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NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX



EXCLUSIVE!

STRANGER THINGS ART

Kyle Lambert on how he illustrated an iconic poster

Future

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Get to grips with key traditional art skills

CREATE FUTURISTIC MANGA

Discover how **Ilya Kuvshinov** paints a sci-fi heroine
PLUS! Ross Tran shares the secrets to his online success



15 unbeatable creature tips

Design cute and characterful animals every single time



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The master manga artist goes wild in Photoshop



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



Hello there. Long time no speak! After a baby-shaped hiatus, I'm back at the helm of ImagineFX. Woohoo! I honestly don't think I could have picked a better time to return.

The art community has never seemed more alive, diverse and packed to the rafters with talent.

I was lucky enough to attend the Industry Workshops event in London last month – you can see my report on the show on page 27. While there, I managed to chat with an incredible array of artistic talent from games, film and beyond. All of them had kind words to say about what we do here at ImagineFX and many also want to help teach you a thing or two about painting. I'm forever grateful for this.

But for now, sit back and take in the inspiration that's stuffed on every page and as ever, let me know your thoughts.

Claire

Claire Howlett, Editor
claire@imaginefx.com

EDITOR'S CHOICE Three things that I rather liked this issue...

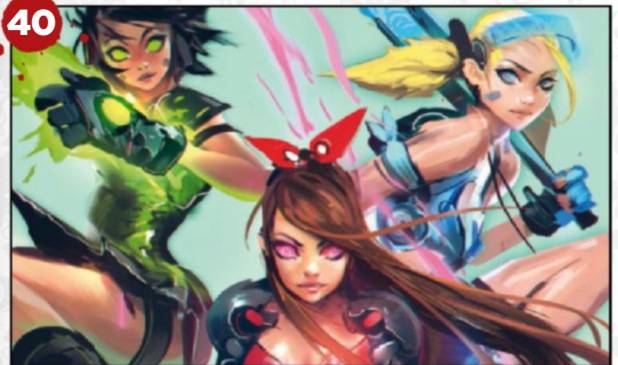
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Turn it up to Eleven

Getting the official Stranger Things artist to tell us how he created the poster got me fangirling...

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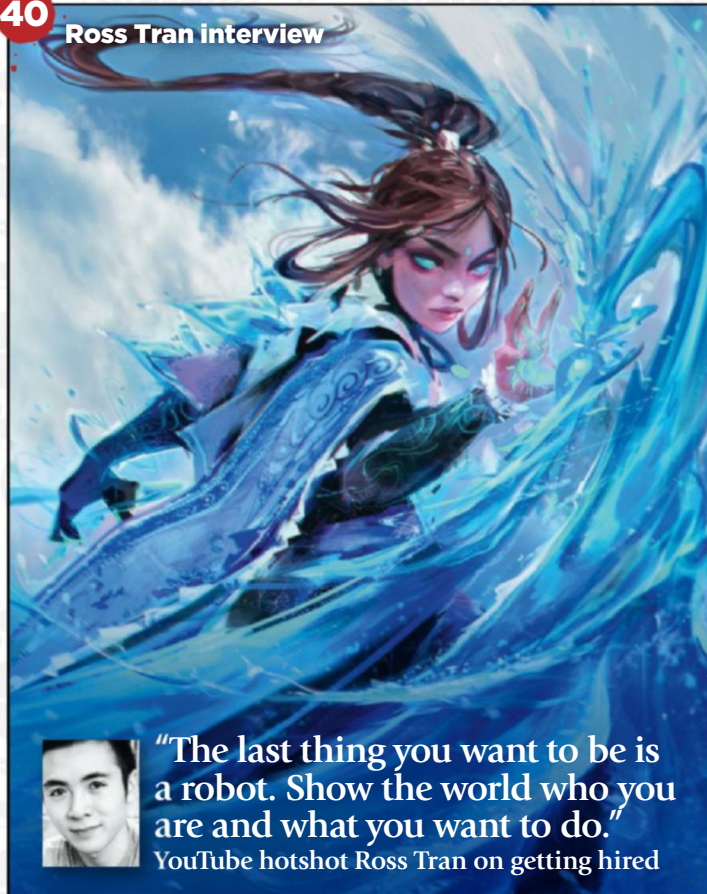
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"The last thing you want to be is a robot. Show the world who you are and what you want to do."
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Reader FXPosé

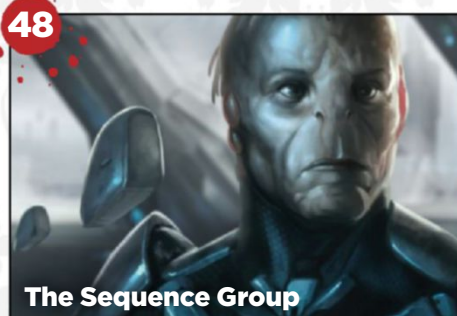
THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART



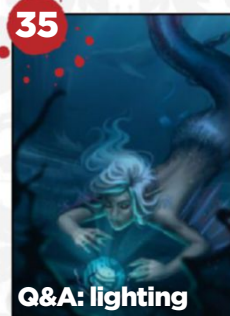
See page 8 for the best new art ➡➡



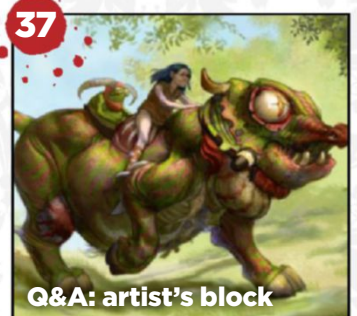
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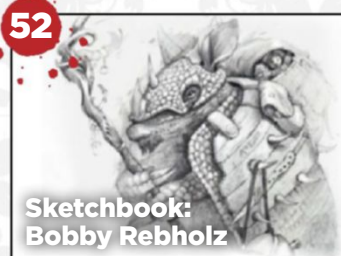
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Artist in residence



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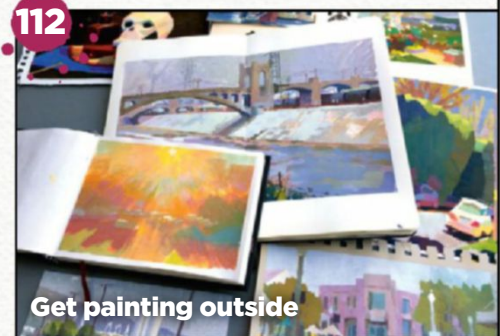
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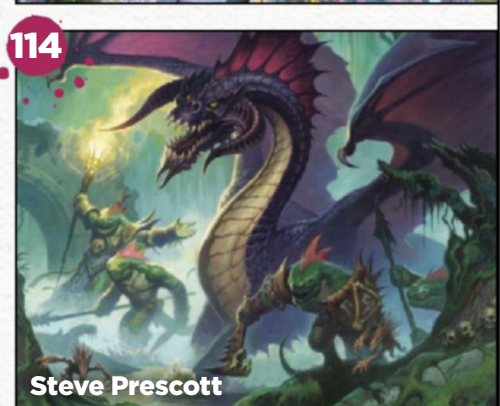
FXPosé Traditional



Half-human half-tree



Get painting outside



Steve Prescott



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Resources

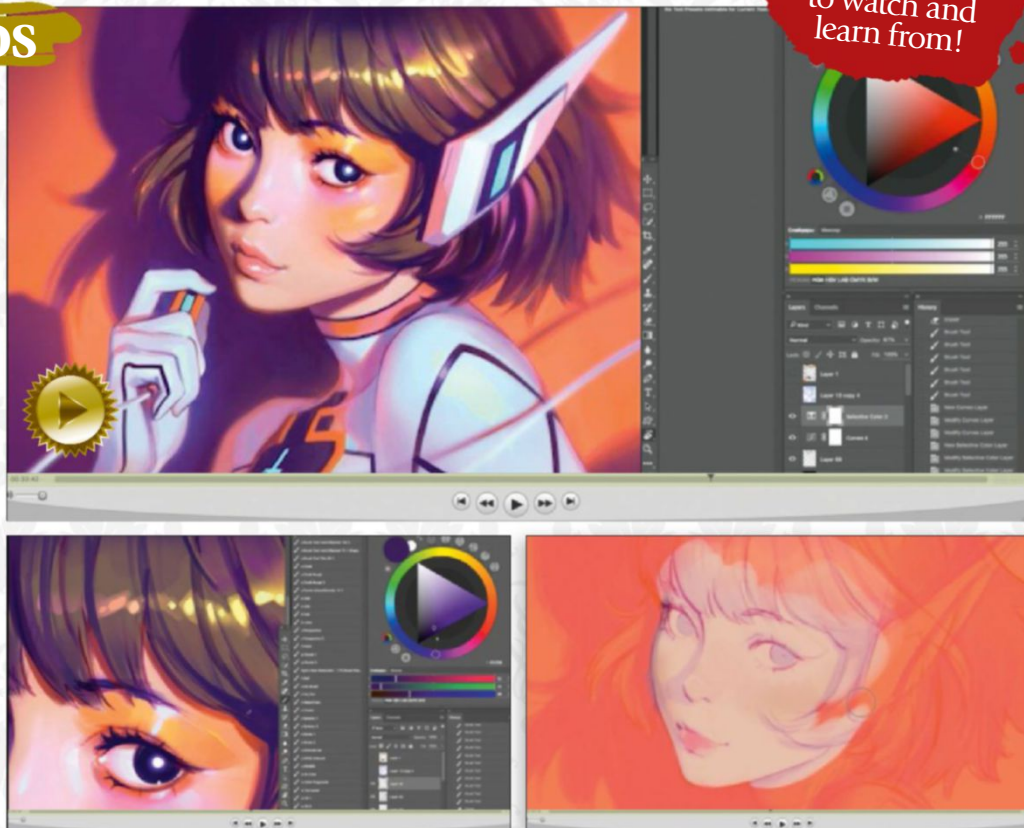
Getting hold of all of this issue's videos, artwork and brushes is quick and easy. Just visit our dedicated web page at <http://ifxm.ag/manga140scifi>

OVER 8 HOURS
of video tutorials
from pro artists
to watch and
learn from!

WORKSHOP VIDEOS

Paint manga on the go

Ilya Kuvshinov sets aside his normal process and develops a character illustration as it's being painted.



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

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Type this into your browser's address bar (not the search bar): <http://ifxm.ag/manga140scifi>
- 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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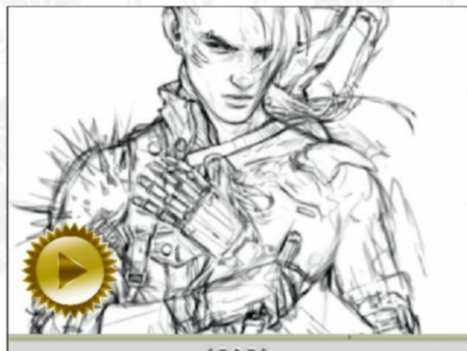
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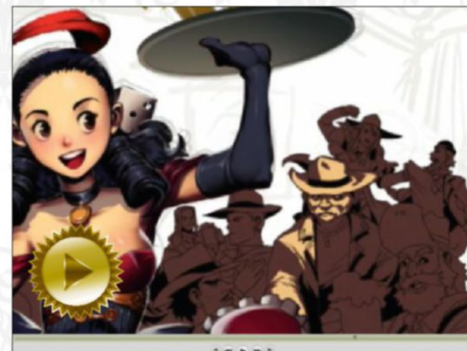
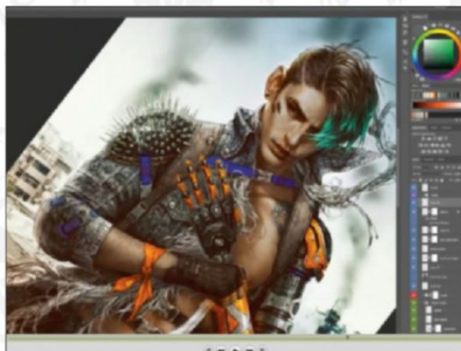
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Watch our videos to gain a unique insight into how our artists create their stunning art



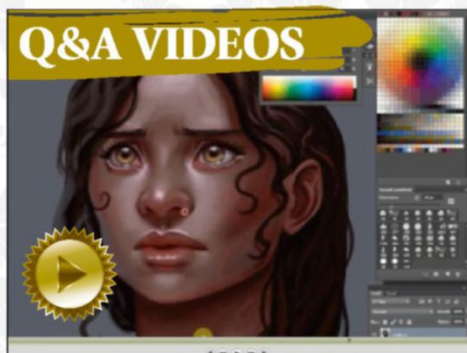
Valentina Remenar

Learn how to concentrate on familiar traits but also add originality when conceiving an illustration of a new character that helps expand on the cyberpunk genre. **WIPs, brushes and final image**



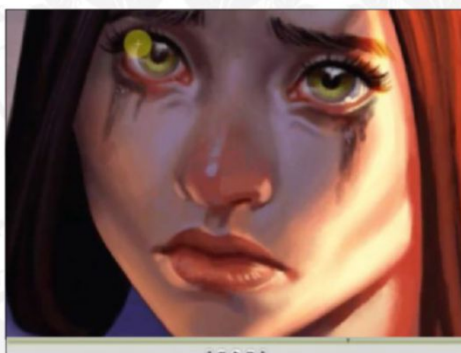
Genzoman

Understand how giving the background more emphasis can enliven a painting. **Plus WIPs, brushes and final image**



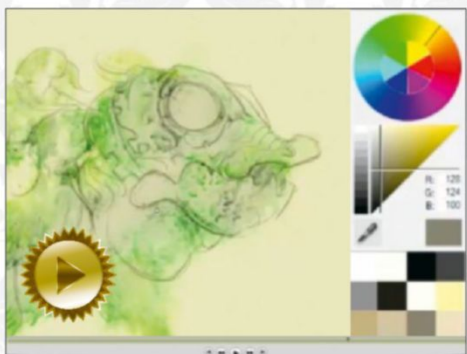
Sara Forlenza

Invest time in studying faces, postures and mannerisms – and use a mirror to study your own – in order to be able to paint convincing facial emotions in your art. **Plus WIPs and final image**



Sara Forlenza

Set some time aside for still life and learn more realistic rendering techniques. **Plus WIPs and final image**



Nick Harris

Tinker with Painter's Spring Particle settings to get watercolour effects – potentially a great tactic to help leapfrog artist's block. Pick colours, make random marks and more... **Plus WIPs and final image**



James Gurney

See how head maquettes help bring extinct mammals back to life, in The Mammal That Ate Dinosaurs: Behind The Art.

AND ALL THIS! Detailed workshops with advice from the best fantasy artists around the world, including Iris Compiet, Peter Chan, Mélanie Delon, Lorena Lammer, David Paget, Esben Lash Rasmussen, Felix Bauer-Schlichtegroll and Tan Hui Tian.

47 CUSTOM BRUSHES, INCLUDING...

BRUSH ELLIPTICAL

This is Ilya Kuvshinov's main brush. "I use it everywhere!" he says.

PASTEL - OIL LARGE 4

Valentina Remenar used this brush for sketching background smoke.

DRAWING BRUSH

Esben Lash Rasmussen uses this soft brush 95 per cent of the time.

Reader FXPose

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART



Ian Olympia

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MEDIA: Manga Studio 4 EX, PaintTool SAI, Photoshop



"I've been working as an illustrator for 13 years now," explains Ian, who goes by the art name wickedalucard. "Most of the client illustrations I've worked on for the past years are for games and manga titles, and recently I've started working freelance in the hope of creating more personal projects."

Ian's dynamic work is heavily influenced by manga, anime, games and fashion, and he gravitates towards creating movement in his layouts. "I'm also fond of using pastel to saturate colours, and applying texture to my drawings," he explains.

When not painting up a storm, Ian says he likes playing the guitar, collecting art books and playing with his six adorable cats.

1



1 DELICIOUS HUNGER "This illustration is for the cover of a personal art book, which I released last Comic Fiesta 2015. I wanted it to have a sketchy watercolour feel, with complex details, yet organised in a way that's still pleasing to look at."

2 THE DECAY "This piece was created as a guest illustration for the Motherland Chronicles project by zemotion and tobieee. It's a very personal piece. I used heavy inking techniques to emphasise the dark elements and the overall illustration layout."



Artist crit

Chester Ocampo, art director at Altitude Games, likes Ian's painting approach...



"Ian's use of delicate ornamentation, combined with low key colours and bold reds, make for exquisitely romantic-looking images."

Candice Broersma

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MEDIA: Photoshop



Candice grew up in the quaint city of Yucaipa, California. As an undergraduate at the University of Redlands, she pursued her love of both music and art by "painting by day and saving the world performing clarinet by night!" she jests. Candice's experience in the two fields garnered her first paid work: her earliest commissions were from colleagues and involved translating musical motifs and narratives into a visual format for their recital posters.

Eager to delve further into the commercial arts, Candice decided to pursue illustration and consequently enrolled in the Illustration Masters program at the Savannah College of Art and Design. Since graduating, Candice has returned to California to begin her career as a freelance illustrator and educator. Her subjects are often unusual characters, odd arthropods, and classic mythologies with a twist.

1 MONOCLE MANTIS "This chap is the most dapper 'Gentlebug'. The structure of his face is based on that of a praying mantis, with his sleeves mimicking its long front legs. I enjoyed the piece so much that I decided to add to his company. The series satisfies my enthusiasm for Victorian fashion and my inner entomologist."

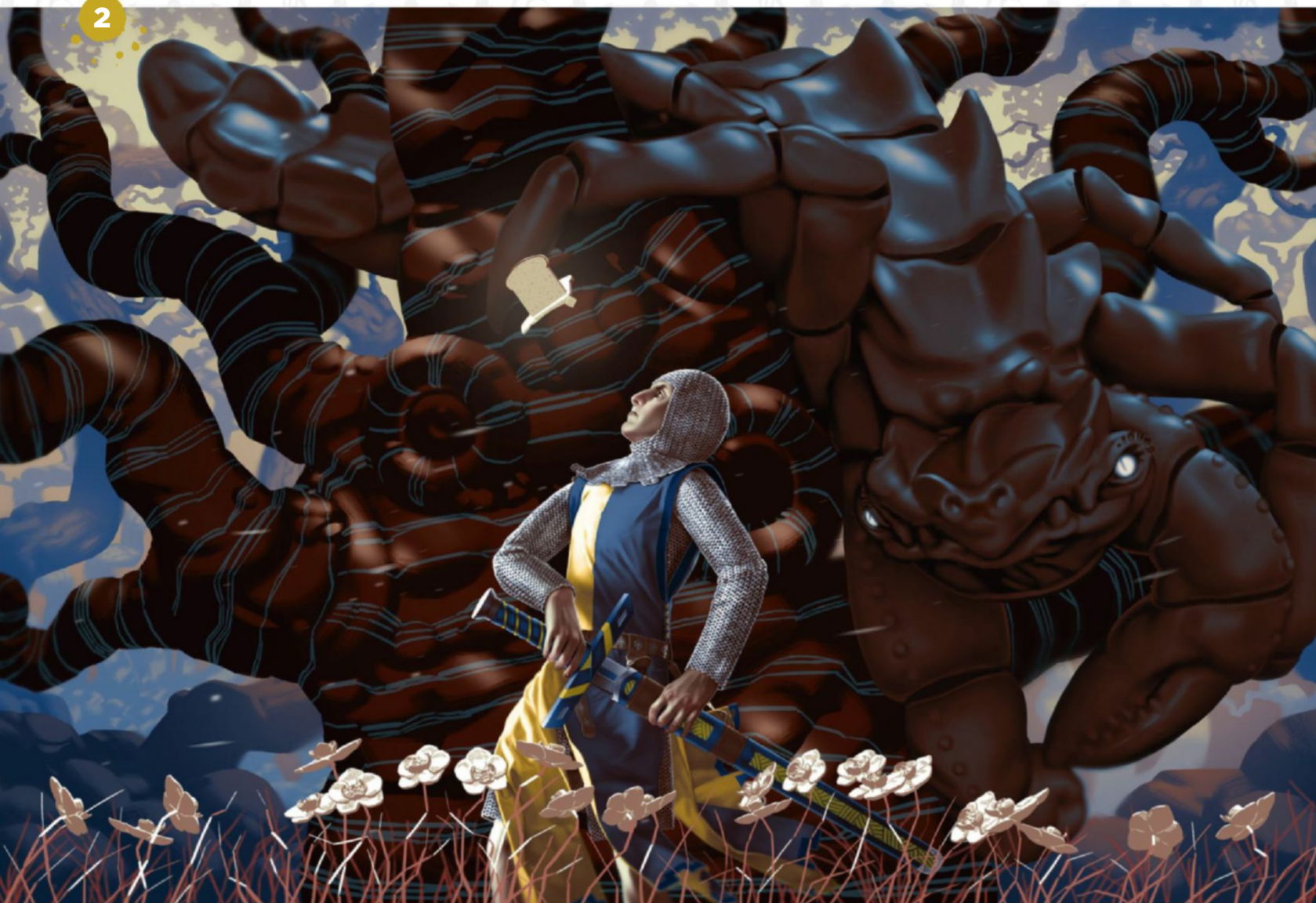
2 BENEATH THE TUMTUM TREE "The Jabberwock has traditionally been depicted as a humorous buck-toothed dragon. Wanting to re-envision the creature while staying true to Lewis Carroll's description, I focused on its 'jaws that bite' and 'claws that catch'."

3 MADAM MOTH "This figure encapsulates the elegant fluffiness of her insect counterpart. I looked at Victorian fashion plates of touring hats to note the materials and arrangement of elements. Ostrich feathers complement her feathery antennae while clusters of silk ribbon and white elements make reference to the silk produced by *Bombyx mori*."

4 PINSTRIPE SPIDER "I imagine Pinstripe Spider as a clever salesman with an extensive 'web' of contacts. He sports a moustache inspired by a jumping spider's prickly pedipalps and mutton chops to match. With Pinstripe and my other profile-view portraits, I sculpted models to help explore the perfect balance of human and bug anatomy."



2



3



4



IMAGINEFX CRIT



"If there's one thing guaranteed to put a smile on my face, it's a praying mantis dressed as a Victorian gentleman, and exhibiting the mannerisms of the era. Arthropods in costume – that's an internet meme right there."

Claire Howlett,
Editor

Elvin Neal B. Bersamira

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MEDIA: Photoshop, Clip Studio Paint



"My only formal art training was a six-month short course in 2D animation," says Elvin, also known as Dexter, "but after finishing

my studies I realised I don't have the perseverance for animation," so instead he wisely put more effort into his illustration and manga skills. He now freelances as a 2D game artist and illustrator, for both local and overseas clients. "I'm also a contributing artist for The Philippine Daily Inquirer (2BU Lifestyle section) and resident illustrator for UnimeTV," he explains, making us wonder if he has any spare time!

While loving manga, he also admires the works of a variety of artists such as Noah Bradley, John Avon and Feng Zhu.

1



© Alienworks

2

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Elvin's work has all the bright cheerfulness of the classic manga style combined with a richness of detail that really draws the viewer's eye into his paintings and makes them come alive."

Cliff Hope,
Operations Editor

1 HIGHWAY BLOSSOMS My guest art for the visual novel game Highway Blossoms (Steam Game) by Alienworks. In this illustration, I tried to emphasise the game's main characters, Amber and Marina, by using the background to give more focus."

2 MEGA CHARIZARD! "This is my fan art of Mega Charizard from Pokémon. In this illustration I tried to make Charizard encapsulated by the pokeball yet powerful at the same time."

3 MATSURI "An artwork commissioned by ASPAC-DAN ad agency. I was asked to create an illustration that evokes the Japanese culture, as their company will be under the new management of Dentsu Aegis Network. Therefore I decided to create this so as to celebrate Japanese Matsuri by featuring an elegant Yukata."

© Pokémon / Nintendo





© ASPAC-DAN

Leanne Huynh

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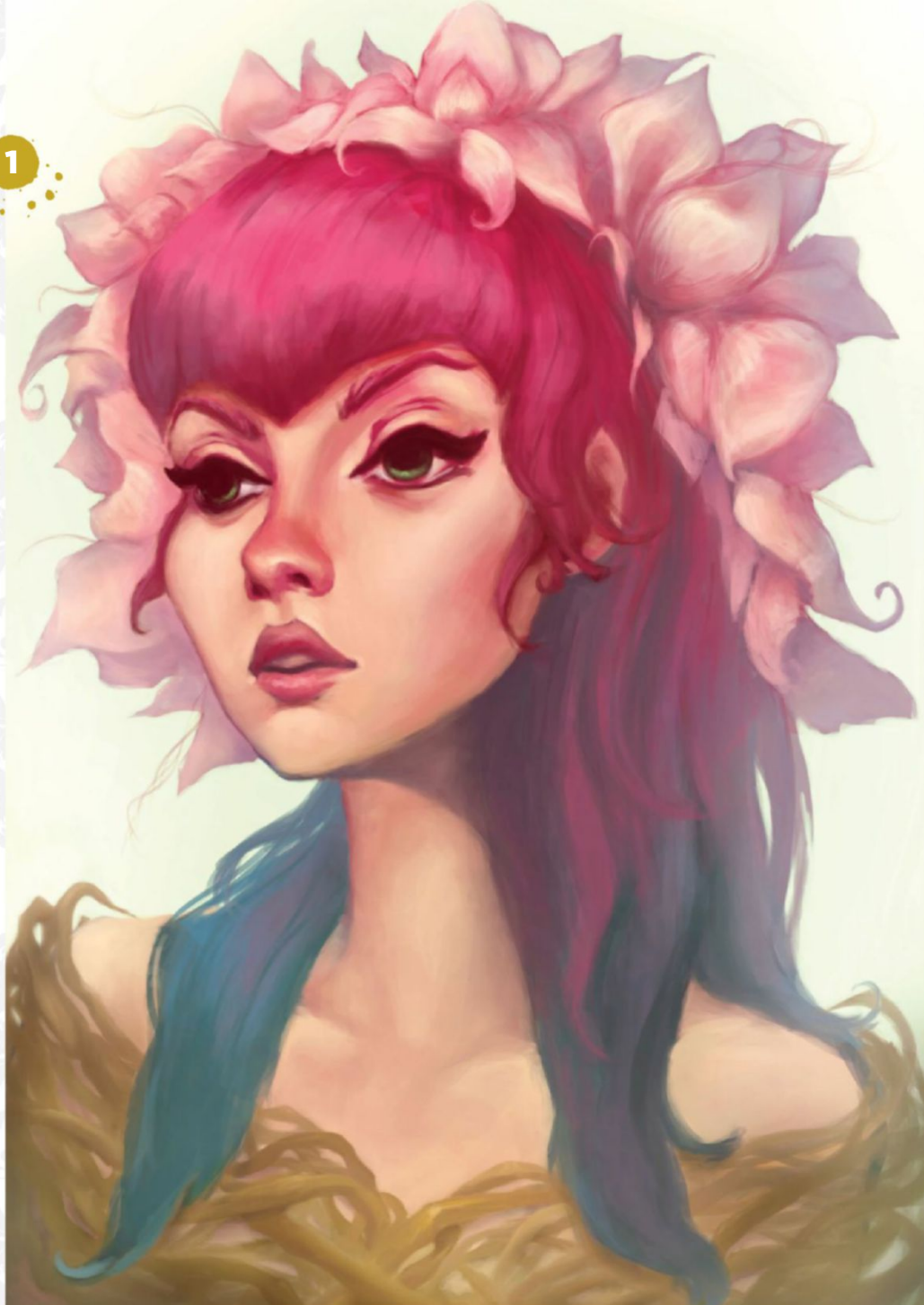
MEDIA: Photoshop



It sounds like Southern California artist Leanne has a pretty good existence: "I spend my slap-happy days painting all the things, trying not to kill my plants (only three so far!), attending a bunch of conventions and meeting amazing people!"

She grew up in the colourful world of 8-bit video games and 1980s cartoons and spent her childhood, as she describes it, "drawing, colouring, playing with Lego and trying to beat my older brothers in video games."

An arts graduate from the University of California, Irvine, Leanne has notched up time as a painter for hire for Blizzard Entertainment, Riot Games and Carbine Studios/NCSOft.



1 ROSALINDE "With this piece, I applied a gradient early in the process of painting her and really appreciate the harmonising colours from it. With her ivy shawl and crown of flowers, I can confidently say that Rosalinde is a big fan of nature."

2 EM "In Vietnamese, 'Em' can be translated to mean 'little sibling', which is what I named this young girl. Em is wearing a traditional Vietnamese hat and dress normally reserved for a formal event. I never got to wear this as a kid, but always thought the saucer hat was interesting."

3 Q "I've recently starting attending comic conventions and selling my art there. This piece, named Q, is inspired by my boothmate, Kieu (pronounced 'Q'). She sells super-cute artwork with cats and fruits on them, which prompted me to paint her with a cat and an apple on her head."



**Kennedy
Cooke-Garza**

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MEDIA: Photoshop



Kennedy has long been interested in art. "I first encountered digital painting in middle school, and it's been my medium of choice ever since," she says.

"From an early age I knew I wanted to work in video games, and in high school I started narrowing my focus towards concept art."

She graduated from the Savannah College of Art and Design and went on to work in the games industry. She now freelances and works on her webcomic, titled Superbitch.

1



2

1 MONSTER, SLAYER "My entry for the Games Workshop's Game Challenge. This piece has likely gone through the most amount of change from start to finish of all my full illustrations, from the pose of the slayer to the colour scheme, to the monster's appearance."

2 CHANTICO "This one is part of a personal series I was doing on Aztec and Mayan mythology. Chantico is the goddess of fire, the family hearth and volcanoes. [The painting] was initially much simpler, with details like the face paint and foreground flames added as last-minute decisions."

3 TABOO "This is another personal piece. Something of a study on the style of Frank Frazetta."



3



1



2



IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Like all the best concept art, Joseph's paintings seem to strike a perfect balance between detail and suggestion – but then, when you look closer, you discover even more and learn more about the subject of each work."

Daniel Vincent,
Art Editor

Joseph Diaz

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EMAIL: joseph@j21studio.com

MEDIA: Photoshop, Cinema 4D, ZBrush



A freelance concept artist based in Barcelona, Spain, Joseph has worked on productions such as

Warcraft, Game Of Thrones, Biutiful, Europa Report, The Impossible and A Monster Calls. "Living in Barcelona, I feel the influence of the great masters Gaudi and Dalí," he says, revealing that he wanted to become an artist ever since he watched Blade Runner when he was five years old.

"I am also obsessed with guitars, the number 21, the planet Jupiter and the exact mathematical representation of pi," he reveals.



1 WORM SANDS "I remember watching Dune when I was a child. One of the things that remained in my subconscious was the sandworm creature. Years later I read the Frank Herbert novel and it still remains one of my favourite sci-fi books. This is my interpretation of sandworms."

2 TRIBAL GOD OF FIRE "I wanted to create a horned character with superhuman abilities and deep esoteric knowledge. I really love symbology and occultism in paintings, because in my opinion it creates a deep layer of storytelling within the image."

3 TIME-SPACE TRAVELLER "I love to paint sci-fi scenes. This one shows a time-space traveller just before his journey. I like to find unusual shapes when I design spaceships, but in my mind even this awkward design has a lot of functionality and makes sense."



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.

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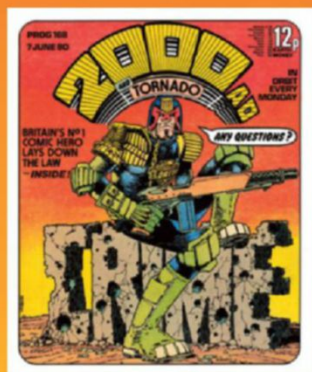
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2000 AD hits a mighty milestone

Dredded birthday Nearly 40 years since its launch, weekly comic 2000 AD is publishing its milestone 2,000th edition. **Garrick Webster** reports

Tharg the Mighty has sent a call across the galaxy to all his finest script and art robots and – by Gronk! – it has been answered. Yes, Prog 2000, of the outstanding British comic magazine 2000 AD, will land in late September, featuring artwork by some of its greatest ever contributors – Mick McMahon, Kevin O'Neill, Dave Gibbons, Carlos Ezquerro and many more.

You'll be able to choose from three alternate covers. Tharg – the mag's alien editor – features on the cover by Cliff Robinson, and Glenn Fabry has drawn an astounding wraparound illustration taking in all the major 2000 AD characters, which will be available only in comic shops.



Mick McMahon's prog 168 Dredd cover (above) inspired Chris Burnham's contemporary effort (right).



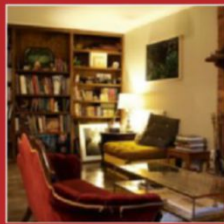
Chris Burnham's Judge Dredd will be one of the three special covers for Prog 2000.

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FROM THE GROUND UP

Get the lowdown on the Foundation Art Group, who go back to basics to focus on the often-overlooked but always-important fundamental art skills. **Page 23**



A STUDIO FOR HOBBITS?

We explore fantasy artist Cory Godbey's spacious underground studio, and learn that his sofa's the perfect place to talk all things Tolkien with him. **Page 24**



WHY, THAT'S A CAPITAL IDEA!

ImagineFX heads over to London's Industry Workshops, the UK's premier art industry gathering, to soak up all the inspiring teaching and to meet new artists. **Page 27**

Chris Burnham has drawn an iconic image of Judge Dredd for the third cover.

It's a brilliant reversal having American artist Chris draw a cover. Founded in 1977 with a sci-fi remit, 2000 AD has developed many young British artists who have later been headhunted by US publishers. "The Burnhams left England almost 400 years ago," laughs Chris. "Returning in the pages of the galaxy's greatest comic is an absolute dream come true!"



Chris's image of 2000 AD mainstay Judge Dredd is in homage to Mick McMahon's cover for Prog 168, published way back in 1980, when the comic cost just 12p. "Mick's exaggerated style gives him all sorts of anatomical leeway – if you look at his original cover, Dredd's hips are like four feet wide and his proportions are downright skeletal, but the impact is just fantastic," says Chris.

Dave Gibbons, who rocketed to worldwide glory with *The Watchmen*, was part of the team that created the first edition of 2000 AD. He's returned for Prog 2000 with a page featuring Tharg surrounded by some of the title's Future War characters – Rogue Trooper, The VCs, Fiends of the Eastern Front and Bad Company.

For Dave, one of 2000 AD's key strengths has been the team spirit it's maintained



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“Dredd’s hips are 4ft wide, his proportions skeletal, but the impact is just fantastic”



Dave Gibbons artwork for Alan Moore's Chronocops one-off story is one he'll never forget.

across generations of comic artists. "With 2000 AD there was a real kind of clubhouse feel," he says. "We were friends with other people who worked on the comics, and I think nowadays the communication between comic artists is so great that you feel you're part of a movement rather than just an individual."

COMEDY INFLUENCE

Originally influenced by American comics, 2000 AD shook up the British newsstand when it was launched. It pushed the boundaries with its wild sci-fi stories and a sense of humour that's been likened to Monty Python and *The Young Ones*. Each week it still contains five or six stories, continuing the tales of characters like Judge Dredd and Slaine, but including one-off Future Shock stories for added spice.

Though he drew the original Rogue Trooper character, Dave's favourite 2000 AD work is a one-off story he did with Alan ➔



Simon Bisley's fully painted, full-colour images of Slaine defined the 1990s in 2000 AD.

A ROGUE TROOPER'S GALLERY

The good, the bad and the ugly: meet the heroes of 2000 AD

Judge Dredd

First appeared: 1977
In post-apocalyptic Mega-City One, they don't have time for police, courts, lawyers and all that. Despite the odd moral dilemma, Judge Dredd maintains law and order as judge, jury and executioner.



Rogue Trooper

First appeared: 1981
A genetically engineered super soldier, Rogue is only happy in the middle of a futuristic war, being splashed by strong acid under a chemical cloud while blasting his enemies with bullets.



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Rufus Dayglo's cover for the Judge Dredd Magazine issue 246.



Beautifully simple Rogue Trooper line art from 1987 by Steve Dillon.



Scottish artist Jock created this stunning Judge Dredd cover for Prog 1304.

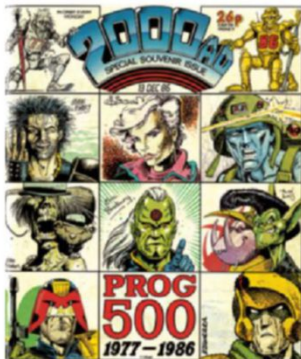


➔ Moore before their Watchmen days. "It was called Chronocops, and was a time travel cops story. That remains one of my favourites and, out of all the stuff that I did for 2000 AD, that's actually the only one I still have the original artwork for – that's how much I enjoyed and prized it."

Future Shock pages give new artists a crack at working on 2000 AD. For Prog 2000, Rufus Dayglo is drawing a new story called Counterfeit Girl, written by Peter Milligan, but his earliest contribution to 2000 AD was a Future Shock. "These short, one-off stories

2000 AD stalwarts Bad Company, as drawn by Rufus Dayglo.

Milestone mags: Prog 500 with a nine-story melange and the 30th anniversary issue, Prog 1526.



are quite challenging," Rufus says. "You have to tell a whole story in five or six pages. It's a test for both writer and artist, and a great tool to learn the craft of storytelling. Mine was about a knight who meets his older self as both a warning and a prophecy."

EXTREME FUTURE

With science fiction its main focus, 2000 AD artists have imagined some extreme versions of the future and just run with it. Characters and storylines go off in crazy directions, and the unpredictability is part of

the fun. Writers and artists have enjoyed plenty of freedom on 2000 AD. As a result, satire, social commentary and bizarre humour have flowed through its storylines.

Yet as zany – and violent – as some of it has been, it's maintained a certain bedrock style. Richard Elson has worked for 2000 AD since the late '80s and in Prog 2000 he's drawing a Rogue Trooper story written by Gordon Rennie. With it, he's aiming to evoke the early Rogue Trooper and give it a classic 2000 AD feel that dates back to the late 1970s and early '80s.

“The short, one-off stories are a great test for writer and artist, and a great tool to learn the craft of storytelling”

Strontium Dog

First appeared: 1978
Johnny Alpha is a mutant and a bounty hunter, part of a community shunned by the 'norms' in a militaristic and hypocritical future Britain. He's often joined by his companion Wulf Sternhammer.



Judge Anderson

First appeared: 1980
Developed as a female support character for Judge Dredd, Anderson eventually got her own series. She's a Psi-Judge with telepathic powers, and her look, by artist Brian Bolland, was based on Debbie Harry.



ABC Warriors

First appeared: 1979
This troop of robotic warriors is led by Hammerstein, who came from the Ro-Busters strip. They're designed to withstand atomic weapons, and missions have included the taming of Mars.



Cliff Robinson devoted his Prog 2000 alternate cover to Tharg The Mighty, long-serving alien editor Of 2000 AD.



"Kevin O'Neill, Mick McMahon, Carlos Ezquerro – they're really great comic artists, and there's a certain sort of quirkiness, oddness, non-mainstream look to their art,"

says Richard. "You've got to take your hat



off to these guys because even your best artists today – Henry Flint and guys like that – are still looking back to their work. There's such a weight of great art at the beginning, the first decade or so of the title, that anybody who works on it is always going to look back to that era."

As its title suggests, the original launch team didn't think 2000 AD would last until the year 2000, let alone reach its 2,000th issue. The comic-reading audience has shrunk, but 2000 AD has maintained a loyal readership and as that readership has matured, so has the title and its stories. The continued influx of new writers and artists points to a bright future.

"2000 AD is a national treasure," says Dave Gibbons. "It encapsulates a certain strand of what it means to be British that I think is worthy of being preserved, if not by the nation then certainly for the nation."



It's all knees, elbows and claws with Kevin O'Neill's rendition of Nemesis seen here.



Ferocious action is a hallmark of Richard Elson, as proven in this cover for Prog 1331.



Sláine

First appeared: 1983
Inspired by Celtic mythology, Sláine has an axe called Brainbiter and the power to 'warp spasm'. In other words, he enters a body-contorting state of frenzy when he's in battle.

Nikolai Dante

First appeared: 1997
In the 27th century, Nikolai Dante is the illegitimate son of a Romanov and causes outrage in future Imperial Russia with his daring feats of piracy, swordsmanship, killing and carnage.





lara

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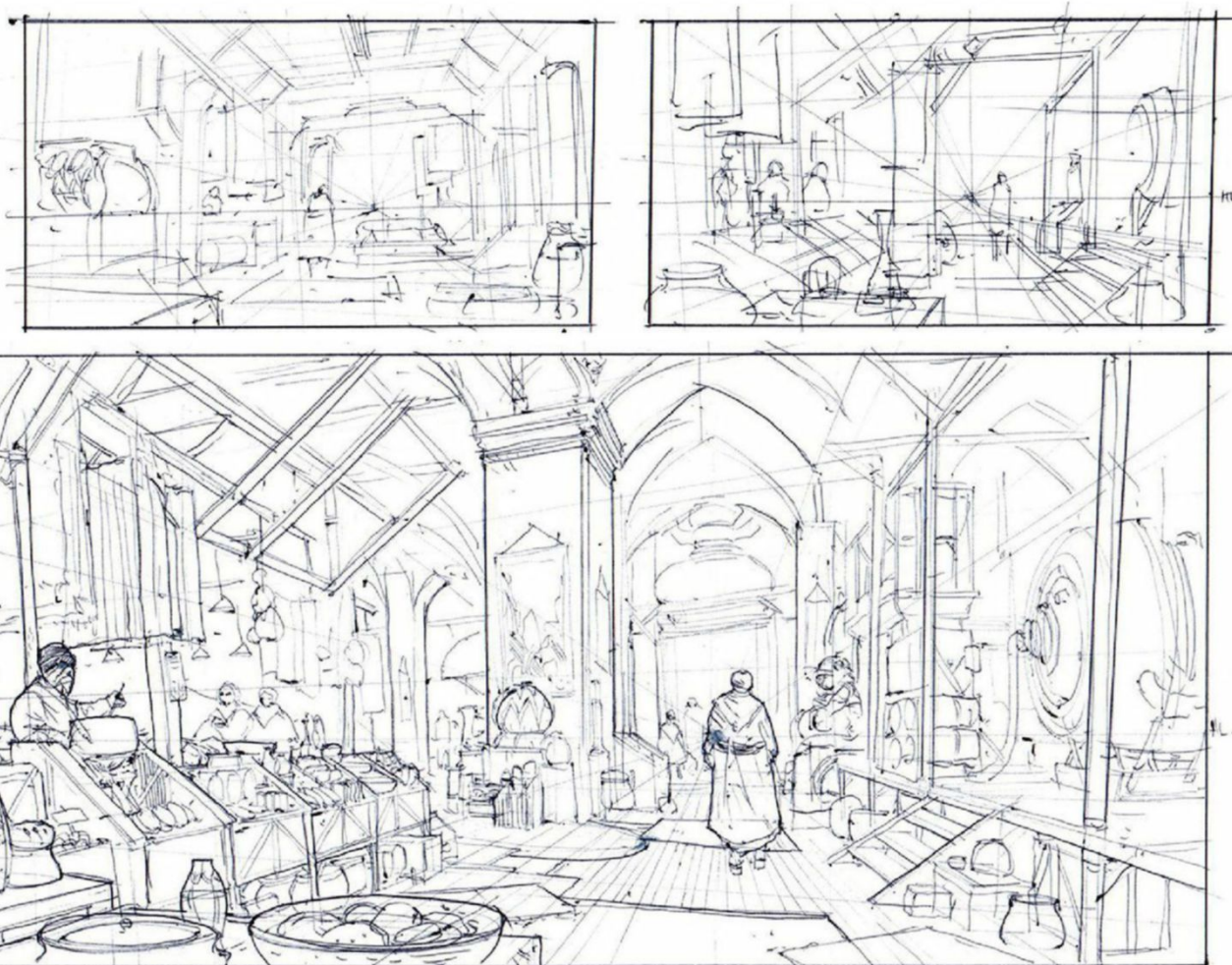
Painting: 'Cardboard League of America' by S.J. Fuerst

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Enrolled students receive a total of seven sessions a month.



Digital art school firm foundation

Back to basics Online platform Foundation Group focuses on often-overlooked fundamental art skills



"Let's face it. Foundation has never been the most appealing subject to students, especially those who didn't receive a formal education in art," says Matthew Zikry, one of the founders of the digital education service Foundation Group. "Subjects such as perspective, basic drawing and design theory cannot compete with tutorials floating around on speed-painting and photobashing when it comes to appeal."

Feeling that students were being cheated out of crucial parts of their education, Matthew, John Park and Daniel Jin Park set up just over a year ago on Patreon. "The curriculum [aims at] artists looking to enter the entertainment industry, but can be widely applied to artists of all fields," he says.

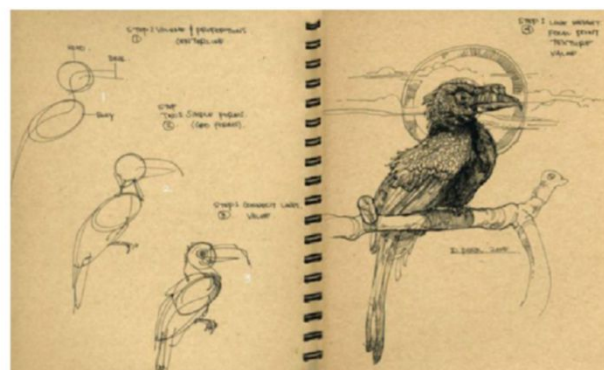
Students and artists are free to join just tutorial sessions alone, or pledge, as part of

the feedback group, to submit monthly assignments for individual critique from instructors. "We find this aspect very important – these professionals can advise students on real-world work situations and help guide their skill set towards those used in the industry today," Matthew explains.

"The curriculum is also unique in that it allows students to select and cater their education based on their needs."

With hundreds of students already signed up, Matthew suggests that Foundation Group plans to develop the curriculum and expand the number of instructors. "There are a few potential workshop instructors who can offer input based on their experiences in animation, film, games, as well as theme park design," he hints.

Explore Foundation Group's curriculum and become a patron by visiting their site: www.patreon.com/foundation.



Students can submit their work to get feedback from industry pros.



Foundation Group enables each student to select and build their own path.



In another life, I might have been a terrarium maker. I love these little worlds, made from moss and stones and bits of branches contained by glass. One time a small spider got into a terrarium and died, but not before it had spun tiny webs over the dead moss. It was the spookiest terrarium ever. Mordor's own terrarium.

Any proper hermit knows a fireplace is essential. You can lurk around the woods gathering firewood, poke at the embers when you're in a foul mood, and even cook over it if you're trying to avoid human contact. I also use the fireplace to burn bad drawings when I gather work for my annual fire sale, much to the chagrin of some of my fans.



Access to some quiet green space is essential for my sanity and creativity. I'll meander around my garden, coffee mug in hand, dictating emails while I check the growth on recent plantings. The treehouse offers more seclusion, perfect for when I'm deep into planning for a future project.



If you're ever visiting my studio in person and I invite you to sit by the fire to discuss Tolkien mythology, make a beeline to claim the chair. The old settee is terribly uncomfortable.

Cory Godbey

Smart space We explore the fantasy artist's underground studio and his collections of gaming knick-knacks, Tolkien books and terrariums



Welcome to my studio. My workspace is located in the walkout basement below my house. Since it's mostly underground, the studio stays cool during the summer and I keep a fire going during the winter. I love working from home, because I'm not-so-secretly a hermit, and prefer the company of my wife and son, along with our gang of cats.

Beyond the door is my outdoor studio: gardens, woods and a treehouse. Before

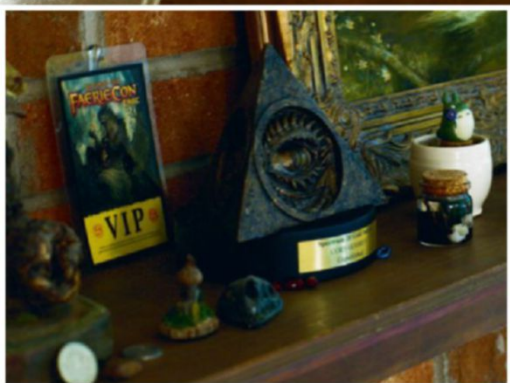
I get to work each morning, I spend a little time outside, walking the paths through the woods, checking on my bird feeders and watering the plants. Later in the day, you might find me in the treehouse, answering emails or taking client calls.

In the main room I have my workstations: a drafting table under the window with ample natural light, and a section of desks for digital work and administrative tasks, a large scanner, and several flat files. Whether for clients and personal projects, my work is

typically a mix of traditional and digital, so it's helpful to have these workstations separated but close at hand.

The fireplace and sitting area is where you'll find some sketchbooks and art reference scattered about, and usually a cat or two lying on top of whatever I'm trying to work on. The wall of built-in bookshelves is perfect for showcasing my favourite books and varied collections. Off the main area, a smaller room is used for assembling and shipping prints. My convention materials live

This handmade leather mask was made by artisans Shane and Leah Odom. It watches over my scanner and sometimes I put it on just to make life more interesting for the studio cats. (No, I don't.)



I was honoured to win the Spectrum Gold Award for my piece, The Fish Master. It will forever be one of my most prized possessions.

in a storage closet, and the bathroom is handy for rinsing out brushes.

Having the proper set-up for an artist is just like choosing any other tool. You have to find what works best for you and make it your own. Feeling at home in my studio helps me to create better and work smarter.

Cory creates fanciful illustrations for books and films. His award-winning work has been featured in the likes of Spectrum: The Best in Contemporary Fantastic Art and The Society of Illustrators. See his art at www.corygodbey.com.

The crown jewel of my mantle is an original oil painting by Annie Stegg Gerard. I'm in love with her masterful depiction of a unicorn foal, and my delight in the subject matter is matched only by my desire to steal all her painting secrets.



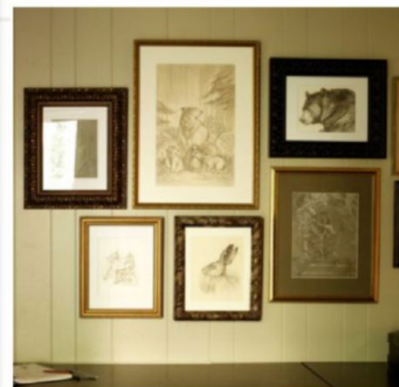
The wall of built-in bookshelves serves to showcase my collection of art books, favourite novels and various knick-knacks. My favourite shelf houses a series of leather-bound Tolkien books. My wife is an excellent decorator and sometimes I swipe items she has styled on our other bookcases. So if something looks good here it's probably thanks to her.



Off the main studio is a small side room and it's one of my favourite spaces in the house: my game room. I've been a lifelong collector and enjoy having the space to display the various treasures I've amassed. At the end of a long workday, I might unwind by playing a little classic Nintendo.



This map cabinet is very old, made in the 1800s. Its new function is storing drawings, paintings and paper. What I love most about this piece is that it has a twin, which lives with my good friend and Mouse Guard creator, David Petersen. On top of the cabinet I have little shrine to Swedish fairy tale artist John Bauer, who's been one of the greatest influences on my work.



Having the work of talented artists grace my walls is a true delight. I prefer to collect originals, but have been known to pick up a print from time to time. I'm currently displaying pieces by Omar Rayyan, Wylie Beckert, Tran Nguyen, Gary Lippincott, David Petersen, Niroot Puttapipat, Annie Stegg Gerard, Charles Vess and more. I'm always getting something framed, so the collection rotates as needed.

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BRUTALLY HONEST

BY DEYA MUNIZ



Industry Workshops 2016

Art in action ImagineFX took a trip to the UK's premier event for networking with professional artists, right in the heart of London

It's 9.30am on a humid, but drearily grey weekend morning in London. Most of the grubby little streets around Brick Lane are empty and quiet, its residents and tourists still yet to make a move for the outdoors. But here at The Old Truman Brewery where Industry Workshops (IW_16) is being held, there's a quiet hubbub of excitement among the hundreds of people who are waiting for the day to unfold.

Many are here for the day's opening lecture, **Thea Turner's** character design masterclass, which is just one of over 150 hours of art lectures and demos featured at the three-day event. Thea, a freelance concept artist for film and games, says, "For me, the most fulfilling part is getting to share insights that can make the journey easier for aspiring artists. It's something I wish I could do for my younger self if I could time travel!"

The list of attending artists from film and video game companies is certainly impressive, including Ash Thorp, Darrell Warner, Suzanne Helmigh and Aaron Beck. There's also an always-packed corridor of portfolio reviews and recruitment drives from the likes of Framestore, Creative Assembly and Atomhawk. In essence, if you're an art professional or an aspiring one, then you should be here.

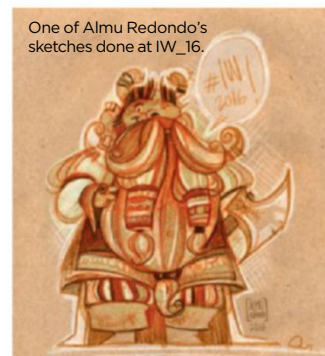


"I use watercolour in the same way you use computers," film costume artist Darrell Warner explained at his Saturday afternoon lecture. "Like you, I just keep adding layers."

One attendee, illustrator and concept artist **Almu Redondo**, explains why she stumped up the ticket price: "It's a three-day rollercoaster of awesomeness. Mind-blowing talks, brain-melting conversations with lecturers and attendees, and fantastic opportunities."

The lectures are insightful and the setting inspiring, but the biggest pull to this event is

One of Almu Redondo's sketches done at IW_16.



Artist Belinda Leung chats to Jort van Welbergen while demoing her skills.

something that can't be timetabled: the chance to hang out with other artists, both pro and hobbyist, in a relaxed setting. Our community is a lucky one. It's a friendly and supportive rabble of people. If you haven't done so yet, we recommend getting to an event like this to connect with your peers.

For more info on this year's event, and to keep an eye on what might be in store next year, visit www.industryworkshops.co.uk.

Letters

YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS



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



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Clint please!

Really enjoying the magazine, especially the issues more focused on comic art. On that score, I was wondering if we might have a feature or workshop on the artist Clint Langley? I've been really loving his work on the ABC Warriors graphic novels of late and some of it really does leave me scratching my head, wondering "How on earth did he do that?" But anyway, keep up the great work.

Cal, via email



Clint Langley combines traditional and digital art with photography to great effect, as Cal points out in his letter.

Claire replies Cal, thanks for reminding me of the many talents of Clint Langley. I was lucky enough to meet Clint at San Diego Comic-Con many moons back. I remember watching with awe as he used a mass of coloured pens to create a frenzied image in a matter of minutes. I'll drop him a line about him appearing in the magazine in a future issue.



Here's Clint Langley dynamic art in action, celebrating 2000 AD character Slaine's 30th anniversary.

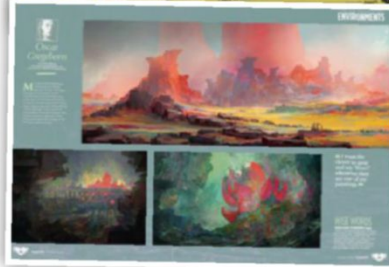
Nothing inspiring

Just to say that the highlight of the post is usually receiving my copy of ImagineFX, so I was quite disappointed in this month's issue of explosive environments [ImagineFX, issue 139].

As a budding environment artist I was awaiting great things in this issue, and sadly throughout the entire magazine I have found nothing inspirational or motivational. This is quite rare to happen, in fact I don't remember a time when I was



MISSED OUR ISSUE ON ENVIRONMENT PAINTING? Turn to page 46 to see how you can get hold of it and others, too!



Even showing work from some of the best environment artists around wasn't enough to float Angela's boat.

completely uninspired. I don't feel there was anything that grabbed my eye. This issue just feels like it's lacking something that's usually there, no question.

Angela Hosking, via email

Claire replies Oh dear, I'm so sorry to hear this. In the issue you speak of, I personally loved the epic environments feature, and I adored the work of Maxwell Boas and Oscar Gregeborn. I'm also a big fan of Coro, who gave us a traditional art workshop.

I hope this edition fares better for you. Every issue we deliver different themes to get your creative juices flowing, so if you say that you're a budding environment artist, you may not initially think that there's anything in this manga issue for you, but hopefully you'll see beyond the art and take advice from the teachings.

Brexit woes

I've just received my copy of the October issue. I like ImagineFX a lot, but I won't be renewing my subscription. I receive my income from the UK in pounds sterling. Since the result of the Brexit referendum, the value of the pound has been sinking steadily. So the value of my income here in France has been reduced.

Meanwhile, I see that a one-year subscription costs 99 euros, which is approximately £86. Whereas, I see that in the UK a one-year subscription costs £59. Currently £59 is approximately 68 euros. Brexit should be making things from the UK cheaper, not more expensive.

Ronald, via email

Claire replies Ronald, I hear the same thing about income from my dad who lives in Spain. I'm not sure about the cost of things from the UK being cheaper since Brexit – if anything, our costs are rising! Furthermore, the cost of a UK subscription is lower than that of an overseas one due to the cost of shipping. I've passed you on to our subscription team to see if they can help with a slightly better offer for you.

FRESH PAINT

Your art news that's grabbed our attention



Alexander Johanson
[@AJohanson89](https://twitter.com/AJohanson89)

“Finished the image – great exercise to practise colour and style.”



Kirsty Rollinson
[@KJRillustration](https://twitter.com/KJRillustration)

“My latest, painted using Manga Studio.”



johnny garcia
[@johnnysgarciac](https://twitter.com/johnnysgarciac)

“So, another year subscribed. Will always be thankful to the IFX team and featured artists for their guidance.”

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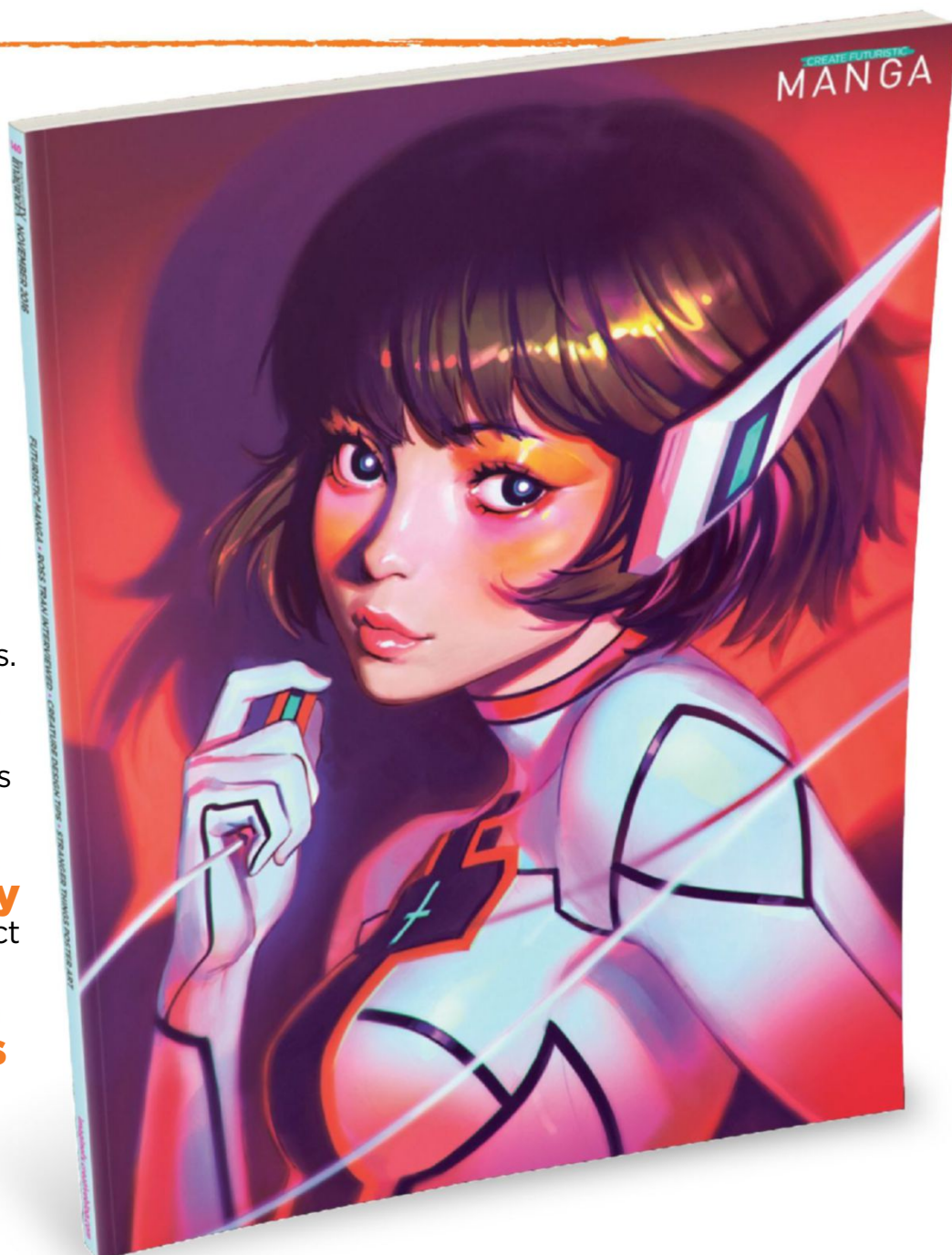
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Artist Q&A

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The NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX panel

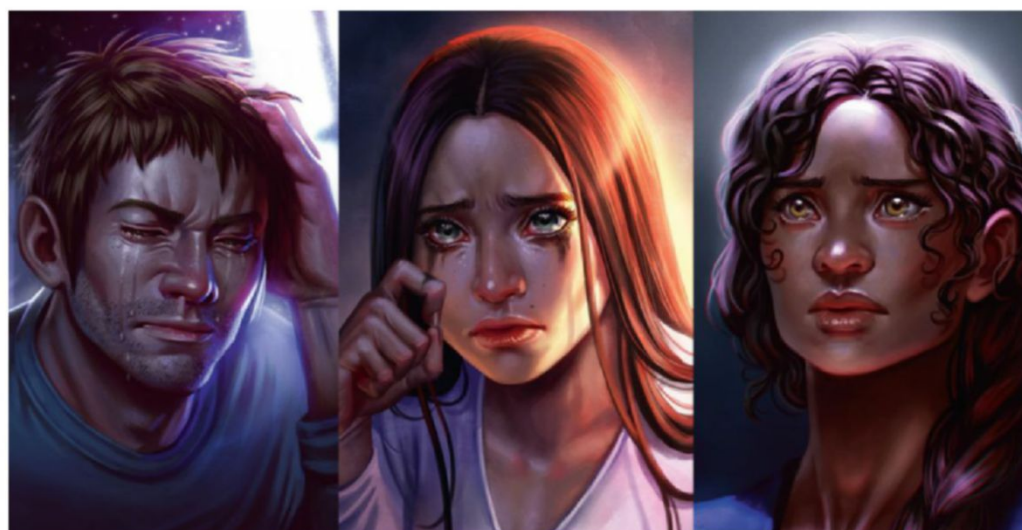
Sara Forlenza
Italy-based Sara is a freelance artist who works mostly on book covers, digital cards and role-playing games. She also creates illustrations for a range of apps.
www.saraforlenza.deviantart.com

Lorena Lammer
Lorena is a freelance artist living in Germany who works mainly for card games, and pen and paper publishers. She spends a lot of her time entertaining her two cats.
www.lululana.com

Mélanie Delon
Fantasy art is a speciality of Mélanie, a French freelance illustrator. She works for a range of publishers, and sets aside time for developing her own personal works.
www.melanieadelon.com

David Paget
David works in the game and film industries as a freelance concept artist. He's also a lecturer, teaching concept art and digital painting at Teesside University, England.
www.davidpaget.co.uk

Nick Harris
Nick's a UK-based illustrator who's been working in children's publishing since 1982. He switched to digital after 18 years of working in traditional media.
www.nickillus.com



Question

How can I show a small group of people in different states of emotional distress?

Barry Carter, US



Answer

Sara replies



Painting a person's emotional state is a difficult skill to master, and you'll need to invest a lot of time studying people's faces, their postures and mannerisms, to be able to produce a credible painting on this theme.

I would also suggest keeping a mirror close to your painting workstation, so that you can watch yourself acting out different emotions. Better still, you can touch your face to feel your facial muscles as they became contracted if you're acting out anger, fear or despair, or became relaxed if you act out joy or a relaxed state of mind.

If we take as an example the emotional state of sadness, there are various levels that can be represented, ranging from melancholy to despair. And for every emotional state, a person's body language and facial expression changes, too.

Sadness is an emotion that can manifest itself through crying. Other body language

Although the overall emotional state is sadness, I've painted three rather different facial expressions.

for sadness may include sloped shoulders that are closed in on themselves, a curved back and lowered head. Similarly, the facial features tend to go downwards: the sides of the mouth and the corners of the eyebrows can all droop, for example. Once you work out how to represent the emotion of sadness, you can add drama by using light, shadow and the general atmosphere to emphasise it.

Artist Q&A Need our advice?

Email help@imaginefx.com with your art questions and we'll provide all the answers!

Artist's secret

FOCUS ON THE EYES

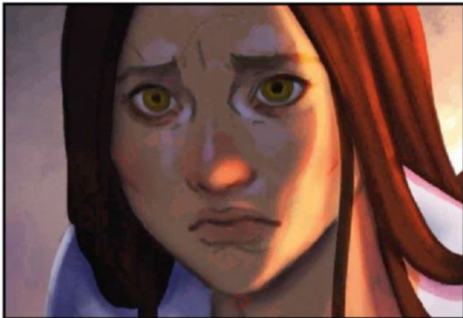
I pay particular attention to the expression of the eyes, because the viewer will be attracted to those. So I remember to paint reddened sclera and any little wrinkles around them, to enhance the sad countenance.



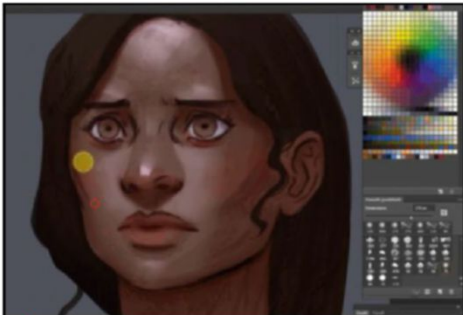
Step-by-step: Portraying different upset emotions



1 I want to paint a desperately sad figure, who is resting his head in his hand. Face muscles contract during a period of crying, so I paint a furrowed brow, eyes that are squeezed tight and a wrinkled nose. I also give him grinding teeth, to suggest the sense of anger often present in the moment of despair.



2 Here the character has cried a lot, so I give her red eyes and nose. Towards the edges of the eyes I add a few touches of light to suggest skin that's still damp with tears. The facial features are less pronounced compared to the previous step. I paint running makeup with black brushstrokes on an Overlay layer.



3 This character's emotional reaction has evolved into a kind of concern. So her face will seem apparently neutral. Only the eyebrows are stretched horizontally with hints of a frown, and the eyes will be wide open. If we want we can play with the reflections in the iris, where white brushstrokes suggest unshed tears.

Question

I'm keen to realistically depict repeated elements in a scene. What's a good technique to use?

Kate Kudrow, Italy



Answer

Lorena replies

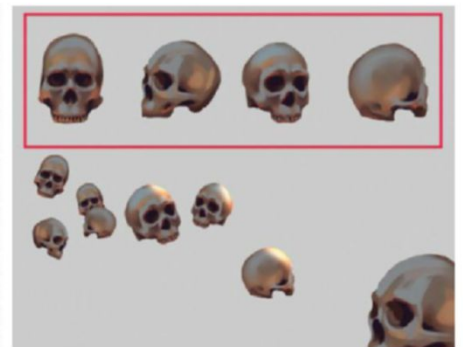


Sometimes, when working on a painting in Photoshop we need to have several copies of the same object in a scene. Yet painting each and every one would take up a lot of time. Fortunately, there's an easy way to achieve this in a couple of minutes.

The best way to go about this is to draw the item you want to repeat on a new layer. If you have a direct light source affecting it don't worry about that until later. For now, just paint the item with ambient and reflected light. Then select the Move Tool (V), hold Alt and drag. This way the item will be duplicated on to a new layer. Repeat this process as often as you need to. You can also flatten a couple of layers at some point and use the same trick to repeat the object even faster. While doing this, be mindful of the layer order and use the Transform Tool to change the sizes and direction of your item.

When you're done with the repeating process, lock the transparent pixels of the layer your objects are on (on your Layer panel click the square icon that comes directly after Lock) and paint in the direct light. If you want more variety in the way the items look, you can now paint in details that will make them look different from one another.

All skulls are based off four different ones. To introduce more variety I add some round shapes in the distance and in between the skulls.



These are my four basic skulls, each of them sitting on a different layer. I can now make copies and transform them to fit the image, before adjusting the lighting on them.

Artist's secret

USE SHORTCUTS

Photoshop's default shortcuts are always going to save you time. Even better, make your own for the tools or actions you use most. For this, go to Edit > Keyboard shortcuts and set them up. Doing so will make your workflow much faster – once you get used to them, of course!



Question

Do you have any tips for painting a still life practice piece?

Geneviève Harquin, France

Answer

Sara replies

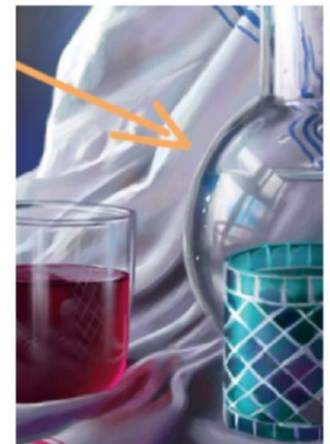


I'd always recommend setting some time aside for a still life painting session. You'll learn realistic rendering techniques, meaning you can paint credible details and create a more intricate illustration. It's also useful to keep your eye trained to capture colours, shades, proportions and to learn how to paint inanimate object like fruit, cloth, and glass and metal objects.

For this article I put together a composition using the glassware, a jug, a wine glass and an ornamental glass. I place them on a white table cloth, close to a source of natural light (in this case a window), so that the way the light interacts with the glass is obvious. Before starting the painting I take a photo: sunlight changes its position and colour during different times of the day, so it's better to keep a reference image because the work can take a long time.

Since my purpose is to portray a still life composition, I don't worry about the background. I simply sketch some lines to outline perspective and table top, bearing in mind that its colour will affect the lights and shadows of the scene.

When I practise, I choose to portray materials such as glass, to bridge the technical gaps in my knowledge.



To get the most from your still life session, ensure your light source hits prominent objects in the composition.

Artist's secret

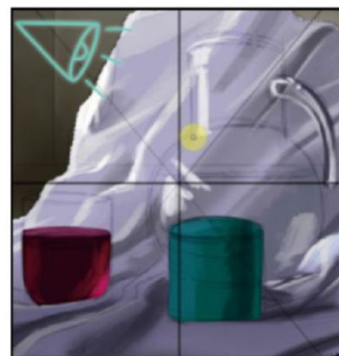
PAINTING PERFECT GLASS

Glass is transparent, but it's vital to remember that what we see on transparent surfaces will be distorted by the glass forms. So don't paint with too much detail – it's enough to define only some areas.

Step-by-step: Sketching and adding details



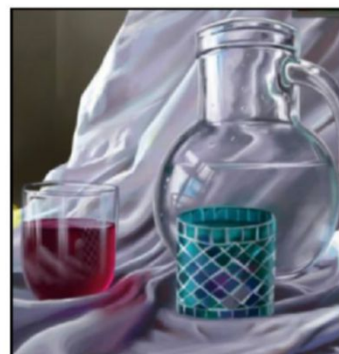
1 I proceed as I would do when painting traditionally. I start with a quick sketch of the jug and the two glasses with a small, hard-edged brush, bearing in mind proportions and perspective. Drawing diagonals on the canvas helps me keep the composition's key elements in focus. Once I'm happy with my sketch I lay down basic colours using the Lasso and Fill tools.



2 This is a delicate phase because choosing colours similar to those that our eye perceives can really make a difference in the success of my painting. Of course, working digitally means I can easily correct my colours, unlike with traditional techniques. With a large hard-edged brush I sketch lights and shadows, noting that with a cold light I have warm shadows tones.

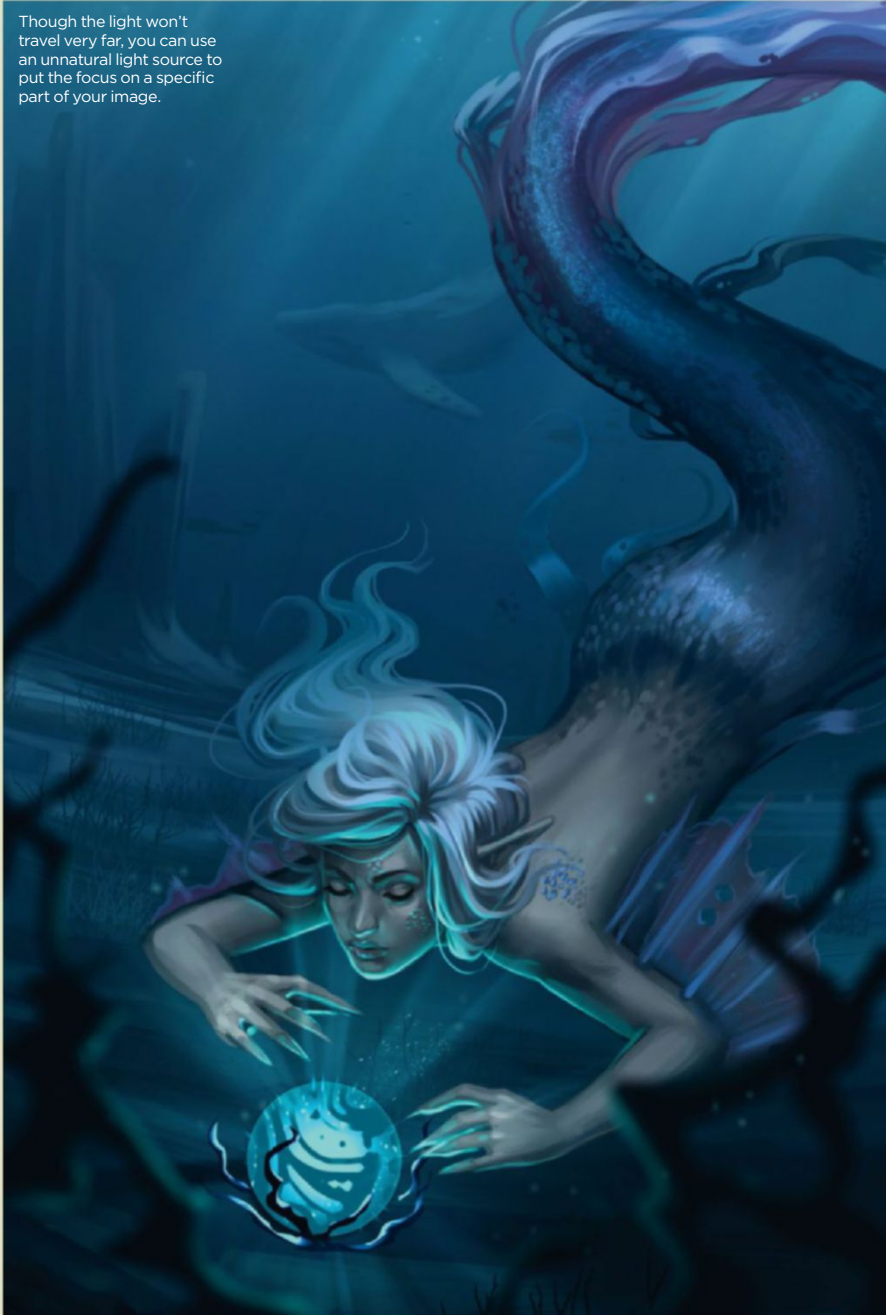


3 I add details. First I define the cloth with a smaller, softer-edged brush. I paint darker shadows where the fabric overlaps. Before moving on to glass objects, I paint the light reflected on the fabric folds, picking up the colour from the well-lit areas of the wine glass (which in this case is a bright and saturated red) and the water jug.



4 I paint the glass and the jug on a new layer, using the Eraser tool to create the transparent effect. As well as being transparent, glass is also reflective so I create another layer and I paint the reflections of the drapery on the wine glass. I use a brush with a soft edge to avoid overcooking them. Finally, I detail the objects and paint the blue lines that run across the cloth.

Though the light won't travel very far, you can use an unnatural light source to put the focus on a specific part of your image.



Question

Help me illustrate an underwater light source

Jim Curtis, England

Answer

Lorena replies



Light behaves differently underwater than it does above it, which affects not only the lighting of a scene but also the colours. The first thing you have to keep in mind is that because water is much denser than air, light doesn't travel as far and thus doesn't illuminate the environment as it would out in the open.

As for the colour, everything receives a blue or green-ish tint and the deeper the scene is set in the watery environment, the more intense and darker this becomes. That's why deep in

the ocean you won't see a lot of red, if at all. Keep this in mind when painting!

Decide on what kind of light source you want to paint, and experiment with Layer and Brush modes to create different effects. Soft Light and Color Dodge can help you achieve interesting glowing effects. Red light is very rare in underwater environments, but it can attract the eye, so try it if this suits the scene.

If you want to keep things straightforward, a teal or blue light source will enable you to light up your focal point more easily.

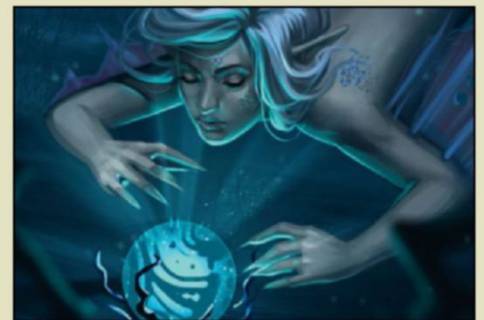
Step-by-step: Highlight your deep-sea focal point



1 I start off with a rough sketch and some colours, to see what direction I want to take the illustration in. At this point I have four layers: the background, the sketch, the flat colours for the mermaid and the light. Separate layers make it easier to make adjustments. Later on you can flatten the layers as you see fit.



2 Keep the mood of your picture in mind. To make the most of your light source, keep everything around it rather dark. Tweak this effect by making use of Layer Adjustments (Image>Adjustments) to darken or desaturate different parts of the image or by using Layer modes, such as Multiply, and a Soft brush.



3 I kept the direct light on a separate layer until now. Once I'm happy with the colours in the scene, I flatten everything down and start detailing the face and the parts that are illuminated by the sphere. I also put more work into the light source itself and add the rays of light on a Soft Light layer on top.



Using photography can radically speed up your design process and heighten the sense of realism in your designs.

When incorporating textures, you should match the perspective and angles within your image. So try to make sure you position textures wisely.

Question

How can I use my cool photo textures?

Simon Keown, Scotland

Answer

David replies

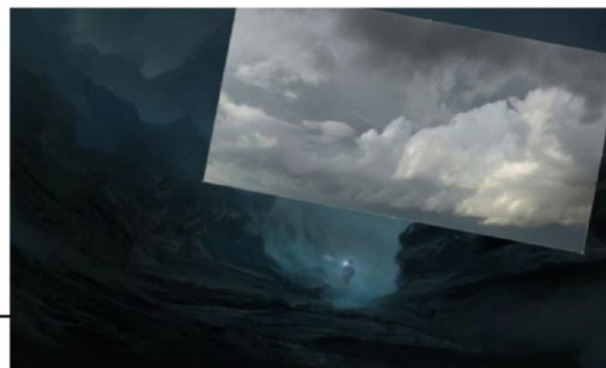


Using photography and textures can help to create a good sense of realism within your paintings and speed up your design process. There can be a slight danger though, in that the final image will just look like a collage of randomly collected images, rather than an original design. So, if you're planning on using photography within your work, bear in mind that it's not a substitute for understanding the fundamentals of art and design.

I think the best application for using photography is to strike a balance between textures and incorporating digital painting

too. Here I've created an alien world environment. I start off with a quick greyscale composition painting, to work out the overall design. Once I'm happy with my design, I begin to bring photos into the image to help quickly define the rough, rock texture of the ground and canyons.

The photos had to be adjusted to match the colour and mood of my scene. I regularly use editing tools available in Photoshop, such as Brightness, Saturation, Color Balance and Levels to adjust textures. This enables me to have complete control over the textures, so I can easily integrate them into my design.



With this image, I wanted to show how quickly you could place in textures using Perspective Tools v2. It's a useful extension to have, so give it a try.

Question

Are there any tools available in Photoshop to help me with perspective?

Simone Adams, US

Answer

David replies



I'm a firm believer that you shouldn't purely rely on software to do the work for you.

A good artist should be able to understand and construct the basic principles of drawing, including perspective. However, there are some useful tools and plug-ins available for Photoshop that can help speed up the process.

Among some of the more useful tools I've found, the Perspective Tools v2 for Photoshop CC-CC2015 purchasable extension has proven to be valuable. It

helps to easily create perspective and parallel grids in seconds. Mainly using the Pen Tool, the user can draw a couple of lines, click the Grids button and the extension works out perspective grids instantly. Perspective Tools v2 also offers a variety of additional features, including the ability to bend and warp textures perfectly to any perspective grids you may need.

If you're looking for a powerful yet easy-to-use perspective tool in Photoshop then look no further. You can get hold of the extension at <http://ifxm.ag/persptools>.

Question

Have you got any advice for breaking my artist's block?

Lucy Camperdown, Belgium



Answer

Nick replies



Painter 2016's brush controls offer a hefty array of choices. A blank canvas can be just as intimidating. Either or both can become a barrier to even starting. Let's tackle both at the same time.

Let's start by tinkering with the Spring Particle settings available to Watercolour>Runny Wash Flat. This brush emulates the sort of unpredictable behaviour of real watercolour.

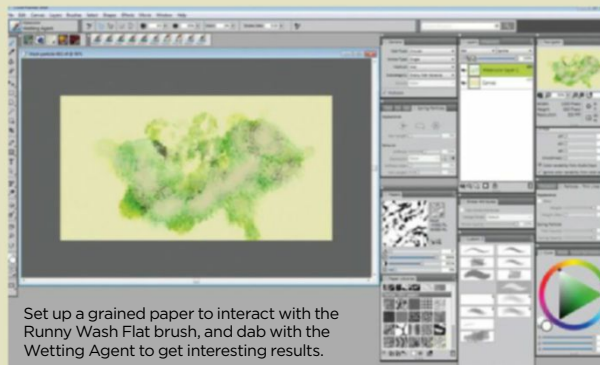
To begin, you'll need certain brush control panels open. Go to Window>Brush Control Panels and make sure Spring Particles is open, which should also have Particles-Common on the same palette. To really expand the possibilities, it pays to have the Paper palette and Library open, so check that, too. More pronounced textures offer more interesting results – try bumping up Scale and Contrast.

Now just pick some colours, make random marks and wait. As soon as you touch the canvas, Painter creates a layer, appropriate to the brush. You should notice, on the Spring Particle palette, that there are three options, of which one will be highlighted. Try the others, before tweaking any other controls. One may already work for you. When you do tweak, explore one setting at a time.

Once you have some nice marks, save as a flat image to draw/paint over. It's like spotting shapes in clouds. Just go with it.



This odd combination of characters would never have existed, without making a few marks on digital paper in Painter 2016 and seeing where they led me.



Set up a grained paper to interact with the Runny Wash Flat brush, and dab with the Wetting Agent to get interesting results.

Artist's secret

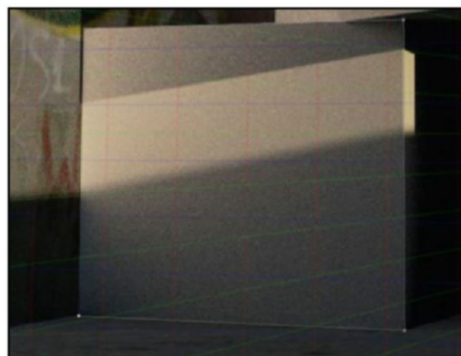
TRY OUT NEW ART SOFTWARE

We all have our favourites, but it never hurts to try out alternatives, when you can. Otherwise you might miss a new favourite.

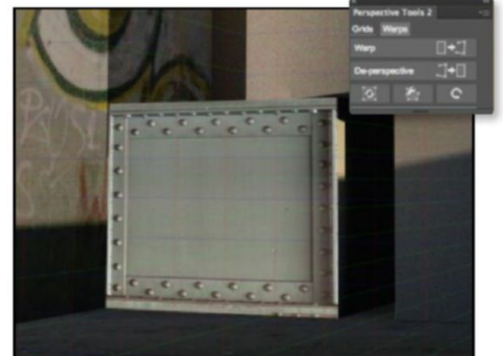
Step-by-step: Warping your textures in Photoshop



1 To illustrate my point on warping textures using Perspective Tools v2, I've created an example for you to see. I have a series of cubes that I want to turn into metal crates. I also have a flat, metallic texture I want to use, but the perspective doesn't currently match my image.



2 Using Photoshop's Pen Tool (press P for the shortcut), I need to create four Path Points on my image. I begin in the top left corner, go to the upper right corner, down to the bottom right, and then to the lower left. Bear in mind that the order you place the points matters.



3 When I'm satisfied with the placement of my Path Points, I can press the Warp button available in the Perspective Tools v2 window extension. This snaps the texture into the correct position. And because the texture was a Smart Object, the layer remains editable.

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Question

Can you give me some help with painting expressive hands?

Rebecca Holgate, Canada

Answer

Mélanie replies



Hands are probably the most difficult anatomy element to paint, even more so when they have to convey an emotion.

And if they're not well executed they can ruin a painting. Hands can express everything from sadness to joy, but whatever the emotion I'm aiming for, I always start with sketches to find out exactly what I want to express. I don't care if the anatomy isn't correct – I just try to focus on the emotion and/or story that I want to tell with my character.

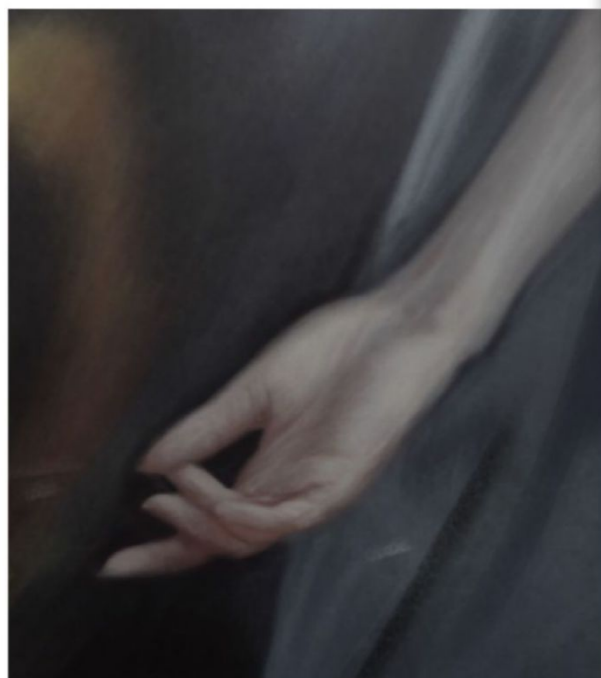
Once I have a clear idea of the composition, the next thing I do is to gather references, to help get the hands right. When I have to paint some complex-looking hands I usually use myself as a model. This helps to avoid any anatomy mistake and also it's a great way to find the perfect hand position. Posing in front of a mirror will help you to capture the emotion that you're after.

Your chosen lighting scheme can also help to increase the emotion of a scene. A soft light will go very well with delicate hands, while a strong light with contrasted shadows will be perfect for stressed-looking hands. You can also play with anatomy details such as veins if you want to achieve an even more intense emotion.

I sometimes use a specific colour scheme to enhance the feeling of an image. If the character is sad then I'll pick pale, gentle colours. But if my character's meant to be happy then the colour scheme will be more saturated, with intense colours on show.

To paint a hand, think of it as a box and cylinders when you do the line art sketch. It's more easy to visualise and add light to these kinds of geometric shapes.

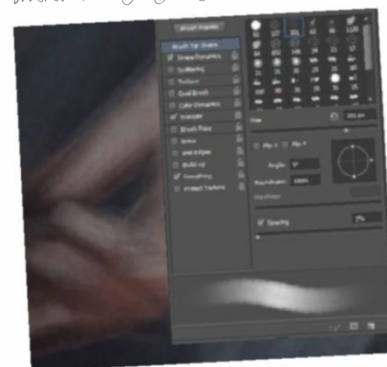
The more you add volume to the hand, the more it'll look real and so the emotion will be easy to convey.



Artist's secret

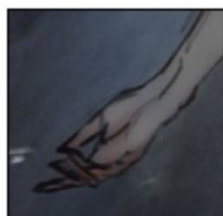
TRY OUT MY SKIN BRUSH

I use this brush for creating skin. It's a very soft one with a lot of texture. The skin needs to have a lot of colour variations, especially on the hands. I avoid a plastic skin appearance by keeping my brushstrokes slightly rough looking.



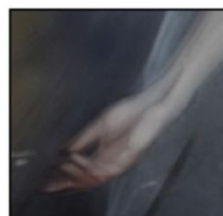
Step-by-step: Paint hands that tell a story

1 I lay down quick line art to start depicting the hand. For this article I want my character's hand to look very soft, almost floating in the air. I choose a pastel-based colour scheme: a pale blue



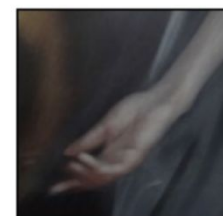
mixed with a tender beige for the hand. I use a Soft brush to create the base, ensuring that there's some colour variation, ready for the skin texture.

2 Now I start to further define the hand, slowly developing the shape of the fingers and the palm. The hand must look delicate and so the fingers need to be long with no hard lines. To save time



I don't try to create perfectly detailed hands. The key anatomy signposts such as nails or wrinkles can be suggested by simple touches of light.

3 I add more details, and work on the skin texture with the same Soft brush. I soften the light because I don't want it to become too strong and ruin the emotion I want to convey. I'll also leave the hand's



outline blurred to achieve an even more tender feeling to the whole element. Clean outlines suit hands that are conveying a tense attitude.

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Artist Portfolio ROSS TRAN

The American tells **Gary Evans** how he emerged from a “dark place” to become an in-demand artist and YouTube sensation, all before graduating college

Ross Tran steps out of his Californian apartment. The sun shines in the sky above and a car idles on the road below. Holding a couple of large canvases, he climbs over a balcony, shimmies down a tree and speaks to camera: “Welcome to another episode of Ross Draws. It’s my graduation episode!”

He runs to the waiting car. Animated sparks fly. He throws his artwork through the open window, jumps into the driver’s seat and speeds away. The hand-written personalised number plate taped to the back of his Chevy reads: COLOR DODGE.

In just 20 seconds, we see why the 23-year-old artist’s videos have earned nearly two million views on his YouTube channel: the quick cuts, the playful tone,

the breathless, almost hyperactive presenting style; whistle-stop tours of his art school, apartment and various locations around California; interviews with the smiley, unbelievably healthy-looking friends and teachers who populate those places... And, of course, the thing that underpins the channel’s success, Ross’s art – bright, stylised, painterly, with tutorials explaining how he produces it. What you’d never know by watching these videos is that the channel “came from a dark place.”

PERSONALITY IS KEY

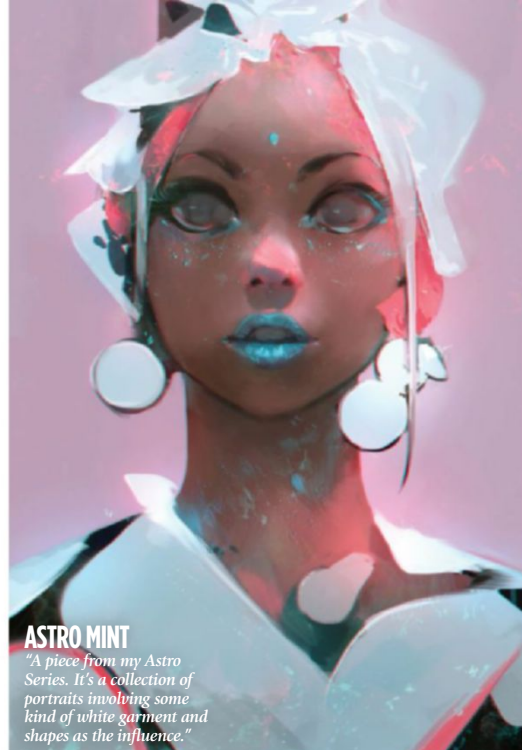
Ross is a recent graduate of Pasadena’s ArtCenter College of Design. He won his first concept artist job at the nearby West Studio when he was just 17. A couple of years later, he worked as lead character designer on his first feature film – creating Echo for the 2014 animated movie *Earth to Echo*. He now counts among his clients Disney, Samsung and Microsoft, and has since worked on the upcoming *Halo* Franchise and several more films.

How did he win so many big jobs at such a young age? “You have to personalise your portfolio so it represents what you really want to do,” he says. “For instance, if you love character design and want to get hired

for it, make your portfolio and online presence character-based. I’ve seen a lot of people put too many types of work in their portfolio. It makes them look disposable. The last thing you want to be is a robot. Show the world who you are and what you want to do.”

He says some people may be familiar with his earlier work, but most of this success has come through Ross Draws, the YouTube channel that he started at the end of 2011.

“I actually grew up really shy,” he says, an image very different from the boisterous character he presents in his videos. “I had a lot of insecurities growing up. I think Ross Draws represents a side of myself that depicts transformation and self-growth. ➡



ASTRO MINT

“A piece from my Astro Series. It’s a collection of portraits involving some kind of white garment and shapes as the influence.”



BEACH

“This was one of the few pieces I did in my year off art to pursue acting. I just loved to paint and felt the need to express myself artistically.”

KATARA

“This was a memorable piece because it was intensely challenging trying to paint water and waves. I had to really try to capture the physics, yet keep it stylised.”

Artist PROFILE

Ross Tran

LOCATION: US

FAVOURITE ARTISTS: My early artistic influences are more fine art and painterly: Craig Mullins, Leyendecker, Claire Wending, Jaime Jones, Sargent and Sergio Toppi.

SOFTWARE USED: Photoshop

WEB: www.rossdraws.com





“The last thing you want to be is a robot. Show the world who you are and what you want to do”

NIDALEE

"This was from the third episode on my YouTube channel, drawing Nidalee from League. She's one of my favourite characters and I had to draw her!"



➡ I consider myself an introvert, but one who's learning extroverted skills."

Even after earning a place at the prestigious ArtCenter College of Design, Ross says he felt something was missing in his life. He was passionate about art, but also loved making people laugh. So he took a year off and pursued an acting career.

Ross juggled art school and auditions. He took extra classes in improv and scene study. The nearest he got to a big break was an audition for a pilot on the Fox network.

The small part called for a designer who freaks out a lot. "My perfect role!" Ross

says. The producers of hit shows *Psych* and *Scrubs* were in the audition room and he made them laugh. They gave the part – which the script labelled "Asian Best Friend" – to a white person.

"I'm not sure the pilot even got picked up," he says. "But it was a great experience. I also auditioned for a lot of commercials."

BRANCHING OUT ON YOUTUBE

A friend suggested he start a YouTube channel combining the two things: art and making people laugh. "I hesitated, thinking it wasn't really my thing. Prior to the channel, I felt like I had no purpose. I was waking up and feeling really unmotivated to do anything. Uninspired, unwilling, defeated.

"Acting helped me to commit. Because, in acting, you have to commit 110 per cent or else no one will believe you, not even you. You can't be in your head. Going on those auditions and to classes helped me to commit to the moment and just do it, no thinking. It's a practice I've also taken into my art. If you have an idea, don't be afraid to voice it."

When Ross reinvented himself as Ross Draws, it shook up his personal life and kickstarted his career. But the success



SPECTRE

"My work has recently taken a more stylised, graphic approach, while still pertaining to my painterly roots."

of the YouTube channel brought new problems. "My schedule is different every week, every day," he says. "Sometimes I feel I overload myself. I'm definitely what they call a night owl. I go to sleep anywhere from 2 to 5am. As my channel grows, so do my opportunities – conventions, signings, gigs – and it's been harder to have a set schedule. It's still currently a learning curve. But most of my week consists of editing my videos and painting."

Growing up, Ross was into TV shows like *Pokemon*, *Sailor Moon* and *Power Rangers* – you can see those influences in his art and on his channel. He has a few key rules when making videos. Our attention span is getting shorter and shorter, he says, so he keeps footage under the six-minute mark. It's also important to be yourself, connect with your audience and collaborate ➡



ROSS AND MILO

"I always got tons of requests to draw my dog and found a perfect opportunity – to celebrate one year on YouTube."

“Acting helped me learn to commit to the moment and just do it, no thinking”



JOURNEY

"I really wanted to express a sense of movement and vision with this one."

THE KEY STEP IN A JOURNEY

Like few other artists, Ross can pinpoint the exact moment he found his own artistic voice

"Journey is definitely one of my favourite and most memorable personal pieces," he says. "I'd been in school for about a year and was learning a lot, but hadn't really applied it. I didn't know who I was as an artist. In class, I felt I was creating a lot of cool stuff, which showed my artistic influences, but there was little of me in there."

Ross wanted to "bring something to life." He says Journey proves hard work really does pay off. All the best elements of Ross's work came together: it's colourful and stylised but painterly; the composition is strong and the characters are suggestive of a much larger narrative than we're seeing.

After completing Journey, Ross started understanding the kind of workflow that suited him. "I began to really love painting," he says. "I started to absorb information faster. This piece hung in my school's gallery and was a staple of my portfolio. It was definitely a breakthrough moment."

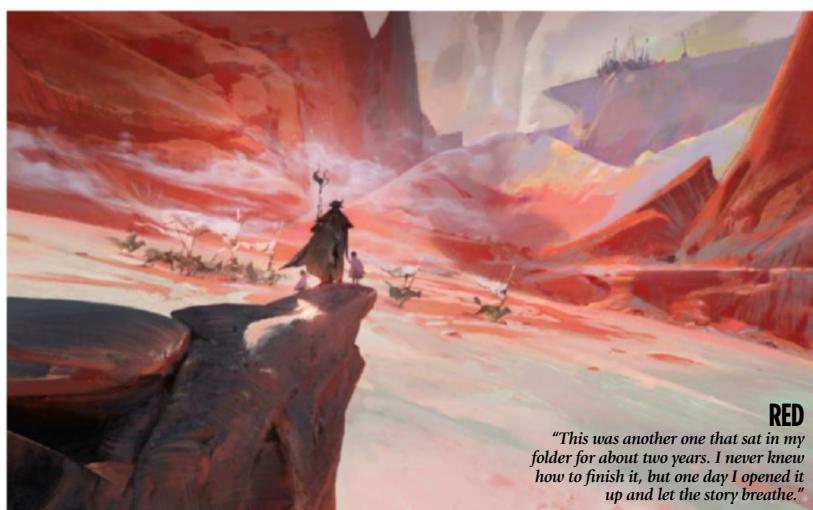
KORRA

"This piece is quite special to me. People often mention that this was one of the first episodes/pieces they saw when they discovered me."



POWERPUFF GIRLS

"I grew up watching The PowerPuff Girls and wanted to do my take on it. I was bringing my love of graphics in the piece."



RED

"This was another one that sat in my folder for about two years. I never knew how to finish it, but one day I opened it up and let the story breathe."



MASTER OF COLOR DODGE

Ross on the Photoshop tool that his fans know has become his signature technique

"I really didn't even know it was going to be a thing of mine. It's part of my process in almost every painting, so my first YouTube video included that step.

"I got so excited in the video that everyone started to say it! Color Dodge makes my painting colourful, vibrant and full of light. You can see here: it can add a lot of story and bring your piece to life."

The blending mode adds a depth and glow to colours. Ross used to feel such techniques were cheating. Now he realises artists must embrace the tools that help them best tell a story. "It doesn't matter. You can learn from anything, any method, anywhere. Have an open mind. I wish someone had told me that when I was starting out."

➔ with other people. He's made videos with artists he looks up to, like Dan LuVisi and Anthony Jones, but also collaborations with non-artists, such as Jimmy Wong and Yoshi Sudarso, who plays the Blue Ranger on the new Power Rangers show.

The YouTube channel brought Ross new confidence, which was mirrored in his art. When he started at ArtCenter College of Design, he knew he was a capable painter but felt his work was too heavily influenced by his favourite artists. Then he painted a piece called *Journey* (see page 43) – a landmark in which he found his own voice and techniques.

Ross works with Premiere and After Effects for his videos, Photoshop and

Lightroom for painting. Using all Adobe software helps him easily switch between apps. One website recently labelled him the "Master of Color Dodge." The blend mode creates extra depth and makes colours really pop off the screen, an almost glowing effect that's present in much of Ross's work.

IT'S NOT CHEATING

Ross hadn't always used such techniques. "At a young age, I thought that using certain methods as cheating, only to realise now that it doesn't matter. You can learn from anything, any method, anywhere. Have an open mind and you can absorb information easier and faster."

SPIRITED AWAY

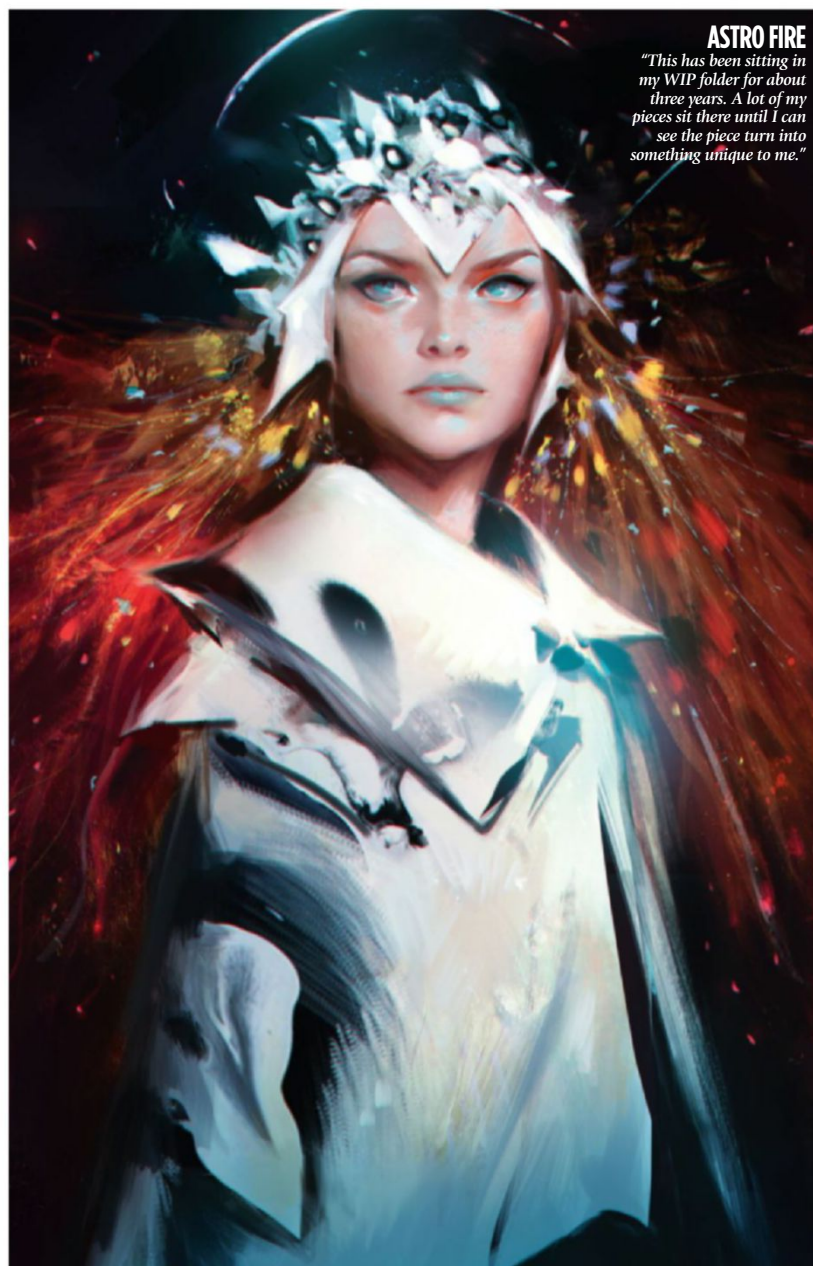
"I'm a big fan of Miyazaki and cherish any chance I can to celebrate the impact he's had to me."

After graduating college, Ross left the apartment that features in many of his YouTube videos. He now rents a house with friends, a place just outside Los Angeles. "We call it The Grind House," he says. The Grind House? "It's where we're going to grind on our stuff for a year and decide what to do from there. There's not much of an art scene in my area, but I love the motivational energy that the house has."

"Motivational energy" is a perfect term. It's in everything Ross says and does. You can still see his influences in his work. There's a bit of Jaime Jones in there, some Craig Mullins and Claire Wending. But despite his youth, he has found a style, voice and motivational energy of his own – and, perhaps most importantly, a platform on which to share it. That's the one piece of advice he's keen to get across: do it your own way, on your own terms.

"My videos are funded by my amazing supporters on Patreon. I'm blessed to have

“I thought using certain methods was cheating. But you can learn from anything, any method, anywhere”



ASTRO FIRE

"This has been sitting in my WIP folder for about three years. A lot of my pieces sit there until I can see the piece turn into something unique to me."

fans who love what I do and who want the exclusive content that comes with each episode. Patreon is definitely a career option for artists." Ross's endorsement of Patreon comes with a caveat, however: only launch when you're ready. "I held off on making my page until I knew I had quality content for the people who supported me.

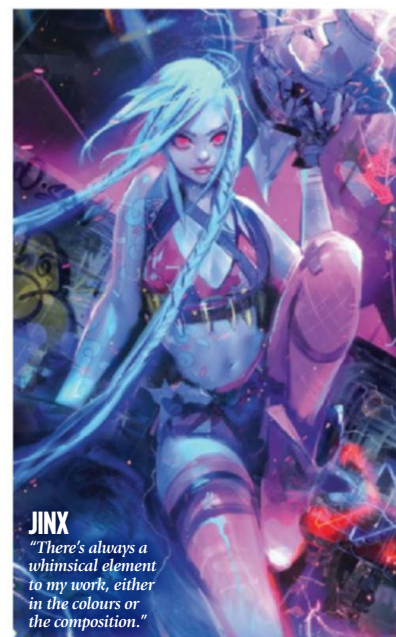
"If you do what you love, numbers and finance shouldn't matter," Ross adds. "I have friends who absolutely love their studio jobs and want to be surrounded by people. I also had friends who quit those jobs, made a Patreon and earned less, but loved what they do.

"I think it's about finding your own instrument and how to operate at your fullest potential. In today's industry – and society – we too often compare ourselves to others, which fuels our inner self-critic. We're all on our own journey at our own pace. We all have different inspirations, a different drive that propels us forward."



REAPER

"This piece was commissioned for the deviantART+Blizzard Campaign '21 Days of Overwatch'. It's probably my best seller at my first convention, Anime Expo."



JINX

"There's always a whimsical element to my work, either in the colours or the composition."

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PRINT AND DIGITAL BACK ISSUES



Issue 139

October 2016

We cover epic environments this issue, and bring you the cream of artists who are busy creating new worlds for video games and films. Elsewhere, creature artist Brynn Metheney shows us around her studio and we take in the vehicle designs of Scott Robertson.



Issue 138

September 2016

Our fantasy art special kicks off with Viktoria Gavrilenko's vivacious Shakespearean cover and workshop. Elsewhere there's portrait tips, an art of DOOM exclusive, Scott Gustafson interviewed, Hellboy, Chris Dunn, Atomhawk and much more.



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.

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May 2016



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April 2016



Issue 132
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Issue 131
February 2016



Issue 130
January 2016



Issue 129
Christmas 2015



Issue 128
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November 2015



Issue 126
October 2015

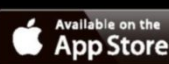


Issue 125
September 2015



Issue 124
August 2015

GET YOUR DIGITAL EDITION THROUGH THESE OUTLETS:



*Resource files are available from issue 85 onwards.

LOCATIONS: Vancouver, Canada (new studio opened in Melbourne, Australia)
PROJECTS: Halo: The Fall of Reach, Marvel: Contest of Champions, Bound
WEB: <http://ifxm.ag/seqgroup>



The Sequence team has a long-running relationship with Halo, having delivered many narrative expansions over the years.



STUDIO PROFILE

THE SEQUENCE GROUP

From Marvel characters to Microsoft games, this Canadian studio firmly believes in stretching its artists' horizons, as **Tom May** discovers

Based in Vancouver, The Sequence Group has been creating concept and production art and illustration for games, films and other media since 2003. Working with the likes of Marvel and Halo, the company has won a string of awards and recently opened a second studio, in Melbourne.

However, still not everyone realises it's a full-service studio, says founder **Ian Kirby**.



"People often think we only worked on smaller aspects of projects," he says. "But we almost always handle everything top to bottom,

from concept art to storyboards to full CG."

And that means The Sequence Group team needs to be super-flexible. "Typically,



our artists are very fluid with jumping between styles when necessary," explains art director **Andrew West**, who joined the company in 2006.

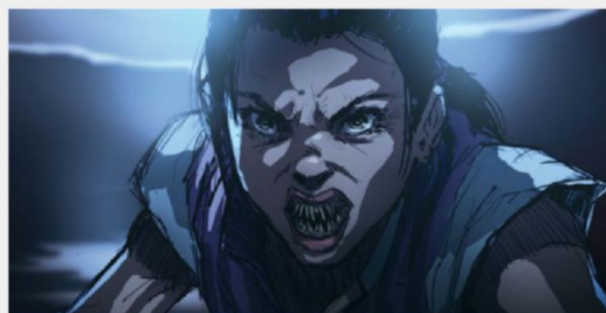
"Cel shaded, painterly, photoreal... we have such a variety of different gigs coming through our doors."

As such, the company's employees – however talented – can never stand still, says artist **Tyler Bradley**, who works mainly

on design and painted production art. "I've certainly broadened my skills in terms of digital painting since I've been here," he reveals. "You



Ian Kirby and Andrew West created the first motion comic in 2001 – Sequence has since worked on many more.



have to be able to paint characters, creatures, environments and props well, and often in a short amount of time.

"We use a number of different styles, which I love," Tyler continues. "It's predominantly stylised realism, but it can also be a more cartoon animated style, often portrayed with cinematic lighting."

RANGE OF STYLES

His colleague **Brett MacDonald**, a 2D generalist specialising in concept design and illustration, tells a similar story. "On any given day, I'll typically be working on matte painting, visual development, or motion comic artwork," he



explains. Indeed, as ImagineFX went to press, he was working on character-reveal trailers for Marvel: Contest of Champions, a free-to-play mobile fighting game from Kabam. "Thanks to the excellent artists I get to work alongside, I've picked up ➡

THE SEQUENCE GROUP



Despite being a relatively small outfit, Sequence has forged relationships with companies like Disney, Marvel and Microsoft.

“We handle everything from concept art, to storyboards, to full CG”

DIMITRI SIRENKO

The senior artist on working on multiple projects at TSG

How did you come to get a staff job at Sequence?

Sequence was my first industry experience. I was a fresh graduate of Emily Carr University of Art and Design in Vancouver, and had been participating in weekly challenges on the now-defunct ConceptArt.org to improve my portfolio. Then one of the artists who I'd been chatting to online contacted me about an artist opportunity at Sequence.

What were you first asked to do once you joined the company?

Initially something entirely new to me: painted backgrounds that were layered specifically for animation and parallax purposes. Many of these backgrounds also included characters that I had to paint and separate in layers for animators.

And how have your art skills developed since?

Sequence has given me a big jump-start into my art career – my skills have improved tenfold. I also had the pleasure of working with a great team led by the incredible art direction of Andrew West. His artistic skills and keen eye really helped me to improve my own abilities. Sequence also taught me about project management deadlines, review processes and production flow for actual projects.

Your proudest moment?

Working on multiple Halo projects. Each one challenged my artistic ability and that made me work that much harder to hit the quality bar.

How's the working environment?

At Sequence, things get done at the highest quality in a fast-paced environment. I enjoyed that because it taught me how to work at speed without reducing the fidelity of the artwork. Most importantly, the work environment at Sequence is fun and doesn't have any trace of condescending corporate structure.

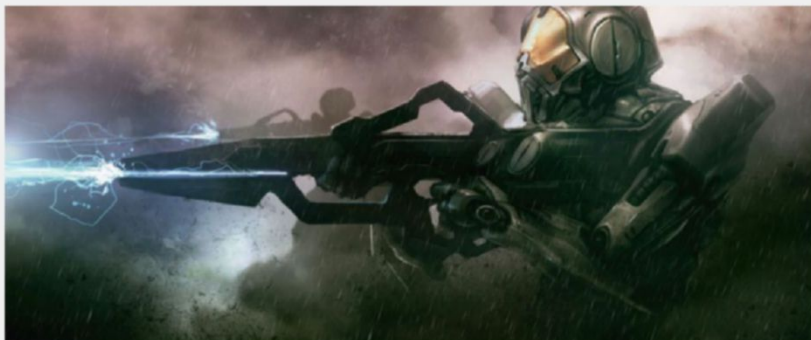
Do you work mainly on your own or collaboratively?

As with most studios there's a chain of dependencies from one team to the next. Sequence has a very strong chain composed of reliable links. The company offers a great balance between having your own workload and at the same time being able to help out, get help, or collaborate with other artists and animators. I recently had the chance to work on multiple projects at once, which was really refreshing – it ensures that the art team's creative juices don't get stagnated by working on one thing only.



Dimitri Sirenko is a concept artist and designer who's worked on Sequence projects for the likes of Microsoft and Warner Brothers.

www.thesequencegroup.com

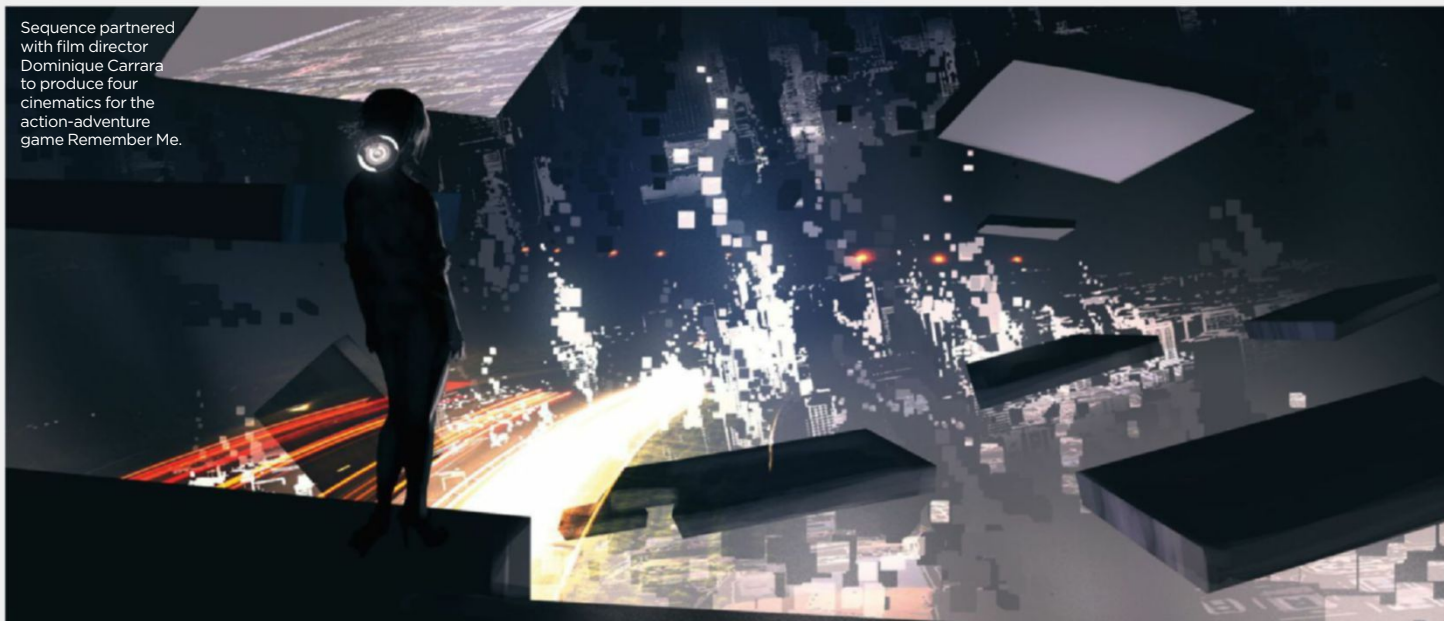


The Librarian cinematic from Halo 4 showcases Sequence's painterly style while building on the Halo lore.

Sequence's HQ is in the heart of Vancouver. The team also recently launched its Australia operation in Melbourne.



Sequence partnered with film director Dominique Carrara to produce four cinematics for the action-adventure game *Remember Me*.



➡ tons of new tricks and techniques," Brett enthuses. "I'd be a lot less confident using light and colour in my artwork without the experience that I've had working at Sequence."

It's not just about technique, though. Keeping big clients happy also means developing a key understanding of their brands, says Ian. Take Halo, with which The Sequence Group has a long-standing relationship (it's just finished Halo: The Fall of Reach, an animated series created in partnership with Microsoft game developer 343 Industries). "With Halo, there's a lot of lore that we have to play well

within, ensuring we're doing it justice," he explains. "This involves a lot of studying the Halo bible, making sure the Spartan's armour is exactly how it should be, for example, and reading in between the lines where we need to."

"It's an incredible experience imagining past events within the Halo universe," Ian adds. "You get to reveal something that hasn't been seen before. It's bringing the imagination to life."

MOTION COMICS

While The Sequence Group produces everything from concept art to animation to live-action VFX and beyond, one creative discipline holds a special place in its heart: motion comics. Recent work in this area includes 40 motion comic-style cutscenes for the free role-playing game *Marvel Heroes* from Gazillion Entertainment. It's also been animating key entries of the *Batman: Black and White* comics for DC Comics and Warner Premiere.

Getting a motion comic right is all about honouring the source material, says Andrew. "We maintain what we call the 'comicness' by matching the art style to the original material," he says. Although that's



Collaboration is at the core of all Sequence's output. Everyone gets their say.

“There’s a great atmosphere and people do get along and hang out outside of work”

not as easy as it might sound. "We've adapted some older comics with nothing more than scanned comics from the 80s or 90s, for instance. And we've been tasked with extending frames outside of the normal comic boxes into a more modern 16:9 aspect ratio."

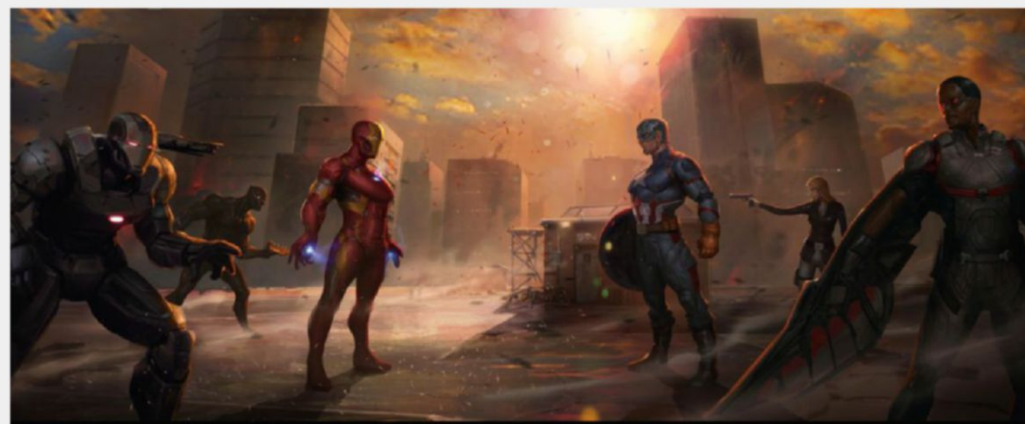
But if the work is challenging, the environment is welcoming, says Tyler. "People work hard here, but it's also relaxed. There's a great atmosphere and people really do get along and hang out outside of work. Inside work, it's always a bit of a collaboration among the other artists, animators and director. It's nice to have talented people to review and critique your work."

Brett agrees. "When I walk into Sequence in the morning I look forward to what I'll be doing that day," he says. "The studio has a real feeling of family and camaraderie. It's loose, sometimes a little wild, but it's one of the best places I've ever worked."

Fancy joining them? "We're constantly on the hunt for new talent," says Andrew.



Want to work at Sequence? Talent, passion and a good chat over a cup of coffee may get you there.



Alongside working on new IPs, Sequence's artists love getting to tackle art of the characters that they grew up sketching.

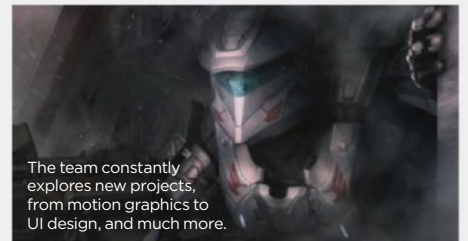
THE SEQUENCE GROUP



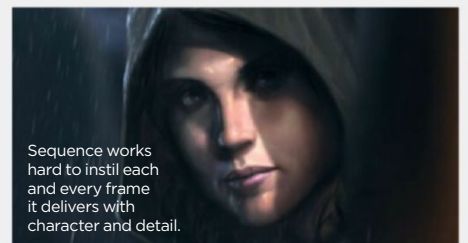
Sequence has contributed a great deal of artwork to Marvel: Contest of Champions' cinematics, and continues to do so.



Sequence illustrated and animated over 20 minutes of painterly cutscenes for Sacred 3, each filled with detail.



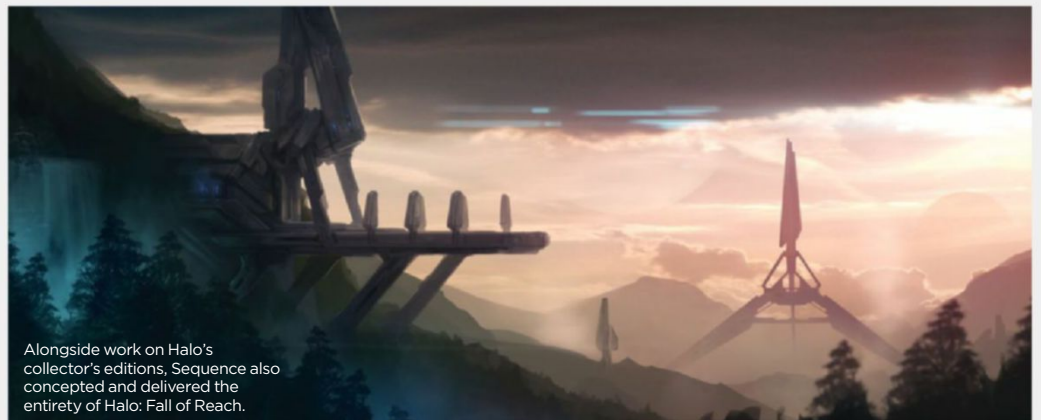
The team constantly explores new projects, from motion graphics to UI design, and much more.



Sequence works hard to instill each and every frame it delivers with character and detail.

"We look for a variety of artists, but it's great to find those who can jump between styles. It's a real valuable asset, to be open to stepping outside the box." So it's not so much about specific skillsets, but about having passion for your art and creativity.

"While the visual and technical challenges of something like an NHL ice projection holds very unique problems versus a painterly Halo animation, it all comes down to the same thing," says Ian. "Ultimately, it's about making someone feel something when they watch what we create," he concludes. "It sounds like a cliché, but it's true."



Alongside work on Halo's collector's editions, Sequence also conceptualized and delivered the entirety of Halo: Fall of Reach.

Bobby Rebholz

From an eel, crab and fish hybrid to armadillos on a mission, someone's a little obsessed with creatures

Artist PROFILE

Bobby Rebholz

LOCATION: US



Bobby Rebholz earned a BS in Design from the University of Cincinnati – where he later returned to teach design drawing classes. He currently teaches creature design for film and games, and visual art classes. As well as a passion for teaching, as Bobby's career has evolved his other main area of focus has become concept design for games and films. Finding new ways to connect these two themes has been a joy, he says, and something he hopes to continue in the future.

www.bobbyrebholz.blogspot.com

THE JUGGERNAUT

"Sketching brutes has always been a joy for me. With this sketch, I made sure to keep the mask insect-like and unique as the Juggernaut stands over the fallen and collects their souls for dungeon torture."



KEATU

"Like the Goratoka bird (overleaf), the Keatu is a combination of different birds – but also a spider. It's a bit more intimidating and vicious, so I thought adding the fear of spiders into the mix would really help its cause!"



"I enjoy designing characters based on real animals, and armadillos offer a very cool opportunity"

THE BAHMBAR

"This was a particularly fun creature to sketch because even though it's a new take on the modern giraffe, there's so much room to explore with the design because of the height and long neck."

BEEPO

"Beepo gathers his gear and sets off on a dangerous adventure to find his long lost brother. I've always had fun designing characters based on real animals, and armadillos offer a very cool opportunity for it."

Sketchbook

TRAPPED IN A WEB

"This was a sketch done for the Daily Spitpaint group on Facebook, with this title as the theme. Again, the fear of spiders is brought into full view in a terrifying and helpless scenario. Will he grab his sword in time?"



GORATEKA

"The Gorateka is a take on the modern-day eagle and several other exotic birds. The combination was done in part to study bird anatomy and to offer a cool new bird creation that could be believable in today's world."

"This was done to study bird anatomy, but also to offer a cool new creation, believable in today's world"



PAIRAMEDE

"In my quest to study wildlife, I took my sketches to the depths of the ocean. Many frightening things are swimming around in the oceans, and I wanted to come up with something that had the combination of an eel, a sea crab and an arapaima."



OWL MAGE

"This was also a sketch for the Daily Spitpaint Facebook group. The theme was Biomorphic Night Owl Mage and I thought it would be really fun to sketch a warrior owl. Owls already have such an iconic look to them."



ARCHENEMY

"This sketch was another for the Daily Spitpaint group. The theme was Archenemy and I immediately thought of a beast versus man scenario. These two have been enemies for a long time and finally fight."



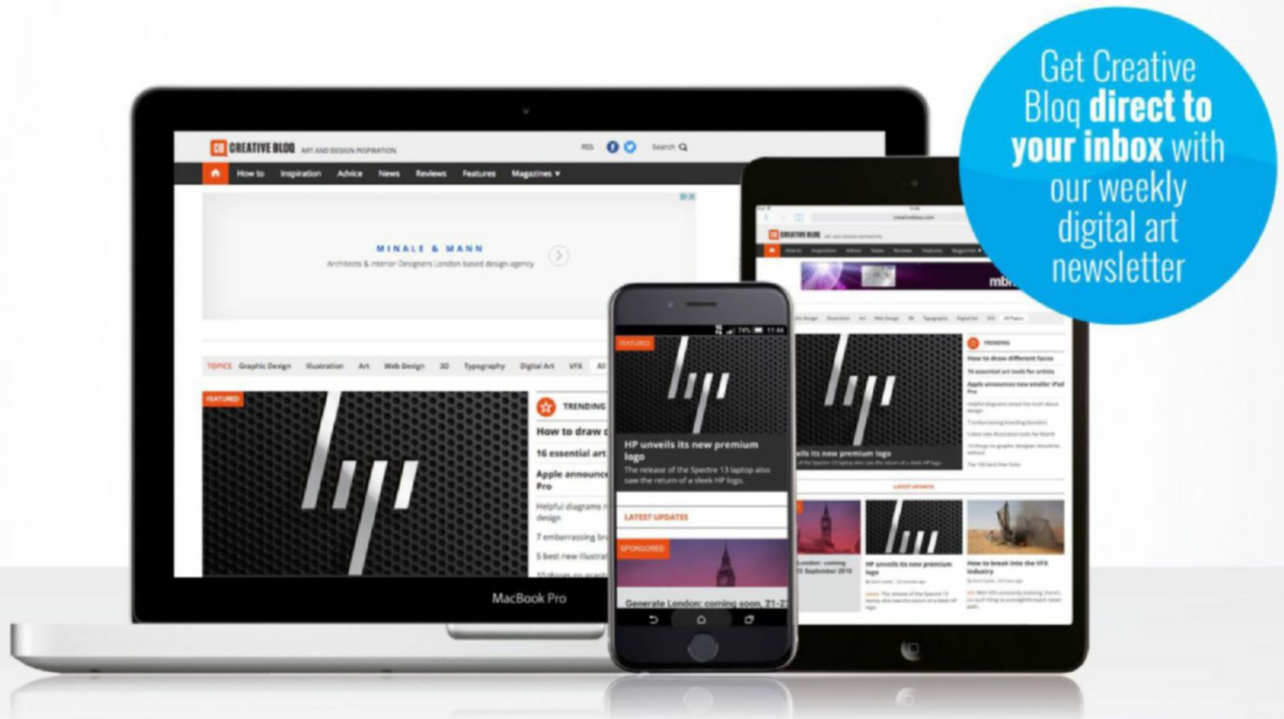
PARA ZERNA

"This creature has an insect influence. It lives in the marshlands and hunts insects and small rodents. While designing it, I kept in mind the need for long, slender legs to manoeuvre through high foliage."

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

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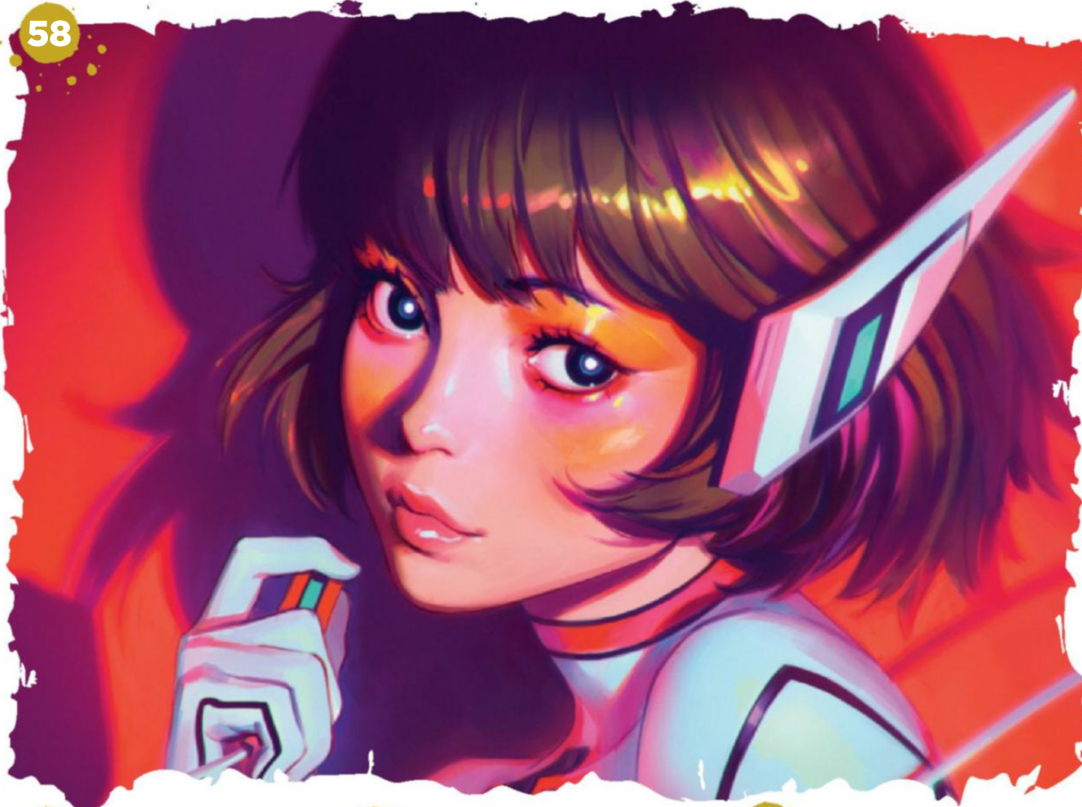
**Workshops assets
are available...**

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

58



This issue:

58 Paint a manga figure on the go

Ilya Kuvshinov develops a character illustration idea while he's painting it.

64 Perspective in Clip Studio Paint

Learn to draw environments accurately with Tan Hui Tian.

66 Illustrate retro poster art

Netflix's *Stranger Things* gets a poster by Kyle Lambert.

70 Expand on the cyberpunk genre

Valentina Remenar illustrates a cyberpunk character who's both familiar and original.

76 Collaborate on promo art

Learn how two artists worked together on a Dota 2 marketing commission.

80 Characterful creature art

Noukah's tips for adding more story and personality.

86 Create manga with a twist

Yee-haw! It's Genzoman's Wild West manga mashup!

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Photoshop

PAINT A MANGA FIGURE ON THE GO



Ilya Kuvshinov sets aside his normal painting process and instead learns to develop a character illustration idea as it's being painted

Artist PROFILE
Ilya Kuvshinov
 LOCATION: Japan

The Russian illustrator and comic artist draws girls for a living and dreams of owning his own animation studio. He's the happiest person ever, he says.
<http://ifxm.ag/kully>

GET YOUR RESOURCES
 See page 6 now!

When I start an illustration I usually have a finished image in mind. So when I start painting, I just do all the steps I need to do to ensure my art looks as close to the image in my head as possible.

Isn't that kind of boring? Yes, you could say that. But here's the good news: that's not the only way to work on an illustration (although it is the fastest way). How about I try to develop my cover illustration for ImagineFX on the

go, upgrading it with every step, always thinking about what I want to show, and how to improve it?

I don't do it like this very often, but that's what will make this workshop more interesting. Right now, you can see the final image on the cover of this cool magazine, and see all the steps here. So everything might look kind of logical. But when I was doing it, I had no idea where it was heading. All I wanted was to do something really cool, something

close to ImagineFX's style and something you'd really like to see on the cover and read about the creation of it inside.

I always think about what kind of character I want before I start to draw it. For example, what's his or her past, favourite food and current mood? What's the situation in which the illustration takes place and how is it going to develop in the next few seconds? For now, let's see how the character develops by herself on the pages of this workshop!



1 A girl and her headphones

My brief is to paint a manga-style woman with one hand on view, maybe wearing some cool hi-tech headphones. It's the headphones that give me my first idea. Music is a key part of our lives, and everybody listens to it in one form or another. So the first roughs feature a girl who simply enjoys listening to music.



2 There's more to media than music...

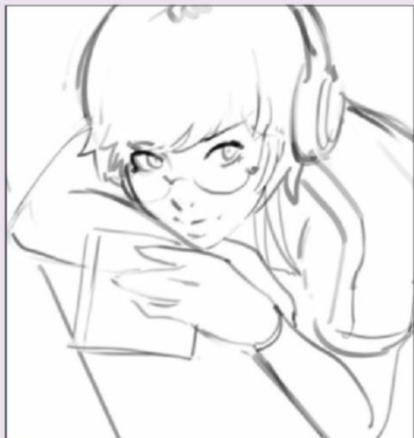
The next idea that comes to mind is the nature of modern media. She's not necessarily listening to music: it could be films or VR video games, because's everything wireless. So these two sketches are much closer to something sci-fi than the first two, including fantasy costumes and futuristic shapes. ➡

PRO SECRETS

Archive your art's progress

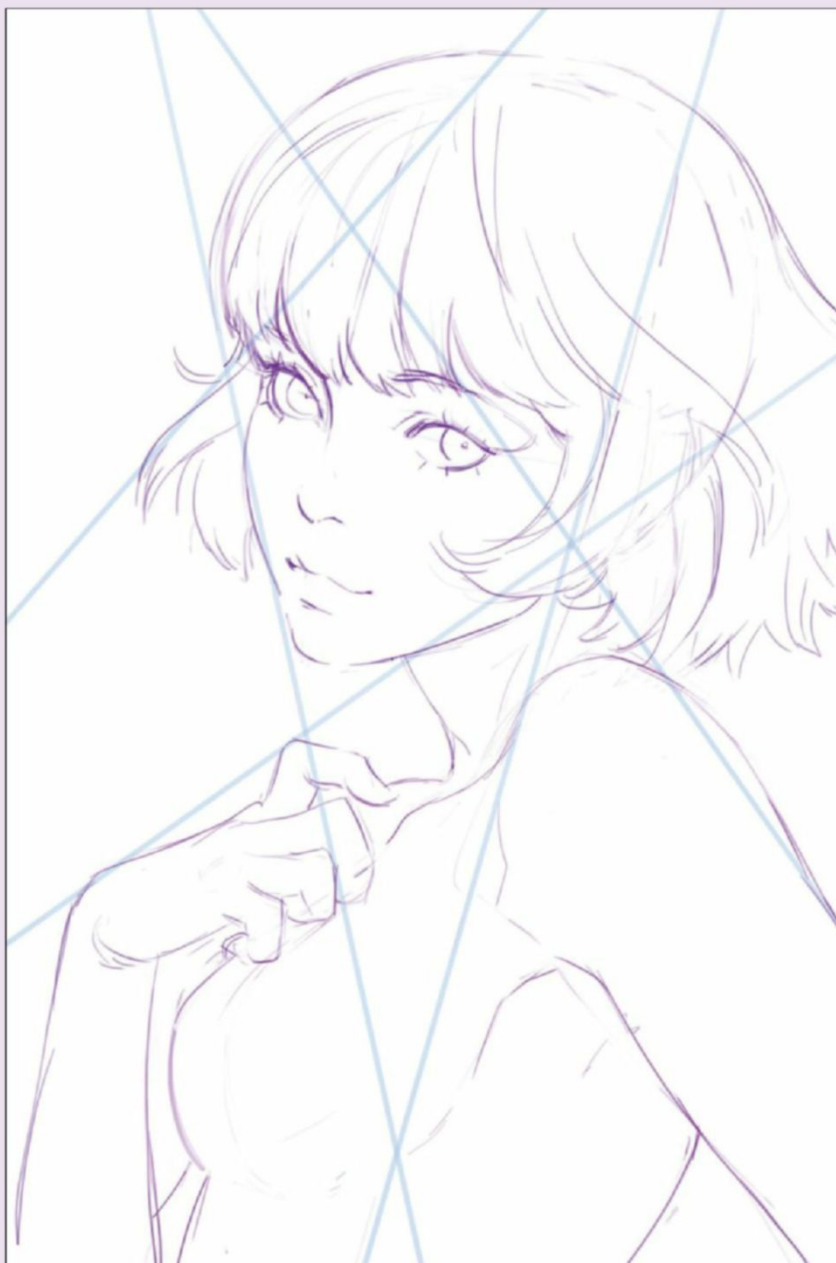
It's always helpful to revisit your previous steps from time to time, to see what's changed and how. I use a program called Screensnap (www.screensnap.org), which saves a full-size snapshot of a WIP to the folder of your choice. I'm sure there are other free options available online.





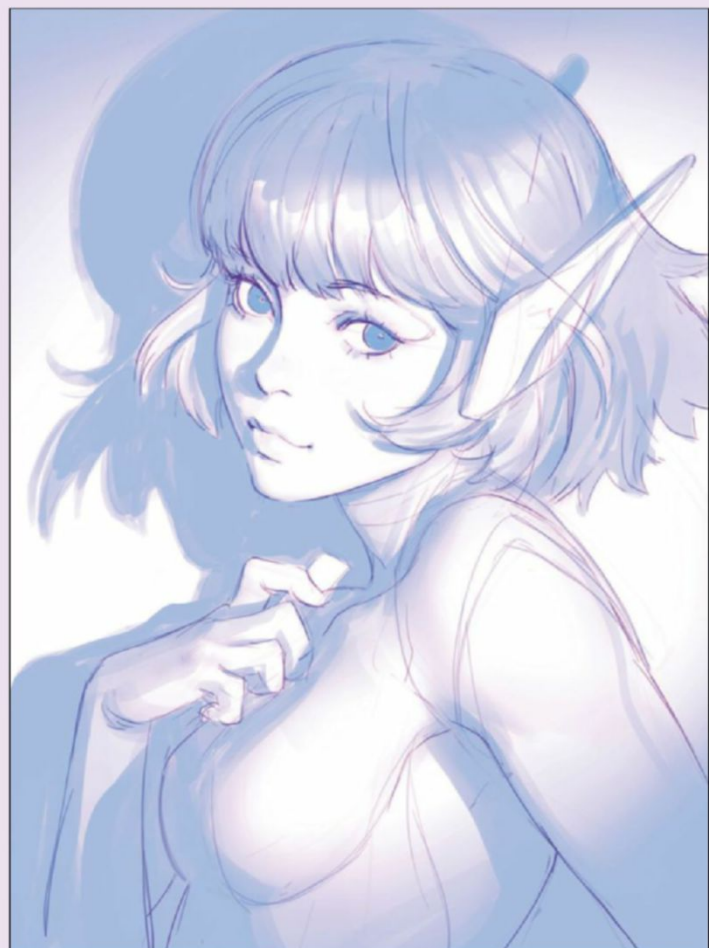
3 Time for my character to relax

For the next two sketches, I return to the first idea of showing the headphones, but in a more relaxing scene: a girl lying on a sofa, with pillows, CDs and a smile on her face. I like the sketches equally, so it'll be interesting to see which one of them I'll be working on.



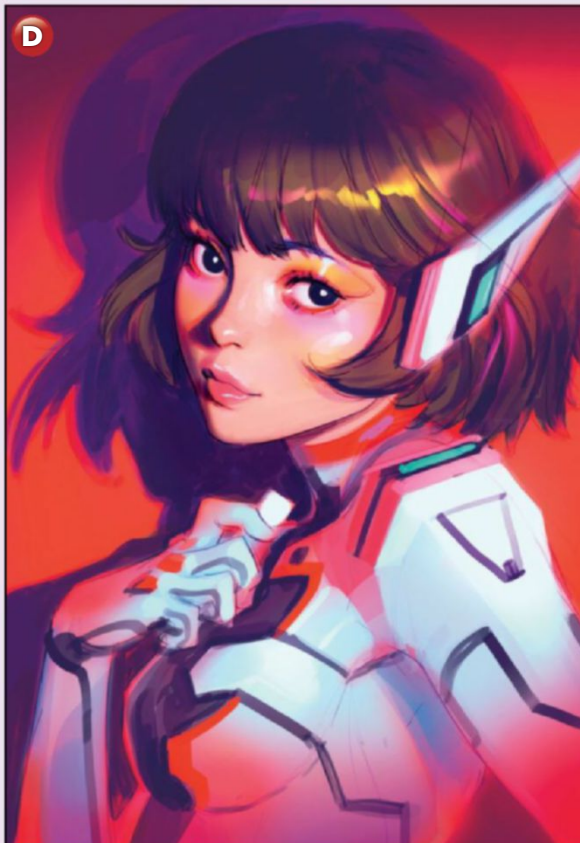
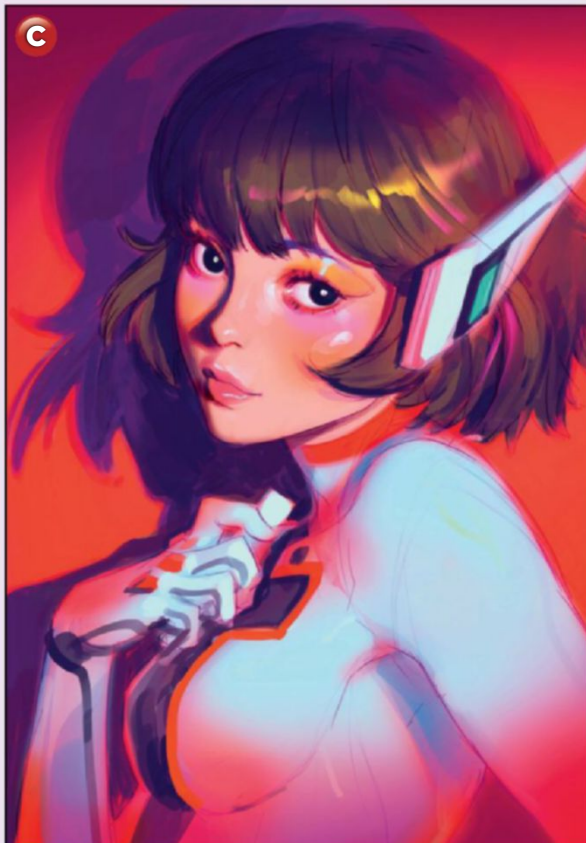
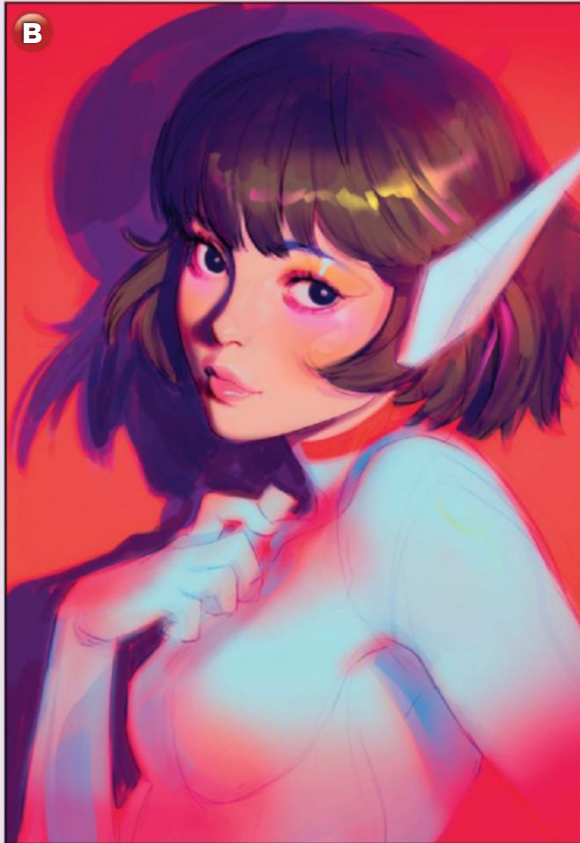
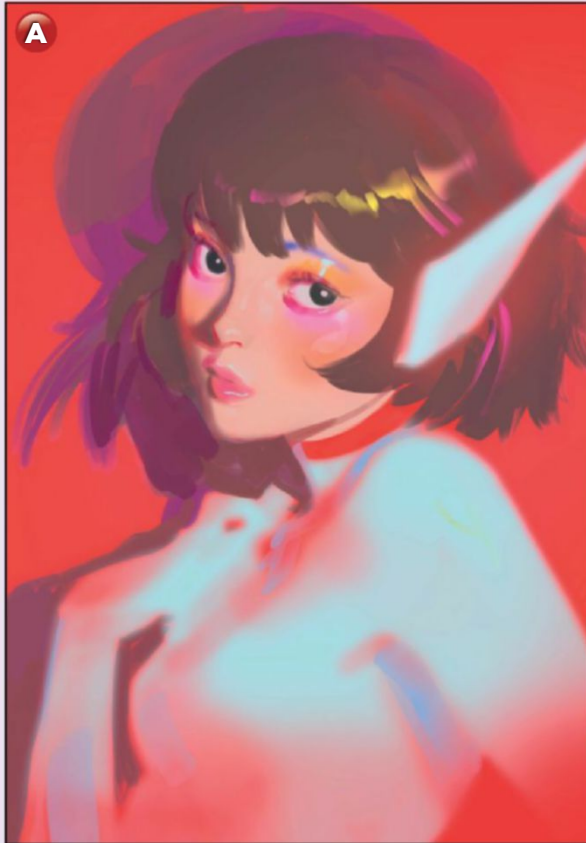
4 Getting to know her

ImagineFX choose the girl with futuristic headphones, so I start to think more about her. What kind of music is she listening to right now? What's her name, where does she work, what's happening at that moment in the scene? I don't need to finalise everything at this point, but it's good to make a start.



5 Lines and shading

My rough lines start here. I have an ImagineFX cover template layer on top of the others, so I can easily check the composition. And for cases like this one, I use guides to get all the shapes and vectors exactly right. The face is the centre of focus, so the hand and body help guide the viewer towards this. One of the most fun parts of this illustration is doing the shadows. I really want to use accent lighting – and that's where the idea comes to me: it's a photo session. Perhaps the girl is some kind of celebrity? If so, do her clothes need to look fashionable, or is she doing the shoot in her work outfit?



6 Colour and costume

Next up is colours. I merge the lines and shadows layer and set the Blending Mode to Color Burn. This keeps the shadows in place and so I just need to carefully add normal colours. One picture here is with a Color Burn layer (A), the other is just a colours layer without shading (B). As I'm adding more details I start to thinking about her costume. I've got it! I think she's a DJ, playing electronic music. So I want her costume to feel digital and futuristic, but not too robotic or crazy (C). You can see my first rough of the costume here, but I later ditch this look because it's resembles a mech power suit. (D). ➔

PRO SECRETS

Get blending

Blending modes are fun! There are some modes that I use all the time for painting and finishing (such as Color Dodge, Color Burn, Saturation and Hard Light). But sometimes I experiment with modes that I don't know so well. It helps to understand how they work, and sometimes you can create some unexpected effects.

Shortcuts

Correct colour and tone

Ctrl+U (PC)

Cmd+U (Mac)

Use this for fast colour and tone correction on your layer.

RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES: BRUSH ELLIPTICAL



This is the main brush I use everywhere - in sketches, painting, detailing... everywhere!

SKETCHY

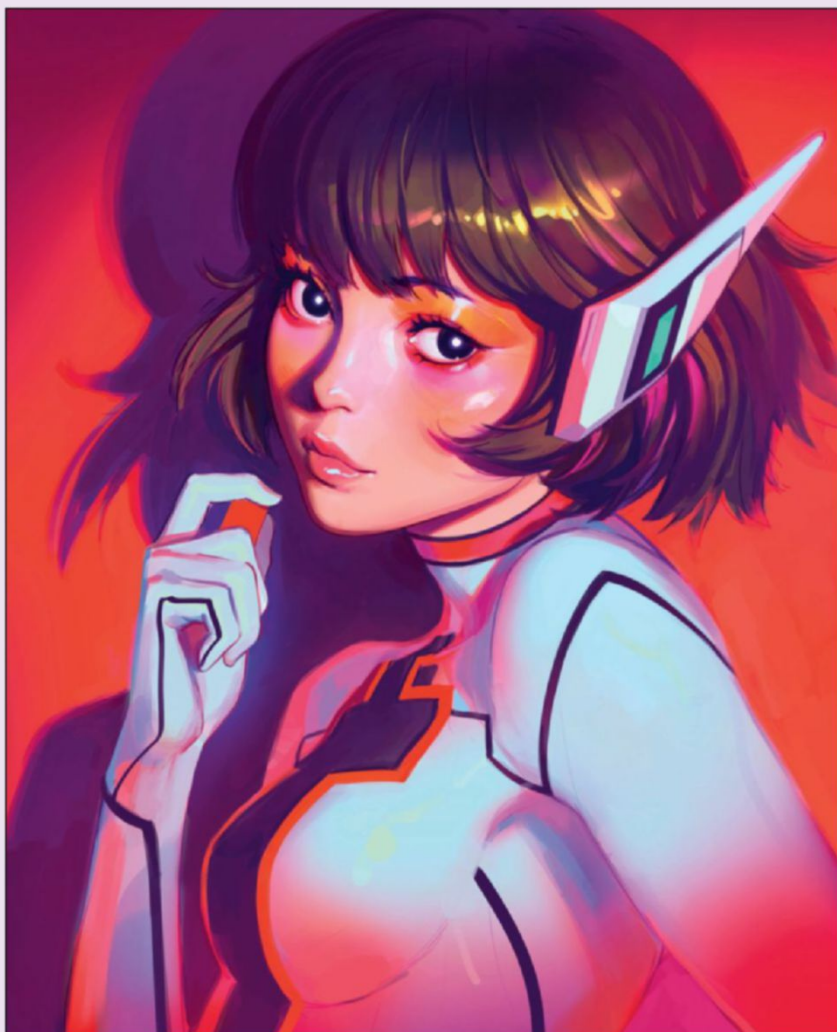
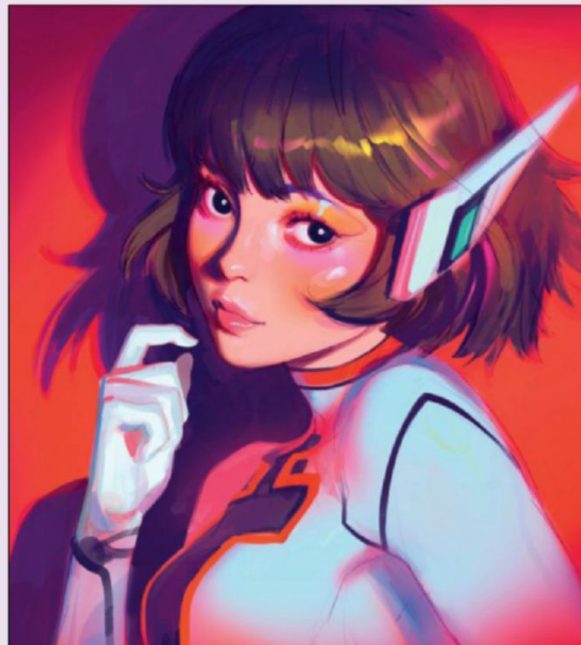


A more painterly-looking brush with texture and more variety. I use it mainly for hair.



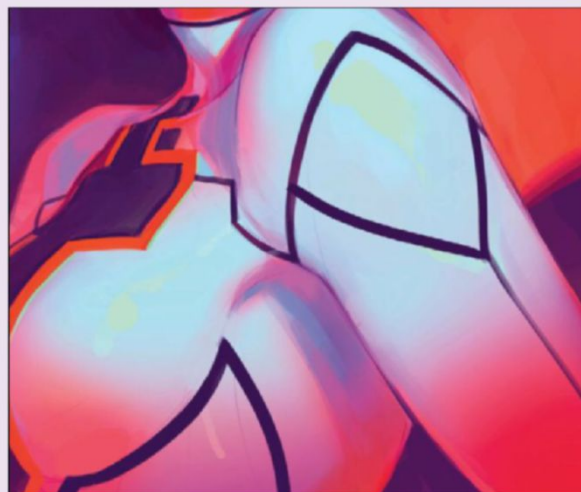
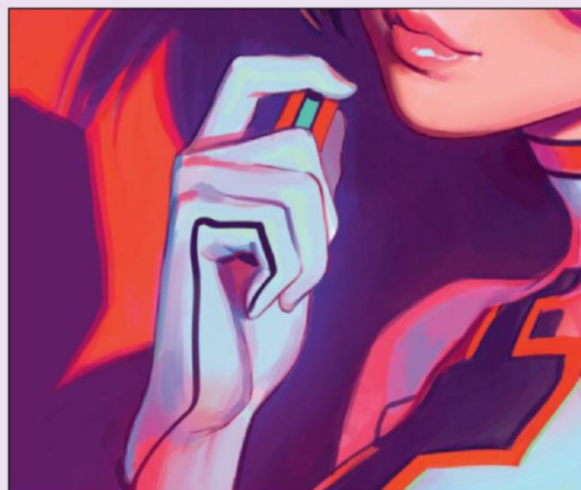
7 Rejigging the position of the hand

I have to change the girl's hand gesture because of the cover's composition. So I propose two new versions: one with the girl resting a hand on her chest, one where she's holding a DJ tool known as a player, higher up. We decide to go with the higher one, so I repaint the hand.



8 Adding details to the composition

Next I start detailing the picture on a normal Blending mode layer – just painting over the girl's face, hair and headphones, with the aim of adding more depth, colours and texture. I also refine most of the edges and introduce more make-up to her face. We decide it will be an unusually colourful cover image. This is where the art starts to look more like a finished cover.



9 Important upgrades

I try to check my illustrations for consistency at every step of the painting and in doing so I realise I've added a hand but forgotten to add its shadow. I also decide to bring in a cast shadow on the right to tonally align the composition, and paint in more details on her outfit.



Shortcuts
Merge layers
above
Cmd+Alt+Shift+N & E (Mac)
Ctrl+Alt+Shift+N & E (PC)
This is handy for adding
a filter and editing
it with a mask.

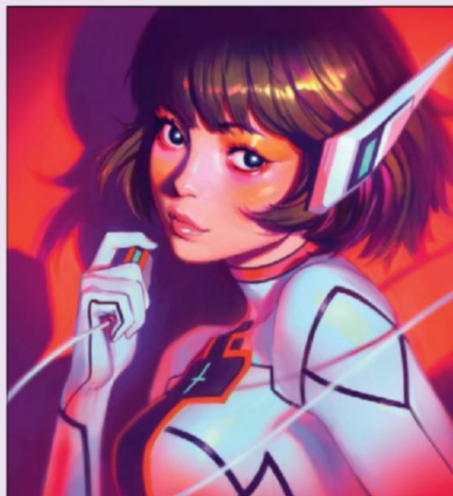
10 More refinements, including adjusting the character's jawline

Because I've added tones and colours, the figure now doesn't resemble the original sketch. In particular, the girl doesn't look as feminine as she did earlier on, so I reduce the size of her jaw slightly. I also add glow on the shadows and other costume details.



11 Apply Lens Blur and Color Dodge

It's nearly finished. I merge the painting into one layer and apply a Lens Blur filter. Then I add a Layer Mask to it and erase the parts that I want to stay sharp, such as the focal points, face and hand. To give the cover a more glossy and shiny feel I use a new Color Dodge layer for the hair, face and costume.



12 Finishing up the artwork

After painting in a few more small details (such as a little shiny cross on her chest), it's time to add my finishing touches. I add a texture layer (on a new Blending Mode, with Opacity at three per cent), make use of the Curves tool and Selective Color Adjustments layers, and apply the Grain filter. And we're done. So everything about this cover was decided on the go – and it was fun! The problem is, I still don't know what the girl's name is...




Clip Studio Paint

PERSPECTIVE IN CLIP STUDIO PAINT



Tan Hui Tian shows you how to use the perspective tools in Clip Studio Paint, enabling you to accurately draw environments in perspective

Artist PROFILE
Tan Hui Tian
 LOCATION: Singapore



Tan is a senior illustrator at Collateral Damage Studios. Her academic background is graphic design, and so her illustrations demonstrate a strong sense of design.
<http://ifxm.ag/th-tian>

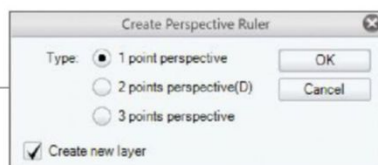
As children, most of us would draw houses as symbolic 2D shapes. In reality, however, it's rare to see an object exactly head-on, and artists have been representing visual perspective in different ways even before the mathematics and science of perspective was properly established. One of the common methods today is by using linear perspective (one-point, two-point, and so

on), although curvilinear perspective imitates how our eyes perceive reality more accurately. Rather simply, the rule of linear perspective follows Euclidean geometry, where the distance and apparent height of the object are inversely proportional: $\text{Apparent Height} = \frac{\text{Actual Height}}{\text{Distance}}$

With the advent of computers and digital drawing software comes the convenience of not having to chart out

perspective guides manually. Having said this, I'd recommend doing it the cumbersome, traditional way at least a few times before moving on to using the perspective tools within Clip Studio Paint, if only to appreciate the mathematics behind linear perspective.

This tutorial assumes basic knowledge of linear perspective, but if you don't have this, I'll try to bring you up to speed while showing you how to use the software.

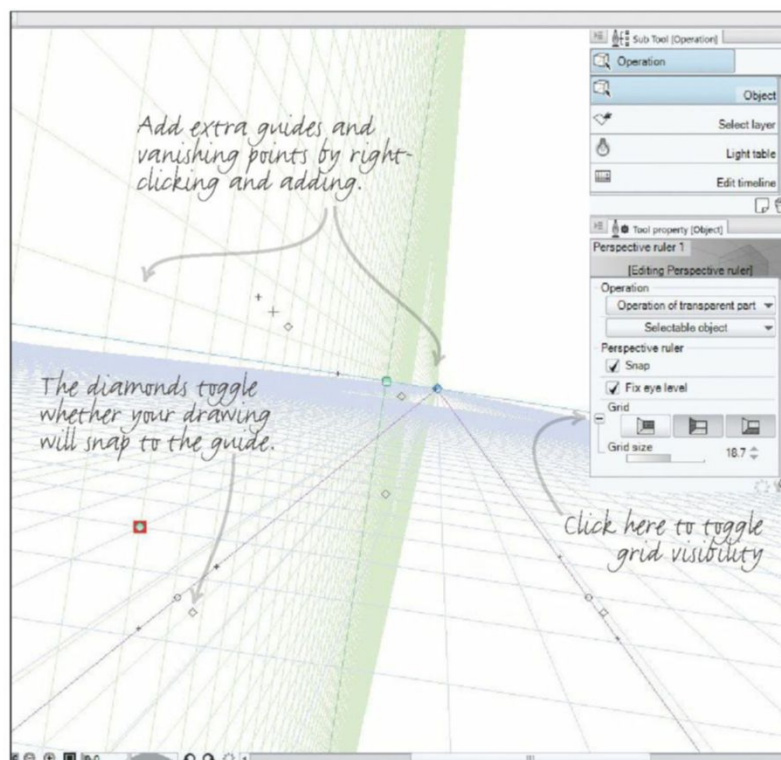
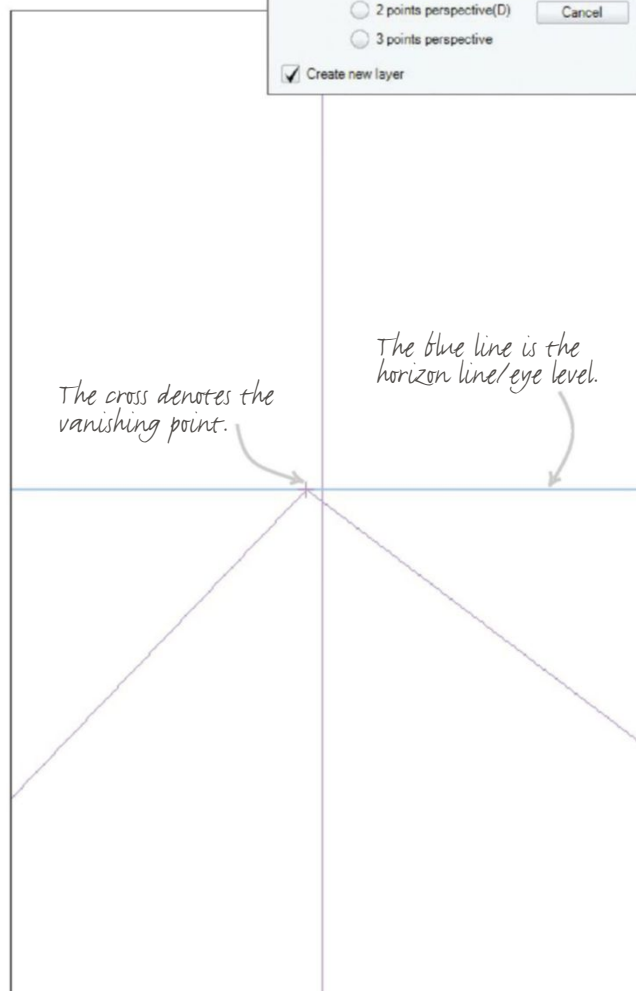


1 Setting up the perspective ruler

In order to create a perspective guide, click Layer>Ruler-Frame>Create Perspective Ruler. In the pop-up window that appears, you choose your options, and in this instance I've selected one-point perspective because this will make it easier to see how the lines correspond to each other clearly.

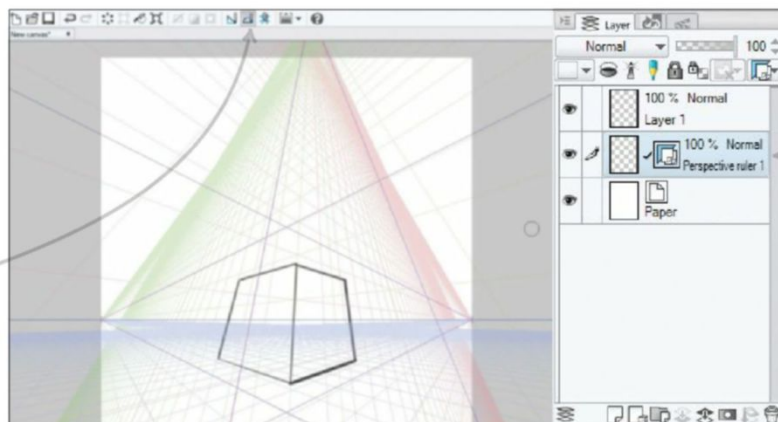
2 Adjusting the perspective guides

You can tilt the horizon by moving the green button on the lower left quadrant (outlined in red). The button at the vanishing point moves the vanishing point, and the green button closest to it moves the vertical guide. Dragging the circle along the magenta lines moves only those guides.



3 Drawing on the perspective guides

Here's three-point perspective in action. Once you've settled on a perspective, you can lock the layer and draw on a new layer above it. To snap the drawing lines to the vanishing points and other guides, click the snap-to-guide button above.



Take care not to draw on the same layer as the guides.

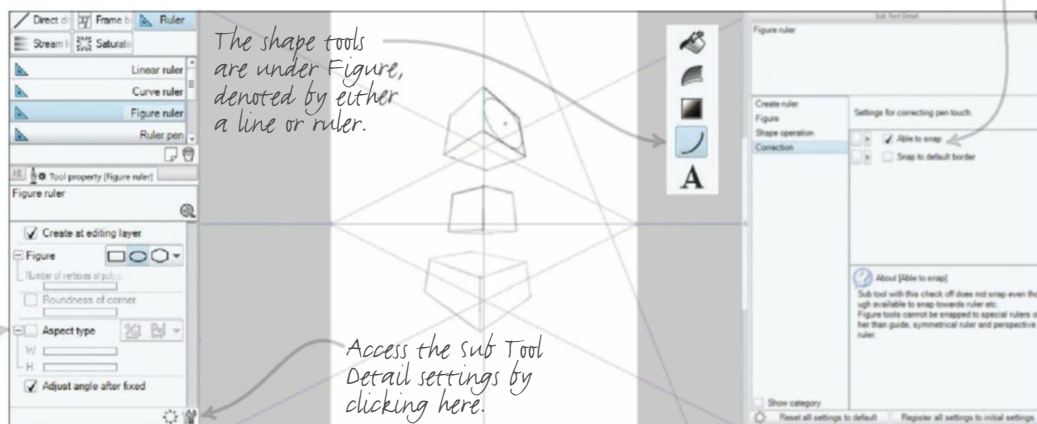
Toggle snapping to different guides (including grids) here.



You can snap to certain guides to ensure you have greater control over your shapes.

4 Ellipses in perspective

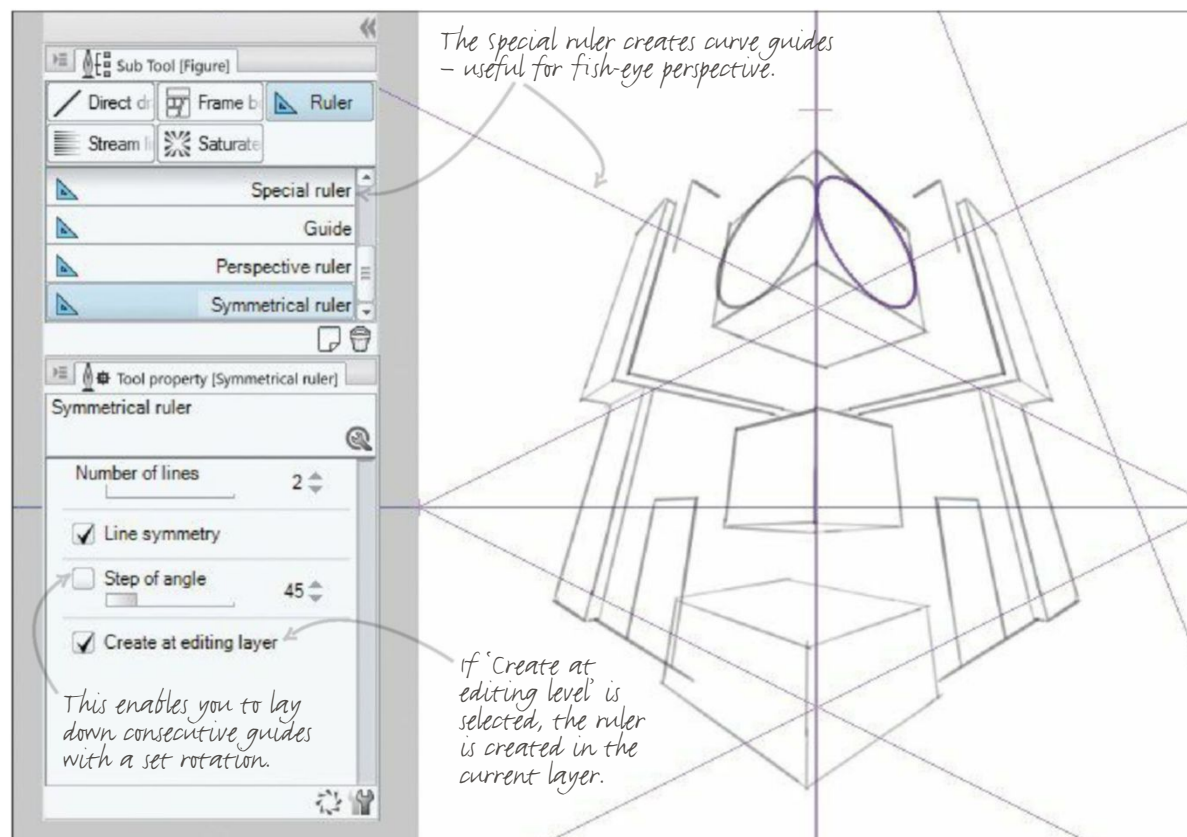
A lesser-known function in Clip Studio Paint is that you can snap the shape tools to the perspective guides as well. Simply open the settings, click Correction, and click 'Able to snap'. This makes it possible for you to draw not just ellipses but other polygonal shapes in perspective, with just a few clicks.



The shape tools are under Figure, denoted by either a line or ruler.

Access the sub Tool Detail settings by clicking here.

Edit aspect type here and create duplicates of the shape.



The special ruler creates curve guides - useful for fish-eye perspective.

If 'Create at editing level' is selected, the ruler is created in the current layer.

This enables you to lay down consecutive guides with a set rotation.

PRO SECRETS

Edit a ruler's Snap Range

You can adjust which layers snap to the rulers by opening the Layer palette, selecting the layer with the rulers, and changing 'Set showing area of ruler' on the Layer palette.

Next month

Draw a figure in perspective using Clip's 3D models

5 Using the Symmetrical Ruler

Given that a lot of architecture or objects may feature symmetry, you can speed up your work process by using the symmetrical ruler. Here I've created only one, along the existing vertical guideline, but it's possible to create multiple symmetrical guidelines.

Photoshop & Procreate ILLUSTRATE RETRO POSTER ARTWORK

Kyle Lambert brings composition to the fore as he paints the official poster for Netflix's *Stranger Things*

Artist PROFILE
Kyle Lambert
LOCATION: US



Kyle is a poster illustrator and concept artist working in the entertainment industry. He's worked with some of the world's largest brands, including Apple, Adobe, Paramount Studios and Vanity Fair. www.kylelambert.com

The agency Contend asked me to produce an illustrated poster for Netflix's ratings-topping show *Stranger Things*. The brief was to create a striking image reminiscent of classic, hand-painted film artwork from the 1980s.

I began by studying some of the most iconic poster designs from this era and then experimenting in Photoshop, looking at ways to paint in a traditional style. I worked with Contend's art director Nate Sherman to explore composition ideas and story elements. I did my sketch work using Procreate on an iPad Pro with an Apple Pencil. I used the standard 6B Pencil brush in this app to do all of the line work and shading for the poster.

I then exported the final sketch into Photoshop where I upscaled the artwork to a higher resolution and used the Lasso tool to cut up the elements into layers. I applied the Multiply Blend mode to all of the sketch layers and blocked the basic colours underneath using the standard Photoshop airbrush. I reduced the Opacity of the sketch layer as the colour work progressed and then merged these layers together.

The final stage was to export these layers back into Procreate, where I used the Splatter and Pencil brushes to add texture to the artwork. I reimported each layer separately back into Photoshop and used the airbrush to blend the colours into one cohesive image. ➔



1980s nostalgia

The poster has obvious 80s film homages, including to *E.T.* and *Indiana Jones*.

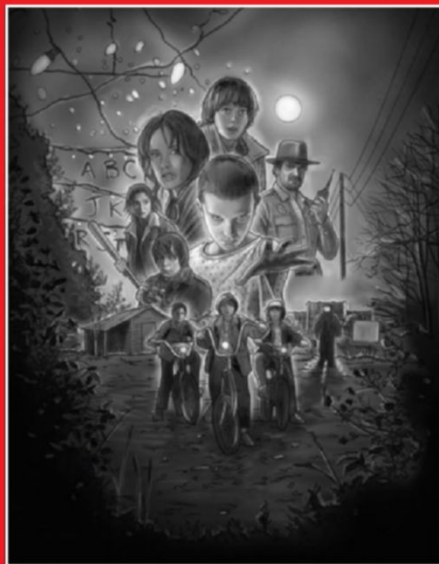
How I create...

A FILM POSTER-STYLE ENSEMBLE



1 Develop the sketch

This is the preliminary outline sketch. Using Blend modes and Transparency throughout, this sketch will show in the final artwork. Therefore it's important to spend time adding as much detail as possible. I use varied line width to define what's important.



2 Tone and emphasis

During this stage I establish the total values for the painting. The most important things for me to think about here are first, where the light is coming from; and second, where the overall emphasis should be when the viewer first looks at the image.

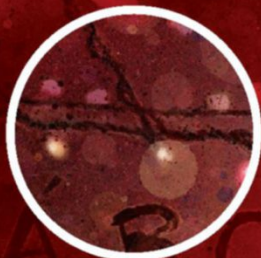


3 Colour layers

Here, along with Blend modes and Transparency, I use the colour layers to tint the artwork. I use additional layers on top of everything else, to add texture with a Pencil or Splatter brush. I also vary the Opacity to blend elements together in a subtle way.



COMPOSITION & LIGHT



Painting fairy lights

The lights are a combination of hand-drawn string lights and transparent Splatter brushes at varying sizes.



Starry skies

The stars are painted using standard Photoshop brushes. They are a solid white circle, with a transparent soft-edged airbrush circle painted on top in blue.



Forrest silhouette

I painted a full surrounding forest silhouette to frame the poster art. This was sketched on an iPad Pro with the standard 6B Pencil brush.

Eleven's pose

This character pose was painted using several reference images. The head was from a video still, the gown was a combination of two photographs and her hand was from a separate photo. I used other photo references to paint realistic-looking lighting to tie all of the elements together.



Poster composition

The key feature of this poster is the composition of the characters. The emphasis is on Eleven with the other characters surrounding her in a circle, leading the viewer down to the children on their bikes and the title treatment.

Fence details

The fence details were drawn as a separate image and then I warped them into place with Photoshop.

IS IT TIME YOU LEARNED A GAME ENGINE?

Discover how Unreal Engine and Unity are changing the film industry – in issue 213 of 3D World! On sale now!

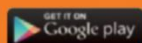


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Photoshop EXPAND ON THE CYBERPUNK GENRE

Valentina Remenar reveals her process for conceiving and illustrating a cyberpunk-themed character who's both familiar, yet original

Artist PROFILE

Valentina Remenar

LOCATION: Slovenia



Valentina is a traditional and digital illustrator and concept artist

who freelances on video games, book covers, posters, character design and also personal digital illustrations.

<http://ifxm.ag/valrem>

**GET YOUR
RESOURCES**

See page 6 now!

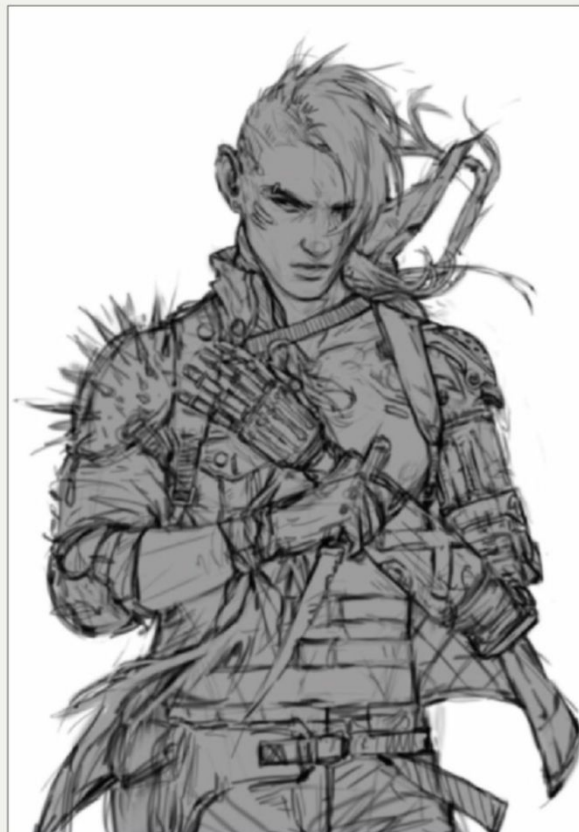
Designing a genre-based original character is fun and rewarding, but challenging. As artists, we strive for originality, but this can be difficult in an industry where everything seems to have already been done. Your character needs to be familiar enough that they are relatable, but authentic enough to stand out. Striking the perfect balance can be tough, especially when you need to catch the viewer's eye with a single image.

The most important part of any image is the composition and it's where I spend the most time. Trying to meet tight deadlines is stressful, but taking my time is where I don't compromise, because the composition dictates the rest of the artistic process. Unless you're happy with your composition, you'll have a difficult time moving smoothly through subsequent steps.

Here I'll show you how I create an original character illustration after I've

decided on the composition. I'll show you my stages on sketching, detailing, using colour, layers and filters, creating the right atmosphere and texturing the piece to fit its intended genre.

Where cyberpunk is concerned, there are specific elements that make the genre identifiable to its fans. The high-tech/low-life aspect of cyberpunk culture is key, so in creating this character illustration I have to be sure to convey this integral piece of the subject.



1 Detailed sketch

After coming up with a composition and sketching the initial concept, including the pose and anatomy, I flesh out details: hairstyle, clothing, weapons, accessories and facial features. Details added now make the painting stage much easier and I spend a few hours getting in as much content as possible. I always begin in black and white before adding colours.



2 Base colours and background

I insert a rough background from purchased stock (from Photobash.org, by Yuri Shwedoff). I want something I can edit to look post-apocalyptic, so I opt for modern architecture and smoke. I also lay down base colours, the darker colours on his skin and clothes on the Multiply and Overlay layers, blues and oranges on the Colour layer, for a complementary contrast. ➡

PRO SECRETS

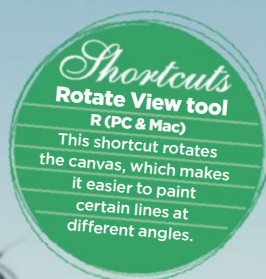
Photobashing

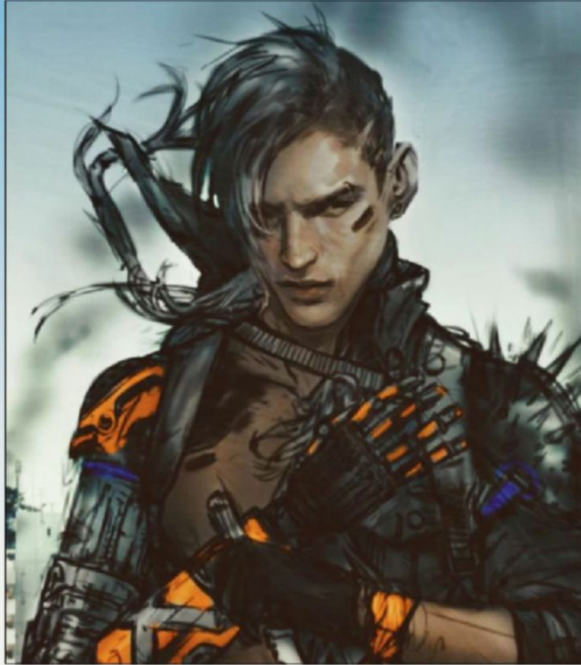
When working on a matte painting, using textures can help you quickly create realistic effects. There are dozens of great resources for textures online, both free and for a reasonable price. Textures are based on photographs, so they already look realistic. This keeps you from having to struggle with painting these effects from scratch. Textures are versatile because you can warp, crop, change and paint over them to meet your requirements.



3 Adding Adjustment layers

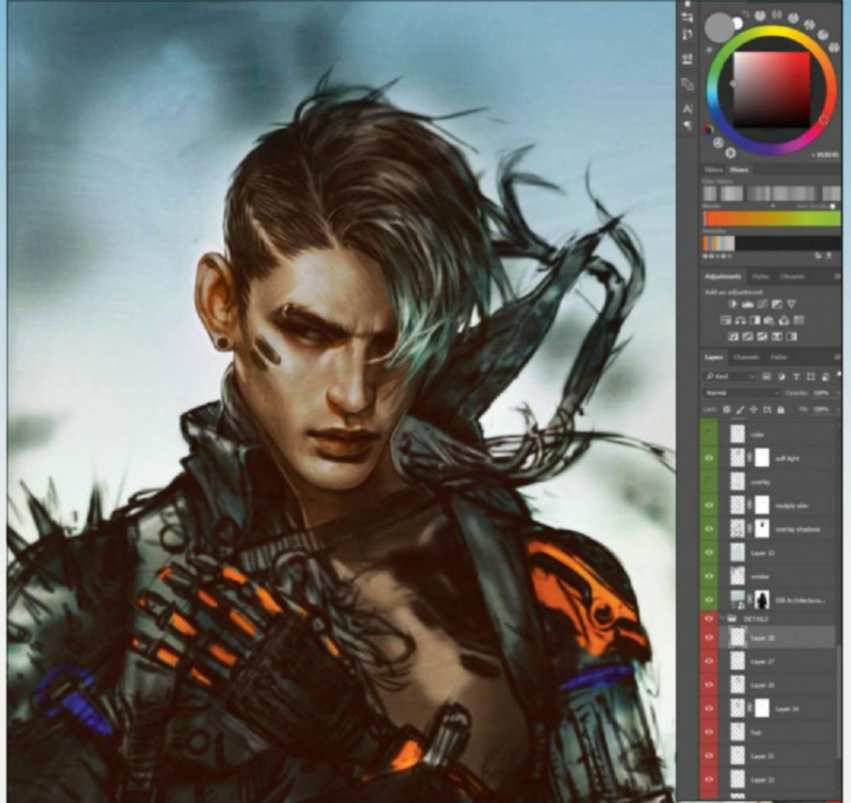
After setting the base colours, I usually change them using Adjustment layers. I mostly use Color Lookup, Selective Color, Brightness/Contrast, and Vibrance to make them more vivid and contrasted. I also change my Layer Blending modes with these Adjustment Layers by setting them to Hue, Lighten, Normal, Darker Color, and so on. This means I can selectively edit only the colours I want to edit. I want to bring out the complementary contrast by making the blues and oranges more vivid.





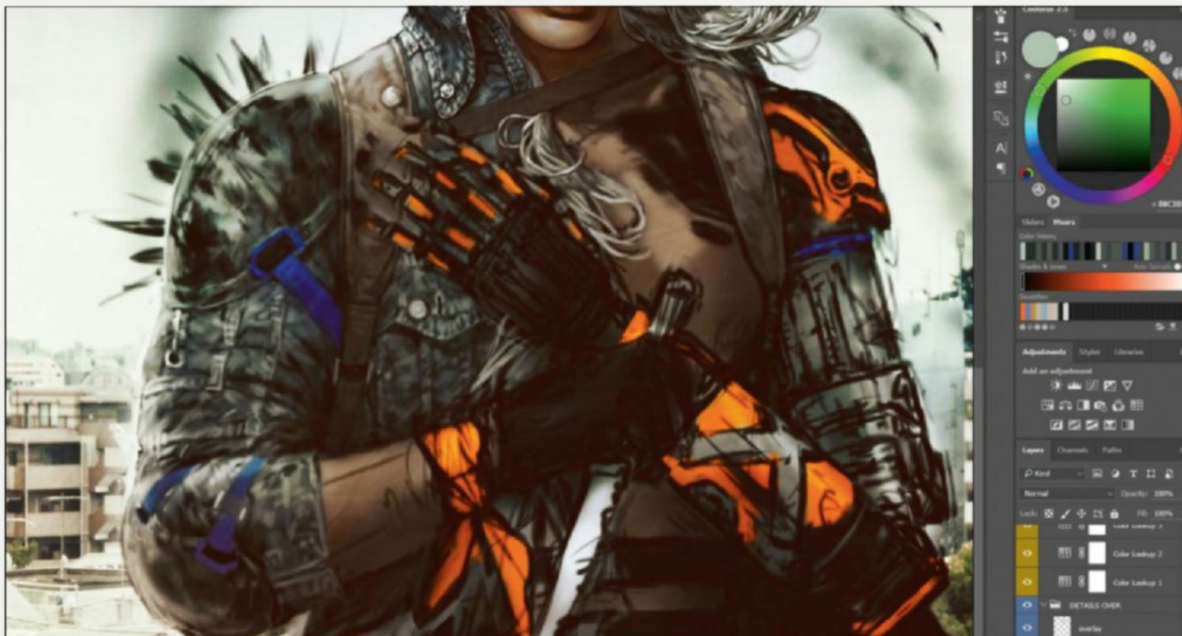
4 More detailed facial sketch

I establish the light source as coming from the top left of the image. Setting it helps me create light and shadows on the character's face and also designates where the shadows should fall. Here I use my horizontal canvas flip custom shortcut (Ctrl+Q) so I can accurately draw the face and its proportions. Flipping the image makes it easier to find mistakes after you've been staring at it for too long. Up until now and throughout this step I use the Soft Round Pressure Opacity brush (Brush Opacity: 100 per cent, Flow: 58 per cent).



5 Enhancing the character's face


After structurally refining the face, I detail it and smooth it out with a smaller brush. Then I add smaller lines for texture to give the image a more painterly look. I also add Overlay and Soft light layers, to make his skin and hair more vivid. As a result, the skin looks more flushed and the highlights in the hair are brighter.




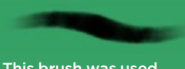
6 Sketching the outfit


I decide that I want his clothes to be denim. I set up the colours for his straps and roughly sketch where the folds should be in his clothes. I also use the light source to establish where the shadows and highlights should be. Picking the material for the clothes also helps me know how the fabric should be textured, where the folds should be, and what the highlights should look like. Denim has a particular look and feel, so in

this stage I try to sketch out the qualities particular to the material. After sketching the clothes, I work on a detailed sketch of the torso. The more detailed these sketches are, the faster it is to paint and polish them afterwards. Once again I use the light source to establish the location of the shadows and highlights on his chest, stomach and arms. I also work on his anatomy and sketch the muscle definition of his stomach. ➡

 **RESOURCES**
**WORKSHOP
BRUSHES**

PHOTOSHOP
CUSTOM BRUSHES:
**SOFT ROUND
PRESSURE OPACITY**

The brush I used the most, from sketching to detailing the character and the background.

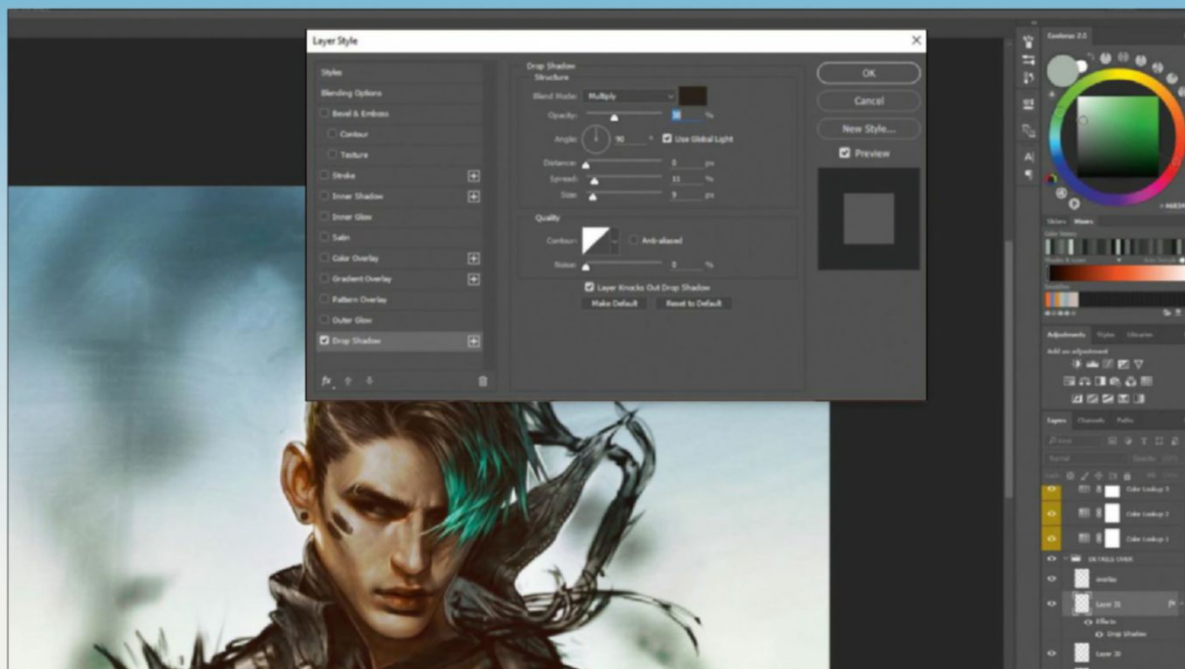
PASTEL - OIL LARGE 4

This brush was used for a rough sketch, for the smoke in the background.

**RECTANGLE - ONE
SOFT EDGE**

I used this brush in an Overlay layer for adding various effects over the buildings.

PRO SECRETS

Paint using Adjustment Layers

Using Adjustment layers to quickly set the colours of the painting is a useful way to save time. It's much easier to paint in black and white under the layers, and much quicker than painting in colour from scratch. When painting in colour, you need to pick colours for shaded and highlighted areas. However, if you paint in black and white and use Adjustment Layers to set colours, the Adjustment Layers will accurately establish these colours automatically. This allows for a quicker process and a more accurate painting.



7 Adding visual depth to the clothing

At this point I'm still using the same Soft Round brush with the Opacity and Flow settings as mentioned previously. When detailing, I reduce the brush size slightly. Here I mainly work on making the denim look as authentic as possible, while maintaining a painterly texture to the image as a whole. I also make a new layer for the stitching and apply a Drop Shadow (in the Layer Style dialog) to automatically create a small shadow beneath the stitch line. This makes the fabric and the stitching look more realistic.

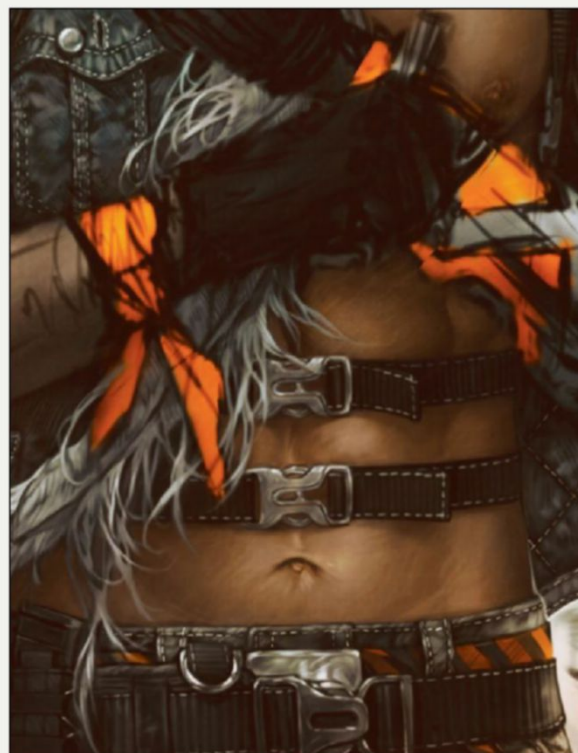
Shortcuts Flip Canvas (custom)

Flipping the canvas helps find mistakes. Customise your shortcuts at Edit>Keyboard Shortcuts.



8 Making it fashionable

I work mostly on the outfit's accessories, making them the perfect blend of fantasy and realism so the image fits the cyberpunk genre. I focus on making the clothes and accessories eye-catching but also practical, since I'm going for a more mature and realistic look. I work primarily on the metal of the spikes, the pouch, belt clasps and scarf. Making the scarf look worn helps create the dystopian image of a classic cyberpunk world, while the spikes on the jacket play up the stylistic qualities of the genre.



9 Finishing the torso

At this stage I polish up his torso, as well as the waist straps and clasp. For a more realistic look, I made his abdominal muscles more defined without being over-developed. I also add texture and stitches to the straps. During this step I also add the shadows created by his arm and scarf, and fix whatever shadows may have been out off. This is done using an Overlay layer and black/white/grey colours. I paint these on the Overlay layer to try and save myself some time.



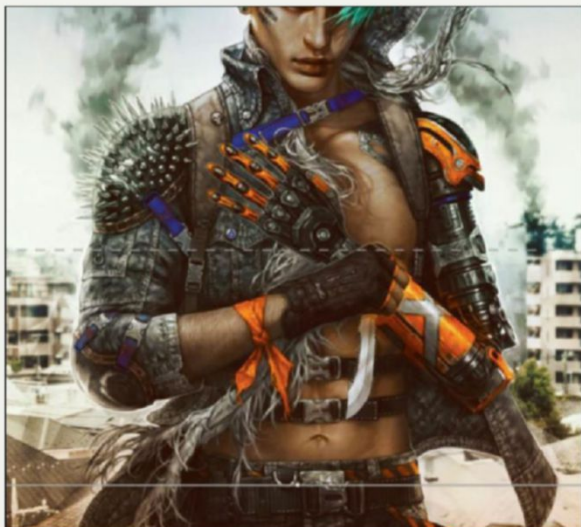
PRO SECRETS

Start in black and white

It's much easier to paint in black and white at the start because it's easier to set the highlights and shadows, and shade them. This means you don't have to struggle with which colours to pick and which to use for the shadows. When it's time to add colours, you can use Adjustment Layers, and different layer Blending Modes such as Overlay, Soft Light, Multiply and Color. You can add colours on all of these layer Blending modes.

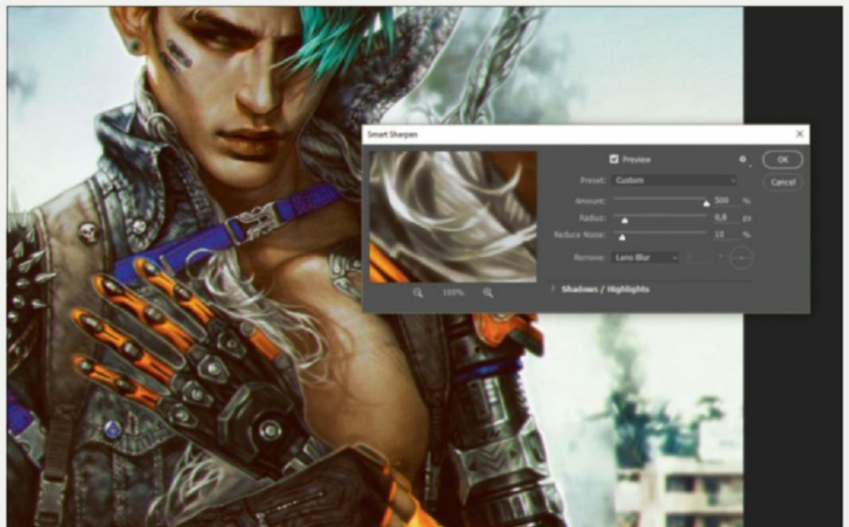
10 Tackling real and replacement limbs

Now I focus my attention on the character's remaining natural arm. One key aspect of the detailing is adding arm hair, because it makes the character more real and less aesthetic, which fits into the gritty cyberpunk world he's meant to be a part of. Even now I'm using the same brush for all my work and simply varying the size of it. After that, it's finally time to flesh out the robotic arm. I wanted to avoid something that looked too clunky or sci-fi, instead opting for a more bare-bones, minimalist design for a functional but worn-down mechanical arm. Part of the job here is to create the right metal texture combined with the worn, damaged look that fits the battle-like mood of the illustration. To accomplish the metallic look, I need to develop a high level of contrast, so that the highlighted area is very bright and reflects light from the surrounding environment.



11 Developing the background

For the smoke, I used a Pastel-oil Large 4 brush and a Soft Round Pressure Opacity brush. First I do a rough sketch with the Pastel brush, then add softer edges and details with the Soft Round brush. I also add Tilt-Shift blur (Filter>Blur Gallery>Tilt-Shift) to the background, to create more depth and ensure the character's more in focus because the background's no longer as detailed and sharp. Finally, I use the Rectangle-one Soft edge brush on an Overlay layer for various effects over the buildings.



12 Finishing touches

The illustration is pretty much done at this point. All that's left to do is add some filters to give the image the right finishing effects. First I duplicate the layers, then merge them. This way I end up with one layer to which I can add effects later. I also duplicate that layer and add Gaussian Blur to it with a radius of about seven pixels (Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur). I also change the layer mode to Lighten, so it creates a slight glow effect around the image, then erase the parts where I don't want to have this effect. I also add Smart Sharpen (Filter>Sharpen>Smart Sharpen), noise (Filter>Noise>Add Noise) and move Green channel (Ctrl+4) slightly to the right (click Ctrl+2 to see the RGB channel).

Photoshop

COLLABORATE ON PROMO ART

Felix reveals how he and **Esben** worked together on a marketing commission, based on the Dota 2 universe

Artist PROFILE

Felix Bauer-Schlichtegroll

LOCATION: England



Felix is a concept artist and illustrator who works in design and visual development, particularly for the sci-fi and fantasy genres. He's currently based at Opus Artz in London.
www.felixbauer.co.uk

Artist PROFILE

Esben Lash Rasmussen

LOCATION: Denmark



Esben is an illustrator currently working for Riot Games. He graduated from The Animation Workshop in Viborg, Denmark, and has previously worked at Sixmorevodka.
<http://ifxm.ag/esbifelb>



This picture was one of the illustrations behind a series of key visuals done for SteelSeries, a Danish manufacturer of video game accessories. The idea was to portray the duality of the often fierce in-game character avatars and the calm and collected gamers battling to overcome the next big challenge.

All the illustrations were done with a few well-known gamers in mind, and the avatars that were created were inspired by the in-game characters which each gamer usually plays as.

Sheever, who this picture was made for, is not only a streamer but also a caster, interviewer and a host when it comes to all things Dota 2. The illustration is inspired by Windrunner and Witch Doctor, because Sheever felt that those were the two characters who best embodied her in-game.

Since both of us artists work full-time jobs, we decided to split the work between us, and the piece was divided into four stages: sketches, refined sketch, colour block-in, and final render. Esben worked as the lead artist on the project. ➡➡

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

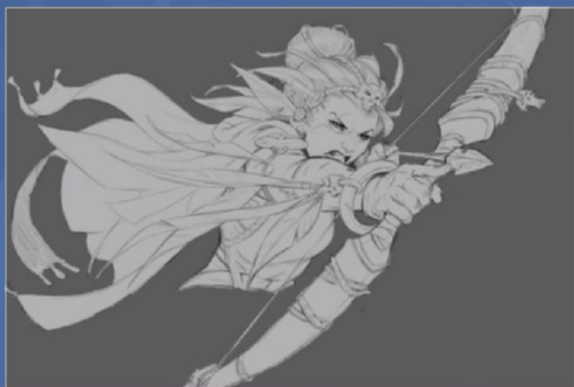
How we create...

HIGHLY DETAILED ART IN STAGES



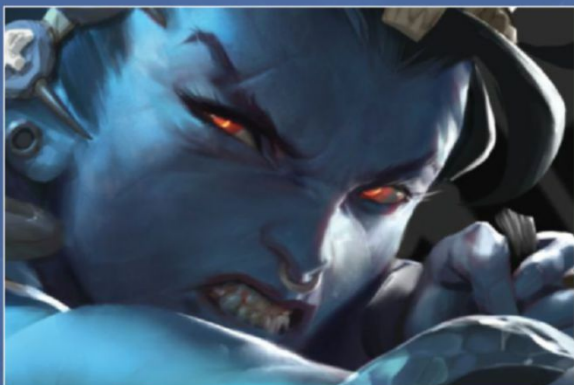
1 Making sketches

We produce three sketches for the client. We tend to spend more time at the start of the project developing the sketches, because we don't want to rush things and then have to come back and fix any mistakes later on. Planning the picture and spending the extra time at the beginning saves us hours in the end. It also gives the client a clearer idea of the direction that we're going in.



2 Producing the final drawing

Once the composition has been chosen we proceed to the final line drawing. In this stage we try to fix any problems in the drawing and, if necessary, add better and more dynamic solutions. In this case this could be twisting the scarf or feathers, for example. We can't emphasise enough how useful a final, approved line drawing is. At the end of the day, if you can't draw it, then you can't paint it!



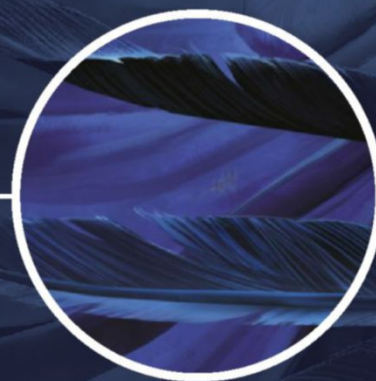
3 Light and colour pass

We block in the colour and make masks to preserve the clean shapes. Then we add the lights with a layer in Color Dodge or Hard Light layer mode. We try to be aware of only making one light the dominant one, and keeping the other ones subtle. Key light, bounce light, diffuse and, finally, rim lighting are all added.

CREATING AN AVATAR

Lighting the feathers

Felix does an amazing job matching the real-life textures and specular highlights. When we paint, we normally have photo reference of the object to see how the material reacts to light and subtle texture changes, but we try to recreate that by painting it by hand instead of using phototextures directly.



Dynamic composition

We try to add as much movement as possible to the piece to make it dynamic. We achieve this by depicting the feathers in mid-air and by overlapping these with a lot of the elements of the character: her cape, arm, torso, hair and so on. Overlaps are important in showing depth and form.

Head piece

This is the focal point of the painting. We use orange to contrast with the blue colour scheme and draw the eye. The intensity of the rim light also boosts contrast. The client insisted on her fierce expression as she readies her final arrow to kill the final boss.

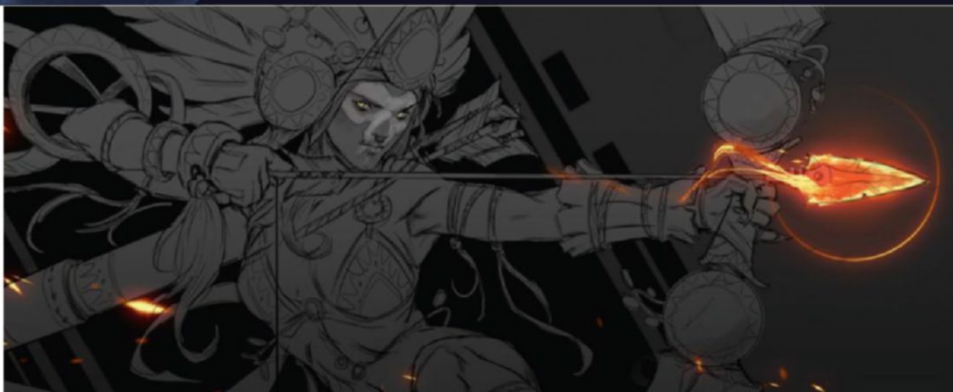


Arrowhead

This had to feel strong and powerful, but not detract from the face. We add a red Outer Glow with a bright yellow Color Overlay. Using a gradient from a dark normal flint colour to a bright magical effect makes it feel as if it's being charged up.

Concept

When designing the character we thought a Voodoo archer would be super cool, in part because this isn't something you often see in the world of fantasy. We talk about what she would wear and what materials she would have available to her. All the materials and elements on her are a result of us putting our heads together to think about her and her backstory.



RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES: DRAWING BRUSH



Some of Michal Ivan's brushes that we use (<http://ifxm.ag/m-ivan>).


Artist insight

CHARACTERFUL CREATURE ART

Noukah shares her tips for adding more story and personality to creatures and characters, and making the viewers care

Artist PROFILE

Noukah
LOCATION: Sweden



Noukah, who's also known as Andrea Femerstrand, works full-time as a game artist at King, freelances, and spends a large amount of time creating content for her blog while fending off her cats.

www.noukah.com

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 6 now!

Animals have always been my favourite art subject. There's really no limit to how much you can learn when it comes to drawing and painting them. And besides, it's awesome to draw cute and funny creatures. However, this workshop will be less about anatomy and technical approaches and more about how to boost your art and take it to the next level.

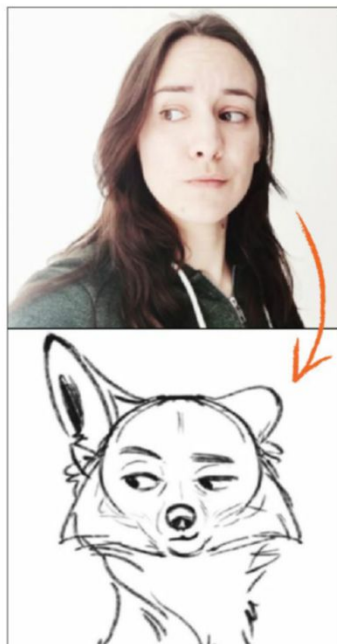
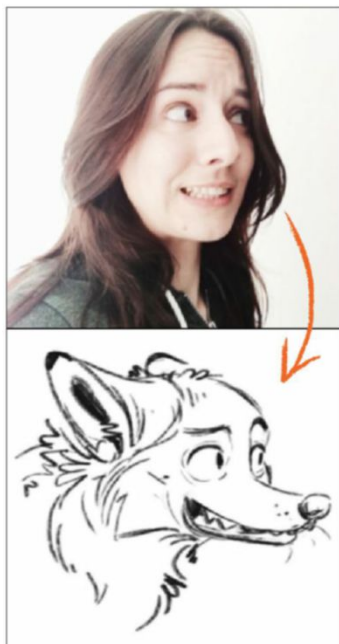
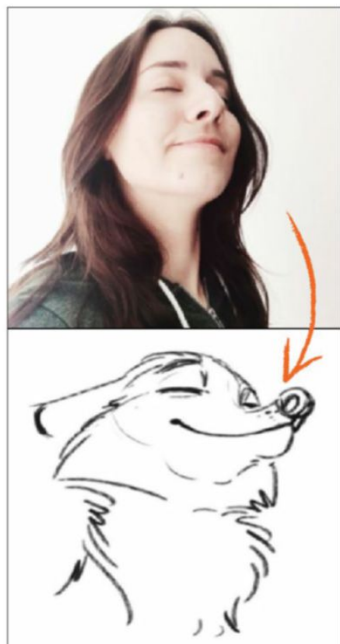
For me, it was all about mastering the techniques in the beginning, which unfortunately led me to not prioritise stories and original approaches. This slowly resulted in strong painting skills, but barely any good ideas. Basically, I forgot what I wanted to say with my art. I regret this today, as I've come to realise that mastering the skill of creating personal art can significantly boost

your own commercial artworks. I'm always on a journey, and I'm still trying to figure things out.

My goal with this workshop is to give you some useful tips and tools, so you can turn up your art and character designs a notch. After all, every artist wants the viewers to care about their art. Hopefully, these tips can help you make progress in that direction.

1 REPEAT, REPEAT, THEN REPEAT AGAIN

I rarely nail a sketch at the first attempt, so don't be afraid to produce several revisions. I'm a perfectionist (for better or for worse), so over the years I've developed a habit for revisions. It's become a good habit, because I'm not only improving with every sketch I make, but I also end up with lots of versions I can go back to, merge together with a new one, and create the best possible results.



2 BE CREATIVE WITH YOUR SELFIES

Study yourself in the mirror, or record yourself on video. It's beneficial to make creatures feel more human, which can be influenced by our own expressions. I like doing this, since I get an excuse to make funny faces without being questioned by people who think they know better.

3 STUDY REAL ANIMALS

Watch photos, online videos and nature programmes, study your own pets. Why not try recording them in different situations? After all, a frozen frame from a video is much more authentic and natural than a staged photo.

4 BE PERSONAL

Your memories and life experiences are priceless. Find your inspiration and tell your own stories through your characters or creatures. What makes you smile, laugh or cry? Consider adding your own pet to your art, or maybe something funny and embarrassing? I tend to draw lots of horses, foxes and cats, since I used to be one of those typical girls who hung out a lot at the stable, and the fox is a common animal here in Sweden. And I see our two silly cats doing stupid things every day, so it's hard not to get inspired by that!



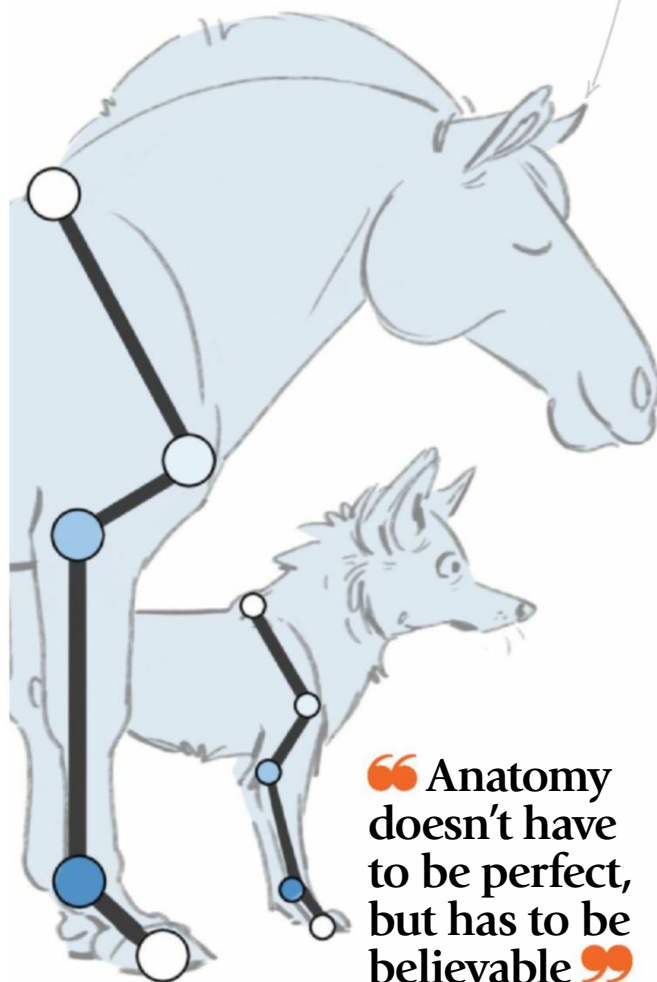
5 DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK "WHAT IF...?"

Take my piece with the tiger chasing the balloon for instance. It all started with that tiger alone, reaching for something. I wanted to try something different, and started thinking that it would be hilarious to paint something about a tiger and a scared balloon. Totally random! Asking "what if?" helps you explore more ideas, for creating interesting creatures and characters.

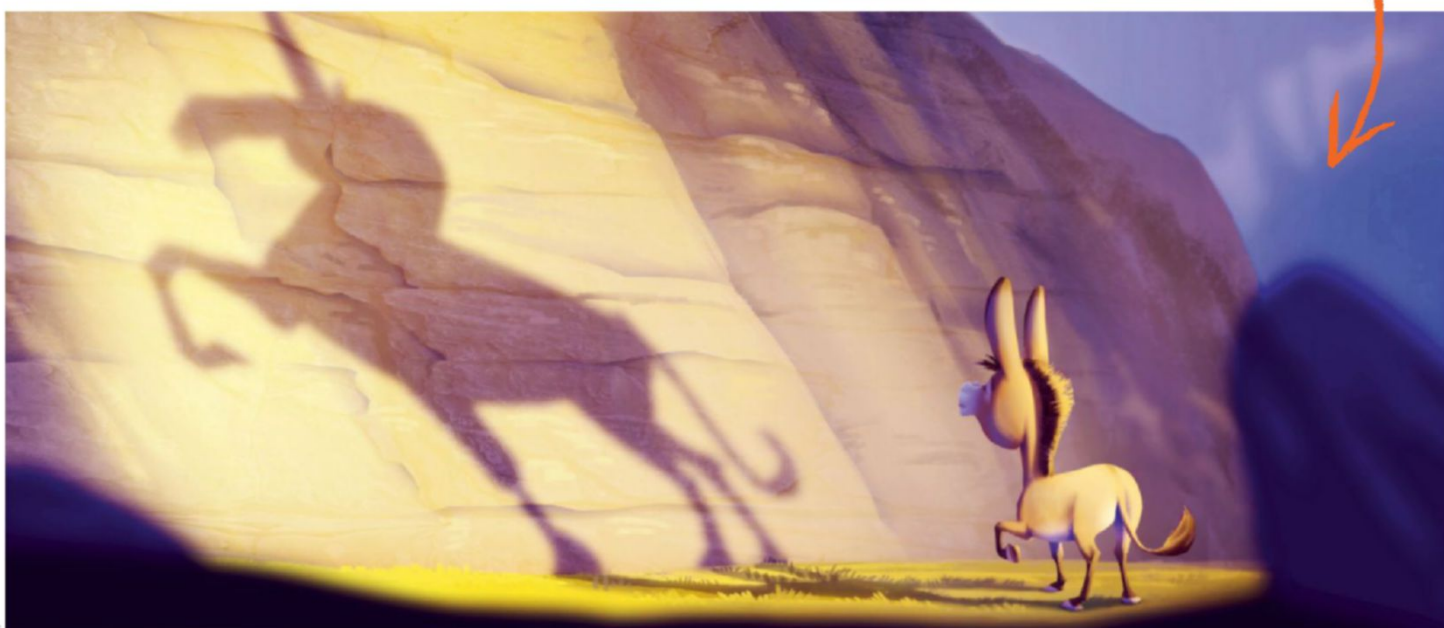
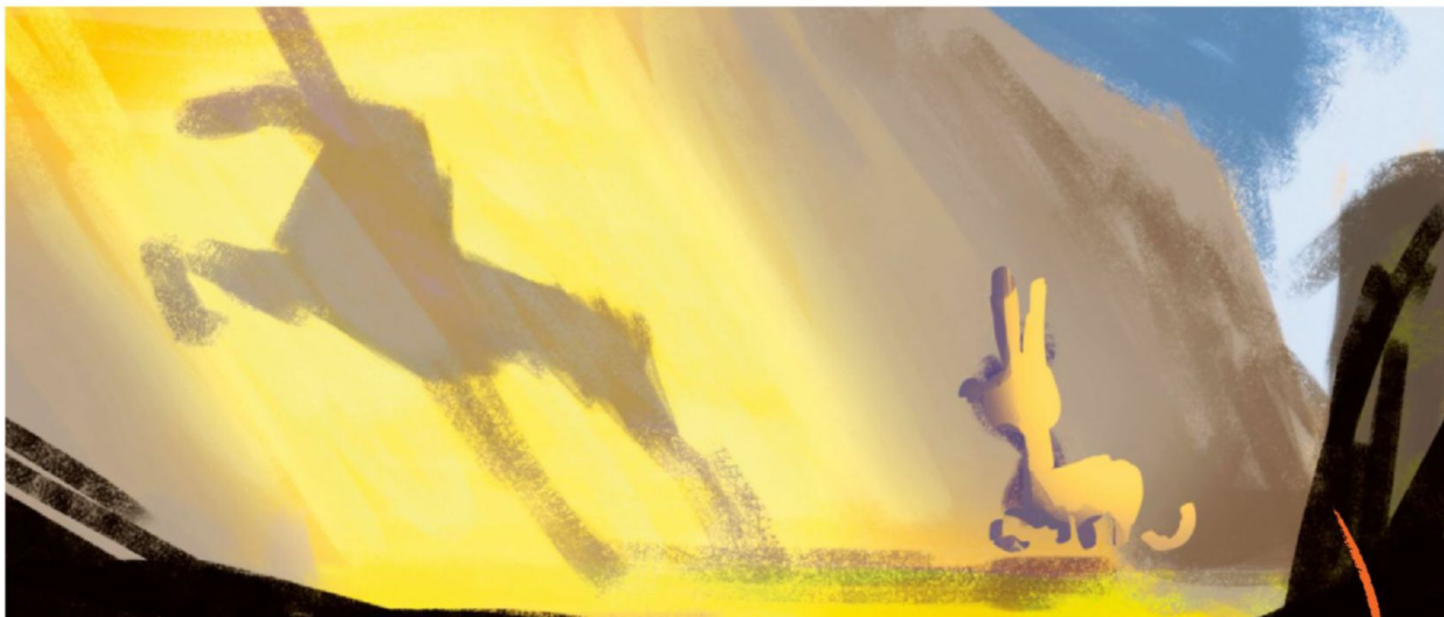


6 KNOW YOUR ANATOMY, TO CREATE BELIEVABLE ART

The anatomy doesn't have to be 100 per cent perfect. But it does still have to be believable. Luckily, many animals share similar anatomy, so you only need to figure out the significant features of the specific animal you're drawing: proportions, posture, significant details and so on. The bones and limbs are attached in a similar way, so if you learn how to draw one animal, you'll get a shortcut to a bunch of other ones, too.



“Anatomy doesn't have to be perfect, but has to be believable”



7 PLAY WITH LIGHT TO ADD STORY

Try out different variations before settling on the final one. Think about the mood, and ask yourself, what do you want to say with your piece? Cute or romantic pieces work well with a sunny, backlit magic hour light, while dark, hard shadows may be more suitable to indicate danger. Study colour scripts for films to see how the studios have solved certain situations and moods. Using actual photos as a base for colours is also helpful if you want to create realistic lighting.

8 PINTEREST IS GREAT FOR GETTING INSPIRED, BUT CAN ALSO BE A TRAP

Don't get too caught up in browsing other artists online for inspiration. Sites like Pinterest or gallery sites like ArtStation are great for boosting your own inspiration, but I would always say to use your own stories and ideas as a base. This is something I'm constantly working on.





“I like art where you can see emotion in the characters”

9 INCLUDE A SENSE OF INTERACTION

I like art where you can see some kind of emotion in the characters, because that's something we all can relate to. The characters or creatures can be cuddly, comforting, angry, sad... It doesn't really matter, as long as you feel something. Take the painting I Love You Bro (above) for instance: some couples have said to me that they remind them of their kids, or even themselves.

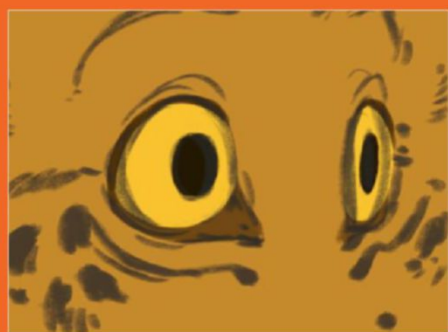
10 USE STRONG BODY LANGUAGE

It all starts with definite body language, so try to nail that before diving into the details such as facial expressions. To help do that, try to imagine how your character would pose themselves if it didn't have a face. I know that sounds a bit creepy, but it makes sense, since body language tells you much more than one might think. Play around with different poses in your rough sketches, then you'll be able to pin-point which one will be the most suitable to tell your character's or creature's story.



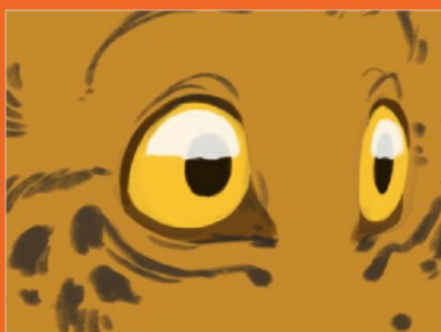
11 PAINT GLOSSY, REALISTIC BUT CARTOONY EYES

Here's a little insight into my approach to painting glossy eyes in Photoshop



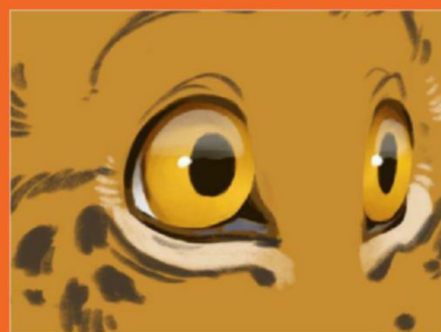
1 Block things in

Prepare a sketch if it feels more comfortable, and then paint in all the default colours. Paint the eye, iris and pupils on separate layers with a Hard brush, to keep things nice and crisp. It's helpful to do all this at the beginning, because it speeds up your process and you can set up a nice finish to your piece.



2 Add the reflection

Create a new layer, then lower the Opacity and paint in a white reflection. This is my favourite shortcut to make eyes feel more 3D. It works for sketches and really helps your characters look even more appealing, even though the rest of the lines are rough. Soften the reflection by erasing the bottom with a Soft brush.



3 Paint and finish

Create another layer below the reflection layer and set it to Multiply. Then, using a darker colour, paint with a Soft brush below the eyelids to create a soft shadow. This will make the eyes pop even more. Go back to your colour layers, and add some colour variations to increase the realism. ➡



12 ENSURE THAT VIEWERS CAN RELATE TO YOUR PAINTINGS

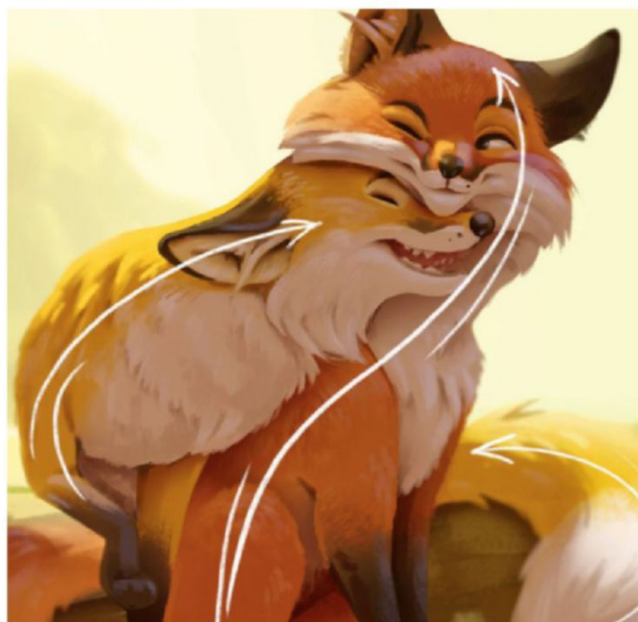
With my Hobbit cats piece, people could relate to it because it was funny and familiar. I even used my own cats as models. Things just suddenly fell into place – my cats resembled Bilbo and Gollum! It's not a coincidence that I painted this during the same time as The Hobbit was showing at the cinemas. The timing was perfect and inspiration struck hard.

“ Things just suddenly fell into place – my cats clearly resembled Bilbo and Gollum! ”



13 ECONOMIC BRUSH STROKES

One way to make paintings or sketches look cleaner is to lock the Transparency on some of the layers and keep painting within brush strokes. I do this a lot to keep things nice and clean, and the brush strokes look much more confident. This technique can also be a lot of help when painting hair or fur. You'll gain more control over smaller strains of hair, whiskers, eyebrows and so on.




14 LINE OF ACTION

Try to think of your character or creature as one simple line of action and build the pose around that. This goes hand in hand with my tip on body language (see number 10). Straight lines indicate a more aggressive pose, while softer curves exude a sense of calm.



15 WORK WITH A LIMITED COLOUR PALETTE TO KEEP THINGS SIMPLE AND CLEAN

Experiment and see what complementary colours work with your piece. I like to decide on one significant colour and let that be the most saturated one. And I pick a less-saturated complementary one to support it. The fastest way for me is to start with a monochromatic painting and save the bright colours to the last. Or just settle with the monochromatic scheme.



For Honor!
Remko Troost reveals
how he creates art for
the epic Viking title!

Next month in...

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

ImagineFX

Video games

Techniques and guidance from our best-ever
roll-call of professional games artists

Featuring...

Star Citizen

Master artist Jort van Welbergen reveals how he designs and builds vehicles for this epic space thriller.

Work at Blizzard

Blizzard's art directors and artists share what you need to know and do, to get your dream job at the company.

Creating worlds

How to use concept sheets to build a believable games world, with pro games artist Olly Lawson.

And much more!

The incredible art of No Man's Sky; a chat with Even Mehl Amundsen; and how to paint Sylvanas!

ISSUE 141 ON SALE IN THE UK FRIDAY 7 OCT



Photoshop CREATE MANGA WITH A TWIST



Genzoman combines two distinct genres to create a dynamic manga composition in a Wild West setting, compete with a bar-room brawl

Artist PROFILE

Genzoman
LOCATION: Chile



Genzoman, alias Gonzalo Ordoñez, is an illustrator who's worked

in the video game industry, TCGs and comics for over 15 years.
<http://ifxm.ag/gen-man>

GET YOUR RESOURCES

See page 6 now!

Westerns are something I've always loved. In this tutorial I'll create an image in the typical manga style but set in a Wild West saloon. The main character, Rose, is a character in *The Wanderer*, a comic about the Old West I'm working on at the moment, to be released next year.

There are certain art styles where the main character is the centre of the action and the background is a secondary consideration, something to help bring

out the character. But there are also illustrations where the background can be considered an extra character, because it also includes additional personality or represents an iconic or picturesque set. In this type of illustration you can often explore new ways to enrich a background.

Here, I'll explain the process I use to achieve a style of background that not only contrasts with the character, but is also dynamic and expressive, with a multitude of characters, expressions and

different atmospheres, as well as different textures in fabrics, glass or smoke.

In this image we'll take the depth of the stage and play with the scale of the characters in the scene. The lighting offers a different perspective on how close or far they are from the light sources. Finally, we'll see some tips to generate background construction elements with the Lasso and Gradient tools, as well as create elements to depict in perspective with the Free Transform tool.



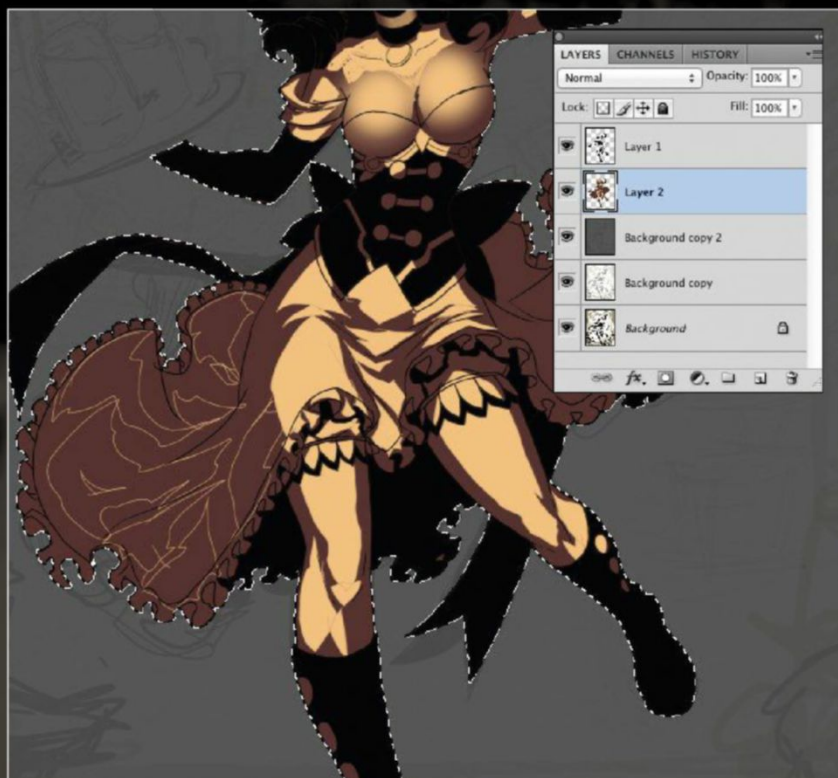
1 Sketches, setting and pose

The Wild West has many possible locations and interesting scenarios. I make several sketches trying to find what will be the most interesting or the most striking, some focused on the character and others on the environment. I settle on the idea of drawing a classic Wild West canteen area, that features several characters and some action.



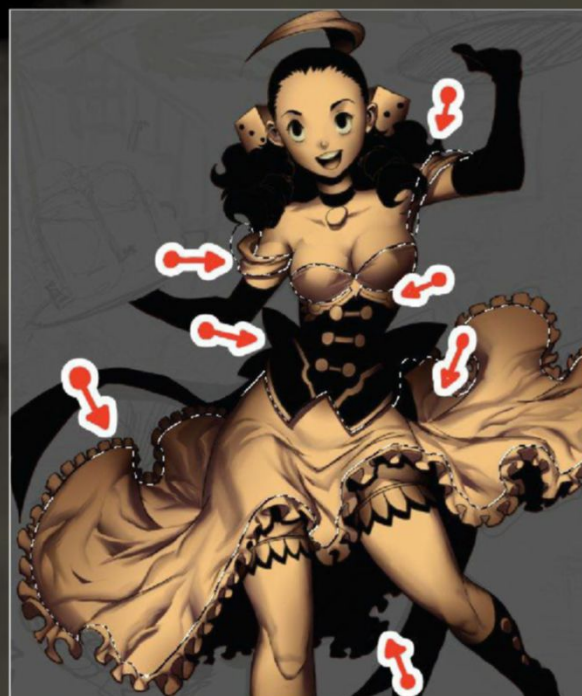
2 Inking the elements

I do this part of the process quickly because everything will be covered by colour and much of the inking will be lost in the following steps. I focus on closed areas, where it's easier to make selections with the Magic Wand than it will be later when detailing. I use the Lasso tool to make quick selections of areas, then fill them with the Paint Bucket tool as I'm inking away. ➔



3 Gradient and cel-shading

I use two tones for adding light and shade before getting into colour. I use the darker tone as a base, and add lighting with the lighter one. I use a Radial Gradient to apply volume to rounded parts of the image such as the face. I create light areas that later I'll fill with paint using the Paint Bucket tool, achieving an appearance similar to traditional cel-shading. Over this, I'll paint a halftone in a new layer set to 50 per cent Opacity.



4 Blending tones and adding shadows

I flatten all the colour layers into one and use the Smudge tool with a textured brush for smooth blending, painting with this in one direction from top to bottom and side to side. This technique gives the image softness and volume, and adds dynamism to elements such as fabric – I love drawing fabrics moving. When this is done, I add shadows by selecting areas and applying a Radial Gradient with my base colour but in Multiply mode, applying this from outside to inside the image.

Shortcuts

New Layer

Ctrl+Shift+N (PC)

Cmd+Shift+N (Mac)

Create a new layer and open a panel for you to set its Opacity, colour and mode.

PRO SECRETS

Allow for more Undos

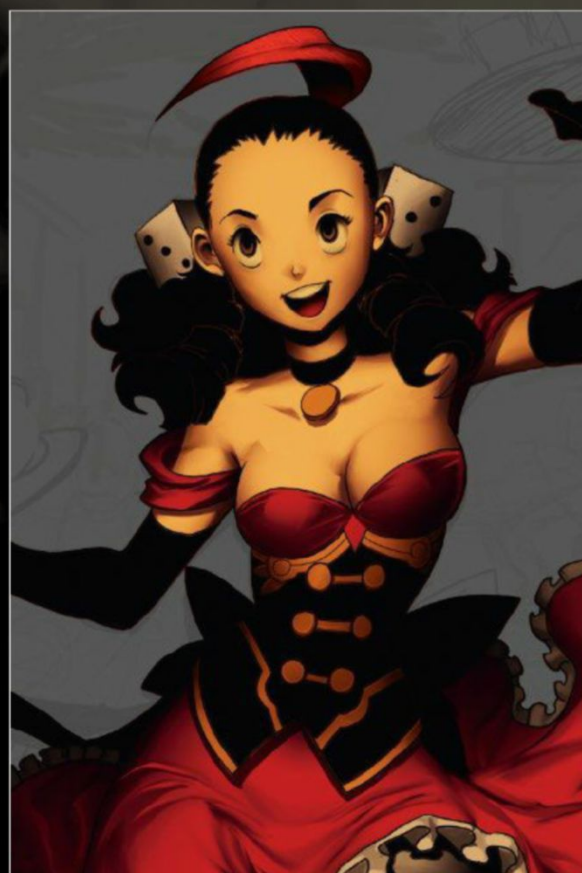
I like to use Undo, mainly because often I'm not entirely sure about some brush strokes or because I feel I could make a bad colour decision and would like to go back as much as possible in time to correct the error.

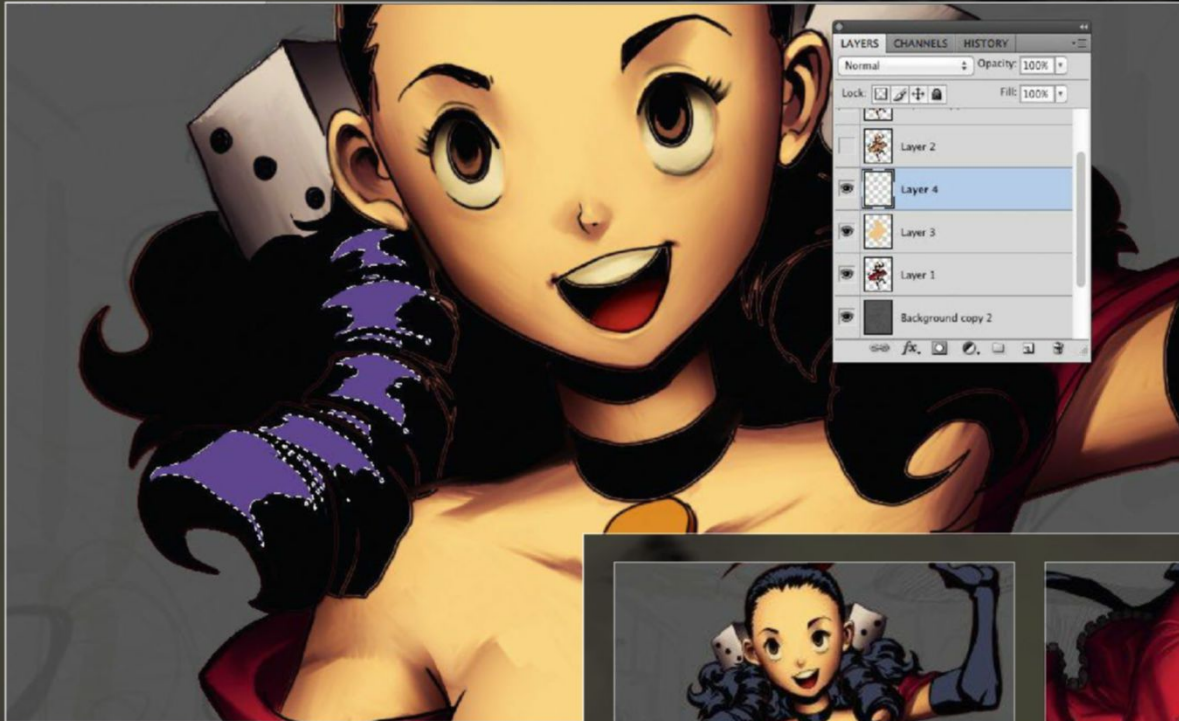
Under Preferences > Performance, you'll find options for History & Cache, where you can increase the number of Undos up to 1,000. I prefer to use 30 undos.



5 Colouring and balance

With volumes sorted, I turn to colouring my mono image, selecting areas that will have the same colour, using the Magic Wand tool. At this stage I add just large areas of colour – details will come later. I duplicate the character image, add a yellowish hue (Ctrl+U) and set the duplicate layer to Multiply mode with low Opacity for an antique look. I merge all the character layers and use Color Balance to better define a final colour.





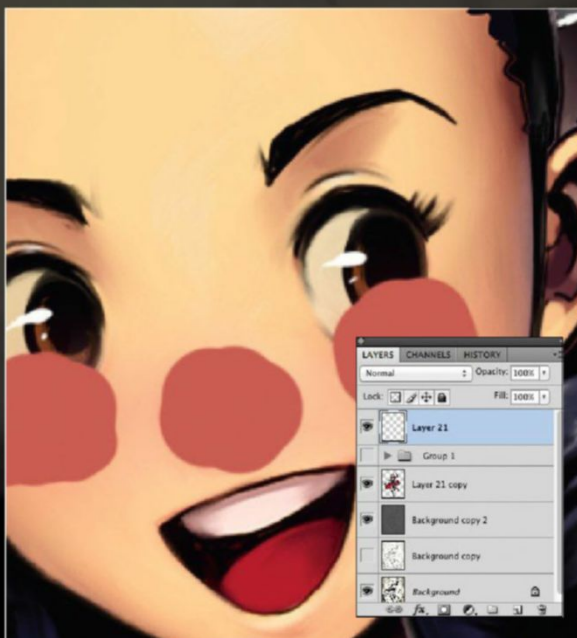
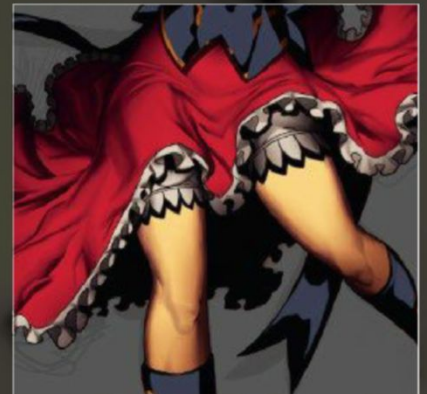
PRO SECRETS

Gaussian Blur is your friend

When a picture looks finished, I always like to add Gaussian Blur, set to a 3.0 pixel radius. Then I use Edit>Fade to reduce it by 20 per cent. It loses hardness and gains some softness and fuzziness. This helps achieve better integration between the elements and adds some depth to the image. But thanks to Fade, it's not invasive or overwhelming.

6 Painting over ink

I begin adding details to black areas, such as clothing and hair. I create a new layer, which I place over the character layer, and select areas of hair and other elements with the Lasso tool. I fill these using a slightly lighter colour to show the contrast. Once these are defined, I convert the layer to the final colour (Ctrl+U) and repeat step four, blending to smooth for the final result. Then I merge the layer with the character's layer.



7 Highlights and details

I begin adding details to clothes and other items, giving them additional volume and shine. I add secondary highlights interacting with the character – sometimes a bit of light can make a big difference. I add light to the hair on a separate layer, then merge it to the character's layer. I use Liquify to fix physical details. On a new layer I paint her cheeks and nose in pink, then add Gaussian Blur and lower the Opacity to give her rosy cheeks.



8 Adding glasses and bottles

I don't draw bottles as such. I do a Rectangular Marquee and modify it with the Lasso tool. I fill the selection with the Paint Bucket tool, add highlights using a Radial Gradient tool and then Colorize (Ctrl+U). With quick selections, I create the impression of liquids inside. I use the same process for the beer, making a selection to add foam, painting with a brush and then applying Gaussian Blur. Lastly, I add a few drops on the glasses and bottles for detail. ➡➡



Shortcuts
Free Transform
Ctrl+T (PC)
Cmd+T (Mac)
 Use this to quickly transform objects, changing perspective and shape.

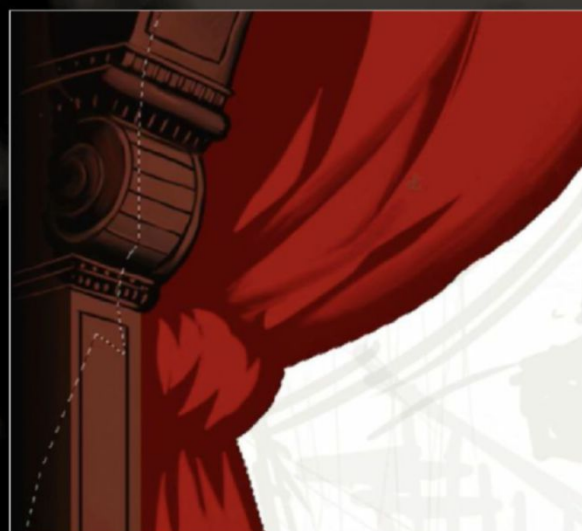
9 Background characters and personality

The setting is a bar, so I need to add some secondary characters to the background to add life, variety of design and expression. I need characters of different ages, ethnicity and sex, each one in different dress, pose and action. A fight in the background will help ground the bar in reality, as will chairs and tables for customers to enjoy a freshly tapped beer.



10 Characters and colour background

I paint the background characters in a similar way to steps three to five. I start with a base colour, and add highlights similar to the cel-shaded ones. I add a new layer at 50 per cent Opacity and paint on it with a light colour to achieve a halftone. Then I apply the Smudge tool lightly in some areas. I paint characters hoping that colour brings out their personalities, but I need to choose more muted and monochromatic colours, so Rose can stand out a little more.



11 Pillars and curtains

To make the pillars, I do a quick selection with the Rectangular Marquee tool, then add depth using the Gradient tool. I paint a few details, then bump up extra light for the look of a deep carving in the wood. For the curtains I make another selection, draw light areas and recolour them with Ctrl+U. I reselect the curtain area and add gradient shadows in different parts to create contrast between them. I merge both layers, then duplicate this to make the other pillar and curtains on the right.



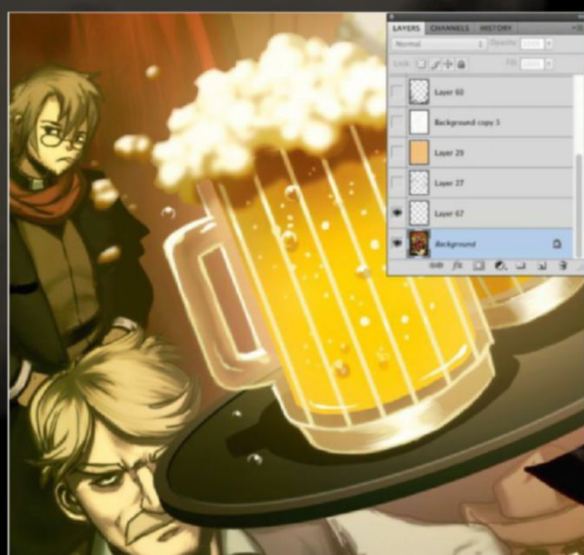
12 Floor, staircases and chandeliers

To create a wooden floor, I draw several vertical lines in a single layer, then use Free Transform to add perspective. I do the same for the handrail as well. I use the same pillar as in step 11 to create the roof and the wall, then use Bevel and Emboss for a small border. The chandelier is done with selections and the chains with Bevel and Emboss for quick volume. On a new layer I add a green tone and set the layer to Color mode.



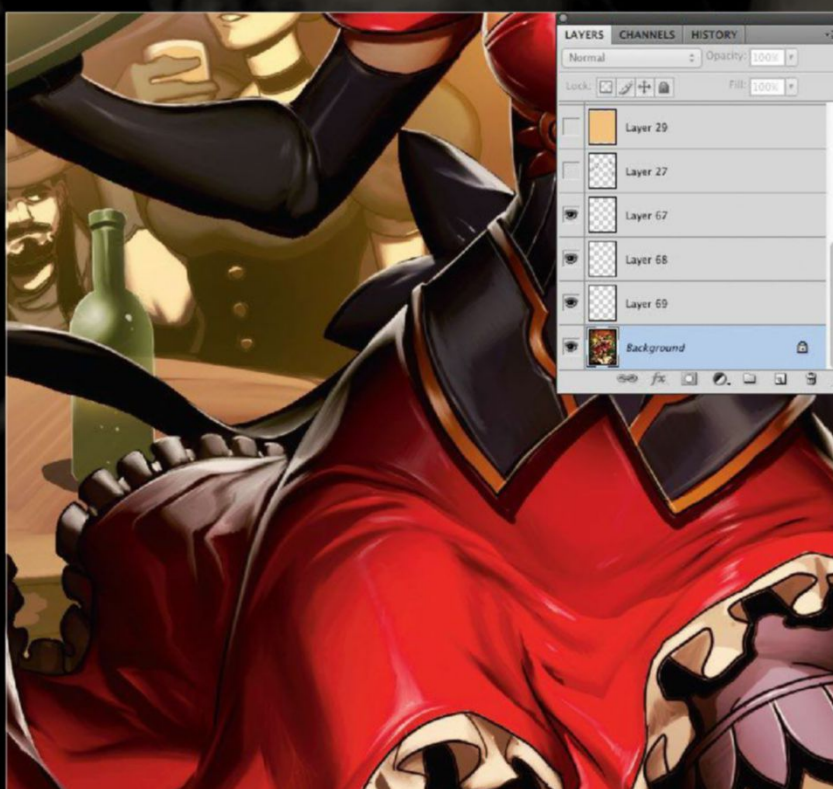
13 Foreground characters and smoke

I add two characters in the foreground, both with heavy inks because they're far away from my light sources. I add colours, then draw light bouncing in a new layer and duplicate it, adding Gaussian Blur to produce a fuzzy light. For smoke I use the Lasso tool, fill the silhouettes with a Gradient and use the Smudge tool to produce irregular shapes. Then I use Gaussian Blur to remove any hardness and make it look more ethereal.



14 Final edits to the scene

I tweak the colours a little with Color Balance (Ctrl+B) and correct the contrast with Levels. I alter some designs from previous phases that don't look so good now, and clean up some inking errors. I add some extra items such as bottles on a table and some extra bounce light on the chandelier. I use the Blur tool in some areas, to add a slight blur and produce a greater sense of depth. After this I can call it a finished image.



WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES: HARD ROUND 3 PIXELS

I use this brush to draw everything! Its strokes are thin, so they're easy to hide on shadows and it's great for detailing.

HARD ROUND 9 PIXELS

I use this brush for quick painting and volumes. If I want a smoothing effect I add Transfer/Other Dynamics as a preset.

TRI BRUSH

This multi-dot brush is not for painting, but is my brush for colour blending using the Smudge tool.

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NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX Reviews

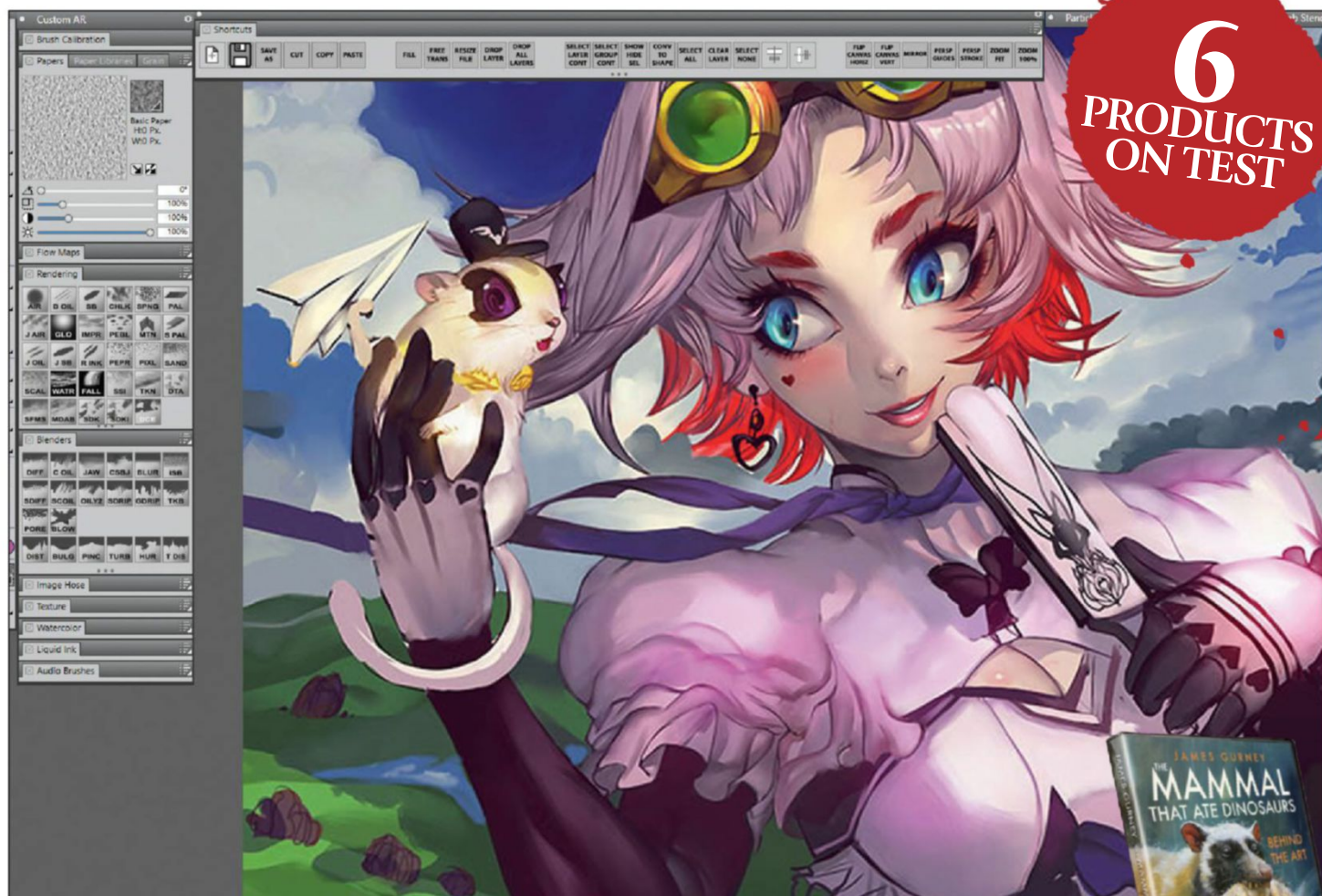


Artist's Choice Award

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...

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PRODUCTS
ON TEST



SOFTWARE

94 Painter 2017

Corel's latest version of Painter utilises new technology for natural-looking brushes, but does this update result in a bloated piece of software? We find out...

96 Astropad 2.0

This remote-control app sounds too good to be true: run Photoshop – or any other painting app – on your Mac and then paint using your iPad.

TRAINING

97 The Mammal That Ate Dinosaurs: Behind The Art

James Gurney paints a series of extinct mammals in his latest video.

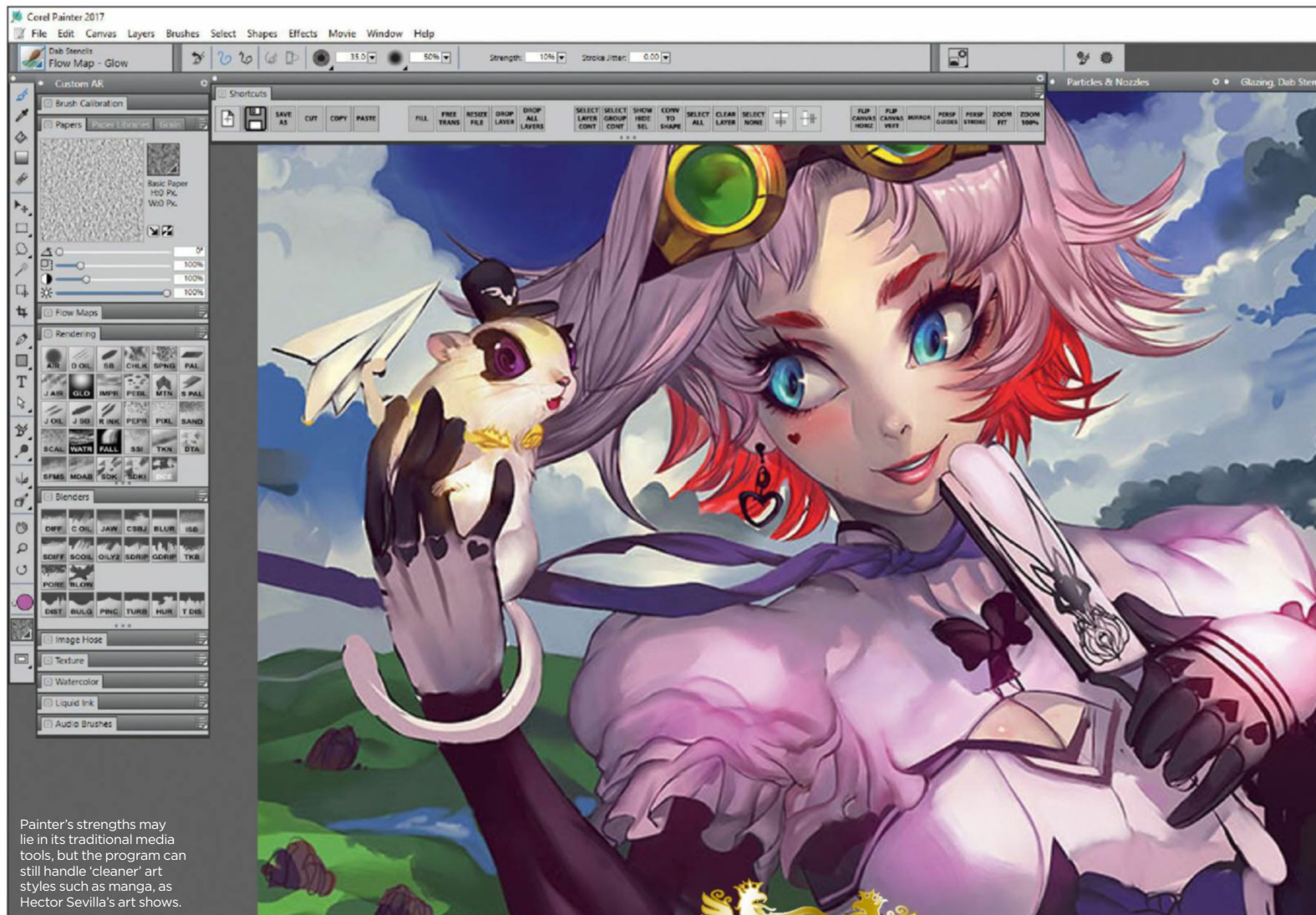
BOOKS

98 New reads

Master the Art of Speed Painting: Digital Painting Techniques; The Art of Finding Dory; The Art and Making of Independence Day: Resurgence.



RATINGS EXPLAINED Magnificent Great Good Poor Atrocious



Painter's strengths may lie in its traditional media tools, but the program can still handle 'cleaner' art styles such as manga, as Hector Sevilla's art shows.

Painter 2017

MAC & PC



PAINTING INNOVATION Corel's latest version of Painter brings new technology for natural-looking brushes while keeping bloat at bay

Price £314 (£159 upgrade) **Company** Corel **Web** www.painterartist.com

After a few iterations of a product, there's a tendency for the program to become stale as features are bolted on, but Corel's Painter 2017 navigates around this minefield with considerable finesse. While it does feature some brilliant new brush technology, there's also been some careful consideration into making Painter 2017 a more streamlined and customisable experience.

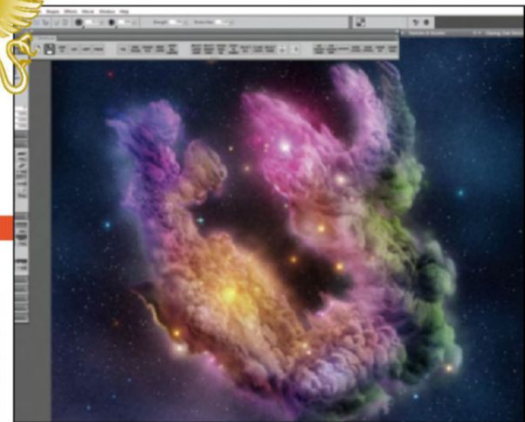
If you were new to previous versions of Painter it was easy to become overwhelmed by the many tools at your disposal, and it could be a chore to navigate through them. So it's great to see how 2017 has made life easier.

The Brush Selector still divides tools into categories, but each brush within is nestled into the right-hand side and hovering over it gives you a preview, making it that much quicker to find the ideal brush.

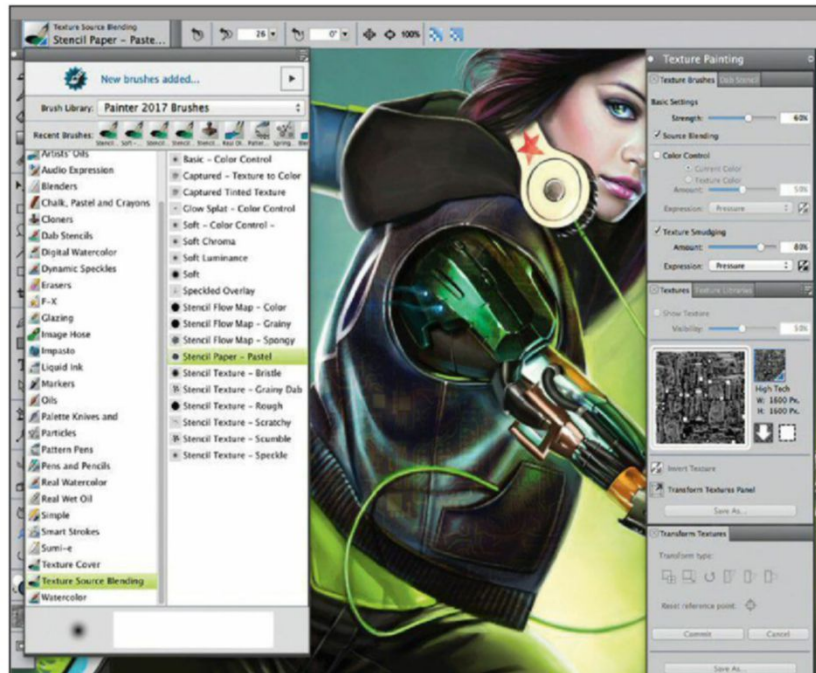
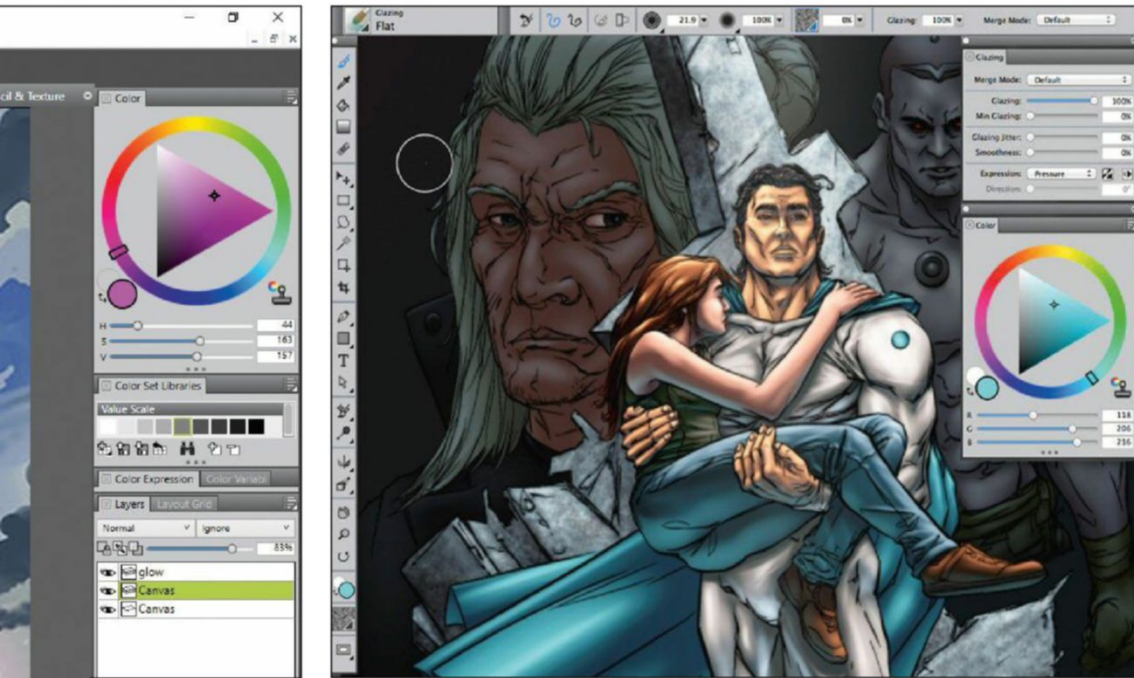
The overall layout is considerably less cluttered now too, with the enhanced Properties bar showing context-relevant options and the ability to show temporary fly-out menus or pop-out custom options if needed. These can also be sorted into custom Palette drawers that are easily minimised, resulting in far fewer palettes obscuring your workspace.

Painter 2017's new offerings include Dab stencils, Glazing brushes and

Dab Stencils enable you to make gorgeously textured and detailed work, like this nebula.



Texture painting brushes, which are great on their own, but more impressively can all be used with each other. Dab stencils give you control over how paper textures affect tools, which enables you to paint in a more natural-looking manner. You can choose from multiple Flow maps and adjust their sizes to suit your needs. Glazing brushes, meanwhile, make it possible to tint existing paint, or to add a translucent texture effect.



“The overall layout is considerably less cluttered now... there are far fewer palettes obscuring your workspace”

There are two categories of Texture brush: texture cover and texture source blending. Texture cover enables you to choose from multiple textures that are transformable, so that you can cover the specific area you need. You can change the texture on the fly, which means you can quickly vary the texture painting, making it feel much more analogue and unique. Texture source blending, perhaps as the name suggests, makes it possible to add

textures that blend nicely with the source image you're painting on to.

If you're an artist who loves digital, but strives for a more random and organic feel to your work, these new features are perfect for you, especially when you combine them. Overall, Painter 2017 is a well-crafted and versatile addition to Corel's catalogue. It's a worthwhile update for existing users, or a great time to jump in if you've never tried Painter before.

Emulate the work of Renaissance masters by laying down translucent brush strokes, with the new Glazing brushes.

Now you can blend your own textures into your art using a range of brush settings such as pressure.

DETAILS

Features

- Texture Painting
- Interactive Gradient tool
- Gradient Express Painting
- Enhanced Dab stencils
- Glazing brushes
- Enhanced Dropper tool
- Palette drawers
- Artists' layouts
- Enhanced Brush selector
- Enhanced Property bars

System Requirements

PC: Windows 10, 8.1 or 7, Intel Core 2 or AMD Athlon 64 CPU, 2GB of RAM, 1GB hard disk space, mouse or tablet, 1,280x800 screen resolution, DVD drive, Internet Explorer 11 or higher
Mac: OS X 10.11, 10.10 or 10.9, multi-core Intel CPU with 64-bit support, 2GB of RAM, 750MB disk space, mouse or tablet, 1,280x800 screen resolution, DVD drive, Safari v7 or higher

Rating



ARTIST INTERVIEW

AARON RUTTEN

One of Corel's elite artists talks surrealism and inspiring others

What's your favourite new feature that was introduced in Corel Painter 2017?

I like the Dab Stencil brushes, which are great for developing organic, random-looking textures.

Are there any features you can think of that you would like to see in the next version of Painter?

I'd like to see Mesh Warp transformations, like those available in Photoshop, added to Painter.

What's the best thing about being part of Corel's Painter Master Elite?

Being able to inspire the next generation of digital artists.

What is your favourite thing about teaching people?

Knowing that I can provide free digital art education to people around the world.

What's the best piece of advice that you have ever received?

Many clients have said to me that I should charge more for my work and stop selling myself short.

Are there any creative apps for mobile devices or tablets that you often use?

Lately, I've been enjoying using the Infinite Painter app on my Android phone.

Has working digitally replaced traditional art for you now? If not, do you think it ever will?

No. I'll always use traditional media because I feel that it's beneficial to do both.

What is your favourite thing to draw and why?

Surrealism, because I can paint realistically while putting my own spin on reality.

If you weren't an artist, what would you like to be instead?

I'd like to be a musician or an actor. Something artsy... well, more than being a painter, at least!



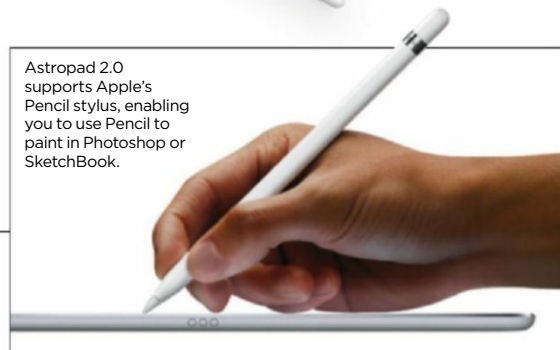
Seattle-based Aaron is an official Corel Painter Master Elite and has over 40,000 YouTube subscribers.

www.aaronrutten.com



Turn your iPad into a Cintiq-like graphics tablet for your Mac with the help of Astropad, a simple app with powerful tech inside.

Astropad 2.0 supports Apple's Pencil stylus, enabling you to use Pencil to paint in Photoshop or SketchBook.



Astropad 2.0

LIVE AND DIRECT Run Photoshop on your Mac and paint using your iPad with the help of this clever remote-control app

Price £23 **Company** Astro HQ **Web** www.astropad.com

There are quite a few iPad apps that enable you to remote-control your Windows or Mac OS computer from your tablet, but Astropad offers some clever creative twists. By adding some artist-friendly features, Astropad helps to turn your iPad into the equivalent of a Wacom Cintiq tablet, where you can draw directly on to your screen.

Astropad relies on two pieces of software: an iOS app (which you pay for) and a companion Mac OS program (which you download at no extra charge). Get both of your devices on the same Wi-Fi network or connect them with a Lightning cable, then run both apps. With clear instructions on both screens, it's easy for the apps to find each other, and the contents of your Mac screen appear on your iPad.

Now you can use Astropad on your iPad to control your Mac's actions. Unlike other remote-control apps, though, Astropad is geared towards the control of creative Mac software. Chiefly Photoshop, of course, but also

any other painting or drawing program you care to run. Astropad overlays a circular button on the iPad screen. Tap this to access one-tap shortcut controls for your Mac software, such as changing the brush size. This update expands the range of software for which dedicated shortcuts are available, to include Autodesk SketchBook, ArtRage and others.

“The benefits are multiplied by the device's larger screen area”

But it's in the act of drawing that Astropad shines. Even on an ordinary home Wi-Fi network, there's no noticeable lag behind drawing on the iPad screen and the brush stroke appearing on the Mac screen. This is no mean feat. The developers, led by two former Apple engineers, created their own wireless technology to ensure screen updates were as smooth

as possible. In this release, they claim it's three times faster than before.

The replicated view of your Mac on your iPad looks nice and sharp, with colour reproduced accurately. You've got the option of viewing the whole Mac screen, which may mean black borders appearing on your iPad because of the differing screen ratios, or zooming in to view part of the Mac display. The latter option is great for when you're detailing.

If you own an iPad Pro, the benefits of Astropad are multiplied by the device's larger screen area and its support for Apple's pressure-sensitive Pencil stylus. Now it really starts to feel like you have a Cintiq...

The drawback is that a 12.9-inch iPad Pro, a Pencil stylus and Astropad collectively cost £780, while a 13-inch Wacom Cintiq HD tablet costs under £600 online and – for now, at least – delivers a better drawing experience. So while Astropad is a superbly implemented app, its appeal rests on whether you already own an iPad Pro or want the extra benefits of one.

DETAILS

Features

- Draw on-screen on your iPad
- Use any stylus or your fingertip
- Support for Apple Pencil pressure and tilt sensitivity
- Connects to Mac via Wi-Fi or Lightning USB cable
- Free Mac app required, but no drivers
- Shortcuts for popular art software
- Pinch, zoom and pan support
- iPad screen refreshes at up to 60 frames per second

System Requirements

Apple: OS X 10.9 (Mavericks) or later, any iPad running iOS 8 or later, iPad Pro required for Apple Pencil support

Rating

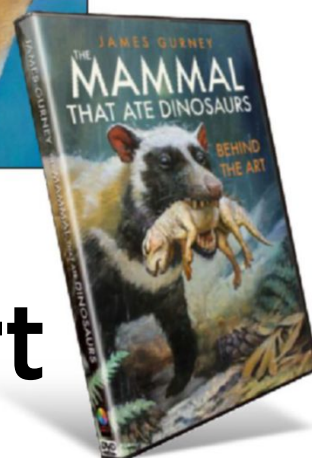




James Gurney's natural-history painting career comes to the fore in *The Mammal That Ate Dinosaurs*, a swift overview of his process.



Children's modelling clay and artificial eyes help James construct a convincing skull based on fossil photographs.



The Mammal That Ate Dinosaurs: Behind The Art

TASTY MORSEL In this short but sweet video, artist James Gurney shows how he brought a series of extinct mammals back to life for *Scientific American*

Publisher James Gurney **Price** \$10 (download), \$24.50 (DVD) **Web** www.jamesgurney.com

The titular mammal that ate dinosaurs in James Gurney's new video is a repenomamus, a Cretaceous-period possum-like creature. A fossil of one such animal was found with the remains of a small dinosaur in its stomach and it's this interplay of mammals and dinosaurs that inspired a recent *Scientific American* magazine cover story, which James was asked to illustrate. Here he talks through the process behind the paintings.

The creation of his natural history illustrations is territory that James has covered, sometimes in greater detail, in previous videos such as *How I Paint Dinosaurs*. But if this is your first Gurney video, you can look forward to a condensed yet detailed breakdown of his working methods, with plenty of ideas for you to bring into your own process.

Key techniques include the creation of a head maquette (with dinosaur in



DETAILS

Topics covered

- Value and colour studies
- Working with reference and briefs
- Prepping art board for painting
- Controlling the image's focal point

Length
40 minutes

Rating



mouth), which enables James to study the light and shadow across the forms more accurately. And the various thumbnails and studies he creates to give the magazine designers plenty of options. You'll also see moments when the process gets off-track and how James corrects it, like the point he realises he's worked too much detail into the background foliage.

The knowledge on display is deep, yet presented in a down-to-earth way that makes you wish there was more here. The download is great value, the DVD edition less so – although making physical media and keeping the costs down is a challenge for any self-publisher.

The 40-minute running time includes a three-minute bonus on protecting illustration boards from warping. James made and added this clip after feedback from an early customer, which just goes to show his commitment to sharing his knowledge with the art community.

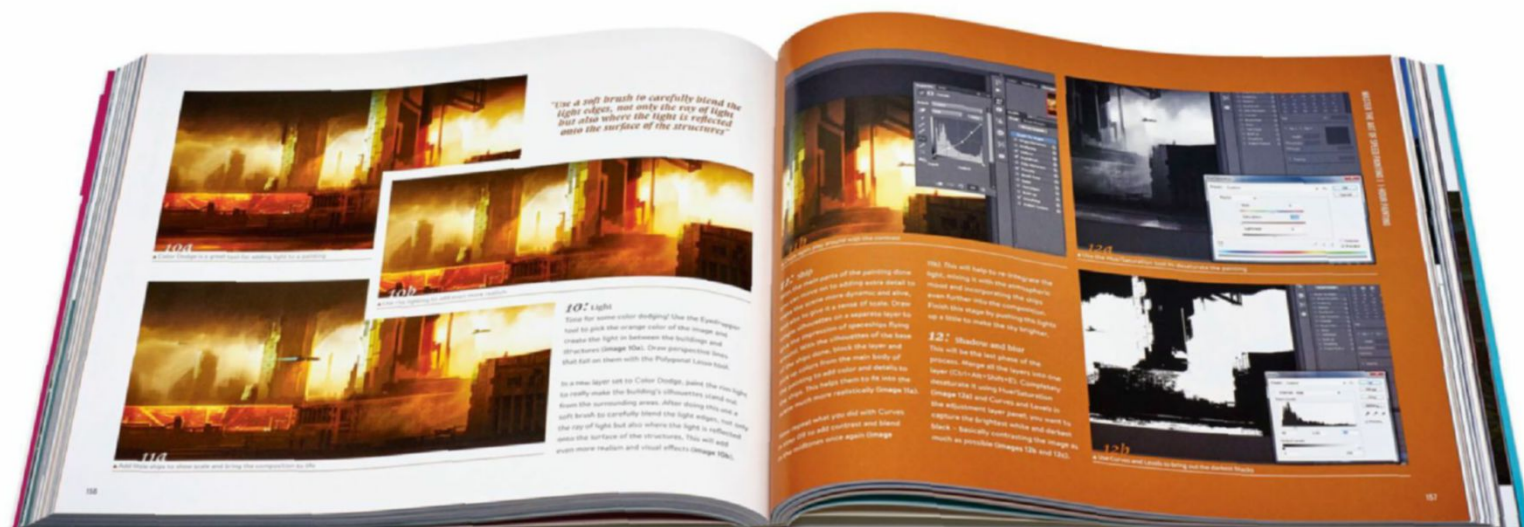
ARTIST PROFILE

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 from 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



Master the Art of Speed Painting: Digital Painting Techniques

QUICK STUDY Leading concept artists demonstrate the essential art of speed painting, with tips and insight to help you work faster



Editor Simon Morse **Publisher** 3DTotal **Price** £22 **Web** www.3dtotal.com **Available** Now

No matter how great your concept art is, studios will only employ you if you can deliver to a deadline. And for many, that means learning to create high-quality work, faster.

Speed painting is a useful technique to help you achieve this. And so this comprehensive instructional guide offers a ton of tips and walkthroughs aimed at improving your speed painting skills, for both would-be artists and industry pros.

Following a foreword by celebrated concept artist Noah Bradley, this 258-page book kicks off with two step-by-step lessons in technique. Marcin Rubinkowski explains how he makes custom brushes for creating environments quickly, showcasing his technique by creating a futuristic industrial scene. Then it's the turn of Ioan Dumitrescu, who demonstrates how to use photobashing to create a weapon design.



Alex Olmedo took the opportunity to marry his speed painting techniques with a painterly feel.

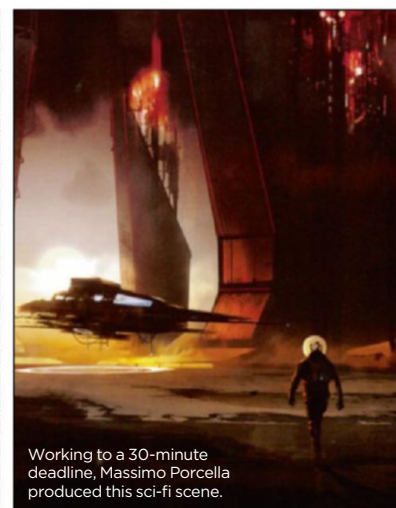
Then it's on to the real meat: the painting projects, 25 in total. These come from leading pro artists and are categorised by time taken: 10, 30, 60 or 120 minutes, respectively. Happily for ImagineFX readers, most of the subjects are sci-fi or fantasy themed, although the techniques involved are universal and can be applied to all kinds of art genres.

James Paick establishes a fantasy ice world in an hour using a mix of photo textures and painting techniques.

“Packed with screenshots and the kind of advice only pro artists can offer”

Noely Ryan explains the process behind his monster concept for a first-person shooter, fashioned in just two hours. Alex Olmedo takes the same time to create a futuristic cityscape using photobashing, as does Wadim Kashin for his sci-fi coastline, using an unconventional digital painting technique. Massimo Porcella designs a Mars factory in 60 minutes using textures, colour and structural shapes.

And there's plenty more besides, with contributions from Katy Grierson, Sung Choi, Jesper Friis, Florian Aupetit, Stephanie Cost, Danilo Lombardo and Ian Jun Wei Chiew. Each project is packed with explanatory screenshots



Working to a 30-minute deadline, Massimo Porcella produced this sci-fi scene.

and the kind of workflow advice and insider tips only a pro artist can offer.

The book is rounded off with a real treat: a 14-page tutorial from Thomas Scholes. This talented artist shares the hows and whys of his digital painting process and workflow in detail, from how to develop your artistic muscle memory to making repetitive use of objects and props in your asset library.

Whether you follow each tutorial and tip meticulously, dip in and out, or just enjoy the imaginative concept art, this is a great way to kick-start (or reignite) your enthusiasm for speed painting.

RATING



The Art of Finding Dory

OCEAN VIEW Pixar had to start again from scratch in visualising the Finding Nemo sequel, as this beautifully put-together book explains

Editors Steve Pilcher, John Lasseter and Andrew Stanton **Publisher** Chronicle Books **Price** £25 **Web** www.chroniclebooks.com **Available Now**

You'd expect an animated sequel would be relatively easy to design and produce. You just have to copy what went before, right?

Wrong. For Finding Dory, Pixar couldn't just reuse the previous character and environment designs, explains production designer Steve Pilcher in his introduction to this book. For one, 13 years of technological advances mean the original pieces no longer fit with the audience's visual expectations. For another, the film-



makers didn't just want to retread old ground, but aimed to explore new artistic and narrative possibilities.

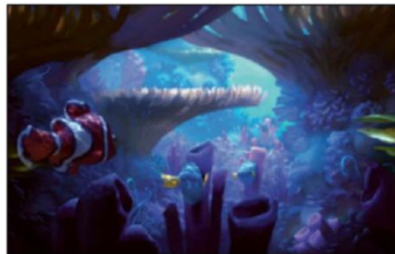
This sets the scene for a detailed look into how the sequel to Finding Nemo was visualised, alongside a cornucopia of unseen art, from scrap-paper sketches and early storyboards through to digital paintings, pre-vis models, 3D sculpts and final frames.

There's a strong focus throughout on world building and environments, including insights such as how the curvilinear shape language of the reef

world contrasts with the rectilinear shape language of the human world. While books like this can sometimes skirt over such details, here you really feel Pixar is trying to share everything about its production process.

But even if you're not interested in that stuff, this book is worth buying just for the stunning artwork by the likes of Shelly Wan, Tim Evatt and Don Shank, all beautifully reproduced across the book's 176 pages.

RATING ★★★★★



© Shelly Wan

Shelly Wan worked on creating concepts for the coral reef in the film.

The Art and Making of Independence Day: Resurgence

SPACED OUT An opportunity for fans to go behind the scenes of the blockbuster sci-fi sequel, but expect more 'making of' than art book



Author Simon Ward **Publisher** Titan Books **Price** £30 **Web** www.titanbooks.com **Available Now**

For the first quarter of this 176-page tome, you might think you've actually bought the wrong book.

The first 50 pages are devoted to the first Independence Day film, with a lot of fan-friendly detail about characters and plot but not much mention of the technical and artistic process behind it.

The book finally starts to fulfil its title's promise from page 70, where



we get rough pencil sketches, digital paintings and cross-sections of the new movie's moon base. From here on, it's the art book you've been looking for, replete with film stills, behind-the-scenes photography, and concept art showcasing how the many visual worlds of the movie, its new alien characters, its weapons and its spacecraft were conceived.

When it comes to the art, though, this book is fairly light on explanatory

text. Much of the concept work featured isn't credited, and while you do get a few quotations from members of the art department such as Aaron Sims, Mark Yang and Johannes Mücke, we'd have liked more. In short, this book is probably mainly of interest to fans of the new film – and a glance at the box office receipts suggests that there aren't that many of those...

RATING ★★★



Concept art of a key story element from the film. It's just a shame the book doesn't credit the artist behind it.

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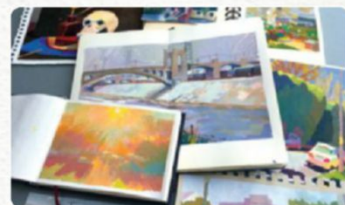
HOW TO PAINT A BELIEVABLE WOOD NYMPH

Iris Compiet uses her instincts to create
a half-human, half-tree being **Page 106**

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The best traditional art revealed.



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Peter Chan shares his set-up.



114 First Impressions
Steve Prescott talks Aliens.

FXPosé *Traditional*

SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL FANTASY ARTISTS

Jana Heidersdorf

LOCATION: Germany

WEB: www.janaheidersdorf.com

EMAIL: Janaheidersdorf@gmail.com

MEDIA: Acrylics, charcoal, pencil, digital



"My work explores everything that lurks in the dark, whether it be feral creatures or shapeless thoughts and feelings,"

says Jana. "I also consume a lot of music, books and movies; among my heroes being Neil Gaiman, Guillermo del Toro, Dave McKean, Patrick Ness, Amanda Palmer and Peter Greenaway."

Her work can be found on and in books, comics and magazines, on walls and online. Clients include Titan Comics, Egmont UK and the Bottleneck Gallery. "If you've bought all editions of Spectrum Fantastic Art, you can find my art in two of them, which is cool. Also, you have a lot of books," she jokes.

Her career goal is finding somebody to pay her to illustrate JM Barrie's Peter Pan in an appropriately creepy style. "When I'm not drawing or crafting you can find me dabbling in the dark arts of writing, photography and animation, or stalking the local squirrel population."

1 THE WITCH OF THE HILLS

Acrylics, charcoal, digital, 31x41cm

"I created this piece during last year's Month Of Fear challenge for the theme Sabbath. I see witches as secret guardian spirits of nature; the idea of a witch protecting her land came after reading Terry Pratchett's Tiffany Aching Discworld novels."

2 THE HEARTLESS GIANT

Acrylics, charcoal, digital, 31x42cm

"This was painted for a German fairy tale anthology with a travelling theme. I illustrated the Norwegian tale The Heartless Giant by combining several story elements into one composition."





IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Jana's art is full of atmosphere and emotion, helped by her choice of colours. I love how the heartless giant almost blends in with the rest of the buildings on the hill. Almost..."

Claire Howlett,
Editor

Julie Wilmore

LOCATION: US

WEB: www.juliewilmore.com

EMAIL: hi@juliewilmore.com

MEDIA: Charcoal, pencil, digital



Julie grew up in Michigan hiking and camping, which created a deep bond within her for the natural world.

"I seek the space between these real places I spent time in and the fluctuating memories I have of them," she explains. "My work uses wildlife and nature as the driving force of my semi-surreal narrative."

Her drawings are made with powdered charcoal and carbon pencil. "I literally paint in dry charcoal; this offers me a high level of control over the value, texture and edges. I then work with the carbon pencil and a smudge stick to add details and deep blacks."

Julie now live in Chicago, but can retreat back to nature through her art.

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"It's clear that Julia feels a strong affinity with wildlife and nature. I like how she's used the cloud in *Boundless Nocturne* to draw the viewer to the owls' eye – or is that a delicate crescent moon?"

Daniel Vincent,
Art Editor

1 BOUNDLESS NOCTURNE

Charcoal on Bristol board with digital colours, 11x14in

"A crescent slowly moves in the sky – with the turn of the earth – as through a beat of wings thunders behind it. I think most people have specific feeling about nighttime. Either it's a time of fear in the dark or a place of calm stillness."

2 RESPITE IN THE PINE HAUNT

Charcoal on Bristol board with digital colours, 14x17in

"I find that time runs differently in wild places. There is an agelessness to the trees and mountains, and days seem to pass more slowly."

3 TAILWIND

Charcoal on Bristol board with digital colours, 11x14in

"The last in a small series of personal pieces, *Tailwind* is all about pushing through difficult moments and finding peace at the end of it. At the time I second guessed the decision of making a pink piece, but now I can't see it any other way."



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Workshops



Pencil

Watercolour

Gouache

PAINT A BELIEVABLE WOOD NYMPH

IRIS COMPIET takes inspiration from nature to explore the world of fae, using mixed media and her instincts to create a being that's half human and half tree

For this workshop I'll be creating a dryad, a female spirit of nature, also known as a nymph. I've been exploring the world of fae for quite a while now, working steadily on a collection of creatures of the Seelie and Unseelie Court for a personal project.

The dryad has always fascinated me. Whenever I strolled in the forest as a young girl I always felt watched, while the sounds the forest made felt like breathing. So the existence of dryads was a natural known fact to me. They are the protectors of the trees and would punish any mortal who would harm one.

Over the course of this article I want to explore this theme and find a way to incorporate a human-like being into a tree, in such a way that it would seem believable. The way I see these creatures is the same way some trees look like they have human features, in their gnarly branches, roots and bark.

ARTIST INSIGHT

STRETCHING TIP

When stretching paper I dampen it using an atomiser. I spray both sides and tape them down with brown artist tape, the kind you have to wet before it sticks. Lay your board horizontally so it dries evenly, and don't put it in the sun: this can make it dry too fast, causing the tape to rip.

I want my dryad to be beautiful as well as menacing. Something I find interesting is the thin line between good and evil. This creature is all-knowing, all-seeing and has been around since the dawn of ages. Much like the ancient trees, they seem to be unmoved by the world around them. But harm them or their kind and they will retaliate. So I want to have an eerie vibe to the piece. Something in the look of this creature will give you the idea that you'd better not mess with her.

To add to her otherworldly appearance I want to give her gnarly branches, which act as limbs covered in moss and fungus. For inspiration I'm looking towards nature and a folder filled with trees and roots in my Pinterest board. I'll use watercolour as my main medium, a Col-Erase brown pencil for details and texture, and some Holbein Acryla gouache to highlight certain areas.

As with most of my fae pieces I treat this as a sketch. It's an opportunity to



explore the world and explore the creature. I work instinctively, doing what feels right at that moment in time. This approach doesn't always have the desired effect, but gives me the opportunity to learn new techniques or solutions that I can bring to other pieces.



Iris is an artist living in the Netherlands, where she paints fantasy and folklore images of the weird and wonderful, exploring the depths of darkness to find the light. Learn more at www.eyeris.eu.

➔

In depth Paint a nymph



MATERIALS

PENCILS

■ Prismacolor
Turquoise 2262 HB,
Prismacolor Col-Erase
brown

PAPER

■ Arches Hot Pressed
140lb

BRUSHES

■ Winsor & Newton
Watercolour Sable
Round #5

■ Winsor & Newton
Watercolour Sable
Round #6

■ Daler Rowney
Graduate Rigger #1

WATERCOLOUR PAINT

■ Daniel Smith: Lunar
violet, Shadow violet,
Payne's gray, Zoisite
Genuine, Green gold,
Green apatite genuine,
Deep sap green,
Cobalt teal blue,
Quinacridone deep
gold, Indian red,
Bloodstone genuine,
Hematite genuine
■ Winsor & Newton:
Indigo

GOUACHE PAINT

■ Holbein Acryla
Gouache: Deep yellow
Carmine, Sky blue,
White



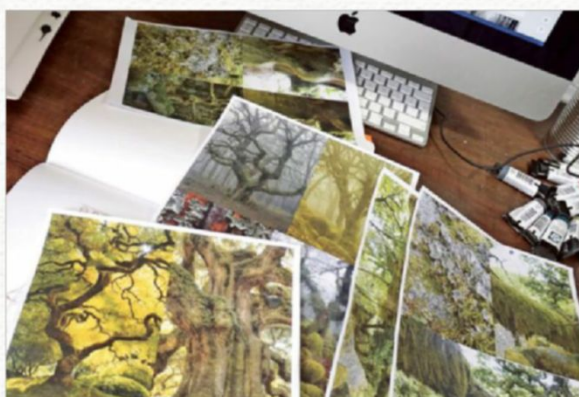
1 The initial sketch

I rarely do thumbnails. Most of my pieces are based on one sketch – the single idea that's popped up and screaming at me from my sketchbook page. In that lone sketch I have basically all the information I'm looking for. If it speaks to me, then it's the one for me.



2 Sketching some more ideas

However, I feel that the initial sketch misses something, so I try to find what it is. I sketch some more, doing quick facial studies for the dryad and I decide that a mix between the first and last sketch may have the desired outcome: a menacing death stare.



3 Bring together my references

I've got folders filled with pictures of trees, bark and fungus. A trip to Wistman's Woods in Devon, England, gave me plenty of reference to work with. I sometimes set up my computer in front of me while working – that way I can switch between references. If the computer isn't an option, I use my iPad or just plain-old printed photos.



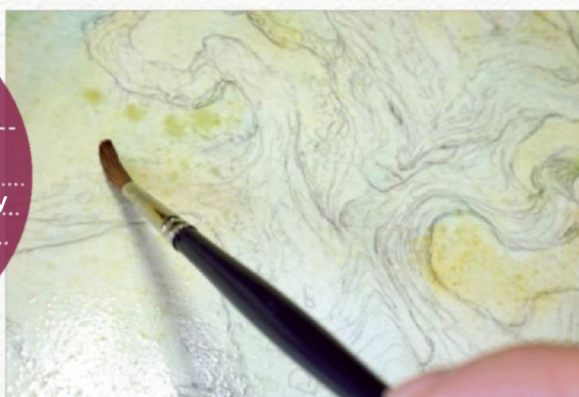
4 Settling on the final lines

I sketch my final image directly on to my stretch paper, using the things I liked best from the different sketches I made earlier and creating an entirely new sketch right on the spot. I only do this when I'm working on personal art. I use an HB pencil, but not too hard or soft, so it doesn't muddy up my colours too much.

PRACTICAL TIP

TOOLS AND MEDIUM

Clean water is essential to help create textures by wetting areas and picking up pigments with a brush.



5 Applying the initial washes

I dampen my paper completely using an atomiser. I let it dry a little and with a brush I add dabs of colour to certain areas, mainly the background. But I'm not paying attention to bleeding colours – I want them to bleed and create textures. I use a hairdryer on some of the areas and add more colour to others. I'm building up a base.



6 Picking up colour

With a rolled-up piece of paper towel, I pick up any pigments that have gone where I don't want them. I clear up areas I want to stay light for now, adding more clean water to these areas to pick up even more pigment as I repeat the process. I want the face, chest and a couple of branches twisted towards the viewer, to be lighter.



7 *Developing textures on the canvas*

At this stage I start adding textures. I'm building up layers of textures, which help me create the feel of the bark. I use my brush to paint swirly lines in a mixture of colours, from browns to greens and even turquoise. These lines are seemingly random and I try to follow the flow of the branch, but a natural sponge is a helpful tool as well. ➡

ARTIST INSIGHT

THE UGLY STAGE

Remember every piece has an ugly stage. When you get there, take a step back and do something else. Refresh your eyes by not staring too long at what you're doing. By stepping back I find that my brain comes up with new ways of solving a particular problem.

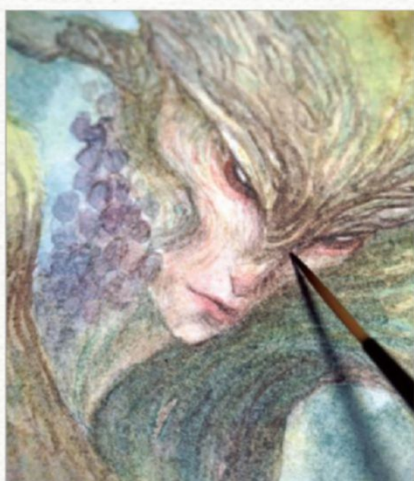


8 Building up the background

I alternate between working on the main character and the background forest. Tackling the background helps me to decide what colours to use in my step. I paint in the trees in a wet surface, leaving the edges of these trees soft in contrast to the edges of the dryad.

9 Bringing in more texture

I like to work wet in wet, using the properties of watercolour to my advantage. I lightly dampen a small area and introduce more pigment to it. Then I wait for it to bleed and blend, using clean water in my brush to pick up pigments where I feel there's too much.

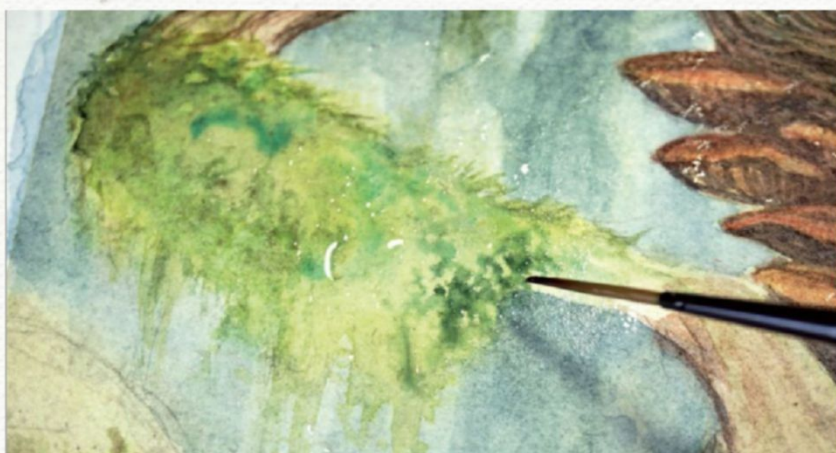


10 The benefits of a Rigger brush

I use a Rigger brush for the details in the face, blending the bark with the human features. The long Rigger means I have a little less control over the lines and I like the nature of them. I build up even more texture and lines to create the bark.

11 Fungus and gnarly details

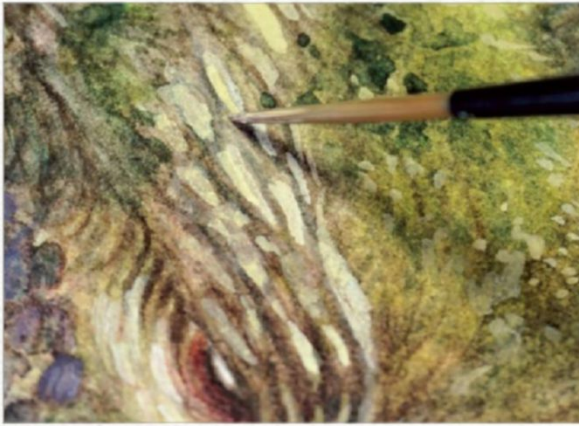
Adding details such as fungus and bumpy holes enhance the idea of the dryad growing old. She's becoming a tree, leaving her human side behind. Using the Rigger, I define the shapes, following the lines of a fictitious ribcage along which fungus is growing. The reddish and purple fungus also adds a bit of contrast to the green.



12 Adding moss to aspects of the dryad

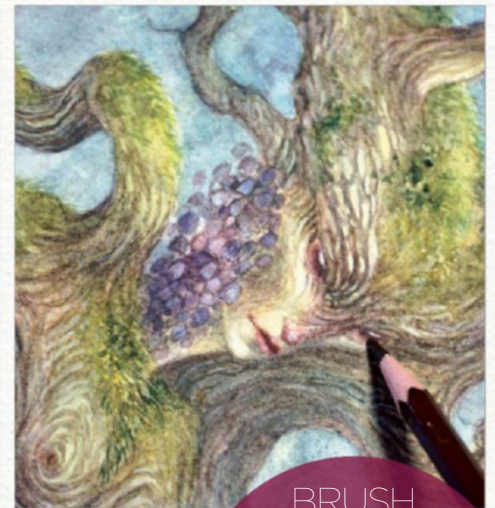
I keep adding detail to the piece, in particular texture, which is very important. I use several methods to create the texture in the moss. For example, there's the wet-in-wet method, where I just let the paint do its thing. Just before the surface is dry I drag a dry brush across the still-wet paint surface to create the hanging moss.

In depth Paint a nymph



13 Paint in some gouache highlights

Aside from darkening some branches to push them back, I go into the piece in some areas with gouache. This makes certain areas pop a little more, adding little highlights on the fungus and around the area of the face.



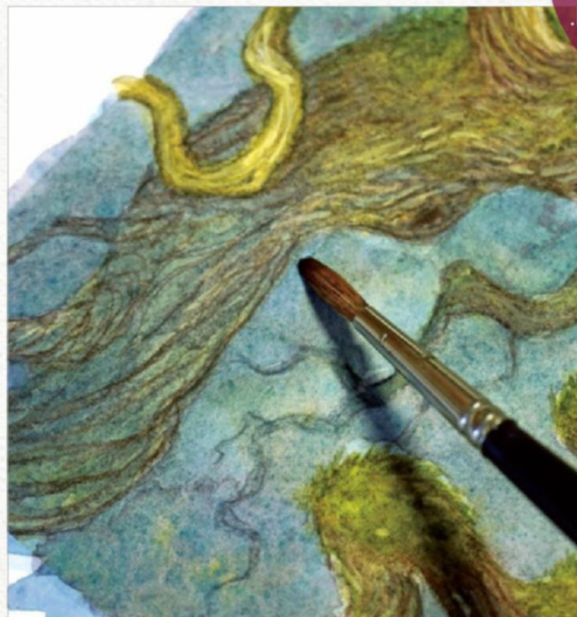
14 Pencilling in details

I darken certain areas using a Col-Erase brown pencil. The pencil on the paper gives another different texture to the piece, which is a little gift. Accentuating and sharpening some lines in the branches.



15 Fixing the background with a final wash

I think the background is still too light, so I add a final wash of Indigo blue mixed with a lot of water to the areas of the background. This pushes it back and softens the trees in the background. Some branches of the dryad are covered as well, so they fade into the background, creating a little more depth overall. And now I call it finished. 🍄



BRUSH TIP

THE BEST BRUSH

Rigger brushes are great for details. They can hold a lot of water and pigment making them a very versatile brush.

ARTIST INSIGHT

ATOMISERS

Keep an atomiser to hand. You can use it to dampen the paper in areas in which you want to work wet in wet. But by using an atomiser you don't have to go over the paint with a paintbrush, leaving that layer untouched until you add more pigment. Atomisers that spray a light mist are ideal.

Gouache

PLEIN AIR PAINTING WITH GOUACHE

In this first part of his plein air painting series, **PETER CHAN** goes through his compact setup that enables him to paint both indoors and outdoors

Painting from observation with traditional media is one of the best ways to study and improve your sense of colour and light. After 10 years of working in the animation industry mostly with digital tools, I decided to revisit this passion of mine and began painting outdoors once a week, either in the morning or during my lunch break. This not only reinvigorated my passion for painting, but also helped tremendously with my colour work professionally.

Oil paint was always my go-to medium, but it's not the most convenient

setup to bring to work. So after doing some research, I decided to take up gouache, and really fell in love with it. The medium comes in a variety of vibrant colours; it's very flexible in its application in terms of painting thick like oils as well as wet like watercolours; and also can be prepared and cleaned easily, making it the perfect medium for plein-air painting.

The tools required to use gouache are also relatively simple and compact, which is perfect for anyone who wants to go out for quick studies in any breaks that come up in a busy work schedule. It's been four years since I took up this weekly gouache

MATERIALS

GOUACHE

■ Winsor & Newton

■ Holbein

BRUSHES

■ Flat brushes 1/4, 3/8, 1/2 and 3/4-inch

■ Round brushes #3, #6 and #10

MATERIALS

■ Watercolour paper,

■ Canson art boards

■ Moleskine sketchbook

painting routine and I still become excited by the beautiful natural subject matter around me, which is a great counterbalance to the imaginary work that I do for the animation studio. It's also the perfect excuse to get away from working on the computer.

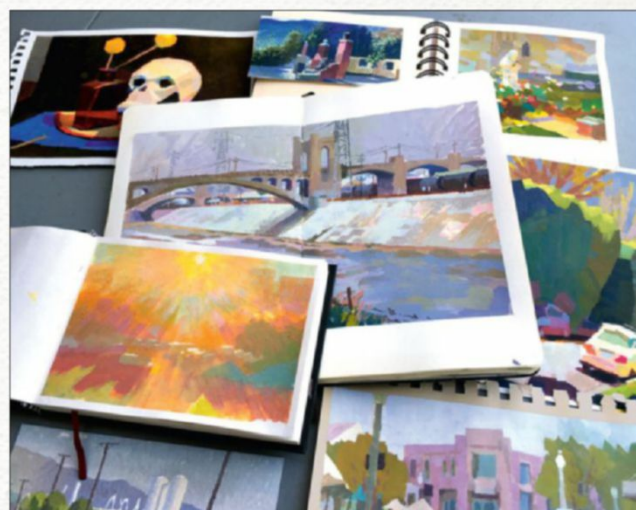


Peter is originally from Taiwan, but now lives in Los Angeles where he works at Sony Pictures Animation. Previously he was at Pandemic Studios as a concept artist, and at DreamWorks Animation where he was a visual developer. You can see more of his work on his blog, www.pixelp.tumblr.com.



1 Simple and compact setup

Start by assembling a compact plein-air setup that enables you to start painting and cleaning up easily. Mine comprises a sketchbook, my paint box, a small jar of water, a small spray bottle to keep the paint wet, masking tape, toothpicks for prepping the paint, paper towels and my brushes in a bamboo matt. I keep all this in a small bag except for the paint box, which needs to be carried. I also have a simple fold-out table instead of a pricey pochade box, where I can rest my water and paint, and use the table top as the mixing surface.



ARTIST INSIGHT

HANG ON TO YOUR OLD BRUSHES

Keep hold of your worn-out brushes – they tend to make some beautiful brush marks. You can do some small brush work exercises at home, just to experiment and get a quick feel for the gouache paint itself.

2 Try experimenting with paper types

I like painting on many different types of paper. It really pushed me to control gouache as a medium when I first started using it. The thin moleskine sketchbook paper forces you to apply the paint rather thick and dry, while Canson art board has an absorbent surface and enables you to layer the paint. Toothy watercolour paper suits a dry brush technique, which creates interesting textures. You can learn all types of gouache application just by painting on different paper surfaces.

Artist insight Painting with gouache

The Flat brush creates a blocky, hard edge look.



3 Limit your brush choices

You don't need to buy premium brushes for these painting studies; it's all about getting comfortable and efficient with them. I mostly use the Flat and Round brushes at a couple of different sizes. The Flat brush is great for blocking in big areas and cutting into colour shapes to create sharper, cleaner edges. The Round brush enables you to "draw" the colours, develop organic shapes, and is also good for dry brush texturing.

The Round brush can develop a softer, organic feel on the canvas.



Use the paint box's lid as a mixing surface.



Organise colours according to their value. All my lighter colours are on the right, with darker colours on the left.

I use a mix of different paint brand, such as Winsor & Newton, Holbein and Reeves.

4 The paint box

I carry my paints in this compartmented box and use the lid as my mixing surface. The advantages with the paint box is that I don't have to squeeze out new paint every time; it's easy to control the amount of paint I get on my brush; and it also helps to keep the paint fresh for up to a week if it's kept out of the sun. It's also easy to clear out the compartment and replace old paints.

I organise my colours according to their values, which helps when picking

colours when painting. Whenever I notice the paint is drying, I can revive it by adding and mixing in a few drops of water. The only downside is that you can't put it in the bag pack and has to be carried level in the hand, so that the paints don't overflow into neighbouring compartments. You can search for "24 well paint box" online and find something similar.

I use mostly Winsor & Newton and Holbein paint brands alongside cheaper paint brands like Reeves, which is great in quality as well as price.



Don't forget to clean and prep your paint for each painting session.



Always keep the paint damp. Once it dries hard it's more difficult to revive with water.



SAFETY TIP STAY COOL

Remember to bring a hat and plenty of sunscreen when you head out to a location without a lot of shade.

5 Prepping the paint

It's important to prep your paint before each session and make sure that it's not too dry. I would recommend adding the appropriate amount of paint depending on the depth of the box compartments. Use about one-quarter of the tube to start out, and add more as you see fit. Spray the desired amount of water with the small spray bottle – I aim for a pancake-mix type consistency. Then mix the water and paint evenly with a toothpick. Depending on the weather, I might also make the paint a bit more watery on a very hot day, or add more fresh pigments for thicker paint when painting indoors. 🌸

First Impressions

✧ Steve Prescott ✧

The fantasy artist talks treefolk, traditional art and the Aliens film



You're a child and you see a painting or drawing that changes everything... Where are you, what are you

looking at and what effect did it have? It was actually the movie Aliens that changed everything for me. Before that, I was probably going to be an artist of some sort, but I hadn't really considered it as a career. After seeing Aliens, I became a full-fledged genre geek and it sent me careening down the road to a career in illustration.

Did other interests vie for your attention at the time and what was your next step in art?

Art was really my only thing. Nothing else competed for my attention, probably because I wasn't much good at anything else! From memory, I think I became more focused on art the further I got into high school. Then I got a scholarship to Cleveland College of Art and Design and that was that.

What was your first paid commission, and does it stand as a representation of your talent?

I was paid for one or two art-related jobs while I was still in high school. But I consider my first truly professional illustration job to be for White Wolf Games around 1995. My very first illustration was a gothy vampire girl with a bandaged stump of an arm. Dark, kinda sexy, stylised in a comic book sort of way. My skills are much more honed and nuanced now, but I think you can definitely tell it was my artwork, even though it's been over 20 years.

“The Aliens film sent me careening down the road to illustration”



SWAMP DRAGON

"A cover for a D&D manual. Years afterwards, I decided there was a small section I didn't like. So I repainted that part so that it didn't drive me nuts."

Next month
Erik Gist

In contrast, what's the last piece of art that you finished, and how do the two items differ?

The last piece I finished was a painting of a treefolk. They differ mostly in media (this one is acrylic) and a 21-year increase in artistic eye and polished skills. But they both have a similar flair for character and detail.

Can you describe the place where you usually create your art?

I have a smallish studio in the loft of my

home. It's often in disarray and overburdened with supplies and reference books, but it gets pretty good light during the day and is suitable for how I work. I have a cluttered table where I do much of my drawing and a ramshackle drafting table-turned-easel where I put the acrylics to work. Most of the decor in the studio is stacks and shelves of books, drawings by my daughter, a few paintings by other artists, a few by me, and an old television that plays DVDs.

How does your approach towards card art and mobile game art differ?

The one mobile game I worked on (SoulSpark) was a combo of pencil and digital colouring to get nice bright colours for little screens to display and almost all the work was character vignettes. Card art I do traditionally. It enables me to get more subtle with colour and makes it possible to immerse the character in an environment.

What gripes do you have about the fantasy art industry?

I try not to gripe, because there are so many great things going on in the industry at the moment. We're in the age of geek culture right now and never has fantasy art been more accessible, popular and more welcome. There are always things that could be improved of course, such as freelance pay, the rights of the artist and copyright infringement. Despite the size of the industry, it can be very difficult to make a living from it, but a lot of that is just the tribulations of being self-employed.

And why do you think the art industry is still the best place to be working right now?

However my brain works, and the need for me to problem solve through creativity, makes being an artist my only option. Fantasy art, at least for the time being, allows me the most access to a lot of creative avenues to channel my interests. And I quite enjoy the anything goes freedom found in fantasy art.

Steve Prescott is a fantasy artist with a BFA in Illustration whose work has appeared in Magic: The Gathering, Dungeons & Dragons books, World of Warcraft TCG and much else besides. You can see more of his art at his website, www.rottface.com.

WAR ORACLE

"With Magic: The Gathering work the tone is important. Here War Oracle is in a sort of trance of destruction - she's a divine tool for killing entire armies."



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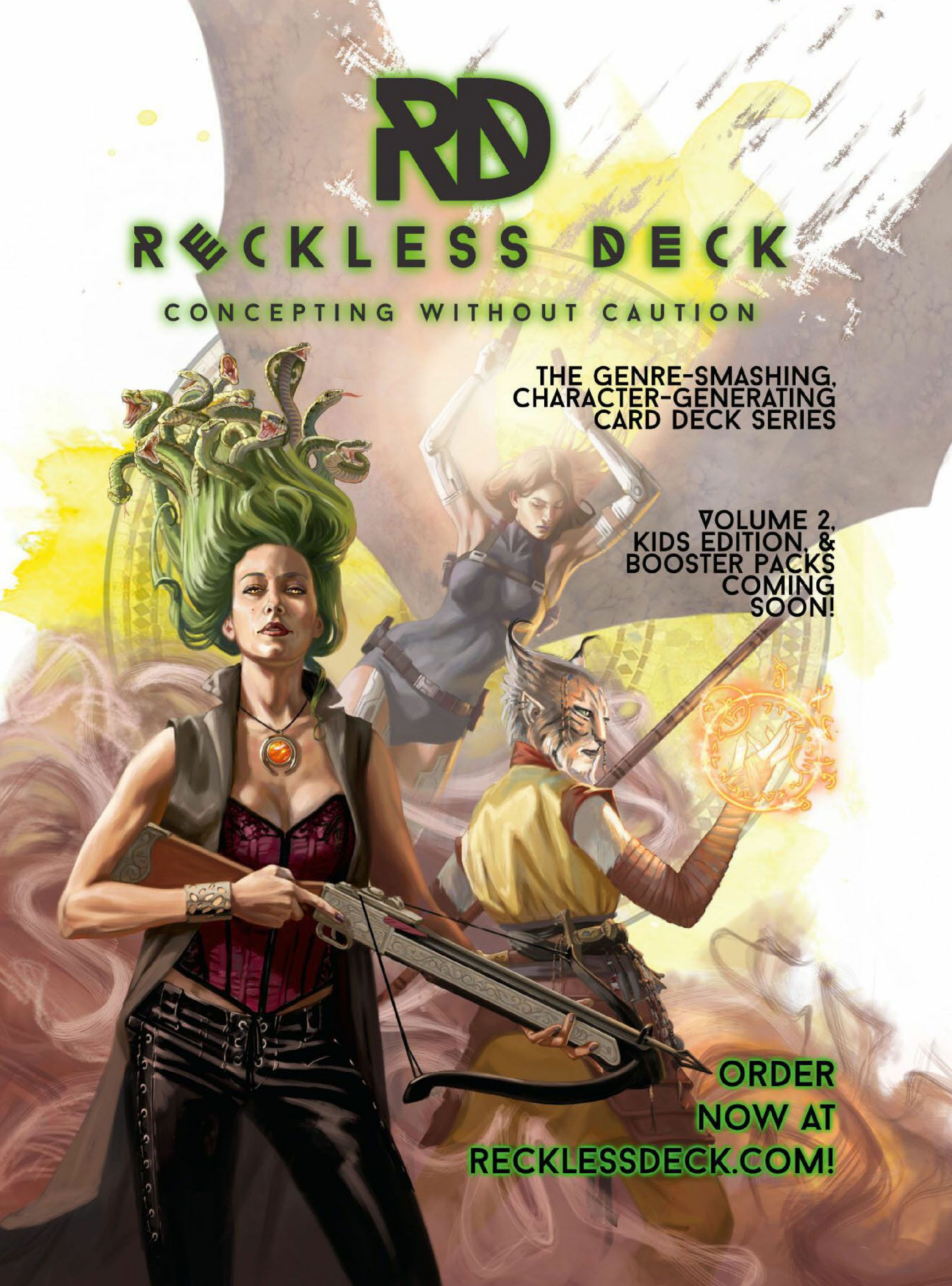
RD RECKLESS DECK

CONCEPTING WITHOUT CAUTION

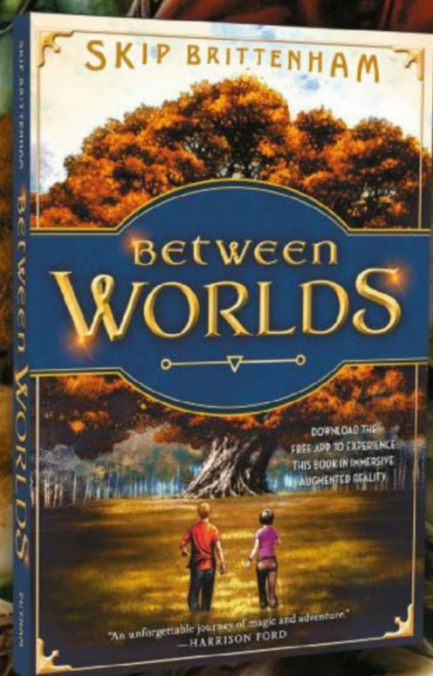
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