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# NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS **ImageFX**

**PHOTOSHOP**

## **PAINT A PORTRAIT**

14 tips on using colour to create vibrant faces

**ART & ADVICE**

**ILM FILM STUDIO OPENS UP ITS ART DEPARTMENT**

TAKE YOUR FIRST STEPS INTO 3D WITH ZBRUSH

**BUILD A LIBRARY OF CUSTOM BRUSHES**

**BE BOLD WITH**

# **BLACK & WHITE**

**Karla Ortiz** inspires you to explore the power of values in greyscale art

*"During the event, students eat, sleep, and breathe the business of art"*

Start getting paid, on page 20

**Future**

**WORKSHOP**

## **WORK WITH LIVE MODELS**

Take your figure painting to the next level with these tips



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# Welcome... to B&W: take two



We had such a great response to issue 126's exploration into the gorgeous world of greyscale, that we couldn't wait to start on our second black and white cover. Working in B&W is useful because it forces you to think about values and what-not, but there's also something uniquely striking about it. A poet might wax wofty about it revealing the quintessence of an artist's intent... thank goodness I am not a poet.

I am, however, chuffed to bits to have worked with Karla Ortiz for our cover. Tasked to make good with some of my vague babblings of "skilled assassin", "black woman", "cool dagger" and "big window", Karla painted a phenomenal piece for you to recreate on page 62. (Don't you just love the assassin's attitude? So cool.)

Flick to page 70 now and there's a reclining lady awaiting! Stéphane Richard uses Keyshot, ZBrush and Photoshop – and lessons learnt from Old Masters – to create an image rich with detail. It's the most sumptuous painting I've seen for a while, and the workshop is a fascinating look into how he achieved it.

Talking of ZBrush, we're kicking off a new series on the software on page 68, as we're aware that competence in 3D is becoming more expected of concept artists these days. But, whether you're going pro or not, getting your hands digitally dirty with virtual clay is great fun. And to bring a little colour into proceedings, check out Loish's art on page 42 and the workshop on colour and light on page 84.

*Beren*

**Beren Neale, Acting Editor**  
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*Our special cover for subscribers this issue.*



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"JJ Abrams wanted to do as much practically as possible. But digital was the glue that kept it together"  
ILM's James Clyne on The Force Awakens

## Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART



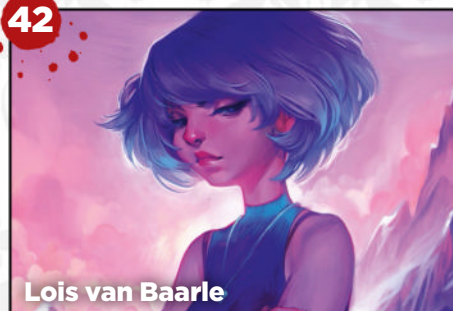
See page 8 for the best new art ➡➡

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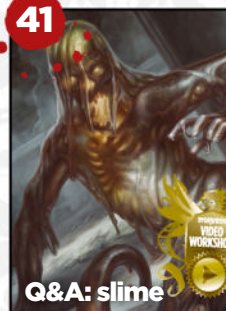
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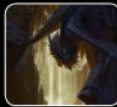
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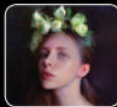
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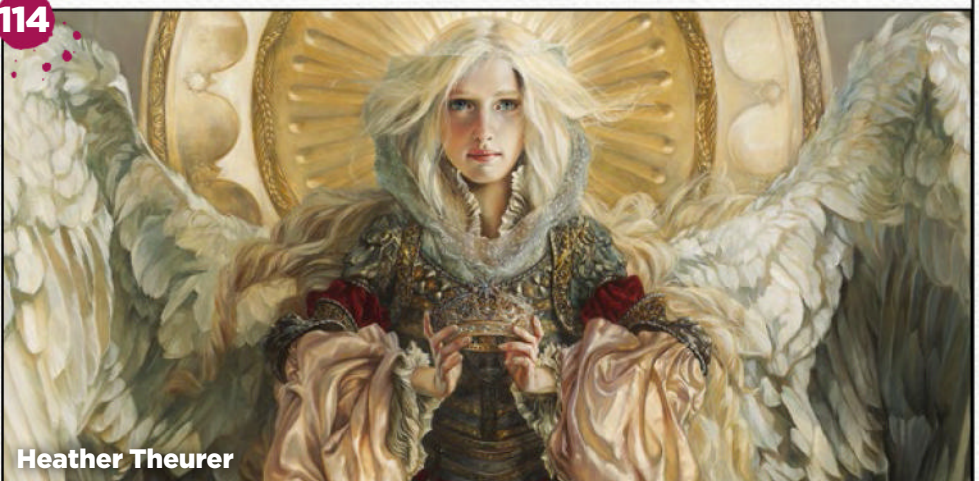
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Heather Theurer





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**ImagineFX**

# Resources

Getting hold of all of this issue's videos, artwork and brushes is quick and easy. Just visit our dedicated web page at <http://ifxm.ag/crowning134glory>

**OVER 10 HOURS**  
of workshop and Q&A videos to watch and learn from!

## WORKSHOP VIDEOS

### Paint a figure using values

Karla Ortiz reveals her process, as she creates a dramatic monochrome masterpiece.



### 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/crowning134glory>
- 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.

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**ImagineFX**

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**NEXT ISSUE ON SALE**  
**FRIDAY 22 APRIL 2016**

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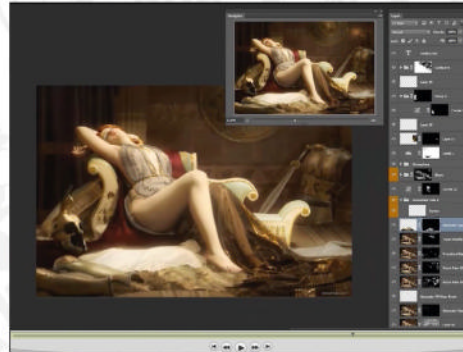
# EXCLUSIVE VIDEO TUTORIAL!

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

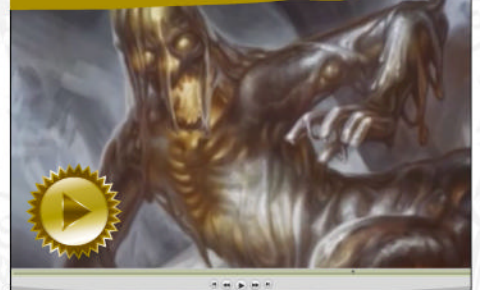


## Stéphane Richard

Learn how to take lessons from the Old Masters into your digital painting process, and mix 2D with 3D art, to create an engaging neoclassical-inspired painting.  
**Plus WIPs, brushes and final image**

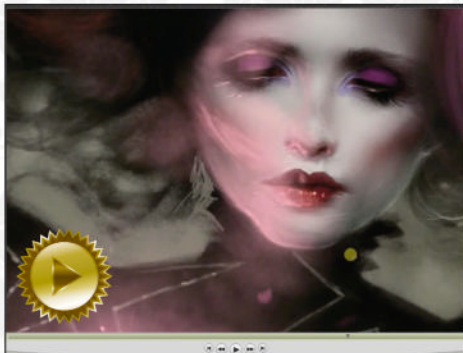


## Q&A VIDEOS



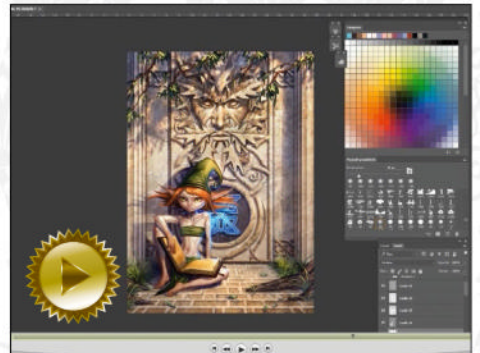
## Alix Branwyn

Understand subsurface scattering and specular highlights, in order to create slime.  
**Plus WIPs and final image**



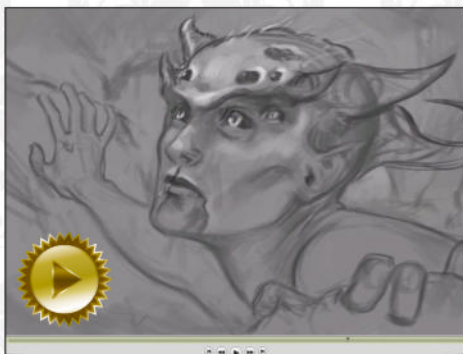
## Mélanie Delon

See how to use a custom brush and play around with Layer Opacity to create effects to help paint a convincing magic wand. You will, of course, need to add sparkles, too.  
**Plus WIPs and final image**



## Sara Forlenza

Use Photoshop's Bevel and Emboss styles to create decorative stone carvings.  
**Plus WIPs and final image**



## Alix Branwyn

Think about your character's background story – the "how" – before painting, and look for specific references, in order to create a believable and compelling mutant.  
**Plus WIPs and final image**



## John Liberto

The concept artist serves up a tasty dish of Photoshop techniques for painting futuristic art, in Sci-Fi Design Pack.

**AND ALL THIS!** Detailed workshops with essential advice from pro artists, including David Braggalla, Michelle Hoefener, Patrick J Jones, Wangjie Li, Anand Radhakrishnan, Bayard Wu and Donglu Yu.

## 20 CUSTOM BRUSHES, INCLUDING...

### SAMPLED BRUSH 10 2

Karla Ortiz prefers to use this for hard edges and large block-ins.

### OIL BLENDER

Stéphane Richard uses this to refine blurred edges and blend colours.

### SAMPLED BRUSH 17 3

This brush is used for painting skin and mixing colour by Wangjie Li.





# Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART



## Eva Soulu

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**MEDIA:** Painter, Photoshop, ArtRage



When asked what she does for a living, Eva always has the same response:

"Storytelling," she says.

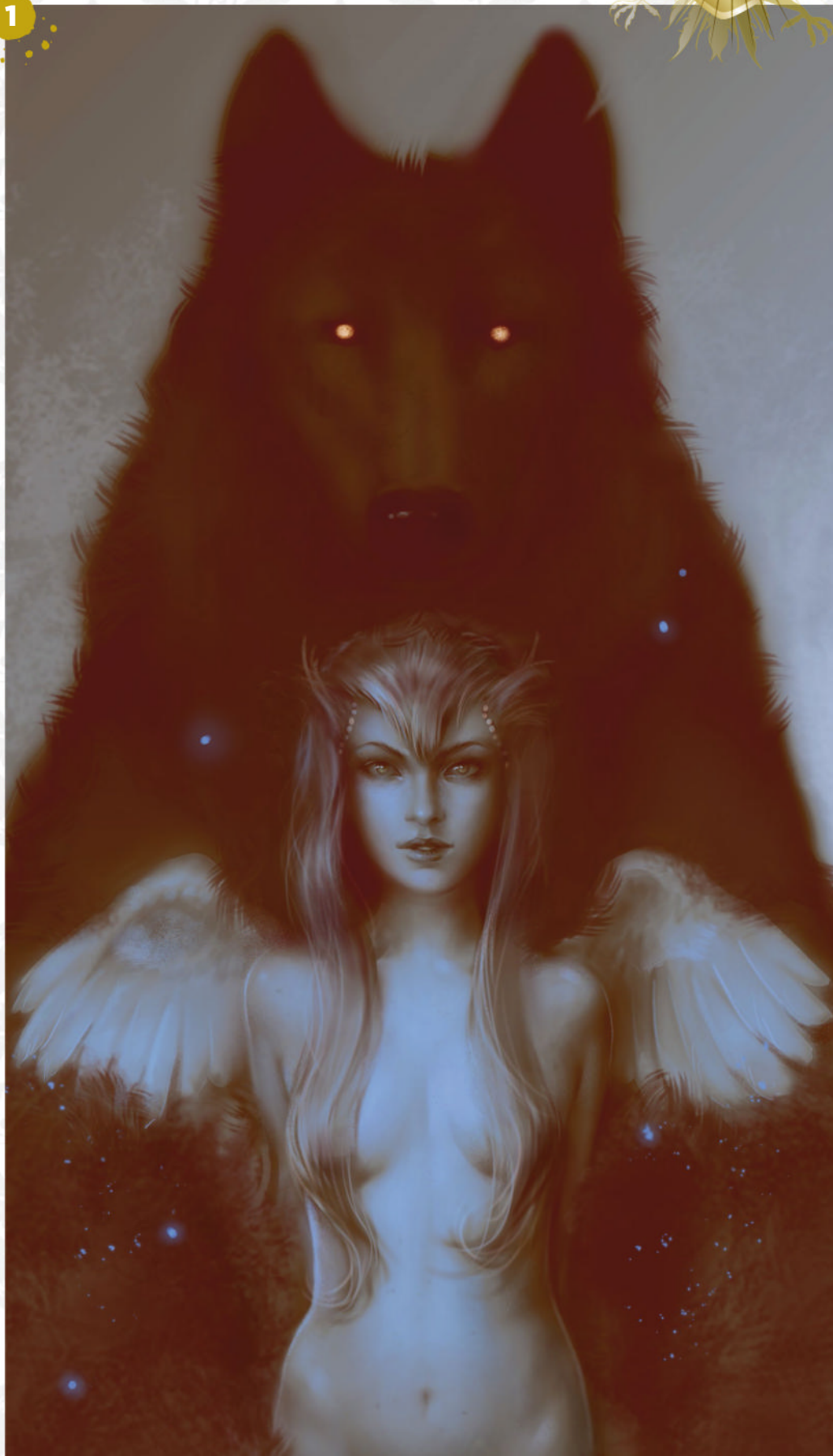
"Regardless if it's about

a painting or a novel, story comes first."

Before beginning an illustration she explores her characters, and asks what's happened to them prior to the moment she's preparing to paint. This meticulous approach leads to an acute understanding of small details and mood, and creates a stronger impact.

"In the past few years I barely touched traditional media, but that's about to change," reveals Eva. "There's an amazing potential in mixing both digital and traditional mediums, and I'm eager to explore it."

1



**1 METAMORPHOSIS** "Bird and Bearwolf - a pair of troublemakers from one of my fairy tales. These two were inspired by real people. The hidden treasure of stories is that even when the people disappear, the story remains, recovers and lives on."

**2 LEADING YOU HOME** "Here's Alesya, starship navigator from my sci-fi novel series. The first book, Vestnik was published last year. I love to work on patterns and futuristic design, anything that requires a detailed work feels like meditation and builds up focus. It goes well with coffee."





## Artist crit

**Miles Johnston admires  
Eva's painting style...**



"Eva has a real eye for detail and polish, which combined with her use of bold graphic compositional elements makes her work eye-catching and satisfying. I especially enjoy the muted value range in *Metamorphosis*."



**Alexander Gustafson**

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Alexander grew up in the icy mountains of Vermont, where he enjoyed drawing stories and playing D&D to ward off the cold. "I also

spent hours in those formative years admiring the works of modern masters like Todd Lockwood, Chris Van Allsburg, James Gurney, and Brom," he reveals.

All of this compelled Alexander to seek out a career in fantasy illustration, where he has the freedom to create worlds and tell stories with pictures.

After graduating from Savannah College of Art and Design in 2008 with a masters degree in illustration, Alexander continues to pursue his passion for sci-fi, fantasy and steampunk art in the rainy, yet thankfully warmer climes of Seattle.

**1 HUNTER OF THE WINDS** "This was a lot of fun to paint. I was inspired by the Mongolian eagle hunters. Griffins have always been a favourite fantasy beast of mine."

**2 THE LIVING CORE** "This image was done for Todd Lockwood's 2015 fall SmArt School class. Sci-fi has always been a huge part of my life ever since seeing Star Wars as a child. This image is about a woman who's been integrated into the ship's control core."







**IMAGINEFX CRIT**



"Once you've taken in the detailing of Alexander's fantastic-looking griffin, you notice that the artist has introduced a humorous touch of juxtaposition between the giant bird and the winged messenger that it dwarfs."

Cliff Hope,  
Operations Editor



**Ryan Richmond**

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Although Ryan's artistic foundation is in traditional drawing, his digital work can be traced back to the days of Microsoft Paint, which marked the beginning of his love affair with digital art.

"I grew up with a mouse in my hand 'painting' these strange, pixelated images. I scare myself sometimes when I look back at them," the artist admits. Eventually, he stumbled upon speed-painting videos, and was immediately enamoured with them, prompting him to pick up his first tablet.

"It wasn't until a few years ago, though, that I gave myself to the craft," he says. "Ever since, I've been painting, following other artists, experimenting with different styles and techniques, and falling in love with art all over again."

**IMAGINEFX CRIT**



"The unusual and dramatic angles are striking in Ryan's digital paintings, but he's backed that up by using light and shadow in emphatic fashion. I'd love to see more of his sci-fi work as well."

Beren Neale,  
Acting Editor

1



2



**1 RETURNING HOME** "This image was one of my more labour-intensive ventures. With a 3D base model that I created using SketchUp, I detailed the heck out of this piece through painting and texturing, as I sought to reach a moody, yet realistic tone."

**2 LAST FRONT** "This image was done as the box art for a WWII card game called Last Front. I referenced old war propaganda posters and artists such as NC Wyeth, because I wanted to create a striking and unique image that would draw in the viewers and stand out on store shelves."

**3 AN INVERTED REALITY** "This image pays homage to the book *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*. The idea was to create an illustration based on a single, obscure phrase that would leave it to the viewers to come up with their own stories."

**4 BATTLE IN THE CLOUDS** "This was a fairly early creation of mine. I grew up drawing dragons and other strange fantasy creatures, so naturally I wanted to create an illustration based around that foundation. This was another breakthrough image, because as I really felt that I was starting to get a handle on digital painting."

© Ploxy Games



3



4





**Amanda Kiefer**

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Originally from northern California, Amanda now lives in Los Angeles and works as a freelance concept artist and

illustrator. She tells us that some of her recurring themes include diverse characters with strong personalities, bright colours and pastels, and a blending of fantasy and sci-fi.

"I focus on themes of emotion and personality," Amanda says, which she portrays both in her characters, and the lighting and environments surrounding them. "My look is realism with a hint of stylisation and designs that are outside the box. I blend dynamic silhouettes with subtle features and details to make my designs and illustrations stand out."

1



2



**1 SWAMP ENCOUNTER** "This piece started out as a speedpaint done for a Facebook group, and was inspired by my love for the horror genre. I wanted it to look like an explorer had encountered an all-powerful, mysterious, terrifying being. Who is she - and who was she?"

**2 THE PATHWAY TO SYZYG** "This was used as a story beat to flesh out the world I'm currently building. I used a photograph as a base for the scene. Here, Borea the water mage leads the protagonists to Syzygy, which has been hidden away and protected by magic."



## Kiri Leonard

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Kiri grew up surrounded by nature and farm animals in the tiny village of Boeslum in Denmark. She left her home country to pursue an illustration career in New York, and now lives in Austin, Texas where she now thrives working in her dream job as a full-time illustrator.

The artist says that she's drawn to the quirky and whimsical, which along with her upbringing has influenced her artwork. "Recurring themes in my art reflect a passion for the world of fairies," she says, "a deep interest in fairy tales as well as an inherent fondness of Nordic myth and folklore."

1



### 1 THE LITTLE MERMAID'S HALLOWEEN

"All she wanted for Halloween was to be a human. This was painted for an ArtOrder challenge and was selected as one of the pieces to go into the ArtOrder Inspiration Art Book, which was a milestone for me."

2 THE FAIRY RESCUE "It's difficult to find your own voice in art. This was an attempt at finding mine. I love fairies and nature, mice and pine cones, and moss and... well, stir it all together and you have a pile of things I love!"

2





**Nagy Norbert**

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Concept artist and illustrator Nagy says his obsession with art began when he was at school and saw some students making portraits in the street for money. "After that, I had to try to draw something. I made a lot of sketches, mostly aliens or robots, and more fantasy-related stuff."

He's glad he did, because when he finished his studies Nagy received a job offer from Gameloft Romania, and it kick-started his career. After three years at Gameloft he joined a smaller company, where he continues to create concept art for mobile games.

"I think I'm lucky to have a job related to what I love to do in my free time," he says, "and I hope that one day I'll have the chance to work in the film industry as a concept artist."

**IMAGINEFX CRIT**



"Nagy's art taps into the power of nature, but doesn't fall into the trap of simply showing giant beasts on the rampage. After all, who wouldn't want to share the warmth of a campfire with a giant gorilla?"

**Daniel Vincent,**  
Art Editor

**1 GUERRILLA WARFARE** "Here, I tried to hint at more of a story, without straying too far into King Kong territory. I love to think about our relationship with nature - in this case a gorilla, a word that can be associated with freedom fighters."

**2 EVANGELION REDESIGN** "I started this with the aim of redesigning a monster from Evangelion, but it turned out to be just another giant monster artwork that I really enjoyed doing."

**3 CROW GOD** "This was a 30-minute speed painting, which is a great exercise for practising how to draw something fast and original."





2



3









2

## **Krisztián Tejfel**

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**MEDIA:** Photoshop



Krisztián is a painter and photographer who focuses on painting portraits of women. He trained as a traditional artist, and

began exploring digital painting a few years ago.

The artist often leaves his creations with an unfinished look and says that his female portraits are characterised by their melancholic look with a pinch of surrealism.

## **IMAGINEFX CRIT**



"Making the leap from traditional media to the digital canvas looks to have been a pretty seamless exercise for Krisztián. His depiction of his characters' skin straddles the stylised and lifelike – that's a neat trick!"

**Beren Neale,**  
Acting Editor

**1 GIRL** "This is a photo study, done pretty quickly, but I think the look in the little girl's eyes is very powerful. It's radiating emotion."

**2 SZAFFI** "In this image I wanted to draw attention to human-animal relationships, to show how much we overposition ourselves and how animals are slowly becoming more 'human' than ourselves."

## **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.

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# ARTIST NEWS, SOFTWARE & EVENTS ImagineNation

AT THE CORE OF THE DIGITAL ART COMMUNITY

Kirsten Zirngibl's The Platform. The artist says last year's 1FW gave her confidence to go out on her own.



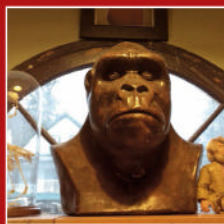




## TRIBUTE TO ENGLAND

We speak to those who were influenced by the *White Dwarf* and *Magic: The Gathering* artist Wayne England, who has recently passed away.

Page 25



## I'VE GOT MY EYE ON YOU

A death mask of Bobo the Gorilla keeps watch over the studio of Greg Ruth, which embraces clutter but in that inspirational way that makes it perfectly okay.

Page 26



## THINK BIG, WIN BIG!

Syn Studio's latest competition encourages artists to look beyond our world and visualise alien landscapes. Enter to win tablets, training sessions and more!

Page 28



All photography @ Loaine Flegal and Kirsten Zirngibl

One Fantastic Workshop is a four-day workshop and symposium focusing on helping artists thrive as independent creators.

# Taking care of business

**Cash rich** One Fantastic Workshop's aim is help you turn your art into a profitable business. **Alice Pattillo** follows the money trail

"With freelance rates either stagnating or decreasing across the industry it's important for artists to be business savvy," says concept artist Peter Mohrbacher, who

along with fantasy painter Sam Flegal has co-founded One Fantastic Workshop (1FW) to address the issue.



Last year marked the first four-day workshop and symposium in Nashville, Tennessee. While most art workshops teach art skills almost exclusively, 1FW illuminates the intersection between art and business, helping students earn from their skills. "We've created a unique environment where artists can comfortably



Peter and Sam see 1FW as an investment: artists leave with the skills to make their money back and then some.



talk business and art to better learn from their peers and experts," Sam reveals.

During the event, students eat, sleep and breathe the business of art. They attend lectures, panel discussions, and one-on-ones with industry professionals, with talks extending to mundane but necessary freelance finance subjects such as tax.

## STARTING SOMETHING

"With the growing audience around our web show, One Fantastic Week ([www.onefantasticweekend.com](http://www.onefantasticweekend.com)), Sam and I thought it would be great to bring that ➔

## INDUSTRY INSIGHT

### KIRSTEN ZIRNGIBL

*Here's what the artist gained from the 2015 workshop*

#### Can you sum up the most important aspect of 1FW?

The workshop is more about giving you "permission" to go out on your own. There are a lot of psychological roadblocks in addition to practical ones, and the workshop addressed them.

#### How was the mentorship?

The instructor to attendee ratio was excellent, and the instructors were friendly and very approachable. There were also formalised one-on-one consultations and I got a lot out of my conversations with instructors.

#### What did you learn?

I learned that finding your business model is an evolutionary process, and something that guides you as much as you guide it. Developing a business model is like developing a personal art style, and there's a dance between the two.

#### What skills have you gained?

How to better manage social media, and how to make an elevator pitch [explaining an idea or service in a short amount of time]. I learned a lot of great leads on making and selling prints, the elements of a successful Kickstarter, social tips for convention sales and some helpful tax advice.

#### What have you done in direct response to 1FW?

I got slammed with a lot of client work right before the workshop, and have been busy making art for other people since. But I'm finally getting the high-profile clients I've wanted since I was a student, and decided to build a relationship with them before going off on my own. That way I could keep my foot in the door and have some steadier income if I need it in the future.



Kirsten is a concept artist and illustrator living in San Diego, interested in writing and world-building.

[www.kirstenzirngibl.com](http://www.kirstenzirngibl.com)





Lectures, demos, dorms and food are all provided for four days, under one roof.



➡ community into a room together,” Peter reveals. The duo learned that there are a lot of resources to help people make better art, but not a lot to help artists make a sustainable living.

“So often we find that artists are trying to make their portfolios fit a certain market, but in the process ignore their own natural talents,” says Sam. “We latch on to those talents and bring them out, giving clear actionable advice on how to proceed, both as an artist and as a salesperson. In the end we’re all in sales just as much as we’re artists.”

Each attendee has the opportunity to present their art and business plan to the workshop faculty, both in groups and one-on-ones. From crowdfunding and social media to more artistic ventures like world building, One Fantastic Workshop covers everything – even the mundane business essentials like how to deal with taxes.

## MOTIVATING MENTORSHIP

With Sam and Peter’s careers thriving, they realised that they could bring in other successful freelance artists. “Our criteria for getting mentors involved was different than most workshops. It wasn’t good enough to find people who were great artists. We needed people who had carved out a niche of experience that enabled them to operate

All mentors are great entrepreneurs with mountains of knowledge about how to grow an artistic brand from scratch.



Gavin Gray Valentine attended One Fantastic Workshop last year to help him build his fantasy art career.

independently. They’re all great artists, but they’re also great entrepreneurs with mountains of knowledge about how to grow an artistic brand from scratch.”

These mentors include Jasmine Becket-Griffith who has built her own art empire, Vanessa and Ron Lemen, and Sean



Andrew Murray – all of whom live, eat and work alongside attendees for the full duration. Illustrator and social media expert Kelly McKernan is

returning as a mentor for the second time this year, and she’s adamant that events like this are crucial to building your career.

“Everyone who attends One Fantastic Workshop – not just the faculty – brings a wealth of knowledge and varied experiences to the workshop,” she stresses.

Kelly’s lectures on social media strategy at One Fantastic Workshop are interactive and based on her own experiences. “I think it’s incredibly important to surround yourself with others who are eager to learn and share what they know, and this workshop brings that to a new level,” she says. “The faculty shares trade secrets that have meant success for each of us, and we’re there to prove that you can do it, too.”

And it’s not just the students who benefit from the workshop environment – mentors also learn a great deal. “I came away from

“It’s incredibly important to surround yourself with others who are eager to learn and share what they know”





2015 attendee Chris Casciano painted this stunning image entitled Blossoming Staff for Game Salute.



Each attendee has the opportunity to present their art and business plan together to the faculty for review, in groups or one-on-ones.

2015's workshop with an entirely new direction to take my artwork," says Kelly. "I had previously been unsure where my work fits in best."

## REAPING THE REWARDS

Holly Morningstar, a fantasy illustrator and one of last year's attendees, says that she was a little hesitant to attend the event because of the price tag, but she's glad she did. "I'm conservative when it comes to spending money on things that simply have potential value. But after a successful art festival in June, I decided to purchase the ticket. I couldn't be happier with that decision."

Thanks to the workshop, Holly has increased her earnings, netting between 20 and 25 per cent of the gross revenue she



Salesmanship, crowdfunding, social media, world building and even taxes for artists are covered in talks from the experts, alongside art advice.

earned last year before the end of January. "I went into the workshop with minimal sales knowledge, even though I've been stumbling my way through conventions since 2013. I left with the belief that the art of selling is something everyone can learn with persistence, work and experience. I felt like even someone painfully shy like myself can make some magic happen."

Holly credits Peter and Sam's workshop with giving her the strength to believe in herself and her work, and to be more engaging at conventions. She says: "The workshop isn't potentially valuable, it's actually priceless."

One Fantastic Workshop takes place on 17-20 November at Scarrit Bennett Centre, Nashville, Tennessee. For more information about the event and to sign up for tickets visit [www.onefantasticweek.com](http://www.onefantasticweek.com).



Aspiring word builder Sasha Jones is pursuing an illustration career, and attended last year's 1FW to boost his personal development.





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White Dwarf #366 is one of the first pieces of Wayne's art David Sondered ever saw. "A light bulb moment," he says.



A Codex Assassins cover by Wayne for Games Workshop. It was particularly his cover art that inspired many of today's fantasy artists.

# Wayne England

**This is England** Three artists pay tribute to the illustrator who inspired them and many others

**The fantasy art community was shaken by the death of Wayne England, Games Workshop and Magic: The Gathering illustrator, who died on 9 February 2016.**

Many artists, including David Sondered, an illustrator at Fantasy Flight Games, first stumbled upon his work in the pages of old copies of White Dwarf magazine. "Inside there was an image of white armoured spacemen using some sort of flaming weapon on aliens," David remembers. "I was immediately struck by the sleek, shiny, render. With sharp angles, strong contrasts between bright and dark. It was really influential."

Wayne's impact can be seen in many aspects of modern fantasy art, from video games to animation. His bold style resonated with aspiring artists who would inject aspects of his work into their own style. "Wayne's cover for the 3rd Edition Codex of the Chaos Space Marines was



almost hypnotic," says game artist Diego Gisbert Llorens. "He created a style so personal and dynamic, vibrant, yet full of clarity and with a strong

visual read." Diego credits Wayne with some major artistic lessons. "He was a reminder of two basic things: one, to leave something unfinished in your work, to invite the viewer to add what is missing. Second, to have fun. Wayne's work shows how much fun I think he had creating it."

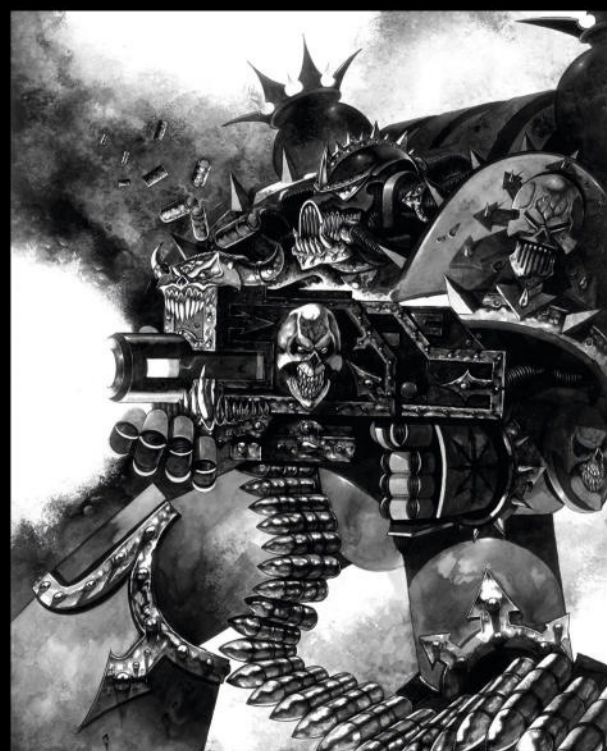
Wayne's work on the Warhammer 40K Codex had a particularly emotional impact



on illustrator Kai Lim. "His graphic composition sensibilities stayed with me," says Kai. "I enjoyed how his arrangement of subjects could be compositionally and almost forcibly two-dimensional and somewhat simpler, but still retain a cinematic quality," continues the artist. "The way the narrative is being explained is simplified, but it doesn't mean you lose depth in the concept itself."

From Wayne's work, Kai says he gained, "A reflection on design philosophy and

**“Wayne created a style so personal and dynamic, vibrant, yet full of clarity”**



"I still find his black and white work absolutely stunning," says Diego Gisbert Llorens.

exploring the psyche of many characters and environments."

David explains seeing Wayne's work in a publication was, "a light bulb realisation that you could show people these wondrous imaginary things and earn a living from it." David later got to know Wayne a little. "I told him the impact he'd had on my artistic life. He was one of my art heroes. Without him, I wouldn't be a professional artist."

Visit Wayne's tribute page and see more of his art at <http://ifxm.ag/wayne>.

All artwork © Games Workshop





The studio mascot, one of 50 death masks of Bobo the Gorilla, sits at the centre of things. It was given to me as a birthday gift. This guy may not see anything, but he's always watching. Sometimes he holds my hat for me.



The secret passage from the downstairs showroom into the sanctum sanctorum above. None shall pass save for me to that space. I say to others that it's to keep the space pure, but it's actually because I never clean it.

My work-for-kibble studio assistant, Pete, who reminds me when it's time to leave work and head in to make supper. Oddly, Pete sees the taxidermy friends as competition for my affections, despite his being still alive as a leg-up.

## Greg Ruth

**Historical haven** This Massachusetts-based artist and author's studio is steeped in local history and inevitable clutter



**I live with my family in a late 1800s Victorian, smack in the middle of Main Street in Ashfield, Massachusetts. It was built by the town doctor at the time, who worked in the apothecary building he used as his pharmacy next to it. The history of places is essential to me and I love being in a place so deeply steeped in the local lore.**

Having a workspace outside of our principal home is equally important in helping me to keep work at work, and home where it belongs. The downstairs showroom

is a bit too open and light filled, so I prefer the darker, cosier environs of the upstairs loft with its wainscoted walls and rosary window.

I work in a state of unforgivable, perpetual clutter and ever since this past summer's deadline crush to get INDEH, (my new graphic novel with Ethan Hawke due out in June), it's only gotten worse. One saving grace this created was switching from working late into the night for getting up at 5am for an early start. This change has been a revolution for my productivity, and while getting up so early to start the day is admittedly hellish at first, achieving a full

day's work before noon and not being so rundown by too many late nights has been a revelation. I'd have never finished INDEH intact working in the old way, nor would the work for it be of a quality the book deserves.

I work traditionally, but I like to finish up my pieces and organise them digitally, so having my drafting table opposite my computer station enables me to hop between them as needed. I keep a well-stocked library of artbooks and LPs on hand to help feed the effort as well.

**Greg has been making books and comics since 1993. See more at [www.gregthings.com](http://www.gregthings.com).**



Some of the work that's ready to be packed and shipped off to their new homes, some books from the shelves and if you can find it, Where's Waldo-style, a pirate's eye patch.



Another collection of incoming and outgoing work on the table top I made for cutting and packing large objects, art and also as a catch-all for all the coffee mugs and other things I can't find a place for.



A collection of some of the prints and images I pasted over my old drafting table I got from Kiki Smith's studio years back in NYC. These images turned out to be one of the most essential reminders while making INDEH that these legendary humans were also people, as simple and complex as any of us.



An actual Tom Button doll I made myself when I was working on The Lost Boy graphic novel. I had to redesign him from scratch and was having such a tough time doing so, I found the real solution was to actually make him. So yes, I'm officially now one of those weird middle-aged men who make and keep dolls. Be very afraid.

An actual life-intolerant goshawk I came across while in the middle of working on INDEH. He became my spirit animal for the project and gives me the stink eye every day I pass him first thing in the morning going upstairs to work. There's no pleasing him.







**Hatboy**

by Vaughn Pinpin



## Designing the final frontier

**Cosmic concepts** Syn Studio's director Anthony Walsh is giving illustrators the chance to become visual futurists with an out-of-this-world competition

Since being set up eight years ago, Syn Studio has grown into Canada's leading concept art school. Director Anthony Walsh believes that its competitions are a crucial part of artistic development.

Inspired by recent discoveries from the Kepler space telescope, Syn Studio's Distant Worlds contest is the school's third competition with an otherworldly theme.

"I'm a big science fiction geek!" says



Anthony. "I also love space, and I'm excited to see some well-illustrated concepts about what could be going on where we have yet to really look!"

The competition will be judged by a panel of concept artists who have worked on big-name titles including Star Wars, TRON Legacy and Mass Effect, and will give aspiring 2D illustrators an invaluable chance to see how their work measures up.

"The learning is priceless," says Anthony.

"You understand more clearly not only where you stand relative to other illustrators and what you need to work on, but also all the creative paths you didn't take."

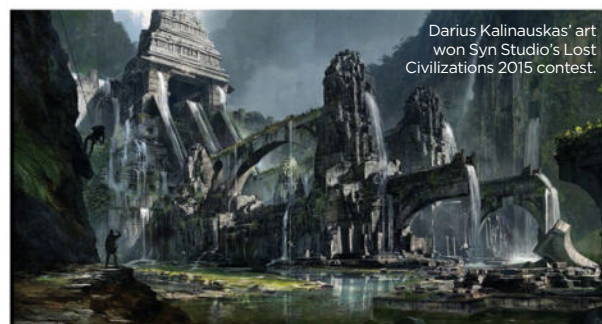
Prizes include tickets to the three-day Gathering of Masters concept art festival, as



Winning entries will demonstrate artistic skill and storytelling abilities. Eugene Shushliamin's 2015 entry set the quality bar high.

well as Wacom tablets, signed artwork and an eight-week online masterclass of your choice. Anthony and the judges are looking for well-rendered, fantastic yet convincing illustrations. "We learn by doing," says Anthony. "And if you do really well, not only do you learn a lot but you also gain recognition as an artist – and win great prizes while you're at it!"

Think you've got what it takes to make the judges sit up and take notice of your art? Then enter at <http://ifxm.ag/distant-comp>.



Darius Kalinauskas' art won Syn Studio's Lost Civilizations 2015 contest.



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# Letters

## YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS



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



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### Imagination juicer!

I've recently purchased the latest Sketchbooks special issue, and I love seeing all the work that artists begin with and use to sketch out to create their masterpieces. So much inspiration for me! I, too, am an artist and would love for my work to be shown in your magazine. Here are a few examples of my sketches.

**Daniel Bade, via email**



Reader Daniel was inspired by our recent Sketchbooks special issue.

**Beren replies** Ooh yeah, lovely stuff, thanks for sharing your sketches – I'm digging Leia's sideward glance. And ta for the Sketchbook series love. I love them, too. Getting together some true art wizards like Wes Burt, Will Murai, Charlie Bowater and Iain McCaig... it's so much fun looking at their sometimes random, sometimes incredibly tight, always thoughtful sketches. Readers, if you haven't bought your copy yet, visit <http://ifxm.ag/svol3> today!

### No CD-ROM? No worries

I'm interested in your recent Animation Artist special issue, but are all the video files, setup files and so forth only on the CD that comes with the issue, or can it be all downloaded somewhere too? We don't have a laptop with a CD-ROM drive at home, so I'm not sure how I'd get the files.

**Martin, via email**

**Beren replies** Hello Martin, you're in luck. With our recent Animation Artist special we gave away a free disc with all the files on it, but also, on page 146, there's a link to download all the goodies, too. So buy a copy of the magazine and start downloading.

### Your starter for 5

I've just started using Manga Studio 5 and I was wondering if there's a special issue of ImagineFX that covers how to use Manga Studio 5, or which issues include workshops specifically on the software?

**Michael Fair, via email**



**MISSED OUR EPIC GAME ART ISSUE?** Turn to page 48 for how to get hold of it, and other recent editions, too!



Look out for another Manga Studio 5 workshop in a forthcoming comic-themed issue of ImagineFX.

**Beren replies** Michael, it seems it's been a couple of years since we've run a Manga Studio-specific workshop (issue 95). That's not because we don't rate the software, of course. More to do with the transferability (definitely a word) of the techniques that we cover in the mainly Photoshop-based workshops. Anyway, I'm going to look into getting a nice, plump, Manga Studio workshop in our next comic issue, just for you. You're welcome!

### Help an artist out

I'm 33 years old and am finding possible paths into a design career to be very difficult. At university I worked at an award-winning branding agency – work I got because of my illustration skills. However, family circumstances required me to work from home and it began to affect my relationship with the team. So I left the agency to go self-employed.

I now need to get back into it, either as a self-employed illustrator or working back in commercial work. I've applied for so many roles, but to no avail. I feel my portfolio, or the way I apply, may be hindering me. What do I need to show in a portfolio? What kind of work do I need to create? As I was already working when in college, I never had a chance to build a good portfolio. Can you offer any advice?

**Stephen Timms, via email**

**Beren replies** Hey Stephen. Sounds like you're in the middle of some tempestuous seas. Yet it's good to hear that within the wave of self-doubt, you still have confidence in your illustration skills. Your conviction in what you're doing is essential to weather this particular storm.

Be careful of making excuses about finding time to update your portfolio, though. There's always a few minutes a day you could spend working on your art, selecting appropriate pieces for the company you want to work for, and getting both your physical and online portfolios (see page 91 for a good online portfolio option).

For some great online art courses, check out next issue where we'll look at the best ones around. For more of the business side of being an artist, see page 20 to see what events like One Fantastic Workshop are all about. Good luck Stephen.



Your art news that's grabbed our attention



**Jesús Gonzalo**  
**@Jess\_Gonzalo**

“My tribute to Creed.”



**Mat Sadler**  
**@matsadlerart**

“I think this book cover is almost done.”



**Katie Wakelin**  
**@SepiaWren**

“Inspired by Julie Dillon's article in March's ImagineFX. Wanted to evoke childhood adventures.”



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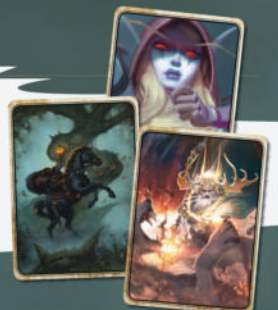


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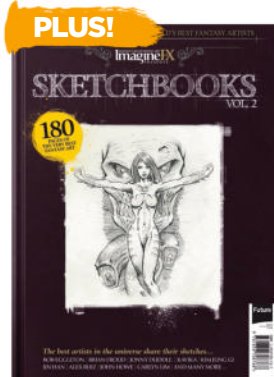
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# Artist Q&A

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## The NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX panel

### Michelle Hoefener



Michelle has worked in the gaming and entertainment industries for six years now. And she's been painting and publishing her work online for well over 15 years.

[www.patreon.com/michellehoefener](http://www.patreon.com/michellehoefener)

### David Braggalla



Dave is a graphic designer and illustrator from Stockholm who works in both digital and traditional mediums. He's currently employed at games company Riot Minds.

[www.pixelhuset.se](http://www.pixelhuset.se)

### Sara Forlenza



Italy-based Sara is a full-time freelance illustrator. Most of her work assignments comprise book covers, and artwork for digital card games and RPGs.

[www.saraforlenza.deviantart.com](http://www.saraforlenza.deviantart.com)

### Mélanie Delon



Mélanie divides her time between working for different publishing houses and creating her own artworks, which often depict her love of fantasy characters and scenes.

[www.melaniemelon.com](http://www.melaniemelon.com)

### Alix Branwyn



Alix is a freelance illustrator for the games industry, and is based in California. Her work is primarily in fantasy and horror, with a focus towards the dark and creepy.

[www.alixbranwyn.com](http://www.alixbranwyn.com)

## Question

How can I turn a flat figure pose into a dynamic one?

*Jenine Woodhouse, Australia*



## Answer

Michelle replies



Dynamic poses are fun for the artist to create, exciting for the viewer, and can strengthen the story and composition of your illustration. They're best achieved with loose gestural thumbnails or sketches, in which you can visualise the pose, angle and composition of the character.

During the initial sketch stage, a figure can become flat or stiff, taking away from the dynamic energy and storytelling that an artist wants to create. Some common situations that can cause this include lack of depth, inaccurate perspective or foreshortening, a non-dynamic camera angle, and a pose that's not based on the beginning or ending of an action.

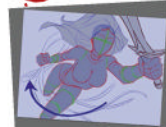
You can turn a non-dynamic pose into a dynamic one by creating gestural thumbnails. Work on top of a chosen gestural thumbnail with cylinders, blocks, volumes and perspective, before fleshing out the final pose with lighting, rendering, detail and special effects.

Wonder Woman – or any heroic character – practically demands to be placed in a dynamic pose.



## Artist's secret

### DYNAMIC ANGLES



Tilt the pose to an off-balance angle to give it motion and visual punch. Rotating the camera and horizon line also adds to the dynamism of the pose and composition of your illustration.

## Artist Q&A Need our advice?

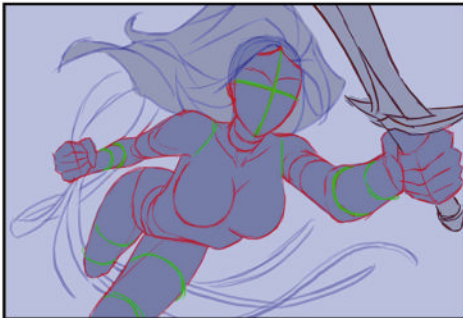
Email [help@imaginefx.com](mailto:help@imaginefx.com) with your art questions and we'll provide all the answers!



## Step-by-step: Bring your characters to life



**1** I create gestural pose thumbnails, thinking about what I want the figure to be doing, what angle I want them to be viewed from, and how I want them in the scene. I build upon the chosen sketch with volumes and forms, fleshing it out with cylinders and blocks to achieve the three-dimensional angles of the body parts.



**2** On a new layer, I build on top of the volumetric pose drawing with more detail, fleshing out the hand poses, clothing, dynamic hair groups and shapes, and dynamic accessories such as Wonder Woman's Lasso of Truth. I then clean up the detail drawing and prepare it for the painting phase and final adjustments.



**3** I block in the basic lighting with an airbrush, thinking about the volumes and how I want the lighting to affect them. Once I'm happy with this stage, I go in on top with more rendering and detail. When the rendering is finished, I add finishing effects such as motion blur to add extra motion and dynamism to the illustration.

## Question

I want to paint the Aurora Borealis without making it too fanciful or unrealistic – help!

*Ben Jones, Wales*



## Answer

Dave replies



Created when the Earth's magnetosphere interacts with the solar wind, the resulting emission of light often takes the form of ribbons or curtains of light. I'll use the curtain metaphor as we depict this beautiful phenomena.

Start by visualising a flat plane in the atmosphere of your scene, a level ribbon that winds through the sky as a river might if you raised it up into the air somehow. This will be the main spine of your aurora, so feel free to pick a shape that best suits your composition.

Paint your main aurora colours along this "ribbon in the sky". Once you have this in place,

start pulling those colours up vertically, as if it were a curtain and your main "ribbon" is the bottom hem. Use a Smear or Smudge tool, or paint with a brush. Try to keep your lines going straight up from the ground, and let them fade as they get higher. Overlap them more as you approach bends in the ribbon.

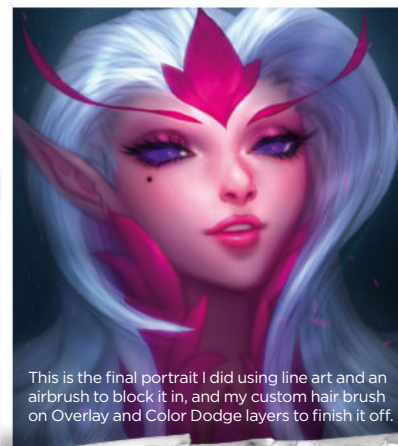
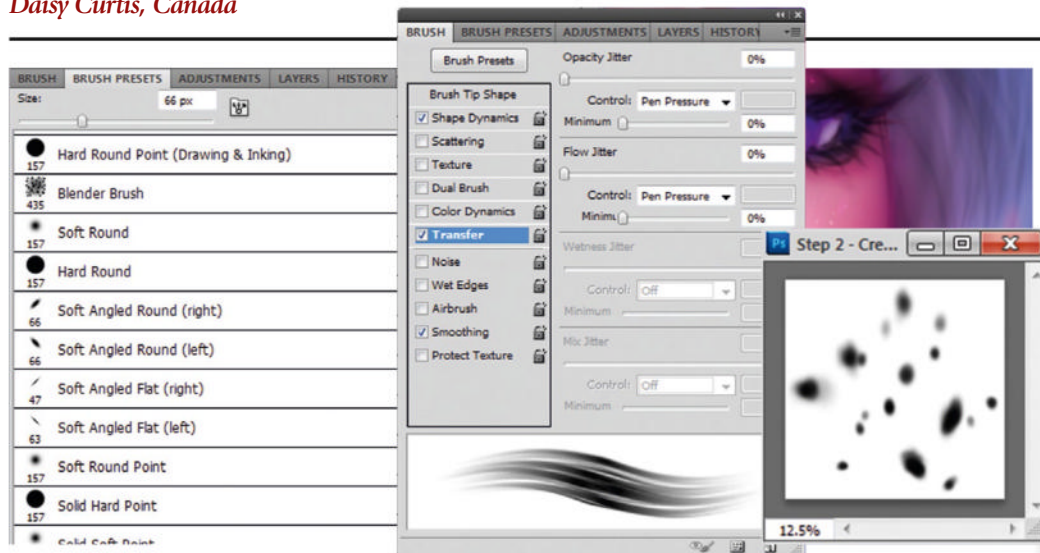
Once you're satisfied with this, alpha-lock the layer and play with painting in other colours. If I find I've been conservative with colour, I'll take my colour layer and duplicate it. I set the duplicate layer to Overlay, which can make elements look intense. I can dial this layer's Opacity up or down as required.



## Question

Can you help me build up a library of custom Photoshop brushes?

Daisy Curtis, Canada



This is the final portrait I did using line art and an airbrush to block it in, and my custom hair brush on Overlay and Color Dodge layers to finish it off.

## Answer

Michelle replies



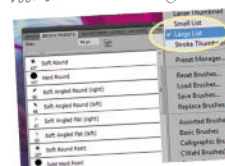
There are many free Photoshop brushes and textures online that an artist can download, which in many instances can be all an artist will need in their custom brush library. Yet creating custom brushes from your own photo textures or hand-painted samples can also come in handy if you want to create a specific effect that can make your art unique.

Here, I'm setting up a custom brush library, made up of custom and free stock brushes. I'm also creating and customising a hair brush to add to the library.

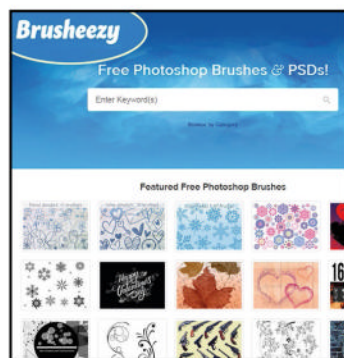
You can build your own custom Photoshop brush library by collecting stock brushes from the web, creating your own brushes from scratch, editing pre-existing brushes that come with Photoshop and organising your brushes into an easy-to-browse brush library. Here I'll explain how to create your own custom Photoshop brush library to help you save time creating awesome effects in your art.

## Artist's secret

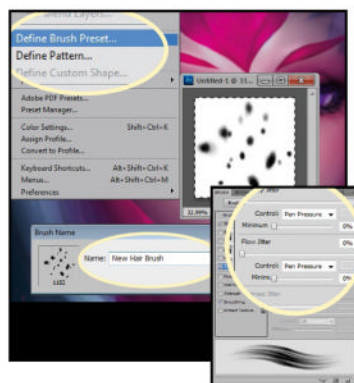
**CUSTOMISE BRUSH LIBRARY VIEWS**  
A great way to help you navigate your brush library is to customise how each brush is viewed in the library. For quick navigation of your brush library, you can switch the brush thumbnail view to small List or Large List.



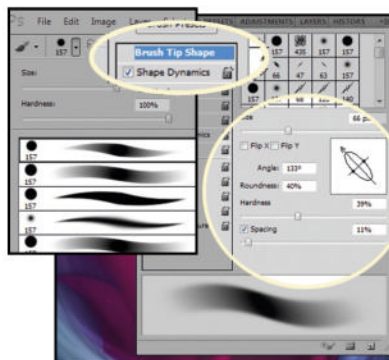
## Step-by-step: Build your custom brush library



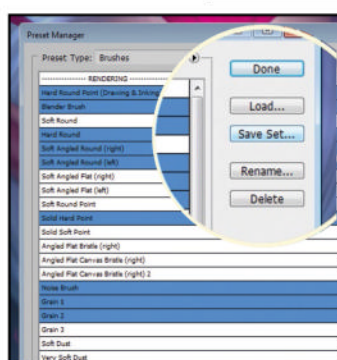
**1** One way to quickly collect a lot of useful Photoshop brushes is to download free stock ones from useful sites such as brusheezy.com and myphotoshopbrushes.com. These sites provide a wide variety of brushes and brush libraries with many different uses. When collecting brushes from the web, I select which brushes I want and create custom libraries with them.



**2** To create custom brushes, I take a photo or a custom-painted shape or texture and convert it to black and white. Then I select it with the Rectangular Marquee tool and go to Edit>Define Brush Preset and give it a useful name that will enable me to find it easily. In the Brush window I can customise the brush's settings such as Shape Dynamics, Scattering, Texture and so on.



**3** I also use Photoshop's default brushes that have extra useful customisable tip options. These can be changed dynamically with a stylus and hotkeys as I paint, such as the Hardness, Softness, Angle and Roundness. To customise a pre-existing Photoshop brush, I select it from the Brush Preset dialog and adjust its properties in the Brush Tip Shape section of the Brush window.



**4** To organise brushes into an easy-to-browse brush library, I open the Brush Presets window, click the icon in the upper-right corner and select Brush Preset Manager. From there I Ctrl+click to select each brush that I want to save into a new customised brush library and then click Save Set. I also add the name and edit the order of the brushes in the Brush Preset Manager.



In addition to the scanned pencil, I've used some favourite textures as a colour Overlay layer, and a scanned watercolour shape for a background element.



## Question

I want to mix traditional media with my digital character concepts. Any ideas?

Lex O'Brian, US

## Answer



When trying to evoke traditional methods with digital media, one of the qualities I find most difficult to reproduce is satisfying line work.

Tablets have never felt right to me for this, but scanners, on the other hand, are quite cheap these days, and scanning in some nice pencil work goes a long way towards warming up the personality of your character designs.

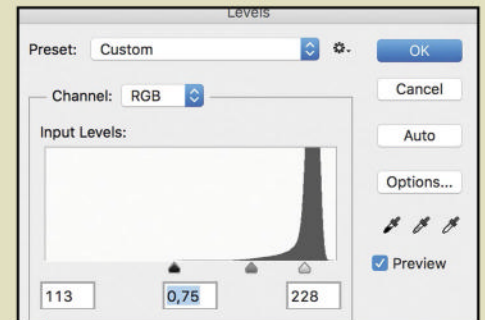
My method is to scan in my pencil art, and then colour it using digital watercolour brushes in Photoshop. My technique was inspired by William Stout's breakdown of how Rackham and Dulac created their ink and watercolour work. I isolate my scanned pencil work in Photoshop as an alpha channel so that I can use Layer Effects to tint it and give it a touch of bleed. I use a separate layer for main colours, with an Overlay layer of texture on top of that.

I think the resulting effect has a lot of appeal, and stands out well from the more typical digital feel.

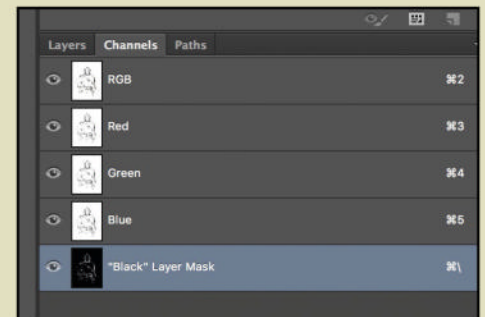


My father's 70s Pentel mechanical pencil and Canson 1557 Croquis 120g paper give me the sketching feel that I've yet to recreate with digital tools.

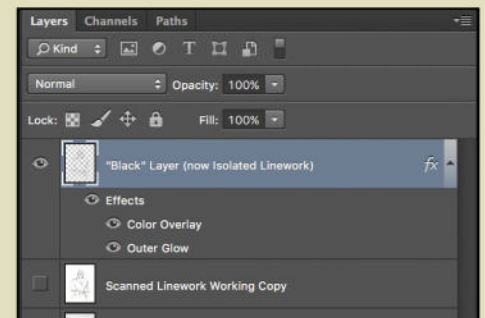
## Step-by-step: Combine traditional with digital media



**1** With your scanned pencil drawing open in Photoshop, create a working copy of your linework layer. Use Image>Adjustments>Levels... to remove as much visible paper grain as possible. This can degrade the quality of the pencils, and you might want to leave some grain visible, but it will affect the overall image colour.



**2** Create a new layer, fill it with black and click Layer Mask>Hide All. Click your adjusted line work layer, Select All and Copy it. Select the black-filled layer with the mask, and click the Channels tab. Click the Layer Mask alpha channel and paste your line work. Then choose Select All and use Image>Adjustments>Invert.



**3** Now discard the Layer Mask of the black layer. What remains will be your isolated pencil drawing. Rename this 'Linework'. Add a Layer Style>Color Overlay and select a sepia or dark red. Use the same colour for a subtle Outer Glow. Set this layer to Multiply and paint your colours on a new blank layer underneath it.



## Question

Please explain how to depict decorative stone

Rory Earle, England

## Answer

Sara replies



To paint stonework that features interesting carvings, I need to take into account the type of stone that I want to represent, and the condition it's in. Let's take, for example, the rough stone carving that might feature prominently on a fairy's door.

First I lay down a uniform grey colour, and introduce a warm yellowish light to the scene. With a very large and textured brush I apply some brush strokes with a darker colour over the entire surface. This will begin to give it a rough stone look. I can also use a green or rust colour with the same brush to suggest the presence of moss and mud on the stone surface.

On a new layer, I paint the carving that will decorate the door, together with the face of the classic 'green man' from legend. Then I go into the Layer menu and I set the style to Bevel and Emboss, which enhances the appearance of the carving. Now I create a new layer and set it to Multiply. Because I've chosen a light yellow as the colour of my light source, I choose a dark bluish-violet colour to paint the shadows.

If the appearance of my surface isn't rough enough, I can use an additional photo texture to correct this. I would always recommend building up a library of personal photos for reference work and texture usage. Finally, I paint the many cracks and imperfections that will give a more realistic look to the stonework.



A lateral light source helps to bring out the three-dimensionality of the stonework.



I paint the intricate design of the stonework on a separate layer, in order to save time later.

## Artist's secret

THE IMPORTANCE OF CRACKS



Cracks give an extra touch of realism to ornate stonework and they can be painted relatively simply with a dark broken line. Study photographs from stone carvings to see how varied in appearance cracks can be, and in what numbers.



## Question

Help me concept a mutant

Kyle Spick, US

## Answer

Alix replies



The first step in creating any kind of mutant is to determine their origin story, their life before the mutation event took place. Whether it's a heavy dose of radiation, genetic splicing or a bit of magic, the "how" behind the mutation will inform your reference research. Don't be afraid to get specific when gathering your reference material. Mixing in elements from another particular species or exaggerating known and existing mutations can help add flavour and believability to your design.

The level of mutation you create, from as subtle as a slight shift in bone structure to

severe body form changes, will entirely depend on the needs of the story you craft. For this article, I'm going to illustrate a woman who's been bitten by a cursed spiny orb weaver, a type of spider that's striking in both form and colour.

Working in Photoshop, I began with a sketch of a human in the pose I want. Taking this approach can help you keep mindful of the flow of the forms, creating a natural mix between the human face and the mutated elements. Maintaining enough of the human form in the face can create an even more disconcerting mutant, because it can still evoke empathy in the viewer.



Altering and including additional aspects of the figure, like the hands, can help push the creep factor of your mutated human.



## Question

My magic wand effects don't look particularly magical. Any advice?

Martha Sokolowski, US

## Answer

Mélanie replies



Here I choose to paint a basic magic effect, but the possibilities are infinite. I begin by choosing a suitable colour for my magical ray of light. I want my character to be very girly so I pick a bright pink, after disregarding yellow. I use this colour to lay down the base of my magical effects, by creating a huge glow of light on the top of the wand, and a long curly ray/wave – like a shooting star, for example – all around the character. This ray follows the trajectory of the wand or the direction of the magic spell that's being cast.

Because I want the light wave to be diffuse I use a custom brush that's very soft and textured. You can download it along with the rest of this month's resources. You can also play with the Layer Opacity or mode to generate more cool colour effects. Here, I erase some parts to achieve the perfect render.

I also work with different shades of pink, to enhance the magical look and also to bring in more texture. I mix a pale pink with a deep pink and create some extra waves over the ray of light.

The top of the wand will be the brightest part, so I ramp up the visible light here. Finally, to increase the magical effect I add sparkles around the wand and the wave. I use a precise brush to do so, with sharp edges to generate marks that are neat and well defined.



The wand's light must affect everything around it, in this case the spellcaster's face and clothing. So I add more pink light to her jawline and lips.

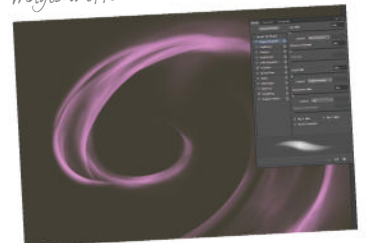


I tend to add a lot (maybe too much!) of sparkles and effects when I paint magic in action. Adjust such visuals to suit the story you're telling.

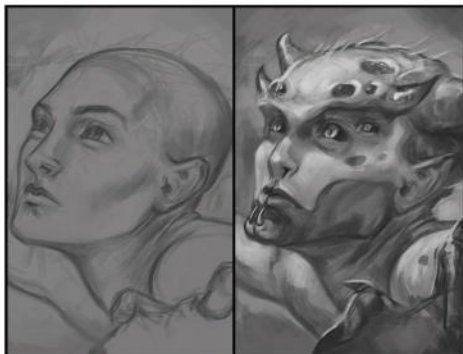
## Artist's secret

### A WAVE OF MAGIC

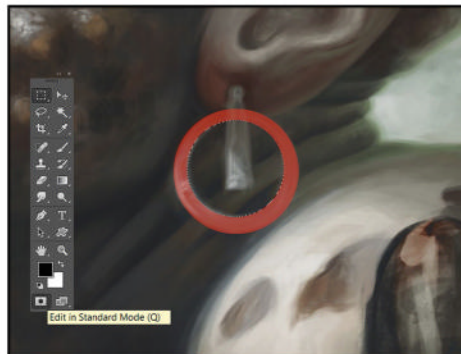
I use a custom brush to create the magical curly wave, which I also use for smoke. I like this brush because it's a kind of two-sided tool. One side is very soft and diffuse, while the other is more precise. This is perfect for adding definition and details to the wand's magical effect.



## Step-by-step: Turn a figure into a cursed creature



**1** On the left, I start with a human form in the scene to give myself a base with real anatomy to alter for the mutation. On the right is the spider mutant sketch I create with a mix of lassoing elements to copy and free transform them, before painting over them to build out new forms.



**2** During the render phase, I add an earring to my figure as an extra touch to show humanity. To make a clean hollow circular shape you can use the Elliptical Marquee tool in Quick Mask mode (press Q). If you mask the area you want selected, a quick invert selection will do the trick.



**3** Incorporating the different ways that a creature's skin pits or shines in the light can help create contrast to the formerly human form. To help add in some of these textures I use a variety of palette knife-style custom brushes made by Kyle Webster (<http://ifxm.ag/k-t-w>).



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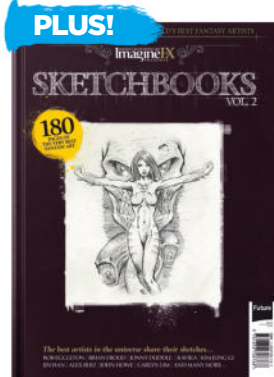
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ImagineFX May 2016



## Question

### How should I portray the surface of a slimy creature

Jo-Anne Melbury, England



## Answer

Alix replies



Creating a creature made out of slime requires getting comfortable working with a tricky material to render. There

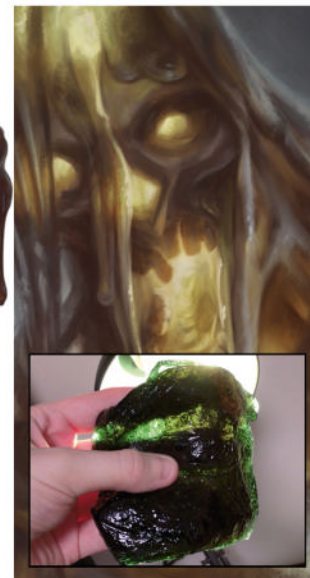
are two key factors to consider: the subsurface scattering that occurs in translucent materials; and the specular highlights that form on wet surfaces.

As with anything unfamiliar you paint, reference is key. However, reference gathering can be more fun than a simple online image search. I use an online recipe to make my own slime using borax, clear school glue and some food colouring. This gives me a great resource to refer back to throughout my process.

Working in Photoshop, I paint a creature that has a core skeleton inside a mass of slimy tentacles and an eerie internal glow. Getting creative with this effect inside of the creature has the two-fold benefit of creating more light to play off the internal structures, while also helping to create a focal point against the dark background.

When creating lighting effects, whether it be the internal glow passing through the material or the shine on the surface, Overlay layers are an artist's best friend. They enable the colours underneath them to show through while applying whatever new colour you select, and are a great way to layer in light. I use Overlay layers to punch up the internal glow as well as creating the specular highlights where the light directly hits the slime.

Don't forget the effects of reflected light on your slime. Adding some subtle highlighting on rounded areas not affected by light directly can help give them form.



I use a program called PureRef ([www.pureref.com](http://www.pureref.com)) to create boards of reference that can remain on top of my Photoshop window while I work.

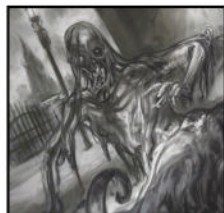


## Artist's secret

**WE ALL MAKE MISTAKES!**  
Need to fix an area but have a ton of layers? Use the Lasso tool to grab the area you need, perform a Copy Merged (Shift+Ctrl+C), and then Paste to produce a new precise and flattened layer of that exact section.

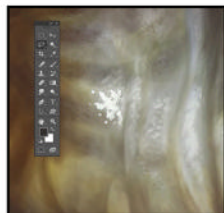
## Step-by-step: It's time for the slime!

**1** In my initial sketch, I focus on creating the flow of the creature and the dynamics of how the material would move. I include bits of slime that run and droop, bits that fling through the air as a tentacle



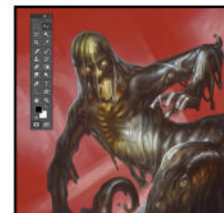
flips or an arm moves, and parts that clump and smear as they drag on the ground. I keep the pieces ropey so they feel less watery.

**2** Slime is shiny and irregular. To help create this look I use the Lasso tool on an Overlay layer to paint in the harsh and bumpy shapes of the shine, then softening them with an Eraser as they turn



across the form. A Scattered custom brush can come in handy around these harder core highlights, to help round out the form as well.

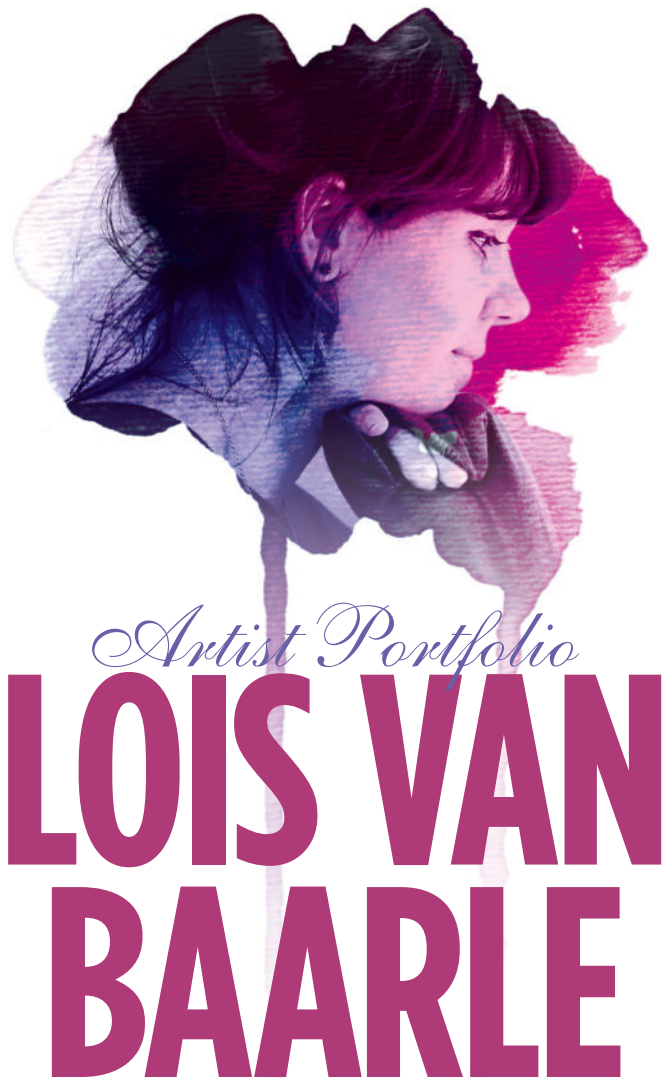
**3** To create a creepy background to ground my creature, I use the Quick Mask tool (C) to block in the areas I want to work on. Inverting the selection and making a copy via Copy Merged, I create a



layer that only has the background area. Now I can paint behind my figure with as many layers as I want, simply by making them clipping masks.

**NEXT MONTH:** DEPICT A LANTERN JAW | **SHOW SOMEONE RUNNING** | DRAW SOMEONE WHO'S OFF-BALANCE | **DESCRIBE A TWISTED TORSO** | PAINT A BEAST WITH JOINTED LIMBS | **AND MORE!**





# Artist Portfolio LOIS VAN BAARLE

Lois travelled all over the world before returning to her native Netherlands. But as **Gary Evans** discovers, what she finds inspiring are the quieter moments in life

**L**ois van Baarle sits in kindergarten class. She's drawing – loose, colourful pictures, the kind only very young children can draw.

This, from her time in the US, is one of the Dutch artist's earliest memories: a teacher points out that the person in her picture has one leg shorter than the other.

"I justified this," Lois says, "by saying that the drawing portrayed someone taking a step forward, which amazed my teachers and classmates. Of course, I made this up after I finished the drawing, but everyone's amazed response gave me a lot of incentive to keep drawing."

Life is made up of these little moments, Lois says. Fleeting, seemingly insignificant incidents that shape who we are. "The positive feedback convinced me that I really was good at drawing, so I just kept doing it," she says. "It helped that I liked drawing, of course. But I think most kids do. I was mainly motivated by the fact that everyone kept saying I was such a good artist."

Lois has freelanced for Blizzard, created concept art for LEGO, worked on animation for the UK's Channel 4 television station, and shared what she's learned along the way in tutorials for Autodesk. But most impressive is her huge, dedicated fan base. Her Facebook page alone has more than one million likes.

It's with the help of these fans that the Dutch artist was able to publish *The Art of Loish: A Look Behind the Scenes*. Her debut artbook represents the proudest moment of her career so far. Fans funded the project through Kickstarter and the book reached 10 times its original funding goal. ➔

## Artist PROFILE

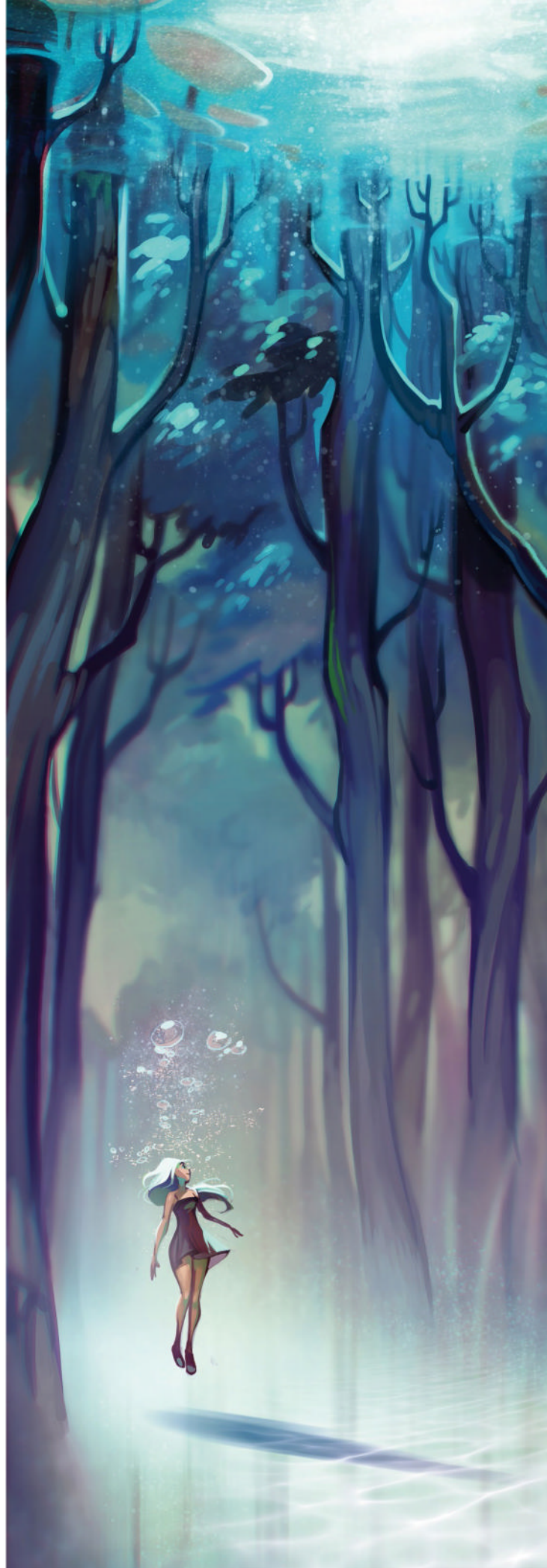
**Lois van Baarle**

**LOCATION:** The Netherlands

**FAVOURITE ARTISTS:** Andrew Hem, Leslie Hung, Alphonse Mucha

**SOFTWARE USED:** Photoshop

**WEB:** [www.loish.net](http://www.loish.net)







#### AQUAFOREST

"This image evolved from a painting of a tree setting that just wasn't doing it for me. So I changed the setting to a floaty, cool underwater scene. I wish being underwater was like this sometimes."

#### FROST

"I'm always inspired by landscapes, particularly mountains and dramatic skies. They bring out emotions that are sometimes buried deep inside."



“Positive feedback convinced me that I really was good at drawing, so I just kept doing it”





#### MORNING

"I tend to collect things that bring back memories for me, but can also feel so bogged down by them. I drew this image at a time when I was getting ready to say goodbye to my clutter."



#### BOLD

"I'm often inspired by simple colour combinations. I wanted to paint something with the heavily contrasting blue-red combination, and this was the result."

#### GROWTH

"I painted this in winter, when I was craving freshness and lush green. I was looking forward to spring, which always brings so much joy and relief that the cold months are finally over!"



“I think the teachers I had, friends I met and place I was in all helped pave the way to me becoming an artist”

➤ Lois spent a year studying animation in Gent, Belgium, before she returned to her native Netherlands to take a course in animation at the University of the Arts Utrecht (HKU). The freelance illustrator is now settled in central Holland. As well as the US, she's also lived in France and Indonesia. But it was people, not places, the little things rather than life-changing events, that had a lasting effect on Lois.

"I think for any artist, or just a person in general, the way you grow up impacts your life in many different ways. The people you coincidentally meet and early influences play a big role in how your life plays out. I can't say that the fact I travelled a lot as a kid has specifically influenced my art.

I think that the teachers I had, friends I met and environment I was in all helped pave the way to me becoming an artist. But that could have happened anywhere, with different people and influences." She continues: "There are artists whose work is heavily influenced by the one place they live in and who draw on that inspiration for the rest of their lives, without ever travelling much. So I don't believe travel is required or even necessarily helpful to artists."

#### FLOWING FORMS, BRIGHT COLOURS

She started developing the distinctive style she calls "feminine and emotive" from a very young age: "I remember drawing a lot of princesses when I was a kid, and feeling a





## BACKING THE ART OF LOISH

Lois's debut art book is the proudest moment of her career, but what made it so special was the overwhelming support from her fans

The Art of Loish: A Look Behind the Scenes is the debut artbook by Lois van Baarle. The Dutch artist – the nickname Loish is a nod to the Dutch accent – funded the project through Kickstarter. "I was expecting to reach the funding goal," she says, "but didn't expect to reach it within an hour and a half, or that it would end up reaching over 10 times the original funding goal! It was so intense and incredibly encouraging and rewarding."

The book, which is available to buy now (place your orders at <http://ifxm.ag/l-v-b>), not only showcases her work as a digital artist and animator, but also offers a behind-the-scenes look at the way she produces that work. The success of the Kickstarter campaign brought home what a dedicated following her art has attracted over the years.

"I knew that I had a lot of people who followed my work, but I had no idea that I would achieve so much support for a project like this. I always felt like the most meaningful type of support I can get are from people who follow my work just because they like it, and decide to devote some of their free time and money to the things that I make. It feels like the greatest compliment of all."



### AQUAMARINE

"I drew this image for the project, and the process for creating it was the basis for one of two extensive tutorials that I wrote especially for this book."



### BREATHE

"I wanted to convey the relationship between a landscape and the emotions this can bring out – the feeling of being able to become who you want to be."



strong drive to draw things that were pretty, like dresses and unicorns. I like flowing forms and bright colours."

Batman artist Becky Cloonan, graphic novel author Aurore Demilly, Alphonse Mucha; Disney, anime and manga, comic art in general... all of these influences and more are present in Lois's work, but the overall look and feel is her own. She looks for the detail in a character: the curve of an eyebrow or the creases in the corner of the mouth. Tired eyes, red noses and knowing smiles help make them who they are. These creations, mostly human, often ethereal, are seen in otherworldly settings or tough urban backdrops, both of which Lois renders with great care and affection.

Lois's work almost always starts straight on her computer, although she keeps a sketchbook, which she uses when away from her tablet to note and develop ideas. She starts simply, adding details as she goes. Her work grows naturally from a rough sketch, with little prior planning.

### A CLEAN STUDIO SETUP

The artist's workspace is simple – desk, screen, Cintiq – with a few other places to sit and write notes or brainstorm ideas. And, most importantly, she has her coffee machine close by. Lois's perfect work day starts at 10am and runs to 6pm. Knowing when to stop is something she learned the hard way: "The risk of repetitive stress

### SURFACING

"Water imagery is my favourite to paint, and for this illustration I wanted to give the water a warm, welcoming glow."

injury is real and that there's a limit on how far you can go as an artist. At 16, I felt I could draw literally all day long, until I was too tired and would go to sleep. Now I've learned that my body can only handle so much. It's a hard lesson to learn."

Lois is an illustrator, animator and concept artist – and often many of the little roles that sit between those job titles. She went to school, but also taught herself much of what she knows, and had enough skills to start work straight out of university.

"After graduating from the HKU, I started working as a freelancer right away and have been able to make a living from it ever since. Former classmates and teachers managed to put me in touch with



## LUMEN

"I like to play around with colours and see how much I can make them stand out. In this case I wanted the hair to feel like it's glowing."

# RULING OUT THE LINE WORK

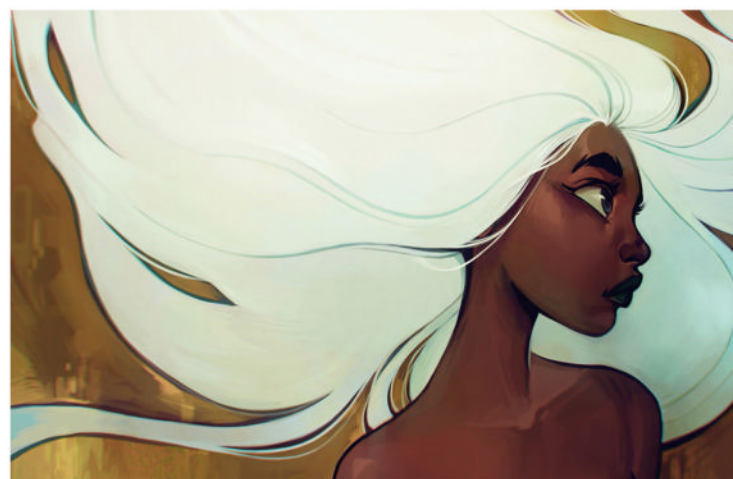
Lois explains how changing the way she works helped her find her voice, a style and a mood that she's become synonymous with

When Lois van Baarle decided to abandon line art and instead paint over her sketches with the bright colours that have become her calling card, it marked a turning point in her creative career.

"This sounds like a detail, but it changed my entire way of working," the Dutch artist says. "I stopped planning out my artwork ahead of time and stopped wasting time on details in the line work."

Changing her technique in this way helped Lois shape a trademark style she calls "feminine and emotive", while also drawing on two of her biggest inspirations: Disney and Art Nouveau. Her overall aim is to capture a very specific moment in time, and she achieves this largely through colour.

"My process became more intuitive and I added details while painting, not in the line work. This has become the defining feature of my current digital painting process."



## GLOW IN THE DARK

"One of my inspirations is Art Nouveau. It's not only the decorative quality of the works, but also the ethereal feeling and the sense of flow. I tried to capture these flowing forms with the hair, as well as the golden elements."

## SUNSET

"This is based on a series of photographs I took of my living room around sunset. I don't draw environments as often as I draw characters, so when I do, I try to base them on existing places that I know well."



## SILENCE

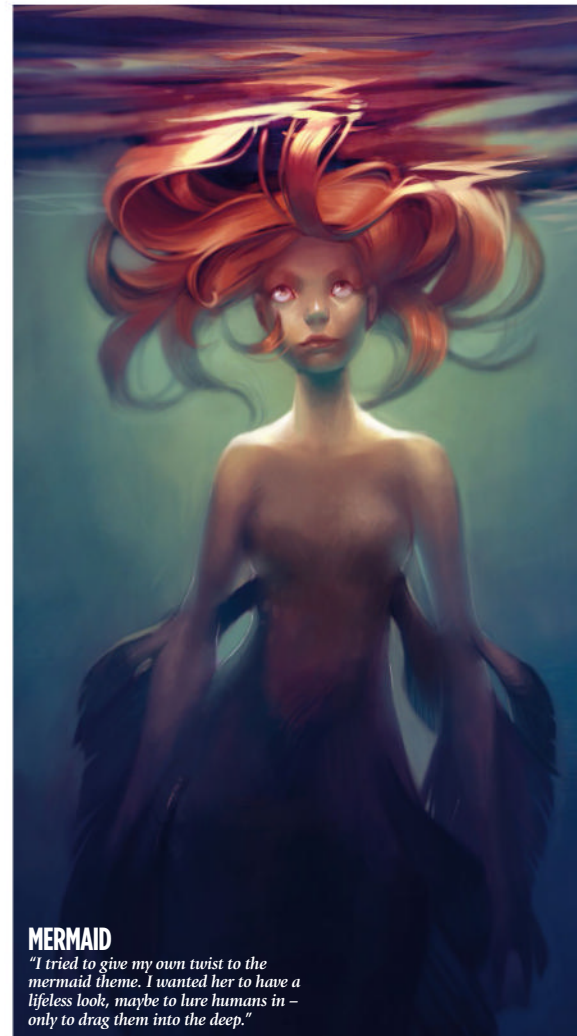
"Space is always presented as a hostile, unforgiving place to be. I wanted to try portraying space as a calm, peaceful and beautiful place in this image."





#### CAFÉ PRESSÉ

"I wanted to capture the warmth and sense of safety that drinking coffee with a friend can bring, while channelling one of my big inspirations: Norman Rockwell."



#### MERMAID

"I tried to give my own twist to the mermaid theme. I wanted her to have a lifeless look, maybe to lure humans in – only to drag them into the deep."

➡ clients for the first few years, and because my artwork had a pretty good amount of exposure online, I managed to attract the attention of clients and people interested in commissions as well."

Lois used to accept new commissions a few times a year. These days she's too busy. She's currently working on an ongoing project with LEGO, but what the project is, exactly, she isn't allowed to say.

Lois rents an office near her home and tries to keep regular hours and a schedule that works well for her clients. She also aims to create 12 new pieces of her own every year. Between the two, she's had to hone her style and work more efficiently, things she found challenging early in her career.

"I used to believe that it was important to avoid reference as much as possible, but my attitude has changed since becoming a

freelancer and having been involved in many projects where reference material was an essential in creating a concise, creative vision. I now gather reference material for the majority of my artwork, although I use it as inspiration and guidance for adding complex details that I can't pull off from memory, rather than create direct copies."

#### DRAW WHAT FEELS GOOD

"Developing my own style wasn't a conscious decision, nor do I have any specific methods for it," reveals Lois. "I think working intuitively is also important:

#### BEAD

"I often paint purely to relax, and without any intention to send out a message or idea. I draw pieces like this for fun – soft round shapes and flowing forms give me peace of mind."



“Developing my own style wasn't a conscious decision, nor do I have any specific methods for it”

try to draw what feels good to you, instead of overthinking the drawing process.

Lois takes us back to the time of that fateful incident at her kindergarten: "I guess I've always known that I had above-average drawing skills," she says, "although I don't think I'm very skilled at telling stories visually – something I learned in animation school. I've always wanted to draw visually appealing images that capture a moment in time. If I wasn't an artist, I'd have studied history or anthropology, but I have no idea what profession I'd go on to be. Maybe a teacher or embittered blogger with an office job."

Embittered blogging's loss is art's gain. Lois is basking in the success of her crowd-funded artbook *The Art of Loish: A Look Behind the Scenes*, a project she describes as her "biggest career milestone."

"I don't tend to plan very far ahead in terms of career," Lois says, "because things have never gone as I expected. I always discover new things, meet new clients, and run into new problems as I keep moving forward as an artist. So I have no way of knowing what things will be, say, five years from now. I hope that I'll still be supporting myself as an artist and have time to work on my own paintings. If I can achieve that, I'll feel very accomplished." ●



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April 2016

Level up your video game art skills! We talk to Riot Games and Laurel D Austin, reveal how Gnomon's tailor-made course for video game artists is shaping up, and explore map-making tips for League of Legends. Plus there's exclusive art advice for Total War: Warhammer!



### Issue 132

March 2016

We explore the fantasy film genre's golden age - Andreas Bannik's cover homage kicks things off in style. Elsewhere, Min Yum takes on a Brothers Grimm fairy tale, Simon Dubuc fills an RPG with unique characters, and James Gurney paints a rogue construction mech.



### Issue 131

February 2016

Alvin Lee's art of Jinx from League of Legends heralds our manga issue, featuring a fresh take on Katniss Everdeen by Ilya Kuvshinov, advice from Legends of the Cryptids artist Laura Sava, and a sculpture workshop from the mighty Shiflett Brothers.



### Issue 130

January 2016

A host of top-flight artists help us to celebrate turning 10 years old. Ross Tran's cover art ushers in the likes of Craig Mullins, Syd Mead, Brom, Mélanie Delon, Todd Lockwood and Allen Williams, who all contribute workshops. Plus there's a free 2016 calendar.

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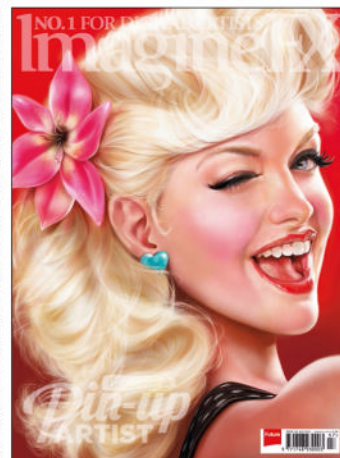
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Awakens, Jurassic World

**OTHER PROJECTS:** Rango,

Transformers, Star Trek Into  
Darkness, Pirates of the  
Caribbean, Avengers, Iron Man

**WEB:** www.ilm.com



## STUDIO PROFILE

# INDUSTRIAL LIGHT & MAGIC

As ILM's art team goes global, their artists talk to  
**Barbara Robertson** about Star Wars and more...

**W**ith only a little fanfare, but with great pride, the award-winning visual effects studio Industrial Light & Magic has expanded its San Francisco art department into a global team. The newly enlarged department now boasts 35 artists working in ILM's San Francisco, Singapore, Vancouver and London studios – and both Vancouver and London have openings.

Twenty-six of the 35 artists sketch, model and paint at ILM San Francisco, while two stretch their skills in each of the Vancouver and Singapore studios, and five now work in ILM's new London studio.



"We were fortunate to have Kevin Jenkins and his crew decide to join us in London," says ILM creative director David Nakabayashi. "Kevin's background and industry connections immediately strengthened our position over there."

Forty years ago the art department's role was to support ILM's visual effects work on Star Wars. So, too, today, with artists helping create the \$2 billion box-office hit Star Wars: The Force Awakens. In 2015 they also contributed to two more blockbusters, Jurassic World and Avengers: Age of Ultron.



Christian Alzmann's design of 'rolling' robot BB-8 for The Force Awakens. Ralph McQuarrie originally envisioned R2-D2 to be a rolling robot.

"We used to draw with pencils and markers, mess around with models and build miniature versions of principal designs," says David, who recently celebrated his 20th year at ILM. "George [Lucas] always kept an art department near him to create the designs. In fact, a lot of the ideas in those early Star Wars came from ILM, not production design. That's why ILM's art department became so important to films after Star Wars. Directors came to ILM to help them visualise the movies."

Today's global art department has continued that tradition and pushed it





James Clyne began creating concept art for *The Force Awakens* early in preproduction.

## “Rather than production design, lots of the ideas in early *Star Wars* came from ILM”

forward. Senior art director Ryan Church worked at ILM and at Lucasfilm during the *Star Wars* prequels, left to work in Los Angeles, and recently returned to ILM. He received a VES nomination for art direction on Episode II, and while in LA received four nominations for production design from the Art Directors Guild, winning for *Avatar*.

### EVOLUTION OF A STUDIO



“At the time of the prequels, ILM’s art department was more about doing shots,” says Ryan. “But, when I was working with Rick Carter on

*Tomorrowland*, I came up to ILM and saw a completely different studio. The artists were working with directors earlier and earlier. I thought it was time to get back to ILM.”

Ryan rejoined ILM two years ago. He spent a solid year helping design ships and environments for *A Force Awakens*, then continued working on that film on and off while moving on to the next films.

“I did a ton of stuff,” he says of his time spent on the new *Star Wars* film. “A lot of the third-act ice planet, the new X-Wing, which is obviously based on Ralph McQuarrie’s design, Kylo Ren’s ship, the



ILM created over 800 shots for the second *Avengers* film, including this one of Vibranium Ultron.



planet Jakku, interiors and exteriors. There were entire planets designed and discarded for that movie.”

Ryan’s work on *A Force Awakens* typifies much of what the artists in ILM’s global art department do, but they do far more than contribute visual effects to films. During the past year, ILM artists have handled 50 projects and of those only 16 were related to ILM’s films. “Increasingly we’re servicing clients as an art department outside post-production,” says Jennifer Coronado, who does project management, talent development and client



ILM’s biggest challenge on *Tomorrowland* was creating a city that functioned in three time periods: 1964, 1984, and 2014. Image by Ryan Church.

Aaron McBride referenced photos of turkey jerky to create the decomposing look of the half-human, half sea-creatures, for *Pirates of the Caribbean*.

## JAMES CLYNE

The supervising art director talks *The Force Awakens*

**You began working on *The Force Awakens* in preproduction. What work did you do?**

JJ Abrams wanted to do as much practically as possible. But digital is very important. It’s the glue that keeps it all together. I work in 2D and in 3D. In 3D I’m able to give an object to a digital effects house – that is us, ILM – and to a practical house. For example, there’s a console in *The Force Awakens* that looks like an outdoor barbecue – Han Solo has to punch a number on it. I built that in 2D and 3D. The 3D outdoor barbecue object went to the art department and it was built as a physical object. Using 3D allows us to have more influence. We can hand it over and see it through.

**What else did you design for *The Force Awakens*?**

I worked on the First Order – the Star Destroyer, Starkiller Base, the troop transport. From the macro Starkiller Base, to what does a switch and button look like on a console. *Star Wars* always relates back to World War II or Vietnam. So I made a PT boat and put spaceship parts on it. That went to ILM to start building as a 3D digital asset, and to the art department in London who built a full-size model of half the ship. Having the ability to develop that idea in 3D made the process much easier. But the idea, the spark, came from an old idea, from the 1940s.

**What tools do you use?**

Photoshop, Modo, Poser and sometimes SketchUp.

**What was it like swapping 16 years of freelance for a staff job at ILM?**

We’re all vagabonds and a lot of us like it that way. So to work for a corporation was a little scary at first. But it’s wonderful. The creative collaborative process hasn’t changed a bit. And San Francisco. The Presidio. The kids love it. My wife loves it. I’m happy up here.



James Clyne was a freelance production designer and concept artist in LA for 16 years, before becoming supervising art director at ILM. [www.jamesclyne.com](http://www.jamesclyne.com)



All images courtesy Industrial Light & Magic



## DAVID NAKABAYASHI

ILM's creative director on what he looks for in an artist

### Why do you think an art department is a necessary part of the visual effects team?

Because of the artistic eye and sensibility. You sit in dailies and hear a lot of back and forth about making a shot better. It's good to have an aesthetic voice within the group, people who bring strong emotion to the shots, who think the way a painter thinks about colour and light.

### In what way do artists in ILM's global art department support the visual effects supervisors in the post-production of films?

They initially do reference and then as shots move through, they continue to look for reference for things that might come up. They might paint over a frame that isn't working, give ideas for lighting, colour, how water moves. They can help make things look real. Artists can create the emotion and texture of a painter, and bring that into shot work. You'd perhaps be surprised by how much concept art looks photoreal. Sometimes simple models created in concept art make it into final shots.

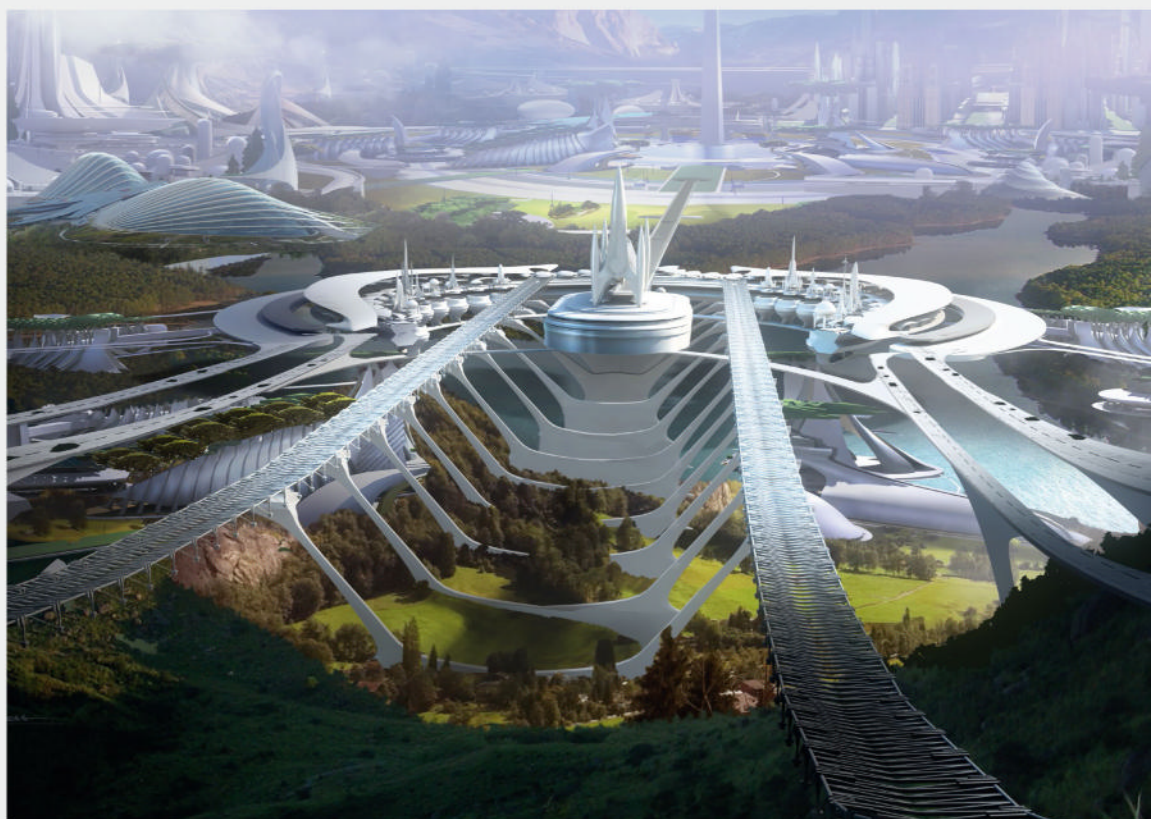
### When you are hiring concept artists and designers, what is it you are looking for?

I look for their spark. Of course their skills, their craftsmanship, too. But, I need to know they can produce an image out of nothing that has emotion and personality. They can be young, but if there is a subtlety in their work, personality in a character, scale and feeling in a landscape, those people will interest us. And, we want artists who are fixed on what we do here: we create characters and worlds for films.



David joined ILM in 1989 as a storyboard artist for *Ghost*. He's worked on *Jurassic Park*, *Men In Black* and much else, and is now creative director.

<http://ifxm.ag/ilmndak>



For Tomorrowland ILM was asked to design and build a complete virtual city, with "1950s optimism" and it should "feel like the perfect blend between art and science".

➤ engagement at ILM. "We're at the head of the process. We might have an art director on a show for a year, but we also have concept artists who float between bid work, client pitches and character development. Sometimes our art department is an extension of the production designer's art department. And we also do graphic design, marketing design, design for AR and VR, character design for games, crew photos and posters, and product design."

Product design? "We're working with a company that uses 3D printing to build Star Wars prosthetics for kids," says Jennifer. "They wanted to make cool things for kids to wear. So senior visual effects art director Alex Jaeger designed some."

Alex Jaeger hard at work on his Transformer designs. He originally trained to be a car designer, which came in very useful.



Alex joined ILM straight out of college in 1995 and could be a poster child for how to become an art director at ILM. He was on track to

become a car designer until an elective class, creative writing, sent him in a new direction. He wrote a science fiction story and started designing sci-fi vehicles rather than cars. The transportation department wasn't amused. It took him a year to get off probation.

### DREAM JOB

After a trip to California with his dad that included a visit to ILM, he switched to the Art Institute of Pittsburgh and geared all his classes towards landing a job at ILM. It worked. Within weeks of graduating, he was building miniature jungle trees for Congo in ILM's model shop. At the same time, he did concept art and storyboards for the art department. And then one day John Knoll asked Jaeger if he wanted to art direct *Star Trek: First Contact*. Jaeger was 23 years old.

Of course, he said yes. "Then I thought, 'What does an art director do?'" says Alex. "It was trial by fire. I had jumped a lot of

**"I have to remember that someone will have to build this and it'll have to work"**







Christian Alzmann's art for *Rango*, ILM's first full-length feature animated film. It won an Academy Award for Best Animated Feature.



steps and some people thought I would fail. But I did a good job and I've been an art director year after year since then."

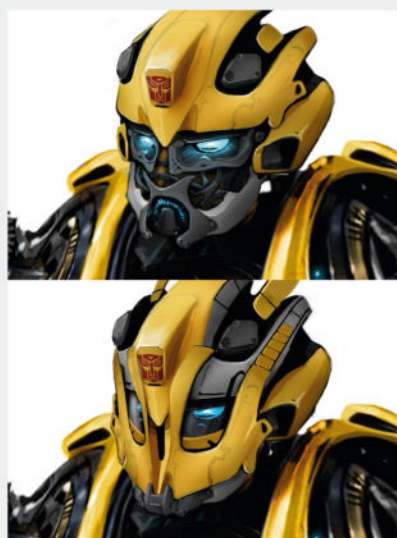
In all, Jaeger has been a visual effects art director on 20 films and a concept artist on nearly 20 more, including three *Transformers* films, *Star Wars* Episodes II and III, *Mission Impossible*, *Captain America: The Winter Soldier*, *Tomorrowland*, and *Avengers: Age of Ultron*. He has received three VES nominations, including one with Ryan for Episode II, and one for *Transformers*. His forte is hard-surface models, and he loves building them so much he's created a website for a fake German company, Jaegerwerks, that builds models designed by 'JaegerTech'.

James Clyne brainstormed with Rick Carter and a group of six other artists to imagine what *Star Wars* would look like 30 years after *Return of the Jedi*.

"A lot of times artists don't think about whether the models can work," he says. "But I do. Even with the transformers. I wanted to be able to take this and make it into that. That's why I think the transformers in the first film were so successful. We took the time to use car parts. Because I worked in the model shop, I have the idea that someone will have to build this and it will have to work."

## OPENING DOORS

About three years after Alex started at ILM, and at the same time he and Ryan were working on the *Star Wars* prequels, senior art director Aaron McBride found his way to ILM. After graduating from the Rhode Island School of Design, he started



Alex Jaeger's Bumblebee from *Transformers* required a big emotional range, but didn't have a mouth, so eyes were used to convey feelings.

Ryan Church's ARC-170 concept from *Revenge of the Sith*. George Lucas chopped off the tail for the finished design.



## JENNIFER CORONADO

ILM's global art department manager talks legacy

### Why does ILM have a global art department?

The art department is always operating in pants on fire mode. We can't forecast when we might get a call from a director, so we have to be flexible. A director might need four artists on a show starting right now. Four studios in four countries gives us more reach to find resources.

### Are the artists all on a pipeline?

We're pipeline oriented in visual effects, so if you start building something in the pipeline, you can go back 50 iterations. But we keep the artists slightly separate. We don't want them bogged down in shots. They need to be freeform and loose, to get to the target fast by doing concepts quickly. Even when they work in 3D, it's very kitbashing. Some artists use Maya, some 3ds Max, Modo, ZBrush, Cinema 4D, Poser, SketchUp, Photoshop. One artist won't give up Softimage XSI. The image is what's important. It's usually a hybrid of 3D and 2D.

### Do they collaborate across studios?

Everyone is hands on. We always partner an art director with a concept artist, and art directors work with and mentor people in different studios. We have to work that way to be flexible. There are time zone issues, but it's important everyone feels part of a team. We do weekly calls and updates, and monthly reviews with Dennis Muren. He has a great eye for cinema. He knows how to create a focal point for a frame. If you aren't doing that, you're failing. I don't want artists to forget what came before, to lose people's wisdom. We're all here because George Lucas had an idea.



Formerly a moderator for Lucasfilm's *Speaker Series* and a senior manager at ILM, Jennifer is now the company's global art department manager. [www.ilm.com](http://www.ilm.com)



General Grievous on his wheel bike confronts Obi-Wan Kenobi in a concept painting by Ryan Church for *Revenge of the Sith*.



Aaron McBride's early concept work for *Iron Man* shows Tony Stark preparing to suit up.



Aaron McBride, who grew up near a port, borrowed books on diseases from his sister, a doctor, to help create this half-dead look for Johnny Depp in *Pirates of the Caribbean*.

➤ working at MSNBC, but taking figure-drawing workshops. During one, he met a man whose son was the art director on *Saving Private Ryan*. And doors opened.

Aaron started as a production assistant in ILM's art department. He moved up when David Nakabayashi put him on the team for *AI*. Then John Knoll asked if he wanted to art direct *Pirates of the Caribbean*. "I was



working in Photoshop, a program John Knoll helped create," Aaron says. "He wasn't involved at that time, but it was still daunting."

From there, Aaron continued as digital effects art director on the following *Pirates* films. He was the creature art director for *Rango*, designed the suit up machine for *Iron Man*, the giant leviathan creature Hulk fights in *Avengers*, and more recently was senior art director on *Noah*, *Teenage Mutant Turtles* and *Jurassic World*. He has two VES nominations, for *Iron Man* and *Iron Man 2*. On his own, he's creating a graphic novel called *Toraidhe*.

## PRE-PRODUCTION

McBride typically becomes involved in film projects early in preproduction, but sometimes even before that, with requests from directors and studios leading to pitches for films. "They want artwork that



ILM brought the main characters, and environments, to life in *TMNT* - this image by Christian Alzmann.

will serve as a foothold to move forward with the look of a project, even if it won't be executed in visual effects," says Aaron. "We usually start by doing bid presentations for whatever is outlined in the script - creatures, ships, environments. Then we work with the production designer and director to flesh things out."

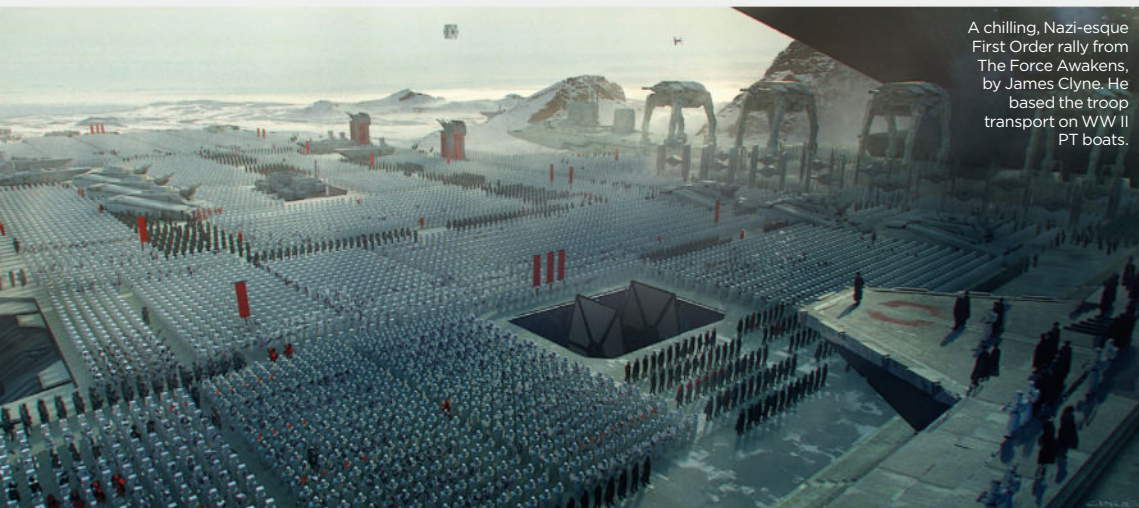


For example, supervising art director James Clyne, who joined ILM in 2013, was involved with early planning for *Star Wars: A Force*

“To work on *Star Wars* is not a dream come true. It's a dream I never thought possible. To be part of it is amazing”



# INDUSTRIAL LIGHT & MAGIC



A chilling, Nazi-esque First Order rally from *The Force Awakens*, by James Clyne. He based the troop transport on WW II PT boats.

## RYAN CHURCH

ILM concept artist compares work on Star Wars films

### What was your first job as a concept artist?

Right after I graduated, I worked for Walt Disney Imagineering. It was fun, but very realistic. One day of blue sky fun, five months of wheelchair access and sidewalk widths.

### You worked on Star Wars: Episodes II and III, then went freelance for 10 years, but returned to ILM to work on The Force Awakens. How did work on the two films differ?

George Lucas was frustrated by his limitations on the early Star Wars and he pressed against that in the prequels. We pushed the boundaries with what was possible with digital and often broke them. JJ realised how the limitations of reality for Episode IV contributed to making such a pure movie. Because ILM was involved early on *The Force Awakens*, we were able to design with JJ, to get the most convincing and real looking stuff, even if it would be digital. That's the secret sauce of ILM's approach. The earlier the director can see things to a high degree of finish, the better for making decisions. For example, we'd show JJ what kind of shots he could get with a limited set build versus what he'd get with a larger set build. We spent many months with each vehicle and location exploring the limits of what a Star Wars look is.

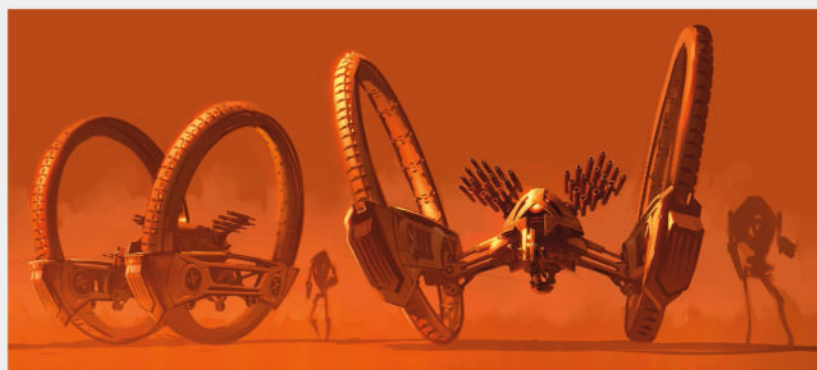
### Can you describe a Star Wars look?

I saw Episode IV when I was a child and it made such an impression. The hugeness of shapes. The colours. The first half of the movie is tan and brown. The second half with the Death Star is black and white. It was brilliant. Even a one-year-old could react to that. Ralph McQuarrie and Joe Johnston were the essence of Star Wars really.



In two spells at ILM, Ryan worked on *Star Wars: Episodes II, III and VII*. He won an ADG Award for Excellence in Production Design for *Avatar*.

[www.ryanchurch.com](http://www.ryanchurch.com)



Ryan Church's innovative designs for *Attack of the Clones* included the deadly Halffire droids.



*Awakens*. "We started as a group of seven artists to brainstorm what our world of Star Wars would look like 30 years after *Return of the Jedi*," says James. "Then director JJ Abrams came on board, the script came together, and we all went to Pinewood. Since my background is mostly working in the art department close to set, it was a great opportunity for me to be a liaison in London."

Before joining ILM, James had been a freelance concept artist in Los Angeles for 16 years. Like Alex, he had become a concept artist and art director after studying industrial design. "I went to the Art Center in Pasadena to study automotive design," he says. "Halfway through I realised I didn't want to design taillight housings for the rest of my life." An instructor referred him to

Another of Ryan Church's Episode III's concepts. He's also worked on *Avatar* and Steven Spielberg's *War of the Worlds*.

Rhythm & Hues, and his career in entertainment began. "The first thing I did was a dung beetle for a show at Disneyland based on *A Bug's Life*," he says. "It was crazy getting paid to design a dung ball."

## THE ART AWAKENS

That led to work on feature films and, eventually, to joining the Art Directors Guild, which meant directors, producers, and production designers working on big blockbuster films would hire him. He has received four nominations from the Guild, and, along with Ryan, won an Excellence in Production Design for *Avatar*. *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* marks the 30th film for which he has been a concept artist, illustrator, or designer. For the new *Star Wars* film, James worked on the First Order

– the troop transport, the Star Destroyer, the Starkiller Base. Now, he's working on *Star Wars: Episode VII*. "I saw *Star Wars* when I was eight," he says. "To work on *Star Wars* is not a dream come true. It's a dream I never thought was possible. To be part of this new *Star Wars* launch is amazing."

The first *Star Wars* prompted George Lucas to open a visual effects studio and make the art department an integral part of visual effects, turning artists Joe Johnston and Ralph McQuarrie into legends. Now ILM is cultivating a new generation of artists, many inspired by Johnston and McQuarrie, in studios across the world. Artists who help directors, production designers and visual effects supervisors visualise their ideas. Artists likely to become a new generation's legends. ■



## Randy Bishop

When he's not painting or storyboarding, Randy likes to sketch kooky characters...

### SURPRISE

"I found a photo of a girl wearing this expression and had to draw it."

### Artist PROFILE

**Randy Bishop**

LOCATION: US



Randy is a character designer and illustrator who lives with his wife and children in Idaho Falls, Idaho. He's been working as a freelance artist for the past several years, primarily as a character designer for animation and games, but has also worked as an illustrator, creating artwork for the publishing and education industries.  
[www.randybishopart.com](http://www.randybishopart.com)

### WIGS

"A few sketches of skulls wearing wigs. I'm not sure why."



### TROLL

"He's been a little down ever since his encounter with the three Billy Goats Gruff."







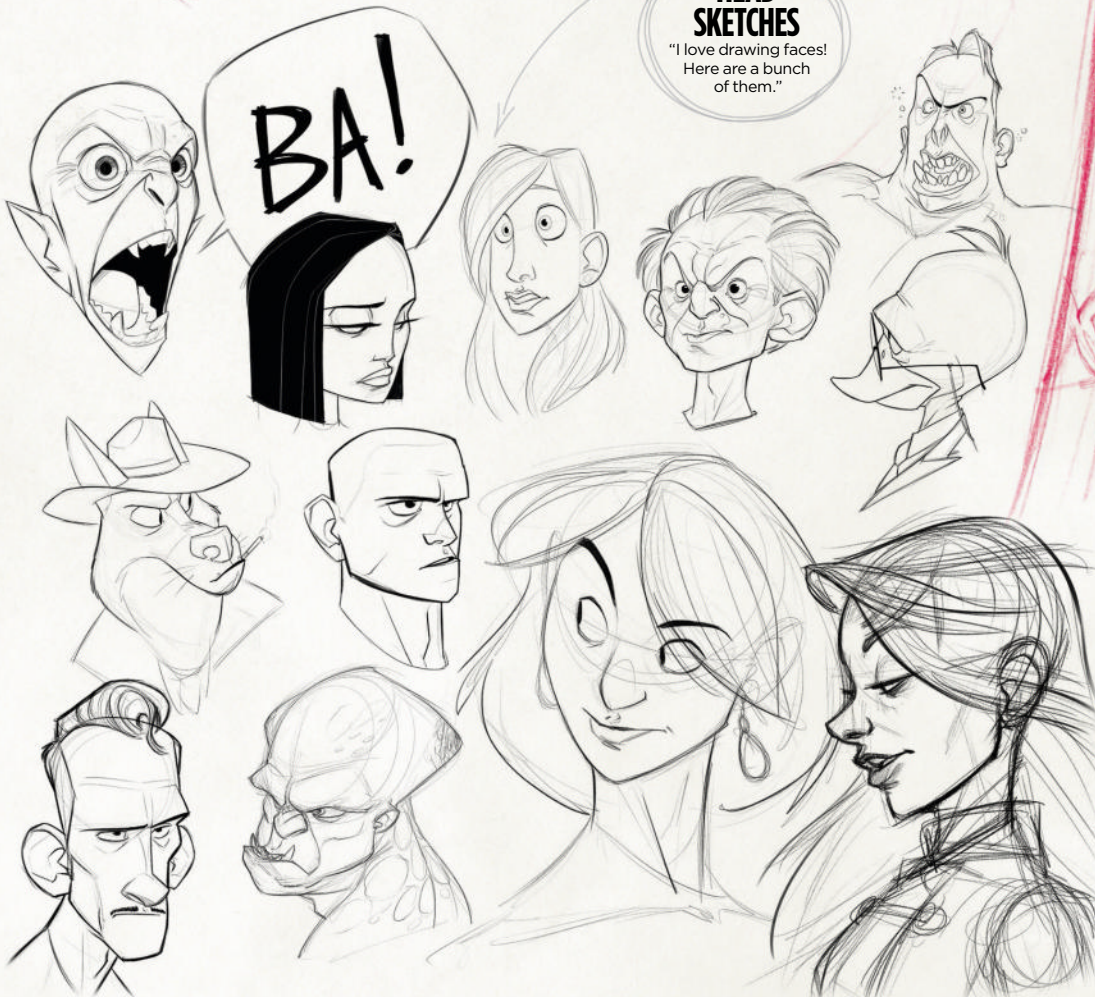
### SHE'S A GIRL

"It took me a minute to decide whether I was drawing a man or a woman when I was drawing this. She's a little ambiguous, but I kind of like it."



### HEAD SKETCHES

"I love drawing faces! Here are a bunch of them."



### CONTROL YOUR CANINE

"I wanted to practise drawing two characters interacting. I was seeing a lot of photos of girls holding little dogs and decided to do something similar."

"I was seeing a lot of photos of girls holding little dogs and decided to do something similar"



# Sketchbook



## THIS IS SERIOUS

"A couple of random dudes from my sketchbook."

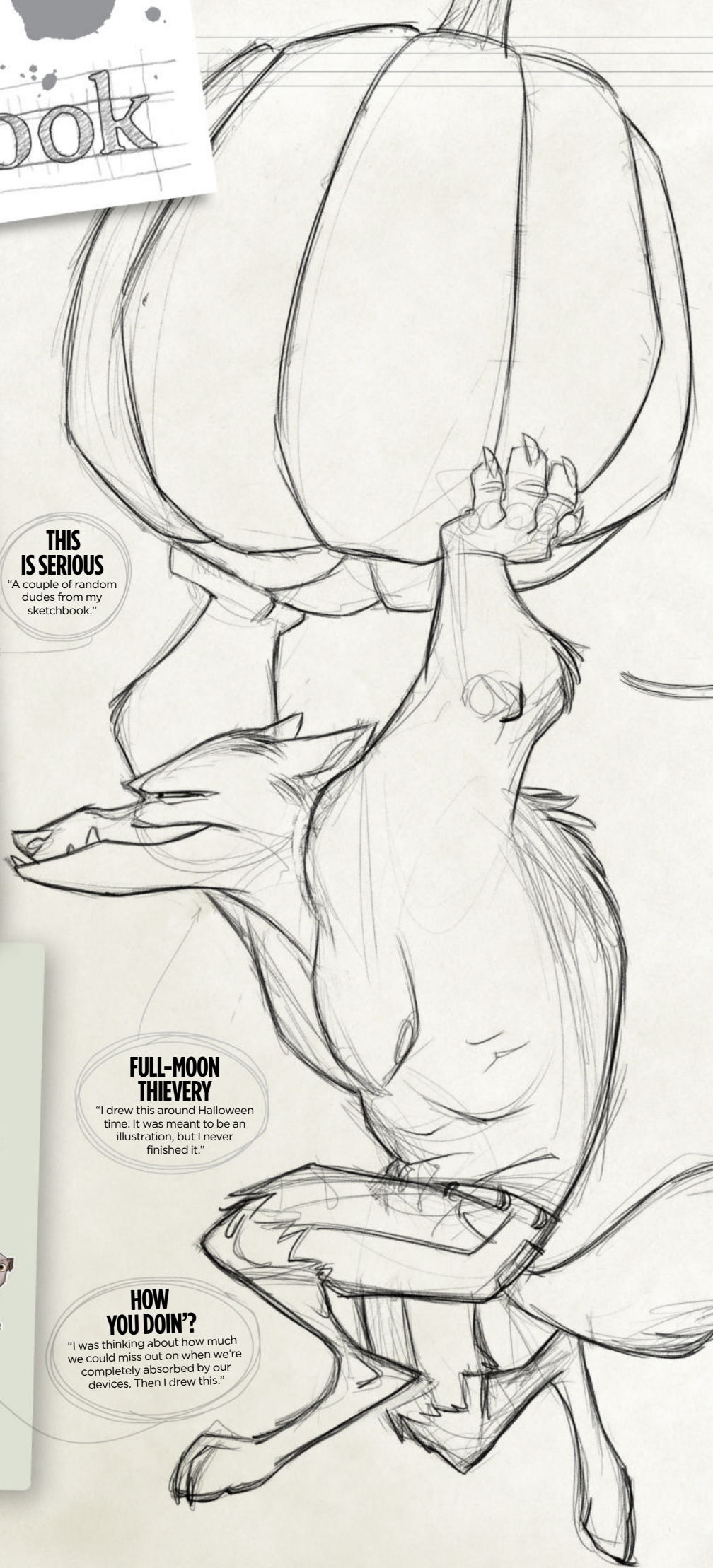


## FULL-MOON THIEVERY

"I drew this around Halloween time. It was meant to be an illustration, but I never finished it."

## HOW YOU DOIN'?

"I was thinking about how much we could miss out on when we're completely absorbed by our devices. Then I drew this."







**YOU'RE CUTE**

"I'm a big fan of English fashion. This was an attempt to capture my favourite parts of it."

**PRETTY PROFILE**

"There's something gorgeous about a strong profile. I absolutely love drawing women with chiselled noses and chins."

**BOWLER**

"I'm a fan of bowler hats. I'm also a fan of arbitrary skin colours."



*"I absolutely love drawing women with chiselled noses and chins"*



**WHITE ELEPHANT**

"This was an invitation to a Christmas party that my wife and I threw last year."

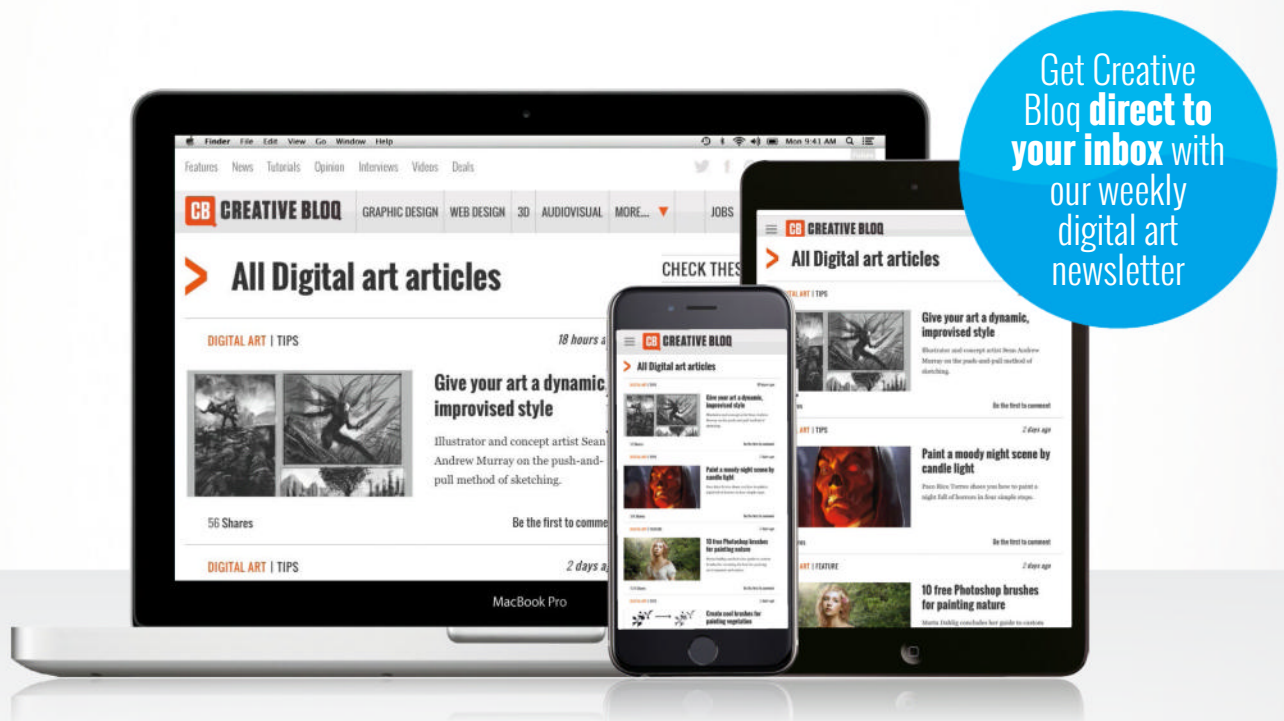


Want to share your sketches? Email us with a selection of your artwork, to [sketchbook@imaginefx.com](mailto:sketchbook@imaginefx.com)

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# NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX Workshops

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are available...**

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



Advice from the world's best artists

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Photoshop


# USE VALUES TO BUILD ATMOSPHERE



**Karla Ortiz** reveals her own process, thoughts and general approach to painting, as she creates a dramatic monochrome masterpiece

**Artist PROFILE**

**Karla Ortiz**  
LOCATION: US



Karla's a concept artist and illustrator whose client list includes ILM, Ubisoft, Wizards of the Coast and Tor Books. She works at Marvel Films in San Francisco and has an adorable cat called Bady.

[www.karlaortizart.com](http://www.karlaortizart.com)

**GET YOUR RESOURCES**

See page 6 now!

**H**ello dear reader. In this workshop I'll be talking about my painting methods, but there are many different ways to create a painting. The only constant factors are the foundations that all artists must grasp: anatomy, line, composition, values, colour and so on. Once you master these key areas, it's up to you to go out and explore what methods make you happy and fulfilled as an artist. My approach to a painting project

changes often. In this article I'll go over the method that I use to create the majority of my art. I start with the character's background - here, she's a skilled assassin who has just finished a job. Then a doodle, a sketch, block in the major areas and render. But on another day I might kick things off with an elaborate drawing, or I might skip the drawing phase altogether, and instead make a painting out of blocked shapes. Regardless of the method used, one of

the most important aspects of painting - aside from having a good understanding of the foundations - is to paint with intent. What does painting with intent mean? It means every single brush stroke is properly thought out. It means every shape you create attempts to be as accurate as it can be, and that every colour or every light placed is in balance with the whole painting. Okay, now you know how I work - let's get started on visualising this assassin.

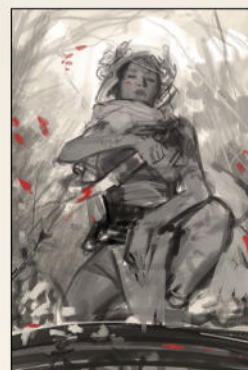


## 1 Explore your ideas with quick doodles

Once I've got the commission to paint a highly skilled assassin, 'from a distant time, with a Persian feel', I begin doodling, and explore compositions. This step is for your eyes only, so don't stand on ceremony. Keep your doodles loose and quick, because this is one sure-fire way of discouraging you from settling on the first idea you have. Doodle away and develop your ideas.

## 2 Work up a doodle into a sketch

Once the doodles are done, I usually pick out one or two ideas that really speak to me. I also keep some references close to hand for this stage - including those that I took of a life model wearing an approximation of the outfit I had in mind for my figure - so that I can use them for information and inspiration. I always try to ensure that these sketches are a clear representation of what I think the final painting will look like. ➡➡





In depth Build atmosphere





## PRO SECRETS

### Make use of clipping masks

A clipping mask is a group of layers to which a mask is applied. The bottommost layer or base layer defines the visible boundaries of the entire group. So if you add or subtract from the base layer it'll affect all the boundaries of the clipping masks above. This is especially helpful when you want to quickly add a variety of adjustment layers to just one object.



## Shortcuts

### Merge Layers

Cmd+E (Mac)

Ctrl+E (PC)

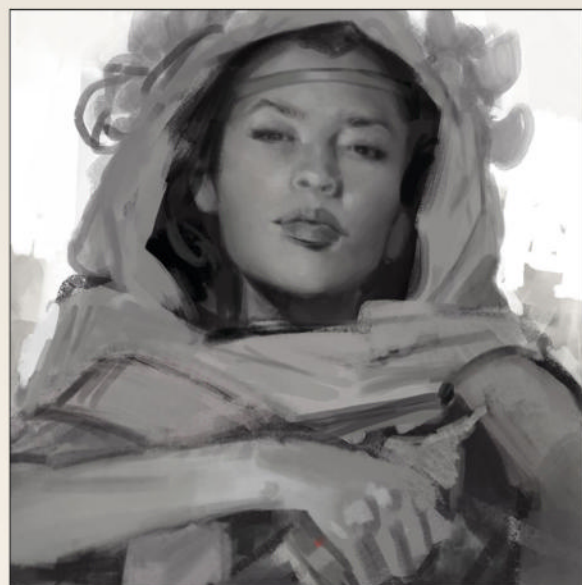
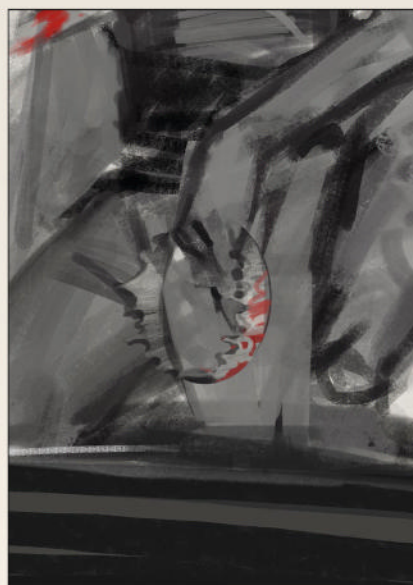
Keep your layers organised using this shortcut. It's one I use a lot.

### 3 Create a detailed sketch

I spend a lot of time on this stage, because I need to establish the main elements of my painting: light, composition, proportion and perspective. It's important to lock down all these factors early on, because then you'll be starting the painting with a strong technical foundation, and thus avoid the twin pitfalls of confusion and aimlessness later on.

### 4 Produce a simple drawing guide

Depending on how much time I have for the assignment, I sometimes like to do a drawing of the figure on top of my sketch. Sometimes the drawing can be detailed; other times it can be very simple. The drawing will serve as my guide throughout the painting, and will ensure that my anatomy and proportions stay consistent and accurate.



### 5 Start blocking in the figure and environment

Now I focus on blocking in all the major areas of the image. For example, I adjust the figure's proportions based on my earlier drawing, start painting the major shapes in the figure, and establish proper lighting throughout the painting. The key to this stage is to always keep the entire painting in mind, and not focus on any details.

### 6 Spend time on the face

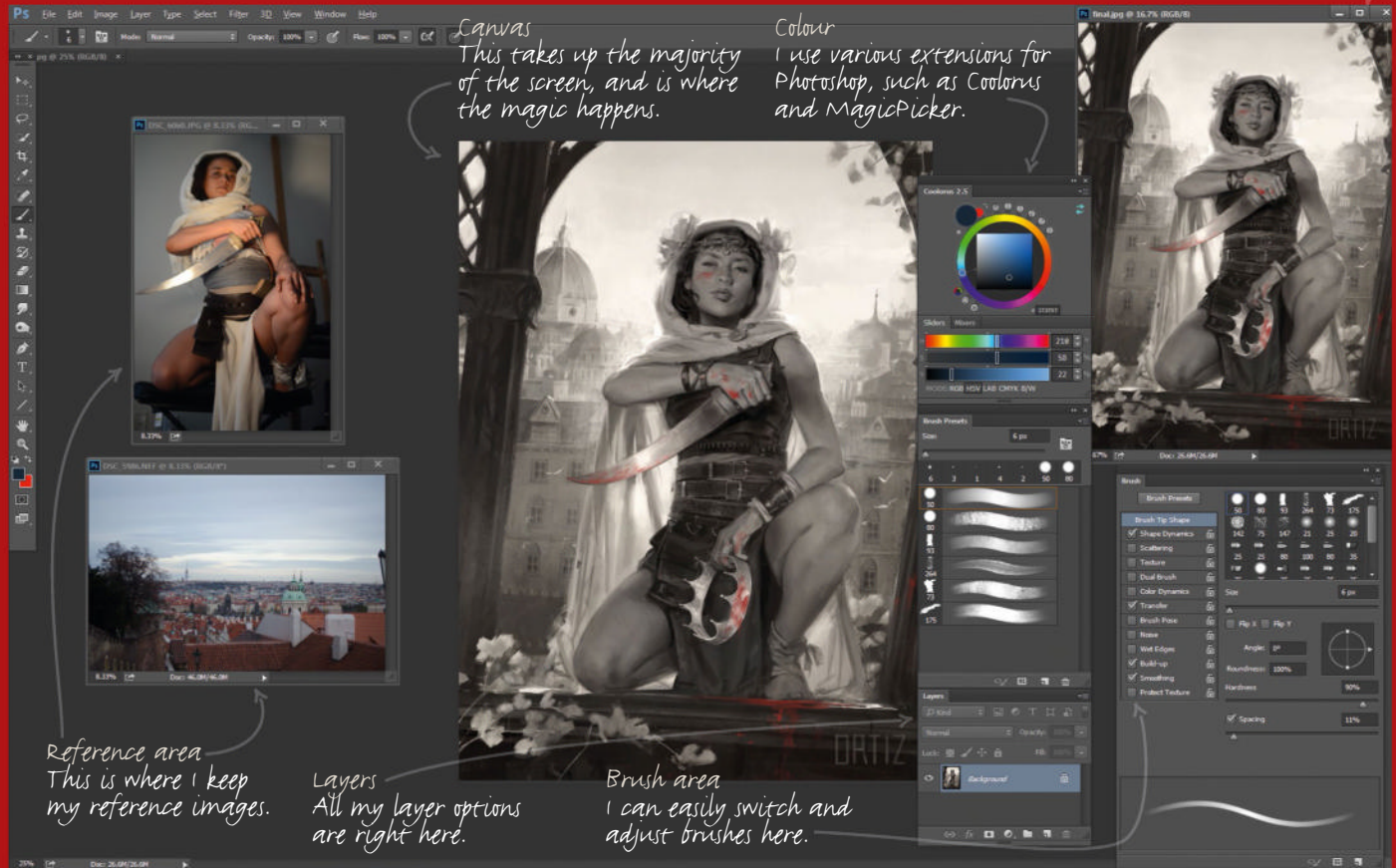
This is my favourite step, and one that I never rush, because faces are one of the most important elements of a painting. It's how others can relate to a painting and the story that it's trying to tell. Not to mention it's the first place most people look. So don't hurry – take your time.



## WELCOME TO MY WORKSPACE

I've refined my Photoshop workspace so that my painting process is as efficient as possible. Here's a breakdown of what goes where...

*New Window*  
Set this up by going to Window>Arrange>New window for your file. This helps me see the whole painting, so I don't just focus on details.



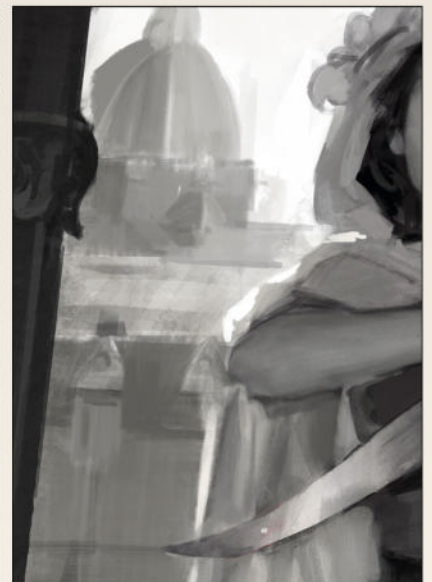
### 7 Spotting anatomy errors

I add defining brush marks to the main parts of the body, all the while making sure that my proportions are correct. It's now that I notice a couple of errors, particularly the length of the arms. It's important to always trust that feeling of "something isn't quite right", and take appropriate action.



### 8 Body and background

The proportion of my arms are wrong, so I make it my priority to fix this before going any further. Then I begin painting other major areas of the body, ensuring that I relate those areas to the arms, and adjust the proportions of the body as a whole. Once this is done I focus on other areas of the painting, specifically the background. ➡





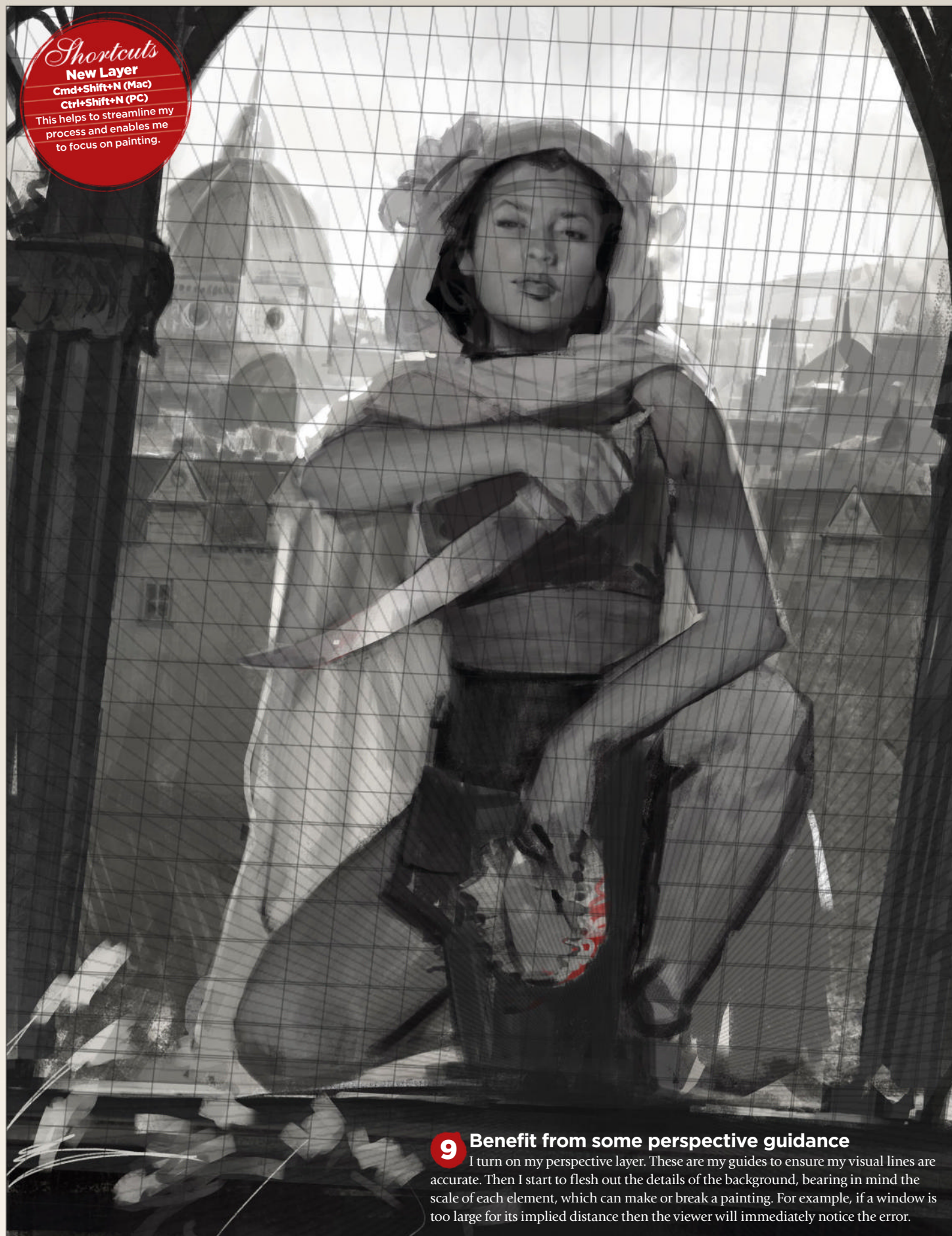
## Shortcuts

### New Layer

Cmd+Shift+N (Mac)

Ctrl+Shift+N (PC)

This helps to streamline my process and enables me to focus on painting.



9

### Benefit from some perspective guidance

I turn on my perspective layer. These are my guides to ensure my visual lines are accurate. Then I start to flesh out the details of the background, bearing in mind the scale of each element, which can make or break a painting. For example, if a window is too large for its implied distance then the viewer will immediately notice the error.





## 10 Polishing the background

I continue to paint the rest of the background, and add shapes and details that give the viewer a feeling of both the time of day and the location. All of these elements help enhance the story that I'm trying to tell. Whenever you work on an illustration, keep in mind that location and lighting are powerful storytelling tools for any artist. Use them well.



## 11 Further composition adjustments

I realise that the background rooftops are too close to her shoulders and could create a problematic tangent. But this is easy to correct with Photoshop: I lower those rooftops and extend the background above to eliminate that tangent. I also continue to make adjustments to the body and start fleshing out the details of her clothing.



## 12 Taking the scene to a high level of finish

I'm happy with the proportions of the body and the painting as a whole, so I focus on taking the figure to final. This involves rendering the hands and legs, designing her outfit, painting the crown and dagger, and making sure each area is painted accurately.



## 13 Adding the small details

At this stage I add the final bits of details to the painting, and make sure I'm happy with every area. I improve the look of the window frame, adjust the design of the character's outfit slightly, add splashes of red to suggest a messy assassination, enhance the lighting and adjust some edges. These small adjustments can make all the difference.

## 14 It's done... or is it?

I prefer to give myself a day or two before calling it finished. Yet while this isn't always possible because of deadlines, giving yourself a bit of time away from the painting enables you to see it with a fresh set of eyes. Perhaps a small section could be improved, or it's perfect as it stands? A little bit of time and distance can help answer those questions.

## PRO SECRETS

### Take a break

It was common for me to do between eight and 12 hours a day of non-stop painting without taking a break (maybe lunch if I remembered). The strain of that schedule surfaced later in my career as a very nasty hand injury and eye strain. It was a scary moment, but with exercise and physical therapy I was able to recover. So please, every 20 minutes or so, take a short break. Your artwork and health will thank you for it.

## RESOURCES

### WORKSHOP BRUSHES

#### PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES:  
HARD ROUND 2222 AND  
HARD ROUND TEXTURE

I use Round brushes for my figure work and creating form.

SAMPLED BRUSH 10 2  
AND DIRECTION  
BRUSHY

Square brushes are good for depicting hard edges and large block-ins.

SAMPLED BRUSH 3 5  
AND AUFGENOMMENER  
PINSEL 11

Textured brushes create visual interest and engaging brushstrokes.



Core Skills

# MASTERING THE ZBRUSH INTERFACE



**Rob Redman** introduces ZBrush's non-standard interface and reveals the locations of its most useful tools for those starting out in 3D art

**Artist PROFILE**

**Rob Redman**  
LOCATION: England

Rob is a 3D artist and industry veteran. He runs a boutique animation studio and can often be found presenting on the events circuit.  
<http://ifxm.ag/rob-r>

**N**o matter what 3D software you choose to use, the terminology is going to be similar, as will the processes you use to achieve any given result.

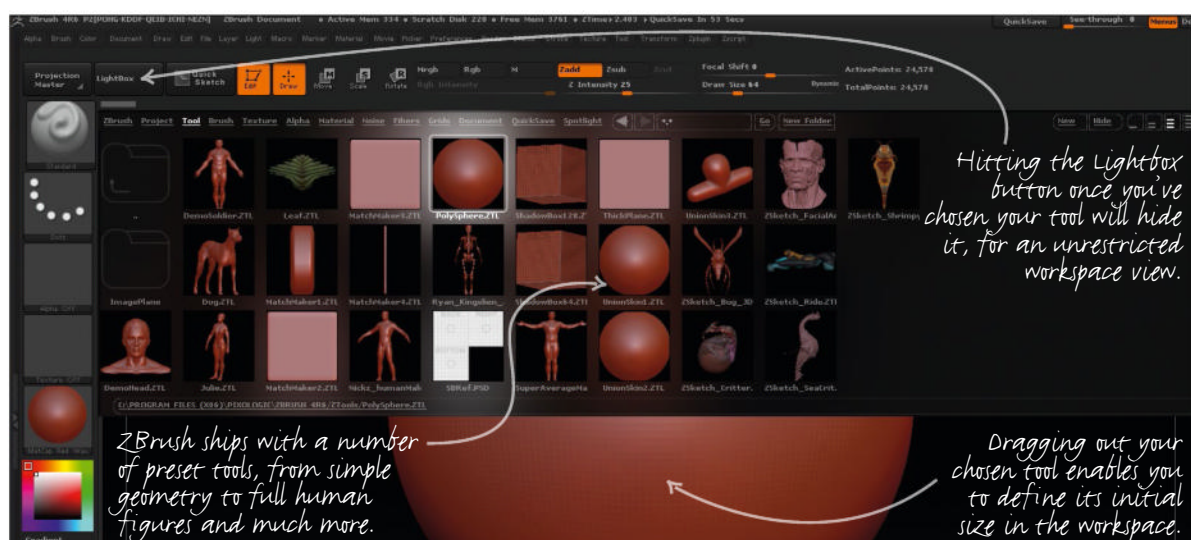
The exception, it seems, is ZBrush, which works like no other 3D software out there. It began life in 1999 as a non-standard 2.5D application and its development followed a natural route,

building upon its initial success with new tools and options added at each revision.

However, the current version can look bewildering to those keen on entering the 3D creative field, and few would argue that the program's interface makes accessing some of its tools and abilities difficult. That said, once you get to grips with its unique procedures and layouts it becomes a familiar friend and you really

can work at the speed of thought. The interface is highly configurable, and so making the program suit your own particular preferences is straightforward and can reward the time you put into it.

In the first of a series of articles, we'll look at the ins and outs of the ZBrush interface, ensuring you're ready to move on to specific tools and processes in future instalments.

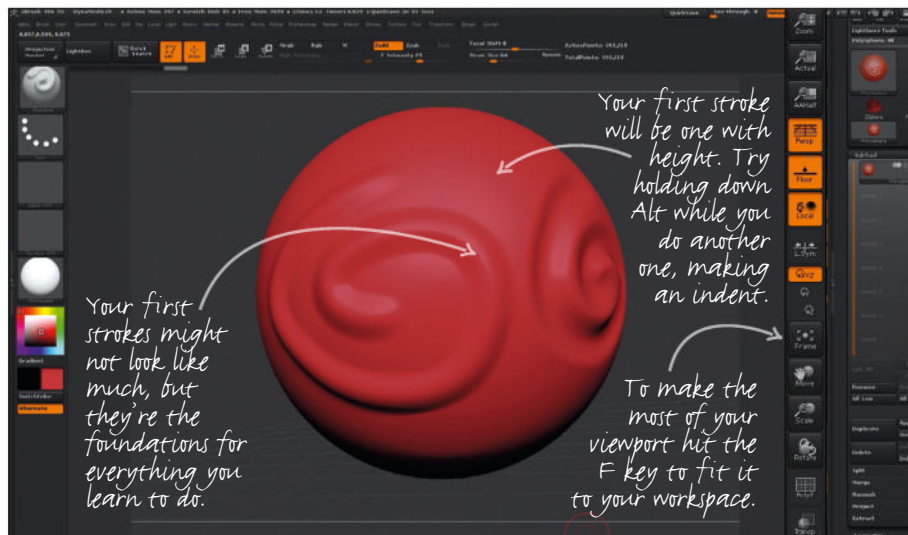


## 1 Loading a mesh to sculpt

The first thing you'll need is some geometry to work with. There are various ways to do this, but the easiest is by opening the Lightbox and choosing something from the Tools tab. Double-click it, drag it out on to the canvas and press T to make it editable.

## 2 Using a simple brush to start sculpting

You'll initially see an icon top left, showing a standard brush. Click this to open the Brush palette and the many brush options. For now we'll stick with the standard brush. Try drawing a stroke across your sphere.



**PRO SECRETS**

**Don't be afraid to experiment**

I've barely scratched the surface of what ZBrush can do here and I urge you to experiment. Dig into different menus and see what buttons do. You'll discover gems such as FiberMesh and the Noise tools that will completely change the way you work.



# Quick technique ZBrush interface

## 3 Global adjustments

While your brush is active you can adjust some simple settings, such as Size, Focal Shift (the softness at the edge of your brush) and more. To access the options you can use the sliders above your viewport, but for a faster workflow get used to holding down Space.

*ZBrush provides various methods of accessing options, so you can tailor the interface to your preferences.*



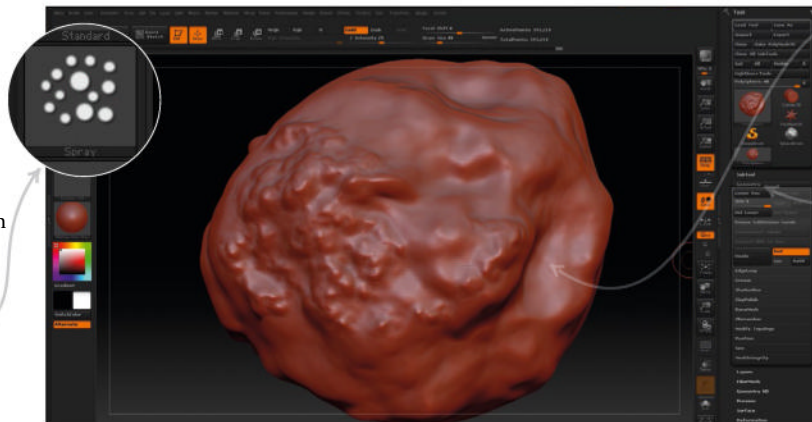
*These simple sliders make even the standard brush a versatile tool.*

*You can even choose your preferred brush by pressing space, which helps to speed up your workflow.*

## 4 Stroke type

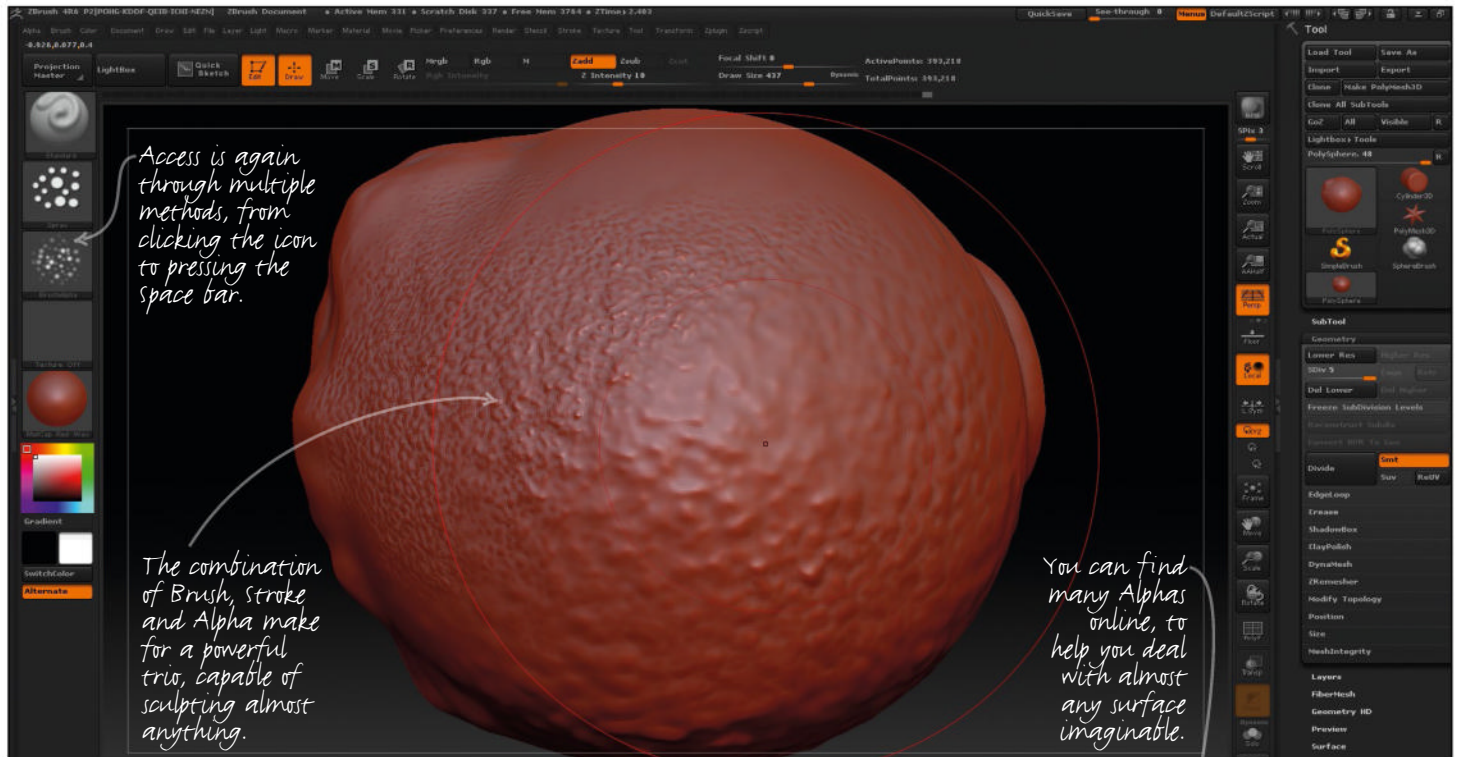
The standard stroke, which is the way your brush marks are laid down, is a series of dots that are close together to make a line, but click the icon below the Brush icon (named Dots by default) and you can choose from a few others. Choose Spray and draw another mark on your object. Click and drag off the mesh to orbit round to an unmarked area.

*The spray stroke type is great for more organic sculpting, with some natural chaos.*



*Adjusting the Brush size by pressing space results in different looks, because the spray scales with the brush size.*

*If you need more definition, go to the Geometry section on the right and click Divide. (We'll talk more about this in future issues.)*



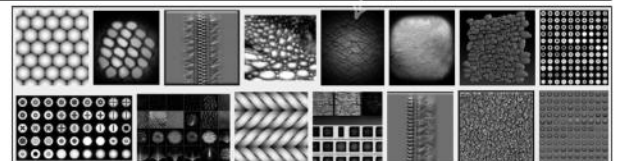
*Access is again through multiple methods, from clicking the icon to pressing the space bar.*

*The combination of Brush, stroke and Alpha make for a powerful trio, capable of sculpting almost anything.*

*You can find many Alphas online, to help you deal with almost any surface imaginable.*

## 5 Brush Alphas

Below the Stroke menu is the Alpha menu. An Alpha is a greyscale image that defines which areas of the brush mark are actually applied, with white being the most and black the least. Alphas are useful for details and can save huge amounts of time when working on subjects such as textures for rock and skin. Click the icon to access Alphas, or load more.









In depth Classic artist skills

*Photoshop, ZBrush, Keyshot*  
**LEARN CLASSIC  
ARTIST SKILLS**

**Stéphane Richard** adapts the lessons he's learned from the Old Masters into his digital painting process





## Artist PROFILE

**Stéphane Richard**

LOCATION: France



Stéphane is a self-taught digital artist who works as an illustrator, concept artist and art director in the TV, publishing and video games industries.

[www.wootha.com](http://www.wootha.com)

## GET YOUR RESOURCES

See page 6 now!

## Shortcuts

### Reset colours D (PC & Mac)

Resets foreground and background colours in Photoshop to black and white

**W**elcome to my latest ImagineFX workshop. In my previous tutorial in issue 126, I explained how I adapted history's camera obscura to a 3D-based painting technique. When I learned that, as early as the 15th century, numerous painters used lenses and mirrors as part of their creative process, I didn't challenge the Old Masters' genius. I thought that it showed how they continuously experimented with new techniques and technologies in order to solve specific problems as part of a wider creative process.

As I studied the Old Masters, I kept discovering elements of their work that could be applied to the digital medium. For example, I learned that many fundamental aspects of a painting were addressed through a rigorous process involving a lot of preliminary studies, each focusing on specific problems such as composition, story or colour scheme. I also learned that problem solving represented a key part of their work.

Once such elements of the painting were properly defined, finding the right model or piece of fabric to use as reference, the correct proportions of a

medium, or the best technique to render a difficult material or draw a complex object in perspective was essential to a successful composition.

In this workshop, my aim is to translate some of the ideas I've learned from the Old Masters into a neoclassical-inspired painting. I'll start by finding a subject, gathering photo and painting references and establishing a composition. Then I'll refine my initial idea and use 3D to build the scene and render my underpainting. Finally, I'll finish the image in Photoshop using adjustment layers, photobashing and painting techniques.



## 1 Start from a simple subject

I started this image as a figure study that I was keen to sculpt in ZBrush and finish in Photoshop. At the time I was also studying *Phaedra* by the 19th century French academic painter Alexandre Cabanel. I decided to push the study further by painting my own image, inspired by Cabanel's work.



## 2 Gather good references

Now that I have my subject, I start to gather Old Master paintings and reference photos using Google. I'm focusing on finding a core selection of strong references that will help me to better define my subject. This is an important step, because this is where a lot of the narrative work takes place.

Clockwise from left: Alexandre Cabanel; John William Waterhouse; Jules Joseph Lefebvre; Alexandre Cabanel

## RESOURCES

## WORKSHOP BRUSHES

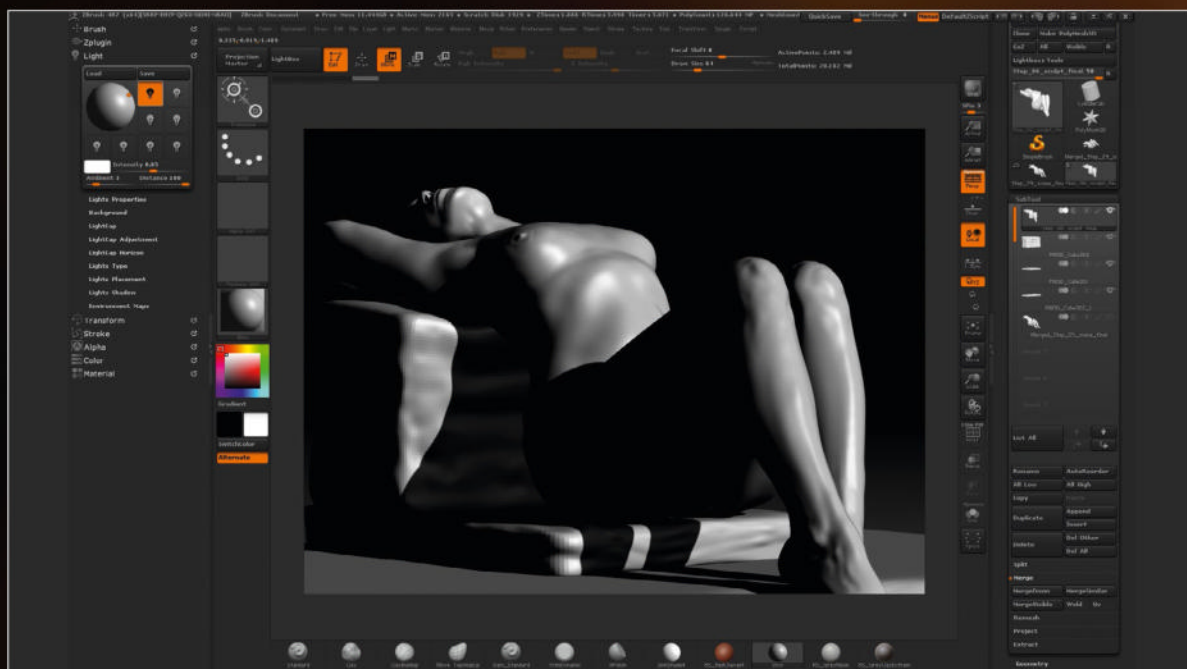
### PHOTOSHOP

#### CUSTOM BRUSHES OIL BLENDER

#### CHALK BLENDER

#### WET BLENDER

I use these Photoshop mixer brush tool presets in the later stage of the painting to create and refine the brush marks, simplify textures, blur edges and blend colours and values. With the Sample All Layers check box enabled, I can push and pull pixels from the layers underneath, too.



## 3 Roughing the main figure in ZBrush

I start by sculpting my figure in ZBrush because I know the whole composition will depend on it. Because I've already chosen my viewing angle, I sculpt the pose without symmetry and focus on what the camera will see, because it helps me to think about the painting at this early 3D stage.





## 4 Establishing a composition

Now that I have the base figure established, I can play with the lighting in Keyshot and work on the composition in Photoshop. I try to have only a few shapes and values, and ensure that they're balanced and dynamic. I don't care about what those shapes are – I only consider the abstract relationship of masses, lines and values.



## 5 Blocking the composition in 3D

I start to block the image in 3D with basic volumes and simple lighting, using my sketch as a guide. I play around with the silhouette, local colour (the intrinsic colour of the objects) and shadow patterns to match the abstract lines and values of my initial composition. I also refine the figure anatomy, bearing in mind the stylised body shapes that are a neoclassical beauty standard.



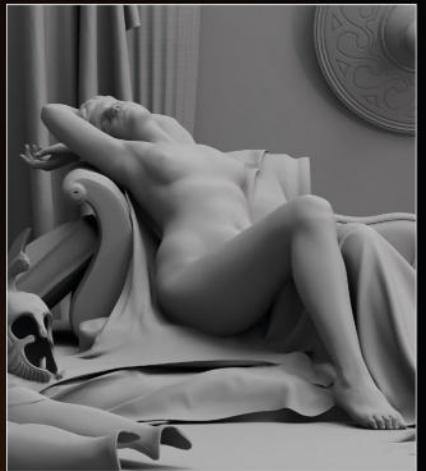
## 6 Roughing in the image in 2D

Before going into detail in 3D, I need to have a better idea of the final image. Using the 3D blocking as a base, I do a quick paint-over in Photoshop to help me define what each shape is going to be and how it's going to relate to the initial composition.



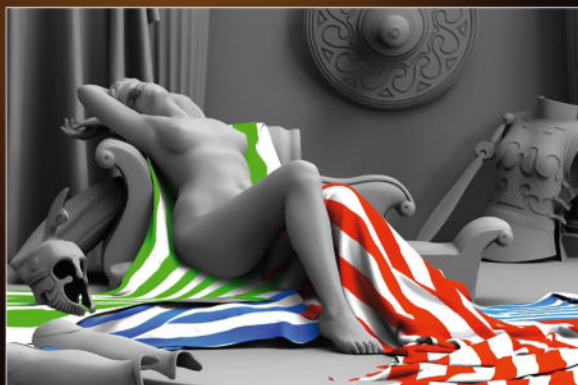
## 7 Modelling the scene in 3D

Thanks to the paint-over efforts, I can confidently detail the scene in ZBrush. Using the photo and painting references that I gathered earlier, I start to model the various elements. I try to work efficiently in both 3D and 2D, playing to the strengths of both. For example, some details are faster to sculpt, while others are very easy to add in Photoshop.



## 8 Adjusting the composition

Thanks to the new plugin available at pixologic.com, ZBrush and Keyshot work smoothly together. I use Keyshot to preview the changes I make in ZBrush almost in real time. This enables me to adjust the various elements of the final 3D render in ZBrush and eventually add the final details.



## 9 Preparing textures

Among the details that are faster to add in 3D are textures wrapping around complex shapes. I use ZBrush to create blank texture files for the pieces of fabric that I can edit in Photoshop. By switching between Photoshop and Keyshot, I can preview the edited textures in the scene. ➡➡

## PRO SECRETS

### Boost your productivity

Photoshop Actions help me save time when carrying out repetitive tasks. I use them to automate anything from exporting files to several formats to selecting specific layers or creating textures. From the Actions palette, I create a new Action, name it and start recording a sequence. Once I'm done, I stop the recording and test it several times. I've now automated a sequence.



## PRO SECRETS

### Assigning your Actions

If I use an Action often enough, I assign it to a keyboard shortcut. From the Action palette, I double-click the empty space at the right of an Action. In the dialog I can assign any function key from F1 to F12 with Shift/Ctrl (PC) Shift/CMD (Mac) combinations. There are more combinations than I'll ever need!



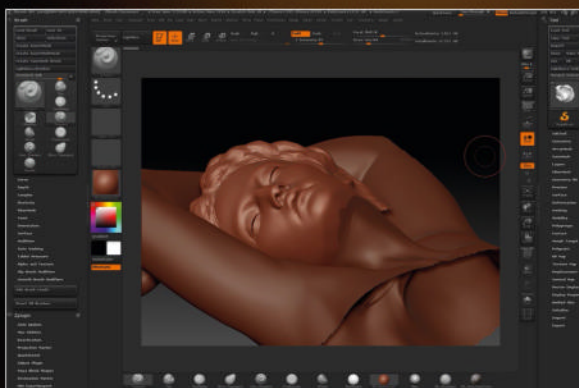
### 10 Rendering passes

I set up a base render with materials roughly matching the final composition. I consider value, reflectivity and transparency, but I'm not too concerned by realism. Rendering accurate materials is time-consuming and I find it faster to depict their properties in Photoshop: I render some passes with properties such as diffuse light and ambient occlusion.



### 11 Working in Photoshop

I assemble the various renders to create the final materials. By combining various passes I can fine-tune the materials in Photoshop. Using adjustment layers and masks, I refine values and colours. I also add atmosphere, glow and various effects to bring the image to life. From now on I'll constantly refer back to Cabanel's Phaedra for many aspects of the painting.



### 12 Introduce new elements

Thanks to my ZBrush>Keyshot>Photoshop pipeline, and because every element is already in the right place in ZBrush, I can quickly add more details. At this stage, I'm not happy with the head, so I sculpt a new one and paste it into my image.



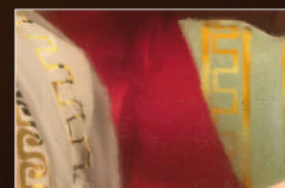
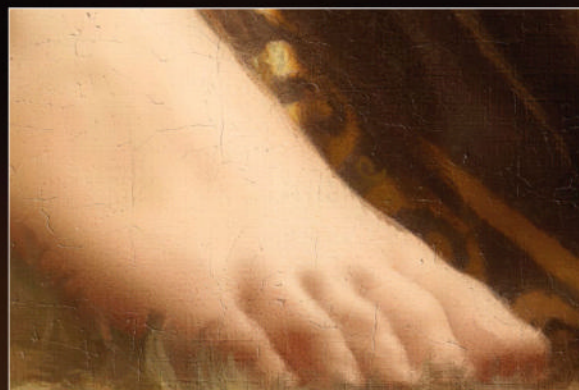
### 13 Photobashing

Now that I have an image that's starting to work as a whole, I add more details where necessary using photobashing techniques. Thanks to the underlying values and shapes, it's easier to incorporate textures at this stage. I carefully select photos that work with my lighting scheme and have interesting shapes that match the flow of the painting.



### 14 Brush work and surface details

I don't want my painting to look too sharp. When looking at the work of the Old Masters, I notice that their sharper edges and textures are very blurry compared to a lot of digital work. I use filters, plugins, overlayed textures and the Mixer brush to design the brush work and fake a weathered canvas surface.





Next month in...  
NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS  
**ImagineFX**

# Anatomy

The new issue of ImagineFX will help you approach figure drawing with new confidence

Aaron Griffin explains how to paint accurate yet personal figures.

## Featuring...

### **Ed Binkley**

The iconoclastic artist shares his approach to the human anatomy, even when that human is a fruit fly!

### **Loopy ideas!**

Dave 'Loopydave' Dunstan shows that there's method to the madness of his caricature paintings.

### **Pascal Blanché**

The French senior art director on how basic 3D skills can open your art up to exciting new possibilities.

### **Anatomy 101**

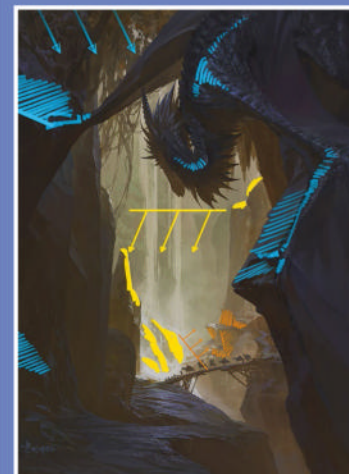
Pick up your pencil, or stylus, and make sure the first lines you make, make sense, with Stan Prokopenko.

**ISSUE 135 ON SALE IN THE UK FRIDAY 22 APRIL**



## Photoshop IMPROVE YOUR APPROACH TO COMPOSITION

**Bayard Wu** builds up atmosphere in a scene using invisible lines, lighting and dynamic storytelling



### Light considerations

The yellow part is the image's brightest area. It originates from the sunlight, and I place it in a small yet key spot. The orange is the reflected light on the surrounding cliffs. The blue is cool light on the cliffs, which sets the tone and supports the focal point.

Like a well-made film, a still image can pull the viewer right into the scene. This, in turn, can prompt them to explore the story in their mind, and wonder what happens next. I'm fascinated by the possibilities thrown up by a person's imagination, and am very keen to tap into its power through my art.

### Artist PROFILE

**Bayard Wu**  
LOCATION: China



Bayard is an illustrator and concept artist with a passion for strong

compositions and story telling. He's worked with game companies in North America, Europe and Japan.

<http://ifxm.ag/bayardwu>

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

**T**his image is an example of the personal work I undertake from time to time. As such, it features my own ideas and preferences. Here, I've chosen to depict a dramatic landscape that features a range of rock textures, and I want to push the feeling of depth in the environment.

Even in a practice piece there's always scope to tell a story with drama and emotion. Indeed, it's this attitude that I take into all of my creative endeavours.

In my other paintings that feature dragons, they've been huge, mighty and proud creatures. For this piece I want to show a dragon that's quite the opposite: a small, cunning beast that's lurking in the shadows as it tracks a group of adventurers. But perhaps the riders are in fact dragon hunters? We don't know, and along with the dragon, the viewer is also hiding in the shadows, quietly watching the adventurers as they make their way across the precarious-looking bridge.

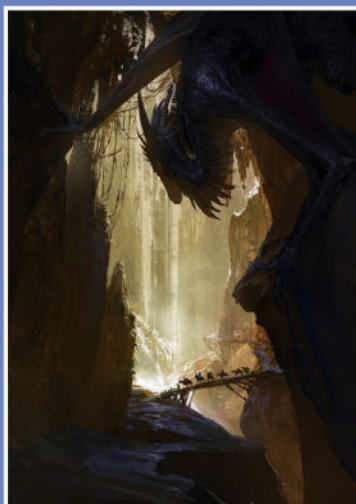
### How I create...

## A DRAMATIC MOMENT



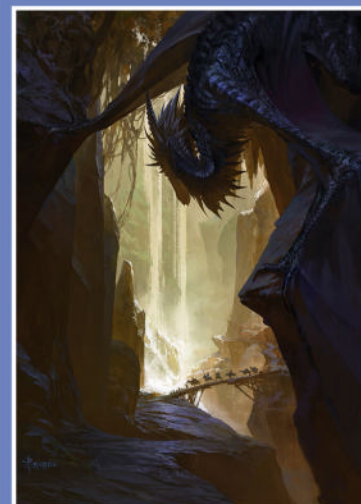
### 1 Decide on a theme and the visual angle

I begin by considering what visual angle to take, to push the storytelling aspect. It's more interesting to see figures from a dragon's point of view rather than the other way around. It goes against convention and might reveal a different side to the classic fantasy beast. Once I settle on the angle, I draw rough lines to set the image within a frame.



### 2 Develop believable characters in context

The look and dynamism of the dragon lies at the heart of this image, and needs to be enhanced within the scene. I imagine that my dragon has the characteristics of a snake and bat, and so its physical appearance has to reflect the sharpness and cunning of these two animals. Their traits suit the theme of hunting in the shadows.



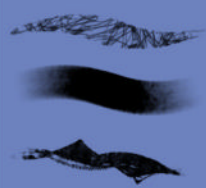
### 3 Detail and enhance the general aesthetic

I paint the dragon's wings and neck carefully. It's crucial for me that the environment has an epic feeling, which I achieve by layering the light and enhancing the depth of the scene. The dark cliff faces contrast strongly with the bright waterfalls and mountains under the sun, which in turn clearly outline the dragon's menacing form.

### RESOURCES WORKSHOP BRUSHES

#### PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES:  
MY CORE COLLECTION

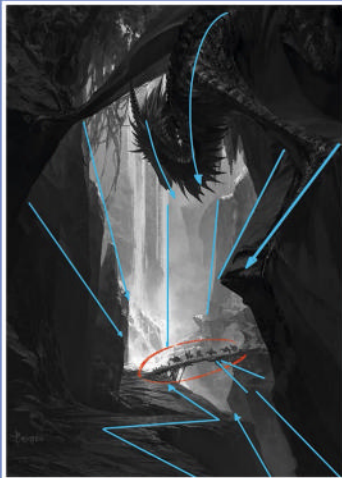


I alternate between these brushes to develop soft or hard lines through the painting.



## Texture

While the viewer may spot the distant adventurers first, they'll soon linger on the details of the dragon. As such, I ensure that the dragon's skin has an interesting texture and tense muscles, and hint at a dense skeletal structure. The low light on the skin indicates the overall darkness of the cave.



## Composition and focus

The imaginary lines of sight from the dragon and its wings, and the angles of the cliffs all direct the viewer to the distant riders. This ensures that even though the figures aren't highly detailed, the viewer is still aware that they're in trouble. There's added drama in the contrast between the roaring waterfalls and the silent dragon, and the bright sunlight and dark cliff faces.

## Geometry

The waterfalls and cliffs cut out a series of vertical blocks, and indicate a vast space. Meanwhile, the dragon, the road and the underside of the bridge break up these vertical lines – otherwise, the image would be boring. The road and bridge lead the viewer from the foreground into the background.



*Artist insight*

# BECOME A BETTER CONCEPT ARTIST

**Donglu Yu** reveals the many production challenges that a concept artist will face during the production of AAA video games







## Artist PROFILE

**Donglu Yu**  
LOCATION: Canada



Donglu is working at WB Games Montreal as a lead concept artist. Previously she's helped develop titles such as Deus Ex: Human Revolution, Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag and Far Cry 4.  
<http://ifxm.ag/art-yu>

**C**oncept artists play an important role in the development of video games. They're the bridge between the art director's vision of the game and the 3D artists who produce the in-game assets. They're responsible for making sure that the concept art tasks follow the designated production schedule; showcase the established design pillars

that have been established early on; and track down relevant production information from other departments if this is missing.

As a lead concept artist, my team and I face exciting and fun challenges every day. Not only do we need to embrace the technology changes within the digital painting process and learn new software, we're also expected to continuously grow

as artists by practising traditional drawing and painting.

Here, I want to discuss in detail the role of a concept artist within a video game production, and the significant impact this role has on the game's finished look. Hopefully it'll inspire you to channel your efforts into breaking into the games industry, or if you're already a busy concept artist, help you to up your game!

### 1 KNOW ALL THE ART PILLARS

Concept artists are the link between the art directors and the 3D artists. We have the crucial role of reinforcing the established art pillars through our work and having daily conversations with the 3D artists. This is the bread and the butter of our job. You should know the check list of the visual benchmarks like the back of your hand.

#### ART PILLARS

→ HISTORY . ARCHITECTURE STYLE, WEATHER, COLOR PALETTE, CULTURE INFLUENCE . DESIGN LANGUAGE INFLUENCE, MOVIE INSPIRATION . SURFACE/TEXTURE TREATMENT.

“Concept artists are the link between the art directors and the 3D artists”



## PRO SECRETS

### Be humble

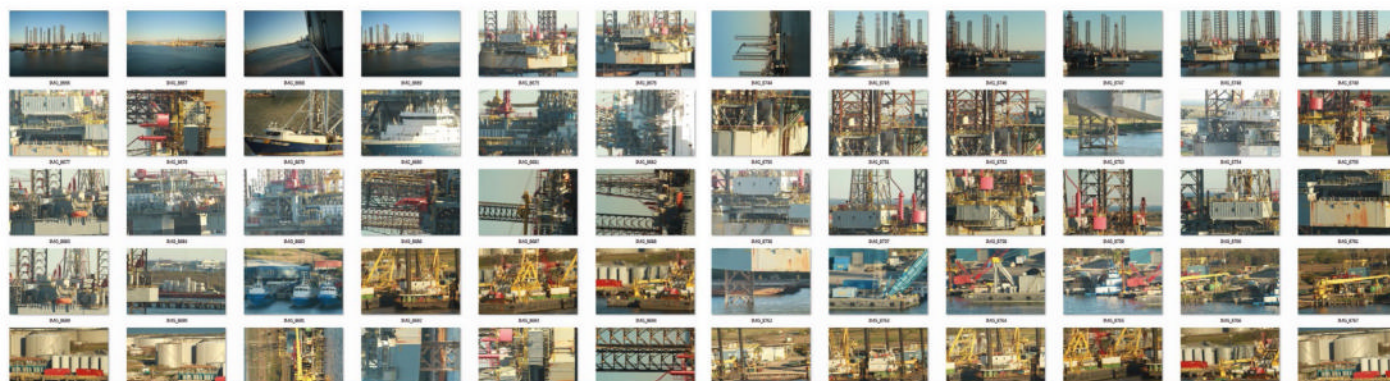
I always remind myself to keep a respectful mindset no matter what the level of my seniority within the creative team. There's always something to learn from the teammates, even the juniors. When you actively embrace that diversified talent pool, you'll be able to truly progress as an artist and a leader.

### 2 EXPLAIN YOUR THOUGHT PROCESS TO THE ART DIRECTOR

Your art director should be an integral part of the concept art process. Don't submit the final piece of artwork without going through your design process with them first. Talk about how you'll be approaching a shot, and then continue with composition sketches and colour palette proposals, and then show the final artworks. Not only will the art director give you valuable insights, but you'll also be able to explain and justify the thought process behind your aesthetic choices, which may lead to further discussions.







### 3 ALWAYS BACK UP YOU CONCEPTS WITH PHOTO REFERENCE

Photo references are the foundation that will generate realism in all your works. Even sci-fi video games will feature a significant amount of real-world designs. References increase the soundness

of your artistic choices and show that you've done your visual research properly. They also serve as great visual support when your deadline is tight and you have to do something loose. Provide the reference materials along with your speed painting; this will make the 3D artists' lives much easier.

### 4 PROVIDE SKETCHES WHENEVER POSSIBLE

Before the level artists start a big map, they need some visual prompts to get things rolling. It can be looking through photos together, navigating in the game engine, or providing sketches to give a general direction of how the silhouette of the map should be approached. A sketch can generate ideas and iterations can be done quickly. Many level artists like this type of interaction, because they're directly involved in the design phase of their assigned map.



### 5 STAY IN TOUCH WITH THE LIGHTING DEPARTMENT

Lighting has a strong influence on how your concept art will be interpreted in the game. Make sure you sync with the lighting crew and seek their feedback. If your shot is dependent on the time of day or specific lighting fixtures, the shadow shape or how the light diffuses can affect your composition. Lighting artists can let you know how much artistic freedom you would have based on engine constraints and how you can use that freedom more efficiently.



### 6 CONSIDER THE LEVEL ARTISTS

Highly rendered concept art, with lots of mood, ambiance and VFX, doesn't always help the level artists. They usually need clarification on modelling and texturing. Listen to their requirements before deciding on what kind of concept art you'll be generating. A piece of line art or a material chart can be more efficient for delivering design clarity. ➡





## A DAY IN THE LIFE...

Donglu takes us through a typical day for a lead concept artist



**It's 8am** in the morning, I walk into the office, grab my coffee and read through my emails. These can vary in nature, from confirming the current deadline of the concept art department tasks or providing paint-overs for concept artists to receiving in-game screenshot from the level artists for feedback.



**9:30am** I kick off a meeting for a new map for the game.



**10:30am** Time to go through the photo references that my team have gathered, pointing out the relevant design elements to showcase.



**11:30am** I work on my own concept art assignments.



**12pm** I grab a quick lunch, check my afternoon schedule, and prepare the materials for meetings if needed.



**1pm** Time to lead a meeting to talk people through the production schedule and discuss how the tasks on the list impact each other.



**2pm** This is my daily review, where I assess the progress of my concept art team.



**3pm** I catch up with the project's art director for our weekly catch-up.

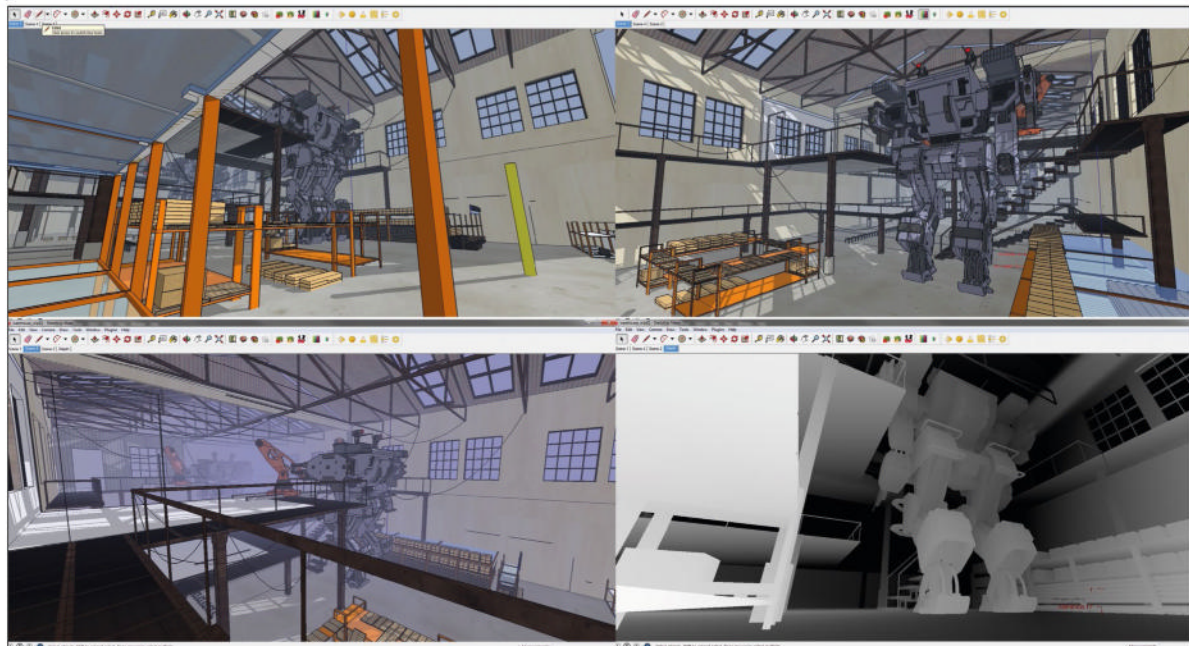


**4pm to 5pm** I conclude the day by working on my own concept art tasks.

## 7 DON'T IGNORE 3D TOOLS WHEN CREATING CONCEPTS

A production has a limited budget and timeline, so you need to use all the available tools to be productive and efficient. If a 3D screenshot can help you to nail the perspective faster and more

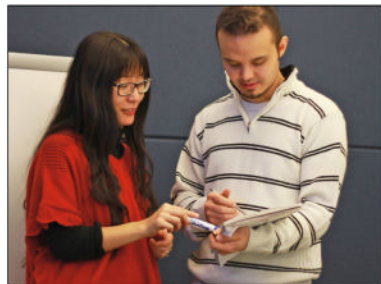
clearly, go for it. If render passes can speed up the process of polishing high-level concept art, don't hesitate. If you need in-game assets to be part of your concepts, ask a level artist to export those objects. You need to be a fast thinker and a pro-active team player.



## 8 ALWAYS RESPECT THE DEADLINE

Deadlines are crucial within the production process, especially when a lot is dependent on concept art being created at the beginning of the pipeline. Missing the deadline can affect all the departments that have scheduled their tasks based on the date of completion of the concept pieces. It's important to let others know as soon as possible that you might miss the deadline, so that alternative approaches can be discussed, such as a looser rendering level with supporting references, or start the task with the available in-game assets instead of painting from scratch.

“If a 3D screenshot can help you to nail the perspective faster and more clearly, go for it”



## 9 IF IN DOUBT, ASK

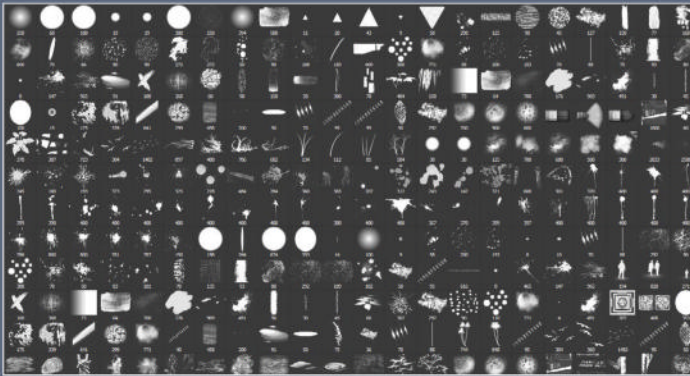
Some shots might have size or navigation constraints. If in doubt, ask. Level designers are always there to answer such questions. If the purpose of a task isn't clear, ask which department will benefit from the artwork. This will enable you to gather information about their needs. If the deadline isn't specified, ask for details so that you can plan your painting process accordingly.

## 10 SHARE ART WITH THE VFX TEAM

Concept art can trigger fresh ideas for the VFX team, so keep them in the loop. While we provide level artists modelling, texturing and layout information through concept art, we also need the VFX team's support on the realisation of the ambiance and the mood portrayed in the concept art. What kind of smoke, fire or steam effects will suit certain maps? Effects artists are the experts, and can provide you the most accurate answers.

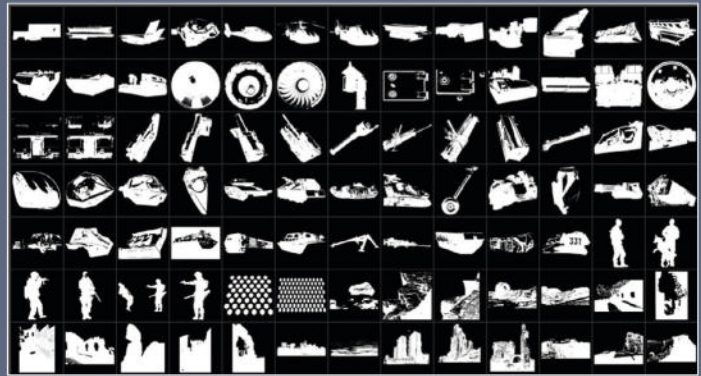






## 11 SHARE DIGITAL ASSETS WITH YOUR FELLOW CONCEPT ARTISTS

I believe that a culture of sharing is the key to ensuring that a concept artist progresses artistically and technically within the production. It can be custom-made brushes, 3D components, cool plugins, nice cut-out shapes or relevant photo packs. Sharing those tools can make our work



more consistent in terms of quality and it can avoid repetitious art tasks. If one artist cut out 10 types of vegetation from references, it doesn't make any sense that another concept artist should spend time cutting out the same elements. Sharing tools and resources can give you more time to concentrate on the areas that need your design talents, instead of tackling run-of-the-mill art tasks.

## 12 SEEK FEEDBACK FROM YOUR PEERS

Your colleagues are your best advisers, because they know the production requirements and you see them on a daily basis. They can also provide you with bonus information or materials that you wouldn't expect if they happen to be are working on some shots that are relevant to yours. Furthermore, the fact that all the concept artist share a similar vocabulary, in terms of composition, value, colour and lighting, will make the feedback sessions smooth and efficient.



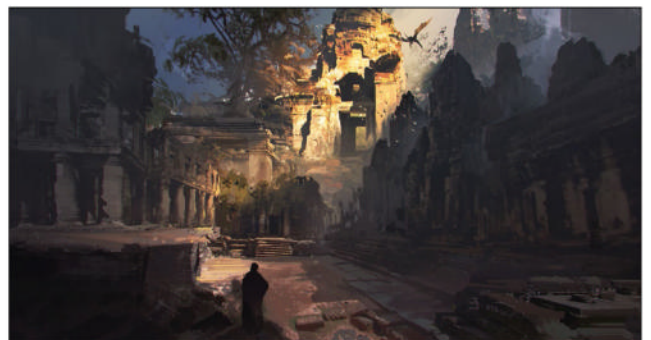
## PRO SECRETS

### Start simply

Once I know what the concept task requirements are, I usually start with a round of black and white sketches, focusing on the silhouettes and the overall compositions. At the review stage, I'd bring along any photo references I've used.

## 13 DON'T BE A PERFECTIONIST

Any video game production is expensive and complex, and the concept art aspect is only one of the many important cogs in this machine. Your concept art is a tool to deliver the final game product, rather than being a finished product in its own right. Yes, there's a quality bar to reach, but your concepts aren't fine art masterpieces that you can spend hours polishing to perfection. You need to learn when to stop. Being an idealist in this environment can have a negative impact, both on your work productivity and on the project's schedule.



PERFECTIONIST  $\neq$  PRODUCTION EFFICIENCY  
CONSIDER PRODUCTION CONSTRAINTS  
→ TIME + BUDGET

## 14 UNDERSTAND THE PRODUCTION VALUE OF A PIECE OF CONCEPT ART

All artists have a gut instinct to make their work as visually appealing as possible. However, it can help to shift this point of view when it comes to evaluating the worth of concept art pieces. A concept artist may deliver a piece of line work that has a significant impact on the level artist's task. You could then say that the line work has a high production value, because it makes a strong contribution to the overall production efficiency across different departments.



# Photoshop A FRESH TAKE ON COLOUR AND LIGHT

**Wangjie Li** enthusiastically explores the relationship between colour and light in a portrait, with a dose of inspiration from traditional techniques

## Artist PROFILE

**Wangjie Li**  
LOCATION: US



Wangjie started teaching art in 2007, but focused on creating concept art in 2009. He moved to the US in 2013 and is now a freelance concept artist living in Los Angeles. [www.wangjieli.com](http://www.wangjieli.com)

**GET YOUR RESOURCES**

See page 6 now!

## PRO SECRETS

**Be passionate, not frustrated**

I get frustrated all the time. I always think that I'm not good enough. It happens to everyone. There are still a lot of things that I need to learn. Sometimes I get irritated at not being able to figure things out in my paintings. When this happens, I usually play video games. I've been a gamer since a little boy, and my passion for them made me want to become a concept artist. When you get frustrated, look back for what you love and what inspires you.

**D**igital painting tools have come on in leaps and bounds in the past few years; people can use tablets to produce works of art at home or away, with all the convenience that brings. And it's also become easier than ever to take traditional painting techniques and apply them to the digital canvas.

I'm a young artist who approaches his work with great enthusiasm. I'm keen to take the idea of expressive elements from

the Old Masters and portray them in my work, because it's important to pass on these ideas to a new generation of art fans.

In this workshop, I'll be taking you through a step-by-step drawing of a study of a female portrait. The value of colour and lighting are the main topics that I'd like to cover, which should hopefully give you something new to consider in your artworks. Indeed, I normally like to paint with a dynamic light source as the main element in my work.

I've learnt the majority of my painting techniques by studying the Old Masters, and those digital artists whose art stands out from the crowd. My favourites are John Singer Sargent and Craig Mullins; you can learn much by studying their work. Recently, I've learnt some new techniques from Sargent's paintings, especially his process of breaking up coolness and warmth in a painting to achieve transparency. I hope you like my interpretation of Sargent's masterful style.



### 1 Making line work a separate layer

I usually start my paintings off with line work. This enables me to have a better understanding of the forms and proportions of the painting. I usually don't paint on the layer of the line work, but I save it for reference later. I create a new layer using the shortcut Ctrl+Alt+Shift+N and make my line work a separate layer.



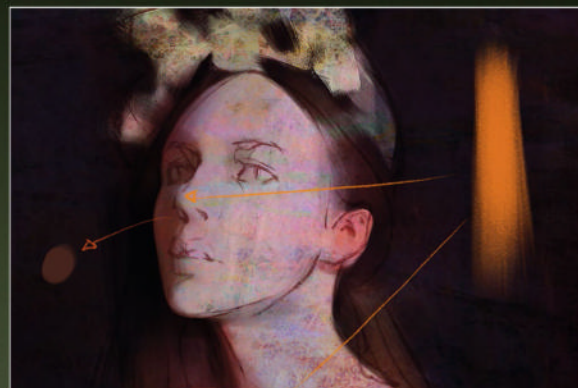
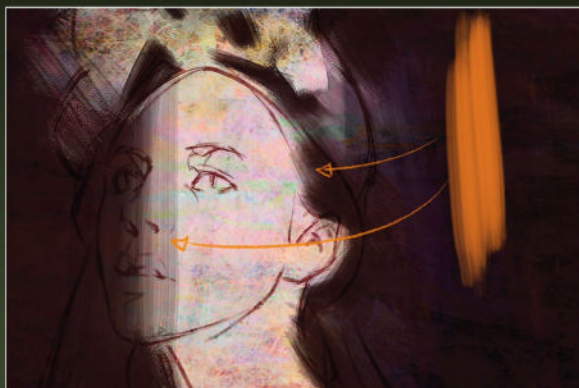
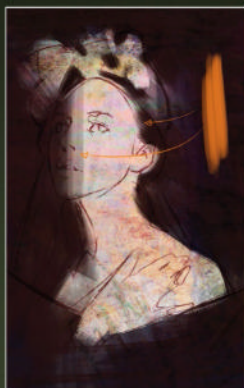
### 2 The underpainting stage

The underpainting process is a complicated task. It may look easy when you watch it being done, but it relies on the intuition of the artist to pick out a few colours from the palette. The skin colour from the underpainting doesn't have to look exactly like the finished piece – I can tweak it later. I use dark values to block in the shadows. ➡➡









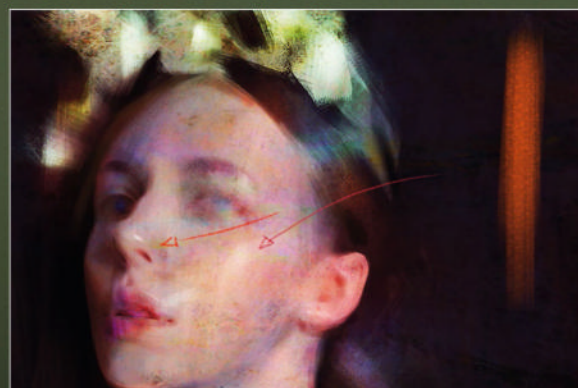
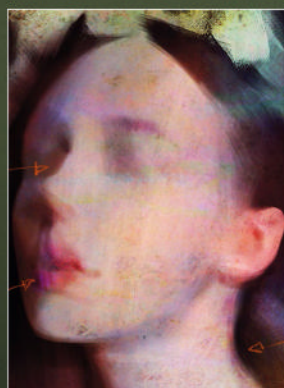
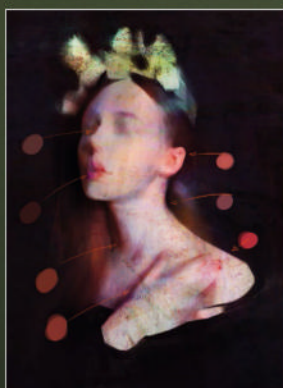
## 3 Introduce some shadows

For this piece, I'm mainly using dark violets to cover the darks in the painting, so the skin colour will pop out even more. Normally when people block in the highlight of a piece they'll just use light colours, but I'll do the reverse and start with the darks, using my custom Sampled brush. This enhances the contrast and will grab the attention of the viewer.

## 4 Achieving a vibrant composition

Next I use more darker and saturated tones with a larger Sampled brush to fill in the spaces between the shadow and the light. This process is very important. I start by using a warm saturated tone to block it in because of the position of the face. Then I'll use cool colours to contrast with the warm tones, so the whole composition will retain its vibrant, high-contrast values.

**Shortcuts**  
**Invert Selection**  
Cmd+I (Mac)  
Ctrl+I (PC)  
Select the opposite of what's already selected. Good for working with masks.

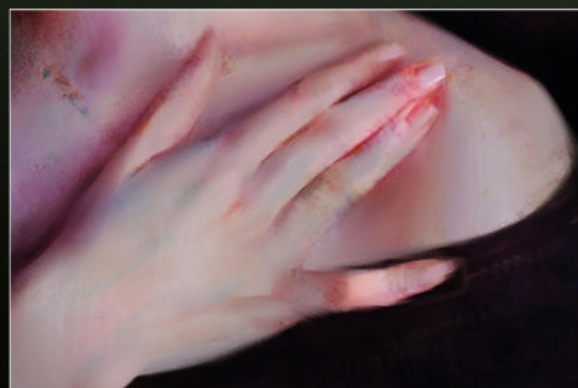
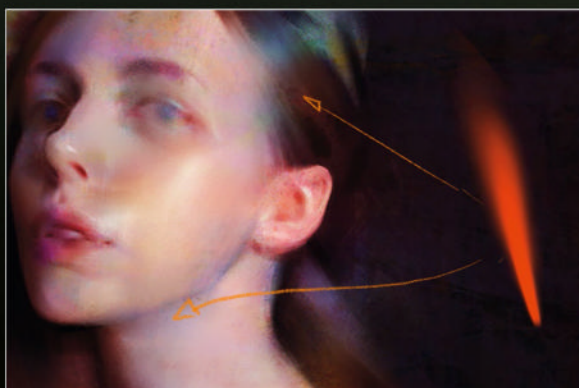


## 5 Contrasting values

I eliminate the line drawing and brighten up the whole composition. Now it's closer to the finished effect that I have in mind. To control the saturation of the composition and evoke subtle value changes, I apply darks to the composition, which are mainly a reddish colour. If the overall values aren't working then your audience won't catch the details in the piece.

## 6 Catching the structure

Now that the composition and colours are starting to work, I revisit the structure: I need to enhance the structure of the anatomy of the nose, the nose ridge, and the area of the jaw and cheekbone, and I use the larger Sampled brush again. This will also add detail as I build up the structure. But before this step I tweak the dark and lights of the piece.



## 7 Environment and detail

Now that I'm happy with the anatomy, I'll use my custom Airbrush to tweak the colours of the composition to reveal the skin colour. The smooth transition between values is a good foundation for further detailing. For now, the colours on the face are too warm, and need to be cooled down so that they match the rest of the environment.

## 8 Painting the hand

I add a little grey with my custom Sampled 17 3 brush to cool down some parts of the painting, and give some depth to the hands. Because it's a female hand, I need to use more colours to push the feeling of transparency. In addition, I want to paint some veins on the back of the hand for added realism.

**RESOURCES**

**WORKSHOP BRUSHES**

**PHOTOSHOP CUSTOM BRUSHES**

**HARD ROUND 70 1**

Ideal for painting details.

**SAMPLED BRUSH 2 20**

I use it for shadow work.

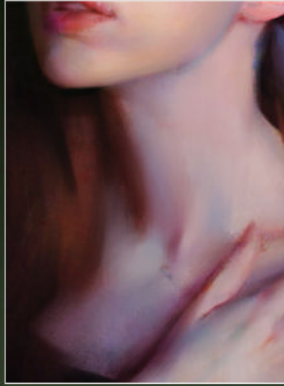
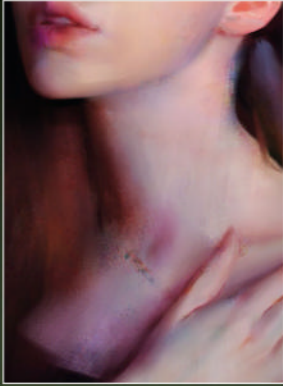
**PLASTIC WRAP - LIGHT 90 PIXELS**

I use this brush to paint the eyes.

**SAMPLED BRUSH 17 3**

I mainly use this brush to paint the skin and mix the colours.





## 9 The cool and the warm

I want to expand the transparent feeling of the hands to the entire painting. Back in step four I used the warm colour on the face to paint the shadow and light. Now I'll balance it out with the cooler colour to some parts of the piece. Doing so will define a relationship between the warm and cool colours.



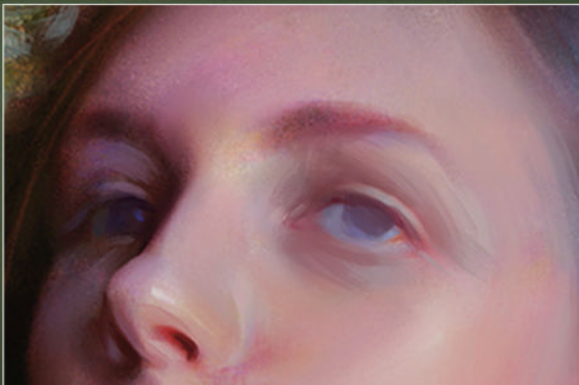
## 10 Perspective of the eyes

For any portrait piece, it's the eyes that pull in the viewer. I like to think of them as the soul of the woman, as well as my main focal point. Key is the perspective of the eye, and that's why I've painted a rough to check that it's right.

### PRO SECRETS

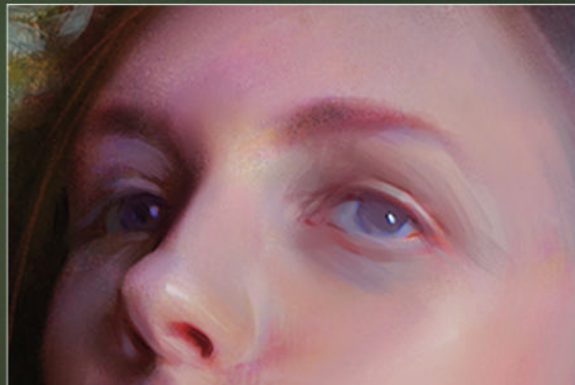
#### Never stop practising

After being a professional artist for years, I really feel that there's no secret at all. It's simply down to a lot of practice on a daily basis. The key is to try to enjoy your daily art exercises. I believe that art is from the heart and it's the easiest way to communicate your emotions. I hope my art is appreciated and that it can bring some happiness to people.



## 11 Check the eye colour

I confirm the colours of the eyes. Many people like to use darker values in between the eyelashes and the pupil. But dark eyes will break the grey tone of this painting. I use a grey tone with a light value, to add a sense of mystery.



## 12 Introduce highlights to the eyes

During this stage I just keep polishing the appearance of the eyes, but I'm still not satisfied with the results. After establishing the values and the structure, I try to add little highlights. Now I think the eyes are finished!

### Shortcuts

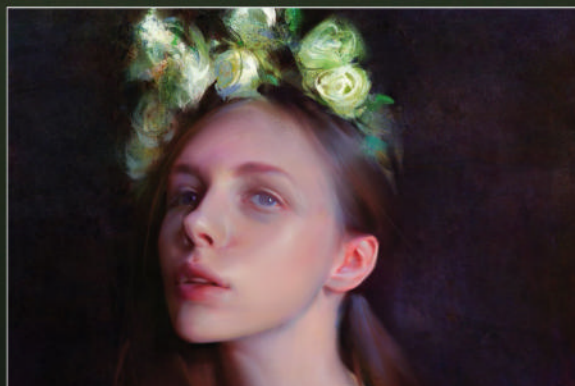
#### New Layer

**Cmd+Alt+Shift+N (Mac)**  
**Ctrl+Alt+Shift+N (PC)**  
Quickly insert a new layer on top of the active layer.



## 13 Trying out solutions

The structure of the light and shadow is almost done, but at this point in my process I like to experiment a little with my painting. For example, should I have the woman's eyes looking at the viewer? The left picture demonstrates how this would look, while the image on the right reveals a dappled light effect that might make the composition look more vivid.



## 14 The finished painting

It turns out that neither option works. My initial design is still the best. During the final stages I usually step away from the painting and do something else. When I come back I'll have fresh eyes on my painting. Since all my other solutions didn't work out I finish the painting according to my original idea. And that, in a nutshell, is my painting process. ●

### PRO SECRETS

#### The power of friendship

I've learned a lot from going to museums to see original works of art, books and tutorial videos. But I think I learn the most from my close friends. We play games together and practise together. We share our thoughts and opinions about art. I'm very lucky to have my friends. They're so passionate about art. When I get upset, I know they'll cheer me up. That's also my secret.



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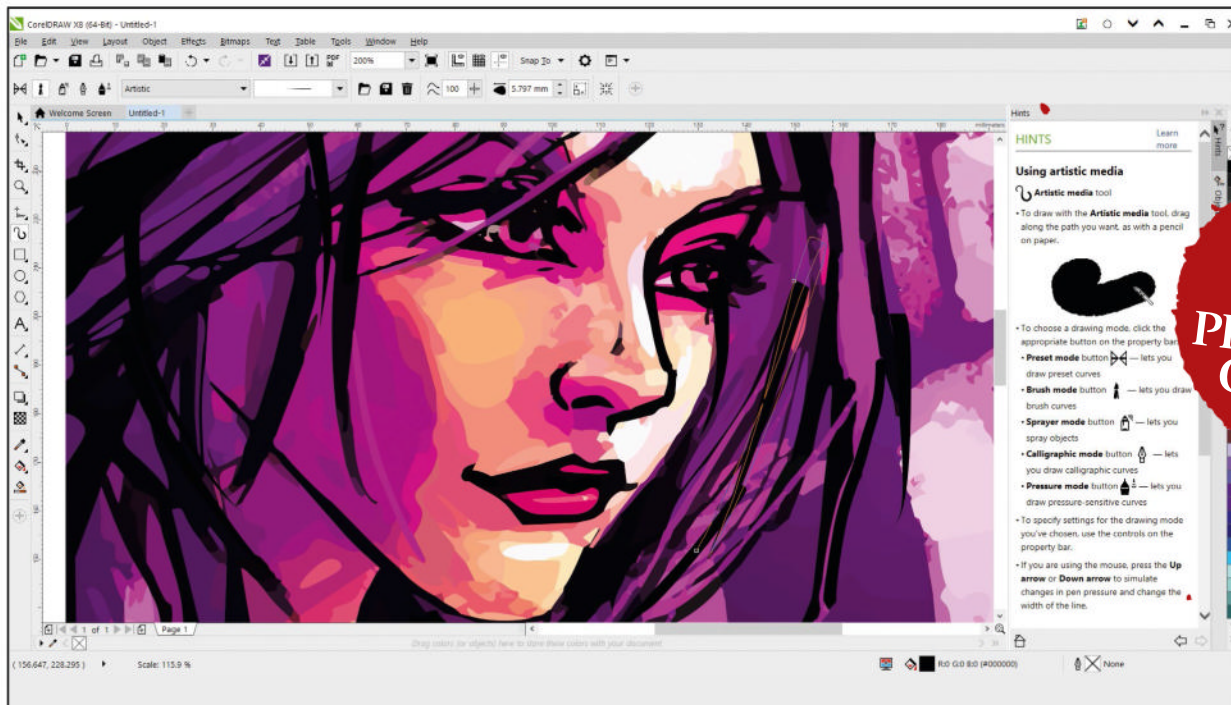


# NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX Reviews

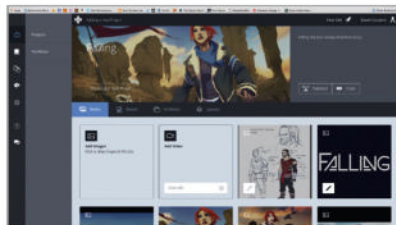


**Artist's Choice Award**  
Art resources with a five-star rating receives the ImagineFX Artist's Choice award!

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



9  
PRODUCTS  
ON TEST



## SOFTWARE

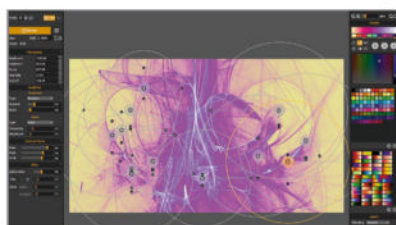
### 90 CorelDraw Graphics Suite X8

There's much to admire in Corel's latest version of its versatile vector drawing package... unless you're the owner of a Mac, that is.



### 91 Fabrik

Create a slick portfolio website with all of the boring parts done for you – for a small fee, of course.



### 91 CrazyTalk 8 Pro

Think you have no need for a facial animation program? Think again – there are a host of 2D uses for Reallusion's feature-packed product.

### 93 Amberlight 2

Now you can generate customisable and gorgeous abstract patterns at the click of a button.

## 93 Hexels 2

The painting app goes from quirky to versatile.

## TRAINING

### 95 Sci-Fi Design Pack

Concept artist John Liberto serves up a tasty dish of techniques for Photoshop users who love painting futuristic art.



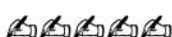
## BOOKS

### 96 Further reading

Imagery from the Bird's Home: The Art of Bill Carman; Star Wars The Force Awakens: Incredible Cross-Sections; Tom Adams Uncovered: The Art of Agatha Christie and Beyond.



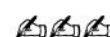
## RATINGS EXPLAINED



Magnificent



Great



Good

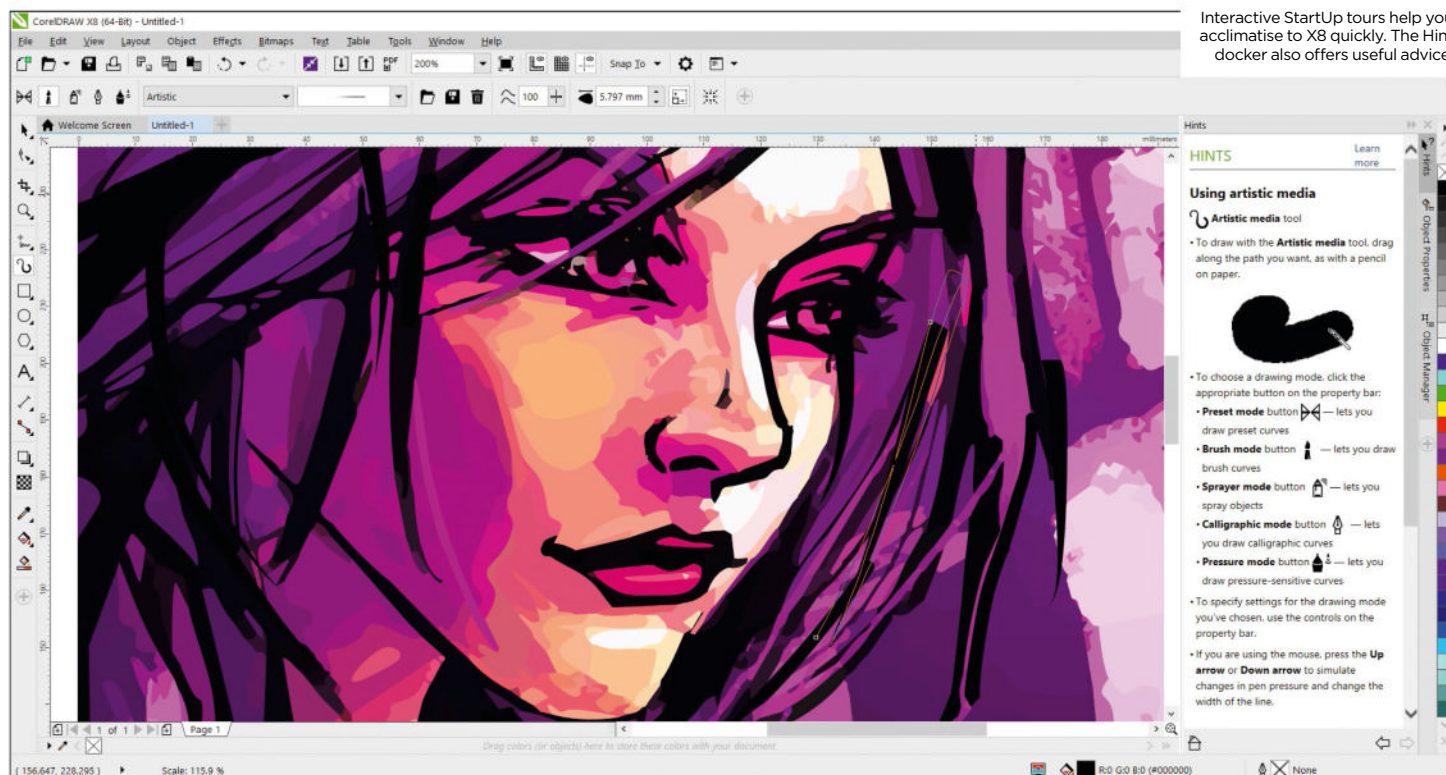


Poor



Atrocious





Interactive StartUp tours help you acclimatise to X8 quickly. The Hint dock also offers useful advice.

## CorelDraw Graphics Suite X8

**ALTERNATIVE ART** Corel releases a new version of its vector drawing package, for those not keen on signing up to Adobe's subscription plans

PC ONLY

**Price** £529 (£259, upgrade) **Company** Corel **Web** [www.corel.com](http://www.corel.com)

**C**orel's programs have picked up popularity in the past few years, by providing a viable alternative to Adobe's subscription-only software. Corel takes pride in offering single payment options for its programs every two years, which many users prefer. So it's a shame there's still no Mac version of CorelDraw.

Other than that, the software is very welcoming to a new user and doesn't assume familiarity (there's even a

dedicated workspace fashioned after Adobe Illustrator) and features new interactive StartUp tours.

CorelDraw X8 is a vector-based program, good for creating and editing graphics, page layouts and designing websites (for more dedicated painting software, check out sister application Corel Photo-Paint). You're offered access to a huge selection of template files, complete with access to thousands of fonts, to save you a lot of set-up time.

Tools are intuitive and after the guided intro you're able to start guessing the behaviours and options available to you. There's also a Hints dock, which dynamically responds to the tool selected, offering access to more hints, videos and tutorials.

PowerTrace, the bitmap-to-vector converter, is incorporated. It's a great choice if you need to turn raster artwork you've created into vectors for a large poster. PowerTrace does a fine job of converting even very textured artwork and retaining the original look, leaving you to have fun refining the line-work with the freehand Pen tool.

CorelDraw's tools are pleasingly versatile. The Knife tool has been enhanced, enabling you to split vector objects, text and bitmaps along straight, freehand or Bézier lines. It can automatically choose the option that best preserves outline appearance.

CorelDraw doesn't knock Illustrator off its perch. But if you do lots of graphic design work and are looking for an alternative to Illustrator, or you're after an Illustrator and InDesign hybrid, CorelDraw X8 is a strong option.

### DETAILS

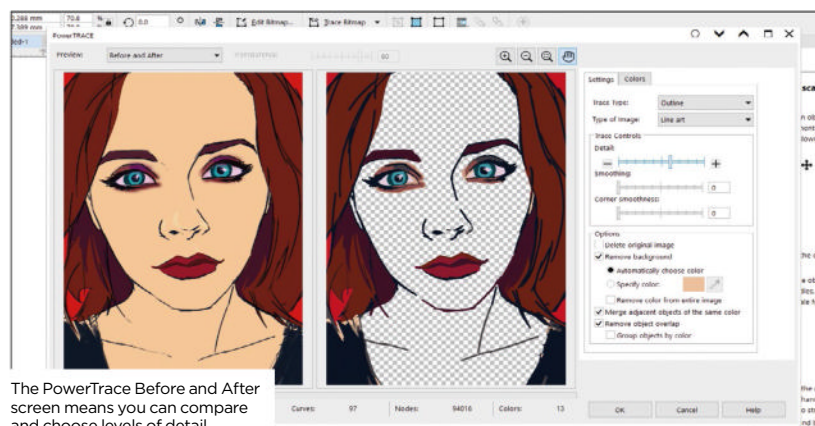
#### Features

- Interactive StartUp tours
- Enhanced Knife tool
- PowerTrace converts raster to vector while maintaining details
- One payment
- New Font list box
- Hints dock offers tool information
- Copy and paste specific parts of a curve
- Updated interface and support for 4K monitors, including UltraHD
- Drop shadows with Gaussian Blur feathering

#### System Requirements

**PC:** Windows 7 or later, Intel Core i3/5/7 or AMD Athlon 64, 2GB RAM, 1GB hard disk space, 1,280x720 resolution, DVD drive, multi-touch screen, mouse, or tablet, Microsoft .NET Framework 4.6

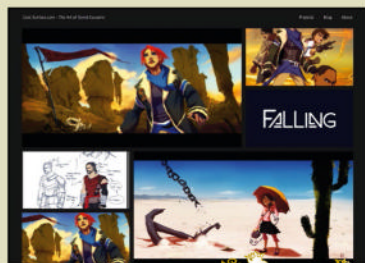
#### Rating



The PowerTrace Before and After screen means you can compare and choose levels of detail.



Fabrik offers a huge selection of customisable portfolio themes and presentation styles.



## Fabrik

### DRESSING UP

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**Price** From £69/year or £6.90/month

**Company** Fabrik

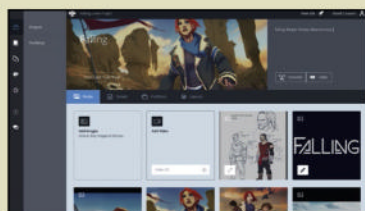
**Web** [www.fabrik.io](http://www.fabrik.io)

**RATING**

**Fabrik is awesome and it's going to be the answer to a lot of artist's problems with portfolio websites. Creating and updating websites is normally a tedious chore filled with frustration, and one lots of artists neglect because of this. Fabrik takes all of the technical hassles away, enabling you to create a gorgeous and responsive website in minutes.**

When you sign in, Fabrik doesn't look particularly special. You're met with a clean and tidy interface that resembles a lot of blogging dashboards. But when you start uploading work Fabrik optimises images for all devices, so you don't have to resize artwork. You're left with the fun bits, customising themes without coding hassles.

Fabrik is versatile too, offering lots of strong themes to choose from. Helpfully, the platform doesn't bombard you with customisation options: you can pick a general theme, then alter each project (a collection of images or videos) to a number of presentation options. So you can choose whatever best suits your work. Highly recommended.



Fabrik adapts to the device you're viewing the site on, with customisation applied immediately.



The clean interface enables you to concentrate on the animation task at hand.

# CrazyTalk 8 Pro

MAC & PC

**LOCO MOTION** Reallusion updates its facial animation and 3D avatar application with strong features and links to third-party apps

**Price** £35 (Standard version), £108 (Pro version) **Company** Reallusion **Web** [www.reallusion.com](http://www.reallusion.com)

**C**razyTalk has been gradually strengthening its reputation as an intuitive, useful application for hobbyists exploring the world of animation. While its place in a 2D artist's workflow might be hard to define, there's no arguing that CrazyTalk works well.

The interface is clean and logical. While there are levels of drill-downs, pop-ups and menus, it never feels like you could get lost. Workflow, too, couldn't be better. Importing reference photo(s) is simple, as is editing, setting facial markers and cleaning up the background. The tools, while limited in number, are easy to grasp and do a fine job – though eyelid folds and beards can be problematic.

There are simple instructions, such as on angles and using even lighting and, although there are occasional errors, the results are pretty good. In the Pro version you can use a side-angle shot to help achieve the best results. This is particularly useful as CrazyTalk makes a rough head-shaped

object and then applies your photo as textures. Any side references help to avoid obvious stretches.

The strength of CrazyTalk lies in its animation abilities, which are very good – up to a point. Adding audio can be done on the fly using your computer's built-in mic. Sound files are added to your timeline, where you can edit, trim or swap out phonemes (the smallest unit of spoken sound) – the program's best single feature. You can drag from a palette of presets, replacing the animation for any syllables CrazyTalk has trouble with. It's quick, easy and gives better results than if the program had been left to its own devices.

CrazyTalk has excellent tools to fix geometry and animation, but the biggest benefit is the huge preset library. It comes with many faces, sounds, props and backgrounds, which are added to if you register the software. Getting your animations off the ground couldn't be easier, though some of the assets are a little cheesy.

If you have a need for this kind of tool and you aren't looking for Hollywood-quality results then CrazyTalk is ideal for web comics, pre-viz work, or even facial reference for artists and animators.

## DETAILS

### Features

- 2D or 3D head shapes
- Large preset library
- Phoneme replacement tools
- Ability to add props and backgrounds
- Automatic animation to audio track
- Lip syncing

### System Requirements

**PC:** Windows 7 or later dual-core CPU, 2GB hard disk space, 8GB of RAM  
**Mac:** OS X v10.9 or later, dual-core CPU, 2.4GB of disk space, 4GB of RAM

### Rating

Swapping out phonemes on the fly is a powerful feature that can save a project.





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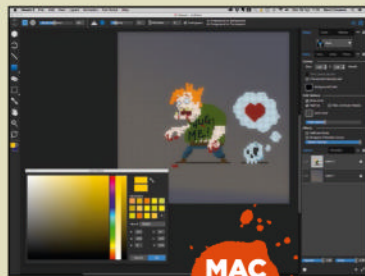
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Issue 207 on sale now!





Hexels is surprisingly powerful, with many useful customisable options to make workflows faster.



## Hexels 2

MAC & PC

### POLYGONAL SPREE

The Hexels app goes from quirky to versatile

**Price** £27 (£14 if upgrading)

**Company** Marmoset

**Web** [www.marmoset.co/hexels](http://www.marmoset.co/hexels)

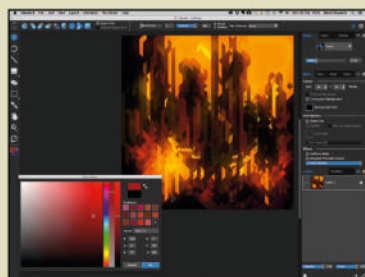
**RATING**

**Hexels 2 is a strong sequel to an intriguing app. Now under the management of Marmoset, it includes a lot of improvements that promote it from a quirky paint package into something more versatile and accomplished.**

The original Hexels was a grid-based painting app that enabled you to choose what sort of polygonal shapes you want to be constrained by, helping paint isometric images with ease.

Hexels was always enjoyable, but version 2 adds a lot of functionality. Layers ensure you can experiment non-destructively and import background images to work with. A new streamlined animation key-frame editor means you can create animations that can be exported as animated GIFs. Layered PSD export also makes it easier to incorporate the program into your workflow.

Hexels 2 won't suit everyone, but if you have a passing interest in retro video games, making animated GIFs, geometric art, pixel art or enjoy experimenting, then it's worth its agreeable price tag.



Hexels also features a dedicated pixel mode that employs an optional grid guide, and gives you Glow and Gradient options.

# Amberlight 2

MAC & PC



**SURREAL SENSATION** Create customisable and gorgeous abstract patterns at the click of a button

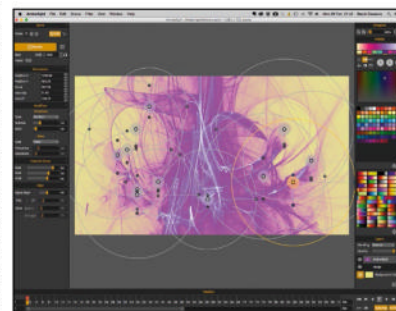
**Price** £42 (£22 if upgrading) **Company** Escape Motions **Web** [www.escapemotions.com](http://www.escapemotions.com)

**A** mberlight 2 is the latest iteration of Amberlight, from developer Peter Blaškovič, the driving force behind Escape Motions' products.

At its core, Amberlight is an app that enables you to generate abstract patterns based on particle field algorithms that you can manipulate, creating weird, unusual and often gorgeous swirling patterns. Refreshingly, Amberlight 2 is confident enough about its allure that it doesn't have any extra features bolted on to try and increase appeal. It generates beautiful imagery and that's it.

The basic idea is you can control up to 12 fields that can repel or attract thousands of particles, and each particle affects another one. Amberlight makes it possible to manipulate the particle effects by altering parameters with each field in up to 5,000 steps, so you have plenty of options for how your final effect looks. There are modifiers, too, for adding variations and waves.

Editing the colours of the imagery is simple, with a slew of appealing gradients to click that instantly apply



No need to dig around in menus for ages, all the control options are visible onscreen within the UI.

changes. You can also alter colours and choose whether or not to have the results against a background before you export them. There's also a new Timeline panel that enables you to manipulate the effects with keyframes and play the animation. You can save it either as a sequence of images in JPG, BMP or PNG files (with alpha channels) or as a video animation in .MP4, .MOV and .AVI formats.

If you're looking for something to create genuinely unique sci-fi style effects that could resemble an inter-spatial rift or an ethereal nebula with ease, then Amberlight 2 is for you.

## DETAILS

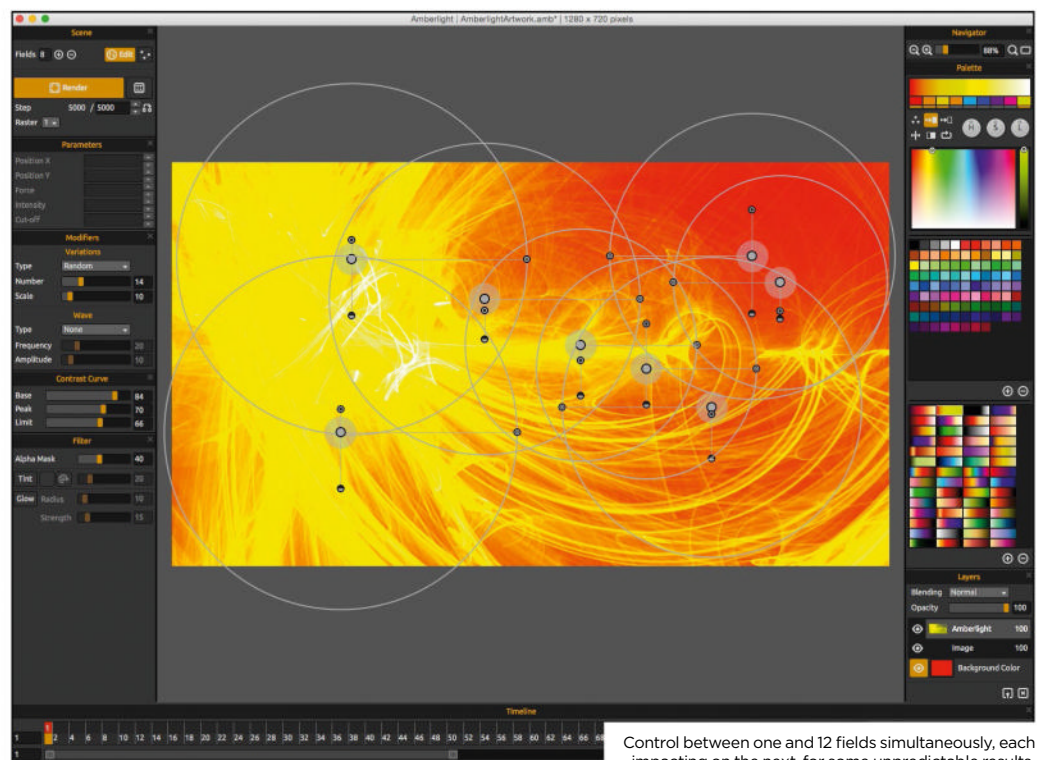
### Features

- Random artwork generator
- Timeline panel
- Improved editing options
- Quick change options
- Particle wave modifiers
- Image and animation export options
- Doesn't suffer from "feature creep" bloating
- Tutorial mode

### System Requirements

**PC:** Windows 10, Vista, XP, Pentium 4 CPU, OpenGL 2.0 graphic card, 1GB RAM, 40MB disk space  
**Mac:** OS X 10.6 or later, Intel CPU, OpenGL 2.0 graphic card, 1GB RAM, 40MB disk space

### Rating



Control between one and 12 fields simultaneously, each impacting on the next, for some unpredictable results.



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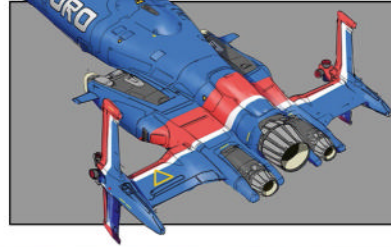
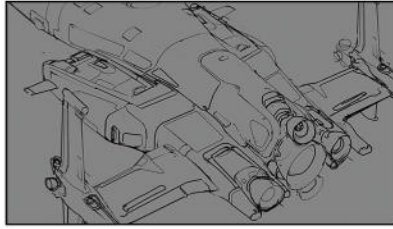
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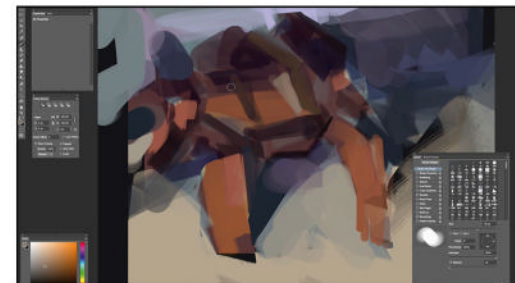
With his Sci-Fi Design Pack, John Liberto uses his considerable concept art experience to show you how to add interest to your artwork.



Detailing techniques such as making type look like it was hand-lettered make all the difference.



John's Crab Mech session starts as a free-form splurge of brush strokes, before shaping into a lively but tight concept piece.



## Sci-Fi Design Pack

**THE JOY OF TECH** Concept artist John Liberto serves up a tasty dish of techniques for Photoshop users who love painting futuristic art

**Publisher** John Liberto **Price** £18 **Format** Download **Web** [www.gumroad.com/johnliberto](http://www.gumroad.com/johnliberto)

**T**he spirit of entrepreneurship is alive and well in John Liberto's Sci-Fi Design Pack. It's great to see artists taking advantage of marketing and retail tools like Gumroad to provide affordable training videos for those coming up behind them.

The Sci-Fi Design Pack brings together three of John's videos, which you can buy separately if you wish, although the Pack represents a \$5 saving. All three are provided as high-resolution 1080p screen captures with well-recorded audio, and Gumroad makes the purchasing and downloading process straightforward.

The videos all showcase John's passion for futuristic tech, but present a variety of Photoshop techniques. Spaceship Design spotlights line drawing with a splash of flat colour, while Vecto and Crab Mech cover painting and rendering techniques.

John assumes you have a reasonable degree of Photoshop knowledge



### DETAILS

#### Topics covered

- Line-art techniques
- Flat-colour rendering
- Lighting an environment
- Photoshop rendering
- Using texture
- Adding detail
- Colour and light interplay

#### Length

569 minutes

#### Rating



already: this isn't beginner material, but rather, practical inspiration for artists wanting to broaden their skill set.

Above all, you'll get an insight into the difference that considered details can make to your art. During Vecto, for example, John explores a range of approaches that aim to "reward the eyes": maintaining interest in every area of the image by varying colours and textures. The decisions he takes are rooted in the reality of the scene, though: in Crab Mech, the robotic design is enhanced in ways that not only convince you that it's a functioning machine, but also provide planes that catch the light in different ways.

You could argue that the pacing of the videos could be less sedate in parts: perhaps John could have sped up the video capture slightly before recording the voiceover to make the training feel tighter. But that's a minor quibble against an epic slab of training that will make you a better artist for not very much outlay.

### ARTIST PROFILE

## JOHN LIBERTO

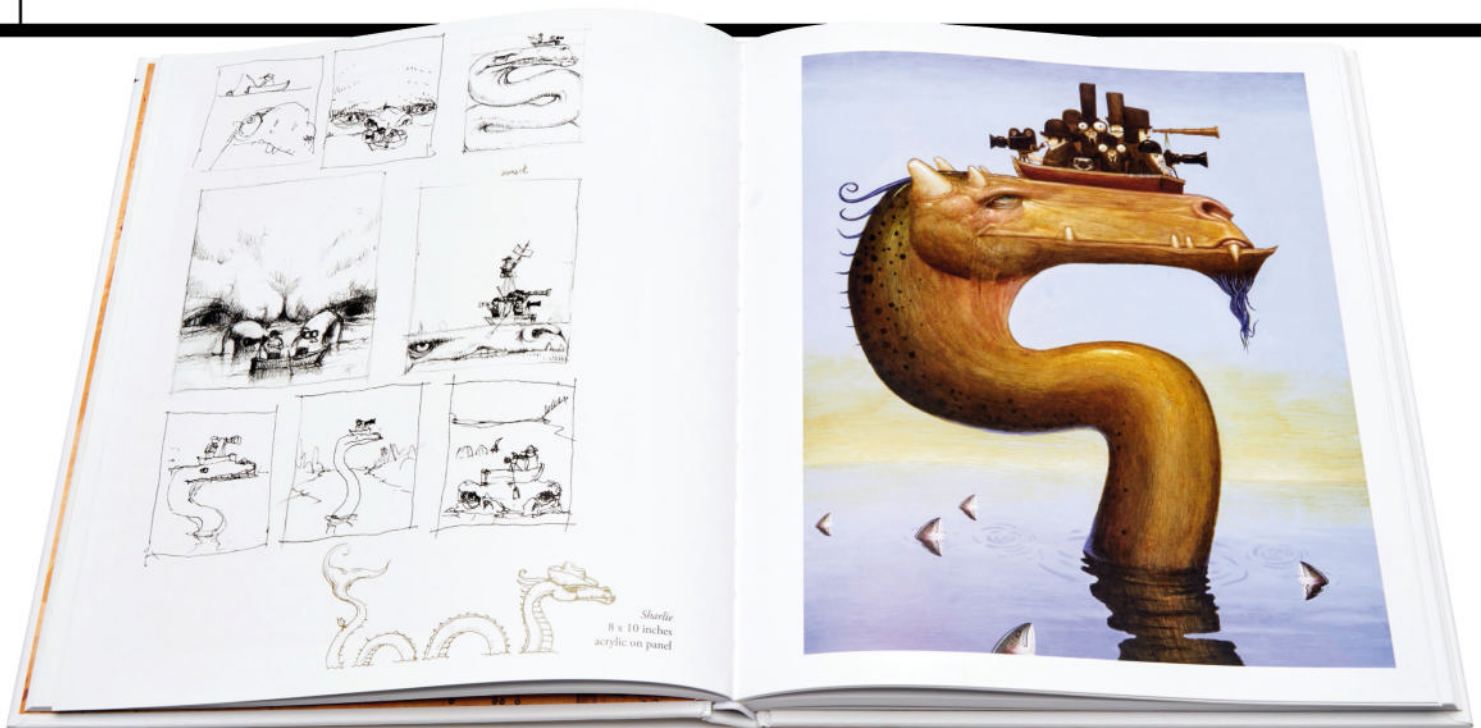
John is a concept artist working at the virtual reality headset company Oculus VR, which is based in California. He's been involved in the video games industry since 1999 and has worked on AAA titles such as Halo 4 and 5, the Gears of War franchise and the Battlefield series of games. Outside of the video games industry, his film work has included Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban and Tim



Burton's Big Fish. John's commercial client work has included Samsung, Intel and Nokia.

[www.facebook.com/john.s.liberto](http://www.facebook.com/john.s.liberto)





## Imagery from the Bird's Home: The Art of Bill Carman



**FLIGHTS OF FANCY** Artist and illustration professor Bill Carman takes you on a journey of texture, mystery and unfinished narrative

**Author** Bill Carman **Publisher** Fleck **Price** £27 **Web** [www.fleckpublications.com](http://www.fleckpublications.com) **Available** Now

**T**extured, innocent, child-like, but with slyly unsettling undertones, Bill Carman's artwork is nothing if not distinctive. With influences ranging from fairytales to surrealism to steampunk, the American artist entices you with both the power of his imagination and the magnificence of his execution.

Bill spent years working as a designer, illustrator and art director at universities, ad agencies, publishers, and large corporations. Yet it's only now that he's finally released a high-quality compendium of his best work. And what a collection it is.

A gaggle of incredible characters, from haughty, besuited cats to gasmask-donning ghouls, jostle for space in bizarre scene after bizarre scene. The artist makes great use of juxtaposition, placing together seemingly random things that



Even Bill's sketches and loose drawings manage to intrigue the viewer.

nonetheless add up to a weirdly engaging whole.

Bill paints mainly in acrylics, on a variety of surfaces including panel, wood and copper, along with some mixed-media work. But while his technique soon becomes familiar, the subject matter never ceases to surprise.

In *Dehydration*, a giant squid wrestles with a gnarled and twisted tree that's straight out of a ghost story. In *Alice's Tears* – Bill's depiction of the Wonderland character's lachrymose lake – he summons forth an original take on a familiar tale. In his *Freudusa*, there's a disturbing mash-up between Sigmund Freud and Medusa that may well keep you awake at night.

As such examples suggest, Bill's work is not the fantasy art ImagineFX usually deals with: there's nothing 'genre' about this work. But there are certainly fantastical elements to his scenes, featuring anthropomorphised animals and oddball humans in situations that are wide open for us to interpret. And to take in the carefully considered, masterfully crafted detail of each painting is a full meal.

As well as completed works – including



In *Shared Eyewear*, Bill Carman demonstrates his skill in bringing disparate elements together.

paintings for commissions, galleries and personal work, there are whimsical drawings, doodles and preparatory sketches dotted throughout. While there's little in the way of textual exposition, the adventure of the imagination this delightfully unusual book will take you on more than makes up for that.

**RATING**





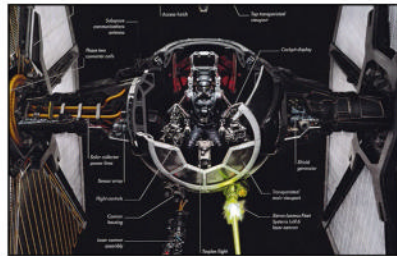
# Star Wars The Force Awakens: Incredible Cross-Sections

**LIFTING THE LID** Vehicles, starships and a certain piece of junk from the latest Star Wars film are revealed in all their intricate glory

**Author** Jason Fry **Publisher** DK **Price** £15 **Web** [www.dk.com](http://www.dk.com) **Available** Now

**E**ven people who have seen the latest Star Wars film multiple times may not realise quite how intricate and carefully thought out each vehicle design really was. This book will set them straight.

It delivers exactly what the title promises: detailed cross-sections of 12 vehicles featured in the film, laid out across a series of stunning double-page spreads. Including everything from



Take a peak inside the workings of a First Order TIE Fighter. The book covers all the main vehicles from The Force Awakens.



Rey's speeder to the First Order's TIE Fighter and the Resistance X-Wing, as well as the Millennium Falcon, these illustrations let you examine minute details such as deflector shields, communications antenna and blaster cannons to your heart's content.

Be warned, though: at just 47 pages, this is a slim volume. And while it takes

a comprehensive approach to its subject matter, it doesn't feature any behind-the-scenes detail of how these designs were created by artists. In short, this book is aimed at fans not artists, so only buy this if you're the former as well as the latter.

**RATING**

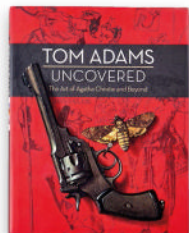
# Tom Adams Uncovered: The Art of Agatha Christie and Beyond

**NOVEL APPROACH** There's a lot more to Tom Adams than his striking jacket illustrations for the English crime novelist, as this volume shows

**Authors** Tom Adams and John Curran **Publisher** HarperCollins **Price** £25 **Web** [www.tomadamsuncovered.com](http://www.tomadamsuncovered.com) **Available** Now

**A**n intoxicating blend of arresting horror and acute realism, Tom Adams' artwork will be familiar to anyone with well-thumbed copies of 60s and 70s Agatha Christie novels.

Yet there's plenty more to celebrate across Tom's 50-year career, including jacket art for novels by other authors such as Raymond Chandler and John Fowles; editorial illustrations; advertising campaigns; celebrity



Cover art from Poirot's Early Cases. Tom admits it wasn't a great idea to paint such a literal interpretation of the short story collection.



portraits; album covers; and his work on films like 2001: A Space Odyssey.

All of this is detailed in this hefty volume, elegantly reproduced and with incisive commentary from author and Agatha Christie enthusiast John Curran (interestingly, his reviews of Tom's art aren't always positive), as well as captions by the artist himself.

Better still, the final chapter sees Tom revisit Agatha Christie novels in the present day, and produce new, large-scale compositions that provide a fresh take on her work. It's a lovely conclusion to a comprehensive and well-thought out book.

**RATING**



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PRESENTS



# FANTASY

*illustrator*

## This issue:



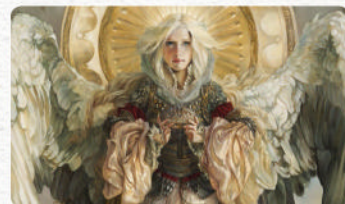
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The best traditional art revealed.



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With Anand Radhakrishnan.



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**YOUR LIFE  
MODELS**

Patrick J Jones on how a good model  
can enliven your fantasy art **Page 106**

May 2016

**ImagineFX**



99



# FXPosé *Traditional*

SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL FANTASY ARTISTS

## Jenny Dolfen

**LOCATION:** Germany

**WEB:** [www.goldseven.de](http://www.goldseven.de)

**EMAIL:** [mail@goldseven.de](mailto:mail@goldseven.de)

**MEDIA:** Watercolour, ink, gouache



Self-taught illustrator Jenny is primarily drawn to mythological and historical themes. She's created hundreds of artworks based on Tolkien, and mainly finds inspiration among the pages of *The Silmarillion*. Her love of tragic stories frequently means that her work incorporates history, namely the Punic Wars, the Battle in Teutoburg Forest, and the Welsh independence wars of the 13th century.

Jenny says, "I create illustrations in water-based media that combine thoroughly researched historical details and character-driven storylines."

## IMAGINEFX CRIT



"In *The Vanyar...* Jenny sees past the diplodocus skeleton usually present in the Natural History Museum to imagine this fantastical setting inspired by Tolkien's *The Silmarillion*. I love the air of expectation!"

Daniel Vincent,  
Art Editor

### 1 IN PAIN AND REGRET

Watercolour on Canson Montval cold-pressed paper, 11x16in

"This is a scene from *The Silmarillion*, featuring the doomed figure of Maglor, wandering by the sea for all eternity after throwing his jewel into the waves."

### 2 THE VANYAR LEAVE FOR WAR

Watercolour and gouache on cold-pressed paper, 12x16.5in

"This is an imagined scene from *The Silmarillion*. I love illustrating scenes that aren't expressly detailed in books, but must have taken place. For this one, set in an elven city, I used the entry hall of the Natural History Museum in London as loose reference, heavily modified with statues."









## + Abigail Harding

LOCATION: England

WEB: [abz-j-harding.deviantart.com](http://abz-j-harding.deviantart.com)

EMAIL: [abi\\_120@live.co.uk](mailto:abi_120@live.co.uk)

MEDIA: Mixed media



"My work has macabre, fantasy and sci-fi elements," says Abigail. The artist has always found art an important means of communication: "I like to experiment, work with multiple mediums, learn more about them. Test myself and the concepts I have in mind."

Abigail likes to create emotional platforms and stories in her work full of symbolic influences. "They are chaotic, dark, macabre, dreamy. I draw out emotional intensity in my subjects, the passion I feel, I depict them in a warped elegance." An avid comics reader, Abigail loves the marriage between literature and art this medium offers. "It's something that really helps me tell the stories in my own work. And listening to music helps me with building atmosphere."

### 1 HE PEERED LONGINGLY

Ink on Bristol board, 11 x 17in

"He peered longingly, his possessiveness and instinct wanting her. His humanity remembered love, yet now she was need, and want, and desire.... A friend and I collaborated together on some writing, that later inspired me to draw this piece and colour it in Photoshop. I wanted to capture the raw emotion of the moment between these two characters."

### 2 DOCTOR STRANGE

Printer ink, acrylics, drawing ink on photo matt paper, 8.5 x 11.75in

"This was a happy accident. The printing went wrong, and I reused the page for this painting. It was chaos, and depicts as much."

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







## IMAGINEFX CRIT



"As happy accidents go, turning a printer mishap into a piece of art is pretty neat, and demonstrates Abigail's technical abilities and determination to create great-looking, textured art."

Alice Pattillo,  
Staff Writer



# Creative Space

## SHOAL OF ART, LONDON

Organiser and tutor **MARK LOVELACE** tells us about his art school, which makes the most of central London locations to nurture and guide artistic individuality

**T**wo years after attending a meetup group called Art Breaks in 2009, Mark Lovelace took over as organiser. This inspired him and his friend John Pipal to organise gatherings for people to draw each others' portraits at a local pub, Royal Inn on the Park.

"We had been going to life-drawing classes for a while and John had the idea of getting some extra practice at portrait drawing," he says. Last year, Mark renamed the group Shoal of Art, using shoal rather than school because, "In a shoal the fish swim somewhat independently, but in a school they all swim in the same direction."

Mark's aim was to begin running taught drawing and portrait sessions with a model. "I'd started teaching for another art club, really enjoyed it and wanted to do more." He runs several weekly events, including Art in the Park, a drawing class in a cafe, along with casual, social drawing dotted all over London.

"Drawing meetups are a great way for people to draw together rather than always working in isolation," says Mark. "Many who attend like the discipline of agreeing to draw for a set amount of time and sharing results." Mark encourages students to look to contemporary and historical art to inform their work, using the prime London location, with stellar museums, galleries and parks in walking distance, to inspire different approaches.

Mark plans to do even more classes. He also intends to give his models roles to play in his sessions at another meetup at Topolski Bar, and perhaps include some long-pose portrait painting classes, along with sessions on painting from drawings.



**In addition to running Shoal of Art, Mark also lectures in an art society and offers life-drawing classes. Find out more**

**at [www.meetup.com/shoalofart](http://www.meetup.com/shoalofart).**



**HEY YOU!**

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

Mark aims to incorporate sessions on painting from drawing at Shoal of Art.



# Creative Space Shoal of Art



Shoal of Art has five gatherings a week, with classes appropriate for beginners and more experienced artists.

## LONDON LIFE

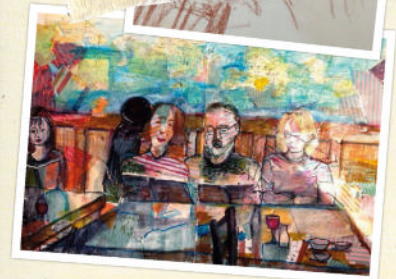
*Shoal of Art illustrators clearly flourish during portrait classes*



Composer and musician Roger Cawkwell, by Jim Sinclair, a black-cab driver.



Long pose portrait, by Ned, drawn at the Topolski Bar.



Collage, by Pam Walker, created at the Royal Inn on the Park, east London.



Lara Gallagher, Half French half Cockney, by Roger Westoby.



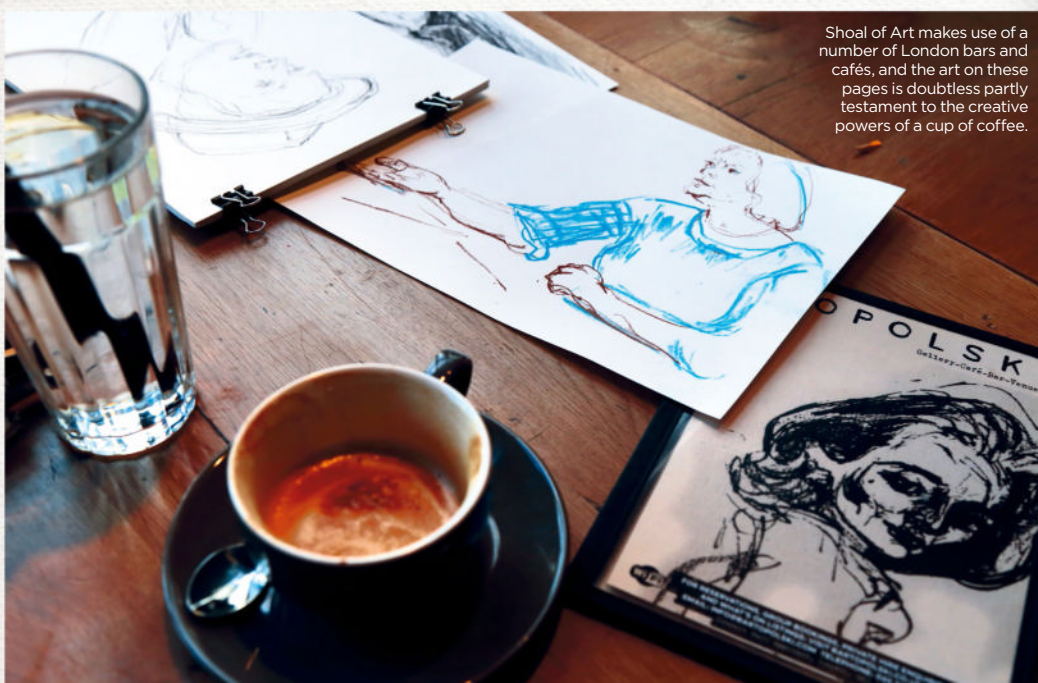
Quick pose by Mark Lovelace, at the Topolski Bar.



Meetups are great for artists who might spend all day alone at a computer.



London illustrators benefit from Mark's instruction at a Shoal of Art Meetup.



Shoal of Art makes use of a number of London bars and cafés, and the art on these pages is doubtless partly testament to the creative powers of a cup of coffee.



# Workshops



Pencil

Oils

## GET MORE FROM YOUR LIFE MODELS

**PATRICK J JONES** takes us behind the scenes of his photoshoots, that help form the basis for his sumptuous fantasy paintings

The tradition of artist and model can be traced back to ancient Greece, and although the artists are long forgotten their mysterious and alluring models remain, enshrined in marble.

During the Renaissance period the model was immortalised again by artists, this time in oils. In those days there were no true cameras to capture the model's image, only the crude camera obscura, but artists could pay a model with simple food, and have them pose all day long.

Each of Patrick's fantasy artworks has its origins in a series of life-model photo references, which the artist takes himself.

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

Today, I continue the tradition of drawing from a live model but, with bread and cheese no longer legal tender, the cost of painting from a live model for weeks on end would lead me directly to the poor house. Luckily, back in 1840 Alexander Wolcott invented a magic box that changed the way models and artists work together. Its descendant, the digital camera, provides artists with the freedom to pose models before the painting begins and possess their frozen images forever with a simple click.

To explore this sorcery further I invite you to step into my humble studio for an insight into a few of my photographic sessions, and the marvellous models and staging methods and techniques behind the paintings that they inspire.



Patrick is the author of the best-selling art books, *The Anatomy of Style and Sci-Fi & Fantasy Oil Painting Techniques*.

Patrick's insights into his art processes are downloadable from his online store at [www.pjartworks.com](http://www.pjartworks.com).







## 1 Models on a budget

When I was a young artist my mother would have called a priest if she knew I was photographing nudes, and the idea of asking a Catholic girl to pose would have provoked a posse of enraged brothers. If you live under more enlightened circumstances, then the cheapest option is to use friends, or cheaper still, use yourself as I have here. With Photoshop I can then break my nose, shave my head, and be a whole new character.



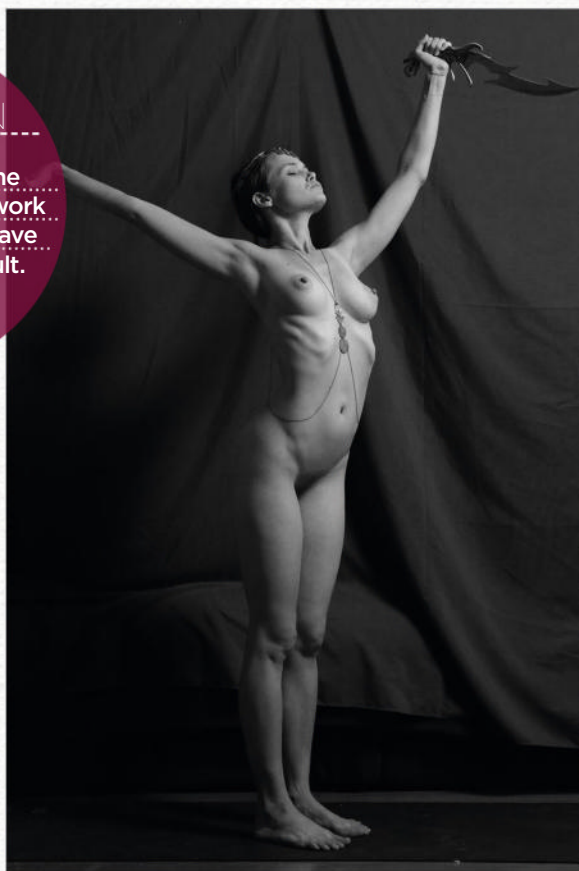
## 2 Draw, draw, draw!

My number one tip for my students is to make a mark on paper. This may seem obvious, but many believe they need inspiration to begin drawing. Waiting for inspiration is one of the great art myths. Draw first and inspiration will find you. Here's one of many sketches scribbled down for a major fantasy painting. From this small seed a large 48x36-inch oil painting will sprout! With such a commitment ahead it's no big deal to draw lots of little comps to find the best idea. It's the nicest part of the job.



### MOTIVATION DELVE DEEPER

Always try to give the model an emotion to work with. Their pose will have more depth as a result.



### MATERIALS

#### CAMERA EQUIPMENT.

- Canon EOS 5Ds and tripod
- Recargable batteries and recharger
- Sigma 50mm F1.4 art lens
- Soft box lights and tripod
- Remote control
- Reflector

#### COMPUTER EQUIPMENT

- MacBook Pro
- Canon Digital Photo Professional
- Photoshop

#### ART MATERIALS

- Pencils
- Winsor & Newton Oils

## 3 The professional model

If you want professional results then your chances of success are increased by hiring professional models. Models aren't cheap, but if you get enough artist friends together to chip in then it become an affordable option. Another approach is to trade photoshoot images with an aspiring model who's just starting out. As a professional artist I use professional models. Here, Alana Brekelmans poses as the Aztec Queen from my previous thumbnail sketch. The benefit of using a professional model is evident in this shot.

## 4 Beware of gremlins

The day of the shoot can be a nerve-racking disaster if you haven't prepared in advance. So do the ground work. Make a check list. Have your sketches ready and at hand in a folder clearly marked. Make sure your camera batteries are charged. Take test shots before the model arrives. Remember that gremlins are lurking around every corner, waiting for their opportunity to cause havoc!







## 5 *Lights, camera, action!*

With preparations water tight and the gremlins booted out the door, you're now ready for your directorial debut. To achieve a professional result, lighting is key. Here, a chiaroscuro atmosphere is created with a powerful single light source. I use professional softbox lights on tripods to develop a sunny mid-afternoon light. Workmen lights from hardware stores are a budget option, or check the weather and use the sun for free. Although Nima and Alana did most of the work on this painting, I still needed to study anatomy to make subtle changes at the art stage.



## 6 *Thou shalt not pass!*

When working with models one simple rule will make everything a breeze: be respectful! Remember that the model is putting themselves out there, baring their soul on your behalf. If you're shooting a friend the boundaries are whatever you're both comfortable with, but with a professional model you need to keep a distance that allows them a personal space of their own. Discuss boundaries with the model beforehand. Having worked with Alana many times, I'm directing at pretty close quarters here, but I'm always professional and respectful.

**“As an art director with a camera, you have the freedom to motivate your model to interpret your sketches with depth”**



## 7 *Explore creative opportunities*

This is the fun part. With your studio set up in advance and all tests done you can relax a bit, but you also need to remain focused on the task. I have all my sketches numbered to be ticked off. If you think you need two hours, book for three. With time on your side you have the opportunity to explore creative options for each sketch. Remember that it's a creative collaboration, so give the model some creative freedom of expression, too.



## 8 *Method acting*

One of the great advantages of shooting your own photos is that you're no longer the slave of found reference. Photos cobbled together from different sources will result in an artwork that lacks conviction. As an art director with a camera, you have the freedom to motivate your model to interpret your sketches with depth. Inject emotion into your paintings by giving your model a back story. Here, Alana's internal motivation is seething defiance, even in defeat. ➡



## Step by Step: Think like a painter



### 1 IT'S ALL IN THE PREPARATION

My colour comps are unrefined gold. I treasure them and refer to them throughout the painting process. All the work is here in miniature. Taking the time to figure out the composition, colour scheme and lighting on a small scale makes the painting stage a joy rather than a hardship.



### 2 DIGITAL IS CHEAP!

The days of worrying about the cost of developing film are over. So even if the chances of hitting the perfect pose in one shot is almost nil, I can shoot 20 or more variations of every pose, then use the best hand, head, foot and expression to compose the ideal shot in Photoshop.



### 3 TO PAINT FAST, GO SLOW

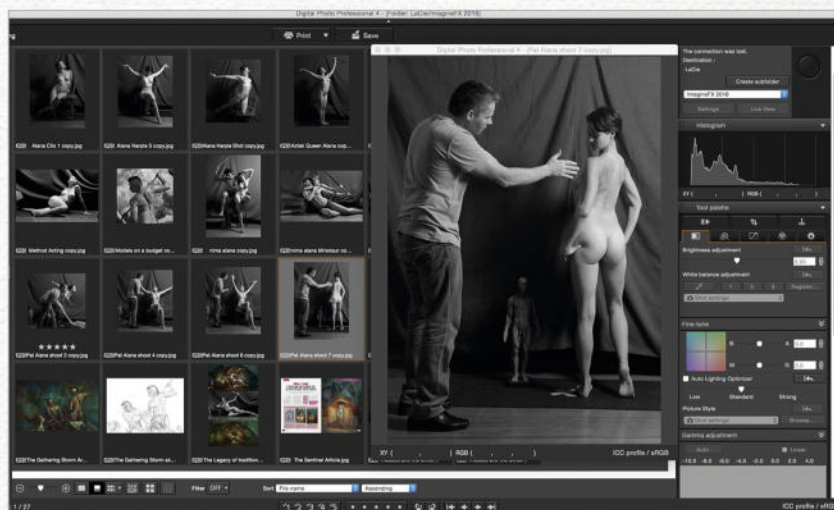
Frank Frazetta was famous for his speed of execution at the painting stage, and it all seemed like alchemy to me as a younger artist, but behind the scenes Frank mulled over colour roughs and sketches well in advance. If you want your painting to go quickly, make time for preparation.



### 9 Everybody wants in on the act!

One of the simplest ways to get your direction across clearly is to act it out for the model beforehand. For small adjustments, such as a hand gesture, I'll hold up my own hand and ask the model to mirror my movements, then stop when I stop.

“One of the simplest ways to get your direction across clearly is to act it out for the model beforehand”



### 10 Big-time operator

If you're at college you may be able to borrow some high-end equipment. I recommend a 50mm camera, soft box and tripod, camera remote control, and a computer with Live Shooting Mode software loaded. This shot was taken with a Canon 5Ds using Digital Photo Professional software, which shows what my camera sees live on a computer screen. This enables me to study smaller details, such as the expressive gestures of the model's hands while shooting with a remote control.





## 11 What's the angle?

Camera angles can create drama as much as lighting. Here, the target represents the eye of the camera at dramatic low level. To avoid blurred action poses I use a tripod, timer and a fast shutter speed. Here my shutter is at 1/250 and my ISO is 4000. A fast shutter speed means a darker image and needs a high ISO to let more light in. This can create a grainy image. Explore your camera's limits.



## 12 The siren's call

A great model is worth their weight in gold. I can only take half the credit for my paintings and owe the rest to my models. If you're lucky enough to find a good model then hold on to them, for your art's sake. With each session the model/artist collaboration will grow creatively. Here, Alana interpreted my art direction with supernatural ease and was able to create a fluid pose while imagining an invisible figure on an invisible boat.



## 13 Photoshop magic

You'll notice in these photos that I've drawn an X on the floor. This marks the spot where an actor is within the camera lens, and is simply called The Mark, hence the phrase 'hitting the mark'. The mark helps me judge where Alana originally posed, enabling me to fill in later as the hero. With hundreds of photos to choose from, I pick the absolute best figures and combine them in Photoshop. It's up to me now to create a world for them to live in.



## 14 The legacy of tradition

All that sketching and photography business might seem like a lot of tomfoolery before a single brush stroke is placed on canvas, but the cost of quality is time and contemplation. If da Vinci were alive today no doubt he would have a 50mm camera around his neck, Mona Lisa on her mark, and a paintbrush behind his ear. So, with a painter's soul I continue the great tradition of artist and model, to dream timeless images of fantasy for future generations to ponder over. ●

### POSING ADVICE

#### SIMPLE ART DIRECTION

A pose is worth a thousand words, so hit the pose yourself for the model to duplicate.



Acrylics

Gouache

# USE THE COLOUR OF YOUR IMAGINATION

Illustrator **ANAND RADHAKRISHNAN** on how he approaches painting in colour from imagination, and his use of references to strengthen the finished piece

The transition of an image from a rough line drawing to a finished painted piece can be a challenge, especially if it's not directly from reference or a live model. It can become confusing to decide which colours to use and how to get started on painting something without anything to look at.

My recommended approach is to do a bunch of thumbnails for both value and colour, and then graduate on to your final piece with a good grasp of your colour

scheme. However, it can also be a great learning experience to work on an image spontaneously and pick colours on the fly. I often do this either while working on smaller commissions or when producing personal work for practice.

One way to overcome the fear of a blank sheet of paper is to use toned paper or any printed surface. This limits the colour range and helps you settle on a scheme. Another issue is that it's hard to recreate objects, figures and landscapes from your imagination. That's when

## MATERIALS

- Toned paper
- Acrylic or gouache
- Brushes

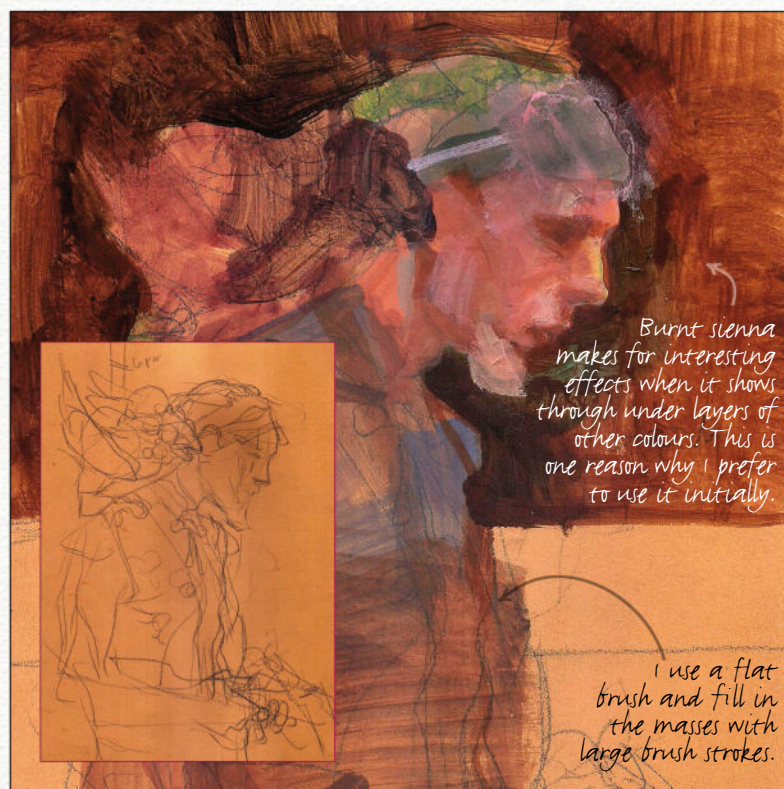


references are useful. But it's important that references don't dictate your painting. I look for reference images after I've decided what to paint and how to paint it. That way, my artistic decisions don't overly rely on the reference photographs.



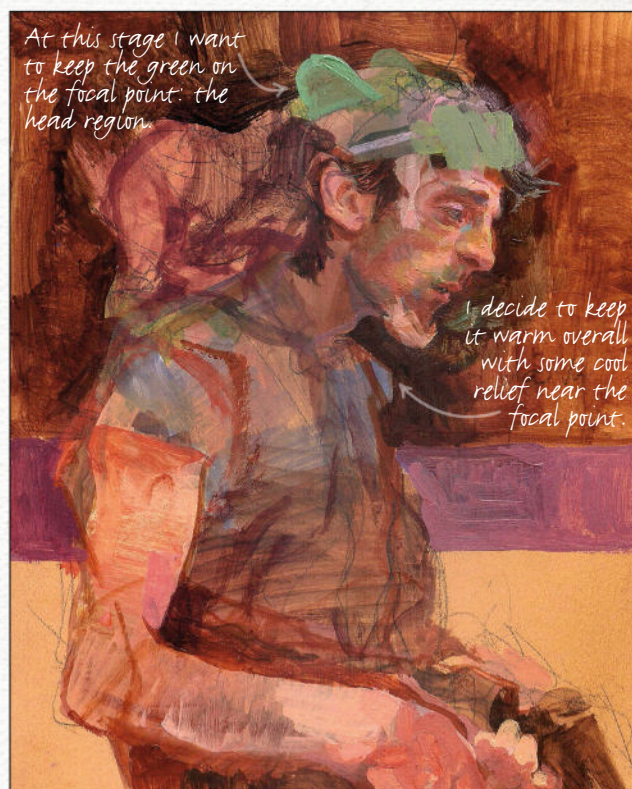
**Anand Radhakrishnan is a freelance illustrator who lives and works in Mumbai, India and has recently started**

**exploring the world of sci-fi and fantasy illustration. You can see more of his work at [www.behance.net/anandrkr](http://www.behance.net/anandrkr).**



## 1 Drawing and silhouette

After a quick graphite drawing of what I want to paint, I go in and define the silhouette with burnt sienna and some muted browns and blues. While defining my silhouette, I decide that I want the top portion of the figure to be light against a dark background, and dark against light for the bottom. Together this forms my light/dark pattern.



## 2 Settling on a colour scheme

As I flesh out various forms in the composition I also think of the basic colour scheme that I'll follow to the finish. I already have my background colour (ochre and orange) fixed, so I decide to have a violet and a green in there. This gives me a triad colour scheme to work with.





© iStock.com/LuckyTeam66/aurumarcus

## 3 Referencing

I look for references as and when I need them, while working on individual forms. I use the references in the context of my painting and try to fit them in the setting of my image, keeping in mind my lighting situation and colour scheme.

*We now have a clear split-complementary scheme with red, violet and green. I add this so that the viewer's eyes can travel through the image and it balances the green near the head.*



*The hands and gun form the second focal point.*

## 4 Modelling and lighting

This step is all about finishing and adding finer and smaller shapes wherever they're needed. I subdue and glaze the region in shadow to push it back, while adding highlights to the area under the influence of sunlight. I add the darkest darks and work on edges to give the piece a sense of completion.

### ARTIST INSIGHT USE TEXTURES

You can create various textures by scraping, sanding, splattering, hatching, using brush strokes and so on to help suggest materials or to add interest to your piece and make it look more organic.

*This was an afterthought to help convey the story aspect of the piece better. In addition, lettering helps to make an image look more finished.*

*This line of contact between light and dark called the terminator usually has saturated colour.*

*I used a lost edge here to give him the sense of being one with the dark background.*

*Using patterns wherever needed to replace flat values is a good design choice. It adds interest and makes the viewer's eye linger.*

## 5 Smaller shapes and finishing

This step is all about finishing and adding finer and smaller shapes wherever needed. I subdue and glaze the region in shadow to push it back, while adding highlights to the area under the influence of sunlight. I add the darkest darks and work on edges to give the piece a sense of completion.

### TOP TIP DIRECT THE VIEWER'S EYES

*Use colour and value to drive the viewer's eyes around the picture and linger around the focal point.*



# First Impressions

✧ Heather Theurer ✧

A flying fish gave Heather the push to explore the fantastic in her art



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

According to my mother, I grew up in La-La-Land.

It didn't matter where I was, I was always off in some fantastical place in my head. That being said, for much of my childhood I lived in rural countryside where nature was my playground, and it fed the amazing places and creatures that spawned inside my imagination.

**Outside of art, what has had the greatest effect on your art?**

Nature. This world is a fascinating place and I never cease to be spellbound by it.

**You're a child, you see a painting or drawing that changes everything... where are you and what are you looking at, and what effect did it have?**



**THE INSATIABLE MR. TOAD**  
"I love how Mr. Toad turned out. We watched a movie together and had popcorn before I handed him over to Disney."

“ I never want to feel comfortable because viewers can sense that intuitively ”

I'm standing in a little shop of curiosities – you know, the ones that sell greeting cards and calendars – and I see an array of postcards with the fantastical art by James C Christensen on them. I'm mesmerised by them and I think, "Holy cow, a fish can fly?" At that point, anything was possible.

**What was your next step in art? Did other interests vie for your attention? What was the deciding factor?**

In my teens, I explored a variety of forms of art, but the fine art aspect always held my attention. However, by the time I was graduating from high school, I was hit by the (perhaps misguided) realisation that fine artists are poor, and that wasn't appealing to me. So I changed directions and decided to take the path of graphic design and illustration. When I became disgusted with the education I was receiving in the art department, I

switched to interior design, which then subsequently got interrupted by children being born into our family. Somewhere along the way though, churning deep down in my gut, was the need to be truly creatively free, so I took the leap and started doing my own thing. It was such a liberating experience, and surprisingly successful, that I've never looked back.

**What was your first paid commission?**

I was 16 and a neighbour of mine commissioned me to paint – on a bull skull – the likeness of her father and herself (from childhood) on horseback, using a vintage photograph she had.

**What's the last piece that you finished, and how do the two differ?**

That most recent commission (not including my licensed Disney work ended up being a 3.5x7-foot masterwork. How do they differ? Well, one I would probably laugh at now, and the other has been invited to be shown in a museum.

**Is your art evolving? What's the most recent experimental piece you've made?**

My hope is that my art will always evolve. Although I love the pieces I create, I never want to feel comfortable in my work because viewers can sense that very intuitively. In the most recent piece I'm creating for Disney (which I can't reveal as it hasn't been released yet) I experimented with textures. Not painterly textures per se, but the realistic portrayal of different textures.

**Did your recent Disney art help to bring your work to a new audience?**

Absolutely. Any time you have a well-known brand to back you, your audience will expand. As much as Disney has helped bring attention to the characters I've painted for them and to my independent work, I hope my art will be able to stand on its own because of its creativity and execution.

**How would you sum up your work, in under 10 words?**

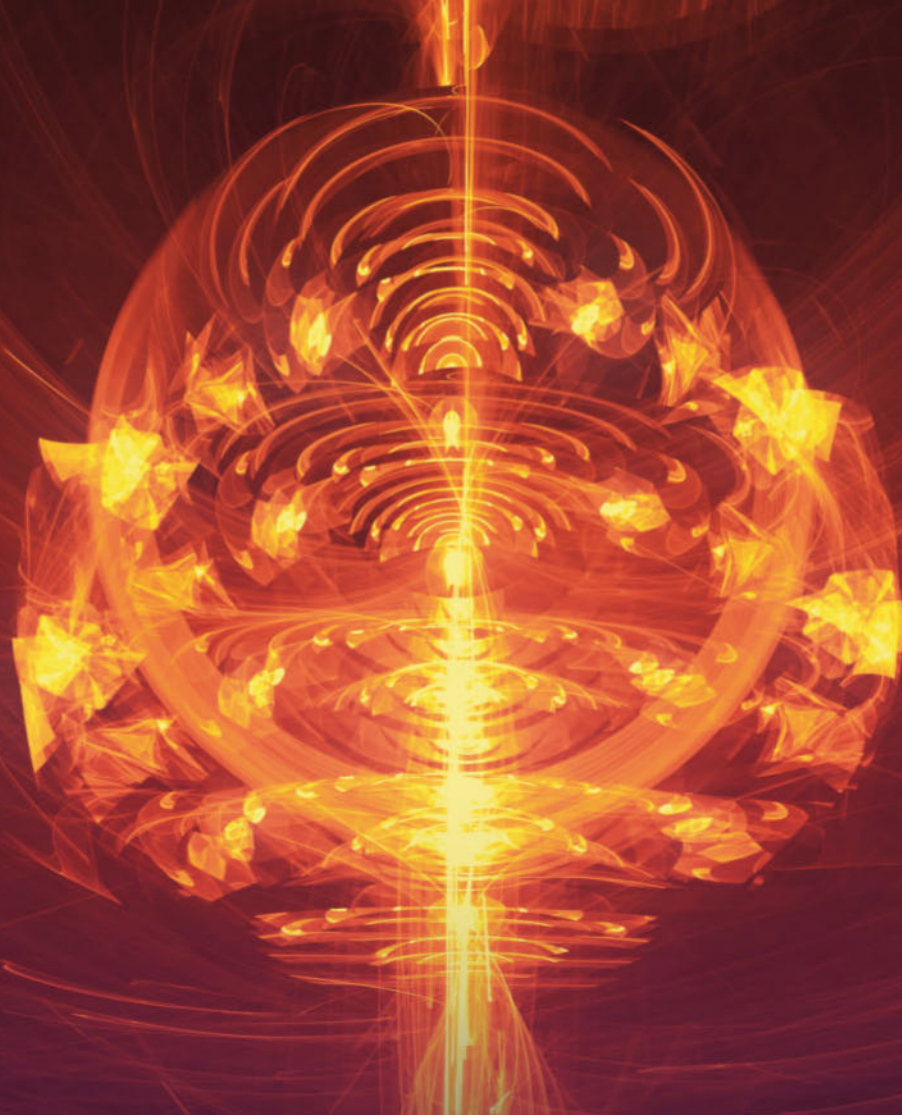
Classical realism with a fantastical modern edge.

*Shared and collected worldwide, Heather's artwork has gained her international media attention, contracts with Disney, and awards from respected organisations including ARC and Spectrum. [www.heathertheurer.com](http://www.heathertheurer.com).*

## TRIUMPH

"This was created for the Masterworks project for FantasyCon and won third in the 2015 ARC international art competition."

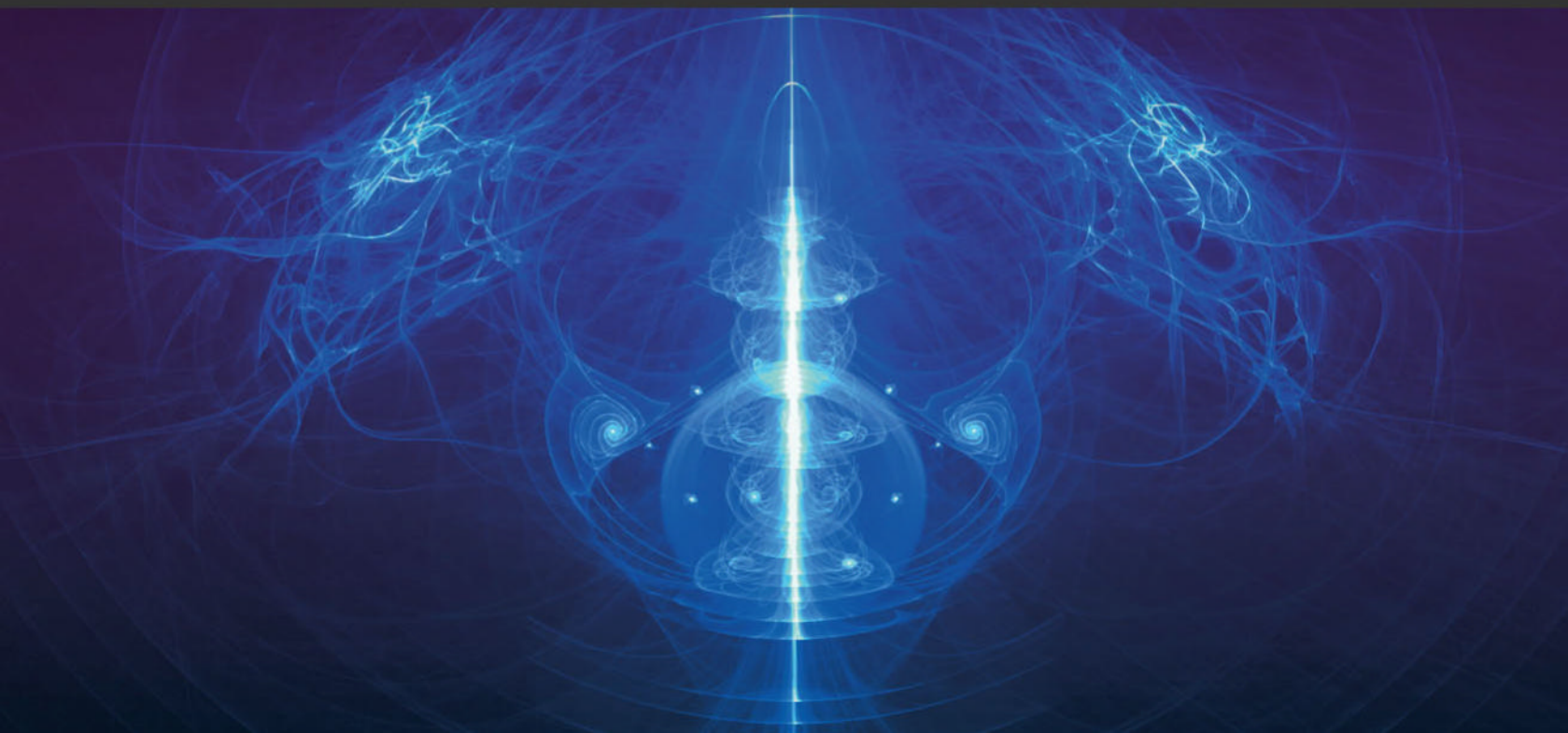




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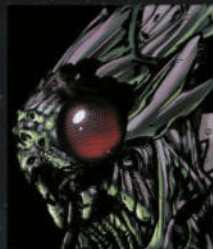
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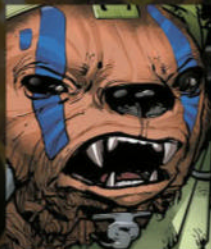
Some of the aliens the crew encounters:



Nulians



Inglets



Boerboe



Blackworm



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