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ILLUSTRATION

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PLUS Become a children's illustrator

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BRILLIANT PORTRAIT SKILLS IN COREL PAINTER

INTERVIEW
MARC SIMONETTI
The Song of Ice and Fire artist talks thrones and art fetishes

Tommy Arnold reveals how he paints a story, on page 54

ART SKILLS
GO BACK TO BLACK
Create impact with ink and imagination

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE! STEP INSIDE TONY DITERLIZZI'S AMAZING ART STUDIO

Welcome to…

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX

"Aim for the magic," says illustrator Nick Harris when discussing what artists need to do when creating for children's books. I thought it was a pretty great way to describe what we all strive for – making something special. See page 18 for more advice on getting into children's book illustration. It's an excellent read.

We certainly aim for the magic each and every issue of ImagineFX and I hope that we've delivered it this time around. From Tommy Arnold's striking cover art, to Marc Simonetti's breathtaking gallery of work in his interview on page 38, or Jon Foster's guide to creating punchy compositions (page 74), we've certainly given it our best shot. There's tons of information and inspiration in this issue, so dive on in!

Oh, and if you're on Instagram, share your art with us @imaginefxmagazine!)

Claire

Claire Howlett, Editor
claire@imaginefx.com

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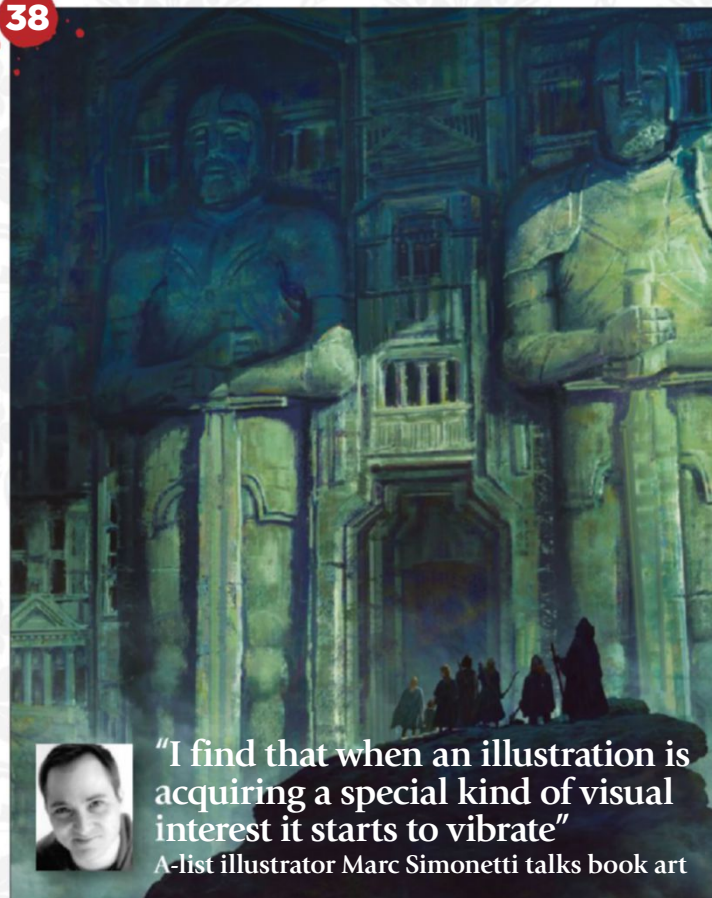
"I find that when an illustration is acquiring a special kind of visual interest it starts to vibrate"
A-list illustrator Marc Simonetti talks book art

Reader FXPosé
THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

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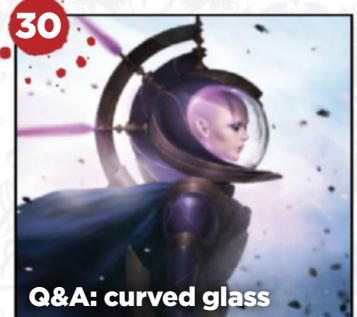
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Daren Bader

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS
ImagineFX
Resources

Getting hold of all of this issue's videos, artwork and brushes is quick and easy. Just visit our dedicated web page at **http://ifxm.ag/page143turner**

OVER 5 HOURS of video tutorials from pro artists to watch and learn from!

WORKSHOP VIDEOS

Add drama to your book art

Capturing the viewer is key to book-cover art and Tommy Arnold shows how to make potential readers linger.
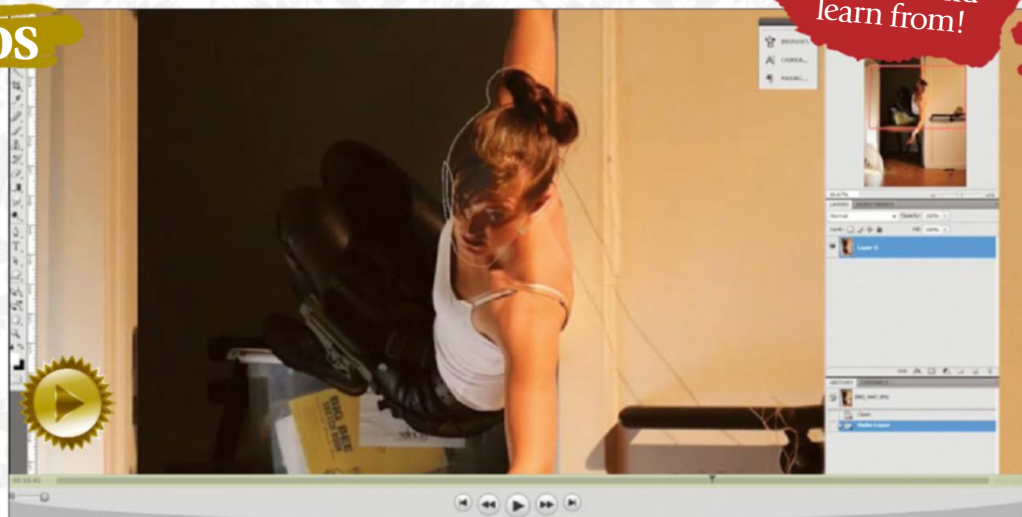
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EXCLUSIVE VIDEO TUITION!

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

Borislav Mitkov
Understand the basics of Corel Painter 2017, the latest version of the natural media art software, as you sail the High Seas and paint a characterful pirate portrait.
Plus WIPs, brushes and final image
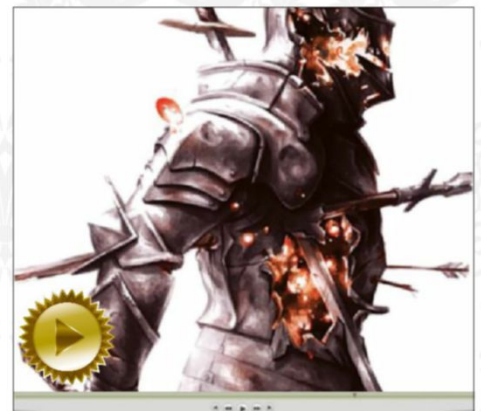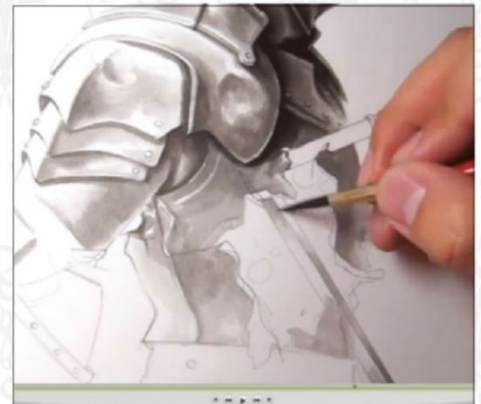
Michael Manomivibul
Discover how to paint character art with maximum impact using limited colours.
Plus WIPs and final image

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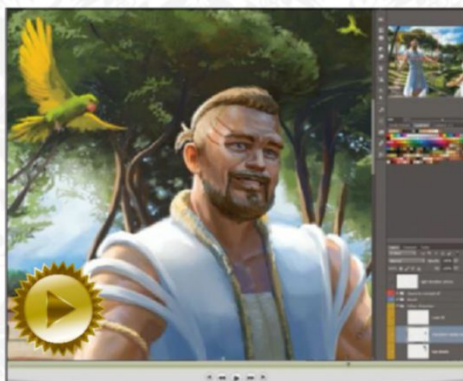
Suzanne Helmigh
Learn how to use bounce light to help emphasise body language and mood.
Plus WIPs, brushes and final image
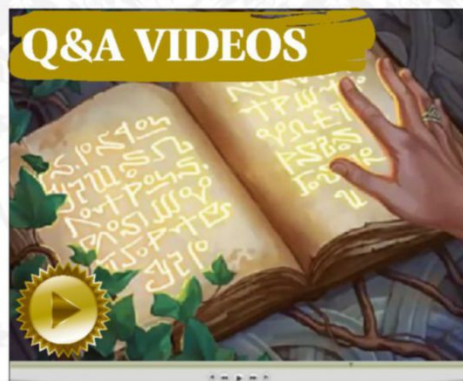
Kelley McMorris
Think about contrasting with the background, to make runes glow.
Plus WIPs and final image

Tor Frick
See the 3D artist's lean, mean method for modelling props in the CGI program, in his Creating a Gun in Modo video.

AND ALL THIS! Detailed workshops packed with advice from pro artists from around the world, including Peter Chan, Mélanie Delon, Tony Foti, Cory Godbey, Jon Foster, Brynn Metheney, Jia-Ying Ong, Peter Polach and Tan Hui Tian.

16 CUSTOM BRUSHES, INCLUDING…

FOLIAGE SKETCH BRUSH
Suzanne Helmigh uses this brush to quickly block out foliage.

GRUNGER
This brush is good for pebbled areas, finds Tommy Arnold.

HAIRY BRUSH
Borislav Mitkov likes the long bristles on this brush for creating hair.

Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

🇩🇪 Luisa Preißler

LOCATION: Germany
WEB: www.luisapreissler.de
EMAIL: info@luisapreissler.de
MEDIA: Photoshop

Freelance fantasy illustrator Luisa loves character-driven art. She works mainly on book covers, games and comics, and always tries to convey emotions that allude to a larger story in her art.

"Watching Sailor Moon as a child made me start drawing early on," the German artist reveals, "while in my teens digital illustration opened up a whole new world of possibilities for me. It enabled me to grow confident with colours, lighting and atmosphere – my favourite things to paint."

In her free time Luisa enjoys reading urban fantasy novels, travelling to Italy and testing out delicious new recipes in the kitchen.
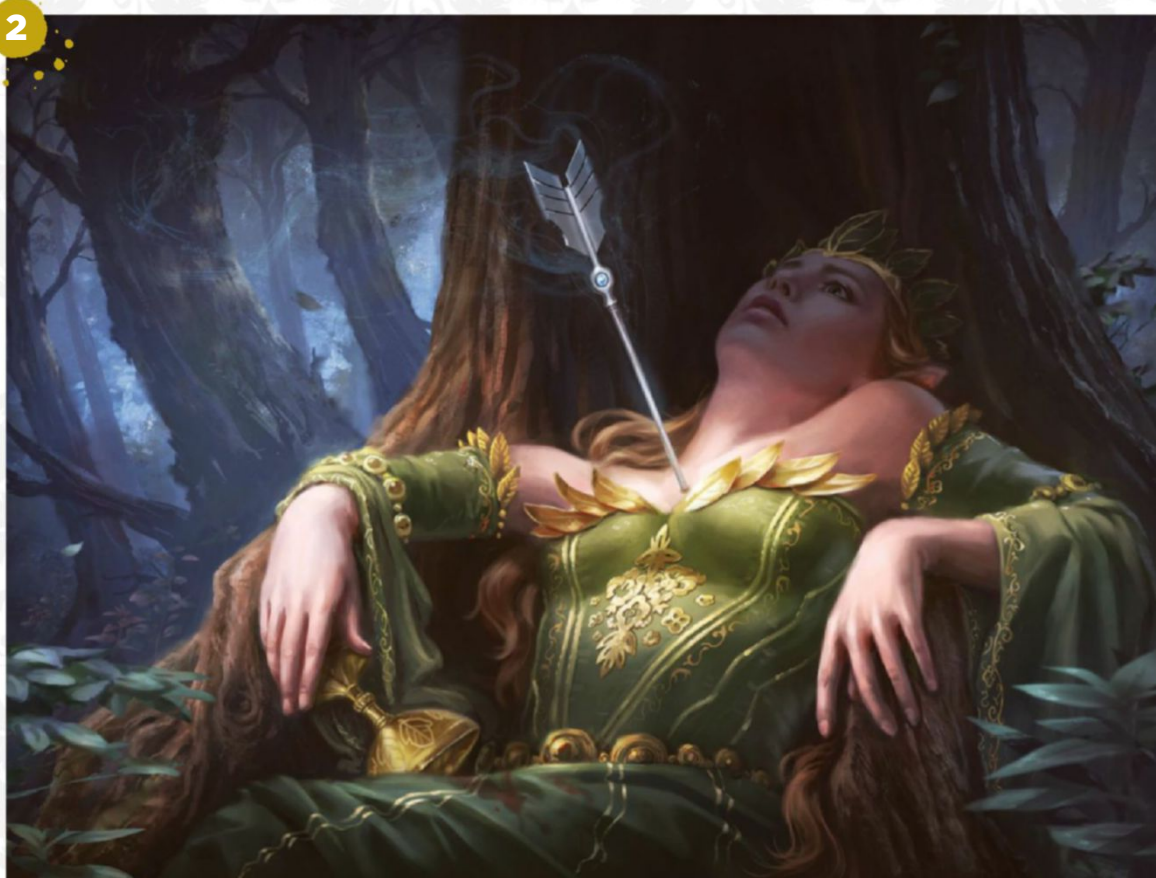
1 SEA CIRCUS "This was done for Jon Schindehette's ArtOrder challenge, the task being to create a water-themed wraparound cover for a magazine. It only placed second but I still love the idea of an underwater circus. I enjoyed designing the mermaid as a circus magician and was satisfied that the composition works as an upright single page (the right-hand side) and as a full landscape-format image."

2 ELVEN QUEEN "This is one of my rare personal pieces, in which I collaborated with Klaus Scherwinski. I started with an elven queen sitting on her throne but even at the thumbnail stage it was looking too generic. Having her shot with an arrow adds a nice, if tragic, twist to the piece."

3 CYBER TRACKER "Moving from fantasy to science fiction was a challenge for me, but it was fun to delve into something completely new and combine unusual tech elements with human skin, and then add a background to give the character a sense of story."

3

Artist crit

John Stanko is excited by what he sees…

"Luisa has an excellent sense of anatomy, composition and colour theory, but what makes her art stand out is the use of subtle elements such as lighting and camera angles to enhance a story."

🇨🇦 Simon Sweetman

LOCATION: Canada
WEB: http://ifxm.ag/s-sweetman
EMAIL: si.f.swe@gmail.com
MEDIA: Photoshop

A former abstract oil painter turned mobile game artist, Simon has delved further into the realms of illustration.

Growing up with the works of Patricia McKillip, Kinuko Y Craft and Hayao Miyazaki, Simon's art depicts dream-like fantasy worlds, with vague narratives only slightly informed by their titles. "I prefer to create works that exist away from the clang of fantasy battles and reside in the quieter, if not eerier parts of those worlds," he explains

The illustrator fell in love with digital art by participating in, and later leading, the Creature of the Week competitions on ConceptArt.org and maintains a healthy interest in creature design. When he's not working on freelance projects or his own art, Simon indulges himself in East Asian cooking and crafting tabletop game campaigns.

IMAGINEFX CRIT

"Despite the two imaginative outdoor compositions on show here, my eyes are drawn towards Simon's delicious-looking, atmospheric Noodles artwork. What's that sound? Why, just my stomach rumbling!"
Cliff Hope,
Operations Editor

1 ROILING LAND "A development piece for one of my personal projects. I wanted to juxtapose two vastly different scenes and moods, connected by a colour palette. A serene and secluded town that thrives next to an utterly destroyed wasteland, relatively ignorant of the ominous cause."

2 NOODLES! "There are few things I enjoy more than a good bowl of ramen. This piece was both to practice drawing food in a way to try and make it look appetising, as well as just being a love letter to my favourite food."

3 THE ARRIVAL OF SPRING "A breakthrough image for me, the Arrival of Spring was one of the first personal works that I started building at my own pace without worrying about speed. There is some fairly obvious Hayao Miyazaki influence permeating my work, and this is one of the more blatant examples."

Julia Metzger

LOCATION: Germany
WEB: http://ifxm.ag/jmetzger
EMAIL: julianatmetzger@gmail.com
MEDIA: Photoshop

German concept artist and illustrator Julia works on both video games and RPG publications, drawing on her experience as an in-house artist and as a freelancer.

"I often take my inspiration from my surroundings, especially from nature," she explains. "I always keep my eyes open for new interesting shapes, trying to capture the magical and mystical sides of the world in my images, merging them with the fantastical."

Julia aims to unite light, colour and storytelling to literally paint a mood within her images.

IMAGINEFX CRIT

"Between Julia's gorgeous depiction of light, and her harmonious colour choices, she's managed to create lush fantasy art that pulls the reader into the scene. The scale and grandeur in her painting The Well is palpable."
Claire Howlett,
Editor

1 THE WELL "This piece is a little concept for a personal project of mine. The well is considered to be the birthplace of magic in its world, although in the memory of people it only remains as a myth, because no one knows its location."

2 UNICORN "In June this year I joined the #junicorn challenge for a while, ending it later on with this illustration. I love painting mythical forests and creatures, so this was perfect for me."

3 SAMAEL "From time to time I come back to this angel, trying to nail his design. The research was interesting, because a lot of the descriptions contradicted each other. There are a lot of facets to his character that make him a huge source of inspiration."

4 AWAKENING "During autumn I saw some reflections on a pond in front of a huge tree, its leaves already fallen onto the water's surface. I thought it would be the perfect setup to have something lurking in the depths: there was just someone needed to call upon the ancient creature in the water."

1

Eoghan Cowan

LOCATION: Ireland
WEB: http://ifxm.ag/e-cowan
EMAIL: eoghan783@hotmail.com
MEDIA: Photoshop

Eoghan is a concept artist and illustrator with over six years' experience in the games industry. "Back in the day, I studied animation. But to get into the games industry, I taught myself digital painting," the Irish artist reveals.

Daily life in Dublin is a constant source of inspiration for Eoghan, while his long-term goal is to open up his own studio and develop his own IP.

2

1 THE CREATURE THAT LIVES "I wanted to capture the moment just before a 'boss battle' in a video game, and push the scale of the creature in comparison to the warrior."

2 MAX RHINOTANSKY "I'm a huge fan of the Mad Max movies. I also love the characters from the animated film Zootopia and thought it would be interesting mashing up the characteristics from both films into one anthropomorphic character."

3 CUSTODIAN OF THE NECRONOMICON "For this character I was inspired by the works of HP Lovecraft and the Dark Souls games. I imagined that he was the keeper of the Book of the Dead. He's not necessarily evil – he just protects the book from falling into the wrong hands."

3

2

Lorena Azpiri

LOCATION: Spain
WEB: www.lorenaazpiri.com
EMAIL: lorenaazpiri@gmail.com
MEDIA: Photoshop

Lorena specialises in digital art, but also enjoys using traditional techniques, particularly watercolours and acrylics. The Spanish illustrator grew up immersed in popular culture, from crazy movies to action figures and comics – all were common place within her household.

"When I play a game or watch a good TV show or film, I like to make fan art," Lorena says, "because I want to see how it looks in my style" The illustrator now lives in the mountains, still surrounded by her pop-culture collectables but with a killer view that inspires her art.
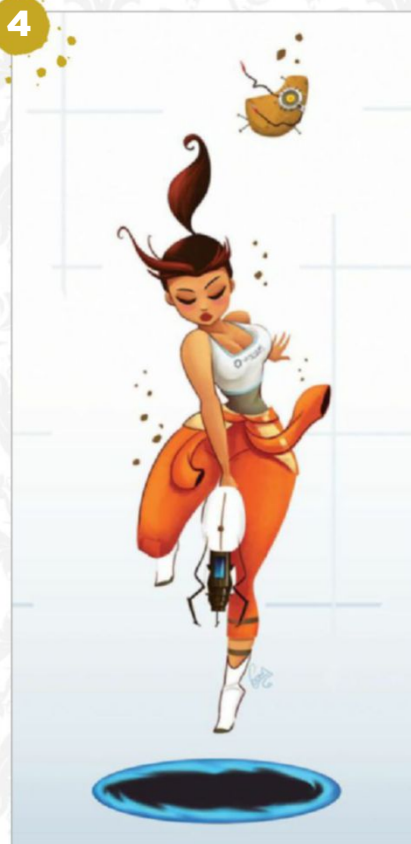
1 MONONOKE "I love Ghibli, so this is not my only fan art inspired by a Miyazaki film. There's something in his stories that you can't find in any other films. I designed a character that looks more like a children's book, just for fun, and I played with blacks and greens."

2 STRANGER THINGS "This is my favourite one. I was looking for something that was representative of the show but didn't have spoilers. So I did the two kids and the two worlds. I looked for contrasts in colour, to separate both worlds."

3 FURIOSA "Of course I was going to make a Mad Max fan art! It was a great fun movie and I love this character. I combined the colours of the desert with greens and blues for contrast."

4 PORTAL "This is one of my favourite games. I wanted to do a minimalist background and Chell, the main character, with a dynamic pose. I ended up with Chell shooting a portal at the ground while she's falling. And the robot-potato GlaDOS follows."

3

4

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

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

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Break into children's illustration

Making magic Julia Sagar dives into the burgeoning world of children's book illustration to find out what it takes to make it as an artist

Magical lands, swashbuckling adventures, tall tales conjured with wonderful breaches of logic... the lure of children's book illustration is clear. Who wouldn't want to spend their days crafting stories of courage, loyalty and bravery?

Children's book publishing is booming. In the UK, the market grew more than seven per cent in the first quarter of 2016, according to Nielsen Books, following a 5.1 per cent growth in 2015. Unsurprisingly, it's competitive, and for many artists a tough field to crack. Even Dr. Seuss creator Theodor Seuss Geisel was rejected by over 30 publishers before releasing his first book. So what does it take to make it in the wild world of children's book illustration?

For author and illustrator Jonny Duddle, the first key attribute is an active imagination. "Whether you're writing and illustrating your own books or illustrating another author's text, you need to create original, inspired artwork to capture a child's imagination," he explains. "You need to be passionate about your vision, and make sure you have the style and technique to pull it off."

Fresh from creating the covers of two new JK Rowling books, The Tales of Beedle the Bard and Quidditch Through the Ages, Jonny – who in 2014 also illustrated the jackets of Bloomberg's refreshed Harry Potter series - has a unique insight into the highs and lows of the field. "Stamina is just as important," he adds. "Finishing the artwork for a picture book always takes longer than you think. Sustaining your vision, passion and imagination over ▶▶

> 66 **Not only is it a difficult and competitive market to break into, it's also a difficult language to learn** 99

The Pirate Cruncher was Jonny Duddle's first picture book: "I illustrate with lots of colour and detail because that's what I loved when I was six."
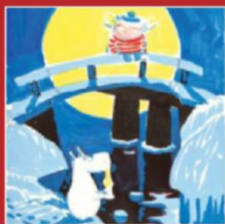
"My books are quite long for picture books," says Jonny. "I'd estimate almost 1,000 hours go into the artwork."

JONNY DUDDLE

The award-winning artist talks pirates, picture books and Potter

What does it take to make a living in children's books?

You have to be open to a diverse range of clients. Most illustrators work in book publishing, educational publishing, magazines, advertising and sometimes games, film or television. Many also do school workshops, library visits, book festivals, lecturing and other public speaking about their work.

What's the most surprising part of the industry?

When my first book, The Pirate Cruncher, was published, the biggest shock for me was having to read my book to children. All authors do it, and the first time you have to stand up in front of a couple of hundred children and read your book – in a silly pirate voice – is frankly terrifying.

How daunting was it to paint the new Harry Potter covers?

Very. I originally tried to turn it down: I'd never read the books and had only seen the first film, so felt like I was poorly qualified to create the artwork. In the end this helped, because I had few preconceptions of how things should look, and the resulting art was therefore a very personal response to the texts.

How did the creative process compare to usual?

I visualised the Harry Potter universe as I read the books, with some tweaking based on feedback from Bloomsbury and JK Rowling. The process was the same as any other illustration job, but there were a lot more words to read beforehand and a massive fanbase, with huge expectations. I was given a choice of a couple of scenes for each book, apart from the first cover, which was a 'test' with a specific brief.

Jonny's working on another pirate themed book and is also planning a Vikings-based saga for children.

www.jonny-duddle.com

Montague Mouse: The Darkest Hour is a promotional image by Kiri Østergaard Leonard for a children's book she's developing.

Jonny visualised the Harry Potter universe as he read through the books.

Cover for Robert Mihok's The Watchers of Enoch. "I enjoy illustrating for middle grade and young adults, more than early readers," says Kiri.

several months is probably the greatest challenge an artist can face."

Danish illustrator Kiri Østergaard Leonard agrees. "Many people go into children's illustration thinking it's really easy to do, but it isn't. Not only is it a difficult and competitive market to break into, it's also a difficult language to learn – especially because it isn't always about drawing well. It's more about relying on story, emotion and strong colours than making something pretty."

WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

From both a technical and practical perspective, children's book illustration can be deceptively challenging. There's a dizzying variety of genres on offer – from folklore to fairy tales; for babies to young adults – and often the simpler a style, the harder it is to create. Don't be fooled into thinking fewer words means an easier job, either. "Some picture books have characters and items evolving from page to page that are never mentioned in the text," points out English illustrator Nick Harris. "You might show the moment just before or just after the scene described in the text, which can have an implication or pathos that adds weight to the words."

There can be more restrictions involved when creating imagery for children, too. "There's a level of censorship that isn't present in artwork for adults," says Kiri. "What's great, though, is how vivid children's imaginations are. They won't ask why the dog is green – because of course the dog is green."

"If you still love to draw the kinds of things that excited you as a child or teenager, then you're halfway there," adds Nick. "I still laugh at fart jokes and pratfalls. Just never condescend. Children are inexperienced, not stupid."

Like many children's book illustrators, Nick works collaboratively with authors and publishers to bring existing stories to life, rather than illustrating his own. For him, creating imagery that perfectly captures and adds to the narrative is one of the most exciting parts of the job. "How you interpret the mood – using eye-line, lighting and body language for characters – affords a ton of ways you can present a scene in your own particular style," he explains.

> 66 **If you still love to draw the kinds of things that excited you as a child or teenager, then you're halfway there** 99

The Worst Fishing Companion. "It's so much easier to illustrate your own concept," says Kiri.
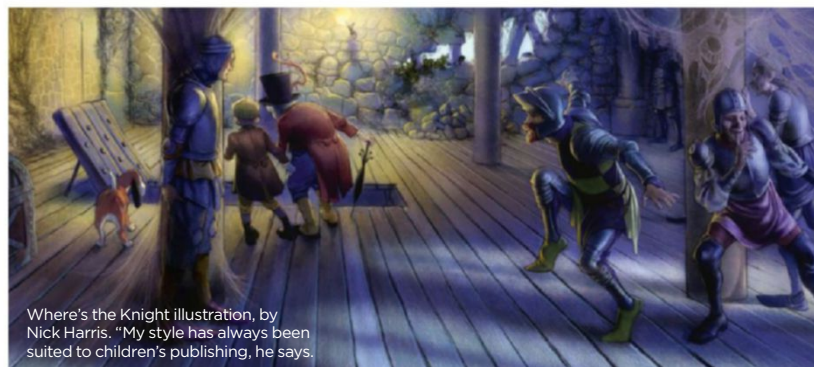
Where's the Knight illustration, by Nick Harris. "My style has always been suited to children's publishing, he says.
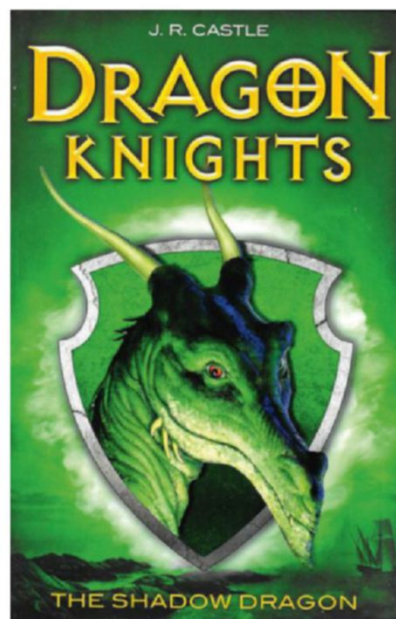
Nick's cover art for The Shadow Dragon took a number of iterations before arriving at the bright, final version.

This Warbot poster was given away with Jonny Duddle's 2013 children's book, The King of Space.

Other artists, however, prefer to illustrate their own books. As Kiri admits, trying to bring someone else's vision to life can be a struggle. "Although then you have to worry about writing, which is a whole different challenge."

For Jonny, the key is to develop story and visuals at the same time. "I don't write the story first, or plot out all of the pictures," he says. "Sometimes a book begins with a casual doodle in my sketchbook, or a rhyming couplet that I think is funny. But each book develops over months or years as a back-and-forth between words and pictures."

NO EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

So what do you need to make it from a professional standpoint? According to Helen Wicks – creative director at Kings Road Publishing, part of Bonnier Publishing – no prior experience is necessary. She frequently hires graduates fresh from college, looking for technical accomplishment, a distinct style and unique perspective. "Just as important is the ability to tell and sustain a story visually, and to communicate emotionally with the reader," she explains. "Our illustrators create pictures with a purpose: to tell a story, convey emotions or illuminate facts."

She's happy to work with illustrators who write, or to match writers with partners. "If the talent is there, we'll find a way to make it work," she says, adding that if you're

interested in getting into children's publishing, don't be afraid to market yourself. "Some pitch fully formed concepts; others send in simple portfolios of illustration that manage to catch our eye. Talk to as many other illustrators and publishers as possible," she advises.

Whatever you do, don't be unreliable. The cardinal sin of children's book illustration is over-promising and not

delivering on time. "We can cope with almost everything else," Helen warns, "but the ramifications of lateness are profound and very stressful for all."

Like any career, says Nick, children's book illustration can be tough. But when the perfect image brings life to the text, it's incredibly rewarding. "Aim for the magic," he says. "It's there. When the right words find the right illustrator, it really ignites."

Art from Jonny's The King of Space. "What's key for me, with picture books, is that the words and pictures must work together, and neither should tell the full story."
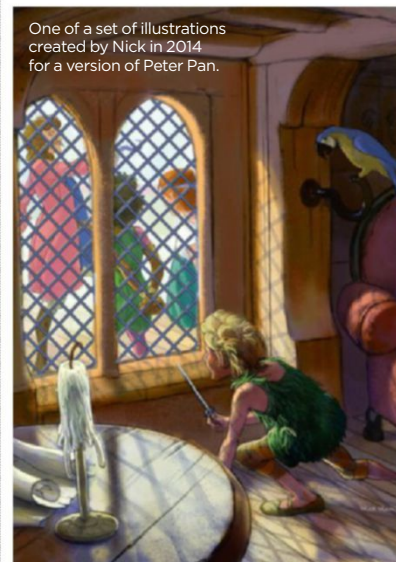
One of a set of illustrations created by Nick in 2014 for a version of Peter Pan.

The world of the Moomins is one of tolerance and love, where every individual is allowed to be themselves.

Creator Tove Jansson took inspiration from the landscape, her friends, family and lovers.

All bound for Moominland

Family fun London's Southbank Centre hosts the first major UK exhibition of The Moomins, showcasing creator Tove Jansson's original drawings, paintings and personal items

Migrating from Finland to the UK as part of Southbank Centre's Nordic Matters programme, the Adventures in Moominland exhibition is the country's first major showcase of Tove Jansson's iconic characters. "The Moomins offers unparalleled potential to visually explore the rich Nordic landscape and create a truly magical experience for the viewer," explains producer Paul Denton.

With the programme eager to examine the themes of sustainability, gender equality and play, the stories of the Moomins and Tove provide a unique way to tap into these three topics. "Through our exhibition programme, Southbank Centre is also keen to find a new way of exploring and displaying original archive material," says Paul. "By displaying these rich and beautiful works in unconventional ways – so they're not hung neatly in rows on walls, but embedded within an immersive set – we allow visitors a new way of connecting and create a more accessible way of understanding," he adds.

The exhibition features original illustrations, letters and 3D models, and will take viewers on a tour through the world of the Moomins. "Each section you pass through takes either direct inspiration from the unique Moomin landscape and seasons, or from a visual reference in the books," Paul says. "Personally I love the Winter Forest and bathing hut, where you might just see the Groke!"

This exhibition gives Southbank Centre visitors a unique opportunity to reconnect with the original books and stories from Finland's Tove Jansson.

The Adventures in Moominland exhibition is split into seven immersive worlds for visitors to explore.

At the heart of the Moomin books is the warmth of family connections, which Paul and Tove Jansson's niece, Sophia Jansson, hopes visitors will take away with them. "Tove was an exceptional, brave and talented female artist whose works thematically are still very current today," says Sophia.

"The Moomins and their fantastical valley are in many ways a mirror of humanity and the values we hold dearest," she adds. "The stories are timeless, not bound by geographical, religious or political constraints. They're fundamentally peaceful and human, and hence appeal to all manner of people. They speak to the thinking and feeling child, as well as adult, in all of us."

The exhibition runs from 16 December 2016 to 23 April 2017. Find out more at **www.southbankcentre.co.uk**.

> **The Moomins are in many ways a mirror of humanity and the values we hold dearest**

ImagineFX
ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

Steve Sims

Art quest The Somerset-based illustrator of beasts and battle badgers invites us to nose around his corner of creativity

When I'm not in the studio busily scribbling away with the other creative types at Dynamo, this is where I while away the hours. It's the perfect balance between a controlled creative atmosphere and my desire to live within a chaotic, overflowing archive of toys and reference art.

Having a work area that's part of the main living area really helps productivity. I used to have a setup in a separate room, but found it a bit antisocial to keep disappearing into my cave. Luckily, when we moved house we had the space to incorporate it all in the lounge, which gave me more scribbling time.

I'm not the most tech-savvy person, so my drawing techniques rely heavily on traditional materials. Sketching, line art and ink work is something I've always loved to do, and will always aim to do traditionally. You just can't beat the textures you get from working on good ol' paper and pens.

My most-used piece of kit is my detachable, home-made drawing board. It's something that a good friend of mine loves to give me stick about – he says it's so unprofessional! However, it's perfectly angled to my drawing position and is custom-made to my work environment.

The best art materials aren't always the most expensive. One of the most useful bits of kit I keep on my desk is a bit of paper with three very basic bits of painting advice written on it. I think it's important to be reminded of the basics, because they're the foundations of all successful work.

However, painting is when I step into the modern age; working digitally in colour is so much quicker and more forgiving than traditional methods. After all, it's a lot easier to store files than canvasses.

Steve has illustrated the Beast Quest children's book series for the past ten years. He also self-publishes the Beast Hunting Battle Badgers comic book. You can see more of his work at http://blog.stevesimsillustration.co.uk.

A canvas of one of the early Beast Quest covers. One of many collaborations with the amazing colourist Gary McNamara. It's always good to have someone you're trying to keep up with creatively. It really helps to push your work.

What's cooler than an evil ninja covered in razor blades?!

I adore Asterix, I love rendering and drawing with as much detail as I can. However, I always return to the masters of cartooning in order to avoid characters looking stiff.
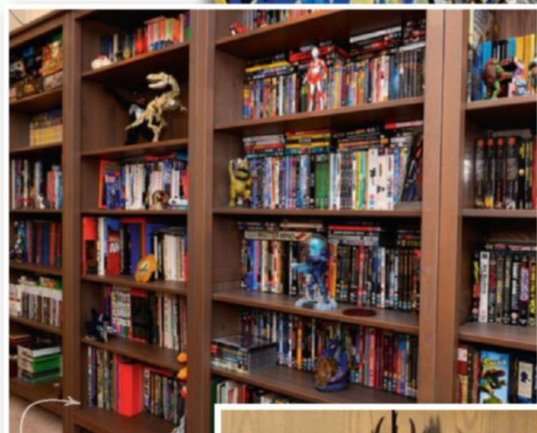
Monsters, beasts and worlds of fantasy are the food that nourishes my soul. The words and worlds of various fantasy books were my home growing up and the fabulous illustrations that accompanied these tales were what started me on the creative path.

This cool dragon was a gift from my awesome partner Caz. Having a loved one who encourages your creativity and the things that you're passionate about (even the geeky things) is the best and really only encouragement you ever need.

During my travels I've been lucky enough to be able to obtain pieces of original art from two of my favourite comic creators. On the left is a page by Jim Lawson, and right is Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird's Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle panel work.

I bought this Leo statue with the money from my first illustration job. The Ninja Turtles were my gateway from Asterix into comic books.

This little guy is Splinter, one of my drawing buddies. We have a couple of pet rats and they can often be found adventuring around my desk.

LEONARDO

FATAL FURY

My lucky hat. I'm not a superstitious person, yet I've worn this hat for all conventions and presentations over the years. I suppose it's more of a creative comfort blanket.
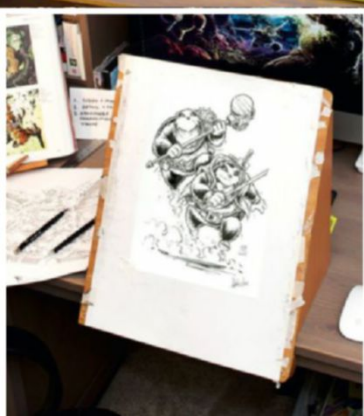
My home-made drawing board, constructed from the wood of my old drawing desk and made to fit my current one perfectly.

I love the early 90s design work of Japanese games companies like SNK and Capcom. Their hero and monster designs on old-school games like Ghouls and Ghosts and Darkstalkers were amazing.

I use HB and 2H leads for pencilling, but when it comes to inking I'll use whatever I can get my hands on: ball points, Sharpies, technical drawing pens and black Copic markers. The best bit is when they start to run out and you can get nice feathering and variations. I end up with a spectrum of Sharpies all at different stages of their lifespan – all useful for different techniques.

An original watercolour by my hero, Brian Froud, peeks out from behind an old Spiderwick bookstore display.

As you can see, I collect a lot of old toys. I often use their vintage packaging as inspiration for fonts, typesetting and design.

My executive producer's chair from The Spiderwick Chronicles is kept warm by Kermit the Frog. The shooting script lies next to him. Behind him are compact discs forming part of my music collection.

Jim Bissell, the production designer for The Spiderwick Chronicles film, gifted me a clear resin mushroom prop from his first film, E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial.

A life-sized goblin rehearsal puppet from The Spiderwick Chronicles film stands guard. It was incredible to see my illustrations and designs brought to life by visual FX pioneers Phil Tippett and Industrial Light and Magic.

Tony DiTerlizzi

Creative clutter The award-winning author and illustrator shares a peek into his fantastic workspace inspired by objects from childhood

To understand me as an author, artist and creative spirit I offer you this glimpse into my studio – my innermost sanctum. All the raw elements that ignite my imagination are found here, as are many of my well-kept treasures and secrets.

My studio is nestled in the basement of our home. The creative work done here, by all members of our family, serves as the foundation for all that we have. Although

I mostly work during the day, I love the luxury of popping down to the studio any time that inspiration strikes. Sliding doors and spacious windows face east, welcoming warm sunlight each morning. The view outside looks out upon fields, farms, forest preserves and hills. When I work during the day, I often hear the cry of red-tailed hawks; and the hoot of great horned owls calling at night. This close proximity to the natural world keeps me connected to my greatest inspiration.

Old books, toys and games clutter the shelves and nooks of my workspace. It's dusty but comfy. These nostalgic artefacts remind me of what it was like to be a kid. Each dingy toy takes me back to a specific time in my life. Each dog-eared book reminds me of my own artistic journey and the many visionaries who shaped it.

The walls leading down to my studio are covered with original paintings, drawings and sketches by those I admire – both past and present. I thrive on visual inspiration,

My drawing table looks out to the fields and farms. The changing light, colour and seasons provides endless inspiration. I'm sketching out my next picture book – the loose paper is easier for me to scan when it comes to creating the book dummy.

A 25th anniversary arcade edition of Pac Man is perfect for blowing off steam after an intense deadline.

Having started my illustration career in the early 1990s working on roleplaying games like Dungeons & Dragons, I've collected many vintage items from the early days of gaming. Only gamers of a certain generation know what's in the Crown Royal bag.

An oversized cork bulletin board dominates the far wall of the studio. The board reflects projects I'm working on. Here, it displays early designs and inspirations for the Christmas-themed picture book I'm writing and illustrating.

I own a ridiculous supply cabinet, which was custom made by Richard Dunbrack. Tiny drawers hold my pens, inks, nibs and tubes of Holbein Acryla Gouache – my preferred medium. That's an authentic iron-cast Naughty Nellie boot jack mounted near the cabinet doorjamb.

and so my studio is decorated with stuff that stimulates my eyes and mind. Characters, creatures and books forged from my imagination intermingle with children's classics and masters of illustration. It's the dream version of my childhood bedroom.

New York Times bestselling author and illustrator Tony imbues all his books with a rich imagination. You can see his work on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter or at www.diterlizzi.com.

Tiers of wooden flat files run along the length of my studio. Each drawer is labelled for a particular project. A peek inside offers not only a glimpse into my imagination, but my life's work.

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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It's been four years since I decided to go digital. I have never regretted a single paper issue of ImagineFX. And when I'm interested in a special magazine, I simply buy it right from your site. I have all the ImagineFX issues and I just want to say thanks for your great work! When I show to my friends how digital art can be so beautiful on a iPad screen, their eyes always shine. Forever with you.
Donald, via email

Claire replies Hello Donald. Thank you so much for taking the time to email us with your kind words. I always share emails like this with the team and it's a great reminder of how lucky we are to be working in the digital art community.

Four years ago Donald swapped over to a digital subscription of ImagineFX, and hasn't looked back.

Submitting art

Hello there. I've just discovered your wonderful magazine! But how can I submit my art to you?
Brenda Standis, via email

Claire replies Hey Brenda, thanks for getting in touch. We're always looking for traditional and digital artists to showcase their art in our FXPosé sections. What we need is up to seven images (either traditional or digital, not both), along with their titles and a short (50 words for each image) explanation about its creation, the inspiration, or technique used.

Ideally, provide your text as a text document and your images in a zip file (include copyright information if needed). We'll also need a photo of yourself, a short biography (maybe about your training, jobs, art inspirations and aspirations, or some silly info about you) and these details: name, location, website, email and your medium. Images should be sent as 300dpi jpg files. Email us at fxpose@imaginefx.com.

IF YOU MISSED OUR FILM ART ISSUE, THEN DON'T PANIC… You can still get hold of it using our back issues service – see page 46 for details.

Our interview with Hollywood costume designer Darrell Warner went down well with Tony Sansom.

Unfortunately we're not able to reply to people individually – unless you get chosen to appear in the magazine.

Costume drama

Hello Team ImagineFX! I couldn't resist writing in to thank you for the Darrell Warner interview in issue 142 (the film art issue). What a fascinating insight into the world of film and costume design it was – and such inspiring art too. I'd love to read more interviews like that one.
Tony Sansom, via email

Claire replies Many thanks for letting us know the interview hit the mark, Tony. Hopefully, you'll enjoy our interview in this issue with Marc Simonetti (page 38), who I think offers a similar level of industry insight we can only get from those who are right at the centre of their art genre.

Cover star

I just wanted to write in about your cover on the film art special (issue 142, Christmas). I've been a subscriber for as long as I can remember, but I think that was my favourite. It just gripped me I couldn't work out whether her eyes were filled with sadness or hope? Maybe both? I turned right to Krzysztof Domaradzki's workshop and of course tried to replicate his wonderful work. No such luck. But I won't give up. Keep up the great work!
Sandra Carey-Bates, via email

Claire replies Hello there Sandra, huge thanks for emailing in. We love getting feedback about the magazine and especially the covers – even if it's constructive criticism. Keep talking to us and telling us what you want to see.

FRESH PAINT

Your art news that's grabbed our attention

Ryan Lang @ryanlangdraws

"The first piece I did for Doctor Strange. A lot was different, I was still trying to find my footing. I still like things about this painting, though"

Miles Johnston @miles_art

"In-progress shot of a pencil tutorial I'm putting together for ImagineFX. I wanted to do a little allegory to pain."

Joshua Sommerfeldt @basssinger23

"Awww my girl got her own ride…"

Want us to shout about something? Tell us all about it on Twitter (@imaginefx), Instagram (@imaginefxmagazine)or Facebook!

Artist Q&A

STRUGGLING WITH A PAINTING TECHNIQUE OR TOPIC? EMAIL **HELP@IMAGINEFX.COM** TODAY!

The ImagineFX panel

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

Jia-Ying Ong
Jia-Ying is a freelance artist from Singapore, who has done work mostly for mobile games, books, and dabbles in animation projects every now and then.
www.circus-usagi.artstation.com

Mélanie Delon
As a full-time freelance illustrator, Mélanie spends her time working for different publishing houses and developing her own personal works on a fantasy theme.
www.melaniedelon.com

Tony Foti
Tony is an artist with Konami who also contributes freelance work to numerous books, trading cards, video games, magazines and advertisements of all types.
www.tonyfotiart.com

Kelley McMorris
Portland, Oregon is the home of freelance illustrator Kelley. State University. Her clients include Disney Hyperion and Scholastic. She also works on the indie video game Crea.
www.kmcmorris.com

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

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

I like to add a lots of glow, lens flare effect when I paint reflective surfaces, and here I paint some subtle ones over her face.

Question
How do I paint curved glass on a helmet?
Rosie Ball, England

Answer
Mélanie replies

Spacesuit are fun to paint, but the helmet part can be tricky to get right, especially the glass element because you have to take into account its reflective properties, and the fact that it's transparent.

So here are a few tips to paint this element. The first thing to know is that you almost don't need to paint it! This may sound odd, but because it's transparent all you have to do is to suggest the glass element with subtle hints of light.

The second thing to keep in mind is the shape. It's like a ball, so the light and colours should be depicted exactly the same as any other round object.

Essentially, I'll be painting a glass ball. Glass is a very reflective surface/material, so painting the light is crucial. It's the basis of everything: the texture, the volume and shape of the helmet, so have fun and go crazy with your space-faring character!
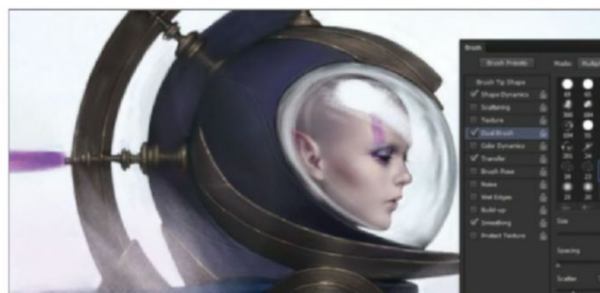
I've made a custom brush for this article, which enables me to paint the light reflecting off the helmet. It's included with this issue's resources.

Artist's secret
EXTRA COLOURED LIGHT
To create a more intense light effect I add a pink light inside the helmet. This won't affect the glass part so there's no need to add pink reflections on it. I just add some bright pink on the back and jawline of my figure.

Step-by-step:
Capture the look of a futuristic glass helmet

1 From my concept sketch I create a round shape with a custom textured brush. I don't want the glass to have an overly clean look, even if it's usually a smooth polished surface. I use a neutral violet colour for this base. The glass shape and volume is only suggested by curved brush strokes and the rest of the helmet.

2 I refine the previous lines, and erase some dark parts inside the helmet leaving more room for my character. I try to create a clean, curved shape. I work the face as normal; I choose to keep the glass uncoloured, but you can quickly achieve coloured glass by adding colour on a low Opacity layer on top of the figure's face.

3 To add light I paint some almost white curved lines on the borders of the glass part, where the glass is the most reflective. Adding some coloured hints of the surrounding environment will increase the realism of your helmet. With a very small Round brush I add small dots of light on the edges to bring in reflection effects.

Question
Any tips for concepting a manga mascot?
Christian Talbot, Australia

To create a sense of harmony, I first fill in the background colours, then work over the main focus with the determined colour direction.

Assuming the animal mascot will be appearing regularly next to your character, keeping the overall design simple will allow for better readability.

Answer
Jia-Ying replies

When creating an animal companion to a manga character, it's important to note that the design shouldn't take too much attention away from the human. It's always helpful to keep the colour palette minimal as well. Think of any notable manga character or series that has an animal mascot: the creature is generally designed to be simple, iconic and appealing.

Before I start concepting, I consider existing animals that I can use for inspiration. For this article, I want to incorporate some cat and hare features, because the result of fusing two different entities is a tried but fun method. I also have the option to use elemental or even cultural themes which, depending on what you're going for, can help drive the story behind your animal mascot.

In this case, I just want this fantasy animal to exude a magical vibe. I include traits like a flaming tail and markings on its head and ears to hint of an underlying, more powerful form, that might manifest later on to aid the main

manga character in their journey. I imagine that the creature would abruptly enter the character's life, as they often do, disrupting the normalcy and heralding a new adventure. To convey the impression, I used a bedroom setting so that it seem like the creature is trespassing into a person's private space.

Artist's secret

GET IT LIT

Need your light source to pop? My favourite thing to do in Photoshop is to use the Color Dodge tool to highlight certain spots. It's a quick and effective way to draw attention to your main subject using contrast.

ImagineNation Artist Q&A

Question
How can I paint decaying vegetation?
Morgan Winter, Canada

Answer
Mélanie replies

Painting decaying plants can add a nice touch to a composition, and they can be a strong storytelling element.

My example will feature Eden gone wrong, with a gorgeous woman surrounded by dead plants. I want to create a contrast between healthy and dead vegetation. To achieve this I'll play with the shapes and colours. A healthy plant will be basically straight and green in colour, while a dead one will be bent and feature autumn-like colours.

The shape and the colour scheme are both important to create the sense of decay. A dead plant loses all its colours, so its green stem and leaves are replaced by a lot of brown, orange and even black and grey parts. If you want to paint flowers then the colour scheme needs to be treated differently. The flower colours simply fade away, so for example instead of having a bright red the petals will be paler and desaturated with some hints of brown.

The wilting plants and flowers quickly conveys to the viewer that the vegetation is dying. Note that the petals and leaves react in a different manner: their oval shape becomes distorted as they curl up and droop. To create this effect you just have to paint a crazy leaf shape – my walkthrough will explain things in more detail…

I add some dead leaves blowing all around the character, to emphasise the sense of decay and give the scene extra dynamism.

Even in this basic sketch, it's clear which plants are in rude health, and which ones are destined for the compost heap.

Artist's secret
DEAD LEAVES BRUSH
To speed up my painting process when I have to do some repetitive elements like leaves, I usually create brushes like this one. I add some shadows and light, and rework the whole thing to develop more volume and realism.

Step-by-step: Paint decaying plants quickly
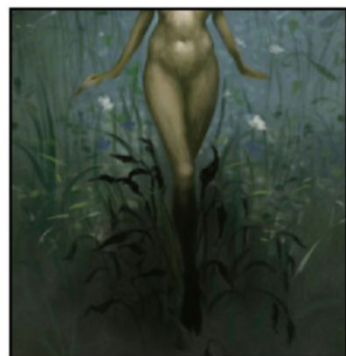
1 I start with a curved shape for the stems of dying plants. I choose a dark green to increase the sense of decay. I keep some stems straight to show that they're growing next to the figure. Then I add the leaves, keeping their shape simple. The edges aren't clean and that's the key trick when painting decaying matter. The same technique applies to the flowers in the scene.
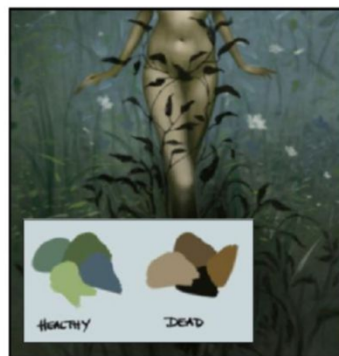
2 I choose this colour scheme to show the difference between healthy and dying plants. On the left are the green pastel colours I use to create my Eden, and on the right are the autumn brown tones that will represent dying, decaying plants. I use some nude skin colour highlights instead of grey to create a link between my character and the dead vegetation.
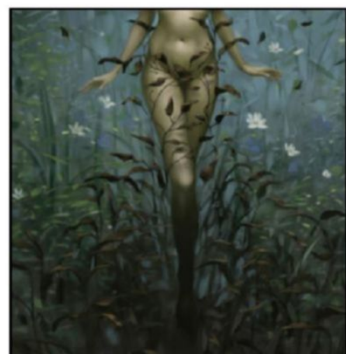
3 Now I start to add details on the leaves. The stems don't need much work because they're very thin elements. To create the wilted texture I simply scribble on my leaf base with a very small Round brush. I need to create a rough appearance with plenty of colour variations. I enhance the sense of dying vegetation by adding angular outlines instead of the normal curves of leaves.

4 Now I play with the light, increasing the contrast between the dead plants in the foreground and the background. I add more light on their wilted leaves, and sharpen their outlines slightly. I really want to create a crisp look here. I use a basic hard edge Round brush to add dots of light. Finally, I choose some desaturated colours to ramp up the feeling of decay.

I make the light ray shine across the character, not quite hitting the eyes because I want them hidden to give a sense of disconnect.

Step-by-step:
Establish lighting over different surfaces

1 I start with a quick sketch, then block out the character with a Layer Mask to keep my painting within the confines of the main figure. The lines don't have to be clean because I tend to colour over them afterwards. I select a monochrome background colour, so that the cast of a bright, orange light will further stand out.
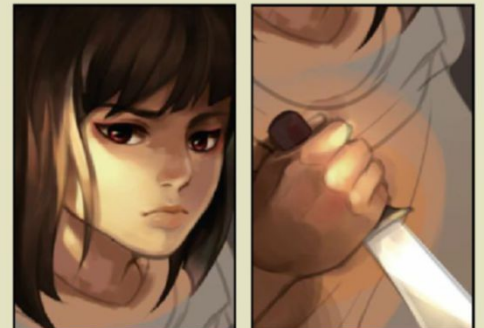
2 I go over the character's skin with warm tones, keeping the shading smooth to denote softness and youth. On the other hand, the light reflecting off the weapon is blinding and sharp. With a saturated orange hue, I use the Color Dodge tool to go over the brightest areas, like the tip of her cheekbone and knuckles.

Question
Help me paint dramatic lighting and shadows
Fia Håkansson, Sweden
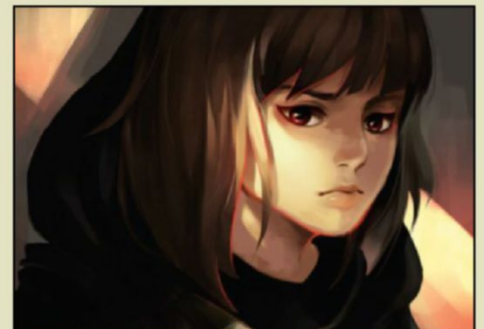
3 After a quick splash of light across the background, I start to paint over the sketch, and erase away some of the unwanted edges. I use large brush strokes to fill in the rough shape of the folds with a rectangle brush. At this stage, I also Liquify parts of the initial drawing like the eyes and mouth to improve on the overall look.

Answer
Jia-Ying replies

Before I start the painting, I consider the mood and the story that I want to tell. I'll go through a mental list of scenes that will be appropriate, or subjects whose intentions will be complemented by having dramatic lighting. In this case, I want to depict a darkly clad figure who's sneaking her way through a dingy passageway, lit only by the light from the setting sun streaming from the air vents.

An important aspect of lighting is mood creation: the intensity of the light source and colour of the light both help set the tone of the scene. Here, I choose to soften the light around the cheek and hair a little to suggest empathy for the character, while contrasting with the harsh reflection of the blade in her hand.

Using light and shadows, we can highlight the key parts of the composition, and guide the viewer's focus on to certain areas. For this painting, I choose hard, diagonally cast light, to not only emphasise the slant of the weapon, but to cast half the character's face in shadow, implying an element of secrecy. The intense light that's reflecting off the sharp blade further amplifies its deadly purpose.

ImagineNation Artist Q&A

Question
What techniques will help me paint a convincing desert mirage?
Adnan Nordström, Sweden

Answer
Tony replies

Not until getting this question did it ever occur to me how strange painting a mirage is. Technically, a mirage is an optical illusion that occurs when light rays bend while taking the path of least resistance around a pocket of hot air. To us, it creates a reflection just above ground that looks almost exactly like a body of water.

First point in capturing the illusion is making sure you're painting the mirage over a flat stretch of land. It generally doesn't travel up or down hills, so drawing it that way can undercut the fidelity. Next, make sure that the mirage reflects the things located just above it. You can actually paint the horizon on a separate layer, duplicate it and flip the whole thing vertically to save a little time.

Since you want to differentiate this from a lake, though, I suggest softening the edges located around and directly above the mirage, to imply the heat distortion. Sometimes the tough part is trying to paint a mirage in a way that isn't exactly the same as painting a lake in the same spot. That mirror-like feeling is important, so make sure you play it up.

They have pretty sharp edges, but the more clean your borders are the less obvious it is that it's not just still water.

That being said, there's one thing I've found that I think reinforces the fact that it's a mirage. Sometimes, if the mirage is right on the horizon line it can obfuscate big chunks of it. Because the heat is bending the light from the horizon, it makes everything sitting above it appear to be free floating. Since this phenomena rarely occurs otherwise, it helps sell the narrative.

Artist's secret
CONTROLLING THE BLUR
When you get towards the end and are softening up edges, make sure to keep an extra copy of the hard-edged version. That way, if things become too soft, you can just erase away back to the original image.

Weathered carvings, overgrown vines, and glowing runes all add up to an unmistakably magical, mysterious setting.

Question
I want to make my runes glow, rather than appear yellow. Help!
Hayden Meekin, New Zealand

Answer
Kelley replies

For this example, I'll place my glowing runes in an ancient spell book. I start by establishing the setting. It's important for the glowing runes to contrast against the background. If the environment or book pages were in brightly lit sunshine, the runes would hardly be visible at all. I choose to set the scene at night, and paint the book pages a medium brown colour, so that the runes can really stand out.

Now it's time to paint the runes. My formula for painting glowing things is to draw the glowing element on its own layer. Then I duplicate that layer and blur it using the Gaussian Blur filter. That's what creates the glowing effect. I adjust the Layer Opacity to change the intensity of the glow.

Here, I want the runes to have a golden glow to contrast with the cool environment. The rune layer is in a light yellow, while the blurred glow layer is in a darker gold colour. It may seem that using pure white would make your runes seem the brightest, but sometimes a darker, coloured glow can actually appear to be more intense.

Question
How do I illustrate an aging fantasy creature?
Marie Obrien, US


Answer
Brynn replies

Showing age in your imaginary creatures is a great way to incorporate story and believability into your design. In order to paint an aging fantasy creature, we must think about how real-life animals and organisms show their age.

To get started, I'll concept a creature's bust. I'm not too worried about age just yet, but I know that I'm depicting an adult rather than a juvenile so I make sure its eyes aren't too big and that it's features aren't too soft.

When we think about age, we think about experience. The idea is that this creature has lived long enough to go through a lot of different experiences, good and bad. We can utilise visual cues like scarring and wrinkles to indicate past battles, facial movement over time and sun damage. Discoloured fur and skin can indicate more sun damage and overall cell damage. If you've ever met an older dog, you'll know the tell-tale grey fur that shows up on most dogs' faces. Greying out one of the eyes could also show that the creature has started to go blind. Broken or worn-down teeth and horns can also indicate a long life. You can also indicate age with posture.

Aged creatures will always look more interesting than clean or new-looking creatures, so try to incorporate a lived-in look into your design work.
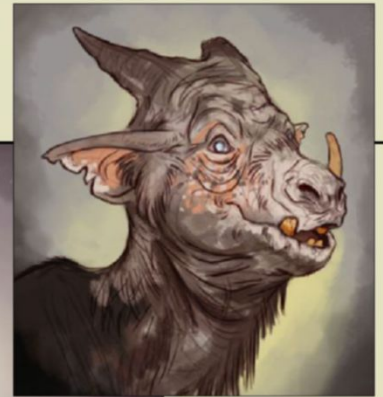
Keep the lines and wrinkles random – it will feel more natural this way. Painting in your textures individually will help, as will asymmetrical features.

Adding in irregular shapes like long whiskers, discoloured skin and a hunched posture can help sell the idea that this creature is old.
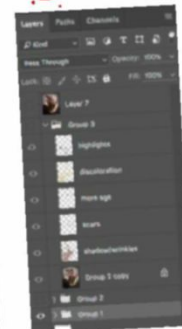
Artist's secret
USE LAYERS TO STAY ORGANISE

Working digitally enables you to keep enhancements on separate layers. You can take away and add in elements to keep the design from looking too busy. I use Multiply layers for shadows and Overlay layers for greyed-out areas like discolouration and scaring.

Step-by-step: Painting magical runes

1 First I paint the book pages without any runes. I use the Flat fan high bristle count default Photoshop brush in various shades of brown to give the pages a weathered and aged look. I pay special attention to the edges of the pages, making them crinkled and torn.

2 On a new layer, I use a default hard Round brush to draw some runes in a solid, light yellow colour. These symbols are my own design. For this technique (and just in general) it's helpful to keep your layers well-organised, so I name this layer "rune layer".

3 I duplicate the rune layer and name it "glow layer". Using the Hue/Saturation window, I change the glow layer to a medium gold colour. Then I use the Gaussian Blur filter to soften and create the glowing effect, adjusting the Blur and Layer Opacity to enhance the look.

Artist Portfolio

MARC SIMONETTI

Where many artists failed, the French illustrator succeeded. Marc tells **Gary Evans** how he accurately drew the most recognisable chair in fiction...

HALL OF KINGS
Marc Simonetti's suitably epic cover for Terry Brooks' 1977 fantasy novel Sword of Shannara.
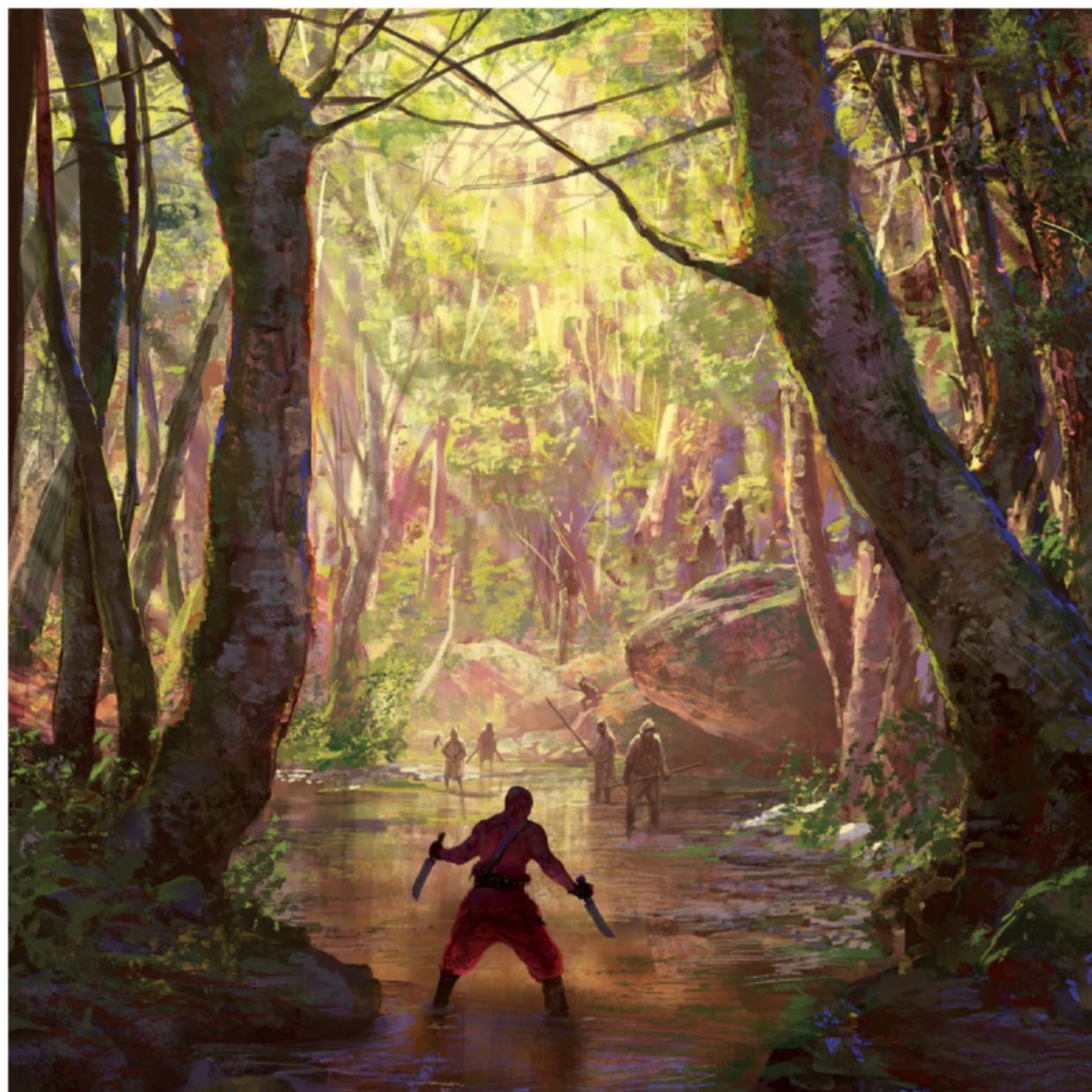
© Le Pré aux Clercs

© Harper Voyager

THE HUNT

In this piece for Le Pré aux Clercs publishing company's 2014 calendar, Marc contrasts the darkness of violence with the lightness of nature.
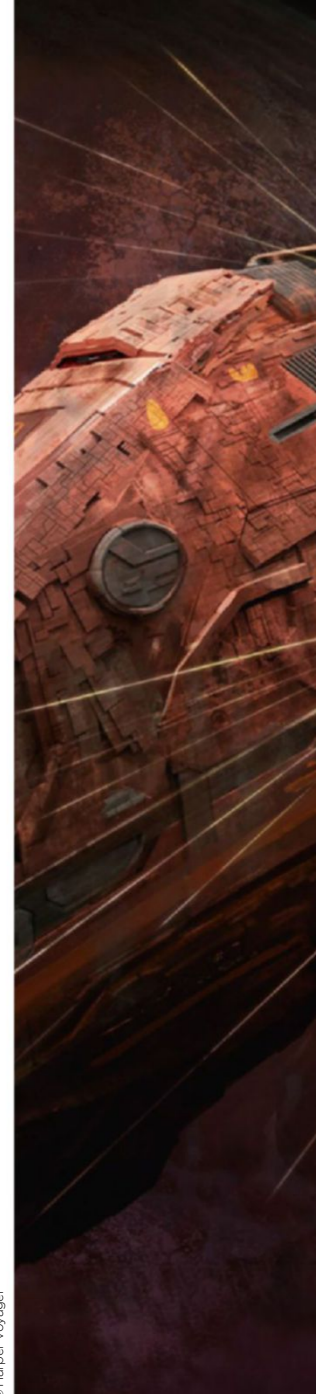
Marc Simonetti received a very detailed commission from an author. It described a throne – now perhaps the most famous throne not just in fantasy but in fiction. In the past, many artists attempted to illustrate this throne – including Marc – but nobody had yet got it quite right.

This time, the French illustrator drew more than 50 versions. Still none of them worked. They somehow didn't quite match the image in the author's head.

The Iron Throne is a grotesque thing, described as being built using a thousand twisted steel blades. It's big, too. So big that the king must climb steps to sit on it. Up to now, Marc had drawn the throne in silhouette. Then he came up with a new idea: he'd set the ugly throne against a beautiful background. The author, George RR Martin, liked what he saw.

"The Iron Throne worked once I did the background," says the French illustrator. "Because picturing that big throne in a strong, beautiful environment balances out its ugliness. I just had to correct a few things and clean the piece. George said: 'This is this one!'"

The Game of Thrones author was so impressed with the 2014 illustration – eventually published in companion book The World of Ice & Fire – that he suggested anyone who draws the throne in future should first consult Marc's drawing.

George said the French artist got it "absolutely right".

"With some commissions," Marc says, "I read the whole book and then submit an idea. On others, I attempt to answer a brief. But I always try to have at least one small thing that makes the illustration pop. I can see when an illustration is beginning to acquire a special kind of visual interest, because it starts to vibrate."

Marc is best known for his work on George RR Martin's A Song of Ice and Fire fantasy novels. He's also illustrated Terry Pratchett's Discworld, Terry Goodkind's Sword of Truth and the Farseer trilogy by Robin Hobb. Beyond his book illustrations, the Frenchman has created concept art for

❝ I'm just a geek, a fan of comics, fantasy and science fiction. My goal is to visually translate the feeling I have ❞

Artist PROFILE

Marc Simonetti
LOCATION: France
FAVOURITE ARTISTS: Sparth, Khang Le, Raphael Lacoste, Aleksi Briclot, Alberto Mielgo, Phil Hale, Jeremy Mann and Greg Manchess.
SOFTWARE USED: Photoshop, Modo, ZBrush, 3D-Coat and Cinema 4D
WEB: http://art.marcsimonetti.com

AGE OF MYTH
Marc's people are dwarfed by the place in which he draws them on the cover for Age of Myth by Michael J Sullivan.

© Random House

TURTLE RECALL
This is cover art for Turtle Recall by Stephen Briggs and the late Terry Pratchett.

© Orion books

SHADOW OF EMPIRE
Marc shows off his love of perspective on the cover for Jay Allan's novel Shadow of Empire.

EA, Ubisoft and Activision. More recently, he moved into feature films.

"Sometimes I think I'm just a random geek," he says, "a fan of comics, fantasy and science fiction. My illustrations have something that uses that generic language. Most of my ideas come from books, from my visual library. When I make an illustration, my only goal is to visually translate the feeling I have."

DA VINCI WAS AN ENGINEER

Marc studied at two art schools at two very different times in his life. He attended the first – in French Alpine town Annecy – between eight and 14 years old. But art was just a hobby back then. Really, he wanted to be an engineer. "Engineering looked kind of interesting, from a child's point of view. But, for me, Leonardo da Vinci was an engineer."

He found his career as an engineer a bit different to da Vinci's. So Marc signed up to the Emile Cohl School in Lyon. ⏩
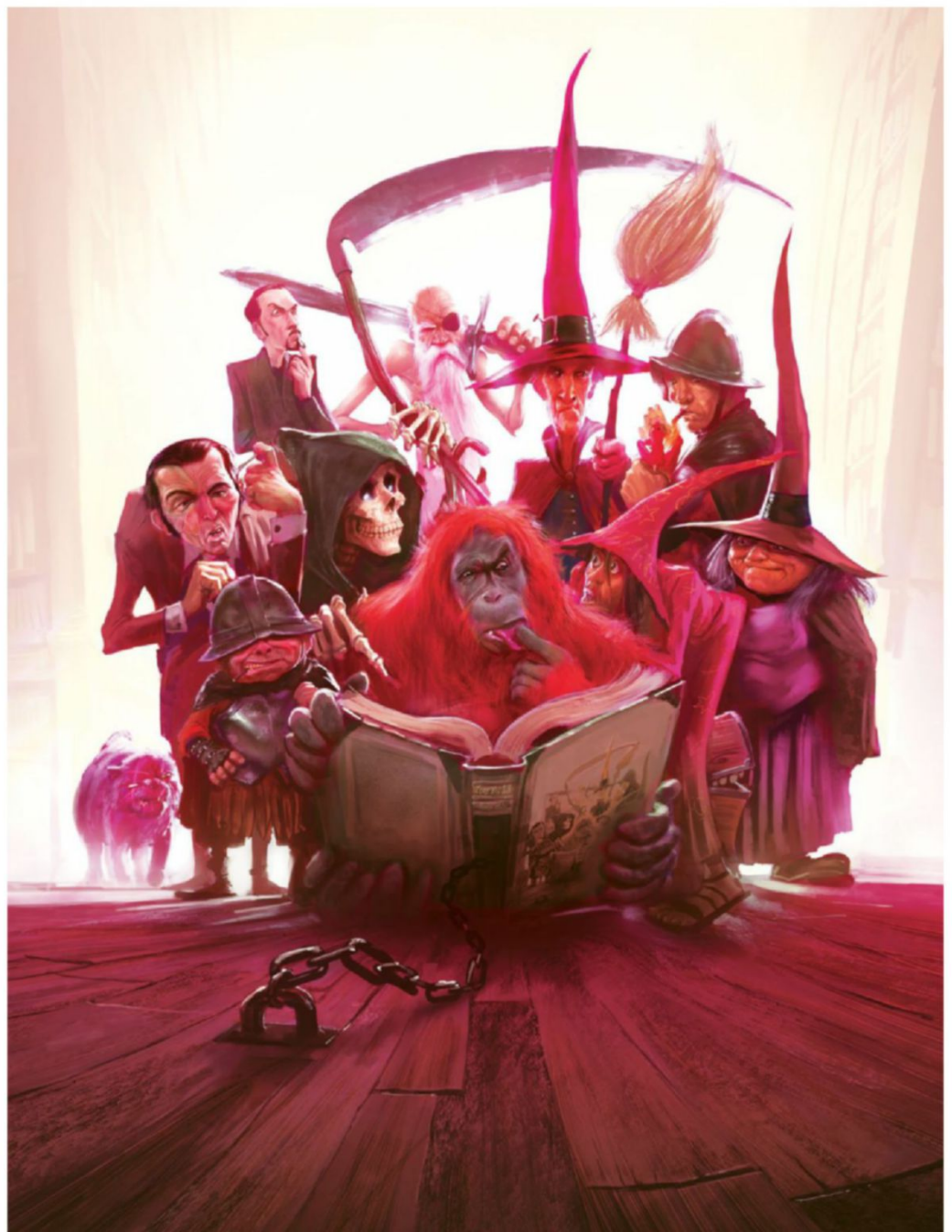
NÔO
Don't look down: Marc's cover art for Nôo by Stefan Wul takes plunging perspective to a whole new level.

© Bragelonne

ILLUSTRATING THE FUTURE

Marc explains how he illustrated a book from the influential Dune series

I made this illustration for Dune Messiah by Frank Herbert for Centipede Press. Dune is one of my favourite books: it had a huge impact on me and on thousands of people, so it was a big thing to able to illustrate one. This image represents the walk of the Reverend Mother toward Paul Muad'dib, in his huge reception room – a room that could contain the biggest cathedrals from our world. I had several objectives: convey the sense of scale, make the two characters clearly visible, create a kind of architecture that fits the book, and show the time period – a time thousands of years ahead of us (the first Dune starts at the year 10,191). It had to reflect an alien architecture, with millions of known planets, and a huge empire. So I had to take some actual architecture references and create new patterns and shapes.

1 SIMPLE COMPOSITION

I first did a very simple, central composition: the subject had to be extremely massive and impressive, and the characters have to be dwarfed there. Then I did a very fast sketch on 3D-Coat that I rendered into KeyShot. This first step took me less than one hour, but helped me develop a solid base for this illustration.

2 CORRECTIONS

To correct a composition, I follow two paths. I try to avoid tangents and graphical nodes that would make the illustration hard to read. Second, I just try to feel things out. When a composition is good, things just feel natural.

➤➤ "I attended for one year, to change my professional life. I was 25 years old then. I didn't like my work as an engineer, so there was a lot at stake. I learnt as much as I could in that year, but my personal work was even more intense than the work done for the school."

The Frenchman joined a video games company straight out of art school, but it took over five years before he made a decent living from his art.

Marc always strives to make his paintings closely resemble the text he's illustrating for, as with George's Iron Throne. But there are a couple of characteristics that tie Marc's

> **❝ I'm fine with people expressing themselves. Not everyone has to like my stuff ❞**

work together. "Fetishes," he calls them. He loves perspective, especially perspectives that look a bit wrong, a little twisted. One of the problems George had with past illustrations of the Iron Throne was the scale. They simply weren't big enough. No one does big quite like Marc.

STARTING OVER

His environments go off into the distance and straight over the horizon for thousands of miles. His people are often dwarfed by the places in which he draws them. He loves colours, using them to create depth and mood. Some illustrations he gets right first time. Others, he has to start over again and again.

"At the end of the day, only my name will be at the bottom of the illustration, so I have to give my best each time. If I have to change a part of the picture that kills the composition or the colour scheme, I adjust the rest to make it work again. Most of the time it's for the best. A good ➤➤

5 PERSONAL ART

This project enabled me to make a very personal piece with a professional subject. I think mixing the two is best, both for me and my clients, because in these cases I can give them something a little less usual, something that just comes from me.

6 GOING FURTHER

This piece was a long push to the end, but it's the kind of work that makes me go further and adds new worlds to my visual library. A new subject can bring new shapes and new arrangements of colours, and spending a lot of time on it just embeds it deeper into your mind, making those assets part of your vocabulary.

3 ADDING COLOUR

I began adding colours. I wanted something very coloured, as complex as possible, to create contrast between the very simple tapestry and the very complex bas-reliefs of the wall.

4 PAINTING WITH VALUES

I could then start to paint using the values I had from the colours and the tones of my base.

NAILING THE THRONE

Marc explains how he drew George RR Martin's initially very elusive but now very famous Iron Throne for Game of Thrones

For me the Iron Throne was one of the major fantasy icons that hadn't been nailed. I had the idea of a correct shape, but it still didn't work well with George. What made it work was the moment I decided to paint its whole environment first. In the books there are very few descriptions of the throne room. All we know is that it's in the Red Keep, and that there were a lot of dragon skulls in it. So

making a huge, beautiful, symmetrical place very impressive but very regular and boring in its shapes, made the ugly and twisted Iron Throne work. Both of the elements were inspired by San Pietro in the Vatican. But one was clearly majestic and regal, while the other one was clearly evil. This is just a composition tool that made the design of the throne work. It was a big, big lesson for me.

IRON THRONE
Now the most famous chair in fiction, it took Marc Simonetti over 50 iterations to gain George RR Martin's approval.

THE DOORS
This piece for Le Pré aux Clercs' dark fantasy calendar shows Marc's talents for scale and space.

© Le Pré aux Clercs

THE RED PROCESSION
Marc's moody, atmospheric piece for 2014 dark fantasy calendar published by Le Pré aux Clercs.

© Le Pré aux Clercs

LES SEIGNEURS DE BOHEN
The cover for Estelle Faye's novel Les Seigneurs de Bohen features Marc's spellbinding representation of the story.

© Critic Publishing

➤➤ art director can really help make a great illustration."

Marc rents a small flat above his apartment, which he uses as a workspace. He sits at a big desk – two screens, Cintiq 27QHD graphics tablet – and works mainly in Photoshop. He also uses Modo, ZBrush, 3D-Coat and Cinema 4D. An average illustration project takes him between two and five days to complete.

"My only routine," he says, "is to work every day, the whole day, whether I have a lot of work or none at all. To be training or working constantly makes the progression, and to get better every day is vital. A perfect workday is the day I can finally finish a picture that I love, then begin a new project that I'm very excited about."

CREATIVE FREEDOM
Marc is currently working on two projects that offer the kind of creative freedom he enjoys most. He's drawing interior illustrations and cover art for the Shannara trilogy by Terry Brooks and Frank Herbert's Dune Messiah. He always reads the book he's illustrating – not all artists do. He also does a lot of extra research to ensure these illustrations are accurate.

As a working artist, his goal is always to please the client. But until the image is finished, he doesn't think about anyone but himself. Whether working freely or within

AMERICAN GODS
This is a fake cover art for American Gods by Neil Gaiman. Marc tried to do something different, more personal too.

a more strict commission, Marc says that what comes out on the page is always a product of what's already inside him.

"There's more freedom illustrating a small sci-fi novel: I just have to be faithful to the text and make a beautiful picture to sell the book. When I do concept art for games or movies, my goal isn't to make a final product. It's all about solving problems: how the mood should be, how to design some props, how some parts could work. So I have to be faithful with the visual identity of the game or movie. I'm just a small part of a team, so all my

assets have to be clean and crystal clear to make them usable in 3D later on.

"I like constructive criticism, but I don't know how to handle compliments. I'm perfectly okay with people expressing themselves. Not everyone has to like my stuff. But you can take any of my illustrations, keep the same composition, lighting and colours, but change the setting – say, from fantasy to steampunk – and it will still work. I try to adapt myself to each book and each theme, but I can only work with my own personality, my own feelings, my own choices."

> 66 My only routine is to work every day, all day, whether I have work or none at all 99

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PRINT AND DIGITAL BACK ISSUES

Issue 142
Christmas 2016
Inside our film art issue there are workshops inspired by Blade Runner, Planet of the Apes and the work of Guillermo del Toro. Plus we talk to the costume designer of Pirates of the Carribean, reveal how to capture movement in your art, and more!

Issue 141
December 2016
We launch our games art special with Remko Troost's cover art, then we visit the For Honor team at Ubisoft Montreal. Even Mehl Amundsen talks anger, we see how Blizzard hire staff, and there are workshops on character, vehicle and environment design.

Issue 140
November 2016
Ilya Kuvshinov shows how he created our manga special's cover. We also have a Genzoman workshop, talk to YouTube star Ross Tran, get an insight into Stranger Things promo art, visit The Sequence Group, celebrate a 2000 AD milestone and more!

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.

RESOURCES ARE INCLUDED WITH PRINT AND DIGITAL EDITIONS*

Issue 138
September 2016

Issue 137
August 2016

Issue 136
July 2016

Issue 135
June 2016

Issue 134
May 2016

Issue 133
April 2016

Issue 132
March 2016

Issue 131
February 2016

Issue 130
January 2016

Issue 129
Christmas 2015

Issue 128
December 2015

Issue 127
November 2015
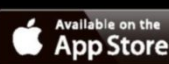
*Resource files are available from issue 85 onwards.

Kiri Østergaard Leonard

Curly horned unicorns share page space with pumpkin birds in this book illustrator's lively sketchbook

Artist PROFILE

Kiri Østergaard Leonard
LOCATION: US

Kiri grew up surrounded by beautiful nature and a variety of farmstead animals in a tiny village named Boeslum in Denmark, Scandinavia. She left her home country behind to pursue an illustration career in New York City. She now lives in Austin, Texas, where she thrives as a full-time illustrator.
www.kirileonard.com

PUMPKIN BIRDIES
"These were some concepts for a set of Halloween cards."

MR BOGGLESWORTH
"I decided earlier last year that I wanted to practise my line work, and this little guy was the first in a series of faerie sketches."

MONTAGUE MOUSE

"Character development sketches for a storybook I'm working on. Montague Mouse is the main character."

SAD TIMES

"One of the themes is how despair leads to nowhere good. This is a rough sketch for one of Montague's darkest moments in the story. I tried to focus heavily on the emotion. I wanted the viewer to feel the sadness and pain."

GOOD FRIENDS

"Here's a heavyset frog that Montague befriends during his travels. I was trying to decide on the size difference between the two characters."

"I tried to focus on the emotion. I wanted the viewer to feel the sadness and pain"

KELPIE
"A creature from Scottish folklore. They're delightfully creepy."

THE FAIRY FISHERMAN
"You have to watch out for what lurks below, when you go fishing."

OWL SKETCHES
"Playing around with ideas for horned owls. I've always thought owls are fascinating birds."

THE HALLOWEEN PARLIAMENT
"I do an annual Halloween illustration – this was the one for 2016."

SWAMPLAND
"This is a setting concept for a storybook in development."

"The older the siberian unicorn gets, the more his horn curls"

SIBERIAN CURLYCORN
"The older the Siberian unicorn gets the more his horn curls. This specimen is still relatively young."

UNICORN MOTHER AND FOAL
"This is the underdrawing for a painting. These two feature on a unicorn-themed calendar that I'm working on."

**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.

VIDEO
WORKSHOP

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

ImagineFX
Workshops

Advice from the world's best artists

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This issue:

Photoshop

ADD DRAMA TO YOUR BOOK ART

Capturing the viewer with your art is no more important than when it's on a book cover. **Tommy Arnold** reveals how to make potential readers linger

Artist PROFILE

Tommy Arnold

LOCATION: US

Tommy works freelance as a full-time illustrator. His clients include Tor Books, Orbit Books and Wizards of the Coast.
http://ifxm.ag/t-arnold

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 6 now!

There are so many images in our day-to-day world, all competing for our attention. As artists, we tend to think that sheer beauty through rendering is the key to getting attention, but the average viewer can't tell the difference between something immaculately painted and something just well enough to do the trick.

You should certainly try to paint well, but you need to remember that your target audience is actually non-artists –

and that's the vast majority of people. As a cover artist, my job is to make someone who wouldn't have picked up a book or magazine stop, take notice, and pick it up. After that, my job is done.

This simple little interaction happens at something near the speed of light, and the time it would take for a potential buyer to "appreciate" an image doesn't even come into play before they've made up their mind.

How can I make up their mind for them? I can simplify and organise my

image in ways that make the image easy to look at and understand. I can make sure my cover is unlike the other images next to it on the shelf. I can make sure my image reads well from a distance as well as up close. I can ask the potential buyer questions in the form of an unresolved narrative, or try to bring my image to life by giving it a sense of movement. In every cover that I create, I try to use all these strategies and more if possible, because the battle for their attention is all-out war, and no one's taking prisoners.

PRO SECRETS

Draw from life
The best way to learn to see is to draw from life. In drawing from life you're forced to group and understand values in the same way you'll have to do when working from reference. You're also forced to take what you're seeing in three dimensions and translate that on to a two-dimensional surface. This is the primary advantage of drawing from life over drawing from photos.

1 Sketching the idea
This is where illustration really happens; everything after this point will be academic. I know we want the figure interacting with the ImagineFX logo so I start there, sketching variations of falling, climbing and rappelling poses using only a hard Round brush with Pressure Sensitivity turned on. Once I have a pose I like, I try to complement it with environment and props that flesh out the narrative and the design.
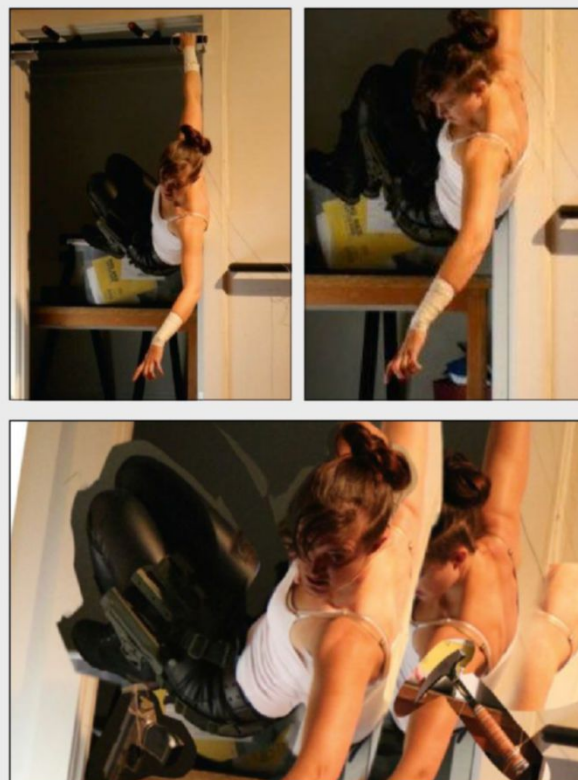
2 Shooting reference material
Realism in illustration is a matter of reference; I wish that someone had told me that when I was starting out. Illustrators have been using reference since the inception of the industry and all the very best still do. I pay for models and costumes and organise photo shoots where I work from my sketch to try and get the information I'll need to draw from. This part of the creative process is actually really fun! ➤➤

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3 Producing a tight drawing

In Photoshop, I assemble the relevant reference photography and drop a white layer over it on a low Opacity. I transfer my reference lightbox-style to start, and then make the white layer fully opaque so all I see is my drawing. I then modify and redraw from there to figure out every bit of form before I start slinging paint around. I take my time on this stage.

4 Colourising the lines

I duplicate my line work and on that new layer, I press Ctrl+U to open the Hue/Saturation adjustment panel. I check the Colorize box and slide the saturation up until my lines turn red. After applying the change, I erase the red lines anywhere where there isn't flesh. The red lines will integrate with the piece as it develops, giving the skin a luminous quality.

RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES: PALETTE KNIFE

Use this anywhere you want a razor-sharp edge. The soft back edge integrates the stroke with existing marks.

WET EDGED PAINT

For creating movement in paint. The wet edges contrast with the random shapes to keep painterly passages dynamic.

GRUNGER

Use this to texturise and define rough or pebbled areas. I primarily used this brush to paint the falling rocks.
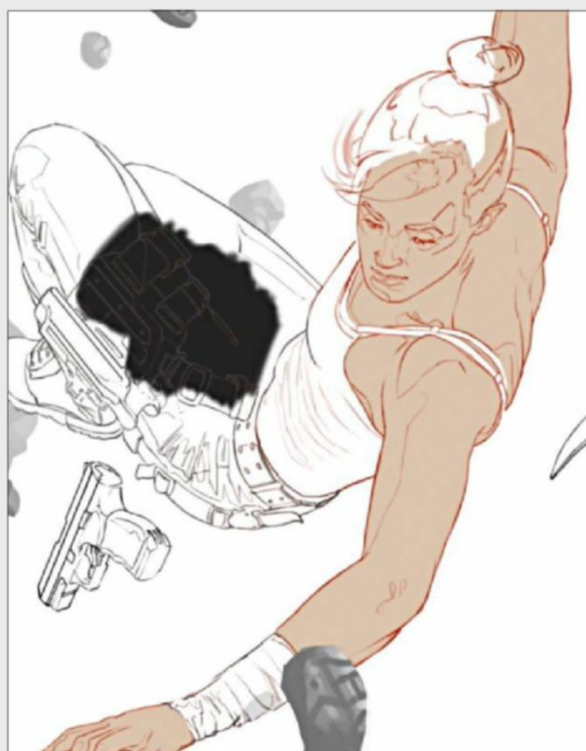
5 Introducing flat colours

Under my line work, I paint in major areas of colour with a flat Round brush. Each distinct colour is on its own layer, and I try to paint each area as the average mid-tone colour I want there. This enables me to see major colour relationships early, and I can adjust each spot colour individually until I'm happy. I make selections out of each layer before moving on.
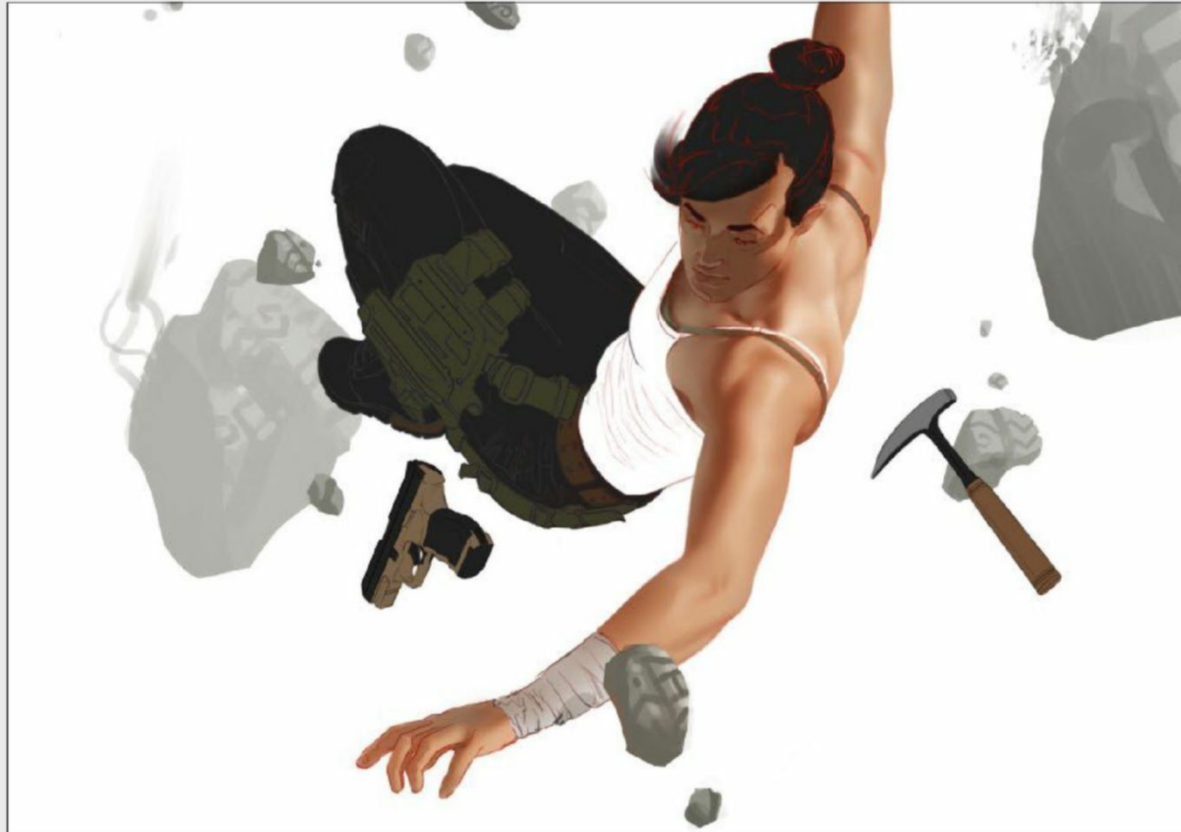
Shortcuts

Color Balance
Cmd+B (Mac)
Ctrl+B (PC)
Modify the colour of your current selection. Useful for taking sketches to colour quickly.

6 **Diving straight into the painting process**
Now I flatten the image and begin working on top of it. Layers breed complication so I always work upwards. I choose an area – in this instance I select the skin and musculature, which is something I love to paint – and just get down to painting right away. I have an excellent roadmap laid out for how the piece should proceed, so now all I have to do is follow it.
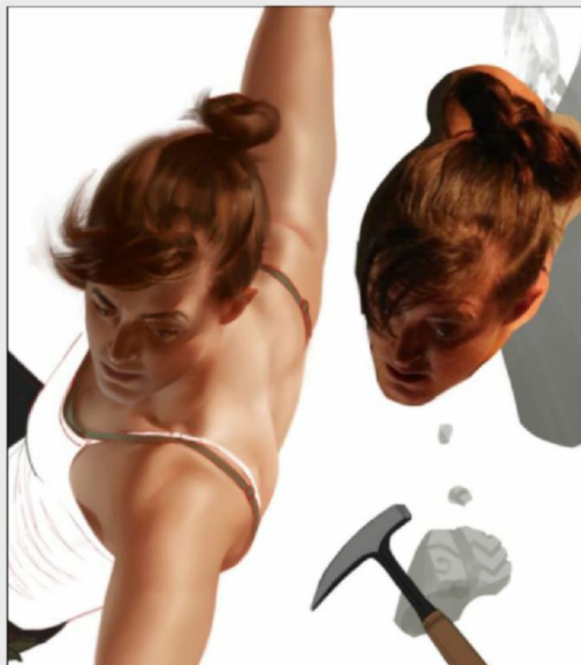
7 **Take time over the face**
The face is the most time-consuming part of any image. Commit to it, and be okay with however long it takes. Even up to 50 per cent of the full painting time is an acceptable amount. Seriously. Look closely at your reference and use any tools at your disposal to get this right. One of the few things any person on earth can see is if you've got the face wrong.
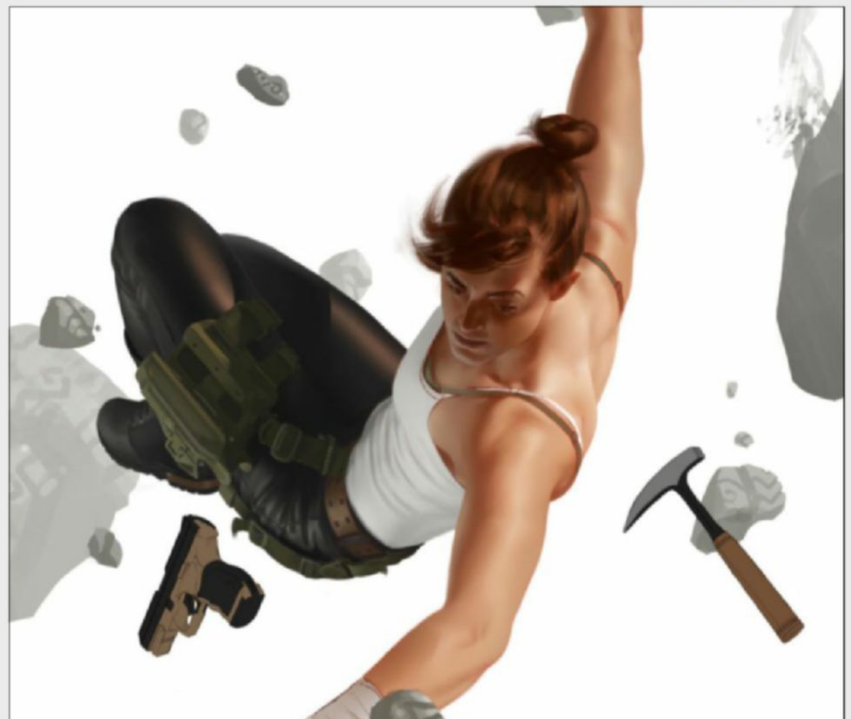
8 **Capturing the look of the trousers**
I can relax a bit now because the trousers, compared to the face, are easy. I look carefully at what surface effects are portrayed in my reference; I really want that shine of leather and the matte, military finish on the holster. I paint using a combination of transparent and opaque layers, flattening often as I go and continuing to work upwards. ➤➤
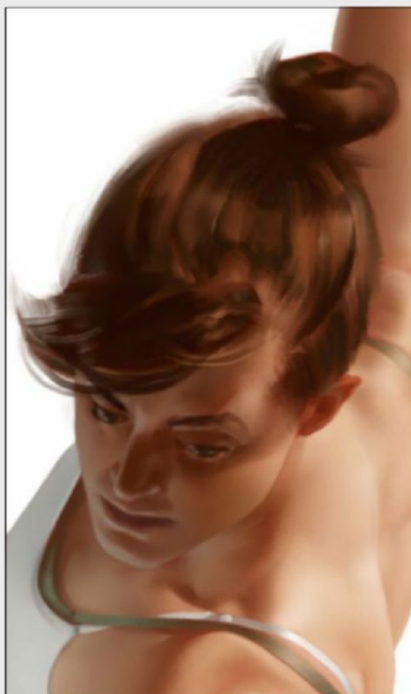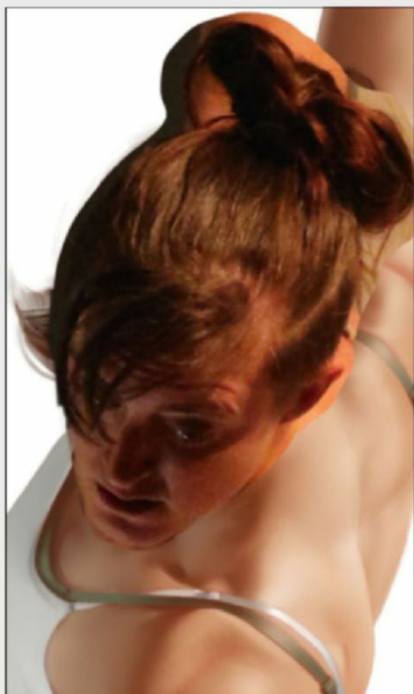
9 Turning back to the face

Throughout the painting I keep coming back to the face as I notice tiny new details and deficiencies that I'd like to amend. Never let a painting be done until you're satisfied with it. Put in the time. I keep my reference on a layer over my painting and flick it on and off to help myself see even the tiniest inaccuracies in my work.

10 Hands, arms and smudging

Whew! Another break from the face. Take a look at your reference and paint what you see. Good painting is seeing well. Focus on separating light from shadow, and on the relative hardness and softness of edges to accurately portray forms. As I continually flatten, I use the Smudge brush to adjust paint and remove the line work that's lingering in the figure.

11 Depicting the character's tools of her trade

In a piece where there's no environment to speak of, only the flat white of the page, everything in the image needs to be painted superbly. Taking close stock of my reference, I set about painting the falling pickaxe and hammer. I'm careful to obey the perspective lines that govern their forms, and not to make them so high-contrast that they distract from the main subject, the figure.
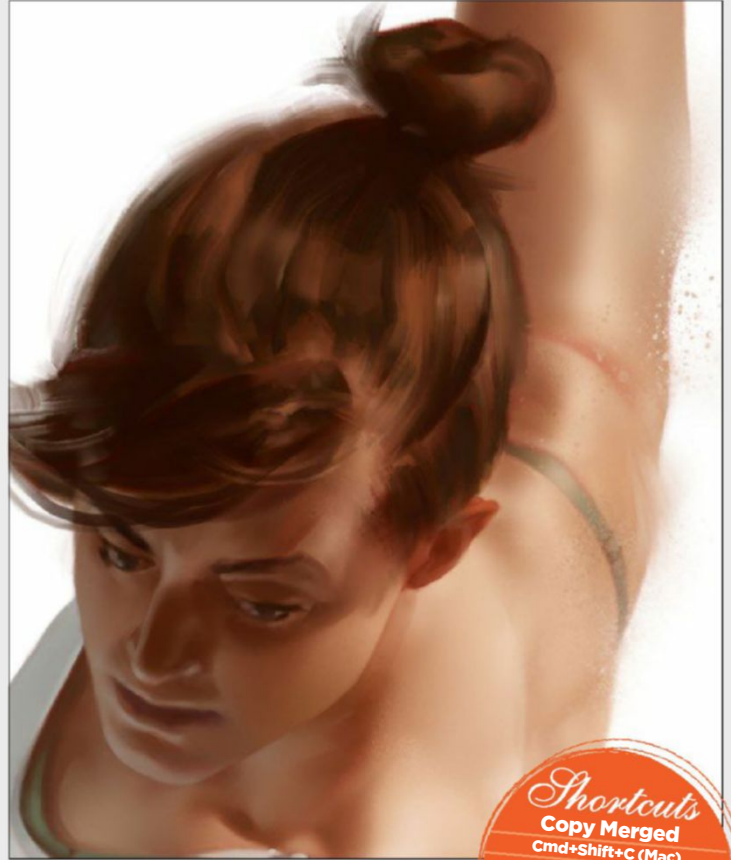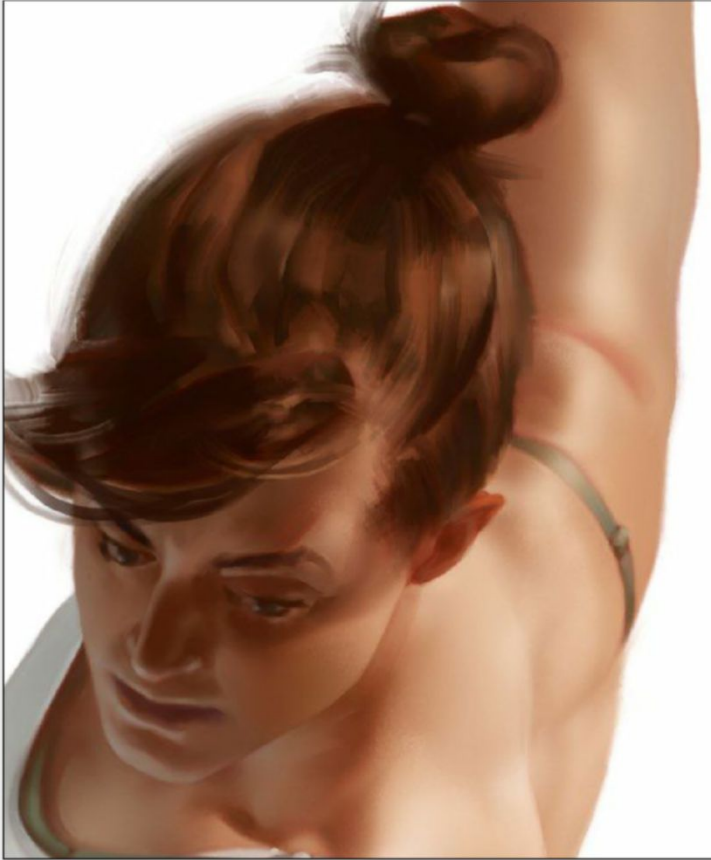
12 Perfecting the character's face

I've been working almost like a printer, moving through the image methodically and finishing one area at a time. The immense amount of pre-planning makes this possible, but some areas still present challenges. Many aspects of the face are invented (my reference in this area isn't particularly great), and that demands that I go back to it one last time and not stop until I'm satisfied.

Shortcuts
Copy Merged
Cmd+Shift+C (Mac)
Ctrl+Shift+C (PC)
This is useful for flattening transparent layer modes into opaque, Normal layers.

13 Looking out for all those rocks

With the focal foreground areas complete, and all line work eradicated from the piece, I take some large, highly textured brushes and work on the carved rocks falling all around our main figure. Big, simple forms like this are much easier to invent than specific human anatomy and tools, but I still make sure to obey the lighting scheme established in my reference.

14 Ramping up the sense of action

I add some more floating debris, bits of leaves, particles of falling rock, and anything else I can think of to add mayhem and activity to this scene. I smudge a few edges to soften them so that everything isn't crystal-clear (this is an action scene after all), and I'm done!

Clip Studio Paint

COLOURING WITH MANGA IN MIND

CORE SKILLS

Tan Hui Tian explains colouring techniques that are ideal for manga, and shows how you can build these time-saving methods into your process

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 have a strong sense of design.
http://ifxm.ag/th-tian

The process of manga-style colouring doesn't differ hugely from those of western comics, although there are some stylistic quirks. My own illustration style is a mixture of various influences, and the distinction may be an unnecessary one.

Typically, manga colouring tends to have flatter values and doesn't aim to be perfectly realistic. The archetypal manga created digitally usually retains its line art and has a smoother, airbrushed colouring compared to a more painterly quality favoured by other artists.

Most of the quirks are perhaps by-products of artists influenced by the animation produced by the Japanese film studios. In anime, cel-shading is the preferred method of colourising the frames, and gradients are employed to give the images more depth.

Owing to the nature of the manga style, I tend to separate the colouring process into blocks of colours on different layers, and add layer modes on top. For other art styles, I may choose to paint everything on one layer once the initial sketch and colour comps have been approved.

Separating elements onto different layers is a good thing to have for client projects, when changes are requested. However, having too many layers for a single illustration slows you down and would be confusing should you not have a good naming convention. It takes time to find your personal balance when developing a painting process, so see what works best for you.

To quickly lay down shadows and highlights, use Brush Combine mode rather than layer modes.

Overlay is a convenient way to introduce hue shifts.
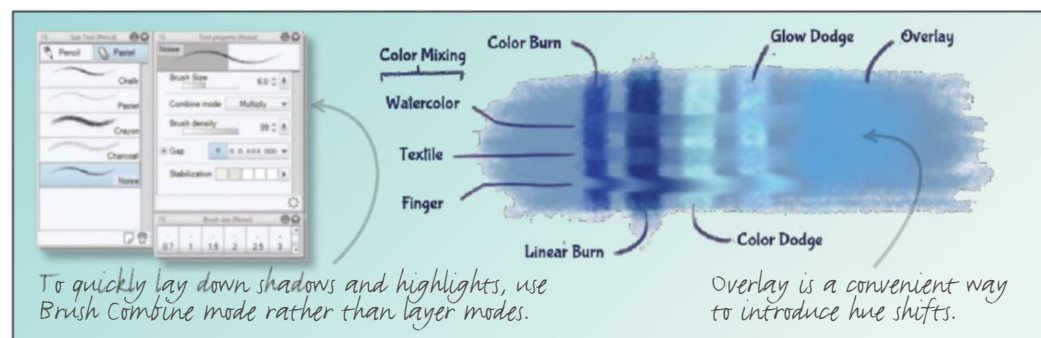
1 Brush Combine modes and colour mixing

Brush Combine modes are only available on the Pastel brushes. Typically, I use them to lay down values quickly after finishing the flat colours. The advantage of this method is the hue shift that's inherent in many of the combine modes. The Color Mixing tool is depicted by two merging circles. It acts similarly to Photoshop's Mixer Brush tool and is great for developing interesting colour effects.

Close Gap can be toggled with other fill tools, and makes colouring line art with small gaps faster.

You can simulate watercolour painting by using a variety of brush types.
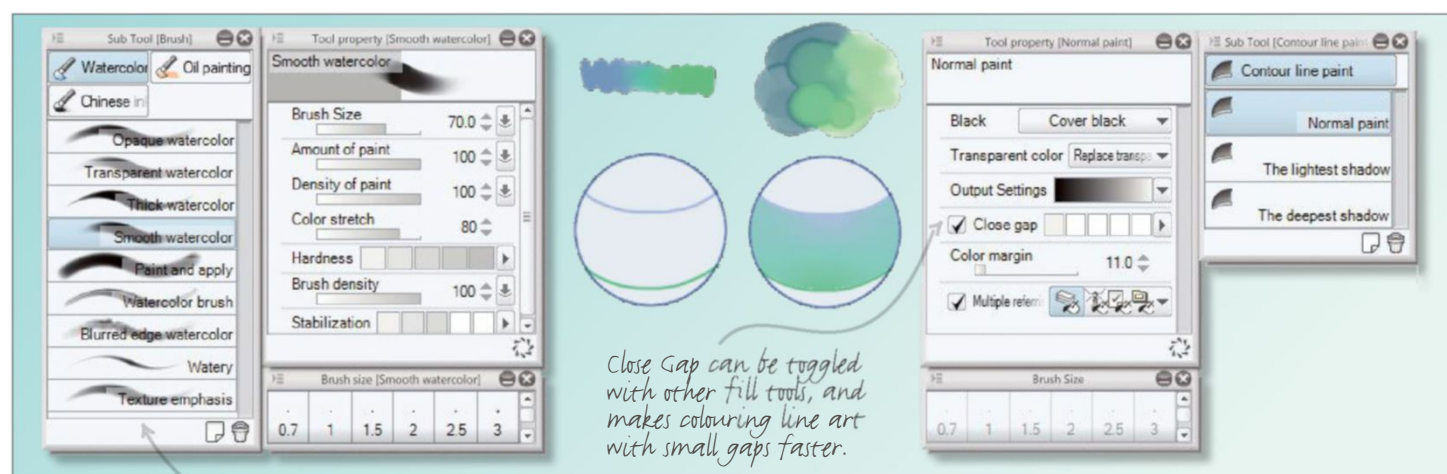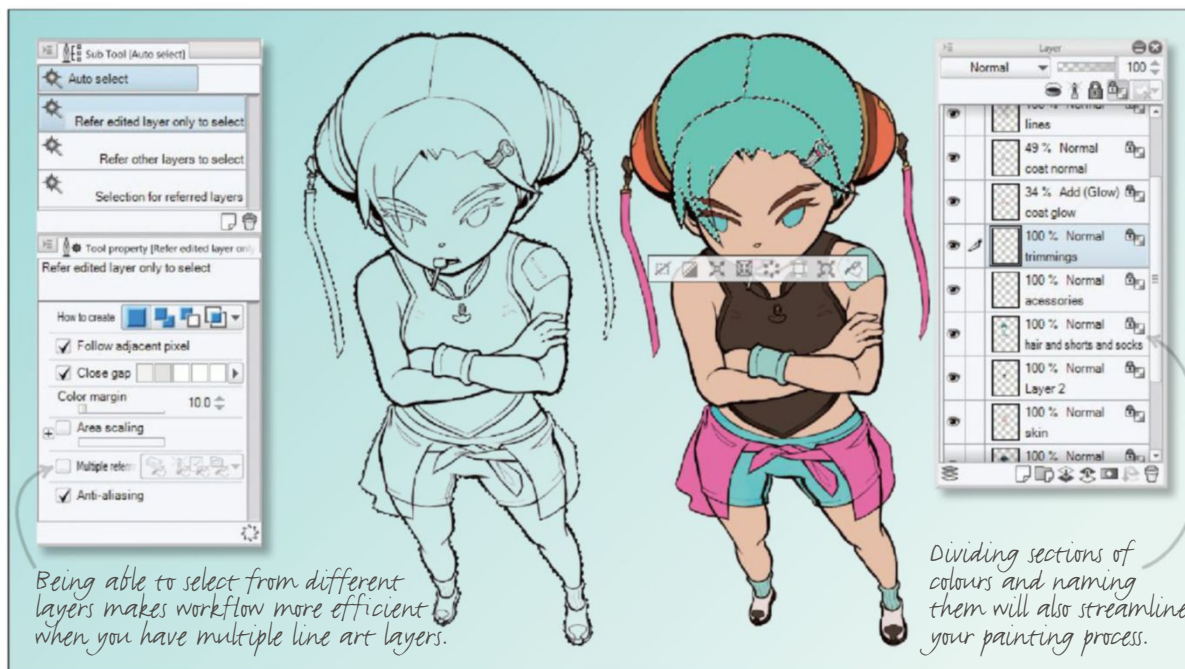
2 General brushes and contour line paint

Most of the brushes blend into each other like real paint does, and is one of the major reasons Clip Studio Paint is preferred by many artists as opposed to other programs. You can adjust the blending with the brush settings. And if you want to replicate the look of watercolours, you can do so with a good amount of control and finesse with the Watercolor tool. The Contour Line Paint tool is a colour fill tool that creates a natural gradient between two coloured lines, and is especially useful for cleaner styles.

Being able to select from different layers makes workflow more efficient when you have multiple line art layers.

Dividing sections of colours and naming them will also streamline your painting process.

3 Colour flatting

Colour flatting in Clip Studio Paint is a straightforward process because with the Close Gaps option selected, you don't have to worry about stray gaps. I create a base colour by clicking outside the line art, then invert the selection (Ctrl+Alt+I) and fill it with a neutral colour. This ensures there aren't any transparent pixels left by the flat colours above it afterwards. I combine certain colour blocks that aren't close to each other in a single layer, both for convenience and to reduce the number of layers.

Next month

Post-processing (colour and exporting).

The colouring looks more vibrant when hue shifts are involved.

Highlight

Reflected Light

Core Shadow

Work from big, soft brush strokes to tighter, smaller strokes.

Experiment with different layer modes and think about the various ways you can apply them.

The advantage of using Layer Mode is that you can easily adjust or delete that layer.

4 Basic colouring techniques

Here, I've mainly used the smooth Watercolor brush. But you can use other brushes depending on what you want the final product to look like. You can colourise the line art using the Tonal Corrections option, or lock the transparency of that layer (indicated by a padlock icon beside a transparent square) and colour it manually.
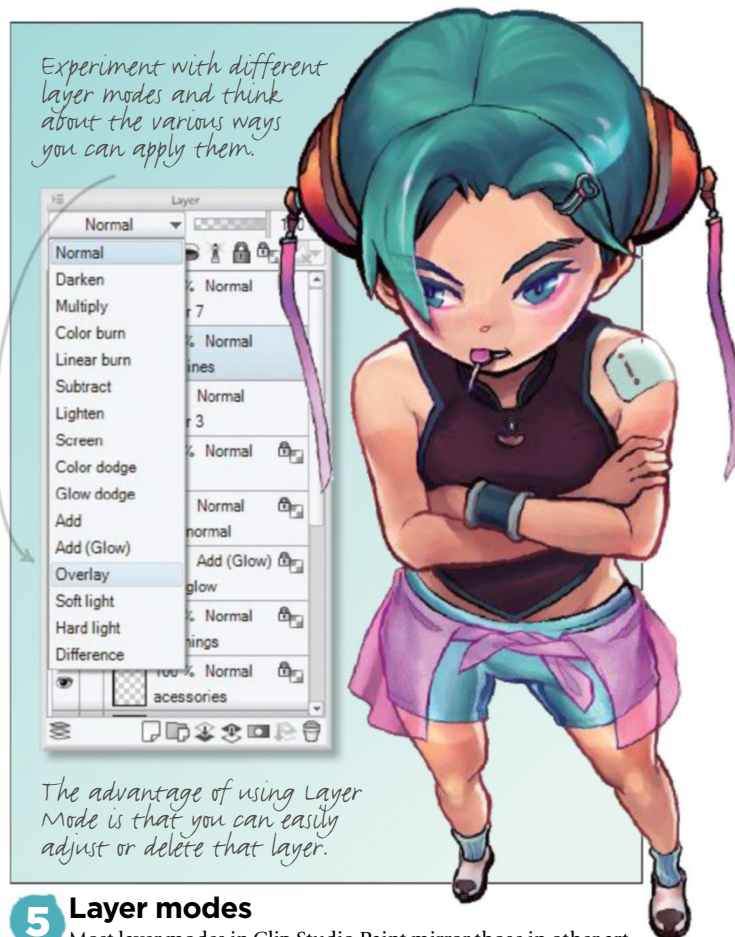
5 Layer modes

Most layer modes in Clip Studio Paint mirror those in other art programs such as Paint Tool SAI. The pink translucent coat on her hips has a layer on a reduced Opacity on Normal, and another on Add (Glow). The tan lines are achieved using an Overlay layer.

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Drawing & painting

From anatomy to figure drawing, sketching skills and character design...

Patrick J Jones shares his unmissable techniques for figure drawing.

All this... and more!

Anatomy masterclass
Simple steps to get better at anatomy, with teacher and artist Glenn Vilppu.

Draw better faces today
When to follow the rules – and when to go a little bit crazy, with Julian del Rey.

Learn from the masters
Artist Howard Lyon reveals how the past masters can help us learn today.

Intricate pencil techniques
Miles Johnston share his pencil skills for drawing a very detailed image.

ISSUE 144 ON SALE IN THE UK *Friday 30 December*

Photoshop

PAINTING A DAYLIGHT SCENE

Suzanne Helmigh uses bounce light to help emphasise body language and mood, creating a summer scene for an illustration

This painting depicts one of the scenes from my illustrated novel, Caldyra. It's a dialogue between two people, with the emphasis on the mood and body language. Every illustration I make for this project supports the story, and has pre-made concept art for the world in which it takes place.

In this workshop I'll show how I approach the depiction of the characters and the environment, because one element influences the rendering process of the other. I search for new challenges in all my illustration work, and with this workshop I'm learning about the influence of daylight and shading over various materials such as plants, rocks, skin, hair, gold and light fabrics.

Before tackling a new topic I'll make time to research it. During the summer I took lots of photos and notes to analyse the colours and effects a blue sky has on everything in view. I also found that the more I render the environment, the more I have to render the characters, and vice versa. Okay, let's see how we can make this summer scene come to life!
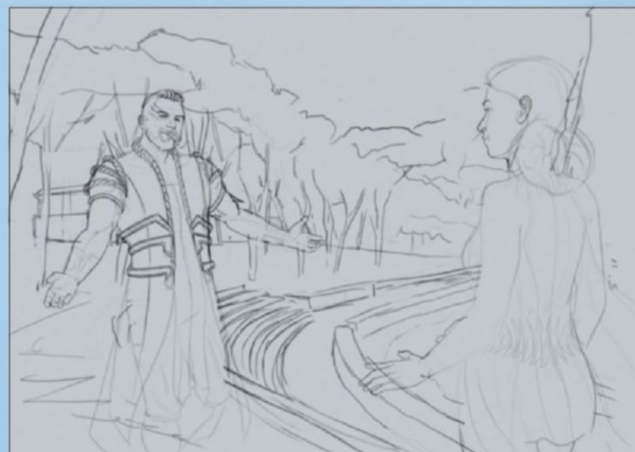
1 Planning the image

I start out with a clear plan in mind. I think about the story I want to tell with my image and carefully arrange the placement of all the elements. I make concept art for anything that needs designing and do research, by looking at reference photos, to come up with a colour scheme and lighting direction.
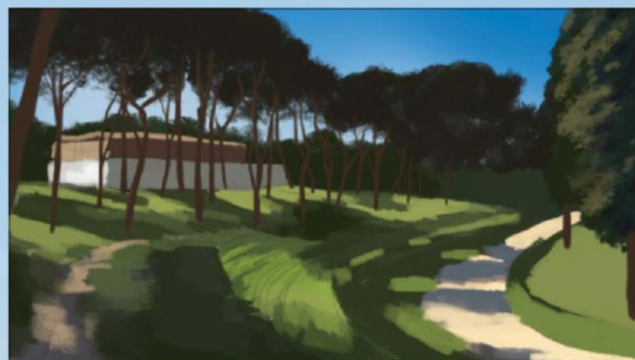
2 Environmental colour blocking

I use a big painterly brush to block out the colour shapes of the environment. With the light direction in mind I create the most obvious dark and light regions. I keep elements such as trees, foliage, the ground and sky separate by putting them on their own layers. This makes it easy to paint in front or behind objects. ➤➤
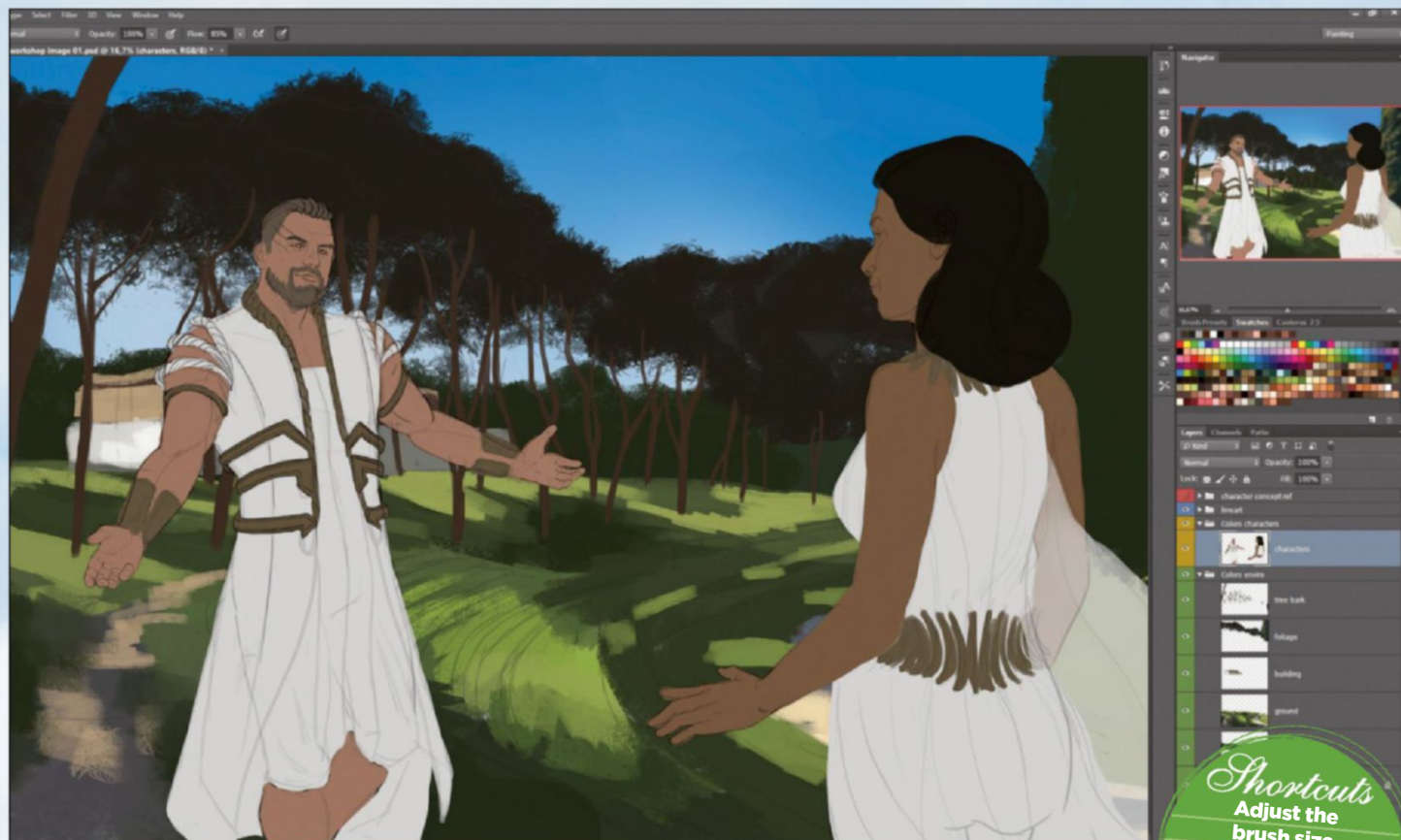
3 Character colour blocking

Using the colours from my initial concept, I block out the object colours of the characters with the generic Photoshop Round brush. This single layer features both characters on it, and will serve as a base for all the character rendering. I designed white clothing with golden ornaments during the planning phase, so now I know how to block out the shapes pretty accurately.

Shortcuts
Adjust the brush size
[and] (PC & Mac)
These two keys help you quickly adjust the brush size.

PRO SECRETS

Take breaks
I often work on multiple pieces at the same time. This enables me to take breaks from an illustration and return to it with fresh eyes. Most of the time I spot new mistakes or possibilities for improvement when I return. This can be a day, but sometimes a week or even a month.

4 Finding the shadow colours

I use a darker version of the sky colour and block out regions of my characters that will be shaded. This layer is linked to the character layer and set to Overlay mode. To shade the white cloth, I link a new layer on Darker Color mode and use the same blue.
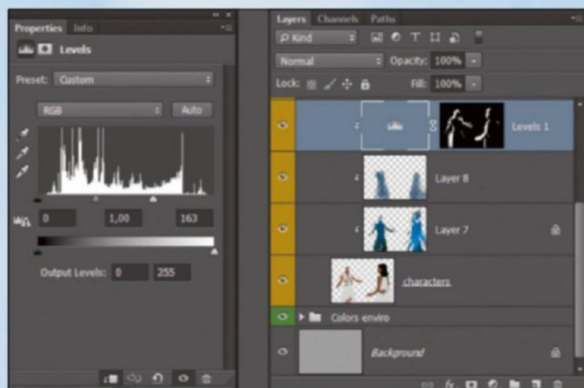
5 Levelling the light

I now create a Levels layer and link this to the character base as well. I experiment with the sliders to find a nice light tone for the highlights. With the Bucket tool, I fill the layer's mask with black, which removes the Levels effect. With white, I manually paint back the levels effect in the appropriate regions.
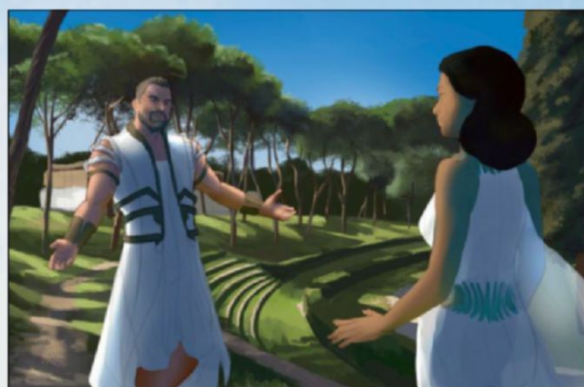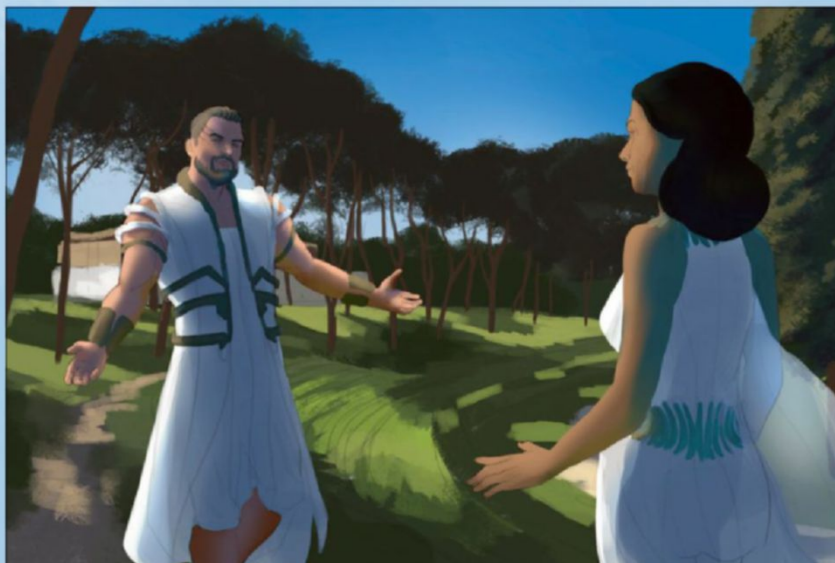
6 Shaping up the environment

Before bringing the characters to the next level, I dive into the environment with a smaller brush than before and block in more details, with the idea being to show what becomes light and what becomes shaded. The characters and environment will always influence each other like this, so I enjoy the act of going backwards and forwards between the two.
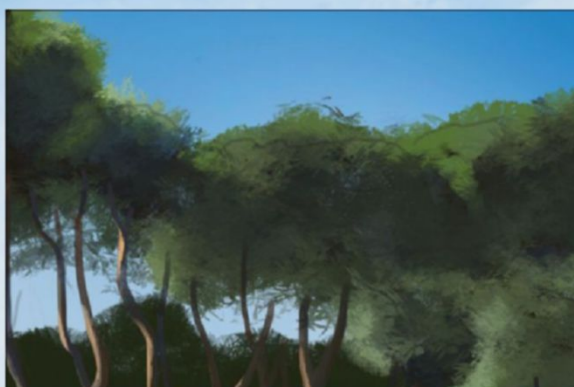
7 Bringing the sky to life

I love adding some nice fluffy clouds to a summer scene. Clouds can do a lot for directing the viewer's eye, as well as adding some additional storytelling to an image. Some clouds can look very threatening, while others simply liven up the scene. The clouds here get the same lighting direction as everything else, and some blue shading in the darker areas. ➡

PRO SECRETS

Understand bounce light

I learned about bounce light by doing life studies. I discovered what materials reflect the most, what colours have the most influence on one another and how light scatters.

RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES: ROUNDBRUSH

I use the simple but effective round brush to paint the lines and most of the smaller details.

FOLIAGE SKETCH BRUSH

A brush to help you quickly block out some foliage.

PAINTERLY BRUSH

This brush creates a nice painterly feel in my work.

TEXTURED MIXING BRUSH

A very useful brush, suitable for mixing colour tones naturally.

8 Skin is complex

I start working on expressing the materials such as skin, gold and fabric. Skin can be very glossy in the greasy areas on the forehead and around the nose, but very matte in the less-greasy parts. Glossy skin reflects a lot of the bright environmental colours, while matte skin maintains most of its object colour: the skin tone.

9 Complement his face

Faces and body language are pretty important in storytelling images and in this daylight setting I have a lot of power over the lighting composition. I make sure the face of the man is very readable, by adding complementary values behind it, by darkening the foliage behind the bright side of the face, and by lighting it up behind the dark side.
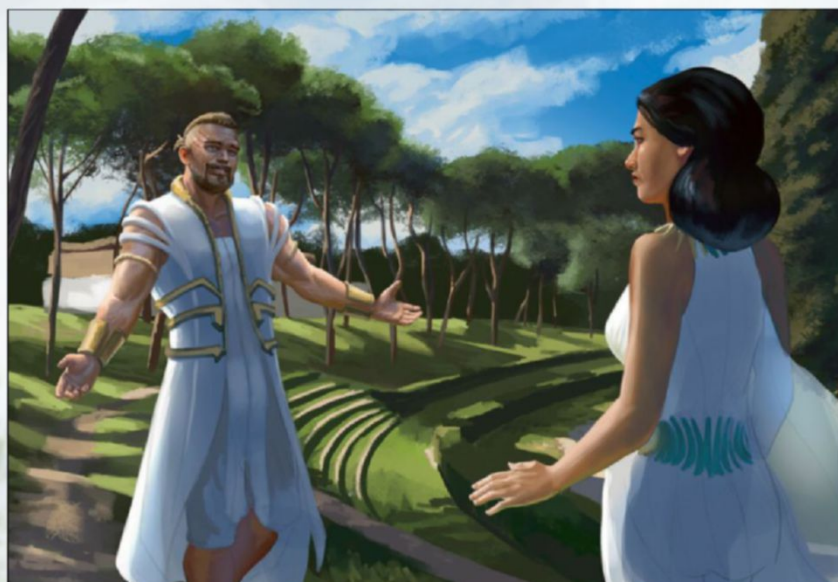
10 Anatomical corrections

I'm not very happy with the face and anatomy, so I make some alterations. Even though I try and plan as much as I can at the beginning, corrections often need to be made throughout the painting process. These changes sometimes mean removing the old painting and replacing it with something new, but this always works out for the better.
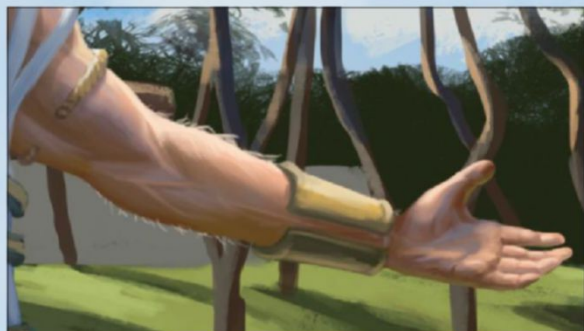
11 Translucency and scattering

Because the cloth of the man is lit up from behind, the light will travel through it and produce this glowing look. The same goes for his light hair – check out those arm hairs! The lady has a translucent silky fabric, so everything I paint underneath will be slightly visible. Wrinkles in the cloth are less translucent and so they appear brighter here.
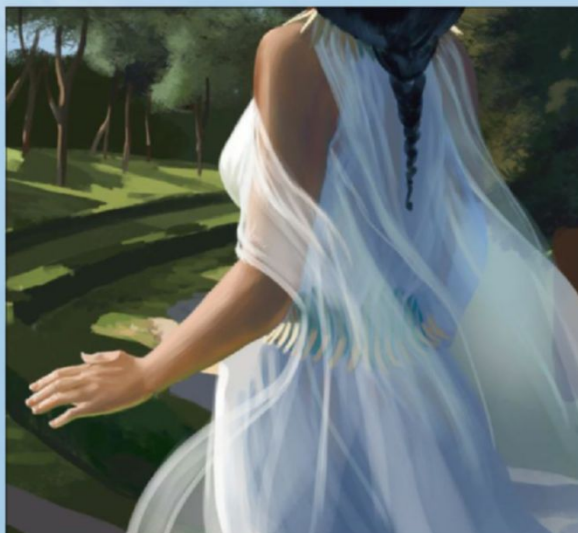
12 Blonde versus black hair

Blonde hair is light, so it will be affected by the bounce colours of the environment and sky much more than the dark tones of black hair. Blonde hair is also more translucent, reflecting much more light. Healthy, shiny, dark hair will only reflect the lightest of environmental bounce colour.
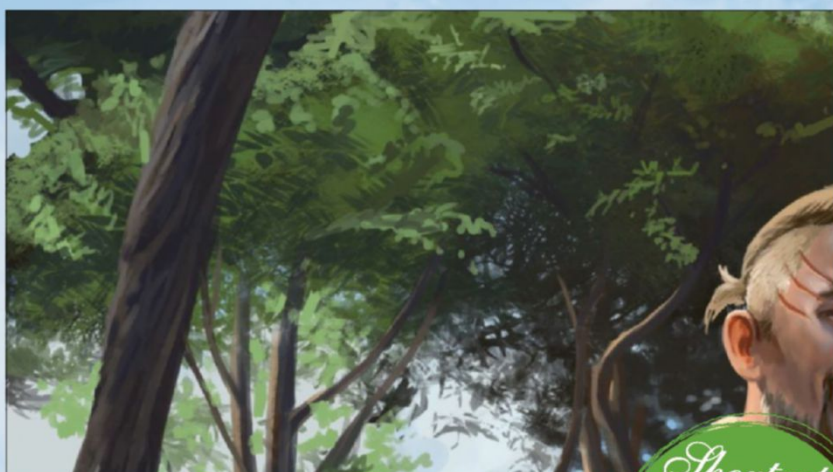
13 Detailing the environment

Now that the characters are at this level, I bring the environment up to speed and go in with a smaller brush to paint out all the textures. Grass, for instance, turns bright yellowish green when basking in sunlight, but in the shade it will bounce a more blueish green colour.

Shortcuts
Colour adjustment
Ctrl+U (PC)
Cmd+U (Mac)
Opens the Hue/Saturation panel for a selected layer.
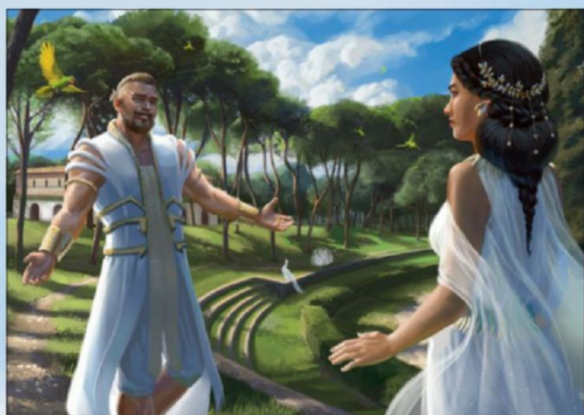
14 And then there was life

I add the final touches to the characters by softening the bright edges and adding more golden decorations. The golden material follows the same process as I've done with the glossy skin regions. Every story piece for my Caldyra book has life in it. The birds mirror the situation of the characters.
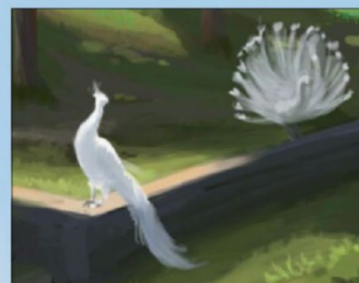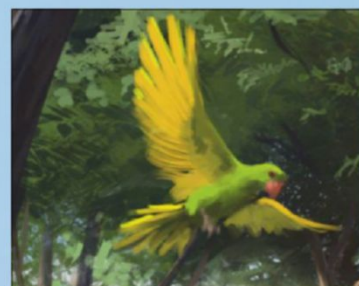
Photoshop

TAKE A LAID-BACK APPROACH TO ART

Peter Polach shares the way he illustrates a figure without much of a plan – or as he calls it, doing his "relaxing jazz thing on the canvas…"

Artist PROFILE

Peter Polach
LOCATION: Slovakia

Peter, aka Apterus, is a concept artist and illustrator who says that he has "a reasonable obsession with ugly dead things and fancy fabrics."
http://ifxm.ag/Sabapt

Diana, before I knew she was the Roman goddess of the hunt, started as a simple practice portrait piece. I had no major plans for the artwork and no clear vision of the end result. Indeed, apart from the fun I knew I'd have painting, I had no reason to create it.

A regular face study provided some ground rules – an anchor in real life for what I knew would eventually become a fantasy piece. What I really like about digital painting is that the canvas isn't strictly defined and an artist can take a painting in whatever direction feels right, wasting nothing but time. Although it's all good practice in the end.

I can't stress enough that to do this relaxing jazz thing on the canvas, one has to be familiar with the rules of composition, lightning and colours, and always keep them in mind. After all, a musician follows a harmonic progression and knows the limits of their instrument, even when improvising. Otherwise they'll produce an unpleasant cacophony.

As my brush strokes started to accumulate on the canvas, I carried out some quick research and added some specific items that support the emerging mythological theme more accurately.

So, as predicted, I had my fun with the picture. I later uploaded it to my online portfolio to help satisfy my craving for public attention. The image then got picked up for a card game, which just goes to show that posting personal work online is well worth doing – you never know who will come a-knocking… ▶▶

How I approach…
PAINTING WITHOUT A PLAN
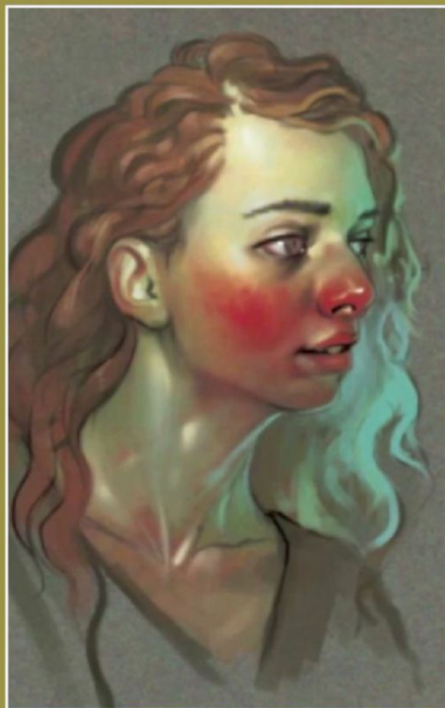
1 Sketch out the figure
I start with a simple line sketch. It's supposed to be a portrait, so I don't bother with trivialities such as the rest of the scene. I fill it with colours; I often prefer to start using colours early. I can check my values using a quick temporary filter.

2 Overpainting and research
I decide that the portrait is boring and the rest of the scene isn't working. I have a beer and do some aggressive overpainting – as if it's done by someone I despise – then go to sleep. I start the new day by researching materials and themes.

3 Add paint on a single layer
I render everything using a simple square brush on a single layer. I don't like using fancy tricks and specialised brushes. I like to do it the old-fashioned way, applying paint where it's needed. I often use the Liquify filter or cut and paste to move things around.

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PAINTING A DEITY

Flesh tones

I fight a long and frustrating battle with the flesh tones, which are unpleasant swamp colours at the beginning and fake tan orange for a brief, shameful period. I gradually settle for a light bluish tone over the previous less-successful attempts, which I enable to bleed through. This gives the skin a pearlescent quality that I'm happy with.
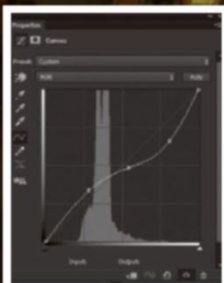
Curves

I often overdo the contrast, so I use the Curves tool to counteract this. It gives me control over the values, and preserves the variety of hues and when used in a separate layer it can be masked and used as a quick fix specifically for the part that bothers me.

Composition

During the painting process I develop a central composition with a later emphasis on an inverted triangle. This symbolism is associated with femininity and motherhood. It's created by light, with Diana's face situated in its geometrical centre helping to create a stillness; together with the prearranged quality of a classical portrait painting.

RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSH: 0D-TX

I prefer using Photoshop's basic default brushes with a little distortion to make them less sterile.
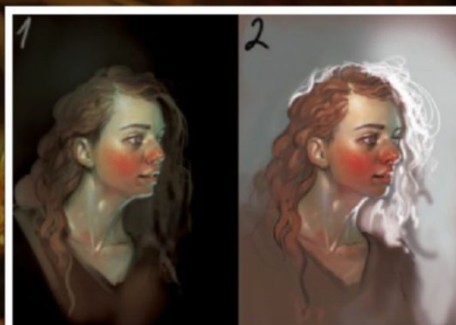
Vox populi

When I'm in doubt, I sometimes create a little poll and post it on social media. People love to express their opinions on my WIPs in a form of a number or letter. Occasionally, I even get good advice about something that I missed entirely. If nothing else, a couple of hours' break helps to clear my mind.

Artist insight

16 EXPLOSIVE COMPOSITION TIPS

Jon Foster presents a range of techniques that, when applied to your creative process, are sure to give your artwork added visual impact

Artist PROFILE

Jon Foster
LOCATION: US

Jon has been working as an illustrator for over 20 years, and his work has appeared on and in countless books.
www.jonfoster.com

Making exciting and new compositions can be daunting, even frustrating. That frustration can be fuelled by a need to nail down the idea of good composition in an objective manner. A plus B equals C, so to speak.

There are tools and rules for composition that are solid and work a bit like that A plus B equals C objective: the Rule of Thirds, the Golden Mean, Dominant Eye theory, the Pyramid Foundation and more. All have value, and all fit nicely into that understandable formula, but they tend to produce the same kind of results over and over again.

But there's more to it. I saw it in the compositions of artists who I admired. I learned that the creative processes was better served by not knowing exactly what to do in an A plus B equals C fashion, but by being willing to make mistakes to find the things that do work. It's a bit like cooking: you set out to make a good dish, follow the direction, keep to the measurements and ingredients prescribed, and ka-pow, a great dish!

Yet if you make that dish repeatedly it becomes common, even boring. You could create another dish by applying the same cooking tips 'n' tricks, but eventually you'll become complacent.

The challenge isn't there, and there are no surprises. You know that following those directions makes a good dish, but you want to make your own dish, to make something new.

To do this you could change the recipe, add new spices, take out spices, change the proportions of ingredients, change the ingredients completely. You'll come up with something new, something that could surprise you! Of course, that surprise could be a bad one, but we have to take these risks to learn new things. But as with food, nothing should gets wasted – we learn from all our experiments in creating.

1 VALUES ARE KEY

Value is the foundation of composition. It helps delineate shapes, shows atmospheric perspective, creates patterns and rhythms for the viewer to discover, as well as move their eyes around the composition. Not all values between objects need to be delineated; often close values can lead to lost edges that help open up a section of the composition, as well as enable the viewer to subconsciously fill in the missing information. Values within each object, negative space and backgrounds aren't always flat, but should have transitions or gradients to add interest, as well as create interest against the space next to it.

> ❝ Values help to move the viewer's eyes around the composition ❞
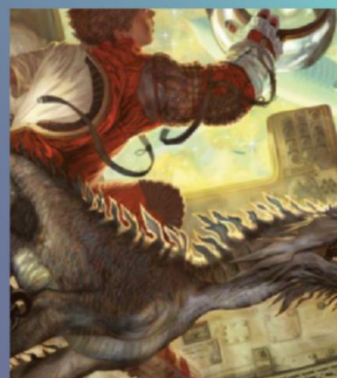
2 SHAPE SCIENCE

Shapes and silhouettes goes hand in hand with value, but can also be easily described with line. Interesting shapes can be subjective, but often they help describe the object. Shapes don't need to be complete or overly descriptive, but there should be hints in their silhouettes that lead us to assumptions of what they are. Finally, variation in forms will go a long way to creating visual interest.
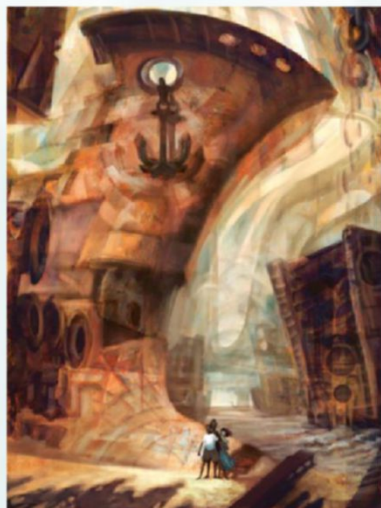
3 SCALE INFORMATION

Objects and shapes that overlap imply depth as well as scale. A man standing in front of another man who's twice as tall will let us know that the man behind must be a giant. Add value changes for atmospheric perspective and you get a very simple and dramatic read on scale changes between the two. But changes in scale just for the sake of contrast is visually stimulating as well.
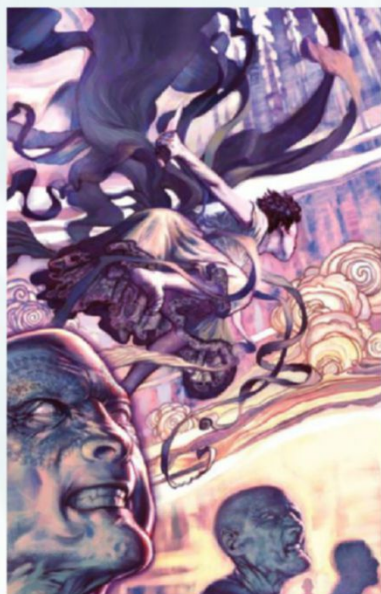
4 CONTRAST VARIETIES

Contrast is a key part of the value setup, but there are other kinds of contrast: soft and hard edges, colour contrasts, and quiet areas that differentiate busy areas. Clever use of contrast in your paintings can move the viewer's eye around your composition, let them know what the important areas are, and keep them from leaving too quickly.

5 TAKE THE GROUPING OR MASSING APPROACH

The grouping or massing of objects, colours and values in a composition create new shapes. The world we live in is full of massing and grouping: cars on a road, people in a small group talking, dogs playing in a park, trees on a hill, for example. Grouping goes hand in hand with value, shape, scale, balance... all of it. Placing multiple objects together can create an object that's significantly larger than a sum of its parts. ➡➡

6 REASONS FOR APPLYING OVERLAP

Overlap is common in our daily lives. After all, something is always in front of something else. Overlapping objects will, by the very nature of covering something up, obscure part of the object behind. This is a good thing: we humans love to fill in the gaps with our imaginations. The viewer will subconsciously flesh out the rest of the information. Overlap also helps with grouping in a composition. A painting of trees that are evenly spaced and sized to each other on the canvas will be boring, whereas a painting that has some trees larger, some smaller, some overlapping each other, some bunched up and some spread out will be much more visually appealing.

7 BODY LANGUAGE

Our recognition of body language is related to how we're hard wired to identify patterns and shapes. Paying close attention to the subtle signs of communication in body language will go a long way in helping you convey emotion and intent in your characters. But there are times for the exaggerated body language as well. Look at dance and stage acting for some pumped-up versions of communicating through body language.

## 8 PATTERN AND RHYTHM

This is created when we put together values, shapes and groups in certain ways. We're rewarded throughout our daily lives when we recognise certain shapes and patterns. You don't have to make your patterns flat and repetitive – in fact for the most part we want to avoid repetitive flatness. Think of your use of pattern like a music piece: an ebb and flow of notes and chords.

9 ACHIEVING BALANCE, OR THE FEELING OF BALANCE

Often a symmetrical composition can feel static, too balanced. Yet there are times when this is intentional, such as with certain portraits, or objects that need a dominance and weight. But more often asymmetry is more interesting. The problem is that while being asymmetrical the composition itself must have an implied balance. This doesn't have to happen with equal-sized objects, like on a see-saw. To carry that analogy further, if a large person were on one side of the see-saw, then to balance things out in an interesting way we could put several small objects or people on the other side, or move the big person closer to the fulcrum. Grouping and value will play a big part with balance and creating interest.
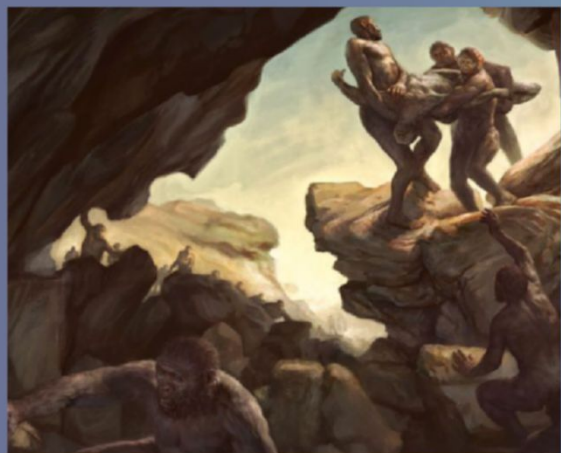
10 DIRECTIONS OF FORCE

This is how the viewer's eye moves around the composition. All of the compositional elements mentioned in this article play a part in making up implied force directions. These can be broken down into straight and curved. Of course, a composition isn't made up of just one or the other, but often one may dominate in the composition. Straight lines can be very direct, explosive and dynamic. Curved can be lyrical, layered and calm. Use them both as well as all the variations that can be achieved by combining them.

> 66 Action can be abstractly implied with certain graphic symbols, such as motion lines or blurs 99

11 CHOOSING THE MOMENT OF ACTION

Naturally, this can be implied by depicting an actual action – running, punching, jumping, say – but it can also be abstractly implied with certain graphic symbols, such as motion lines or blurs. Action can also be implied by its aftermath: the man standing above another who's dazed and holding his bloody jaw, for example. I find that the most interesting action is either before the moment of climax (potential) or after (what just happened?). Imagine the winding up of a punch or the guy flying away from the punch. This means that the viewer can fill in the action, and they create how dynamic it is in their heads. ➡➡

12 VARYING THE POINT OF VIEW

We walk around seeing everything at eye level, so if we use eye level as a point of view in our compositions we'd better make sure other parts of the composition are interesting, or that we intended for the scene to feel common place. To help make things more dynamic we can simply move the viewing camera down so that we're looking up – this makes us feel part of the scene as well as convey an unsettled feeling because we're lower than most of the characters and action. Conversely, looking down on a scene makes us feel detached and disconnected from the drama playing out below.

13 FIGURE AND GROUND

This is simply the object against some kind of background. A person standing on a road, or a flower in a vase on a table. The main part of this concept is that an object or shape is living in some kind of environment. How we set that object off from, or blend it into this environment, is the important part.

14 PERSPECTIVE

The use of architectural perspective and vanishing point perspectives help to lead the viewer's eye to area of focus in your image. Atmospheric perspective helps with mood, as well as implying atmosphere and distance, because it's able to separate the fore-, mid- and background.

❝ If we're looking down on a scene, it makes us feel detached and disconnected from the drama that's playing out below ❞

15 BLOCKING IN VALUE AND SHAPE

Here's a quick example of how I often starts a painting

1 Work up an idea

With a prepared thumbnail or a general idea in mind, I start to block in values, placements and shapes. I use both line and areas of value at this stage.

2 Visual interest

This stage is basically a continuation of the first one, but here I'm working to refine the shapes and thinking about the placement of the values to create interest. This can go on for quite a while!

3 Introduce colour

When I feel like I'm getting somewhere with the composition I slowly begin to add colour, keeping in mind that some shapes, placements and values will need to be changed.
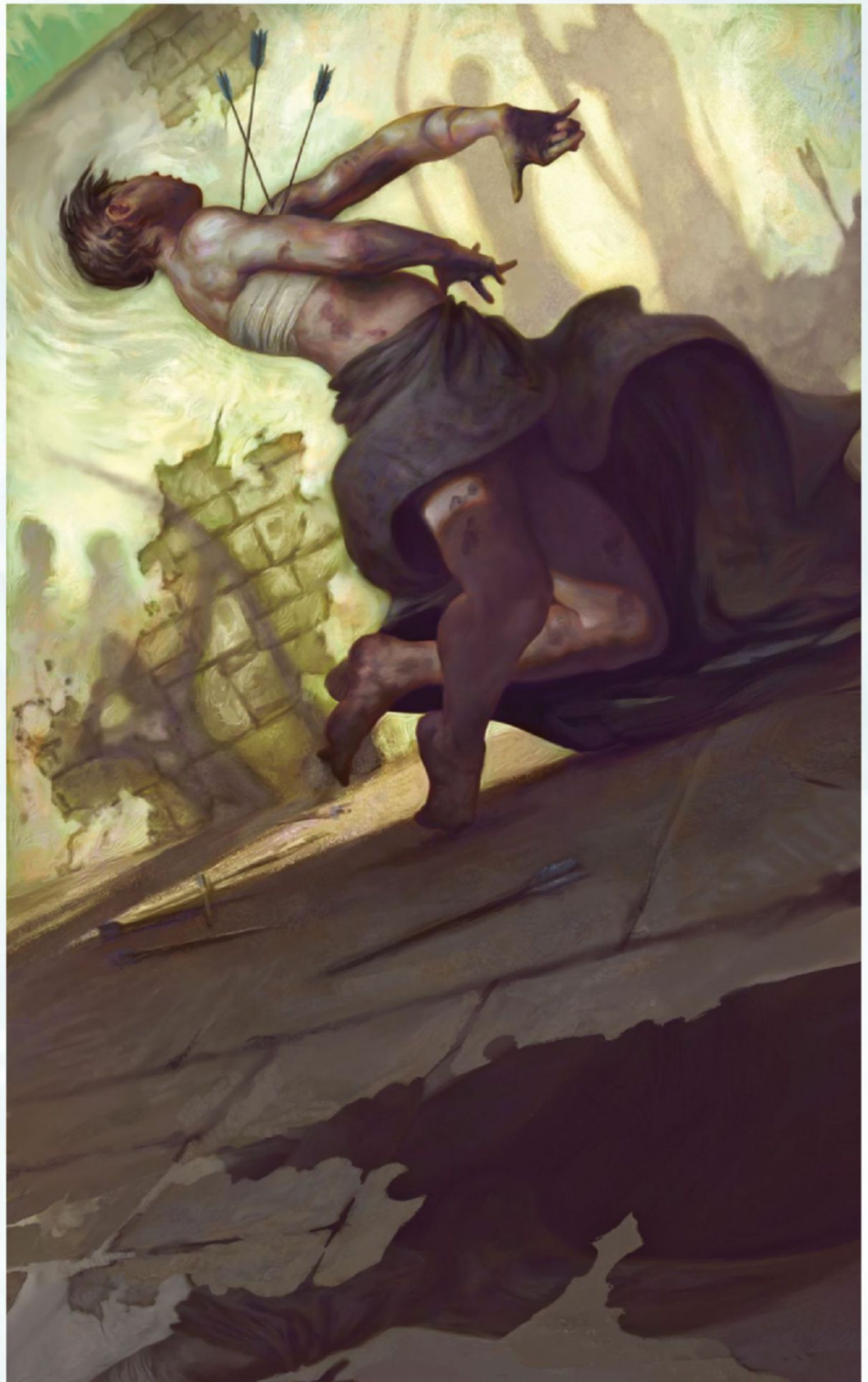
16 THINK BIG, EVEN WHEN WORKING SMALL

Implying that elements from outside the picture frame exist (usually by casting a shadow) can inform the viewer that the scene or world you're illustrating is grander than the small part you're showing them. Elements outside the picture frame, via a cast shadow, can divide, obscure or even define objects and environments in the picture frame.

Painter

PORTRAIT ART IN COREL PAINTER

Using Painter 2017, the latest version of Corel's natural media art software, **Borislav Mitkov** sails the High Seas as he explains his portraiture process

Artist PROFILE

Borislav Mitkov

LOCATION: Bulgaria

Borislav is a freelance concept artist and illustrator. Previously he spent the past 10 years as a concept artist at Ubisoft Sofia, where he worked on the Rayman Raving Rabbids, Tom Clancy, Prince of Persia and Assassin's Creed series.
www.bmitkov.com

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 6 now!

This workshop will introduce you to the basics of Corel Painter, and I'll be using the most recent incarnation, which is Painter 2017. I'll also guide you through my painting process.

I'll start things off by setting up the canvas, setting its size and orientation. Then I'll tackle the colour management of the document and select the correct colour profiles. It's also important to configure your workspace, by customising the layout and making it suitable to your way of working. This could involve placing tool palettes in certain positions or removing them altogether, for example.

During the painting stages I'll take you through the various tools and brushes that I use, and explain how they interact with the canvas texture, and how colours blend with paper textures. I'll explain my approach to sketching in more detail, in which I use either the digital pencil or custom brushes, and break down my glazing technique and how to use this traditional art approach to colouring on the digital canvas.

The workshop is intended for all skill levels. The brushes I use are default brushes that I've tweaked slightly, and I also makes use of custom brushes from other artists as well: Dan Milligan, Craig Mullins and Jaime Jones. These are Photoshop brushes that I've brought into Painter using the new import feature, which was introduced this year.

I hope I'll keep your attention throughout the whole article. I'm not much of a writer myself, but I'll do my best to keep the things clear and fresh as possible. So, let's get going!
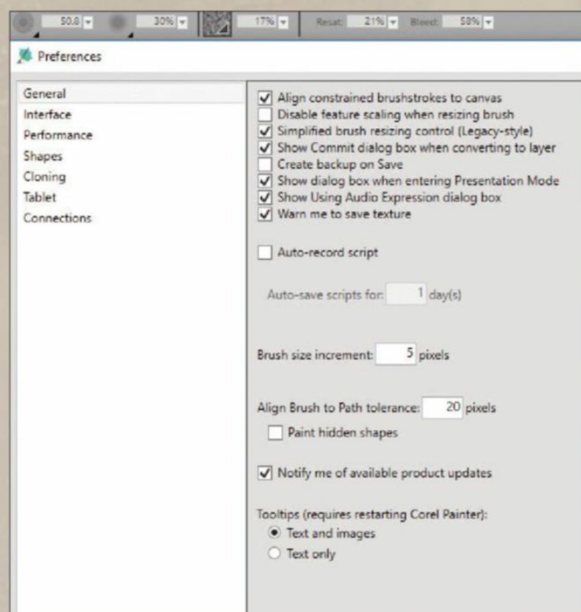
1 Adjusting the settings

One of the most important things you should do before painting is adjusting some of Painter's settings: click Edit>Preferences>General. On the General tab I check Create Backup on Save. This will create an additional backup file in case you experience a crash or decide to revert to an older version of your work. On the Interface tab you can configure the Cursor Type; I set it to Enhanced brush ghost. I establish a darker interface via the Color Theme option, and adjust Default View Mode to Single Document View, which removes the additional scroll bar at the bottom. On the Performance tab, I set the number of processor cores used by Painter. I'd advise leaving the Undo levels at their default setting, though.
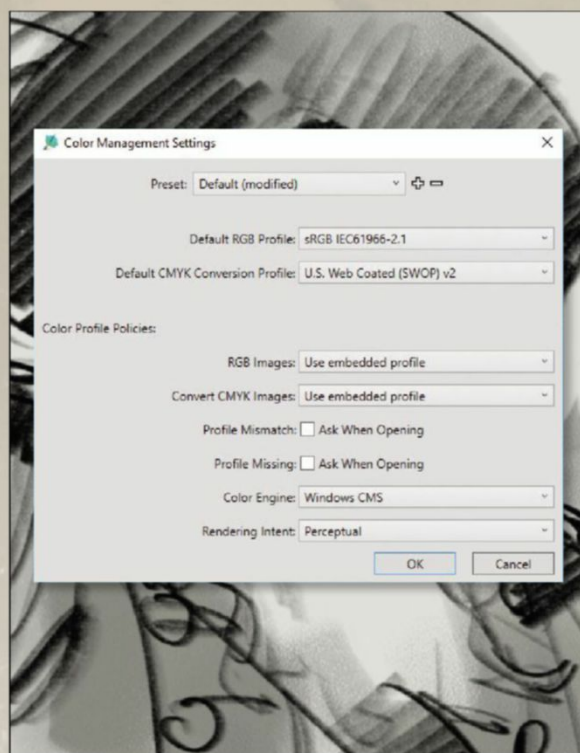
2 Setting a Color Profile

The default Color Profile I use for my work is sRGB IEC61966-2.1. I have my screens calibrated using third-party hardware, but I always save my work in this default profile. This means my files can be opened in different programs without noticeable changes in the original colour values. This is important, especially if you send your files to your clients or export them for the web across various devices. ▶▶

Workshops
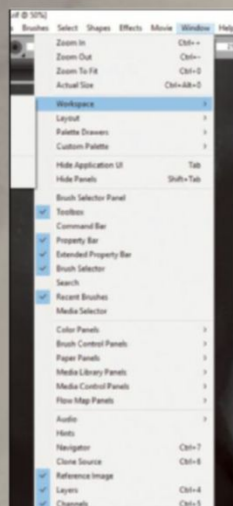
3 **Customising a Workspace in Painter**
Painter enables you to save your interface layout, settings, brushes and paper textures library as a Workspace. It can be accessed from Window>Workspace, where you can Create New, Delete, Import or Export your Workspace and share it between devices or with other artists. You can also save your layouts and switch when necessary. Windows and tool bars can be moved and repositioned; I prefer to remove the bars and menus I don't use often, but which you can open using shortcuts. My core tools are the Color wheel, Color Set Libraries, Layers and Channels and Reference Image window, with my brushes and settings on top, leaving a large area to work on.

4 **Setting up the canvas**
For this workshop I've decided to do a portrait, so I'm going to use A3 size and 300ppi resolution. If you prefer to work on a smaller-sized canvas, you can always go A4 or A5, and lower the resolution to 72ppi. The smaller file size will suit posting online. In the File menu you can also select the colour of the canvas and the paper texture. I'll start in greyscale, which I'll turn into colour later using a glazing-like technique, so I choose a simple white canvas, without any gradients or shade of colours. I find it's easier to build light and shadows using greys.
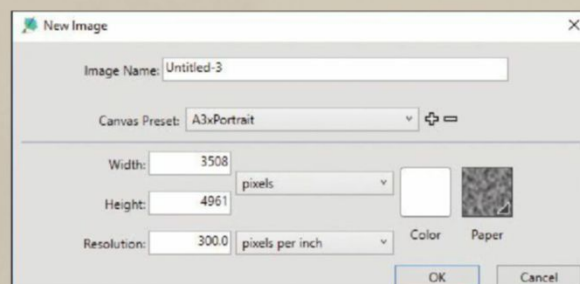
5 **Produce rough sketches or thumbnails**
I've found that the easiest way to throw my raw ideas down on to paper is by creating quick sketches or thumbnails. Whether you do concept work, illustrations or storyboarding, the approach is the same. I always start with simple sketches, and prefer working with line – just creating hints of what I have in mind. I don't go into details because they belong in the painting process, which follows. Imagine them as small copies of what you'll have in your final painting. The Painter brush I use is called Real 6B Soft Pencil Grainy – it interacts with the paper texture, which gives the lines a more natural look. I also activate the Tilt function so that's it easier for me to switch between thin and wide lines, just like a traditional pencil would do.

Shortcuts
Navigator
Cmd+7 (Mac)
Ctrl+7 (PC)
You can use the Navigator to better orient yourself in the document window.
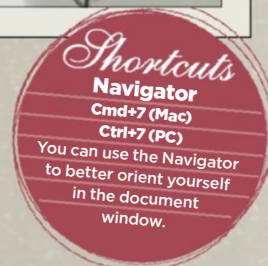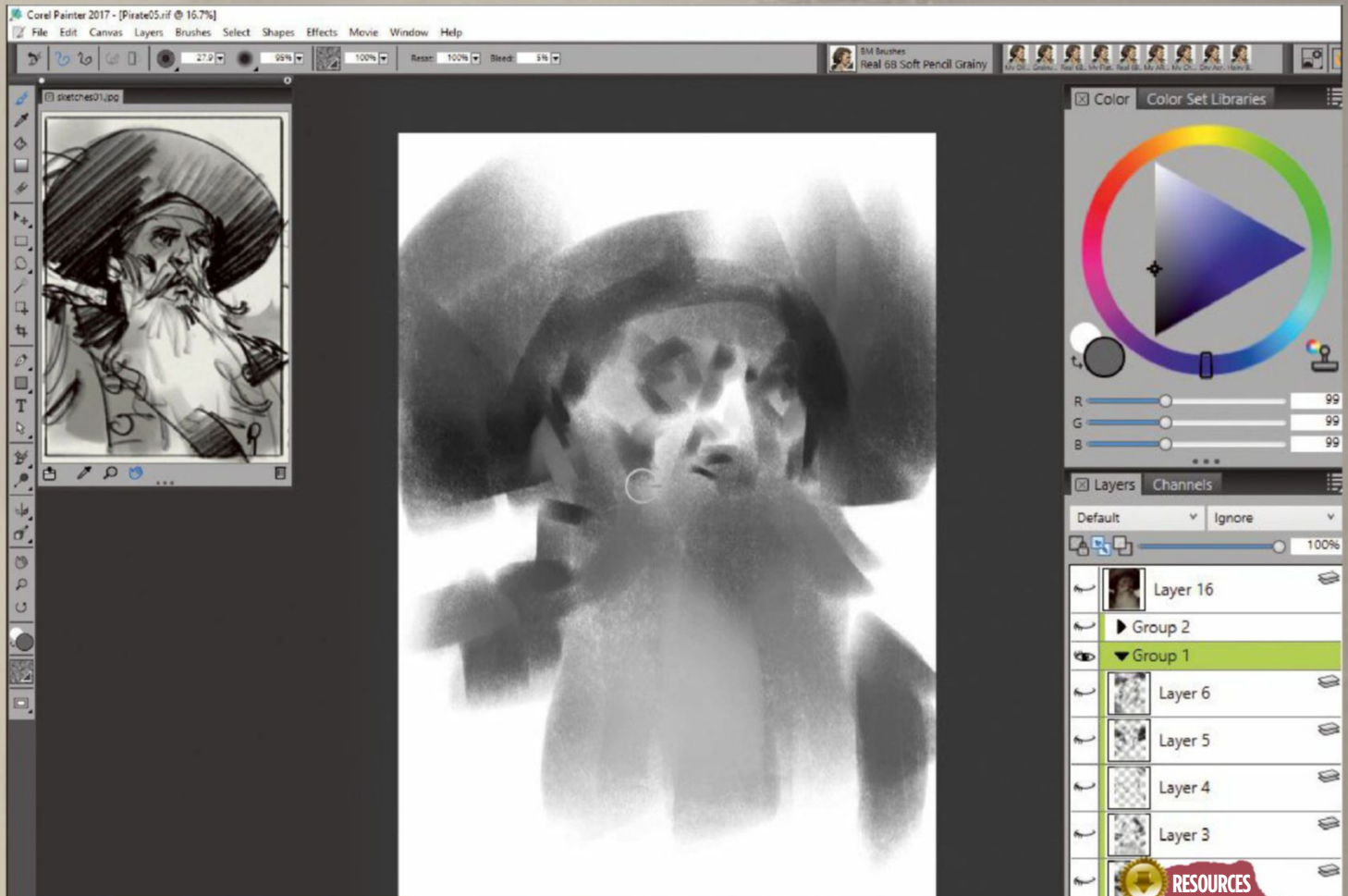
6 Taking the sketch and going big

Once I settle on a character that I want to push further I take the thumbnail and place it in the Reference window. This is a great tool, which can be used either for references or picking colours. The purpose of this step is to paint the portrait as close as possible to the original idea and composition, although changes are possible further down the road, of course. Working fast and rough at this point enables me to maintain the freshness and dynamism of the painting. I'm using a big brush and a grainy paper texture for blocking the first shapes of what is going to be a portrait of a pirate with a very fine beard.

7 Why start in greyscale?

I'm not all that confident when combining colours in a specific palette. On the other hand I love greyscale, black and white: it's enough to create a good range of contrast and express my ideas. I believe that a good greyscale painting gives you the flexibility to make changes – and if you work in the game or film industry then changes are inevitable! So this approach enables me to experiment with colours as much an I want once the final design is fixed. Put another way, once I'm happy with contrast between elements, I'll start playing with colours. ➤

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PAINTER

CUSTOM BRUSHES: REAL 6B SOFT PENCIL GRAINY

As mentioned in step five, this is a pencil brush. It's great for sketching or adding details, and is my favourite all-rounder.

MY OIL PASTEL

One of the finest pastel brushes in Corel Painter with its triangular form. I use it for basic sketching, blocking shapes and hard edges. Frankly, it can be used at any stage of the painting process.

MY CHUNKY PASTEL

Another customised default brush. This one has a softer brush with a bristle texture – excellent for blending colors and softening edges. I use it mainly in the later stage and for detailing.
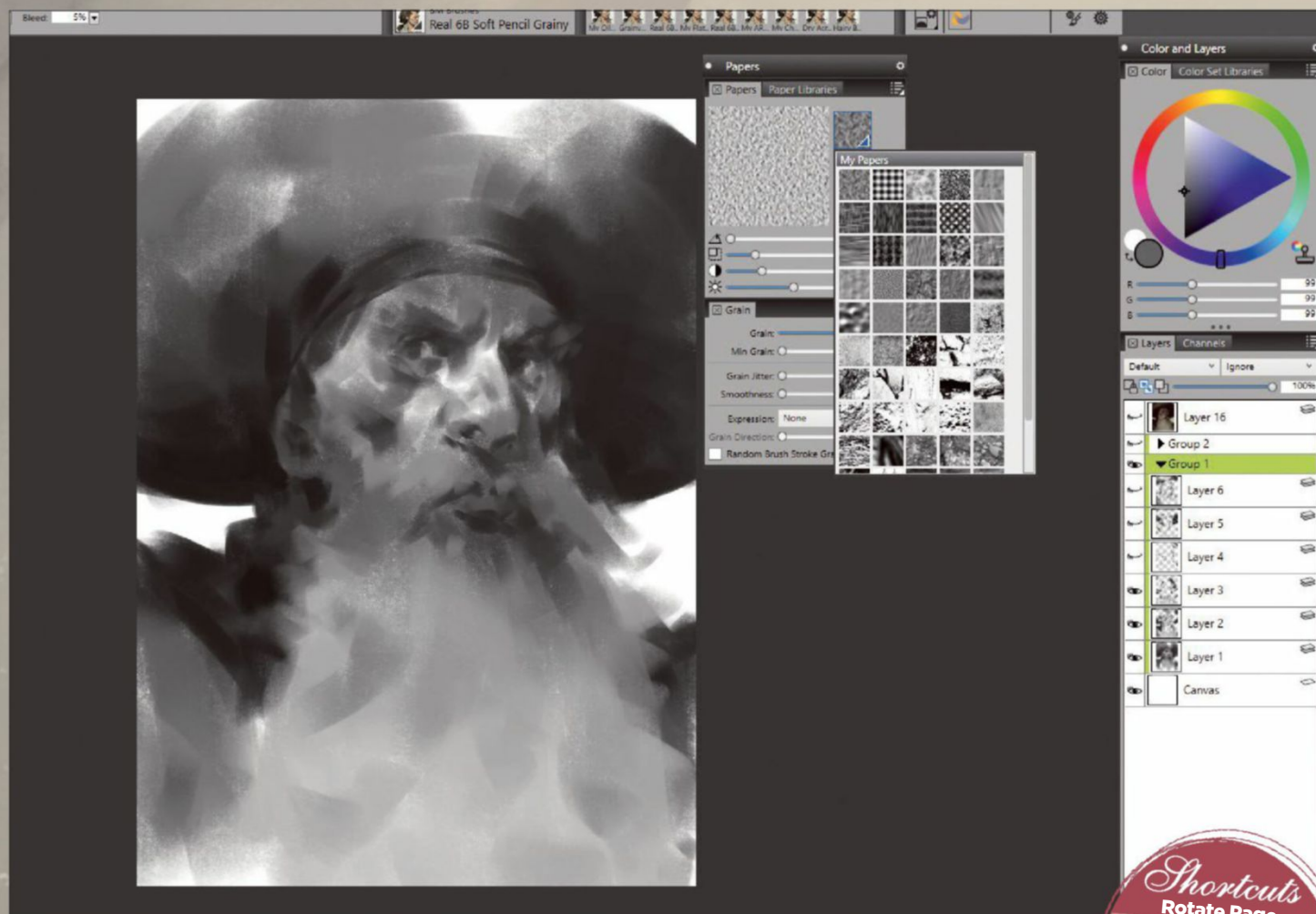
8 Paper texture and brushes

In Corel Painter, the texture of brush strokes comes from the brush interacting with the texture of the canvas. I can easily switch between the default and any custom-made textures, using the Paper libraries or Paper Menu (press Ctrl+9). The brushes that I use in this workshop are based on the Pastel brushes category. They're customised to suit my painting style, but also have two important features: they reveal the texture based on the pen pressure; and they blend colours perfectly.

Shortcuts
Rotate Page
E (PC & Mac)
This shortcut enables you to rotate the page, to accommodate your drawing style.

9 Building up the figure

I block the basic shapes of the face and outfit with very wide strokes, adding spots here and there, and defining the pirate's facial features. I also set the mood and lighting, letting the texture and brush stro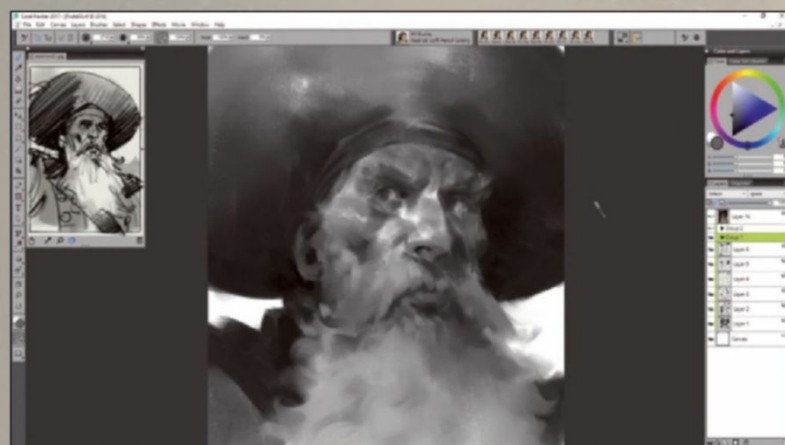kes help with those little happy accidents. At this point I'm trying to stay in the middle of the grey spectrum; I never use 100 per cent white or black. It does look a bit flat, but this is just the first step: it's the foundation on which I'm building on. I create new layers whenever I'm happy with the result – this enables me to make changes if subsequent work doesn't quite go to plan.
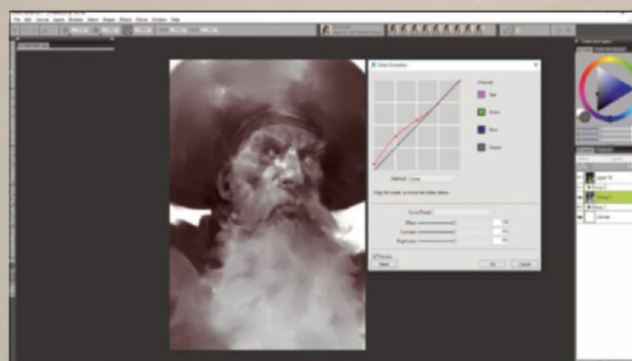
10 Keep on rendering...

…but don't overwork the painting at this stage. This is still the sketching phase, so I continue working loose and experimenting with some elements. I use the Undo function a lot, looking for that perfect stroke. I add a bit more details to parts of the portrait that are focal points – the face and beard – and leave the rest up to the imagination of the viewer (his hat and coat). I always imagine a vertical line going through the focal point and place all the detailing there, while I leave the edges rough and unfinished. Remember, the painting is finished when you decide it's finished. During this greyscale stage I try to balance all the elements, so the colouring later on will be easier.
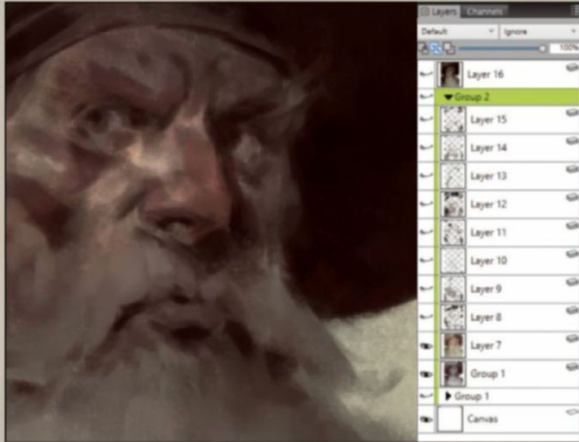
11 Colouring or glazing?

Let me explain a bit about the digital glazing technique. The whole work is done in greyscale with attention to values. Afterwards I use layers and different blending modes – Multiply, Overlay, Color, Soft Light and so on to add colour on top. In other words, I'm colouring the image. First, I flatten all the layers. Then, using the Correct colors tool (select Effects>Tonal Control>Correct colors) I choose the red channel and adjust the curve until I achieve some reddish/brown values.
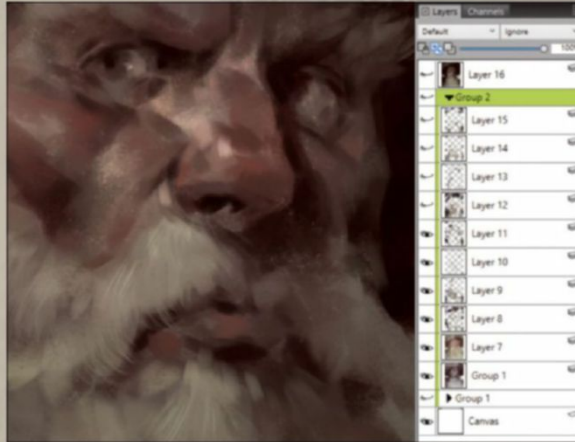
12 Experiment with colours

I create a Multiply layer and lay down some colours. And here's why I get rid of the greys: when starting to add colours, your pastel brush will pick up and blend some of the colours from the underpainting. And you don't want to mix grey and get muddy colours. I use a very desaturated subtle green colour as the base, which mixes with the red, creating some interesting effects. Some parts of the face like the nose, cheeks and ears need additional colour to make the face pop out of the canvas.
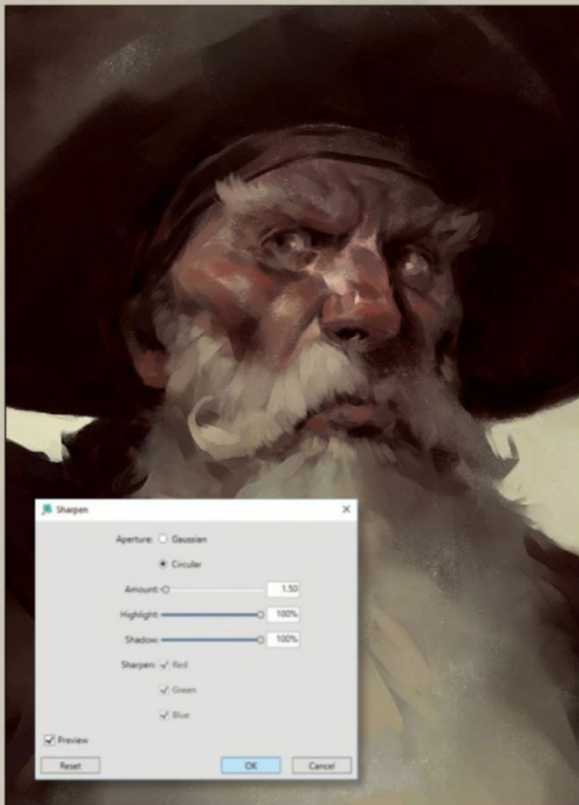

13 Almost there

Once I have the basic colours down and I'm happy with the result, I create a default layer on top and start painting. I use the same Oil Pastel brush for some hard edges and My Chunky Pastel brush for smoothing and blending. I'm trying to keep some of the original strokes that I like while refining the image, adding contrast and details. I try not to pick the colours from the painting, but rather from the colour wheel, otherwise things gets muddy. I also experiment with different paper textures at this point and different brushes: a smoother texture for some parts of the face, bristle brushes for the hair, and so on.

14 Final touches and resizing

I keep on rendering until I'm happy, turning layers on and off to check that I'm on the right path and not overworking the image. I reserve the final top layer for blending some parts of the painting and detailing others. Once I think that I'm done, I usually resize the image – in this case it's 18 per cent of its original size – then sharpen it so that the details and textures will pop out, and do some colour and contrast corrections. The tools can be found by selecting Effects> Tonal Control>Brightness/Contrast (press Ctrl+Shift+B) or Effects>Focus >Sharpen. One final tip: always keep the original file in case you decide to print it.

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS
ImagineFX
Reviews

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

8 PRODUCTS ON TEST
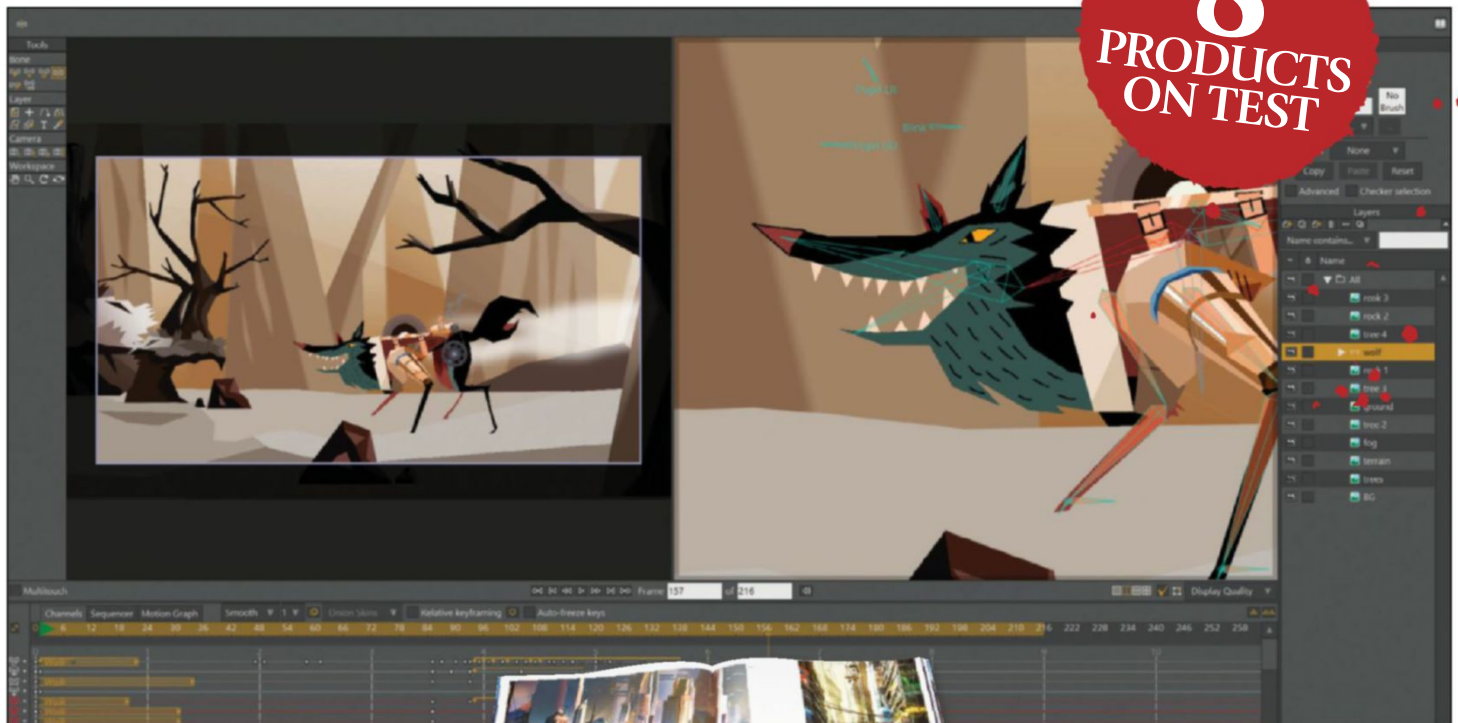
BOOKS

88 The Art of Aardman
Concept work from some of the studio's famous projects, such as Wallace & Gromit, Shaun the Sheep and Morph.

89 The Art of Deus Ex Universe
An arresting collection of art from Eidos artists who visualised the near-future.

89 Paris Je T'aime: The Sketching Lover's Companion
A diary of a month in Paris from the urban sketcher, as he returns to his home city.
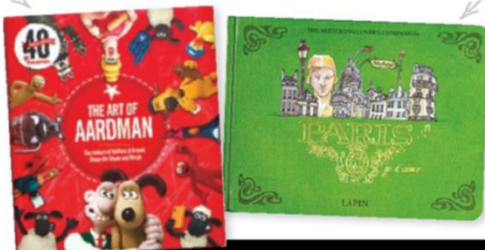
90 Worlds: The Art of Raphael Lacoste
A compelling collection of game and film environment art from Raphael Lacoste.

91 Fathoms: The Art of Michael Manomivibul
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93 Moho Pro 12
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TRAINING

95 Creating a Gun in Modo
Using one of the best CGI programs around, 3D artist Tor Frick presents an efficient method for prop modelling.

RATINGS EXPLAINED ✍✍✍✍✍ Magnificent   ✍✍✍✍ Great   ✍✍✍ Good   ✍✍ Poor   ✍ Atrocious
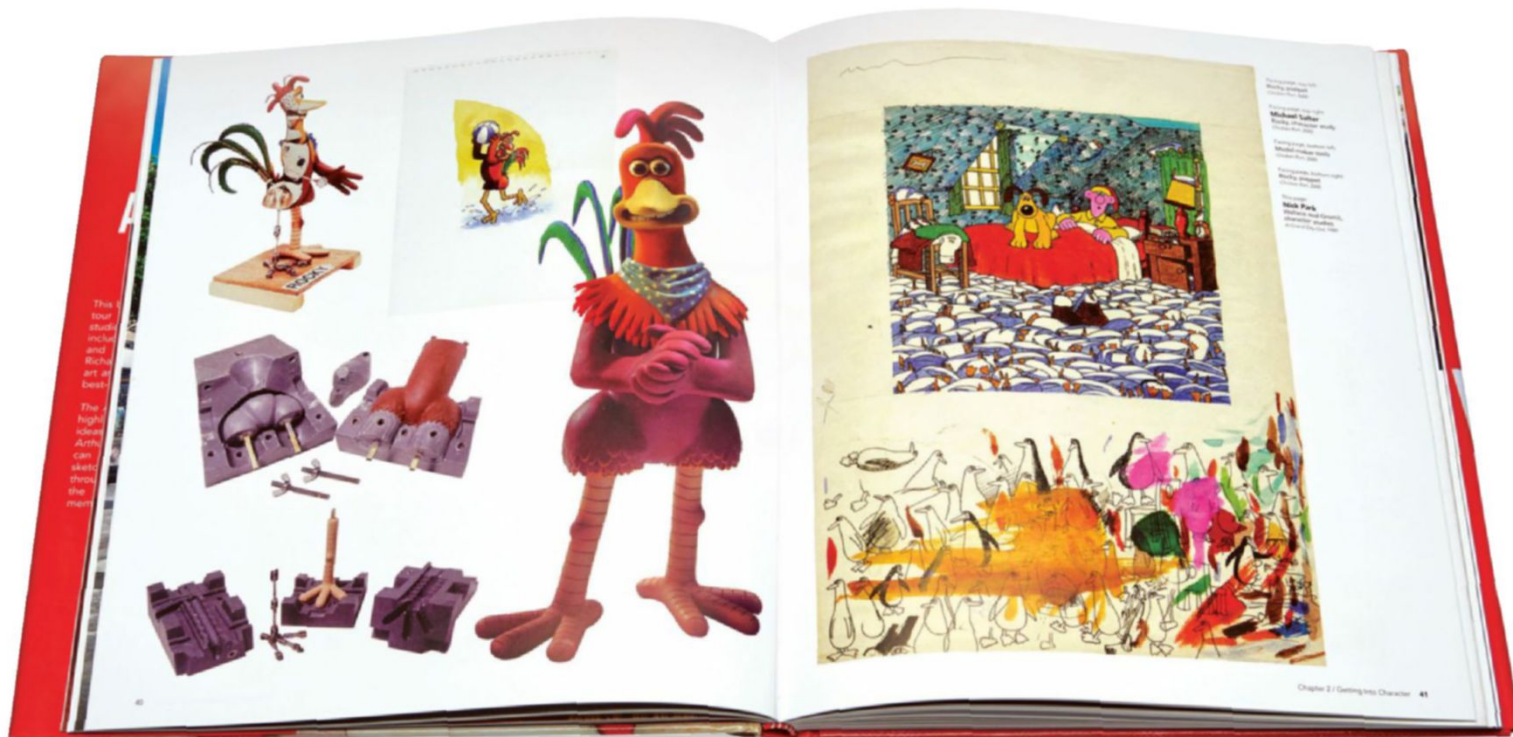
The Art of Aardman

ANIMATION ARCHIVE The maker of Wallace & Gromit, Shaun the Sheep and Morph reveals the concept work behind some of its most famous projects

Author Aardman Animations **Publisher** Simon & Schuster **Price** £17 **Web** www.simonandschuster.co.uk **Available** Now

Famous around the world for its stop-motion animations, Aardman Studios has entertained generations of viewers with its distinctive and whimsical films. **The Art of Aardman gives readers a glimpse into how the company develop its iconic characters and sets, by sharing a wealth of concept art, sculptures and sketches.**

This is the studio's first combined collection of artwork, and it opens with separate introductions by Aardman's co-founders Peter Lord and David Sproxton, charting their lifelong journeys as animators and filmmakers. These short introductions are the bulk

Gromit in the Greenhouse, from The Curse of the Were-Rabbit, 2005.

of the book's text, but they give a good-enough impression of how writers and artists develop stories and characters, as well as how the studio overcomes challenges and adapts to technological advances.

The book is split into six chapters covering an animator's main tasks: shaping an idea, designing characters, creating worlds, preparing props, making machines, and lighting a scene. Through doodles on scraps of paper and photos of completed models, chapters chart the development of relatively small projects all the way through to feature films.

However, a lot of the images look as if they're near the end of the creative process. Concept sketches of the villainous penguin from The Wrong Trousers, or the escapee chickens from Chicken Run, appear very similar to what we see on screen. Without explanatory notes, it's unclear how many iterations were worked through before these designs were settled on.

Sometimes you see character development, such as pencil sketches revealing the evolution of Lady Campanula Tottington's hairstyle and the shape of the Were-Rabbit. Yet the

The Mind Manipulation-O-Matic: a production still from The Curse of the Were-Rabbit.

images themselves are left to do all the work, and for readers looking for more in-depth artistic insight this may prove frustrating.

There is interesting minutiae to be found in pencil sketches and ink drawings of characters including Morph, and Wallace & Gromit. Here, comical details such as Wallace watching Coronation Street in his spaceship and Morph's shape-shifting antics reveal the character and humour that have helped Aardman become the successful studio it is today.

RATING ✍✍✍

The Art of Deus Ex Universe

DYSTOPIA CALLING Learn how Eidos's artists visualised the world of the near-future, in this arresting collection of video game art

Authors Jonathan Jacques-Belletete and Martin Dubeau **Publisher** Titan Books **Price** £30 **Web** www.titanbooks.com **Available** Now

Deus Ex is to cyberpunk what World of Warcraft is to fantasy. The first-person stealth shooter game is set in the 21st century and centred around augmentations that turn normal humans into superheroes. Eidos-Montreal's art design team has played a key role in visualising this high-end concept, and this majestic hardback pays tribute to its groundbreaking work.

A foreword by game designer Warren Spector and an introduction

Protagonist Adam Jensen's design "was a two-year endeavour".

from executive art director Jonathan Jacques-Belletête outline "future realism": art that owes fidelity to the real world but is extrapolated out to the near future.

The book explains how artists fulfilled these principles in creating characters, weapons, tech, locations, and in-game adverts for Deus Ex's dystopian world, for titles Human Revolution and Mankind Divided.

Its 300 sketches, concept art and 3D renders give real insight into the making of the popular franchise. There are discussions on the multiple designs of Adam Jensen and near-future Prague – inspired by both Brutalism and Middle Ages architecture. It's a collection of game art both fans and casual observers will get plenty from.

RATING ✍✍✍✍✍

Paris Je T'aime: The Sketching Lover's Companion

STREET ART The urban sketcher returns to his home city to bring us a celebratory and quirky diary of a month in Paris

Author Lapin **Publisher** Promopress **Price** £16 **Web** www.promopresseditions.com **Available** Now
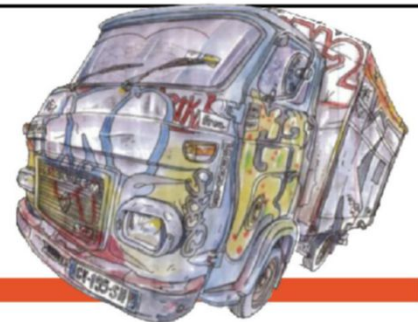
Lapin, a French illustrator and artist based in Barcelona, is a hero of the urban sketching movement and he's been busy of late. Paris Je T'aime is one of three sketchbooks he's produced in 2016, alongside Modernisme: Beyond Gaudí and Barcelona: An Urban Sketchbook.

This one sees him return to his home country, where he spent a month observing, conversing with people and

Lapin says he aimed to "celebrate the city that has given me so much".
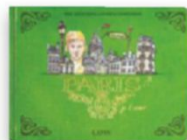
sketching on the streets of the French capital. If the idea isn't original, it's in Lapin's highly original sketching style that the appeal lies. Using a black ink pen as his main drawing tool, he sketches in old accountant books and adds subdued colours with watercolour pens. It's an unusual approach and the result is a form of amiable art that borders on twee, yet retains an attractive authenticity.

Lapin's quirky artworks are threaded together in this bijou book by handwritten tales of his travels through Paris, from artist's squats to the Eiffel Tower, Aligne Market to the Moulin Rouge, and beyond.

In all honesty, we're not sure who the audience is for this, but we are sure of one thing: we like it very much.

RATING ✍✍✍✍

Worlds: The Art of Raphael Lacoste

PANORAMA SPECIAL The epic environments of game and film artist Raphael Lacoste get the crowdfunded artbook they deserve

Author Raphael Lacoste | **Publisher** Iamag | **Price** £39 | **Web** www.iamag.co | **Available** Now

When it comes to digital environments, Raphael Lacoste is one of the biggest names around. Once Ubisoft's award-winning art director on Assassin's Creed and Prince of Persia, he later moved into films to work as a matte painter and senior concept artist on the likes of Terminator Salvation and Death Race. Then in 2009, he went back to games, working at EA, and is now back at Ubisoft.

Earlier this year, he launched a crowdfunding campaign for an artbook that would bring his best work together in one place. Worlds: The Art of Raphael Lacoste is the result, and from the cover image alone – an epic, stirring vision of dragon boats, mountain vistas and gigantic, menacing tentacles – you know you're in for a treat.

Raphael Lacoste's Lost Island – his concept art for Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag.

The hardback, landscape-format book kicks off with a foreword by Halo art director Sparth, and then an introduction from Ian McQue, lead concept artist on Grand Theft Auto I–V. Then it's on to the main event: Raphael's stunning artwork, spread generously across 112 pages.
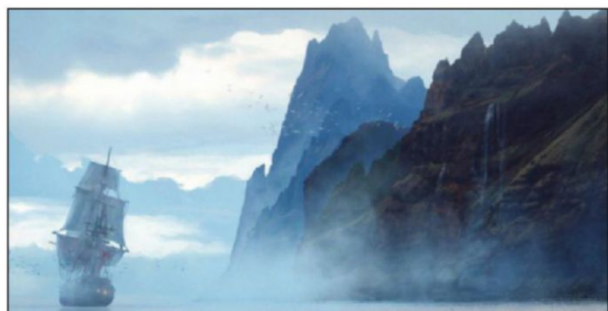
The four main sections cover the artist's work on fantasy, science fiction, his concepts for the Assassin's Creed saga, and book covers, respectively. Each begins with a short discussion by the artist, printed in both English and French. Brent Ashe's layout benefits from minimal clutter (the captions are restricted, for the most part, to title and year) and intelligent use of white space, giving each piece full room to breath.

And what work this is. With bold use of colour and tone, breathtaking attention to detail and a sweeping sense of wonder, these scenes stimulate the imagination on an epic scale. Our personal favourites include the explosive Mothership Wreck, a terrifying vision of a giant spacecraft hurtling towards a futuristic cityscape; The South Kingdom, depicting a horse-backed warrior surveying a heart-pulsating panorama from Assassin's Creed; and After Earth: A Perfect Beast, one of the scariest-looking aliens we've seen in ages.

Raphael painted the cover art to After Earth: A Perfect Beast, a prequel story to the film.

A fifth chapter features a selection of the artist's sketches, providing a fascinating insight into his process, and then a final section includes three short tutorials, each showing how Raphael created a particular artwork in five steps.

While it's quite light on pages for the relatively high price, for an admirer of Raphael's art, this beautiful book is simply essential. There's also a lot in these pages to offer any artist with an interest in creating digital environments in general, too.

Note that this book is a limited edition run, which is only available on the IAMAG website, although we're told there may be a reprint if demand is high. And we're pretty sure it will be.

RATING ✍✍✍✍✍

Fathoms: The Art of Michael Manomivibul

DEEP DIVE From aquatic adventures to knightly heroes, ink artist Michael Manomivibul's artbook invites you into his imagination

Author Michael Manomivibul **Publisher** Michael Manomivibul **Price** £20 **Web** www.mikemanoart.com **Available** Now

Another crowd-sourced effort, Fathoms is the first art book by illustrator Michael Manomivibul (who has a workshop on page 102). He's best known for the artwork on The Princess Bride: An Illustrated Edition and his work summons atmospheric feelings of mystery and adventure.

Michael's art is distinctive, and that's partly a matter of technique. He works in Sumi ink, building up with layers of ink wash, playing with texture and value, then finishing with digital colour
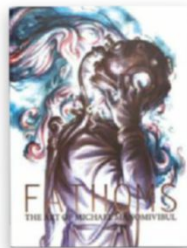
Bubbles, 2009. "A piece about release," says illustrator Michael Manomivibul.

or glazes of coloured inks and watercolour. But the power of his work is its imagination. From deep-sea divers and terrifying tentacles to heroic knights and brutal beasts, each scene is suggestive and gives the viewer a welcome opportunity to complete the full story in their minds.

This softback book is beautifully printed on heavyweight paper and almost every piece gets a full page,

enabling you to examine and enjoy every detail. It's just shame that at just 82 pages, it's a fairly slim volume. There's a small amount of text, printed in a font that makes the book reminiscent of a children's title. Indeed this collection offers a deep-dive into the imagination, from an artist who deserves to be more widely known.

RATING ✍✍✍✍

Human Figure Drawing: Drawing Gestures, Postures and Movements

FIGURING IT OUT This guide to drawing human anatomy is less about strict adherence to rules and more about learning from your mistakes

Author Daniela Brambilla **Publisher** Promopress **Price** £22 **Web** www.promopresseditions.com **Available** Now

There are a number of ways you can learn to draw human figures. Some books give you strict rules to learn, but this is not one of them. It takes the view that learning to draw anatomy is like starting to talk or to play an instrument.

So rather than spend too much time on theory, Daniela Brambilla instead sets a series of exercises and encourages you to learn by doing – while learning from your mistakes.

Daniela Brambilla teaches drawing at the highly respected Istituto Europeo di Design, in Milan.

This large-format, 260-page hardback covers almost every area of human figure drawing. It begins with the basics: gestures, contours and understanding position, proportions and lines of force. Then it's on to more advanced topics such as expanding your imagination and capturing "the

movements of the soul", as Daniela rather evocatively puts it.

With plenty of examples, and exercises that encourage you to get scribbling, it feels like a relaxed evening class held by the best teacher in town.

RATING ✍✍✍✍✍
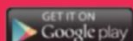
The new GUI is adaptable, but the defaults feel fresh and up-to-date with other art and design software.
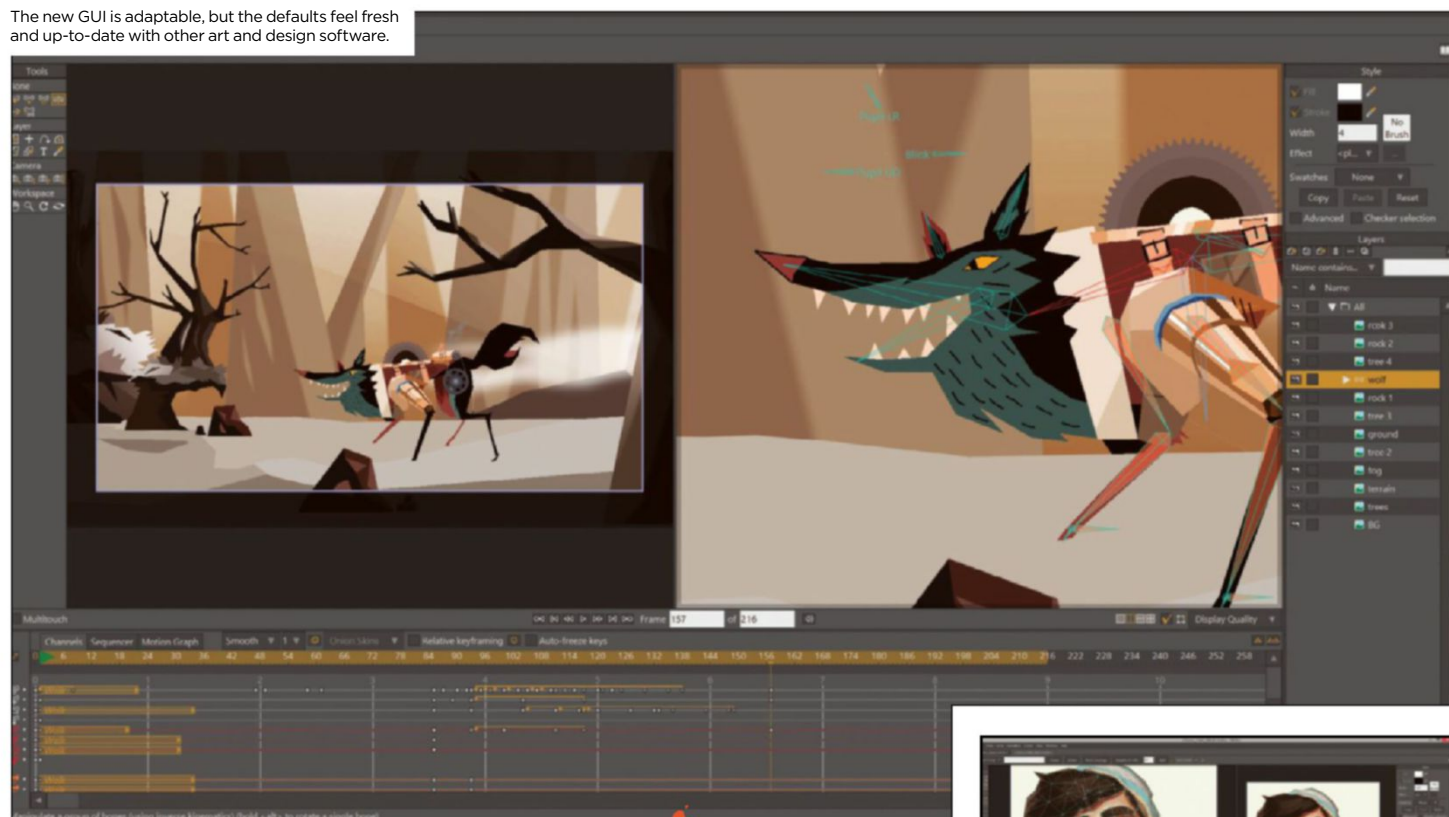
Achieve better lip-sync results, with Moho's new Mesh Warp tool.

Moho Pro 12

MAC & PC

MORE MOJO How successful is Smith Micro in revamping its mature animation software, the previously named Anime Studio?

Price £320 (£160 upgrade from Anime Studio 11) **Company** Smith Micro **Web** www.smithmicro.com

The initial feeling when launching Moho Pro 12 is one of freshness. Although the updated interface will be familiar to users of previous versions, it's much more in keeping with current interface trends and should be less intrusive as you work.

That said, you can adjust the brightness of menus, as well as colours of highlights. Similar adaptability is available for window placement and you can save workspaces, to aid efficiency. Elsewhere, there have been reworkings of two key areas. Both the Layers panel and the Content Library have been overhauled to make things easier to use – much-needed changes.
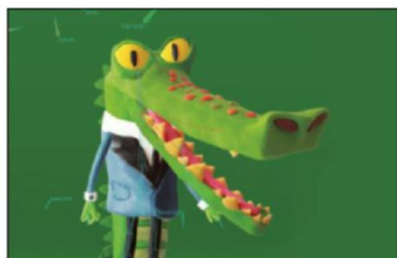
Inverse kinematics gives greater control over bones.

DETAILS

Features
- Revamped GUI
- Improved vector art controls
- New layers layout
- Better frame-by-frame workflow
- Real motion blur
- New content library

System Requirements
PC: Windows 7 or newer, 1.3GHz Pentium 4 or newer, Athlon 64 or newer, 2GB RAM, 800MB hard drive space, OpenGL enabled GPU, 1,440x900 display, disc drive
Mac: OS X 10.8 or newer, 1.3GHz CPU, 2GB RAM, 800MB hard drive space, 1,440x900 display, disc drive

Rating
★★★★☆

Although it's an animation tool, Moho users spend a lot of time creating objects, and the developers have upped their game in this area. Version 12 has a revised vector system, which makes the task of drawing accurate curves easier than ever. New handles allow for fine tuning while keeping things clean, with as few points as possible to achieve best results. Vector import and export is better too, with

> ## The new Mesh Warp enables you to define areas of your art

full support for various stages of your creative process. If you like to create your assets in Illustrator for example, you no longer need to worry about what will make it through the transfer.

While the bones and onion-skinning tools have always been strong, it's good to see Smith Micro adding to the features with some innovative ideas. The new Mesh Warp enables you to

define areas of your art, either bitmap or vector, which can then be deformed and keyframed. Uses for this are endless, but it's a good way of setting up selective squash and stretch as aids for lip-syncing, adding to facial expressions, or creating swaying foliage. It's a deceptively simple implementation which, with a little planning, produces some great results.

Animators enjoy new goodies, too. Keyframing can be given separate channels, to make controlling, editing and navigating easier. There's also a new IK (inverse kinematics) constraint to isolate defined bones, reducing the need for unwanted knock-on changes.

There are many, many more new features and tweaks, from real motion blur to batch exporting, all of which make Moho Pro 12 a worthy upgrade. It feels like a fresh app that sits well with other creative software, and has some excellent new innovations.

If hesitant about taking the plunge, you can trial the software, or purchase the cheaper Moho Debut 12 (£56), to get a good idea of what you can achieve with the program.

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Just search for 'ImagineFX' on these selected platforms…

The gun prop is built up from basic shapes as Tor adds extra forms and components.

Modo's layer-based materials system means details can be added to generic textures.

Want to create props to this level of quality? Tor Frick's video for Gnomon shows exactly how it's done.

Creating a Gun in Modo

WEAPON OF CHOICE 3D artist Tor Frick presents a lean, mean method to model props in one of the best CGI programs around

Publisher The Gnomon Workshop **Price** Subscription only (from £39/month) **Format** Streaming video **Web** www.thegnomonworkshop.com

Modelling guns is bread and butter for Tor Frick's day job in the games industry, and Modo is his preferred tool for creating his weapon designs. It's a superb piece of 3D software, combining powerful features and a cohesive interface with a more affordable price tag than the likes of 3ds Max or Maya.

Tor's video shows a complete workflow for creating a hard-surface prop. Even if you're not a games artist, this is the sort of object where it's useful to be able to make it, so you can view it at different angles and under different types of lighting for reference. Not everyone has the studio space to make maquettes like James Gurney…

Tor's emphasis in his workshop is on modelling, from the early blocking-out stages to the final details. He goes through several key everyday techniques, such as using Boolean tools to cut out segments of the object. There are also plenty of tips for avoiding

any of the technical snags that can pop up when you model with polygons.

It's worth pointing out that Tor's workflow relies on scripts that aren't part of Modo as standard, but the streaming video web page includes a download that provides these scripts, along with the gun project file for you to study at your leisure.

Later chapters in the video see Tor switch to Modo's materials system, adding metal and wood textures to a previously grey model. What's interesting here is that Tor is able to use Modo's powerful layer-based materials system to improve the gun's appearance without resorting to painting on UV texture maps, which is a long-standing but fiddly 3D technique.

The modelling techniques in particular are relevant to more 3D apps than Modo, so this video has broader appeal than you might suppose. If you're mastered the basics of 3D and are looking for ways to get more made in less time, you'll find them here.

SAMPLE VIDEO

DETAILS

Topics covered
- Blocking out
- Making cut-outs
- Detailing with ready-made parts
- Adding shaders
- Building custom materials

Length
232 minutes

Rating

ARTIST PROFILE

TOR FRICK

Tor is a 3D artist with over a decade of experience working in the entertainment industry as an art director, a concept artist and an environment artist. Tor was art director on Wolfenstein: The New Order and Wolfenstein: The Old Blood, and has contributed to a range of best-selling video games including Far Cry 3, Gears of War 3, Gears of War: Judgement, Doom, Fallout 4 and many more. Tor says that among his wide range of creative skills, his passion lies with hard-surface modelling and design.

www.torfrick.com

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX
PRESENTS

FANTASY

illustrator

This issue:

HAVE FUN WHEN…
GOING BACK TO BLACK
Michael Manomivibul uses a minimal colour palette to produce maximum results **Page 102**

Joseph Murphy

LOCATION: US
WEB: www.jmmurphyillustrator.com
EMAIL: jmmurphyillustrator@yahoo.com
MEDIA: Gouache, ink, acrylics

"I'm greatly influenced by illustrators Mark English and Bernie Fuchs, whose work made me completely change my portfolio from very tight realism to a more expressionistic style of contemporary illustration," says Joseph, a freelance illustrator who works in book publishing and the entertainment markets.

The artist's work has appeared in shows and exhibitions through the Society of Illustrators of NY/Los Angeles, 3x3 Magazine, Creative Quarterly and ICON. Joseph says that he "appreciates the films of Terrence Malick and the mysticism of water as portrayed in literary fiction."

IMAGINEFX CRIT

"Joseph's style of painting, which has its roots in expressionism, benefits from his use of textures, which adds another beguiling dimension to his artworks. I love his nod to Turner's signature seascapes."
Claire Howlett, Editor

1 FAIRY
Ink, gouache and digital, 5x5in
"I wanted to experiment and see how far I could push the use of texture in one piece. By varying the types of textures with values, I was able to create a scene within an environment that could almost emerge from the page."

2 HALL OF LANGUAGES
Oil, 8.5x11in
"I've always loved the work of illustrator Mark English and have sought to capture the sense of atmosphere in his work."

3 THE MERCHANT
Copper, salt and vinegar, gouache, oil, tar and digital, 7.75x9.25in
"Inspired by the works of JMW Turner, I imagined how he would have depicted a figure in one of his landscapes."

🇺🇸 **Tom Sarmo**
LOCATION: US
WEB: http://tomsarmo.com
EMAIL: tomsarmo4@gmail.com
MEDIA: Pen, ink, watercolour, gouache

Tom has worked as an illustrator for over 30 years, and his art has featured in children's books and products, character design for film, commissions and gallery art. He loves anthropomorphism, folk tales and has "a life-long admiration for Maurice Sendak's illustrations."

Tom often teaches a variety of illustration workshops and his art is in private collections across the US and in Europe. The artist is hard at work on his fourth illustrated book, loves old timepieces, and his most prized possession is a haunted clock.

IMAGINEFX CRIT

"Tom has a good eye for blending an air of innocence with undercurrents of dark humour. He's also able to bring plenty of detail into his art, without diminishing its visual impact."
Cliff Hope,
Operations Editor

1 THE WATCHER
Acrylic ink and gouache, 5x7in
"This was drawn for a collaborative group show and book project called Strange Conversations. Eight illustrators randomly wrote phrases, picked them from a hat, illustrated them and compiled them into a story."

2 THE PROJECTIONIST
Pen, ink and watercolour, 12x12in
"This piece is my favourite of a triptych done for Screenplay at Helikon Gallery this year. The three works all depicted anthropomorphic movie equipment and the film Frankenstein."

3 THE CUPBOARD GOBLIN
Brush, ink and watercolour, 8x10in
"In 1941, a murderer dubbed The Spiderman broke into a house in Denver and lived in the attic undiscovered for nine months, helping himself to food and things. This Goblin is sort of the same type of fellow, but he's not a killer."

4 THE OLD WITCH
Brush, ink and watercolour, 8x10in
"Creepy old ladies from literature fascinate me, as do fanciful borders that extend the story implied within the illustration. This witch was created as a poster design and gallery piece."

VIDEO WORKSHOP ▶

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Pencil · Gouache · Ink · Photoshop

CREATE IMPACT WITH LIMITED COLOURS

MICHAEL MANOMIVIBUL walks you through his process of producing character art with maximum visual impact, while using a pared-back colour palette

The best art is created within limitations. There is joy to arranging the bare minimum of elements for the maximum impact. Here I'll aim to create an impactful piece using a limited palette.

While attending art school I dabbled in almost every medium, but nothing quite clicked until I picked up ink. Inspired by comics artists and cartoonists, I found pleasure in creating mood and atmosphere using just a jar of black ink. Recently, I've been trying to incorporate colour back into my work, while retaining what I love about ink. Digital tools have enabled me to experiment and develop my sense of colour, while still working in the traditional medium I love most.

ARTIST INSIGHT

BEAT FRUSTRATION
It's okay. Get up, stretch, go for a walk, get a coffee. No one makes good decisions while frustrated, so take a moment away from the piece, then come back with fresh eyes and you'll likely see a clear way forward.

Contrast is core to my work, visually and conceptually. I love images that pop, offering both depth to get lost in and space to breathe. Lighting is fundamental, too. I like to think of it theatrically, adding drama and drawing the eye in. I also consider emotional and conceptual contrasts: hope doesn't exist without despair, love isn't as potent without resentment. Here I want to suggest great violence, in the past and future, but in the present moment all is still and beautiful.

I work primarily in ink wash. I find that there's something incredibly satisfying about ink. One bottle of black can evoke so much tone and atmosphere. It's permanent and demands to be handled with care.

I work with two brushes at once. One loaded with ink or pigment, the other with clean water. This way I can lay down a mark with the ink, then blend it out with the clean brush. I can also work in reverse and lay down a clean water wash, then drop pigment in for softer edges and flowing textures. Ink is about moisture control: the more water, the harder it is to control. Yet relinquishing control is the key to beautiful washes and having fun.

Michael loves the instant gratification of ink and the drag of brush on paper. He's worked on books about spooky beings and grand adventures. Follow his shenanigans and find more of his work at www.mikemanoart.com. ▶

1 Ideation and thumbnails

I work from my sketchbook or scratch paper, knocking out thumbnail sketches as quickly as possible, just to get something down on paper. This is often the most difficult stage for me as I figure out what the point of the piece is. I often write down keywords to help anchor the sketching with concept, narrative or mood.

2 Concept lockdown

Once I settle on a thumbnail, I'll make a more detailed and clearer version to test out basic light and dark shapes, and to make sure the concept has enough depth to be taken to finish or presented to the client. Clarity is key.

3 Drawing the final form

I take the drawing to its final form. I sometimes blow up the thumbnail, print it very lightly and sketch over it. Or I might start from scratch, depending how much I liked the thumbnail sketch. Here I start over and draw it larger so I have greater cropping flexibility later, while still adhering to the client's requested format.

4 Value studies and lighting design

Once I have my final drawing, I scan and print out multiple copies of it, to try out different lighting schemes and compositions. When I find one I like I render it in pencil as a roadmap for the painting. Ink is unforgiving, so it pays to know where you're putting down your dark shapes before you start.

5 Transfer and final drawing

I transfer the final drawing on to watercolour paper using a lightbox. I make a conscious effort to turn the light on and off as I draw, checking the drawing as I go. This is because mindless tracing can lead to a drawing that lacks that extra bit of life or magic.

6 Laying down ink

Finally: painting! Working in ink wash, I take Sumi ink and dilute it into different concentrations with water. I start with the darkest area of the painting. This anchors the piece as I refer back to this area as I build up the painting, always knowing that I can't go darker than this starting point.

BRUSH TIP

INVEST IN THE BEST
Good brushes keep their point no matter the size. They also hold more paint and water, for better washes.

MATERIALS

PAPER
■ Sketchbook
■ Plain printer paper
■ Fabriano 140lb hot press watercolour paper

BRUSHES
■ Isabey Sable watercolour brushes, round #6 and #7
■ Various synthetic round brushes

INK AND PAINT
■ Sumi ink
■ White gouache

PENCILS
■ Orange Col Erase
■ HB pencil
■ Mechanical pencil

OTHER
■ Two water containers, for cleaning brushes and for wetting washes and mixing
■ Kneaded eraser
■ Photoshop

7 Blocking in the piece

As I paint I jump around the canvas a lot, building up one area before moving to another, making sure I don't spend too much time on certain elements. It's important that the whole piece gets an initial pass because it's very easy to fall in love with working on one area, inevitably overworking it. ➤

8 Layering and rendering

I really enjoy watching a piece emerge from the white paper. In my mind I'm using the brushes to push away the white, revealing the dimensional piece in relief underneath. I tuck ink into the nooks and crannies of the drawing, adding depth as I go while bouncing back and forth between different areas.

9 Painting texture

In the final tonal study I also think about what textures I'm trying to achieve, which is battered steel in this case. There's only so far you can take it in the pencil sketch – when painting, the ink will begin to do the work of creating surface texture. Brush strokes find their marks naturally when you trust the medium.

10 Diving into colour

The majority of the piece is now painted. I've left the central area bare so far, because it scares me. The whole piece pivots around getting a convincing glow from this area. I decide to break out the watercolours and try a new effect, because recently I've been attempting to incorporate colour traditionally back into my work.


11 Regrets, I have a few (well, one)

I hate what I've just painted in watercolour. I placed too much trust in my understanding of the medium to get the effect I wanted, when I should have worked on it more in the sketch and done colour studies. To fix it, I slather black ink over the mistake. Black hides all sins and can be a reset.

12 On to Plan B

I lean back on to white gouache, a medium that I'm much more comfortable with, and paint the lights back in. I'll have to add colour to the piece later in Photoshop. I noodle around and paint details. This is the endless polish stage and I could live here forever, but deadlines are calling, so it's time to scan and finish digitally.
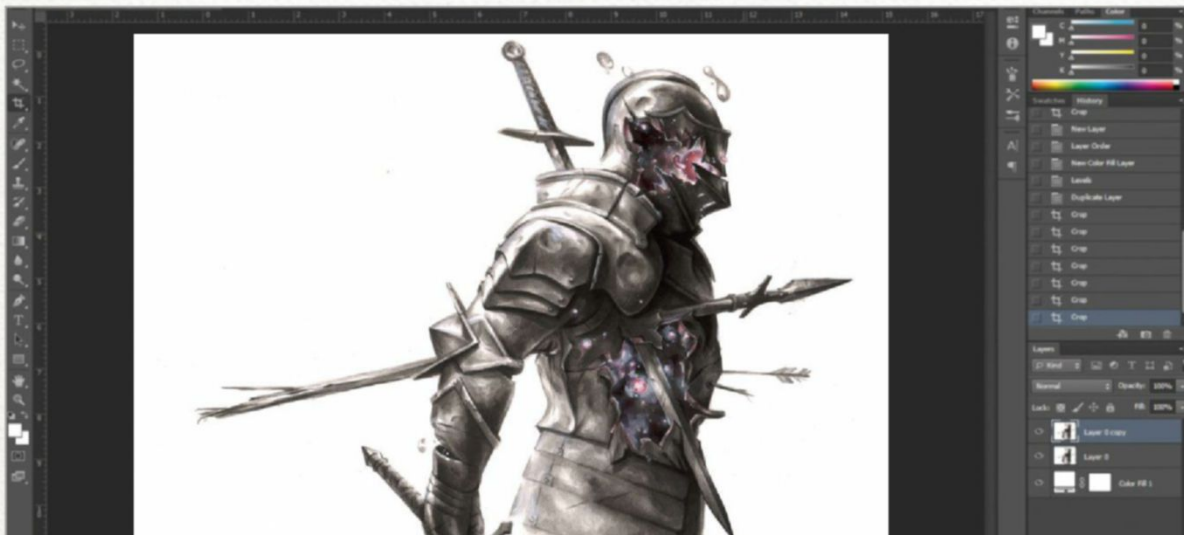

ARTIST INSIGHT

SKETCH QUICKLY AND FEARLESSLY
Often I'll follow my gut and land on a sketch early. However, don't settle just yet. Go crazy on your next ideas. You already have something you like, but you never know what else you might shake loose.

13 Scanning and cleaning

I scan the piece at 600dpi for archival purposes. This will also enable me to print the image larger if there's ever a need to. Next I adjust Contrast and Levels, to bring the scan more in line with how I feel the piece looks in life, because something is always lost during scanning.
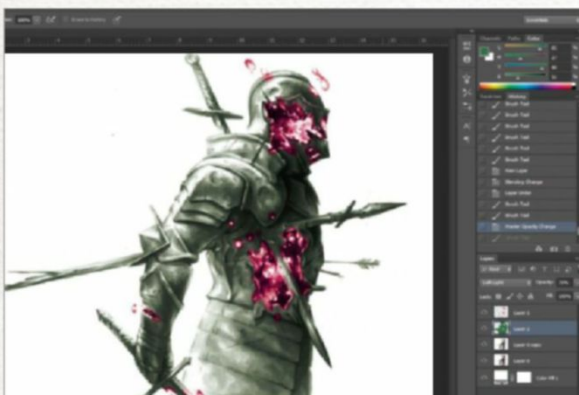
14 Colour and layers

I tune some of the value structure using the Dodge and Burn tool, then add layers for each colour element in the piece. Because there's a fully rendered ink wash painting already, all I need to do at this stage is colourise using Photoshop's Blending modes. Soft light and Overlay are my go-to modes.
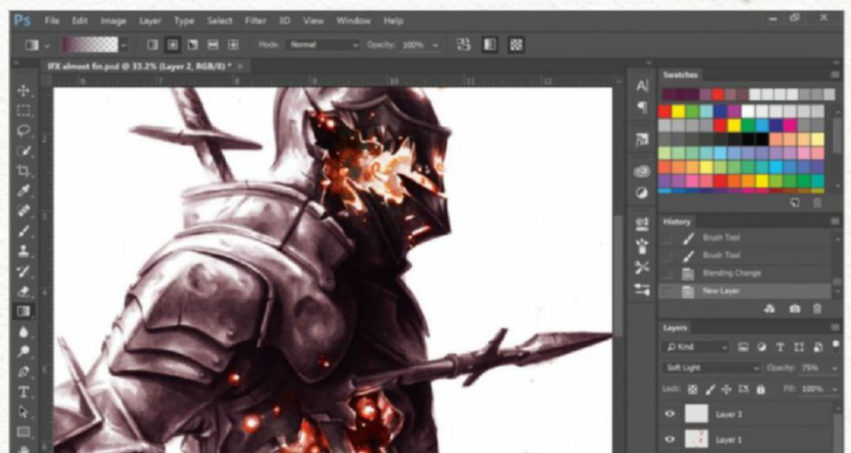
15 Finishing the piece

I experiment with different colour combinations using the Hue and Color Balance sliders. Once I decide on the final colours, I hone in the initially loose digital brush marks and add hot edges to the lights, to better sell the illusion of the light source. I finish the piece by cropping the larger painting to the final trim size.

Pencil *Watercolour* *Photoshop*

PICTURE BOOK ART FROM LABYRINTH

CORY GODBEY uses traditional media coupled with Photoshop's composition tools to create three key characters from the much-loved children's fantasy film

This year marks the 30th anniversary of Jim Henson's classic film, Labyrinth. As a part of the anniversary celebration my picture book, Labyrinth Tales, tells three original stories, each focusing on a different character from the ground-breaking, strange and dazzling world that Jim Henson, Brian Froud and many others worked hard to create.

When it comes to writing and illustrating for something as beloved as Labyrinth, my main goal is to approach it honestly and respectfully. It's an honour that I've not taken lightly. I feel that, in a manner of speaking, I've been allowed into Brian's garden to gather up sticks. Put another way, he built the sandbox and we get to play in it.

Well, perhaps one of these days Brian will come swinging out of his front door with a broom and chase me out of his garden (because, really, who wants some kid playing in your yard!) but until then I've enjoyed the artistic pleasure of intensely studying his work. It's richly complex, astonishingly beautiful and truly magic.

To bring these new stories to life, I work hard to be certain that I've gathered appropriate reference for the characters and the world. There's a delicate balance you must walk while trying to create something honest and new, yet at the same time respecting the original work. It's been gratifying to see the response from fans who have enjoyed my take on these classic characters!

I feel incredibly grateful that I've been given the opportunity to draw and write for such widely adored characters, and in some small measure add to the legacy of Jim Henson.

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. You can see his work at www.corygodbey.com.

Step-by-step: Assemble a group of lovable characters

1 SPEEDY APPROVAL
Due to the need for a speedy publishing turnaround, this cover had to come together quickly. Fortunately, my initial suggestion to the publisher (which was to feature a handful of the characters gathered around the Wiseman while he read a story) was accepted. I quickly scribble out the idea and send it in to Henson for approval.

2 SEPARATE CHARACTERS
I usually draw and paint traditionally; however, the one unusual way I build the cover is to draw each figure separately. Working this way offers me flexibility and enables me to make edits quickly. For example, the cover originally featured a bouncing head of a Firey, which was cut to accommodate the title and text.

3 PERFECTING THE COMPOSITION
Next, I bring the elements into Photoshop and assemble the final cover. All of the character drawings are done traditionally, however the colour is painted digitally. I handle all background elements sky, trees and plants in watercolour. By placing the trees on layers beneath the characters and moving them around, I find my composition.

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Points of interest: Developing the group dynamics

THE VALUE OF VALUES
The difference between a muddy image or an illustration that can be read immediately is, simply, values. When working digitally, I keep an adjustment layer at the top to constantly check my values. If something's not feeling right then a quick check of the values will usually point out the problem.
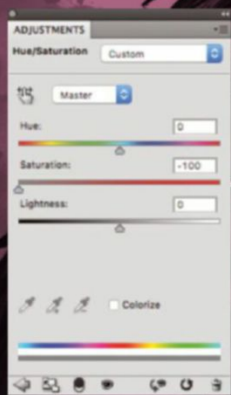
SPOT THE WORM
The worm that Sarah meets early on in the film is one of the most recognisable, iconic characters from Labyrinth. I knew he needed to have a place on the cover, however small. Situating the blue worm next to the orange Ludo and the Wiseman creates a satisfying interplay of colour.

ARISE, SIR DIDYMUS
The faithful, chivalrous Sir Didymus sports one of the film's most complex and colourful costumes (outside of a certain Goblin King's…). Indeed, of any Labyrinth character I've illustrated over the years, Sir Didymus has required the most study to get right.

PEST CONTROL
It's all in a day's work, spraying for faeries. Hoggle's introduction in the film is particularly memorable and I want to allude to that moment (and his general grumpy demeanour) by including some faeries and his sprayer.

MATERIALS
PENCILS
- Prismacolor Col-Erase brown pencils
- Kimberly 2B pencils
- General's Layout pencil

PAINTS
- Winsor & Newton watercolours

BRUSHES
- Daniel Smith watercolour brushes

SOFTWARE
- Photoshop

GUIDING THE VIEWER
A strong composition will lead the viewer around the image and engage their imagination. My go-to compositional structure is a triangle. Like many artists before me, I've found the shape lends strength as well as natural, familiar lines to help guide the eyes.

Gouache

CAPTURING LIGHT AND DEPTH

In the final part in his series on plein air painting, PETER CHAN demonstrates a speedy technique for painting background to foreground to capture light and depth

Previously, I went through the important aspects of working the painting as a whole, constantly comparing value, colour and shapes with nearby elements. The process ensures that you don't get bogged down in a specific area, but it can take more of your time and muddy your brush or paints if you're not careful, especially when painting outdoors and time isn't on your side.

This time I'll go through another approach to plein air painting: the back-to-front method. The idea is to break down your scene from the lightest colour values in the furthest background, and gradually apply darker paint to the foreground elements. This process applies to larger objects as well as small details.

There are two key things to keep in mind. First, put down quick and decisive marks and don't fiddle too much with them, especially with the lighter backgrounds. Second, elements in the distance are nearer in value and are less detailed, and gradually gain value contrast and more details the closer they are to the viewer. If you follow these guides, you'll achieve a greater sense of light and depth quickly. This approach works well with early morning and later afternoon scene as well as on overcast days.
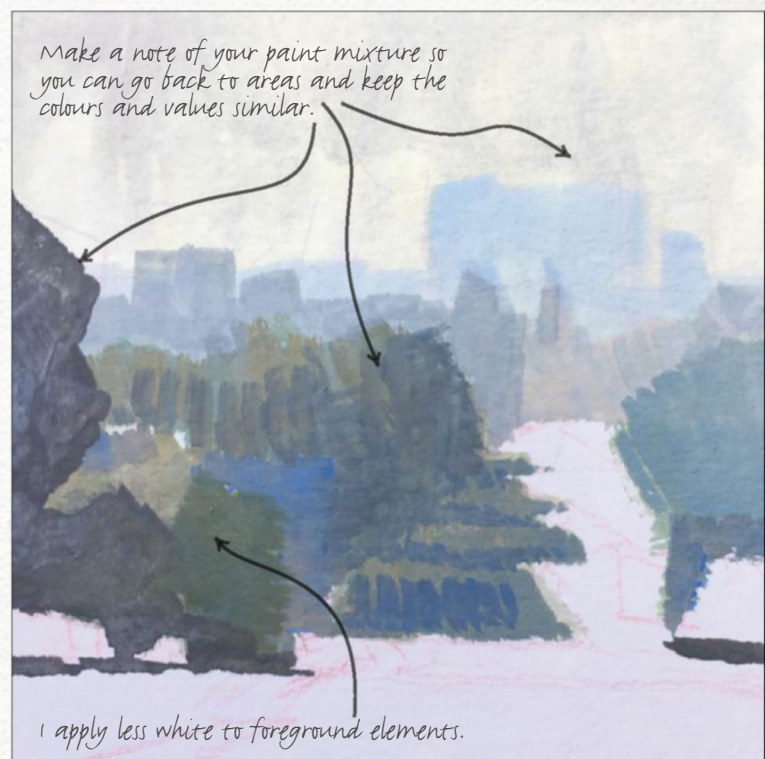
For this article, I parked on a street and spent about an hour painting a early morning city scene on my daily commute.

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 6 now!

Peter is from Taiwan but lives in Los Angeles where he works at Sony Pictures Animation. He's worked previously at Pandemic Studios and DreamWorks Animation and you can see more of his work on his blog at www.pixelp.tumblr.com.

I mix more permanent white and gray no.1 into the paint.

Make a note of your paint mixture so you can go back to areas and keep the colours and values similar.

I apply less white to foreground elements.

1 Don't overwork the background

First sketch out or mentally break down the scene into the background, middle ground and foreground. Here I lay in very simple shapes and colours that suggest the sky and distant city line. It's very easy to get carried away with the details here, but it's all about capturing the simple impression and not copying exactly what you see. I also mix more white and light grey in this area, so that it'll sit back nicely when I add in the foreground darks later.

2 Remembering your paint mixture

I continue to paint my midground elements of the trees and street shadow, all the way to the foreground tree on the left, with more darks as it transitions forward. Everything is kept simple and abstract, enabling me to focus on creating a feeling of depth. I keep mental notes of the paint mixture I use for each area, so that when I revisit those area, the value will be similar.

The cars at the very front have more contrast compared to distant areas with reduced contrast.

Manage your detail levels to ensure the foreground, midground and background are well defined.

3 Reinforcing the sense of depth

Just by blocking in key areas of background to foreground, I've already created a good sense of depth. Now I can add small secondary elements such as the cars on the street to further suggest depth. In a similar way to how I painted the city, the distant cars start out grey and lighter, and become much darker, larger and detailed the closer they are to the viewer.

STUDY TIP

WORK SMALL
Painting on small canvases enables you to work faster, experiment more and build up confidence!
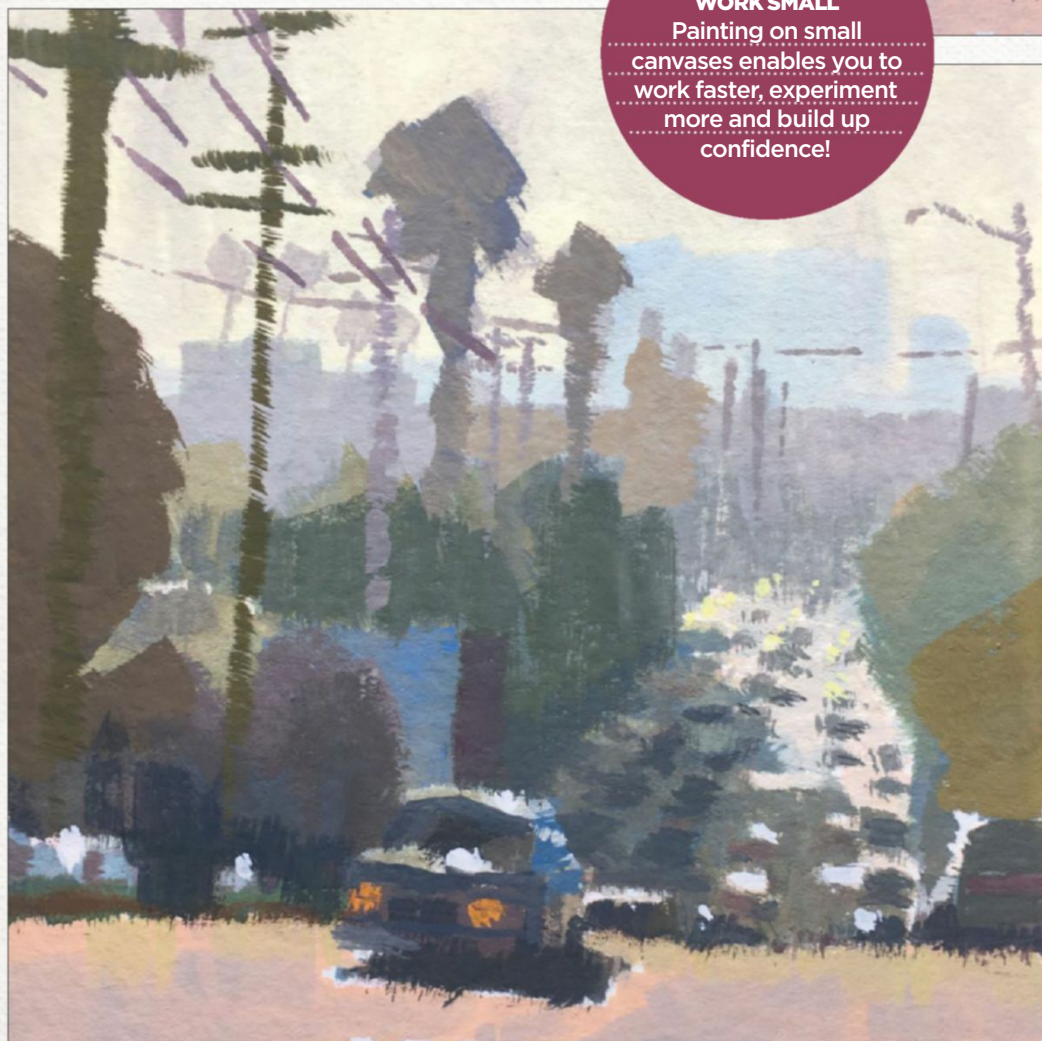
4 Another layer of detail

Once I've blocked in a large chunk of the composition, I start to add other details such as the palm trees. I start with smaller and lighter-value trees at the very back and then paint forward to the front, with trees becoming thicker and darker in scale. Don't worry too much about painting all the leaves; instead, find a simple and bold shape that communicates what it is. I also start to make the foreground much darker with a bit more detail to bring everything forward.

ARTIST INSIGHT

SIMPLE STROKES
Learning how to use simple strokes to communicate complexity is a great tool to speed up plein air work. It will take some practice, but will give your paintings lots of life and also prevents your colours from becoming muddy.

5 Add in line elements

During the final stages of the painting, I add more refined and smaller line elements. In this case it's the telegraph poles and wires as well as the mid-ground cars. These are perfect to show depth, because they act as a directional element that lead the viewer's eye back and forth through your composition.

First Impressions

Daren Bader

It's all about capturing the feel of the locale for this award-winning artist

Where did you grow up and how has this influenced your art?
I grew up in California, with lots of family camping in the mountains and on the coast. I was always a fan of the outdoors, and I think I absorbed lots of the California landscape into my sensibilities, as well as organic shapes in general.

You're a child, you see a painting that changes everything… what are you looking at, and what effect did it have?
Well, that would be the Frazetta painting Dark Kingdom on the cover of the Fantastic Art of Frank Frazetta Book 2. I'd seen plenty of "fantasy art" before, but this painting had a grittiness and mood that really struck me.

What was your first paid commission?
That may very well have been painting copies of Frazetta and Boris' pieces on to Vans skateboard shoes for friends in high school. In the industry, though, I think my first paid commission was a couple of painted trading cards for a Ray Harryhausen comic book in the early 90s.

What's the last piece that you finished, and how do the two differ?
I've just finished a card piece for Hearthstone, and the biggest difference is the quality of colour choices. But we're talking about a huge difference in time and almost 30 years of artistic evolution.

Where do you usually create your art?
I have a studio in my house where I paint traditionally, as well as a Wacom touch

> ❝ I don't identify with the figures I paint, so much as the worlds they live in ❞

WHITE WITCH
Dramatic lighting helps to generate mood and atmosphere in this forest scene.

© Paizo Publishing

screen for digital work. I have sketchbooks and bring them around while I'm out, but I need to stay in the habit of doing that. It's like exercise: you need to create good habits and stick to them. If you stop, you can feel those little things not working as smoothly as before.

What character that you've painted do you most identify with?
I would have to say Tarzan, simply because of my awe and appreciation of

SHADOW OF THE COLOSSUS
"This was done for a gallery show entitled Video Game Artists Doing Art of their Favourite Video Games."

wilderness and nature. But I don't really think I identify with the characters I paint, so much as the worlds they live in.

There's an extremely illusive feeling of recognition and familiarity that I strive to achieve when I paint a scene – like a memory from childhood or from a dream, some form of connection to a time and place, and not necessarily a real time or place. Landscapes can pull something up from deep within you… bring strong feelings of 'locale' or 'place' forward that don't usually come to the forefront. Though in truth, all types of art and subject matter is capable of doing that.

Is your art evolving? What's the most recent experiment you've made?
I don't think that my art is evolving, or at least not fast enough. For that to happen, I'd need to spend more time on purely personal works of exploration, since clients don't usually want you to experiment with your style on their jobs! What I would like to see evolve in my art would be a better use of paint itself. When I look at work by someone like Petar Meseldžija or John Singer Sargent, I'm deeply disappointed in my skill level.

Do you tread the convention trail?
Since I have a day job, I do very few shows because they take a lot of prep. I did do Dragon Con this year as a guest juror, along with Scott Fischer and Stephan Martinière, and had a great time hanging out with them. That's the attraction, by the way: spending time with other artists and friends you only see at shows.

How has the industry of fantasy art changed since you've been part of it?
The internet has made viewing tremendous amounts of art and reference instantaneous, and that has in turn pushed the quality of work to new levels. The flip side of this is, of course, there are many more capable artists out there competing for the same work.

Why is it still the best place to work?
Because where else can you paint pictures of monsters and heroes fighting it out on planets light years away!?

Among other things, Daren is a video game art director, fantasy illustrator and 2016 Spectrum Fantastic Art gold award winner. You can see his art at www.instagram.com/darenbader.

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