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15 MANGA ART SECRETS

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WORKSHOP

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Step-by-step tuition in Clip Studio Paint

13 GENZOMAN SKETCHES!

AMAZING LINE ART INSIDE!

WE ♥ MANGA

Discover how to paint eye-popping cover art and more with Udon artist **James Ghio!**

Future

ILYA KUVSHINOV THE RUSSIAN MEGASTAR SHARES HIS SACRED STUDIO SPACE

Welcome to…

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS
ImagineFX

Being at the helm of this mighty magazine, I receive lots of emails from readers. Quite often I receive a particular type of email. The words may change, but the theme is the same: teach me everything I need to know about art RIGHT NOW!

I understand. Not being where you want to be is hard, whether it be a dream job, a place at university, or even just the ability to recreate what's in your head on screen. But not even your favourite artists have taken that kind of leap without working at it. So, to make it feel easier, don't think of the mountain to climb. Think about that first step you should take.

There's lots of insight inside this issue that will help you on your path, but one I particularly like is from artist Jessica Prando, on page 11. Every year she paints a version of the same subject so that she can evaluate the evolution and progress of her style. This is something that you can do right away – so dig out a favourite painting from last year and recreate it today. In doing this you'll see that you've made progress. Please send in your results if you do this task, I'd love to see how you're doing.

Claire

Claire Howlett, Editor
claire@imaginefx.com

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Three of my top picks this month…

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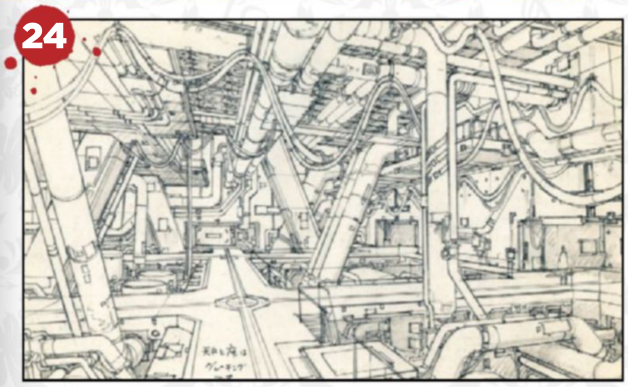

Film backdrops
Feast on the stunning hand-painted backdrops to the original Ghost in the Shell film, on show in London.

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Bad-ass geisha girl
Artist Gennaro Grazioso creates a striking and unique character concept in SketchBook Pro.

106

Girl on a jetty
Laura Bifano shares her techniques on creating engaging art in gouache and pencils.

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Find out why this young artist from Singapore is in such huge demand

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Diversity in the comics industry

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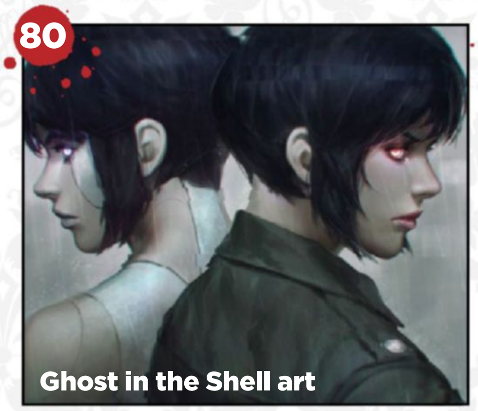
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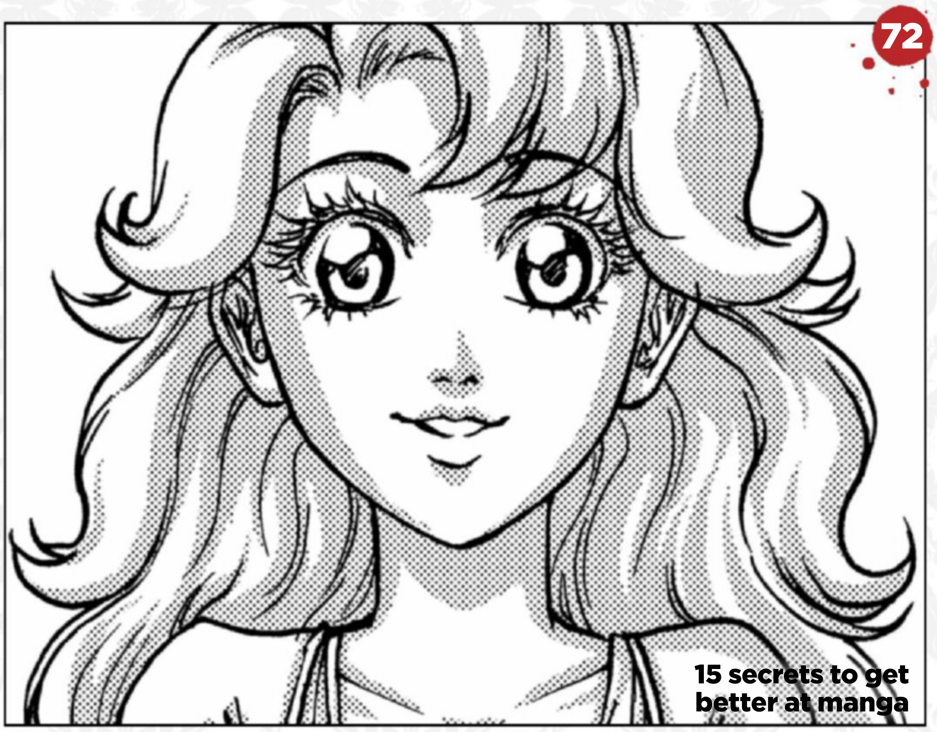
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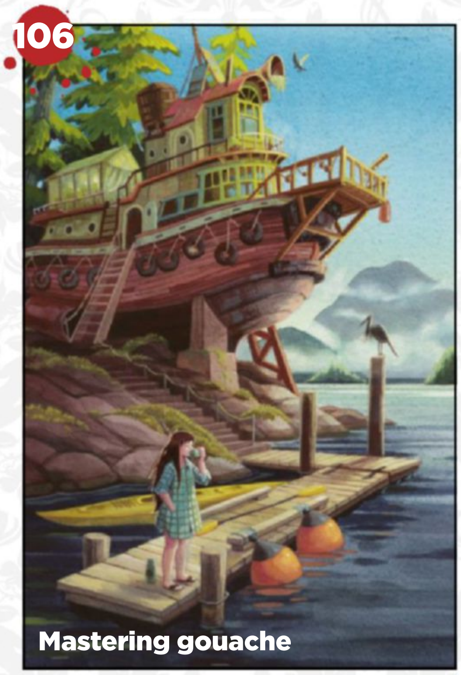
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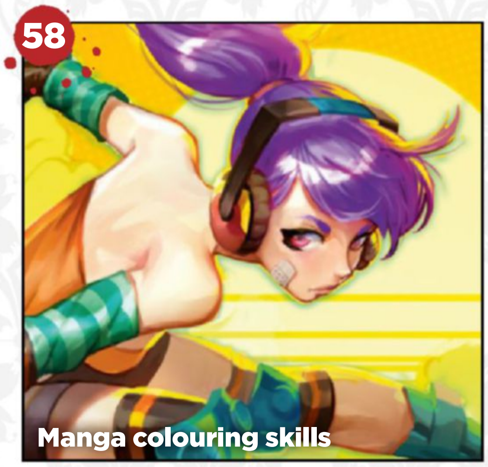
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Manga colouring skills

Traditional Artist

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Resources

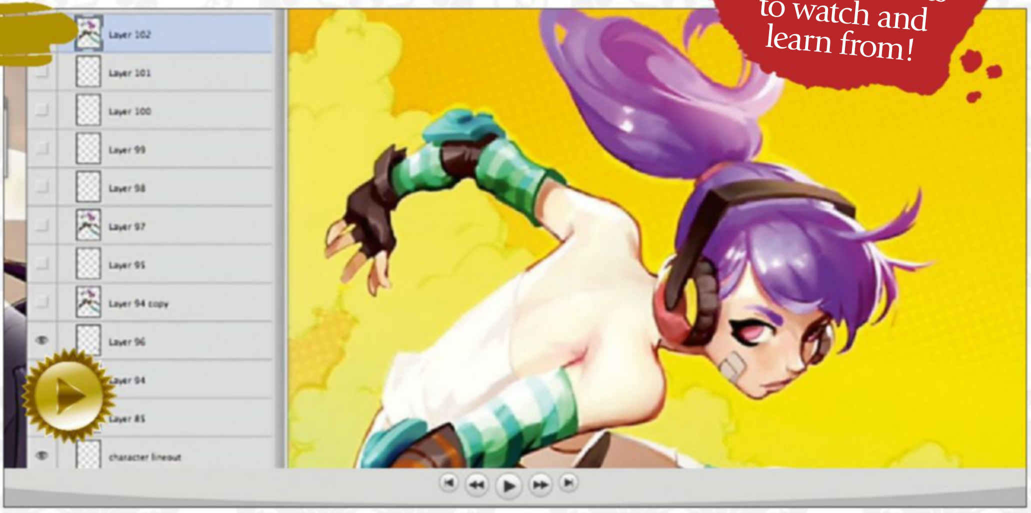
Getting hold of all of this issue's videos and custom brushes is quick and easy. Just visit our dedicated web page at **http://ifxm.ag/manga149artlove**

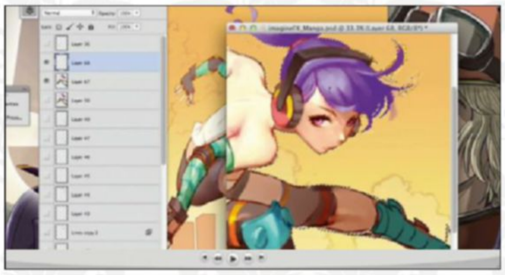
OVER 3 HOURS of video tutorials from pro artists to watch and learn from!

COVER ART VIDEO

New manga colouring skills

See James Ghio reveal his rendering method for creating colourful manga art. And there's more on page 58.





GET YOUR RESOURCES

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

1. **Go to the website** Type this into your browser's address bar (not the search bar): **http://ifxm.ag/manga149artlove**
2. **Find the files you want** Search through the list of resources to watch or download.
3. **Download what you need** You can download all of the files at once, or individually.

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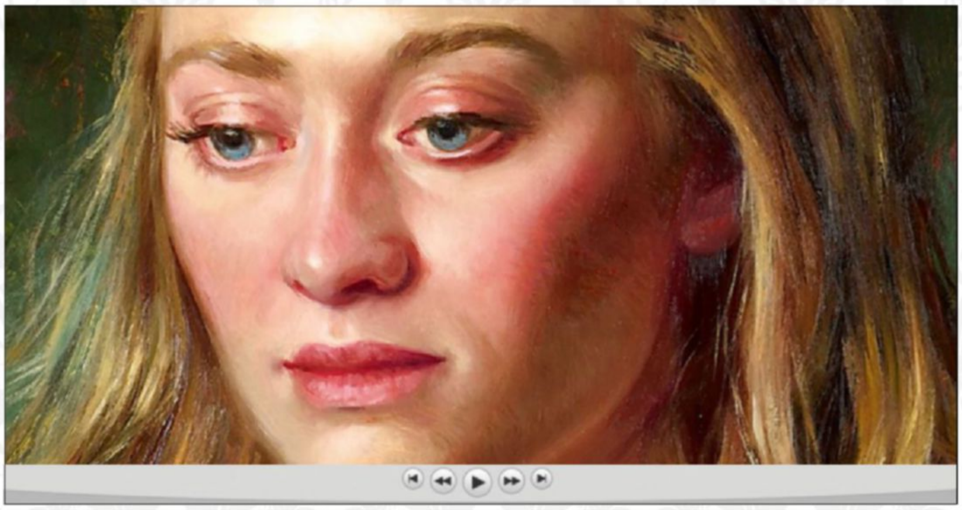
EXCLUSIVE VIDEO TUITION!

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

WORKSHOP VIDEOS

Create a comic page

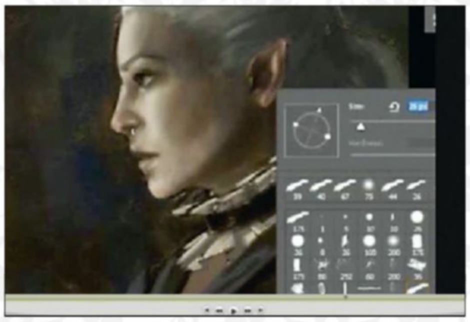
Discover how Neil Edwards develops an action-packed script over on page 64, from early sketches through to finished panels.



Painting in oils

In the final instalment of his oil-painting series on page 112, Howard Lyon identifies key shapes to help him paint a portrait.

Q&A VIDEO



Make your art look more organic

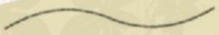
Turn to page 33 to see how Belinda Leung gives her Photoshop compositions a painterly feel, focusing on the texture of the canvas, and the shape and settings of her brushes.

TRAINING

Clip from The Lighting Game

Use light to set the mood, in Izzy Medrano's Gumroad tutorial, reviewed on page 97.

85 CUSTOM BRUSHES, INCLUDING…



INK PENCIL LINE
Neil Edwards used this brush to sketch out his initial comic ideas.

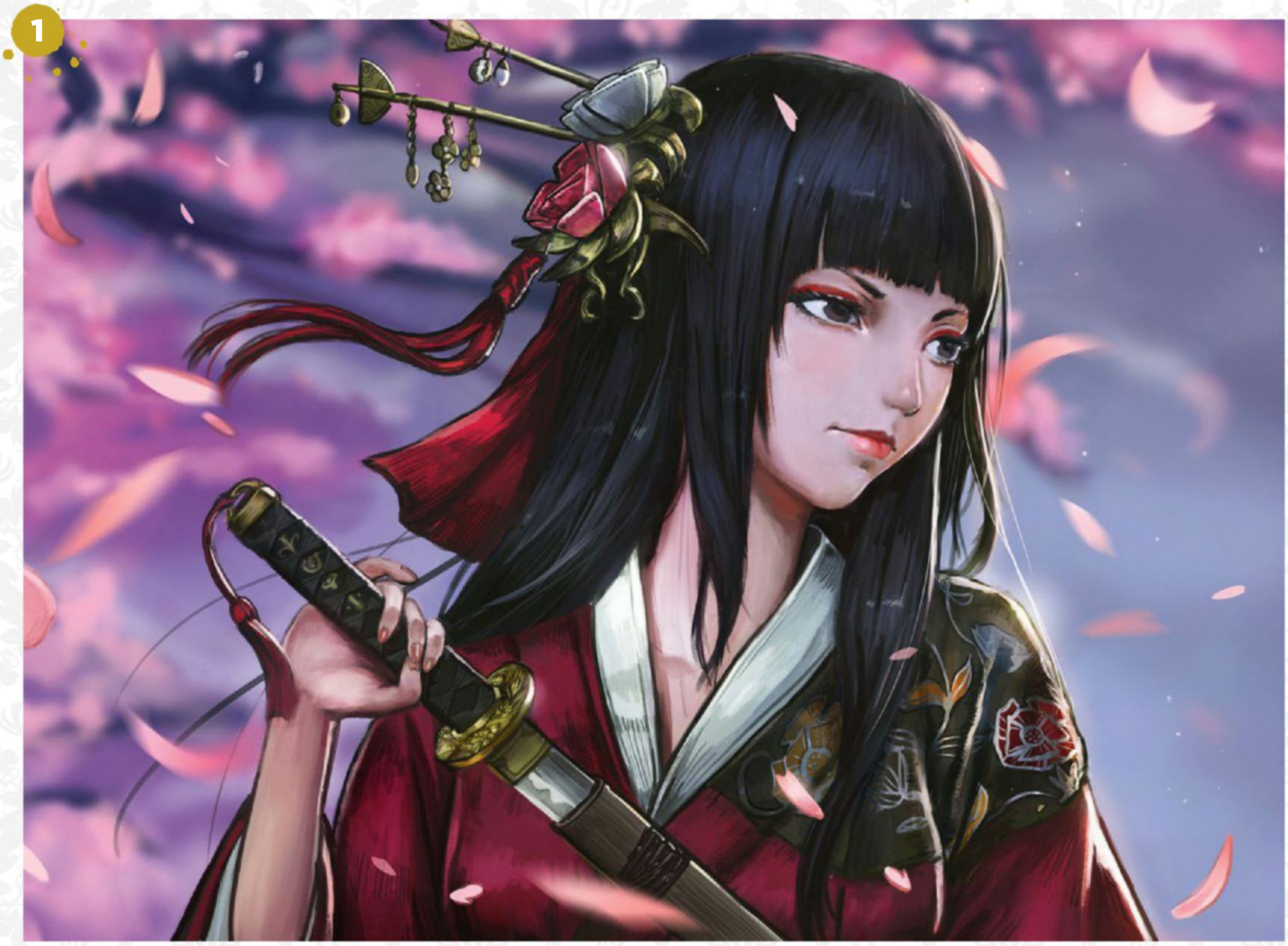
TRIANGLE BRUSH
Using this SketchBook Pro brush, Gennaro Grazioso draws his character.

VARIED PARTICLES
Guweiz is able to give his art a less-polished look with this brush.

FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

1



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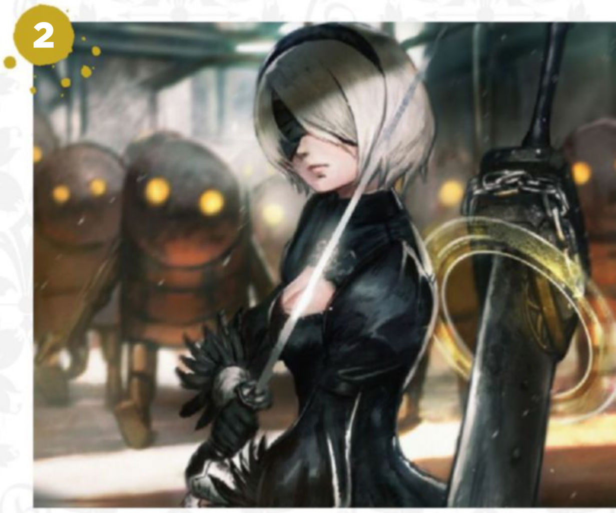


Timothy Kong

LOCATION: UK **MEDIA:** Photoshop **WEB:** www.timkongart.com

Timothy has a love of eastern manga and the Old Master style of painting. "And I'm exploring ways to create a happy marriage between the two," he says.

1 **AKEMI**
"I tried a different visual direction for this, using a brighter colour palette and creating the design in line art first. I worked with warm colours to develop a feeling of serenity and beauty."

2 **NIER AUTOMATA**
"I loved the design of this game since it was first announced. I wanted to capture a cinematic moment depicting 2B surrounded by the robots and getting ready to attack."

3 **SUMMONER**
"This piece was quite a challenge. I was trying to replicate the format of Applibot cards and the composition proved quite troublesome, but overall I learned a lot."

3

Email your submissions to fxpose@imaginefx.com

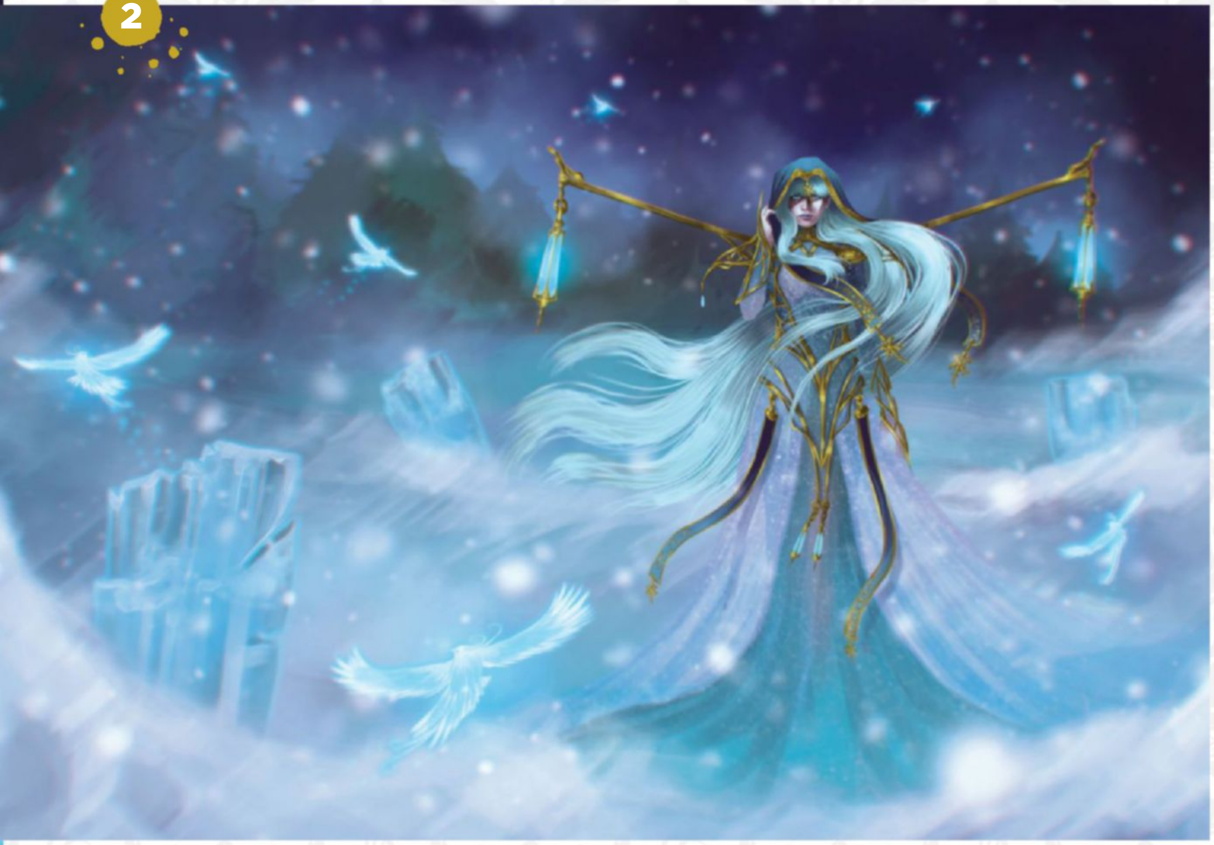
1

Jessica Prando

LOCATION: Italy **MEDIA:** Photoshop **WEB:** jessicaprando.altervista.org

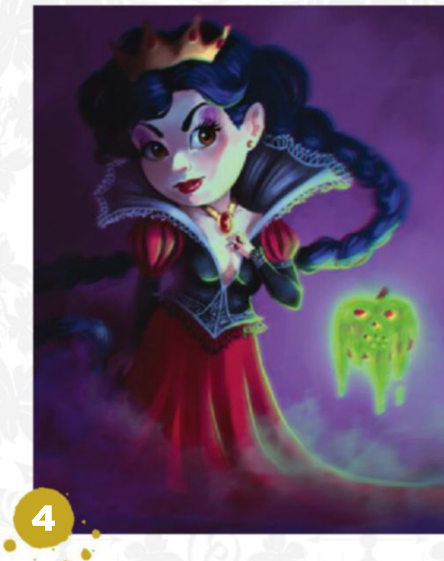
Self-taught artist Jessica has loved the fantasy genre since she was a child. “Art is a little bit magic… just pick up the pencil and cast the spell! That’s my motto,” she says.

2



1 **WILD ROSE**
“I was inspired by a wonderful Nick Cave song: Where the Wild Roses Grow. I imagined the final verse of the song, just a moment before the girl’s death.”

2 **LADY WINTER**
“I paint a version of this subject every year to see the evolution and progress of my style. This is the last version of her, done in 2016.”



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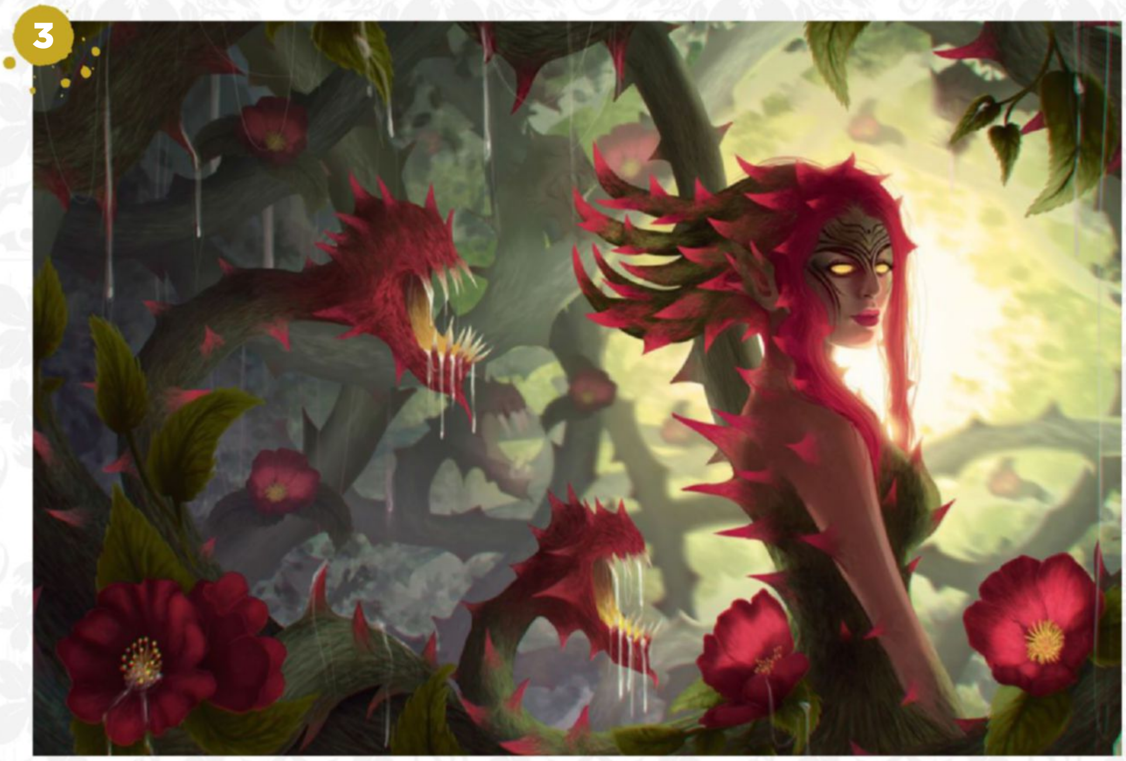


3 **ROSA CANINA**
“One of my favourite things to do is to represent the strength and beauty of nature in human form, with fantasy elements added. This character’s elegance envelopes everything.”

4 **EVIL QUEEN**
“I love the villains in Disney films so much and I love Chibi style too, so I mixed the two for this evil queen fan-art.”

Email your submissions to fxpose@imaginefx.com

Juan David Muñoz Rico

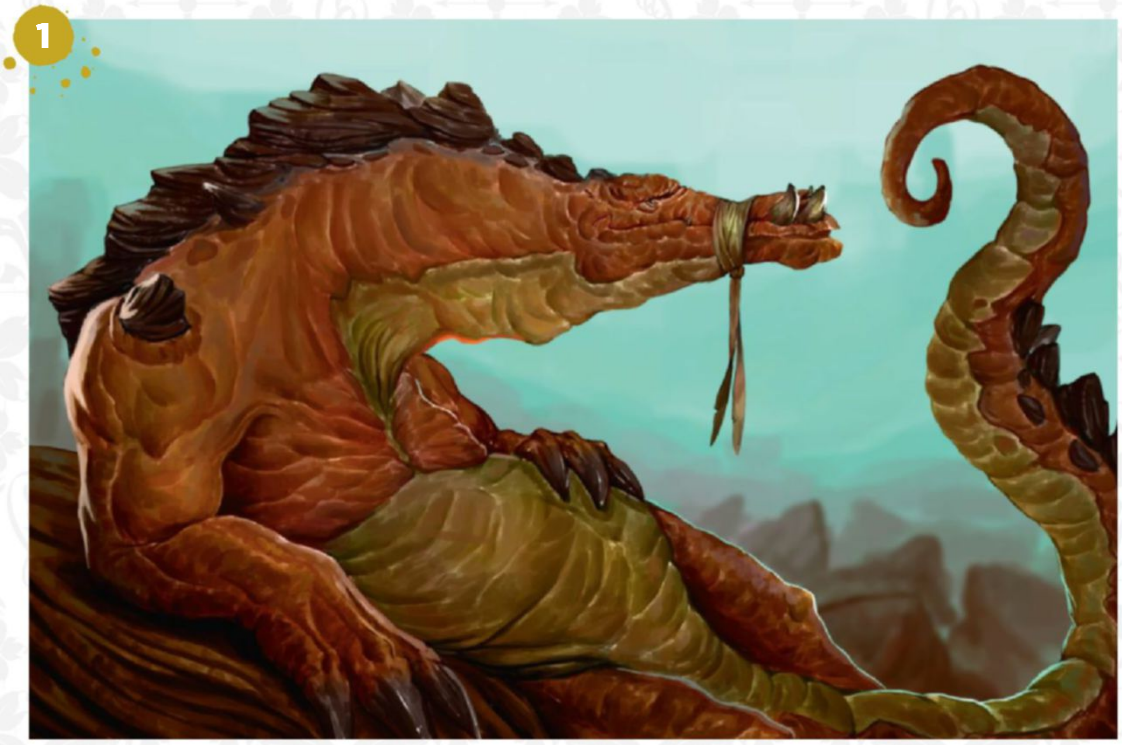
LOCATION: Colombia **MEDIA:** Photoshop **WEB:** www.artstation.com/artist/juandamr

Colombian illustrator Juan cites his main influences as Baldur's Gate, The Lord of the Rings, and the great Frank Frazetta. As well as mythology and fantasy, he's also interested in social conflicts.

1 RELAX

"Monsters are always represented as beings without any personality, so I always try to play with their body shape and facial expression. This lizard is silent, but clearly expresses its nonchalance towards the world around him."

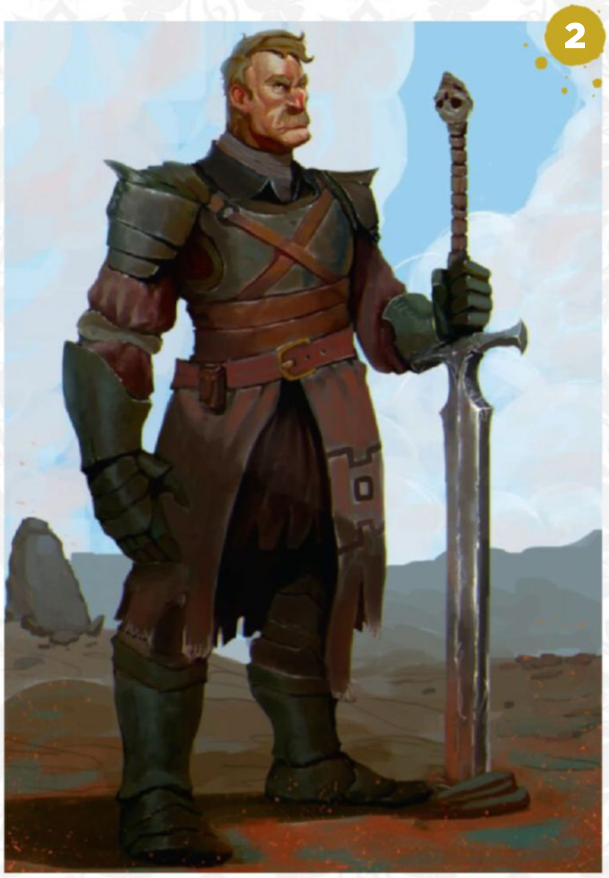
1



2 THE WARRIOR

"This man will give everything for his land, even though his efforts are forgotten. In this illustration I focused on conveying the man's sense of deep pride through his armour and giant sword."

2



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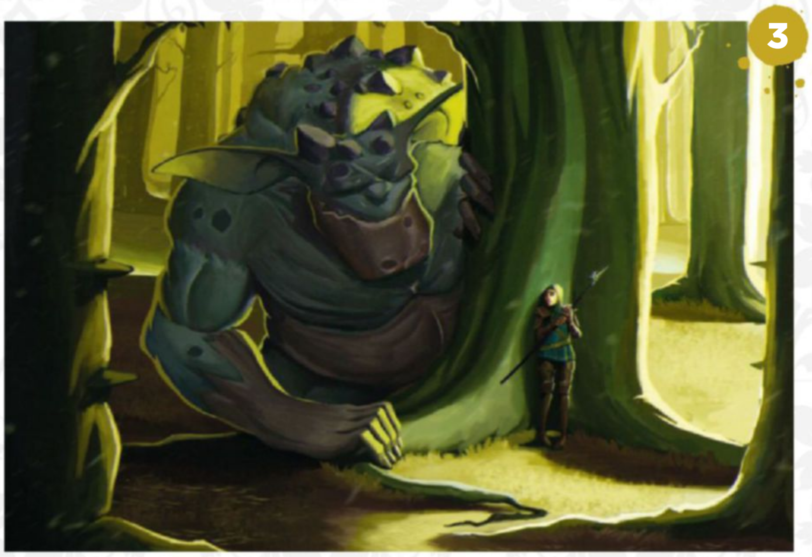

3 AW CRAP!

"I love to show the weakness of some higher beings against creatures who they think are beneath them. In this, there's a human being who feels insignificant in the composition."

4 GRANNY MODE

"A perfect moment to show the young people the real power of the granny's experience. When I paint a character, I try to capture their personality and charm. Here, the granny has a real connection with nature."

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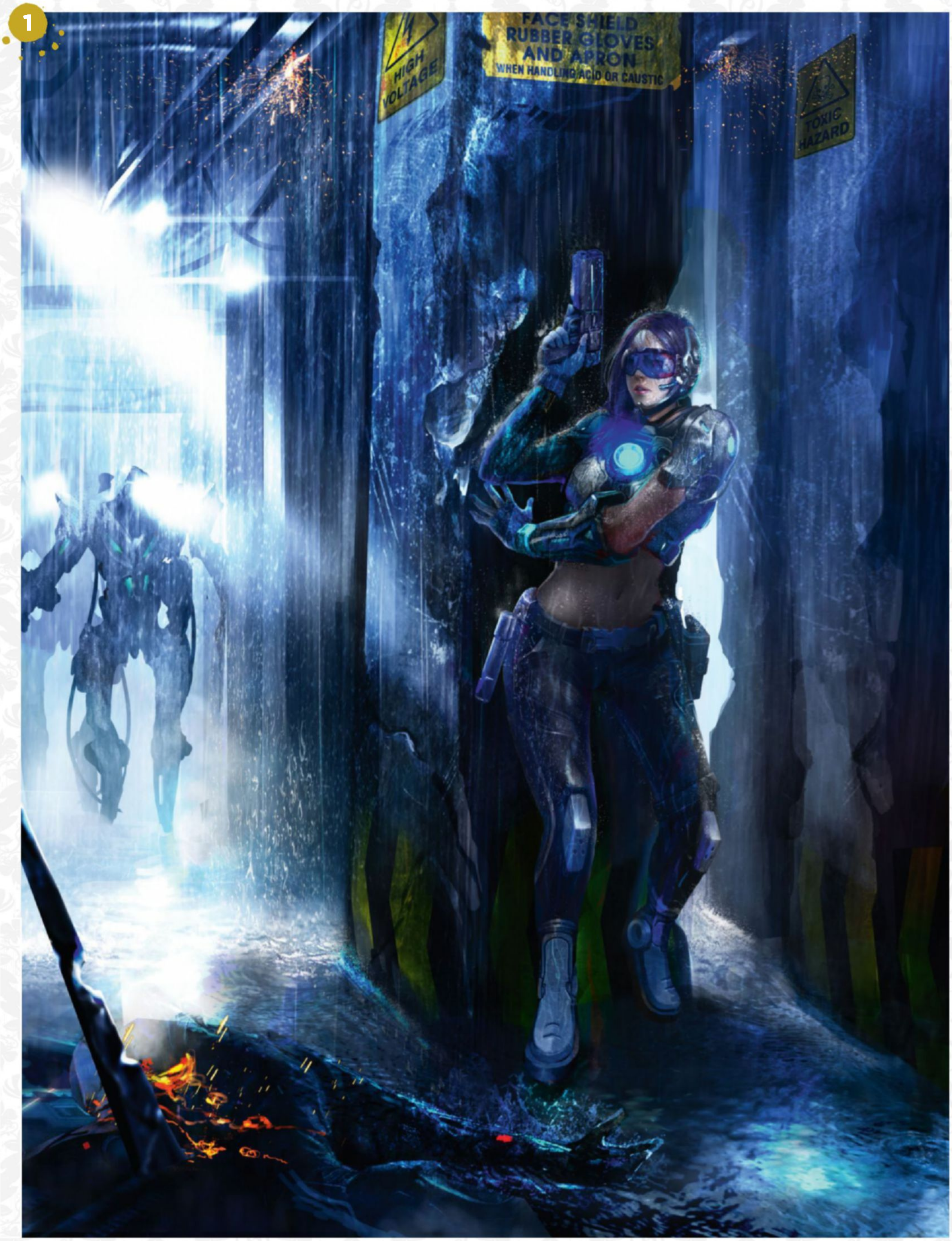
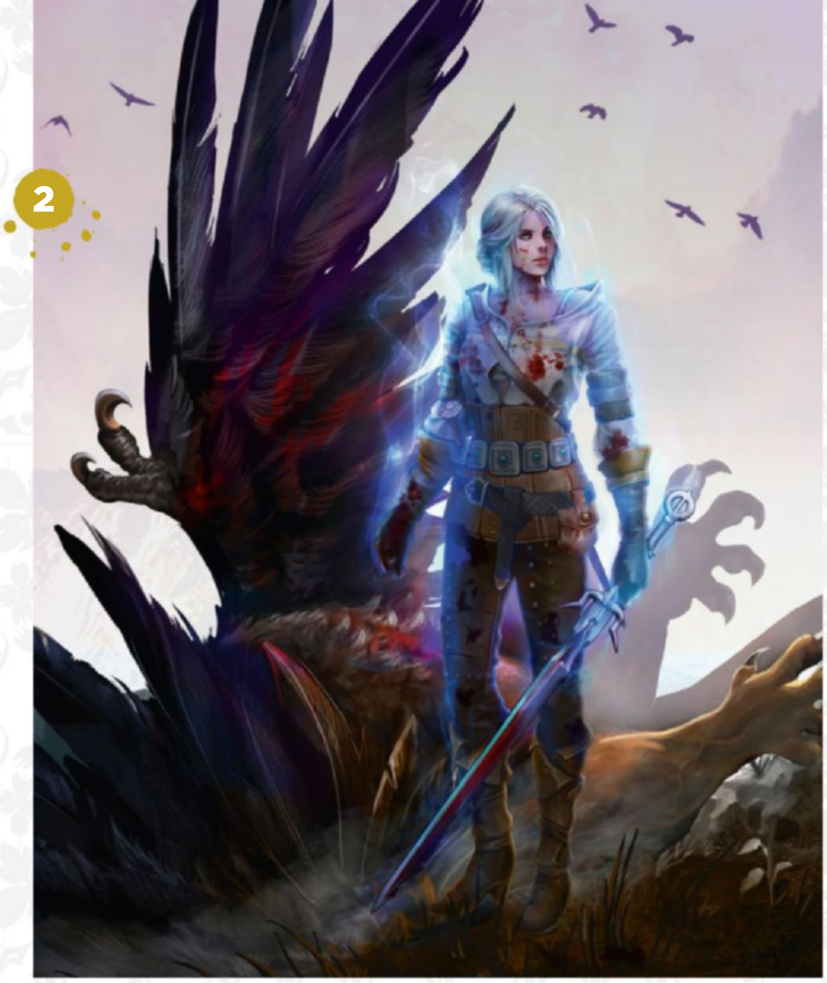
1


HIGH VOLTAGE
FACE SHIELD
RUBBER GLOVES
AND APRON
WHEN HANDLING ACID OR CAUSTIC
TOXIC HAZARD

2



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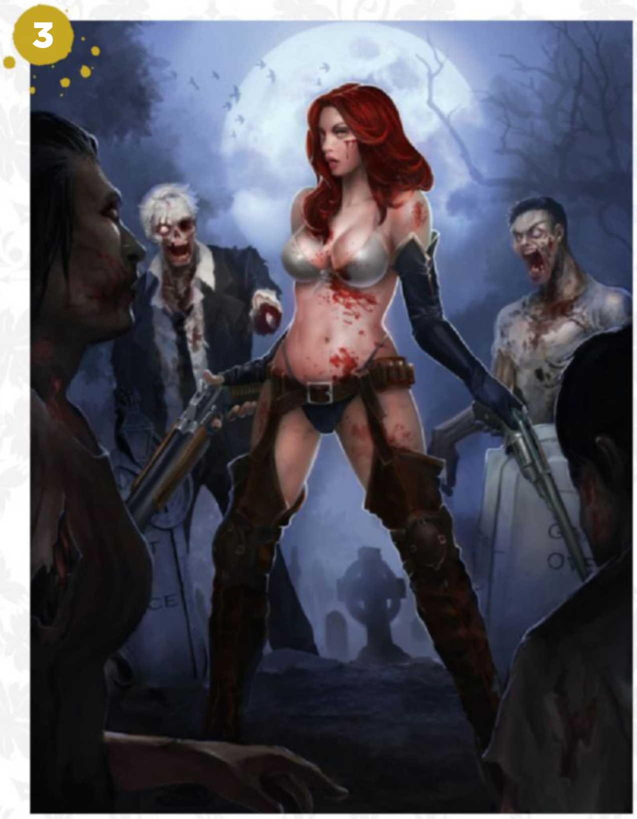


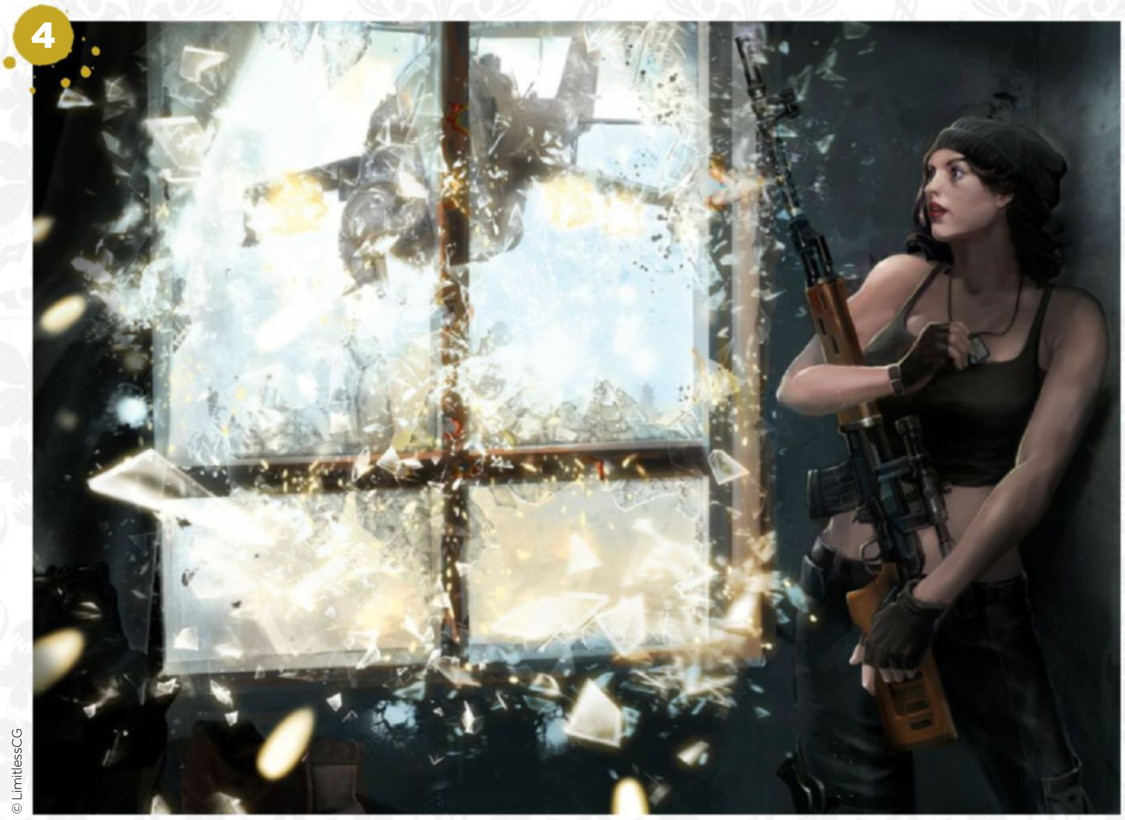
© LimitlessCG

Rudi Indra

LOCATION: Indonesia **MEDIA:** Photoshop **WEB:** www.artstation.com/artist/rudi_indra_a

Rudi studied industrial design, but always felt his true calling was in concept art. "My dream is to create a fantasy world filled with all the characters in my sketchbooks," he says.

4



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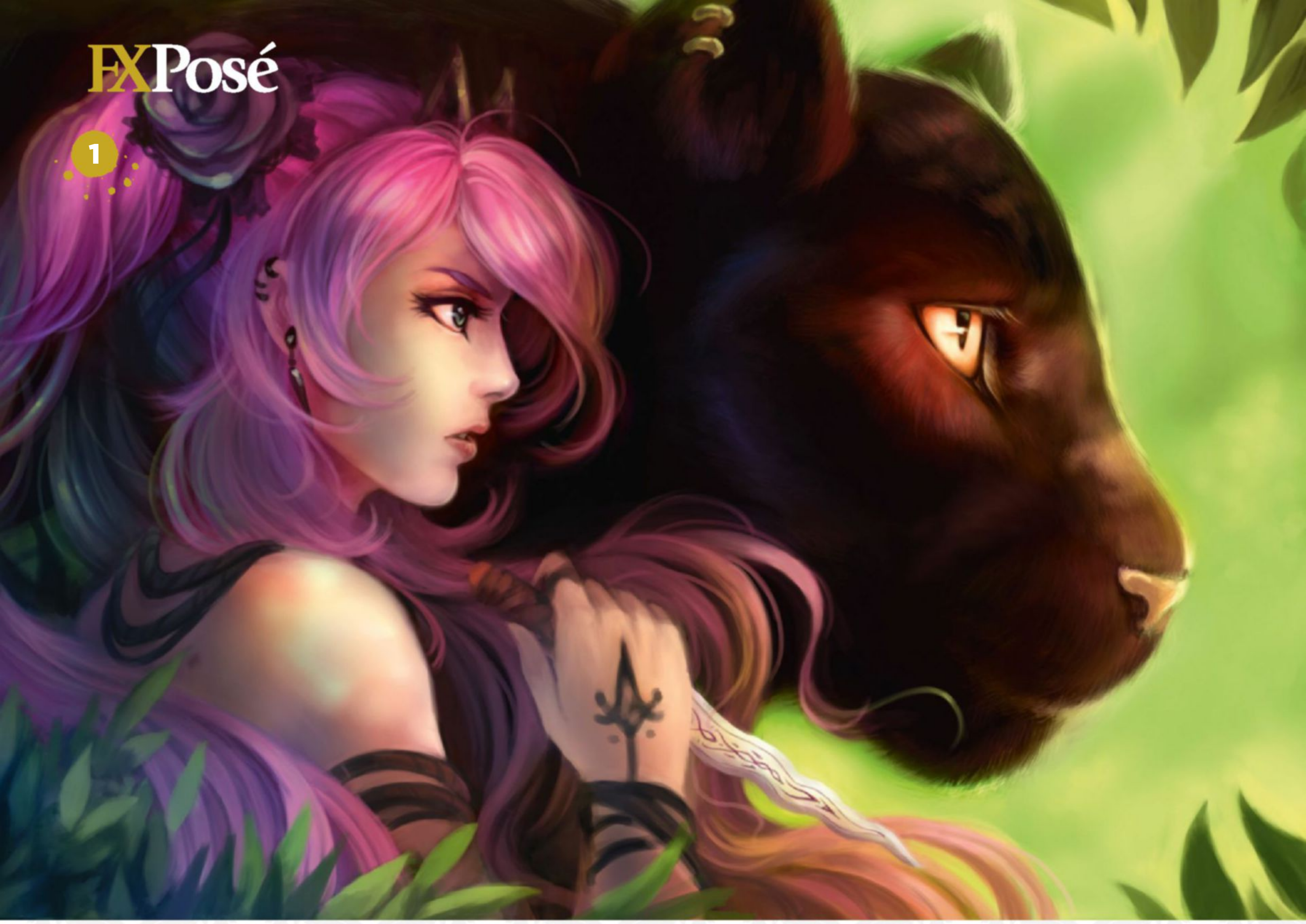
1 **LAST STAND**
"I've always liked cyberpunk art, but had never really tried to create any myself. This is my first try – I imagined a world where machines hunt for humans on every street corner."

2 **CIRI**
"I'm a big fan of The Witcher 3 game, and I'm interested in seeing how Ciri becomes a full-fledged Witcher, taking contracts and slaying beasts as her powers grow."

3 **GAME OVER**
"I love zombies! The inspiration for this came from pin-up posters and B-movies. I thought that a cowgirl who was surrounded by zombies would make for a hilarious scene."

4 **SURPRISE**
"This is a personal piece for my gasmaskgirl character series. I tried to do some military stuff in a more pin-up-style, not-so-serious way."



Jodie Snow

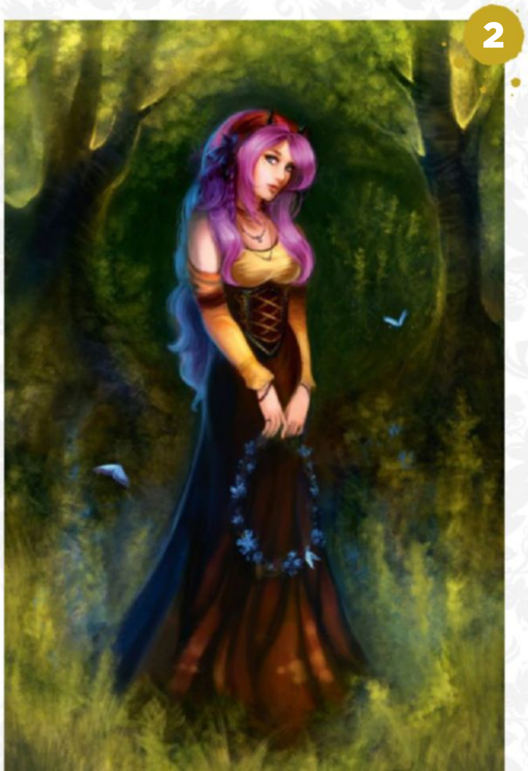
LOCATION: England **MEDIA:** Photoshop **WEB:** www.laternaworks.co.uk

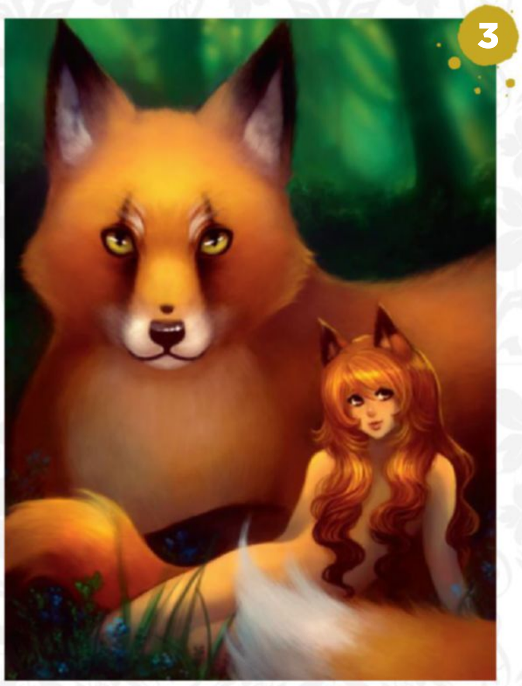
Jodie specialises in producing colourful paintings of women, but has recently started exploring animal and landscape subjects in her art.

1 **THE HUNTERS**
"I love painting pink hair. It looks especially lovely in bright green surroundings. This is a painting of my character and her panther on a hunt together."

2 **FOREST RINA**
"Dense forest backgrounds are incredibly fun to paint. Just go nuts with a speckled brush and see what happens!"

3 **FOXCHILD**
"Manga-style girls with animal ears are adorable. This one is like a fox spirit accompanying her kitsune friend."





4 **BIRD OF PARADISE**
"For this image I wanted to paint something a little bit 'high fashion'. In particular I was inspired by various perfume ads in magazines."

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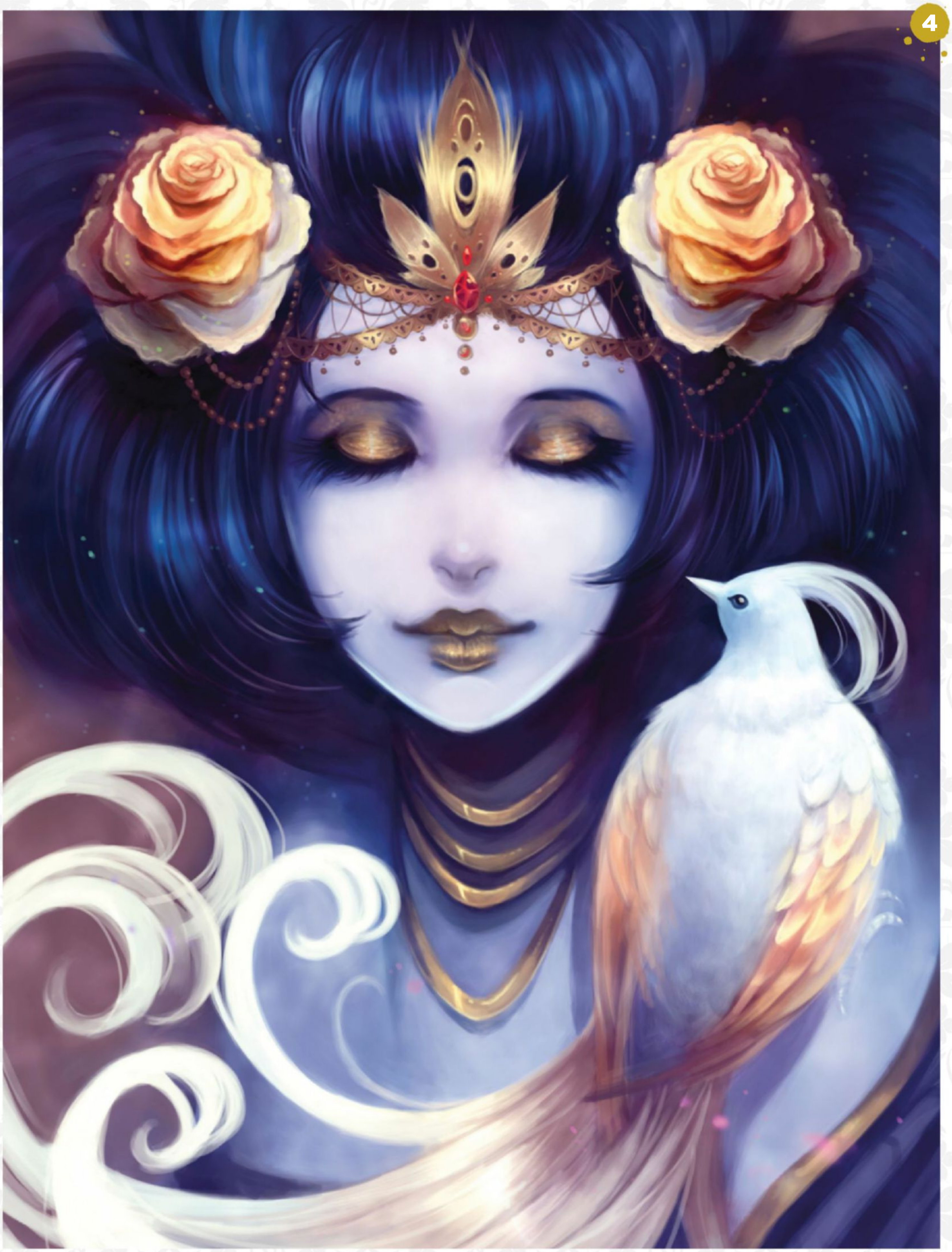
4



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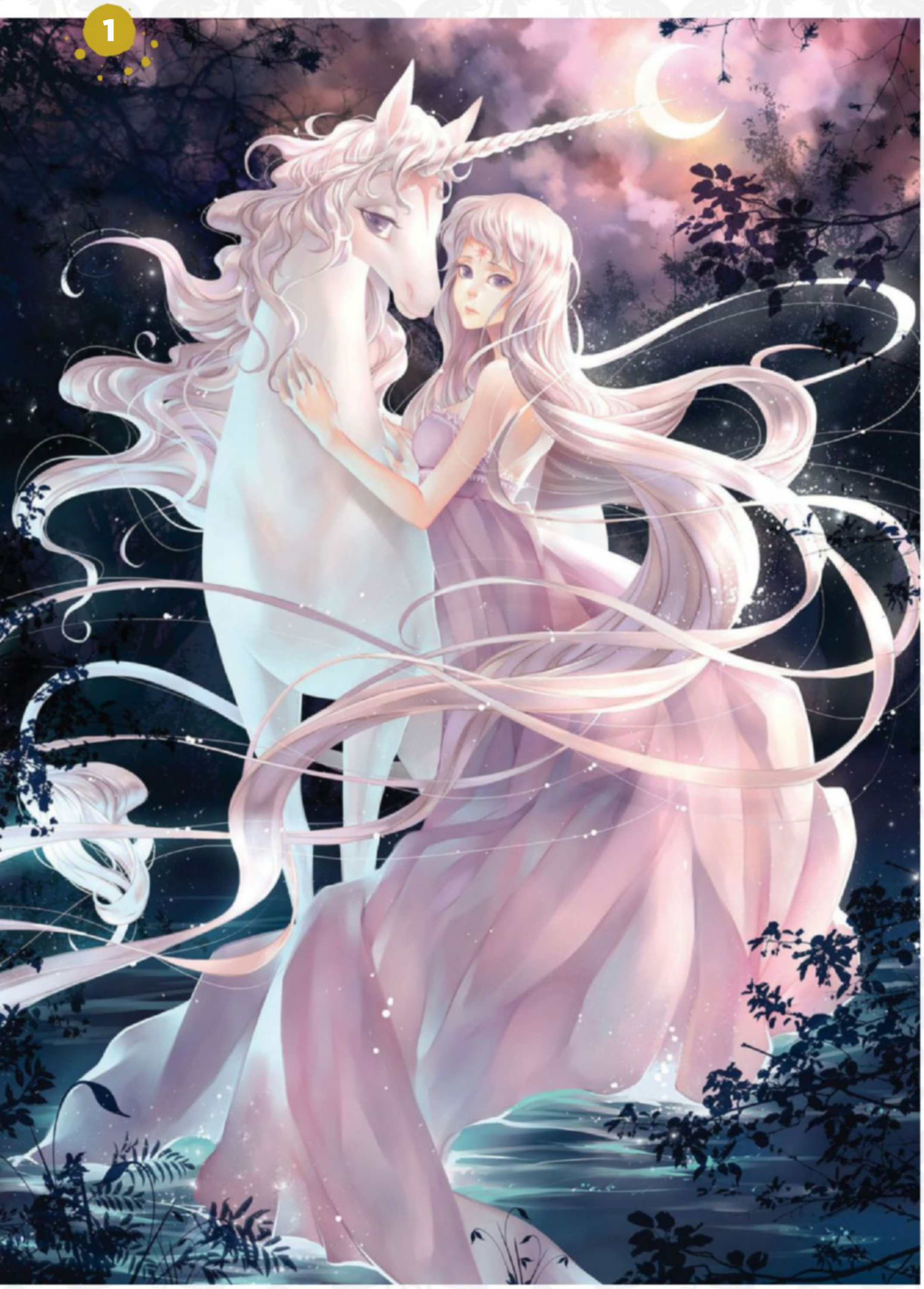
Alexa Pásztor

LOCATION: Hungary **MEDIA:** Photoshop **WEB:** www.luleiya.deviantart.com

Alexa works as a graphic designer, only creating art in her spare time under the name Lüleiya. "I'd describe my style as a mixture of realism and manga," she says.

1 **UNICORN**
"A tribute to The Last Unicorn – a book and film that shaped my imagination in my early childhood. The strange melancholy of the story has stayed with me over the years."

1



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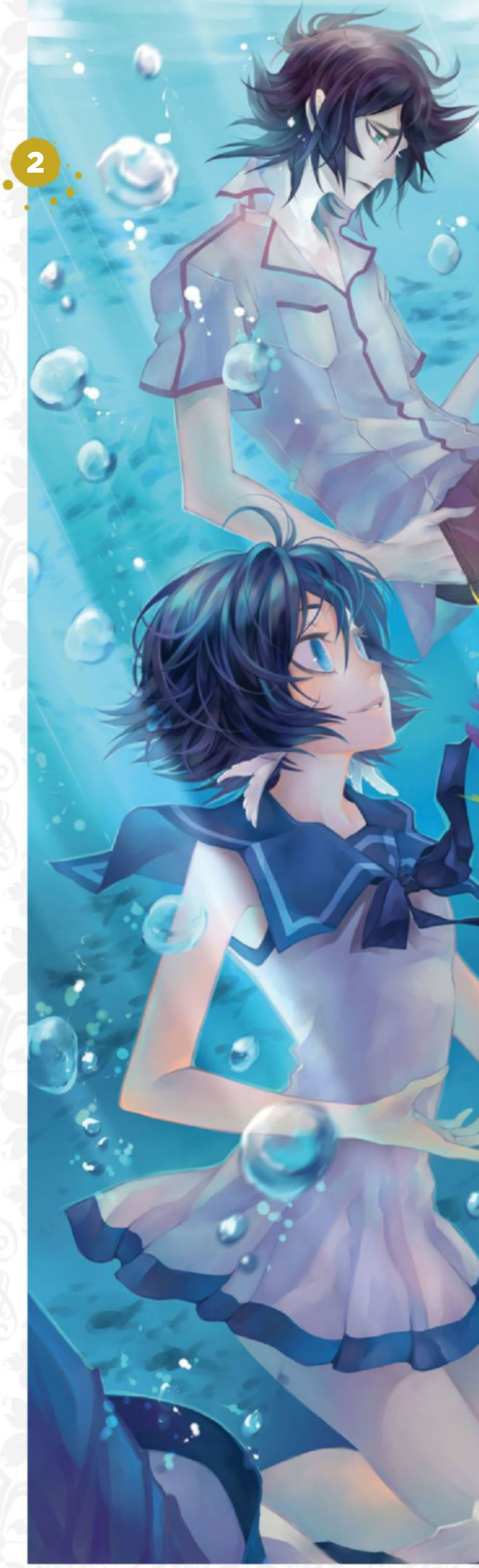


2 **AQUAMARINE**
"I was mesmerised by the world of Nagi no Asukara, but I was still high on my love for the Bleach fandom, thus this crossover fan art was born!"

3

3 SAKURA IN WONDERLAND

"An Alice in Wonderland piece, featuring characters from Tsubasa: Reservoir Chronicle. This piece was a real challenge both to plan and to finish, but it was super fun to work on."

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**

ARTIST NEWS, SOFTWARE & EVENTS

ImagineNation

AT THE CORE OF THE DIGITAL ART COMMUNITY

> “Comics have embraced diversity more than ever before…”

Cliff Chiang created this alternate cover for issue one of Ms Marvel, published in May last year. Kamala Khan is the first Pakistani-American comic heroine.

TRADITIONAL GHOST STORY

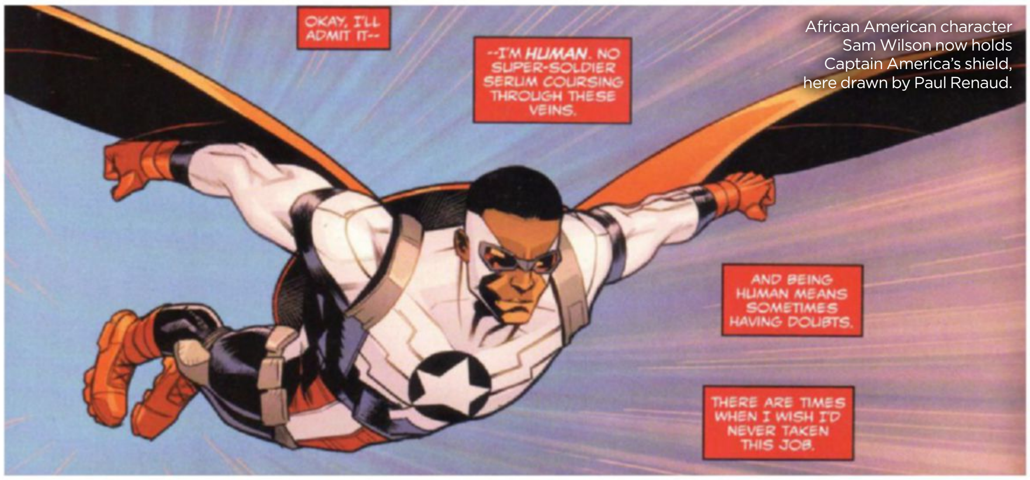
As the live-action take on Ghost in the Shell plays in cinemas, we visit a new exhibition that features the pencil and watercolour art from the original anime.
Page 24

BOXING CLEVER

Step into the home of star manga artist Ilya Kuvshinov, who despite moving in months ago, has still got "Unpack stuff" written on his to-do list.
Page 26

CAN'T BEAT THOSE PANELS

This month in our regular Q&A section you'll find key advice on manga panelling, creating character sheets for comics, and life-drawing advice.
Page 30



African American character Sam Wilson now holds Captain America's shield, here drawn by Paul Renaud.

OKAY, I'LL ADMIT IT--
--I'M HUMAN. NO SUPER-SOLDIER SERUM COURSING THROUGH THESE VEINS.
AND BEING HUMAN MEANS SOMETIMES HAVING DOUBTS.
THERE ARE TIMES WHEN I WISH I'D NEVER TAKEN THIS JOB.

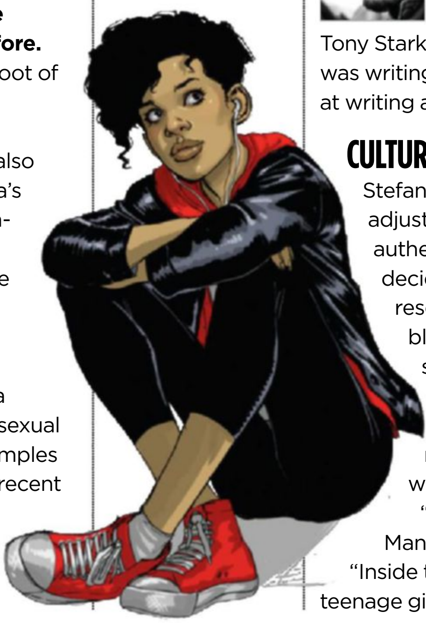
Diversity in the comics industry

About time Change is sweeping through today's superhero comics and artists are rising to the challenge, discovers **Garrick Webster**

Comic books have always aimed to surprise. Sometimes through sheer weirdness and offbeat humour, like Guardians of the Galaxy. Sometimes through brilliant storytelling, such as The Dark Knight Returns or Grant Morrison's run on Batman. But the past few years have seen more experimentation than ever before.

Eight issues into Marvel's reboot of The Mighty Thor, the character disappeared and returned as a woman. Soon after, Wolverine also turned female. Captain America's shield is now held by an African-American character, black teenager Riri Williams wears the Iron Man suit, and Ms Marvel's alter ego is now Pakistani-American Kamela Khan.

In DC's books, Batwoman is a Jewish lesbian, Catwoman is bisexual and there are dozens more examples we could mention. Despite the recent rise of populist politics and a lurch to the right, comics have embraced diversity more than ever before.



Riri's vulnerability is one of the things Stefano Caselli wants to portray, even though she now wears Tony Stark's iron suit.

"If you ask me, I say, 'Yes, this is cool,'" says Italian artist **Stefano Caselli**, who draws the Invincible Iron Man, which is written by Brian Michael Bendis.

"I was kind of shocked when I found out that Riri Williams would replace Tony Stark, but once I heard that Brian was writing it, I relaxed. He's the best at writing about teenagers."

CULTURE RESEARCH

Stefano implemented a range of adjustments to draw Riri authentically. Based in Italy, he decided it was a good idea to research everything from US black culture through to street fashion. He worked hard on how she expresses her emotions and faces new situations. Then there was how she'd wear the suit…

"I knew I had to change Iron Man's moves," says Stefano. "Inside the armour we have a teenage girl, which changes the ➤

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

CLIFF CHIANG

How newly empowered comic characters inspire artists…

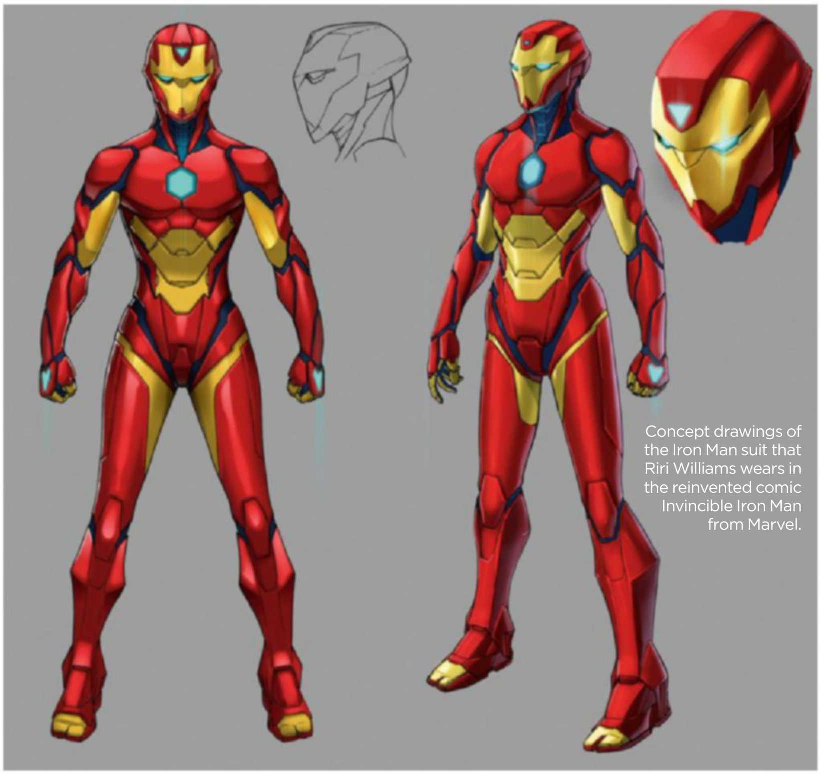
Your cover for issue one of Ms Marvel with Kamala Khan has become an iconic image. What was important to you when you drew this cover?
Ms Marvel is such a great, empowering character, and it was important to show her strength and determination. The basic idea came from the book's editor, Sana Amanat, and I tried my best to draw a hopeful and inspiring image. When I first started working in comics, I never would have imagined I'd be drawing a Pakistani-American girl on the cover of her own comic.

What's your overall view on the greater diversity in comics that we are seeing?
It'll be a rocky road for the near future, as we try to push towards greater diversity. We're used to the way things were, and change is always difficult for some. Our stories need to reflect the world we live in. Creatively and financially, it just makes sense to acknowledge diversity.

Do you think there's enough diversity in the industry?
Currently, no. But you can see the audience changing, and the books are changing, too. And I've seen so many hopeful young artists at shows, and they're not the usual faces anymore. I have no doubt that the industry will look very different in 20 years, but it's mostly a question of how quickly companies embrace real diversity, which will speed up that timeline.

Cliff has come to the fore as a leading comic artist, with a long run on Wonder Woman, and now Paper Girls.

www.cliffchiang.com



Concept drawings of the Iron Man suit that Riri Williams wears in the reinvented comic Invincible Iron Man from Marvel.

© Marvel Comics 2017

Unfollow, drawn by Michael Dowling. A diverse comic, driven by Rob Williams' unique social media concept.

Paper Girls drawn by Cliff Chiang is like Stranger Things, but the heroes are all teenage girls.

© Brian K Vaughan and Cliff Chiang 2016

way the character moves and acts considerably. She has to seem a little insecure and heroic at the same time. I really wanted to have readers see Riri improve with each issue."

Although artists like Stefano have brought both nuance and finesse to the job of depicting socially relevant heroes in their comics, there's been a steady stream of cynicism from some quarters. Marvel VP of sales David Gabriel was left eating his words when he blamed poor sales on the introduction of more diverse characters. Others have said that it's going to be cheaper to get a young black woman onto cinema screen as the next Iron Man than Robert Downey Jr's asking price. Others still have queried everything from the storylines to the marketing support that the books have received.

CYBORGS, PIRATES, CUT-THROATS AND MERCS...
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1
ERIC BORDEN
DAVE MIMS

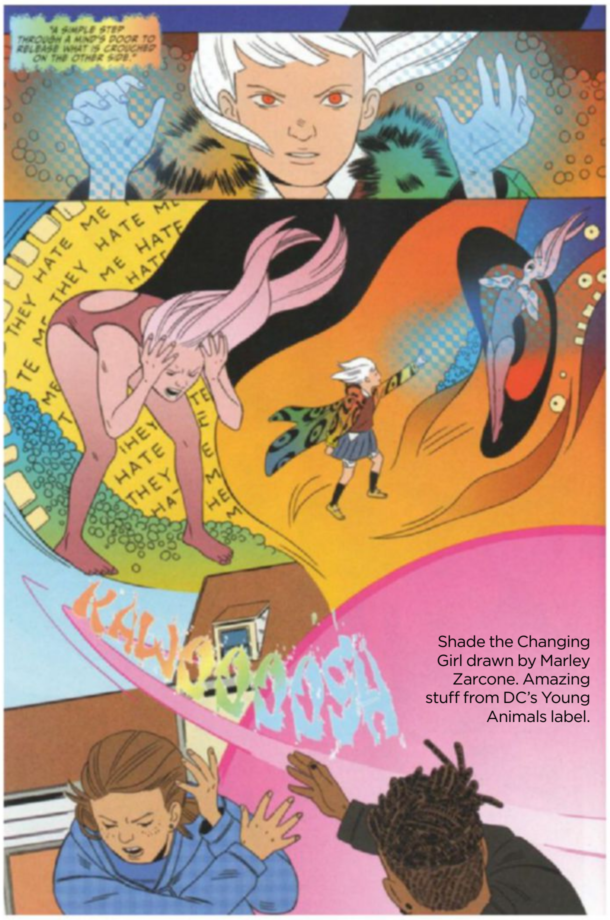
Scrimshaw from Alterna Comics features a mixed team of heroes drawn in Dave Mims' inimitable style.

© Eric Borden and Dave Mims 2016

"You have to stay true to the theme and core of the story and cast accordingly – that's the bottom line," says Bristol-based writer **Rob Williams** (Unfollow and Suicide Squad). "But diversity is also something I'm aware of, and I try to have a healthy mix in my stories."

He continues: "It's also about the major companies hiring diverse voices. There could be more of that, I'm sure, but it is happening. They're not quite the boys' clubs they once were."

Marley Zarcone, based in British Columbia, draws the innovative book Shade: The Changing Girl for DC's Young Animals imprint. Shade was a male character in the 70s, but his illusion-projecting vest has been refitted for a teenage girl – an awkward alien called Loma from a place called Meta. It's been wild stuff seeing this book aimed at a younger, female audience develop. And a far cry from hairy, angry old Logan.


"A SIMPLE STEP THROUGH A MIND'S DOOR TO RELEASE WHAT IS CROUCHED ON THE OTHER SIDE."
THEY HATE ME
KAWOOOOSH

Shade the Changing Girl drawn by Marley Zarcone. Amazing stuff from DC's Young Animals label.

© DC Comics 2017

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Nobody imagined the day Wolverine would become a woman. Striking issue 19 cover by Leonard Kirk.

© Marvel Comics 2017

> "I wanted the girls to feel like the real, adventurous girls that I grew up with in 1988"

"It's all about the books. Diversity is great and necessary, but being thoughtless in execution doesn't help at all. It just gives room for people to blame poor sales problems on diversity," says Marley.

LOOK BACK, LOOKING FORWARD

Like Marley, **Cliff Chiang** is having great success well away from the muscle-bound white man in spandex comic book trope. He drew the iconic first cover of Ms Marvel, starring Muslim character Kamela Khan, but his regular series, Paper Girls, with Brian K Vaughan, is new and yet nostalgic at the same time. It emulates the Amblin Productions movies of the 80s like The Goonies and ET, but with an all-girl team of heroines.

"I wanted the girls to feel like the real, charming and adventurous girls that I grew up with back in 1988," says Cliff. "Each needed her own recognisable look and style, to make them easy to identify. When you see their designs, their personalities should come through."

DC's bizarre 70s creation Shade the Changing Man really has changed… into a teenage girl.

© DC Comics 2017

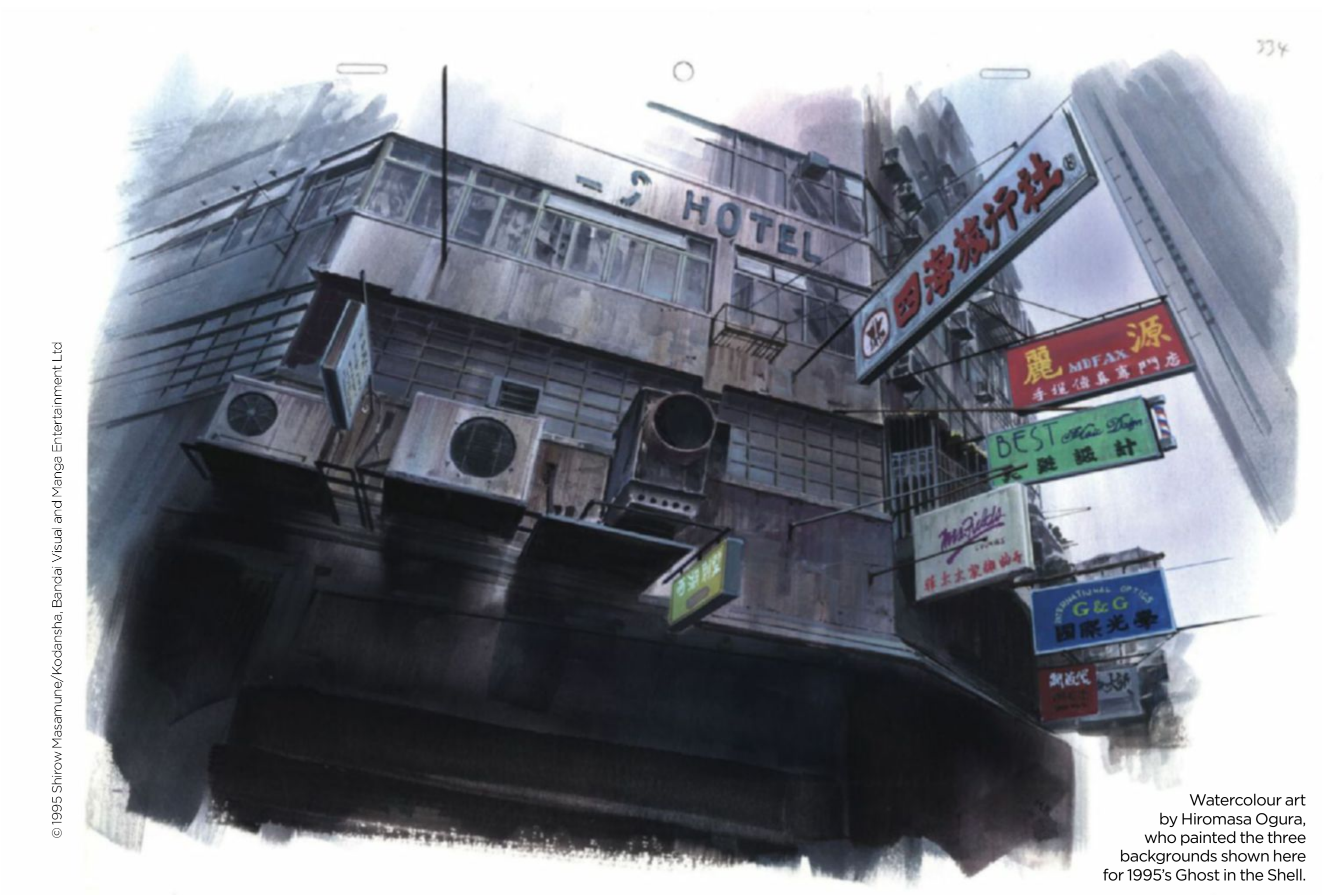
Arguably, indie titles and creator-owned publishers have always shown a bit more daring and diversity. The recent sudden swing in such a short space of time has left some indie publishers slightly bemused.

Peter Simeti runs Alterna Comics, publishing creator-owned books. He's got a pretty open submissions policy, and while he's aware of the need for more diversity in the industry, it doesn't drive the agenda.

"Diversity is great," says Peter. "Lasting and meaningful diverse characters with impactful storylines are even better."

He continues: "When it comes to accepting submissions, I look for great stories first and foremost, created with quality and heart. Focusing on anything else would be a disservice to creators and readers everywhere. It'd be hypocritical of me to champion a creator's vision while insisting that they change the gender, ethnicity or sexual orientation of a character that they've created."

What happens next? Well, rather than a Trump-like arrogance towards minorities suddenly appearing in comics, we're likely to see even greater diversity, with deeper characters and storylines as writers and artists try new things. Watch this space…



© 1995 Shirow Masamune/Kodansha, Bandai Visual and Manga Entertainment Ltd

Watercolour art by Hiromasa Ogura, who painted the three backgrounds shown here for 1995's Ghost in the Shell.

Anime exhibition goes back to the future

World building Traditionally painted background illustrations from classic sci-fi anime films take centre stage in this new exhibition, based in London

Photo © Gianni Plescia

"With the Hollywood version of Ghost in the Shell at the cinema," says Stefan Riekeles, the curator behind Anime Architecture: Backgrounds of Japan, "it's a great time to have a look at the original artwork that laid the foundation for this remake."

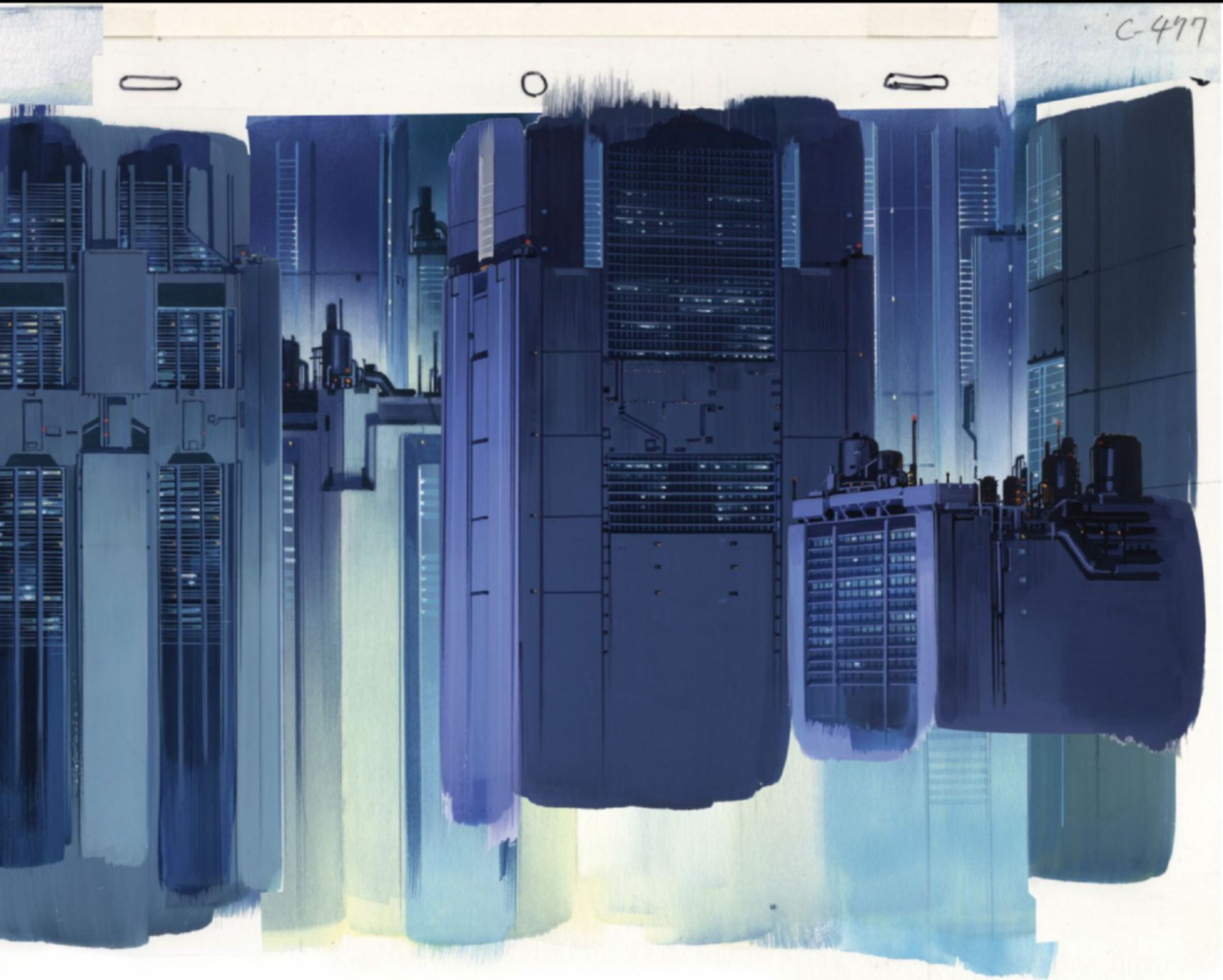
Taking place at London's House of Illustration, this perfectly timed exhibition explores the background paintings and drawings from influential anime films, including 1995's Ghost in the Shell, Patlabor: The Movie, and 2001's Metropolis. The art on show will include the watercolours of Hiromasa Ogura, and the intricate pencil drawings of Takashi Watabe.

The UK exhibition is the first of its kind, and is the outcome of a longer research project into Japanese animation. "From the beginning I was fascinated by the background illustrations," Stefan explains. "These works present large parts of the world view of the film. Some are worked out in great detail, yet each one is only visible for a few seconds."

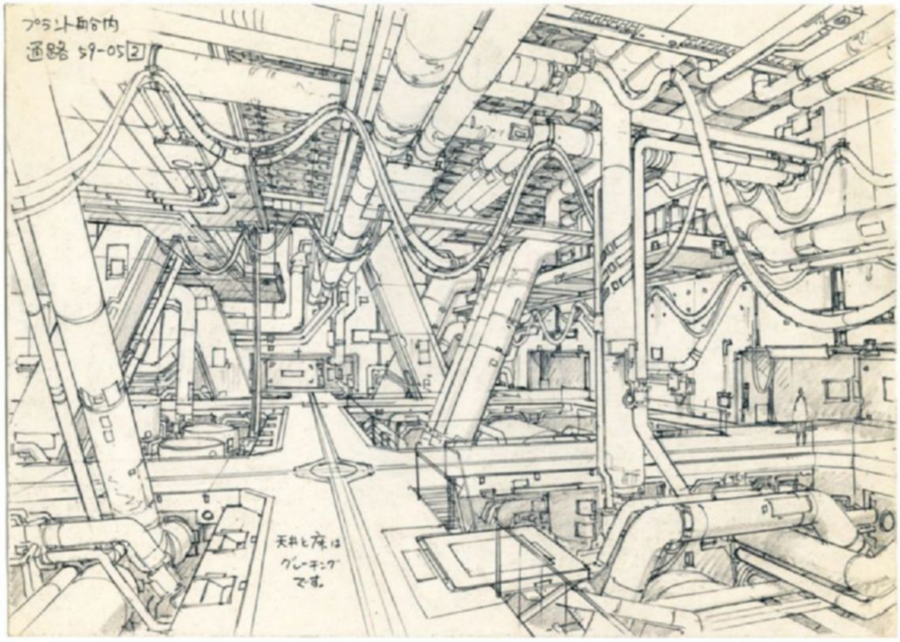
By stripping away the characters and the plot, this is a rare chance for these background illustrations to get the full attention they deserve. "We present scenes that are tranquil – here and there almost picturesque – drawn by hand with pencil and watercolours on paper," says Stefan. "It's the sheer beauty of these illustrations that we'll be celebrating in this exhibition."

Anime Architecture: Backgrounds of Japan, runs from 26 May to 10 September. You can find out more about the exhibition by visiting **www.houseofillustration.org.uk**.

Ghost in the Shell's director, Mamoru Oshii, described the Asian megacities as "exotic".



The Ghost in the Shell cities are a hybrid of a realistic urban Tokyo and a purely fictional Asian world.



Animation director Takashi Watabe's pencil artwork is made up of layers to create a strong sense of depth.

ImagineFX

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

賞状

第八回国際漫画賞入賞

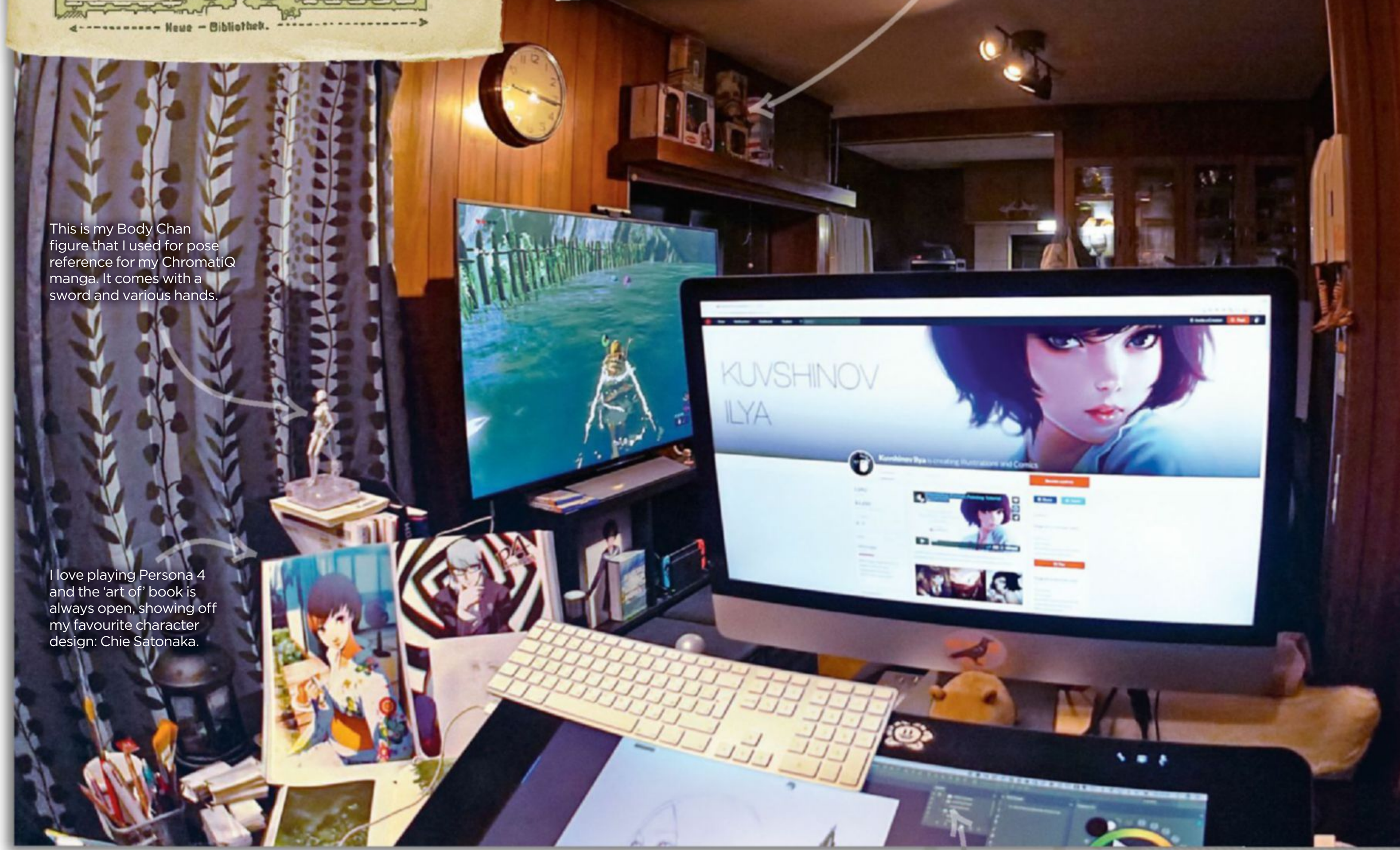
"サマーシュラウド"

Ilya Kuvshinov 殿

岸田文雄

My International Manga Award – I got bronze!

Here's my collection of unopened and rather rare figurines. Maybe someday I'll be brave enough to unbox and see them in all their glory…



This is my Body Chan figure that I used for pose reference for my ChromatiQ manga. It comes with a sword and various hands.

I love playing Persona 4 and the 'art of' book is always open, showing off my favourite character design: Chie Satonaka.

My 27-inch iMac and Wacom Cintiq 27QHD is the best creative configuration I've ever worked with – and that keyboard's position is actually super comfortable!

Ilya Kuvshinov

Total art This manga artist believes that what you see on a daily basis adds to a visual library of inspiration. Hence the multitude of art on show!

Five months ago I moved into a new house. I made sure to set up my workstation as soon as possible, but I still haven't found the time to unpack one or two boxes…

I like my creative space to be dark and cold. Now, you're probably thinking, "Er, like a cave?" So what I mean is that painting digitally usually means there's more than enough illumination and heat created by my screens, and furthermore I don't want the distraction of external light sources.

This is a framed page from Kei Toume's extremely rare 2001 calendar, starring Haru from Yesterday wo Utatte manga.

My work area has to be inspiring, so I keep all my art books within easy reach, and decorate the space with figurines, various posters, and photographs of my friends. My TV is kept nearby: I'm a bit of a gamer, and I also like to watch Netflix while I paint (Breaking Bad is a current favourite).

My workstation is on the first floor of the house and takes up half of the living room and kitchen. This means I'm able to chat with my house mates while they're cooking or eating a meal.

I only have to spin in my chair around to access my books, stored in a bookcase from IKEA. Thinking about it, most of the furniture in this room is from the Scandinavian chain. I'm a loyal customer, clearly!

I truly believe that your environment and daily life influences your sense of taste, even if you're not studying it consciously. That's why objects like my framed Kim Jung Gi's original sketch are on show – they're to remind me that I need to improve every day.

Ilya is a Russian-born illustrator and comic artist who's currently living in Japan. You can see examples of his art and support him at www.patreon.com/kuvshinov_ilya.

This is the promotional poster for my recently released book, Momentary. [*We review it on page 98, and it's a good 'un – Ed*]

I use these figurines to help me paint legs, and for general anatomy reference. They're really nicely done.

Behind my desk is the main bookcase. A framed example of Kim Jung Gi's work sits top left, along with my ImagineFX cover art. Then there are books from my favourite illustrators, gengas and storyboards of anime that I'm a fan of, and a collection of pose reference books.

A clock reminds me not to play games for too long. I own a PlayStation 4 Pro, a PlayStation VR, a Nintendo Switch and a Laser Disc player with all the Urusei Yatsura TV series on tap.

This is a collection of Mamoru Hosoda's works on Blu-ray, signed by the director himself!

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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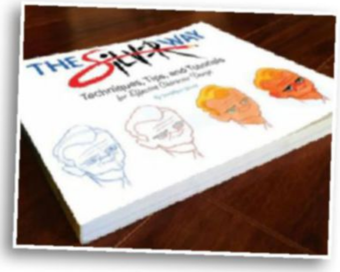
Cover artist suggestions



Could Stephen Silver's recent Kickstarter success tie in with being a future ImagineFX cover artist? Reader Mark thinks so.

In issue 147 of ImagineFX you said in your editor's letter about being open to suggestions for future cover artists. May I suggest Stephen Silver or Sean Galloway? Both artists have a great animation style to their work that I'd like to see featured. In fact, Stephen has recently developed an art book through Kickstarter that proved highly successful, and he'd probably enjoy the extra publicity!

Mark Kilkelly, via email

Claire replies Both of these suggestions are spot on, Mark! We did speak with Stephen Silver about contributing to the magazine a while back, but it ended up not happening. Sean Galloway is a great artists and one we'd love to feature more. I'll see what I can do! Any readers have other ideas?

Pointy-eared elf please!

I'd like to see Laurel D Austin on your cover. Get her to paint a pointy-eared elf lancer riding one of those recently discovered fluffy-feathered dinosaurs.

Furthermore, can you try to focus the workshop on the early stages of her process, like composition and, above all, choice of colour. I'd love to hear about Laurel's way of harmonising colour across a whole picture.

Stefan, via email

Claire replies Stefan, that's a great idea. Laurel's work is always stunning. Her interview in issue 133 is one of my favourites. Thanks for your suggestion.

Mary Highstreet is back creating art after struggling with RSI.

DID YOU MISS THE PREVIOUS PACKED ISSUE?

Don't worry – you can still get hold of it. Visit **http://ifxm.ag/ifx-148** for details.

Reader Stefan believes Laurel D Austin would make a great cover artist. We're inclined to agree with him!

Artists with RSI

I'd like to see a future article dealing with repetitive strain/stress injury (RSI): how to prevent it and what to do if you have it. I know many artists who are struggling with RSI or are concerned about developing it.

I developed RSI in 2014 and after being treated without success I thought I'd never paint again. My symptoms included hand tremors, severe tendon/joint pain, stiffness, numbness and tingling in my hands and arms. It was interfering in my work, life and happiness. Then I was referred to a new physical therapist (PT) who healed me of RSI completely!

My PT said that RSI is common for any professional and top athlete who trains hard. Her primary technique is trigger-point release therapy, using massage and stretches. She worked out knots and stretched out muscles in my back and arms, which opened up my back and gave relief to my hands and arms. This technique is revolutionary and relieved all the symptoms of RSI after just two sessions plus some simple stretches she gave me to take home.

I'm now creating art again, symptom free! I was also given tips on artist injury prevention and ergonomics, both for everyday and for at the computer or art desk/easel. I'd be so happy if you'd consider sharing this information with my fellow artists, because it's been so beneficial to me.

Mary Highstreet, via email

Claire replies It's so good to hear that you're fully recovered, Mary. Thank you for passing on your advice and for a timely reminder for me to revisit this subject in a future edition of ImagineFX. It's vital that we look after ourselves so we're able to continue the things that we love doing.

FRESH PAINT

New works that have grabbed our attention

Art of Southpaw
@art_of_southpaw

Sal – TheDarkCloak
@thedarkcloak

Emily Hare
@artbyemilyhare

Shiflett Brothers
@shiflettbros

Just finished something that you want us to shout about? Then tag us on Twitter or Instagram, or find us on Facebook!

Artist Q&A

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

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 6 now!

The No.1 for digital artists ImagineFX panel

Belinda Leung

Previously a lead artist in games, Belinda is now a freelance illustrator/concept artist who specialises in designing for films and games.

www.belindaleung.com

Koh Min Min

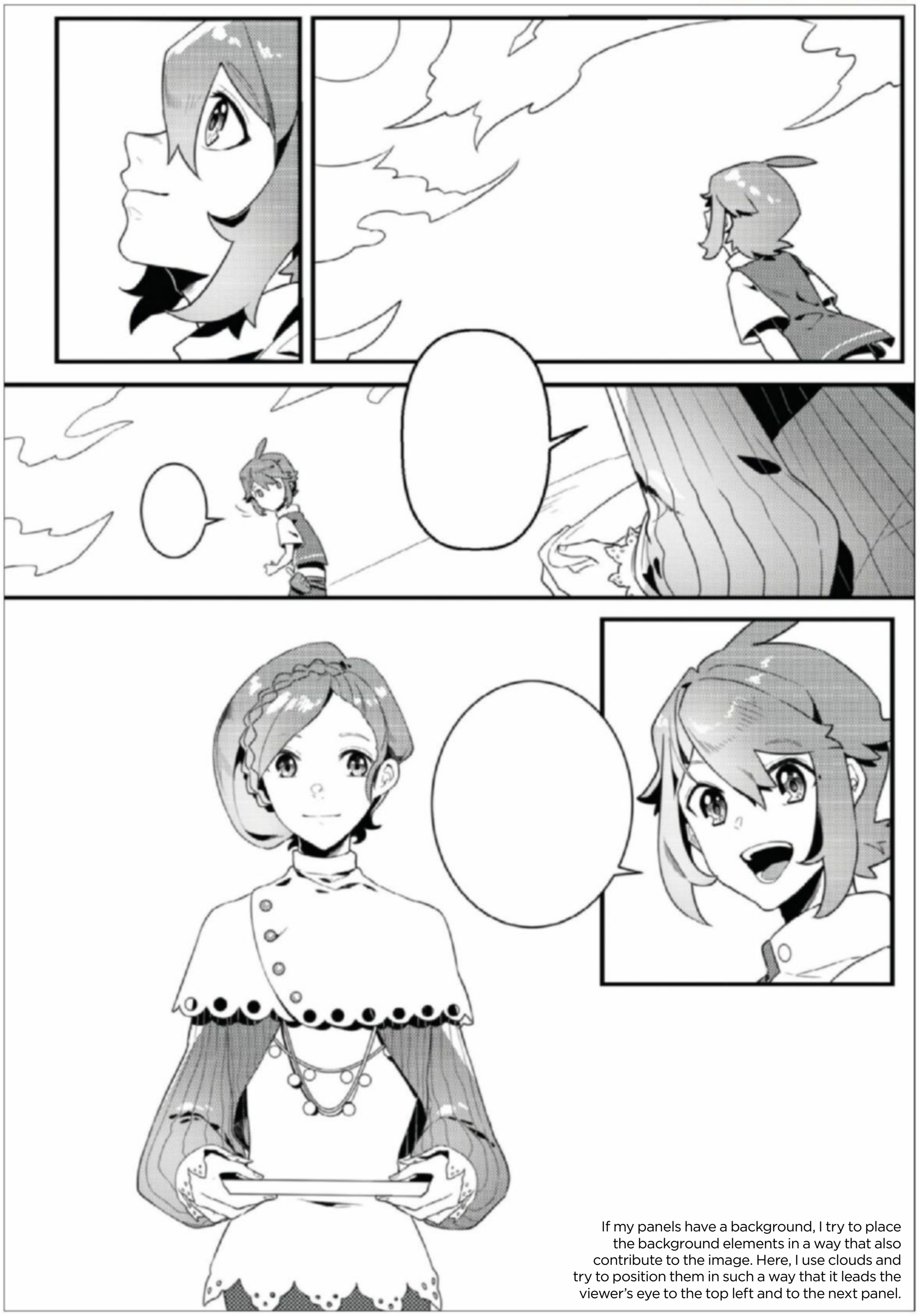
Koh Min Min enjoys coming up with character designs for the fun of it. She's worked for CDS and Japanese retailers such as Toranoana.

http://ifxm.ag/koh-m-m

Lorena Lammer

Lorena is a freelance illustrator from Germany who just recently moved to Berlin so she can spend more time with her artist friends there.

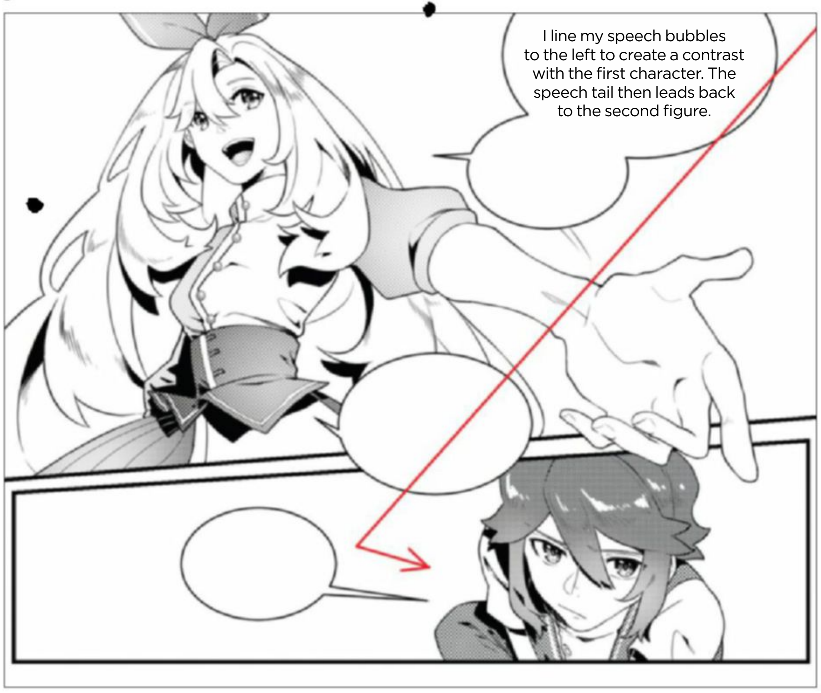
www.lululana.com



If my panels have a background, I try to place the background elements in a way that also contribute to the image. Here, I use clouds and try to position them in such a way that it leads the viewer's eye to the top left and to the next panel.

Artist Q&A
Need our advice?

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



I line my speech bubbles to the left to create a contrast with the first character. The speech tail then leads back to the second figure.

Question

Help! I don't know where to start with my comic panelling! Any advice?

Mary Hasty, US

Answer

Koh replies

For comic panelling, I try to try and keep a certain flow in between subjects. I prefer to use diagonals and curves and try to lead the viewer's eye from one panel to the next, using the placement of characters and other objects so as to do this comfortably.

Though it may be tempting to not stick to plain or simple square panelling, the most important thing to keep in mind is that when you read your own comics, your eyes don't end up darting all over the page.

A common trick I like to do is to use the direction of where my characters are looking, to maintain a visual flow. If my character is on the left side of the first panel and the second panel has another character on the right, I'll draw the first character either looking towards the right, or make use of their hair or clothes to "point" towards the right. I also tend to not put characters on the same side of consecutive panels unless it contributes to the story.

Use lots of references when learning about composition because it's a big topic and the best way to learn is through what others have already done. Keep things simple! Drawing details may be cool but it can also make things very messy. Less is more.

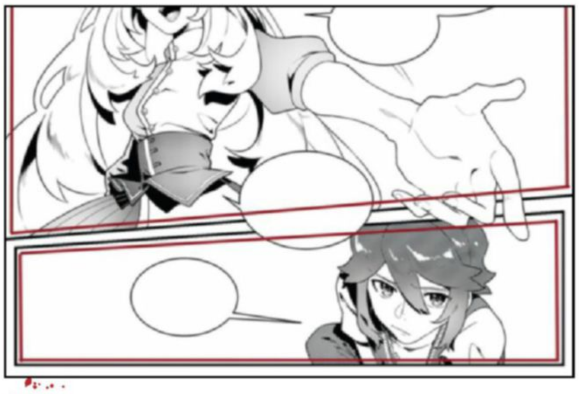
Another important thing is to avoid tangents. Tangents are when two edges are very close together and they create unnecessary and unwanted tension in the image. This is especially so when placing speech bubbles as these bubbles can create tangents with your drawings. Do make a habit of checking your sketches and reworking constantly. I tend to use overlapping panels a lot so tangents are always one thing that I check for.

Artist's secret

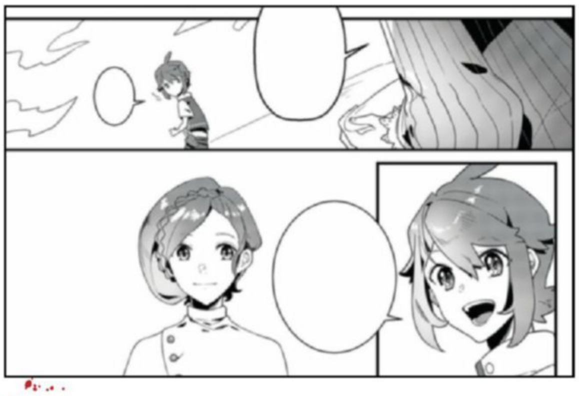
Slanted perspective

I prefer not to draw my characters in straight positions as I find it too rigid. I like to use more slanted perspective and angles as I find it can cover a wider area of the scene and also better convey the characters' emotions.

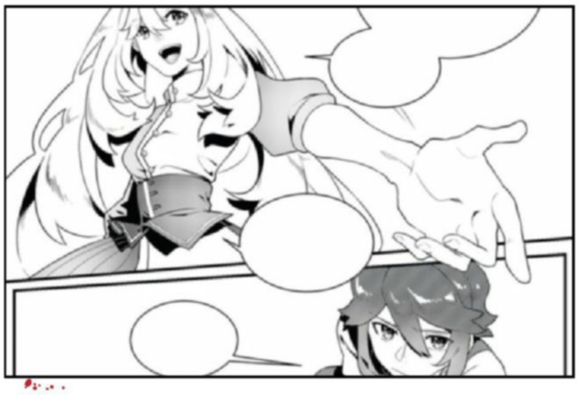
Step-by-step: Additional tips and what to look out for when placing panels



1 Angles are important when asserting dominating subjects and can help with deciding panel sizes. If a character is in a more confident position, they would get a bigger panel as opposed to a figure who's in a more vulnerable position.



2 Speech bubbles also affect the composition of the image, and their shape affects the tone that viewers will read your characters voice in. Take note of how the different shapes and placements would affect how your entire page looks as a whole.



3 My character's arm creates flow from the first panel to the second. Notice how my first figure is also looking to the right even though she's facing left. My second figure is also looking back towards the left, which also contributes to this visual flow.

Question

I've just bought an iPad. Can you recommend any painting tools for live sketching sessions?

Phillipp Aachen, Germany

Answer

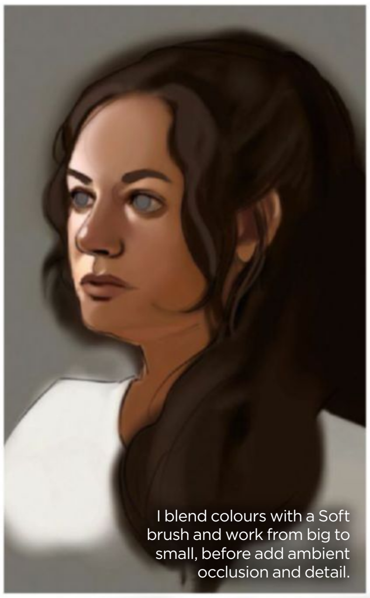
Lorena replies

Recently, I've got into the habit of taking my iPad to live drawing sessions and museums a lot. I've found Procreate to be a great tool for sketching, from quick gesture drawings to more detailed studies.

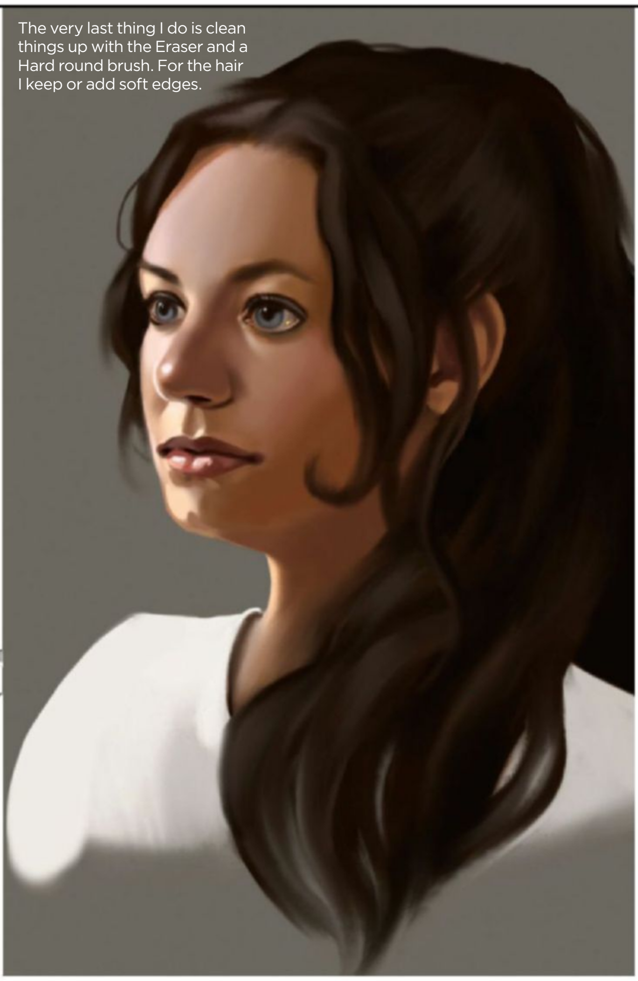
There are different ways to approach sketching digitally, just like with pen and paper. It takes some time getting used to all of the app's settings and brushes, but once you get the hang of them, the process becomes very easy.

I like to use the Pencil brushes, especially for gesture drawings. When tilting your pen you'll be able to draw as if you were using the flat side of a pencil. This is great for generating the first couple of marks, just to get down the flow of the figure. These gesture studies usually only last between one and three minutes.

When the poses last longer you can go for a full colour drawing. This is easily achieved by using a soft Fuzzy brush to blend in the colours and not getting caught up in details early on. If you're not comfortable working directly with colour just produce a simple line sketch first.



I blend colours with a Soft brush and work from big to small, before add ambient occlusion and detail.



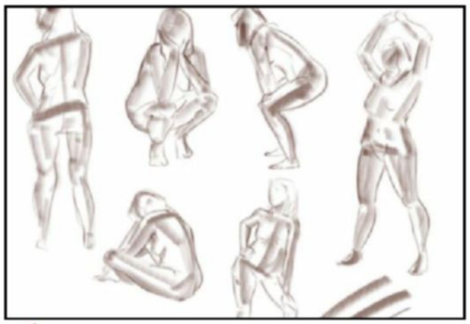
The very last thing I do is clean things up with the Eraser and a Hard round brush. For the hair I keep or add soft edges.

Artist's secret

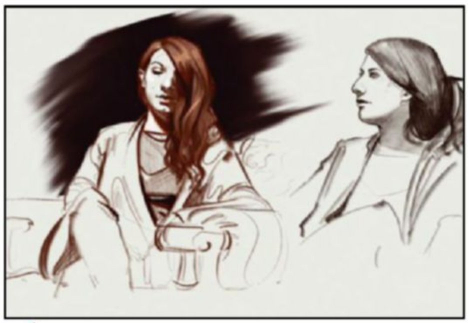
Adjust your brushes

Tap on a brush to open the settings. There you'll be able to add or adjust the Tilt setting, for example. You can always test your changes by drawing in the space at the top of the Adjustment window.

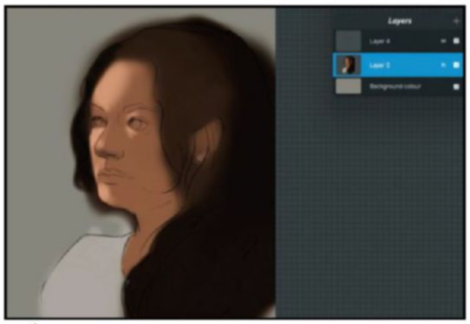
Step-by-step: From quick gesture drawings to colour portraits



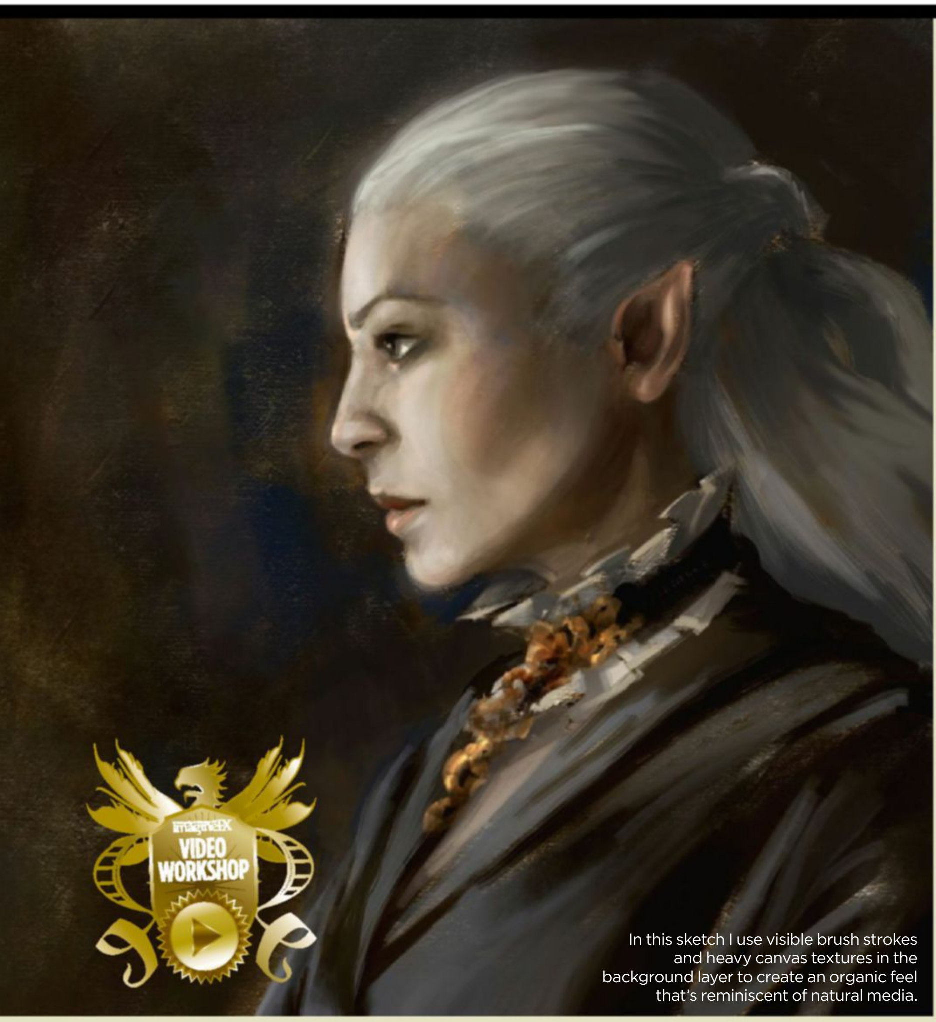
1 When doing gesture studies it's crucial to capture the model's pose as quickly as possible. Make quick, broad marks by using the flat side of your pen (note that not all of Procreate's brushes use the Tilt option) and then add a couple of thinner lines for detail.



2 When the poses last longer you can introduce more detail. You can still use the method mentioned before to draw the basic figure/portrait and then slowly add to it as you would with any other drawing. I like to use the Pencil brush for this, but that's just a personal preference.



3 For creating a colour sketch I do a quick line drawing of the figure on a Multiply layer (click N in the Layer menu to change blending modes). I add a colour base underneath with a Soft brush and then lock it by swiping two fingers to the right on the layer.



In this sketch I use visible brush strokes and heavy canvas textures in the background layer to create an organic feel that's reminiscent of natural media.

Question

Can I make my art look more organic?

Kyle Hobbs, England

Answer

Belinda replies

Digital painting has historically suffered from looking too artificial, but with the vast range of software available today, it's much easier to replicate the look of natural media. Here I've done a quick sketch using Photoshop, demonstrating a few ways to create an organic, painterly feel, using a process that also reflects the way I paint in oils.

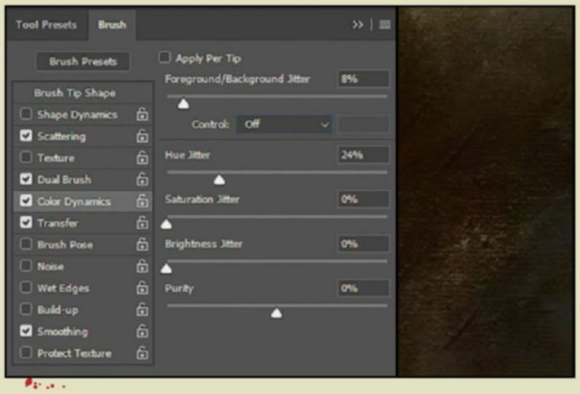
I start off with toning my canvas using a heavily textured canvas brush to give the subsequent paint something to "grip" onto. I also have Color Dynamics turned on to give subtle changes to the hue.

I then block out a sketch and, just like I would when oil painting, start by blocking out the darker shadow shapes before gradually laying in lighter colours. The orientation and direction of brush strokes play a huge part in replicating the look of natural media so at times I have the Angle Jitter set to Direction.

When I want an even more controlled brush angle, I switch the Angle Jitter off and use the brush orientation compass to turn the bristles to the angle that I want.

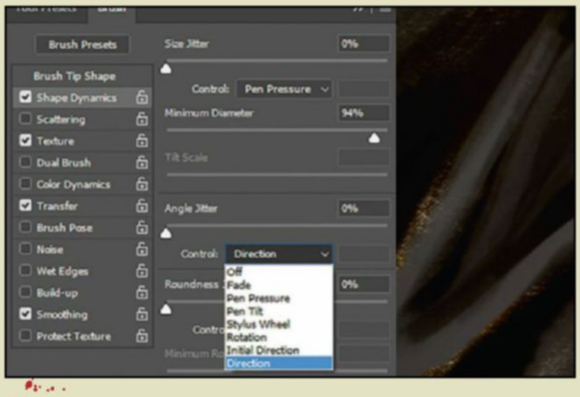
In this sketch I've used visible brush strokes and heavy canvas textures in the background layer to create an organic feel, reminiscent of natural media.

Step-by-step: How to paint digitally with a natural media look



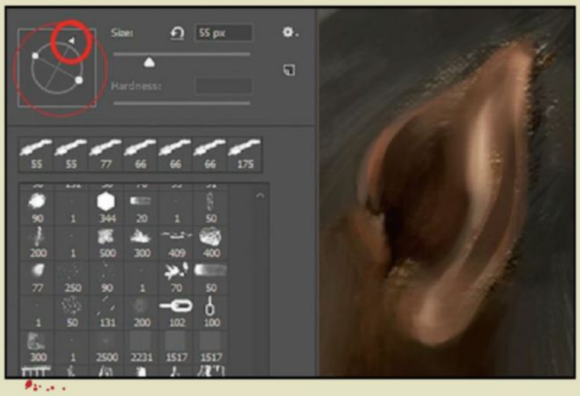
☐ Apply Per Tip
Foreground/Background Jitter 8%
Control: Off
Hue Jitter 24%
Saturation Jitter 0%
Brightness Jitter 0%
Purity 0%

1 Color Dynamics are a good way of adding subtle hue variations that mimic the mixing of colours on a canvas. Foreground/background Jitter is great when you have a colour range in mind. Otherwise, Hue Jitter on a low percentage is usually fine.



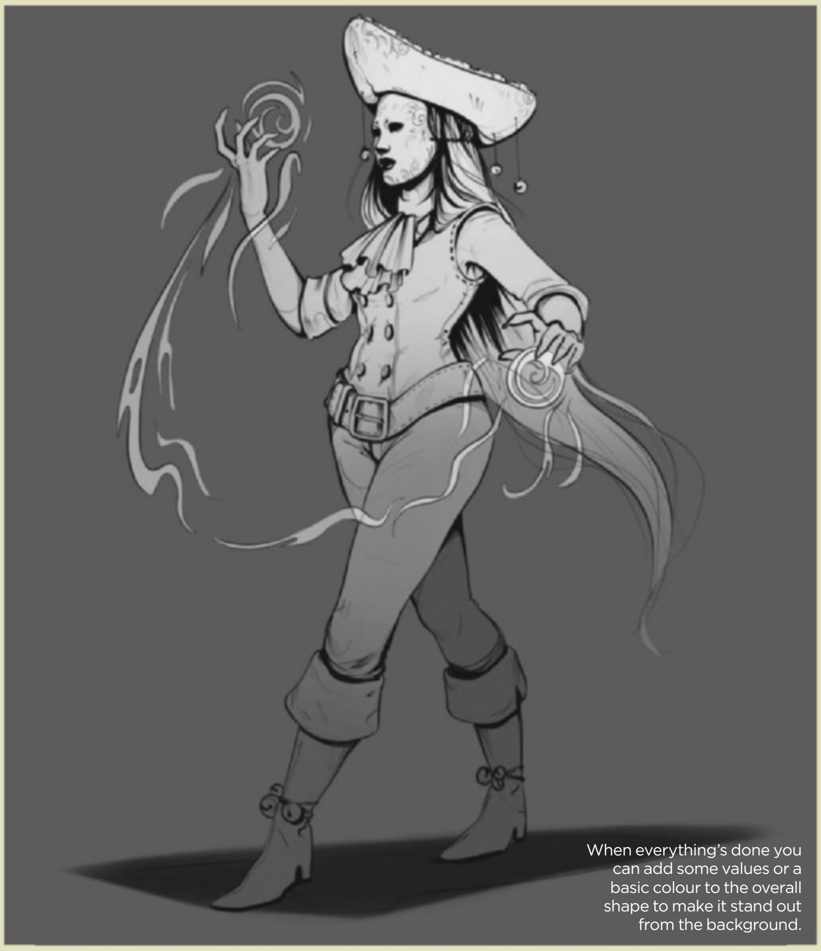
Size Jitter 0%
Control: Pen Pressure
Minimum Diameter 94%
Tilt Scale
Angle Jitter 0%
Control: Direction
Roundness Jitter 0%

2 Setting your brush's Angle Jitter to Direction is a good way to create organic strokes that showcase your brush's textures, such as the hairs on a bristle brush. I like to use this when painting hair or for bold impasto brush strokes that follow the form.



Size: 55 px

3 Manually adjusting the orientation of your brush can give you great control over the look of your brush strokes and is great for flat brushes. Using this method does require a little more patience, but it can yield organic and decisive painterly strokes.



When everything's done you can add some values or a basic colour to the overall shape to make it stand out from the background.

Question

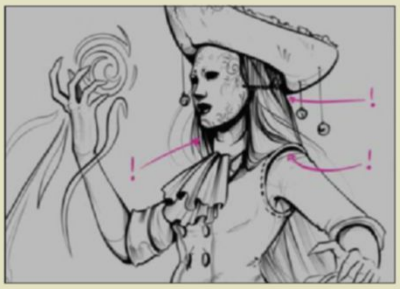
Can you recommend a method for working up a drawing in Procreate?

Mark Leeming, Wales

Answer

Lorena replies

Creative line art in Procreate is relatively straightforward, once you get the hang of it. First off, I recommend purchasing a screen protector with a bit of texture for your iPad. This will make it more comfortable to draw on.

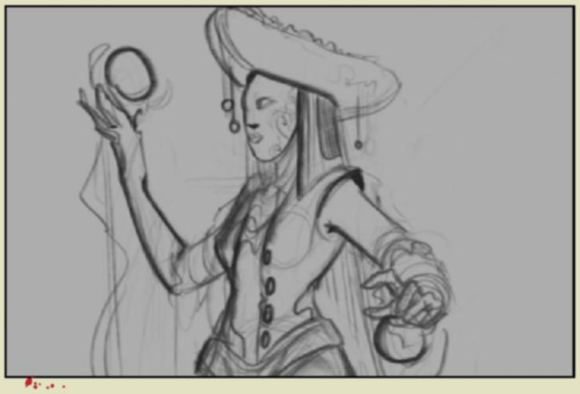


Add details and depth by adjusting the line weight. Thicker lines where objects overlap suggest shadow.

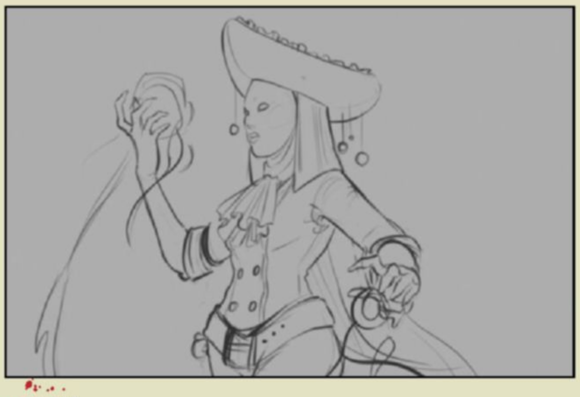
I'll show you how I produce line art using different brushes and settings. If you don't have a concrete idea of what you want to draw, put down a couple of thumbnails, especially if you're planning on drawing a complete illustration!

I like using the Pencil brushes for this (they're on the first brush tab, under Sketching). Once you've decided on a sketch, add some more detail so you know where every part of the image goes. After that, produce a clean sketch. This step isn't mandatory: it depends on how rough your first sketch is. I like to create a cleaner pass before working on the line art. Pick a brush you like to use for the final lines, I prefer a Round one, without any texture.

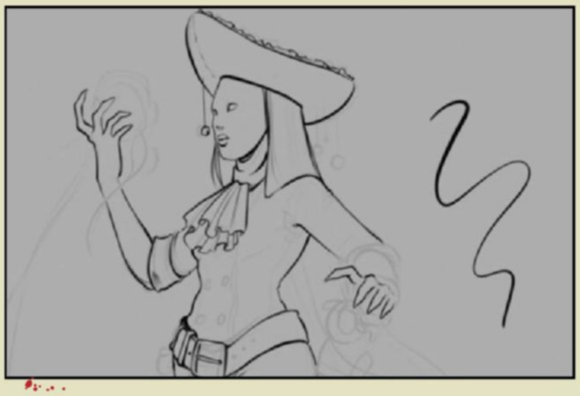
Step-by-step: From rough sketch to a clean line art piece in Procreate



1 I decide to draw a masked character and start out with a loose and messy sketch. I also prefer doing line art on a grey background so I change the background layer by simply tapping on it. Always keep your rough sketch – you might need it later!



2 When you clean up the sketch don't worry too much if the lines aren't that great yet, because this is just your final guide for the actual line art. I like using Inking brushes for this stage, with the Streamline setting reduced quite a bit.



3 Tap two fingers on the layer with your clean sketch (in the Layer menu). A blue line will appear above the canvas. Slowly swipe left to reduce the Opacity to the point where you can still see the sketch, but can draw over it easily on a new layer.

Question

How can I make my life drawings look less stiff?

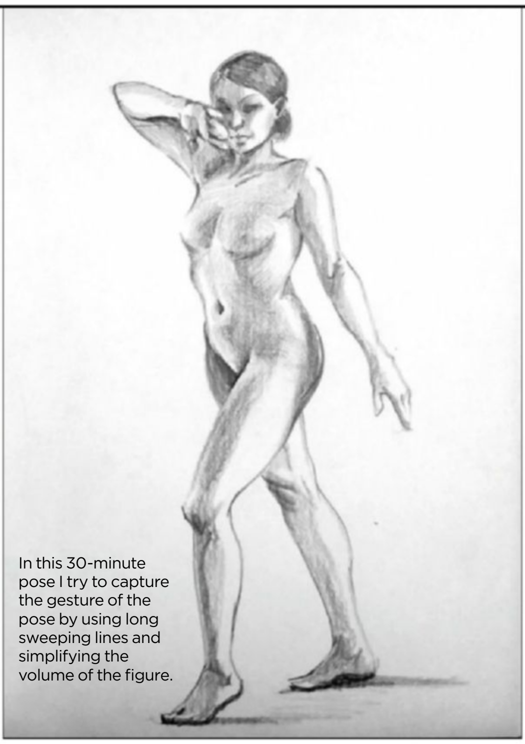
Amelie Powell, Australia

Answer

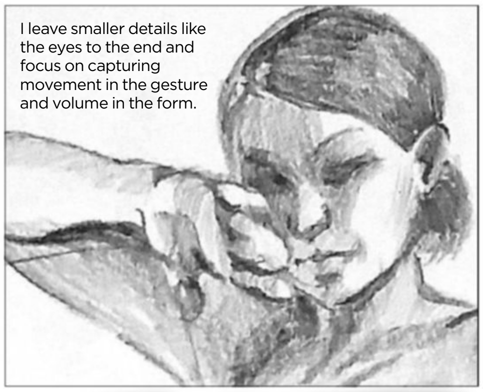
Belinda replies

Capturing movement in a static poses starts from the first few lines you decide to make and the confidence with which you make them. I find the core elements of a gesture are the angles of the spine, shoulders and pelvis. I like to start with a line that flows from the head and spine, all the way down to the ground. I then use simple lines for the angle of the shoulders and pelvis.

To complete my gestural sketch I add the arms and legs, making sure to anchor the feet to give the figure a sense of place. Whenever I'm unsure of the next stroke, I'll look at the model to check my proportions and angles. The most important thing about life drawing is to always look at the model and not start noodling away too long on your own.



In this 30-minute pose I try to capture the gesture of the pose by using long sweeping lines and simplifying the volume of the figure.



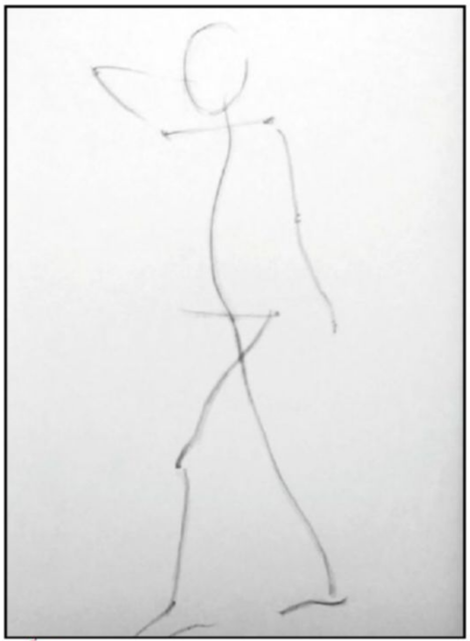
I leave smaller details like the eyes to the end and focus on capturing movement in the gesture and volume in the form.

Artist's secret

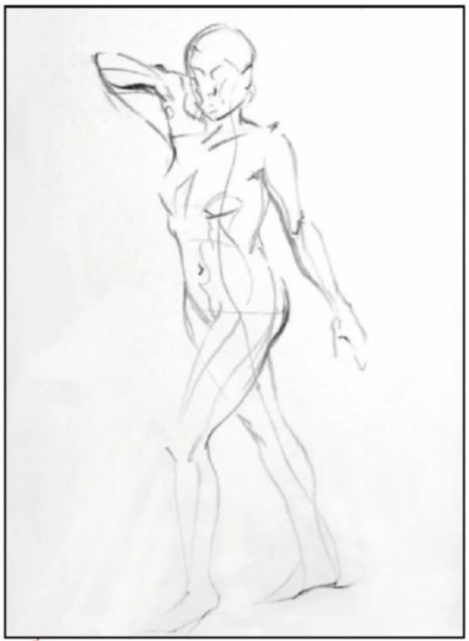
Take your time and stay loose

I mime the stroke I'm about to make, before putting pencil to paper. This helps to keeps my wrist loose and lines confident. I refer back to the model and this gives me time to distil the core gestural lines into one or two strokes.

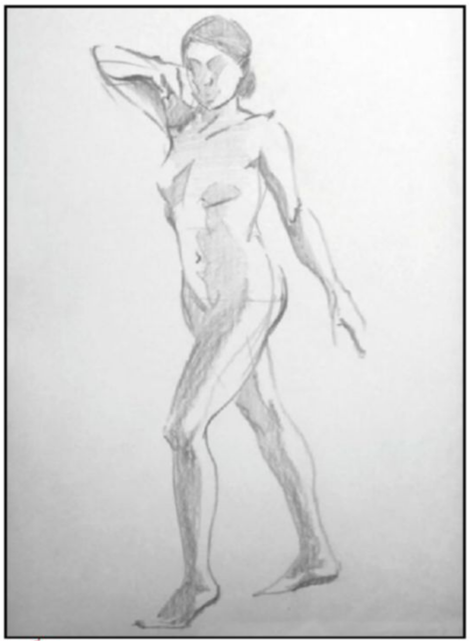
Step-by-step: Building up a sketch



1 I take as much time as I need to analyse the weight and movement of the pose. And then, using just a few lines, I sketch the gesture of the head and spine, shoulder and pelvis, followed by the arms and hands, legs and feet.



2 I start fleshing out the gesture with the rib cage and add thickness to the figure using simple outlines to describe areas of shadow. I also take into account any foreshortening and adjust my line thickness for areas in light and shadow.



3 With the remaining time, I block in the shadows that I've mapped out, starting with a single flat tone. I then add midtones to turn the form and build up my range of values until the end of the pose. I can use an eraser to add highlights.

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Question

Can you please give me advice on character sheets for my comics?

Wei K'ung, England

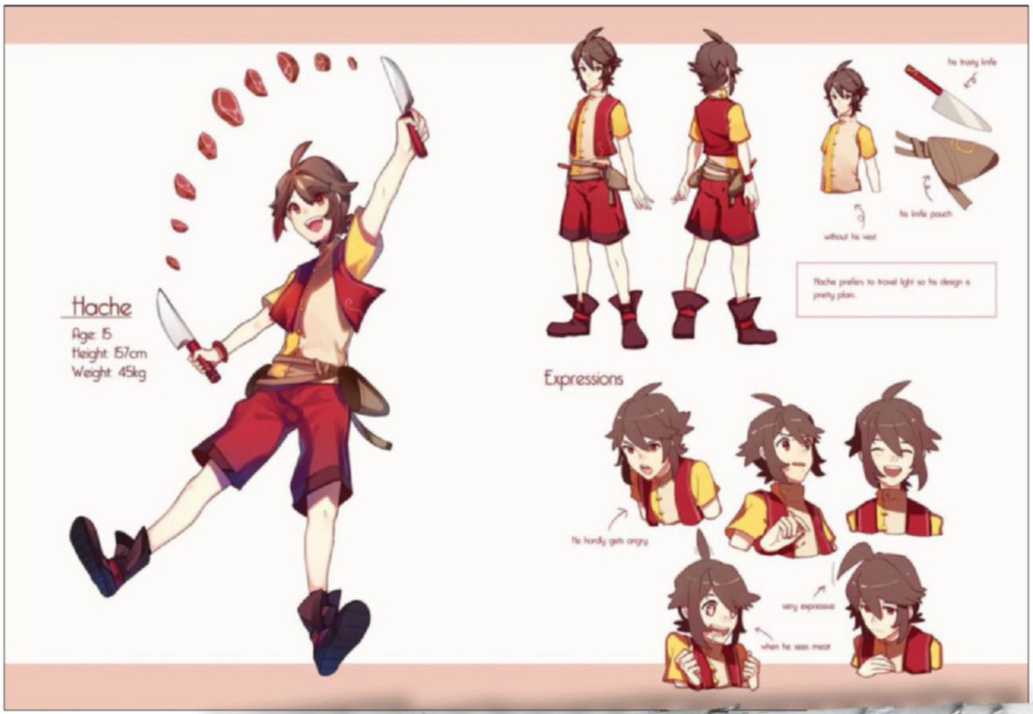
Answer

Koh replies

Character sheets are meant to be a good reference as well as a visual guide for how your character would look in all types of situations. A front and rear view is crucial, with a side view if the situation calls for it. I usually draw any items that my character carries around with them and any clothing layers, enabling enables me to reference them later on.

For expressions, I'll include the basic ones, such as happy, sad and scared. I also think about their personality for more specific expressions. It also helps to make the character more unique. Poses of your character doing certain activities will also prove helpful, such as if they go into battle with a particular weapon.

I usually include a fully rendered image of my character in a pose, which ensures the character sheet looks professional. I don't think it's necessary to completely shade anything else because it would take too much time and it might also interfere with the clarity of the design. Arrange all the poses and elements on the sheet neatly, and place your annotations so that they don't clutter the visuals that are on show.



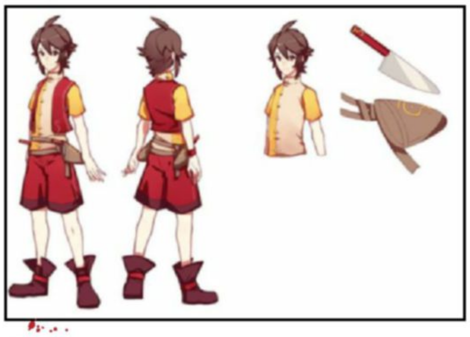
I often reuse drawings, especially for clothing layers so I can save time and not redraw the entire thing again. I try to draw more than just the head for expressions because the body alters position when the face changes.

Artist's secret

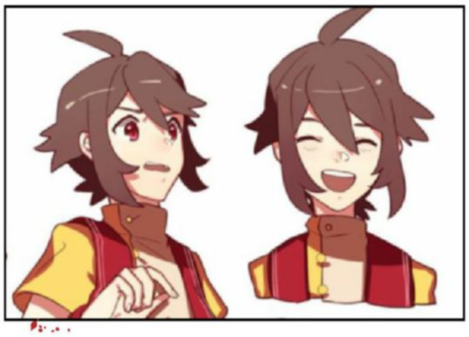
Line colours

I prefer not to use completely black lines for my character sheets – I find them too jarring. My lines may look black, but I actually use a darker shade of red. This means the image is easier on the eyes and complements the character.

Step-by-step: What goes into a character sheet?



1 Flip the image of your front view and edit from there to draw the back view. Take note of perspective, redrawing some areas as necessary. If your character has layers or items they normally carry, include them. Shading and rendering isn't key. Clarity of your character's design is.



2 Include the usual facial expressions, such as happy, sad, angry and also fear. Try to also think about your character's personality and make use of your design to express how they'll look and feel in certain situations. Keep any captions short, to reduce clutter.

Hache
Expressions

3 Arrange your imagery and text explanations sensibly, and be sure to include a fully rendered piece of character art. Consider using different fonts at a range of sizes to add to the information on show. The placement of all your elements is important. Clarity and consistency is key!

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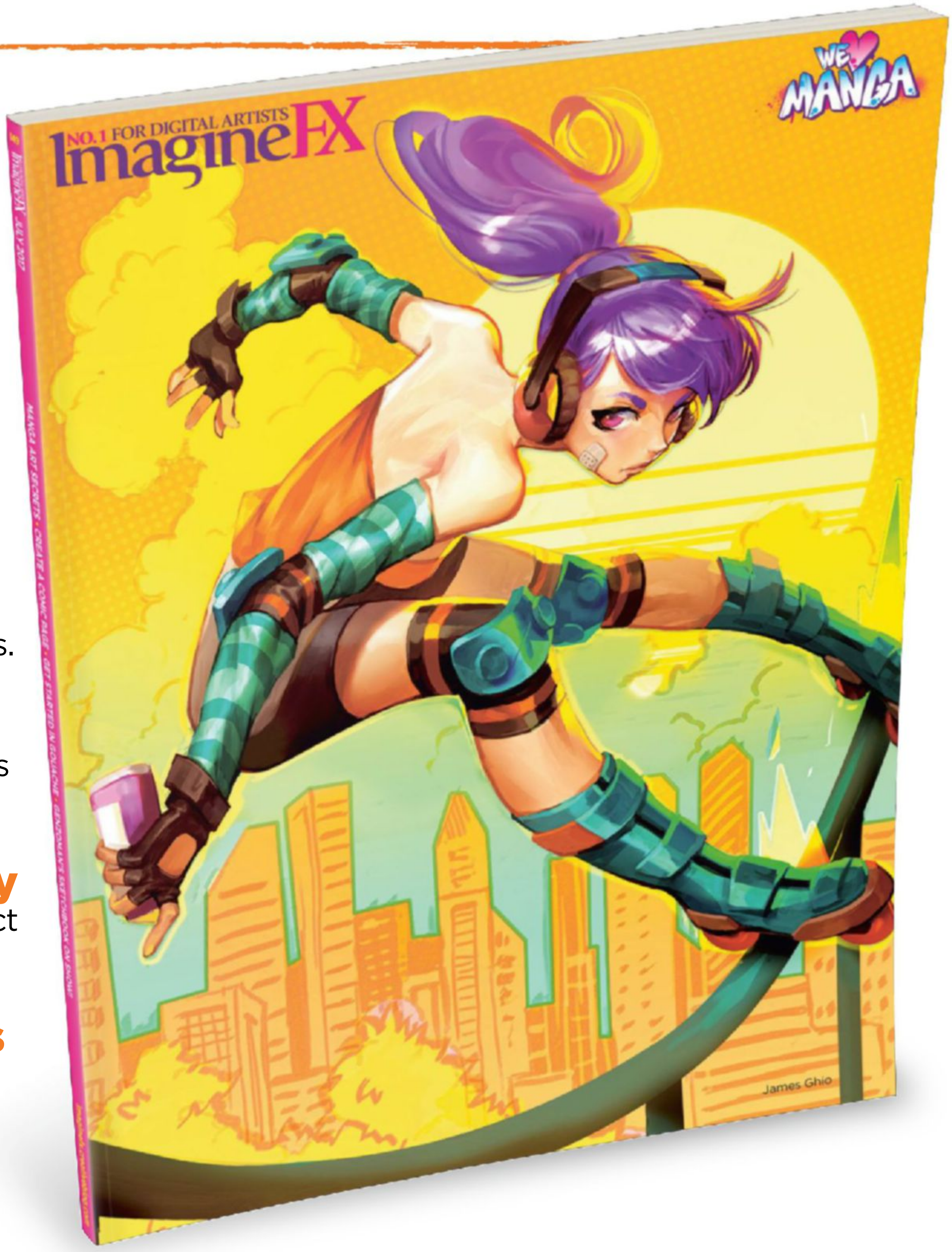

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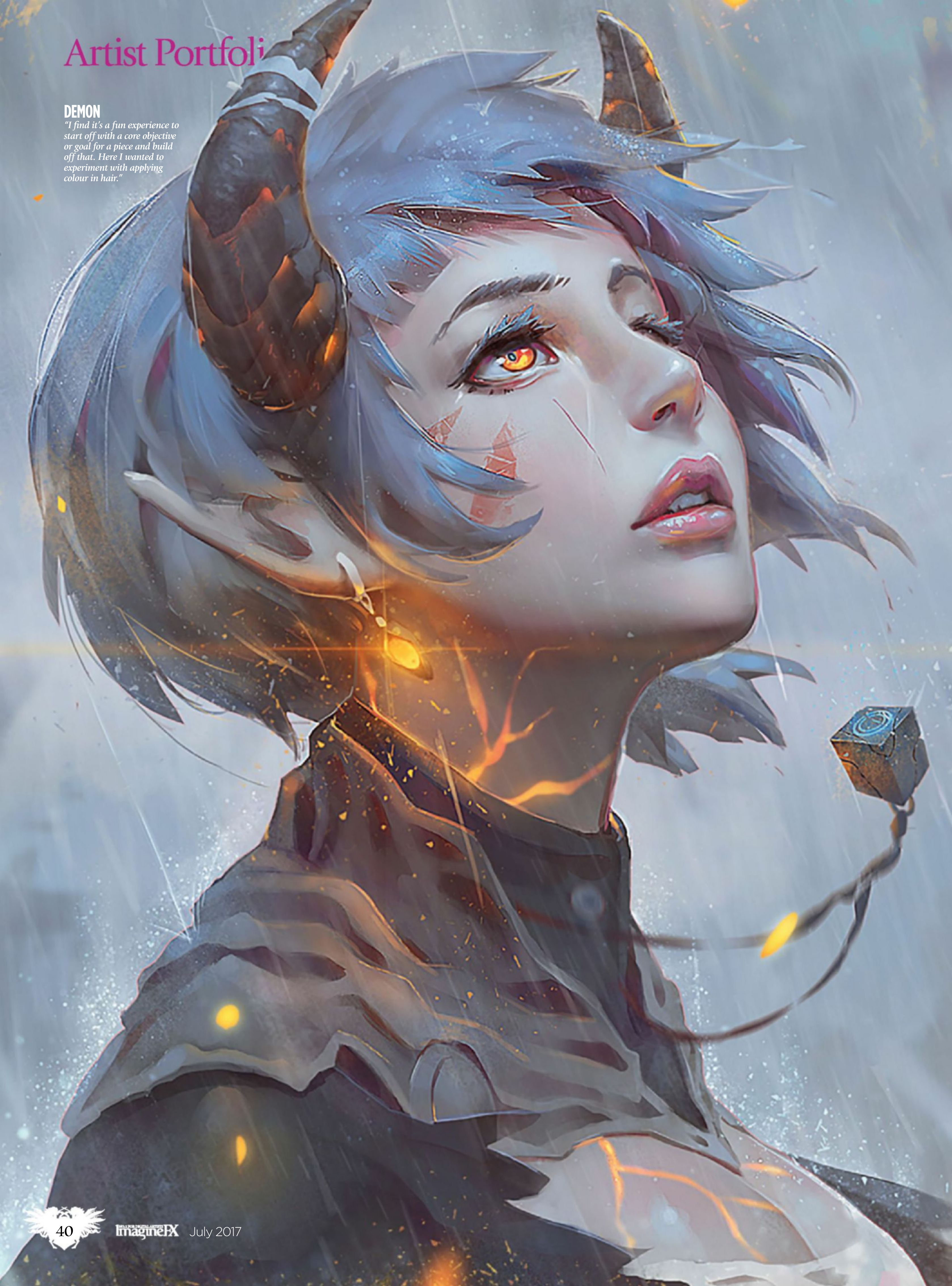


DEMON

"I find it's a fun experience to start off with a core objective or goal for a piece and build off that. Here I wanted to experiment with applying colour in hair."

Artist Portfolio

GUWEIZ

In just four years, Zheng Wei Gu went from bedroom hobbyist to big-budget films. **Gary Evans** finds out how…

Prepare to feel very, very jealous. Guweiz, who took up drawing aged 16, recently completed artwork for the live-action version of Ghost in the Shell, featuring Hollywood star Scarlett Johansson. He's 21.

Growing up in Singapore, the artist – real name Zheng Wei Gu – focused on doing well at school, passing exams and getting into a good university. He planned to become a pharmacist. Then he saw a video on YouTube, a tutorial on how to draw an anime face. He gave it a go, and managed to replicate the picture pretty well.

"It was probably a video meant for 12 year olds," he says, "Given that I was 16, it wasn't too hard for me to end up with a decent copy. Still, I filled up a few pages trying to copy the steps."

Over the next year, Guweiz spent every free moment drawing. Then he enlisted for national service (a mandatory two years spent as a full-time soldier in the Singapore army), which gave even him more time to draw and think about drawing. Yet with no formal training, he was "drawing blindly" and making plenty of mistakes. As the artist puts it, "I was like a random guy who decided he was going to start making gourmet soup, but with only memories of the really good soups he'd tasted before." ➤

Artist PROFILE

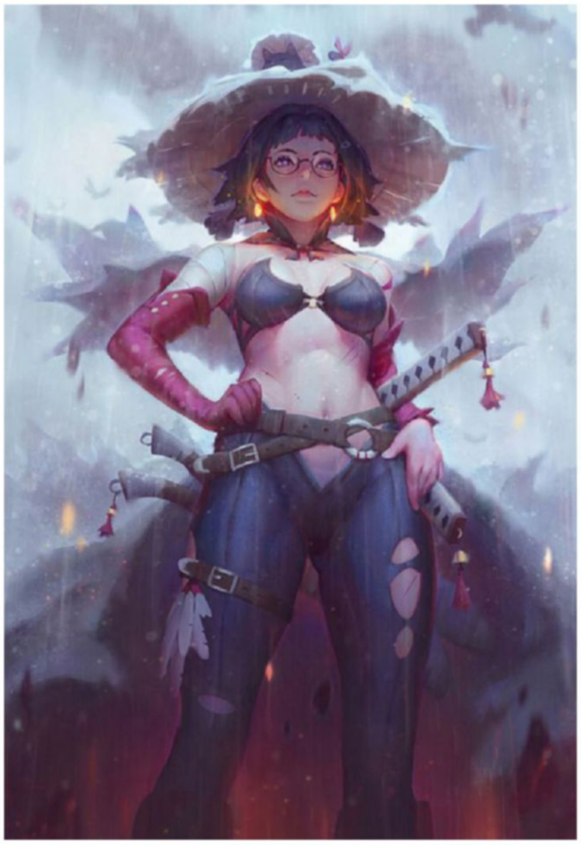
Zheng Wei Gu

LOCATION: Singapore

FAVOURITE ARTISTS: Ilya Kuvshinov, Krenz Cushart, Piotr Jabłoński

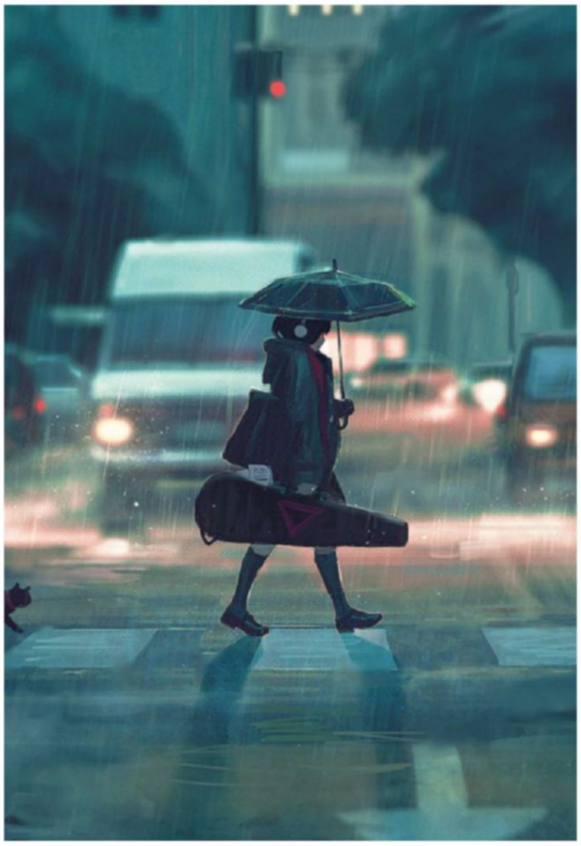
SOFTWARE USED: Photoshop

WEB: www.guweiz.deviantart.com



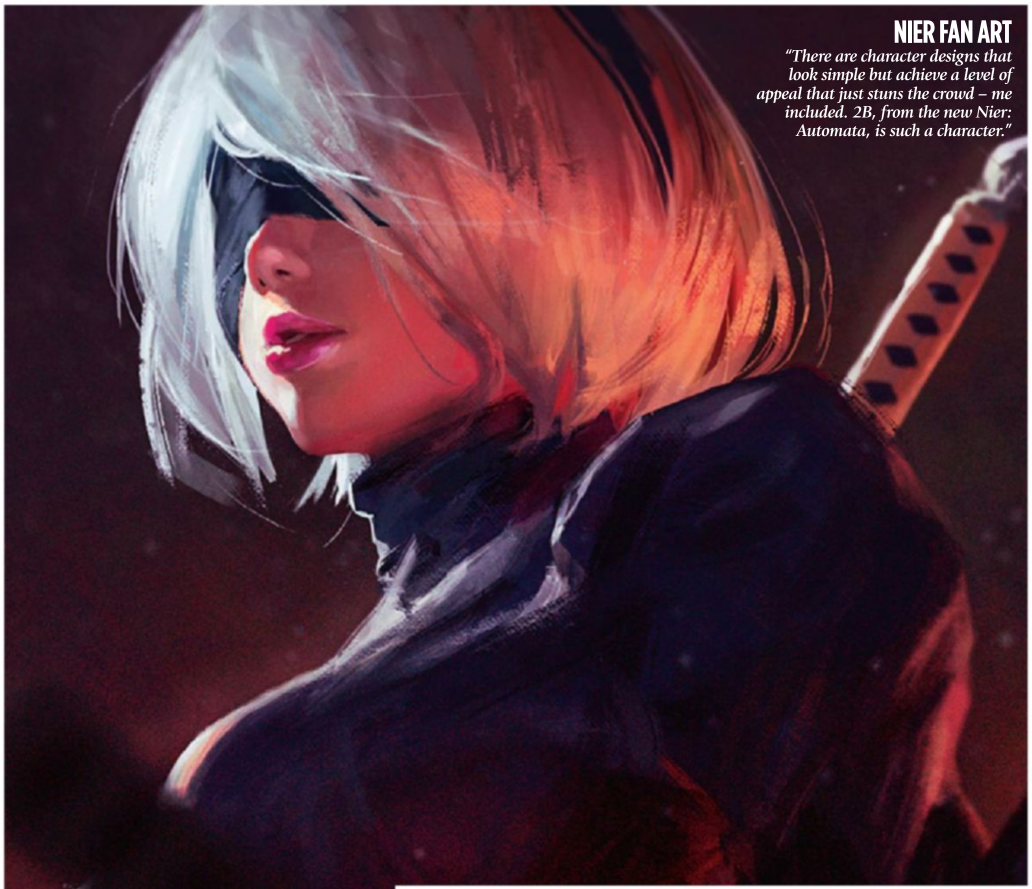
WANDERER

"This is one of the first pieces where I framed the composition around the character. I learnt I needed to be more accurate with shapes, to direct focus around the image."



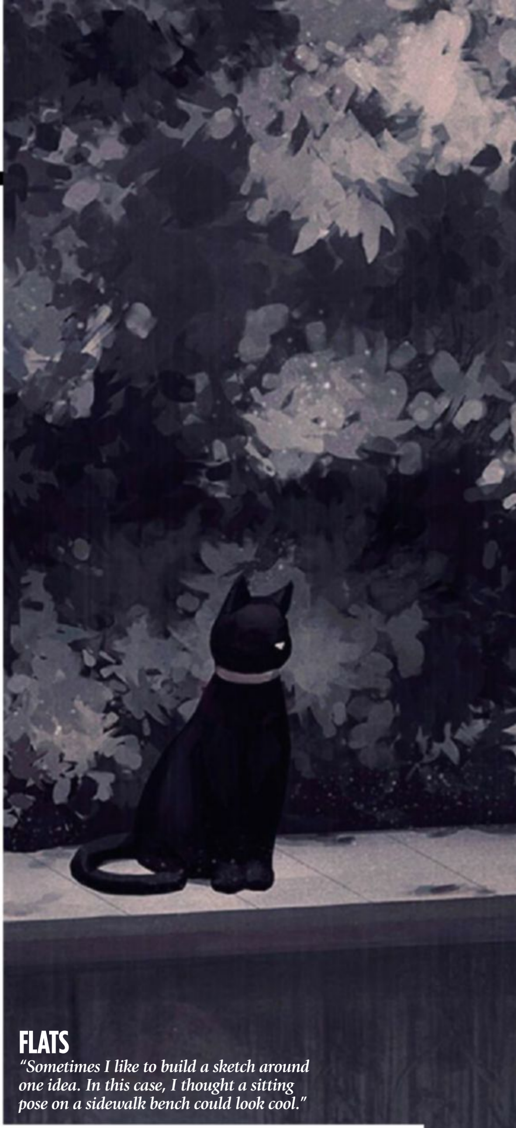
AFTER PRACTICE

"I was inspired by photos of zebra crossings, with blurred traffic in the background. The challenge was to explore multiple colour schemes, seeing what worked."



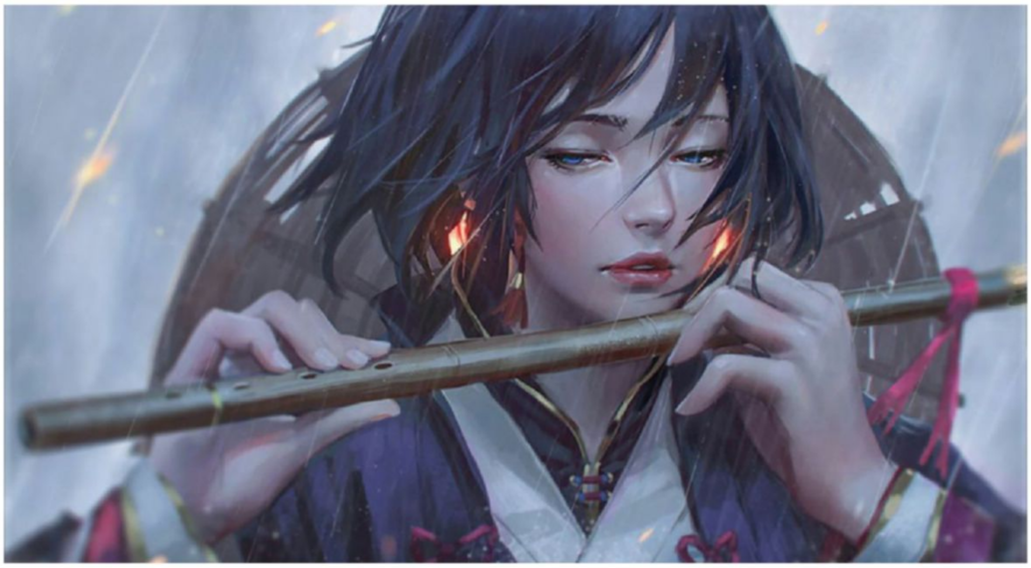
NIER FAN ART

"There are character designs that look simple but achieve a level of appeal that just stuns the crowd – me included. 2B, from the new Nier: Automata, is such a character."



FLATS

"Sometimes I like to build a sketch around one idea. In this case, I thought a sitting pose on a sidewalk bench could look cool."



Guweiz searched the internet for references. Photographers became a good source of inspiration. He stopped drawing blindly and based work on the real world. Social media became his art school. He used it for advice and feedback, for validation that he was moving in the right direction. His posts often reached hundreds of thousands of people.

But it wasn't until 2014, a year and a half after Guweiz took up drawing, that he decided to properly study the fundamentals. That's when things really opened up. "It was kind of like tasting bland soup so many times – one fully realises how far it is from the desired quality," he reveals.

OUT ON HIS OWN

Guweiz's professional career only got going in September 2016. He started working as an illustrator for Legend of the Cryptids, the battle card game by Mynet Inc. Things moved quickly. He recently completed promotional art for the big-budget film Ghost in the Shell.

"I'm making a pretty good living for a 21-year-old artist working full time. That fills me with a sense of urgency though, reminding me that I'm really on my own, and essentially out of the system, while most people my age can expect guaranteed jobs when they obtain their degrees."

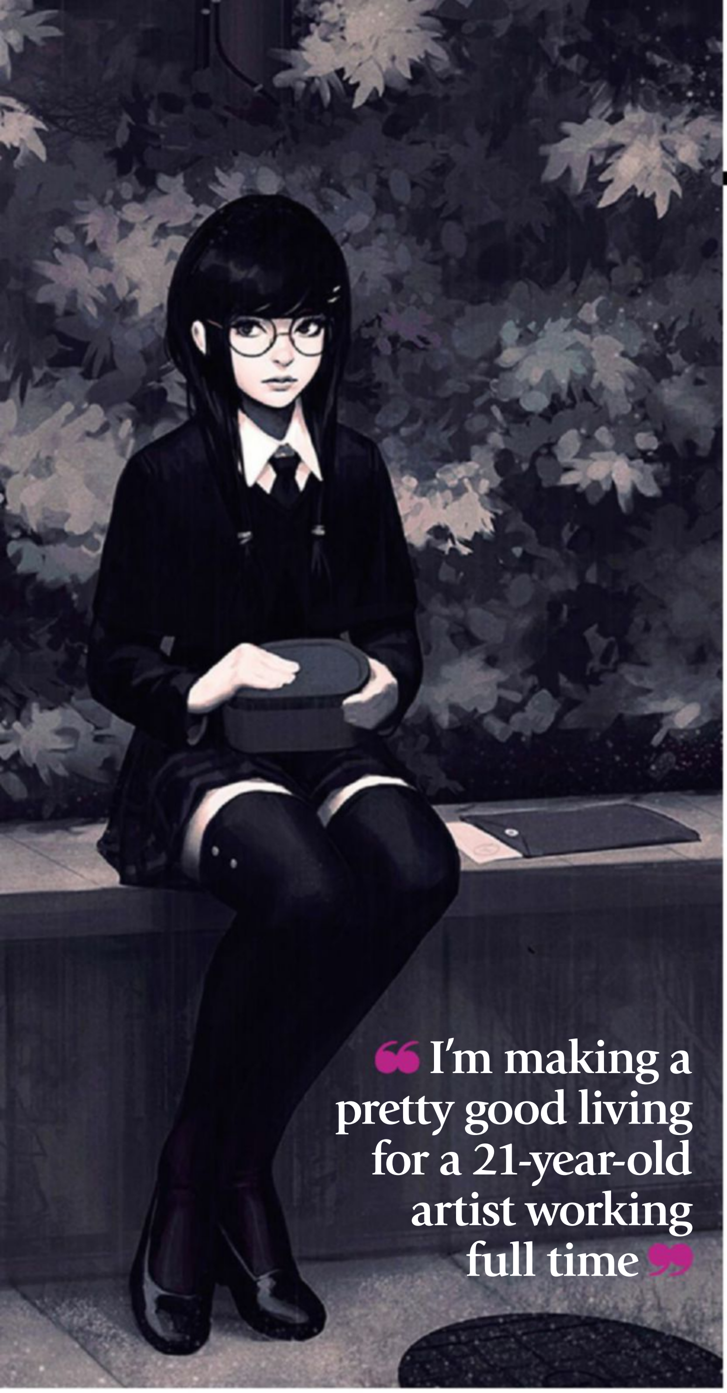
Initially, he found it difficult working with art directors, particularly having to pitch idea. But they've all been positive experiences – even the first time when someone painted over his work. "I just thought it was a really amazing thing that I'm getting guidance on how to make an image better," Guweiz says.

FLUTE

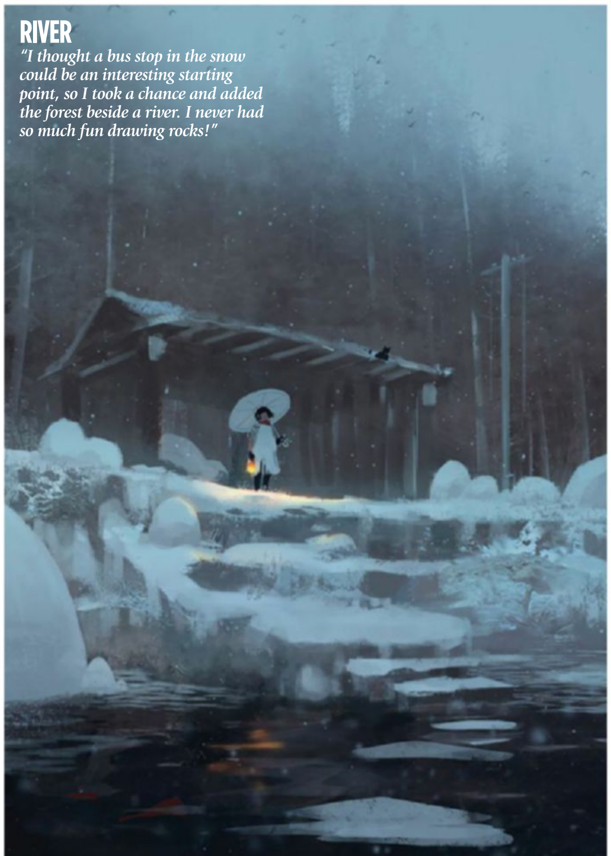
"Landscape portraits are a bit of an oxymoron, but once in a while I find such compositions powerful to use. The horizontal orientation of the flute and pose suit the scene."

When completing work for a client, the artist believes the most important thing to remember is that he's telling someone else's story. But because he secures assignments based on his portfolio, he usually gets to put his own stamp on things.

"My Ghost in the Shell piece for Paramount is a pretty good example," the artist says. "The brief gave me a



> “I’m making a pretty good living for a 21-year-old artist working full time”



RIVER
“I thought a bus stop in the snow could be an interesting starting point, so I took a chance and added the forest beside a river. I never had so much fun drawing rocks!”

A FOGGY, RAINY MOOD

A good image always starts with an accurate base, not sloppy groundwork, as Guweiz explains…

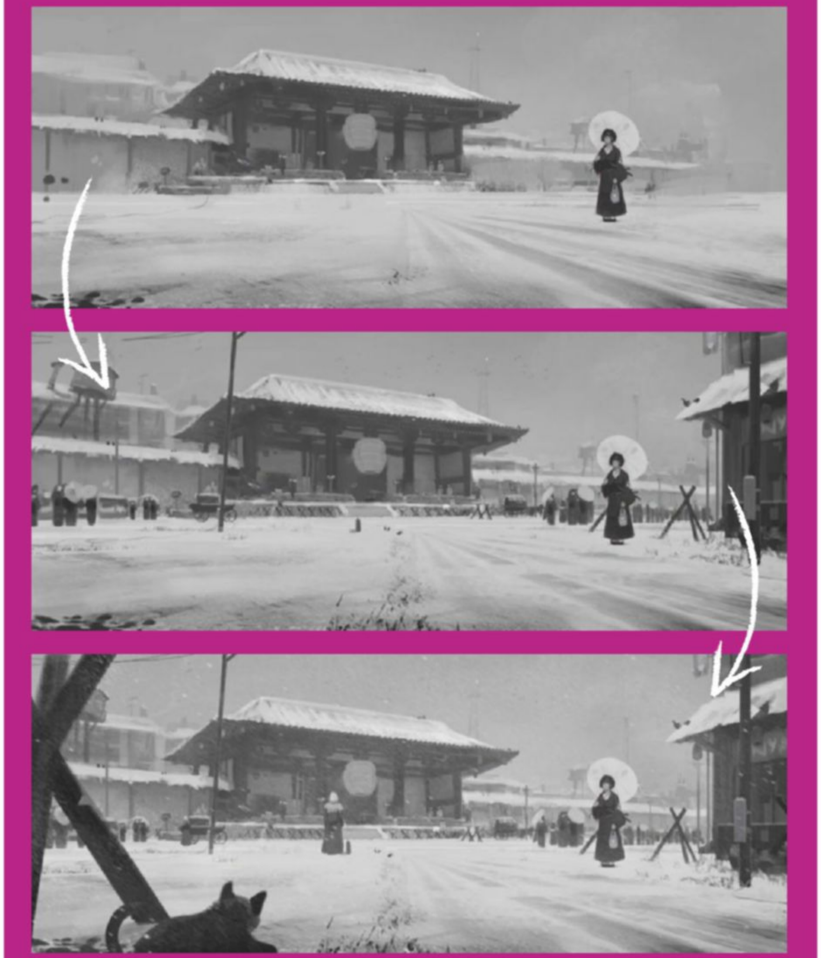
I wanted to draw an image in which old Hong Kong-style apartment blocks featured in the scene. A low camera angle is a favourite of mine, so I started with a photo in the background to help me find a perspective to latch on to. I manipulated the photo using Photoshop’s Transform tools until I achieved the exact feeling I was after. Then I threw on a black-and-white filter and painted in the silhouette of the character.

Once the character and the cat silhouette were in place, it was just a case of drawing line sketches over them and placing all the elements, then finally rendering them to be consistent with the foggy, rainy mood.

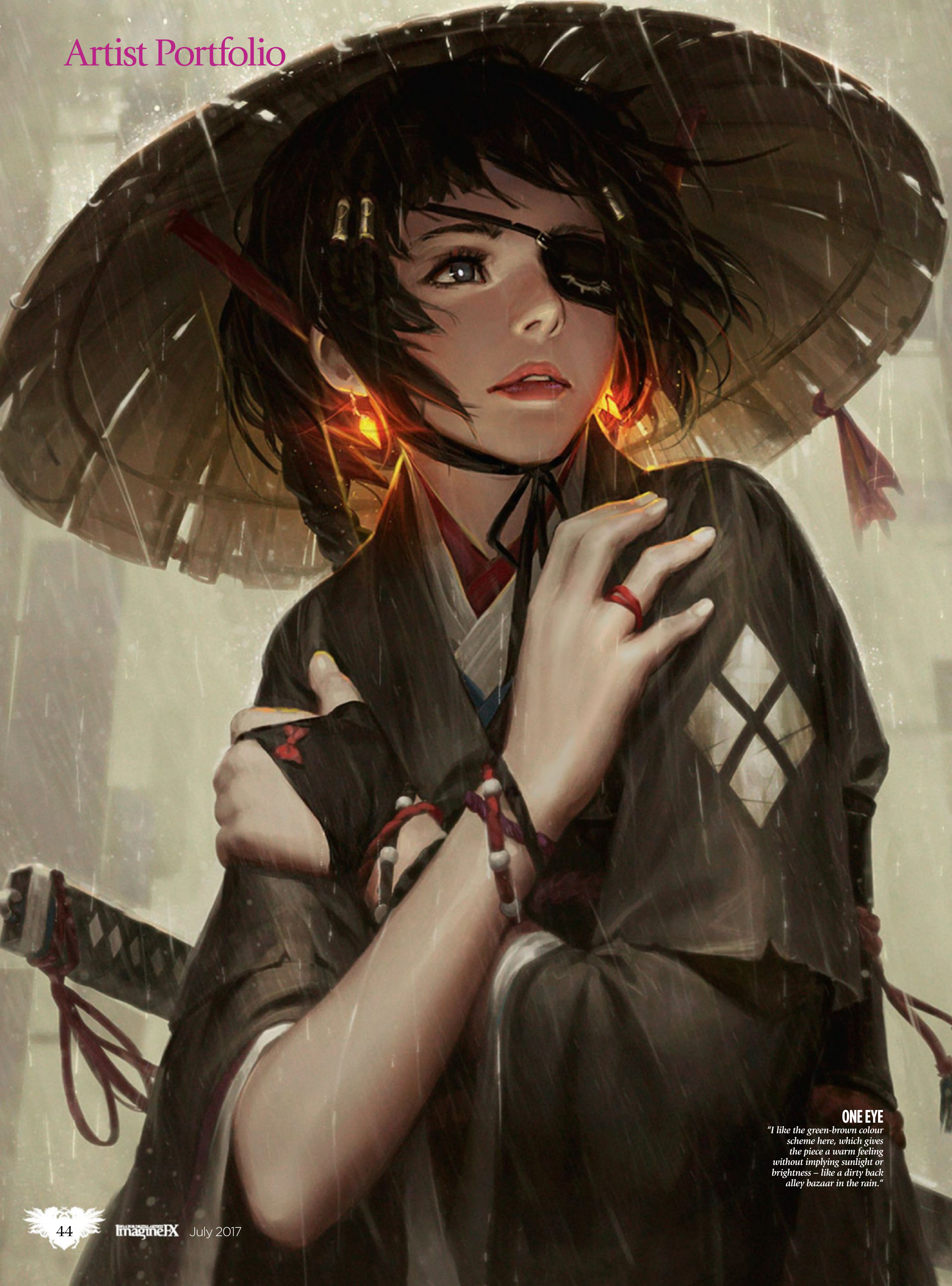
The colouring stage was quite straightforward. I used a Gradient Map to remove the pure greys, and then Soft Light layers to add local colour. After this stage, I painted over the sketch until I was satisfied. Flat, untextured brushes are great for developing forms. Later on, I also used some texture brushes to make the fabric of the dress look a little grittier.

Photoshop’s Lasso tool comes in very handy, especially when trying to add details to edges that require a consistent look. After applying the Smudge tool to control edge sharpness, and the Airbrush to create edge value contrasts, I felt that the image was up to a decent standard.

A big lesson I learnt here was that, more often than not, a good image really needs to start with an accurate base. If you’re struggling to produce the effect or scene you have in mind, check if your groundwork is sloppy.



A LESSON IN HONG KONG-STYLE URBAN PLANNING
“The starting point for this sketch illustrating a wide-angle shot and creating depth through overlaps. Starting from the temple building I added value blocks in the form of crowds, buildings and the electricity poles.”



ONE EYE

"I like the green-brown colour scheme here, which gives the piece a warm feeling without implying sunlight or brightness – like a dirty back alley bazaar in the rain."

PIPA
"This was an exercise in values, shapes and edge control. Getting the basics in place was satisfying and resulted in an image that could be read easily."

LADY MARIA
"The Dark Souls and Bloodborne franchises have always been a great source of inspiration for me. I learnt that there's beauty in structure and form, even when we hold back on colour."

good idea of what's going on, and as an independent contractor I had a quick verbal discussion and pitch with the client side, and then sent in a few of my sketches.

"None of those made it to the next stage, but what they did was to convey to the client what kind of general impression I was aiming for. A quick prompt later and I was able to come up with a sketch and composition that the client and I both really liked."

> **I was like a guy who decided to make gourmet soup, but only with memories of the good soups he'd tasted before**

ASKING KEY QUESTIONS

Guweiz says that an image's success usually comes down to how solid the underlying idea is. He reveals that an idea often takes a few days to "mature" in his head, but a new project always starts with the same questions: "What's the impression you want to make? Does your subject and general content in the piece help to make that impression? Is there a better subject or a better composition?"

The artist splits his personal work into three main categories: colour sketches (usually an environment and simple character, focusing on mood and story); character drawings (zoomed in on a character); and photo studies (to sharpen his skills). Next comes the camera angle – the position from which the viewer sees this image. Guweiz uses brightly coloured boxes to show where major shapes go.

By keeping things simple, he can easily move stuff around and adjust contours. He's looking for the most "readable" image possible. For speed and flexibility, he works digitally. If he feels he's lost his way then he goes back to an earlier draft to see where he went wrong. It's a kind of reverse engineering that helps him to correct any technical mistakes.

ROOFTOP
"I like low camera placements because they enable me to have full control over the overlaps going on in the background."

THE ART OF SOCIAL MEDIA

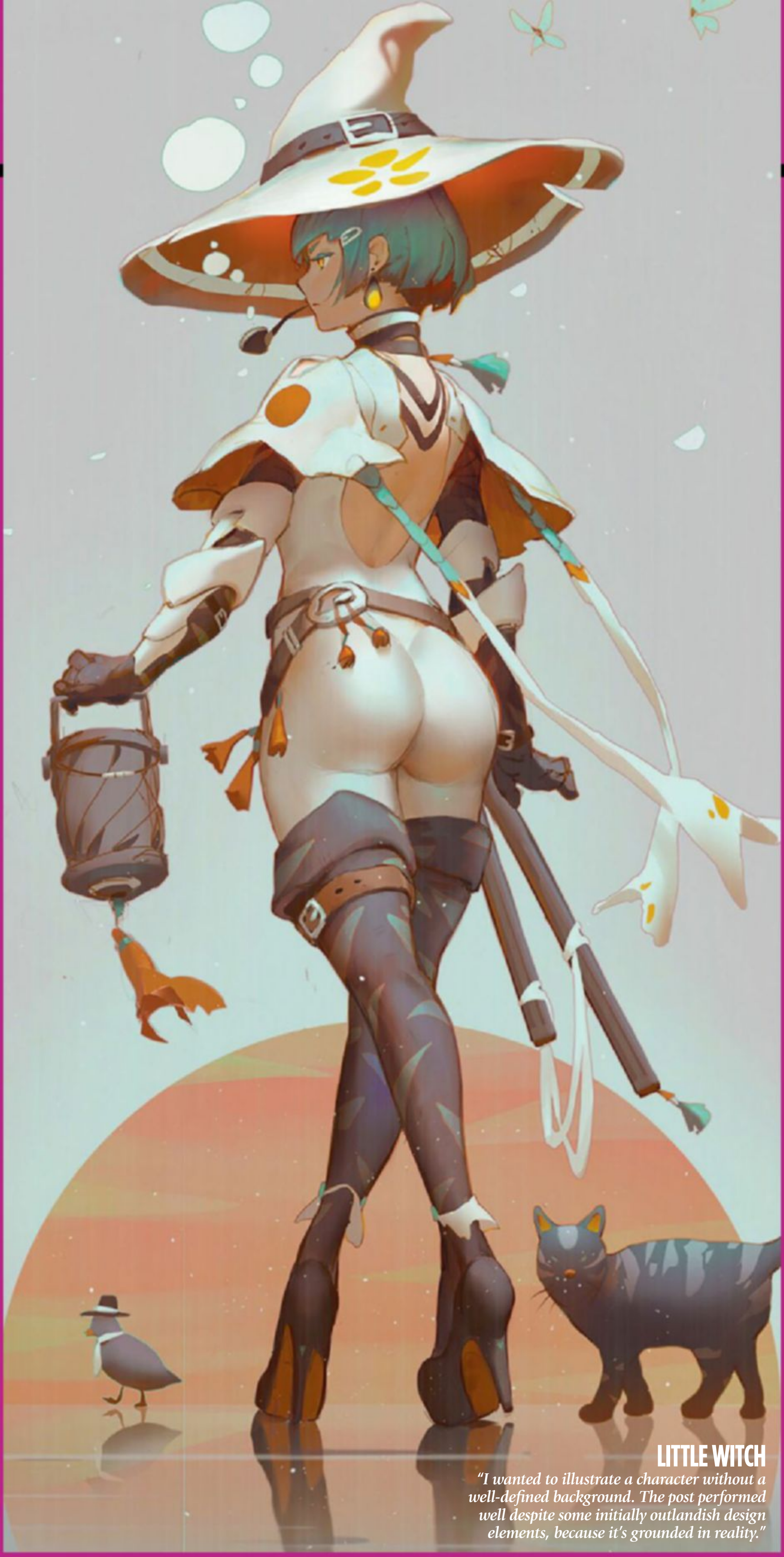
Guweiz reveals what he's learnt about posting his illustrations online

The subject of the illustration is key when appealing to a general audience, as opposed to fellow artists. The more "mundane" the subject is, the more you can expect it to draw attention across the board. This is because a general audience isn't likely to appreciate fantasy or sci-fi themes.

Genuine fan art that reflects one's taste can be enjoyable to produce, especially if it does well on social media. I avoid creating fan art unless I care about the source material, mainly because I can't find the motivation to draw something that isn't close to my heart.

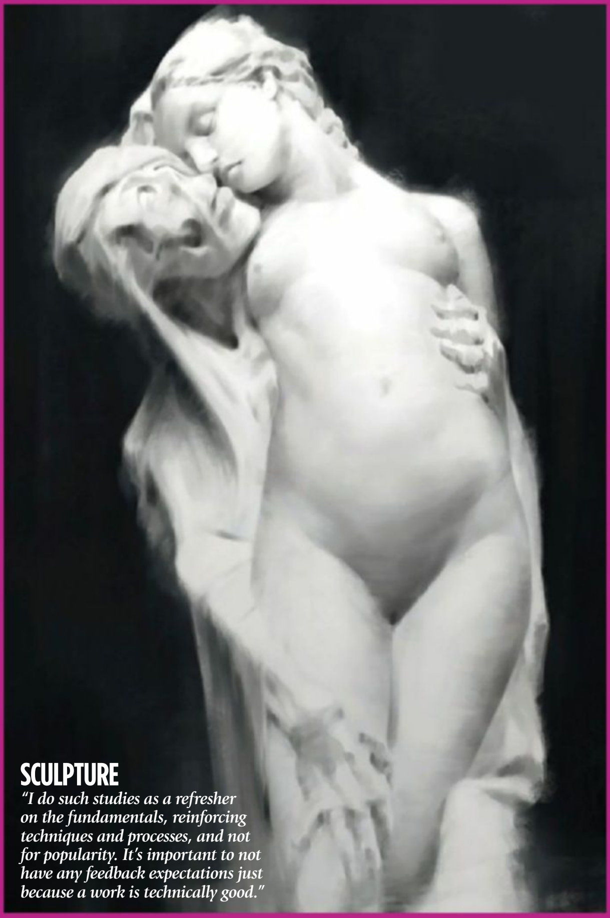
A minimum level of proficiency in technique and knowledge is required before any kind of drawing has a chance to gain traction on social media. Drawing what I thought was popular never paid off until I hit a certain skill level. This becomes especially important with the aforementioned "mundane" drawings. Because people see such artwork so often, the level of execution must be good enough for it to stand out.

I'd say that the post and content outweighs any benefit that posting at a certain time or tagging can give, to the point which I don't really care about captioning or doing much tagging. I've tried varying the posting times before, but never noticed any substantial effect, so I settled for the most convenient time for myself. The thing about social media is that if your work is accomplished, it will be seen.



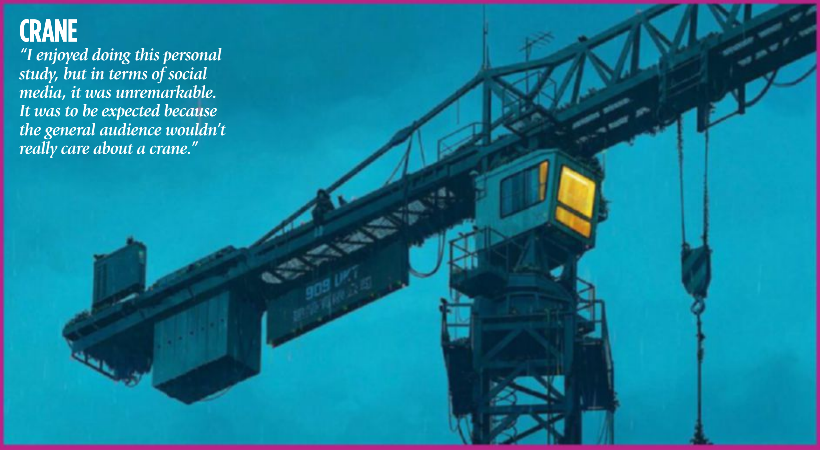
LITTLE WITCH

"I wanted to illustrate a character without a well-defined background. The post performed well despite some initially outlandish design elements, because it's grounded in reality."



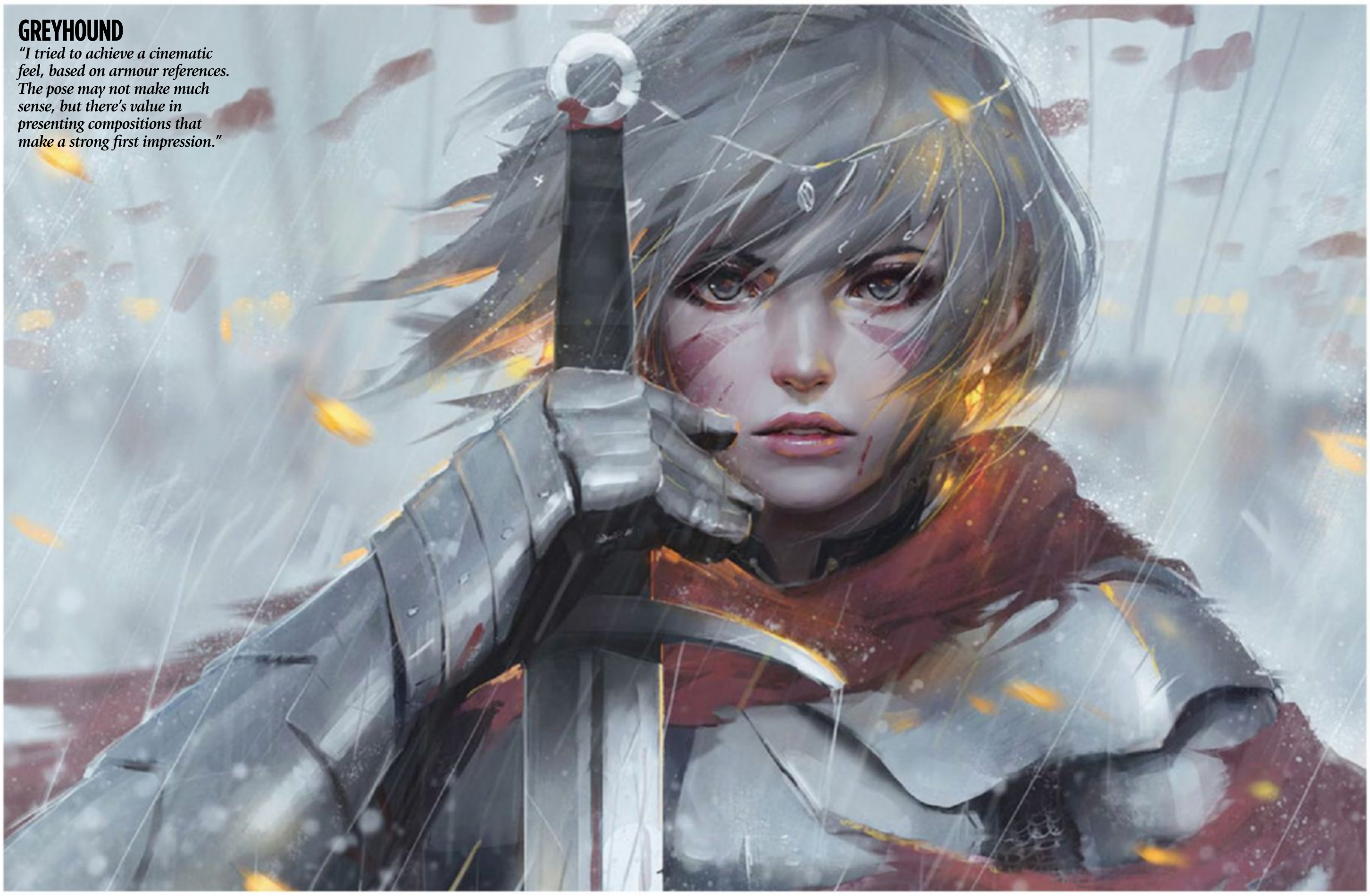
SCULPTURE

"I do such studies as a refresher on the fundamentals, reinforcing techniques and processes, and not for popularity. It's important to not have any feedback expectations just because a work is technically good."



CRANE

"I enjoyed doing this personal study, but in terms of social media, it was unremarkable. It was to be expected because the general audience wouldn't really care about a crane."



GREYHOUND

"I tried to achieve a cinematic feel, based on armour references. The pose may not make much sense, but there's value in presenting compositions that make a strong first impression."

Guweiz maintains a simple, but disciplined routine. He wakes up at 7am, eats breakfast, and paints for the rest of day. A film or documentary plays while he works, but never music. He uses Photoshop and draws on a Wacom Touch, the same one he's had for years, even though he recently invested in a 27-inch Cintiq. How long he works depends on how well the work's going. Sometimes, he's still at it come 2am. He always tries to start a new piece before going to bed, so he doesn't wake up to a blank canvas.

THE SHADOW OF SHANGHAI

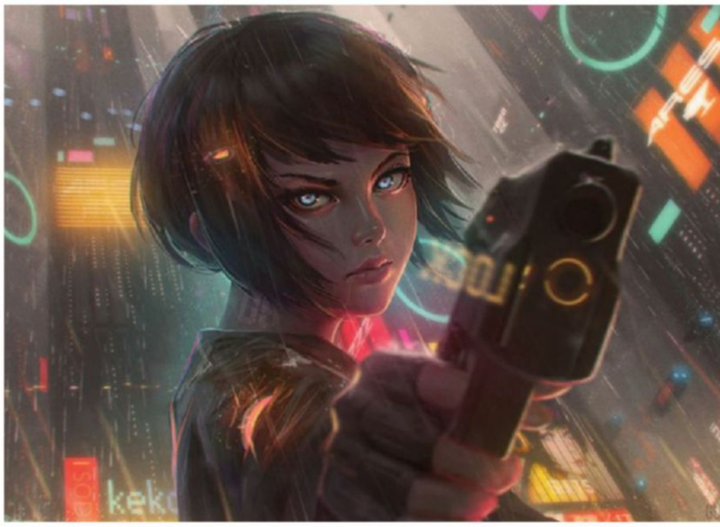
Guweiz generally describes his work as fantasy, but can pinpoint the biggest influence on the look and feel of his art, the foundations for everything he builds on family visits to Shanghai. "I harboured a strange and probably unhealthy love for the hazy smell in the air, especially when it came with the occasional fog that would roll around and obscured the Huangpu River and the Oriental Pearl Tower, the view from my uncle's balcony, dust-covered plants, grimy suburbs with cluttered apartment stairwells and winter days spent playing arcade emulators with my cousin. I suppose that's why I associate greyish days and greying places with happy thoughts, and because of that I tend to gravitate towards greyish, ambiguous moods."

Guweiz is thinking big for his future. And why not, considering all he's achieved in four years? He continues to work on monthly illustrations for Legend of the Cryptids, but wants to create character design for a AAA fantasy game or film. He's even considered moving into art direction.

"There's a lot of uncertainty as to how I can get there," he says, "but I'm also aware that self-improvement is my only option of having a shot at these goals. Not being in a real-life art community with professional peers is a disadvantage I have to overcome.

"Given my slow start in art, personal work and consistent study is the reason behind why I was able to start making art as a career in the first place. I feel it could easily be my downfall, if I let complacency take root…"

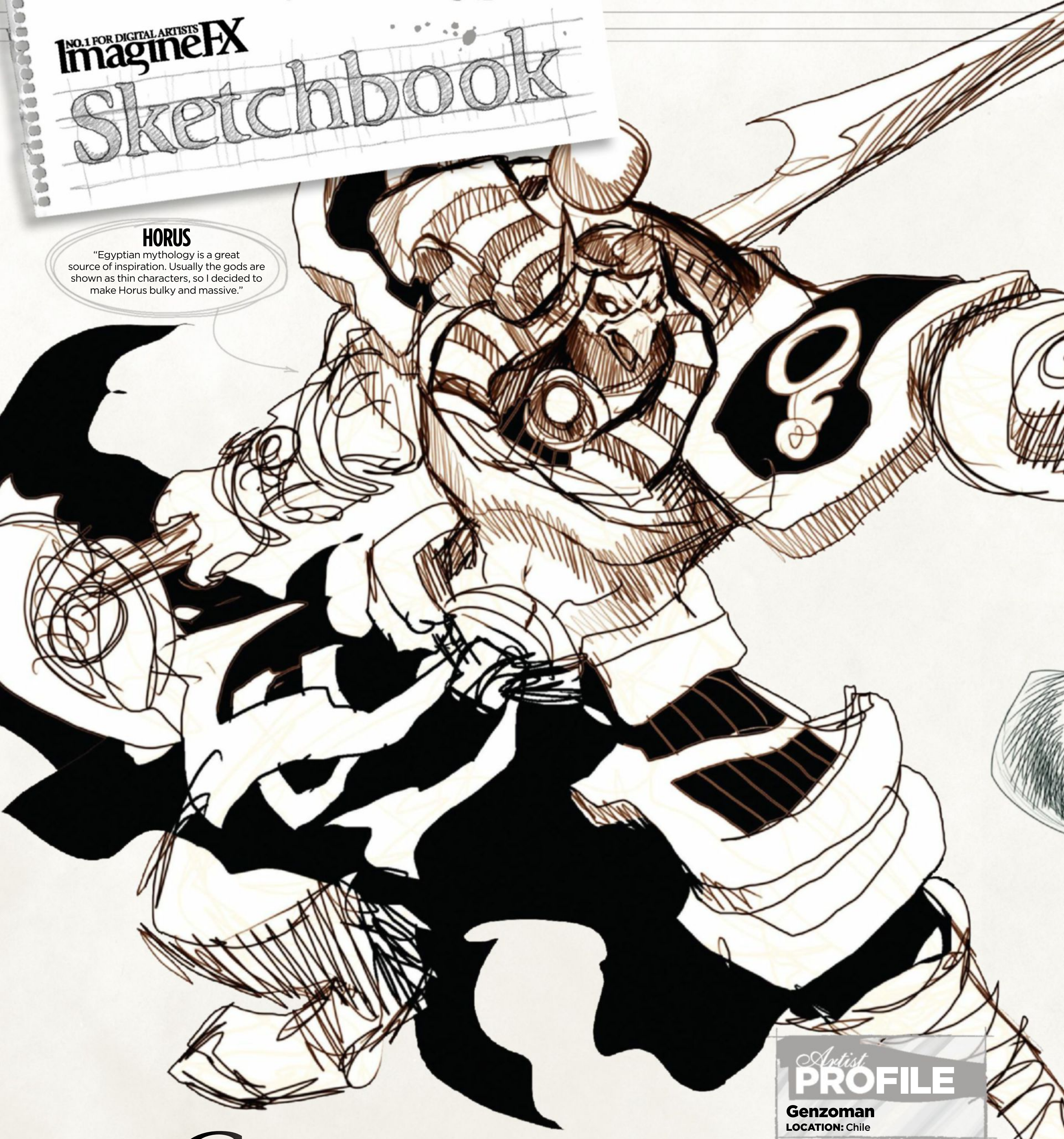
> **"Not being part of a real-life art community with professional peers is a disadvantage I have to overcome"**



ARREST

"One of my earlier pieces, but I feel it's aged well because I paid attention to painting accurate forms. I was happy with the slightly warm colour scheme being applied to a rainy setting."

ArtRage 5
Your path to painting...
Nick Harris 2017



HORUS

"Egyptian mythology is a great source of inspiration. Usually the gods are shown as thin characters, so I decided to make Horus bulky and massive."

Genzoman

Pirates, fairies and street brawlers in a love-hate relationship are just some of the characters to appear in this leading artist's sketchbook

Artist
PROFILE

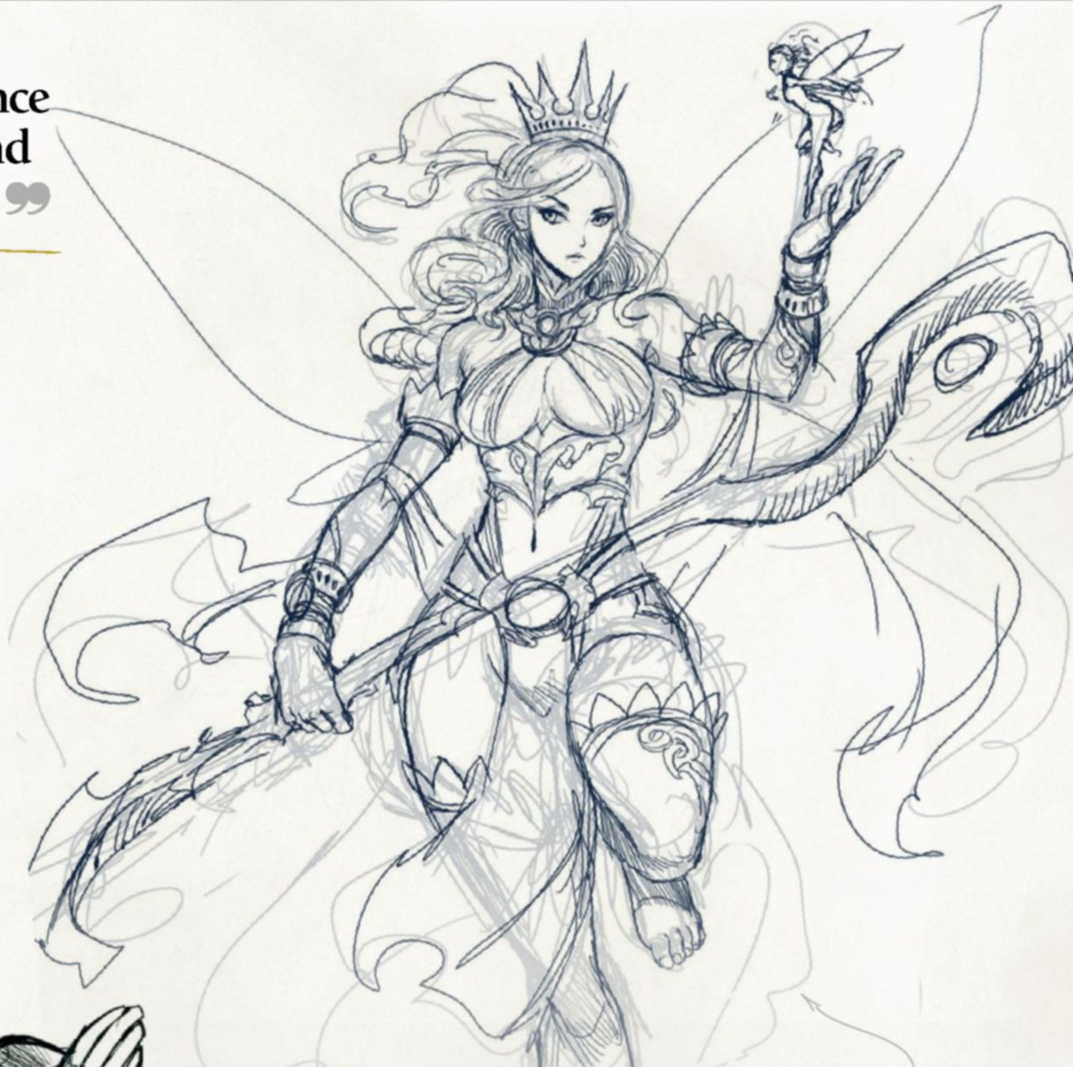
Genzoman

LOCATION: Chile

Gonzalo Ordoñez, also known as Genzoman, is a self-taught illustrator who's spent the past 20 years creating art for video games, magazines, films and card games. You can see examples of his art in Udon Entertainment's Street Fighter comic, and World of Warcraft.

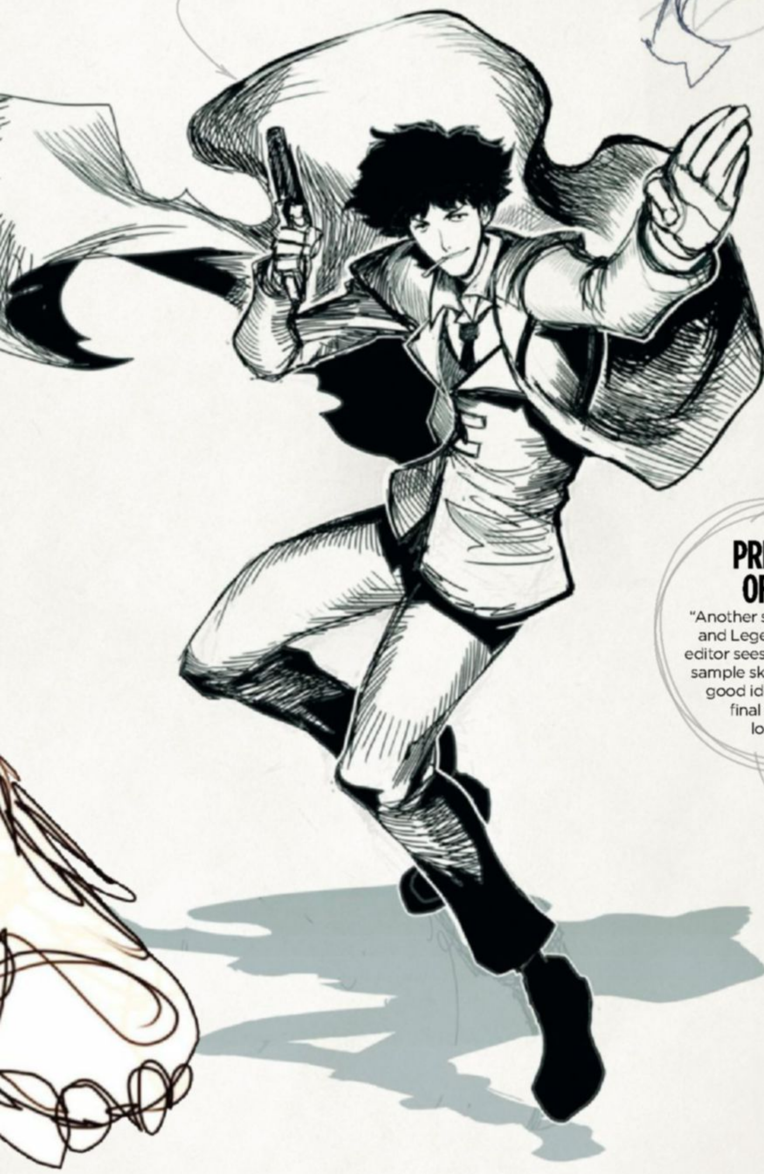
www.genzoman.deviantart.com

> “Fairies are a fine balance between strong magic and delicate character design”



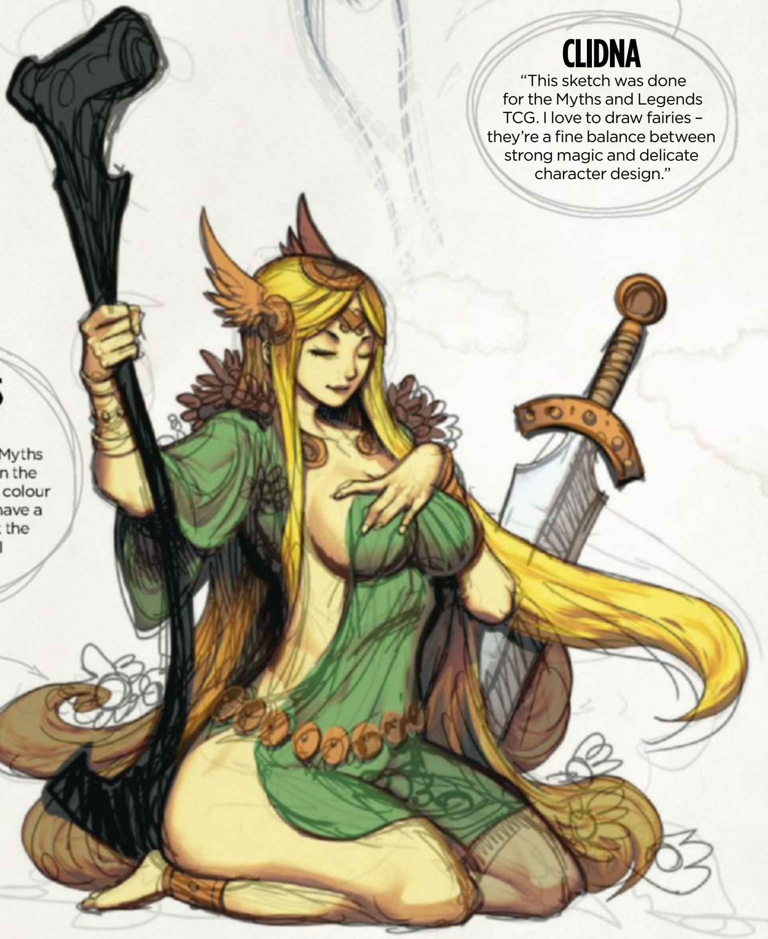
CLIDNA

“This sketch was done for the Myths and Legends TCG. I love to draw fairies – they’re a fine balance between strong magic and delicate character design.”



SPIKE SPIEGEL

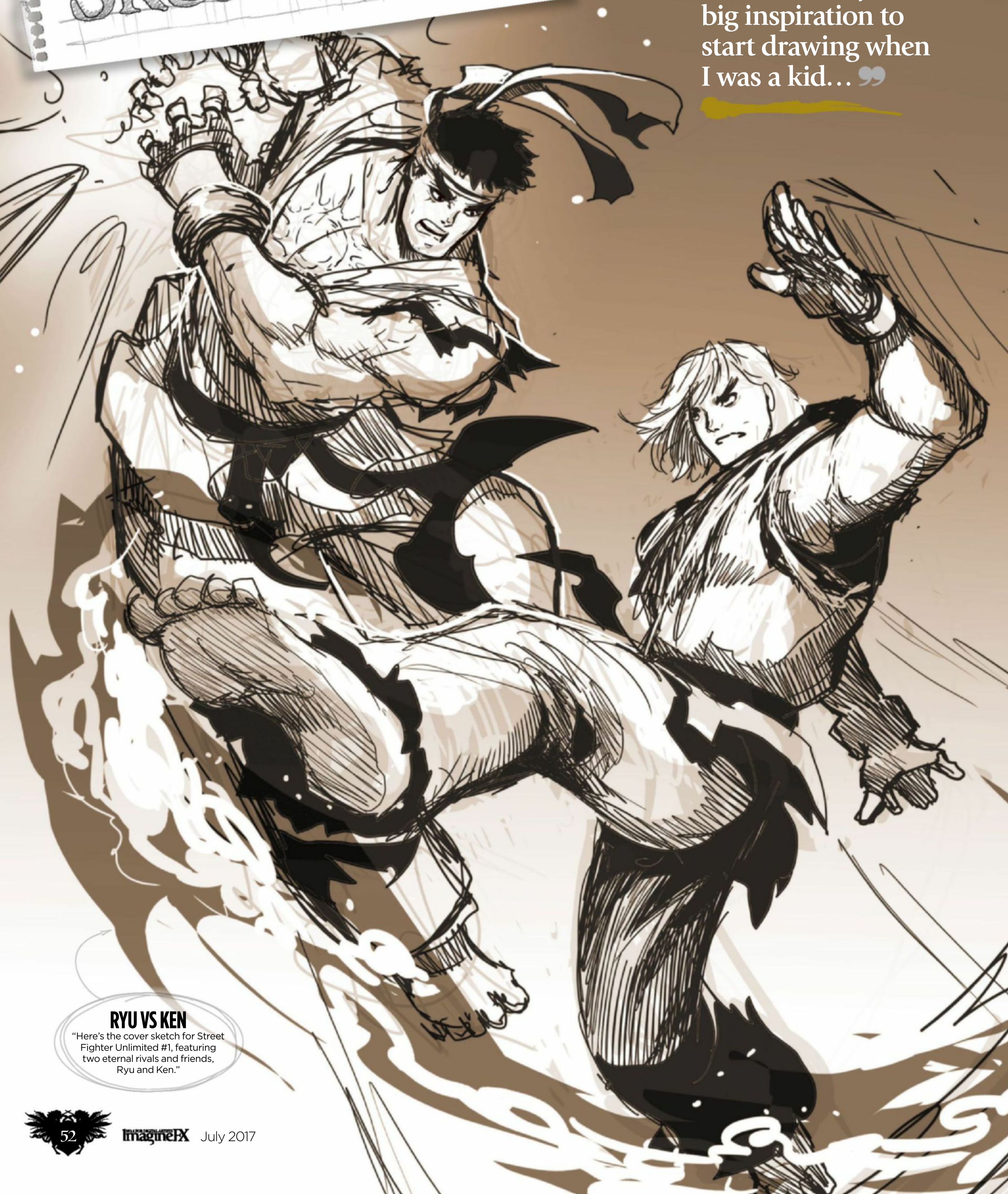
“Back in the 1990s I was a big fan of Cowboy Bebop and anime. Shinichirō Watanabe creates such interesting worlds and characters.”



PRIESTESS OF ODIN

“Another sketch for Myths and Legends. When the editor sees this basic colour sample sketch he’ll have a good idea of what the final design will look like.”

> “The Secret of NIMH was my first big inspiration to start drawing when I was a kid…”



RYU VS KEN

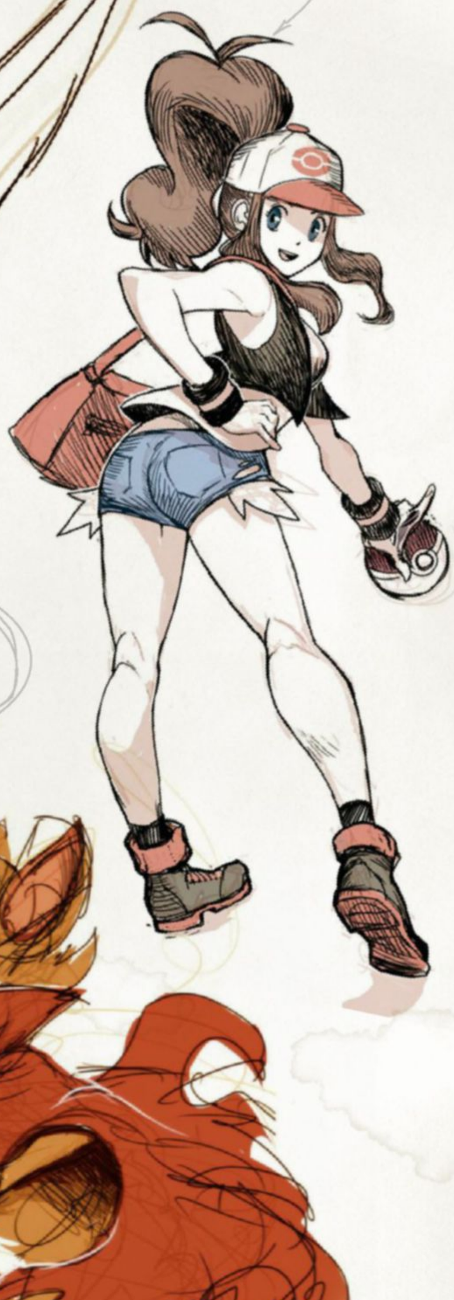
“Here’s the cover sketch for Street Fighter Unlimited #1, featuring two eternal rivals and friends, Ryu and Ken.”

ATHENA

"A rejected sketch for an unreleased game. I like the idea of a calm Athena, instead of the typical fierce warrior stereotype."

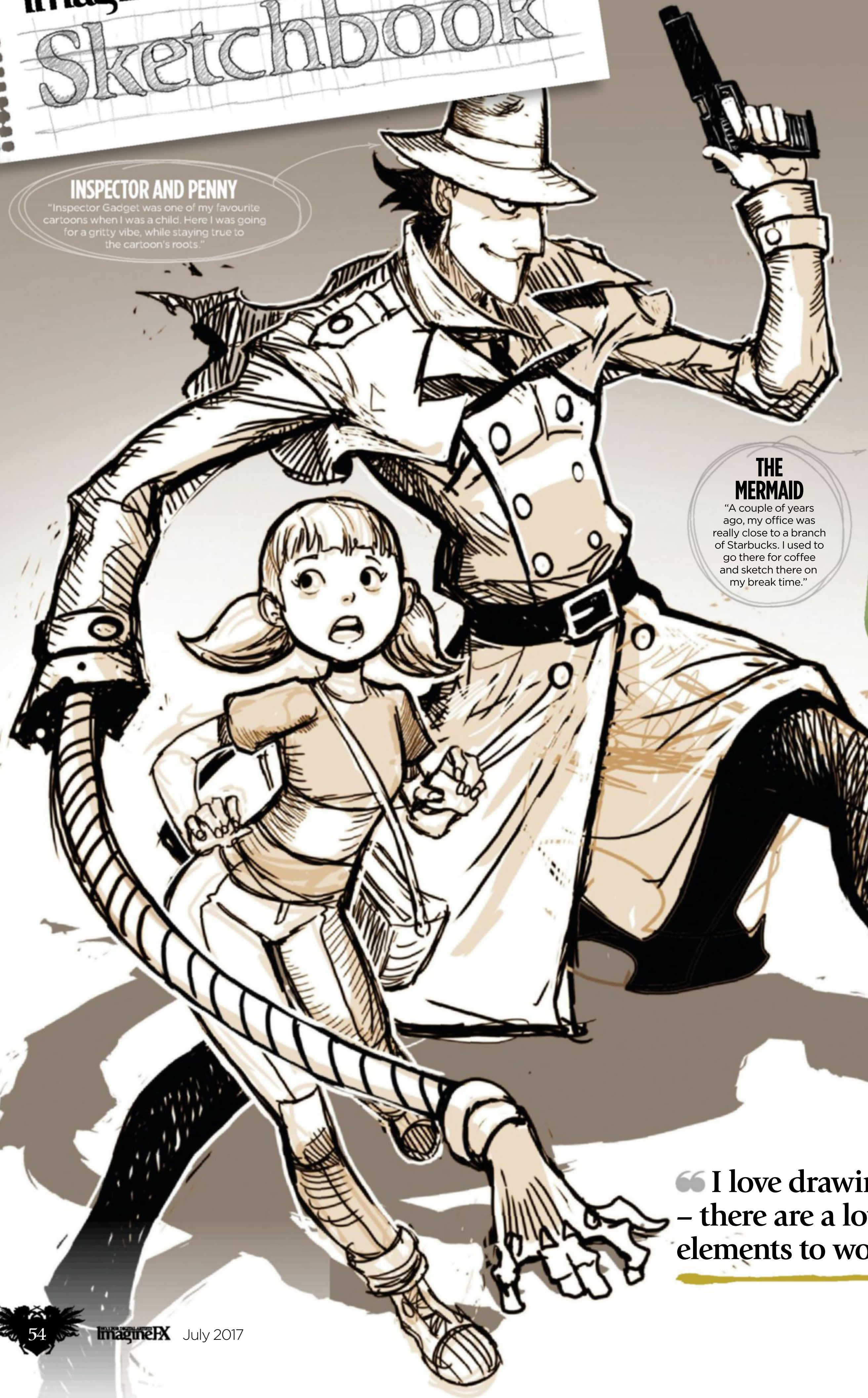
HILDA

"Once I was without my computer for a whole month and tried to do a daily sketch of all the Pokémon trainers. This is one of them."



MRS BRISBY

"Don Bluth's film The Secret of NIMH was my first big inspiration to start drawing when I was a kid. I still love that movie!"



INSPECTOR AND PENNY
"Inspector Gadget was one of my favourite cartoons when I was a child. Here I was going for a gritty vibe, while staying true to the cartoon's roots."

THE MERMAID
"A couple of years ago, my office was really close to a branch of Starbucks. I used to go there for coffee and sketch there on my break time."

> I love drawing pirates – there are a lot of cool elements to work with

AQUERONTE

"Sketch for an unreleased game. I tried to maintain a HR Giger vibe on Aqueronte's design. Greek myths are great!"

PIRATE GIRL

"A sketch for the upcoming board game The Pirate's Flag. I love drawing pirates – there are a lot of cool elements to work with."

PATHFINDER

"Compositional sketches for the covers of Pathfinder: City of Secrets #1 and #2."

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

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 6 now!

Workshops assets are available…
Download each workshop's resources by turning to page 6. And if you see the video workshop badge, you can watch the artist in action, too.

VIDEO WORKSHOP

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS
ImagineFX

Workshops

Advice from the world's best artists

58

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80

This issue:

Photoshop

LEARN NEW MANGA COLOURING SKILLS

James Ghio breaks down his rendering techniques for creating colourful and appealing manga art without having to render every element

Artist
PROFILE

James Ghio
LOCATION: Canada

Cover and concept artist James has worked for companies such as Udon, Capcom, Marvel, Bandai, and Microsoft Studios. He's currently taking a break from the industry and is busy developing a self-published project.
http://ifxm.ag/j-ghio

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 6 now!

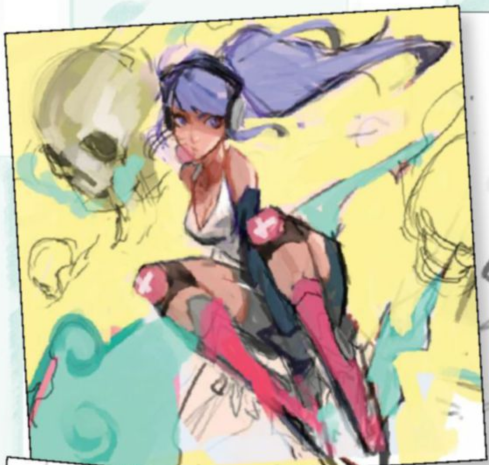
In this workshop, I'll explain the basic rendering techniques that artists can use to effectively manage their illustration process.

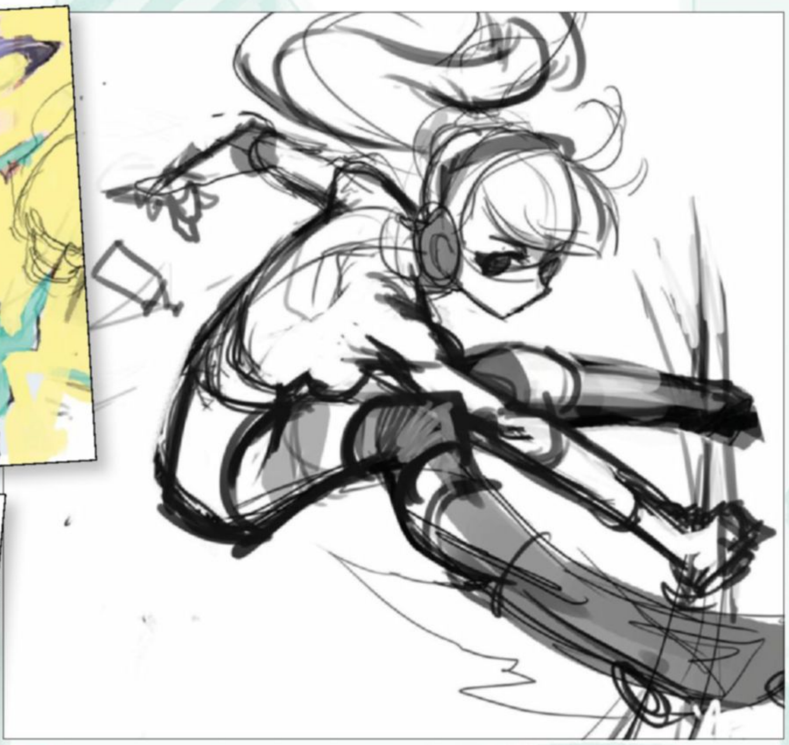
There's a primary directional light in my painting that helps show off forms with a strong degree of clarity. I'll be explaining the significance of this lighting scheme and how to render out the lights and darks within a set tonal range. Note that I'll be keeping all the tones within this tonal range until I'm satisfied with their overall forms. After establishing a strong black and white base, I'll apply colour through the use of Color adjustment layers.

As you decide on your tonal range, think of it as 0 being white and 100 being black. When working in black and white, it's best to keep the tonal range close and maintain the values within 30 units of each other. This means that when rendering, your lightest tone should be only 30 units brighter than your darkest tone.

Once you've finished this tonally controlled rendering, you can add tones outside of this range to enhance your core shadows, drop shadows and occlusions in the dark areas, as well as any highlights or speculars in the light areas.

I'll also discuss colour choices and how these decisions reduce the time taken to finish the image. Finally, cover and box art require some design flair in placing elements to strengthen the composition, and so I'll reveal how you can achieve this.





1 Start off by being messy

Here's the preliminary gesture for the final image. This is the stage in the process in which you can be as gestural as you want to be. Go ahead and be messy, use construction lines and energetic lines until you find the pose that you're looking for. Sometimes you'll find new and interesting ways of constructing a scene through these unplanned lines.

PRO SECRETS

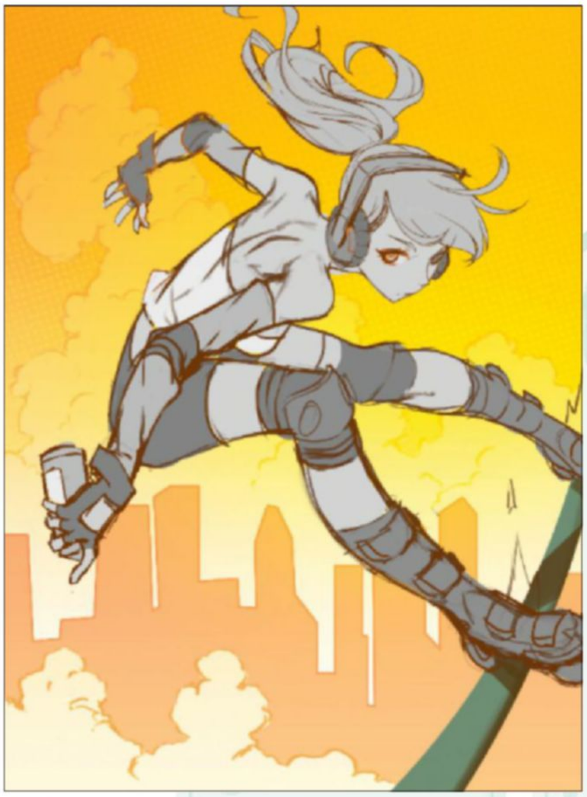
Painting is all about drawing

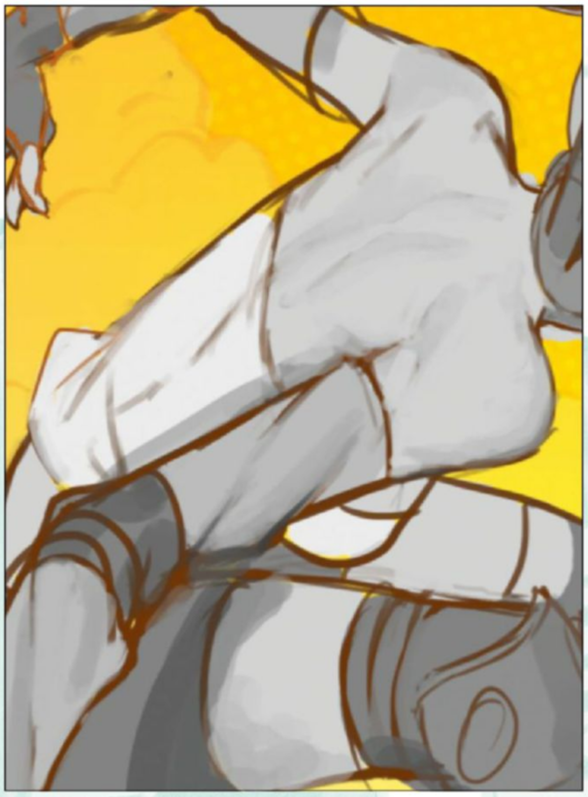
Drawing is more important than painting. You'll never be able to improve a bad drawing by adding colour, so it's crucial you ensure that your drawing and forms are clear before you begin adding colour.

PRO SECRETS

Work smarter in greyscale

Keep your greyscale forms simple. Some forms aren't shown through tones – they're simply indicated through shifts in colour. Hue transitions can trick the eye into seeing forms that aren't greyscale. Depending on the material, you may need to use several layer styles to achieve the colour and contrast you want. For example, use an Overlay layer to increase contrast, or a Color layer style to preserve existing contrast in the scene.



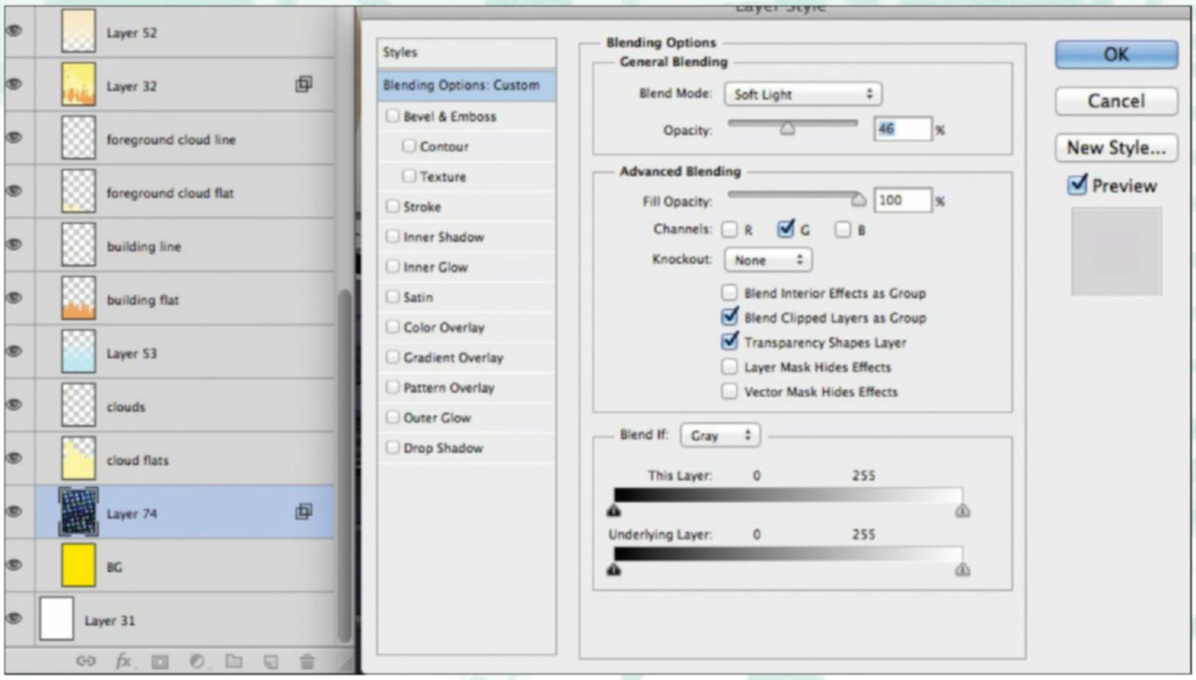


2 Ask around for help

Manga styles do not come easily with me. I usually have to render the image out to achieve the details I'm after. But there is a shortcut that I've found to be useful… ask another artist friend for help! In this case, my wife helps me draw out the hair and eyes, which comes naturally for her because she's a manga artist by trade.

3 Smoothing out the structures

I always draw plenty of anatomy details during the initial sketch stage. Even though they'll probably fade away during the rendering stages, such subtle details will still leave an impression. As you can see in the character's back, most of the lines are now rendered out. Accurate, low-key anatomy will set your art apart from the crowd.



Blending Options
General Blending
Blend Mode: Soft Light
Opacity: 46 %
Advanced Blending
Fill Opacity: 100 %
Channels: ☐ R ☑ G ☐ B
Knockout: None
☐ Blend Interior Effects as Group
☑ Blend Clipped Layers as Group
☑ Transparency Shapes Layer
☐ Layer Mask Hides Effects
☐ Vector Mask Hides Effects
Blend If: Gray
This Layer: 0 255
Underlying Layer: 0 255

4 Summon the Photoshop gods!

I want the background to pop and feel real, even though it'll eventually have a two-dimensional, stylised look. So I begin messing with Photoshop's blending options, filters and inverted controls. While doing this, I never know where it's going to end up, but eventually something magical happens as I keep applying layer effects.

RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

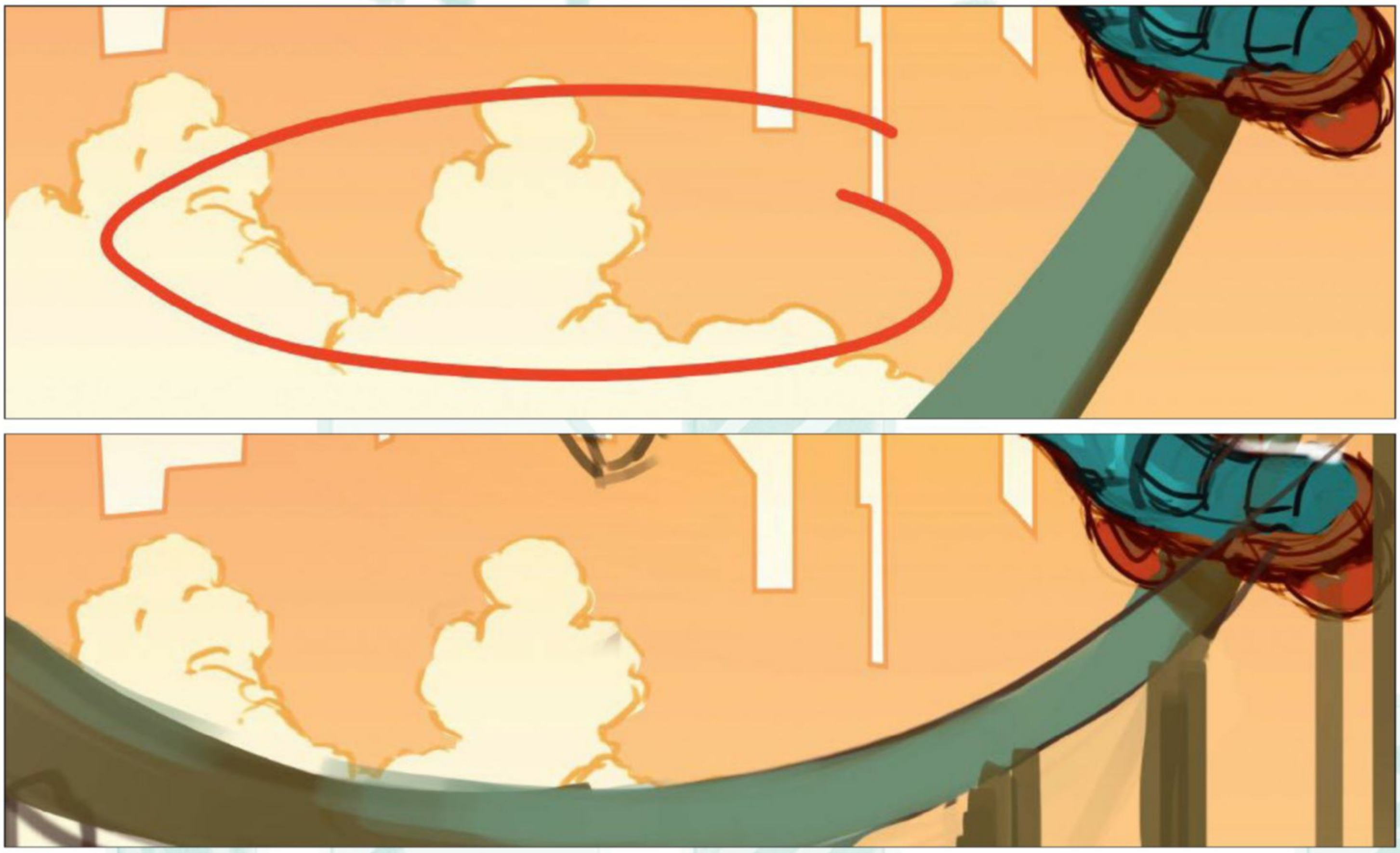
PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES: SQUARE

The square bush is for solid forms and I use it for sharpening edges.

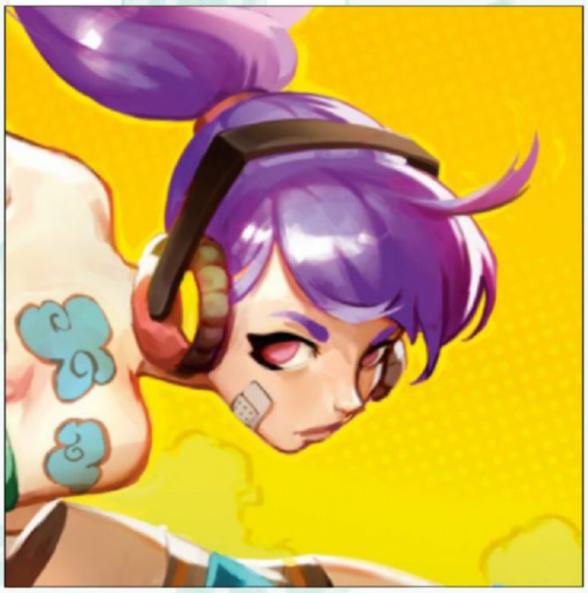
RENDER

This brush helps me draw and render without having to switch brushes.



5 Fore-, mid- and background considerations

I become aware that something is lacking in the composition. I had initially used the clouds as a filler in the lower left-hand side of the painting. One of the requests from the ImagineFX team was to ensure that there was no drastic foreshortening coming from the character's pose. So, bearing this in mind, I need to find another element to work as a foreground component. Moving the rail into view is a good solution.



6 Video game style influences

All the colours are laid out, which gives me a great opportunity to start transforming features and details. Another request from ImagineFX was to have a Jet Set Radio-like underlying theme. So I render out the face with similarities from the game's unique style while trying to maintain a manga likeness at the same time.

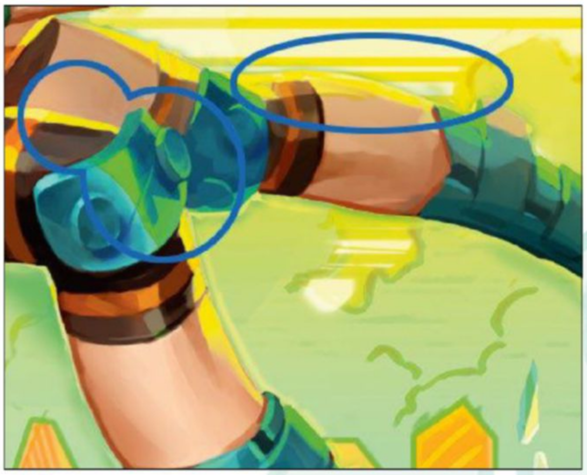
7 Making elements shine

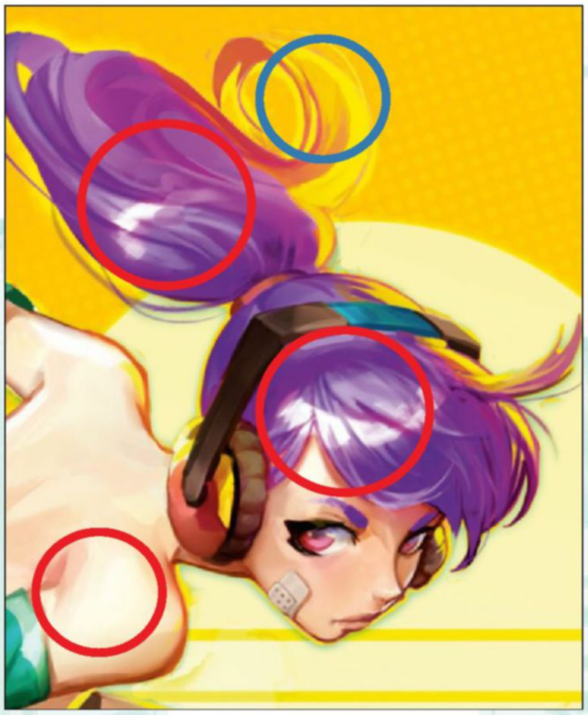
For my final highlights pass, I use a separate Overlay or Color Dodge layer and draw out a thick highlight with Transparency turned on. Then I use an eraser to create the highlight shape. It's similar to masking but a little more intuitive, and because it's on a separate layer you can adjust the colour with the Hue slider. ➔

PRO SECRETS

Create precise brush strokes

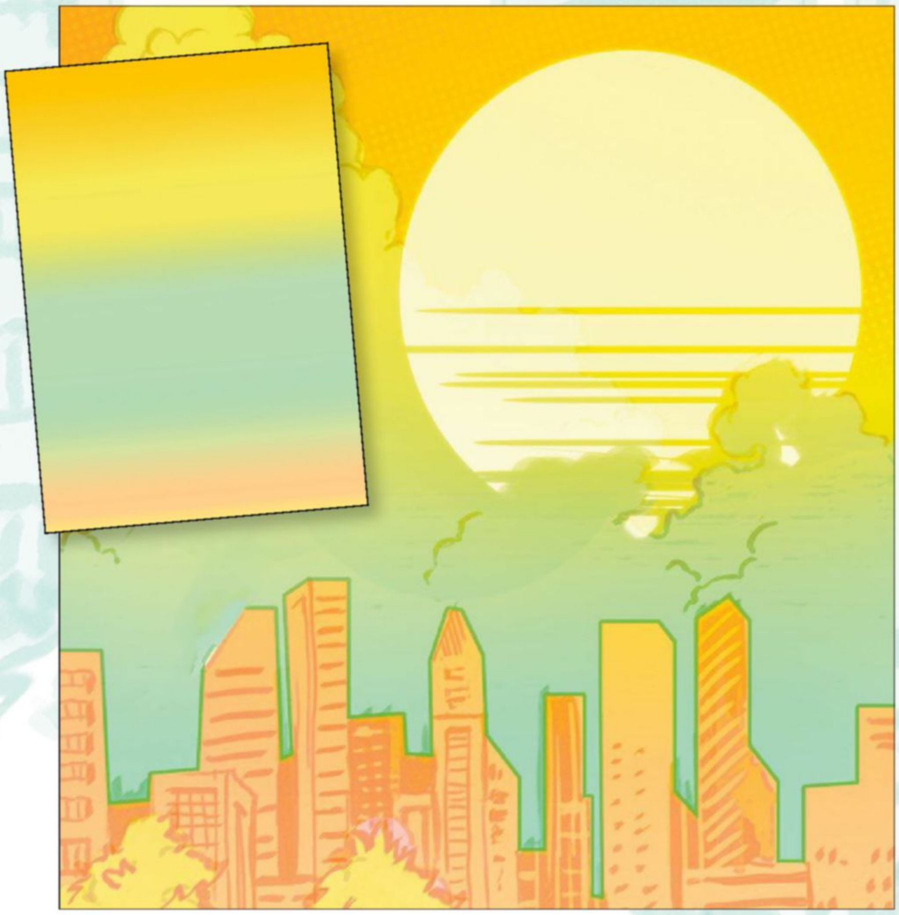
During any stage in the painting process, keep your brush opaque to avoid pushing paint. A soft brush will force you to render endlessly. Using an opaque brush will establishing clearer and precise marks. It'll also help prevent muddy colour transitions and overly rendered forms.





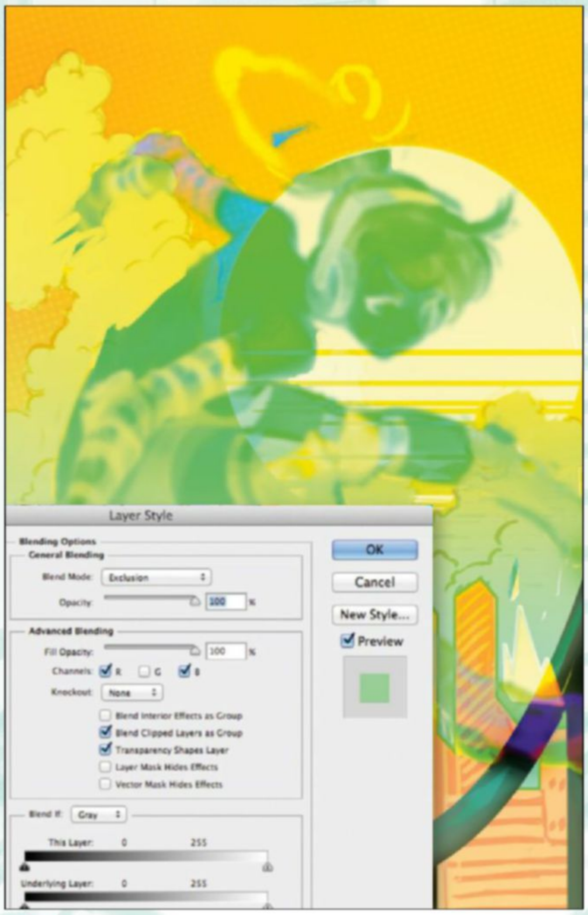
8 Add colour to those highlights

It's important to separate lights by colour. Here, the red circles are the primary warm highlights. Notice how the highlights are almost purely white. The blue circles are areas that take on the yellow light from the background. This helps the viewer easily distinguish between the different lights being used. Essentially, it's directional light versus rim light. I use a Darken layer for this process.



9 Build up a scene around a hue gradient

Here, I've broken down the background into a colour gradient so you can see how there's a smooth transition of colour despite having contrasting elements, such as the buildings against the clouds. In everything you paint, you should be looking for ways to implement colour gradients. Think of the whole image as one big abstraction of colour, and then find ways to bring certain areas of colour together.

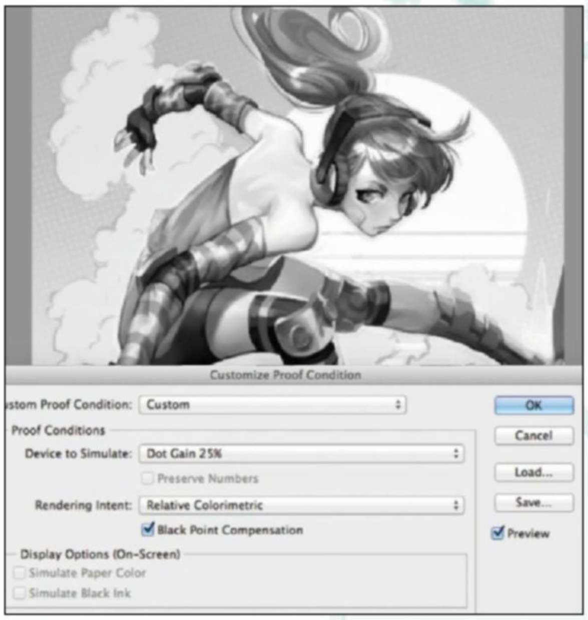


Layer Style

Blending Options
General Blending
Blend Mode: Exclusion
Opacity: 100 %
Advanced Blending
Fill Opacity: 100 %
Channels: ☑ R ☐ G ☑ B
Knockout: None
☐ Blend Interior Effects as Group
☑ Blend Clipped Layers as Group
☑ Transparency Shapes Layer
☐ Layer Mask Hides Effects
☐ Vector Mask Hides Effects
Blend If: Gray
This Layer: 0 255
Underlying Layer: 0 255

10 Make it glow

Of course, with every splash of colour you need an element of glow. Using an Exclusion layer, I remove the green channel so that I can have a green knockout glow effect behind the character. It helps lift the main character off the background, as well as pop her off the page.



stom Proof Condition: Custom

Proof Conditions

Device to Simulate: Dot Gain 25%

☐ Preserve Numbers

Rendering Intent: Relative Colorimetric

☑ Black Point Compensation

☑ Preview

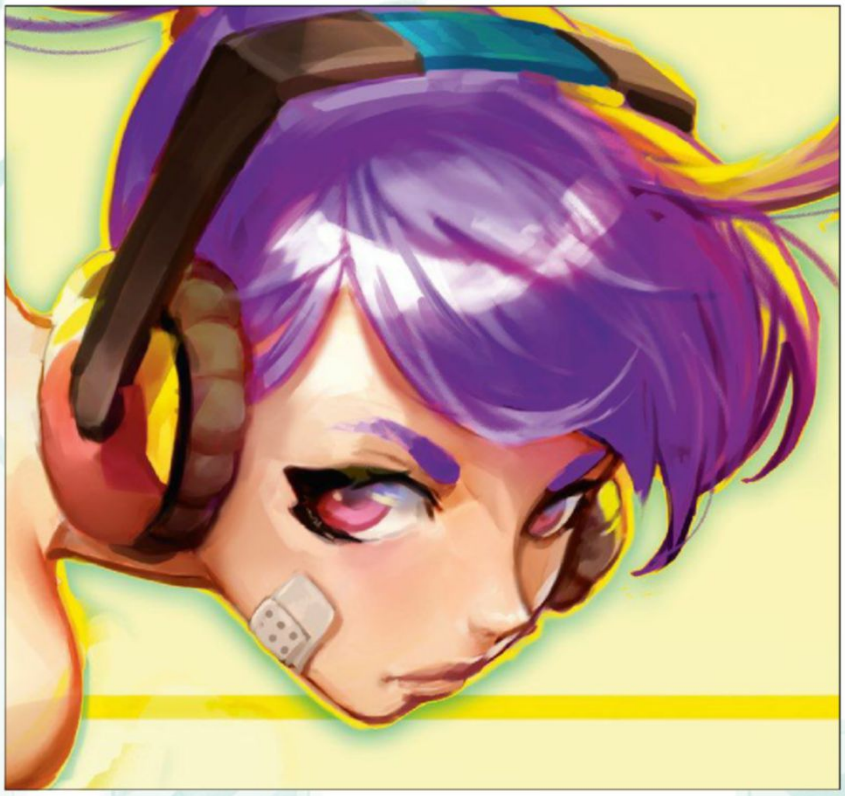
Display Options (On-Screen)

☐ Simulate Paper Color

☐ Simulate Black Ink

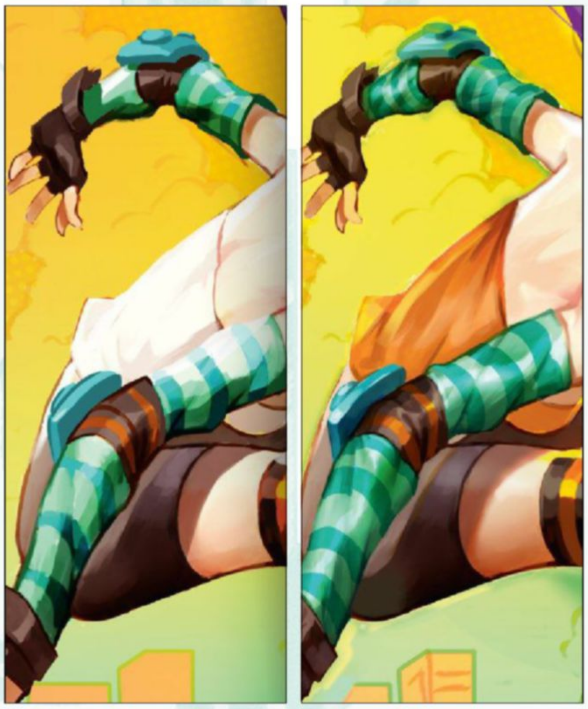
11 Checking your tones

At this point I need to check the tones within the composition to make sure that I haven't pushed the contrast too far. I strongly believe you should be constantly toggling between colour and greyscale views throughout the entire painting process. To do this, select View>Proof Setup>Custom… and apply the settings that are shown above. Now every time you press Y you can see your work-in-progress as a greyscale image.



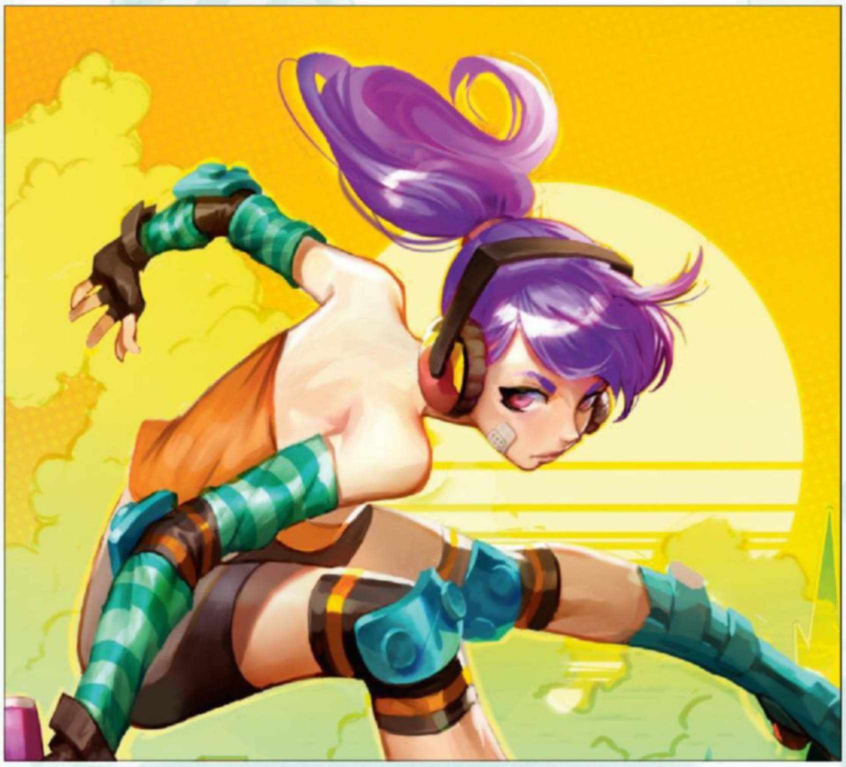
12 Application of detail

Although I'm keeping this illustration pretty simple, it never hurts to carry on detailing (at least, up to a point). I prefer to detail using highlights.



13 Correcting uneven tones

To connect the character to the background's overall palette, I change her shirt to a deep orange. Even though it's tonally correct, her shirt was blending with the background clouds too much. It's never too late to make these kinds of adjustments. Don't settle for what you've painted until your eyes agree with the overall image!



14 Showing your reasoning

I realise I need to justify why there's rim light on the character. Art doesn't always need to make sense, but in this case the colourful environment means I definitely need to show the cause behind the effect. What better way to do this than by painting, a giant stylised sun to match the rest of the background?

Clip Studio Paint

HOW TO CREATE A COMIC PAGE

Comic artist **Neil Edwards** walks you through a comic page from script to initial prelims to finished output

Artist
PROFILE

Neil Edwards
LOCATION: Wales

Neil is a comic book artist known for his work on Spider-Man, Dark Avengers and Fantastic Four for Marvel Comics, Justice League and Justice League United for DC Comics, and Dr Who and Assassins Creed for Titan Comics.
http://ifxm.ag/neil-e

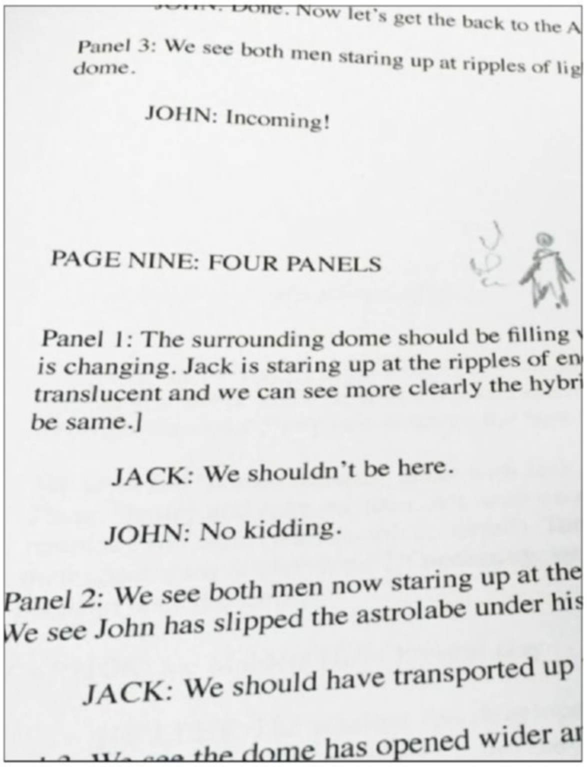
GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 6 now!

Argggghhh! That dreaded but exciting feeling when looking at a blank page! This is always my favourite part of working on a book, thinking through the script in my mind and alternate versions that might be.

I'm currently working on a hugely exciting Torchwood book, published by Titan Comics and written by John and Carol Barrowman. It follows Captains Jack and John adventuring on a techno-jungle planet, so there's lots to think about, and plenty to research and have fun with!

This page is from Torchwood 2.4. For this article I wanted to explain how I use Clip Studio Paint to develop a strong action page that shows a variety of shots and some good texture rendering, too. In this walkthrough I'll take you through how I go from initial thumbnails, reference and my technique when working on a page (and all the mistakes that I make). I work on a Cintiq Companion 2 to create the prelims, and then for the actual page I'll use a 27-inch Cintiq hooked up to a 21-inch iMac with 4GB RAM.

Every page is always challenging and hard work, but thoroughly rewarding, so always try to push yourself and above all have fun with it. Okay, enough chat – let's go!



Done. Now let's get the back to the A

Panel 3: We see both men staring up at ripples of lig
dome.

JOHN: Incoming!

PAGE NINE: FOUR PANELS

Panel 1: The surrounding dome should be filling
is changing. Jack is staring up at the ripples of en
translucent and we can see more clearly the hybri
be same.]

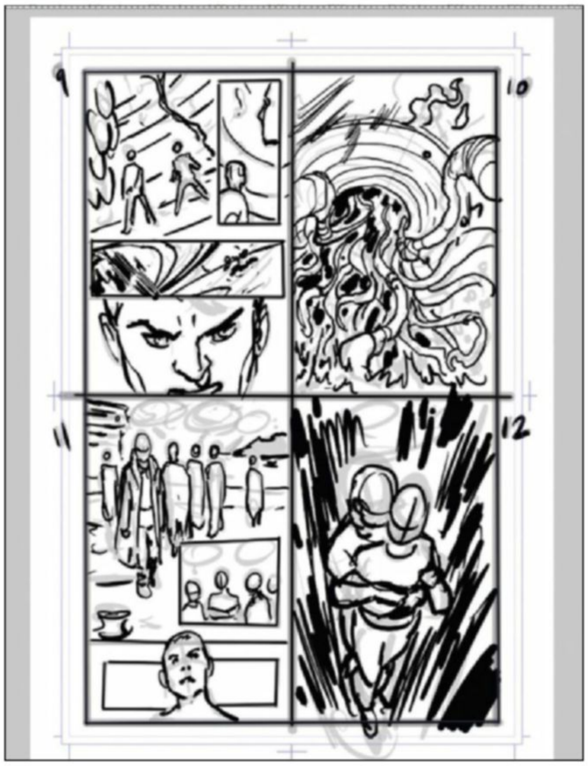
JACK: We shouldn't be here.

JOHN: No kidding.

Panel 2: We see both men now staring up at the
We see John has slipped the astrolabe under his

JACK: We should have transported up

the dome has opened wider ar



1 Read the script

Once the panic attack has subsided from the scary white page, it's time to read the script. I identify moments that stand out in the text for each panel, looking for dynamic and clear storytelling events to move the story forwards effectively. I make thumbnails as I read, and jot down any reference that I might need at this stage too.

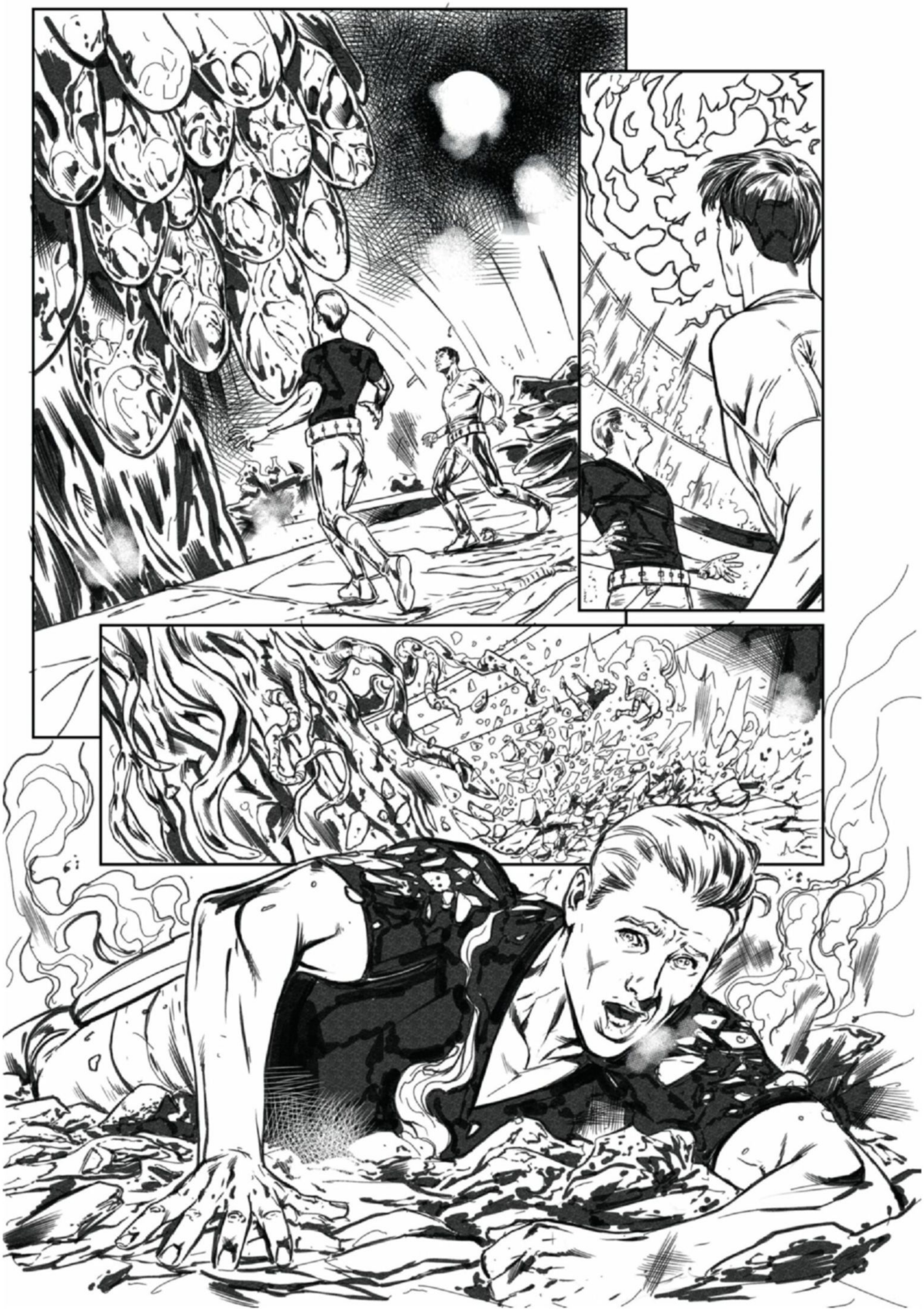
2 Produce prelims

At this stage it's vital not to be precious over what you put down, because nothing's set in stone. I initially rough out the prelim very quickly, ignoring anatomy and rendering, then work over it – bearing in mind where the speech bubbles are going to be placed. I usually work the prelim stage up on the Cintiq Companion 2.

PRO SECRETS

Use a real ruler

Clip Studio Paint's perspective tools are amazing, but I try not to be a slave to them. I use a small ruler with felt pads stuck on the back to protect the Cintiq, to block in perspective and line work. It's great for working quickly, and you can use a French Curve ruler the same way, too.



PRO SECRETS

Remember to keep saving

There's no excuse for setting up a schedule to save your work when working digitally. It's a horrible feeling losing a few hours work when your Mac freezes. I have two back-up systems to archive the work as well as burning projects to DVD, just in case! Better to be safe than sorry.

RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

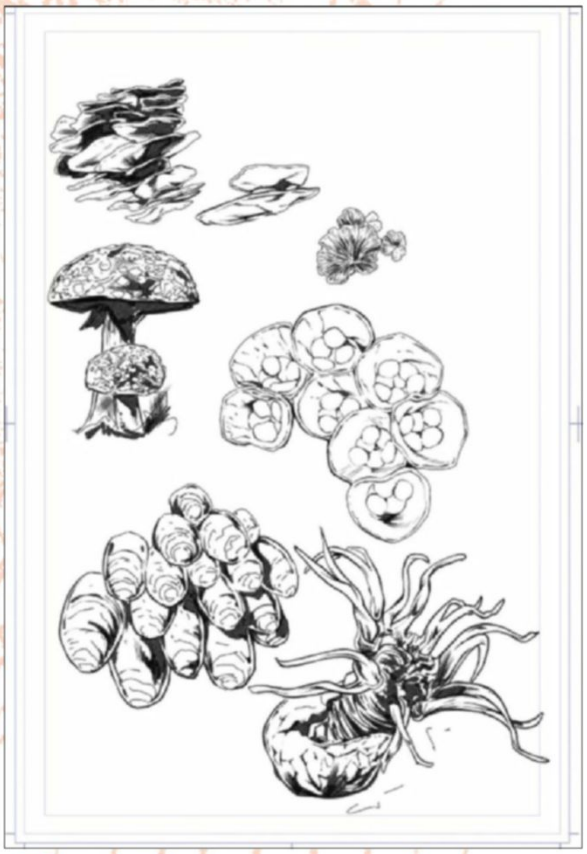
CLIP STUDIO PAINT

CUSTOM BRUSHES: INK PENCIL LINE

I use this to sketch out the initial drawing.

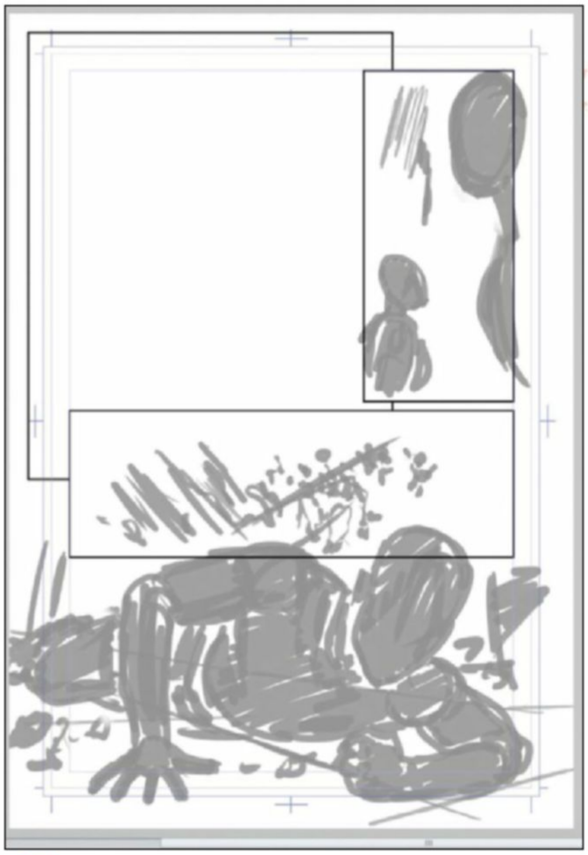
INK PENCIL

Enables me to quickly refine the drawing.



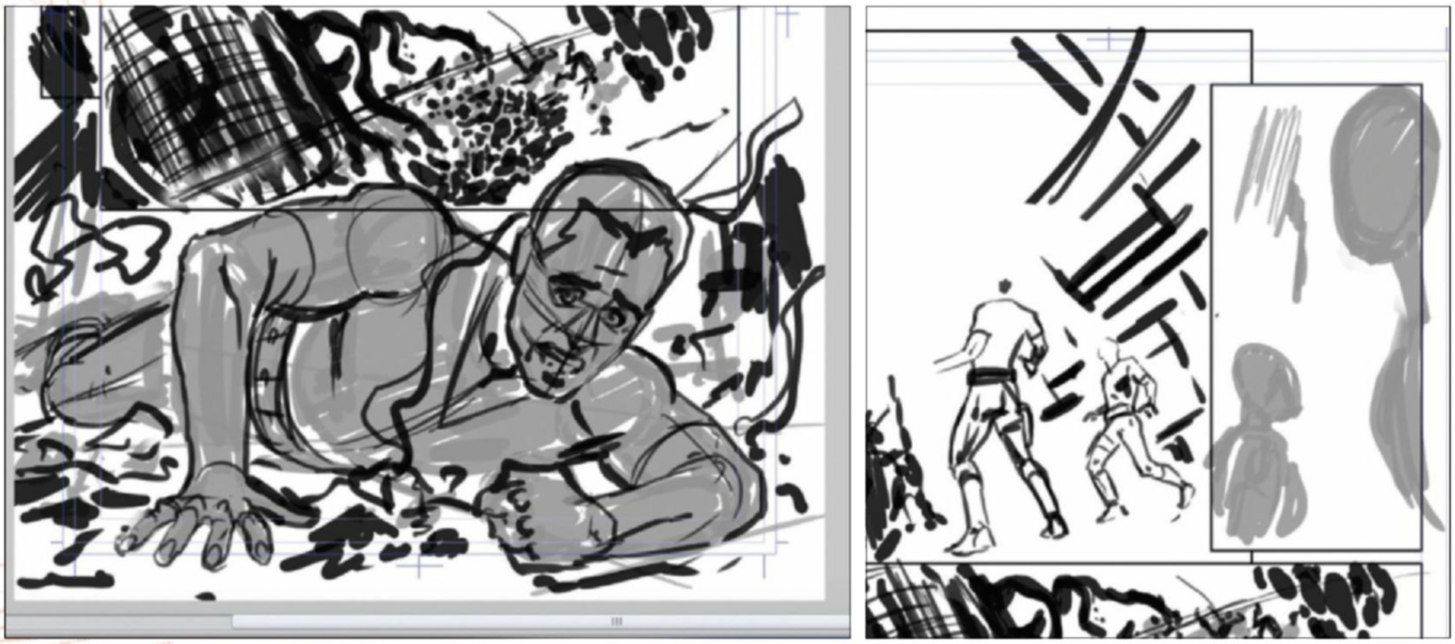
3 Bring together my references

The script calls for lots of vegetation growth, so I start researching vines, jungles, mushrooms and fungi. I usually pencil up some references during this early stage. Doing so gives me an understanding of how to make environments fit and feel right within the page. I've now moved on to working on my big 27-inch Cintiq.



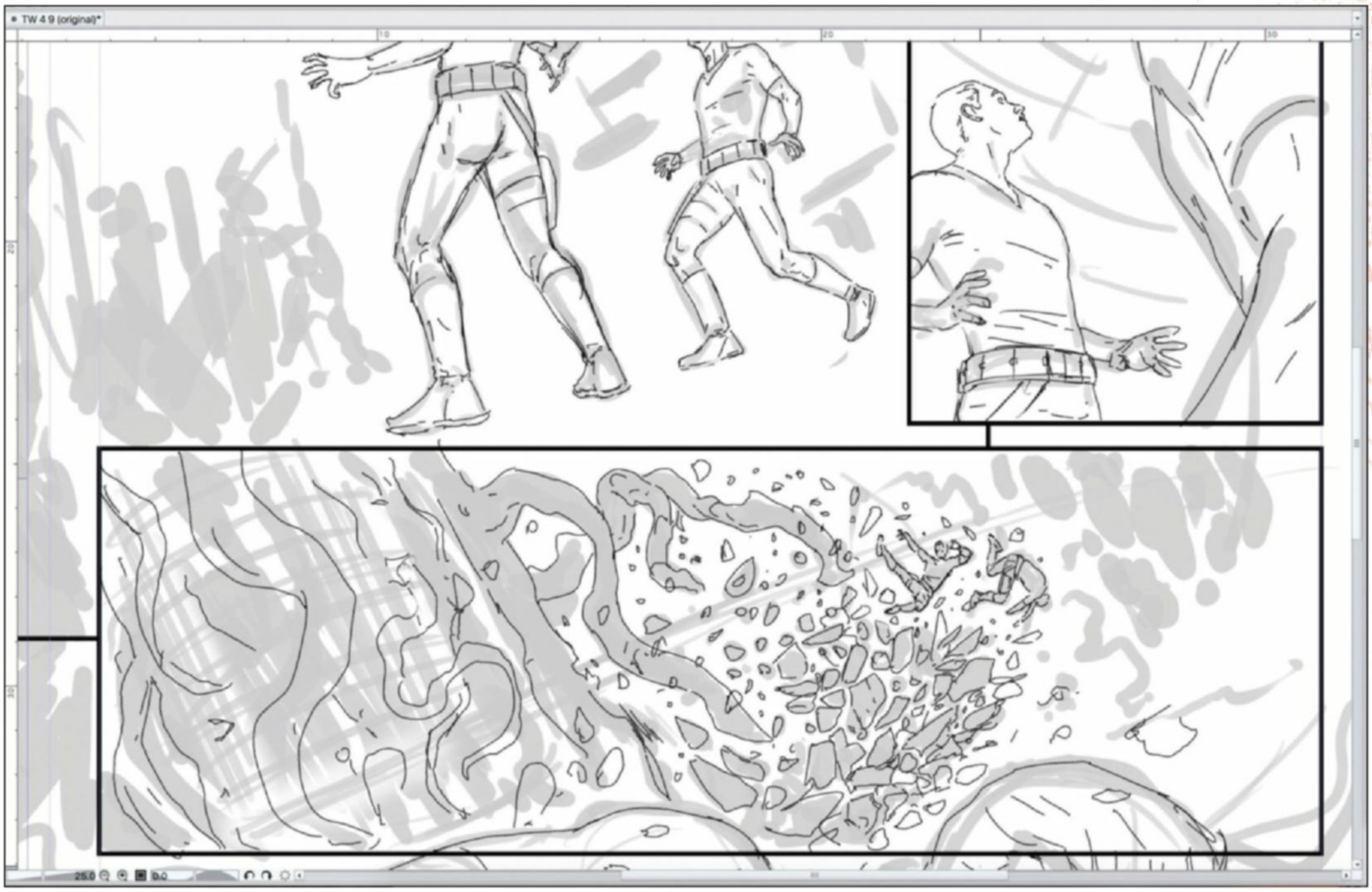
4 Initial blocking in

With the prelims approved and some storytelling elements refined, it's time to start on the under-concept drawings. I draw the panel borders with the Frame tool, and then block the figures in as a silhouette, using the default basic Darker Pencil brush. This gives me the correct mass of the characters to work with.



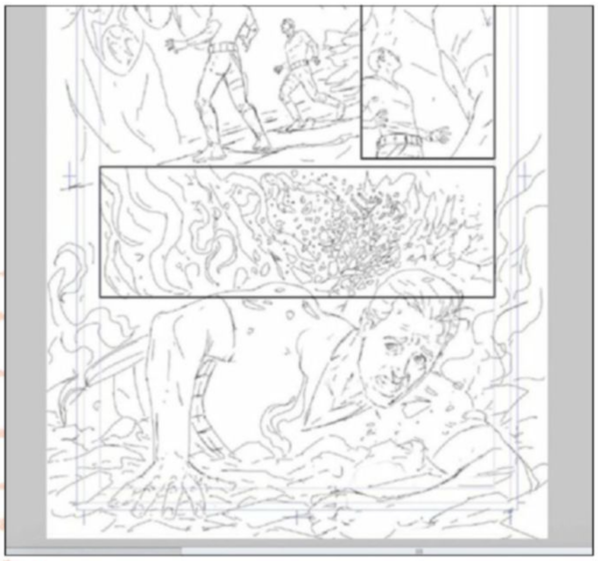
5 Adding detail to the under-drawing

Once I'm happy with the placement of the figure, I create a new layer and knock back the silhouette, working on getting my centre lines and anatomy of the character fixed. I'm using the basic Darker Pencil brush again. After all the elements are roughed in, I can start refining them.



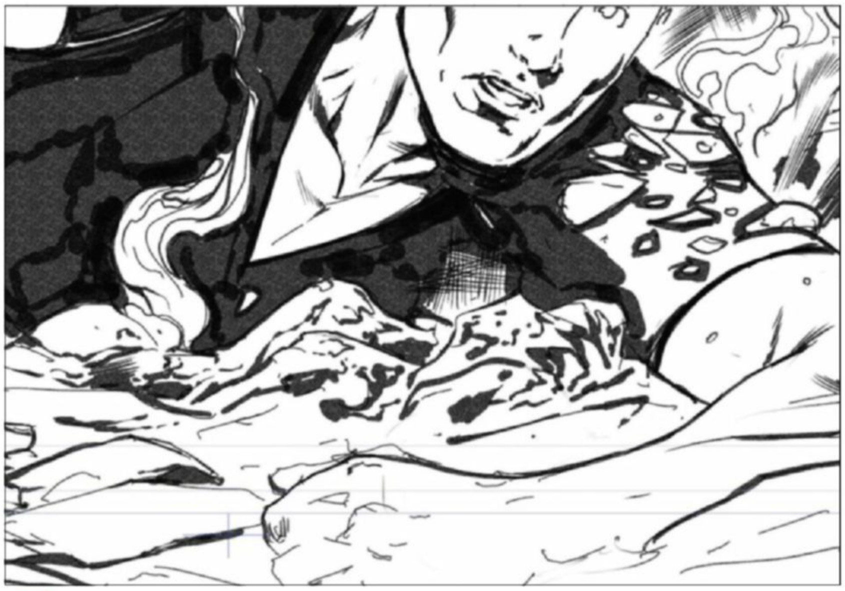
6 Developing the line art drawing for the page

I'm happy with the proportions and placement of elements on the page, so it's time to create a new layer and work on the proper drawing. I start by using my custom Ink Pencil line brush and put down the line work that I want to eventually work over. During this stage I think it's important to work lightly, but include some basic rendering and lighting wherever possible.



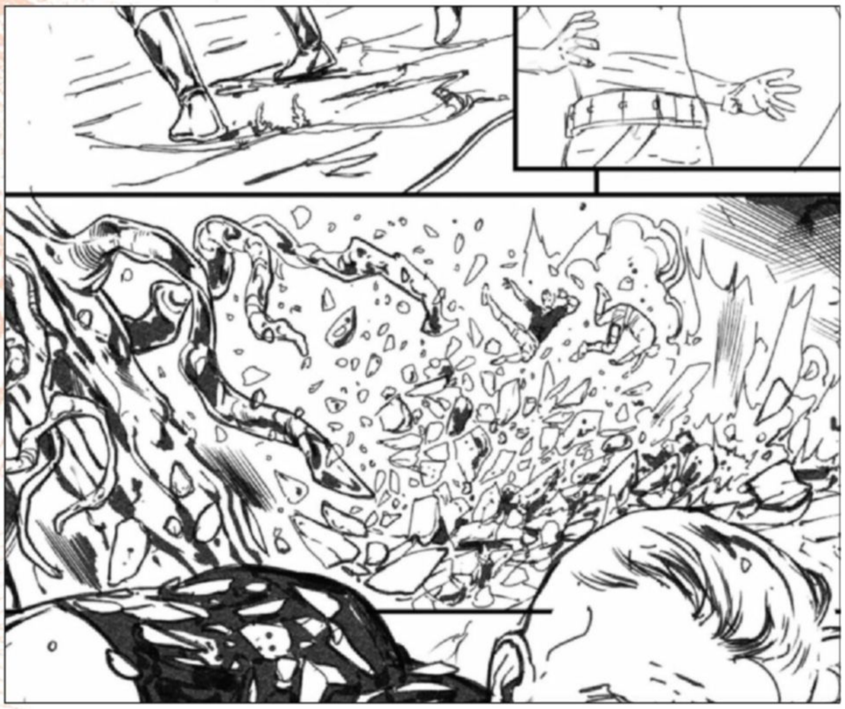
7 Identifying errors

Once I've wrapped up the line art I cast my eye over the page, looking for elements that need amending. I flip the page to see what mistakes jump out and take a couple of notes before correcting them. Remember that even at this stage, nothing is set in stone.



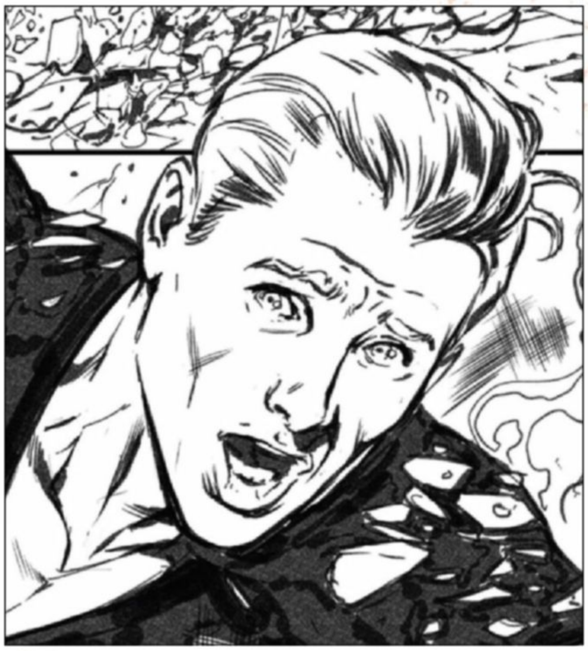
8 Adding weight to the lines

The next stage is to increase the line weight and introduce flow to the drawing using my custom Ink Pencil brush (I really should come up with a better name!). The line should define the light source and weight of the character, so be careful that the line work doesn't end up looking flat and characterless. ➸



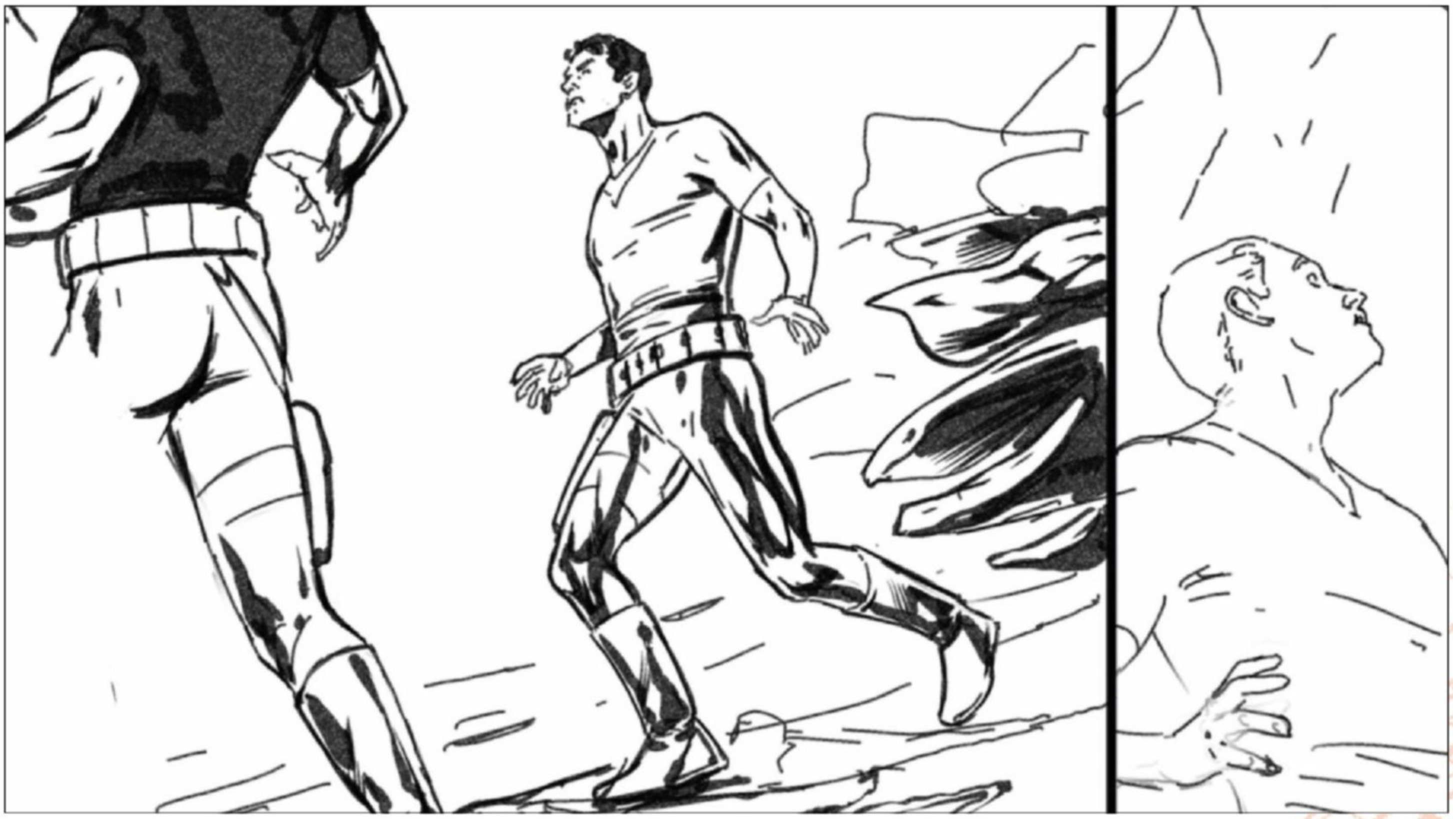
9 Detailing elements in the scene

Still using the Ink Pencil brush (I know, I know) I start adding selective line weight and shadow to the detail elements. Always try and be more suggestive rather than over-rendering each line. Avoid filling the page with too much detail. Remember that an absence of something can be just as effective as including it.



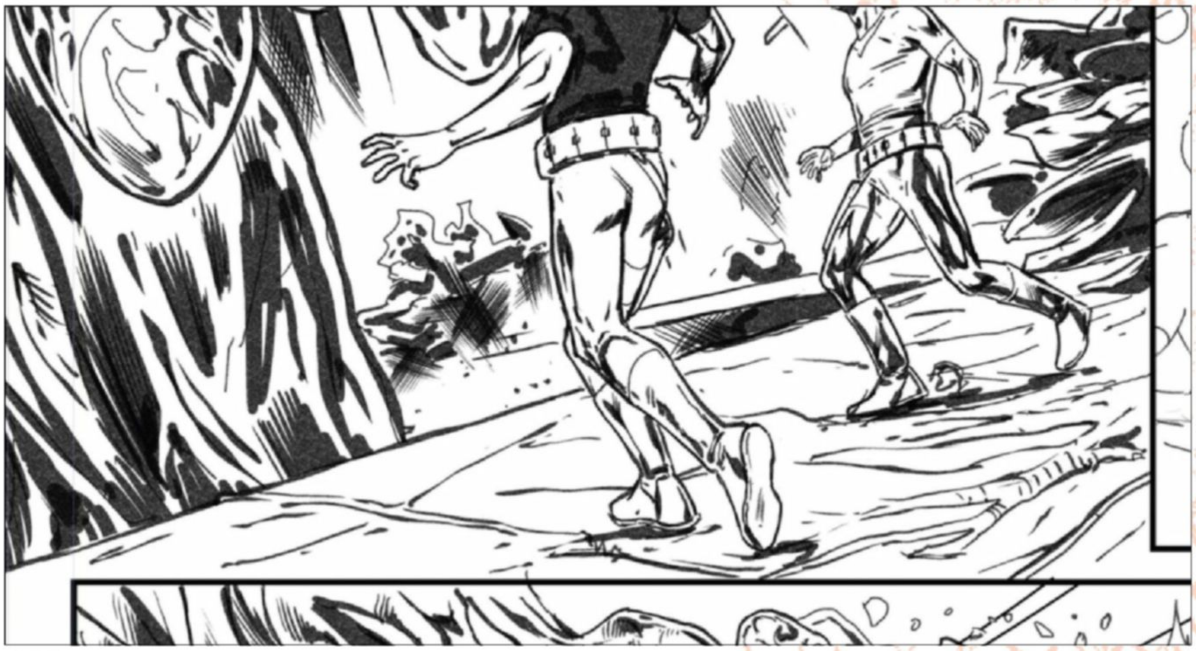
10 Correcting Captain John

After looking over the page, I decide I'm not happy with a few elements such as Captain John's head. So I sketch out a replacement on a new layer and then refine the expression. Reference may be useful at this stage, so consider using a mirror or taking a photo with your phone to help capture the look you want.



11 Smaller figure elements need to be drawn with care

As with the debris elements in step nine, I'm careful not to over-render the smaller figures on the page. In particular, I watch my line weight as the figure elements recede into the background. Using silhouettes and strong shadow can help define smaller characters, too. However, it's a bit of a balancing act because smaller characters might get lost in among background elements if they're drawn too subtly.



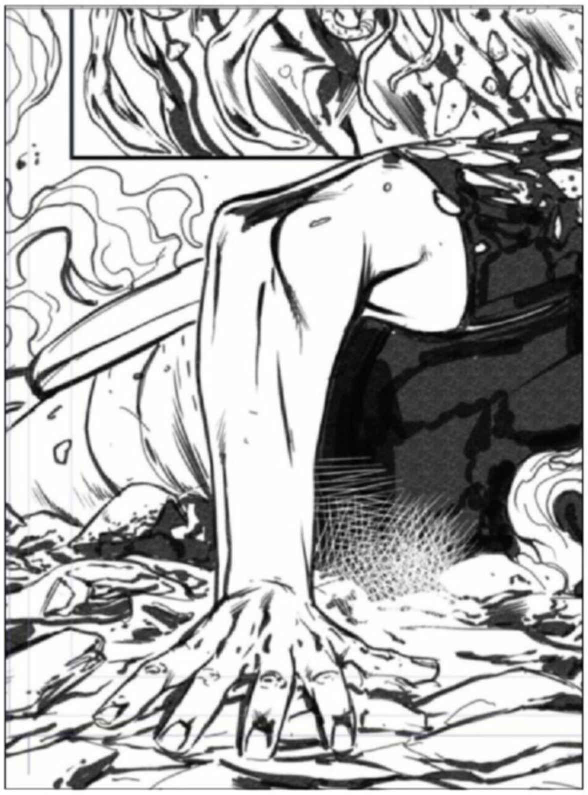
12 Making the anatomy look natural

I'm also not happy with Captain John's legs: they came across as a bit odd in my initial layout, so I recreate them in a more balanced stance. Always aim to make your characters look dynamic and natural, rather that stiff. I also alter the stance of the smaller characters so that they better suit the angle of the background's perspective.

PRO SECRETS

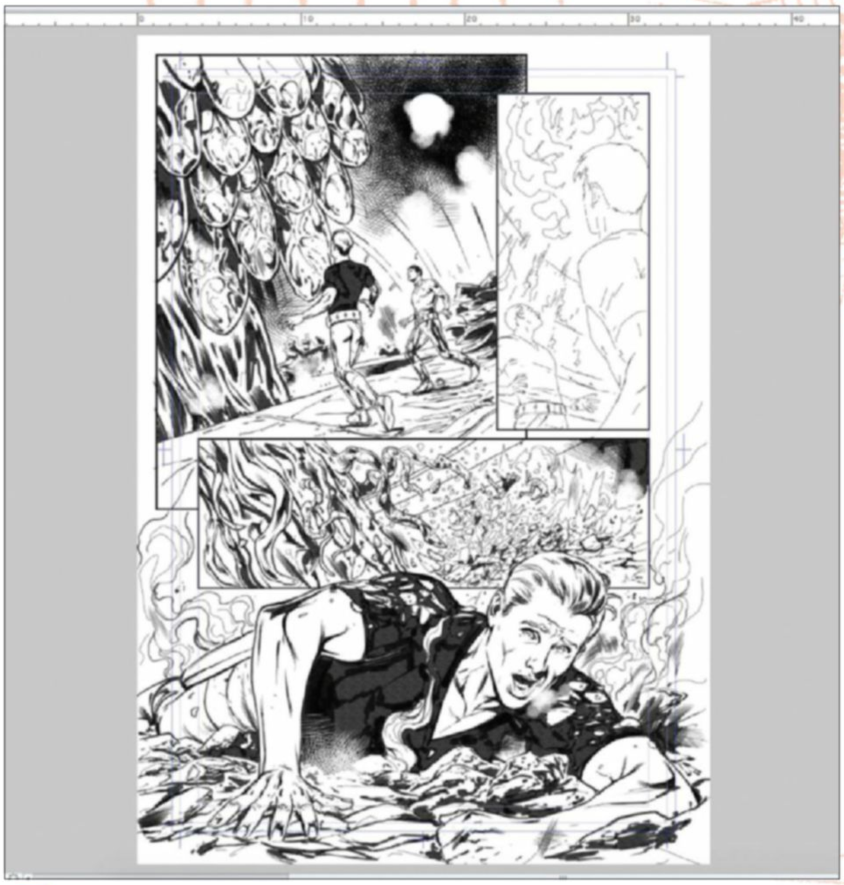
Sketch... a lot!

Each day, before I start on a page, I produce a quick sketch to work out any niggles or to try and do something different in a current assignment. This enables me to experiment with new techniques, as well as practise anatomy and facial expressions in a sketchbook rather then on my working page.



13 Bring in texture elements

Using Clip Studio Paint's powerful texture and crosshatching brushes, I add smoke and air debris elements to give greater density to the page. I also add freehand crosshatching to introduce a more organic and traditional feel to the scene. I also add some more vegetation details to the background, and bring in a couple of light sources in panel one.



14 Nearly done...

With the page almost finished I refine Captain John's face on the bottom panel and add some more freehand crosshatching in the background. I then move on to the top right panel and draw the energy waves. Once I'm happy with the page I output it as a greyscale TIF at 500dpi, then collapse back in my chair. Phew!

Core Skills: Part 5

EDIT REBELLE'S BRUSHES & CANVAS

If you're not happy with the brush attributes in Rebelle 2, change them! **Martin Hanschild** shows you how, and alters the canvas properties, too

Artist **PROFILE**

Martin Hanschild
LOCATION: Czech Republic

Martin is a 2D and 3D character designer who works in Prague for motion art house Eallin.
www.hanschild.com

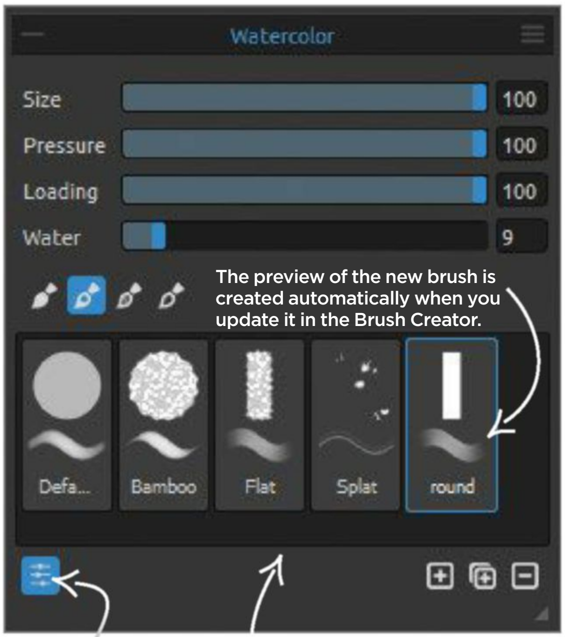
Traditional painters have long been able to choose from brushes of various sizes, shapes and characteristics to achieve different effects in their illustrations.

Similarly, most art programs come with brush editors that enable you to adjust your tools according to your own needs and preferences. In a lot of cases you're also able to import custom brushes created by other artists from around the world.

Turning our attention to Rebelle, the ability to create and customise brushes in the program was limited compared to other art programs. I'd go so far as to say that the absence of a brush editor was a significant weak point in this otherwise great app.

Version 2 of Rebelle now comes with the Brush Creator, which brings it into line with the competition. I'd recommend making use of it: your painting process will be improved and your art will become more varied and richer. Here, I'll explain how to use Rebelle's new brush editor.

The second part of the article is on configuring the canvas. This makes it possible to add texture to your art, making it more visually interesting. I'll also show you how you can use canvas texture even more creatively, not just as a background surface.



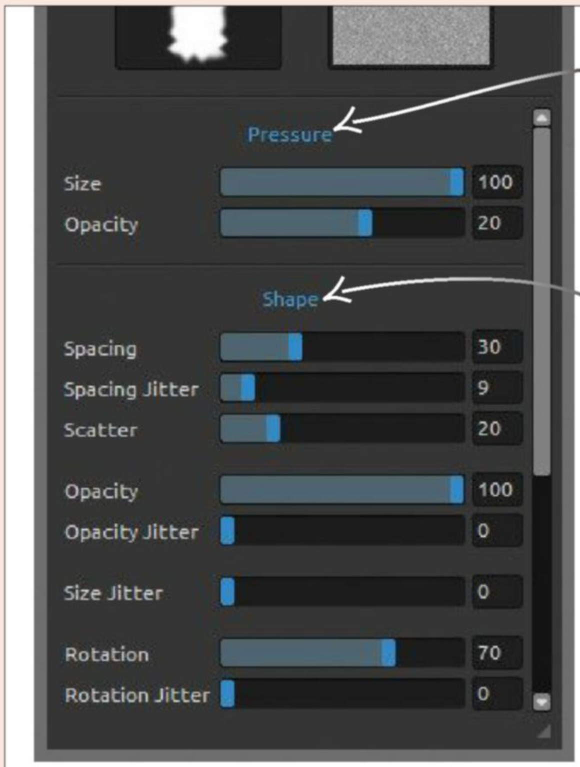
Watercolor

Size 100
Pressure 100
Loading 100
Water 9

The preview of the new brush is created automatically when you update it in the Brush Creator.

Click to open or close the Brush Creator.

The Properties panel gives a preview of the selected brush.



Pressure

Size 100
Opacity 20

Shape

Spacing 30
Spacing Jitter 9
Scatter 20
Opacity 100
Opacity Jitter 0
Size Jitter 0
Rotation 70
Rotation Jitter 0

You can adjust the Pressure for the brush's Size and Opacity separately.

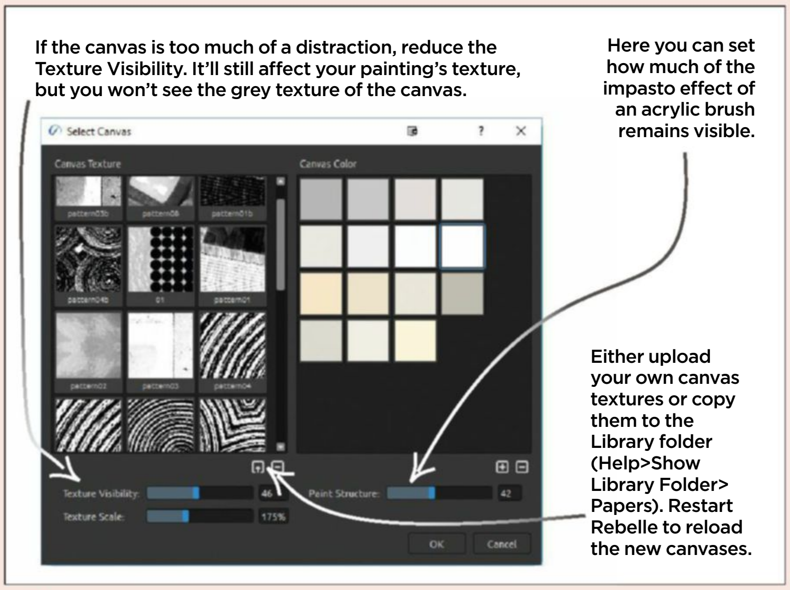
The various Shape settings, including Spacing, Scatter and Rotation, enable you to achieve a more varied and random brush stroke. Play around with these settings to create brushes that suit your way of working.

1 New brush possibilities

Each tool in Rebelle 2 comes now with various brush presets. You can create custom brushes by selecting Add New Brush Preset or Duplicate an Existing Brush in the Properties panel, and set its Properties in the Brush Creator. To import brush presets, click the panel menu and load them as a .PNG.

2 Make use of the Brush Creator editor

The resulting brush is a combination of shape and grain texture. Upload your own shapes and grain textures by clicking on their icons in the Brush creator. Images must be black and white, where white pixels represent full amount of colour, grey is a half, and black is a zero. The shape and texture images that you import can be JPG, PNG, BMP or TIFF formats.



Texture Visibility: 46

Texture Scale: 175%

Paint Structure: 42

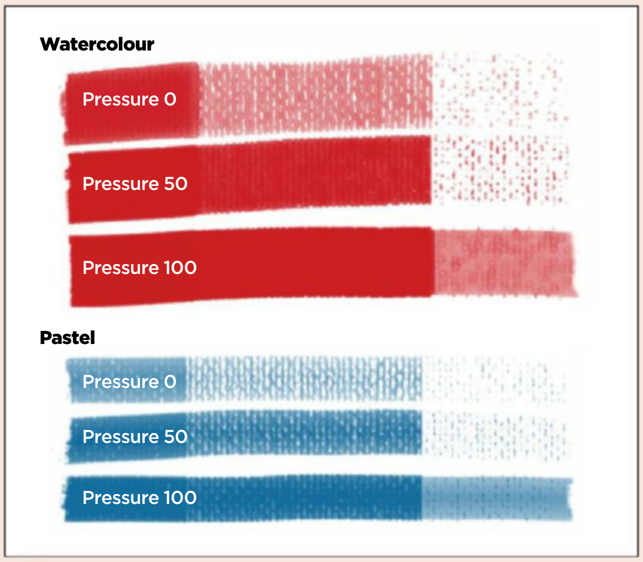
If the canvas is too much of a distraction, reduce the Texture Visibility. It'll still affect your painting's texture, but you won't see the grey texture of the canvas.

Here you can set how much of the impasto effect of an acrylic brush remains visible.

Either upload your own canvas textures or copy them to the Library folder (Help>Show Library Folder> Papers). Restart Rebelle to reload the new canvases.

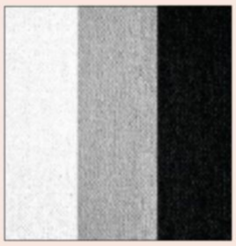
3 Making the most of the canvas

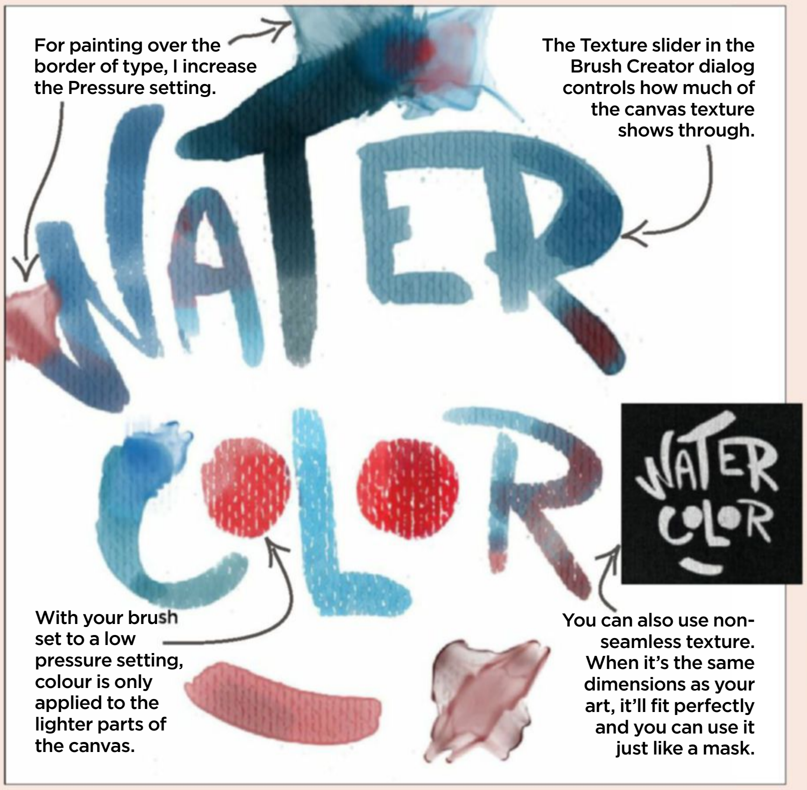
The canvas is an interesting element that can affect the look of your artwork. You can choose a canvas texture when you start a new project, and change it if you later decide that it's not helping your artwork develop. The menu for selecting canvases and change their properties is at the bottom of the Layer Palette. There, you'll find options to change the canvas colour, texture scale and visibility, and you can add or remove texture in the Canvas panel.



4 Black, white and grey

These two images show the relationship between the Pressure setting of your brush and white, grey and black values of the canvas. Increase the Pressure level to ensure more of your colour appears, with less show-through from the canvas.





For painting over the border of type, I increase the Pressure setting.

The Texture slider in the Brush Creator dialog controls how much of the canvas texture shows through.

With your brush set to a low pressure setting, colour is only applied to the lighter parts of the canvas.

You can also use non-seamless texture. When it's the same dimensions as your art, it'll fit perfectly and you can use it just like a mask.

5 Understand the canvas

A canvas texture is made up of a seamless black and white image maps, but you can use any .PNG file, even if it's not seamless. How colour interacts with the canvas isn't only governed with the brush's Pressure setting. At the bottom of Brush creator dialog there's a slider that controls how much of the Canvas's texture is on show. This enables you to use the texture as a mask of sorts, as you control how much colour appears on the canvas.

Try different canvas texture sizes.

If you want to keep sharp edges, use lower values of Water, and dry the layer completely before you start to paint with a new colour.

6 Use canvases in a creative way

For this stylised and decorative cloak, I create several patterns with Adobe's Capture app and convert them to black and white images. I then increase their contrast and import them as canvas textures. During the painting session, I switch between them according to my needs, using the Selection tool for masking different parts of the character's clothing.

Artist insight

15 SECRETS TO GET BETTER AT MANGA

Veteran of the UK manga scene **Sonia Leong** gives key advice to artists wanting to draw and paint authentic-looking manga...

Artist **PROFILE**

Sonia Leong

LOCATION: England

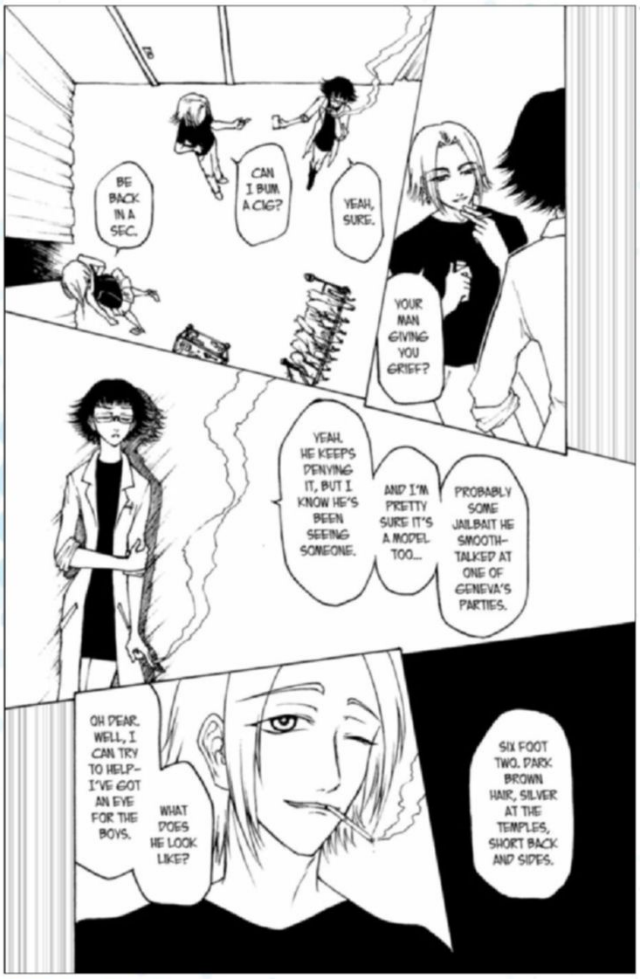
Sonia has illustrated for SelfMadeHero, VIZ, Titan Comics, Image, Toyota and many more across different industries. She loves fashion, food and playing video games.

www.fyredrake.net

While the style and finish of manga is relatively minimalist in comparison to other types of comics, this apparent simplicity is deceptive. Every line is a choice made by the artist. The thinking is never use ten strokes to depict something if just a single, well-placed one would suffice.

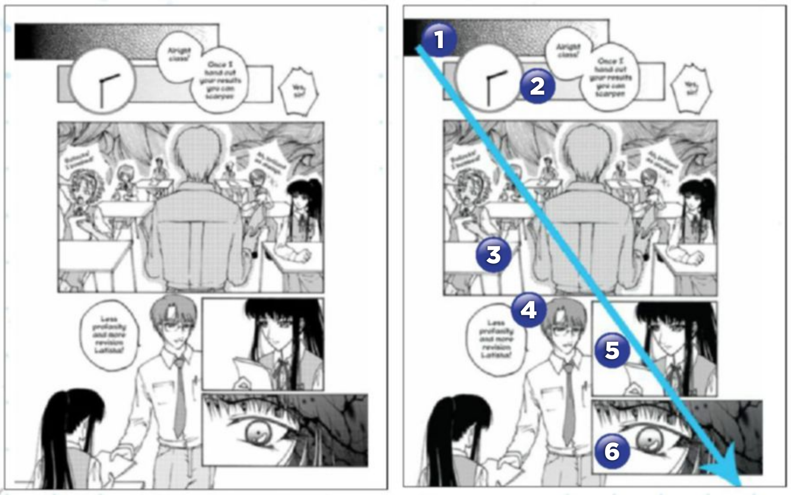
This principle of concentrating on what's needed to relate a story permeates throughout manga creation. Every panel is an exercise in choice: size, zoom, camera angle, speech bubble positioning, and type of background. Every page works as a whole to control the reader's experience, particularly in pacing.

Production is geared towards minimising costs to maximise number of pages, so most manga is in cheap black and white. This has led to the development of specialist techniques to add depth and understanding and to enhance both action and emotion. Stretching limbs, blurry lines and irregular panels add dynamism. Extreme close-ups, abstract backgrounds and symbolism add intensity and atmosphere. We're not afraid to steer away from realism if it helps to convey meaning more effectively. It's not just about how you draw the characters, it's how you tell the story.


BE BACK IN A SEC.
CAN I BUM A CIG?
YEAH, SURE.
YOUR MAN GIVING YOU GRIEF?
YEAH, HE KEEPS DENYING IT, BUT I KNOW HE'S BEEN SEEING SOMEONE.
AND I'M PRETTY SURE IT'S A MODEL TOO...
PROBABLY SOME JAILBAIT HE SMOOTH-TALKED AT ONE OF GENEVA'S PARTIES.
OH DEAR. WELL, I CAN TRY TO HELP– I'VE GOT AN EYE FOR THE BOYS.
WHAT DOES HE LOOK LIKE?
SIX FOOT TWO, DARK BROWN HAIR, SILVER AT THE TEMPLES, SHORT BACK AND SIDES.

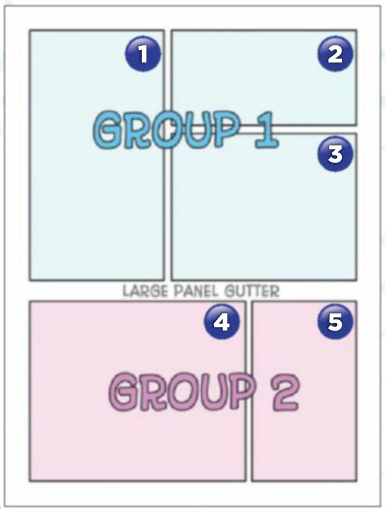
1 SCRIPTING AND PANEL COUNT

When you're writing for manga, remember it flows faster and sparser than other types of comics. It spreads across more pages with fewer panels per page. There is variation between the types of manga; Seinen manga, aimed at adult males, will be more densely packed than Shoujo manga, which is read by young girls. But as a guide, aim for a maximum of three speech bubbles per panel, an average of five panels per page, and around four pages per scene.



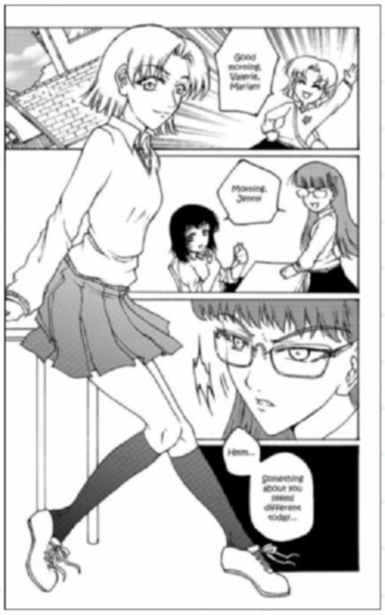
2 READING DIRECTION AND RULES

Manga originates from Japan, and Japanese traditionally reads vertically from top-to-bottom before going right-to-left. So for any manga originally



3 GROUPING PANELS

Most manga have panels of different sizes and shapes that change from page to page. There are no arrows or numbering to guide the reader, so you must group the panels clearly to make it obvious they must read one bunch of panels before moving on. Separate one group from another by increasing the space between the panels (the panel gutter). Then make sure that any small panel gutters inside a group don't line up with any panel gutters in another group.


Good morning, Valerie, Marian!
Morning, Jenni!
Hmm...
Something about you seems different today...

4 ABSTRACT LAYOUTS

Manga doesn't just stick to traditional boxes in rows. It often employs dynamic panel layouts that stretch across the height or width of the whole page, along with diagonal lines and irregular shapes. Sometimes boxes aren't even used at

ed as outlines, or the character breaks out of the

ade in and out as part of the storytelling. The difficulty

ss of layout, the panel order remains clear. Try reading

more examples to play with.

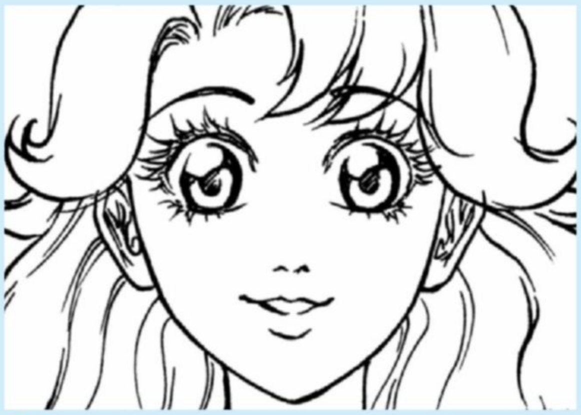
> Decide on your reading direction and stick to it

5 CINEMATIC FLOW

Manga is known for its cinematic feel. Every panel is like an action movie, where the camera cuts from a close-up of eyes, to a two-shot profile of a conversation, to a bird's-eye view of the characters, then a low-to-high angle as a stiletto heel clicks onto the floor. Really make an effort to showcase different camera angles and zooms in your story.

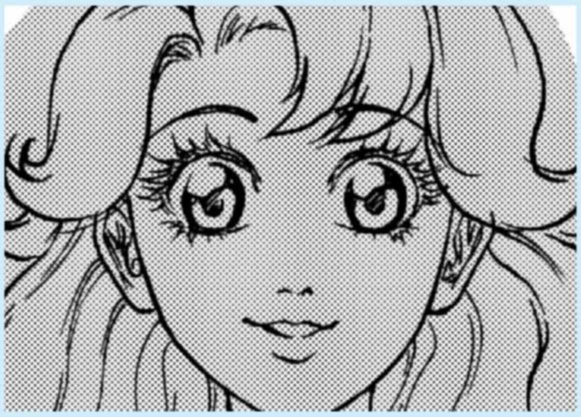
6 SCREENTONE BASICS

Manga uses screentone as its black and white. Simply paste it on top of your lines and then cut away the excess.



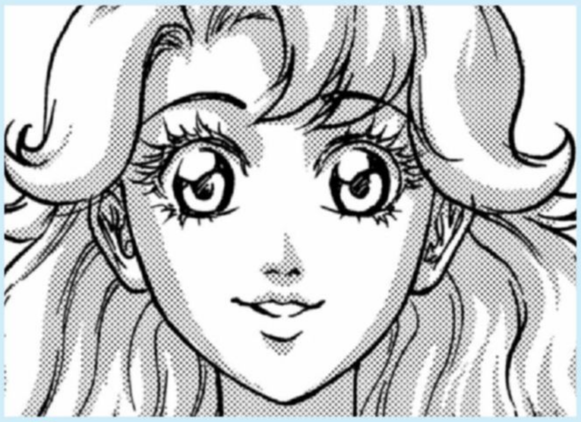
A Scan in your line art

Prepare your line art. It has to be in pure black and white without any greys, so scan at a minimum of 600dpi. Then threshold-to-convert every pixel into either black or white. The same must apply to your desired screentone: each pixel must be black or white/transparent.



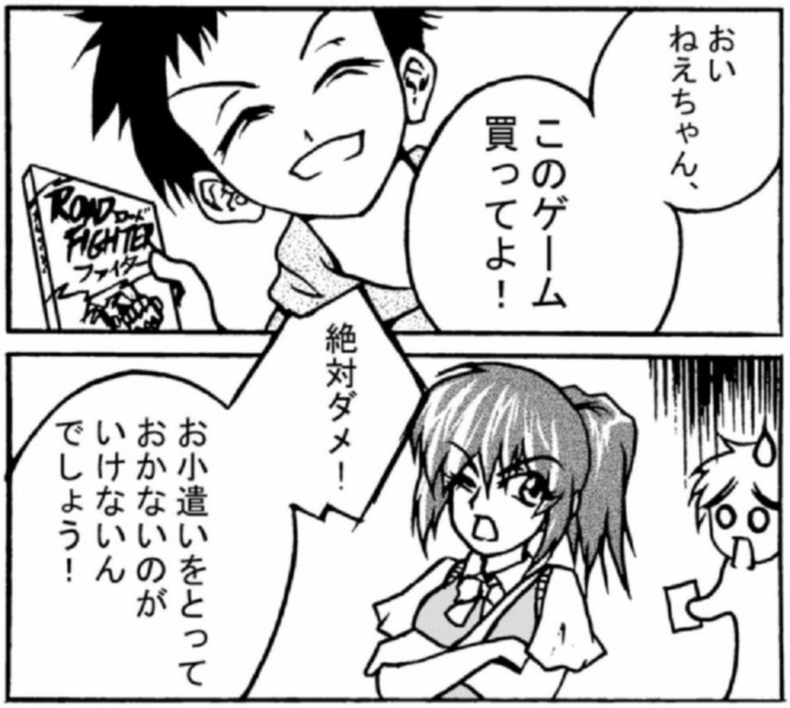
B Apply the screentone

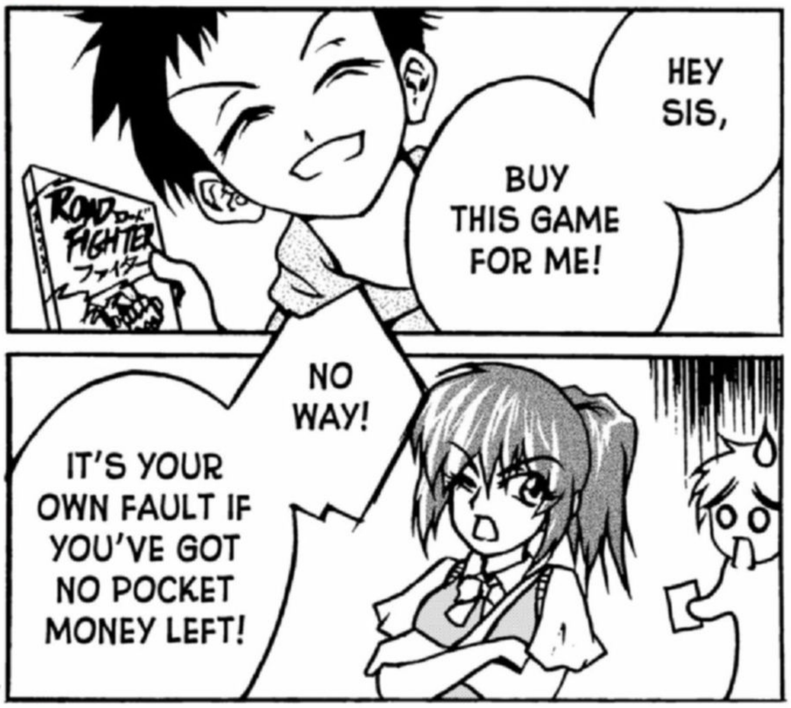
Copy then paste the screentone on a layer above the line art, enough to cover the lines and more. If your screentone isn't transparent, for example, on a white background, then set the layer to Multiply so you can see the lines underneath.



C Edit back the screentone

Remove unwanted areas of the screentone. There are to do this: you can select with a Lasso/Magic Wand tool and Eraser in Pencil mode, or use a Layer Mask with a hard-edged that no greys are introduced.

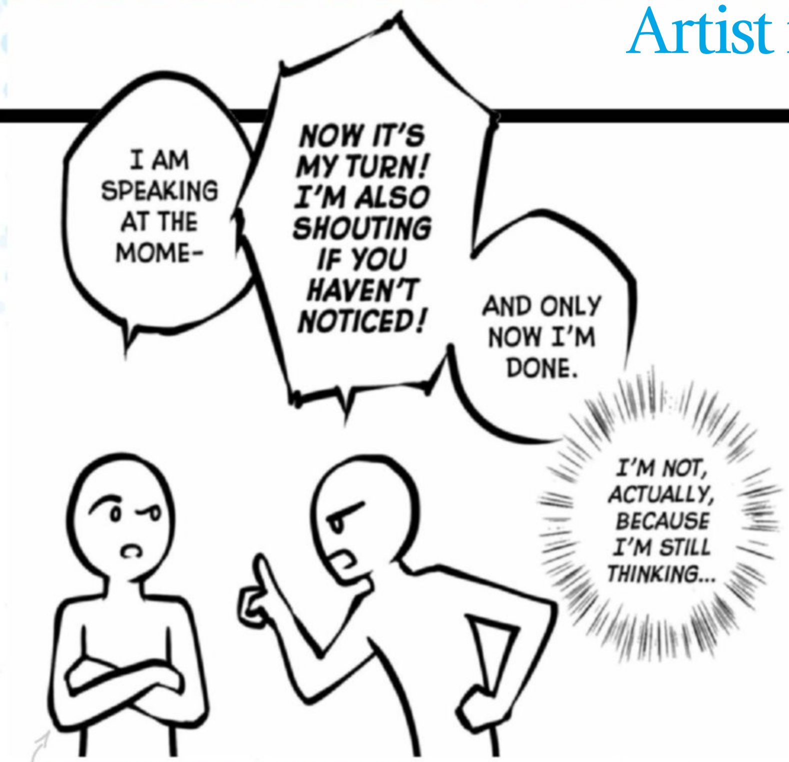



HEY SIS,
BUY THIS GAME FOR ME!
ROAD FIGHTER ロードファイター
NO WAY!
IT'S YOUR OWN FAULT IF YOU'VE GOT NO POCKET MONEY LEFT!

7 SPEECH BUBBLE BASICS

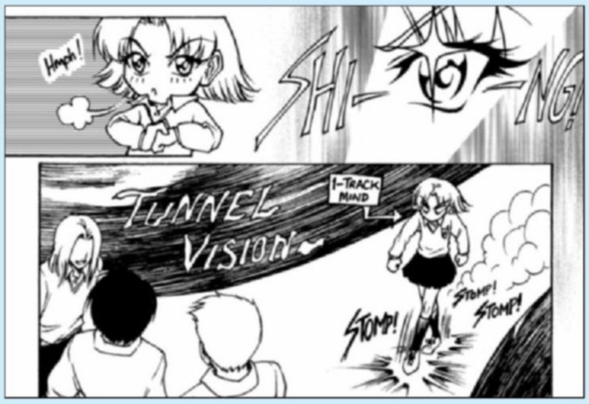
Japanese people traditionally read top-to-bottom and then right-to-left. To accommodate this, manga speech bubbles are much taller than in Western comics. They're also roomy, with lots of space around the lettering. Another key feature are tails denoting the speaker are either very small or non-existent. Rather than relying on tails, the speech bubbles are positioned near the speaker's head – use those camera angles wisely! Japanese dialogue also tends to makes it clear who's speaking, due to special verb endings and slang.

> “Manga speech bubbles are taller than in Western comics. They also have lots of space around the lettering”


I AM SPEAKING AT THE MOME-
NOW IT'S MY TURN! I'M ALSO SHOUTING IF YOU HAVEN'T NOTICED!
AND ONLY NOW I'M DONE.
I'M NOT, ACTUALLY, BECAUSE I'M STILL THINKING...

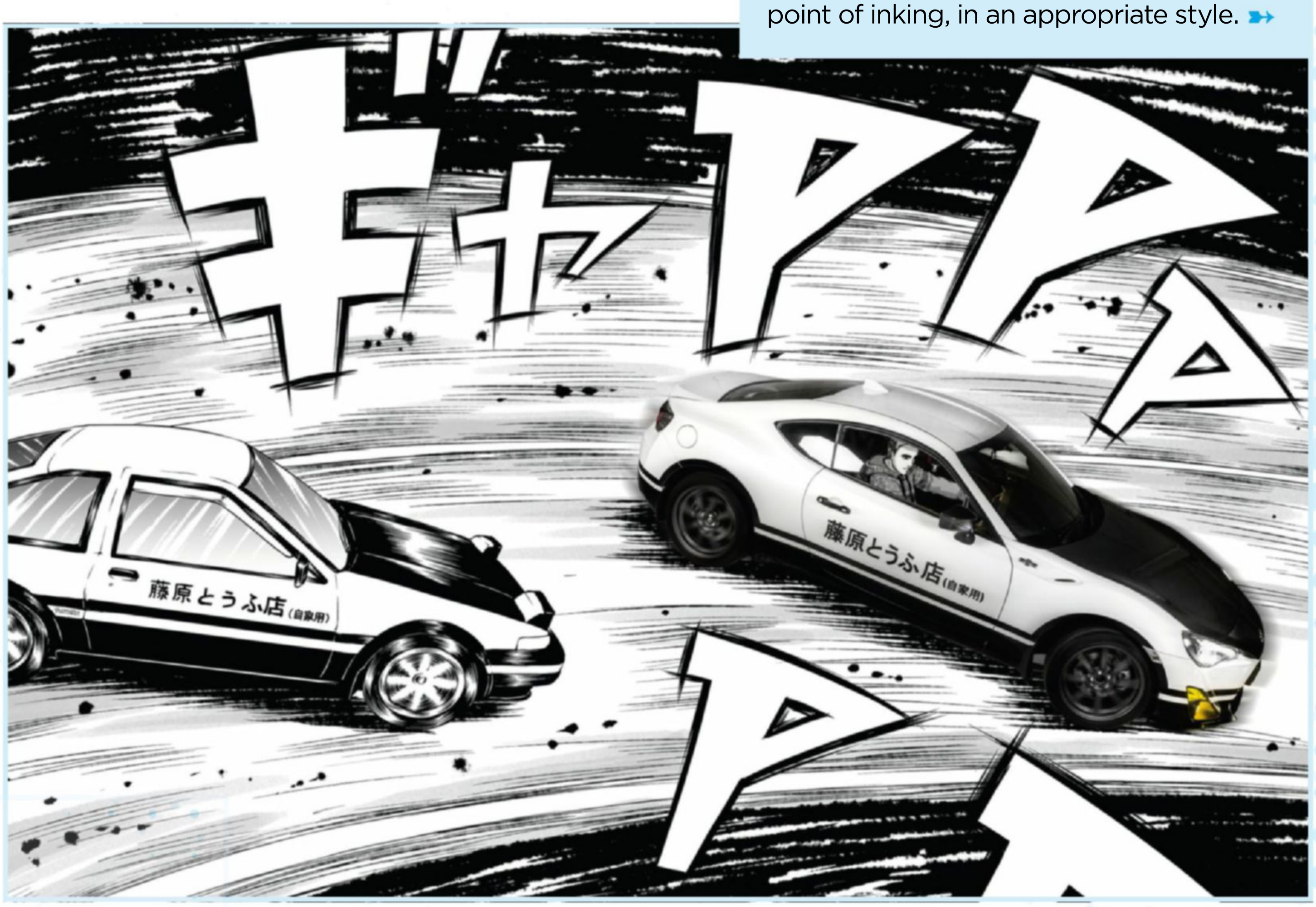
8 SPEECH BUBBLE STYLING

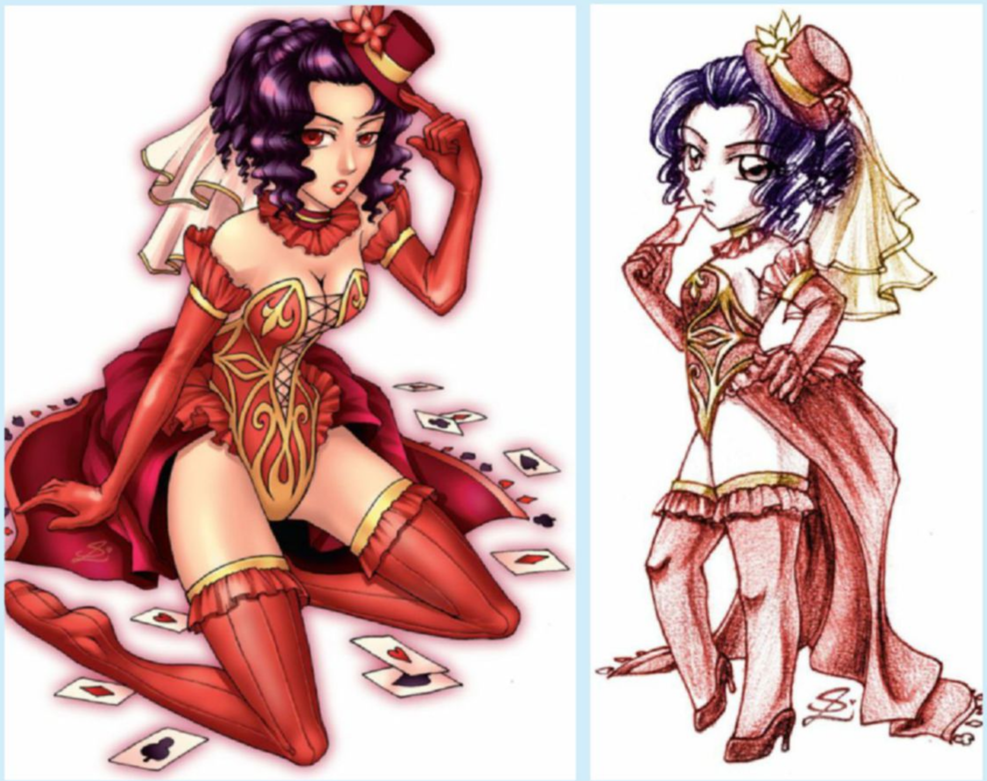
Speech bubbles in manga are a lot more organic than in other types of comics. They're almost always hand drawn, slightly irregular in shape. Joined speech bubbles are combined rather than linked by a thin line. When one character talks over another, it's depicted literally, with each speech bubble overlapping. While shouting is depicted with a more conventional spiky outline, thought bubbles aren't drawn as clouds; more often they're surrounded by a haze, either drawn or made out of screen tone.



9 SOUND EFFECTS

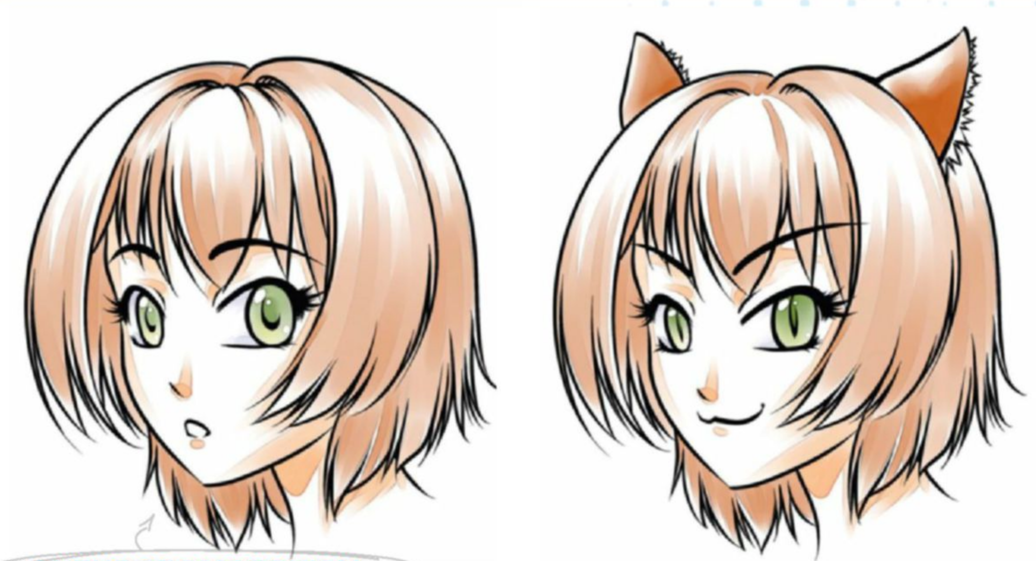
Japanese sound effects are incredibly diverse, using all manner of consonant and vowel combinations to describe crashes, thumps and slices. Pronunciations often more realistic than in English like "roar" (GA-O-!) or "slam" (pa-tan!). What's unique to Japanese onomatopoeia are sound effects for abstract concepts ("shiiin" for a stare, or silence), facial expressions ("niko" for a smile) or even temperature ("poka poka" for warmth). They are an integral part of the artwork, so are hand drawn at the point of inking, in an appropriate style. ➻





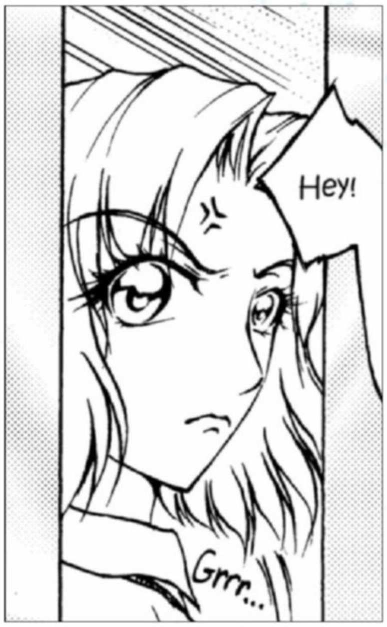
10 ALL THINGS CHIBI

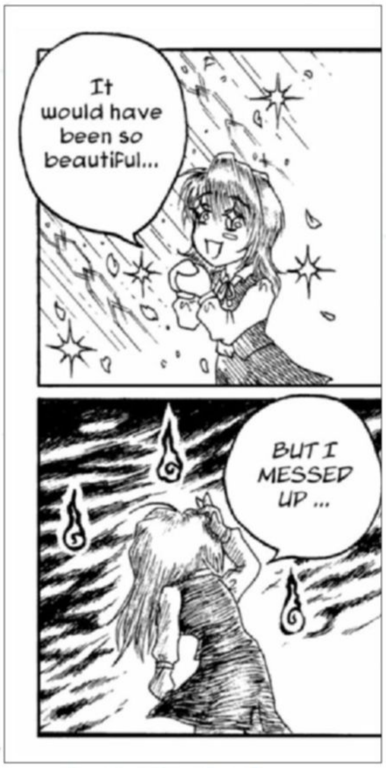
A chibi is a cute, squishy, mini-version of a person, squished down to just three to four head lengths tall, with a large head and a chubby body. Shoulders are rounded off, hips are wider, hands and feet become stubby. Although these characteristics are childlike, remember that you're not actually drawing a child! An adult chibi should still look like an adult, just highly stylised. In manga, characters are often portrayed as chibis when the story takes a lighthearted turn, for comic effect. Spot all the examples throughout this article!



11 ANTHROPOMORPHISM

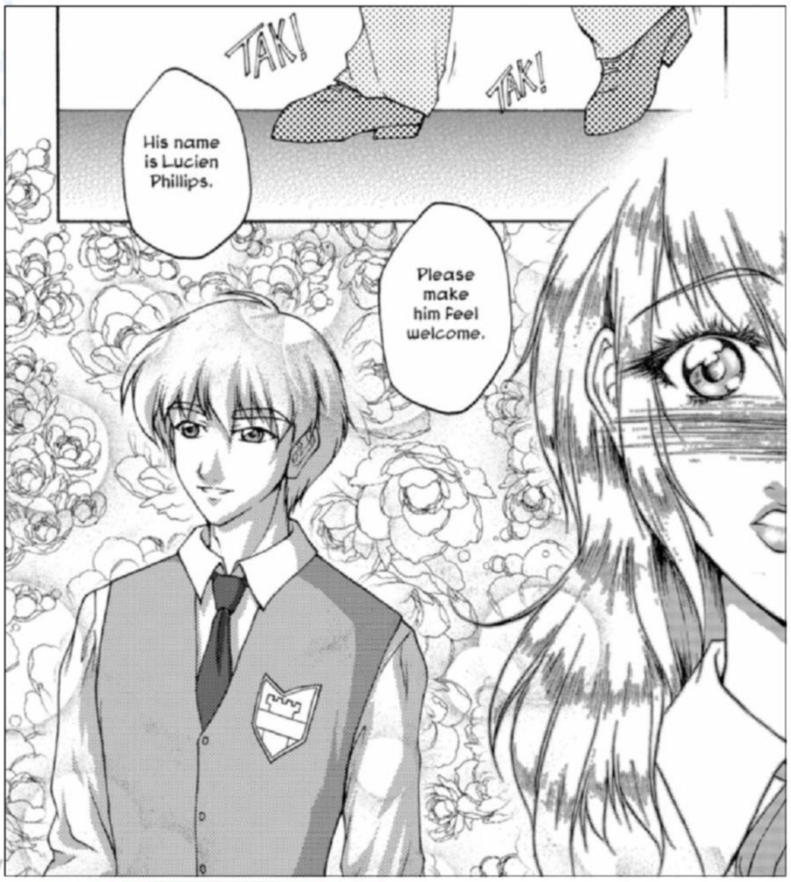
Another popular technique used in manga is 'kemonomimi', which literally means animal ears. For instance, if someone is being as sly as a cat, you can draw her with feline features; most notably cat ears and a cat tail. You can even go further with cat eyes that have slit-pupils, and using the shape of cat's mouth. Why not draw a disappointed guy as a sad puppy dog? A fierce mother as a dragon? Like chibi, it can be used for effect in specific scenes, but it's also popular as a character design for fantasy stories.





12 VISUAL GRAMMAR

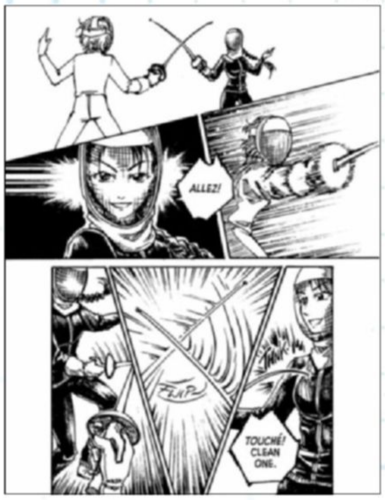
Many symbols are used in comics to enhance the viewer's understanding of what the characters are feeling, like punctuation marks for pictures. Perhaps a love heart to show romantic intentions, or a light bulb when someone has a bright idea. Manga has some unique examples: a sweatdrop for nervousness or embarrassment, a hash mark for raised veins on the forehead when someone is angry, and little spirit wisps gathering when someone is feeling depressed.



13 EMOTIVE BACKGROUNDS

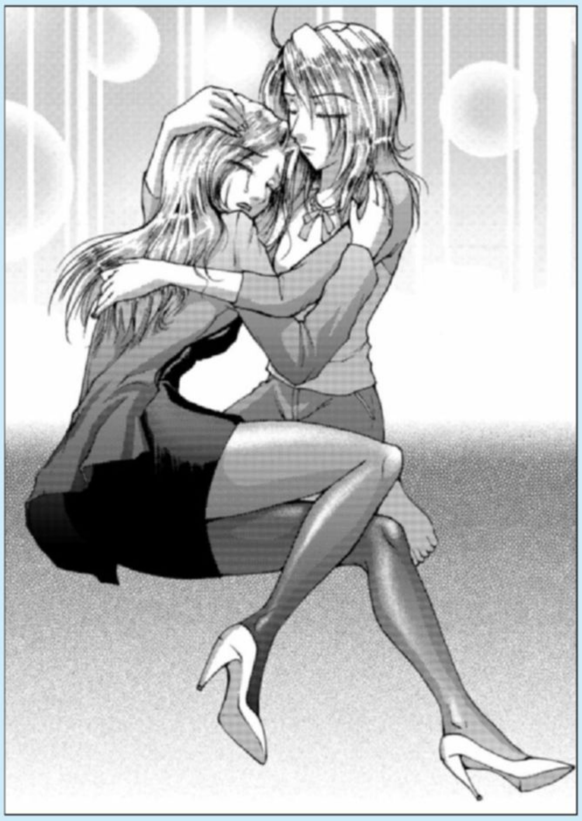
One key difference between manga and other types of comic is the use of abstract backgrounds to match the atmosphere and the emotions of the characters. Once the scene has had an establishing shot of the physical surroundings, the backgrounds can be anything: lacework and flowers to signify a budding romance; flames if someone is full of burning rage; black shadows and swirling knots to convey inner turmoil; or cookies and cakes when a character is irresistibly cute! This is particularly popular in Shoujo and Josei manga, which is aimed at girls and women.

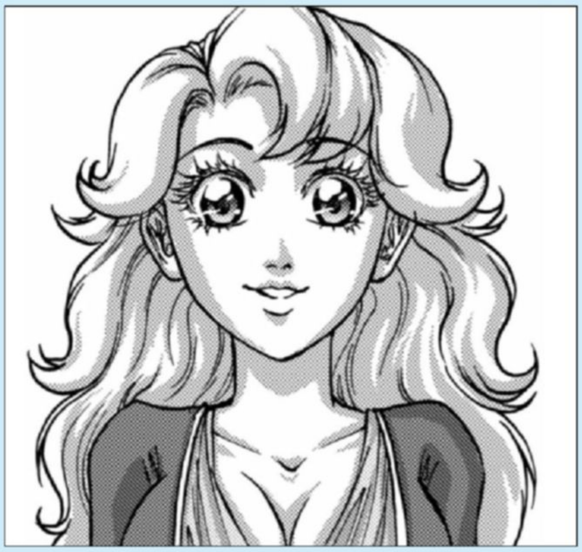
> “Unlike superhero comics that have fully inked characters, manga favours limbs that blur with motion”



14 DEPICT MOVEMENT

Manga is a dynamic form of storytelling; when a character is in a full-blown fight, they really look like as though they're moving, even flying out of the page. Unlike superhero comics that have fully inked characters and points of impact, manga favours limbs that blur with motion, backgrounds that become speedlines, channelling and enhancing the direction of the motion and highlighting the point of impact with emphasis lines originating from it. Most of this is done through inking, but can be done with screentone, too.





15 SCREENTONE EFFECTS

There are many things you can do with screentone besides just sticking it down for shading. Add white pencil over both lines and screentone for traditional white painted highlights. Try soft, burnished highlights by using an Eraser set to Dissolve. Use screentone just over the lines to give the art a blurry feeling. You can increase the contrast in your shadows by layering different screentones on top of each other, but be careful: you may get moiré if you use different densities or if you align them incorrectly.

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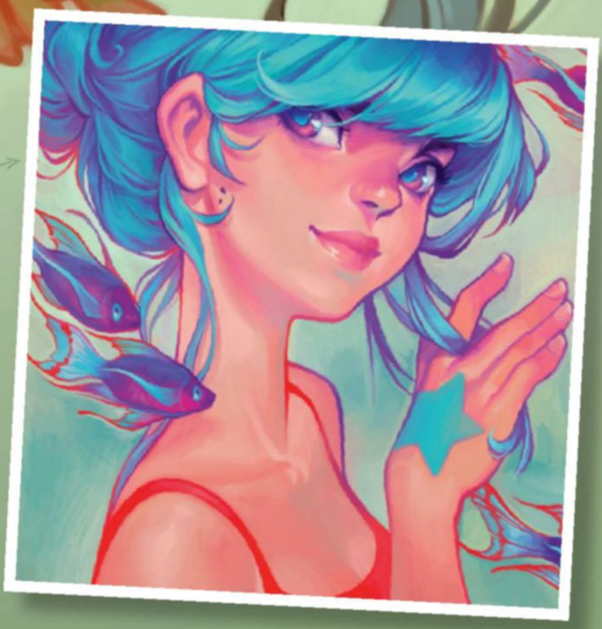
+ ARTSTATION

Your **20-page** guide to a killer portfolio!



The incredible **Lois van Baarle** paints our anniversary cover art!

Feng Zhu's sketches

The master artist and teacher opens up his sketchbook just for us.

Life-changing tips!

Domareen Fox's Photoshop shortcuts are guaranteed to change your (art) life!

Level up your art

Sketch genius Daniel Landerman reveals how to get better at drawing.

Legendary advice

Donato Giancola reveals how you can add emotion to science fiction art.

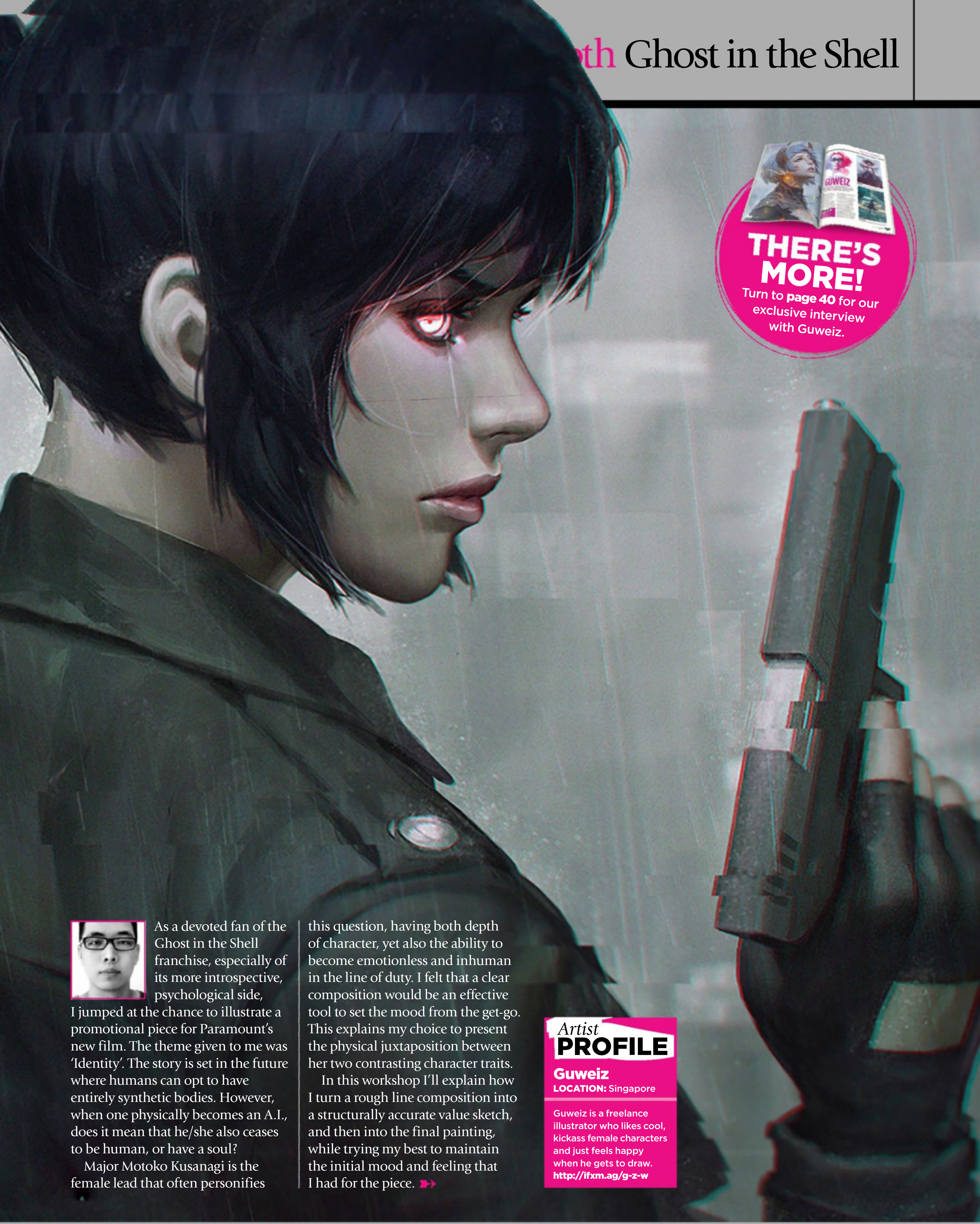
ISSUE 150 UK ON SALE

Friday 16 June

Photoshop

PAINT ICONIC GHOST IN THE SHELL ART

Guweiz creates promotional art that explores the theme of identity in the iconic anime film universe



As a devoted fan of the Ghost in the Shell franchise, especially of its more introspective, psychological side, I jumped at the chance to illustrate a promotional piece for Paramount's new film. The theme given to me was 'Identity'. The story is set in the future where humans can opt to have entirely synthetic bodies. However, when one physically becomes an A.I., does it mean that he/she also ceases to be human, or have a soul?

Major Motoko Kusanagi is the female lead that often personifies this question, having both depth of character, yet also the ability to become emotionless and inhuman in the line of duty. I felt that a clear composition would be an effective tool to set the mood from the get-go. This explains my choice to present the physical juxtaposition between her two contrasting character traits.

In this workshop I'll explain how I turn a rough line composition into a structurally accurate value sketch, and then into the final painting, while trying my best to maintain the initial mood and feeling that I had for the piece.

THERE'S MORE!
Turn to **page 40** for our exclusive interview with Guweiz.

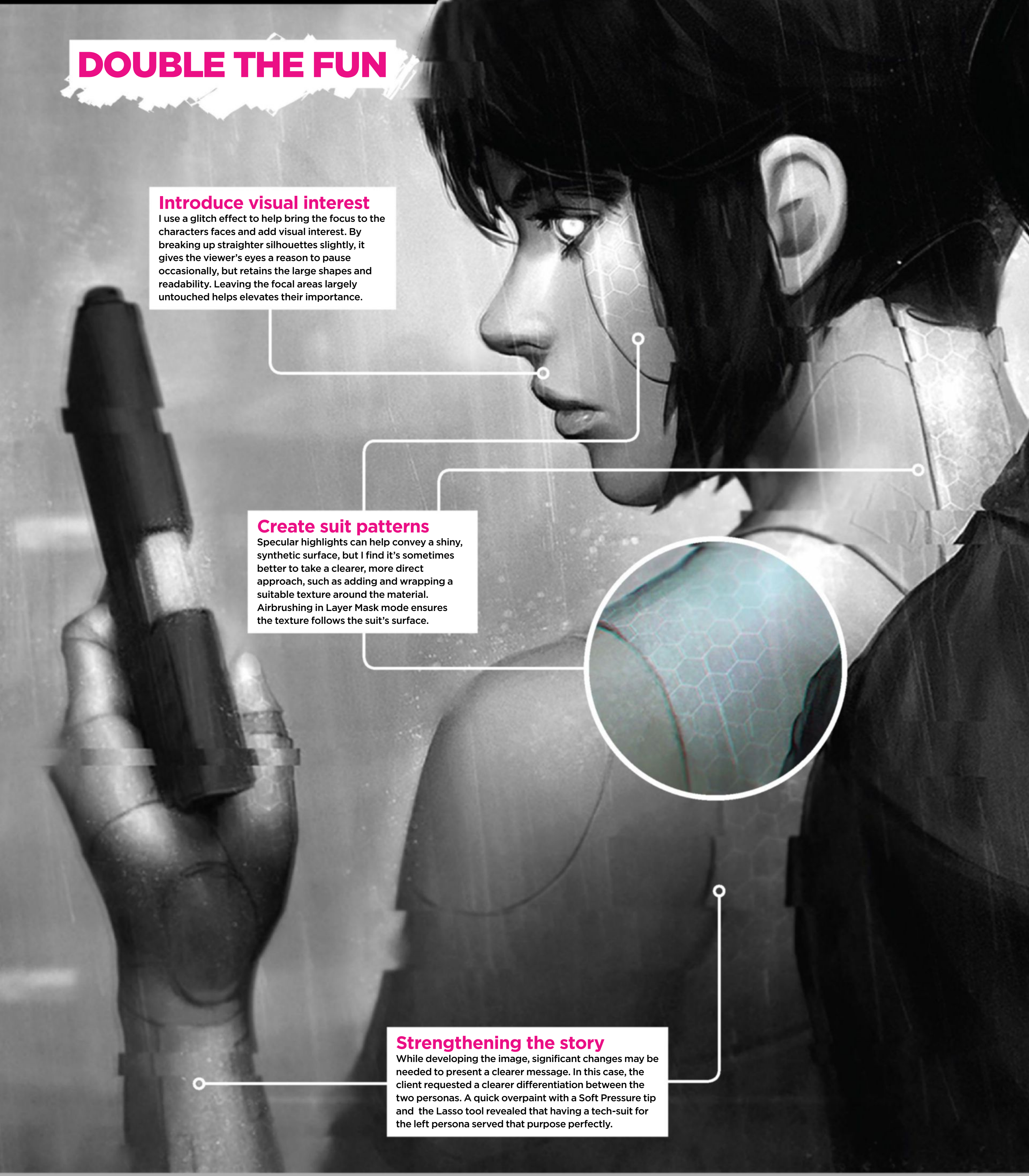
Artist **PROFILE**

Guweiz

LOCATION: Singapore

Guweiz is a freelance illustrator who likes cool, kickass female characters and just feels happy when he gets to draw.
http://ifxm.ag/g-z-w

DOUBLE THE FUN



Introduce visual interest

I use a glitch effect to help bring the focus to the characters faces and add visual interest. By breaking up straighter silhouettes slightly, it gives the viewer's eyes a reason to pause occasionally, but retains the large shapes and readability. Leaving the focal areas largely untouched helps elevates their importance.

Create suit patterns

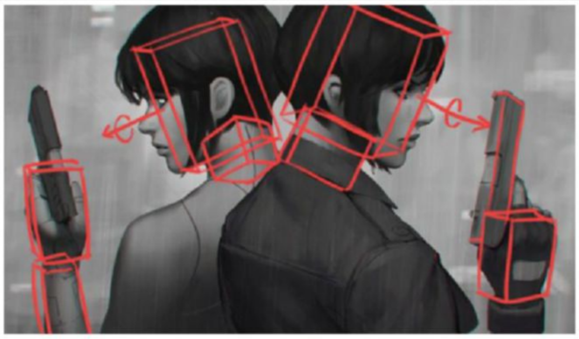
Specular highlights can help convey a shiny, synthetic surface, but I find it's sometimes better to take a clearer, more direct approach, such as adding and wrapping a suitable texture around the material. Airbrushing in Layer Mask mode ensures the texture follows the suit's surface.

Strengthening the story

While developing the image, significant changes may be needed to present a clearer message. In this case, the client requested a clearer differentiation between the two personas. A quick overpaint with a Soft Pressure tip and the Lasso tool revealed that having a tech-suit for the left persona served that purpose perfectly.

Depicting strands of hair

After studying many photo references of hair, I've noticed that the thinnest hair strands usually capture and reflect a slight flare in front of bright lighting. It's also a neat way to show the viewers the highest "resolution" of detail by having a prominent, fine element presented near to the focal point(s).



Make use of perspective boxes

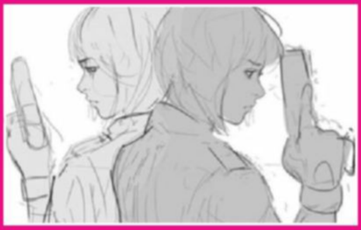
It's sometimes easy to forget or lose small degrees of rotation and contours, especially in the early stages of rendering where the lighting setup isn't fully established. These boxes helps remind me of the facing and orientation of important forms in the composition.

A mix of rain drops

A mix of brush-generated and hand-painted raindrops helps push the atmospheric effect in the scene. Any suitable particle brush with Motion Blur, along with transform tools for perspective, creates the regular layer. Two or three of these coupled with a hand-painted rain layer finishes the job.

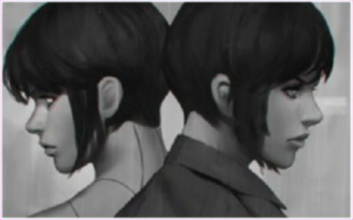
How I visualise...

MAJOR KUSANAGI'S DUAL IDENTITY



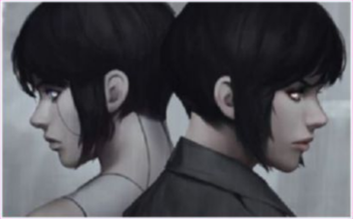
1 Build the scene

At this stage, I focus on finding the best set of elements to fill my canvas with. I preserve my energy by focusing on the rough layout, ensuring that there's sufficient detail for both myself and the client to understand.



2 Find the structures

It's key to define structures in the painting accurately, while keeping in mind the ambience and lighting setup. Without strong directional lighting, the positioning of highlights and halftones become indicators of form.



3 Colour over values

I want the colors to take a back seat, in order to sell the grey-green ambience. It's a balancing act to define local colors sufficiently without overtly and unintentionally highlighting a particular area in the piece.

RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES: SOFT PRESSURE TIP

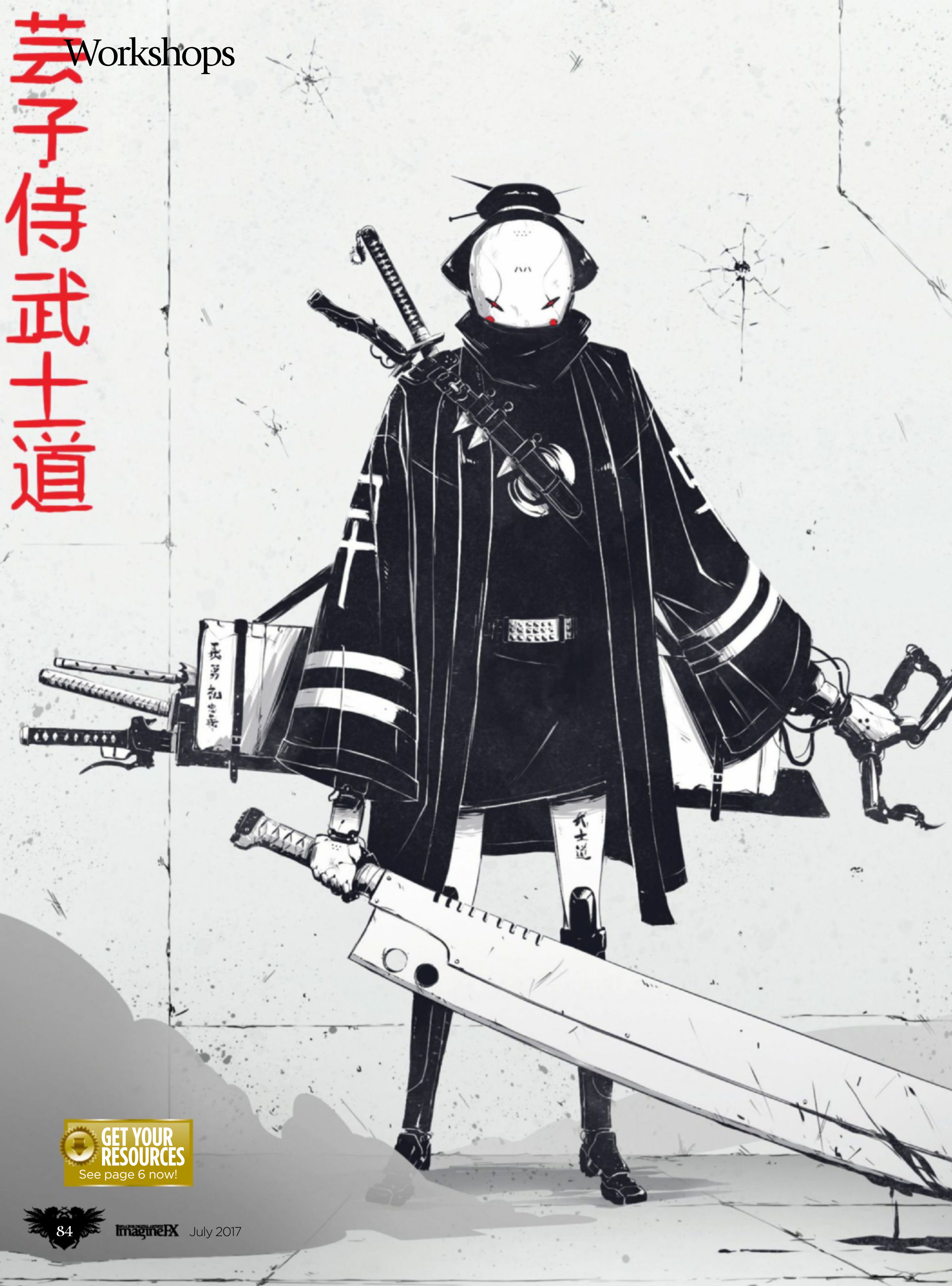
Gives a thinner stroke on low pressure, and is ideal for airbrushes when set on high pressure.

FIXED SIZE ROUND

General painting brush that helps avoid unintentional thickness variations common with the default Round brush.

VARIED PARTICLES

Produces particles varied in value, size, sharpness and opacity. Use it with blend modes for more control.



GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 6 now!

Sketchbook Pro & Photoshop

BOOST YOUR CONCEPT ART TECHNIQUES

Concept artist **Gennaro Grazioso** reveals how he tackles character design to capture the essence of a geisha girl

Artist
PROFILE

Gennaro Grazioso
LOCATION: England

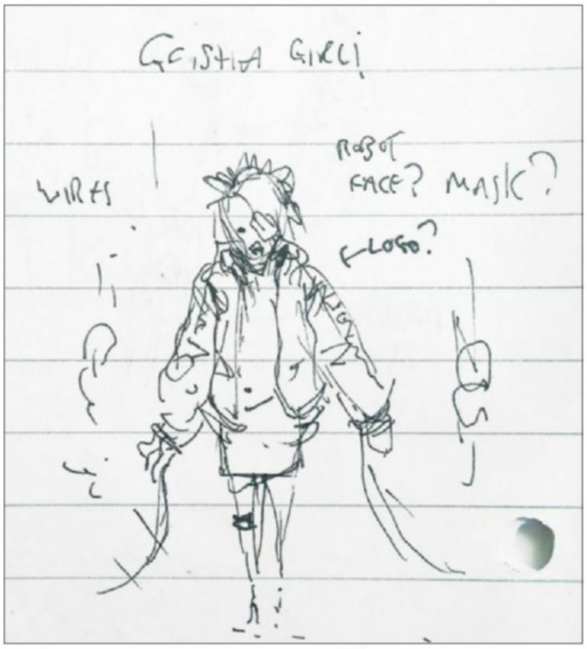
Gennaro works as a freelance concept artist. He loves coffee and free chocolate, and spends his time chilling with his wife and dog Bruno.
www.grazeart.com

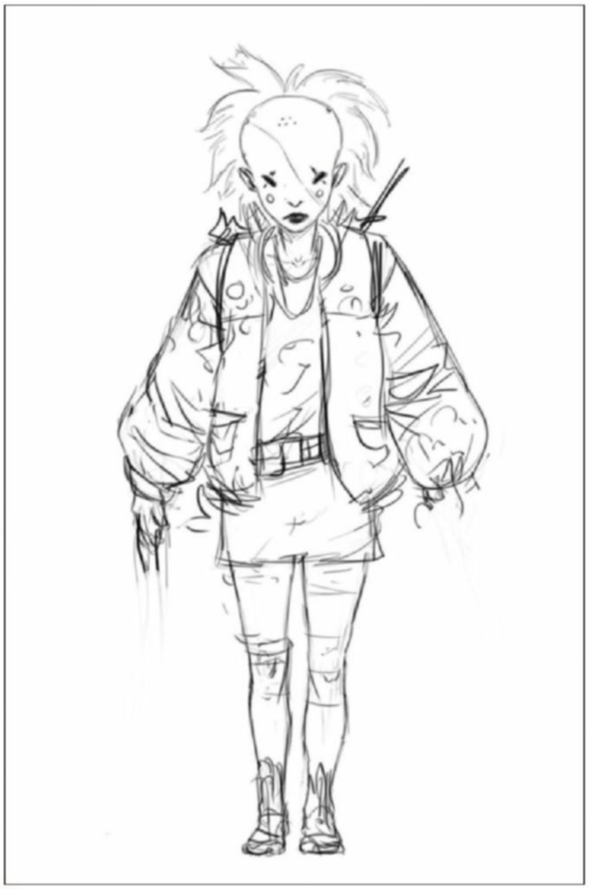
They say inspiration can be found anywhere. I was just scrolling through Facebook one day when I came across a competition to design a geisha or samurai character. That's when my idea for Geiko began to take shape.

A young geisha doll, driven by anger and revenge, roams the streets as she takes down all the bad men that hurt people like her. She's a geisha turned self-serving samurai, a vigilante within a dangerous cyberpunk universe.

I wanted to capture a grungy dark urban vibe, laced with elegant traditional Japanese elements. The idea that kept coming up again and again was to make her 'bad-ass'. That's the core essence of Geiko that I established early on and held on to until the very end.

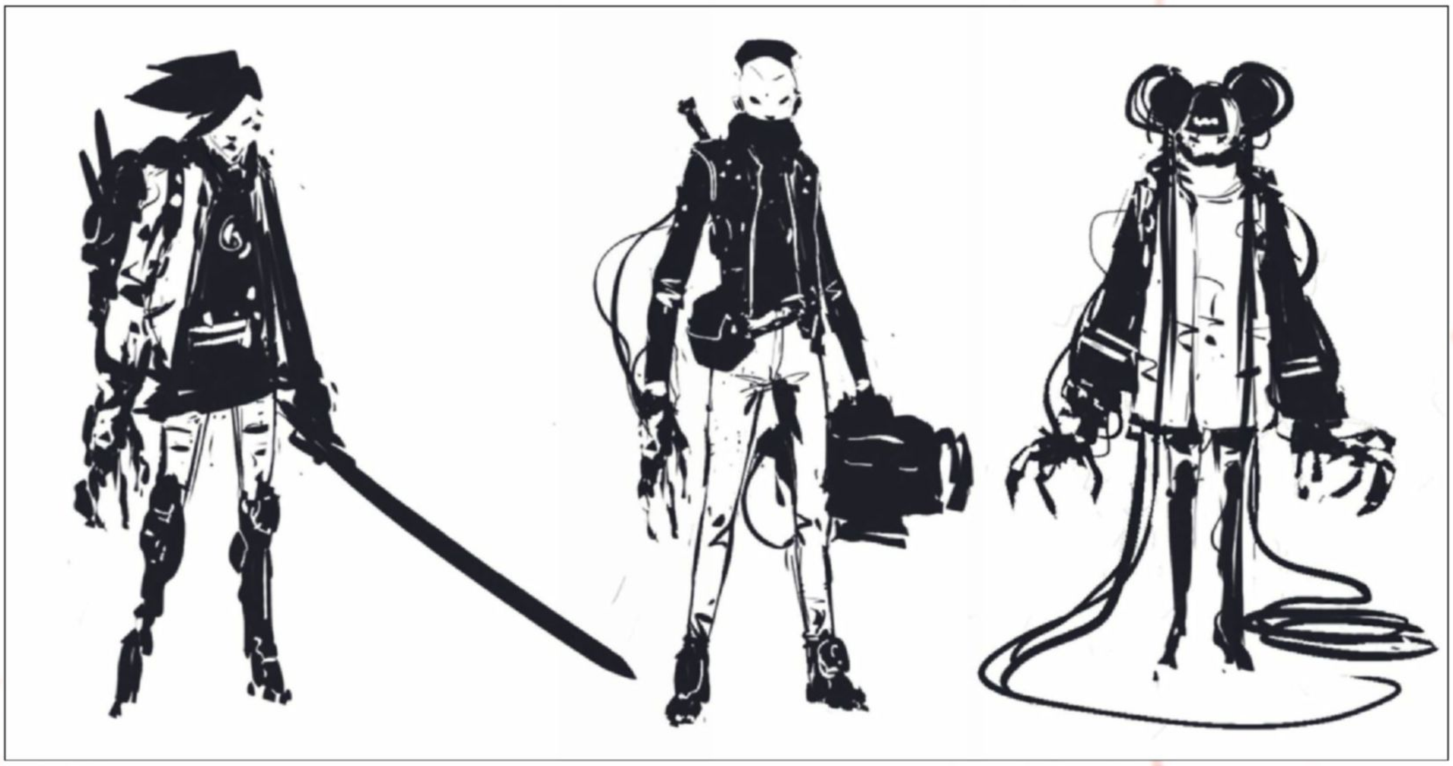
Here, I'll explain how I developed this Geiko illustration, and my whole thought process and approach to design. You'll pick up tips on how to push your ideas forward and craft the final details. I want to leave you with concepts and methods you can adapt and use in your own work. So let's start with the most crucial bit…





1 Visualising the big idea

The very first step is deciding the look and feel of the character and capturing it all with a rough sketch. The most important thing is knowing exactly how you want your audience to feel about your character, because this will drive your whole thought process from start to finish. My core idea is to design Geiko so that people's gut reaction to seeing her is, "That's bad-ass!" ➸



2 Generating thumbnails

With that clear goal in mind, I jump into SketchBook Pro and use the Triangle brush to sketch my ideas out, exploring and pushing them further while staying true to the original Geiko essence. I keep it loose and gestural at this point, making notes on the ideas that I'd like to take forward. Throughout this process I keep asking myself, "Is she bad-ass enough?"

RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

SKETCHBOOK PRO AND PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES: TRIANGLE BRUSH

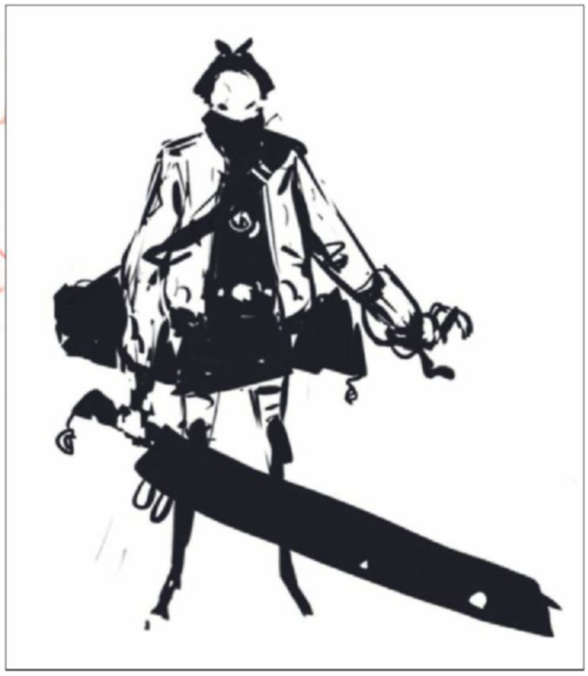
I used this SBP brush to create all the line work for my Geiko character.

TRIANGLE ERASER BRUSH

This SBP brush enables me to erase the line work and 'sculpt' the forms.

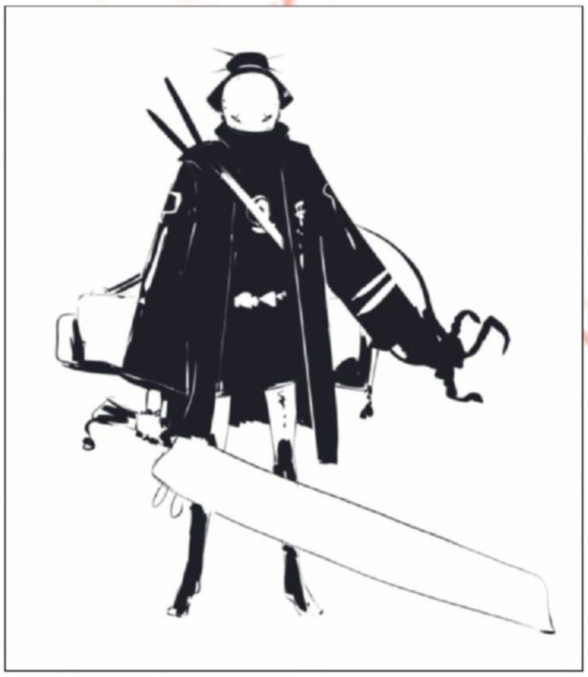
TEXTURE BRUSH

I use this Photoshop brush to add texture to the image using a mask.



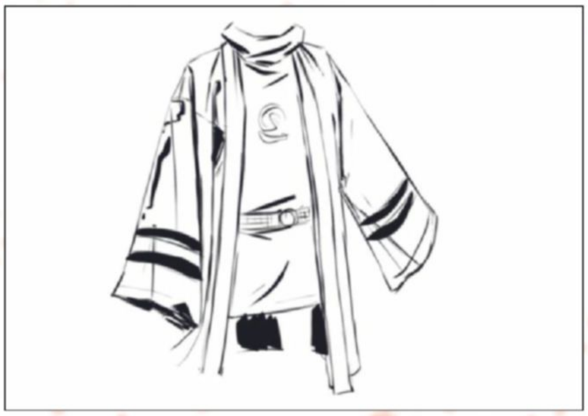
3 Finalise the idea

This is where I take all my favourite ideas that came out of the thumbnail process and explore how they can better capture Geiko's essence. I duplicate my favourite thumbnail several times and try out those ideas, mixing more Japanese cultural elements back in with an urban cyberpunk twist. Don't add too many details just yet. All you want to do here is finalise your big idea.



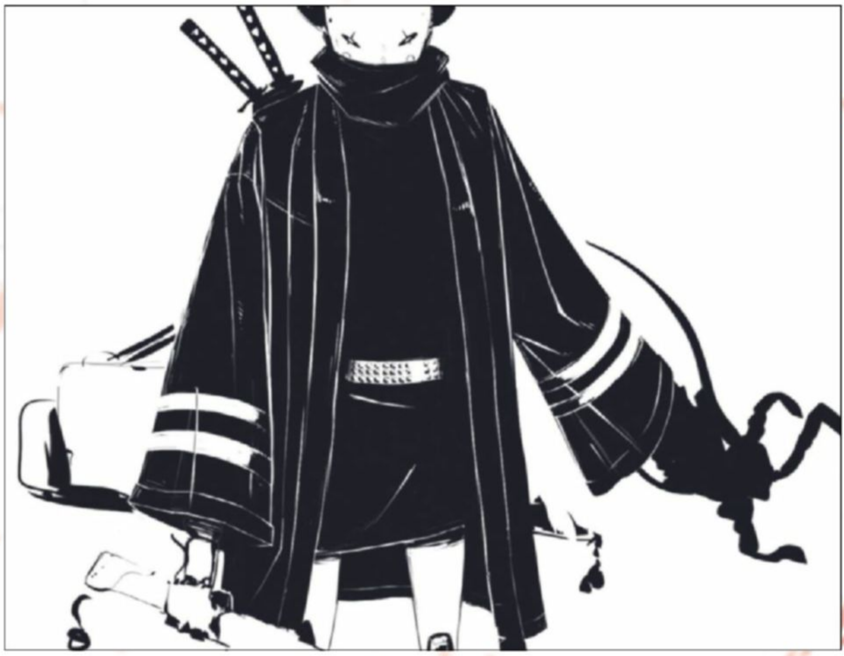
4 Polish and craft the design

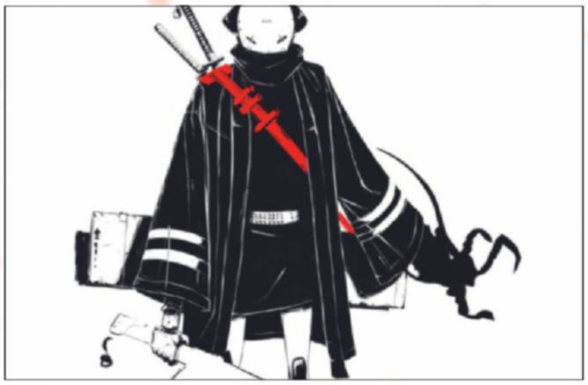
Everything from this point on is just polishing up. You'll still be making some design choices, but the core essence shouldn't change. I usually start with the face, because it's the most important part of any character. If I get it right, the rest falls into place. There are no secrets here. I sketch with the Triangle brush and Eraser, pressing S to quickly flip between the two brushes.



5 Refine the clothing

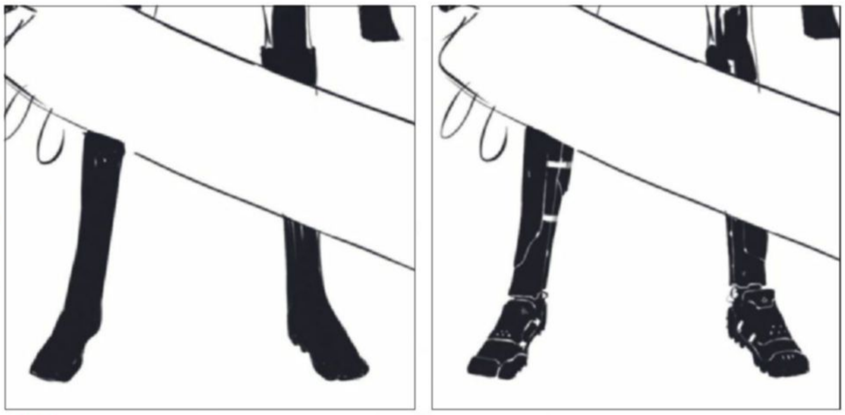
The next major element to get right is her kimono. I start by grabbing some references. (But remember: references are just guides, so don't feel bound by them.) Then I create a new layer and make a rough sketch, focusing on the design and flow of the wrinkles. For the final look, I use the Eraser to follow my initial line work on the black kimono and create the white-on-black effect.





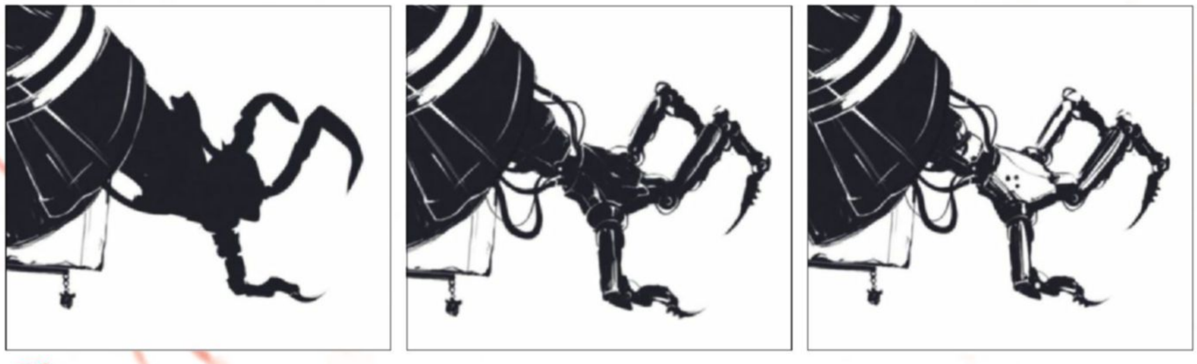
6 Accessories and props

Using references, I work on the swords on her back, making a quick sketch in red to explore the function of the strap, while also playing with the idea of adding kunai knives. I also try to add clues about her personality, like a Totoro charm at the end of one of her swords. It's subtle, but it helps make the character seem more well-rounded.



7 Bring in detail on her boots

Next I start cleaning up Geiko's boots. In a similar way to how I did the clothing, I use the Eraser to create the line work, which is consistent with the style of the image. Her footwear is inspired by a mixture of high-heeled boots with a sporty twist and the Japanese ninja sandals. I want to create a glossy type of material for her legs, so I add white highlights to achieve that look.



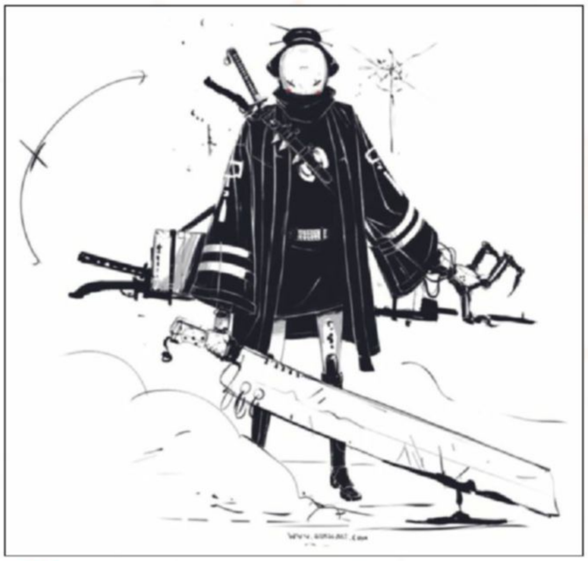
8 Creating the mechanical gauntlet

I want to keep the essence of my sketch, so I use the base silhouette and start cleaning it up, erasing panel lines in, and drawing exposed wires to make it feel more customised instead of being built in a factory. I flick back and forth with the S key throughout, drawing lines in and erasing where necessary. I realise that the silhouetted gauntlet is blending in too much with her kimono, so I opt for a lighter version that helps to create a better read. ➤

PRO SECRETS

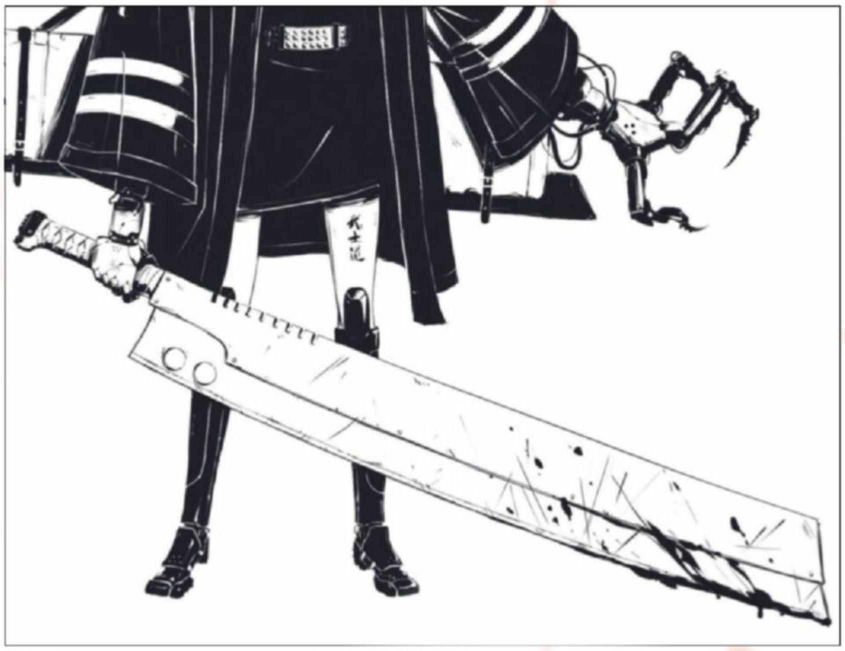
Add a brand to your work

Branding, like your logo or signature and website URL, helps make your illustration yours wherever it ends up. People will always know whom to credit and future clients can contact you easily. Don't forget to give it a title, too. It'll help finish it off and make the piece feel more considered and complete.



9 Stop… it's paintover time!

Now that I'm almost done with the design, I take a step back and look for any bits I can push further. A quick paintover enables me to explore how I can exaggerate Geiko's bad-assery. I add a more well-rounded toolset of weapons including samurai gun-swords and a traditional Japanese umbrella. Then I push the storytelling with dripping blood and bullet holes, along with a smoke trail that adds movement, mystery and depth.

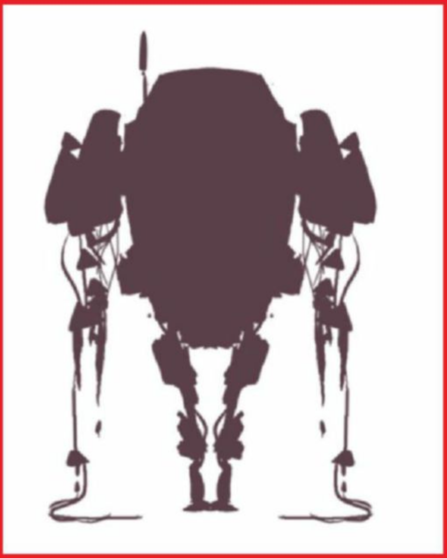


10 Detailing Geiko's primary weapon

From the loose sketch done in the paintover stage, I begin to finalise the main sword design. I don't want her weapon to be elegant or well-crafted, but to feel more imposing and threatening, so I choose to go with an exaggerated butcher's knife. I use the Ruler and Lazy Mouse features in SketchBook Pro to create the long, sweeping arcs in the blade, ensuring the line work feels rough and grungy.

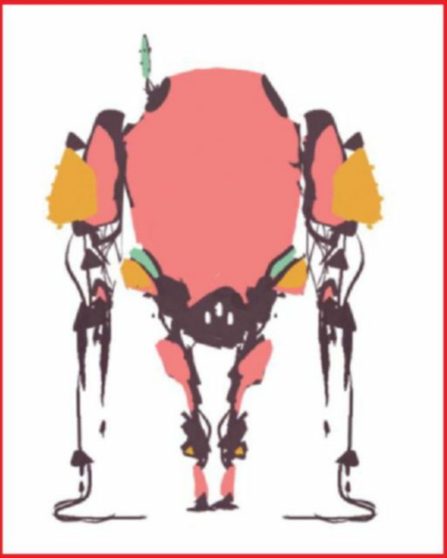
How I design…

WHIMSICAL ROBOTS IN SKETCHBOOK PRO



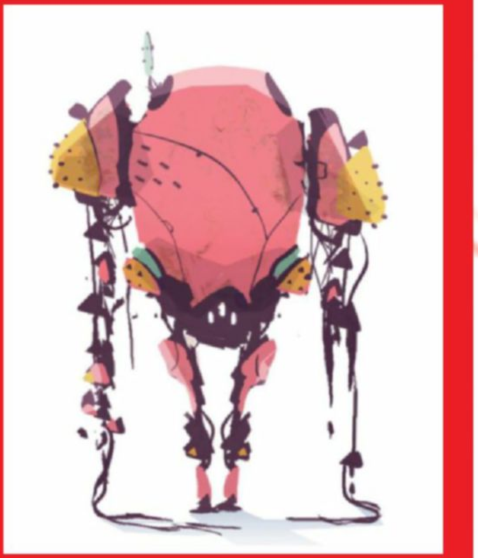
1 Work symmetrically

Start off by blocking out a rough silhouette using SketchBook Pro symmetry function (press Y). This tool enables you to draw half the character and it updates in real time on the mirrored side, which I find essential for rapid thumbnailing. Once you're happy with the shape, lock the layer.



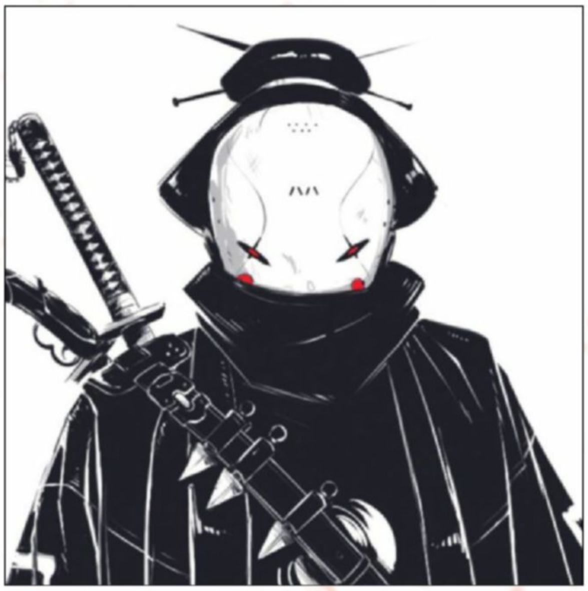
2 Break up the design

Choose a main colour to start blocking out the metal casing for the robot. I create my own colour palette within SketchBook Pro, to speed up this step. I add some lights to represent the face, making the character more relatable. A secondary colour breaks up the design.



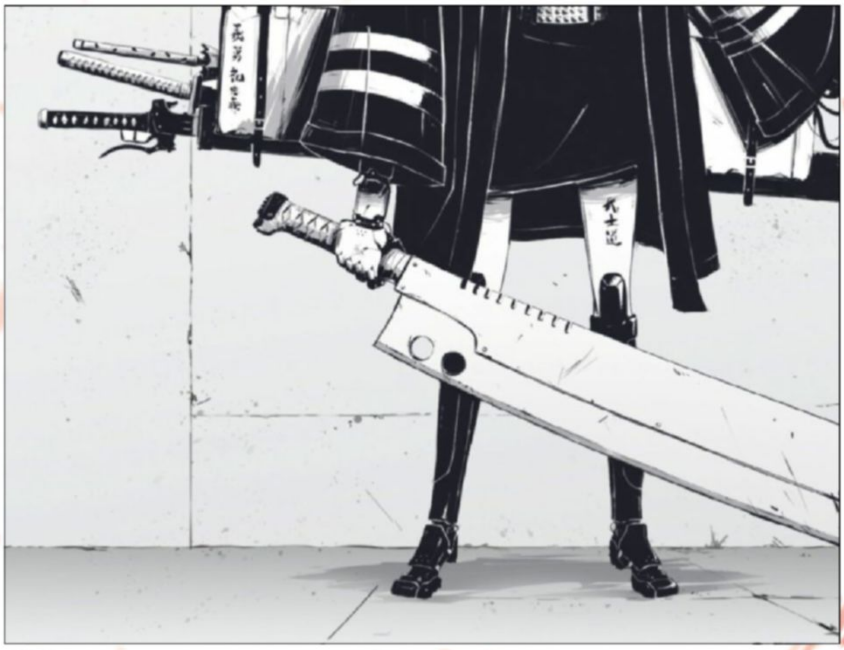
3 Detailing and lighting

To finish things off I begin adding some asymmetry to the design. Once the extra details are in place, I create a new layer set to Multiply for the shadows at 30 per cent Opacity. I paint a rim light and a texture, both set to Overlay effect. Then I colour grade the final image in Photoshop.



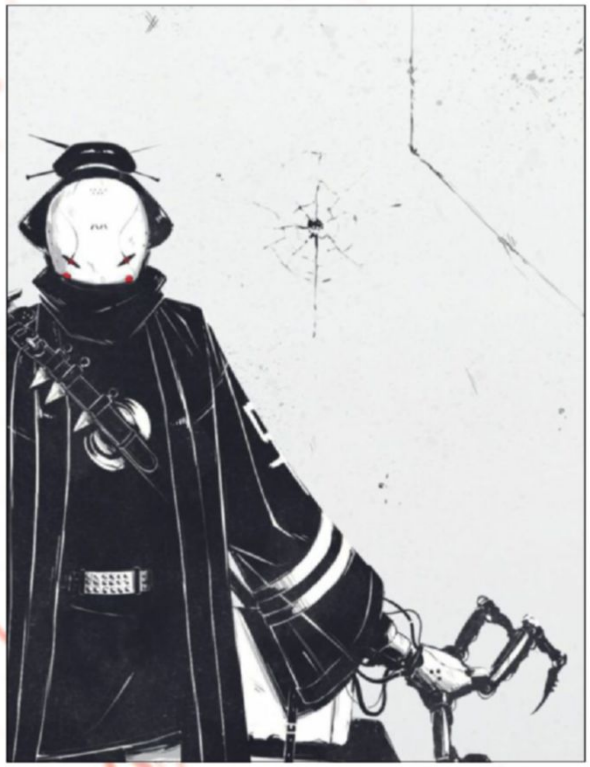
11 Finishing touches

Before finishing up the design, I take the time to polish it up. I decide to add more details to her mask and sword, tweak the design of her cross-body strap and give her some branding and tattoos, making sure I use the correct Japanese phrases. Details like these count. I also include a shadow pass to add more depth, as well as the juxtaposition of her red demon eyes and rosy red cheeks.



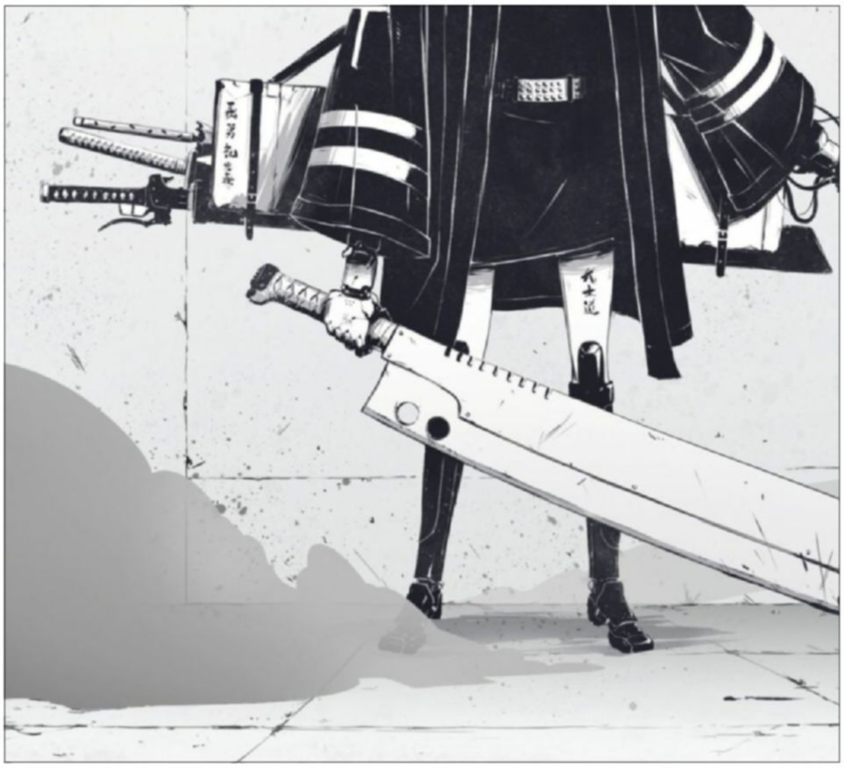
12 Establish the background

With the character done, I jump into Photoshop to create the background and atmosphere to round off the piece. I imagine Geiko in a back alley, fresh from a fight. So I add a floor and wall pattern, making these more sci-fi and grungy looking to enhance the cyberpunk feel. I add a quick gradient to them, which helps pop the character from the background and add more depth to the image.



13 Background details

I now add extra details and textures to the environment. Bullet holes, dust particles and dripping blood help tell more of Geiko's story and push the final illustration. I use masks to blend some of the line work out, and use texture on the background and character with custom brushes to help it appear less digital.



14 Bring in action cues to push the mood

For even more depth and mood, I add action cues like smoke at Geiko's feet. I use the Lasso tool to create the shape of the smoke, taking into account the wind direction that may tilt it slightly. I do this quickly to capture the motion, instead of lingering on it too long and making it too refined. Once I fill in my selection, to make it appear more like smoke I reduce the Opacity and use a mask to blend out specific parts even more, letting the background elements pop through.

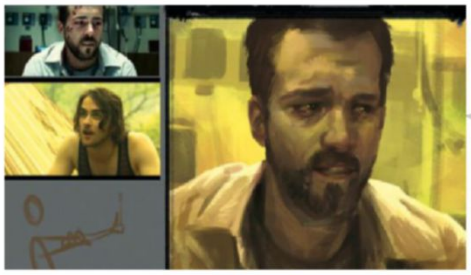
NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

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

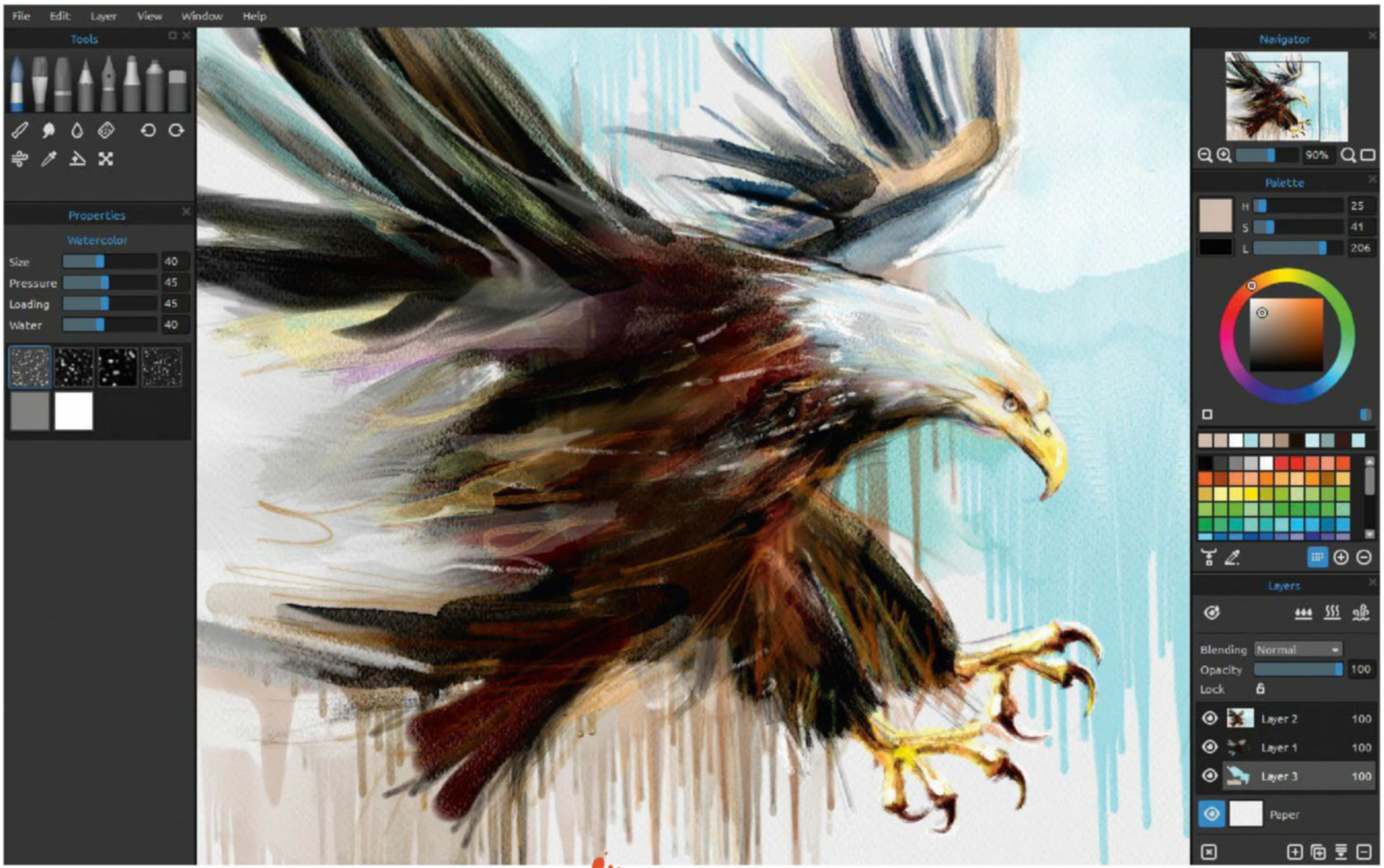


SOFTWARE

TRAINING

BOOKS

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



Size 40
Pressure 45
Loading 45
Water 40
H 25
S 41
L 206
Blending Normal
Opacity 100
Lock
Layer 2 100
Layer 1 100
Layer 3 100

By tilting the canvas you can make paint drip and move from simulated gravity, as Rana Dias has done in this piece.

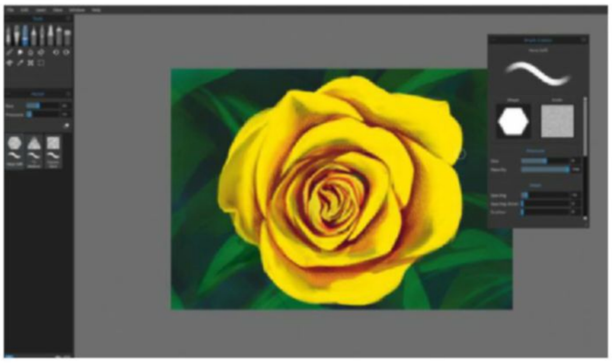
Rebelle 2

MAC & PC

KEEP IT REAL Escape Motions' budget program is the latest evolution in digital art software, which attempts the recreation of traditional media

Price £70 (£35 if upgrading from version one) **Company** Escape Motions **Web** www.escapemotions.com

After launching the program for the first time, Rebelle feels like a low-calorie version of Photoshop. There are noticeably fewer tools and menus. The list of brush tips is a lot smaller (at least in the program's default installation package) and there appear to be fewer options.



Once you choose your media – in this instance, pastels – you can vary the brush shape to suit.

But this program is a different beast from Photoshop. In the top left corner is a small set of realistic-looking paint brushes with different shapes. Yet clicking them doesn't give you a variety of shapes, but rather different painting media.

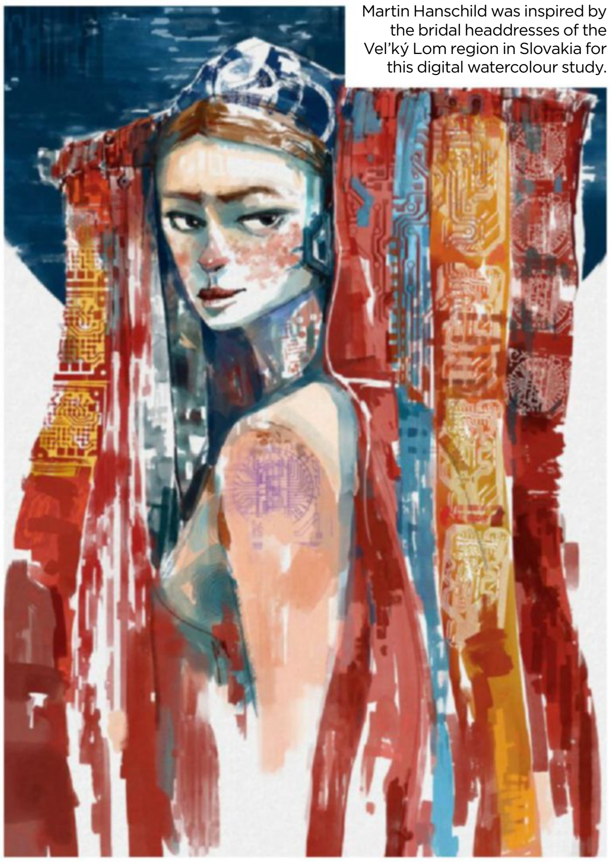
Furthest on the left is watercolour, then acrylic, pastel, coloured pencil, ink, marker and spray paint. Within each of these is a submenu of brush tips, each with a clutch of options.

Rebelle's developers have rebuilt the program's brush engine from version one. There's now a range of industry-standard settings such as Jitter, Opacity, Pressure and Shape for customising your brushes. Simple sliders enable you to adjust a brush's options,and we loved the look of the resulting paint splatters, strokes and ink lines. You can achieve very interesting effects if you choose to mix mediums. All without any mess, too!

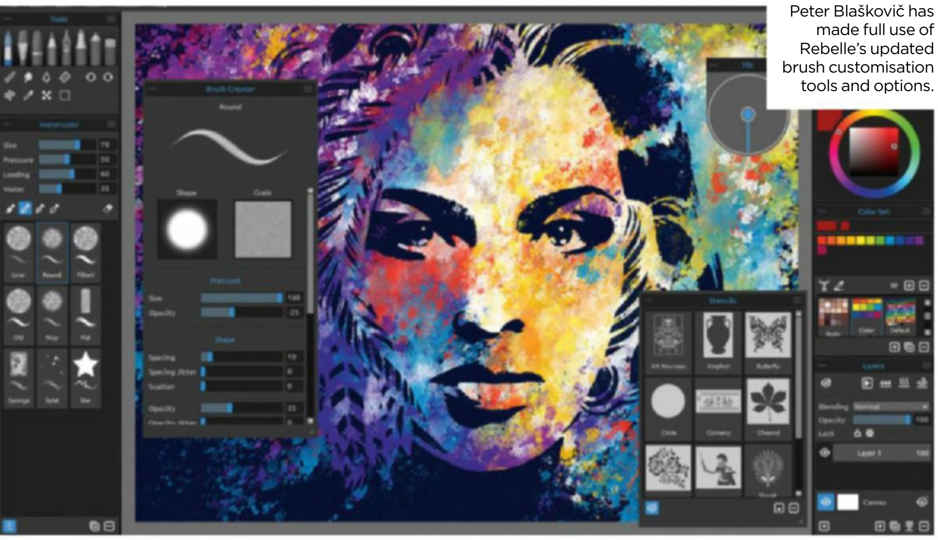
Indeed, while there are painting programs that can simulate real-life tools, such as Painter and Fresh Paint, Rebelle takes it a step further with features like the ability to speed up or slow down drying time. It's not a perfect recreation, but it's the best we've seen to date.

> “You can achieve very interesting effects if you choose to mix mediums. All without any mess, too!”

Jay Hardy used Rebelle's acrylics to paint this striking portrait piece.



Martin Hanschild was inspired by the bridal headdresses of the Vel'ký Lom region in Slovakia for this digital watercolour study.



Peter Blaškovič has made full use of Rebelle's updated brush customisation tools and options.

As you'd expect, Escape Motions has been listening to the Rebelle community since the program's launch in 2014, and version two incorporates a range of new features.

Traditional watercolour artists use masking fluid to help them create clean shapes and edges. Rebelle enables you to do the same, and better still, any tool can be used to paint a mask. The introduction of stencils also helps you to achieve strong shapes on the canvas – and as well as using the default selection, you can also import or quickly create your own stencils. Other new highlights include selection tools (missing from version one, perhaps unbelievably), import and export options for PSD files, and the ability to Lock Transparency.

You could argue that Rebelle almost recreates the behaviour of paint too much. For artists unfamiliar or out of practice with traditional media, it can be jarring when colours dry differently to when you put them down. But that's also its appeal. Download the trial version and see for yourself!

DETAILS

Features

- Choose from acrylic, watercolour, pastel, ink, marker and spray paint
- Canvas textures shows through
- Paints mix on the canvas as you use them
- Drying times can be altered to suit
- Change the canvas angle to make watercolours drip
- Smudge sticks enable you to blend different media
- Different paint types can be layered over each other
- Use water to blend shapes and colours
- Clean interface
- New visual tools for brush creation

System Requirements

PC: Windows Vista, 7 or 10, Intel i3 or equivalent AMD processor, 4GB RAM, 100MB hard disk space, Open GL graphics card with 1GB RAM

Mac: OS X 10.9, Intel i3 processor, 4GB RAM, 100MB hard disk space, graphics card with 1GB RAM

Rating

★★★★☆

ARTIST INTERVIEW

MARTIN HANSCHILD

The artist discusses how Rebelle fits into his art and workflow

What does Rebelle make easier for you?

I'm able to achieve results similar to traditional watercolour painting – just digitally!

But does Rebelle make anything harder?

You need to be careful, because you have to stop your colours or water flowing at the right time, or else you might lose an interesting shape. It's closer to the analogue technique. But I'd say this just adds to the fun. What actually makes Rebelle harder is that it lacks some features that are common in other art programs, such as image resize, crop and varied selection tools.

Did you find the interface easy to use?

Yes, it's simple and clear. All of its panels can be docked, so you can change their position and size, and either attach them or let them float in your workspace. I have worked with Rebelle from version 1.0 and it had fewer options and possibilities, then. This time it took around two to three hours to get the hang of it

Does the brush feature seem useful to you, or gimmicky?

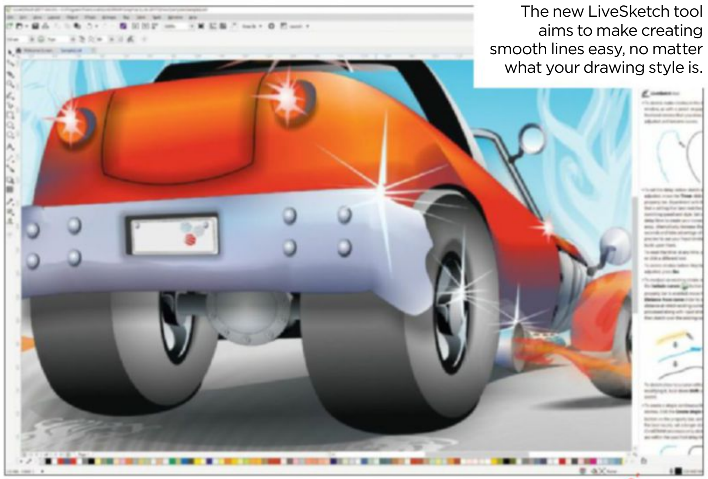
The new brush editor is definitely not gimmicky. I'd actually call it a game changer, because of how effectively it works, and what you can achieve without much effort.

Did you end up making any of your own brushes?

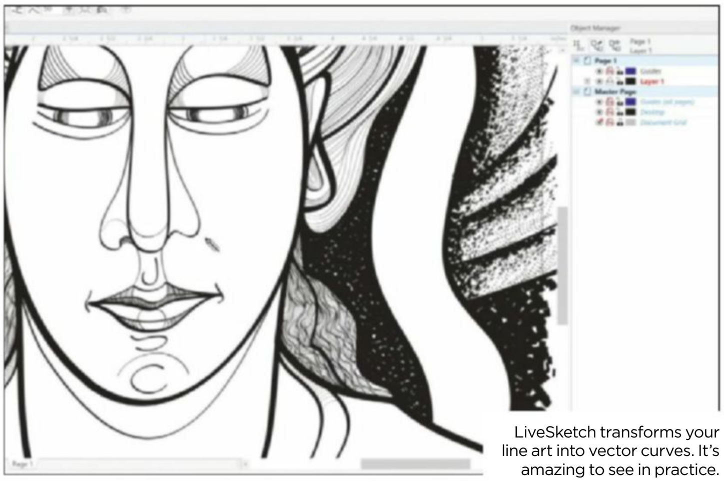
Yes, I did. And I'll keep doing so in the future. Being able to choose from a greater number of brushes with more interesting strokes means you can easily add visual interest to your artwork.

Martin is an illustrator from Kladno in the Czech Republic. Turn to page 70 for details on getting more from Rebelle.

www.hanschild.com



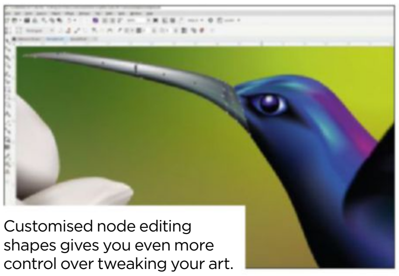
The new LiveSketch tool aims to make creating smooth lines easy, no matter what your drawing style is.



LiveSketch transforms your line art into vector curves. It's amazing to see in practice.

CorelDRAW Graphics Suite 2017

PC ONLY



Customised node editing shapes gives you even more control over tweaking your art.

SKETCH APPEAL There's a whole host of tools on offer, but it's the eponymous DRAW that you'll want to get your artistic teeth into…

Price £30 per month/£600 **Company** Corel **Web** www.corel.com

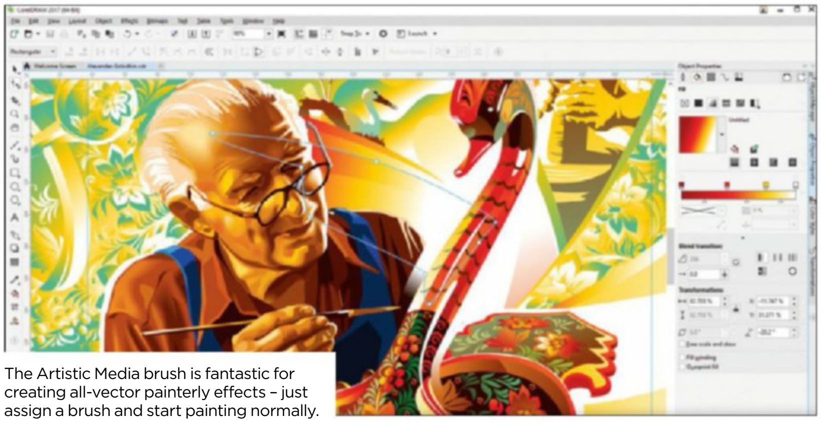
CorelDRAW is often overlooked by artists – it's been long overshadowed by Adobe's tools. But Corel is a familiar name to digital artists, and its Painter is a staple among concept artists and illustrators.

For those unaware, CorelDRAW is a vector-drawing program. Any image you create is essentially made up of points and is infinitely scalable – unlike raster-format artwork. And whereas vector art is usually associated with crisp, flat artwork, there's a whole collection of brushes within CorelDRAW that can recreate the look and feel of natural tools.

CorelDRAW itself is part of a bundle of tools – the CorelDRAW Graphics Suite – that includes Photo-Paint, a web design tool and more templates, clip art and fonts than you can shake a paintbrush at.

Yet the tool you'll be buying this for is DRAW. So what's in it for artists? Well, we touched upon the natural media tools – and the Artistic Media tool is great – with a number of calligraphic brushes and pressure-sensitive controls. CorelDRAW 2017 also has some excellent new node controls, meaning you can tweak your lines and curves with ease.

But the big tool on offer here that artists will love is LiveSketch. This is a real innovation in the world of vector art that aims to give you a more natural drawing environment and in some respects negate the need to sketch on paper and scan in. No matter your drawing style, you'll get a smooth line. You set a timer in the Properties bar to determine how long you have to adjust your sketch before it's converted to vector lines.



The Artistic Media brush is fantastic for creating all-vector painterly effects – just assign a brush and start painting normally.

> “CorelDRAW's brushes can recreate the look and feel of natural tools”

DETAILS

Features

- LiveSketch for more natural sketching
- Artistic Media tool
- Better node editing
- CorelDraw – vector drawing and editing
- Corel Photo-Paint – image-editing
- 1,000s of fonts, clip art and other graphics

System Requirements

PC: Windows 10, Windows 8.1, or Windows 7 (32- or 64-bit editions), with the latest updates and service packs, Intel Core i3/5/7 or AMD Athlon 64, 2GB of RAM, 1GB of hard disk space, 1,280x720 screen resolution at 100 per cent (96dpi), 1,920x1,080 at 150 per cent, and 2,560x1,440 at 200 per cent.

Rating

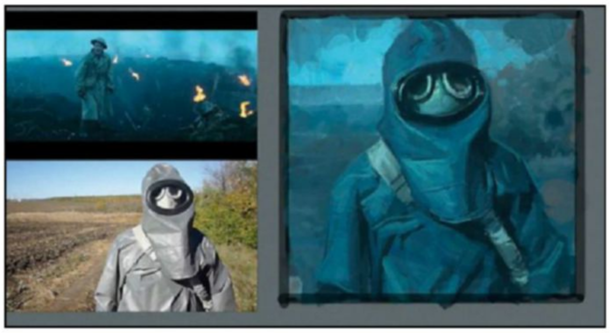
★★★★☆

It sounds complicated but it's very intuitive with a stylus – it means you can adjust the timing to suit your style of drawing. It's like nothing we've seen before in a vector app. It's very, very cool indeed. There's also a new Tablet Mode for those sketching on the likes of a Surface Book.

There's a ton of other stuff here, too. Photo-Paint is a decent photo-manipulation app; there's a basic web design tool, and some other stuff – like a Barcode Wizard – that you'll probably never use.

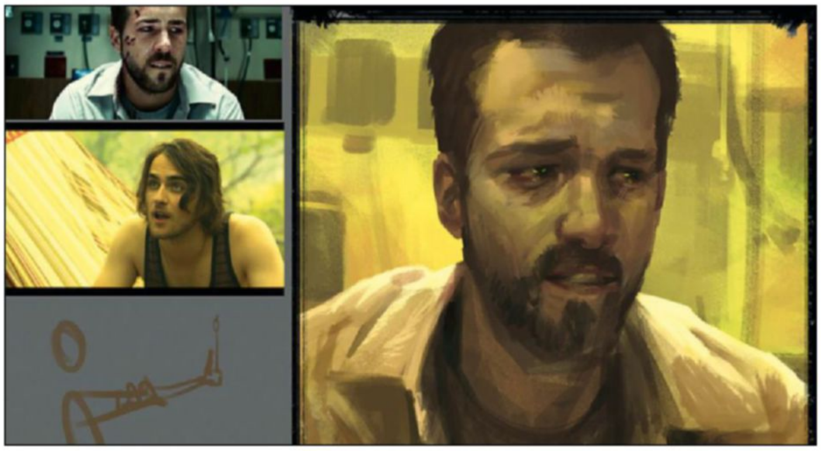
But it's CorelDRAW that you'll be buying this for. And at £30 per month or £600 outright it's pretty expensive. We wish you could buy CorelDRAW 2017 on its own, because this is the real star of the show, and the program you'll definitely want to try out.

The idea of The Lighting Game is to apply a lighting scheme from one image to the character and setting in another to make your own hybrid.

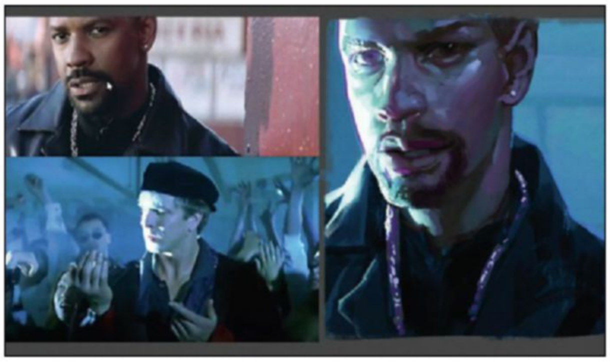


Izzy Medrano shows how making a series of studies can boost your understanding of light and colour.

Izzy reveals the difficulty in completing this colour study was filling in the extra skin detail compared with the original image, which was much darker.



Different photo pairings throw up challenges, such as how to adjust a lighting scheme to take a darker skin tone into account.



The Lighting Game

PLAY THE GAME Concept artist Izzy Medrano dares you to discover more about different lighting schemes with his colour scheme mashups

Publisher Izzy Medrano **Price** $16 (or $10 per month subscription) **Format** Download **Web** www.gumroad.com/izzymedrano

The Lighting Game is the 21st in Izzy Medrano's monthly series of online tutorials. It makes an interesting case study in how to use your passion and skills to reach an audience and generate income at the same time.

Izzy sells tutorials on Gumroad for $16 each. Once you decide you want to commit to the series, swing over to Patreon, where a $10-a-month pledge gets you access to all future instalments, plus other art goodies.

This video follows on from last month's, when Izzy showed how to break down a lighting scheme in an existing image – but everything here is clear enough that you can follow the concepts. The 'game' of the title is Izzy's dare to you: to make a series of studies where you take the shapes from one reference image, and apply the lighting scheme from another image to create a composite of both.

Izzy spends 20 minutes showing a set of his own studies, with concise explanations of the challenges each study presented. One, for example, takes a character from an outdoor environment with harsh sunlight and applies a flatter but strongly coloured lighting scheme from an indoors scene. The idea is that you'll learn about light and colour if you take on a dozen or more of your own studies, using a variety of different sources.

For the remaining hour, Izzy makes one of these studies from scratch, using a couple of film stills. While this session offers advice in establishing your light and colour scheme, there's an equal emphasis on using observation to paint a subject, rather than drawing the main forms first. This will prove as great a test for some artists as the primary lighting task, but is just as worthwhile to tackle.

There's a lot of useful advice here, from overriding principles to bite-sized tips, but the greatest value will arrive when you accept Izzy's challenge and play the Lighting Game yourself.

DETAILS

Topics covered
- Interaction of light and colour
- Outdoor vs indoor lighting
- Light on different skin tones
- Building silhouettes
- Judging proportions by eye

Length
84 minutes

Rating
★★★★★

ARTIST PROFILE

IZZY MEDRANO

Izzy is an artist with experience in concept development, drawing, painting and ideation. He's created materials for Magic: The Gathering for over a decade, while other clients include Ubisoft. Hi-Res Studios and Infinity Ward. He's also the founder of Thoughtgun Shells Studio, which generates original stories and properties. Through platforms such as Patreon and Gumroad, Izzy offers training and tutorials to help other members of the creative community develop their art skills.

www.patreon.com/izzymedrano

Momentary

GIRL POWER This Russian artist gives an added sense of depth and maturity to his depiction of manga characters

Author Ilya Kuvshinov **Publisher** PIE Books **Price** £23 **Web** www.pie.co.jp/english **Available** Now

Momentary is the first art book by the talented and popular Ilya Kuvshinov. The Russian-born artist, who now lives in Tokyo, has become a mainstay of the manga scene and is a huge name on social media, too.

At first glance, all the genre tropes are carefully adhered to, from wide, expressive eyes and young girls to sweeping Japanese landscapes, both urban and suburban.

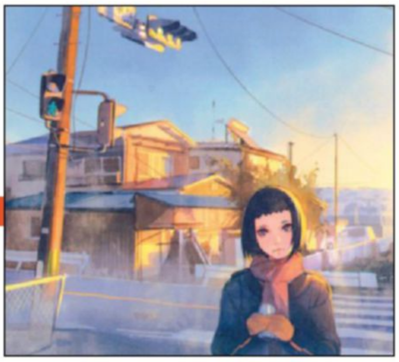
On closer inspection, however, Ilya is no copyist, but has forged a style that's all of his own. Characterised by pinpoint precision and attention to detail, his art – which ranges from cartoonish to near-photoreal – has an honest depth to it that makes it stand out from other manga artists' work. And this lovingly curated, softback book brings together the best of his work from the past three years.

Big eyes – check. Button nose – check. Delicate jawline – check. But Ilya's art is manga with a difference, as his book testifies.

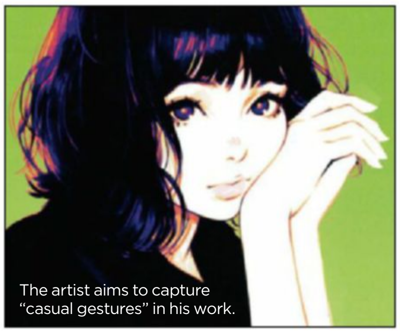
The vast majority of these depict women on the young side, but nowhere is there any sense of impropriety. Far from voyeuristic, Ilya's art is not about physical attributes, but instead is firmly focused on evoking personality and back story. As he himself says in the introduction to the final chapter, his goal is "narrative driven art.... characters that connect with [the audience] on an emotional level." In that aim, he's succeeded.

> "The lush, deep colours and tones of his illustrations really do jump out of the page"

You don't need to buy a book to enjoy Ilya's art: you could simply join his near-one million followers on Instagram and check out his work there. But, perhaps mindful of this, the publishers have lavished attention on the print quality of this book. And so the lush, deep colours and tones of his illustrations really do jump off the physical page, in a way that they don't on screen. And there's an extra treat in store: a significant number of work-in-progress sketches that reveal a rare insight into Ilya's artistic process.



Ilya's figures are often seen in the most mundane of environments, which introduces a sense of contrast.



The artist aims to capture "casual gestures" in his work.

On the downside, there's not a lot to actually read in this book: just a few paragraphs introducing each of the six chapters, which appear in both English and Japanese. But it's still interesting to hear the artist's brief comments about his past few years of creativity, such as why he uses a square-shaped canvas ("it's the perfect way to capture people's emotions"). Given the amount of art on show, it's astonishing that he's produced so much in so little time. We can't wait for volume two.

RATING ★★★★☆

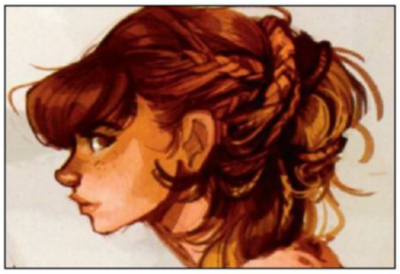
The Art of Horizon Zero Dawn

WORLDS APART Gain an insight into how artists at Guerrilla Games defined the look of a post-apocalyptic land, where robot beasts roam freely…

Author Paul Davies **Publisher** Titan Books **Price** £30 **Web** www.titanbooks.com **Available** Now

Horizon: Zero Dawn is an open-world RPG video game developed by Guerrilla Games. The game revolves around Aloy, a hunter living in a world overrun by robots, and this 192-page book explores the art from this innovative setting.

Around 300 images, including detailed sketches and full-colour concept art, are brought together, accompanied with commentary throughout from the artists and creators. We particularly love the series of illustrations showing a town in various stages of decay and reclamation; the selection of experimental illustrations used to develop Aloy's hair (from 'dreadlock mohawk' to 'teased hair with bandana'); and the visual guide used to instruct the creative team on the 'Oseramification' of different objects.



Lois van Baarle tackled the look of Aloy – and in particular, the style of the lead character's hair.

However, while there's plenty of beautiful art, there's not much detail of how it was actually created (as opposed to the ideas and concepts behind it). This, plus the absence of artist credits for individual illustrations, means it often feels less like a 'proper' art book than a general guide to the game world and its characters.

RATING ★★★☆☆

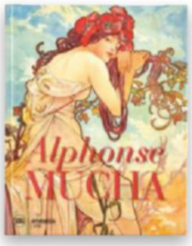
Alphonse Mucha

NOUVEAU RICHE Explore the work of one of the leading lights of the Art Nouveau movement in this handsome book

Author Tomoko Sato **Publisher** Skira **Price** £28 **Web** www.skira.net **Available** Now

Alphonse Mucha found fame in 1890s Paris for his theatrical posters and decorative panels. Author Tomoko Sato's gorgeous tribute to the artist is well worth poring over.

Mucha's work permeated illustration, posters, postcards and the advertising designs of his day. This hardback book reproduces his designs beautifully, and gives you a real sense of the glamour and excitement of fin-de-siècle Paris.



That's only part of Mucha's story, though. An unusually versatile artist (he worked as a painter, sculptor, photographer and designer), he believed passionately in the independence of his Czech homelands, and this came to the fore in his latest works. There's some carefully selected photography, too, that adds to the immersion in the period, along with a detailed introduction that sets everything in context.

Detail from Mucha's advertising work for British bike company Cycles Perfecta.

That's about it for the text, though, aside from the picture captions. Most of this book is centred around Mucha's gorgeous illustrations, making every turn of the page an exquisite aesthetic experience to be savoured.

RATING ★★★★☆

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 6 now!

Workshops assets are available…
If you see the video workshop badge then you can watch the artist in action. Turn to page 6 to see how you can get hold of the video.

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX

Traditional Artist

Inspiration and advice from the best pro artists

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This issue:

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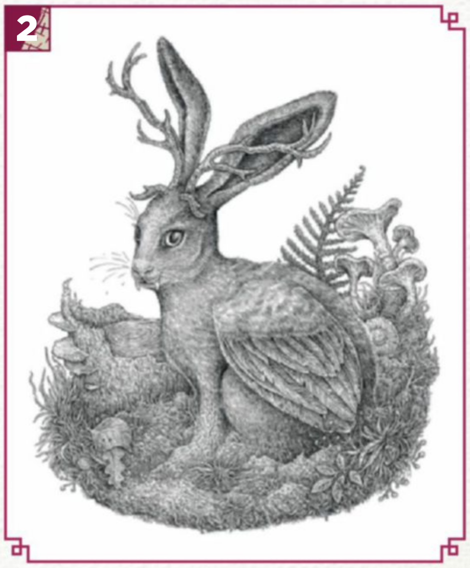
FXPosé

SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL ARTISTS

Eugenia Hauss

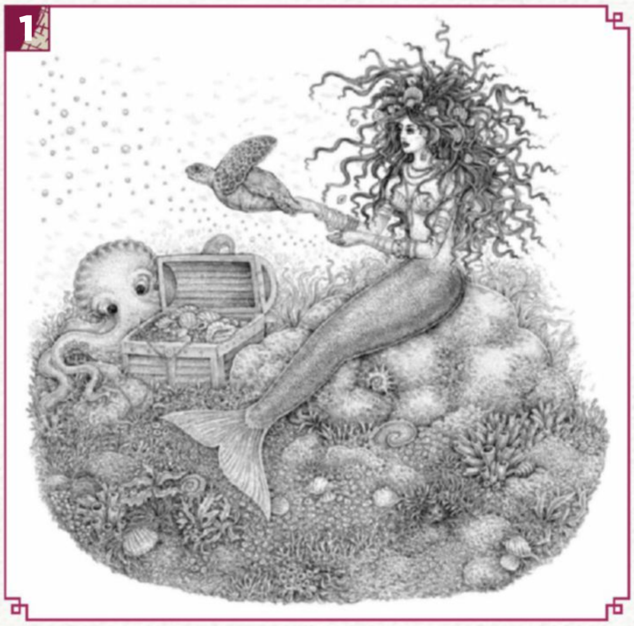
LOCATION: Belarus **MEDIA:** Ink, ink liners **WEB:** eugeniahauss.com

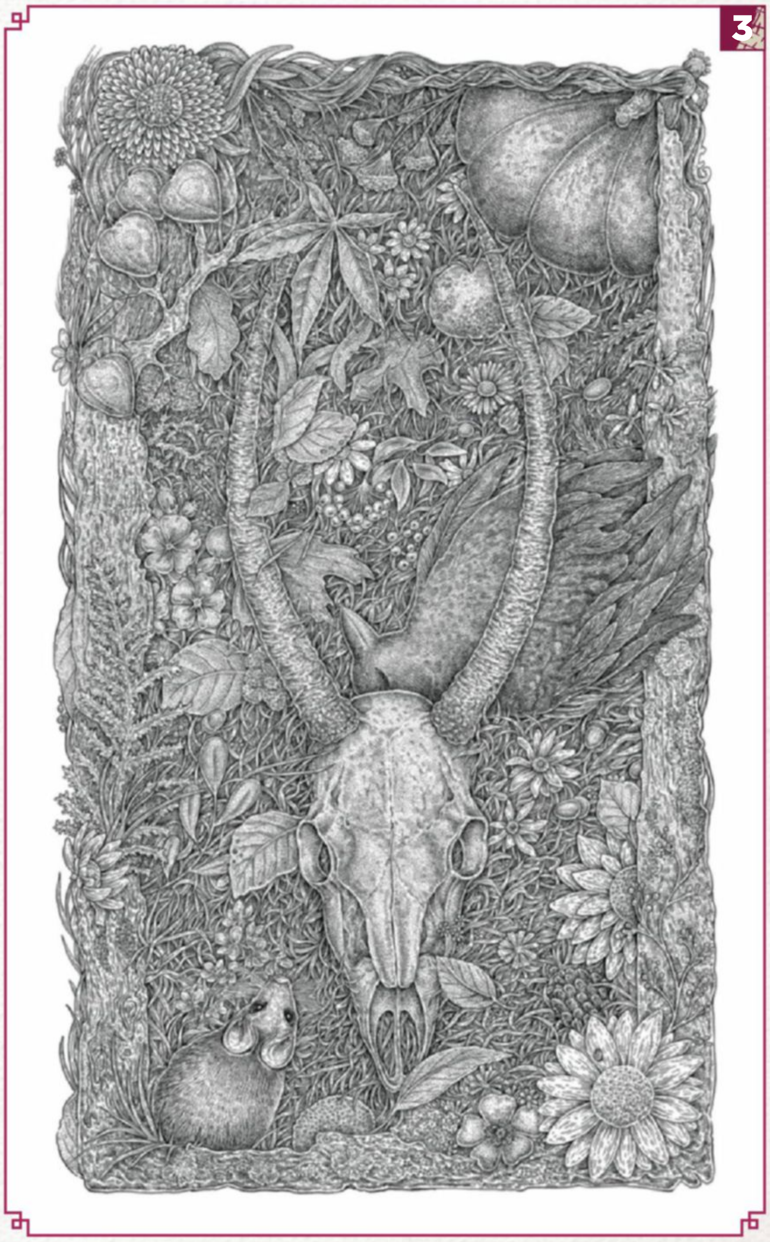
Eugenia fell in love with monochrome art at an early age, revealing that, "The works of Dürer and Dore were so fascinating in their brevity and beauty."



1 **THE MERMAID**
"I imagine sea creatures like mermaids and octopuses and think of various stories. Every artwork like this is an attempt to leave space for a fantasy in the everyday life."

2 **THE WOLPERTINGER**
"Also known as a jackalope, this mythical creature resembles a hare with deer horns. The symbol is mentioned numerous times in the cultural legacy of various countries."





3 **THE WISDOM OF NATURE**
"I was inspired by the slight feeling of fading that accompanies the autumn months. But of course, every end is the beginning of something new!"

4 **HER MAJESTY TOAD**
"This drawing is a collection of splendid textures. The skin of the toad, leaves, a mossy stone, flowers, a piece of wood… Every object here demands a separate approach."

4

1

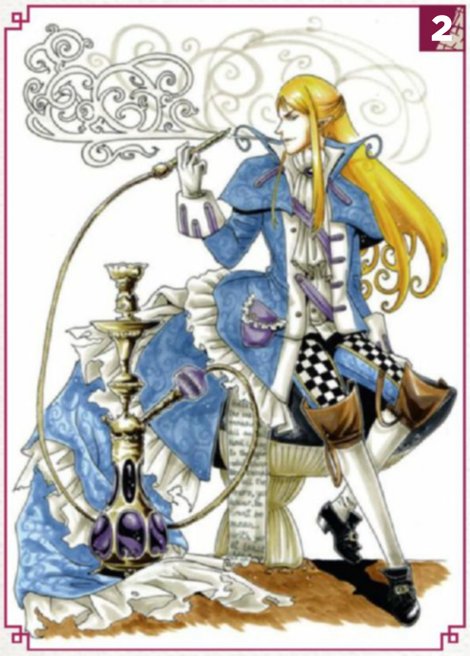
Mina Petrović

LOCATION: Serbia **MEDIA:** Ink, Copic markers, watercolors, white-out **WEB:** www.youtube.com/mistiqarts

Serbia-born Mina works under the studio name Mistinqarts. A manga enthusiast, she runs a manga school, shares tutorials on her YouTube channel, and has published a book on the subject.

1 **CHESHIRE CAT AND WHITE RABBIT**
"This image was inspired by Alice in Wonderland. It was designed as a book illustration, showing how the characters influence their surroundings by controlling a huge chess clock."

2 **CATERPILLAR**
"Another of my Alice in Wonderland redesigns. Here, the shape of the caterpillar is represented as an elaborate coat."

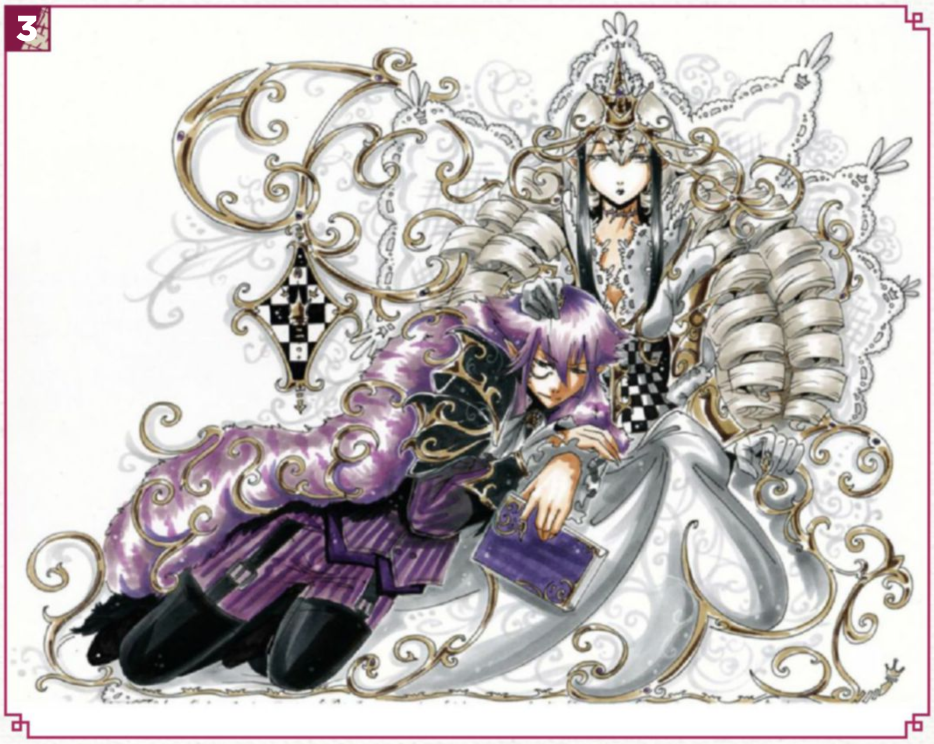


2

4 **OPHELIA**
"This was inspired by Shakespeare's tragic maiden, but I wanted to reimagine her in a fantasy manga setting."

5 **SETI**
"This is my manga teaching mascot, who can change her gender at will. The main reason for this illustration is to show the various differences in drawing male and female bodies."

3 **WHITE QUEEN AND CHESHIRE CAT**
"Here's my own twist on Lewis Carroll's characters and their personalities."



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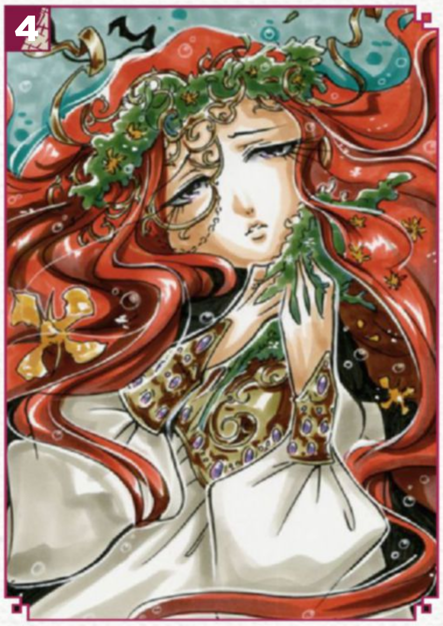

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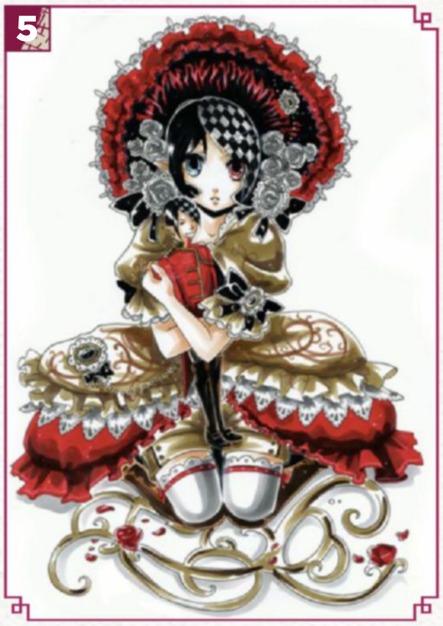


5

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**

Gouache

ACHIEVE GREAT RESULTS IN GOUACHE

Inspired by a recent sailing trip, LAURA BIFANO works up an idyllic river scene using gouache, which she describes as a finicky but very versatile medium

Last summer I did a boat trip up Lemmens Inlet in Tofino, Canada. It's basically this crazy inland channel full of tiny islands and cobbled-together houseboats, one of which I was lucky enough to be invited to stay on for a weekend. It was pretty inspiring seeing such a different way of living, and I've been daydreaming about it ever since.

While I'm not going to be moving on to a houseboat and enjoying a morning coffee by the water any time soon, I thought it would make a nice subject for a painting.

I'll show you how I created this painting, beginning with thumbnails, tonal and colour comps, and how I used some simple, widely available tools to control the paint.

ARTIST INSIGHT

PAPER TOWELS ARE YOUR FRIENDS

I always have a wad of paper towel in one hand while I paint. I use it to control the moisture of my brush, to blot out areas of paint, and even to quickly fix mistakes.

Here's something to remember about gouache: the darker values dry a shade lighter, while the lighter values dry a shade darker. Keep this in mind when mixing your palette, to avoid the image falling too far into the mid-range values. I also restrict my use of Titanium white to very bright highlights in a scene, because using it to control values dulls the colours and the final product can end up looking chalky.

Note that gouache also has a tendency to lift off the paper and mix with subsequent layers. It's also advisable to work fat over lean and preserve the white of the paper, in instances where you're planning on laying down lighter values.

I used an Epson P600 printer to transfer my line work on to watercolour paper. In the past I used to do carbon paper transfers, but I've found that printing the image directly on to your painting surface can save days of work. It's also helpful to soak your watercolour paper for at least ten minutes before and then making sure that it's well-taped in place. This will stretch the paper and keep it from buckling when you lay down your first wash.

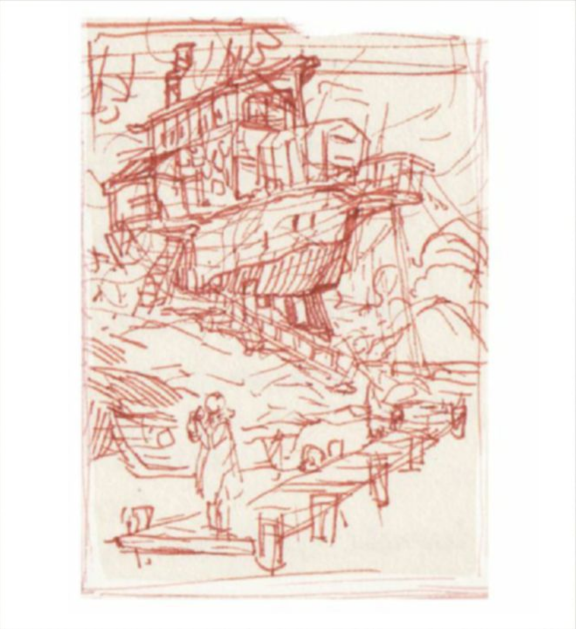
Finally, a good soaking improves the absorption of the paper itself.

Laura is an illustrator and production artist from Vancouver, BC. She's worked in film, TV and children's books. She says that gouache, her medium of choice, is a fickle one, but good to work with once you get used to its idiosyncrasies. See her art at www.laurabifano.com

ARTIST INSIGHT

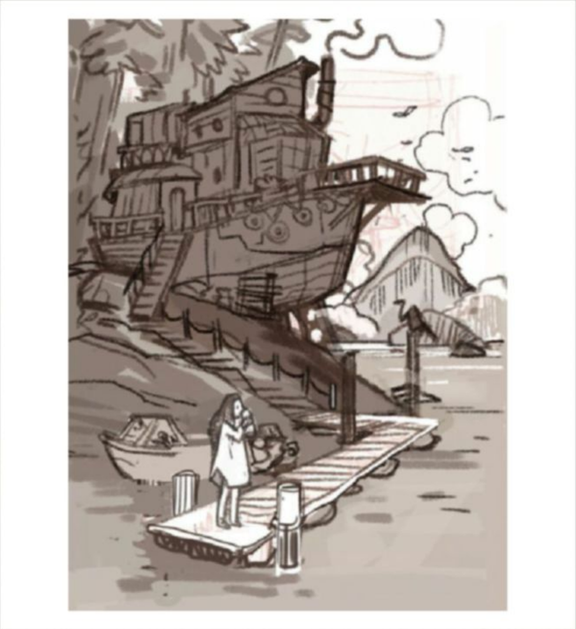
THOUGHTS ON SCANNING

When scanning in your painting in chunks, make sure to leave a lot of overlap. You never know when an area of a scan might have flaws, so it's important to have a lot to work with.



1 And it starts…

I start with a rough thumbnail, working loosely to capture my idea. I'm captivated by derelict structures, and I've had houseboats on the mind lately… I do a few variations before I land on an idea and composition that I think will work, then I import it in to Photoshop.



2 Making it read

This is the refined thumbnail I send to the editor. I tighten it up to the point where it's readable by not just me – blocking in some basic values and beginning the design of the main elements. I flip the image horizontally to make sure the composition works both ways.

MATERIALS

PAPER

- **Arches 400lb Cold Press Watercolor Paper**

GOUACHE PAINT

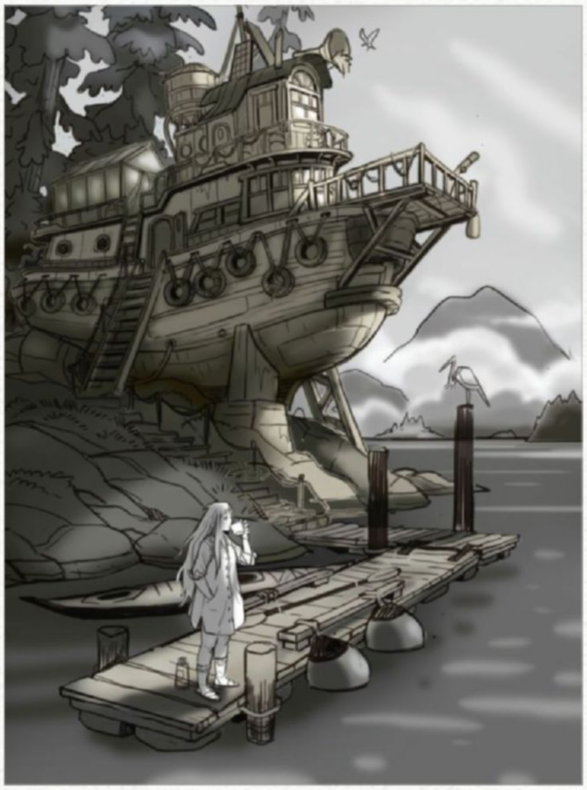
- **M. Graham Titanium white**
- **M. Graham Cadmium Yellow light**
- **Winsor & Newton Cadmium red**
- **Winsor & Newton Magenta**
- **Winsor & Newton Primary blue**
- **M. Graham Prussian blue**
- **M. Graham Ivory black**

BRUSHES

- **Kolinsky Sable size 8**
- **Wide house paint brush**
- **Gold Sable size 20**
- **Gold Sable size 4**

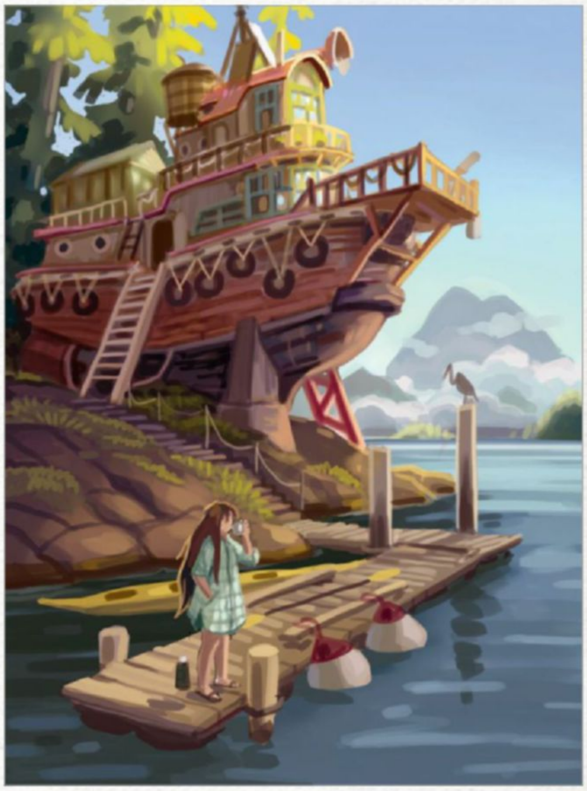
EXTRAS

- **A wad of paper towel, in hand at all times**



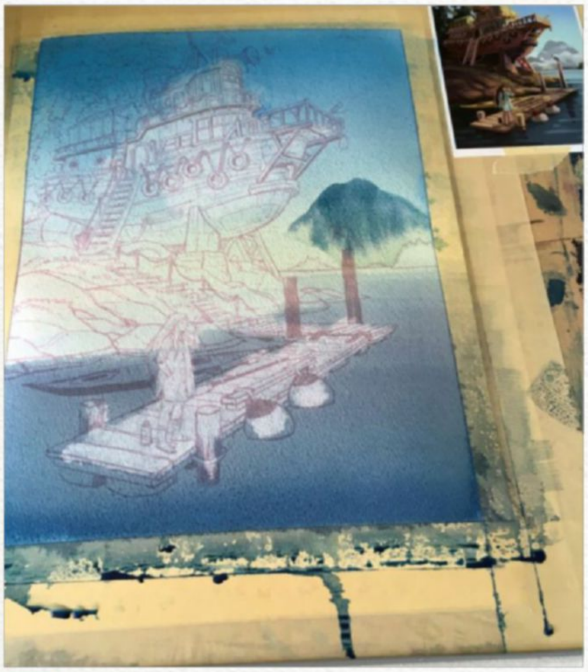
3 The initial tonal pass

I decide that this houseboat needs to be an old tugboat. I love tugboats. Lots of neat shapes to play with! Once I'm done the design of the houseboat I move on to doing a tonal pass. I know I want the primary focus to be the figure, so I keep her lit and darken her surroundings.



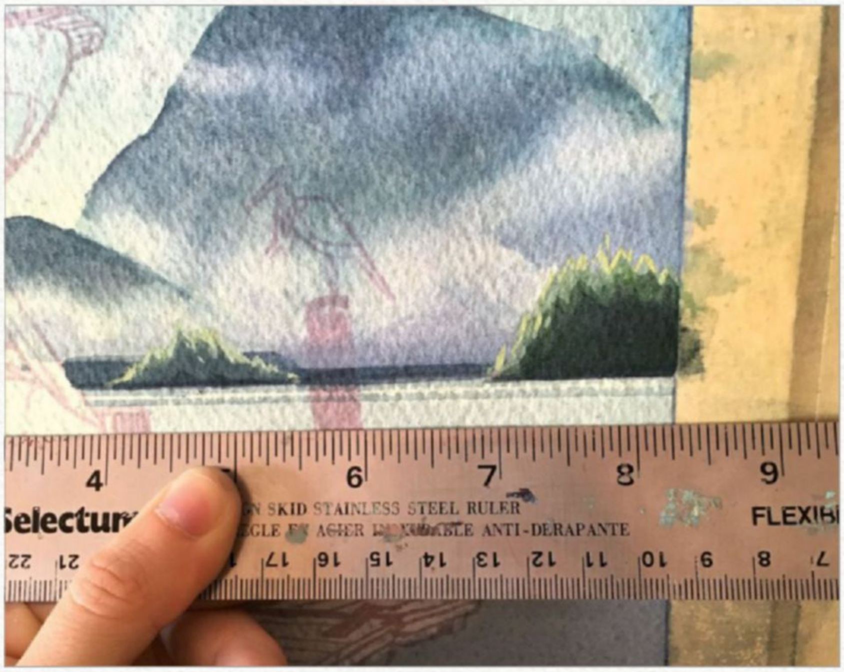
4 Producing a colour comp

This step is key because I'll be using the colour comp as reference. I want this image to take place in early morning with the light playing across the top of the houseboat and along the pier. The figure needs to be well lit, so I keep that in mind when choosing the sun's angle.



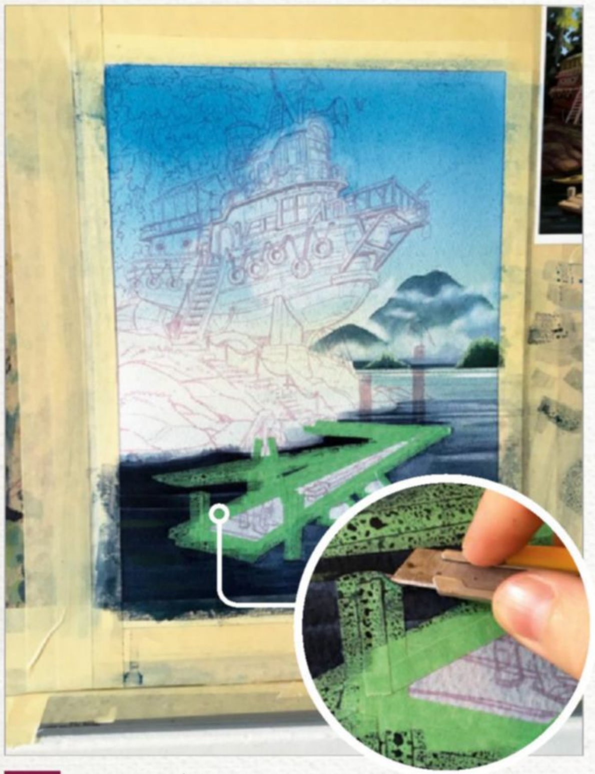
5 Washes and blotting

I carry out a wash, working wet-on-wet and using a paper towel to blot out the boat area and dock. Once the first wash is dry, I re-wet the mountain shape and let the paint bleed downwards.



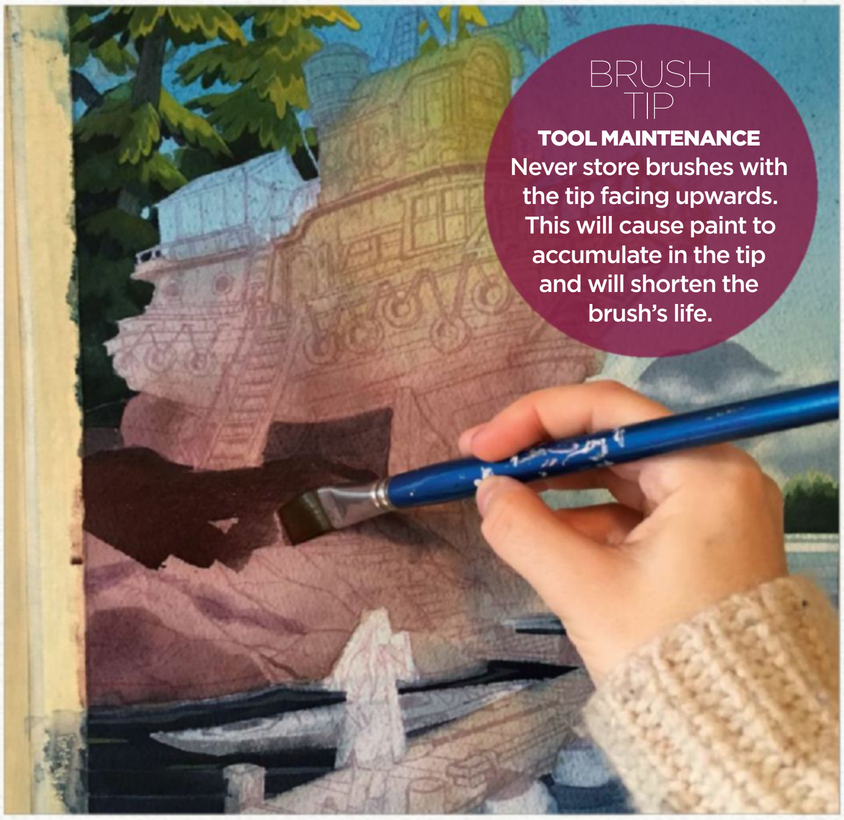
6 Mountains and fog

After working in the other mountains, I decide to beef up the clouds with a little bit of Titanium white, being careful not to paint over that nice bleed effect from earlier. Once everything looks good, I start working in the ocean, using a ruler to steady my hand while I paint in bands of colour.



7 Having fun with tape

Before I work in the foreground ocean, I decide that it'll be easiest if I mask out the dock. I use pinstripe painter's tape and very carefully cut out the edges with a pen knife. I use Primary blue, working down and Prussian blue mixed with magenta and Cadmium red for the darkest parts of the water.



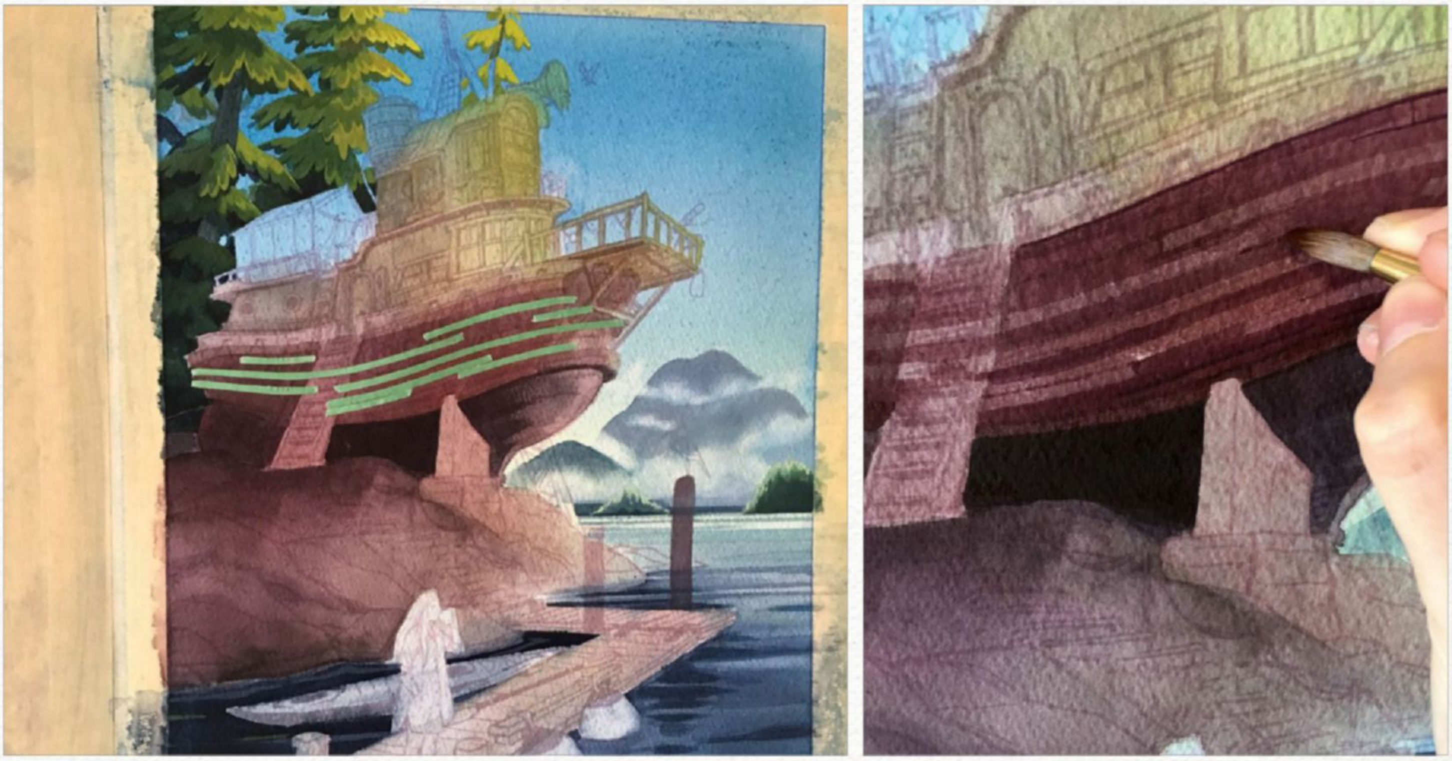
BRUSH TIP

TOOL MAINTENANCE

Never store brushes with the tip facing upwards. This will cause paint to accumulate in the tip and will shorten the brush's life.

8 Blocking in the environment

I block in the houseboat island starting with the darkest areas of the trees. I add more Cadmium yellow light for the treetops. If I work this area in too dark, then the paint will lift and muddy the lighter tones, spoiling that nice dawn light effect. Once the trees are finished, I block in the houseboat.



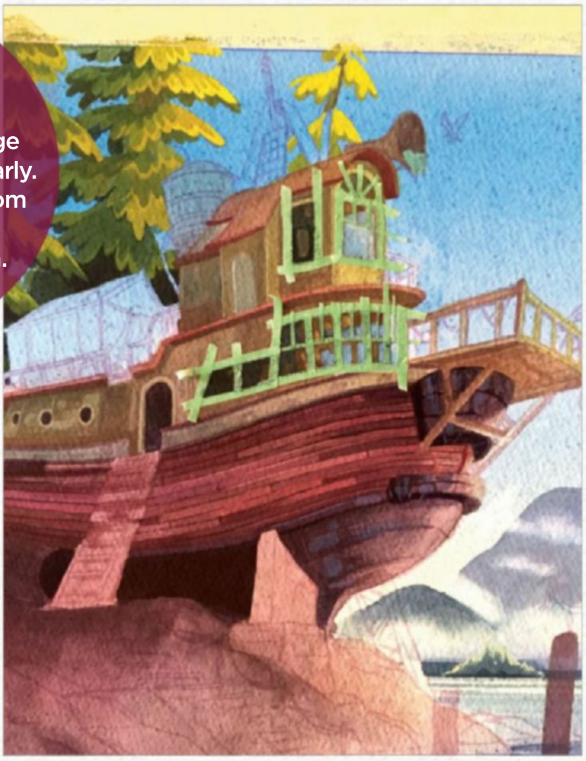
9 *Depicting weathered beams on the boat*

After laying down a wash of Rusty red, I mask out some beams on the side of the boat using pinstripe tape. I'm going for a derelict look for this dwelling, so I just going to mask out a few areas with the aim of creating an uneven, faded effect.

WATER TIP

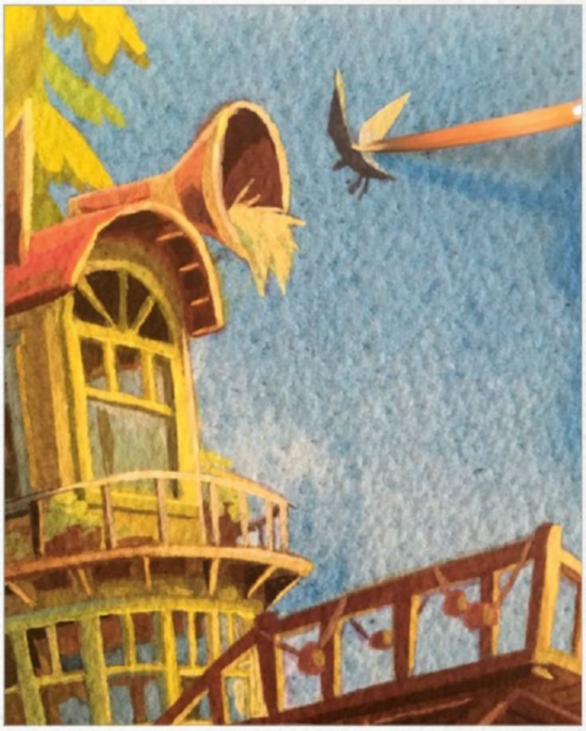
USE CLEAN WATER

Don't forget to change your paint water regularly. This will keep paint from accumulating in the ferrule of your brush.



10 *Tape! What can't it do?*

In my colour comp the window trim is bright and saturated, so I don't want to risk painting over the area. This time I have to run a utility knife down the middle of my tape roll to achieve a narrower strip and pat it down to mask out the windows.



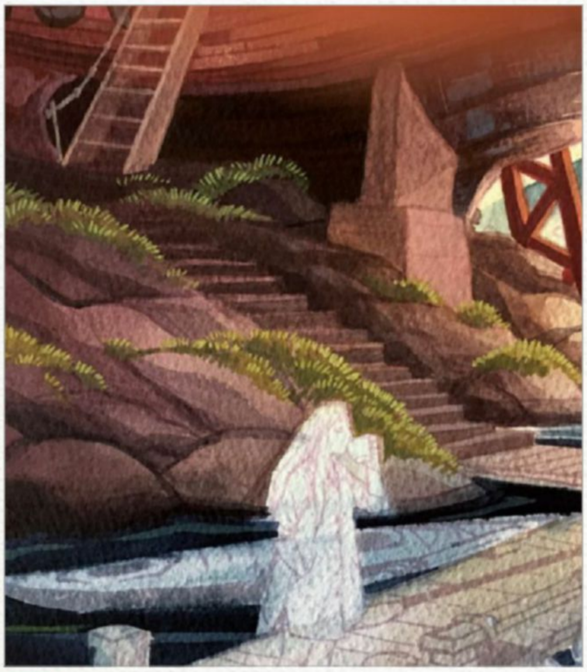
11 *Refining the boat*

Once I'm confident with my general window colour scheme, it's time to refine the whole thing. I use a Titanium white and Cadmium yellow mixture with my liner brush to tighten up edges and lay in some nice, crisp highlights, often flipping the painting upside-down to see it with fresh eyes.

ARTIST INSIGHT

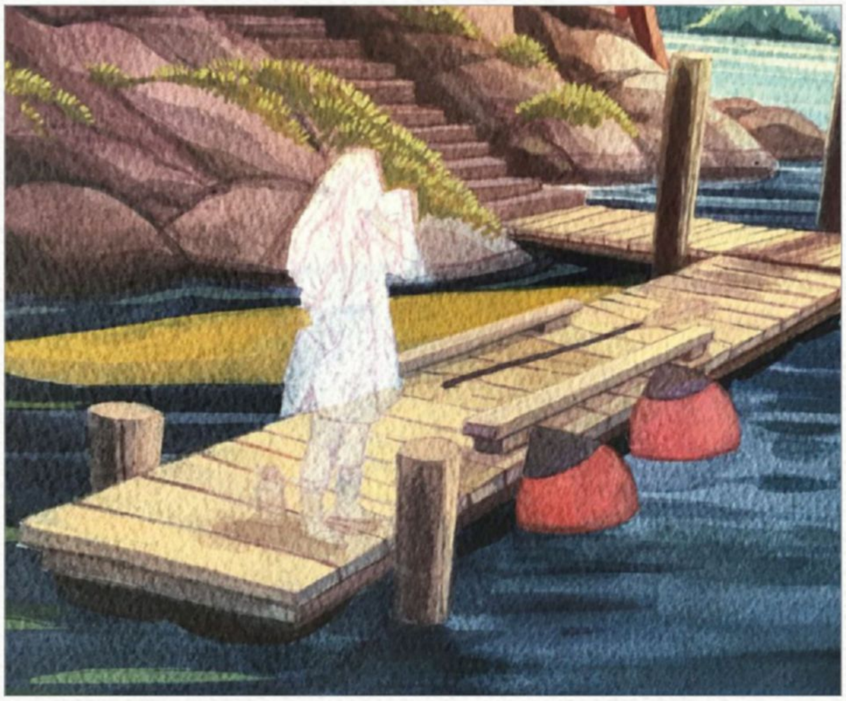
RULERS RULE

Need to paint a straight line? Use a ruler! Press it against the paper and run the edge of your paintbrush along the length of it for perfect lines. Just remember to wipe it off before you put it down.



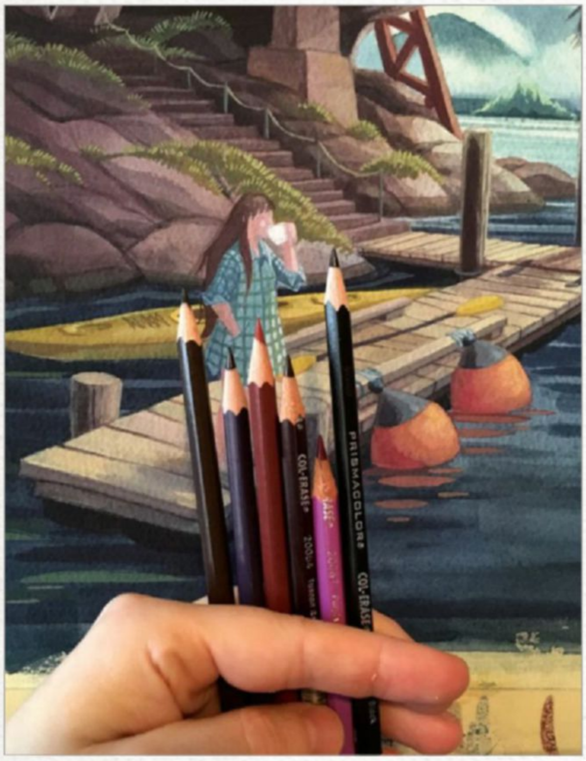
12 On the rocks

The boat is pretty much wrapped up now. I know I'll end up adding little touches here and there, but I'm ready to move on to that craggy island shore. I work in a similar fashion to watercolour, laying down washes light to dark and using opacity to control my values.



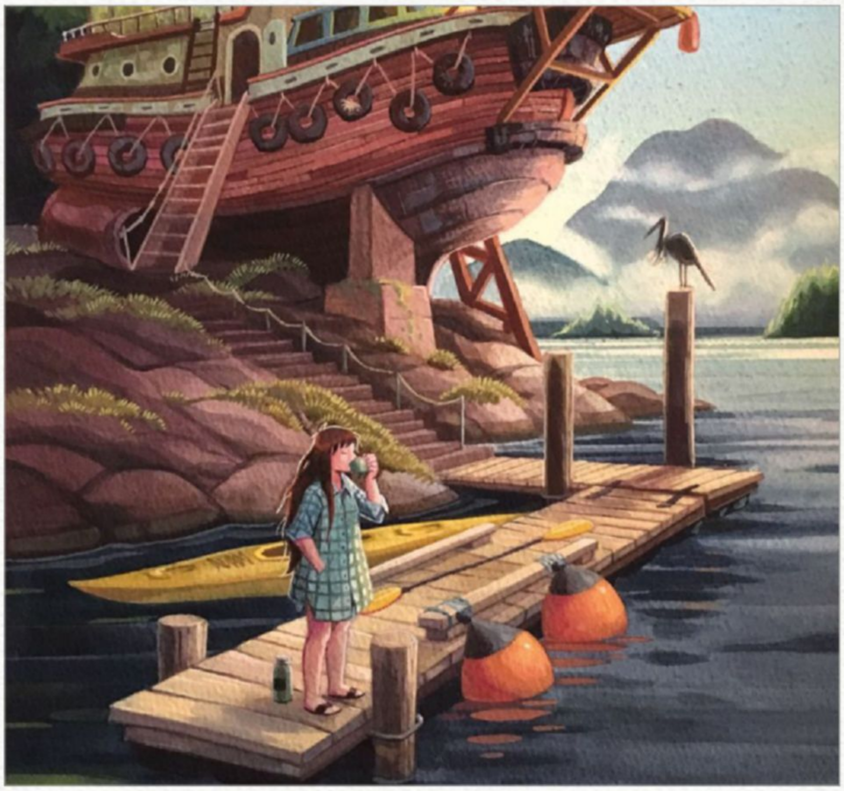
13 Painting in the pier

I use a mixture of Titanium white, Cadmium yellow and Cadmium red on the pier. I normally try to shy away of using Titanium white for anything other than highlights, but In the case of morning light playing across a bleached wood dock, it's nice to have a bit of chalkiness and opacity on show.



14 Pencil crayons save lives

Once the dock is done, I paint the figure by laying down translucent washes, working more opaque as I go. I realise pretty quickly that my brushes aren't going to cut it for the amount of detail that I want, so I decide to finish off the figure using pencil crayons.



15 Tweaking the final image

I scan in the finished image and tweak the curves, saturation and colour balance to get it as close to the physical painting as I possibly can. My gouache paintings have a tendency to scan cooler and with less contrast, so a bit of Photoshop trickery is required.

Core skills: Part 5

TECHNIQUES FOR PAINTING IN OILS

In the final instalment of his oils series, HOWARD LYON reveals how he focuses on seeing key shapes, using this technique to paint a portrait piece

When painting the head of a portrait piece, begin by looking for the large shapes. Identify the shadow shapes and make sure they're established. I've found that if you squint at your subject it can make identifying shapes and ignoring details easier.

I'll often tint my canvas with a warm colour and then paint in the shadow shapes with a rich brown such as burnt umber or raw sienna.

With your shadow shapes identified your painting should look like your subject. If it doesn't, make corrections at this stage because it's much easier to make big changes now, rather than later on.

Now establish your colour in the light side and develop the forms. Try to make each brush stroke count, mixing the right value and colour and painting in the correct shape. Maintaining this focus throughout the painting will help keep you from wasting effort and time.

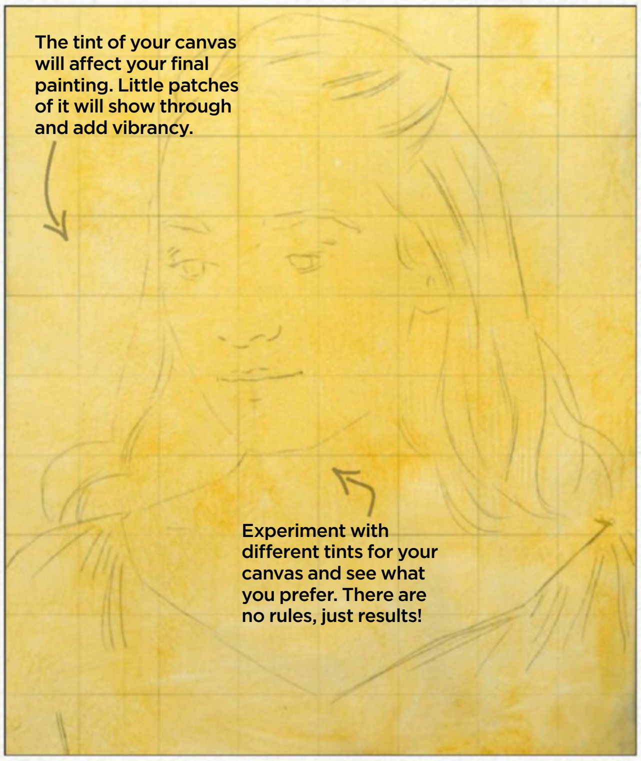
Learning to draw and paint is a lifelong and fulfilling process, so learn to enjoy the journey.

ARTIST INSIGHT

PRACTISE, REPEAT!

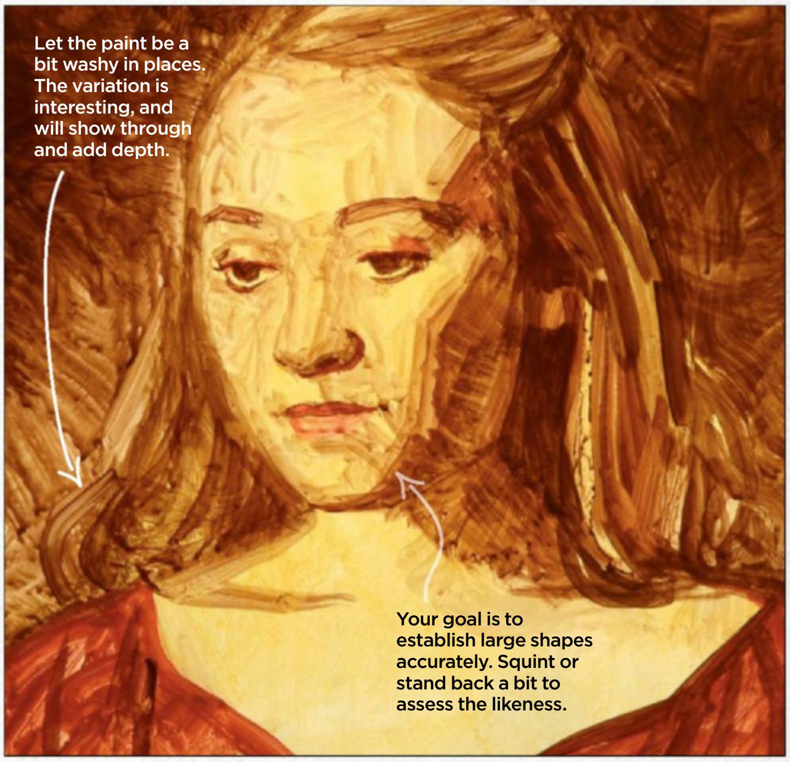
It's better to finish many paintings than to get caught up in one painting. Forget about being perfect, instead create as many paintings as you can!

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.


The tint of your canvas will affect your final painting. Little patches of it will show through and add vibrancy.
Experiment with different tints for your canvas and see what you prefer. There are no rules, just results!

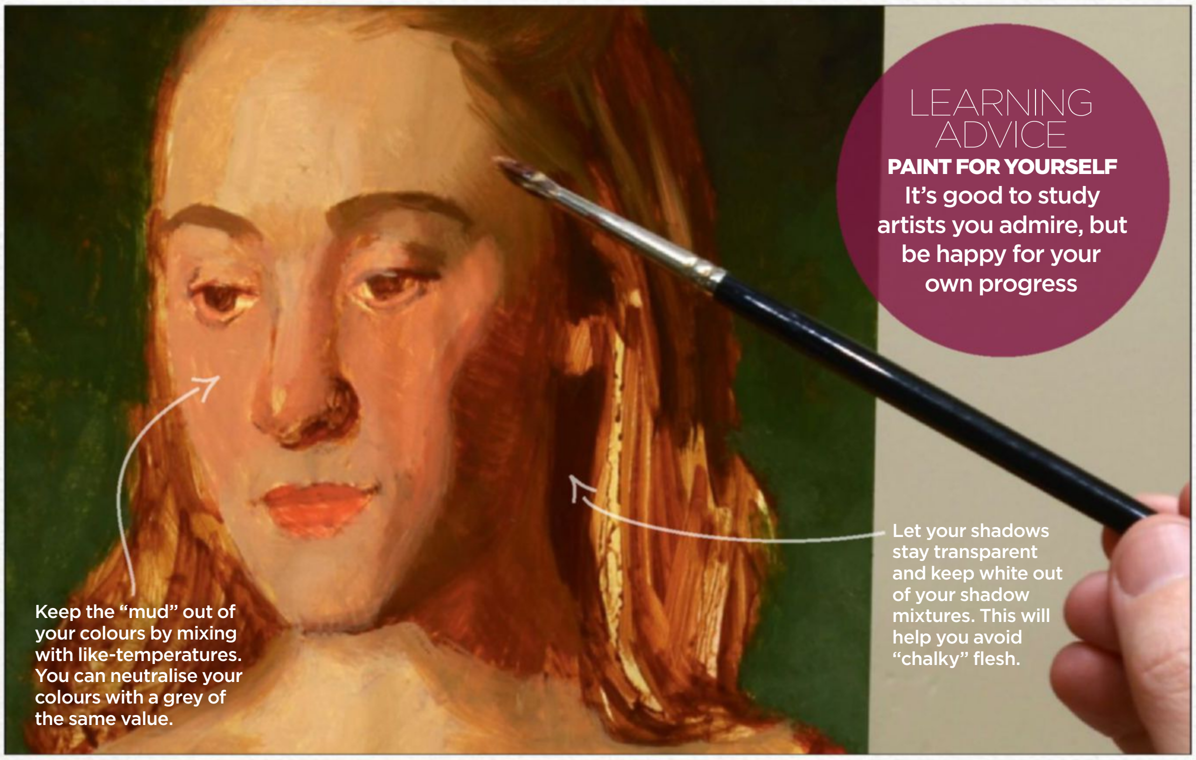
1 Drawing and tone

I use a grid to create my drawing. I use pencil for the grid and when the drawing is done, I ink the important lines with a Micron Pigma Pen or India ink and then erase the grid. I also like to use a warm colour to start with.


Let the paint be a bit washy in places. The variation is interesting, and will show through and add depth.
Your goal is to establish large shapes accurately. Squint or stand back a bit to assess the likeness.

2 Creating an imprimatura on the canvas

The imprimatura is usually one or two pigments that are thinly painted over a toned canvas. Here I'm using Raw umber and Light red. This is the stage to focus on establishing the shadow shapes. Don't worry about perfect edges and brushstrokes. This stage is simply about creating accurate shapes.



Keep the "mud" out of your colours by mixing with like-temperatures. You can neutralise your colours with a grey of the same value.

Let your shadows stay transparent and keep white out of your shadow mixtures. This will help you avoid "chalky" flesh.

LEARNING ADVICE

PAINT FOR YOURSELF

It's good to study artists you admire, but be happy for your own progress

MATERIALS

OIL PAINT

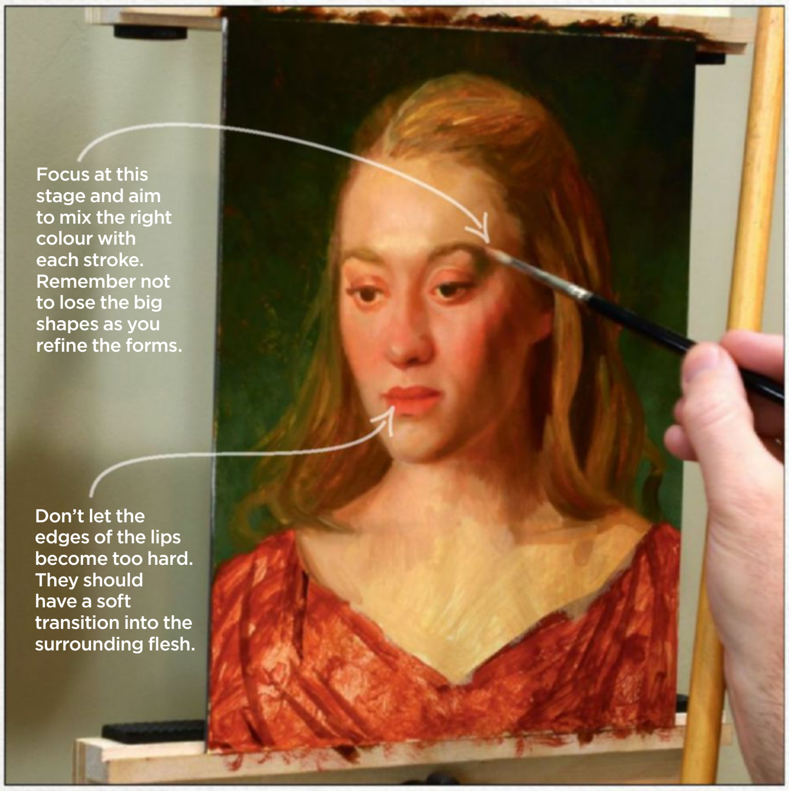
- Flake white
- Yellow ochre
- Vermillion
- Alizarin crimson
- Light red
- Raw umber
- Ivory black
- Viridian
- Phthalo blue

MISCELLANEOUS

- Pencil
- Aluminum panel to paint on
- Ruler for making grid
- Liquitex Professional Gesso

3 *Establishing the colour in the portrait piece*

Now we begin to establish the colour for the flesh. Look for middle values in the light side and avoid the highlights for now. Like Frankenstein's creation, parts are coming together, but it still looks a little monstrous. Don't panic – slow and steady work will win the day. Keep your flesh colours simple, using only two or three pigments.

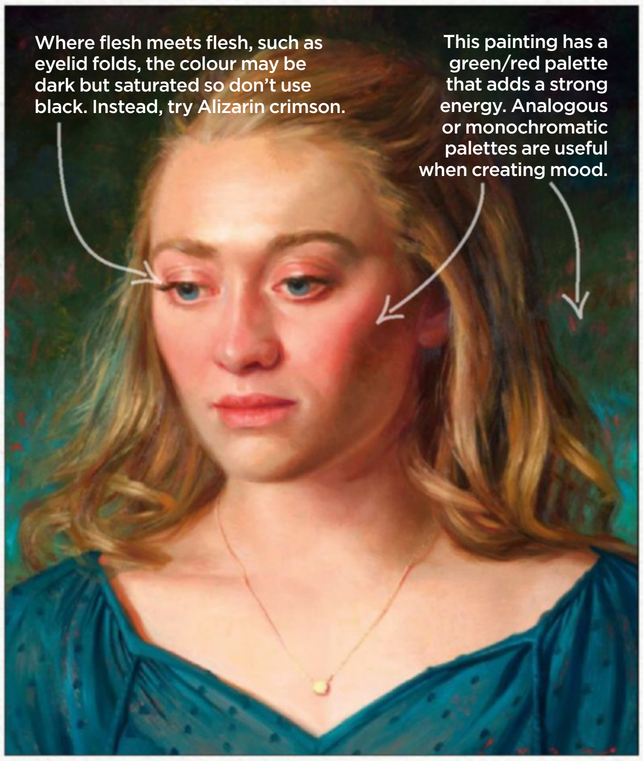


Focus at this stage and aim to mix the right colour with each stroke. Remember not to lose the big shapes as you refine the forms.

Don't let the edges of the lips become too hard. They should have a soft transition into the surrounding flesh.

4 *Defining the figure's forms*

Now that the colour and values are in place we can start to work the transitions from dark to light. Try to mix the right colour rather than blending on your canvas. This will train your eye and improve your ability to mix colour.



Where flesh meets flesh, such as eyelid folds, the colour may be dark but saturated so don't use black. Instead, try Alizarin crimson.

This painting has a green/red palette that adds a strong energy. Analogous or monochromatic palettes are useful when creating mood.

5 *Finishing with style!*

Don't be afraid to make artistic decisions throughout the painting process. You aren't a slave to your subject. I'll often add splashes of bright colour to the background and subject in the final moments. It adds vibrancy and is a lot of fun!

First Impressions

Ira Sluyterman van Langeweyde

Discover how this German creative fell back in love with illustration…

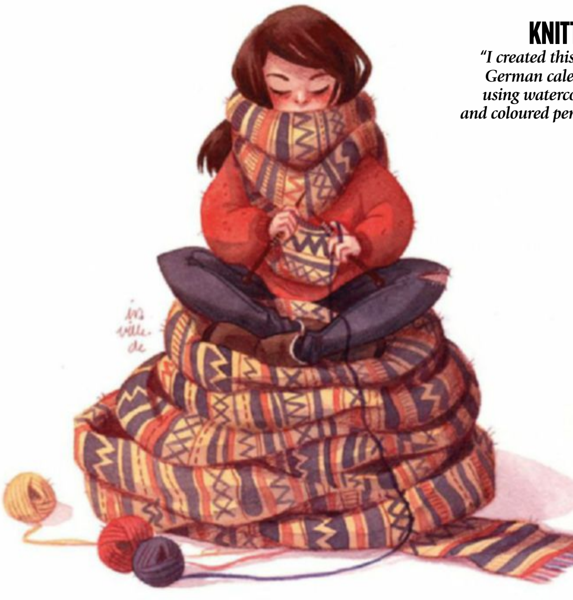
Photo by Stefan Oberholz.

Where did you grow up and how has this influenced your art?
I grew up in a little village near Bonn, Germany. I'm not quite sure how this has influenced my art. But there was a huge forest near my hometown where we used to regularly play as children. So maybe that's one reason why I love to paint trees and nature-related objects. Furthermore, the first artist whose work I recognised was August Macke, who was born in Bonn.

What advice would you give to your younger self to aid you on the way?
Keep doing your thing. Don't stop drawing. Don't be insecure. Don't play so many computer games instead of drawing. Be patient, because everything needs time, understanding and a lot of practice.

Tell us about your first paid commission, and does it stand as a representation of your talent?
I worked as a web designer for some years after I studied design, so my first paid illustration job was a design for a website with illustrated elements. That was the first time I had drawn again after many years. I found it difficult, but in the end I was happy with the result, and it gave me back the joy of drawing and painting, which I had lost during my time at university.

Afterwards, a lot of different people started to ask me for illustrations, or designs with illustrated elements. Then, more or less by coincidence, a production company asked me to produce character designs for an international children's film with animated creatures. I won the pitch and worked further on this film, together with the producers and the 3D studio for several months. And so my focus shifted towards illustration work.



KNITTING
"I created this for a German calendar, using watercolours and coloured pencils."

> **"Don't stop drawing. Don't be insecure. Don't play so many computer games"**

Next month
Wayne Haag

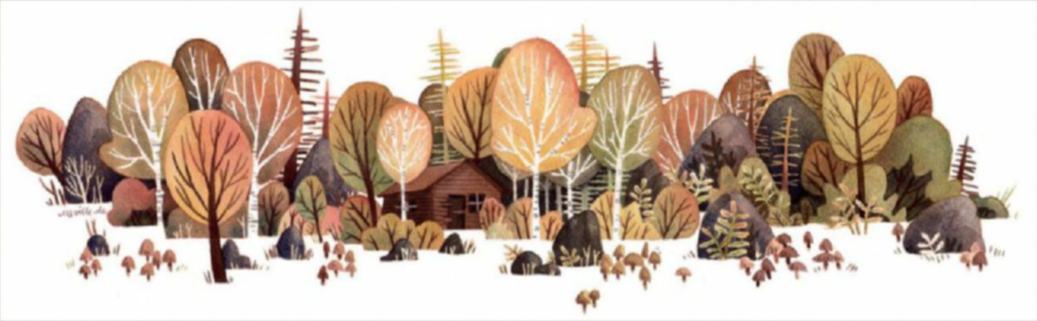
What's the last piece that you finished, and how do the two artworks differ?
My style has changed drastically over the past few years, because after I rediscovered my interest in illustration, I experimented a lot and I had to learn many things. So my style developed over time. My last piece, which you can see on my Instagram channel (**@iraville**) is a little illustration called Camping Girl, in watercolours and pencils.

What are your painting rituals?
I take my time, which is crucial – I have to be totally relaxed. A must-have is either a freshly brewed coffee or a delicious tea. I listen to a TV series or an audio book while I paint. I work on several illustrations at the same time, because I use watercolours with a lot of layers that need a long time to dry.

Do you have an art tool that you can't live without?
Too many! A pencil. I prefer red pencils instead of graphite. As for watercolours, I can paint with just a few. I filled a little tin with just six colours, some of them are mixed from pigments I bought. I need a round and pointed brushes and of course, watercolour paper or a mixed media sketchbook. That's it.

Is making a living as an artists all you thought it would be?
No, it's probably better. But I never planned to be an artist because once upon a time I was a designer.

Ira Sluyterman van Langeweyde, aka Iraville, is an illustrator and character designer. She works for a range of industries including film and TV studios, book publishers and design agencies. You can see her work at www.iraville.de.



BIRCHTREE FOREST
"Watercolour on paper, painted for my own corporate design."

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