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



When you're working day to day on this magazine, sometimes it's only in the latter stages of the production schedule that things start to take shape and slot into place. At this stage, all the searching for artists, the chatting, flattering, bartering, commissioning and cajoling

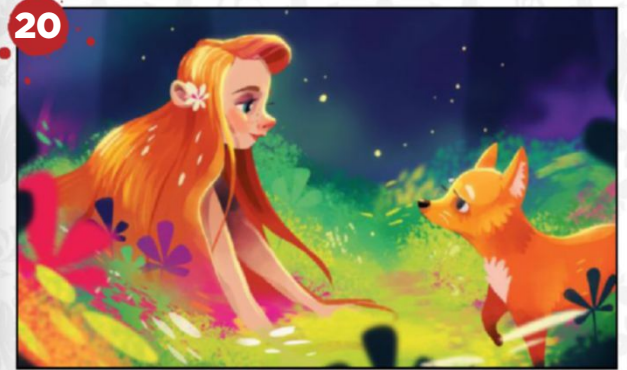
seems totally worth it! Sending the issue to the printers today, it's hard to pick a favourite part. I'll be honest with you – Emily Hare's bare-bummed brownie springs to mind, as does her excellent tips workshop on creating fantasy creatures. But really, this month's issue is packed with awesome stuff.

Although I haven't received any correspondence about it yet, I want to take this opportunity to talk about the increase in ImagineFX's price. It's not a lot, but it is our first. That's right, ImagineFX has been the same price for 10 years, and although we wanted to keep it that way, inflation forced our hand. What I can promise you is that we'll continue to increase the value that each reader gets for the cover cost, and continue to work with the best artists to produce the most inspiring art magazine in the world. As ever, get in touch and tell me how you think we're doing.

Claire

Claire Howlett, Editor
claire@imaginefx.com

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



Warning! Artists at work

It's a hard game, this art lark. We speak to top artists about the perils of perfectionism and benefits of chill.



They mostly come at night... mostly

Regardless of whether the new Alien film is any good, the art behind it is a nice blend of the familiar and fresh.



Bright lights, big city

I love Aaron Griffin's art, and the way he explains his process in this workshop is an absolute treat.

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NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX Contents

Your art

8 **FXPosé**

We show your gorgeous art to the world!

News and events

20 **The art of mindfulness**

We speak to pro artists about how they manage their state of wellbeing, and the effect it has on their creativity.

26 **Artist in Residence**

Set sail on Pittsburgh's Tugboat Printshop, with Valerie Lueth at the helm!

Your questions

34 **Artist Q&A**

Discover how to paint a realistic burns scar, and control your brush strokes.

Features

42 **Interview: Paul Kidby**

This English artist's work is synonymous with the books of Terry Pratchett.

50 **Sketchbook: Dawn Carlos**

It'd be easier to ask what doesn't inspire this San Francisco-based concept artist!

56 **Interview: Aaron Miller**

It's all about capturing this moment for this in-demand fantasy illustrator.

Reviews

92 **Software**

95 **Training**

96 **Books**

Regulars

3 **Editor's letter**

6 **Resources**

32 **Letters**

38 **Digital subscriptions**

40 **Subscriptions**

48 **Back issues**

76 **Next month**

42



Artist Portfolio

**PAUL KIDBY
AND
AARON
MILLER**



"The thread that ties all my work together is 'magical wossname'"

Paul on his painting approach



"Finally getting work doesn't mean you're at the top"

Keep at it, encourages Aaron

56

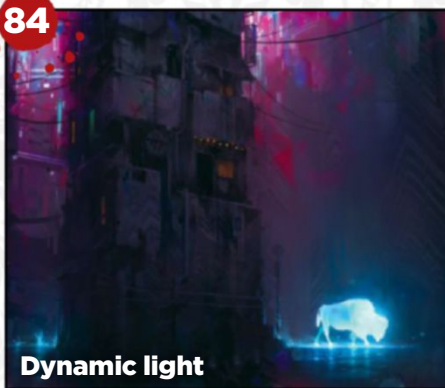


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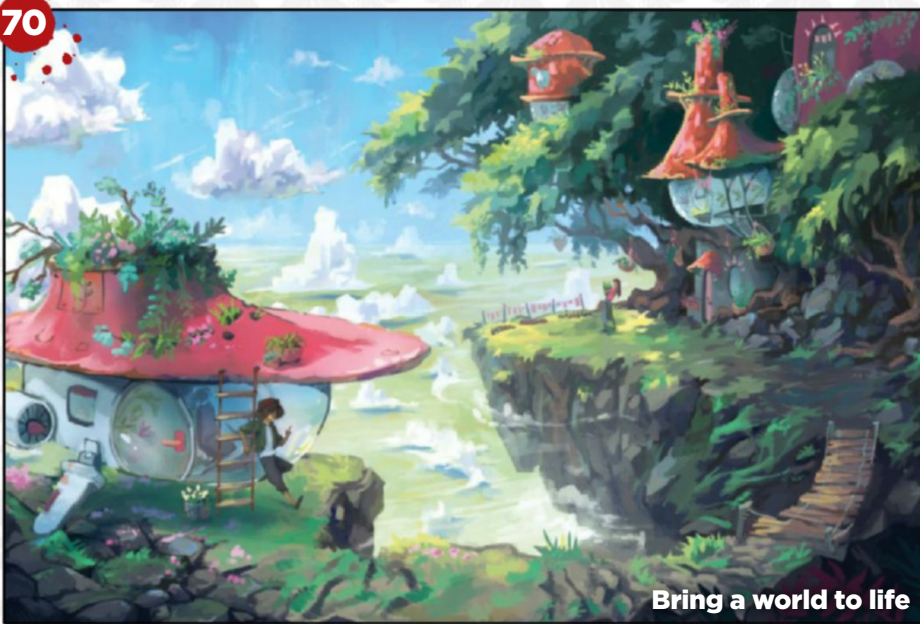
Sketchbook: Dawn Carlos

84



Dynamic light

70



Bring a world to life

78



Fantastic beasts

104



Original tarot card

Workshops

64 Illustrate a celestial portrait

Tran Nguyen depicts the beauty of the female expression with a touch of whimsy.

70 Bring a world to life

Create environments filled with colour, story and life, with Anna Hollinrake's help.

78 Create original fantasy beasts

Emily Hare reveals how to design and paint your own original fantasy creatures.

84 Dynamic light in a city scene

Aaron Griffin streamlines his workflow and adds life with his custom brushes.

64



Celestial portrait

Traditional Artist

100 FXPosé

We bring you artwork from some of the finest traditional artists around today.

104 Create an original tarot card

Discover new approaches to personal projects and telling stories, with Sam Guay.

110 Get to grips with gouache

Join artist and illustrator Laura Bifano as she demystifies the medium, in the first instalment of this four-part series.

114 First Impressions

Jesper Ejasing on the influence of RPGs.



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Resources

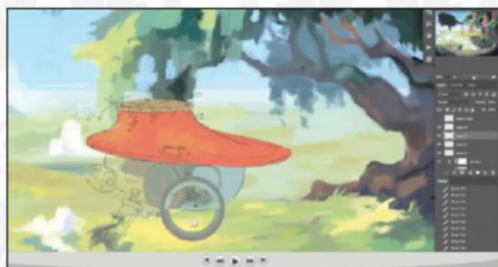
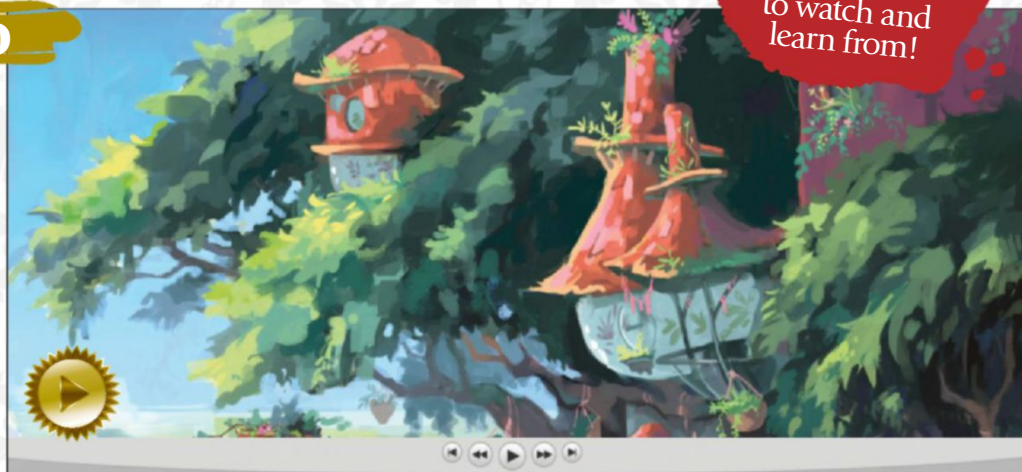
Getting hold of all of this issue's videos and custom brushes is quick and easy. Just visit our dedicated web page at <http://ifxm.ag/illo151>

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

WORKSHOP VIDEO

Paint like a storyteller

Watch Anna Hollinrake as she fills her world with colour, story and life. And read her workshop on page 70.



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/illo151>

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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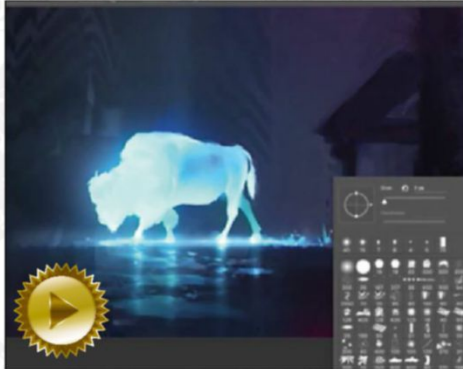
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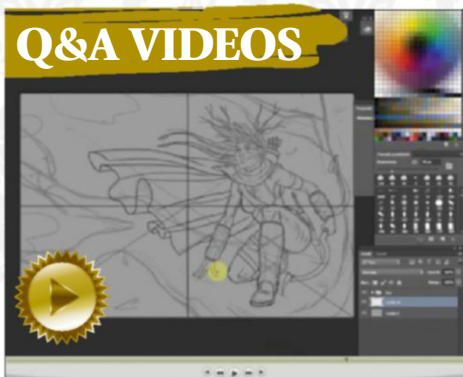
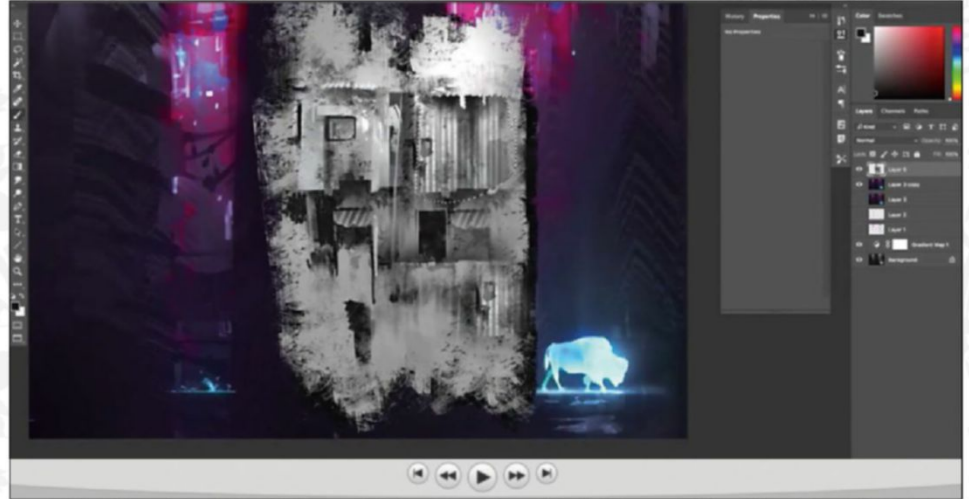
PLUS MORE VIDEO TUTORIAL!

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



Light up a city scene

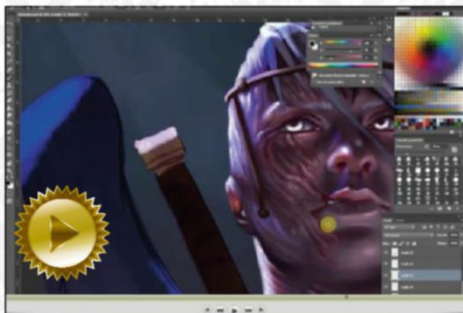
Aaron Griffin applies neon light to a urban setting, and lights up a buffalo for good measure. See more over on page 84.



Q&A VIDEOS

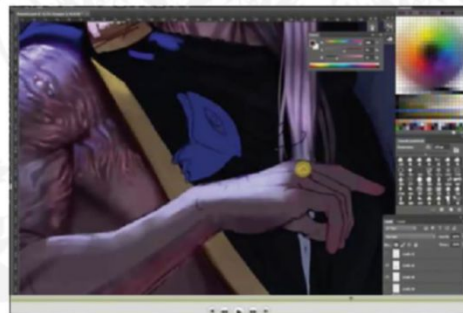
Paint a cape in the wind

See how Sara Forlenza takes into account a cloak's material and its perspective, before painting it. More on page 37.



Realistically depict a severe burn scar

Taking an unfortunate elf as an example, Sara Folenza shows in her Q&A article how to illustrate a burn scar. Watch her video, and then turn to page 34 for more details.



TRAINING

Fantasy Art Workshop: Oil Painting Techniques

See page 95 for our review of this video.

137 CUSTOM BRUSHES, INCLUDING...

SMOOTH SQUARE

Anna Hollinrake says this brush is good for pushing stylised shapes.

PLANT SCATTER

Ideal for puddle details and adding texture variations, says Aaron Griffin.

ROUND HARD TEXTURE

For blocking out, this brush can't be beat, says Anna Hollinrake.

FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

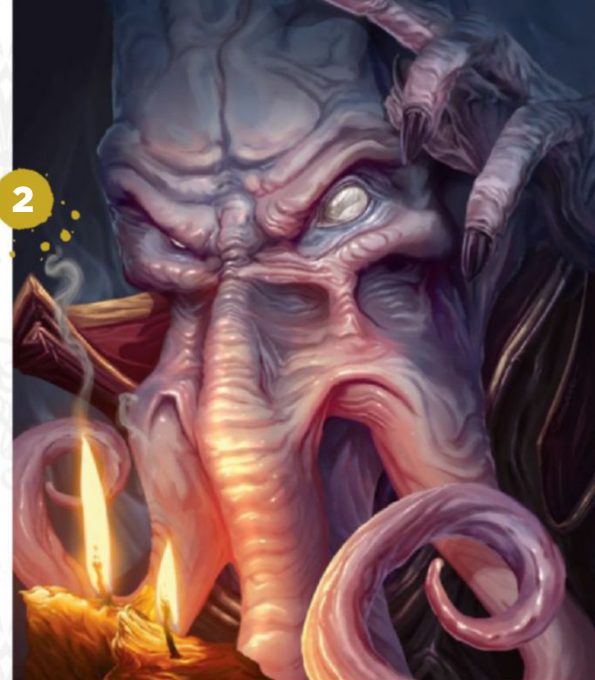


Gabriel Cassata

LOCATION: US MEDIA: Procreate, Photoshop WEB: www.gabrielcassata.com

Before committing to his passion of fantasy and sci-fi illustration, Gabriel was a VFX artist in Hollywood on TV shows including *Lost* and *24*.

2



1



© White Wizard Games

1 GLADIUS THE DEFENDER

"This piece was for the TCG Epic. The brief asked for a mounted knight rallying the common people. I rendered it a bit rougher as it was shrunk down for final production."

2 MIND FLAYER

"This pretty face sprang from my lifelong love of fantasy and D&D. I wanted to portray something slimy and wet by candlelight, and the octopus-inspired illithid was a perfect fit."

3 GOBLIN CUTPURSE

"A portrait of a goblin thief from the Pathfinder RPG universe, who's quite proud of his stolen treasures. My first try at working in pure value before adding coloured layers."



8

ImagineFX September 2017

Email your submissions to fxpose@imaginefx.com





Eva Maganja

LOCATION: Slovenia **MEDIA:** Photoshop, After Effects **WEB:** www.artstation.com/artist/evelynsoa

In the three years since graduating, Eva has been busy working on projects for films, commercials and documentaries. "A lot of inspiration for my art comes from video games," she says.

1



1 GOD

"This artwork was made for an ArtStation challenge on ancient civilisations. I was inspired by the idea of food offerings to the gods. I love the colour palette."

2 TURTLE ADVENTURES

"I sketched out this idea 10 years ago, and it was fun to see it come to life as concept art. I started with photographs, and painted over them."

2



3 SWAMP CHASE

"After a Star Wars film marathon I decided to create this tribute. I did some photobashing and then edited the artwork in After Effects. I wanted the scene to convey an epic feel."





3



Karolina Jędrzejak

LOCATION: Poland **MEDIA:** Photoshop, PaintTool SAI **WEB:** www.facebook.com/rinrindaishi

Karolina is at uni studying animation. "Digital art is still considered odd in Poland, so I've been confronted with a lot of negative opinions. It taught me to be sure of what I want to do in my life."

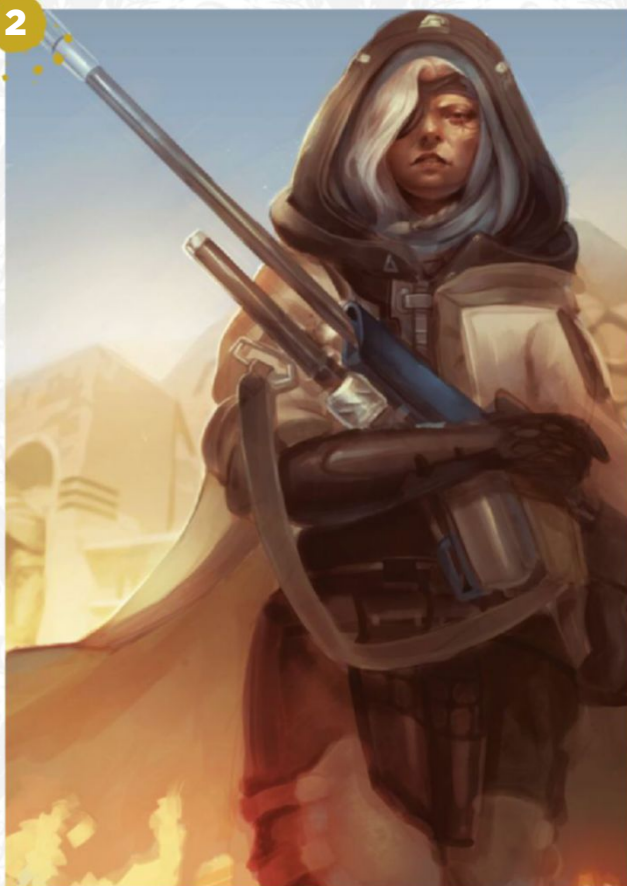


1 WARNING

"This was my first attempt at a fully illustrative type of art, with perspective, mood and action. Both characters have spotted each other. The question is who will attack first..."

2 ANA AMARI

"I fell in love with Overwatch immediately, partly because of the strong, original characters. I wanted to show Ana as fearless fighter. This piece started out in greyscale, and I added colour at the very end."

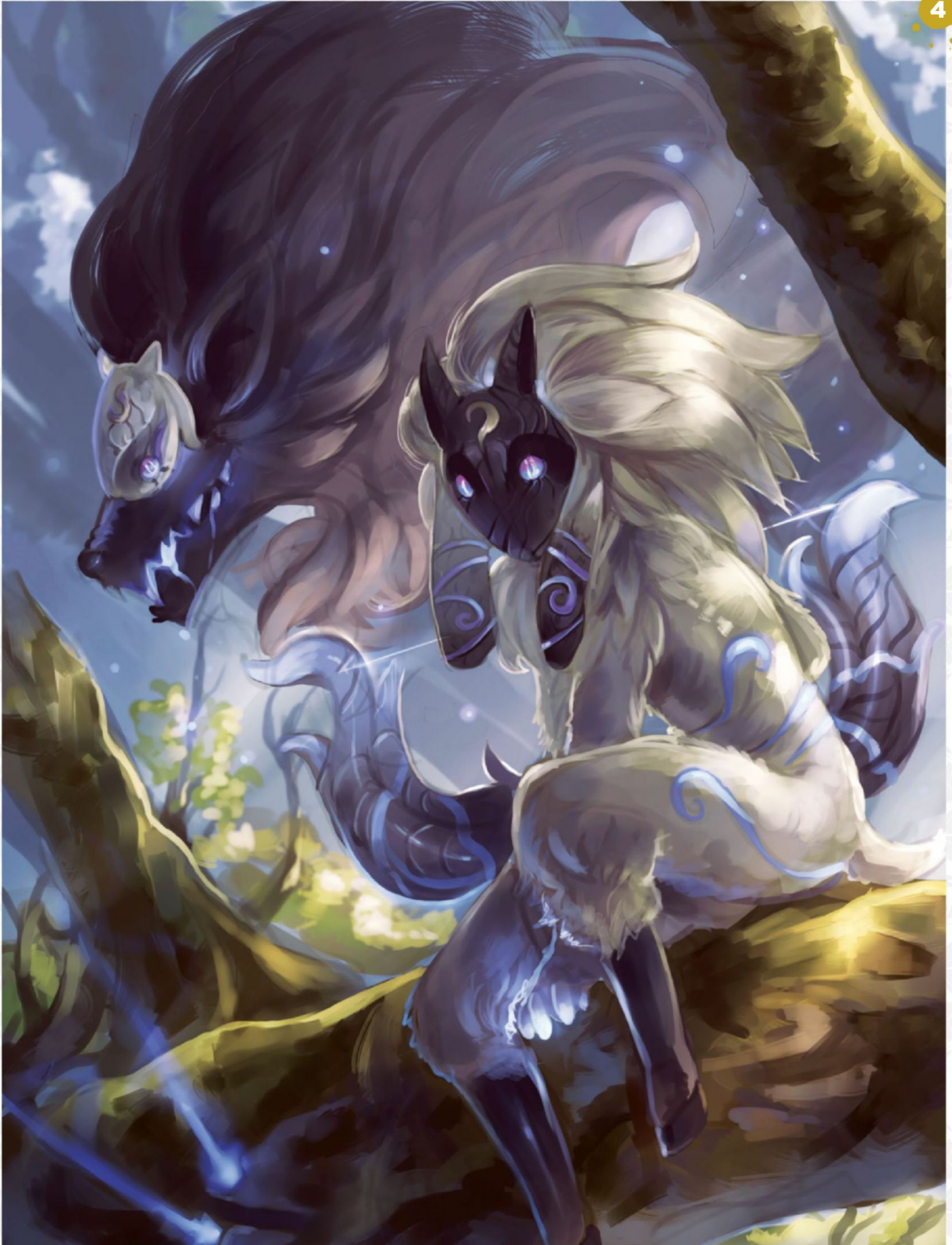


3 YEJIDE

"This is a character of my own creation. She came to life as a result of my love of Nordic culture and strong female characters."

4 KINDRED

"Characters from the game League of Legends. These are eternal hunters of death, seconds before their next hunt. I wanted to create a contrast with the calm mood of an early morning forest."





Joerg Schlonies

LOCATION: Germany **MEDIA:** Photoshop **WEB:** www.dojoerch.com

Joerg runs a small art studio called Do Joerch. "I really have a soft spot for Ireland," he says, "and so fairies, leprechauns, trolls and gnomes have a special meaning in my life."



1 THE COMPANIONSHIP OF THE FIVE

"This is an illustration for a story about five little dwarfs who face some big adventures together. I plan to publish the whole story in a comic."

2 THE WISE FAUN

"This is a personal piece that I created just because I wanted to draw a faun. I had the idea of this exact scene in mind. Maybe it'll be used in a fantasy story someday."

3 DRAW MORE!

"I created this Drawing Gnome character to serve as inspiration to do more artwork and overcome my lazy days. He commands you to draw more!"



Jennifer Hawkyard

LOCATION: England **MEDIA:** Graphite, Procreate, Photoshop **WEB:** www.jezhawk.com

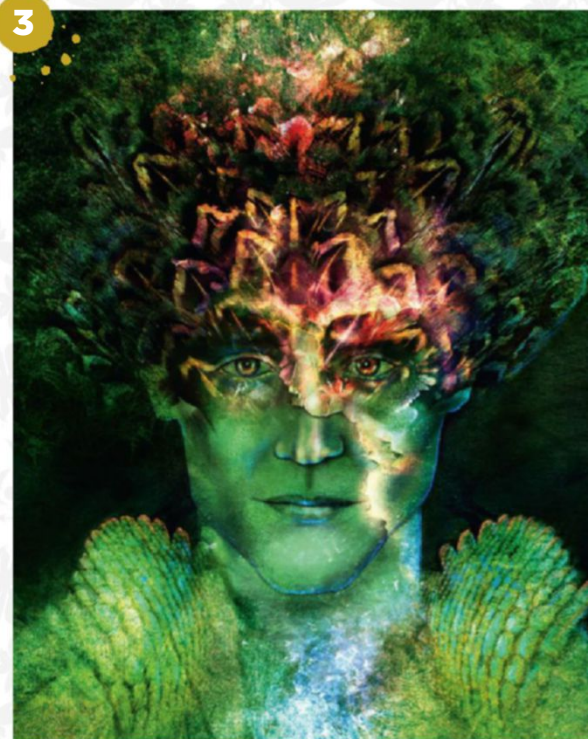
Jennifer left her job as an art director in Canada to pursue art back in the UK. She's now a freelance artist combining digital and traditional techniques.



2



3



1 AODHAN

"As with a lot of my other pieces, I started out with a detailed graphite drawing and then laid colour down in Photoshop, before adding photo textures towards the end."

2 RAPHAEL

"This fan art is of a character from a book series. The challenge was to keep the focus on the eyes while also describing some of the character's unique features."

3 THE GREEN MAN

"The Green Man is found in many cultures around the world. I wanted to create my own version. The piece evolved into something quite different than my original intention."



Sebastian 'Seban' Cichon

LOCATION: Poland **MEDIA:** Pencil, pen, ink, Photoshop **WEB:** seban001.deviantart.com

"I began drawing on the walls when in my cot. Later I switched to paper, and I've been learning this craft ever since," says Seban. He now works in animation.

1 BARBARIAN

"From the first line I knew the barbarian would be in that epic pose, standing on top of the dead bodies of all the monsters he had killed."

2 THE LOST TRIBE

"I created this for the Hex Lost Tribe contest. I've always loved painting heroines wearing impressive capes and I can't think about anything more dramatic than a monster looming behind her!"



3 RABBIT

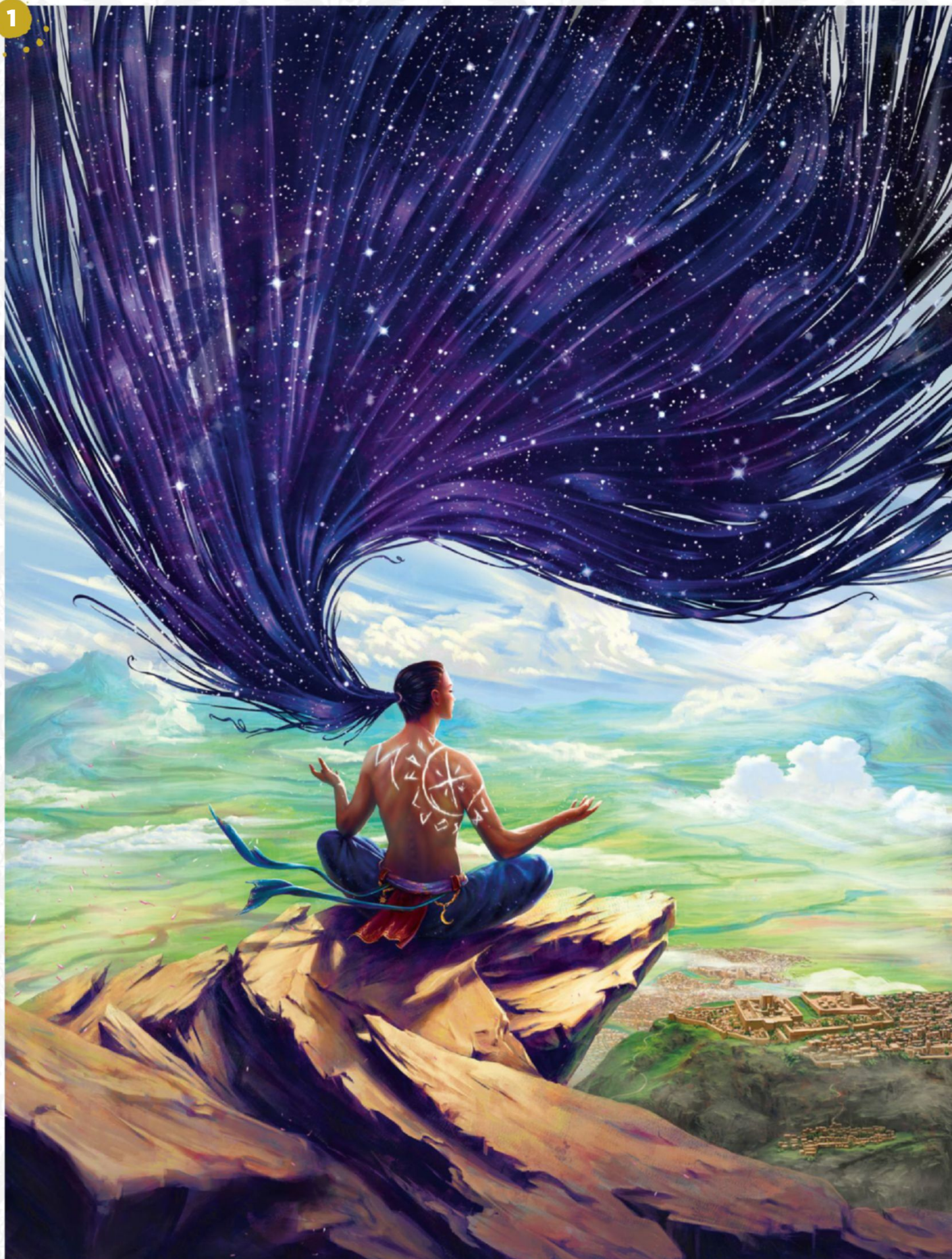
"Every year I like to prepare some special illustrations for upcoming holidays. This time I began by sketching a rabbit in a pumpkin. To add a Halloween atmosphere, I made the rabbit mad."

4 PATHFINDER: KYRA

"This is my first cover for Dynamite Entertainment. I spent a lot of time on the details in this painting, and it's one of my favourites. Kyra gleams with magical sunlight as she attacks the skeleton warriors."



© Dynamic Entertainment





Nassima Amir

LOCATION: Canada MEDIA: Photoshop WEB: www.artstation.com/artist/nassimaamir

Nassima studied CGI and illustration before becoming a freelance artist. "I am a real idealist," she explains. "I think fantasy enables me to make people dream and question their society."



1 AQUARIUS ERA

"I painted this for a book cover, so I had to leave a space for the title. I focused on the shape of the hair to create a graphic feeling."

2 NEW ERA

"For this I focused on painting simple but accurate shapes. The portrait is quite simple apart from this cyber headdress, which was very interesting to create."

3 GROWING STRONG

"This is Margaery Tyrell, my favourite character from Game of Thrones, transposed into an Edo-era Japanese style. I looked for reference images of empresses' outfits, engravings, fabrics and origami ornamentations."

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

The art of mindfulness



Love is There if You Know Where to Look, by Bobby Chiu, who says he sometimes draws to de-stress.

Mind matters Creativity might improve wellbeing, but is this true for artists? **Julia Sagar** finds out how pro artists beat stress

We all know about the therapeutic benefits of creativity. Most of us, at some point, have experienced the sensation of becoming so immersed in a creative act that the world, and our worries, have melted away.

Indeed, for many, creative mindfulness is an effective practice for achieving a focused, meditative state through art. But what about when you're a professional artist? Can art still function as a vehicle for mindfulness or wellbeing when you've been drawing, painting or creating all day? What can artists do to escape when it all gets a bit much?

"I started my career as a concept artist because of the mindfulness I experienced when I was drawing," says London-based **Francesco Mazza**.



"After a few years of doing it as a professional, though, I've realised that drawing isn't such an effective way to achieve mindfulness, because most of the time you have to meet the clients' needs."

ACHIEVING INNER PEACE

Lately, Francesco has been working on personal projects in his spare time in an attempt to recreate a sense of inner peace. And it's working. "I feel that this is the best way to escape from the pressure of a hectic life," he says.



Toronto-based artist **Bobby Chiu** agrees that client work is often the source of stress. He also points out that far from being a guaranteed gateway to a

meditative state, sometimes the creative process can be difficult and stress-inducing.

"I've always found the initial steps of a painting or concept to be the most mentally tiring, because you have so many different things to think about and coincide. The stress comes when I have a creative task to accomplish, but I can't seem to find an idea that I really like and the deadline is looming."

However, it's a different story when it comes to execution. "If I just have ➡





SMOOTH SAILING

It's woodcuts as far as the eye can see aboard the Tugboat Printshop, a studio located in the heart of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and run by Valerie Lueth.

Page 26



ART OF THE COVENANT

Three concept artists from the latest Alien instalment tell us what it was like creating art that both informed the film's production and appeared on screen.

Page 28



THE SCAR OF THE STAR

Sara Forlenza explains how to paint realistic-looking scars and a cloak flapping in the wind - just some of the topics covered in our regular Q&A section.

Page 34



Izzy Burton's At One With Nature. "It's hard not to get worked up when you're a perfectionist," she admits.

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

IZZY BURTON

The concept artist talks style, stress and shutting off

Do you create art to escape?

Yes, usually when I'm drawing or painting a subject I know well because it's easy to just shut off. However, when you're working to a brief it can be stressful to try to kurb your ideas and style to fit certain criteria. You have to keep checks on yourself, which can break the flow.

What's the most stressful part of your job?

My art style is fluid and sketchy. I don't spend time making sure each shape is perfect because I like the energy that it has, so when I'm asked to do vector-style work or texture, I find it stressful to be so concise and uniform. To deal with it, I slow myself down as much as possible and remind myself that I'm still learning.

What do you do when work or life gets a bit too much?

I tend to go for a wander around London and just take photos. It reminds me that the world is a spectacular place and I'm lucky to be here. I'm also painting a mural, which helps offset my digital art.

What advice would you give other artists who are stressed?

I have a notebook that outlines my life dreams, and breaks them down into things I want to achieve before the year is out, then what I want to achieve in a few months' time, then this month and then this week. This makes tasks a lot more manageable, and makes me feel like I'm achieving something.



Concept artwork by Francesco Mazza for a personal project called The Blue Caravan.

“Drawing isn't an effective way to achieve mindfulness, because most of the time you have to meet the clients' needs”



Blue Zoo Animation Studios concept artist Izzy is putting together an art book that's on how she deals with anxiety.

www.izzyburtonart.wordpress.com

Bulu, a monkey anatomy exploration by Almu Redondo, who advises, "Be open and curious about the world."



The Ganon Fight is a personal piece by Francesco that's inspired by the legend of Zelda.

➡ to spend the rest of the day rendering something like fur on a creature or foliage, it can feel quite meditative," he says. "That's when hours can go by in what feels like minutes. I usually leave these kind of tasks till the end of the day when I'm already a bit tired."

A MENTAL REFRESHER

To deal with stress, Bobby often goes jogging. He also practises the Wim Hof Method. "It's a combination of breathing exercises, yoga, stretching, meditation and cold therapy," he says. "It's quite refreshing."



For Blue Zoo director and storyboard artist **Chris Drew**, swimming three or four times a week offers a similar mental release. "All I can focus on when I'm in the water is my breathing and my technique," he says. As a director he's involved in every aspect of a production, which often means having several things to deal with at once and, at times, can feel overwhelming. He advises trying to focus on one thing at a time. "Multitasking isn't a productive way to work," he adds, "so I try to finish one thing before moving onto another."

An elf from 2015 Blue Zoo short More Stuff, which animator Simone Giampaolo directed.



“it’s important to avoid spending all of your time living in a mental fantasy world”

Francesco works on personal work, like Heart Piece, to achieve a sense of calm after a hectic day.



Swiss animator **Simone Giampaolo** finds drawing on paper particularly effective for escaping reality. He says that

switching everything off for an hour or so – phone, computer, tablet – and creating tangible art enables him to reach a state of mindfulness similar to meditating or dreaming. “In fact, after a few hours of addictive drawing I feel a little dizzy, like after a long sleep, but happier and more inspired than before starting. I come up with the best ideas for shorts or stories during or



immediately after drawing or building something.”

“Artistic escapism is great,” agrees **Dr Danny Penman**, a qualified

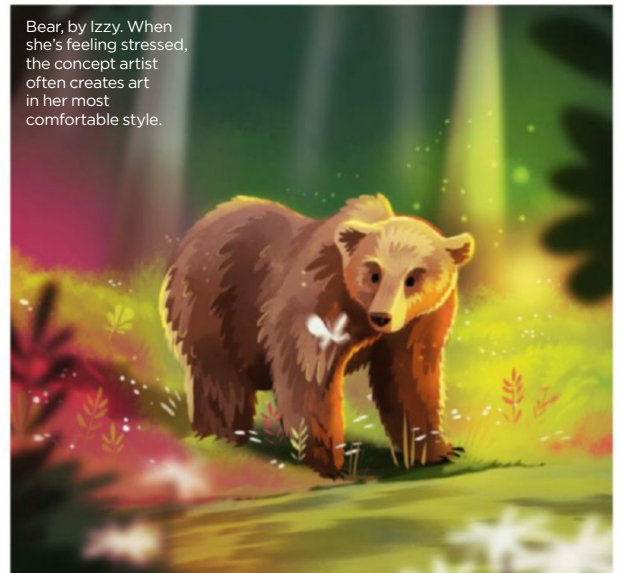
meditation teacher, journalist and author. “Creating something new is deeply satisfying and wonderfully therapeutic, but it’s important to avoid spending all of your time living in a mental fantasy world,” he points out.

BE AWARE OF THE HERE AND NOW

Danny’s new book, *The Art of Breathing: The Secret to Living Mindfully*, provides a guide to practising mindfulness, which he says is the single biggest thing an artist can do to enhance overall wellbeing.

“Escapism, to me, is escaping from the ‘here and now’, whereas mindfulness is being fully connected to the present moment,” he explains. “Lots of clinical trials have shown that connecting to the present moment ➔

Bear, by Izzy. When she’s feeling stressed, the concept artist often creates art in her most comfortable style.



FURTHER READING

SIX WAYS TO BE MINDFUL

*Want to practise mindfulness?
Try these brilliant resources*

1 Headspace

www.headspace.com

Comprising a website, app and book (Get Some Headspace: How Mindfulness Can Change Your Life in Ten Minutes a Day), the Headspace resources are made up of advice, tips and 10-minute meditation exercises from former Buddhist monk Andy Puddicombe.

2 The Art of Breathing: The Secret to Living Mindfully

By Dr Danny Penman

The award-winning author has produced a guide to letting go and finding peace, simply by taking the time to breathe.

3 Wherever You Go, There You Are

By Jon Kabat-Zinn

An easy-to-follow starter book for new meditators, Jon Kabat-Zinn's Wherever You Go, There You Are includes practical explanations on mindfulness and awareness.

4 The Power of Now: A Guide to Spiritual Enlightenment

By Eckhart Tolle

This is a manual for anyone who's ever wondered what 'living in the now' means, or how to free yourself of your ego.

5 WildMind

www.wildmind.org

This website offers free guides, articles and resources for practicing mindfulness. Run by Bodhipaksa, a Buddhist teacher and author, it's packed with tips for getting more from meditation.

6 Mindfulness for Creativity: Adapt, create and thrive in a frantic world

By Dr Danny Penman

Artists can enhance their creativity, problem-solving and decision-making skills with the simple mindfulness techniques mentioned in this book.

Spring is Coming is one of the first images Bobby created after coming out of a recent "artistic slump".

“You need to cultivate an open mind that can gather and then integrate new ideas”



The Turtle Port. "I'm still looking for the perfect activity to release stress," says Francesco, who's started boxing.



Character sketches. "Being an artist is all about being present and looking at the world through your own lens," says Almu.

➡ using mindfulness dissolves anxiety, stress and depression."

Better still, mindfulness can be extremely good for boosting your creativity. To see how this works, Danny suggests taking a step back and asking yourself: What do I need to do to become more creative? He believes it requires three things.

OPEN YOUR MIND

"First, you need to cultivate an open mind that can gather and then integrate new ideas. "Second, you need to consciously notice the new ideas created by your mind and realise their significance – otherwise they'll pass you by. And third, you need the courage to follow your ideas wherever they should lead – and the resilience to cope with the inevitable setbacks."

Danny walks through a number of meditations and exercises in his 2015 book, *Mindfulness for Creativity: Adapt, Create and Thrive in a Frantic World*, which aims to help artists achieve all three objectives.



One creative who practises mindfulness is vis-dev and concept artist **Almu Redondo**. She says mindfulness is key to

Espero is Simone's graduation film. "Spend time with people," he advises. "And don't forget to listen to them."



having an open mind and looking at the world in an objective way – which is what being an artist is all about.

"In both my personal and professional work, I purposely look for that mindful moment in my brain in which everything flows and is relaxed, but is also focused and receptive at the same time," Almu says, adding that music, routine and exercise all help her achieve this state. "Have patience," she advises. "Everything comes if you put in the hard work – and remember to



try and enjoy yourself while doing art."

London-based concept artist **Izzy Burton** agrees.

"We do art because we love it. If you find yourself becoming stressed, take a step back and relax. Find a new way to approach art that doesn't stress you out. I've found physical painting with acrylics helps me stay creative and calm when my digital work gets too stressful. That's my meditation."



I use an assortment of Japanese- and American-made tools to carve wood. A handful of V- and U-gauges make up my toolbox.



Ink is rolled and smoothed on the glass slab to eliminate inconsistencies before rolling up the block to make an impression.

These I-beams aren't just for show - they'll eventually support the Tugboat Printshop roof garden.



This sofa has just been replaced with a drawing bench. Being able to transform the room to fit new needs was a top concern and one of the main reasons the space was kept so boxy and simple.

This central table is made from plywood and wrapped with canvas on sawhorses.

Valerie Lueth

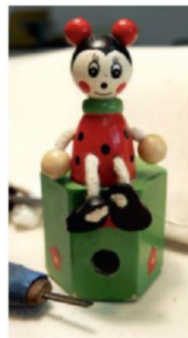
Sail away Take a guided tour inside Tugboat Printshop, a backyard woodcut press located in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania



Tugboat Printshop was founded 10 years ago in the front parlour of a 100-year-old Lawrenceville row

house. Operations were kept tidy and made to work, but space became a big need pretty quickly.

This past year, a new studio outbuilding was constructed on the property to host Tugboat; printing resumed in the upgraded location last autumn. The new space is bright and airy - it's a big cube of possibility! The



Wooden toy pencil sharpener - I love things made from wood!

ease of moving from home to studio is incredible (time's tight in a household with small children). I've been brainstorming some wacky plans for an eventual green roof and garden... the view up top is breathtaking.

Having a studio nearby and ready to go is amazing. I can either breeze in and start anew or pick up an ongoing project with ease. The building is set into the earth (the property is on a gradient), with a tall blue box facade facing an alley zig-zagging with roof lines and chimney

tops. Historic Victorian brick buildings are everywhere.

The view out the studio windows is my home and garden, with indirect sunlight filtering in all day. Dutch-style doors open interchangeably to the alley. The studio space is used for a variety of different purposes, so its layout is fluid and customisable.

Tugboat Printshop is an artist press specialising in traditionally made woodcut editions. Its printshop was founded in 2006 by Valerie Lueth and Paul Roden. You can see more at www.tugboatprintshop.com.



Here are the studio's doors, as seen from the inside. The Golden Apple Tree, Moth and Left Right woodcuts are framed and hanging in the background.

Ink is tacky and is handled with metal spatulas, then rolled upon the carved woodblock's surface with brayers and rollers. Coloured electrical tape helps organise ink cans.

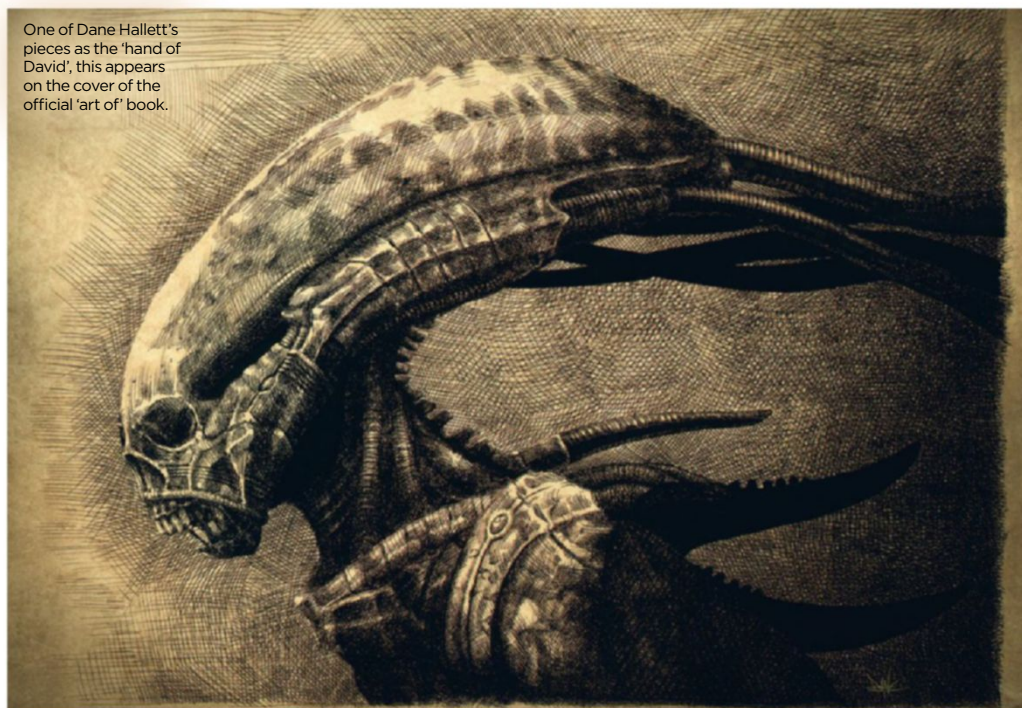


Tugboat is on Bowery Way, halfway up the hill between bustling Butler Street and Penn Ave. The studio faces the alley just up from a Victorian community centre and one of the first Carnegie libraries.

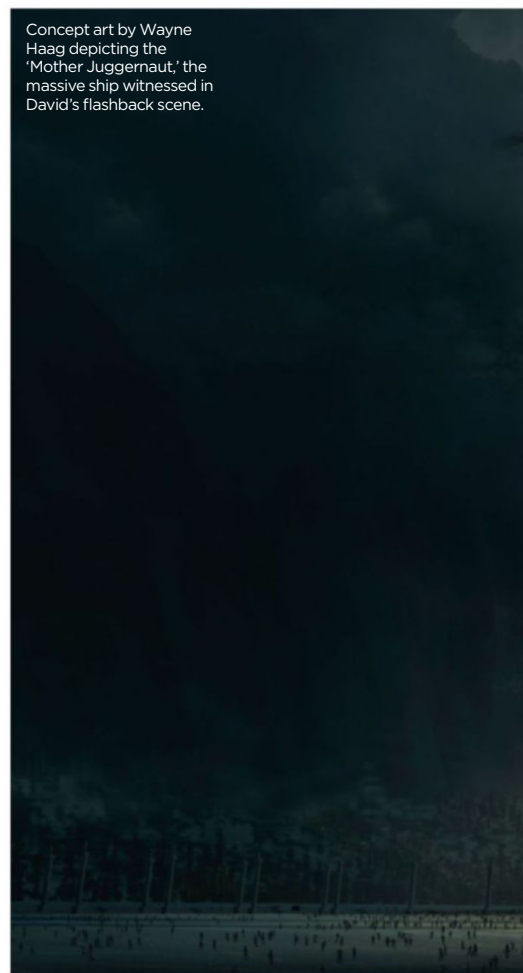
Five hand-drawn, hand-carved blocks created this colour woodblock image, entitled Overlook.



One of Dane Hallett's pieces as the 'hand of David', this appears on the cover of the official 'art of' book.



Concept art by Wayne Haag depicting the 'Mother Juggernaut,' the massive ship witnessed in David's flashback scene.



Loving the Alien

Space art For concept artists Wayne Haag, Matthew Hatton and Dane Hallett, working on the latest Alien film was a dream come true...



Concept artist Wayne Haag has been working in the film industry for over 20 years now. But while you might assume he's seen it all, collaborating with Ridley Scott on Alien: Covenant was still something pretty special.

"It's probably been one of the most creatively free jobs I've had," Wayne says. "Even though we were provided assets such as CAD models of sets or ship models, given specific direction or provided earlier designs, we were still allowed to take it where we thought the shots could go. Because lighting is really my thing, I almost don't care what I'm painting, as long as I get to light it."

Wayne explains that production designer Chris Seager served as the artists' direct link to Ridley Scott.

"We'd sometimes get Ridley-grams to work from, or Chris would give us a fairly loose brief and let us go to town. He gave out shots or scenes at random initially, because he didn't know our particular strengths, weaknesses or desires."

Anatomical study of male engineer created by Matthew Hatton.



"But eventually Chris gave us locations to work on that seemed to best fit our style, or that we'd already established a look for, or because we were technically proficient in a certain area. Within the broader context, the three of us worked with the set designers, helping to flesh out the eventual look of the sets and

locations, but also the greater environment beyond."

Wayne's work on the project was entirely digital, but involved quite a mix of approaches, he adds. "Some started with 3D assets. Some I had to build the 3D myself. Some started from a purely photographic basis. And sometimes I just started off painting, eventually

“It was like a bunch of mates hanging out and painting cool stuff. Everyone pushed and helped each other”



Anatomical studies of an alien egg created by Dane Hallett, drawn in the hand of the film character David.



Artwork created by Dane Hallett for an Instagram campaign led by the Alien: Covenant marketing team.

bringing in some photo bashing or adding 3D elements.”

Some of the artworks took up to 15 versions before being given the executive thumbs up, while others were approved on the first go. “If there were higher versions, it wasn’t because the art was bad; more likely decisions about the sets hadn’t yet been finalised, and so we had to adjust earlier works to fit a new brief. Everything comes down to cost and so, more often than not, I was asked to remove things from my paintings – lest they end up being built when they shouldn’t be.”

GROUP EFFORT

Something else that made working on Alien: Covenant special for Wayne was his relationship with the other artists who were busy working on the project, he adds.

“I’d known some of them throughout my career, so it was like a bunch of mates hanging out and painting cool stuff. We all had a great time. It was one of those jobs where everyone pushed and helped each ➡



➡ other. It was an Alien film so we weren't about to phone the job in – we all wanted to do our best.”

Fellow artist **Dane Hallett** concurs. “Growing up, I'd always wanted to



work in the film industry, and I really always just wanted to draw monsters,” he enthuses. “And Alien is my favourite film. So when

I heard about Alien: Covenant, I sent the supervising art director Ian Gracie an email that said: “I just want you to know that within your lifetime you'll never meet anyone who loves Alien as much as me, and you'll never meet

Unused Elizabeth Shaw concept by Matthew Hatton showing tentacles encasing her face and inserted into her head.

anyone who can draw the shit out of the Aliens like I can.”

Dane started out doing regular concept art on the movie. But then the job took a very different turn, because he was tasked with creating finished art that actually appears in the film.

How so? Because in the script Michael Fassbender's character, David, does nature studies of extraterrestrial

“We got the language down and it was leash off, draw as much as you can draw”



This large-scale piece by Dane Hallett, depicting failed facehugger experiments, was two metres long.

wildlife. “Then pretty quickly his drawings detail his own madness, and he becomes like a mad scientist,” Dane explains. “And the drawings become like a surreal fantasy.”

To create this on-screen artwork, Dane teamed up with another concept artist, **Matthew Hatton**, and the pair



produced 600 drawings in total. “We became the hand of David: we were responsible for all his drawings,” says Dane.

“And Ridley loved our stuff, to the extent that he said to me: ‘I've never taken anything home before but I'm definitely taking these home’, which was very flattering.”

GOING BERSERK

Again, the pair had the creative freedom to run with their ideas. “This was one of those beautiful movies where I just got let off the leash,” says Matthew. “It was awesome. We got the language down and it was leash off, go berserk, draw as much as you can draw. It was nine months straight, and we didn't have a day off.



Concept art by Wayne Haag showing the environment of Paradise. The look and feel needed to convey a sense of gloomy isolation.



Another Dane Hallett's pieces as the 'hand of David', this represents the character's tipping point in his descent into madness.



Concept artwork by Wayne Haag showing the crash site of the Juggernaut spacecraft.




One of a series of images created by Dane Hallett for the marketing of the film.

"Our brief was to work traditionally to produce botanical, anatomical and nightmarish studies in the style of Old Masters, filtered through David's unhinged mind," says Matthew. "We worked in charcoal, and nibs and inks based on the styles of da Vinci and Rembrandt respectively. A direction from Ridley, production designer Chris Seagers and set decorator Victor Zolfo to give us an aesthetic touchstone. The Italian 'anatomical Venus' wax figures were another direction.

"But then the sheer number of drawings required changed. This forced us to adopt a hybrid approach

mixing traditional and digital, and from working directly on the lovely Japanese paper stock to printing on it. It also meant that after both equally working on the final art for David's quarters, Dane took charge of the daunting amount of imagery for the huge Lab set and I for the Shaw likenesses in the Scroll Room.

"Overall, I think Dane and I worked well as a tag-team," Matthew adds. "We're immensely proud of the job we did, and as fans ourselves we hope that other Alien fans dig it, too."

See page 97 for our review of The Art and Making of Alien Covenant. 

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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We worked hard to bring you a bumper package for our 150th issue. Hands up who's put the poster on their wall!

A big thank you

Thank you so much for creating a great 150 special issue. I've been reading the magazine since close to when it first came out, and I've gained so much confidence in my art – and joy in creating – by following the many workshops that I've read over the years.

I also like the advice provided by professional artists, which funny enough, is something I don't aspire to be. I enjoy my day job and am not quite ready to gamble the house on my art skills! But that doesn't matter: the fun is in the doing, and I think ImagineFX has done something special over the years in building up a community of artists. We may never meet each other, but ImagineFX is what we have in common, and I think that's really special.

Matthew J, via email

Claire replies Wow! Thank you so much for the kind words. We really wanted to put together a special celebratory issue, and we think we managed that. Back in the day, any mention of 'community' largely meant the old ImagineFX forum (remember that?!), but it fills me with all the good



DID YOU MISS THE PREVIOUS PACKED ISSUE?

Don't worry – you can still get hold of it. Visit <http://ifxm.ag/150ifx> for details.

Reader Liz got plenty out of her two trips to IFCC, the art festival held in Zagreb, Croatia.



Issue 150 featured the sketches of the brilliant Stephan Martinière and Feng Zhu. It was a double whammy!

feels to hear that it's alive and well... Awww, I'm getting all tearful here!

You've outdone yourselves!

Your recent issue (150) is an absolute treasure trove of amazing art! Loish on the cover, Sparth in the first feature, Stephan Martinière in the sketchbook, and that's before you get to the workshop with Dave Seeley. Amazing! So many legends in one issue. Kudos to the ImagineFX team.

Jason Philips, via email

Claire replies Thanks a lot for the love, Jason. It was fun getting together so many fantastic artists involved in the issue. They're very busy people! But as with the majority of artists over the years, they also seem to have time for ImagineFX. So really, the thanks should go to them for their help, and to you for reading the magazine.

ImagineFX festival?

I'm really excited about the upcoming art festivals this year. Having been to the past two IFCCs [Independent Festival of Creation] in Croatia, I learnt so much from the artists there, but also got super-inspired from meeting so many budding artists, like me, who want to do this for a living some day.

Anyway, my question is, why doesn't ImagineFX do an art festival? I'd go!

Liz Belloway, via email

Claire replies Good question, Liz, and this is something that we've talked about, and pushed for, for many years. The short answer is that there's no guaranteed money in it (I know, brutal, but true). The slightly longer answer is,

ImagineFX is a healthy, but relatively small magazine in the pretty big company (Future). It is, ultimately, out of our hands – though like I say, we've made it clear that we'd be interested in staging a London-based art event under the ImagineFX banner. Also, we're a team consisting of just three office staff, so if we were to take this on, we'd might need a holiday to recover from the experience!



New works that have grabbed our attention



Alexandra Mannion
[@alexa_ink](https://www.instagram.com/alexa_ink)



Jacob Aybara
[@JacobAybara](https://twitter.com/JacobAybara)



Małgorzata Kmiec
[@mkkmiec.art](https://www.instagram.com/mkkmiec.art)

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Artist **Q&A**

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The
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panel

Sara Forlenza
 Italy-based Sara's a full-time freelance artist who works mostly as an illustrator of book covers, digital cards and role-playing games. She's also produced artwork for advertising campaigns and apps.
<http://ifxm.ag/sara-f>

Don Seegmiller
 Don's traditional oil work appears in collections worldwide, he's worked as an art director, and he regularly travels to speak at conferences and host lectures. Don's also written several instructional digital art books.
www.seegmillerart.com

Capturing the irregularities of the damaged skin is key to painting a realistic-looking scar.

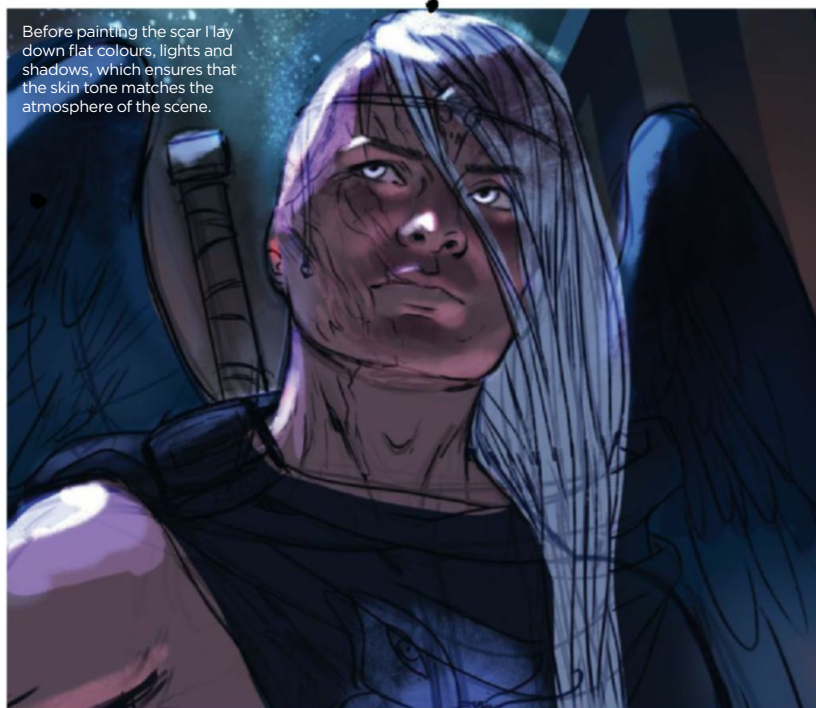


Artist Q&A **Need our advice?**

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



Before painting the scar I lay down flat colours, lights and shadows, which ensures that the skin tone matches the atmosphere of the scene.



Question

Please explain how to paint a realistic-looking scar

Gareth Jones, England



Answer

Sara replies



Before starting the drawing, I usually search for references, images and descriptions of a range of scars. What I learn from those references is that scars have a different aspect, shape and colour depending on the area of the body affected and the cause of the injury.

For example, a fantasy warrior's scar would be limited to a specific area, depending on the weapon that injured him. The sharpness of a blade determines the severity of the scarred

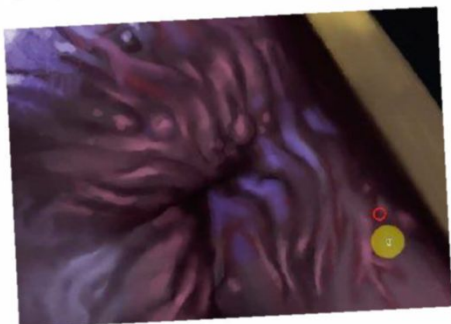
skin (just think about surgical scars). In contrast, burns vary in their size and shape, and will have irregular edges. They'll be different burn grades depending on how long the skin remains in contact with fire or a heat source. Skin will redden until it becomes darker than the uninjured skin colour, and will wrinkle, too.

Let's consider a serious burn scar that affects the upper half of the character's body, face, neck and part of torso and arm. I start by delineating the edges of the affected area...

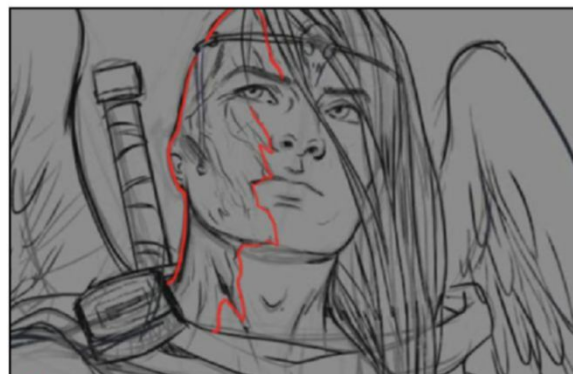
Artist's secret

Make use of soft and rough brushes

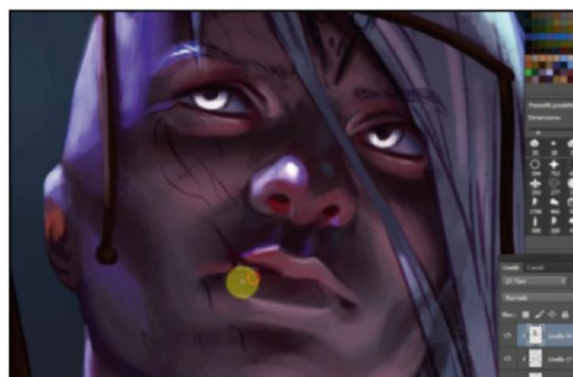
If the scar appears unrealistic or it doesn't stand out, I create a new Overlay layer and with a reddish colour and a soft brush I accentuated some areas. With a rough brush I'm able to add a degree of irregularity.



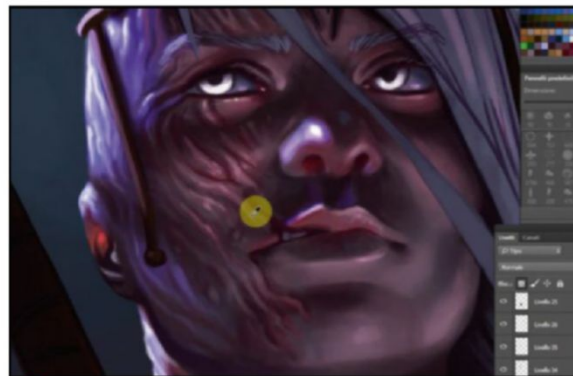
Step-by-step: Illustrate an elf with a savage burn scar across his face and body



1 I lay down the scar edge in the sketch, but I don't worry about adding details. Indeed, most of the heavy lifting will be done with colours. Because half of the figure's head is burnt, this area will be hairless and the ear will be reduced in size.



2 After painting flat colours I introduce lights and shadows. I want to depict a realistic skin surface, on to which I'll paint the scar. Taking this approach will ensure the shape and curves of the character's face are reflected accurately in the design of the scar.



3 I choose a hard-edged brush and a reddish colour to paint details such as streaks, bulges and other irregularities. The scar should appear raised, wrinkled and darker. Finally, I add light accents on key areas, to give it a shiny appearance.

Question

In Painter my brush strokes are either too heavy or too light. Help!

Mai Carey-Bates, US

Answer



Don replies

Corel's Painter ships with a huge variety of brushes separated into Categories. Within each Category are a number of Variants. There are hundreds of individual brushes. With so many brushes on offer, how do you pick the ones to use?

That decision is usually based on how a brush stroke looks. While every brush has default settings, the look of individual strokes is based on the general settings of the program combined with the artist's stylus pressure and speed.

Because every artist is individual, the program defaults may not paint as anticipated. Strokes may be too opaque or not opaque enough, they may not interact with a paper texture properly, or the size-to-pressure ratio may be incorrect. Painted strokes can lack the natural media appearance Painter is known for, and cause artists to abandon the program.

Fortunately, there's a way to customise the individual painting pressure and speed to suit the each artist's style. To set the program defaults to your individual stroke pressure and speed you'll need to use Brush Tracking...

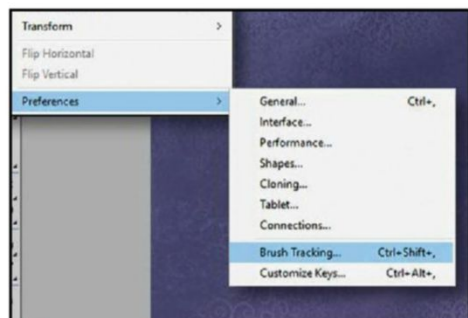
Don't use Painter's brushes out of the box. Instead, tailor their way of working so that they best suit your natural painting style.



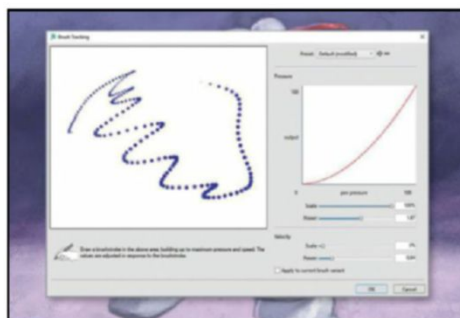
Artist's secret

Get a feel of your brushes
I like brushes that make marks which are more subtle. To accomplish this I'll draw with less speed and lighter pressure in the Scratchpad. There's no specific speed or pressure to produce different results. It'll take some experimentation.

Step-by-step: Make use of Painter's Brush Tracking option



1 Painter's brushes don't always behave as expected. This is corrected by setting the Brush Tracking. This option is found under Edit>Preferences>Brush Tracking (Ctrl+Shift+,) on the PC and Corel Painter 20xx>Preferences>Brush Tracking (Cmd+Enter) on the Mac.



2 The Brush Tracking window appears. With your stylus draw a stroke in the Scratchpad. Vary the speed and pressure of your stroke from slow and light to fast and hard. A squiggly line will give better results than a quick straight line. The Pressure graph will update automatically.



3 Click OK. The resulting settings will be closer to your individual stylus pressure. Also, try customising brushes by checking Apply to Current Brush Variant box, and experiment with different sliders. The Pressure graph will update. You'll only need to set Brush Tracking once.



By first defining the background I'm able to identify the light sources that are shining on the cloak.

Question

Help me paint a flapping cloak

Toby Fairley, Australia

Answer

Sara replies



To paint a cloak caught by the wind, consider several elements. First, what's the cloak made from? By searching for references and looking at different types of cloth we'll have a better idea of how it'll be affected by the wind. For example, a heavy fabric such as wool or felt won't crinkle as much as, say, a cotton cloak. Fabric can be rigid, which we can translate in our drawing by using broken, stiff lines and a few large curves.

Another key element is the wind: the direction it's blowing in, and its strength. A strong wind will lift the cloak and stretch the fabric, creating longitudinal folds parallel with its direction. Let's consider a very strong gust of wind blowing to the right and towards the viewer. This will cause the cloak to whip around the character body and flap over on the right and in front of the figure. So we'll have to pay attention to the perspective of the folds on the edges of the cape.

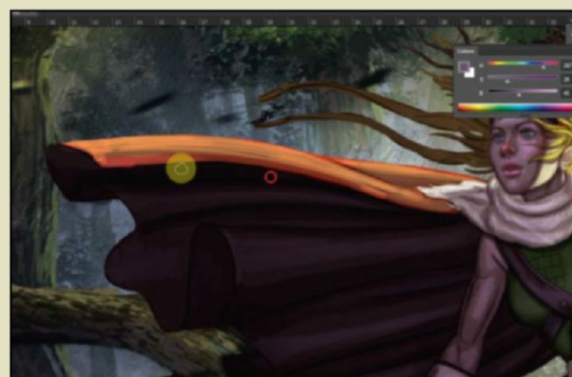


The flapping cloak with motion blur applied to its edges and on leaves gives the viewer an idea of how strong the wind is in this scene.

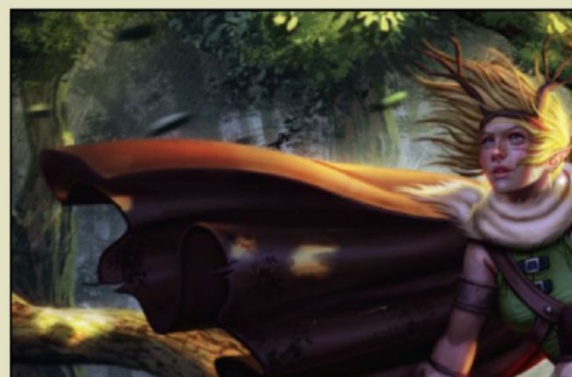
Step-by-step: Illustrate a character's flapping cloak to depict a dynamic scene



1 I put down a sketch, keeping in mind what the direction of the wind is. Because the cloak's fabric is of a medium thickness it'll produce large longitudinal folds. The edges of the cloak and the orientation of the folds indicate the wind's direction.



2 I choose a brown for the colour of the cloak. On a new Multiply layer I apply shadows with a Hard brush and a purplish, warm colour. Then I create a Color Dodge layer and apply the light with a blue-green that matches the woodland environment.



3 I merge my layers, and check that the lights and shadows aren't too much of a contrast, otherwise the fabric takes on an unsuitable, shiny look. As a last touch I select a hard-edged brush and add spots of dirt, tears and frayed edges.



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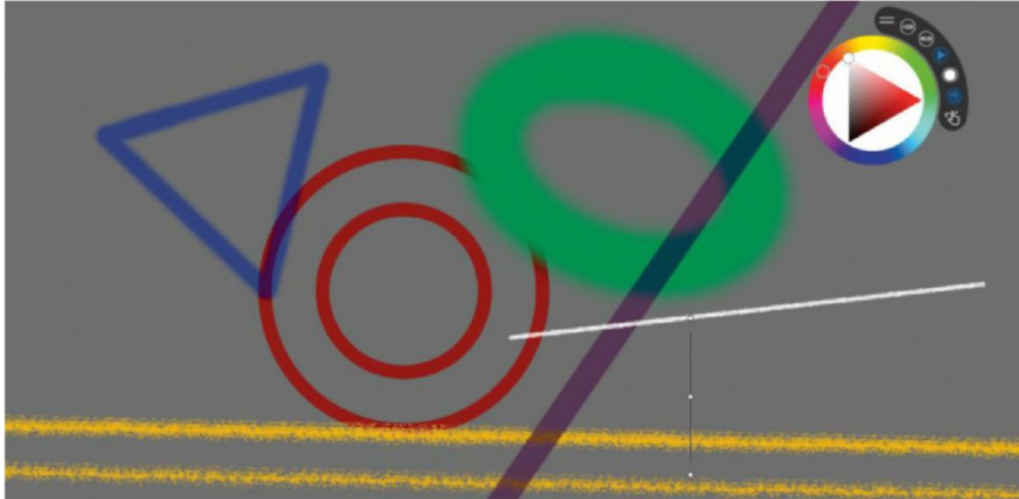
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Question

How can I paint controlled and smooth strokes?

Sandra Hines, Canada



Answer

Don replies



Sketchable is a painting app for Windows 10. It enables you to paint large strokes on large images with no lag. Images are created in 'Journals', of which you can create any number at any size. It's like having multiple sketchbooks always open.

This sophisticated app has a large set of features usually found only in expensive desktop programs. A few of the more obvious features found in the app are layer blending modes,

customisable tools, importable brushes and paper textures, and more.

There are some features that aren't as obvious at first glance. One such gem is the ability to paint using Stencils. These give you the ability to constrain your brush stroke to a variety of different shapes. Each shape can be transformed, moved, scaled and rotated.

Once you've tried painting with stencils, they will become integral to your work flow.

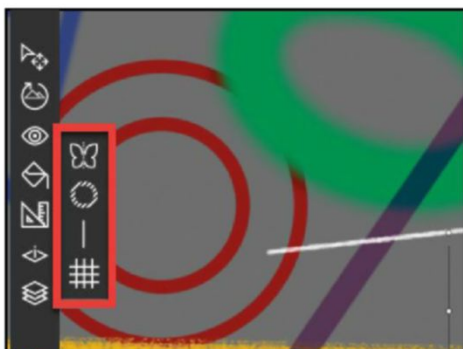
Once you've created your stencil art in Sketchable, you can export it as a PSD.



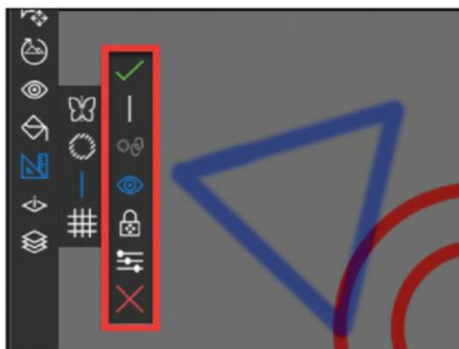
Artist's secret Get more control

If you need precise size and placement of Stencils, click the Stencil Setting icon. The large Stencil Settings window opens for precise control. You can change shape, toggle the Stencil Gestures, toggle the Stencil Gestures, change size, position and more.

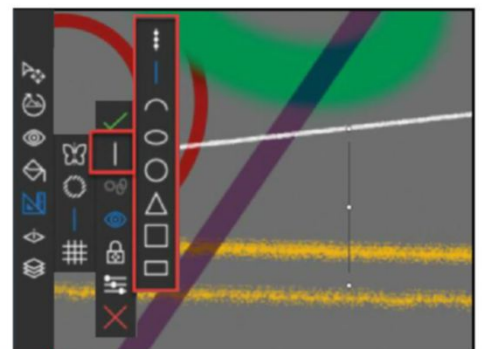
Step-by-step: Use a stencil to create precise brush strokes



1 Open the Explore the Masking, Snapping, and Symmetry options (Friskets) located on the left side of the Sketchable workspace. The icon looks like a triangle overlapping a ruler. A panel opens with Symmetry, Mask, Stencil, and Grid options. Choose Stencil.



2 Another panel opens showing Stencil options. Turn the Eye icon on so that the Stencil is visible. It will be a blue colour. The default Stencil is a line with control points at the top, middle and bottom. You can click the control points to transform the stencil.



3 Click the Shape Selection icon and select a different shape. The Stencil updates to the chosen shape. Click the Stencil Gestures (padlock icon), choose a brush, and now you're able to paint a precise stroke that's constrained to your chosen Stencil.

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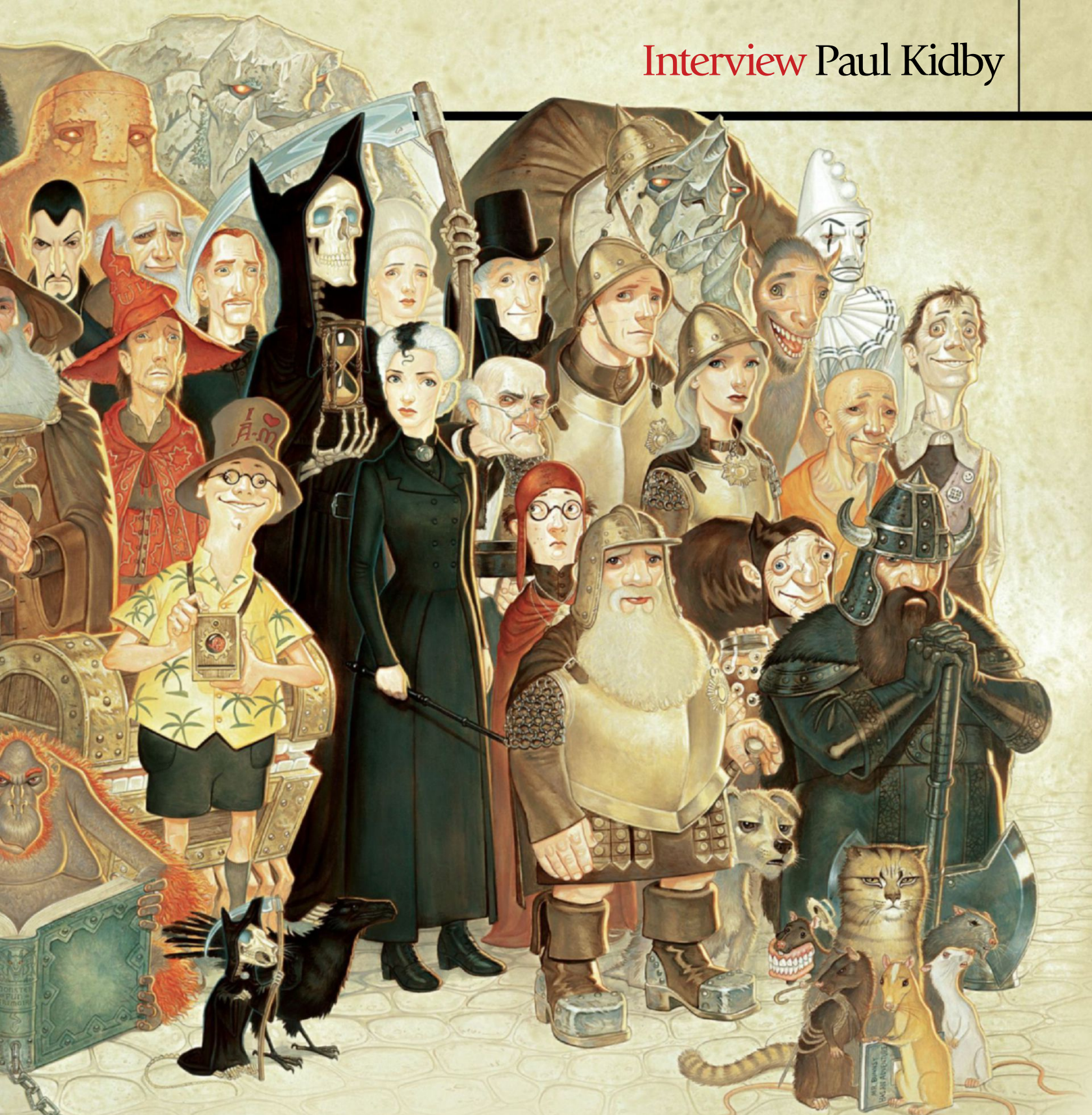


Artist Portfolio

PAUL KIDBY

Making false teeth, firing flaming arrows and painting magic wosname: the British artist tells **Gary Evans** about his long and eventful career





Paul Kidby grew up in suburban London in the 1960s and 70s. As a boy, there was a house on his street that he found fascinating. In the window was a skeleton. And when he heard what this lady did for a living, he found her house all the more fascinating. But he was well into his teens before he dared knock on the door of Miss Ockington's.

At that time, he'd just dropped out of sixth form and worked on a Youth

DISCWORLD

"I painted this in 2014. It's a large-scale piece, acrylic on canvas, and features over 70 Discworld characters. It'll be on show at the Terry Pratchett Hisworld exhibition, on at the Salisbury Museum."

Opportunity Program making false teeth. He'd been interested in art from a young age. He'd make plasticine models of the orcs and elves from the books his big sister would read to him.

He was always drawing, too. He had plenty of supplies, since his dad was a stationary salesman. As a teenager, he drew imaginative pieces influenced by his two interests: fantasy literature and punk rock – The Lord of the Rings and The Jam, War of the Worlds and The Clash. Aged 17, Paul "plucked up

the courage" to introduce himself to Miss Ockington.

"Miss Ockington," he says, "had been an anatomical artist working in operating theatres, and was an adept draughtswoman and calligrapher. She had taught art at Ealing Art College. Her students included Pete Townsend, Freddie Mercury and Ronnie Wood.

"She told me, in no uncertain terms, that if I was serious about becoming an artist, I had to learn the nuts and bolts of my craft, starting with ➤

'I HAD NO IDEA HOW POPULAR HE WAS...'

Paul remembers the day that would define his career: his first meeting with best-selling author Terry Pratchett

In 1993, my sister gave me *The Colour of Magic* by Terry Pratchett for my birthday. This was a pivotal gift. At once, I was able to visualise Discworld and its inhabitants. I sketched up some of the characters and took them to a book signing in Bath.

At the time I had no idea how popular he was and was rather surprised when I joined a very long queue to meet him. I shook his hand and gave him my envelope of sketches. I expected to hear nothing further. However, a few weeks later, he rang me up and suggested that I create some artwork for him. It was a very exciting moment.

He told me that my character designs were the closest anyone had got to how he himself imagined them. That for me was hugely encouraging, as was his endorsement of my creative work by allowing me to illustrate for him.

I would visit him often at his home and we would discuss the character designs and develop the look of the environments. Terry's work remains a great inspiration for me and my gratitude for the opportunity he gave me is huge.



A CLUTCH OF CHARACTERS

"The bearded chap is archchancellor Ridcully – his expletives are coming to life in this 1995 piece. Below are the Reformed Vampyres, drawn for the 2003 *Discworld Diary*. I tinted my pencils digitally."



WRYD SISTERS

"I started this piece in 2002 and finished it in 2013. It was for an exhibition at the Russell Coates Museum in Bournemouth. Granny Weatherwax looks like my mum."

were doing something far worse. "We made bows and arrows to fire across our department into the rolls of cardboard. This stopped after we got carried away and fired flaming arrows, as we realised things might be getting a tad out of hand."

By the mid-80s, he was working as a commercial illustrator, first as a freelancer in London, where he created greetings cards and packaging, and later at Future Publishing in Bath, where he drew covers for magazines like *Sega Power*, *GamesMaster*, and *Commodore Format*. "I had the optimism of youth," he says, "but it did mean working a lot harder, including weekends. The days of firing arrows, flaming or otherwise, were well and truly over."

DEPICTING DISCWORLD

Paul is best known as the artist of choice for Sir Terry Pratchett. Since 2002, he's designed book jackets for the author's celebrated Discworld series and its various tie-ins. Paul used to have direct contact with Sir Terry until the author's death in 2015. They'd flesh out designs together. Now Discworld commissions come from publishers or the Pratchett estate.

For book jackets, Paul receives a brief, then he works with an art editor until their ideas align. "My job is to visualise the brief," he says, "so it's not a matter of compromise for me, rather a case of giving the client what they



BATMAN

"The art editor won an award for this cover, my Batman illustration for *GamesMaster* magazine."

➔ perspective, anatomy and composition. I had to ditch my imaginative illustrations and start drawing from life."

Paul visited Miss Ockington every week. She critiqued his work and set him challenges. Technically, he learned a lot from her. But above all else he learned that to be a successful artist you need discipline. "It was the start," the illustrator and sculptor says, "of a life-changing process in my artistic development."

In the early 1980s, Paul designed and painted roller blinds in a factory. He was working, but not hard. He and a friend would clock in and then go jogging. If they weren't doing that, they

Artist PROFILE

Paul Kidby

LOCATION: England

FAVOURITE ARTISTS: Alphonse Mucha, John William Waterhouse, Gustav Klimt, James Jean, Arthur Rackham and Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres

MEDIA USED: Oils, acrylics, coloured pencils and Photoshop

WEB: www.paulkidby.com



RINCEWIND

"This is one of my favourite Discworld characters being chased by some creatures from the Dungeon Dimensions, inspired by HP Lovecraft."

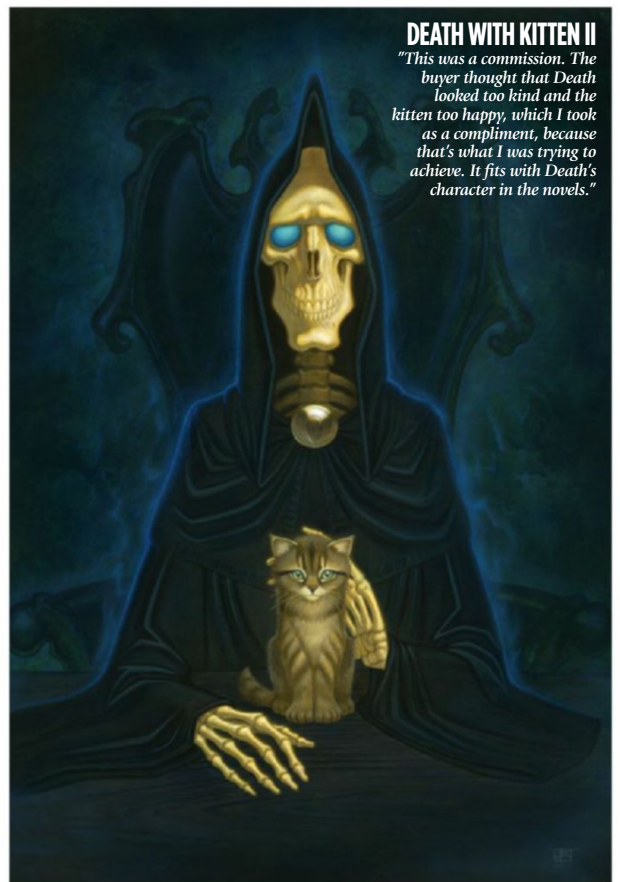
LAST HERO

"This is Cohen the Barbarian, with his sword and walking stick, which Terry especially requested a rubber bung on the end of."



DEATH WITH KITTEN II

"This was a commission. The buyer thought that Death looked too kind and the kitten too happy, which I took as a compliment, because that's what I was trying to achieve. It fits with Death's character in the novels."



“Even if the subject is fantastical, such as a dragon, I’ll apply my knowledge of anatomy to make it believable”

want to see. Sometimes I input additional ideas when I submit my designs, but it’s a collaborative process overall and one that I enjoy.”

Paul begins by drawing a very rough sketch. Only he’ll ever see this. He doesn’t develop it into a series of working sketches. Instead, once he has the idea straight, he starts work on what will eventually be the finished piece, adding lines, taking them out, working with the pencil and the eraser until he’s entirely happy with the composition. He shades for form and tone. If he’s going to colour the work, he’ll create a detailed underpainting in sepia tones, which “provides the bones

for the drawing by strengthening the lines and form.” He adds thin washes of colour.

In the final stages, Paul uses colour pencils for details and highlights. He describes himself as “modern old school.” He strives for accuracy, in perspective, in proportion, in the things that always underpin his paintings. He makes final tweaks in Photoshop. By his own admission, he’s not a fast worker.

“Even if the subject matter is fantastical,” he says, “such as a dragon, I’ll apply my knowledge of anatomy to make it believable. My work has a historical feel and my colours tend ➔



CHECK MORT

"This was done for a French book jacket in 2011. It became an iconic work because it was released during the time that Terry was battling Alzheimer's. I painted it so that Terry's chess pieces are positioned to win."



GREAT A'TUIN II

"This large-scale painting depicts the Discworld, on the backs of four elephants, who are standing on a giant turtle, travelling through space. Pratchett genius at work."

➡ to be muted. I'll often give an illustration a humorous slant, and sometimes I parody an existing painting, but only if it's appropriate. I think the underlying thread that ties all my work together is 'magical wossname' – a useful Pratchett term."

Paul works every day, often including weekends. He wakes up at 6.30am and runs on the treadmill. He gets cracking no later than 9am, after breakfast and a strong pot of coffee. He stops for lunch, walks his dog in the afternoons, and does Pilates to "counteract the hours I spend hunched over my drawing table." He's usually done by 6pm and rarely works at night.

Paul likes oils, acrylics or coloured pencils, and a smooth Bristol board on which to apply them. He doesn't have a dedicated studio. He works at the dining table or in the conservatory. He uses an iPad, but for reference more than for making art. Other than that, he has no "fancy art equipment."

INTERACTING WITH VIEWERS

"As an illustrator," Paul says, "it's my job to always consider my viewer and to convey information from the text into visual form." He finds exhibiting in galleries the most rewarding part of his job. It enables him to show work as he intended it to be seen, free of text, titles or changes made digitally by clients. It's when he can interact directly with the viewer, the most intimate kind of artist-viewer communication.

Paul is working in collaboration with Sir Terry Pratchett's estate and the Salisbury Museum on a major exhibition titled Hisworld. It starts in September and runs until January 2018, and features over 40 original Discworld paintings, including Paul's

IMMORTALISED IN BRONZE

Paul explains how he put together a project to honour the Discworld author

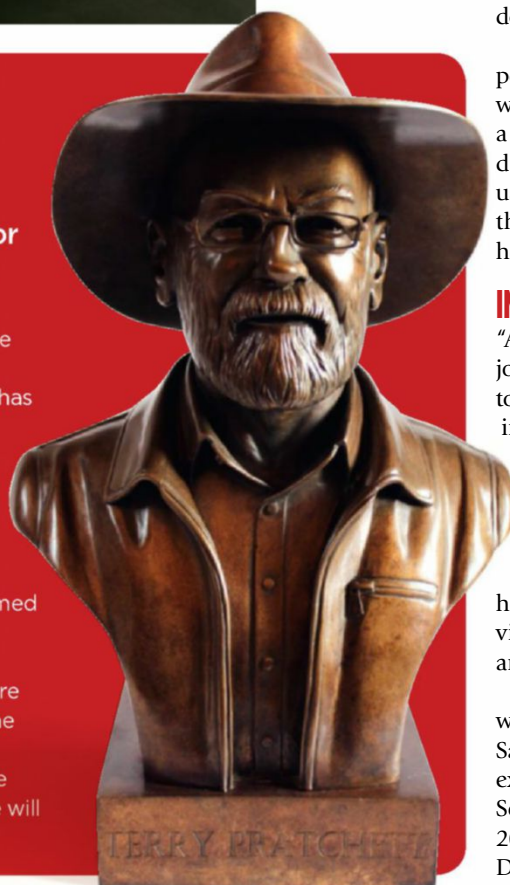
This portraiture piece is a sculpted bust of Sir Terry Pratchett. I made it as a preliminary study for a full length, large-scale sculpture that I'll be making of the writer for the city of Salisbury.

The bust is made in the oil-based clay Chavant. It has no wire armature inside. Initially, I worked from photographs until I was happy with the basic proportions. I then began to work from memory to try and capture the expression of the man I knew. Only when I was satisfied that I had a likeness of Terry did I tackle his glasses and trademark hat.

The glasses were very fiddly to make. They're formed with fine wire with a light skim of clay. The hat was made separately and can be removed.

The sculpt was then taken to the foundry, Sculpture Castings in Basingstoke, where a team undertook the process of mould making and casting.

The final stages are fettling the raw bronze, before applying the patination and a beeswax polish. There will be only 12 bronze casts.



NIGHT WATCH

"This is a parody of Rembrandt's The Night Watch. It was the first book jacket I painted for a Discworld novel following the death of former Discworld illustrator Josh Kirby. So I painted him into the crowd as a tribute."



“Terry’s ongoing legacy is extraordinary, and there’s still a wonderfully rich body of work for me to illustrate”

concept design for a large-scale bronze statue of Sir Terry for the city of Salisbury, where the author lived. He has some new collaborations lined up too: “Although Terry has sadly passed away,” Paul says, “his ongoing legacy is extraordinary, and there’s still a wonderfully rich body of work for me to illustrate, so there are plenty of exiting new projects on the horizon.”

After two decades of these collaborations, Paul’s art is almost inseparable from Terry Pratchett’s writing, and vice versa. But being the go-to artist for one of the world’s most successful authors hasn’t changed the

way he works. He sometimes spends years developing a piece before he puts pencil to paper. One single colour illustration can take six weeks to complete. And it all goes back to the discipline that he learned from his time with Miss Ockendon.

“I prefer to plough my own furrow,” he says, “and this doesn’t involve attending publishing parties, conventions, entering contests or being the focus of attention. So I guess courting praise is not important to me. In fact, the most important thing to me is to be left to get on with my work undisturbed.”

COMPANION

"This has a secret message for someone very special to me... who has since become my wife! It features the Discworld librarian surrounded by magical books."



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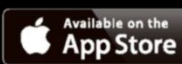


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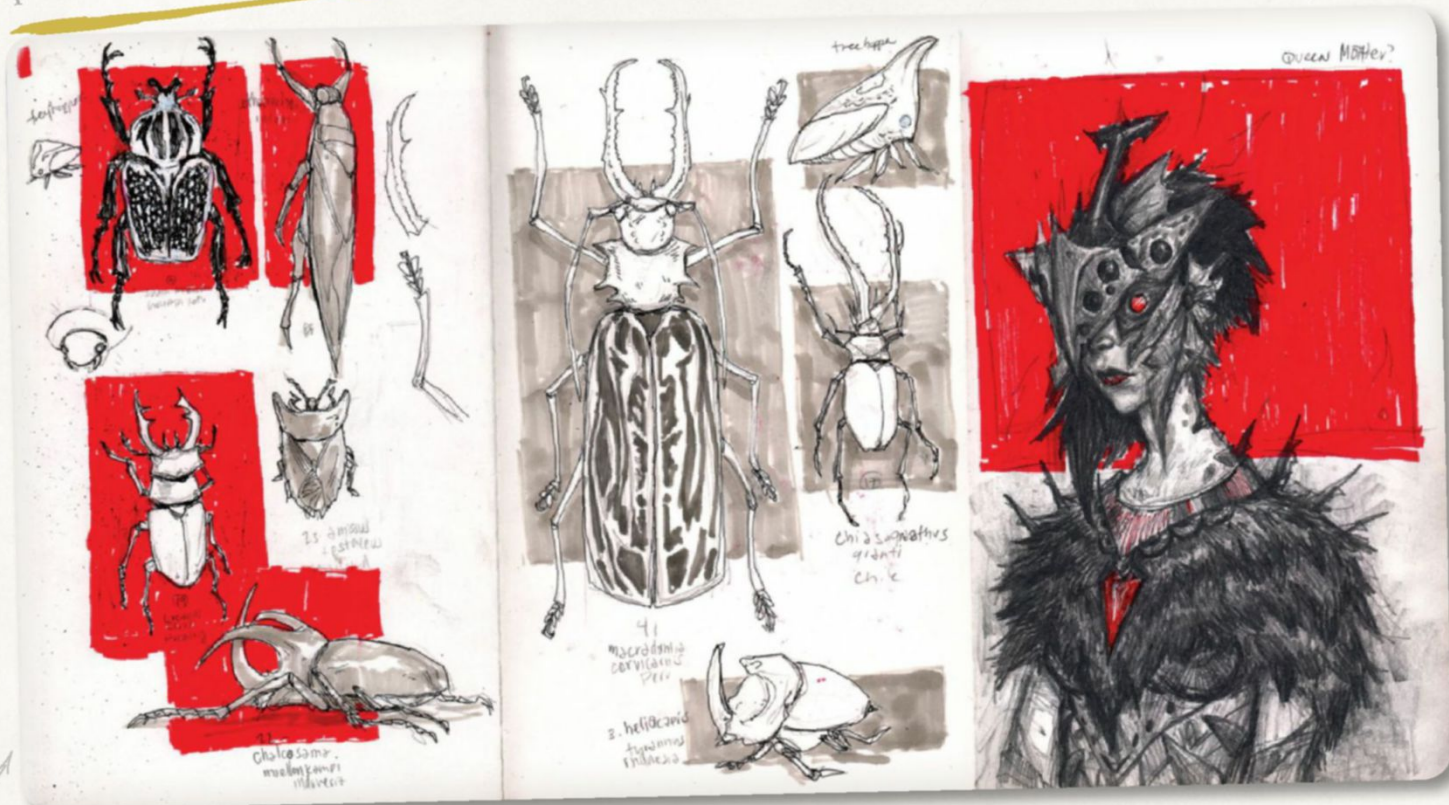
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THROUGH THESE OUTLETS:



Dawn Carlos

Insects, gaming and aliens – in fact, almost everything she sees – provide inspiration for the concept artist and illustrator's sketchbook

Dawn Carlos
LOCATION: US



"Studies from the insectarium in the Montreal Botanical Gardens. The Queen MOTH-er was originally a sketch of a woman's face that never quite worked out, so it was abandoned. After seeing all manner of insects I was able to return to it with some fresh ideas on how to salvage it."

"I love how far you can push the weirdness of aliens – using animals, insects, shapes and textures – but still retain a sense of character and humanity through it all."



"From roots and turkey tail mushrooms – rotting, blossoming – all while hiking through Muir Woods."



**FOUR
EYED SAGE**

"Inspired by fishes, frogs and tree bark. Using my trusty brush pens and those little label dots."

“I love how far you can push the weirdness of aliens but still retain character”

Sketchbook

YOSEMITE GROVE

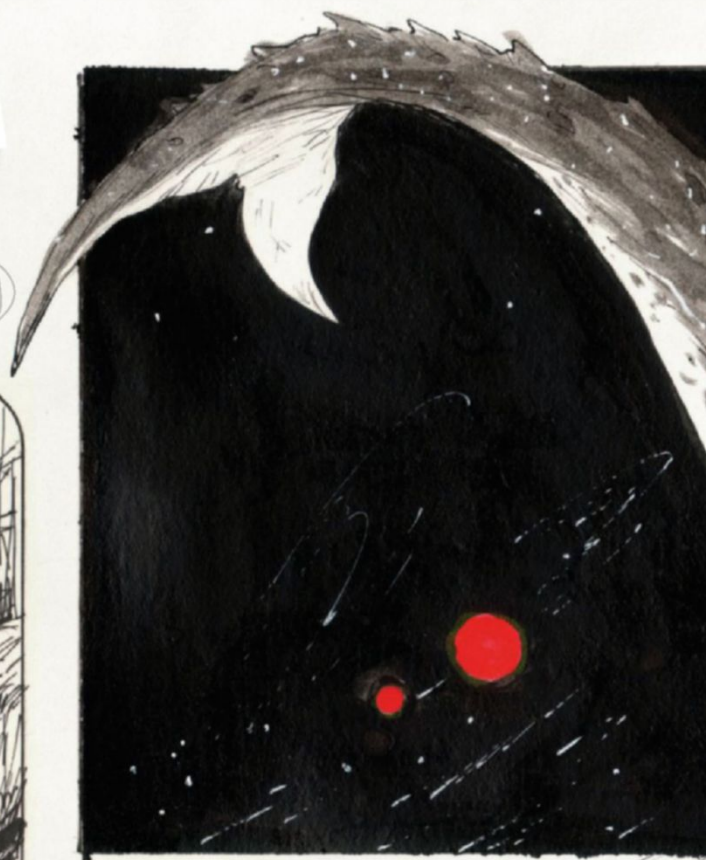
"Ink drawing as a gift for my parents, based on a grove I hiked through during my first time in Yosemite."



“I played the Mass Effect trilogy and my love for all things sci-fi was rekindled”

CROW BRO

"Starting with the idea of a shoulder-perched pet, this turned into a lone wizard, his familiar, and a magical crow claw prosthetic."





TWO EYES, THREE...

"These were postcard sized drawings done shortly after I had played the entire Mass Effect trilogy over two months and my love for all things sci-fi was rekindled."

WHAELSTROM

"I felt like drawing a monster whale. This one is also based on a pun, a play on the word maelstrom."



Sketchbook

JERK MAGE AND TROLL BIRD

"Mages can be real jerks sometimes, picking whatever, whenever from whomever for some potion or spell or magic stuffs. Poor Troll Bird hasn't even got that many feathers to begin with!"

IF YOU CANT BEAT 'EM...

"Played Overwatch one night and had a horrible losing streak. So I gave up and drew the characters instead."

“ Played Overwatch and had a horrible losing streak, so gave up and drew the characters instead ”



CAT-LIKE THIEF AND THE MUSHROOM PONCHO

"Couldn't decide if our Mushroom Merchant is wearing a poncho or a trench coat, so it's a Ponchoat. Or was it Trenchco?"

IT'S A TRAP!



ITS A TRAP!

"Started with fishy mouth up right, then scales, then thought, 'Oh, like scaly armour!' Then a hooded figure, a squire and an elf."



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Artist Portfolio **AARON MILLER**

Capturing the moment is the key to this American artist's striking fantasy work, as **Nick Carson** discovers...

When asked what makes his style unique, Aaron B Miller takes his time formulating an answer. It's not an easy one to pin down, but he believes it's one of the most important things for an illustrator to consider.

"I've heard it's my use of lighting. I think it's the moments I choose to focus on," he muses. "I aim for a realistic, but painterly style. I want my

images to look painted, not like photos. It's not about the details, but the marks and shapes that make us see more detail than is actually there."

Figures, creatures and landscapes are Aaron's subjects of choice, and he eschews complex, chaotic action scenes in favour of taking his time painting one fascinating character – under his trademark dramatic lighting scheme, naturally.

Although he concedes that digital art is faster and cheaper – and can achieve a similarly painterly feel – Aaron works in oils whenever he has the time, and brings his creatures to life with wonderfully tactile textures. "I tend to choose fur over scales," he reveals. "And feathers, of course."

His high school provided technical, illustration-focused art classes, and he went on to study at Chicago's ➔

Artist **PROFILE**

Aaron Miller

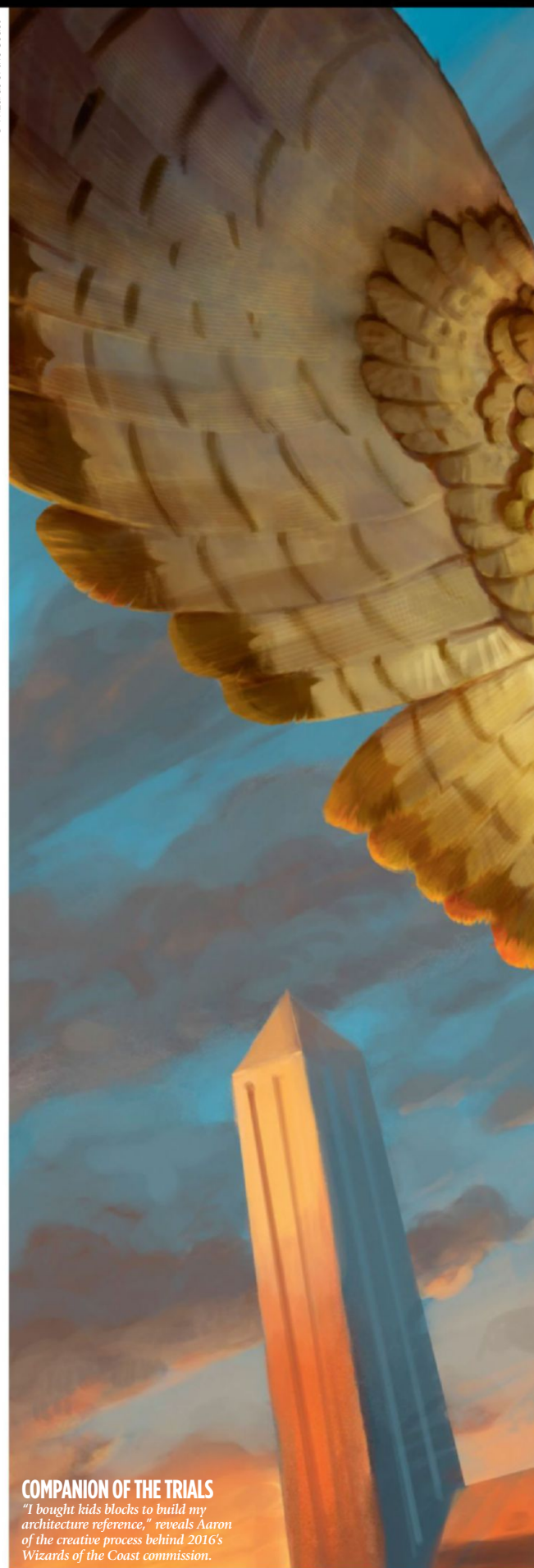
LOCATION: US

FAVOURITE ARTISTS: John W Waterhouse, Erik Gist and Chris Rhan

MEDIA USED: Oils, and digital using a Cintiq and stylus

WEB: www.aaronbmiller.com

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COMPANION OF THE TRIALS

"I bought kids blocks to build my architecture reference," reveals Aaron of the creative process behind 2016's *Wizards of the Coast* commission.



“It’s not about the details, but the marks and shapes that make us see more detail than is actually there”

© Wizards of the Coast



FAITHBEARER PALADIN

This was the first horse painting that Aaron was happy with. It was created for Wizards of the Coast in 2014.



MAP CHECK

"Can you guess the dungeon they're in, based on the map?" is Aaron's challenge for this 2015 commission for Wizards of the Coast.

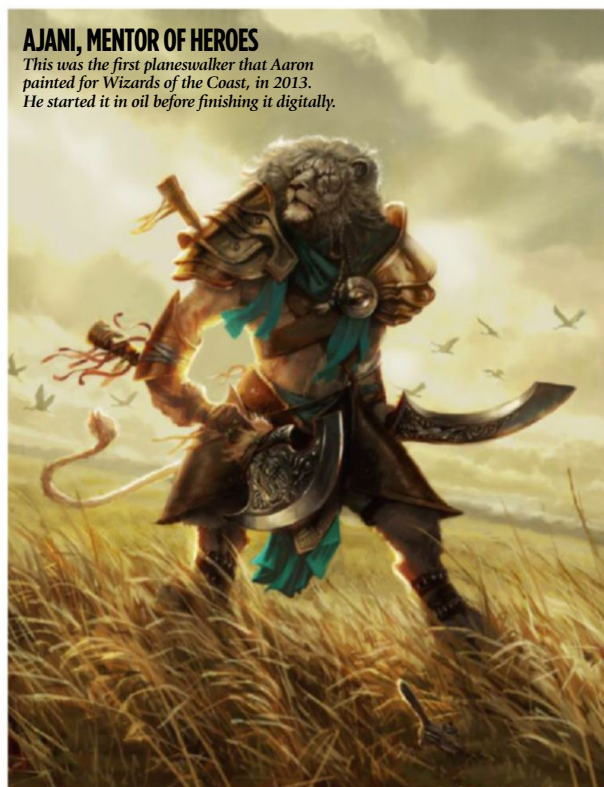
FIRES OF THE DESERT

For Miller, his cover artwork represents "success through sheer frustration, and trashing all previous attempts at an idea."



AJANI, MENTOR OF HEROES

This was the first planeswalker that Aaron painted for Wizards of the Coast, in 2013. He started it in oil before finishing it digitally.



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THINK OUTSIDE THE DESERT

Aaron overcame a range of creative challenges on this book cover project, and ended up with a portfolio highlight

Sometimes the hardest projects that you take on end up being the most rewarding, and the challenges involved can help develop you as an artist. This was particularly true with the cover image for *Fires of the Desert*, the fourth in the *Children of the Desert* series by US author Leona Wisoker.

After reading the manuscript, Aaron faced a conundrum: despite its evocative title, *Fires of the Desert* contained precious few examples of either flames or sand. "I recall most of the scenes taking place in an area that might resemble Italy," explains the artist.

"Blue was an important colour. There was very little desert, and not much fire. I felt all of my ideas would be in conflict with the title of the book, even though they were visually fitting once read."

After numerous failed ideas, Aaron went back to the drawing board. "I asked some simple questions to myself. I knew I either needed to show some fire, or use that colour scheme somehow," he continues. "Then I focused on the character, and how she was in conflict within the book, and the answers just flowed right out to a simple thumbnail."

Although at the start Aaron was concerned that the flowing fabric would prove to be the biggest challenge to achieve, it turned out to be the most enjoyable part of the process. "It was such a joy to work on," he says.

➤➤ American Academy of Art. But he firmly believes in ongoing personal development, and still attends life-drawing and sculpture classes to perfect his grasp of anatomy, as well as running his own Figurative Illustration workshops to help emerging illustrators hone their own technique by drawing costumed models.

TAPPING INTO ART HISTORY

Creative influences were around from an early age. Time-Life book series *The Enchanted World* introduced Aaron to the Romantic and Pre-Raphaelite artwork that he would later fall in love with. "It was, and is, an easy association to find fantasy throughout art history. Our museums are filled with fantasy art. Many are mislabelled as religious," he says.

“It was, and is, an easy association to find fantasy throughout art history. Our museums are filled with fantasy art”

Next came *Dungeons & Dragons* miniatures, as well as books – picked primarily for their cover art – plus an array of left-field comics. "I was attracted to the non-mainstream titles, although they did become so later," he recalls. "I was a fan of Moebius, and *Nausica* was my intro to anime. I collected TMNT when no one cared."

These days, his studio hosts a giant library of art books. "I've given away more books than most artists I've met own," Aaron says. "Artists I turn to when I'm looking for specific themes, techniques and subjects include Donato, Greg Manchess, James Gurney, Chris Rahn, Sargent, Dave Palumbo, Waterhouse, NC Wyeth, Rockwell... I could go on and on."

His books give him insights into how his artistic heroes overcame



LUDEVIC

Aaron used his father as a reference for the mad scientist in this 2015 digital commission from *Wizards of the Coast*.

technical hurdles, but they also help resolve aesthetic head-scratchers. "How did he capture a mood? How did she express emotion? How did this artist solve an action problem for a static subject?" he reels off. "It's a deconstruction process."

By most people's standards, Aaron has hit the big-time himself now, with a dream roster of clients and collaborators that includes Magic: ➤➤

Artist Portfolio

SCOUTING PARTY

This was created as desktop art for an online gaming convention in 2013. It's a digital artwork that Aaron feels was instrumental in working for Magic.



PLAYING HARD BALL

Aaron was against taking on this pro bono project, but it became a key springboard for his Magic work...

Depicting a dwarf ranger scouting out some orc raiders, Scouting Party was commissioned at desktop art for an online gaming convention in 2013. It proved to be a milestone project for Aaron that ultimately got him noticed by Magic: the Gathering, but he wasn't at all keen on taking it on at first.

"I tried as hard as I could to turn this job down," he recalls. "After two 'no thanks' emails, the art director called me to find out why I didn't want to do the work. For starters, there was no money. Zero. Then the project descriptions were horrible, from my perspective. They called for compositions I don't particularly care for, and had no desire to create."

All the more appealing subjects were already taken, he recalls, and

the lack of fee on top of that seemingly made the rejection a no-brainer – but Aaron opted to move the goalposts instead. "Asked what I would prefer, I mentioned creatures. He recalled a description that had a dwarf riding a lizard. I explained it was an overly busy scene, but I liked the main theme and would create something that worked for me and they could take it or leave it. The art director agreed."

Aaron's persistence paid off: the resulting painting was the event's most-downloaded image. "Confidence won out, and I delivered what the client actually needed, rather than what they thought they needed," he adds. "I try to recall this project when I feel my confidence slipping."

TRISTAN AND ISOLDE

Tristan and Isolde is a personal piece completed between 2013 and 2015, painted with oils on panel. "I started this at the IMC and got sick, and spent most of my week in bed," recalls Aaron.





RAPUNZEL

Painted for a fairy tale-themed show at the Maza Museum in 2015, Rapunzel was the "lucky last reference" for a sketch Aaron never expected to use. "Glad I decided to explore it," he says.



ELDER WATER ELEMENTAL OF THE DROWNED LANDS

Here's one of Aaron's recent personal pieces: "The rock basin that is the body of the elemental is referenced from an onion. The peeling layers symbolise life."

➤ the Gathering, Star Wars, D&D and Wizards of the Coast. They didn't just fall in his lap, though: it took years of hard work to build a portfolio, and he has some cautionary words for anyone who thinks they've 'made it' after their first big commission.

"Finally getting work doesn't mean you're at the top," he warns. "It means you've made it to the bottom of the top, and there's still a lot of work to do. Now that it's been a few years, I'm sure new opportunities will open up that I'm not even aware of."

Working on the likes of Magic involves collaborating with an art director, a process that Aaron enjoys – so long as it doesn't constrict him too much. "I love briefs as a jumping-off point," he explains. "I also love them being as brief as possible."

Good briefs, according to the artist, are like good travel guides: they should provide all you need to explore and have fun, with the freedom to approach things from your own perspective. "If the brief is too detailed, it can be stifling," he admits.

WHAT ARE YOUR NEEDS?

"Sometimes those are projects where a very specific vision is trying to be realised, and they just need a 'wrist' as the old term goes. Also, over-detailed briefs can run the risk of failing to focus on the important ideas. A good art director knows what an illustrator needs and doesn't need."

Miller is a regular sight at art events, and lauds the fantasy genre community as particularly warm and welcoming. "Going to events feels like

going to a family reunion you actually want to attend," he says. "And the contacts that you make at events can be life changing."

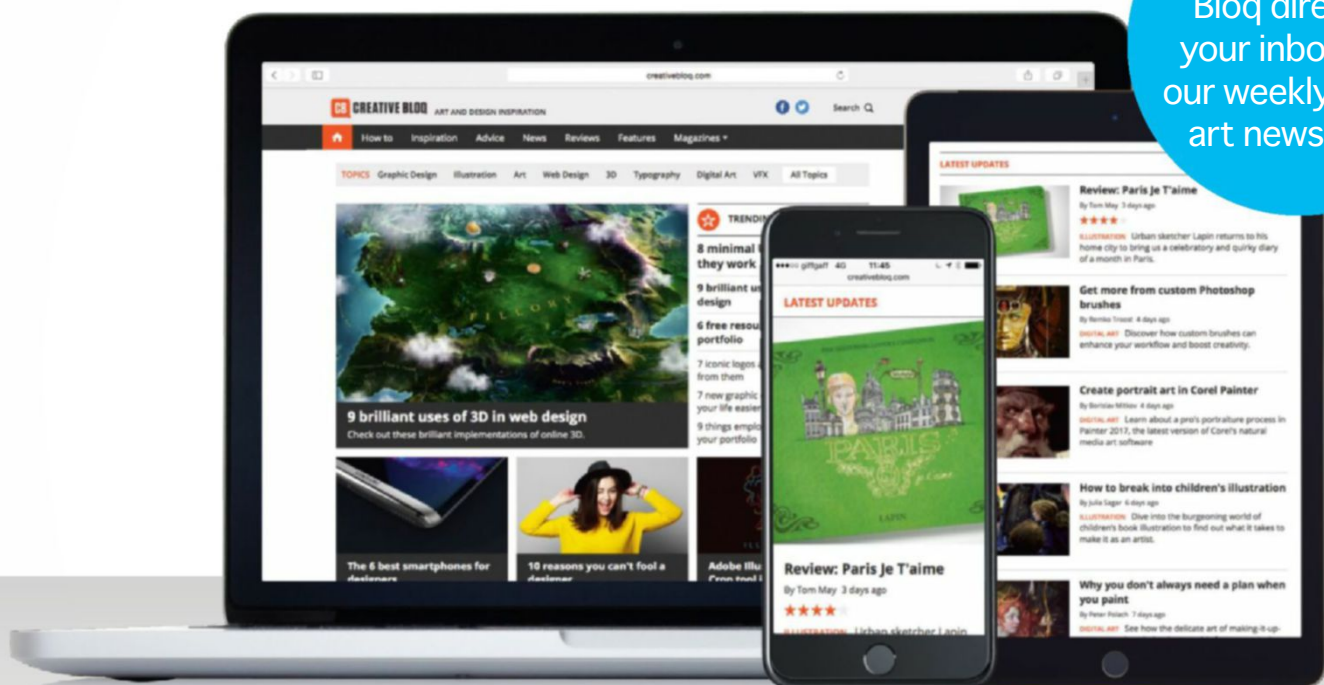
Face-to-face contact with like-minded souls "adds that special asterisk to your name with others, in that you become a friend or acquaintance in real life, rather than in an online list," he points out. "Seeing others' work is also important. You can ask about technique, and gain insight into an artist. If it makes sense financially, I suggest to any aspiring artist to attend a featured event or workshop."

After a decade or so of skill-building, Aaron believes a new chapter in his career is just opening up. "Sometimes I've said about particular paintings that I love that I cannot wait to hate it," he confesses. "By that, I mean my skills have improved so much that I know I could out-paint my old self. I want to paint circles around the old me, and that only comes with time-invested experience." 🍌

“Now that it's been a few years, I'm sure new opportunities will open up that I'm not even aware of”

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This issue:

64 Illustrate a star-studded portrait

Tran Nguyen depicts the beauty of the female expression with a dash of celestial whimsy.

70 Bring a world to life with storytelling

Create bright environments and worlds filled with colour, story and life, with Anna Hollinrake's help.

78 Dynamic light in a city scene

See how Aaron Griffin streamlines his workflow and adds a sense of life with Photoshop custom brushes.

84 Create your own fantasy beasts

Emily Hare helps you design and paint original fantasy creatures, using pencil and watercolours.

Traditional art skills

ILLUSTRATE A STAR-STUDDED PORTRAIT

Following her strong appreciation of portraiture, **Tran Nguyen** depicts the beauty of the female expression with a dash of celestial whimsy

Artist PROFILE

Tran Nguyen
LOCATION: US

Tran is a Georgia-based gallery artist and freelance illustrator. Born in Vietnam and raised in the States, she's worked for clients including VH1, Smithsonian and Bloomberg, and has showcased with galleries all over the world.
www.mynameistran.com

Photo by Jo McCune



This issue's cover artwork is an astral-themed exploration of female portraiture.

Through the usage of billowing lines, iridescent patterns and a slithering motif, the narrative takes on a more otherworldly tone.

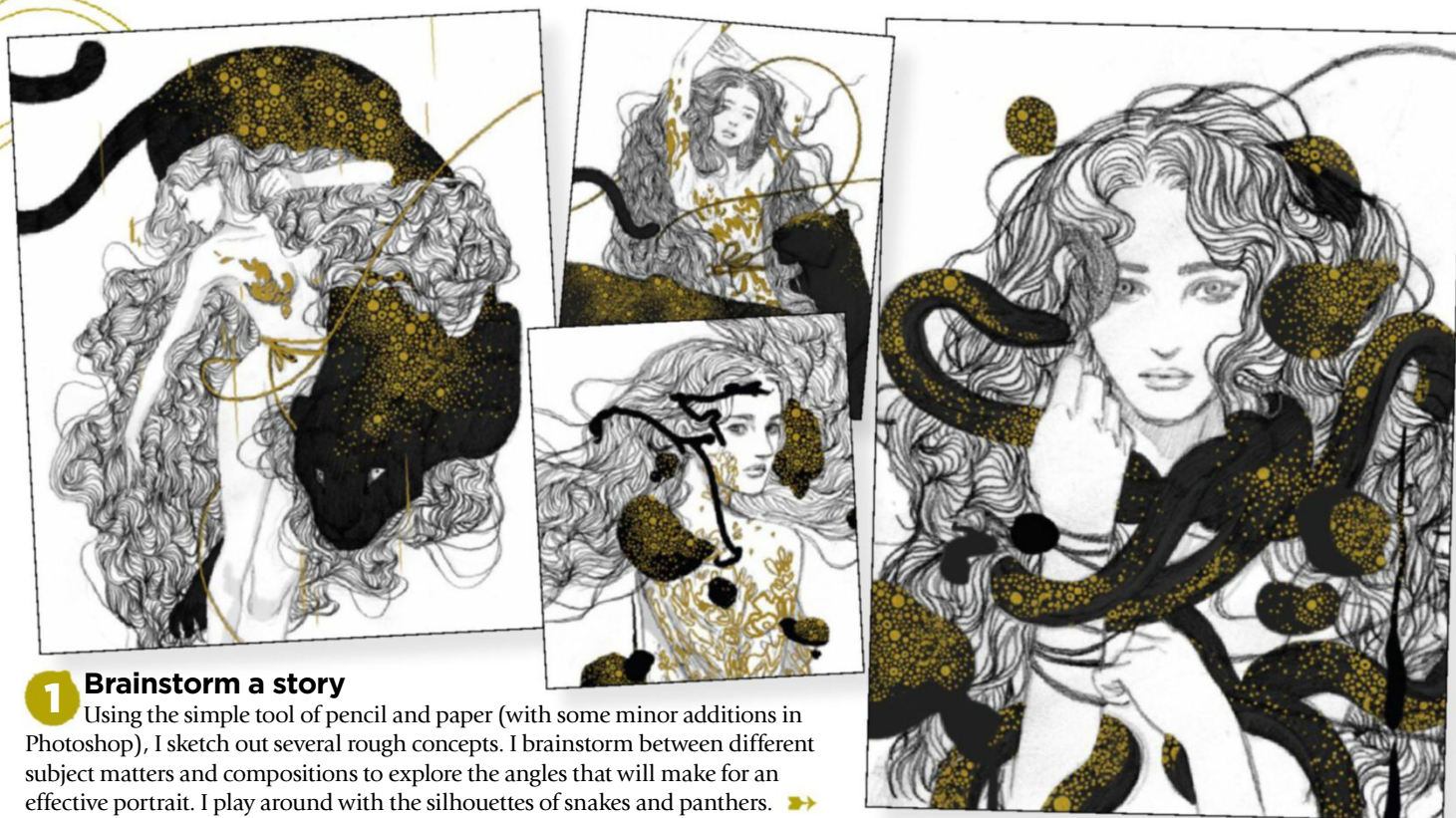
Portraiture is a magnificent engraving of a single-bodied story. With it, I can depict their longings, fascinations or vices, in a romanticised and fantastical way. I enjoy amplifying narratives through the use of motifs that tend to have undulating characteristics. Recently, I've been captivated by celestial motifs. I'm attracted to the mystery

that lies within stars and the in between – they're entities full of untold stories.

The figure is captured in a moment where she mingles with the abstract elements so that both worlds appear as if they exist on the same plane. Though she's not distracted by the snake, the woman attends to it by having her hands linger on its scales. Pairing her stoic expression with the snake conveys their interdependent relationship with one another. In current society, the snake is often a representation of sinister, but in this case, I see it as a symbol of mystery. It's a dark, secretive creature that hides in obscure places.

The drawing is limited to a monochromatic palette with a few spot colours to keep a graphic aesthetic and direct the flow of the composition. It's also dependent on texture and the balance between each. Her hair is a matrix of billowing lines so pairing it with the solid black shapes of the snake can help break up the monotony. By adding gold dots on the creature, I can further push the texture depth.

My intent for the illustration is to portray a female character, her black and gold counterpart, and their star-studded narrative. It's a simple character story chock-full of textures and stellar delight.



1 Brainstorm a story

Using the simple tool of pencil and paper (with some minor additions in Photoshop), I sketch out several rough concepts. I brainstorm between different subject matters and compositions to explore the angles that will make for an effective portrait. I play around with the silhouettes of snakes and panthers. ➡



PRO SECRETS

Au naturel

To create a natural look to your paper, use a ruler to make deckle edges. Tearing the edge as oppose to cutting it creates a natural, rugged texture that's unique.

WORKSHOP MATERIALS

PAPER

Strathmore 300lb plate Bristol

PENCIL

Tombow pencil in 2H, HB, 2B and 6B

PEN

Black Pigma Microns in .005, .02, brush. Pentel Slicci gold ink

COLORED PENCIL

Prismacolor pencils in peach and light peach

PAINT

Golden titanium white acrylic

BRUSH

Princeton 8 round



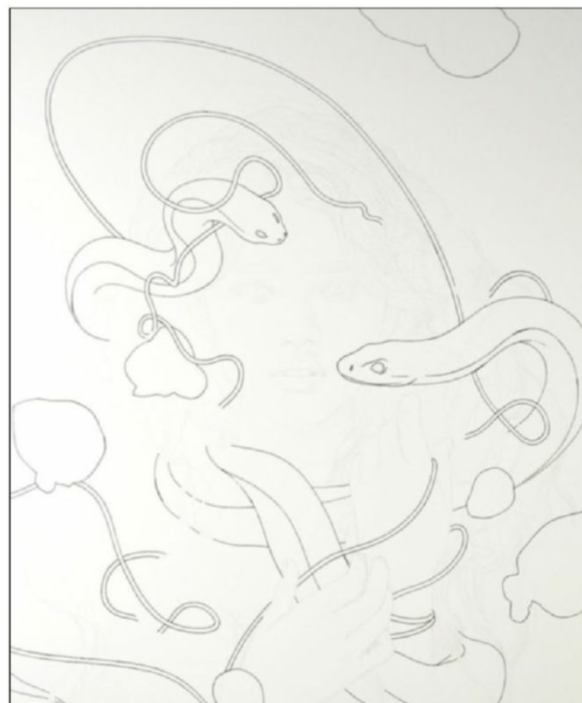
2 Tighten up the lines

I decide on the sketch of the woman with the snake. To make sure there aren't any future complications, I refine her face and the hair's general shape. Unlike the sketches I've prepped for my paintings, this sketch is kept very loose in certain areas. This way, I can approach details with spontaneity, which yields a natural and fluid movement.



3 Scan, enlarge and transfer

Once the sketch is finalised, I scan, enlarge and then print it to size. Afterwards, the sketch is transferred on to Bristol paper via a lightbox with a 2H pencil. I keep the lines light so that there aren't any problems erasing them later on. Again, I don't worry about the hair details.



4 Initial markings

The first marks I make with the .02 ink pen is to delineate the different components in the drawing: the snake, abstract shapes, and string. I keep the edges of the skin unmarked with ink to preserve its softness. This will help juxtapose the graphic feel of the ink.



PRO SECRETS

Framing the deckle edges

To frame works with deckle edges, top-mount the artwork in a shadowbox-styled frame to showcase its rugged corners. This can introduce a nice touch of authenticity, and give the illusion that it's floating within the frame.

5 Linear lines of hair

This is where the magic happens. With very little planning, I use a .005 ink pen to articulate the flow of her hair. Starting at the parting line then outwards, I make my marks with one fluid motion. I then make more lines parallel to the one before with a slight difference in angle. This very slight change in the angle creates dynamic movement.



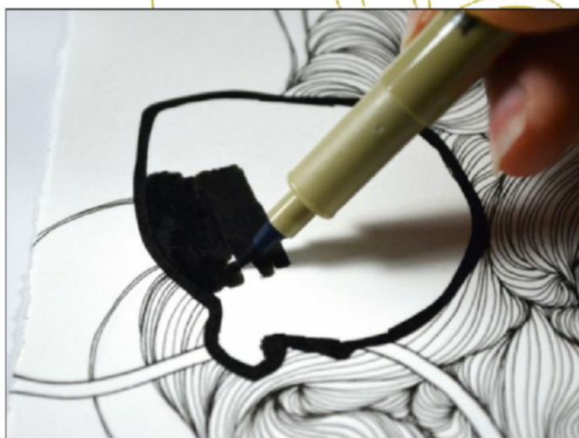
6 Don't forget flyaway strands

To loosen up the hair shape, I draw in strands of flyaway hair. Having the hair as one, solid shape isn't appealing and so adding these finer details help break it up. It also helps me balance the composition while making it more intriguing. ➡

PRO SECRETS

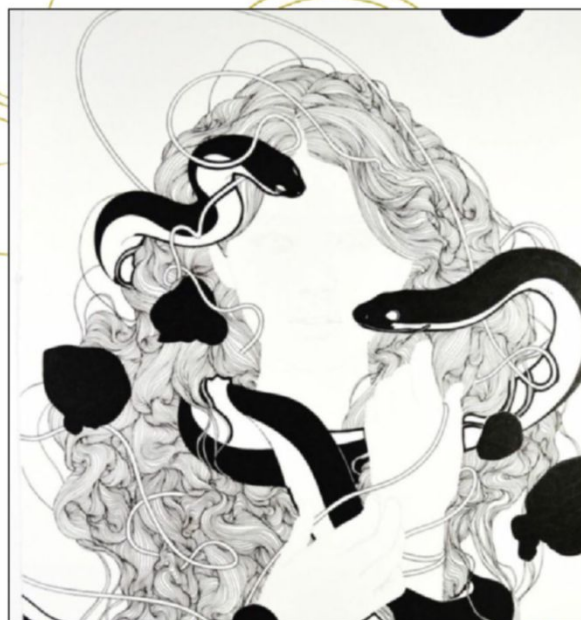
Digitising the finale

It's crucial to archive your illustrations for future usage, including reproduction and licensing purposes. The best image-capture device is the Cruse scanner that records the artwork without touching its surface. If that's not available, I recommend the Epson 11000XL flatbed scanner.



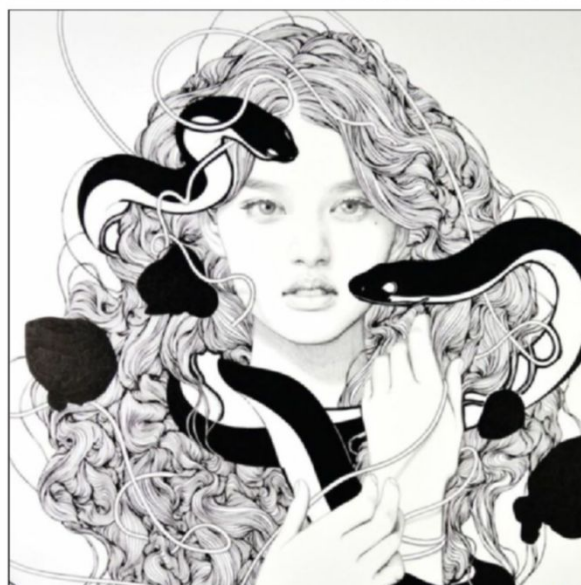
7 Blocking In blacks

The illustration needs a bit of a punch to contrast the fine, linear details of the woman's hair. I fill the snake with black ink by outlining the edges of its shape with the .02 pen, then fill it in with the brush pen. Keeping the snake simple and bold helps direct the focal point.



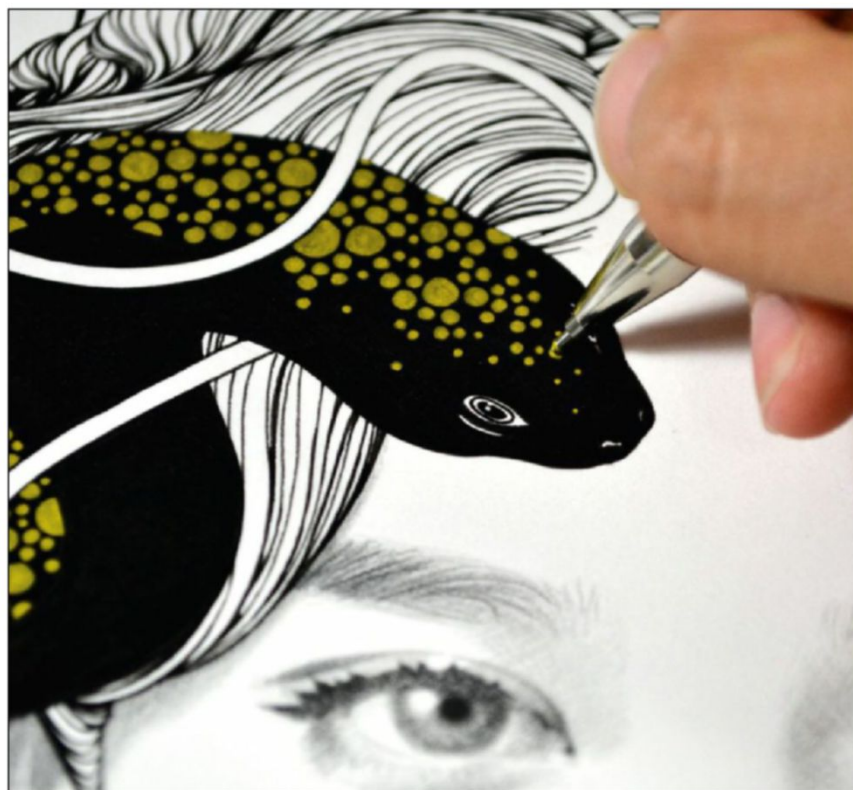
8 Tending to form

To create an illusion of form in the hairlines, I darken the crevices where the hair is concentrated. At the same time, I pinpoint the location of the light source, and start adding value to the face with a light touch of the 2B pencil.



9 Refined skin values

After the mid-tone is established, I push the darkest values even further. This includes the pupils, eyelashes and the corners of the mouth. I then go back in with the 2H and 2B pencil, refining lighter values around the lips and nostrils. I don't use a blender to smooth out the pencil strokes because I want to preserve that streaky texture.



10 Star-studded additions

I go back on top of the black ink shapes with an iridescent gold ink pen. I dictate the flow of the snake's skin by drawing circular patterns in varying sizes. Once the gold patterns are drawn in, I fill its underbelly with black ink.



11 A touch of life

A light layer of colour on the figure's face and hands will bring the illustration to life. In a circular motion, I use the peach-coloured pencil to bring out the areas where blood vessels are most prevalent, such as the cheeks, lips and fingertips. Though it's subtle, the glaze of flesh colour directs the focal point to the figure.



12 Highlights of white

To add another layer of dimension, I apply titanium white paint to areas where the skin catches the light. By lightly dabbing with the tip of the round brush, I paint the highlights on her lips, eyes, and fingernails. The paper is a somewhat natural white, so the application of the titanium white broadens the value scale.

Photoshop

BRING A WORLD TO LIFE WITH STRONG STORYTELLING

Anna Hollinrake

guides you through creating bright environments and worlds filled with colour, story and life.





Artist PROFILE

Anna Hollinrake

LOCATION: England

Anna is a concept and environment artist at Climax Studios, specialising in designing for VR, low poly modelling, talking about mental health in games, and excessive whimsy. <http://ifxm.ag/anna-h>

GET YOUR RESOURCES

See page 6 now!



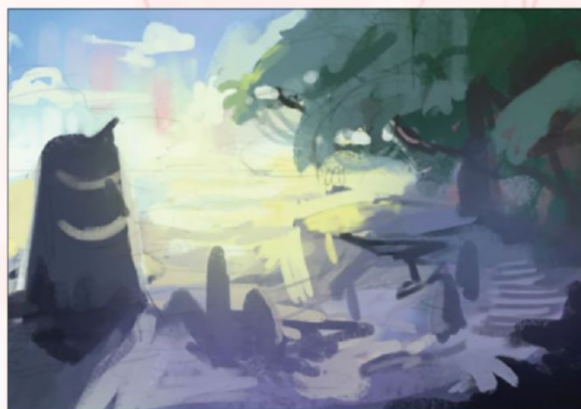
I've always been fascinated with imagined scenes that leave you with a sense of wonder; wanting to find out more and see what's just around the corner. Good worldbuilding is all about gathering up enough information for you to discover the story inside a composition, and become immersed in it. Losing yourself in a painting, book, film or game is a magical

experience, and something I'm always looking to create in my own work. Hopefully you do, too!

When starting a painting, I ask myself questions as to how the world functions, the nature of relationships between characters, and the overall mood and feel that I want to set. This allows me to logically and organically develop the story and design! How does the air taste? What can you hear? How do characters get around? Defining your image with

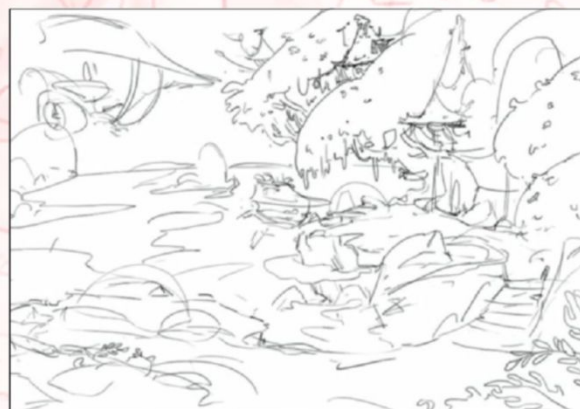
subtle rules gives it a sense of authenticity and life.

For this piece I wanted to capture the life of a someone living in a quirky cliff-top home that overlooks misty, expansive plains. I wanted to imbue the environment with a sense of personality, spring freshness, and calm, as well as keeping the visual language cohesive. Through seeing my thought process, I hope this workshop helps you build your own stories in your paintings!



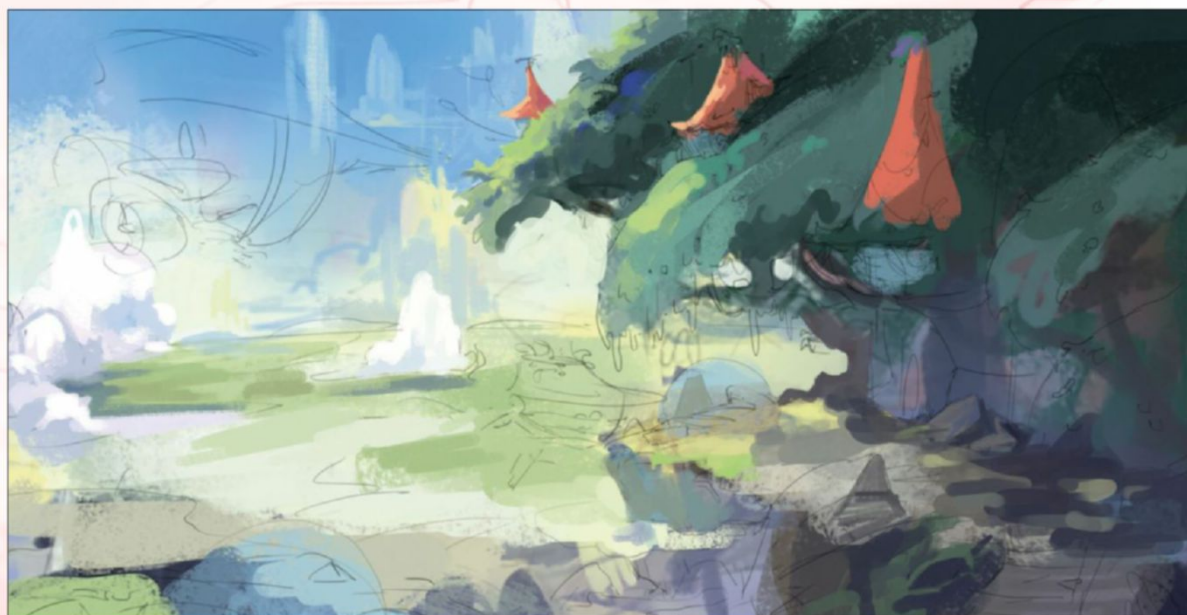
1 Throw down shapes

I gather reference that inspires and interests me, to use as a visual anchor to refer back to during the painting process. I also consider the mood and theme of the scene: I want it to feel fresh and bright, so I throw down shapes using down colours like periwinkle blue and pale yellow. This part is always a mess, but it's worth it!



2 Define story through line

Now I have a rough stage, I start to tell the story. Working over the top of the thumbnail, I consider where I want this world to be set. The scene is high up in the mountains, clouds drifting far below, with a house organically built into trees. I want to imply the mechanics of daily life here, so I add in a couple of delivery aircraft.



3 Introduce rough colours

I work with what gives me the most inspiration, so I put in more colour pretty early. Although many people work in greyscale initially, I find it holds my imagination back and leads to fewer happy accidents, so I play around with colour combinations and look for exciting contrasts – like the coral orange of the gestured in rooftops.

RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES: HARD ROUND TEXTURE



My workhorse! It's great for blocking out and rough blending.

SMOOTH SQUARE



Really good for pushing stylised shapes and adding foliage detail.

AIRBRUSH



Good for atmosphere and distant forms. Don't listen to its detractors!



PRO SECRETS

Listen to your creativity

Pay attention to how you created the pieces you're most proud of, and try to break down and recreate that workflow. Don't ignore your gut when a process or method doesn't work for you, even if it's making the rounds on social media! Try out as much as possible and listen to what sings to you when you do it.

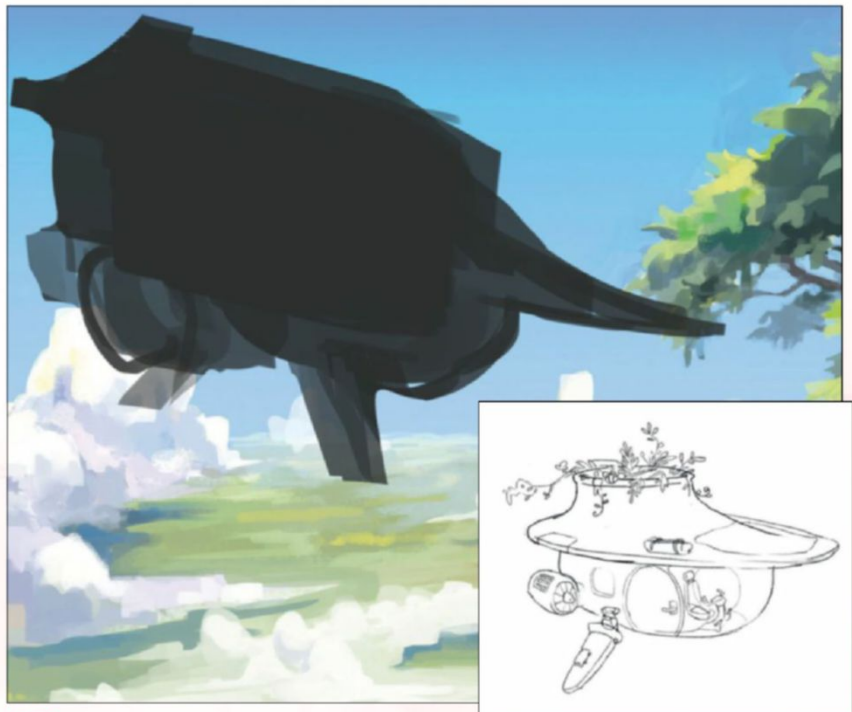
4 Streamline your image to help with the painting process

I expand and reduce the detail in my image until I find a balance I'm happy with. I define the planes of the environment a little more clearly so that it gives my brain the mental breathing room to process – too much information is overwhelming. It also enables me to clean up my lighting and get the fresh, spring feel I want the painting to have.



5 Identify your setting

Good worldbuilding defines the materials and environments in keeping with the story you're trying to tell. I want this place to feel safe and secure even though it's high up and precarious, so I bring in deep-rooted trees and moss-covered rocks to make this location feel like it's stable and has been here a long time – and won't go anywhere fast!



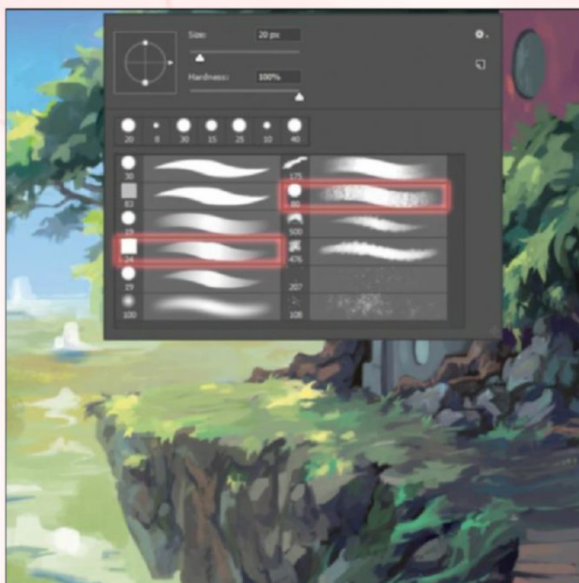
6 Develop focal points

I create the ship silhouettes to remind myself of their compositional placement. The design is influenced by the shape of the rooftops and greenhouse bubbles: repeating shape language throughout an image makes it cohesive. The ships transport plants around in a whimsical way, which will require sunshine and water. I also add details like airbrakes and a rope ladder, for practicality. ➔

PRO SECRETS

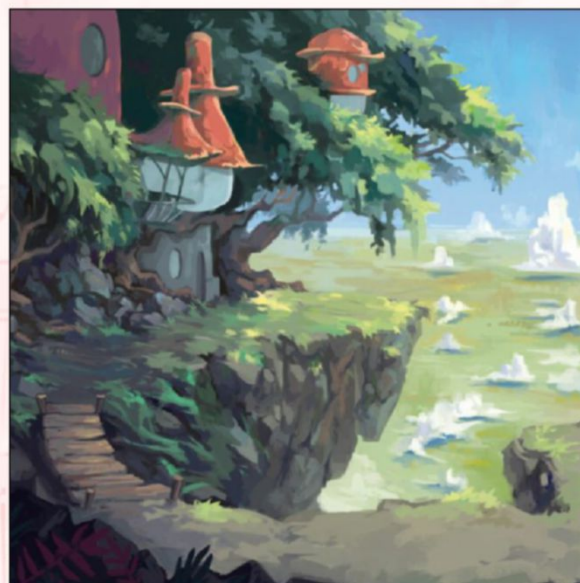
Authenticity in your designs

Always refer back to key images that inspired you at the beginning, and see if your design has slipped or simplified. This happens to me constantly! It helps to have a design rooted in something that exists and functions already. It gives the viewer context for your world in a way that they're already familiar with.



7 Carve away!

When rendering I'll create shapes and then carve into them with textured or square brushes, defining sharp edges that create focal points. I do this especially for grass trims around cliffs, or on craggy rock formations. Because of this I rarely use lots of layers, preferring the organic approach of painting over forms before erasing them.



8 Flip your image

A trick as old as the invention of the mirror, but wholly necessary! I tend to tilt my compositions due to the hand and angle I draw with, and thus the composition can slide off the page. Pay attention to your little quirks of drawing! I darken the rocks in the corner and pull the foreground cliff edge up to balance the image.



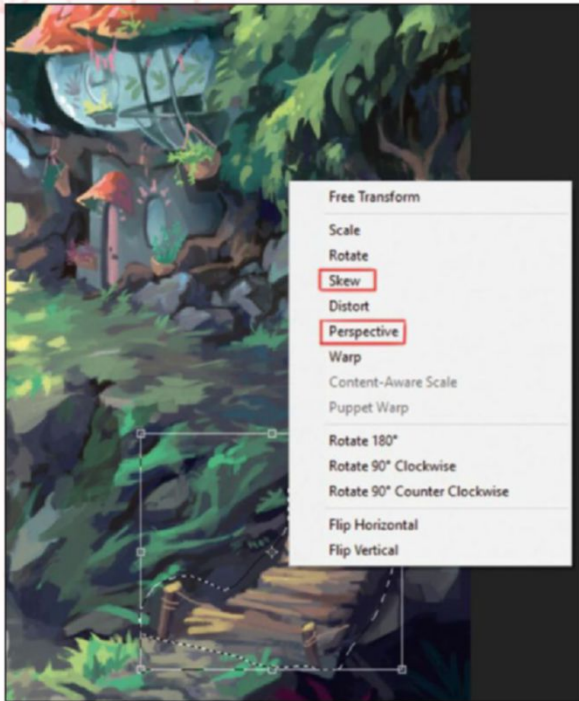
9 Get into the details

Now it's time to make this world feel personal! I ask myself how the inhabitants would decorate their treehouse. In my mind they grow mountain flowers for sale, and so dot baskets around outside and fill the 'bubbles' with foliage. Those rooftop platforms would experience lots of rain, so I cover them in plants, too. There's so much beauty to be found in messy details – make use of it!



10 Make changes where necessary

Don't be afraid to drastically change your composition if it isn't sitting right. Here, I need something that balances out the bottom left, and the combination of the house and the airship is getting too busy. I use Free Transform to move the ship, and change its colour palette to the white of the clouds and the pink of the roof tiles, which connects it more to the scene.



11 Consider verticality in the scene

The two ground planes are sitting at the same height, which makes the image dull to look at and doesn't communicate scale well. I increase the airship size even further and use the Free Transform tools Perspective and Skew to warp the bridge into an angle that implies downward traversal, which then pushes the mid-ground down and back.



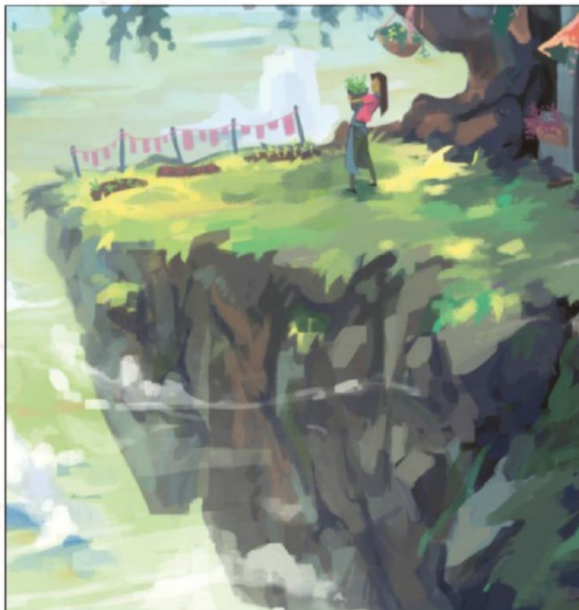
12 Add figures for scale

Figures are a universal way to communicate scale to a viewer. I gesture in an airship pilot with a thought to what they're doing; I want this piece to capture a relaxed moment during a routine morning pickup! When adding someone to a piece, their posture is the most telling thing about their character. I act out this pose to achieve the exact, unhurried vibe I want!

PRO SECRETS

Get physical

You'll get the feel of a figure gesture way more easily if you act it out, so don't be afraid to go for it! Pay attention to the way your body moves midway through; characters become stiff-looking when drawn at the beginning or end of a movement. It's also a great excuse to get out of your chair and move!



13 Hint at a story and raise questions

I add another figure to provide context as to who lives or works at the treehouse, but also to imply a relationship between the two figures. Raising questions is the best way to pull a viewer into a scene. What is the nature of their relationship? Do they have a history? The over-the-shoulder glance implies a bit of a crush, and that's a cute detail I can't resist!



14 Compositional polish

As humans we naturally follow the eyeline of other people, and so I have a pleasant compositional loop happening through the pathway and the gaze of the figure in the distance. I emphasise that loop by adding airship contrails, which has the added effect of implying there's a bigger world out there than just these two. That's always incredibly exciting – just imagine what it could be!

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

Become a concept artist

Discover the skills you need to work on
tomorrow's blockbusters and AAA-games

**Richard
Anderson**
reveals his tips for
creating lasting
concept art.

Next month

All this... and more!

Justin 'Coro' Kaufman

The Massive Black man opens his studio door and invites you inside!

Master light and colour

Olly Lawson takes you through his process inspired by the masters of old.

Is it ever okay to steal art?

We speak to professional artists to see if they all agree on art theft.

The mighty Volta Studios

See what it takes to work at this bustling Canadian art powerhouse.

ISSUE 152 ON SALE IN THE UK *Friday 11 August*

Artist insight

CREATE YOUR OWN FANTASY BEASTS

Illustrator **Emily Hare** passes on her key advice that will help you design and paint original fantasy creatures, using pencil and watercolours

Artist PROFILE

Emily Hare
LOCATION: England

Emily has been working as a freelance illustrator for 12 years and is producing her own book, *Strangehollow*, filled with magical creatures and unusual beings. www.emilyhare.co.uk



There are many ways to approach creature design and ideation, and it all depends on what you want your end result to be. Recently, I've had a leaning towards more humorous beasties, as opposed to the darker and more gruesome kind.

However, this doesn't mean that I won't look to the natural world for

inspiration (for indeed, this can help me come up with some odd-looking creatures), and one of the best places to spark off ideas is with a Google search. Try exploring deep sea fish, unusual birds and bizarre insects!

I always have in mind where this beast's habitat might be, what it might eat, whether it's nocturnal, and prey or predator. All these things will influence the final design.

For instance, if you had a large herbivorous animal, ask yourself what does it eat? Who hunts it? If it has natural predators then what – if anything – has it evolved to protect itself? Speed? Armour? Poison? All these questions should go through your mind at some point. They'll ensure your creature feels like it might exist in real life, and that's when the magic starts to happen...

1 BRAINSTORMING!

Get those ideas down on paper. Usually it'll take me a while to create any shapes that I like, or even anything that I'd want to take further. Sometimes they appear fully formed and others will never make it into a painting. I use my heavy blunt mechanical pencil to make loose designs and then refine them with a sharper point. For these thumbnails my thought process was 'enchanted forest' – and anything that popped into my head that may exist in such a place was extracted from my brain.



2 DESIGN WITH LOGIC IN MIND

This is a tarlak, one of the inhabitants of the world that I created for my upcoming book *Strangehollow*. This bristly, hairy chap has been influenced by warthogs and wild boar. I wanted a forest-dwelling vegetarian that was pig-like and used his tusks to dig the ground for delicious root vegetables of some kind. He also needed to be able to look after himself if he was attacked by one of the local predators. His tusks would make formidable weapons against even the most persistent of carnivores.



3 DEPICTING THE FINE DETAILS

Once I've sketched the design in watercolour (more on this overleaf) I make a pass with a darker wash and figure out which areas I want lighter and darker. With watercolour you need to work from light to dark. The process is time consuming, but well worth it for the final result. I'm a big fan of detail so I use very fine brushes for this. It also enables you to go steady with the value range, which in this instance I hadn't decided on until I started the painting.



“With watercolour, work from light to dark. Time consuming, but worth it”



4 MIX 'N' MATCH WITH CARE

To help fill my brain with future creature ideas, I'll spend a lot of time watching nature programmes and looking through wildlife photos on Pinterest or general Google searches. There's nothing quite so strange as the natural world and you can combine aspects of different creatures to make a completely new one. But try to avoid making a chimera, which is to take the body of one animal and the legs of another and the head of yet another: it doesn't really feel like it's something that could exist. Instead, imagine what would happen if two of those creatures had babies. What would they look like? ➡

5 CREATURE CREATION, START TO FINISH!

See how Emily develops a creature that's filled with life and character...



A Rough ideas

Most of my creature ideas begin with a very rough thumbnail. I prefer to use a very large 5.6mm heavy mechanical pencil by Koh-I-Noor, which stops me getting obsessed with detail. I wanted to create something darkly mischievous with this guy.



B Watercolour sketch

My next step from thumbnail is sketching with watercolour. Instead of damaging the watercolour paper, which is very easy to do with lots of erasing of pencil lines, I use a fine brush (my favourite is size 3 Series 7 Winsor & Newton sable) and using a light wash I draw the creature directly onto the paper.



C Improving on the initial concept

In the case of this Darkling Glib creature, I didn't quite capture the dark and creepy nature of the initial rough thumbnail. However, I was really pleased with the result. With any furry creature it's worth taking the time to slowly build up layers of washes for the fur.

6 IS IT A PLANT? ANIMAL? BOTH?

Another fun way to make something new is to combine flora and fauna. For this craggle (a cannibalistic fairy caterpillar) I wanted a creature that could hide in plain sight to ambush his prey. His prey, the wiffles, are fond of psychedelic mushrooms, so the craggle hides among these mushrooms, and is able to do so because there are fungi-like growths on its back. The wiffles don't have a chance! Have fun with thinking up what it is that your creature eats, whether it's predator or prey. These concepts will help you to imagine your creatures living in the real world.



7 TAKE THE RANDOM APPROACH

Throw out all your plans. This is another valid way of coming up with an interesting creature. Eventually you'll start to see something appear among these shapes and you can then start to refine it. For this piece I started by soaking the illustration board (Strathmore 500 wet media board). I did this by using a misting spray bottle filled with water. I then mixed some paints and started dropping the colour onto the paper. This made for some wonderful accidental shapes, as we'll see...

8 INTERESTING SHAPES

For my magical being here, I saw a face, so I started to build on that. I used the interesting shapes that the watercolour made as it dried (a very handy tip is to have a small hair dryer at your desk so you can speed up the drying of each wash). Once I'd started picking out a nose and some eyes (plus an extra one!), I could continue working around the painting and further develop the face more. The great thing about using watercolour paint, particularly into wet paper, is that it's very unpredictable. It's the perfect setup for generating those happy accidents.



“The great thing about using watercolour, particularly into wet paper, is that it's very unpredictable”



9 THE EYES HAVE IT

I chose a contrasting colour for the eyes of my green man so that they instantly pop out from the greens and purples. Eyes are possibly the most important thing to bring a creature or strange being to life. The final dots of watery reflection in them can make or break a painting. Make sure you study lots of pictures of eyes – consider finding some eyes that don't belong in a human face and put them there, such as the eyes of an octopus! These are the things which can create an unusual, original creature.



10 HERE BE DRAGONS

Dragons. Who doesn't love them? I like the idea of a dragon that's evolved to live in forests and so has developed growths that look like branches – the ideal camouflage for an ambush predator! For inspiration for dragons you can look at all kinds of creatures. The usual ones to study would be komodo dragons, crocodiles and other lizards, but check out less-obvious creatures that will leave you with an unconventional dragon, which hopefully will have more variety. Birds are great for that dead-eyed, carnivorous stare – even a chicken has that... ➡➡

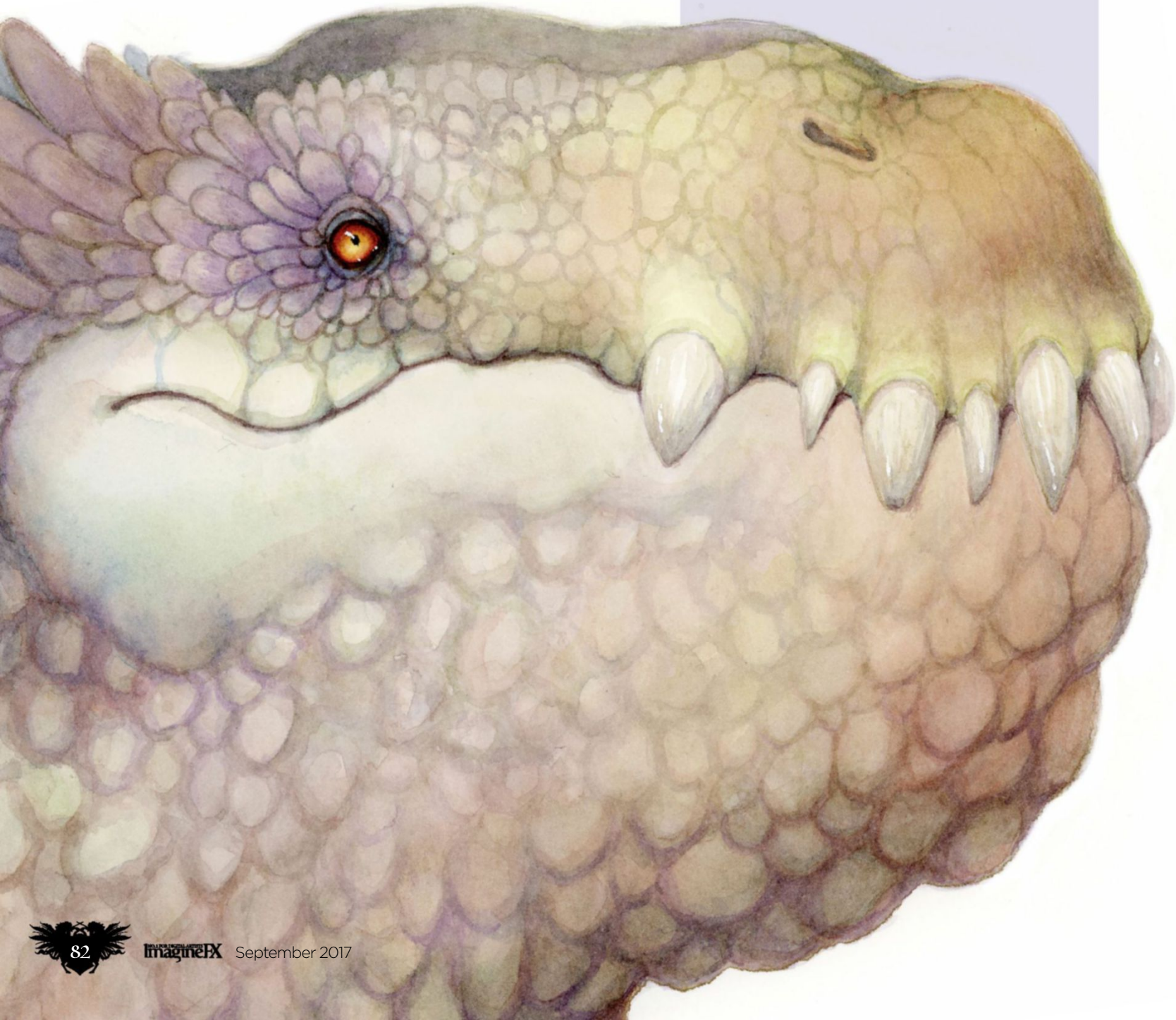
11 MAMMALIAN FEATURES

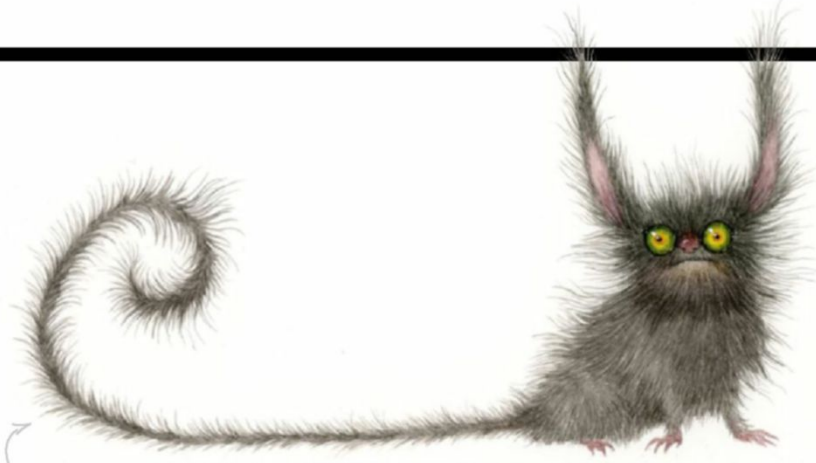
Another way to make your dragons more interesting is to take aspects of mammals and other toothy creatures and add those to your dragon. For this red beast I used inspiration from animals with tusks, wild boar and particularly the crushing jaws of a hippopotamus. I used to live near a natural history museum in Brighton that was filled with the most amazing animal skeletons. If you have anything like that near where you live, take some time to go there with your sketchbook to gain inspiration for your creatures. The hippopotamus skull was particularly amazing to see and definitely influenced this dragon.



12 TECHNIQUES TO CREATE INTERESTING-LOOKING SKIN

Have fun with patterns and shapes to give the impression of scales or knobbly textured skin. I used reference from the mouths of lizards and also crocodiles for this dragon's jaw and then mixed it up a bit. Furthermore, don't hold back on splashing paint around and letting it dry in various textures. Then use the patterns from those dried splodges to guide where you might make marks. I like to keep things fairly organic looking, and try to steer clear of classic dragon profiles. Here, I wanted this guy to have a big, blunt nose, I'd imagine he could fit quite the meal inside those jaws!





13 BIG EYES ARE SHORTHAND FOR 'CUTE'

For creating something super cute, I always go for big eyes because they're a sure-fire way of conveying the 'awwww' factor. This little chap was inspired by squirrels and pugs. His snub nose and big wide eyes give the impression that perhaps he's not too bright, and most definitely a little highly strung, too. I used a fine rigger brush to create the very fine long hairs all over him. The rigger is a wonderful brush for keeping control of fine lines and they hold a fair amount of pigment, which is always useful. The brush's name comes from the brushes that were created to paint the rigging on paintings of tall ships.

“The rigger is a wonderful brush for keeping control of fine lines and they hold a fair amount of pigment”



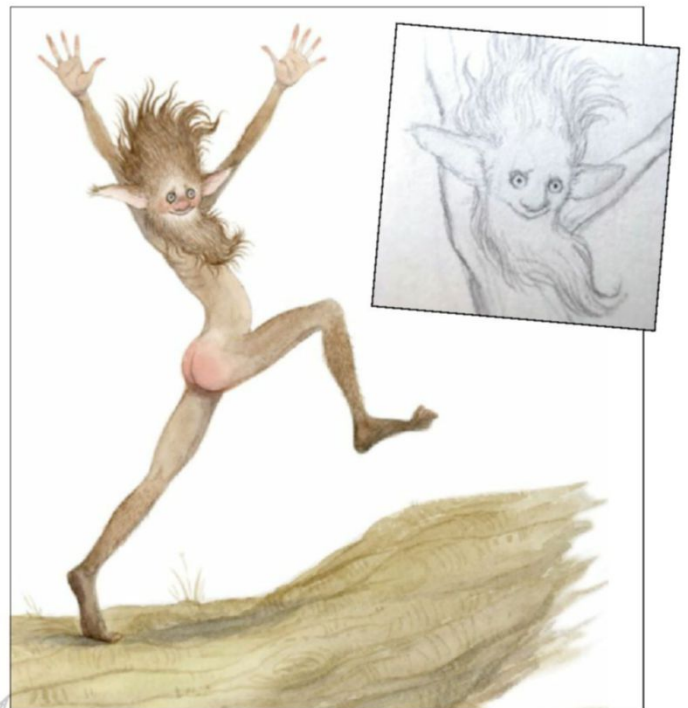
14 PAINTING SHINY EYES

The eyes have it. Glossy eyes are essential, especially in a mammal. Once I'm ready to add highlights to an eye I bring out the Acryla gouache. This medium is permanent and behaves much like acrylic, except it dries completely matte - just like watercolour. I use this all the time for highlights in my paintings, and it can be mixed with watercolour to tint it (or you can buy other colours in the same medium too, of course). As well as the main highlight on the eye, I always add tiny spots of light around the lids of the eye to give the impression of wetness.



15 WHAT'S THE STORY?

Create a story. If you're not sure where to start, think of the story behind the creature. I created this dragon who eats dead trees. I started with the idea that he would go around eating the dead wood in the forest, then I thought, well, what happens when he's eaten it all? He then hibernates! Sleeping for years at a time while grasses and plants and small trees grow all over him, camouflaging him while he's away in dreamland.



16 REMEMBER TO BRING THE FUN

Add humour. When I was designing my brownie, I imagined them as very annoying little beings who try to distract you as you're walking through the forest, in order to lead you off the safe path to where they can rob you of all your belongings. I imagined them leaping about, maybe yelling compliments (of a sort) to you as you went on your way through the forest. This is the creature that appeared as a result! If in doubt, adding a nude pink bottom is highly amusing. 🍌

Artist PROFILE

Aaron Griffin

LOCATION: England

Aaron's a self-taught illustrator and concept artist working in the games industry in London. He's an avid motorcycle enthusiast, hates the taste of olives and loves faeries!

<http://ifxm.ag/aagriff>



**GET YOUR
RESOURCES**

See page 6 now!

Photoshop DYNAMIC LIGHT IN A CITY SCENE

See how **Aaron Griffin** streamlines his workflow and adds life with custom brushes



Hey wonderful readers! In this workshop I'm going to be talking through my process of creating a

glowing spirit animal within a night time city scene. I'll be discussing the foundations of sketching out a bigger scene and the key stages that make up creating an illustration of this kind.

There are a variety of methods I can choose from when tackling the initial sketch phase. In this piece I focus my attention on shapes and values, building up a strong black and white composition. I'll talk about the efficiency of working in this method and how it provides a solid base to

work from. It can be easy to become lost in small details too early or trying to work too fast with the aim of just getting more work done. Sometimes the best thing you can do is work slower, smarter and just simplify your process.

I'll then colourise my sketch using different blending modes and colour layers. I'll also be discussing my brush settings and their effectiveness to add more variety to your workflow.

Along the way I'll provide lighting tips and tricks that can really help your glowing elements 'pop' in the scene and provide great focal points in a bigger composition. So, without further ado let's get stuck in! ➡➡





PRO SECRETS

Don't become too attached

One of the best pieces of advice ever given to me was, "Don't get too attached to your painting." Much like Golem and his "precious" gold ring. Giving yourself time to consider alternatives, make changes and not be too hesitant about making mistakes can help push your art skills.

RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES: COLOUR JITTER LIGHT



Used for adding a textured base sketch and adding colour variations.

HEAVY



Used for the majority of the painting, blocking in and rendering.

CROSS BLEND



Great to use with the Smudge tool to blend edges and add texture.

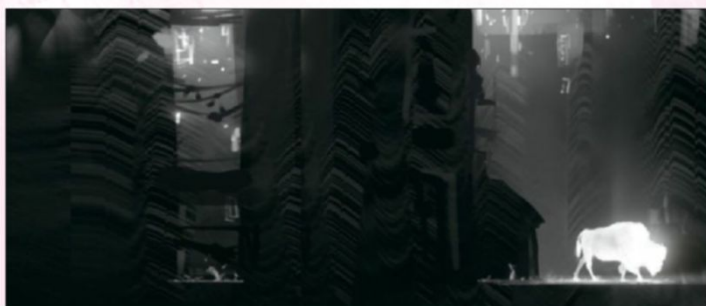
PLANT SCATTER



Used for the puddle details and adding subtle texture variations.

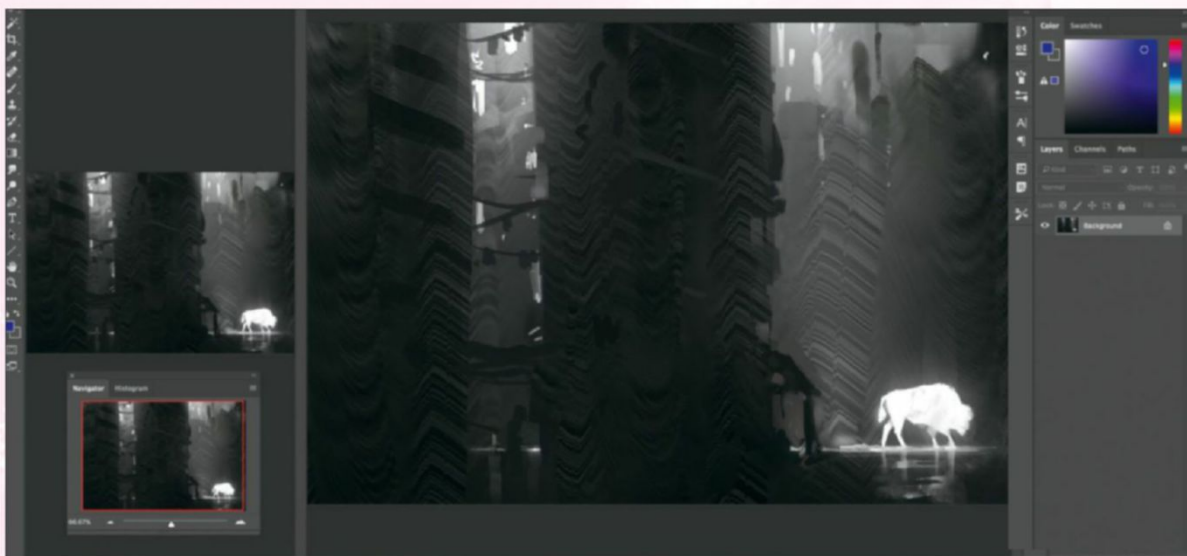
1 Research and References

When I'm given a brief, a loose concept usually builds up in my mind. Before I begin sketching however, I like to explore my ideas by researching and collecting a variety of references. I arrange my references into a mood board (a collage if you will) – I find this a great starting block to sketch from.



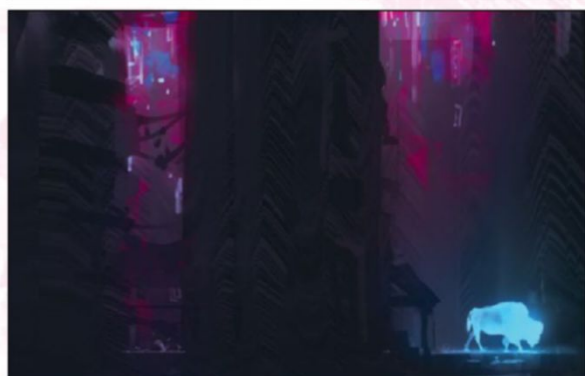
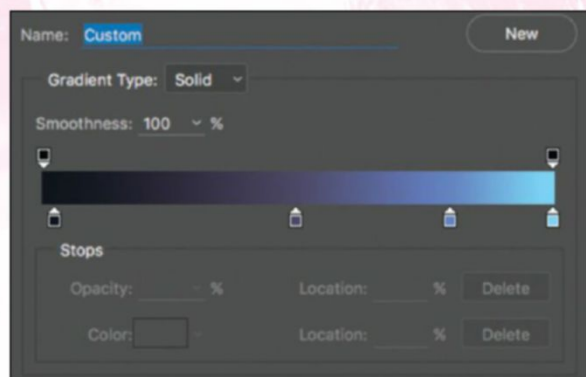
2 Working with shapes and thinking about values

This will be the quickest yet most important stage to the painting. I separate my composition into small, medium and large shapes. In the Buffalo sketch for example, my largest shapes are the foreground buildings, the medium shapes include the furthest skyline and buffalo and the smallest shapes will be the neon and window lights.



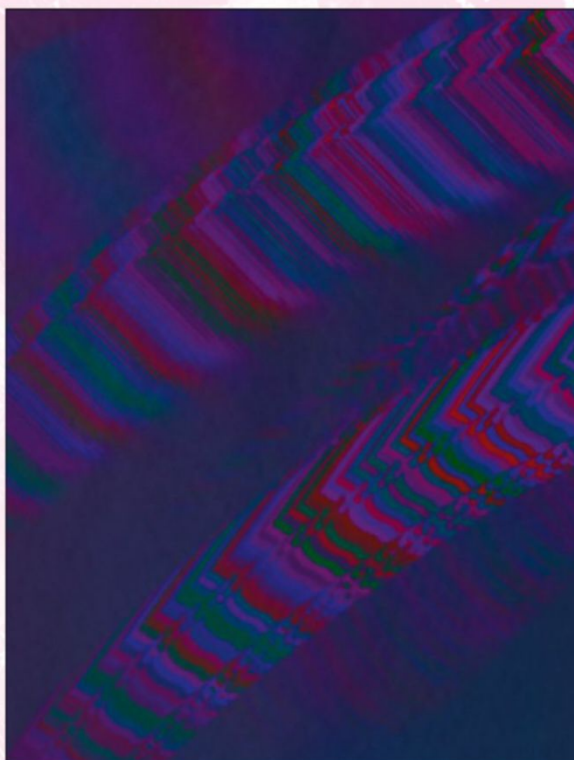
3 Working from a thumbnail window

To create a second window as a thumbnail go to Window>Arrange>New window for... and then shrink the window. It's easier for the eye to read smaller images and spot mistakes. I then make sure my values and composition read well at this scale before I move into colour. I try working faster and more efficiently by planning my marks carefully.



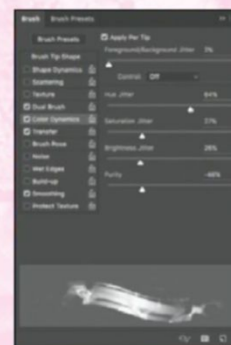
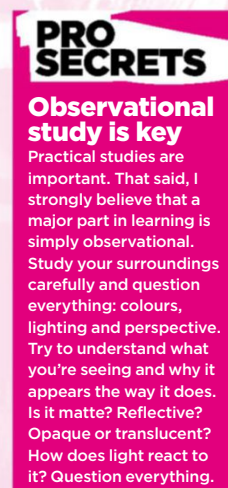
4 Colourising your values

I begin building the base colour using a gradient overlay, choosing purple tones for the shadows and light blues for the lightest values. Above this base I add Color and Hard Light layers to burst pink hues into the neon and then blue around the buffalo. A Hard Light layer is ideal for colourising and adjusting values simultaneously.



5 Make use of Color dynamics

You'll often find that your colours and values look flat or monotonous. To help break up these areas I use Color Dynamics from the Brush settings panel. By adjusting the Hue, Saturation or Brightness and toggling Apply per tip, you can brush in a variety of colour/value shifts. This is great for adding visual interest.



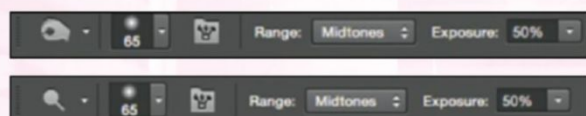
WITHOUT DODGE/BURN



WITH DODGE/BURN

6 Make use of Dodge/Burn tool

I often hear people saying, "Don't use the Dodge/Burn tool" but I love this tool! By selecting shadows, midtones or highlights from the top left panel you can change colour and values simultaneously. For example, Highlight dodge pushes the highest values first and boosts saturation in mid-values; Shadow lightens the darkest values first without boosting saturation; and Midtones works somewhere in between.



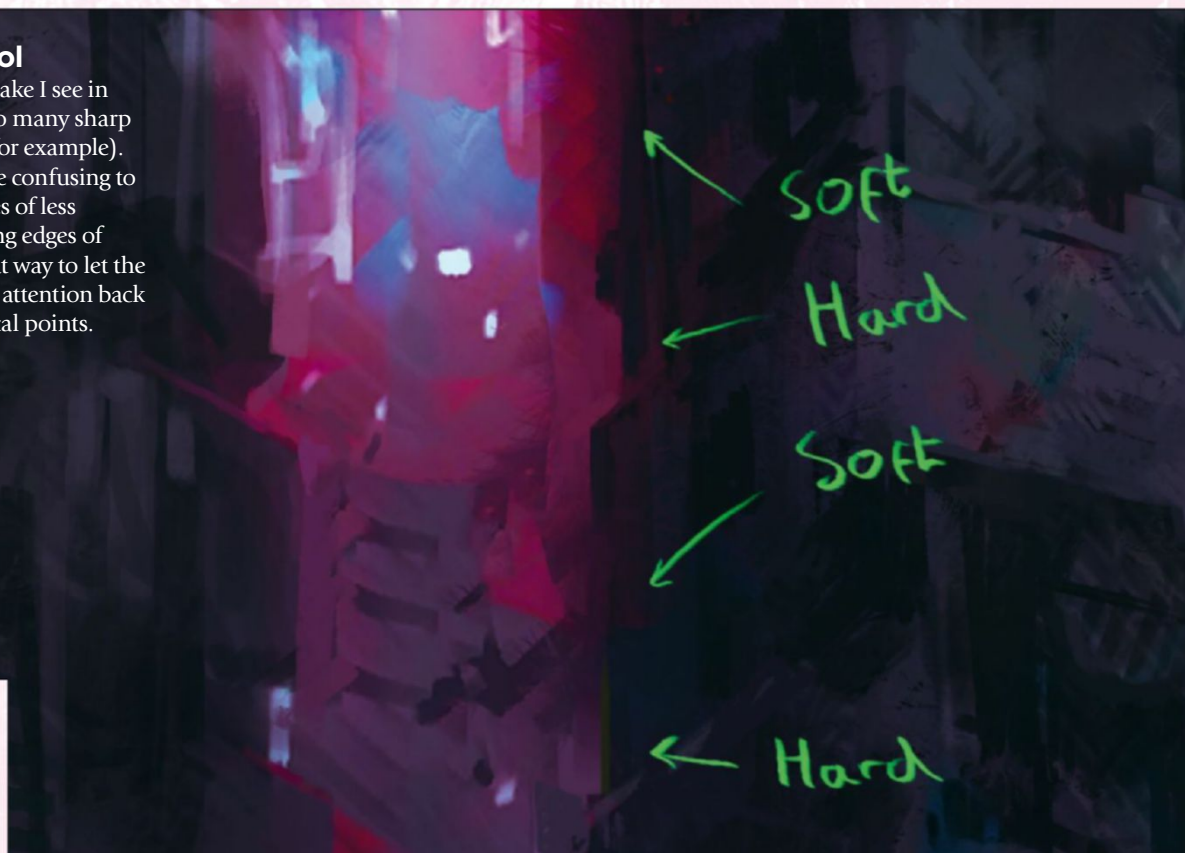
7 Adding the buildings

I paint my wall texture using photos for reference. I work in black and white so I can overlay the values onto my colour base. Painting my own texture will also help maintain a more painterly feel when applied. I then change the layer blending mode to Overlay and apply the texture (above). This provides a base to then paint over. ➡



8 Edge control

A common mistake I see in paintings is having too many sharp edges (contour lines, for example). This can sometimes be confusing to the eye. Breaking edges of less importance or blending edges of similar values is a great way to let the eye rest and also pulls attention back to more important focal points.



PRO SECRETS

Work smart, Not fast

I learned that the best way to build up speed is to actually slow down. Rushing your painting may result in more mistakes. Take a deep breath, relax and consider your next brush stroke with more care. Place a single, well-thought-out and instructive mark as opposed to several rushed marks.

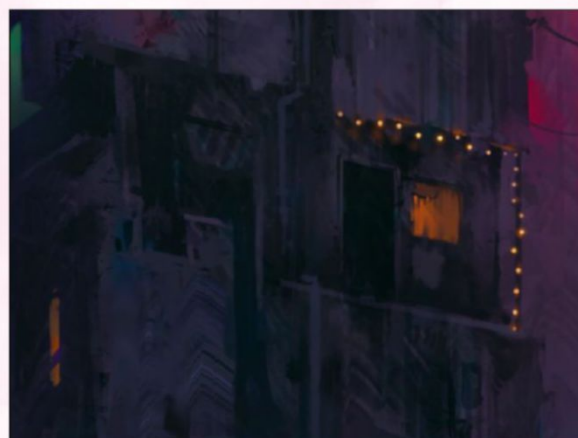
9 Adding the reflections

To enhance the impression that my buffalo is integrated into the environment, I add small details in the foreground and streak the light downwards. Water reflections work in the same way as a mirror by bouncing its duplicate image directly opposite to the viewer's eye. Using a soft Round brush I lightly add glow to the floor to push the overall illumination levels.



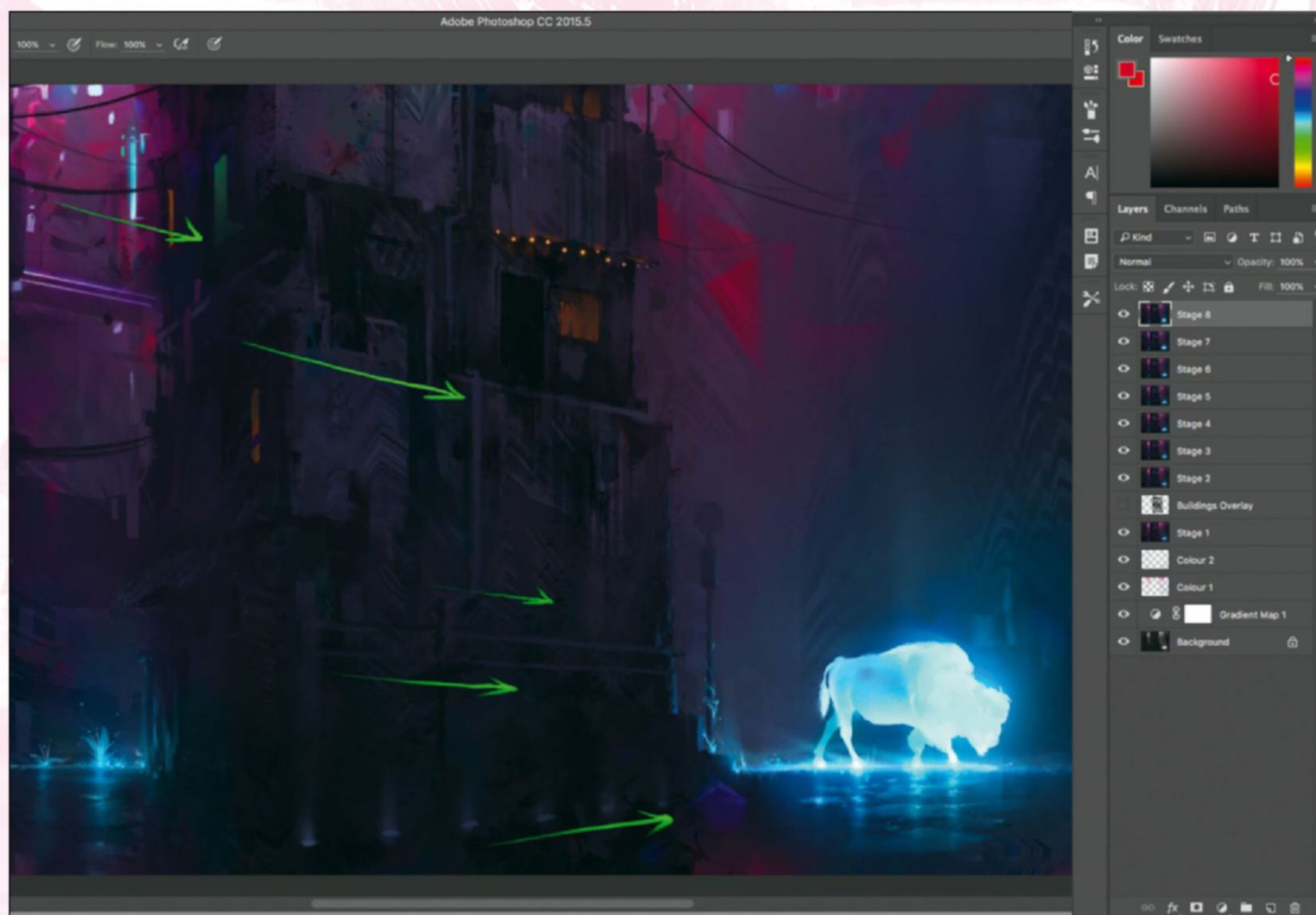
10 Painting neon signs

I draw my neon using a light desaturated line, and add colour around the line using Screen blending mode, so it won't darken the line when you paint over. I then select the Dodge tool set to Highlight, so that when I brush over the neon line it will become brighter and burst colour into the midtones.



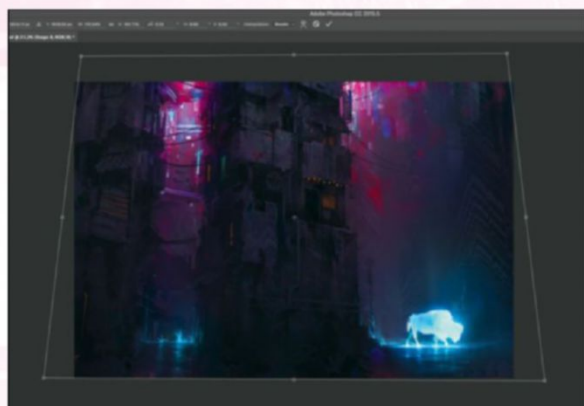
11 Adding some life

In spirit of giving these houses more life, I add small lights and details to give the buildings more character. I paint electrical wires and clothes lines across the alleyway to separate the building from the background, introducing more depth. Crossing wires over the neon light helps to separate the foreground and background.



12 Establishing your focal point

I soften the negative space around the buffalo to act as a contrast against its hard edges. This makes the buffalo a stronger focal point. I also remove some lines of fairy lights and darken the windows to prevent drawing unwanted attention. I bring in subtle directional lines throughout the piece to help guide the viewer's eye back towards the buffalo.



13 Correcting your perspective

After taking a day away from the painting (something I often do, to then see my piece through fresh eyes) I notice that despite having a low horizon my perspective is very flat. My solution is to cut/paste my buffalo separately and then use the Free Transform tool (Ctrl+T or Cmd+T) to skew the entire scene outwards from the bottom, creating a wider angle.



14 Finishing touches

This stage is the perfect opportunity to make any final tweaks such as small details or blending edges. I add a flush of random colour using my Brush Dynamics and add bokeh (out of focus light particles) in front of my light sources.

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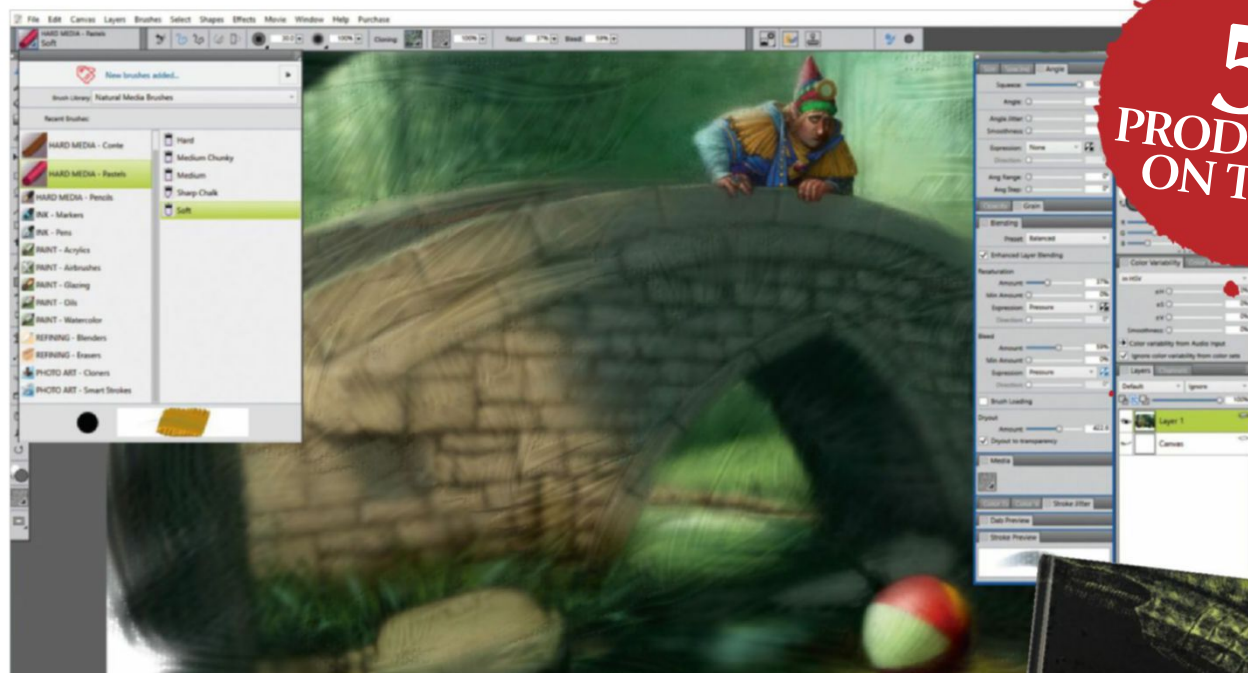
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The latest art resources are put to the test by the ImagineFX team...



SOFTWARE

92 Painter 2018

Discover if Corel's traditional painting program brings new tools to the table.

TRAINING

95 Fantasy Art Workshop: Oil Painting Techniques

Jeff Miracola covers a lot of ground in his lengthy training DVD, which explains the basics of painting with the tricky medium.

BOOKS

96 Wonder Woman: The Art and Making of the Film

Learn how the production team developed the world of the Amazonian warrior.

97 The Art and Making of Alien Covenant

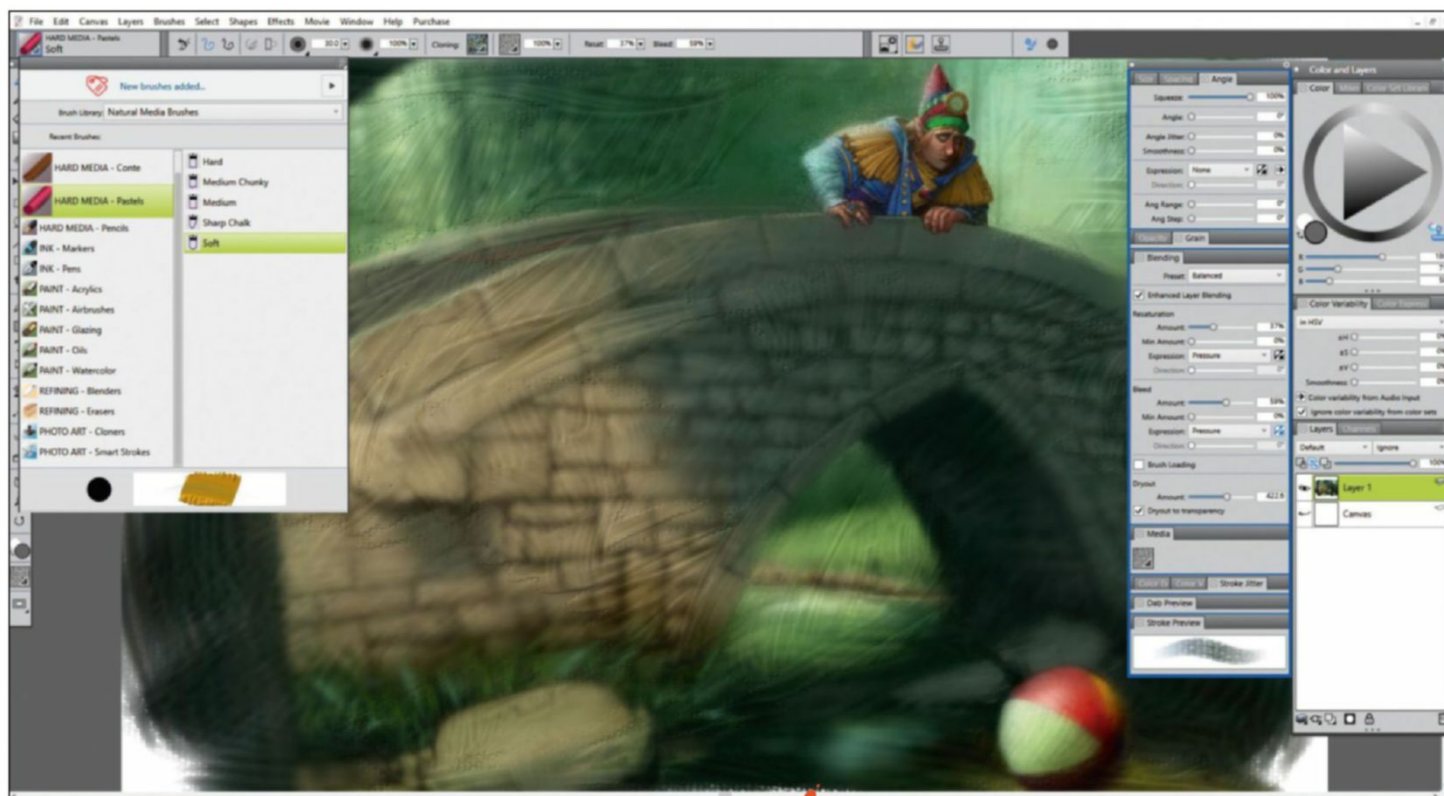
Check out concepts from the latest chapter of the toothy xenomorph's backstory.



97 The Art of Cars 3

Pixar's Cars films may not be to everyone's tastes, but the enhanced character and environment designs are well worth a look.

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



Painter 2018



Corel has worked with traditional artists to ensure Painter's natural media brushes can accurately imitate oils, watercolours and more.

DOUBLE WHAMMY Corel's updated flagship painting program features tools that mimic traditional media and digital tools that look like nothing traditional

Price £360 (upgrade for £180) **Company** Corel **Web** www.painterartist.com/en/product/painter/

This new release of Painter has many new features that will make the digital artist quiver in anticipation.

Let's start with the Thick Paint option. This set of painting tools goes beyond the Impasto painting tools that were present in earlier versions of Painter. They accurately mimic the look and feel of traditional oil and acrylic paint. You can pile on the paint, push it around, carve into the paint,

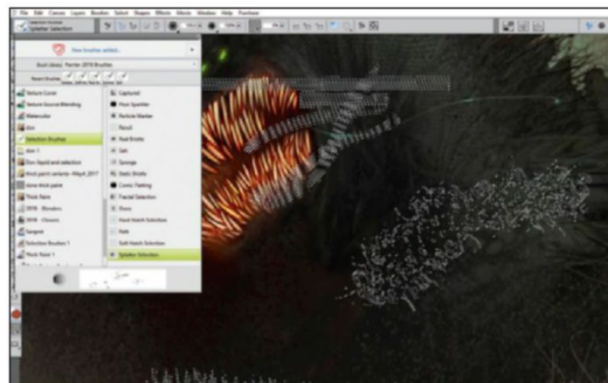
Selection brushes can be used to create complex selections, to help you paint interesting shapes.

scrape the paint, and realistically blend the colours and strokes.

The default brushes have been inspired by their traditional equivalents and Corel says that the brush variants have been created by artists familiar with traditional media. One wonders how they were designed in previous versions. Still, the brushes are flexible,

textures. Texture Cover uses the colours found in the active texture, or you can choose any colour to be used while painting. Interestingly, the new 2.5D Texture brushes build subtle and dimensional textured surfaces using the active texture. With these brushes you can change, scale and transform the texture at any time while painting.

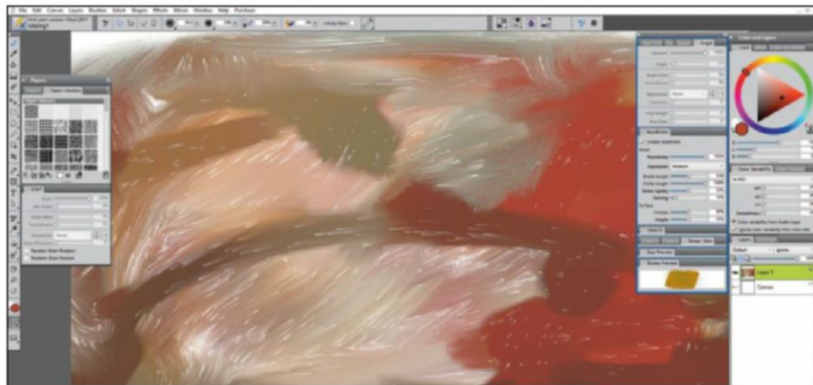
“The Thick Paint tools go beyond the Impasto painting tools that were present in earlier versions of Painter”



with new options for blending underlying brushstrokes and variable opacity. Thick Paint can be enhanced by changing the direction, intensity, colour and number of light sources that interact with the canvas.

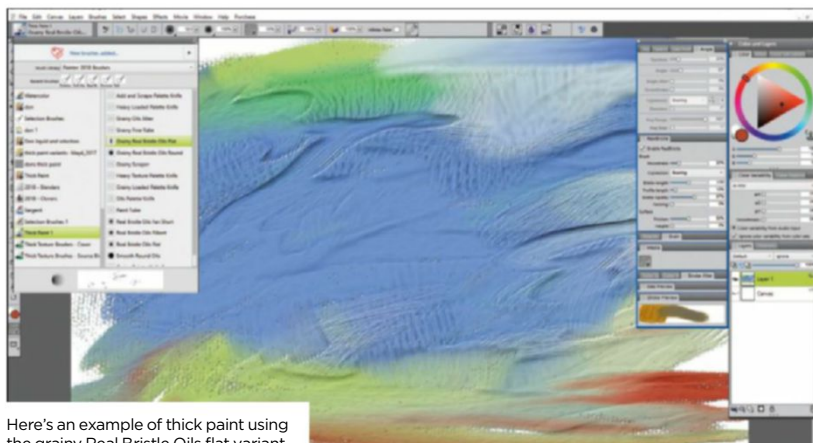
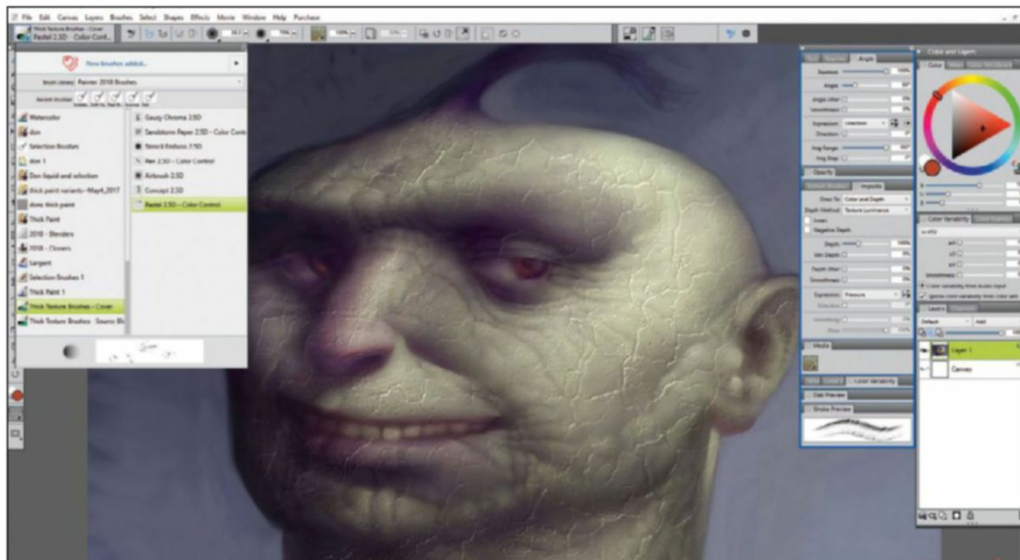
Elsewhere, you can now paint using Texture Cover, Source Blending or the new 2.5D Texture Brushes. Texture Source Blending builds depth using

Another new feature, Texture Synthesis, enables you to pick an area of a document or texture and reproduce it at a larger scale. When synthesising a new texture, the selected area of the original texture is randomised across the new document, creating something unique. You're not limited to using textures: the brushstrokes in a document enable you



The enhanced Drip and Liquid brushes enable you to blend paint in a number of ways.

You can add texture to a painting or rendered 3D model using the Thick Texture brushes.



Here's an example of thick paint using the grainy Real Bristle Oils flat variant.

to create a new texture. The resulting image can be used as any other texture or as a layer in your painting.

There are a number of smaller, but welcome new features, too. The Enhanced Drip and Liquid brushes work on an empty layer to blend a colour with an oil paint-like transparency or paint using the colours from underlying layers. Random Grain Rotation will rotate the active paper texture with each brush stroke, giving a natural look. There's also a redesigned

Natural Brush library, and you can create your own selection brushes using any dab-based brush variant. Finally, new cloning capabilities give you the ability to adjust the size and shape of clone sources as you paint.

There have also been a number of background and interface tweaks, making the program easier to use. Overall, Corel's done well in updating Painter so that, more than ever, it brings the worlds of traditional and digital art closer together.

DETAILS

Features

- Thick Paint
- Thick Texture brushes
- Texture Synthesis
- Enhanced Drip and Liquid brushes
- A new Natural Brush library
- Random Grain Rotation
- New Selection brushes
- New cloning capabilities
- Texture Fill

System Requirements

PC: Windows 7, 8.1 or 10, Intel Core 2 or AMD Athlon 64 CPU (2GHz or faster), 2GB of RAM (8GB recommended), 1GB of hard disk space, 1,280x800 screen resolution, Internet Explorer 11 or higher.
Mac: OS X 10.12, 10.11 or 10.10, multi-core Intel CPU with 64-bit support, 2GB of RAM (8GB recommended), 750MB of hard disk space, 1,280x800 screen resolution, DVD drive.

Rating



ARTIST INTERVIEW

DON SEEGMILLER

This artist has seen Painter improve over the years...

What new features in Painter 2018 do you like the most?

The new Thick Paint has to be my favourite. In addition, I use a lot of textures in my work and the new Texture Synthesis feature makes it straightforward for me to create one-of-a-kind textures, patterns and papers.

In the past, users have complained about the stability of the program. What do you think about that?

I generally find that Painter is very stable. Having taught with the program for a number of years I've noticed that most stability issues are the result of users who are unfamiliar with the program and trying to do something that's either heavy on machine resources or that Painter wasn't designed to do.

Painter seems to be a complicated program to learn. Any thoughts on that?

All programs have a learning curve. If you just open Painter and look around, then of course you're going to be frustrated. My advice is to pick one brush and create a painting on the canvas without any layers. You'll learn a lot from this exercise.

Are there any other significant improvements in the workflow area that you think are worth mentioning here?

I think that the most important change in the workflow is how Painter handles transparency. In the past, painting on a transparent layer could be problematic depending on your choice of brush. This has been significantly addressed, especially in this version.



Don's professional career spans over 30 years. He started using Painter when the first version was introduced.

www.instagram.com/seegmiller_art

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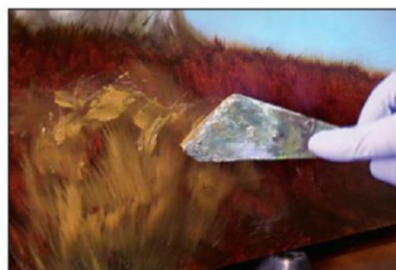


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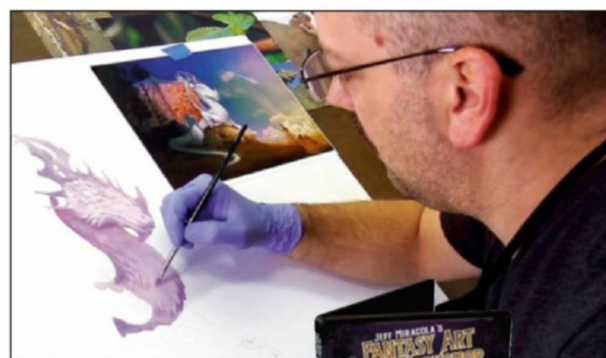


In his second Fantasy Art Workshop, Jeff Miracola reveals the basics you need to start painting with oils, including tools and techniques.



Jeff explores design issues such as repeating motifs and how the shape of different elements conveys a personality.

Jeff gets started with his underpainting. Note the gloves, worn to stop skin absorbing any chemicals from the paints or solvents.



Fantasy Art Workshop: Oil Painting Techniques

OIL BE BACK Fantasy illustrator Jeff Miracola follows up his DVD on acrylics by tackling the most challenging media of them all...



Publisher Three Points Publishing **Price** \$50 **Format** DVD/download **Web** www.threepointspublishing.com

Anyone who's thought about trying traditional paint media will have a view about oil painting. In the follow-up to his DVD on painting with acrylics (reviewed in issue 142), Jeff Miracola sets out to make getting into oil painting as simple as possible. And if that doesn't tempt you, how about this lovely dragon...?

Impressive as Jeff's dragon is, it's just there for him to guide you through every stage of creating a finished oils piece. It soon becomes clear that it's a long process, with much patience required. Jeff admits there's always a stage where the painting looks wrong, but you have to remember you're laying the foundations for success to come later. Indeed, his patient layering of effects over each element in the painting eventually pays off.

Continuing the format from Jeff's first Fantasy Art Workshop, his walk-



DETAILS

Topics covered

- Concepts and thumbnails
- Colour studies
- Preparation and materials
- Your work area
- Paints, brushes and knives
- Solvents and mediums
- Underpainting
- Glazing
- Advanced techniques
- Varnishing

Length

399 minutes

Rating



through of the painting stages is punctuated with short practical guides. These are essential to watch in the case of oils because of the safety issues: Jeff does a great job of explaining the risks of using solvents and oil-based media while showing how simple it is to control those risks with straightforward measures. You'll also learn about the range of brush types, other tools for painting with, glazing and much more.

A disc full of extras adds further detail, including a valuable section on how to prepare your board; but it's the main feature you'll return to repeatedly, as you absorb all the basics you need to get started on the biggest painting adventure of your life.

The DVD version plays on your home entertainment system (as long as it supports NTSC video playback, which most modern DVD players and TVs do) or a computer with a DVD drive.

ARTIST PROFILE

JEFF MIRACOLA

Jeff attended the Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design before embarking on a freelance career that would lead him to work on Magic: the Gathering, Shadowrun, Changeling, Battletech, Rage, Vampire: The Eternal Struggle and Judge Dredd. Book covers and magazines have followed, as well as toy design. Jeff has shifted his style of art as



he's become more focused on children's books, editorial work and video game graphics.

www.jeffmiracola.com



Wonder Woman: The Art and Making of the Film

AMAZON ADVENTURE A deep dive into how the new Wonder Woman movie was created, with art and insight along the way

Author Sharon Gosling **Publisher** Titan Books **Price** £30 **Web** www.titanbooks.com **Available Now**

We're sent a lot of 'Art of' film books here at ImagineFX, but they're by no means all alike. Some are padded out with film stills and feature very little actual art. Others are filled with eye-opening concept artwork from cover to cover. This large-format volume, devoted to the new Wonder Woman film directed by Patty Jenkins, falls somewhere in the middle.

Quite a few of the images included here are film stills or in-progress production shots, which feels a little wasteful if you've already seen the film. And where artwork is featured, there's a frustrating lack of credits for the artists who created it.

But we don't want to overstate the negatives. There's still a good number



of preliminary sketches, storyboards, concept art and set and costume designs within these beautifully produced pages, plus a lot of textual detail about how the film was conceived and produced.

Following an introduction by Jenkins, the book is essentially a succession of two- or four-page guides covering every visual element of the film, more or less chronologically. The first half details the different characters, the myriad locations of Themyscira (including the island, the



The Amazonian armour varied from character to character, to convey a sense of individuality.

“The book is a succession of guides covering every visual element of the film”



Concept art of the young Diana scampering through a marketplace on Themyscira.

Throne Room and Diana's bedroom) as well as its weapons and armour (both Diana's and the Amazons' as a whole). Then there's a close look at the beach battle, for which we see CGI breakdowns and original storyboards.

This is followed by a brief, six-page section on Diana's journey across the sea, which includes a look at how the ship was put together digitally. Then the final section focuses on 'Man's World', with some good insights into how locations like London, Dover Docks, the War Rooms and No Man's Land were developed.

Right at the end of the book, there's a bonus insert: a black envelope stamped with the Wayne Enterprises logo. Inside is a acetate black-and-white photo of the film's main characters. Fans will doubtless love this, though given the book's title, it's a shame this wasn't a fabulous piece of concept art instead.

With extensive quotes from both Patty and production designer Aline Bonetto, it all adds up a detailed guide to how the film was created, and is particularly strong on explaining how the environments and all-important costumes were realised. Fewer film stills and more concept art would have nudged us closer to a five-star rating, but this is still a top-notch release.

RATING ★★★★★☆

The Art and Making of Alien Covenant

SCARE PACKAGE Crew and actors discuss in depth how the latest in the Alien sci-fi horror series was created, alongside plenty of concepts from the film

Author Simon Ward **Publisher** Titan Books **Price** £30 **Web** www.titanbooks.com **Available Now**

Following on from 2012's quasi-prequel *Prometheus*, in 2017 the Alien franchise returned to its horror roots with *Alien Covenant*. This book offers a blow-by-blow account of how it was made, with input from Ridley Scott, his crew and, a little unusually, its main actors.

Here we get to take a close look at the intricate tech behind the colony ship and its vehicles; the designs of the



crew's uniforms and weaponry; artwork of key locations; and vividly dramatic alien art imagery.

However, do note that, like the *Wonder Woman* book, this falls halfway between an art book and a fan book. So while some enticing sketches, blueprints and concept work are included, they feel a little crowded out by film stills and behind-the-scenes photographs. And overall the text pays

more attention to the plot and how the actors interpreted the characters than the actual art and design of the movie.

Finally, while some of the artists are properly credited for their work (notably Dane Hallett and Matt Hatton, whom we interview on page 28), much of the art featured here isn't credited at all, which does irk us!

RATING ★★★★★☆



Dane Hallett and Matt Hatton worked on a series of drawings, inspired by Geiger and Rembrandt, that featured in the final film.

The Art of Cars 3

ROAD RAVE Pixar shares a generous dose of behind-the-scenes imagery as it unpacks its second *Cars* sequel



Authors John Lasseter, Brian Fee, Bill Cone and Jay Shuster **Publisher** Chronicle Books **Price** £28 **Web** chroniclebooks.com **Available Now**

When it comes to art books, Pixar has been hitting it out of the park for some years now. And while the workmanlike *Cars 3* isn't exactly its most iconic movie to date, this release shows exactly how an 'art of' movie book should be done.

As production designers Bill Cone and Jay Shuster explain in their introduction, the central challenge was to evolve the world of the previous

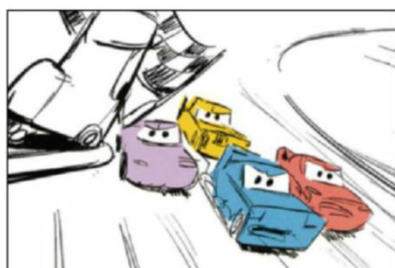


films in an entertaining way for the audience. With *Cars 3*, they opted for a new location, the southeastern United States, and a visual theme informed by the origins of NASCAR in the rural South. The book explores how this new world was developed, with insights from the artists and filmmakers along the way.

Most importantly, it's all beautifully illustrated, with everything from

preliminary notebook sketches and storyboards to fully fledged concept art, both physical and digital. With such a rich variety of visual material on display, including deleted and unused material, there's no need to pad the book out with film stills: hurrah! Plus there are full artist credits for every image used: double hurrah!

RATING ★★★★★



A storyboard from a race early on in the film shows both Lightning McQueen's skills and the camaraderie between him and his fellow racers.

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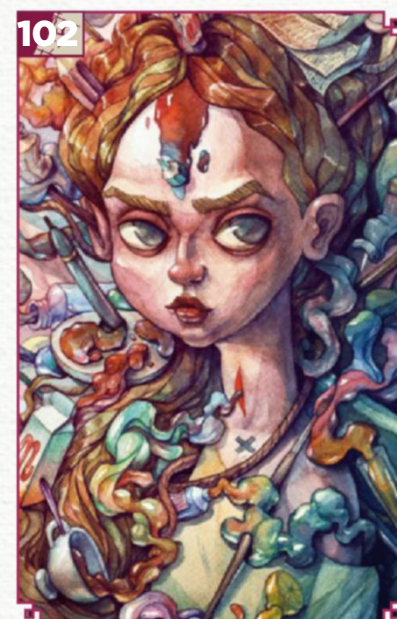
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NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS
ImagineFX

Traditional Artist

Inspiration and advice from the best pro artists



This issue:

102 Traditional FXPosé
Artwork from some of the finest traditional artists around today.

106 Create an original tarot card
Discover new approaches to personal projects and telling stories, with Sam Guay.

110 Get to grips with gouache
Join artist and illustrator Laura Bifano as she demystifies the medium, in the first instalment of this four-part series.

114 First Impressions: Jesper Ejning
The world of role-playing games had a big hand in developing this artist's love for fantasy art.



FXPosé

SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL ARTISTS



Marija Tiurina

LOCATION: UK **MEDIA:** Watercolor, ink, digital **WEB:** marijatiurina.com

Working traditionally and digitally in games art, advertising and book illustration, Marija says, "The best inspiration comes from a blank sheet of paper."



1 LOSING THE BATTLE

"A watercolour piece that's a spontaneous compositional play rather than something delivering a strong message."



2 JOB INTERVIEW

"A composition of random fun details creating a strange creature that's on its way to a job interview. Why? Because why not?"



3 DOMESTICS

"A small personal watercolour and ink piece, playing with composition, objects and gravity."

4 ARTOXICATION

"This is a watercolor painting illustrating the feeling of browsing through so much inspiring art that it becomes intoxicating."

4





©Hysterical Games



Karolina Wucke

LOCATION: Poland **MEDIA:** Black ink, watercolour **WEB:** www.wucke.deviantart.com

After learning to draw and paint privately for 12 years, Karolina studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Łódź. "Drawing is a way to share my own world," she says.

1 MOON DRAGON

"I draw a dragon portrait with a moon in the background to create a mysterious atmosphere, like it has come from an ancient story about something magical."

2 WATER DRAGON

"Underwater depths have always been fascinating and mysterious to me - they make me wonder what is hidden in them. Many legends and myths have arisen about unusual creatures that appear in the waves."



3 BLOODY DRAGON

"Dragons aren't only fairytale creatures, they're also really dangerous, vicious beasts. I wanted to show the bloody and cruel side of a dragon - his darkest face."

4 CREEPY DRAGON

"I enjoy letting go my imagination and creating totally absurd creatures. These are the kind of monsters that live under your bed."

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



Pencil

Gouache

Watercolour

Ink

CREATE AN ORIGINAL TAROT CARD

Discover new experimental approaches to personal projects and telling stories, as **SAM GUAY** paints The Emperor card for the Blood Moon Tarot

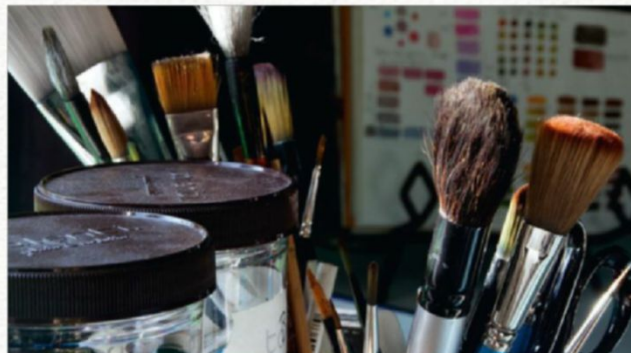
When I received my first tarot deck, I was enchanted by the beautiful artwork and the stories that accompanied every card. It became a source of inspiration for me: it could be used to explore life's experiences, to interpret dreams, or to randomly generate ideas for characters and stories.

It was a goal of mine to create my own deck. Many years later I began the long journey of creating the Blood Moon Tarot, and I'm in the midst of finishing the Major Arcana. The Major Arcana are the iconic cards such as Death and The Fool.

The concept attached to each card is an integral part of the tarot. I find that many decks stick close to the imagery found in the familiar Waite-Smith Tarot, but for my own deck I wanted to explore the meaning of

each card, relate the meaning to my own experiences, and then use my experience to create my own symbols and a unique view of the card.

For this workshop I'll be painting The Emperor. My interpretation of the card is of foundation, plans, and protection. He's a solid oak tree growing in the forest: difficult to sway, impossible to move, but a fortress for thousands of creatures



that he shelters with strong limbs and tough bark. Each year when autumn turns he lays plans for other leafy strongholds and tucks them away beneath the shells of many acorns.

I'll walk you through the steps I take to create the card art. Tarot decks can vary in size; for my own I chose to stick with typical tarot card dimensions – about 3x5 inches. Though I primarily work in watercolour, you'll see that sometimes I incorporate acryla-gouache, ink and crayons. Each card is a new problem to solve, and by staying open to a variety of solutions I've discovered new mediums and techniques during the creation of the deck.



Lurking in the gloomy forests of New England, Sam pursued art and storytelling to document her travels in the dream lands. You can see other examples of her work at www.samguay.com.



MATERIALS

PAPER

- Arches 140 hotpress watercolour paper
- Clearprint 1000H drafting vellum

BRUSHES

- Size 1 extra pointed sable brush
- Size 2 round sable brush
- Mop brush

WATERCOLOUR PAINT

- Quinacridone gold deep
- Perylene green
- Indanthrone blue
- Sap green
- Green apatite genuine
- Burnt umber
- Burnt sienna

INK

- FW Acrylic Artist Ink - Sepia
- Liquitex Ink - Carbon black

ACRYLA-GOUACHE

- Titanium white
- Sap green
- Lemon yellow
- Burnt sienna
- Raw umber

PENCILS

- 4B
- HB

MISC

- Grumbacher liquid frisket
- Eraser pencil
- White painters tape
- Kraft paper tape
- Hardboard panel
- Scissors
- Spraybottle
- Incredible Nib
- Caran d'Ache Crayons

ARTIST INSIGHT

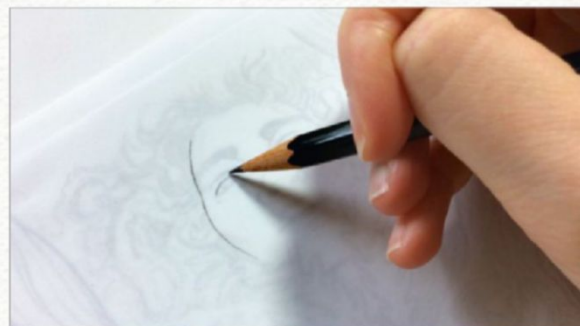
INSPIRATION AND REFERENCE

I keep books and images on my desk for reference and inspiration. The images include reference photos taken for the piece I'm working on as well as textures, patterns, and paintings with colour palettes that I like.



1 What's the concept?

Each tarot card has a specific meaning, so my first step is to research interpretations of the card, brainstorm my own ideas and connections to the concept, and create thumbnail sketches. For the Emperor I ended up relating my personal ideas of foundation and protection to oak trees in the forest.



2 Pencil drawing

Drawing is a chaotic process for me. I like to keep my sketches messy and loose at first because it gives me a chance to find visual solutions that I may not have initially thought of. I begin with a pencil sketch, which I draw over digitally, then print out and draw over with layers of vellum until I'm satisfied.

WATERCOLOR TIP

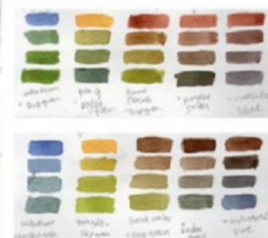
PAINT SKILLS

Dirty water will muddy your watercolours, so top up with clean water regularly.

ARTIST INSIGHT

TELLING STORIES

Not everyone reads tarot, so I write about my personal interpretation. I do this to accompany all my personal work because I find that people connect with the image more deeply when there's a story to go along with it.



3 Value and colour studies

I work primarily in watercolour. Because it's a difficult medium to correct mistakes in, I prepare with colour and value studies. Studies will help me decide on a colour palette, and I can reference my studies during the painting process so I don't deviate too far from my planned intentions for the image.



4 Transferring the drawing

When I'm ready to start painting, I scan the final drawing and print it out on hotpress watercolour paper. Before I do anything else, I go over the printed line work with pencil, adding more weight to important lines and insuring the image will remain if the printer ink fades.



5 Stretching watercolour paper

I soak the paper with water and adhere it to a board using Kraft paper tape, which has water-activated glue on one side of it. I leave space around the drawing because I'll have to cut that tape off later. When the paper is dry I put painter's tape around the drawing, so the illustration will have clean edges.



6 The underpainting

Now that the paper is stretched, I thoroughly wet it and chose one or two colours for the underpainting. These first washes are very light and I use them to tone down the white of the page in areas that will have a darker overall value. In lighter areas, such as the buildings and acorn, I keep the paper's white.



7 Make use of liquid frisket

Occasionally I use masking fluid when I have a lot of small areas where I want to retain the white of the paper. I make sure the paper is dry before I do this, and I use a tool that will enable me to cover the little details with the fluid. ➡

Traditional Artist Workshop

ARTIST INSIGHT

TAROT AND ORACLE DECKS COMPARED

Tarot decks and Oracle decks are different.

Tarot decks follow a set format and contain specific cards (78 cards total, 22 Major Arcana and 56 Minor Arcana), but Oracle decks can feature any cards and any format.



8 Working wet on wet

Before starting my washes, I wet the paper again. I add many loose layers of paint with a wet brush (wet on wet technique) and I create interesting texture by spraying the damp paint with water. In this step the trees and the leaves start to take shape, but I don't get too detailed.



9 Tackling the details

Here I use a wet brush on dry paper, layering transparent washes. I add detail to the buildings in the city, the trees and leaves, the Emperor's face and the brooch. I don't go into fine details just yet, but I get it to a point where I feel like the line work needs to be defined.

WATERCOLOR TIP

EFFICIENCY

You can use a hairdryer on the low heat setting to help your washes dry faster.



10 Removing the frisket

Again I wait for the paint to dry completely. I then use an eraser to gently remove the frisket. I don't like to use my fingers to peel it off because I don't want to get dirt or oils from my hands rubbed on the paper, and it's easier to remove the small spots with an eraser.



11 Inking the lines

When I feel like the line work is getting lost I make a half-and-half mix of sepia and black waterproof ink. I use a very small brush to darken the lines, especially on the face, hands and other delicate details. If I want my lines to be even darker, I'll add more black ink to the mixture.



12 Dry brush details

From here I add energetic lines with my smallest brush using a dry brush technique, which I like because it feels similar to drawing. I add lines around the roots of the city and the acorn – I want it to feel like there's light and life flowing around that area, while other areas in the painting are more stable and still.



13 Acryla-gouache highlights

I use acryla-gouache and a jelly roll pen to bring in highlights on the skin, city and acorn. I also flick the brush to create a small splatter effect with the paint. This looks like dust in the light, and I use the jelly roll pen to make smaller white speckles as well – closer to the acorn and window light.



14 Making adjustments

I take a break from the painting and give my eyes a rest. When I return it's easier to spot where adjustments are needed. Acryla-gouache is my go-to for fixing anything that I can't fix with watercolour. I also add light texture by gently using a water-soluble crayon so that it catches on the tooth of the paper.



15 Finishing up

When I'm finished the painting, I remove the white tape and cut away the brown tape with a pair of scissors. To avoid any noise and make it easier to digitally remove dust, I scan the painting at 1,200dpi and make very small adjustments to the colour and value, resize the image, and then I'm done. 🍷

Core skills: Part 1

GET GOING WITH GOUACHE

Gouache! What even is it? Join artist and illustrator **LAURA BIFANO** as she demystifies the medium in this four-part series

Gouache is a wonderfully versatile medium and is used in everything from fine art, concept design and animation background paintings. You can achieve a number of effects from soft gradients, textured drybrush, to painstakingly detailed fine lines.

That being said, it does have some idiosyncrasies that often put people off. For example, lighter values often dry darker and darker values become lighter, making working over multiple sessions a bit of a challenge. In addition, if the paint doesn't dry completely between applications, bottom layers can even lift and muddy the colours applied on top!

But don't let this discourage you – gouache also has many advantages. Number one for me is that its matte finish and vivid colours means that it reproduces easily, making it the medium of choice for anyone working in illustration or design. It's also portable, fast drying and has great opacity, which is why many artists also choose to use it for painting outdoors. Unlike oils, which require the use of abrasive solvents, gouache is water-soluble, easy on



your brushes, and perfect for working in smaller spaces.

Gouache is also incredibly variable and can be watered down and used like watercolours. Yet unlike watercolours it can be built up in thicker, painterly layers.

In my opinion, its versatility and portability far outweigh its finicky nature. True, this medium comes with some challenges, but I promise the end results are worth the effort.



Laura is an illustrator and production artist from Vancouver, BC. She's worked in film, television and children's books. You can see more of her art at www.laurabifano.com.

1 Getting started

Pictured here is my basic setup. I have a few different palettes that I like to use: a small, portable one for travel; a medium palette for working on smaller-sized pieces; and finally an open tray for mixing larger quantities of colour. And of course, I always keep a paper towel, rag or sponge handy for controlling the moisture on my brush and paper.

I find masking tape works just fine for stretching watercolour paper. I've never had an issue with buckling or tearing, and it's cheaper and more widely available than artist tape. The smaller roll of liner-tape is fantastic for masking out areas on the painting, similar to frisket paper.

Blotting materials.



Larger travel palette (also good for studio work!)

Gouache is pigment bound in an emulsifier, usually gum arabic or dextrin. Whenever possible, avoid student-grade paint, because they often contain talc, calcium carbonate or marble dust that add opacity but reduce saturation. I use M. Graham & Co and Windsor-Newton gouache, which obtain their opacity from pigment rather than fillers.

Core Skills Get into gouache



Traditional Artist Workshops



2 Choosing your brushes

There are thousands of brushes to choose from. Since most painters work coarse to fine detail, it makes sense to have a variety of brush sizes. For water-based medium it's good to use soft, natural hair brushes such as sable, although many synthetic brands are good, too. A stiff brush such as Hog's Hair will be hard on your paper and won't hold paint as well as a softer brush.

3 Palette basics

I keep a fairly limited palette when working. I like to use a couple of variations on primaries. Cadmium yellow is a deeper, richer shade, compare with the high chromacity of Cadmium yellow light. This enables more variation when mixing greens. I use a lot of Prussian blue when mixing shadows and Primary blue when painting sky panels.

I generally try and keep my palette organised according to warm/cool light/dark, but they can sometimes wind up looking like a bit of a dog's dinner. This example palette isn't indicative of how I work – rather, it's an example of the variations you can achieve with limited primaries.



A I use Prussian blue, Magenta and Cadmium yellow to create a neutral black. I test out the mixture on a separate piece of paper, laying it on transparently to make sure that it's not leaning too far over into the warm or cool spectrums. The idea is to make neutral dark tone that I can add in to my secondaries.

B This warm brown is a mixture of Cadmium yellow, Red and Prussian blue. I also mix it in

with my black to tone it down. I can use this mud mixture with my primaries and secondaries to create different undertones.

C Orange is a mix of Cadmium red light and Cadmium red. I've also added the black mixture to lower its intensity.

D I do use one secondary colour in my palette: Magenta! This is more vivid than I would be able to

mix using my blues and red. I add my black to tone things down.

E I've mixed a "pure" green from Cadmium yellow light and Primary blue, with a warm and cool mixture to the right and left of it. I can then work off these three blobs, mixing in my subtractive black.

F I keep a worn-out brush handy for mixing colours that have dried on the palette.



Doing a colour comp before starting a painting saves a lot of decision making. Since you've done all the brainwork beforehand, you can focus on craft and execution.

Having proper lighting is important too, especially if you're in a position where you have to paint at night. Most light bulbs cast a warm, yellow light that can make achieving accurate colours tough. Here I'm using an LED daylight bulb, which casts a cool, neutral light.

The most important thing when working in a water-based medium is to make sure you've properly stretched your paper beforehand. I use Arches 300lb watercolour paper, which needs to soak in water for 15 to 20 minutes before taping it to the easel. Then I let it completely dry before I wet it again and start painting.

I keep a couple of rulers handy for painting straight lines. I'll sometimes use a mask directly on the surface, but as you inevitably build up thicker layers, tape and frisket paper will flake off the paint. Running your brush along the edge of a ruler is a quick and easy way to produce nice, crisp edges.

4 Choosing a suitable painting surface

You can work on literally any flat surface you want. I'll often use a sturdy masonite drawing board, sometimes a clipboard or even the surface of my desk. Right now I'm using an adjustable drawing easel, which I can set up anywhere in my studio. ●

First Impressions



Jesper Ejsing



Playing RPGs from an early age has shaped the life of this Danish artist...



What was your first paid commission.
The first job that I remember getting paid for was an anatomical board illustration for a physiotherapist. I highlighted the muscles in question in red. I was 16 and that kick-started my career. Later that year I started illustrating a magazine for my teacher at high school. I did my first cover at the same time: a ranger in a forest.

What's the last piece that you finished, and how do the two artworks differ?

There's 18 years of accumulated skills between the two pieces, but the subject matter is the same. It's a ranger, painted for *Magic: the Gathering*. It shows just how little I've moved on since my initial start in the world of fantasy art.

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

I grew up in a suburb in Denmark, I made weapons in the forest with my brother and started playing role-playing games in the mid-80s. We started illustrating our role-playing characters – I've basically made a living out of that.



RANGERS

On the left is Jesper's cover from his high-school days, alongside his latest image painted for Magic: the Gathering.

“When I fail at an illustration I fail at life. It's the whole me that's failing...”

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

Just living life, I guess. I think when I was younger I always painted barbarians acting bad-ass and tough, looking mean while slaughtering their enemies. These days I'm more inclined to paint the same barbarian looking with discomfort at a hacked-off head thinking: “Why did you make me kill you”?

I think I'm more interested in portraying a character as a real, believable person than just an archetype. But playing role-playing games is and will always be my main source of inspiration.

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

I always play some kind of fighter or thief, so those guys come natural to me. In scenes I try to capture the feeling of a role-playing fight. I freeze a moment in time when the outcome of the battle is uncertain.

Can you describe the place where you usually create your art?

I've got a studio in town. My space has two tables. One is for traditional art and one for digital art. I spend 50 per cent of my working time at each table. The studio has 12 other artists doing either comic books or children's books.

Do you have an art tool or ritual that you can't live without?

The good thing about having a studio outside my home is that when I arrive at the studio and sit myself in front of the desk, I'm immediately in work mode. The familiarity of the workspace and the absence of any distractions means I'm able to stay in the 'art zone' effortlessly. That, and an espresso Morettino from Sicily.

Is making a living as an artist all you thought it would be?

Yes, and even more. Every day I leave my studio happy and content that I'm fortunate enough to make a living doing drawings of goblins and dragons. What I didn't anticipate is the huge amount of self-loathing that comes with having all your identity tied up in being an artist.

When I fail at an illustration I fail at life. It's the whole me that's failing. Not just that specific piece. At the same time, when it goes well, I'm the only one responsible for all the awesomeness. For me, it's a constant elevator that's moving between heaven and hell.

What does the future hold for you?

I'm putting together a huge coffee table art book with all my best illustrations from the past 15 years. This is something that I've always wanted to do.

Jesper is a fantasy artist from Denmark. He started his career in comic books as a colourist artist and went on to book covers and Magic: the Gathering. Lately, he's been working as a concept artist in the gaming industry. You can see more of his art at www.artstation.com/artist/ejsing.

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