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SUPER HERO

JOCK INTERVIEW

Why he doesn't want to be one of 'those guys' in comics

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



With all the talk of divisiveness in the world, I found our lead news feature on the unlikely heroes of comics (page 18) to be a much-needed uplifting story. It's essentially a tale of inclusivity: how a group of artists are elbowing their way on to the comics newsstands

with protagonists from usually less-visible and under-represented walks of life.

Gavin Mitchell, one of the lead artists on *The Pride*, a UK-based LGBTQ+ comic, made a thought-provoking comment in the piece: "If there's not a comic out there yet that's doing what you want to see, then start creating yourself."

I loved the sense of power and the freedom to create whatever you want in this statement. I've often wondered why artists – and the art community in general – are seemingly able to be inclusive of others. I can't put my finger on why exactly, but perhaps it's this ability to design and make our own worlds and stories, that help us to engage and understand a broad spectrum of people.

Do you agree? Please write in and let me know either way. I'd love to hear your thoughts.

Claire

Claire Howlett, Editor
claire@imaginefx.com

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

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The unlikely new heroes of comics

How indie comics are leading the way for heroes of all shapes and forms to be represented.

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Sketchbook titans!

Start with the deft scribbles of Mark Brooks on page 48, then delve into Joverine's dynamic lines – see page 56.

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Expressive watercolours

The insightful watercolours workshop from multi-talented artist Marc Taro Holmes is a great read.

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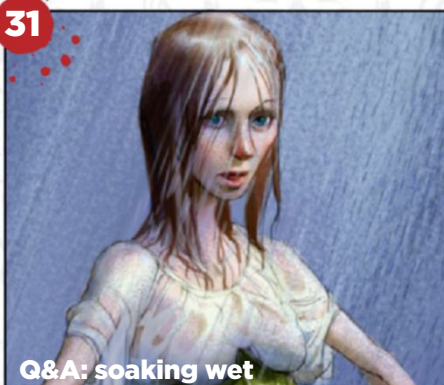


"Persistence. The only advice I can give is that. If we're honest, we know whether there's potential"

Batman illustrator Jock talks getting started



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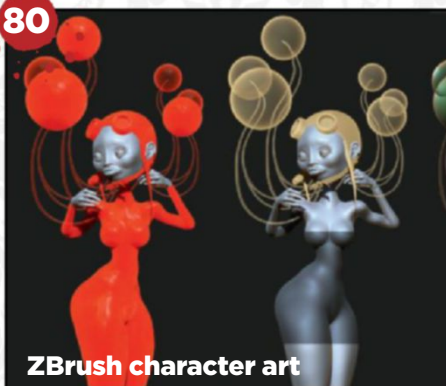
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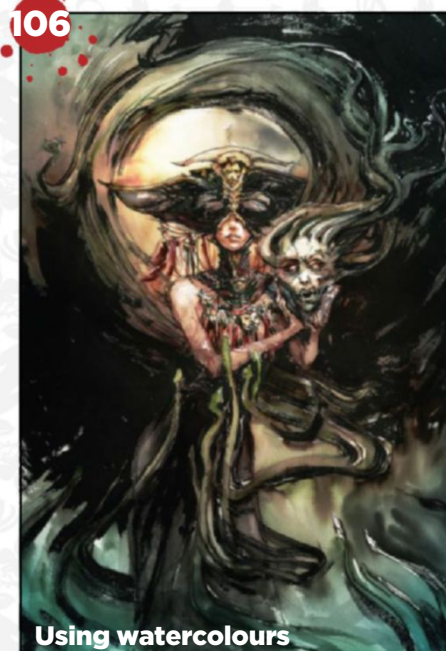
Wonder Woman

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Sketchbook: Mark Brooks

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Using watercolours

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Resources

Getting hold of all of this issue's videos and custom brushes is quick and easy. Just visit our dedicated web page at <http://ifxm.ag/wonder146comics>

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of video tutorials
from pro artists
to watch and
learn from!

WORKSHOP VIDEOS

Get better at comic panels

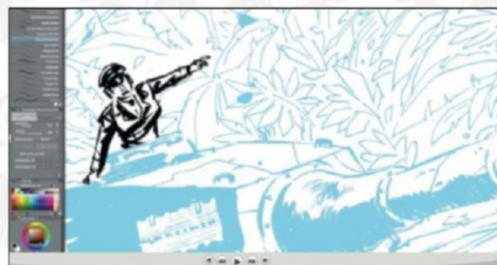
World of Tanks artist PJ Holden shows how to use real-world reference to draw a comic strip.



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

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- 2 Find the files you want**
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EXCLUSIVE VIDEO TUITION!

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



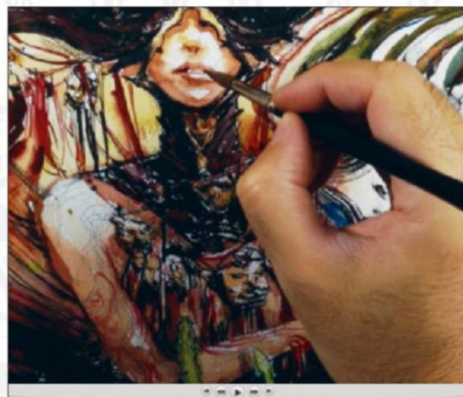
John Mahoney

See how John applies a range of straightforward ZBrush techniques to work up the details of his alien pilot design, before bringing it into KeyShot and turning the character into a photorealistic piece that's suitable for presentation.



Marc Taro Holmes

Through the use of dipping nibs, sable hair brushes and textured watercolour paper, Marc harnesses the unpredictable nature of traditional media and paints expressively with watercolour to create a striking piece of fantasy art.



Q&A VIDEOS

Tom Foster

Discover how Tom quickly depicts crowd scenes in comics, using one of three easy-to-understand techniques.



Tom Foster

Work in accordance with some basic principles of physics in order to paint the difficult-to-master dynamics of fabric, in this case a superhero's cape caught on something. Tom shows you how to achieve this comedic effect realistically.



TRAINING

Krystal Sae Eua

Witness the secrets of creating pro-level characters with efficiency, in Krystal's Character Modeling for Production video.

FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART



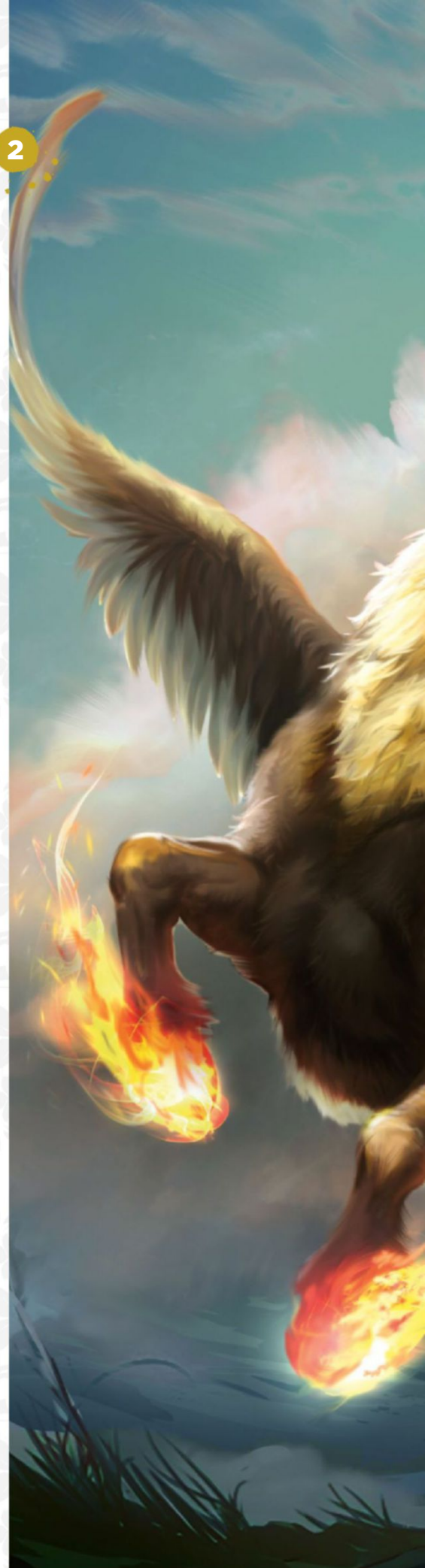
Ricardo Ow

LOCATION: Canada MEDIA: Photoshop WEB: www.owzersart.com

Having begun his career as a 3D artist, Ricardo recently begun to focus on illustration. "It's the perfect marriage between software and artistry," he reveals.



2





3



1 DRAKE

"This is a 'David vs Goliath' version of dragons fighting in mid-air. To spice things up and suggest scale, I decided to include a human rider. I imagined a world where humans had tamed a smaller species of dragons to stand a chance against the bigger and more menacing drakes."

2 STAGASUS

"For this art school assignment we were asked to paint something we felt represented us. I chose a character taming a powerful mythical beast to represent my own quest to master my art. It's corny, but it gave me a great excuse to paint a stag with wings."

3 SPACE RANGER

"A personal project: a series of illustrations featuring my golden retriever, Ecco. He's normally a bit of a fraidy-cat and I found it hilarious to reimagine him as a brave hero on grand adventures."



Álvaro Calvo Escudero

LOCATION: Spain MEDIA: Photoshop WEB: www.escudero.artstation.com

Freelance concept artist and illustrator Álvaro wants to work on films. His ethos is to draw for the sake of drawing. "Focus. Show the world your vision. Express yourself in your own way."



1 Obee

"Obee needs to cross the hall quickly, and this rat is perfect for the job. For this piece I focused on humour, action and speed. I was looking to create a symbol; a recognisable silhouette for the video game The Promise."



2 Faffell

"It's a reader monster who likes to read stories to others. This was my first personal project. I was keen to capture his personality, not only through his face but also by showing the movement of his fingers and toes."

3 Thorn Pup

"A cute, playful dog plant was the idea. Although it was a very enjoyable study, creating an anatomy for this puppy wasn't as easy as I thought. I tried to use real, beautiful plants to create a balanced fur design."





Marilena Mexi

LOCATION: Greece **MEDIA:** Photoshop **WEB:** www.marilenamexi.com

Marilena studied graphic design and worked on advertising projects, before becoming an art teacher and finally a freelance illustrator. She has also self-published three fantasy novels.



1 MIST AND MAGIC

"This is an illustration from my novel *Deerward*. The book tells the story of Prince Alcander. When he discovers a secret about his past, he sets forth on an epic quest to save his homeland."

2 ALICE IN WONDERLAND

"I made this for Cap Cap, a cafe-bistro in Athens - it was printed as a huge mural for one wall. The main difficulty I faced was the aspect ratio, which is ultra-wide."

3 THE DEER AND THE FAIRY, FAIRYTALES, FAIRYLAND

"These are illustrations I created for my upcoming children's book. It's going to be a story based on a world where fairies and other mythical creatures exist. My goal is to teach children the virtue of sharing, the power of friendship, and to follow their dreams."







Ricardo Vultos

LOCATION: Portugal **MEDIA:** Photoshop, Blender **WEB:** www.ricardo_vhultos_art.artstation.com

Sci-fi dominates Ricardo's art: "I start by sketching on paper, before scanning it and painting it in Photoshop. For environments, I block and light it in Blender first."

1 BEAM SABER SOLDIER

"Inspired by Magic: The Gathering and League of Legends, I created a character in a dynamic pose with sci-fi elements."



Roberto Gatto

LOCATION: Italy **MEDIA:** Photoshop **WEB:** www.robertogattoart.com

Having trained as a computer programmer, illustration wasn't a natural career path for Roberto. "I was never an arty kid," he recalls. "I got into this field thanks to The Elder Scrolls series!"



1



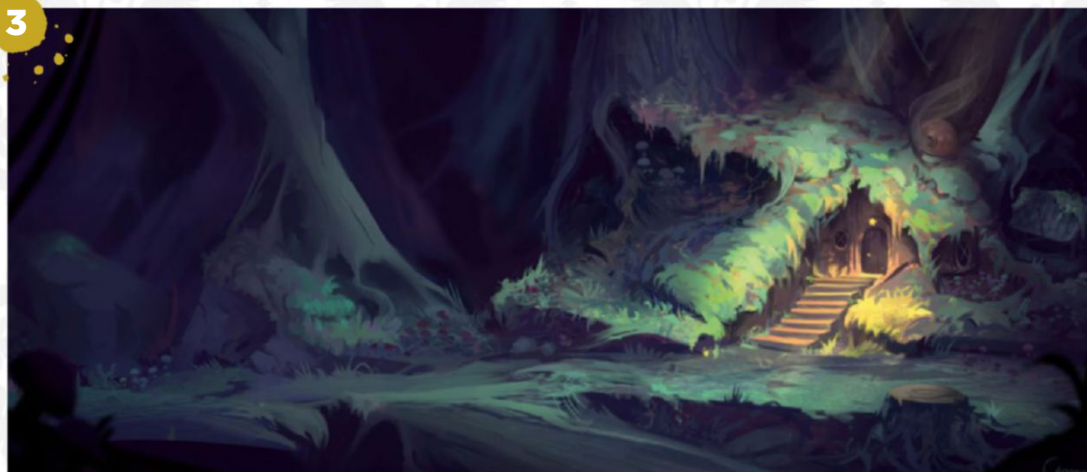
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1 MEDIEVAL TOWN

"This is a piece from my Dream Tales personal project. I took great care planning the composition, from silhouette exploration to line drawing, colour keys and the final painting stage."

2 WITCH DOCTOR HUT

"I wanted to visualise a shaman's hut in the middle of a forest. I tried to contrast the mystery of the individual living there with a peaceful woodland setting."



3

3 DARK FOREST

"This is the piece that sparked my Dream Tales project. It was fun working on it without much planning: I just started with a colour abstraction and worked my way to the final painting."



Christian Doretz

LOCATION: Germany MEDIA: Photoshop WEB: www.dodez.de

It wasn't until university that Christian discovered his passion for sci-fi and mechanical art. "Since then I've really got hooked deeply into mechs, spaceships and bulky tech cars," he explains.

1



2



1 PATROL

"I wanted to show a small vessel exploring an abandoned and desolate environment. I started with very rough strokes, and it evolved to a detailed foreground ship with a diffuse background."

2 DESERT RACE

"The picture started out as a bright wasteland desert. My idea was to create something like the pod race from The Phantom Menace."



3



3 ROBOTICS BAY

"My idea was to build up a sci-fi robotics lab in a clean environment. The bright entrance was meant to leave an open space for the viewer's imagination."

4



4 MOON MINING ALTAIR

"My inspiration for this was one of Nicolas 'Sparth' Bouvier's awesome pictures. I love sci-fi, and his work always inspires me to keep on drawing."

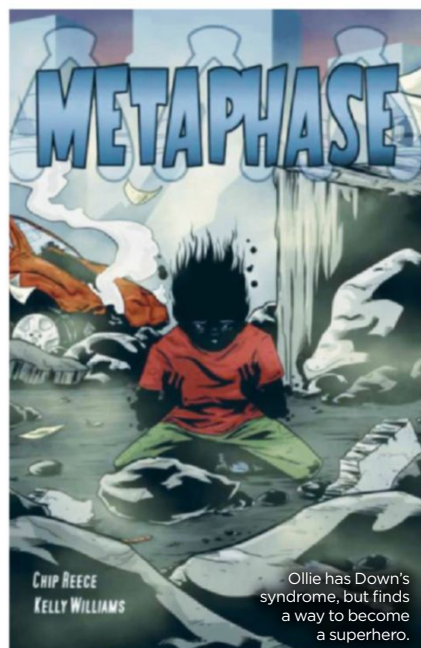
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5 LEAD FREE

"What would the world look like if spaceships used oil as their source of fuel? This piece leads you to a not-too-distant future where oil is transported around the globe in huge ships."

Do you want to see your art on these pages? Then email five pieces of your work and a short explanation about each artwork, along with a photo and a few details about yourself, to fxpose@imaginefx.com



Ollie has Down's syndrome, but finds a way to become a superhero.



The creators of The Pride wanted more realistic LGBTQ+ heroes.



In Alters, transgender issues are woven into the storyline.

The unlikely heroes

PC comics Indie artists lead the way as comics enter a new era of inclusivity, reports **Garrick Webster**

The overweight teenager who's bullied and teased, but shrugs it off with a laugh. The disabled reporter who remains dignified, even when a prominent politician mocks him. The transgender individual, humiliated by not being allowed a toilet. Or the Down's syndrome child with a heart defect, who fights for life through multiple open-heart surgeries before the age of one. They're all heroes – absolutely – but you're unlikely to read their stories in comics.

Yes, there are blind and wheelchair-bound heroes. There are gay superheroes too, here and there. And the outsiders – orphans, mutants or anti-heroes – are well represented. Mainstream comics are becoming more diverse, but for some creators it's not coming quickly enough. So they're doing it themselves via indie publications that are both stunning and inspiring.

Metaphase is a great example. It was written by comic fanatic Chip Reece,

whose son Ollie has Down's syndrome (DS), and features a hero based on Chip's young boy.

DREAMING BIG

"The comic idea came mostly from my wanting to eventually share my love of comics with Ollie, but then discovering that there were no characters with Down's syndrome in the stories. I wanted my son to be able to see characters like himself doing amazing things, so he could dream just as big as I did as a kid."



With a script for a 10-page teaser, **Chip** got artist Kelly Williams on board (see Industry Insight, far right) and eventually Peter Simeti at Alterna Comics agreed to



People with Down's syndrome are told they can't do things. Metaphase addresses the prejudice.

publish it, with some funding coming via a Kickstarter campaign. Now anyone can buy it on Amazon.



Dan White is another dad who saw the gap in what mainstream comics were offering. He developed Department of Ability (DoA) because he couldn't find any wheelchair-using heroes that his daughter Emily could relate to. Like Ollie, she's now the hero of a comic.

The UK-based charities Scope and Strongbones support DoA, enabling Dan to write and draw it full time, while

“I wanted my son to be able to see characters like himself doing amazing things”



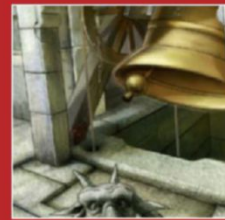
LISTEN UP, PERPS!

To celebrate 40 years of 2000 AD, art from the "galaxy's greatest comic" is on show at London's Cartoon Museum. And none of it is 'Dreddful'...
Page 23



UNPLEASANT CONDITIONS

A workspace should be pleasant. "But not too pleasant! Not too much comfort!" says lounge-averse Ryan Sook, as he shows us his coastal studio.
Page 24



IT'S SOUND ADVICE

Ever struggled to depict sound in your art? See how Nick Harris does it, among other indispensable advice from pro artists, in our Q&A section.
Page 28



at the same time being a sort of inclusivity evangelist. He shows the book to people all the time, taking feedback, and is inspired by Al Davison, a comic artist who suffers from spina bifida like Emily.

"My skills have gone from fairly static and apprehensive in the ideas stage, to thinking 'just go for it' in the final page - disability very much in

The wonderful Department of Ability has given artist and writer Dan White his big break into comics.

your face," says Dan. "Al Davison's work, for instance on *The Spiral Cage*, has taught me that every page can feature a different style of panels and imagery without losing the hook and power of the story."

It isn't just parents with disabled children who are pushing the agenda. The indie publisher Aftershock has big ambitions for *Alters*, a new series ➔

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

KELLY WILLIAMS

On what it was like drawing a Down's syndrome superhero

How did *Metaphase* start?

Chip Reece did a write-up about *The Cabinet*, a crowd-funded horror comic I was working on. He emailed me about *Metaphase* and asked if I'd be into drawing it. I read the pitch and saw the heart and thoughtfulness in it. So, I was in.

What style were you going for?

We wanted *Metaphase* to be an all-ages story, to appeal to kids and parents who may not read comics at all. I decided to draw the book digitally, with a really clean look and bright colouring. It was fun to play around with.

What was it like drawing a child with Down's syndrome in a sensitive way?

Coming up with the design for Ollie was tough at first. I had concerns about being very detailed and trying to draw a perfect representation of DS and it coming off as a caricature, or jarring. Plus, this character was based on Chip's son and I really didn't want to accidentally offend. But I probably had more fun coming up with Ollie's look than any other character.

How well do comics represent disability at the moment?

The comics industry is slow to change. Far too many people are holding on to old ideas and outdated conventions of what defines a hero, villain or meaningful story. The fact we still have to work so hard for everyone to be included is nuts.

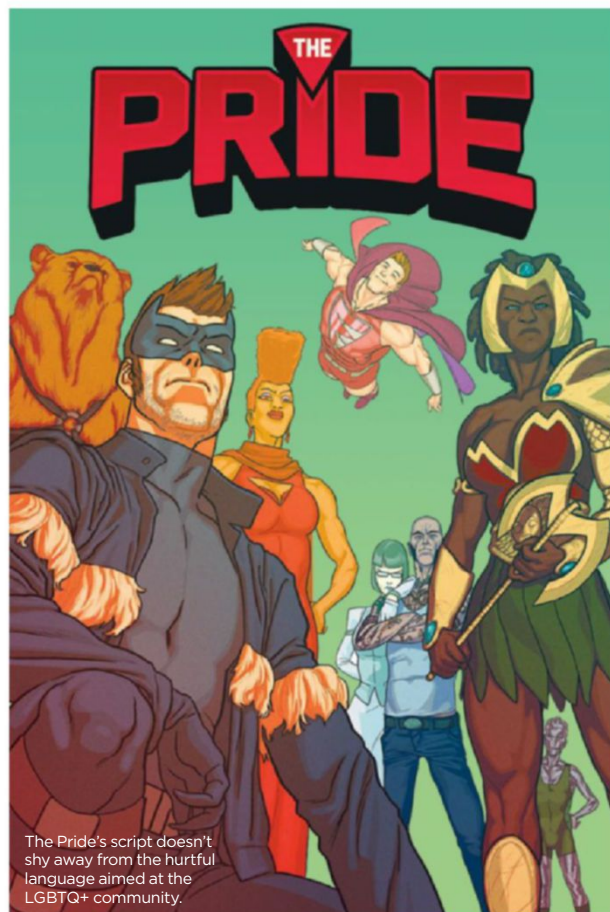


Kelly is a US comic artist, drawing titles such as *The Dark*, *The Cabinet* and *Angel with a Bullet*.

www.treebeardstuff.com



The Department of Ability's characters are as different and diverse as possible.



The Pride's script doesn't shy away from the hurtful language aimed at the LGBTQ+ community.



In Alters, Charlie become Chalice, awakening powers that could save humanity.

➤ featuring Charlie, who is transitioning to become Chalice, and at the same time becoming an Alter – a powerful hero to protect humanity.

BEYOND A TRANSGENDER STORY



Italian artist **Leila Leiz** has been drawing the comic, which deals with subjects far beyond transgender issues. "We're hoping to

do stories about homelessness, mental and physical health, people dealing with difficulties in life such as job loss or mistreatment by society," she says.

An inclusive team and a huge amount of research helps with the book's brilliant execution. Leila

continues: "The entire creative team is made up of different genders and gender identities. Our colourist, for example, is a trans woman. Each of the scripts is read by at least five trans people, just to ensure we're on the right path. But the less we make this about transgender rights and the more we make it about a character who happens to be trans, the more effective our story will be."

The Pride is a well-established indie comic created in Wales. It began eight years ago and aims to represent LGBTQ+ heroes as real, three-dimensional characters rather than stereotypes. Its writer is Joe Glass, who is tired of seeing queer characters

“If there's not a comic book out there yet that's doing what you want to see, then start creating yourself”



Artist Gavin Mitchell went for a classic Silver Age look for The Pride.

introduced through a big coming-out story, before fading into the background. Joe's noted that many gay characters are white men. There are few black ones, and bisexuals often turn out to be villains.

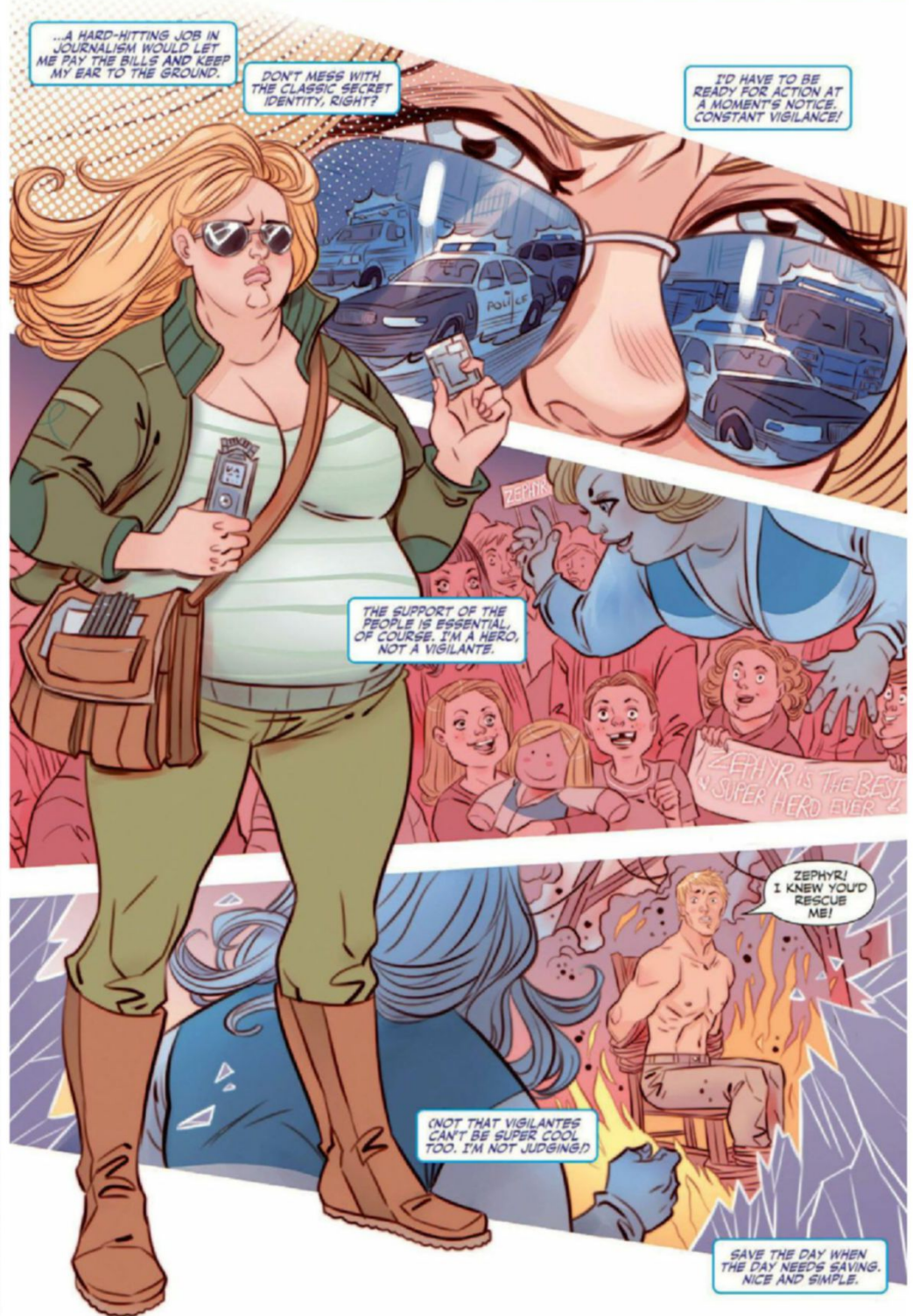
"My run on the artwork has a simple style, but it doesn't mean that the real-world issues addressed in the comic have to be," says Gavin Mitchell, one of the lead artists on The Pride. "Diversity was, and still is, an important part of the roster of heroes and The Pride is constantly expanding to include as many as it can. It's a book that's meant for everyone, so hopefully the art reflects that."

SIZING IT UP

Over the generations, overweight characters in comics have tended to be victims, baddies or providers of comic relief. Not Faith, a hero who's been around for 25 years in Valiant's book Harbinger, but has only recently got her own series.



Originally drawn by Jim Shooter, today Montreal artist **Marguerite Sauvage** is on pencils and Faith received nominations for three industry awards last year.



Plus-size superhero Faith is confident and solves problems. No aspect of the storyline is based on her size.

Marguerite's rendition of the character is intelligent, confident and beautiful.

"She talks before fighting, she believes in redemption instead of revenge, and she's positive and generous," explains Marguerite. "That's what I want to express through my drawing. Her body size is a part of this message of progress and tolerance. We challenge conventions and prejudice by showing a good example, like Faith would do."

Mainstream comics are certainly changing, but as is often the case the indie publishers and self-publishers are sparking the real creativity when it comes to unlikely heroes. Gavin's succinct advice chimes with what all the creators we spoke to told us: "If there's not a book out there yet that's doing what you want to see, then start creating yourself," he says.

"Comics are for everyone and can be created by anyone."

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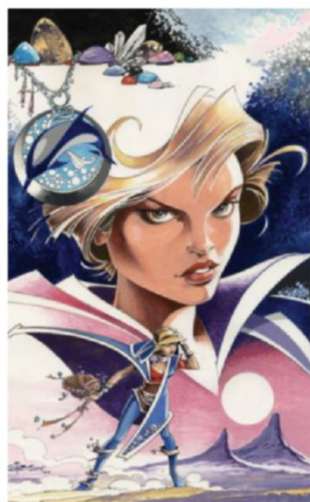
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The stylish artwork for Halo Jones was created by Ian Gibson.

The Harlem Heroes, illustrated by Dave Gibbons, were part of 2000 AD's original line-up.



Gaze into the art of Dredd & co

Comic curation Forty years of 2000 AD are celebrated in a display of original art from the 'galaxy's greatest comic'...

Since first going into Earth's orbit in February 1977, weekly sci-fi comic 2000 AD has gone on to become one of the most important titles in the industry. The impact of the British publication continues to this day: 2000 AD remains an enduring critical and commercial success.

Given its important place in comic history, it seems only right that 2000 AD is being celebrated by an exhibition at London's Cartoon Museum. From futuristic lawman Judge Dredd to 50th century



Simon Davis' cover celebrates 2000 AD's British origins, during the era of punk music.

Mutant bounty hunter Strontium Dog, drawn here by Carlos Ezquerra, was originally created for 2000 AD's sister title, Starlord, which lasted for 22 issues.



businesswoman Halo Jones, original artwork of the publication's most iconic characters are on display.

"The Cartoon Museum would have been derelict in its duty of preserving and promoting the best of British cartoons and comic art by not celebrating the milestone that is the 40th anniversary of 2000 AD, 'the galaxy's greatest comic'," says comic artist, tutor and the Cartoon Museum's



curator **Steve Marchant**. "Many of the greatest artists and writers we have ever seen have sprung from its pages, and it continues as a home for the very best to this day."

Ron Smith started drawing Judge Dredd in 1979, giving the feared lawman more realistic proportions.

Featured artists include Carlos Ezquerra, the originator of Judge Dredd and Strontium Dog, Rogue Trooper co-creator Dave Gibbons and award-winning fine artist Simon Davis. There's also work by stalwart 2000 AD artists Brian Bolland, Mike McMahon, Ian Gibson and Henry Flint.

There's over 80 pages of original artwork, so visitors will get a taste of each decade. "Whether people only read it in their youth or have continued buying it to this day, there's plenty here to enjoy," Steve reveals.

Supported by Rebellion Publishing, Future Shock: 40 Years of 2000 AD includes rare pages loaned by artists and collectors. The exhibition runs until 23 April at London's Cartoon Museum - for more details, visit www.cartoonmuseum.org.

“Many of the greatest artists and writers we have ever seen have sprung from its pages”



My vintage 1960s Dazor lamp hangs over my home-made painting table. It cost a dollar at a rummage sale. For a buck, it's one of the best investments in the room!

My drawing table. It's the only piece of furniture in the room that I've bought myself. Makes me feel professional. I'm trying to live up to owning it!

My "Ryan's Studio Roost" hand-carved sign came from my dad. A great artisan, whose studio I promise would be far more interesting to see than mine!

My great oak flat files, a gift from my wife, are a prized possession. How she managed to fit all four in my 91 Ford Explorer is still a mysterious, if not a miraculous achievement!

My assortment of real and sculpted bones, shells and horns are strewn about to remind me that the best designs are those found in nature.

The windows here are one of my favourite features. The changing light, the trees and the not-too distant Californian coast make the view too beautiful to close the blinds.

Ryan Sook

Harmonious space The comic artist opens the doors on his coastal studio, where the line between functional and liveable is very fine...



I've had four homes with five studios over the past 20 years. And it's worth mentioning that in nearly all of

those workspaces my arrangement was established, reestablished and often re-reestablished throughout my tenure in each one. Not unlike my process for making pictures in fact.

The space shown here is my favourite thus far! And I got it settled after only one rearrangement of things!



Original art by my daughter Eden when she was one. At age four she paints better than I do!

Finding a balance between functionality and comfort is essential in creating a productive work environment. Spending often eight to 14 hours a day in the same space requires, for me, that it should be somewhat pleasant to exist in. But not too pleasant! Not too much comfort! Lest I find myself lounging. Ogling art books, reading Ross MacDonald novels, playing guitar, or watching that movie for the fifth time (okay, 15th time) instead of drawing.

Then again, the studio can't be so sterile or industrious that it becomes a place I have no desire to be in. Otherwise my drawing table, painting station, rolling tool caddies, monitors and keypads become little more than disgruntled coworkers I'd like to avoid. My lovely wife and two little girls provide sufficient reason to elude the studio as it is. So I can't allow the space to become oppressive.

Now, after a couple of decades, I've managed to work out the kinks and

Artist news, software & events

Behind this unused fireplace are my dusty books (I read a lot online now) and my collection of comics, which hide behind bags, boxes and shipping supplies. The days of long boxes are gone.



My tiny Ikea desk and drawers are bare-bones furniture, for when I'm working digitally. I like the smallest tablet and simplest tools in Photoshop, with a scanner and printer within easy reach. More importantly, some coffee, water, an iPad for reference and audio books are all to hand.



Most of the fun in the room happens at my painting station. Finished and unfinished art gather with multiple sketchbooks and every possible medium. This is the only time I'm creative without restraint. Without personal projects, work for hire becomes stale!

strike that balance of harmonious efficiency that makes my studio an enjoyable place to make pictures in. With four distinct "stations" in the space – drawing, digital, painting, and storage – I can quickly jump from an inked board or painting to the scanner and Photoshop without skipping a beat. All the while, enjoying an audiobook or listening to that movie for the 15th time. Okay, 50th! I'm old. But good movies, like good comics, never become old.

Ryan has been drawing comics featuring the likes of Batman, Buffy and Jonah Hex since 1997 and despite himself, manages to still make a living at it. Look at some of his illustration work at www.ryansook.com.



My huge drafting table is less for scale than for the number of concurrent projects. I need room for a sketchbook(s), iPad and completed pages to refer to. Again, coffee is as close as any other essential tool!

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, England



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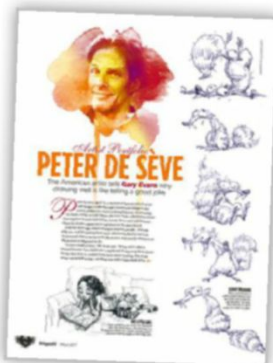


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Asking questions

I wanted to write in and let you know how much I enjoyed the interview with Peter de Sève in issue 145. His life and journey to becoming an artist were entertaining and insightful, and his analogy that creating good art is like telling a good joke has stayed with me ever since. More interviews like that one please!

Eric M Hargis, US



Eric really enjoyed issue 145's interview with artist Peter de Sève.

Claire replies Many thanks for writing in, Eric. We enjoyed that one, too. Often great anecdotes are down to the artist's personality. But it's often down to the journalist, too – in this case the very talented Gary Evans. Interviewing skills, and especially the knack of teasing out anecdotes from sometimes more introverted characters, is a much under-rated skill. Don't you worry, we plan many more like this!

Body of work

Thank you for your recent anatomy issue (number 144). I'm an art student who wants to break into digital fantasy art when I graduate, but your Fantastic Figures piece, showcasing the best in the industry right now, was a huge eye-opener. I have some way to go before I can match them! But it only motivated me all the more. I hope one day it'll be me featured in these round-up pieces.

Alexandra Brookes, England

Claire replies Hello Alexandra. None of those artists got to where they are now without spending hours honing their craft. It sounds like you're well



DID YOU MISS OUR ISSUE ON ANIMATION? Turn to page 54 to see how you can get hold of this and other past issues.



Alexandra hopes to one day feature in an artist showcase piece like *Fantastic Figures* in issue 145.

positioned to join them. We hope to hear from you again when you're ready.

Alt software

I run a school animation club and one of my rules is that no child does something in my classroom on a Friday lunchtime they can't reasonably do at home at the weekend instead. We use cheap digital cameras for stop motion, and Blender and Sculptris software.

Which brings me to my point. I've seen you're starting a tutorial series on ZBrush. Great idea. But given that the program doesn't come cheap, why don't you opt to do one on Sculptris instead? It would be a great introduction to the ideas, which everybody could then try out, regardless of how much they have to spend.

Andy, via email

Claire replies Thank you Andy, that's an excellent suggestion. ZBrush is an industry standard tool, so it's important that we feature it. However, Sculptris looks like an affordable way for artists to discover 3D art techniques and is definitely something we'll look into featuring in the future. What other software are readers using that you'd like to see workshops on? Let me know!

Interesting times

I'd like to thank you and your team for producing great issues of ImagineFX which have been my go-to every month. There's always something which fascinates me. Issues 143, 144 and 145 were especially interesting. So please keep up the good work!

Best regards, S Austin

Claire replies Thank you for writing in. We work hard to make the magazine the best we can, so it's a relief when we get feedback like yours. We don't mind if feedback is constructive, too, though. What do other readers think? What would you like to see more (or less) of? Let us know!



Your art news that's grabbed our attention



Matt Sadler
[@matsadlerart](https://twitter.com/matsadlerart)

"A quick warm up sketch from this morning."



Jason Rainville
[@rhineville](https://twitter.com/rhineville)

"No more imagination dailies. Say hello to good old-fashioned studies."



Dorian Vallejo
[@dorian_vallejo_art](https://twitter.com/dorian_vallejo_art)

"The final version of *On Almost Any Morning*, oil on panel, 24x36 inches."

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

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS
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Artist Q&A

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The NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX panel

Tan Hui Tian
Previously a games artist, Tan is now a senior illustrator at Collateral Damage Studios. Her background in graphic design can be clearly seen in her illustrations.
<http://ifxm.ag/th-tian>

Tom Foster
Between assignments working as a comic book artist on titles such as 2000 AD and Judge Dredd Magazine, Tom writes and performs stand-up comedy.
www.instagram.com/tomfosterart

Nick Harris
English artist Nick switched to digital after 18 years of working in traditional media, mostly watercolours. He works as a full-time freelance children's book illustrator.
nick@nickillus.com

Carmen Sinek
Carmen is a freelance illustrator and concept artist based in Arizona, US. When she isn't painting, she spends most of her free time trying to find her Wacom stylus.
www.carmensinek.com



We can introduce sound to this scene through the reaction of the critters around its source. That, along with various other clues dotted around.

Question

Can you help me to convey sound in a painting?

Molly Steiner, Australia

Answer

Nick replies

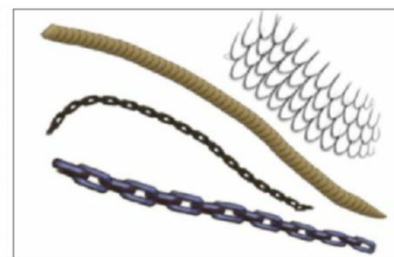


While it's not possible to show sound in a conventional, still image (multimedia interactivity aside), you can imply it in the reactions by characters and objects in a scene. Impacts throw up particles and cause vibration, for example.

With that in mind I'll tackle a tolling church bell, from a high eye level. That enables me to show details you wouldn't be able to see if viewing the same thing from ground level. I can show small things that might be shaking, vibrating or even dislodged.

I can also add humour, such as gargoyles covering their ears. Masons working on such things were known to include humour in their carving,

Take the time to create custom brushes for items such as ropes, chains and scales. However, don't just use them straight. Tweak their application for particular scenes.

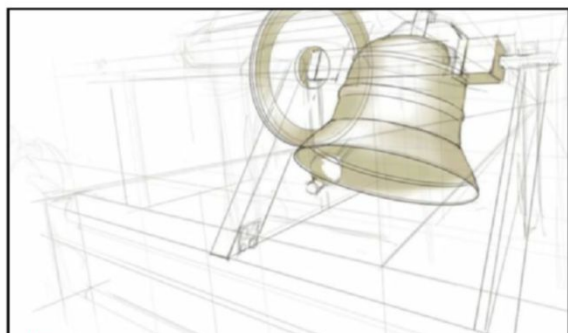


but here our critters may be more alive than stone. You could also have alarmed pigeons taking flight, roof tiles sliding about and other fixtures swaying. Yet the key to the scene for me are the gargoyles. I use SketchBook Pro to sketch out a belfry and bell, because it has a decent perspective rig, Ruler and Ellipse tools.

Artist Q&A Need our advice?

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

Step-by-step: How to add the feeling of sound to your scene



1 Using a two-point perspective rig with the horizon line fairly high, I mark out some simple shapes, such as a box around the bell. I use the Ellipse tool to draw the bell. I look at various photos to understand what the support setup might be for a heavy bell, then sketch something appropriate.



2 I use some texture brushes to help make areas look more like stone. By using these same brushes on the gargoyles, it should keep the viewer guessing whether these are alive or not. I pose them all with claws to their ears, and make sure the bell is poised with the clanger just after the strike.



3 I build up the stone textures and ensure everything feel solid, particularly the clanger because it's a focal point. I avoid vibration lines and other such comic book devices. Instead I'll have a few bits of masonry coming loose. Try to have your effects fit in with the visual style you're using.

Question

Any tips for depicting a padded seat?

Arthur Bartels, US



Alter the materials of the seat by overlaying different textures and using different Layer modes. Using this technique makes it possible to quickly create multiple design options.

Answer

Tan replies

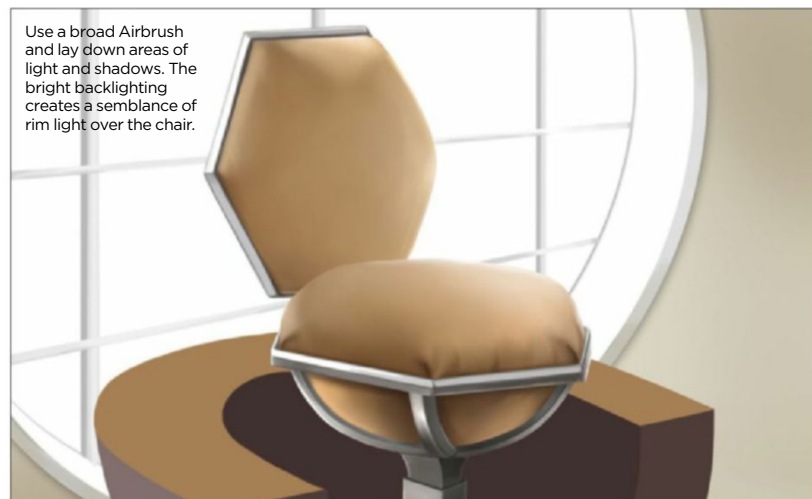


Materials such as a cloth-covered padded seat not only require texture to make them look convincing, but an understanding of their physical structures and how light interacts with them. Before I start, I search the internet for images to gain an idea of the characteristics of a padded seat. For instance, a padded seat usually has rounded edges, and the silhouette of the padding should reflect that.

Additionally, the fabric or leather is usually stretched over the back and/or bottom of the chair, making tiny bunches in the drapery where the tension is strongest. It's the attention

to such details that would make the rendering more convincing. I want a lighting condition that's high-key, so that the materials can be depicted with clarity. To that end, I chose to position the seat in front of a wide window.

First, I need to sketch the seat in perspective. I use simple, one-point perspective to establish that. For clean-looking objects such as these, I use Photoshop's Pen tool for more control over my edges. You can erase some edges with an Airbrush for soft edges, but in this instance, it's not needed. After that, it's a matter of rendering the material and overlaying a material texture (on Soft Light mode) as needed.



Use a broad Airbrush and lay down areas of light and shadows. The bright backlighting creates a semblance of rim light over the chair.

Question

How can I best show a standing figure, with the viewer looking down on them?

Felix Ström, Sweden

Answer

Tan replies

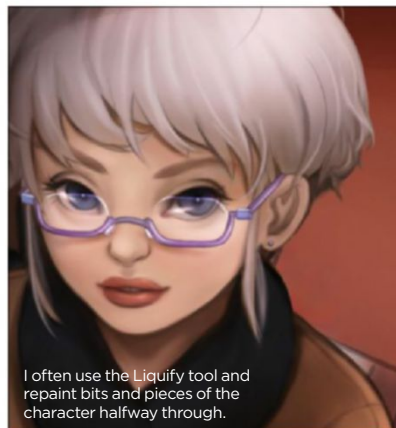


Drawing a foreshortened human figure relies on the same basic principles as drawing boxes in

perspective. You can start off by drawing the artist mannequin from different angles, because the form of a mannequin is simplified.

A strong grasp of anatomy is needed to realistically depict a human in a top-down view from scratch, although photo references can help. In this example, however, I'm constructing a figure from scratch, using a more anime style, which is conducive to exaggerated foreshortening.

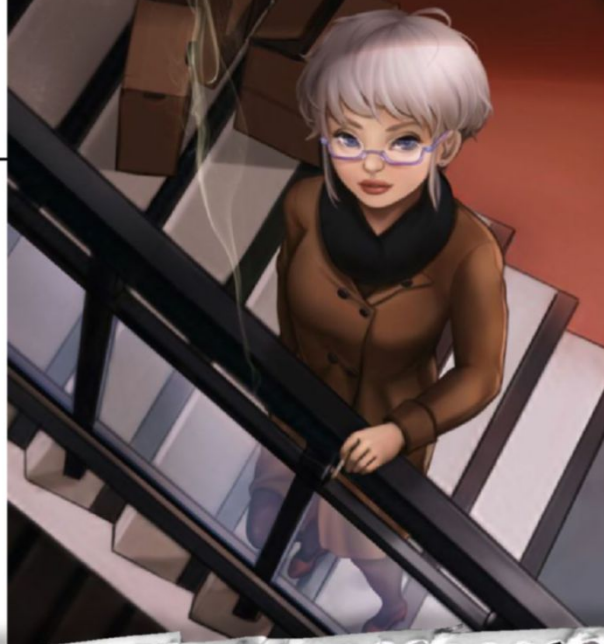
I start off by browsing images for inspiration, and settle on the idea of a character looking up from a staircase, due to its potential visual interest. I then draft out the environment in perspective and rough out a character in that environment.



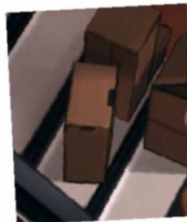
I often use the Liquify tool and repaint bits and pieces of the character halfway through.

For a more accurate figure drawing, I'd measure out the proportions and divide the perspective guide for the figure accordingly. But I chose not to do so for this one, to save time. I go over the rough with a cleaner sketch and then render the scene in full.

Sometimes a small detail can create narrative. By adding a cigarette in her hand, you've created a purpose for the character to be there.

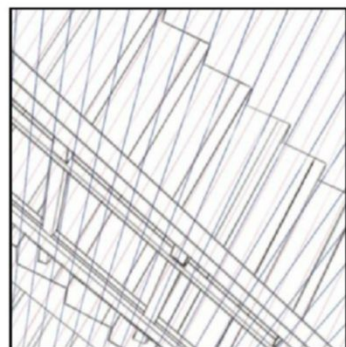


Artist's secret Box clever

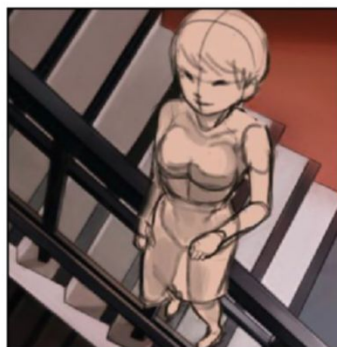


To create visual interest and make the arrangement of the boxes more realistic, don't draw them all aligned along the same vanishing point. For that lived-in feel, tilt some objects and see what works.

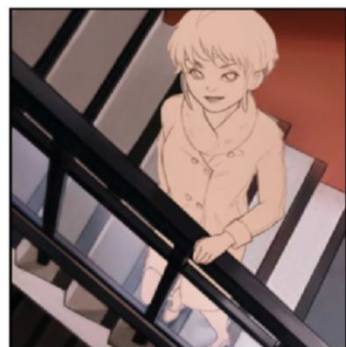
Step-by-step: Compose a character in perspective



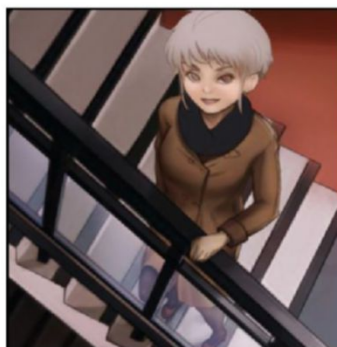
1 I lay out the perspective grid by distorting two sets of parallel lines to make a two-point perspective. Key to this is the set of blue lines that converge to a vanishing point below the canvas. I could have done away with the red (Z-axis) lines, but they would be helpful in determining the regularity and the lines of the stair edges. I then draw the banisters.



2 I render the background first because it will affect the lighting of the character later. The lower flight of stairs is intentionally blurred out, as if the camera lens of the scene has a shallow depth of field. The figure is constructed using simple blocky shapes, just to roughly establish the proportions and foreshortening in this top-down view.



3 I detail the character while correcting the flaws of the previous rough. I favour thinner lines during this stage, because it becomes useful during the colour blocking stage to know where the edge of each colour block is. I use Layer Masking to hide parts blocked by the banisters, which enables me to move the figure without redrawing anything.



4 I didn't separate the colour blocks, so that the colour transition from one area to the next is more natural looking. I use a broad Airbrush and lay down the shadows and highlights. (Alternatively you can use a subtle Dodge or Multiply brush setting.) You can render closer focal objects like the face in more detail than objects further away.

You can emphasise the impression of being drenched by remembering that body posture plays a part. Wet clothes tend to be less comfortable than dry.



Question

I want to illustrate a figure that's just got a soaking. Where do I start?

Ján Culek, England

Answer

Nick replies



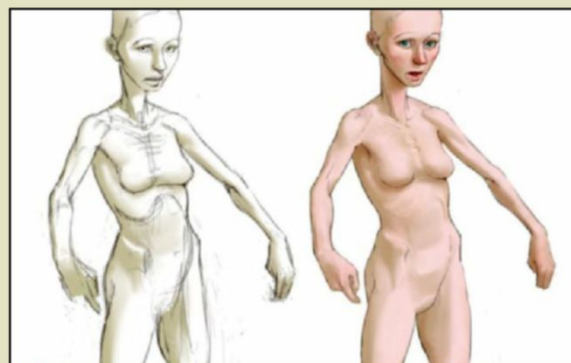
Painting a figure that looks soaking wet requires taking a number of things into account, dependent on the style of clothing and such. What sort of fabrics or textiles are they wearing? Think how wet leather looks and behaves differently to wet silk. While treated leather can have a degree of stiffness and water resistance, silk quickly becomes waterlogged and clings to the forms beneath it.

Then I work up an unclothed figure to drape the wet clothes upon. It makes it easier to work out material clinging to the form. I paint a female

figure, with longish hair and flowing skirt. This also influences the pose, which is something else to consider. Wet clothes are less comfortable and heavier. That can affect how you move, and even how you behave. You might choose a different route through a house to avoid spoiling an expensive rug, for example.

Your figure work is likely to have more character if you give them a back story. What sort of hair do they have? Curly hair and straight hair might both hang the same when soaked, but may look quite different as soon as they begin to dry.

Step-by-step: Create a naked figure, then add wet hair and clothing



- 1 It's important for me to understand the figure because wet clothing will cling to it more closely than dry. I sketch out a pose of what will be a young woman holding up her skirts slightly. This is done with Pencil and Paintbrush tools in SketchBook Pro.



- 2 I sketch out clothes on a new layer and block it in with solid colour on a layer beneath that. The extra weight of wet fabric will cause it to hang straighter, and being wet may also affect the colour. I pick a green for the skirt and white for the blouse.



- 3 Shading helps with the volumes. I paint with browns and purples on several layers set to Multiply. I limit the spread of the highlights, where I want areas to look wettest. Her white blouse appears semi-transparent where it sticks to her skin.

Question

Do you have any advice for depicting a crowd of people?

Laura Newton, England



Answer

Tom replies



In comics, where there are often many competing elements on a page, a crowd scene can really eat into a schedule. The ways in which I'll deal with them usually fall into one of three categories.

First, there's the "I'm not sure... there seems to be... a lot of them." This technique involves placing the reader's point of view so far from the action that they can't really make out numbers or many specific details. Using an overhead shot, I can really emphasise the scale of the crowd.



By filling an image right to the edges, I can suggest a big crowd, even with a small panel.

Next, there's the "Woah – just pull back there a little, please" approach. Here I've placed the camera right in the throng, at a low angle. By crowding the panel – and thereby, crowding the reader – I can suggest large numbers without actually showing them. This shot is useful for when I need to highlight the characters that make up the crowd, rather than merely its size.

Finally, there's the "Sorry, could you just... I can't quite..." method. Inevitably, a script will come along that calls for a large panel that sells both the scale of the crowd and the characters it comprises. A shot like this will inevitably be quite time-consuming to compose, but even here I can economise a little.

By placing the two besieged characters in shadow and close to the camera, I can eclipse a lot of detail that I'd otherwise have to draw in full. This also helps create a sense of depth and clarity in a panel that could easily just become a morass of detail.

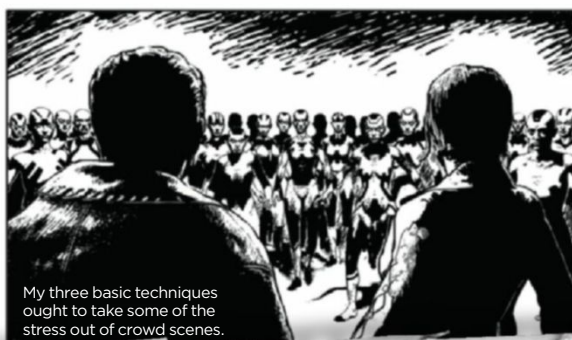
1. The "I'm not sure...there seems to be a... a lot of them".



2. The "Woah - just...pull back there a little, please".



3. The "Sorry, could you just...I can't quite..."



My three basic techniques ought to take some of the stress out of crowd scenes.

Artist's secret

Judicious camera placement

The placement of the reader's eye in a scene is crucial if I want to communicate a lot, without having to render it all. Whether it's by distance, angle or concealment, there's always a way to obfuscate unnecessary detail.

Question

Help me paint multi-coloured smoke

Christelle Morel, Belgium

Answer

Carmen replies

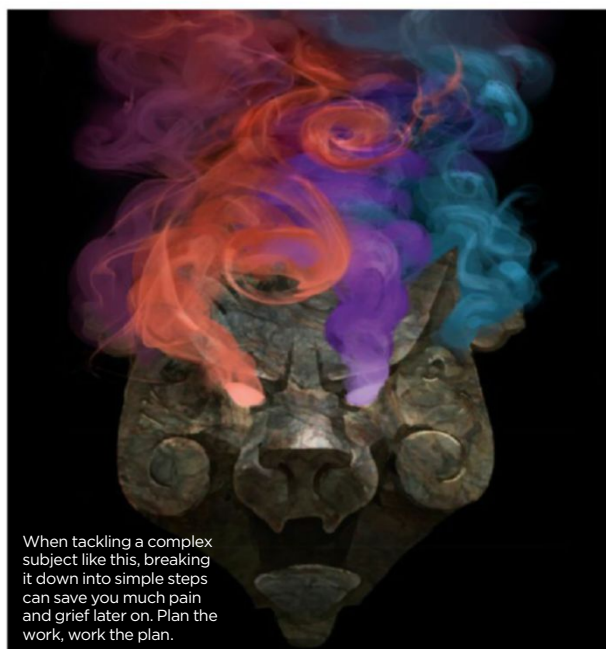


Smoke can take on many forms. A campfire's light, hazy smoke is different from the thick smoke of a factory smokestack. Smoke has mass and exerts force on the air around it, meaning different sources of smoke may not blend together smoothly. By noticing how the smoke is moving and mixing, I'll be able to create a more realistic effect.

When I'm blocking in my shapes, I think about the density of the smoke. Thin smoke will have softer edges,

while thick smoke will have more distinct shapes and flow. Since I have chosen a fairly dense smoke, there will be areas of overlap and areas of mixing, with harder edges at the source that soften as they rise away from the mask. I have to be careful to avoid long, curling lines, because these will give my painting a flat feel.

When I'm ready to finalise my painting, I comb over the area to push and pull contrast, paint over my photo texture, and adjust colours as needed to pull the image together.



When tackling a complex subject like this, breaking it down into simple steps can save you much pain and grief later on. Plan the work, work the plan.

Question

What techniques should I use for illustrating bruised skin?

Aaron McDonald, Canada

Answer

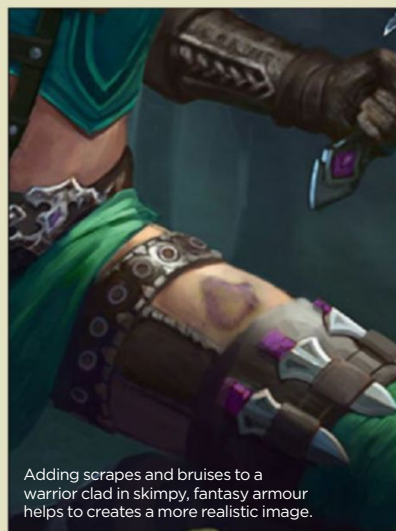
Carmen replies



When I'm trying to paint something realistically, I always begin with a little bit of research. The more thoroughly I understand something, the more convincingly I can paint it from imagination later on. Ask yourself questions, and ensure that you obtain the answers through research and observation.

Why does skin bruise? What causes the different colours? How does a bruise made by blunt object trauma differ from one caused by muscle sprains? What causes soft versus hard edges? Looking for these answers forces me to slow down and closely observe my reference before I begin painting, preventing me from rushing ahead without a plan.

First, I start with the base skin tone, because this will determine what colours are used for the bruise. Next, I choose colours based on my reference and research, and layer them over the skin. I use Multiply layers when I need a darker value, Soft Light to change hue, and Overlay to bump up the colour intensity. Finally, I add texture.

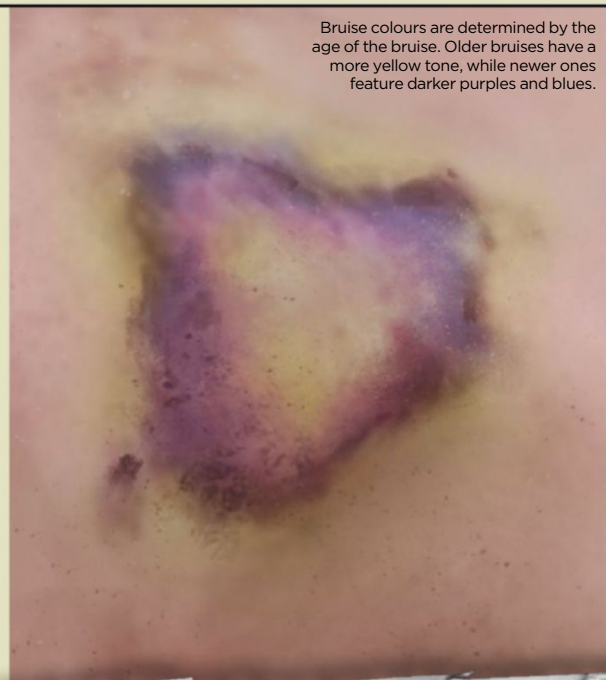


Adding scrapes and bruises to a warrior clad in skimpy, fantasy armour helps to create a more realistic image.

The discolouration of a bruise is underneath the skin, and this means pores, hairs or other surface markings will still be visible. The texture of the pores is exaggerated in bruises. One of the most common mistakes is making soft, fuzzy bruises on top of the skin.

And that's pretty much all there is to it! And if you did your research, you may not even need to reach for reference next time you need to rough up your characters.

Bruise colours are determined by the age of the bruise. Older bruises have a more yellow tone, while newer ones feature darker purples and blues.



Artist's secret

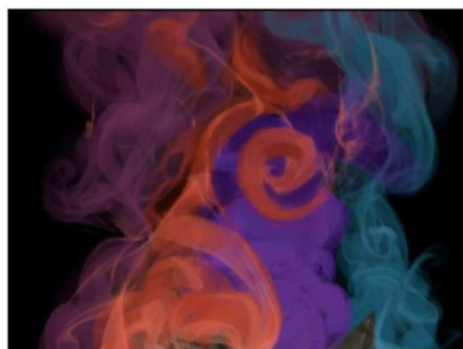
Focus your image search

If you use an image search for reference, put some thought into what you're searching for. An image search for "bruise" brings up a wide variety of images, but "bruise progression" gives you much more detailed information to learn from.

Step-by-step: Merging wisps of colours together



1 I begin by blocking in the largest shapes of my smoke. At this stage, I treat the shapes as though they're solid but malleable, as if I'm working with clay. I'm focusing on how the individual colours of smoke overlap and flow together to create a pleasing pattern.



2 With my large shapes in place, I think about the form of each smoke pillar: where they wrap around one another and where they begin to merge. This will help me achieve the effect that the smoke itself is coloured; a smooth colour gradient would suggest a coloured light.



3 I often utilise photo texture when painting smoke up close. While I'm confident I could paint something by hand through careful observation, it would take time. Finally, I look for areas where the smoke colours would mix together to form new hues and soft colour transitions.



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Question

I want to show a character's cape caught on something – how can I make the physics convincing?

Sven Schweizer, Germany



Answer

Tom replies



The dynamics of cloth and other flexible fabrics can be deceptively difficult to master. It's often tempting to delegate the task of communicating the presence of a cape or scarf to a series of amorphous, flowing lines. In some situations this can be expressive, but it rarely reflects the properties of real materials.

The important thing to remember is that the cape, just like the superhero figure, is a three-dimensional, physical object. It has weight and mass – it reflects light and casts shadows – just like other objects. The only thing that betrays its flexibility is movement and its relationships with other objects and forces. Otherwise, it might just as easily be moulded from clay or carved from stone.

Because this isn't an animation exercise, I'll rule out any actual movement (although I'll do my best to suggest it a little in the static image), which leaves us with relationships. The arrows in the main picture represent the relationships that define the contours of the cape. Primarily, it's being pulled between



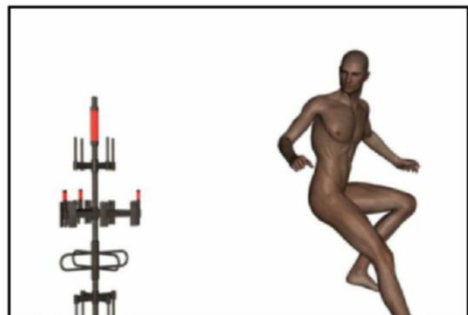
A cape's folds and contours will be defined by the influence of surrounding forces and objects. Understanding these will make for more convincing detail.

two rigid objects: the superhero (yellow) pulling one way, and the antenna (green) the other. Between the antenna and the figure, the cape is pulled quite flat, with a little sag to suggest that the figure has slowed down or stopped to check what's happened. However, the antenna has

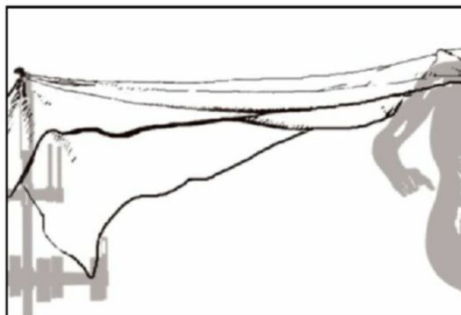
broken the influence of the hero's momentum, so everything to the left of it falls, tent-like, to the force of gravity (the red arrow).

Observing these basic principles enables me to create a cape that looks relatively realistic, despite a colourful, comic-book style.

Step-by-step: Illustrate convincing clothing folds and wrinkles



1 Because the cape's contortions will be based around the influence of more rigid forms, I establish those first, using 3D posing software it's quicker to use prefab models. I suggest the tugging cape in the figure's body language by having his legs projected forward a little.



2 Next, I lay out my main forms. I exaggerate certain qualities (such as how flat the cape is being pulled to suggest greater force), but give every fold clear edges and shadows. Messy or indistinct lines will suggest floppy drawing skills, rather than floppy fabric.

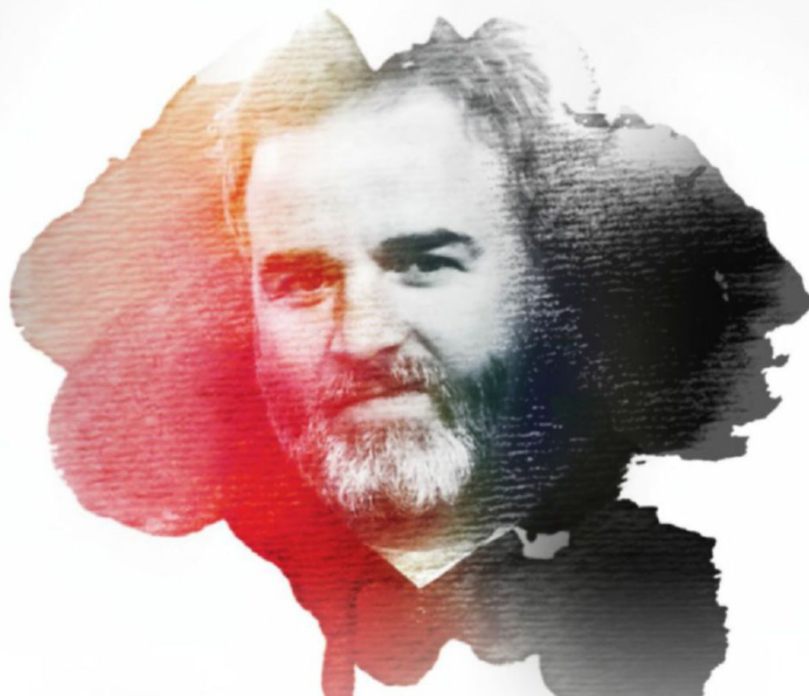


3 I render the colour conservatively, having already delineated the dark and light areas at the line-art stage. I pick out a few key highlights and areas of dim shadow, but for the most part, don't interfere with the forms as described in black and white.

THAT JOKER COVER

Jock has seen his version of the Joker reproduced on all sort of merchandise – and hundreds of tattoos. “I had no idea at the time I was turning in a cover that would go on to be pretty iconic,” he says.

Jock



Artist Portfolio

JOCK

The British artist tells **Gary Evans** how an unconventional portfolio review led to Batman, Superman and Hollywood

Jock remembers waiting in line to see Glenn Fabry in 1995. He'd hitchhiked to a comic con – all the way from Devon in southwest England to Glasgow in Scotland. He went with a friend. The pair had painted together for six months, often staying up all night to do so. Neither had any paid work, but they felt ready to show their portfolios to the professionals.

He was 22 at the time. His friend – fellow comic artist Dom Reardon – was just 18. Jock reached the front of the line. Glenn, an artist who'd painted some of comic's most famous characters, glanced at his work and

said: 'Why are you showing it to me? F*** off and make some money.'

"It was our first big trip, young and coy, and Glenn was the first person we showed our work to," says Jock. "He essentially said, 'Great. Why are you showing me? Go make cash from it.'

"Persistence. The only advice I can give is persistence. If we're honest with ourselves, and literally compare your work to someone else's, you know whether you've got something, or if there's at least potential that you'll have something. I tried to be realistic about it. Not in denial. It's persistence."

His persistence certainly paid off. The British comic book artist – ➔



© DC Comics 2015

SUPERMAN: AMERICAN ALIEN

Jock felt Superman had become quite dark, especially in the movies. He wanted to draw him a more optimistic version, using quick strokes to represent speed and flight.

SCALPED #13

"I used rich colour and textures," Jock says of his cover for crime-western Scalped, "to try and get across some of the depth and history of the Native American roots."



© DC Comics 2007

Artist PROFILE

Jock

LOCATION: England

FAVOURITE ARTISTS: Bernie Fuchs, Saul Bass, Alberto Breccia, Sergio Toppi, Barron Storey, Egon Schiele, Jorge Zaffino and Jenny Saville.

SOFTWARE USED: Photoshop

WEB: www.4twenty.co.uk

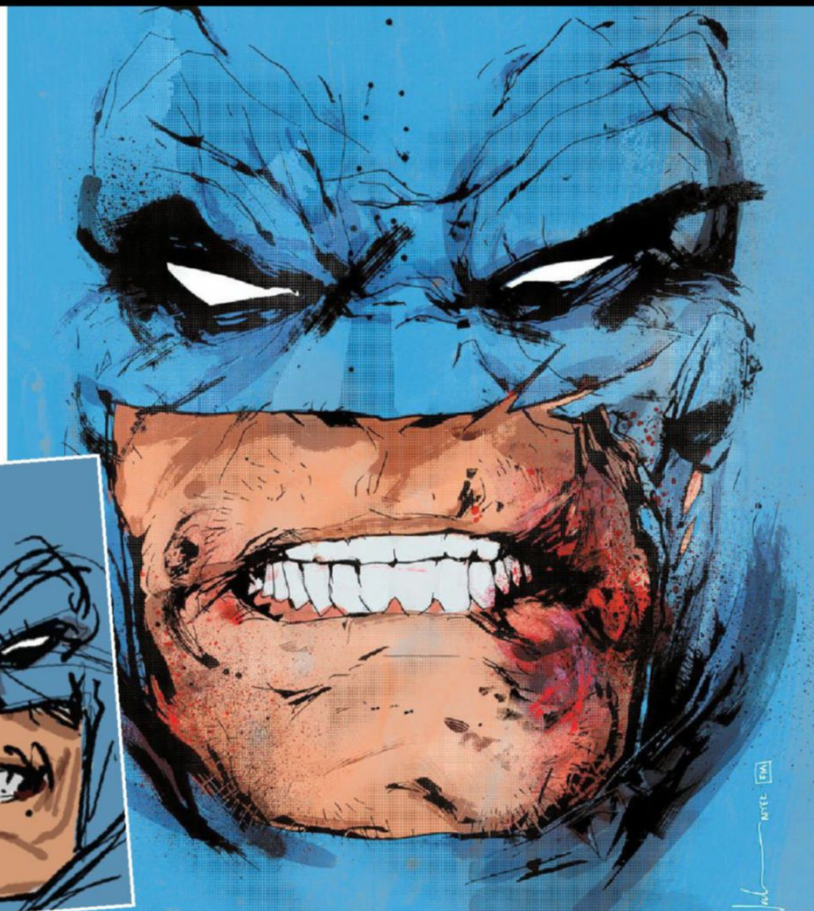


SKETCHING AVA

Jock created this drawing for 2015 film *Ex Machina*. He felt his job was to work out what feeling and presence the character Ava should have.

A NOD TO MILLER

This variant cover from *DKIII: The Master Race* is a homage to Frank Miller's cover for *The Dark Knight Returns*.



© DC Comics 2015

➔ real name Mark Simpson – has worked for 2000 AD, Marvel and DC. He created one the most iconic covers in recent memory: Detective Comics #880 features his brilliant and terrifying vision of the Joker. More recently, he moved into the film industry. Jock created art for Iron Man 3, The Dark Knight trilogy, Dredd, Star Wars: Episode VIII, and the Oscar-winning *Ex Machina*. But it's been a long road from that first meeting with Glenn Fabry to where he is now.

FROM NORTH TO SOUTH

Jock moved to Dorset as a boy, but was born in Glasgow – hence the nickname. After his A levels, he completed a one-year foundation degree in art. He wanted to study on a full degree, but was rejected from

every university he applied to. In those days, he says, art schools frowned upon comics: "Maybe the tutors could smell it in my work."

Instead, Jock spent his time building his portfolio and showing it to editors. He moved to Devon and rented a one-bedroom apartment, where he worked on his hands and knees with a drawing board on the floor. He didn't have a job and survived on a very meagre

“I woke up and there was an answer phone message from Andy Diggle of 2000 AD – offering me paid work...”

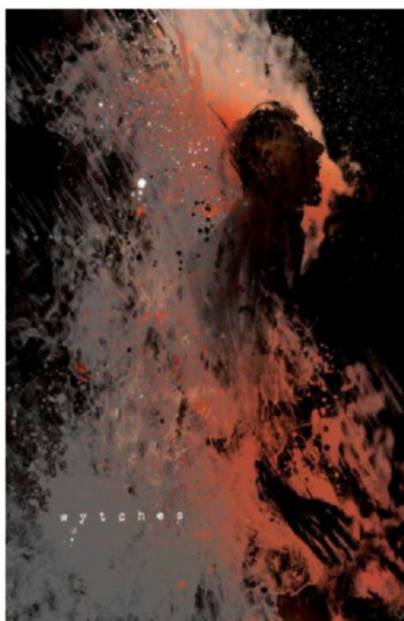
government Jobseeker's allowance. In a career full of setbacks and rejections, only once did he ever consider giving the whole thing up.

In 2000 he went to visit his old friend Dom Reardon. The pair hadn't painted together for a while. They stayed up all night, just like the old days: "I was walking home," Jock says. "It was dawn, getting light. And for the first time I thought, 'What am I doing?' I didn't have any work. I had a baby at home. I started thinking about some sort of compromise.

"I went downstairs and there was an answer phone message waiting from Andy Diggle of 2000 AD – offering me paid work. I've worked ever since."

ALL THE HOME COMFORTS

Jock still works from home, only now he has a specially built studio in his back garden. The studio is small but comfortable, with underfloor heating and an outside decking area. He ➔



SIDESTEPPING REALITY

These covers from *Wytches* #1 and #3 are full of atmosphere and rich textures, in which Jock aimed for an image that's just step or two away from reality.

© Scott Snyder and Jock 2015

Interview Jock

NEGATIVE SPACE

Jock loves using negative space, such as in this image from the cover of Catwoman #43. "It's often way more eye-catching than filling up dead space with detail," he says.



Artist Portfolio

STAR WARS REWORKED

This image is from Jock's Star Wars series, created for Mondo. He wanted to use iconic scenes from the films, but to show them from a unique angle. Jock deliberately used a looser stroke to create energy.



© and ™ Lucasfilm Ltd.



40

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ImagineFX April 2017

A long tir



Interview Jock

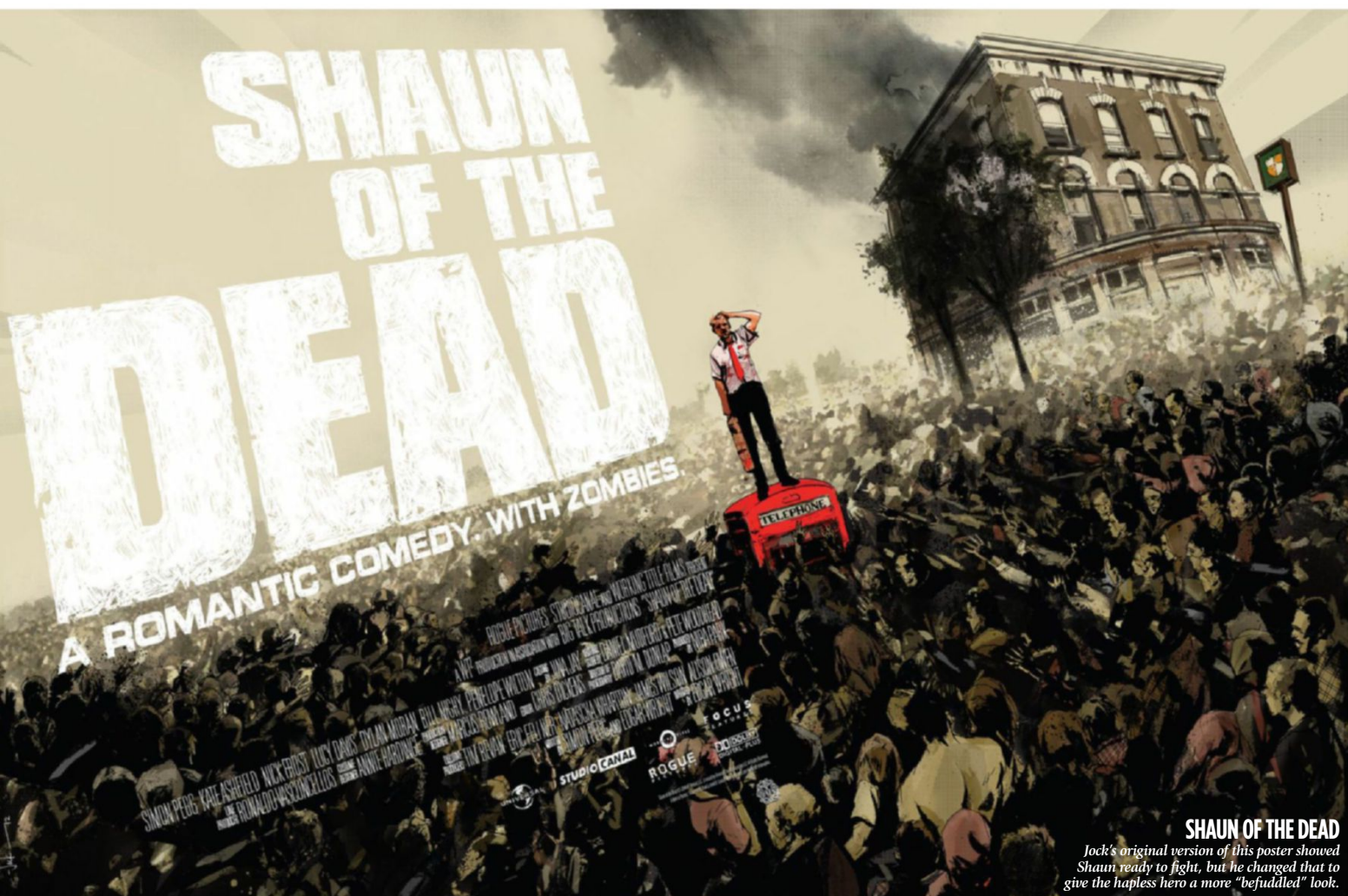
“I never wanted to be one of those guys – in comics, you see them all the time – who settle on a style and just do that forever...”

me ago in a galaxy far, far away....

STAR WARS

April 2017 **ImagineFX**





Courtesy of Universal Studios Licensing LLC 2012

SHAUN OF THE DEAD

Jock's original version of this poster showed Shaun ready to fight, but he changed that to give the hapless hero a more "befuddled" look.

➡ works five days a week and keeps regular hours – though he may continue into the evening and on weekends if he has a deadline.

He gives an example of an average project: Scott Snyder sends him the first draft of a Wytches story. They talk it through over the phone until it feels like a final draft. Jock draws

any notes. Some days he might only complete one panel. Other days – especially around deadline – he may ink three or four pages.

LEARNING ON THE JOB

Working digitally meant Jock could experiment more. He likes spatters of ink and loose line-work, which he has

THE LOSERS

This image, for *The Losers* #1, was Jock's first ever digital image: "Learning on the cover of our new comic was a trial by fire. But it gave everything a freshness that had been lacking using physical media up to this point."

“ Learning on the cover of *The Losers* was a trial by fire. I was literally learning how to use Photoshop in print ”

thumbnails to work out page layouts. He takes reference photos. Then he inks pages by hand and scans it into his computer.

Next, he touches up the page in Photoshop, which he finds quicker and more versatile than working by hand. It enables him to create a hand-drawn look, but one that's more accurate and controlled. He then sends the pages to the colourist, along with

more control over when working on his computer. His first digital piece – which was also his first proper DC project – was a front cover for his comic *The Losers*. "I was literally learning how to use Photoshop in print," he says, "on the cover of DC."

The Losers – which Jock drew and Andy Diggie wrote – was his breakthrough project. He met director Peter Berg while working on the ➡



© DC Comics 2005

COVER FOR ALL STAR BATMAN

In this completed image, Jock had added "haze and a couple of choicely placed reflections" to create more atmosphere.

FROSTY RECEPTION

Jock explains how a rejected sketch ended up being one of his favourite covers

"Five or six years ago I did two cover sketches for Batman Confidential. The editor chose one – of Batman standing in profile in Moscow – but I always liked my other one, which showed Batman ready for a fight, and regretted not being able to complete it.

More recently I did an issue of All-Star Batman with Scott Snyder.

I wanted a cover of Batman in the snow. Snow is so atmospheric. It gave me the opportunity to push that side of it, and work up the previous design I always liked.

I was so happy with the old rough sketch that I traced it onto my art board and inked it from there. I put on some simple grey tones once I'd scanned it into Photoshop, then

some sputtery airbrushes and texture brushes. I added minimal colours, highlights and glows to give it a bit of a haze and some atmosphere, then painted some extra snow on top and it was done.

It was a straightforward cover to do. But it was only straightforward because I was happy at every stage. Only one in 20 images is like that."



DREDD

Jock worked as the principal concept designer on the film *Dredd*. This image shows an early helmet concept.



'THEY CAME LOOKING FOR US'

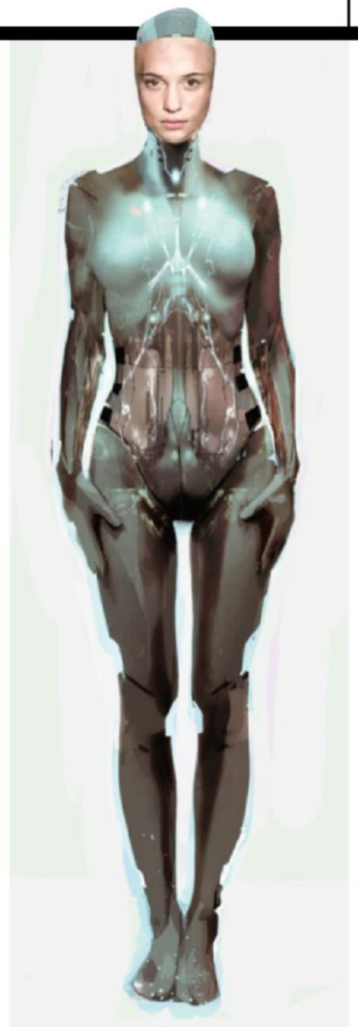
Jock explains how an 'f*** off' led to his first job in the comics industry

Glenn Fabry's blunt, but approving critique (see p.41) was a breakthrough moment. Steve MacManus, an editor at 2000 AD, heard about what happened and offered Jock a commission in the 1995 summer special.

It wasn't until five years later that he had regular work for 2000 AD. But that first job was a breakthrough moment: "Myself and Dom Reardon weren't particularly good," Jock says. "But Steve was trying to encourage us. He heard about that meeting and therefore came looking for us, rather than the other way round. So it was an awesome moment."

Jock went on to big things at 2000 AD, and won the best newcomer award at the National Comics Award in 2001. He worked with writer Andy Diggle on Lenny Zero, a pairing which led to his big break in the US. Together they published *The Losers* with DC Comics. The rest is history. And it all started from that most unconventional of portfolio reviews. Now Jock sits on the other side of the signing desk...

Dredd Motion Picture Artwork © 2012 Lionsgate Entertainment Inc. All rights reserved



Ex Machina © 2014 A24 Films. All rights reserved

EARLY AVA

This image shows an earlier version of Ava from *Ex Machina*, before Jock and the team altered her body to make her look even more mechanical.

“Getting a job and thinking, ‘I can’t wait to get going on this.’ That’s what creates the interesting stuff...”

➔ 2010 film adaptation of the comic. Peter invited him to work on more movie projects, and Jock has created key art, concept design and promotional imagery ever since.

“The movies made it feel more legitimate,” he says. “When I started working at DC and we did *The Losers* and *Vertigo*, I felt more validated and that what I was doing was a bit more worthy. It felt like the audience was larger and I was reaching more people.”

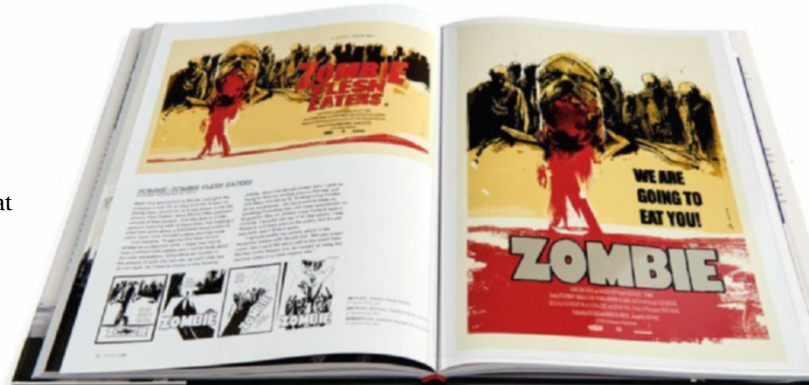
A NOISY WAY OF WORKING

Peter Berg contributed to Jock’s recently released debut art book – a retrospective on a glittering 15-year career. The art it contains is some of the most innovative and recognisable in the industry. But Jock’s reluctant to pin down exactly what his style is. He

instead quotes his former editor at DC comics, Will Dennis, who in *The Art of Jock* says his work is, “Energetic, noisy and graphic.”

Jock says, “I never wanted to be one of those guys – in comics, you see them all the time – who settle on a style and just do that forever. That’s great. That’s disciplined. But the longer I do this, the more I value the excitement of doing it. Getting a job and thinking, ‘This is really cool. I can’t wait to get going on this.’ That’s what creates the interesting stuff, the stuff that kind of makes me feel lucky and grateful for doing this job.

“Naming something puts limits on it. I work quite instinctively. I do my best work when I’m – for want of a better word – feeling it. When I’m



LOOKING BACK

The Art of Jock is the artist’s debut book, which showcases selected work from a 15-year career in comics and films.

trying something new and different, that gets me excitement. When you send in a job that has a spark, a bit of energy, something new and interesting, that feels really good. Especially on the bigger projects. To feel you have an influence on a big project is an amazing feeling, an honour. It’s nice I can do that and maintain my own style with it.”

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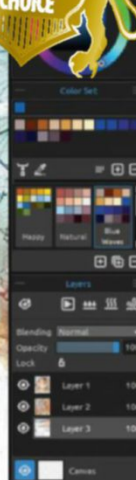


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Mark Brooks

Moments of all-out action mix with quiet vignettes and a one-man marching band on the pages of this accomplished comic book artist

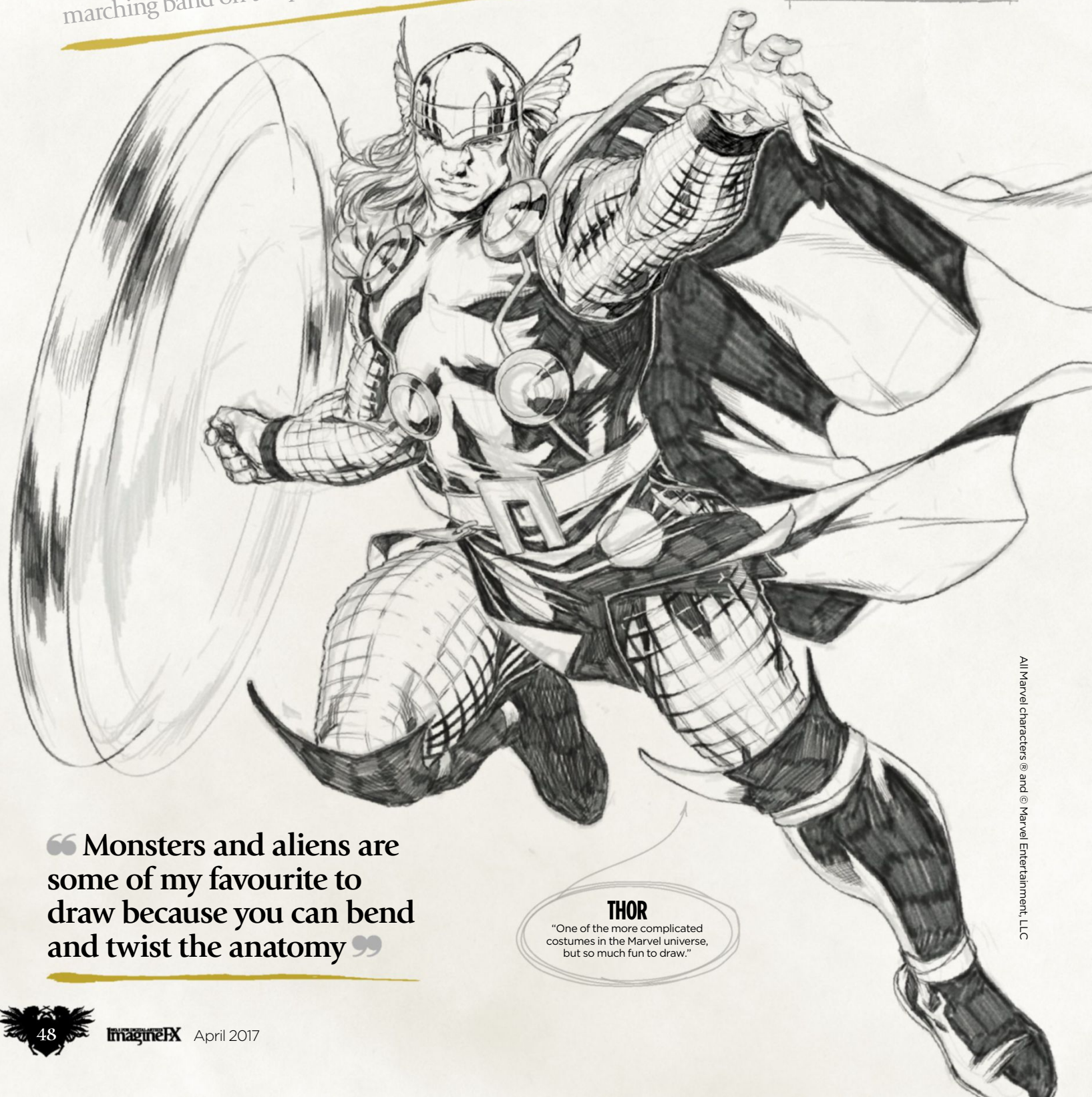
Artist PROFILE

Mark Brooks

LOCATION: US



Mark is an Inkpot award-winning artist for Marvel Comics. His career has spanned 15 years and included stints as a cover and interior artist on Spider-Man, X-Men and the Avengers. When not drawing comics Mark spends his time contributing concept and character designs for video games, toys companies and television.
<http://ifxm.ag/m-brooks>



“Monsters and aliens are some of my favourite to draw because you can bend and twist the anatomy”

THOR

“One of the more complicated costumes in the Marvel universe, but so much fun to draw.”

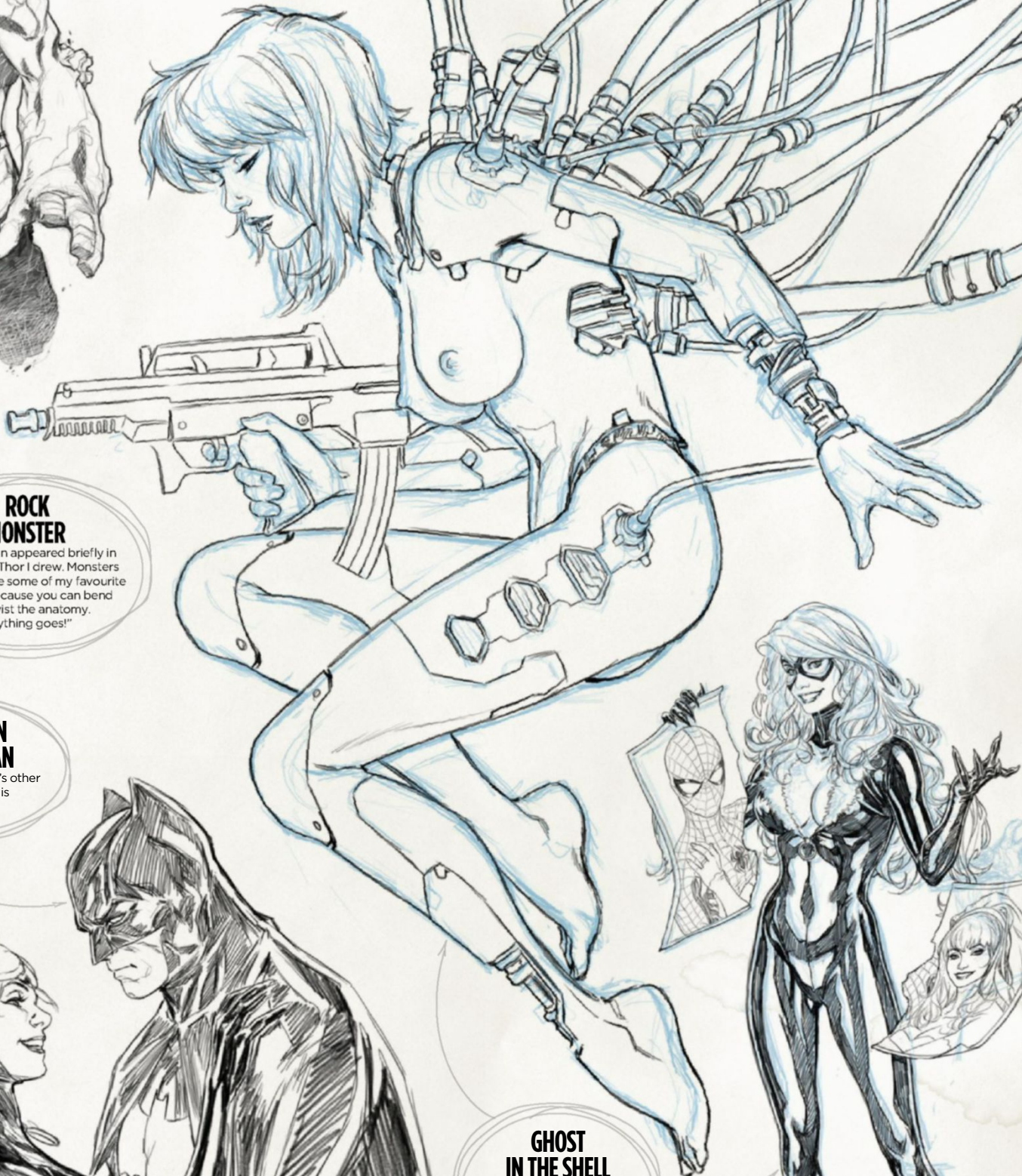


ROCK MONSTER

"This design appeared briefly in an issue of Thor I drew. Monsters and aliens are some of my favourite to draw because you can bend and twist the anatomy. Anything goes!"

CATWOMAN AND BATMAN

"Where is Catwoman's other hand? And why is she smiling?"



GHOST IN THE SHELL

"This started off as an anatomy exercise and morphed into Motoko Kusanagi. Someday I'd like to revisit this sketch and refine it."

BLACK CAT

"Sometimes the simplest costume design become the most visually effective. Black leather with white fur trim. Eat your heart out Mary Jane!"



Sketchbook

SPIDER-GWEN

"I like to inject a sense of youth and playfulness into my art whenever possible. After all, you can't draw dark and brooding all the time..."

PHOENIX

"Can you tell I love drawing hair? I like to think of it as twisting ribbons that fall and bend, instead of individual strands."

LOKI

"Turn Loki into a woman? Sure, it's comics so why not!"

“I like to inject a sense of youth and playfulness into my art whenever possible...”

DEADPOOL

“I did a lot of homage covers for Deadpool. I’ve always idolised JC Leyendecker and so I used one of his more famous paintings for inspiration. With Deadpool, the more absurd the better.”

Sketchbook



Page 5 and 6

QUENTIN QUIRE AND CAPTAIN AMERICA

"I love the idea of Cap's new sidekick being a smart-assed nihilist, even if it was short lived."



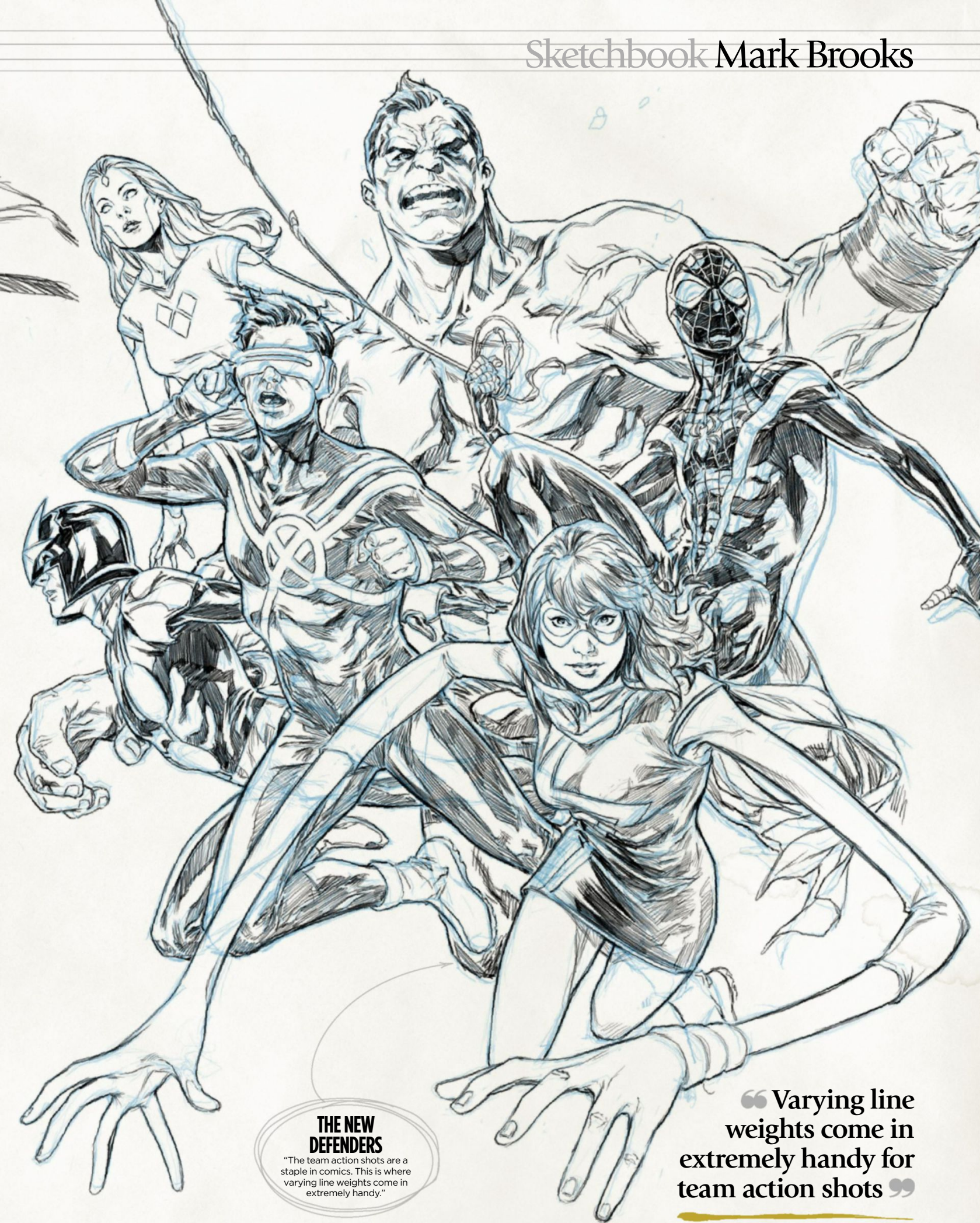
MAGNETO

"I like drawing these quieter moments because it gives me the chance to humanise these fantastical characters. They become grounded and relatable."

TANK GIRL

"Not sure about you, but my ideal woman curses and lot and drives a tank."





THE NEW DEFENDERS

"The team action shots are a staple in comics. This is where varying line weights come in extremely handy."

“ Varying line weights come in extremely handy for team action shots ”

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March 2017

Our animation issue emphasises why story is important in your art – a message that comes loud and clear from Kenneth Anderson's cover art, to Armand Serrano's background art tutorial and Matt Jones' storyboarding workshop.



Issue 144

February 2017

From Patrick J Jones's cover art, to creating faces full of character with Julián del Rey, to anatomy advice from tutor Glenn Vilppu, this is an issue that's guaranteed to boost your knowledge of anatomy and figure drawing.



Issue 143

January 2017

An interview with A Song of Ice and Fire illustrator Marc Simonetti headlines our book illustration special. There's also essential advice on getting into children's books, and workshops on colour and composition.



Issue 142

Christmas 2016

Our film art issue includes art inspired by Blade Runner, Planet of the Apes and Guillermo del Toro. We talk to the costume designer behind Pirates of the Caribbean, reveal how to capture movement in your art, and more!

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Issue 132
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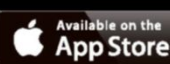


Issue 131
February 2016



Issue 130
January 2016

GET YOUR DIGITAL EDITION THROUGH THESE OUTLETS:



Sketchbook

Joverine

From familiar comic book characters to original concepts and childhood creations, this artist's sketchbook is full of life!

Artist PROFILE

Joverine

LOCATION: Canada



Joverine has worked in the comics, video games and toy industries. Rather than treating a sketchbook as a way to "capture scribbles", the artist says he loves to lose himself in an idea, harnessing the raw energy of inspiration and riding it all the way through the page.

www.instagram.com/joverine

WEIGHT OF THE WORLD

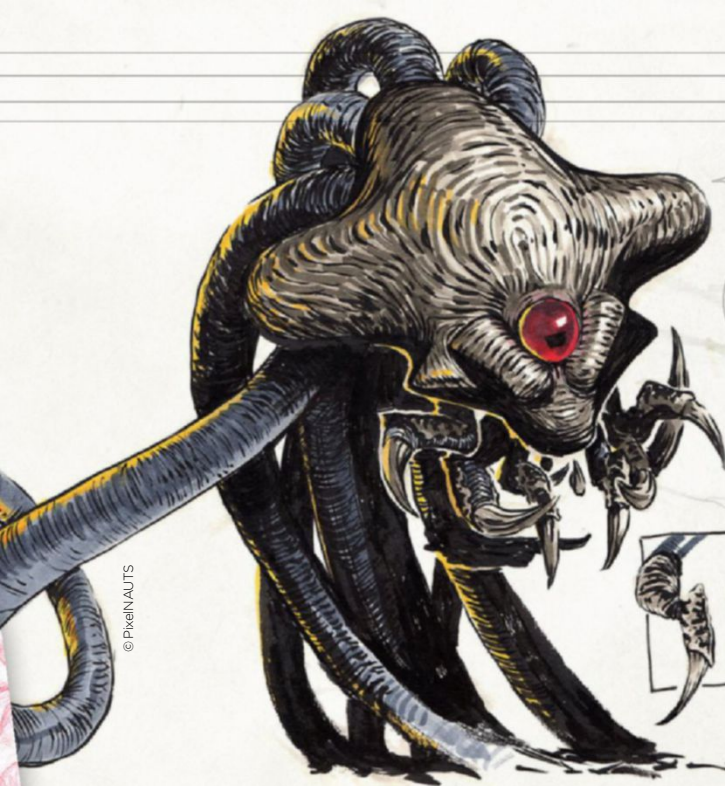
"Random sketch of two of my favourite characters... in their later years."



BATTLE BERZERKER BALTO

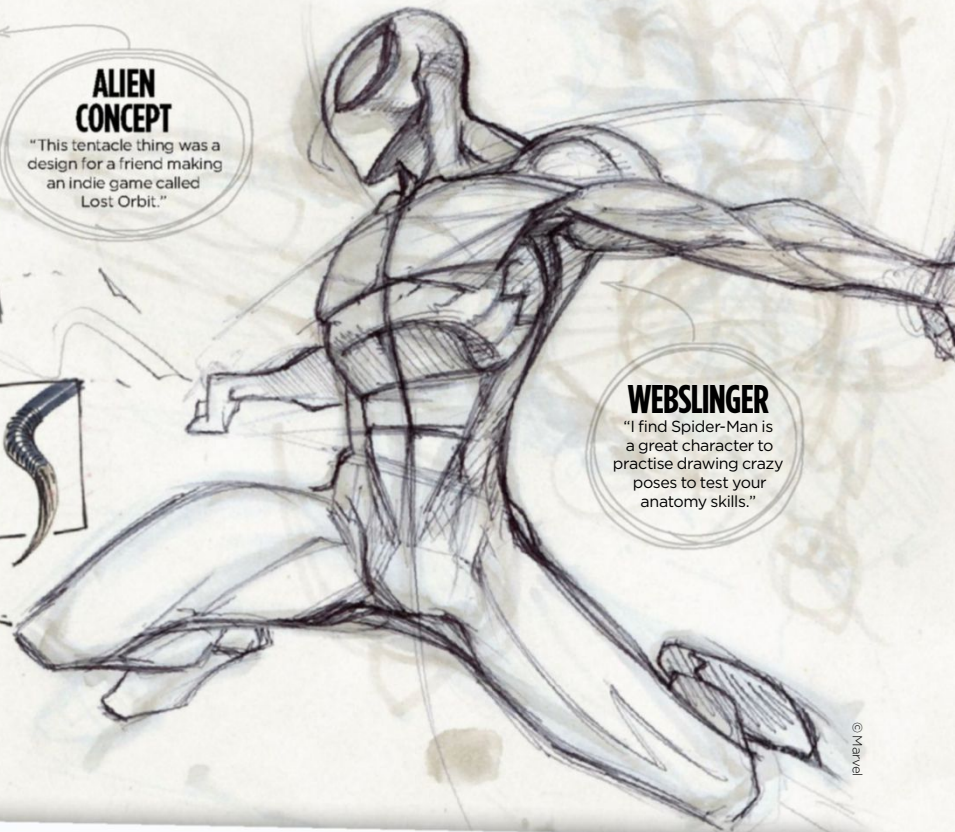
"This is my own creation, Balto. I first drew him when I was about 13. He's changed slightly each year, but only recently have I been exploring different colour schemes."

“I’m just drawing fun stuff and then shoving a story behind it”



ALIEN CONCEPT

"This tentacle thing was a design for a friend making an indie game called *Lost Orbit*."



WEBSLINGER

"I find Spider-Man is a great character to practise drawing crazy poses to test your anatomy skills."

WORLD BUILDING

"Various characters from my I.P. Basically, I'm just drawing fun stuff and shoving a story behind it."



Sketchbook



DEVILMANVERINE

"I tried to draw Devilman from memory. Turns out I was a bit off. It reminded me of Wolverine, so I sketched him, too."

Wolverine © Marvel



VIKING

"Head sketch of a random Viking dude while testing out some new pens."



TONGUE TIED

"Guess this guy wouldn't stop talking! This was a drawing for an online drawing group."



GATEKEEPER MINI COMIC

"I've been working on my own stories for a while now. This was done on the fly, panel by panel, as a fun exercise."





CRASHING THE PARTY

"I originally drew this to be a print to sell at conventions, but never got around to getting it made."



“I’ve always found it boring to do studies of static poses...”

CARNAGE WATERCOLOURS

"I inked this one on a live stream via YouTube. I scanned the inks and printed it out on card stock so I could colour the copy. This way I could sell them together as a package: Rough drawing, inks and painted. It'll be available on my Instagram art store soon."



© Marvel

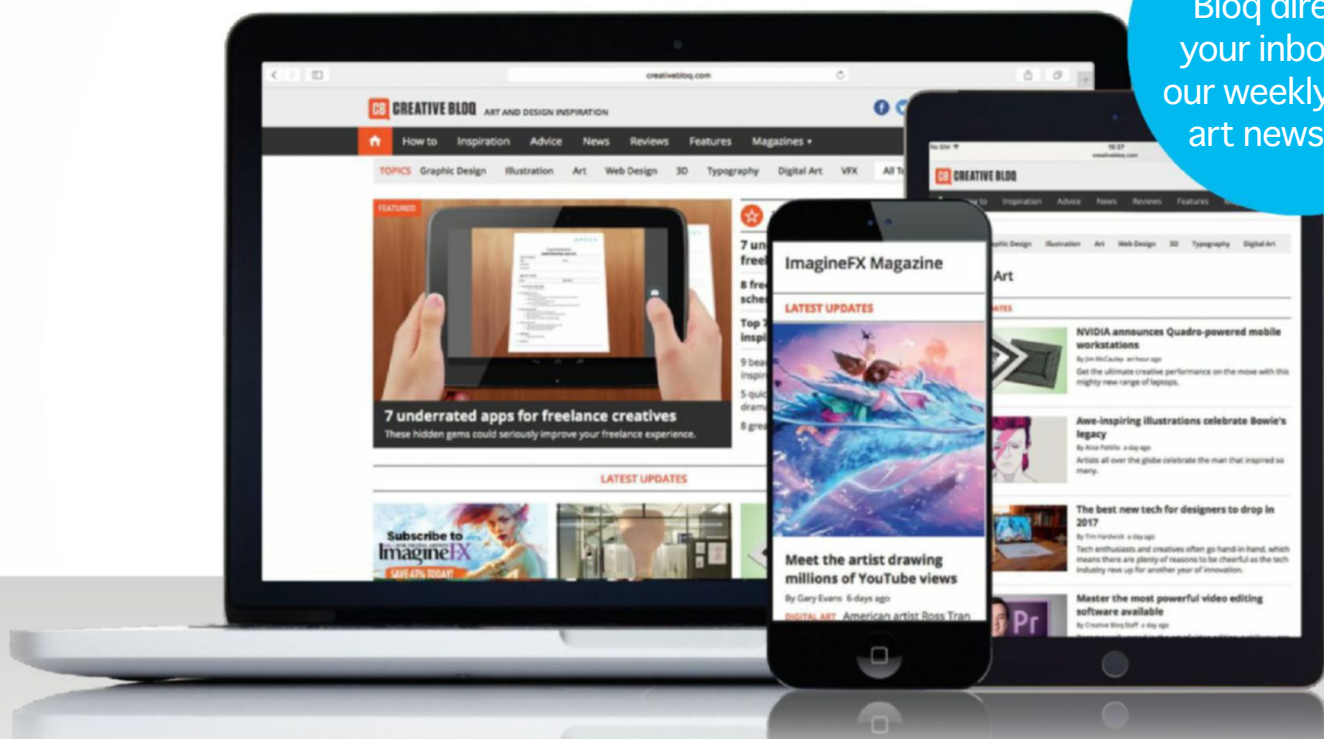
POKE MONSTER HUNTING

"I've always found it boring to do studies of static poses. Drawing scenes of characters interacting is a great workaround."

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Anand Radhakrishnan reveals what makes a good cover for a comic.

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Photoshop & ink A FRESH TAKE ON WONDER WOMAN

Bilquis Evely reveals the creative process behind the striking cover of Wonder Woman #16 and why she wanted to add more realism

Artist PROFILE

Bilquis Evely
LOCATION: Brazil

Bilquis is an artist who's passionate about classic comic books and fantasy stories. At the moment she's working on the Wonder Woman series for DC Comics.
<http://ifxm.ag/b-evely>



When I start a new project, my first thoughts are usually, "What should this illustration look like, and what drawing style should I use?"

Usually, we have a basic idea for the covers based on the stories, but since this was my first cover for the new arc of the series, DC asked me to do a "kick-off" cover. It would need to show what aspects of the

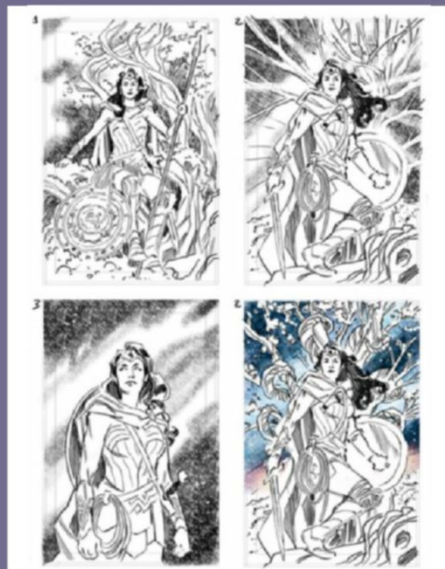
character appeal to me, which brings me back to my point about the style.

I love Wonder Woman – she has so many sides! She's a heroine, a warrior, there's a divinity quality to her, and yet she's very human, and this gives me several references to explore. So, my idea for the cover and for the entire book was to distil all those iconic aspects of the character into a single illustration, without making it a mess of influences.

My majors references were Hal Foster's Prince Valiant, Franco-Belgian comics books and artists such as Alex Toth and José Luis García-López, who are very good at drawing human bodies and casual scenes, because there's a focus on the humanity of all the characters in the Wonder Woman comics. It's heroic and it's fantasy, yes, but it's still grounded, which is why I avoid stylised, unnatural figure poses. ➔

How I create...

COVER ART THAT HINTS AT THE STORY



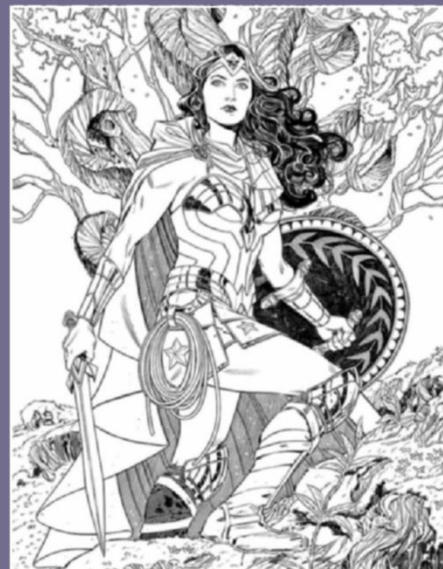
1 The thumbnail stage

The team picks one of my thumbnail ideas, and we add the tentacle in the tree to allude to the story. The scene looks beautiful and powerful, but there's also a sense of danger. I also add some colour ideas for our colourist, Romulo Farjardo Jr.



2 Digital pencils

I use Photoshop to do the pencilling, using Ray Frensen's Blue Pencil brush (you can buy it at <http://ifxm.ag/ray-pencil>). I prefer to work up all the elements in the scene during this stage, because it makes the following inking stage a lot easier.



3 Inking the image

Once the pencils are done, I print the image directly on to Bristol paper and finish it with ink and traditional brushes, transforming those rough lines into fine lines and textures. I want everything to be ready so Romulo can start his colouring.

Artist insight Wonder Woman

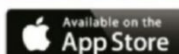


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BATTLE READY

Behold the eyes

I always try to take extra care of a character's eyes, because at a snoop they tell the viewer everything they need to know about them. She is compassionate, hopeful, loyal and always alert. She's not looking at you, but rather something next to you. Be careful!



Composition

I like to use diagonals and centred points to develop the composition. I centre Wonder Woman's eyes in the top quarter of the page, mainly to make room for the title and create a symmetrical composition. I then place the tentacles in a circle around and behind her central body position.

Maintain a sense of strength

Wonder Woman is a symbol for women and sometimes this can be sidelined through the use of impossible anatomy, which female characters tend to suffer from. So I try my best to give her healthy, natural appearance, with an underlying sense of strength.

Arms and armour

I decide to draw Wonder Woman in full armour, primarily because I want to emphasise Diana's warrior upbringing, using the Greek sword and shield to indicate her fighting abilities. And also because, well, it's cool to see an armoured deity!

A well-grounded figure

I work on portraying Wonder Woman in a natural pose. Diana isn't a dainty princess - she's heavy and strong! Her foot position and folds in her leather reflect this.

Clip Studio Paint GET BETTER AT COMIC PANELS



PJ Holden, artist on *World of Tanks*, shows you how to use real-world reference to draw a comic strip set in an alternative historical timeline

Artist PROFILE

PJ Holden

LOCATION:
Northern Ireland

PJ is a Belfast-based comic artist whose work has appeared in *2000 AD*, drawing Judge Dredd, Rogue Trooper and much more over the past 15 years.

www.pauljholden.com



Comic art is one of the most rewarding, unusual and difficult art jobs you'll ever have. Every new job is a challenge, requiring the application of multiple art techniques and a range of creative approaches.

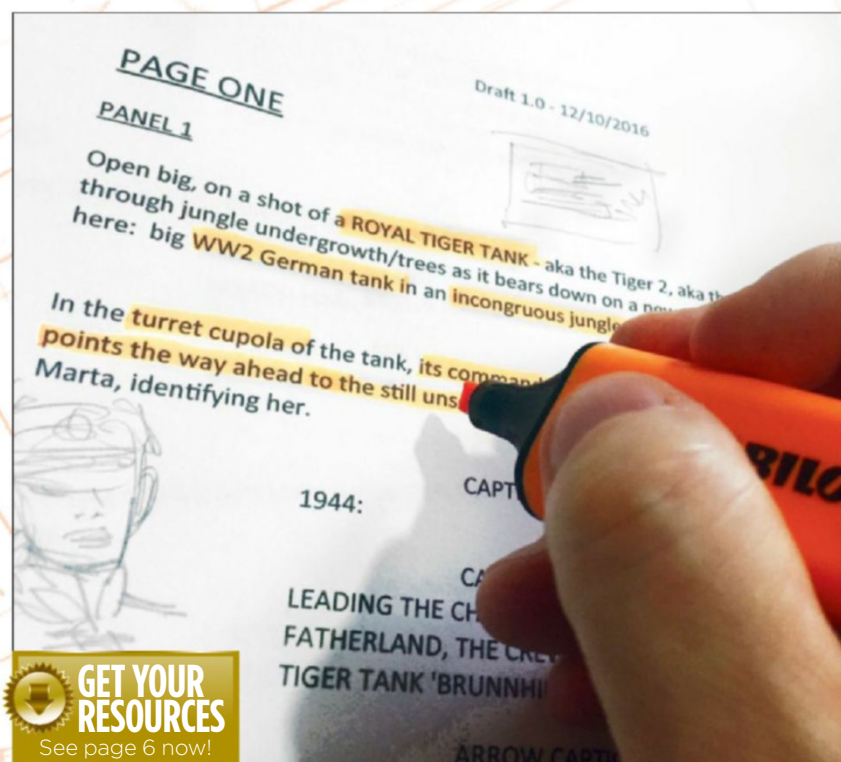
When I was asked to finish *World of Tanks* for Dark Horse, I had a tight deadline, but I was also required to draw detailed, believable and most importantly, accurate tanks and other World War 2 vehicles. Unlike

drawing futuristic war stories, you can't just make this stuff up. These things exist and people know exactly what they look like.

Luckily, this means there's usually a plethora of reference material out there. There are models, books, videos and, most precious of all, manuals – these will often show vehicles from the inside. This is crucial knowledge to have when you have a team of people inside a tank, and the book will be put in front of millions of readers who've all played

the game and know exactly where the driver sits.

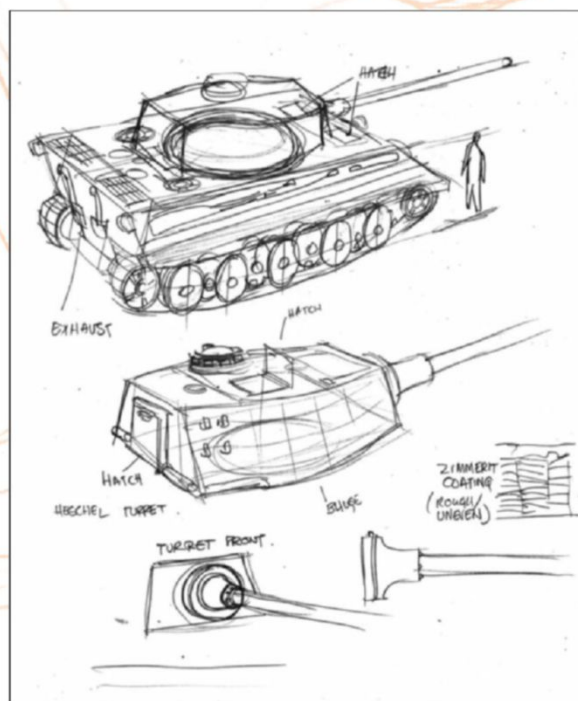
In this workshop I'll take you through a page of a new creator-owned series I'm working on with Gordon Rennie called *World War Thule*. It's set in the dying days of the War, and tells of a last-ditch effort of the Reich to find new resources in the Hollow Earth. We follow the all-female crew of a German King Tiger Tank as it fights Atlanteans, dinosaurs and cavemen with weird futuristic technology...



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

1 Look for keywords in the comic script

All comics start with reading the script, but on books where research is required you've got to also mine it for keywords that will help you when looking for reference. The script for *World War Thule* starts off with a bang and features a WWII Royal Tiger Tank. At this stage, I honestly have no idea what that is!



2 Undertake some research

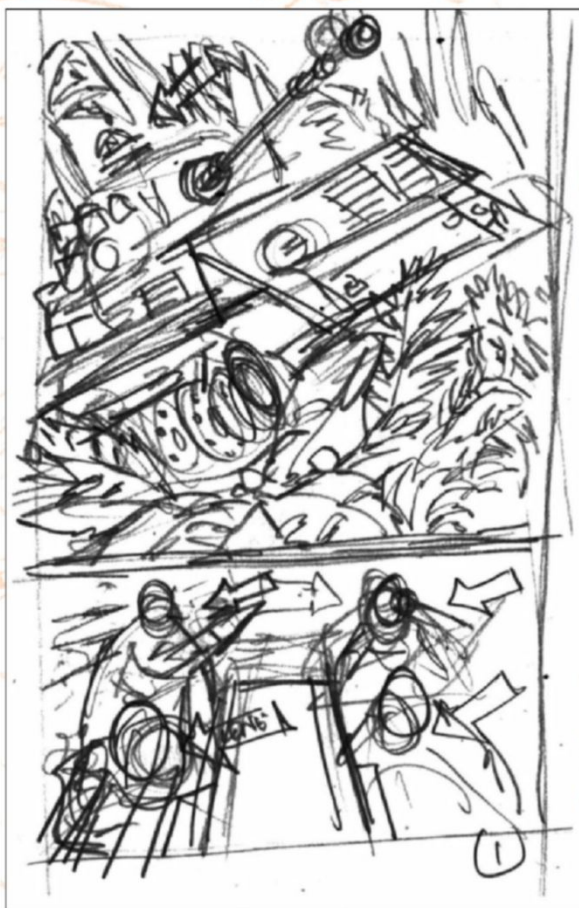
I start with Wikipedia, checking the articles for Royal Tiger Tank. I note the specifications to give me some sense of scale, and I begin finding as many photos as I can. From these I sketch out an annotated diagram, I'm not too worried about getting everything exactly right, as there's a danger of research paralysis occurring. ➡



PRO SECRETS

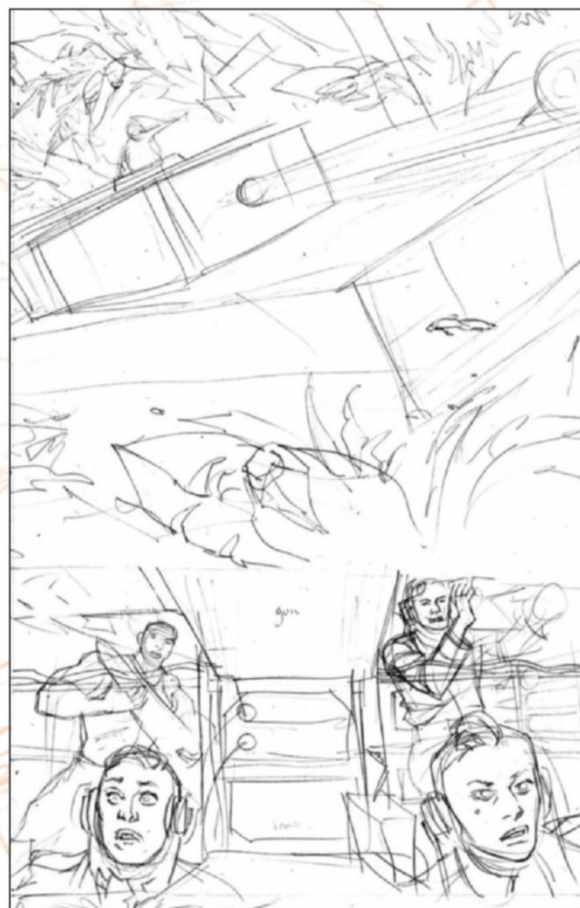
Using smoke and mirrors

Sometimes, the research just isn't enough and it's impossible to get clear reference for something you have to draw. At that point, you can use smoke and mirrors. Well, mostly smoke. Obfuscate, use debris, make the inking slightly more scratchy, use shadows... any trick you can. The reader won't question something that they can't see. If you decide to 'wing it', you can guarantee at least one reader will spot the error.



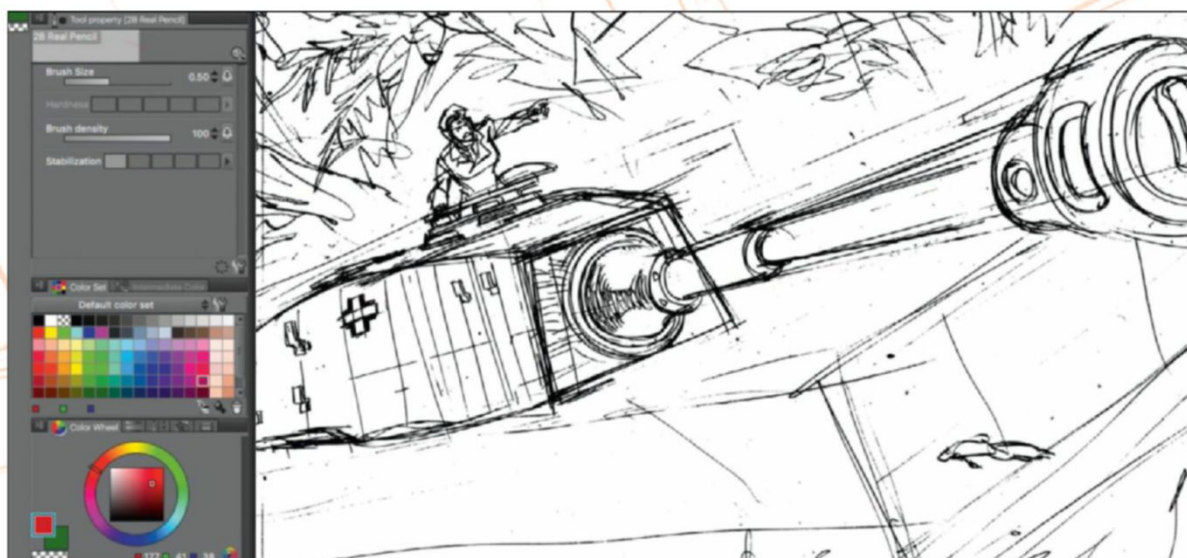
3 Produce thumbnails

Thumbnails help me draw the first page of the comic. It's a simple two-panel page designed to show off the tank, where panel one features it barreling through the jungle. I try and get as much tank in there as I can. This is the reader's first close-up view of the vehicle, and it's crucial for the image to create an impression.



4 Picking up a pencil

Thumbnails done, I begin pencilling the page. At this stage it's all about big shapes and where they go. I want movement and action on the page. I jot down a basic perspective block shapes for the tank; being correct is less important than getting motion on the page. I then rough out the figure placements on panel two.



5 Detailing the turret and directing the viewer

Now I'll start to refine the shapes and start adding details. I introduce sloping curves to the side of the turret, and then extend and enhance the barrel looming out of the shot. The barrel, if used correctly, can be an incredible asset in controlling the reader's eye and I use it to draw them down towards the tank commander.

RESOURCES WORKSHOP BRUSHES

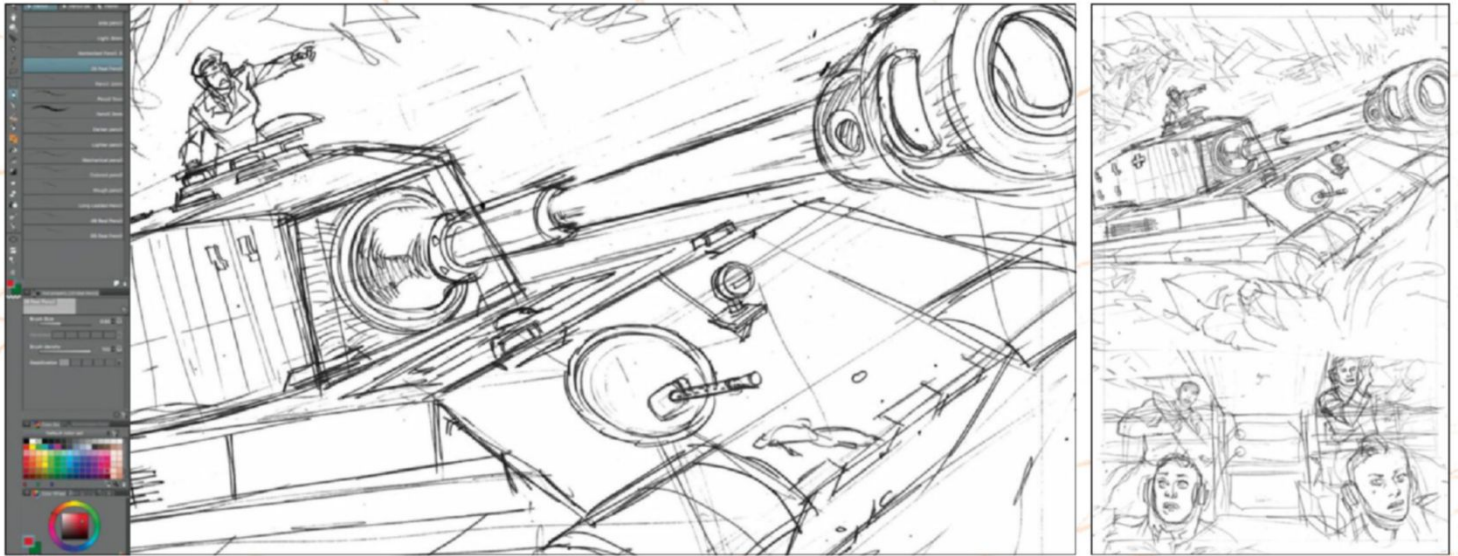
CLIP STUDIO PAINT

CUSTOM BRUSHES: FERN

A silhouette of jungle ferns, used to add foreground shadows of jungle ferns.

SPLATTER

General random splatter, used to help simulate flying debris



6 Refining the tank's main body

I want drama and movement in the scene, and the movement should follow the direction of the body of the tank. After all, that's the direction the vehicle is travelling in. After digging through the reference, I begin to tighten the shape up, sloping the edges of the front forward to get it more tank-like and less like a box on caterpillar tracks.



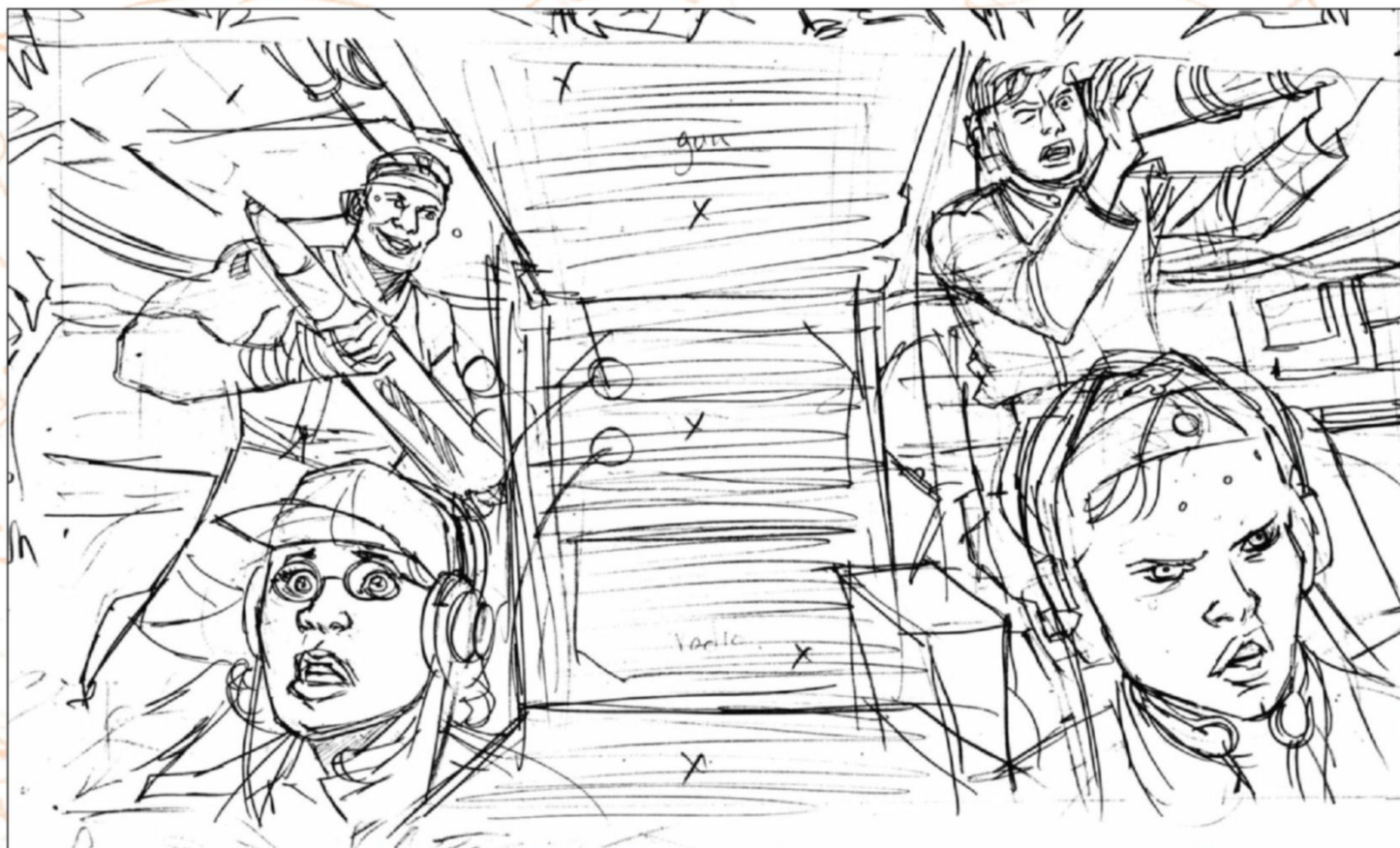
7 Getting the tracks right

Tank treads are powered by a toothed sprocket at the front that drives it forward, while the rest of the wheels help to spread the tank's weight. I start by drawing the sprocket in its fixed position high at the front, then drawing a line of action through the centre of the tank's wheels, using this to count out the five outer wheels and then draw the interior interlocked wheels.



8 Working up the environment

I give the tank a once-over, adding some details noted from various reference photos. These include spare tank treads on the side, fuel tins and cabling. I draw the plants around the wheels to suggest that it's moving the undergrowth out of the way. Then I scribble in the surrounding jungle: this can be fairly abstract as all we want is an impression of thick undergrowth. ➔



9 Illustrate inside of tank accurately... to a degree

If drawing the outside of a tank was hard, drawing the inside is nearly impossible. While looking online I stumble across someone who's built a model Tiger tank from the inside out. This enables me to figure out the physical space better. While the technical stuff is important, storytelling is king and so I don't let physical space limit me too much.

PRO SECRETS

Make your own shortcuts

If Clip Studio Paint doesn't have a shortcut to a command you can always make one. One frustrating omission from CSP's list of common commands is an **Cmd+F** for fill. To create it go to the Shortcut Settings (on a Mac it's **Clip Studio Paint > Shortcut Settings**; on a PC it's **File > Shortcut Settings**). Select **Tools** on the Setting Area drop-down, and then locate **Fill**. Fill is normally mapped to **G** (which cycles through Gradient and Fill) but we can now add **F** for Fill.



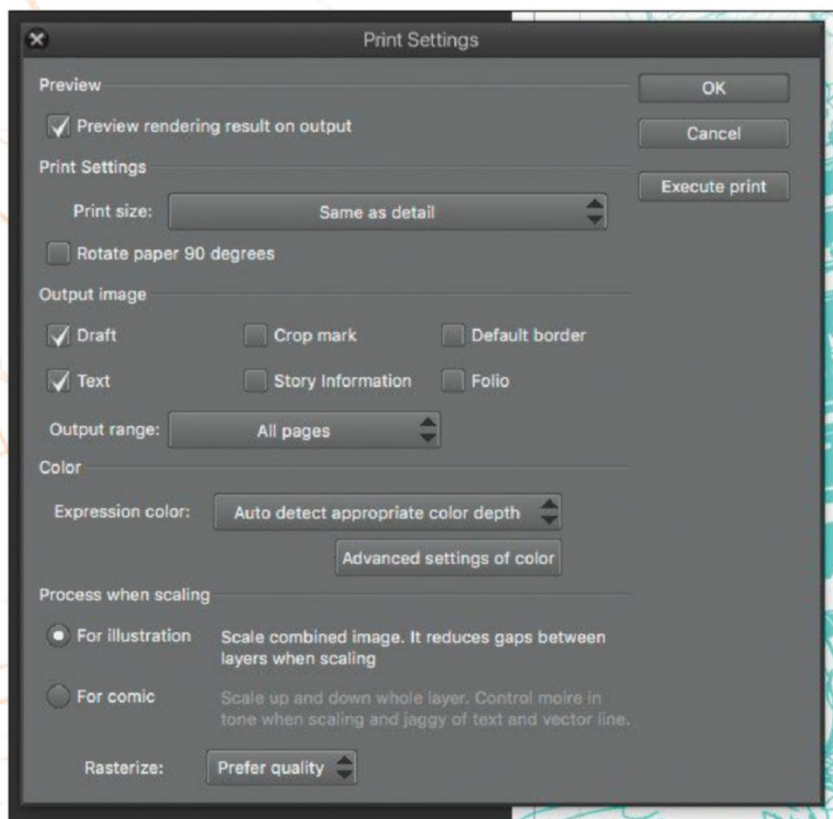
10 Scan the art and clean it up

Having already created a document for the comic in Clip Studio Paint, I scan the page and place it in my document set to the same physical dimensions as my art size. At this point I decide that the tank is just a little too big, so using the Lasso Marquee I draw a selection around it and then press **Cmd+T** to transform and shrink it.



11 Adding Panel Frames

I add a Panel Frame folder, and using the Slice Panel Frame I cut it in two. I really want panel one to be a full-bleed panel and so, using the Object tool, I select the corner boxes of the first panel and drag them until the first panel frame has disappeared off the page. Panel one is now full bleed and has plenty of visual impact.



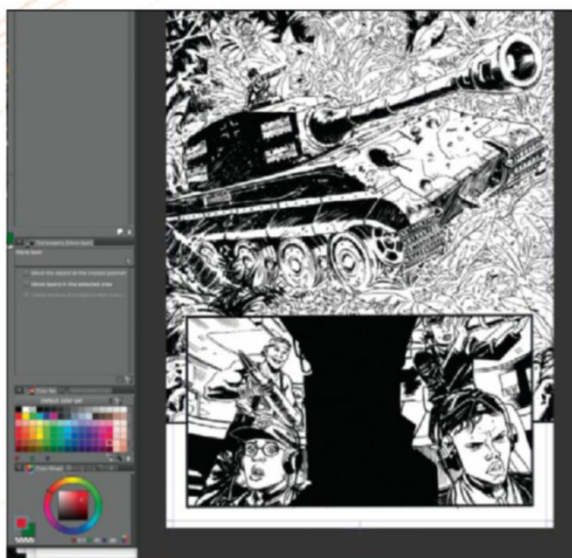
12 Preparing to ink the artwork

My preference is to ink traditionally, so using the Layer Color drop-down in the Layers window, I turn the scanned pencil layer to Cyan – this is often called non-photo-repro-blue. Then I select Print Settings. From here, I select Print Size as Same as Detail, and ensure that Output Image includes Draft, and then select Print. Luckily, my Brother A3 printer can handle Bristol Board!



13 Letting loose with inks

I ink with Deleter Number 2 ink, and a G nib and a brush. I find the Deleter inks to be great for inking with a nib, and this is the fun part, just thrashing through the inks. Having spent so long getting the precise technical details of the tank right, I can now just let loose and splatter ink all over the image.



14 Finishing up

Scanning the art as pure black and white drops the cyan pencils out of the scan and I end up with a pure black and white inked image, which I then place in the live area of Clip Studio Paint. Now I'll touch up anything I think needs corrected, lassoing the lead figure on panel one and resizing her until she's a little bigger to get the scale just right. And after that, we're done!

PRO SECRETS

Record your actions

Clip Studio Paint enables you to record various tasks and replay them, saving you time. Common uses for me include Cleaning up line-art, cleaning up pencils and creating a brand new digital pencil layer. Simply go to the Auto Actions window (if it's not visible, select Window>Auto Action is ticked), select Add Auto Action on the drop-down menu in the Action window, then press the big red record button and perform your own actions. When you're done you can hit the big red stop button.

Core Skills: Part 2

USE WATERCOLOUR TOOLS IN REBELLE

Martin Hanschild continues his six-part series on Rebelle, the natural media painting program, by looking at how the Watercolor brush works

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



Simulating traditional methods can be a challenge, especially watercolours. Over the years I've tried several techniques and many custom brushes to achieve that distinct watercolour look, and sometimes the final results were pleasing.

Yet how I achieved these results didn't feel right. The workflow lacked the natural and organic feeling of the paint, didn't properly replicate how colours diffuse across the canvas, and

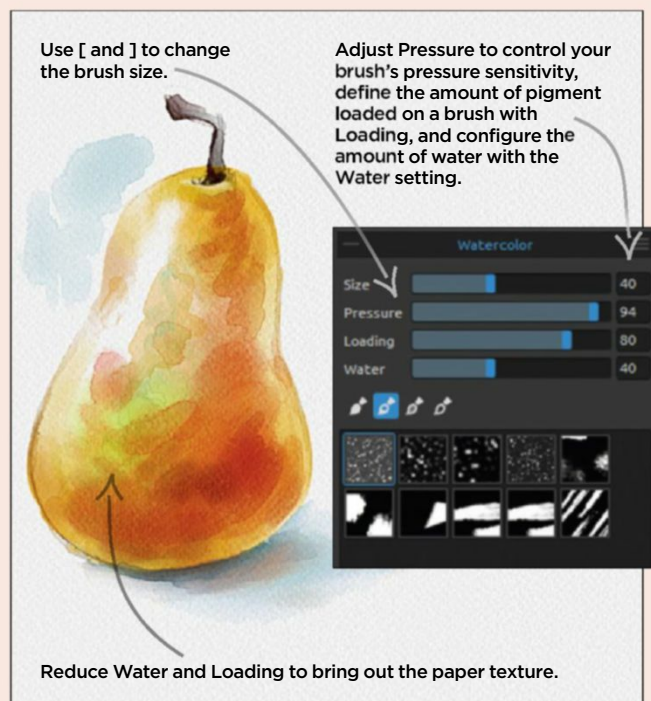
the effects achieved by blending colours together looked 'off'.

With Rebelle, the painting process feels real, colours soak into the paper and blend together smoothly, and the program mimics the real-world experience. Note, however, that the watercolour effects are simulated on the canvas in real time, so you have to have patience. You also need to manage and dry the canvas to control the painting's development.

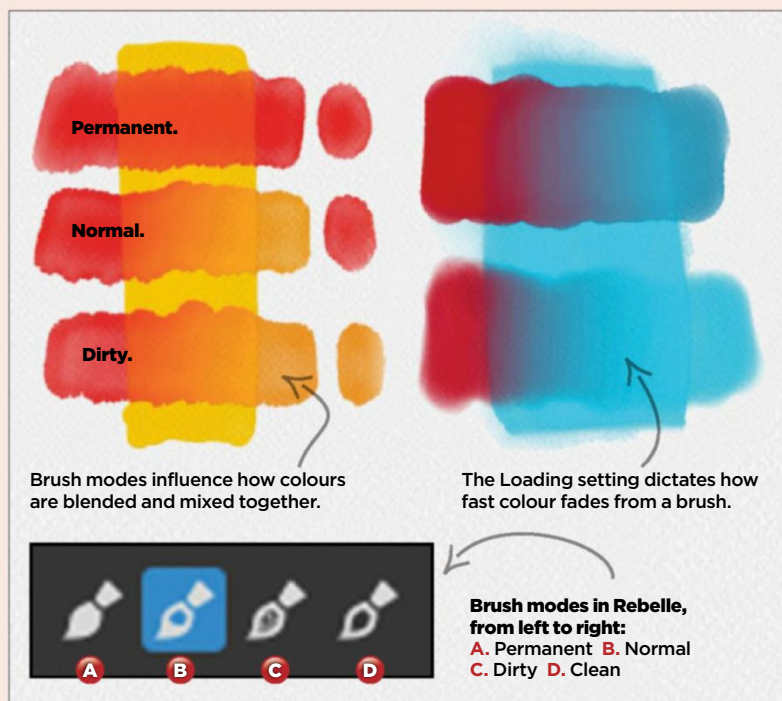
The settings for the Watercolor brush are straightforward, with fewer

options compared to other painting programs. But you can still affect the final result using options such as canvas texture, canvas wetness, tilting the canvas, switching between wet and dry surfaces, using a Fast Dry layer or a Dry layer option, and more.

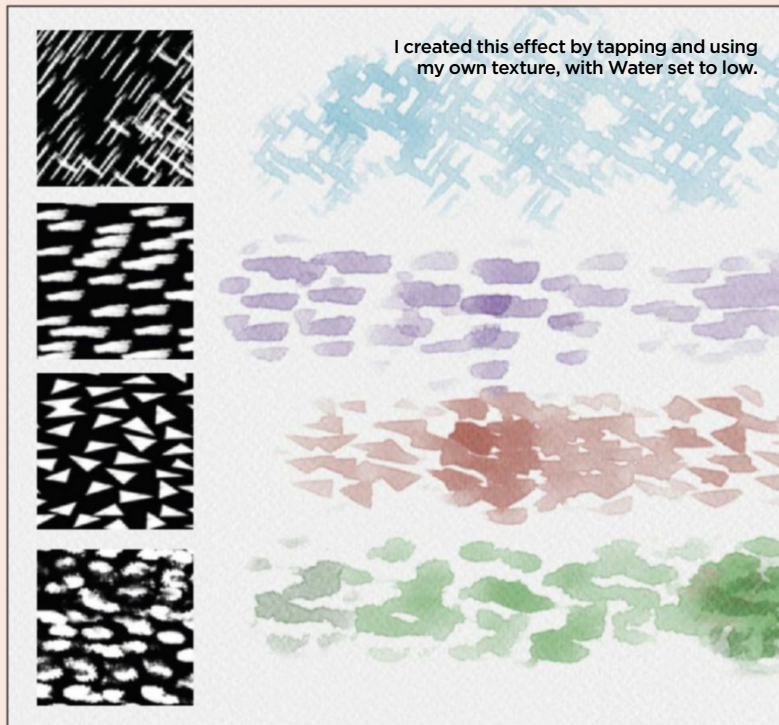
In this month's instalment I'll introduce you to the basic tools and steps that you need to take, to maintain control over your watercolour work. But don't forget to experiment and find your own way of working in Rebelle.



1 Basic settings for the Watercolor brush
I mostly paint with Pressure set close to 100. Then I either decrease the Loading value if I want to paint with light, transparent strokes, or increase it to achieve strong strokes with a rich amount of pigment. If you want to spread colour faster on the layer, and produce the effect of diffusing colours that mix with each other, increase the Water setting.

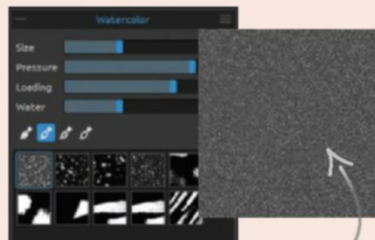


2 Choose your Brush modes
In Normal mode, colour slowly fades from the brush and blends on the canvas, and this continues until a new stroke is painted. A brush in Permanent mode has an infinite Loading setting and the colour doesn't fade. Dirty mode blends colours together and when you paint a new stroke, you produce a blend of colours. A Clean brush isn't loaded with any colour and is always recoloured by the colour it passes across on the canvas.

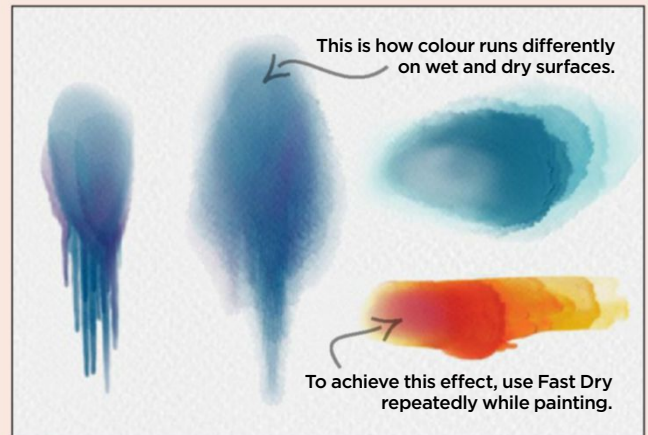


3 Brush texture

By default, there are four types of brushes in Rebelle. But you can use your own textures. Go to Help>Show Library folder and put your own brush into the Brushes folder (the brush image must be 512x512 pixels and a PNG). A white pixel represents the full amount of colours, grey is half and black pixel is zero.



Rebelle's Brush engine takes only part of this texture, from the middle of the brush image.



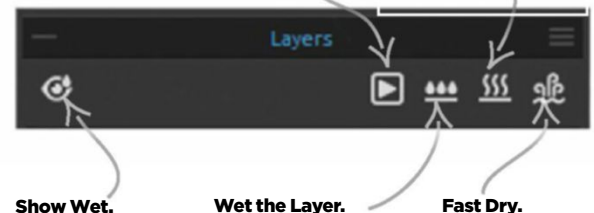
4 Control a layer's degree of wetness

Wet the whole layer to simulate the wet-into-wet technique, as used in classic watercolour techniques. Fast Dry stops the flow of colour and water, but the wet parts stay wet, while Dry the Layer dries everything. You can control which parts of the canvas are wet by pressing H (Show Wet). When you switch layers, the layer mode will change to Fast Dry.

Pause the spread of water

You can pause Water Flow to give you more time to think about your next step.

Dry the Layer.

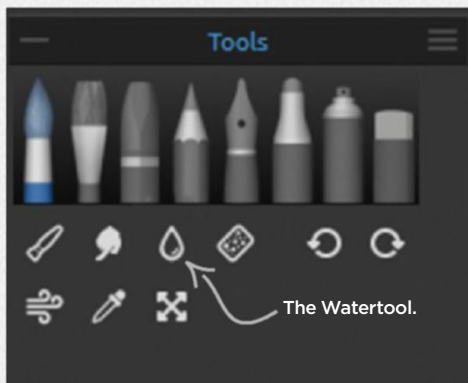


Show Wet.

Wet the Layer.

Fast Dry.

Using the Water tool on a wet canvas will produce soft, diffused results. On a dry surface your art will be more defined and feature stronger edges.



Paint some shapes with the Water tool. Then, if you paint with the Watercolor brush (with a Water value of 100) inside this shape, colour won't go beyond the edges.



PRO SECRETS

Bigger brush workflow

Sometimes at the start of a painting I need to work with a bigger brush, which is a problem because of the software's limitations. My workaround is to start with a lower resolution (around 1,000px), then export the painting without a background as a PNG, rescale it and open it again in Rebelle before continuing working.

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5 Use the Water tool to suit your way of working

If you want to work with wet colours or re-wet dried colours, use the Water tool (W). It adds clean water to your canvas. To see the water stroke, turn on Show Wet Layer (H). Tilt controls the direction of spreading water.





Artist PROFILE

Liam Sharp
LOCATION: US

Hailing from Derby, north England, Liam is the current lead artist on Wonder Woman for DC Comics, and the co-founder of the innovative digital storytelling company Madefire. He's also a published novelist. www.madefire.com

Pen & Photoshop CREATE A COMIC SPREAD

Artist **Liam Sharp** pencils a Wonder Woman spread, then **Laura Martin** adds the colour (see overleaf)...



This spread from Wonder Woman: The Lies (issue 11) had a lot of work to do! It had to establish, to the informed reader at least, that this was not the real Themyscira, the island paradise former home of our heroine,

but rather an elaborate fake. Meanwhile, Wonder Woman herself had to be slightly dazed and uncertain – wanting to believe she's home, but somehow holding back. The spread had to feel rich and evolved as an environment, but also suggest clues to its true nature... ➔

DRAWING IN DECEPTION

Visual narrative clues

1 Themyscira is a highly evolved, civilised paradise, so making the shelter behind the queen's table so crude is an immediate giveaway that this isn't the real Themyscira, instead someplace more barbaric.

A doubting Steve

2 Wonder Woman's love interest Steve Trevor feels doubt. He's the only mortal male to have visited Themyscira, knows this isn't it, but isn't sure how to break it to Diana. I put burger and fries in front of him – a cynical slight. These Amazons don't like men!

Creating atmosphere

3 I want to achieve a scene of a bustling, believable feast in a medieval-type setting. Heaps of food on crude tables hidden by layers of material, hastily erected shelters. The town is empty as everybody gathers in the square. A scavenging dog, a mouse...

More signs and clues

4 The sword has a horned skull motif that suggests possible involvement from Ares, the god of war, and Diana's nemesis. Weapons wouldn't ordinarily be on display in Themyscira, but here there are shields, spears, and even a trident.

A sense of texture

5 I primarily use brush and ink (and a small amount of pen). I like to create a sense of texture, suggesting the various materials and surfaces as well as ambient depth – created by using finer lines in the distance.



A surprise inclusion

6 It's quite common to have peacocks parading around fantasy environments because they suggest splendour. But I wanted to draw the anti-peacock and immediately thought of a dodo! The fact the dodo is also extinct is another visual clue that things might not be what they initially seem.

What's missing?

7 Themyscira itself is shown here as a tumble-down medieval-type city, not the progressive paradise it's generally thought to be. There's no sign that its denizens are in any way innovative, modern builders in a progressive, civilised society.

Another discrepancy

8 Hippolyta is the queen of the Amazons, and Diana's mother. We had, back in Year One, established her as raven-haired and Mediterranean in her looks. But here she appears blonde and based on an alternative iteration from the New 52 Wonder Woman series of recent years.



Artist PROFILE

Laura Martin
LOCATION: US

Laura has been colouring comics for almost every American publisher, and winning awards, since 1995. She is also an avid hiker and volunteers at a local cat rescue.
www.lauramartinart.com



Help! How do I enhance storytelling, draw attention to main plot points, and lead the eye through the page, all at the same time? I read Greg's script and talked with Liam about overall mood. We wanted a

strong, high-contrast palette, more cinematic than realistic. I chose a colour scheme of hot versus cold. Red, yellow, peach, gold, pink and burgundy focus light and attention on to the main characters. The mood is of fervent gluttony, in a frame of a cold, slightly off-kilter space.

COLOUR & LIGHTING

Light source

1 This globe is the primary and only light source. I choose a bright yellow light with a limited range, to concentrate the visual energy on to the main characters.

Adding narrative

2 Steve is an outsider, a point driven home by his military-green shirt. The actual colour is much closer to golden brown - it's only because of the surrounding colour scheme that it appears to look green.

Dead as a...

3 I laughed when I saw the dodo, but I also understood its significance as a clue that this isn't the real Themyscira. I do some dodo research before colouring and use a thin, yellow highlight along its body to keep it from getting completely lost in shadow.

A sense of perspective

4 There's great depth of field, and colour can put it into perspective. I choose the focal point, emphasise it with the most contrast in hue or value, and allow planes to 'recede' by cooling colours and reducing details.

Hold the detail

5 It would be very easy for a colourist to get lost in rendering every little face and hand. However, too much colour detail would confuse the overall composition, so I keep the smaller figures in almost flat colour.

Play with emotions

6 The emotion has changed significantly from panel two to panel three, so I accentuate Hippolyta's scowl and shadow Diana's face to suggest she's still in the dark about what's happening.



5



6

How I introduce...

CINEMATIC DRAMA



A Shapes take shape

The first step is flattening, or breaking down the image into separate colours (subcontracted to Chris Garcia - thanks!). Colour choices don't matter here, as long as each shape is a different colour to adjacent shapes.



B Colour scheme

I establish the overall colour scheme and change flat colours to base colours, or darkest versions of the colours I will eventually use. This prevents me from going too dark, which could obscure the line-art.



C Adding details

I use the Brush tool to paint details, add secondary lighting and create surface textures like hair and metal. I also add special effects on separate layers. Here there's a colour hold on the whites of Hippolyta's eyes, and a slight shine on her silver crown.

Wonder Woman © DC Comics

Next month in...

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

ImagineFX

Digital art techniques

Discover fresh new tricks to help make your art better than ever before!

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Do you need to like or follow?

How to freshen up (or start!) a social media strategy for promoting your art.

Tell a story with one image

Animation artist Pascal Campion reveals his tried and tested techniques.

Paint vivid watercolours

Illustrator Katy Lipscomb shares her watercolour skills with you.

Create with SketchUp

Use SketchUp as a base to build a fantasy castle, with artist Donglu Yu.



Next month

Master artist
Mélanie Delon
shares her unique
digital art painting
methods!

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ImagineFX



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ZBrush & KeyShot

REFINE YOUR 3D CHARACTER



Part two of **John Mahoney's** series on ZBrush sees the artist detailing his alien pilot design, before using KeyShot to make it photorealistic

Artist PROFILE

John Mahoney
LOCATION: US

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



The possibilities for creating interesting and fun-looking characters in ZBrush is endless. This is your chance to jump in and get started!

However, I recognise that translating a 2D concept sketch into a 3D model can be a challenge. So in this article, the second of my three workshops, I'll be showing you some straightforward techniques to help you take your designs into the 3D world. For example, you'll be able to

copy your exact original design using the Transference function in ZBrush.

Creating a body of any kind can be tricky in ZBrush, so here I'll be revealing some basic formulas that will enable you to create any body you like quickly and simply. Using the Append function you'll be able to add any previously sculpted assets to your new body sculpt.

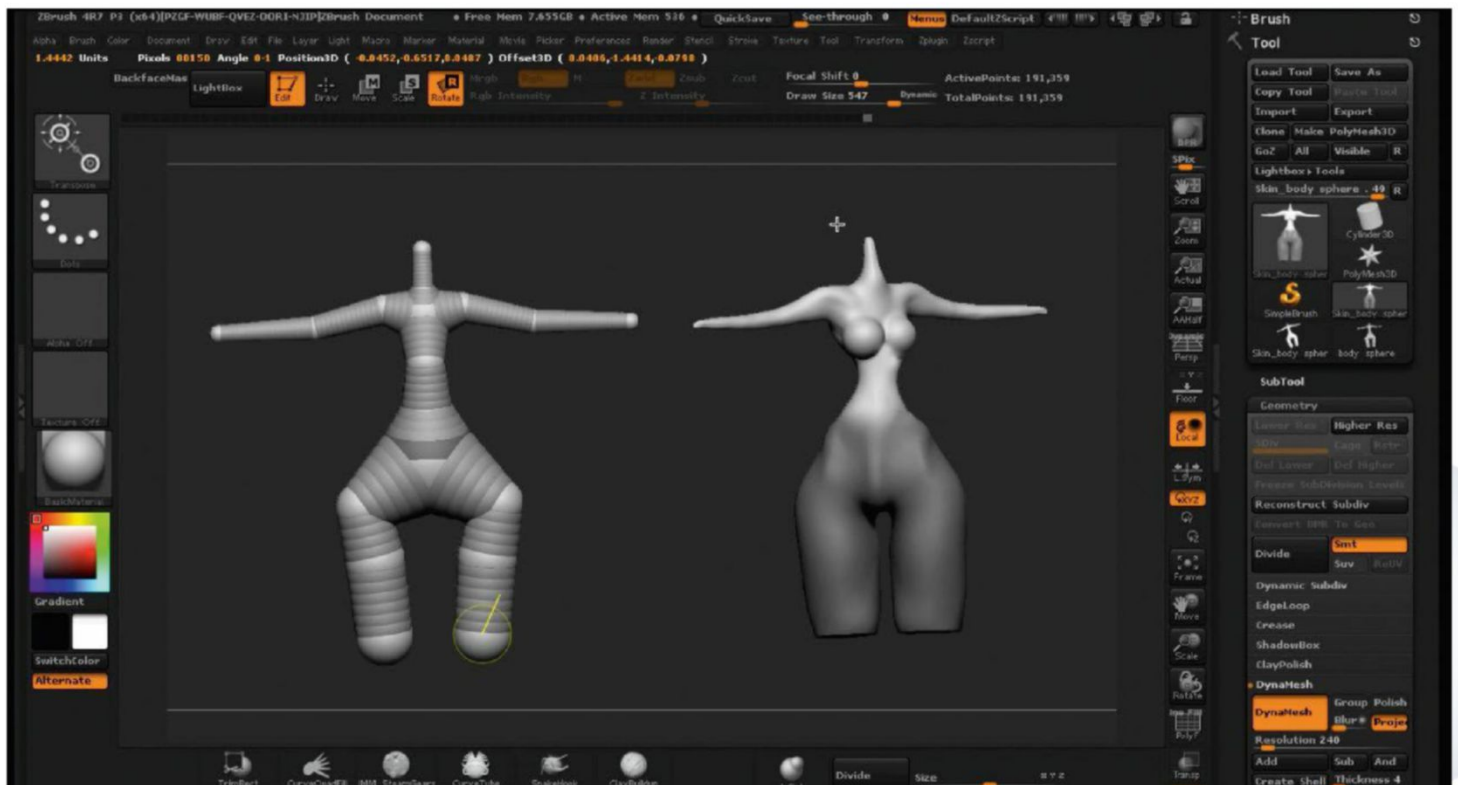
I'll also be explaining how to import your work into KeyShot to enhance its appearance, so that it's ready for presentation.



1 Matching up ZSpheres to suit your references

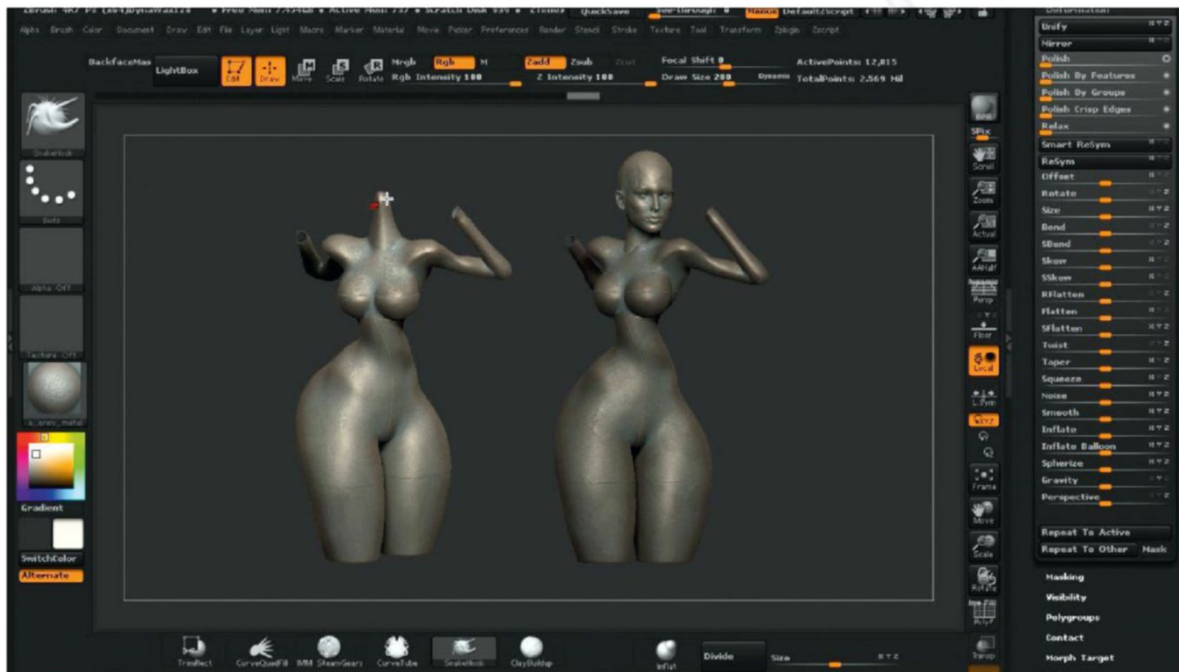
I use the transparent function to see through the ZBrush menu, so I can easily view my reference image on my desktop. This will be my guide for creating the female cartoon-like body. I select a new ZSphere and drag this on to the canvas. I use the Draw tool (with Symmetry selected) to draw additional ZSpheres on the original ZSphere. Once I draw these additions spheres, I can drag out these spheres to create legs and arms for my character. They can then be repositioned and scaled to fit the original reference.

In depth Refine your 3D character



2 Turning the ZSpheres into Clay

Once the character is properly positioned and I'm satisfied with the basic T-pose proportions, I select Make Adaptive Skin. This creates a new version of the body in virtual clay. I can now refine the forms and basic anatomy easily. Then I pose the character asymmetrically. I save the original T-pose version in case I want to go back to make design changes, because when you move off symmetry it's almost impossible to get that symmetry back.



3 Adding a head to the character

In part one of my workshop series I added a temporary head model that's supplied in ZBrush to show how to append a second Subtool to my main sculpture. Now I go to Insert Meshes and choose Body Parts. I choose this female head just for this workshop. This head can be modified to any character you like or you can append a sphere and start creating a new head from scratch. The Append button in the Subtool menu is the most important button in ZBrush in my opinion. This enables you to keep adding elements to your main sculpture. ➡

PRO SECRETS

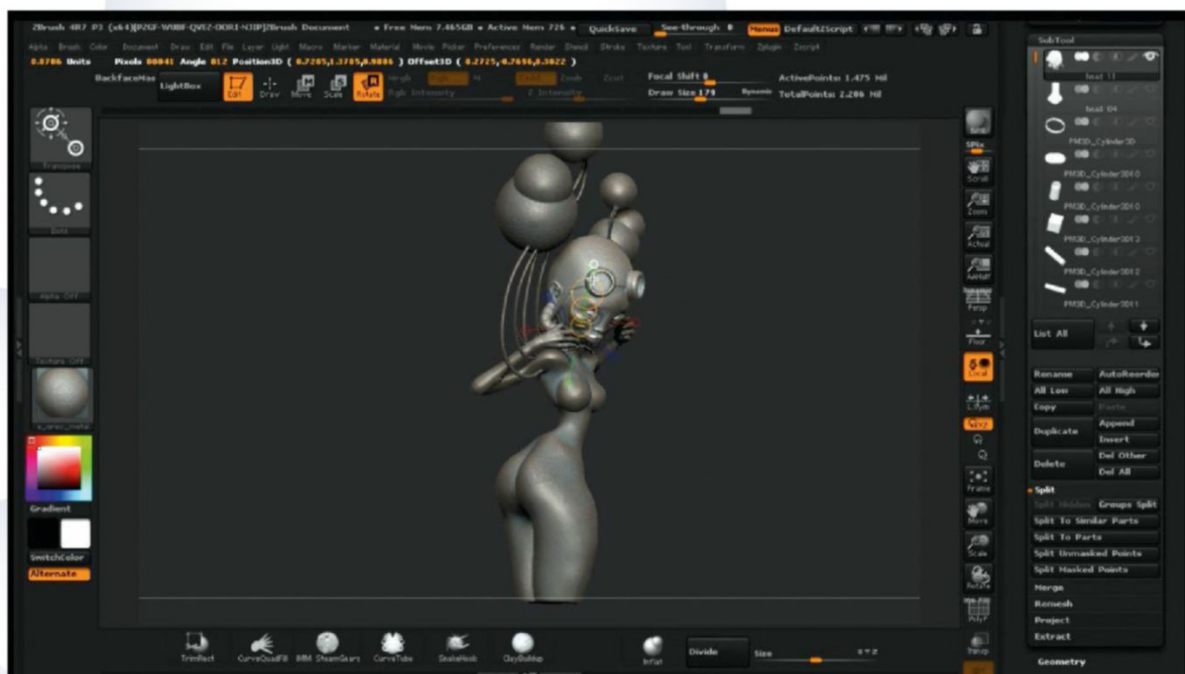
Build your 3D library

Remember that every time you build something in 3D, you'll never have to build it again. This is, to me, the most amazing thing about sculpting digitally. Always think of fresh ways to reuse your models. This will actually push your creativity. Remember the wonderful world of scale. A sneaker can be sneaker size or the size of a planet. Every new sculpture you create increases the opportunity for some creative mash-up with your previous work. Have fun thinking outside the box with your ever-growing toy chest!

PRO SECRETS

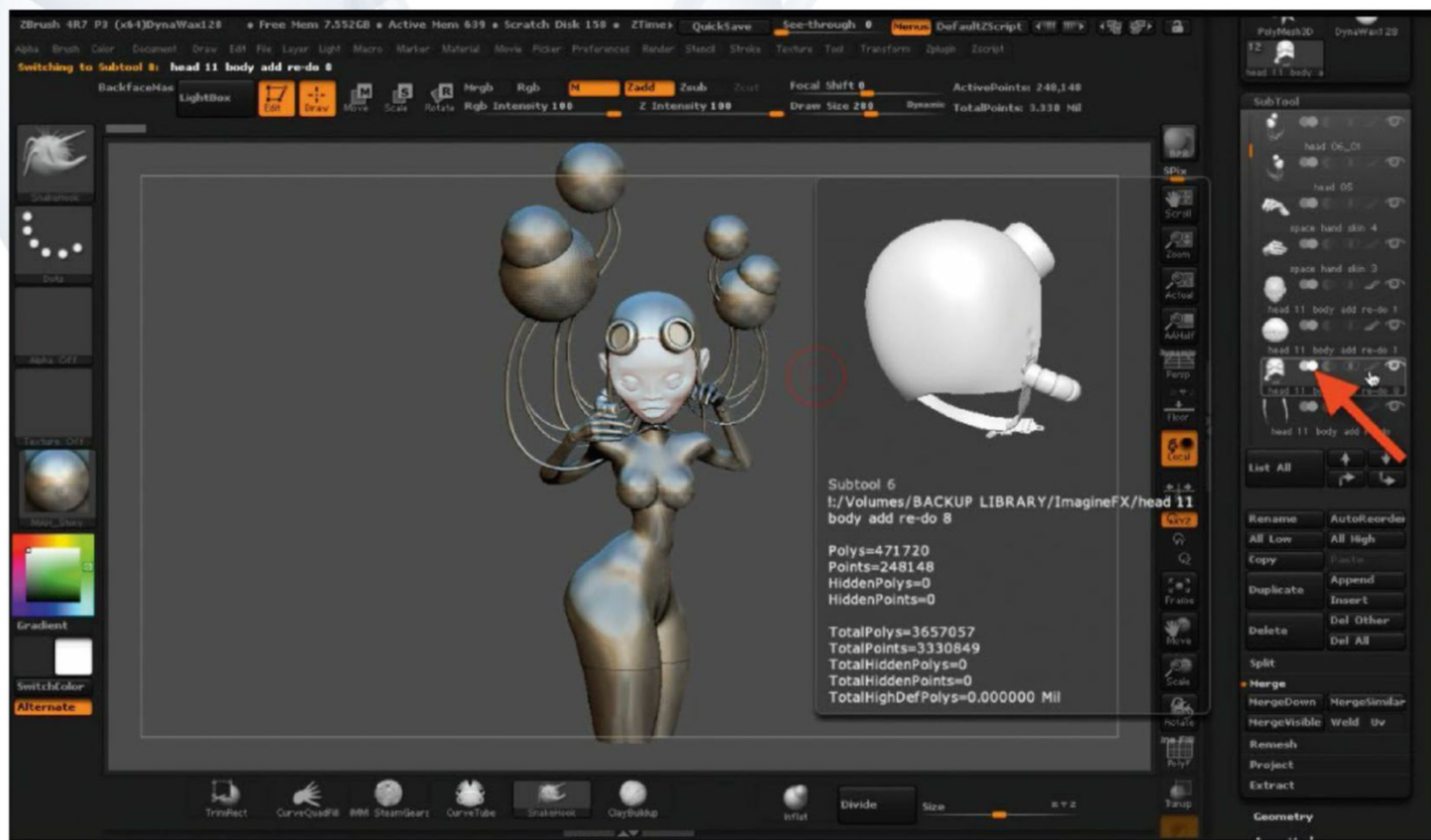
Organise as you go along

One thing that I wish I'd done earlier was organise my 3D sculptures into proper folders as I produced them. You'll be creating more work than you realise and there'll come a time when you want to find that particular sculpture you did six months ago. So I advise creating a series of folders of work you did or plan to do in 3D. You can bring these properly labelled folders into ZBrush and search them using the Lightbox menu. You'll become twice the artist if you can find the necessary pieces of the puzzle efficiently, so start today!



4 Adding the previously sculpted head

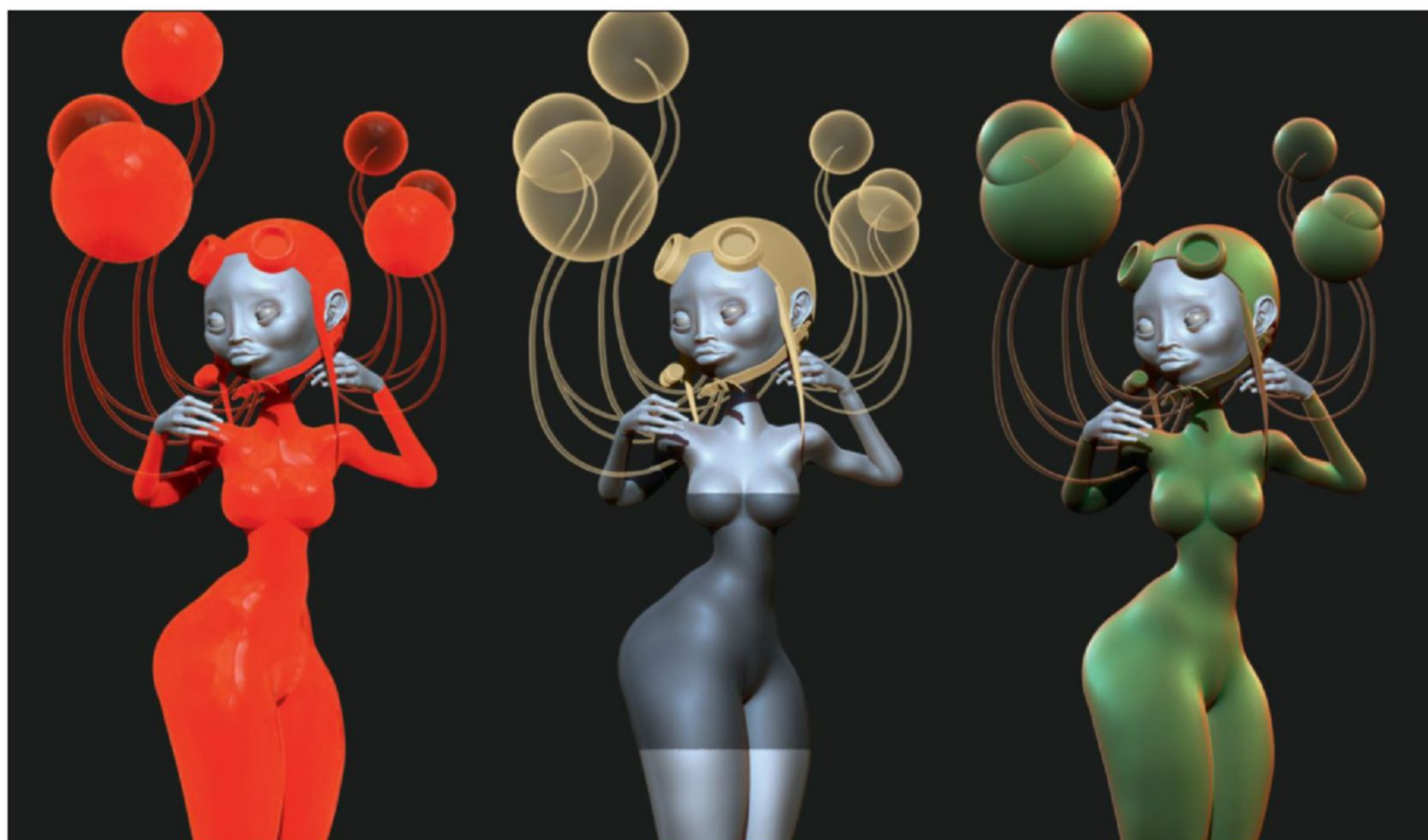
I then replace the demo head with the head I created in part one of my series. I reposition the head and balloons to create a pleasing pose and design. This is a great chance for me to practise using the Move and Rotate tools. I find this to be the most pleasing part of the process – it's very much like playing with a stop-motion character in the real world.



5 Experimenting with Materials

Once I have the character in the position I want, I begin experimenting with Materials, choosing one that will suit the first section of my character. This section has to be its own Subtool for it to have its own Material. I then go to Color>Fill Object, making sure the M button (for Material) is selected, then hit Fill Object. Now, when I select another Material, that first Subtool I colour filled will have the first Material "spray painted" on. I then repeat the same process for the next Material.

In depth Refine your 3D character



6 Exporting my renders

Once I have a group of concepts I like, I do a BPR (Best Preview Render) to see if I like the results. If I do, I go to Documents>Export and export the image as either a PSD or JPG file. This is one of the ways I build up my ZBrush portfolio, by creating as many different Material configurations as I can to show off the character. This gives me ideas for backgrounds, and future style guides for subsequent supporting characters.



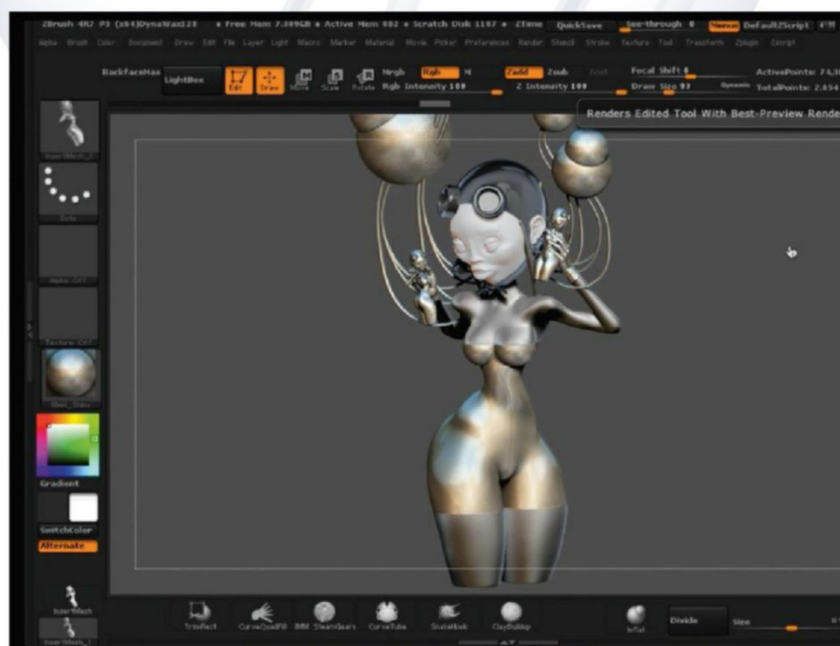
7 Move from ZBrush to KeyShot

I now bring the character into KeyShot. You can purchase a feature-limited, low-cost version of KeyShot for around £120 that only works with ZBrush, but this is enough because you can quickly import your characters into KeyShot for a photorealistic presentation. I love playing with Materials in KeyShot, as well as swapping out different HRD (high dynamic range) backgrounds, just to see what happy accidents occur. ➡



8 Creating dolls for the character

I want to create tiny dolls of the main character for her to hold. First I go to Subtools and click Merge Visible. This creates a merged character in my main menu. I then select Decimation Master>Preprocess Current, then click Decimate Current. I do this twice to ensure that the resolution is extremely low. I then reduced the dimensions of the figure using Deformation>Size. Now I have a tiny reproduction of my main character.



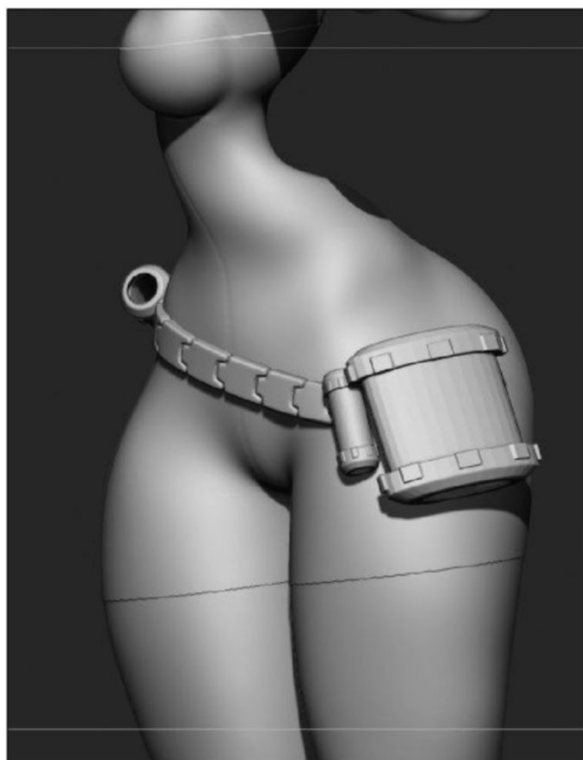
9 Placing the dolls in situ

I then go back to my original character and hit Append, looking for my tiny figure in the menu. Once I find her I click her icon so that she appears with my main character. I then adjust the placement and size until I have the little figure in my main character's hand. I then duplicate this figure and move her to the other hand.



10 Adding clothing accessories

This is my favourite part in both the digital and traditional sculpture process. I feel this really gives a character personality. I press I for Insert Meshes and choose the belt icon. Then I click M to reveal several choices for possible belts for my character. Once a belt is chosen, I click and drag the belt on to my figure. If the belt is too big or too small, I adjust the draw size, press Ctrl+Z and drag it again until I find the perfect size.



11 Modifying an accessory

Modifying an inserted object is pretty easy. I choose the Machine Gun Insert Mesh this time, I press M and choose some primitive objects to add to her belt. If I click and drag the object I can squash and stretch this object before committing to the shape and size of it. I choose to take a canister shape and squish this into something that resembles a flattened cantina.



12 Opening the mouth

The best way to sculpt an open mouth is to slice the head at the jaw. I mask off the lower jaw, then go to the Subtool menu and select Split Unmasked Points. This gives me a separated jaw. I then go to Geometry>Modify Topology>Fill Holes, to fill in the open spaces where the cutting took place. I can now part the lips using the SnakeHook brush. If I wanted to I could now change the insides of her mouth.



13 Creating teeth

I then press I for Insert Meshes and select the Insert Sphere. I drag on a sphere approximately the size of the overall teeth volume. I then choose Split Unmasked Points so that this sphere is on its own Subtool layer. I push the shape around with the SnakeHook brush to give me a general teeth shape. Now my character is complete.



14 Creating the final turntable

It's time to create a turntable to show how the character exists in three dimensions. To do this I go to Movie>Turntable, and choose Doc>Large, before pressing Turntable. I need to make sure the character is properly placed in the middle of the project, otherwise the figure won't turn properly. The simplest way to do this is to merge all Subtools into one Subtool, before saving this under a new name. Then I can use the Move tool to reposition the character in the centre position. I turn on the Floor find the centre point. This process is only needed when the character is in an off-axis. Once I like the turntable, I hit Export.

PRO SECRETS

Work on your personal art

It's great to work for big studios - you get money, credits and fans. But you'll need more than this to keep yourself inspired for the long haul. You must continue to produce material that's of your own creation. Something only you have authority over. This will keep you fired up to keep reaching for more. You can go in any direction you like regardless of what you're famous for at the moment. You'll have something to look forward to after each work day. This will keep your spirits up on those down days. And most importantly, you'll have something no one can ever take away from you.

Next month

Quickly take your concept in a new direction

Photoshop TANGLE UP YOUR COMIC CHARACTERS

Illustrator **Anand Radhakrishnan** discusses his inspirations and cover art requirements when creating his first fantasy comic book cover

Artist PROFILE

Anand Radhakrishnan
LOCATION: India

Anand is a freelance illustrator based in Mumbai. He has recently entered the world of fantasy, science-fiction and comics.
<http://ifxm.ag/anand-r>



Fantasy authors such as Joe Abercrombie, George RR Martin and Scott Lynch have long been on my reading

list. In spite of the complexity of their worlds, they manage to weave a sense of plausibility into their stories.

By the end of 2015, this was one of the factors that led me to start exploring the world of comics, sci-fi and fantasy illustration. Since then

I've collaborated with writer Ram Iyer on several occasions to create comics and standalone illustrations, and one ended up being the cover for his new fantasy graphic novel, *Brigands*.

The purpose of a cover, in addition to making the book stand out on the shelf, is to give the reader a gist of what's to follow within the pages without giving away any spoilers.

This provides some interesting possibilities for the artist to play with

during the concept stage. In some cases the book cover may not even have much to do with the content of the book, so long as the general feeling of the story is conveyed.

For this cover I wanted the main characters of *Brigands* (Stilian and Veina, unlikely companions on a misadventure) to appear as if they were combined, trapped and tangled in one unrecognisable mess hanging on for dear life, literally! ➡

How I illustrated... THE BRIGANDS WHO FELL



1 Inking and line-art

I use a .88 Stabilo liner for this step, inking over my rough pencil lines. I find this to be the most crucial step of the process. The inks are the backbone of the illustration: they will determine the design of the piece along with the content and style.



2 Put down flat colours

Flatting involves filling flat areas with colour and value, and is when the colour scheme starts to develop. Here it's a split-complementary one. I keep the figures in the range of 50-70 per cent value with a lighter background.



3 Bringing in details

I add elements that are painted in without an outline, such as Veina's cape and other design elements like coins and gems, which push the narrative of the piece. The final step here is to adjust the colours, brightness and contrast as required.

Artist insight Tangled characters



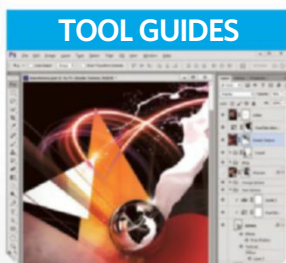
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JUST HANGING...



Make room for the title

It's crucial to account for the title of the book during the early stages of cover design. The title is the most important component of a cover and so it's wise to either leave enough space for it or design the cover around it. In this case, I left the bottom of the composition free for the title, credits and other text elements that come from the publisher.

Pushing the story

Small things can help to tell the story better and add layers to the cover illustration. Here, if we look at Stilian's right hand, he seems to be grasping a handful of rubies and gold coins; if he lets go of them then he'd be able to free himself. That is a representation of Stilian's character as a thief in the comic.

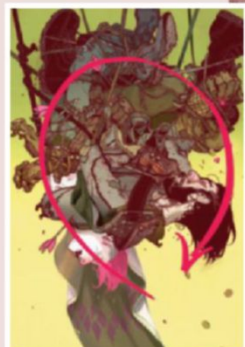


The power of flat darks

Flat blacks or darks help to ground an image. Areas that are seemingly inactive, like a heavy chunk of black in a painting, often function as negative space or breathing space for a painting. These can be used with great effect to make the rest of the image look more active in comparison.

Taking aim...

In the story Stilian is an archer and so the bow and arrow is a repeating visual throughout the comic. I thought it would be fitting to see the two main characters riddled with arrows. Here, they have the additional function of guiding the viewer's eye.



Directing the viewer

I used a split-complementary colour scheme here where the tertiary greens and browns make up 90 per cent of the image, while the saturated reds have the sole purpose of directing the viewer's eye. In this case, they're taken from Veina's hair, follow a circular path along the arrows and the falling rubies, and finally towards the title at the bottom.

PRO SECRETS

Every object has weight

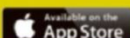
Unless the setting is in space or underwater, every object has mass and will be affected by gravity. You need to be aware of that weight, especially while drawing things upside down. For example, things that aren't tied down would fall downwards and blood would rush towards the character's heads, making them redder in the face.

PERFECT YOUR VIDEO GAME MODELLING

Artists from Epic Games, Insomniac and Riot Games share the secrets to better video game character models!



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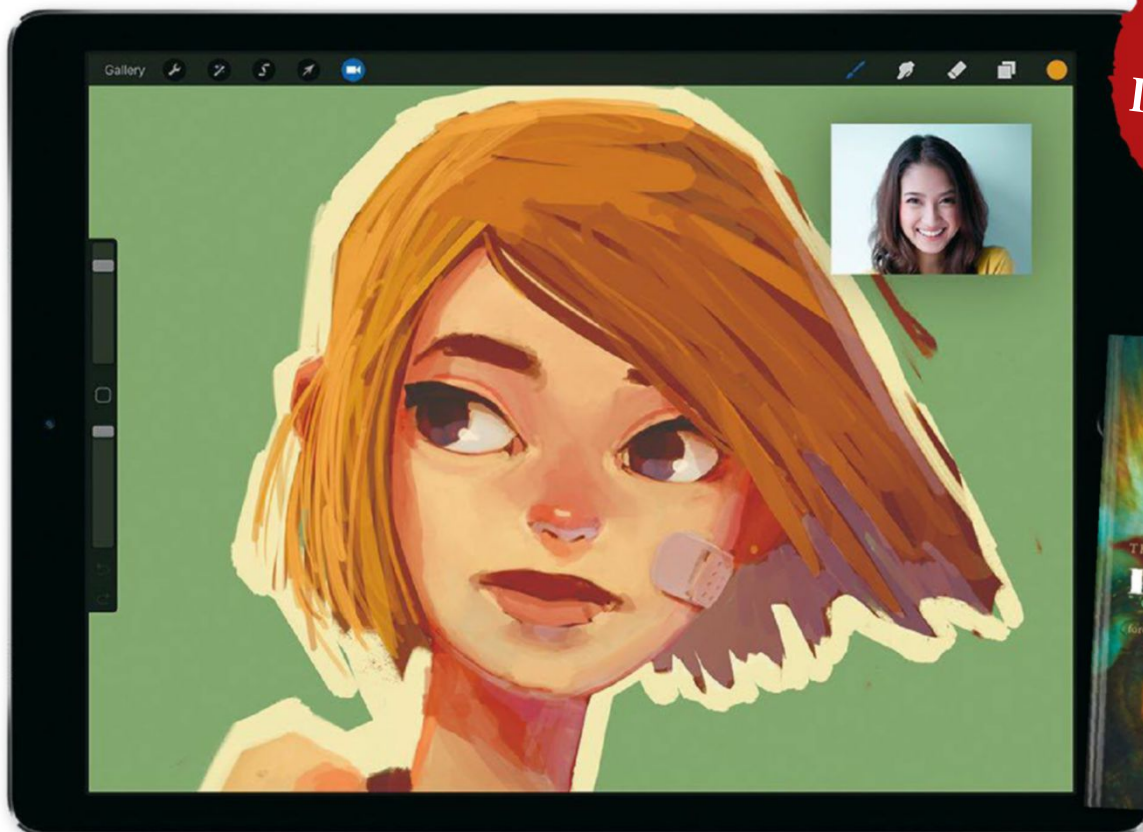


NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX Reviews

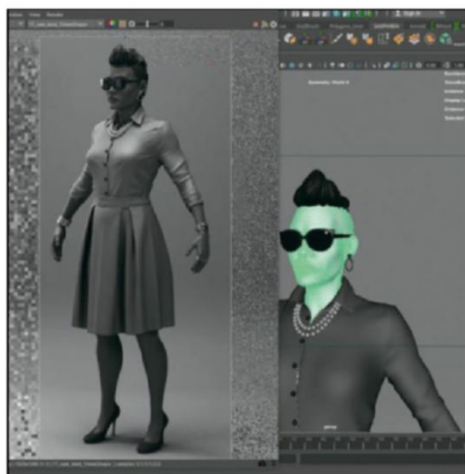
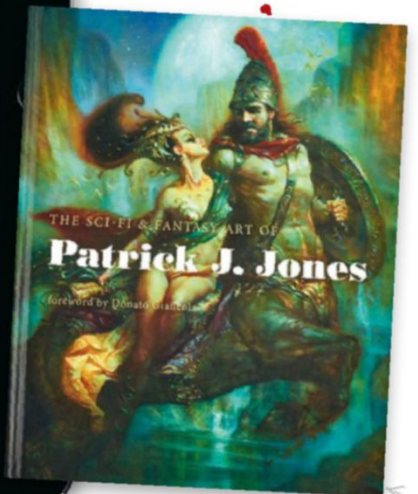


Artist's Choice Award
Art resources with a five-star rating receives the ImagineFX Artist's Choice award!

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



6
PRODUCTS
ON TEST



SOFTWARE

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A revised layers system and video recording make this great art app even better, so long as you keep its powers in check...

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This software turns your iPad Pro into a graphics tablet, but does the subscription pricing model work for you?

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The sumptuous paintings of this illustrious illustrator and teacher are gathered together in this career retrospective.

99 Vignettes

Disney and Sony vis-dev artist Armand Serrano shares select pieces of personal art that he whipped up in his spare time.

99 Watchmen Noir

The classic graphic novel gets republished in a gritty black and white edition that highlights the amazing artwork.

RATINGS EXPLAINED ★★★★★ Magnificent ★★★★★ Great ★★★ Good ★★ Poor ★ Atrocious



Procreate 3.2 iPad

TOP DRAW A revised layers system and video recording make this great art app even better, so long as you keep its powers in check...

Price £5.99 **Company** Savage Interactive **Web** www.procreate.si

Procreate 3.2 is a powerhouse of mobile digital art, with system requirements to match. You don't just need an iPad to run it: you need an iPad capable of running the very latest iOS version, which limits the range of models that Procreate is compatible with. This is because Procreate developer Savage Interactive has invested in a state-of-the-art rendering engine before applying a raft of tools and options on top. This is no ordinary painting app.

The basic template for this version was established with Procreate 3.0 in 2015; version 3.2 builds on top of that release with some major new features. You can now import full Photoshop

documents and retain their layers and blend modes: for example, iPad keyboard users can work faster with the help of keyboard shortcuts.

The big two changes, however, are layers and video capture. A redesigned layers panel gives you more control if you're creating complex illustrations, where having lots of layers is pretty much a given. You can now select multiple layers simply by swiping to the right on each layer you want to choose. This swiping mechanism is faster and easier than picking at checkboxes, and makes the Layers system feel more intuitive in use.

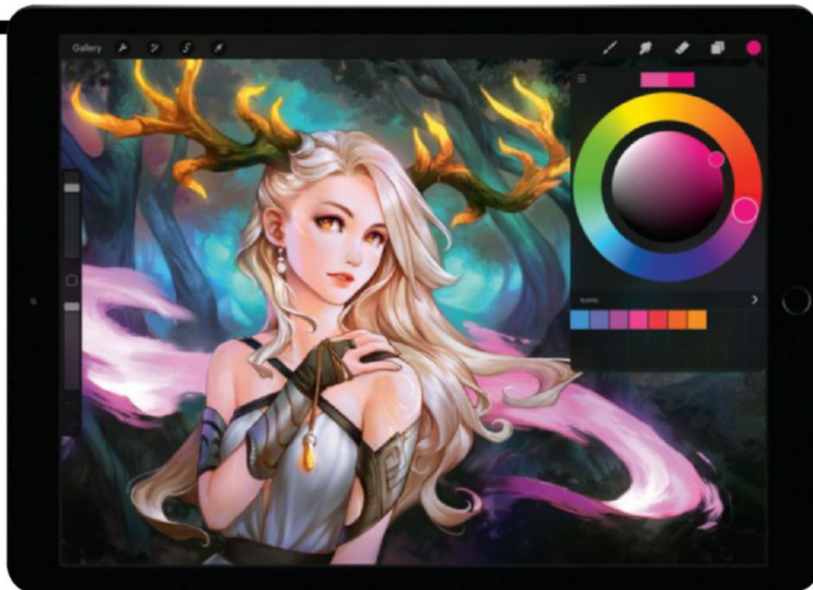
The introduction of multiple layer selection leads to a host of possibilities. As well as moving them in

With a redesigned layers system, Photoshop file support and video streaming, Procreate is more versatile than ever.



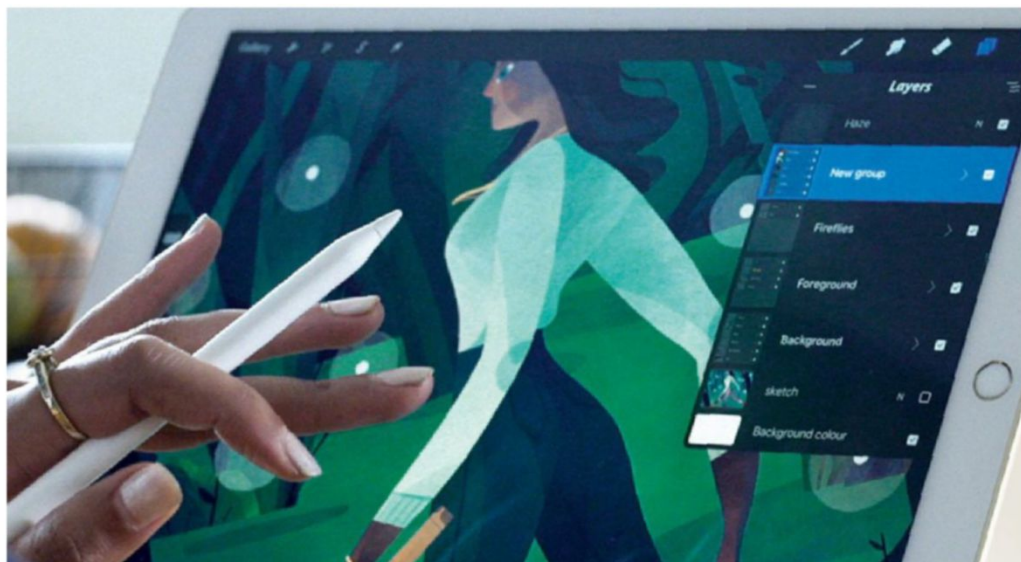
the stack or deleting several layers in one go, for example, you can now group your selected layers together, then apply the same effects to the entire group. You can also use Transforms functions on individual layers or groups, such as moving an element across the canvas or distorting its shape.

The second major change is designed for artists who like to share their working process. Video support means you can now record yourself as



In one of version 3.2's more minor changes, the colour wheel is redesigned to make selecting yellows and oranges easier.

With the help of a streaming app, you can broadcast live painting to the world – and even appear in the video.



“Savage Interactive has invested in a start-of-the-art rendering engine. This is no ordinary painting app...”

you work; a switch preference enables you to choose whether to record your voice narration through the iPad's microphone at the same time. You can then export the video file to edit in another app, or share it online.

Better still, you can also stream your working process direct to the internet. This relies on the presence of a compatible streaming app, such as iScope or Mobcrush, which use iOS's Extensions system to appear as options within supporting apps.

The execution is much simpler than the description: once you've got a streaming app installed, you just select Procreate's streaming option, choose the streaming service you want to use, then 3, 2, 1... you're live!

If Procreate has a fault, it's that it's in danger of becoming too powerful. The app has so many tools and options that playing with them can distract from the artwork you're supposed to be making. There's an overwhelming choice of ways to customise any brush preset, for example.

If you paint on your iPad because you want a spontaneous, rapid creative fix, you might find that working with Procreate is biting off more than you want to chew. But if your vision of your iPad is as a substitute for your Windows or Mac OS computer, and you're looking for the slickest, most powerful art app around, Procreate is a strong contender for the title.

DETAILS

Features

- Silica 64-bit rendering engine
- 16K maximum canvas resolution (on iPad Pro)
- Over 120 brush presets that are customisable
- Smudge and blend controls
- Streamlined inking system
- Layers system with groups
- Includes layer transformations
- Video capture with narration
- Video streaming support with an external app
- Photoshop document import

System Requirements

iPad: iOS 10 running on an iPad or iPad Pro

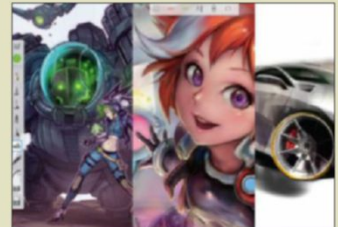
Rating



IN FOCUS

APP HAPPY

Here are three more painting apps vying for your attention...



SketchBook

Web www.sketchbook.com

Price Free

An intuitive app for iOS or Android with lovely, natural-looking sketch brushes. The free version has a limited toolset; pay £24/year to unlock the full range of options in the Pro version.

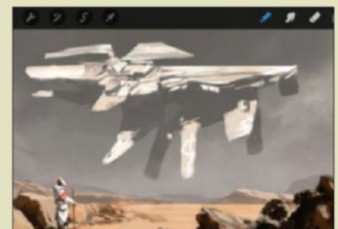


Pixelmator

Web www.pixelmator.com

Price £4.99

Pixelmator for the Mac is best-known for its image-editing tools. Yet with layer support and over 100 brushes to choose between, its painting set-up is none too shabby, either.



Procreate Pocket

Web www.procreate.si

Price £2.99

This cut-down version of Procreate is exclusively for iPhone, and may suit artists looking for a more spontaneous painting experience than the parent iPad app provides.

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Astropad Studio enables you to use your iPad Pro and Apple Pencil as a graphics tablet to paint on a Mac screen.



Studio's Magic Gestures feature means you can easily combine finger touches and Pencil gestures to trigger shortcuts or simulate modifier keys.



Studio is compatible with Photoshop, SketchBook Pro and other major Mac art apps, so you can start making pressure-sensitive lines in minutes.

Astropad Studio



STELLAR SKETCHING This software turns your iPad Pro into a graphics tablet, but watch out for the subscription pricing...

Price £52 per year or £6 per month **Company** Astropad **Web** www.astropad.com

Led by former Apple engineers, Astropad is a small company devoted to building creative tools for Apple products. Its eponymous Astropad app (now rebranded Astropad Standard) is a high-quality, affordable way to link an iPad and Mac so you can draw with the former onto the latter, turning your iPad into a graphics tablet.

Now Astropad Studio joins Astropad Standard in the line-up, but whereas Standard is compatible with many iPad models and stylus brands, Studio works only with iPad Pro and Apple's Pencil stylus. In turn, Astropad has been able to focus on creating the best possible drawing experience.

Studio's pricing model is also different. Now, instead of a small, one-off fee, you have to subscribe to an Astropad Studio account.

Setting everything up is a bit of a fiddle, simply because of the number of components you're working with. First, create your Astropad Studio account and set up your subscription. Next, download and install the Astropad app on your Mac and the

Astropad Studio app on your iPad Pro. Now run both apps: as long as your Mac and tablet are on the same network, they'll recognise each other and your Mac screen will be reproduced on your iPad Pro.

On a regular home network with a modern wireless router, we

“Link devices and the connection sizzles: it feels instantaneous”

experienced a degree of lag between the Mac screen changing and the iPad Pro updating: noticeable, but not jarring. The wireless network is always going to be the limiting factor. Link your two devices through your iPad Pro's charging cable, on the other hand, and the connection sizzles: synchronisation between the two screens feels instantaneous.

Astropad has also cut loose with extra features. For example, Studio's Magic Gestures feature enables you to

DETAILS

Features

- Paint using your iPad Pro and Apple Pencil
- Works with any Mac program
- Works over either your Wi-Fi or USB connection
- Saves shortcut sets
- Magic Gestures
- Pressure Smoothing
- Subscription payment model
- Includes iPad keyboard support
- Display is colour-corrected

System Requirements

Mac: iPad Pro and Apple Pencil; free Astropad app for Mac requires OS X 10.10

Rating



The exclusive use of Apple hardware means Astropad has been able to include extra features.

combine finger taps and Pencil gestures to trigger responses including simulating a right-click or switching between tools.

Astropad Studio is state of the art when it comes to using your iPad Pro as a graphics tablet: it's superbly responsive. But the type of artist who'll regard £52 a year as a price worth paying is equally likely to be able to afford, say, a Wacom Intuos Pro.

The gap in quality between drawing with your iPad and with a dedicated tablet has narrowed considerably. But the physicality of the latter (through attributes such as surface bite) mean it's still a superior option.

| THE WORLD'S LEADING DESIGN MAG |



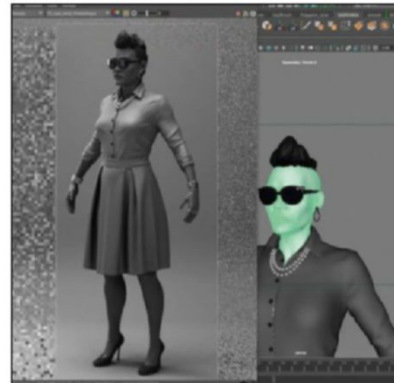
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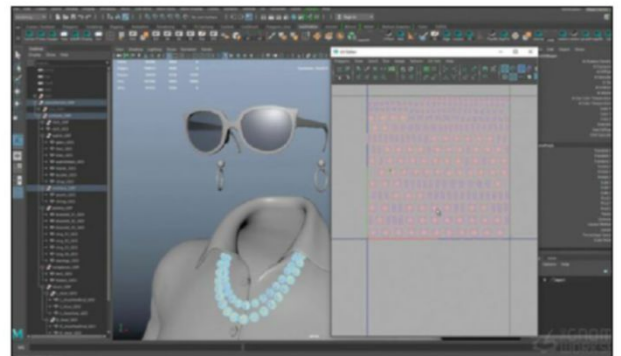
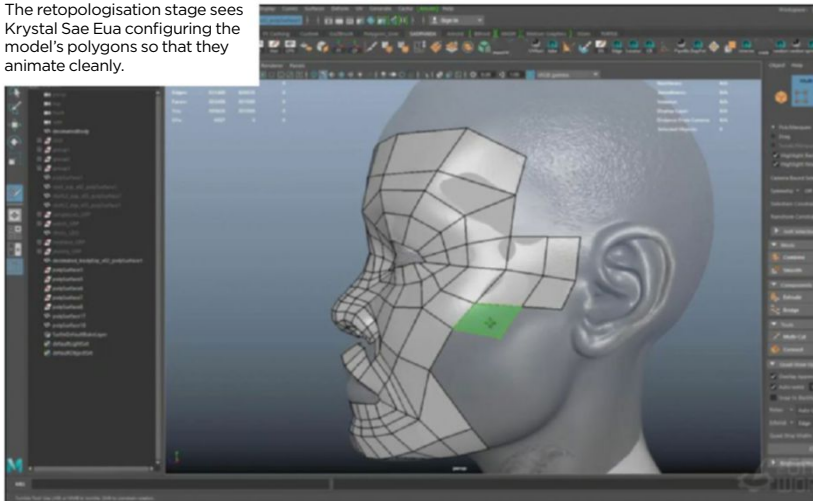




The retopologisation stage sees Krystal Sae Eua configuring the model's polygons so that they animate cleanly.



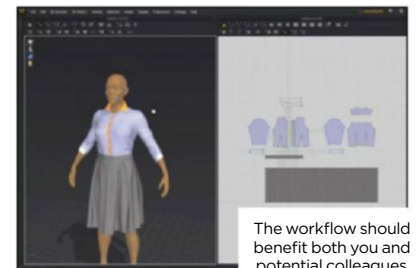
Get your character production process into shape as Krystal shows you how to make your characters ready for the animation stage.



In the video you'll see how to make texture-ready UV maps that work efficiently.

Character Modeling for Production

BODY TALK Modelling and texture lead artist Krystal Sae Eua shares her secrets of creating pro-level characters with efficiency



The workflow should benefit both you and potential colleagues.

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

The Hollywood dream factory needs a continual supply of new talent to create its visual effects and animation. But if you want to get a foot in the door as a character modeller, you need more than just ability. You need to understand the process, and what other members of your team expect from you.

That's where Krystal Sae Eua's video comes in. Her emphasis here is not on how to model, but on the finished form your model needs to be in, so it's ready to pass on to your project's animators or riggers. Here, Krystal creates a realistic figure that's suitable for visual effects, but her workflow principles for modellers are broadly applicable to artists in a character animation project, too.

You'll see the steps she takes to prepare the topology so it deforms correctly when it's animated, and how



DETAILS

Topics covered

- Customising ZBrush
- Sculpting the body
- Modelling clothing
- Modelling props
- Sculpting hair
- Retopologisation
- UV projection and organisation
- Texturing workflow
- Baking and rendering

Length
245 minutes

Rating



she models clothing and hair with the lighting and rendering stages always in mind. An extensive section on UV mapping shows you an efficient way to prepare for texturing.

Narrating speeded-up footage of her own process, Krystal is a natural teacher, offering a huge amount of detail while always keeping the tone measured and relaxed. She also provides a character reference sheet, a base OBJ figure and preferences for customising your ZBrush settings, so you're well-equipped for trying out this project yourself.

While Krystal uses Maya and ZBrush, with a side helping of Marvelous Designer and a dash of Arnold, her emphasis on production workflow means you'll get a lot out of this video regardless of the software you use. More to the point, you'll speed up your own process and enable team-mates to work more efficiently, too.

ARTIST PROFILE

KRYSTAL SAE EUA

Krystal is the modelling and texturing lead at The Mill, Los Angeles. Her modelling, texturing and visual effects work can be seen in a broad range of blockbuster projects, including feature films, commercials, game cinematics and theme park experiences. Trained as a 3D generalist, and a graduate of the Gnomon School, she has contributed to Avatar, The Avengers, Fast and Furious 6, and much else.



www.sadpandaproductions.com



The Sci-Fi & Fantasy Art of Patrick J Jones

BODY OF WORK The sumptuous paintings of this illustrator and teacher are gathered together in this career retrospective

Author Patrick J Jones **Publisher** Korero Press **Price** £26 **Web** www.koreropress.com **Available Now**

Patrick J Jones is one of the biggest names in fantasy and sci-fi art. With a career that includes credits for Disney and Lucasfilm, the artist from Belfast has worked hard to remain true to his childhood dreams of becoming a fantasy artist. After a stint working in advertising in London, Patrick now lives in Brisbane, Australia, where he complements his studio work with teaching.

Renowned for the luminous quality of his paintings, Patrick's work shows a flair for individual style and a technical accomplishment that elevates him from the legion of artists who try and



emulate this style. This is evident from the cover image, an oil painting of characters from Jason and the Argonauts with creative composition and a confident grasp of anatomy [and also why we chose him to create our cover for ImagineFX 144, see p.54].

The book opens with a foreword by US contemporary Donato Giancola before leading into an interview between Patrick and fellow fantasy

“This book does an excellent job of collecting a decade’s worth of Patrick’s work”



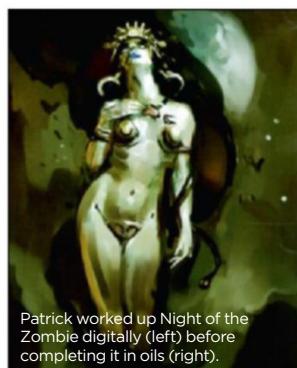
Line art of Patrick's 2005 proposed cover art for Bikini Planet. It was rejected for being too serious!

Tracing the ebb and flow of his working life, these chapters each open with a short explanation by Patrick of what his life was like at the time of painting the following pieces.

Thanks to a considerate page layout that gives over 100 pieces of artwork room to breathe, the book does justice to the lavish paintings. Each image is accompanied by notes on the size and medium of the piece. However, you'll find yourself referring back to each chapter's opening spiel if you want to get an idea of when they were made.

At 175 pages, this book does an excellent job of collecting a decade's worth of Patrick's work. Topped off with digital and traditional composition drafts, there's plenty in these pages for artists to admire and learn from.

RATING ★★★★★☆



Patrick worked up Night of the Zombie digitally (left) before completing it in oils (right).



artist Mike Cody. Here we get an overview of Patrick's life and profession, which provides a valuable insight into the meandering career path of an illustrator. This interview does a good job of detailing his years as an advertising illustrator and sets up the context for the following chapters.

Split into five main sections, the bulk of the book covers Patrick's career from 2005 when he first moved to Australia and started working for New York publishing giant Roc Books.

Vignettes

SPEEDY SKETCHBOOK Disney and Sony vis-dev artist Armand Serrano shares select pieces of personal art that he whipped up in his spare time

Author Armand Serrano **Publisher** Self-published **Price** £33 **Web** www.armandserrano.com **Available** Now

With over two decades of working in the animation industry under his belt, artist Armand Serrano has certainly been keeping busy. But outside of projects for Walt Disney Studios, Sony Pictures Animation and Hanna-Barbera Studios, he's also been creating his own work.

It's these non-commercial pieces which are the focus of Vignettes, a book that Armand has dreamt of



Armand wants the viewer to decide whether this is either a giant robot and a human engineer, or a regular robot and very small person.



releasing for years. As the title suggests, the art in this book is mainly completed in short amounts of time (mostly 15 to 30 minutes), but this doesn't mean the illustrations are compromised or less evocative.

Fantastical creatures and historical art sit alongside everyday scenes of a sunrise crawling up the wall of a house in what for the most part is a collection of digital pieces. Towards the end of the book there are some traditional ink

pieces and it would have been nice to see more of these, especially as they're better presented.

Indeed, page design is the main downfall with Vignettes. It feels as if the book was put together as quickly as the artwork. It's a shame because a few more illustration break-downs and a considered layout are what these pieces from Armand deserve.

RATING ★★★★★

Watchmen Noir

COLOURLESS COMIC The classic graphic novel gets republished in a gritty black and white edition that highlights the amazing artwork

Author Alan Moore **Artist** Dave Gibbons **Publisher** DC Comics **Price** £33 **Web** www.dccomics.com **Available** Now

First released 30 years ago, Watchmen has gone on to become a significant piece of 20th century literature. This new edition presents the classic in a fresh light by depicting the masterful ink and pencil illustrations in raw black and white.

Doing away with John Higgins' vibrant colouring from the original is a bold move that's sure to split opinion. On the one hand, readers get to enjoy



Rorschach shakes up retired supervillain Moloch; the lack of colour takes nothing away from the power of Dave Gibbons' line-art.



the same story while gaining a greater insight into Dave Gibbons' illustrations. While on the other it begs the question: is this version necessary?

It depends on how the reader wants to enjoy the series. If they're new to it, it might be worth reading Watchmen in colour as it was originally intended. But if you're already familiar with the series,

Watchmen Noir presents a refreshing take on a familiar text. Oddly, there's no explanation behind this hardcover edition, making Watchmen Noir feel almost perfunctory - even though there are 300 pages of gripping story and remastered art to pore over.

RATING ★★★★★

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Traditional Artist

Inspiration and advice from the best pro artists



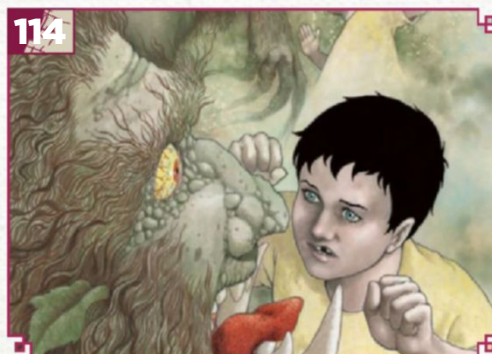
This issue:

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Showcasing some of the finest traditional artists around today.

106 Be expressive with watercolour
Fantasy concept artist Marc Taro Holmes shows how to use unpredictable traditional media to your advantage.

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The award-winning comic artist was inspired by a royal...



FXPosé

SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL ARTISTS



Scott Brundage

LOCATION: US **MEDIA:** Coloured inks, watercolour, gouache, acryla gouache, digital
WEB: www.scottbrundage.com

Taking inspiration from animation, 19th century pen and ink artists and modern art, Scott says, "I aim to create images that feel alive and excite the viewer."



1 STACEY MCGEE

"This piece was mainly a proof of concept that I could produce a proper fantasy-style book cover. I got my first book series shortly after showing this around."

2 ALCATRAZ VS. THE EVIL LIBRARIANS: THE KNIGHTS OF CRYSTALLIA (BOOK 3)

"It's surreal to listen to a book by your favourite author, Brandon Sanderson, then be asked if you'd be interested in illustrating the covers for his YA series. This cover was the most ambitious scene I'd ever attempted."

3 THE BUILDERS

"Working on lots of young reader books can be a very art directed and very wholesome experience, so I relished the chance to let loose and paint a scene of rodent carnage. It was fun to design for a violent western starring critters."



1





Charlie Dixon

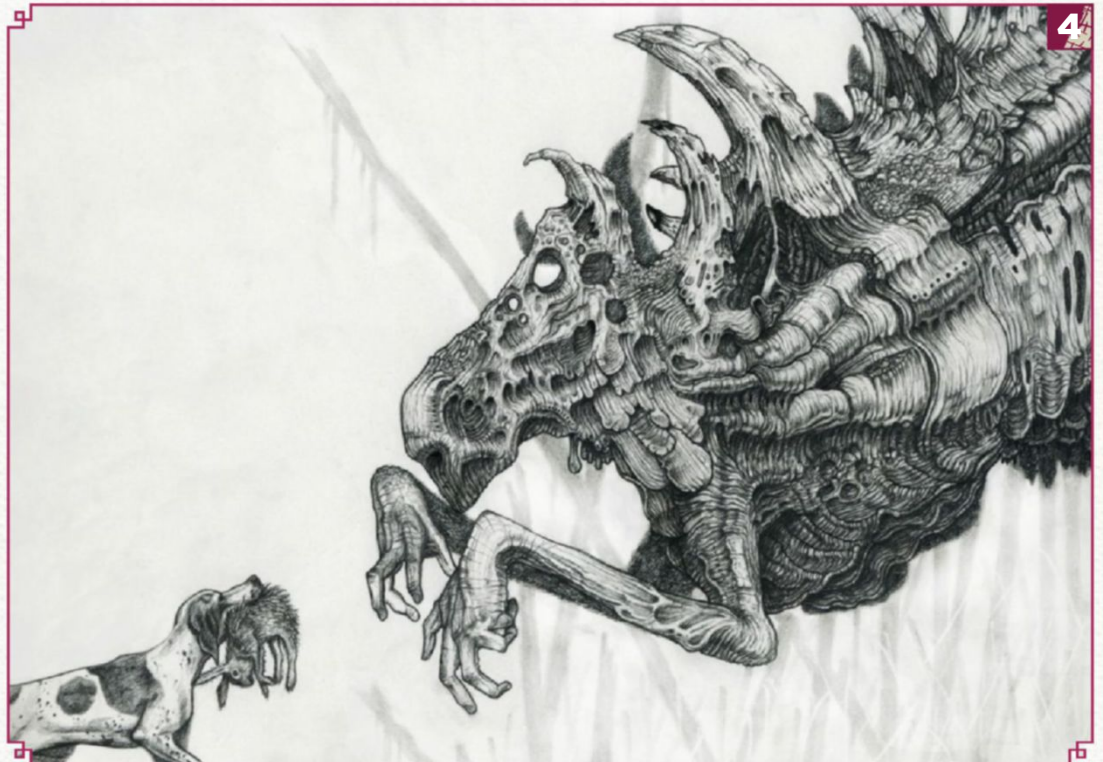
LOCATION: England **MEDIA:** Pen, pencil
WEB: www.charliedixonillustration.com

Charlie tells us he's inspired by "nature, the macabre and the unusual," and strives for atmosphere and realism in his detailed art.



1 SHAMAN
"This piece started out as a textural experiment, but then gradually evolved into something more. I'm happy with how it turned out."

2 OVERGROWTH
"I was keen to combine texture, form and intricate rendering in a single piece, using graphite."



3 LYCANTHROPE
"This personal piece reimagines an age-old myth and explores the classic themes of transformation, decay and death."

4 THE ENCOUNTER
"An exercise in exploring textures and forms alongside narrative storytelling."

Fancy sharing your traditional art with your fellow readers? Then email five pieces of your work and a short explanation about each one, along with a photo and a few details about yourself, to fxpose@imaginefx.com



Pencil

Watercolour

Inks

Photoshop

BE EXPRESSIVE WITH WATERCOLOUR

Fantasy RPG concept artist **MARC TARO HOLMES** shows you how to turn the unpredictable nature of traditional media to your advantage

My background is in concept art for video games and feature animation, an art form that's greatly benefited from the arrival of digital painting. Yet as visual effects become more impressive, they also become more technical. Naturally, I want to meet rising standards. But I worry about losing touch with the simple enjoyment of making art. It's a job. There's something to be said for concept artists – who are supposed to inspire the team – needing to first be inspired themselves.

What I love about ink and watercolour is the way the media itself sets ground rules. You can't wander through endless variations. Once the brush goes down, by-and-large that mark is forever. You need to go with your first statement and stop worrying about perfection.

ARTIST INSIGHT

FRESH COLOUR

I prefer to squeeze tubes into my little paint box. Dry pans are less messy, but they're stingy about releasing the amount of colour you need. To keep my paints moist, I spritz them with a little atomiser bottle.

At the same time, simplicity has hidden depths. The brush is a subtle tool, much more sensitive than tablet and stylus. It can change instantly from a point, to a broadly textured drag, to a splayed ratty bristle. Not to mention the excitement of truly random events. You can't predict when a pen might splatter. Digital artists are always trying to add grain, to program brushes to emulate randomness. But it's impossible for software to be truly out of control – you've already told it what to do. Natural media will do things with a mind of its own.

Here, I'm going to go old school. I'll be drawing with antique dipping nibs, painting with sable hair brushes and working on a textured watercolour paper. You'll see what I do to safeguard against unforgivable mistakes, and when I just go for it and let the ink splatter where it may.



And at the end though, I'll probably go back to the computer to make some final revisions. I'm not crazy! This is the real world. You're only hurting yourself if you fight the software. Let's use it in partnership with some flying paint.



Marc is the author of *Designing Creatures and Characters* and has been a concept artist on epic fantasy RPGs from *Baldur's Gate* to *Dragon Age: Inquisition*. You can see more of his art at www.citizensketcher.com. ➔

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



Traditional Artist Workshop



MATERIALS

PAPER

- Recycled printer paper
- Fabriano Artístico 140lb medium tooth, bright white

PENCIL

- Pentel GraphGear 1000, size 0.3mm

PEN NIBS

- Small - Hunt #107
- Medium - Brause 361 Steno

INKS

- Platinum Carbon Black, Liquitex Acrylic Inks Red and Green (all waterproof)
- Higgins Sepia, Private Reserve Daphne Blue, Noodler's Ink Gold and Rome Burning (all water soluble)

BRUSHES

- #7 Winsor & Newton Watercolour Sable Pointed Round
- #4 DaVinci Sable Mop
- #5 DaVinci 803 Blue Squirrel Oval Wash

WATERCOLOURS

- DS Perylene green, DS Olive green, DS Green gold, DS Buff titanium, DS Quinacridone gold deep, DS Naples yellow, MG Transparent red oxide, DS Pyrrole orange, DS Perylene maroon, DS Raw umber violet, DS Moon glow

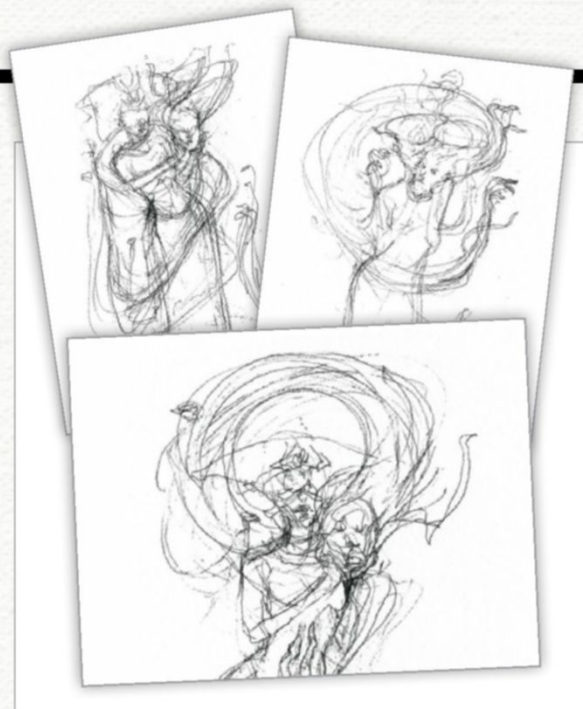
1 Thinking on paper

I start every project by doodling in ballpoint on the back of old printouts. This frees my thinking – no pressure, just rip up the bad ones! I like to review it all laid out on the floor. If you can uncover a new path, or avoid a blind alley with these 30-second doodles, then that's a big win.



3 Speed study

I decide on my favourite and attack it with pen and ink. I don't need a great drawing – I just want to see the value pattern and get a dry run at the brush handling. I might ink (and colour) all three to show a client, but on a personal piece there's no need for outside approval.



2 Compositional roughs

I've got my idea: a blind priestess wielding the head of Medusa. So it's time to get more specific. I'll redraw it a few times in pencil, and this time I let myself use the eraser, so I can refine some compositions. I want to offer myself multiple workable options for the design of the snaky hair.



4 Start the final pencil drawing

I start the final drawing with the gesture. I have to get the placement of the focal points (the two faces) and the curvy posture of the figure right before going any further. Fortunately, the rough drawings before this built up some muscle memory. I don't like to erase. I want the final art to feel fresh and alive.



5 *Tracing paper – analog layers*

Before the invention of Photoshop, there was tracing paper. Sometimes if I have a tricky spot, such as the way her hands make contact with the severed head, I'll try testing on an overlay first. I want to draw it correctly on the watercolour paper on the first try. Too much erasing damages the surface.



6 *Drawing ready for ink*

This is the finished pencil drawing. I've got more than enough information here – too much in fact. I got carried away trying for a good demo. I recommend only sketching the larger forms and leave the small details out for as long as possible. You don't want to be tracing over finished pencils. Each pass should be original work.

ARTIST INSIGHT

ANGLE OF ATTACK

Watercolourists need to control the angle of the work. Tilted up for drawing, flat for washing. I use a camera tripod instead of an artist's easel because it's more adjustable. My board is clamped to an attachment that's designed to securely hold laptops.



7 *Antique pens – still the best*

I like old-style dipping nibs and bottled ink. You get a more interesting line compared to technical or fountain pens and they're easy to swipe clean – it's possible to jump around, changing ink colours as you draw. I don't shade or stipple. The line is just a framework for the colour to follow. ➡

SUCK IT UP BEST PRACTICES

A stray droplet stays wet, risking a bigger smear. Use a scrap of paper towel to 'vacuum' it up.

SIZE MATTERS

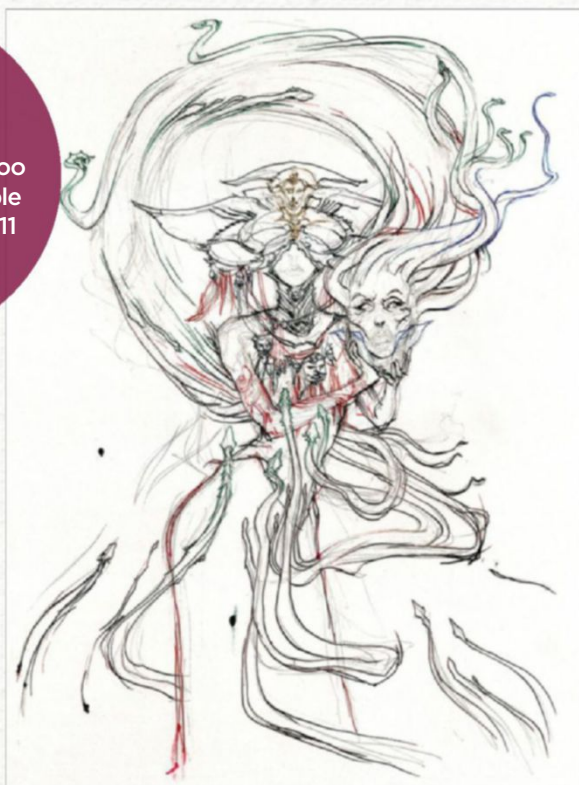
BEST PRACTICES

I don't believe in thumbnails. They're too small to see actionable details. I start at 8.5x11 inches, then go to 22x30 inches.

ARTIST INSIGHT

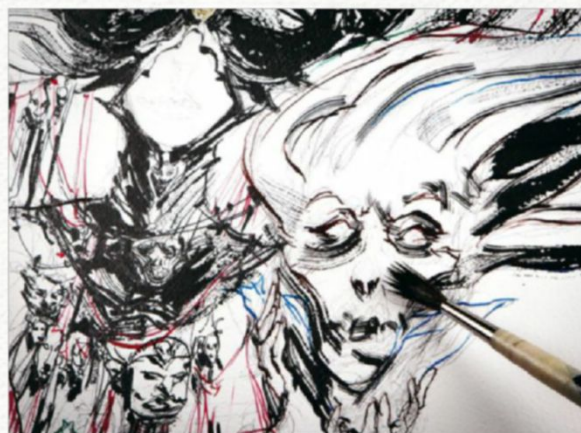
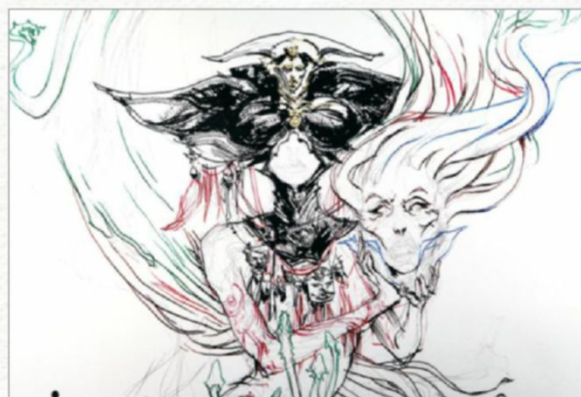
KEEP A SKETCHBOOK

Experienced artists say, always keep a sketchbook handy. Absolutely, there is value in continually training – but also, you're building a collection of your personal obsessions. Topics you can go back to repeatedly. You should never be stuck for inspiration.



8 Why use soluble inks?

Here's the deal with these coloured inks. I'm switching between waterproof (black, red and green – look for pigment or acrylic ink for sure-fire proofness) and water soluble (blue, gold and brown). Almost all dye-based fountain pen inks are water soluble. Why use soluble? I'm planning ahead for the way these lines will bleed into my washes.



9 Ink painting – blocking in shadows

I'm finally painting. The prep took about half a day and I'm excited to be placing darks with a sable brush. This is when things start to look solid. Note how the side of the brush is dragged over the textured paper. The fine point can be splayed into a wider 'rake' for parallel lines.



10 Time for black ink

Black ink is my favourite. Such a huge step forward, and so quickly, too. I see now I could have drawn the whole thing with a brush and saved a lot of time getting here if I wasn't doing an ImagineFX workshop! Also, this is a natural point to scan and go to digital colour, but there are still some tricks to come.



11 Flood the background

Boom! Colour. I use the biggest brushes and pour on colour with fresh, damp paint. (No dry cakes. You can't pick up enough pigment.) I work fast, so each wet stroke placed next to another will intermingle. Also, see the tobacco-brown stains blooming out of the snakes in the lower half? That's the payoff from the soluble ink.



12 Skin tone in layers, wet-on-dry

I force-dry the background with a hairdryer so I can paint inside the figure without bleeding across the edge. Skin tones are a matter of first washing in a light base and then (after drying again), coming back for a darker shadow tone on top. More pigment, less water. Use tone on tone – don't shade skin with grey or black.



13 Large-to-small, light-to-dark

Here's the two-step process on Medusa's face. The idea again is to put down a base tone, then come back and refine it. I wash in some gradients in the eye sockets and under the cheekbones. Then, after drying it, come back with darker accents on top. I always systematically work lighter and larger shapes first – smaller and darker details second.



14 Digital colour correction

I'm happy I've exploited the floating effects of ink and watercolour for a look I couldn't get digitally. I've been casual with colour choices all along because I knew I could colour correct using Photoshop's Curves and Adjustment layers. This is a no-fuss process – just adding points on the histogram and pulling up or down in value.



15 Finished! Or am I?

I could carry on painting in Photoshop, but that's a slippery slope. I'll limit myself to a quick-and-easy variant using a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer to cool down the colour – then erasing with gradients on the layer's mask, giving us a hot centre that pulls focus. It looks like a CCG card or book jacket. I'll call that done. 🍷

Core skills: Part 2

ARRANGE AND MIX YOUR OILS

HOWARD LYON continues his five-part series that will help you begin using oil paint, by explaining how to arrange the palette and mix your colours effectively

Let's start by covering how to get paint out on to your palette. I like to arrange my colours from the most intense to the less intense, grouped into warm and cool colours.

I've seen students squeeze out colour randomly and it becomes tricky to keep things organised as the painting progresses. Choose a layout, stick with it and you won't have to think about where your colours are.

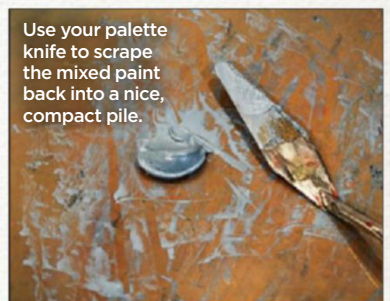
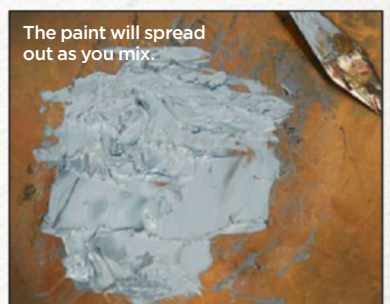
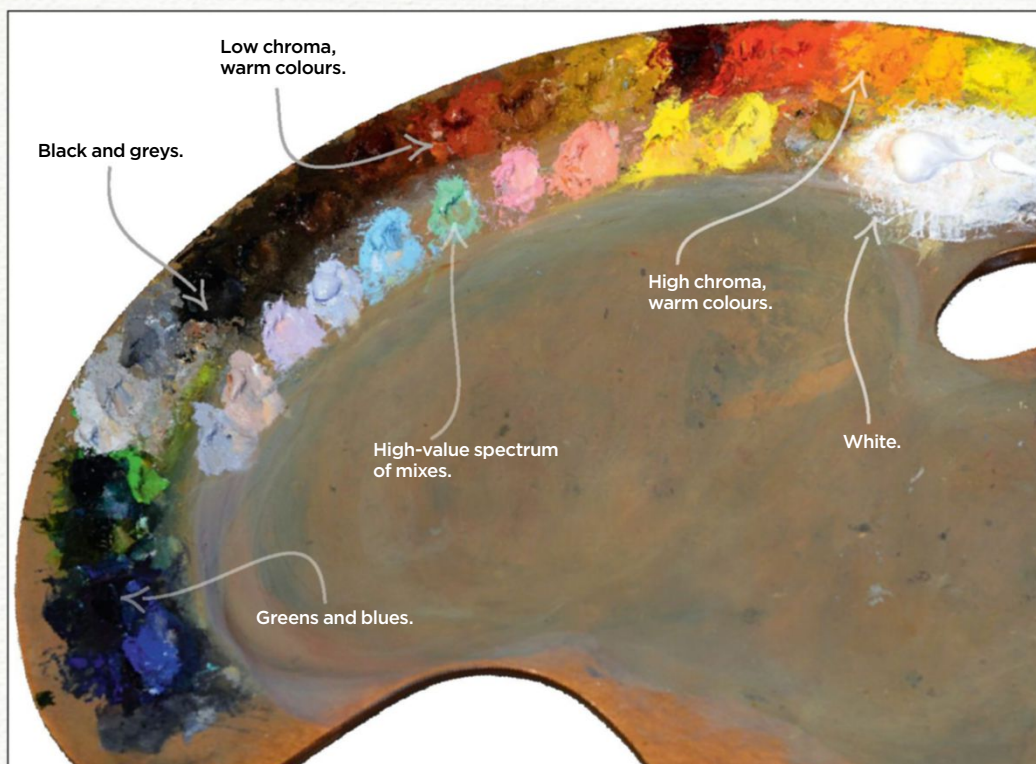
I'll mix up a pile (or nut) of paint and make adjustments to the pile by mixing colour into a portion of it. If you remix the whole pile it can get away from you and then the whole nut is wasted. For example, if I have a base skin tone that I need to make cooler or warmer, I'll mix into the left and right sides of it, saving some of the original colour.

Your colours will stay cleaner if you can mix with two or three colours

instead of six or seven. It also helps to reduce the intensity of your colours by mixing in a grey of the same value, instead of mixing in a complement or adding black. In summary, mix until you have the right colour. Check it, adjust it and then start painting.



Howard has worked as an illustrator and art director, as well as a fine artist for galleries and collectors. You can see his art at www.howardlyon.com.

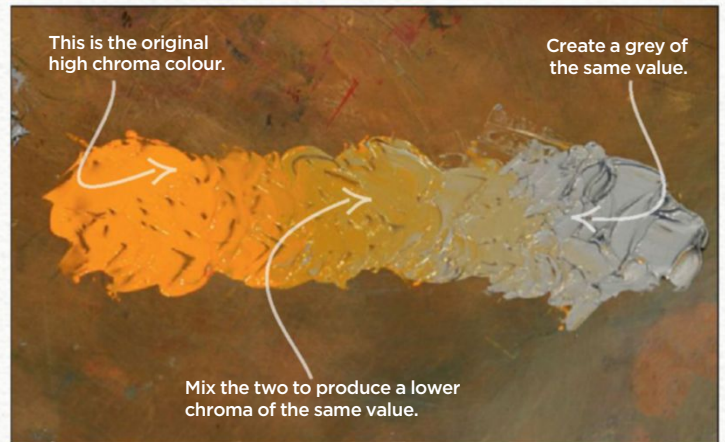
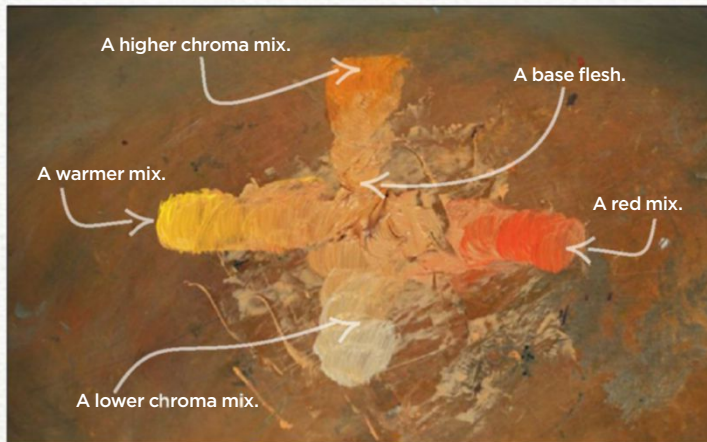


2 Mixing on your palette

Use a palette knife rather than your brush to mix larger paint piles. This will help keep paint out of your brush ferrule (the metal collar that holds the bristles). Keep the mixed paint organised and if you need to, scrape your palette down so you have a clean space to mix colours.

1 Arranging your paint on the palette

It isn't critical how you arrange colours, as long as you're consistent so that you know where your colours are. Some artists pair warm and cool versions of each colour or arrange them in a ROYGBIV string with black and white at the ends. I recommend keeping things organised and consistent.

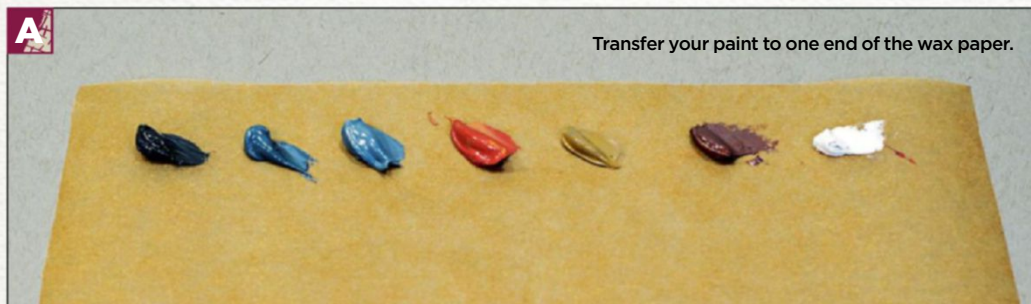


3 Keep your mixes versatile

When adjusting paint on your palette, mix into a portion of your pile, rather than the whole thing. The benefits are three-fold: it gives you more painting options, provides you with a visual history of your mixes, and if you mess the colour up you don't lose the whole pile.

4 Reducing the chroma

When painting from life, most colours out of the tube will be too intense. I find that it's best to reduce my colour by mixing in a grey of the same value, rather than mixing in a complement or black. Colours stay cleaner and you can control the values more easily.



ARTIST INSIGHT

BE GENEROUS WITH YOUR PAINT

Painting can be difficult; working with thin, meagre piles of paint is even harder. Make your life easier and use a decent amount of paint on your palette.

MIXING TIP

TAKE YOUR TIME

Mixing the right colour and value at the beginning of your process makes it less daunting if you want to start over.

5 Storing your paint

Extend your paint's life by keeping it in a freezer or fridge. If your palette doesn't fit or space is limited, transfer your paint to wax paper and put all the paint in a row, then roll it up to reduce the amount of space it takes up.

First Impressions

✧ **Colleen Doran** ✧

The award-winning comic artist was inspired by a royal...



What was your childhood like?

I grew up in a small city in the American south. I spent a lot of time wandering in the woods and being around animals, working at a vet from childhood, and working on peaceful farmland, in a time of political and social turmoil. I was in my first race riot when I was about six. Felons would show up at our house. It was interesting.

What, outside of art, has most influenced your artwork?

The countryside. Found a bunch of sketches in my files going back to when I was around ten. They're all studies of birds and plants.

You're a child, you see a painting or drawing that changes everything... what are you looking at?

Hal Foster's Prince Valiant strips in the Sunday newspaper. I couldn't believe how beautifully drawn they were. Even when I was a little kid I was attracted to naturalism over cartoony art.

What was your next step in art?

I saw Sleeping Beauty and thought how wonderful it would be to be a Disney animator. I won some contests when I was a little girl, but the school teachers could be very obstructive. Every time you drew something or wrote something, they wanted to know how you faked it, or copied it. Anything out of the ordinary must be a trick.

My parents were very supportive though, and bought me The Art of Walt Disney, and real art paper. We didn't have a lot of money, so that was a stretch for them. I thought I might be a doctor, because it didn't



TROLL BRIDGE FILES

"Art from Neil Gaiman's Troll Bridge, published by Dark Horse Comics. I did this in pencil, then used digital colours, on handmade paper with an oil emulsion."



LOST SOULS 1-2

"From The Book of Lost Souls by J. Michael Straczynski. It's a pen and ink piece."

© J. Michael Straczynski.

“I was in my first race riot when I was about six. Felons would show up at our house”

really click with me that people made art for a living. But when I got sick at age 12, a family friend gave me a big box of comic books. I'd seen comic books before, but never had the money to buy them. Now I had a few hundred of them! I then decided to become a cartoonist.

Does one person stand out as being helpful during your early years?

When I was a kid I met artist Frank Kelly Freas at a sci-fi convention. A Big Name Fan Artist was dissing me, and told Kelly not to waste his time with me, but Kelly blew him off. Later Kelly asked me to visit him at his studio and visit. I got to work there and spend a lot of time with



A DISTANT SOIL

"I did this in pen and ink, and created the lettering by hand on Bristol board."

him. When his wife died, I took care of him. He gave me a lot of art supplies and reference.

How much does graphic design play a part in your comic art?

I think of the storytelling first, not design. Maybe that's not a good thing, and I try to study design more these days, but I'm always thinking first in terms of what does the picture convey, in terms of the story.

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

I don't know if I identify with anyone I paint. I try not to project myself on to characters who aren't me. I try to make them individuals and not just my ego projections. I identify with a character I write, though, but he's not an ego projection either, I hope.

What gripes do you have about the comics industry right now?

It's still pretty exploitative in many ways, and it can be harsh. There's a lot of talk about creator rights, but in some cases it's just a marketing tool. It's hard for beginners to tell the difference and I worry for them.

Why is it still the best place to work?

I don't know that it is, it's just that I want to make comics, and that's why I'm here.

Colleen is a writer and artist, currently working on projects for Dark Horse, DC Comics and Image Comics. See more of her art at www.colleendoran.com.

Published by Image Comics © Colleen Doran

IMAGE COURTESY OF VASIL PEYCHEV



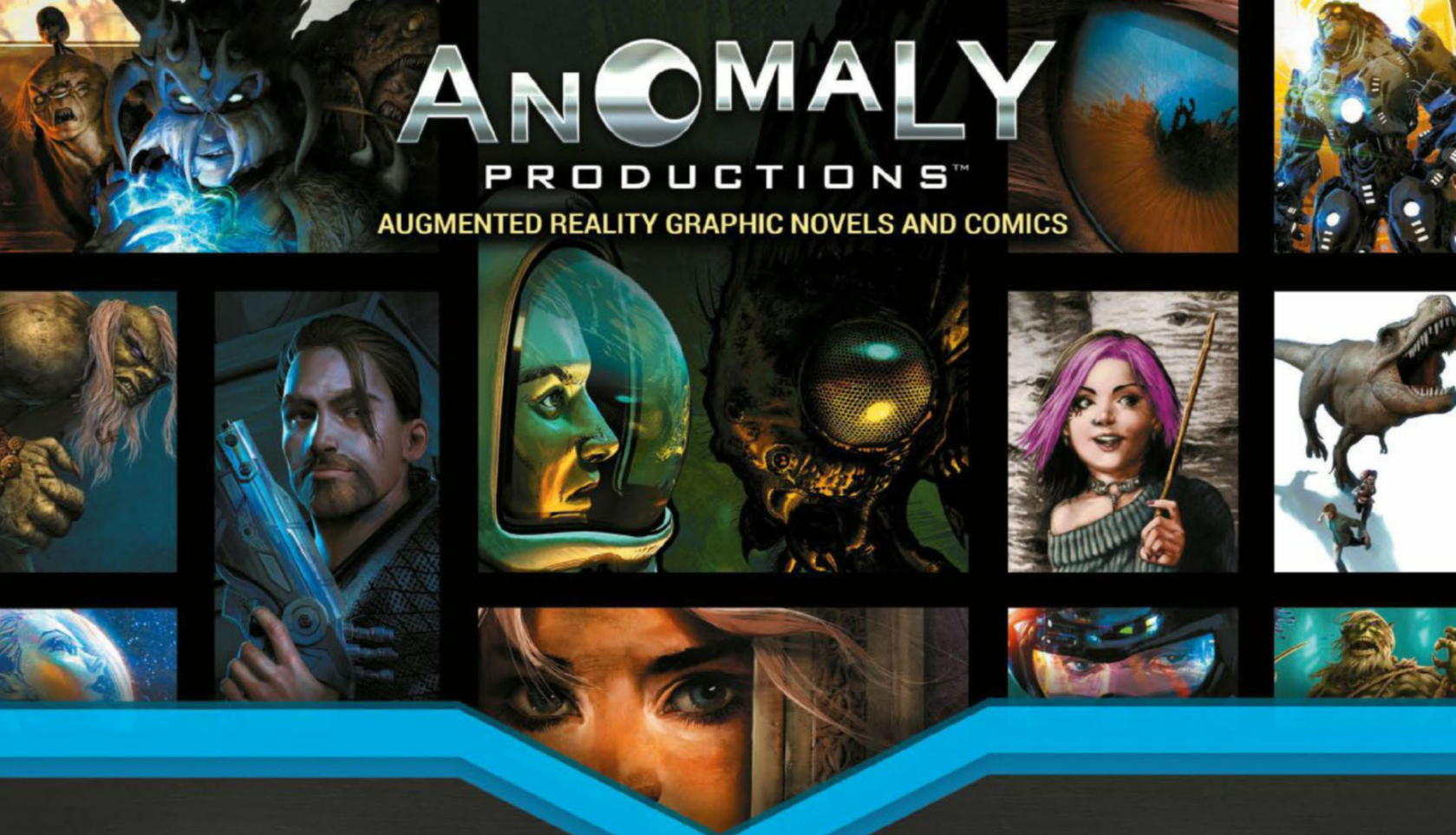
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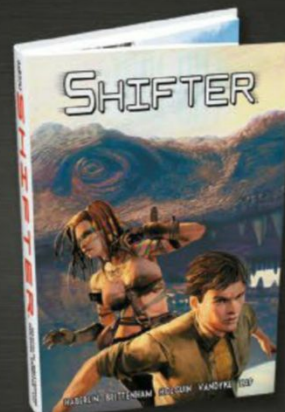
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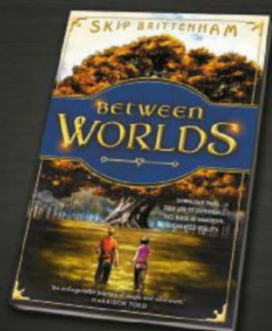
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with a sci-fi twist.



BETWEEN WORLDS

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