NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

ImagineFX

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ANATOMY MASTERCLASS
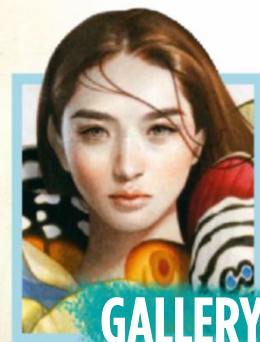Bring your drawings to life with loose strokes

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Ideas to inspire a new year in art

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Six figure artists to follow right now!

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Create better life drawings from head to toe with advice from artist and teacher **Patrick J Jones**

WORKSHOPS
LEARN OIL PAINTING TECHNIQUES
PAINT FEATHERS IN PHOTOSHOP
CREATE INTRICATE ART IN PENCIL

Future

FACE FACTS! SIMPLE STEPS TO ADDING VARIETY & CHARACTER TO YOUR FACES

Welcome to…

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imagineFX

Greetings! Come, if you will, and step inside a world of foundation art techniques and training this issue. First up is Patrick J Jones' cover art figure-drawing workshop, where he treats you to an unmissable life-drawing lesson. Next, take an anatomy class with industry veteran Glenn Vilppu, then follow it up with guidance on adding character to faces with Julián del Rey.

Take flight with Leesha Hannigan's workshop on painting feathers, before discovering what you can learn from the Old Masters with Howard Lyon's guidance and pencil art skills with Miles Johnston.

Also, if your New Year's resolution is to freshen up your skills, find out what pro artists are doing in 2017 to push their art even further. There's even more besides this! Where else are you going to get this kind of advice? Let us know your thoughts.

Claire

Claire Howlett, Editor
claire@imaginefx.com

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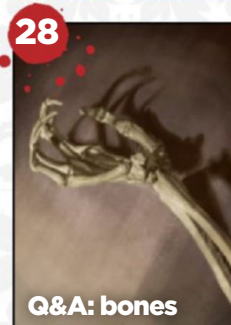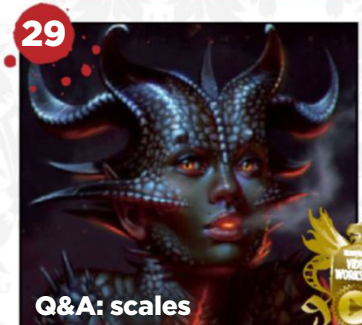
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Draw fantastic figure art

FANTASY illustrator
Inspiration and advice from the best traditional artists

Lessons from the Masters

Miles Johnston talks detail

Kristina Carroll on Greek myths

FXPosé Traditional

Resources

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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/strike144pose**

OVER **3 HOURS** of video tutorials from pro artists to watch and learn from!

WORKSHOP VIDEOS

Get better at figure drawing

Watch how fantasy artist and teacher Patrick J Jones drew this issue's cover during a life-drawing class.
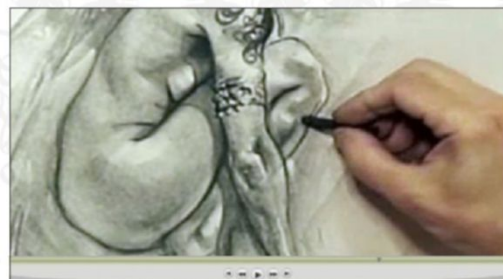
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EXCLUSIVE VIDEO TUITION!

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

Glenn Vilppu
See how focusing on gestures and action, and making use of the "icons" of basic rendering, can be the keys to creating expressive anatomy in figure drawing.
Plus WIPs and final image

Leesha Hannigan
Illustrate realistic bird feathers by taking a painterly approach to the subject.
Plus WIPs, brushes and final image

Howard Lyon
Discover how studying an Old Master can give you invaluable insights into your art.
Plus WIPs and final image

Q&A VIDEOS

Sara Forlenza
Study the translucent qualities of mist, its thickness and thinness, to paint it well.
Plus WIPs and final image
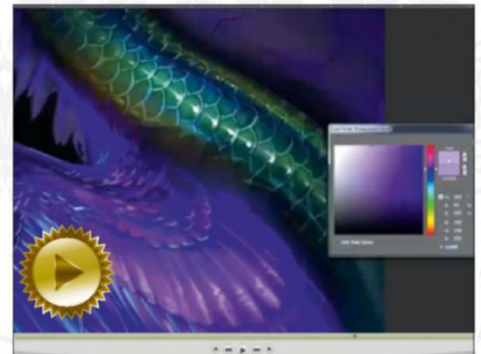
Allison Theus
Understanding how iridescence works will help you to paint scales that shimmer.
Plus WIPs and final image

Sara Forlenza
Use references to note patterns and help paint convincing scales for a dragon girl.
Plus WIPs and final image
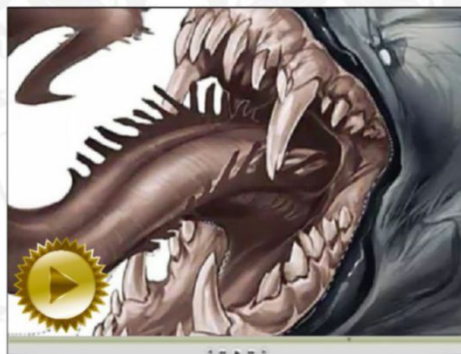
Allison Theus
Study the creature in question in order to paint a close-up of its open mouth.
Plus WIPs, brushes and final image

TRAINING

James Gurney
Go mining for the creative gold to be found in a much-underrated medium, in the Casein Painting In The Wild video tutorial.

AND ALL THIS! Detailed workshops packed with advice from the best pro fantasy artists from around the world, including Matt Cowdery, Becca Hallstedt, Miles Johnston, Brynn Metheney, Julián del Rey, John Stanko and Tan Hui Tian.

7 CUSTOM BRUSHES, INCLUDING…

PENCIL FRIEND
This is Leesha Hannigan's go-to pencil emulating brush, for sketching.

PAINTERLY – RECTANGULAR SMOOTH
Matt Cowdery says he uses this brush for 95 per cent of everything he does.

SOFT ROUND
Good for subtle gradients and lighting, and atmosphere, says Leesha Hannigan.

Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

Yigit Koroglu

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MEDIA: Photoshop

Yigit didn't follow his artistic dreams straight away. After studying banking and finance in college he went on to pursue interior design, but soon found himself creating fictional characters and monsters instead.

"I love observing structures of things around us, man-made or natural, and how they operate," Yigit says. "This is probably an old habit from my school days, when we had to base our designs on solid logic to make them functional."

Studying the practicalities of interior design didn't go to waste though, as they fed into Yigit's vast mental bank of reference material. "I can also say the delicacy of predators in the wild, the brute strength of heavy machinery, and complexity of old trees in swamps are what influence me the most," he reveals.

1 RITUAL OF THE OLD ONES "Here's one of the illustrations that I painted for a client's novel. I can't tell much about the story because the book hasn't been published yet. The image will be printed across two pages, so the composition was a real challenge because of the fold down the middle."

2 UNINVITED GUESTS "Two wizards enter a long-forgotten tomb and are welcome by its inhabitants. I tried to create a smooth composition with the whirling creatures, emphasising the main characters by using bright colours in the middle of the scene, and giving them relatively static poses."

3 EXTRAORDINARY ADVENTURES OF ROBBIE AND BOXIE "This is Robbie and his fellow companion Boxie posing valiantly after their great discovery. Robbie is the protagonist of my mini-robot project. I try to develop his story whenever I feel overwhelmed by all the dark and depressing works and use it as a sanctuary for my mind."

Artist crit

Freelance illustrator and regular Magic: the Gathering artist Anna Steinbauer is impressed…

"Yigit's work shows a great sense of movement, contrast, and attention to detail. Each of his paintings tells a compelling story of believable characters set in an intricate world."

Yewon Park
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MEDIA: Photoshop

Yewon is a professional artist who specialises in concept and visual development. She has diverse job and internship experience in game, TV, and animation and shares her valuable concept art tips and drawing on her blog and Tumblr page. Currently, she works for Blizzard entertainment studio as a concept artist.

"I strive to push the acting and storytelling in my art, and make the most of my content, posing, staging, and harmonious colours to portray what I want the audience to feel," Yewon says.

IMAGINEFX CRIT

"Yewon's art looks like it belong on the pages of a children's picture book, or perhaps they're concepts for a yet-to-be-made animated film. In any event, this is characterful, storytelling imagery at its best."
Claire Howlett, Editor

1 APINA "This is a character from my personal project Poika. It's the classic storytelling setup where two individuals – in this case Apina and Momo – don't get on initially, but by the end of their journey they're the best of friends."

2 PROLOGUE "Momo's journey begins in his home village. To change what others think of him, he decides to embark on an adventure."

3 DISCUSSION "Along the way, Momo befriends Apina the monkey and Koira the dog. They take a welcome break at Apina's home, and here I've shown them discussing their new plans for the journey ahead."

4 ENCOUNTER "Momo and his comrades finally confront the Red Monster in the hope of defeating him once and for all, but the beast's formidable power seems impossible to overcome. Yet the will to save his friends awakens a hidden power within Momo, enabling him to vanquish the monster."

🇺🇸 Moe Balinger

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EMAIL: moe.balinger@gmail.com
MEDIA: Photoshop, Illustrator, Manga Studio

Character design and Art Nouveau-inspired line work enthusiast Moe previously worked as lead artist as a major screen printing company, designing T-shirts. He even has some experience in 2D animation.

"For a brief time in 2015 I was a character illustrator on FX's Archer. There I learned a ton about animation and vector art," he says. Recently, Moe's had the opportunity to participate in a mentorship with Peter Mohrbacher, "Pete really helped me align my goals and establish a consistent style in my art," explains the artist.

Moe's latest work comes from a series of illustrations inspired by Arthurian legend, the aesthetic of this which is heavily influenced by dark fantasy with modern tropes.

IMAGINEFX CRIT

"Rather than slavishly following the classic Art Nouveau look, Moe's put his own spin on it in these artworks. Whether that's the result of learning from Peter Mohrbacher or just his natural development as an artist, it's all good!"
Cliff Hope,
Operations Editor

1 MORGAINE LE FAYE: SORCERESS
"Often said to be Arthur's half-sister, Morgaine becomes an apprentice of Merlin and an adversary of Arthur and his knights. I wanted to paint a vertical illustration to use as my convention banner. I've always loved floating witches and spooky ritualistic items in fantasy art. This was really fun for me."

2 BERCILAK: THE GREEN KNIGHT
"This image is based on the character from Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. I was inspired by brass plate armour designs from England. I wanted to capture a blend of modern and ancient aesthetic, drawing from media like Game of Thrones and Dark Souls."

IMAGINEFX CRIT

"As Christina says herself, she's one for trying out new techniques, and the examples shown here reveal this artist's versatility at tackling a range of styles and topics. I love the expression of Oinknight – charge!"
Daniel Vincent,
Art Editor

Email your submissions to fxpose@imaginefx.com

2

🇺🇸 Christina Krati

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MEDIA: Photoshop, ink, pencil

Around three years ago Christina moved from Greece to New York City and has been pursuing a freelancer illustrator career ever since. She recently decided to put a larger focus on her own, personal projects without the influence of a client because, she says, it seems to be affecting her creativity.

"I've always been indecisive when it comes to style and techniques," Christina admits, "but it's so refreshing to me every time I pick up a new one anyway, so I totally recommend embracing it!"

In the spirit of trying things that are new, Christina recently took up playing the violin to add yet another artistic string to her bow, so to speak.

1 MOON SOLDIER "Inspiration for the this piece was from a favourite anime (Sailor Moon – you can see this from the wand she is holding) and the Jungian shadow. I sometimes enjoy shining my own personal light on characters that I've always liked since I was a kid, and therefore changing their archetypal character quite dramatically."

2 KISS "Fan art based on the Korean TV series Scholar Who Walks the Night."

3 HOLYSNEK "Why Snek and not Snake? Well, because he's goofy looking!" This is a character design I wanted to try with lots of contrast."

4 OINKNIGHT "I did this while going through a 'kids style illustrations', phase. These ones come and go quite often, so I have a lot of pieces that exhibit a similar feeling."

3

4

Keeping it
fresh
2017
in

New skills Leading artists tell **Julia Sagar** how they're going to push their craft forward in the new year

As 2017 sails into view, there's no better time to stop for a moment, take stock of the past 12 months and set some goals for the coming year.

Continually striving to evolve your skills is the key to being a successful artist, but it's easy to lose sight of the bigger picture. There's the usual tight deadlines, demanding clients, and all-consuming work or family commitments to manage, but becoming too comfortable can also cap your creativity.

One thing's for sure: to stay motivated, in-demand and creatively stimulated as an artist, it's important to continually push your practice forward. So what are your aims for the next 12 months? And how are you going to make them happen?

"In 2017, I'm finally tackling traditional media, which I've neglected for way too long," says São Paulo-based artist Ursula Dorada. She specialises in illustration for the entertainment industry, but recently ventured into book illustration and has a number of goals for the new year.

"I'm going to start painting in oils," she says. "And since every start in new media is painful, instead of diving in and trying to finish images, I'll begin by doing more anatomy studies – you can never do enough of those."

EXPAND YOUR VISUAL VOCABULARY

Her other objective is to paint a set of images that are free from client input. The plan, she says, is simply to explore her visual vocabulary. "I've been working on a focused portfolio for too long," Ursula says. "I'm

feeling a bit smothered, but I'm certain that tackling a new medium and having more freedom with the art direction of things will remedy that pretty quickly."

Danish illustrator Esben Rasmussen also recommends taking a measured approach to stay motivated: "If you allow studies into your workflow before starting a piece, you'll pick up new ways to accomplish a certain task," he advises, "which is always good. It'll help you keep your spirits high."

Esben recently moved to the US to work at video game developer Riot Games, and says that the next year is all about settling into life in LA, while growing and ➤➤
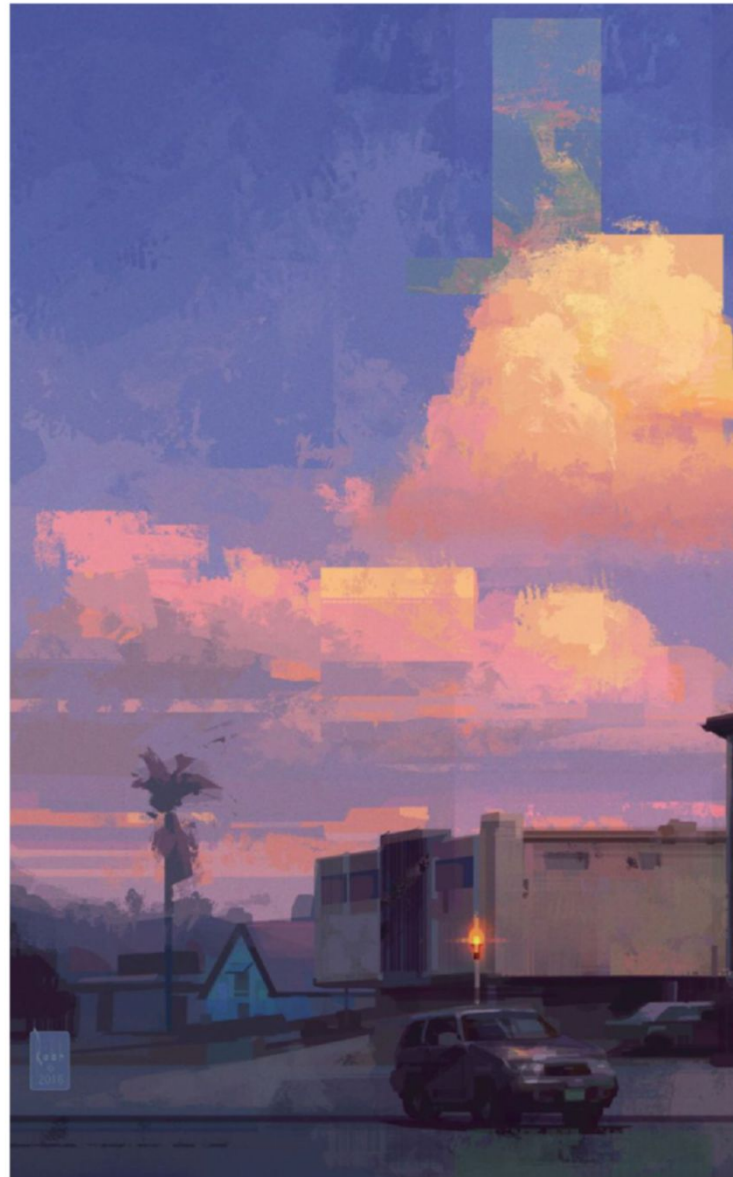
Clouds, by Robh Ruppel. "Everyone is different, but mornings are when I'm freshest," he says.

© Riot Games Inc

Exploration sketches for Program Lissandra, by Esben Rasmussen for Riot Games. "The sketch stage is crucial for a good illustration."
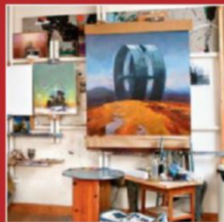
Portrait of actor Sterling Hayden posted by Robh on Instagram.
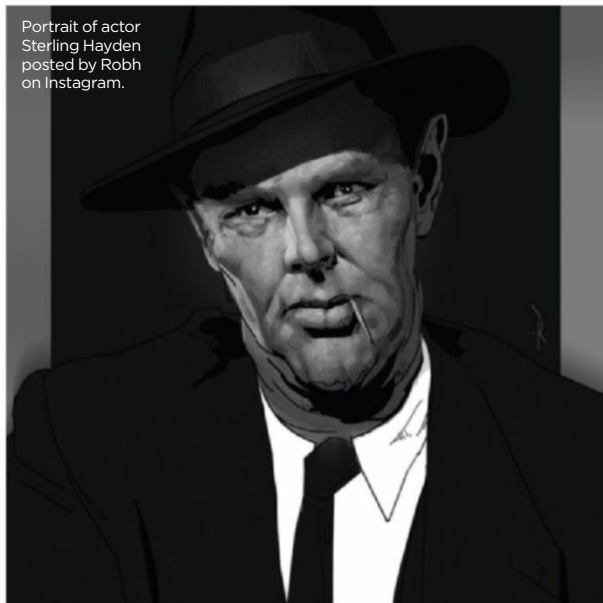
> ❝ If you allow studies into your workflow before starting a piece, you'll pick up new ways to accomplish tasks ❞

A cover illustration for The Elephant and Macaw Banner series by Ursula Dorada.

Miles Johnston inverted a women's face in his pencil drawing, Receiver

URSULA DORADA

The artist on passion, perfection and the need to finish a piece

What are you most looking forward to in 2017?
I'm hoping I'll have time to work on a set of illustrations, and maybe call that my first art book. The most important part is the research I've been doing towards it. It feels like my first solo flight, and a big step!

How important it is to stay fresh as an artist?
Art is a passion pursuit. No one got in it to get rich, and keeping on top of your game as a pro is demanding. Staying fresh means you're interested. Maintaining this momentum is important. If you don't actively seek it, you stagnate.

Is there too much pressure on artists to keep evolving?
There's more pressure to fit into a mould than to stay fresh – particularly if you're starting out. Do more of this; don't invest time in that. It's jarring for anyone who's already uncertain of their standings. My advice is to have a goal and work towards it: it's easier to select feedback that works towards your goal and not against it. Ignore the rest as noise.

What advice would you give artists for developing their craft?
Work on small projects, and focus on that goal. If your plan is to finish one sketch every day for two weeks, concentrate on finishing – not on making them perfect. Done with that? Now do a set of 10 landscape studies in a month – the best you can, inside the time limit. Finished? Great job! Move on. Try new things. Work with something new. Keep in mind that the idea is to finish. Being perfect comes after you've experimented with new things, and found something that piques your interest. Good luck!

Currently working freelance for the games and comics industries, Ursula is starting to venture into book covers.
www.sulamoon.com

Like Clouds, Culver Hotel is another image from Robh's book, Graphic LA.

➤ nurturing his craft. His biggest career goal is to become a senior illustrator at Riot Games in 2017 "and make my new best piece". But for Esben – whose interests outside of drawing include beat-boxing and magic tricks – staying fresh isn't just about concentrating on work. "I want to focus on life. Having new experiences other than just art is going to give me the energy to study and work hard," he says.

IN SEARCH OF NEW EXPERIENCES

For illustrator Miles Johnston, staying fresh in 2017 means seeking out new, inspiring experiences. "I've been in discussion with a few online connections to put together a group show, where we build a body of work together. Often a group of people come up with ideas they never would have found individually," he says. "I'd also like to start a Patreon and put together another art book."

A digital artist by trade, Miles has built a striking portfolio of pencil drawings over the past few years [see page 108 for Miles' pencil workshop]. He's been feeling the pull of traditional media for a while, he says, and intends to compile a large body of oil paintings and drawings in the new year that

> 66 **It feels more effective for me to slow down and focus on one thing, instead of being scattered all over the place** 99

"To stop your work getting stale, look after your body, relationships and mental health," recommends Miles.

feel as though they belong together. "It isn't necessarily a permanent move into traditional, and I don't want it to be confused as some pointless nostalgia about the good ol' days," he explains. "Sometimes I think I want to do a 180-degree leap and dive into VR and emerging technologies, but it feels more effective for me right now to slow down and focus deeply on one thing, instead of being scattered all over the place."

Miles' main goal for 2017 is to stop accepting work that doesn't fit him anymore. "I did a few jobs this year," he says, "where although the client was happy with the end result, I felt like I was dragging my feet."

Tricky deadlines are something that Ursula would like to leave behind in 2016. "If there's anything I'm always trying to fix, it's accepting tight deadlines for enormous projects," she says. "While I love doing them, I intend to focus more on quality than on rushing pieces out to meet deadlines."

EARLY MORNING ART WORK

One artist who's focused on personal growth all year round is prolific Naughty Dog art director Robh Ruppel. He wakes up early to focus on his self-initiated projects – which range from plein air paintings to faux pulp paperback covers – before heading to work at the video game developer in Santa Monica. This year, though, creative growth has come courtesy of a particularly exciting commercial project that's pushing him to become an even better designer. "It's an amazingly artistic project," Robh says. "It's like getting a PhD in design."

However, while personal growth in a commercial context is arguably the Holy Grail for artists, it's also an area that can be fraught with fear. How can you be sure you'll deliver, when you've never done it before? Robh agrees that it can be unnerving: "But that's what motivates me," he explains. "If I

Marketing artwork created for Albion Online. "I'm always trying to improve my craft," says Esben.

Astro Mage, created for gaming peripherals company Steelseries, demonstrates Esben's skill at depicting light.

"I work almost entirely in traditional media right now," says Miles.

Ursula's character art from the game Hex: Shards of Fate. "If you don't seek momentum, then you stagnate," she warns.
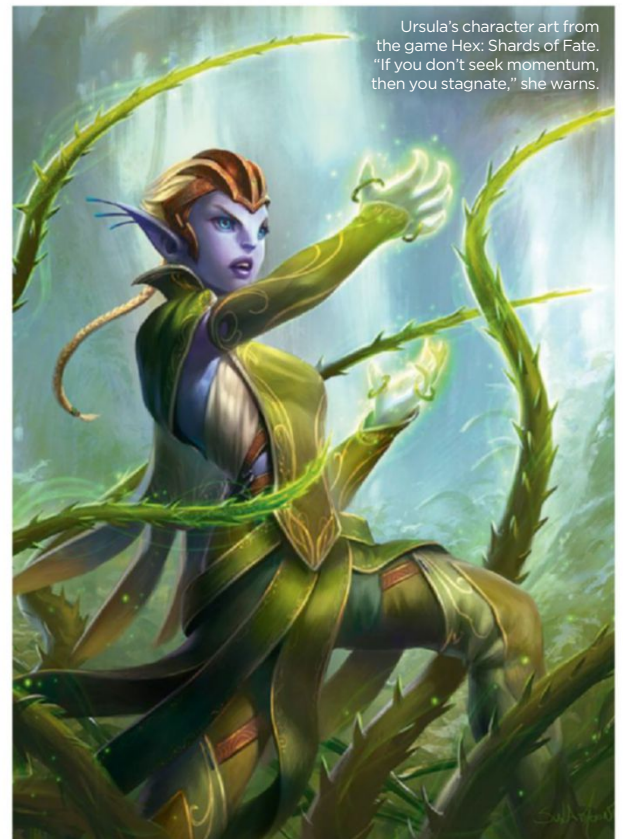
were cranking out the same images I was producing 10 years ago, it would be depressing. There should always be an evolvement of taste, style and skill.

"As far as not delivering, I believe that you can always find a solution, if you keep trying. That's why self-growth and study are important: the more experience you have, then the better odds there are to come up with a solution."

For busy artists who feel swamped with work or family commitments, Robh recommends "wood-shedding" – cutting yourself off from all outside influences to pursue an idea – as an effective method for

making time for side projects. Furthermore, ask new questions: "What if I did an entire image using just coloured squares – could I make it look real? Does everything need the same amount of detail? Where are the visual rests? What can be eliminated and make a stronger design?"

As for his own plans for keeping it fresh next year, Robh's working on fewer tricks and better design. "Real growth and progress come when you go beyond what you feel comfortable with," he says. "The job of an artist is to present new takes on what it is to be human, and that comes with experience – miles of experience."
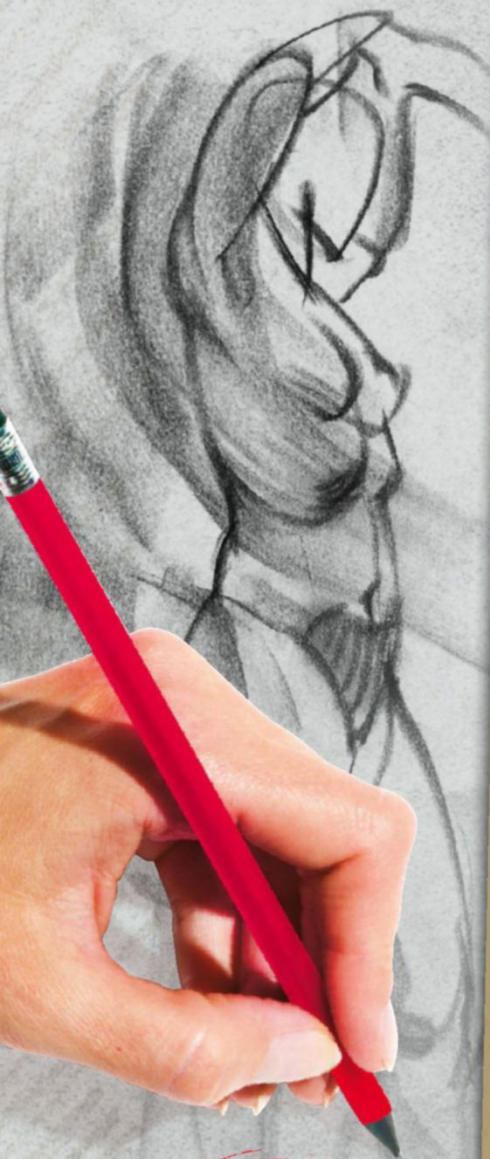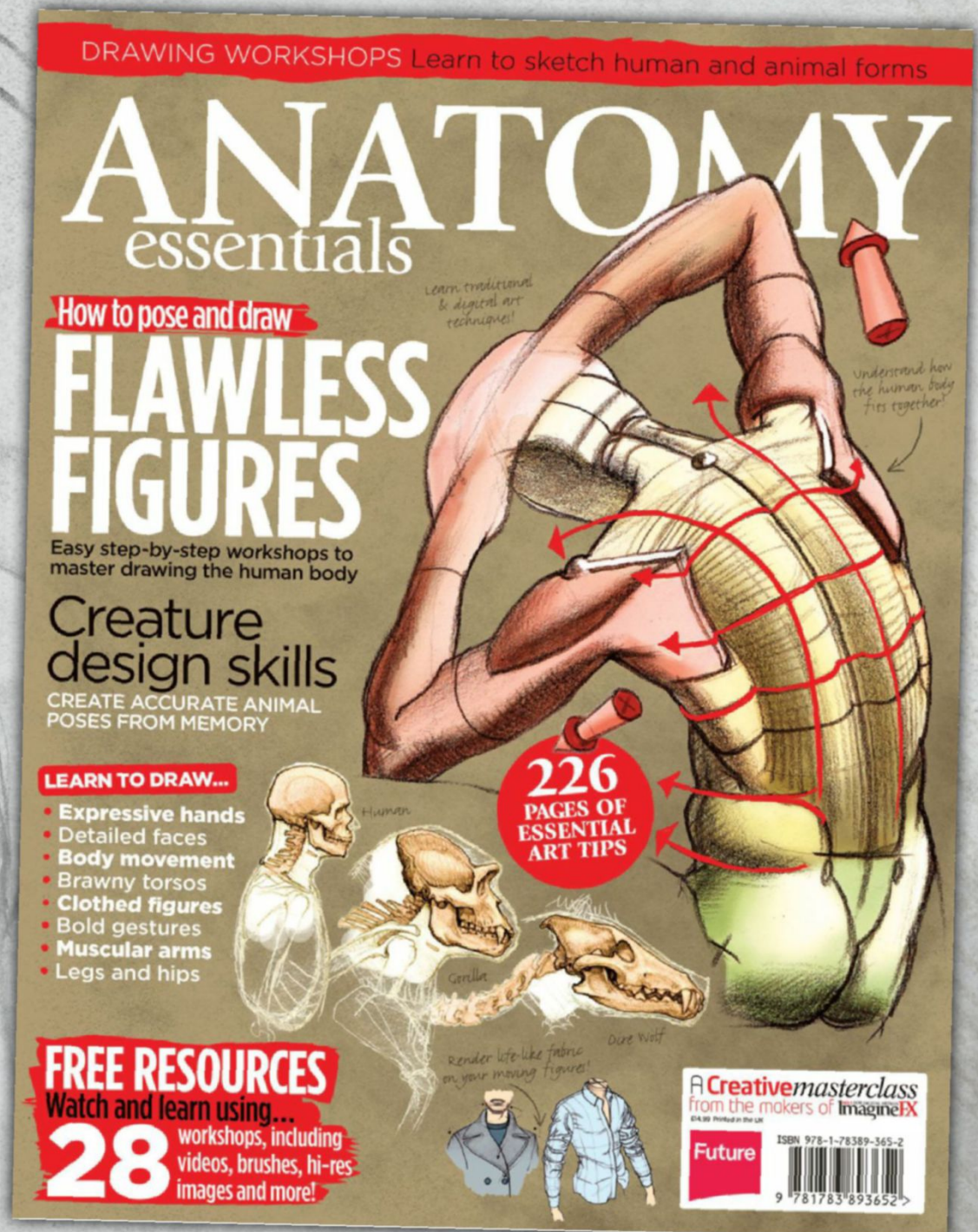
BRUTALLY HONEST BY DEYA MUNIZ

I THINK I'M GONNA BUY THIS BOOK

OH?

I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE INTO THIS STUFF

GENERALLY I'M NOT

BUT LOOK HOW PRETTY!!

Faerie mural brought to book

Shrink wrapped Celebrated fantasy artist Charles Vess has condensed the epic mural from his last exhibition into printed form

Veteran fantasy artist and illustrator Charles Vess has released an art book with a difference, inspired by his exhibition last year at Virginia's William King Museum of Art.

"As part of the exhibition, I painted a 12x150ft narrative mural that ran around the gallery," Charles says. "I also displayed selections of poetry alongside each piece. The response to that combination of art and text was phenomenal, so I decided to pursue more of the same, only in book form."

So Charles has reconfigured the mural to fit the pages of the 108-page book, entitled Walking Through the Landscape of Faerie.

The Corn King sacrifices himself to ensure a good harvest in the coming year.

"This dramatic transformation in size necessitated numerous aesthetic changes to the narrative," the illustrator says, "but I'm very happy with the result." The book features poetic contributions from Neil Gaiman, Ursula Le Guin, Charles de Lint, Susan Cooper, Robin Williamson and others.

Next up for Charles is illustrating all six of Ursula Le Guin's Earthsea books, collected together for the very first time, for release in 2018. "I'm in direct consultation with the author, trying to crawl inside her brain and see that world through her eyes," he says. "A daunting task to be sure."

You can order Charles' book, which costs £28, from **www.faeriemag.com**.
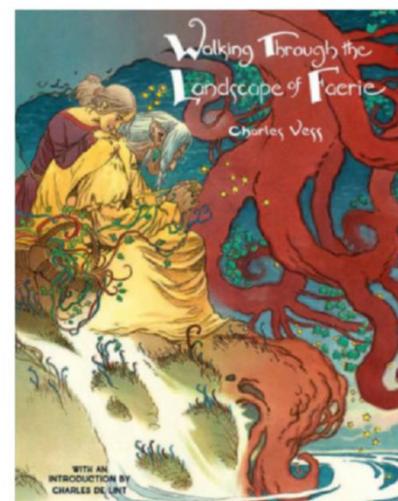
Charles says that publishers Faerie Magazine "has lavished a large amount of attention" on his book.

The book features encounters with blind beggars, giants, witches and dragons.

Charles and his original mural: "Now anyone who was unable to travel to Virginia can experience my story."

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

The studio would not be the same without the stove and its constant feline companion.

Get a bigger brush! Whenever I start fiddling with artwork, these are to hand. They're wonderful for liberating a piece.

An Asian throw I picked up in Granada. It's there because it's a perfect evocation of moonlight in discreet colours.

I use these pigments in some experimental work that I've been doing (see The Secret History of the Earth at www.hiddensun.co.uk).

A rolling pin is a very useful way to squeeze the last bit of paint out of a tube.

Painting from a distance using long brushes is sometimes essential to get the right values. It also introduces an element of chance, because it's almost impossible to fully control the brush marks.

John Harris

Creative space The sci-fi artist reveals his studio and the bric-a-brac that accompanies him on his travels through unknown worlds

So, welcome to the Temple of my Imagination. This is where I spend most of my waking hours. At 42 square metres, this T-shaped space is the biggest room in the house.

It has the unusual feature, for a studio, of having a large south-facing glass gable window looking out onto the garden. The long, top bar of the T is the work space, where all my tools, plan chests, drawing boards and painting equipment is. The north wall along the top bar of the T is the place where it all happens. This is where

I've fixed batons to the wall that serve as an enormous easel.

I usually get into the studio between 9 and 9.30 in the morning, and spend a while pottering around, sorting things out. If it's winter I'll light the little woodburner, installing the cat in front of it. All of this is pure procrastination, delaying my approach to the North Face. That's what I call the wall where I work on my current canvases.

And this is when I discover that the oil paint I left on the palette the night before is no longer usable, and has to be scraped off. But no matter, because in the process I often

find interesting colour combinations. By the time I actually get down to applying paint to the canvas, it could well be 11am. An hour later and the dog is crossing her legs and wants a walk.

So it's 12.30pm or so, before I'm back in front of the painting. It's 2pm and my wife has returned, needing the odd chore or two to be done. I'm hungry and munch something on the hoof, then go back into the studio at around 2.30-2.45pm for more chewing on my lip to get right what I got wrong in the morning. At 4pm the fire's gone out, the cat's complaining, both

The North Face: the wall with fixed batons that acts as an easel. This is where all the real work is done.

Dog shampoo. Probably because of the wood burner, both my cat and dog gravitate to the studio and accidents happen. This spray keeps the spots clean and sweet-smelling.

Here's where it all starts, on a glass disc two feet across. Sometimes I leave bits of smeared paint deliberately because of unexpected combinations.
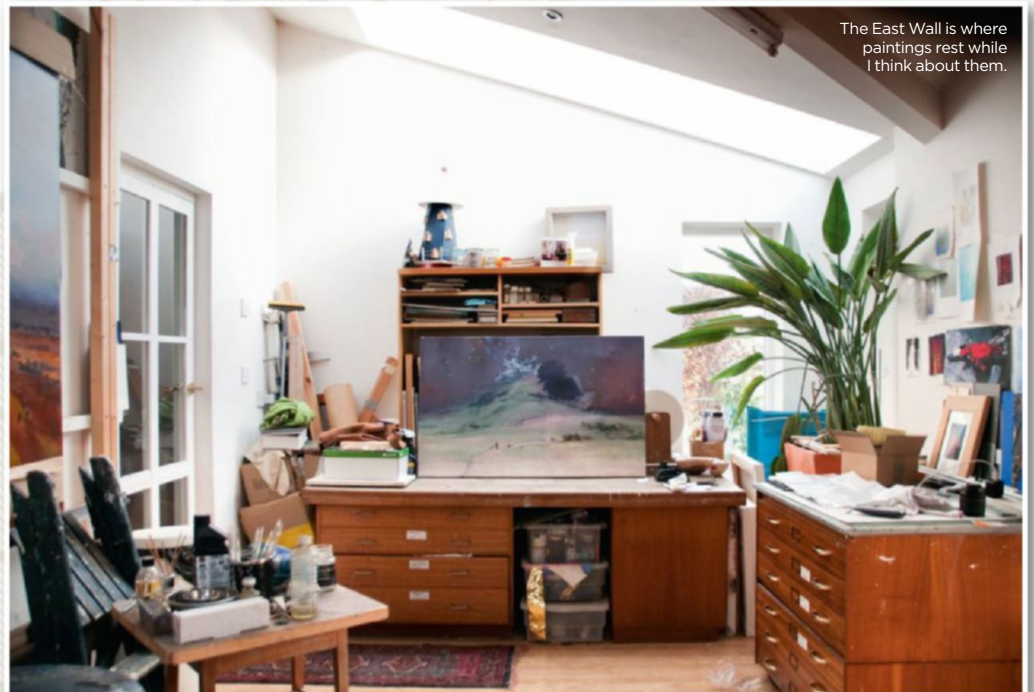
The East Wall is where paintings rest while I think about them.

A mahl stick is the traditional way to keep a steady hand for fine work. I have two of these (you can see the other one in the long brush pot). They're both made from old walking sticks, but the silvery one has been with me for nearly all the years I've been painting. I would feel bereft without it.

animals want feeding and the light is going. This is why I installed daylight strips in the studio, and not just for winter, because the space needs a lot of light.

So, between then and about 6.30pm, I'm finding my stride. Then I sit back and chew my lip again, fiddle around with the piece a bit more, and chat with my agent on the phone about an upcoming exhibition.

It's really just as well I work fast.

John began painting professionally in 1975, for Shell, Phillips, NASA and hundreds of sci-fi book covers. He's preparing for a major show in Paris. See his art at http://ifxm.ag/j-harris.

This is an entirely handmade eight-inch reflector. Quite apart from being a working telescope, it's a beautiful object, which has influenced designs in my paintings.
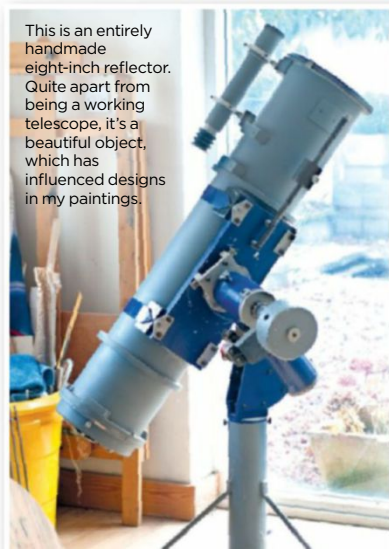
These natural objects are a constant source of inspiration. Their colour and reflected faces surprise and jolt my imagination.

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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Good and bad

I wanted to write in and say how much I've enjoyed my subscription to ImagineFX. I've learned a lot from the tutorials and my own work has improved so much!

I was disappointed by the recent manga issue, though. Despite the arresting cover art, there was nothing about actual manga – that is, the sequential art. Manga style illustrations are nice, but they're the icing on the cake. It would have been nice to see workshops that addressed making actual manga pages, or working in different genres of manga.
Sonya Kinsey, via email

Sonya Kinsey wanted to see more page craft techniques in our recent manga-themed issue.

Claire replies Good to hear from you, Sonya. With the most recent manga art special (issue 140), we wanted to try something a little different. We regularly produce a manga themed issue and it's usually one of our most popular issues. We felt we'd covered off those aspects in previous issues and wanted to bring something new to the table. But we'll certainly bear your view in mind when we're planning the next one. What do other readers think? Are we getting the balance right? Please email in and let us know.

Under cover

I'm a long-term reader of ImagineFX – thank you for all the great digital art – and I have a question about something that has long intrigued me. Namely, how do you select your cover artist for each issue? Or instead, do they in fact choose you?
June Krieger, via email

Claire replies Thanks for your question June. Because ultimately we need people to pick up the magazine and buy it, the cover is the most important page in it. Art editor Daniel Vincent and I always pick the artist, after a lot of research online. We try to get

DID YOU MISS OUR BOOK ILLUSTRATION THEMED ISSUE? Don't panic – see page 48 for how to get hold of this and other past ImagineFX issues.

Reader Marion Meeks was impressed with what French illustrator Marc Simonetti had to say in issue 143.

the best possible artist within the issue's genre or theme, approach them and tell them what we are after. They usually say yes, and then two or three weeks of email exchanges between the three of us begins. The cover direction process can be a challenge because it's over email – we'd much prefer a face-to-face discussion – but is always rewarding in the end. Hopefully, most of the time, we get it right!

Turning over a new leaf

I just wanted to write in and let you know how much I enjoyed your book illustration special. It's not an area of digital art I'd given much thought to before. But the issue, and especially both the interview with the fascinating Marc Simonetti – his story, his work ethic, his opinions – and the piece on how to break into children's illustration really opened my eyes and fired up my imagination. Thank you ImagineFX.
Marion Meeks, via email

Claire replies Many thanks for emailing in Marion. We're so glad the issue hit the mark.

Traditionally speaking

I'm really enjoying your magazine and feel like I've just sat through a digital art class after reading every issue. On putting the magazine down, I always feel full of both fresh ideas and techniques I'm compelled to try out. My only request, if this isn't too impertinent, is that I'd love to see even more traditional art in ImagineFX. Though I consider myself primarily a digital artist, I find it so inspiring and it's made me pick up a paintbrush again after a long absence. But otherwise, please keep up the great work.
Kian Griffin, via email

Claire replies Hello Kian, thanks for getting in touch. We're fairly happy with the ratio of digital and traditional art in the magazine at the moment, although it's an open question we will continue to monitor. What do other readers think? Do get in touch and let me know!

However, you may be pleased to hear that a new special issue of ImagineFX, Practical Painter Vol 2, has just come out. It's packed full of traditional content from the finest professional artists around. You'll find more information about it on page 92. We all hope you and other artists like it.

Your art news that's grabbed our attention

Mélanie Delon
@melaniedelon

"Make a wish... included in my 2017 calendar, hope you will like it!"

Vira Sakhniuk
@ViraSakhniuk

"Lunch sketch of a glacier. Approx 40 mins."

Sean Tourangeau
@SeanTourangeau

"Flats laid down on this character."

Just finished a piece of art that you want us to shout about? Tag us on Twitter or Instagram, or find us on Facebook!
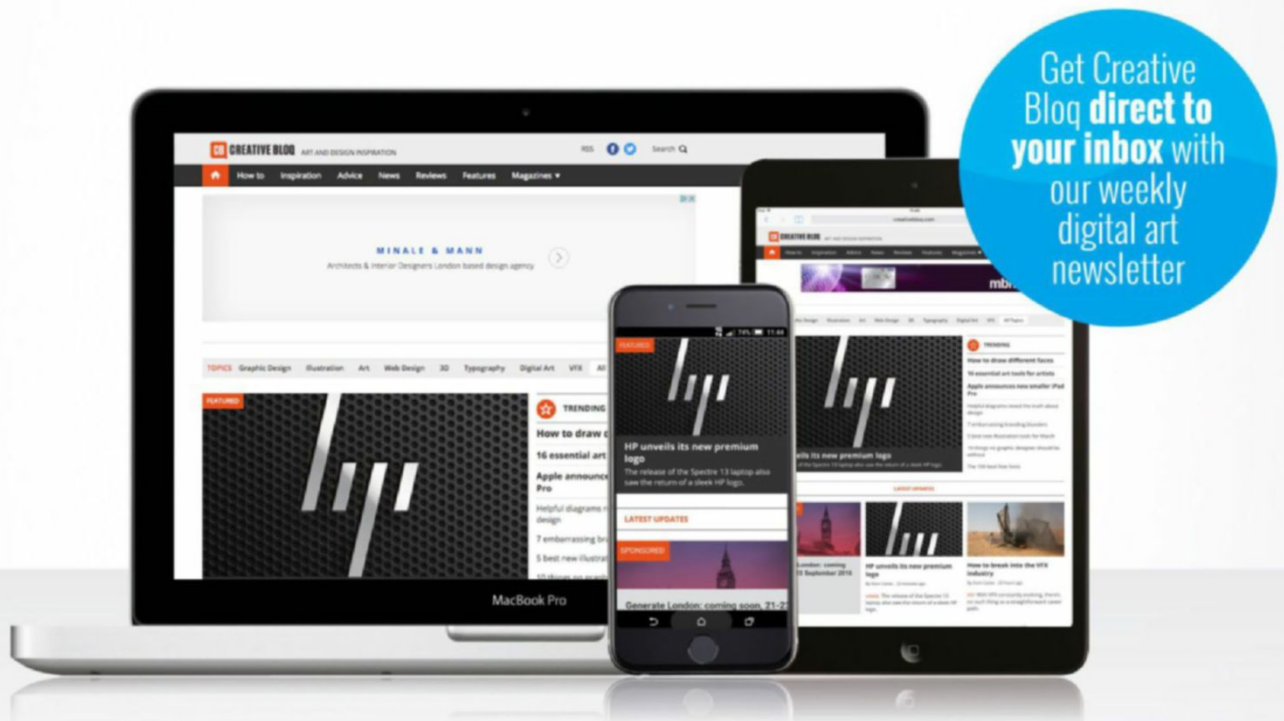
Artist Q&A

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The ImagineFX panel
NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

John Stanko
John is a designer and art director whose clients have included Tor Books, Wizards of the Coast and Blizzard. He teaches graphic design at the University of South Florida.
www.stankoillustration.com

Sara Forlenza
Italy-based Sara is a full-time freelance artist who works mostly as an illustrator of book covers, digital cards and role-playing games. She also creates artwork for apps.
www.saraforlenza.deviantart.com

Allison Theus
Austin, Texas is the home of Allison, a concept artist and illustrator who works primarily in the video games industry. Her speciality is producing original creature designs.
http://ifxm.ag/a-theus

Becca Hallstedt
Chicago artist Becca spends her time creating stylised fantasy art. She worked at NetherRealm Studios and High Voltage Software before taking the freelance road.
www.beccahallstedtdesign.com

Brynn Metheney
Brynn specializes 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!

Question
How can I paint scarred skin realistically?
Eustachy Wieczorek, Poland

Answer
John replies

Surface elements such as scars or cuts add an extra level of finish, making your painting more believable. Done correctly, it can add more depth to a character. Since there are many kinds of different scars, always take a few minutes to think about the scar effect you want to achieve. For example, cuts healed with stitches will scar differently than cuts left to heal on their own.

No matter what kind of scars, cuts, bruises, and so on you're adding, it should be added at the final stages of a painting. In other words, paint your subject without the scars, and then add them after your figure has been fully rendered. This enables you to focus on the overall lighting and values of your subject without trying to paint around the scars.

When adding the scars, the most important point to remember is to follow the contour of the figure. The scars should look like they're part of the skin. Finally, ensure that you use the same local skin tones when painting scarred skin.

Adding scars to their back helps to convey a sense of pain and despair that this powerful character is feeling.

Artist's secret
TINTING SCARRED SKIN
An easy way to add the colour to the scars is to use Layer effects>Color. This keeps the value the same and just tints the colour. Experiment with the Opacity so the colour isn't too intense.

Step-by-step:
Adding long-healed scars to a barbarian

1 Once you have your figure painted in, start by adding a lighter line to indicate the shape of the scar. Remember that scars showing a battle wound shouldn't be perfectly straight. If you're adding multiple scars, make sure they criss-cross at different angles and try to avoid 90 degree angles whenever possible.
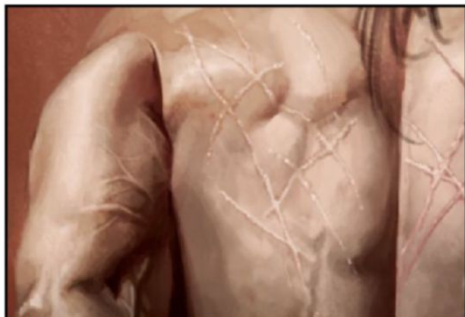
2 Add a darker tone on both sides of the scar; scars don't heal perfectly. When adding tones around the scar, apply a bit of Jitter to introduce a "cauliflower" look. Lighten the centre line to show various highlights. Using a pressure-sensitive Eraser brush, lightly erase sections of the scars that are in the darker shadows.

3 The last step is adding colour to the scars. For lighter skin it'll be a pinkish tone. For people with darker skin, it'll be a more purple hue. The intensity of the colour depends on how recent the scar is. So a more recent scar will be more intense in colour, while an older scar will be less intense in colour and appearance.

Question
Please explain how to create a misty environment
Brianne Burris, Canada

I add details such as fallen leaves, moss and shrubs beside the tree to finish off this misty scene.

Answer
Sara replies

The first thing I do is to observe references of misty landscapes. Mist is translucent: in some places thick, in others thin enough to reveal objects. Depending on the time of day in which it occurs, it will influence all the colours in the scenery – dampening dawn's vibrant colours or turning a sunset into pastel shades.

Mist usually desaturates colours into shades of cold or dark grey. So when I paint a misty setting I'll work in greyscale. I use a separate layer for each element in the environment, which enables me to differentiate the shades and suggest depth and aerial perspective.

The further away an element is from the viewer, the more it'll be affected by the light grey translucent patina of the mist. As such, tree trunks in the distance will assume this colour and lose detail, for example, only appearing as silhouettes. The kind of lighting is a cold

ambient light, without strong contrasts, but I increase contrast when I paint elements closest to the viewer. I also increase the level of details to give depth to the image.

The mist appears at ground level, so to suggest fog banks I create a layer on top of one of the elements painted (here the roots of the oak), and with a light grey colour and a soft brush I roll out some brushstrokes. If the scene is too opaque I can adjust the layer's Opacity.

I need to be happy with the sense of depth I'm creating in the composition, before I move on to colours.

Artist's secret
CONTRAST WITH THE FOREGROUND
To make the misty atmosphere perceptible at a glance, I leave one element in the foreground, in this case the rock, which isn't covered by the mist. The contrast between the rock and the fog-affected elements strengthens the scene.
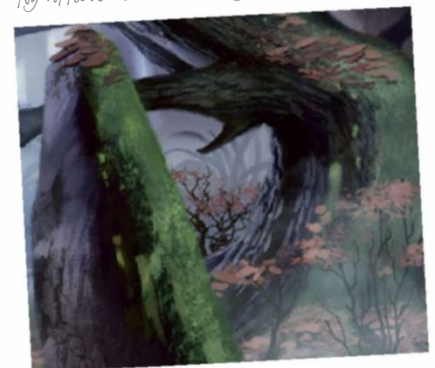
Question
Help me paint a skeletal hand!
Molly Coaldrake, New Zealand

Answer
John replies

When painting skeletal elements it's essential to use a reference of some kind. For instance, the human hand has 27 different bones, and all of those bones have very subtle details. Unless you've spent a great deal of time studying the human skeleton, it's nearly impossible to draw an accurate skeleton purely from your imagination.

Ideally, you should use a life-sized human skeleton model, and most art school have them for life-drawing classes. However, for someone not at a university, this may not be an option. If you don't have access to a skeleton model, a good anatomy for artists book can be very helpful and these are available online. If you're using dramatic lighting and don't have access to a model, use some clay or Sculpey to create a skeleton hand for a quick photo reference.

The bottom line is, when painting a human skeleton, don't try and make it up because you're almost guaranteed to get it wrong. The human skeleton is something that everyone can tell when it's wrong in a painting, even if we can't explain why.

You can see all the subtle little details in the bones that would have been nearly impossible without a solid reference to work from.

This is the photo reference I used to create this painting, which helped to take a lot of the guesswork out of the process.

Step-by-step: Draw and paint the hand of a skeleton
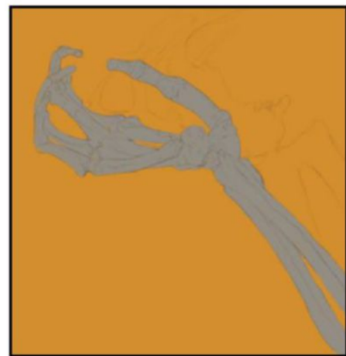
1 Start by creating a sketch of the skeleton hand. Make sure to include as much detail as possible in the sketch. When working with any part of a skeleton, it's always better to have too much detail rather than too little detail. Then block in all the mid-tones for the bones. It's important to note whenever you're painting bones, the mid-tones aren't white.

2 The next step is to begin to block in the details of the bones. Start by adding the shadows, but make sure to not go too dark. If in doubt, it's better at this phase to make the shadows too light. The shadows on a bone tend to have a fair amount of bounce light, which means the shadows have different levels of values because of the light bouncing around.
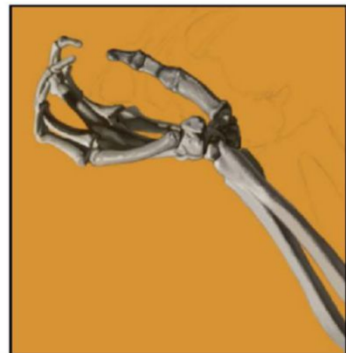
3 Continue to refine by pushing the range of values in the shadows. In many areas the darkest part of the shadow will be where the shadow and the mid-tone meet, also known as the core shadow. It's the darkest shadow because it's least affected by the bounce or reflected light. Then pop in a few highlights with a lighter tone, but be careful not to add too many.

4 Continue to add subtle details to the bones. They're not smooth, so it's important to add bumps, pits and craters, making sure they follow the lighting. Next, add a dramatic shadow so that the hand doesn't look like it's floating in space. The shadows cast by the bones should be a bit lighter and softer than normal, because of the bounce light coming from the bones.

Adding cracks and irregularities to the scales and horns helps to give these elements a more realistic appearance.
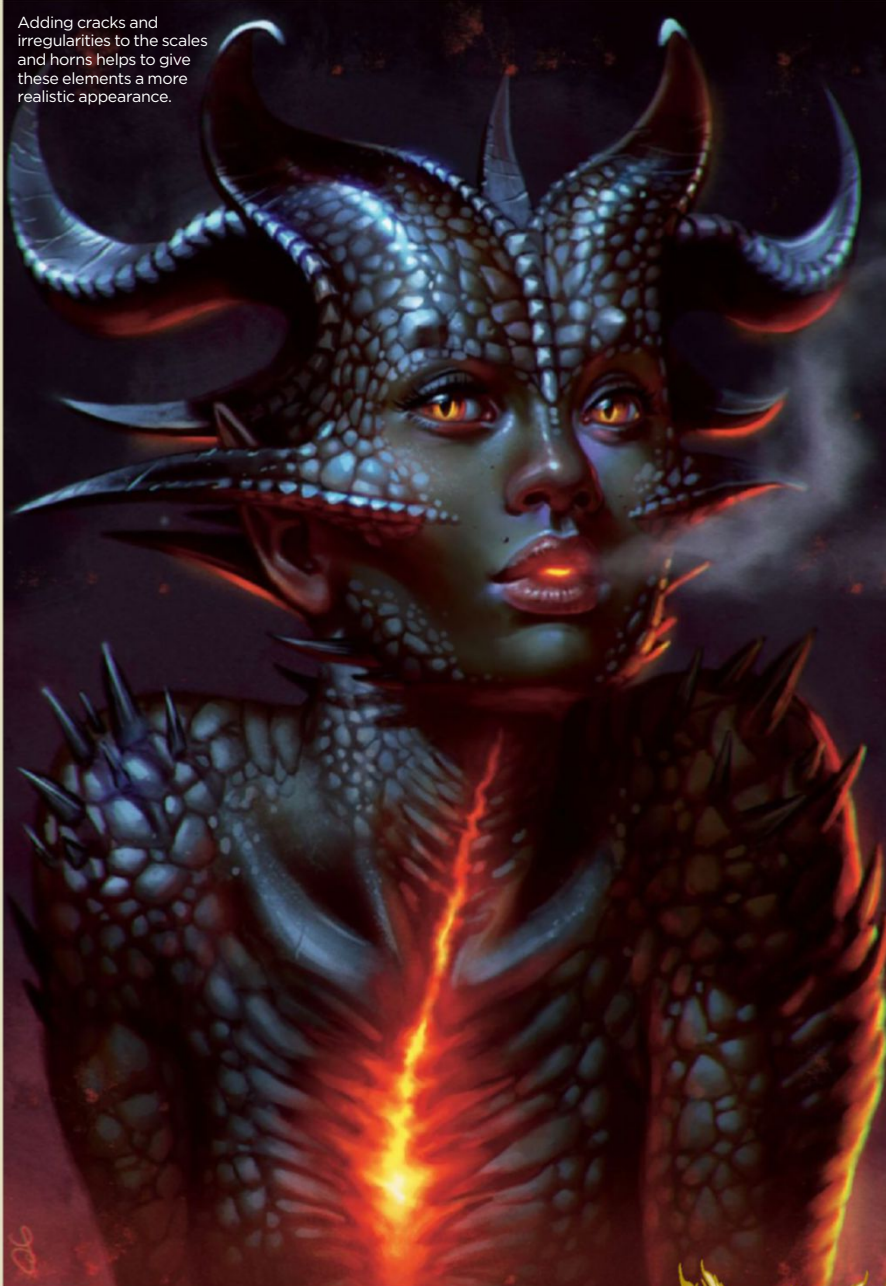
Question
Got any advice for painting scales?
Searlait Boucher, Canada

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Answer
Sara replies

There are many types of scales, and painting each of them requires a different approach. For this article I'm illustrating a half-dragon girl. Because dragons are fantastic creatures inspired by reptiles, I obtain some references for those types of scales, in particular photos of lizards and crocodiles.

Such scales are tough, rough or leathery, and in some examples take the form of spikes. They appear in a regular pattern (more or less), depending on the area that they cover: the back, stomach or snout of the beast, for

example. This means that you can't use a default pattern brush to recreate their look; they need to be drawn into place.

Once I've got my references I sketch the figure and lay down basic colours. With a simple brush, without any texture, I paint cool lights that I contrast with warm shadows, and I define her face, neck and shoulders, even going into detail because the scales will follow the shape of the body. Then I start painting scales one by one. When I paint the horns, I make their colour fades into a darker one on the ends, for a more realistic look.

Step-by-step:
Covering skin with reptilian scales
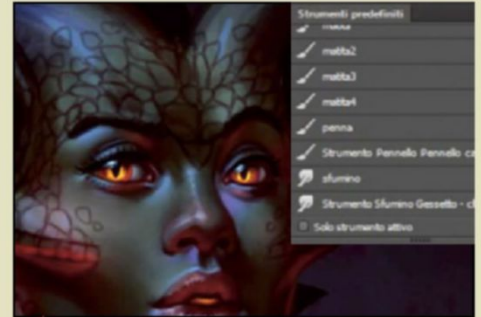
1 Once I'm satisfied with the light and shadow, I create a Multiply layer and use the warm colour of the shadows to draw scales one by one. Their shape is an irregular quadrilateral with a bevelled edge. I avoid rounding them off, leaving them with noticeable edges. I also lay down each scale's shadows in the same colour.
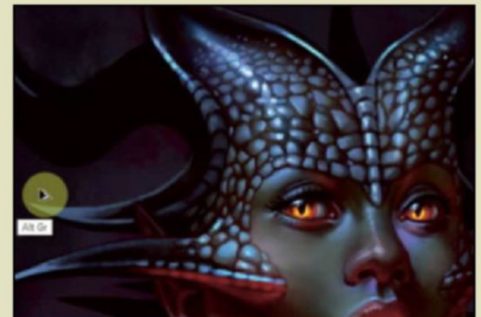
2 I paint a more regular pattern on the horns' edges for a more realistic effect. Then I paint lights with a light, cool colour. Every scale has its own highlight that reinforces its rounded shape, as well as following the shape of the head. I apply white brushstrokes as highlights, to simulate the smoothness of the scales.
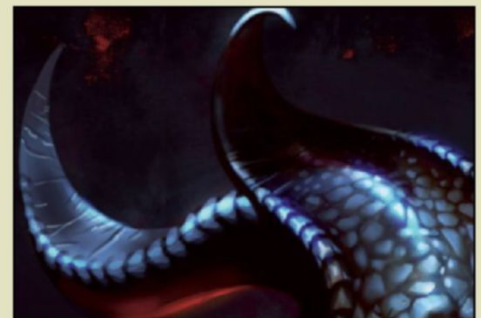
3 Now I paint the girl's horns. To achieve a more interesting effect I give them a twisted form, taking a cue from some animal horns, such as the goat and ram. I pay attention to the light and to the shadows they cast. Horns are leathery so I paint in some more white brushstrokes, to simulate a shiny appearance.

Question

How would I go about illustrating iridescent scales and feathers?

Ruth Geal, England

Answer
Allison replies

The key to painting iridescence lies in understanding a little about how iridescence works and how it appears in nature. Iridescence is a product of structural coloration. It's produced by microscopic structures that refract light waves between layers of light-reflecting cells. The location and shape of these structures varies from species to species – lizards, snakes, and birds, for instance, are all different.

Birds use iridescence for courtship and display. When painting feathers, I put down a base tone and then begin laying out saturation changes and where the light will hit. I tend to think of it in terms of hot spots (saturated warm tones where the light hits) and cool spots (darker, cooler saturated spots that help boost the hot spots), that I then fade into slightly desaturated mid-tones where the shape falls out of the light.

A snake's iridescence is tied heavily to the kind of scales it has. Those with heavily keeled scales are often dull and drab, while those with smooth scales (ideal for friction reduction) exhibit it quite frequently. Once I've plotted out scales and have an idea of where the light will hit I start building up low-opacity colour in the spots where the iridescence should fall (this is typically not where the light directly falls, but on either side of it). Understanding the variety and functionality of the scales will help you determine what kind of scales your creature should have, and how much iridescence would make sense.

Artist's secret

IRIDESCENT DIRECTIONS

I've noticed that iridescence in moderately smooth-scaled animals often happens where the bounce light occurs. In the higher iridescent animals, it also occurs on either side of the highlight, beginning with violet and moving up the spectrum, sometimes all the way to red.
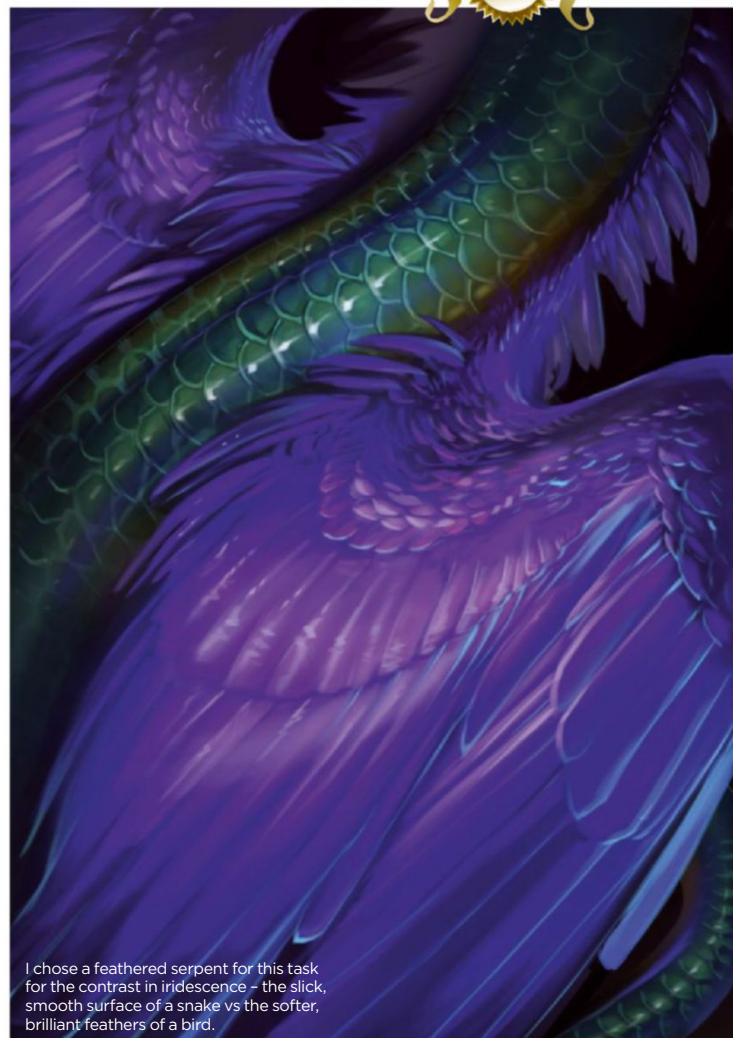
I chose a feathered serpent for this task for the contrast in iridescence – the slick, smooth surface of a snake vs the softer, brilliant feathers of a bird.
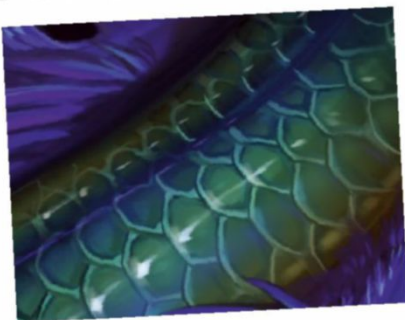
There's more to the internal structure of the mouth than teeth and tongue. All of it will help bring character to your design.

Question

Any tips for painting a close-up of a creature's open mouth?

Derek Smith, England

Answer
Allison replies

First, ask yourself what kind of creature are you painting? Everything comes back to form and function. In this instance I have apex predators with high bite forces on the brain: something wrapped in muscle, with thick jaws and a big, bone-crunching gape, but with a bit of an underbite and protruding chin for a slightly slicker profile. I start with a quick profile sketch and then, once I'm satisfied with a direction, work this into a three-quarter perspective view to better display the mouth.

I opt for big chunky gums and envision the roots of the teeth go deep into the skull. Once I settle on a tooth arrangement I tackle the tongue, and chose to have it whipping out to help give the head a more dynamic sense of movement. I also introduce a relaxed lip line to reinforce a mouth that's slightly closing as it turns, as opposed to one that's stretched taut during maximum gape. Finally, I add specular reflection and strings of saliva, the direction of which also reinforces the head turn and adds to the beast's momentum.

Question
My tree bark art looks like nothing of the sort – can you help please?
Anja Konig, Germany

Answer
Becca replies

First of all, use both photos of bark and artistic references. If you're only referencing other art, then you'll just be making a copy of a copy. It's great to use someone else's textures to understand how to create in a specific style, but the most unique work is inspired by reality. You'll get more accurate art this way, and it's a great exercise for general painting practice.

Next, work big to small. Don't go into details too early. The first trick to follow this rule is to stay zoomed out from the canvas as long as you can. You also want to make sure that you are always using the biggest brush you can for the task. This is a big time-saver, but also helps to keep your flat colours clean.

Make sure that you focus on form – the shapes created by the raised bark elements. Even though this will be 2D art, thinking about the form of your material is essential. Consider the direction of light, make sure to paint in ambient occlusion, and add cast shadows when it's needed. Use light, warm colours to pull the convex forms towards you, and use dark, cool colours to push concave forms into the background. Think of it like you're sculpting. Use a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer with Saturation turned down completely above all of your other layers to make sure forms read well.
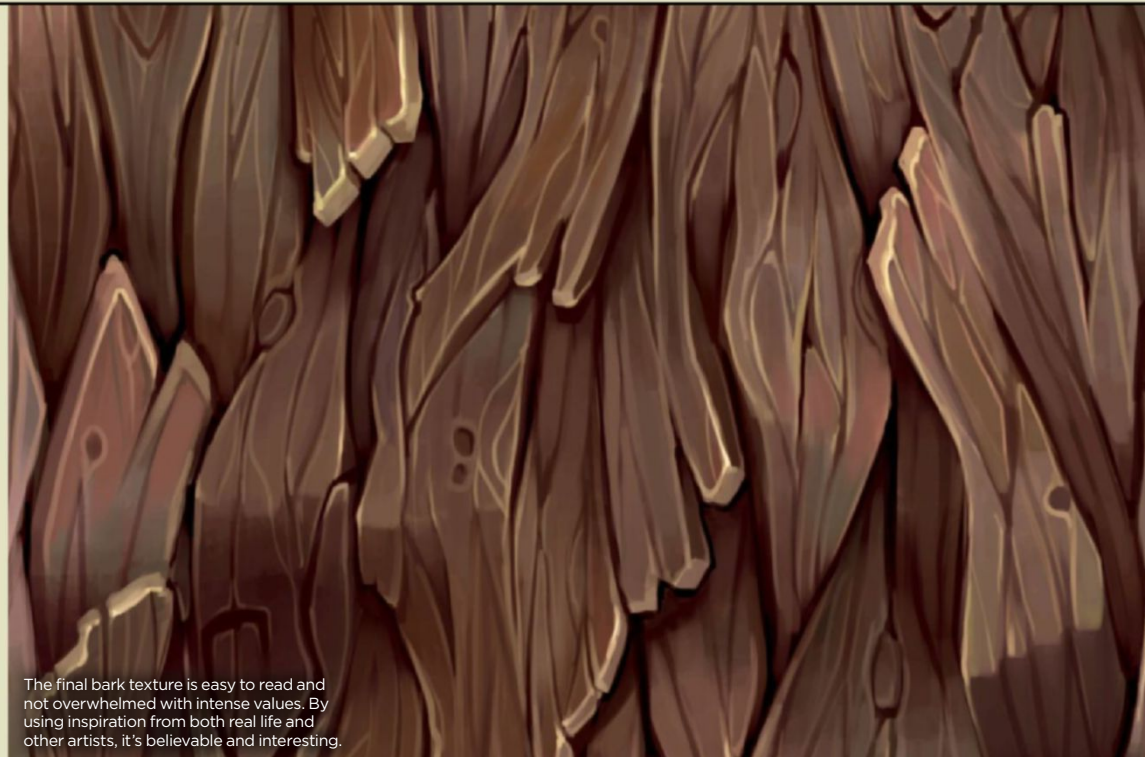
The final bark texture is easy to read and not overwhelmed with intense values. By using inspiration from both real life and other artists, it's believable and interesting.
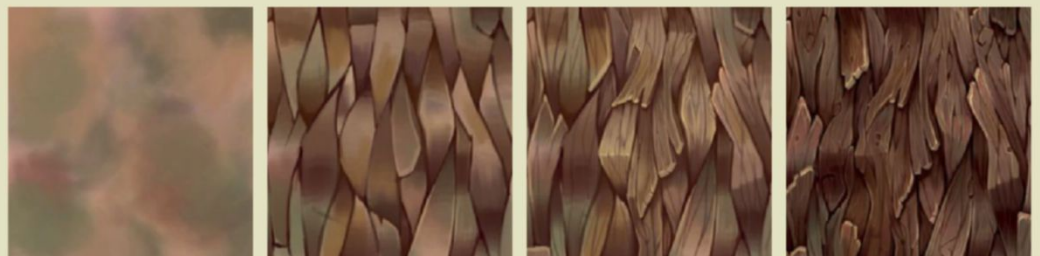
You can see in these progression images that I work from large detail to small detail. This is a great way to avoid muddiness.

Step-by-step: Design and paint a creature's mouth
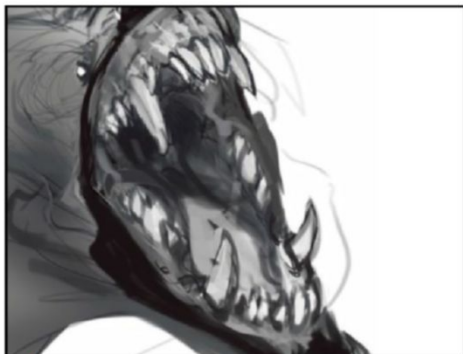
1 I began with a loose profile sketch to give me a target for on the three-quarter view. I was not worried about following it exactly, as the purpose and focus is simply the mouth. I started the initial sketch off in black and white to help keep my values straight.

2 Next, I focus on what the teeth arrangement should be, along with what the gums should look like and where the tongue sits. I think the back of the jaws, palette and throat shapes, while easily overlooked, are key in helping to sell the feeling of weight and power.

3 I leave the specular reflection and saliva for last. For the former I use a reduced Opacity Airbrush for light reflective surfaces, followed by a dense soft brush or one of the hard Rounds for the stark highlights. I use a soft Round or angled for the saliva in the same way.

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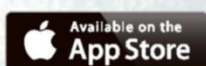
Question

How do I draw an imaginary creature that's stretching?

Dominic Armstrong, US

Answer
Brynn replies

Creature posing can be difficult, but if we work from general to specific, we can achieve an interesting pose. The stretch is a universal movement for a lot of real-life animals, and visualising your creature design this way will show off its character.

I begin with a rough gesture to block out the pose. I like to push through my strokes and draw through the forms, much like an animator. To this end, use your shoulder when you draw in poses – you'll develop a more dynamic posture for your creature.

In working out the pose, I'll usually work with wire frames to find those big skeleton landmarks like the rib cage, the shoulder blades and the pelvis. From here, I build up the drawing, using layers in Photoshop to

Even though I'm using digital tools, I choose to keep a pencil-like aesthetic. This means I can maintain an animated feel to the pose and have fun exploring the shapes and rhythms of this creature's body.

overlay more finalised drawings over the last. Every time I bring the drawing to a certain point, I reduce the Opacity, make a new layer and refine the drawing.

As I work, I consider the shapes of the creature before I think about the details. It helps to keep things in perspective as I work. I call this "the planar view". Now I find those major muscle groups: the glutes, the triceps, the latissimus dorsi and so on. Muscle anatomy for creature design takes lots of study and practice. The more you draw real animals, the easier time you'll have adapting anatomy to creatures.

From here, I move into detail. I think about the weight of the creature and where I can flatten the forms to show where they meet the ground.

Artist's secret

DRAW THROUGH FORMS

One mantra I'm always repeating is to draw through forms. This principle keeps my drawing looking fluid because I don't stop when one form meets another. It's a great way to capture volume. Because I'm working digitally, I have the advantage of using layers to bring out the details, as I clean up my drawing without loosing the initial sketch.

Step-by-step: Build it up, but keep it simple!

1 Line of action helps me find the overall movement of the character. You can see the line that flows through the front arm for an exciting pose. Gesture helps us find the pose and orchestrate the different elements of the design like the ears or tail. Gesture is a great way to sketch out a pose. It's not about accuracy; it's about acting and movement.
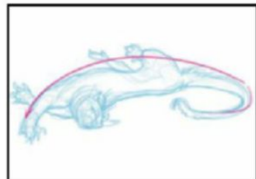
2 Next, I start to find the volumes and shapes of the creature. Boxes and cylinders can help with finding the perspective of your poses. It also helps me understand which way forms are turning so I can better depict the volumes. I like to add lots of construction lines to my image – the added texture helps add some tooth to the digital drawing.
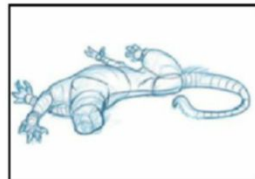
3 From here, I start into detail. I'm looking for where I can indicate weight. Keeping the forms flattened where they meet the ground will help it look like this creature is lying on a surface. I keep my lines heavier where there's darker volumes and lighter toward areas that are lit up. It's a quick way to indicate forms without a lot of rendering.

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Fantastic FIGURES

From dream-born bodies to expressive line art capturing the essence of a figure, **Beren Neale** selects great art by great figure artists working today…

A rt has been dominated for centuries by figure painting, from cave drawings to ArtStation's home page. Whether it's an expressionist take, or a hyperreal depiction that fools the eye, fantastic figures have universal appeal.

For the viewer, there's recognition, identification, a willingness to connect with the human portrayal in front of you. Each artist brings a different energy, a unique palette and personal interests. There are many interpretations of the human figure, but one thing is certain: we're not getting tired of figure art any time soon.

Here we look at six of our favourite artists who've made a name for themselves with striking figure art. The anatomically realist art of Boris and Julie, the surreal dream-like paintings of Tran Nguyen, the darker figures of Bastien Lecouffe Deharme, and others. But all are united with positioning the human figure at the heart of their art.

Boris & Julie

LOCATION: US
WEB: www.borisjulie.com
MEDIA: Oil on canvas

Of all the figure artists in this feature, the two most associated with a realistic art style are Boris Vallejo and Julie Bell. But that's not the whole story. "I think that when you've spent many years working on realism and accuracy, it just starts to happen that you want to veer off into some stylistic choices," explains Julie. "It's a bit like playing with the tools that you've become so familiar with."

These tools include an encyclopaedic knowledge of the human form, thanks to a background in weightlifting – but more than that, of where the action is. "I look for the basic energetic line in a pose and draw that first. And then break it down. First the energy line in the whole figure, then in each leg, arm, hand and so on," Julie says.

Of course, all artists started making marks when they were still in nappies, but what's remarkable in this particular fantasy art dream team is that Julie pipped Boris to the post by four years. "The first human I drew was a model in art school when I was 14," Boris recalls. This is Julie's cue: "Starting when I was about 10 years old, I would get pictures from magazines and draw beautiful ladies in my sketchbooks. I loved creating all kinds of cool fashions for them. It was very girly. Not the heroic stuff that I would do now."

> 66 **I look for the basic energetic line in a pose and draw that first. And then break it down** 99
> **Julie Bell on capturing the action**

WISE WORDS
Go beyond the anatomy

Boris: "Work with live models and then paint beyond that!"
Julie: "When I painted Spider-Man for Marvel, I learned to forget about both spine and pelvis. I just drew him as if he didn't have them and it looked more realistic!"

Rebecca Léveillé

LOCATION: US
WEB: www.rleveille.com
MEDIA: Oil, gold leaf, resin on board, canvas and masonite

Every painting needs an 'in', a focal point that the viewer can engage with before deconstructing the rest of the image. For Rebecca, that's the figure, which "is part of an emotional language I use to attach the viewer," she says. The use of exaggeration is key.

The trick is keeping the essence of what she first sees in her subject all the way to the finished piece. "Sometimes things can get lost when the artist doesn't make choices that keep the work from strictly adhering to the model or reference," she says. "Things can become static and even if it's academically strong, can be stiff and without spirit. The challenge is getting to know the rules of the form through many hours of practice until the form of the figure becomes a fluid tool."

As for her figure's relationship with their surroundings, as in life there's no clear answer. "I'm very much wanting to deal with the light and dark of emotional moments. My figures have a sense of control, but it's not always comfortable."

WISE WORDS
Focus on expression

"Seeing expressive figuration makes me feel like I'm expanding on the inside. Like great dance or music, it makes me feel filled with breath, possibility and emotion."

❝ It's part of an emotional language to attach the viewer, make them feel the work's intention ❞

❝ I like complementing the composition by juxtaposing figures with quirky environments ❞

Tran Nguyen

LOCATION: US
WEB: www.mynameistran.com
MEDIA: Pencils, acrylics

When nominated to be her school's homecoming queen, Tran Nguyen had a decision to make: come up with a "cheesy propaganda poster," selling herself to her peers, or do something a bit more real. "I livened my poster up with a whimsical female figure," she says. "Her anatomy wasn't perfect, but it was a ground-breaking piece for me."

For Tran, anatomical accuracy has never been the ultimate goal to figure painting. She exaggerates and stylises the human form with the aim of, "complementing the concept or composition, juxtaposing static figures with quirky environments."

Figure drawing helped the artist improve immensely when starting out. "Drawing from observation, from life, is like learning a language in its native country," Tran says.

But it's not all been plain sailing. "When I was a kid, it was always the nose I had most difficulty depicting, and it's still one of my weak points today."

WISE WORDS
Bending the anatomy rules

"Learn anatomical accuracy. Then distort the form all you want, because you'll have the knowledge to make it look believable."
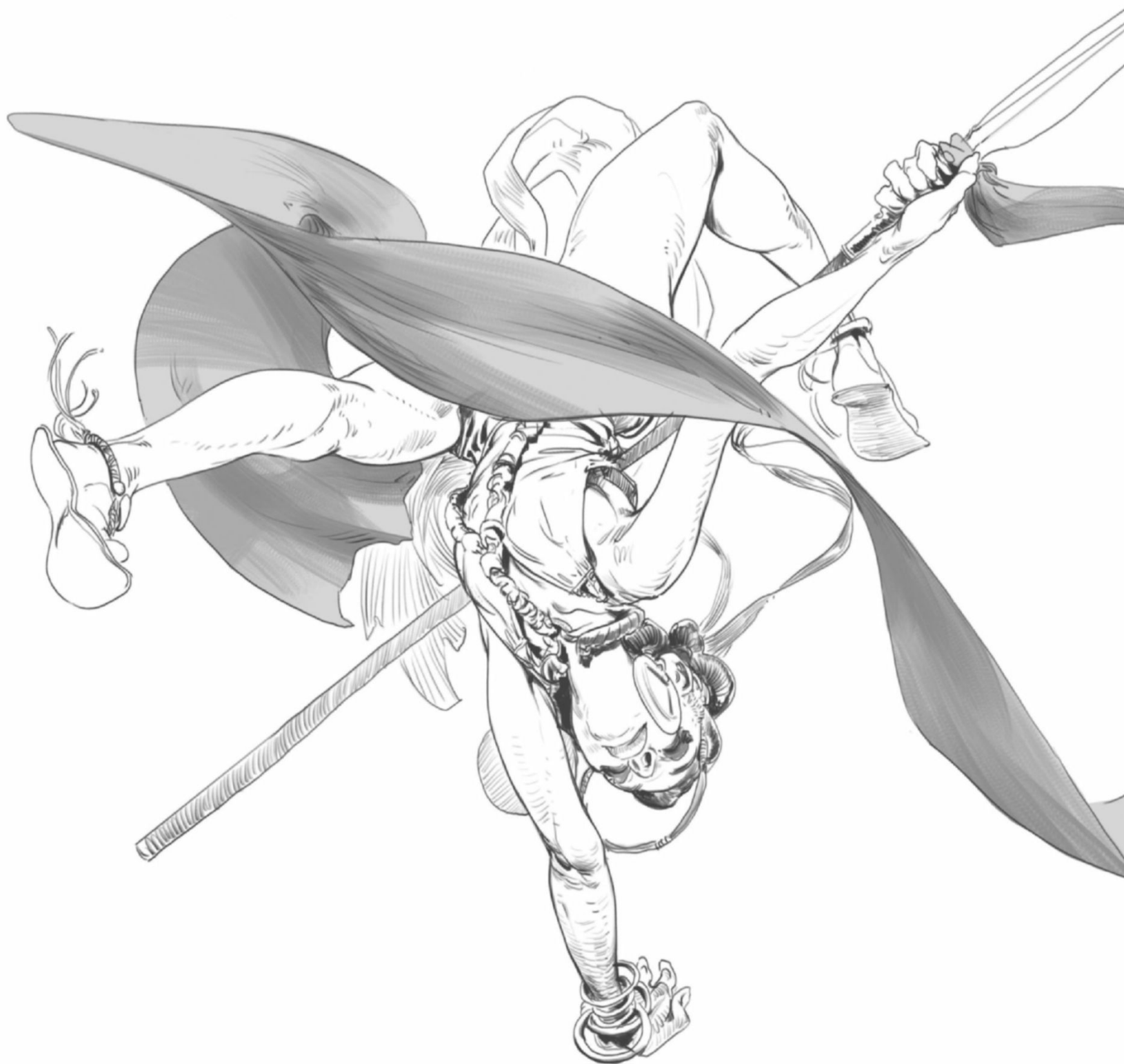
Even Mehl Amundsen

LOCATION: Norway
WEB: http://ifxm.ag/even-am
MEDIA: Photoshop
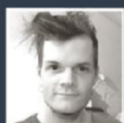
"It's a great canvas," says the Norwegian artist, "and a subject for learning that never stops giving. There is always a new aspect, be it something in the details or something in the whole to learn from."

Even has made his name as a concept artist with an exceptional handling of human anatomy. Daily sketches posted on Facebook reveal his eye for deft detail, but the forms underneath the rendering are totally convincing, and always interesting.

And he has no doubt that the real fun is to be had at the sketch stage, "almost by definition. Because the moment you go from impression to deliberation, you're no longer being spontaneous."

However, there are ways around this problem. "When you lose the dynamic sense, you can so easily kill the drama of a piece. But in the pursuit of preserving that drama we have solutions ranging from Frazetta and his theatrical exaggerations, to the fluid, almost animated lines of [comic artist] Bastien Vivès."

And what keeps Even enthused about his favourite subject matter? "An awe at successfully making a simplified illusion of the three dimensional in two dimensions," he states. "The extraordinary understanding of one aspect of the form or another, be it anatomical or that of movement, or ideally some unique mixture of the two. That gives me great pleasure."

> ❝ **There's always something new, in the details or in the whole, to learn from** ❞

WISE WORDS
Learn as you draw

"Don't be precious, and never copy! Always try and understand, rather than working pretty."
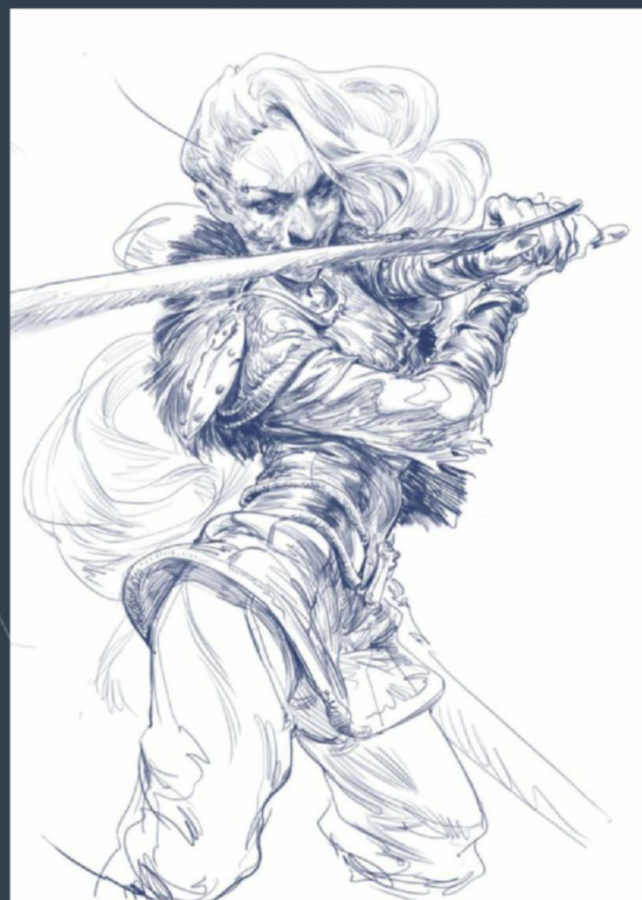
Vanessa Lemen

LOCATION: US
WEB: www.vanessalemenart.blogspot.co.uk
MEDIA: Oil on canvas and board

Vanessa isn't overly bothered about achieving results. Instead, she's far more engaged in the process of creation for its own sake. The main appeal of painting people for this artist is all about the humanity of the subject – finding a connection. "My perception of drawing well has evolved over the years. But I can say that when I feel like something clicks the most, it's basically just when I really enjoy the process of making it."

This process can be very personal. "When I was a child, starting to draw, I don't think I thought of things as being difficult to depict accurately," Vanessa says. "Take hands for example. There was a point in my early childhood when I drew them huge – as big as the rest of the entire body!" The artist is aware that the logical reaction would be to say, "That's wrong."

"But if you really think about it," Vanessa continues, "I was being as accurate as I could've been, based on what I knew at that time. It turns out that those who I'd drawn with huge hands, were the people who I thought were strong and capable.

"As we learn to depict accurate proportions, I think we shouldn't lose sight of the ways in which we perceive things as well. Eventually, these two aspects of our experiences, along with a few other aspects, join forces to become our means in which we speak through imagery."

> ❝ When the art clicks, it's also when I've really enjoyed the process of making it ❞

WISE WORDS
Carry a conversation
"When painting the human form, open up a dialogue with your art. Like a conversation ebbs and flows, so does the process that leads to the image revealing itself."
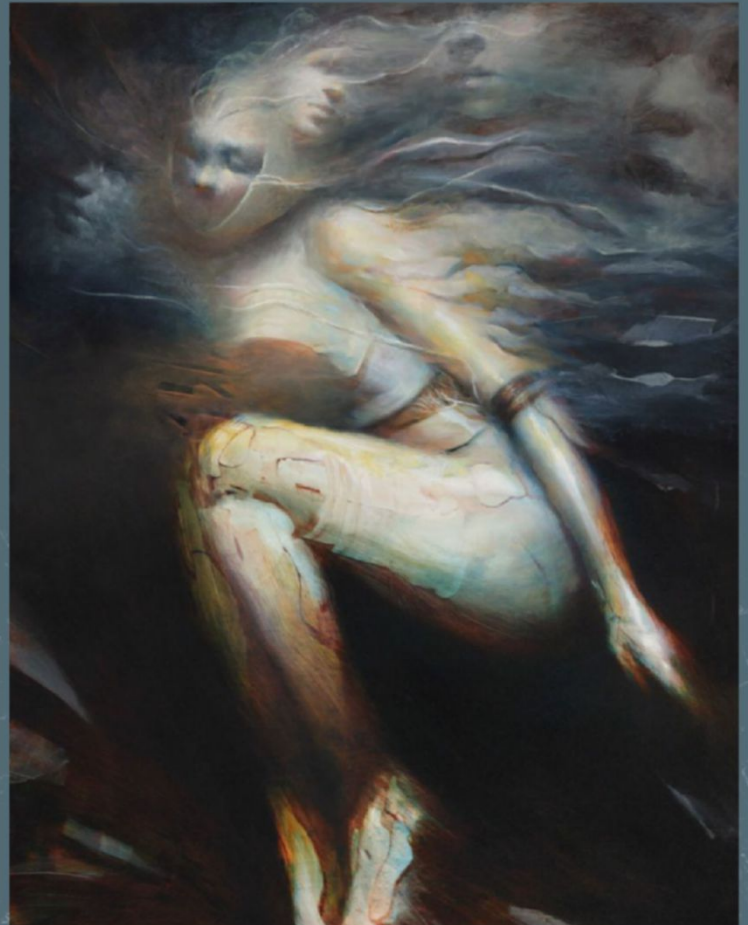
Bastien Lecouffe Deharme

LOCATION: France
WEB: www.roman-noir.com
MEDIA: Photoshop

How does the body reflect personality? That's a key question that keeps this French artist enthused with his favourite subject matter: the human figure. "I have a true fascination for the body," Bastien says, "with all its singularities that make it unique. We're all so similar, but so very different."

But how can he explain his enjoyment of viewing contorted, dynamic or elegant figures painted in two dimensions? Purely recognition? Voyeurism? A human connection? "A bit of all that," Bastien tells us. "A love for the complexity of the human body, the most fascinating of machines."

And the trickiest part of this machine to depict? The knees. "I used to always cover the knees – I'd always find a way to avoid painting the complexity of the knee caps!"

Today, Bastien's subjects are often the focal point within an environment they seem to be a part of. "I think it's because my images aren't about a character and a place meeting for the moment of the image. Quite the opposite. I compose the image and develop the environment according to the figure. Everything is built around it. Idealism? Maybe. Symbolism? For sure."

> ❝ I compose the environment according to the figure. Everything's built around it ❞

WISE WORDS
Follow the lines

"Observation and measuring are key. Learn to see the lines that connect the specifics of a pose and use them to understand how the body works. Building strong life-drawing skills, learning to observe, really increases the quality of work from imagination."

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Issue 142
Christmas 2016
Our film art issue includes workshops inspired by Blade Runner, Planet of the Apes and Guillermo del Toro. Plus we talk to the costume designer behind Pirates of the Caribbean, reveal how to capture movement in your art, and much 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!

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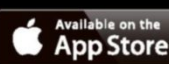
*Resource files are available from issue 85 onwards.

Sketchbook

Abhishek Singh

Figures from Indian myth and legend come to life in the sketchbook of this globe-trotting artist

Artist PROFILE

Abhishek Singh
LOCATION: US/India

Abhishek's work spans fine art, graphic novels, films and VR, and has been exhibited in Los Angeles, Houston, Vermont and Varanasi. His graphic novel, Krishna: A Journey Within, was Image Comics' first publication by an Indian writer and artist, and he's sold over half a million comics. Abhishek divides his time between New York and Mumbai.
www.abhishekartstore.com

VARAH
"This is from a comic project where I wanted to go completely black and white, but we coloured it eventually. The drawing is a reminder that someday I'll go back and do a black and white book. No compromises."

LION DURGA
"A minimalist drawing to capture the energy of the characters' interactions. Studies like those often challenge the excessive editing of our drawings that we've become accustomed to. Just put a bold line, let go and draw. And repeat!"

KRISHNA
"The moment where the wanderer acknowledges how everything is perpetually travelling, through seasons or changes in life patterns. This was a small work made in oil as a prelim for a bigger piece."

BHAGVATI
"Another study that became a small painting. This often happens where a smaller piece takes on a life of its own. In my process I don't do smaller copies of larger artworks. The small works are for inspiration, and they can look totally different from the final one."

KALI
"I like to let colour breathe and I went for that feeling here. Studies like this help prevent the final work from being over-rendered."

"The moment the wanderer acknowledges that everything is perpetually travelling..."

ARJUNA
"Warriors were often given weapons by expert craftsmiths and this piece explores one who turns into a warrior, at the moment before he makes his bow, with bones and raw materials from the forsaken trampled lands."
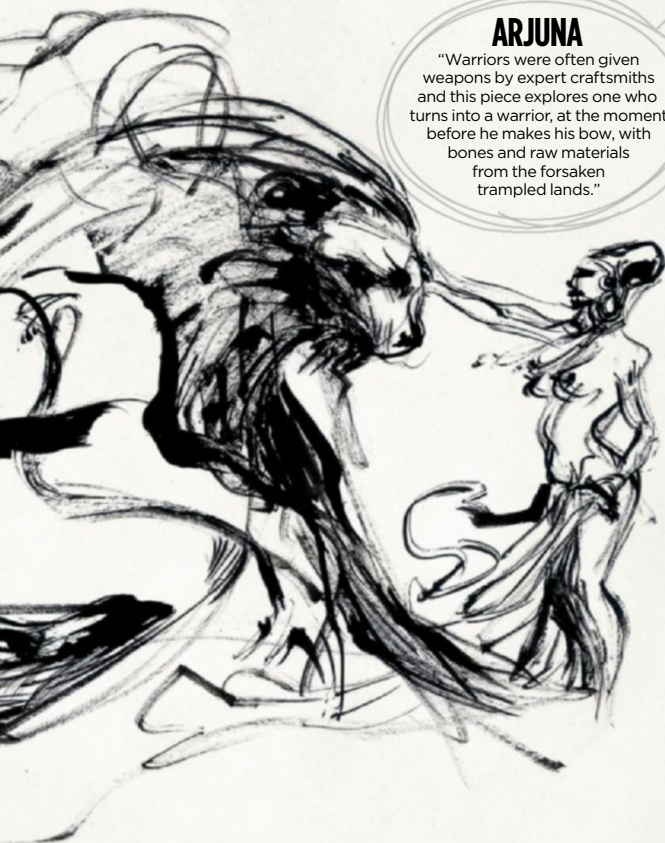
Sketchbook

KRISHNA

"The world was born of fire. This theme was made into a painting and here's a prelim I did to test the scope of it. I wanted to keep a radiant yet very calming feeling to the whole palette."

WARRIORS DEVA

"An exploration for my story, where the cursed gods, now warriors, embellish their weapons. I took inspiration from various traditions of martial arts for this tale. The tattoos play an important role in the narrative."

SAMADHI
"Warriors often lived by the code of choosing good over bad, but were aware that evil intentions are part of our mental makeup. This is a scene before the war between the ram and raven, who were enemies in the story of Ramayana, who's meditating and acknowledging this synthesis of good and bad being one."

"Usually i'll take ideas from these sketches as my inspirations for the final art"

SHIVA EXPLORATIONS
"This was a series of five black and white works. Usually I'll take ideas from these sketches as my inspirations for the final art."

VIDEO WORKSHOP

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This issue:

Traditional Skills & Painter
GET BETTER AT FIGURE DRAWING

Peer over the shoulder of fantasy artist **Patrick J Jones** as he draws live from his life-drawing workshop, without slavishly copying what he sees

Artist PROFILE

Patrick J Jones
LOCATION: Australia

Patrick is an artist, teacher and the author of Sci-fi & Fantasy Oil Painting Techniques, The Anatomy of Style and The Sci-fi & Fantasy Art of Patrick J Jones.
www.pjartworks.com

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 6 now!

When I got the great call from ImagineFX's editor to draw a life model for the cover illustration, I was beaming with energy and filled with notions of mighty gestural turns, curvaceous glutes and hips a-sway; but the brief came with a hurdle: no nudity could grace the cover! A chaste nude can work, of course, but usually at the sacrifice of the major curves that make the female figure so appealing and graceful. I decided there and then it would be an artistic challenge!

Normally, I teach life drawing at university, but for this commission I planned to record the stages live at my first private figure-drawing workshop, which was a big call, with every chance of me falling flat on my stupid face in full view of the class. It was also decided that an Asian model would be great too, and I agreed, but it would turn out to be my second challenge.

In this workshop I'll be working with classic butcher's paper (newsprint) and charcoal, while relating a tale of the wondrous unknown that greeted me as I walked into my first private life-drawing class with this exciting commission and cameras rolling…

PRO SECRETS

All aglow
Remember that you are the master of the machine. If the default mode for a particular set of brushes is Gel, explore another mode. One of my favourite brushes is the Glow brush, in the FX section of Painter's brushes. I set this to Screen mode for very quick highlight effects on metal.

1 No time for the wicked

Time is already tight because I accepted the commission when I was in the US, so when I return home I get scribbling right away. Here's a sample of the 22 quick charcoal poses I come up with. I plan to add some ornaments to cover the full-breasted thumbnails, but they're still too risqué. Eventually, the central figure is chosen, with the request to lift the head up.

2 Rolling with the punches

Having hired my go-to model, Alana, I'm all set, but on the very day Alana falls sick and is replaced last-minute by a non-Asian model I've never worked with before! These are the times an artist must dig deep for inner strength. I show her the approved thumbnail, and she strikes the pose as I go to work blocking in the simple shapes with a willow charcoal stick. ➤➤

3 Knowledge is freedom

During the class I'm also teaching the foundation of the figure to my students. Here's a study sheet drawn live during the same class, which not only helps the students understand my inner workings, but also keeps my internal anatomical knowledge fresh. My oft-said motto is, "Learn this stuff off by heart, then bury it in your subconscious."

Remember...

A The 'eight heads make an ideal height of a figure drawing' is a guide, <u>not a rule!</u>

B Find gesture when you can and push it

C Learn the general model for basic landmarks, then adjust for the life model

4 It's all in the gesture

Here I'm using my 'gestural hand', which means I'm holding my sharpened willow charcoal stick underhanded rather than with the 'detail hand', which we use for writing. This enables me to draw from the shoulder rather that the stiff confines of the wrist. At his point I'm refining the simple shapes and using the broad side of the charcoal for bigger tones.

Break the head rule

Work with an eight-head model in mind, then adjust when the live model arrives. Here I've shortened the fourth head

Crown
One hand's length
Nose
One hand's length

Iphoid process

Fat deposits here of female

We fold here

Great trochanter

Gesture of satorius

Gesture

Nose of Tibia

Outside straighter

Gesture of tibia

Peak of fibula

Every knee is a little different but the patella and tibial nose can usually be found

Ankle is lower on outside

Add style here.
I have tilted
eyes: 'cat like'

Peak of head
behind the eye

Seventh vertebra
landmark lump

Peak of the clavicle
can be seen at back

Ribcage tilts toward
viewer at shoulder,
then dips in at waist

Clavicle
from above

shelf of hips

TIP: Line up the
sacrum dimples to find
the tilt of the glutes
and great trochanter

Tilt

Sacrum
dimples

Hips are
fused

When weight is on
both legs the glutes
are compressed to a
straight line by the
biceps of the thigh

5 The pencil with appeal

Having found my basic shapes and proportions I begin to draw more solid lines. Here I'm using a charcoal pencil because it's the same material as the willow charcoal, just more dense. If I were to use a graphite pencil it would be too shiny and grey. This is a 'peel-off' pencil that generally doesn't need sharpening if you work big. The way it works is, you peel the outer paper layer upward to reveal more point. Very handy and clean to use.

6 Drawing without copying

With the model on a break, I have the chance to work on the drawing without the distraction of that old trap of copying exactly what's in front of me. This gives me the chance to rub into the charcoal shapes with my fingers, thumbs and tissue. It's also the perfect time to work some broad gestural shapes into the background, which adds movement to the figure. One last thing I do before the model returns is to work some Asian influence into the face. ➤➤

7 The thing with life drawing is...

When the model returns, she asks can she change her hand position for better balance. This is no problem because I rarely work on parts in detail and had barely sketched the hands. The thing with life drawing is that the model will shift slightly here and there, which isn't entirely a bad thing, because it stops you from getting caught up in detail. With the drawing almost done, it gives me time to study and blend the connecting muscles. At this point I'm starting to consider style by making the lines more gestural.

8 A world of contrast

I add some texture to the background with crunched-up tissue, making the flesh appear softer by contrast. Contrast is something the eye always seeks, and we artists can add it as we please. The same goes for line: I place thicker lines on the shadow edge of the figure. At this point I use some imagination and chip off the sharp European chin for a more Asian turn of line.

PRO SECRETS

Secret in the sand
Use a sanding pad to sharpen the end of your charcoal stick to a chisel point. That way you can produce a variety of marks from just one stick.

9 Love is all you knead

It's time now to give the drawing some love and added pop. I'm using a kneaded eraser here to pull out some highlights. Kneaded erasers are terrific because you can shape them like putty, hence they're sometimes sold as Putty Erasers. Using the kneaded eraser also gives me the chance to carve into the neck and face to achieve the exotic look I want. At this stage the face no longer resembles the original European life model at all.

10 The light touch

For those stubborn areas that forever hold the grey charcoal I use an electric eraser. It's important not to lean too hard, because you can easily tear butcher's paper. This tool is more commonly used on professional illustration board, which can take all kinds of punishment, but with a light touch it can also work well with butcher's paper.

11 The exotic glamour

Because I'm teaching a class during this demo, I have no time to fuss around with detail, and so I pay the model some extra cash for a few reference photos during the next break, which also became an impromptu photography lesson for the class. Once the class finishes I carry on drawing, adding more elements of style such as the oriental tattoo. If you look in the background of the reference photo you can see the clutter of a painter's studio. My iPad is also hanging from my drawing board by parcel tape and bulldog clips. Ah, the glamour of it all.

12 A great notion

I take the drawing home and work on it the next day without reference interfering. Reference is an incredible tool, but it can stunt your artistic hand. Leaving the art out of sight for a while can also give your eye a rest. The notion of a fresh eye is all too true: I now see clearly what needs a tweak. The final touches of darks and lights, varying the thin and thick line, and it's done.
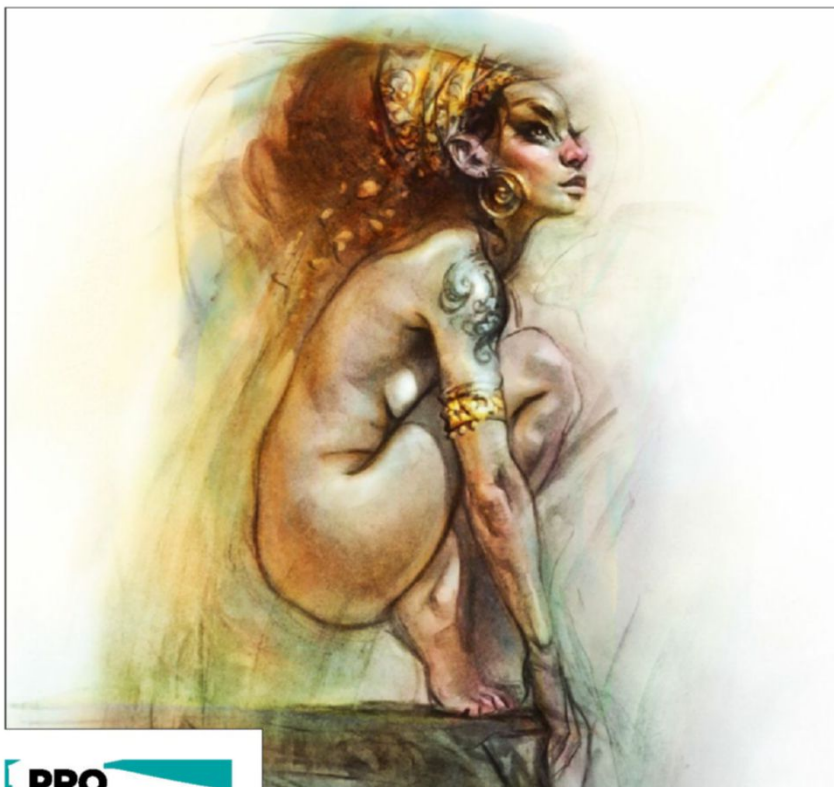
PRO SECRETS

Add texture

Charcoal is like a kind of monotone oil paint, in the sense that it's always 'live' – so feel free to push the pigment around with your hands or lift some texture out with scrunched-up tissue, or anything you please.

13 All awash

I'm not a big fan of bright colour over line art, so with the request for a wash of colour on top of my drawing I turn to Corel Painter's watercolour brushes. The default mode is Gel, which makes the colours a bit too garish for my taste, so I dial the Opacity settings down to 30 per cent and change the mode to Overlay. This gives me the real-world feel of a traditional watercolour wash. The highlights on the metal edges are added with Painter's FX Glow brush.

14 Adding your own style

So why bother with life drawing when we can simply trace photos? Well, the main reason is that we are artists who started out with the love of drawing, not rendering. Constantly drawing the figure frees us to rekindle that flame and express movement within our oil and digital paintings. Here's my finished art sitting proudly on the cover, drawn with gestural lines and underpinned with anatomical knowledge. It all adds up to artistic freedom born from the life-drawing studio!

Clip Studio Paint
ENHANCE YOUR FINISHED IMAGE

Tan Hui Tian demonstrates simple post-processing techniques in Clip Studio Paint that will bring out the best in your artwork

Artist PROFILE

Tan Hui Tian
LOCATION: Singapore

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

Much like in photography, an artwork may not feel complete until it's been post-processed. Post-processing enhances the art and may be used to ramp up the image contrast, change hues, create a blur or bokeh effect and so on.
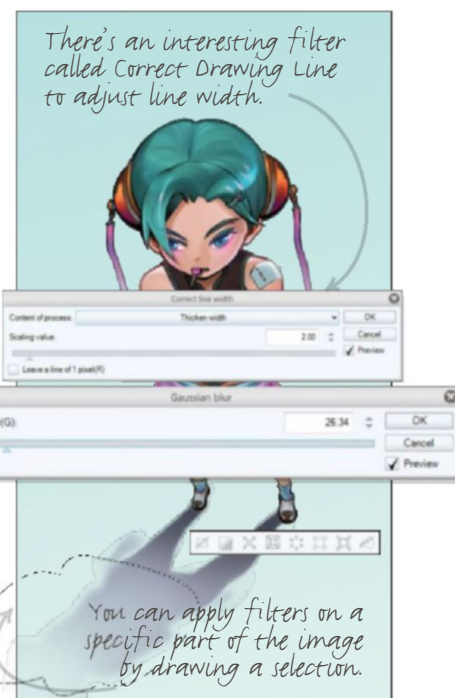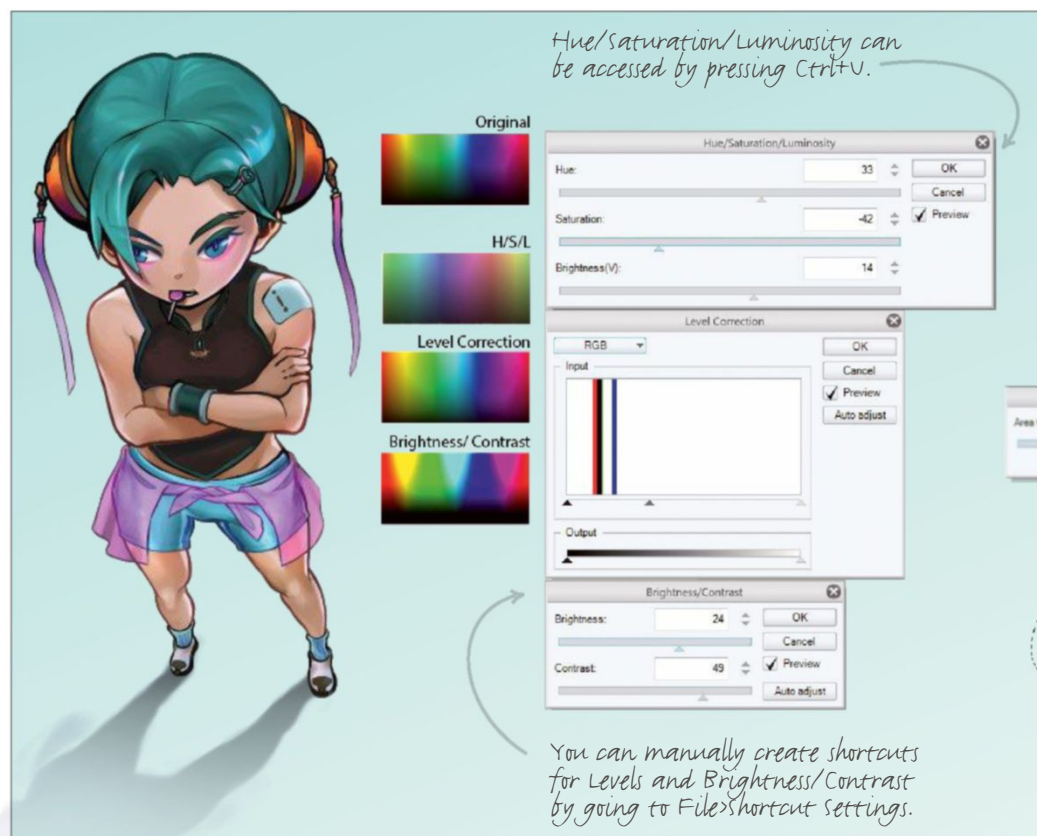
The features on Clip Studio Paint may not be as comprehensive as those in photo-editing software, but it should be sufficient for most purposes. However, you can also supplement Clip Studio Paint with free editing tools such as Pixlr or Google's Nik Collection.

Assuming your screen is well-calibrated, printed images are duller in colour than when shown on a monitor screen. In this regard, I find that most images work well with ramped-up contrast unless the mood of the artwork benefits from tonal ambiguity. But whether the end results will be printed or not, layer overlays and colour adjustments make the colours more cohesive, and can help to bring out the intended atmosphere of the art.

As for how to develop a good sense of colour, beyond the usual study of colour theory, I find the subject of colour grading in films both fascinating and helpful. For instance, many Hollywood movies employ an orange and blue palette because the orange hues of the actors contrast vibrantly against a blue backdrop.

There seems to be certain stocks of colour grading by genre in the film industry as well: cold blue for horror movies, grimy grey for the apocalyptic ones, pinkish tones for romance. The rules aren't hard and fast, but can be useful in manipulating humans' psychological associations with colours.

Hue/Saturation/Luminosity can be accessed by pressing Ctrl+U.

There's an interesting filter called Correct Drawing Line to adjust line width.

You can apply filters on a specific part of the image by drawing a selection.

You can manually create shortcuts for Levels and Brightness/Contrast by going to File>Shortcut settings.

1 Tonal correction modes
There are three Tonal Correction modules in Clip Studio Paint: Hue/Saturation/Luminosity (H/S/L), Level Corrections, and Brightness/Contrast. H/S/L is useful for adjusting the hues of each colour block as you paint, to make the palette more cohesive. Levels is useful for adjusting the intensity levels of the shadows, mid-tones and highlights. Brightness/Contrast is great for ramping up the colour punch where needed.

2 Useful filters
There aren't as many filters on Clip Studio Paint compared to other art programs, but there are some interesting ones you won't find elsewhere. Normally though, I'd use the blur filters to create a shallow depth of field if needed. This makes the background or unimportant areas less distracting. You can also sharpen some areas as required.

You can try out different Layer Modes here.

Use a Clipping Mask to mask it to the layer below.

Sort and manage your layers by placing them into folders.

You can merge everything via Merge Layers, or merge visible layers with Ctrl/Cmd+Shift+E.
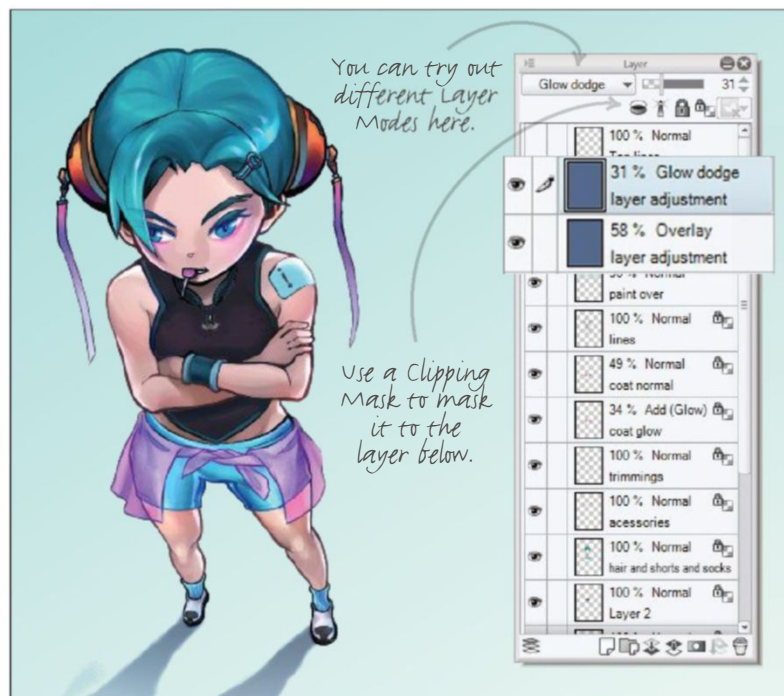
3 Layer adjustments

In the Pro or Ex versions, you can create layer adjustment layers in order to tonally correct the artwork. In the cheaper Debut version of Clip Studio Paint, things are less complicated, but the process is the same: create a layer above your artwork, fill it with a colour, modify the Layer Mode and Opacity for different colour effects.

4 Merging and layers management

To keep your layers organised, create folders for the layers and sort them accordingly. If you subsequently want to combine the selected layers to do a filter or tonal adjustment overpass in Debut, just right-click when you've selected the layers and choose Combine Selected Layer. Merging the visible layers include the Paper as well. The aforementioned step isn't advisable if you want your layers separated.

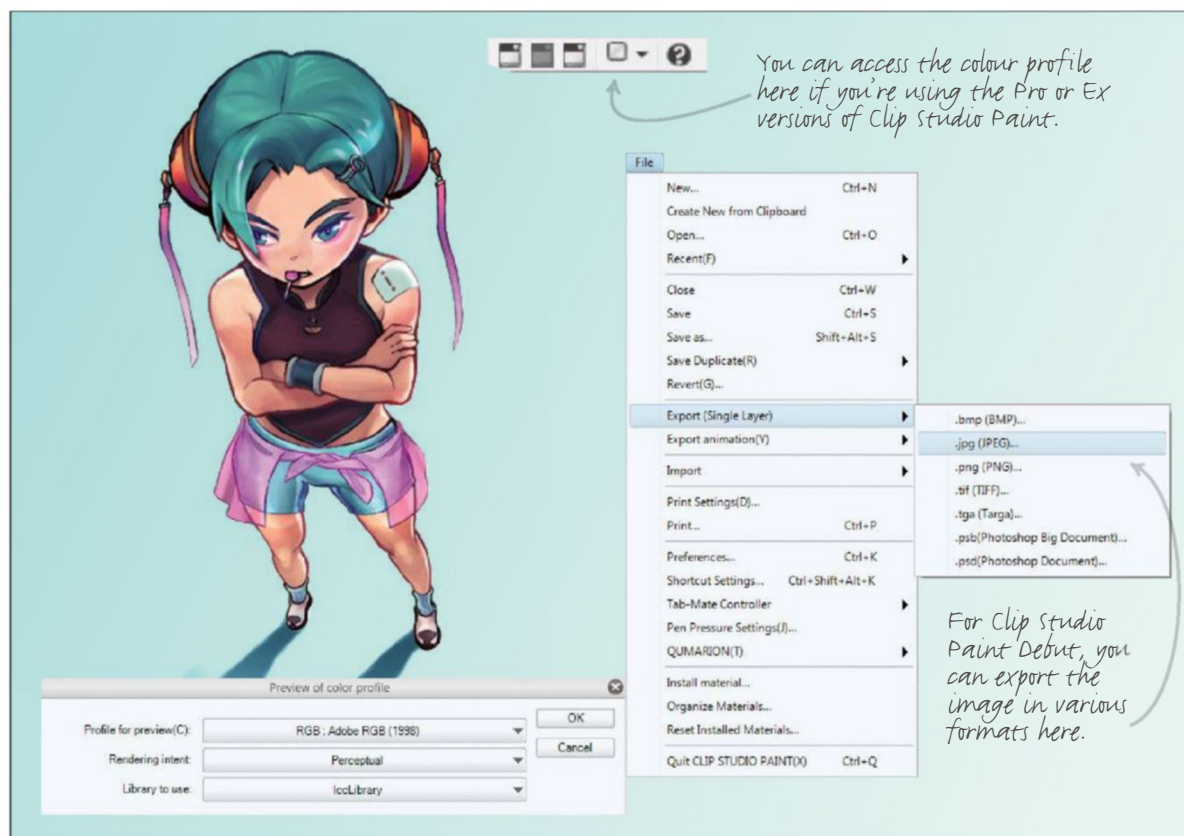You can access the colour profile here if you're using the Pro or Ex versions of Clip Studio Paint.

For Clip Studio Paint Debut, you can export the image in various formats here.

PRO SECRETS

Colour checking

Unless you have a colour meter, you're probably calibrating your monitor by eye. But one monitor may not be the most colour-accurate and it's always helpful to view your work on more than one monitor. You could borrow your friend's, or even view it on your mobile.

5 Saving and exporting your work

Most printers have file requirements and may prefer if you send them your files in specific formats (CMYK JPGs, for instance). While there's the option of changing your colour profile in Ex or Pro, there isn't such an option in Debut. You may need to download another program to save it in your printer's preferred format, or if you have Photoshop, simply save it as a PSD and edit the image from there. Make sure the DPI is high enough for print as well, especially for manga artwork with screentones.

Next month

New series! Get started in Rebelle

Photoshop
PAINT REALISTIC BIRD FEATHERS

Leesha Hannigan illustrates pigeons and doves of various colours, demonstrating how to render feathers while taking a painterly approach

Artist PROFILE

Leesha Hannigan
LOCATION: Scotland

Leesha is a freelance illustrator and concept artist originally from Australia. She specialises in fantasy illustrations for video games, tabletop games and book covers.
http://ifxm.ag/leesha-h

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 6 now!

For this workshop I'm going to be focusing on how to paint feathers, and have chosen pigeons as my subject matter. This is primarily because they're easily accessible to most people for study purposes, but also because it can be valuable to sit down and observe the more commonplace things in your environment, taking note of subtleties you may have previously overlooked.

Pigeons and doves for example, come in a variety of colours. When choosing your own subject for this exercise, try to find a species that will enable you to explore different colour variations.

When painting any specific material, putting some time into both dedicated studies and focused observation will save you a lot of energy further down the road. Getting into the habit of doing studies and representational paintings also promotes consistent growth when it comes to your technical skills.

The more you look at a subject, the more you'll understand how to accurately depict it in your illustrations, and as with many things, once you learn the rules you can also break them. That's where stylisation can then come into play.

I take a somewhat painterly approach to rendering, because I find it lends itself well to naturalistic paintings. Nature is inherently imperfect; allow this to come through in your work – it'll add to the character of the piece. Use reference, but apply the freedom to use it loosely. It pays to know when to deviate from your reference material and trust your own eye.

PRO SECRETS

HSB sliders
Using a colour wheel is quite common, but try switching to the HSB sliders. Alongside Hue and Saturation, you have the B slider that stands for brightness, or more accurately, value. I've found that being able to observe the number values beside each slider has made it a lot easier to maintain control over my colours and values.

1 Sketch it out
Depending on your goal, you can choose to plan your piece with line work alone, or you can dive right into colour. For this painting, I want to develop a clear idea of what I'm aiming for. Birds are quite involved when it comes to arranging them compositionally, so having a colour sketch blocked in helps me maintain a clear vision throughout my process.

2 On to the drawing board
I start with a drawing for each of the birds in this painting. Even a sketchy-looking drawing can help as a guide when it comes to anatomy – especially for wings, which feature a lot of complicated, overlapping forms. I recommend setting aside time to do studies of anatomical drawings of bird wings – these are often extremely helpful! ➤➤

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

**PHOTOSHOP**

CUSTOM BRUSHES: PENCIL FRIEND

Lately this has been my go-to pencil emulating brush, which I used for the sketching phase of this painting.

PAINTY BRUSH

I love this brush for its painterly texture and the way it tapers at the end. I used this throughout the workshop. It's a great all-rounder, but is also perfect for shorter feathers and even fur.

SOFT ROUND

I use this soft Round brush for subtle gradients, atmosphere, and adding subtle lighting effects in either Overlay or Color Dodge layers.
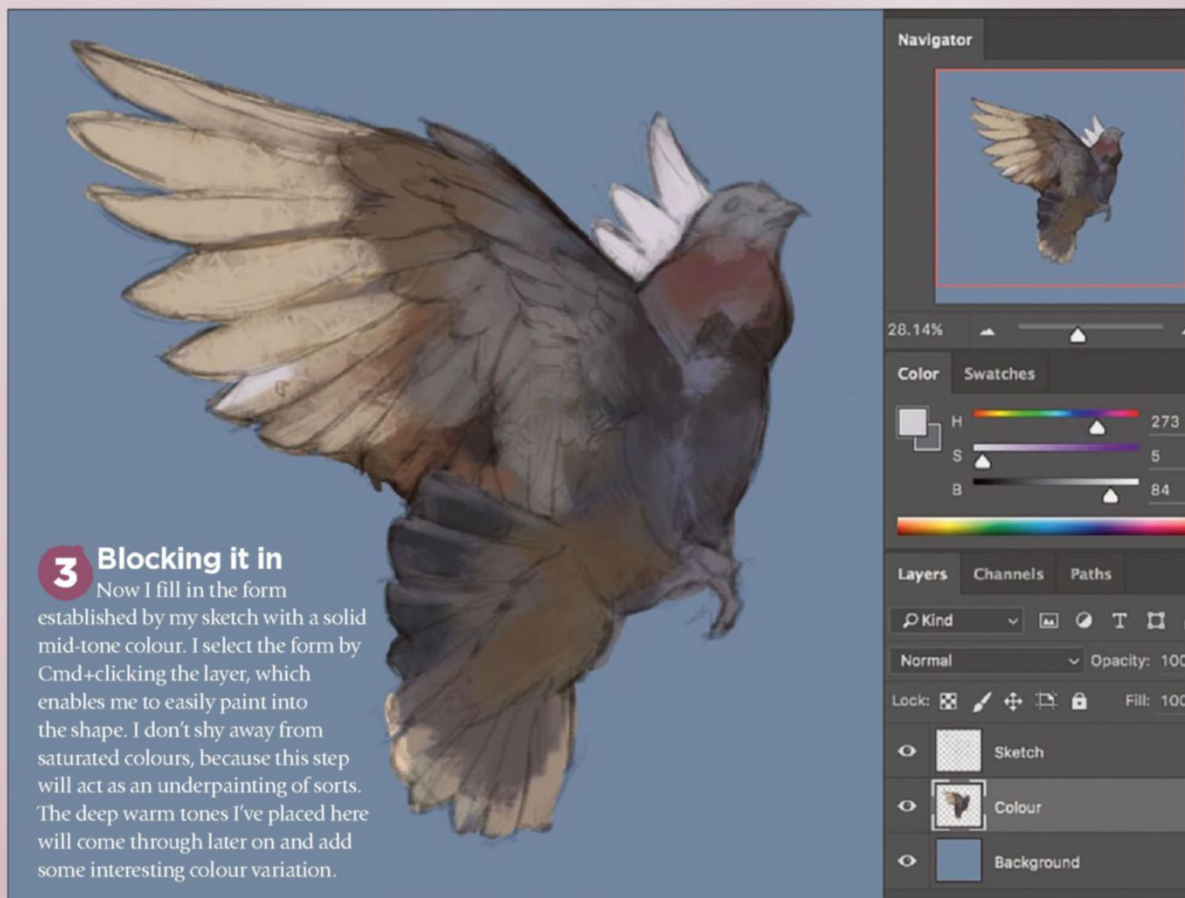
3 Blocking it in

Now I fill in the form established by my sketch with a solid mid-tone colour. I select the form by Cmd+clicking the layer, which enables me to easily paint into the shape. I don't shy away from saturated colours, because this step will act as an underpainting of sorts. The deep warm tones I've placed here will come through later on and add some interesting colour variation.

4 Finding your feathers

Now that I've established some base colours, it's time to define the forms of the wing feathers. Here, I'm focusing on the outer flight feathers called primaries, which overlap one another in a repetitive pattern. It's a good idea to refer back to your reference material often throughout your painting, as the structure of feathers can get complicated.

5 Lasso the edges

The Lasso tool enables me to gain edge control, which is helpful for implying detail while maintaining a painterly approach. I select each feather with the Lasso tool, before gently painting into the shape. I repeat this process, noting that the overlapping areas will be slightly darker in value because less light will be coming through.
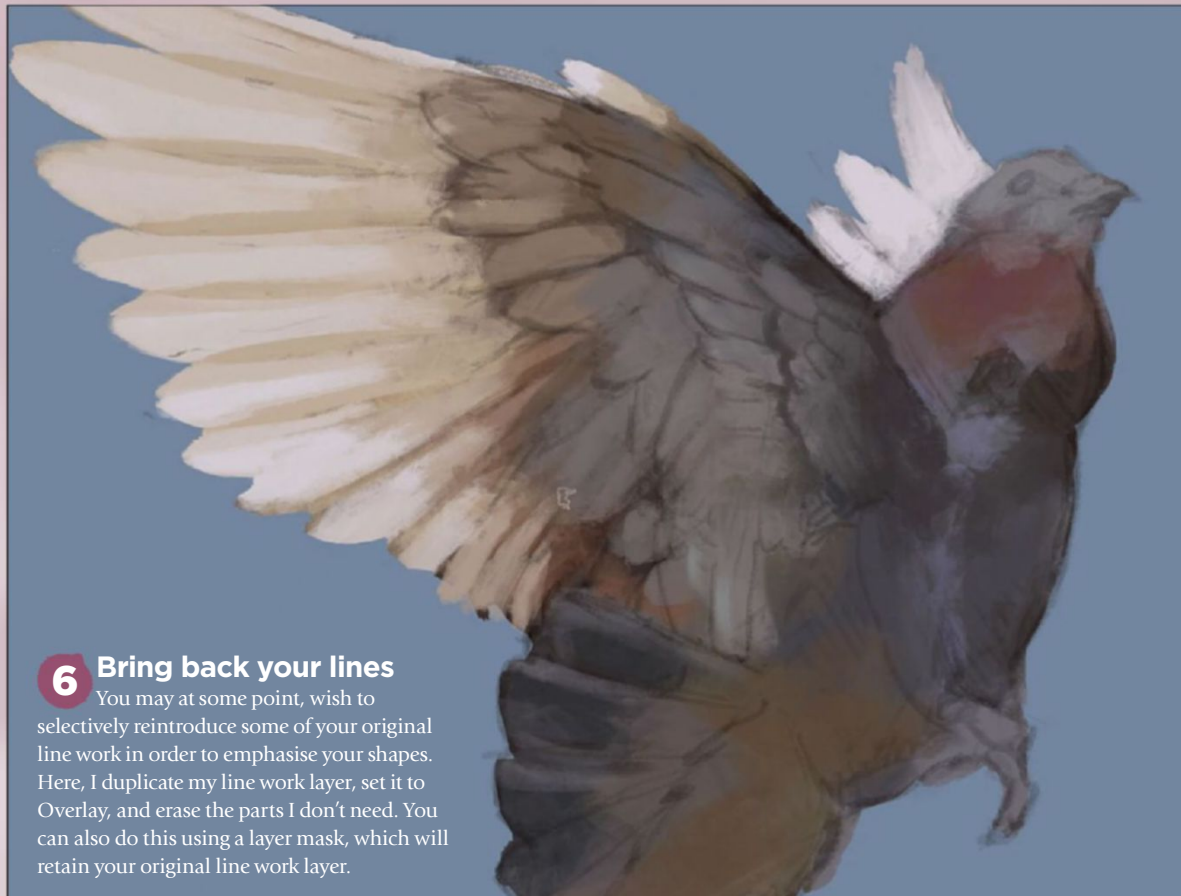
6 Bring back your lines

You may at some point, wish to selectively reintroduce some of your original line work in order to emphasise your shapes. Here, I duplicate my line work layer, set it to Overlay, and erase the parts I don't need. You can also do this using a layer mask, which will retain your original line work layer.

7 Refine your values

One of the key factors in painting feathers is to maintain close values while applying very selective dark areas. So for this step I tone down the previous Overlay line work layer and then paint some light areas into the shadow of the wing, continuing to define the inner wing feathers. These are called the primary and secondary coverts.

8 Get a fresh look

Flip your canvas as much as you can. When you mirror your canvas, it often illuminates glaring errors you would previously not have noticed. To flip your canvas horizontally, go to Image>Image Rotation>Flip Canvas Horizontal. But this is rather long-winded, so I've bound this function to Cmd+F. Now I can flip back and forth with ease! ➤➤

9 Gentle strokes

I use a custom brush I call Painty Brush [see Workshop Brushes on p.66] to render the smaller feathers covering the bird's body. This tapers out and simulates a real paintbrush. Indeed, this works well for these particular feathers, which I generally treat more like fur. I apply small strokes, adding more texture to the areas where shadow meets light, and making small dark upside down V-shapes to add shadowed areas.

10 Feel the warmth

Feathers will often be visually affected by both bounce light from their environment and subsurface scattering. I add some warm light coming through the outstretched wing on an Overlay layer, using a soft Round brush with low Opacity. This enables me to maintain control and keep things subtle. You can enhance this effect using either Overlay or Color Dodge, depending on how intense you want the brightness to be.
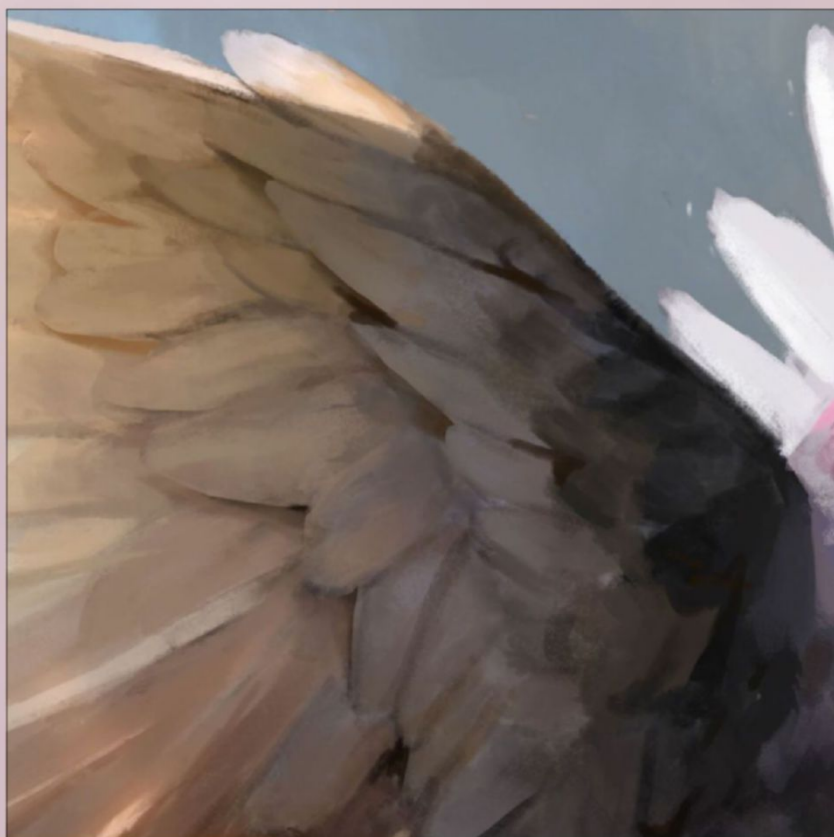
11 Embrace the darkness

I selectively add some dark areas while defining my feather shapes. This quickly brings form and detail to my focal points. You can do this by using the Lasso tool to select a feather, inverse the selection (Shift+Cmd+I), then carefully paint with a darker tone near the edge of the feather, where the feather is resting and where the shadow will be the darkest.

12 Make eye contact

As with portraits, one of the focal points when painting any animal will inevitably be the face. Our eyes are drawn to the facial area of both humans and animals. Apply close detail to this area, paying attention to the eyes and beak. Try to source some close-up images of your bird species so you can see what these features look like.
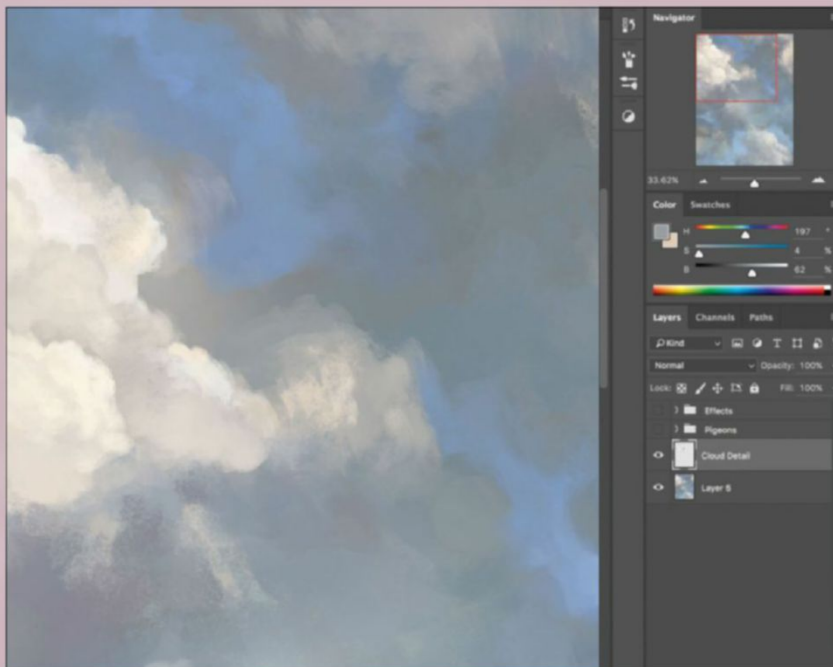

13 Create an environment

The setting for your subjects enables you to give them further context. My doves sit against a backdrop of fluffy white clouds. When painting clouds it's important to treat each cloud formation as a three-dimensional object. I select a Chalk brush and then apply small, circular strokes to render your clouds. Some of the edges should be defined and detailed, while others should be wispy and soft.

14 A striking silhouette

I take some time to ensure the silhouette is reading nicely, ensuring that light tones rest against darks, and darks against lights. I paint in some light areas of sky behind the edges of my dove that lie in shadow, and darker clouds behind the lighter areas. This helps to gives the bird a more defined silhouette and a more vibrant appearance.

15 The edge of the flock

Edge control is highly valuable when it comes to suggesting life and movement. If all of your edges are crisp, your painting will seem lifeless and stiff. I spend some time adjusting the edges of each bird's wings, so that some edges become "lost" and imply a blur caused by movement. It's a subtle effect, but can make a huge difference.

Shortcuts
Undo forever
Cmd+Alt+Z (Mac)
Ctrl+Alt+Z (PC)
This enables you to undo beyond one step. I was rather excited the day I discovered this!

PRO SECRETS

Saving for web
Using Save For Web is a great way to avoid huge files. If you press (Cmd+Alt+Shift+S), it will bring up this option. I will generally save out my images as JPEG, set to High quality – but don't be afraid to experiment with PNG, as it can sometimes offer better colour results. 1600px on the long side is a good standard size to share images online.

Artist PROFILE

Matt Cowdery
LOCATION: US

Matt is a freelance illustrator and concept artist based in Seattle, Washington, who creates fantasy illustrations for games.
www.mattcowdery.com

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 6 now!

Photoshop

BUILD A DEMON'S LAIR

Matt Cowdery concentrates on contrasts as he combines gothic architecture and fantasy scale, to create a strange, forgotten world

As a genre, dark fantasy is unquestionably my favourite. The mysterious and bleak environments of games such as Dark Souls and the morbid dreamlike paintings of Zdzisław Beksiński both serve to inspire me to imagine strange and forgotten worlds, and the inhabitants of those worlds, who must attempt to survive as their world crumbles all around them.

This inspiration turned into the idea of a demonic conqueror sitting amid piles of wealth, finding nothing but emptiness in his ultimate victory, because he lived for the conquest itself, and without it, finds himself empty.

For the environment of the piece, I took inspiration from traditional gothic architecture and mixed it with the impossible scale found in fantasy worlds. For the demon itself, I chose to have a rough, almost thorny skin, to contrast the opulent wealth he's surrounded with.

The human eye sees by way of contrast, whether it's contrast of value, colour, saturation, theme, scale, or anything else. To make something pop out, I contrast it with its opposite. I use this technique abundantly: the saturation of the gems in his armour, compared to their surroundings, and in the level of finished detail in the foreground, versus the significantly less-detailed background. ➡➡

ANATOMY OF A DEMON

Metal details

To set the silver armour apart from the skin, I make the transitions between light and dark much more pronounced, with the highlights having nearly no gradation at all to their surroundings. This, in combination with their rough texture, gives the appearance of glittering, rough metal.

Sub-surface scattering

The scattering of light through semi-translucent objects creates a faint glow that carries the object's interior colour out to the other side. This effect give me the opportunity to add visual interest to something, by diversifying the way light behaves with it, as well as offering an insight into what material we're really looking at.

Informed anatomy

You can't get too much anatomy reference. Finding the reference you need to help paint the figure correctly is crucial. If you don't have the experience and visual library to paint it from your head, you're going to need reference. Your reference doesn't need to look like your painting, it just needs to inform you how the figure is constructed.

How I portray...
A NETHERWORLD CONQUEROR

Add some narrative
Even a simple narrative can bring depth to a painting. The elements used to sell this narrative can be as obvious as the destroyed cathedral, or more subtle: the crowned heads stacked behind the thrown, which blend into the pile of treasure at first glance.

1 Rough drawing
Starting as a loose value sketch, I make a rough drawing to nail down the drawing's big elements. This drawing doesn't need to be particularly clean or pretty, but it does need to show that you know the forms of the painting. Trying to create a good painting from an uninformed drawing is an uphill battle and should be avoided.

2 Preliminary rendering
I compose a colour rough under my line art. Then I convert the painting into greyscale and render it to a semi-complete stage, before placing the colour rough on top. This technique enables me to manage the values of the painting easily, without losing the complexity of the original colour comp.

3 Final rendering
I work on top of the preliminary render and take the image to finish, with a very close eye on keeping the direction of the lighting consistent, and the various materials in the image identifiable. In other words, the metal should react to light like metal would, the skin should have the slight translucency expected from skin, and so on.

Artist insight
ANATOMY MASTERCLASS

Glenn Vilppu shows how focusing on action and making use of the "icons" of basic rendering are the keys to creating expressive anatomy

Artist PROFILE
Glenn Vilppu
LOCATION: US

After 20 years spent as a figurative painter, Glenn gained work in the animation industry, for Warner Bros, Fox, Marvel Animation and others. He's a layout and storyboard artist, who also teaches at various institutions in the US, Europe and online at the Vilppu Academy.
http://ifxm.ag/glenvil

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 6 now!

Over the next five pages I'll reveal the basic steps I use in my lectures, and how they're related. I'll start with the first conception or inkling of an idea, and take you through to the final presentation.

Each step has an accompanying video instruction and involves applying core visual tools, like selecting icons for a particular program, that you need to know how to use, to develop your concept. Continuing the computer analogy, drawing is the graphical interface to your imagination. These tools enable you to relate your idea to yourself and the world.

I've organised these tools into a series of logical steps that can be applied to any visual presentation.

All of us know a lot more than we think we do, and much of what I teach is simply making this knowledge accessible. My desire is to bring a feeling of life to the drawing, based upon movement. In this workshop I'll focus upon the action – otherwise known as gesture – and the primary rendering steps involved in drawing the figure from imagination.

1 TOOLS, NOT RULES

When drawing from life and from imagination, the key is to understand the action that you're trying to depict. This is an analytical process. In this example, the lines lead you through the figure – they're not copies of shapes, outlines or stick figures. Each fragment leads you to the next, as if you were animating a trip through the figure, moving from one side to the other. No dead drawings like CSI. It's all about transition. Make the viewer's eye move.

ARTIST TIP: Think of each of the tools as icons on a computer that you access to create a drawing.

2 GO ACROSS THE FORM

The next primary tool is using lines going across and around the form, similar to a basic wire frame. Notice how it gives the first step a clear understanding of the forms in space. Focus on 3D, not shape or tone.
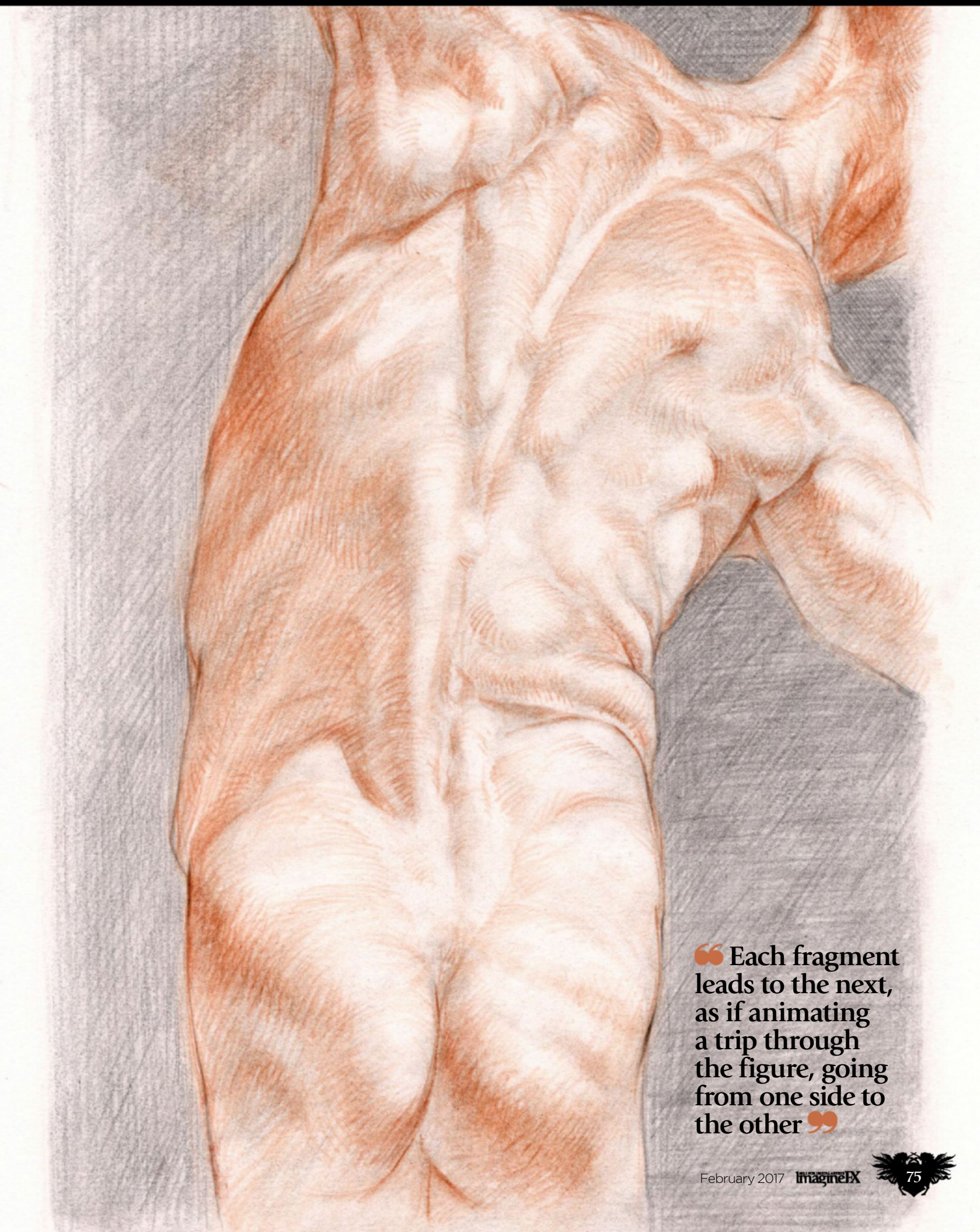
ARTIST TIP: Follow through, and take the line across and around the form. Imagine your pencil on the forms going over the contours.

3 BUILD UP THE FIGURE

In this step we come to the workhorse of describing form in action. The basic sphere is the first step in the development of the form. When adding the sphere, we focus upon creating clear, simple volumes. You can look at these as prototype anatomical structures, but don't get obsessed about having to make them perfect for now. These are general forms that will be adjusted as we go along. But for now, pay particular attention to how they overlap.

ARTIST TIP: Draw very lightly so that you can change without erasing. Rehearse the strokes: three looks, two thinks, one application.

> **Each fragment leads to the next, as if animating a trip through the figure, going from one side to the other**
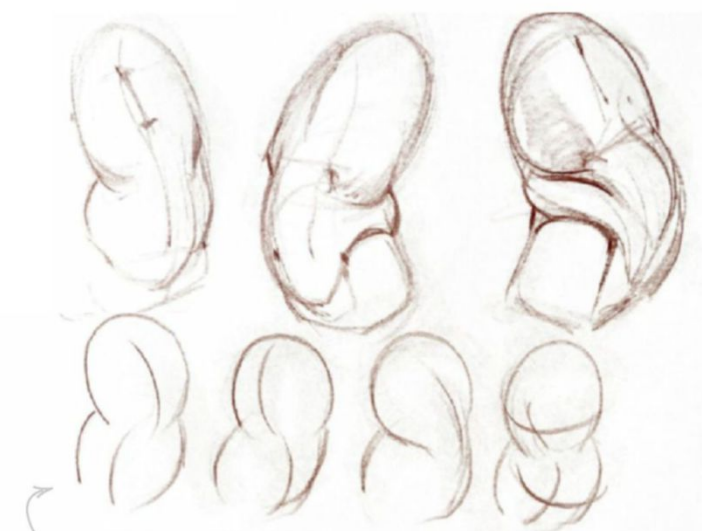
4 BRING IT TO LIFE

Our goal as artists is to add a sense of life and movement to our drawings. So it's important that you use lines that communicate the gesture. Notice how the same simple spheres communicate very different actions. Every line has meaning. Your drawing needs to be purposeful in developing your first idea, which is your end goal.

ARTIST TIP: What's seen are the lines we put down. The lines you put down is what you're thinking. Build the drawing.

> **66 Every line has meaning. Your drawing needs to be purposeful in developing your first idea, which is your end goal 99**

ARTIST TIP:
Put two oranges in a stocking and see what happens as you twist and bend it.

5 ALL ABOUT REALITY

How your drawing communicates a sense of physical reality is key to your drawing having a sense of life. The first exercise in studying animation is the bouncing ball, and the primary elements of how the ball changes shape on hitting the ground and regains its shape in rebounding. Squash and stretch are fundamental drawing terms. I first heard these in discussions of the works of Michelangelo and Pontormo. Look at the Belvedere torso, copied by artists since Roman times. Note how I'm applying this basic concept to the simple forms of the figure.

6 USE THE CYLINDER

As we drew the simple cross contours back in step 2, each showed a section of a cylinder. The cylinder becomes our next basic tool for the figure and a building foundation for anatomical information. Where you place the ends of the cylinders and how you draw the ellipse are the main points in showing direction and foreshortening. The cylinder becomes part of a visual structure we build anatomical structure on.

ARTIST TIP: This approach also works for anything that's coming forward or back, from snakes to branches.

ARTIST TIP: Don't get hung up on using boxes. They help, but are not essential.

7 SYMMETRY AWARENESS

Analysis of the pose is key when drawing from a model. In doing the drawings so far I've been building on an idea in my head, but in drawing from a model it's not often clear what the action is. Our next tool is the box, which works to both clarify our understanding of the live model and our conceptual intent. This is because it introduces critical anatomical landmarks that show us symmetry – a key element in revealing action.
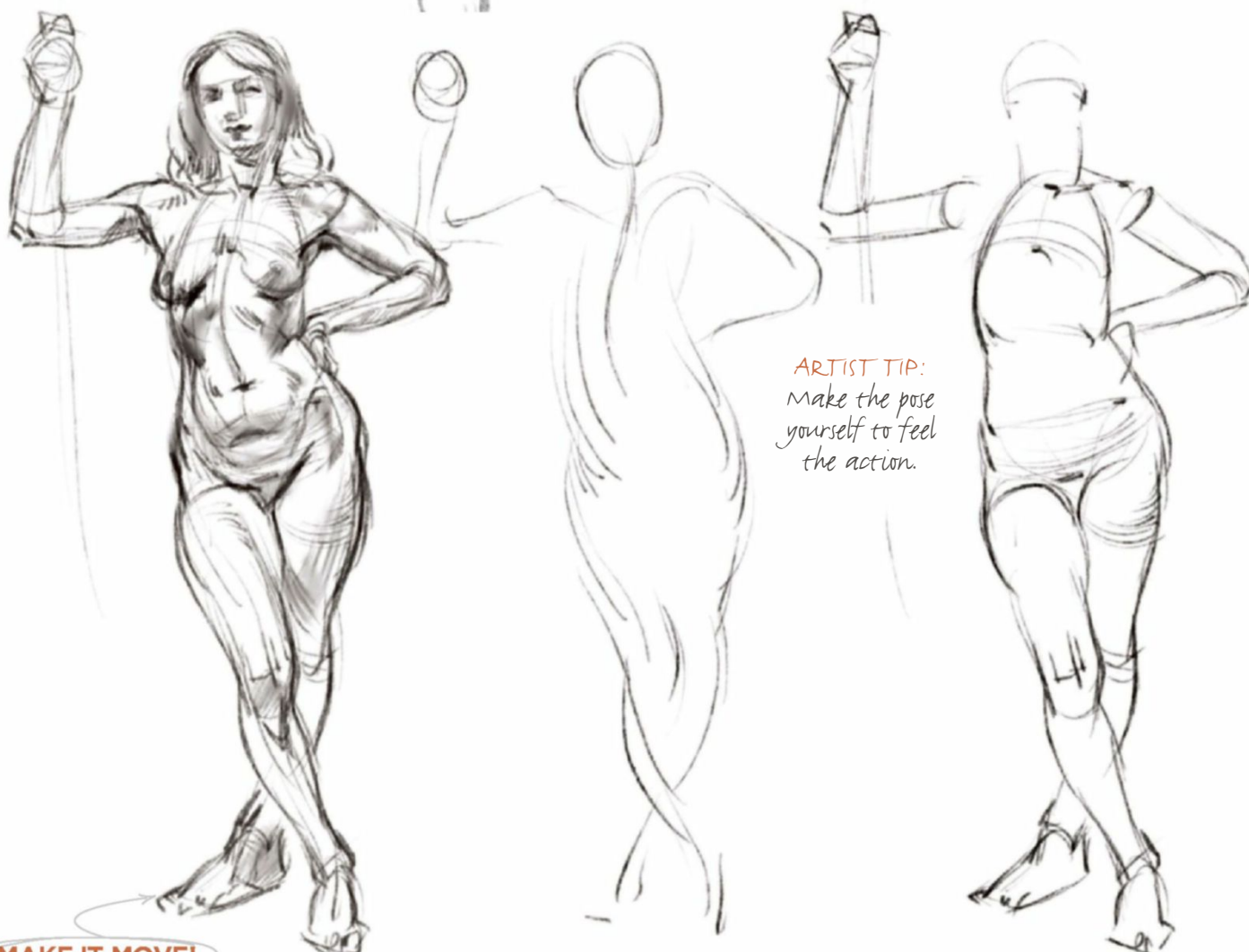
ARTIST TIP: Make the pose yourself to feel the action.

8 MAKE IT MOVE!

At this point in the drawing we get a merging of fundamental construction and anatomy in action. All the muscles are connected at two points and some at more. How the basic underlying structure moves and interacts is giving visual expressions to how they affect the surface anatomy. So now is the perfect time to focus on not only the muscles, but the fabric of skin and fat on top of the muscles and their interaction. Remember that everything goes over, around, compresses and stretches. ➤➤

9 KEEP THE MOVEMENT

It's important to focus on how our original gesture sketch is applied in the development and rendering of the anatomy. We're drawing figures in action, not anatomy book illustrations. Each of the lines leading through the figure are transitions from one point to the next. In using these lines as guides I compose the anatomy to communicate the action.

ARTIST TIP: Feel the pencil as it goes over the form. Focus on the total, not the parts.
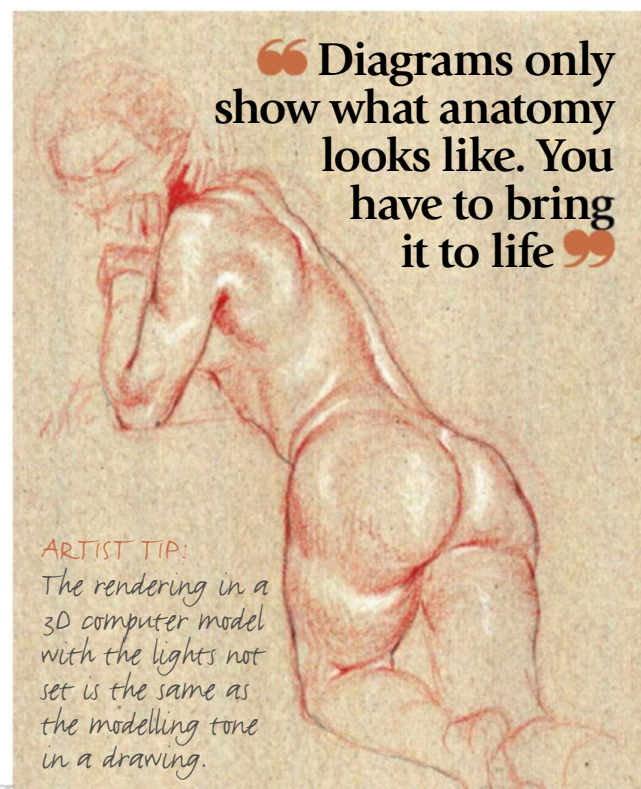
> **Diagrams only show what anatomy looks like. You have to bring it to life**

ARTIST TIP:
The rendering in a 3D computer model with the lights not set is the same as the modelling tone in a drawing.

10 USE THE TONE

The first tonal rendering tool is the modelling tone. Push the sides back, and what faces you is in light. As the form turns away it goes into tone. The tones move the eye in the same way lines do. They have to direct and describe the form. Don't copy tones, but use them to describe form.

11 BRING IT TO LIFE

A major element in the drawing that's often overlooked is the subjective content of the subject. In this example, notice how the look of the eyes and expression change the feeling of the drawing. Make the action and body language obvious, or no one will understand your intentions for the piece.

ARTIST TIP: It's about stretch, compression and how to describe form. Anatomy diagrams only show what it looks like. You have to bring it to life.

12 USE THE PHOTO, DON'T COPY IT!

When working from photographs, it's important to keep in mind that a copy of a figure in action doesn't mean the drawing will show action. You must create it. I tell my students, we never copy, we analyse and construct. Compose the anatomy to show the action.

Vilppu ACADEMY
ONLINE ACADEMY FOR DRAWING
VILPPUACADEMY.COM

Testimonial

I studied Anatomy and Figure Construction and Quick Sketch with Glenn and took these classes over and over. Glenn's approach to drawing is a classical, renaissance approach, mostly lost in modern times. Glenn Vilppu is responsible for sparking the passion for drawing I have had burning bright ever since. I have gone on to become a professional storyboard artist and illustrator working primarily in feature film. Projects I have worked on include: Disney's The Jungle Book, Allegiant, Resident Evil 3, The Amityville Horror, The Night Of, The God Particle and others. I carry what I learned from Glenn with me everywhere I go as one of my greatest assets. I also count him among my dearest friends.

- Jonathan Gesinski

Artist and designer Kenneth Anderson reveals how he brings his characters to life!

DRAWING FACES WITH CHARACTER

Julián del Rey explains how to add life and personality to your character drawings, using anatomy, expression, light, colour and composition

Artist PROFILE

Julián del Rey
LOCATION: Spain

Now a senior concept artist and illustrator, Julián has worked in the video games industry for seven years. Previously he was a photographer and graphic designer. He likes video games, art, good TV series and engaging films.
http://ifxm.ag/j-delrey

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 6 now!

When I started working as a digital and traditional artist seven years ago, I found that all the faces I designed looked flat and lifeless. They had no personality. For a long time I always drew the same faces, just to stay inside my comfort zone. One day one of my friends, who is also a digital artist, asked me, "Do you want to create characters who look alive?" I said yes, and he answered simply one name: "Norman Rockwell."

Next day I went to the library and found a book about Norman Rockwell. When I saw those faces, those expressions, something changed in my mind. So then I started thinking about how I could apply this in my drawings.

I spent a lot of time looking at a lot of digital artists, concept artists and illustrators who made their characters very simple overall, yet managed to put a great deal of effort into one place: the face. The human face is one of the most important parts of a character, so here are some of my tips and tricks to help you to add life and personality to it.

1 PROPORTIONS FOR REALISTIC PORTRAITS

When starting a character, the first thing I think about is the fundamentals of anatomy and how the face works. You can then play with the muscles, the shape of the eyes and of the mouth, adding expression and making characters more interesting.

As we'll see through the rest of these tips, this approach makes it easier to deal with the forms and proportions of all the elements. The most dangerous situation is when all of your characters look like a bunch of clones.

Top

1/3

Brows

Eyes 1/2

1/3

Nose

1/3 1/3

Chin
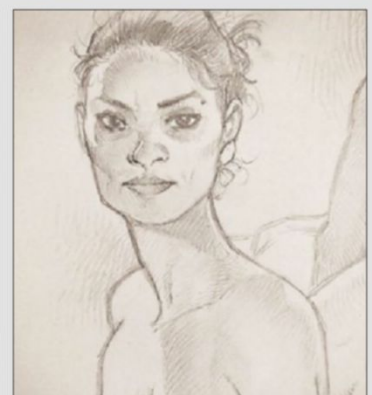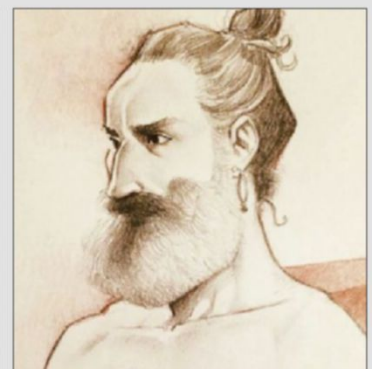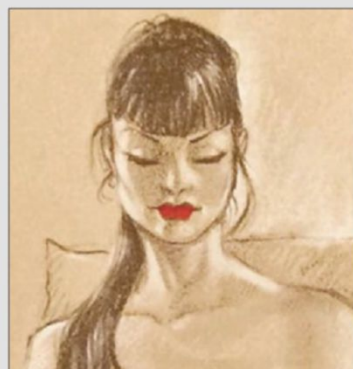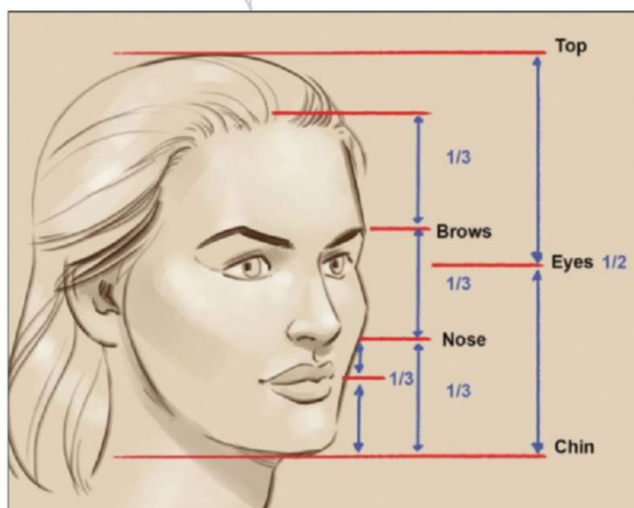
2 CAPTURING THE MOMENT

This may be obvious, but I think it's important enough to warrant mentioning here. Live drawing sessions are not only a good way to meet and socialise with other artists, but they're also a good exercise to learn new techniques and, most importantly, capture the moment.

Drawing quick poses helps you memorise them, as you unconsciously create a library inside your brain, which will be useful when quickly creating expressions for your characters. Capturing the moment of a face when it's sad, focused, happy or uncomfortable is one of the aspects that adds personality to your character.

NORMAL | IRONIC
NOSTALGIC | TRUSTING

3 THE POWER OF THE LOOK

People say the eyes are a window to the soul. This makes them one of the most important elements in a character's face. The eyes can express any kind of human emotion you can think of: happiness, sadness, anguish…

The look can be also boosted by the eyebrows. The eyebrows help by intensifying what the eyes are expressing. When the character looks worried, the brows tend to arch up, giving rise to wrinkles at the top of the forehead, while the lower jaw drawn back can cause creases on face.

> ❝ The eyes can express any kind of emotion, and the eyebrows help by intensifying what the eyes are expressing ❞

4 PLAYING WITH SHAPES AND PROPORTIONS

Every shape evokes a different reaction for the viewer. Whenever I'm creating a character from scratch I usually imagine what type of personality and attitude the character is going to have, and then apply this to the body and head shapes.

SWEET | STRONG | EVIL

CIRCULAR SHAPES: These suggest appealing, good (so, not evil) characters. Circular shapes are typically used to connote cute, cuddly and friendly types.

SQUARE SHAPES: Consider words like dependable, solid, strong, secure, firm, certain, serene and heroic. The square shape evokes stability and fortitude.

TRIANGLES: Easily leads to more sinister, suspicious type of characters and usually represents the bad guy or villain in character design.

5 EYE SHAPES

When I design characters, I start by drawing the eyes. That's because I think they're the most important part of the face. As I've already mentioned, we get to know the character's soul through their eyes – how they're drawn make them capable of expressing any kind of emotion.

At a fundamental and more immediate level, the size and position of the eyes conveys your character's personality. Bigger eyes tend to express childishness; smaller ones imply seriousness; wide-set eyes generate a sense of oddity; while close-set eyes can often indicate a comical demeanour. ➤➤

6 ADDING CHARACTER TO A FACE USING LIGHTING

Here are the steps I follow to add appeal to a stylised portrait…
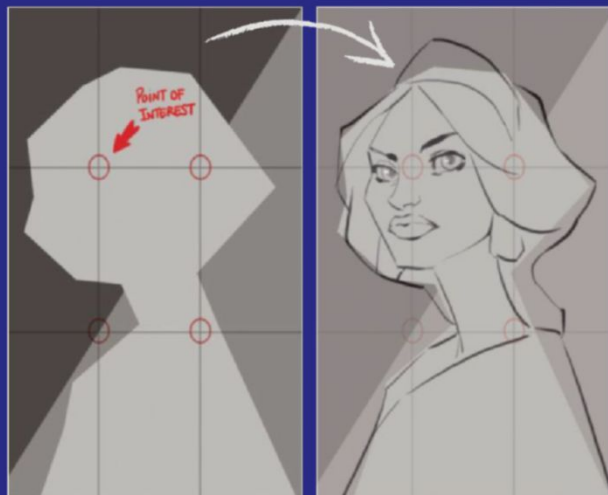
A Decide on the composition

The first step is to apply the Rule of Thirds to my composition and try to find the primary point of interest for the face. In this particular case I want my character to have her head towards the left-hand side but be looking to the (viewer's) right. This helps to focus the expression I'm after.
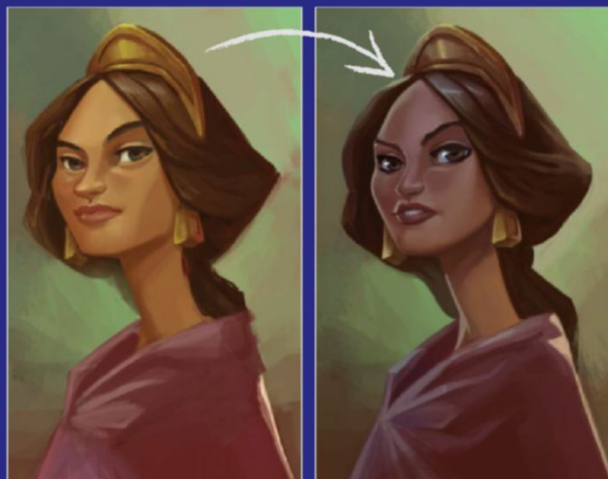

B Construction and lighting

The next step is to construct the different planes of the face, the form of the eyes, the nose, the mouth, and all the features. When I'm happy with this, I use Photoshop's Photo Filter and apply a cold tone to put the face into semi-darkness. I refine the face a bit, adding more shading until I'm satisfied with the lighting. More of the character is visible, but it remains incidental – our interest centres on the face.
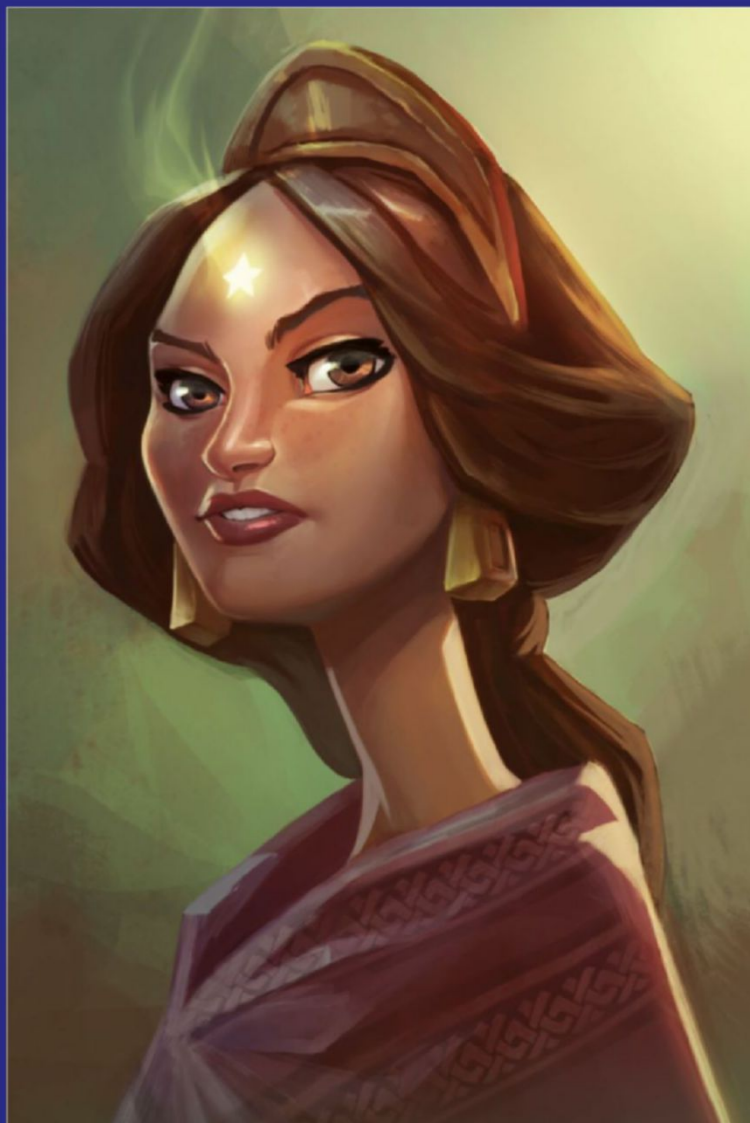
C Bringing out the details

Once I have the portrait with the cool tones that I want, I add another Photo Filter layer using a warm tone. In this case the light comes from the right-hand side (the character's left) and so I add the appropriate highlights to the eyes, the nose and the mouth. At this stage it seemed to me that the mouth I originally drew was a bit flat and lifeless, so I parted her lips a little in order to make the expression more interesting. Finally, I added a decorative motif – the luminous star in the forehead – to make sure that the viewer's attention is drawn to the character's face.

7 VARYING THE MOUTH

Another important feature that adds expression to the face is the mouth. It can be wide open to yell, or tight to show concern. To show happiness, the lips are parted showing the teeth, with the corners of the mouth pulling upwards to hint at a smile. In sadness, the shape of the lips turns concave, and the corners of the mouth droop. For anger, the mouth is slightly open, showing the teeth; the centre of the upper lip rises, creating a zig-zag line.

66 Instead of a happy person, draw an ecstatic one. Instead of an angry person, draw a furious one 99

8 DECORATING THE FACE

Often we get the feeling that our characters look very similar and they don't have something that makes them unique. A useful trick is to decorate the face. Once I have the face shape that I want and eyes that express what the character feels, it's time to decorate. This can be achieved by adding a distinctive element such as an eye patch, a specific hat that tells us the character is a pirate, a pair of glasses or maybe a long beard or a bald head. All of these elements – not an excess of them – will help strengthen the personality conveyed by the face.

9 THE IMPORTANCE OF THE LIGHT ON THE FACE

I always try to simplify my process to give me more control. Here's a useful trick I often use: when a character is coloured I apply two Photo Filter adjustment layers using the background colour. If the character is on a white background, I apply a warm colour on Multiply for the shadows and a cool colour for the lights in Overlay or Color Dodge, depending on whether I want stronger or smoother lighting. This tints the character.

Then I mask parts of these layers selectively, darkening or brightening areas according to what I want to depict. I recommend darkening the whole scene and lighting up the face as a central focus, to draw the viewer's eye.


10 EMBRACE THE WRINKLE

Drawing beautiful girls, nymphs and handsome men is always nice – the audience loves it. But have you tried to draw older people's faces? Their faces show the passing of time, which makes them interesting and adds much personality. It's common to exaggerate some of their features, like the ears or the nose, which usually look bigger than a younger person's. It's always fun to create characters that have had a lot of experiences, such as shamans, ancient kings, or even mages or sorcerers.

11 FACIAL EXPRESSIONS

I always begin with an oval for the form of the head, then place the eyes and nose, forming a basic T-shape. For expressions, treat this as a unit, noting that if you alter the shape or position of one feature, it affects everything – nothing stands completely on its own.

When I'm trying to nail down an expression, I use a mirror for reference. But for a stronger drawing and character, really push the expression. Instead of simply drawing a happy person, draw one who's ecstatic; instead of an angry person, draw a furious one. To show more personality, exaggerate the expression. ➡
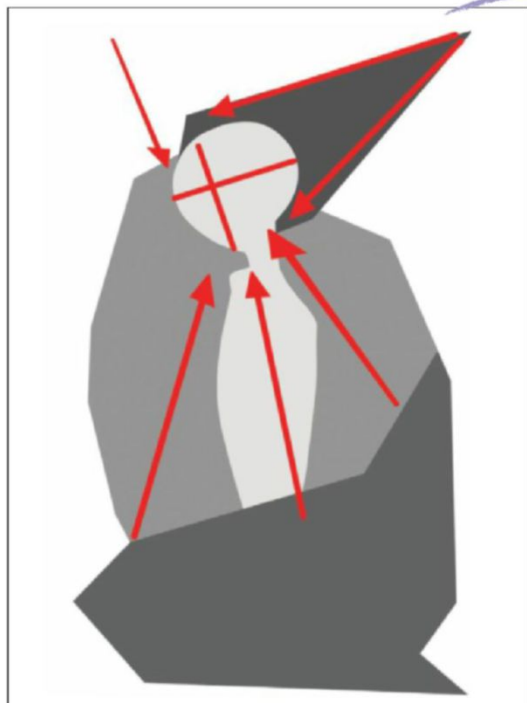
12 MY BEST FRIEND, THE RIM LIGHT

Using a rim light not only adds depth to a composition, but also helps separate different objects from each other and from the background. I've also been using it to sculpt the face of my characters. Rim light is a key element for adding personality to an expression, and helps draw the viewer's attention to the face. You can also use it to highlight different aspects, like the glow in the eyes or the shape of the nose. It all adds up, and when combined in a practical way with dark lighting it introduces seriousness and interest.
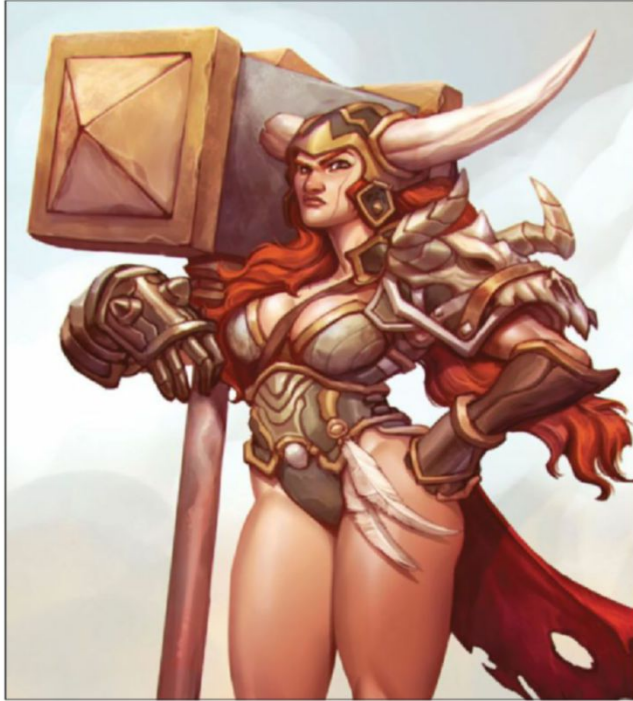
13 REINFORCING THE LOOK

Besides using the tricks I've mentioned so far, you can further add personality to faces using focal points, as if you were creating a landscape composition, using tone and colour to frame an area. You can also apply leading lines – like the ones we use to give movement to characters – to make faces more interesting.

This means that sometimes to create a more engaging face you should add things to highlight it. In this example I use the body shapes to draw attention to the character's face. These are especially helpful when your drawing is a portrait because the face is the most important element, the point where you want to draw the viewer's attention.

14 THE FACE AS STORYTELLER

We can use the faces of our characters as an enhancer of the story we want to tell in an illustration. Faces can tell us how the different characters in a scene interact with each other. If a character is alone in a scene, try to make it look at the viewer so as to focus attention on what's happening to it. But if there are several characters, try to establish a visual connection between them so that a story can be told. This helps the viewer to understand what's happening. Hence it's very important that the characters have expressive faces and eyes, the mouths should "talk", and everything tells a story.

15 ADD LIFE TO THE FACE

As well as exaggerating the expression, you can highlight key features to breathe life into your character. When starting a new character, I begin with a sketch that explores the character's attitude, pose and look. Then, as I'm adding colour and polishing details, I change some aspects of the face: I exaggerate face shapes using the Liquify filter, then add lighting and shadows emphasising the most important features: the eyes, the mouth, the eyebrows and the nose. Finally, I add glow to the pupils to highlight the eyes and increase the appeal. For this I always use a light turquoise tone in Overlay mode.

When the character is finished I duplicate this layer and apply the Lens Correction filter with subtle values. This distorts the channels and emphasises the brightness of the eyes, making them look more lively.

16 PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

A good character is one that has its anatomy, volumes, expression and lighting fully controlled by the artist, so that the artist can draw out its full potential. The face is a crucial element, not only for creating a nice-looking character, but also to express what you want the characters to convey and reinforce your story.

Now it's your turn to use these tips and create a dynamic character with personality. As Antoine de Saint-Exupéry once said: "A designer knows they've achieved perfection not when there's nothing left to add, but when there's nothing left to take away." I hope these tips help you to develop amazing aspects for your characters!

> **Perfection isn't when there's nothing left to add, but when there's nothing to take away**

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NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS
ImagineFX
Reviews

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

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

5 PRODUCTS ON TEST

BOOKS

94 Jim Henson's Labyrinth: The Ultimate Visual History
A collection of concept art and behind-the-scenes material from the cult fantasy film (now 30 years old!) that brought Brian Froud's unique character designs to life.

95 Masters of Sketching
Dedicated to one of the most versatile art forms, this new release features plenty of advice from skilled sketch artists.

95 Beyond Art Fundamentals
If your art lacks emotion and drama, then this book aims to address your concerns with a range of techniques you can apply.

HARDWARE

90 Intuos 3D
A Wacom drawing tablet and ZBrushCore – a stripped-back version of the sculpting software – could help you get started in 3D.

TRAINING

93 Casein Painting In The Wild
Illustrator James Gurney offers a guide to a much-underrated medium – but there's useful information here for any artist.

RATINGS EXPLAINED Magnificent   Great   Good   Poor   Atrocious

Intuos 3D

MAC & PC

DOUBLE ACT Get started in 3D with this tag-team of a Wacom drawing tablet and ZBrushCore, a stripped-back version of the sculpting software

Price £168 **Company** Wacom **Web** www.wacom.eu

The Intuos 3D becomes the fifth in a range of affordable, accessible tablets from Wacom. **Each option has essentially the same tablet (the colour may vary), but a different choice of software, with specific types of artist in mind.**

It's worth pointing out that your software use isn't limited to the package you get with the tablet. Wacom tablets are supported by a broad range of art software and in Windows and OS X, so you can use the Intuos for nearly every creative task you can think of, and even replace your mouse with it, if you wish.

The software in this case is ZBrushCore, a stripped-down version of the well-known digital sculpting and painting package from Pixologic, which is sold separately for £118. It says something about the continuing growth of 3D art from its professional niche into a more mainstream activity that Wacom considers this particular combo worth offering.

Before you can get started, you need to connect the tablet to your computer, which is done using a single USB cable; then install Wacom's tablet driver and Pixologic's ZBrushCore software, both of which are provided via download rather than on a CD. This

Combine the Intuos 3D with a 3D printer, and you could soon be sculpting and outputting your own art reference.

makes sense: not every new computer has an optical drive nowadays. It has to be said that the process of registering on both Wacom and Pixologic's website, entering various serial numbers and installing licence files is neither quick nor pleasant, especially bearing in mind the less-technically experienced audience this sort of tablet is aimed at. But it's a chore you only have to undergo once – and the good news is that once the various parts have been installed, everything works together beautifully.

ZBrushCore recognises the tablet without hassle, so you can start sculpting straight away. It responds

Because it's a simplified version of ZBrush, ZBrushCore is the ideal introduction to 3D art.

The provided Intuos Pen offers buttons pre-configured for ZBrushCore. Nibs can be replaced when worn out.

Four ExpressKeys can be customised with shortcuts.

A standard Kensington cable lock beefs up security.

The 8.5-x-5.3-inch drawing area is more than adequate for most ZBrushCore tasks.

66 Working in ZBrushCore is usually a process of small, iterative strokes, so using this tablet is pretty comfortable 99

well to the tablet's pressure sensitivity, enabling you to make a small scratch or a deep dig. The four programmable keys on the tablet are pre-configured for common ZBrush tasks: one brings up the Brush palette so you can switch quickly, for example. The higher of the two buttons on the pen is set up for rotating the canvas. You can customise all of these functions, but it's nice to know that you've got a pretty decent workflow straight out of the box.

With some art programs, the 8.5x5.3-inch drawing area of this size of

Intuos compared with larger but pricier Intuos Pro models can be inhibiting. However, working in ZBrushCore is usually a process of small, iterative strokes to build up your forms, so using this tablet is pretty comfortable.

Like any 3D program, ZBrushCore demands you invest time into learning its core principles and idiosyncrasies, but there are plenty of resources to aid this. Put in the time (and forgive the installation hassles), and you'll find that this tablet and software bundle is a terrific combination. 🔴

DETAILS

Features
■ 8.5x5.3-inch drawing area
■ No batteries required
■ Four ExpressKeys
■ 1,024 pen pressure levels
■ Optional wireless support (kit costs £35)
■ Includes ZBrushCore

System Requirements
PC: Windows 7 or later (ZBrushCore requires 64-bit edition), Intel i5 or i7 CPU, 8GB RAM, 100GB disk space
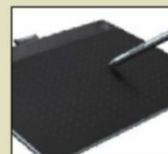**Mac:** OS X 10.8.5 or later, Intel i5 or i7 CPU, 8GB RAM, 100GB disk space

Rating
✏️✏️✏️✏️✏️

KEEP TAKING THE TABLETS

If the Intuos and ZBrushCore combo doesn't appeal, there are more tablets to choose from…

Wacom Intuos series

Web www.wacom.eu
Price From £67 to £84

Wacom offers four other tablets with bundled software. The Intuos Art (£84) comes with Painter Essentials and is the same size as the Intuos 3D. The other three are smaller, with a 6x3.7-inch drawing area: the Draw (£67) includes ArtRage Lite; the Photo (£84) features PaintShop Pro, Macphun Creative Kit and AfterShot Pro; and the Comic version (£84) comes with Anime Studio Debut.

Wacom Intuos Pro series

Web www.wacom.eu
Price From £157 to £315

The Intuos Pro is what most artists probably think of when you say "Intuos" – and it's certainly what they crave. The largest has a generous 12.8x8-inch drawing area, the pens and related accessories are a dream to draw with, and the various shortcut keys mean you can customise your workflow to suit your style.

Huion Giano WH1409

Web www.huiontablet.com
Price £130

Wacom is the best-known tablet maker, but nowadays there's a vast selection from other companies, starting from as little as £25. This particular model stands out by offering wireless connectivity, a 13.8x8.6-inch drawing area (the largest in the world, Huion says) and 12 shortcut keys.

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GET STARTED!

Charcoal Find out how to improve your sketches

Acrylics Tips and tricks to get the best from these vibrant tools

Watercolours Simple steps to help tame this tricky medium

James's portable art studio fits into a pouch, but enables him to capture a variety of natural scenes.

The challenge of this boat workshop scene was to strip the elements down to their basics – you'll see how James tackles it.

An ordinary roadside scene becomes an exercise in creating a semi-abstract display of light and colour.

The secret to this Wyoming ranch scene is the classic technique of painting from background to foreground.

Casein Painting In The Wild

JUST IN CASEIN Illustrator James Gurney offers a guide to a much-underrated medium – but there's creative gold dust inside for any artist

Publisher Gurney Studio **Price** £18 (DVD), £11 (download) **Web** www.jamesgurney.com

Partway through this video – the latest in James Gurney's series showing how to use different media in outdoor painting sessions – the illustrator explains that casein may not be as ubiquitous in the artist's arsenal as watercolour or gouache, but it's a very effective medium. Like acrylic, you can apply casein in thin washes or as thick, opaque daubs, making it a versatile choice when you don't want to carry too much around.

In the 74-minute video, James presents seven sketchbook projects where he relied on casein to get the job done, as part of his continual work to gather reference on the interaction of light and the natural world. As the camera follows him from a picturesque Catskills mountain stream through a Wyoming horse ranch and into the main street of a small Colorado town, you'll see how James uses casein's properties to capture each scene with great efficiency.

His approach is pragmatic, placing the paint in service to his concept. Sometimes he records the scene as he sees it. Sometimes he uses his surroundings as raw material for an idea he wants to explore, as in the project where a mundane roadside scene becomes a shimmering contre-jour light show.

It's this down-to-earth attitude to his materials that always makes James worth watching, even if you'd rather be painting on your iPad. Whether by coincidence or design, there's a broad theme of simplifying complexity running through these projects. As James paints a boat workshop, for example, he focuses on colour temperature and values to make sense of the many overlapping forms. You'll see in a couple of other projects, meanwhile, how he constructs his initial sketches to ensure the proportions are correct. Whatever your preferred medium, an hour and a quarter in James's company is time well spent.

SAMPLE VIDEO

DETAILS

Topics covered
- Casein history and application
- Working with washes
- Applying solid colour
- Simplifying complex scenes
- Contre-jour light

Length
74 minutes

Rating

ARTIST PROFILE
JAMES GURNEY

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

www.gurneyjourney.blogspot.com

Jim Henson's Labyrinth: The Ultimate Visual History

AMAZING ART Lose yourself in this collection of concept art and behind-the-scenes material from the cult fantasy film, which brought Brian Froud's character designs to life

Authors Paula Block and Terry Erdmann **Publisher** Titan Books **Price** £35 **Web** www.titanbooks.com **Available** Now

Combining the creative might of puppeteer and director Jim Henson, illustrator Brian Froud and executive producer George Lucas, it's no surprise that Labyrinth continues to fascinate viewers since its release in 1986. With 2016 marking the film's 30th anniversary, there's no better time to explore the making of this landmark piece of cinema.

Opening with a foreword written by the infant star of the film, Toby Froud, and an introduction from puppet coordinator Brian Henson, it immediately becomes apparent that Jim Henson's Labyrinth: The Ultimate Visual History has a wider scope than the average art book. Fortunately, the exclusive interviews with the cast and crew never get in the way of the book's many photos, sketches and paintings.
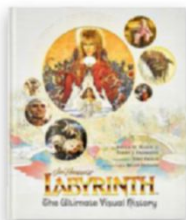
Photographs taken on the set of Labyrinth reveal the reality behind the fantastical locale.

Split into four sections – Inspiration, Characterization, Realization and Summation – the book takes a chronological look at the making of the film. Dotted through each section are replicas of illustrated flyers, invitations, script extracts and pages from Jim Henson's notebook, which push the idea of a visual history in pleasantly unexpected directions.

While these inserts give the reader a broader appreciation of how the film was made, they're unfortunately presented in a way that makes the book cumbersome to read. The reader can raise the facsimile sheets to read the text underneath, but it's unclear whether they were designed to be removed or kept in place. If an insert pops off by accident, the adhesive residue makes the pages stick together.

Despite these issues, there's still a wealth of stunning imagery to enjoy. From concept art of Ludo, to sketches of the Fireys, the main characters and creatures each get a look-in, complete with anecdotes from the people who brought them to life. Storyboards, photographs and full-colour paintings from scenes throughout the film round off the collection.

Standing over Hoggle is Jim Henson's son Brian, who remote-controlled the dwarf's face movements.

It's difficult to say whether Labyrinth: The Visual History is an art book or a broader making-of book. Perhaps, given the nature of the film, with its population of puppets and surreal special effects, the art is always going to spill over into the storytelling. Yet no matter how you categorise it, Jim Henson's Labyrinth: The Visual History is an insightful treat for both fans of the film and general fantasy artists.

RATING

Masters of Sketching

QUICK DRAW Pearls of wisdom from masterful sketch artists are shared in this book, dedicated to one of the most versatile art forms

Editor Debbie Cording   **Publisher** 3dtotal Publishing   **Price** £24   **Web** www.shop.3dtotal.com   **Available** 10 January 2017

Sketches have long fascinated artists. Indeed, the study of sketchbook art is a popular way to see how the masters worked, and is sure to improve your own drawing skills.

This is the thinking behind Masters of Sketching, a 271-page softback book that assembles 20 contemporary sketch artists and explores how they bring their work to life. The book presents a good variety of styles, ranging from impressionist charcoal

Film concept artist Colie Wertz's attitude towards sketching is, "If I hand this over to a modeller, will they be able to build it?"
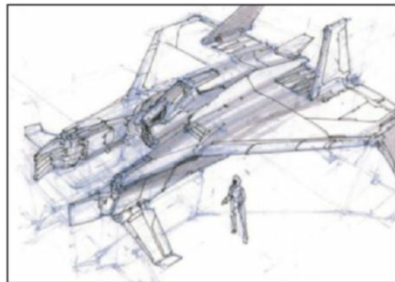
pieces to precise and whimsical work, so there's bound to be an artist in its pages you can learn from.

Each artist's section is broken down into a tutorial and a showcase gallery. While the galleries can be frustratingly brief, sometimes comprising just a couple of images, the step-by-step tutorials have much more depth and provide a fascinating glimpse into lots of different sketching methods.

This slightly compromised balancing act doesn't mean readers will be unsatisfied, though, because there's plenty to learn and appreciate from this book. And with further information about each illustrator at the end of the book, there's lots of further research to embark upon if you've discovered a particularly engaging sketch artist.
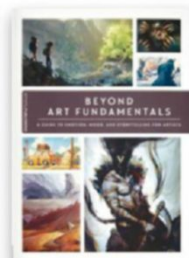
RATING 👍👍👍👍

Beyond Art Fundamentals

FEELING IT Professional digital illustrators reveal the techniques they use to add emotion and drama to their images

Editor Marisa Lewis   **Publisher** 3dtotal Publishing   **Price** £26   **Web** www.shop.3dtotal.com   **Available** Now

Beyond Art Fundamentals looks at how moods and feelings are the key to creating successful art that stick in people's memories.

Following a short introduction by the editor, Beyond Art Fundamentals is split into three main parts. The bulk of the 222-page softback is devoted to the Emotions section, where 18 artist tutorials reveal how different moods such as anger and nostalgia can be interpreted. These articles follow the

Damien Mammoliti taps into his own fear of the "dark unknown" to create this disturbing piece of art.

development of an image that conveys a certain feeling, with each one offering unique takes on composition, character details and general working practices.

The remaining quarter of the book is set aside to a cooperative project, where two artists tackle the same topic to reveal how collaboration can produce the best work, before closing with a gallery in which artists discuss their creative process.

Beyond Art Fundamentals might not be the most technical book around, but considering that it deals with something as personal and abstract as emotions, this doesn't matter. Furnished throughout with beautiful images, there's a wealth of advice and insight here for hobbyists and skilled artists to enjoy.

RATING 👍👍👍👍

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS
ImagineFX
PRESENTS

FANTASY
illustrator

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Kristina Carroll talks Greek myths.

HOW TO CREATE
INTRICATE
ILLUSTRATIONS

Miles Johnston focuses on values and edges to make beautifully detailed pencil art **Page 108**

🇺🇸 **Nen Chang**
LOCATION: US
WEB: Retromortis.com
EMAIL: nen@retromortis.com
MEDIA: Watercolour, Gouache

Nen started her career by installing works in galleries and doing conventions right out of school, before being given a sizeable scholarship to pursue a degree in sequential art. "Subsequently, I started working as a promotional illustrator and character designer, focusing on doing commercial work pulled from my fine art roots," she reveals.

Now Nen works as a freelancer for the likes of Marvel, Titan, Dynamite and AEG. This variety of works holds off her biggest fear: artistic stagnation.

"I want to continue on with my work as a cover artist and concept artist for tabletop games. But someday I want to be like the Japanese artist and character designer Amano, and produce lead character design as a traditional media painter," she adds.

IMAGINEFX CRIT

"Nen's colours are almost a character in themselves. But where an artist of lesser talent might struggle to get the vivid hues to work together, this illustrator makes it look like an effortless achievement."
Daniel Vincent,
Art Editor

1 HEMOGLOBIN
Watercolour, gouache, gold leaf, mica flake, 10x20in
"This is the cover for GODKILLER vol. 2 I experimented with more textural elements in this, with mica flakes throughout the piece."

2 REVERIE
Watercolour, gouache, acrylic, 13x19in
"This is a bit of an experimental piece. There's a load of acrylic added on top of the usual watercolour and gouache that's typically present in my paintings."

🇫🇷 **Yann Tisseron**
LOCATION: France
WEB: http://ifxm.ag/y-tisseron
EMAIL: plumedecorbeau@gmail.com
MEDIA: Acrylics

Yann's artistic inspiration can be traced back to cinema trips as a child, where he soaked up spaghetti westerns and 80s classics such as The NeverEnding Story and The Goonies. His time in front of the big screen also helped to focus his creative imagination.

"I used to play with everything all the time – LEGO, Mechano – and drew constantly. I was a pretty hyperactive kid. But everything started from these stories. I was an only child, so I used to tell myself stories in my room."

This passion for storytelling now takes shape in Yann's artwork, as well as a series of novels and a three-volume comic series.

1 DRAGON
Acrylic, 75x43cm
"Here's a painting made during an auction at Sotheby's. I'm glad I kept some of my rough line art visible."

2 VIVIANE
Acrylic, 80x50cm
"Viviane is one of the mythical characters I've always wanted to represent. These characters seem to be solitary and in need of love, so I chose to represent her in her element, after she's just stolen Lancelot."

3 STAR WARS
Acrylic, 50 by 65cm
"I painted this for a private collector, which I do regularly. Ever since I saw these films as a child they've been close to my heart."

IMAGINEFX CRIT
"The drama of Yann's Star Wars painting is eye-catching, but it's the scene of the young Lady of the Lake cradling the infant Lancelot that lingers the longest in my mind. Such a lovely, atmospheric artwork."
Cliff Hope,
Operations Editor

Email your submissions to fxpose@imaginefx.com

VIDEO WORKSHOP

Pencil   Oils

LEARNING FROM THE OLD MASTERS

HOWARD LYON demonstrates how studying an Old Master can give us invaluable insights into their process, aesthetics and techniques

For this workshop we'll take an in-depth look at the benefits of copying an Old Master painting. I've chosen to copy a portion of the painting Jeanne, by William Adolphe Bouguereau.

There are many artists who I admire, but I think Bouguereau sits at the top of my list because of his technical mastery. I've worked in the video game industry for 13 years, as a freelance artist and a gallery artist, and while my subjects and clients are varied, I've always been able to look to Bouguereau for inspiration.

The goal of doing a master copy is three-fold. The first goal is to learn from the aesthetic sensibilities of the artist you choose to copy. This is key to developing taste or connoisseurship.

During the 19th century the French government, concerned that French artists were declining in taste, commissioned Charles Bargue to create a series of plates from classical works that students would copy. This trained them to draw with great accuracy, but also

> ### ARTIST INSIGHT
>
> **MIXING COLOUR**
> It helps to isolate the colours when matching them. I use small pieces of grey paper, sometimes with a hole punched in it to isolate a colour. I then put a small stroke of the colour I'm trying to match on the paper and hold it up to my reference image.

informed their mind as to what was pleasing or ideal. This is subjective, of course, but when you choose a painting to copy, keep this in mind that you're training your taste.

The second goal is to learn how the artist approached colour, value, edges, and design or composition. I try to pay close attention to the way edges are handled and where the artist makes stylistic decisions, as opposed to being rigid to what can be observed. For instance, Bouguereau has greatly simplified the hair in his Jeanne piece to create larger shapes, and only in a few key spots does he render individual hairs.

The third goal is to be accurate. This is the least important, but still of great value. I say this because there may be portions of the painting that are near-impossible to copy with complete accuracy and paint in the same way that the Old Master did. If the original painting was done with big brush work that feels spontaneous and loose, you don't want to get out your smallest brush

and try to mimic a single brush stroke with a hundred small strokes, just to show how meticulous you can be.

I suggest that painting with similar vigour and manner as the original artist will be much more valuable to emulate, than creating a ostensibly perfect copy that misses out on the original technique.
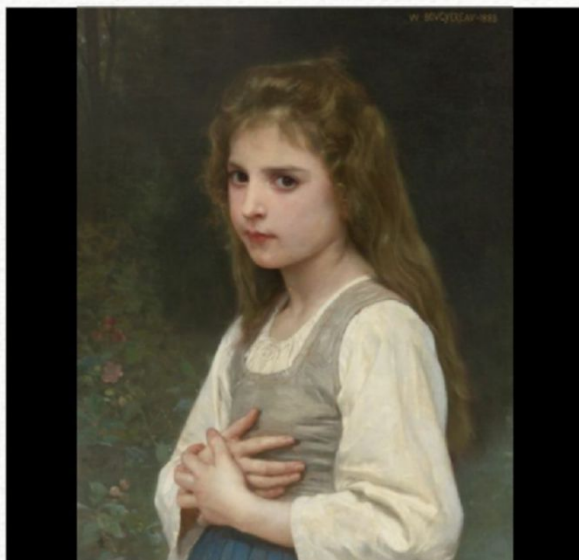
Howard has worked in the video game industry as a concept artist and art director. He has also freelanced on properties like Magic: the Gathering and Warcraft, as well as a fine artist for galleries. See his art at www.howardlyon.com.

1 Choosing your Master
The first decision is picking an image to work from. In this case, I chose to paint a portion of William Adolphe Bouguereau's beautiful Jeanne, because I want to study how Bouguereau handles skin and values. I'm also keen to try and paint hair in the same manner that Bouguereau did.

2 Preparing your surface
Gesso your board with either an acrylic or oil-based gesso. I like the Liquitex Professional gesso because it has some calcium carbonate added to give it absorbency and tooth. If you use oil-based primer you'll need to size your canvas and give it several weeks to cure.

4 Selective drawing
You don't need to render out all the values when drawing your painting. Try to limit your drawing to just the landmarks that you'll need to aid in your painting. Look for big shapes and clearly defined shadows. The sole purpose of this stage is to aid your final painting, rather than ending up with a fully rendered drawing.

Once your drawing is finished, either erase the grid lines and then spray it with workable fixative, or ink the lines with permanent pigment-based ink. Don't use dye-based inks like a Sharpie or a ballpoint pen, because they can bleed through the paint. India ink works well, as do Micron Pigma pens. Bouguereau would ink his drawings with a brush.

3 Creating an accurate drawing
In preparing to copy the drawing to your board place a 1x1-inch grid over your source image, then lightly draw the same ratio grid on your canvas. Don't make this too dark or else it'll show through. Here I'm working at the same size – it's a 1:1 grid.

5 Applying the imprimatura

Now you need to tone your canvas. I chose to use a warm pink tone because I know from research that Bouguereau would often use a pink or warm grey tone. Research your artist and see what they preferred. This is called an imprimatura. Keep this transparent enough so that you can still easily see the lines.

6 Four colours for flesh

My flesh colours are mixed from white, red, yellow and black. I mix a few values of grey rather than add pure black to the flesh colours. This enables me to make adjustments to the saturation more easily. Mix plenty of paint so you aren't remixing often. You don't need to mix every colour you see – just a few values in each colour family

7 Establishing values

It's key to establish your value relationships early on. I try to get at least one portion of the painting as dark as it will be in the final, to help measure value relationships. In this case, the background and the eyes contain the darkest values. Save the brightest values for the final pass.

8 Painting hair

I'm handling the hair differently than the rest of the painting. I'll try to get close in one pass to help the brushwork look more spontaneous. Later, I'll add in some highlights and indicate some delicate hairs in the next stage, but you can get pretty close in one pass. ➤➤

MATERIALS

SURFACE
■ 11x14-inch aluminium panel

OIL PAINTS
■ Flemish white, Yellow ochre, Vermillion, Ivory black, Phthalo blue, Phthalo green

GESSO
■ Liquitex professional

BRUSHES
■ Rosemary and Co: Ultimate Bristles, Eclipse and Masters Choice
■ Silver Brush: Grand Prix bristles

PALETTE
■ New Wave Art: Expressionist Confidant

MEDIUM
■ Five parts turpentine, one part damar varnish and one part stand oil
■ Liquin or Galkyd Gel to speed up the drying time of the paint

OTHER
■ Mahl stick steadies my hand for some of the finer work
■ Pencil
■ India ink
■ Pigmented marker
■ Ruler

9 *Painting the ébauche*

The values and colours in the ébauche stage – my underpainting for the art work – aren't going to be exactly how they'll appear in the final. I look for the average colour and value for the area that I'm painting. This will enable me to paint more opaquely in the final pass, but have small portions that show through, adding depth.

10 *Finishing the ébauche*

Let the ébauche dry before you start the next stage. This will enable you to work more aggressively and scumble in paint without removing the ébauche. If you've added a drying agent such as Liquin or Galkyd Gel to your paint, it should dry overnight. Lead-based pigments like flake, and Cremnitz or Flemish white also speed up drying times.
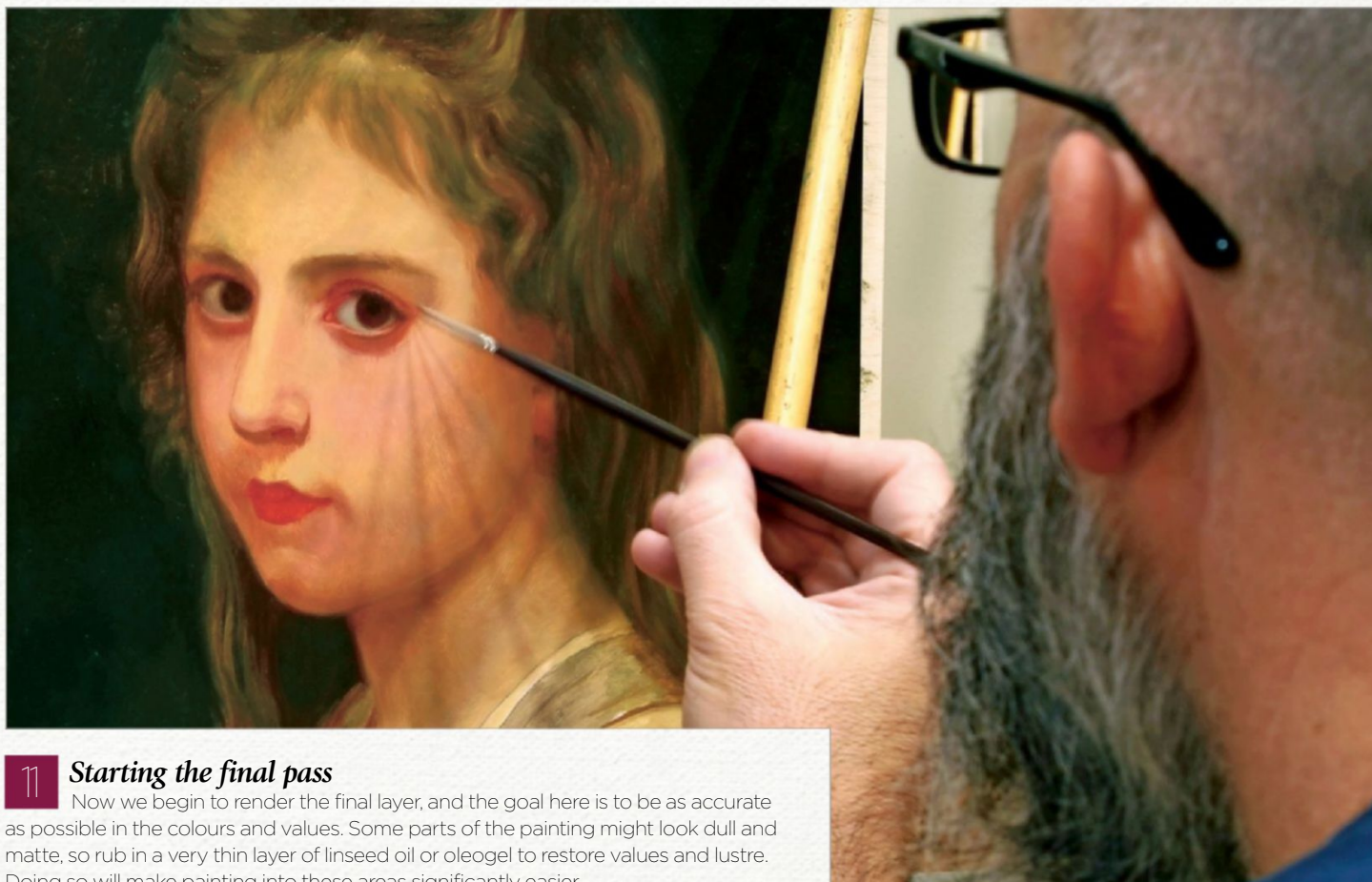
11 *Starting the final pass*

Now we begin to render the final layer, and the goal here is to be as accurate as possible in the colours and values. Some parts of the painting might look dull and matte, so rub in a very thin layer of linseed oil or oleogel to restore values and lustre. Doing so will make painting into these areas significantly easier.

PAINTING EDGES

PAINT SKILL
Pay close attention to your edges. Vague or irregularly rendered edges can degrade an otherwise elegant painting.

12 *Depicting Jeanne's grey eyes*

The whites of the eyes are really just a greyed-down version of the flesh tones. If you grab a painting of Bouguereau's and take it into Photoshop, you can analyse the colours and see what basic hues are used. This painting is mostly red and orange in the flesh tones with low saturation.

13 *A steady, step-by-step approach*

Work from one area to the next and try to avoid jumping around too much in the painting. This will help you in determining value and colour relationships. Mix up plenty of paint, and if your paint starts to dry out mix up new piles of paint. If your paint starts getting clumpy under your brush then you need fresh paint.

14 *Finishing and varnishing*

Look for the darkest accents and brightest highlights in this final stage. These will make your painting pop. When the painting has dried you can apply the final varnish. For Damar you need to wait six months, but with new varnishes such as Gamblin Gamvar you can varnish as soon as the paint is firm.

Pencil

CREATE INTRICATE ART IN PENCIL

MILES JOHNSTON shows how he's able to create detailed pencil art by paying close attention to values and edges

Everyone has drawn in pencil. For most of us it's probably the first drawing tool we ever used. When I was a beginner and I would find out about a new artist, I was always attracted to their pencil drawings most of all.

Since then I've studied oil painting, worked as a digital illustrator and tried out many different media, but I always feel the pull back to pencil calling. I think it never hurts to see what you can get out of pencil and paper. There's a satisfying purity to knowing the only thing between you and the end result is your imagination and your skill.

Over the past few years I've settled into a working method with graphite that's pretty efficient for the kind of results I was interested in. Now I'd like to share with you my method for creating this illustration, from the tools and techniques I use, to an outline of my workflow and sketching process. Limitations can be creatively liberating, and working around

the restrictions of graphite will improve your abilities as an artist.

I'll try to cover how to capture a strong sense of light using the comparatively restricted value range of pencil. I'll show you how to master simple tools to achieve varied mark-making, combining smooth blending and hatching techniques. These will enable you to develop exciting edge variation and gain precise control over your rendering. I'll also reveal how you can use different kinds of contrast to create satisfying compositions.

Pencil is mostly seen as a sketching medium, but I'd like to show you that by following some simple guidelines it's possible to produce polished finished pieces out of pencil that can stand alongside other work in your portfolio.

MATERIALS

PAPER
■ Pro-Art Paper
Strathmore Bristol
Vellum Paper

GRAPHITE
■ 0.3mm HB
mechanical pencil
■ 6B graphite stick with
square edge

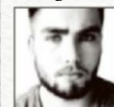**BLENDING TOOLS**
■ Paper stumps of
various sizes

ERASER TOOLS
■ Tombow Mono Zero
■ Kneadable eraser

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 6 now!

Miles is a freelance illustrator born in England. He now lives in Sweden, where he's a part-time instructor and artist in residence at the Swedish Academy of Realist Art. See his art on Instagram: @miles_art.

1 Initial sketching
My golden rule for sketching is to allow yourself to make ugly drawings. The polish comes later. I'd recommend doing this step from imagination so you don't limit your possibilities. Redraw everything several times in pen and pencil, and explore your idea thoroughly. Don't move on from here until you have an idea you're passionate about!

2 Nailing the thumbnail
Now with a little clearer direction, try to think about the main problems you need to solve compositionally. Where will you place the drawing's main elements? Where is the light coming from and roughly how will the value scheme of your drawing look? Again, don't worry about technique, this can all come later. Thinking comes first.

4 Shadow shapes
Keep refining the line drawing and start to block in the shadow shapes using low contrast flat values. This helps you to start to get a sense of the light, and to define which edges will be the most important. Look out for anywhere you can use cast shadows to add depth, and show the direction of your light source clearly.

3 Tackling the block-in stage
It can feel intimidating to begin a drawing, so just accept that whatever you put down first will be wrong, and fixing it is all part of the process. I shot my own reference for this drawing to help with some of the more difficult aspects of the pose. I sketch in clean, easy-to-change lines, planning the composition as a whole.

5 Adding complexity and interest

I'm still reluctant to commit to anything enough to fully dive into values until I feel that the drawing is really working. I'm slowly going round tidying things up, refining the shadow shapes and anatomy, adding and removing branches and introducing fungus shelves on the tree.

6 Separating out different materials

Different materials require their own value ranges. The tree bark in the light will still be lower in value than the character's skin in the shadow. To begin planning this, I smudge large areas of the tree trunk to set the lightest point as a mid-tone grey. This helps to visualise which areas of the drawing will be left paper white.

7 Keying the drawing to assess the values

As I move into the rendering stage, it's important to key the drawing. This involves setting the darkest and lightest values, so that I can judge my values. I like to find an area where I'll use both close to each other, and begin from there. ➤➤

BLENDING TIPS

USING A STUMP
Paper blending tools are for smoothing out or softening edges. You can even use them to draw in soft marks.

8 *From lines to edges*

I try to think about edges in pencil drawings the same way I'd think about them in a painting. At this stage I start to try and transition from having lines, to having edges between different values. Here I've started to block in a value for the sky behind, to bring out the edge of her back.

9 *Building up pencil layers*

The appeal of graphite is its ability to put down layer after layer, to build richness, texture and depth. This requires you to have planned ahead of time where you want to leave the paper value showing, and to slowly lay down the values around these areas, almost like watercolour painting.

10 Capturing the light

If you're working on white paper with pencil, the paper white can't be made any brighter. Therefore, to capture a strong sense of light, everything else must be darker. One of the most common mistakes people make is to make the shadows too light in comparison to the mid-tones, which makes everything look flat and grey.

11 *Texture and shape contrast*

I try to move my pencil around loosely and in a manner that flows with the form of the tree trunk. I'm thinking about this from a perspective of abstract design principles: I want the lines to echo the rhythms of the figure, and contrast with the sharp lines of the branches.

12 Compressing the lights

Since we have a limited range of values to work with, I compress the tones in the lights and leave large areas of paper white. When you make a drawing, you don't have to match the values as they would look in real life. Instead, you have to match the relationship between light and dark.
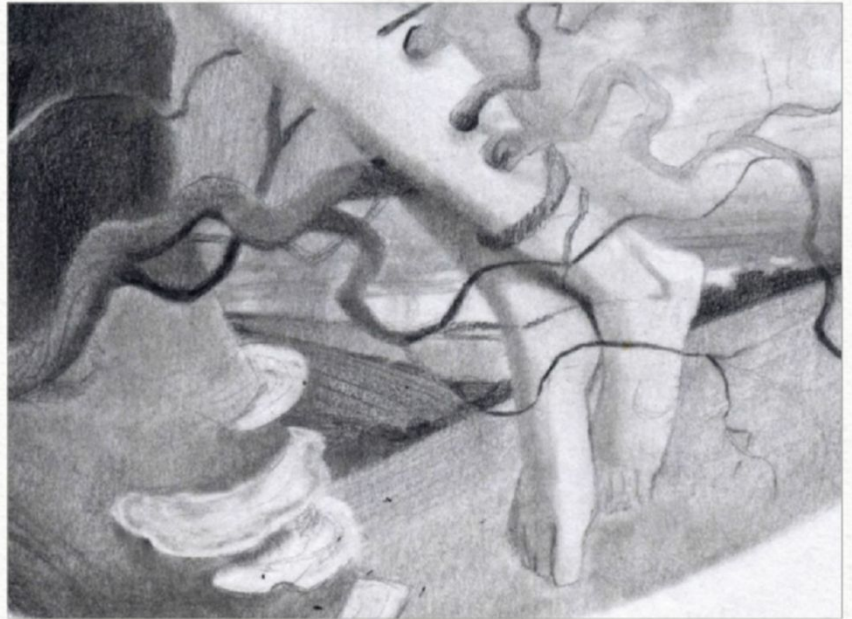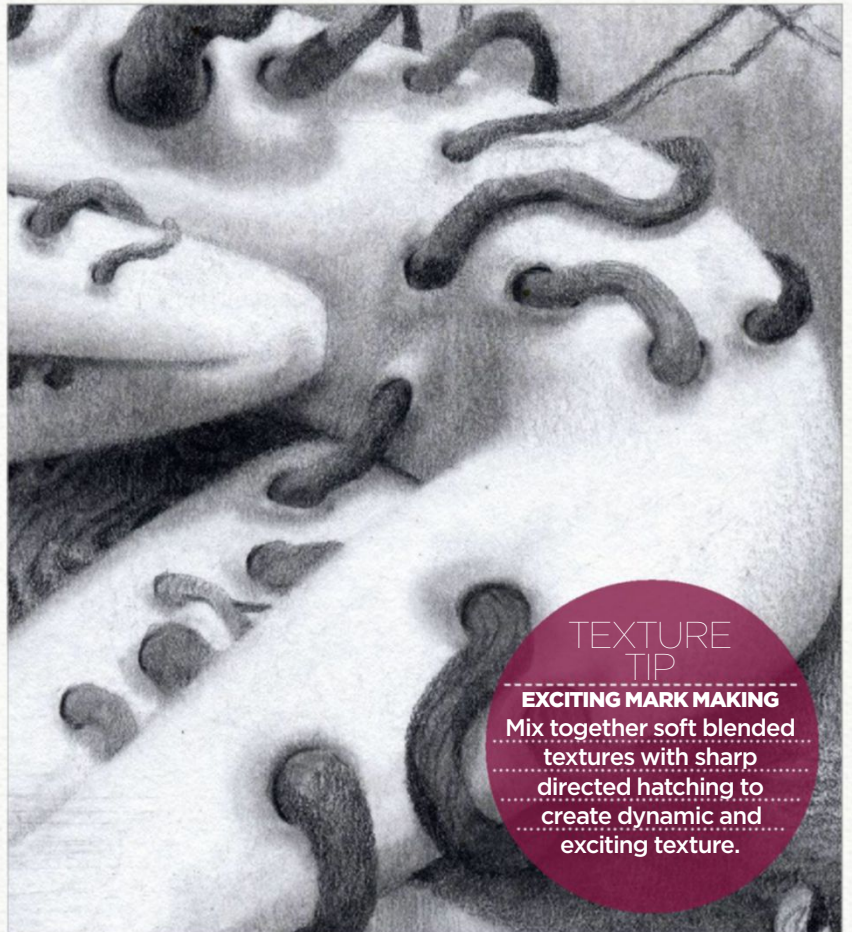
13 Adding background details

It's immensely satisfying for the viewer if you reward them for paying close attention by adding minor, interesting visuals. I like to place small landscapes and details into tiny areas of the drawing, making sure to balance this out by leaving big areas of relative quiet and calmness. Once again, contrast is key.

TEXTURE TIP

EXCITING MARK MAKING
Mix together soft blended textures with sharp directed hatching to create dynamic and exciting texture.

14 Tying it all together

Once most of the image has been blocked in, and the whole drawing is covered, it's time to balance the image out as a whole. I use a paper blending stick to soften edges, make the textures most subtle and to make sure the focal points of the image capture the most attention.

15 Enhancing the focal points

Now that the image is working as a whole, I tackle what's most important for the impact of the image with my original intention in mind. In this case, I add some more modelling to make it look as though the branches are going under her skin, and then I tweak the face, hands and feet. And then I call the illustration finished.

First Impressions

✳ *Kristina Carroll* ✳

The artist and teacher on her fascination with a creature from Greek mythology…

Where did you grow up and how has this influenced your art?
I grew up in Montana and was an only child, so I had to learn to entertain myself. My home life wasn't always terrific and so I escaped by reading and drawing.

You're a child, you see a painting that changes everything… what are you looking at, and what effect did it have?
It wasn't until high-school where certain artists started to stand out. I remember discovering James Christensen's book, Voyage of the Basset, and falling in love. Seeing how an artist could make picture-heavy stories that an older audience could enjoy opened a door for me.

What was your next step in art?
My biggest goal after high-school was to get far away from Montana, so when a theatre school in NYC accepted me, the location was more of a draw than the subject. I didn't find my way back to art until my late 20s, but have no regrets.

What inspired you to launch the Month of Love and Month of Fear challenges?
I had recently moved to Boston and it was

LADY NAUTILUS AND COMPANION
"This piece was inspired in part by collaging old Victorian clip-art images and then painting over them."

winter. I was depressed, feeling isolated and not making art, so I devised this idea to make a whole bunch of art with friends to jump-start the creative process. The idea of doing it publicly created an accountability and pressure helpful to levelling-up. I'm continually delighted at the enthusiasm and beautiful art that comes from these challenges!

Why do you think watercolours are overlooked by many artists?
I think that they can be intimidating. There's a permanence to the mark making in watercolour that other mediums don't have, and they require a

> ❝ The ability to connect with fans and peers on a regular basis is a great experience ❞

measure of patience and planning to be most effective. This can lend itself to some wonderful happy accidents.

What's the most important thing that you've taught someone?
I think the reason many students connect with me is because I hit them with a lot of technical tools and it

THE MINOTAUR
"I imagine the Minotaur to be a misunderstood artist, carving his labyrinth to pass the time."

empowers them to problem-solve from multiple angles. Also, being in the sci-fi/fantasy community, I often shine a light on different avenues of being a working artist that they might not have thought of before. That means I can also give them some specific places to go right after school, to engage with a larger community of artists.

Do you tread the convention circuit?
I'm fairly new to the convention circuit, but looking forward to making it a bigger part of my life. The ability to connect face to face with fans and peers on a regular basis is a great experience that I find very motivating.

Is there a character you've painted who you most identify with?
I don't know if "identify" is the right word, but I've always been fascinated with the minotaur. To me, he's a misunderstood being at the mercy of other people's bad choices. He's half-human, but that part has been disregarded next to his monster half. In my painting of him, I gave him a creative spark so that he could carve beautiful shapes into his surroundings and show that he was more than just a monster.

Do you have any gripes about the fantasy art industry?
It's frustrating that so many companies have adopted work-for-hire contracts in concert with low fees. Especially those companies that have very popular IPs to work on. There's so much passion and love for this subject matter, but when you cripple the artist's ability to make a living from it, it creates a negative feedback loop that's bad for everyone.

Why is it still the best place to work?
This community is so welcoming and supportive. Our openness about our techniques, business and enthusiasm for our peers' work creates an atmosphere of camaraderie that's really special. I've often heard from people in the editorial, design or gallery world who come to our events and are floored at the way we treat each other. I love this industry and can't imagine being in any other.
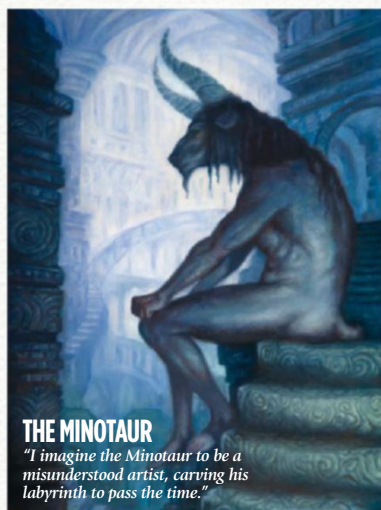*Kristina specialises in painting magical realism, and has been recognised by a number of art bodies, including Chesley and Spectrum. See more at www.kristinacarrollart.com.*

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