

FREE! OVER 8 HOURS OF VIDEO TRAINING + CUSTOM BRUSHES!

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX

EXCLUSIVE!

CONCEPT ART TECHNIQUES

Visual development skills
with Armand Serrano

*Creating a story is key
to making great art!
See how on page 60*



SCRAT MAN!

PETER DE SEVE INTERVIEW

From Disney to Blue
Sky Studios, The New
Yorker and beyond!

DREAM BIG!

Animation

Paint innovative stories for your characters
PLUS! Master the tricky art of storyboarding

ART & ADVICE

GET STARTED USING
TRADITIONAL MEDIA
INSIDE ANIMATION ART
HOUSE STUDIO SOI
CONCEPT AND SCULPT
CLAY IN ZBRUSH

Future

REEL IMPACT! PRO ARTISTS GIVE TOP TIPS ON CRAFTING A KILLER PORTFOLIO



Rebelle

**EXPERIENCE A NEW PAINT SOFTWARE,
COMPLETE WITH REAL-WORLD SIMULATION
OF FLUID FLOW, COLOR BLENDING,
MOISTENING AND DRYING.**

rebelle.escapemotions.com



Painted by Daniel Murray
danielmurrayart.deviantart.com

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



This issue is about one thing: the importance of a story. In animated films, you can have great characters, beautiful scenery and amazing action sequences. But it

won't connect with the audience unless there's a compelling story linking it all together. Your art has to connect with the viewer in more ways than just looking pretty. Reading through Peter de Sève's interview, Armand Serrano's background art workshop and Matt Jones' storyboarding advice, they all reveal how they go beyond the pose or scene to make that connection and really bring the narrative home.

There's also never been a better time to subscribe. We're giving away a copy of Rebelle, a top-rated natural-media painting program. We deliver to over 100 countries. Turn to page 36 right now to sign up to this great deal before stocks run out!

Claire

Claire Howlett, Editor
claire@imaginefx.com

EDITOR'S CHOICE Three of my top picks this month...

18



Killer portfolio advice

Professional artists at leading animation studios share their know-how on creating a job-grabbing portfolio.

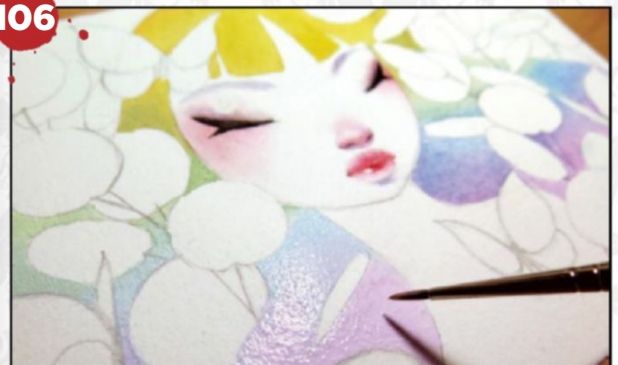
76



From back to front

How to make your background art the star of the show, with Disney artist Armand Serrano.

106



Gouache and watercolour workshop

Bao Pham shares his wet-in-wet technique to create gradients of colour in his beautiful paintings.

✉ mail@imaginefx.com
 🐦 @imaginefx
 📘 facebook.com/imaginefx
 📷 @imaginefxmagazine
 📺 imaginefx.creativeblog.com



Free gift worth \$60!

We're giving away a copy of Rebelle software with every print subscription! See page 36...

ImagineFX Contents



FREE SOFTWARE!

Your art

8 Reader FXPosé

Including elven gods, warriors, remote planets, military mech, twisted beauties, and more.

News and events

18 Perfect portfolios

Pro animators tell us how to catapult your career to the next level by showcasing your work.

24 Artist in residence

Why Dutch artist Iris Compriet is trying to cram a museum into her bedroom studio.

Your questions

28 Artist Q&A

Tips from pro artists on how to paint rusting surfaces, engaging environments, elaborate tattoos and much more.

Features

38 Interview:

Peter de Sève

The American artist tells us why drawing well is just like telling a good joke.

48 Sketchbook

Walt Disney story artist Brian Kesinger shares his sketchbook characters and creatures.

52 Studio profile

Germany's Studio Soi has built a reputation on skilled craft across multiple disciplines.

Reviews

94 Hardware

97 Training

98 Books

Regulars

3 Editor's letter

6 Resources

26 Letters

34 Digital subscriptions

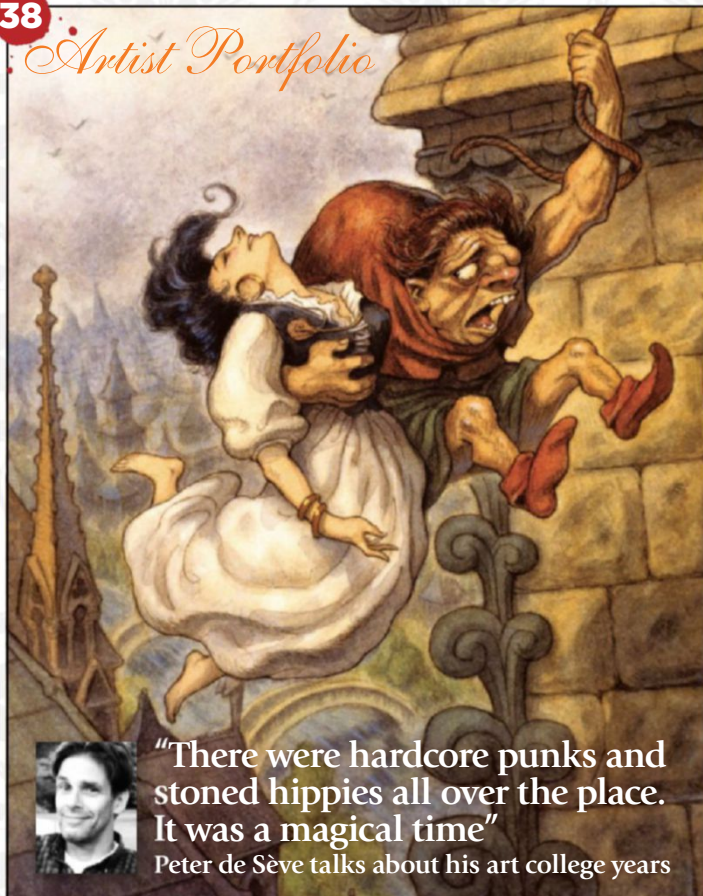
36 Subscriptions

46 Back issues

75 Next month

38

Artist Portfolio



"There were hardcore punks and stoned hippies all over the place. It was a magical time"

Peter de Sève talks about his art college years

48



Sketchbook

30



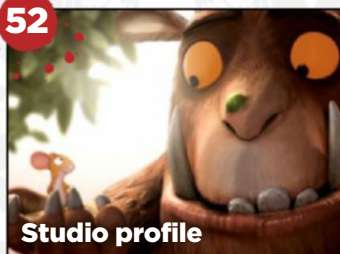
Q&A: rust

31



Q&A: battle axe

52



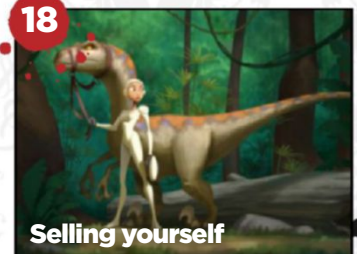
Studio profile

24



Artist in residence:
Iris Compriet

18



Selling yourself

Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART



See page 8 for the best new art ➡➡

28



Q&A: tattoos

ImagineFX Workshops

Advice and techniques
from pro artists...



60 Use a character to tell a story

Kenneth Anderson creates
a fun cover illustration.



66 Core skills: Rebelle -part 1

The main tools explained
by Martin Hanschild.



68 The art of storyboarding

Matt Jones on a key skill
for any animation project.



76 Concept design techniques

With visual development
artist Armand Serrano.



82 Combining sci-fi noir and fantasy

Alyssa Menold shares her
work on Shadowrun.



86 Sculpt your concepts in 3D

A new series on ZBrush,
with John Mahoney.



DOWNLOAD RESOURCES

Turn over the page for
this issue's art assets



FANTASY illustrator

Inspiration and advice from
the best traditional artists

102 FXPosé Traditional

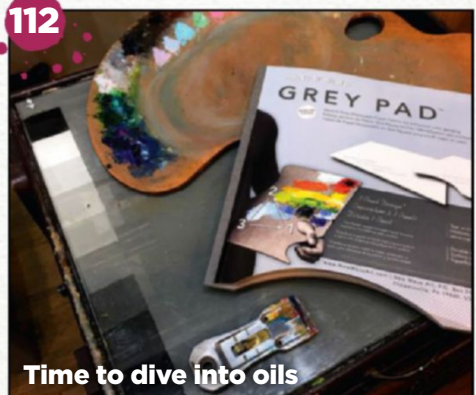
Bao Pham uses wet-into-wet.

112 Get started with oils

Howard Lyon shows you how.

114 First Impressions

Jasmine Becket-Griffith talks eyes.





NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS
ImagineFX

Resources

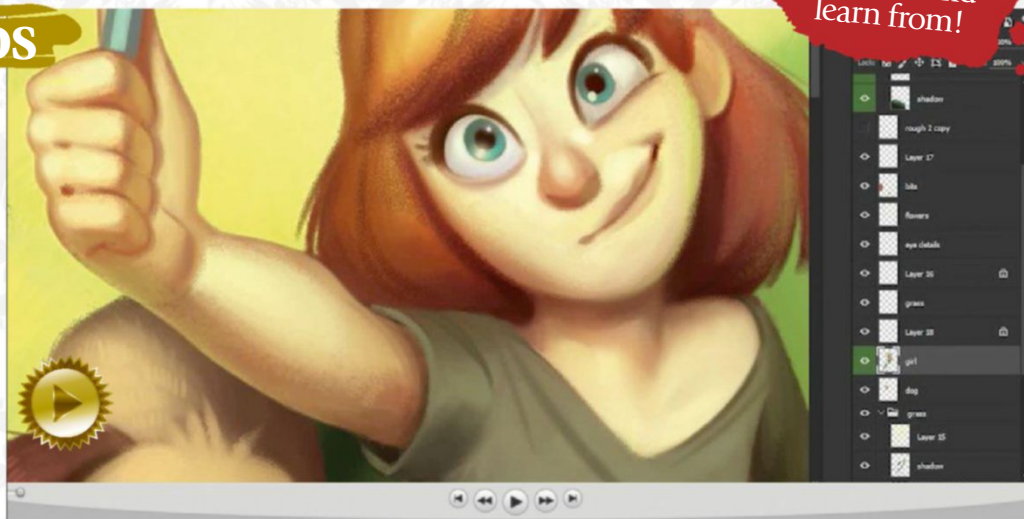
Getting hold of all of this issue's videos, artwork and brushes is quick and easy. Just visit our dedicated web page at <http://ifxm.ag/story145teller>

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

WORKSHOP VIDEOS

Use a character to tell a story

Watch how Kenneth Anderson creates a fun, character illustration with an emphasis on narrative.



GET YOUR RESOURCES

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

- 1 Go to the website**
Type this into your browser's address bar (not the search bar): <http://ifxm.ag/story145teller>
- 2 Find the files you want**
Search through the list of resources to watch or download.
- 3 Download what you need**
You can download all of the files at once, or individually.



NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS
ImagineFX

EDITORIAL
CLAIRE HOWLETT EDITOR
claire.howlett@futurenet.com
DANIEL VINCENT ART EDITOR
daniel.vincent@futurenet.com
CLIFF HOPE OPERATIONS EDITOR
clifford.hope@futurenet.com

CONTRIBUTIONS
Kenneth Anderson, Channah Carr, Dominic Carter, David Cousins, Gary Evans, Tony Foti, Damian Hall, Martin Hanschild, Richard Hill, PJ Holden, Richard Hood, Matt Jones, Belinda Leung, Howard Lyon, John Mahoney, Tom May, Alyssa Menold, Bao Pham, Julia Sagar, Armand Serrano, Alex Summersby, Tan Hui Tian

PHOTOGRAPHY Future photography studio

Want to work for Future?
Visit www.futurenet.com/jobs

ADVERTISING
CLARE DOVE commercial sales director,
clare.dove@futurenet.com
+44 (0) 1225 68 7226
CHRIS MITCHELL account executive
chris.mitchell@futurenet.com
+44 (0) 1225 687832
MATT DOWNS director of agency sales
matt.downs@futurenet.com
+44 (0) 20 7042 4166
CLARE JONIK head of strategic partnerships
clare.jonik@futurenet.com
+44 (0) 20 7042 4108

MARKETING
CHARLOTTE JOLLIFFE campaign manager
SASCHA KIMMEL marketing director
PRINT & PRODUCTION
VIVIANNE CALVERT production controller
MARK CONSTANCE head of production UK & US
NOLA COKELY ad production manager
NATHAN DREWETT ad production co-ordinator

LICENSING
MATT ELLIS licensing & syndication manager

FUTURE PUBLISHING LIMITED
RODNEY DIVE group art director
MATTHEW PIERCE editorial director: games, photography, creative & design
AARON ASADI creative director, magazines
ZILLAH BYNG-THORNE chief executive

NEXT ISSUE ON SALE
FRIDAY 24 FEBRUARY 2017 - SEE PAGE 75!
ImagineFX is the registered trademark of Future Publishing Ltd. All Rights Reserved.

CONTACT US
PHONE +44 (0) 1225 442244
EMAIL mail@imaginefx.com
ART SUBMISSIONS fxpose@imaginefx.com
WEBSITE <http://imaginefx.creativebloq.com>
TWITTER @imaginefx
INSTAGRAM @imaginefxmagazine
FACEBOOK www.facebook.com/imaginefx
POST ImagineFX, Future Publishing Ltd, Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA, UK

PRINT SUBSCRIPTIONS
UK PHONE 0844 848 2852
OUTSIDE OF UK +44 (0) 1604 251045
EMAIL contact@myfavouritemagazines.co.uk
WEB www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk

DIGITAL SUBSCRIPTIONS
APPLE DEVICES <http://ifxm.ag/apple-ixf>
ANDROID, PC OR MAC www.bit.ly/r938Ln
GOOGLE PLAY <http://ifxm.ag/google-halfprice>
BARNES & NOBLE NOOK
<http://ifxm.ag/IFnypM>
AMAZON KINDLE <http://ifxm.ag/kindle-ixf>

Future Future is an award-winning international media group and leading digital business. We reach more than 58 million international consumers a month and create world-class content and advertising solutions for passionate consumers online, on tablet & smartphone and in print.

Future plc is a public company quoted on the London Stock Exchange (symbol: FUTR).
www.futureplc.com

Chief executive Zillah Byng-Thorne
Non-executive chairman Peter Allen
Chief financial officer Penny Lakin-Brand

Tel +44 (0)207 042 4000 (London)
Tel +44 (0)1225 442 244 (Bath)

© 2017 Future Publishing Limited. All rights reserved. No part of this magazine may be used or reproduced without the written permission of the publisher. Future Publishing Limited (company number 2008885) is registered in England and Wales. The registered office of Future Publishing Limited is at Quay House, The Ambury, Bath BA1 1UA. All information contained in this magazine is for information only and is, as far as we are aware, correct at the time of going to press. Future cannot accept any responsibility for errors or inaccuracies in such information. Readers are advised to contact manufacturers and retailers directly with regard to the price of products/services referred to in this magazine. If you submit unsolicited material to us, you automatically grant Future a licence to publish your submission in whole or in part in all editions of the magazine, including licensed editions worldwide and in any physical or digital format throughout the world. Any material you submit is sent at your risk and, although every care is taken, neither Future nor its employees, agents or subcontractors shall be liable for loss or damage.



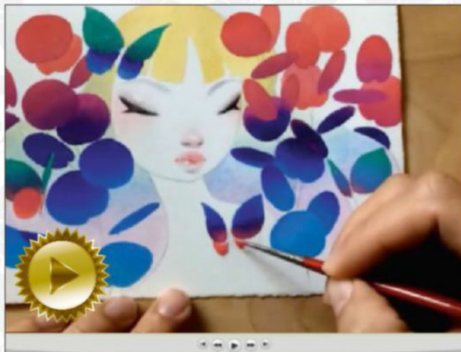
EXCLUSIVE VIDEO TUTORIAL!

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



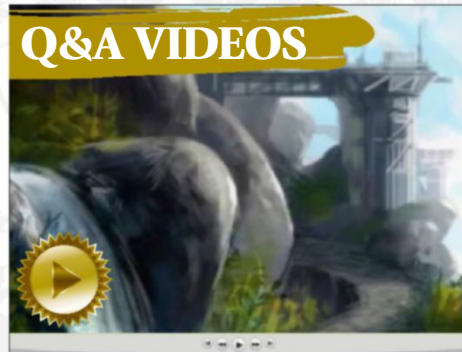
John Mahoney

Discover how to design an alien pilot from a virtual ball of clay, using ZBrush. Plus WIPs, brush and final image



Bao Pham

Witness how the wet-into-wet approach can lead to a serene and colourful image. Plus WIPs and final image

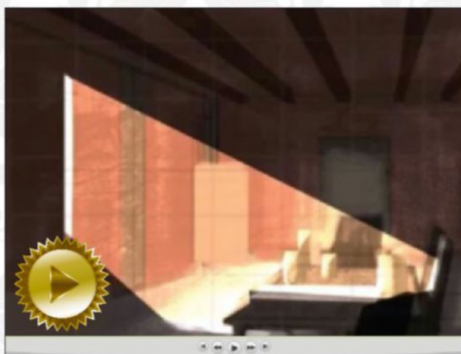


Q&A VIDEOS



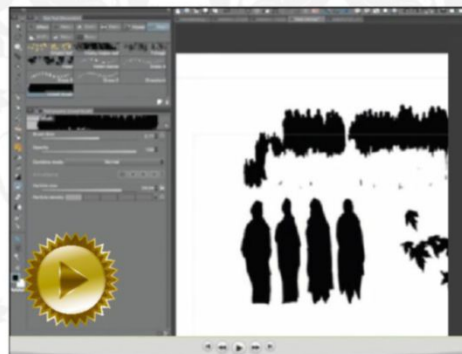
Tony Foti

Take into account lighting, composition and perspective, to depict an aged weapon. Plus WIPs and final image



Belinda Leung

See which factors are key to painting a shaft of light piercing through darkness. Plus WIPs and final image



PJ Holden

Understand how you can quickly create custom brushes in Clip Studio Paint. Plus WIPs and final image



Fred Gago

Gain valuable insight into the first and most important stage of animation, in Fred's Storyboarding Techniques training video.

AND ALL THIS! Detailed workshops packed with advice from the best professional fantasy artists from around the world, including Martin Hanschild, Howard Lyon, Alyssa Menold and Armand Serrano.

7 CUSTOM BRUSHES, INCLUDING...

FLAT OIL

Alyssa Menold uses this brush for transparent shading and blending.



GRASS A

A custom brush Kenneth Anderson uses to quickly suggest grass.



SMOOTH ELLIPSE

This brush was used to render areas smoothly by Alyssa Menold.

Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART



Quentin-Vladimir Castel

LOCATION: France

WEB: <http://ifxm.ag/q-vcastel>

EMAIL: castel.quentin@yahoo.fr

MEDIA: Photoshop



For freelance illustrator Quentin-Vladimir, an artistic calling wasn't always on his mind. Having been a business student, he came to the scene a little later in his life, but he's made up for lost time by studying at art school and learning with traditional mediums. However these days he only paints digitally.

Drawing inspiration from childhood stories and universes hidden in books, films and video games, Quentin-Vladimir uses art to travel to other worlds, dreams - even nightmares.

The artist hopes to develop his own personal style and "make people enter worlds they don't know yet, make them dream and travel across both good and evil universes," he says. "My dream job is to be a concept artist for a AAA video game production. I have a sci-fi comic book project, too."

1



1 THUNDER WITCH "I'm a big fan of fantasy and I made this piece as a tribute to this kind. Motion and lightning effects helped me to convey a sense of action and frenetic battle."

2 LADY GALAXY "This is personal work from a series of mine called Twisted Beauties. Space and outer worlds inspired me to come out with a strange design."



Artist crit

Illustrator Mélanie Delon loves how Quentin executes his ideas on the canvas...



"Quentin-Vladimir's art is wonderful, especially his Lady Galaxy piece. I adore the concept: the way the character floats in space, and yet is connected to all the elements."





Dominik Mayer

LOCATION: Germany

WEB: dominik.t.mayer@gmail.com

EMAIL: http://ifxm.ag/d-mayer

MEDIA: Photoshop, Maya



Dominik is a concept artist and illustrator who first began experimenting with 3D art while studying design at the Nuremberg Institute of Technology. Initially, he was interested in making movies, before discovering the field of concept art.

"I went for a concept art internship at Goodgame Studios in Hamburg and learned a lot there," he explains. "After that I began freelancing and finished my studies. Now I'm working as a freelancer for international clients."

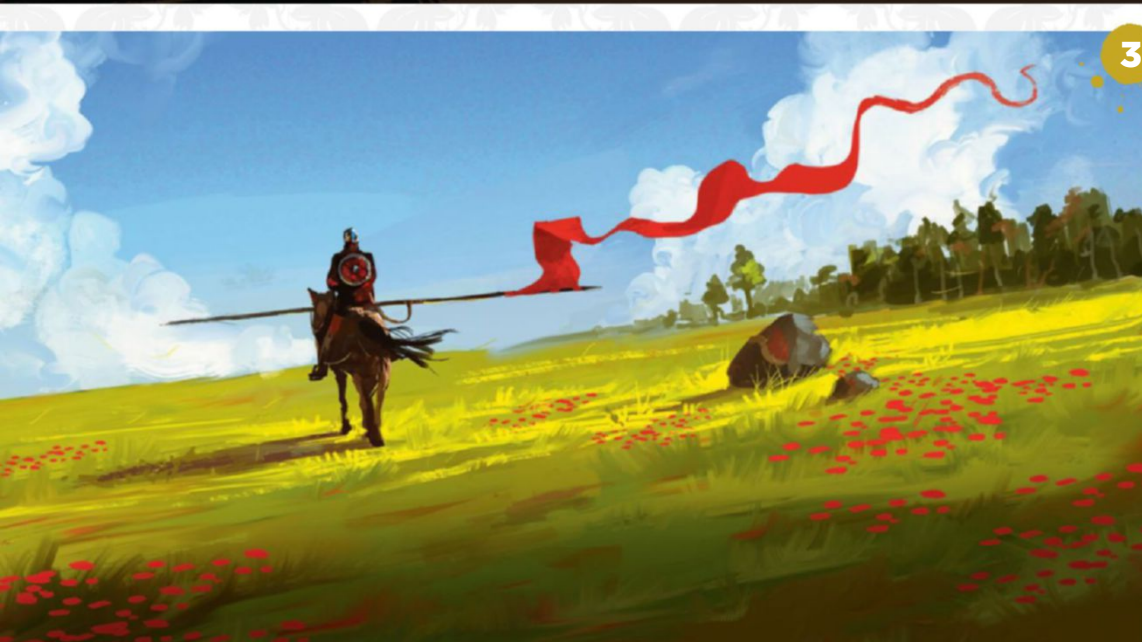
As well as being inspired by everyday life, Dominik's illustrations are heavily inspired by history, especially the Middle Ages. "I love to paint fantasy stuff with dynamic action and rich colours," he reveals. "But I would say one of my biggest inspirations is nature itself. It creates so many crazy interesting things. I always try to observe these and mix them with fictional elements."

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"There's a definite look of epic cinema about Dominik's paintings. His daylight compositions are striking in themselves, but the Silver Seven sunset artwork is on another level! There's so much story going on in here."

Daniel Vincent,
Art Editor



3

1 THE SILVER SEVEN "This one was really fun to paint. I just had 30 minutes before I had to catch a train and my topic was The Silver Seven. I started with some random shapes. Some happy accidents and warriors with horses later, and the Seven Riders of the Bloodmoon were born."

2 HONOR "At this time in my life I did a lot of dark and mystical paintings, and so with this one I wanted to do something with peaceful colours: blue sky, fluffy clouds and some lovely flowers on the ground. To break up this idyll, the charging samurai army enters the scene. I love such contrasts."

3 LAZY AFTERNOON "I love to paint knights on horseback. In this one I wanted to create a very relaxed mood on a peaceful day. The man enjoys the ride and the banner is fluttering in the warm summer sun."

 Leon Tukker

LOCATION: Netherlands

WEB: www.leontukker.artstation.com

EMAIL: leontukker@gmail.com

MEDIA: Photoshop, Cinema 4D



For Netherlands-based environment and concept artist Leon, it wasn't paint brushes or pencils that sparked his imagination as a child. Instead, it was LEGO that gave him a creative outlet. After a failed career in sports, a friend showed him Cinema 4D and the opportunity of a new direction.

"It instantly felt like playing with LEGO again," he remembers. "The love for 3D modelling and building worlds made me practise more and more in my free time. And so after four years of school I graduated in February this year. I've been working freelance ever since, and tackling personal projects in my spare hours."

As well as being a big fan of giant cityscapes, Leon also channels his love of science fiction into his artwork. "It's amazing that more and more of these concepts from the movies I loved as a kid – and still do – are becoming reality."

1 STARLINER TRADING HUB

"A crashed starliner is refurbished as a trading hub on a remote planet. I tried to put some emphasis on its logo by making use of very saturated colours. I made this painting while trying out Otoy's OctaneRender."



IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Leon's skill here is to use light to draw the viewer's eye across the hull of the liner, to indicate that the wreck is now a bustling habitat. This is also a great example of how 3D and 2D tools can be combined to best effect."

Cliff Hope,
Operations Editor



Silas Owen

LOCATION: Slovenia

WEB: www.swevenfox.artstation.com

EMAIL: boundtofoxes@gmail.com

MEDIA: Photoshop



Apart from some art lessons at school, Silas is a self-taught artist who learnt everything about digital media through trial and error. By trying out different options and practising on her own, she's able to truly express herself and her thoughts.

"I have a huge love for symbolic art and surrealism, often with a hint of Art Nouveau," she explains. "I'm also a fan of surrealism and symbolic work such as the Tarot Arcanas and the hidden meanings behind these pieces. When I draw I want to draw a story, not just something which 'looks cool'."

Currently working as a freelancer for various clients, Silas hopes one day to realise her dream of working as a 3D concept artist.

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Engaging character designs combine with unusual colour schemes in Silas' fantasy art. There's a pleasing traditional media look to her work that adds another level of appreciation for the viewer – lovely stuff."

Claire Howlett,
Editor

1 WHEEL OF FORTUNE "This personal piece is based on Final Fantasy XIV. I love to experiment with surrealism and symbolic elements in my work, and this one got a bit of both."

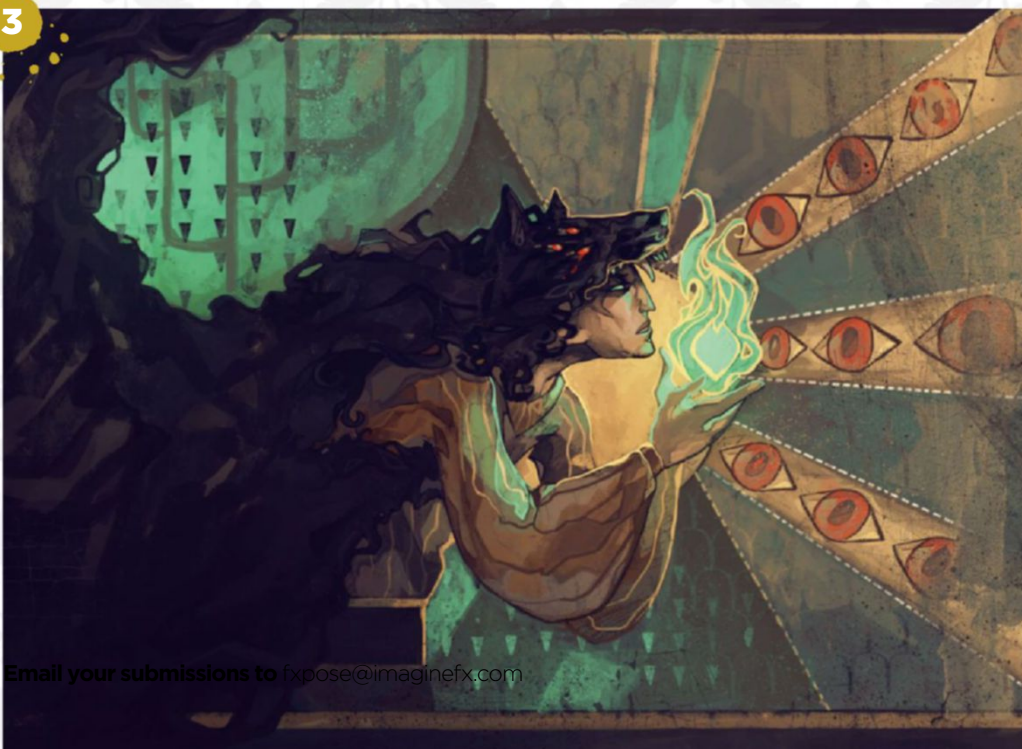
2 ONCE IT WAS BEAUTIFUL "Here's my personal favourite. It features the character I created in the world of Dragon Age encountering one of the Elven Gods from the game. As the game itself gave no real visual on their Elven gods and goddesses, the design for him was based on my friend's idea."

3 BREAK YOUR CHAINS "Dragon Age is my top video game, so I just had to paint various characters from it. I was playing with symbols and hidden meaning in this one, imitating their official art style mixed with my own."

2



3



Darek Zabrocki

LOCATION: Poland

WEB: www.darekzabrocki.com

EMAIL: darekzabrocki@gmail.com

MEDIA: Photoshop, 3ds max, ZBrush



Despite his youth, 25-year-old Darek has already been a concept artist and illustrator for eight years.

However he's been working towards this early success for most of his life. "Art was always my biggest passion while growing up," he explains.

Having switched to digital art in 2007, Darek has gone on to co-found the free online art community for teaching and sharing, Level Up!, in 2013. "I realised then that concept art is what I want to do with my life for good," he says.

Since then everything has taken off for Darek, and his client list has grown to include the likes of 20th Century Fox, Paramount Pictures, Wizards Of The Coast and more.

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Darek's artwork is rich in atmosphere.

In his Assassin's Creed image, you can almost smell the stink of the Thames from 19th century London. And just look at the lighting on show in Accolade! Darek's success is well deserved."

Cliff Hope,
Operations Editor

1



© Ubisoft Quebec

1 ASSASSIN'S CREED: SYNDICATE WESTMINSTER RIVER

"One of many concepts I made for the game. It was definitely one of the biggest breakthrough projects in my career so far and I learned a lot from it."

2 ACCOLADE "This was a personal picture I started for my 2015 presentation at the Splash graphics conference in Prague. I had imagined the piece in my mind for a while, but I think I had to wait until I grew as an artist before I could pull that idea off!"

3 SPIDER THE NEW TOY "Here's an example of work that you do and no one is expecting it from you. But it shows you can be versatile. I wanted to get out of my comfort zone and do some military mech sketches. It's an old one but still remember how much I owe to this painting."

2





3

SUBMIT YOUR ART TO FXPOSÉ

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

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

Post: (CD or DVD):
FXPosé
ImagineFX
Quay House
The Ambury
Bath, BA1 2BW, UK

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



"For a character design position, I look at their drawing, painting, and design skills, and for a variety of styles," says Aaron.

Perfect portfolios

Killer tips Leading animators tell **Julia Sagar** how to catapult your career to the next level with a carefully crafted showcase of your artwork

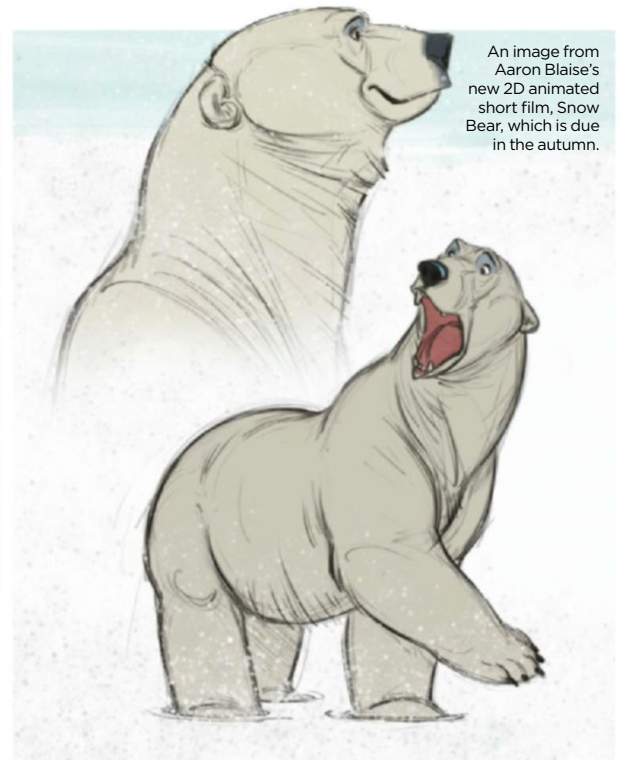
It doesn't matter how talented an animator you are. If you don't have a killer portfolio to showcase your skills, that job you've dreamed of is unlikely to materialise. But crafting the perfect portfolio or reel is an art itself. So what's the secret to success? And with thousands of other passionate animators out there, how can you ensure you stand out for the right reasons?

We asked leading animators to share their pro tips on portfolio strategy. Whether you want your digital portfolio to work harder or to make your showreel sing, there are some best-practice tips that can be applied, whatever field you're targeting.

Golden rule one: know your audience. Who is your portfolio or showreel aimed at, and what do prospective employers, viewers or visitors want to see?

"Whether you're applying to a games studio, effects studio or a character animation studio, you have to tailor your portfolio to the studio you're applying to and the type of work you aspire to do," says

Andrew Gordon, a directing animator at Pixar, who's worked on everything from *A Bug's Life*, *Monsters, Inc.* and *Toy Story 3* to Pixar's Academy Award-nominated short film *Presto*.



An image from Aaron Blaise's new 2D animated short film, *Snow Bear*, which is due in the autumn.



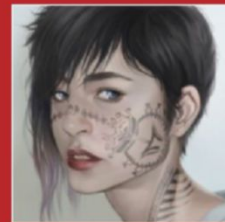
WIZARDRY AT WORK

We talk to the Framestore creature artists behind *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, and hear about an unusual development process. **Page 22**



CLOGGED UP WITH ART

Find out why Dutch artist Iris Compier is trying to cram a museum's worth of exhibits into her studio, where she creates her fantastical pieces. **Page 24**



MORE THAN SKIN DEEP

Ever struggle to depict believable tattoos? Check out Tan Hui Tian's tips, among other indispensable advice from pro artists, in our Q&A section. **Page 28**



Park City (Wasatch) is one of a number of images in Ty Carter's portfolio that shows his understanding of design and colour.

Oscar-nominated animator Aaron Blaise agrees: "Know who you're interviewing with," he advises. "If I were looking to get



hired at Disney, I wouldn't show them a reel of Simpsons animation, and vice versa. And if you don't have the type of work you think a

studio is looking for, then it would be in your best interest to do a shot or two in that studio's particular style."

HOOK YOUR VIEWER

"Keep in mind that we have seconds to evaluate your work," explains Disney in its exceptionally helpful portfolio and showreel application guidelines (www.disneyanimation.com/faqs). That means putting your best work first and closing strong, as Pixar's Andrew explains: "Realise that people will fast-forward through your work. If they don't see something really quickly, they'll turn off."

It also means being original. How? By injecting personality into your portfolio. "Good character animation is the art of bringing characters to life – not moving them around," points out Aaron.

He's currently working on an original 2D animated short film, *Snow Bear*, with business partner Nick Burch, and urges animators not to sacrifice personality by focusing solely on movement and

“People will fast-forward through your work. If they don't see something really quickly, they'll turn off”

"Game animation is competitive," says Jonathan Cooper, who worked on *Uncharted 4*. "Even veterans need to keep pushing the quality bar to get that ideal job."

mechanics. "Often a shot requires little to no movement to get an emotion across," he says. "It can be just a look, an eye movement, a blink. I also advise animators to include performances where there's a change of emotion or idea: angry to happy or fearful to brave. That's when it becomes real and the viewer is pulled in." ➔



© Naughty Dog

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

ANDREW GORDON

The Pixar directing animator talks tips, tricks and techniques

What skills do you want to see in an animation portfolio?

I want to see that someone understands the principles of animation: weight, physicality, overlap, squash and stretch. There also needs to be good acting sensibilities – an understanding of how to gesture or when not to.

Anything you don't want to see?

I don't care about rendering or lighting. I just care about storytelling, entertainment value, great posing character and great acting – the elements that make quality feature animation. If you're applying to be a technical director or a lighter, they want to see great staging and lighting. Modellers want to see details of models. Animators look for that spark.

What exactly is that spark?

When I see an original character that's well posed and has a funny little story, I know this person is thinking about entertainment. That's what grabs my attention. That's the spark.

Which portfolio traps do people most often fall into?

When you're tailoring a demo reel towards what you think a studio wants to see, don't copy old tests. Make it original. Add personality. If you're going to use a stock rig from a school, come up with an original design and test. Don't leave the default shading and geometry of stock in place. It lacks imagination.

What are your showreel tips?

Show storytelling. I really love the idea of seeing a lot of shots, and continuity. And keep your titles simple and classy. You don't need a beautiful logo that's been done in After Effects with exploding phone numbers!



Andrew teaches animation and storytelling masterclasses. Get more tricks, tips and info via @splinedoctor and his website.

www.splinedoctors.com

Grandpa's Farm. "Keep your showreel short and sweet," advises Ty.



Thumbnails from Snow Bear. "Only include the best, most impressive work in your portfolio," recommends Aaron.



Ty's best tip for standing out is to be yourself. "Find a way to reflect yourself in your work."



Night Hunt. "Lay out your portfolio to look as professional as an 'art of' book," advises Ty.

When it comes to specific skill sets, different disciplines require different portfolios. For Andrew, who specialises in character animation, this means showing an understanding of the principles of animation – squash, stretch and so on (see his advice on the previous page).

JUMPING IN

For Naughty Dog video games animator **Jonathan Cooper**, however, this means showing actions and a relevant style. Jonathan is the brains behind video animation website **www.gameanim.com**.



He's currently working on *Uncharted: The Lost Legacy*, and says that for the games he makes, he wants to see navigation around a complex environment, including jumping, climbing and vaulting, one-on-one-combat, walk and run cycles, and so on. "Dialogue and acting scenes are a huge bonus as we're always blurring the lines between gameplay and cinematic storytelling, and game animators are typically expected to at least have a hand in both aspects on the

job," he says, adding that camera work also helps you stand out.

As Jonathan explains, it's essential to have an up-to-date demo reel to keep up with the fast-paced games industry. "A personal website is the easiest to share with the studio involved in hiring, but a link to your latest reel in your resume is enough," he says. "I prefer Vimeo to YouTube, because of the final render quality and overall cleanliness of the site," he continues. "And ArtStation is fast becoming the standard for pre-made portfolios. But I recommend adding your reel everywhere – even LinkedIn. As for a physical portfolio, I don't think I've seen one in years."

Lisa Allen, an animator at Blue Sky Studios and recent portfolio reviewer at



November's CTN animation expo, echoes the sentiment: "Your showreel is really the only part of your portfolio that matters for getting a job as an animator. Ideally, the pieces in your showreel demonstrate your eye for acting, posing, design and composition. If you've done work in any other categories like life drawing, or



Mission Selva is a personal piece by Ty Carter. He breaks down the process in a tutorial on his Patreon page.

illustration, that's great – but keep them in a separate part of your portfolio website instead. Also, less is more. For me, the perfect reel is between three and five clips and around a minute long.”

GOLDEN RULES

Another golden rule for a successful portfolio is to create a clear focus. If you're showcasing a number of core abilities, make sure the direction in which you want to take your career is clearly presented. “Successful portfolios are specific, organised and



contain original ideas,” says Blue Sky Studios visual development artist **Ty Carter**. His film credits include Ice Age 4: Continental

“We are in the business of entertainment. I want your portfolio to entertain me”

Drift, Epic, and The Peanuts Movie, and he shares all kinds of useful tutorials and teachings on his Patreon page (www.patreon.com/tycarter).

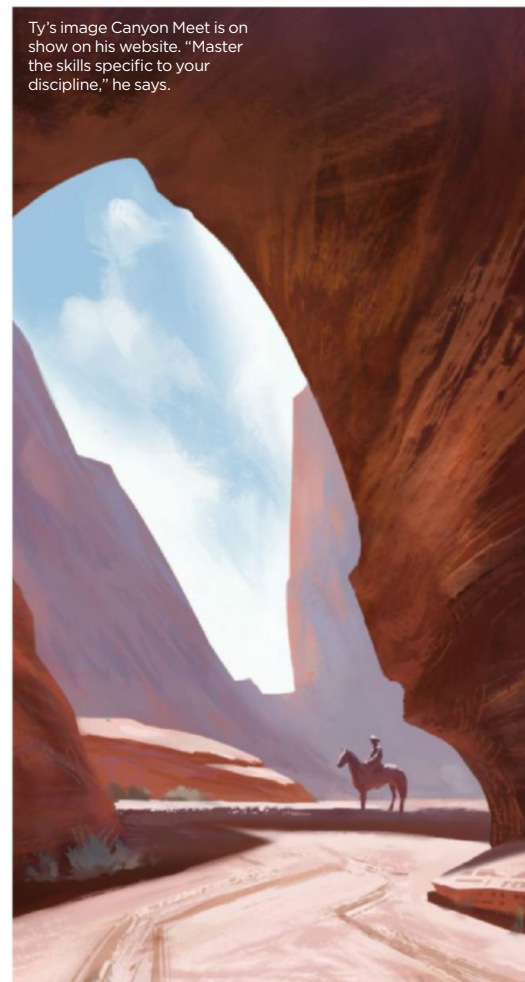
“It's good to see one major focus like character design, set design or colour. If you do each of these at a high level it doesn't hurt to show them all, but be careful not to include too much. What's most important is showing you're a creative problem solver. Ask yourself, what do you bring to the table that no one else can do? Is your own life experience reflected in your art? If not, how can you do that?”

Most importantly, it's about storytelling. “Don't fall into the trap of being a shot animator,” warns Andrew. “People don't just want to see great animation: they want to see if you can tell a story. You have to put together the pieces so that you're showing you understand cutting, continuity and staging. You don't need complex rigs to get noticed. Just great ideas.”

“At Disney we would talk about portfolios that stuck out,” agrees Aaron, “and they stuck out because the work was consistently entertaining throughout. We are in the business of entertainment,” he smiles.

“I want your portfolio to entertain me.”

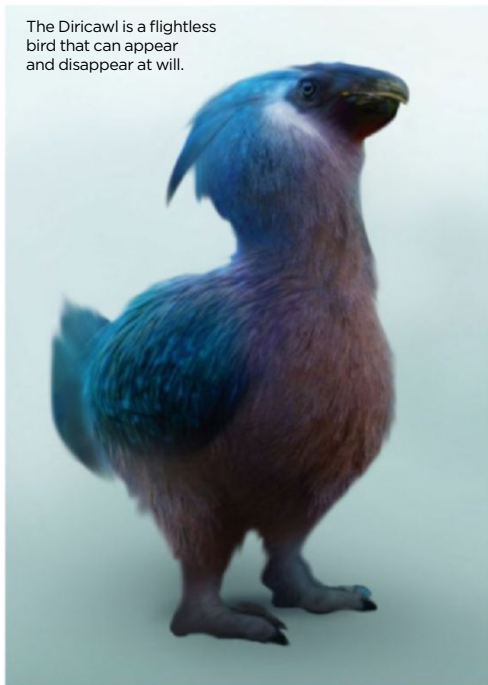
Ty's image Canyon Meet is on show on his website. “Master the skills specific to your discipline,” he says.



“At Blue Sky we look for animation with entertainment through character and personality,” says Lisa Allen, who worked on The Peanuts Movie.

© Blue Sky Studios

The Diricawl is a flightless bird that can appear and disappear at will.



A concept created to show the full effect of the Thunderbird in flight.



How to create Fantastic Beasts

Creature feature The process of designing creatures for JK Rowling's latest blockbuster was a little unusual, as Framestore's concept artists explain...

London studio Framestore is best known for its visual effects work on films such as Gravity. But it also has a top-notch art department, which was recently tasked with creating creature concepts for JK Rowling's latest blockbuster Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them.

The way these designs were to be developed, though, was a little unusual, explains animation supervisor Pablo Grillo.

"The conventional method is that art departments start with illustrations, sketches, 2D images," he says. "These then get turned into 3D sculpts, which are handed over after shooting to a post-production facility, who then animate them," he says. "It's a very



linear, baton-passing process." But here producer David Heyman wanted the artists think about animation right at the start of the process, as an integral part of developing the concept designs. "There's a lot you can develop through movement and also narrative ideas," says Pablo. "The idea being that the design of the drama informs the concept."

In practice, that meant the art department found itself in a continual loop with the animators, as the creature designs

“It meant knocking most niggles out of the creature design at the beginning”

were passed back and forth to finesse things as much as possible.

As a case in point, concept artist Sam Rowan's design for the Niffler, a rodent-like creature with a long snout, was taken into pre-viz (an early, basic level of animation testing) and then sent back by the animators with feedback and requests for changes.

"I was told, for instance, that he needed to pick up coins, but the massive paws I'd given him made it difficult to do so," says Sam. "They said I'd made him too fat to move properly as well. There was a lot of back and forth like that."

For concept work on characters such the Erumpent (a huge African magical beast



An exploration of the Niffler's coat, trying out downy hair rather than feathers.



A young Marmite – a tentacled cross between a dust mite and a squid.



resembling a rhino), the Swooping Evil (a large, butterfly-like creature), and the Obscurist (a barely visible, malevolent force), fellow artist

Dan Baker had a similar experience.

"There was a lot of discussion with Pablo and the pre-viz guys very early on," he says. "We'd have a look at Pablo's sketches, I'd come up with some stuff, and it was all really a group task."

"The Obscurist was particularly challenging, as you had to show a force of terrifying dark energy without actually seeing it. We solved that by creating a lot of swirling debris around the actual creature."

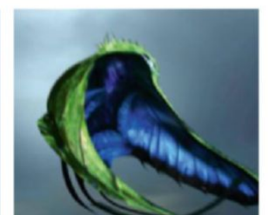
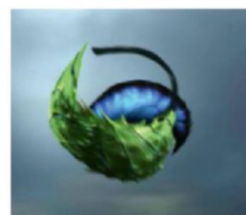
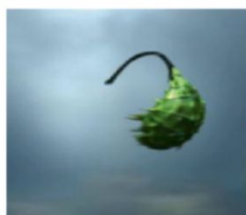
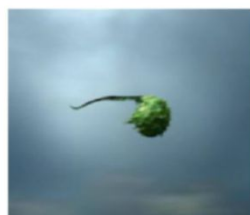
But rather than finding this non-linear way of working onerous, the artists all responded positively to it. "It seemed like a healthy, breath of fresh air way of working rather than being stuck in a room by yourself," Sam says. "And by keeping all these changes up at the front of production, it meant you could knock most of the niggles out of the creature design right at the beginning."

To learn more about Framestore's art work on *Fantastic Beasts*, visit www.framestore.com/fantasticbeasts.



The Occamy had to look elegant and mysterious, but also show a strong maternal side when threatened.

The Swooping Evil juxtaposes the wings of a butterfly-like creature with a terrifying animal skull.





The space between my digital and traditional setups isn't big, so I can easily switch between them. If you have a small studio like this then you have to be creative.

Here's my fully functional architect's drafting table. I usually keep it flat: the large working area leaves room for my art and my cats.

I do have a bit of a sketchbook addiction – I buy them in bulk. And there are stashes of new books everywhere!

I bought a Yiynova tablet rather than an Cintiq. It's the ideal alternative to Wacom's device if you need to paint digitally, but don't want to spend lots of money.

I love this chest of drawers, which my mother salvaged from an old school. I put wheels on it and use it to store my smaller supplies. I place my paints on when I'm using oils, and my easel will be next to it.

Iris Compiet

Cabinet of curiosities This Dutch artist is trying to cram a museum into a converted bedroom studio. Find out why...



© Jelle Nollema

One of the best things about my studio is that it's got a door! I can step into it in the morning... and close the door behind me when I'm done in the evening. It's my sanctuary.

But it's small and getting too small, so I'm invading every other room in the house. My stash of shipping supplies, frames, boxes of sketches and photo studio setup has taken over the attic, while my silk-screen area has moved into the smallest bedroom in the house, and the bathroom is where I mount



I collect items to use as props in paintings or to turn into works of art. This old porcelain doll is set to become a weird business card holder.

watercolour paper to board, wash my silk-screens and generally use as my room for nasty experiments.

My digital setup is on one side of the room, and opposite this is my pride and joy: an antique architect's drafting table, which is over 100 years old. I can put it in an angle, but I prefer it flat because I love to spread out my sketches, materials and books when I'm working. Furthermore, I tend to work on different tasks each day, so I like things to be close at hand, switching between projects as the day progresses.

Sometimes my easel is set up in the room as well and I'll work on oil paintings between client work. I like to work on different things at once; I find it keeps my mind fresh. When I hit a roadblock with one project I'll put it to one side and work on the next one, while my subconscious comes up with ideas to solve the problems I'm facing with the first task.

I usually get up at around 6am and start work at around 7.30am. I'll put on an audiobook, check up on some emails and then do some warm-up sketches. I try to do all the boring, business stuff before 10am,

Artist news, software & events

I like to take old porcelain dolls and turn them into something else. This is my octobaby and it's a work in progress, but for now it keeps a watchful eye on me... and freaks out anyone who visit my studio!

I try to find elaborate frames everywhere I go. I always intend to use them for a piece of art, but end up keeping them myself because I love the tacky gold frames. Oh, and that's Edgar - he's my studio crow.

I have art by artists I admire in my studio, bought or gifted to me. They are my treasures.



The all-important kettle. I can't live without it. I need my tea next to me...



This is my cat Hyde. He and his brother Jekyll will always stay by my side when I'm working in the studio. They like nothing better than to be right in the midst of the action... preferably right on top of a freshly painted image!

These mugs were bought at an antiques market in Bruges. The skull-shaped mug is used for cleaning my brushes (when I'm not using my tea mug) and the doll head is actually a flower pot.



and then it's full-on art! I have a little digital clock that goes off every hour, which lets me know that it's time to take a break and make a cup of tea.

I've got loads of books in my studio as well as art that I've collected over the years. It's nice to have all of this close at hand - it's my emergency inspiration boost!

Iris enjoys working on projects ranging from picture books to gallery art and even sculpts her own frames. Creating a "sense of wonder" is at the core of her work, which you can see by visiting www.eyeris.eu.



Just a small part of my collection of oddities. Since my studio is small, a lot of it is in the living room and I tend to bring stuff up to my work space to use in my paintings. I love looking at things like this to fire up the imagination. The little ray is the newest addition to the freak show and it's perfect for when I'm working on mermaids.

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



Follow us on Twitter:
www.twitter.com/imaginefx



Tell us your thoughts on Facebook:
www.facebook.com/imaginefx



Post your art or photos on Instagram:
www.instagram.com/imaginefxmagazine

Digital manga?

Just enquiring about manga magazines. I was wondering if you do any issues that contain computer-generated manga?

Alton, via email

Claire replies All of our manga editions have imagery that's created using computers and software such as Photoshop. They also feature traditional art advice. Our most recent special manga edition is available here: <http://ifxm.ag/manga-artist3>.



Learn how to paint all things manga, in our recent special issue!

Can't read the mag!

I love your magazine, but why is the text so small? Sometimes I find it really hard to read – especially the hand-written stuff – and I have to squint to be able to read it. I know this makes me sound like a right old fart, but it has to be said!

Darren, via email

Claire replies Darren, I'm so sorry that your eyes have been hurting while reading our magazine! We're always thinking of ways to improve the magazine, so we'll take a look at how and where we could make things more readable, if necessary. Do other readers agree? Or do you have any other niggles to tell us about? Drop me a line!

Can't open brushes

Most every month your magazine shares some utterly wonderful brushes, but I can almost never use them.

Like I expect many of your readers, I mostly use Manga Studio (or Clip Studio Paint as it's now known) for my own digital work, which doesn't natively handle Photoshop brushes. So I have to load the brushes individually into Sketchbook (the only reason I still own it) and create a stamp to then make my own brush. Alternatively, I'll try and use an .Abr viewer. Having said



DID YOU MISS OUR ISSUE ON ANATOMY?

Turn to page 46 to see how you can get hold of this and other past issues.



Tom's experiencing trouble getting our artists' custom brushes to run properly on his home computer.

this, I did download one viewer at Source Forge, and my computer almost immediately crashed.

I'm sure a lot of your community would appreciate it as much as I would if ImagineFX could provide in upcoming issues, as part of its resources, a safe, proven .Abr viewer so we too could share and try out the brushes that you regularly supply.

Tom, via email

Claire replies Great idea, but it's the 'safe, proven...' bit of your letter that we're unable to help with. We cannot supply third-party software in case something goes wrong with it, or it isn't compatible with certain operating systems, and so on. It's a tough one! Perhaps other readers who do a similar thing to you can share how they do this?

Index please!

I've been buying your wonderful magazine for years, but wouldn't it be great if they could be used as a live resource rather than an impressive pile of magazines stuck on my shelves to be enjoyed randomly, which is pretty much what happens in my case.

Imagine a scenario where it's possible to access the Contents pages of every ImagineFX available digitally, and search them by keyword? Then people like me, who still favour the print version, could look for topics of interest in the Database of Contents and go directly to their print edition(s), or buy missing issues that feature the content that they're interested in. For digital versions, perhaps the search would create Bookmarks automatically.

Of course, your readers may already have this kind of feature, which makes me look a bit daft, but I can live with that!

Max, via email

Claire replies Hello Max, this is another great idea. We would dearly love to create a searchable index for our editions – it would help us here in the office as well! Alas, we just don't have the resources to get this sorted. I even asked our apps team if they could create something within our magazine container app for our digital editions. Again, it's just not something that we can supply at present.

I'll add it to the big list of things I'd like to get done in 2017. Thanks for writing in.



Your art news that's grabbed our attention



James Paick
[@jamespaickart](https://www.instagram.com/jamespaickart)

“Gear up! Titanfall 2 concept art.”



Lois van Baarle
[@loisvb](https://www.instagram.com/loisvb)

“Coloured in my Wonder Woman sketch. I tried to use a more traditional comic style of colouring! Was fun to try out.”



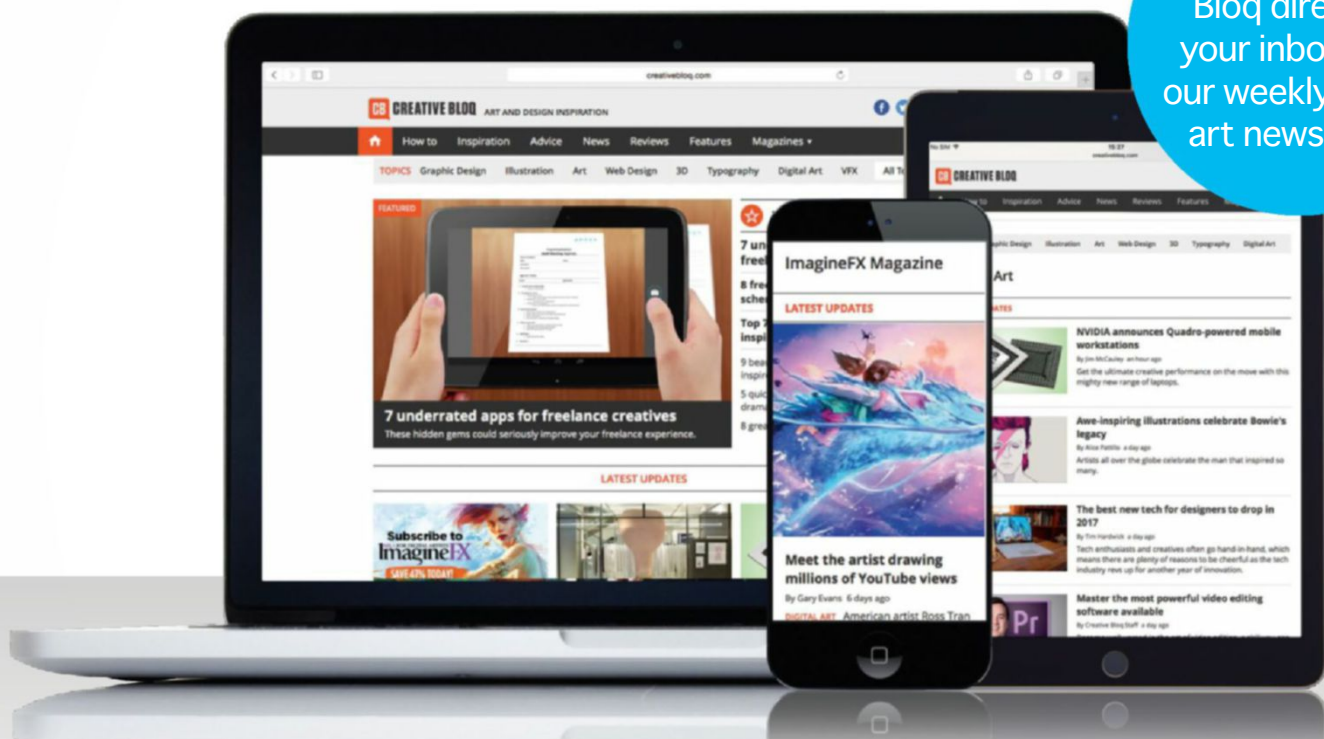
Shannon Rose
[@SacrinxiaArt](https://www.instagram.com/SacrinxiaArt)

“Corvo Attano fan art.”

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

The number one destination for **digital art** news, views and how-tos

Get Creative
Bloq direct to
your inbox with
our weekly digital
art newsletter



CB CREATIVE BLOQ

Graphic design

Art

Web design

3D

Digital art

www.creativebloq.com

Artist Q&A

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



The
NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS
ImagineFX
panel

Tan Hui Tian
After some time as a game artist, Tan is a senior illustrator at Collateral Damage Studios. Her academic background in graphic design can be clearly seen in her illustrations.
<http://ifxm.ag/th-tian>

PJ Holden
A Belfast-based comic artist known for drawing Judge Dredd in 2000 AD and the Nu-Earth series Hunted, PJ's recently drawn tanks for Garth Ennis and World of Tanks.
www.pauljholden.com

Belinda Leung
Previously a lead artist in the games industry, Belinda is now a freelance illustrator and concept artist who specialises in designing for films and games.
www.belindaleung.com

Tony Foti
Tony is an artist at Konami, who also contributes freelance work to numerous books, trading cards, games (board, tabletop and video), magazines and adverts.
www.tonyfotiart.com



I've chosen a clean aesthetic for the character with a white colour scheme, to create a contrast with the tattoo.

Question

Can you help me paint an elaborate tattoo?

Yolanda Conley, US

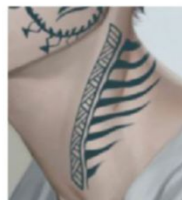
Answer

Tan replies



Tattoos can certainly add visual interest to a character and are straightforward to paint. There are many tattoo styles to choose from and I've picked one that's a mix of geometric and tribal.

Apart from the tattoo style, there's also the age of the tattoo to think about. Fresher tattoos are more opaque, and the pattern on the skin may be raised, with reddish irritated skin around it. Older tattoos are faded and tend towards a greenish-blue tint if a conventional black



To make the tattoo look less digital, I go over some layers with a grunge brush with the Transparency locked. To fit facial contours liquify the tattoo in broad strokes before refining.

ink was used. They may also be distorted according to the topographical changes of the skin they're on.

A temporary fake tattoo and a real one will both fade, but in different ways. In the former, the pigment flakes off and may crack according to points of stress and the epidermal structure of the skin. A real tattoo becomes faded because of sun exposure, and suntanning also creates a layer of brown tint on top of the tattoo. Over time, the lines of a tattoo will become less crisp as well.

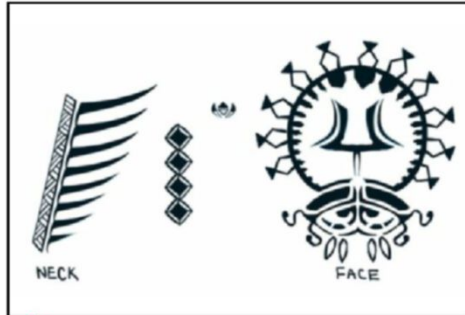
Artist Q&A

Need our advice?

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



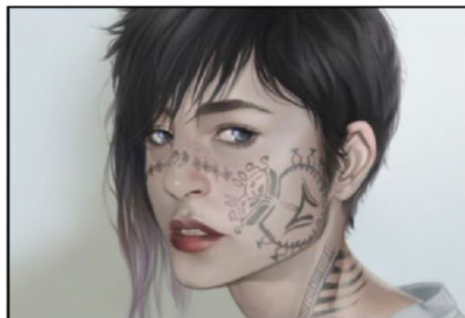
Step-by-step: Create a realistic, complex tattoo



1 Break elaborate designs down into parts, and use repeating elements (like the geometric shapes here) to make it look cohesive. Get an idea of where each part goes beforehand by sketching out the tattoo on the portrait first. The tattoo doesn't have to be perfectly clean, since real tattoos are done by hand.



2 Place your flat design where you want, then Transform>Distort its layers to match the perspective. For simpler curved surfaces (say, across a calf), Transform>Warp might do. For greater control, I use Liquify. Click Advanced Mode and Show Backdrop with the settings shown, so you can see the background while liquifying.



3 For this subtler, aged tattoo look, I have a layer in Overlay mode and others in Soft Light and Multiply. I alter the Opacity to blend with the skin and use Gaussian Blur, because an old tattoo will lose its crispness. For a new tattoo, select Blending Options and add Soft Glow set to Multiply for a red outline of irritated skin.

Question

How can I quickly create custom brushes in Clip Studio Paint?

Barry Simons, England



You can produce a complex silhouette by waving the brush around and applying pressure to help generate random patterns.

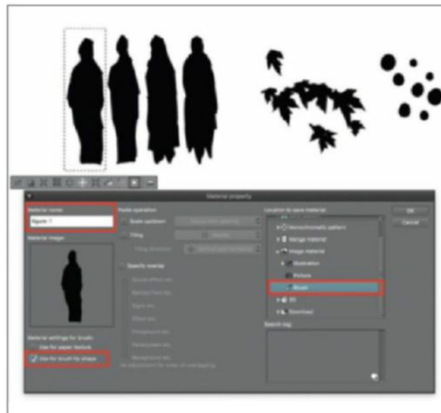
Answer PJ replies



Every first-time installation of Clip Studio Paint involves an excited exploration of the Decoration subtool. It's a veritable smörgåsbord of natural, unnatural and downright goofy brushes that can quickly generate rock-encrusted wastelands, dense forests or, more likely, just a random smear of black and white.

In my experience, this toolset quickly gets relegated to the digital equivalent of the bottom drawer. There is, however, a way to fix this, turning it from a little-loved tool into an absolutely essential time saver.

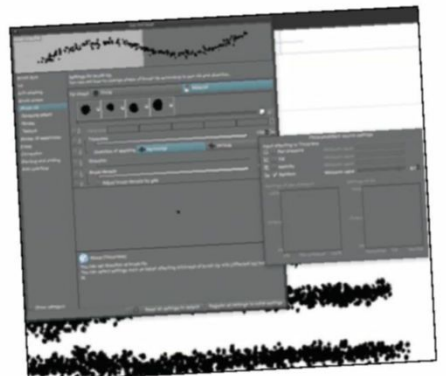
Think about creating silhouettes: using your own custom-made brush tips is key here. A variety of leaves (hand-drawn or scanned and traced) combined can look like a dense bocage, a set of random blobs add up to the intergalactic power of comics legend Jack Kirby's "Kirby Krackle" effect and a crowd is really just a mass shape composed of numerous individuals. Each brush tip should be made of a simple silhouette.



Draw a variety of shapes on a single layer in black and white, then select them individually and add to the brush list using Edit>Register Image as Material.

It's always easier to start from an existing brush and build up. So find a Decoration subtool you think might do the job – most of my more successful silhouette brushes are derived from the Foliage brush – and use the Create Copy of Currently Selected Sub Tool icon to duplicate it and then edit it.

Once you've designed a few of your own more useful decorative brushes, you can drag them out of their subtool and on to the toolbar on their own, grouping them together to save time hunting for them when you need them.



Artist's secret

EXPERIMENT WITH SETTINGS
If you want to get the right kind of impact, it's essential to learn how each of the settings in the spraying effect will influence how the silhouette is created. A random angle of each brush tip may work best with foliage, but will work poorly with a crowd of people. So experiment!

Question

What tips can you share for painting a rusting surface?

Rhonda Hambly, US

Answer

Tan replies



Adding a way to depict rusty surfaces to your repertoire can be helpful, especially for painting backgrounds. Rust or iron oxide occurs when unprotected iron comes into contact with water. This means it usually indicates old, weathered metal objects, and can add realism to any scenes where wear and tear is expected. Iron is usually protected with a layer of paint, and it can add interest to depict rust interacting with flaking or welting paint.

When painting rust you should take note of the physics, such as where water would come into contact with iron and where the iron object would experience stress. For instance, in the example I'm painting of an abandoned car in a forest, the metal grilles in front might rust in a different way to the car body. Rust forms in streaks (for example, on the car door) where water has presumably flowed down. But because the main car body has been protected by paint, the rust is milder on it.

Other weathering effects occur as well. Moss forms on top of the car, as the spores would land and stay on top of it rather than collect on the sides.



Weathering can make an artwork more evocative because it implies a narrative. Each scratch and dent on a vehicle tells of its history, and can make the viewer curious about its story.



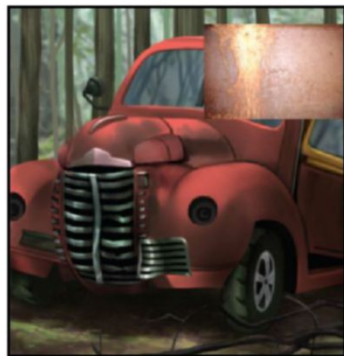
Adding headlights and tweaking the lighting creates a different, slightly eerie atmosphere. It's no longer just an old, abandoned car...

Artist's secret

ADD VARIETY

Rust isn't simply a single monotonous brown. It can be a cacophony of colours. The easiest way to add spots of colour variance to your image is by throwing a texture layer set to overlay blending mode on top of the image.

Step-by-step: Applying rust to a surface



1 Before you add rust to any surface, you'll need objects that are made of iron. Rather than painting an object shiny and new, it will be easier if the surface is already dull or matte with dust and dirt on it. That means there's no need to spend time painting in specular highlights. I'm using textures from **www.textures.com**, which are free to download (with a premium option).



2 I start off by layering the textures as appropriate. I use the Liquify filter to warp the rust textures so they fit the contours of the car. To show the background, click Advanced Mode and Show Backdrop. You can also use Puppet Warp or Warp for simpler contours. Erase the edges of the texture so that it blends with the surface of the car, and set the layer to Overlay or Multiply.



3 Continue to layer textures on the car, while keeping in mind how real-life physics would affect the weathering. For instance, the constant day-night cycle would make the metals expand and contract at different rates, and therefore bend the radiator grille and even the body panels out of shape. Rust will be worse wherever the metal has been scratched or damaged.



4 The image is beginning to look a little flat, so I go over it with a simple grunge brush so that it doesn't seem too clean. I add other details such as a layer of moss, broken glass and reflections from the environment as needed. Because any glass would have become grimy and dusty over time, I apply a blur to the reflections and give them a more matte appearance.



You can also use the background to explain more about why the weapon is in such a state of disrepair.



Question

How do I add an aged look to an axe or similar weapon?

Barbara König, Germany

Answer

Tony replies



Before you can paint an old, worn battleaxe, you're going to have to design a new one. As always, spend some time looking at designs from the time period you're working from – unless it's fantasy, of course, in which case just look at everything. Your workflow should start with the axe design, then figuring out a composition. Once you've got the composition, decide on your lighting and then finally paint and wear down

the weapon. Use a perspective grid to make sure every part of the axe that should be symmetrical is actually symmetrical.

When you do start sketching the blade and embellishments, just focus on one half and copy it over. This is especially useful with little design motifs on the blade, which can be hard to match up. You can then copy this layer and drag it down a few pixels to create the bottom plane of the axe, controlling thickness with distance.

Once your sketch is done, you can get down to painting. Silver metal (and any colour that's close to neutral) will tend to take on the hue of the surroundings. Ensure whatever colours dominate the background are also in the axe. Chips in the blade and scratches along the surface imply previous battles. Spots of rust can show age and give you places to change up the textures a bit. Keep adding on the wear and tear until you feel there's too much, then start trimming it back.

Step-by-step: Painting a battleaxe that's seen action

1 Start by loosely sketching out the image as you imagine it, without getting too caught up in any detail or perspective nuance. Then, using that rough sketch as a guide, draw out the



shape of the axe and any decorations in a flat, top-down planar view. Use the Pen tool for smooth, precise curved lines.

2 Focus on drawing just the left half, then when it's finished simply copy the layer, flip it horizontally and line it up. This way you know the two sides match. Now figure out what the sight lines and



vanishing points are doing in your rough, then use Free Transform and Skew to lay the flat design down in the right perspective.

3 Paint the axe using the sketch as your guide, and always take into account how the light will be reflecting from the metal. You can use the eraser or the colour of the background to paint some



chips into the blade. Show the stains of war and the dirt, along with scratches that catch the light with dark reds and browns.



Question

I want to design an engaging environment – any tips?

Tom Blau, Germany

Answer

Belinda replies

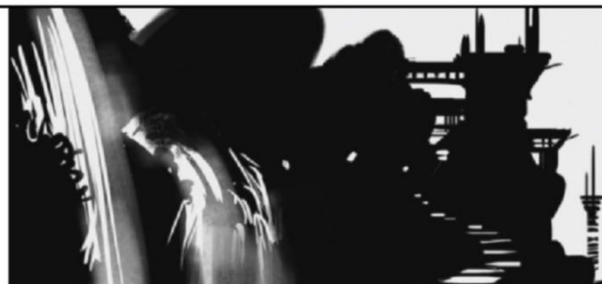


My first approach to making a potentially mundane scene look interesting is generally to use the principle of harmony versus variety, to spark interest in an image and create a focal point.

People have a natural tendency to look for patterns, so providing repeated shapes throughout the image but in a variety of sizes will encourage the viewer to scan the image. Counterpointing these repetitive shapes with something different will cause the eye to settle, and these contrasting areas are perfect for the focal point for your image. This is where you can perhaps

add a story element or character interaction to really draw the viewer in and keep them looking around.

This principle of harmony versus variety doesn't just apply to shapes, but also works with contrasts in colour, value, line and other art fundamentals. The idea is to create a sense of overall unity within your image using any of these aspects or combinations of them, then interrupting it with a contrasting element where you want the viewer's eyes to settle. An image that has no harmony in it at all will give the viewer a hard time scanning the picture, yet on the other hand a scene that's too harmonious



I create a silhouette to establish the overall contrast of round and angular shapes. The silhouette in the final image is pretty much the same.

will become bland and have difficulty grabbing the viewer's attention for long. I like to maintain a ratio of about 80:20, in which 80 per cent of the image is harmonious, with 20 per cent featuring contrasting elements.

For your focal point, try using either colour accents or areas of dramatic value contrast. Also consider depicting an area of quiet in a chaotic scene.

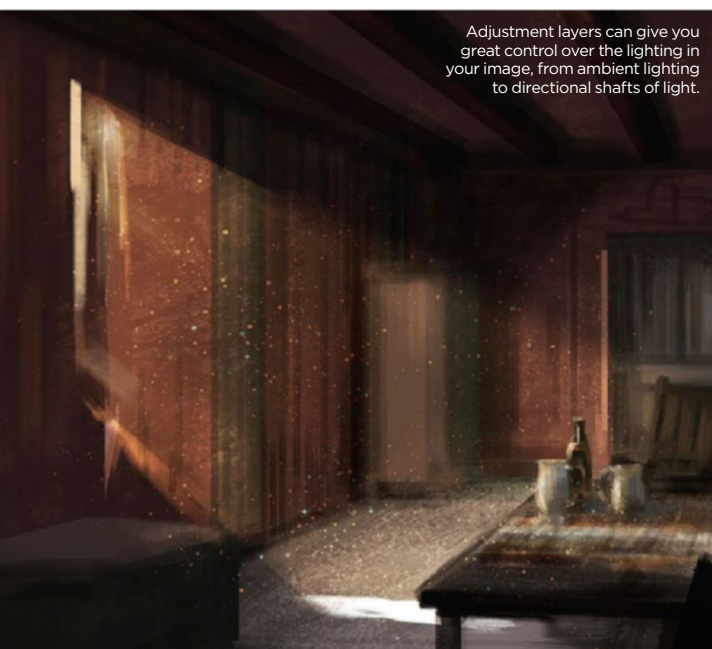


In this scene I use the repetitive curves of the rocks and path to create a sense of harmony in the shapes, which I contrast with sharp, angular buildings.

Artist's secret

USING BLACK AND WHITE "NOTAN" THUMBNAILS

Notan is a Japanese painting principle used to describe the balance of light and dark in an image. Using black and white thumbnails can help to simplify your composition and really nail down the shapes and silhouettes of your image. An interesting composition should be effective even when simplified down to just two values.



Adjustment layers can give you great control over the lighting in your image, from ambient lighting to directional shafts of light.

Question

Help me paint a shaft of light

Qi Meng, Australia



Answer

Belinda replies



There are few things that can evoke a sense of magic and wonder more simply than a glimmering stream of light piercing through darkness.

To make the lighting believable and effective, you'll need to take account of a few factors, such as the mood you want to convey and the kind of atmosphere the light is shining through. For example, is it a dusty room or a crystalline cavern? The effect of the light can also create a range of feelings such as mystery, hope, sadness and nostalgia, depending on the effect of the light on its surroundings. If a character is

side-lit by a sliver of light with their face remaining in shadow, they might look threatening or mysterious, whereas if their face is lit by the light, they could look hopeful and thoughtful.

Here I've painted a simple scene of a dusty old room to demonstrate some straightforward Photoshop techniques for how to approach painting a shaft of light. The technique uses layer blending modes and adjustment layers for maximum flexibility, and it can be used for other forms of lighting situations, too. Have a play around with this technique to create different lighting effects.

Question

How can I make an object look like it's moving fast?

Leon Thornton, England

Answer

Tony replies



There are all kinds of ways to make something look fast-moving. I'll go over a couple of different approaches, with the help of a time-travelling pilot.

The first thing to consider is whether the 'camera' is tracking the object. If so, the focus will have sharper edges and the background will be almost all soft edges. If the camera is stationary, the background will be clear and anything fast is going to be a blur. I've done something in between the two, so you can see how both approaches work.

For a background in motion, try using Filter>Blur>Radial Blur, ensuring it's set to Zoom. Use the little grid to move the focal point over your desired vanishing point (remember to keep all motion visuals in perspective), and you'll get a kind of tunnel blur effect.

For a fast-moving focal point, I suggest painting the subject on its own layer. Then you can duplicate it and use Filter>Blur>Motion Blur. You'll end up with a ghostly streak effect that suggests an object moving a large distance fast.

Another way is to have the colours and values from an object bleeding back in perspective, like comic-book speed lines. The red bombs bouncing around are examples of this effect. For every layer you want to treat this way, I suggest making a blurred and non-blurred version. Adjust Opacity to refine later.

Motion blur is a great start for implying movement in an illustration. Make sure to keep things in perspective, though, and don't soften everything so much it becomes uninteresting.



Composition is another big component in expressing movement. Have figures leaning into their step to give the impression that they're hurtling forward.

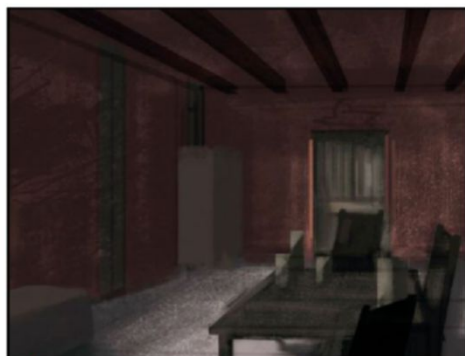
Artist's secret

DIRECT THE EYE

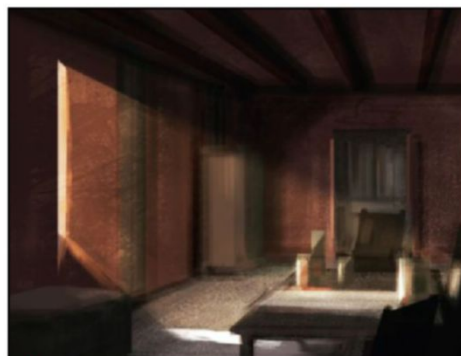
Use the movement in your image to direct the movement of the viewer's eye. You pretty much always want everything in the piece to lead to the focal point, and motion blur is a powerful way to influence what people pay attention to.



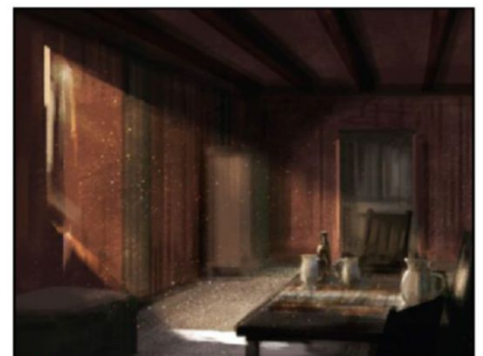
Step-by-step: Bring in directional lighting



1 I start by painting the environment using local colours only, without the effect of directional lighting. I sometimes start with darker or lighter local colours to set the initial tone of the image, such as a dark, mysterious scene or a light, hopeful one. Only then do I add the light source...



2 I start with a Levels adjustment layer to brighten everything up, then invert the layer mask and paint into it to create the light source and areas of bounce light. I then use an Overlay layer to paint the triangular beam of light and add some soft cast shadows around the room.



3 This strengthens the direction of the light. To add atmosphere to the light, I use a Color Dodge layer to paint in some specks of dust lit by the stream of light. I also use this layer to add hot spots of lighting to other areas of the room that are being directly hit by the light.

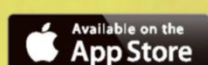


ESSENTIAL ART RESOURCES
Videos, images, brushes
and more are available
with your digital
editions!

iPad is a trademark of Apple Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries. App Store is a service mark of Apple Inc.

Try out a digital edition for **FREE** today!

Just search for 'ImagineFX' on these selected platforms...



Question

How do I set up my comic panels?

James Barnstaple, England

Answer

PJ replies



At its simplest, a comic page is made up of a number of images called panels or frames. (In the US you're more likely to hear the word panel than frame – they mean the same thing, but frame is Clip Studio Paint's preferred term.) Frames are separated by a gutter, and it's the gutter that performs the magic in the reader's eye of coalescing those frames into a single coherent story.

Clip Studio Paint has tools for everything, including creating frames and their borders, and here I'll discuss ways to simplify the process and best practices for working with frames so you can do it quickly – and then get on with the fun stuff of drawing comics.

If you're about to do a 200-page graphic novel, it's important to be consistent, so from the outset you'll want to establish some rules. I've always preferred a solid 5mm gutter around my frames, with a border thickness of 1.4mm. These are pretty much the standard for 2000 AD.



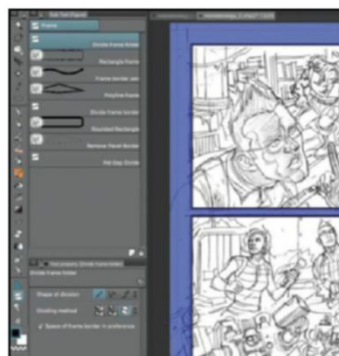
Chaos, destruction, panic, all contained within a mix of full-bleed and overlapping panels built within Clip Studio Paint.

When you have a monster too large to be contained in the frame, that's when you may need to have it burst out!

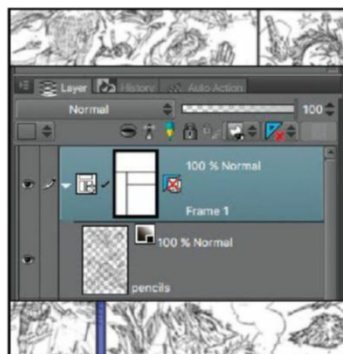
Step-by-step: Making the most of frames



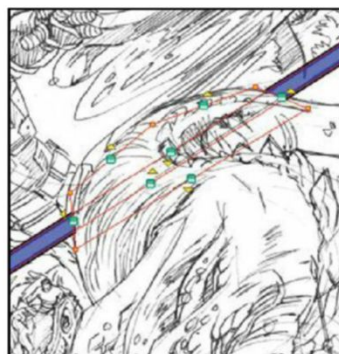
1 In Preferences>Layer Frame, set the Frame Border Horizontal Space and Vertical Space to 5mm each. Clip Studio Paint uses the 5mm both as a default and a guide when moving frames close to each other, but you can adjust individual frames to overlap them or alter gutters. (If your measurements aren't in mm, change that in Preferences>Ruler/Unit>Unit Of Length.)



2 Once you've created a new frame (Layer>New Layer>Frame Border Layer), with a border set using Line Width (it will remember your last used size and default to that), you can then slice the frame up using the Divide Frame Folder tool, making sure it's set to Divide Not Folder but Frame Border. Hold Shift while placing the cut to fix the angle of cut in 45-degree increments.



3 Select Rectangle Frame, making sure the layer selected is the frame folder layer (if you're on another layer, creating a rectangle frame will also create a brand new frame folder layer). You can now add this new frame on top of any other. Since Clip Studio Paint lacks any tools for reordering panels, though, it's handy to know that cutting and pasting a frame moves it to the top.



4 Using the Polyline Frame and setting its Draw Border property to unchecked, you can now draw a frame over the top of any other. This is incredibly useful if you want to add a bit of drama to a frame by having a character punch his way out, or even open the top or bottom of the frame up. The Polyline frame sits on top and hides the frame borders of any frames it's on top of.

NEXT MONTH: DEPICT BRUISED SKIN | PAINT MULTI-COLOURED SMOKE | GENERATE A CROWD OF PEOPLE | MATERIAL PAINTING TIPS | ILLUSTRATE TOILING BELLS | AND MORE!

Subscribe and save!

Subscribe to **NO.1** FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX

Subscribe to our **print** edition, or get the best value with our complete **print and digital** package!

Get a sub
from only
£16!

Save up to 47%

...and get Rebelle, the natural media painting software worth \$60.

Exclusive covers

Subscribers receive issues with text-free covers.

Available globally

When we say **Rest of the World**, we mean it! We can post to over 100 countries. Learn more at <http://ifxm.ag/ifxr-o-w>.

No-hassle delivery

ImagineFX gets sent direct to your door or device, and P&P is included.



Free gift worth \$60!

FREE SOFTWARE!



Rebelle



GET A FREE COPY OF REBELLE, WORTH \$60!

We've teamed up with **Escape Motions** to offer you a free copy of **Rebelle**, the excellent natural media painting program, when you take out a subscription.

Key Features:

- Paint using digital watercolours, acrylics, inks and pastels.
- Features realistic brushes, wet and dry tools, and more.
- Intuitive, easy-to-use interface
- We gave Rebelle top marks when we reviewed it in issue 123!
- Available with a Print or Print & Digital subscription only.

The amount you pay every three months

	PRINT	PRINT & DIGITAL
UK	£16	£19
EUROPE	€28	€35
US	\$37	\$44
REST OF THE WORLD	\$39	\$47

SAVE UP TO
47%

Two easy ways to subscribe today...

VISIT OUR DEDICATED WEBSITE AT
WWW.MYFAVOURITEMAGAZINES.CO.UK/IFXREBELLE

OR TELEPHONE 0344 848 2852 (UK)
+44 (0) 344 848 2852 (INTERNATIONAL)
(PLEASE QUOTE IFXREBELLE)

Terms & conditions Your Rebelle software will be sent to you by email up to 30 days after purchase. Prices and savings quoted are compared to buying full-priced print and digital issues. You'll receive 13 issues in a year. Prices correct at point of print and subject to change. You can write to us or call us to cancel your subscription within 14 days of purchase. Your subscription is for the minimum term specified and will expire at the end of the current term. Payment is non-refundable after the 14-day cancellation period unless exceptional circumstances apply. Your statutory rights are not affected. For full terms and conditions please visit <http://bit.ly/magterms>. Offer ends 15 March 2017.

For digital editions, please turn to page 34



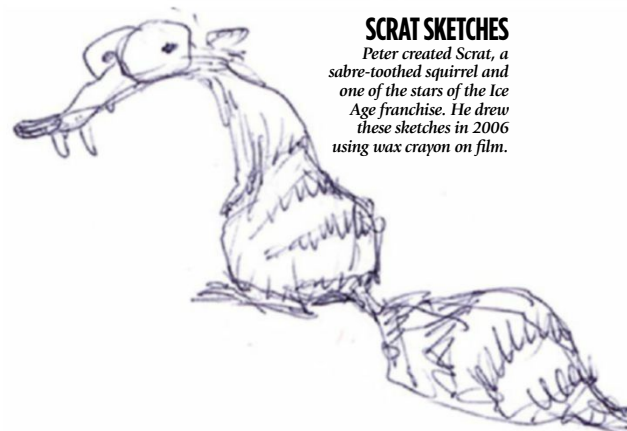
Artist Portfolio PETER DE SÈVE

The American artist tells **Gary Evans** why drawing well is like telling a good joke

Peter de Sève, aged 16, a student at Parsons school of art and design, walks through Greenwich Village to the corner of Bleecker and Macdougall Streets. It's snowing. He finds a table in Café Figaro, the New York coffeehouse whose past regulars include Bob Dylan, Lenny Bruce and Jack Kerouac, where he drinks cappuccinos and draws in his sketchbook.

With his drawings, Peter's trying to impress people – friends, girls too. And it's during these quiet afternoons that he starts to understand what it means to be illustrator, and exactly what it is an illustration is supposed to do.

"It was a magical time," the artist says. "It was 1977 when I started Parsons. For a kid from Long Island, living away from home for the first time, it couldn't have been more exciting. The punk scene was in full swing – yet there was still a faint whiff of the ➡



SCRAT SKETCHES

Peter created Scrat, a sabre-toothed squirrel and one of the stars of the Ice Age franchise. He drew these sketches in 2006 using wax crayon on film.



THE LITTLE GIRL

Peter worked on the recent 3D animated film *The Little Prince*. This drawing is a development sketch of a "smart and precocious" character known simply as The Little Girl.

Courtesy of Netflix

“For a kid from Long Island, living away from home for the first time, it couldn't have been more exciting”



© 20th Century Fox Film Corporation

ICE AGE, DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS

In his character designs for the Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs, as with illustration work, Peter strives for exaggerations that feel real and credible.

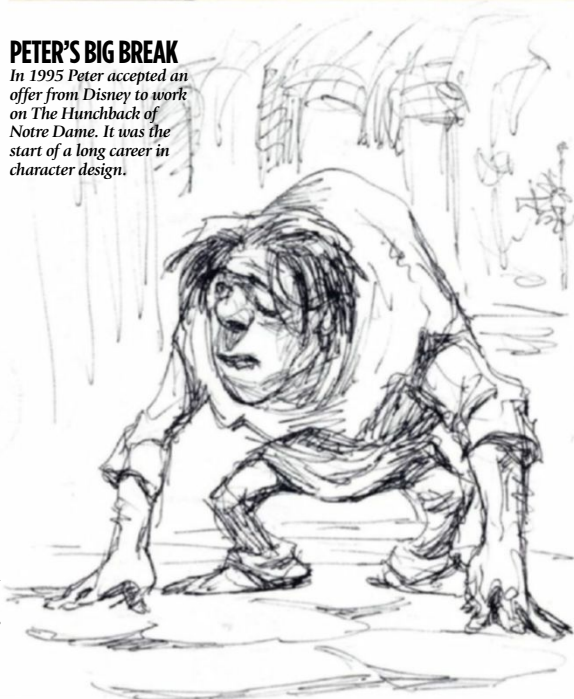


CROCODILE TEARS

This unused New Yorker cover, created in watercolour and ink, shows Peter's love of an arresting image that's full of character.

PETER'S BIG BREAK

In 1995 Peter accepted an offer from Disney to work on *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. It was the start of a long career in character design.



➡ folk scene down on Bleeker Street. There were hardcore punks and stoned hippies all over the place, and that's where friends and I spent most of our free time. We'd walk through the snow and hunker down at the Café Figaro.

"I just loved to draw things that would amuse myself and other people. That's kind of the job of an illustrator in a nutshell, isn't it? It's not only about pleasing yourself but you have to communicate to and entertain an audience. Every drawing is an opportunity to make someone feel something specific and to do it in the cleverest, most economical way possible. I've always loved that challenge. I think I was hard-wired to be an illustrator from birth."

CONSTRAINED BY THE FACTS

In 1995, Disney came calling. Peter accepted an offer to work on character designs for *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. They didn't use much of his work, but it was



SCRAT DE SÈVE

This wax crayon drawing shows Peter looking a lot like his most famous creation, Scrat from *Ice Age*.

“How your audience views your work determines how well you've told the story”

the beginning of a long career in character design. His credits now include *A Bug's Life*, *Finding Nemo* and all five *Ice Age* film – he created the endearing character Scrat for the franchise.

Peter says his work is as much about concept as it is technique. He likes a strong image, a split idea – like a lion in a vegan restaurant. His character designs are often about the little details that change the image in a big way: a head tilt, an eyebrow raised. He doesn't use too many references, because he doesn't want to be “constrained by the facts.” Yet any exaggerations in his characters must also feel real and credible. He describes his own work as looking contemporary, but “glazed with a 19th-century patina.” And as a working illustrator and character designer, the viewer is always an important part of what he does. ➡

Artist PROFILE

Peter de Sève

LOCATION: US

FAVOURITE ARTISTS: Jack Davis, Wally Wood, Frank Frazetta, Heinrich Kley, Arthur Rackham, Roland Topor, Murray Tinkelman and, most inspiring by far, Brad Holland

MEDIA: Wax crayon, ink and watercolour

WEB: www.peterdeseve.com

SID AND BROOKE

A playful character study based on two of the leads from *Ice Age: Collision Course*, the fifth and most recent film in the franchise.

Sloth H



WILD RIDE

Buck, an insane one-eyed weasel, joined the cast the *Ice Age* franchise in the third film, *Dawn of the Dinosaurs*.

'YOUR CRUMMY DRAWING'

Peter talks compliments, criticism and dealing with knock-backs... some of them self-inflicted

Peter was already a successful editorial artist when Disney asked him to design characters for *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. They didn't use much of what he drew, but it was his big break into animation. He's since learned a few things about dealing with criticism and compliments.

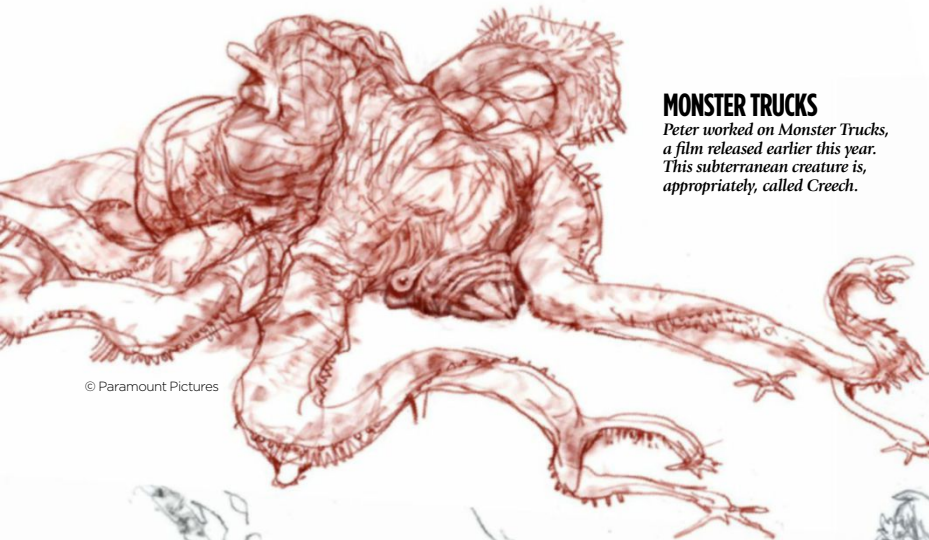
"I take compliments as lightly as possible," the artist says, "and have a pretty good antenna to help me determine which are genuine and which are just nervously polite. As for criticism, I take that more seriously – though, again, my antennae is crucial here. Sometimes a criticism can come from a personal bias. A piece might have an off-putting element in it – a rat, for instance. However, if enough people don't get what you're trying to say, the fault is not in the stars chum, it's in your crummy drawing."

Peter is perhaps his own toughest critic. He has trouble looking at past projects – even successful ones: "When I look through my work, I have real difficulty in looking at finished pieces. Invariably, there's something that bugs me about them. Something I didn't quite pull off. But for some reasons, I'm much more forgiving of my sketches and looser drawings. They are always much less self-conscious and to me are a glimpse at the artist I'm supposed to be."

QUASIMODO AND ESMERELDA

Disney never actually used Peter's character designs for *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, but he's since gone on to work for box-office hits such as *A Bug's Life* and *Finding Nemo*.





© Paramount Pictures

MONSTER TRUCKS

Peter worked on *Monster Trucks*, a film released earlier this year. This subterranean creature is, appropriately, called Creech.

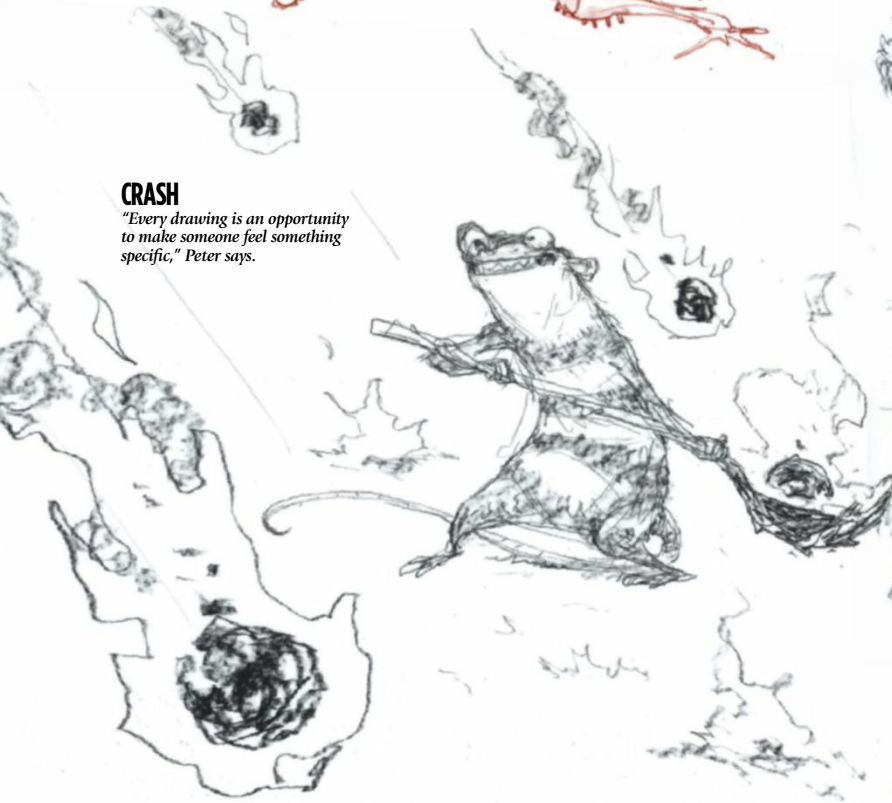
SHANGRI-LA

This handsome bunch are inhabitants of Shangri-La, taken from last year's *Ice Age: Collision Course*.



CRASH

"Every drawing is an opportunity to make someone feel something specific," Peter says.



➔ "To me," Peter says, "the viewer is the second most important element in picture-making, second only to the picture itself. How your audience views your work – meaning in which order he or she takes in what is happening in your picture – determines how well you've told the story."

Peter is also known for his front covers for *The New Yorker* magazine. For 20 years, he "worked in the trenches" of editorial illustrations, submitting as many as three pieces each week to *Forbes*, *Business Week* and *The New York Times*, among others. He's also created book covers and posters for Broadway shows.

He'd been at Parson for a year when he was introduced to editorial illustration.

“Almost all of my biggest heroes are artists whose work is grounded in reality”

The 1970s, he says, was editorial illustration's heyday. He came across a book called *The Art of the Times*. It contained editorial art by illustrators "hired for their hand as well as their brain," such as American artist Brad Holland.

"Man, I loved his work," he says. "He fit perfectly into that rubric of exaggerated realism I mentioned earlier. But beyond his drawing style, were images that insisted the viewer engage with them. Not literal solutions that simply depicted what the article was about, but visual companions to the written words, which made their own, independent statement."

EXAGGERATED REALISM

For many years, Peter worked late at night and would stick at it until the early hours of the morning. He's easily distracted. There were fewer interruptions at night. After he got married and had a family, he switched to "a much healthier" nine-to-five. But that doesn't mean he's free of distractions.

His dream working day looks something like this: he lives and works in a ➔



RAT RACE

Peter says a good drawing is like a good joke: the punchline should always come at the end: like seeing the rat after seeing the commuter.

WHAT'S ON THE MENU TODAY...?

Peter reveals through his process for coming up with a cover for venerable title *The New Yorker*

"My work often begins with a visual dichotomy of some kind. In this case, my initial doodle had something to do with carnivores at a vegan restaurant, the kind of place you can easily find in a Brooklyn neighbourhood like mine. My wife, Randall, has been a vegetarian since she was 12 and though I tried being one for almost eight years. I realised it just wasn't for me. That moment, when I first began to rethink my diet, is what this cover is all about.

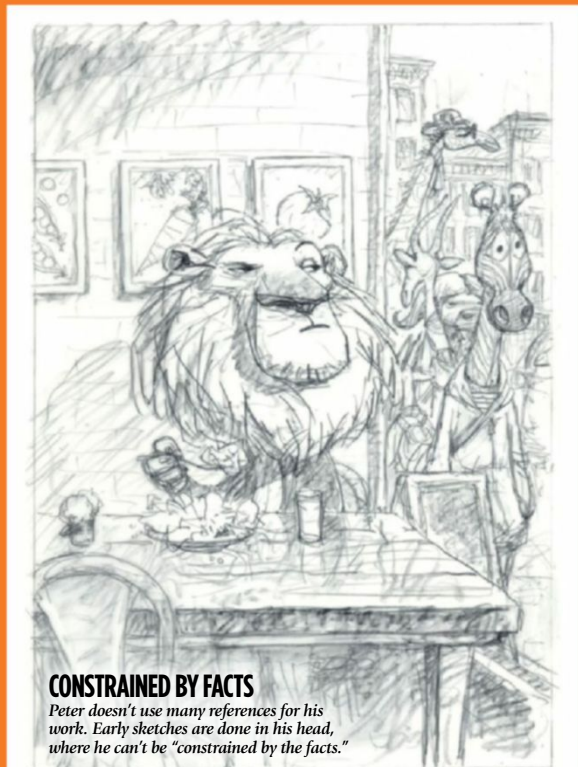
Once I landed on the lion with a salad watching more delicious options walk by, I began to refine the drawing. Originally, I had an anaemic-looking lion, but soon decided on a healthier version. After that, I concentrated on his expression. It's amazing how the tilt of a head, the placement of an eyebrow or even the height of an eyelid can totally change the tone of a drawing. In the end, I wanted the viewer to hear the lion think to himself, "Hmmm."

I don't generally go overboard with references. I always do my rough sketches out of my head, so I'm not too constrained by the facts. Still, there are little touches one can discover by looking at photos of a place he or she is depicting - the little flower in the mason jar on the table and the exposed brick wall all telegraph the kind of earthy, crunchy-granola vibe a place like this projects. It also didn't hurt to take a closer look at what a lion's face is really about. It's easy to convince yourself you know how to draw a thing, but that can lead to an over-reliance on cartoony clichés. I like my exaggeration to be based on reality, at least a little bit, to help me put an idea over the top."



A NEW LEAF

Peter likes works built around a "visual dichotomy", such as a lion at a vegan restaurant. He then develops the character, capturing details like facial expressions.



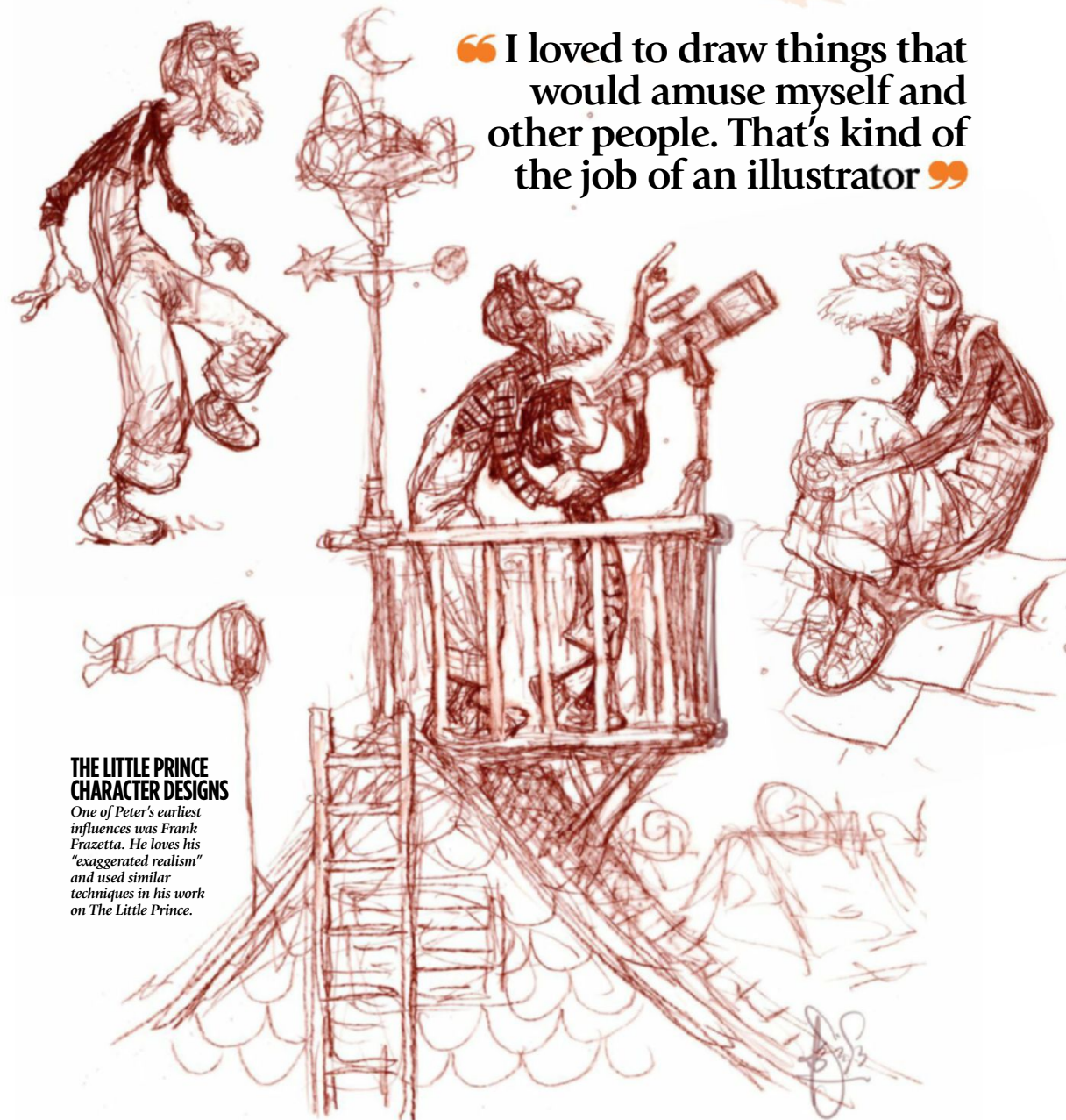
CONSTRAINED BY FACTS

Peter doesn't use many references for his work. Early sketches are done in his head, where he can't be "constrained by the facts."

SPOTTING MISTAKES

Peter has created around 50 covers the iconic *The New Yorker* magazine, but finds it difficult to look at old work. He always sees the things he didn't get quite right.





THE LITTLE PRINCE CHARACTER DESIGNS

One of Peter's earliest influences was Frank Frazetta. He loves his "exaggerated realism" and used similar techniques in his work on *The Little Prince*.

➔ Brooklyn townhouse, where, second cup of coffee in hand, he sits down at his drawing board and waits for "exquisite, heartrending images to spill from my pen. Hours later, without having looked up from my work even once, I turn out the light and go back upstairs to rejoin my family... None of this has ever happened, of course."

A GAUNTLET OF DISTRACTIONS

His home studio "is a wonderful place," which is part of the problem. Bookshelves overflow all around the room. Art from friends and heroes hang on the walls. "Just crossing the room is like running a gauntlet of distractions. I often find myself staring at a book or a picture, wondering what the hell I was meant to do in the first place."

Ideas typically come to him away from the drawing board, during those distracted times, when he's doodling in his sketchbook or out running. He divides his time between the two fields, character design and editorial illustration. In both,

STUDY ON A SOFA

Even when shown in a quiet moment, Peter's characters still exhibit life in their expressions and body language.



his aims are similar: to create a character or an image that's just one or step or two away from reality, something that's plays off of a bigger narrative, a bigger idea, something that drives the pictures towards its ultimate punchline.

"Almost all of my biggest heroes, past and present, are artists whose work is somewhat grounded in reality," Peter says, "with a general respect for anatomy and perspective, while still disregarding them for the sake of telling a story. Or a joke."

"In my Rat Race picture, for instance, I make dead sure that the first thing you absorb is a lone commuter standing on an empty platform waiting for a train. I don't want you to see the rat below him doing exactly the same thing until the second beat. I composed the piece so the man is dead centre; you have no choice but to go there first."

Peter ends with this key advice: "Just like telling a joke or a story: your setup is just as important as your punchline." 🍌

Complete your collection!

ImagineFX Back issues

Missed an issue of ImagineFX? Don't panic, here's how you can order yours today!

Missed out on a recent print edition of ImagineFX?

See what's available at www.bit.ly/ifxbackissues.

Got an Apple iPad, iPhone or iPod Touch?

Get the free ImagineFX app for your iPad or iPhone at <http://ifxm.ag/apple-ifx>, or download us straight from the Newsstand app already on your device.

On Android, PC or Mac?

Google Play: <http://ifxm.ag/google-halfprice>
Zinio: www.bit.ly/r938Ln

Got some other device?

ImagineFX is available for all kinds of devices, including Barnes and Noble's nook, and Amazon's range of Fire tablets.



PRINT AND DIGITAL BACK ISSUES



Issue 144

February 2017

This month, we help you boost your knowledge of anatomy and figure drawing. From Patrick J Jones's cover art, to creating faces full of character with Julián del Rey, to human anatomy advice from artist and tutor Glenn Vilppu, this is an unmissable issue!



Issue 143

January 2017

An interview with A Song of Ice and Fire illustrator Marc Simonetti headlines our book illustration special. There's also advice on getting into children's books, workshops on colour and composition, and a look around Tony DiTerlizzi's amazing studio!



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.

BUY PRINT EDITIONS OF IMAGINEFX AT:

www.bit.ly/ifxbackissues

myfavourite
magazines.co.uk



RESOURCES ARE INCLUDED WITH PRINT AND DIGITAL EDITIONS*



Issue 140
November 2016



Issue 139
October 2016



Issue 138
September 2016



Issue 137
August 2016



Issue 136
July 2016



Issue 135
June 2016



Issue 134
May 2016



Issue 133
April 2016



Issue 132
March 2016



Issue 131
February 2016

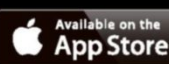


Issue 130
January 2016



Issue 129
Christmas 2015

GET YOUR DIGITAL EDITION THROUGH THESE OUTLETS:



*Resource files are available from issue 85 onwards.

Sketchbook

Brian Kesinger

The Disney story artist shines a light on the expressive characters and creatures populating his sketchbook pages

Artist PROFILE

Brian Kesinger

LOCATION: US



Brian is an Annie award winning story artist for Walt Disney animation studios. His 20-year career at Disney has spanned both hand-drawn and CG animated films from Tarzan to Moana. On top of his film work, he's also an author and illustrator of several books, and he blends his animation background with the comic art form for Marvel Comics. www.bkartonline.com

WASTELAND SCAVENGER

"I drew this as soon as I got home from seeing Mad Max: Fury Road. To say that this film inspired me is quite the understatement."

MERMAIDS

"Sketching is my favourite part of the illustration process. Like watching a Polaroid develop, I'm never quite sure how a drawing will reveal itself. In this stage I let the flowing lines guide me until a character starts to appear on the page."



CAPTAIN CASSANDRA

"When in doubt, draw an airship pirate with a pet dragon."



THE MAIDEN AND THE SERPENT

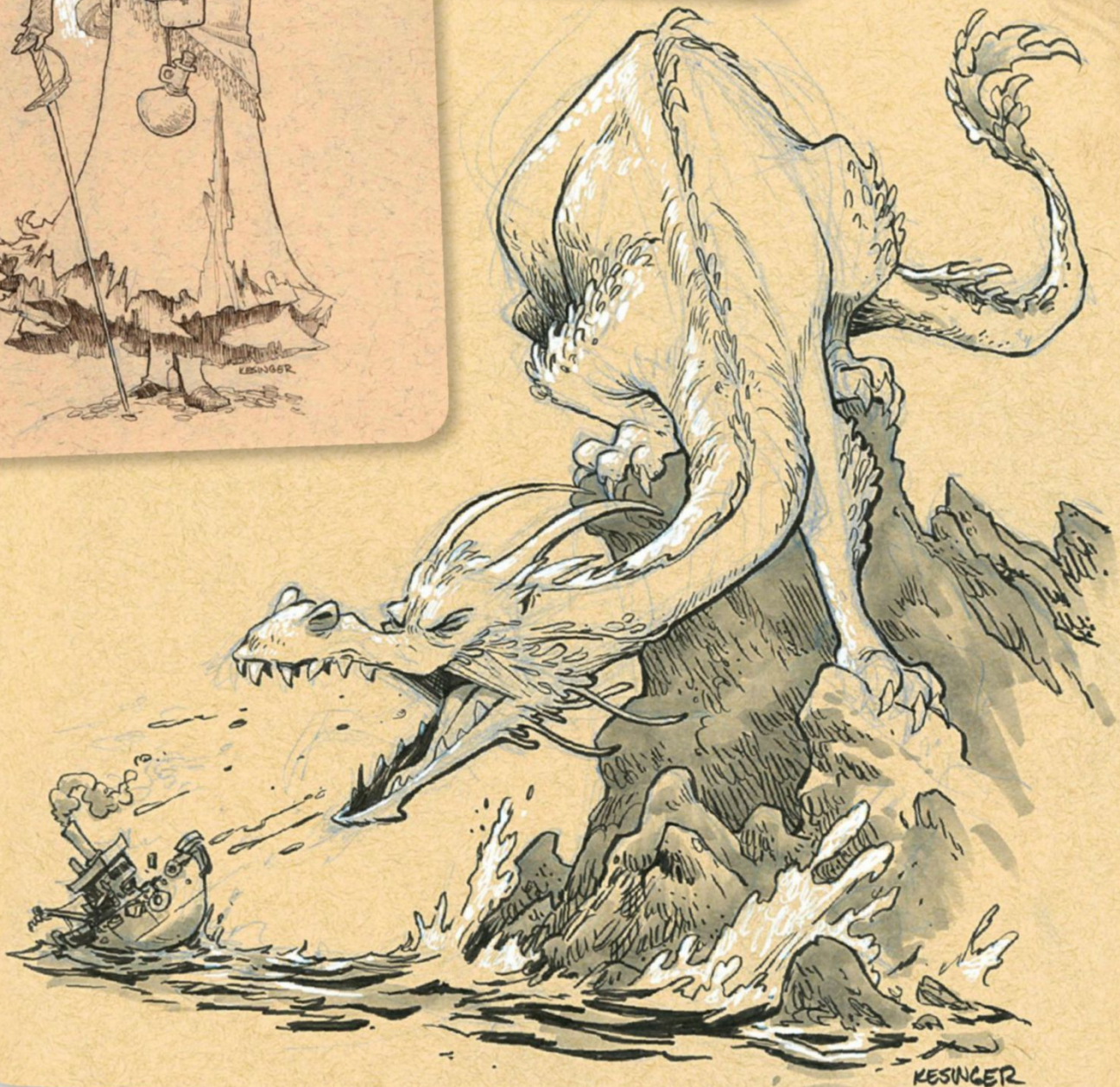
"Just another excuse to combine steampunk, mermaids and dragons into one image."



DRAZIER THE CACOPHONOUS

"Who needs a foghorn when you have a particularly bombastic dragon roaming your coastline?"

"I'm never quite sure how a drawing will reveal itself"



KESINGER

Sketchbook



LORD EARL THE GREY

"This dapper dragon always makes time for tea in between hoarding his treasure and desolating local villages."



THE EXPLORER

"I wanted to capture the moment of anticipation before this pilot steps out of her vessel for the first time. I'll leave it up to the viewer to decide if she'll be stepping into the starry vacuum of space or the inky depths of the sea."

THE ALCHEMIST

"I love taking steampunk out of its usual home in Victorian England and infusing its aesthetic into other cultures."



"A lot of my time is spent in discussion. Meetings can go on for hours and often result in the most random sketches"



GLADIGATOR

"This is just one of hundreds of 'meeting doodles'. As a story artist, a lot of my time is spent discussing different sequences of a film with the story team. These meetings can go on for hours and often result in the most random sketches."

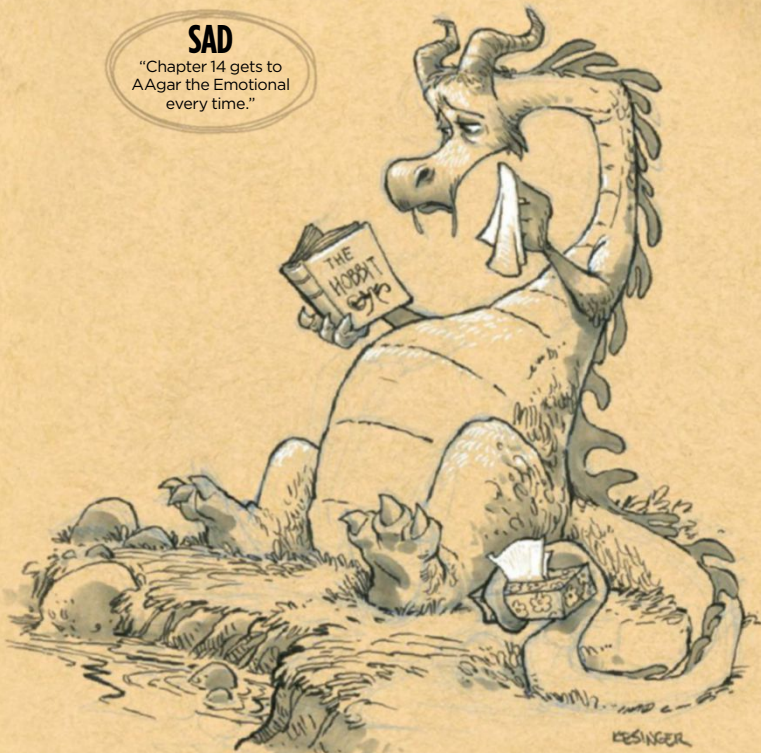
WEREWOLF

"There goes a wolf."



SAD

"Chapter 14 gets to AAgar the Emotional every time."



Do you want to share your sketches with your fellow ImagineFX readers? Send us an email with a selection of your art, captions for each piece and a photo and bio of yourself to sketchbook@imaginefx.com

LOCATION: Ludwigsburg, Germany
PROJECTS: The Gruffalo, Petzi, The Amazing World of Gumball, Trudes Tier
WEB: www.studiosoi.de



The 27-minute Gruffalo film mixes computer animation and miniature sets. It was built, shot and animated entirely at Studio Soi.



STUDIO PROFILE

STUDIO SOI

The German animation studio has built a reputation on skilled craft across multiple disciplines, as **Julia Sagar** discovers

Studio Soi's films were once described as the "wooden toys" of the animation industry, says founding animation director Klaus Morschheuser – and it isn't hard to see why. BAFTA-award-winning cartoon *The Amazing World of Gumball* and stunning Academy award-nominated short *The Gruffalo* are just two examples from the Ludwigsburg-based animation studio's exceptional portfolio of globally acclaimed films. So how did seven animation graduates with no clients build a 60-strong team and worldwide reputation for visual innovation? And is it as fun to work there as it looks?



design, compositing and someone who can handle all the production work," says Klaus, who launched Studio Soi in 2003 with six fellow students from internationally renowned film school Filmakademie Baden Württemberg.

"This was a great ground-base when starting new projects, because we were able to discuss things freely, and everyone could bring in their ideas and concerns. Also, we could decide which technique made

"From the start, an essential concept behind the studio was that all founders had different roots: 2D, puppet and 3D-animation,



Pre-production drawing, *Ants by the Platanus Tree*, shows Mouse from *The Gruffalo* walking through the forest.

the most sense for each project and who could handle it best."

IDEAS WELCOME

This ethos continues to run through the studio today. "We take all feedback into consideration while working on the films – everybody from interns to broadcasters can contribute to the creative process," says Klaus. "If somebody has a good idea, it's always worth listening."

"Everyone's opinion is valued. No one is confined to their own work or expelled ➡



A still from *Petzi*. "Going from desolate desert one episode to a jungle floor in another is exciting," says art director Domareen Fox.

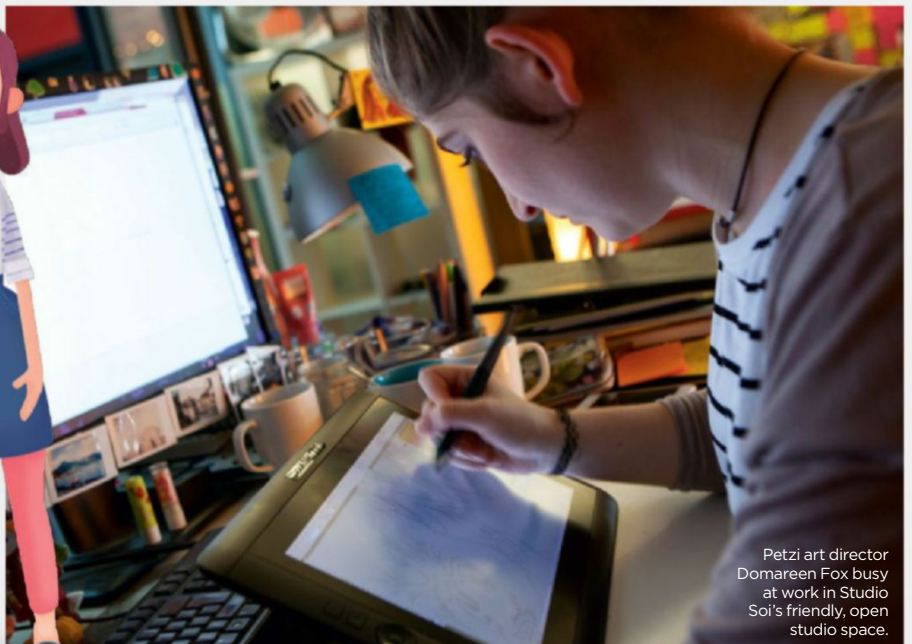


“Everyone can bring in their ideas and concerns”

A rendered, final version of two Trudes Tier characters. "All of Soi's productions are very story centred," says Massimiliano Truzzi.

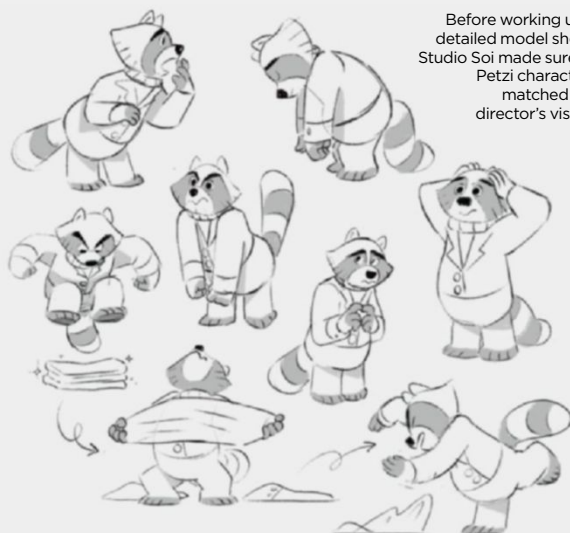


Studio Soi developed *Petzi* by using character sheets to explore different poses.



Petzi art director Domareen Fox busy at work in Studio Soi's friendly, open studio space.

Petzi's Turtle Island episode was awarded the silver gong for Best Animated Series at the 2016 Xiamen International Animation Festival in China.



Before working up a detailed model sheet, Studio Soi made sure all Petzi characters matched the director's vision.



"People flock to Soi to work on Gumball, and then happily merge into the other projects we have," says Domareen.

➔ from the entirety of the production pipeline, just because they're hired for one project," agrees art director Domareen Fox.



Domareen's currently working on the studio's first-ever in-house children's TV series, Petzi, which is based on the Danish comic strip

Rasmus Klump, by Carla and Vilhelm Hansen. The budget and deadline are tight, she says, but her team are incredibly inspiring – and having production entirely in-house makes communication both easy and efficient. Her team uses a Shotgun pipeline to take care of asset management, but the open working space means staff can simply walk over to each other's desks and chat. "We're all very well informed on production status," she says.

“Working this way is a harmonious process, and the directors usually find themselves understanding their characters more”

Like all processes at Studio Soi, aspects like character development are a collaborative affair. "It's super important that the directors know who their character is, or who the character wants to be," Domareen explains.

She begins by researching "archetypes, personality and costumes", before tying her research in with inspiration taken from her own life experiences. Rough sketches are then created in Photoshop, with Domareen discussing the designs with Studio Soi's directors every step of the way. "I can't

always envision a character just from one briefing," she adds. "Working this way is a harmonious process, and the directors usually find themselves understanding their characters more through the exploration process."

REWARDING WORK



For animation supervisor Massimiliano Truzzi, Petzi is the most rewarding project he's worked on since joining Studio Soi in 2012. "Being ➔



Beautiful preproduction colour work for *The Gruffalo*, created by Studio Soi's Neil Ross.

Also from the pre-production stage, this drawing by Studio Soi's Manu Arenas shows the foxhole in *The Gruffalo*.



Trades Tier is animated in Maya. All characters are in 3D with a very flat shading, while backgrounds and most props are drawn in 2D and put on several layers in Maya.

BEN HEARNDEN

The character animator is Studio Soi's latest recruit

How did you get your job at Soi?

I applied in October 2016 and got the job one month later. I saw shows they did on TV back in the UK – like *The Gruffalo* – and loved them. Plus there was the chance to work in another country for a while.

What does your role involve?

I'm one of the 3D animators, so I move the characters on-screen around. I'm working on a children's CG TV series. The team are a few episodes in, which is great because it enables me to get a feel for the style of the show.

What's the most challenging part of your job?

I'm infamous among people I've worked with before for pushing poses on characters to the absolute limits, and making characters look a bit over the top. It's great for big cartoony things, but this show has real charm to it, which is helped in no small part by the subtle character performances in the animation. So I'm really trying to work on simple, smaller poses for characters and attempting to get an audience's reaction from that.

What's it like to work at Studio Soi?

It's nerve-wracking – everyone here is so talented. I feel like I've won a competition to be working here. But the staff are some of the friendliest people you'll ever meet. Everyone has made me feel so welcome, which is so important, especially when dealing with the culture shock of moving to a new country for a job.

What sort of training have you undertaken so far?

The supervising animator here has gone through the shots with me, easing me into the style of the show by doing a few test shots. He's already teaching me a lot about the power of more subtle, subdued character poses when animating characters. He's also really helped to show me what an animator can do to retain quality animation, but to do it with speed, which is always one of the most important things in a show like this.

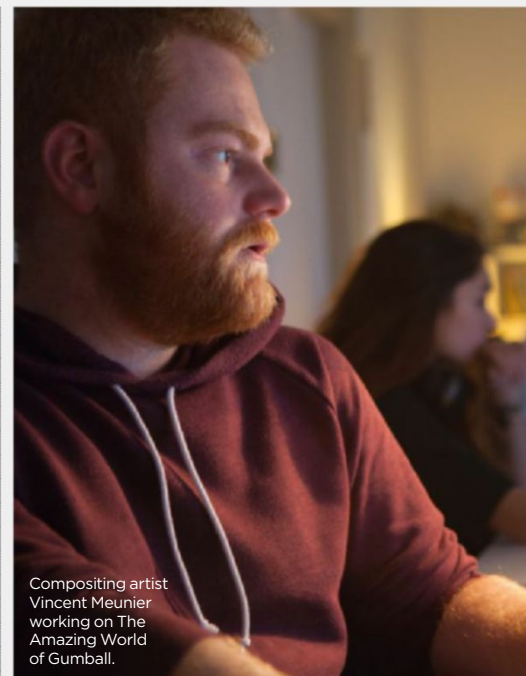
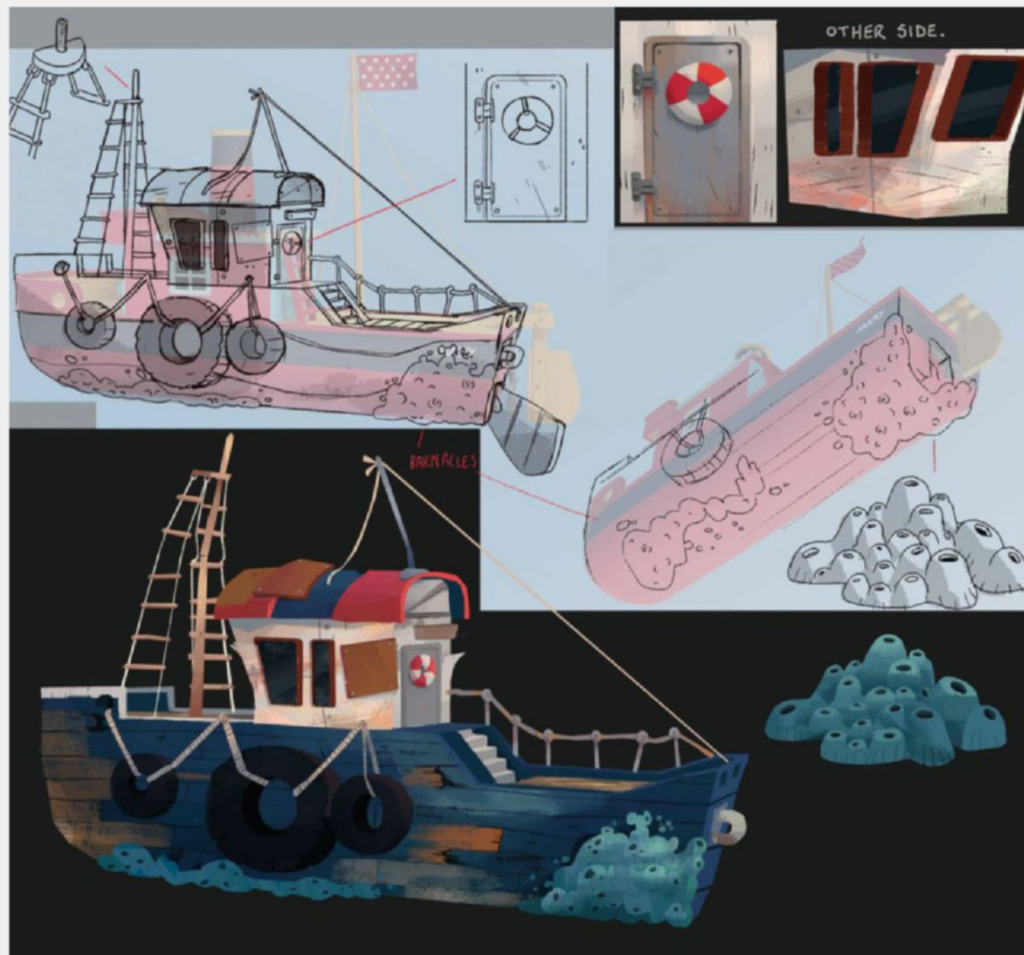
What advice would you give to a young artist wanting to work somewhere like Studio Soi?

I'm trying so hard not to sound like a cliché, but honestly: work hard, have fun animating and let that show in your reel when you apply. Studios get hundreds of applications and there's a load of competition, so it's a huge help if you can stand out from the crowd.



When not working on Studio Soi's new stopmotion-style CG TV series for kids, British character animator Ben is getting used to life in Germany.
<https://vimeo.com/user5897285>

Petzi colours keys: low-resolution playblast animation stills are painted over by Domareen Fox to give the rendering/compositing team ideas for lighting and colours.



Compositing artist Vincent Meunier working on The Amazing World of Gumball.

part of the production from the beginning, I had the chance to develop the animation style – it was great fun,” says Massimiliano, who’s responsible for ensuring the animation is produced on time and to the highest possible quality.

“Usually every episode has new technical difficulties that sometimes appear impossible to overcome,” he says. “Solving all of these problems in such a limited timeframe can be very challenging.” But it’s also very rewarding: “In one of the recent episodes we had to animate a very high number of cloth materials and ropes. The final result is very satisfying,” he says. “I often get the chance to learn new things.”

“The final result is very satisfying. I often get the chance to learn new things”

A design sheet with shading references for a ship required in a recent episode of Petzi.



Assistant animation supervisor **Michael Brady** appreciates the fact that every week working at Studio Soi presents a new opportunity to tackle a different approach to animation. “One week we might have a character that moves in the style of eight-bit computer graphics. The next week, it’ll be a character who moves like a traditional animated feature film,” he says.

STYLISTED DISUNITY

At the moment Michael works on Gumball, Cartoon Network’s multi-award winning children’s animated TV series. Marked by its lack of stylistic unity – characters are created using everything from stylised traditional animation and puppetry to CGI, stop motion and live action – it’s a fantastic representation of the studio’s wide-ranging expertise.

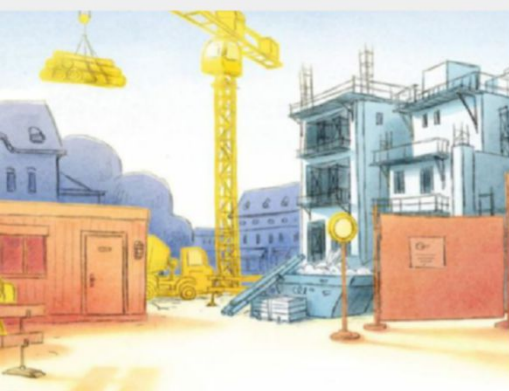
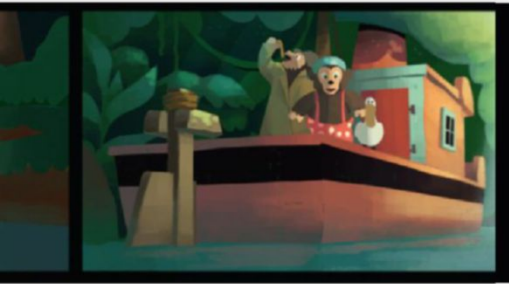
A typical day at work for Michael might involve handing out scenes to the team, briefing them on the director’s instructions and then putting together edits of the episodes. He’ll also work on scenes at the 2D clean-up stage of production. This is when Studio Soi receives rough animations from its production partner based in London and uses this to create final drawings for each episode.

“I’ve learned a great deal about composing characters clearly within the frame, and keeping continuity between scenes,” he says. “These experiences in sequential storytelling have continued to feed into my personal work.”

Self-development is actively promoted at Studio Soi. Creatives are encouraged to pursue their hobbies and interests, while senior artists are always on hand to help junior members of staff.

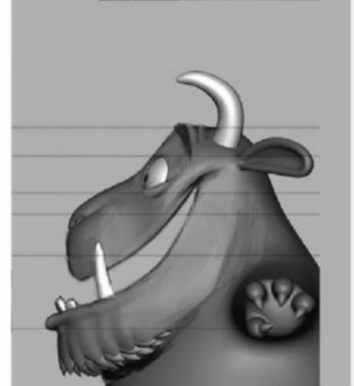
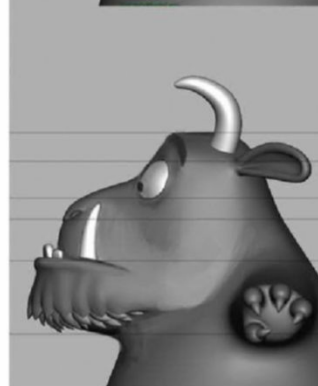
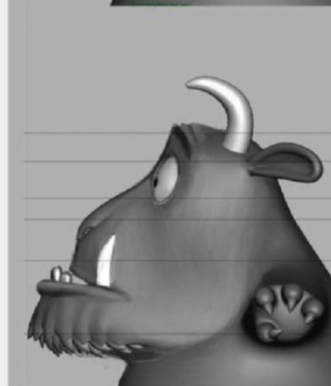
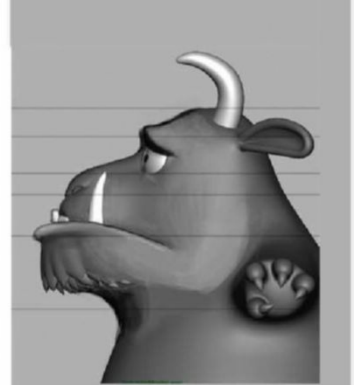
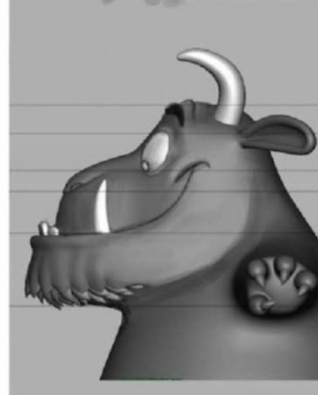
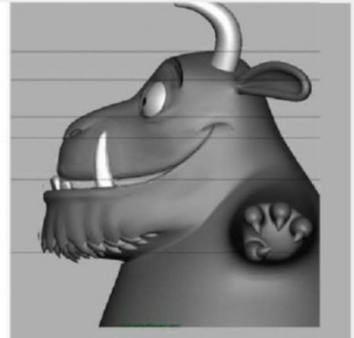
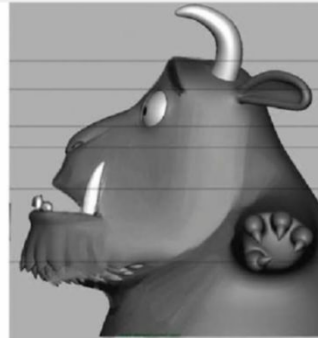
“Some people come into the studio at weekends just to learn new software or work on their personal projects,” says Domareen. “And the awards just help to keep us all pumped.”

“For us as a studio, it’s essential to bring great talents together to create something fresh and new,” adds Klaus. “We’re always looking for new talent who want to achieve something with us, and who will bring in new ideas to enable great projects.”



Different backgrounds in layout and final status for Trudes Tier, created by Studio Soi's Sandra Brandstätter.

Facial expression overpaints for The Gruffalo.



NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS
ImagineFX

GET YOUR BINDER TODAY!



*This sturdy binder will store and protect 13 issues of ImagineFX.
Prices start at £9.99, which includes delivery!*

ORDER YOUR BINDER AT <http://ifxm.ag/ifx-binder>

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX Workshops

**Workshops assets
are available...**

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



Advice from the world's best artists

60



68



76



82



This issue:

60 Use a character to tell a story

With an animation vibe and an emphasis on narrative, Kenneth Anderson creates a fun illustration.

66 Core Skills: Rebelle - part 1

Martin Hanschild introduces the software's main tools and edits the workspace.

68 The art of storyboarding

Honing your storyboard craft is key for any animation project, says Matt Jones.

76 Concept design techniques

Learn to think like a visual development artist, with industry insight from Armand Serrano.

82 Combining sci-fi noir and fantasy

Follow Alyssa Menold as she works with an art director for Shadowrun.

86 Sculpt your concepts in 3D

Join John Mahoney for a new series on using ZBrush, featuring an alien pilot.



Photoshop USE A CHARACTER TO TELL A STORY

Kenneth Anderson creates a fun, character-based illustration with an animation vibe and an emphasis on a clear narrative



Artist PROFILE

Kenneth Anderson

LOCATION: Scotland



Since 2005, Kenneth has worked in games, 2D animation and illustration. He now freelances for a variety of clients as a character designer and illustrator. www.charactercube.com

GET YOUR RESOURCES

See page 6 now!

Drawing characters is a passion of mine and I try to tell a story with them in every illustration I do. It can be subtle or forthright; as long as there's some narrative in there, the audience can relate and it brings an artwork to life. This is important in the world of animation – every character design I do for a client has to have a sense of story behind them.

When ImagineFX asked me to do the cover for an animation issue I knew I had

to get an element of this storytelling in there. I threw a few ideas on the table, but this is the one that stuck. I'm glad too, because it has some subtlety – a story that relies on really looking at the piece. Why is this girl not scared of the thing casting that ominous looming shadow over her? Her sketch reveals it's just a goofy, friendly monster.

My background in traditional animation definitely influences my illustration style. It's stylised and

exaggerated, but I like to keep the colours and forms grounded in reality. I knew painting this would be tricky with the grassy background and heavy use of green – I find colour a challenge every time I paint. So I took it one step at a time, getting the elements I knew I could handle out the way and figuring out the difficult bits as I went. My workflow is simple but not completely linear, so this workshop is a rough guide to how I work.

With all that said, let's get started!



A



B



C



D

1 Thinking, research and sketching

At the start of any new illustration, I mull over the brief and consider how I'm going to approach the work. I research anything I'm unfamiliar with and have a look at other artwork for inspiration. With the notes from the ImagineFX team in mind, I rough out some simple sketches, trying to find a distinctive idea and character in each one.



2 Refine the idea

There's a bit of back and forth between myself and the team while we decide on a direction and lock down the image. It's important to get the characters and composition right at the earliest stages. If the character doesn't feel alive in a rough sketch, then no amount of painting will fix that! ➡

PRO SECRETS

Incremental backups

Try saving incremental files and numbering them sequentially. I like to have old files I can go back to in case the file I'm working on becomes corrupt or I accidentally overwrite it (rare, but it can happen!) Or, if I want to go back to an earlier stage in the painting process and bring some non-merged elements back into my painting for editing, it's easily done.

3 Colour and value rough

Once the team is happy with the sketch I do a rough colour pass on a Multiply layer, switching to greyscale to check my values. I know the most prominent colour is going to be the green of the grass, so I base my colours around this. Red hair and dark clothes should make our character stand out.

PRO SECRETS

Tablet input settings

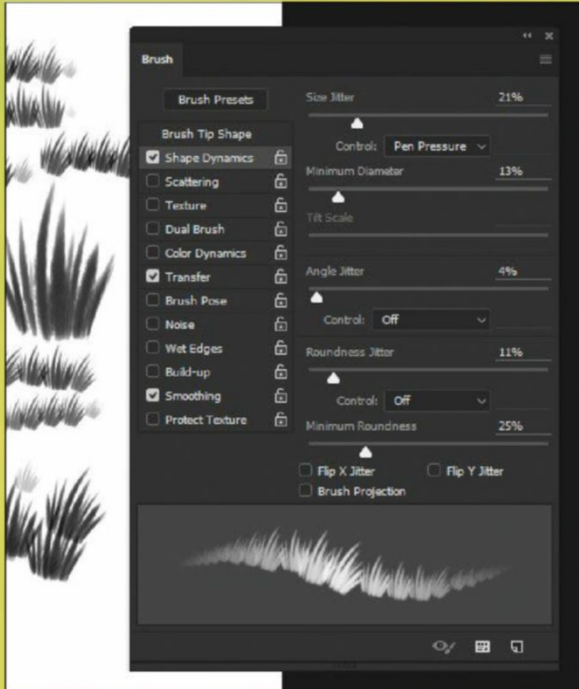
Photoshop offers a lot of control over how your tablet pen interacts with the software. However, I find the tablet device settings really useful and they complement the controls in Photoshop nicely. Try lowering the sensitivity input of your stylus for line art and sketching. Increase the sensitivity slightly and you have more responsive strokes – perfect for painting!

Rotate view
R (PC & Mac)

**Rotate View
R (PC & Mac)**
This enables you to rotate the canvas on the fly. Great for getting good drawing angles.

4 Prepare the canvas

4 After some tweaks to the composition the colour rough is approved. I like to paint at a higher resolution than needed so I double the required image size. I create reference layers with the bleed areas and the logo indicated, so I can switch them on and off to get a feel of how everything is working in context.



5 Create grass brushes

Before painting, I create some quick grass brushes. I want to use my own so they're consistent with the overall style of my artwork and have a more hand-drawn effect. They don't need to be perfect – just good enough so I can quickly lay down some texture and then paint over the top. I have supplied these brushes with your resources – see page 65.



6 Red underpainting

I start painting from scratch with a default Pastel medium tip brush and using my colour rough as a guide. Because green will be a large percentage of the image, I plan to paint on top of a reddish underpainting. I want the red to shine through so the green is less harsh – a tip I learnt from James Gurney's book, *Color and Light*.



7 Background block in

Using my custom brushes and a default Pencil brush I layer in the grass. I'm careful about where the grass is in relation to the magazine cover text and where it leads the eye: I want the viewer's attention to be on the characters and not on the blades of grass, after all! I use Hue Jitter (in the Color Dynamics section of the Brush dialog) so that the colours vary. I'm keen for some yellows and blue-greens to be in there.



8 Bring in the characters

I copy the characters from my colour sketch and put them on separate layers. I have to be careful I don't lose their energy as I paint them up. Using the rough characters as underpaintings, I start to block in their forms on a clipping mask. This enables me to paint without destroying the original layer information, merging the layers when I'm happy. ➡



9 Continue the block-in

I do a rough pass of everything, focusing on good values and getting colours that work together while avoiding too much detail. I throw stuff out there and see what works, painting until things start to feel right. I separate elements on to different layers: the flowers, shoes and jacket have their own layers. It makes them easy to move things around.



Shortcuts
Create/release
clipping mask
Cmd+Option+G (Mac)
Ctrl+Alt+G (PC)
Quickly mask the chosen
layer with the one
that's below it.

10 Treating the shadows differently

I keep the main character and monster shadows on separate layers and start painting in cool hues to suggest the reflected "off screen" blue sky. I minimise details in the shadows and ensure that they're strong enough to suggest a sunny day. I set the main monster shadow layer to Multiply, but the girl's shadow is painted on a Normal layer because it doesn't need to interact with a complex background.



PRO SECRETS

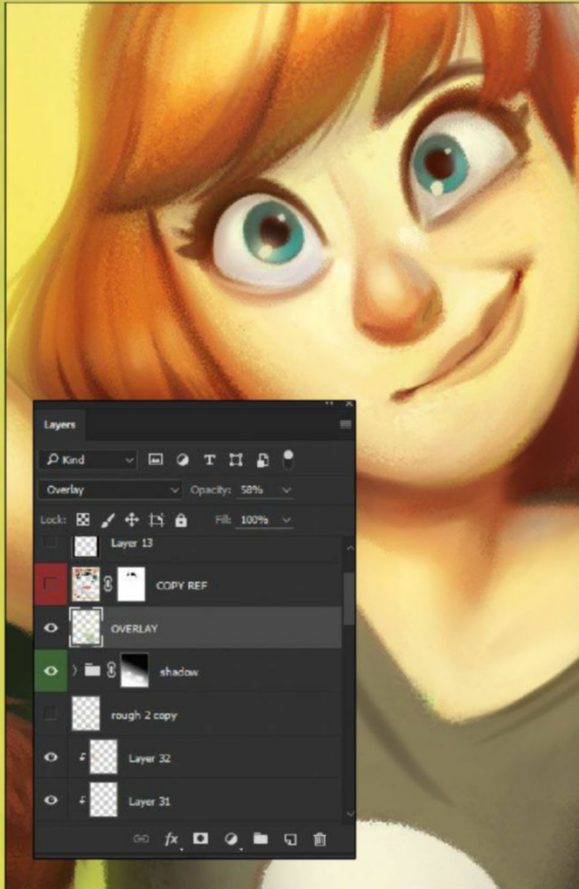
Use greyscale to check value

With a Hue/Saturation layer set to zero saturation at the top of your Layers panel you can quickly turn your image greyscale. I use this all the time to check that my values are working without the colour information distracting me. Try painting while switching this layer on and off - it really helps me focus on retaining good value structures and forms while I colour.



11 Rendering details and colours

With everything roughed out I start to render the forms, using the Color Picker tool to choose colours from the canvas. I try to bring the colours to life by adding subtle reds into the face and hands, reflected light from the grass and more cool sky reflections in the shadows. This is an ongoing process throughout the rest of the painting process.



12 Overlay some yellow-greens

Once I have most of the elements in place, I add an Overlay layer on top of all the layers and paint in some yellow-greens. I find this helps to bring to life the glows and transitions between shade and light. I switch this layer on and off while painting, so it doesn't interfere when painting on other layers.



13 More rendering and tweaks

By this point the major elements of the scene are mostly complete. I just need to tighten up forms and details and change any bits that I'm not happy with. I introduce more grass details, work into the flowers and adjust some colours in the faces of the girl and her dog before sending it to the ImagineFX team for final feedback.



14 Final polish

I get stuck into tightening up the details and making the changes requested by ImagineFX. I'm careful not to get too carried away with details because I want the image to maintain a looseness. I refine my Overlay layer and create a colour correction layer: my image is very green and I want to balance things out with some subtle reds. I also adjust the sight line of the girl's eyes so that it's clear she's looking at the tip of her pencil to help her complete the sketch of the friendly monster.



RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES:
GRASS A

A simple brush I created and used to quickly suggest grass while maintaining my usual drawing style.

CHUNKY CHARCOAL

My go-to brush for sketching and laying in forms and colours. It's not included with this issue's resources, but is readily available from www.kylebrush.com.

CORE SKILLS: REBELLE PART 1 TAKE A TOUR OF THE PROGRAM

Martin Hanschild starts his series on Rebelle by editing the workspace and introducing the main tools of the natural media painting program

Artist PROFILE

Martin Hanschild
LOCATION: Czech Republic

Martin is a 2D and 3D character designer who's working for Eallin, based in Prague.
www.hanschild.com

Rebelle, from Escape Motions (<http://ifxm.ag/rebelle-em>) mimics the behaviour of watercolour, acrylic and dry media digitally, using real-world colour blending, wet diffusion and drying times. You can paint on wet or dry surface, control the bleeding of colours, make your colours flow by tilting the canvas,

and even blow on wet washes to change the direction of the spreading colours. You can also use a drying tool to remove water and stop the flow, and alter the look of your art by choosing different papers.

Rather than being packed with features that are rarely used, Rebelle focuses on the painting experience. What I love about the program is how it encourages

experimentation on the canvas, resulting in numerous happy accidents.

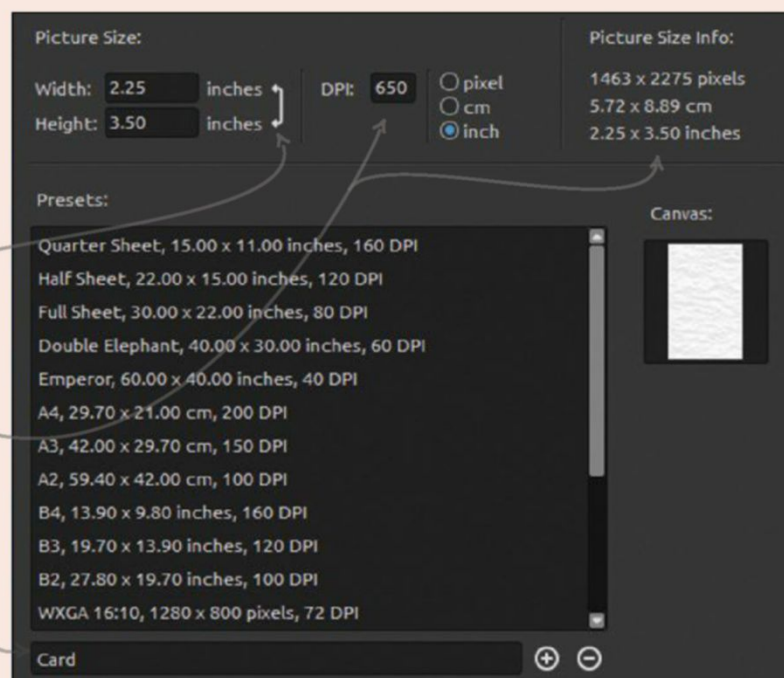
Painting in Rebelle is a different experience compared to other art programs, because of how it simulates traditional media. In this series I'll show you all aspects of the program, and how to use its tools. Let's start by configuring the workspace and the key tools...

1 Prepare for painting
This menu pops up when you launch the program. Choose from common paper sizes or define your own. You can select the canvas background, too – you can change this any time during your work. Then press Ctrl+N or click File>New to create a new document.

Flip the canvas orientation here.

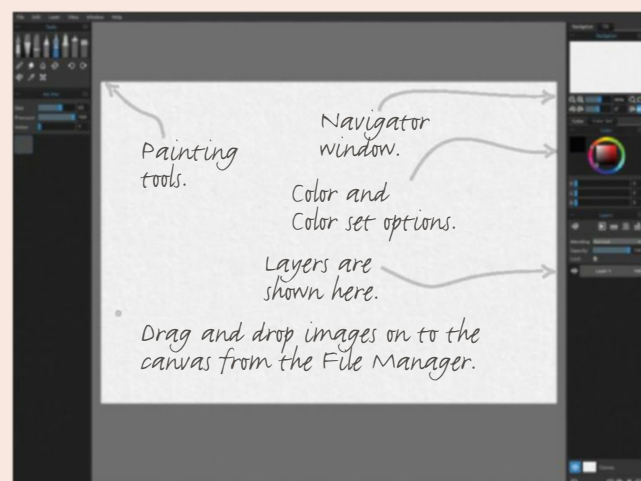
Give your defined canvas size a name and click + to add it to a list of preset canvases.

Depending on the DPI value you set, picture size information will be automatically calculated both in centimetres and inches.



PRO SECRETS

Control the canvas view
To enable me to quickly alter how I view my art, I've configured the left cursor arrow to rotate the canvas counterclockwise, while the right cursor rotates it clockwise, up activates full screen mode, and down to flip the canvas.



2 Setting up your workspace

This is the default workspace (left). The GUI is simple, readable, and you have all the necessary tools to hand. Panels are dockable, you can change their position and size, and attach them or let them float freely. Here I've docked all panels on the left, except for Color and Navigator.

Click the edge and drag to resize a panel. If you want to return to the default workspace, select Menu>Window>Reset to default.

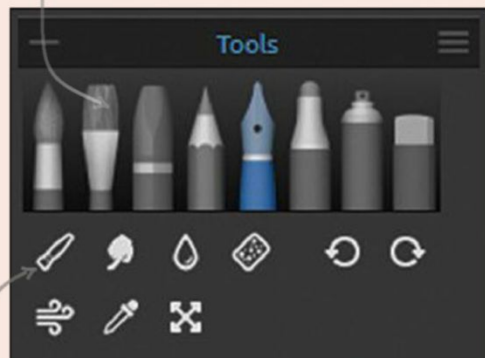
Click the panel name and drag to move it around.



3 Exploring the panels

There are seven panels in Rebelle: Tools, which contains several types of brushes; Properties, featuring brush and tools settings that may differ in their properties; the Color and the Color Set panels; Tilt, which determines the direction and speed of running colours; Navigator; and Layers, which enables you to manage your layers.

Brushes, from left to right: Watercolor, Acrylic, Pastel, Pencil, Inkpen, Marker, Airbrush and Erase.



Tools, from left to right: Blend, Smudge, Water, Dry Undo/Redo, Blow, Color Picker and Transform.

This menu contains different options for each panel. You can hide all Panels by pressing Tab.

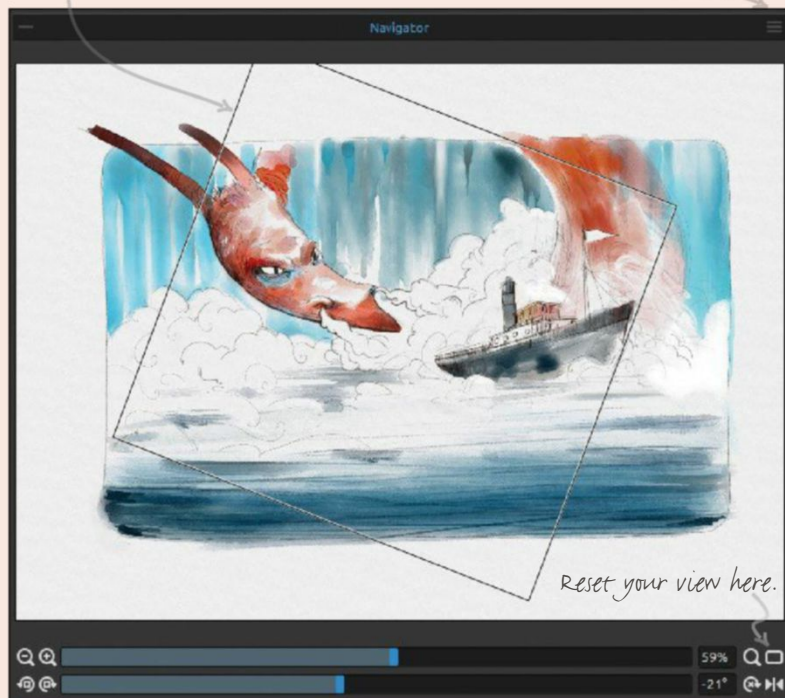


Under the Color Palette menu you can switch between a circle (the classic colour wheel) and a square colour palette, show or hide sliders, and choose either an RGB or HSL colour model.

Drag the little circle on the outer ring to adjust a colour's Hue, and the circle inside a square to alter saturation and Lightness.

The black box in the Navigator corresponds to the currently viewable area in the window.

Click the Navigator Menu and switch to greyscale (G) to check your image's values.



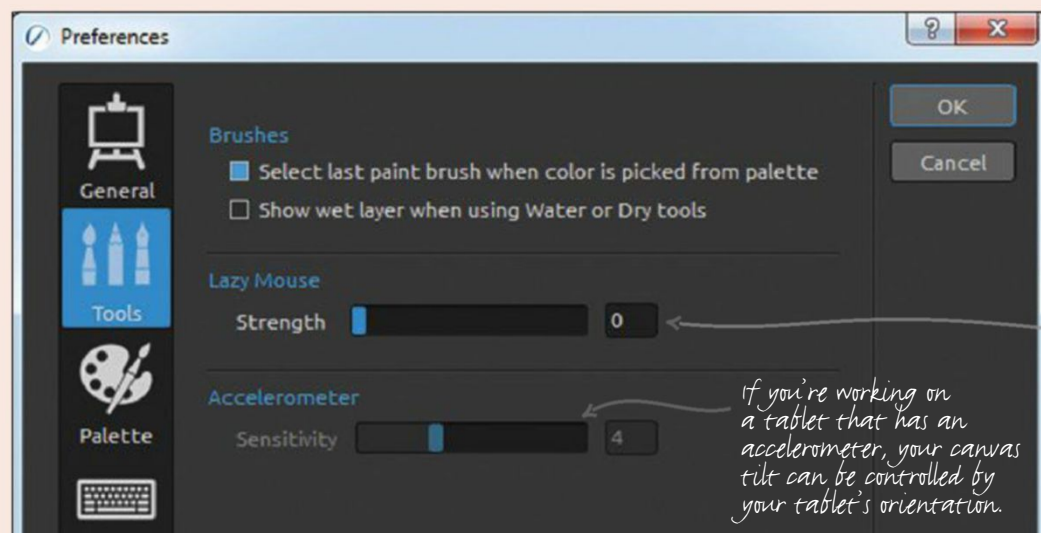
4 The Navigator panel

I use the Navigator panel a lot, mainly to preview my work-in-progress image on a second monitor. Within the Navigator panel are options for Viewport zoom, Rotation and Flip, but I recommend setting up keyboard shortcuts for these operations.



5 The Tilt panel

Tilt affects the movement of wet paint and is represented by a circle with a pointer. Click and drag this pointer to set the angle of the canvas, while the length of the line determines the angle and speed of the running colours. Click the middle circle to turn Tilt on and off.



6 Set your Preferences

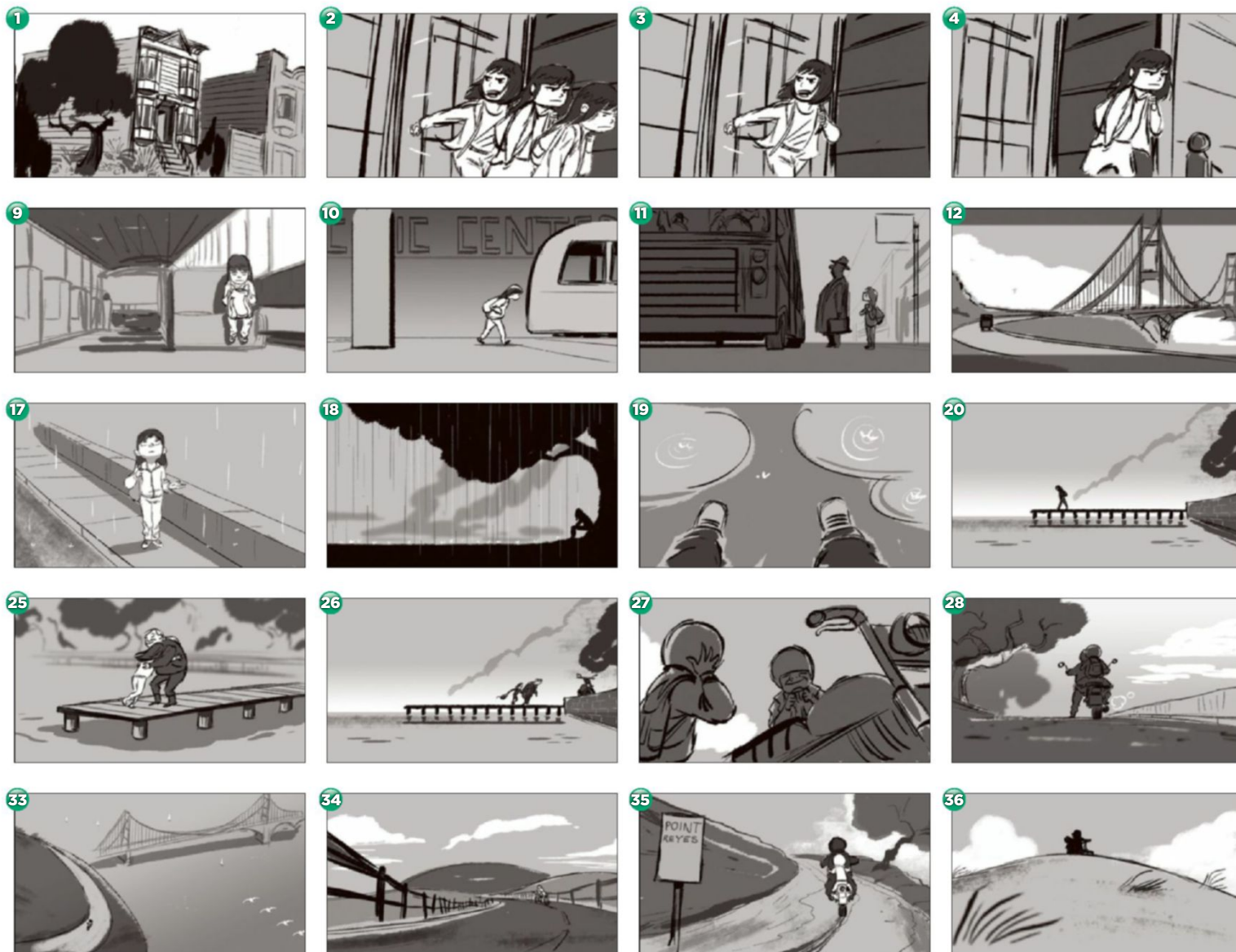
Under File > Preferences there are several settings that I recommend configuring when you first launch the program. Go to the General tab and in the Interface you can resize the whole interface. You can also set custom keyboard shortcuts under the Keyboard tab. Not all of Rebelle's tools have shortcuts, so it's good to set your own.

Smooth your painting strokes more by increasing this parameter.

If you're working on a tablet that has an accelerometer, your canvas tilt can be controlled by your tablet's orientation.

Exclusive subscriber offer!

Get Rebelle when you subscribe! See page 36



Artist insight THE ART OF STORYBOARDING

Artist PROFILE
Matt Jones
LOCATION: US

Matt has worked in the animation industry for over 20 years and storyboarded for major studios including Aardman and Pixar. He's currently in Los Angeles developing projects.
http://ifxm.ag/m_jones

Matt Jones passes on his industry experience for honing your storyboard craft – a key skill for any animation project

During the early months on Pixar's *Inside Out*, I gave myself a personal assignment to draw a sequence from the point of view of an adolescent girl running away from home after an argument with her parents.

I had recently moved to San Francisco from the UK and based the sequence on

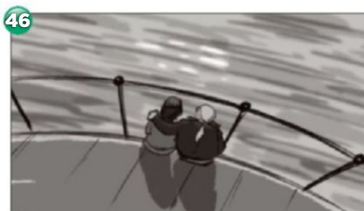
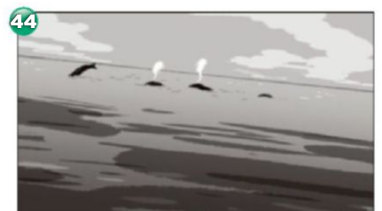
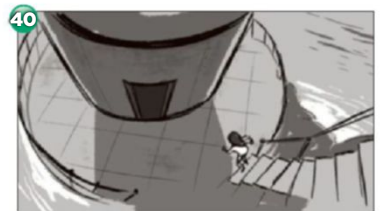
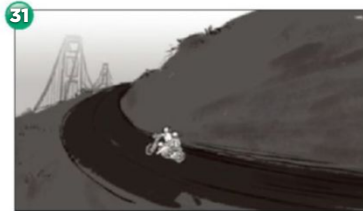
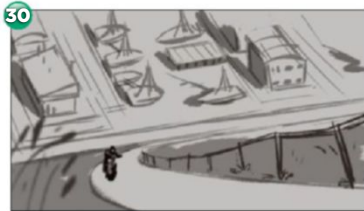
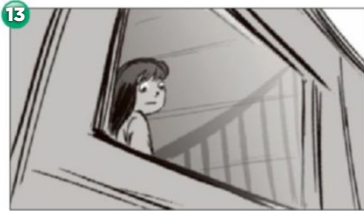
my exploration of the Bay Area. She followed a path across the Golden Gate Bridge through Sausalito, Marin and up to Point Reyes lighthouse – the edge of her known world. I could see a parallel with the interior story of the *Emotions* lost in the *Mind* (at the heart of the film).

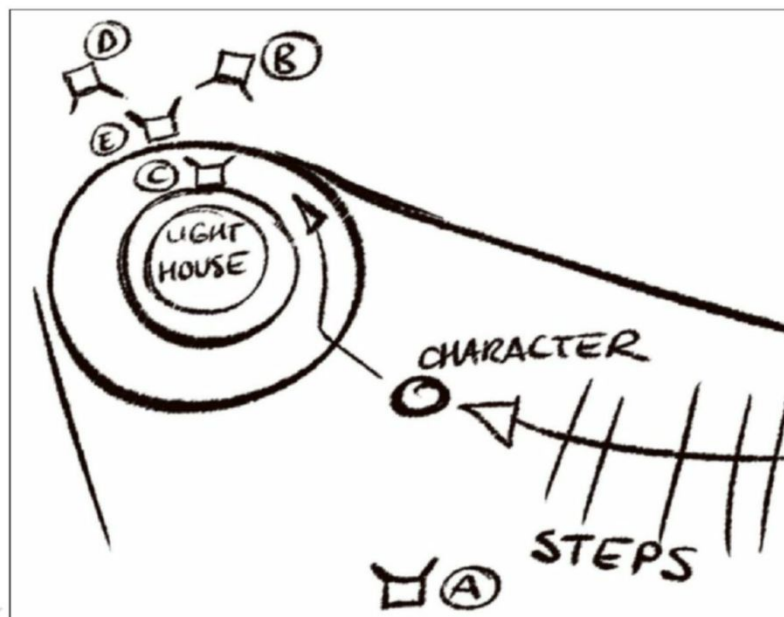
I was trying to find symbols that could have corresponding interior imagery: the

lighthouse as a beacon of joy, the Golden Gate Bridge spanning two worlds, the fog that hangs above Twin Peaks.

I drew the sequence rapidly in a flurry of inspiration, on paper, but then lost the originals. I've recreated the sequence digitally, taking more care over the drawing. They're 'beat boards' – single panels to represent a scene. ➡

Artist insight The art of storyboarding

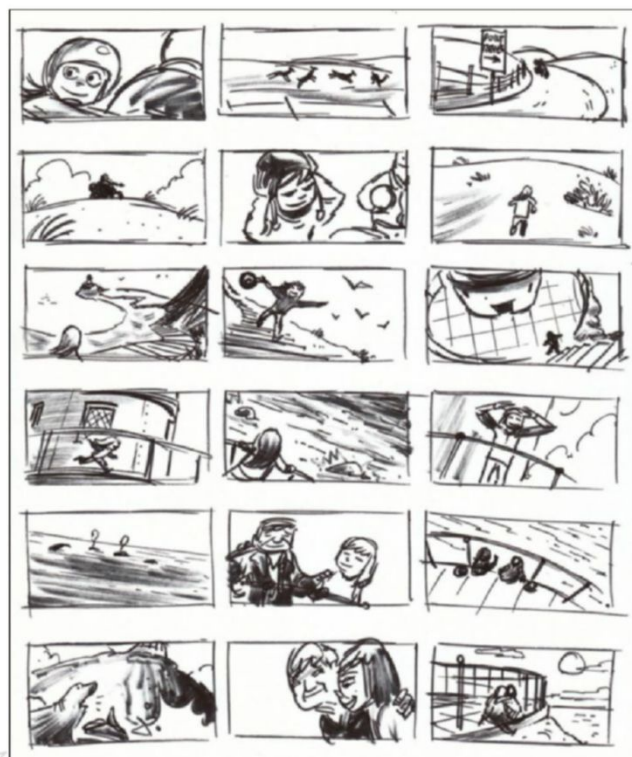




1 GETTING STARTED

Faced with that first blank panel, where do you begin? Well, think! Read the script pages multiple times and visualise the sequence in your mind. Start sketching key images or shots you think are integral. It may be an establishing shot of the location or the height of the emotional beat of the scene. For a complex setup with multiple characters moving around, a good idea is to draw a map with camera placements to stay on track.

“The orientation of the face towards the camera can determine the level of empathy the audience feels”



2 GET THUMBNAILING

Thumbnail sketches are ‘thinking’ drawings and help me quickly work out the staging and acting of a sequence. I won’t start a sequence until I’ve fully thought it through and know where I’m going with it. I’ll improvise acting and poses once I get into boarding, but I need this framework to support the sequence and ensure it flows with the right camera angles, moves and cuts. I usually thumbnail on the script page, roughing out compositions and circling lines of dialogue with speech balloons attached to the relevant shot.



3 STORYBOARD BASICS

Contemporary feature animation boarding usually requires several panels per shot. For instance, if a character is moving out of frame from a standing position you would have an A pose (standing), a B pose (walking out), and a C pose (gone). For the purpose of a smooth animatic the editor might demand some in-between poses, for example, an anticipation pose, before the walk and a half-out

pose as the character exits the frame. This is where modern storyboarding converges with old-school 2D layout and even approaches animation. It depends on the wants and needs of particular directors and editors, but often story animatics or story reels feel animated. They may be roughly drawn but are so fleshed out they feel animated, which helps the audience read or follow the story.



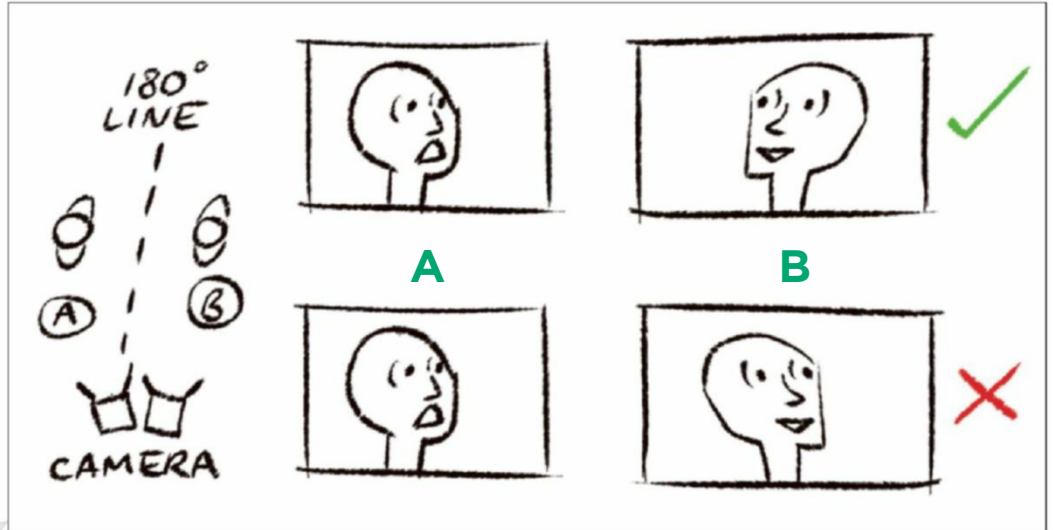
4 GENERATE EMPATHY

The orientation of the face towards the camera can determine the level of empathy the audience feels with that character. A figure in profile reveals less of their face, shows only one eye and therefore we see less of their emotional state (although it works for a detached or cold state). The Pixar style has evolved to have characters virtually full face with their eyeline just left or right of the camera. (The characters in Cars needed this because of their wide facial designs).



5 OVERLAPS HELP CREATE DEPTH

Use depth to bring a more cinematic quality to your panels. You can define space in two dimensions by having characters at different scales within the frame, or overlapping them to delineate size differences. Use overlapping objects and architecture too. Characters advancing to or receding from the camera also give the illusion of 3D space.



6 MAINTAIN EYELINES

Screen direction must be adhered to. If character A is talking to character B then A must face B and those eyelines should be maintained. Character A shouldn't be looking in the same direction as character B when they're talking. If both characters appear to look screen left then one of them has broken the 180-degree line, and the viewer will feel they're no longer addressing each other.



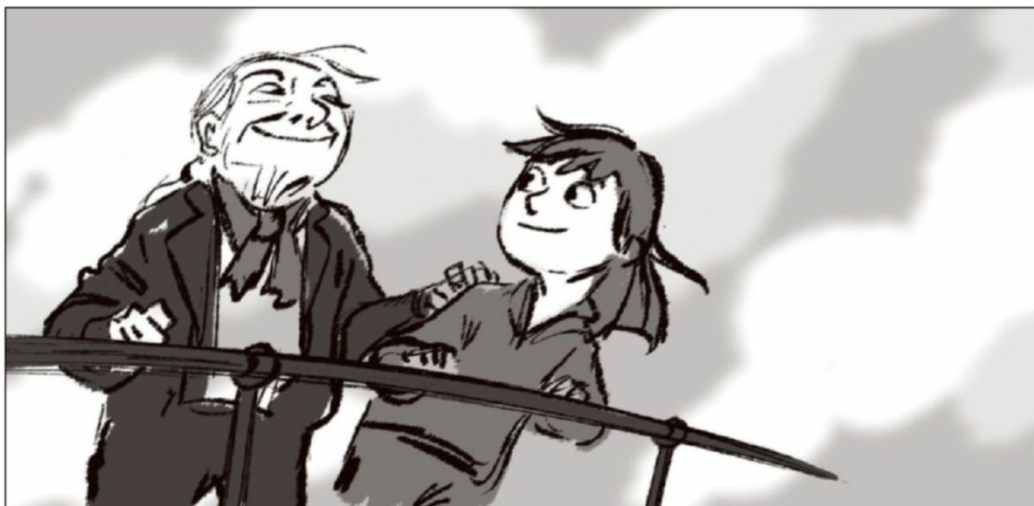
7 BUILDING TECHNIQUES

Story artists should not only be good at tackling character expressions, but must also be adept at environments, the backgrounds of storyboard panels. Sketch from life and familiarise yourself with different architectural styles to build a mental library of designs. Study principles of perspective and use it to dynamic effect in your boards. Low or high angles on buildings tend to look more cinematic.



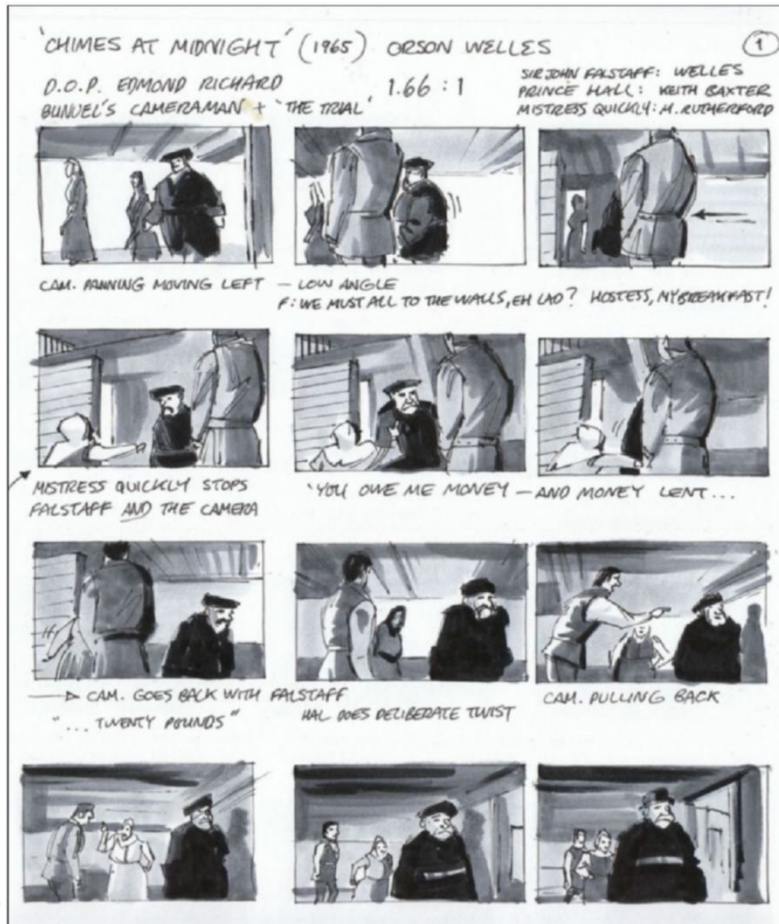
8 BODY LANGUAGE

I love to tell stories visually, with as little dialogue as possible. It's the unique power of cinematic storytelling and I relish the challenge of communicating narrative through drawing alone. The drawing above became an exercise in expressing emotion through composition, framing, body gesture and facial attitude.



9 MAKE GOOD USE OF LIGHTING

I like to indicate lighting to add a sense of mood and tone. To do this quickly (story artists must work fast these days to hit short deadlines), I start all story panels on a grey background, from a template. I use lighter greys for skin tones, white to highlight eyes, clouds, teeth and dark greys to balance and black for contrast. (This means a white background can be used, for startling effect, when required). ➡



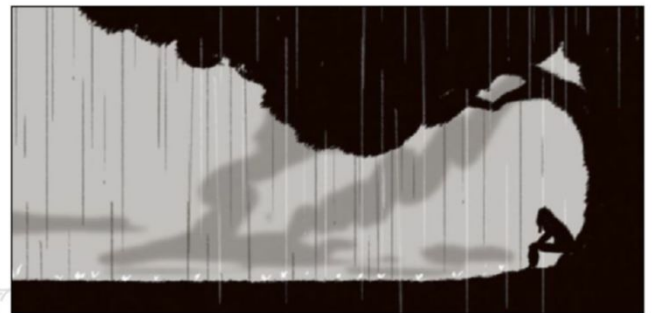
10 AIM FOR INTERESTING STAGING

Dialogue scenes don't have to be characters standing around. Decide if it might serve the scene better to have them move around. The staging can help you express who has the power in a scene — who is dominant. Power can shift within a scene or a shot as characters become small or large elements within the composition.



11 BIG OR SMALL?

Size relationships can influence the emotions of the audience or reveal a character's psychology. A very small figure on screen can seem lonely or overwhelmed by their environment. If the horizon line is at a low angle, a character can feel dominant over their environment or heroic, even.



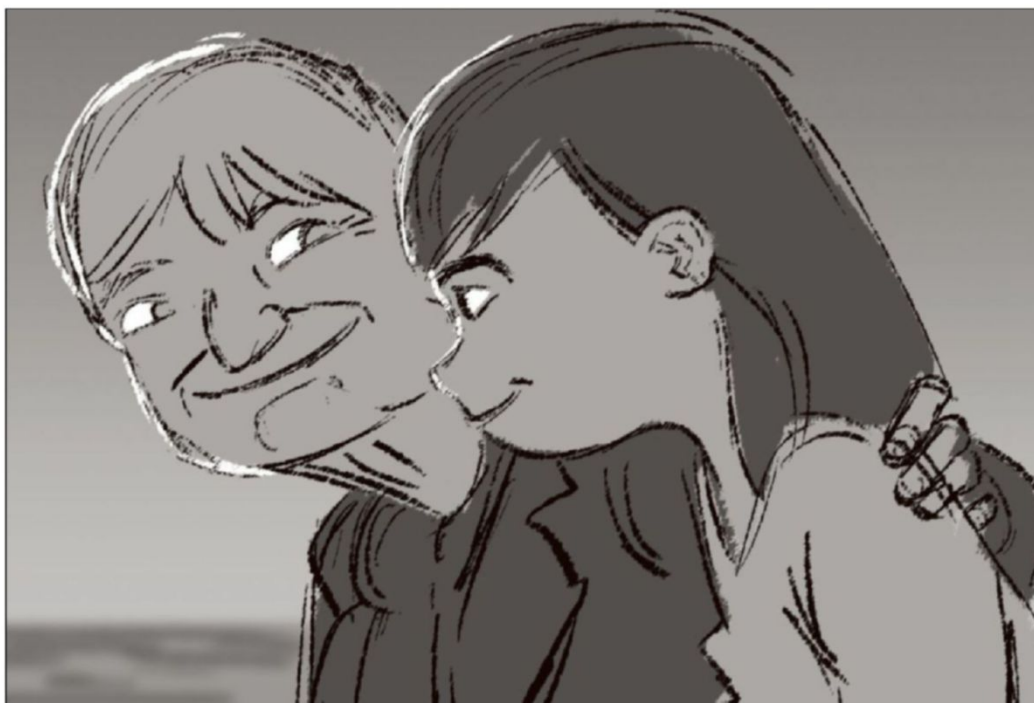
12 LEAD THE EYE

In storyboarding, you're leading the eye with contrast. The viewer's eye will instantly go to the point of highest contrast. Use white against black, in shape terms, straight against curve, or negative against positive. Our brains are hard-wired to detect contrast and it's aesthetically pleasing. Contrast is dynamic, communicative and cinematic. Don't be afraid to use heavy blacks — think like a camera operator and create drawings that feel like frames from a film.

13 MAKE YOUR SHOTS COUNT

Close-ups can be reserved for impact — don't make every dialogue shot a close-up. Remember, the characters are large on a cinema screen. An intimate close-up of a character's face is only really necessary for very subtle shots of emotional resonance, to show someone thinking, changing their mind, realising something, shock, surprise and so on.

“You must suppress artistic ego. The drawings are entirely disposable”





14 THINK ORGANICALLY

Story artists must also think about how separate shots work together across a cut. When viewed in animatic form, shots must flow organically and also lead the eye between different compositions. If the point of interest is screen right in one shot, then the next shot should pick up that same eye position and lead it onto the next shot.



15 BOOST YOUR SKILL SET

Storyboard artists are the director, writer, editor, actor and cinematographer of their sequences and must be skilled in all. Reading books on these subjects is essential, but to master it you must practise it. You have to get comfortable with producing hundreds of drawings every week for the duration of a production, many months and often years. You

must suppress ego – drawings are functional and disposable. They will never be seen by an audience and sequences are routinely re-drawn or 'fixed' by others. It's the ideas that count and that make it to the screen. Film-making is a collaborative art form and the reward is the final film. Though there's still a thrill to be had if a gag of yours makes it to the screen!



16 DRAW FROM FILMS

Analyse a scene that strikes you from a good film and sketch the composition. Then take note of the camera moves and look at how it cuts to the next scene. Learn how and why the sequence is effective. Analysing bad movies can also be productive – notice how the film-making could have been better and think of alternative solutions.

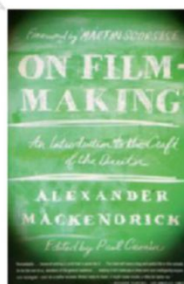


17 PRACTISE DRAWING GESTURES

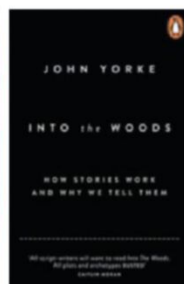
Along with cinema studies, gesture drawings are crucial. A regular session in the life class with a model striking quick poses (between 30 seconds and one minute) will loosen you up and prepare you for working as fast as storyboard artists need to. It's like the gym for your brain and arm!

18 FURTHER READING

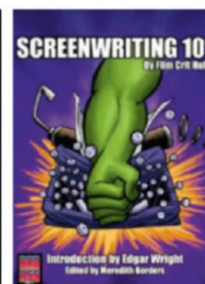
Study film, but also read. There are many excellent books on film theory and film-making. These are some of the quintessential reads:



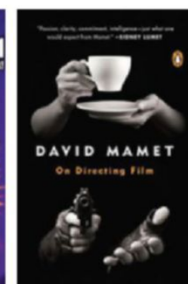
On Film-making: An introduction to the Craft of the Director, Alexander Mackendrick.



Into the Woods, John Yorke.



Screenwriting 101, Film Crit Hulk!



On Directing Film, David Mamet.

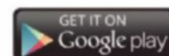
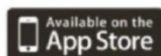
And anything on Sidney Lumet, Walter Murch, Billy Wilder, Orson Welles, Hitchcock and Kurosawa. Watch and study their films.

| THE WORLD'S LEADING DESIGN MAG |



MONEY SPECIAL: Master your financial future today!
Boost your clients' profits, get a pay rise, budget smarter, and more...

Print and digital editions on sale now
bit.ly/casubs • bit.ly/CA-iPad



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

Super Jock!
British artist Jock talks,
comics and more in an
exclusive interview!

COMIC ARTIST

Make your art soar with
our tips, techniques and
advice on sequential art!

Plus!

Wonder Woman

Liam Sharp and Laura Martin
reveal how they pencil and
colour a Wonder Woman page.

Bill Sienkiewicz

The legendary Elektra comic
artist on how to be unique.

And much more!

From how to use photos to
create tanks for a comic, to
creating pages in watercolours!

**ISSUE 146 ON
SALE IN THE UK
24 FEBRUARY**

Artist insight

CONCEPT DESIGN TECHNIQUES

Armand Serrano on why a visual development artist is a developer, designer and draftsman, when creating believable worlds for animation

Artist PROFILE

Armand Serrano
LOCATION: US



Armand has been an animation professional for 26 years and is currently working at the Walt Disney Animation Studios as a senior visual development artist.
http://ifxm.ag/arm_ser

The main task of a visual development environment artist working in animation is to conceptualise, design and execute a believable world for characters to live in. But the success of these environment concepts doesn't rely solely on the drafting skill level of the artist. It's the whole package that makes the final product work effectively. I'd say the goal of the visual development artist is to become a developer first, a designer second, and a draftsman third.

A developer is a thinking artist – an artist who can plant, cultivate and harvest an idea or concept that supports the visual foundation of a story. To become a dynamic designer is to cook those ideas and concepts until they become integral visual ingredients of the story. For the artist to become a prolific draftsman, one has to execute and flesh out those visual ingredients for public consumption.

Visual development is simply the visual design evolution, from an idea to the final product. It's how the story is handled by

the artist(s) working on the project, going from the initial preproduction stage to the breaking down of the environment into smaller parts for others to work on. So it's crucial that the structural makeup of the artworks in development occur in this order – concept, design and technique – and not vice versa. To think technique is the key to the success of the artwork is totally missing the mark.

Here are my key tips that point towards a successful process in creating strong concepts and compositions for animation.

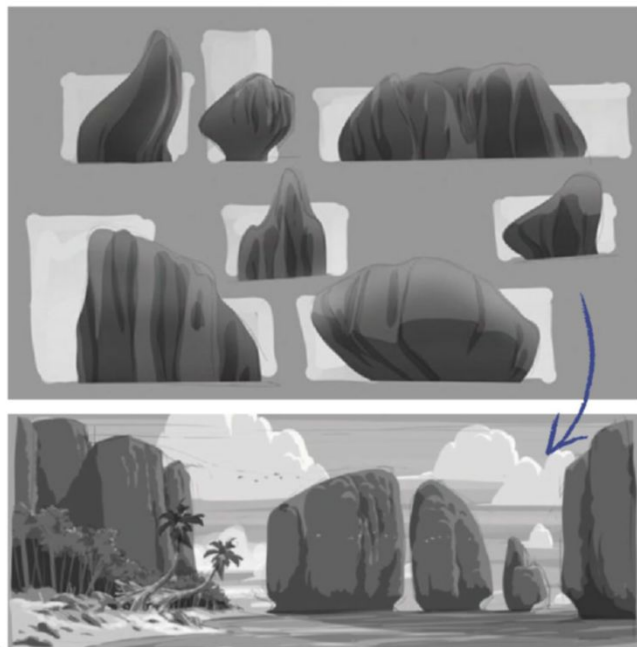
1 CONCEPT ART = CONCEPT + ART

Concept art is not just about the epic, or its beautiful execution. It's artwork that grows out of a design process, well rooted in an idea that supports the story. The priority of concept can be identified thus: **needs** and **wants**. What the story **needs** has to be conceptualised first. The artist then provide his design **wants** that focus and support the story.

● **RIGHT:** The concept/idea need for this image is to design an Asian fairy and her magical environment. A second character is a design want, to exemplify the scale and dimension. The design choice of the secondary character creates a relational affinity and familiarity between the two.

● **LEFT:** The story is based on the ancient Chinese legend about Hua Mulan who once saved their kingdom from a Mongol threat. The need is a scenario when she puts on armour for the first time while in deep contemplation. The overall design execution was part of the design wants, based on research.





2 DYNAMIC RESEARCH

Research breeds authenticity in the design evolution, from concept to the final product. Similar to the old adage about knowing the rules first before one can break them, I have to learn what's real before I can design, or redesign, an object or environment. Research gives a vision of functionality. What makes it dynamic is when I start sketching and creating thumbnails while doing research. This keeps me from getting bogged down in reference material. I trust my artistic instincts when I hit a design target from reference materials, and I stop looking for more and start sketching. My approach towards design improved by doing this.



3 THINK INSIDE BEFORE OUTSIDE THE BOX

As visual development artists and concept designers, we're always told to think outside the box. But I believe this is only possible if the designer knows what's inside the box. And not only to know what's inside, but also understand how those objects inside the box work.

I've learned over the years not to go outside the box if what's inside it still works. At the end of the day, it's how the story/idea could be told more effectively that influences your design

choices, not whether it's a safe or 'out there' idea.

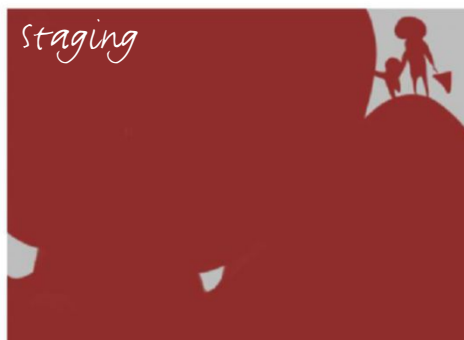
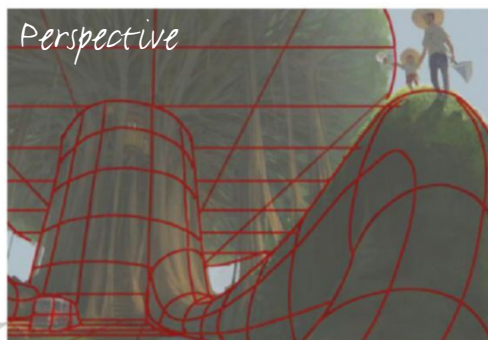
These quick sketches give me two spring boards on retelling the story of the Titanic. The first image is the inside-the-box translation, with a literal narrative of its present underwater situation. Alternatively, I can go for the outside-the-box option by creating a juxtaposed imagery of its supposed description and its present-day situation, encapsulated in a classic ship-in-a-bottle setting.



4 DESIGN LOOSELY

One key discipline I've learned over the years is to design with my arm and draw with my wrist. There's a dynamic balance of freedom and control in my wrist, and a dynamic balance of freedom and control in finding the right design language when the arm is moving loosely. When I become lazy and miss the arm out, the artwork tends to be static and lifeless. These images (left) are from a 90-minute demo process in a live workshop. The 18x24-inch canvas gave me a good amount of arm flexibility. Then I took a hi-res iPhone photo and transferred the file into Photoshop for value and colour. ➔





5 UNDERSTANDING COMPOSITION

Getting to grips with composition is vital to the structural strength of design. Composition is not just a standalone term that simply describes an arrangement of forms and shapes. Instead, realise that composition is perspective, value, staging and colour arranged harmoniously, to tell the story or idea more efficiently.

Perspective is the placement of the camera and what type of lens is being used. Value translates the application of lighting. Staging is the arrangement of different elements in the canvas using the combination of shapes, sizes and overlaps, creating depth, dimension and balance. Colour is the harmony of palettes and temperatures.



6 VISUAL AESTHETICS USING PERSPECTIVE

Perspective has a strong psychological effect on viewers' perception. Below, various camera placements of the same subject and environment give different viewer perceptions. The viewpoint is the audience's eyes.



A high-angle shot suggests invincibility, strength, confidence and leadership.



An eye-level shot gives a perception of normality, neutrality, and is relatable.



A low-angle shot suggests vulnerability, weakness, danger and loneliness.

7 THE APPLICATION OF VISUAL AESTHETICS

Visual aesthetics is the study of how compositional elements (value, perspective, staging and colour) interact and the audience's reactions to them. It's not enough to understand composition and expect to be effective visual storytellers. Rather, it's important to understand perception – how the audience reacts to composition.

Improper use of composition will result in an audience's selective perception. Selective perception results in selective context. And selective context means the audience will have different interpretations of the story/idea. With the proper use of visual aesthetics, the compositional choices become intentional and directional towards intended perception.



When the artist controls selective seeing, the visual message becomes subjective. Subjective means controlled perception. Controlled perception results in controlled context, and this means the audience will have a singular interpretation of the story idea.

My original idea for this image was to place the male subject at the same



distance from the camera, but staged right below the lady on the bridge. Yet this gave the impression he'd already reached his destination. So instead I moved him just a little bit to the left. It gave a hint that he's not completed his journey, but he's about to reach his destination very soon. It also helped to create a perception of movement in the painting.

8 VISUAL AESTHETICS USING VALUE

Value is the lightness or darkness of a colour. Every colour has a corresponding value and that lightness or darkness depends on the amount of lighting applied to the colour. The three important rules of value are: a) it controls focal points –

usually the brightest area, the highest contrast, or when a predominant value encloses an opposite value; b) value gives the illusion of three-dimensional form, when it shows the surface being hit by light and the surface under the shadows; c) value creates the illusion of

depth (altering the range of dark and light creates distance).

The perception of mood or emotion of the story being told in the canvas is established by the applied lighting translated into values. The success of colour composition depends on the value composition.



9 VISUAL AESTHETICS USING STAGING

Combining different shapes and sizes together in a shot creates the perception of intensity. Intentional overlap in images also develops cohesion and relationships among characters and environment. The higher the contrast between sizes should result in greater intensity. The same goes with shapes.



“Effectiveness of information is dependent on the shapes”



10 WHY THE READABILITY OF SHAPES AND FORM IS KEY

From the overall form to the least visible prop, every shape has to be readable. Even in a busy setup (see left), the effectiveness of information is not dependent on the details, but the readability of shapes. Even if those shapes were stripped of details to the point of silhouette, they will still be easily identifiable.

World War II pilots were trained to identify specific enemy ships at sea by reading their silhouettes. So I would say your designs must be exaggerated and simplified, with clear silhouettes working harmoniously. ➡



11 BALANCE IN A SCENE

Imagine the subject as the pivot of a horizontal lever. Now remember, all other elements that will be drawn on the canvas will have “weights” that are based on their shapes, sizes and value. Balance will be attained if these elements are staged on both sides of the pivot, without having the lever tilt on either side. The example above is balanced, with the closer tram on the left equalled by the lamp post and more-distant tram.

12 LESS IS MORE

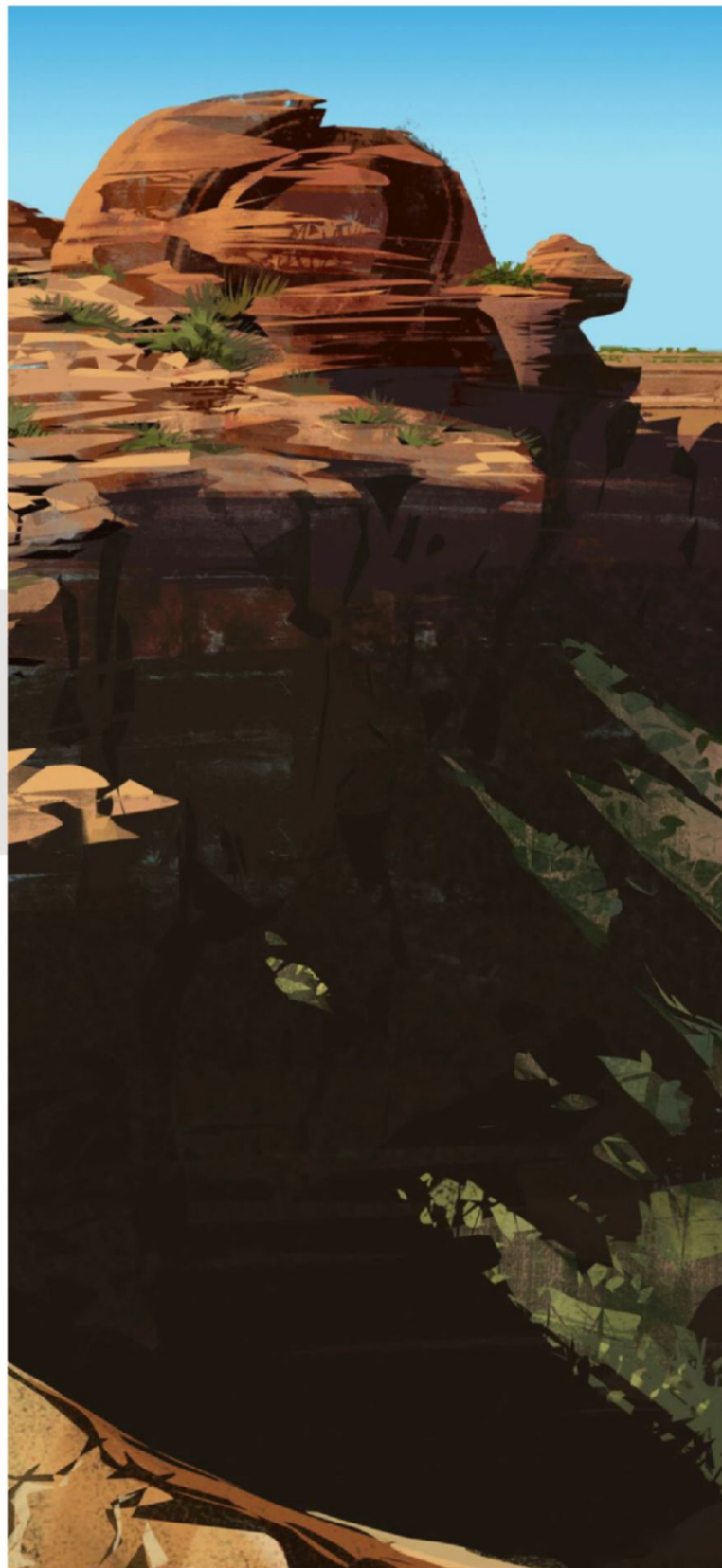
In designing what's supposed to be repetitive patterns, such as bricks on a wall, or organic patterns like rough textures on rocks, always apply the economy of lines and simplify without the compromise of information. This can be done through the less-is-more approach. This is either the simplification or purposeful removal of details on some sections. By doing this, the designer leaves room for the viewer's imagination to fill in the missing details.



13 DON'T BECOME DEPENDENT ON PHOTOS AND TEXTURE BRUSHES

This tip doesn't intend, in any way, to look down or undermine the direct use of photos in the digital painting process. If it's needed in production, then go for it. But the heavy reliance and dependency on photos should not become a designer's priority. Your goal is to learn how to create simplified textural patterns and concentrate on the design essentials first and foremost. There's a charm added when hand-drawn textures are applied.

“By using the less-is-more approach method, the designer leaves room for the viewer to fill in the missing details”





14 ADDING SOME HISTORY AND STORY

Research plays a big part in this process. The believability of a world doesn't come from a literal application of a photo. The designer has to find a way to design the history and story of an environment that personifies and supports the personalities in it.

When creating an island that's anthropomorphically inhabited by penguins, just designing from a photo wouldn't be convincing. What makes it believable is applied history and story. Adding the two penguin monuments (above) made sense in establishing the penguin world, by giving a clear perception of their habitation of this environment.

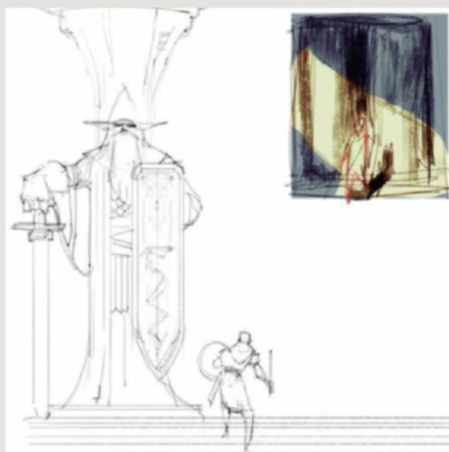
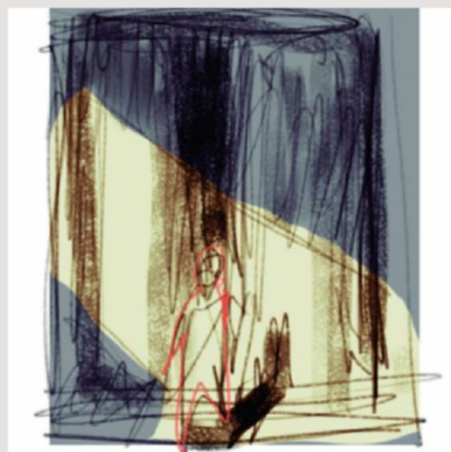


This is a concept design of Walt Disney while serving as an ambulance driver during the tail end of World War I. To make the concept convincing, I made it black and white and applied a JC Leyendecker-inspired stylisation. This was an appropriate direction to take because he was the leading illustrator at that time. This gives the viewers the perception of contextual harmony between the actual story and the style of the image.

15 LASSO PAINTING

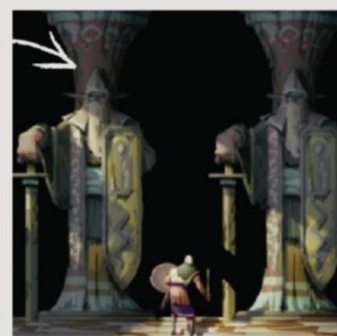
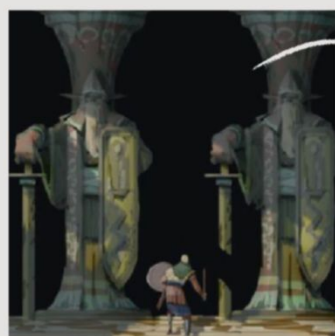
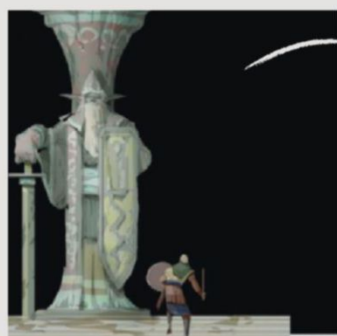
This is the technique I use when I'm pressed for time. I coined the name from the Lasso selection tool in Photoshop. Its simplicity and ease of use enable me to drop the values, carry out speedy colourisation and paint over highlighted surfaces.

With practise, this process is very effective for a quick turnaround of art. At this point the heavy lifting has been done and all I need to do is a bit more painting over the image to create a refined, final version if needed.



A Thumbnail and line work

I create a very quick thumbnail idea for composition and direction, then lay down the line work. The column and the character are on two separate layers. Then I drop and separate the local values using the Lasso tool. I also use a little bit of Airbrush to soften the edges.



B Duplicating the layer

Next I duplicate the desired layer to be colourised, then select it. I pick the desired brush and then from the Brush Mode drop-down menu, I select Color (and I make sure to bring it back to Normal mode after this step).

C Keeping lighting consistent

Using the Lasso tool, I select the cast shadowed surfaces. I soften the mask for the columns but keep it sharp on the character. Consistency in lighting is the key for this step. I create separate new layers for shadowed and highlighted surfaces and I increase the cool tone, then darken the layer with the shadowed surface. I increase the warm tones and contrast on the layer using highlighted surfaces.

Photoshop COMBINING SCI-FI NOIR AND FANTASY

Alyssa Menold works with an art director for the Shadowrun RPG, working up concept iterations and going from client brief to final painting

Artist PROFILE
Alyssa Menold
LOCATION: US



Alyssa is an illustrator working primarily in sci-fi and fantasy. Games are a passion for her, both to play and to illustrate.
www.alysamenold.com

When Catalyst Game Labs approached me about doing the cover for Shadowrun's Court of Shadows rulebook, I was beyond excited.

I've always had a ton of fun with Shadowrun's gritty, urban settings. But I was psyched at the opportunity to change things up and bring my love of traditional fantasy to the role-playing game.

When I got it, the art brief described a faerie queen walking through forested ruins. However, Catalyst's art director,

Brent Evans, also had a couple of key points that the cover needed to hit. He was looking for a strong, central figure, one who appeared to be both fascinating and ominous too.

As well as that, the painting needed to have a sense of movement, and the colours couldn't get too bright and fluffy. Even though it was a fantasy painting of a faerie, it needed to be consistent with Shadowrun's noir atmosphere.

The most exciting part of this painting was getting to be more surreal than

normal. Creating a dress that was made of ravens, for example, was quite unusual – and also a total blast.

Throughout the process, Brent worked closely with me, encouraging me to push this picture even further than I knew I could. A lot of my favourite elements in the painting – for example, the misty magic from her fingers, the blurring of reality at the edges of the painting – came from that collaboration.

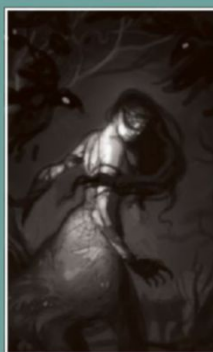
Anyway, stay with me and I'll talk you through what I did and why. ➡

How I develop...

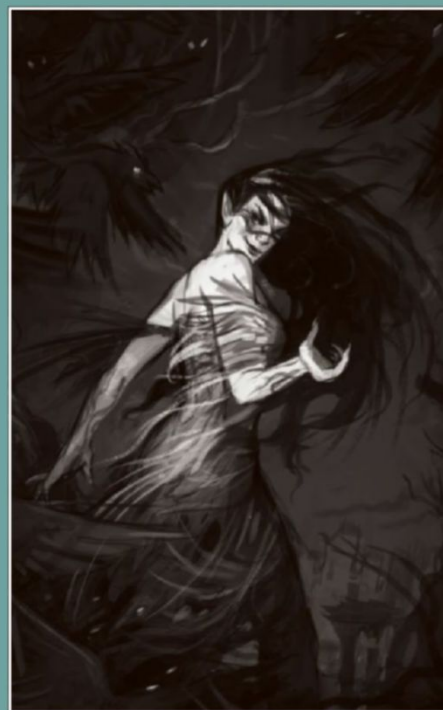
A CHARACTER FOR A COVER



1 Oodles of doodles
I start all my projects with stream of consciousness scribbles. At this stage my sketches are just brain vomit. Here I'm exploring every idea I can think of without worrying about composition or quality. All of that can come later.



2 Thumbnail drawings
Next I pick out my favourite ideas and refine them. This is where I work out compositional problems and worry about legibility. These drawings need to be able to communicate layout, subject matter and mood, without me being there to explain them.



3 Final drawing
Brent liked the inviting hand gesture from thumbnail #1, but preferred the overall pose and concept from #3. So the two were combined in this sketch. The ruins were also deemed to be too far back, and so were made larger in the final painting.

©2016 The Topps Company. Image used with permission.



PRactical Painter

HOW TO DRAW & PAINT IN PENCILS, OILS, ACRYLICS & MORE!

148
PAGES OF
ART AND
ADVICE

LEARN NEW TECHNIQUES

From taking your first steps in **sketching** and **composition**, to painting stunning images in the medium of your choice, our **easy-to-follow guides** will help you get better at creating art!

ON SALE NOW - BUY YOUR COPY FROM...

<http://ifxm.ag/practical-painter-2>

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

SCENE SETTING

Texture variations

I used photographs of speckles on Soft Light and Overlay modes to add random variation to the background. I also used custom brushes to spice up the painting's texture.

Distorting reality

One imperative aspect of this image was the sense that reality was being distorted by the faerie. Brent and I looked at several options before going with the Radial Blur filter (with Zoom on). I applied it to the outer edges, then painted over the filter to blend it in.

A sense of motion

I used the Queen's hair and dress to add motion to the picture. Their spiral shape also centres on the Queen's face, which helps to emphasise it as the focal point of the image.

RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

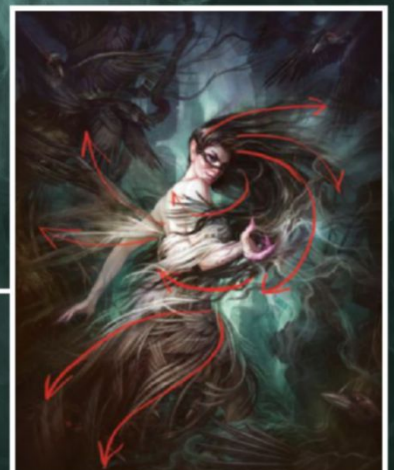
PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES:
FLAT OIL, ROUND OIL,
SMOOTH ELLIPSE

I used Flat oil for transparent shading and blending, Round oil for detail and Smooth ellipse for smooth rendering.

GET YOUR RESOURCES

See page 6 now!



Working with text and formatting constraints

It was important to leave space at the top and bottom of the painting for text and formatting. I needed to design the spaces to be interesting enough for the picture to work without the text, but I couldn't put any important elements in these areas.

ZBrush SCULPT YOUR CONCEPTS IN 3D



In **part one** of a three-part series on getting started with ZBrush, discover the techniques **John Mahoney** uses to design an alien pilot

Artist PROFILE
John Mahoney
LOCATION: US



John has worked in many leading entertainment companies including Lucasfilm, Disney and Blizzard. He's recently produced his own graphic novel called Zentropa.
<http://ifxm.ag/j-mah>

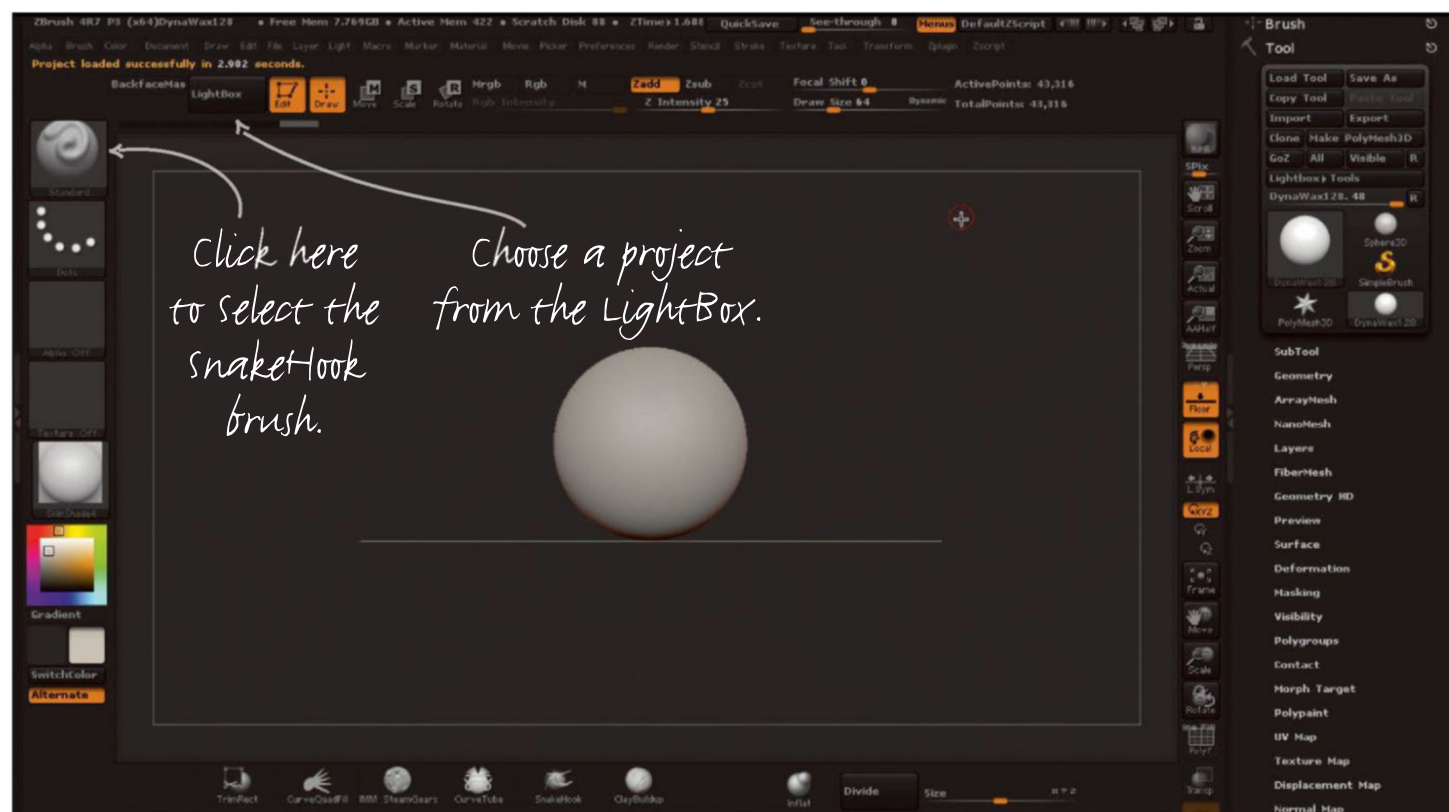
ZBrush is closely related to sculpting in real clay in many ways. You can start with a basic lump of virtual clay and fully realise your design concept complete with all the details.

The main difference with sculpting traditionally is that ZBrush enables you to sculpt symmetrically. You can make minor and drastic changes to your character throughout the entire sculpting process. Once you learn its basic tools, you'll be able to sculpt portfolio-worthy creations in a fraction of time it would take in other programs. You can push and pull virtual clay, you can carve away, and

add all kinds of bits 'n' pieces. You can duplicate anything you create and add complex attachments effortlessly.

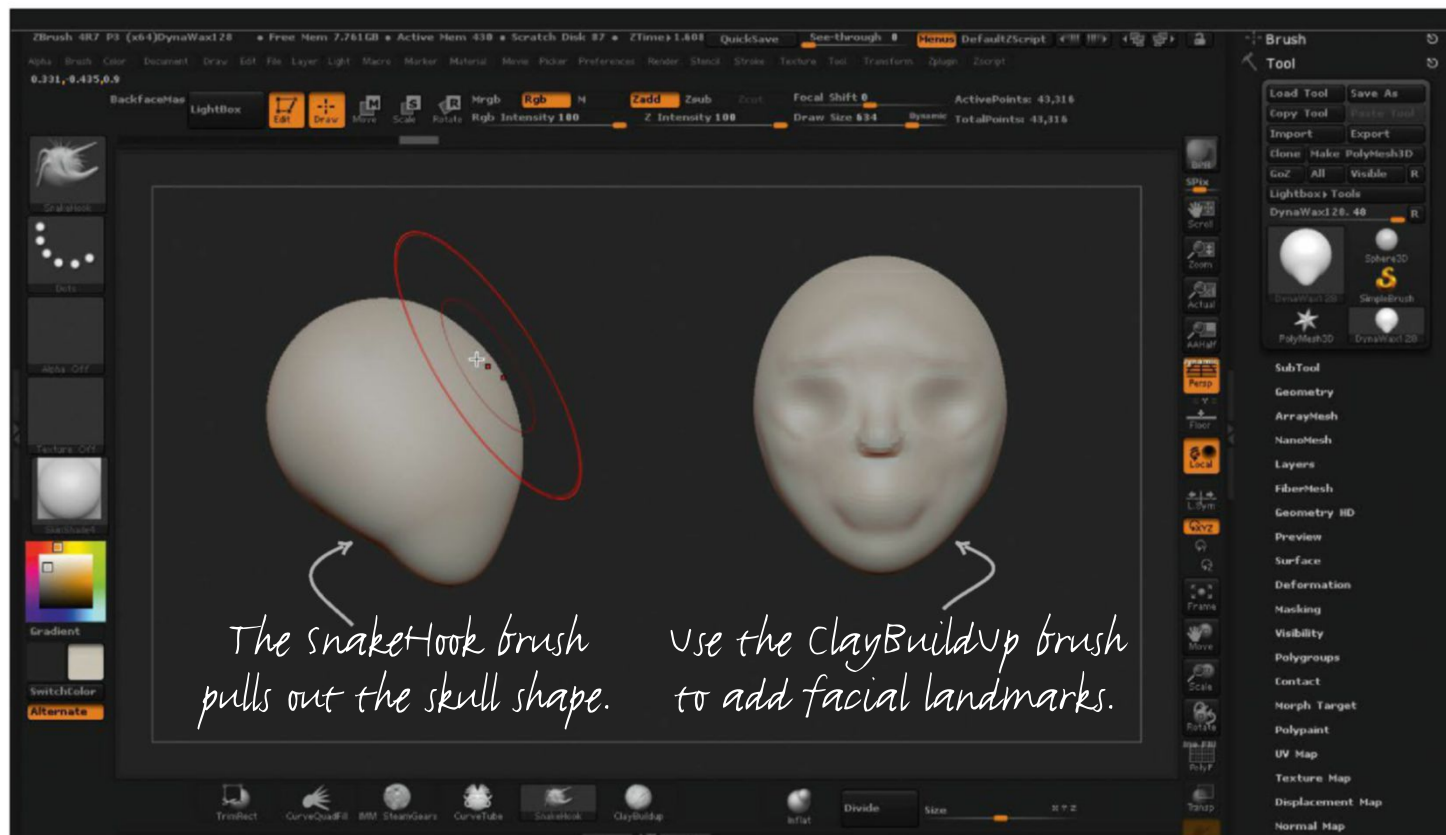
I was traditionally trained and swore that I'd never attempt 3D sculpting, because I couldn't imagine giving up the tactile nature of clay and paint. But after working with this program for several years, I can see the incredible benefit of sculpting in ZBrush.

A lot of the refined forms that I admire in classic sculpture, I can now emulate in 3D, which would take me forever to do traditionally. Another benefit is I can export my images to Photoshop or even 3D print my creations.



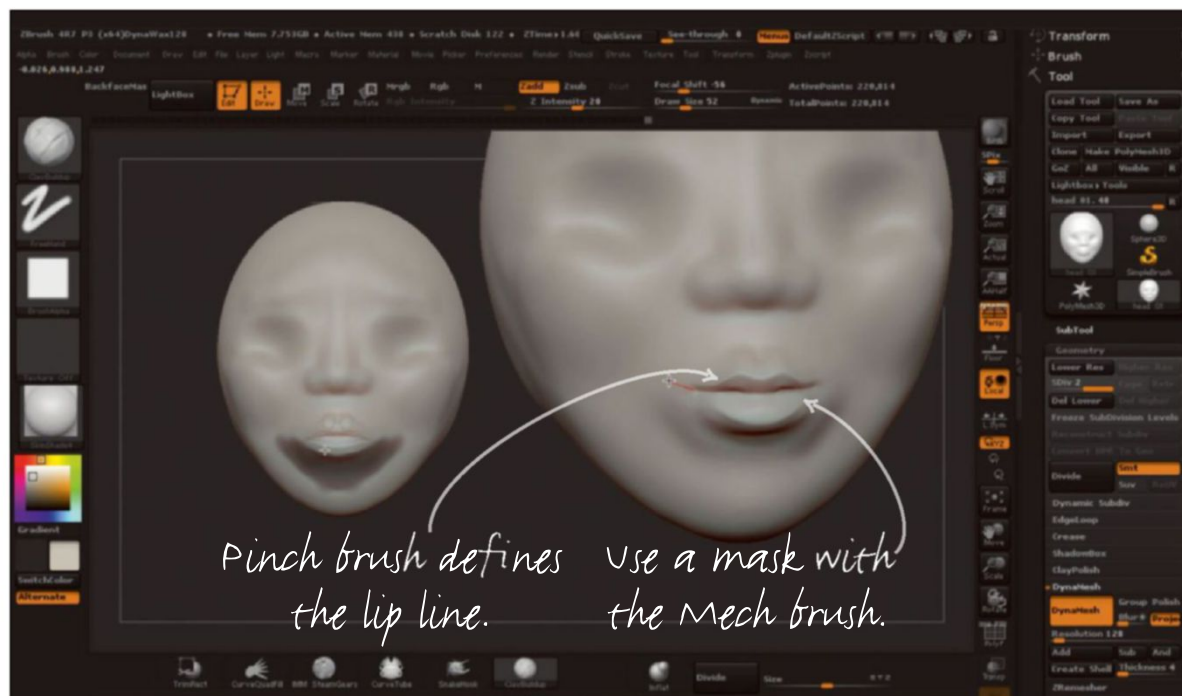
1 Choose DynaWax project

I choose the simplest shape to begin with – the sphere – which requires the most sculpting to make it into something interesting. DynaWax gives a nice feel and look to the 3D form. I go to LightBox>Project>DynaWax 28. Click the centre of the screen (the canvas) and drag down to reveal a sphere. Before touching any other button, click Edit to turn the object into a sculptable form. Then in the Brush menu, I choose SnakeHook to begin shaping the sphere into a skull shape.



2 Shaping the basic skull structure

I choose the ClayBuildUp brush to add bony landmarks to the head shape. Sometimes I'll have a skull replica on my desk to help out with this information. I add volume to the forehead, cheek bones and chin. I always add a lot of form to the teeth area, even though the mouth is usually closed. Then I begin sculpting the lips on to this volume.



3 Defining the character's lips

The lips are the most difficult thing to get right on the face. Once the teeth form is established, I build the lip forms up aggressively. I then create the clean separation on the lower lip line, and the centre crease between the lips. I use the Pinch brush to squeeze the lower lip line into position. I like to go over this several times with the Pinch brush until the lip becomes well defined. I use a custom-made Mech brush to create the centre separation line. I also use the Mask tool to isolate forms for more specific form delineation (hold down Ctrl and draw on the form to create a mask).

PRO SECRETS

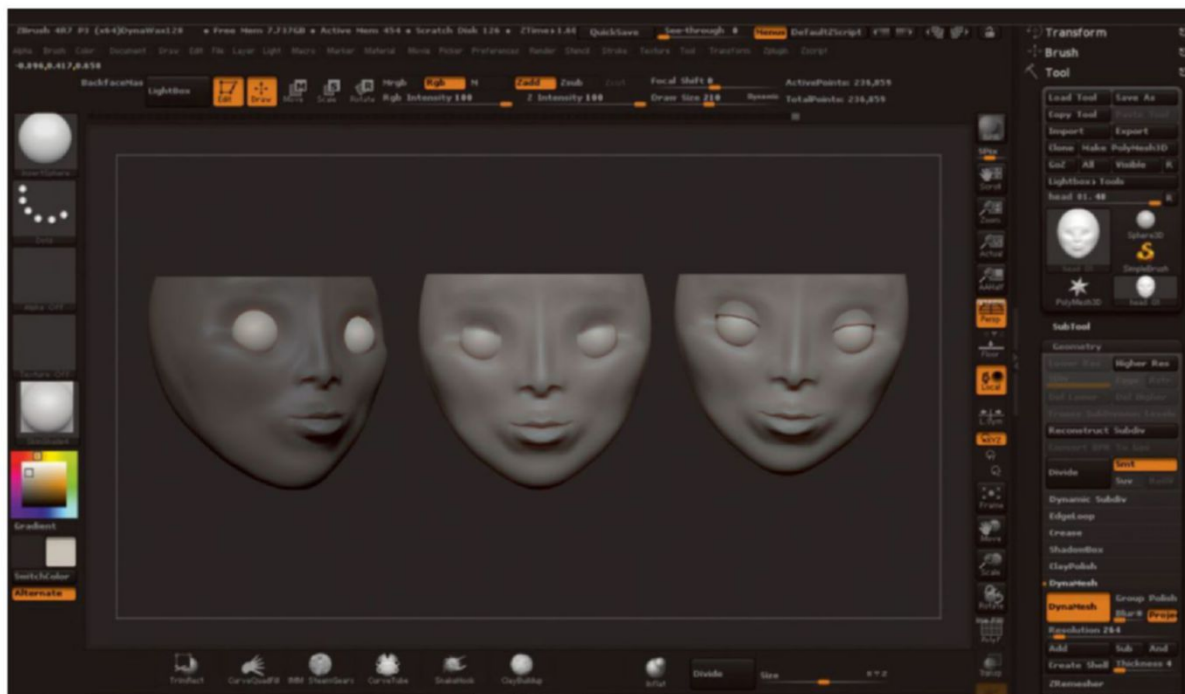
Posing with thumbnails

I struggled with posing in ZBrush for years. Most artists can't create realistic and or dynamic/ cartoon-like posed characters in ZBrush. It's a cumbersome task to move one limb at a time while trying to inject true movement into a static pose. The secret to getting around this is to do a lot of quick gestures in your sketchbook to find the best pose to go for. Once the pose is chosen, it's relatively easy to pose one limb at a time, because you already know what the pose looks like. I tried this and was amazed how fluid my ZBrush characters became.

PRO SECRETS

3D modelling and drawing

3D modelling can't replace core drawing and design skills. There are no shortcuts to becoming a good designer. I always say, "A sketchbook is worth a thousand computers!" I truly believe this. So when you're wanting to improve yourself as an artist of any kind, life drawing and location drawing is the best place to test your skill level. It's great to strip away all the bells and whistles and really see where you're at. The great thing is, once you improve in these key areas, all other artistic tasks you do will improve significantly, too.



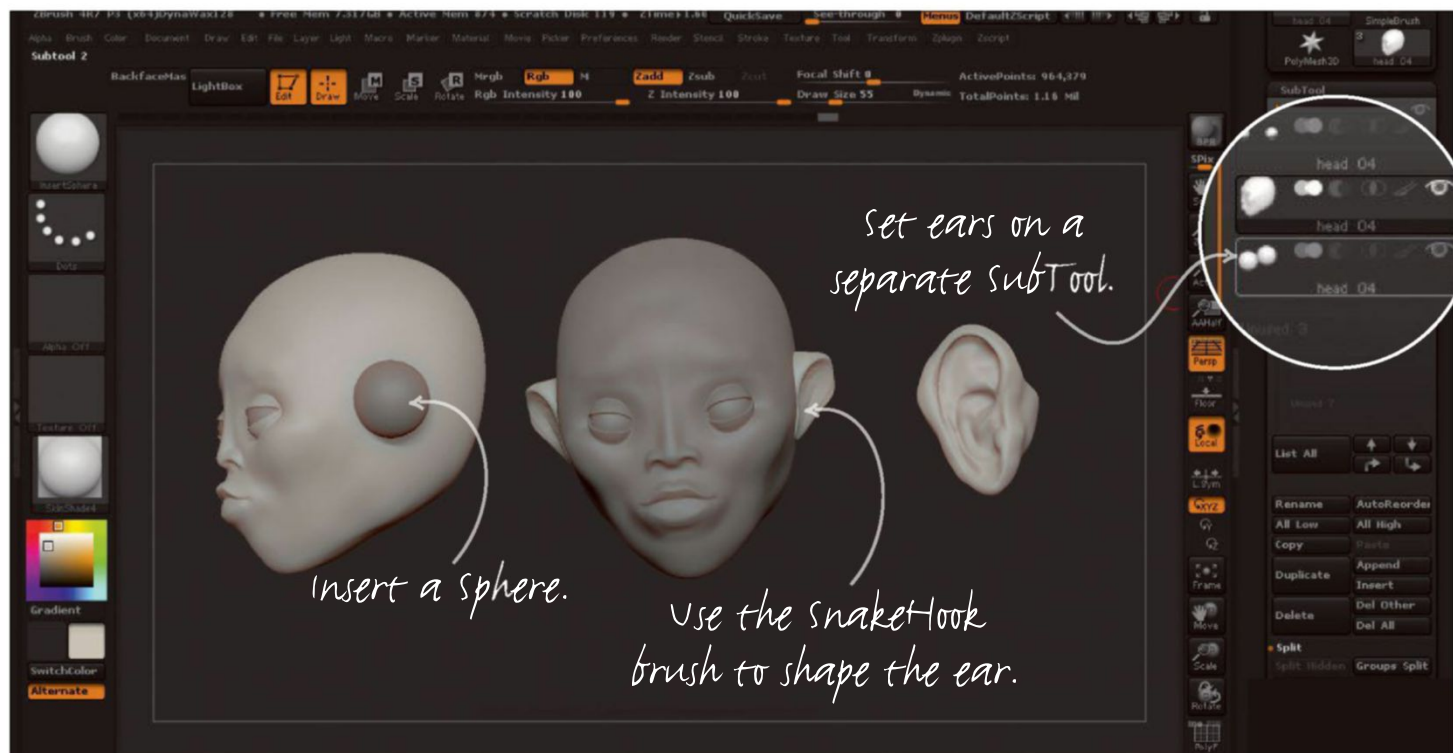
4 Placing the eyeballs and lids

To create eyes, I go to Brush>Insert sphere and simply click and drag on the location I want the eyes to be. If I don't like the position, I press Ctrl+Z to undo and I'll try it again. I like to separate these eyes into their own SubTool by going to the SubTool menu and scrolling down to Split Unmasked Points. Next I draw a mask where I want the eye lids to go. At the bottom to the SubTool menu is the Extract button. I click this and then click Accept to create a lid.



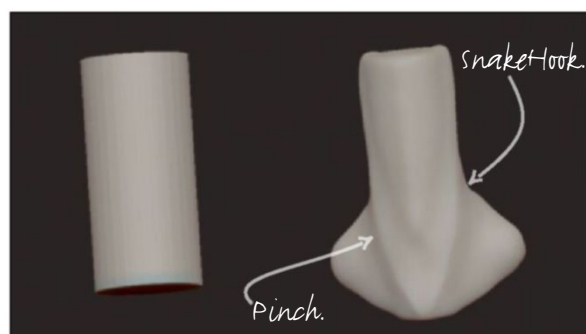
5 Pushing the forms of the head structure

I begin to search for a character in the face and head. I like using the SnakeHook brush to stretch and push the overall forms to see what character I can make from the basic head shape. This is where the concept designing begins – my ideas of where the character is going start to take shape.



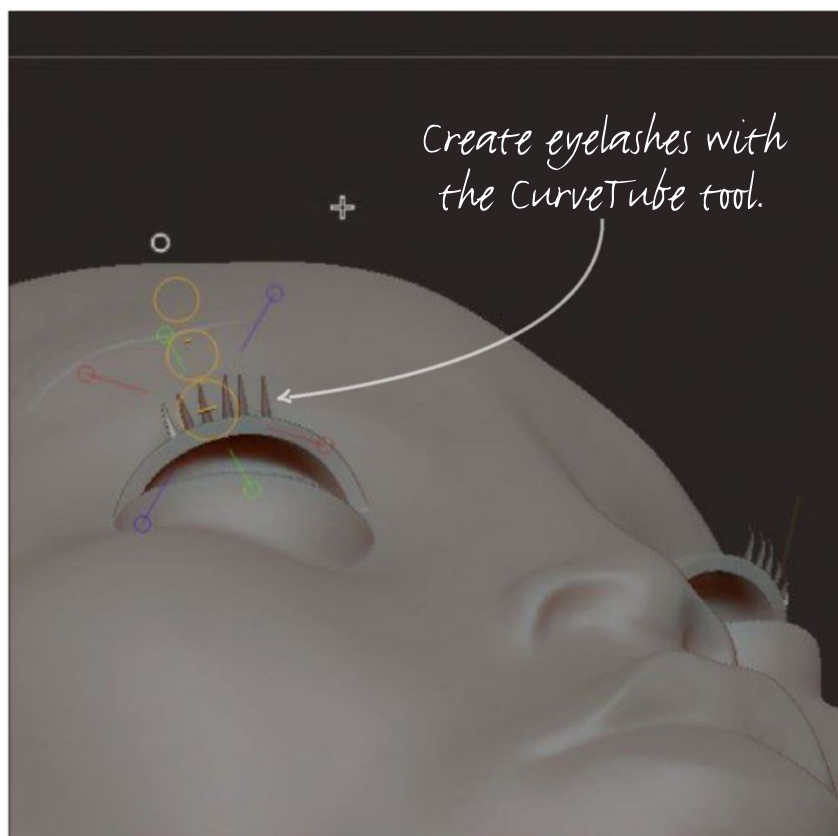
6 Sculpting the character's ears

Ears are tricky, so I keep some reference by my side. I go to Brush>Insert Sphere and drag these on to the sides of the head. I then mash the shapes into a basic ear form using the SnakeHook brush, before using the ClayBuildUp brush and the Smooth brush to refine the ear (pressing Shift activates the Smooth brush).



7 Sculpting a separate neck

I start with a cylinder. Once the cylinder is dragged on to the canvas, I go to the Geometry menu and select DynaMesh. This turns the primitive object to something pliable like taffy that I can stretch into position. I use the ClayBuildUp brush to add shoulders and neck muscles. I like sculpting these elements as separate Subtools: once the neck is finished, I can play with the proportions to get everything to feel right for the design.



8 Adding eye lashes

For this step I use CurveTube tool. First I adjust the fall off settings so the tube tapers off to a point. This tool is also great for sculpting tentacles. I drag on one eyelash, move it into position, then duplicate these as many times as necessary. The shortcut for this is to hold down Ctrl while moving the eyelash, and another eyelash will appear. ➡

PRO SECRETS

Always work symmetrically

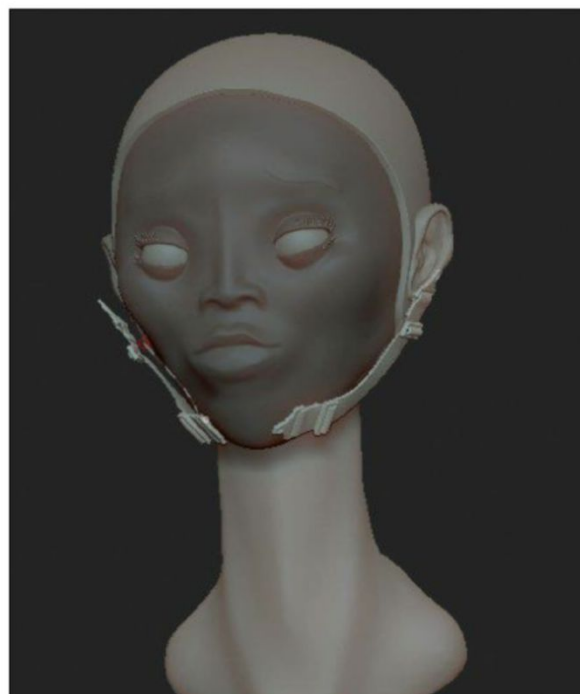
The key for designing incredibly fast is working symmetrically. You'll be designing as you go, but because you're working on both halves of your character at the same time, you're creating harmonious rhythms. Ninety nine per cent of all creatures on Earth are symmetrical, so working this way helps you tap into this basic concept.

Also in ZBrush, once you move off symmetry it's very difficult to re-configure your character to get symmetry back. Always save your T-posed characters before you begin posing. You'll no doubt want to return to that T-pose version for revisions at some point.



9 Building up the pilot's helmet

I mask off the shape of the helmet, then go to PolyGroups, click Group Masked and reverse the mask. In the SubTool menu, I click Extract and Accept. I can now go the Deformation menu and adjust Smooth by Poly groups. This will give a clean edge to rim of the helmet and creates a SubTool in my SubTool menu. I now move the ears out to create a nice ear/helmet silhouette.



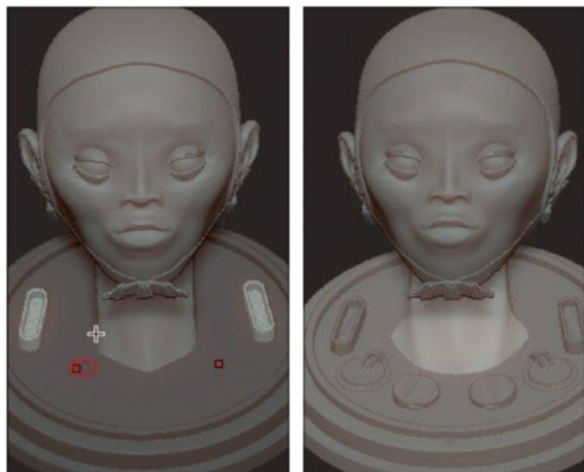
10 Introducing a helmet strap

One of the most enjoyable tools in ZBrush is the Insert Meshes. I love dragging on all kinds of junk, just to see what enhancements I can add to my characters. I go to Brushes and choose IMM Curve, then I press M to choose a belt to drag onto my character. Once dragged on, I click and drag onto an open section of the canvas to merge the belt with the face.



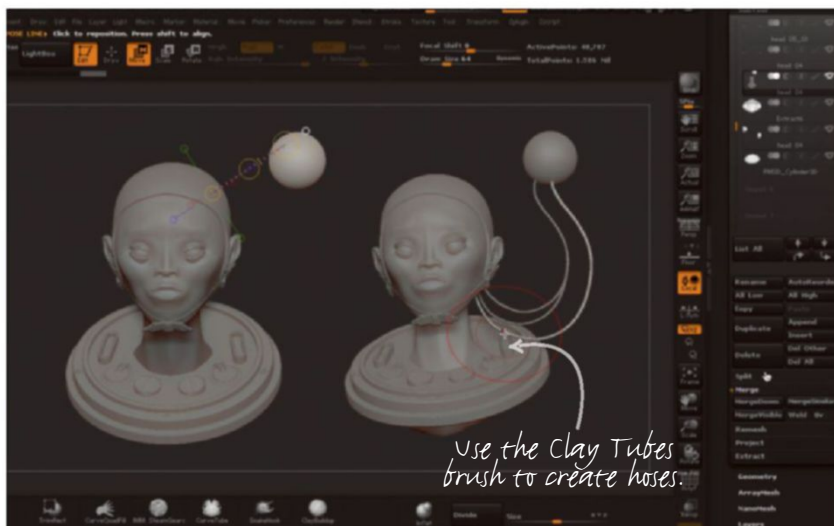
11 Turning a cylinder into a space suit collar

I go to the Append button in the SubTool menu and click Append. I choose a cylinder and modify this with the masking tool to create interesting forms. I then mask off one area and then click Deformation>Size to enlarge the unmasked areas. I can create semi-complex, hard surface shapes this way. I mask off a ring-shaped form, then select SubTool>Extract to create a ring-wall form. Finally, I reposition the form to create the inner ring of a space collar.



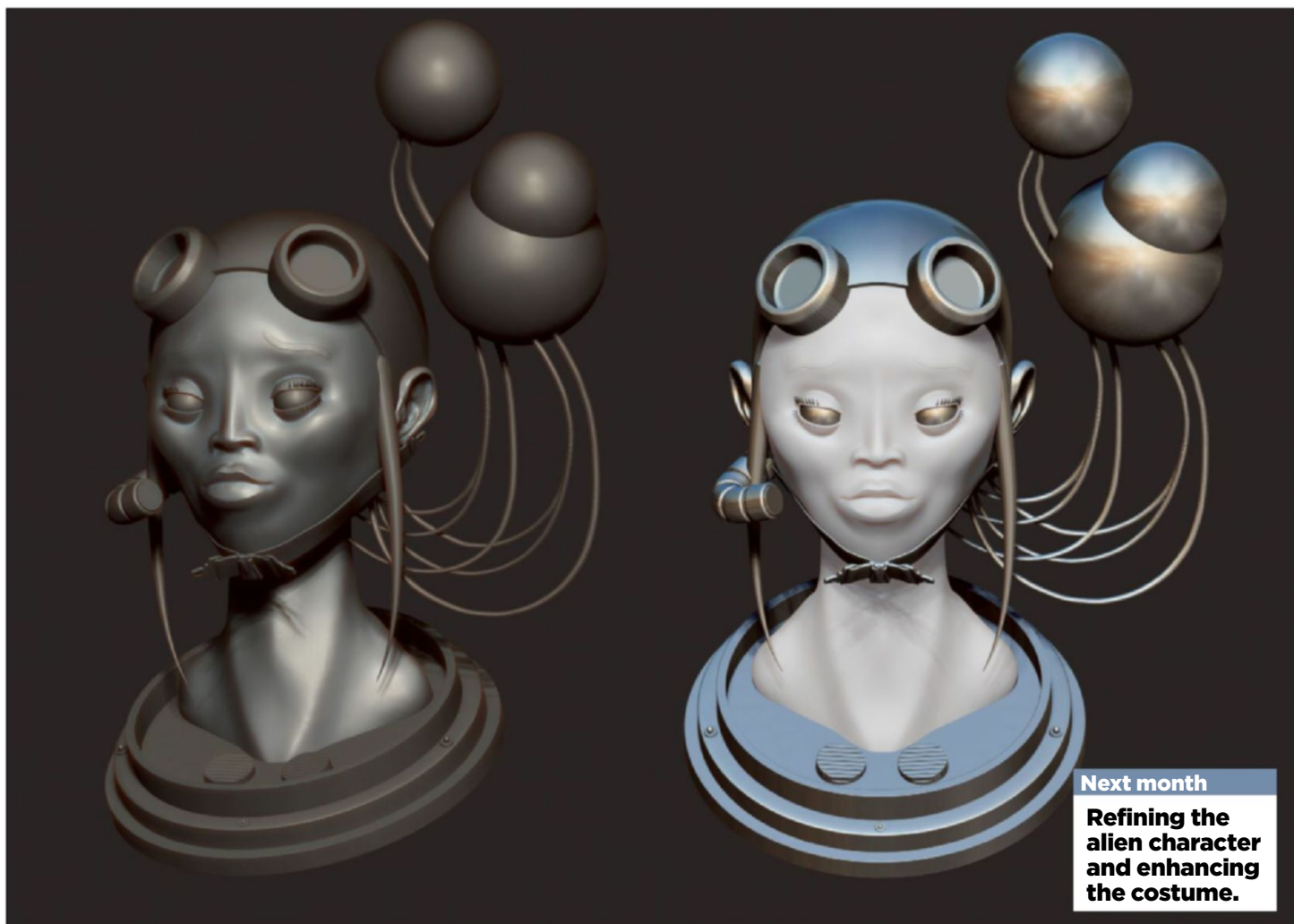
12 Mech Insert meshes are alien tech!

I add random insert Mech pieces to help me brainstorm alien technology. I do this all the time with plastic parts with real sculpture, but it's so much better to have unlimited scalable bits and pieces in the virtual world. This approach has enhanced my concept design ten-fold. I drag on a mechanical piece, then scale and rotate until I get the correct position.



13 Create floating orbs for a zero-gravity feel

I love the concept of living without gravity. These floating spheres symbolise a weightless atmosphere... something that's impossible to create in the real world. I select Insert Sphere, drag on to the head and then move off the head, so that the orbs look as if they are floating in space. I then paint hoses using the Clay Tubes brush by dragging with my mouse.



Next month

Refining the alien character and enhancing the costume.

14 Final rendering with materials

I play with materials to help enhance my final presentation. I select one SubTool to have a certain material. Then I select the specific material I want for that object. Now I press the M icon near the top of the interface, then I select the Fill Object option in the Color menu. You can have a different material for each SubTool this way. Once done, I click BPR (Best Preview Render) to prep image for export. To export the image, I go to Document>Export and select PSD.

HOUDINI 16 EXCLUSIVE!

Get your first look at the latest version of the VFX, video games and animation industry's must-use software. We reveal the new features and tools, and how to use them.



GET
YOUR NEXT ISSUE
FREE!

Download our no
obligation digital
trial offer now!

FREE!
12GB
OF RESOURCES
& VIDEO

Newsstand for iOS: www.bit.ly/3dworld-app
Print: www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/3dwsubs
Issue 218 on sale now!



NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX Reviews



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

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

**5
PRODUCTS
ON TEST**



HARDWARE

94 MobileStudio Pro

Could the new Wacom tablet be the best and most artist-friendly ever? But even if it is, can it really justify the huge price tag?

TRAINING

97 Storyboarding Techniques

A nine-hour primer for the first and most important stage of animation, with storyboard artist Fred Gago.

BOOKS

98 Spectrum 23: The Best in Contemporary Fantastic Art

It's here once again, the prestigious annual round-up of the best in fantasy art. We see if its usual high standards are maintained.

99 The Art of Moana

Among other challenges, learn how Disney artists gave personality to the Pacific Ocean, in its latest big-screen animation.

99 The Art of Titanfall 2

Discover the secrets behind the mechs, guns and environments that feature in the sequel to 2014's first-person shooter.



RATINGS EXPLAINED Magnificent Great Good Poor Atrocious



MobileStudio Pro

PURELY PROFESSIONAL Is this the best-looking, best-performing and most amazing tablet ever? And if so, is it worth the huge price tag?

With six different models to choose from, all capable of running desktop software, the MobileStudio Pro is a designer's dream.

Price £1,399 to £2,749 (depending on configuration) **Company** Wacom **Web** www.wacom.com

After a few false starts into the tablet PC market, Wacom has finally achieved its goal and released a new tablet that's the answer to a lot of artists' prayers. The MobileStudio Pro is a fantastic piece of kit that offers a portable drawing device with very few drawbacks.

The tablet is reassuringly sturdy, yet light enough to sit on your lap or be carried around in your backpack easily. It runs Windows 10 and desktop programs such as Photoshop very smoothly. Even when using demanding 3D programs, the MobileStudio Pro's fan noise is significantly less than previous Wacom offerings. At the very worst, the device is no louder than an external hard drive.

The screen quality is amazing, with QHD resolution on the 13-inch model and 4K resolution on the 16-inch. It has six ExpressKeys and a touch ring, and three USB-C ports that enable charging from any port. The screen does become a little warm, but it's not going to cook your lap, and the fans are positioned well in both portrait and landscape mode. The SD card slot is great, not only for transferring files across, but also for adding increased storage capacity.

The Wacom Pro Pen 2 is a thing of beauty. The levels of pressure sensitivity are staggering: an unprecedented 8,192 levels of sensitivity. The screen is so thin that parallax isn't an issue and pen lag is virtually nonexistent. If all this weren't

The power slider is designed so that you will never accidentally turn the MobileStudio Pro on while carrying it around.



The sensitivity of the Pro Pen 2 has to be believed. Even the lightest stroke will be picked up.

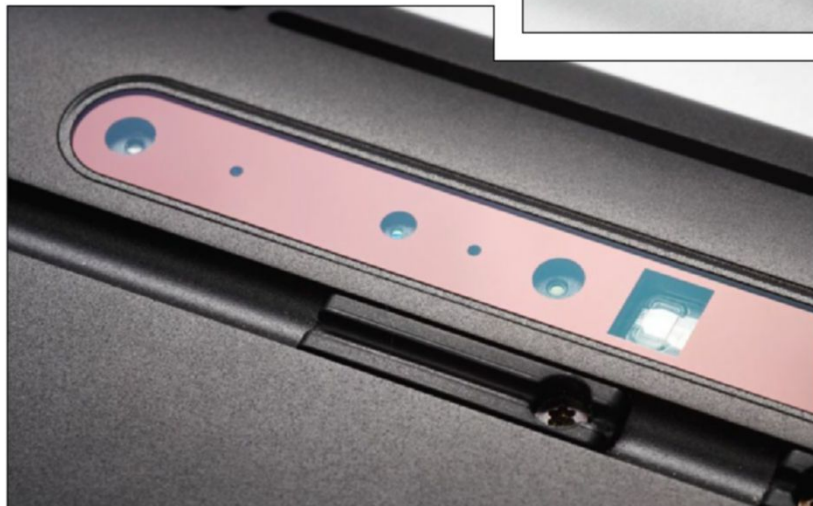
enough, the pen never requires charging. We can honestly say there's not a stylus on the market that can adequately rival the Pro Pen 2.

However, the device is not without its minor faults. The speakers are functional, but lacklustre. The battery life is purported to be six hours, but after continuous use it's realistically somewhere around four hours. A further niggle is that in the UK you have to buy an adaptor for the two-pin power plug supplied. Considering the



The Radial dial and ExpressKeys are all programmable so you can tailor them to your workflow.

All three USB-C slots work for charging the unit, so you won't have to switch cables around when you need to charge the tablet.



As well as transferring files, the SD slot also enables you to expand the storage options on the MobileStudio Pro.

Select models include the 3D RealSense camera that means you can scan an object into, say, ZBrush and refine it from there.

“The Wacom Pro Pen 2 is a thing of beauty. We can honestly say there's not a stylus on the market that can rival it”

hefty cost you're already paying, this feels a tad egregious.

This small example links to our biggest gripe about the MobileStudio Pro, and Wacom's hardware generally. While truly the best quality products available, they're always excessively expensive and don't include everything you may need. For example, the MobileStudio Pro has no USB ports, so the Wacom Link (around £60) is necessary if you want to use the MobileStudio Pro as a Cintiq monitor

and your Mac/PC doesn't have a USB-C port, but this has to be purchased separately. Similarly, no stand is provided, and no protective carry case included.

For pricey kit that's intended to be carried in backpacks, the absence of such items is unforgivable. But of course – you've guessed it – you can purchase them additionally. The MobileStudio Pro is lovely to use, but we wish Wacom would offer a complete package for its high cost.

DETAILS

Features

- Wacom Pro Pen 2
- 3D camera
- Life-like colour and up to 4K resolution
- Runs demanding creative 2D, 3D and CAD software
- Customisable ExpressKeys
- Available in a range of six processor, memory and storage configurations
- Intel-powered
- Pro-Pen 2 has 8,192 levels of sensitivity
- No parallax and minimal lag
- SD Card slot and USB-C ports

Rating



ARTIST INTERVIEW

SARAH COUSENS

Find out what's it like to use the MobileStudio Pro for illustration...

How have you found the multi-touch features on the MobileStudio Pro?

Near perfect. Unlike other multi-touch tablets, I've not encountered many issues at all. You can rest your hand on the screen and draw comfortably without any accidental strokes. I've only had one instance where an option was selected by my knuckle.

How do you envisage the MobileStudio Pro fitting in with an artist's workflow?

You can use it from start to finish, because you can work with full desktop programs like Photoshop. This means you could still work on commissions if you were away from the office for days and they would still be the same standard.

Would you recommend the MobileStudio Pro for everyone?

If the price were lower I would recommend this to all designers, photographer and illustrators. But because of the cost, it's a tool for professionals rather than hobbyists.

How do you find drawing on the 13-inch MobileStudio Pro?

Surprisingly good. Thanks to the high resolution, Photoshop's UI doesn't take up too much space, and the rotatable screen gives you a completely different area to work on, which stops the workspace from feeling too claustrophobic.

Any welcome surprises?

The SD card slot! If you were a professional photographer, you could take a photo and start editing it on site by transferring it over. Small things like this make life so much easier.

Speaking of interface ports, how do you feel about the lack of standard USB ports?

In honesty, it's a pain. USB-C ports are still relatively new and not yet standard, so it limits the Pro's versatility right now. Having to buy the Wacom Link feels a bit cheeky!



Co-founder of illustration company Cool Surface, Sarah produces photo composite art for magazines and clients.

www.coolsurface.com

Paint your own masterpiece

- Fun, step-by-step artist insight every month
- Three issues for £5 when you subscribe*
- Watercolours, acrylics, pastels, oils and more
- Interviews, features, news and reviews



*Subscribe at:

www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/paint17

or call 0344 848 2852 and quote PAINT17

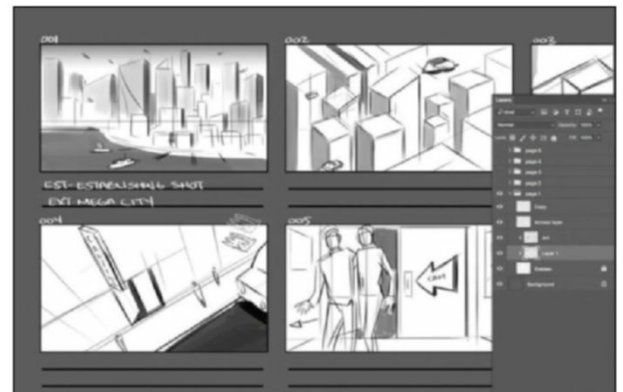
In Storyboarding Techniques, Fred Gago explains how to keep the character position on the screen consistent, whatever camera angle you pick.



Here, Fred demonstrates the art and technique of creating a storyboard before animating begins.



A good storyboard conveys the flavour of the setting, even though the final design work isn't complete.



Storyboarding Techniques



GET ON BOARD Storyboard artist Fred Gago offers a nine-hour primer for the first and most important stage of animation

Publisher The Gnomon Workshop **Price** Subscription only (from \$49 a month) **Format** Streamed video **Web** www.thegnomonworkshop.com

The process of animation starts long before any actual animating is done. Whether you're creating a short single-handed or are part of a team, the storyboard is essential for understanding how a tale will be told. Animation remains work-intensive despite all the computing power at our disposal, so using storyboards to figure out what works and what doesn't can save you many hours.

In Storyboarding Techniques, Fred Gago takes you into the mind of a storyboard artist, helping you understand what your goals should be. He starts with the housekeeping of building a storyboard layout template in Photoshop and assembling basic visual reference to communicate the flavour of the setting and characters.

As you'll discover through this nine-hour masterclass, the point of the storyboard is to convey information as clearly as possible. The design of the main character may not be complete,



DETAILS

Topics covered

- Gathering reference
- Making a template
- Warming up before drawing
- Camera angles
- Character design basics
- Showing movement
- Rendering values
- Conveying atmosphere simply

Length

553 minutes

Rating



for example, but Fred will still be sure to give him/her/it a distinctive look and silhouette, so they're immediately recognisable in every frame. Choice of camera angles is also key: Fred shows you many of the most-used, although a more systematic run-through might have been useful. You'll also learn how he uses elements in the scene as framing devices to reinforce the setting, and why he pays attention to a character's position within the frame.

The final major component is movement. Static drawings can't always show exactly what's happening, such as when a barman slides a beer bottle along a counter-top. Apparently simple actions like this become an exercise in using as few frames as possible to make the motion clear.

You could argue that Fred could have got the basics across in less time, but if you're patient and let the lessons unfold, you'll find Storyboarding Techniques a first-rate primer for a deceptively challenging discipline.

ARTIST PROFILE

FRED GAGO

Fred is a professional freelance artist who's spent the past decade providing everything from storyboards to character and creature design. His clients include Disney, 20th Century Fox, NBC Universal and Adult Swim Games. Fred has contributed to a variety of TV projects, including American Horror Story, Arrow, Scream Queens, Outcast and Banshee. Currently he's an art director for an educational app as well as an instructor of storyboarding at the Gnomon School in Hollywood.



www.gagoism.com



Spectrum 23: The Best in Contemporary Fantastic Art

BEST IN SHOW The prestigious annual round-up of the best in fantasy art is here once more and, as usual, it doesn't disappoint

Editor John Fleskes **Publisher** Flesk **Price** £36 **Web** www.fleskpublications.com **Available** Now

For more than two decades, the Spectrum annual has been a showcase for the world's best creators of fantasy art. Established in 1993 by Cathy and Arnie Fenner, each volume's release is a big event, both for fans and as a resource for art directors, buyers and artists.

It's not exactly cheap. But you get a lot of hardback book for your money, in terms of its size, weight and number of pages (308). Plus it's lavishly produced, with thick, super-glossy paper that makes the images sing.

But what about the work itself? In a word: breathtaking. As usual, the Spectrum jury has selected 300 artists, both upcoming and established, from the US, Europe, China, Australia, South America and beyond. Their contributions, which include artworks



created for books, graphic novels, video games, films, galleries and advertising, are infused with wit, inventiveness, passion, imagination and sheer talent. Proof the world of fantasy, sci-fi and horror art is alive and well.

Work that particularly resonated included Android Jones's exquisitely intricate cover image (The Year of the Ram); Annie Stegg Gerard's evocative fairytale scenes (Renard and the Strawberries, and Moonlight Parade); Guangjian Huang's mythical male and

“Each artist has passed a high bar to be included. There's absolutely no filler”

female warriors (Narcissu, and Silver Knight); David Palumbo's arresting vision of a woman in warpaint (Binti); Travis Louie's enthralling alien (Invader Mitch and his Dog); Audrey Benjaminsen's charcoal witches (The Moirari) and Michael Whelan's girl in a floating globe (Her Own World). But everyone will have their favourites, and that's the idea. Because each artist has passed a high bar to be included here, there's absolutely no filler.

While most of the book is taken up with the art itself, there's a fair bit to read too, particularly across the opening 30 pages. These include a

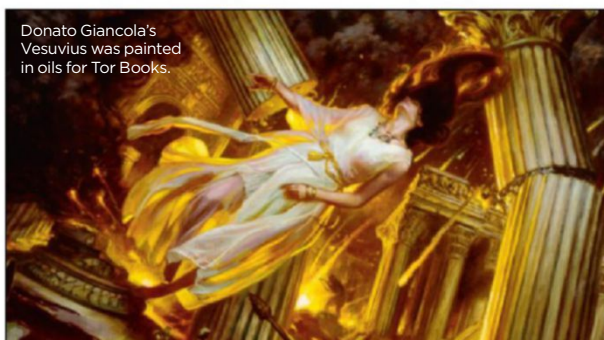


Tran Nguyen's *Traveling to a Distant Day* (acrylic and pencils) earned the Editorial Gold Award.

Meet the Jury section, a profile of rising star Victor Maury and a greeting from Spectrum Grand Master Mike Mignola. There's also an insightful 11-page Year in Review by John Fleskes (though the year in question is 2015, not 2016).

All in all, whether you're looking to check out the competition, keep abreast of fantasy art trends, or just enjoy a lot of amazing work, Spectrum 23 is a desirable purchase.

RATING ★★★★★



Donato Giancola's *Vesuvius* was painted in oils for Tor Books.



The Art of Moana

SEA CHANGE Learn how Disney gave personality to the Pacific Ocean, among other challenges, for its latest big-screen animation

Authors Jessica Julius and Maggie Malone **Publisher** Chronicle Books **Price** £25 **Web** www.chroniclebooks.com **Available** Now

Disney's 56th animated feature, Moana tells the tale of a spirited teenage girl in ancient Polynesia who sets out to prove herself as a master wayfinder and fulfil her ancestors' unfinished quest. Bringing this ancient world to life involved two big tasks for Disney's artists: authentically recreating the real-world environments and cultures, and portraying both the ocean and lava as sentient characters.



Concept art by Ryan Lang. The artists had to contend with the tension between reality and storytelling.



These main challenges subdivided into countless smaller problems, such as making Maui's tattoos animate against his bare skin as he shape-shifts; convincingly recreating the thick, wavy hair of Pacific Islanders; and bringing to life the eight-eyed bat and monster eel of Maui legend and grounding them in something real.

In this book, the authors detail these challenges and how they were overcome across 162 landscape-format pages. At the same time we're treated to a sumptuous selection of artwork,

from raw pencil sketches to thrilling storyboards, stunning concept art to finished CG scenes.

Disney's Art of books have really upped their game recently in terms of the level of detail and insight: the publishers, we sense, really want to show how much thought, effort and passion have gone into these films. And this release is no exception: there's much to learn here, and a lot of beautiful art to be inspired by.

RATING

The Art of Titanfall 2

SOLDIERING ON The sci-fi video game's weapons, vehicles, settings and more are all brought together in one comprehensive volume

Author Andy McVittie **Publisher** Titan Books **Price** £30 **Web** www.titanbooks.com **Available** Now

Titanfall 2 is a first-person shooter game developed by Respawn Entertainment and published by EA. It focuses on an infantry soldier who aspires to be a pilot of the warfare mechas known as Titans. And this 196-page, large-format hardback offers a comprehensive look at the artwork behind the game.

Following a foreword by art director Joel Emslie, it's divided into five sections, covering Titans; pilots;



"Heavy pilots were a lot of fun to design," says art director Joel Emslie.



vehicles, weapons and tech; locations; graphics and modelling. Each chapter features a wide range of concept artwork, together with brief descriptions of the creative processes. The highlight is perhaps the final six pages, which feature stunning 3D-printed maquettes.

With a layout that's workmanlike but not inspiring, an obvious typo on the contents page, and a failure to credit

artists clearly, this book isn't likely to win any prizes. We'd also have liked to see more in the way of preparatory art, rather than the solid diet of completed, full-colour concept work.

That said, the work is all of high calibre and will be of interest to fans of the franchise or games designers looking for broad sci-fi inspiration.

RATING

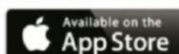


ImagineFX presents inspirational sketches
from the best artists in the world!



Order your copy today!

For print and digital: <http://ifxm.ag/svol3>





NO. 1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS
ImagineFX
PRESENTS



FANTASY

illustrator

This issue:



102 FXPosé Traditional
The best traditional art revealed.



112 Get started with oils
Howard Lyon shows you how.



114 First impressions
Jasmine Becket-Griffith talks eyes.

HOW TO CREATE COLOURFUL GRADIENTS

Bao Pham uses the wet-into-wet approach to create a serene yet colour-rich image **Page 106**

FXPosé *Traditional*

SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL FANTASY ARTISTS

Jay Penn

LOCATION: Ireland

WEB: www.jaypenn.com

EMAIL: jaypennart@yahoo.com

MEDIA: Pen and ink



Melbourne-born, Ireland-based artist Jay fell in love with the work of Rien Poortvliet and Brian Froud at a very early age, and has been passionate about fantasy art ever since. His work has appeared in RPGs, novels and comics all over the world, and he's currently producing his "magnum opus": a quarterly fantasy comic called *The Circle*.

"It's my dream to see a *Magic: The Gathering* card with my art on it one day," Jay says. "Or be featured in a *D&D Monster Manual*... and something Tolkien-related, while we're at it."

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Jay's deft texturing gives his drawings a feeling of solidity and entices the viewer's eye. The closer you look, the more little details spring out to delight you. You can see where all that effort went in!"

Cliff Hope,
Operations Editor

1 COOKING WITH CTHULHU

"This is one of those pieces where the marks you put down just make sense and come out even better than you intended. It's what I look at when I start to doubt my artistic worth. I put my heart and soul into that whisk."

2 ARCHER

"I've always had a fascination with rangers, so I went all-out with this piece and put some pretty hefty hours into inking it. I love drawing trees, so this whole piece was a pleasure to create, from start to finish."





Joe Ward

LOCATION: England

WEB: www.joewardart.com

EMAIL: contact@joewardart.com

MEDIA: Acrylics



Joe is a Falmouth College of Art graduate with a passion for fantasy and figurative art. "I'm drawn towards fantasy with plausibility, as well as a hand-made quality of painting, which I feel lends itself well to the medieval fantasy genre," he says.

Joe's medium of choice is acrylics, and he has a well-honed technique. "I work fairly small and prefer a smooth watercolour paper surface," he explains. "I usually begin with an unprimed pencil drawing, initially using thin washes. I find the quick drying time of acrylic lends itself to glazing and scumbling, providing quite a bit of versatility."



1

1 ANCIENT WITH STAFF

"My attempt at a Mystic character from the film *The Dark Crystal*. I like the rough, mottled appearance of lichen on stone. The window where I work looks out on to a cemetery, so perhaps the old headstones are creeping into my painting here."

2 A GOBLIN CLAN

"All too often when drawing heads like these, it later dawns on me that one or more of them unintentionally resembles someone I know! With fantasy illustration there's a sweet spot between archetypal and realistic renditions of characters that's often hard to pin down."

3 FOREST ELF

"When painting a character against a background, I often return to a 'light against dark/dark against light' approach. When push comes to shove I'm usually more concerned with ensuring that an image will reproduce robustly than I am with achieving subtle shifts between elements."

SUBMIT YOUR ART TO EXPOSÉ

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

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

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

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



2

34



IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Joe is modest about it, but you can spot the trained artist in his work. As well as the luminous colours and classic compositions, his paintings all 'read' clearly and tell an interesting story."

Claire Howlett,
Editor



**GET YOUR
RESOURCES**

See page 6 now!

Workshops

Gouache

Watercolour

CREATE
GRADIENTS
FULL OF
COLOUR

BAO PHAM makes use of the wet-into-wet approach to create a serene image that manages to be colourful, too

Last winter, because it was too cold to paint outdoors and I couldn't use oil paint indoors, I started using gouache. I fell in love right away and it quickly became my main medium. I love its opacity and minimal preparation time. I have a small studio space, so I have been focusing on smaller works, and gouache offers the compact versatility that I need. Also, I work with minimal shapes and its rich colours help me add visual interest and create effective moods.

Gouache is best described as opaque watercolour. It can be reactivated with water, although it is a bit difficult to blend after the paint has dried. However, since it's not permanent, storage and cleanup are a breeze. One unpredictable thing about it is that dark colours will appear lighter when dry and light colours appear darker when dry. This makes it hard to judge the value of a colour as you work, but that can be sorted out by premixing and testing colours beforehand. Gouache is not only easy to use and set up, it also has a beautiful matte finish, while the colours stay rich and vibrant when dry.

In this workshop, I will focus on using wet into wet techniques with gouache and watercolour. Wet into wet is simply

painting while the surface is still saturated with water. I first learned this technique with watercolour and I've found it's very effective with gouache as well. It enables me to create smooth transitions between colours and values. It's best used in a single pass, considering that adding subsequent layers will reactivate the paint underneath and can cause muddiness.

I prefer using watercolour for soft and delicate details, with gouache for more vibrant and bold colours. I highly recommend doing colour studies first before working wet into wet. It will cut down your guesswork and let you focus on the manipulation of the paint.

Here, I'll cover the various ways I work with washes, starting with breaking up sections of the painting to keep large areas more manageable. I'll also show you how to transition from one colour to the next to create a smooth gradient, and how to blend colours without lifting paint that has been laid down.



Bao lives in Iowa, US. Painting and drawing with a variety of media, he creates contemplative and introspective imagery

featuring various plant forms and rich colour palettes. You can follow him at www.instagram.com/baotpham



MATERIALS

PAPER

■ Rives BFK paper

BRUSH

■ DaVinci Cosmotop
Spin Round, size O

PAINTS

■ Winsor & Newton
Gouache
■ Winsor & Newton
Watercolours

OTHER

■ Liquitex Black Gesso

1 *The drawing*

The subject is a girl lost in thought surrounded by colour-shifting plants and butterflies. I'm keeping the shapes round and simple to let the colours shine. I'm drawing on Rives BFK paper with a mechanical pencil. If the lines end up too dark, I use a kneaded eraser to dab off some of the graphite, leaving a light pencil drawing.



2 *Digital colour study*

At this point, I take a clear photo of the drawing, bring it into Photoshop and do a quick colour study. I make the most of my colour choices here, and Photoshop enables me to readjust colours quickly. I decide to keep the figure in shades of pastels and the rest of the elements at a darker value to create contrast.

3 *Premixing colours*

I premix my colours and test on a scrap piece of paper to see how the paint dries, as darker colours will dry lighter and lighter colours will dry darker. I thin down my gouache paint with water and keep it at the consistency of heavy cream. I find that this is best for working wet into wet.

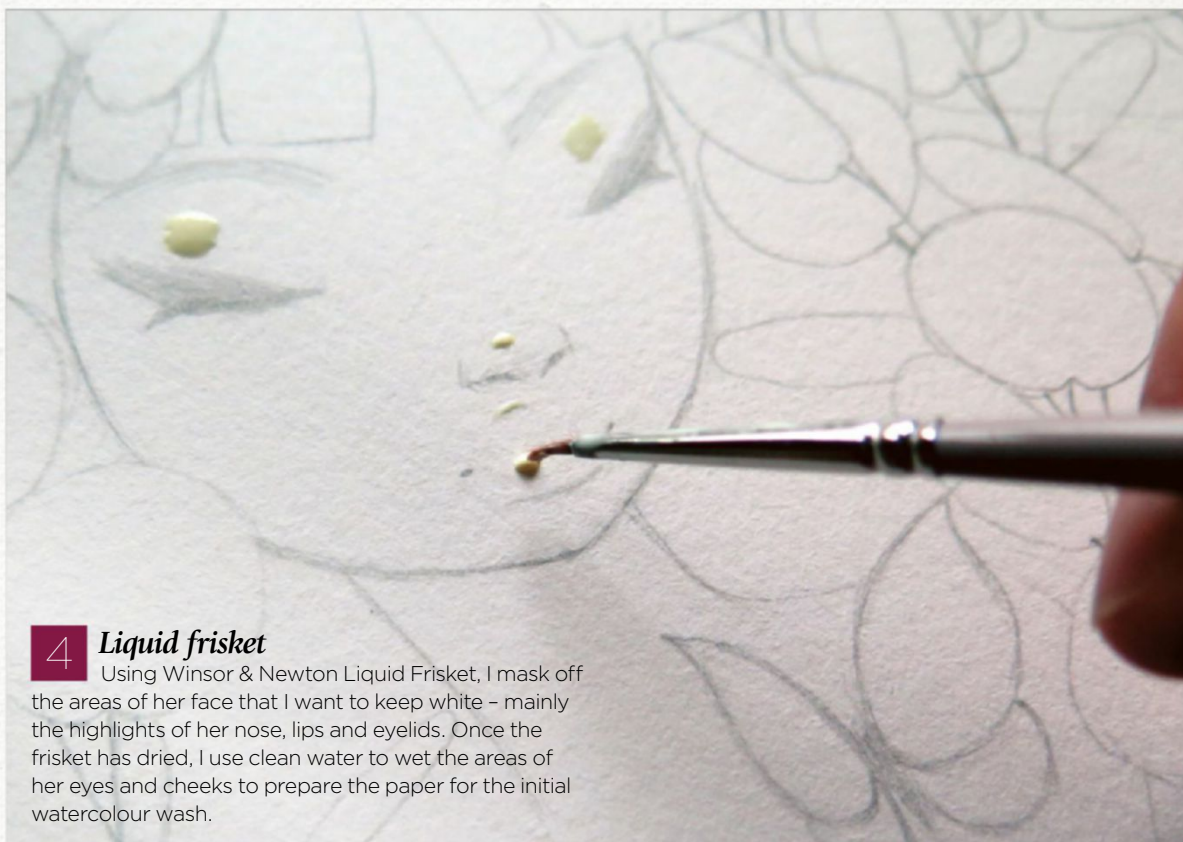
ARTIST INSIGHT

CREATING A DECKLED EDGE

Start with a sheet of paper larger than your intended dimensions. Leave at least one inch on all sides. Flip the paper over and measure out the dimensions on the back of the sheet.

Next, take a ruler, and line it up with your marks. Keep firm pressure on the ruler and tear the paper against the edge, towards the ruler. Tear a bit at a time if the length is too long.

You'll be left with a deckled edge and an indented line from the ruler. This is why we tear from the back of the paper. If there are edges that stick out too much, use a pair of clean pliers to pinch them off.



4 *Liquid frisket*

Using Winsor & Newton Liquid Frisket, I mask off the areas of her face that I want to keep white - mainly the highlights of her nose, lips and eyelids. Once the frisket has dried, I use clean water to wet the areas of her eyes and cheeks to prepare the paper for the initial watercolour wash.



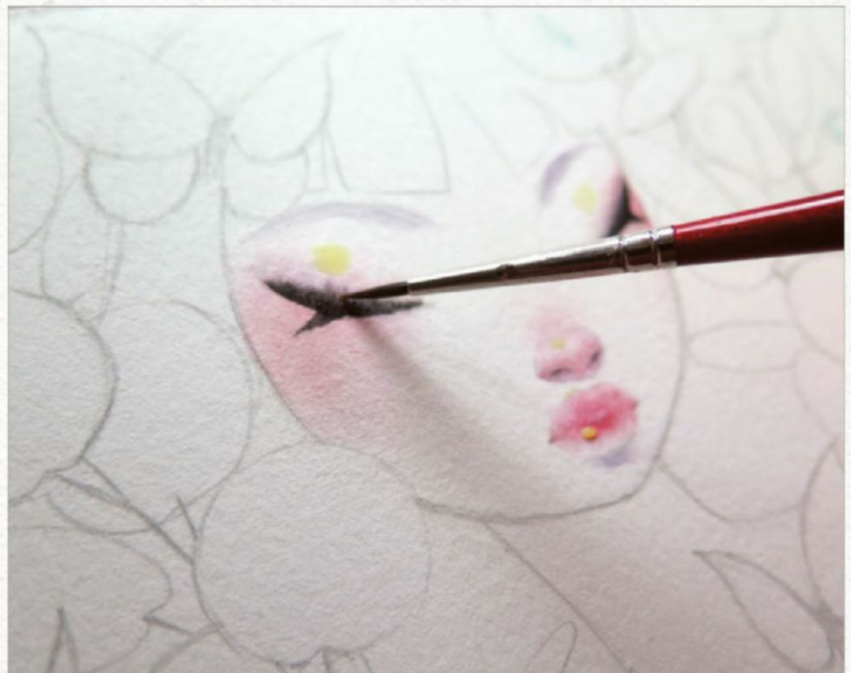
5 *Applying the initial washes*

Using thin watercolour, I add drops of paint on the wet areas of her eyes. Working wet into wet enables the paint to move and spread to create a smooth gradient. As the areas start to dry, I add more paint where I want the colours to be more saturated. The less wet an area, the less the paint spreads.



6 *Wet into wet*

Using the same technique, I wet her nose and lips, staying within the boundaries of those features. I move the paint around using a wet brush. When I need to remove some paint, I use a dry brush to soak up the excess colour. For a clean removal I use a piece of paper towel.



7 *Layering the watercolours*

I let the paint dry before building on top of it to add more depth and dimension in her features. I use black gesso to line her eyes. I like to use gesso because it has the same matte finish as gouache and it won't reactivate if I decide to work further on her eyes. ➡➡

ARTIST INSIGHT

LOST AND FOUND

Watercolour on a well-sized paper has the flexibility of being able to remove or push around pigment. Lay down a wet line and you can dab it out or scrub it back and forth, trying various line positions and ideas, picking the strongest and pushing back the wrong answers. But beware: too much reworking on wet paper will munch up the surface and may give unwanted textures.

ART TIP

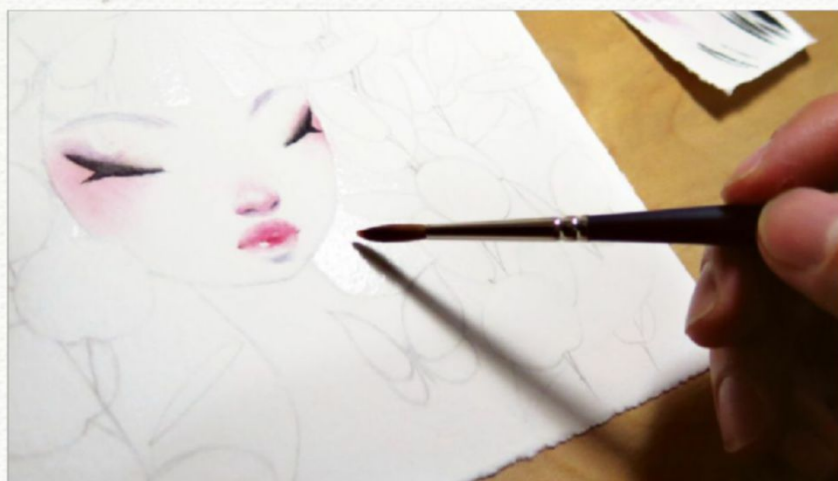
SURFACE PROTECTION

Use tracing paper to rest your hand while working. This prevents you dirtying the painting, but enables you to see it clearly underneath.



8 Removing the frisket

I use a thin layer of paint for her eyebrows to let the pencil lines show through, adding texture. Once the paint is dry, I carefully remove the liquid frisket with a hard eraser. I readjust the edges of the masked areas if they're too sharp.



9 Sectioning off

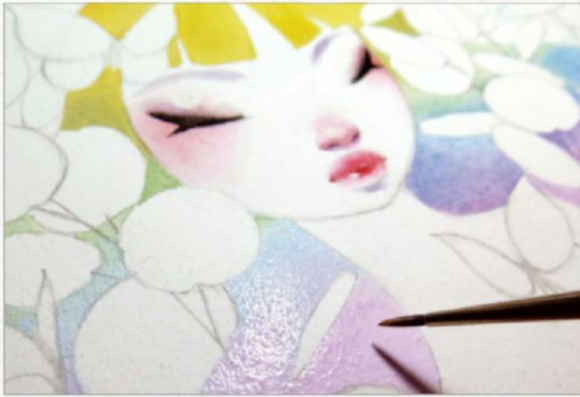
When I'm covering relatively large areas, I like to section off smaller, more manageable parts to work on. This is particularly helpful because of the complexity of the negative spaces. I make sure to keep the area wet as I go along.



10 Colouring the hair

Once again, I wet a section of her hair, making sure to exclude the leaves and butterflies. Starting with yellow gouache, I load up the paint and move it to the edges with my brush. I add the next colour and use the side of my brush to push the paint along the edge where they meet. A back-and-forth motion helps blend the two colours.

In depth Colourful gradients



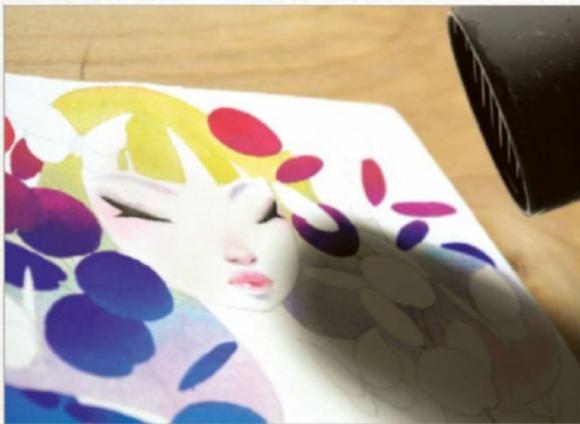
11 *Blending with a loaded brush*

I add more colours in the gradient and repeat. If a section of gradient is being encroached by another, I add more paint to help it push back and be more visible. I make sure my brush is loaded with paint when blending or it'll soak up pigment already there, causing uneven coverage.



12 *Tackling the leaves*

After her hair is dry, I work on one leaf at a time, wetting the shape and loading it with plenty of paint. I'm making the colours of the leaves much darker than her hair and face, to help separate the foreground from the figure.



13 *Slow and steady*

Working wet into wet takes a bit of patience, especially waiting for one layer to dry before working on the next. I keep the shapes I'm working on separate from each other to avoid the colours bleeding into each other. I use a hairdryer, set on low, to cut down drying time.



14 *Bringing the butterflies to life*

For the butterflies, I'm adding some greens to the gradient. These are not found anywhere else in the painting, so it will help them stand out. I'm using the complementary colours of the leaves to paint the stems to create some contrast and help them separate the different elements.



15 *The final touches*

Towards the end, I clean up all the uneven edges and deepen her eyelines. For the finishing touch, I add specks of colours throughout the painting to add more movement and interest to the whole piece.



Core skills: Oils

PART 1 GETTING STARTED WITH OILS

HOWARD LYON launches a five-part series that'll boost your knowledge of oils. If you've been putting off using this age-old medium, there's no time like the present!

There's an undeserved mystique around oil painting that has put up some intimidating barriers for some artists wanting to use this wonderful medium. I hope to remove those concerns and provide a basic foundation of knowledge to help you get started.

Oil paint is pigment bound in a drying (siccative) oil. The most common is linseed oil extracted from flax seeds, but you'll also find paint bound in walnut, safflower or other oils. The pigments are

generally the same as those found in watercolours, pastels and acrylics.

Oil paints offer a richness of colour and its surface allows the creation of beautiful textures. You can paint thick or thin, directly or use glazes. Oils can be used on paper, wood, metal, plastic, canvas and many other surfaces.

If you're just getting started, don't get overwhelmed. Be patient with yourself and recognise that it'll take a little time to get the hang of this beautiful medium. Don't overcomplicate it, either.



To begin we'll go over the key materials needed for you to get started. Most art materials are sold in at least two grades: student and professional. Whenever possible, purchase pro-grade materials. I find the difference in price is offset because pro materials almost always last longer and the paint goes further.



Howard has worked as an illustrator and art director as well as a fine artist for galleries and collectors. Explore his art by visiting www.howardlyon.com.

1 A spectrum of colours

There are hundreds of colours to choose from, but start with a basic palette that covers the spectrum and will give you a good mix of warm and cool hues. Pro-grade oils will contain more pigment, which will result in more accurate colour mixing, and will be resistant to fading in sunlight.



ARTIST INSIGHT

BE DELIBERATE

Every stroke you make should have purpose. What shape, colour and value is the stroke you're trying to make? Stay focused and paint with intent.



2 Oil painting requires a variety of brushes

I prefer Rosemary & Co. brushes, but I also recommend Silver Grand Prix and Trekkell. Hog bristle brushes are versatile, not terribly expensive and allow for a variety of applications. Finer-haired brushes, both natural and synthetic, can give you an even smoother finish and make very fine detail possible.



ART TIPS

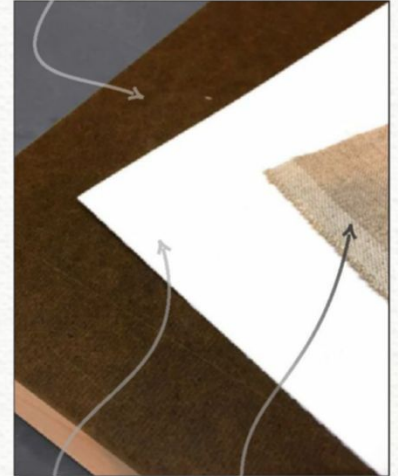
REGULAR DRAWING IS ESSENTIAL

Sketching from life is the fastest way to improve your observational skills and your paintings.

4 A surface to paint

The most common surfaces to paint on are canvas, linen and wood. You'll need to prime the surface with a gesso or ground to prevent the acids in the paint from contacting it directly. Acrylic gesso is easy to use and can be applied with a brush or roller.

A wood hardboard panel is cheap and smooth, and easy to make.



Paper from Arches that has been sized for oil painting.

Raw linen before it's been sized or primed. Expensive, but has a beautiful texture, and is strong.

3 Choose a palette for your paint

You'll need a palette for your paint. This can be a disposable one, a clean tabletop or a handheld wood palette, or a piece of glass that can be quickly scraped clean. Whatever you use, choose something that's large enough to allow for easy mixing and can be used ergonomically.

5 A comfortable easel

A solid easel is important so that your work is stable, safe and remains at a good working height while you're painting. You can purchase small, metal tripod-style easels that can be used sitting or standing, or consider a folding wood easel, or larger studio models that are meant to remain in situ.



From left to right...

1. Inexpensive, metal, tripod-style easel. Easy to carry and store, and can be used either when sitting or standing.

2. H-frame style easel for studio use. Broad price range and comes in various sizes.

3. French-style field easel. Limited canvas sizes, but is versatile and portable.

First Impressions

✧ Jasmine Becket-Griffith ✧

The self-taught artist reveals how a strong entrepreneurial streak helped her career



Where did you grow up and how has this influenced your art?

I grew up in south Kansas City, Missouri. I went to the somewhat blighted public schools there; it seems like we were all pretty poor and there was a lot of negativity. More than anything, I think it inspired me to lose myself in my artwork and try to better my own situation with it. There's a lot of escapism within that, especially with fantasy and surrealist art.

Is there a piece of art you saw as a child that changed everything?

My dad had a lot of art books that he shared with me when I was younger: the works of Salvador Dali, Hieronymus Bosch and MC Escher. We'd visit the city's Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art a lot and my favourite piece was Penitent Magdalene by El Greco. Every time I went to the museum I had to see her, my "lady with the most pretty eyes." I think in a lot of my paintings I still try to capture that look on her face, over and over again.

What was your next step in art?

I was always a little entrepreneur when it came to my artwork. I remember trying to sell my artwork door-to-door when I was five. In middle school I won a bunch of money from the National Spelling Bee and spent it on art supplies. I began selling more professionally when I opened my Strangeling.com website in 1997, while I was still in high school.

What character that you've painted do you most identify with?

Gosh, I might have to go with Alice in Wonderland. I see a lot of myself in her. I like adventures, cats, reading and exploring new things.

How much are you on the road?

An awful lot. In 2016 alone I caught 45 airline flights. Countless miles are



“I remember trying to sell my artwork door-to-door when I was five”

clocked up on our van. In just one year I've been to 15 countries on four different continents.

I have three homes: my primary house is here in Celebration, Florida, but I still maintain a studio near my family up in Kansas City, and a secondary home in London. I'm not always travelling

ABYSSAL MERMAID

"I painted this acrylic piece for the DragonCon Art Show. It celebrates my love of deep sea critters and bioluminescence."



specifically for art shows, but often it's tangentially related somehow.

What's been your best convention experience to date?

Wow, that's a hard one. Gotta love DragonCon. It's the one I've been doing the longest and I have the art show every year there. It was my first convention in fact: my friend and fellow artist Larry Elmore convinced me to give it a shot – and I'm so glad I did!

What's the most important thing that you've taught someone?

I've just come back from a teaching position as faculty for The Fantastic Workshop in Nashville, Tennessee with the folks at One Fantastic Weekend, which was fun and hopefully helpful.

More than anything though, I think I teach people that it's indeed possible to have a very fulfilling and lucrative life as a professional artist.

Is your art evolving? What's the most recent experiment you've made?

I'm an acrylic painter and I like to push the limits with what acrylic paints can do. Recently I've been playing with the notion of censorship in art and have been using a ruler to create grids of tiny squares of paint that resemble pixellation blurs. People first think it's done by a computer, but it's all done by hand with acrylic paints. I have fun experimenting.

Do you make space in your busy schedule to paint for pleasure?

I'm lucky in that almost all of my painting is completely for pleasure. I don't do much commissioned work, and when I do I only take on projects I genuinely enjoy, like my work for the Walt Disney Company. So 95 per cent of my painting time is my own, on my own projects for my gallery shows, and so on.

What advice would you give to your younger self to aid you on the way?

I'd tell myself to drop out of school as soon as I could. I hated school. I think I'd have been better off starting my art career full time even earlier. That's probably really bad advice for most people though. Stay in school, kids.

Jasmine is an acrylic painter working in the fantasy and pop surrealism genres. You can see more of her art at www.strangeling.com.

IMAGE COURTESY OF DANNY MAC



ZBRUSH 4R7[®]

Pixologic

PIXOLOGIC.COM



THE ALL-IN-ONE DIGITAL SCULPTING SOLUTION.
DESIGNED FOR THE PURSUIT OF ART.

BETWEEN WORLDS™

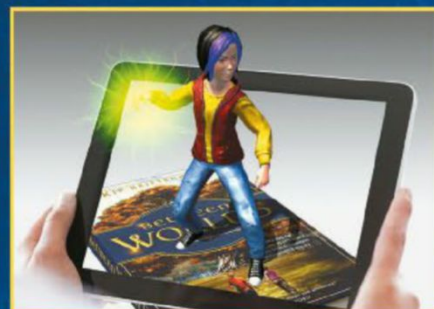
*The next
generation of
fantasy novel
is here!*



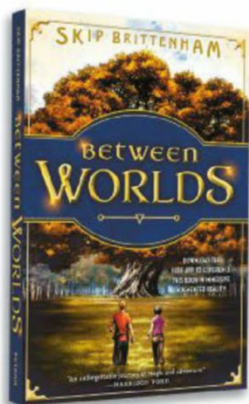
Aided by the mysterious Aaron, they are taught to survive this beautiful yet harsh land, but there are some in Nith with other plans for the teens.

Mayberry and Marshall must learn to control their new powers and, with the help of furry friends, escape their enemies and find their way home.

Misfit teens Mayberry and Marshall wander off during a school field trip to the Mystery Forest on a dare to find The Wishing Tree of local legend... and succeed. But they get more than they bargained for when they're swept to the alternate universe of Nith, a world brimming with danger and intrigue at every turn.



**FREE AUGMENTED
REALITY APP!**



Available now wherever
books are sold.

Find out more:

BETWEENWORLDSBOOK.COM

BETWEEN WORLDS is ™ and © Anomaly Productions, Inc. All rights reserved.

ANOMALY
PRODUCTIONS™

