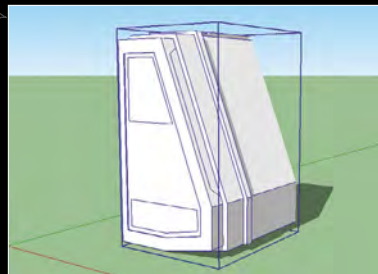
Components can save you lots of time when creating SketchUp models. Discover how to use them effectively with **Mark Roosien**

Components are mini-models that can be used in SketchUp to build larger models. A component is a repetitive element, which only needs to be created once and can then be duplicated as necessary. As such, components are the greatest time-saving feature in SketchUp

(the free version, SketchUp Make, is available from www.sketchup.com). For example, when designing a car, create one half, then duplicate it to produce the other half, or create one wheel and replicate it three times. When making a symmetrical model you may only need to produce only one quarter of the final object.

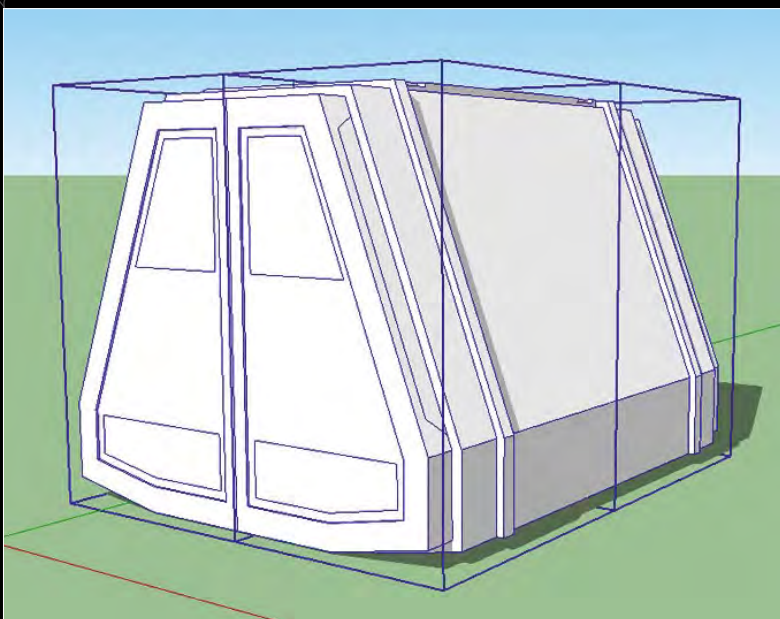
1 Create a component

I want to make a large container that can be used as a repetitive element on a spaceship. I design one quarter of the container by using the Line Tool and the Push/Pull Tool. Now I use the Select Tool to capture the quarter model in a selection box. All lines and surfaces will now change colour. I select the Make Component icon, then choose Create.



2 Make a container

The first component is ready, but I'll need four to complete the container model. I select the Move Tool and click the component. Then I move the component while holding Ctrl (or Cmd) to create copies. Some of the components need to be mirrored to make them fit properly. To do this, I select the component, right-click, select Flip Along and choose the desired flip effect.



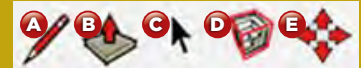
Artist PROFILE

Mark Roosien
COUNTRY: Netherlands

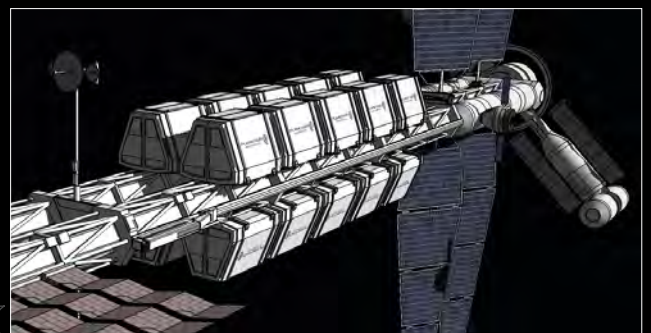


Mark is a self-taught artist who jumped from traditional media to SketchUp seven years ago. He specialises painting nuts and bolts sci-fi art.
<http://ifxm.ag/mroosien>

MODIFYING COMPONENTS



In this article I use the Line tool (A), the Push/Pull tool (B), the Select tool (C), the Make Component tool (D) and the Move tool (E). After you've created and duplicated your component, you'll still be able to modify it. And when a component is changed, all duplicated components will change as well. Select the component (a blue box will appear around it), right-click and select Edit Component. If you want a component to differ from its duplicates, right-click and select Make Unique.



3 Construct a spaceship

I select all four components and select the Make Component tool again to make one big container component. I can now duplicate lots of containers for my spaceship with only a few mouse clicks. It's possible to create components to produce all sorts of elements for the ship model. In this example, the containers, solar panels, antennae, support beams, radiators and crew modules are all duplicates. ●

Photoshop DRAW AND PAINT MARLEY'S GHOST



Ed Binkley works efficiently to build up his composition, and shows how he's able to conjure up the magic of recognisable Victorian-era horror

Artist PROFILE

Ed Binkley
COUNTRY: US



Ed is an art educator and freelance illustrator. His credits

include Lucasfilm and a variety of books and magazines, plus a Gold Award in Spectrum: The Best in Contemporary Fantastic Art.

www.edbinkley.com

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RESOURCES**

See page 6 now!

Shortcuts

'Hide all'
Layer Mask

Alt+Click mask icon (PC)

Alt+Click mask icon (Mac)

Hides an entire layer, then paint the mask to reveal it.

Horror is a broad genre of contemporary illustration, but Victorian horror has a particular appeal to me. I'm fascinated by the psychological horror the great Victorian writers created. Charles Dickens, Mary Shelley, Bram Stoker, Henry James and their ilk created stories that enable us to bring our own experiences to their work. The result is greater than the storyteller could have accomplished by dictating every nuance.

Second, early photography of the 19th century creates a definite sense of time and place. The sepia tone combines with the inherent authority of photography to say, "Yes, of course this is how things were" – and it was bleak. Victorian people obviously lived in full colour. But our nearly universal impression of the culture is one of shadowy, gas-lit black-brown.

Finally, Victorians loved ghosts. This was the era when phantoms became characters for entertainment as well as

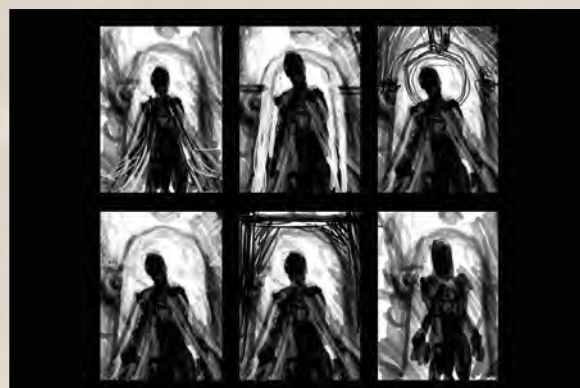
edification. I chose a pivotal moment for Marley: when he has lost his patience with Scrooge's disbelief, and his wail is horrifying enough to bring the curmudgeon to his knees.

Scrooge's scepticism is symbolic of the Victorian embracement of the New Science (horrifyingly critiqued by Shelley's *Frankenstein* 20 years earlier), in which old superstitions weren't tolerated. Marley knows better and has to break through for the sake of his own soul.



1 Starting in greyscale

I'll be drawing the image in greyscale and applying the tone later. It's essentially a workshop in digital drawing, and I demonstrate techniques that are standard in Photoshop along with my own processes. I also emphasise efficiency, since professional work must hit a deadline without sacrificing the impact of the final image.



2 Compositional thoughts

I always begin with fast sketches to try and find the composition. This enables quick experiments and also takes advantage of happy accidents. All I know is that I want Marley centred with a framing device around his head (probably a door), and an upward perspective that places the viewer slightly below him, as if they're kneeling.



PRO SECRETS

Start with silhouettes

My favourite drawing technique is to paint white or light grey into a black silhouette with the Transparency locked. Almost every object I depict starts as a black silhouette, shaped carefully for impact and clarity, with white or light values painted in. This gives my subjects their 3D believability because I'm lifting form up from the picture plane, as opposed to traditional dark-into-light, which depends on pushing things back.



3 Looking for personality

Once I find a composition that works, I scale the thumbnail up to full resolution and dimensions, and start looking for Marley's personality by painting white or lighter values on to the black silhouette. This technique also tends to create texture as I go, so I rarely remove something completely or start from scratch.



4 Editor sketches

I add elements to give the editor a clear notion of where I'm going with the image. Some clients want multiples to choose from, and in those cases I create variations that have substantial differences rather than subtleties. The illustration has to address the editor's needs, but I try to avoid submitting anything I'm not enthusiastic about – sometimes that's the one that gets chosen.

Shortcuts

Perspective Transform

Cmd+Alt+Shift+drag (PC)
Ctrl+Alt+Shift+drag (Mac)
Easily create parallel textures such as woodgrain.



5 Initial textures

I paint the initial wood texture and add the foundation plaster on the wall. I do multiple passes on each silhouette, moving towards lighter values and smaller brushes. The first pass on textures such as woodgrain is done with parallel lines on a straight grid. The second pass is done freehand to create a more natural look. A third pass tightens details for more realism.



6 Painting a final pass

Here I'm using a light grey or white and a small brush. I try to bring reference images into the image for a couple of reasons: I don't have to look very far from my drawing to see the reference; and I do a lot of horizontal flips to check anatomy when I work, and now the reference flips with my drawing. You can also see the texture that's created by the multiple-pass approach.



7 Depicting realistic hair

I replace the sketched hair with more realistic hair. I shape the hair using white, then lock the Layer Transparency and fill with black to create a hair silhouette. Then I switch the brush to white and paint white hair on top. This adds depth and realism by using the silhouette as shadow within the white hair, and maintains the shape as I work on depth and highlights.



8 Realising the chains

The replacement chains are created from only three drawn links: a full-view link, a side-view link and a three-quarter-view link. I then combine them into a random-looking basic unit of about eight links merged together, and duplicate that unit to make the longer strands. Then I duplicate the longer strands to create the entire mass, and add a quick overall texture.

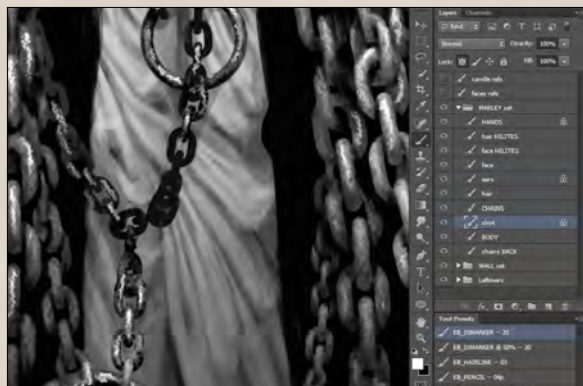
RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSH: SCRAGGLY HAIR BRUSH

Ideal for creating masses of hair. Try it first with solid black to create mass, then white on top to imply depth.



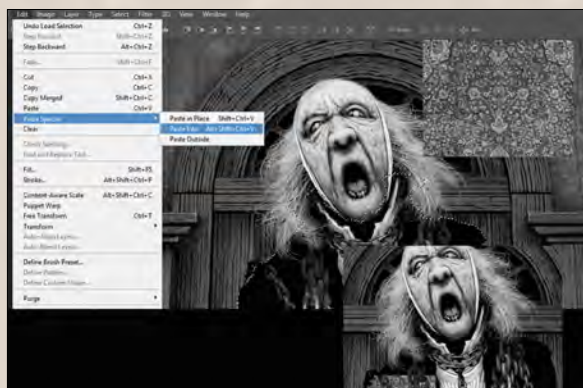
9 Introducing more detail

For lighter-value cloth such as linen or cotton, I let the early rough sketch suggest folds and pleats, refining what's already there. I've found this to be a more efficient approach than trying to duplicate details from a reference image. I just scribble, then see what I see, using reference only as a general guide while I add gradually lighter and more detailed passes.



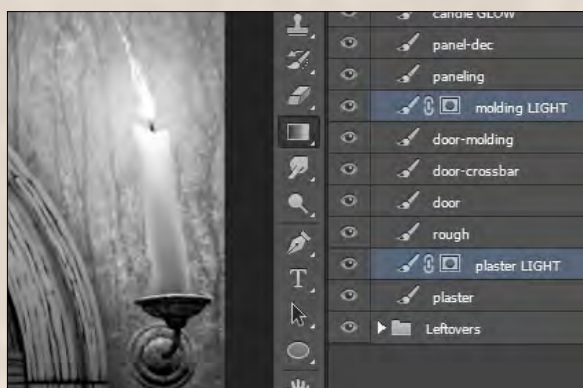
10 Getting ready for print

To help me judge how much detail to push toward, I've drawn one-inch tick marks with a metallic pen on the outer frame of my main monitor. Then I can show the rulers in Photoshop and match my Zoom level to the actual-size ruler on the frame. This enables me to judge my level of detail for print reproduction without having to produce multiple printouts.



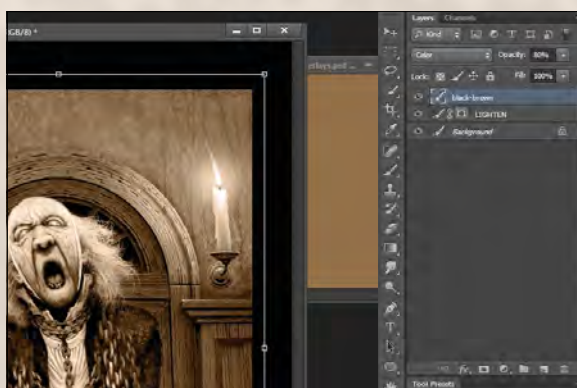
11 Adding fabric to the coat silhouette

I copy a section of fabric, then load the Coat layer as a Selection. The Edit>Paste Special>Paste Into function creates a mask in the shape of the coat. I can then Transform, Duplicate and adjust the fabric within the shape, and paint on the mask to make the fabric conform to Marley's torso. I work on his torso and sleeves separately to ensure the seam at the shoulders stays strong.



12 With added spookiness

After creating the candles and sconces, I use my "Layer and levels" technique (see Pro Secrets, right) to create the spooky lighting. This is a great technique for antique-looking light effects, whether from candles, a fire or gaslight. And it's very fast because the object's details and textures are already drawn and I don't risk destroying anything.



13 Finishing off

I save a flattened version, convert it to RGB and add a sepia-colour Color layer. Wherever the drawing values match the value of the brown from the drawing, the brown's saturation will be strongest. Then I adjust the sepia layer's Opacity to reduce the saturation. Finally, I duplicate the drawing layer, and Layer and Level it to enhance the candlelight effect.

PRO SECRETS

Create light and shadow

To create a light (or shadow) effect across a broad area, I use a Layer and Levels technique. I duplicate the subject layer, lighten it using Levels, then add a Hide-all mask. Then I paint on the mask to reveal the lightened layer, which gives me control over the effect of the light. By Levels-adjusting a duplicated layer I control what happens to the details and texture, unlike when simply painting to lighten or darken something. Then I can focus on the light effect and not worry about losing details.

Next month

ImagineFX Workshops

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Katarina Sokolova paints a doomed Ophelia.

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Create better creatures with Mike Corriero.

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PRESENTS



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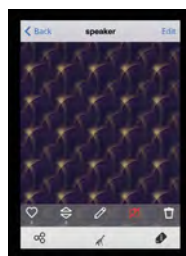


Artist's Choice Award
Art resources with a five-star rating receive the ImagineFX Artist's Choice award!

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



7
PRODUCTS
ON TEST



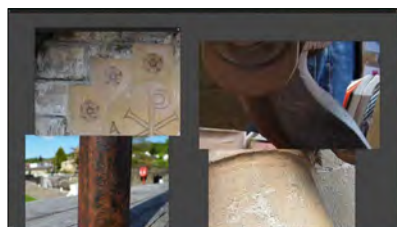
SOFTWARE

92 Flame Painter 3

Now there's an even better way to paint with fire! But do the added features justify the extra outlay for this indie art program?

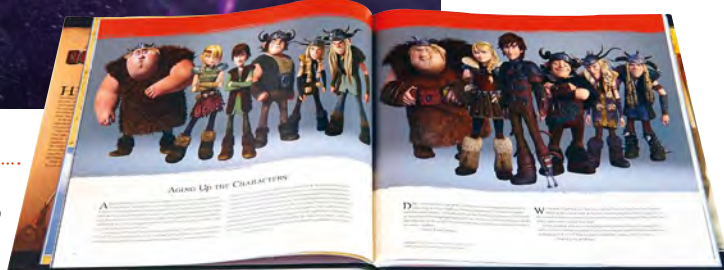
93 Patterns

Using Corel's iPhone app for creating repeating, tiled graphics, you can introduce real-life patterns to your art via photographs.



93 refBoard

This handy free program enables you to display all your reference materials on an easy-to-use virtual pinboard. No more printouts!



BOOKS

94 New reads

The Art of How to Train Your Dragon 2; The Paleoart of Julius Csotonyi; Robert Crumb: Sketchbooks 1964–1982.

TRAINING

97 The Making of Totem

Gnomon supremo Alex Alvarez creates a mysterious jungle scene using 2D and 3D tools.



RATINGS EXPLAINED Magnificent Good Ordinary Poor Atrocious



Randomised elements such as noise can be used to add a lot of detail to your images.

Flame Painter 3 MAC & PC

FLAME GRILLED One of our favourite pieces of indie art software has just got even better – but does the price represent value for money?



Price £18 (Personal), £54 (Professional) **Company** Escape Motions **Web** www.escapemotions.com **Contact** support@escapemotions.com

We're big fans of Flame Painter, Escape Motions' fire-creation software. It's a wonderful way of creating realistic flames, but imaginative artists can use it to create everything from microscopic nerve structures to entire galaxies. With the latest version, Flame Painter just got a hell of a lot better.

At its core this is the Flame Painter we've come to know and love, and it works in exactly the same familiar way as its predecessors. You're given a blank, black canvas and a constantly jiggling brush with which to create your composition.

There are a variety of preset brushes to choose from, such as Rainbow Lens Flare, which looks like JJ Abrams' imagination, or the good ol' orangey flames. There's also a capable granular system for adjusting and customising brushes. You can change their size, speed, softness, centre, chaos, noise, as well as picking between a single colour and a gradient. Different combinations produce jarringly different results, and it's worth experimenting with the various settings to find effects which suit whatever you're creating.

One of the biggest advantages of previous versions of the software is

that you don't need more than a mouse to create stunning work – in fact the robotic lines and defined clicks of a rodent contrast well with Flame Painter's organic scattergun approach. However, Flame Painter 3 includes support for Wacom tablets and Leap Motions' Kinect-like Mac and PC controller. Both of which work really well here.

While Flame Painter's flames have always been an interesting addition to

“The fact Escape Motions has found so much to improve is incredible”

Photoshop pieces, there's always been a lot of back-and-forth between the two. The latest version solves this with a plug-in that immediately translates changes in Flame Painter to Photoshop and vice versa.

This does, however, mean you have to have both programs open at the same time. This is because, according to Escape Motions, Photoshop isn't capable of running Flame Painter's brushes as an internal plug-in.



Even on its own, Flame Painter is a powerful piece of software. Version 3 has found improvements where we could hardly see room for any.

Another new addition is a vector layer, which greatly increases Flame Painter's versatility. Although you're limited to a single stroke on this layer, it can be exported as an SVG (Scalable Vector Graphics) file and then broken apart in Illustrator or CorelDRAW. It's an impressive technical feat, and it brings a sprightly other-worldliness to the staid nature of vector graphics.

When we looked at Flame Painter last year, we had very few criticisms and it seemed like near-perfect software. So the fact Escape Motions has found so much to improve and add is quite incredible in itself.

The only sticking point now is the £54 price tag for the pro version, which is up £18 from last year. But we reckon the new additions are more than worth the extra outlay, and Escape Motions offers cheap upgrades to existing Flame Painter owners.

DETAILS

Features

- Photoshop blending modes
- Unlimited layers
- Leap Motion support
- Multicore optimisations
- Photoshop plug-in (CS5, CS6, CC) (Pro only)
- Open and save layered PSD files (Pro only)
- Export SVG vector format files (Pro only)
- Wacom tablet support (Pro only)
- Editable vector layers (Pro only)
- Supersmooth antialiasing (Pro only)

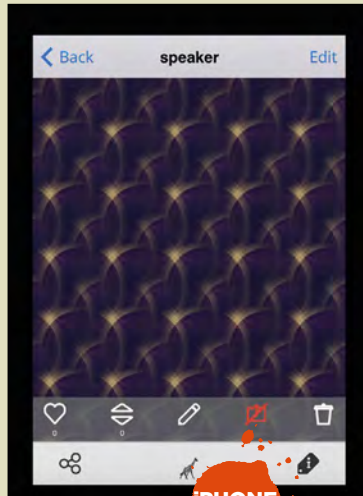
System Requirements

PC: Windows XP, Vista, or 8, Intel Pentium 4 CPU, OpenGL 2.0 graphics card, 1GB RAM, 40MB free hard drive space.
Mac: OS X Snow Leopard, Lion, Mountain Lion, Mavericks, Intel CPU, OpenGL 2.0 graphics card, 1GB RAM, 40MB free hard drive space.

Rating



This psychedelic pattern was created using an image of a round speaker that was tiled, blended and colour adjusted.



IPHONE ONLY

Patterns

PHOTO FIT Introduce patterns to your art via photography

Price Free

Company Corel

Web www.corel.com

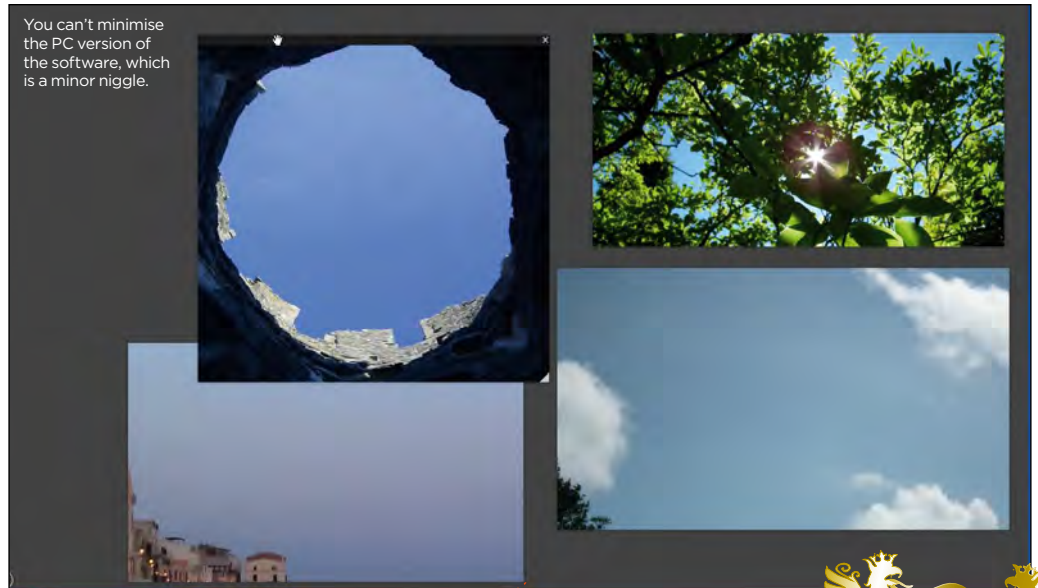
RATING

Corel's Patterns is a nifty little iPhone app designed specifically for creating repeating, tiled patterns using photos you've taken with your device's camera. If you're anything like us, you'll have often noticed interesting objects or textures while you're in the great outdoors, and Patterns is a great way to incorporate these into your art.

Once you've taken a picture you can crop and rotate it to a square frame, then use blends to hide the edges, and adjust brightness, luminance and contrast. It's incredibly easy to use and you can turn mundane images into interesting tiled patterns. Your pattern can then be emailed as a PNG image or a CorelDRAW-specific FILL file. Another cool feature here is a community where you can share your patterns, and vote other patterns up or down, a bit like Instagram or Pinterest.

You're a little limited in what you can do with the patterns once they're in your creative software of choice, and there aren't any randomisation options for creating large-scale tiles. But you can still use it to create textures for clothing or objects, and the fact that it's free makes it even better.

You can't minimise the PC version of the software, which is a minor niggle.



refBoard

MAC & PC



BOARD SUPREMACY A nifty free piece of software that displays all your reference materials on an easy-to-use board

Price Free **Company** Jonathan Richards **Web** www.designerjon.com/refboard **Contact** See website

Reference material is always a weak spot in an artist's work flow. You can print it out, but it's a bit 20th century, plus your Wacom can quickly be buried under a pile of paper. Looking up material on a tablet or smartphone is an option, but the constant back-and-forth between screens can be disruptive.

This is where refBoard comes in handy. This small, free program is designed for viewing images in a window on your PC or Mac. It stays on top of other windows so it's always viewable, and you can zoom in and out of your pictures, or reposition multiple images as if they were on a pinboard. If you've built a board you like you can save the group of images to load later.

That's pretty much all it does, and we have to admire its rather singular functionality. A few things we'd like to have added are the ability to see what zoom level reference material is displayed at, as well as keyboard shortcuts for essential functions such as zooms and pans. At the moment only JPG, GIF and PNG images are supported – it would be nice to access formats such as PSDs and BMPs.

However, this is a brilliant piece of software that utterly serves its purpose. It's all the more impressive because it's been created by one person, Jonathan Richards. Jonathan has a history of actively listening to communities and is quick to add requested features, so it's probably going to get better, too.

DETAILS

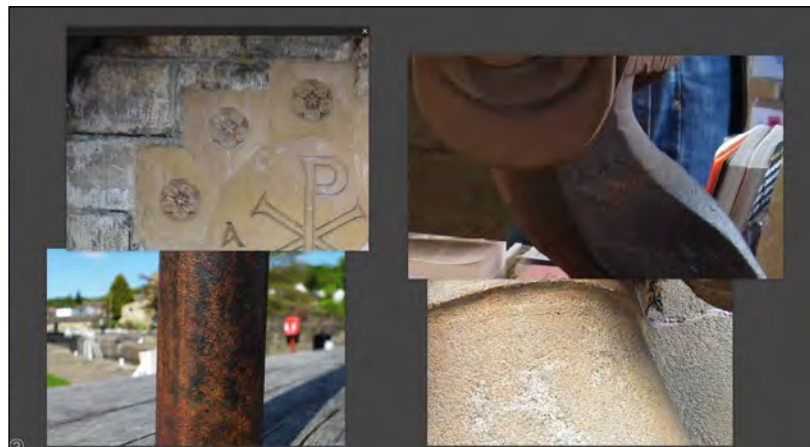
Features

- Always-on-top window
- Discrete UI
- Every function controlled by mouse
- Fully scalable window and images
- Drag-and-drop file opening
- Image panning
- No limit on number of images
- JPG, GIF and PNG compatibility

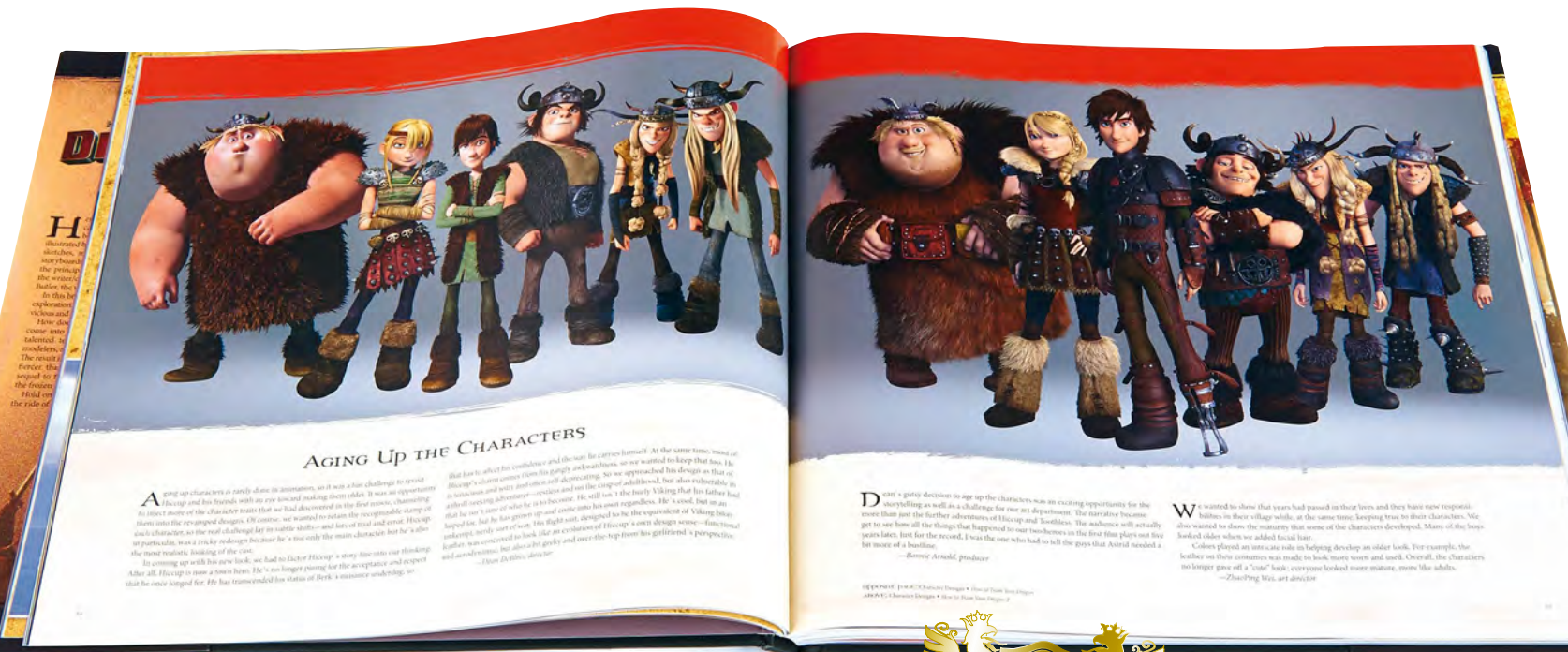
System Requirements

PC: 2.33GHz x86-compatible CPU
Windows XP, Vista, 7 or 8, 512MB RAM
Mac: Intel Core Duo 1.83GHz CPU OS X 10.6 upwards, 512MB RAM

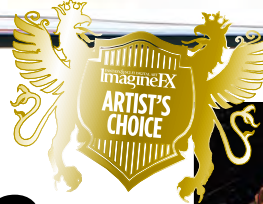
Rating



Creating a new pattern is a speedy process, and if you're familiar with Instagram's image enhancements you'll be right at home here.



The Art of How to Train Your Dragon 2

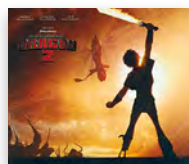


FLAME ON! We check out this excellent, interactive book about the much-anticipated DreamWorks sequel

Author Linda Sunshine **Publisher** Titan Books **Price** £25 **Web** www.titanbooks.com **Available Now**

DreamWorks' 2010 animated feature **How to Train Your Dragon** was unusual in that it was touching, funny and beautiful – and it wasn't made by Pixar. It raked in almost \$500 million at the box office and became DreamWorks' most successful film outside the Shrek franchise. The film's success has inevitably led to a sequel, which Titan's art-of-book documents in style.

This rich and detailed tome kicks off with a description of the week-long trip that the filmmakers made to Norway to draw inspiration for the Scandinavian setting and locales. What's noteworthy here is that, despite



The main artistic challenge for depicting the Nest of Dragons was to somehow create a humid environment in an ice world.

Nordic settings being very popular thanks to Game of Thrones, Vikings and Skyrim, How to Train Your Dragon has created a world with its own visual language that doesn't encroach on our existing understanding of fantasy northern lands.

The characters have also aged five years (characters aging is a rarity in kids' films) since the first instalment. CGI technology has also progressed significantly during this time, which means the figure models had to be rebuilt from scratch. "If you compare Hiccup from the first movie to the sequel, you can see how his design got much more detailed in terms of his facial structure, his neck, and his outfit," says Simon Otto, head of character animation. All of the main characters receive at least a page or two detailing their redesign, and there are some wonderful pieces of concept art.

Of course, it wouldn't be complete without the dragons themselves, which are uniquely amphibian-like rather than taking their design cues from the more traditional lizards. They range from the impossibly cute babies to the ferocious



Hiccup wields his home-made Dragon Blade – an expandable sword with the ability to generate fire.

Bewilderbeast, which expels enormous plumes of blue-green ice. "There's a complex scattering of light in a piece of ice and replicating that into something believable, achievable and affordable for our movie was really difficult," says Mike Necci, the film's environments digital supervisor.

This is an exemplary tome, too. While most Making Of books tend to focus on the visual side and omit all-important text, here there are plenty of quotes, as well as artist credits for each and every image. There's even a nifty app available for smartphones with which you can scan certain images and see a clip from the film as if it were there on the page – something that makes a good book even better.

RATING

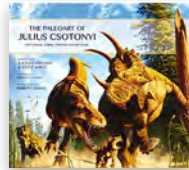
The Paleoart of Julius Csotonyi

DINOMITE Discover how the world-renowned dinosaur illustrator went from microbiology to mastodons

Authors Julius Csotonyi and Steve White **Publisher** Titan Books **Price** £25 **Web** www.titanbooks.com **Available** Now

My first drawing, at the age of three, was a dinosaur," says paleoartist Julius Csotonyi in this compendium of his work. From this humble beginning Julius studied microbiology, keeping his desire to draw diplodocus on the side, until he was able to pursue it as a profession.

We're big fans of paleoart and it's interesting to see compositions designed to expand our scientific understanding of a long-lost creature rather than entertain or tell a story.



An image created to show the process of making a fleshed-out life restoration from fossilised remains.



Which isn't to say Julius' images aren't dramatic, and he certainly has an eye for putting beasts together in a way that gives a tangible impression of their size, power and nature. However, sometimes the terrible lizards look too shiny and obviously computer-generated, a little like the BBC's Walking With Dinosaurs series.

Although paleoart may not be to everyone's taste, more observant

artists will find a lot to love here. Dinosaurs are the closest thing we've had to dragons and Julius' scientific understanding of poses and anatomy is evident throughout. With Jurassic World coming to the big screen, The Paleoart of Julius Csotonyi could fast become an essential tome for those jumping on the velociraptor zeitgeist.

RATING

Robert Crumb: Sketchbooks 1964-1982

CRUMBS! If you can stump up the cash, you'll get to see a lot of work from the dirty old artist of 60s counter-culture

Author Dian Hanson **Publisher** Taschen **Price** £650 **Web** www.taschen.com **Available** Now

Our biceps had only just recovered from lugging around the last Robert Crumb box set when this one arrived on our desk. Like the first, it's an epic collection, with six hardback volumes covering his career from mid-60s to early-80s.

In a brief intro Robert discusses the very beginning of his career as a 21-year-old who'd just discovered the joys of drawing with a Rapidograph technical pen. Even as a young man Robert had developed a distinctive



style, and his trademark spidery, nerdy creeps being overpowered by beluga-like women are present right from the word go. Most artists mature as they grow older, but with Robert it's the other way round - his drawings become baser and more debauched. But it's clear that by the mid-70s he's become more confident in drawing ugly characters engaged in messy sexual acts.

This collection is not going to be for everyone, and 2005's The R Crumb Handbook is a better place to start for those new to the artist's depraved mind - and you won't need to remortgage to buy it, either. But devoted Crumb fans will find a lot to love here, and it's oddly pleasing to pore over the artist's unique images.

RATING



Robert's drawings became more debauched as he grew older.

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s2014.siggraph.org



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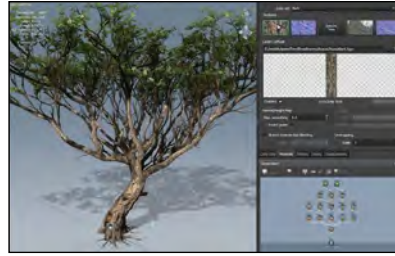
Conference 10–14 August 2014
Exhibition 12–14 August 2014
vancouver convention centre

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From textures to trees: Alex Alvarez's video masterclass shows the secrets behind every stage of a mammoth CG jungle project.



Early workshop chapters show how modelling was done in ZBrush (above) and Maya (left).



The Making of Totem

JUNGLE LORD CG ace and Gnomon supremo Alex Alvarez shows his workflow for creating a lush jungle scene for our sister title, 3D World

Publisher The Gnomon Workshop **Price** \$69 **Format** DVD/Download **Web** www.thegnomonworkshop.com

Recently, our sister magazine **3D World** asked CG artist and Gnomon Workshop founder Alex Alvarez to create an original piece for its Christmas 2013 cover. In the magazine Alex showed the broad sequence of how he created the 'Totem' render, but then decided there was more to say on the subject – over six hours more. That's even longer than a Peter Jackson movie.

Many training videos are based around footage of the artist as he or she works on the piece. Here, Alex opts to present a sequence of work-in-progress scene files, analysing the techniques that he used at each stage. It means that while you don't get to see many of the hands-on skills that other videos show, you gain a deep understanding of the procedures and tools that Alex utilised.

Alex uses CG tools, primarily Maya and ZBrush, with a topping of compositing in Photoshop. You'll need

some familiarity with CG tools and terms to get the most out of this masterclass: Alex doesn't spend time explaining the distinction between bump maps and displacement maps, for example, but instead concentrates on how to optimise both.

If you have a basic 3D software toolset, Alex will also introduce you to numerous third-party tools. These range from handy free scripts to the complex and powerful tree-generation system SpeedTree, which Alex explores in some detail. He also talks a lot about how he organises his files: you'll marvel at his library of renders for his ready-made plants, each with scale and tonal information. Together, these two topics are sure to trigger positive changes in how you work in 3D.

Alex covers the entire creative process from thumbnails to final render in this video. The depth of his knowledge is such that there isn't a single stage when you won't learn something new.

DETAILS

Topics covered

- Concepts
- Blocking out
- Sculpting the head
- Planning the environment
- Lighting the scene
- CG trees
- CG plants
- Texture maps
- Z-depth and fog
- Compositing

Length

382 minutes

Rating



ARTIST PROFILE ALEX ALVAREZ

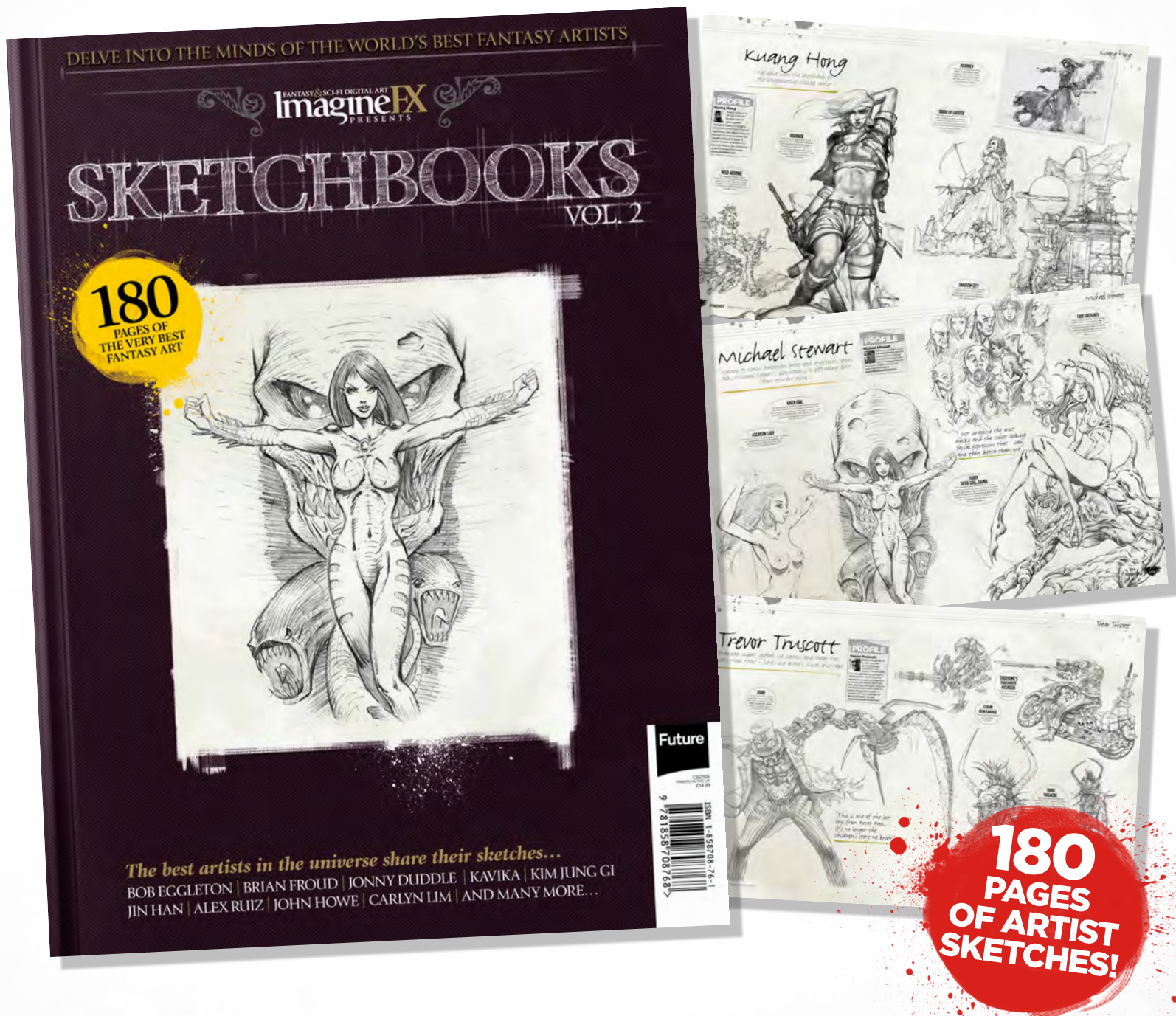
Alex is the founder and president of the Gnomon School of Visual Effects and the Gnomon Workshop, helping to change the face of design education. He has been published in industry magazines, websites and books, and taught workshops at major trade conferences. He continues to work on personal and professional projects, recently as a creature development artist on Avatar, Star Trek, Green Lantern and Prometheus. Prior to Gnomon,



Alex worked for Alias|Wavefront as a consultant and trainer for studios in the Los Angeles area.

www.alexalvarez.com

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FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART
ImagineFX
PRESENTS



FANTASY

Illustrator

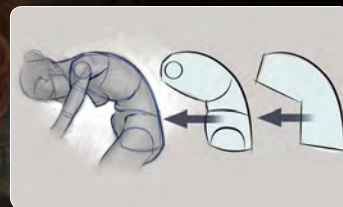
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James Gurney gives art advice.

HOW TO CREATE ART
**INSPIRED BY
THE CLASSICS**



Annie Stegg paints a portrait using oil paints
and traditional techniques **Page 106**

FXPosé *Traditional*

SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL FANTASY ARTISTS

+ Christopher Lovell

LOCATION: England

WEB: www.christopherlovell.com

EMAIL: chris@christopherlovell.com

MEDIA: Ink and acrylics on paper



Christopher feels fortunate to be a child of the 80s.

"The toys, films and cartoons of the era left me spellbound," he says.

"They really fuelled my imagination."

The Welsh artist currently lives and works in Wiltshire, but will be relocating to Spain later in the year. There he plans to work in isolation, focusing on large canvas paintings for a 2015 exhibition.

Christopher cites Simon Bisley and Ian Miller as major influences. He works primarily in ink and acrylics – although he does use digital mediums for commissions – and counts rapper Kid Rock and clothing brand Iron Fist among his diverse list of clients.

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Christopher sticks close to the source material

for his well-rendered Tales From the Crypt image, then throws an artistic curveball with his Ashura piece. It's full of detail, and has a lovely, serene feel."

Cliff Hope,
Operations Editor

1 TALES FROM THE CRYPT

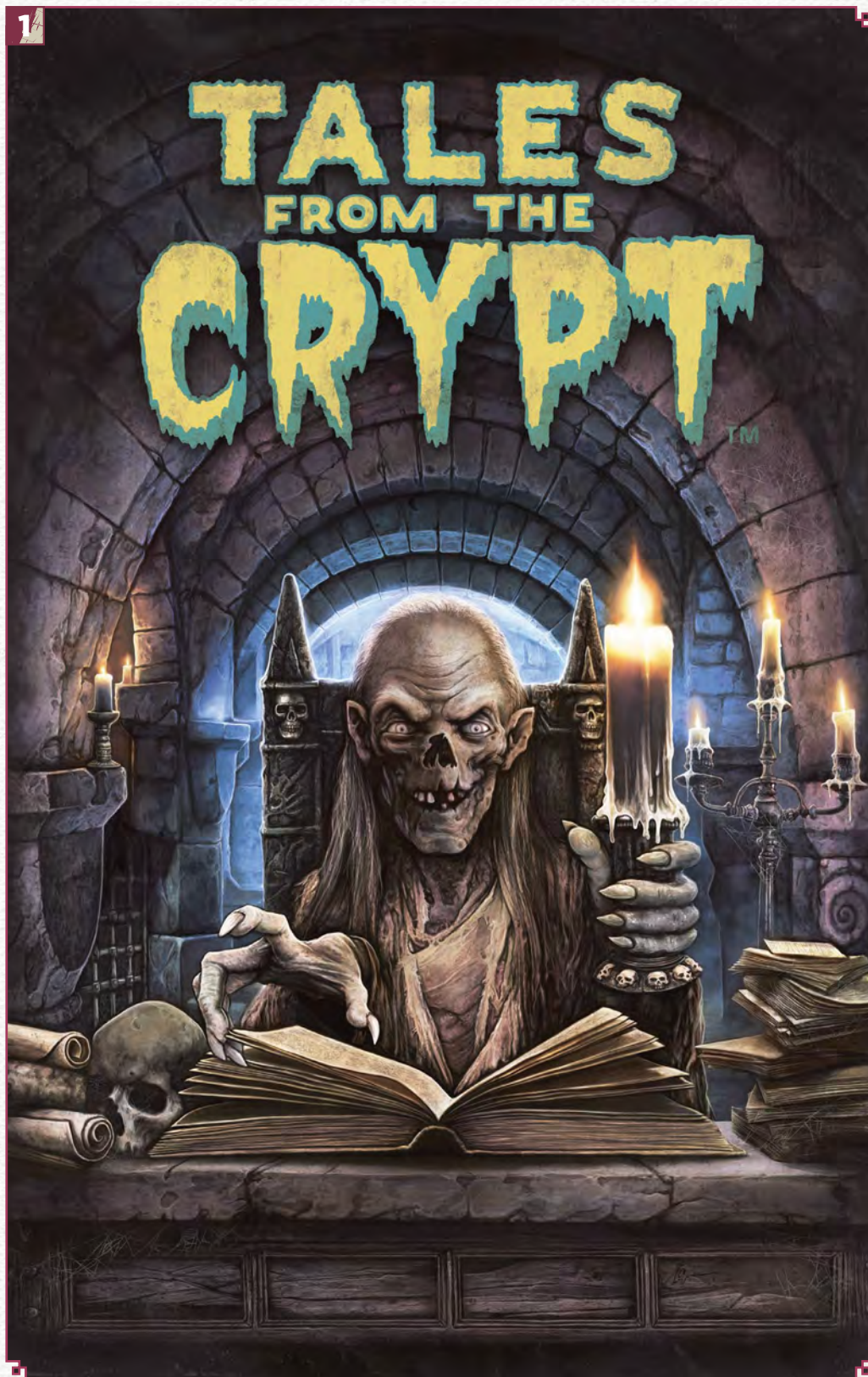
Pencil and ink on paper, 16.5x23.4in

"This piece for FEARNET was a nostalgic and fun piece to work on, because I used to watch the TV show when I was just a kid."

2 ASHURA

Pencil, ink, acrylics and watercolours on paper, 16.5x23.4in

"Recently I've enjoyed drawing females in various headwear and ornate skeletal jewellery. I drew this piece in pencil and ink, then carefully applied paints."





+ Marcus Sprigens

LOCATION: England

WEB: www.marcus-sprigens.com

EMAIL: marcus@marcus-sprigens.com

MEDIA: Graphite on card



"My work is a journey into the fantastic realm of the imagination," Marcus says, "where archetypal pareidolia is embedded into other worldly landscapes."

He explains that apophenia is the experience of seeing patterns or connections in random data. Pareidolia – a form of apophenia – describes our tendency to see patterns in random data. Faces in clouds, for example.

The London-based artist looks for form in the "semi-random lines" he draws at the beginning of each piece – something that suggests likeness or environment. He continues fleshing out the drawing until he completes the web of intricate, interwoven images that's the hallmark of his art. Marcus recently exhibited his experiments in pareidolia at London's West Bank Gallery.

1 THE GATHERING

Graphite on art card, 23x16in

"A gathering of pareidolian archetypes, drawn out from random lines, listening to a reading from the Book of Life conducted by the invisible mask-wearing Psyche."

2 TROJAN HORSE

Graphite on art card, 16x9.5in

"Pareidolian entities congregate to view the arrival of a Trojan Horse at the gathering."

SUBMIT YOUR ART TO FXPOSÉ

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

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

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

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





IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Marcus's work is a little different to the usual art featured in ImagineFX. But I'm totally blown away by his intricate line work. You notice something new and interesting with every viewing."

Gary Evans,
Staff Writer

Creative Space

SUPER ART FIGHT: BLACK CAT, WASHINGTON, DC

How a technological failure at a con led to one of art's most exciting live events, which, says **MARTY DAY**, turns artists into rock stars

Fights are 25 minutes in length. Participants are given a topic at the beginning of each bout, new themes introduced at the five-, 10-, 15- and 20-minute marks, chosen using the Wheel of Death.

Participants are actively encouraged to "attack" their opponent's art, completing unfinished pieces or subverting them with additional doodles: a bullet hole here, blood there. This is Super Art Fight: where artists become rock stars.

"Yes," Marty Day says, "artists become rock stars. Or at least over-the-top, pro-wrestling-style characters. Drawing is much more enjoyable with a crowd chanting and cheering for you – as opposed to fighting your own mental blocks and merely hoping someone enjoys the end result."

Marty is organiser and co-host of the event that's a direct descendent of the slightly more civilised Iron Artist competition. When video equipment failed at the 2008 anime convention Katsucon, artists Jamie Noguchi and Nick DiFabbio began drawing on each other's canvas to entertain the crowd. Marty and Nick knew they were on to something, and discussed taking the show out of a convention setting and in front of a "live, rock club-style audience". The audience, Marty says, is as important as the artists.

"We present a show unlike any other. You'll laugh, you'll see amazing art, you'll see underdogs rise to the occasion. And since the audience picks the winners, battle-of-the-bands style, your voice will be heard loud and clear."

Super Art Fight has launched a podcast and will soon be unveiling a YouTube show. More information at www.superartfight.com.



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

Super Art Fight co-founder
Jamie Noguchi faces off
against Red Erin.



Let battle commence! Three artists wage art war against each other in front of a live - and lively - audience.

ART ATTACK

The scene of battle: canvases from the recent Super Art Fight at the Black Cat in Washington, DC



Bout One was Jamie "Angry Zen Master" Noguchi vs Red Erin (Cats vs Presidents).



Bout Two was Baron Von Sexyful vs MeKonga (Teapot vs Pandas).



Bout Three was The Commando and The Dudeler vs El Russo Rojo and the Charm City Shinobi (Bananas vs Dessert).



Bout Four was Super Art Fight Champion Stompadon defending against Krod (Bears vs Meat).



Some artists, like Baron Von Sexyful, go the extra mile when getting dressed for the event.



Super Art Fight attracts plenty of characters. Well, men in dresses anyway.



The event has its roots in Katsucon and is a less-civilised version of Iron Artist.

Workshops



Oils

TAKE INSPIRATION FROM THE CLASSICS

ANNIE STEGG shows how to create a fantasy portrait using traditional oil paints, working from background to foreground, and using other classical techniques

The portrait artists from the Rococo period greatly inspire me. Indeed, these painters have always had a large influence on me, and their work has impacted my own methods.

The portraits of this period were both imaginative and fanciful. Works were created using beautiful vibrant palettes, serpentine lines, elaborate ornamentation and romantic atmospheres. Classical myths were often explored in these paintings, using a playfulness that was unique for the time.

I'll be showing you the techniques I've learned from studying these classical paintings. I'm going to be depicting a portrait of Keto, one of the daughters of Oceanus from Greek mythology. She's a naiad nymph whose name means sea monster in ancient Greek.

For this portrait I want to stay true to the classical portraits of the 18th century, while adding a fantastic element – the baby sea dragon – as a twist. You'll learn how I create a fantasy portrait using these

MATERIALS

SURFACE

■ Heavyweight watercolour paper on panel

BRUSHES

■ Round #0/20, #0/2, #0, #1, #2, #4
■ Flat #2
■ Bright #2, #4
■ Filbert #10

PAINTS

■ Alizarin Crimson
■ Indian Yellow
■ Titanium White
■ Sap Green Hue
■ Phthalo Turquoise
■ Burnt Umber
■ Raw Umber
■ Burnt Sienna
■ Raw Sienna
■ Payne's Grey

MEDIUM

■ Walnut alkyd oil

methods in one of my favourite mediums. While I'll be working in traditional oils for this painting, keep in mind that many of the principles I'll be showing here can also be applied to other mediums, too.

Once the idea for your image has been established, I find it helpful to create a value sketch on toned Canson paper. This will act as the base foundation for the rest of the piece. After sealing the drawing with a layer of acrylic matte medium, I'll be toning the piece with a thin layer of oil to establish a warm ground for my painting. This initial toned layer will help establish an overall mood for the piece, as well as unify the colours. It also has the benefit of giving you a warm palette to start with.

Working from background to foreground, I'll show you how you can continue to use glazes to enhance the colours of your image, tone back highlights and create overall atmosphere. Finally, I'll demonstrate how to apply details that bring your characters and their world to life.



Annie has been painting since childhood and enjoys creating work inspired from folklore, mythology and nature. She strives to create images that evoke emotion and imagination. Her clients include video game companies, fine art galleries and private collectors. www.anniestegg.com

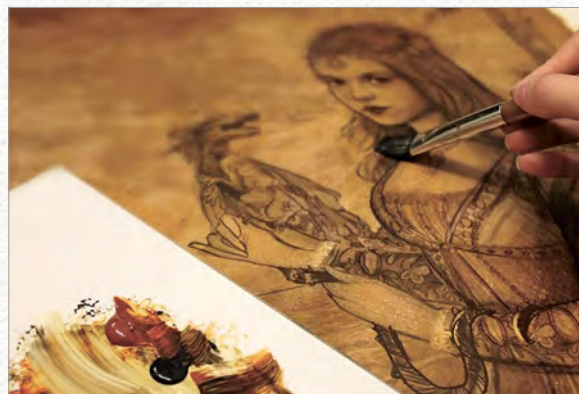
In depth Inspired by classics



ARTIST INSIGHT

SEALING YOUR SKETCH

The reason I seal my sketch is to prevent any oil from coming in contact with the paper itself, which can affect the fibres of the paper. By doing this, I help ensure the image will remain archival.



1 Creating the sketch

Before starting my painting, I create a sketch to better understand my image. By mapping out a rough foundation I can ensure the subsequent steps of the painting will go more smoothly.

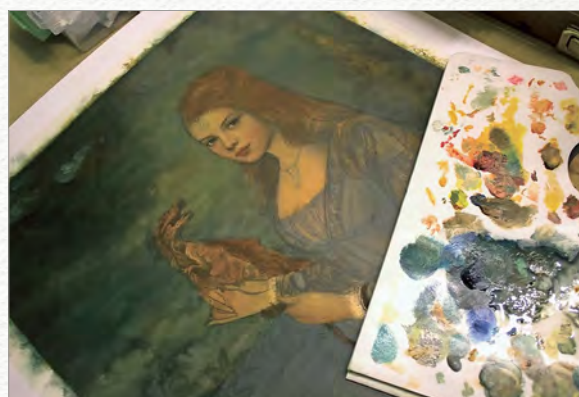
2 Toning the sketch

Once the sketch is complete, I seal it using spray fixative and then apply a thin layer of matte medium. When it's dry, I coat the image with a thin mixture of Raw Sienna, Burnt Sienna and Burnt Umber oils. This creates a strong mid-tone base that'll help to unify the painting.

BRUSH TIP

FROM BIG TO SMALL

When working on large areas, use a larger brush to establish forms. Only switch to smaller once major colours are blocked in.

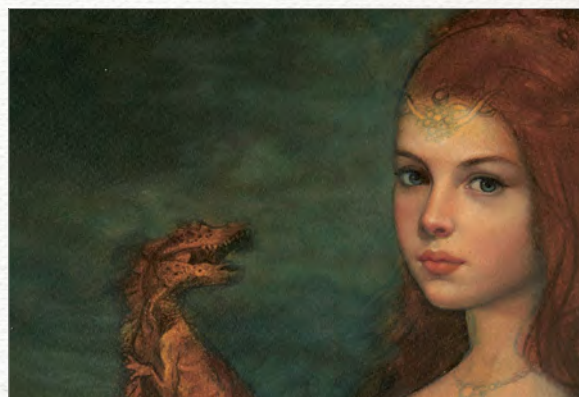


3 Block in the colour

I rough in the colour scheme of the piece using paints thinned with walnut oil. I work thinly in this step, which ensures that the ground tone still shows through. Blocking in these tones means that my colours are able to work harmoniously with one another, before I become too involved with the minor details.

4 Working on the background

It's easier to finalise the background elements first before adding foreground details. The furthest background element is the sky. Remember, clouds are a reflection of the sky and aren't pure white. By mixing other colours, such as Payne's Grey, Sap Green Hue and Indian Yellow to Titanium White I'm able to create a more interesting atmosphere.



ARTIST INSIGHT

DRY YOUR PAINTING IN BETWEEN STEPS

After blocking in all of the colour, I prefer to let the painting dry. This will ensure that subsequent layers won't be lifted as I continue to add colour.

5 Unifying the sky

I mix a wash of Payne's Grey and Sap Green Hue with walnut oil, which brings together the tone of the sky. I then apply this over the painting using a large brush, which produces a soft atmospheric effect without the loss of any of my details. Highlights can then be reapplied to add depth. Repeating this step will add dimension to a painting.





6 *Bringing the sea to life*

I continue to slowly apply colour to the painting using glazes. For the wave crests, I use a small round #0/20 brush to add the sharp details, and then a larger brush to soften them. After the detailed areas have dried, I add another light application of Payne's Grey with walnut oil. This unifies the colours while toning down the highlights. ➡

ARTIST INSIGHT

OILING OUT

Sometimes after a layer has dried, colours can look dull and sunken in. Once the painting is completely dry, I rub a thin layer of walnut alkyl oil over the surface to reinvigorate the colours.



7 Depicting the beadwork

Once the background is established, I can explore the elements in the middle ground. Using a small round brush and Titanium White paint, the beadwork in the figure's attire can be developed. Detail steps like this can be tedious, but these fine touches add more interest to a piece.

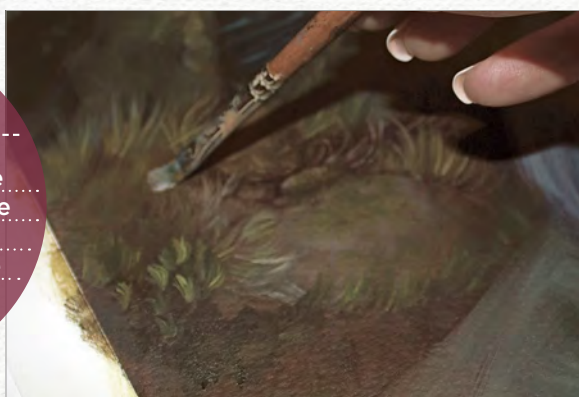
8 Adding foliage

Next, using both Sap Green Hue and Payne's Grey, I rough in the shapes of all the leaves that the fig tree needs to look realistic. Once these layers have dried, I then add some highlights, using Indian Yellow mixed in with some small amounts of Titanium White.

BRUSH TIP

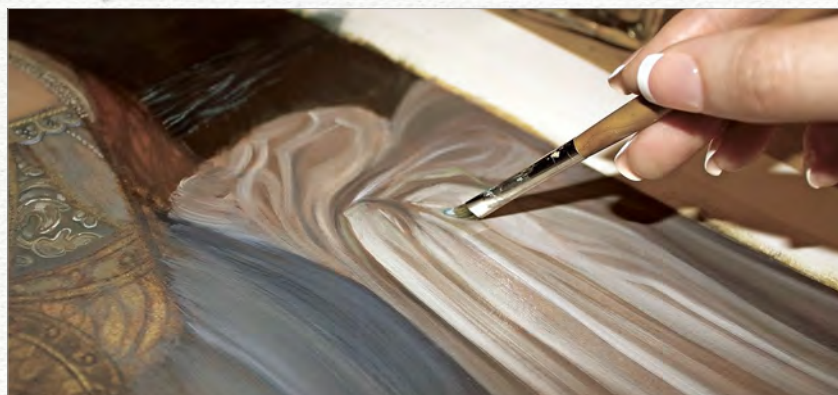
FINE ART

When working on fine detail areas, I like to use the smallest brush possible. My favourite is a small round #0/20 brush.



9 Composition enhancements

To keep the composition flowing, I've decided on a semi-rocky seashore with angles pointing back towards the character. Once the right-hand tree is completed, this should give the image a circular composition. I add tufts of grass using a bright size #4 brush, with a mixture of Titanium White, Indian Yellow, Burnt Umber and Sap Green Hue.



10 Give cloth believability

When painting cloth it's helpful to have good reference to hand. This will help you to make the folds and wrinkles appear more natural. Drapery can also act as a supporting element for the composition. To counter the warmth of the underpainting, I use cool tones to bring out the highlights.

11 Taking historical inspiration

The lacework for the dress is largely inspired by the works of the Pre-Raphaelite and Rococo painters. As in my beadwork step, I use a small round #0/20 brush and Titanium White paint to dab in the details. It may appear to be too stark initially, but remember that with glazes you can always subdue and unify the highlights.



12 Detailing the foreground

Once the dress is complete, I add foreground details. This provides decorative interest and also helps give a sense of spatial distance.



13 Tackling the figure's hair

By dividing the hair into shapes, I'm able to give it dimension without painting every single strand. I use Burnt Umber for the lowlights and Raw Sienna mixed with Titanium White for the highlights.



14 Pet designs

I take inspiration from a seahorse called a leafy sea dragon as I create the design for Keto's pet. I sometimes like to base elements of a creature's design on a real animal, to give it more believability.



15 The final pass

Once the painting is completely dry, the final finishing touches are added. During this stage I like to enhance the volume and depth of the piece. Shadows can be buffed in using a large round brush in a circular motion. A final colour glaze is added to the image to unify colour and atmosphere. ●

ARTIST INSIGHT SCANNING YOUR PAINTING

If your painting is too large to fit in your scanner, you can go to **File>Automate>Photomerge in Photoshop** to batch merge multiple scans for a single piece. This is especially helpful for very large images.

Pencil *Ballpoint pen*

DRAWING TRICKY SIDE POSES

Are you having trouble presenting a different side to your figure art? Then follow **CHRIS LEGASPI**'s expert advice on drawing side and twisting poses

Side poses are challenging because they often contain less information in terms of anatomy and details than other views of a figure. As such, I've found it useful to apply a combination of drawing techniques.

I kick things off by focusing on the ribcage and pelvis. Describing the ribcage and the relationships with the hips is helpful for bending and twisting poses. For neutral poses I describe the angle of the ribs and pelvis. The ribs naturally tilt

backwards and the hips tilt forward. I'll often exaggerate this tilt to create more tension and gesture in the pose.

I start the actual drawing by simplifying the torso using C-curves and straights. C-curves describe the gesture and curve of a side pose. Straights add a contrast and tension to the pinch side.

A bending or twisting pose can also be difficult to depict and so I start with a box construction for the rib cage. This enables me to describe the front plane of the torso. I also describe the centreline: this is

MATERIALS

- Smooth newsprint paper
- Carbothello pencil, black or Conté B
- Kneaded eraser
- Ballpoint pen
- Sketchbook

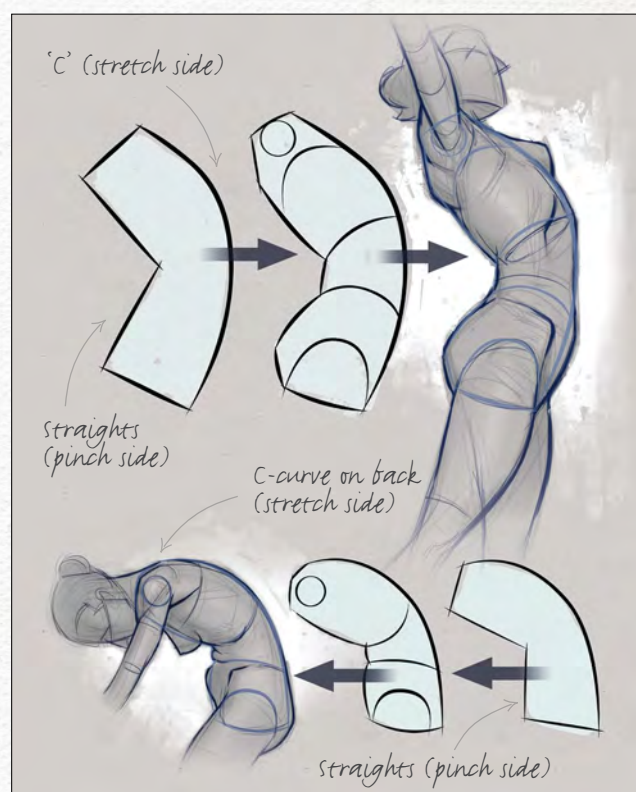
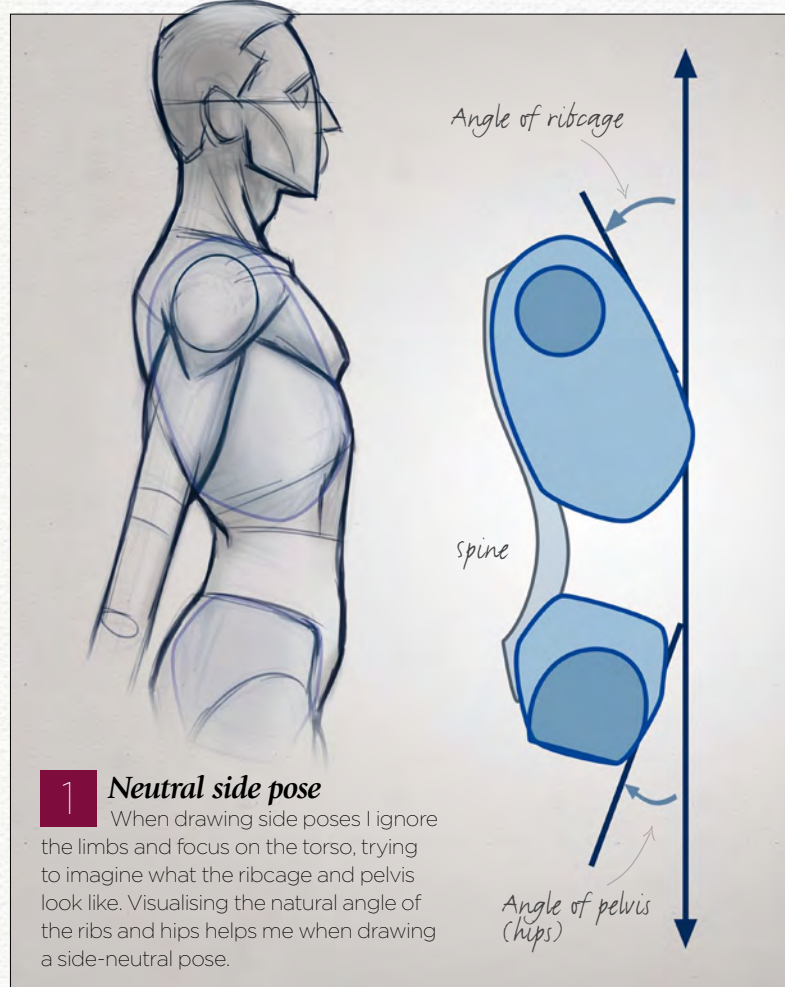
GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 6 now!

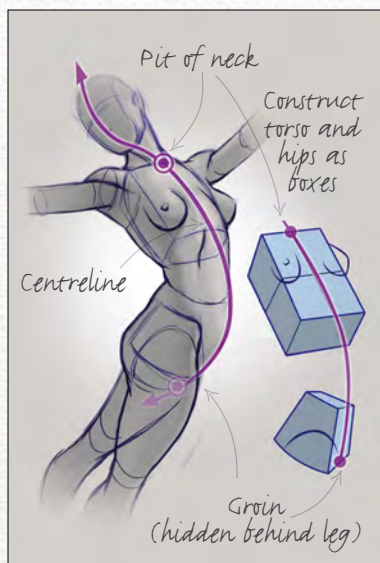
an imaginary line that runs from the pit of the neck to the groin.

I add anatomy, limbs and details in layers. The first is the simplified torso and rib construction. The second is the major muscles of back and chest. The third is limbs, neck and head. Then I emphasise overlaps or intersections in anatomy, which add depth, realism and life.



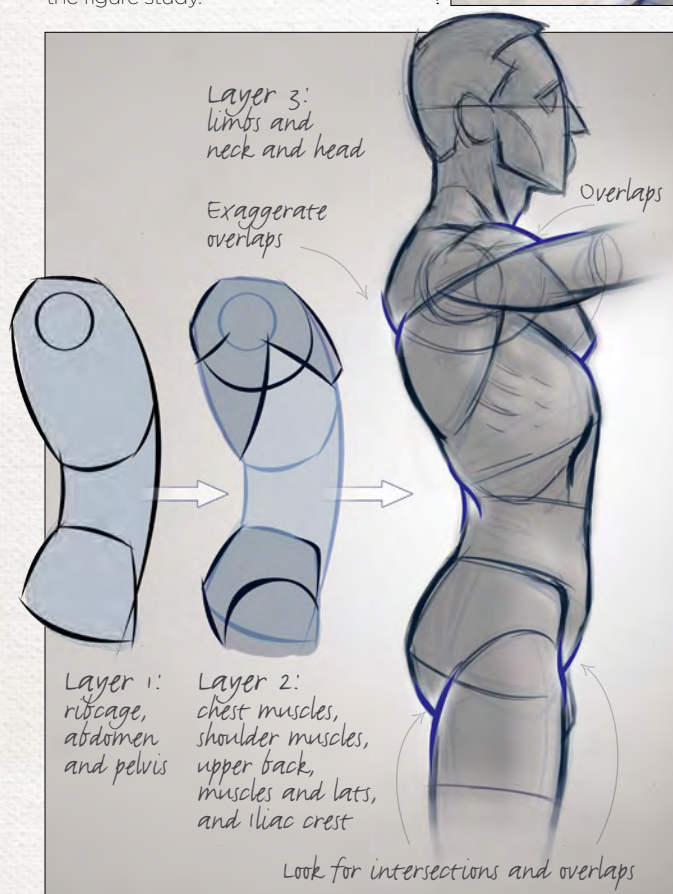
Chris is obsessed with figure drawing and painting, and loves sharing his knowledge of art. www.learn-howtodraw.com





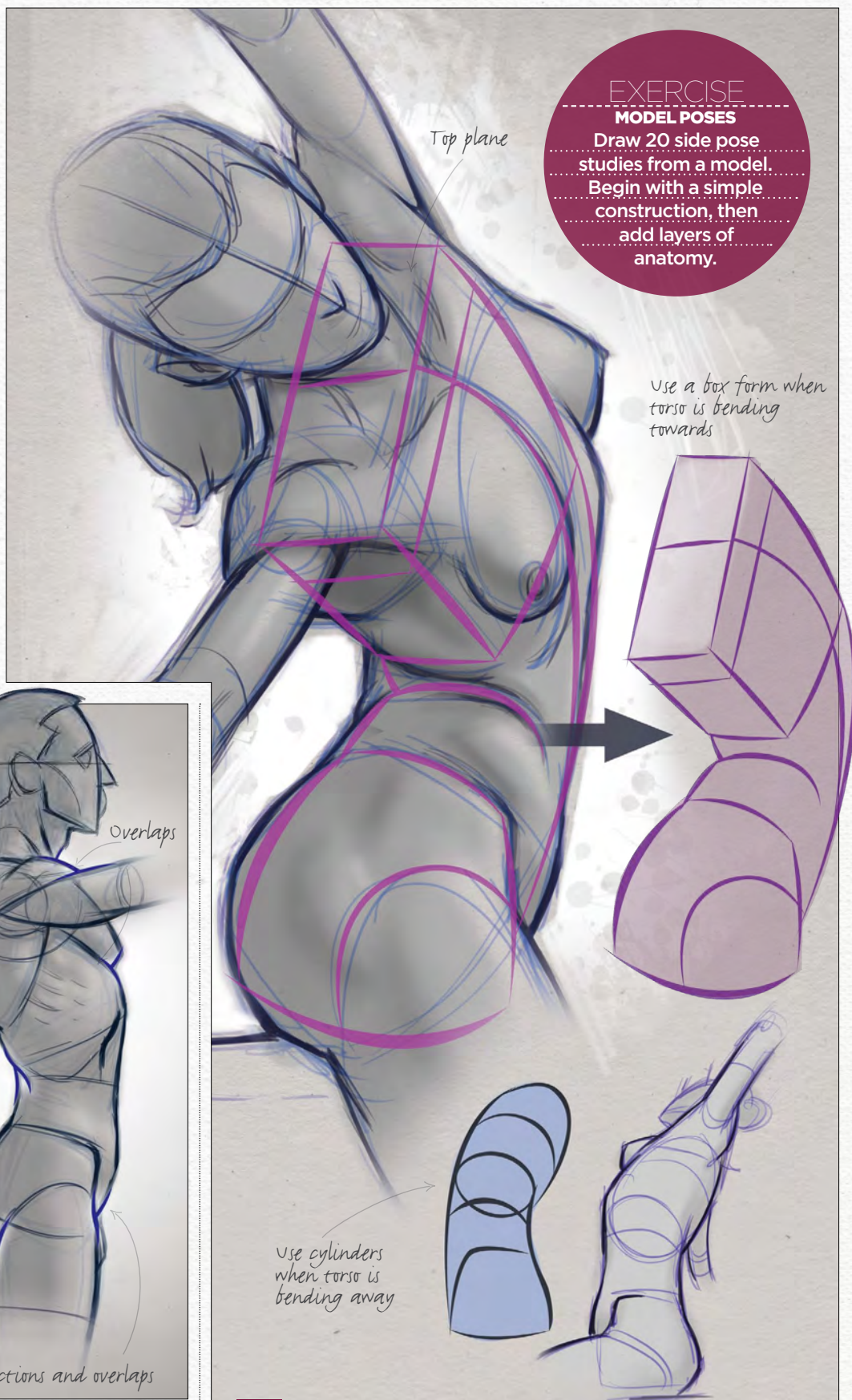
3 Twisting poses

I simplify the torso into a box so I can describe the front plane of the torso as it twists and turns into view. I also describe the centreline, which runs from the groin to the pit of the neck. This also gives the drawing gesture and movement of the figure study.



4 Layers for depth

To create depth I draw the figure in layers. I start with the simple construction from step one. Next, I add the second layer of anatomy, then finish off with the final layer of the limbs, neck and head. I also emphasise any overlaps or intersections to help create added depth.



EXERCISE

MODEL POSES

Draw 20 side pose studies from a model. Begin with a simple construction, then add layers of anatomy.

5 Bending and twisting

When a figure bends and twists, I find it helpful to combine the techniques of box construction and layering. The box form describes the planes, especially the front and top plane. The top plane is especially important for bending poses. For poses that bend away, a simple cylinder describes the form and gesture. ●



First Impressions

James Gurney

How the Yellow Pages and riding freight trains helped James turn pro



Where did it all start?

I'm about eight years old walking behind my family in San Francisco's art museum. Suddenly the eyes of a Rembrandt portrait catch mine. Am I crazy, or did it just blink? For a second, I think I see the eyes turning to follow me. The moment passes as my parents call for me to catch up. But the idea enters my brain that paintings can be more than a flat surface. They might also be windows to living worlds.

What was your next step in art?

I was a pen and ink man until I was 20. I spent more time building models than drawing pictures, though, because I couldn't get the pictures real enough to satisfy myself that I could live inside them. Through high school I built model boats, aeroplanes, kites, puppets and masks. Drawing was mainly a tool for planning those month-long projects.

Who has helped you the most?

My high school graphic-arts teacher Bill Burns let me use his copy stand for basic animation – bouncing balls and walk cycles – and loaned me the stand and the camera to create a short film over the summer. In art school, Ted Youngkin was the greatest ever perspective teacher. He was very demanding and a bit scary in class, but I kept in touch with him until he passed away. He really loved his students and wanted them to succeed.

Has anyone tried to get in your way?

Aged 22, after my first year at Art Center in California, I rode freight trains across America for the summer, documenting everything with a sketchbook. I returned with a backpack full of sketches and a book contract from Watson-Guptill. When I asked the president of the art school, Don Kubly, and head of the illustration department, Phil Hays, to let me do a slide show for the school, they refused, saying art instruction books



EGGS-ELLENT ART

James Gurney's most recent work: one of three paintings of dinosaur eggs and babies for the National Wildlife Federation.

weren't high-art or conceptual enough.

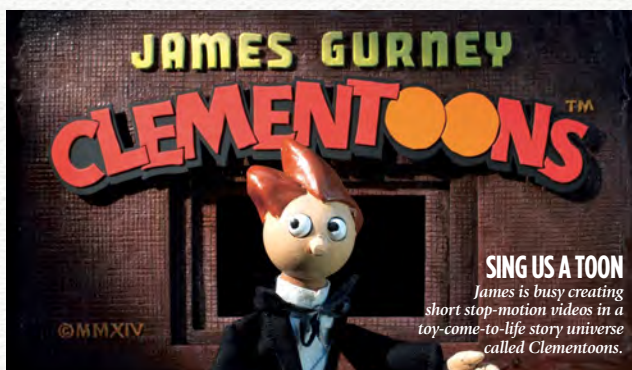
It was a ridiculously narrow view of art, and I felt sorry for both of them. I never returned to the school because I realised they weren't serious enough about the knowledge I was hungry to learn.

“Do what you love most, then figure out how to make a living out of it”

What was your first paid commission?

In high school I went through the Yellow Pages to find all the small printing shops in hope of getting assignments for calligraphy and illustration. I visited all of them on my bicycle, with my portfolio

Next month
John Harris



strapped to the basket. I taught myself calligraphy using books from the 1920s and '30s. My first job was a wedding invitation that paid \$20. It seemed like a fortune for an afternoon's work.

Is your art evolving? What's the most recent experiment you've made?

I hope it's evolving. It's got to change to stay alive. I've been sketching a lot in water media, and I've been returning to casein, a milk-based paint that predated acrylic. It's the oldest paint, older than oil – I think the Egyptians used it. It's very opaque and has a wonderful surface. I've also been painting in watercolour and gouache, which appeal because of their difficulty and because they encourage risk and commitment.

What is the most important thing you've taught someone?

I'm not really a teacher, more of an explainer and I don't often work directly with students. But on my blog I did a multi-part post, myth-busting the Golden Mean, one of the most persistent dogmas in art education.

What advice would you give to your younger self?

First, do what you love most, then figure out how to make a living out of it. Second, don't worry about the numbers of a contract – think more whether you like the people you'll be doing business with. Third, hang on to your rights.

How has fantasy art changed for good since you've been working in it?

Digital empowers creators to be their own publishers, which places a burden of responsibility to maintain quality in everything they do. But at the same time to take risks and experiment, not only with subject matter, but with delivery systems and monetisation.

What gripes do you have about the fantasy art industry right now?

I'm not very good at griping. There's always room for new ideas and people who want to take risks. What's hot and popular now will be tomorrow's corny nostalgia. The things that won't feel dated are truth to nature (realism) and truth to emotion (sincerity).

Visit www.jamesgurney.com to learn more about James and his art.

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