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PLUS PHOTOSHOP CUSTOM BRUSHES

# NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX

PRO INSIGHT

## 16 TIPS TO PAINT PORTRAITS

- Dynamic compositions
- Lighting and contrast
- Bringing eyes to life

*Atomhawk's Viktoria  
Gavrilenko paints this  
month's majestic cover*



## HAVE FUN WITH COLOUR & LIGHT

Discover the 14 steps to create this bright and beautiful fantasy forest scene in **Photoshop**

AND MORE...

CREATE A GAME CONCEPT  
WITH A STRONG IDENTITY

PRO ADVICE TO MASTER  
THE DIGITAL ART BASICS

USE 3D AND 2D TO PAINT  
A CARD ART CHARACTER

Future



**FANTASY ILLUSTRATOR!** THE NOSTALGIC CHARM OF SCOTT GUSTAFSON'S ART



# RD RECKLESS DECK

CONCEPTING WITHOUT CAUTION

72 DIFFERENT  
CHARACTER  
GENERATING  
CARDS

THE BEST OF  
SCI FI, FANTASY  
HORROR,  
& STEAMPUNK

ENDLESS  
CREATIVE  
POSSIBILITIES

WHO  
WILL YOU  
CREATE?





## Welcome to... NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX



I spend a lot of my waking day searching for amazing art. I know what you're thinking – what a soldier! Well, one of the bums to this gruelling schedule is that I have so many

awesome artists in mind that the job of figuring out when to work with who becomes a real-life, mental Krypton Factor.

Viktoria Gavrilenko is an artist who's been on our radar for a long time, and when we decided that our cover should depict a bright and colourful version of Shakespeare's Titania, queen of the faeries, Viktoria was our first choice.

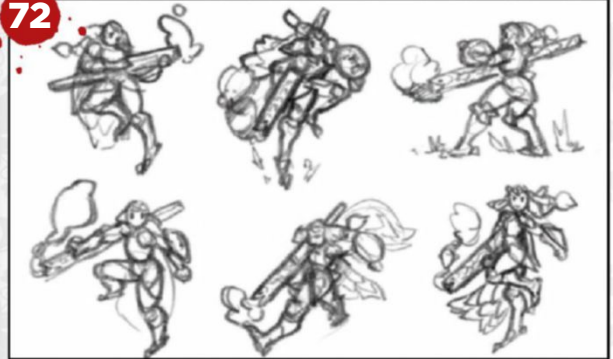
Her workshop, over on page 66, is a stunner, starting with line art and building up to create the final vibrant image. She's also produced her second ever video for the tutorial, so check that out... Now, back to the endless search for awesome art. Wish me luck!

*Beren*

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

### EDITOR'S CHOICE Laro, Mignola and online art comps

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#### Laro's lines

I asked Thomas Scholes who his favourite artist was. He named Rob, and his character workshop reveals why.

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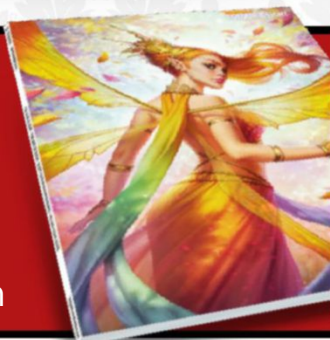


#### Your challenge

Online communities have changed over the years – can ArtStation revive the age of the online competition?

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"We felt everything in the original looked like it was something a 15 year old would draw..."  
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## Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART



See page 8 for the best new art ➡➡

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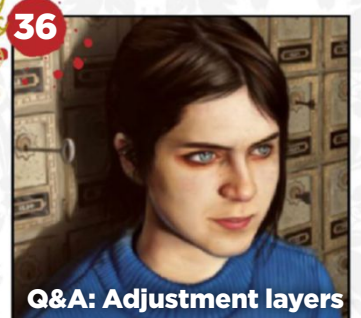
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Artist in residence





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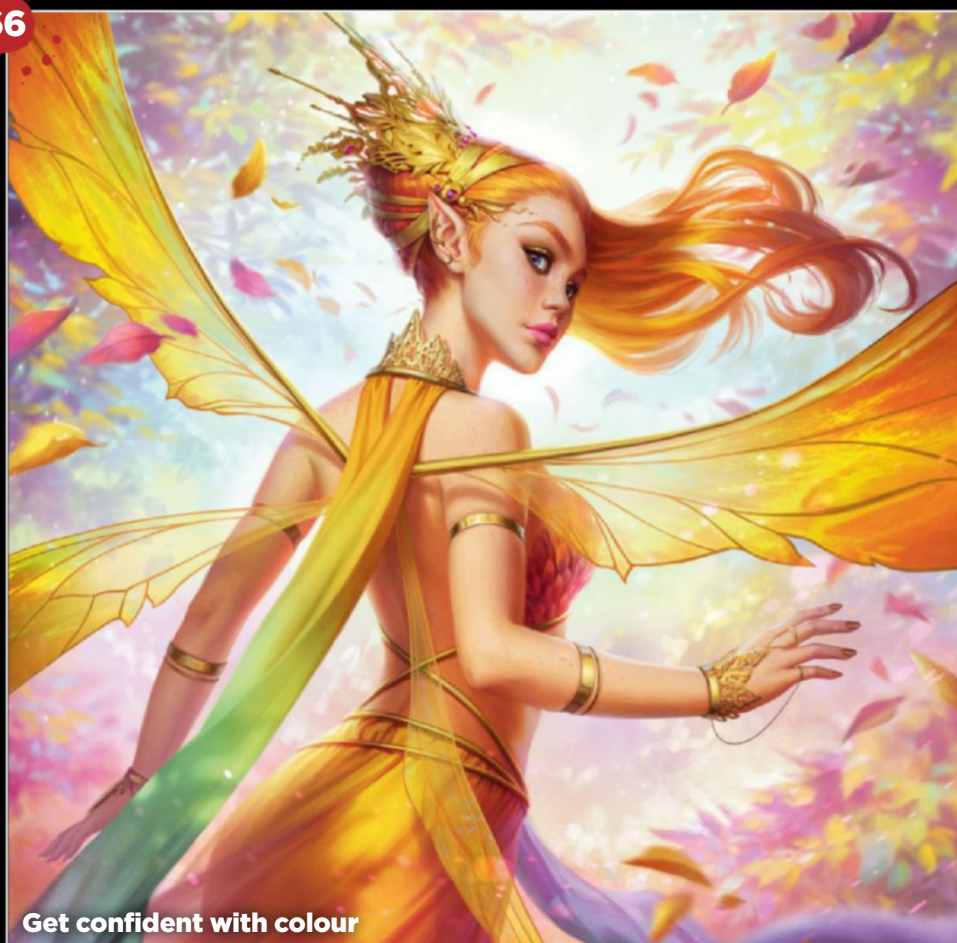
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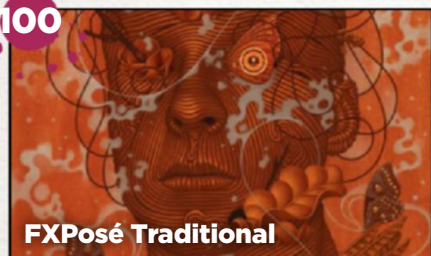
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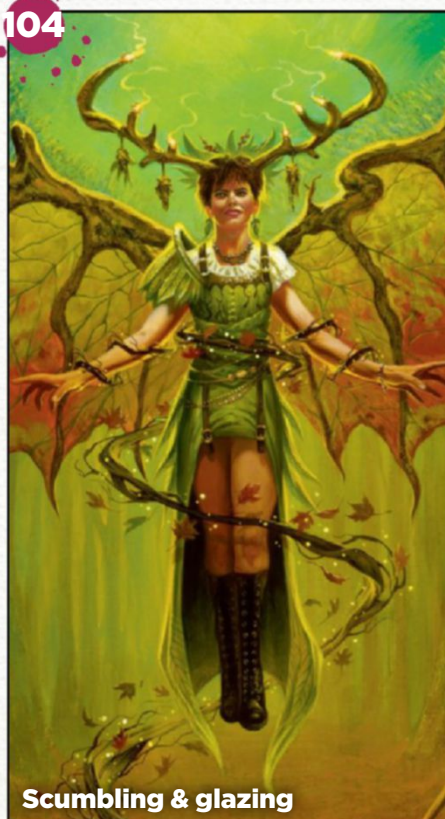
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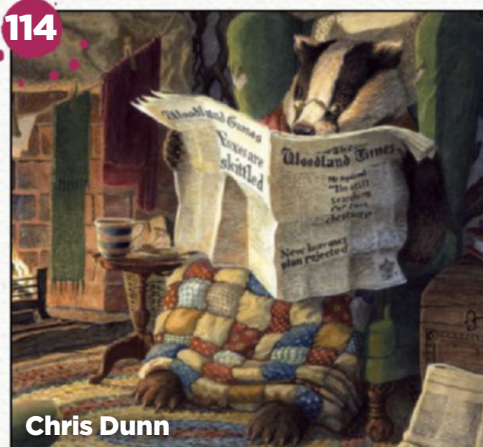
Scumbling & glazing



Classic Hellboy



Glazing



Chris Dunn





NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS  
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# 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/colour138light>

**OVER 10 HOURS**  
of video tutorials  
from pro artists  
to watch and  
learn from!

## WORKSHOP VIDEOS

### Visualising a fairy queen

Viktoria Gavrilenko brings her colours to life as she paints Shakespeare's Queen Titania.



### 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/colour138light>
- 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**

#### EDITORIAL

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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 to switch between Photoshop, DAZ 3D, ZBrush and KeyShot to illustrate a comical card art character from The Witcher 3, while on a tight deadline.

**Plus WIPs, brushes and final image**

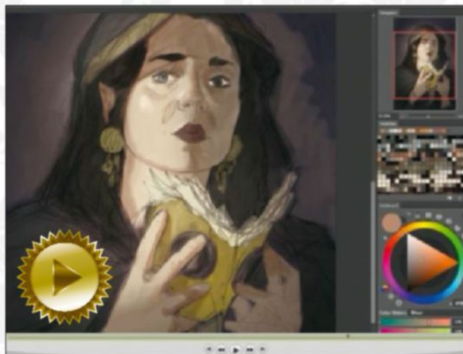


## Q&A VIDEOS

## Alix Branwyn

Understand how to match colours by eye, to build a colour palette in Photoshop.

**Plus WIPs and final image**



## Alix Branwyn

Blending modes are one of the most powerful tools in Photoshop's digital toolbox. Learning what they do and when to use them will make you a better artist.

**Plus WIPs and final image**



## Nick Harris

See how Painter's Paper controls provide a great way to bring texture into an image.

**Plus WIPs and final image**



## Nick Harris

Witness how Painter's Digital Watercolour, the most beginner-friendly option because it works with other blend modes and tool sets, can help you create great watercolour art.

**Plus WIPs and final image**



## TRAINING

## James Gurney

Use the outside world to generate a rich assortment of characters for your art, as seen in Portraits In The Wild.

**AND ALL THIS!** Detailed workshops with advice from the best fantasy artists around the world, including Mélanie Delon, Tony Foti, Rob Laro, Jeff Miracola, Anand Radhakrishnan, Rob Redman, Paolo Rivera and Rudy Siswanto.

## 14 CUSTOM BRUSHES, INCLUDING...

### SOFT FUZZY

The blending brush Viktoria Gavrilenko uses to retain texture in a stroke.

### FEATHER BRUSH

Rudy Siswanto uses this to render feathers on an owl bear and griffin.

### MODELLING BLENDER

Stéphane Richard uses this preset for smooth but controlled blending.



# Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART



1



## Pei Gong

**LOCATION:** China  
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**EMAIL:** 55017000@qq.com  
**MEDIA:** Photoshop



Pei has been studiously preparing himself for a career in concept art for years, honing his painting skills and artist chops in evenings after school.

"I really enjoy watching movies and playing video games," he says, "not only just for fun, but also to bring lots of

fantastic ideas that I can use for future digital painting projects."

And that hard graft has paid off handsomely. "I feel so lucky that I now have a chance to get into the gaming industry, and I've met so many great artists all around the world," he says. Yet his main goal remains to be inspired and learn from all that's around him.

2





## Artist crit

Concept artist Thomas Scholes admires Pei's art...



"Pei's firm grasp of the fundamentals of drawing, perspective, atmosphere and rendering combine to craft a convincing illusion abundant with depth and space."



3

**1 WEST LAKE** "A quiet and mystery landscape garden. There's a quiet lake surrounding the garden."

**2 KUNG FU** "The hero is surrounded by rebels. Fighting could break out at any moment. Blood will be spilled."

**3 DRAGON ISLAND** "I imagined that this is a secret island, which only the dragon and the local residents can easily access."



**Ryan Winch**

LOCATION: US

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MEDIA: Photoshop



Ryan has been a passionate artist of all types of illustration since childhood. Graduating from high school, and with no means to attend college, Ryan joined the army and served as an infantryman for eight years.

"With the ability to attend college through the GI Bill, I studied at the Academy of Art University in San Francisco," he says. "After receiving my BFA in visual development, I moved to Los Angeles where my first job was with Disney Interactive as a concept artist.

Recent endeavours include a series of children's books dealing with bullying issues called Space Pilgrim.

**IMAGINEFX CRIT**



"I like Ryan's painting style: it's deceptively simple, but look closer and it's full of details. There's humour, too: who would have thought that rabbits were taught about the significance of carrots?"

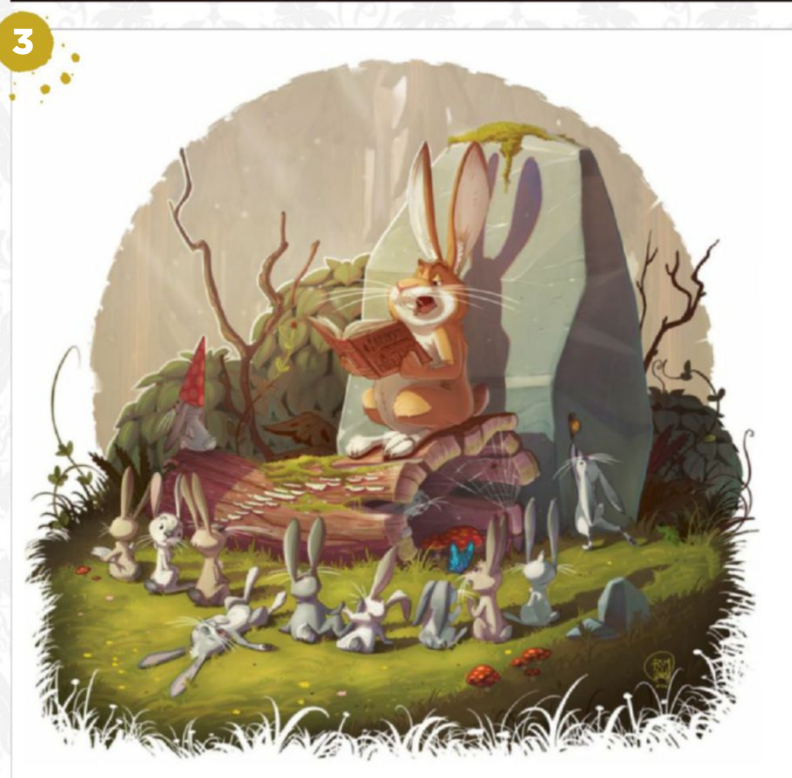
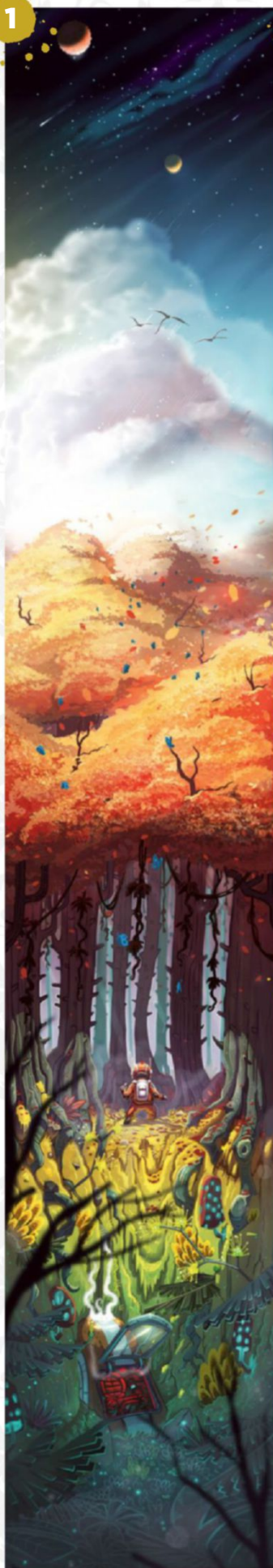
Cliff Hope,  
Operations Editor

**1 SPACE PILGRIM** "This is my current children's book project, to be completed within the next year or so. It's about the adventures of a boy named Logan who's launched into space and crash lands on an alien planet."

**2 MERMAID** "Sometimes you just have an urge to draw a girl with a fish tail."

**3 STORYTIME** "A private commission illustration of bunnies learning about the colourful history of the carrot. Some of the bunnies are less than interested."

**4 FELLOW EXPLORERS** "Another scene from my Space Pilgrim book. When the boy crash lands he's not alone. Logan is joined by Emma and a helpful robot named Bert."









**Tin Salamunic**

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MEDIA: Photoshop



Tin has been a senior designer, commercial illustrator, UX analyst and creative director over the past 11 years. "I'm primarily a digital artist, although I occasionally sketch in my Moleskine whenever I have time," he says. The Adobe Suite is his go-to arsenal for most work. "But I rely on Manga Studio's unique tool set when it comes to inking."

"My inspirations change weekly, if not daily," says Tin, "and I don't have major long-term plans for my career because I'm very happy where I am."

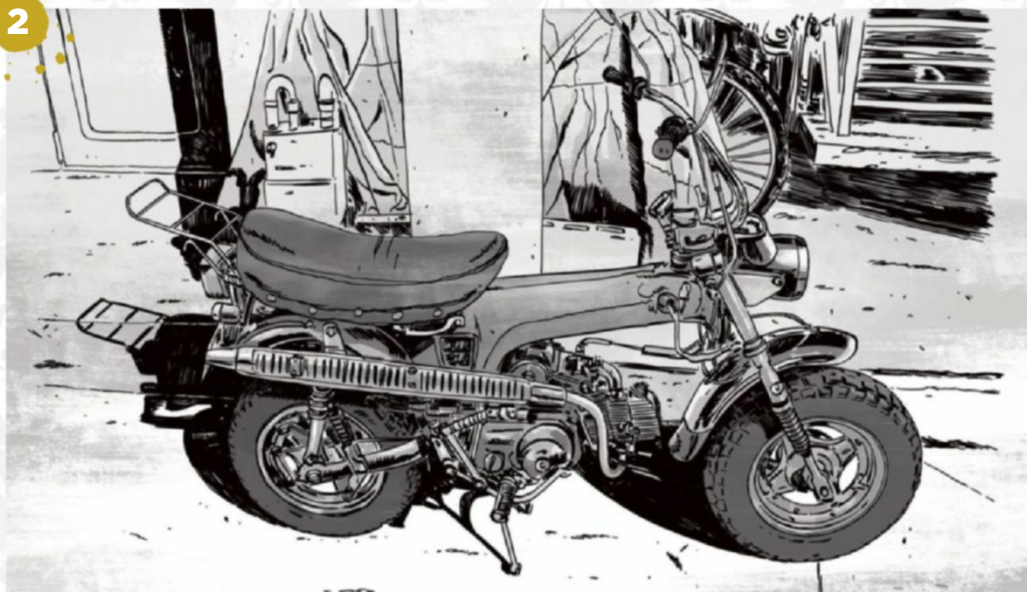
The artist works together with his wife, who is also a designer.

**IMAGINEFX CRIT**



"There aren't many images in ImagineFX as striking as Tin Salamunic's Dead Island. I both can't stop looking at it and really don't want to look at it. And I don't plan to book a holiday to Dead Island any time soon."

Daniel Vincent,  
Art Editor



**1 TOKYO, JAPAN** "I'm a sucker for travel journals, and in the past I never left the country without several blank sketchbooks. Lately however, I've been leaning more and more towards digital sketching. It's faster, more convenient, and I never run out of materials. Digital sketching is a great tool when you're just too busy and don't feel like carrying around supplies."

**2 BIKE** "I try to sketch whenever I can. It keeps things fresh and helps me maintain a visual library of all kinds of exciting things I encounter on a day-to-day basis."

**3 DEAD ISLAND** "I write video game and tech reviews when not doing illustration and design, and I'm a huge fan of Deep Silver's Dying Light and Dead Island series. This was a Dead Island tribute piece I did for the DS folks after their game launched."







**Xuexiang Zhang**

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**MEDIA:** Photoshop



"I started to paint in school when I was 15," says Xuexiang, "and in 2009 I went into college majoring in animation. It was around this time that I became aware of how much the games industry relies on digital artists."

The Chinese artist graduated in 2013 and since then has been fully committed to working within game companies, loving the passion of the art teams on each project. "Now I'm a freelance concept artist, teleworking for a company in Canada."

**IMAGINEFX CRIT**



"The first thing that jumps out at me from Xuexiang's art is the use of colour, which manages to be both powerful and yet subtle at the same time. He has a great understanding of shape, too, especially flamboyant curves."

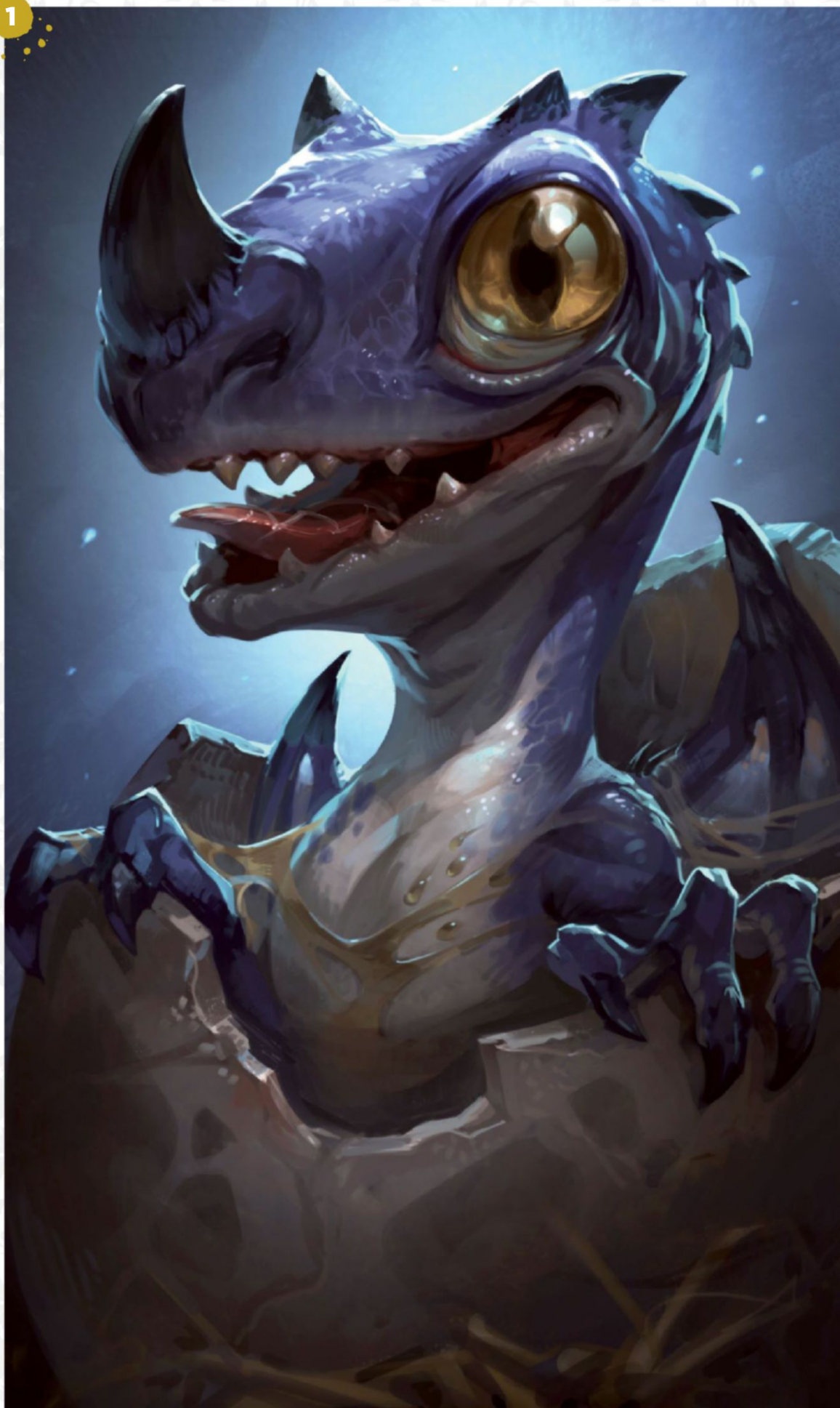
**Beren Neale,**  
Acting Editor

**1 DRAGON BABY** "I tried new themes and texture with soft and loose strokes to depict the picture. The use of side lights helped to exaggerate the volume of the creature."

**2 PALADIN** "This illustration was 2015's last project. This was the first breakthrough in my work, although my painting style has since changed."

**3 DEMON GIRL** "This is a character in a card game. She's a vampire demon who hunts intruders that get lost in the middle of the night. She rules the graveyard and the dead from the underworld would fight for her."

**4 GAME ICON-DRAGON HEAD** "An icon for a Chinese game, which is the first time I had to draw part of the dragon head. I developed fresh understanding of anatomy, namely that contrasting colours help to capture the viewer's attention."

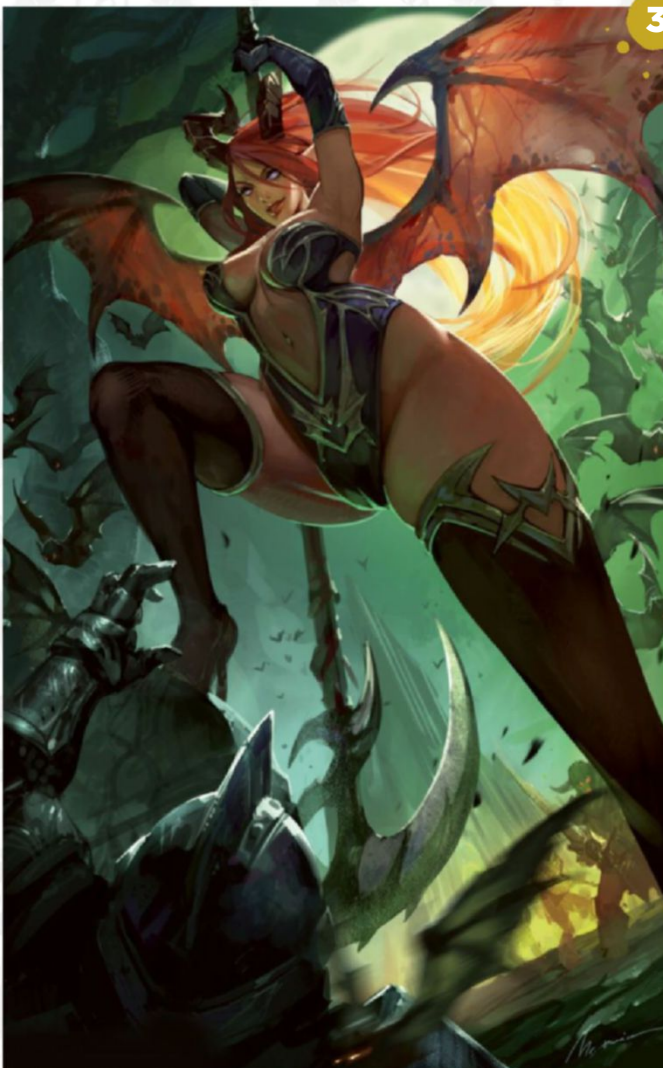




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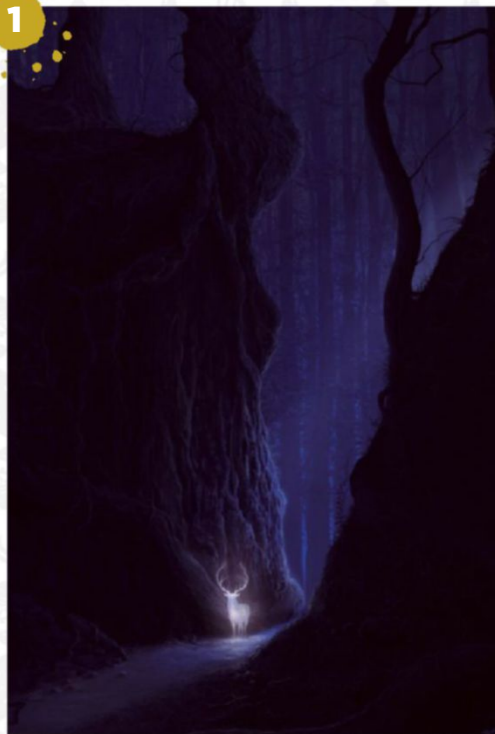


4





1



2



### Vladislav Pantic

LOCATION: Serbia

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MEDIA: Photoshop



A self-taught freelance artist from Belgade, Vladislav was slowly seduced by digital's ease of use and apparent unlimited possibilities.

"For years I've been fascinated by the world of faeries," he tells us, "and so became inspired by artists such as John Bauer, Brian Froud, Jean-Baptiste Monge and Alan Lee.

"I tried to present beings from that reality in a way I see them, using both digital and traditional media."

#### 1 THE GUARDIAN OF THE FOREST

"In this illustration I let the mysterious atmosphere of the faerie kingdom appear as the being of light, in this case the guardian of the sacred forest."

#### 2 RETURN TO LABYRINTH

"I watched the Labyrinth film half a dozen times as a kid and it's still one of my all-time favourites. This is my interpretation of these great characters."

#### 3 THE GIFT

"In this piece I was trying to achieve a dynamic image of faeries. I was keen to depict a feeling of lightness, freedom and joy."

#### 4 THE PRINCE OF MIDNIGHT

"I wanted to create a character that represents the other side of the faerie realm. Even in that world we can meet some unpleasant spirits, so be careful when dealing with faeries - not all of them are benevolent."



3



4



#### IMAGINEFX CRIT



"I really like the classic fantasy feel to Vladislav's art seen here, the subject matter, the beguiling atmosphere and sense of mystery he conjures up. I would happily have *Return to Labyrinth* on my wall at home."

Clifford Hope,  
Operations Editor

#### SUBMIT YOUR ART TO FXPOSÉ

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

**Email:** [fxpose@imaginefx.com](mailto:fxpose@imaginefx.com)  
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All artwork is submitted on the basis of a non-exclusive worldwide licence to publish, both in print and electronically.



# Challenge accepted!

**Winning** ArtStation Challenges give artists a platform to share and improve their work. **Dom Carter** asks if it signals the renaissance of the digital art competition...



**When it comes to giving artists an opportunity to find work and connections, ArtStation is taking the lead. "Founder Leonard Teo's**

**vision for ArtStation is that we solve real problems for the artists and the industry," says Daniel Wade, the site's product manager, referencing the importance of ArtStation competitions.**

Launched earlier this year, The Journey is a batch of contests that hark back to a time of giant forum competitions. Split into 2D and 3D categories, these six ArtStation Challenges invited artists to submit

character, environment and transport art. "We didn't want it to be Groundhog Day with a forum-based system, with all of those limitations," Daniel says. "So we started with a custom-built competition platform, and added features that elevate the challenge experience like Twitch streaming, 3D viewer support, feedback, public voting (likes), social media integration, and a simple judging experience."

## TAKING PART

Word of the challenges spread quickly and attracted an overwhelming amount of talent. Professional illustrator



Jean-Baptiste Monge, who scooped first place in the 2D character art challenge, considers the award a great achievement: "Even at my level, nothing is to be taken for granted," he says.

The benefits of entering extend beyond winning, though. "For younger artists, it can be a good experience to see how you react in the face of stress and deadlines," explains Jean-Baptiste. "The most important thing is that you finish the illustration on time."

Considering that he's been put off by huge forum competitions before – "The subjects were common and boring" – ➡

**“We didn't want it to be Groundhog Day with a forum-based system, with all of those limitations”**

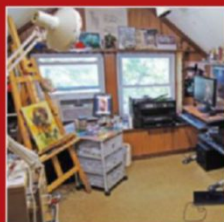




## BYE BYE HELLBOY

Artists from across the industry salute Mike Mignola as he calls time on Hellboy, the popular demon-turned-paranormal investigator.

**Page 22**



## A RIGHT HELL HOLE?

Jim Pavelec is well known for his demonic art, but this painter's home studio seems anything but hellish to create traditional and digital art in.

**Page 26**



## WIN A COURSE WORTH \$1,300

Escape Studios is giving away an eight-week storyboarding course - this could be your ticket into the visual effects industry. Don't delay, enter today!

**Page 28**

## WINNER: 2D ENVIRONMENT CHALLENGE

Yan Yang has built up his skills by persistently studying other people's work for six years.





## WINNER: 2D CHARACTER CHALLENGE



Creating a slow-moving creature was a chance for Jean-Baptiste to give his hyperactive mind a rest.

➔ Jean-Baptiste's entry helps certify the quality of the ArtStation Challenges.

Layna Lazar, winner of the 3D character challenge, agrees that the interesting brief attracted her to The Journey, and hopes the contest leads to, "More competitions that have a briefing to create worlds and stories rather than 'make a thing'."

Layna is also mindful of deadlines and 3D work's long pipelines. "Participate in a challenge that suits you best or is something you want to be doing for the next few months," she says. "At the end of it, you'll have a great finished portfolio piece, and that's always worth it!"

Having something different to work on was the driving force behind Kait Kybar's entry, which triumphed in the 2D transport category. "Competitions are like a personal project that keeps you motivated," the artist says.

Like Jean-Baptiste, Kait is unsentimental when it comes to the old days of massive forums and competitions. "I only remember

slow internet, bad servers and confusing websites. ArtStation is quite a good portal at the moment, though."

## EXPOSURE AND CAREERS

The spirit behind the ArtStation Challenges fosters community-based learning. And by growing artistically within a supportive community, artists put themselves in a position to get noticed.

"Receiving an award gives you a lot of exposure and helps to make your name a lot more recognisable," says

Wojciech Piwowarczyk, winner of the 3D environment challenge. "It's a huge advantage when looking for work if someone finds in your portfolio an image they recognise. Even if someone

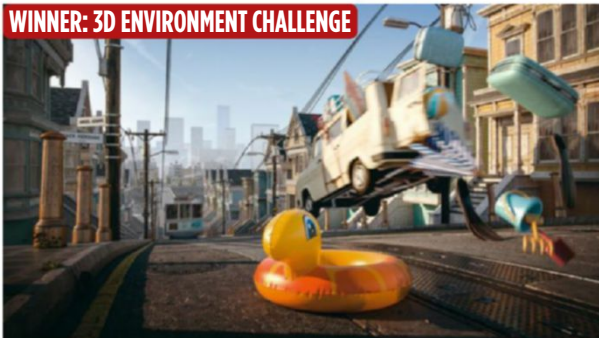


**“If ILM discovers new talent, then there may be opportunities for the artist in the future”**

## WINNER: 2D TRANSPORT CHALLENGE



## WINNER: 3D ENVIRONMENT CHALLENGE



Wojciech uses his travel experiences to create images not seen in the cinema or video games.

wasn't lucky this time, showing a competition entry in a portfolio means that you're being proactive and seeking ways to get exposure."

For Serbian-based artist Darko Markovic,



his location means that exposure is hard to come by. "This competition was the best thing that could happen to me," he says, after coming first place in the 3D transport competition. "Exposure is the main weapon when you have great work. No one will hire you if you're hidden in your cave, no matter how good your work is."

Having worked with film and games studios for more than 30 years, Daniel has seen winners from these challenges use their exposure to land their dream jobs. And after months of planning, he could finally reveal in May that ArtStation has been working with ILM to launch a Star Wars challenge hosted by the studio's art directors.





Kait has been painting digitally for 20 years, but still finds it easy to generate new ideas for images.

"This is really a first for an art challenge on this scale with a major studio and its biggest IP, and we're in discussions with other studios to run this type of challenge in future," Daniel reveals. In confirmation of what the winners of The Journey challenges have been saying, he observes that, "It's not far-fetched to imagine if ILM discovers new talent, that there may be opportunities for them in the future."

## THE FUTURE

ArtStation's new challenges and features have certainly generated optimism and excitement in the community. But where does ArtStation go from here?



"I think online competitions have a lot of prospects and I'm prepared to be surprised," says Yan Yang, winner of the 2D environment challenge.



**WINNER: 3D TRANSPORT CHALLENGE**

Darko was keen for his vehicle to push the boundaries of proportion and design.

Layna is new to the world of digital art and has been mentored by Jon Troy Nickel.

"I think we should lay emphasis on communication and connection between artists. In this manner, no matter what outcomes we get, we can always benefit from the experiences."

For Daniel, it all comes back to solving problems. With the competition between studios to find top artists only set to increase, this could lead to the evolution of studio-judged art challenges.

"Studios are always looking for talented artists, and the competition to find them is increasing. The ability to see how these artists perform on a deadline – even simulated – will also be valuable," he says. "They would never replace our community challenges, because the requirements are quite different. Studio challenges will either be recruitment-style challenges where studios are searching for talent, or public challenges where the studios want to give back to the community."

To keep up to date with the latest ArtStation competitions and developments, visit [www.artstation.com/contests](http://www.artstation.com/contests).



**WINNER: 3D CHARACTER CHALLENGE**

## INDUSTRY INSIGHT CHALLENGE CHAMPIONS

*Forum competition organisers on how they grew their communities*

### Darren Rawlings, former moderator at CGHub

"While I was an editor/moderator at CGHub, we had ongoing events called jams, where artists would post designs and stuff every week on a chosen topic. It was fun and everyone seemed to enjoy it. We gave out badges and whatnot for winning, but it was mostly just that: jamming. Folks in the community drawing together. A lot of folks would join and there were always cool topics, such as design a new Mass Effect character. I remember thinking some of these designs and should be in the game. There was always mind-blowing stuff coming out of the community."

### Fernando Caire, The Gnomon Workshop

"The Gnomon Workshop has run monthly Community Image Challenge contests since 2006 in 2D and 3D categories through our forum. Each month we've chosen four winners to receive subscription prizes: access to The Gnomon Workshop library. Contest themes change from month to month, with recent challenges including Magical Fail, David and Goliath, and Tolkien."

### Lynette Clee, former studio manager at 3DTotal

"3DTotal ran regular challenges on the Threedy forums including Stylised Challenge, Speed Modelling Challenge and Speed Sculpting Challenge. We also used to post a Stylised Challenge over on ConceptArt.org forums for the 2D guys and gals. Prizes were usually 3DTotal goodies such as DVDs, books and PDF magazines."

### Daniel Wade, former publisher, CGChallenges

"The art challenges started out as friendly artist-driven contests on the CGTalk forums. It was just a bunch of guys shooting the sh\*t while creating art and giving each other feedback. They became the CGChallenges on CGSociety. These grew from a handful to thousands of artists, with a defined framework around a creative brief, several categories and substantial prizes."





Creator Mike Mignola continued the series by writing and illustrating the Hellboy in Hell collection.

# Closing the door on Hell

**Raise Hell** As Mike Mignola calls time on Hellboy, the demon-turned-paranormal investigator, artists from across the industry pay tribute to the landmark comic series



**"I've never taken a significant chunk of time to just do work essentially for myself," says Mike Mignola, the prolific artist and writer behind**

**Hellboy, who recently announced that he has decided to pause work on the series and focus on personal projects. "I've no idea where it's gonna go," he adds, "but it's exciting. It's what keeps me going."**

This is uncharted territory for Mike. Previously, the Eisner award-winning artist has had plenty of work lined up and

Hellboy made its debut in 1993 and has gone on to win Eisner and Harvey awards.

demanding his attention. But it was a painting completed in his limited spare time that sparked a realisation. "I only average about one painting a year, and the last painting I did, I actually really liked," he reveals. "So I thought, 'Gee, if I do a bunch of paintings, maybe I'll actually figure out what I'm doing instead of relearning every year.'"

Even though this is the end of the road for now when it comes to Hellboy, Mike stresses that he still has plenty of other projects to keep him busy. "I can't really take a year off — I'm co-plotting Bureau for Paranormal

Research and Defense, but I'd like to take a year off from drawing any kind of comics."

Considering Hellboy is one of the most critically acclaimed comics from the past three decades, Mike's decision not to focus on the series has understandably made waves in the graphic novel community and beyond. "Mike Mignola is the smartest comic book artist of his generation," says iconic



comics creator **Frank Miller**. "He puts his words and his pictures together with great care and makes it all look very easy."

Previous work on Gotham by Gaslight and Cosmic Odyssey had already garnered Mike a lot of fans, including Catwoman artist Adam Hughes. "I was on board with Hellboy from day one," he enthuses. "I admire everything about it: the art, the writing, the design, the world-building, the sheer uniqueness of the voice of the storytelling... all are head and shoulders above the rest. Mike Mignola's Hellboy makes every day seem like Halloween, and Hell a pretty cool place to visit."

Heavy Metal veteran and Hellboy artist **Richard Corben** observes that the series was

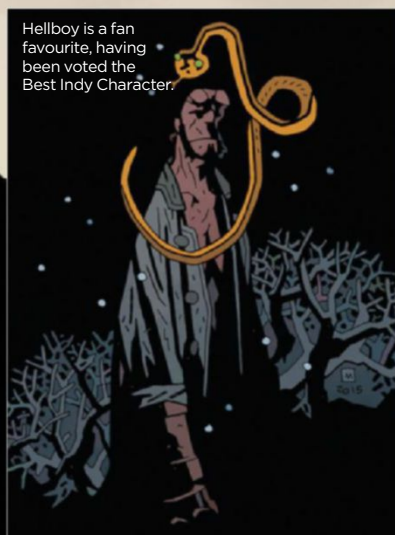


a source of inspiration for a generation of cartoonists. "His comic art is beautifully simple, so simple that other cartoonists think they can



The Hellboy in Hell series kicked off in 2012, and picked up where the original series left off.





## “Mike Mignola is the smartest comic book artist of his generation”

emulate his style, which is futile,” he explains. “He’s one of the best. Congratulations on your masterpiece Hellboy in Hell, Mike.”

With discussions about bringing out a third Hellboy film, together with rumblings over a television series, this might not be the last we’ve seen of the character, but



Ultimate-Spider-Man writer **Brian Michael Bendis** insists that it’s the creator who’s remembered. “Mike is so excellent, so consistent,

that my fear is that people may take it for granted. Do not. He is one of the great comic legends of all time, and we get to watch him live.”

You can keep track of Mike’s upcoming projects at [www.artofmikemignola.com](http://www.artofmikemignola.com).

M 2015

The Hellboy saga will meet its end in *For Whom The Bell Tolls*.



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## PRINT AND DIGITAL BACK ISSUES



### Issue 137

August 2016

Comics have never been more popular, and this issue we give you the skills to break into the industry. We also chart Conan's appearance in the comics, talk to illustrator Iain McCaig about his love of storytelling, and help you combine 2D and 3D techniques.



### Issue 136

July 2016

With the help of Magic: The Gathering and Fantasy Flight Games artists, we give you the skills you need to paint stunning card art, and reveal art from the latest Magic deck, Shadows over Innistrad. Plus, Rodney Matthews shares his brilliant sketches.



### Issue 135

June 2016

Stan Prokopenko gets down to the bones of the matter in our anatomy special, Aaron Griffin lays bare his methods, Ed Binkley creates a human house fly and Loopydave shares his learned tips on caricature. We also study up on the 10 best online art schools.



### Issue 134

May 2016

In this month's issue, learn how to manage values by following Karla Ortiz's cover workshop, improve your portrait skills, build a library of custom Photoshop brushes, get the most from your life model, and more. We also talk to Lois van Baarle and the ILM art department.

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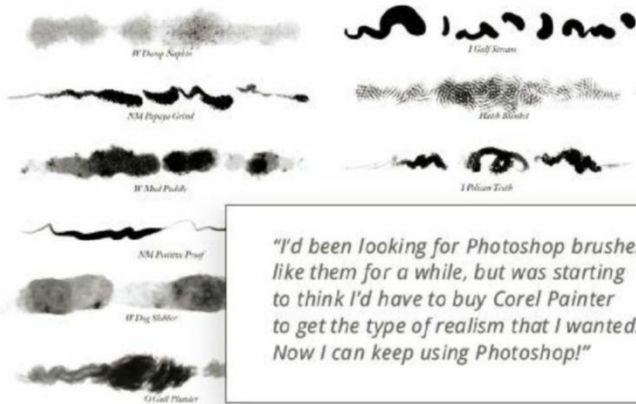
# Pressure Responsive Photoshop Artist's Tools

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[GrutBrushes.com/waters](http://GrutBrushes.com/waters)



"I'd been looking for Photoshop brushes like them for a while, but was starting to think I'd have to buy Corel Painter to get the type of realism that I wanted. Now I can keep using Photoshop!"

## Oil Impasto

[GrutBrushes.com/impasto](http://GrutBrushes.com/impasto)



## Inks

[GrutBrushes.com/inkyleaks](http://GrutBrushes.com/inkyleaks)



## Cloud FX

[GrutBrushes.com/cloudfx](http://GrutBrushes.com/cloudfx) (50 Dynamic Cloud Brush Tools)

## Free Photoshop CC Plugin

[GrutBrushes.com/plugin](http://GrutBrushes.com/plugin) (Brushes sold separately)



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## Jim Pavelec

**Hell boy** He's known for his demonic art, but this painter's studio isn't hellish



**Hell is pretty full these days, so I work at home like most artists. I recently moved my studio back into my home from an office location. I felt the extra expense of the off-site studio was unnecessary, and wanted to save money for upcoming projects.**

My workspace isn't very large, but this means I can bounce from my easel to my computer or drafting table with ease. With the new painting techniques I'm utilising, this is ideal for me. I switch back and forth from traditional media to digital several times within a piece. I can work on a drawing, lay some acrylics and pastels on it, scan it, paint on it in Photoshop, print it out, mount it to board and be painting in oils – all in one day. This setup has enabled my creativity to expand to the next level.

I do a lot of my pencil and pastel drawing at a local coffee shop. There's a long tradition of the artist and the café. The constant coming and going of people has an energy that you can tap into, and working in public opens you up to meeting new friends, patrons or collaborators.

I don't need top-of-the-line equipment for making art. My easel is a mid-range easel, I made my mahl stick out of things I had in the basement, my palette was salvaged from a local hardware store, my Wacom – which I got for next to nothing on Craigslist – is old, and a lot of my bookcases and other storage items I stole from a large chain bookstore that was closing down. I'm not condoning stealing things, but hey, do what you have to do. Being an artist is a tough racket.

**Jim has been a freelance fantasy illustrator for over 15 years. You may be more familiar with his demon drawings and paintings, and as the founder of the artist rights website ArtPACT. Follow him on Instagram: @jim\_pavelec.**

My adjustable easel, where I do most of my painting, would not be complete without the Tom Kuebler shrunken head. It watches over me to make sure that what I'm working on is sufficiently disgusting.

A print of a Nicolai Fechin page of hand studies. It's a constant reminder that I need to work harder, and smarter.



My bag of rocks is one of my favourite drawing tools. The bag was knitted for me by one of the baristas at the café. For those not familiar with my drawing process, I start by coating paper with a dusting of powdered graphite. I then press a large kneaded eraser into the various textured surfaces of the rocks and shells. Finally, I press that eraser on to the paper, lifting up the powdered graphite and revealing wonderful organic patterns that I use as the basis for my drawings.



I bought this special clamp mount designed specifically for the iPad. I'll often create a Pinterest board for a painting I'm working on, and put all the reference I need in it. I can then scroll to whatever I need, instead of printing the reference images out and wasting ink.



These are currently my three favourite rocks. A trilobite fossil dating back 500 million years; a fairy stone, which is a concretion of glacial sand; and a piece of green malachite. I'm always looking in nature, and at rock and mineral shops for new textures.

Hellboy.  
Because...  
it's Hellboy!

My palette is a large piece of countertop material I found in the scrap bin at a hardware store. It's not fancy, but it serves me well.

My drafting table. This is where a piece usually begins. I have a wide variety of media within reach, and work very randomly and chaotically. I'll be simultaneously working on a watercolour block with watercolour, acrylic and soft pastels. Water, thinners and rubbing alcohol are also used. Whatever I end up with doesn't need to be archival, because I scan it, manipulate it in Photoshop, then print that image out and work on top of it with more paint and pastels to achieve the final artwork.





# Win an eight-week storyboard course!

**Competition** Want to take your first steps into the world of storyboarding? Enter our competition to win a place on an Escape Studios course, worth \$1,300!

London-based Escape Studios, part of Pearson College London, is Europe's premier visual effects academy. If you've got raw talent and the drive to create top-level visual work, Escape Studios can give you a highly vocational training experience in the animation & visual effects industries.

We've teamed up with Escape Studios to offer a place on its eight-week storyboard art course. Students will benefit from three-hour hands-on teaching sessions one night a week. Made up of set projects that cover everything from character design, scene structure and cinematography, the course culminates in a final live "industry brief".

The mentoring continues with a further eight-week period of additional support and online aftercare, in which students can hone their skills in a virtual classroom.

To be in with a chance of winning a place on this course check out Escape's website, <http://ifxm.ag/escape-story>, and then answer the following question:



**The resident art guru who's leading the course is:**

- A) Alex Williams
- B) John Williams
- C) Rory Williams



Hibbert Ralph, the producer of Redboard, demonstrates the key software used on the course.

Please submit your answer at <http://ifxm.ag/escape-studios>. This competition is open to entries from the UK only and all entrants must be 18 or over. The closing date is 15 August 2016 and the prize is non-transferable for cash or other Escape Studios courses.

You can check out a full set of competition rules by visiting <http://ifxm.ag/escape-studios>.



**“What was Disney’s 50th  
animated feature?”**

**#SMARTERMOVIEMAG**



# 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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### LinkedOut

I'm a fan and a user of your magazines. I was reading a digital edition of the comic special, Comic Artist Volume 2 and I wanted to download the resources but the link was broken. It redirected me to a blank page. This has happened before with other links. But for the moment the one that I'm looking for is <http://ifxm.ag/comart2>. Can you please help me with that? I appreciate your help.

**Andres, via email**



Most of our special issues come with downloadable resources – videos, layered artwork and brushes.

**Beren replies** We're very sorry about this, Andres. There are all sorts of boring and complicated dreams behind the failed resources link, which I won't bore you with other than to say that it's a hangover from us moving web servers. We'll certainly fix it as soon as possible. I would also encourage readers to email us if they come across any broken links.

### Subscription stuff up?

I have recently changed address and, despite setting up redirected mail, I haven't received the last two issues of the magazine (May and June editions). I have previously had problems with the subscription. I was sent a December issue in December, then a February issue in January. I was told that they had run out of January issues, which I didn't expect to happen with a subscription. To resolve this, the staff I contacted extended my subscription by three issues, which was very kind.

Since the February issue, I have been receiving issues a month ahead of the month we're in. For example in February I received the March edition, and in March I received the April edition. I hope that's not too confusing, but that's why I've missed May and June, even though June's only just started!

I should have received a May issue in April and a June issue last month, but neither of them showed up. I'm wondering



**DID YOU MISS OUR COMIC ART ISSUE?**

Turn to page 24 to see how you can get hold of this and other past issues of ImagineFX.

now if somehow there's been another stuff up? Your system says my subscription is done and the three issues added on to resolve the last problem weren't added on!

I'm really hoping that you'll be able to help with this!

**Graham Goodall-Smith, via email**

**Beren replies** Hello Graham. Firstly, thanks for getting in touch about this and I'm so sorry you've had so much trouble. Our subscriptions are handled by an external company who largely do a great job. I've forwarded your email on to the relevant team and I expect them to contact you shortly to sort this out. If they don't, please email me again.

For what it's worth, the March issue does usually come out in February and so forth. But that's neither here nor there if your issue has been misappropriated somehow and doesn't arrive at all! Sorry again. Anyone experiencing subscription woes – and it is rare that we get complaints of this nature – should send an email to [contact@myfavouritemagazines.co.uk](mailto:contact@myfavouritemagazines.co.uk).

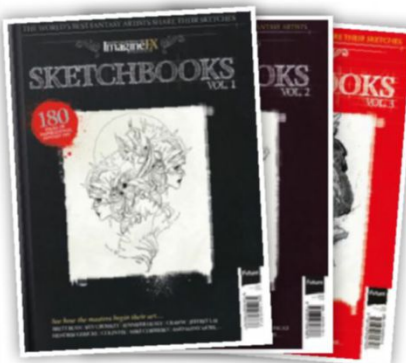
### Please sir, can I have some more?

I've got one – just one – of the ImagineFX Sketchbooks series and it's outstanding. However, I'm trying to find more. Have they stopped being made? Or are they available to download for Kindle Fire. They are about the best thing I've found for the thing that I want, namely a book full of sketches by many artists. It's an excellent magazine well worth the 15-odd quid. Can you send me a link to a download please? Shops where I live no longer stock them.

**Keith Boe, via email**

**Beren replies** Hello Keith. We're really glad you enjoyed the ImagineFX sketchbook special. There have been three Sketchbook specials produced so far and volume 2 and 3 are still available – and we will put more together, too.

To order your copy – and any of our other special editions of ImagineFX – simply visit [www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk](http://www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk) and follow links to Specials and Design. Happy drawing, Keith.



So far we've put together three Sketchbook volumes, and there's more special issues to come.



Your art news that's grabbed our attention



**John Landers**  
**@johnofthefuture**

“Articles in @imaginefx always inspire me to practice harder! #sketching”



**Jean-Baptiste Monge**  
**@jbmonge**

“Meet Binabick the Clean One”



**Dave Paget**  
**@davidpaget**

“Artwork for my latest tutorial video, The Reaper”

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



# Take the smart movie quiz...



[www.gamesradar.com/new-totalfilm-quiz](http://www.gamesradar.com/new-totalfilm-quiz)

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# Artist Q&A

STRUGGLING WITH A PAINTING TECHNIQUE OR TOPIC? EMAIL [HELP@IMAGINEFX.COM](mailto:HELP@IMAGINEFX.COM) TODAY!



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

**Nick Harris**  
 English artist Nick switched to digital after 18 years of working in real media, mostly as a watercolourist. The majority of his work is aimed at the children's book market.  
[www.nickillus.com](http://www.nickillus.com)

**Alix Branwyn**  
 Alix is a Seattle-based illustrator for the games industry. Her artwork is primarily in fantasy and horror, with a focus towards the dark and downright creepy.  
[www.alixbranwyn.com](http://www.alixbranwyn.com)

**Tony Foti**  
 Tony is an artist with Konami who still somehow contributes freelance work to numerous books, trading cards, video games, magazines and adverts of all types.  
[www.tonyfotiart.com](http://www.tonyfotiart.com)

**Paul Canavan**  
 Paul is the lead concept artist at Blazing Griffin. He has been featured in Spectrum, Develop's 30 Under 30 and recently won a BAFTA, which he doesn't brag about. At all.  
[www.paulscottcanavan.com](http://www.paulscottcanavan.com)

**Charlie Creber**  
 Charlie's a concept artist and illustrator working from Cardiff, Wales, where she spends her days creating digital and oil paintings, and collecting felines.  
[www.creberart.com](http://www.creberart.com)

## Question

### Help me make sense of Photoshop's Blending modes

Terri Calloway, Canada

## Answer

Alix replies



Next to the Undo button and layers, Blending modes are one of the most powerful tools in the digital toolbox. In most cases, you'll probably just find yourself flipping through them until you find the effect you want, experimenting with the unexpected. However, in some cases it's good to know exactly what some of the more commonly used modes do and



Adding a subtle Multiply layer made with a low Opacity Soft brush at the end can be a great way to push your shadows and forms.

learn when to use them, to help you make creating a digital piece a little bit easier. And that's exactly what I'm going to do in this short article.

The blending modes in Photoshop operate by interacting with the pixels that are placed beneath them and are split up into a few different groups, depending on their effect. The main three groups of Blending modes that you will likely work with are the Darken, Contrast and Lighten groups.

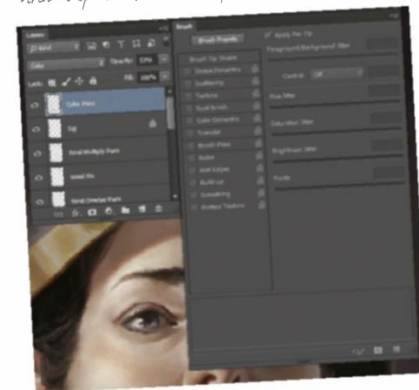
Of these, the main Blending modes that I used for my example created in Photoshop are Multiply, Overlay, and Screen, respectively. Once you get a feel for how these blending modes interact with your piece you can find any number of uses to make your process easier.



## Artist's secret

### ADDING SOME TEXTURE

Creating a Color Blending mode layer at low Opacity with random brushstrokes in an array of colours can be a good way to add texture and a splash of the unexpected to your art.



## Artist Q&A

### Need our advice?

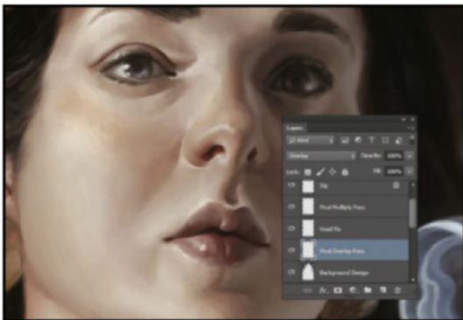
Email [help@imaginefx.com](mailto:help@imaginefx.com) with your art questions and we'll provide all the answers!



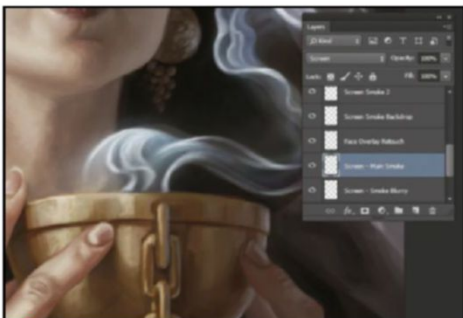
## Step-by-step: Laying out common Blending modes



**1** Multiply is a fantastic tool at many stages of your process. Because white on a Multiply layer is omitted, it's great for placing pencil scans into your piece to be coloured. It can be used for blocking in the initial shadows on colour flats, or for creating freckles or tattoos that interact with the skin tone of your character.



**2** I find Overlay to be the most versatile Blending mode. When using lighter colours it creates a luminous glow, and darker colours can create rich shadows. It's useful for blocking in your lights on colour flats, creating bloom and glow, pores and skin texture, and adding touches of saturated colour to the shadows' edges.



**3** Screen only adds lightness when applied. In addition, this light is more opaque and less saturated than what Overlay would create, which makes it ideal for creating atmosphere like fog or smoke. Layering in some soft Screen layers can also help push objects in your scene back in space, to create more realistic depth.

## Question

I'm new to Painter. Could I have some tips about using Painter's Paper textures, please?

Layla Towns, Australia



Textures in this image comprise several layers, built up using the Real Fat Chalk tool, and painting with a combination of in-built and custom Papers.

## Answer Nick replies



Painter's Paper controls have provided a great way to introduce texture into an image for some time now. It's always worth taking the time to point out some of their potential for those not familiar with them yet.

Access to their controls is through one of two tabs, usually found together on a single palette (click Windows>Paper Panels). You're offered Papers and Paper Library. The latter is self-explanatory: it's where you'll find your choice of papers. You can add to or remove Papers using controls along the bottom of the palette, or from a drop-down menu accessed from an icon that's top right. It's also possible to use Painter's own Paper maker to construct fractal-based additions.

For me, the main attraction is in the controls offered in the Papers section, though. Once a paper is selected, you can rotate and scale it, or adjust contrast and brightness, or even invert

the texture and/or lighting. Furthermore, you can use a rectangular selection to sample from any flattened image to make a paper, using the Capture Paper option to be found in that drop-down menu, top right. While not all images work well for this (cross-fade for tiling is available), you'll certainly be able to build up a custom library pretty quickly and easily. Brush grain then becomes more exciting a control to play with.



Once you find a Paper, or combination of Papers that you like, you can accentuate the texture by inverting it for the dark and light portions of an element.

## Artist's secret

GENERATE QUICK CLOUDS FROM A PAPER TEXTURE

Sometimes, when I need a wispy cloud effect quickly, I often use Paper textures and ramp up the scale on one of the more irregular options. Then I make marks with the Fat Chalk and smudge them about:







## Question

### Any advice for painting with watercolours in Painter?

Luiza Walczak, England

## Answer

Nick replies

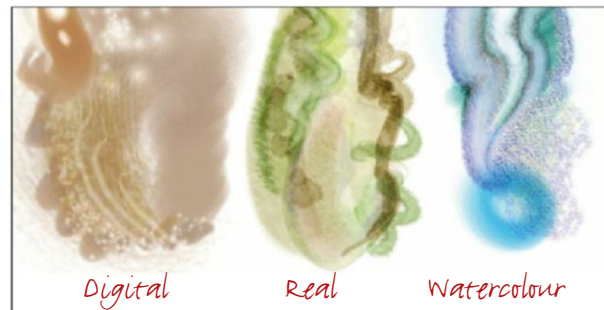


Painter offers a banquet of watercolour tools. It boasts Digital, Real and Watercolour tool categories, each with a range of brushes. While Real and Watercolour categories require a specialised layer blend mode called Watercolour, the Digital Watercolour will work with other blend modes and consequently tool sets, but it has fewer tools.

I come up with a loose sketch first, flood fill the background layer, duplicate it and set the new layer to either Multiply or Gel. The latter kills the white and gives you a head start on colour. Then simple Water Brush strokes at lower Opacity lay the groundwork. Using that brush, along with the Simple Diffuser, Salt and Gentle Wet Eraser, I work up some tones. I duplicate that layer, then block in the figure with solid colour on a new layer. I then place that layer below the two watercolour layers.



Watercolour-type effects can be achieved not only by applying colour washes, but by removing or working on areas with some of the other tools provided.



The best way for you to choose which Painter watercolour set suits you best is to spend time trying them out.



## Step-by-step: Combine Painter's Watercolour sets



**1** To start defining shapes and planes, I work with the Erasers and Blenders appropriate to each watercolour type on my layers. I develop some form and lighting on everything, as well as introducing some darker areas with washes on another layer (Real Watercolour). I can then work back into that layer with the Erasers and Salt to create waves and froth effects.



**2** I work with the Oil Pastel (pick whatever Paint tool you prefer) to build up interest and form on the character's base colour layer. I take the chance to bring green hues in. I also add another Digital Watercolour layer to add depth to the shadows on the character. I build more form into the foreground waves, using Salt and the Erasers to hint at froth and splash effects.

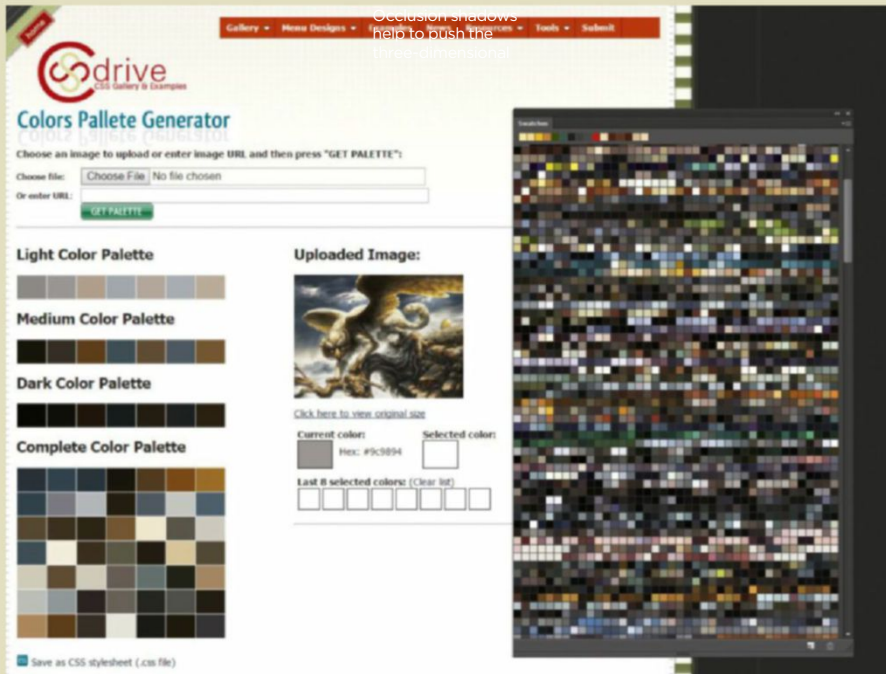


**3** By working with body colour (Oil Pastel again) on a lower layer, set to the default Blend mode, it's possible to build up more nuances and subtlety with the watercolour layers above. This is the way I like to work and if you're aiming for a more purely watercolour look, then it might not be for you. We all find our own preferred way of working, given time to try things out.



**4** I carry on building up tones and interest all over. This includes introducing an effect called Flow Maps. These can exaggerate the Paper effect if you select Create from Current Paper (on the drop-down from the Flow Map panel). They work with the appropriate Flow Map brushes in Real Watercolour. I tweak Layer strengths and finish off with added highlights.





## Question

Please help me establish a colour palette in Photoshop

Darren Lambert, England

My master swatch file was created using about 100 photos and paintings collected from the web.



## Answer

Alix replies



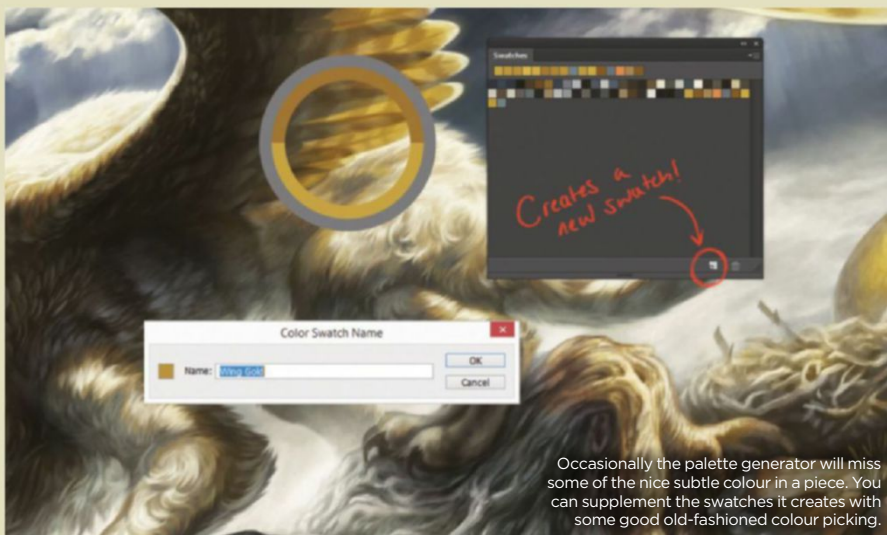
In the digital world where we don't have an array of physical pigments to mix, where do you begin when it comes to colour? It can be a

daunting task to start out building a colour library, but with a few tricks and tools you can set yourself up for a much easier time.

Being able to match colours by eye from life or reference is an incredibly important skill to hone, and one of the easiest ways to do this is the use of a good colour picking utility. I like to use the Coolorus plugin ([www.coolorus.com](http://www.coolorus.com)) to replace the standard colour picking tools in

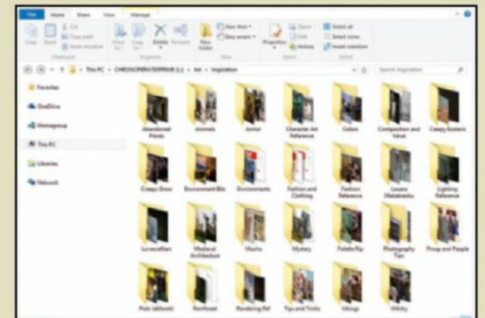
Photoshop, because the interface makes for a quick and intuitive way to colour match in your workflow.

For colour schemes where you aren't matching from a reference, however, I've found it to be incredibly useful to build out a swatch catalog that you can scroll through to grab pre-made colours as you work. I use a handy colours palette generator utility from CSS Drive ([www.cssdrive.com](http://www.cssdrive.com)) as a quick and free way to create colours to save in a large master swatch file, using photos and artwork with excellent colour as a base.

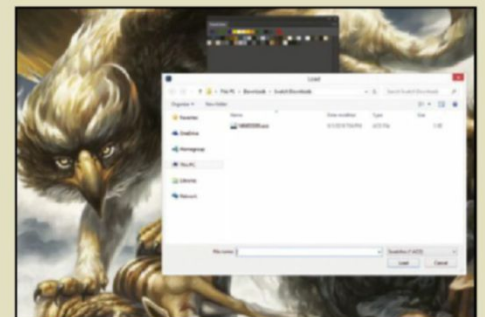


Occasionally the palette generator will miss some of the nice subtle colour in a piece. You can supplement the swatches it creates with some good old-fashioned colour picking.

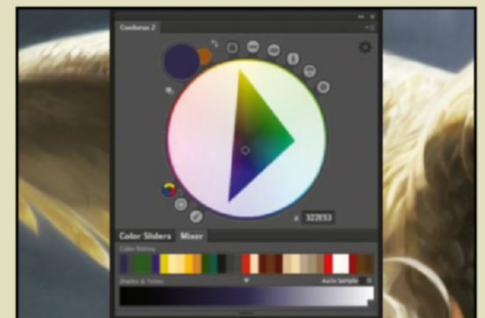
## Step-by-step: Creating your own colour collection



**1** Building and maintaining an inspiration library is a must. Whether you create it over a long period of time or you go on an art-collecting binge, finding a collection of pieces where colours were handled in a way that speaks to you will give you the material you need to build out your own collection of colours.



**2** CSS Drive's Image Palette Generator ([www.cssdrive.com/imagepalette](http://www.cssdrive.com/imagepalette)) is a free tool that creates Photoshop colour swatch files. By uploading an image, it generates a palette from a simplified version. When you append your swatches in Photoshop by loading in the new set, they stay grouped together.



**3** The excellent Coolorus plugin also provides some excellent tools such as gamut locking with editable gamut maps and built-in colour harmony sliders. Having some of the same tools that traditional artists use like gamut masks can be an way to challenge yourself by using a limited colour palette.



## Question

### How do I use masks to improve my Photoshop workflow?

Wayne Kemp, Poland

## Answer

Paul replies



Masks can seem daunting to a new artist, but once you start using them you'll never go back.

They come in two flavours:

Layer masks and Clipping masks. Think of the former as the ultimate replacement for the Eraser tool: while an Eraser serves one purpose (the removal of information on a layer), Clipping masks give you plenty of control over the image, enabling you to

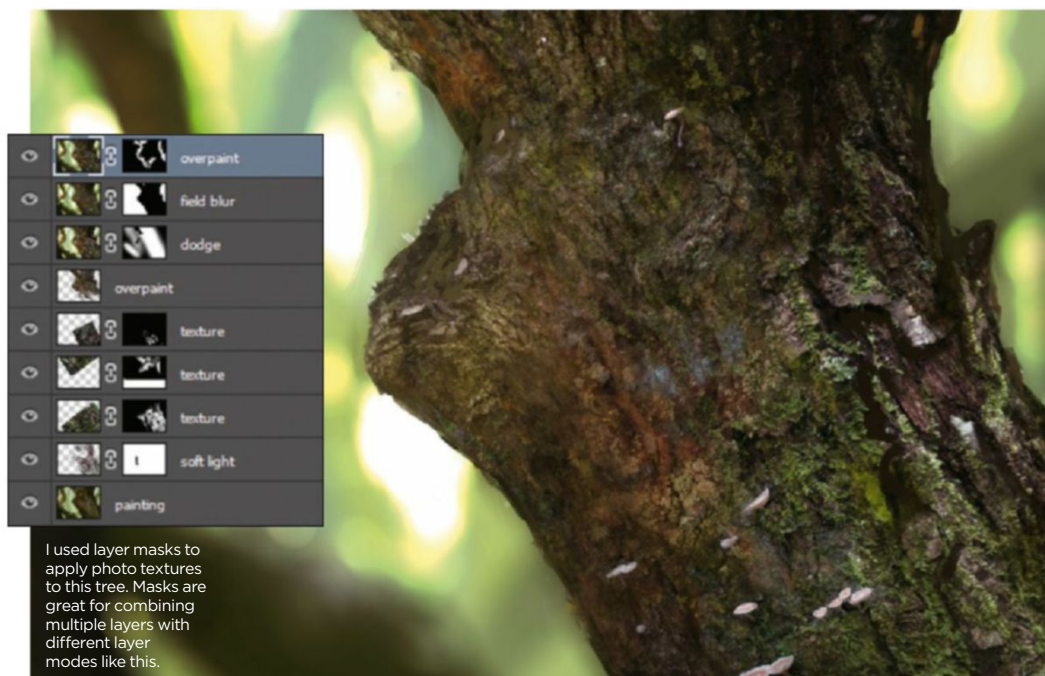
As well as adding texture, Layer masks can be used to add adjustments such as Hue/Saturation to specific areas.

paint information out and back in using your brushes. Clipping masks, on the other hand, are essentially stacks of linked layers in which the bottom image defines the boundaries for the rest. This is great for separating elements of your image, and means you can add texture to a character and not her environment, for example.

To create a layer mask click the square icon with the circle at the bottom of the

Layer panel. You'll notice that a small, white rectangle will appear next to the layer. Click the white rectangle and you switch to Mask painting mode. Now you can draw on the canvas in black or white to either erase or add information. Layer masks are incredibly powerful for adding texture to an image or tweaking adjustments, especially if you're working with lots of layers at once.

Clipping masks are even simpler: create a new layer over your drawing, hold down Alt and hover the mouse between the two; you'll now see an icon appear. Click and the layers will be linked.

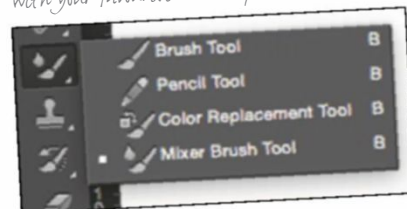


I used layer masks to apply photo textures to this tree. Masks are great for combining multiple layers with different layer modes like this.

## Artist's secret

### MIX IT UP

The Mixer Brush tool is all the rage right now. It emulates the flow of paint, enabling you to mix and smudge on the fly. Try setting it to Dry, Heavy Load and experiment with your favourite Photoshop brushes.



## Question

### Which of Photoshop's many adjustment layers do you find most useful?

Janina Koenig, Germany

## Answer

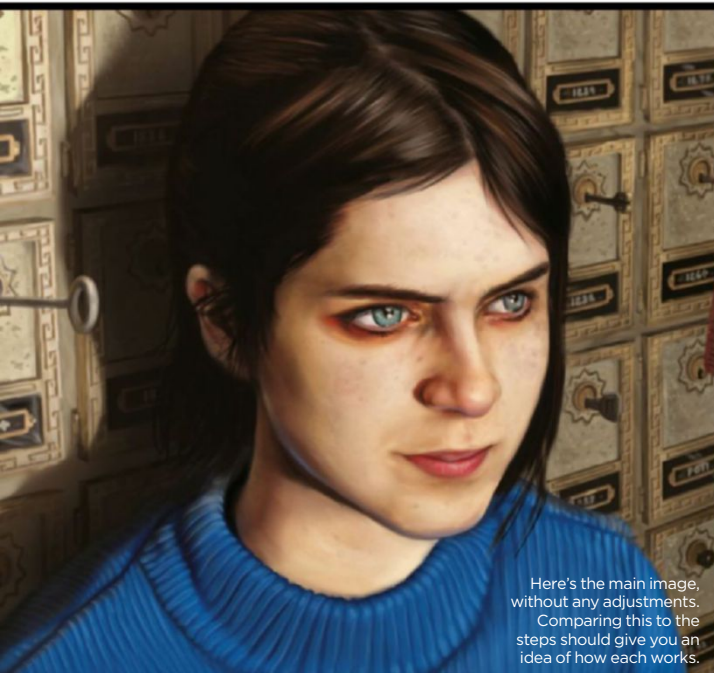
Tony replies



One of the main advantages of Photoshop is the Layers system. Being able to keep things separate enables you to make significant changes in minutes. With Adjustment layers, you can create colour, value and edge modifications that click on and off easily. A lot of the major functions of Adjustment layers can be applied to images (or layers) under the Edit panel, but doing it with an Adjustment layer makes it possible still see and edit the original art, hours after you've run out of History states.

If you look at the bottom of the Layers window, you'll see a circle that split into dark and light halves. Click it to bring up the list of Adjustment layer types. There are quite a few; and for this article I'm going to cover the three I use most.

There's a saying people use when working with masks: "Black conceals, white reveals." I find this a bit confusing, mostly because of how often at first I'd wonder if it was the mask or the original that I was revealing or concealing. Just try to remember that it's referring to the mask and you're in business.



Here's the main image, without any adjustments. Comparing this to the steps should give you an idea of how each works.



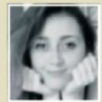
## Question

What advice can you give me for preparing an image for print?

Wayne Jones, US

## Answer

Charlie replies



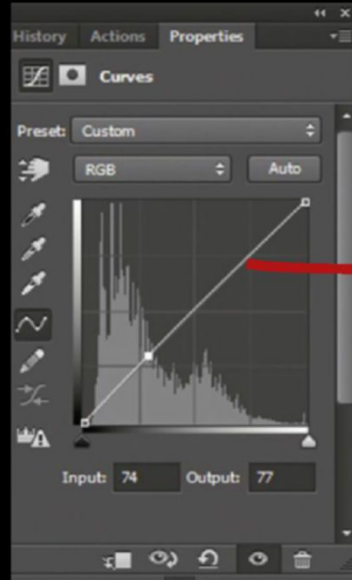
Preparing your artwork for print for the first time can be daunting. You want your work to be as close to the original as possible – and there are a lot of pitfalls to avoid before you can finally hold your work in your hands.

If you're new to printing, you might not have considered things like colour gamut (the subset of colours your printer can reproduce), and DPI (the number of pixels per inch of printed space), but if you're planning on printing an image you should absolutely have these in mind from the start.

Knowing what colour gamut you should be using (such as CMYK), and final resolution of your image will enable you to work within these parameters early on, and save you hassle later. To check in Photoshop if your colours are 'out of gamut' use the Gamut Warning function under the View menu.

Printed images will often come out darker than intended, so check your values and avoid using values that are 10 per cent and under. If you later check your values and find out that your image is very dark, you can fix this with a Curves or Levels layer, which will subtly bring up the image's overall tone. Some prints won't always come out crisp, so use the Sharpen and Blur tools to help emphasise the focal points of your picture and obtain the best read possible.

BEFORE

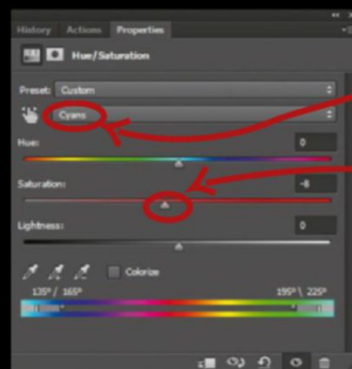


AFTER



Use the drop-down menu to tweak colours individually. Click the graph to select a value, and drag out to edit.

Use a Curves layer to raise the overall value of a low-key image before it goes to print, to stop your details becoming dark and muddy.



select your problem hue  
slowly push to the left

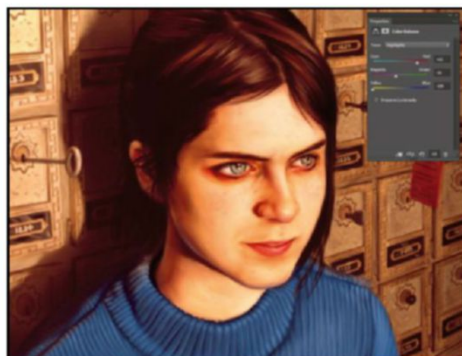
The Hue/Saturation tool will enable you to retroactively fix your out-of-gamut colours. Use the smallest possible slider value, because you don't want to desaturate your image too much.

## Artist's secret

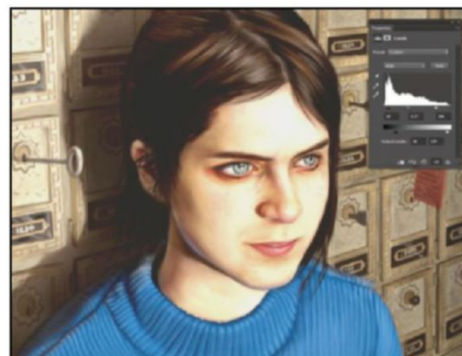
### TRICKING THE EYE

if you apply a small amount of Multiply and Blur to the corners of your image, it will make the focal point of your composition pop.

## Step-by-step: Color Balance, Levels and Threshold



**1** Color Balance is useful in creating extra contrast between colours. Move the sliders between cyan/red, magenta/green and yellow/blue to adjust which colours are most prominent. Use the drop-down menu to switch between adjusting the shadows, mid-tones and highlights.



**2** Levels enable you to emphasise the lights, darks and contrast in your image. Moving the left slider in the top window adjusts your dark value range, and moving the right slider does the same thing with whites. The middle slider adjusts dark/light contrast in general.



**3** A strong silhouette is a key part of good composition, and Threshold makes it possible to simplify everything down to basic black and white shapes. If your values are reading well, then you should still be able to tell what's going on. If not, I suggest rearranging your values.





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## Question

### How can Photoshop help me out with my perspective?

Joseph Benson, England

## Answer

Paul replies



Understanding perspective is a crucial skill for all artists. Our job is to visualise three-dimensional objects and environments on a two-dimensional screen or page, and perspective is the tool we use to create that illusion. I'm not going to go too deep into the fundamentals. Instead, I'll focus on how to visualise perspective within Photoshop itself, creating guidelines from which to draw and paint.

At its most basic level, perspective can be broken down into the concept of lines emanating from a vanishing point that sits upon a horizon line. This is called one-point perspective, and most of the lines in the scene go to the same point. You can add additional vanishing points on the horizon line to create different angles, but in this article I'll stick with one. Simpler perspectives, while not as technically exciting to create, can be more visually interesting to a casual viewer because they require less thought to understand.

Photoshop doesn't have a dedicated perspective tool, but it does offer a suite of useful features that, when combined, make the creation of perspective guidelines relatively easy. Here, I'll show you how to take a loose sketch of a city street and create guides to follow, to generate a relatively clean piece of line art.



By including a character for scale it's easy to figure out the scale of other objects in the environment. If in doubt, just follow the lines.

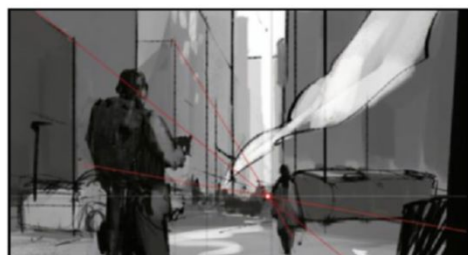


## Artist's secret

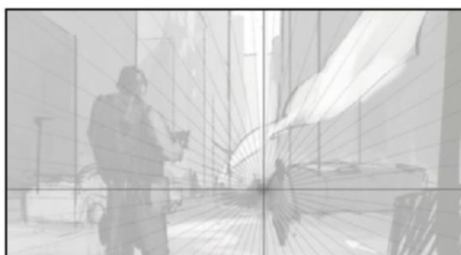
**THINK LIKE A CONCEPT ARTIST**  
While the ability to paint is an important skill for a concept artist, thinking is actually the key part of the job. Consider everything in your scene, ask yourself why it's there and what its function is. Taking this approach will soon highlight any erroneous elements in a scene.

## Step-by-step: Putting the apocalypse into perspective

**1** I sketch out some ideas for an apocalyptic street scene; it's rough but has enough information to get started. To figure out a vanishing point and horizon line I draw a few lines on top of the sketch to see where they cross. I then use the ruler tool (Ctrl+R) to pull a guideline over that point by dragging from the top.



**2** The Polygon tool is ideal for creating guidelines: click and hold the Line tool icon for more options. Once selected, click the cog icon at the top of the screen, then select Star and set Indent Sides By to 99 per cent. Set Sides to around 50-100. Now click and drag on the vanishing point and you'll create a grid of lines.



**3** With the canvas set up I reduce the Opacity of my sketch to around 20 per cent and create a new layer on top for the cleaner art. I use the Line tool to block in the environment, always leading back to the vanishing point, and add some details that don't follow this rule to make it feel realistic. I'll clean this up more as I go.



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# THE ART OF DOOM

More than a decade since the last instalment of id Software's first-person shooter, **Gary Evans** finds out how a sleeping giant awoke



One critic recently described the original Doom as the games industry's "punk moment". It changed things. It was a deliberate break from old conventions. You had mazes to explore, the freedom to go where you wanted. You could get creative

with a strafe run or a rocket jump. But mainly you shot anything and everything that moved. You used the handgun, the shotgun, the BFG. And you had two speeds: fast and faster.

The bad guys, the demons, they also charged around like raging bulls. So you opened a door and blasted away before you'd seen what was waiting on the other side. No one kept score – it wasn't about that. You spilled as much pixelated blood and guts as possible. You got lost, doubled back, walked into walls. Out of sheer frustration you fired a few shots at nothing at all. Doom showed us video games could be different. It said, that's how things were, but this is how they are now. When id Software released the engine source code, fans started building and sharing their



*One of the art team's touchstones was 80s death metal album covers – an influence seen in the light and shadow here.*







Artwork © id Software



*Doom's main character, an unnamed marine, fights his way through hell and the demons who inhabit it.*

*Hugo Martin wanted the game to look like something a 15 year old would draw on a notebook in maths class.*

September 2016

IMAGINEFX





own levels. They became DIY developers: video games got its very own punk moment. "After studying the original sprites and designs in the first Doom," says **Hugo Martin**, the id Software creative director, "we felt like everything in that original game looked like it was something a 15 year old would draw on the back of his notebook during math class."



"What we were striving for was that sort of juvenile spirit of all things bad-ass. None of the game art takes itself too seriously. That's the key to it all."

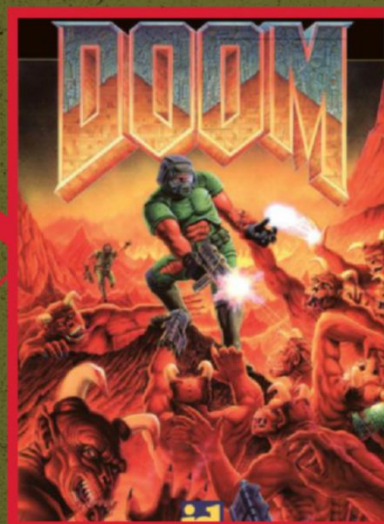
The greatest first-person shooter of all time is back, looking a bit more slick, shedding a lot more blood, fully realised as the best first-person shooter of 2016. The plot's not much

## WELCOME TO HELL

**Hugo Martin** on how Doom has evolved over the years...

### DOOM 1 POSTER

*"This image was a huge source of inspiration for Doom 2016. The vibrant colours, the B-movie tongue in cheek tone, the marine's armour – all of it was a touchstone for our game. We used vibrant colours and kitschy images to balance out the intense violence on screen. It's all in the name of good fun and this image is a great example of that."*



more elaborate than the 1993 original. We play an unnamed space marine, Doomguy. We shoot and butcher our way around

Mars, gunning down and carving up demons that appear through interdimensional holes. We face no moral dilemmas. Everyone's an enemy. Our brains aren't teased much and neither are we distracted by long, interactive cutscenes.

Doomguy last got a proper run out in 2004's Doom 3. The follow-up was years in the making, before developer id Software finally scrapped the game a couple of years ago. That's when Hugo joined the project.

### WORKING WITH HIGH STAKES

As an art director and concept artist, he's recently worked on films like The Avengers, Pacific Rim and the upcoming The Dark



*Many of the game's characters have comic-book proportions, to make sure they are "fun, not completely disturbing".*



*The art team worked quickly, producing lots of concepts like this, to match the game's fast and furious pace.*

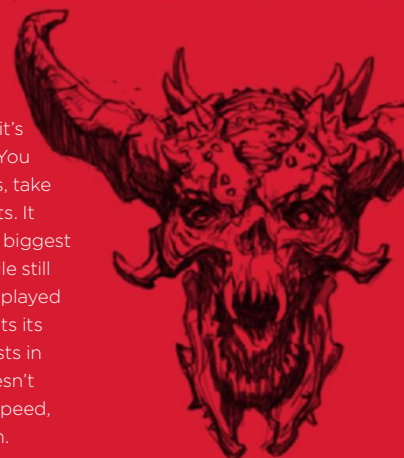
## "IT'S MEANT TO BE CRAZY AND FUN, NOT COMPLETELY DISTURBING"



From the feeling of taking on a big challenge, to the game's influences, Doom's creative director **Hugo Martin** explains how he and his art team masterminded its comeback

### What challenges did bringing back such an iconic game pose?

The pressure is always there. I think it's what any creative person looks for. You want to tackle the biggest problems, take on the most challenging assignments. It gets the creative juices flowing. The biggest challenge was making sure that, while still feeling fresh and new, it looked and played like a proper Doom game. Doom puts its action and gameplay first. Story exists in support of those features, but it doesn't necessarily drive them. The core is speed, movement, combat and level design.







### DOOM 2 COVER

"There is a punk, heavy metal vibe to Brom's painting that's a big part of Doom 2016. Doom is over-the-top, comic-book fun, and it's everything we tried to preserve in the new Doom. It's supposed to make you smile."

### FINAL DOOM

"The Final Doom cover art has the look of an ammo box, the simplified logo adding an air of finality. The punk, heavy metal vibe was at the front of our minds when making Doom 2016."

### DOOM 3 POSTER

"The xenomorphic design themes of Doom 3 can be seen in the Hell Knight of Doom 2016. We love the look of every Doom game and we wanted to bring back an iconic element from each one."

### NEW DOOM

"Here we are full circle. We didn't want to copy past games exactly. We wanted to capture the essence of it all and add cool new things. The cover represents this idea. It's very recognisably Doom, but also embodies the summer blockbuster feel that we were going for."

Tower. Working when the stakes are high gets Hugo's creativity going. He actively looks for high-pressure projects. With such dedicated fans, and at a time when critics are giving reboots and remakes a kicking, the stakes on this particular project couldn't have been higher.

The artist says the scrapped game didn't feel enough like a Doom game. Hugo helped set up the "pillars for the game" and then worked with a team of concept artists to build on those core elements. To do this, he had to make sure everyone saw the game in the same way. He told them the game should look and feel like an 80s metal album cover come to life.

"Using heavy metal album covers as inspiration is a guide post for designers to follow is one method," he

**It's got a B-movie vibe, but with summer blockbuster visuals and action** **Hugo Martin**

says. The analogy of the 15 year old scribbling on their book during maths class is another. "These things help keep everything feeling consistent in their tone. You have to establish touchstones early on for people to use as guideposts during

their creative process. These touchstones need to be easily understood and clear to everyone involved."

Hugo took charge of Doom's storyline. It had to be interesting. It had to have an element of mystery. But the narrative ➡

Labelled one of the most violent games of all time, you can turn bad guys like this inside out.

### What were your aims for the game's look?

To feel like an 80s metal album cover come to life. Characters have comic book-like proportions, but with hyper-realistic textures and details. Not campy, but not super-realistic either. It's meant to be crazy and fun, not completely disturbing.

### Can you talk us through the production?

We wanted a varied experience, something that wouldn't grow stale visually. We spent a lot of time jamming on ideas. We felt like the key to Doom's success in the art department would be our ability to ideate

quickly and generate lots of ideas.

Thumbnailing and quick sketches helped us avoid getting bogged down for too long trying to find the right design.

### What were the game's biggest influences?

The original Doom games and pop culture at the time. We used some of the same references as touchstones for our work. Evil Dead 2 was a big inspiration. Comics like Hard Boiled and Sin City helped shape the narrative style and the tone of the violence in Doom. It's got a B-movie vibe with summer blockbuster visuals and action.



The latest iteration of Doomguy is an example of the B-movie meets summer blockbuster look that the art team aimed for.



After Doom 4 was scrapped for not being Doomy enough, the team went back through the old games looking for inspiration.



Handwritten-style text in a non-Latin script, possibly representing a demonic or ancient language.



➡ also had to stay well out of the way of the gameplay. In the two decades since its original release, the iconic first-person shooter has been overtaken by countless other franchises. Hugo felt

it important not to look at this competition, but instead to focus on the game's own wealth of history. He looked at past instalments and expansions, Doom comics and forums. Then he examined the era in which the game first came out. Slowly a catalogue of pop references began to build: 1987 comedy horror movie Evil Dead 2, for example, was a big inspiration. So were comics like Hard Boiled and Sin City, which

**■ ■ ■** *We want the audience to smile as a Revenant gets beaten to death* **■ ■ ■**

**Hugo Martin**



helped shape the narrative style and the tone of the violence. Hugo says the game is meant to feel like a modern interpretation of the original Doom, to have that B-movie feel, but with all the visuals and action of a summer blockbuster.

"The story is there to be experienced and discovered if you look for it," says Hugo. "It's not forced on the player.

Pulling that off was a challenge.

We have what would be considered in our game as modern concessions, but they again

all exist in direct support of the main feature in the game which is combat."

The next challenge was to make sure the gameplay remained varied, that the visuals weren't too repetitive, something the team achieved with subtle changes to the set designs, colour palettes and lighting set ups. These transitions had to happen at just the

*If in doubt, fire a few rounds into the darkness. It's the Doom way.*

SECTION 3







works and boiling out what doesn't. After a while the game will start to tell you what it needs and you learn that by playing it a lot.

"Our daily playthroughs for art were more about fine tuning

the visual experience and making sure the look of the game was in synch and supporting the gameplay. That became extremely important when it came to the demon and weapon designs. These were the tools the player would be using throughout the 13-hour campaign. A gun has to feel and look powerful and support the gameplay. Same for the demons. These are the chess pieces in the Doom experience that you play against in our combat puzzle. It's critical that the AI visually support the type of experience we were trying to create."

### ARTISTS QUICK ON THE DRAW

When Hugo put his team together, he picked people who could draw "extremely well". Like the game itself, he knew the art department had to move fast, to generate lots of ideas and share them with each other as sketches and thumbnails. He'd provide a theme as a starting point for those sketches: "The breakthrough moment was realising what it was we wanted the audience to feel when they looked at the characters and saw the crazy gameplay and the gore. We decided we didn't want them to cringe or look away. When they watch a Revenant scream while getting beaten to death by their own hands, we wanted the audience to smile. Everything is meant to make you smile and say, 'Awesome'."

The character of the Revenant is the embodiment of all these things. Designed by Alex Palma, he's a mix of heavy metal imagery, industrial design, comic book proportions as well as doses of satanic humour. That is everything we strived for ➔

right moment, exactly when a player's interest was waning.

"Playing the game everyday is critical," Hugo says. "You have to have a real understanding of the product you are making. Often times, once you get into the meat of development, the game is 'all there', so to speak, and it's about building on what

"What we were striving for," says Hugo, "was that sort of juvenile spirit of all things bad-ass."

## COLD STEEL



Lead weapons artist **Gregor Kopka** tells us how he created weapons like the Hellshot

"It was clear to me," Gregor Kopka says, "that Doom is about cold steel. Every gun had to have its own character with defining shapes and mechanics. So for myself, the first breakthrough was when I finally managed to design and implement my first weapon, Hellshot. From then on, I had a feeling that the game was going to be fun."

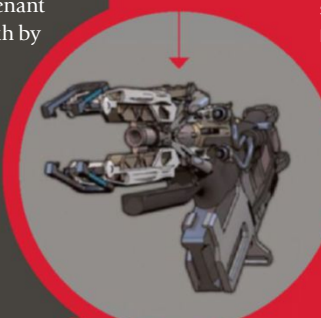
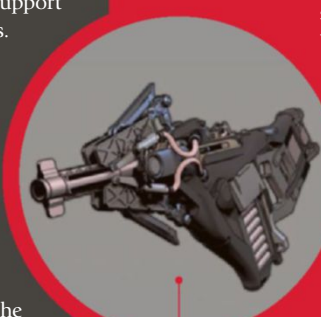
The lead weapons artists says that, with so many years of experience, he can immediately feel whether or not a game is doing something special. He knew Doom was special.

"The weapon pipeline was very streamlined and included testing white box weapons, from a game mechanics perspective, through to the final art asset. Everyone who is included in the gun development process is invited to the game tests and contributes feedback and ideas.

Then we do quick 3D thumbnail-type designs, which can also include animated mechanical ideas. As soon as we nail down one direction, we continue elaborating until we make a final paint over."

Gregor's reason for using 3D art from the beginning was so he could test it in-game. "I think it's a benefit to start in 3D because you can come up with much better mechanical ideas than you can in 2D, and at the end you can still streamline the design, but on an already proven mechanical concept."

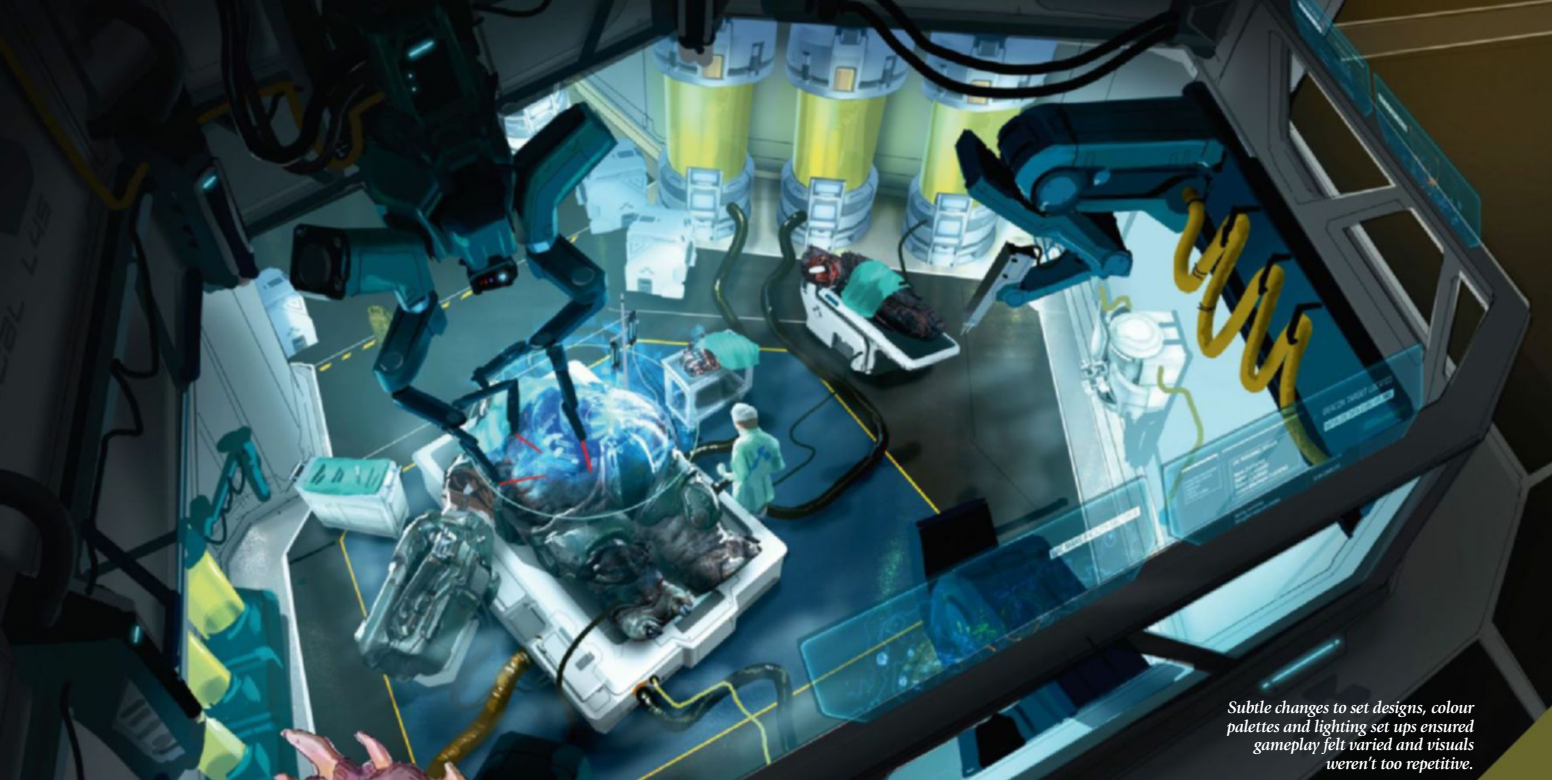
Weapons creator **Gregor Kopka** designed every gun with its own specific shape and mechanisms.



Gregor's weapon designs are now part of video games' most infamous arsenal - led by the most infamous of them all, the BFG.







Subtle changes to set designs, colour palettes and lighting set ups ensured gameplay felt varied and visuals weren't too repetitive.



When Hugo was putting his team together one of the things he looked for was people who could draw very well, very quickly. Generating lots of ideas was key.

There's an inherent campiness to Doom. That's the source of all of its charm

Jon Lane

in Doom. He is completely nuts and so is our game."

"We didn't want to copy it exactly, otherwise there would be nothing new to show," concept artist Alex says about the challenges of reviving such an iconic game. "So there were times when the directors tried to really go out there with



the story and, at times, it felt like it strayed a bit too far. But eventually they went back to the original as a source of inspiration and captured the essence of it, while still having some pretty cool new things. The way I would describe it is rock and roll, blood and guts, and a relentless pace."

Jon Lane says he understands the game's fans, because he is one. The lead concept artists grew up playing the game. To

Jon, Doom is about the "collision of science fiction and mysticism". Once the team settled on that theme, it began

to shape more easily.

"There's an inherent

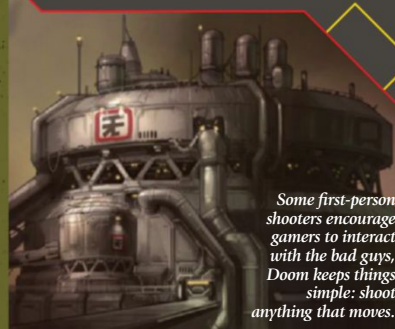


campiness to the original Doom," Jon says. "That's the source of all of its charm. We spent a lot of time talking about that sort of thing, looking at campy 80s movies and comic books, and thinking about how we could modernise those parts in a way that would stand out against popular modern trends. In many ways the look of Doom is an homage to its past, being that it's a mixture of each of the previous games, brought together with an intent to update and reinvent for a modern audience."

## PUSHING BACK AND FORTH

Jon explains how the art team worked: "The work gets tasked out to whoever's going to essentially be the owner of the thing. Depending on what it is, ideation can go on for some time, usually in direct

relation to how significant a thing is considered to be. Characters tend to see the longest ideation periods, especially with some of the modernisation of classic characters, which can go back and forth until the thing is considered to be pitch perfect. We have



Some first-person shooters encourage gamers to interact with the bad guys, Doom keeps things simple: shoot anything that moves.

Doomguy is one of video games' greatest silent protagonists: no name, no past, no future. Just lots of shooting.



# REVISING THE REVENANT

**Hugo Martin** reveals how the art team revisited one of the iconic creature designs from the original

"The Revenant was pure rock 'n' roll – you would find him on the cover of a heavy metal album. He has a tongue in cheek quality too and we felt he made you smile – we wanted the 2016 Revenant to have those qualities.

In the beginning he looked much more serious. In some of the first sketches he's more slick, like the F22 of demons. It didn't feel right to us, didn't read like the Revenant or like a Doom demon, so Alex Palma continued to sketch. We started to look more closely at heavy metal album covers from the 80s. There was a comic book quality those images had that we wanted to infuse into our design.

There's a whiz-bang, awesome factor with the look of all the demons that's very much present in the final Revenant design. He represents everything Doom is about.

Alex really landed on something special with the design as it captures the crazy spirit we were striving for. This wonderful final design ended being one of the core elements in our marketing campaign in Doom, a testament to the great work done by Alex and the team."



Hugo and the team felt everything about The Revenant "was pure rock 'n' roll".

definitely seen instances where a thing gets made and torn down and rebuilt from scratch, because the desire to get it right is that strong. It can be a painful process, but it's almost always better as a result. It's important that everyone on the team feels like they're making significant contributions to the project. You also create opportunities to let artists bring their own brand of creativity."

## WHAT THE FANS WANTED

**Bryan Flynn**, a concept artist on the game, elaborates: "Getting ideas into the game usually starts with conversations during lunch or while taking a break. I like to present the idea later to the art director, game designers and others around the office after that. If people seem to respond to the idea, I will write-up or draw my idea and submit it formally. Then the team decides if it's something we want to, and indeed can, do as a group."

The associate concept artist would begin an idea with notes and sketches – on how a weapon would look and work, for example. Then import into a 3D program and begin to blockout the weapon's shape. He'd usually make between five and eight versions with various hand positions, animations, silhouettes and sometimes rudimentary effects.

"In this program, I would have cameras placed so I could view the weapon as it would be in-game," says Bryan. I would take pictures of the blockouts and quickly draw over them with line and tonal breakup. We would review the choices and narrow down the preferred designs. This process would continue until we settled on the final design."



Hugo and his team worked as equals. That meant anyone could have an idea for a gun, present that idea and get it into the game.



Jon Lane says the game's "inherent campiness" translates into the over-the-top weapon designs.

Hugo says that final design had to give the fans what they wanted. "We made Doom for the fans. We ourselves are huge fans of Doom. The fans played a huge role in the making of this game, without question. We wanted to make the Doom game they wanted to play. And we didn't make any compromises along the way."



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**LOCATION:** Gateshead and London, England  
**PROJECTS:** Avengers: Age of Ultron, Mortal Kombat X, Guardians of the Galaxy, Kinect Sports Rivals, THOR II: Dark World, Killzone Mercenary, Injustice, Devil May Cry, Pottermore  
**WEB:** www.atomhawk.com



## STUDIO PROFILE

# ATOMHAWK

In between its film and game projects, this studio likes to develop its artists, as **Tom May** discovers...

**L**aunching Atomhawk in 2009 was what CEO Ron Ashtiani describes as a "leap of faith". He found himself out of a job after games developer Midway closed its Gateshead studio, in north-east England, where he'd been working alongside graphic designer Steve Pick and artists Pete Thompson and Corlen Kruger. But instead of going their separate ways, the four decided to team up.

"If I was ever going to make a break from games development and fulfil my dream of setting up my own art and design studio, this had to be the opportunity I'd been waiting for," Ron says.

They haven't looked back since. Based in Gateshead, and recently launching a satellite studio in London, Atomhawk now has 40 released projects across games, films

and digital media, including Avengers: Age of Ultron, Mortal Kombat X, Guardians of the Galaxy and JK Rowling's Pottermore. So what's the secret to their success?

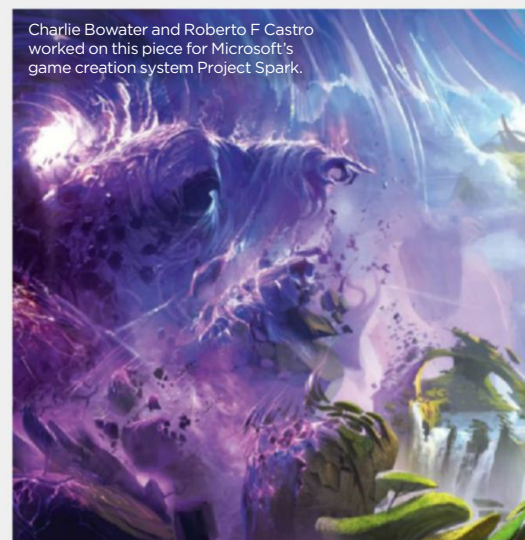
In short: artist development. "We don't just hire great people," says Ron. "We take the time to develop their skills. For example, we have regular learning lunches where each artist gets the chance to share their experience and skills in a particular area with the rest of the team."

It's not just about formal instruction, though. Atomhawk has generated an open, inclusive atmosphere where senior artists don't just hide away in silos, but instead share their knowledge and skills on a

daily basis – something that concept artist **Michael Mowat** greatly appreciates.

"Getting to work with some serious talent is grand," ➡

Charlie Bowater and Roberto F Castro worked on this piece for Microsoft's game creation system Project Spark.



Artwork by Tommy Kinneru for Injustice Gods Among Us, a fighting game based on the DC Universe.







## SAM HOGG

The senior Atomhawk artist on the joys of collaboration

### Can you tell us how you come to work at Atomhawk?

I started my career in graphic design but made the move to concept art to fulfill my lifelong dream of developing video games. I applied to Atomhawk after I'd been working for Playground Games on the *Forza Horizon* brand for a year and a half.

### What does your role involve?

I've worked on a huge range of projects: everything from character design for a big upcoming AAA games title to some really stylised projects such as *LEGO*. Unfortunately, everything that I've worked on recently is super-secret stuff and I won't be out for a while yet, so I can't go into any details. As a senior artist, I'm expected to be pretty self-reliant and I often have to give feedback on the work of junior and intermediate artists.

### What's been the biggest hurdle you've had to overcome?

I'd say it's rising to the challenge that comes with working in so many styles, on what can often be pretty tight deadlines.

### What's the working environment like at Atomhawk?

It's cool being able to work among such a large, 2D-focused team. For most of the day we usually have our heads down working, but being able to see such a wide variety of work being done is inspiring. I do really enjoy the ideas that come out of collaborating with colleagues, because often you end up in places that you wouldn't have found on your own.

### Do you typically work on one or multiple projects at one time?

We tend to get one project at a time, though occasionally you get some overlap while waiting for feedback, so you have to jump between projects. It's one of the challenges of working for a studio like this; being able to switch ways quickly between artistic mindsets.

### What advice would you give to a young artist wishing to follow in your footsteps?

I would definitely recommend doing some research into the various aspects of concept art. Ideation and iteration are really important – equally as important as your technical ability to paint and draw. Spend some time developing your design sense as well as your fundamental art skills, because it's often that design sense that newer artists lack. Being able to do multiple interesting designs within the same brief is key to being a good concept artist, in my opinion.

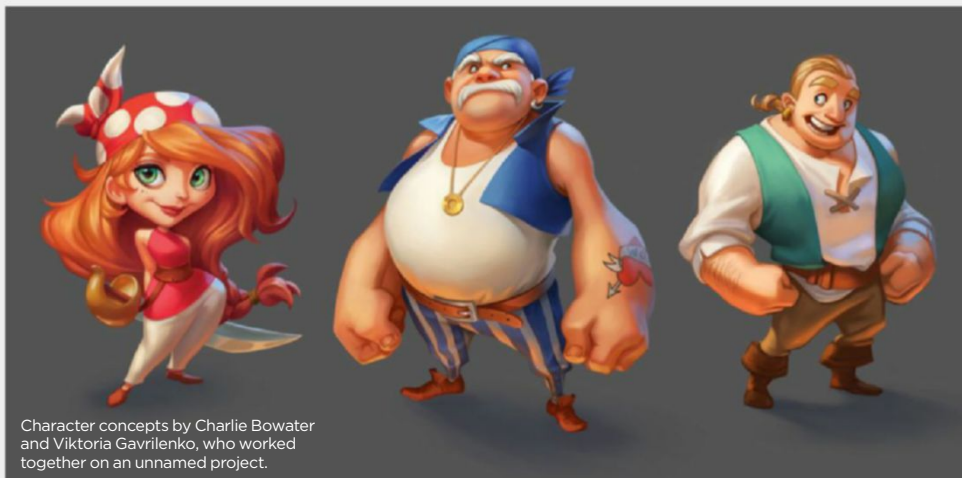


An unashamed Blizzard fan girl, when not creating artwork for her personal projects, Sam can be found playing *Diablo* and *Warcraft*.

<http://jfxm.ag/sam-hogg>







Character concepts by Charlie Bowater and Viktoria Gavrilenko, who worked together on an unnamed project.



➤ Michael says. "There aren't any egos, so everyone is open with their processes, and how they actually make the awesome. Very handy for a nosey artist like myself."

The founding team initially focused on realistic action and horror visuals, on projects such as *Mortal Kombat*, *Ryse: Son of Rome* and *Dead Island*. But as the company grew, they decided to add more range. "So artists like Charlie Bowater were key to more stylised projects like *Pottermore* for JK Rowling and *Project Spark* for Microsoft," Ron explains. "Our creative team is now 14 people with a diverse range and so we no longer have a house style; we're focused on excelling across the field."

## DIVERSE PROJECTS

That sense of variety has been a thrill ride for concept artist Daniel Peacock. "Before I



started working here, I assumed it was mainly movie and game stuff," he says. "But I soon learned that Atomhawk produces art for all sorts of things. I'm working on some images for a children's reading app, for example."

In the eight months he's been there, Daniel has worked on everything from marketing art to character concepts, environment design to logo creation. "My proudest moment has been designing creature concepts for an indie horror game," he says. "I love drawing monsters, so it was the perfect project for me."

Michael tells a similar tale. "Since joining Atomhawk in April 2015, I've worked on everything from stylised interiors and characters to more realistic environments and characters," he says. "It changes week by week and keeps you on your toes. I've even seen the process of making art itself changing: we've been doing a lot more VR stuff, and many of the artists have moved into implementing 3D into their workflows."



That's a sentiment echoed by senior artist Sam Hogg. "There's more crossover between 3D and 2D in concept art now," she says. "As



Concept art by Roberto F Castro, for Marvel's 2013 film *Thor: The Dark World*.

**"We want people to take pride in their work, but we don't have room for big egos"**

the tools for creating 3D become more available, I can see it becoming a vital tool for a lot of concept art creation. The rise of VR is going to make the creation of concept art interesting too, as it's such a different thing being physically immersed in a world, versus looking at it on a 2D screen."

Atomhawk has even made forays into publishing. In 2011, it collaborated with 3DTotal to produce a 192-page hardcover book, *The Art of Atomhawk*, and this year it released a second volume under its own

Atomhawk's artists work on a huge variety of projects, including 3D and virtual reality.



imprint. The cost of its production was funded by a Kickstarter campaign, which raised £17,675 from 393 backers.

"All the design and content was done in house, with everyone playing a part, so it's something we're exceptionally proud of," says Ron. "We also learned a lot through the process, and hope to put that knowledge to use again sometime soon."

## JOIN THE TEAM

If this all sounds like an environment you'd like to work in, then good news: Atomhawk is hiring. "Right now, we have roles open for intermediate and senior level artists," says Ron. "Obviously talent is key, but we also look for artists who are keen to learn and develop. We want people to be passionate and take pride in their work, but we don't have room for big egos."

It's not all about work, though. "There are also plenty of opportunities to relax, too. Games get played in our breakout area most lunchtimes, and we've had everyone trying out a new VR headset recently, which has been a lot of fun," reveals Ron. "There are also plenty of nights out and celebrations, including our company birthday party, which has a tendency to get a bit messy towards the end of the night." We're sure they'll be plenty more birthday parties for Atomhawk in years to come...



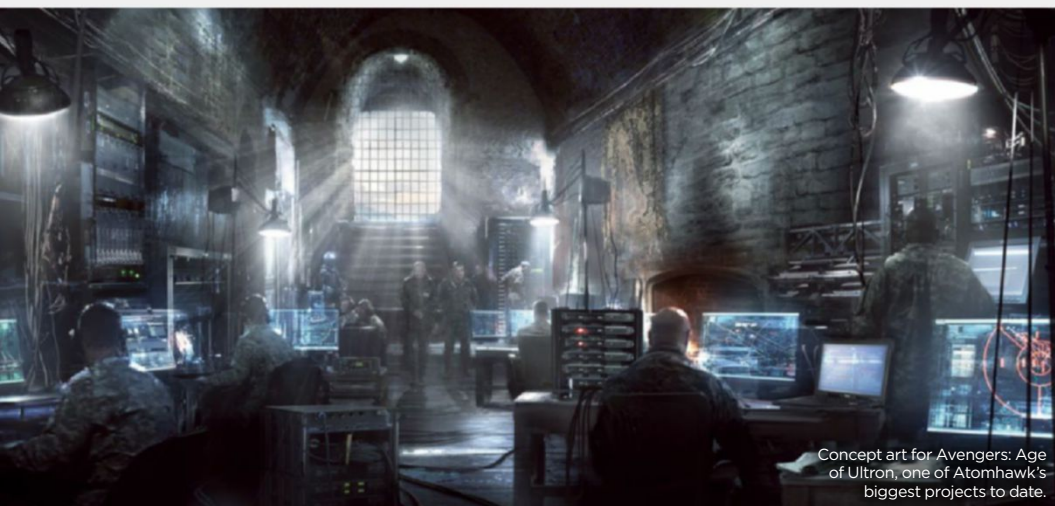
# ATOMHAWK



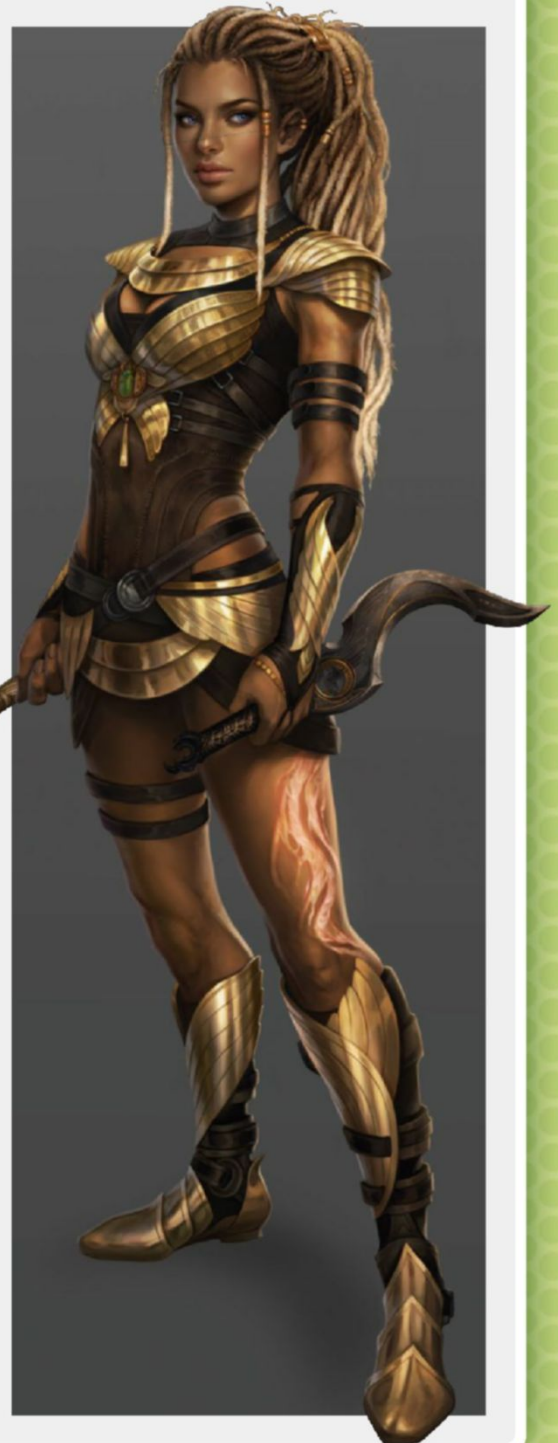
This environment painting from *Mortal Kombat X* was created by Marcel Van Vuuren.



Joe Ward worked on the free online RPG *Kings Road* from Rumble Entertainment. Here's one of the characters in action.



Concept art for *Avengers: Age of Ultron*, one of Atomhawk's biggest projects to date.



Charlie Bowater produced this character concept for fighting game *Killer Instinct*, from Microsoft.



## Jared Muralt

Character studies and detailed environments populate the pages of this Swiss illustrator's sketchbook...

### Artist **PROFILE**

**Jared Muralt**

LOCATION: Switzerland



A self-taught illustrator and self-employed since 2006, Jared and three friends founded the award-winning

illustrations and graphic design company BlackYard, and has self-published various prints and books under the Tintenkilby name. Jared's busy working on the first issue of The Fall, his post-apocalyptic comic series.  
[www.jaredillustrations.ch](http://www.jaredillustrations.ch)



### **FEMALE FACE STUDY**

"To me, a sketchbook is a place of inspiration, self-teaching, playing around and experimenting. Here are character studies from a fashion magazine. I tried to focus on how contrasting black and white areas and cross-hatching work."





Ich bin ja recht langesam dran,  
eine Charakterstudie zu zeichnen,  
weil ich für mein "Tagesbuch"  
Zeichnen ein wenig zu  
schon haben möchte...  
Nur die Punktstudie  
kann ich mir, wenn ich  
schonmal eine Übung  
anstellen. Die Frage stellt  
sich, was in welchem Kon-  
text ich die Studien auf  
auf mich nehmen soll.



## SOLDIER AND PILOT

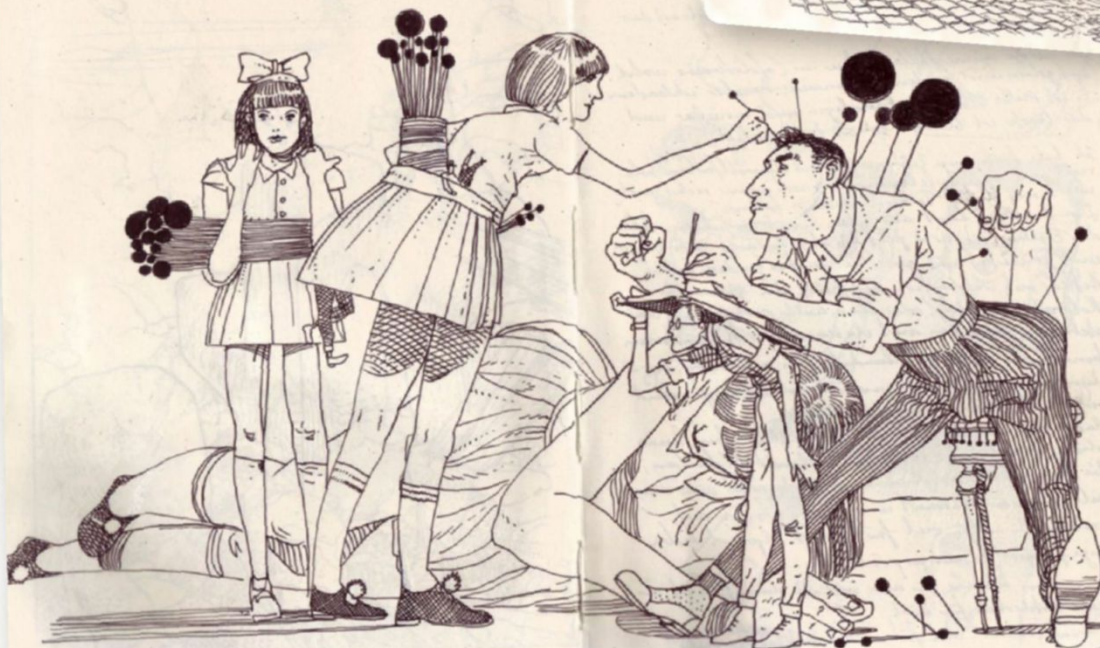
"I never stop practicing and my sketchbook is filled with character studies and faces. It also serves as a diary and notebook, to continually improve my skills."

## ENROUTE TO WORK

"The old town of Berne is just five minutes walk from our work space. My sketchbook is always on me and if time allows, I prefer to make studies on site and draw directly in ink, only very rarely a rough draught in pencil."



"To me, a sketchbook is a place of inspiration, self-teaching, playing around and experimenting"



## FIRST TREATMENT

"A sketch I drew after my first acupuncture appointment. The giant needles were an inspiration and motif I carried through an entire project that will be published as a book this November."



# Sketchbook



## DREADNOUGHT STUDY

"Different ideas and approaches for a gig poster for Brave Black Sea. Studies like these often lead to ideas and images I can use for another project. I redrew the top left corner image and turned into a screen print."

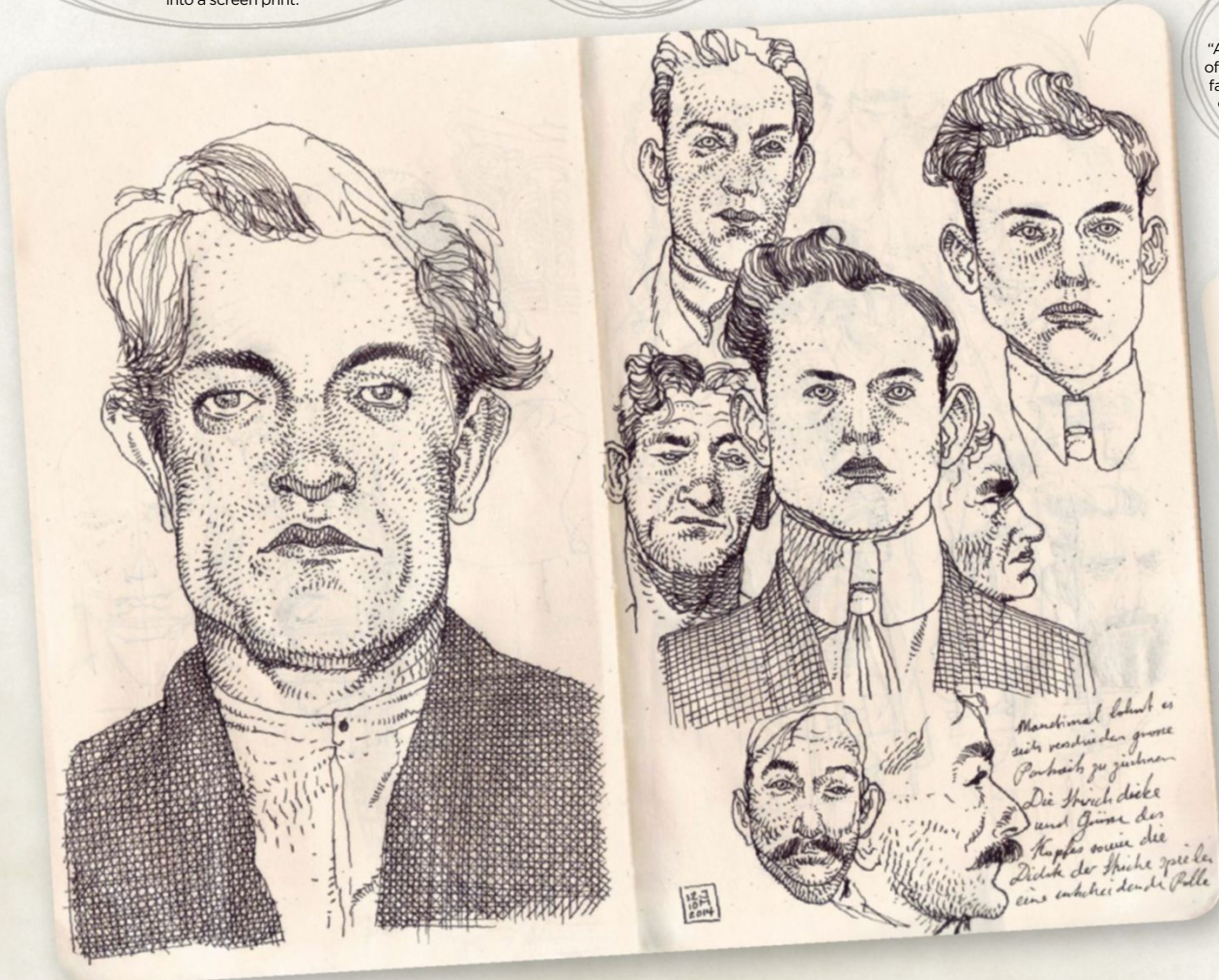
## STEAMSHIP STUDY

"Of course, my sketchbook also serves as the starting point for commission pieces and personal screen prints."



## MALE FACE STUDIES

"A great challenge and interest of mine will always be faces and facial expressions, especially in old photographs, and trying to use different sketching techniques."







### ABANDONED SCHOOL

"For my upcoming comic The Fall I'm creating an inventory of architectural studies around Berne. I choose buildings and let them fall to ruins on paper."

"My sketchbook also serves as a starting point for commission pieces"

### THE END OF BON VOYAGE

"Some pages from my sketchbook end up almost identical in my print work. This sketch can be found in my comic book The End Of Bon Voyage."



### WINTER GARDEN

"My front yard shed, December 2014. Since I almost exclusively sketch in black, I like winter scenes a lot. Snow gives you such great contrasts. This sketch was a study on how different textures work within one image."

Want to share your sketches? Email us with a selection of your artwork, to [sketchbook@imaginefx.com](mailto:sketchbook@imaginefx.com)  
NEXT MONTH'S SKETCHBOOK: REMBERT MONTALD





# SCOTT GUSTAFSON

There's more to this artist than his fantastically detailed and nostalgic fairytale images, as **Ed Ricketts** find out



"I'm not proud of my computer illiteracy but I do feel the need to be honest about it and share my situation with others," admits Scott

Gustafson, renderer of gorgeous fairytale scenes in traditional media. "It's only through talking about this shameful problem that I think we, as a society, can come to terms with it and learn to deal with those less fortunate among us who neither text nor tweet..."

He is, of course, joking. As a veteran illustrator of 36 years to date (and counting), Scott has little need of digital tools, versatile as he is ➔



# DRAGON AND SCRIBE

This oil-on-panel illustration was commissioned by and sold to a private collector.





# ARTIST TIP

## DRAWING THE REAL WORLD

"It's always fascinating to observe from life and see how that interpretation differs from a photo-based reference. I find the still-life elements, though not as accurate as the photo-informed ones, literally have more life, and I recommend giving it a try."



**JACK AND THE SLEEPING GIANT**

A Spectrum Silver award winner from Jack and the Beanstalk, in Scott's book *Classic Bedtime Stories*.



**LITTLE SAMPHA...**

...and the Tiger with the Beautiful Little Red Coat, also from *Classic Bedtime Stories*.

# Scott Gustafson

## VITAL STATISTICS

The artist's journey in bite size...

### Age

59

### Date of birth

7 December 1956

### Current location

Chicago, Illinois

### Favourite artists

William Heath Robinson, Rembrandt, J. Waterhouse, the animated films of Walt Disney and Warner Brothers Studios,



NC Wyeth, Arthur Rackham, Gustaf Tenggren

### What's the best piece of advice anyone has ever given you?

Spend some time finding out what you enjoy doing

most, and then do it.

### Web address

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

“The idea of someday becoming an artist was with me from just about as far back as I can remember”



**MERLIN AND ARTHUR**

An original image imagining the relationship between the two mythological characters, which was made into a limited edition print.

➤➤ with almost every traditional medium – be it oils, gouache or charcoal. Besides, the kind of gloriously detailed and coloured scenes he paints, harking back to the Golden Age of illustrators, seem to cry out for the gentle touch of media to canvas, rather than the sometimes harshly delineated tones of software.

Scott is unashamedly influenced by the likes of NC Wyeth, Norman Rockwell, Maxfield Parrish and Arthur Rackham, and like those admired artists, he creates nostalgic, glowing images that never veer to the sickly or twee. It would be slightly reductive to call him a children's artist, although it's true that Scott has created many illustrations for age-old fairy tales and bedtime stories (if you're of a certain age and grew up in Britain, you might be reminded of the classic hardback Ladybird story books).

Yet he has also written and illustrated his own children's book, *Eddie: The Lost Youth*





## A CONFABULATION OF DRAGONS

A chance to experiment led to one of Scott's favourite pieces

Scott was approached by a private collector for a commission that had only three requirements: it should contain three young women, a Huskie dog and at least one dragon. "Here was a chance to see what I could come up with within a very wide set of guidelines," he says.

"I had been looking for a word that I could use to refer to a group or gathering of dragons, much like a pod of whales or a pride of lions, and I felt that I found what I was looking for in a 'Confabulation' of Dragons.

"I envisioned the scene as a great meeting of dragons – a sort of draconian summit, where representatives of the diverse world of dragons would gather and confer. What I liked most about this idea was that it lent itself to a group of dragons of all shapes and sizes."

Scott decided that the dragons would meet at the base of a large tree,

with the three young women representing some sort of human liaison, perhaps priestesses. On the ground and nearby boulders are ancient runes, which were carved by members of earlier 'confabulations'.

"Soon, I began designing dragons as well as setting up a photo shoot for the young woman who would pose for all three of the young women in the finished picture," he adds. "Fortunately, they were supposed to be sisters, so it was okay if the characters all looked similar..."

"The final painting measured 46x34 inches, and took several months to complete. The biggest challenge, as always with a complex piece, was trying to balance all the elements so that the overall effect was one of harmony, yet with a variety of shapes, contrasts, colours and details. This one offered challenges on all those levels."

### A CONFABULATION OF DRAGONS

*The finished piece, which Scott painted on canvas using oils, was awarded a Silver medal in Spectrum 17, in 2010.*

of Edgar Allan Poe, which showcases a somewhat darker side to his talent, and commercial clients include Playboy, The Saturday Evening Post, The Bradford Exchange, DreamWorks and The Greenwich Workshop.

### SINGLE-MINDED AMBITION

"I grew up in a small town in northern Illinois, and attended elementary and high school there," Scott says. "I always liked to draw and was continually encouraged by my parents, relatives and teachers to continue drawing and painting, so the idea of someday becoming an artist was with me from just about as far back as I can remember."

However, it was animation that called to the young Gustafson, so much so that he eventually majored in animation at the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts. Ambitions changed when he realised that he could become a freelance illustrator, but he ➔



# ARTIST TIP

## SOURCE REFERENCES

"Take time to do research. If the picture calls for a throne, see if you can find a few examples to work from instead of making one up. A 15th century Spanish throne is going to be way cooler than anything I could have come up with on my own, that's for sure."



### YOUNG POE

*"The wondrous words that had crowded his brain earlier that night were gone..." The title page from Scott's illustrated novel.*

## DRAWING POE: THE WONDER YEARS

How the master of the macabre inspired a fairy tale illustrator

Several years ago Scott came across an old paperback of *Tales of Mystery and Imagination*, the collected stories of Edgar Allan Poe, that he had bought when he was about 13.

"It not only brought back memories of how fascinated I was by Poe and his stories at that time, but it also got me wondering what Poe would have been like at that same age," Scott says. "As I thought more about it and then began to research it, the idea of Eddie just seemed to take on a life of its own."

The resulting novel was *Eddie: The Lost Youth of Edgar Allan Poe*, written and illustrated by Scott and aimed at eight to 12 year-olds. It's something of a departure from his usual work, not least because all of the 90-odd illustrations are in monochrome, apart from the cover art, shown here.

➤ feels that his education still aids his work today.

"In studying the work of the great animators like Ollie Johnston, Frank Thomas, Eric Larson, Woolie Reitherman, Bob Jones and Bob Clampett, I found that they helped me to learn how to capture facial expressions and pose a figure so that the posture and pose helped define the character and the role that he or she plays within the story," Scott explains.

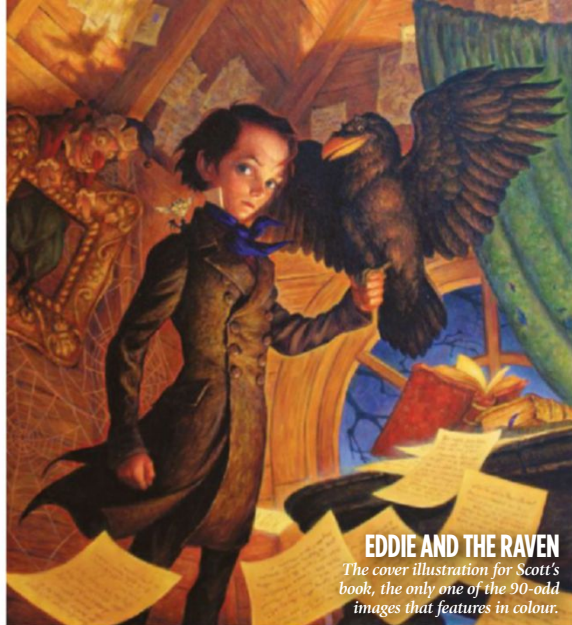
### THE APPEAL OF ANIMATION

"These days, I've actually found a lot of inspiration looking up pencil tests of great animators online. The work of Glen Keane and Sergio Pablos is particularly wonderful... I've grown to prefer these pencil tests because they're the actual animator's drawings, filmed in sequence as a test before going to colour. I'd recommend taking a look for anyone who appreciates great character development and beautiful drawing."

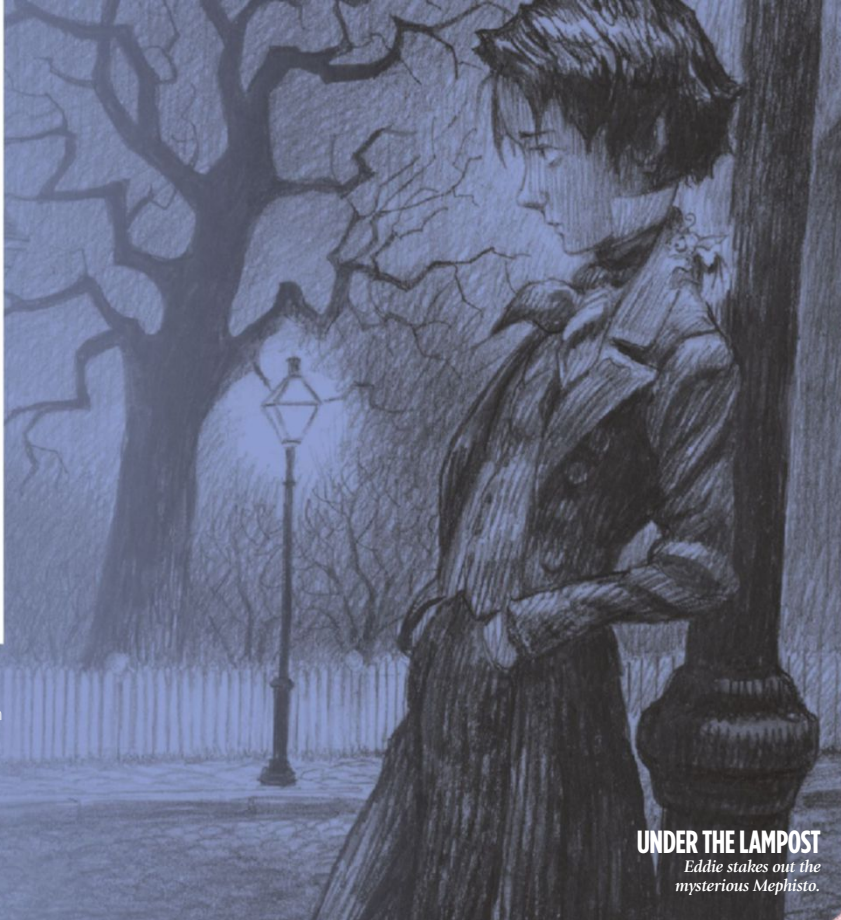
So would he consider dabbling in animation again? "Well, animation on the level of the animators I've mentioned is a very complex art, and as much as I've gone in and out of fantasising about it again, I usually take the lazy way out and watch classic films like *Fantasia* or *Lady and the Tramp*!"

As he has done for most of his professional career, Scott works from home, albeit in his own studio which takes up the entire second floor of the house: "This space is one of the main reasons we bought this house over 20 years ago." He also tries to keep to regular work hours, which helps keep a separation between





**EDDIE AND THE RAVEN**  
The cover illustration for Scott's book, the only one of the 90-odd images that features in colour.



**UNDER THE LAMPOST**  
Eddie stakes out the mysterious Mephisto.

"As far as illustrating the story, even in its earliest concept stages I knew I wanted a lot of pictures and that those pictures would be in black and white," he explains. "Black and white not only seemed appropriate to Poe and the story, but illustrating a book with drawings as opposed to paintings was something I had wanted to do for a long time."

The story itself grew out of possible situations that the young Poe may have found himself in, and the visual possibilities grew out of that. "When illustrating it, I was mindful of an atmosphere that I wanted to evoke, as well as illustrating the actual story," says Scott.

work and non-work time. "When I was younger, living in a four-room apartment, I got up late and worked late, and it seemed like that's all I did..."

A typical Gustafson image begins as a series of thumbnails, anything up to 12 loose sketches to set the idea. That becomes a larger sketch: "I average about three of these to show the client, or just to make sure I've tried more than one approach to a given idea." A more fully fledged drawing comes next, with reference, props and even a model shoot if necessary.

"Then I transfer this drawing to the surface on which the final painting will be

### THE MAN IN THE MOON

A limited edition giclee canvas print, one of several available to buy through Scott's website.



done – usually gessoed masonite. This is done by either directly tracing through a copy of the final drawing using graphite paper, or by mounting an archival print out of the drawing onto the panel."

With the image complete, Scott turns his attention towards colour. "On a mounted, reduced print-out of the finished drawing, I do a loose indication of what I think the colour will be for the final piece, followed by underpainting. Depending

concentrating almost exclusively in oils as they offer the widest range of flexibility and possibilities, as well as depth of colour and overall richness."

It's a complex process – though the results are certainly worth it – and it's little surprise that Scott hasn't really had time or inclination to investigate digital processes. "Seriously, though, the computer is a fantastic tool, and I've come to rely on it for many things, chiefly communication and

**"When I was younger, living in a four-room apartment, I got up late and worked late, and it seemed like that's all I did..."**

on the piece, I do either a monochromatic tonal underpainting to establish the values, or, referring to the colour study, a thin, transparent layer of those colours in the corresponding areas of the transferred drawing."

### EVERY PAINTING'S A CHALLENGE

The final stage is painting. "Depending on the complexity and size of a piece, this can take anywhere from several days to several months. Last week, for instance, I finished painting a vignette in three days, but the picture before that one – another illustration from the same story – took three weeks to paint. They are all different and all present their own surprises and challenges."

Scott has experimented with many mediums over his career, but primarily he now sticks to acrylics or oils for finished colour work. "In recent years I've been

reference," he says. "I leave anything more complicated than that in the capable hands of my wife and business partner, Patty, who handles all those aspects of our business marvellously."

With a new book in the making, tentatively titled Storybook Fables and scheduled to be published by Artisan in autumn 2017, life is good. Scott admits that he has never really thought about what's next beyond the current project, and so far that has worked out well for him and his family. Of course, there are always new ambitions.

"I used to fantasise about illustrating Alice in Wonderland or The Wind in the Willows, but John Tenniel, Rackham and EH Shepard are pretty fast company," he laughs. "If I were offered the chance, who knows? I love illustrating classics, but I think it would also be exciting to work with a contemporary author as well."



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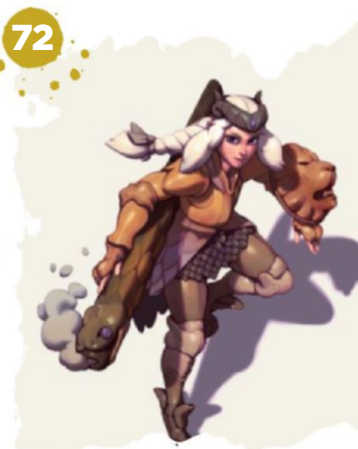
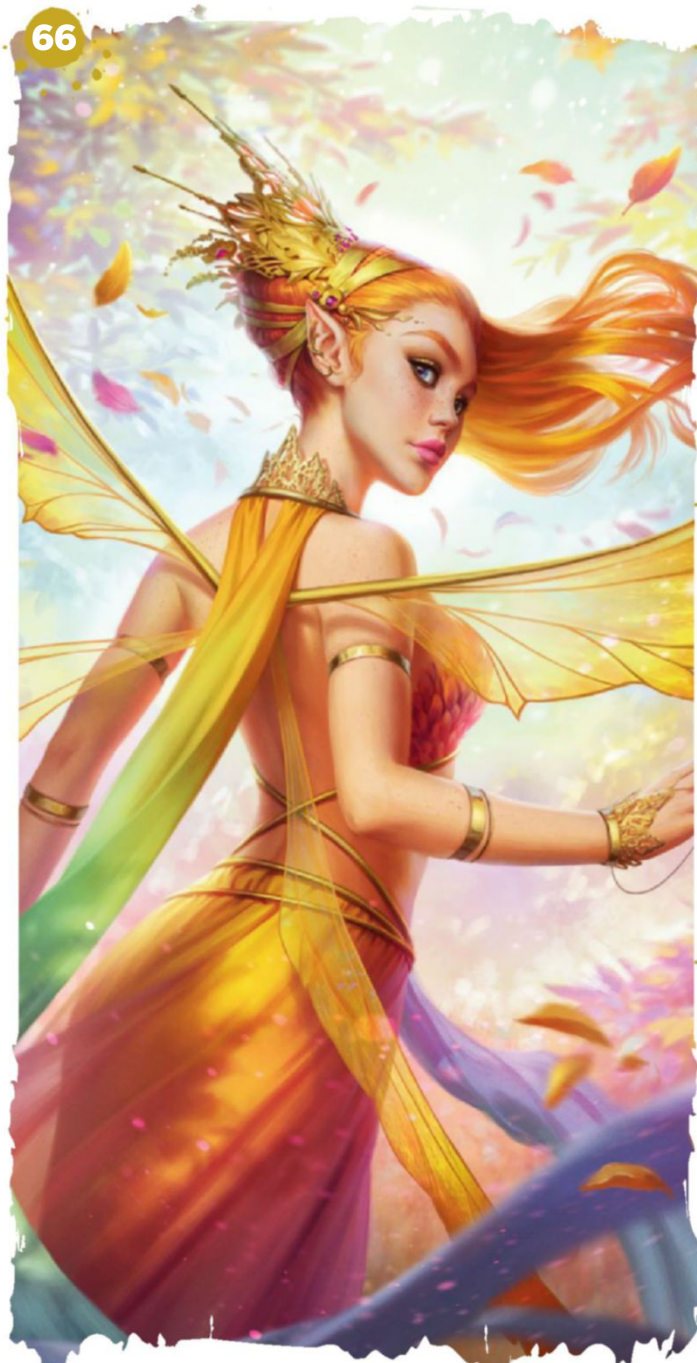
# NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX Workshops

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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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Learn from Rob Laro, who shares his process of idea generation to design an original character.

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Make your portrait paintings stand out from the crowd, with Mélanie Delon's tips.

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Stéphane Richard uses 2D and 3D software to quickly illustrate comical card art.









# Photoshop VISUALISING THE QUEEN OF FAIRIES

See how **Viktoria Gavrilenko** brings her colours to life as she paints the elegant Queen Titania from Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

## Artist PROFILE

**Viktoria Gavrilenko**  
LOCATION: England



Victoria, who's known as Vik to her friends and family, lives in the city of Newcastle, where she works at Atomhawk, creating concept art for games and various other hush-hush projects.

<http://ifxm.ag.vik-g>



**GET YOUR  
RESOURCES**

See page 6 now!

## Shortcuts

**Free Transform**

Cmd+T (Mac)

Ctrl+T (PC)

Quickly go into Free Transform mode on your selected layer.

## PRO SECRETS

### Kill your darlings

This is likely the best advice I was given when I started out as an artist, and it's stuck with me to this day. Don't get too attached to a painting, be it personal or professional. If you feel like something doesn't work then it probably doesn't. Rather than wasting time trying to fix something that didn't work from the start, try something different.

**B**eing asked to paint a bad-ass Fairy Queen by none other than my favourite magazine got me very excited, and slightly nervous. I managed to calm myself down, however, by starting off with something that I'm comfortable with, in this case line art. I eased into having to video record my process, which I've only done once before, and had a lot of fun creating this cover of one of my favourite fantasy subjects, fairies.

Before starting out with any professional work, though, I always gather a bunch of reference that might aid me as the painting progresses. And because this was my first magazine cover I wanted to be as prepared as possible before beginning to paint. Good reference can spark a whole bunch of ideas, so I started my hunt by looking up different films and art books, as well as old paintings of real queens. I draw bits and pieces from my gathered references when

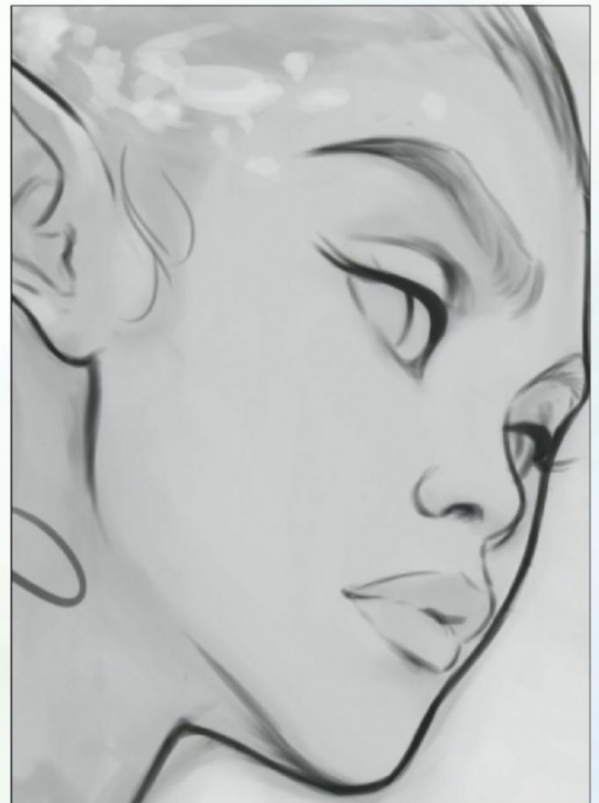
painting my thumbnails, but also make sure not to get too reliant on it, because this can limit my creativity.

I've painted many fantasy females before, so I felt comfortable tackling this theme. I also consciously didn't stray too far from my comfort zone: I wanted to avoid the risk of struggling while being under a very tight deadline, while also having a full-time job and thus little free time. That said, I hope that you find this workshop helpful.



## 1 Sketching quick ideas

I start by fleshing out some quick and dirty ideas. I'm not being too precious about keeping things neat and pretty. At this stage it's more important for me to capture the general feel and look of the character, as well as figuring out the composition. I'm thinking about the pose and the best viewing angles to present Titania, to make her look as regal and powerful as possible, yet still have a definite feminine look to her.



## 2 Deciding how to progress

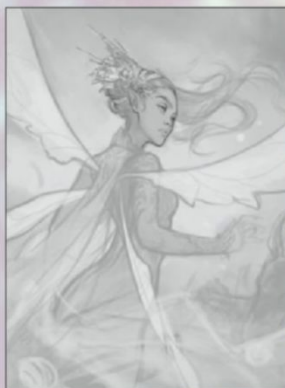
I would normally go in with colour and produce a rough colour thumbnail now. However, I feel that it would be easier to have a more refined sketch to work underneath, during the later painting stages. I set the thumbnail layer to 30 per cent Opacity, and on a layer above I start outlining with a slightly oval, Soft brush with Opacity and Size set to Pen Pressure so that I can easily control the thickness and value of my lines. ➡



## PRO SECRETS

### Keep a mirror nearby

Don't underestimate the power of using a mirror for reference purposes, especially if you're starting out learning how to paint people, but also if you paint them often as a professional. Nothing can teach you anatomy and expression quicker if you can pose your hand in front of a mirror, or reference your face in different angles or make crazy expressions to get a deeper understanding of how the facial expressions work.

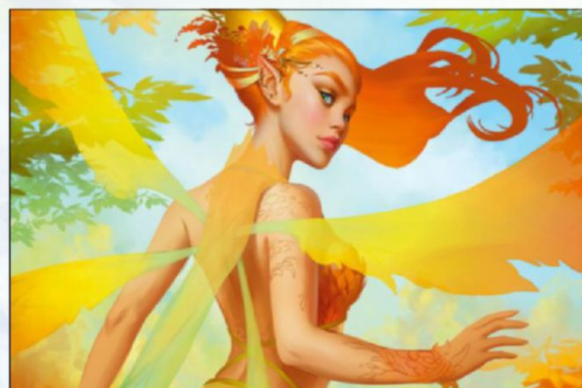
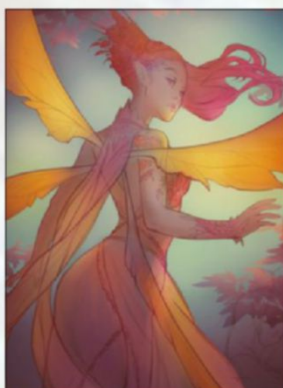
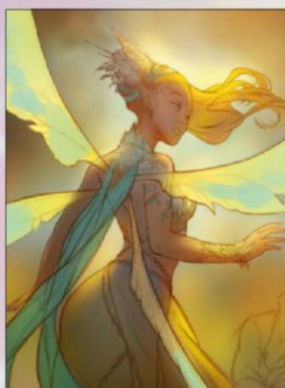


### 3 Keeping it simple

I don't want to get too hung up on the line art, because most of it isn't going to be in the final painting. I try to keep the lines rough and don't worry about line variation. This is all about me having a good, strong guide to work under later on. I use this stage to figure out the anatomy and the design of the character and try to get that as close as possible to the final design.

### 4 Almost time to colour

Having the finished sketch on a separate layer, I block in Titania's silhouette on a layer underneath with an opaque brush in a simple grey tone. I then lock the grey layer (by pressing /). This is a very useful shortcut to quickly lock the pixels on a layer so you can't paint outside of them. Using a Soft Round brush, I can now finally start blocking in the colours.

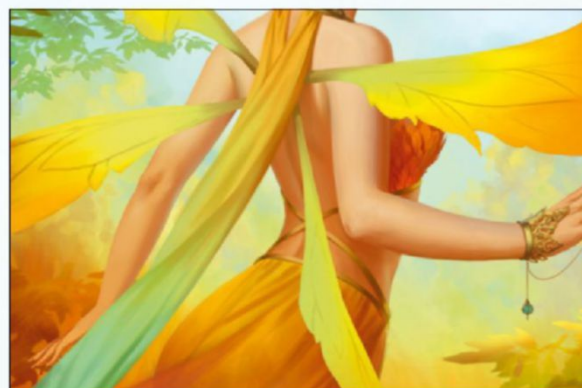
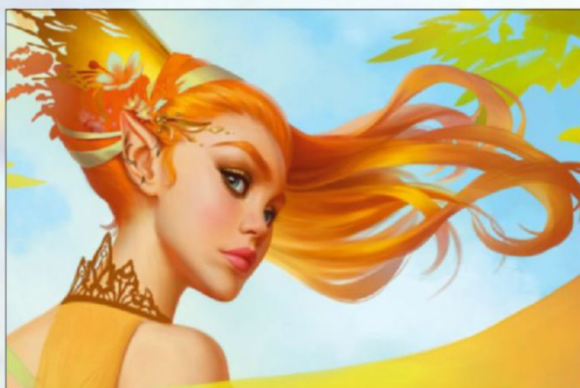


### 5 Colour thumbnails

I now have two layers: the background layer and the silhouette of Titania. I start colouring them in with a Soft Round brush, alternating between the two. One of the best things you can do when going into the colour stage is to decide what mood you want to convey. This will in turn help you with your colour choices. ImagineFX asks for an autumnal colour scheme.

### 6 First steps of rendering

I start on Titania's face. First, however, I need to decide what lighting I'm going for. I want the image to be brightly lit, with few shadows, so that the colours are vibrant. I begin by laying down a basic coating of shadow and gradually build up the skin tones on top, building form with shadow. I make good use of layer blending modes such as Overlay and Multiply at this stage.



### 7 Painting hair

I think in terms of shape when painting hair. I always start by putting down the big shape of the body of hair in a flat colour, then sculpt into that using smaller shapes, remembering the design principles of large-medium-small. My way of painting hair is pretty stylised, so I'm not fussed about making it look realistic, so long as it has enough detail to resemble hair.

### 8 Rendering fabric

The fabric in this painting is free flowing and moving (mostly) in one direction. There are only two points where it attaches to Titania: her hips and necklace. Those points are where the fabric will bunch up into folds. I paint in the folds using a semi-Soft, fuzzy brush that's easy to blend with, using subtle shadows so that the vibrancy of colour remains.

## RESOURCES

### WORKSHOP BRUSHES

#### PHOTOSHOP

#### CUSTOM BRUSHES: ALL-ROUNDER

A slightly textured brush, ideal for blocking in colour or rendering with.

#### LINE ART BRUSH

Great for line art, as well as adding in details in the rendering stage

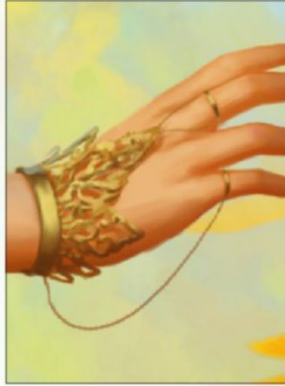
#### SOFT FUZZY

A lovely soft blending brush that still retains texture in the stroke.

#### SPARKLER

Great for painting sparkles, snow, dust particles and skin pores.



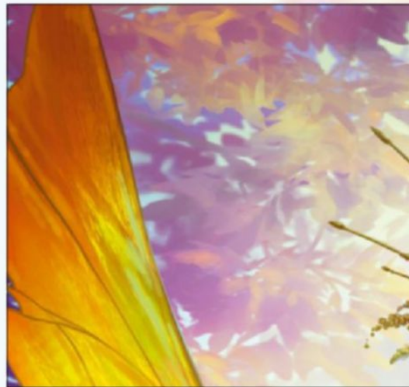
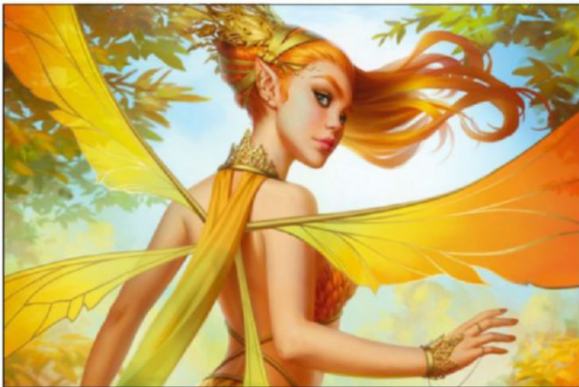


## 9 Adding gold details

I refine different elements like the wings, dress folds and Titania's hair under the straps. I'm not completely sold on the crown and hair accessory design, however. The flowers in her hair and crown feel like something Titania would wear at spring, not autumn, so I rearrange the straps that support her updo, and then revamp the crown to fit the autumn theme.

## 10 Foreground elements

Looking at the image after having established the bulk of it, things are feeling a bit flat. I want to push the depth of the image further, adding something to it to better invite the viewer into the image. I play with a bunch of different ideas before finally settling on having fabric flowing into the image from the foreground. I then go to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur and quickly blur the foreground fabric. This helps push the depth even further.

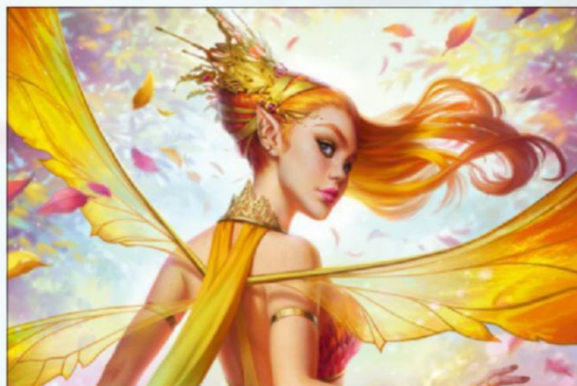


## 11 The magic of a Multiply layer

To push the depth of the image even further, I create a clipping mask on top of Titania. I set the layer blending mode to Multiply and then use my semi-Soft brush to paint in a leafy cast shadow on her skirt and flowing back fabric. Then I go in with a Color Dodge and an Overlay layer to add glow on the lit parts around the cast shadow.

## 12 Extreme colour makeover

The ImagineFX team asks me to revamp the background colours. I really like their suggestion of using purples instead of autumny green-orange for the background, so I quickly change the colour scheme by using the Hue/Saturation and Selective Color features in Photoshop. I also add a much brighter light behind Titania, which sets her off against the background.



## 13 Apply Iris Blur

Iris Blur is an awesome tool you can use to quickly give more depth to an image. You can find this under Filter>Blur>Iris Blur. This tool enables you to control the strength of the blur and to shape the area of the blur by playing with the different points. I use this tool on only the background layer and add a slight blur effect to it to further push Titania from the background.

## 14 Final touches

To better tie in Titania with the new background colours, I add a touch of pinks and purples in a few areas. I also feel that adding in blowing leaves helps create more depth and movement. I finish off Titania's hair by breaking up the big shapes with strands of hair, and keep refining and adding a few more details, like bracelets and sparkles blowing in the wind.

## PRO SECRETS

### Rotate your canvas

It's easy to forget how important it is to rotate your canvas when in the midst of rendering. Rotating your canvas enables you to use your hand in a position most comfortable to you and will minimise the risk of wrist injury - not to mention that you'll get a steadier brush stroke when you're not trying to bend your wrist/arm in an awkward position.



ZBrush

# APPLY HAIR AND FUR TO 3D OBJECTS



**Rob Redman** shows you how to get to grips with ZBrush's Fiber tools, which enables you to create and control elements such as hair fibres

**Artist PROFILE**

**Rob Redman**  
LOCATION: England



Rob Redman is a creative director at a boutique animation and VFX studio, working across print, film and television. When not in the studio he can be found presenting at industry events.  
<http://ifxm.ag/rob-r>

**A**lthough ZBrush may best be known for its sculpting tools and for its feel of working with digital clay, it's actually offers workflows for many tasks.

One of these is the FiberMesh tool set. Its sole purpose is for creating hair and other fibrous structures. This kind of modelling is a particularly hard task to carry out using traditional digital

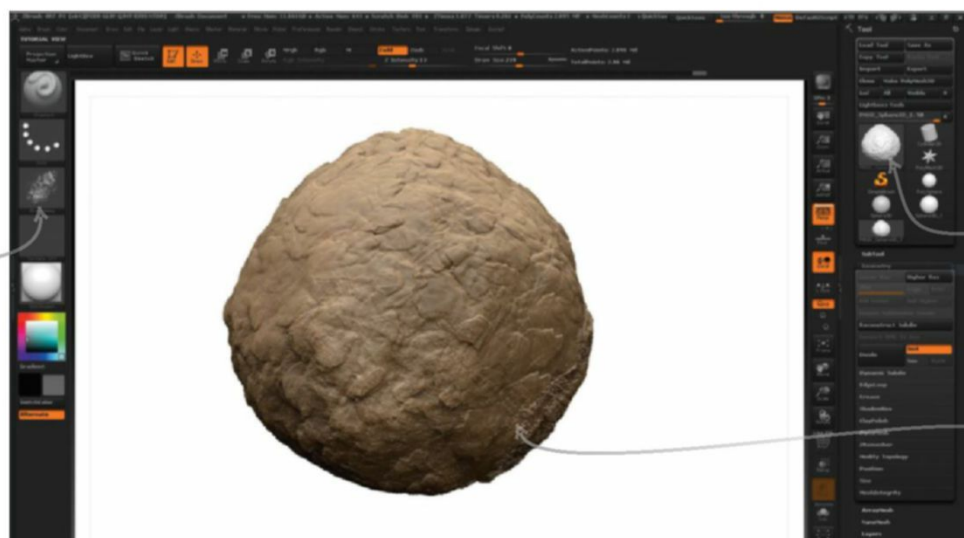
techniques, partly because of the complex nature of each fibre, but mostly down to the sheer number of strands needed to make the end result look believable.

Most 3D software has been developed with a specialist tool for the task and ZBrush is no different. Indeed, it possesses a particularly elegant solution, with just a handful of controls that enable you to work very quickly, along with real-

time feedback. Your viewport can handle the vast number of fibres just as it can the massively dense polygon object that ZBrush handles with ease.

The key to success with the Fiber tool set lies in masking techniques. As you'll see, working with the strands is easy enough, but what will sell your model is the placement of the strands, so read on and find out how to do both.

Load a suitable alpha to help you develop the surface detail.



Add a Polysphere to the scene and divide it to add some detail.

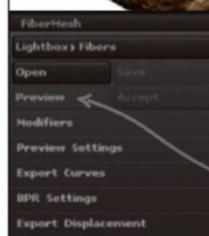
Here's a simple rock to which we can add some fibres.

## 1 Establish your base object

For the purposes of this article I'm going to keep it pretty basic. To follow along add a polygon sphere to your scene. If you want to sculpt it, go ahead. I'm using a simple round rock, but feel free to use whatever model you want.

## 2 Masking method

Placement is as important as the strands' appearance, so let's look at the most basic mask. Hold down Ctrl and drag out a marquee over the top half of the rock. Unfold the FiberMesh menu and click Preview. Fibres will be grown in the masked area only. Ctrl-click off the model and then hit Preview again.



Mask off the top half of the model.

Click FiberMesh > Preview to see your fibres.



Previewing the fibres.

## PRO SECRETS

### Reference the real world

It sounds obvious, but pay attention to how grass and hair grows, and the effects of gravity and movement. Your mind may tell you one thing, but the reality is likely to be a little different.



## 3 Create a more accurate mask

While the large blocks of fibre could be useful, we can certainly use a more refined method. Unfold the Masking tab and scroll down to Mask by Cavity. Click the button and you should see the crack in the mesh go dark. Head back to the FiberMesh menu and hit Preview. We now have a very natural look, with fibres between the cracks.

*Many masking options are available, but we want to pick By Cavity.*



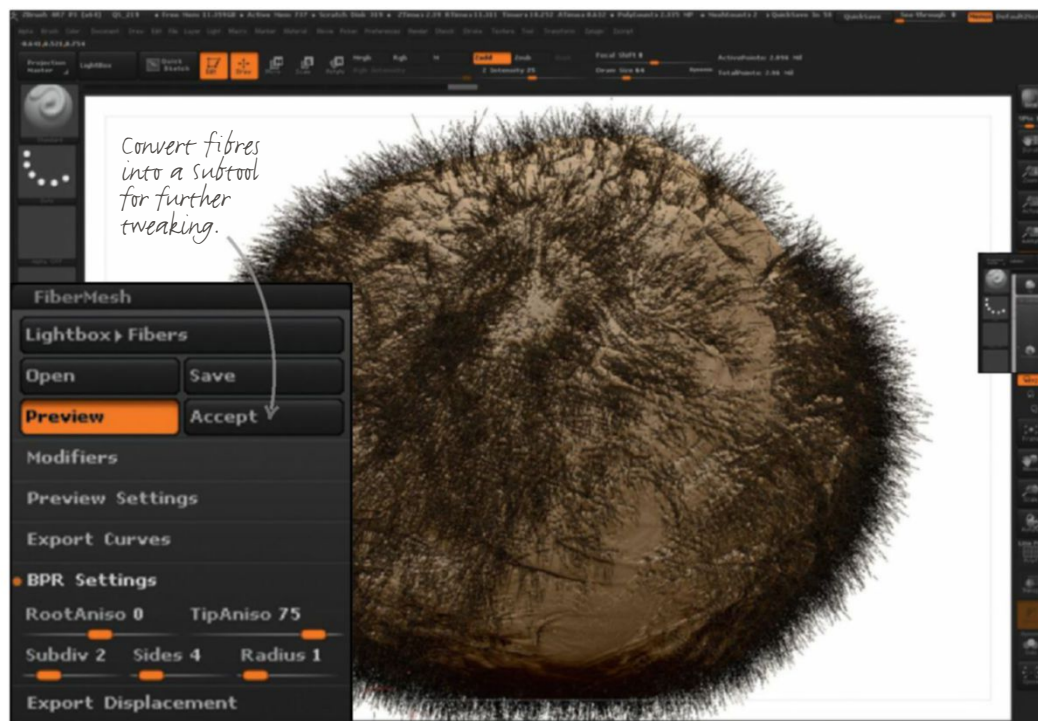
## 4 Adapting the shape of the fibres

There are plenty of other options available, but let's tame the overall look. First, unfold the Modifiers section, and use the Length slider to control how long the strands are. The MaxFibers slider establishes the overall density. Now you can experiment with the other settings. A good control to play with is gravity, but beware: it uses screen space, so make sure up is where you want it!

*Gravity affects your fibres' level of droop, but look at your model head on to avoid unexpected results – although happy accidents can occur.*



*Most of the controls can be found in the Modifier section.*



*ZBrush contains a number of grooming tools, each with a specific role for tweaking your fibres.*



*The Clumping brush is great for adding patches of denser fibres.*

## 5 Exert greater control over your fibres

Head to the top of the Fiber menu and click Accept. This changes the fibres into a Subtool, so open the Subtool menu, where you can swap between the rock or the fibres. From here you can use ZBrush's standard tools, but a good one for extra control and detail is the Groom brush, which enables you to brush the strands in real time, pushing them where you need. There are a number of groom brushes, that are named according to task.

**Next month**

**Manga Studio**



Photoshop

# MAKE A CONCEPT WITH IDENTITY

Games artist **Rob Laro** demonstrates how to use idea generation and rapid iteration to develop a character with a specific goal in mind

## Artist PROFILE

**Rob Laro**  
LOCATION: England



Artist turned indie game developer, Rob spends most of his time frantically drawing, modelling, programming and designing games, somehow all at once.  
<http://ifxm.ag/r-laro>

**GET YOUR RESOURCES**

See page 6 now!

## PRO SECRETS

### Keeping it together

At the brainstorming stage, having all of your drawings in one place gives you to get a good overview of your art, especially when working iteratively. It makes it easy to see your progress and where your ideas are going. Furthermore, if you do happen to run out of steam with ideas, you can always take a look at what you have so far and try a different direction.

**W**hen designing characters for purposes beyond a single illustration, be it for games, comics or animation, a more in-depth approach may be needed to ensure your character leaves a lasting impression. Each element of their design needs to be fleshed out, from the inside of their jacket to the bottom of their feet.

Not only do you need to be thorough, but you also need to unify the character as a whole. One way to achieve this is to

personify a single distinctive idea or concept, giving them a strong sense of identity. This ensures that you'll portray what the character is all about quickly and cleanly to the viewer.

In this workshop I'll be demonstrating my design process for a character, as if they were the main character of a game, from start to finish. My starting point is the rough idea of a monster-slaying maiden, incorporating the theme of a chimera: a mythical hybrid creature.

I'll begin by exploring the concept with a series of quick figure sketches of the character before focusing on each element of her clothing and equipment. Here I'll explain the significance of reference material to support the designs and how you can interpret it. Once I finalise the design, I'll transition to colour in Photoshop and create an illustration to showcase the character while looking at some of the techniques I use to add colour variance and lighting.



### 1 Quick sketches

With the rough idea in my head, I start brainstorming by making lots of small, energetic sketches of the figure. I avoid any detailing here: it's best to keep these drawings very small and vague, which enables you to iterate through ideas as quickly as possible. At this stage the character has a basic design, but I still focus on trying to put some personality into the poses.



### 2 Unleash the beast

I feel like the character is looking a little too delicate, so I toughen her up by giving her a big hand cannon, which adds more weight to her posture. I continue to make multiple drawings and start incorporating animal elements into her design. It only takes one sketch to open up ideas, so it's important to not set anything down just yet. ➡



## Shortcuts

### Lock

**transparency**  
/ (PC & Mac)  
Handy for restricting  
your painting to  
the transparency  
of a layer.

## PRO SECRETS

### Replacing colours

When working on pictures with large areas of flat colour, things can look a little plain, so it's good to break areas up a bit and introduce some variation by using Replace Color (Image > Adjustments > Replace Color). Saturating colours and hue shifting in places where colours meet and at certain levels of tone change usually work best, giving a more painterly feel.





## 3 Design and refine

After a few more iterations, I'm now settling on the character's overall design, defining the thematic chimera elements into her clothes. I define her falcon cloak and sabatons, lion gauntlets and buckler, snake cannon, and finally her goat's horn circlet. Now that I know her design well enough to be able to draw her more consistently, the base design is complete.



## 4 Study and stylise

I would like the sabatons to look bird-like while still resembling armour, so I search for images of falcon feet and make some study drawings of them first. Drawing directly from reference helps to get a good grasp on the identifying features before translating them into designs. I feel like the talons are the strongest feature, so I incorporate them into the boots.



## 5 Reverse engineering

The gauntlet design is bit more complex, so I approach this by breaking the armour into smaller parts. Splitting an item up like this can simplify things, enabling you to focus and iterate on each part separately. I also make sure to draw the parts at different angles to understand how the gauntlets would move and function.



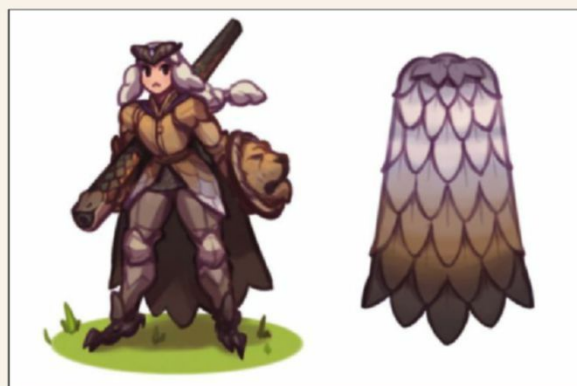
## 6 Adding functionality

It's good to start with real-world references and look for convenient shapes and details to take advantage of. For the snake cannon I base the design on a break-action shotgun, before stylising the long barrel and stock into the body of a snake. Take note not to be too liberal with the modification of references: you don't want to break any possible functionality.



## 7 Every bit counts

Even the smallest objects still have a role to play in your character, so it's good to draw them up and cover all the bases. I work and iterate on some of the remaining elements of her outfit, before finishing up the preliminary process. I'm ready to create an illustration of the character, now that I understand the design of the whole outfit.



## 8 A choice of colours

I now move from my sketches to Photoshop, creating a quick coloured illustration to get an idea of the palette and silhouette. When working with silhouettes it's good practice to account for the tones of your colours. Bright tones are light and dark tones are heavy – I make her lower half darker and top half lighter so that she doesn't appear top heavy.

**RESOURCES**

**WORKSHOP BRUSHES**

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSH: SOFT LINE

I used this single brush to develop the entire image, for both lines and painting.





## 9 Strike a pose

Now that the design is complete, I draw a handful of poses that best represent her and her personality. I've maintained a theme of movement and agility throughout my sketches, so I choose a dynamic pose from above. When making a vignette illustration with no background, the pose determines your composition. Account for this when positioning your character.



## 10 I choose you!

After selecting a pose, I make a start on the preliminary, scaling up my sketch in Photoshop and loosely working in details. I find this to be the most difficult stage because when translating a small sketch into a high-resolution image it tends to strip it of all its energy, leaving it looking stiff and lifeless. Try to focus on refining the core pose and shapes above all else.

## PRO SECRETS

### Quantity over quality

Making your drawings small and fast when generating ideas is a great way to keep things flexible. This enables you to stay focused on your core concept and not worry about the details, because this can be distracting. Drawing cumulatively is a non-destructive process as opposed to iterating over a single drawing multiple times – you'll be left with a lot of good stuff to work with.



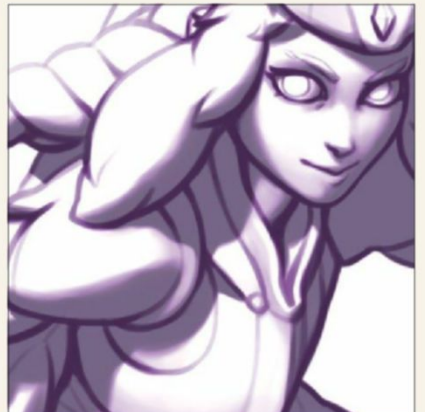
## 11 Get in line

In my case, lines aren't just a foundation for painting but actually part of the final illustration. I place the preliminary on a layer below, reduce its Opacity to around 20 per cent (similar to an inking method) and use it as a guide. I keep the lighting in mind here, thickening the line weights in shadow because it'll help to blend my lines with the shading later on.



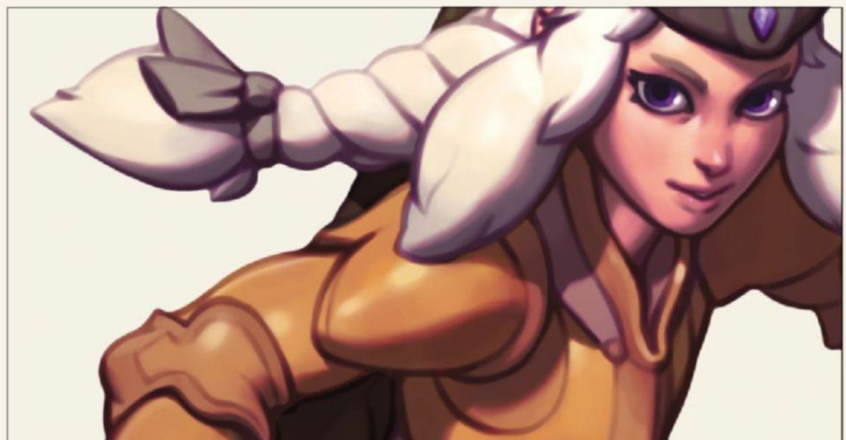
## 12 Between light and dark

For the shading stage I paint a greyscale lighting layer and add it to a layer group set to Multiply. I then use the Gradient Map adjustment layer to map the black and white to my lighting colours. Here, it's grey-purple with a very saturated terminator between the light and dark. This setup makes it significantly easier to change the colours of the image without having to repaint any lighting.



## 13 Fill me in

Before I start laying down any colours, I create a single silhouette of the whole body in one layer. I then block in the areas of colour and clip them to the single silhouette layer (Alt-click in between layers). Having the image segmented into cells like this makes it possible to modify the colours easily. I keep my painting workflow as flexible as possible until the very end.



## 14 Wrapping things up

Now that the picture is almost done, I make a flattened copy of all my layers so that I can make final adjustments and paint directly into the picture. When working with dozens of layers it starts to get progressively more difficult to change the image, so I take advantage of flattening to tweak the face and saturate the shadow edges of the whole image.



Photoshop

# DEVELOP A STRONG LIGHTING SCHEME

**Rudy Siswanto** shows how intelligent lighting choices can help to turn a straightforward composition into a compelling book cover

## Artist PROFILE

**Rudy Siswanto**  
LOCATION: Indonesia



Rudy is a passionate illustrator who loves animals. He works on fantasy card illustration and concept art, as well as character design.  
<http://ifxm.ag/rudysis>

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**B**aby Bestiary was a commission I had a lot of fun doing, especially because animals and creatures are my favourite subjects to paint. The client, Metal Wave Games, approached me with a simple brief: to create a mirror composition. I found it a challenge because I needed to make a simple composition look interesting.

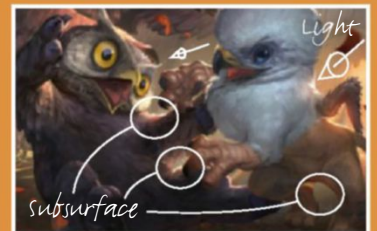
I usually begin a painting by adopting a workflow that's used by many artists. I start by producing thumbnails to help me decide on the overall composition, then proceed to put together a basic colour rough, before eventually finalising the colours by rendering the scene. This approach enables me to focus on the

composition and the lighting, rather than focusing on developing my brush strokes on the canvas and steadily rendering the painting.

Because of the simplicity of the composition, I needed to put a lot of expression into my characters. In particular, the focal point was my opportunity to ramp up the visual interest in the composition. I already had something in mind about the flow of the image. I wanted the audience to follow the beasts' journey through life, starting from their infancy and all the way through their adulthood. This means I needed to treat the lighting in this painting in a very specific way, in order to tell the story behind the image.

## Enhance the focal point

I find the real challenge is to simplify a complicated image that contains a lot of elements. That's why I increase the contrast in the main focal area, both in value and in the silhouette. I also make the lighting come from behind the beasts' infancy phase, to create a stronger silhouette. I also want to direct the audience to explore the owl bear's face by illuminating its face with a strong lighting.



## How I create...

# BEASTS THROUGH THE AGES



## 1 Initial sketch

I wanted to incorporate three different life phases of the owl bear and the griffin. So I started simply by observing animals that live near me. I learned that animals tend to play with each other during their infancy. During their adolescence the playing turns to fighting - and it happens all the time! They tend to be calmer when they're fully grown adults.



## 2 Colour rough

During the early stage of making a colour rough, a common approach is to focus on the middle of the composition: in this case, the two fantasy beasts' teenage years. But this made the composition uncomfortable to read. So I changed the main focus to the lower part of the image, where the beasts are still in their infancy. This suits the book's theme, which is about nurturing baby beasts.



## 3 Final stages

I want to keep the values intact. So rather than using a frontal lighting scheme, I use lighting that originates from behind the beasts. This enables me to define the silhouette of both beasts clearly. I want the viewer to be able to read what's happening in this cover very clearly, so that when this book is displayed in the bookstores the silhouettes of the playing baby beasts are obvious.

## RESOURCES WORKSHOP BRUSHES

### PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES:  
FEATHER BRUSH

I used this brush to render the feathers on the owl bear and griffin, especially their wings.

### RENDER BRUSH 1

I used this brush for detailing and refining the overall images.

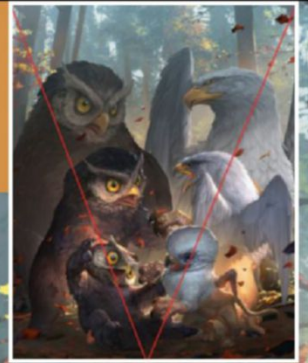
### RENDER BRUSH 2

I used this for the initial shapes when rendering to block big shapes and rough colours.



## The flow of the image

I want to emphasise the focal area in the bottom part of the cover, where the infant beasts sit. So I make the visual flow resemble an arrow pointing downwards. I also utilise the beasts' body parts, such as beaks and claws, making them point downwards as well. By doing this, I make the flow of the entire image leading down towards the bottom of the book cover. I hope the audience will get the message that I intend to send.



## Lighting up the griffin

I use an additional light source from the front, to light the expression of the baby griffin. I use this to help the viewer explore this area more. Sometimes we're allowed to ignore realism a little, so our painting can deliver the message we want to send.

## Exaggerate the expression

Expression is important for me. Here I try to exaggerate the faces of the beasts. I want to make their faces adorable and cute, based on general references. The main focus of their face will be on the eyes.



Next month in...  
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**ImagineFX**

AWE-INSPIRING

# LANDSCAPES

The epic environments and the artists who create them for film and games

**ISSUE 139 ON SALE IN THE UK** *Friday 12 August*



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**ImagineFX** September 2016





Pablo Carpio will paint a space battle of epic proportions for our next issue's cover!

## Featuring...

### **Space battle!**

Paint a vast scene within the constraints of the portrait dimensions of a cover.



### **'Coro' Kaufman**

The Massive Black artist picks up his paints for a brand new workshop.

### **Get the ArtRage**

Caricature illustrator Yoann Lori explains his process to making a lasting impression.



### **Scott Robertson**

The digital art legend talks about Design Studio Press and the appeal of steel!



*Artist insight*

# BRINGING FANTASY PORTRAITS TO LIFE

**Mélanie Delon** talks through the tips, tricks and techniques she uses to achieve realistic portrait paintings, ensuring they stand out from the crowd

## Artist PROFILE

**Mélanie Delon**  
LOCATION: France



Mélanie is a freelance illustrator who specialises in fantasy

subjects. She spends her time working for different publishing houses and developing her own personal works.  
[www.melaniedelon.com](http://www.melaniedelon.com)

**GET YOUR RESOURCES**

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**F**antasy portraiture is my favourite subject. Bringing an original character to life is exciting, but can be difficult to achieve. To avoid mistakes and save time I try to follow a few rules. But they're really just guidelines, so feel free to adapt, change and test other techniques that might better suit your painting process.

The most important thing to bear in mind is to take your time. This is the best

advice I can give, because nothing good comes from rushing a painting.

It's worth spending time and effort trying to understand how a face 'works', such as under a particular lighting setup. Such a skill won't be grasped overnight. Spend time experimenting with several techniques, and don't be afraid to fail.

I've learned – and still learn – a lot more when I struggle on a painting, and when I'm stuck (on a mouth or nose, for

example), I don't hesitate to redo everything... and have a coffee break!

The main challenge in a portrait painting is to make the character stand out. Usually there's no surrounding decor in the environment to help you achieve this goal, and a finished, polished portrait can often end up looking flat and boring. Thankfully, there are several simple and effective ways to achieve a striking portrait that will be remembered.

## 1 PREPARATORY SKETCH

Before starting an illustration, I always do some quick pencil sketches to lay down my ideas. This helps me to see more clearly what I want to do and express, and be more confident about the direction I want to take. I use these sketches to build the composition, reworking them slightly in Photoshop if necessary. Usually I like to keep them rough, because this gives me more freedom during the colouring process. I feel restricted by perfectly clean line-art.

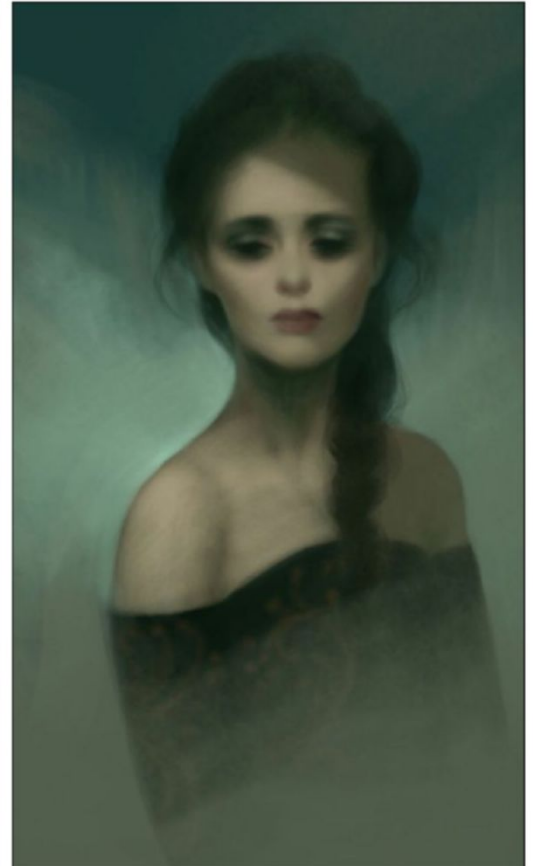
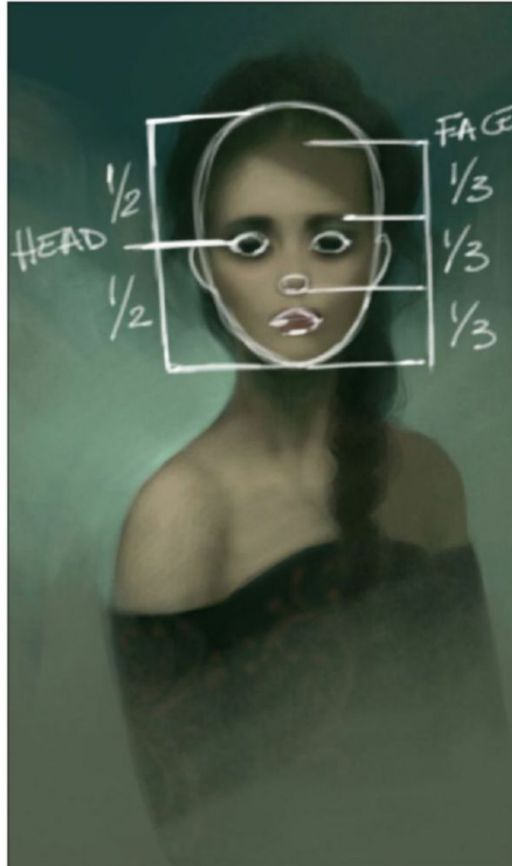




## 2 PROPORTIONS OF THE HEAD AND FACE

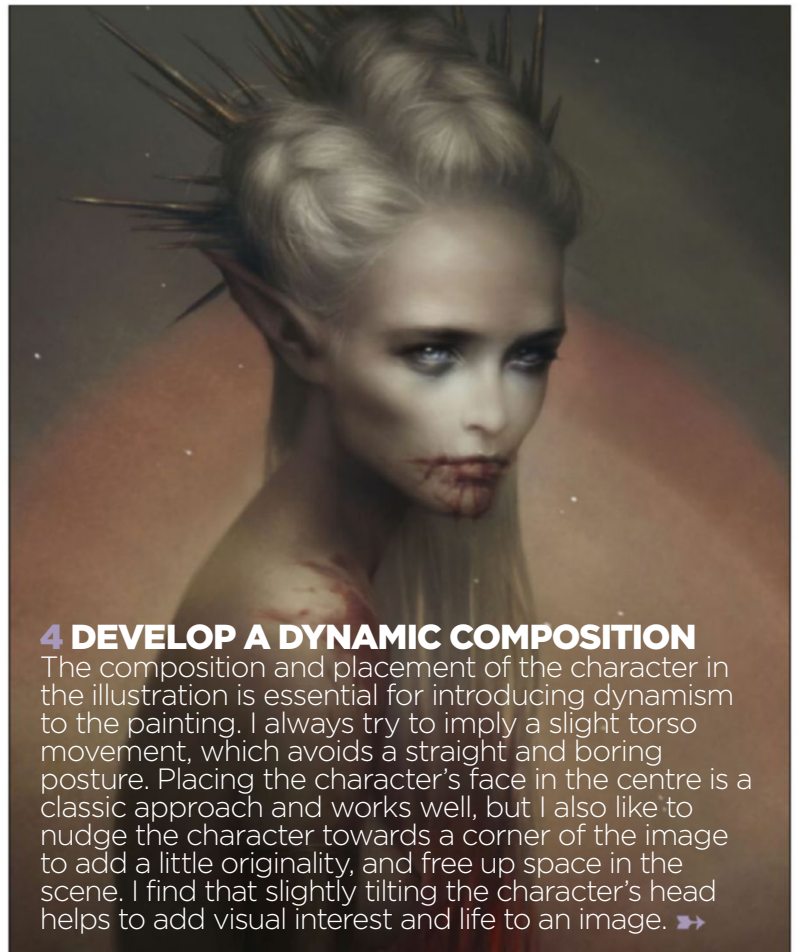
It's important to be aware of the proportions of a human face. Of course, they're only guides – everyone has a different face shape that doesn't necessarily meet the beauty standard – but it's essential to know these rules, if you're going to play by them and break them. I recommend practising with facial proportions, until it almost becomes instinctual to apply them to a portrait piece. I always start with a basic oval and then slowly add the facial features, steadily building up the character's face.

“Slightly tilting the character's head helps to add visual interest and life to an image”



## 3 ENSURE YOUR COLOUR SCHEME IS HARMONIOUS

Usually the biggest mistake in a portrait painting is the skin's colour: it's never either beige or black. Skin comprises a multitude of colours, from pale blue around the eye, pink, to hints of yellow for the mouth's corners. I start painting with very few colours, and progressively add more hues. I save my colour palette in a corner of the illustration so that they're always on hand. To avoid a muddy look, I avoid using pure black or white. Instead, I increase the saturation to the colour I using for the shadows.



## 4 DEVELOP A DYNAMIC COMPOSITION

The composition and placement of the character in the illustration is essential for introducing dynamism to the painting. I always try to imply a slight torso movement, which avoids a straight and boring posture. Placing the character's face in the centre is a classic approach and works well, but I also like to nudge the character towards a corner of the image to add a little originality, and free up space in the scene. I find that slightly tilting the character's head helps to add visual interest and life to an image. ➔



## 5 WORKING THE BACKGROUND

The background can also help give more impact to the portrait. I don't like to overload it with details, preferring instead to leave it relatively plain to avoid any unnecessary visual distractions. I usually add subtle texture and a gradient to avoid a flat, lifeless look. Another alternative is to add blurred elements, such as a forest or a building, to give the character context and hint at their story.

## PRO SECRETS

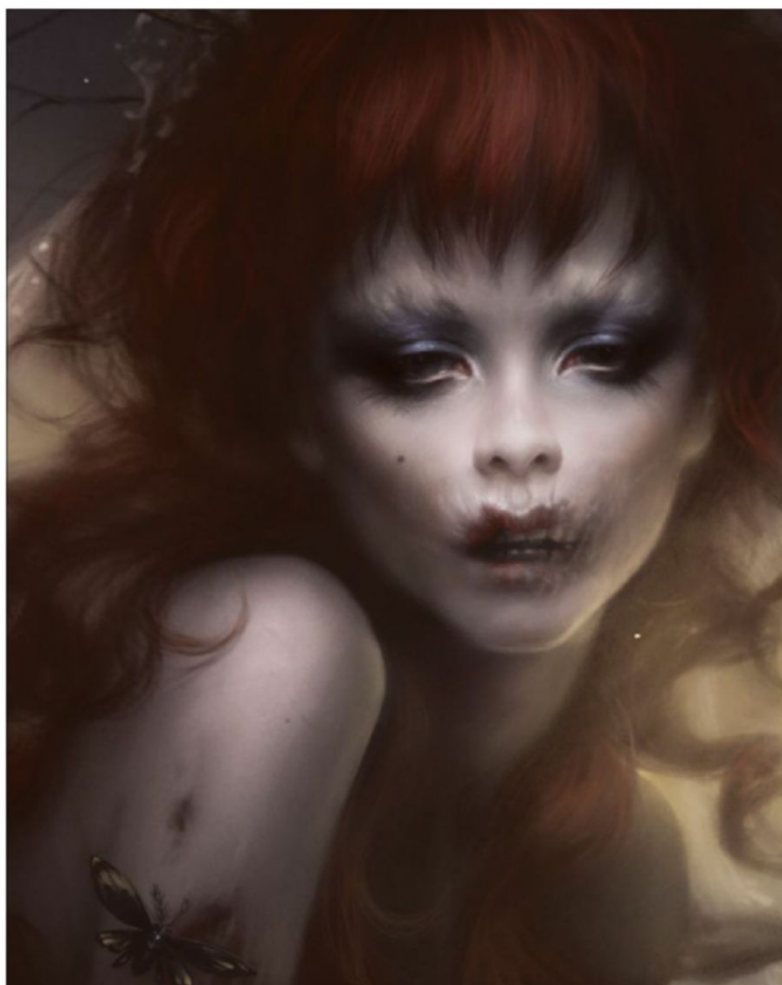
### Keep some brushstrokes

Skin is never perfect, and sometimes seamless blending can ruin a skin's texture. I never blend and smooth my brushstrokes, because I like to maintain colour variations in the face, along with some texture. Tiny scribbles help to introduce extra texture.



## 6 INTRODUCE REALISTIC DETAILS

Small details such as veins or beauty dots won't be immediately apparent, but will give the last touches of texture and realism to portraits. These can also tell a story: for example, exposed veins can be useful for depicting a vampire or a person who's ill. I generally use the same brush to create these details: a very fine brush that allows for precise work. I slightly blur the brushstrokes' extremities, to unify and soften the details.



“ Small details such as veins or beauty dots will give the last touches of texture and realism to portraits ”

## 7 EMPHASISE KEY FACIAL ELEMENTS

It's easy to get lost in the details, even in an intimate portrait piece. To avoid this and save time I don't detail the entire illustration, instead only working up the areas that I want to draw attention to. For a portrait the most obvious area are the eyes, but depending on the lighting and the story I want to tell I can add a second focal point, usually a key costume element.





## 8 EYE CONTACT

Even in the busiest of compositions, a face will always catch the viewer's attention. And to make the face even more powerful and striking, ensuring strong eye contact remains the most effective trick. The viewer is instantly connected with the character. It's an effect that I use a lot in my portraits... perhaps a little too much! But I also love to play with more subtle glances, which are less direct and help to develop a sense of mystery, raising questions in the viewer's mind.



## 9 PAINT APPEALING LIPS

Lips are an important facial feature. They draw attention as much as the eyes do, and help the character to express emotion. To get them right it's just a matter of texture. Lips aren't a flat, plain element: I paint the little wrinkles with a very thin brush, which gives them texture and a lot of volume. Indeed, volume is the key to bring life to the lips, so I always add some intense dots of light to make them more realistic and attract even more attention. ➤

## PRO SECRETS

### Source your references

References are important. You can always do some internet searches but the most simple and obvious approach is to use yourself! I always keep a small mirror next to my computer when I need to quickly check some expression or feature. You can also ask your friends or family to pose for a portrait.

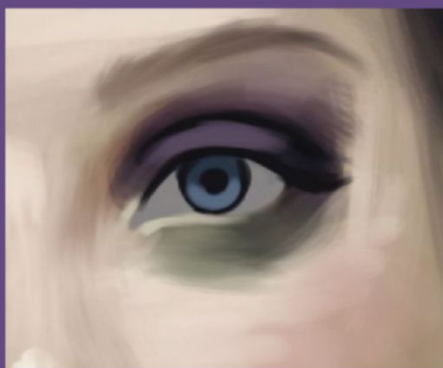
## HOW TO BRING LIFE TO THE EYES

The key to achieving a striking portrait lies in the eyes. Here are three steps to easily paint them



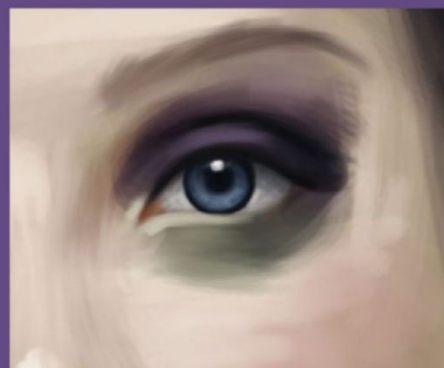
### 1 Capture the eye's shape

First I quickly sketch the shape of the eye. It's essentially an oval, but you can play a bit with it because nobody has the same eye shape. I quickly sketch my lines so I know where to add the light and the shadows. It's all about curves because the eyeball is round, and the eyelids must reflect this shape.



### 2 Develop light and volume

Once I'm happy with the shape of the character's eye, I can start to apply the colour base, along with some volume and light. The upper eyelid will catch a lot of the light and will give volume to the eye. Here I decide to use a pale mauve for her make-up, which will work pretty well with the blue of her eye.



### 3 Introduce a sparkle of life

I further define the eye and add shadow under the upper eyelid to enhance the sense of volume. The final touch is the eyeball's bright dot of light which is essential: it's the sparkle of life in any kind of portrait painting. After that I can add more details such as eyelashes, to increase the sense of realism.



## 10 TAKE THE PROFILE APPROACH

Developing a character's profile is tricky because there's no eye contact to play with and only half of the face to show. I use light and contrast to compensate for the lack of interaction with the character, and enhance the costume design to hold the viewer's attention. Here, the figure's hair does almost everything: it defines her head shape and contrasts well with the bright, empty background.

*Adding vibrant colours to details like the orange feathers will balance out a pale colour scheme.*



*A clean outline helps to make a character stand out, especially when the background is very bright.*



## 11 CAPTIVATING EYES

The eyes are usually the main part of a portrait, and are my favourite element. They can look sad, sparkling, mysterious or dangerous... and done well, can bring any character to life. I like to give them a lot of intensity with unusual colours such as purple or yellow. The trick to make them stand out is to play with the light and saturation. I use a precise brush to create some colour variations in the eye and finish it a bright dot of light that will give volume to the eyeball.

## RESOURCES WORKSHOP BRUSHES

### PHOTOSHOP

#### CUSTOM BRUSHES: SMOOTH

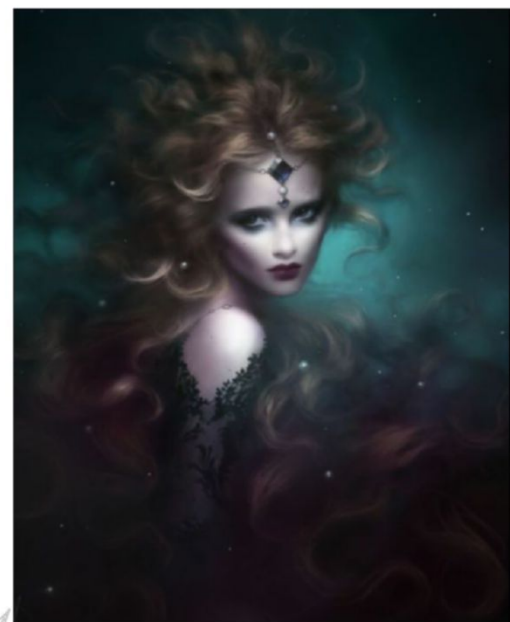
It's the brush I use for almost everything, and especially skin. I like the soft texture it brings to any element and it's perfect for skin. It's not too soft or too textured, so I don't have a lot of blending work to do.

#### PRECISE

This is a basic Round brush with Shape Dynamics turned on and Minimum Diameter set to zero per cent. It's ideal for painting tiny details such as wrinkles or eyelashes to a portrait.

#### DOTTED

This dotted brush is useful for adding extra texture like skin pores. I often use the Blur tool to blend the results, giving a soft and natural look.



## 12 STORYTELLING

A portrait leaves very little space to tell a story, so the general style of the character is important and can give a lot of indications and information about their life. I try to pay special care to their clothing, even if the viewer can only see a small part of it. I also spend time on their hair and details like a crown, to give the maximum amount of visual information. Their story can also be told by elements on the skin, like a tattoo, a scar or tribal markings.

“Eyes can look sad, sparkling, mysterious or dangerous... and done well, can bring any character to life”



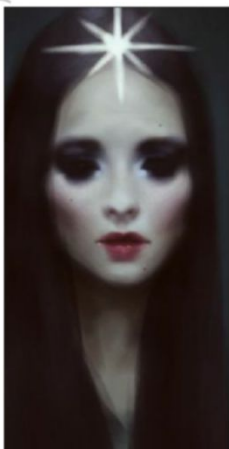
## 13 GOOD LIGHTING

The light is crucial in a portrait. If you get this right, it adds to the atmosphere of the piece, and brings life and volume to the face. I always start a portrait with neutral mid-tones and gradually add shadows and light. I love to accentuate the light in a chiaroscuro style; I think it brings a classic feeling to my fantasy theme. However, I keep my shadows very soft, and my gradients are usually very smoothed, because the face is made of curves and not sharp angles.



## 14 SKIN TEXTURE

The skin is obviously an important element in a portrait painting, and a common mistake is to make it look flawless. It's relatively simple to paint clean, soft-looking skin, but if you're not careful your character will end up looking like a plastic doll, and besides nobody has perfect skin. To avoid this, I start with a textured base and use a Soft brush with a little grain texture to recreate the skin's irregularities. I also add some dots of light to create pores, particularly on the nose and around the eyes.



## 15 PLAY WITH CONTRAST

Another trick that works very well is to add contrast to the composition. I achieve this by adjusting the lighting, playing with complementary colours, or using warm and cold hues. The trick is to separate the character from the background. My favourite approach is to use a very dark background and an unusual light source to illuminate the character. The light captures the viewer's initial attention, who then moves on to my character portrait.



## Photoshop, Daz 3D, ZBrush & KeyShot

# CREATE A CARD ART CHARACTER

**Stéphane Richard** switches between software to illustrate comical card art from The Witcher 3, on a tight deadline



### Artist PROFILE

**Stéphane Richard**

LOCATION: France



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

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

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### PRO SECRETS

#### Smart Objects

In Photoshop I use Smart Objects to add nondestructive capabilities to layers. Every new file I drag and drop is set to be placed as a Smart Object in my properties (Edit> Preferences>General> Always create Smart Objects). Smart Objects keep the original file resolution and support chaining filters and Adjustments Layers with editing, re-ordering and fusion modes.

**T**he ImagineFX editor asked me to illustrate a character inspired by the Gwent card game, from The Witcher 3 video game. The brief was to depict a comical hero and we settled on a chubby elf looking proud of himself and ready to win the next battle with nothing more than a smile.

Card art, especially in digital games, presents a very specific challenge. The image has to work at a very small scale.

But it also needs details to support full screen mode, attentive scrutiny by the player, or even larger print versions.

I'm going to focus on a workflow that's suitable for tight deadlines. This image took around 10 hours to complete, from initial sketch to the final image, and this wouldn't be possible for me without using 3D software and photobashing.

Starting from the sketch, I'll take you through DAZ 3D to quickly generate a posed base mesh that I'll import in

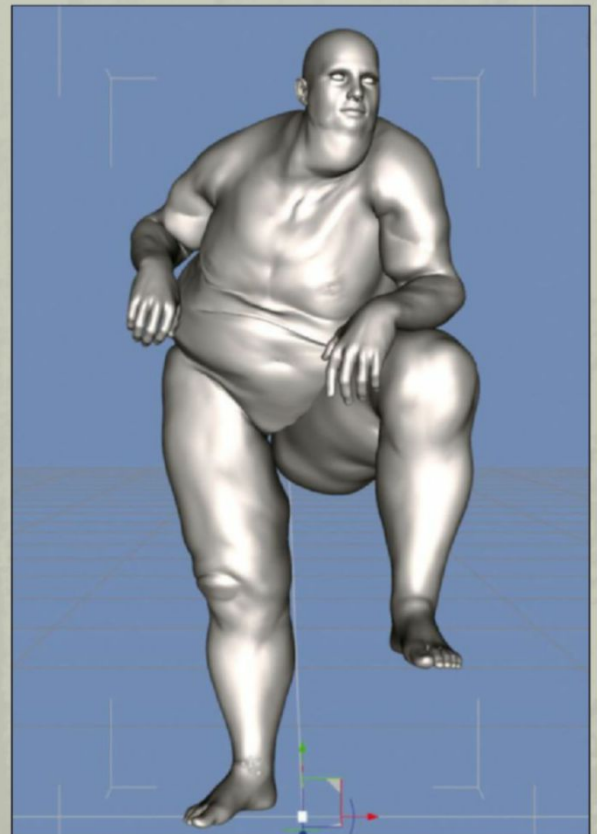
ZBrush for further detailing. After adding some rough clothes and props, I'll bring the 3D model into KeyShot to render a few material passes. Then I'll finish the image in Photoshop, by compositing all the render passes to develop a base before adding colours and details on top.

After using photobashing to generate a background that matches my sketch, I'll use the Camera RAW filter plug-in in Photoshop to apply photo-retouching techniques to my image.



#### 1 Sketching the figure

After spending 30 minutes gathering references for Gwent and charming, overweight males, I start to sketch the character, leaving details aside for now. I keep in mind the various elements of the brief and try to find the right pose and expression, while highlighting some key elements of the clothing and props.



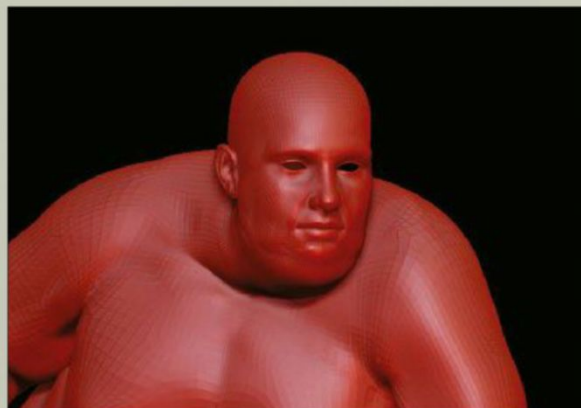
#### 2 Creating a base mesh

DAZ 3D is a free software that enables me to shape and pose a base mesh. It comes with a standard male and female mesh that can be shaped with morphs (ready-made skins). I play with the musculature, weight and size of the character, and pose it to match my sketch. DAZ 3D doesn't replace the need to know human anatomy, but it greatly speeds up the process. ➡









**Shortcuts**  
Brush tool selection  
Shift+B (PC & Mac)  
Quickly cycle through the Mixer and standard brush tools.

## 3 Fixing the anatomy in ZBrush

Once in ZBrush, the first thing I do is to correct the anatomy. As soon as I pose the DAZ 3D character it starts to have improbable anatomical distortion that I need to correct. Even though none of the body apart from the head will show in the final art, I want to have something clean to start from.

## 4 Adding clothes and props

Now that I have a good, clean model, I add the clothes and props. I'm not looking for too much details or definitive shapes, because I know that many things are going to be faster to solve later in Photoshop. I just want a rough geometry to have interesting base renders. Using the references I gathered, I sculpt the face to match my sketch.



## 5 Rendering base material passes

Thanks to the bridge plug-in, sending my model to KeyShot is a matter of pushing a button. I choose my lighting environment and I do a few key render passes: a matte pass (no reflections), a reflective pass (using a metal material), a fresnel pass (with the velvet material), a leather pass and a fabric pass. Those are enough for me to create the image in Photoshop.



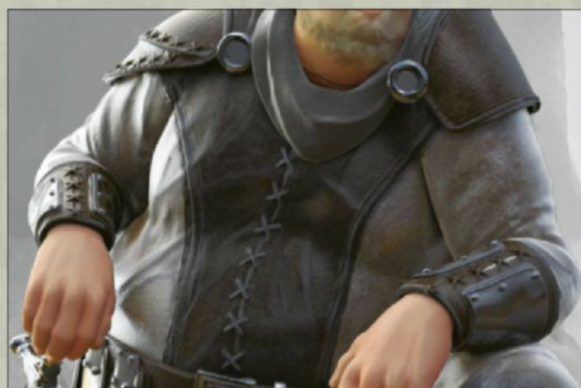
## 6 Base compositing

I import the passes into Photoshop and attribute basic materials to elements: matte material for the skin, metal, leather and fabric for the clothes and props. To make life easier, I create an ID pass (a flat colour for each shape for rapid selection with the Magic Wand) by assigning different solid colours in ZBrush to my subtools and rendering them as a flat material in KeyShot.

## PRO SECRETS

### Keep files manageable

A key part in my nondestructive workflow is to know when to be destructive. At some point in the process, I need to flatten layers and rasterise Smart Objects to keep my file workable. I save a new version of the file and try to decide which part of my history I don't need anymore, so I can flatten it. I use the Crop tool with Delete Cropped Pixel checked, in order to remove frame pixels.



## 7 Refining materials

Most materials are both reflective and matte. I start to refine my materials by laying them one on top of each other, using opacity. I also add weathering using masks. Where the leather is worn it'll lose reflectivity and surface texture, so I use the matte pass to tweak the material. I do the same with the metal by bringing back its full reflectivity on scratches.



## 8 Adding colours

I add colours using several layers set on different fusion modes. Particularly for the skin, I use many layers to slowly build up the subsurface scattering and variation in tones. I add subtle changes (red scattering in shadows, broad white around lit areas, dermal colour changes from underneath bones, veins or facial hairs). I step back by lowering the opacity, and start over.





## 9 Colour mood

After reading about James Gurney and gamut masks, and learning about colour grading for film, I've developed the habit of adding a colour mood to images. The idea is to restrict the colour scheme, to make it more interesting. I play with several Adjustments layers (my favourites being Color Lookup and Color Balance) until I find a colour mood I'm happy with.



## 10 Adding details and texture

Next, I start to add details by hand painting and photobashing. I'm looking out for sharp edges, breaking them so that they don't look too digital. I use simple brushes at this stage: a Round and a Square brush. I use photos and adjustment layers to add new elements, and apply texture to the materials.



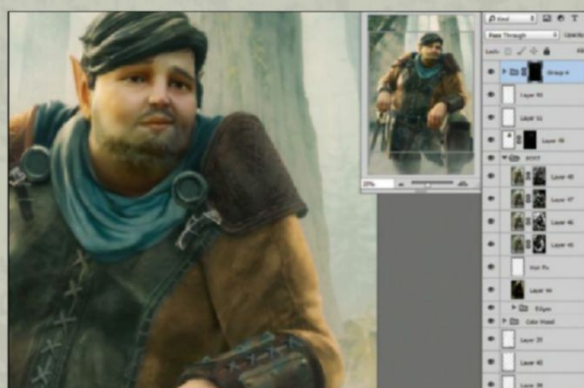
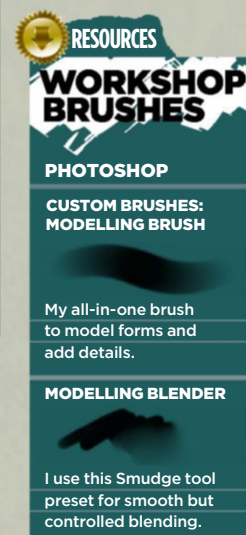
## 11 Photobashing the background

From the sketch, I know I want a simple background: a few trees with a blown-out light originating from the sky, and a very foggy atmosphere. I search in my library and on the internet for photos that match my needs. I'm looking for images with a very diffuse lighting scheme that fits my image. I avoid strongly lit subjects in direct sunlight.



## 12 Atmosphere, mist and fog

I want to add atmosphere to separate my subject from the background, and add a sense of depth. In a foggy environment there's a lot of light scattering in the air that lightens and lowers the contrast of distant elements. To achieve this I use several Level Adjustment layers in between my background, mid-ground and foreground. I add mist and a subtle shaft of light.



## 13 Post-production

The image looks too sharp. I'm using a blurred copy-merged version of the image, set on a low Opacity to add a bit of diffusion. I repeat this several times with various blending modes. I also use filters such as Paint Daubs, Sponge and Spatter, to create painterly passes. I add a mask and reveal part of these passes in areas that look too digital.



## 14 Photo retouching

I use Camera RAW to fine-tune my image. I add some sharpness, film grain and I tweak the colours. Camera RAW is a very powerful tool that's often overlooked for illustration. When used with Smart Objects, it becomes a powerful tool for adding a nondestructive finishing touch to my artwork. By converting all my layers to a Smart Object, I can dynamically add filters to it while ensuring that it remains editable.

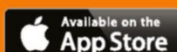


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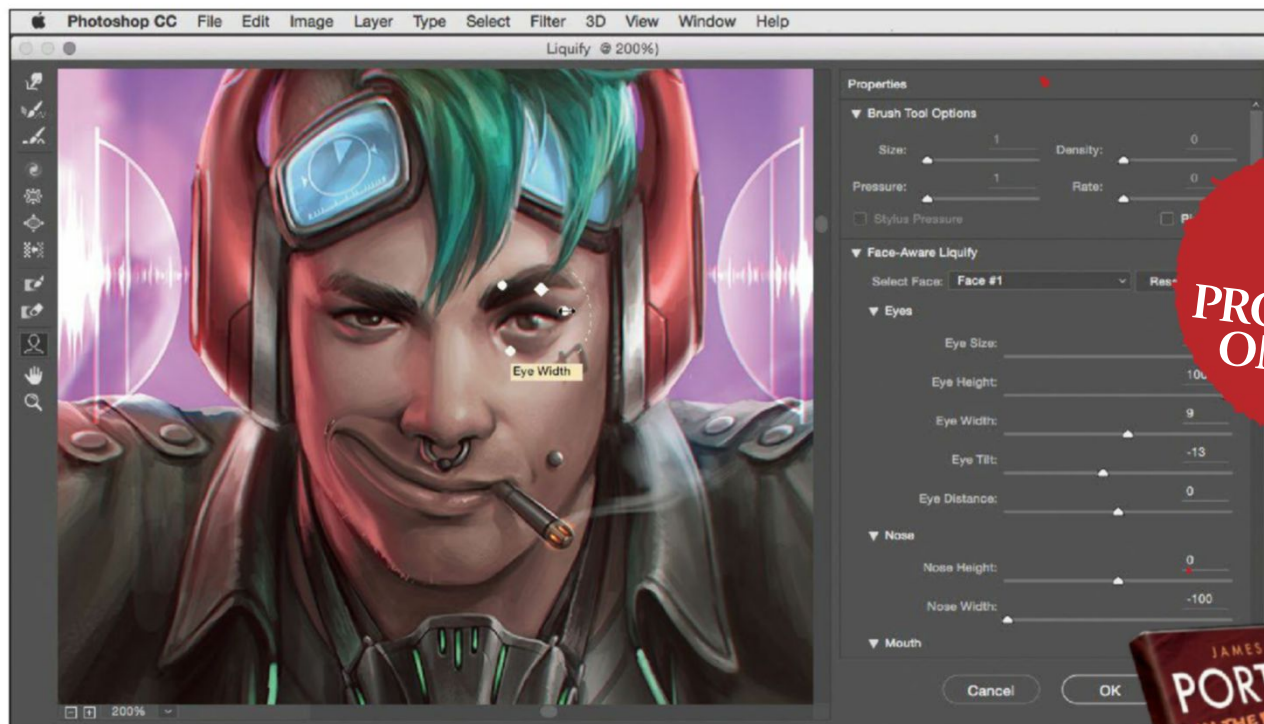


# NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX Reviews



**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...



8  
PRODUCTS  
ON TEST



## SOFTWARE & HARDWARE

### 92 Photoshop CC 2015.5

The interim update of Photoshop has a few surprises in store for artists.

### 93 Apex Fusion

This stylus for iPad or Android looks good and better still, has a polymer tip for greater drawing control.

### 93 Bez

You can accomplish plenty with this free vector drawing app.

### 94 PaintBerri

Beginner artists would do well to check out this browser-based paint app, which has a social media side.

## TRAINING

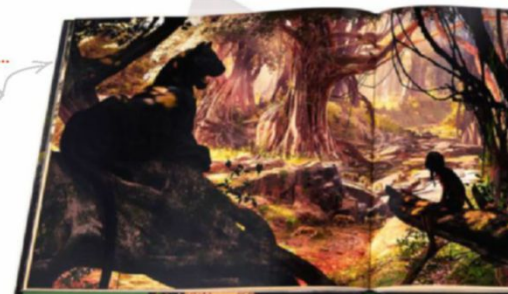
### 95 Portraits In The Wild

James Gurney encourages you to step outside your studio and base your character designs on people from everyday life.

## BOOKS

### 96 New reads

The Art of The Jungle Book; Killzone Visual Design; Science of Creature Design & Principles of Creature Design.



RATINGS EXPLAINED Magnificent Great Good Poor Atrocious

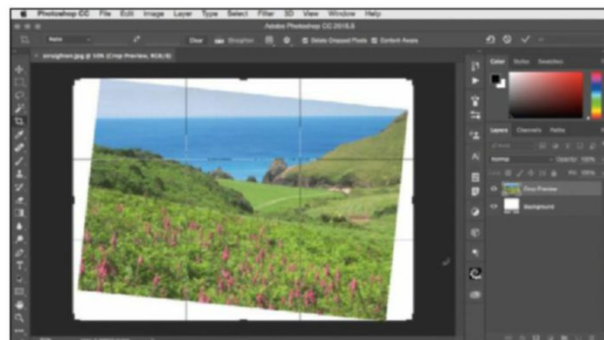




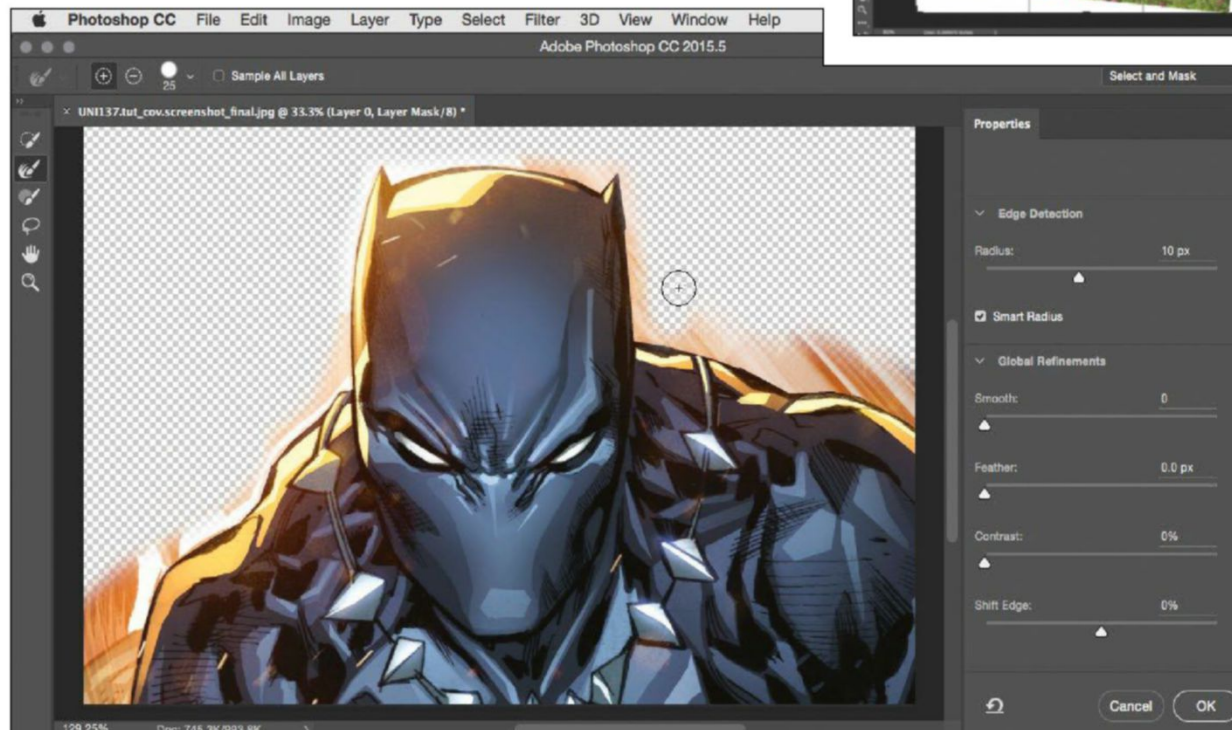
Enhancements include faster open and save and a new straightening tool in Camera Raw.



The new Liquify tool makes it easy to tweak faces, with automatic feature recognition.



Correct the horizon on a photo with the new Content-Aware Crop tool, and the corners will be filled in automatically with appropriate texture.



Onion Skin mode in the Select and Mask dialog enables you to paint in opacity as the brush automatically finds edges.

## Photoshop CC 2015.5

**PHANTASTIC?** Adobe's stop-gap update to Photoshop spices up photo-editing with a new cutout method and auto face recognition



**Price** From £8.57 a month **Company** Adobe **Web** [www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com)

**T**he latest Creative Cloud update is only an interim release, but there are some cool features for the dedicated subscribers. Just not much for Photoshop-using artists.

There's an enhancement to the Liquify filter that automatically recognises faces, identifying each feature and overall shape. You can tweak the size, position and shape of eyes, noses and mouths.

The Select and Mask dialog (formerly Refine Edge) now includes the Selection Brush, with a novel Onion Skin mode that makes it possible to start with a semi-transparent image, painting in the opacity as you make the selection. With new built-in brush tools and a better hair selection tool, it's easier than ever to make perfect

cutouts, without having to flip back and forth between tools and dialogs.

The Crop tool has long enabled you to straighten an errant horizon – but dealing with the empty corners that result has previously involved several operations. Now, the new Content-Aware Crop means the corners are filled in for you automatically, a process that works especially well with natural landscapes.

Other enhancements include faster open and save, a new straightening tool in Camera Raw, better integration for stock photographs, and the ability to make Library assets read-only (perfect for distributing icons and logos to groups).

But wait, we hear you say, this is all well and good, but we're artists – not photographers! And you'd be right.

### DETAILS

#### Features

- Face recognition
- Paint selections with opacity
- Enhanced editing brushes
- Content-Aware Crop tool
- Font recognition
- Faster opening of images

#### System Requirements

**PC:** Intel Core 2 or AMD Athlon, Windows 7, 2GB RAM, OpenGL 2.0  
**Mac:** Multicore Intel processor, OS X 10.9, 2GB RAM, OpenGL 2.0

#### Rating



The cold hard fact is that there's very little for the digital artist in any of Adobe's Photoshop updates. Digital art pioneer Craig Mullins has been vocal about Adobe's view that digital art is a 'dirty secret'. Yes it remains the number one piece of software for concept artists and digital illustrators, but this general apathy to digital artists – not to mention the subscription-only model – has certainly played a part in the rise of Photoshop alternatives such as Serif's Affinity Photo, which can be yours for a mere £40.

We've had CC for the past five years, and as far as we can tell software development has been 85 per cent image editing and 15 per cent 3D – and no one cares about Photoshop 3D! So it gets four out of five. It's good, but there's nowt earth-shattering on show.



It didn't take us long to get used to Bez's menus, which are well designed and intuitive.



**OS ONLY**

## Bez

**MAGIC TOUCH** This free vector drawing app is surprisingly capable

**Price** Free

**Company** Juicy Bits

**Web** [www.juicybitssoftware.com](http://www.juicybitssoftware.com)

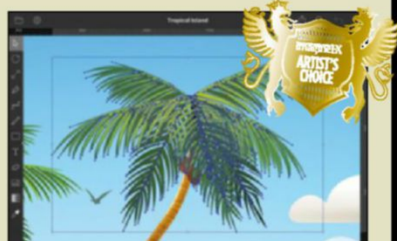
**RATING**

A vector drawing app from indie developer Juicy Bits, Bez takes its name from Bézier Curves. While it'll work on any iPad running iOS9+, it's iPad Pro owners that Juicy Bits has in its sights, and so Bez offers full support for Slide Over, Split View, the Smart Keyboard and the Apple Pencil.

We tested it on the iPad Pro and found it fast and smooth. Bez's menus are well-thought out and intuitive, and it was easy to get started. The software was very responsive to our fingers, and flew with the Apple Pencil. We were also impressed with the 4,096 per cent zoom; access to unlimited layers; and the full undo/redo functionality.

In short, all the tools you'd expect from a pro-level vector editor are here, with the exception of being able to set a text size. In general, though, Bez is up there with the best iPad vector drawing apps around.

Okay, so you do need to pay a single in-app purchase of £5.99 to unlock four additional features, most importantly high-quality output to PNG and SVG, and the ability to import and export documents. But there's plenty you can achieve in the free version of this impressive app.



You'll need to unlock the app to send your artwork to services like iCloud and Dropbox.

# Apex Fusion

**DRAWING TIP** Discover a stylus for iPad or Android that looks good and helps you draw with ease

**Price** \$60 **Company** Lynktec **Web** [www.lynktec.com](http://www.lynktec.com)

**W**hen it comes to styluses to draw or write with on your tablet, not all pens are created equal. The earliest 'capacitive' designs took advantage of the inherent electricity in your body to fool tablets into recognising them. Because tablet screens are designed to detect fingertips, these early styluses had thick, stubby tips, which meant drawing with them wasn't a pleasant experience.

Later 'active' designs use a built-in battery to generate their own electrical field that the tablet can detect. This means that the physical nibs can be finer. The Apex Fusion is Lynktec's third attempt at an active stylus, and its best yet.

The nib, made from a new polymer created by Lynktec, glides across a tablet display surface and feels entirely natural. The accuracy is good. It feels as though the line is emerging from the nib, rather than the slight gap you get with some styluses, although there was some delay in the line appearing at times. There's no pressure-sensitivity in the Apex Fusion, but you can achieve a limited degree of line thickness by varying the speed you move the pen. It's also quite tolerant of being held at an angle to the screen.

You can order extra packs of nibs cheaply, although it's a shame a spare nib wasn't included with the Apex

In addition to black or silver, the Apex Fusion also comes in gold or "rose gold" – a delicate shade of pink.



Fusion to encourage the habit. With the business-like feel of a micro-tip pen, the stylus barrel itself is light and easy to grip, and doesn't become uncomfortable if you use it for a longer session.

The internal battery offers around 14 hours of use per charge; a discrete micro-USB port accepts the provided cable for charging. A simple button on the pen-holder activates the power.

With intuitive use and no configuration required, the Apex Fusion is an excellent stylus for sketching, although dedicated artists may still be tempted by the features, particularly pressure-sensitivity and shortcut buttons, that Bluetooth-enabled designs like the slightly more expensive Adonit Pixel provide.

## DETAILS

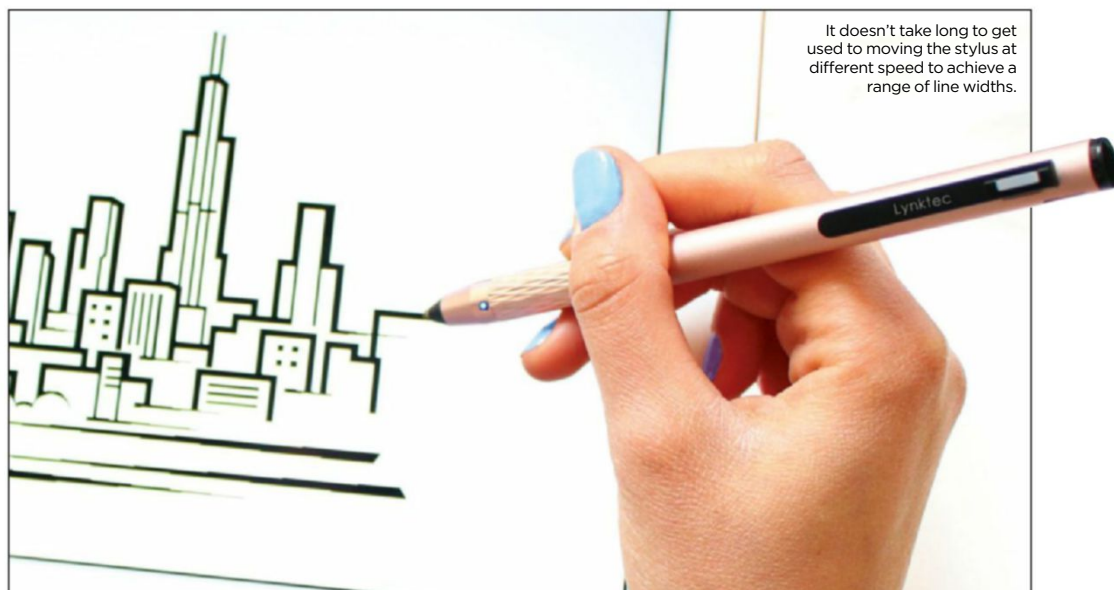
### Features

- Choice of four colours: black, gold, silver, rose gold
- Rechargeable lithium-ion battery; 14-hour charge
- Auto power save
- Replaceable conductive fibre polymer nib
- 15cm length
- 1cm diameter
- Weighs approx 15g

### System Requirements

**iOS:** Any iPad except iPad 1; all iPhones  
**Android:** Most Android tablets and smartphones

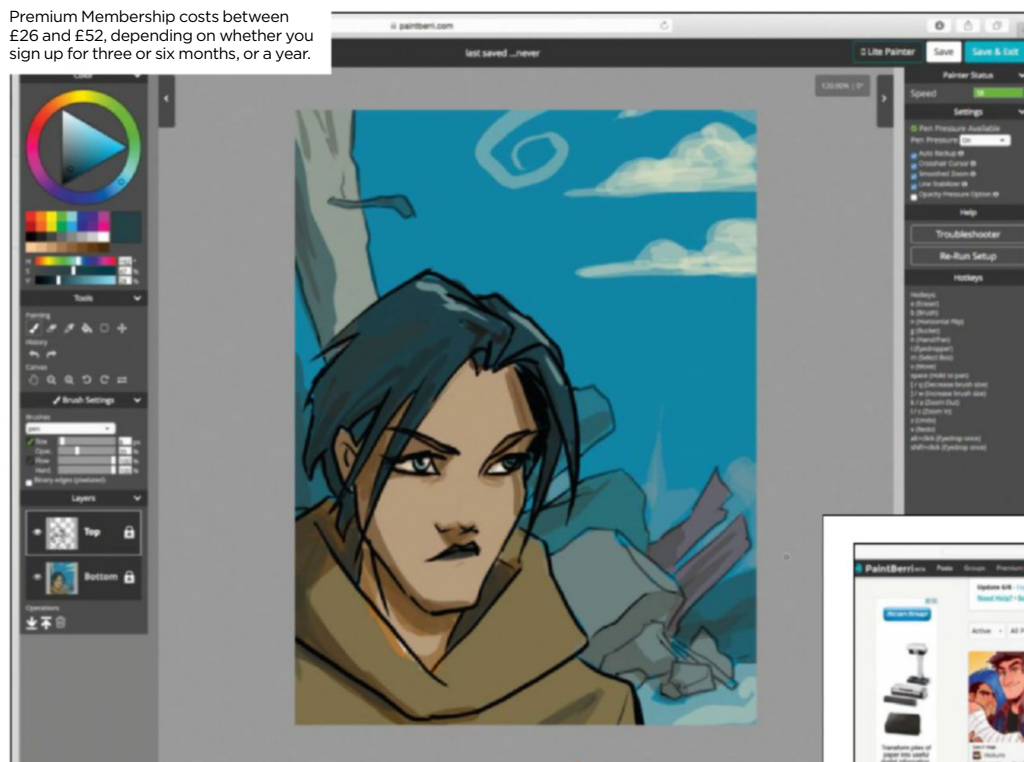
### Rating



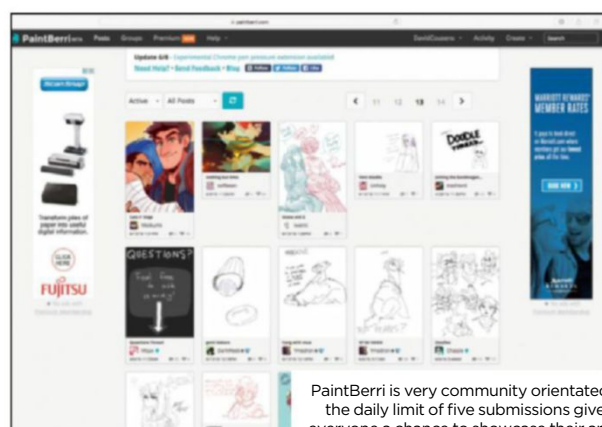
It doesn't take long to get used to moving the stylus at different speed to achieve a range of line widths.



Premium Membership costs between £26 and £52, depending on whether you sign up for three or six months, or a year.



PaintBerri has just two layers, but elements like Line Stabilization and Opacity are welcome additions.



PaintBerri is very community orientated; the daily limit of five submissions gives everyone a chance to showcase their art.

## PaintBerri

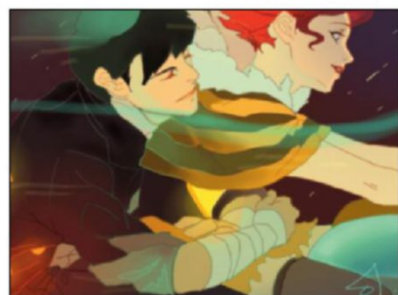
MAC & PC

**ART SOCIAL** This browser-based paint app doubles as a social, online art community for beginner artists

**Price** Free/variable Premium Membership pricing structure **Company** PaintBerri **Web** [www.paintberri.com](http://www.paintberri.com)

**W**e were initially unsure what PaintBerri's unique selling point was. The online app features free in-browser painting, a competent full painter mode that includes pen pressure (apart from when using Chrome), layers, hotkeys and many other professional-quality digital painting tools, together with a lite painter version compatible with older computers and mobile devices. Yet numerous art apps, available for both desktop and mobile devices, offer a more impressive toolset.

Furthermore, there are a number of online forums you can upload work



Artists such as SoftBean use PaintBerri to create fan art, and people can draw responses to the images.

to and comment on other people's art, and sites with more powerful portfolio aspects. Then the penny dropped: the appeal of PaintBerri is that it's a safe place for young artists to hang out and socialise.

Although there are many places to show off your artwork, a lot of them include established professional artists with awe-inspiring skills and a large number of followers willing to praise their idols at every turn. This makes it harder for inexperienced artists to draw attention from these digital celebrities. Furthermore, it can be quite intimidating to display your art alongside somebody who's been doing this for years.

Because of the limited tools and only two layers, more experienced artists will stay away from the app. This levels out the playing field, keeping heavy hitters away and meaning everybody else has more visibility and feels safer to share their work publicly without risk of unfair comparison. PaintBerri also features a cap on posts per day, to prevent artists from flooding the forums with their art, giving everyone a fair chance to be seen.

### DETAILS

#### Features

- Free in-browser painter
- Unlimited ability to save drafts
- Pen pressure with compatible OS/browser/tablet combos (Chrome not supported)
- Line Stabilizer function
- Standardised hotkeys that match apps like Photoshop
- Comments can be either text-based or drawn
- Brush Size, Opacity, Flow and Hardness options
- Five posts per day limit
- A block feature for avoiding social "drama"
- NSFW filter

#### System Requirements

**PC:** Connection to the internet, Firefox or Safari  
**Mac:** Connection to the internet, Firefox or Safari

#### Rating



**“It's a level playing field. Everyone has more visibility”**

Free membership to PaintBerri gives you access to in-browser painting tools, unlimited storage, auto-backup and unlimited comments, while a Premium Membership also grants you eight group slots, adjustable height comments, 600 characters per text comment, eight publishes per day and no advertisements.

With a lot of role-playing groups and fan art-based content on the site, PaintBerri certainly caters towards a younger user-base and will most likely leave many older art hobbyists mildly nonplussed and perhaps even underwhelmed with the social features.

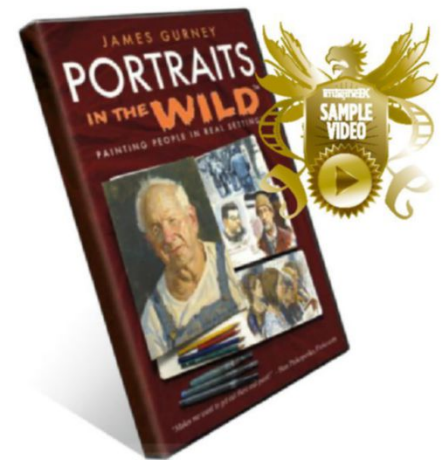
The best we can say about PaintBerri is that it's a haven for young, neophyte artists, looking to make friends and learn new techniques in an encouraging environment without worrying about being judged or critiqued too harshly.





This watercolour sketch comprises people captured at different times as they join and leave a busy queue.

In Portraits In The Wild, James Gurney chooses four locations where he's able to capture a variety of informal poses.



## Portraits In The Wild

**PEOPLE POWER** Use the outside world to generate a rich assortment of characters for your art, with the guiding hand of James Gurney

**Publisher** Gurney Studio **Price** £10/£17 **Format** Download/DVD **Web** [www.jamesgurney.com](http://www.jamesgurney.com)

**F**or all the emphasis in art training on anatomy, the human body manifests itself in an endless variety of forms. And that's without accounting for gender, age, race, personality and style. Capturing such diversity in your artwork is both an opportunity and a challenge.

James Gurney's latest video shows him doing the groundwork that supports his successful attempts to represent the breadth of humanity in his illustrations. As with all his In The Wild' videos, you'll watch him use an outdoor drawing and painting kit to solve creative challenges.

The task this time is to get figures on to paper while the 'models' get on with whatever they're doing: queuing for food at a country fair, working in a historical re-enactment village or performing in a choir, for example. There's also a more formal modelling session, with a model who, James says, "We knew wouldn't stay still."

### DETAILS

**Topics covered**  
 ■ Quick gestures  
 ■ Capturing character  
 ■ Light and form  
 ■ Values and colour  
 ■ Detail and looseness

**Length**  
 66 minutes

**Rating**



There's no guarantee that the subject will retain the same pose or even, in the case of the queue, stay in view until you've finished. James shows you how he adjusts his technique to suit the time he has, focusing in quick studies on gesture and the distinctive elements that suggest character. You'll also see how the situation makes him switch between capturing the subject or the background first; getting values down ahead of colour is a consistent decision.

James' In The Wild videos never offer the density of technical advice you'd expect from, say, a Gnomon Workshop video. Instead, they're creative beacons, informing the way you approach your craft and encouraging you to use the world around you to enrich your work. There's also a great deal of enjoyment to be had from the characters that you meet along the way; and the Sacred Harp choir performance, which you'll hear fragments of as James paints, is sensational.

### ARTIST PROFILE

## JAMES GURNEY

James specialises in painting realistic images of scenes that can't be photographed, from dinosaurs to ancient civilisations. He's also a plein air painter and sketcher, believing that making studies from observation fuels his imagination. James taught himself to draw by reading books about Norman Rockwell and Howard Pyle. He received a degree in anthropology at the University of California, but chose a career in art. James has written the instruction books Imaginative Realism and Color and Light.



[www.gurneyjourney.blogspot.com](http://www.gurneyjourney.blogspot.com)





## The Art of The Jungle Book

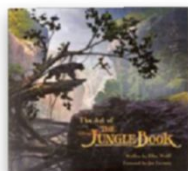
**ANIMAL MAGIC** A behind-the-scenes look at how Disney reinvented a cinematic classic, showcasing some stunning concept artwork

**Author** Ellen Wolff **Publisher** Titan Books **Price** £30 **Web** [www.titanbooks.com](http://www.titanbooks.com) **Available** Now

**D**isney's innovative reimagining of *The Jungle Book* has been the cinematic hit of the year. But while critics have been united in their praise for the 2016 reboot, which draws on both Rudyard Kipling's novel and the 1960s cartoon, they've been a little unsure about how to describe it.

It's not quite "CG animation" and not quite "live action", instead using motion capture to create a hybrid of the two. It's digital animation that's also handcrafted. It's live action that's often entirely pixellated. And it's precisely this boundary-pushing approach to filmmaking that makes this behind-the-scenes artbook such a fascinating read.

Following a foreword by the director, Jon Favreau (*Iron Man*, *Cowboys &*



Kaa's jungle home was painted as dark, murky and claustrophobic, to reflect Mowgli's state of mind.



*Aliens*), author Ellen Wolff, a writer specialising in animation and VFX, takes you through the making of the movie in six well-structured chapters. We learn how Favreau delved into Disney's archive for inspiration; how the creature artists melded anatomical accuracy with the mocap actors' own facial features; and how virtual environments were used to enhance the emotions in the story. As the director puts it: "We feel like we're out in fresh snow, with no tracks to follow. We're using technology that no one's used before, doing something in a way nobody's ever done."

The final two chapters explores how the animators and VFX artists brought the concept art to 3D life, facing such challenges as making fur and muscles move in the rain, and how to give talking animals mouth movements that seem believable. We also follow the process of building digital environments and combining them with photographed images, in a process that Ellen describes as "like solving a Rubik's cube."

Throughout 160 glossy pages, all this textual detail is complemented with stunning artwork, including pencil sketches, concept art, storyboards and film stills, as well as behind-the-scenes photography on set. The carefully considered layouts give the book a



Michael Kutsche's Baloo was envisioned as a larger bear than how he appeared in the finished film.

cinematic feel that encourages you to pore over every detail of every image. Near the end, there are five double-page walkthroughs, showing how two characters – Shere Khan and Raksha – and three environments were built.

We're not sure whether the 10 pages of interviews with the voice cast adds much insight to the book's 'art' subject, but that's a minor niggle. Unfortunately, there's a much bigger one: nowhere do you hear from the artists themselves. In fact, not one of the conceptual or storyboard artists whose work is used throughout is credited anywhere in the book. It's for this glaring reason we're unable to give this otherwise impressive book the full five stars.

**RATING**





# Killzone Visual Design

**GAME PLAN** Celebrating 15 years of the FPS, this lovely collection of art also offers insights into the video game design process

**Editor** Ashley Cowles **Publisher** Cook & Becker **Price** £32 **Web** [www.candb.com](http://www.candb.com) **Available** Now

**M**ost collections of video game art are mostly of interest to fans of the game itself. But this artbook celebrating 15 years of Killzone, the first-person shooter developed by Guerrilla Games, may appeal to a wider audience because of its “radically different” design philosophy.

Most games studios hire a team of artists to create concept art for a game, which is usually impressionistic, rather than being a completely



Helghast troops in action, using guns that the style guide says should be “heavy and cumbersome, not lightweight and comfortable.”



established game world. At Guerrilla Games, though, a ‘vis team’ starts by investigating how the game will work first, and designing functional systems of behaviour: it’s only when those are in place that they start thinking about aesthetics. It’s this difference in design philosophy – common to other areas of design but rare in the gaming world – that adds extra interest to this collection of Killzone concept art.

From hand-drawn concepts through to final in-game renders, and including alien environments, Helghast soldiers, weapons and vehicles, the visuals are all given space, and the attention to detail is staggering. Yet there’s enough text to keep it interesting including, most intriguingly, excerpts from the company’s own style guide.

**RATING**

# Science of Creature Design & Principles of Creature Design

**BEAST FOOT FORWARD** One of Hollywood’s top creature designers reveals the skills you need to follow in her footsteps

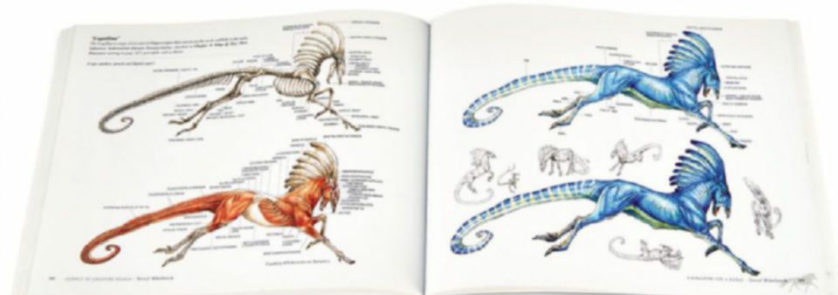
**Author** TerryI Whitlatch **Publisher** Design Studio Press **Price** £32 and £34 **Web** [www.designstudiopress.com](http://www.designstudiopress.com) **Available** Now

**A**s an illustrator who’s worked on creature design for big films, TerryI Whitlatch is well placed to offer advice and instruction on the subject.

In Science of Creature Design, she examines the importance of anatomy as the cornerstone of believable creature design, offering advice and her own drawings of mammals, fishes, reptiles, amphibians and dinosaurs. Companion text Principles of Creature



TerryI’s JakkoBeast takes its influences from the Bengal tiger, snow leopard, bearded pigs and more.

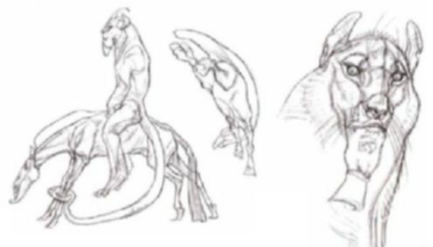


Design puts this knowledge into practice in creating imaginary animals. TerryI explains how her fantasy creatures are constructed according to the principles of anatomy, enabling them to interact with the environment and other creatures realistically.

Neither book contains tutorials or walkthroughs. It’s more about an examination of principles, using

examples of the author’s own work to help you make sense of them. The work is beautifully presented, and we see how much of it progresses from first sketches to finished work. But both books are more like portfolio art books with added tips, than comprehensive instruction manuals.

**RATING**



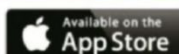


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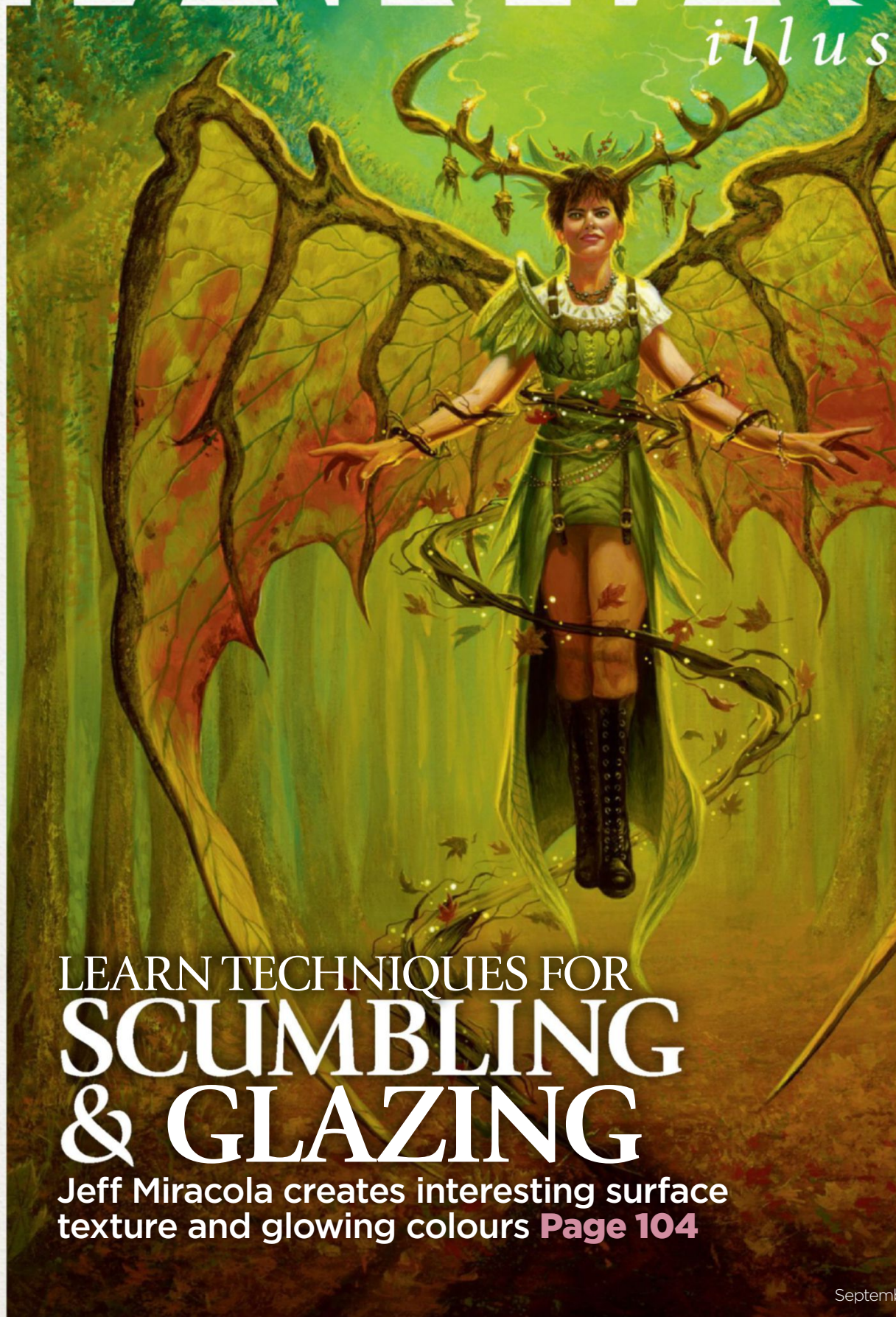


NO. 1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS  
**ImagineFX**  
PRESENTS



# FANTASY

*illustrator*



## LEARN TECHNIQUES FOR SCUMBLING & GLAZING

Jeff Miracola creates interesting surface texture and glowing colours **Page 104**

### This issue:



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The best traditional art revealed.



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Paolo Rivera's comic book cover.



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Anand Radhakrishnan's tips.



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Chris Dunn talks badgers.



# FXPosé *Traditional*

SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL FANTASY ARTISTS

## **Boris Pelcer**

**LOCATION:** US

**WEB:** [www.borispelcer.com](http://www.borispelcer.com)

**EMAIL:** [mail@borispelcer.com](mailto:mail@borispelcer.com)

**MEDIA:** Acrylic, graphite and digital



Boris is an independent artist and illustrator, whose work is a mixture of realism and surrealism. He divides his time between working on his personal projects and commercial commissions. "In a way, my personal work can be seen as a visual journey where I get to question the world around me and explore the unknown territories within my own psyche," says Boris.

Boris' clients include The New Yorker, The New Republic, The New York Times, The Atlantic, Newsweek and Bloomberg. He received his MFA in Art from University of Idaho: College of Art & Architecture, and his BFA in Illustration from Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design.

## **IMAGINEFX CRIT**



"Striking imagery from the artist.

I think Boris' paintings straddle the fields of illustration and graphic design. I can certainly see his work moving from editorial commissions on to the front of books."

**Cliff Hope,**  
Operations Editor

## **1 ABSURDISM**

Acrylic and digital, 6x8in

"It seems that in many ways, the joy and beauty of human life is defined by its impermanence. I find that realisation somehow absurd, and that's what I wanted to capture in this piece."

## **2 IDENTITY**

Acrylic and digital, 6x8in

"With this piece I explored the question: 'What is this phenomenon of identity?' I feel like my identity is constantly being shaped and reshaped by many influences, some of which I'm aware of, while others are much more subtle - unconscious, even. This piece explores some of those things that I believe shape my identity."









## ● Mateusz Urbanowicz

LOCATION: Japan

WEB: [www.mateuszurbanowicz.com](http://www.mateuszurbanowicz.com)

EMAIL: [mattjabbar@gmail.com](mailto:mattjabbar@gmail.com)

MEDIA: Watercolours, Photoshop



"I was born and raised in Silesia, Poland," says Mateusz, "where I studied electronic engineering until I found out that art can be more than a hobby when I began teaching people how to use Wacom's creative products."

Thanks to a scholarship, the artist moved to Japan to study animation and comics. In 2013 Mateusz started working as a background artist and animations creator for Comix Wave Films in Tokyo. Alongside his studio work, he's busy creating illustration series, standalone paintings and other works.

## IMAGINEFX CRIT



"I love how Mateusz has achieved the motion blur in his first cycling painting. But he also captures the cyclist's solitude in the companion image, where the storm clouds add to the atmosphere."

Beren Neale,  
Acting Editor

### 1 RIDE ON BICYCLE BOY!

Watercolour and pencil on F4 paper, 31x20cm

"This is one of a series of illustrations on the cycling theme. I wanted to focus on the rapid movement in the scene. I found it a challenge, but like how the blurring effect brings this piece to life."

### 2 YAMANE MEAT SHOP

Watercolour and Copic multiliner on watercolour paper, 30x20cm

"I would often walk along the streets of Tokyo, thinking how I'd love to depict the fronts of interesting-looking stores. This is the first in a series on that particular theme."

### 3 "BICYCLE BOY" SERIES #08

Watercolour and pencil on F4 paper, 30x22cm

"This piece was inspired by the winding roads of Seiseki-sakuragaoka train station, near Tokyo. I wanted to paint a warm evening with the sky coming out after the rain, as the hero closes in on the finish line."

### 4 COLD IN YOKOHAMA

Watercolour and pencil on watercolour paper, 30x18cm

"This is possibly my favourite piece from the series inspired by the 1960's Yokohama city. I wanted to mix fantastic elements with nostalgic feel in just the right amounts."

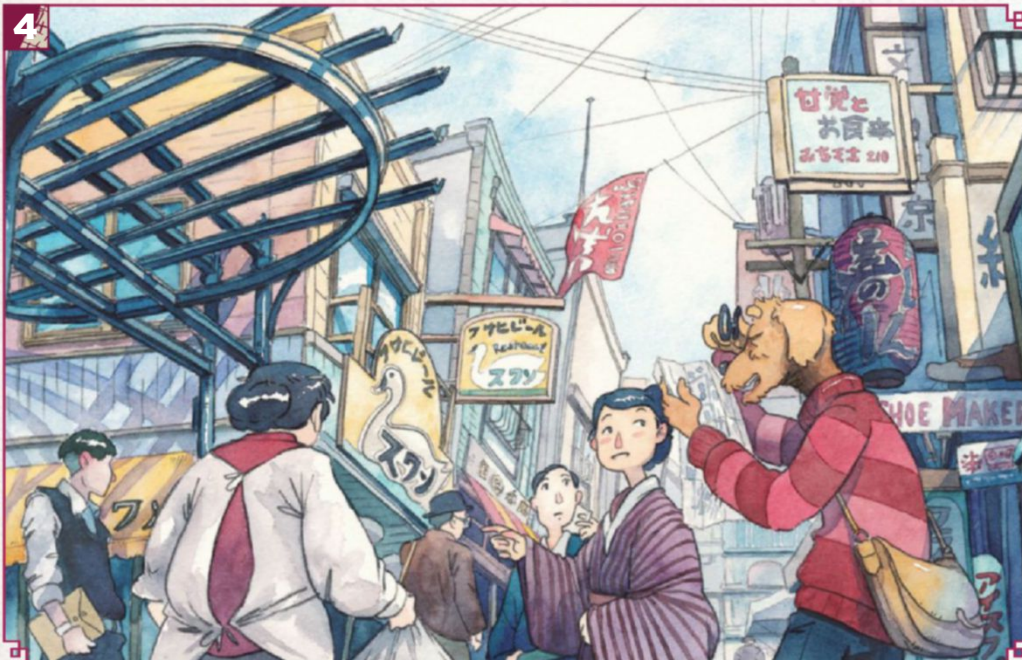




3



4



## SUBMIT YOUR ART TO FXPOSÉ

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

**Email:** [fxpose@imaginefx.com](mailto:fxpose@imaginefx.com)  
(maximum 1MB per image)

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

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



# Workshops



Pencil

Acrylics

Photoshop

## SCUMBLING & GLAZING TRICKS

JEFF MIRACOLA guides you through his process of creating a traditional painting that features interesting surface texture and vibrant, glowing colours

Over the past few years, I've uploaded videos to my YouTube channel featuring my various drawing and painting techniques. These short videos have become so popular that my subscribers have asked for a more in-depth look at my process. I answered by creating a video which is the most comprehensive look yet into my acrylic painting techniques. The painting I created for that video is the image you see in this workshop.

My Forest Angel painting is the perfect way to present my method of glazing and scumbling with paint to achieve both texture and vibrant colour that seem to glow on the canvas. Early in my painting career, I stumbled upon the method of glazing: that is, applying thin washes of paint over a base colour (usually a lighter one) in order to change or enhance that original base. I found that applying many glazes throughout the course of a painting gave me wonderfully rich colour unequalled to that straight out of the

### ARTIST INSIGHT

#### PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATION

Getting high-quality photos of your final art, which capture exact colours, can be tricky. I find it best to have a professional photographer make a photo or scan of my painting, to look its best for the client.

tube. I also discovered that scumbling, that is, the method of dry-brushing a lighter, opaque colour over a darker one to lighten the original, was extremely useful for creating interesting textures.

I do a great deal of preparation work before I start painting. Essential parts of my pre-painting process include allowing quiet reflection to think of ideas, creating thumbnail sketches, photographing reference, rendering the final drawing, preparing the painting surface, and transferring the final image onto it. Without those crucial early steps, my paintings could not be successful.

Just as critical are my underpainting and local colour stages, which lay the groundwork for a strong image. I often call these early stages the "ugly" stages because that's when the painting looks its worst. This is the time when many artists abandon a painting, never pushing through to the final result. I was guilty of this as a young artist until I learned to be persistent, to keep working until the painting resembled the image of my



imagination. The way I was able to achieve that final result was through glazing and scumbling, two painting methods which have become the foundation of my acrylic painting process. I'm thrilled to share them with you here.



Jeff has been creating fantasy art for over 22 years and has illustrated for properties such as *Dungeons & Dragons*, *World of Warcraft*, and *Magic: the Gathering*. He runs a YouTube channel where he showcases many art techniques. You can see more of his paintings at [www.jeffmiracola.com](http://www.jeffmiracola.com). ➔







## MATERIALS

### DRAWING SUPPLIES

- Prismacolor ebony pencil
- Derwent pencils
- Crayola Sky Blue coloured pencil
- General's kneaded eraser
- Pentel Hi-Polymer eraser

### PAINTING SURFACE

- Crescent #110 Cold Press illustration board
- Art Alternatives acrylic white gesso
- Foam brush

### PALETTE

- 11x14-inch sheet of tempered glass
- Stanley razor scraper

### PAINTS

- Golden Soft Body Fluid Acrylics: Green Gold, Teal, Cerulean Blue Deep, Yellow Ochre, Hansa Yellow Medium, Red Oxide, Cadmium Red, Medium Hue, Quinacridone Red, Burnt Sienna, Burnt Umber Light, Raw Umber, Sap Green Hue, Titanium White

### LIQUITEX HEAVY BODY ACRYLICS

- Titanium White

### BRUSHES

- Loew-Cornell LaCorneille Golden Taklon (7650) Spotter – sizes 3/0 and 5/0
- Loew-Cornell LaCorneille Golden Taklon (7500) Filbert – sizes 4 and 10
- Artist's Loft Vienna Wash – size 1 inch
- Artist's Loft Vienna Oval Wash size 1/2-inch
- Grumbacher Goldenedge (4624) wash size 1.5-inch
- Artist's Loft Marseille Mop – size 3/4-inch

### ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

- Liquitex free-style Small palette knife #12
- Hyde putty knife
- Natural sponges
- X-Acto brand knife
- Old toothbrush
- Windsor & Newton Art Masking Fluid
- Liquitex Blended Fibers Texture Gel
- Liquitex Slo-Dri Blending Medium



## 1 Produce thumbnails

Thumbnails are a good way to get my ideas on to paper quickly. My first concept isn't always the best, so I create many thumbnails to explore new angles or compositions. I don't bother making detailed drawings – I only add enough information to help me visualise my idea.



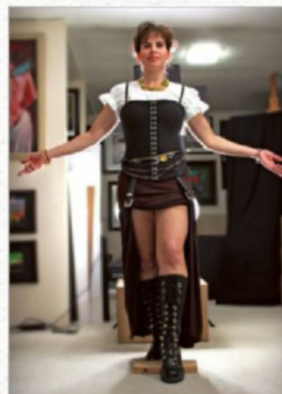
## 3 Final drawing

With my photo reference and thumbnail drawing nearby, I create a more detailed, final drawing on higher-quality paper, such as watercolour paper, because it holds up well to any erasing or corrections that I need to make. The final drawing is my chance to solve any compositional issues, and put in all the details I'll need.



## 5 Create a colour study

To explore various colour options, I scan my drawing and add colour in Photoshop on a separate layer with the Blend mode set to Multiply. Alternatively, I print out small versions of my drawing and create colour studies with markers. I often make colour studies for my paintings because it gives me a 'road map' to follow as I paint.



## 2 Take photo references

Once I've decided on a thumbnail composition, I shoot photo reference of my wife for the forest angel. I light her from behind because I want the main light source in my painting to originate from behind the figure. I also shoot close-ups of certain body parts, like the hands or head.



## 4 Transfer the drawing

With my drawing complete, I make a photocopy of it, coat the back of the photocopy with soft lead pencil and tape the photocopy to my painting surface. I then use a ballpoint pen to make the transfer. After I transfer my drawing, I keep the photocopy handy – just in case I need to start my painting over.





## COLOUR TIP

### LIGHT 'EM UP

I use daylight bulbs in all of my studio lamps. This enables me to achieve consistent colour in my paintings.



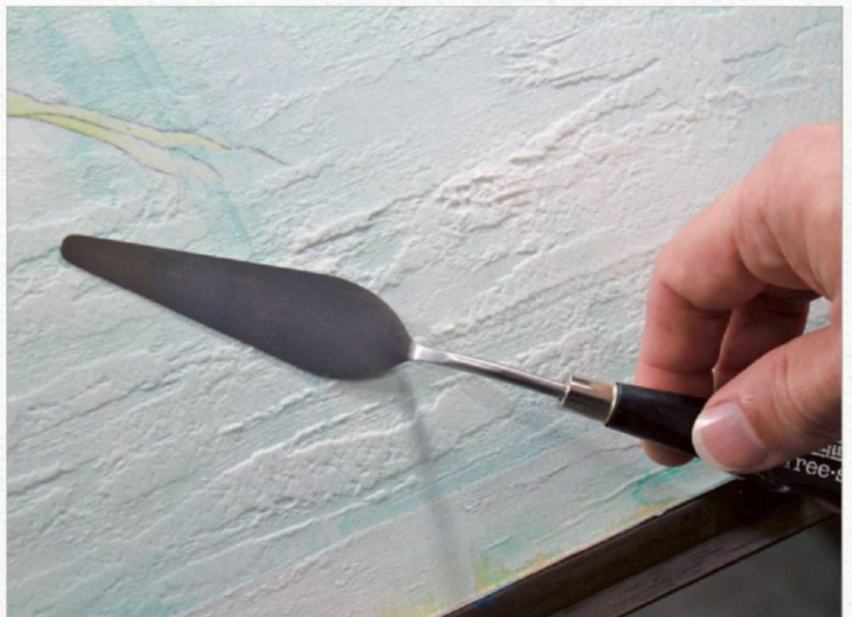
## 6 Use art masking fluid on the character

I want to paint the background first and the foreground elements last. To protect the forest angel while painting the background, I cover her in art masking fluid. This is a liquid that dries to solid rubber latex and is easy to remove. I make sure to liberally apply the art masking fluid so that the angel is completely covered.



## 7 Apply texture gel

I spread texture gel on the illustration board using a palette knife to build up surface texture for the tree trunks and leaf-covered ground. I carve into the texture gel with the palette knife or lightly skim across it to create specific textures. Gesso could be used to create texture, but the texture gel is thicker and more moldable. ➡







## 8 Underpainting approach

I begin my underpainting by choosing colours that closely match my colour study. I apply the paint in thin washes, let it dry and repeat this process as I slowly build the paint to its optimal colour and thickness. The messiness of this stage can be discouraging, but I keep the final image in my mind and keep moving forward.



## 9 Paint tree trunks and ground

With light-coloured paint, I scumble over the dark tree trunks using the side of my brush to skim across the textured trunks, giving the impression of tree bark. I also apply a yellow glaze over the painting to add a feeling of warmth. This is the first of many glazes I'll be applying.

### MATERIAL TIP

#### ANY OLD RAGS

You can use an old cotton T-shirt as a paint rag. And use a glass palette for picking up paint. It's easy to clean and reusable.



## 10 Paint the treetops

I use a natural sponge dipped in paint to apply impressionistic leaf shapes. I apply a dark colour first, let it dry, and then apply a lighter colour over that, repeating this a few times so that the leaves appear to catch sunlight. Applying the paint dark to light also gives the treetops some depth and volume.



### ARTIST INSIGHT

#### MAINTAIN A PAINTING SAFETY NET

Safeguard all drawings, photocopies, and reference photos until you're done with your painting in case you have to scrap everything and begin again. Saving these materials has helped me more than once when I've had to start paintings over for various reasons.



## 11 Remove art masking fluid

With the background done, I now remove the art masking fluid from the angel. I carefully peel it up by dragging my finger across the mask. It's important to remove it slowly, so I don't lift paint beyond the mask edges. I occasionally use a tool called a rubber cement pickup to remove any stubborn pieces of the art masking fluid.





# In depth Scumbling & glazing



## 12 Angel underpainting

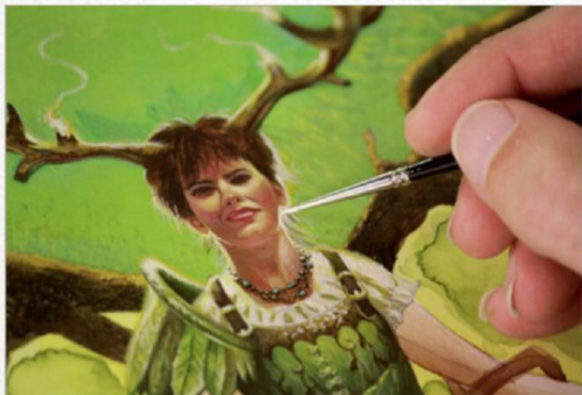
I build up the colour of the angel with a series of glazes to achieve depth and richness of hue. I then dab watered-down paint in the wings so the paint moves around, creating interesting shapes. These shapes help me visualise the leaf pattern that I'll paint into the wings.



### ARTIST INSIGHT

#### MAKE GOOD USE OF AIR POWER

A blow dryer can be used to speed up drying time and also move wet paint around in interesting ways. Drying paint quickly can be used to "lock in" the paint to create different effects.



## 13 Paint the face

I spend the most time painting the face, because it's the centrepiece of this composition. I apply dozens of glazes, each time applying a thin wash of colour, then working into that colour with more opaque colour, such as white. As the paint builds up on the surface, the ability to achieve smoother gradients and blends becomes easier.



## 14 Paint the wings

I apply a base colour of orange with light green over that. I use my leaf reference photos to guide me as I add details such as veins and imperfections. I also paint rim lighting along the edge of the wings. For the skeletal structure of the wings, I apply texture gel and paint them brown so that they resemble tree branches.



## 15 Putting in the finishing touches

Details that are added at the end of the painting are the most rewarding because that's when the painting starts to pull together. I add floating leaves and magical lights along the vines, and animal skulls hanging from the antlers. I also apply a few more glazes of yellow/green paint over the painting so that it glows.



Acrylics

Gouache

Photoshop

# PAINTING HELLBOY IN A NEW LIGHT

**PAOLO RIVERA** brings together the style of Norman Rockwell and the Saturday Evening Post to create a comic book cover featuring everyone's favourite demon

This was the first of three covers for the series Hellboy and the B.P.R.D.: 1953, written by Mike Mignola and Chris Roberson. I did the interior art as well (with help from my dad, Joe Rivera, on inks and Dave Stewart on colours), but the covers are always done well in advance for solicitations and promotion. I submitted several thumbnail sketches, planning to do them all in ink with digital colour — the same style as the interior art. But my editor, Scott Allie, thought one sketch in particular would look good in the style of Norman Rockwell, especially since the book takes place in 1953.

I'm glad he convinced me, as it became one of my most popular pieces. Indeed, the original was purchased by Guillermo del Toro, director of the Hellboy films.

I was reluctant to paint because I knew it would take a while: about 70 hours, sketch to scan. My daughter had just been born, so I was short on time (and sleep) and those 70 hours often came in 30-minute snippets. She's almost one now, almost old enough to start drawing.



Paolo grew up on cartoons and comics, especially *Ninja Turtles*, *Batman*, and *The Tick*. In 2002 he got his big break from

Marvel Comics. Visit [www.paolorivera.com](http://www.paolorivera.com) to see more of his comic and cover work.

## MATERIALS

### BRUSHES

■ Silver Brush Black Velvet. This is a great all-purpose brush. I mostly use Rounds, Sizes 4 and 8.

### PAINTS

■ Holbein Gouache  
■ Holbein Acryla  
Gouache White

### SURFACE

■ 13x19 inch Fabriano Artistic Watercolor Paper Hot Press 300lb



## GENERIC LIGHTING

The lighting works well on a white background where the graphic shapes are more important than creating a sense of atmosphere through light and shadow.

## Step by Step: Laying the groundwork in Photoshop



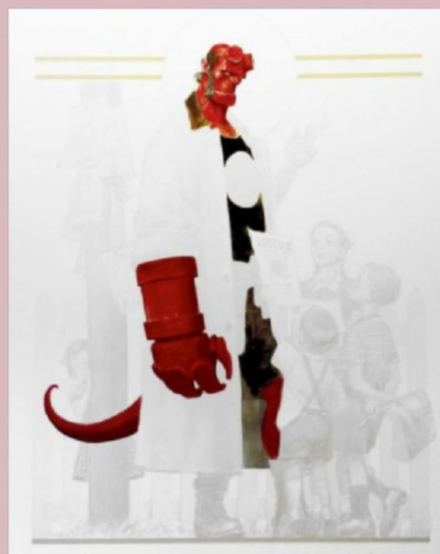
### 1 ARRANGE THE COMPONENTS

This sketch is to work out compositional elements and details. Once I know what's needed, I can begin to collect reference: period clothing, lost pet signs, posed photos and so on. All my preliminary work is done in Photoshop using Kyle T Webster's brushes ([www.kylebrush.com](http://www.kylebrush.com)).



### 2 TIGHTEN ALL THE DETAILS

Still in Photoshop, I create a new layer to tighten up the drawing. This is the stage where I look at my reference the most, either pasting images directly into the document or using a split-screen. I then add another layer (set to Multiply) where I work out a rough colour study.



### 3 TRANSFER AND PAINT

Using an Adjustment layer, I make the image a very light orange to mimic a burnt sienna underpainting. I print out the drawing on thick watercolour paper at 13x19 inches. I sometimes do a monochromatic underpainting, but here I just start painting, mostly washes at first.



# Artist insight Painting Hellboy

## LOST PETS

The telephone pole is fun to paint, mostly for the variety of textures and subtle colour variations. I try to accomplish as much as possible using transparent techniques and end with bold, opaque strokes to solidify details.

## HELLBOY'S MUG

I render Hellboy's features using gouache thinned with water. I work from dark to light so that I don't lose the drawing's details, but often tone down the lightest areas, ready for opaque highlights.

## WACKY REFERENCE

For reference photos, I want just enough information to get the gesture or lighting right. I most often need help with hands and clothing wrinkles. Although I didn't make it in time for this cover, I eventually sculpted a Hellboy maquette in sculptor to help me with draftsmanship and lighting for the rest of the series.



Paolo  
Rivera



## Oils

# GLAZING OVER AN UNDERPAINTING

ANAND RADHAKRISHNAN continues on from his previous article, and paints over a monochromatic underpainting in transparent layers of oil paint, called glazes

A glaze refers to a thin and transparent layer on a painting that affects the appearance of the underlying layer. This change in appearance could be in hue, value, texture or a combination of all three.

As such, glazing is the second of the two-part painting process where layers of paint are applied thinly on an underpainting, usually done to add colour to an achromatic or monochromatic underpainting. It's

similar to placing a coloured Cellophane sheet over a black and white photograph.

There are two main reasons why glazing is popular among artists. The first is brilliance and luminosity. Because it involves applying colour directly without the addition of white to make it opaque, the colours are more saturated and appear brighter on the canvas. In addition, it provides a glow to the painting.

Second, underpainting enables you to break down value and colour. Because glazing deals with colour and doesn't

### MATERIALS

- Canvas
- Oil paints
- Painting medium
- Palette
- Brushes

affect the value to a large degree, the finished painting often stays loyal to the tonal schemes of the underlying opaque layers. In many ways, glazes work like the Multiply layer in Photoshop, adding transparent layers with the underlying image showing through to a large extent.



Anand is a freelance illustrator who lives and works in Mumbai and has recently explored the world of sci-fi and fantasy

illustration. You can see more of his art by visiting [www.behance.net/anandrkr](http://www.behance.net/anandrkr).



I don't approach anything over 80 per cent in the greyscale, because of the use of burnt umber and white.

I avoid highlights on the glass surface at this stage.

I downplay some of the values and keep it light, because glazing tends to darken the values by a certain percentage.

### OBJECT TIP

#### FLUID MECHANICS

An object suspended in liquid would move around, depending on the space available – and that shows in stills, too.



People usually have more red at their fingertips, and I exaggerate that here for effect.

I leave some of the brush strokes showing through, to ensure that there's a variety of textures in the final piece.

I leave a lot of the burnt umber showing through from the underpainting, because it's a pleasant grey and plays well with brighter colours.

## 1 Adding to the underpainting

In the previous article, I went through some steps in creating an underpainting using burnt umber and white. I start here where I left off and develop the underpainting a little further. I add some subtleties of skin and folds that will show through in the final piece.

## 2 Warm glazes

I apply a number of layers of warm glazes to the painting. To glaze effectively I use a small amount of pigment mixed with a larger amount of medium to make it thin and transparent. I intend to keep it warmer towards the centre, and cooler at the edges.



I add greens and blues to the veins of the hands. I also use blues at the edges of the forms to direct the viewer's attention.



I let some of the glazes drip so they sit at the crevices made by dry paint. This pushes the illusion of skin folds on the hand.

### 3 Subtle cool layers

Because I want this painting to be predominantly warm, my cools are subdued. It's important to let an image be either more cool or more warm. This automatically gives the image a tangible mood. Choosing to sit on the fence will please no one.



### 4 Edge considerations

Playing with a variety of edges is one of the most useful tools in suggesting concepts such as submersion, transparency and luminosity. When used in combinations of each other it can give the viewer the illusion of form, whatever the setting may be.

The outlines of bright saturated colour help to suggest glow and add atmospheric perspective.

When direct light hits a glass container filled with fluid, the light generally is trapped to a certain degree in the container and bounces around before exiting. This causes a glow or a gradient in the fluid.

I group the majority of the darks and use it to frame the focal areas.

Lost edges help to build the complete image in the mind's eye of the viewer. The human brain is excellent at interpretation and filling in the gaps.

I add the tattoos as tools to direct the viewer's eye and not let it go out of the composition.

### 5 Highlights and darkest darks

In this final step, I add my opaque lights that stand as my highlights and accents of colour. Because the uniform glazes don't cover these areas, they tend to be bright and vivid. Conversely, I also add my darkest darks: in this case, the inactive area of the painting that frames the active areas.

#### ARTIST INSIGHT

##### COLOUR IS SUBJECTIVE

A colour will appear dull or bright, depending on the colours placed next to it. So a neutral grey might appear blue when placed among warm colours.



# First Impressions

✧ Chris Dunn ✧

The Wind in the Willows artist reveals how Middle-earth kick-started his career



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

I grew up in a town called Keighley in West

Yorkshire. The town sits in the windswept moors of Brontë country, and the atmospheric landscape has influenced many of the backgrounds to my paintings. The town also has a Victorian industrial past and I think that's cropped up a few times in my work over the years.

**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?**

I was 14 years old, in a local book shop and looking at a Tolkien calendar illustrated by John Howe. I noticed watercolours could be both vibrant and dark. Howe's work had a big effect on me: I realised I could paint fantastical pictures and get paid for the privilege.

**Can you name one person who helped you on your way? And someone who tried to get in your way?**

I had a very helpful tutor in my art foundation course at Bradford College



## SETTLING IN

*"Badger relaxes after a long day. This painting was commissioned by Galerie Daniel Maghen, a gallery based in Paris."*

back in 2005. He said to me, "You like realism and narrative – have you heard of Norman Rockwell?" To my shame I hadn't, and so the next day he came back with a huge book packed full of his amazing illustrations. That was another light bulb moment. I would say nobody has tried to hold me back other than myself. I'm my own toughest critic and I think that stopped me from promoting myself effectively for a long time.

**“I realised I could paint fantastical pictures and get paid for the privilege”**

**What was your first paid commission?**

Editorial illustrations for a history of work article in a management magazine. They were based on ancient Greek plates featuring designs representing the workplace from Ancient Greece, the medieval period and the industrial revolution, through to the modern day. The artwork I produced was mainly digital and I learned a lot doing it, but I don't keep it in my presentation portfolio.

**What's the last piece that you finished, and how do the two differ?**

I've just finished a spot illustration for The Wind In Willows showing Toad driving a car into a pond. It's a small watercolour illustration, very traditional and exactly the type of artwork I normally produce. It bears little relation to my first paid commission and with luck I will continue producing original paintings for the rest of my life.

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

Create what you like and find a market for it afterwards, because if you like it then somebody else will, too.

**You're known for your animal art – is there a species you love to paint? And one that makes your heart sink?**

Badgers have so much character and they look good in a woolly jumper. I don't enjoy painting domestic pets quite so much. Wild animals are just better.

**What character that you've painted do you most identify with?**

Probably the badger reading a newspaper in my painting Settling In. Sitting in front of a lit fireplace with a newspaper, cup of tea and biscuits is my idea of luxury (don't judge me). However, I haven't experienced that delight in the past three years because my two young boys won't allow it. Everybody knows newspapers are for tearing and chewing.

**Can you describe the place where you usually create your art?**

I have a small studio at home, in what would be the small bedroom. There are two desks, a drawing table and a bookcase down one side and then multiple boards, easels and portfolios stacked against the wall behind me. Over time I hope to fill the back wall with originals by other favourite artists.

It's brilliant to be at home because my wife and kids can drop in, or I can join the conversation, at any point. Saying that, I may have to fit a lock on the studio door to prevent my eldest invading when I'm not there. I've already had a few close shaves, but nothing a putty rubber won't fix.

**Chris is an illustrator and gallery artist. His most recent series of anthropomorphic animal paintings will be exhibited at Galerie Daniel Maghen in Paris this July. You can see more of his art at [www.chris-dunn.co.uk](http://www.chris-dunn.co.uk).**

## TOAD CRASHES

*"Watercolour spot art for The Wind In the Willows, to be published at the end of the year."*





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