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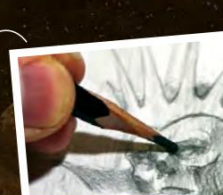
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Welcome... to the real cover stars



I'm fascinated by the psychology of book cover art. I know from my experience of wandering around book stores that I'm completely and utterly swayed by my first visual experience of that book. I'll dismiss or grab hold of a tome purely because of what's on the front of the jacket: the colour, style, character.

I'm sure you're no different. We may think we're deciding on which book to buy, but in reality, months of planning and art direction ensures that we've already been hand-picked ourselves.

Which is why it irks me that illustrators are often overlooked when people talk about successful books. I get annoyed when I read an article about a title – especially an illustrated book or graphic novel – and I can only find mention of the author. Unless the author is very well known, it's the art that will first grab the reader's attention.

Luckily, this is something ImagineFX can help address. This issue we're focusing on book illustrators. There's Jonny Duddle's tales of reimagining the Harry Potter books (even though he'd never read them himself!) and Tony DiTerlizzi's fairy tale of his Spiderwick Chronicles book series making it to the big screen. We're also taking a peek inside Orbit Books, which is currently working on the book covers of your next reads, and we've got top tips on getting into the industry – leading illustrators are on hand to share their secrets with you, too. All in all, it's a veritable page turner of an issue. You won't be able to put it down...

Claire

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



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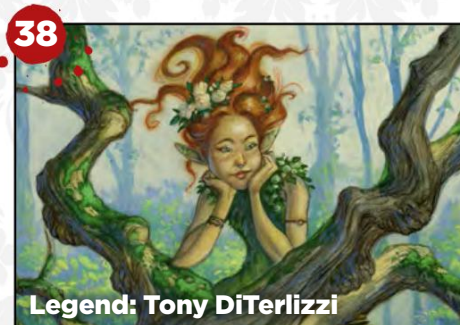
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THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART



See page 8 for the best new art ➡➡



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the best traditional artists

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Oils & acrylics



Light up a story



Romas B Kukalis

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Resources

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/book120end>

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

WORKSHOP VIDEO

Paint subtle emotions

John Stanko reveals how to get the most out of simple facial expressions – a powerful illustration tool.



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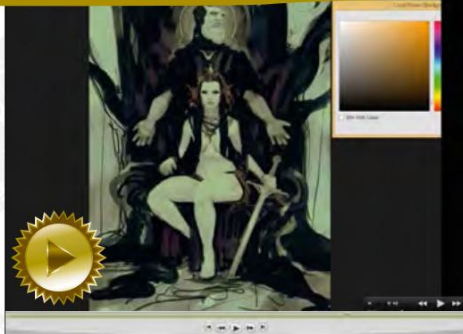




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WORKSHOP VIDEOS



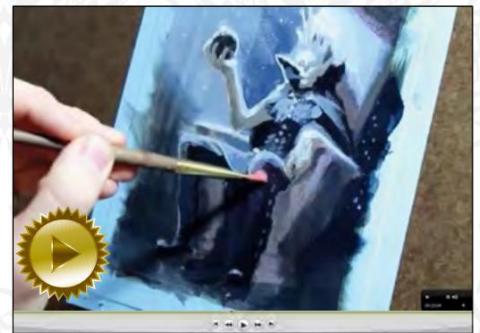
Rafael Sarmento

Put a fresh spin on an old tale with this chaotic but intuitive painting process. Plus WIPs and final image



Rovina Cai

Learn how to create a gothic artwork full of almost tangible mood and atmosphere, by using a combination of graphite drawing and digital techniques. Plus brushes, WIPs and final image



Alex Stone

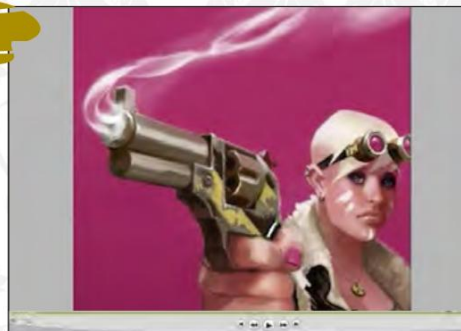
Develop a painting of a morose fantasy character, from concept to finish. Plus WIPs and final image

Q&A VIDEOS



Paco Rico Torres

Carefully consider shape, use Photoshop layers as well as long brush strokes, to help create realistic-looking smoke – in this case from the barrel of a freshly fired gun. Plus WIPs and final image



Drawing with Charcoal

Fantasy artist Patrick J Jones reveals his classical side as he shows you how not to make a mess of figure drawing.

PLUS WIPs and finished art available to download, created by accomplished professional artists from around the world, including Dave Braggalla, Justin Gerard, Mark Molnar, David Palumbo, Amanda Sartor and others.

Visit <http://ifxm.ag/book120end> to download of all this issue's videos, image files and brushes



Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART



Maurice Mosqua

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MEDIA: Photoshop, 3ds Max

1



Multi-talented Maurice has just completed a degree in game design. His first proper title has been aimed specifically at dyslexic

children, with child-friendly backgrounds, characters and icons. In his spare time Maurice is also creating his own game and working on his art – but his career isn't a closed book.

"I'm always looking for new interesting projects and opportunities," he says. "My goal is that my art transports mood, emotion and atmosphere to the viewer. To me, art is more than just technical skills, it's a path. Often it's rough, but the journey is worth it, wherever it may take us."

1 GIANT PET "This was a speedpainting for the Super Speedpainting Funtimes group on Facebook, where you can use any technique you want to produce an artwork in about an hour. There are new topics every day. I liked the idea of a cowboy taking a rest with his best buddy, a giant lion!"



ImagineFX April 2015

FXPosé submissions to: fxpose@imaginefx.com

Artist crit

Concept artist and illustrator John Giang likes what he sees in Maurice's artwork...



"Maurice is doing what many concept artists forget to do at times: he's telling a story. The characters' relationship is expressed through poses, props and expressions."



Iqnatus Budi

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EMAIL: budiwhteper@gmail.com

MEDIA: Photoshop



Budi has honed his skills in his day job at Caravan Studio, a Jakarta-based comic and illustration house that's created work for Sony Online Entertainment, Hasbro, Mattel and Marvel. "I'm self-taught, but I've learned a lot of the fundamentals of digital art and new skills from my seniors at Caravan," he says.

Through his employment at a multi-disciplined studio, Budi has been able to hone his skillset. "I really like fantasy painting, especially creatures and characters," he says. "I love sci-fi too, but I'm just not a big fan of creating machinery and vehicles!"

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"You don't need to have clunky mechs in your portfolio to show you can paint, as confirmed by Budi's expressive figure work. And I wonder how many people can relate to the inspiration behind his Day Dreaming image?"

Beren Neale,
Commissioning Editor

1 SPRING "I like the Japanese girl band AKB48 and this image was inspired by them. I tried to capture the scenery of spring in Japan that I love the most. The cherry blossom tree is simply fascinating and I wanted to bring them together in one frame."

2 DAY DREAMING "I spent two idle years dreaming about, rather than practising, my painting. This picture shows my condition at that time: me, riding a pig to show how slow my progress was. It's so embarrassing that even the angels are laughing at me..."

3 VALKYRIE "Heavily influenced by Huang Guang Jian, this is my first experiment in creating ornamental armour. It was a challenge: you have to pay attention to every detail without losing the focus on the main object. It was a pain in the butt at times!"

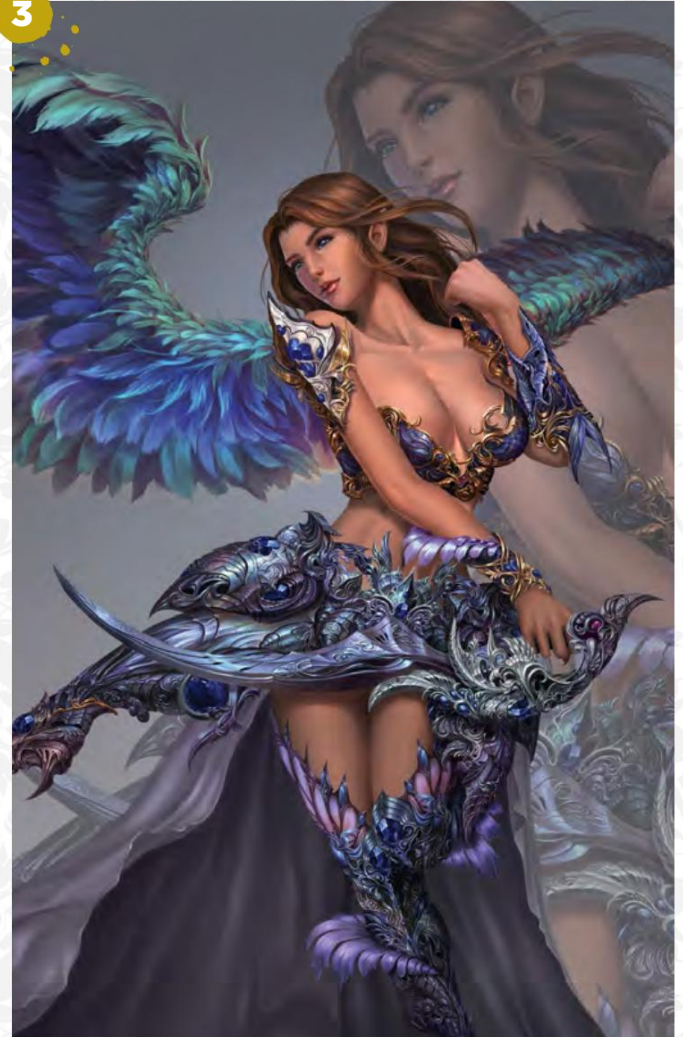
4 FALLEN ANGEL "I was keen to paint a couple in a sad yet beautiful atmosphere, and I thought angels would be the ideal subject. I'm really pleased with how it turned out."



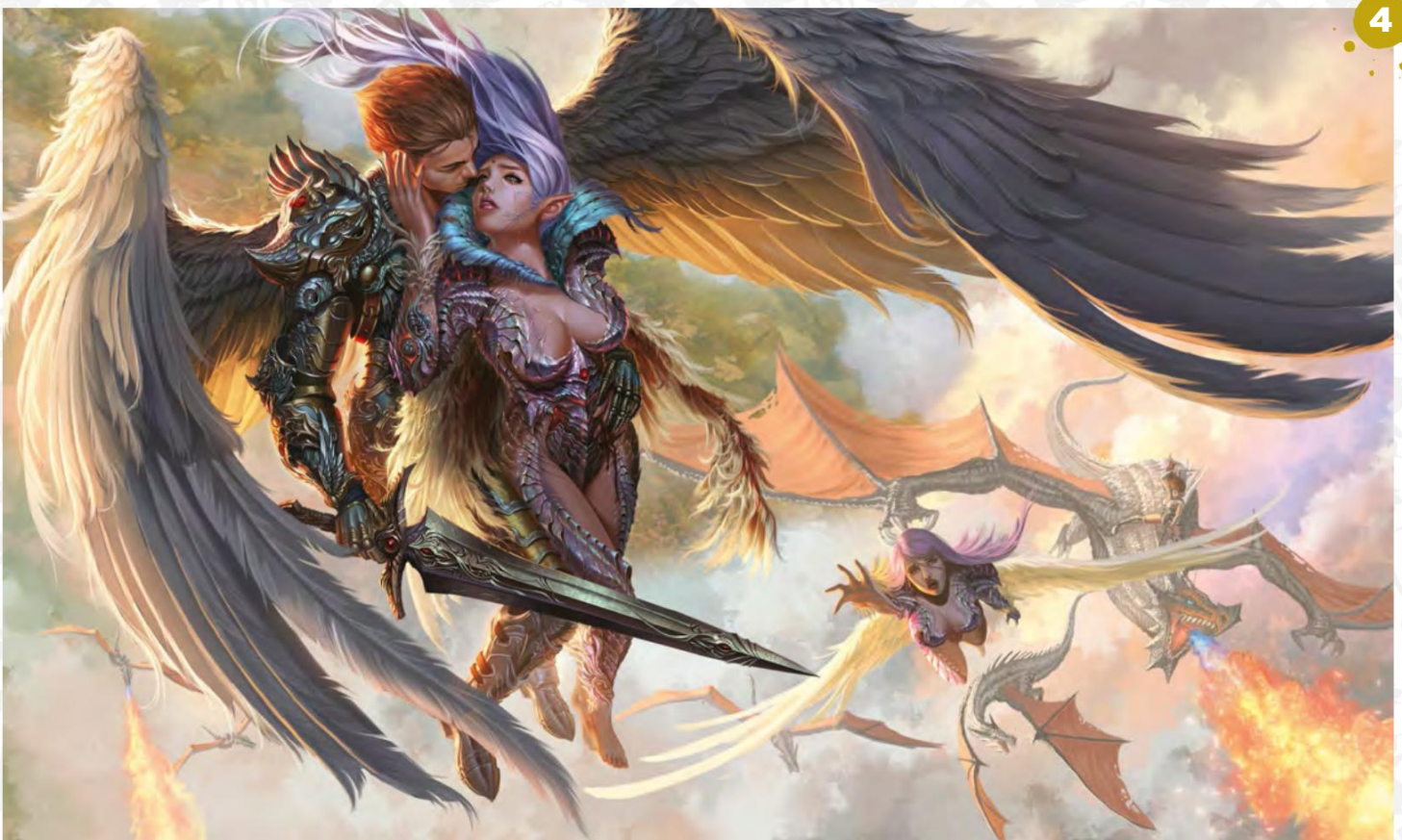
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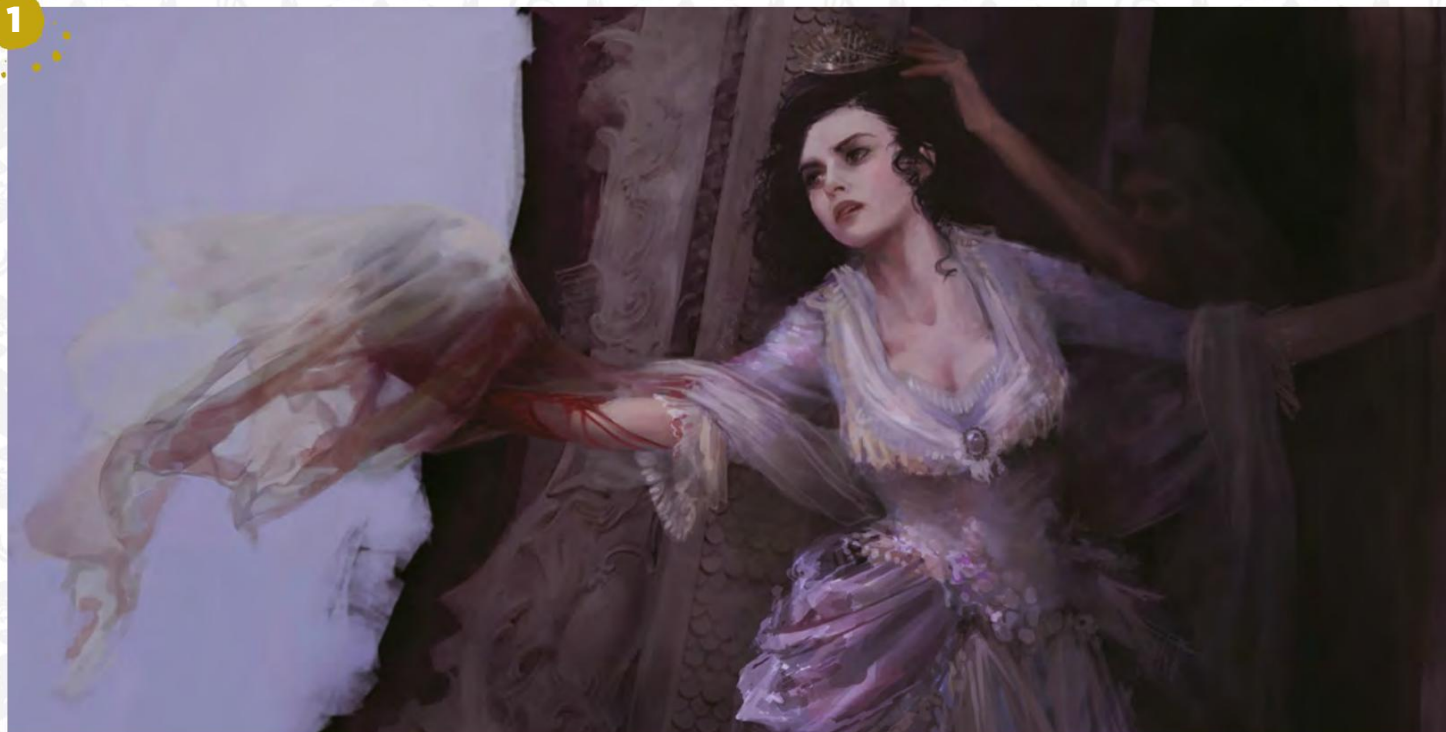
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4



1



+ Charlotte Creber

LOCATION: England

WEB: www.creberart.com

EMAIL: creberart@gmail.com

MEDIA: Photoshop



Despite abandoning acrylics and watercolours in favour of digital painting, Charlotte is still keen to give her images a traditional flavour. "I like to preserve a traditional look to my paintings and I'm really inspired by artists like Craig Mullins and Donato Giancola, who marry fantasy and realism," she says.

Charlotte's process for creating images has also changed as she's grown as an artist, from planned to more free-form and natural. "My painting process is organic," she says. "A lot of my artwork changes dramatically in progress so I don't usually make base sketches at all anymore - despite having sketchbooks full of unused ideas and thumbnails."

2



1 FROM THE BALCONY "This was my first major digital illustration and it made me fall in love with the medium straight away. I wanted to focus on storytelling and narrative in this image, and make it dramatic."

2 DEPTHS "This was inspired by the Peter Pan and siren legend, in which mermaids encircle a young girl who's been made to walk the plank. They're curious and dangerous, and don't help the human to survive, but instead follow her to the depths below."

Johan Törnlund

LOCATION: Sweden

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MEDIA: Photoshop, Modo

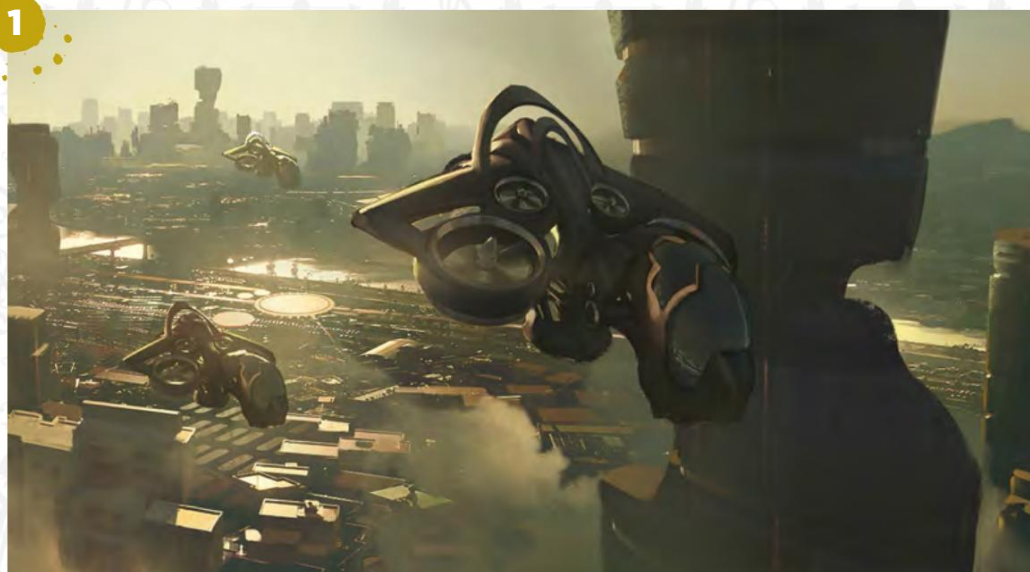


Johan works as a freelance concept artist specialising in sci-fi and environment designs, and he's worked in-house for Swedish and

German indie and mobile games studios. His passion for sweeping sci-fi cityscapes was kindled from a young age: "My interest in working in this field originated from the visionary experiences I got while watching *Blade Runner* and playing *Abe's Oddysee*."

If there's a theme to Johan's work it's the juxtaposition of the natural and the artificial. "Growing up between the wilderness of Sweden and the hyper-urbanised cities of Japan certainly helped spark my interest in this conflict," he explains. "I think it shapes a lot of the content in my work."

1



2



3



1 VIPER DRONES "With this piece I wanted to visualise a not-too-distant future metropolis with lightweight police/surveillance drones. The image began as a collage of photos I had taken from the top of a mountain overlooking Nagasaki in Japan."

2 SKY SAILING "Here, I tried to constrain myself to less detail and create a more traditional look. The scene is of a sleek racing vehicle and its crew. It's also my attempt to study the work of master illustrator John Berkey."

3 INDUSTRIAL HANGER "The first in a series of pieces depicting futuristic transport ships. It's making a delivery to a heavily industrialised society."

4 ANKH "This was part of an experiment where I fused sci-fi with the visual language of ancient societies and symbols. In this case I took inspiration from Egyptian motifs."

4



Jennifer S Lange

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MEDIA: Painter, Photoshop, SketchUp, ArtRage, Sculptris, Apophysis



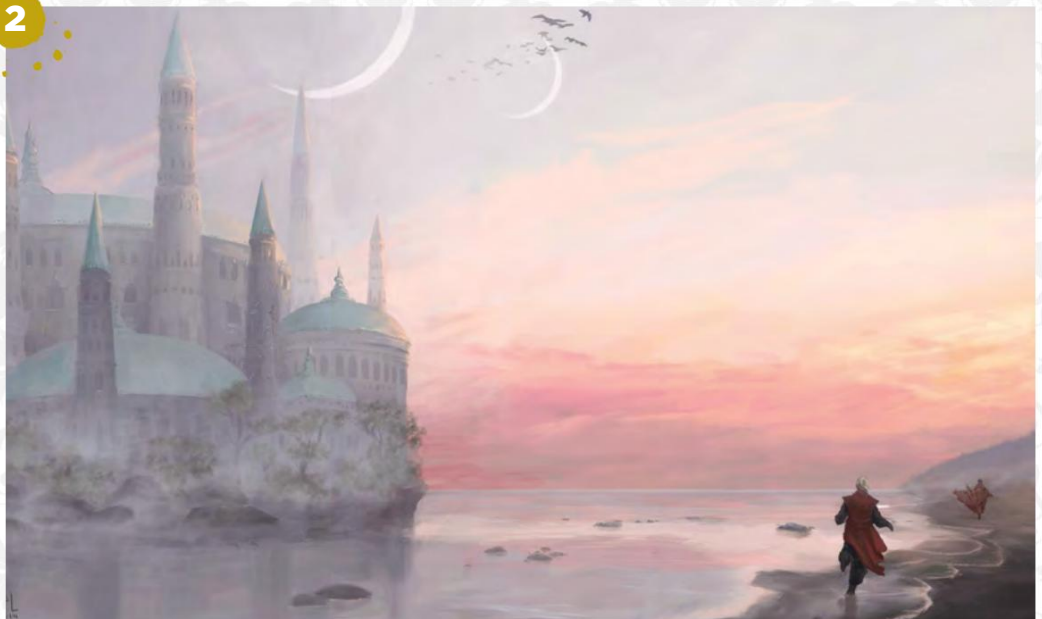
Jennifer trained as a architect, but a couple of semesters on art caught her attention. She started painting in acrylics, then switched to digital painting tools. "I think it's important to have something to pour your heart's blood into, and painting is that thing for me," she says. "I just never get tired of it."

She's even built her own fantasy world for her creations. "Most of my personal work today illustrates my world, Genius Loci, where I indulge my love for ancient myths," she says. "I'm inspired by all kinds of things, from biology to anthropology and etymology, and it all amalgamates into a fantastic world that often surprises me."

1



2



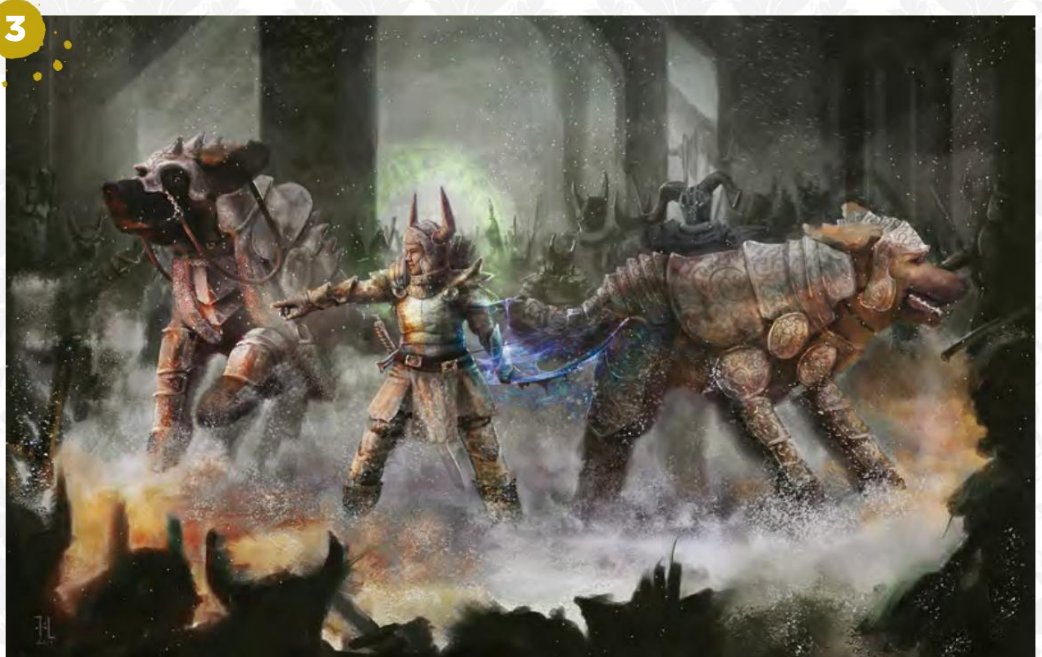
1 RADSERI SPIRITFRIEND "I modelled the parts for this in Sculptris before drawing them. Nature spirits are friendly creatures; Radseri is the world's foremost expert on their behaviour and indulges their playfulness. I paid special attention to the spirits' colouring for their otherworldliness."

2 THE TALE OF NAHIL AND REMOR "A piece for my world Genius Loci, based on a pencil sketch and using SketchUp to help with perspective. It was meditative to paint with such unified colours. The tale isn't written yet, but I like to be inspired both ways - writing first, painting later, or the other way around."

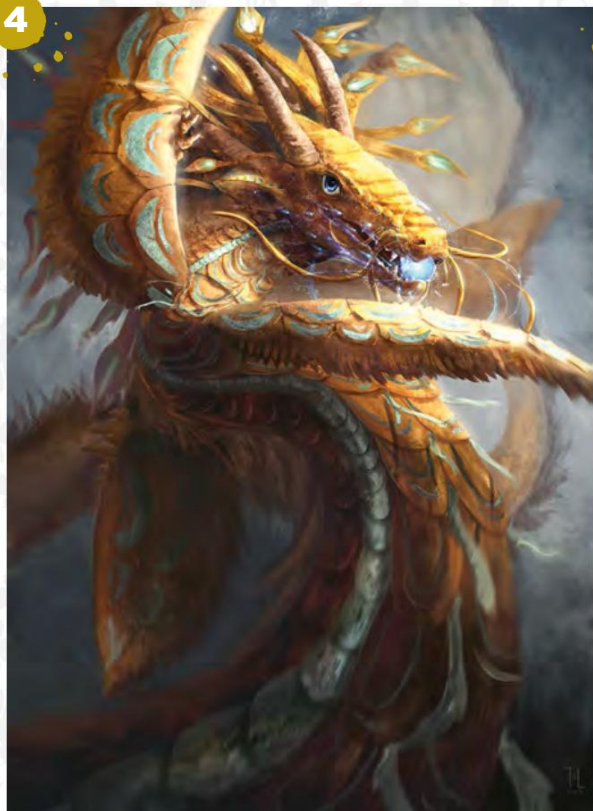
3 KNIGHT JASMIN "I'm not fond of painting crowds, but attacking undead armies are acceptable. It's a portrait - of sorts - of my sister and her dogs, which she asked for while playing Skyrim. The spell effect is a fractal created in Apophysis."

4 SERBUS DRAGON "This is my second attempt at this piece. It was inspired by a Raymond Swanland painting I saw in ImagineFX, but when I started it I lacked skill. This time it's much closer to my original vision."

5 THE FLEETER, THE GIRL AND THE DAWN "Fleeters are gentle creatures, and they love to play. I did it entirely done in Painter for my world Genius Loci. I like the format, but it did prove tricky to print."



4



5



IMAGINEFX CRIT



"I'm impressed by the effort Jennifer's put into depicting the lands and inhabitants of Genius Loci. Her art skills are unrestrained by someone else's opinions and ideas, and so she's free to bring her fantasy world to life."

Cliff Hope,
Operations Editor

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ARTIST NEWS, SOFTWARE & EVENTS

ImagineNation

AT THE CORE OF THE DIGITAL ART COMMUNITY



Anne Stokes believes
that a good drawing or
painting posture will
stave off later problems.



ImagineFX April 2015



BISLEY VS THE DEVIL

Simon Bisley tells about his time with Blizzard to paint characters from its game Diablo III. Find out why it felt like familiar territory for the comic art legend.

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BORN TO BE WILDLY MESSY

Discover why there's a motorbike – and a whole lot more – in book illustrator Scott M Fischer's garage, sorry, studio space. Just out of shot: lots of robots.

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INSPIRED BOOK IDEA

Jon Schindehette's latest project aims to spread the wealth equally. It's a book of work from various artists, who'll share in any profits made.

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DANGER

Artists at work!

The hurt inside Suffering for your art? Some of the world's best artists explain how to avoid problems when you're painting

Creating art may not seem like a dangerous profession compared to, say, dentistry for sharks, or hang gliding into a volcano to collect lava samples. But, like anything that involves repetitive and precise movements, there are hidden dangers that can catch you out.

Gothic art legend Anne Stokes has made a living out of painting images of the undead, but her problems haven't been the type that can be sorted out with a stake through the heart, or a clove of garlic. "At various times in my career I've suffered from sharp pains and pulled muscles in my neck and lower back," she says. "This can get extremely bad and make it very uncomfortable and difficult to work. At times it's also affected other aspects of my life and my ability to play sports."

Some slight modifications to her workspace alleviated Anne's problems. "You

should be sitting comfortably looking level at your monitor, without the need to slump down or look up to see it clearly. Invest in a good chair and make sure your monitor is at a suitable height. The best position will be different for everyone. I have a box underneath my monitor to make it high enough for what suits me."

“Get out, take a walk, loosen up your muscles, and focus your eyes on natural light and far-off objects”

Anne's other solution is to use a pair of furry friends to ensure she's getting a break every now and then. "I have two lively dogs who need a couple of good walks a day," she says. "This is very helpful for me, as come rain or shine I get exercise with them and don't spend all day in front of my computer. I'm not suggesting every artist needs to go get a dog, mind!"

OLD METHODS DIE HARD

Of course, it's not just digital artists who need to keep an eye on which tools they use and how this may affect their health. "I used an airbrush far too much years ago," explains Hugo award-winning science fiction and



fantasy artist Bob Eggleton. "Even though I used organic pigments and nothing bad, I still found myself with a cough and getting between three

and six sinus colds a year. Many older airbrush artists come down with COPD – chronic obstructive pulmonary disease – a respiratory disease that comes from

Alex Ries experienced chronic pain in his drawing hand that had its origins in his spinal chord. His workstation may have been at fault.



INDUSTRY INSIGHT

ALEX RIES

How a second opinion got to the root of this artist's pain

What was the problem?

It began with an ache at the base of my thumb, and developed into shooting pains in my hand. Then the pain migrated upwards. Some days the area around the shoulder blade was so painful I was unable to sleep. I never discovered the cause, but it seems my workstation was too low for my height, which resulted in bad posture.

How did you treat it?

I went to a physiotherapist, who diagnosed early stage carpal tunnel syndrome. I was referred to a hand surgeon who performed X-rays and more physiotherapy. This went on for months and cost a considerable sum of money, but had no effect. I then went to a new practitioner whose studied my shoulder area, now the focus of much of the pain. I was sent to a sports clinic, which conducted MRI scans and X-rays, and discovered a minor cervical disc herniation. The hand pain had been caused by the spinal cord in my neck sending pain down my arm. My workplace had my desk rebuilt under the supervision of an occupational therapist, who sent me to a neurosurgeon. I was told to stop all physiotherapy exercises and to sleep on my back without a pillow to straighten my neck. The pain then rapidly disappeared.

What's your advice for anyone suffering similar problems?

Pain in your drawing hand might have its origins in the spine, so have your workstation carefully set up and your posture correct. You might have to get a fourth opinion to find the cause of a problem. See another specialist if you aren't making any progress, and ensure that they look at your whole body, not just the location of the pain.



Alex is an illustrator and concept artist who specialises in biology, zoology and real-world technology.

www.alexries.com

Bob Eggleton believes that spending time out of the studio prevents the onset of physical and mental problems.



➡ smoking or from breathing too many paint particles."

Bob's more traditional art used to be created from a seated position, but he's started standing up to paint, to alleviate back problems. "Standing helped with my back – it was less painful," he says. And he has some advice for fellow artists: "Get out, take a walk, loosen up the muscles, focus your eyes on natural light and far-off objects. Do hand and elbow exercises. Take breaks. This is really important. It also helps your mental state, too. Also, get out with friends and don't let things close in on you. It's all connected."

ALL IN THE MIND

As Bob highlights, physical problems are perhaps the most prominent when it comes to creating art, but a lot of psychological baggage can come with the medium that can manifest in an insidious manner. By its very nature artists must focus intently on a particular piece, often losing hours at a time ensuring that a particular element image is just right. It's the only way to create great art – but it can take its toll.



"When I was working from home I had the tendency to sit down 'just for ten minutes' to finish something even late at night and I ended up working for another three or four hours," says concept artist **Mark Molnar**. "This really affected my relationship, because I ended up spending much less time with my partner."

While working from home can sound appealing, especially if you've built your own

Mark Molnar reveals that his keenness to finish a painting led him to neglect the company of his partner.

“I had the tendency to sit down ‘just for ten minutes’ to finish something, and ended up working for hours”

workspace, the lack of delineation between work and rest can become a huge problem. Mark's solution was to get out. "I rented out an apartment downtown with some of my friends, who are also freelancers and were having the same problem," he says. "We turned it into a small co-working office and this enabled us to separate our private life



from work. It was an effective solution, because I still had the freedom of working to my own schedule, but I also went to my workplace every day, which gave a healthy rhythm to my life."

Of course, not everyone can afford to rent their own workplace or studio, in which case Mark recommends sticking to a daily routine. "Plan your days, even weeks ahead and then keep to that schedule," he says. "The more you know what you're going to do, the more effective you'll be when you are working." ●

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Diablo III's King Leoric gets Bisleyfied.



You can practically hear the squealing electric licks...



All images © Blizzard Entertainment.

Devilishly good art

Bisley does Blizzard The 2000 AD and Heavy Metal legend joins forces with the company behind Diablo III and World of Warcraft

Simon Bisley is a weightlifting, bass-playing artist whose distinctive style – essentially muscles, boobs and demons – has made him a legend in the world of comic books. Yet his latest project is a side-step from graphic novels: creating artwork for Blizzard's game Diablo III.

"Blizzard approached me about a year ago to do some promotional artwork on its main characters," says Simon. "It's taken what I've done, which was hand-painted, and then digitised and animated it so it looks three-dimensional. Normally that would be a bit corny, but these are done very effectively. It really enhances my genius."

Despite games being largely unfamiliar territory, he found himself at home with Blizzard. "It's exactly my style. I saw stuff there that was mine anyway," he says. "It's

funny when companies get you to create stuff, and your influence is in their work already. It comes back to you in a weird way, and it's a huge compliment. I was probably one of the grandfathers of that style... Listen to me and my ego!"

“I was probably one of the grandfathers of that style... Listen to me and my ego!”

While hand-painted work was commonplace among the promotional material of games 15 to 20 years ago, more recent titles have relied heavily on computer-generated and digital art. It makes sense given the virtual nature of games, but Simon believes there's a danger that old-school skills will be buried by digital art.

"You can put more of your soul into a painting when you're doing it hands-on," he says. "Doing artwork digitally is a bit like having sex with a condom on – the pleasure's not there, but at least you get there in the end. Not using a condom is greater pleasure. It's more aggressive, more organic... just way better."

Simon sees an important role for his unprotected approach to art in the future, too. "It doesn't matter what medium you use, or how you get to it – it all ends up on a screen anyway," he says. "I think the main thing is there's a resurgence of comic book artists. People in the games industry have realised that we're quite good at designing as well as illustrating stuff, and we come up with our own concepts. So yeah, there's a great future for it."

See more of Simon's art and legacy at www.simonbisleyart.com.





This is a Cintiq 22HD on an Ergotron arm. Man I don't know how I lived before this thing! And I made a Bluetooth keyboard stand out of a 1930s stand for a fan.

That time I got three million copies of my JUMP children's book voted into Cheerios cereal boxes!

I stand when I work, so I built a podium to house my computer station and I even raised my art desk so I can stand at it. A brush stroke should start from your feet to your hand!

One of my best contraptions involved putting an antique bicycle seat on a space heater. As a bonus it can keep my coffee warm, and that's important!

Scott M Fischer

Creative utopia The New York Times best-selling book illustrator and popular cover artist on tinkering and fuelling his art mojo

© Alan Amato



My studio is located in Western Massachusetts, US. Though I hesitate to simply call it an 'art studio' - because it's more like a mad scientist's lab. I surround myself with all sorts of inspirational and terribly distracting things.

I have a love for objects that are old. And often rusty and dirty. Peeling paint and chrome surfaces are practically a

prerequisite. I like to build bizarre things with them. Robots, guitars, motorcycles and bicycles. (The cars stay in the garage but they, too, are old and rusty.) My method of creation is to find a bit of this and a bit of that, and make something unique and, to my eye, beautiful. Things full of character and the all-important mojo.

And here's the interesting thing: the same applies to my art. It's a bit of this and a bit of that. A texture here, a paint-stroke there.

This area flat and graphic, this area rendered and slick - adding mojo one flick of the brush (or stylus) at a time.

I'm a tinkerer at my very core and this is my utopia.

Scott is a renowned book illustrator and cover artist for publishers including Penguin Books and Harper Collins. He's also known for his work on series such as Halo, Harry Potter, Star Wars and the TRON franchise. Check out his work at www.fischart.com.

Artist news, software & events



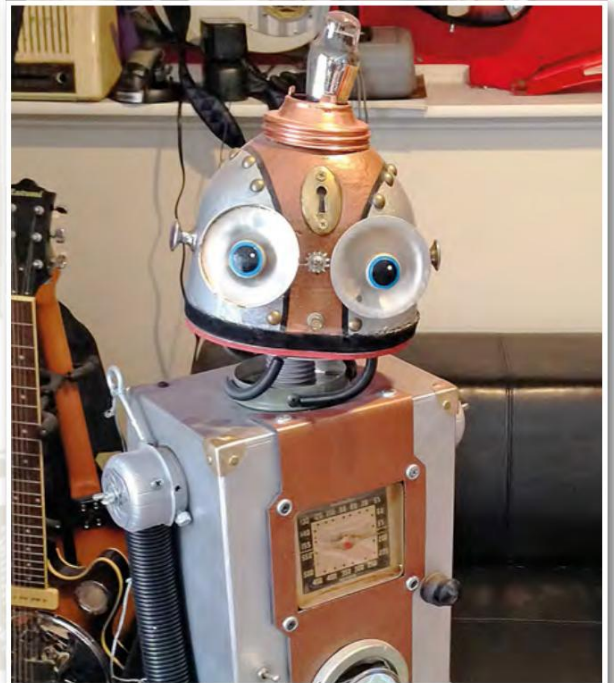
Sometimes you just have to rock! There are rockin' guitars all over, for when you just have to shred!



This old mirror is now a table that acts as my palette.



The brain centre of the whole operation: iMac and Wacom Cintiq 22HD on an Ergotron arm. Photoshop is my main program for all things digital. And a whole bunch of stuff to keep me inspired, or distracted, depending on the day.



I make robots out of junk in my spare time. This fellow is called Emerson and he's a full puppet who often joins me on school visits.



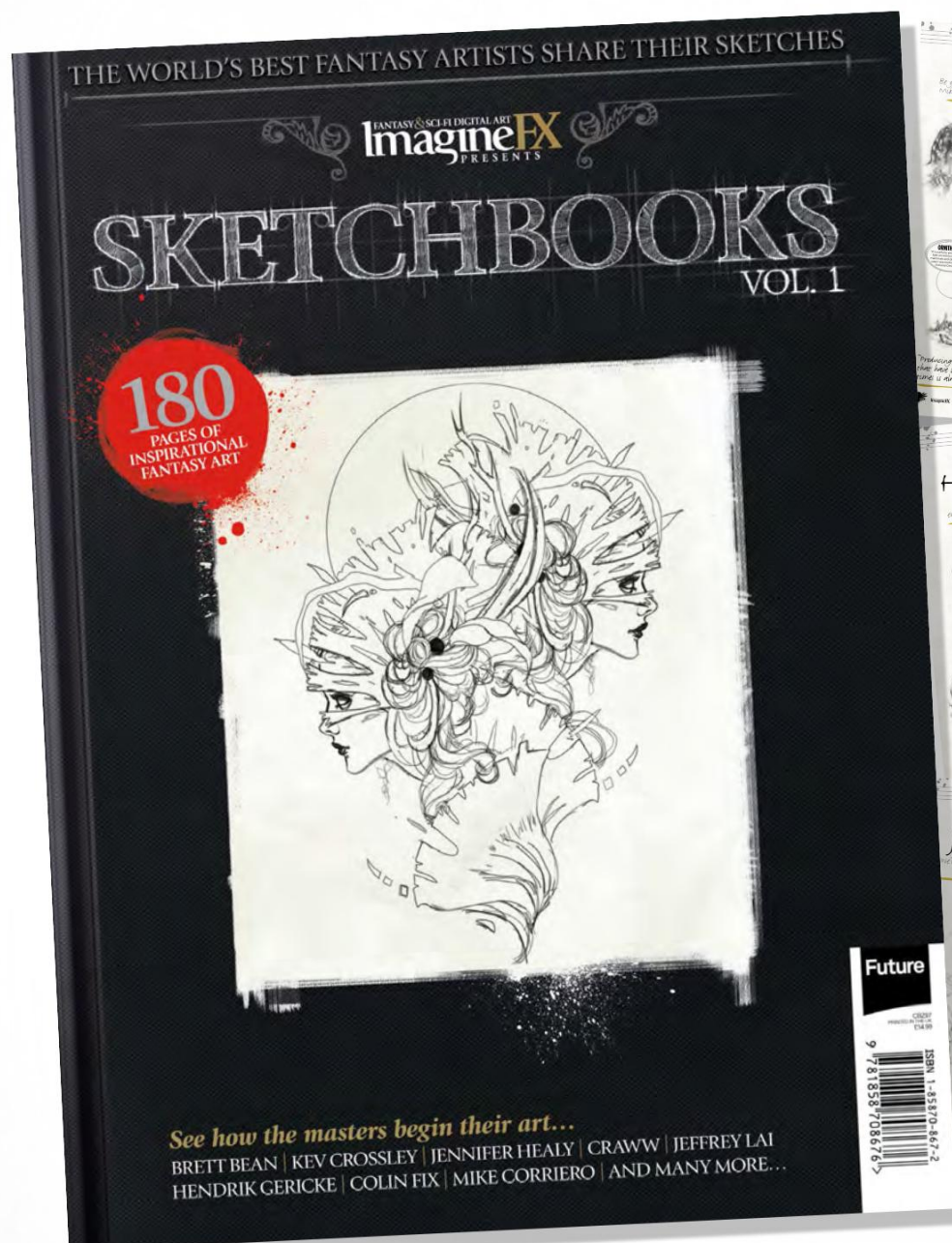
On the shelf and on the floor are two more robots I've built out of junk.



Why yes, that is a motorcycle in the studio. And a BMX bike.

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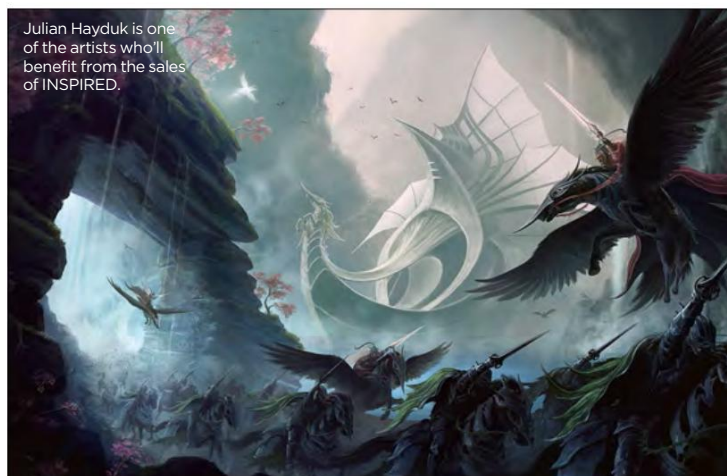
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Hatboy
by Vaughn Pinpin



INSPIRED has a limited print run of 1,000 – get your order in, quick!



Julian Hayduk is one of the artists who'll benefit from the sales of INSPIRED.



Sam Guay's watercolours 'The Eight Arrows' appears in the book.

Sharing is caring

Inspired art Jon Schindehette aims to tackle the norms of publishing with his new book, by splitting the profits



Art books need to be exciting, inspiring and unique. With plenty of glossy, image-led publications on the market, it's a tough task

to get your release noticed, so ThinkGeek creative director Jon Schindehette decided to do things a little differently.

The INSPIRED art book is a juried collection of original art work from over 30 artists around the world. It features selected

works from the Inspired By ArtOrder challenge, as well as short essays by the artists concerning their inspirations, and a mini-artists gallery. "What makes this one special is on the other side of the purchase," Jon explains. "Unlike more juried art books, where the artists trade their skills and creativity for exposure, or a chance to win some prizes – we'll all share the profits of the book. This means that each artist gets a piece of the pie if the book does well."



Renowned creature artist Terry Whitlatch was on the jury panel.

Originally planned as a Kickstarter venture, Jon will now be self-releasing the INSPIRED publication. With jury members including IMC founder Rebecca Guay and Orbit Books' creative director Lauren Panepinto, the book is set to be released on 15 March. You can pre-order the INSPIRED art book now, with the digital book delivered within 24 hours of the sale.

Learn more about INSPIRED, and buy your copy at <http://ifxm.ag/js-inspired>.

Letters

YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS



Contact the editor, Claire Howlett, on claire@imaginefx.com or write to ImagineFX, Future Publishing, Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA, UK



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ImagineFX inequality?

While I'm aware male artists generally feature in greater numbers than female artists in the magazine, I don't usually mind much. I certainly don't normally take out my calculator to figure out that women only make up seven per cent of the featured artists. But in issue 118, I started to feel the lack of female contributors more acutely. And I started counting...

Out of all the artists featured with name and photo, only three out of 41 were female. And that, honestly, is shameful.

This prompted me to do some Googling on women artists and equality. All the search results ended up being about women portrayed in art rather than creating art.

However, I did find some general figures for modern art as a whole. Numbers are variously from the US and the UK, and might not be internationally comparable, but it seems around 60 per cent of art students are female. One number states that 51 per cent of modern artists today are female. In shows and exhibits, about 30 per cent are female. Women are represented in about 8-14 per cent of public art in London. In short, women artists aren't receiving the attention and recognition they deserve.

There are two things I'd like to see ImagineFX do about this. One is a themed issue dedicated to women artists only. I would also like to see ImagineFX take the lead in moving towards a future where these gender issues are no longer issues. It shouldn't be too difficult to set up a few goals about what per cent (of either gender) should always be represented.

Charlotte Ahlgren, via email

Claire replies Thanks for writing in and bringing this to our attention, Charlotte. I would agree that the issue in question doesn't have a gender balance reflective of the industry. Though I would hope you'll notice there's a lot more female input in this month's edition. The gender balance in issue 118 and this one, however, is entirely



Issue 114 was the last time ImagineFX had a female cover artist. Do we have a representative number of female artists in the magazine?



DID YOU MISS ISSUE 119? Visit <http://ifxm.ag/ifxstore> for details on this edition and other special offers, too.



The popular cover image for our Fantasy Art Essentials special issue was created by Boris Vallejo and Julie Bell.

coincidental. We simply try to find great art – and for this reason I'm not sure a quota system is the best way forward. Perhaps men are simply better at promoting themselves online – which is where we research most of our artists. Also, art students may predominantly be female, but do they go on to work in the fields that we represent? Is there a fair representation of females in games and film art, and comics for example? What do other readers think?

Cover question

May I congratulate you on the fantastic Fantasy Art Essentials special issue, which is possibly my favourite publication, and I speak for a number of my colleagues too! Since buying it though, I've scanned the magazine to find out the artist of the cover image (a female warrior in gold, with an axe, leaning on a tree). Please could you let me know their name?

David Ellis, via email

Claire replies We're very glad you and your colleagues are enjoying Fantasy Art Essentials, David. The cover in question was co-created by Boris Vallejo and Julie Bell.

Thank you

I just wanted to say thank you, ImagineFX. I had lost my enthusiasm for art – it must have lasted a couple of months. I had stopped doodling and stopped updating my online portfolio. I guess I had stopped thinking of myself as an (aspiring) artist.

Your magazine is so full of inspiring art that I got right back to it that same day and – following some of the advice in the tutorials – have created what I think are some of my best pieces yet. You now have a new subscriber! Thanks again ImagineFX.

Stevie Simons, via email

Claire replies

Thanks for writing in Stevie. We're glad to help. Have other readers had spells of disillusionment or lacked motivation? It would be good to hear about it – and how you got out of it?



Your art news that's grabbed our attention



SimonWrightArt
(@SimonWrightArt)



"Create your own inspiration, don't wait for it to happen... #artist #comics @imaginefx"



Emre Akkaya
(@mreakkaya)



"My new digital drawing WIP. This is for @DeviantArt and I hope @imaginefx in the future"



Mat Sadler
(@matsadlerart)



"Did a quick sketch on the kids' whiteboard... quite liked it so I coloured it on the computer. @imaginefx"



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Artist Q&A

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The NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS **ImagineFX** panel

Paco Rico Torres



Freelance illustrator Paco lives in Spain, and has produced sci-fi and fantasy art for several card games, magazines, books and role-playing games.

www.pacorico.blogspot.co.uk

Wojtek Fus



Wojtek is a concept artist from Poland who works for Quantic Dream in Paris. He also freelances for companies such as CD Projekt Red, Guerrilla Games and Applibot.

www.fb.com/fus.wojtek

Bram Sels



Bram is a freelance illustrator and concept artist who's based in Belgium. He's worked in the entertainment industry for two years, mainly for the game developer Grin.

www.artofboco.com

Dave Braggalla



Dave is a graphic designer and illustrator from Stockholm who works both digitally and traditionally. He recently organised the Northern Light Workshop series.

www.pixelhuset.se

Mark Molnar



Mark is a concept and visual development artist who works for the entertainment industry, creating illustrations for international film, game and animation companies.

www.markmolnar.com

Artist Q&A Need our advice?

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Question How can I paint translucent wings?

Anton Gilroy, US

Answer Paco replies



The first thing that you should bear in mind when tackling this subject is that even the translucent matter that makes up these wings is still going to be affected by the lighting in the scene to some degree. A translucent or transparent object can experience specular highlights, and the placement of those highlights vary depending on the position of the viewer.

For example, if you're walking outside on a sunny day and you notice someone wearing sunglasses, you'll see specular reflections on the lens. If you're the one who's wearing the sunglasses then you won't notice any reflection on the lens of your glasses, because the reflections are on the outside.

If you understand how light affects different materials, including translucent matter, then painting wings will be a straightforward task.

The same principle works here. If you paint the side of a wing facing the main light source, you should paint some specular highlights, even if this means losing some transparency. When painting the side of the wing that's away from the light, you can ignore the highlights and focus on creating the transparency effect.



Artist's secret

USE DIFFERENT LAYERS

Before painting the wings, copy the body of the creature on to a new layer, and clean the edges of the figure. This will enable you to paint the wings behind the body more easily.



Step-by-step: Give your creature realistic wings



1 I create the wire structure of the wings. I paint it totally flat, then use the Transform command to achieve a perspective effect. I paint the wing in the foreground black because this is the side of the wing that isn't facing the light. The rear-most wing is white because it's the side that's facing the light.



2 Next I add the translucent element. I paint it using grey on a different layer (below the wire structure) on an Opacity of around 40 per cent, and then I add some colour variations on a new layer set to Soft Light using pink, purple and green to achieve a pearlescent effect. This adds visual interest to the wings.



3 I paint the specular highlights on the bright wing, and some highlights on a layer under the wire structure of the dark wing to represent the side of the wire structure that's facing the light (which we can see because the wing is translucent). Then I add some shadows to the creature's body, and detail the scene appropriately.

Question

Can you help me paint a stylised portrait without relying too much on realism?

José Munkle, US



Once I have my sketch I think about the shape design and the general composition. I'm building on top of what I've established.

Answer Wojtek replies



It's all about striking the right balance between stylisation and realism. Most of the time stylisation means simplifying or exaggerating, taking away what's unnecessary to make room for your chosen features and themes. In contrast, realism means depicting things as they are.

To create a convincing stylised painting you need to identify what to take out of the realistic image you're interpreting and twist it to your own tastes and vision. It can mean stylising shapes, exaggerating colours or playing around with the

I approach my portrait just as I would a logo. I want something bold and unique, and I want it to communicate a certain mood.



anatomy, for example. Ask yourself what do you like about this image, and what could you eliminate or tweak but still stay true to its essence. Making these bold decisions and being confident about them is crucial to a successful stylised artwork.

In my Low Poly portrait series everything in my painting will be either a straight line or a triangular shape. I used to hear opinions that it's impossible to create a feminine portrait without curves, so I made it a challenge for myself to prove the opposite. Setting up a few strong rules before you start painting will save you a lot of time later on, and will make your artwork stand out. Don't be afraid of experimentation, and stick to what you've planned in the first place!

Artist's secret

SOFT VS HARD EDGES

Painting and designing with flat shapes doesn't mean you should forget that you're still building a 3D form! Use soft edges when the form turns, and hard edges when one form meets another.

Question

I'm having trouble depicting smoke. Got any tips?

Felicity Jones, England



Answer

Paco replies



To answer this question I've decided to paint a gun that's just been fired. I think that showing the moment just after the trigger's been pulled adds to the drama of the scene.

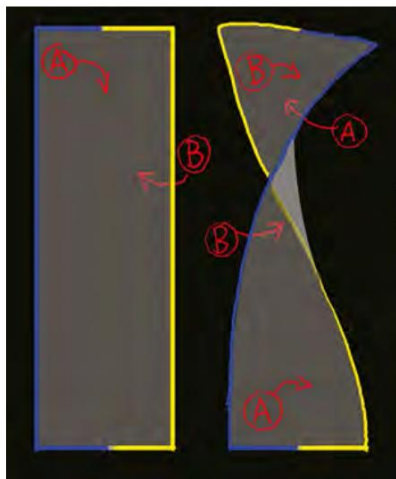
I need to consider the shape of the smoke as it flows out of the gun barrel. When it's close to the barrel, the smoke resembles a piece of paper or fabric that you can twist. It has a 'side A' and a 'side B', and as it twists we can see either one side or the other. The more distant the smoke is from its source (the barrel), the more similar it becomes to everyday smoke. Bear in mind that smoke is immaterial, so depending on how much smoke is between our eyes and the background, it will be more or less visible.

The easiest approach to take is to paint the whole image, and once it's finished, block in a basic scheme of where the smoke is going to be on a new layer. Next, create another layer under the smoke layer and fill it with black. Then, back on the 'smoke' layer, continue to paint the smoke, just as if you were painting it on a black background. Try to use elegant and long brushstrokes when painting the smoke close to the barrel, and short, thick ones on the far end of the smoke trail.

Once done, turn the smoke layer mode to Screen. The black part will become transparent, and you'll have created a translucent, white smoke effect.

Introducing smoke to a gun that's just been discharged can help you solve an unbalanced composition, or fill an image that has too much empty space.

Try to understand the shape of the smoke. I do this by imagining it as a piece of paper that you can twist.



Artist's secret

GET SMUDGING



The smudge tool in Photoshop can help you distort your brush strokes and make them look more natural. I would advise painting the smoke as directed here, and then add some final touches using the smudge tool.



Noise layers and brush textures are simple tricks that can quickly make an image feel less digital and more traditional.

Question

How can I give my digital drawings a more traditional feel?

David Harris, Scotland

Answer

Bram replies



This may sound like an obvious statement to make, but painting and drawing on a computer can quickly make an image feel digital. However, there are different painting methods to counter this – and programs such as Corel Painter and ArtRage do this inherently – but one of the quickest ways to do it is by using the Noise filter. I find that noise helps to give my paintings a little bit of extra texture and makes my brush strokes look like they've been made on a rough surface, rather than a flat digital screen. I'm always careful not

to overdo it though, otherwise the trick quickly loses its magic.

A second pitfall I also try to keep in mind is that an untouched Noise layer – since it's computer generated – will look digital as well. The Spatter filter can help to clutter the chunks of noise together and to randomise it, making it look more traditional.

A last trick I use to ensure my paintings look more traditional is to create digital brushes from actual brush strokes, and to apply a grainy texture pattern to them. All are straightforward techniques, but they can be used to great benefit. Here's how...

Question

What's a good approach to take when ramping up the drama in an existing painting?

Mikael Blumvist, Australia

Answer

Wojtek replies



Drama is a word often used when referring to contrast. So if you want to add more drama to your picture, simply add more contrast! But it won't be as easy as adjusting a Photoshop slider. You have to think about what contrast you want to create. It can be contrast between two values, two colours, specific shapes or rhythms. Alternatively, it can be less technical and be contrast in a storytelling sense (the attitude of the two characters, for

Here, I tilted the camera to make the scene look dynamic. The splash of blood on the ice creates a strong, sweeping curve that leads the viewer into the picture.

example). And you don't need all of them to create a memorable image.

Try to identify what your piece is lacking the most and then try redoing this part with a focus on pushing it to the limits, but without crushing it. Knowing what has already been done or present in the world of art and nature may also be helpful to you. Broadening your visual horizons will help you understand how other people have resolved the problem you may be facing right now. A practical approach would be to build a mood board: a

collection of images that are connected by one theme, subject matter or a story. Try looking at films, nature, photography, art and design for ideas.

Once you have all the images gathered, they'll serve as your visual guide and a place that you can refer back to, should you start struggling with your piece. You can adjust it along the way, find new inspirations and explore. You'll discover that a few hours of planning may save you time, work and frustration at the later stages of the creative process!



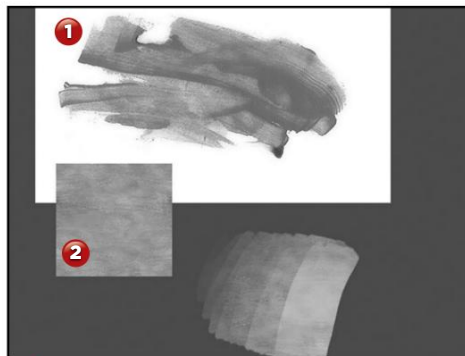
Artist's secret

BOLD STROKES!

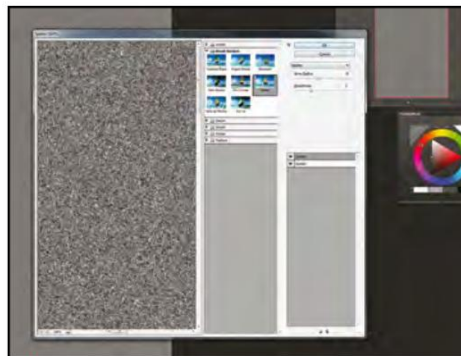
Bold brush strokes will give your piece a fresh look. My advice is to make a bold, sweep of a stroke and then erase a small part of it using the Eraser tool. It will make it look fresh and deliberate at the same time.



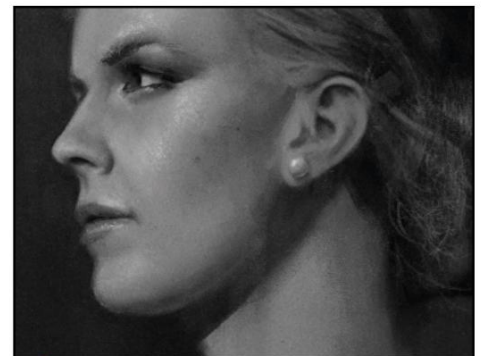
Step-by-step: Apply noise to a digital image



1 To make my brushes feel more traditional I access the Brush palette. Creating a brush from a brush stroke (1) helps to get rid of the digital-looking round shapes of the standard Photoshop brushes. I also turn on Shape Dynamics and apply a texture (2) to it.



2 To add noise, I create a new layer, fill it with a neutral grey (RGB: 125,125,125) and click Filter>Noise>Add Noise (about 50 per cent), followed by Filter>Filter Gallery>Brush Strokes>Spatter. Finally, I set my layer to Soft Light and adjust its Opacity to 20 per cent.



3 I try to hold off using noise until the end of the painting process. If I add it too soon, it obscures my vision for the brush strokes underneath. I'm also careful not to overdo effects such as these. Using these techniques results in a painting that's 20 per cent more traditional looking!

Question

How can I recreate the effect of an angelic backlight on a character?

Nicola Bradshaw, England



Using several simple optical effects, you can turn a staid character portrait into something more striking.

Answer Dave replies

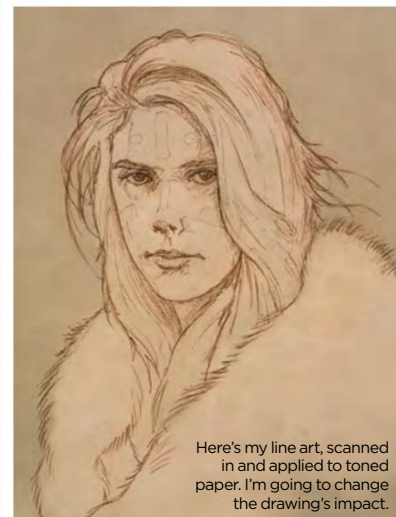


Painting bright light can often be a challenge, but mastering a few simple techniques will make this much easier for you.

A mistake I used to make was to push my bright light source as white as possible, but since we can't get whiter than white, where does one go from there? It's actually simpler to create the illusion of brightness by careful handling of the areas around the light source instead.

Direct light scatters, both in the atmosphere and in the human eye. Learn to simulate this corona effect in your art instead of blowing out the contrast in your light source, and you'll produce a much more satisfying result. If you combine this with careful edge lighting, you can produce a powerful visual effect.

Crepuscular rays, or sun rays, are perhaps the most obvious effect, but it's easy to overdo them. A soft touch with these can do the job very well without things growing out of control. In addition, a hint of bounce light from your foreground can contribute to the sense of a scene being bathed in light. Let's look at how adding each one of these effects drives the image closer to our desired result.

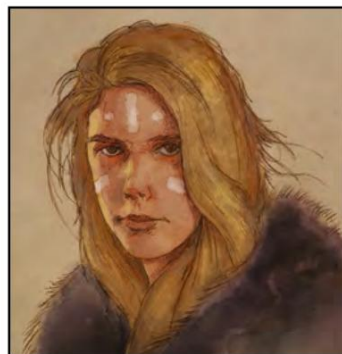


Here's my line art, scanned in and applied to toned paper. I'm going to change the drawing's impact.

Artist's secret

LAYER CAKE
For this kind of combined lighting effect, it's good practice to keep each effect on its own layer. You'll be able to dial each component up and down, and develop a sense of how much is too much.

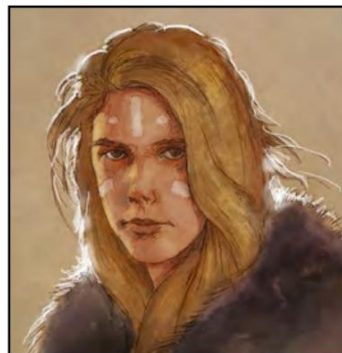
Step-by-step: Creating angelic backlight



1 Here's my basic line drawing and colouring. I've scanned in my pencils and used digital watercolour brushes. The value range isn't yet all the way up to the white point: I want to have somewhere to dial things up to! I've also darkened around the edges of her hair, which is mostly where I'll be using the colour corona effect later on in my painting process.



2 I use a big grainy brush to spray in light behind the girl's head, and then on a separate layer set to Overlay, I employ the same brush to dust light around the edges of her form. The end result is called colour corona, and gives a sense of brightness to the figure. I'm still not up to pure white yet, but already the feeling of the image has changed for the better.



3 This stage shows just the application of the edge light layer. Don't outline everything evenly, but instead think about where a light source behind the figure will break through most. I hit those areas with a bit of airbrushed glow. You can see that even this effect alone can be effective and dramatic. The edging can be pure white here if you want.



4 Here are all the effects combined, along with added crepuscular rays, but with the colour layers turned off. It's clear that this type of lighting can also work independently of colour, and can be applied to toned drawings or manga styles equally effectively. I'm always a bit wary of crepuscular rays, but with careful treatment they can work very well.

Question

Can you help me design and draw a sleeve tattoo please?

Luis Carvalho, US



Create unique tattoos for your characters and treat them as part of the overall design and story.

It's crucial that you integrate the tattoo with the skin by follow the shape of the body.

Answer

Mark replies



I want to create two focal areas for this character design: one is the robotic head on the human body and the other one is the tattoo design showing a human skull, to serve as a visual link to the character's missing head.

I start with a quick line drawing and after blocking in the colours I detail the body and head. I want to keep the whole design simple, so as not to distract the story that I want to tell.

The tattoo design itself is one of my old works, but I thought it fits the idea perfectly. It was originally created for a start-up T-shirt design company, which wanted to sell post-apocalyptic themed clothing designs. The skull of the human soldier with the crow on top symbolising death contrasts nicely with my character, who's lost his humanity.

I place the original design on to a Multiply layer and distort it to match the character's arm. I recolour it slightly so that

it has a more vivid tone and push the blacks so that they have a blue hue similar to that of old tattoos. The final step is to bring back some highlights and some skin colour on top of the tattoo. Don't forget that the tattoos are under a layer of skin, so the skin still retains most of its reflective qualities.

Artist's secret

INKING SEPARATELY



Draw and paint your tattoo design separately as a traditional or digital ink drawing, and then use the Free Transform tool to apply the final design on your character. This method makes it a lot easier to match the tattoo to the body's curves.

Question

I want my clouds to have depth and form – any advice?

Aaron Hewitt, US

Answer

Dave replies



I love to draw and paint clouds. They're evocative and come in infinite varieties of shape, size and colour – a very flexible tool in your compositional toolbox! Learning to conceive of the volume of your clouds and smoke elements will make your images more compelling and convincing.

Consider the atmosphere for what it truly is: an ocean of air, with layers, currents and tides. Although clouds can feel flat as background elements, always bear in mind that they're fully dimensional forms, affected by the atmosphere around them. I often use this idea to give a sense of motion to the clouds in my paintings. Ponder the weather and wind in your scene and how it might affect the clouds.

Clouds are water vapour that diffuses light throughout them. Dense clouds can appear very opaque, yet other clouds appear lit from within by light bouncing around inside the form. Many clouds are flattened at the bottom by air layers, so you can make these areas darker. Often, areas of complex cloud shapes will throw bounce light onto other areas, and this can be quite dramatic. Smaller clouds in front of large clouds can appear dark and silhouetted for more depth in your scene. Whenever possible, observe and photograph real clouds to build up your understanding of their behaviour. It'll really pay off!



Shadowing, bounce light and edge lighting convey dimension and form, and layering the clouds gives a feeling of depth and even motion.

I use smoke, foreground and background cloud shapes as compositional elements. The figure's cloak and banner accentuate the sense of wind.

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Question

I want to paint a creature with layers of teeth, like a great white shark. Can you help?

Justine Chang, US

Answer

Mark replies



The key for painting layers of teeth is to give extra depth to the creature's mouth, and then using various artistic tricks to sell the idea that the lines of teeth are behind each other.

The most basic approach that you can take is to make the teeth further in the mouth darker, because the skull and jaw are casting shadows on them. It's tempting to add highlights to all the teeth, but unless there's a light shining directly into the mouth then only the first line of teeth will catch the light. Be careful when applying rim lighting, and limit this to the teeth at the very front of the mouth.

Second, reduce the saturation inside the mouth. Strongly saturated colours bring an object closer to the viewer, so by desaturating the inside of the mouth you can create the illusion that some teeth are further away. You can achieve the same effect by slightly changing their size and adding fewer surface details to the lines of teeth at the back.

The final and most important art trick is to create overlapping objects, which instantly conveys to the viewer that a particular object or element – in this case, very sharp teeth – is behind another. Furthermore, you can add a lot of depth by clever positioning of the lines of the creature's teeth. Avoid painting teeth that look too precise in their size and placement, which will result in an unnatural looking set of gnashers!

You can achieve believable results with your fantasy creatures, if you spend more time on your focal areas and paint them realistically.

Adding extra details with proper shadows to the lines of teeth can help you to sell the idea that they're layered. Without that the teeth would look flat.



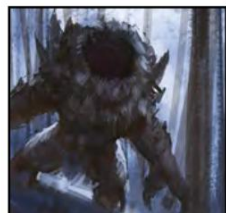
Artist's secret

DON'T TREAT EVERYTHING EQUALLY

By varying your edges and contrast, you can give extra depth around your focal areas. Here I add more definition and differing values to the outer line of the teeth, which brings them closer to the viewer.

Step-by-step: Handling depth with edges

1 After quickly blocking in the background colours of the forest and the silhouette of the creature, I start to add the primary light sources and shadows. I don't worry about the whole mouth area



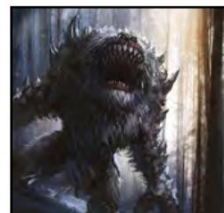
because I know that it's going to be my main focal area. To emphasise this I make an effort to lay down brushstrokes that point towards the mouth.

2 I bring in a warmer light source, which helps to make the palette of the image more interesting, and then start detailing the composition. I want to give the image a painterly feel, so I add details that radiate



out from the focal area by having the smallest brushstrokes around the creature's mouth and teeth, and painting more loosely towards the edges.

3 I apply more contrast and definition to everything and then use various custom brushes to give more texture to the image. I define the different lines of teeth – which is the key feature of the



monster – and better define the fur. Then it's simply a case of applying final tweaks and making minor adjustments, along with any special effects.

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Tony DiTerlizzi

By approaching goblins like scientifically observable creatures, Tony has had an enormous influence on fantasy art...

When Tony DiTerlizzi was 12 years old, like so many fantasy art fanatics, he was deeply into Dungeons & Dragons. And, growing up in South Florida, he loved nature too and loved exploring in the nearby woods looking for wildlife detailed in illustrated guidebooks. One day, his imagination took over and he started drawing a field guide of his own, but instead of snakes, birds and possums, his book depicted the monsters routinely observed during games of D&D.

"I started putting them into a field guide. And it filled up like a notebook," Tony says.

MULGURATH

Here's the villain of the piece in *The Spiderwick Chronicles* – an ogre, not to be trusted!



"Over the course of the summer I'd do a drawing of a dragon and give it a Latin name which I'd make up completely – like Biggus Baddus Firebreathus. Then I would write this whole entry from a naturalist's point of view, observations of this animal."

The project lay dormant in Tony's mind, but resurfaced after he'd become a children's book illustrator living in New York. He'd just won the Caldecott Honor award for his illustrated version of Mary Howitt's poem *The Spider and the Fly*, and his publisher at Simon & Schuster had an offer for him.

"They asked me a question you don't get asked often: 'If you could do any kind of book, what would you do?'" he says.

BUILDING A STORY

His mind immediately went back to the field guide he worked on that summer back in Florida. What if he could recreate it properly, build a story around it and have it published for a fantasy-loving audience.

"I brought everything in and I told my editor about it and he thought it was a great idea. He was like, 'Tell me about the guy who created this.' And so I started telling

Artist PROFILE

Tony DiTerlizzi
Illustrator and writer Tony is perhaps best known for *The Spiderwick Chronicles*, a series of children's books he created with Holly Black. But he's also made a name for himself producing art for *Magic: The Gathering* and *Dungeons & Dragons*. He now lives with his family in Massachusetts, US.
www.diterlizzi.com



him the stories about Arthur Spiderwick and how, in his mind, he was going to become famous. He was going to be the next Charles Darwin and blow open the scientific community with his discovery of the fairy world."

The *Spiderwick Chronicles* was born, and it became a global sensation. Tony co-wrote the series with Holly Black and solely created over 350 amazing illustrations for it, which comprises eight storybooks, plus *Arthur Spiderwick's Field Guide to the Fantastical World All Around You*, *The Care and Feeding of Sprites*, ➔

THE FUTURE

For *World of WonderLa*, Tony wanted a female lead and a futuristic setting.





TROLL ALERT!

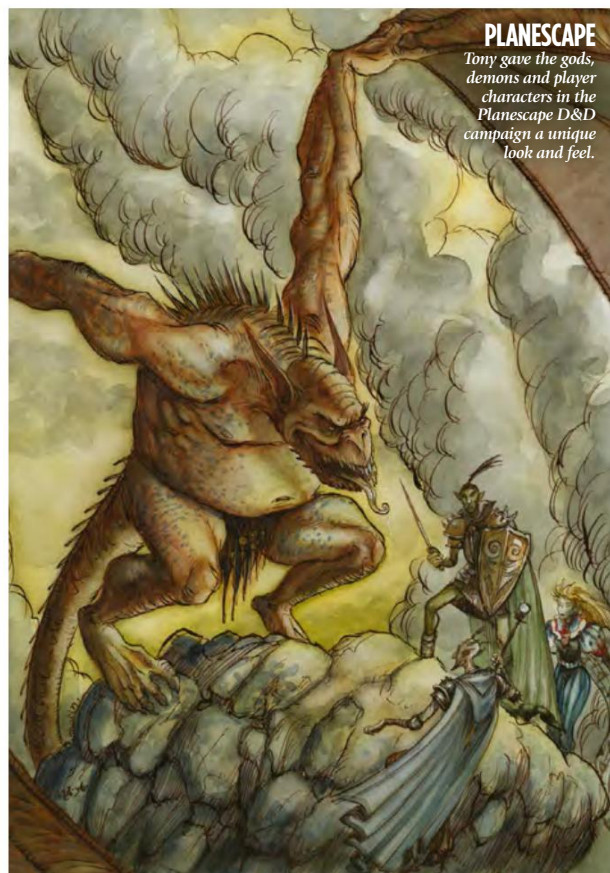
*The physiology of a
River Troll, as explored
in Arthur Spiderwick's
Field Guide.*



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SONG OF SERENITY

Following his success with *Dungeons & Dragons*, Tony was recruited by the art directors on *Magic: The Gathering*.



PLANESCAPE

Tony gave the gods, demons and player characters in the *Planescape* D&D campaign a unique look and feel.

➤ and *Spiderwick's Notebook* for *Fantastical Observations*. His earthy, tea-stained, Rackham-inspired imagery has been ingrained on a generation of new, young fantasy naturalists.

"I learned a lot from working with Holly, most importantly to subvert the anticipated," he explains. "For instance, the first sketches I did of the Grace kids were very American, Norman Rockwell. Kids with freckles and big ears. Holly was like, 'We've seen you do that in your other books. Why not make them look different? I've got a rule for you: no freckles!'"

A DIFFERENT KIND OF HERO

So our heroes had dark hair and pale skin instead, and the series got a hint of shadow and mysticism. When it came to a scene in one of the books, Tony initially thought along the lines of a wonderful revelation. But Holly's thinking was... well... blacker.

"Holly had the unicorn come and share its nightmare-ish visions of the unicorn hunt with one of the kids. It was so powerful. It was going to be, 'Oh, pretty, beautiful unicorn,' but then what it's holding within its soul is just not what I would have expected. I don't think it's what the reader would expect, and that was the genius of how Holly wrote."



REALMS

A spot image from Tony's new book, *Realms*. Beware the deadly Fungi!

The creative partnership continued when *The Spiderwick Chronicles* was turned into a film in 2008. Tony and Holly were both executive producers on the project. Working on it exposed Tony to all the creativity that goes into motion pictures. The visualisation of the story's creatures was split between ILM and animation guru Phil Tippett.

"Phil and I got along terrifically, to my delight, because I'd grown up seeing his work in *The Empire Strikes Back*, *Dragonslayer* and *Robocop*," says Tony. "ILM kind of redesigned a lot of the stuff that they were tasked with doing. They did *Thimbletack*, the fairies and *Mulgarath*."

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WORLD OF WONDLA

Tony's most personal project saw him write and illustrate a three-part science fiction story for children

Published between 2012 and 2014, *The Search for WondLa*, *A Hero for WondLa* and *Battle for WondLa* may not have been as commercially successful as *The Spiderwick Chronicles*, but Tony regards them as a real personal achievement. They're 100 per cent his story – one he had to tell.

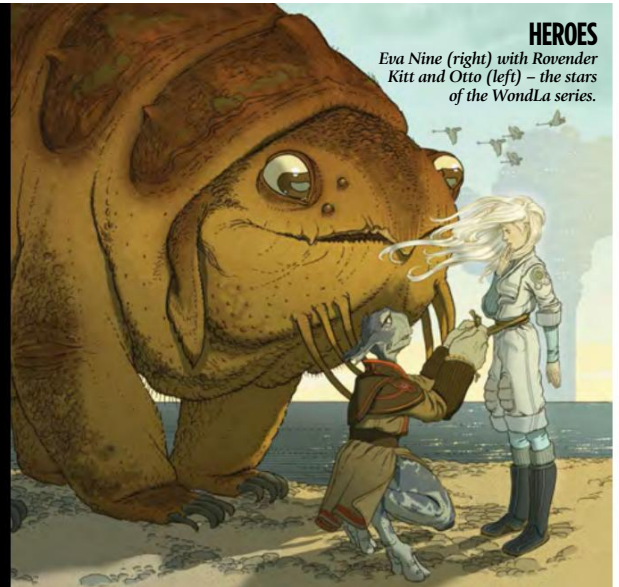
In *The Spiderwick Chronicles*, a 100-year-old journal is discovered by contemporary children and sparks off their adventure. In contrast, the idea behind the *WondLa* books, which fascinated Tony, was a story that comes from the future to affect today's young readers. He worked on the concept while he drew *Spiderwick*. "In my sketchbooks you'll see these sketches of *Thimbletack* and *Hogsqueal* and next to them you'll see sketches for what would become

Rovender Kitt and *Otto* from the *WondLa* books," he says.

Tony had just had a daughter when he wrote it, and this was a significant influence on his choice of main character – a 12-year-old girl called *Eva Nine*. *Star Wars*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Peter Pan* and *The Wizard of Oz* also inspired him.

"I wanted *WondLa* to be slicker and more finished and so I switched from dip pens that I had used with *Spiderwick* to technical pens. I coloured the art digitally as opposed to putting watercolour on it.

"I looked at *Moebius* and *Hayao Miyazaki*, but I also looked at *Walter Crane*, *Kate Greenaway* and *Randolf Caldecott* – that line quality in their art was so crystal clear and so epic to me and I wanted to try and capture that in the illustrations for *WondLa*."



HEROES

Eva Nine (right) with *Rovender Kitt* and *Otto* (left) – the stars of the *WondLa* series.

BEHOLD!

The Beholder is a classic *Dungeons & Dragons* monster.



and a job in a studio in the early 90s, his friends nevertheless convinced him to send a portfolio to TSR, the then-publisher of *Dungeons & Dragons*. Eventually, he won a series of commissions from the company, including work on the *Monstrous Manual* – the first full colour edition of the *Monster Manual*. In 1994, his illustration skills went up a level when he became sole artist for *Planescape*, a new *D&D* campaign setting that enabled players to visit realms and dimensions inhabited by the game's gods, demigods, deities and elementals.

PLANE SPEAKING

"I was asked to fly up to TSR and I met with Zeb Cook, who was one of the original game designers for *Dungeons & Dragons*," Tony explains. "By working with Zeb, I really started to understand how to build a world from soup to nuts, and that was really important for projects. I ended up doing the same down the line, in particular with *The Spiderwick Chronicles*."

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AWARDS

The award-winning illustrations for *The Spider and the Fly* put Tony on the children's book publishing map.



“A weird merge of Japanese and British illustration sensibilities comes together with my pen and ink style”

Thimbletack and *Mulgarath* kind of went through the Hollywood filter – they were changed for the screen. When I got to see Phil and what he was doing – the goblin and the troll creatures – he really didn't change them. I said, 'Is this the final?' and he said, 'Yeah, the designs were great, why would we mess with them?' I just thought that was such an amazing compliment because I expected the designs to change. That's what always happens when a book gets adapted to film."

While creating *The Spiderwick Chronicles*, Tony used a skill he'd developed years beforehand: that of world building. With a degree in graphic design

Zeb Cook also introduced Tony to Yoshitaka Amano's vibrant artwork, while his own inspiration came from Golden Age illustrators such as *Arthur Rackham* and *Edmund Dulac*, and more recent work by *Brian Froud* and *Alan Lee*. The challenge for Tony was to come up with a cohesive creative style that could be used across covers and internal pieces, depicting everything from gods to player characters, religious artefacts to architecture – not to mention the campaign's cross-dimensional ethereal settings.

"So you've got this kind of weird merge of Japanese and British illustration sensibilities and it all kind of comes



THE UNICORN

Co-author *Holly Black* helped Tony make his unicorn more engaging than he could possibly have imagined.



FORGOTTEN FUTURE

Eva Nine in the ruins of a future society, as visualised by Tony for his World of WondLa series.



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POLTERGEIST

This Magic: The Gathering card brings out the artist's natural predilection for humour.

MERMAID

Scientific illustration inspired Tony's approach to the Spiderwick series, and the Field Guide book in particular.

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS RETROSPECTIVE

Watch for Realms this summer, where Tony revisits his D&D artwork and how he made it

After Tony graduated from college, he went to work as a graphic designer, but always harboured a desire to become a fantasy illustrator. One night, at a local bar, his friends convinced him to send his work in to TSR, the publisher of Advanced Dungeons & Dragons. He started creating images for them on a freelance basis, and this was where his career began.

Fittingly, Tony's latest project is a book that will revisit his role playing games artwork. Entitled *Realms*, it'll be published by Kitchen Sink Books and it's due out in the summer. To put it together, he's been revisiting his old sketchbooks.

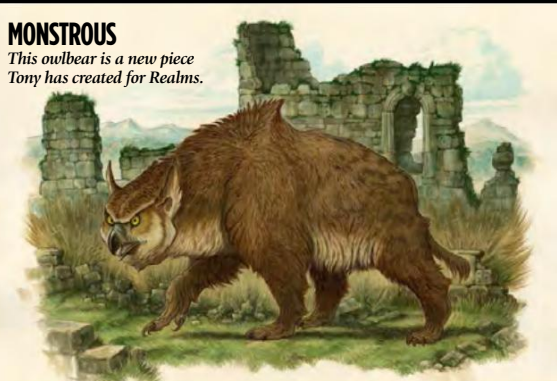
"It'll have artwork from Dungeons & Dragons, Planescape and Magic: The

Gathering and other unpublished stuff," Tony says. "Unlike a typical art book that just has image after image, paging through finished paintings, I wanted a lot of sketch work, photographs of the models that I used, and recollections by the people that I worked with. I really want it to feel like you get a sense of other people that were involved. It wasn't just me. You work with a lot of other people, and I like that when I create my art."

Although it's a long time since Tony's drawn an orc or a magic user in anger, he's gone back and sketched D&D creatures for fun throughout the years. *Realms* will include new, finished artwork of monsters such as a kobold, an owlbear and a tiefling.

MONSTROUS

This owlbear is a new piece Tony has created for Realms.



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“I have a favourite palette that I will kind of sit in – brown and dirt, and green. It's very nature-driven”



➡ together with my pen and ink style,” explains Tony. “Because the deadlines were so tight and I was the only one doing them, the artwork was looser, faster, a little more spontaneous and I would say livelier. Less accurate, and more gestural.”

A STORY FAR, FAR AWAY

The artist's celebrated, fantastical career developed further via dozens of *Magic: The Gathering* cards, and he's done numerous other children's books besides, including his creative opus, the *WondLa* series (see page 45). However, last year he took on another project of which his 12-year-old

self would surely have been proud. Lucasfilm approached him and asked him to put together a 64-page picture book using the concept art of the late Ralph McQuarrie, and to write the story.

As Tony worked on it, he could see how McQuarrie's art worked and compare it to his own. “Ralph worked much smaller than I do, he worked incredibly tiny. Many of his thumbnails were not much bigger than a postage stamp,” he says. “He's incredibly good at spatial, the illusion of space, and I don't mean like stars but I mean big spatial landscapes and architecture and buildings that I struggle with. And also his ever-

WRAPAROUND

The full wraparound jacket artwork for A Hero for WondLa, the second book in the series.

changing colour palette. He could do very cool colours for a scene that involved the Death Star and he could do very warm colours for Jabba's palace or an Ewok village. I will play with my colour palette, but I have a favourite palette that has lot of brown and dirt, and green. It's nature-driven, and everything is antiquated and a bit dingy.”

After years as an illustrator who found the writing a little more challenging, being offered the project recognised Tony's all-round talent. “It's amazing, it's very validating, because I wasn't doing the art. I was just being asked to design and assemble this book for them and write the story.”

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PRINT AND DIGITAL BACK ISSUES



Issue 119

March 2015

Fred Augis' bright cover image is just a taster of what's inside this month's sci-fi art special. Our workshop artists concept a spaceship, show a planetary expedition and paint a space-age priestess. We also talk to Stephan Martinière about his futuristic art.



Issue 118

February 2015

Learn new tricks for the New Year as we concentrate on boosting your art skills. A raft of top concept artists, including Khang Le, Feng Zhu and Ian McQue share their ideas, and Yoann Lossel shows you how to paint with gold. Plus we chat to Bruce Pennington.



Issue 117

January 2015

Zap! Pow! It's all about the comic art this issue. Stanley Lau shows us how to create dynamic and compelling superheroes, Dave Kendall makes a horror page, and we chat to some greats of the comic field, including Alex Ross, Terry Dodson and Bill Sienkiewicz.



Issue 116

Christmas 2014

Our creature design special gives you all the hints and tips you could need to produce better beasts, with advice and tutorials from Aaron Blaise, Bobby Chiu, Terry! Whitlatch and more. Plus, we take a look into Wes Burt's sketchbook, and visit Jesper Ejsing in his studio.

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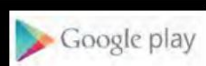


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STUDIO PROFILE

ORBIT BOOKS

Hachette's acclaimed sci-fi and fantasy division has a uniquely collaborative approach

Orbit Books US handles the core of Hachette's sci-fi and fantasy titles. The team works on around 50 books a year, from established and debut authors, taking in everything from photo-based illustration to epic fantasy landscapes.

"I love the fact we work with lots of female authors," says creative director



Lauren Panepinto: "We've got lots of meaty, epic fantasies written by women." It's a dream role for Lauren, who worked at comic book stores in high school and studied graphic design at Manhattan's School of Visual Arts.

Keith Hayes, art director at Hachette's Little Brown Book Group, recommended her for the role in 2008. Already established in the UK, Orbit was just beginning its

expansion into the US. Lauren, then an art director at Doubleday, was facing redundancy after Black Tuesday decimated the publishing world. "It's a real kismet story," she says. "I didn't even have my portfolio together. I just threw a bunch of books in a box and went to the interview."

Art director Kirk Benshoff moved over from Little Brown and together they built the Orbit US art department from the ground up. "We had a great amount of time to get to know each other and figure out how we both work," says Kirk. "We handle a large workload for a small group of people, so we need to communicate really well."

Both directors divide their time between Orbit and Yen Press, Hachette's manga and graphic novel imprint. Newly based in ➔

Daniel Dociu's art for the cover of James A. Corey's *Nemesis Games*, from the book series *The Expanse*.

Lauren Panepinto says it was John Harris' idea to split his art across Ann Leckie's sci-fi trilogy.



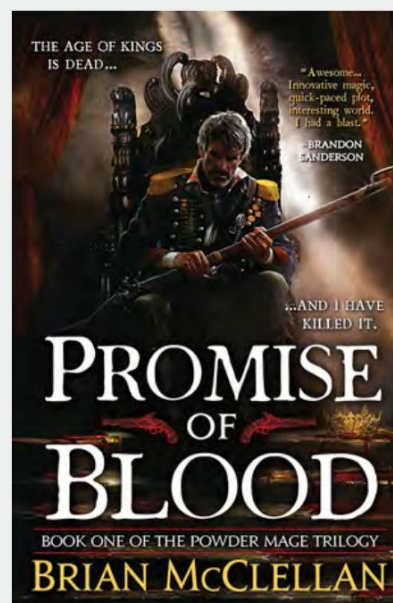
Here's legendary sci-fi artist John Harris' full artwork for Ann Leckie's Ancillary series of books.



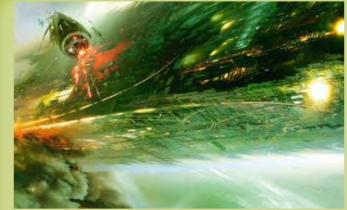
Sam Weber's cover for Rachel Aaron's Spirit's End, the final book in her Eli Monpress series – more overleaf.



This dynamic cover art for Kate Elliott's Black Wolves was created by Larry Rostant. The book is out later this year.



Gene Mollica and Michael Frost share art credits, and a Gemmell Award nomination, for this cover.



DANIEL DOCIU

The prolific artist and art director gives us the inside track on working for Orbit

What's your background?

My degree is in industrial design. After studying in Romania, I moved to the US and went into video games. I've worked in games development for the past 22 years. I'm employed full-time, so I reserve my weekends for freelance work. It's cathartic to do something other than video games and it forces me to keep my skills reasonably sharp. During the week, a lot of my time is consumed with meetings and managerial responsibilities, so any freelance work has to be done at the weekend or early in the morning.

How did you get noticed by Orbit?

I'd been doing some covers for Tor Books. Lauren must have noticed my work and she called me up. I've been collaborating with them for about five years, working on the Caliban's War series by James SA Corey.

What's the best thing about working for Orbit?

Lauren is extremely easy-going and our working relationship has been awesome. She sends me projects she feels are up my alley and she's really good at giving me a concise yet relevant creative brief.

What do you like to do when you're not working?

My big hobby is riding my motorbike. It's an adventure bike, namely a BMW 1200GS. I get on my bike at every opportunity: I ride every day, all year round, come rain or shine. I live in Seattle and we don't get much snow or ice here, luckily. During my lunch break, I'll hop on the bike and go for a spin to clear my mind.

What advice do you have for someone wanting to be an artist?

Treat every assignment, big or small, with the same amount of effort. Never treat projects differently according to what they pay – see them all as portfolio pieces and work on them as if you're working for yourself. It's the same with a full-time job. Make the most of it, even if you're doing a crummy job you hate. Always make the most of whatever opportunities you have right now.



A freelance artist for Orbit, EA, Warner Bros, Disney and others, Daniel is also an art director for ArenaNet, Guild Wars and NCSOFT.

www.danieldociu.weebly.com

“I love the fact we've got lots of meaty, epic fantasies written by women”



Photoshoots provide the opportunity to explore a variety of character poses and moods for the eventual cover art.

➡ the Rockefeller Center, Orbit US has just one in-house designer. The company work with a wide range of freelancers from all corners of the globe and share most covers with Orbit UK.

The new office space is open plan, which suits the Orbit dynamic. "We're super collaborative," says Lauren. "This is the first publishing house I've worked in where everyone sits together – I used to share a cubicle wall with our marketing guy." It's the same with Orbit's cover meetings. "Those meetings are often very formal affairs but ours are a free-for-all. The sense of collaboration and freedom can freak other designers out because I show work much earlier and more in development than people ever usually do."

FANTASY BATTLE

Kirk also relishes this dynamic. "I love the absurdity of the discussions we have in cover meetings. It's like our own fantasy battle," he says. For him, the most enjoyable challenge is the need to please fandom. "We're designing for a culture and that's really challenging. I love getting into the



Gene Mollica combines photography and digital art to create his book covers.



"We chose Daniel Dociu [for this cover of James A Core's *Leviathan Wakes*] because he brings that cinematic look we needed," says Kirk Benshoff.

“The sense of collaboration and freedom here can freak other designers out”

Orbit US only has one in-house designer, so it makes regular use of freelancers worldwide.

minds of the audience. They're passionate and they know what they want."

It's also important to nail an author's vision, as Lauren explains. She likes to speak to authors in-depth and discover as much as she possibly can about their ideas and vision. "Covers are often done before a manuscript is completely finished, so details from the cover sometimes make it into the book." She's also conscious of the need to stay ahead of cover trends. "We're always trying to produce something cool and awesome that's attractive to genre fans, while also attracting a mainstream audience."

Unsurprisingly, Lauren values good communication from freelancers. It also helps if artists understand the role she

plays. "Freelancers often think they're pleasing the art director and we're the hurdle, but we're the coach in the corner who's fighting for you," she explains. "I'm not the decision-maker – I just control the choices. I sometimes feel like a harried translator at the UN."

Always hungry for new talent, Lauren tries to answer every personalised email she receives. "So much of what I do is outreach and development," she says. "We really like to nurture young talent and use people who haven't done covers before."

So, what's the best way to get noticed by Orbit? "Don't just email. Upload cool stuff to your Facebook page. Go to conventions and network. I'm always going to conventions and seeing new art."

"Some people say, 'There are so many artists ahead of me in the chain. Why would you hire me?' But I still get books arriving on my desk where I don't know who would be good for them. There can never be too many artists." ●





Orbit's brief asked for some humour, romance and epicness – but not too much of each.



Character sketch

"I sent Sam the manuscript and a physical description of the character. Humorous but not too humorous, epic but not too epic, romantic but not for a romance book. These thumbs came out of his imagination – he really nailed the attitude."



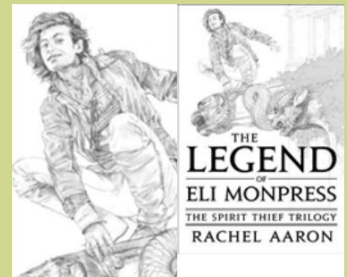
Perfect pose

"Sam came back with those initial thumbnails within a week. We thought it was dynamic to have the protagonist in this Spider-Man-esque pose, which conveys a sense of fun. He looks a bit more heroic in some of the other sketches."



Combined concepts

"We put two of Sam's sketches together and flipped things around so it looked like he was leaping off. I quickly Photoshopped them together at our cover meeting. Sam mostly works traditionally, so we needed to factor that into the timescale."



Final touches

"We knew we would need to put colour in the type as Sam's style uses very muted backgrounds. We gave the type less character, however, as the illustration does all the work. This edition really breathed new life into the series."

REIMAGINING ELI MONPRESS

Lauren Panepinto, Orbit's creative director, on the thinking behind creating new art for Rachel Aaron's *The Legend of Eli Monpress*



Orbit commissioned Sam Weber to illustrate the cover of *The Legend of Eli Monpress*. "Sam does great character portraits," says Lauren Panepinto. "We wanted him to capture the main character, who's very funny, arch and roguish. A lot of our illustrators are good at character design, but Sam is also very good at conveying emotion." Rachel has since written a fourth book.



Fred Augis

somewhere between the ravings of David Cronenberg and Daft Punk, you will find...

Artist PROFILE

Fred Augis

COUNTRY: France



Fred Augis is a Gallic professional concept artist and illustrator currently working in the video game industry. His customers

include Ubisoft, Wizardbox, DTP Entertainment and many more - including us, having provided the artwork for our sci-fi cover last issue.

www.fredaugis.tumblr.com

ROCKET

"Rockets are a fascinating object of war and virility. It's fun to push the boundaries until your image becomes absurd, with over-abundant muscles and tattoos."

CHARMEUSE

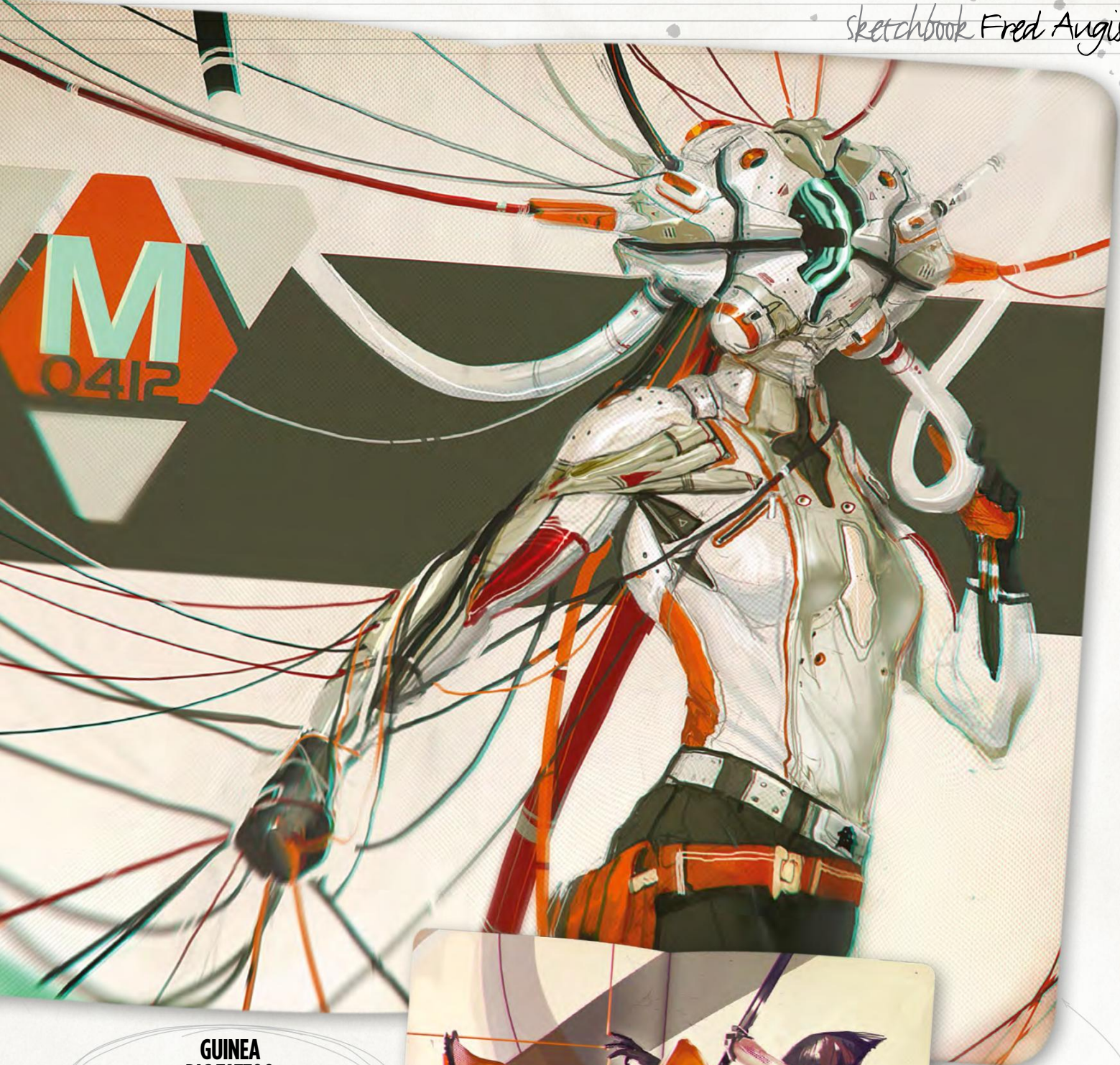
"I like to add graphic symbols to my compositions to inject more impact. There's certainly something symbolic about this snake."



GUINEA PIG

"I placed high saturation colour on the orange strip to make it stand out against the other images."





GUINEA PIG TATTOO

"Here's a rough design for some skin ink. It's important to me that I can create symbols which are very different to others."



SERIES 5

"Technological heads and masks often bring about a weird feeling that I like."

POLE

"The shape of active movement is an integral part of the composition for me, personally."

"It's important to me that I can create symbols that are very different to others..."



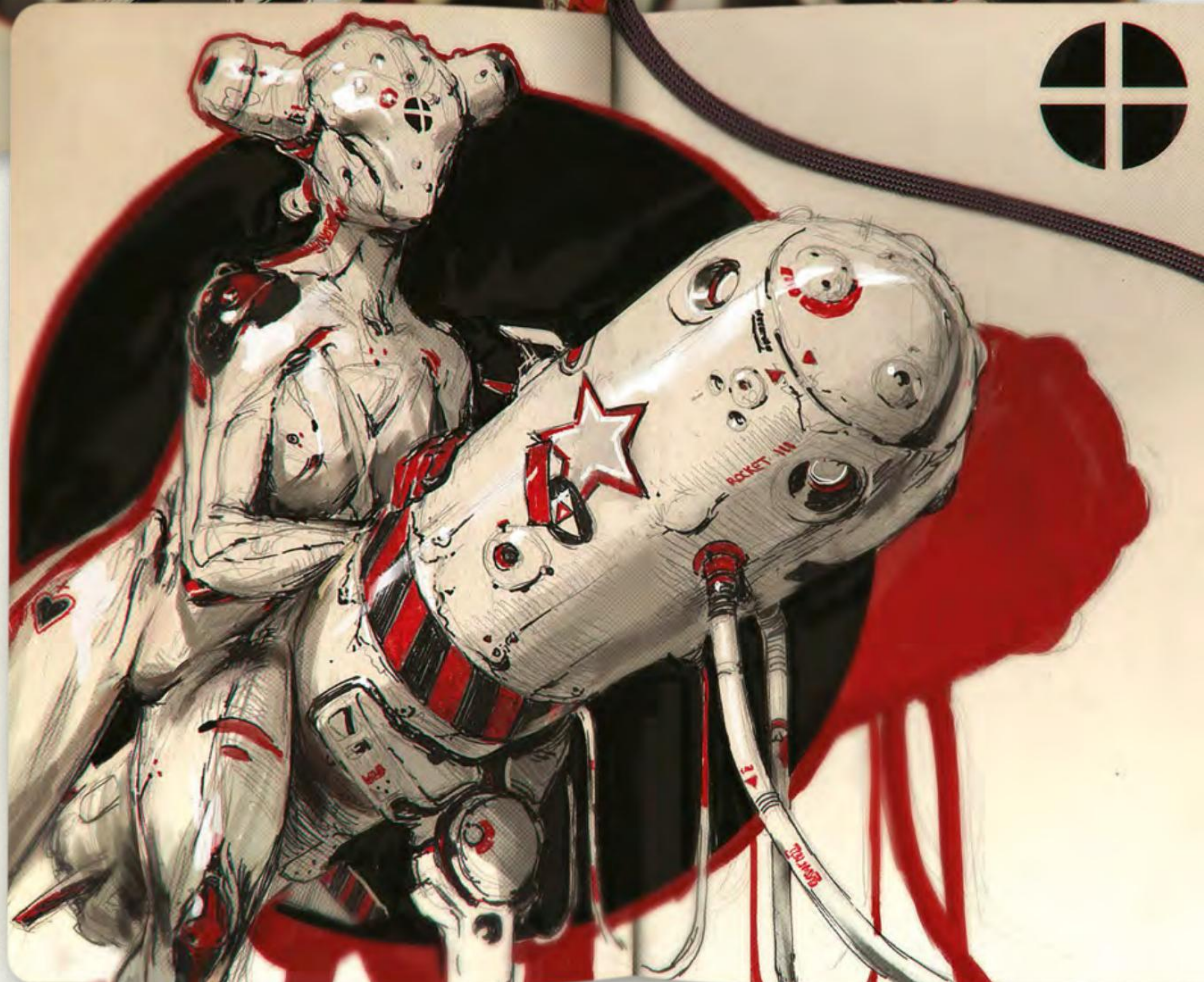
MERCENARY

"I like to integrate teeth into my masks. There's something pleasing about the nonsense of a carnivorous cyborg. You wouldn't want to marry one."

ROCKET SERIES 3

"This pin-up sketch is my twist on the cliché of a good-looking girl riding a rocket. How did I do?"

"There's something pleasing about the nonsense of a carnivorous cyborg"



4

OTHER TATTOO

"The notebook is where all my sketches start their lives - I use a large moleskine sketchbook with a 2B pencil."

TECHNO CLOTHES

"Some research doodles for character design."



WIRED

"Wires are important in this series - it's crucial for me to get the movement and shape of the wires across successfully."

Want to share your sketches? Email us with a selection of your artwork, to sketchbook@imaginefx.com

NEXT MONTH'S SKETCHBOOK: DEVON CADY-LEE

GET INTO BOOK ILLUSTRATION

Ten Essential Tips

Want to get your stylus in the door of the book illustration world? Illustrators and art directors share their hard-earned industry advice...



COVER TO COVER

Fantasy and sci-fi book illustrator Dave Seeley's own art book, featuring his greatest work, will be out in September.

Yes, they'll tell you that fantasy and sci-fi illustration had its heyday in the 1970s, when the market for pulp paperbacks was still booming. And who hasn't heard that print is dead and ebooks are apparently killing off those good-old bound editions? So, it's a terrible time to get into book illustration, right?

The answer to that is a resounding "No!" Yes, there has been a swing to ebooks. But publishing industry figures tell us that, unlike in the music industry, the digital market has plateaued somewhere around 30 or 40 per cent. People still love to buy and collect fantasy and science fiction books. And they love it all the more when they can get their hands on copies with stunning jacket artwork. The industry needs skilled illustrators whose images are

so amazing that fans can't help but pick up the books when they browse the bookshelves. Equally, that artwork also has to get them clicking thumbnails when they're surfing Amazon.

However, the availability of painting software and graphics tablets means there are more artists who are busy creating fantasy and sci-fi artwork than ever. They're sharing it online and this means there are tens or even hundreds of thousands of potential book illustrators out there ready to satiate the needs of art directors at the big publishing houses. But not all of them have what you have.

No, they don't all have copies of ImagineFX in their hands (fools!), and they're not reading this very article on how to make it in book illustration. Read on, heed the advice of the experts we've spoken to, and give your career a boost... ➔



GRUDGE BEARER

Fantasy illustrator Todd Lockwood loves working on covers that feature a dragon – and it shows on this cover for a JF Lewis novel.



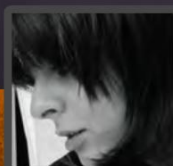
Todd Lockwood
Illustrator



Dave Seeley
Illustrator



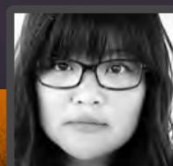
Irene Gallo
Art director



Karla Ortiz
Illustrator



Rohan Eason
Illustrator



Sarah Robinson
Art director

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BOOKS OF VIRGA

Dave Seeley works a great deal with models, whom he photographs, when composing his covers.

1

ALWAYS JUDGE A BOOK BY ITS COVER

That old adage about never judging a book by its cover? Ignore it. The cover is the most important page of the book as far as you're concerned and that's no less the case in today's world of ebooks and Kindle. "A book cover must grab the reader's eye and convey at a glance the heart of the story inside," says renowned fantasy illustrator Todd Lockwood. "The most important thing is that it has a focal point, what I call 'the Star of the Painting' – the one significant element or character that you see first, giving the viewer a point of entry into the illusion. This is usually achieved by concentrating the most contrast at that point in the image."



WAR MACHINE

Dave Seeley's cover leaves readers in no doubt that there will be guns and sci-fi cities inside.

“A cover must grab the reader's eye and convey at a glance the heart of the story inside. It must have a focal point”

CALL TO DARKNESS

Michal Iwan's art for Pathfinder Tales: Called to Darkness is a great example of having what Todd Lockwood calls "The Star of the Painting."

© Paizo Publishing

2

NAIL YOUR GENRE

Sci-fi and fantasy readers are very visually literate, informed by over 100 years of imagery. And these books are marketed to niche groups. "Film posters often just set a mood, and are hyped via robust advertising including trailers and film stars," says Dave Seeley, who has illustrated book covers for Baen, Del Rey and Tor. "Mainstream publishing for big-name authors can get away with that, but sci-fi and fantasy novels, marketed to a niche fan base, can't. Maybe that'll change, but they currently need to tell a potential reader that the book is sci-fi or fantasy at a glance. That can be accomplished with obvious cues like spaceships, planets, or future technology for sci-fi, or medieval weapons, dragons or visible magic for fantasy. Sometimes cues can be bold, sometimes quite subtle."

3

NO SPOILERS

Too many storyline clues on the cover ruins reader satisfaction. Todd Lockwood, who's illustrated books by RA Salvatore and Marie Brennan, looks for a scene in the story that hints at the characters and action inside, but doesn't go too far. His cover for The Thousand Orcs (below), is a great example. "I hate it when a cover gives away the story," says Todd. "Sometimes I know early on what will work, other times I make a document filled with book excerpts, endless doodles and word associations. I try to distill the novel down to a single image, an entry point – a broad hint of what's inside."



THE THOUSAND ORCS

Todd Lockwood's cover hints at what may happen inside, without giving much of the story away.

© Wizards of the Coast

LUKE SKYWALKER AND THE SHADOW OF MINDOR

"Show them something that they love, and all else is forgotten," says Dave Seeley, on collaborating with authors.



© Arrow

4 THE MANUSCRIPT IS NOT ALL-IMPORTANT

Some of the illustrators we spoke to insist on reading the manuscript whenever they can. However, it's not as important as you might think. Often covers are commissioned before the book's been written. Rather than relying on the manuscript, focus on the notes in the commission.

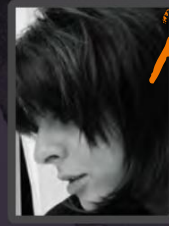
Good publishers usually have a process that goes on behind the scenes to help produce the brief you receive. "For each title I ask an editor to fill out a cover concept memo," says Irene Gallo, art director at Tor.

"I ask for plot, setting, character descriptions, comparison titles and a specific scene if they have one in mind. I'm looking for a starting place to begin thinking about the book. I'll use that to go back to the editor and ask them questions, make suggestions, and we hone it down.

I'll then send a highly revised version of that memo to the artists."

Dave Seeley is one of the artists Tor commissions. He says: "Often I get a script and an art director asks me to pitch something after I've read it. Sometimes there's no manuscript, and I'm working from a paragraph synopsis. Even when a manuscript is available, sometimes clients know exactly what they want right down to expressions on characters' faces, celebrities the characters resemble, and details of costumes and settings.

"There are times when these constraints can lead to a 'yes' more quickly, and don't preclude an interesting approach. And there are times when a verbal description isn't physically possible to execute. The only way to success at that point is to show the author something they love, and all else is forgotten." ➔



Profile KARLA ORTIZ

Fantasy artist Karla Ortiz was one of our Rising Stars. Now she's pulling down commissions from publishers including Tor. We asked how she got started...

WHAT GAVE YOU YOUR LOVE OF ILLUSTRATION?

When I was 12, I was walking to the local bakery with my father. I noticed a new gaming store, and in the window was a large poster. It was Desolation Anger, made by the masterful Brom, for Magic: The Gathering. I waltzed in, hypnotised by how incredible that painting was. My father bought me my first pack of Magic that day, and that's when my hobby of drawing random things turned into a hobby of drawing illustrations.

WHAT MEDIA DO YOU WORK IN?

Pencils, oils and digital.

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST COMMISSION FOR A BOOK ILLUSTRATION?

My first one for a big publisher was given to me by Matthew Kalamidas, art director at Science Fiction Book Club. The job came to me thanks to a recommendation by Jason Chan, my old teacher and friend. The book was The Order of Deacons by Philippa Ballantine (see page 61).

HOW DID YOU APPROACH IT?

The look and feel of the characters and their surroundings was already established. The challenge was to somehow make the scenario my own. As an illustrator I think that's one of our most important tasks, to have your own voice. To have a voice isn't something you think long and hard about, and say 'this is my style!' It happens through study and by trying out different things. You soon find what makes you happy as a painter, and then accept that you are your own artist.

DID YOU HAVE TO MAKE MANY CHANGES, AND WHAT WERE THEY?

Changes happen quite often, some large, some small. For this particular piece I remember extending the borders a little bit to fit the layout better.

WHAT OTHER BOOKS HAVE YOU DONE ILLUSTRATIONS FOR SINCE THEN?

I did another one for Tor, a month or so after The Walking-Stick Forest (see page 63). It was called In the Sight of Akresa by Ray Wood. I've also done illustrations for The World of Ice and Fire: The Untold History of Westeros (page 62) and Game of Thrones. My favourite thing about working on that was turning two of my good friends into characters for the book, one of them being Rhaegar Targaryen.

Trial by fire FROM ROUGH TO READY

Irene Gallo, art director at Tor Books, reveals how she chose the final cover for *Karen Memory*, a book by Elizabeth Bear. The illustrator was Cynthia Sheppard. She had 10 days...



"Seeing Cynthia Sheppard's work at Spectrum Live solidified my interest in working with her. This was, however, a trial by fire.

I was late on the book for various reasons. One cover didn't hit the mark and I spent some time rethinking it. So by the time I settled on Cynthia, we had only 10 days left.

My email to her included the word panic and this brief: 'It's a portrait of a woman. Steampunk. Bad-ass. Runs a brothel. Behind her could be a stylised mechanical kraken or a steampunk city. If it's the kraken, it could read as a designed background - it would not need to look like a literal scene'. I promised more details, but before I got them, she handed in three amazing sketches..."

SKETCH 1

"I loved version one. It was clever, had attitude and would have made for a good cover. In this one, the title would become the star of the picture with the leg as a strong supporting cast member."



SKETCH 2

"Sketch two didn't quite have the strength of one or three. It felt a little lost. It's hard to know where she is and what's happening. The type and the figure seem to be fighting for equal time. It was the first one dropped from consideration."



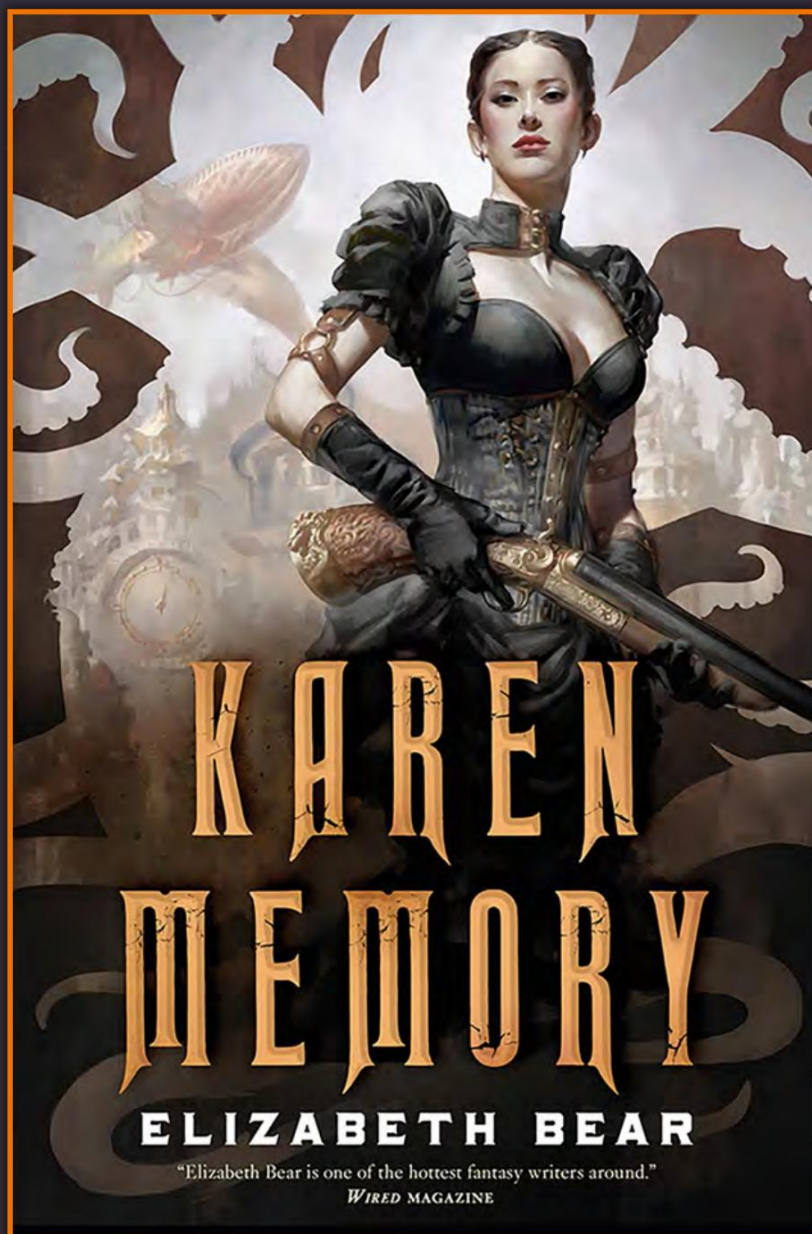
SKETCH 3

"This one is a beauty. It's all about the character - the reader would want to know who it is. Once engaged in the picture, the background details are fun to look over. It has brilliant use of the kraken shapes. And they cleverly focus attention on Karen's face."



FINAL COVER

"I sent one and three to the editor and we settled on three. We made a few tweaks and let Cynthia finish it. Cynthia nailed this piece by creating a woman who's fun and sexy without giving up Karen's character. You believe she's strong, smart and capable. Someone the reader wants to meet and spend time with."



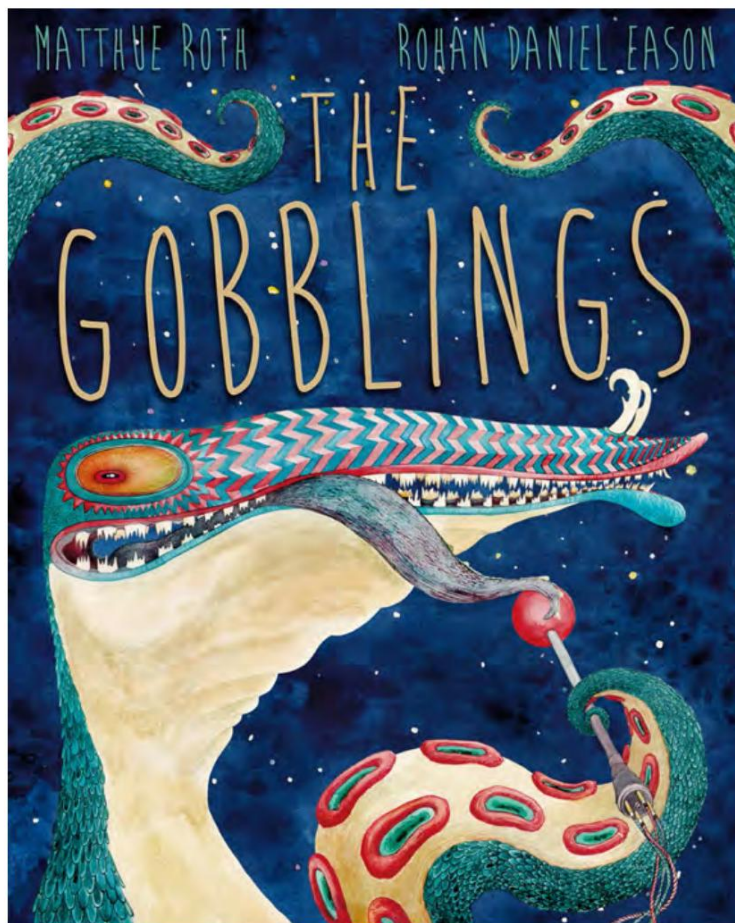
5 SKETCH, SKETCH, SKETCH...

"Sketching is key – the most important process," says Rohan Eason, who's illustrated children's storybooks and young-adult novels. "I produce a story board with the simplest scribbles and from this I make a first round of sketches. The client will see these and hopefully agree with my choice of images. I then make more detailed second-round sketches, with fully developed characters and environments. If the client is happy, I may re-sketch individual pieces many more times, until I'm happy with the composition and characters. Sketching is the best place to work everything out. I redraw again and again, until it's a smudgy mess, and from that I retrace for the final piece."



THE GOBBLINGS

Rohan Eason, who illustrated these along with various children's and young-adult covers, says his very first sketches are "barely recognisable to anyone else".



© One Peace Books

“To find new talent I look at artists I work with – their blogs, websites and social pages – and see who they like or follow”



THE ORDER OF DEACONS

Karla Ortiz's cover for Philippa Ballantine's *The Order of Deacons* was her first commission for a major publisher.

© Science Fiction Book Club

6 GET OUT THERE AND NETWORK

"My main tool for finding new talent is artists I already work with," says Sarah Robinson, managing art director at Paizo. "On their blogs, websites and social pages you can see who they like or follow. It's a great resource for me. Sometimes I spend days on art websites like ArtStation. Also I attend many conventions, such as Spectrum Live and the Society of Illustrators. I also go to the World Fantasy and World Science Fiction cons. The Illustration Master Class is one of the most useful and enjoyable weeks of my year. I wouldn't tell anyone to go who's more interested in finding work than in simply getting better, but people make career-enhancing connections there and business training is definitely part of the curriculum."

“You really have to want to do this. It’s not an easy life for the person with the skills, persistence and creativity required”

7

HIT YOUR DEADLINE

Missing a deadline has repercussions for people up and down the publishing food chain. Publishing houses work in seasons and art directors pull together entire catalogues of new titles for sales and marketing meetings. The more they can show off your cover, the more the sales team can utilise it to get the book in front of buyers, who in turn get it in front of readers. If the book does well, readers want more of the same, which means more commissions. However, miss your deadline, that prep doesn’t happen, and the book may flop. “Meet the deadline,” says Irene Gallo, “and it’ll go a long way to ensuring a second one.”

VISERYS

Karla Ortiz rendered this image of King Viserys Targaryen on the Iron Throne, for Tor’s *The World of Ice and Fire*.

© Tor Books

COBRA SLAVE

Spacecraft looming dramatically above a planet – not necessarily out of fashion in sci-fi illustrations, says Dave Seeley.

© Baen Books

© Baen Books

© Randomhouse/Del Rey

8

WANT IT! LOVE IT!

“You really have to want to do this,” says veteran illustrator Dave Seeley. “It’s not an easy life for the person with the skills, persistence and creativity required. There are far more remunerative professions for people with those strengths. When you’re young, you don’t think that matters so much, but when your contemporaries in other professions are raising kids

and nesting with three to 10 times your level of pay, it gets you to thinking. However, there can be great satisfaction, the ability to make your own schedule, have some fun, gain some modest notoriety, and lots of wallowing in image junkie heaven.”

Young illustrator Karla Ortiz agrees. “Love it,” she says. “All art is a labour of love. If you have a passion for your work, it shows.”



HOMECOMING & THE WALKING-STICK FOREST

Illustrator Karla Ortiz first impressed Tor's Irene Gallo at Spectrum Live, when she presented the cover for *The Walking-Stick Forest* (above, right), a novel by Anna Tambour.

9 START NOW

Don't wait to get hired. "Pick up a book, read it, and illustrate it. Build a strong portfolio and start approaching agents and publishers," says fantasy illustrator Rohan Eason. "Create your own books to illustrate, or choose random books from the library and bring them to life with illustrations. Offer your services for free to new

authors, do anything you can to practise. There are no quick tips for book illustration. But developing your own working practice will help." Dave Seeley agrees. "Assign yourself your dream job and execute it," he says. "Then market that image by submitting to illustration annuals, web media, competitions, and so on. Seek exposure for your art."



LUCAS GRACIANO

A Paizo cover by Chesley Award-nominated fantasy illustrator Lucas Graciano, who's also worked for Blizzard and Wizards of the Coast.

© Paizo Publishing

10 GET VERY, VERY GOOD

Once you're on the radar of art directors and producing covers, carry on honing your style, take ownership of it, put your soul into it. "Get very, very good," says Irene Gallo. "The better the work is, the easier marketing it becomes and suddenly it's being accepted into annuals, being linked to on social media, art directors are telling art-director friends about it. A big part of that is having a distinctive voice. When I hire people like Victo Ngai, Sam Weber, Allen Williams, or Anna and Elena Balbusso, it's because they have a point of view that no one else does. I often want artists who can bring themselves into the painting, show us the world in a way no one else can."

Five things ART DIRECTORS HATE THE MOST

Doing these will quickly send busy art directors into a rage...

1 NO RESEARCH

Don't send your portfolio to a company unless you know what it does and that your work is relevant to it. For instance, Paizo's style is high fantasy. "Getting anime, editorial or children's book illustrations immediately tells me that this was a mass emailing," says Paizo's managing art director Sarah Robinson.

2 POORLY DESIGNED WEBSITES

What's the point of having a slick-looking website if your contact details are hard to find or, worse still, missing altogether? Make sure your site is easy to navigate and up to date. "It's so frustrating to see someone's great portfolio at a convention, or their latest pieces fly by on Facebook, only to look them up afterwards and see work that's six to 12 months' old. You want your website to seal the deal," says Irene Gallo, art director at Tor Books.

3 FALSE REPRESENTATION

Art directors tend to hate it when the work you hand in isn't the type of work they've seen in your portfolio. They've most likely hired you because they've seen that you do particular things well - and that style or quirk of yours is what they're after. If you want to try something wild, new and different for an assignment, discuss it with the art director first. Surprise art directors by being great, not by being surprising.

4 RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

There are lots of people involved in the publication of a book and their opinions are all valid - from sales to marketing, from the author to the publisher. Amends will happen on your covers. "I never want to work with an artist who I think will become overly defensive about their first sketches and ideas. We should be working together to create a good piece of advertising. We all love it when that's elevated to the level of art, but we always need to be in service of the book first of all," says Irene Gallo.

5 NO COMMUNICATION

You shouldn't need to talk to your art director every single day, but if you have a problem with anything to do with the project, let them know and discuss it. There might be a simple solution. Equally, if your art director has a question, respond to it promptly - if you're off the grid when they need you, you'll drop off their list of preferred artists pretty quickly.

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Download each workshop's WIPs, final image and brushes by turning to page 6. And if you see the video workshop badge, you can watch the artist in action, too.



Advice from the world's best artists

This issue:

66



66 Create classic steampunk art

Learn how to illustrate a book cover using both traditional and digital media, with Justin Gerard.

70 Recreate an iconic character

Jonny Duddle shares his approach for painting a Harry Potter cover.

72 Draw and paint subtle emotions

Make sure your characters' facial expressions have impact, says John Stanko.

76 Mixed media book cover art

Amanda Sartor illustrates for a self-published book, incorporating both modern and traditional sensibilities.

78 Put a fresh spin on an old tale

Rafael Sarmento shares his process for giving Arthurian characters a sci-fi twist.

83 Customise and set up brushes

Want to tweak SketchBook Pro's brushes? Then follow Paris Christou's quick guide.

84 Paint a moody gothic artwork

Combining traditional and digital, Rovina Cai creates mood and atmosphere.

72



76



78



Traditional skills & Photoshop **CREATE CLASSIC STEAMPUNK ART**

Justin Gerard is given a dummy book illustration cover brief by ImagineFX, and captures a steampunk character in a reflective mood

Artist **PROFILE**

Justin Gerard
COUNTRY: US



From the moment Justin learned crayons were meant for colouring and not eating, he has been drawing. He began painting later in life and creates story-driven images to inspire himself and others.

www.gallerygerard.com



**GET YOUR
RESOURCES**

See page 6 now!

PRO SECRETS

Beat brush lag in Photoshop

Photoshop can struggle with larger files. The more layers you have, the more memory your file will take up, and the slower your computer will run. This can cause annoying brush lag when painting, especially true of Photoshop's Mixer Brushes. To fix this, I regularly flatten my image and save it in intervals. First, I save my layered image. Second, I flatten all my layers. Now I save and name this file a new name. Then, when my file begins to run slowly again I repeat the step and so on.

Digital painting has many compelling points. It offers a range of fantastic techniques, the ability to undo mistakes, quickly edit an image, and perform experiments on your painting without any fear of ruining it. It has many time-saving features that enable the artist to streamline their process and produce work faster. Working digitally also makes easy colour application possible, and you never have to wait for those colours to dry.

To top it off, you'll never have to clean your brushes. In many ways, it's magic.

However, when I began working digitally, I noticed that my finished paintings looked either too plastic, or burnt out. My digital work felt synthetic and flat and while all the visual information was there, it was missing an organic vitality that my traditional work had. As I investigated further, I realised this problem lay in the surface texture itself. The digital art just didn't have it.

I experimented by working digitally over traditionally painted textures and underpaintings, and found that by using real-world texture and traditional work underneath my digital work, my final paintings didn't feel quite so soulless. It's an approach I've refined over the years.

In this workshop I'm going to be showing you this method step by step, and covering how I combine traditional materials and digital paint in Photoshop to achieve a rich, classically painted look.



1 The central idea

After getting the brief from ImagineFX, I draw a small thumbnail in pencil, and focus on making the composition pleasant to look at. As I sketch, I learn more about my character and story. I decide on clouds for the background, and this in turn leads to more ideas. I draw thumbnails until I arrive at one that best suits the scene. Then I scan it in and tighten it up in Photoshop.



2 Cleaning up a thumbnail

Photoshop is wonderful for doing quick adjustments and minor edits to a composition. Working digitally at this point enables me to fine-tune my thumbnail so that I arrive at the best possible design for my painting. I lighten my thumbnail, then redraw it with a darker lines. Finally, I add very rough values using Multiply layers.



RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES:
IFX 04E HARSH CHALK

I use this rough-edged Eraser brush for carving out details from airbrushed shapes.

IFX 05MB OIL PASTEL

I think that this Photoshop Mixer brush is excellent for achieving the look of a traditional oil brush-stroke.

IFX 01 CHALK CHISEL

This basic chalk brush is an excellent choice for both detailing and laying in large shapes.

IFX 01 AIRBRUSH

This basic airbrush is great for laying in soft areas of colour.

IFX 03 CLOUD CONTROL

This brush is a texture of my own design, excellent for laying in clouds and atmospheric patterns.



3 Tight pencil drawing

Lines can be seen as intellectual statements and colour as emotions. It's important not to skimp on the drawing stage – it's the brains of this operation. I print out my sketch and do a very light carbon transfer on to Bristol vellum paper. I make a light transfer, just enough to get my shapes down correctly. Next I do a tight clean drawing using 2H and HB pencils.



5 It's go time!

I scan my work into Photoshop. As with my digital comp, my first order of business is to drag my image into a new file, which has been sized to the correct dimensions and DPI and set to the correct colour mode. I adjust the image using Image/Levels and Image/Color Balance to make up for any aberrations in colour caused by the scanner.



4 Traditional underpainting

With my drawing finished, I want to add values, by doing a rough underpainting. If I'm up against a deadline I may skip this, but it'll give my digital painting a strong traditional base to work from. The more physical texture I can add, the more interest the surface of my digital painting will have. For this stage I use Liquitex inks.



6 Adding textures

When painting digitally I prefer to begin from a slightly darker mid-tone, and my painting is a little light. I could add a flat fill on a Multiply layer, but where's the fun in that? Instead, I drag a watercolour texture into my file and set its blending mode to Multiply. This darkens my values, but also adds a richness to the colour and further enhances the surface effect.



7 Foreground mask

I don't like using many masks. I like to experiment and play with the edges of shapes, and a mask can be restrictive. That said, I use one while I establish values and mood. My goal is to separate foreground elements from the background. Instead of the Mask tool, I paint out my foreground in red, on a layer, with its blending mode set to Multiply.



8 Colour dodging

Using my mask, I knock the character out from the background. I want the shapes to stand out from one another, enabling the character to be read quickly. I create a layer and set its blending mode to Color Dodge. Next, I paint in dark neutral tones with a soft brush (IFX 01 Airbrush). Then I erase parts with a sharp, Chalk brush (IFX 01 Chalk Chisel).



9 Let's add some colour

It's time to bring some soul to the image, by adding colour. I work in my colours slowly, using layers set to a very low Opacity. I use several blending modes, but primarily Multiply and Soft Light, both of which won't obscure the details and surface texture. Again, I paint in my colours using soft brushes and erase out what doesn't belong with a sharp, chiselled brush.



10 Tightening up with Mixer brushes

To sharpen details I use my Mixer brushes. I turn on 'Load the Brush after Each Stroke' and 'Sample All Layers'. I tighten up areas that are unrefined and blend colours so they feel more natural. I reduce the Opacity, which recreates traditional painting where, as paint dries, layers underneath show through. Once it's less opaque, I create a new layer and paint until I'm happy.



11 More refining

I airbrush in shadows and tones with a transparent brush. I want to enhance the shadows to give the image more drama. Shadows should always be vague, while highlights should be sharp with interesting detail. I soften areas that are drawing too much attention, such as the upper clouds. The background should be lighter and have less saturation than the foreground.



12 Recapturing lost detail

Some areas of detail have become too obscured, such as the gears in the wings and the character's eyes. I create a new layer, set its blending mode to Multiply, then draw my details back in, using a sharp brush set to a neutral grey. I only redraw detail areas that are important. Other elements, such as clouds, feathers and skin, will look better with no lines on them.



13 Saturated colours

Time to add more saturated colours. I do this last because oversaturating colours can leave an image looking garish. I pick two colours – a bright vermillion and a cool green – and add these using layers with blending modes set to Hard Light, which both saturates and affects the value level of the pixels. I bring my colours up to full saturation, ensuring no details are lost.



14 Final details

Lastly, I work around the image using opaque layers and brushes to soften and refine details. My focus is the details and cleaning up overly rough patches or places that look unfinished. I give the head more glow and further refine the skin, with standard brushes set to a very low Opacity. I also step back from the image to see if there's anything missing or incorrect. ●

PRO SECRETS

File prep

My first order of business when I bring traditional work into Photoshop is to drag it into a new file, which has been sized to the exact dimensions and DPI that I want my final image to be. I also include room for bleed on all sides. I do all of this before I'm fully committed to my design. It's a terrible feeling to be invested in your layout, only to learn that the client needs it to be a different size.

Dead space

One of the balancing acts in book cover illustration is trying to make sure all titles and graphics on the cover are legible, given adequate space and aren't fighting with the artwork. This cover was easy enough, with a dark space in the roof of the cavern taking up the top third of the image, but some of the others were much more complex.

Imagining Harry

Every Harry Potter fan has their own idea of how things look, either based on the films, other covers or their own imagination as they read the books. As the illustrator hired to produce a new set of covers, I could only show my interpretation. Harry looked how I imagined him when I read the books: of slight build with a thick head of hair.

Simple strokes

It's easy to become obsessed with detail and over-render while zoomed in. Always remember the output dimensions of the final art, in this case a fairly small book cover. I might get a bit tighter on important details such as a face, but much of the painting is about mark making, layering textured brushes and colours to build up the desired effect at the printed size.

Photoshop & Painter RECREATE AN ICONIC CHARACTER

Jonny Duddle reveals his approach for painting the children's-edition cover for a reprint of JK Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*

Artist PROFILE

Jonny Duddle
COUNTRY: Wales



Jonny is an illustrator and concept artist working in publishing, games and animation. He's written and illustrated seven children's books and was also a character designer on Aardman's *Pirates! In an Adventure with Scientists!*
www.jonnyduddle.com

Back in the autumn of 2013, I was asked by Bloomsbury to create a test cover for *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. A handful of artists were briefed to illustrate the moment when Harry, Ron and Hermione first see Hogwarts across the lake. The cover would be for a new set of children's editions, with the successful artist going on to illustrate the remaining six *Harry Potter* covers.

When I was offered the job, I was thrilled and terrified in equal measure. It was an incredibly exciting opportunity, tempered just a little by the fact that I'd never read a *Harry Potter* book, and had only seen the first film on its original cinematic release. I realised that I had an awful lot of reading to do. More than a million words, in fact.

Another worry was that the artwork I'd been producing for several years was very

stylised and aimed at a much younger age group. Bloomsbury wanted the new covers to attract a new generation of children, and the brief called for bright colours, action and an array of creatures, and would be more realistic than I'd been on any work for a long time.

My aim was to produce a set of covers that worked well together, with contrasting colours, compositions and themes, with just a little stylisation.

How I create... A CIRCLE OF FLAMES



1 Strong composition

Dumbledore's circle of flame both frames Harry and Dumbledore, and adds some depth by breaking up the layers of Inferi (the undead inhabitants of the lake). The first step is to block in a strong base colour, in Photoshop, with big textured brushes, bold marks and a free-flowing hand.



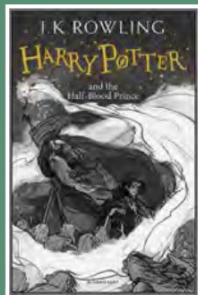
2 Brush work

I want the flames to be full of movement and to really bring the cover painting to life. I flip between Photoshop and Painter in almost all of my work, and here I use a variety of Painter 12's Real Bristle and Flat Oil brushes, to build up layers of colour and texture.



3 Adding detail

I'm not after a realistic depiction of flames. My characters are stylised and so I can carry that over into the scenes, effects and lighting. I continue to build up colours and texture using Painter and Photoshop, then add blood-orange glows on the edge of the flames, and lighting effects on the characters.



Templates

It's vital to paint a cover to the right dimensions. This will be specified in the brief, including a 'bleed', usually 5mm all around, to allow for minor inaccuracies in printing and trimming. I have rulers showing (in mm) and use guides to line up everything.



Painter DRAW AND PAINT SUBTLE EMOTIONS

If your figure-led compositions are looking a little flat, then help is at hand. **John Stanko** reveals how to get the most out of simple facial expressions

Artist PROFILE

John Stanko
COUNTRY: US



John's clients include Tor Books, Dungeons & Dragons,

Magic: The Gathering, Blizzard and Fantasy Flight Games. He also teaches art at University of South Florida.

<http://ifxm.ag/jstanko>

GET YOUR RESOURCES

See page 6 now!

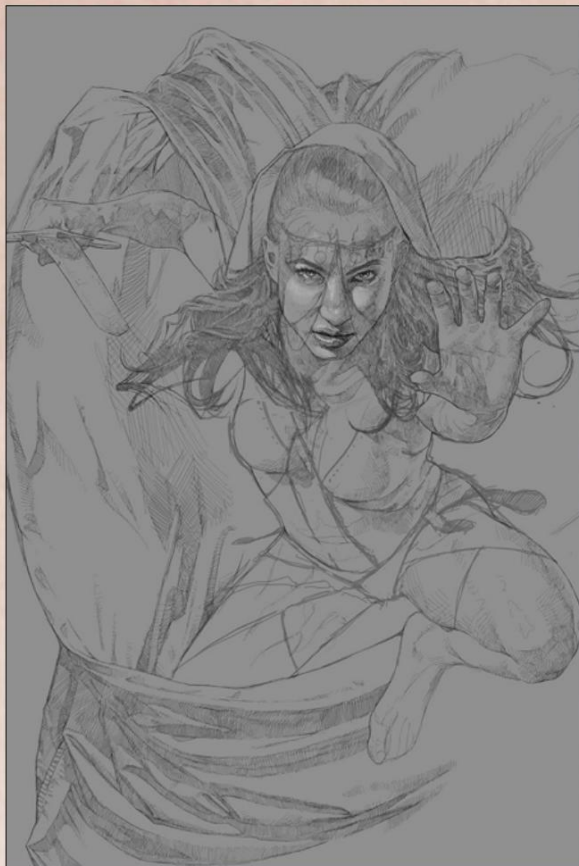
Facial expressions can be one of the most powerful tools for any fantasy illustrator. A mantra often repeated in illustration is, "If you can paint hands and faces you can be successful," but just painting pretty faces isn't enough. You need to be able to capture subtle emotions to create believable characters that help tell a visual story. A well-painted facial expression can give a unique insight

into a character's personality. It can tell us if they're determined, angry, sad, a bit crazy and so on.

Just as great facial expressions can take a painting to the next level, a poor or ill-considered expression can ruin a piece of art just as easily. How many times have you seen a beautiful painting only to notice that the main character has a blank look, or worse, an shield maiden trying to look sexy in the middle of a battle? The

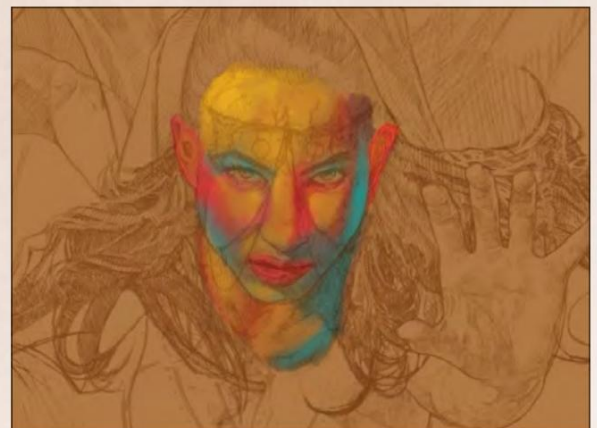
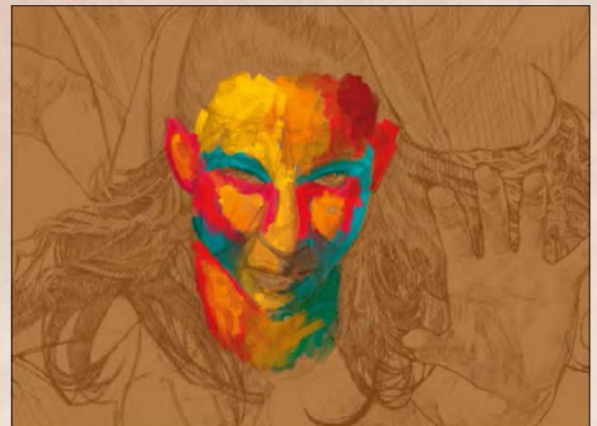
facial expression should help advance the overall storytelling of the image. No matter how well a face is rendered, if it doesn't fit the setting or tell the story, it won't work. If it's a battle then the character should look like they're fighting, not posing for a photo.

In your next painting, take some time to ask yourself, "What's this character thinking?" Then try to capture that look through facial expressions.



1 Getting the sketch right

Getting the facial expression right in the sketch is critical. Here, I'll create an, "I'm gonna kick your butt!" look using a number of visual tools. The head is slightly turned down for a more aggressive look. The left side of the mouth is slightly curled up. The eyes are squinted for a more intense stare. And finally, a furrowed brow increases the seriousness of the expression.



2 Undertones for face

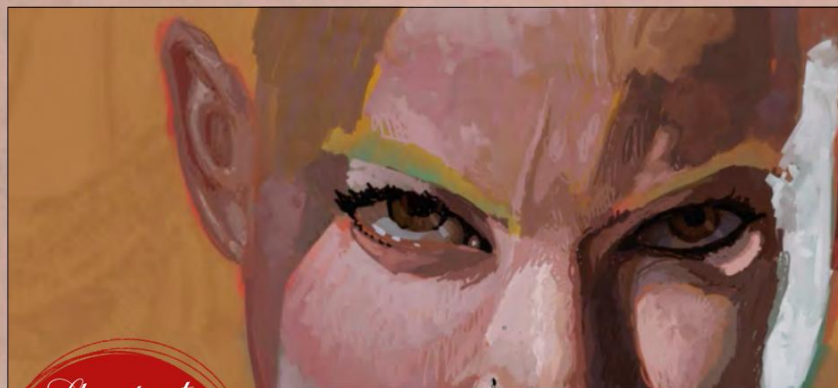
I start by blocking in the undertones for the face. I use red/magenta for the cheeks, yellow for the forehead and then cyan for the area just above the eyes and the lower half of the face. Using underlying colour helps to add a more natural tint to the skin tones and prevents them from becoming too flat. ➔

PRO SECRETS

Showing less can be more

When creating facial expressions, it's often tempting to go over the top and add too much expression to the face. An unsubtle expression can be just as distracting in an image as one that lacks emotion. For example, when creating an aggressive face, try using a gritted teeth - almost a snarl - rather than recreating a full-on primal scream.





Shortcuts

Select colours

Brush tool+Option (PC)

Brush tool+Alt (Mac)

With a Brush tool selected, toggle between the Eye dropper and Paint brush.

3 Block in skin tones

This phase is all about establishing the overall tone and value of the face, arms and hands. I generally use a larger Wet oily brush from the Artist Oils dialog for the big areas and then add more details with a Detail oils brush from the Oil Brushes dialog. I try not to zoom in too tight at this phase.

4 Refine face and adding details

This is the step where I usually spend significant amount of painting time, especially when the facial expression is critical to the painting. I pay extra attention to getting the eyes and mouth shapes right. I'll often paint in the eyes and mouth, only to come back to them later and refine them over and over again.



PRO SECRETS

Yelling, not yawning

In 2014 the University of Glasgow carried out a study that suggested the more muscles you use when making an expression, the easier it is to tell what that expression is. Basically, just opening your mouth doesn't communicate anger or yelling. Look at the two quick sketches of faces. The first just looks like he's yawning. However, when you use a larger number of muscles (crunched-up nose, curled-up lip and squinting eyes) it becomes clear that the character's yelling.



5 Block in the hair

When I paint hair, it's important not to get wrapped up in the individual strands of hair. It's a lot easier to paint hair in chunks and use the highlights to bring out the various strands. The most effective way I've found to paint hair is to start by blocking it in with the darkest colour of the hair.



6 Apply highlights to the hair

Now that all of the darks are blocked in, I add the highlights to give more detail and structure to the shape of the hair. When painting characters with long hair, it's important that all of the 'chunks' of hair have a logic and connect together.



7 Painting in the leather

My approach to costuming is the opposite of how I approach faces and figures. I don't put as much detail into my costuming during the sketch phase - this keeps things pretty fluid. For example, I was planning on putting a flowing cape in this painting, but it had too much of a superhero look for my taste, so I removed it.



8 Refining the leather

Once I have all of the leather outfit blocked in, I add folds and stitching. My main goal here is to add energy to the character while moving the viewer to her face. Take a moment to notice the three areas of skin that show on her torso. Each one is an arrow shape that points back to her face.



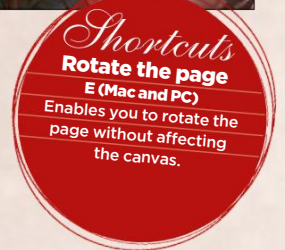
9 Arm the character

With this pose and composition, I have to be careful not to make the sword too much of a distraction. I want the viewer to be focused on her face and not her sword. So I make sure to keep the sword design pretty basic and simple, and limit the range of values of the sword.



10 Embellish her outfit

Even though I ditched the cape and the exotic jewellery that were present in my original sketch, I chose to keep the hood for no better reason than I think hoods are cool. Like the sword, I have to be sure that the hood doesn't distract from the character's face, so I keep the highlights to a minimum.



11 Paint in the background

I start with a cool tan and then add both of the setting suns, which establishes where the edge lighting comes from. To create the depth of the cityscape I start with the buildings that are the furthest away and give them basic shapes. The key to painting backgrounds is to not add more details than the main character.



12 Blend edges

I use the Grainy Blend to soften the image. I prefer to go slow at this phase because I've found that an overly blended painting will end up with a plastic appearance. I try to leave some of the brush strokes visible so that it still looks like a painting. Indeed, I spend over five hours blending edges and cleaning up the overall image.



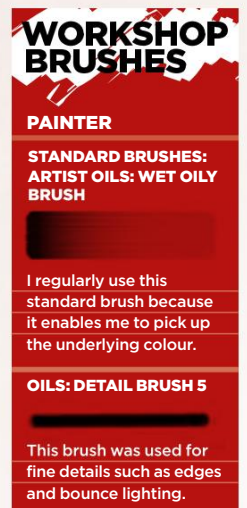
13 Refine colour tones

At this point I can now see what I have overall. Sometimes my colours become flattened or grow muddy, so to fix this I create a number of layers that are set as Overlays with a low Opacity. This technique can mimic what traditional painters can achieve with glazes, and adds more depth to your skin tones.



14 Finishing touches

Finally, I flatten it down and add a few little extras to make it work. I pop in a few extra bright highlights around my character's lips and eyes, and add a glow to the rim light. I feel that her head is a bit too big, so I scale it down about five per cent and repaint the hair, which makes the resize process seamless. ●



Photoshop & Traditional skills

MIXED MEDIA BOOK COVER ART

Amanda Sartor illustrates for a self-published book incorporating both modern and traditional sensibilities

Artist PROFILE

Amanda Sartor

COUNTRY: US



Amanda is a freelance illustrator who lives in Seattle. Her

style is the culmination of over 10 years' working in the entertainment and publishing industry, and is a mix of traditional and digital media.

www.amsartor.com



**GET YOUR
RESOURCES**

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RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

**CUSTOM BRUSHES:
BLOTCH**

A general-purpose brush that has a watercolour look. It can be reduced to use for soft detail.

SPRINKLE

A watercolour salt brush that's good for building subtle textures.

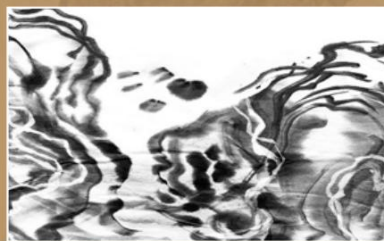
This is an illustration created for a self-publishing author. When dealing with self-publishers, it's a good idea to find out ahead of time what service they plan to publish through. Some of these services have different requirements. You may also be acting as art director and designer, so be prepared to handle more responsibility than you might with a traditional publisher.

The topic of the book is a young adult reinterpretation of Little Red Riding Hood. The client wanted to show the main character in the woods, but was otherwise fairly open about how the image was presented. My idea was to show the character right at the moment she realises she's being followed, and to convey some of that apprehension and foreboding. I also wanted to portray the character as more of a mystery than a victim. I did this by obscuring part of her face to make her seem less vulnerable. Eyes convey emotion, and by obscuring them the character becomes inscrutable.

Like most of my illustrations, I rely as greatly on design as on realism. I try to use as much abstraction as possible while still maintaining a sense of reality that the viewer can identify with.

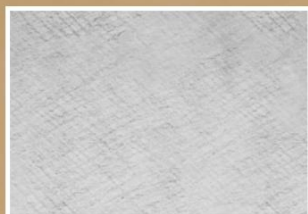
Creating texture

I use many hand-made textures, such as watercolour washes and sumi-e. This creates the spontaneity and traditional look that can be difficult to achieve with digital tools, and also gives me an excuse to play with different media. The decorative textures are added later, when the composition and colour is already defined.



No blank canvases

I dislike starting with a blank white canvas, so I start with a cross-hatch texture in a Color Burn layer on top of a grey background. I work with this layer on top of everything for the whole process. This helps me to see the overall image, rather than focusing on detail too early in the process.



Visual Impact

Book covers have to give a quick initial read and present immediate interest to the viewer. Keeping the composition simple will draw the viewer into the image. I identify areas of interest within the composition to concentrate on detail for a second read. The overall shapes should be bold and still look interesting, even when heavily reduced.



How I create...

NEW ART FOR AN OLD TALE



1 Defining a value structure

After getting thumbnails approved by the client, I start a value study. This will help bring any compositional problems to the surface. A strong value structure also makes adding colour easier. At this stage the image should read clearly, even with limited visual information.



2 Creating interest with line work

After the value study is completed, the line work can be added on a separate layer. I use multiple layers so I can fine-tune form and detail. The line follows the form to add a sense of movement and shape.



3 A limited palette

I add colour last, and I'm restrained with my colour use. Since this is Little Red Riding Hood, I end up using red. I work in Photoshop with Multiply, Overlay, Screen, and Color Dodge to achieve the look I want.



The alchemy of shapes

Geometric shapes can have multiple symbolic meanings. They can also be used to great effect as compositional elements. I've used concentric circles to represent protection and magic, but also as a visual target right in the middle of the image.



Photoshop PUT A FRESH SPIN ON AN OLD TALE

Rafael Sarmento shares his chaotic but intuitive painting process for placing two classic characters from Arthurian legend in a sci-fi setting

Artist PROFILE

Rafael Sarmento
COUNTRY: Brazil



Rafael's art has been featured in notable publications such as Spectrum and Café Salé, and he's freelanced for clients all over the world.

www.rafsarmento.com

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 6 now!

When I start the illustration process, it's rare that I already have a final image in mind. For me, much of the journey in the digital realm is about using the pixels and digital canvas to pursue not just an idea, but a storytelling concept, to find the mood that will fit that feeling I have in my head.

The original brief for this is about a personal interpretation or deconstruction of Merlin and Morgana, from Arthurian

legend, which I happen to be incredibly passionate about. I have a glimpse of an atmospheric scene in mind, which I'm not 100 per cent certain about at first. We'll find that mood together, here, opening doors in your minds to this kind of intuitive approach for image-making. One that the digital tools enable us to do.

I suggest you embrace this intuitive approach. Not setting a specific goal makes possible explorations, discoveries and happy mistakes (yes, they do happen

in digital painting all the time), which ultimately help us to define our vision, to trust our instincts, to develop our visual and artistic sensibilities, and start finding our own voice. Our artistic voice is the sum of everything that we experience – and most importantly, everything we allow ourselves to experience.

Let your intuition lead you through your creative process. You may be surprised with what you'll discover. Be free, be chaotic... okay, let's create!



1 Sketching the idea

First I lay down chunks of pixel paint, both lines and blobs of digital pigments, to start figuring out what the next steps will be. As you see, the real process is getting through all the changes I'll make, in pursuit of the atmosphere I'm looking for in the final image. The sketching and blocking will be a major part of the workshop, before getting into the real deal.



2 Defining the direction

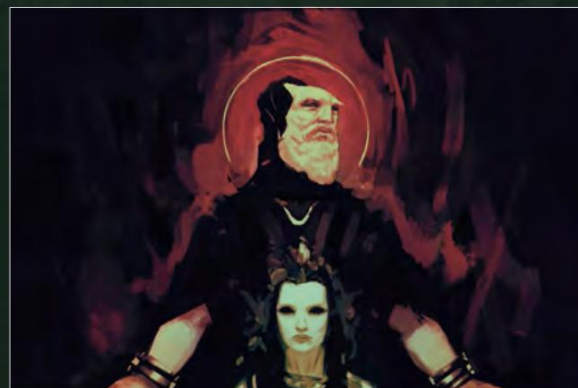
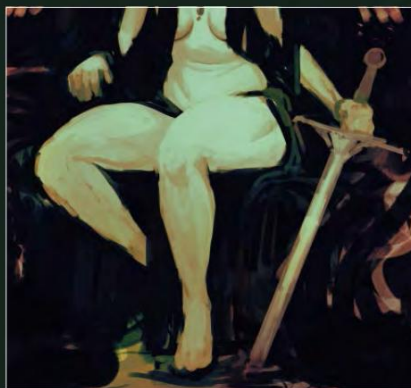
Here I start to define the shapes and overall direction. I'll leave all the anatomy stuff and details for later stages, I'm just putting some elements together right now. I'm not sure how our Morgana here will be sitting (or even where). So far I only feel that Merlin will be trapped somehow – perhaps tied to that tree in the background? I need to start planning this right now! ➔

PRO SECRETS

Replace your colour palette

You can modify and tweak the entire spectrum of colours you're working with – individually – in case you need a quick change, or like me, if you've left some colour choices to the end. Go to Image > Adjustments and hit Replace Colors. Have fun with this!





3 Background action

Although I was planning to use the tree idea to imprison Merlin, I have second thoughts and start to move towards a rustic, druid-esque background. I decide to give it a much darker approach – a cave, perhaps? But I'm already considering recasting the whole scene so it has a sci-fi look to it. I ditch the tree idea and move on. Let's stick with the cave... at least, for now.

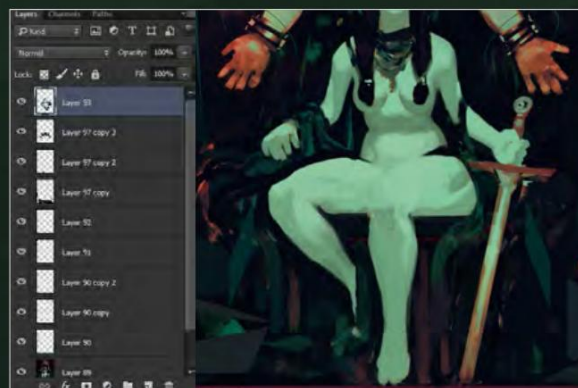
4 Fantasy vs sci-fi

I said I'd leave anatomy for later (I always use some sort of stylisation anyway), but I start sculpting a bit more of the figures. Merlin is somehow trapped behind Morgana, but I'll tackle the specifics later on. The idea is taking shape, and we'll shortly see the whole scenario happening.



5 Painting with more focus

The idea is defined. It's now just a matter of creating the elements and playing around with them until they fit the mood that I'm starting to see more accurately. Because I'm not using any reference, I start focusing on the appearance of the characters solely based on intuition, and think about how I can push my painting to lead them through their roles in the story.



6 Morgana takes the wheel

The character's overall design (as well as their expressions and body language) will play a major part of the story behind the image. I get to work on Morgana's face, because she'll be the main focus. There are two characters in the scene, but as they'll compete for attention, I decide she'll take the lead, despite the compositional weight of Merlin in the background.

Shortcuts

Liquify tool

Ctrl+Shift+X (PC)

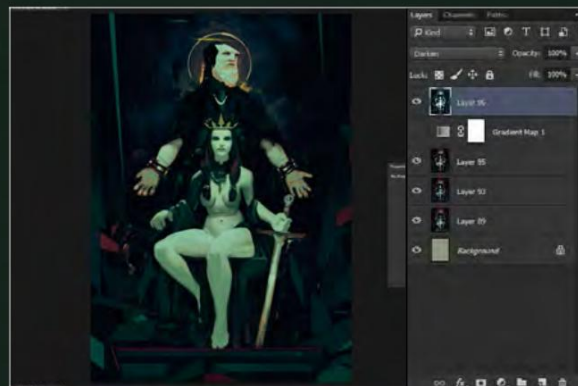
Cmd+Shift+X (Mac)

Very useful for adjusting and fixing the proportions of your figures



7 The crown of Britain

I won't properly define the clothing designs until the end, but I start placing some elements that help to give a sense of the characters' roles. Perhaps in this scenario, Morgana took the crown of Britain (a darker version), hence her position of arrogance under a defeated Merlin? I give her a rudimentary-looking crown for now.



8 The cave

Now that I know this will be a cave (a futuristic, dark version of Avalon?), I start painting the blocks and colours on the background, before placing elements – devices, objects and everything else. Using the Lasso tool (which I use for most of the geometric elements), I pull some vertical lines off some parts of the cave, to direct the viewer's eyes through the composition.



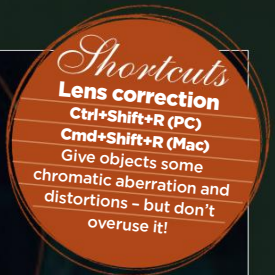
9 A witch with attitude

I'm unhappy with Morgana's legs. I want her to look somewhere between relaxed and alert. Her body language will dictate that, and I decide her legs, as they are, aren't selling this idea. I paint another set of legs on top, trying to capture a certain attitude, while her arms are relaxed. Notice that she's holding Excalibur – where did she get it from? Poor Arthur...



10 The wizard takes shape

Now I turn my attention to Merlin. I don't want him to be the typical old wizard cliché – he's going to be a man in his 40s, physically strong but with a wise gaze upon his face, despite his imprisonment. Maybe he's planning something – a way to escape his current predicament? I start defining facial details such as his beard, and the device in the back of his head (which I've decided will be a part of his suit).



11 A throne for a queen

Time to get the lady sitting on her throne. I make it simple and suggestive, a sort of barrier between both characters. Merlin stands behind the throne like a subordinate, while she casts her evil look and throws her charm around. I now focus on abstract elements: I put some steps, wires and debris on the asymmetrical ladder under her feet.



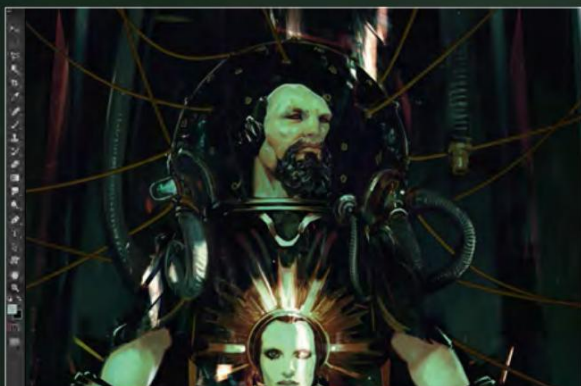
12 Adjustments and nit-picking

Things are almost settled now and here is where the crazy, creative fun happens. The forms, shapes and design may be almost there, but I usually tend to find this the most exciting part. I start to play with the colour grades and layer properties and adjustments, and make all my nit-picking tweaks to give the image as much detail as possible.

PRO SECRETS

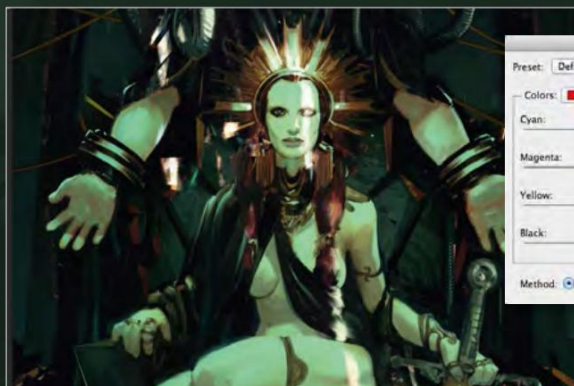
Adjust your vision!

Adjustment layers (the yin yang symbol in the Layers tab) are uniquely liberating tools in the digital realm. Use them to adjust the image according to your vision! Selective colours are good for fine-tuning the colours, while Gradient Map (with some layer property such as Darken, Soft Light or Exclusion) can give a nice touch to the overall atmosphere. Play around with them, but try not to get in their infinite possibilities.



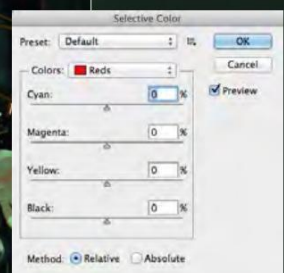
13 Avalon's prison

I decide that Merlin's 'prison' will be the illustration's final element. Around the halo, I suggest that there might be some kind of diving helmet, with wires, cables and hoses. I don't need to paint the entire device because it's behind Morgana's throne – I just show what the dim light enables us to see on the top of it. The suspended wires are the final touch.



14 The finale

I use the Selective Color tool to grade the colours, pushing and pulling values and temperatures. It's here that I create the first impact on the viewer through the mood – those few seconds that the artist has to catch their attention. Some colour adjustments and overlays, and we're done! Hope you enjoyed this journey as much as I did creating it for you. Abraço! ●





Next month in...
NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS
ImagineFX
MANGA
ART

We've gathered the
best artists from
around the world
to show you how!

Featuring...

Ethereal manga

Create stunning
illustrative art inspired
by Asian styles and
themes with Swiss
artist Jade Mosch.

Go outdoors!

Malaysian artist
Chong Fei Giap is an
expert at environment
art and he'll show you
how he does it.

Star ascending

Ilya Kuvshinov's art
is kicking up a storm
online. We scale the
dizzy heights with this
rising star of manga.

Happy campers

Featuring comics,
concept art and toys,
we take a peek inside
the Indonesian art
house Caravan Studio.

ISSUE 121 UK ON SALE FRIDAY 27 MARCH

SketchBook Pro CUSTOMISE AND SET UP BRUSHES



More is never enough when it comes to art! **Paris Christou** explains how you can create and customise any brush in SketchBook Pro

The new SketchBook Pro is an all-in one software packed full of tools and brushes to satisfy any type of artist, giving them plenty of helpful digital assets to complete their projects.

Although the software provides you with all the tools you need, SketchBook Pro also gives you the power to edit and customise an existing brush, or create

your own unique brush, and the possibilities here are almost endless.

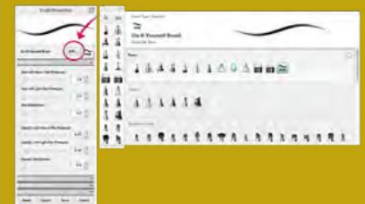
In this short step-by-step guide, you'll learn the basics of creating a new brush, where to customise the brush's properties, how to best name your new brush and change the brush icon, and finally how to add it to the Brush Palette.

I promise it's not as complicated as all that might sound!

Artist PROFILE
Paris Christou
COUNTRY: Cyprus

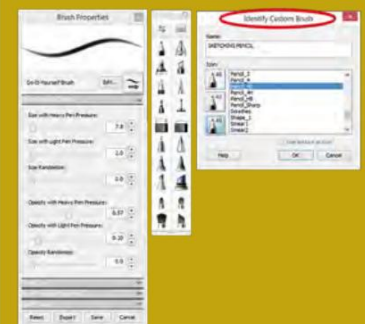
 Paris is a 2D animator, illustrator and teacher. He's also the founder of ToonBoxStudio.com, a site that offers illustration and 2D and 3D animation courses.
<http://ifxm.ag/tbstudio>

NAME AND CHANGE THE BRUSH ICON



A. Identify Custom Brush

Open the Brush Properties dialog for your new brush. Click the Edit button, which opens the Identify Custom Brush window. This enables you to give the brush a title and assign an icon to it, to keep your tools organised if you have several brushes.



B. Selecting an icon

You now should be looking at the Identify Custom Brush window. The first option is to name your brush. Below is SketchBook Pro's massive Icons library: scroll through the series and find one that fits best with your new brush. Once you've chosen, hit the Save button to complete the customisation.

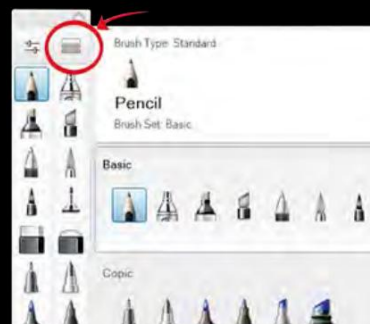


C. Adding to the Palette

You will have a new brush sitting in the Brush library. To add it to the Brush palette, click and hold the mouse over it, drag it to the palette and release on top of any brush. SketchBook replaces the palette brushes, so drag your brush over a tool you never use.

1 Selecting a specific brush

Press 3 and right-click to open the Brush palette. Then select a brush that you want to either modify or is similar to one you want to create. For this example, I'll choose the default Pencil tool, with the intention of creating a new custom pencil. Once you've selected your tool, press the Show Brush Library button that's located at the top right-hand corner of the Brush palette.



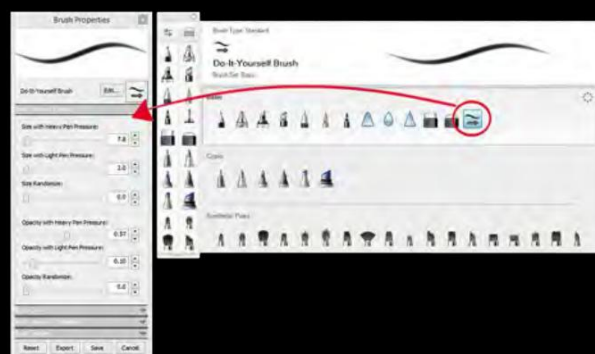
2 Creating a new brush

Next, locate the row of tools in the Brush Library that features the brush you've chosen, hold down your mouse button over the circle of dots that appears around it, and then select the New Brush option to create a new brush. A Create Do-it-yourself Brush window will appear, and this gives you the option to select the type of brush that you want to create. Make sure you choose the Current Brush option.



3 Customising the brush properties

Your newly created brush will be found at the end of the row in the Brush Library you accessed in step two. Double-click the new brush icon to open the Brush Properties dialog, which will give you many options to play with. This dialog enables you to edit the Size, Pressure, Opacity, Color, Spacing, Texture and more. Hit the Save button and you can start using your new brush.





Photoshop & Traditional skills PAINT A MOODY GOTHIC ARTWORK

Using a combination of graphite drawing and digital techniques, **Rovina Cai** creates an illustration that's full of mood and atmosphere

Artist PROFILE

Rovina Cai

COUNTRY: Australia



Rovina is a freelance illustrator based in Melbourne.

She has a penchant for very old stories and swishy lines.

www.rovinacai.com

GET YOUR RESOURCES

See page 6 now!

PRO SECRETS

Adjustment layers

In this workshop I'm using both adjustment layers (Layer>New Adjustment Layer) and regular image adjustments (Image>Adjustments). Both create the same effects, but an adjustment layer applies an effect to all layers underneath it without permanently changing these layers. They're best used for changing the overall colour or tone of an image. A regular image adjustment applies an effect to the selected layer, so it's best for editing a single layer when colouring artwork. Take care to use the correct option!

This workshop will explain the traditional and digital techniques I use to create an illustration based on Beauty and the Beast. I'll start sketching in Photoshop, then make a graphite drawing, and finally I'll take it back into Photoshop for editing and colouring.

The subject of the illustration is one of my favourite visual tropes: that of balancing beautiful and dark themes. I enjoy the challenge of taking something romantic and introducing something

dark and unsettling to it. There's a lot of potential for creating a moody, haunting image with this subject matter.

Colour is crucial in setting the conceptual tone of an image. A muted palette with subtle touches of colour suggests a haunting atmosphere. Edges are another way to heighten the atmosphere within an image; soft edges convey a sense of mystery, so when I'm drawing I'll create sharper edges around the focal area, and softer loose pencil strokes around the rest of the image.

I constantly assess and tweak the colours and edges as I work, to keep the tone of the illustration on track.

My method of colouring a drawing uses adjustment layers, solid colour fills and gradient fills, all set to various layer blending modes. This technique is intuitive, and it's fun to play with the different settings and stack one effect on top of another. Once you get to know the technique, you'll have a powerful set of tools that can be used on your own work, whether traditional or digital.



1 Rough sketch

I start things off by doing a couple of sketches to find a composition that works. At this stage, I'm thinking about how the different elements of the illustration will eventually fit together, and the silhouette or shape of each element. I also consider storytelling, and how to convey emotion through the gesture of the figures.



2 Reference gathering

I shoot reference that's hard to find – usually figures and poses. For everything else, a quick Google search for public domain images turns up plenty of results for photos that are free to use. I also drop in some paintings from Old Masters to serve as inspiration. All the images are assembled into one file in a big collage for easy access.



PRO SECRETS

Take a break!

If you're working on one thing for an extended amount of time, it's easy to lose track of how the image is progressing. Take a break and come back to the image afresh. It'll prevent you from getting stuck on one area, and you'll notice things you can tweak and improve. Similarly, flipping the image or rotating using the Rotate View tool also gives you a fresh perspective as you work.



3 Final sketch

I create a final sketch to flesh out the details. Then I start to think in terms of line; planning out the direction of my pencil strokes, and where to add areas of detail.



4 Graphite drawing

I print out the sketch and transfer it to my drawing surface using graphite transfer paper. I'm drawing on 11x14-inch vellum surface Bristol board, using pencil grades from H to 4B. I also use a paintbrush with graphite powder to soften edges and lines. I shade in my drawing using long, sweeping lines that follow the contour of an object, creating texture and energetic lines.

Shortcuts

Hue/Saturation

Ctrl+U (PC)

Cmd+U (Mac)

Quick access to the Hue/Saturation panel when adjusting the colour of a layer.



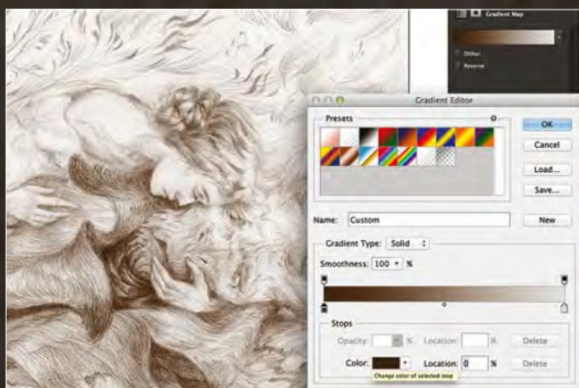
5 Scan and initial adjustments

The drawing is too big for my scanner, so I scan it in two parts and merge them by going to File>Automate>Photomerge. I resize the merged scan to the correct dimensions, and use Levels (Image>Adjustments>Levels) to make my lines darker.



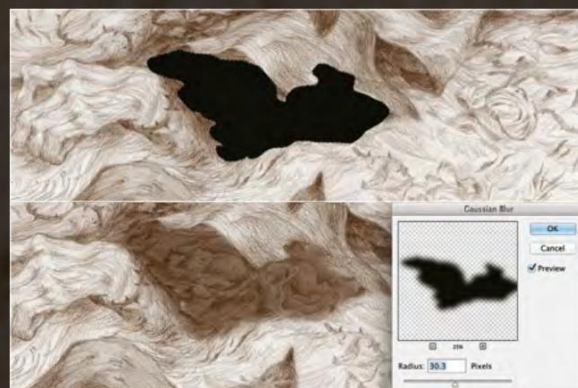
6 Making corrections

Sometimes gesture and sense of movement can be lost between the rough sketch and the final drawing, so I use the Liquify tool to warp certain areas of my drawing. I exaggerate the curve on the girl's neck to make her gesture more graceful, and change the angle of her eye so that her expression is more sorrowful. This adds to the narrative of the illustration.



7 Colouring the pencil lines

I make a Gradient Map adjustment layer on top of the drawing. In the Properties panel that pops up, I click the Gradient box to bring up the Gradient Editor and change the colours: brown for the darker side of the gradient, and off-white for the other. With the adjustment layer selected, I go to the top of my Layers panel and set its blending mode to Color.



8 Shading with the Lasso tool

Working underneath the Gradient Map adjustment layer, I create a new layer and use the Lasso tool to draw the shape I want to shade in. I then fill the selected area with grey, soften the edges of my fill using Gaussian Blur, then set the Layer blending mode to Multiply and adjust the Opacity. I make a new layer for each area I want to shade in, and build up my value structure.

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

STANDARD BRUSH PENCIL BRUSH

I used this default brush to add decorative elements and details. The brush has a subtle texture that blends well with the original drawing.



9 Apply a base colour

I add base colours using the same method as before, but working above the Gradient Map adjustment layer. For some areas I duplicate my shading layers, move them above the Gradient Map adjustment layer, and edit the colour using the Hue/Saturation tool and selecting Colorize. I also adjust the Opacity so that the colour doesn't overpower the drawing.



10 Lighting with gradients

My base colours are quite flat, so I use gradients to make them pop. Gradients create a glowing effect on lighter areas, and unify the shadow areas. This play of light and shadow creates atmosphere. On a new layer, I create a Foreground to Transparent gradient, set the blending mode to Soft Light or Overlay for lighter areas, and Multiply for shadow areas, and adjust colour as before.



PRO SECRETS

Organise your layers

Use groups to organise your layers. To create a group, click the folder icon at the bottom of the Layers panel, then drag the relevant layers into the group. You can group layers by type (for example, all lighting effects in a group) or by proximity (such as all layers related to one character in a group). You can also colour-code your layers by right-clicking a layer in the Layers panel and selecting a colour.

11 Adding details

To emphasise the focal point of the illustration, I begin adding details to the faces of both characters. On a new layer, I use the standard Pencil brush to paint on top of all the previous layers, adding subtle details such as highlights to the skin, touches of colour and rendering the Beast's eyes.



12 Flowing lines

Using the same brush, I create 'swishy' lines throughout the image. These lines are a personal touch that I like adding: they create movement and break up some of the flat shadow areas. I draw the lines using quick, decisive strokes; it can take a few tries to achieve just the right stroke.



13 Introducing textures

To finish things off, I apply some textures on top of my image. Using a texture I found on a free texture website (www.lostandtaken.com), I set the Layer Blending mode to Multiply and reduce the Opacity of the layer so that the texture isn't too harsh.

14 Final adjustments

Lastly, I apply various adjustment layers: I use Levels to increase the contrast, and Color Balance to unify the colours in the illustration, adjusting so that my highlights are blueish. This gives the illustration a cold, eerie look that's appropriate to the subject matter. And finally it's time to merge the entire thing – all 30-plus layers of colours and adjustments! ●



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DESIGN
MATTERS

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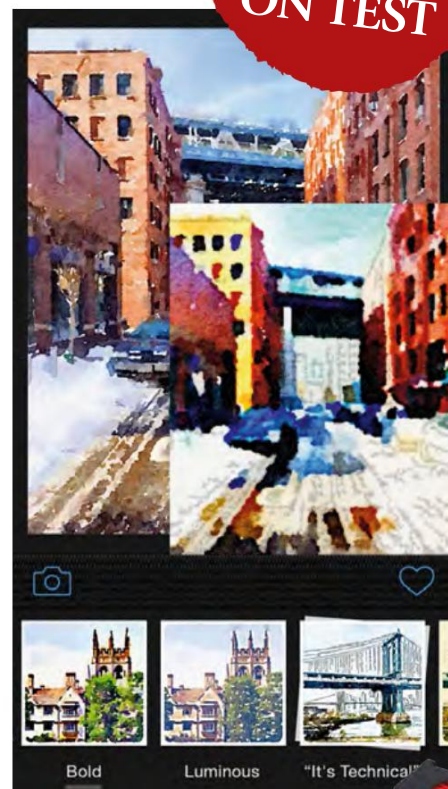
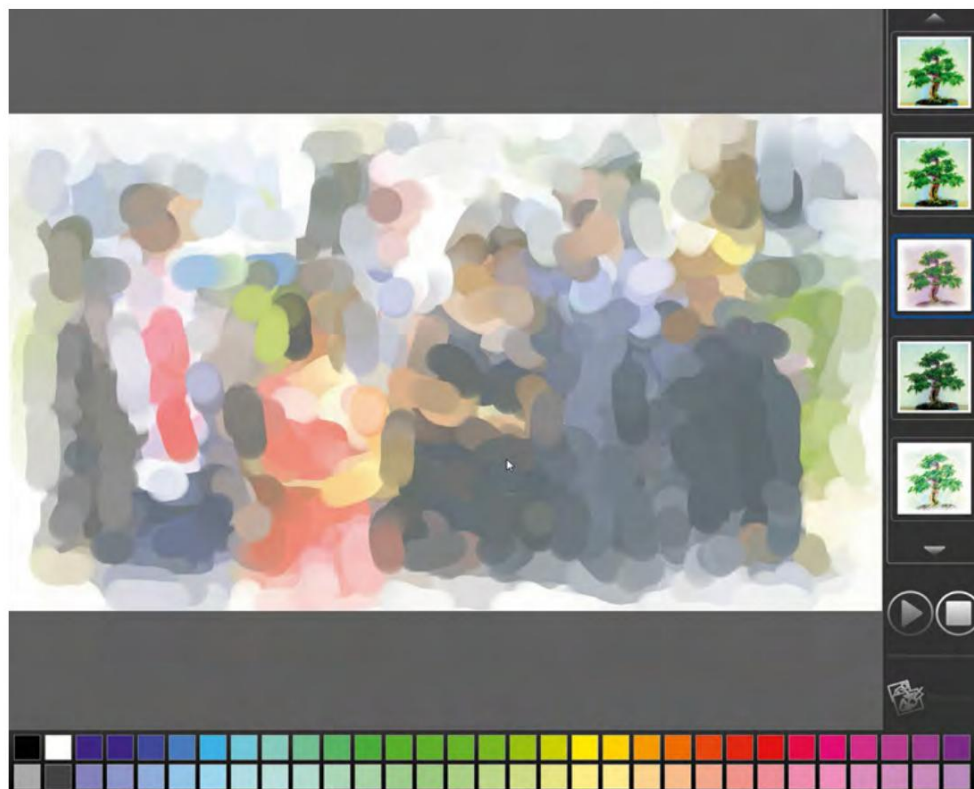
NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX Reviews



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

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

9
PRODUCTS
ON TEST



SOFTWARE & HARDWARE

90 Paint It!

Corel shows how you can quickly make works of art out of your photographs.

91 iDraw 2.5

Could this app be a genuine alternative to Adobe's Illustrator?

91 Waterlogue

An app that promises to make turning your favourite images into watercolours a far cleaner affair.

93 Lightroom mobile

Synchronise and share your art across your devices – a useful free app for Adobe subscribers.

93 FirePro W7100

AMD's mainstream professional graphics card could be a sign of things to come – but early adopters better have deep pockets!

TRAINING

95 Drawing with Charcoal

Fantasy artist Patrick J Jones reveals his classical side as he shows how not to make a mess of your figure drawings. Fingers at the ready...

BOOKS

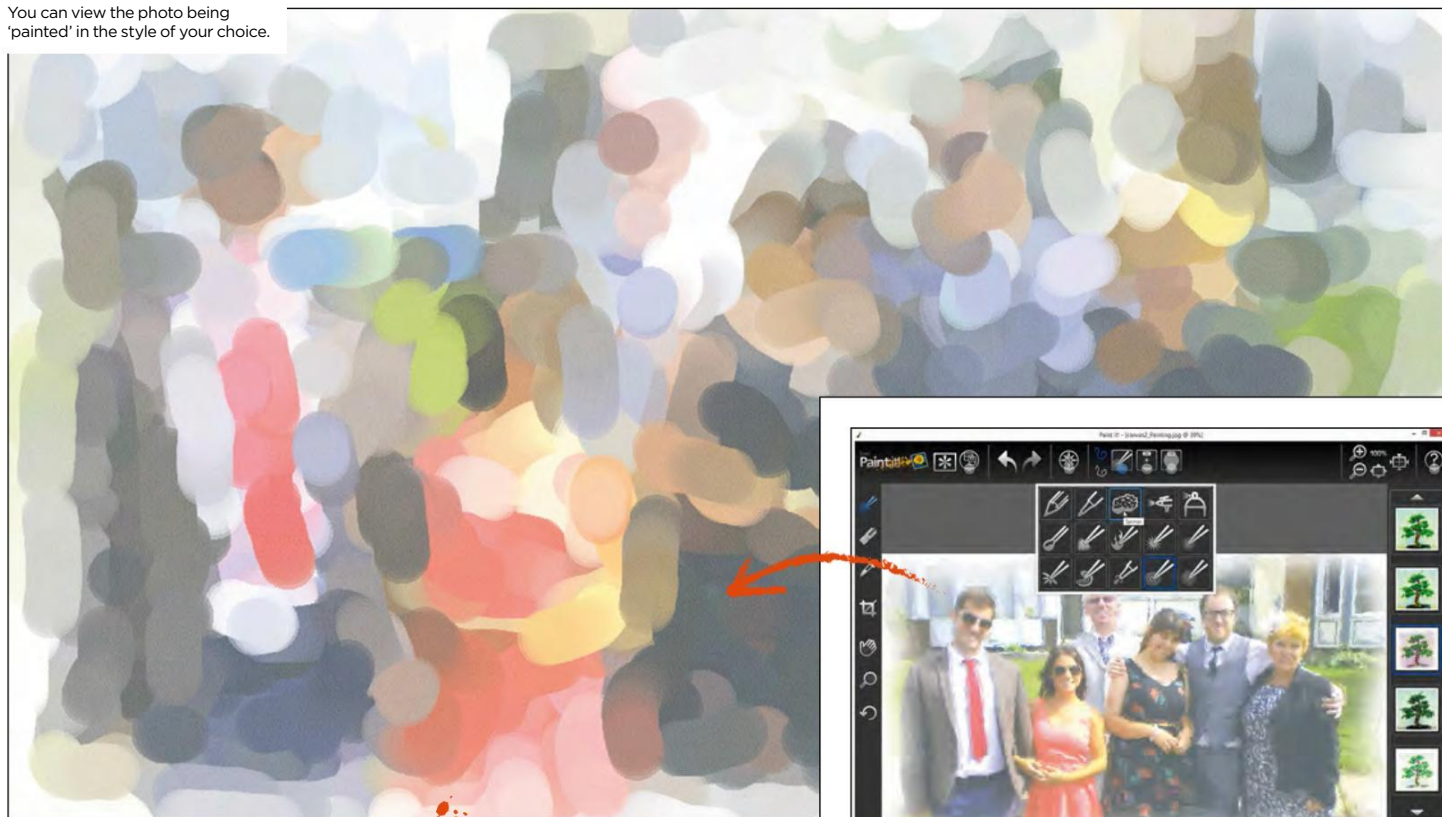
96 New reads

The Complete Little Nemo; The Art of the Simon and Kirby Studio; The Art of Robert E McGinnis.



RATINGS EXPLAINED Magnificent Good Ordinary Poor Atrocious

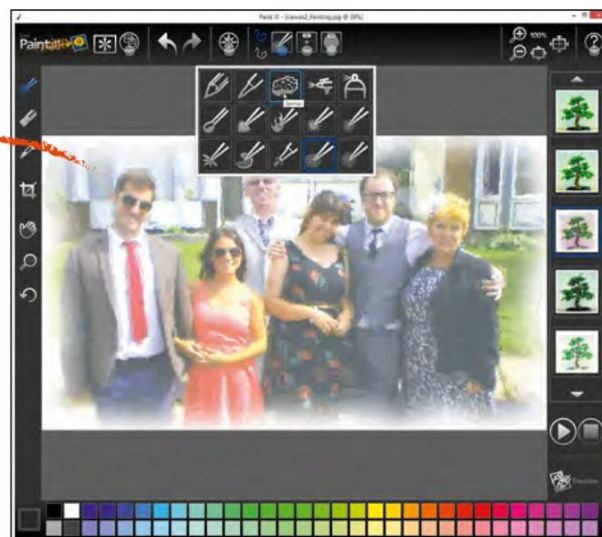
You can view the photo being 'painted' in the style of your choice.



Paint It!

MAC
&
PC

PHOTO PAINTER Corel shows you how to quickly make works of art out of your photographs

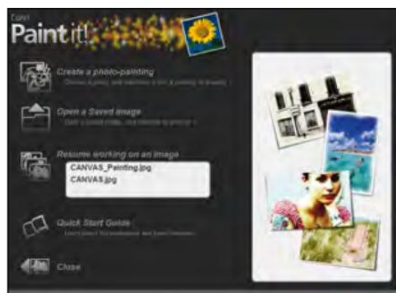


Big buttons make it possible to quickly find the tool or brush that you want, although options are limited.

Price £27 **Company** Corel **Web** www.painterartist.com

Paint It! makes it possible to turn regular photos into hand-drawn works of digital art. The software is aimed squarely at beginners – indeed, its simple interface with big, easy-to-understand icons means that it's an excellent tool for getting children into digital art. However, adults may also find lots to like here.

Like some of the best beginner tools, Paint It! can be as simple as you like, but it also has enough depth to help you refine your art as you become more proficient with the program.



A simple interface enables you to quickly and easily choose the photo you want to transform.

Using it is as simple as selecting a digital photo, choosing an art style (such as Oil Painting, Impressionist Painting, Watercolors and much more) and pressing the Play button. Paint It! takes care of the rest. Seeing the brush

“Seeing the brush strokes of your photo being turned into art is a nice touch”

strokes of your photo being turned into digital art is a nice touch, giving you insight into colour and technique.

The final results are pretty decent, and for some people they'll be good enough. However, as an artist you'll probably want to dive in and add your own flair to the artwork, and Paint It! makes this possible.

The default tool selected is the Soft-edge Cloner brush, which is handy for bringing back details from the original

DETAILS

Features

- Automatic photo transformation
- Range of art styles
- Variety of brush styles
- Pen & Ink styles
- Restoration tool to revert changes
- Eraser tool
- Line tools

System Requirements

PC: Windows XP, Vista or 7 (with latest Service Pack), Pentium IV CPU, 700MHz or greater, 1GB RAM, 24-bit colour display, 1,024x768 screen resolution, 140MB hard disk space
Mac: OS X 10.5 or 10.6 (with latest revision), Intel CPU, 1GB RAM, 24-bit colour display, 1,024x768 screen resolution, 140MB hard disk space

Rating



photograph. A light touch is needed here for best results, but unfortunately the default setting is rather over the top, leading to some ghastly outcomes. You can easily tweak Brush size and Opacity, giving you slightly more control over the brushes, but you're only able to increase or decrease the values in increments of five or 10.

Although Corel has some impressive technology in its art software portfolio, it feels as though not much of this know-how has been applied to Paint It! There's a perceptible lag when painting that can be distracting, and the more you paint, the bigger the disconnect between yourself and the tools becomes. The best digital art programs provide you with instant results that match your brush strokes and Paint It! isn't capable of that.

As a tool for children and absolute beginners, or anyone who wants to quickly transform photos into drawings, Paint It! is a perfectly fine tool. However, if you want complete control over your digital art, then this software probably isn't for you. ●

Familiar vector app features are located in the menu at the top of the screen rather than as part of the tool or a keyboard shortcut.



iDraw 2.5

MAC
& iOS

VECTOR DRAWING

Is this app a genuine alternative to Illustrator?

Price £19 (Mac), £7 (iPad)

Company Indeeo Inc

Web www.indeeo.com/idraw

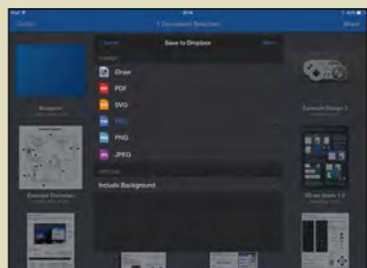
RATING

With vector-drawing apps it's easy to focus on how they're not like Illustrator and miss out on the positives. With a new, simple full-screen design iDraw 2.5 offers a less-cluttered approach than previous incarnations.

New for this version includes CMYK workflow, pattern fills, blurring effects and clipping paths, which may seem old hat, but helps the program become more than just another Illustrator wannabe.

The real plus point is the compatibility between its desktop and tablet apps. Using Apple's Handover functionality, iPad designs can be continued on a Mac effortlessly, with native files saved and synced via Dropbox or iCloud Drive (with layer effects and paths).

As a standalone iPad app, iDraw feels the closest to a traditional desktop vector app, unlike say Adobe Draw, and as such it's much more familiar and intuitive to use, especially because it's almost identical to the desktop version. Granted, both versions lack some of the finesse features of Adobe's apps, but when used together they are a genuinely useful alternative.



iPad artwork can be synced via iCloud Drive or Dropbox, or exported as layered PSDs or SVGs.

Waterlogue

iOS

INSTANT WATERCOLOURS Ever wondered what your digital paintings would look like in watercolour? Wonder no more!

Price £2.29 **Company** Tinrocket **Web** www.waterlogueapp.com

Waterlogue aims to be a fast way to create watercolour prints by enabling you to make broad aesthetic decisions without having to do the hard graft of actually painting.

The app works by selectively removing information from an image, then working it up again using coloured paints based on the filter and settings you apply. There are 14 pre-set styles you can select from an easy-to-use control ribbon. The styles are Instagram-like filters of different tone and hue, but they also apply variations in white spots and unpainted areas, to reflect the way watercolours are traditionally laid down in a single wet pass.

The app was designed for use with photos, but we've seen artists having a lot of fun turning their well-rendered digital paintings into softer, watercolour images. There are lightness, border and detail options; the latter is a ruler for changing the pixel number setting, so selecting Giant increases the pixel count and results in finer detail, for example. This brings out definition in close-up shots, while the Small setting creates a more impressionistic canvas

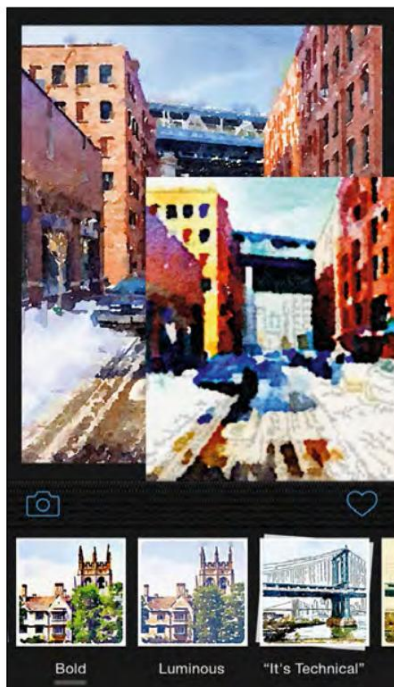


that works better on landscapes.

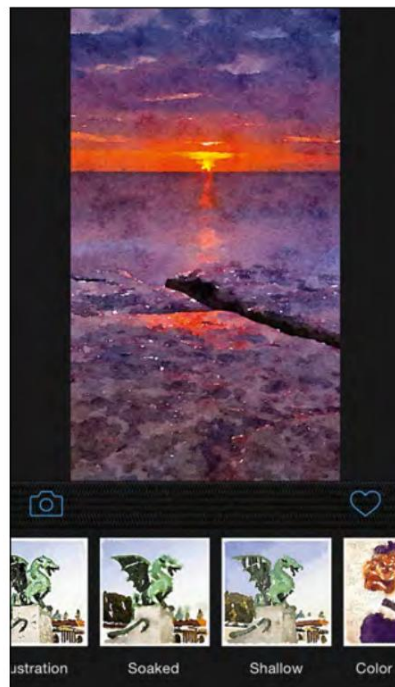
Applied filters of a photo stand in an album-like CoverFlow arrangement, making it easy to swipe between passes and 'heart' ones you want to save, copy or share.

The one downside is that faces don't turn out so well, but results look authentic and you can create a variety of effects with vector and 3D rendered images. The new art may lack the depth of a Turner or Hopper, but don't look half bad for an algorithm.

You can create watercolours from your photos or digital art creations.



Filters can be previewed in a smaller frame alongside the original or currently applied filter.



High-resolution exports are just a tap away in Waterlogue's control ribbon interface.

DETAILS

Features

- 14 pre-set styles
- High-res export
- Control borders
- Lightness settings
- Adjust pixel depth
- Use any image
- Fast renders
- 'Technical' architectural filter
- AirPrint support

System Requirements

PC: iOS 7 or later, iPhone, iPad, or iPod touch, 43MB free

Rating



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Helpfully, Lightroom enables you to tweak and edit your files after you've uploaded them.



Lightroom mobile

A SAFETY NET

Synchronise and share work with your devices

Price Free (with subscription)

Company Adobe

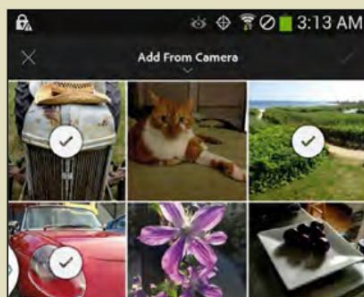
Web www.adobe.com/uk

RATING

Adobe's app for iOS and Android enables you to synchronise files from your mobile apps with your main computer. Although it's primarily designed for photograph management, it's still a helpful app for your artwork.

As you'd expect from Adobe, the interface is well designed and easy to use. You can set up Lightroom mobile to automatically sync with any computer that's running the desktop version of the program: it's a quick and efficient way to make sure all your photos and artwork are saved online. So if you lose your mobile device, at least you won't lose your work.

The whole process of syncing your art is fast, and crucially you can leave it to look after your work in the background. However, the service does require an Adobe Creative Cloud account, which begins at £8.57 a month. If you use a lot of Adobe's programs then it's a nice addition, although you can get hold of similar synchronisation tools for free from services such as Dropbox (www.dropbox.com).



Lightroom's syncing process is automatic, but you also can dip in and choose what to archive.

The FirePro W7100 is a single-slot solution that runs quiet and cool.



FirePro W7100

PC ONLY

TRICKY CARD AMD's mainstream professional graphics card could be the sign of things to come...

Price £540 **Company** AMD **Web** www.amd.com

Artists working in 3D know that if they want to build something incredible they'll need hardware to make it happen in a timely fashion. There isn't quite the same reliance on hardware for 2D art, but as we head into a brave new world where graphics cards can also boost performance, things are about to get interesting. The AMD FirePro W7100 is a serious slice of cutting-edge tech, but is it something you actually need to create great art?

The FirePro is a mid-range card, forgoing the raw power of the W9100 and W8100 for a lower price point. It has 1,792 stream processors, or 28 compute units, which puts it on a par with the Radeon 285 (£150). There are a few differences, though: the FirePro has 8GB of memory, can power up to four 4K screens at the same time and has improved software support.

Installation is straightforward, provided you've got room in your case for a full-length card and that your power supply has a spare six-pin connector. To get the most from the card your current system should support PCI Express 3.0 (most modern machines do) and if it's relatively

modern then the power connector shouldn't be a problem, either.

Performance improvements vary greatly, depending on what you're doing, image sizes and whether the effects take advantage of OpenCL. But it's possible to go from several seconds

“Go from several seconds for effects to be applied, to it happening almost in real-time”

of waiting for an effect to be applied to it happening in pretty much real-time.

Should you buy the FirePro W7100? It's a tricky call, even if you're tempted to try a little 3D work on the side, have a bunch of filters that use OpenCL, and dabble with some video-editing work. It's still early days for OpenCL and it isn't clear how much developers can eke out of the hardware. There are cheaper options in the FirePro range, and if you're not into 3D, they'll make more sense. Essentially, you'd be buying a pricy bit of kit for a potential that hasn't been fully realised yet.

DETAILS

Features

- 8GB GDDR5 RAM
- 1,792 stream processors
- Peak single-precision floating-point performance: 3.3TFLOPS
- Peak double-precision floating-point performance: 206GFLOPS
- Four DisplayPort 1.2a outputs
- DirectX 11, OpenGL, OpenCL support

System Requirements

PC: Windows 8.1 and Windows 7, Linux (32- and 64-bit), PCIe x16 (dual-slot), 8GB RAM

Rating

net

MAGAZINE IPAD EDITION

The iPad edition of **net** has been completely rebuilt from the ground up as a tablet-optimised reading experience.



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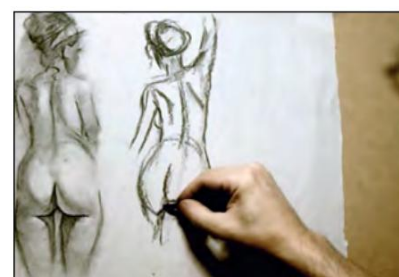
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The video frequently uses split-screen to show what Patrick is either referring to, or striving to achieve.

In Drawing with Charcoal, Patrick Jones shows how to create art from a simple black stick and some erasing tools.



Patrick breaks figure drawing into a few simple stages – the process won't seem quite so overwhelming once you've watched this.



Drawing with Charcoal

THE DARK ARTS Fantasy artist Patrick J Jones reveals his classical side as he shows how not to make a mess of figure drawing



Publisher Patrick J Jones **Price** £7 **Format** Download only **Web** www.pjartworks.com

As most artists who've taken an art foundation course or an evening life-drawing class can confirm, charcoal is a fantastic creative medium. In his digestible but comprehensive introduction to this gleefully messy tool, Patrick Jones calls charcoal "a gateway to painting" – an easy way to extend your drawing skills into exploring relationships between form, light and shadow.

Patrick kicks off with a few examples of what you can achieve, before explaining the tools of the trade: how to sharpen your charcoal stick and what to use to remove marks – not just to erase mistakes, but also to bring back highlights and negative space. Your finger will also come in handy!

Most of the charcoal techniques you'll pick up, however, are shown by example – because once he's run through the tools, Patrick's narration focuses almost exclusively on figure drawing and anatomy. He variously



DETAILS

Topics covered

- Charcoal drawing tools
- Preparing your charcoal stick
- Gesture studies
- Basics of form
- Basics of light and shade

Length
72 minutes

Rating



uses a live model, other drawings or photography as reference, then builds up a series of studies, explaining his thinking as he goes.

As with his other training videos – including Conan the Conquered, which we reviewed in issue 110 – the depth of Patrick's knowledge is obvious, but he always keeps the tone conversational rather than technical. If the complexity of figure drawing intimidates you, then watching this video will help to remedy matters. You'll see how to start with simple construction shapes, develop them into forms that feel three-dimensional, and finally, key in on the all-important details.

The video might not place as much emphasis on charcoal skills as the title suggests, but it's a great primer for starting to learn techniques and principles that have underpinned great works of art for centuries. Other videos from Patrick delve deeper into the topic of anatomy for anyone who wants to go further. ●

ARTIST PROFILE

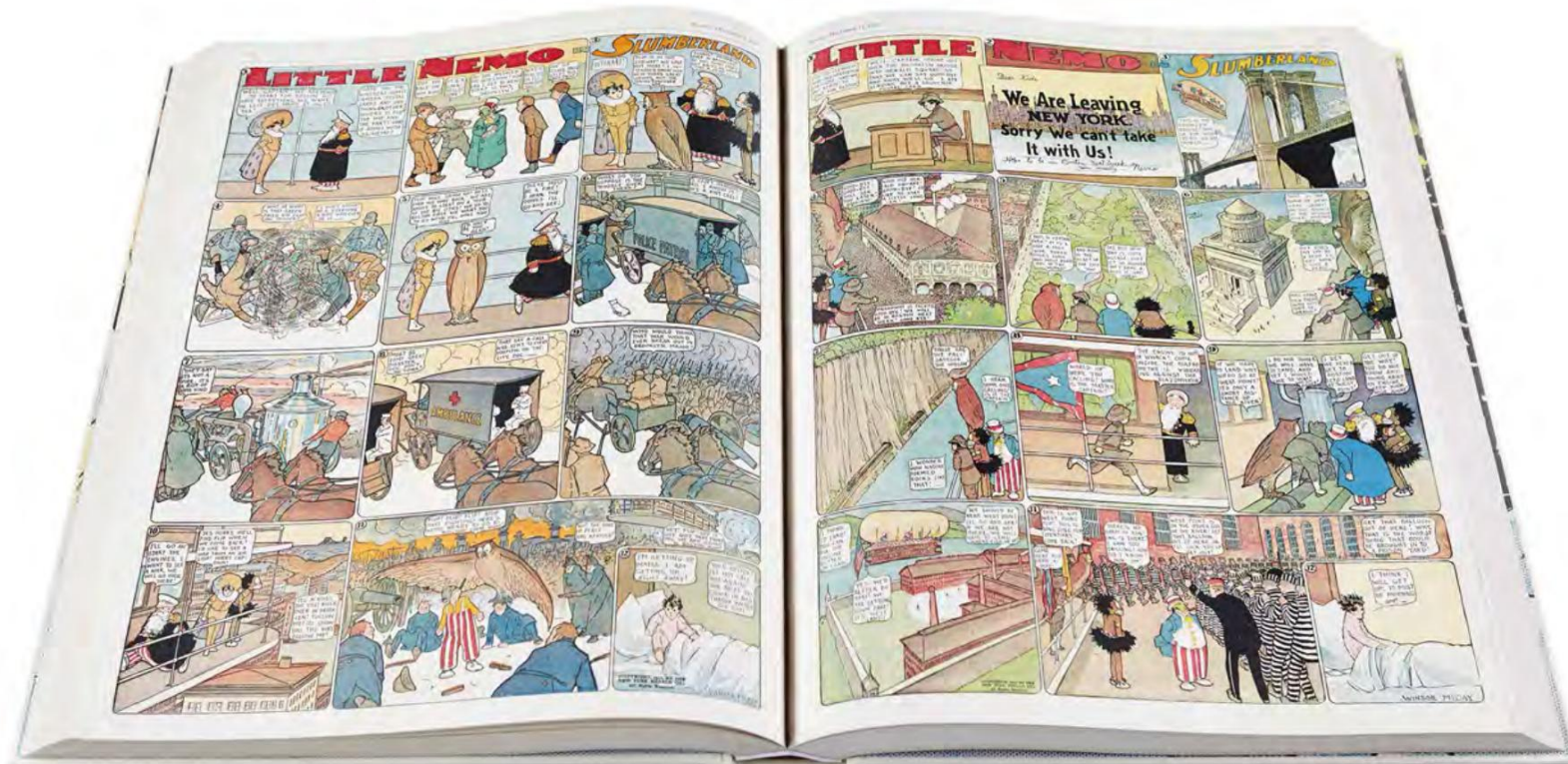
PATRICK J JONES

Patrick was born in Belfast. He became inspired to take up art by the fantasy work of Boris Vallejo and Frank Frazetta, and moved to London – the first step on a path that would see him travel the world as an illustrator and artist. He's worked for most major science fiction and fantasy book publishers, and film companies, painting covers for authors including Simon R Green, Mary Shelley and



Bram Stoker. His painting Conan The Conquered was the winner of 2014's IBA Grand Jury Prize.

www.pjartworks.com



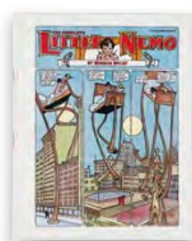
The Complete Little Nemo

WAKE-UP CALL No, you're not dreaming – after 110 years of adventuress in pyjamas, this really is as complete as it gets

Editor Alexander Braun **Publisher** Taschen **Price** £135 **Web** www.taschen.com **Available** Now

The otherworldly adventures of the curious child known as Little Nemo have long been divorced from any conscious popularity in our culture. The classic series' first stumbling block for many will stem from simply being so decidedly American, but also the strips have been all but forgotten about in the century since Nemo's rise to greatness.

This makes this impressively gigantic comprehensive package very much a specialised purchase. But even a flick through these pages (perhaps requiring the assistance of a stronger member of your household) equally proves that Little Nemo's influence on



Winsor McCay's comic started in the New York Herald in 1905, moved to New York American in 1911, and went back to the Herald 1924.

comic and fantasy art is deserving of this lavish and loving treatment.

There was a time when few followers of popular culture would need a thumbnail sketch of Little Nemo, on either side of the Atlantic, but in 2015, the sleepy tot's adventures are redolent of a long-lost world. If anything, creator Winsor McCay is now remembered more for his pioneering 1914 animation of Gertie the Dinosaur than his strip most celebrated at the time. But this just makes this collection all the more precious, containing as it does as exhaustive a treasury of the comic odyssey as can be achieved, painstakingly pieced together from the artist's own archives, and with the help of an army of fans and collectors.

The most celebrated format for the strips book-ended a wildly fantastical adventure through a dreamscape with the titular child lying in bed, ultimately being grateful that 'it was all a dream!' This device, seen as a cheap get-out in modern pop culture, enabled Winsor to devise and pilot some of the most innovative techniques in comic book design, and a level of artistry we all too easily take for granted these days. More than 100 years on, only the most



A strip from April 1926, where Nemo joins the circus and performs in a "daring equestrian exhibition".

knowledgeable comic fans can recall what made Nemo's dreams so great.

The accompanying history of the series is beautifully laid out as a relay of cod newsprint articles, and covers the whole sweep of Nemo's adventures in Slumberland, right up to modern cartoon adaptations, Simpsons references and a Nemo-themed Google doodle. But it's the titanic-sized treasury itself that will mark out the truly dedicated comic book aficionado from the casual fan. Keep an eye on the price, and splurge when it lowers.

RATING



The Art of the Simon and Kirby Studio

CUT 'N' PASTE Two Golden Age pioneers of the comic book as we know it, but are there too few heroes to cheer on?

Editor Mark Evanier **Publisher** Abrams ComicArts **Price** £40 **Web** www.abramscomicarts.com **Available** Now

Leaping heroically into stores hot on the heels of Taschen's eccentrically gigantic celebration of 75 years of Marvel Comics, this 'zooming in on a couple of key players in the early comics world' approach is a far more manageable format, but remains an acquired taste for the main part of the book.

Mark Evanier gives us a brief but authoritative insight into the pioneering partnership of New York artists Jack Kirby (of Spider-Man co-creation fame)



and Joe Simon, but this history is only the tip of the iceberg. The remaining majority of the book is taken up with adoringly recreated comic strips authored by the pair – many featuring faithful facsimiles of sticky-taped rough pages in mid-construction.

Sadly, any superhero freaks looking for action-packed stories of the calibre bearing the name of Kirby's other collaborator Stan Lee will probably be

nonplussed by the acres of woodpulp here, demonstrating the earlier popular comic genres of romance, Wild West thrills and gritty crime.

With the quality of the artwork itself on the decidedly pulp side of popular culture, this is a collection unlikely to be of value to any but the most devoted comic book historian.

RATING



Fly discovers a skyscraper is, er, missing. While, above, the duo invent the romance comic.

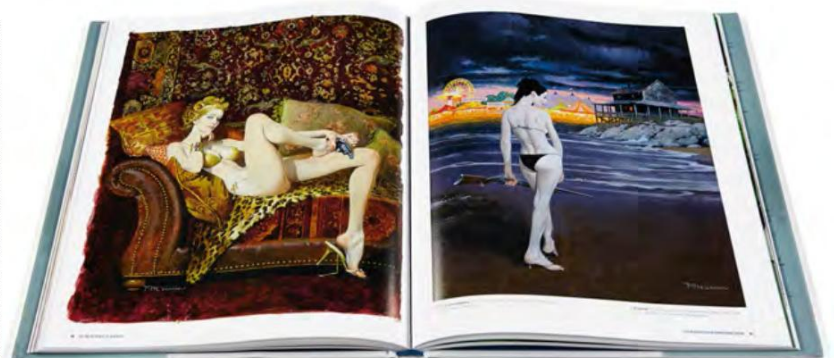
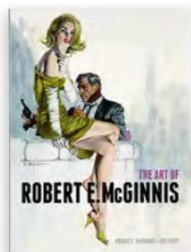
The Art of Robert E McGinnis

WHIT WOO This glamorous collection reveals there's much more to the celebrated cinematic artist than just softcore sexism

Editor Art Scott **Publisher** Titan Books **Price** £25 **Web** www.titanbooks.com **Available** Now

One of the greatest interpreters of the stylish female form of the 20th century, the work of Robert E McGinnis will be familiar to anyone who hasn't avoided ever seeing *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, or early James Bond films (or rather, the publicity artwork for the likes of *Diamonds are Forever* and *Thunderball*).

The chic and glamorously chauvinistic world of Bond is in fact almost a millstone around the artist's neck, the famous association perhaps



giving critics easier leverage for dismissing Robert as a purveyor of softcore sexism. This new collection shows otherwise, with great style.

Although light on text – a fresh interview with the near-nonagenarian being the highlight – the 175 pages of this collection depict a career with far greater diversity and depth than Robert's most famous images suggest. Yes, the content may be roughly 70 per

cent fixated on the female form – lounging on couches, playing in hay, smoking on fur rugs – but it's fascinating to contrast these portraits with his work on Westerns, his haunting American landscapes, and magazine designs covering conquistadors and F1 racing. Here's an artist who deserves better than to be pigeonholed.

RATING



Robert E McGinnis's poster art for 1967's *You Only Live Twice*. From *Thunderball* (1965), he was the principle Bond poster artist for 10 years.

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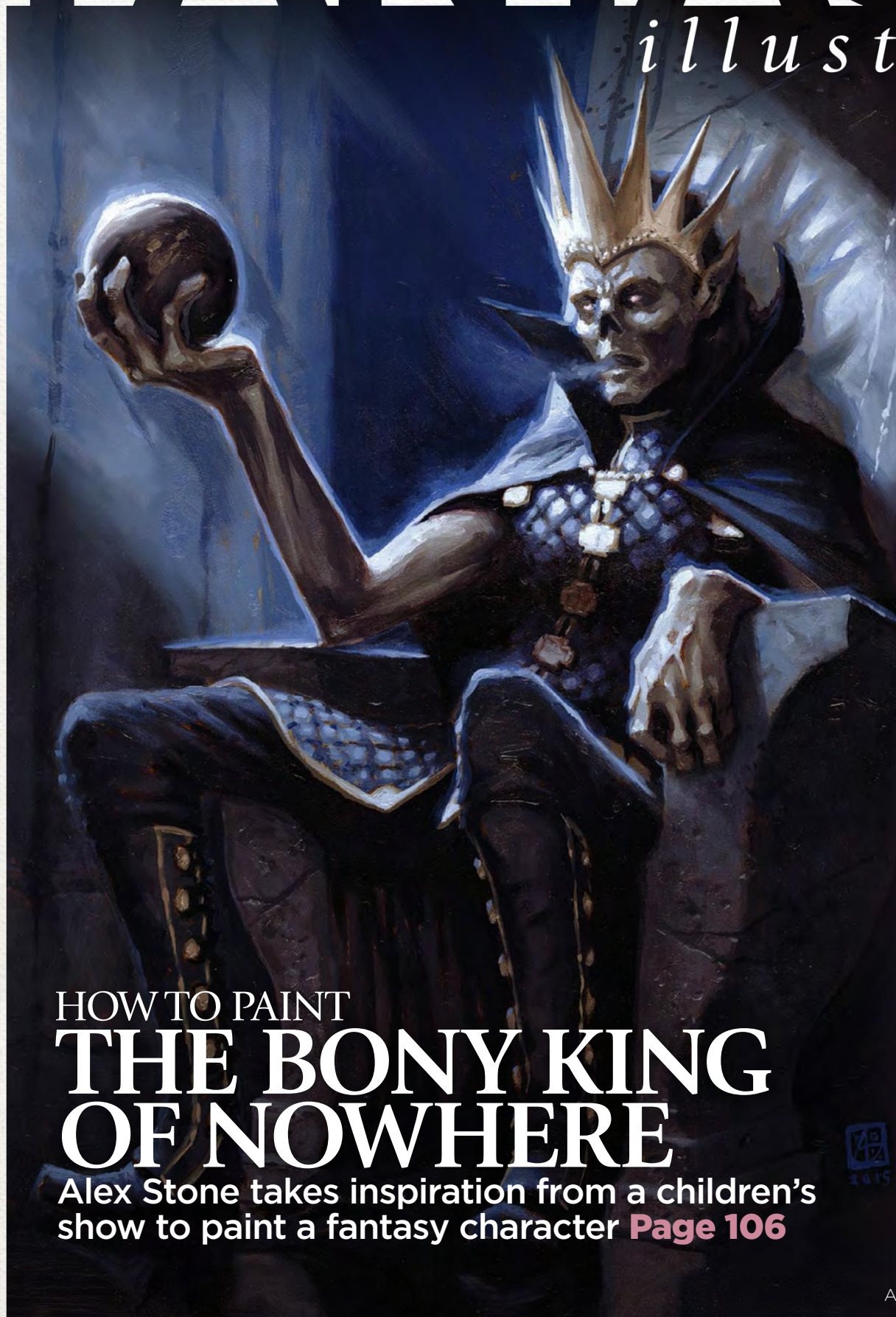
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FANTASY

illustrator



HOW TO PAINT THE BONY KING OF NOWHERE

Alex Stone takes inspiration from a children's show to paint a fantasy character **Page 106**

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The best traditional art revealed.



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All The Young Nudes: Glasgow.



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Get more drama from models.



114 First impressions
Romas B Kukalis talks money.

FXPosé Traditional

SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL FANTASY ARTISTS

Andy Kehoe

LOCATION: US

WEB: www.andykehoe.net

EMAIL: andy@andykehoe.net

MEDIA: Acrylic, epoxy resin, oil, polymer clay



We can't fully do justice to Andy's paintings until ImagineFX is 3D printed.

"I use epoxy resin inside cradled wood panels,

building up the painting layer by layer,"

he says. "It opens up endless

possibilities of new techniques to

experiment with. I've been mixing wet

oil paints and pigments into the uncured

resin to create a variety of swirly,

marble-like textures."

Andy's future involves bringing

together all of his work. "I want to

continue working on paintings for

gallery shows, but I'd love to branch out

into some new mediums such as a book

or an animated work," he says.



1 CATHEDRAL OF THE FOREST DEEP

Oil, acrylic and resin in wood box, 30x24in

"I'm a big fan of trees and forests, and

I love the idea of this grand, natural

monument hidden deep in the forest.

I also like to match the characters with

their surroundings - in this case, the

pattern in cloak matches the flowers in

the tree canopy."

2 AT THE EDGE OF AN UNKNOWN WORLD

Oil, acrylic and resin in wood box, 30x24in

"I enjoy making paintings of isolated

and far-off places. There's a strange mix

of serenity and fear in being that far

away from everything. And there's also

meeting the strange denizens of those

far places."

3 CREATURES OF SYNCHRONICITY

Oil, acrylic and resin in wood box, 20x24in

"I wanted a bold, minimalistic

composition for this piece, and I've

been delving into incorporating

geometric shapes to juxtapose the

natural aspects to my work. I used a few

layers of wet paint in uncured resin to

produce the texture of the planet, then

I masked it off with acrylic paint to

create the planet and the sky."





IMAGINEFX CRIT



"A simple ethereal beauty permeates Andy's atmospheric art. It instills a sense of calmness in me – no bad thing in today's busy world. You can almost feel the cool breeze blowing through the moonlit trees."

Cliff Hope,
Operations Editor

Jake Kobrin

LOCATION: US

WEB: www.kobrinart.com

EMAIL: jkobrinart@yahoo.com

MEDIA: Acrylic, oil, casein



A native of California's picturesque Mill Valley, Jake's art has been influenced by his geographical surroundings.

His father, Dr Neil Kobrin, is an equally important figure in Jake's artistic development, teaching him to meditate and fostering spiritual experiences.

"My artwork reflects deep states of awareness that have been reached through meditation and shamanic techniques and is imbued with the philosophies and teachings of the many great sages who have walked The Path," says Jake. "It manifests from a subconscious place, influenced by the automatist techniques of the great surrealists, psychedelia and master painters of the past."

1 EROS

Acrylic on canvas, 40x20in

"Love, passion, Eros. This is the guiding force, the supreme motivation. We're all yearning for this ecstasy, the moment when lovers lose their sense of separation and merge as one."

2 LIFE IS CARRIED ON THE WINGS OF INTUITION

Oil, casein and acrylic on wood panel
24x36in

"When you quiet the mind, you begin to see life in its fundamental purity. Listening inward, you hear the wisdom of the heart. You connect to our original and most essential nature."

SUBMIT YOUR ART TO FXPOSÉ

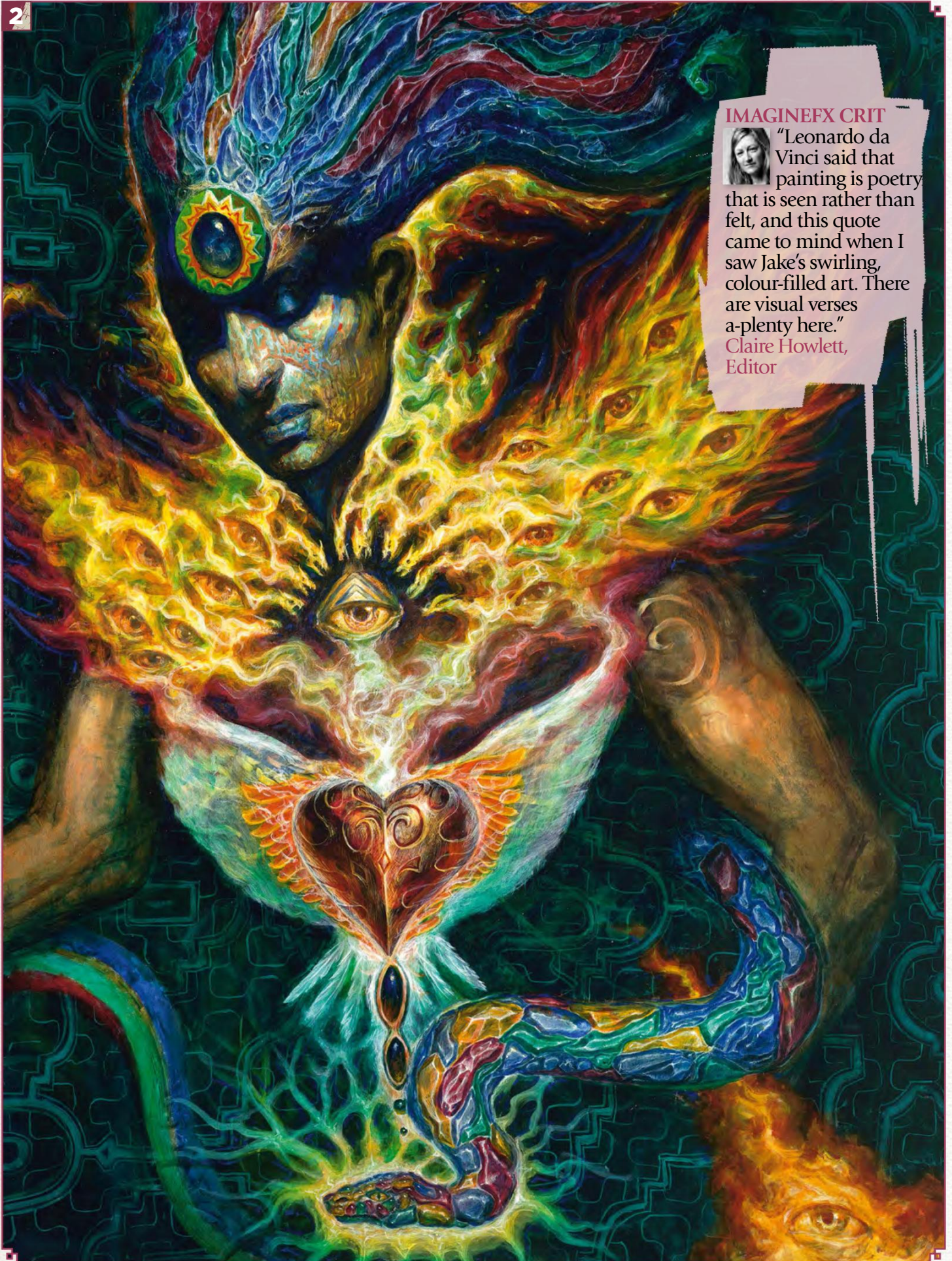
Send up to five pieces of your work, along with their titles, an explanation of your techniques, a photo of yourself and contact details. Images should be sent as 300DPI JPEG files.

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


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IMAGINEFX CRIT

 "Leonardo da Vinci said that painting is poetry that is seen rather than felt, and this quote came to mind when I saw Jake's swirling, colour-filled art. There are visual verses a-plenty here."
Claire Howlett,
Editor

Creative Space



HEY YOU!

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

ALL THE YOUNG NUDES: GLASGOW

JOANNA SUSSKIND explains how a student life-drawing class is taking over Scotland – and, potentially, the world

Taking her cue from David Bowie's barn-storming 1972 hit, as made famous by Mott the Hoople, and a life-drawing class at the Glasgow School of Art, Joanna Susskind founded the Scottish art group All The Young Nudes about six years ago. After her artistic contacts provided a venue in the form of the Flying Duck nightclub, the group has met every Tuesday since.

"We created a brand and let the word spread," she says. "We now have up to 100 people in Glasgow, 50 in Edinburgh and 20 in Dundee. Most of our attendees heard of us through word of mouth. We do very little advertising, although we do keep on top of social media interaction.

It's great to see the sketches posted online from all three cities each week."

A big part of the attraction of All The Young Nudes is down to its unfussy and bureaucracy-free way of running. There are no joining fees, no set course dates, no certificates – and they don't even charge an entrance fee. "For this reason we have people of all ages, from all sorts of backgrounds turning up to draw. People tend to bring their friends and colleagues along – or a date!"

Joanna's seen people join the group and grow as artists, too, which has to be the sign of a successful creative meet-up. "Drawing from life is an invaluable skill because it's so challenging," she explains. "It teaches you to observe and to focus. It



Artists hard at work during a life-drawing session.

also helps you with scale and anatomy. This can be a great boon in so many different lines of work."

As the group's grown so to has its reputation, and other organisers have been keen to get in on the life-drawing action. "There have been requests for ATYN from all over the world," says Joanna. "We're working on our format to ensure consistency in each new spot. This year we're looking at opening clubs in London and New York."



To find out more about All The Young Nudes visit www.atyn.co.uk. When Joanna's not running the sessions she

oversees Toad's Caravan, an art collective in Glasgow. www.toadscaravan.com

Art groups All The Young Nudes



Despite the name, you don't even have to be young to join the group...

ATYN'S ARTY-NESS

Choice sketches from the Scottish scribblers...

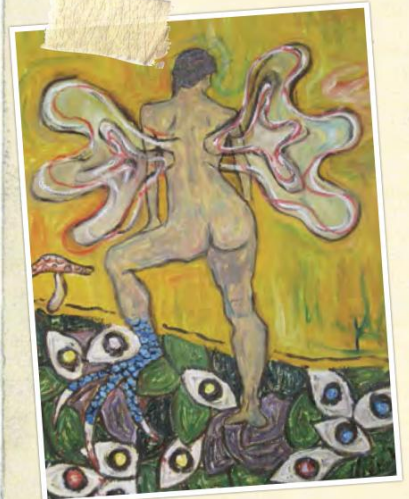
Mark Mechan created this piece in just 15 minutes.



An athletically built model, as rendered in pencil and chalk by Andrew Horner.



Splashes of colour make Andrew Horner's work stand out.



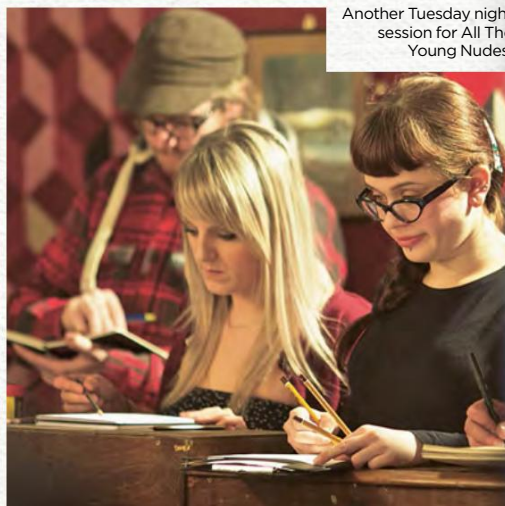
Itsuka Hiraga takes life drawing to more surreal places.



Artists of all abilities are made welcome.



The art group keeps growing despite only being word of mouth.



Another Tuesday night session for All The Young Nudes.

Workshops



**GET YOUR
RESOURCES**
See page 6 now!

Oils

Acrylics

Pencil

PAINTING THE BONY KING OF NOWHERE

ALEX STONE takes inspiration from a children's show and develops a painting of a morose fantasy character, from concept to finish

For this workshop, I'll be painting a character known as The Bony King of Nowhere. It's loosely based on an animated short from a classic British children's show called Bagpuss, wherein the Bony King finds his throne to be too cold, and sends his subjects to find him something warm to sit on. This is my favourite kind of assignment, because it gives me something to loosely grab on to, but run with in whichever direction I choose and turn into something that's my own.

Early on, I get a creepy vibe from the title itself and choose to move away from the cuteness of the original short animation. I decide that I want the king to have a skeletal and unsettling appearance. He's not the happy, kind king depicted in

ARTIST INSIGHT

PAINTING A BEAM OF LIGHT

To paint a beam of light, mix two separate sets of colour: one for everything inside of the beam, and one for everything outside. Once you've blocked it all in, you can blend the paint where it meets with a soft synthetic or sable brush.

the original story. He gazes into an orb, perhaps observing the subjects that he's sent on this quest. I don't explicitly describe this narrative in the image, instead preferring to leave it to the viewer to interpret as they please. I imagine Nowhere to be a cold and empty place. The king's hall is dark, lit only by a narrow shaft of cool blue light. Its vast size is only hinted at by the enormous pillar in the background.

I enjoy the challenge of working in a limited colour palette, as well as the mood that it can capture. By focusing my palette on strong blues, I hope to convey the coldness of the space as well as an otherworldly, magical quality. A spotlight will draw the eye to the character himself, and build up a dramatic effect in an otherwise quiet, uneventful moment.



Alex is a fantasy artist from Brooklyn, NY. His interest in the genre was sparked at an early age from an exposure to *Magic: The Gathering* and TV shows such as *Hercules: The Legendary Journeys*, *Xena: Warrior Princess* and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. www.alexstoneart.com

In depth Bony King of Nowhere



2015

ARTIST INSIGHT

GET RECYCLING!

After cleaning your brushes, you can leave your Turpenoid or Gamsol in a jar until the pigment settles in the bottom. Then transfer it to a new jar. Repeat this process until it's free of paint and ready to be reused.



1 Start with thumbnails

I start by quickly sketching out ideas on a sheet of scrap paper. They're very small, only about 1.5 inches on the long side. At this stage I want to find a general composition or gesture that I like.

2 Digital explorations

Once I have a few thumbnails that work, I scan them and build them up in Photoshop. I'm focusing on my value structure first, and secondly, colour. This stage should start to give me an idea of how the final painting will look.



In depth Bony King of Nowhere



3 Create a detailed drawing

Moving ahead with my selected rough sketch, I do a detailed drawing on Bristol paper. Now is the time to start using any reference photos that I may have.



4 Painting a colour study

I trace my drawing on to a small piece of watercolour paper and do a fast, loose version of the finish in acrylic paint. I do this to help determine exactly what colours I need to mix for the final painting. In this case I do just one, but I'll repeat as necessary until I know exactly what I want.



5 Preparing the surface

I take a lightly sanded piece of masonite panel and apply an acrylic gesso. While the gesso is wet, I smooth it out with a foam paint roller. I do this two or three times, ensuring that the gesso gets the chance to dry between applications, and lightly sanding between each coat.



6 Transfer the drawing

Using a blown-up print of my drawing and a sheet of graphite transfer paper, I trace the drawing on to my board. Afterwards, I go over the lines with a pencil just to darken them enough to see once I put down my undertone.



MATERIALS

PENCILS

- Derwent Graphic HB
- Derwent Graphic 2B

PAPER

- 100lb Bristol paper
- 140lb cold press watercolour paper

'BRUSHES'

- Robert Simmons Signet, Brights size 7, 5, 3, 1
- Robert Simmons Signet, Filberts size 6, 4, 2, 1
- Nameless flat bristle brush, approx. size 1
- Robert Simmons Titanium, Filbert size 6
- Utrecht Kolinsky Red Sable, Filberts size 6, 4
- Raphael Kevrin, Round size 4
- Princeton Art & Brush Co. Wash size 0.75
- Princeton Art & Brush Co. Shader size 6
- Princeton Art & Brush Co. Angular Shader size 0.25
- Princeton Art & Brush Co. Round size 2
- Princeton Art & Brush Co. Liner size 2/0
- Liquitex Basics, Flat size 2
- Winsor & Newton Scepter Gold II, Round size 00
- Medium or large house-painting brush
- 2-inch Badger hair brush

OILS

- Winsor & Newton: Burnt Umber
- French Ultramarine
- Ivory Black
- Alizarin Crimson
- Titanium White
- Underpainting White

ACRYLICS

- Liquitex Heavy Body: Burnt Umber
- Ultramarine Blue
- Ivory Black
- Quinacridone Red
- Titanium White

PAINTING SURFACE

- Masonite Panel
- Acrylic Gesso
- 220 grit sandpaper

MEDIUMS AND SOLVENTS

- Liquin Original
- Gamsol
- Odorless Turpeneol
- Walnut Oil

ARTIST INSIGHT

CORRECT GLAZING

To make a glaze, choose a transparent or semi-transparent colour of paint and mix it with some of your medium. Information about the transparency of paint can usually be found on the back of the tube.



7 Put down an undertone

Using a watered-down mix of burnt umber and ultramarine blue acrylic paint, I put a wash over the entire board. This seals in the drawing so that it won't smudge, and also gives me a middle tone to paint on top of.

8 Do an underpainting

From this stage onwards, I switch to oil paints. I block in the shadows and try to get back some of the quality of my drawing. I'm using a mix of burnt umber and ivory black, thinned with Gamsol.

PAINT TIP

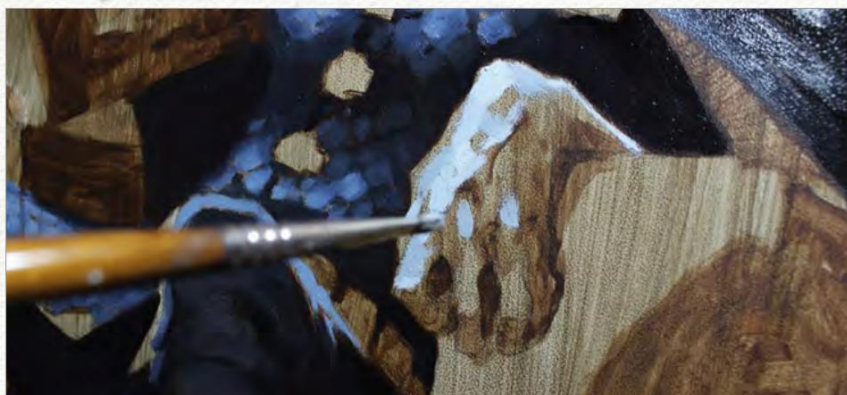
FAST-DRYING WHITE

Titanium White dries very slowly. Combining it with Underpainting White makes it easy to work with and speeds up drying times.



9 Mix colours on a palette

Using my colour study as a point of reference, I mix all of the colours that I'll be painting with for the first session. I repeat this step for later sessions as necessary.



10 Start on the figure

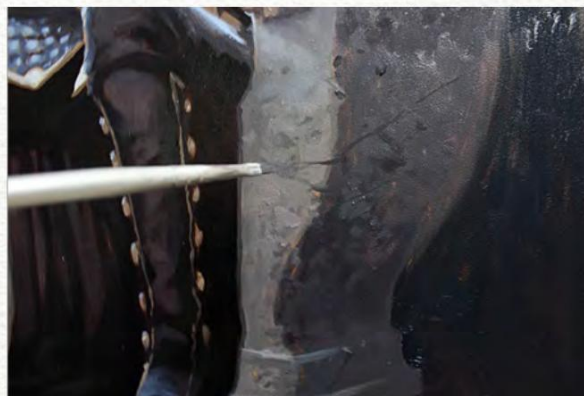
I start painting the figure since, being the focal point, it'll use the widest range of values. This helps me adjust my eye for the rest of the painting. I block in lights and darks, taking care to not overwork anything. I'm trying to let each brush stroke do as much work as possible.

11 Finish the first pass

I move on to the rest of the painting, approaching it in the same way as the figure. I'm taking care to keep my value range narrower in areas that are not as important.

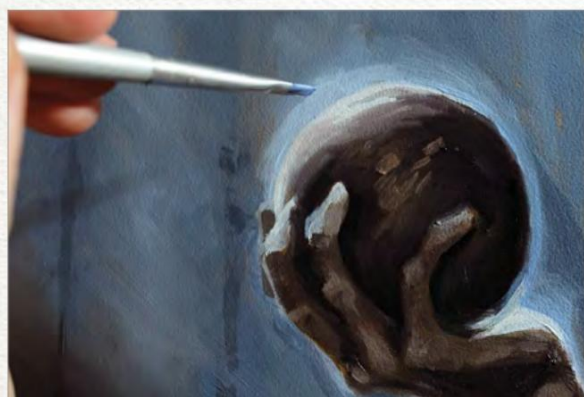


In depth Bony King of Nowhere



12 On to the second pass

I go back into everything to build up more light and shadow. I'm also focusing on using my strokes to describe the texture of the throne, and the reflection in the floor.



13 Glazing and details

I push the areas that I want out of focus back with a dark glaze. I also work on fine details such as highlights and edges, and correct anything that doesn't look quite right. The painting is about 99 per cent finished.



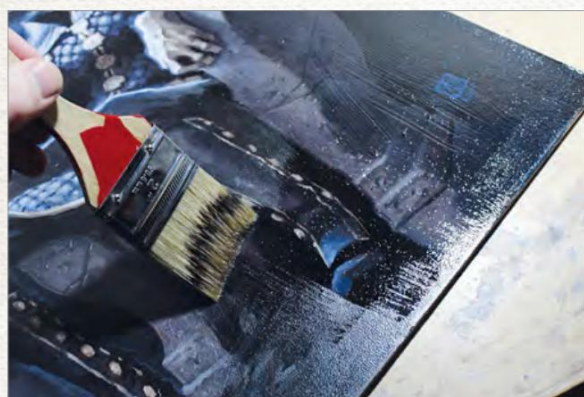
BRUSH TIP

BRISTLE BRUSHES

These brushes are great for laying down thick paint and showing brushstrokes.

14 Stop right there

I turn the painting around and leave the studio. I'll do anything to not think about it. Play video games, watch a movie, take a walk, or just go to sleep. If I can afford to, I'll leave it until the next day.



15 Last look and final tweaks

I come back with fresh eyes and put in any last-minute details I may have missed. Then I sign it, and once the painting is dry to touch, I apply a thin coat of Liquin. This brings out the vibrancy of the colours and deepens the darks that tend to get lost when the paint dries. This is not a replacement for a final varnish, which will be added later. ●



Photography

USE LIGHT TO TELL THE STORY

In the first part of a new series, **DAVID PALUMBO** shares his favourite methods for getting more drama from his models through lighting

Light shapes the mood of a painting. How you light your model, either for photographic reference or live observation, will shift the tone from naturalistic to melodramatic or anywhere between. Thinking carefully about what mood you wish to achieve is the first step to finding an effective lighting strategy.

All lighting concerns come down to controlling the quality and direction of your light. Quality of light mostly refers to how hard or soft the light appears. Hard

light casts harsh shadows while soft light will cast gradual shadows, possibly to the point of almost no perceptible shadow. Direct sunlight is an excellent example of hard light. Ambient light of a nearby window shows soft light. Extreme soft light can be seen under an overcast sky.

Light quality relates to the size and distance of the light source from the model. Larger light sources create softer shadows. For dramatic hard light, aim an intense light directly at the model. You can achieve a more atmospheric or

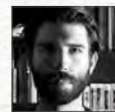
MATERIALS

- Clamp lights or photo strobes
- Light stands
- Reflector
- Camera (optional)

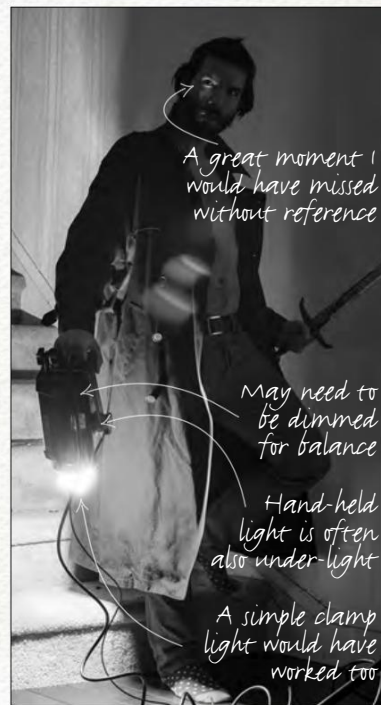
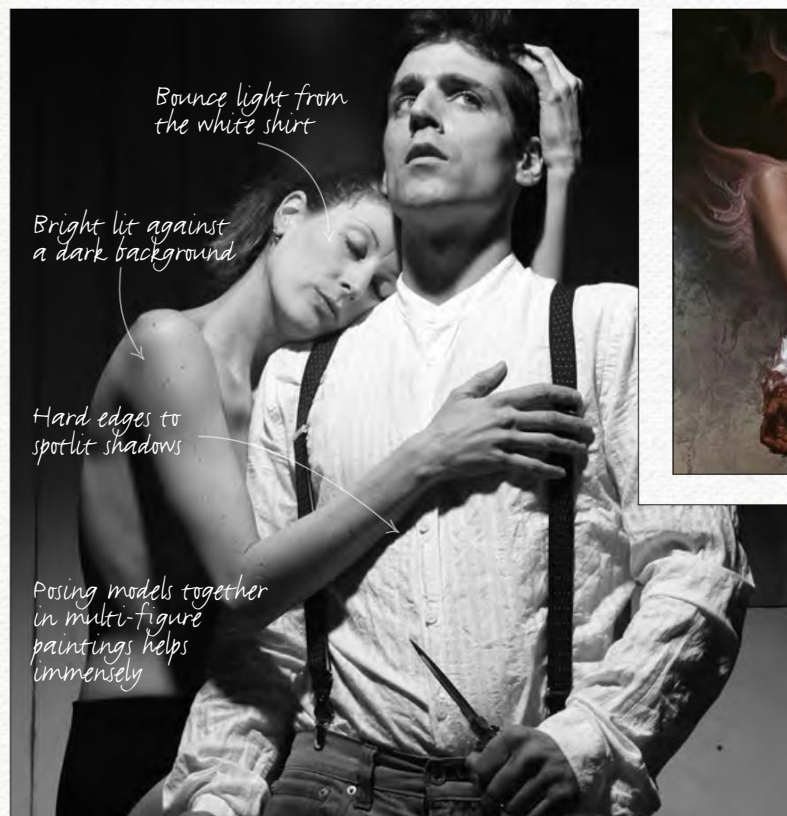


naturalistic look by bouncing your light off a larger surface, such as a reflector, light umbrella or wall.

The direction of light is the angle that light falls over the form of the subject. Some basic set-ups are shown here, along with a few particular methods that always give me great, moody results.



David is an award-winning illustrator and fine artist who works primarily in genre fiction and fantasy gaming. See more of his art at www.dvpalumbo.com.



ARTIST INSIGHT

REAL-LIFE CONDITIONS

Whenever possible, I like to reference under the actual conditions of the intended scene.

This better informs me by discovering realistic nuances that I might never imagine.

1 Theatrical overhead

A strong, single, hard light source directly above and slightly to the front of the model or models will create a spotlight effect. This can give an operatic level of drama to help your image feel bigger than life, especially when it is contrasted against a darker environment.

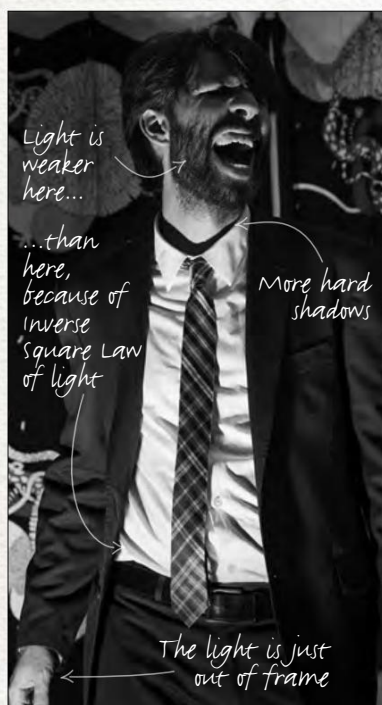
2 In-frame light source

An in-frame light source such as a candle or lamp can add mystery and atmosphere, especially when held by the model. Careful composing or strategically covering the light source with other elements in the final composition will help keep the light from stealing the focal point.



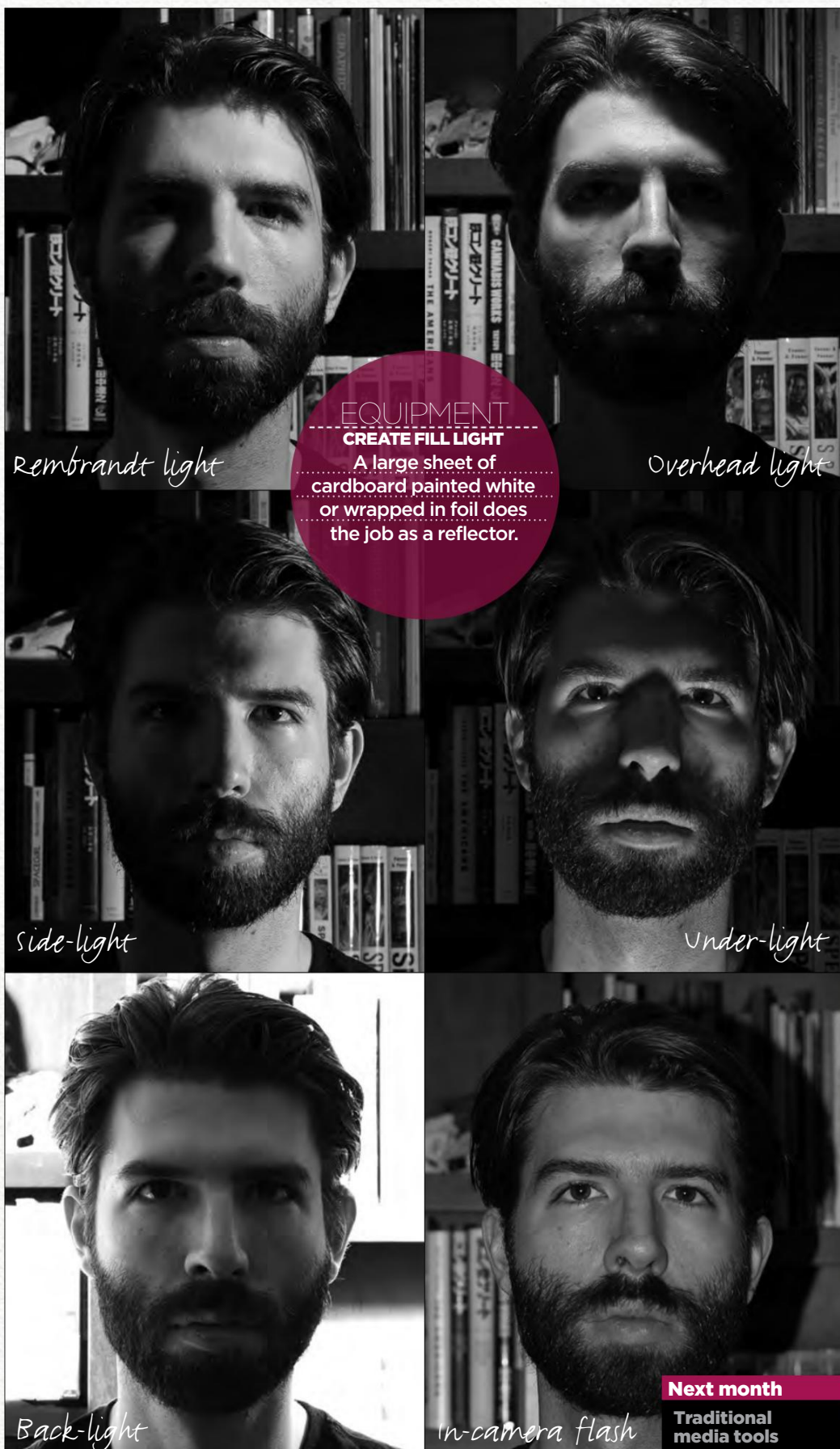
3 Edge and fill lights

Figures really pop with an edge light highlighting the contour, while fill light helps to inform the shadow side. The edge light will be behind and pointed towards the camera, and the fill is generally diffused and dimmer (here it's bounced off of a wall).



4 Under-lighting

Because we rarely see people lit from below, this approach can give an unnatural or frightening tone to a figure. Hard under-light (as we can see here) will give an aggressive atmosphere. While in contrast the subtlety of a soft light will create a more ethereal and eerie feel.



5 Single light source basics

Here are examples of Rembrandt, overhead, side-, under-, back- and in-camera flash lighting. As you can see really well here, the in-camera flash will negate most shadows and leave you with a flat, boring, unflattering result that's almost never useful as painting reference. ●

First Impressions

✧ **Romas B Kukalis** ✧

This fantasy and sci-fi artist tells of a close encounter with Rastafarian royalty...



Where did you grow up and how has this influenced your art?

I grew up in Connecticut, New England, but my heritage had the greatest influence. I'm Lithuanian and descended from the wicked and ruthless Livonian Knights of the 15th century. It's a gift. And a curse.

What, outside art, has most influenced your work through the years?

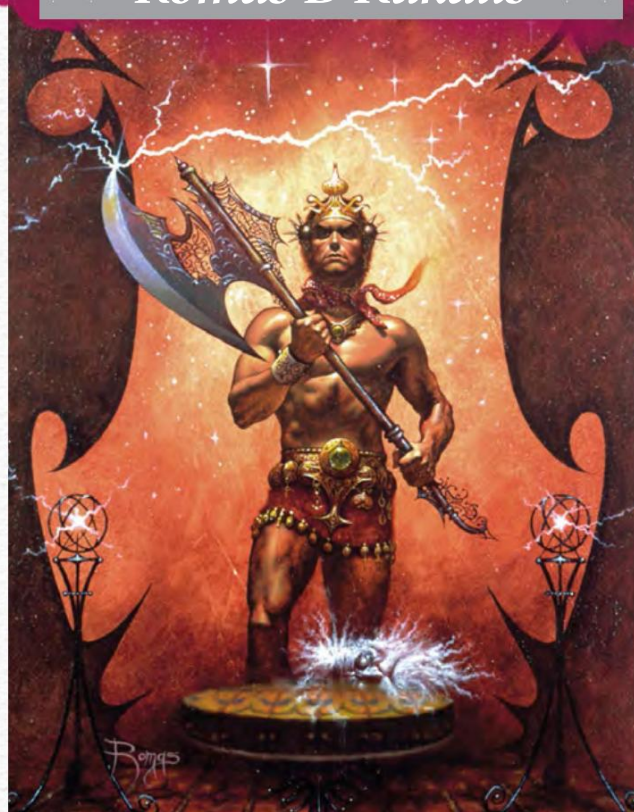
Drawing and painting to classical music, or Ian Anderson, or Linkin Park. And I take a break from fantasy and sci-fi with books my wife recommends. Lately I'm on a Martin Amis jag.

You're a child, you see some art that changes everything... where are you and what are you looking at?

I loved Marvel Comics characters. I loved copying the superheroes on whatever paper I had at hand. I came to wholly believe in the male as heroic, that justice existed, that good always overcomes evil. I hold out hope that that's still true.

What was your next step in art?

At a parent-teacher conference, my art teacher showed my mum and dad



STAR AXE

"This book was published by Tower Books. I had the concept for the painting as soon as I heard the title."

pictures the class had drawn of their homes. I was the only one who showed the correct orientation of the chimney to the roof: a vertical. The other 35 kids had chimneys coming out at oblique angles. My dad said, "When you grow up you will go into commercial art". "Okay, dad," was the only natural response.

Who helped you most on your way?

Mrs Lansing-Jones, my high school art teacher, challenged, inspired and really

“My first job was for a local drug dealer – who also claimed to be a Rastafarian prince”

focused me. I think, because I was an immigrant, she took pity on me.

What was your first paid commission?

My first sci-fi commission was a book cover assignment from a small publisher in New York City after I graduated from art school. But the really cool first job was for a local drug dealer – who claimed to be a Rastafarian prince. He asked me to create a portrait of Haile Selassie with a lion (the first of several pieces I did for him), and he paid

GHOST SHADOW

"This is one of my favourites because I could merge fantasy and sci-fi in one piece. I also posed for the character. The book was published by DAW Books."

promptly, well and from a huge wad of cash he kept on his person at all times. I delivered the paintings to one of his several houses, where I met each one of his several wives, and which were surrounded by goons, gates and guns. Later, when my wife Allison was working in New York City she told a Jamaican co-worker the story and she nearly fainted. Evidently, he was the real deal – a ganja-dealing Jamaican royal! True story, and my favourite one.

What's the last piece that you finished?

It was in oils on board, for the graphic novel series I'm working on. I didn't create a drawing first and used no reference. I started with a blank board and just went for it. A total blast, and a real departure in method for me.

What are your painting rituals?

I feel a bit of stress whenever I start a new piece, so I begin by methodically cutting and preparing the board first, photographing models, assembling reference, executing the drawing, and transferring the first stages to the board before applying paint.

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

Always focus on drawing, no matter the subject or medium. Draw from life and your imagination whenever possible.

What advice would you give to your younger self to aid you on the way?

I wish I was more selective with the projects I chose. When you're freelance you hate to give up work. You can't always hit the high note, especially if the project doesn't sing to you. But money's money, especially to a husband, father and mortgage payer!

Why is the fantasy art industry still the best place to be working?

It's my refuge from reality. I'll never understand people who watch "reality" TV. I have more than enough drama and headaches dealing with everyday matters. To be productive in an atmosphere you create at home is truly a blessing. I'm thankful to God every day.

As well as being an established cover artist, Romas has created art for Magic: The Gathering. You can see plenty more of his work at www.romasbk.com.

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[†] World Forest Resources, 1953 and UN FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment, 2010

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