NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

ImagineFX

PHOTOSHOP
GAME OF THRONES
Paint Queen Cersei in the style of an Old Master

FREE!
4 HOURS OF PRO VIDEO TUITION
+ CUSTOM BRUSHES

Future

TAP FOR TEXT-FREE COVER!

FRESH SKILLS IN
FANTASY ILLUSTRATION
Create art filled with light and full of form with the amazing **Jana Schirmer**

MAKE MONEY!
EARN FROM YOUR ART
Artists reveal how they bring in a steady income

ART & ADVICE
14 STEPS TO PAINT A VEHICLE IN MISCHIEF
TRADITIONAL PORTRAIT TIPS FROM JIM PAVELEC
MAKE YOUR ART STAND OUT WITH BLENDER

MODERN MASTERS! DISCOVER THE 10 MOST UNIQUE ARTISTS WORKING TODAY

Welcome…
to a fresh start

The highly astute amongst you will have noticed that I am in fact not Claire Howlett. Fear not! The ImagineFX supremo is on maternity leave, and I'm taking the reigns while she's away.

And what an issue to take over! Jana Schirmer's cover is a stunner, and her workshop is a great account of the (thankfully) rewarding negotiation process behind it (page 64). It also helps that Jana's a bit of a genius when it comes to depicting movement, light, form and… well, everything!

Inspired by her distinct style, we scoured the art world for 10 of the most unique artists we could find, and asked them to talk about their journey to awesomeness, and show off their favourite pieces of art. The resulting 18 pages of eye candy starts over on page 40.

If you're up to date with Game of Thrones, you may be thinking about the irresistibly detestable Cersei Lannister in a new light. Well, Andrew Theophilopoulos's grand portrait of the über-queen uses the old portrait artist John Singer Sargent as a springboard, and adds yet another element of intrigue to the character (page 70).

I'd also like to mention Donato Giancola's epic on page 110. I started writing for ImagineFX in 2007, and I'm still convinced I got the job because my name's from JRR Tolkien's The Silmarillion. By coincidence, this issue features Donato's vision of the moment Beren and Lúthien got hitched. A good omen for the issues to come!

Beren

Beren Neale, Acting Editor
beren.neale@futurenet.com

Our special cover for subscribers this issue.

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The *modern masters* of fantasy illustration

"It is a little boring in the real world. I draw what I like, create my world and draw my dreams"
Ruan Jia on his whimsical, ethereal style

Reader FX Posé
THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

See page 8 for the best new art ➤➤

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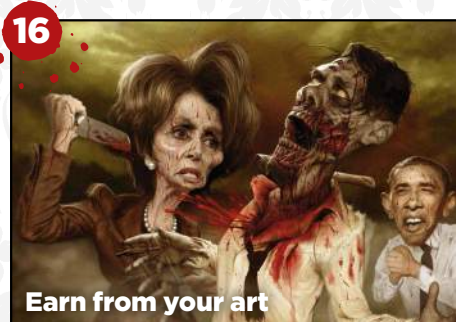
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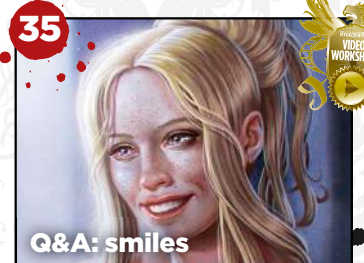
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FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART
ImagineFX

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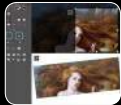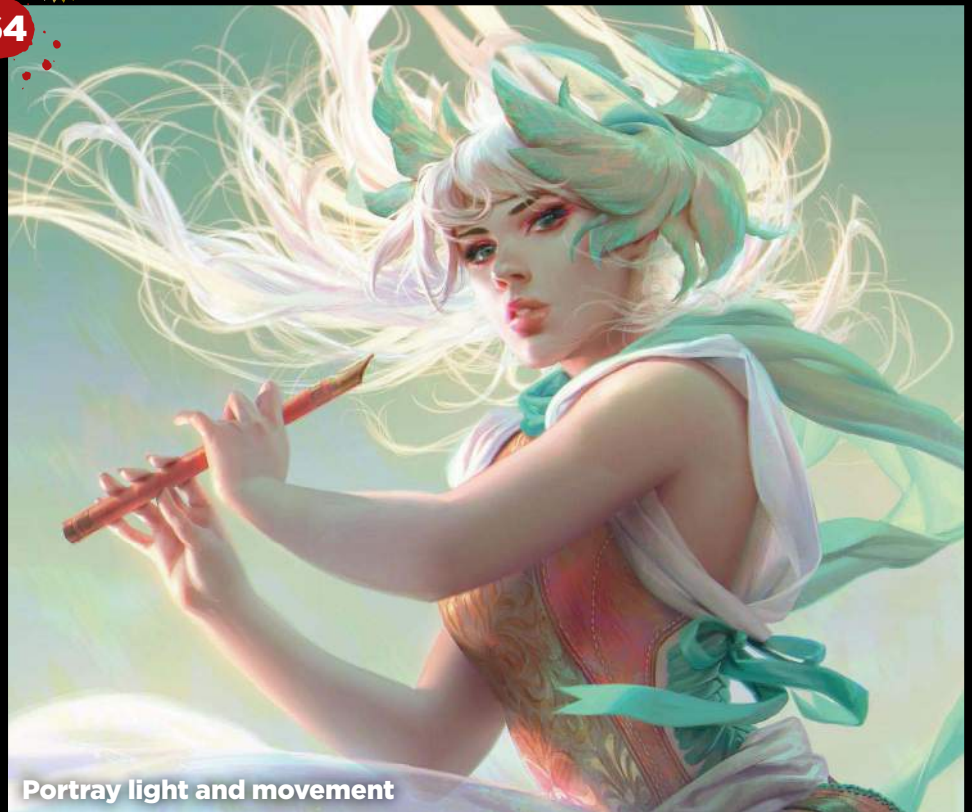
Portray light and movement

FANTASY
illustrator

Inspiration and advice from the best traditional artists

Visit Middle-earth
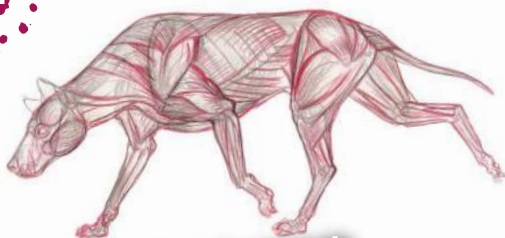
Drawing accurate animals

Grotesque, not gory!

Lindsey Look

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX
Resources

Getting hold of all of this issue's videos, artwork and brushes is quick and easy. Just visit our dedicated web page **http://ifxm.ag/fant125asy**

OVER 4 HOURS of workshop and Q&A videos to watch and learn from!

COVER WORKSHOP

How to show movement

Jana Schirmer on how she embraced green to paint a beguiling fantasy character for this month's cover.

GET YOUR RESOURCES

You're three steps away from this issue's resource files...

1 **Go to the website**
Type this into your browser's address bar (not the search bar):
http://ifxm.ag/fant125asy

2 **Find the files you want**
Search through the list of resources to watch or download.

3 **Download what you need**
You can download all of the files at once, or individually.

VIDEO WORKSHOP

EXCLUSIVE VIDEO TUITION!

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

Lorin Wood
Learn about ideation and developing an original sci-fi vehicle with historical roots.
Plus WIPs and final image
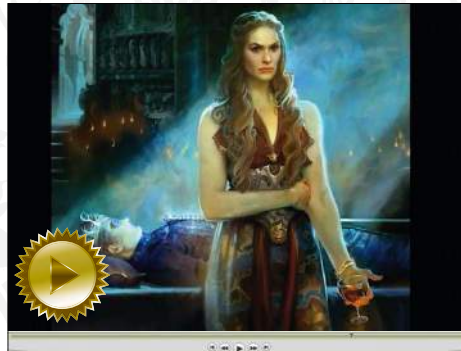
Andrew Theophilopoulos
Understand how to paint in the style of an Old Master as Andrew channels John Singer Sargent to depict Cersei and the dead king from Game of Thrones.
Plus WIPs and final image
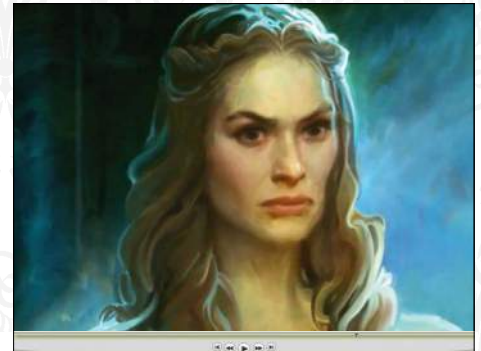
Matt Kohr
See how to design an environment using 3D software, before painting over it.
Plus WIPs and final image

Q&A VIDEOS

Denman Rooke
Dress a warrior in realistic animal furs, by thinking about shape, texture and colour.
Plus WIPs and final image

Sara Forlenza
Consider your composition in order to create a dynamic group shot.
Plus WIPs and final image
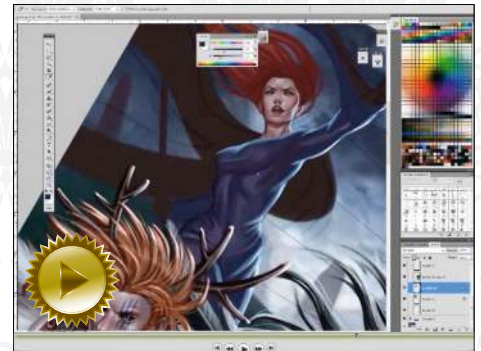
Denman Rooke
Understand repeating geometric knotwork to paint convincing Celtic patterns.
Plus WIPs and final image
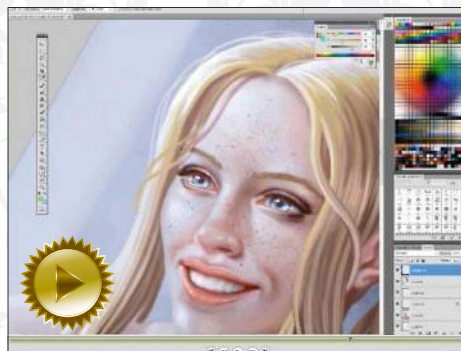
Sara Forlenza
Look in a mirror and play about with your face in order to paint a smiling character.
Plus WIPs and final image

TRAINING

Patrick J Jones
The painter and illustrator continues his series with an in-depth look at the bit in the middle, in Anatomy of the Torso.

AND ALL THIS! WIPs and finished art available to download, created by accomplished professional artists from around the world including this issue, David Brasgalla, Charlotte Creber, PJ Holden, Brynn Metheney, Jim Pavelec and Jana Schirmer.

Visit **http://ifxm.ag/fant125asy** to download of all this issue's videos, image files and brushes

Reader
FXPosé
THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

Raquel Cornejo
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MEDIA: Photoshop

Raquel is a fine art graduate, and freelances as an illustrator and concept artist for the likes of Geek and Sundry, the webseries created by Wil Wheaton and Felicia Day, and Spanish video games company MercurySteam Entertainment. At the moment she's working on an illustrative novel, The Alchemist Project, which is heavily influenced by steampunk art.

"I'm self-taught, even though I learned about traditional art during my studies," Raquel says. "I love fantasy video games, and sci-fi, horror and dream worlds inspire me. I'm particularly interested in developing my 3D art skills and am busy working with ZBrush and 3ds Max!"

1 MADAME CROW "I painted this illustration for a group exhibition. It has a lot of crudity and impact. Also, it has a rather dramatic undertone."

2 ALBINOS "For this illustration I focused on albino children. Despite the cruelty that some people show towards them, they give off colour, liveliness, love and tenderness. Most of them have their eyes closed as a symbol of not wanting to look at the atrocities of their fellow human beings."

Email your submissions to fxpose@imaginefx.com

2

Artist crit

Jean-Sébastien Rossbach admires how Raquel uses contrasting elements to create striking art

"What I like in Raquel's art is the atmosphere she creates by placing realistic-looking figures in a dream-like situation. She walks a thin line between technology and mythology."

Reader
FXPosé
THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

Annisa Ya Hsuan Wang
LOCATION: Taiwan
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MEDIA: Photoshop

Annisa pursued her love of illustration by moving from Taiwan to the US so she could immerse herself in an environment that nurtured her love of concept art. Taking inspiration from her surroundings, the students and professionals who Annisa studied alongside spurned on her creativity and motivation.

"Usually I take inspiration from games and comics, especially fantasy – which is the genre I absorb the most of, through reading and play," Annisa says. Her work demonstrates her love of storytelling and imagining fantastical worlds, creating new and wonderful characters through the medium of illustration.

IMAGINEFX CRIT

"Annisa's worked hard to develop a colour palette that suits the mood generated by her understated art. Her lighting choices are also well implemented – see how effective Resting Place is, even though most of the scene is in darkness."
Alice Pattillo,
Staff Writer

1 THE FOUNTAIN "I tried several compositions before finally deciding to adopt an upper-angle view for this illustration. The water from the fountain means life to her and her family, and I think this angle tells a better story. I focused on the character to make her the focal point of the piece."

2 BREAK OFF "This is an image for a personal project. I prefer to finalise the composition early in the creative process so I don't need to worry about it later on. For this painting I focused on the creature and then worked on the background to support it."

3 FLUTE "I was inspired by a Chinese film called The Legend of the Swordsman. The Hmong ethnic tribe captivated me with their intricate, ethnic outfits and then this piece came out!"

4 RESTING PLACE "For this painting I used some photos to create a strong composition. References are often good for inspiration! I played around with layer effects to achieve a colour palette I was happy with."

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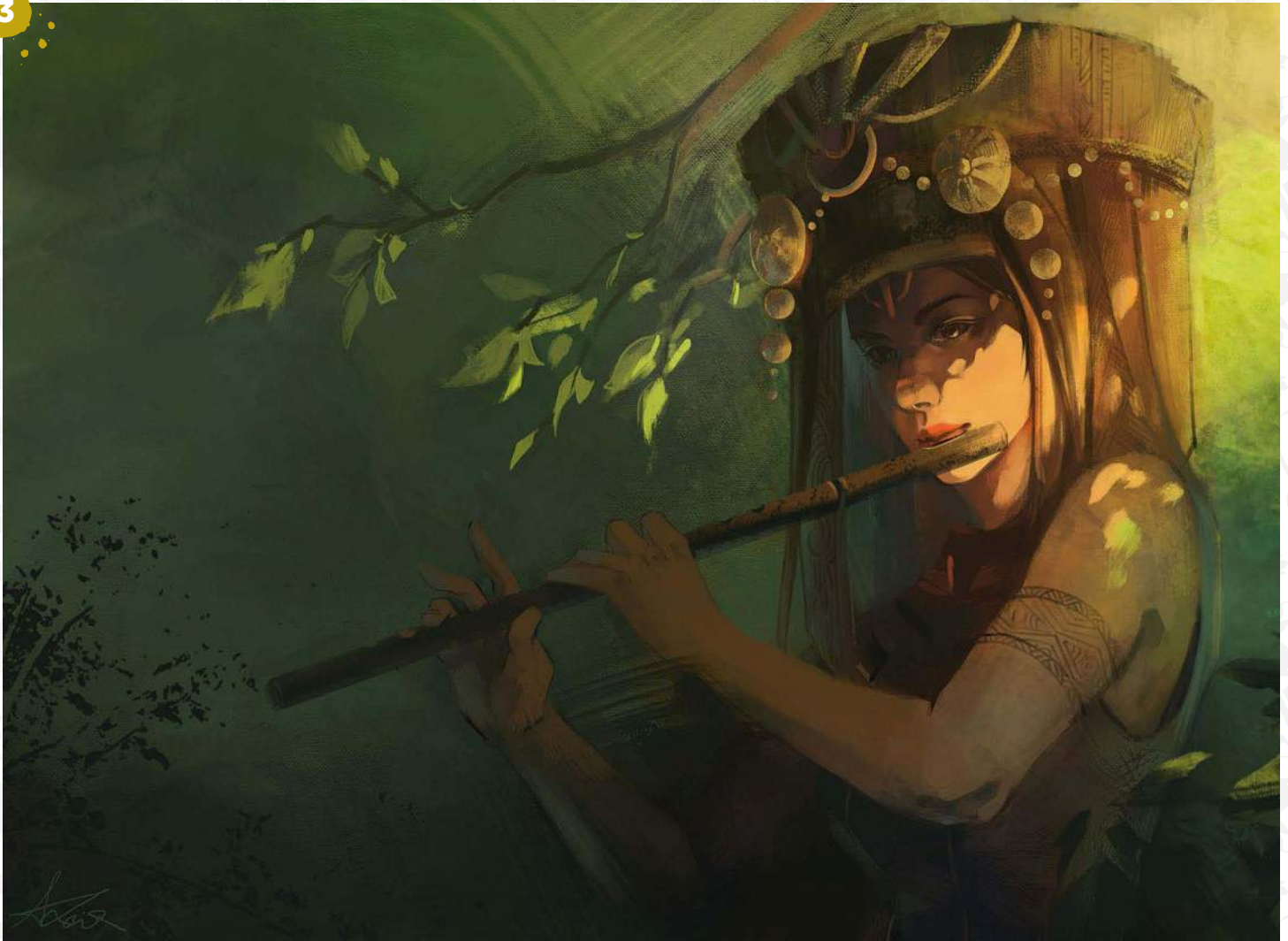
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🇲🇾 Mohamed Shazmiq

LOCATION: Malaysia
WEB: http://ifxm.ag/mshazmiq
EMAIL: moshverse@gmail.com
MEDIA: Photoshop, Manga Studio

The cover of RA Salvatore's book The Crystal Shard inspired Mohamed, aka Shaz, to pursue art for a living. It was painted by Todd Lockwood, an artist who remains close to Shaz's heart, and the illustration set the 15 year old on a path to fantasy art – despite showing no talent or interest in painting beforehand.

Shaz tries to recreate the look and thickness of oils in his work, emulating the likes of Frazetta, Brom, Simon Bisley and Jesper Ejsing. His aim is to be able to illustrate large-scale battle scenes and develop his skills to handle such a composition. "I hope to one day work for big fantasy properties for Wizards of the Coast and Tor Publishing, just like the artists I admire," Shaz says.
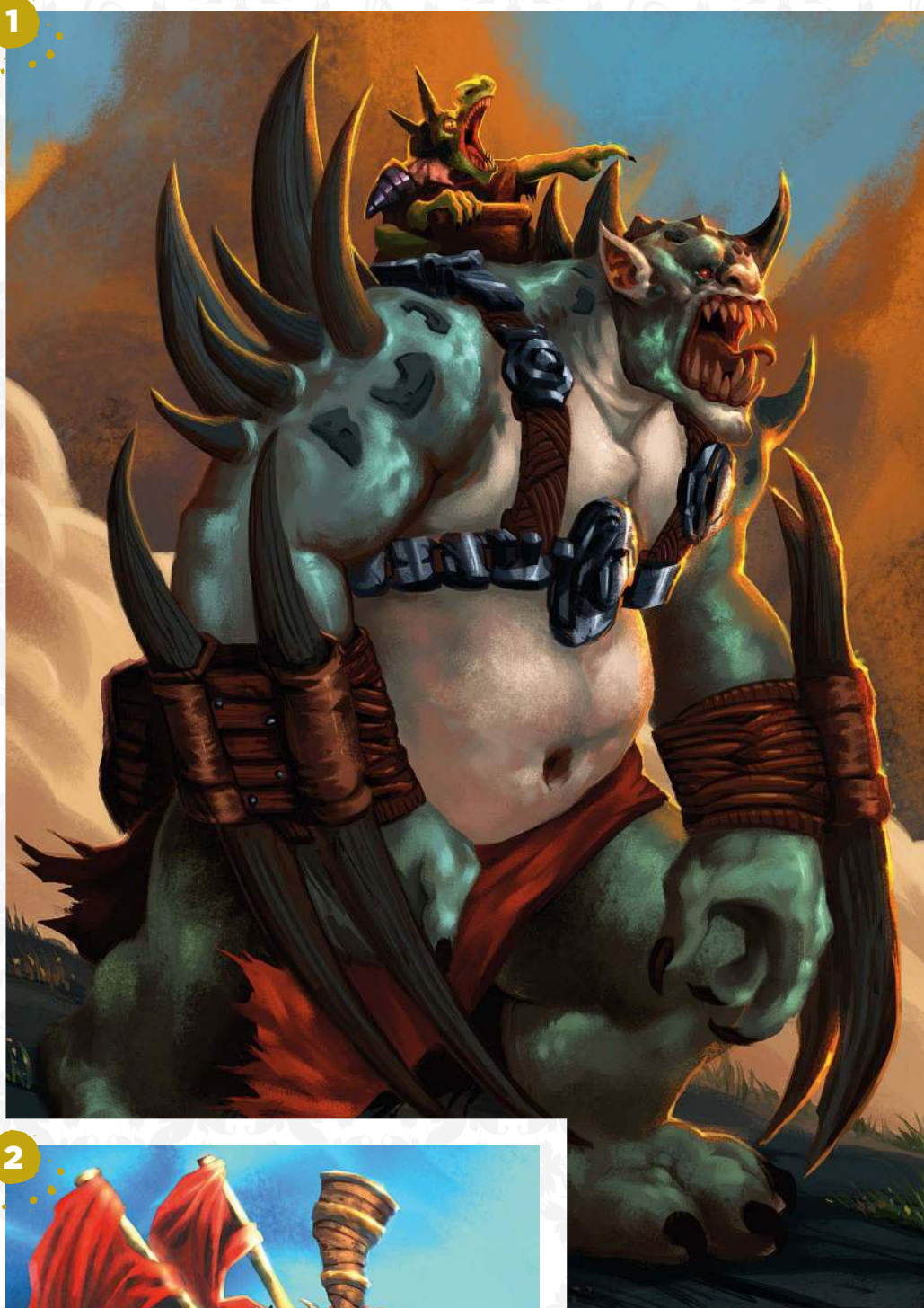
1 OGRE RIDER "My favourite fantasy paintings have a dash of humour within. Here's a kobold barking out orders as he sits on the shoulders of an ogre who he can barely control."

2 DWARVEN HERALD "I painted this gaudily armoured, battle herald for a dwarven army. It was inspired by the dwarfs of Warhammer, a gaming property that I hold dear."

3 ELVEN BLADEMASTER "I wanted to paint a battle scene with a real sense of motion in an illustration. I used more colour saturation variations, because I have a habit of not controlling the chroma of my colours in a painting. Hopefully, this will be the start of better painting habits!"

Email your submissions to fxpose@imaginefx.com

● **Naomi VanDoren**
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MEDIA: Photoshop

Describing herself as an artist, illustrator and global nomad, Naomi lives in Tokyo, Japan with her husband and two cats. "I don't have any formal training in art, although I've always loved to sketch."

Naomi began painting in 2013. "I enjoy a more traditional, painterly style of work and find inspiration from many traditional artists," she says. "What I enjoy most is telling stories through a mix of characters and environments. My art often features strong female figures, and life-and-death or romantic themes."
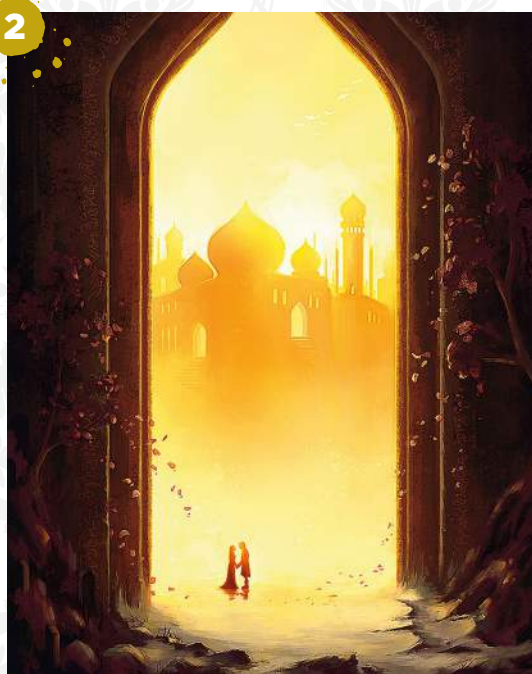
1 TIME "I created this piece for a contest around the theme 'time passing'. It was inspired by a day spent wandering among rocks like these in Kura Tawhiti, New Zealand. It's a story of a couple reunited after her death."

2 REUNION AT THE GATES OF HEAVEN "A fan suggested the title of this piece and it stuck. I started this piece with the idea of a city gate and confetti or flowers falling on the couple."

3 GUARDIAN "This piece began with the intent to improve my figures and drapery. In this piece I found my work is more cohesive when I paint in all of my textures by hand."

4 IN SHADOW "The moment right before the action. This piece is the beginning of a world I'm only beginning to explore. It's inspired by my childhood. I began this piece with a lot of studies of Balinese stone architecture and statues. Her clothing is influenced by the traditional Papuan dress as well as from other parts of Indonesia."

Jarold Sng Koon Shan
LOCATION: Malaysia
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EMAIL: jaroldsng@gmail.com
MEDIA: Photoshop, Maya

Having explored clay sculpting and drawing at the same time, as a painter Jarold focuses more on recreating forms and how their surfaces react to light and shadow.

"My main inspirations come from skulls and bones," he says. "I love the silhouettes and lines they create. To me they're nature's best sculptures: they are not only aesthetic marvels, but also the structure of our bodies."

The artist then reveals his influences: "HR Giger, Zdzisław Beksinski and Takayuki Takeya are artists who I greatly admire. I find that their artworks feel petrified, as if the characters and worlds are frozen in time."

1 CO-OP "I wanted to explore a military scene that had an element of scale between two characters. I was looking for a different take at military or police aesthetics. I chose to frame the characters with large shapes, using Hong Kong-inspired architecture."

2 COLOUR AND CHROME "This dysfunctional couple wants nothing but to be together permanently. They live together in a post-apocalyptic world, so all of the equipment are recycled. This painting was a personal assignment to practise painting metallic and rusty objects."

3 RUST WHALE "Shadow of Colossus is one of my favourite video games because of how small you can feel in the game. I wanted to recreate that feeling by using a giant flying whale made out of parts of rusty metal. The girl in the rain coat would cycle from her home to see it passing by."

4 SAND WALKERS "These giants are autonomous cannons that roam around the sand planes. I like to think of them as self-sustaining drones endless looking for a target. In this painting I modelled a rough version of the design in Maya before painting over it."

5 ALLEY "I had the chance to visit Tokyo for a couple of days. I took a lot of long walks around back streets and alleyways from the city centre. This painting was my attempt at recreating that feeling of walking on a quiet street in a bustling, advanced metropolis."
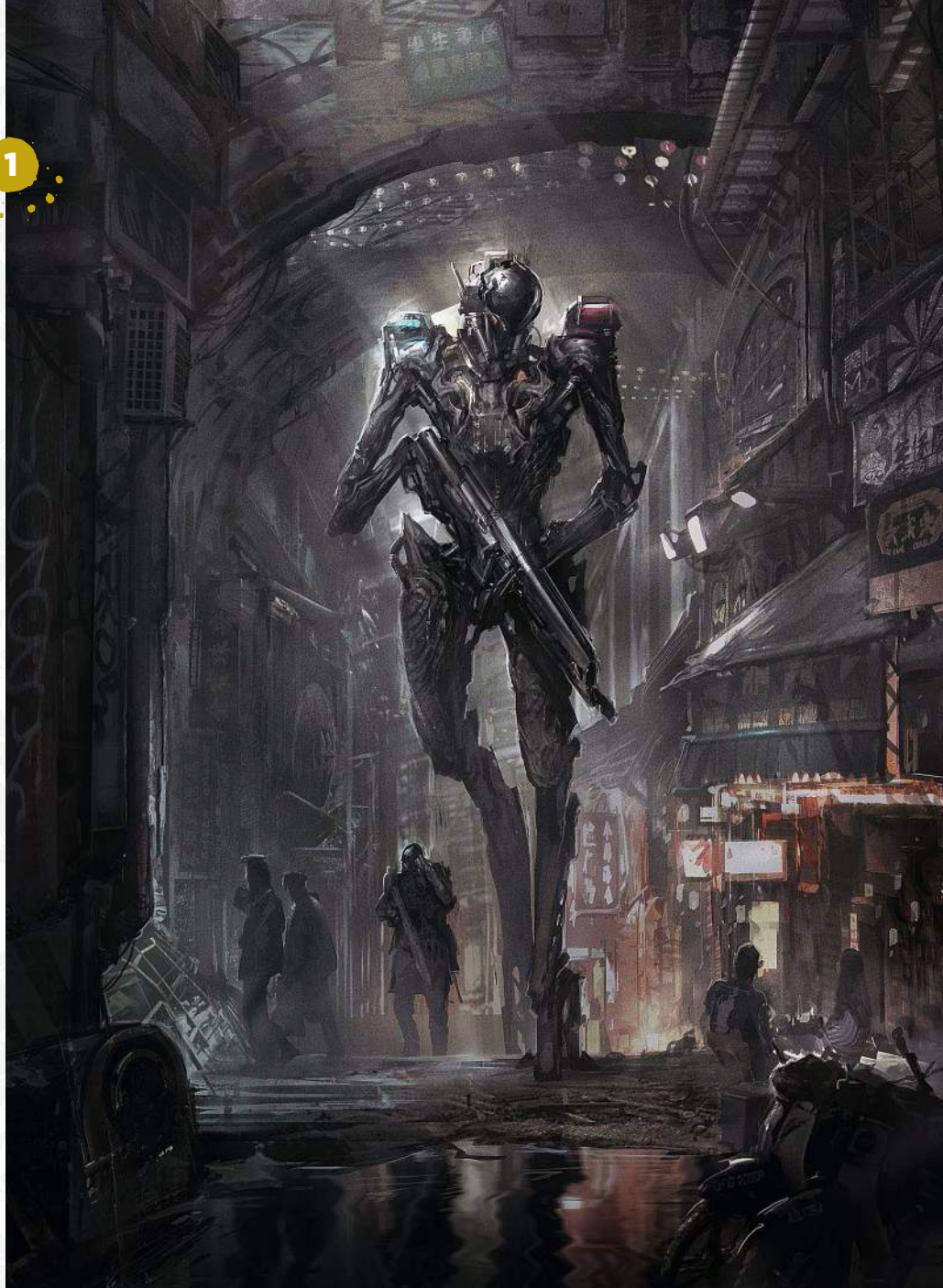
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IMAGINEFX CRIT

"Hulking metallic figures and oppressive environments often go hand in hand, but Jarold's storytelling skills has taken his art to the next level. None more so than in his Colour and Chrome image."
Beren Neale,
Acting Editor

4

SUBMIT YOUR ART TO FXPOSÉ

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

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

Post: (CD or DVD):
FXPosé
ImagineFX
Quay House
The Ambury
Bath, BA1 1UA, UK

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

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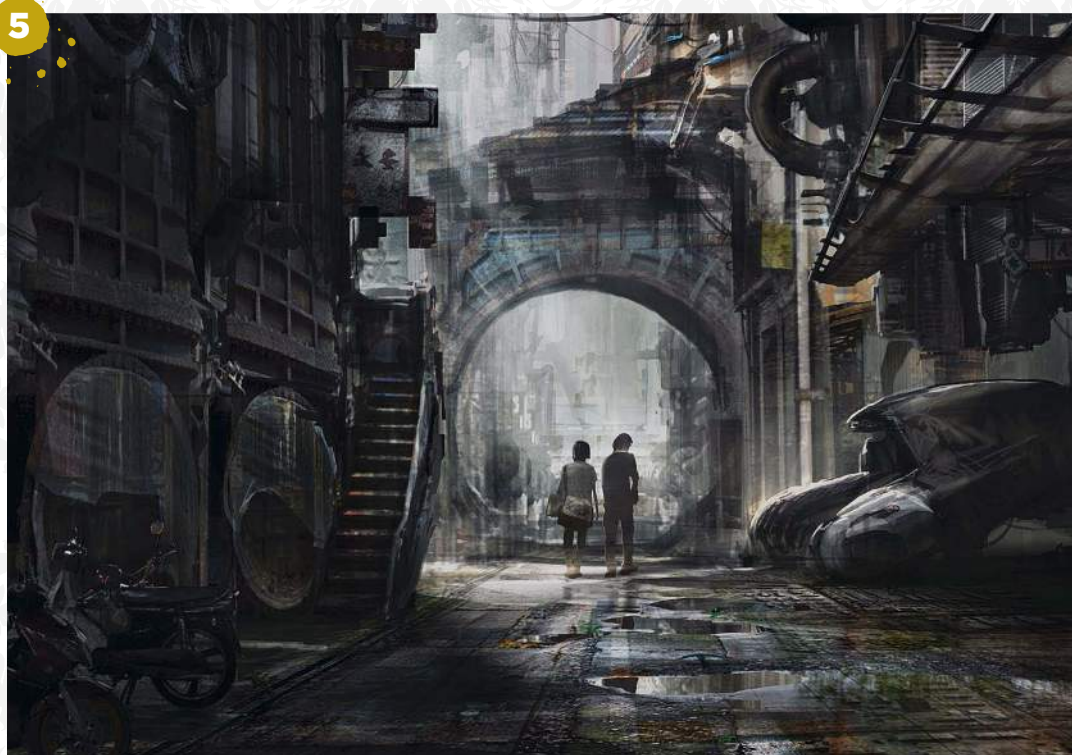
Phoenix in Shadow by
Todd Lockwood, who's
about to crowdfund a
new art book.

Show me the money

Crowdfunded Fantasy artists are making money through platforms such as Patreon, Gumroad and Kickstarter – but is it that easy? And is it sustainable?

Freelance illustrator and comic artist Ilya Kuvshinov earns $3,129.85 every week through crowdfunding platform Patreon. That's right. $3,129.85. Per week.

The Russia-born, Japan-based artist only joined the site in November 2014, but it's already become his sole source of income, and he's not the only one at it. Digital artist Paul Kwon, aka ZeroNis, has 1,237 patrons who donate $6,269.53 every fortnight. And Canadian fantasy artist Sakimichan pulls in a whopping $28,421.57` fortnightly, thanks to the support of some 3,432 patrons.

Patreon is one of several new platforms that enable creators to fund their projects via donations from supporters – or 'patrons', in this case. Unlike Kickstarter, where a successful campaign leads to a single sum, Patreon is a subscription model: fans pledge a fee per artwork or on a recurring basis, in return for exclusive content.

"Thanks to Patreon, I can do – draw – what I like. I don't need to take boring or uninteresting commissions just because

Ilya Kuvshinov's fan art, Universe, celebrates Urusei Yatsura's character Lum.

> **❝ Artists are supported by fans, and fans enable their favourite artists to give them more of what they love ❞**

Ilya Kuvshinov's Maid is another of his many crowdfunded pieces.

I need to eat everyday," says Ilya, who offers his donors a tiered reward system. For pledges of $1 or more per week, fans receive 10 pictures every week, plus behind-the-scenes sketches. For $5 or more, patrons also get Photoshop documents and full-size imagery, while for $10 or more process videos are added to the mix.

Milestone goals give artists the opportunity to further thank their fans when specific targets – earning $1,000 per week, for example – are reached. However,

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TODD LOCKWOOD
On how Kickstarter is giving artists more control

What's your new Kickstarter project all about?
In the autumn I plan to run a Kickstarter for a book compiling over 20 years of my fantasy, science fiction and horror art.

Why did you choose to crowdfund the project?
I received an advance for my first book, Transitions, published by Paper Tiger. They got into financial trouble and I made virtually no money on that venture. And I've heard other horror stories. I like the idea of artists being able to control their own properties more fully. I could go with a traditional publisher, but I'll have more ownership this way.

And why Kickstarter?
It's the platform most people are familiar with and I know many artists who have used it. I hope to learn from all of them.

What are the biggest challenges you're facing?
The distribution side of it will be different. But I'm partnering with Grim Oak Press and Signedpage.com, who have experience.

What advice would you give others about to crowdfund?
Research, research, research! Don't forget shipping costs, especially international shipping costs.

Is crowdfunding sustainable?
I don't know, but I hope it's very sustainable. I'm beginning to hear good things about Patreon, as well. Removing the middleman isn't always best – there will be times when you want someone with experience to absorb the body blows and provide seed money. But art publishing may not be one of those ventures any more.

Todd has been painting fantasy, sci-fi and horror for book covers, games and cards for over 20 years.
www.toddlockwood.com
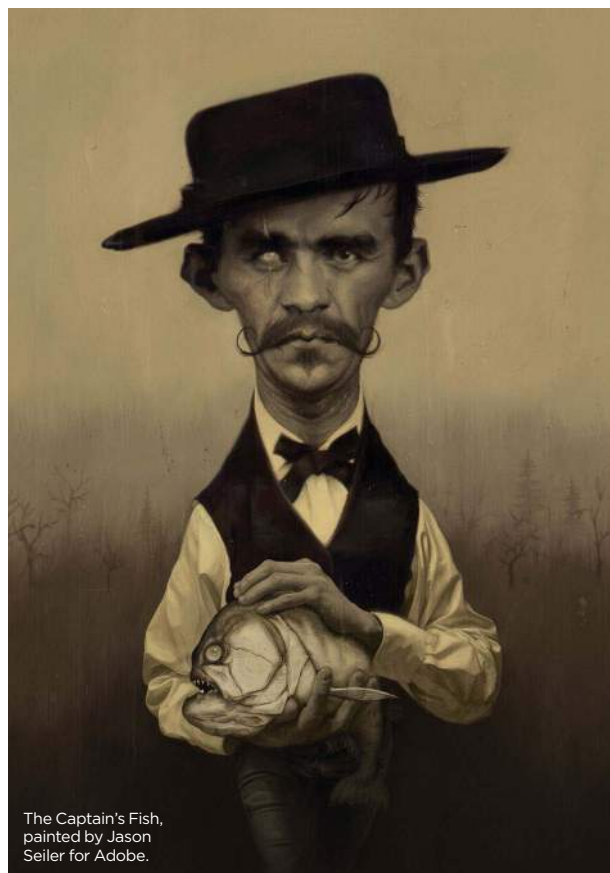
The Captain's Fish, painted by Jason Seiler for Adobe.
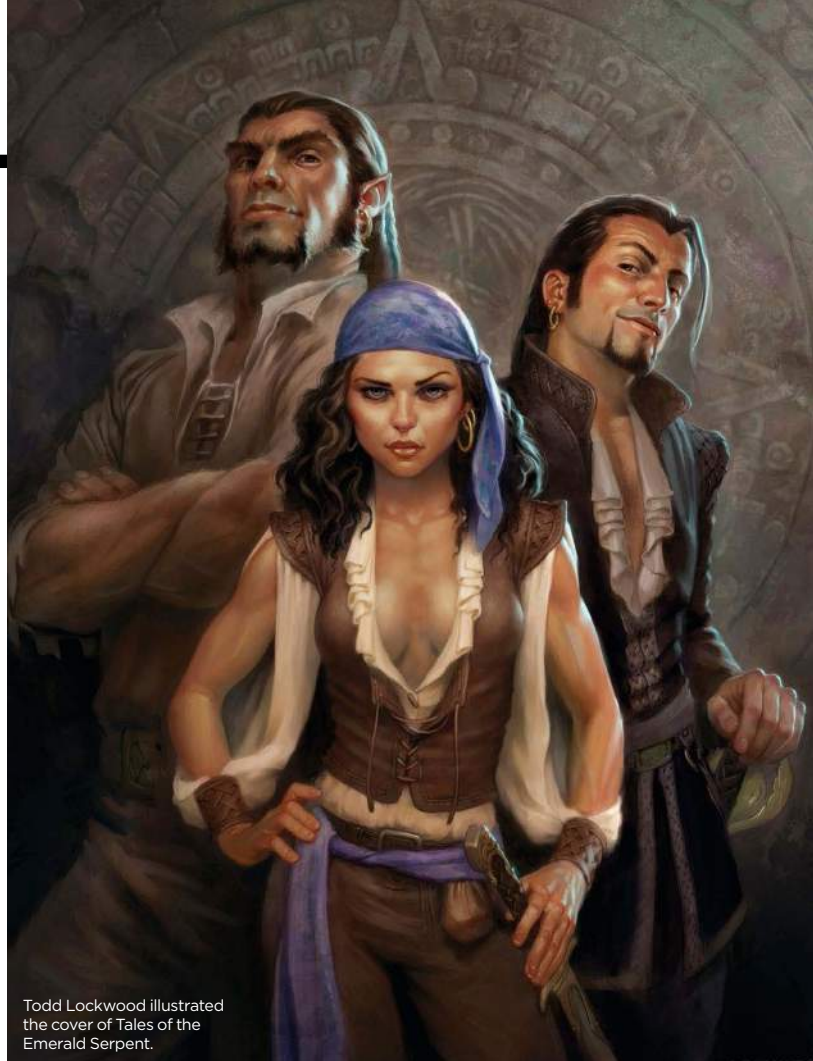
Todd Lockwood illustrated the cover of Tales of the Emerald Serpent.

these commitments can prove challenging, and not just because of time constraints. A common observation from new users is that it can be tricky to know exactly what sort of incentives will best encourage patrons to pledge.

"It's easier now, though," says Ilya, "because they're commenting about what they want to see – tutorials, for instance. Tutorials can be hard, because I'm still learning myself. But if you have passion and love what you do, it attracts people."

"The people who don't see much success lack strong content, consistency and point of view," says multimedia artist and toy designer Chris Ryniak,

Chris Ryniak's resin figure Bubblegut.

who provides his 139 patrons with behind-the-scenes studio updates, news, secret sales and more. "It's not a model that will work for everyone, that's for sure."

EAGER CUSTOMERS

For artists who already have a large following, however, direct-to-fan sites such as Patreon, Kickstarter and Gumroad – the latter being a platform that enables creators to rent or sell digital assets straight to consumers – are a no-brainer. After all, there's little need for a costly middleman when an engaged community is actively waiting for you to create your next piece of art or content.

Jason Seiler is an illustrator specialising in caricature and portraits for publications such as Rolling Stone and The New Yorker. He's been selling video tutorials alongside his work on Gumroad since the autumn of

Two of Chris's Churblefurb resin figures.

> **❝ When a video first comes out I can do quite well. But it's not a realistic way to make serious money ❞**

2014, and generates interest through social media for each new tutorial by sharing trailers and links with his 153,000 Facebook fans and Instagram followers.

"I've been an instructor at Schoolism.com for 10 years now and figured that I could use the Gumroad site as a way to get more students to sign up for my Schoolism class," says Jason. "The videos are a way to share some of what I teach for a fair price, and then if you want more you can sign up for my class."

To make real cash on crowd-funding sites, however, artists need to invest serious time into the platforms. "When a video first comes out," says Jason, "I can do quite well for a couple weeks. But it's not a realistic way to make serious money. For me, it's just a little extra cash here and there. If I wanted to make Gumroad my full income, I'd have to put more energy and time into."

Artists also need to be aware of tax issues. From 1 January 2015, a new regulation means VAT on digital products sold in the EU is chargeable in the place of purchase, rather than the place of supply. VATMOSS (VAT Mini One Stop Shop) aims

to prevent huge companies diverting sales through low-VAT countries like Luxembourg. But the new rules apply equally to creatives.

"The seller is responsible both for charging the correct taxes and remitting them to that national tax authority through VATMOSS," says Heather Burns, a Glasgow-based web designer and digital law specialist. Because many creative platforms are located outside the EU, there are unanswered questions about how these are expected to comply.

TOO SMALL TO BE TAXED?

"With so much uncertainty about the law and its future, creatives must find out whether their platform is VATMOSS compliant," says Heather. "If it isn't, you're exposed to a massive administrative and taxation burden." She reveals that the EU Vat Action campaign has reported European tax authorities chasing artists outside the EU over VATMOSS discrepancies of less than €5. "No creative should think they are too small to be caught out."

So, will crowdfunding platforms continue to provide a sustainable source of income?

For now, yes. According to Massolution's 2015CF – Crowdfunding Industry Report, global crowdfunding in 2014 expanded by 167 per cent, reaching $16.2 billion in contributions, up from $6.1 billion in 2013.

"I think that removing the middleman can, in some instances, be for the best," reflects world-renowned fantasy artist Todd Lockwood (see previous page for more). He's launching a Kickstarter campaign in autumn this year for a new art collection book. "It's 'win' all around: artists are supported by their fans, and fans enable their favourite artists to give them more of what they love."

Chris agrees with Todd: "As long as there are creators generating content that people care about, and those creators tend to their communities, I think people will want to feel like they're doing their part," he says. "Since contributions are generally low, donors don't feel pinched."

"I'm pleased with what I have to offer and feel confident that people feel the same," says Jason. " I want to inspire people and get them excited to draw. Hopefully that's enough to keep people interested."

Triss Merigold – Witcher 3 fan art by Ilya Kuvshinov.
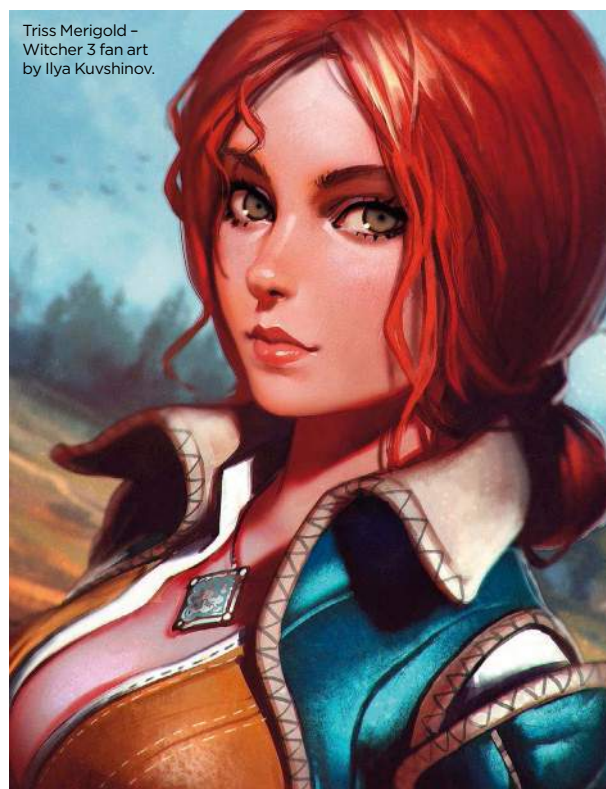
Dark lighting is important in these paintings. At night Greg sees them come alive on his library shelf.

For Greg, puppets represent the past and specifically childhood, "crumbling" on a shelf.

From pin-ups to puppets

Nostalgia trip Greg Hildebrandt's new series of creepy ventriloquist puppet portraits is a change of direction and laments the deterioration of childhood

Greg Hildebrandt, along with his late brother, Tim, made a name for themselves producing Star Wars and Lord of the Rings art during the 1970s. More recently, Greg painted a series of cheesecake pin-ups, entitled American Beauties which seem a far cry from his current project, Dark Dolls, a collection of paintings with a rather disconcerting subject: creepy puppets.

Greg's love of puppets began with an animated puppet circus that ran inside the entire length of a barbershop. From there he developed an obsession and his puppet collection has continued to grow. Before his 75th birthday, Greg decided to begin a series of art that represented his childhood.

He sees the past as "crumbling" as he watched his puppets sit on his shelves for years, drying out, cracking and decaying.

To him it resembled the fragility of his childhood and the city he grew up in, Detroit, which has turned from a friendly neighbourhood to a "war zone."

"We watch our past disappear," he laments. "As I paint my puppets I can freeze time and stop the decay. I guess I'm saving a piece of my past." Greg imagines his puppets coming to life at night: "They are real and so I paint them as if they are real. This, I believe, is what makes them scary to most people. I'm not trying to make them scary. I'm painting their portraits."

The artist doesn't want to be known for "only one or two things" in his career. "I enjoy change in my art," he says. "I love the idea there's always something unknown and unseen around the corner. And I don't want to know what it is until I get there."

You can see more of Greg and Tim's work at **www.brothershildebrandt.com**.

Above, one of two portrait paintings of the dolls on this page (though they're easily mistaken for photos!)

Greg's extensive figurine collection: "In the 1930s and '40s you could win these chalk figures at carnivals. They were knocked-out figures made of plaster, spray-painted and covered in glitter."

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

I have all my current projects to hand in my workspace. My drawing board is flanked by my computer and Cintiq, and my references and books are within reach.

An old toile-covered fabric board above my Cintiq acts as a repository of cards, art and other objects that mean a lot to me for many different reasons.

My computer and drawing set-up is in an L-shaped configuration. I have a tilt-table drawing board perpendicular to a flat table that accommodates my Mac and 22 inch Cintiq. I've found it useful, switching back and forth between traditional and digital.

Terryl Whitlatch

Downton Abbey Animal skulls and stuffed birds perch alongside antique furnishings inside the creature designer's grand studio space

My surroundings have always been exceedingly important to me, with light and airiness an essential. I've always been a small town girl and a history buff, so I've always been drawn to old buildings with a past.

Thus, my studio is in a gable of an old Queen Anne Victorian, circa 1897, where I also live. For northern Californian standards, that's a pretty old house! I love the soaring ceilings and the beautiful moldings, and have furnished it with antiques of that era. Downton Abbey suits me just fine!

My studio is organised in such a way that reference is always at hand and drawing space is maximised. This is crucial when one is an animal artist and creature designer. The more nature references you can surround yourself with, the better, and my computer (iMac) and Cintiq 22-inch are positioned to act as reference boards or view wildlife videos as needed.

My drawing table faces a magnetic bulletin board set up on an ordinary presentation easel to post further references, as well as current projects that I'm working on. I can easily switch gears using my swivel chair and work digitally on my Cintiq after doing basic traditional work on my drawing table. In addition to this core setup, my scanner (Epson Expression 10000XL), printer (Epson Artisan 1430), photocopier (Konica Minolta Bizhub 181, which I lease for a low monthly fee), and flat files for art storage, nestle across from me in the window bay.

There's also a closet, which I've converted into book storage – I have even more books down the hall – and I have four metal filing cabinets organised according to zoological classification, chock full of animal references.

This Thief of Bagdad image has been inspirational to me since childhood. It symbolises all sorts of possibilities.

You enter the studio from the parlour. The lace curtains are period and have a swallow motif. My drawing table is right behind the easel that holds a bulletin board.

Horses are very important in my life, and my favourite subject to draw. Thus, I have another collection atop my other two filing cabinets that my friends call The Shrine. There are all manner of horses, unicorns, zebras and anything vaguely equine grouped together – and it's always growing.

Across from my drawing table are my scanner, printer and digital copier, as well as my flat files where I store my artwork.

Timmy, my whippet, is a wonderful little friend and companion.

Here are some of my anatomical models and specimens – they often come in very handy for my work.

The closet is mirrored, so I can easily reference myself for expression and gesture.

A studio becomes very individual, and mine is no exception. Atop two of my filing cabinets are some of my animal anatomy collection, including a large skull of a draft mule. Perched against a wall is a little California quail, found in an antique store.

Above my Cintiq are old prints (including the Thief of Bagdad movie poster - so inspirational!) and another small fabric bulletin board, with cards and mementos that are important to me. My little Whippet Timmy is very much the guardian of the gate and mascot. He spends much of his time snoozing in the studio, or alternatively begging to be petted. Whatever pose he strikes is always beautiful, and I've used him as a model for many, many projects.

Terryl is an internationally regarded animal artist and creature designer. You can see her work at www.talesofamalthea.com.

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Hatboy
by Vaughn Pinpin

Blades of glory

Mind games Ninja Theory's Hellblade title aims to show a sensitive and accurate portrayal of psychosis

"Understanding mental health isn't simply about books or lectures, but from deeper engagement on all levels," says Paul Fletcher, a psychiatrist and professor of health and neuroscience from the University of Cambridge. He's been working alongside independent games developer Ninja Theory during the development of its latest release, Hellblade.

Telling the tale of Senua, a Celtic warrior who's left traumatised by a Viking invasion, the game will follow her journey into a vision of hell, conceived by her own mental illness.

The 15-person Cambridge-based team created the game under the Independence AAA development model, which has given them total creative freedom but with the production values of bigger blockbusters.

Principle artist Dan Attwell was the only environment artist on the team, which enabled him to make quick decisions based on the academic advice. "We all have to have more of a sense of autonomy when it comes to creative decision making," he explains. "We

A modular, kit-part approach to asset creation and set dressing was taken by Dan Attwell.

initially played around with photogrammetry, but it was clear that to achieve clean results would require a lot of post processing."

Professor Fletcher concludes that, "Maybe this type of approach when designing games will contribute powerful new ways of challenging stigma."

You can find out more about Hellblade over at **www.hellblade.com**.
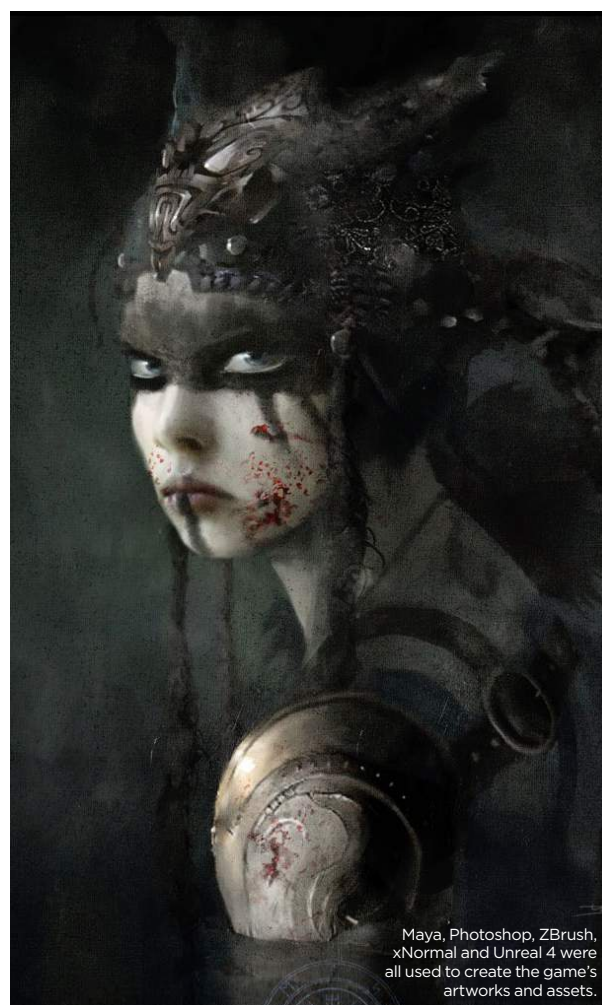
Maya, Photoshop, ZBrush, xNormal and Unreal 4 were all used to create the game's artworks and assets.

© Ninja Theory

Letters
YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS

Contact Acting Editor, Beren Neale, on beren@imaginefx.com or write to ImagineFX, Future Plc, Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA, UK

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Two-tone 'tastic!

I totally agree with Ryan Davidson's letter in issue 123. Whether it's comic art or portrait, work in black and white (B&W) is really awesome. Personally I love to work in B&W, especially when it comes to portrait art. For me, less colour digs deeper into the soul of the person being painted. I only do faces without colour. I'd love to see an ImagineFX issue featuring haunting B&W work.

Since reading ImagineFX my skills have developed significantly, so thank you. I've attached some of my portrait work and I hope you like it!
Étienne Pascal, via email

Étienne's portrait of Robert De Niro is a good example of the artist's love of black and white.

Beren replies Thanks Étienne, and that's actually quite a timely letter to be writing! I can't say much more than… buy issue 126. You won't be disappointed.

Long live Claire

As a huge fan of ImagineFX since 2006, I've been so thrilled with the magazine and I think you've been doing a wonderful job. It's my favourite magazine and every month I'm always super excited to get the newest issue in the post.

I just wanted to write to vocalise my support for Claire since reading that letter in issue 122 that attacked her as intentionally sexist, and the previous letter that seemed to imply you were somehow accidentally sexist. One of the beautiful things about art communities and in particular ImagineFX as a magazine and platform is its focus on art and artists, no matter who they are, where they come from, the colour of their skin or what's between their legs.

As such, it's especially saddening to see people trying to throw slander around, divide the community and drag identity politics into one of the most equal and open art platforms I've ever seen. As Hernan mentioned in the third letter of the same issue, the consistent focus on the art above

Just some of the materials that Jim Pavelec uses in his traditional fantasy art pieces. See more on page 104.

all else is extremely motivational and a very praiseworthy aspect of ImagineFX. In short: the magazine is great. Never mind the haters, you're doing one hell of a job!
David Farrel, via email

Beren replies Claire's not around to respond to your email, but I'm certain she'd appreciate your kind words - and we all appreciate your love for the mag.

Trad love

I just wanted to say thank you for the wonderful magazine. I'm a traditional artist, primarily using graphite pencils on Bristol paper. Your magazine is jam-packed with useful information that I'm able to apply to my style of art. Your magazine contributors produce the most amazing art work.
Michael Guest, via email

Beren replies Nice one Michael! And if you're reading this, you should head over to Jim Pavelec's tips workshop on page 104. It's a fascinating look at his process in creating graphite and charcoal portraits. Even if beautiful grotesque isn't for you, his insight is definitely an eye-opener.

Gender quota

I agree a quota system (mentioned in Letters, issue 120) to create a gender balance of featured artists is not the way to go. That said, two of this century's superstars who are worthy of an issue each happen to be young women – Fiona Staples and Victo Ngai. An interview with Diane Dillon about being a prominent female artist for over 50 years would not go amiss either. Occasional cover art picturing males instead of females would also be appreciated.
Dame, US, via email

Beren replies Thanks Dame. The great thing about this Letters page is to hear back from you guys. Opening up a dialogue about gender inequality, visibility and representation may bring with it strong, differing opinions, but it's so important, especially if it results in the celebration of great artists. The more we hear from you about the artists you love, the better for you, the artist, and the magazine.

WANT IN ON ANIMATION…
…but missed out on issue 124? Turn to page 38 to see how you can get hold of it and others, too!

FRESH PAINT
Your art news that's grabbed our attention

Kirsty Rollinson @KJRillustration

"Bird skull studies for next piece!"

minastan @minastan

"Superman Fan Art"

Imran Siddiq @Flickimp

"What do I do when my back hurts? I lie down and draw."

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Artist Q&A

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The ImagineFX panel

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

Denman Rooke
Denman started working as a freelancer in 2007, creating art for games, films and advertising. He now lives in Dublin, where he works at Digit Game Studios.
www.denmanrooke.com

Charlotte Creber
The Welsh freelance character artist lives in London and creates concept art and illustrations for games, film and publication. She works mainly in oil and digital.
www.creberart.com

PJ Holden
PJ has been drawing comics professionally for over 15 years. Best known for Judge Dredd, he's currently drawing giant mech suits versus monsters, for Gunsuits.
www.pauljholden.com

Sara Forlenza
Sara creates art for book covers, cards and RPGs. After many years with traditional techniques, she was introduced to digital art. It was love at first sight.
www.saraforlenza.deviantart.com

David Brasgalla
Dave is a busy graphic designer and illustrator from Stockholm who works both digitally and traditionally. He's produced film concept art and matte paintings.
www.pixelhuset.se

Artist Q&A
Need our advice?
Email **help@imaginefx.com** with your art questions and we'll provide all the answers!

ImagineFX **VIDEO WORKSHOP**

Question
How can I dress my warrior in animal furs?
Zac Toomey, US

Answer
Denman replies

When designing an outfit for a character I'll pick a main element, then add a couple of complementary materials to help sell it and balance the design as a whole. I've heard it said that one usually wants to have about three different materials in a design to help separate each form.

For this example I decide to dress a warrior in some wolf pelts. The grey wolf fur will be what defines the main shapes, and I'll counter the soft fur with some leather, and then lastly the exposed skin of our character with a splash of red blood. To add to the mood of the character I want to put him in a dynamic pose with a lot of movement. I decide that a simple triangular

Using a variety of materials – in this case, the character's skin, leather and the animal fur – helps separate and define each element of the character's design.

composition would suit the aggressiveness and power I want to convey. Finally, I throw in a simple background to tie the illustration together. And since I want to focus on the character and his movement, I keep the image loose and implied.

Artist's secret
DEPICTING PERFECT FUR

I use Photoshop's natural media brushes to paint fur. Using a custom wet flat brush, the bristles simulate hair while also blending the paint nicely. Make sure to balance the variation of materials in your character, so you don't have just a furry mess!

Step-by-step:
Depict an attacking fur-clad warrior

1 I start by collecting the right references. Knowing how to use reference is key. You're looking for general shapes, texture and colour to inform your decisions. Nothing that holds you prisoner to it, but just to get the creative wheels turning. Then I dive into the sketch by roughing out the gesture to the character.

2 Animal furs tend to have uneven, rough edges. When painting the edges, make sure to have lots of rough fur sticking out. Unlike a regular cloak, fur's silhouette is often spiky and uneven. When approaching folds, note that the fur "fabric" is thick and you often won't see tight folds. Think bulky shapes and coarse edges.

3 Getting into the final render, I make sure the fur is soft, but I don't paint every hair. Think of fur in larger shapes. I add colour variation to the fur, making sure I define the darker roots of the fur with lighter tips. I also like to add a bit of leather and rough-cut animal skin near the edges of a fur coat, to add to the realism.

Question
What's a good way of adding drama and interest to a character portrait?
Sandra Simmons, Scotland
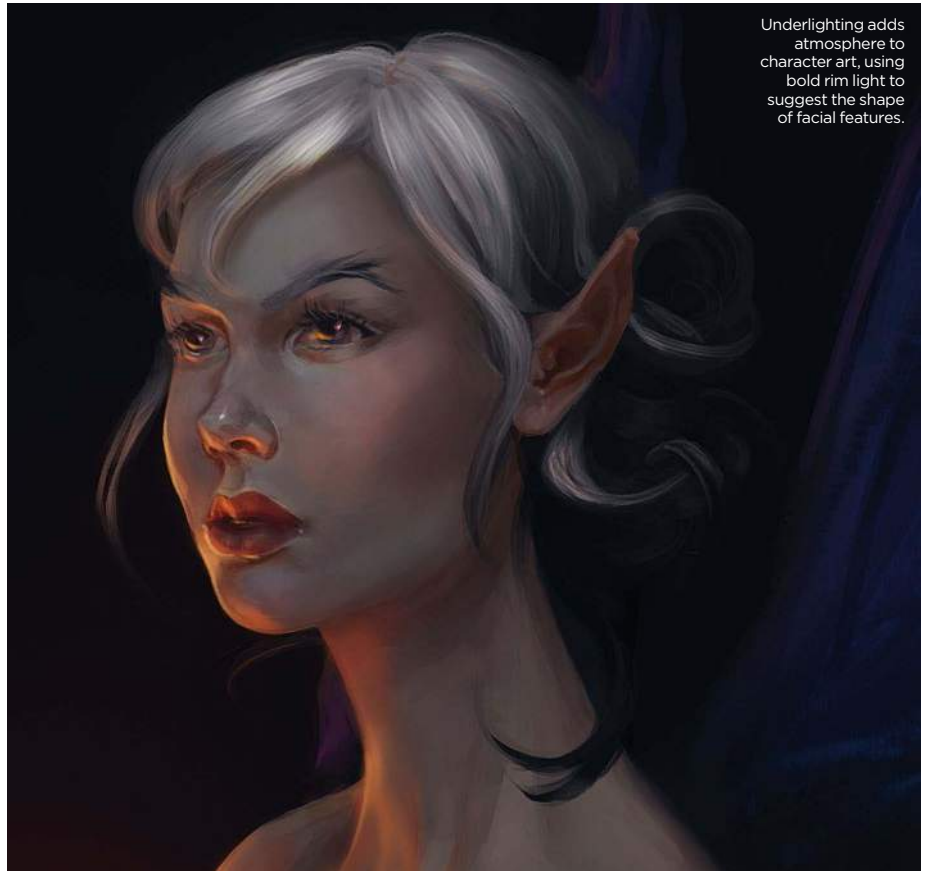
Underlighting adds atmosphere to character art, using bold rim light to suggest the shape of facial features.

Answer
Charlotte replies

Underlighting is a reliable way to add drama to a portrait. The key here is being able to envision your character's face in three dimensions and work out which parts of the character are facing your light source. Start out by painting your character with a soft, low fill light. Avoid dark shadows or bright highlights for now, unless you're using multiple light sources.

Now create a new layer in Color Dodge mode with a highly saturated colour (pick a similar hue to your light source) and apply colour to the planes of the face that should be illuminated. For underlighting, this checklist normally includes the base of your chin, the upper lip, the bottom of your nose, the lower eyelid, the underside of the cheek bone and just beneath your brow.

By adjusting the Opacity of the layer and fine-tuning your edges with the Erase tool, you can quickly create realistic-looking lighting in your portrait scene. Once you've blocked in your underlighting you can start to add important details, such as the shadows cast by the bottom lip and eyelid, as well as adding specular light to your character's eyes and hair. Finish up by creating a Linear Dodge layer and using a large Soft brush to suggest a fill light from the source of your underlighting.
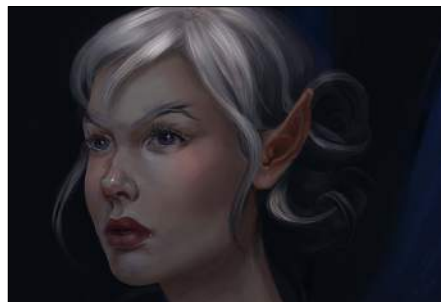
I've found that the easiest way to approach complex lighting is to start your portrait with a low contrast fill light and build on that with new layers.

Artist's secret
CREATING REALISTIC SKIN WITH SHADOWS

Boost the saturation of your edges where light meets shadow on your character, using Color Dodge and a bright red/orange hue. This mimics the look of light penetrating skin to illuminate the layer beneath.

ImagineNation Artist Q&A

Question
Please help me paint authentic Celtic patterns
Rose-Marie Hodgson, Canada

Here's the finished pattern adorning a warrior's shield. Notice how the pattern goes above and below the repeating elements.

Answer
Denman replies

When I start creating an authentic original Celtic pattern I always keep a couple of key points in mind. Most Celtic patterns primarily feature repeating geometric knotwork, spirals and sometimes animal, floral or human motifs appear in the mix. To answer Rose-Marie's question I decide to use a simple knotwork pattern with a wolf design

When I'm tasked with developing a symmetric pattern like this, I usually start off by creating a smart object of the desired symmetrical effect. Here, I'm replicating it in quadrants. I want to use it for a round shield design in my illustration, so I make sure to create some circular guides. I usually concept up a couple of ideas, and after a few sketches I lay them all out and pick the one that I like best.

The main feature of the knotwork is to "weave" the pattern over and under each overlapping element. When adding flora or fauna motifs to your Celtic pattern, make sure to keep the design more stylised in nature as opposed to a realistic approach. You'll quickly realise that you can create any shape or design to look like a Celtic pattern when you start applying this simple technique. After finishing up the basic design I want to implement it into an illustration, so I put together an image of a Celtic/Viking style woman holding a big sword.

Celtic animal motifs are generally stylised and minimalist. The main elements of the body are often turned into the geometric knotwork of the pattern as well. Think of the motifs as designs more than realistic depictions of animals.

Question
My waterfall environment looks a mess. Do you have any tips that I can follow?
Andrei Hannigan, US

Focusing on motion and texture, I create a dramatic waterfall environment.

Answer
Charlotte replies

The golden rule for painting convincing moving water is watching the direction of your brush strokes. This applies to rivers, seascapes and waterfalls alike. Make sure you're painting in long strokes that follow the direction your water is travelling. This helps to convey speed and motion blur – and can even be used as a composition tool to lead the eye of the viewer to the focal point of your image.

I use Hard brushes to emphasise this effect, which is especially exaggerated on a waterfall. This gives a nice contrast to the soft, billowing edges of the mist at the bottom of the waterfall. Make sure you keep this rule in mind when using Smudge tools and Blend modes, too.

Waterfalls offer a good opportunity to experiment with a variety of textured brushes, benefiting particularly from splatter and traditional-style brushes as the water transitions from its smooth state upstream, to a rough cascade as it breaks on rocks in freefall before collapsing into a fine spray on the river below. The more powerful the waterfall, the more mist and spray is produced as it collides with the ground.

Question
How do I show a character's musculature underneath a superhero outfit?
Katie Phelps, England

Answer
PJ replies

The simple solution is to think of clothing as another layer of skin over the body. So the first step is to have a good understanding (okay, simple-ish) of the character's basic anatomy that you wish to convey.

In the case of our superhero The Judge, his physique is granite-like but not 'cut'. In other words, he's muscular but unless he's exerting himself in some manner, it's more relaxed muscle.

Once I've roughed out the figure that I want to draw, I begin to add the fabric around that. Often that means taking in to account the kind of material the outfit is made from, as well as any design elements on the suit. While most superhero outfits don't tend to wrinkle, it can add a note of realism to an outfit. And as a simple rule, you'd expect to see wrinkles around the parts of the body that are compressed together. Of course, where wrinkles are compressing there's usually a corresponding stretching taking place opposite that compression, and how much wrinkling occurs depends on the kind of material.

Once I've established the outline of the material and where it's folded, I can begin the rendering process. Rendering depends largely on what the material and colour of the fabric is, as well as the environment the character finds themselves in. Leather material takes a lot of deep shadows and specular highlights, while fabric will have a lot of subtle feathering. When rendering though, it's important to follow the curves of the underlying muscle structure, so even where contrasting fabrics meet there's a consistency on display.

Even in this sketch, you can see that the outfit sits on top of the body rather than being vacuum sealed to it.

Light feathering moulded to the shape of the underlying muscle, as well as creases, help show he's wearing clothing rather than body paint.

Artist's secret
EVERYTHING IS STORYTELLING

Rendering the fabric is a great opportunity to get in a lot of micro-storytelling. The folds can do the job of expressing movement and speed, and the shadows can carry a lot of dramatic weight. Don't let realism weigh down your decision-making process.

Step-by-step: Creating a waterfall in Photoshop

1 I start by blocking in the base colours and shapes of the scene at 100 per cent Opacity, using the Lasso tool to define the different zones of the painting, separating them on to their own layers. At this stage you should already be implying texture using brushes and bounce light.

2 I start the surrounding environment and use a heavy bristled brush with deep vertical strokes to add motion. Using a small Soft brush, I dab highlights along the length of the waterfall. I then blend these vertically using a textured Smudge tool to depict the body of the water.

3 I use a large, opaque chalk brush to suggest heavy spray along upper parts of the waterfall. I add an earthy bounce light to the water from the rocks and finally use a large soft Round brush (in Color Dodge mode) to create the billowing mist at the bottom of the fall.

Question
Do you have any advice for creating a dynamic group shot?
Rosanne Hayes, Ireland

Leaving the central point of the illustration clear of important elements means that the focus isn't placed on a single character.
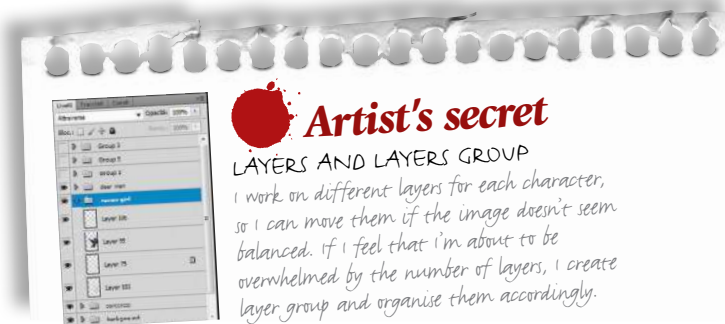
Answer
Sara replies

A well-balanced group image should show the various characters in an effective manner, and emphasise their characteristics and dynamic nature. The figures in the foreground will clearly have more prominence, but they can't all be in the foreground. I've found that a useful way to show them is to use a view that's slightly from above, which especially suits a portrait-format image.

One technique to lift the characters from the background and give them a degree of dimensionality is to introduce architectural or natural elements. Note that these elements need to be in keeping with the scene's setting. In my illustration I add a staircase and put in semi-natural objects (some standing stones in the background). I also add tufts of grass and worn rock, before creating a very rough and ready sketch of the characters. I keep my elements on different layers, which enables me to make corrections to the image towards the end of my painting process.

Usually, I'll want to emphasise the importance of the main character and so I would normally place them in the centre of the composition where the viewer's eye will look first. However, in this case I'm keen to create greater dynamism and so I leave that area free. I want the viewer's eye to move from top to bottom, taking in all my characters as they do so.

Artist's secret
LAYERS AND LAYERS GROUP

I work on different layers for each character, so I can move them if the image doesn't seem balanced. If I feel that I'm about to be overwhelmed by the number of layers, I create layer group and organise them accordingly.

Step-by-step: Develop a group dynamic

1 I start the design phase of the image by drawing medians and diagonals, locating the centre of the image. In this case I create a grid, dividing the width and height in three, but other artists might use the Golden Spiral or different kinds of grids – each solution is valid! I sketch the characters in a rough way, so I have an idea of the pose and perspective.

2 Active characters help to ensure the scene has dynamism. The sorceress casts a spell, the raven-woman spreads her wings, the deer-man charges with a spear. Next, I focus on the anatomy, which is essential to ensure credibility and gives a naturalness to the characters' gestures. Only at the end do I add details such as hair, clothing, weapons and armour.

3 At this point in the creative process I introduce colours. I usually start by painting the background, so I choose the type of lighting and where to place the light sources. In this case, the environment is characterised by a leaden sky, a prairie and some mountains, so I paint a cold, ambient light. I also use a warmer rim light, which introduces visual contrast.


4 Ambient light doesn't cast sharp shadows, but gives a more defined look so I can show off the characters and their details. I pick desaturated colours to maintain the dark look of the sky, except for the magical light of the spear and the spell of the sorceress. I ensure that my characters are affected by aerial perspective, so I desaturate colours where necessary.

Question
How can I give a pattern a realistic underwater glow?
Vicky Smit, New Zealand
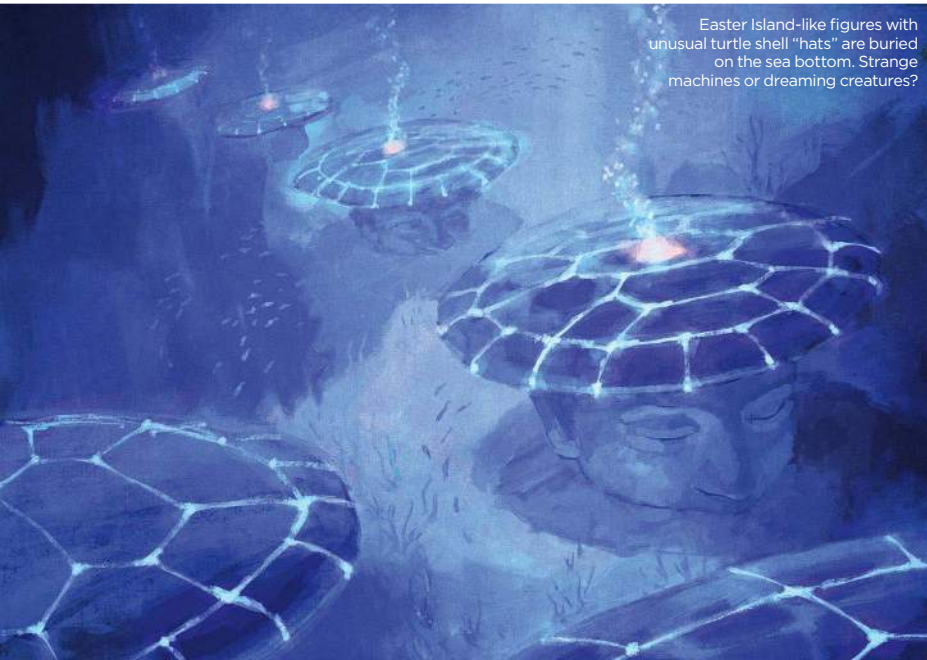
Easter Island-like figures with unusual turtle shell "hats" are buried on the sea bottom. Strange machines or dreaming creatures?

Answer
Dave replies

Since your original artwork used a glowing design on a crab, Vicky, I've employed similar elements inspired by turtle shells. Bright sunlight through water can be dramatic, but will tend to wash out the effect we're after, so I create a composition that has some shadowed or darker areas to help bring out the effect. Water naturally diffuses light more than air, so we'll take that into account. I'm also keeping my glowing elements on separate layers, to easily keep full control of the effects.

The glowing cracks of light in the "shell hats" are made with the same flat Brush/Eraser I'm using throughout. Instead of a uniform glow effect applied to the cracks layer, I use a new Overlay layer and paint the glows using the same colour. I want to vary this, so that the cracks facing the viewer release more light. This colour corona technique helps the glow feel more natural and less like a preset filter. Junction points are highlighted, while the distant light arrays have a much more diffuse and overall soft glow.

Distant objects become low-contrast silhouettes, and distant light sources have much less strength and sharpness, with a larger, softer glow.

Artist's secret
PAINTING WITH LIGHT

For great glow effects, make a separate layer set to Overlay mode and use a texture brush on a low Opacity to paint highlights and diffused glows. It's wonderful to see areas literally light up with this technique, but use restraint!

Question
Please help me paint a character with a big smile
Jimmy McGoldrick, England

I can emphasise a character's beaming smile by using bright light along with light shadows.

Answer
Sara replies

To paint a face with a particular expression, I usually hold a mirror next to me and mimic the expression. Having this reference on hand, which I can see from many angles, helps a lot. A smile, because of its characteristic of spontaneity, is very difficult to paint and is often in danger of looking fake, not very expressive, or wicked. I'll try to do my best!

Touching my face also helps me to understand what's happening when I laugh. When my mouth first widens, it opens in a crescent, the lips become thinner and the teeth are revealed (usually only the top ones, but if the smile is very expressive you can also see the lower ones).

The cheeks become rounded and they rise near the eyes, creating two folds around the mouth. The eyes become half-closed and widen. Sometimes the nose curls or widens slightly, too. Finally, the head usually tilts a bit. I keep these characteristics in mind as I prepare a sketch. I have to highlight these features using colour.

I add a shadow under the lower eyelid to the narrowed eyes. On the cheeks I add a touch of light to point out the roundness. I pay attention to the folds on the sides of the mouth, because if they're too dark and large they make the character appear very old. But they are essential for a beaming smile.

When a character has a beaming smile, many areas of the face are affected. Try to consider them all as you paint.

Question
What are some good ways to render cybernetic implants that are integrated into the human body?
*Mathilda Dennis, Canada*

Answer
Dave replies

Looking at a lot of cyborg art, I notice how much of it has an emphasis on revealing a simulated body. I want to find a different angle. Wearable tech and early forms of implants are certainly already here, and it seems this technology will initially be centred around fashion and wealth. The current thinking is that implant technology will be mainly accessible to the rich, so I decide to approach the concept from that direction, and to aim for an air of privilege and elegance in my image. I also want to blur the line on where the implants actually become part of the body, so it's a melding of replaced body parts and wearable technology.

There's an old 1960s Star Trek episode featuring Diana Muldaur as a blind woman who uses a beautiful jewelled sensor mesh worn over her clothing to see her surroundings, and I use that as a stylistic starting point. I also drape some rich fabric to create a fashionable feel. Instead of being brutal in design, the implants and wearables are delicate and ephemeral: the optic interface seems to become glitter eye shadow. Does it penetrate the skin? Is it sprayed on? I like the ambiguity here.

The figure's hand, however, is clearly partially artificial. I think a stylised technique here works better with the overall theme, because my main goal is to show that the character isn't only comfortable with the cybernetic implants, but also graceful and perhaps even proud.

Elegant wearable tech combines with body implants for the completely connected trans-human... The fact that she looks like the Bride of Frankenstein is just a coincidence!
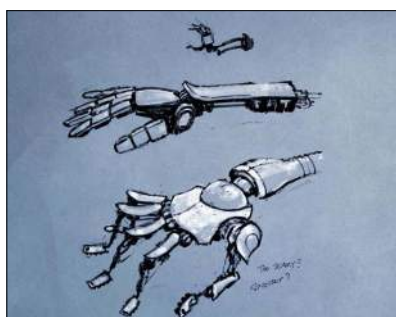
I look at progressive fashion trends in prosthetic technology to get a sense of how real-world people form relationships with their artificial body parts and extensions.

Artist's secret
CHECK OUT PINTEREST

Pinterest is great for inspirational images and reference collection. The images are all from other users' curated boards, and you can pin them to your own project boards.

Step-by-step: Blurring the body lines

1 I sketch the idea out, looking for a more posterised, almost comic-like treatment. I let lines and colour areas stay loose. I like the impact of more graphic compositions, and so I work at simplifying the lights and darks into larger, unified shapes. By keeping these areas flatter in tone, I'm hoping the lighting hot spots of the tech will jump out more.

2 The headpiece/eyewear is deliberately vague about where it ends or how it even connects, appearing almost as a fashion accessory. I add the same specular sparkles to her tunic, and I like being deliberately obtuse about what these devices and wearables might actually do, rather than conveying an explicit, obvious function to the viewer.

3 For the cybernetic hand, I decide that a highly rendered surface won't fit the painting style and so I treat it more as a flat, knockout-type area. I make a rough mask for the hand and fingers, and try brushing on different textures and images for a more stylised look. The bright tips tie the focus with other specular points around the image.

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Cris Delara paints our pin-up cover star, while a double-sided poster features art from Loopydave and Fiona Stephenson. Julie Dillon and Serge Birault (think octopuses and women in rubber) add their spin, and we learn about intriguing artist and model Zoë Mozert.

Issue 122
June 2015
We zoom into a film special by interviewing two Hollywood conceptual-art heavyweights: Michael Kutsche and George Hull. There's also insightful advice from storyboard artist Jim Cornish, our cover artist Alex Garner and concept designer Ben Mauro.

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The *modern* masters of fantasy illustration

We speak to 10 artists whose style and commitment to their art is inspirational

When you start out on your art journey it can be a daunting experience. Can you ever be original? Will your work stand out in the crowd? Will the community accept your art and your potential? These are all questions that bounce around the heads of artists as they post for the first time on their online gallery.

But as we discover, this questioning is only natural. As the 10 artists presented here testify, the fantasy art community is a friendly and welcoming place that's open to new ideas and ready to offer a helping hand to new artists.

These 10 artists have, over time, created portfolios of amazing imagery that never fails to grab your attention and makes you want to pick up the Wacom and start painting. While their processes and styles vary, they all share common goals: to become better, experiment and progress their art.

On the question of style, this is something all artists say is defined over time. Some heavily pursue the idea of creating a new visual language; others say they fell into a style of method by focusing on things they love. Whatever your process, ability and involvement in the wider fantasy art community, the 10 artists we meet here have inspirational experiences and art to share. They prove that with hard work, creativity and support from the wider art community, anything is possible.

Contents

Ruan Jia

Colour and light help define Ruan's whimsical style

There's a romantic, ethereal feeling to Ruan Jia's artwork that his friends refer to as "entirely glowing," in which every part of the image feels like it's imbued with colour and light. "This is because I love to add saturated colour to places where it is not supposed to glow," explains the artist.

At the heart of Ruan's style is his ability to control colour. When he chooses the colour for his portraits he's considering the emotion that needs to be conveyed; red or yellow to express anger, blue or purple for sadness.

"After deciding the key colour for the overall mood, I continue adding colour changes to my painting," says Ruan. "I love dramatic lighting, and I often make the light fall on the focus point, to make the main object stand out."

While Ruan's personal work consists of fantasy illustration, his day job is spent creating sci-fi concepts for Halo 5 at 343 Industries. For Ruan, his personal fantasy paintings are a form of escapism: "I feel that it is a little boring in the real world, and I love to imagine like I am in another world, seeing many images and incidents that cannot be found in the real world... When I am not working, I draw what I like, create my world and draw my dreams."
www.ruanjia.deviantart.com

Artist tip
CHECK YOUR VALUES, NOT THE COLOURS

"If your colours aren't working, the values may be at fault. Change the image to greyscale to check and adjust the values, then create a Color layer and add your colours on this layer."

Tran
Nguyen

For Tran, it's all about finding a message and purpose for her art...

Tran Nguyen paints figurative work with a hint of surrealism and a splash of fantasy, and she's clear that the fantasy genre is a place she belongs to.

"Fantasy encompasses a perspective that's perpendicular to reality," she says. "I think depicting imagery that captures space which could never exist in our daily lives expands our imaginative capacity."

But when asked if her illustrative work belongs to a particular community she's a little more guarded, or rather ambiguous, on who would enjoy her work. "I can easily see myself categorised into the pop-surrealism movement," she replies, "although I would

prefer it if my work was free of any compartmentalisation."

Tran goes on to explain that she loves to paint "therapeutic imagery", and tries to pinpoint the concept behind each of her paintings. She aims to tap into a specific yet universal emotion that everyone can relate to.

"It's my hope that the viewer can relate, recollect and thus foster well-being from what they interpret," says Tran. "It's ubiquitous to say that life is a series of hardships and each year yields emotional baggage. In all, I'd like for my visuals to serve as a buffer in getting through tough times."
www.pockypuu.blogspot.co.uk

Artist tip
MAKE YOUR MISTAKES EARLY ON
"Try to take a lot of risks while you're in school or college – it's imperative that you stop worrying about impressing your peers. Instead, you should embark on experimental failures, and focus on illustrating without any timidness."

"I'd like my visuals to serve as a buffer in getting through tough times"

> **"What matters the most is the team work, and not the concept art itself"**

Donglu YU

The concept artist who's begun to teach her craft

Though she works digitally, Montreal-based concept artist Donglu Yu began her art career in a traditional way, first with private drawing and oil painting classes, and then pursuing art at college and university where she studied illustration and animation.

Yet it was a close family member who set her on the path: "My grandfather is a Chinese traditional calligrapher. So I've been exposed to Chinese watercolour from a very early age."

That sense of inspiration is what drives the artist to share her ideas and techniques wherever possible. After work, away from Ubisoft, Donglu teaches a digital art painting class at a local art school in Montreal.

"It's always a pleasure to witness the progress of the young students, and to be proud of them when they finally land a full-time job in the industry," says the artist, explaining that she's taken her teaching skills to the internet, to pass on the skills needed to encourage the next generation of new artists.

"I've learnt so many techniques of producing concept art because of the talented people with whom I worked with," explains Donglu." I've also learnt to be disciplined, to always get better within the digital domain. I feel challenged and inspired by the talent around me."

It's clear Donglu knows what she wants from the art industry, but she also knows that the only way to fit into a big game production, such as Far Cry 4, is to embrace cooperation. "What matters the most is the team work, not the concept art itself," she says. "This pushed me to work even more closely with the level artists and the modellers. So we grow as a solid team, instead of individual artists."
www.donglu-littlefish.blogspot.co.uk

Wylie Beckert

An artist who fell in love with the fantasy
community and found her style grew naturally

Wylie Beckert describes her work as "dark and whimsical" with an emphasis on characters and storytelling. "For me," she says, **"developing an identifiable style has been less a conscious choice, and more a by-product of the tools and process I work with, combined with an eye towards continuous improvement."**

Indeed, she feels her work blossomed when she stopped reaching for a style and instead focused on making the most technically proficient piece she could. "In doing this, who

I am as an artist comes through in the finished product almost of its own accord," she says.

"When I first started freelancing," recalls Wylie, "I was inundated with jobs that paid next to nothing and had very little to do with what I really wanted to be illustrating. I ended up pretty well burned out on art, not making a living wage, with a portfolio of random, rushed work with no real common thread." The solution was to take time out, put a minimum on her commissions and wait it out. "The jump I experienced in my career after taking some

time to improve my skills really drove home the point that there were better uses for my time than just taking any job that came along."

Working in the fantasy genre is a big plus for Wylie. "I love that fantasy illustration is free from the pretentiousness that's stereotypically associated with the fine art world; artists and fans are passionate about the genre, and there's an appreciation for craftsmanship and narrative work that can be hard to find elsewhere," she says.
**www.wyliebeckert.com**
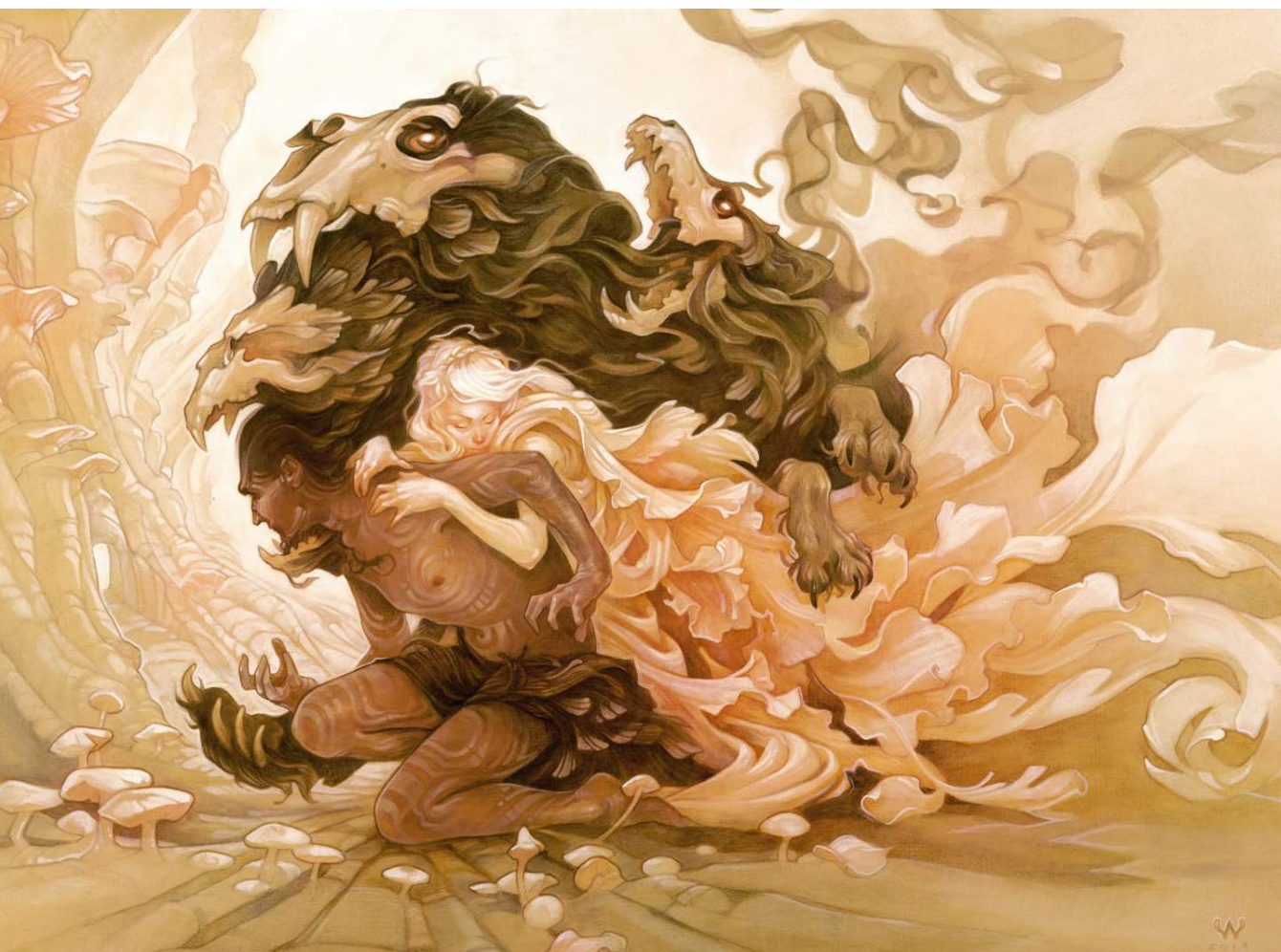
"If you're trying to build your art skills or master a new medium, keep a camera handy while you paint and document the process. As I've been moving from digital to traditional media over the past year or so, having snapshots of my works-in-progress at various stages has made it easier to see what combinations of techniques resulted in success and what missteps resulted in failure."
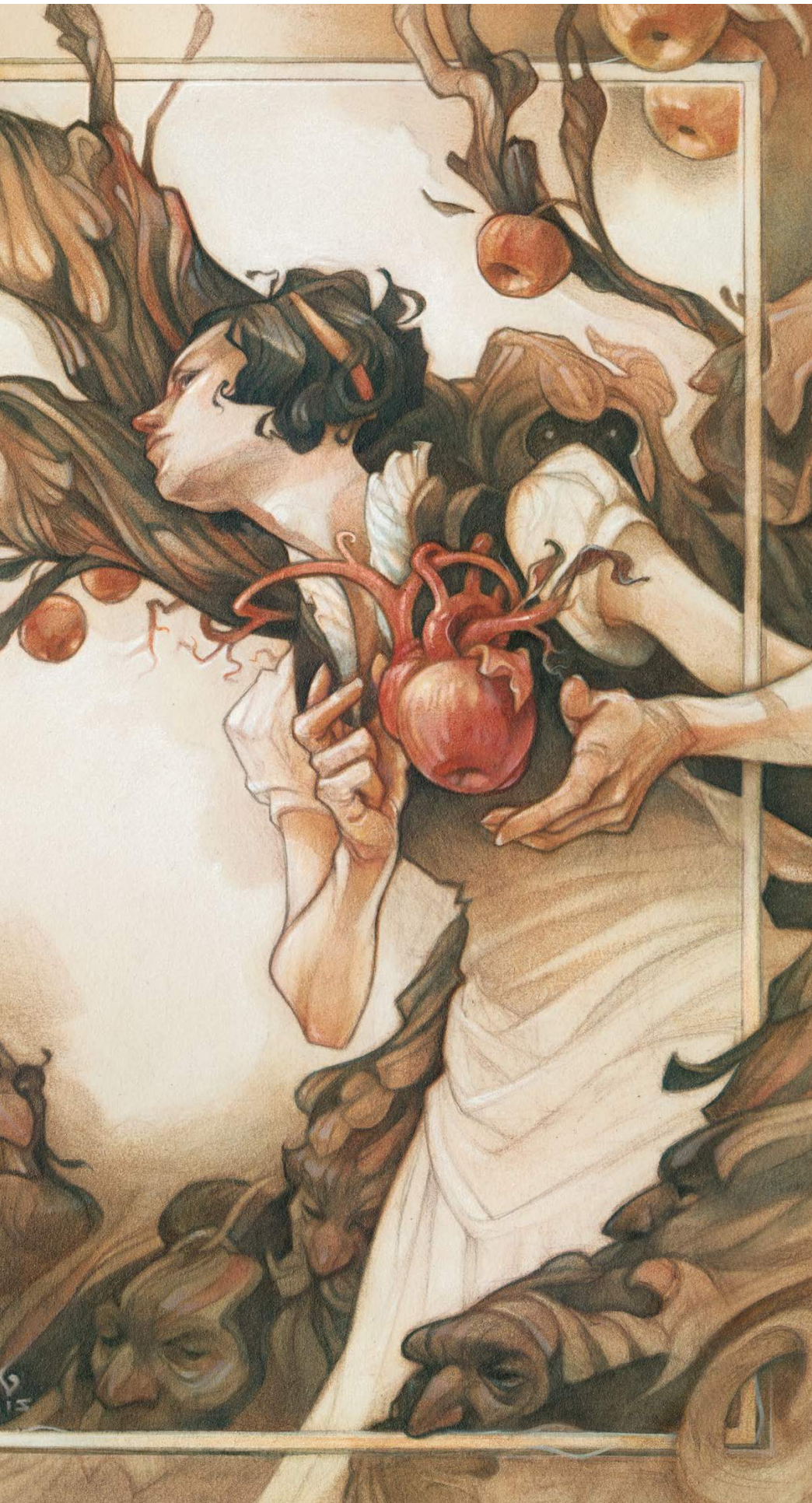
66 **Artists and fans are passionate and appreciate craftsmanship and narrative** 99

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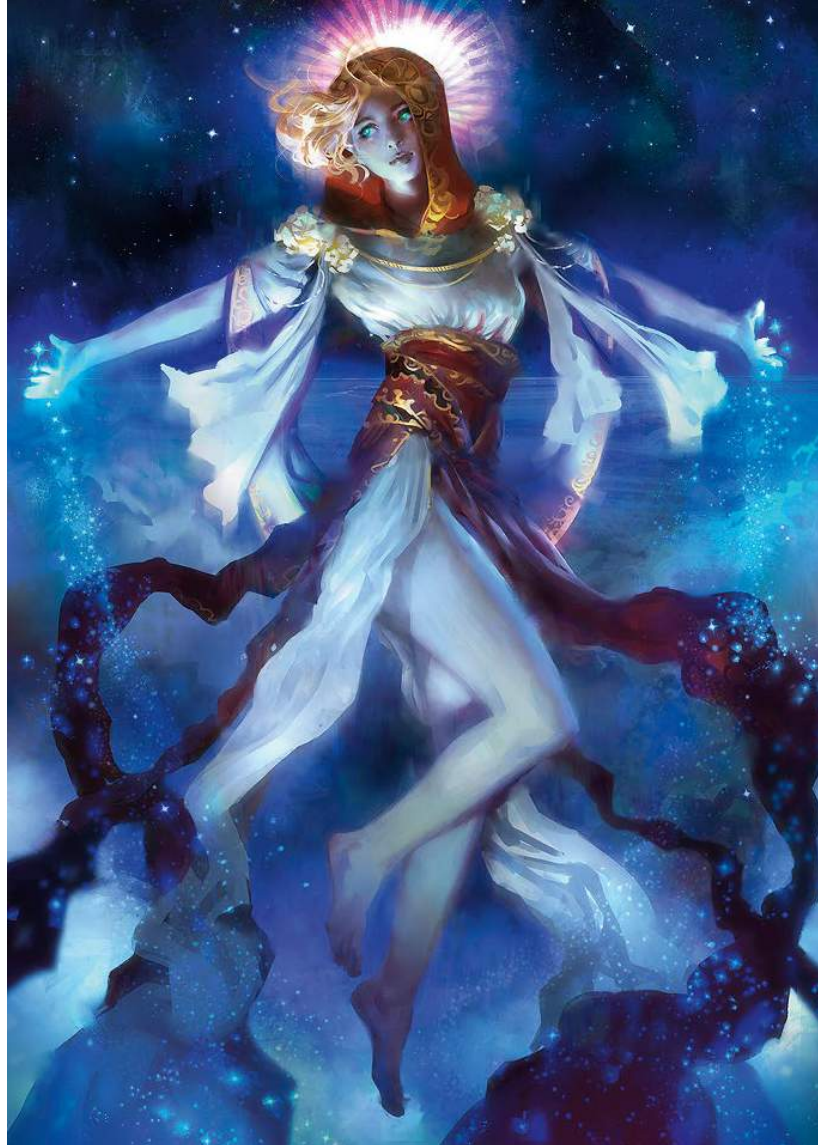
Miles
Johnston

This young English artist is using his pencil
sketches to drive his fervent creativity

**Miles Johnston was still a teenager when he
caught the eye of ImagineFX during the first
Rising Stars campaign. Four years later, he's
become an inspirational artist to many.**

Miles found his feet online in the digital art
community, posting work on sites like
conceptart.org. "The whole online art scene
feels like a cool, extended friendship group,
and it's been exciting meeting so many people
that I've known from online."

Now Miles has turned to perfecting his
pencil work. His engaging sketchbook posts
see the artist settle on a theme and explore it
in as much depth as possible. "I try to be
honest about what I'm interested in, even if it
means making a bunch of drawings around
ideas that might seem a little weird."

For Miles, experimentation is key to finding
new forms and shapes in familiar drawings.
"Sometimes I'll take an old-school approach,
with lots of thumbnails and careful planning,

and sometimes I'll work a whole image
outwards from a single focal point." Finding
spontaneous shapes and ideas is what
matters: "I like to leave my process open
enough to follow those impulses," he says.

At the heart of Miles's approach to art is the
belief that you should always be challenged,
to continually wrestle with your doubts and
fears to drive forward. "The best thing about
painting, in my opinion, is that you never reach
a limit, and the challenge never goes away."
http://ifxm.ag/miles-j

Artist tip
ALWAYS DRAW
**"I spend a lot of time in my Moleskine, even
doing a lot of finished work in them. I like
having my setup be really simple and
portable, so I can vary where I work a lot."**

Jana Schirmer

The Berlin-based artist has recently turned to portrait art, in an effort to find her true style

After facing problems at school and dropping out at 15, Jana Schirmer devoted all her time into her painting. "Art felt like the only thing that was left for me," she says.

Jana's art is beautiful and light, semi-realistic but with overtones of manga. "I used to draw and paint manga during my teenage years, and it's very hard to get rid of these 'trained mistakes' that comes with a specific style," she says.

Style and a place in the industry are subjects that leave Jana confounded. Most of her clients are based in fantasy art, but it's not a style she truly enjoys. "I don't care about the fantasy genre, unless it's dark fantasy. But what art you do and what you're interested in aren't always on the same page anyway."

That said, Jana loves the feeling of being part of a wider community of artists and art lovers. "It's great to meet the people behind beautiful artwork. For instance, the last time

I went to a workshop I met an artist friend for the first time, after knowing her online for more than 10 years. It's amazing how the community can connect people."

Outside of her commissioned work, Jana has begun exploring portrait painting, "I love portraits that are made up with a bunch of loose brushstrokes," she says, adding that many portraits often feel too tightly painted. "It's liberating to just paint from blobs of colour that I throw on one single layer." But Jana's still learning: "I'm still looking for my language as an artist – so far I feel more like a craftsman."
www.janaschi.deviantart.com

Artist tip
ORGANISE YOUR LAYERS
"Always try to keep layers organised, because then it's a lot easier to make changes."

Rafael Sarmento

For this artist, finding a voice and a place in the art community is important…

After starting freelancing four years ago Rafael Sarmento decided to "get serious" with illustration and use his professional work to "explore his inner creative urges."

Right now the artist is on the cusp of something interesting. His art defies a style. Neither illustrative nor fantasy, it feels like a work in progress of some larger, broader piece. "It's like a perpetual motion machine, whose rhythm is getting faster as the time passes, and it creates the impulses that makes me paint," says Rafael.

"I'm always looking ahead, foreseeing what I want or need to achieve in the future. The goal is to move into a more undefined area at some point – somewhere between figurative and abstract imagery."

Helping this journey is the wider art community that Rafael believes is vital to exploring his art. "We'll always be related to this ongoing cause, underneath the trends and revolutions in the art world," he says.

It's a question of acceptance on a broader level, and Rafael doesn't envisage his art being popular, "which honestly doesn't matter," he says, "as long as I find the niches that welcome me and my work as something valid."
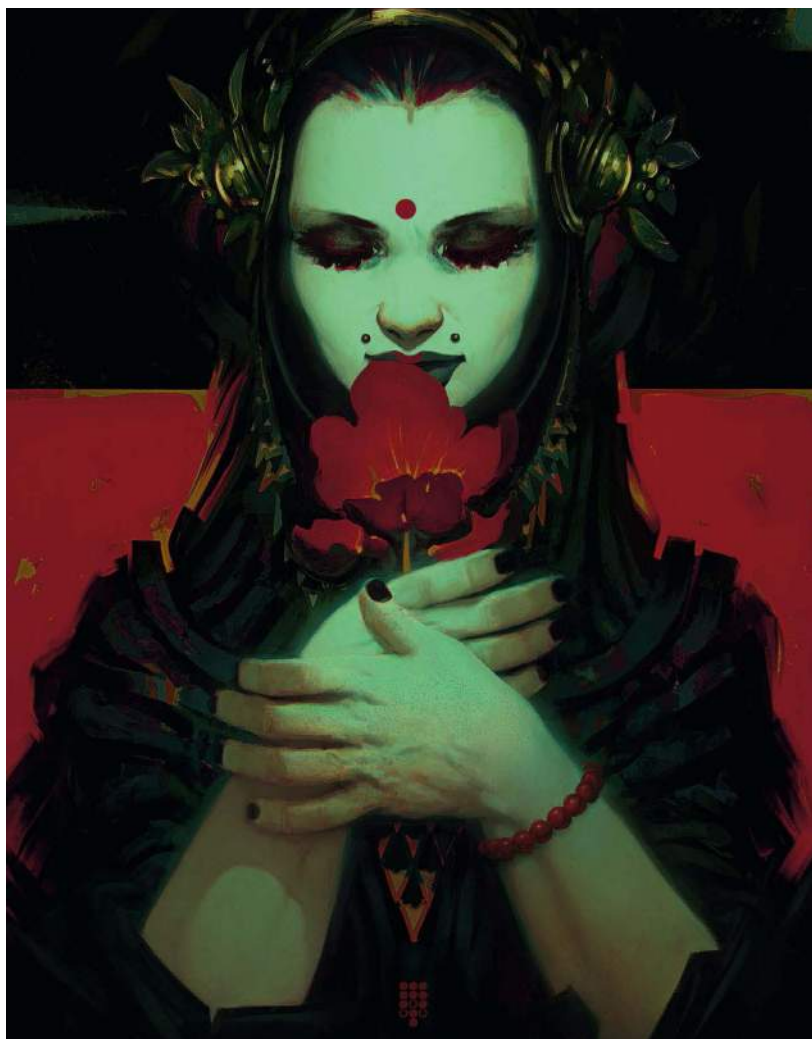
With a growing fan base, Rafael is certainly on track to find his place in the art world.
www.rafa-insane.deviantart.com

Artist tip
BE OPEN TO FRESH POSSIBILITIES

"I'm guided by feelings, so I keep the painting process open to improvisation, from the initial pencil doodle, to the very last stroke on the canvas."

"I'm always looking ahead, foreseeing what I want or need to achieve"

The eyes let the viewer in and engage them. They help the viewer know their story

Ross Tran

An artist keen to keep learning and share knowledge

As an only child Ross spent a lot of time finding new ways to entertain himself. "I remember exploring the back yard of my grandma's place and getting lost in the worlds I created for myself," he recalls. Soon that imagination was put to use in his art.

"Fantasy allows for anything to happen! It's just a whole world of make-believe and unlimited things to draw from," says the artist, who has found success with a vibrant portfolio of fantasy figures and concepts. His portraits in particular are striking and evocative. In a few simple strokes he manages to capture your imagination, and it's all in the eyes… "They let the viewer in and engage them, then allow the viewer to gander around. The eyes help the viewer know their story and it makes a great focal point," he confirms.

Over time, Ross has begun to define his style. Explaining that an artist's style comes from their experiences and purpose, Ross has started to pare back his work. "Lately I've been trying to simplify a lot more and get into graphic design," he says.

Key for Ross is the broader art community that he finds inspirational. "I think it's essential to share and pass on knowledge. I wouldn't be the creator that I am today without humble talented artists sharing their experiences and knowledge with me."

To this end Ross has launched a YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/c/rossdraws) to give back to a community he values. "If I could help [artists] further succeed in [their] journey in any way, I've done my job," says Ross.
http://instagram.com/rossdraws

Artist tip
NEVER EVER STOP LEARNING
"Every experience will feed into your work and make you who you are."

Tom Bagshaw

An artist who puts a story behind his art and is even more interested in the viewer's take

Although Tom Bagshaw shuns the idea that he has a style – "honestly," he says, "I've never really thought about it" – there's a unique line of thought that runs through his paintings. His influences include religion, the occult, folklore and broader fantasy, and the idea of the story: his paintings often begin with a narrative behind them.

However, he insists, "It's always far more interesting to hear the viewer's interpretations of what I paint. I've had quite a few occasions where other people have come up with far better stories for my work than mine!"

The wider community is important to Tom, and he feels it brings people together. But he points out that there are still certain barriers to be breached. In early 2015 Tom contributed to the Dreamlands show featuring edgy modern art at CHG Circa gallery in Culver City, California. "There's still a barrier between the fine art/collector's market and how digital art is viewed," Tom says. "Digital art isn't really an issue if it's in the context of advertising, publishing, editorial illustration and so on, but once you cross into that fine art market then galleries and collectors, even other artists, still have an issue with digital. It's getting better with time, but is still very much a problem any digital artist faces."
www.mostlywanted.com

Artist tip
BE READY FOR IDEAS

"Ideas pop into your head at odd times, like when you're actually working on another piece. Having a notebook to hand enables me to quickly jot it down, along with a quick scribble, so I can come back to it later. It's all these little notes that help to shape future works."

" Others have come up with better stories for my work than mine **"**

Jeff Simpson

This concept artist likes to break art's long-established rules…

With a mother who worked as an art teacher and a creative father, Jeff Simpson has always felt he was born into the life of an artist, "I grew up as the 'art kid' as far back as I remember. I never really questioned it!"

While Jeff earns a living as a concept artist, it's his personal paintings that catch the eye. His portraits break the rules: they're a collision of colour and shapes that merge forms and become an expression of something broader.

Jeff says he hasn't worked on honing his style. "I think people have associated me with having a style simply because I paint what I like to paint," he says. "I like certain colours, certain shapes, certain levels of detail… I feel as though I've been blessed with a brain that has the ability to be interested in something as simple and abstract as a shape or a texture, and just obsess over it."

When painting, Jeff admits his process is a mess, and spends far too much time tinkering with colour adjustments and minute details many people won't notice. "I don't think I've ever made an image that looked exactly the way I wanted it to in my head," he says. "I'll usually start rendering something relatively realistically, then tear it apart. I'll crop, import, cut, flip and invert my paintings dozens of times before I finally get bored of it and call it a day. This is how I like to work; when I'm painting on my own time I like to have no direction at all. Because mistakes and happy accidents are part of my process, it's really hard to be fast or consistent."

Despite his chaotic workflow, Jeff's art is admired by the online community, and it's something he's always loved. "Everyone seems to know everyone now thanks to social media – it's hard not to feel a part of the community," he says. "There are so many more artists now showing their work, it's actually really intimidating and I'm very glad to have started out in the smaller, more closely knit groups from five or ten years ago."
www.jeffsimpsonkh.tumblr.com

Artist tip
STUDY ART'S PROGRESS
"It's all good to learn the core skills and techniques, but looking at work that breaks the rules is also important. Learn the history of art, of painting… see where it's gone, why it changed, and where it's going."

I don't think I've ever made an image that looked the way I wanted it to in my head

Chuck Lukacs

This artist likes to draw fantastical creatures rubbing shoulders with characters from the land of 70s sit-coms

THE YOUNG ONE
"This was an insectoid character, born from a Fantasy Genesis role, along with being a concept test for creating a creature to function as both an adult and a young adolescent."

"TV'S FRANK CANNON, COMPO & FRIENDS"
"I love to freeze-frame old 70s shows and sketch all the folks that time's forgotten. Here are the characters from Last of the Summer Wine."

MY INNER CANADIAN
"A self-portrait from when I was thinking of dual citizenship. Och, they'd probably nae have me... The runes say, 'Take off to the Great White North.'"

"sometimes it's the photo reference that leads the mind through the sketch"

MUDDY FINGERS

"Sometimes it's the photo reference that leads the mind through the sketch. This bloke appears in a couple of my sketches and paintings. Here he's a giant, rooting around for something, but he's been at least four other characters over the years."
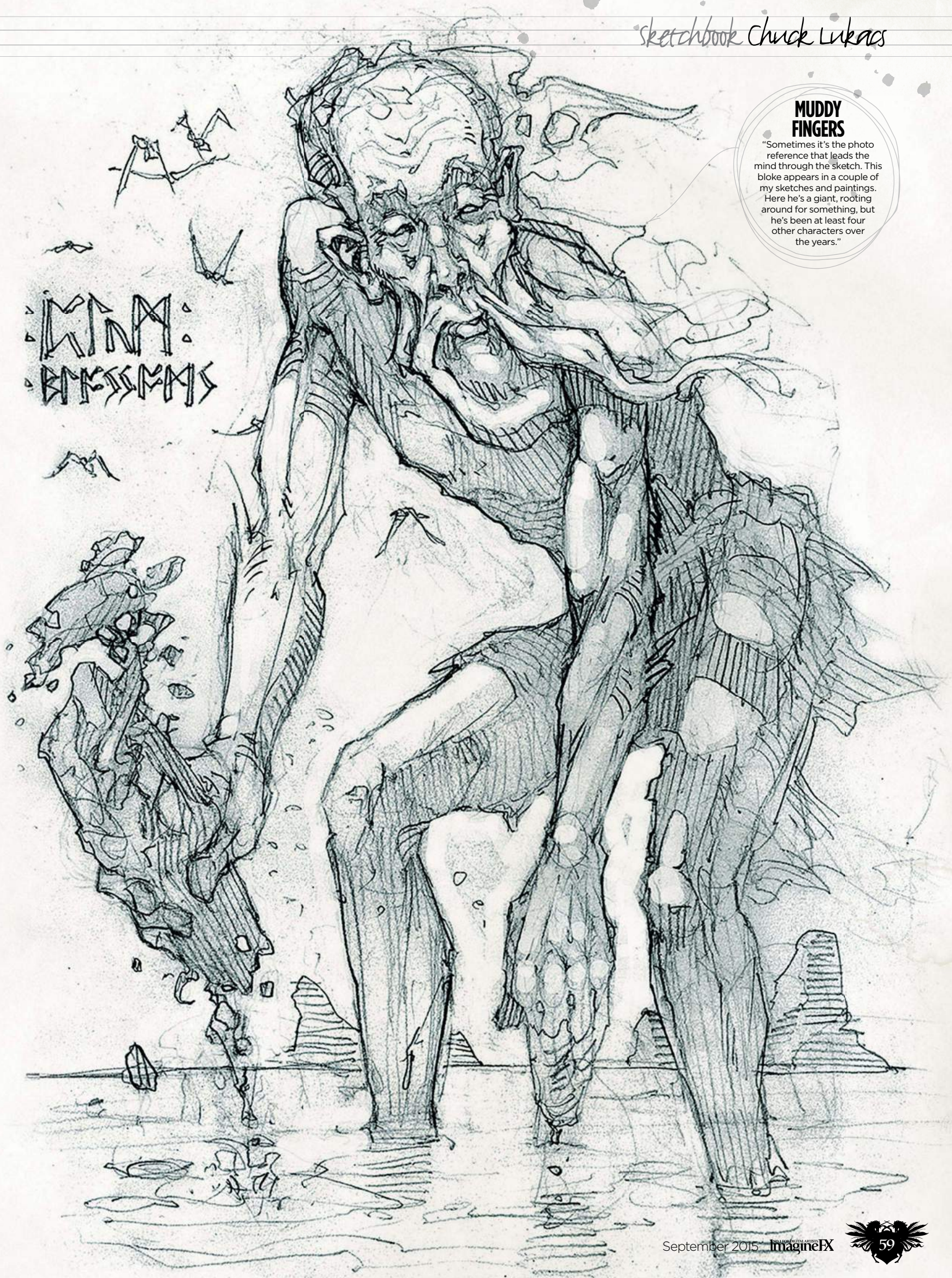
Sketchbook

BROCCOLI SHEEP

"I used this character as a sample for my class as we got into anthropomorphism. I think it's important to pay attention to period, multiculturalism and ritual or rites of passage, because so much can be said about your character's world, without ever saying a word."

BELA LUGOSI

"I almost never go to this level of finish on a sketch, but I started this as an in-class demo and it just wanted a bit more time. I love to lay down a tone over the line work, then cut deductive marks in with an eraser."

"so much can be said about your character's world, without ever saying a word"

PIRATE FUN

"What I really love about sketchbook characters is that you can create a whole cast, with narrative archetypes, behavioural intricacies and complex expressions within a couple hours. It's almost like casting who will be in your painting."

GUN CONTROL

"This page came from a homeless cat that I needed to get down right away before I forgot his wonderfully puckered features, and a role from my game book Fantasy Genesis."

Want to share your sketches? Email us with a selection of your artwork, to **sketchbook@imaginefx.com**
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Photoshop
ADD MOVEMENT TO YOUR FIGURE ART

Jana Schirmer reveals how she stepped out of her comfort zone, embraced green and painted a beguiling figure for this month's cover

Artist PROFILE
Jana Schirmer
COUNTRY: Germany

Jana works as a freelance artist and illustrator, creating art mostly for the video game industry. In her free time she loves to collect stickers.
http://ifxm.ag/JanaSch

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 6 now!

This was truly a fun commission! My initial thoughts were that I was safely in my comfort zone when I was asked to "paint a fantasy-themed girl with some moving fabric." But knowing that it would appear on the cover of ImagineFX added some pressure! I think I struggled a little at the beginning of the process, but then it was a great feeling to finish the image and I learned a lot about how to make a piece of character art work on a cover.

This isn't my first cover. I'd worked on a book cover that didn't turn out so well, so I treated this commission as if it were my first cover request. The subject matter wasn't new to me – I've probably painted a female fantasy character a hundred times now – and so I was keen to bring something fresh to the project. I achieved this goal by working with green. I usually don't like green at all, even though you can make any colour work (depending on the context, of course), so it helped that I erred on the side of turquoise!

Furthermore, I feel as though I've produced a lot of over-detailed commission work in the past few years, so it was a nice change to keep things simple and focus on just a few details, instead of overloading the whole image. I think I'll restrict my detailed approach to my personal work in future.

I wanted to focus on giving the image a cool, fresh feeling, in direct contrast to my studio, which becomes a bit too hot and stuffy from time to time. Okay, it's time to take you through my painting process!

PRO SECRETS

How to paint a realistic sky
Photoshop's Gradient Map is ideal for creating realistic colour blends in the sky. Study a few sky references and select believable atmospheric colours. Add a Gradient Map adjustment layer by choosing Layer>New Adjustment Layer> Gradient Map. Click the gradient and a new window will appear, enabling you to customise the gradients.

1 Finding an idea
The coloured image is the first one I send to the ImagineFX team. Looking back, I realise my first sketch wouldn't have worked at all. I think it's a mixture of pressure and warming up to the subject. Then I do three thumbnails that are a closer match to the assignment. The bottom-left image is chosen, so I continue with this idea.

2 Working with the layout
I change the sword to a flute at the request of the team. If you compare this image with the final one you'll see that the pose of her arms is slightly different: I need to make more space for some cover text. I actually prefer how the arms look when they're higher up – it makes for a more dynamic pose. But this solution is a lot better for the cover!
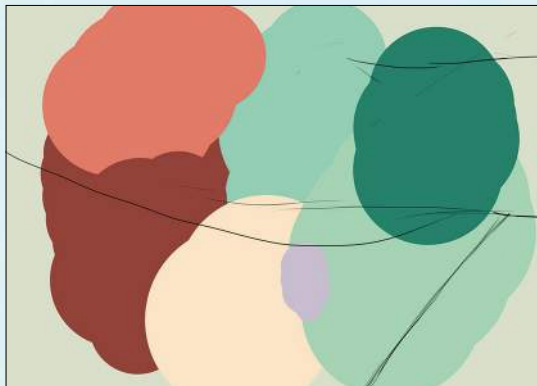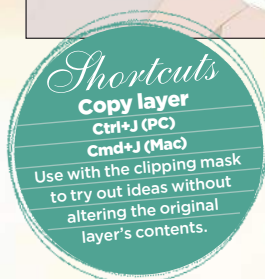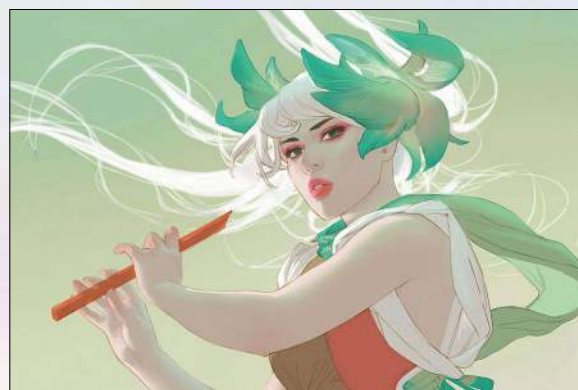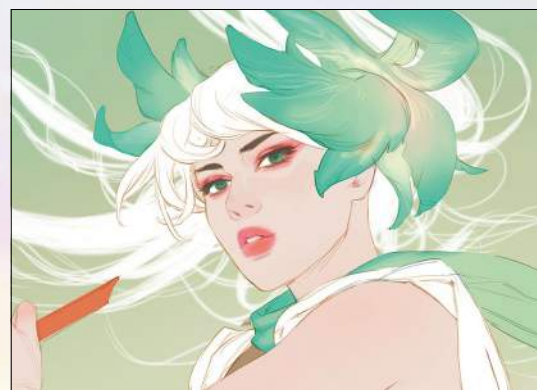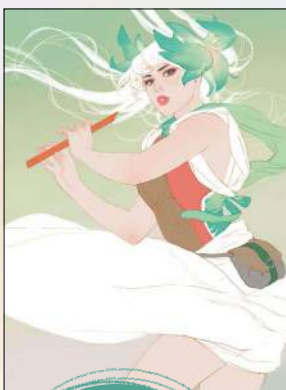
3 Final sketch and colour choices

Next, I erase all the lines that I feel aren't helping the sketch, and then I add more details. I don't draw lines for most of the hair because it's easier to block in hair directly, by painting its outlines and then filling it in with another colour. I assemble my colour palette on the bottom of the canvas. Note that the image will turn out slightly different to what these colours might suggest, because of all the adjustment layers that I'll add towards the end of the painting process, to make the image pop.

4 Colour block-in stage

I block in some basic colours with a Hard brush on three layers: orange on top, followed by purple and then blue. I like to keep my layers as simple as possible. It also helps when I'm creating selections of certain areas, for speedy paint-overs!

Shortcuts
Copy layer
Ctrl+J (PC)
Cmd+J (Mac)
Use with the clipping mask to try out ideas without altering the original layer's contents.

5 Introduce local colours

I lock the Layers' transparency and fill them with local colours. None of the colours should stand on their own; they need to have a counterpart. This makes the picture less busy, too. I want to keep the painting light, hence why the character's wearing mostly white and has pale hair. Using a reduced colour palette helps to keep the image simple and balanced.

6 Shadows and light

I place a layer on top with a light grey tone for the shadow and then I create a layer mask to erase where I'd like the light to hit the figure. I want to cover her with shadows, to suggest a light source that's behind her. This enables me to play with subsurface scattering on her hair and skirt. I also create a Linear Dodge (Add) layer containing green to bring in some diffuse light from the sky.

PRO SECRETS

Getting lost in the details
Sometimes it feels as though there's no end to the painting process. I often get lost in rendering the details without feeling that I'm making progress. For commissioned work in particular, I would suggest making a checklist of the key elements that the image needs in order to be finished. Now you can mark things off once they're in place. This helps you to remain focused on the painting's key features.


7 Setting the scene at sunset

The image could benefit from more contrast and darker colours, so I create another Multiply layer to add some warmer shadows. I also use the erased parts of my shadow layer as a selection to fill in a dark brown colour on Linear Dodge (Add). That gives it a sunset feeling. I add a gradient from bottom to the top, which makes the dress darker and increases focus on her hair.
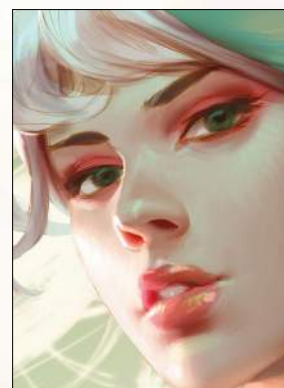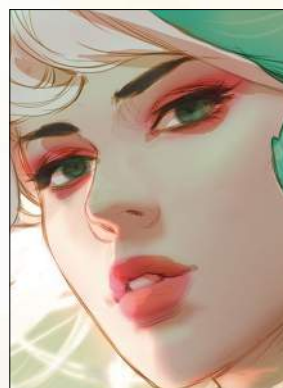
8 Merging the layers

Once I'm happy with my colours I merge my shadow and light adjustments, plus the outlines, with the three layers from earlier. Now the rendering starts! Since my lighting scheme is already in place, all I need to do is to tighten up and add more detail. I also introduce more painterly brushstrokes, because I want to make it look like an actual painting.
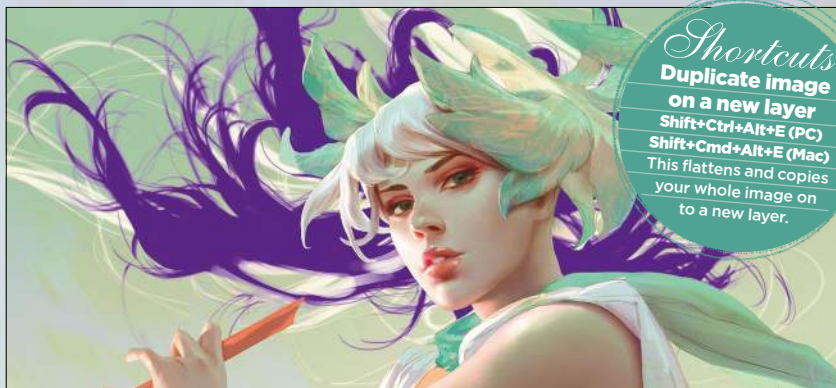
9 Adding texture

Adding texture is a great way to bring in more colours. I place a number of rust textures over the painting and lock them to my three base layers with clipping mask. On the left side is how it looks like when you put those textures on Lighten mode. I love this layer mode because it will only affect those colours that are darker than the texture.

10 Giving my character more hair

To be honest I'm really lazy when it comes to painting hair, so I use a selection of one of my older paintings of a girl who has wild-looking hair. I spend time altering it with the Transform tool so that no one will recognise the original source material. I think I've pulled it off! All the single hair strands also instantly make the image look more detailed.
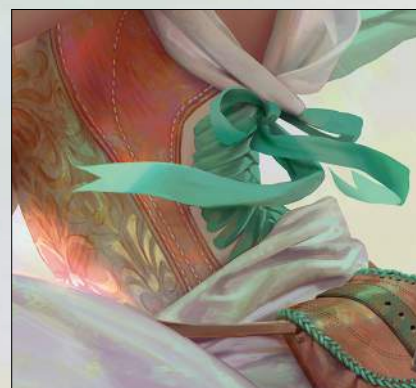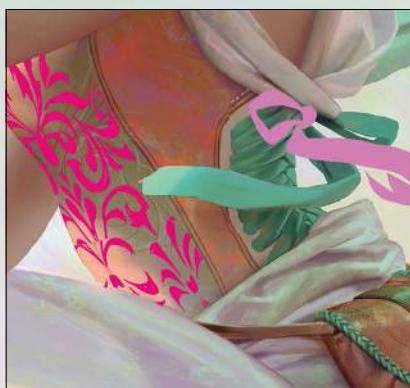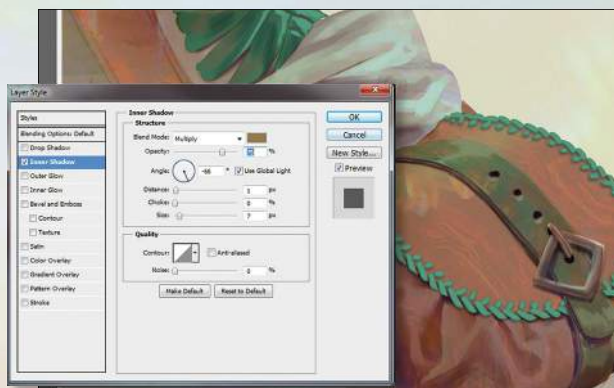
11 Bringing in more detail

An easy way to show details, such as the trim of her little pouch, is to draw using solid colours first. The Layer Effects option enables me to add shadows and shading to this block-out without painting them. I use Inner Shadow and Drop Shadow for the trim. I make sure that the colour and angle of the shadows matches the scene and my lighting scheme.

12 Making use of layering and overlapping details

Selections are a key part of my painting process. For the detail on her torso I draw the pattern without any perspective and then copy and mirror it, before applying it on her body. I then use the Transformation tool to make it fit her body. I notice that the ribbon isn't entirely readable, so I add another knot. This technique of layering and overlapping objects helps to make the painting more visually interesting and creates depth.

13 Toning down the contrast

I'm nearly finished, but I need to make some general contrast changes. I feel there's too much contrast in the shadow areas: at the start of my the painting process I strived for a clear contrast between light and shadow. But now I decide to use a big airbrush with an orange colour to go over all the shadow areas. Using one colour brings all the shadow areas together again.

14 Finishing touches

I darken the background around her head to develop the contrast between the background and the hair, and enhance the glow using an Linear Dodge (Add) layer. I also paint colours on her dress where the sun's shining through it. I add saturation where light hits a shadow, such as the area between the sleeve and the light on her shoulder. I also soften up some edges.

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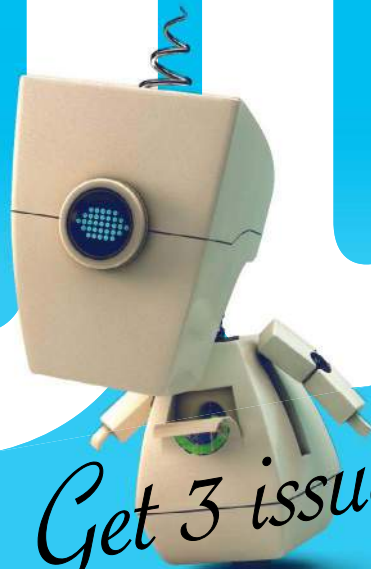
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specific savings you'll make. Trial your first 3 issues for just £5, if you like it, your subscription will continue at £27.49 every 6 months by direct debit thereafter. Offer ends 25/08/2015

Krita Desktop
GET TO KNOW KRITA'S BASICS

Learn all about the software's tools and find out how to use variables to control them, as **Katarzyna Oleska** explains Krita's core aspects

Krita offers a good variety of tools for painting and editing images. These include creating diverse brush strokes, selecting objects on the canvas, resizing your artwork, as well as the ability to stretch and crop a painting.

To take full advantage of all the tools the program provides however, you'll have to make sure that your Tools Docker and Tool Options Docker are both turned on and visible.

In order to do that, you simply need to select Settings>Dockers from the top menu and check these Dockers from the list. Then, depending on which Tools Docker tool you decide to use, the Tool Options Docker will change accordingly, displaying all available options for that tool.

Artist PROFILE
Katarzyna Oleska
COUNTRY: England

Katarzyna is a self-taught illustrator who works for various publishers and private customers, specialising in portraits, caricatures, fantasy and sci-fi illustration. She has illustrated a range of leading book titles.
http://ifxm.ag/kataro

THE MOST USEFUL TOOL OPTIONS
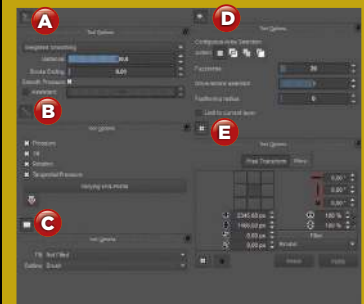
A. Paint With Brushes tool
The most interesting feature in Brush Options is the distance parameter, and it's useful to adjust it. If you paint with a small zoom (far away) and a large brush, it's good to set the distance setting to high. Brush strokes will be more fluid and you'll see that it's harder to paint with smaller brushes and movements. For the same reason, keep this parameter low when working with a big zoom (close up).

B. Draw a Straight Line tool
Even though it seems this tool is a combination of a brush and a vector tool, it can still work with brush pressure. Tilt and rotate depending on your choice.

C. Draw a Rectangle/ Circle/Polygon tool
Those three tools use the same settings. You may choose what kind of filling you want (Not Filled/Foreground/Background Color/Pattern), or if you want an outline to be visible (No Outline/Brush).

D. Contiguous Area Selection tool
To select a colour within a contiguous area, click a colour to select it and, depending on a fuzziness setting, similar adjacent colours. You can also Grow/Shrink the Selection and change the Feather parameter (blurriness of the selection edges). You can add, subtract and intersect consecutive selections.

E. Transform a Layer or a Selection tool
You can transform a layer or a selection freehand, but the Tool Options enable more precise transformations. You can control Vertical and Horizontal Translation, Shear and Scale. You can also tilt and rotate the selection/layer around the X/Y/Z axis.

1 Brush strokes and colour fill
There is a variety of ways you can create brush strokes with the available tools: Paint With Brushes (freehand), Draw a Straight Line with the Current Brush (tap on the canvas to start and finish a line), Draw a Rectangle/Ellipse/Polygon (with various fillings) and Draw a Polyline/Path/Freehand Path Tools. You may also fill a selection with solid colour, pattern or gradient.
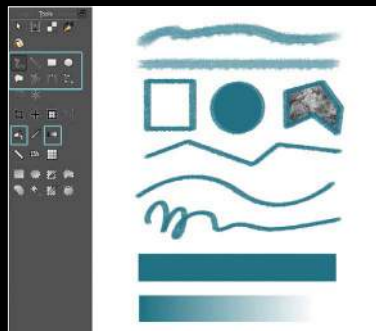
2 Selecting an area
One way to select areas on the canvas is to use the tools that offer a predefined shape (rectangle or circle for example). Another is to draw a shape by brush, polygon, outline or path. To make a selection by colour you may select a contiguous area of colour(s), or select all areas in the picture that contain the colour of your choosing.
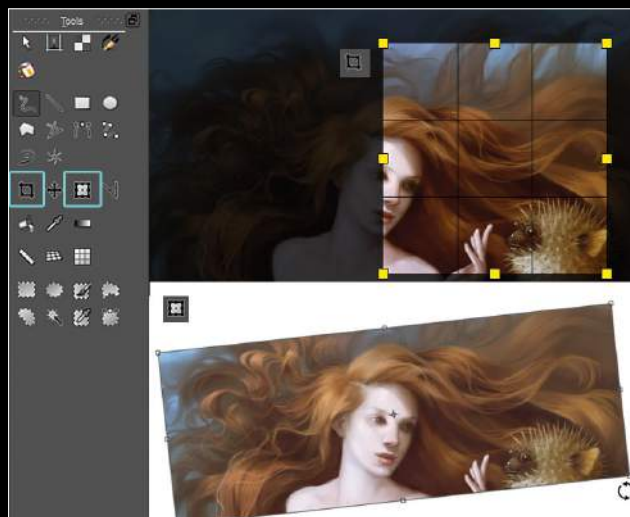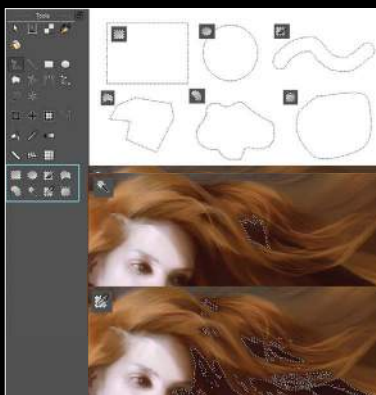
3 Transforming your work
To crop an image freehand, pick the Crop Tool, select an area and hit Enter. To resize, rotate or distort a selection or layer, choose the Transform Tool, click a selection or layer (the Transform controls will show this) and hover over one of the controls until it changes into the desired mode. Simply click it and drag into the position you want.

Photoshop

PAINT IN THE STYLE OF AN OLD MASTER

Andrew Theophilopoulos channels John Singer Sargent's distinctive portrait work and paints Cersei and the dead king from Game of Thrones

Artist PROFILE

Andrew Theophilopoulos
COUNTRY: US

Andrew is a freelance concept artist, art director, fine art painter and teacher travelling the world to spark inspiration and inner exploration.
www.andrewtheo.com

For this workshop I'll be attempting to simulate a painting by John Singer Sargent in Photoshop, using nothing more than the Round brush and a few handy tools.

I've studied Sargent since college and continue to be surprised by his feats as a master painter. While teachings from him are few and far between, the best way to learn from a dead artist is to see the work in person. It takes one good trip to a museum to understand the massive scale of Sargent's career.

When we look at an image through the internet we wonder, how have the painters created such tight and realistic works of art? The answer usually lies in the size of the original painting and in Sargent's case, these portraits were massive! When viewing an original Sargent up close you'll notice the gesture, the energy and oily gloop required to fill a life-sized portrait. As a large-scale oil painter myself, I prep my Photoshop files to be as large as a fine art canvas. This way I can print the work to be close to life-sized. It also helps to keep me in the mindset of the Old Masters.

I, like they, want my work to be grandiose. My only wish for this painting is that Lady Cersei and King Joffrey were to have sat for their portrait. The model is the life and soul of Sargent's paintings: you can almost feel them breathe. Let's see what we can do with a photo shoot, and some of our imagination.

PRO SECRETS

Draw what you see
Too often we artists pull from our memory to create a drawing. This can sometimes be crippling to those who are attempting realism. Draw what it looks like, not what it is. If you don't draw what it looks like, it's not going to look like what it looks like! In other words, why draw fingers and a hand the way you remember them to be. Instead, draw the potato-looking giraffe which has the personality of the hand's pose at this point in time. It's all about capturing a unique moment.

1 Furious thumbnailing
When coming up with the concept for an illustration, I like to run through 50 to 100 thumbnails before settling on the final sketch. I generate several types of concepts in a sketchbook and go through a dozen compositions for each idea. At less than 2cm per thumbnail, I can push out the bad and make way for the good ideas in no time flat.

2 No more white canvas
Sargent would work with a toned canvas, probably a mid-value, neutral colour. If you've ever toned a canvas, you'll be used to the wonderful textures created before the painting begins. Here, I create an abstract photo bash using my original artwork. Combine three illustrations on the layer blending modes of your choice and see what kinds of textures you can create!

3 Develop a colour sketch

Using a scan of my thumbnail, I edit the colour and value of the abstract background to fit my concept using blending modes. To push back the darks I use a Multiply layer mode and paint around the figures. To give the character's shape some clothing or fleshy colour, use Overlay, Color or Hue layer modes. I then clean everything up on a new opaque layer to create this sketchy style.

4 Achieve the perfect reference photo

The sketch helps a model find their pose in the photo shoot. Grab a friend or neighbour, find the right time of day and bring the camera! For Cersei, I had my model sway back and forth, fidget and turn from side to side in the faint light of dawn. Joffrey's photos were taken around 2pm. I like to take 100 or more photos to get everything I need for a perfect reference shot.

5 Using Adobe Photo'chop

The differences between my cartoon sketch and the photo shoot are immense, but not to worry, Lasso tool is here! Make a selection with the Lasso, then select Copy Merge and Paste in Place. This will create a flattened layer of your selection that can now be scaled and distorted to fit into place. I use an airbrush to erase the cut marks for a clean finish.
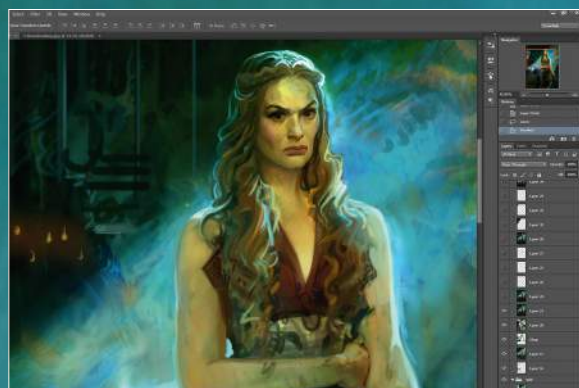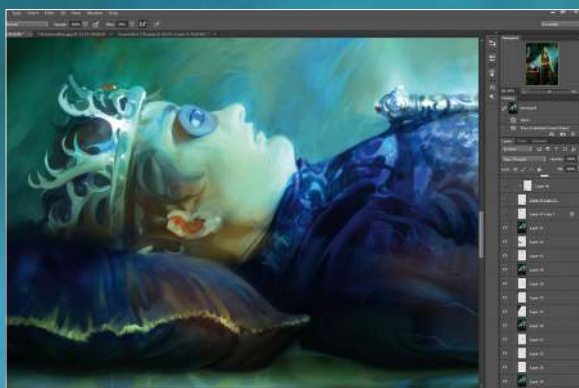

6 Render the image

My sketch is slowly moulding into a more accurate depiction of my subject. I work like a sculptor, pushing and pulling until the shapes and proportions become more coherent. After a break, I get my fresh eyes on the painting and continue to push the drawing, colour, value and of course, my brush quality.

7 Achieving a colour match

I want to create more harmony within the piece so I'll need to dance the colours throughout my painting a bit. The red glow within Cersei and the wine glass has no influence through the entirely blue Joffrey. With a Hue layer mode, I'll brush on some of the oranges and reds within the shadows of our King. Likewise, Queen Cersei will be needing a hint of blue, eh?
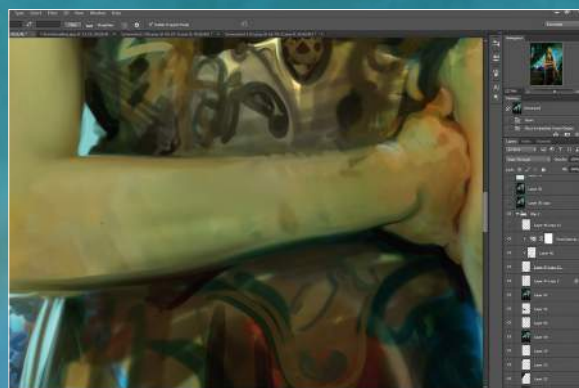
8 Photoshop tricks

Ever draw with the Smudge tool? As long as you've set yourself up with some nice colour, you can create long, clean sweeps for a fluid brush effect. Set the tool to 90 per cent Strength and glide like butter!

9 Apply a pattern

For the royal pattern, I create half of an icon, then mirror a copy of that half to create a symmetrical design. Now that we have a single icon on its own layer, I'll duplicate that layer so that we have two copies of the same icon. Using Free Transform, I place the copy so it's the next icon in the pattern. Hit Ctrl+Shft+Alt+T and Photoshop makes the next step in the pattern. Repeat!

10 Introduce a texture

My paintings always have a crisp digital feel to them – yuck – so it's time to go outside and shoot some grunge photos. On a layer mode of your choice, combine the shot of my photo texture and a detailed crop from an oil painting to give this digital artwork 100 years of personality. You can even add a canvas texture if you like.
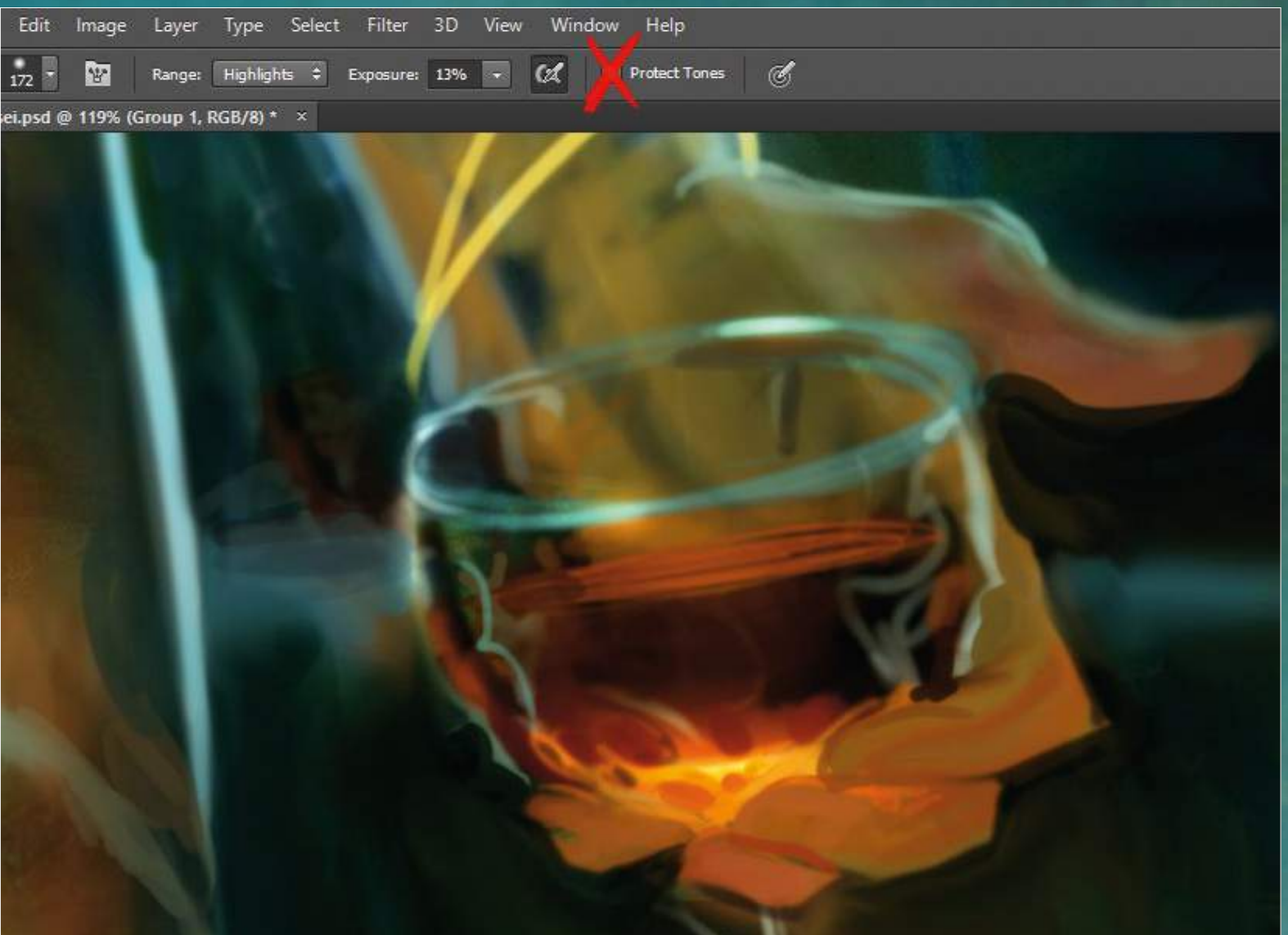
11 Make use of Dodge and Burn

It's easy to cover some ground with the Dodge and Burn tools. Turn off Protect tones and set the exposure to, say, 13 per cent. Use Dodge (highlight) to develop nice warm highlights, and Burn (mid-tones) for your colourful shadows. I'm careful not to overdo this.

12 The story behind your edges

The most notable way to describing something is to show how it interacts with its surroundings. I'm talking edges. Doesn't the softness of a woman's hair work well as a lost edge, or the sharp cut tell us about the personality of architecture? Blur your eyes and look at your subject, to identify the sharp edges and see which portions of the painting seem to fade into each other.

13 Suggesting the background

In Sargent's portrait paintings there was always a hint of background. He would accomplish these backgrounds with a simple suggestion of the lights and darks with barely enough detail to set his character into an environment. I follow his lead.

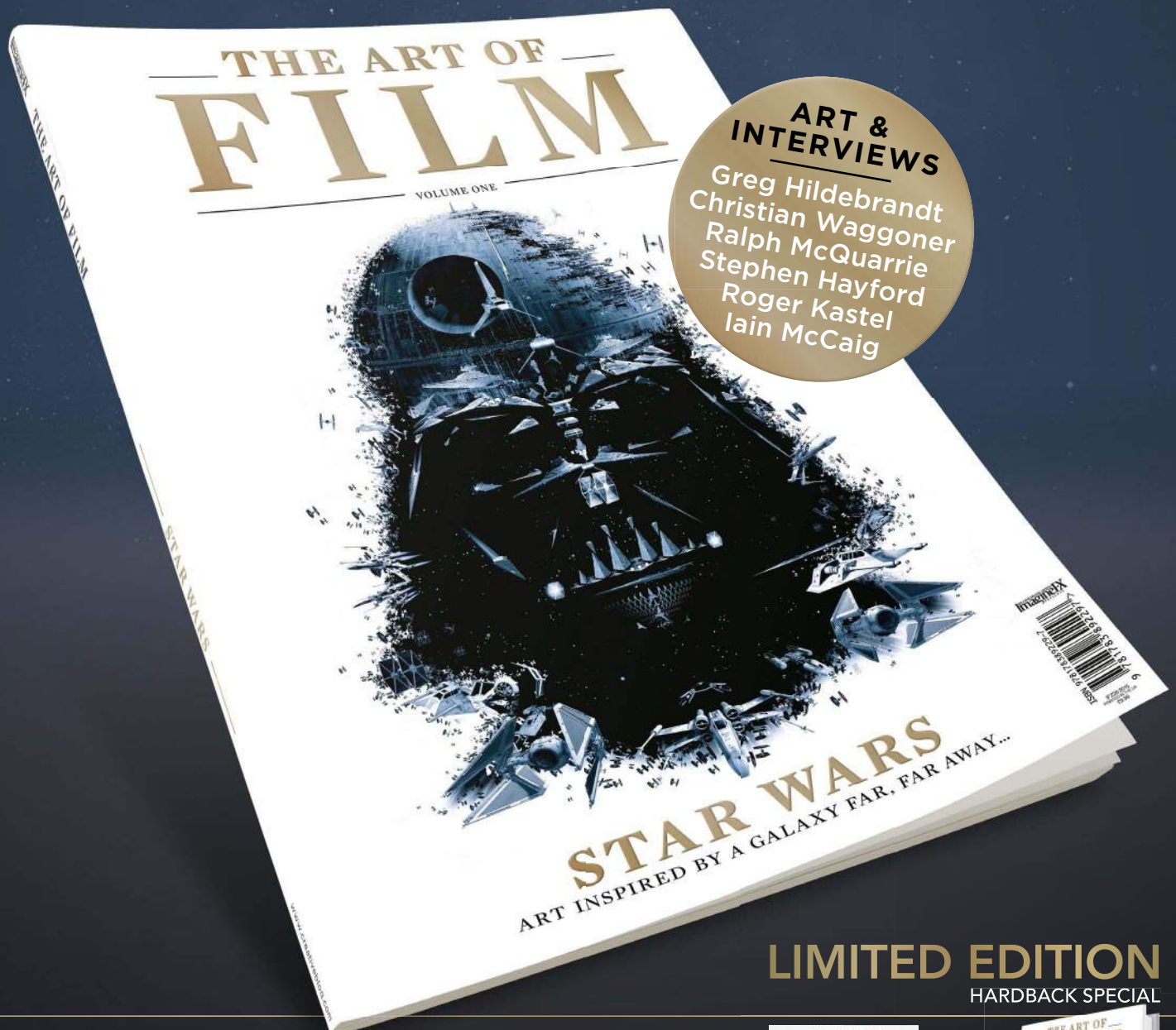### 14 Above all, have fun!

Sargent eventually grew sick of his portrait work. At one point in his career, John, on his way out of the industry, would request an ungodly amount of money for a portrait commission in hopes to scare the client off. Much to his surprise, the wealthy would pay whatever it took. If I may leave you with any advice at all – follow your dreams, not the cash. Good luck y'all!

Mischief & Photoshop
CONCEPT AN SCI-FI VEHICLE USING MISCHIEF

Lorin Wood does the research and ideation to develop an original vehicle that has its roots in US history...

Artist PROFILE
Lorin Wood
COUNTRY: US

Lorin is a conceptual designer with nearly 20 years of experience in film, television, video games and product design. He has contributed to projects with Walt Disney Studios, 20th Century Fox, Warner Independent Pictures and Gearbox Software.
www.lorinwood.com

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 6 now!

F or this workshop I've decided to create a sci-fi vehicle for a personal IP that I've been developing on and off for several years. The subject matter – which is close to my family's history as it happens – transplants a 19th-century covered wagon into a spacecraft for interstellar migration.

Whenever you develop a design that has its roots in reality and real historical foundations, it's important to bring in as much of that history to the design as possible, to give the final concept a weight and authenticity your viewer will recognise, even if it's on a subconscious level.

I've found that the best rule of thumb with science fiction is to put as much of the real, functional world into it as possible, then stylise and distort as needed to fit the needs of your story. When you do this, as a designer, you're mentally building a database of plausible function and believability that hopefully becomes infused into your concept. And the more you do this, the more proficient you'll become at creating truly unique and original designs.

On the subject of originality, I think it's achieved by taking an existing object and looking at it from a new angle. So will it be with this sci-fi covered wagon. I'm taking the fundamental blueprint of a wagon and augmenting it for use in a new frontier: space travel. It will have the basic silhouette, but obviously retrofitted to an extreme, to meet the needs of my intergalactic pioneer scenario.

For the bulk of the process I'll be using my favourite sketching program, Mischief. I'll then run a final polish in Photoshop. So a basic understanding of both Mischief and Photoshop are required for this workshop.
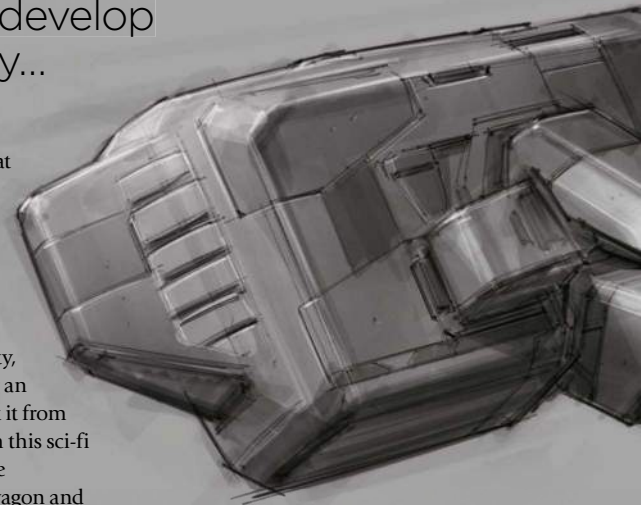
1 Narrative breakdown
Before beginning any design process, have a purpose for it. An elaborate narrative isn't necessary, but some concept of why this design exists should be developed. This step is critical because it creates a realistic design viewers will buy into. A back-story gives context as to why it was made, who made it and for what purpose. This helps you naturally evolve the design.

2 Reference morgue
For reference, covered 19th-century wagons are my starting point. Though the final design will bear little resemblance to a wagon, I want it to carry the essence of one. I divide the morgue into sections, using Mischief's Pins feature. The canvas is virtually infinite in size, so you can space the groups about, set them with a pin and jump right to them.
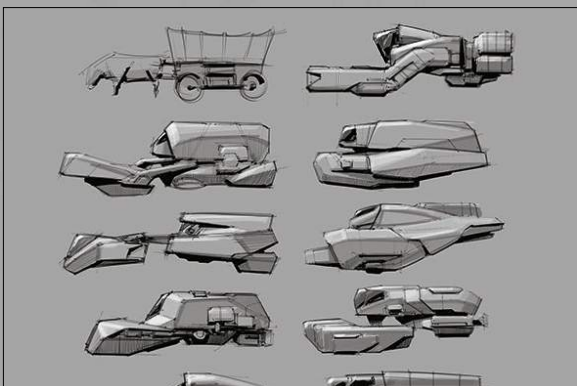
3 Creating thumbnails

This is a good stage to run through, especially if you're working for a client. They'll want to see options, and so it's a good demonstration of your versatility as a designer to show them your thought process. Show some diversity, but be aware of the stated design requirements. Each sketch should maintain the feel of a covered wagon.
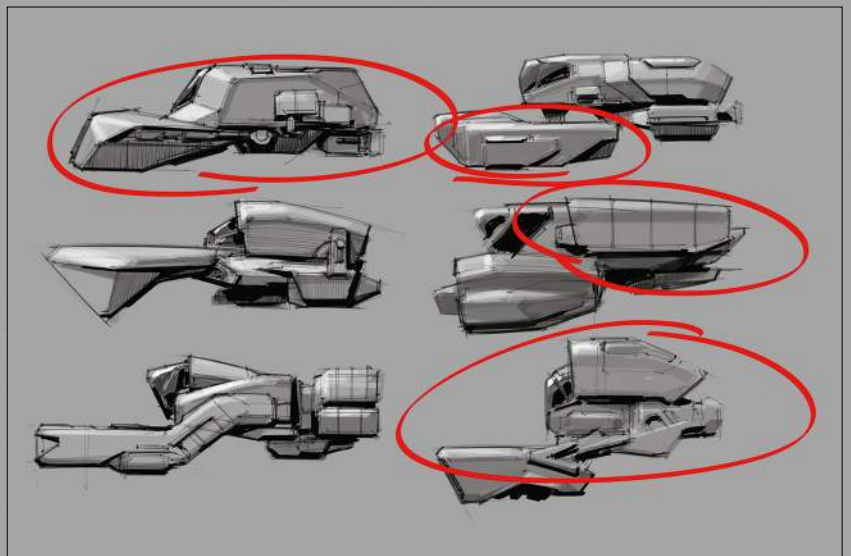
4 Lorin's rules of design

Here are some helpful rules of thumb to keep in mind during the early stages of the creative process. Will your viewer be able to understand the design's story just by looking at it? Does the overall design have a good silhouette that exerts an intended mood? Can you identify the purpose and function of the design in three seconds? Does the design seem plausible? If you answer any of these questions with a no or a maybe, then it's a good sign that you may need to rethink your approach. It'll save you time later on, too! ➤➤
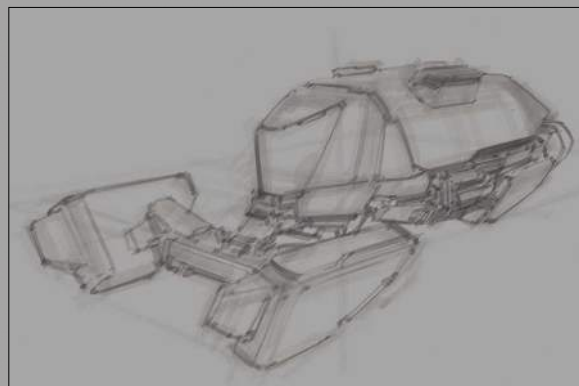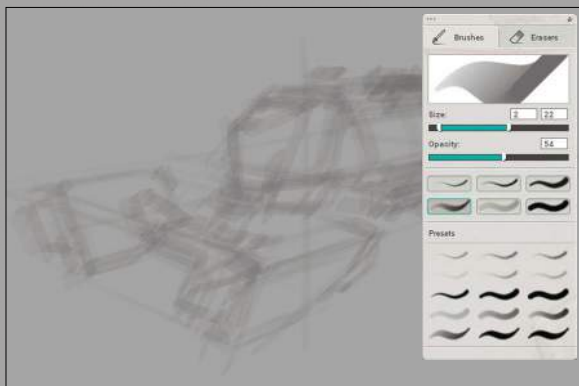
5 Concept design
I draw a basic perspective grid. I keep it loose – it's to guide the design, not shackle it. The point is to inspire. I then use the Marker tool and select a grey tone a shade darker than the background. I lay out the basic shapes of the craft here, using broad shapes. I don't worry about details – just focus on proportion, perspective and an interesting angle.

6 Apply tone
I use a darker grey marker and solidify the primary shapes of the vehicle. In addition, I layer in tone to further define the mass and light direction. Just like working with real media, I start light and then add darker tones.
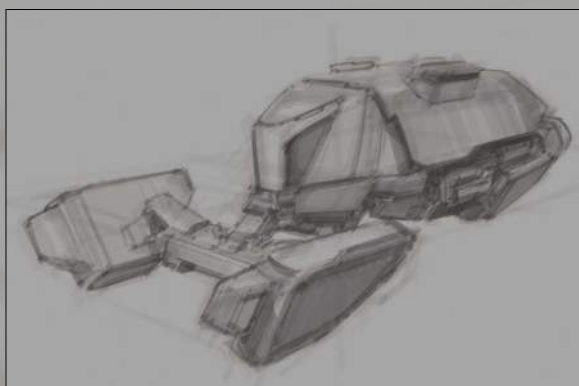
7 Refinement
Contrast equals greater form change, so continue to cut out the design using the darker marker until you're satisfied. Remember that the darkest shading will be in objects closer to you. Refer to Scott Robertson's excellent textbooks, How to Draw and How to Render, for more tips on the fundamentals of both basic drawing and rendering techniques.
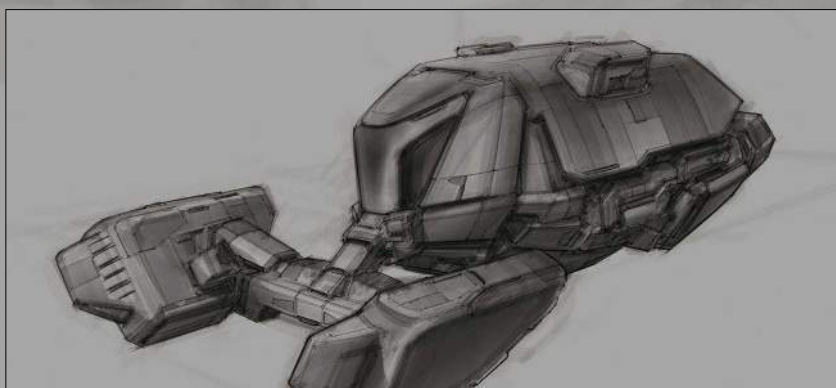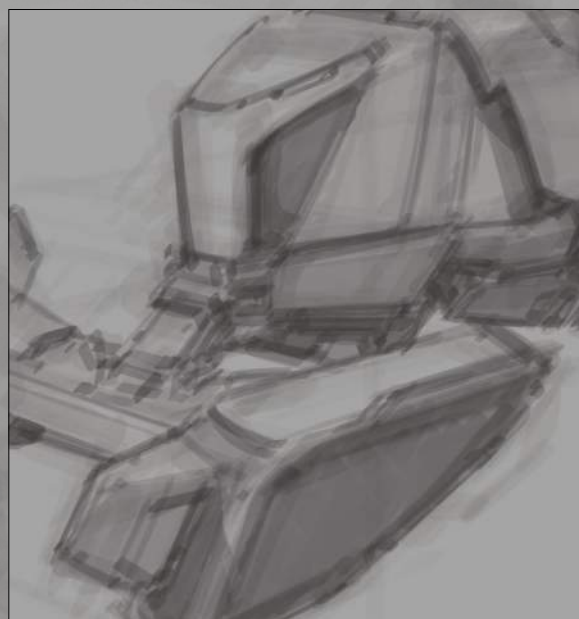
8 Definition through line art
The ship is still a bit of a mess, so we need to define the individual pieces and shapes into a coherent whole. Focus in on the guts of the ship where all the earthly belongings of the pioneers are carried. How are the engines yoked to the main craft? These details come into focus at this stage. At this point I'm more interested in making the design look cool. The story of this being a space wagon is established, so now it's time to fill in all of the fun sci-fi gizmos!

9 More refinement
Next I add in more line-art and decide that the ship doesn't have enough girth, so I drop the front of the main hull down to round the ship out. In my backstory, this vessel was put together with used or salvaged components, which is why neither engines are identical.
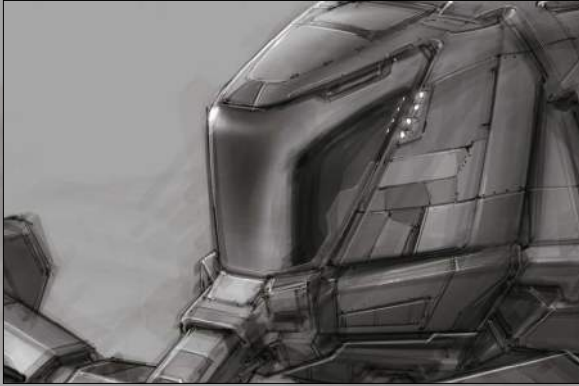
10 Introduce highlights

I'm pretty happy with the design, but it still needs some punch and the best way to do this is adding a nice rim light. This further brings the ship into three dimensions. I also add some LED lights next to the cockpit. Their intensity will be brighter than the dull metal hull material so they can pop.
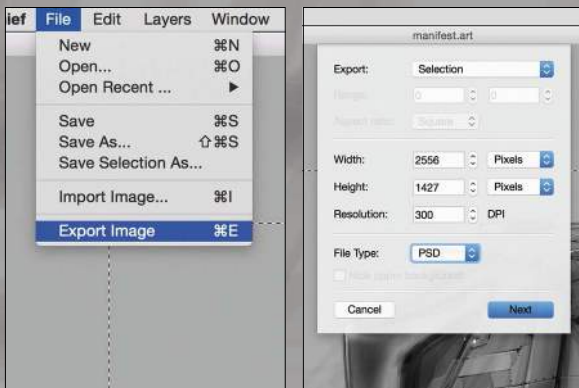
11 Export the image

Go to Export Image from the File menu. Select the Visible Canvas option to export everything on screen as a PSD file. This enables you to have all of the individual layers when you open it up in Photoshop. Be sure to export at a large-enough DPI value (300 for print and 72 for web).

12 Clean up in Photoshop

The fun part of working with real media is living with the mess. I also love the freedom that Photoshop affords me to change an illustration. To help focus on the central portion of the ship, I want to remove some of the haphazard marker. I add a mask on the marker layer and use a pressure-sensitive airbrush to gently fade the marker away around the cockpit.

Shortcuts
Mischief hotkeys
Z, B, E (Mac & PC)
Use these Mischief hotkeys to speed up your workflow: Z for Zoom, B for Brush and E for Eraser.
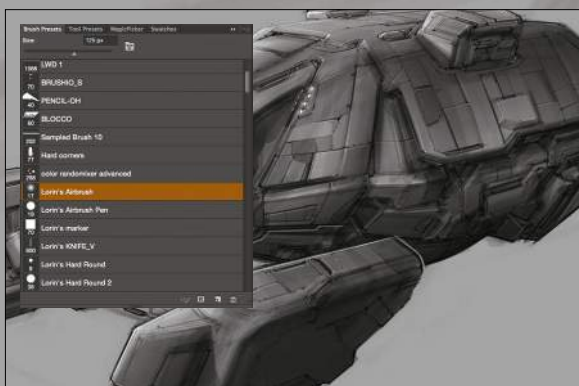
13 Post work

To punch up the shading, I use my rectangular, pressure-sensitive marker brush, to produce a smooth gradient. I push some side details back and add an airbrushing of black to the top of the wagon and underbelly, to show it's rounded away from the light source. To pull out subtle highlights I use a marker tool and select a dim grey from the ship side.
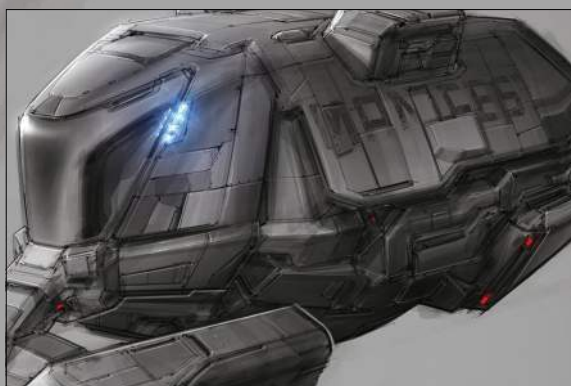
14 Final touches

I love monochrome marker illustrations. A smart step to take before adding any extra visual effects is to create a new empty layer, and create a light effect using LensFlare Studio. Because flares require a flattened image, I'm going to make a duplicate. I depict the flares with a blue LED hue. They're small but powerful. They serve as the equivalent to a candle-powered lamp hanging off of the wagon. I finish off by adding some red beacons and throw a weathered name on to the craft.

PRO SECRETS

Hold off on adding detail
Maintain high energy in the drawing – don't feel the need to fill in every detail, especially if there's symmetry or repeated elements. Keeping a basic form language will be enough for the viewer to fill in the blanks.

Charlie Bowater creates a unique
black, white and gold cover image –
find out how!

Next month in...

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS
ImagineFX

Black & White

Discover the beauty of striking values, and find out if you're suited to the freelance life!

All this... and more!
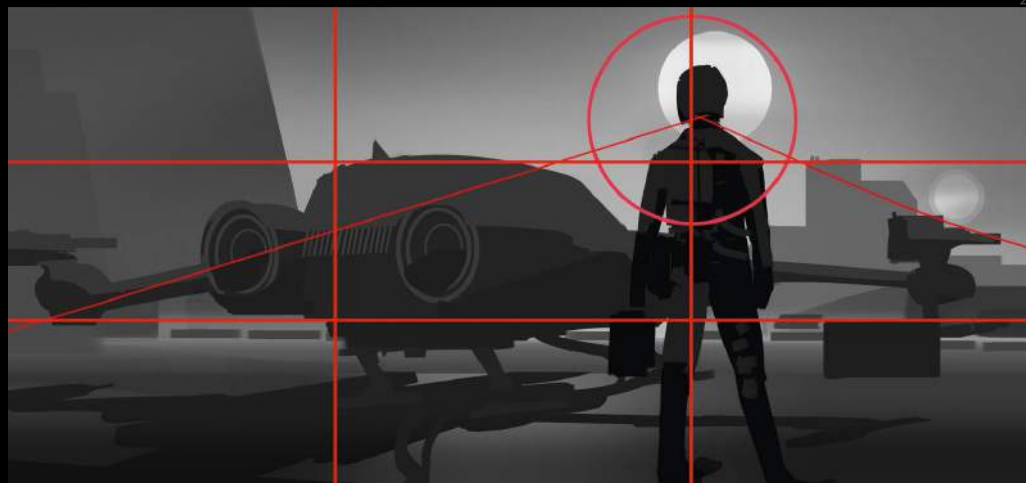
Dramatic lighting
See how Brian Matyas worked this rough up into a dramatic piece of sun-kissed concept art.

Anti-hero chic
Tara Phillips works over a pretty boy to create a compelling anti-hero character design.

Make your mark
Patrick J Jones takes you through the possibilities of using charcoal in fantasy art.

Artwork to value
We speak to 10 artists who work with pared-down colours to create bold, striking imagery.

Reader Q&As
Get your art questions and queries answered by pros, and discover how to paint folklore in a fresh way.

ISSUE 126 ON SALE *Friday 14 August*

VIDEO
WORKSHOP

Photoshop & Blender

MODEL A SCENE USING 3D TOOLS

Concept artist **Matt Kohr** demonstrates how to design an
environment using 3D software, before painting over it

Workshops

Artist PROFILE

Matt Kohr
COUNTRY: US

Matt is a freelance concept artist, and creator of the tutorial website Ctrl+Paint.
www.ctrlpaint.com

How often do you choose to draw city skyscrapers from dynamic camera angles? Probably not very often. Even after getting comfortable with drawing in three-point perspective, some subject matter is tricky to draw accurately. When things are difficult, we avoid them. In my years as a concept artist, 3D software has been an essential starting point for architecture and other technical subjects.

Here I've decided to tackle an especially difficult interior environment to show how valuable 3D tools can be. To prove the point I've chosen a scene with some linear perspective nightmares: repeated arches, stairs, figures at different elevations and a circular layout. This setting would be a challenge for even the most seasoned draftsman, so instead I'll let Blender do the heavy lifting.

The painting is broken up into two phases: the model and the paintover. First I block out the scene in 3D, based on my thumbnail sketch, and export a render. Then I take the render into Photoshop and use it as the foundation for my painting. To see this whole process in action, check out my video.

In this workshop you'll see how powerful 3D can be for the illustration process. But before we start, a word of warning: 3D doesn't replace drawing. If you think you can slap a 3D background behind your character instead of learning to draw in perspective, you're sadly mistaken. I've reviewed a lot of beginner portfolios, and trust me – you're not fooling anyone.

1 Produce a sketch – or sketches!

All paintings should start with a well-considered sketch. This sketch is one of 10 that I produced. Sketching enables me to problem solve, make mistakes, and stay as open-minded as possible. Every artist plans differently but I like to work in greyscale: it gives me more information than a line drawing would, but is faster to create than a full-colour sketch.

2 Identify objects to model

Now that my space is designed, I consider which parts I'll be modelling. I like to look for repeated elements, because 3D software excels at 'instancing'. This means I can spend more time on one element, and clone it for my scene. These clones are linked, so whenever I edit one the others update. This scene has two ideal candidates: arched doorways and cloaked figures.
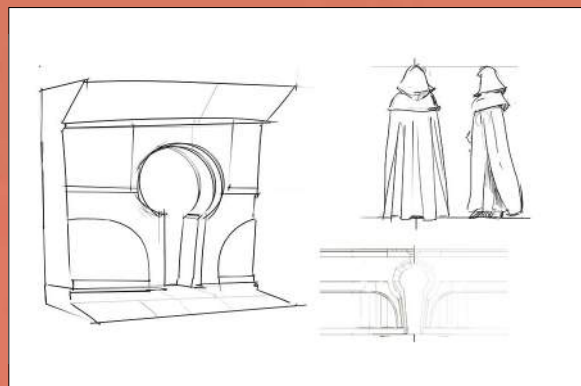
3 Sketch 3D elements

Because I'm faster at sketching than I am at modelling, it's good to spend a minute and plan out these objects. You can see that the drawings aren't detailed, but it's helpful to clarify my thoughts before I open Blender. As a concept artist, these sort of drawings are often used to share ideas with co-workers, although they're rarely showcased publicly.

4 Create a texture sheet

Think of the texture sheet as the 'skin' for the arches I'm about to model. Using the Brush tool instead of photographic overlays, I'm painting in Photoshop at 2,048x2,048px. Photos are great, but I want these models to blend in naturally with the rest of my painting. Since I'll be repeating these arched doorways, it's worth spending some extra time in this phase.
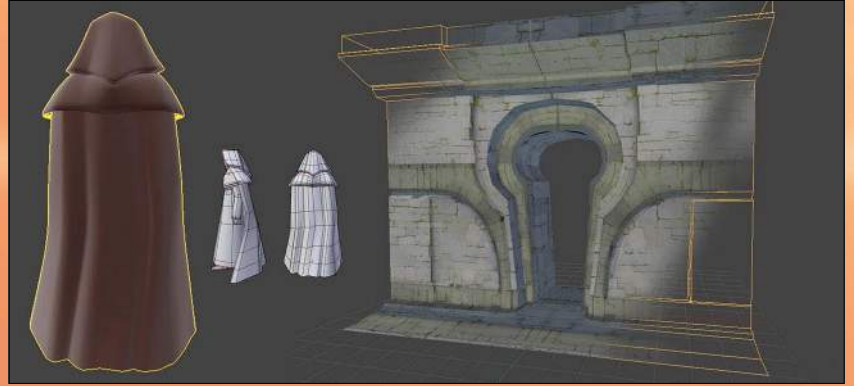
5 Model and texture basic forms

Unlike game assets or movie props that are finished artwork, these 3D models are only an intermediary step. I'll be painting over them in Photoshop, so it's not worth adding a lot of detail now. And you might be wondering why I only modelled half of my arch. The answer is simple: it's faster to mirror symmetrical 3D shapes than to manually create both sides.

6 Assemble the building's interior

Creating this floor plan is all about repetition. Half an arch can easily be mirrored into a full arch. Then I clone the full arch eight times into a long, straight row of arches, before applying a Bend modifier to wrap my row of arches into a full circle. Next, I quickly model a circular floor and duplicate it to use as the ceiling. Finally, I add the figures. ➤➤

7 Light, render and export

It's time to light the scene using my thumbnail sketch as a guide. I love this phase in 3D software, because it's so easy to experiment with different lighting layouts and colours. Unlike in a painting, moving these lights around only takes a few clicks – and the shadows are extremely realistic. When I'm satisfied, it's time to hit Render, resulting in a 3,600px wide .PNG image that I'll bring into Photoshop.
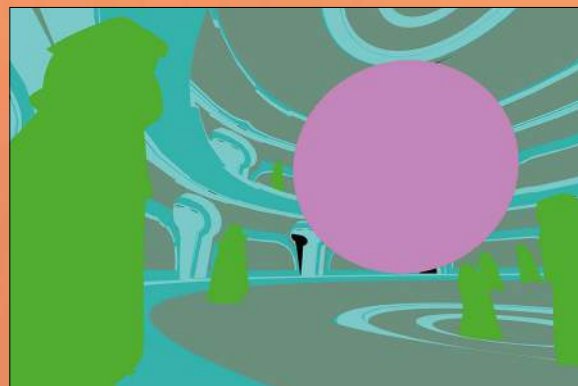
8 Render a selection map

The other image that I like to render in 3D is this rather strange-looking colour map. You can probably tell that it's a render of the exact same scene, but with all of the lighting turned off and the textures replaced the with solid colours. Clearly, it's not a beautiful image, but in the next step you'll see why it's key to my creative process.

9 Prepare masks for speedy selections

Half of digital painting is about making selections. Marching ants, marquees, masks… these are the tools that enable you to paint inside the lines and have good edge control. The slow part is creating these selections by hand – but I don't have to! Using the Magic Wand, it's easy to isolate individual areas of my colour map, which are turned into selections. Hide this layer on the top of your stack and turn it on to grab a quick selection!
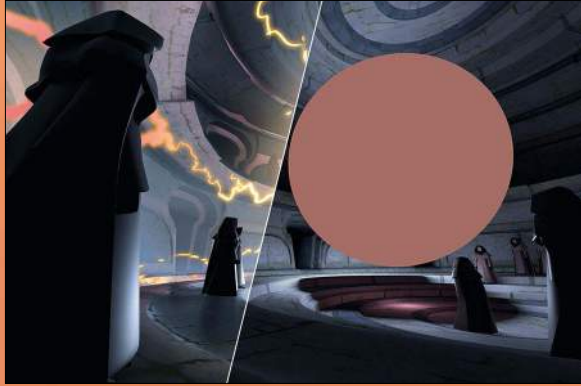
10 Start the paintover

The 3D render is just a starting point: now it's time to start thinking like a painter. I want to control the light and colour to improve my composition. In this phase I keep the render intact and make my changes with adjustment layers instead of the Brush tool. Adjustment layers are a great way to experiment with colours without damaging the lower layers.
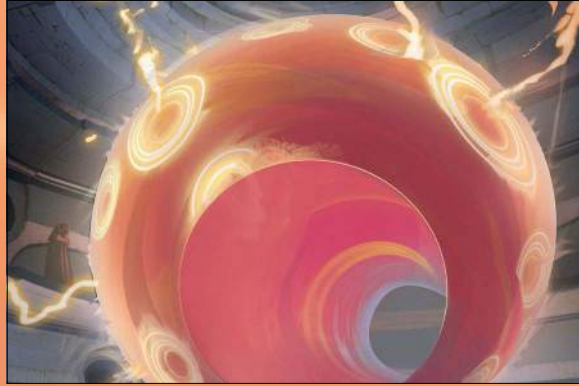
11 Paint the portal

This is a great example of 3D being less effective than hand painting. Knowing I want the portal to be detailed and organic, I only blocked it in as a basic 3D sphere. To refine this element I'm using the Brush and Eraser tools. For specific details, I've gathered a collection of real-life reference photos: lighting, the sun and solar flares.

12 Add details and texture

Once I'm happy with the overall feel of the composition, it's time to get specific. I zoom in, get out the Brush tool and slowly add detail to the entire scene. Since I've created a strong focal point with the circular portal, that's where I'm focusing my energy. Polishing the image takes time, so I put on some good music and get comfortable: this will take a while!
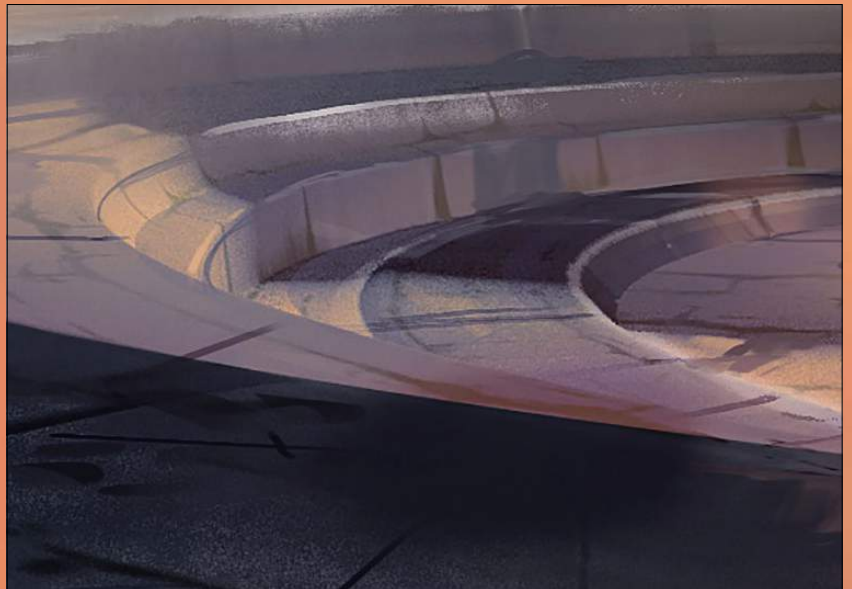
13 Tweak the composition

Sometimes you realise the image has gone off track. Sometimes the image lacks punch. Even near the end of the process, it's never too late to shift elements around. I decide to add a bit of dynamism to my composition by tilting the entire image. Additionally, I enhance the sense of depth by overlapping a couple of figures over the portal.
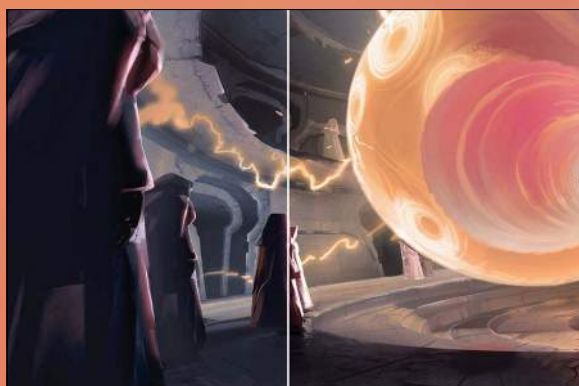
14 Make final adjustments

Now that I'm happy with the overall image, it's nice to do a final polish pass. Especially when you're shifting elements around, it's easy to accidentally leave an ugly seam or hole. This is my last chance to add polish and fix problems before calling the image done.

PRO SECRETS

The thumbnail is king

When working with elements like 3D models and masks, it's easy to get bogged down. The secret to staying on course is my thumbnail sketch. Every 15 minutes or so I compare my current progress against the initial thumbnail. Do they look similar? Good. If not, it means I'm drifting off course and need to be careful about my design. The thumbnail isn't just the first step – it's your road map, blueprint, and instruction manual. Don't ignore it!

The number one
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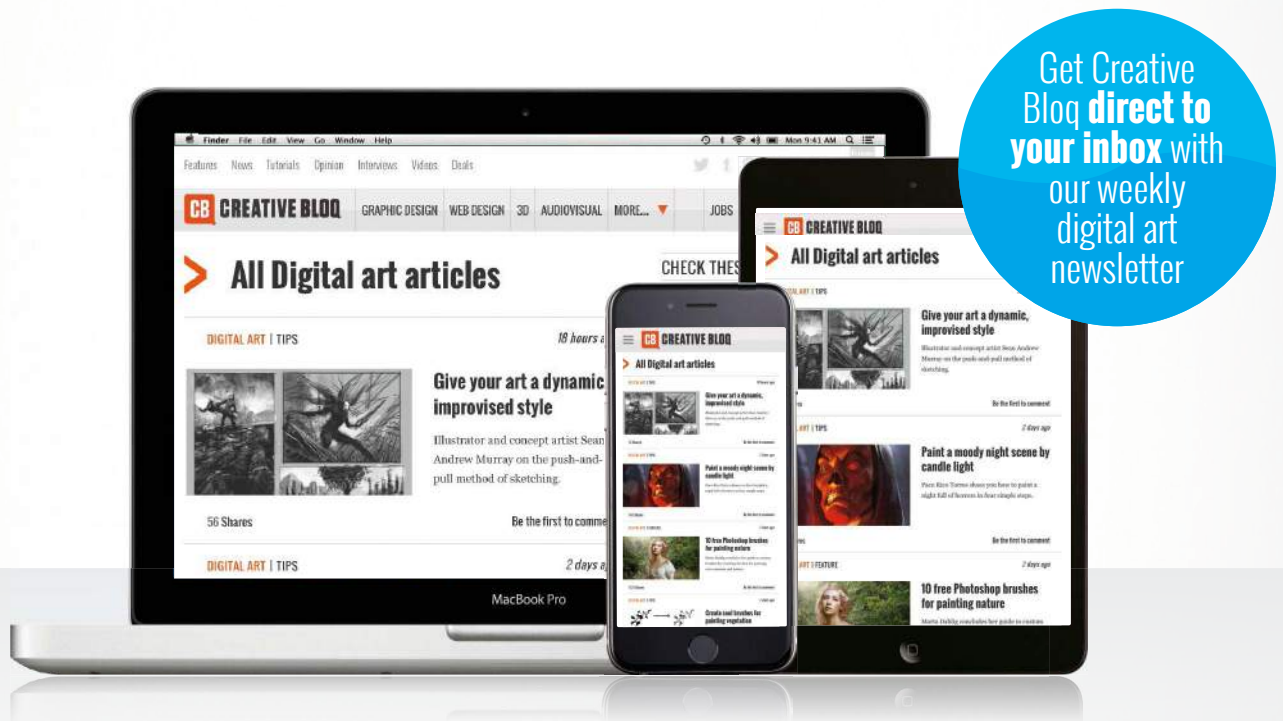
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NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS
ImagineFX
Reviews

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

7 PRODUCTS ON TEST

Sketch by Chuck Lukacs

HARDWARE

90 Nomad
Summer's here and it's time to head out of the studio for a spot of plein air drawing. Is this the ideal art bag to take with you?

SOFTWARE

93 Clarisse iFX 2.0
Ever wanted to mix some 3D with your 2D art? Clarisse could be the perfect way to do so.

93 PaintCan
Transform photos with painterly effects, using smart brushes that adjust themselves.

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Painter and illustrator Patrick J Jones continues his solid series on anatomy with an in-depth look at the bit in the middle.

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96 New reads this month…
The Art of Mad Max: Fury Road; The Art of Inside Out; VHS Video Cover Art.

RATINGS EXPLAINED 🖊🖊🖊🖊🖊 Magnificent   🖊🖊🖊🖊 Good   🖊🖊🖊 Ordinary   🖊🖊 Poor   🖊 Atrocious
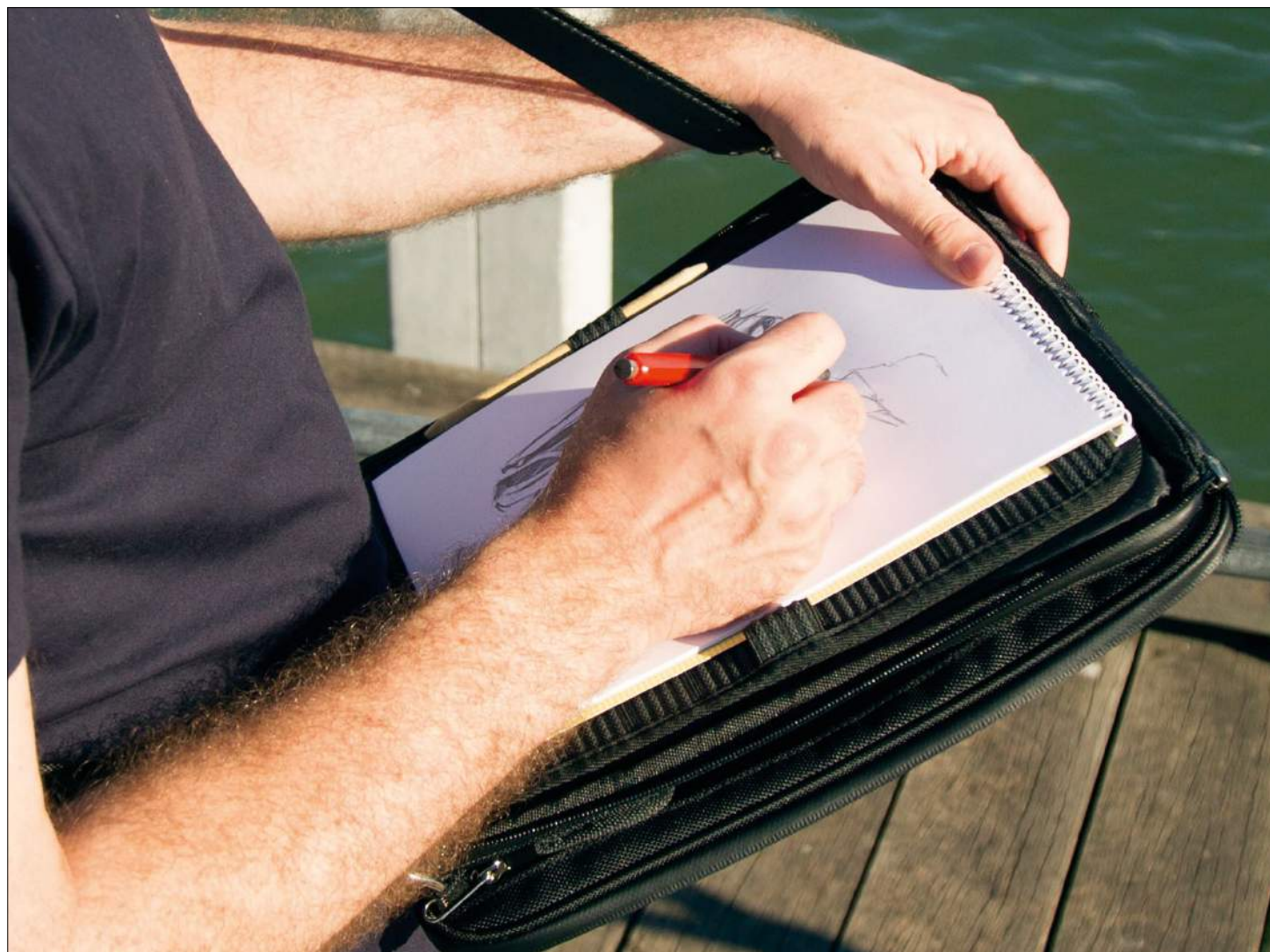
Nomad art satchel

IN THE BAG Summer's here, and it's time for a spot of plein air drawing. Is this the bag to take with you into the great outdoors?

Price £76   **Company** Stylus Monkey Design   **Web** www.nomad-artist.com

The Nomad's build quality immediately makes it stand out among the plethora of art bags we've seen in the ImagineFX office. It's well engineered, robust, attractive and highly adaptable. The outer material is ballistic nylon backed with rubber, making it resistant to moisture.

The weather proofing doesn't stop there, though: the exterior YKK zips are also guarded by a rubber seal, which prevents wet stuff from getting inside and damaging your art materials. And it's the interior of the satchel being where things get interesting.

Inside, the Nomad is divided into two halves: one side for your sketchbook,

The interchangeable strap boards mean that you can use any sketchbook type.

while the other side has a mesh pocket for supplies. Both halves have interchangeable strap boards attached to the casing via large strips of velcro. The straps on one board run vertically while the other board has them orientated horizontally, which caters for sketchbooks with different bindings.

Each elasticated strap has rows of rubber stitched through them to aid grip – the idea is that you interlace your tools through one or several straps to

create a secure lattice. They work remarkable well, and if you grew up playing Tetris you quickly realise how much gear the boards can hold. There's also two soft-fabric lined pockets on the outside front, the extra padding inside ensuring the safe transit of your tablet.

Depth is at a premium, mind. We tried getting an A4 hard-backed sketchbook in, along with a collection of art materials in their original boxes,

> **❝ The Nomad is one of those stand-out art products that makes you want to pick up a pencil and start drawing ❞**

Combined with a tripod and the Nomad becomes a sturdy travel easel, for extended sketching sessions.

Use the Nomad's rubberised straps to stop your art tools from floating around in the bag.

Begone, water! The YKK zips help keep out the wet stuff.

The outer pockets are padded, ensuring your that tablet will be protected from bumps and scrapes.

ARTIST INTERVIEW
DARREN YEOW

The creator of the Nomad on spotting a gap in the market

Why did you make the Nomad?
Put simply, I wanted to sketch away from the drawing table more easily. Sketching in most places without a table is awkward and ended up being an experience that was more trouble than it's worth, despite the surge of inspiration. After a particularly unpleasant experience, I looked online for a product that would help me to sketch on-the-go more easily, and found nothing that matched my requirements.

What was the Kickstarter process like?
I was totally unaware of what was required to manufacture a quality product, sell the idea to people, and deliver that product to each customer. I was a self-taught concept artist in video games and advertising – what on earth did I know about manufacturing and retailing products? One thing that was obvious to me before I started putting money into the prototype phase was that I wouldn't be able to bankroll the whole process myself. I think it had taken about six prototypes and probably eight months or more before I got to the model that I finally filmed for the Kickstarter campaign.

Did you face any challenges?
Time was dwindling quickly, people were becoming impatient and money was beginning to run very low. I had to dig into my tax money to keep food on the table and the prototype development churning. I finally understood the phrase "failure is not an option" – it really wasn't anymore. This Kickstarter had to work, otherwise I wouldn't have enough money to pay my tax bill or anything else, and my wife and my child would suffer for my overzealousness. Despite all the insane challenges, this has been the most positively transformative period in my life, both professionally and personally.

Darren is a concept artist and illustrator who also teaches his craft at RMIT University in Melbourne, Australia.

www.stylus-monkey.com

and things got a little too snug. We're willing to let this slide though, because the Nomad's design negates the need for a hard-backed sketchbook.
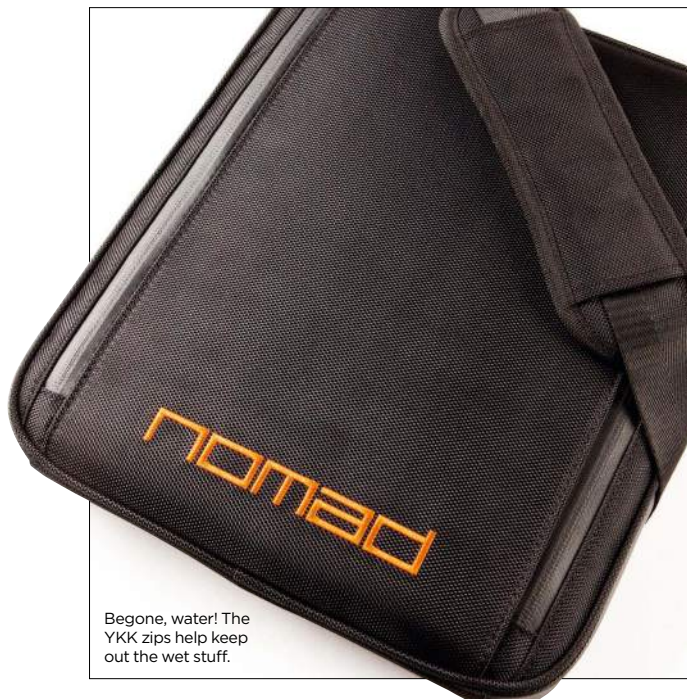
Although storage and safe transit of your drawing materials has been well thought out, where the Nomad really starts to shine is when you start using it to draw. Clever strap design enables you to go from the typical off-the-shoulder to more of a sling-type configuration, supporting your sketchbook against your stomach much like an usherette's tray. This works when sketching in either portrait or landscape orientations.

Another piece of inspirational design is the inclusion of a removable tripod interface plate on the Nomad's reverse side. This means you can attach it to a camera's quick release and fix it to a tripod, turning the satchel into a drawing easel. It secures well and is very sturdy with no discernible balance issues. Nomad add-ons are on the drawing board, and we're hoping that additional straps for carrying a tripod are heading our way.

The Nomad is one of those stand-out art products that, once you take a closer look, makes you want to pick up a pencil and start drawing. Around these parts we're big fans of such inspirational objects, which is why the Nomad has definitely found its home within the ImagineFX setup.

DETAILS

Features
- Configurable shoulder strap design
- Tripod plate
- Water-resistant rubber seal protecting outer zips
- Cushioned pockets
- Modular strap system for art tools
- Rubberised straps grip art tools
- Interchangeable strap boards
- Dimensions: 30x35x7cm
- Weight: 1.8 - 2kg when loaded

Rating

net

MAGAZINE IPAD EDITION

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

You'll find additional imagery, exclusive audio and video content in every issue, including some superb screencasts that tie in with the practical projects from the issue's authors. **Don't miss it!**

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Available on the
App Store

Clarisse's object-based workflow is a boon if you have many different elements in a project.

Clarisse iFX 2.0

EASY AS 1, 2, 3D Want to mix some 3D with your 2D? Try Clarisse…

Price £636 or free edition
Company Isotropix
Web www.isotropix.com

RATING ✍✍✍✍

Since Clarisse iFX's initial release, this rendering software has gone from strength to strength, with big effects studios ILM and Double Negative chipping in to the software's development. As a result Clarisse 2.0 includes new features that take the software's output into the heady realms of Hollywood-quality renders.

Among these features are volumetric and OpenVDB support, improved sampling quality, occlusion and improved colour management. If you're new to all this, it essentially means that the images Clarisse produces sport the kind of depth and volume that you'd expect in a blockbuster film scene.

Not into 3D? Developer Isotropix is keen to embrace the digital painting crowd. You can combine 2D elements to create a digital matte, or if you're feeling brave you could play around with 3D models to act as a backdrop.

There's no getting around it: 3D software can be intimidating to newbies, but Clarisse doesn't overwhelm with menus and scripts, and YouTube tutorials are your friend in this case. Best of all, you can try it for free: the Personal Learning Edition includes most features from the full-price software, but only for non-commercial use.

With procedural modelling you can make big changes to scenes while objects stay in place.
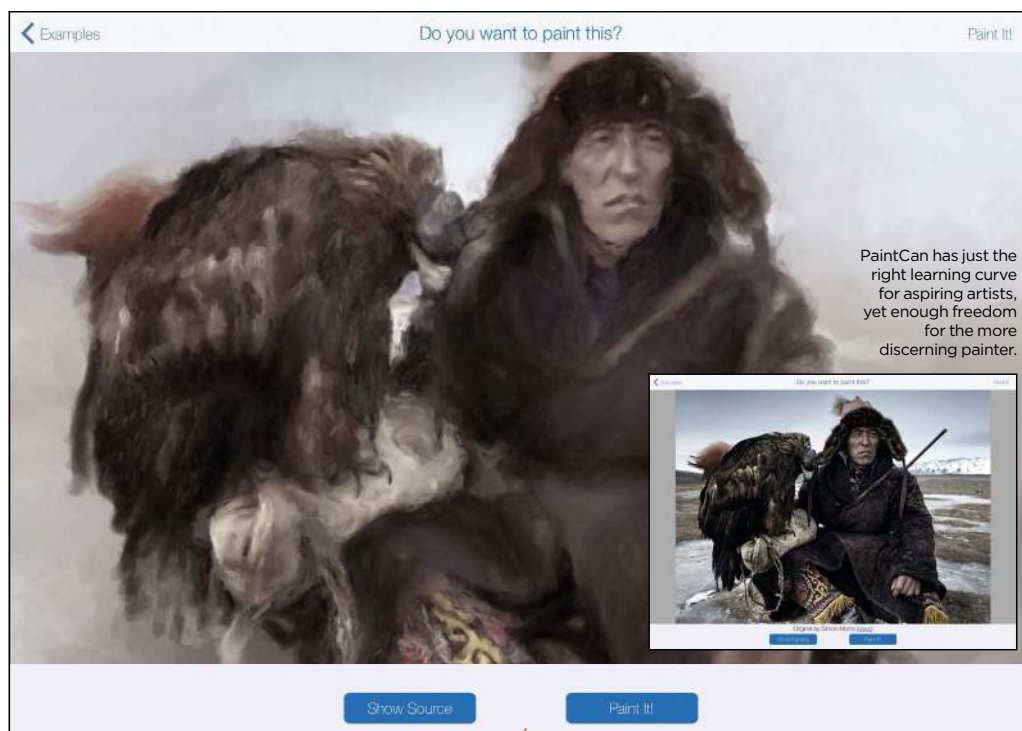
PaintCan has just the right learning curve for aspiring artists, yet enough freedom for the more discerning painter.

PaintCan • iOS

PICTURE PERFECT Transform photos with painterly effects, using smart brushes that adjust themselves

ImagineFX ARTIST'S CHOICE

Price Free **Company** Adobe **Web** www.adobe.com

PaintCan sits somewhere between a photo filter app and a flexible art tool, and is bound to appeal if you're creative in other mediums but still working on your confidence to oil paint from scratch. It enables you to create painterly representations of imported photos and images. That said, it's not just a one-click effects app: there's plenty here for the dab hand too, such as smart brushes and preset manipulation, and it should please anyone feeling the loss of the Oil Paint Filter in recent versions of Photoshop CC.

You open an image and paint over it on a separate canvas layer. The app boasts intelligent, intuitive controls, and its context-sensitive brush strokes are generated using an underlying image's existing colours and composition, but when used with presets and zoom offers a high degree of freedom.

The Light, Heavy, Coarse and Outline presets consist of broad Background strokes for laying down your scene; combining them with Details presets – using Light strokes with the Organic preset for painting natural landscapes for example – can result in impressive (and impressionistic) effects. The Face

Brush size can be adjusted to suit, while the Eraser's strength can be controlled with the Opacity slider.

preset handles fine features adroitly, resulting in nuanced portraiture, while Lines and Structured presets smartly hook on to angular, architectural elements in a scene. Manual settings, on the other hand, make it possible to take your own course entirely, which should prove a boon for experienced artists. Multiple undos are also a tap away, and the snapshot tool enables you to save a specific image state to return to it at a later time.

At first you'll find yourself making fair use of this feature – experimentation is key to getting the hang of the app – but with time and a little patience the results can often be sublime, leaving you free to snap a photo (or even download one), open it up in PaintCan and begin working up your next oil paint masterpiece.

DETAILS

Features
■ Light, heavy, coarse, outline brush presets
■ Structured, organic, face and line detail settings for subjects
■ Import from Camera Roll or Photo Collection
■ Full manual control, brush size and opacity settings
■ Peek/hide original images
■ Auto-zoom for tight spaces
■ Multiple undo/redo
■ Multiple share options
■ Eraser tool
■ Snapshot option for saving WIPs

System Requirements
iOS: Requires iOS 7.1 or later. Compatible with iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch. This app is optimised for iPhone 5, iPhone 6, and iPhone 6 Plus.

Rating
✍✍✍✍
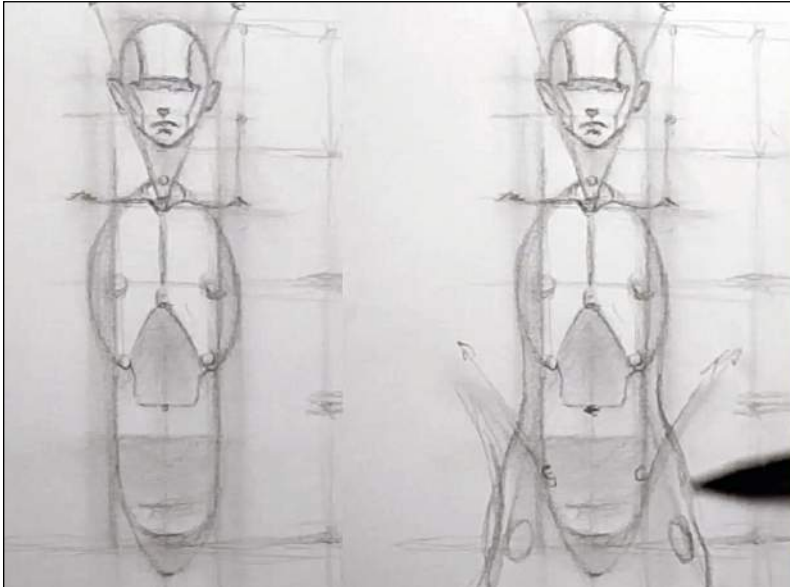
Patrick uses his finished paintings to show the principle he talks about.
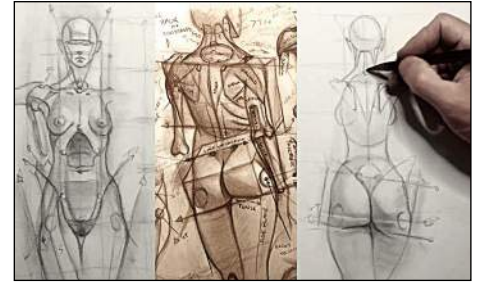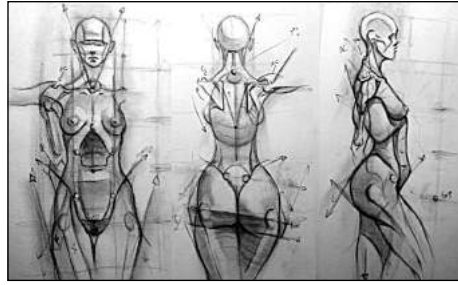
You'll see how body parts seen from different angles relate to each other, giving you the confidence to try your own poses.

From the earliest stages, you'll see how to differentiate the female form from the male without resorting to over-exaggeration.

Anatomy of the Torso

BODY TALK Painter and illustrator Patrick J Jones continues his solid series on anatomy with an in-depth look at the bit in the middle

Taking his cue from great teaching artists like Andrew Loomis, Patrick J Jones is capturing his knowledge in a series of videos about the human body. Anatomy of the Torso is the latest, following on from Patrick's Anatomy of the Head two-parter (which we reviewed in issue 122). Each video works fine on its own, but collect the set and you've got a lot of wisdom at your disposal.

Patrick follows the same structure he used for his Head videos, drawing a torso from the front, then the back, then the side. There's some basic measuring to establish proportions, and you'll see how to locate landmarks around the body – certain bones or muscles that are easier to spot – as you build up the body structure. But Patrick's emphasis is on helping you understand the body's forms and shapes as you draw them, so that your figures feel like they're living creatures rather than mannequins.

Patrick chooses to go with a woman's torso, which should make this video extra-handy for certain male artists who don't appear able to grasp how breasts and bottoms should look! The curves of the female body make it one of the most artistically pleasing things you can draw; Patrick shows how to show the best of women's bodies without resorting to unbelievable shapes.

As Patrick moves from the back view to the side view, he also offers an enlightening discussion of how the body balances itself as it moves, and how to reflect that in your drawings. As with previous instalments, the beauty of Anatomy of the Torso is the way it shows drawings developing over time, so you can see how complex images have the simplest of foundations.

We look forward to future chapters, with the body's limbs being next on Patrick's list. But it would be good if he could sort out the audio recording, which suffers from hiss. 🔴

SAMPLE VIDEO

DETAILS

Topics covered
■ Basics measurements
■ The front view
■ The back view
■ The side view
■ Male and female bodies
■ Maintaining balance in the figure

Length
65 minutes

Rating
✏️✏️✏️✏️

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 Art of Mad Max: Fury Road

PETROLHEAD PARADISE A legion of cinema-goers left multiplexes with their minds blown – here's how George Miller and co did it…

Author Abbie Bernstein **Publisher** Titan Books **Price** £25 **Web** www.titanbooks.com **Available** Now

The original Mad Max trilogy was the zenith of post-apocalyptic action franchises. Not only has the series' 21st century rebirth rocked the boat by centring on a feminist narrative that subverts all the prejudices of your average Mel Gibson lover, but jaded action fans have left multiplexes marvelling at the exhilarating world in which they've been immersed.

An in-depth print investigation into how George Miller and his team of artists managed to exceed all expectations, bringing such spectacle back to the screen, is therefore particularly worthwhile, at a time when so many films get their own automatic tie-in art book, irrespective of success.
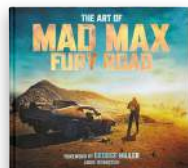
A key frame that sets the scene at the start of Mad Max: Fury Road.

Abbie Bernstein's approach is comprehensive without ever delving deep into Max's world from the previous three films. Instead, the author provides an episodic deconstruction of Fury Road, with a compact commentary for each set piece.

In his stirring introduction, George stresses the emphasis on old-school filmmaking with real stuntmen, rusty vehicles, and every grain of filth captured on celluloid. Nonetheless, as the sections in each chapter take us from rough sketch to finished spectacle, Abbie's narrative shows that good use has been made of the kind of digital technology the director couldn't have imagined 30 years ago.

As ever, total messianic devotion to the internal combustion engine and the iconography of petrolhead hysteria are central, with guides to the realisation of vehicles that make the mind boggle, even as charcoal or watercolour sketches. The Gigahorse, the War Rig, all those gnarly pursuit vehicles… indeed, any roadster that impressed on the screen crops up, with brief but intriguing exposition.

It seems unlikely that Fury Road will be the final instalment of Mad Max's

Tattoo and piercing designs for the War Boys, who make up the army that pursues Mad Max in the film.

story, but in this book, Abbie and the team behind and in front of the camera have documented a unique journey, showing how a defunct movie franchise can be revived not just as a cash cow for the film studio, but a genuine cinematic event.

It's more of a handbook for fans than an artist's showcase, and we would have liked fewer press photos and much more of the raw artistry that helped create this dystopia, but cinema-goers still haunted by Fury Road will be well advised to take the journey.

RATING ✎✎✎✎

The Art of Inside Out

INNER SPACE Pixar's latest delves into a young girl's psyche – find out how emotions were given a unique visual identity

Authors Amy Poehler and Pete Docter **Publisher** Chronicle Books **Price** £26 **Web** www.abramsandchronicle.co.uk **Available** Now

Fifty-three years on from the debut of The Numskulls in British comic The Beezer, Pixar is now portraying the antics of their transatlantic equivalents: Joy, Sadness, Fear, Anger and Disgust, a bunch of misfit personified emotions who steer the life of Riley, an 11-year-old girl.

All five kooky characters have their own highly marketable unique colour and design, while Riley's humdrum existence 'outside' very tightly adheres to the Pixar template. What's strange

Ralph Eggleston's early takes on Joy, one of Riley five key emotions.

– and wonderful – is that this official tie-in book entirely favours the extremely raw, organic artwork that director Pete Docter's team played around with, before a single digit of programming had been attempted. Laid out with a conscious emphasis on rough-edged handiwork, the styles and experiments pinned to every page are certainly worth sharing, as the characters grow and begin to assert their personalities.

It all adds up to a remarkable, warm and wordless (besides beguiling intros from Docter, and Amy Poehler on playing Joy) collection of rough, evocative designs for a Pixar movie that has all the charm that these humble blueprints promise. And with each talented artist well credited, this works as a beautiful, light-hearted concept art book all on its own.

RATING ✎✎✎

VHS Video Cover Art

BE KIND, REWIND Be prepared for an unfettered deluge of nostalgia for those long-forgotten days of the eye-catching video cassette case

Editor Thomas Hodge **Publisher** Schiffer Publishing **Price** £29 **Web** www.schifferbooks.com **Available** Now

The youth of the 1980s lurked in video shops, eyes keenly scanning wall after wall of screaming cover designs, each tape begging to be watched, rewound and returned.

The changeable artistry of hordes of video cover designers provides food for thought for anyone with an eye for commercial design, but let's be honest here: more copies of this book are going to be sold in the spirit of camp nostalgia than as a sincere respect for the kind of artist who came up with,

Mirrored shades, sweaty muscles and a no-nonsense expression reveal all you need to know about The Enforcer II.

say, the saucy tableau for forgotten erotic comedy Oddballs.

From the gaudy to the tawdry, the overblown to the downright tacky, this book has it all. The art is presented without comment as high-quality scans, but sometimes it's good to let no-holds barred imagery do all the talking. In his introduction, editor Thomas Hodge says he "based this collection purely on artistic merit". How big was the reject pile, we wonder…

It's telling that the book's creators are too young to have worked in the industry at the time, making this more of a hipster love letter to a defunct format than a retrospective on behalf of the artists themselves. Having said this, it's touching that most of the original designers have been tracked down and credited. Movie geeks over 30 will flip for this.

RATING ✎✎✎✎

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PRESENTS

FANTASY
illustrator

This issue:
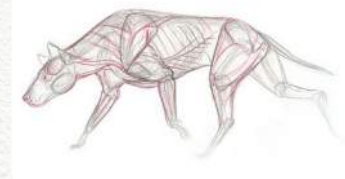
HOW TO CREATE
PORTRAITS WITH A FANTASY TWIST
Jim Pavelec combines beautiful females with a touch of the grotesque **Page 104**

Maggie Ivy
LOCATION: US
WEB: www.maggieivy.com
EMAIL: ivy.maggie@gmail.com
MEDIA: Acrylic

Maggie knew she was going to be an artist from the tender age of eight, and her devotion to painting never faltered. She attended the Florence Academy of Art at 17, then moved on to study illustration at TAD followed by an apprenticeship with Vanessa and Ron Lemen at Rev Art Academy.

"Being from the Ozark Mountains of Arkansas, I pull inspiration from my eerie walks in the woods, and bike rides around the lake at night," Maggie says. "I'm also someone who gets easily smitten with stories, especially horror, faerie stories and folk tales."

1 THE RED LADY
Acrylic, 9x12in
"The covers of vintage pulp novels inspired this piece. The femme fatale theme has always been intriguing."

2 MUMMIFIED
Acrylic, 12x24in
"This was painted for the group show GUTS at Light Grey Art Lab. Artists were asked to paint a research topic of their choosing. I picked the mummification of cats in ancient Egypt."

3 HANGING AROUND
Acrylic, 4.5x7in
"I've been a fan of Dylan Dog for many years, and managed to get a guest art spot in one of the Swedish re-releases of the Dylan Dog series."

4 WOODLAND
Acrylic, 7x10.5in
"I've been getting into taking long bike rides in the woods. Taking in the solidarity and morning mist really inspired this piece."
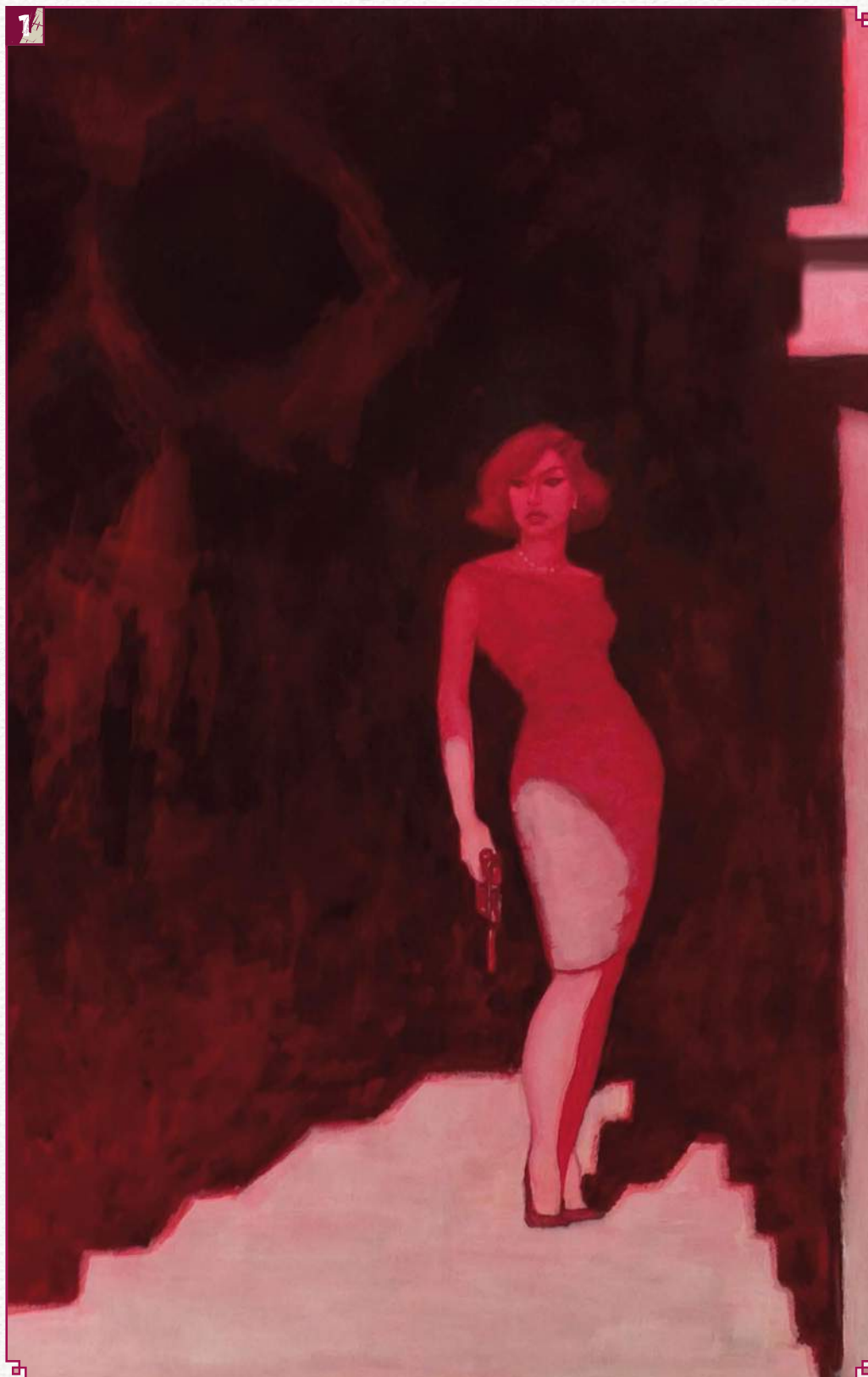
IMAGINEFX CRIT

"It's not often you see a cat in any frame of mind apart from one of quiet detachment and self-satisfaction. Maggie displays a lot of artistic skill depicting her mummified moggy in such an awkward pose."
Cliff Hope,
Operations Editor

Heather Shirin
LOCATION: US
WEB: www.heathershirin.com
EMAIL: info@heathershirin.com
MEDIA: Acrylic, paper and gold leaf

Heather paints Art Nouveau portraits of women, influenced by the works of Alphonse Mucha and Gustav Klimt. She works out of her home studio in Asheville, North Carolina, and her current series focuses on using fine art papers, metallic paints and gold leaf to create the woman's hair, clothing and the background designs.

"I'm interested in abstracting the figure into the background." she says. "I also want to incorporate the idea of being in outer space – using nebulas as a colourful and interesting place to find someone thinking."

IMAGINEFX CRIT

"Heather's work must be a real pleasure to see in person. Her use of gold leaf on the swirls of hair and other elements enhances what are already effective examples of figure art."
Daniel Vincent, Art Editor

1 NETTED BY THE DANCER'S TOUCH
Acrylic, fine art paper and variegated gold leaf on birch panel, 60x48in
"Painted in Golden OPEN Acrylics with layers of paint watered down to soak right into the raw wood, like watercolours. I built up the skin tones and then applied a thicker paint layer for the hair with metallic paint added, and fine art papers used for their dresses."

2 SHE KEEPS ME WARM
Acrylic and gold leaf on birch panel, 40x30in
"This was inspired from a photo by Matt Schmidt. I changed the girls' hair, background and tattoos using Photoshop and a projector. Tattoos and piercings, coupled with an erotic theme, was pushing the limits for me to see how brave I could be as a fine artist."

3 HEAVENLY VIEW
Acrylic and gold leaf on birch panel, 40x30in
"My nude figure series focuses on women in an Art Nouveau style, usually in space. This woman is born into a nebula, and has a highly decorative styling done to her hair. This piece was reported on Facebook for nudity last week. Fine art is still finding its way into the main stream without being perceived as offensive."

2

3

Graphite   *Charcoal*

MIX BEAUTY WITH THE GROTESQUE

JIM PAVELEC demonstrates how to combine the delicate beauty of a female face with elements of the grotesque to create haunting and intriguing portraits

Late in the 15th century the remnants of ancient buildings – Emperor Nero's lost palace – were discovered beneath the Esquiline Hill, the largest of the seven hills of Rome. Adorning the walls of these buried buildings are myriad decorative paintings containing bizarre figures combining human, animal and vegetal forms. The Italians at that time named the decorations grottesca (from grotto or cave) or "grotesques".

The influence of the grotesques spread rapidly throughout Europe, inspiring artists over successive centuries such as Michelangelo, Hieronymus Bosch, Salvator Rosa, Henry Fuseli, William Blake and Goya. This rich visual tradition led authors such as Poe, Baudelaire, Lovecraft and many others to take up the mantle of the grotesque. More recently, we can see the revitalisation of the grotesque in the art of HR Giger, Zdzisław Beksiński, Allen Williams, Wayne Barlowe and Chet Zar.

There is a power in the grotesque, one that wrapped its slithering tentacles around my imagination at a very young age. It took me a very long time to let go of what people were telling me I should do with my art and truly embrace what I knew I should have been doing all along. In this workshop we'll delve into the techniques I use to create the beautiful and bizarre creations that are the foundation of my imaginative life.

Jim Pavelec has spent over 15 years as an illustrator, and now works mainly as a fine artist and concept artist. He is also the founder of ArtPACT.
www.jimpavelec.com

MATERIALS

GRAPHITE
- Powder Pounce
- Architect's lead holder with E0 leads

OTHER TOOLS
- White charcoal pencil
- Kneaded and mechanical erasers
- Rolled paper stump for smudging
- Stones, shells and other textured objects

Pro Secrets: A beautiful portrait within a grotesque construct

1 A juxtaposition of elements
Who doesn't love a big, gnarly, slobbering creature? I know I do. I've drawn and painted many throughout my career. But what is more challenging, and in the end I find more pleasing, is combining the beautiful and the bizarre. And what, I ask you, is more beautiful than the visage of a woman? Rendering a beautiful woman's face has been at the core of artistic endeavours from their earliest expressions.
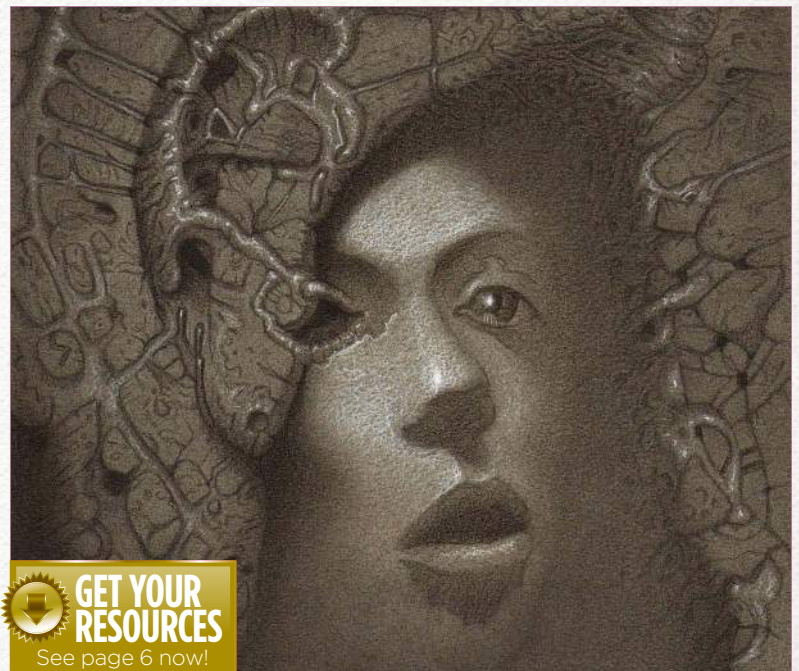
GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 6 now!

2 *Finding your muse*

To do this kind of work in a realistic manner, you're going to need good reference material. I would encourage you to find your own sources, and not just use images from the internet. If you're a decent photographer, you can photograph your friends, or browse sites like Model Mayhem (**www.modelmayhem.com**) to find models in your area to set up shoots. If you, like me, aren't a great photographer, use the internet as a resource for collaboration. If you see a photo that's perfect for the image you want to create, contact the model or photographer and ask if you can use the image as reference for your artwork. I've recently started contacting photographers and offering a small fee for their permission to use their photos as reference. Remember, photographers and models are artists trying to make a living just like you. Treat them with respect. In this example, I worked with model Kyrian Poole, who happens to be the daughter of illustrator Mark Poole.

3 *Expand your toolkit*

Whatever media you decide to use, give serious consideration to going outside your comfort zone and trying new tools and techniques. When I started I was just using pencil on paper. I soon learned from Allen Williams about the graphite powder pounce – a piece of cloth wrapped around powdered graphite and cotton balls. This simple tool enabled me to embark on a new and exciting path of experimentation. I dab the pounce on the paper, and graphite filters out of the pounce and on to the page. Then I take a kneaded eraser and press it into a variety of rocks and shells that I've gathered on trips. I then press the eraser into the graphite on the page. The result when I lift the eraser up is a unique organic pattern, which I use as the basis for finding the monstrous portions of the composition.

4 *Have fun with the eyes*

When rendering a woman's face, I try not to alter the features very much. This is the part of the piece that is comforting for the viewer, before branching out into the chaos. It's a safe place for their eye to return to the familiar. One thing you can play with are the eyes. Don't change the eye shape, but have fun with the iris and pupil. Maybe there's no iris at all and the eye is completely white, or black. You can try a pupil that is grey, or even reptilian. Experiment and see what has the greatest impact. ➤➤

> **66** Whatever media you use, consider going outside your comfort zone and trying new tools and techniques **99**

ARTIST INSIGHT

WORKING FROM A PHOTO REFERENCE
When drawing a face from a photo reference, it's not necessary to copy every single tonal shift in the photo. Placing the features properly and making them the right size is much more important than rendering every freckle and wrinkle. Simplify some of the transitions in the face, and then leave the complex detailing for the surrounding organic attributes.

5 Shape considerations

As with any design, basic shape is of the utmost importance. If you just draw a face with random protrusions going in every direction, the image can become overwrought and too chaotic. Start with a strong shape, and then work on getting the details right.

6 Make use of hard and soft edges

When trying to create an eerie atmosphere in a drawing, edge work is more important than ever. Edges are used to help convince the viewer of a three-dimensional object rendered in two dimensions. Hard edges are those indicated by a distinct and purposeful line to describe a cast shadow or define the edge of the form against the background, while soft edges are gradations of tone used to define the transition from light to shadow. A successful drawing will create a balance between hard and soft edges that's pleasing to the viewer. Too many of one or the other can leave a drawing feeling flat.

ARTIST INSIGHT

GET OUT OF THE STUDIO AND TAKE PHOTOS
For the embellishments to the head and neck, you need an extensive visual library to pull from. Do you want her to have horns? Okay, but based on what? A ram, a deer, a rhino? Is part of her made of stone? What kind? Spend a day at the zoo, go on hikes, go to museums, and look and photograph all of the wonderful textures and designs that nature and your artistic predecessors have provided you.

> 66 **The basic shape is of the utmost importance. Start with a strong shape, and then work on the details** 99
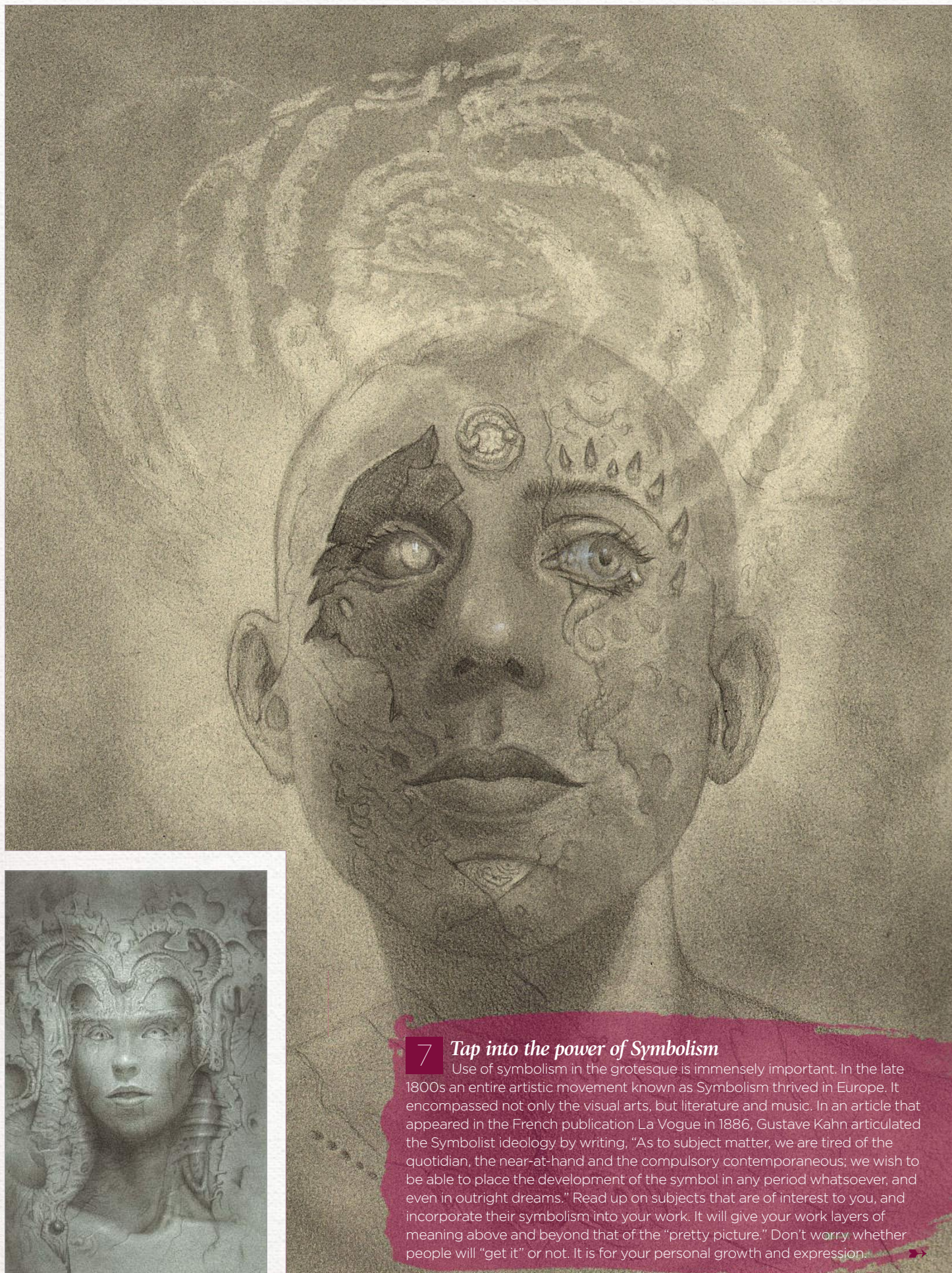
7 *Tap into the power of Symbolism*

Use of symbolism in the grotesque is immensely important. In the late 1800s an entire artistic movement known as Symbolism thrived in Europe. It encompassed not only the visual arts, but literature and music. In an article that appeared in the French publication La Vogue in 1886, Gustave Kahn articulated the Symbolist ideology by writing, "As to subject matter, we are tired of the quotidian, the near-at-hand and the compulsory contemporaneous; we wish to be able to place the development of the symbol in any period whatsoever, and even in outright dreams." Read up on subjects that are of interest to you, and incorporate their symbolism into your work. It will give your work layers of meaning above and beyond that of the "pretty picture." Don't worry whether people will "get it" or not. It is for your personal growth and expression.

Pro Secrets: Creating a grotesque painting

1 DON'T BE AFRAID TO FAIL AND START AGAIN

This was probably my third or fourth attempt on this same surface before I got something that interested me. If something isn't working, don't force yourself to push forward on something you probably won't be happy with in the end. Paint right over it and start anew.

2 DON'T BE AFRAID TO EXPERIMENT WITH YOUR ART

Try different combinations of media to see what results you get. I've been traditionally an oil painter, but I tried watercolour, acrylic and soft pastel on this piece before it really started to come together. It was only after this that I finished it in oil paint.
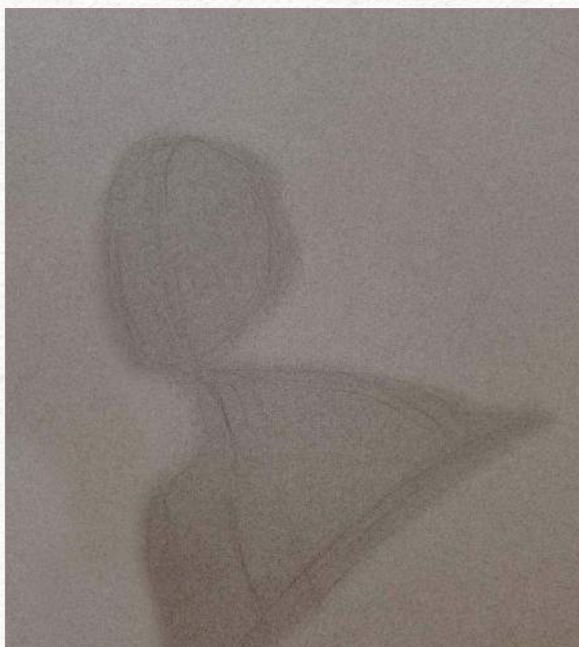
3 DON'T BE AFRAID TO LEAVE AREAS UNFINISHED

You don't need to bring all areas of an image up to the same level of finish. Bring the most detail and finish to the area you want the viewer's eye to focus on, and handle other areas in a looser fashion. Ambiguity in areas can add to the creepiness of the piece.

Step by Step: Blend the beautiful with the bizarre

1 *Basic shapes*

I start out with two simple shapes that define the head and shoulder area. They have a nice balance, and give the feeling of a sculpted bust.
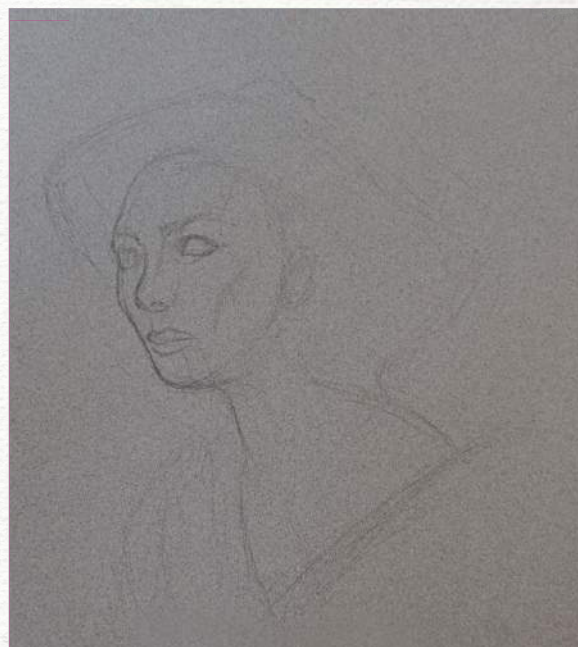
2 *Placing the features*

I move into the face making sure I get the placement and size of the eyes, nose and mouth correct. Sometimes I'll use the traditional grid technique to ensure the proportions are correct. Check the negative spaces in between the features. Hold the drawing upside down and look at it in the mirror. You'll be surprised at what you notice.

3 Tonal structure

I use the graphite powder pounce to block in large dark areas. I want to surround the lightest area, her face, with a dark shape that is reminiscent of a hair shape. This high-contrast area will pull the viewer's eye there when the piece is finished.

4 Finding the chaos

I take out my bag of rocks and shells and find ones I think will bring out textures and shapes that will work well with this design. I press the eraser into the natural surfaces, and then press it into the dark areas I created with the pounce. The eraser lifts up the graphite powder, leaving an eye-catching patchwork of patterns and textures that I will weave into something interesting.

5 Adding whites

I use my white charcoal pencil to start adding highlights to the face. Having decided on the location of my light source, I want the cheekbone and tip of the nose to capture the brightest highlights. Build up your lights slowly, and don't be afraid to use your finger to smudge areas to adjust their tone or edge quality.

6 Symmetry versus balance

I like asymmetry in my images, but I don't want the piece to be unbalanced. At this point the right-hand side of the image is too heavy, so I add a twisting appendage to the left-hand side to balance things out. It doesn't match the twists of the other horn, but that doesn't matter when dealing with the grotesque.
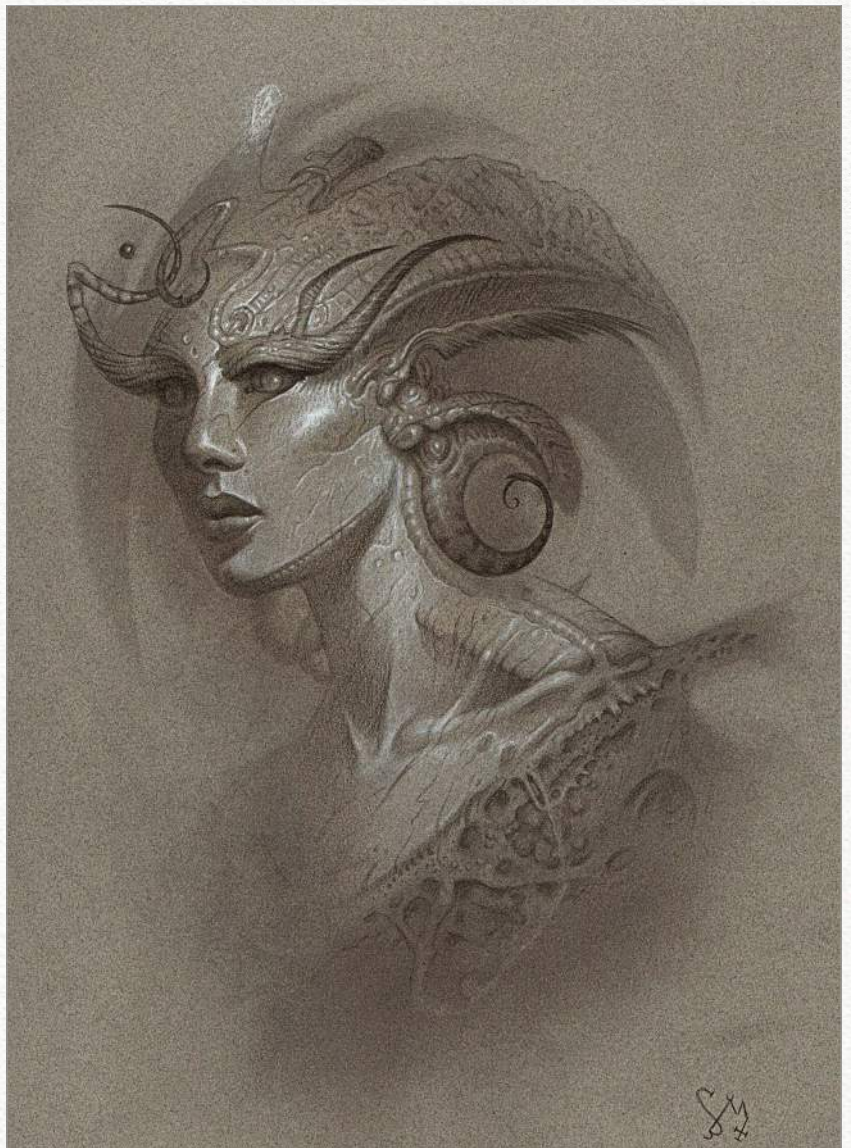
7 Finishing details

Completing the piece is simply a matter of going in and darkening certain areas and lightening others until I get a pleasing tonal range. A lot of fine tuning of textural details occurs at this point, too.

TALK AMONG YOURSELVES
When managing the arrangement of over 30 figures, it's best to consider relationships in small groups. These vignettes provide wonderful narrative moments related to but not fully dependent upon the painting's focal point.

POINT OF VIEW
When dealing with the visual impact an original artwork will convey, the scale of figures within the composition as well as the final eye line should be seriously considered. Too much dense information at the top of a large-scale composition can make your audience feel frustrated and disengaged, and the content out of reach.

Pencil   *Oils*   *Acrylics*

VISIT MIDDLE-EARTH ON AN EPIC SCALE

Discover how DONATO GIANCOLA'S most complex work took him on a grand journey into the heart of JRR Tolkien's The Silmarillion...

One treads lightly in the halls of the elven King Thingol and his queen Melian, especially when you're one of the only mortals to step foot there! Such was the difficulty I faced when commissioned to create a massive work on the theme of Beren and Luthien, Tolkien's love story from The Silmarillion. My client was seeking an epic painting, approximately 3x2m, depicting the elvish court and the moment Beren engages King Thingol in a dangerous tete-a-tete.

One of the most difficult issues to address was how to bring forth enough illumination in a court which is placed in a series of caves. The nature of elves, their engagement with the forest and nature, and the emotional moment, called for a much brighter, airier landscape. And this was just the start. From costume design to architectural considerations, colour balancing to model referencing, the various logistical hurdles to be managed began to mount…

BRUSHES
■ Winsor & Newton Kolinsky Sable and REKAB Kolinsky Sable watercolour brushes
■ Masterstroke filberts
■ Squirrel hair blender
■ Ox hair flat

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QUICKENING THE PACE
Much of the colour structure of the image is established with acrylic washes during the initial colour/value lay-in. Acrylic dries rapidly allowing for fast, intuitive changes and experimentation. It also helps the quick build-up of layers, both opaque and transparent.

UNDER CONTROL
My workhorse brushes are the fairly small filberts and rounds used to produce my smaller paintings. The dense visual information and complex lighting and colour changes through the painting, and require a high degree of control over intimate surfaces that these small brushes afford.

Step by Step: From sketchbook doodles to full-blown composition

1 IN THE BEGINNING...
Even at this large a scale for the final art, my pictorial problem-solving process begins in small, abstract sketches. Shown here are the initial studies and a larger concept pitch to the client. This doodle later deviated from the stereotypical vertical architecture elements and opened the door to curving masses, design and light.

2 DRAWING OUT THE SCENE
With my model and element references all gathered, shot and considered, the transfer of the preliminary drawing begins on to the final linen. Even though I'd executed a smaller version of this drawing on paper (60x75cm), every head, figure and detail needed to be redrawn and embellished to work at the full scale of 150x280cm.

3 AND NOW, COLOUR!
Turning to oil paints after the acrylic washes, the real work of this image begins. Dozens of faces, hands and costumes need to be rendered and colour balanced within the architectural landscape. Many of these faces have seen three or four paint-overs to set them right in value, colour, detail and design.

Pencil

DEPICT MUSCLE GROUPS ACCURATELY

BRYNN METHENEY continues her series on animal anatomy by revealing how complex muscle groups can be simplified, to help build up an animal's form

Vertebrate anatomy is consistent and as you study, you'll notice that muscle groups between different animals are similar, if not the same. Just like with the skeletons in my previous lesson, it's only the shapes and sizes that are exaggerated and despite a few differences, vertebrate bodies all share the same basic muscle systems.

When drawing out muscle studies of animals, it's important to start out with a wireframe and then basic skeleton gesture. Using a harder lead for this will help keep the drawing light and workable as you move forward with your muscle study. You'll notice that my canid skeleton isn't detailed, but the gesture and proportions are in place so that I can build on top of it with my red Col-Erase pencil. These pencils are great because you can easily range from dark to light.

You'll notice that these pencils do wear down quickly. If you're drawing from life, it's a good idea to have a few ready to go with sharpened tips, just so you can switch them out quickly and not waste time sharpening.

You'll notice that once I have my skeleton in place, I lay in basic muscle groups. As you study more animal and human anatomy, you'll begin to look for these landmarks in your drawing.

Brynn specialises in creature design, fantasy illustration and visual development for film, games and publishing. She lives and works in Oakland, California. www.brynnart.com

MATERIALS
- **2H and HB Caran D'ache Graffwood pencils**
- **Acid-free sketchbook paper**
- **Red Col-Erase pencil**
- **Kneaded eraser**

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 6 now!

1 Create a wire frame
We need a skeleton to attach these muscles to, so I begin with my 2H pencil and lay out a quick gesture. This is of a canid (a dog) walking. I'm not worried about detail; I just want the shape, proportion and motion.

Wire frames are the easier way to jot down an animal's pose. This technique is not only useful for foundation drawing like this, but also life drawing at the zoo.
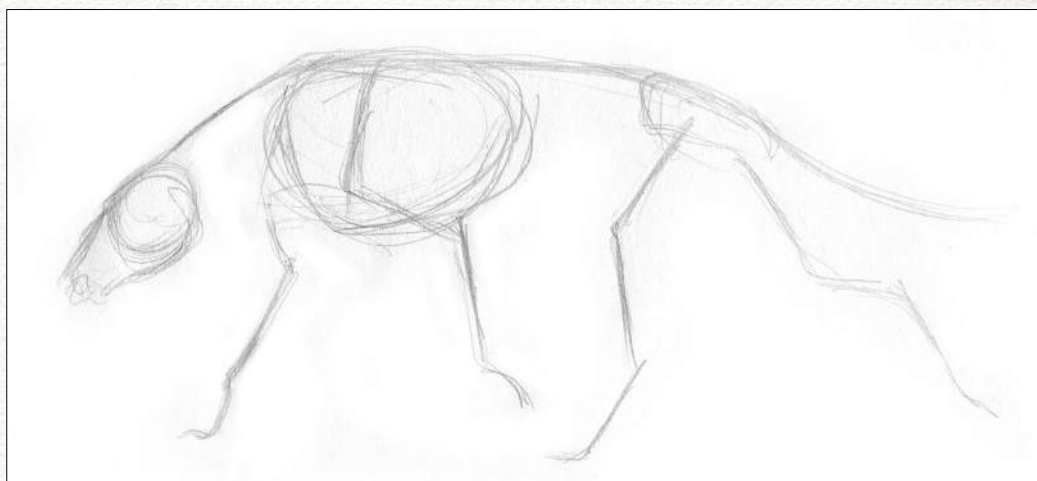
2 Add a bit of detail
Now that I've got my wireframe in place, I can introduce a few details. These details are what I call landmark bones, such as the scapula, the ribs and the great trochanter. These are bones where muscle groups attach.

I keep my touch light here still. I'm only looking for landmarks that'll help inform where my muscles need to attach to the skeleton.
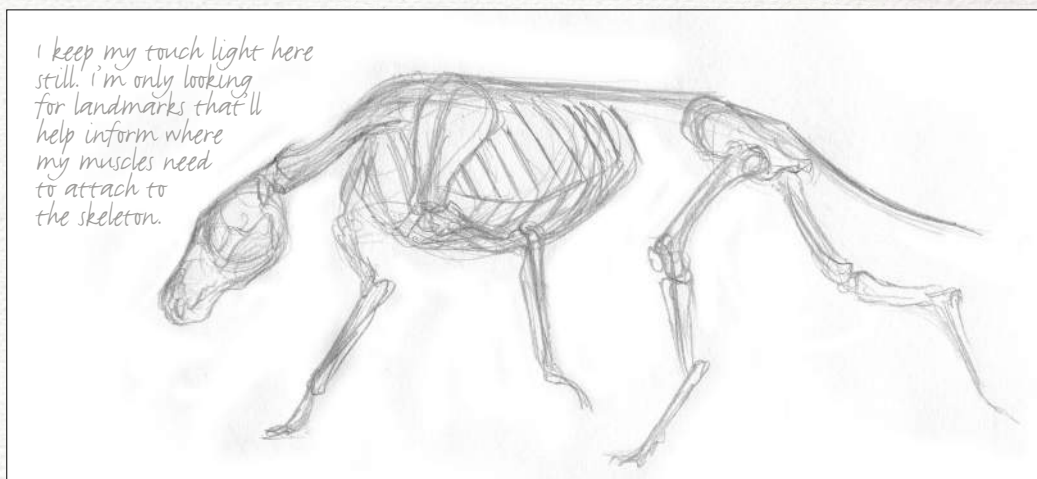
ARTIST INSIGHT
DRAW THROUGH FORMS
It's important to not get caught up on the edge of the subject. Remember that what you're drawing is a living, breathing animal and it exists in 3D space. Draw around and through those forms to add more weight and volume.
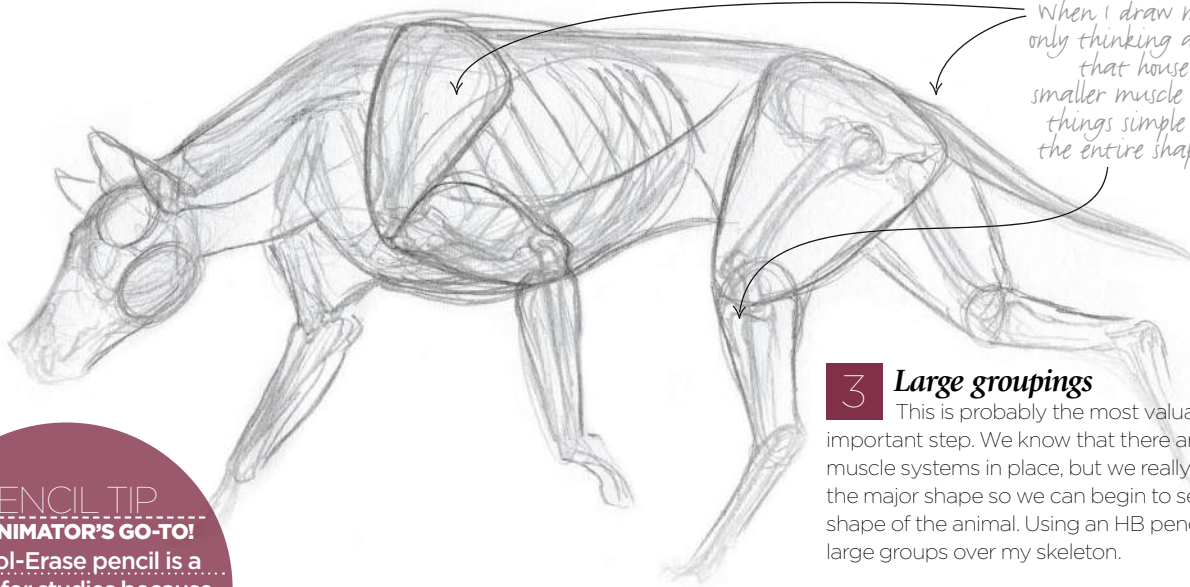
When I draw muscle groups, I'm only thinking about large shapes that house lots of different, smaller muscle shapes. This keeps things simple and helps you see the entire shape of the animal.

3 Large groupings

This is probably the most valuable and important step. We know that there are complicated muscle systems in place, but we really just want to find the major shape so we can begin to see the whole shape of the animal. Using an HB pencil, I lay in those large groups over my skeleton.

**PENCIL TIP**

THE ANIMATOR'S GO-TO!
The Col-Erase pencil is a perfect for studies because it's waxy and allows for light and dark sketching. It comes in a range of colours.
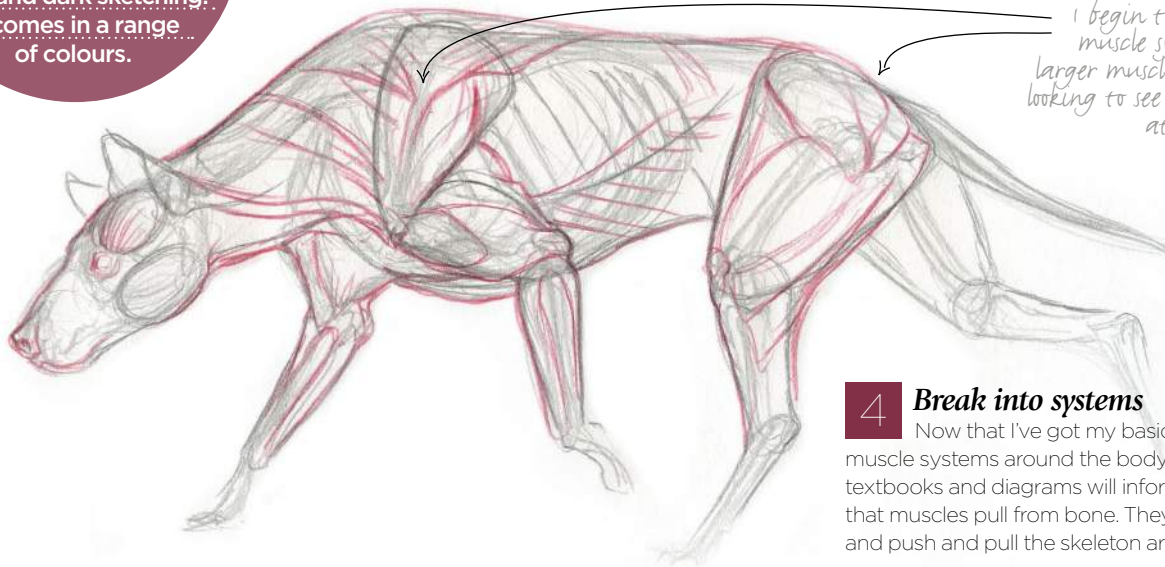
I begin to find those smaller muscle systems inside of the larger muscle groups. I'm always looking to see where the muscle is attached to the bone.

4 Break into systems

Now that I've got my basic shape, I find those muscle systems around the body. This is where textbooks and diagrams will inform you. Remember that muscles pull from bone. They're directly attached, and push and pull the skeleton around.
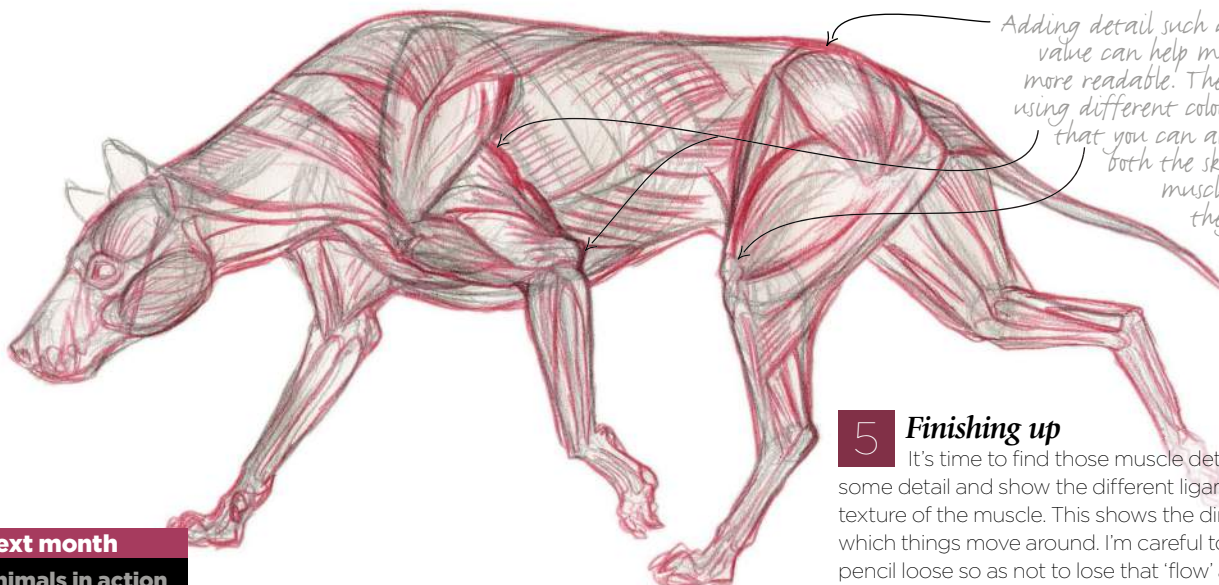
Adding detail such as texture and value can help make your study more readable. The advantage of using different colours in pencil is that you can always reference both the skeleton and the muscles, to see where they're attached.

5 Finishing up

It's time to find those muscle details. I add some detail and show the different ligaments and texture of the muscle. This shows the direction in which things move around. I'm careful to keep my pencil loose so as not to lose that 'flow' as I draw. 🌑

Next month

Animals in action

First Impressions

Lindsey Look

Learn why this artist likes the challenge of painting something that doesn't exist...

Where did you grow up, and when did you realise you had a talent for art?
I grew up in Connecticut, US. I honestly can't remember a time when I wasn't drawing, painting or making something. I wouldn't exactly say that I was talented at it, just persistent. When I went to grade school, I became a highly sought partner for anything involving posters or art projects. That's when I began to realise I had a knack for it, and knew at that point that I wanted to make a career out of art somehow.

Did your upbringing influence your style of painting in any way?
Probably. My parents encouraged hard work, so I've always been something of a perfectionist. I think it's likely attributed to the highly rendered quality of my work. I actually love that loose, more painterly approach that many artists have, but I always feel this compulsive need to paint in thin layers and smooth everything out.

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THE BLOODFORGED
Lindsey painted this for Erin Lindsey's second book in the author's high-fantasy series.

What's the appeal of sci-fi and fantasy art over, say, modern-day imagery?
I find the creativity and imagination that needs to be put into elements of the painting which don't exist or can't exist really appealing. It's not enough for me to just paint something I can take a photograph of, or see sitting before me. I want to solve the visual problem of figuring out what something fantastical would look like.

> 66 The day I left my job so I could focus on freelancing was one of the biggest highlights 99

How valuable was your internship with Dan Dos Santos?
Invaluable. There's no better education than working in the field with someone who knows the business inside and out. Dan taught me how to make invoices, gesso boards, hire models and shoot reference… everything. Having someone there to walk me through it made it much less daunting and sped up my learning process. It was also nice to have someone to hang out with and discuss industry-related topics on a weekly basis.

REDEEMER
The cover art for CE Murphy's book was based on the classic Rosie the Riveter poster.

What's been the highlight of your career so far? Any low points?
The day I left my job so I could focus full time on freelancing was one of the biggest highlights. Being able to support myself while having complete control over how I make my living is immensely satisfying. I've had plenty of low points too. Any time I don't have a few jobs lined up I start worrying that my entire career is about to come crashing down around me.

What's been your most challenging commission or assignment?
Without a doubt, my first book cover. I was interning for Dan at the time, and he called and asked if I wanted to do a cover he couldn't fit into his schedule. I said, "Absolutely!" and he said, "Great, they need it in two weeks." I was still working my retail job full time, and I just about had a nervous breakdown. But I pushed through it, and with Dan's reassurances and guidance I was able to deliver the cover just in time. And the art director called and left the most wonderful voicemail about the cover that I still have saved on my phone.

Have you noticed more demand for your art? What can you attribute this to?
Yes, definitely. I think it's a snowball effect: the more work you do, the more exposure you get, the more interest in your work is generated. I'd also like to think I've improved over the years.

What advice would you give to your younger self?
I would have told myself that graduating college wasn't the end-all to my art education. I had this misconception that I'd start getting work right out of college, and it just wasn't the case. I had a lot more learning to do. I think I've learned just as much – if not more – working in the field than I did in college. My process, technique and the business aspect of what I do is always evolving.

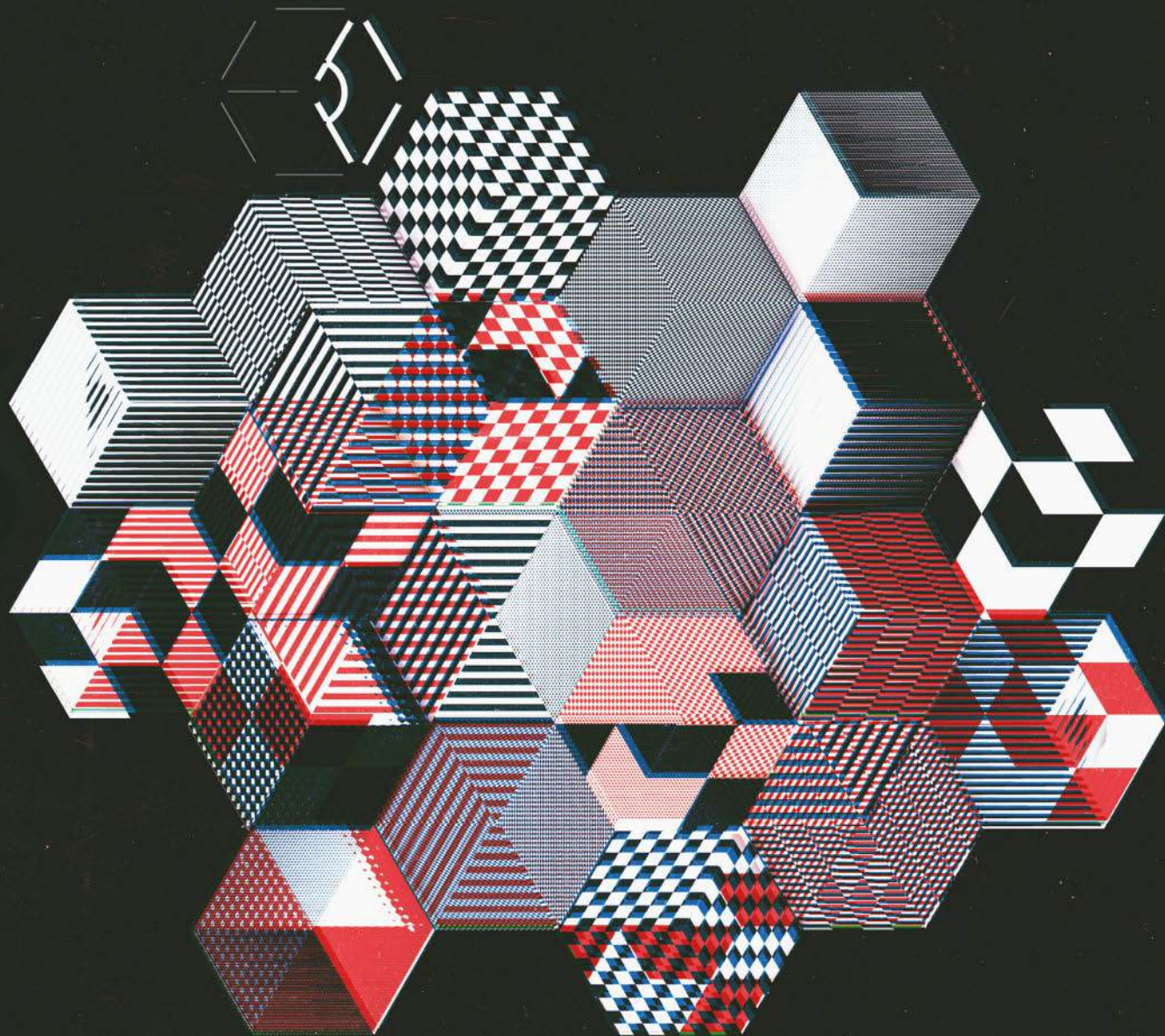**How would you sum up your work, in under 10 words?**
Colourful and detailed fantasy, featuring strong heroines.
Lindsey has created sci-fi and fantasy art for a range of clients, including Wizards of the Coast, Applibot and Penguin Books. www.lindseylook.com

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