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NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS **Imagine** **EX**

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PASCAL CAMPION! INTERVIEW & WORKSHOP FROM THE AMAZING STORYTELLER



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



How are you all this month? Me? Well, after a hectic few months at home and at work, I really took in Pascal Campion's insight in his interview. Not only is he a great artist, but I thought his opinion on work was a refreshing take on how to balance working and living.

It's especially hard for creatives, because our passion for work can cloud our judgement. We all feel pressure to keep giving more and more, but is it sustainable? We seem to be working longer hours and this can lead to feeling detached from our friends and loved ones. If this resonates with you, then read Pascal's interview on page 42 – then take time to see what you can do to help your situation.

Finally, why not submit your work to us! It's easy: just send in up to five images of either traditional or digital art, along with their titles and a short explanation of how or why you created it. Add in a short biography, a headshot and then email it to fxpose@imaginefx.com. Or, if you want to see a particular artist in the magazine or are keen to learn a technique, or even if you have a studio space to share in our Artist in Residence feature, let me know at the email address below.

Claire

Claire Howlett, Editor
claire@imaginefx.com

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



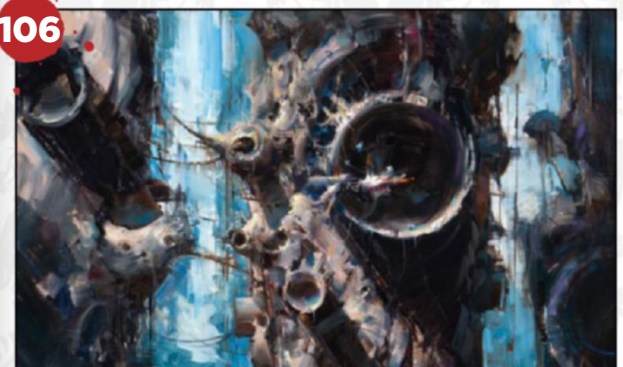
Artist Q&A special!

We put your animation questions to our friends at Sun & Moon Studios and guess what? They answered them!



Exclusive! Inside Aardman Animation

My hometown of Bristol also houses this amazing studio. I couldn't be more proud. More cheese Gromit?



Cinematic scenes in oils

Bryan Mark Taylor shares his process for painting an epic science fiction environment in oils.

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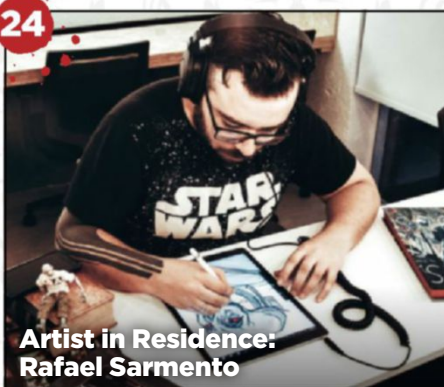
Artist Portfolio **PASCAL CAMPION**



"I chose to accept not being the best, instead of being the best I could be, which is different"

Pascal on choosing life over work

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Animation art

Traditional Artist

102 Traditional art FXPosé
We showcase the best art created using traditional methods, sent in by you!

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Your traditional art

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Sci-fi scene in oils



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Resources

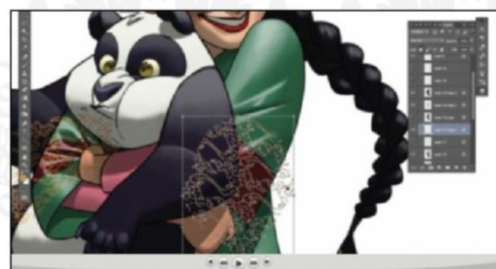
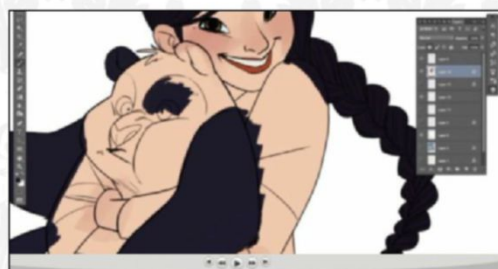
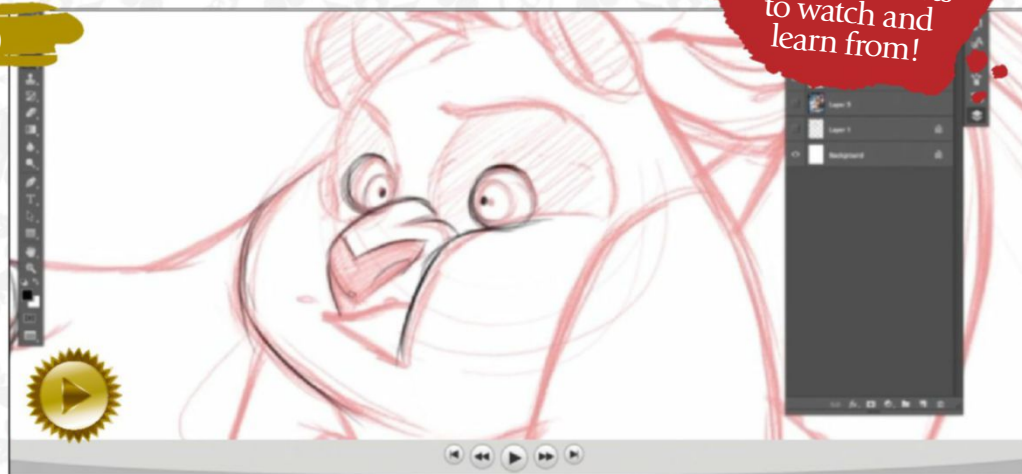
Getting hold of all of this issue's videos and custom brushes is quick and easy. Just visit our dedicated web page at <http://ifxm.ag/animation154art>

OVER 2 HOURS
of video tutorials
from pro artists
to watch and
learn from!

COVER ART VIDEO

Paint animated character art

Listen as Randy Bishop explains the thinking behind his fun cover art. Then read his workshop on page 66.



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/animation154art>

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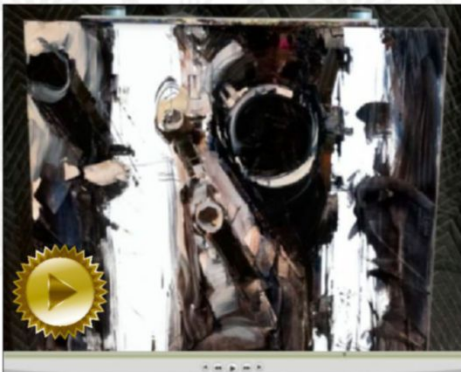
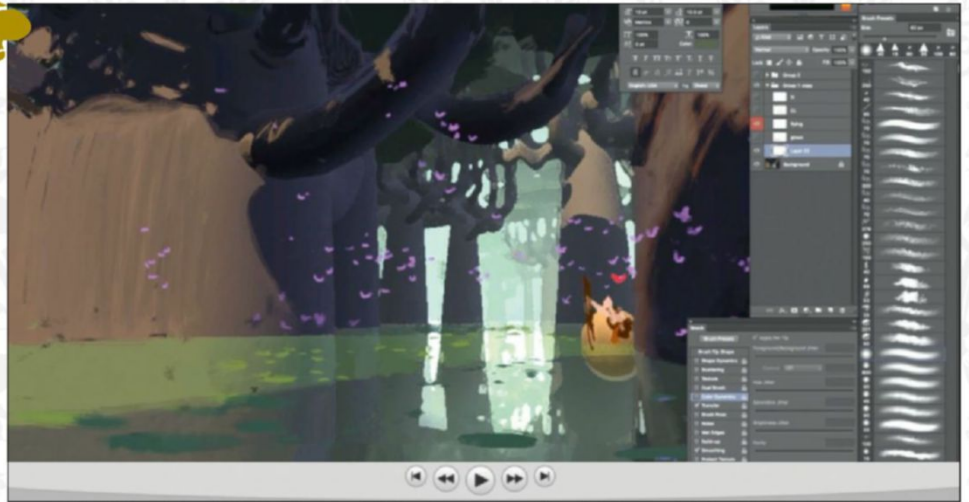
Watch our videos to gain a unique insight into how our artists create their stunning art

WORKSHOP VIDEOS



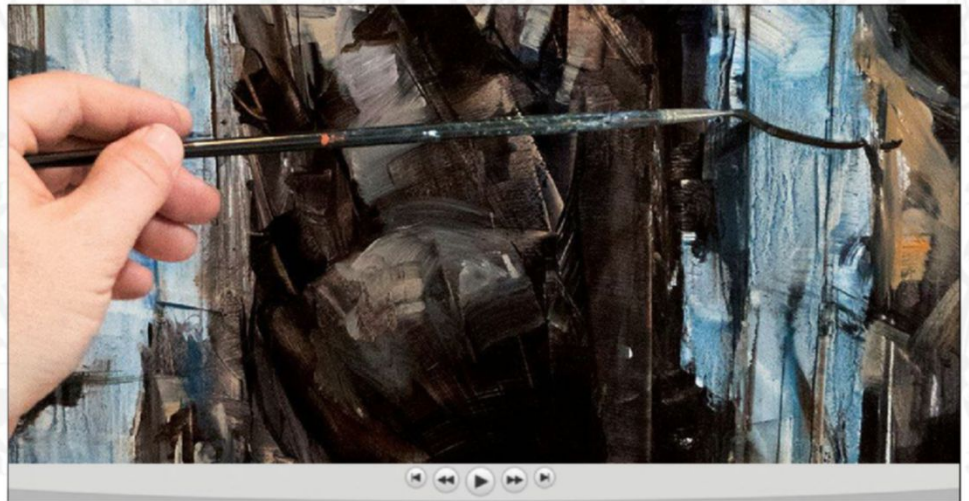
Illustrate a flooded forest

Boost your visual development skills by watching Craig Elliott's workshop video, then turn to page 74 for more details.



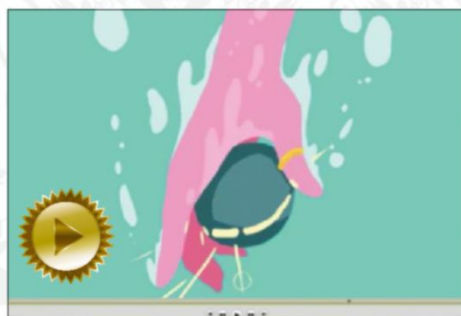
A sci-fi environment in oils

Watch how Bryan Mark Taylor depicts an epic sci-fi environment in oils. Take a closer look at this process by turning to page 106.



Create cartoon-like 3D hair

See how Owen Simons from Sun & Moon Studios builds up a mop of hair on page 35.



It's a drop in the ocean...

On page 39, Sun & Moon's Dan Keeble recreates the physics of bubbles in water.



Flower Painting in the Wild

James Gurney captures the details of flowers. See page 97 for our review of his video.

11 CUSTOM BRUSHES, INCLUDING...

RAIN 025

Pascal Campion uses this to paint – you've guessed it – precipitation!

BLENDER

Ideal for depicting highlights and shadows, says Randy Bishop.

SAMPLED BRUSH 3 6

Craig Elliott's brush will bring some randomness to your art.

FXPose

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART



Findara McAvinchey

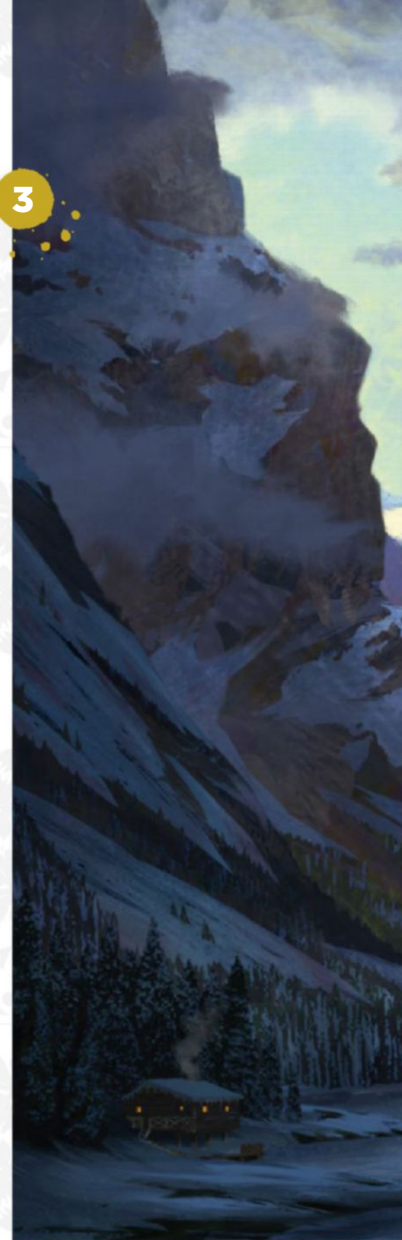
LOCATION: Ireland **MEDIA:** Photoshop, 3ds Max **WEB:** www.artstation.com/artist/finndocor

Findara was introduced to concept art when playing Castlevania: Lords of Shadow while at university, and proceeded to drop out in order to pursue a career as a freelance concept artist.

1



3



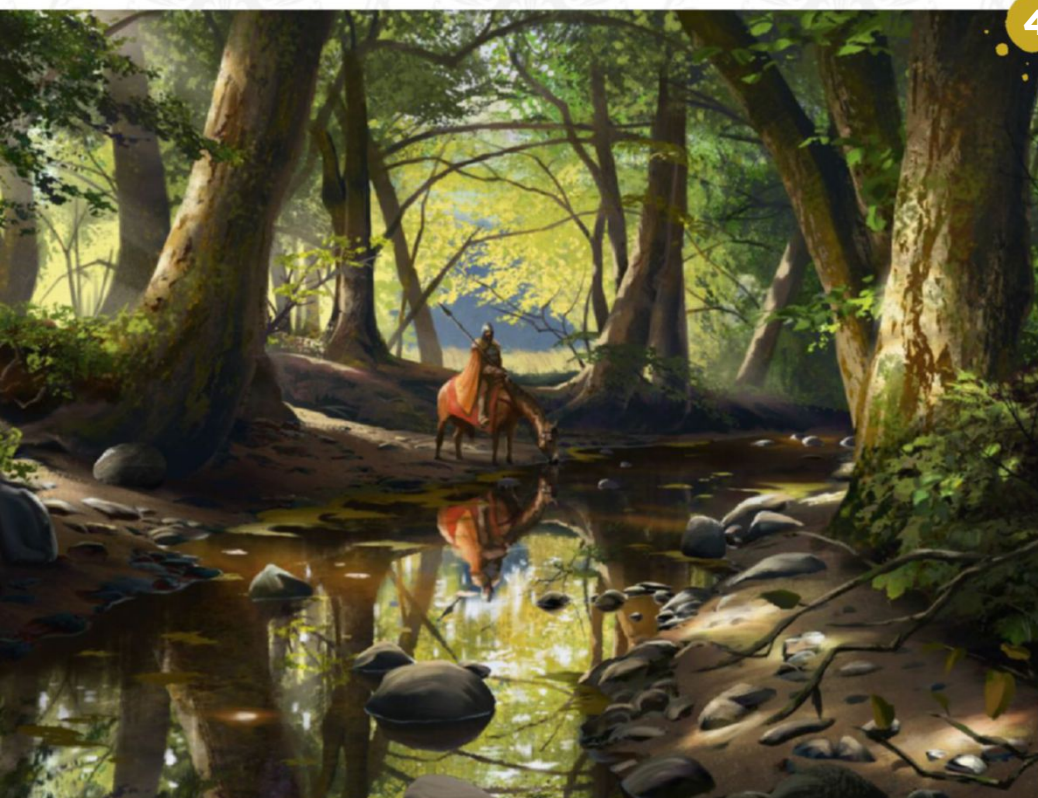
2



8

ImagineFX December 2017

Email your submissions to fxpose@imaginefx.com



4

1 DRAGON HUNTERS

"For this image I wanted to create the sense of a fast-paced chase taking place by using a dynamic angle. The bleakness of the wooded landscape helps to push the focal points forward."

2 SKELLIG GIANT

"This was inspired by the scale and ruggedness of the Cliffs of Moher. I find a dramatic sky can be extremely effective in trying to heighten the mood of a painting."

3 FROZEN FORTRESS IN THE MOUNTAINS

"I did this piece as part of an online course in environment design. I used a 3D base created in 3DS Max to help me achieve accurate lighting and shadows in the scene."

4 FOREST

"As a kid I spent many hours trekking through woods, imagining I was somewhere else, fighting monsters and exploring. This piece shows a soldier taking a quiet moment off the beaten path."



Diana Van Damme

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

"As a child I was interested in anything Disney, the Renaissance masters, Arthurian legend and the works of Shakespeare," Diana says, "and those preferences have shaped my taste ever since."



1 LADY OF THE LAKE

"Based on the Arthurian legends of Camelot, Avalon and the knights of the Round Table. My Renaissance influences really bleed through."

2 LILITH

"A depiction of Adam's first wife, described in Jewish mythology. I wanted her to look like Eve's opposite, with a little of the demon look mixed in."

3 JUSTICE

"This was originally titled Vengeance, but I felt the end result appeared more righteous. My focus for this piece was luminosity, angelic beauty and drapery."







Ashley Cassaday

LOCATION: US MEDIA: Photoshop WEB: www.ashleycassaday.com

"Video games and cartoons were a large staple in my life growing up," says freelance artist and art teacher Ashley. "I love mixing different concepts together to make something unique."



1 COURT OF BLOOD

"Originally, this character was based on a dragon theme, but with elements like the wings on her chest armour and the colour palette, she reads more like a vampire now."

2 WINTER'S LIGHT

"This started as a value study. It was winter, so this theme seemed fitting. I wanted to push myself with light sources, and also create something sweet and slightly ethereal."

3 FOREST GUARDIAN

"I wanted to try my hand at some creature work. The monster had to be intimidating, yet approachable once you understood it."

4 CLOCKWORK FAIRY

"While painting this I was listening to a song that incorporated a lot of clockwork sound effects. The idea of a fairy that lives inside a clock tower became the narrative."



3



4





Sasha Jones

LOCATION: US **MEDIA:** Photoshop, Painter, oils, watercolour, ink **WEB:** www.sasharjones.com

Sasha's an independent artist whose work explores themes of nature, queerness and mythical creatures. He uses light and colour to create immersive and etherial scenes.



1 HOLDING BACK BIRDS

"Trying to hold back one's own inner nature is like holding back a flock of birds. No matter how determined you are, things are going to keep slipping through."

2 DOUBLE-HEARTED

"From one of my main personal projects, which depicts a general torn by his love for and loyalty to the people on both sides of a war. Though his heart is true, a man divided cannot move forward."

3 LIRAN'S ASCENT

"This piece was a major leap forward for me. It was one of the first where I really went all out with reference, including a fully detailed maquette for the dragon."



Artist's bio photo by Kim Ostergaard Leonard

4

4 PURSUIT THROUGH THE MISTS

"While I grew up on fantasy with a medieval European basis, these days I'm drawn to a more diverse range of cultures and settings."







David Calabrese

LOCATION: US MEDIA: Photoshop WEB: www.davidcalabrese.com

David studied illustration and interactive design at university. He's worked as both an in-house and freelance artist for studios in the computer game, social media, 3D virtual collaboration and casino gaming industries.

2



3



1 IDES OF MARCH

"This was a painting was for a contest, but I didn't read the contest rules properly – they wanted the focus to be on the environment. It was a fun experience regardless."

2 MINE FULL OF WEREWOLVES

"I had a lousy experience at work, and came home so dejected that I had to create something exciting to lift my spirits. I ended up with adventurers attacking werewolves."

3 FAIRIES IN AUTUMN

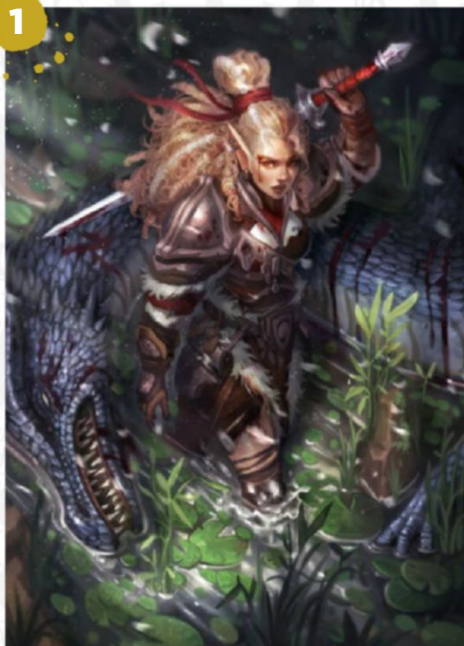
"I tend to paint dark and scary things, but I wanted to do something different, and so I focused on my favourite season and used warm, vibrant colours."



Jaslynn Tham

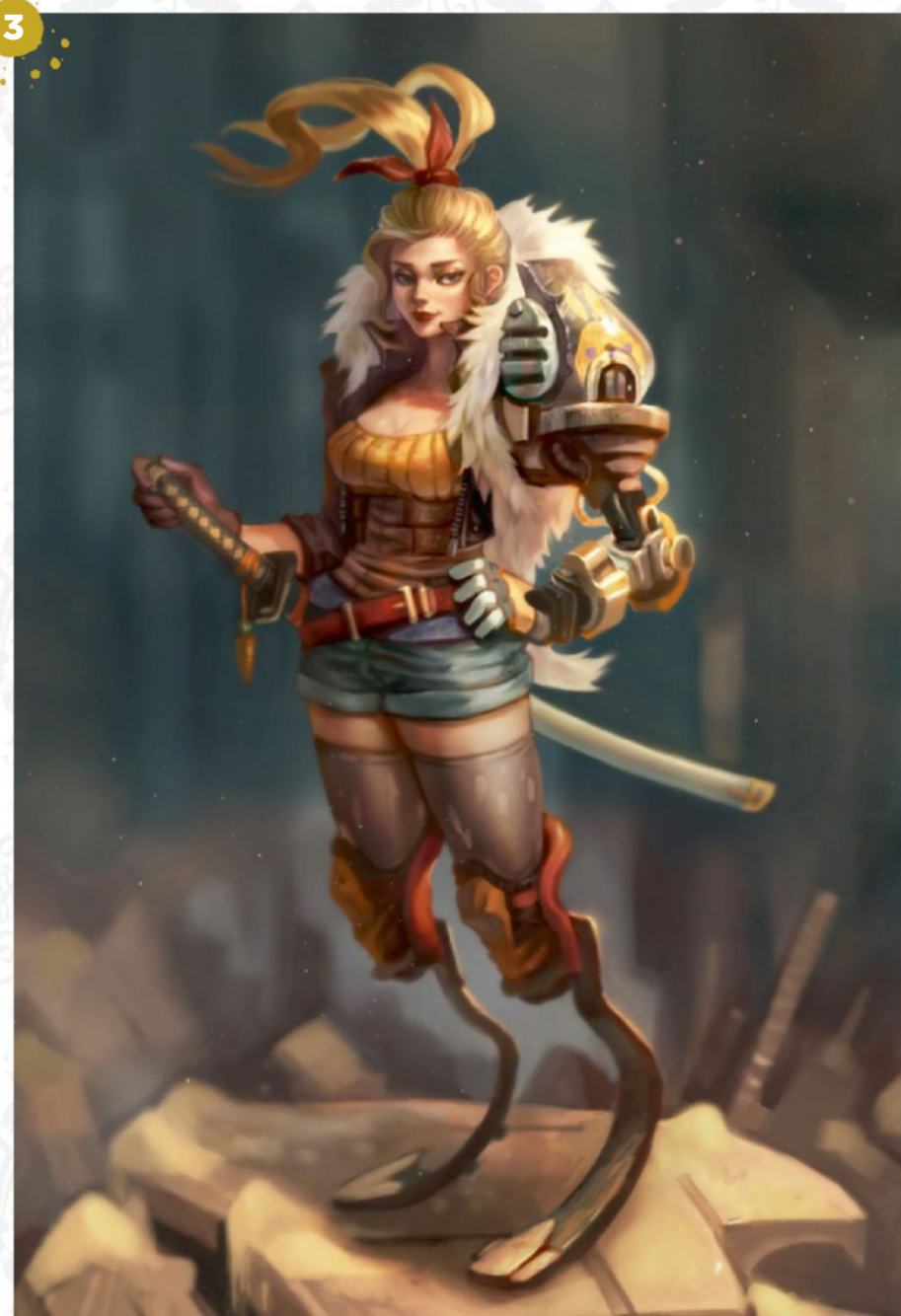
LOCATION: US MEDIA: Photoshop WEB: www.jastarts.com

Malaysia-born Jaslynn recently graduated from university. "I fell in love with the medieval fantasy genre via Blizzard's games," she says. "I try to mesh that aesthetic with my own personal style."



1 FALLA THE SLAYER

"This elf warrior has defeated a beast. I designed the overall composition from a higher angle, with the dragon's body framing the character. I learned a lot about rendering water effects."



2 TANK HOUSE

"I enjoy imagining what things would be like in a different world, and I thought a tank would be an interesting place to live. I wanted the focus to be on the tank itself, hence the ray of light shining onto it in."

3 DUSTY THE CYBORG

"This cyborg character is based on a rabbit. Her ponytail looks like ears, her fur vest suggests soft fur, and her legs are a combination of prosthetic running blades and rabbit's feet."

4



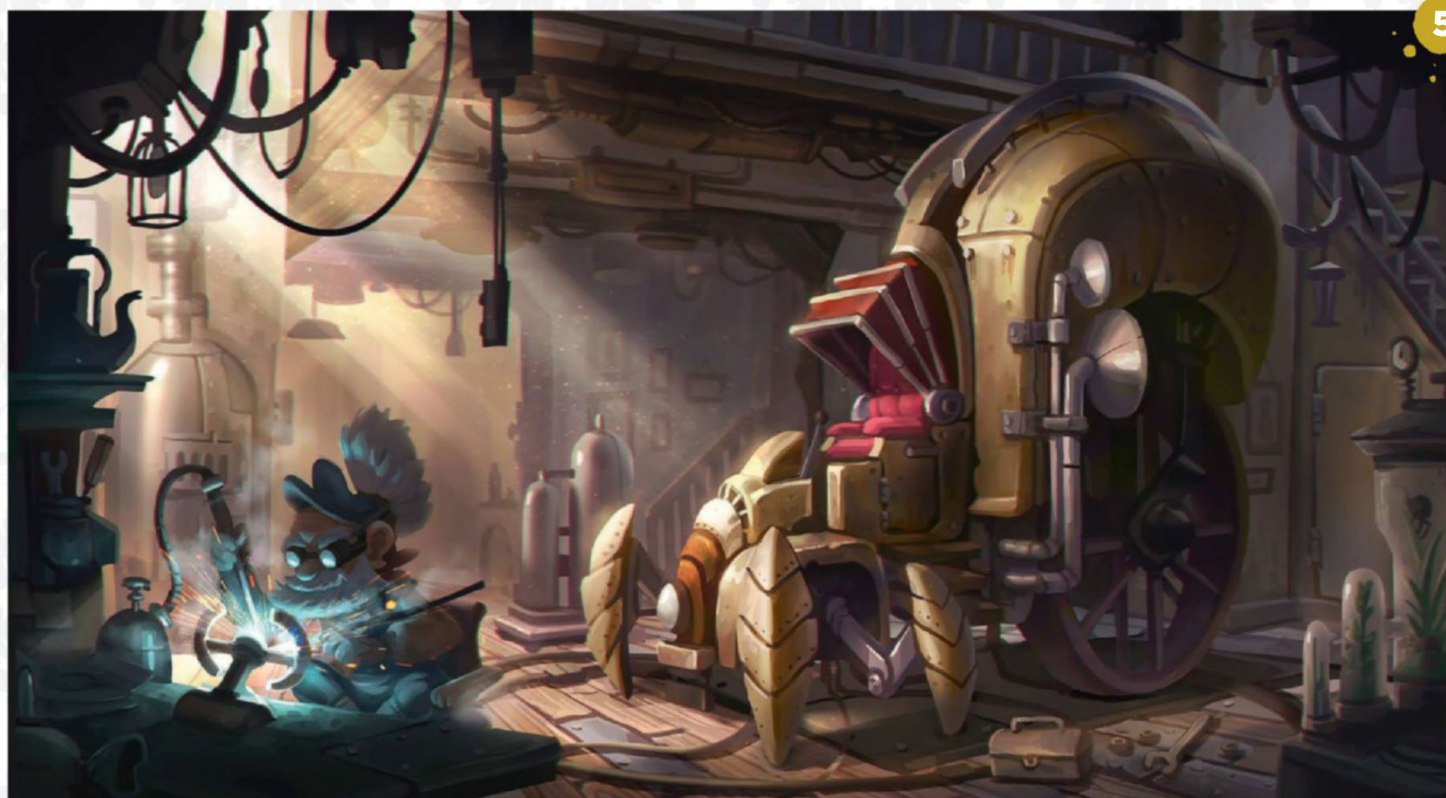
4 TWILIGHT

"This traveller is trying to find her way home. I was keen to create an interesting composition in which the character is rendered but the background is more graphical."

5 THE CRAWLER

"This steampunk illustration features an old inventor and his bug-concept vehicle. It was interesting to play around with the anatomy of an insect and use it to develop a functional vehicle design."

5



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

Combat, by Jason Rainville, who says that art bubbles are undesirable – but can happen naturally when you curate your friends over time.



Are you in an art bubble?

Fit to burst As debate around the power of echo chambers intensifies, **Julia Sagar** discovers how artists can break out of their personal filter bubbles

There's been a lot of talk about filter bubbles and echo chambers of late. If you were surprised by Brexit, or the US presidential elections, then you'll know first-hand the limiting effects of being surrounded by those who share the same views as you.

The internet promised to democratise information and create a global village, and yet many have never felt more trapped. But our filter bubbles don't just apply to politics, or online: anybody can become stuck in an echo chamber – and that includes artists.

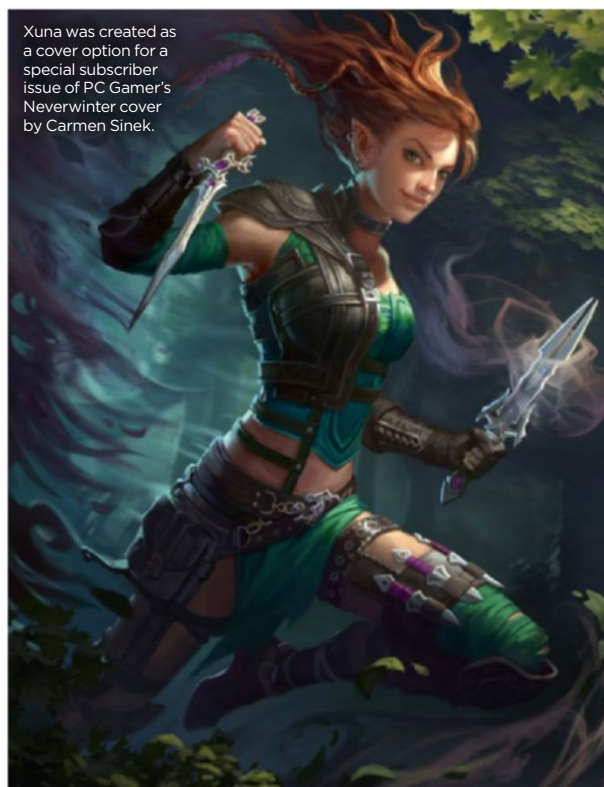


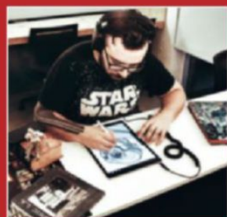
"It's a problem that impacts artists with different severity," says concept artist and illustrator **Carmen Sinek**.

"Some people know what they like and are happy doing just that. Others lock themselves into a certain style early, for the sake of pursuing a career with a certain company or genre."

It usually happens, Carmen says, when artists start focusing on the product instead of the process. "They set out with a goal in mind – working for this company, or ➡

Xuna was created as a cover option for a special subscriber issue of PC Gamer's Neverwinter cover by Carmen Sinek.





ART STUDIO IN A BAG

Rafael Sermiento's mobile art setup enables him to paint in cafés and co-working offices, boosting his productivity and caffeine levels.

Page 24



HUMAN NATURE

Discover how artists including Vanessa Lemen and Marc Scheff are reinterpreting the depiction of the human form, in a new exhibition in New York.

Page 27



QUICK ON THE DRAW

We invite the team from UK-based Sun & Moon Studios to answer your questions on animation, including creating a character with personality.

Page 32

“Some artists lock themselves into a certain style early, for the sake of pursuing a career with a certain company or genre”



Into the Winter Gale. “There’s a difference between living in a bubble and being confident of your point of view,” says Jason.

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

CARMEN SINEK

The concept artist explains how to break out of a bubble

How real is the problem of artists working in bubbles?

I see it happening often. Never exploring art outside your bubble can leave you artistically drained and stagnating. I realised I’d become trapped in an art bubble while trying to figure out where I had lost the ‘fun’ in art. I’d been trying to work for certain clients for years, and after finally getting those jobs, I found myself uncertain of where to go next.

How did you break out of it?

I asked friends for their favourite stylised artists. I started going to museums, and paying attention to how I felt while looking at art: what resonated with me and what made me want to see more? I began doing studies of work that was different from mine, and then tried to draw in styles that didn’t include the same level of realism and detail that I was used to.

What advice would you give for avoiding an art bubble?

Reflect on why you draw the way you do. Is your style based on what feels safe for your career goals, or what represents your interests as an artist? Once you understand the motivation behind your stylistic choices, look for other ways to broaden them.

Also, experiment – and focus on how you feel while doing so. Don’t let the voice in your head tell you you’re wasting time or that the work isn’t good enough. Are you enjoying yourself? Is the process fun for you? Does it make you think? Does it make you feel?



Concept artist Carmen has started to move towards more stylised work for splash art and her own personal projects.

www.toomanylayers.com/illustration



Storm, painted by Paul. "The more experiences you have to draw from, the more rounded you'll be," advises the artist.

➡ emulating that artist – and slowly begin to build their art education around it. If an artist wants to work for Magic: The Gathering, they might follow Magic artists online. The tutorials they see and resources they pick up, such as digital brushes, will likely be used by those who work within Magic's semi-realistic style range. They build a social media echo chamber around a very small part of the art community, and it becomes more difficult to move outside of it."

SINGLE-MINDED

At an industry level, one of the most immediate consequences of this is artistic homogenisation. For a while, many big video games and films had very similar aesthetics, points out Carmen. "Year after year, waves of students came out of the top art schools with extremely similar styles and design tastes," she says.

At an artist level, the consequences can be more harmful. Restricting your creative range can lead to

dissatisfaction and depression – and limiting your views can be even more destructive. "I've seen too many artists



clinging to harmful views on sexism and diversity," says art director **Paul Canavan**, "ignoring valid criticism from the affected parties and making the industry less appealing for many people."

“There’s a difference between living in a bubble and being confident of your point of view, though”

"On a strictly artistic level, there are also a number of artists, mostly students or those relatively new to the industry, who decry the use of photos, 3D or any other 'non-traditional' techniques in illustration or concept art work, and take it upon themselves to spread this weird message around social media forums. I think subscribing to that elitist mentality is

pretty harmful, and it's a place that I will try to engage in discussion."

BREAKING THE BUBBLE

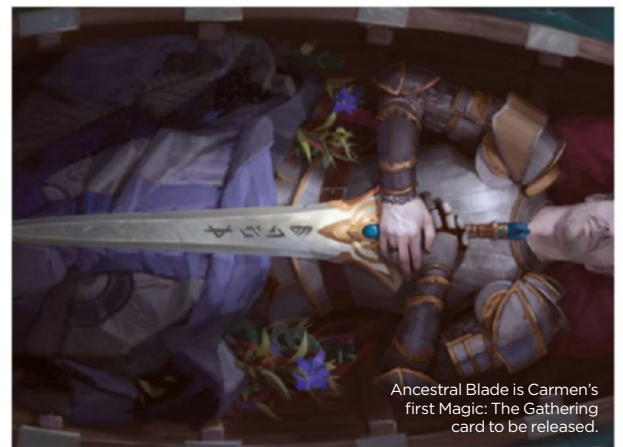
So why are filter bubbles so tough to pop? The reasons are three-fold: first, you might not realise you've fallen into a bubble. Second, social media is built upon the idea of 'following' people whose work or perspective you like.

And third, when you're doing a lot online, algorithmic filtering serves to reinforce your preferences on the basis of past choices of online content. The more personalised our online experiences become, the more segregated and siloed our views.

"The result is an automated population of news feeds, search results and so on, with content



Monarch, by Carmen. "Experiment" is her advice for steering clear of art bubbles.



Ancestral Blade is Carmen's first Magic: The Gathering card to be released.

© Wizards of the Coast



Paul designed this game artwork, *Moving Hazard*, to encourage "mini narratives": smaller areas that work as standalone images.

© Disruptor Games



© Disruptor Beam

automatically selected if deemed as in keeping with those previously



recorded choices," explains media and communications expert **Dr Dan Mercea**, who's a senior lecturer in

Sociology at City University London.

However, as Dan points out, it's not all bad: the more diverse those choices, the greater the variety of filtered content. "The algorithm will adjust itself as it tracks our surfing histories, so the filtering becomes more intricate as we make more information available about our preferences. So if we expose ourselves to diversity, the algorithm will reflect this choice – at least temporarily."

And it's the same in real life. Beating a bubble can be as simple as watching



a video or reading a blog from someone with a different opinion, says illustrator **Jason Rainville**:

"There's a difference between living in a bubble and being confident of your point of view, though. And you don't want to be so open-minded that your brain falls out."

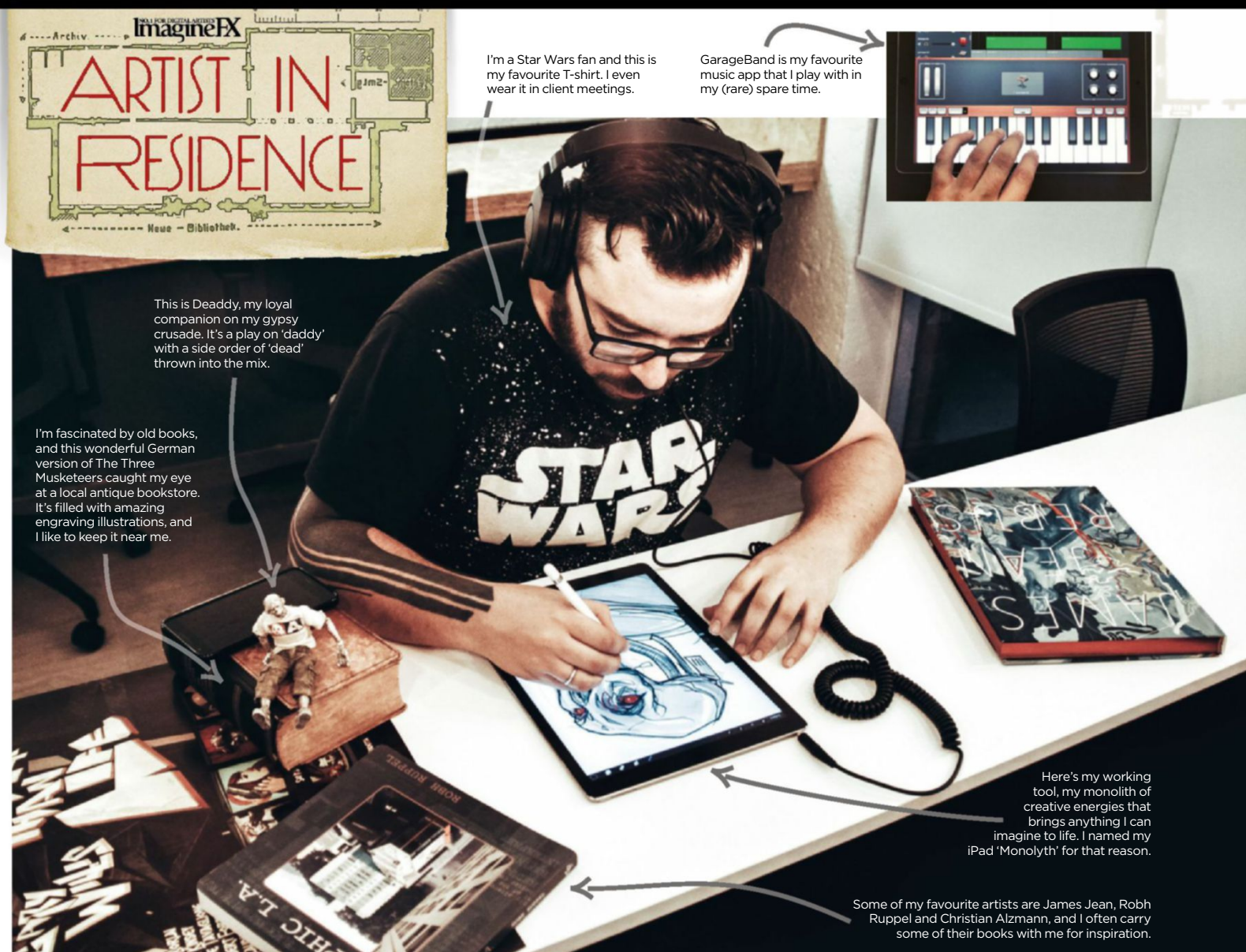
DO SOMETHING DIFFERENT

Carmen agrees that doing something outside your comfort zone is a good way to pop a creative bubble. "Dig out your art history book and start going through it, or enroll in an art history class somewhere. Find a place to learn where you will be exposed to a wide variety of artistic movements and styles, not just the ones you pick to research on your own."

This Star Trek character collage was created by Jason for Disruptor Beam's mobile game *Star Trek: Timelines*.

"Be open to different opinions and encourage dialogue," adds Paul. "There are a ton of controversial, oft-debated topics around the art community. Getting involved, sharing your opinion and trying to take something away from every encounter is super healthy."

And that's the point: there's a difference between being part of a community and stuck in a bubble. Debate, discussion and the exchange of ideas can propel your practice to new levels. "There's something to be said for surrounding yourself with like-minded people who can push the sort of content you enjoy into your eyeballs every day and a sense of community into your life," reasons Paul. "In an industry where many of us work remotely, that can really help."



I'm a Star Wars fan and this is my favourite T-shirt. I even wear it in client meetings.

GarageBand is my favourite music app that I play with in my (rare) spare time.

This is Deaddy, my loyal companion on my gypsy crusade. It's a play on 'daddy' with a side order of 'dead' thrown into the mix.

I'm fascinated by old books, and this wonderful German version of The Three Musketeers caught my eye at a local antique bookstore. It's filled with amazing engraving illustrations, and I like to keep it near me.

Here's my working tool, my monolith of creative energies that brings anything I can imagine to life. I named my iPad 'Monolyth' for that reason.

Some of my favourite artists are James Jean, Robb Ruppel and Christian Alzmann, and I often carry some of their books with me for inspiration.

Rafael Sarmiento

Digital nomad The Brazilian artist reveals how the mobile way of life was a game changer for his creativity and productivity levels



Being able to carry your whole setup in your backpack is the dream of many artists, especially for those

who like or need to work on the go.

Of course, the idea isn't new, but Improvements in computing technology have meant artists can carry enough power in their laptops and tablets to enable them to detach from their desktops, which was almost unthinkable 10 to 15 years ago. The digital creative landscape is now an incredibly exciting place with the new



This is a recent piece, that I first sketched in Photoshop a while ago, and ended up finishing in Procreate. I'm not saying that I'm a replicant, but well... it's up to you!

generation of computer tablets, such as the Microsoft Surface and the iPad Pro, which provide plenty of graphical power to fulfil the needs of artists.

With the advancement of hardware, a raft of new art software has been released to match this momentum. Savage Interactive's Procreate app is causing a real revolution in the digital art community, which previously was dominated by the likes of Adobe and Corel. With its outrageous processing speeds, intuitive UI and incredibly innovative brush mechanisms, Procreate enables me to do everything

I used to create on a desktop machine, and more besides!

My main tools are an 12.9 iPad Pro (first generation), the Apple Pencil and my trusted studio-grade headphones. From time to time I carry some of my art books, especially when I need them as "mood boards" while working at certain jobs, but mostly my references are now on the tablet (along with that low-key invention called the internet).

I use Procreate for all my illustration and concept design works, with occasional colour adjustments using apps such as Affinity Photo or the Adobe suite for iOS.

Streamlining my creative setup has resulted in other advantages. One of the biggest is that I no longer live in a messy studio, which isn't as romantic and artistic as some people might think! Restricting my knack of staying disorganised to a few items in a bag

Artist news, software & events



I created this as an exercise to get the hang with Procreate, right after I bought the iPad Pro. It's Lisbeth Salander from the Millennium book series.

I created this piece as a concept art for an upcoming racing/fighting game called Monowheels VR, by the Brazilian VR games company IMGATION Studios.



KIT LIST

- A. Moko Case
- B. Apple Pencil
- C. iPad Pro 12.9
- D. Nexus 5X
- E. Pineng powerbank
- F. Moleskine
- G. Pentel mechanical pencil
- H. iPad charger
- I. USB-C charging cable
- J. Anker charging cable
- K. Sennheiser 280H headphones
- L. 3A toy figure

makes things a lot easier. And I stay more focused without the visual distraction of messy surroundings. Also, being able to work on public spaces is a great way to produce observational drawings.

Since I started using this mobile setup, I don't usually hook up at a particular location anymore, which makes my daily routine almost always a nice surprise. I usually go to places with good wi-fi and comfy environments, such as cafés and co-working offices, and then I just unpack my stuff at a table and start getting

things done. All that I need for work fits on the iPad now, including not only art apps but also music apps (my hobby and passion) and comics and art books, which I rely for inspiration and research. Now I can get work done literally anywhere! I use cloud services to back up all the work and keep them safe and available for clients at any time.

Rafael is an illustrator from Brazil, who's also a coffee aficionado and cat worshiper. His clients include Wizards of the Coast, Volta and Riot Games. You can see more of his art at www.rafsarmento.artstation.com.



Photography: Marcos Meira

It's such a pleasure to be able to relax and kick back in cafés, and get lots of creative stuff done thanks to my portable art setup.

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PRINT AND DIGITAL BACK ISSUES



Issue 153

November 2017

Discover how to paint distinctive characters. Case in point: Ramón Nuñez's arch-looking figure on the cover. Plus, sketch artists share their secrets, Greg Ruth on why he loves/hates the ballpoint pen, and clay sculpting advice.



Issue 152

October 2017

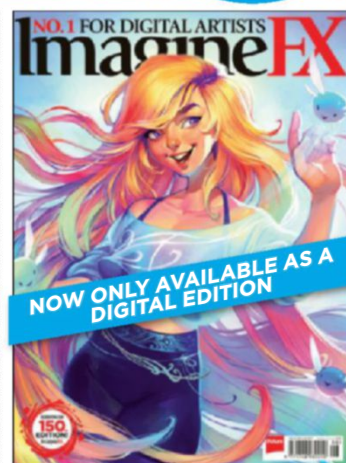
Break into the concept art industry with the help of our pro artists who work in films and video games. We talk to Paul Scott Canavan, visit vis dev powerhouse Volta, and see how artists are preventing art theft.



Issue 151

September 2017

Raise your illustration game with the help of cover artist Tran Nguyen. Emily Hare passes on her creature design tips, Anna Hollinrake's workshop tackles colour and storytelling, and we talk methods of beating stress.



Issue 150

August 2017

Our special 150th issue features a double-sided poster, portfolio advice from our friends at ArtStation, workshops from Lois van Baarle, Dave Seeley, John Howe and Donato, an interview with Kim Jung Gi and lots more!

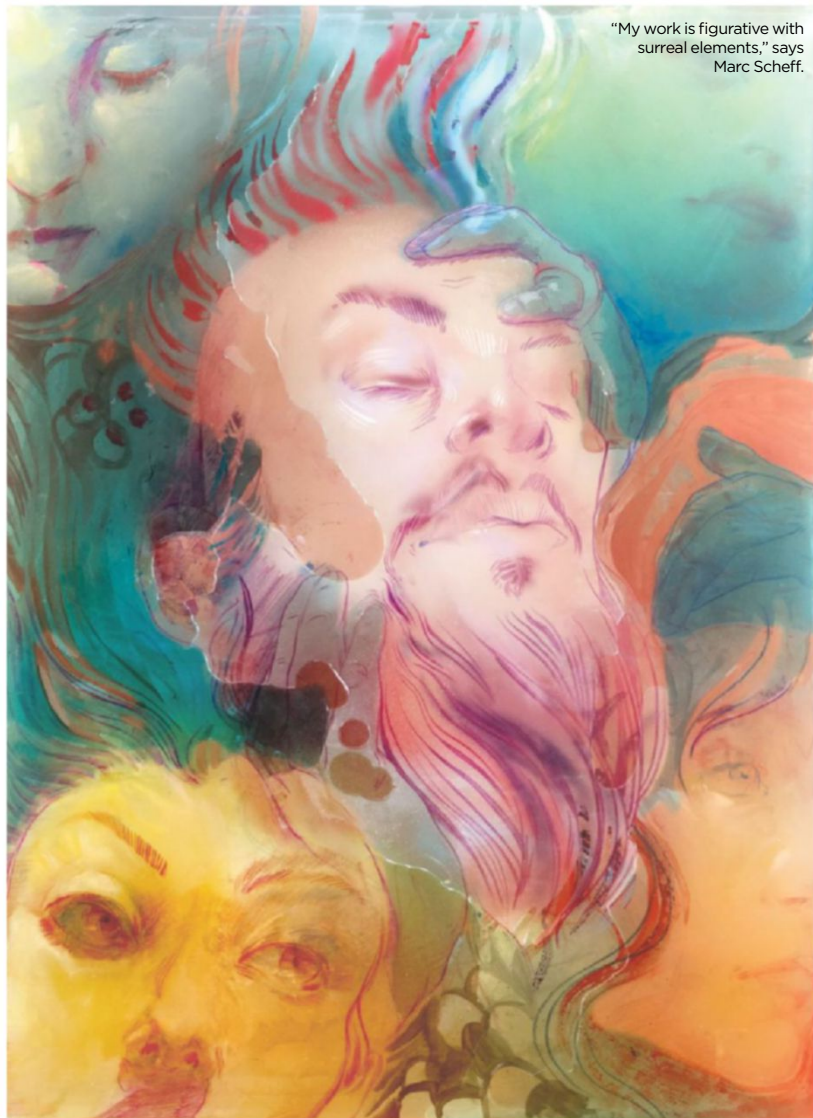
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"My work is figurative with surreal elements," says Marc Scheff.



Vanessa describes her work as "excerpts from my own personal journey, using the figure as an integral part of the story."



Marc: "My hopes and fears as a 40-year-old man with two kids all come out in the canvas."



Figurative art forges ahead

Body issues Depicting the human form is a staple artistic endeavour, but is the representational approach still relevant? A new exhibition seeks to find out...

New York is the location of **ARC Select 2017: Contemporary Figures**, an exhibition that brings together specially created work by some of the most exciting artists working in figurative art today.

ARC Select 2017 is a collaboration between the Art Renewal Center, which promotes realism in the arts, and Rehs Contemporary Galleries. This year's invited artists include Vanessa Lemen, Marc Scheff, Emanuele Dascanio, Daniel Gerhartz, Sergio Lopez and Tim Rees.

"Our stylistic approaches to painting or drawing the figure might



The potential for beauty in people is always there; that's what I'm trying to find," says Marc.



be varied, but the overall theme will have the human form as the subject," says **Vanessa**.

"I really look forward to seeing the show in its entirety, to get a feel for the thread that weaves us all together."

For some of her pieces, she's used oil on masonite, while a couple are mixed media: oil and acrylic on bookpages or collage mounted on masonite. "All began with abstract marks on the surface, before I painted into the marks to pull the image out," she explains.



Meanwhile, **Marc** has been creating work for the show using resin and gold leaf, as well as pencil, acrylic and pastels.

"There's no overall theme - they're just a reflection of my own mental state about being a parent, being in this political moment in time, and all the weird psychological stuff artists deal with when they find new success," he explains.

The exhibition runs from 28 October to 17 November at Rehs Contemporary Galleries in New York (www.rehs.com/contemporary.html).



EXPLORE THE COMPOSITION



DESIGN A VISUAL LANGUAGE



SHAPE & POSE THE CHARACTERS



BUILD & RENDER THE SCENE





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Letters

YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS



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What about the readers?

This is the first time I've written to a magazine, and I've been a reader of ImagineFX since issue one jumped out at me from the shelves at a newsagent.

The reason I'm writing is because I support the ideas raised in Ronald Gerard's letter from issue 152. I'd love to see more reader content showcased in the magazine with a dedicated page for this – along with perhaps their sketch work too, and even their home studio setup.

My last point would be about the ImagineFX special issues. It would be nice to know about what's coming up in advance. The comic art special issue has appeared on the shelves in my newsagent, but it would have been good to know it was in the pipeline. I love the sketchbook specials, too. It's been 16 months since volume three appeared, so can we expect volume four any time soon?

Keep up the great work!

Phil Armstrong, via email

Claire replies All good points, Phil! We'll endeavour to let you know of any special editions coming up. Sketchbook volume four hit the shelves in the UK at the start of September, so should be winging its way around the world as I type. As for reader content, all the FXPosés are submitted by readers! Please turn to page 19 to see how you can submit your digital work and page 105 for traditional art. We also welcome you to submit your sketches for Sketchbook. See page 63 for details.



Pip's haul of ImagineFX over the years, after carefully checking them out on the shop shelves.



DID YOU MISS THE PREVIOUS PACKED ISSUE?

Don't worry – you can still get hold of it. Visit <http://ifxm.ag/153-ifx> for details.



Get your finished art seen by fellow readers in our FXPosé section. And if you've got sketches, send them in, too!

Finally, if any reader has a brilliant studio space that they'd like to share for Artist in Residence, please email some photos to the address (left)!

Lose the bag!

I bought my first copy of ImagineFX in May 2014. It's been a great resource and has gotten me drawing again digitally and traditionally. Since buying that copy I've gone each month to the newsagent and had a flick through the latest issue, and if I liked the topics covered I'd buy it. So far I own 22 copies of ImagineFX, plus the brilliant Anatomy Essentials special issue and the ImagineFX book SCI-FI.

But sadly I went into my newsagents only to find ImagineFX is now sealed in plastic and so only the front cover can be seen. I can no longer spend \$20+ Aussie dollars per issue on a magazine based purely on the cover, I need to look inside first. This may be out of your control, but I had to let you know as a lover of the magazine.

Pip, via email

Claire replies Pip, I think that you might be talking about issue 150, which came in a bag because it contained two free gifts. These would have fallen out if they weren't bagged. We tried to put as much information as we could on the front and back of the bag so that readers can see what's inside. Subsequent issues shouldn't be in a bag, so you're able to make a decision on whether you want to buy it right at the newsstand.



Our special 150th anniversary issue came in a bag because it contained gifts a-plenty.



New works that have grabbed our attention



Clement Ruxton
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SimonWrightArt
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Artist Q&A

THIS MONTH, OUR FRIENDS AT SUN & MOON STUDIOS ANSWER YOUR ANIMATION QUESTIONS!



The NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS **ImagineFX** panel

Sun & Moon Studios

Meet the team behind the answers!
www.sunandmoonstudios.co.uk

Dylan Shipley



Co-founder and creative director Dylan is also a designer and animator who's worked on hundreds of shorts as well as BBC commissions.

Louis Jones



As Sun & Moon's co-founder and creative director, Louis has produced many commissions. He believes in great characters and engaging stories.

Owen Simons



As a highly experienced 3D generalist, Owen is vastly knowledgeable in modelling, texturing, rigging and animating.

Dan Keeble



Dan is the studio's 2D lead Animator and director. An animation powerhouse, Dan is vastly experienced in the whole production process.

Sam Shaw



Sam is responsible for much of the design output of Sun & Moon. He's played key roles in co-directing and design leading across a variety of projects.

Question

What's the best way to get an audience to quickly understand your character design's personality?

Lewis Vincent, England

Answer

Sam replies



Many things have to be considered when creating an instantly relatable character. Aspects such as shape, pose and exaggeration have all played key roles in creating beloved characters throughout the years.

Every character is built out of a number of shapes, and the type of shapes you choose will help define who your character is. Circles are often attributed to things like innocence, vulnerability and cuteness, while squares are a great way to build up a strong, stubborn character. Pose helps emphasise your choice. If you

want the character to seem confident and open, have them leaning back with their chest puffed out.

Finally, exaggerating some of your characters defining features will help hammer their personality home and make them seem larger than life. It helps your audience to identify the character's main qualities and traits. Choosing one or two traits to emphasise over others is a great way to create variation and more memorable characters.

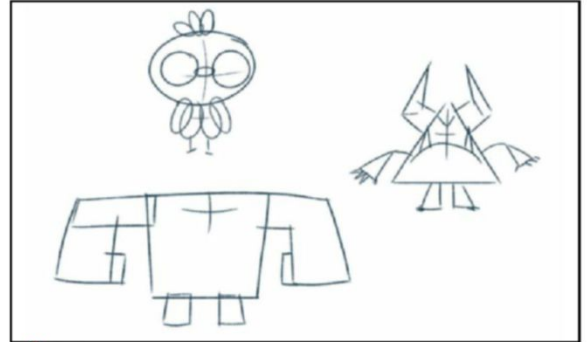
If you apply these factors, you'll have a character design people will feel like they've known for years.

Colours can also affect the audience's perception of a character. Bear in mind that the vibrance and saturation of your colour palette will have a huge effect on the overall mood of your work.

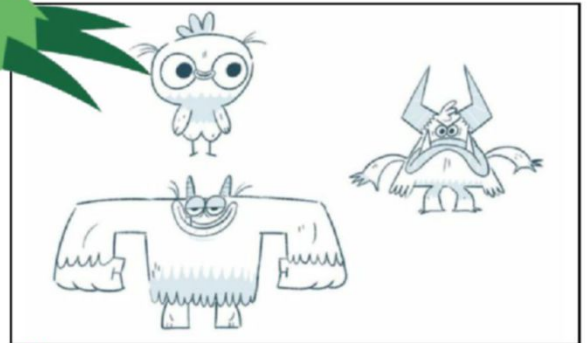


Even if only slightly, try to avoid making your characters completely symmetrical. A little bit of hair variation or a crooked tooth can add heaps of interest to a design and make it stand out from the rest.

Step-by-step: Use basic shapes to inform viewers of a character's disposition



1 Using one shape to define your character is a great way to get started. Adding more of the same shape helps sell your character's personality: circles for cute characters, squares for strong and triangles for the scary aggressive types. It's good at to nail down some strong poses for each figure, too.



2 Now to flesh them out. Audiences will look to the facial features of your designs for a more conscious effort to get to know your characters, so giving them the right expression is pretty important. Adding some curved lines in with the straights on the body also creates some nice variation.



3 It's time to push your characters' features to the limit! By enlarging some of your designs' main shapes and pushing expressions to their extremes, we instantly know what each character is thinking. The shapes and pose complement the expression and we now have some memorable relatable characters.



Question

What are the best mouth shapes to use when doing lip-sync?

Kerry Eason, US

Answer

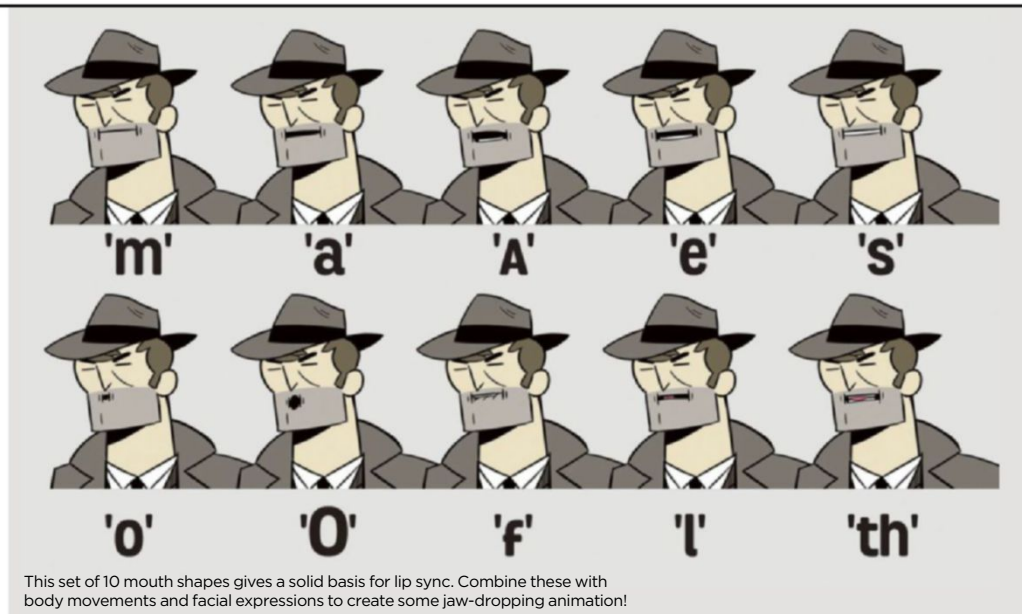
Dylan replies



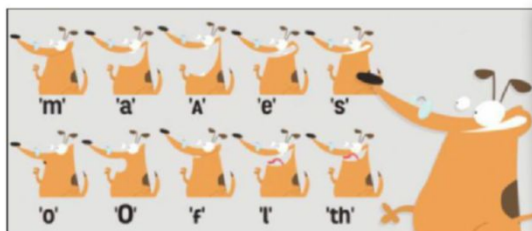
You may not be aware of this, but when we speak we don't form all the individual shapes in a word with our mouth. It's far too much effort! Instead, our mouths take the shortest route possible. The main mouth shapes are: a closed mouth M (which is also used for P and B); a wide mouth showing teeth for S (also used for C, D and T); an open O mouth; a wide and open A; and an E mouth, which is like A but wider still.

From there you have less-common secondary shapes: F, which has the lower lip tucked behind the upper teeth; and L is a wide mouth showing the tongue coming up behind the upper teeth. You'll also need an extreme version of O and A for when these are said more strongly, and finally a TH shape showing the tongue between the teeth.

To animate these words, it's best to find the main beats, adding in the most prominent key sounds and then playing the animation back to see how it flows and where to refine it with secondary shapes.



This set of 10 mouth shapes gives a solid basis for lip sync. Combine these with body movements and facial expressions to create some jaw-dropping animation!



Lip sync can be a great opportunity for humour. Meet Maths Mutt, who has a pretty extreme contrast in his various mouth shapes, bringing this dog's absurd nature front and centre in his characterisation.

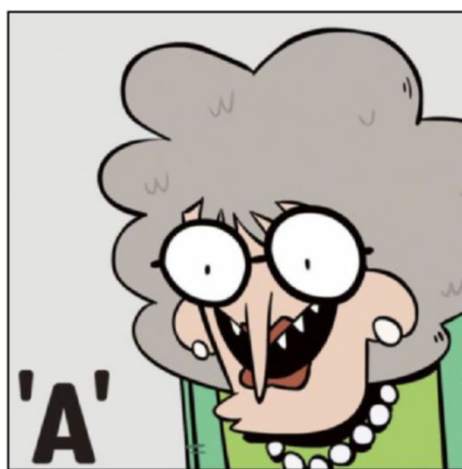
Artist's secret Strike the right pose

Animate the body movements first. A lot of the expression of dialogue is done with body language, and so if the way the body moves sells the lines well then lip sync will simply be the icing on the cake.

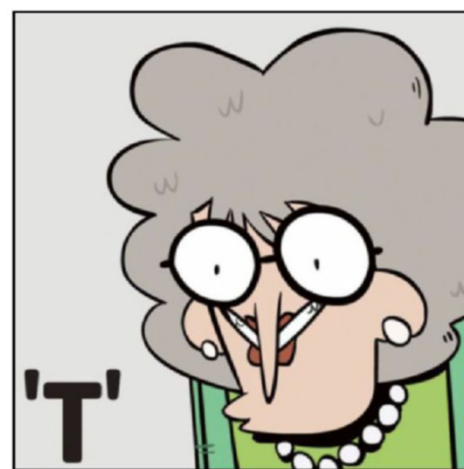
Step-by-step: Animate a mouth to say "What?"



1 Here's an example to animate the delightful Mrs Green saying "What?" after receiving some startling news from another character who's out of shot. Start with the O mouth shape.



2 Add the A shape. She's speaking quite loudly so her mouth is wide open. The mouth size needs to match the intensity of the line being said, and the eyes and body movements should also mirror her mood.



3 Finally the T shape. These three shapes timed out to the voice track should look pretty good. Now I add smooth in-between animation to them, to make Mrs Green sell this line even better.



Hair made with modelled geometry is ideal for a stylised cartoony look. Perfect for this Tyrion Lannister homage.

Question

How do I build up cartoony-looking hair for my 3D character?

Marcel Baum, Germany

Answer

Owen replies



While realistic, dynamic hair can look great on a 3D character, when trying to achieve a stylised cartoony look, hair modelled with geometry is still my preferred choice. Geometry hair can take a while to build, but it's much quicker to render, requires no expensive plug-ins and with the use of a few simple modifiers you can achieve some good-looking dynamics.

By building layers of Guide geometry you can quickly block out the overall shape of your hair before

adding in any detail. You can then use these guide layers to build your final hair shapes.

The graphite modelling tools in 3ds Max are ideal for this job, with the Step-build and Conform tools enabling you to easily create geometry on the surface of another object.

3ds Max's Modifier stack comes in really handy here too: using Shell and Push modifiers fleshes out the hair in a non-destructive way and means you can keep control of the shape of the hair at the base level.

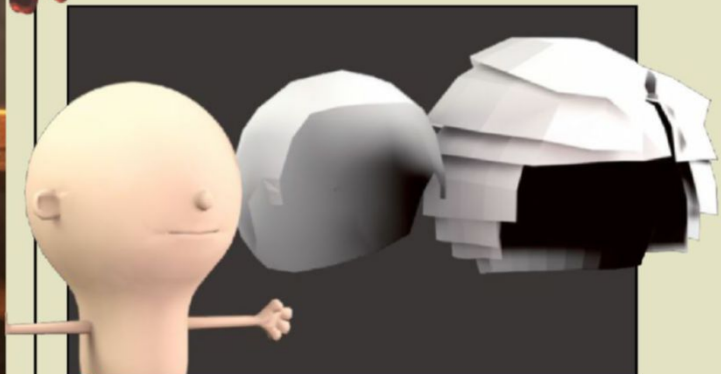
Artist's secret Easy dynamics

A Soft selection on the hair ends and a Flex modifier does the job if you want to demonstrate some simple dynamics. It's possible to animate the strength of the Flex in 3ds Max if the movement is too extreme in places. Have fun experimenting.



3ds Max's Modifier stack offers great control and flexibility, while the graphite modelling tools speed up the modelling process significantly.

Step-by-step: Use Guide geometry and Modifiers for maximum control



1 Cut out the hairline on a copy of your character's head to make your hair base. This will provide the starting point for your hair. Next make Guide geometry layers starting at the back of the head and working up to the hair parting and fringe.



2 The Guide layers determine the overall shape and direction of the hair. Using Step build or Snap to Surface creates hair shapes on each of the guide layers, with sections splitting apart and the hair ending in a nice mix of different points and curls.



3 Add a Shell modifier to give the hair some thickness and use Soft selection and Push modifier to make the hair thicker at the base. Use a final edit Poly modifier to give the ends a random appearance. Use Turbosmooth to finish the look.



Here's a variety of poses from various projects. Each have bold, fluid lines of action and easily identifiable silhouettes that are strong, dynamic and defined even without any of the interior details.



A weak line of action leads to a passive, lifeless silhouette that isn't particularly easy to read. Turn your line of action up to 11!

Question

How can I improve my silhouettes and poses?

Stina Gunnarsson, Australia

Answer

Louis replies



The key to a strong pose is a clear silhouette that gives the viewer all the information they need to work out what's happening. Make sure that your pose is as legible and dynamic as possible by following a few simple rules.

When starting a new pose, I ask myself, "How would a mime artist act this out?" Great poses are just like mime – very exaggerated and purposeful – as both need to speak volumes without using any words.

Beginning with a simple line will establish the energy and movement, enabling the audience to easily read and understand the situation. And it's not just about the pose itself, it's also about the information that isn't there

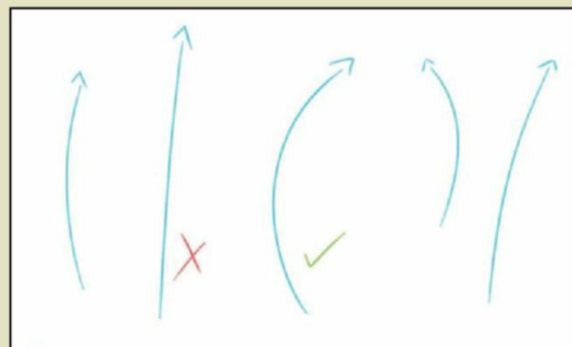
or 'negative space'. The space around the character is just as important and complements the action, adding definition and helping to sell the movement. Your keys should contrast with one another and create a dynamic flow of action that's clear to see and a pleasure to watch.

Artist's secret

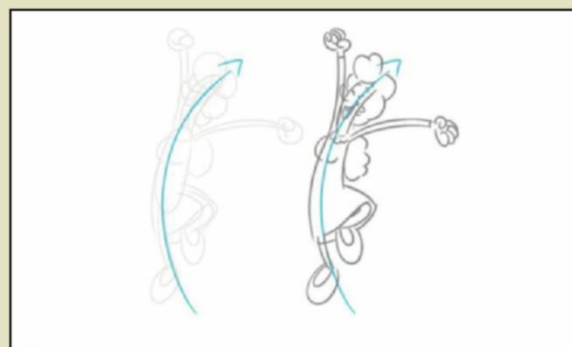
Beware evil limb twins!

Try to avoid 'twinning' limbs (having both arms or legs in the same position) as this doesn't help with the dynamics of your pose. Ask a friend to take a photo or use a mirror to act it out!

Step-by-step: Employ a dynamic line when designing your character



1 Draw an imaginary line running through your character. This acts as the leading force in their action and directs the viewers attention. If the line of action isn't doing the job then the pose won't be as strong. Avoid using straight lines – instead, use arcs that are naturally expressive and bold.



2 Draw your character in their pose following the line and consider where you're placing the limbs and how well they'll read. You don't need to be able to see everything in full view, but avoid hiding limbs completely: once in silhouette these can become hard to read.



3 Here's where you define, refine and strengthen your pose. Ensure that all of the various elements of your character's anatomy are working together. Turn your pose into a literal silhouette and check that it still reads. If something isn't quite working tweak it, and then tweak it some more!

Question

Got any advice for turning a script into a storyboard?

Sheryl White, Canada

The board must describe the artist's ideas for movement in still images. Arrows can help do this and the one in the fourth panel helps to describe the character's jump out of screen.

Answer

Dylan replies



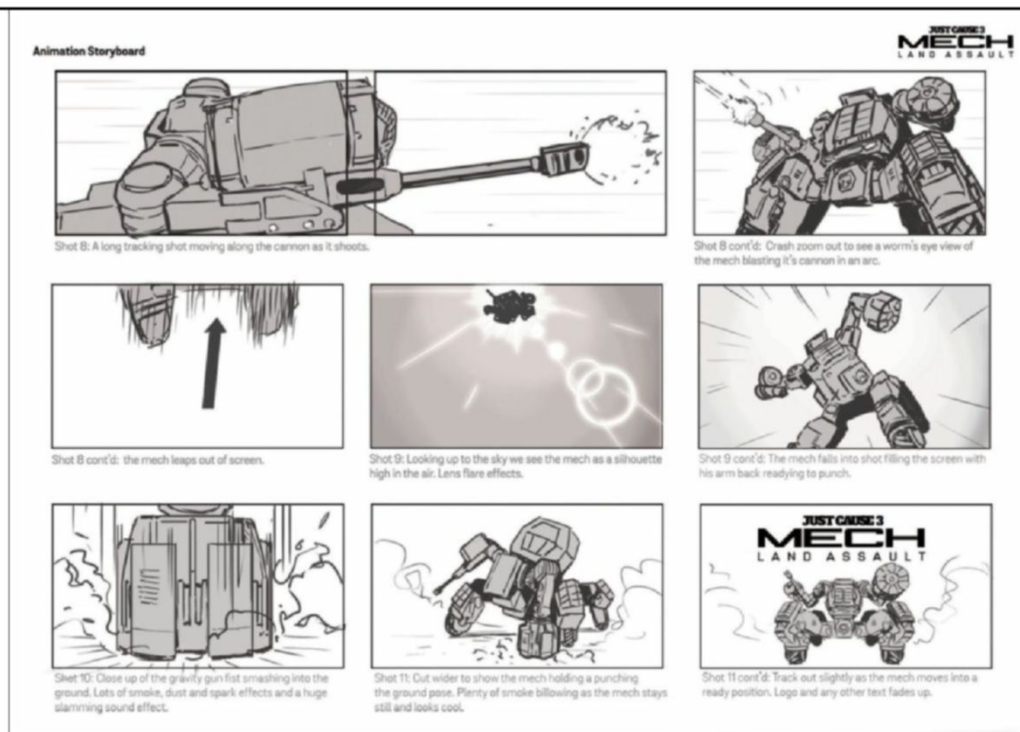
A script may contain just dialogue, some notes on the actions or both. Either way, the script gives you all the clues you need to put together a clear and interesting storyboard.

Read the script and try to imagine what kind of shots would go well with what you're reading. At a basic level, you have three staple shots – close-up, mid-shot and long-shot – and you can move through these three views throughout scenes.

A mid-shot is your classic view and is what we see usually when talking to someone in real life, so this is often a good starting point. Sometimes you want to start with a long-shot if you want to establish your characters' location or show a lot of different things on-screen. Close-ups can be used to emphasise key dialogue, facial expressions or objects.

Beyond these fundamental views, you have a whole lot more to play with to add variety and emphasis: over-the-shoulder, up-shot, down-shot, multiple characters, tilt, POV, split-screen, silhouettes extreme close-up and transitions, to name a few.

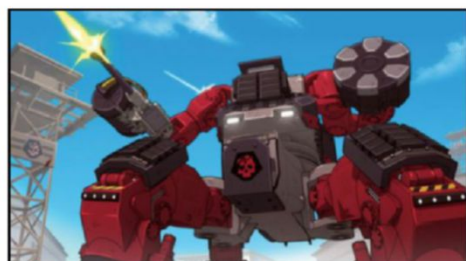
You can paint over your board and make a colour key. Animation works well when you work to a clear pipeline, and this colour key and an animatic will make things easier down the line.



Artist's secret Thumbnail sketches

Print out your script and draw small thumbnail shot sketches next to each line of dialogue. This enables you to quickly try out different ideas and, once drawn, that's everything worked out! This means you're now free to concentrate on the finer details in your main storyboard.

Step-by-step: Vary your audience's points of view



1 This panel is an example of an up-shot, most likely taken from the point of view of a human soldier or pilot. The shot quickly emphasises the size and powerful nature of the armoured mech and is also a good chance to establish some of the location around it.



2 Choose shots that serve a dual-purpose. This view not only gets the story point across of the mech's driver starting its engines, but also shows off a key piece of his equipment on his arm. Every shot must do two things: convey the story point and have visual appeal.



3 This mid-shot gives us a good view of our main character – the mech, not any puny humans – and the empty space on the right gives the viewer a sense of anticipation, because it's about to be filled by his full-screen electrically charged punching fist!



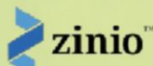
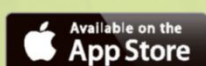
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Question

Help me animate bubbles when an object falls into water

William Murray, Scotland

Answer

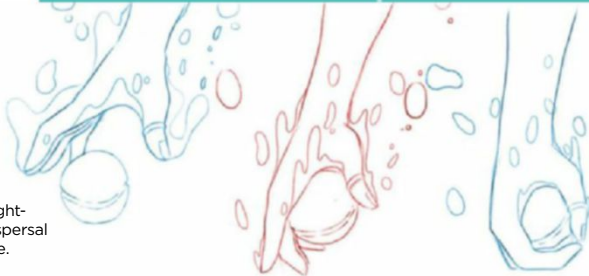
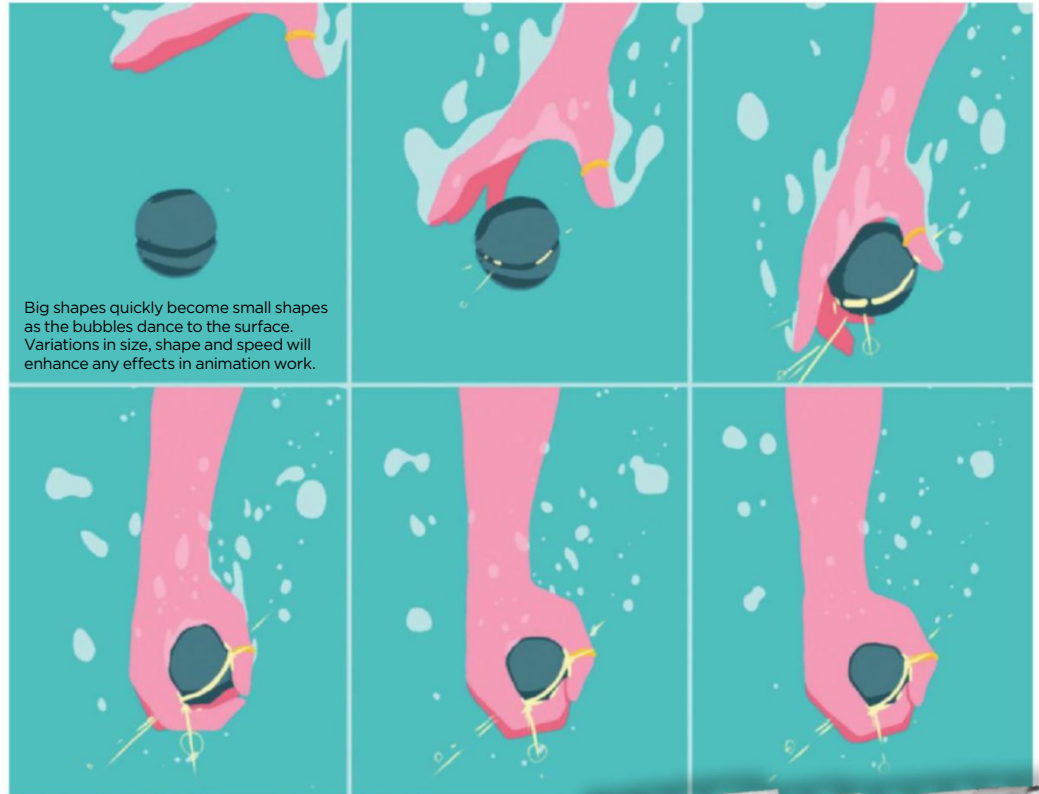
Dan replies



As an object falls into the water it drags a chunk of air down with it. This air will be grouped underneath the object. At this stage you can have a lot of fun designing an interesting-looking bubble without worrying too much about physics. It's as soon as you start moving these bubbles that your own understanding of the physical world comes into play. This may seem complicated, but my animation tutor once told me that animation is lots of simple things happening at once, and underwater bubbles are no exception.

The first thing to note is that bubbles will accelerate towards the surface, taking a curving path to get there. The shapes of the bubbles start off more stretched and extreme. They then become more circular and uniform as the animation goes on. You can animate some bubbles stretching apart and then break them into a few smaller ones. With others, randomly split them into smaller bubbles as they travel upwards. It's then a case of animating the smaller bubbles until they're dispersed.

Rough out the major shapes, then employ the straight-ahead animation approach to depict the smaller dispersal bubbles. This will maintain their spontaneous nature.



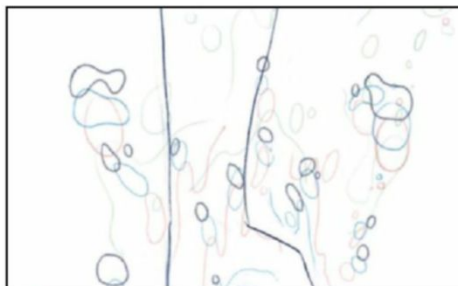
Artist's secret Trust your instincts

Good effects animation thrives on a healthy dose of randomness. Have a bubble do something unexpected like quickly change direction or split before it's stretched to breaking point. This simulates the complex reality we live in!

Step-by-step: Show rising bubbles in water



1 On the first keyframe of the object being submerged, block out the shape of the air bubble. Design a flowing abstract shape that stretches towards the surface. Strong variation is key for a realistically random design. Then add smaller bubbles coming off this main shape.



2 Break off the large areas of the major shape into large bubbles and have smaller areas disperse into groups of little bubbles. The object will continue to drag some of the air down as it falls so be sure to keep some smaller areas still attached to it.



3 The next step is to animate all of the small bubbles off the screen. No need to keyframe and in-between this stage: animate these bubbles straight-ahead. The bubbles follow an S-curving pattern with them, gradually becoming smaller until they disappear.

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Artist Portfolio **PASCAL CAMPION**

Gary Evans maps out the successes – and setbacks – in the French illustrator's globe-trotting career

After failing to get into his first-choice art school, Pascal Campion took a job as a dishwasher in Strasbourg. It was Christmas, dishes piled up all around him, and he'd recently lost half a tooth after being jumped by muggers outside the restaurant. The Frenchman remembers thinking: "Man, I'm so going to enjoy being an artist."

Pascal knows how to roll with the punches. He got into the art school

the following year. In fact, many of the animator's greatest achievements have followed major setbacks. The first of these came when he was very young. He still thinks about the incident to this day.

Pascal was born in River Edge, New Jersey. When he was three years old, his parents separated and he moved from America to France. His mother is French. He describes his childhood in Provence as "pretty idyllic" and remembers being surrounded by the "sunny, beautiful, vibrant colours" that now characterise his work.

His family owned all the Tintin and Asterix stories. Older brother Sean was into Marvel comics and would let Pascal read them, but only after getting him to copy the covers. Pascal says Sean is the main reason he's an artist.

Yet not everyone was so supportive. When he was 10, Pascal told an art ➔



CHILLS

"I was playing around with buildings in this one – how to suggest buildings without showing buildings. Buildings feature a lot in my work."



WHEN THE SNOW FALLS

"I love doing facades; I love people watching. I do a lot of these types of images and I'm always trying to figure out what other people's lives are like."

Artist **PROFILE**

Pascal Campion

LOCATION: US

FAVOURITE ARTISTS: Andrew Wyeth, Bill Watterson, Leo Espinosa, Tatsuro Kiuchi, Carl Larsson, Frederic Remington, Al Parker, Jon Romita Jr

SOFTWARE USED: Photoshop, Flash

WEB: www.pascalcampion.com

**IT WAS 1980 SOMETHING,
THE SUMMER WHEN**

"I was feeling low because of work, so I did this piece that reminded me of the summers I spent in Alaska."

“All I had to do was press Enter and the computer would play back all the frames I had just drawn”

WATER GAMES

"At the beginning of my Sketch of the Day series, there was a period when I was drawing animals doing funny things. I still like doing some for my kids now and again."



A LITTLE CLEANING, A LITTLE DANCING, A LOT OF LOVE

"I've done 4,000 Sketch of the Days now!"

➔ teacher he wanted to be an artist when he grew up. He showed him work. "In a very serious tone," the Frenchman says, "the teacher said I should probably not consider this, because I just didn't have it. Up until that point, I really liked that teacher. That crushed me."

UNUSUAL METHODS

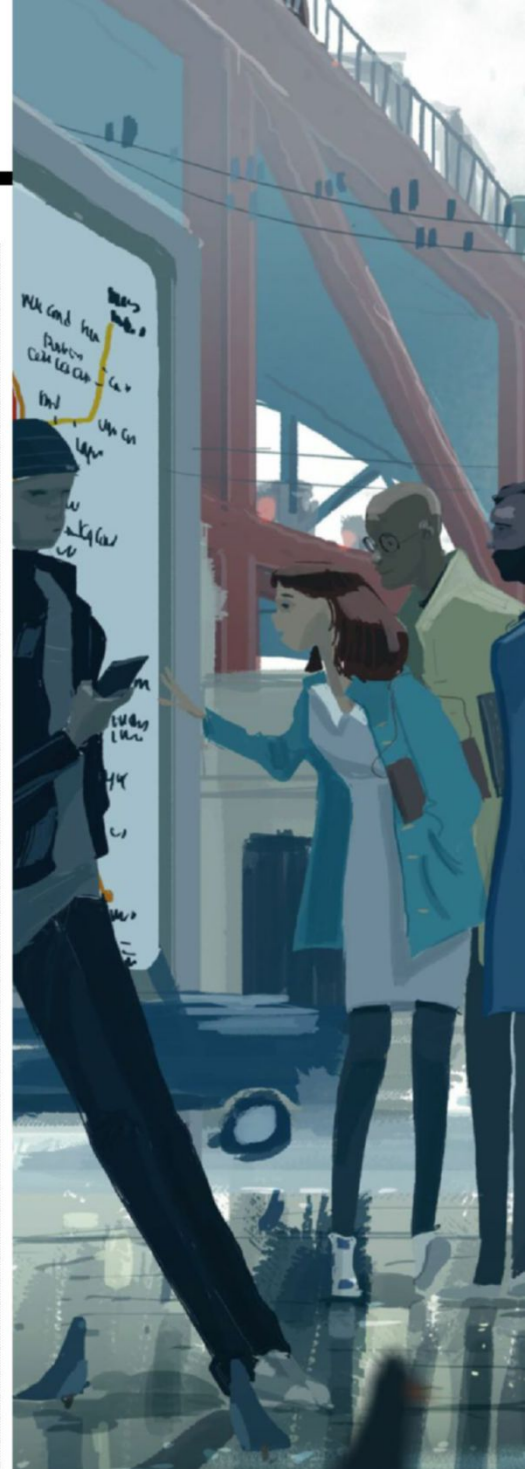
Pascal studied at the Arts Décoratifs de Strasbourg. To get in, he sent a portfolio, then travelled to the school for a week of tests. He picked narrative illustration as his major. But before that, the teachers – unusual in their methods – worked out what students liked to do best and made sure they did the exact opposite: everything from engraving to metalwork. In his

THE VIEW

"This is a weird one for me. When I did it, I didn't like it at all and showed it to barely anyone. But now it's one of my most popular images. Funny how that works."



“The teacher said I should probably consider not being an artist, because I just didn't have it. That crushed me”



final year, Pascal created three projects. Two of them had to be paid jobs, otherwise he couldn't graduate.

"They didn't tell us how to do things at all," Pascal says. "We had to come up with that on our own, which was very frustrating at first. That said, the big thing we did focus on was on how to tell stories, how to control what you're saying with your images, and how to make sure the audience understands what you want them to understand."

Before graduating, in 2000 Pascal spent a year as an exchange student at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. He also worked at Tom Snyder Productions. It was his first job as an animator.

Pascal flew to Kansas City to live with his brother. He wanted to work in

Interview Pascal Campion

MEET ME AT FIVE?

"This image was originally created for a workshop for ImagineFX! But afterwards I did this version, which is slightly different."



the comics industry. But his career plans changed after Sean built him his first computer. Pascal began playing around with software called Macromedia Flash.

"All I had to do was press Enter and the computer would play back all the frames I had just drawn," Pascal says. "I fell in love with it because I could make animations instantly."

LIFE ON THE UP – AND DOWN

He posted these animations online and job offers soon followed. He worked at studios in San Francisco (where he worked on a web show), in Portland (where he became a storyboard artist), in Honolulu (where he met his future wife), and in Portland again (where he became a ➔

THE GOOD KIND OF HEAVY

"Every day in the afternoon we'd go with the kids to the park next to our house. They were still small enough that I could balance them all on the see-saw. I loved those days."



Artist Portfolio

FLUID

"This is a summer image. I was just happy that day. I remember doing it and just singing to myself the whole time."



“I start with a colour and work with it. Sometimes I draw a character or an environment and see what happens”



SLOWING DOWN

"This one is new. I was feeling a little burnt out from a bunch of stuff, so I did it to remind myself to slow down. It worked."

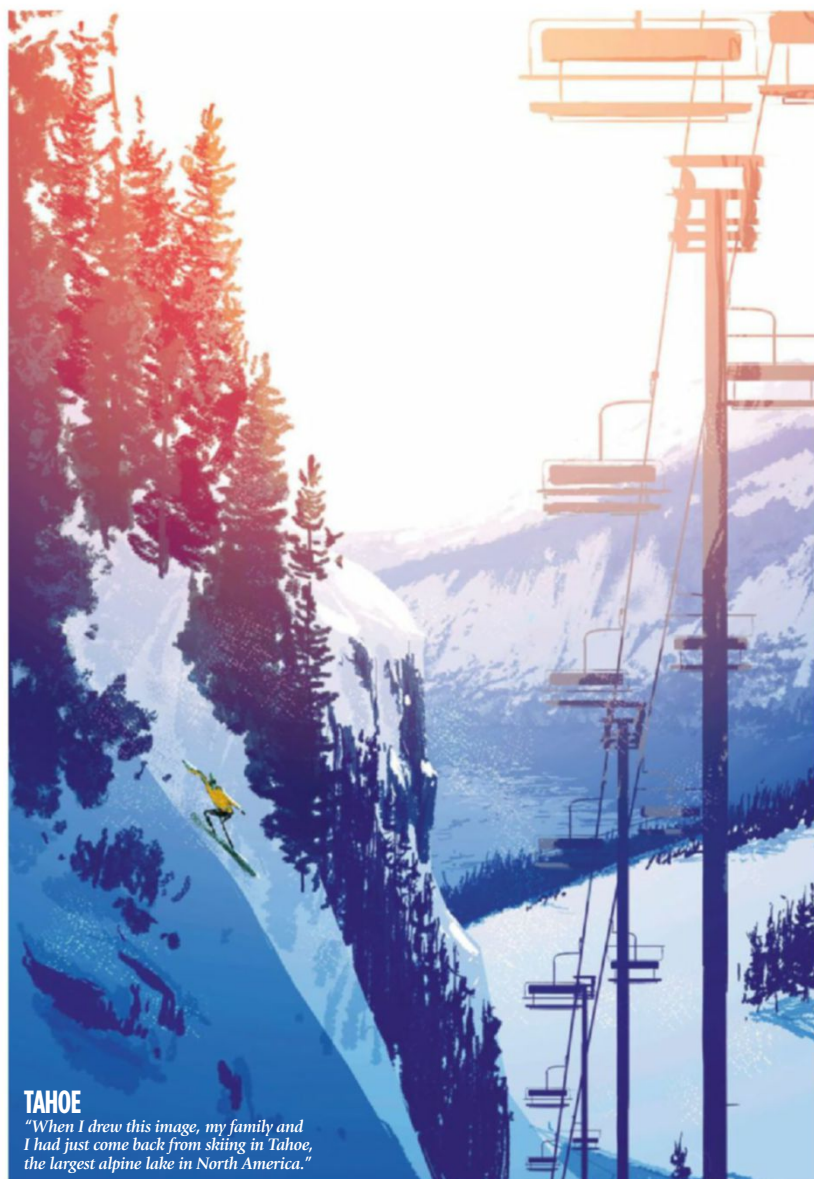
YOU DON'T NEED TO BE THE BEST

Pascal explains how having children changed his outlook on a career in art

After having kids I found that, because I was more focused, I could do more work in fewer hours. Being busy doesn't necessarily mean I'm being productive. This was a good thing for me to learn and accept.

I had to accept it because life changes all the time. My work will change with it, and that's okay. I say this because sometimes the conditions are ideal and I do a great piece, and sometimes I'm sick or my kids or sick, and my focus is split and my computer is slow and my dog needs to go out ... So my work will be what it will be. I had to learn how to live with this and accept it, which was not the case before I had kids.

I also chose to accept not being the best, instead of being the best I could be, which is very different. Before having kids, I wanted to be the best, no matter what discipline, and that made me work more and not take care about anything outside of work. When we had our first daughter, I realised I wanted to spend some time with her. She had a schedule. I had to get on that schedule if I wanted to be a part of her life. I did. And, oddly enough, my work completely changed and I loved that change. I felt a little stupid for not slowing down earlier. I enjoyed what I was doing more, because I wasn't doing it all the time.



TAHOE

"When I drew this image, my family and I had just come back from skiing in Tahoe, the largest alpine lake in North America."

➤ director). He put so much into his work, his personal life suffered.

"I was realising how empty my life was. I had nothing going on outside of work and had a hard time making and maintaining contact with anybody. I had broken up with my girlfriend a while back. I was very sad about that."

Pascal moved back to San Francisco to be with his girlfriend. He accepted a position at a company called Leapfrog as a lead animator, but he spent most of his time managing others. So he decided to come into work a little earlier each morning and draw. The Frenchman now has over 4,000 of these daily drawings.

"I start with a colour," he says, "and work with it. Sometimes I draw a character or an environment and see what happens. In almost all cases, though, I have an idea of the emotion."

His Sketch of the Day series led to some big freelance jobs. DreamWorks asked Pascal to do development work on a feature film. "I actually got fired, because when we got to production work – that's the part where you stop doing conceptual work and you have to start rendering the elements as they will appear in the movie – they realised I didn't know how to do that."

A SECOND CHANCE

DreamWorks put Pascal on another movie, *Mr. Peabody & Sherman*. He's also worked on projects for Disney, Paramount, the Cartoon Network, and many more. He creates covers for books and comics, does editorial illustrations, and works on video games and commercials.

Pascal describes working in these various fields as similar to speaking ➤



➡ different languages. They each require a different part of his brain. "In animation I don't care too much about the quality of the drawing, because all I'm doing is matching it to the approved design, which is usually a simplified design.

"I can't listen to music or talk to anybody, because my whole brain is focused on getting everything to work together. I'm also moving pretty fast because I try to keep a spontaneity of motion – a flow and rhythm."

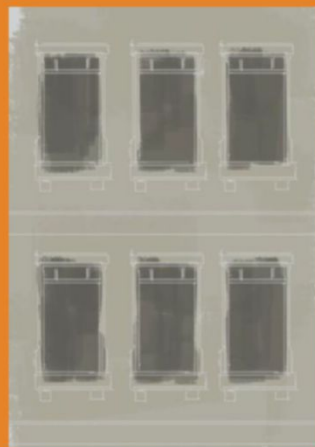
SETTING THE MOOD

Pascal describes his style as "loose and pretty utilitarian." He wants the audience to understand in a split second exactly what's happening in the image. So he makes each visual element as clear as possible. The same goes for the overall message – the audience shouldn't have to work anything out. He uses light to set the mood, something that's becoming an increasingly important part of his work. And he edits ruthlessly. No ➡

"I try to keep a spontaneity of motion – a flow and rhythm"

'THE BLANK PAGE SCARES ME'

Pascal explains how he created a striking image of a couple in love...



1 A textured start

I add a little bit of texture, just so I don't have to draw on a blank page. Whether it's on canvas or on a digital screen, the blank page scares me. I do a loose pencil sketch of where the windows will go. Next, I establish my zones of contrast: dark inside and bright outside. This is more for me to know which type of values I'll be using in different areas of the image.



2 The happy couple

I start adding details to the façade, and I block in my couple very loosely. My pencil sketches aren't very good – at least, they aren't clean. I know what I want, but because I don't use lines in the final I don't bother cleaning them up. In addition, if they're loose it enables me to be more creative when I paint them. I make the figures dark to suggest intimacy.



3 Supporting cast

I add all the other figures. They are there to support the main characters, so I freehand them. Most of my images are like that: there's one set of characters I've really thought about and everybody else is just freehanded. It makes it fun for me to draw.



4 Introduce some greenery

I add the tree to create a little bit of depth and make sure the leaves don't cover any characters and that they're not too close to the characters, to ensure the painting is readable.

5 A dramatic swathe of light (right)

This is a late-afternoon image, so I made a big swash of light across the building. I prefer early daytime, late evening, or night-time, because the colours are more dramatic.



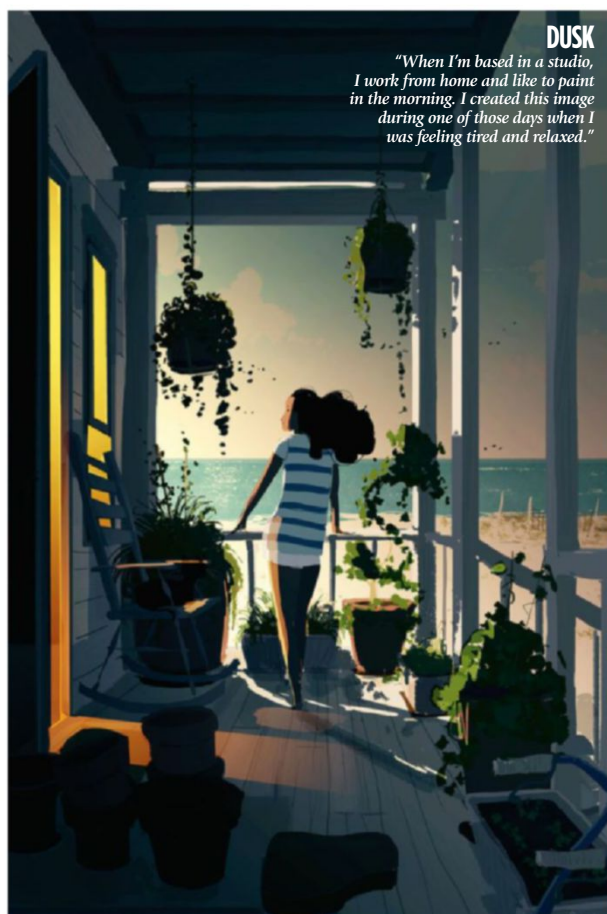
Artist Portfolio

“I’m trying to get the emotion to be the story, without making an abstract or gratuitous painting”



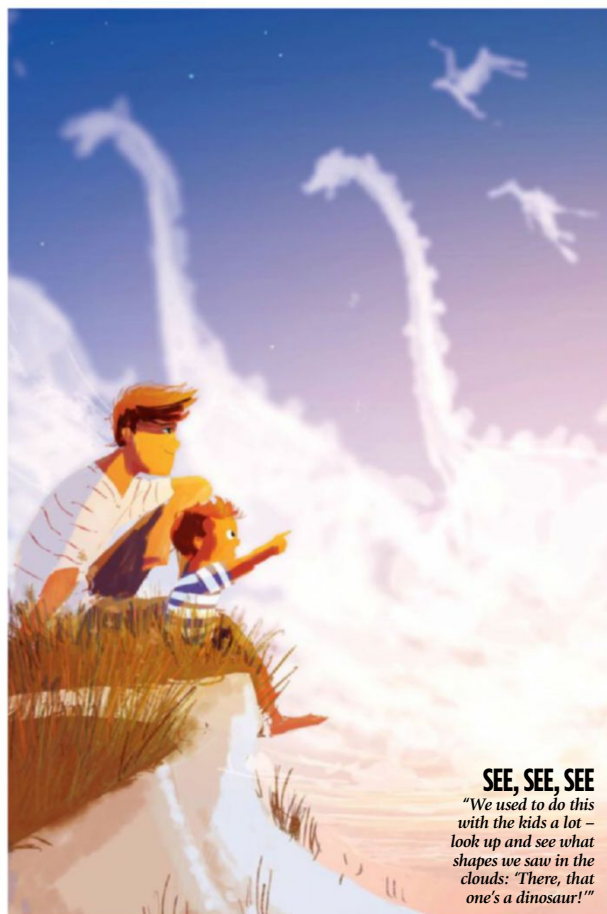
MY RAINY DAY FRIENDS

“Growing up in Provence, I remember mostly sunny, beautiful vibrant colours everywhere. But I just like ducks, rain and moody weather.”



DUSK

"When I'm based in a studio, I work from home and like to paint in the morning. I created this image during one of those days when I was feeling tired and relaxed."



SEE, SEE, SEE

"We used to do this with the kids a lot – look up and see what shapes we saw in the clouds: 'There, that one's a dinosaur!'"



SOMETIMES YOU JUST HAVE TO SAY JUMP IT

"This a metaphor – not necessarily jump off a rock, but sometimes I feel I need to take more chances. This painting's a way of reminding myself."

➔ matter how good it looks, if it gets in the way of readability, of clearness, then it has to go. He likes it when someone who knows nothing about art can relate to his work.

"I'm trying to get the emotion to be the story," he says, "without making an abstract painting or a gratuitous one. Not that I have anything against simply beautiful images. I just have a hard time making them myself, so I stick to what I understand. I try to push my understanding and question it as much as I can. That's the French in me, I think."

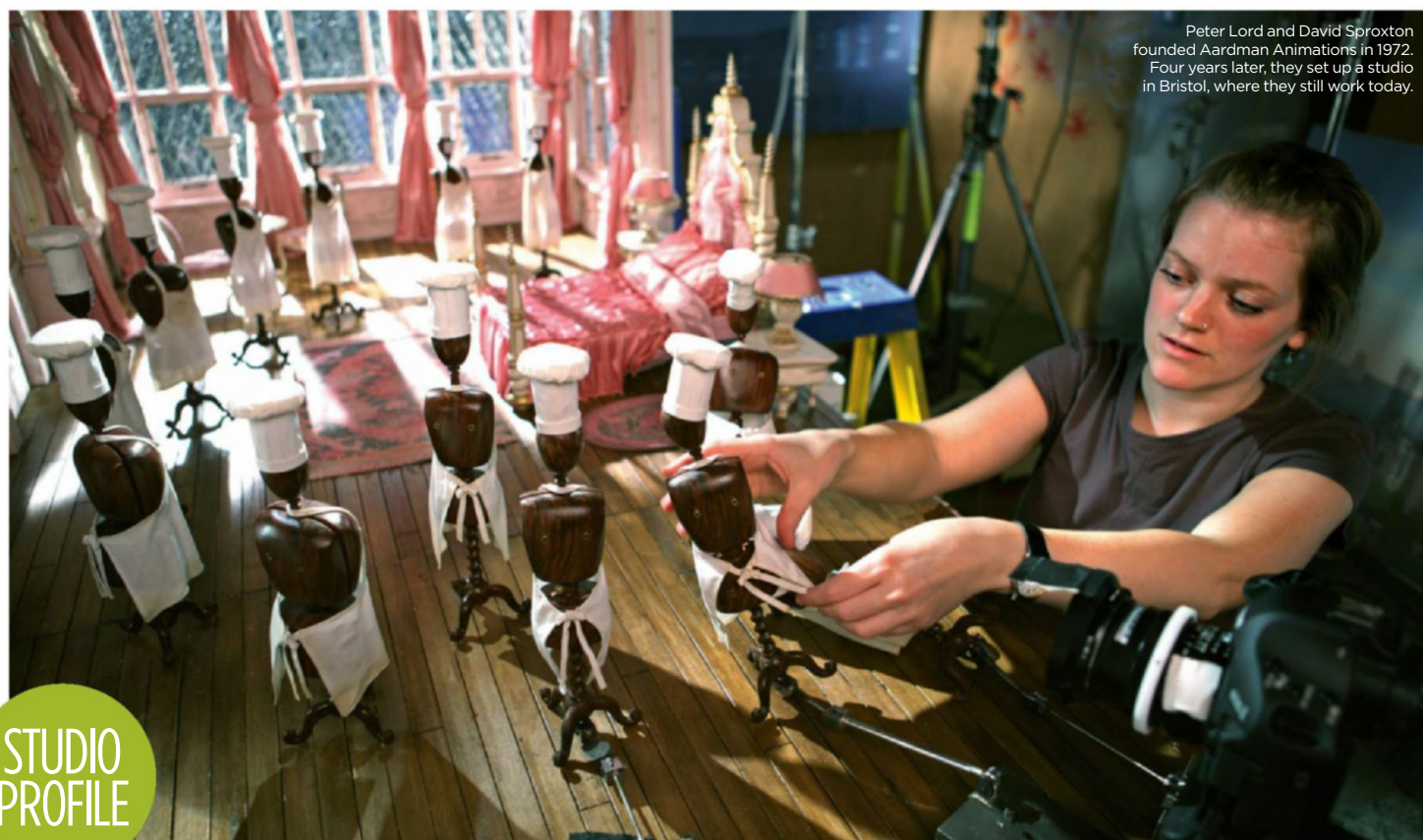
DAILY ROUTINE

Pascal wakes up at five in the morning and draws for a couple of hours before taking his kids to school. He bikes to the Los Angeles studio where he works as art director on Green Eggs and

Ham, an animated Netflix series by Warner Bros. If he's not there, he's at home, always working in the morning, since he's a little slower come afternoon. He doesn't like to work late and keeps a good routine because this approach gets "ideas flowing at a specific time."

Aside from the Warner Bros. projects, Pascal is working on several covers for books and for Marvel comics, a video game, more commercials, and more development work. His dream project in a cover for The New Yorker magazine.

Spurring him on to greater achievements is his first major setback: his childhood art teacher. "I think about him every other month or so," Pascal says. "Funny how that works. I'm spending the rest of my life trying to prove him wrong." 🍌



Peter Lord and David Sproston founded Aardman Animations in 1972. Four years later, they set up a studio in Bristol, where they still work today.

STUDIO
PROFILE

AARDMAN ANIMATIONS

Gary Evans meets the team behind some of the most iconic characters ever created, and uncovers the ethos that makes it possible

A recent Frubes commercial shows two characters, animated yogurts, fishing on a frozen ocean. One tries to freeze the other by sawing a whole in the ice, only to end up falling in the water and freezing himself.

Aardman Animations created the Try Me Frozen campaign to promote freezing the children's yogurt to make ice lollies. It's a self-contained story, complete with a twist, a joke and a punchline, told front to back in under

20 seconds. It's charming. It's funny. It's silly. It's everything Aardman does best.

"The big thing Aardman is based on is really strong characters and storytelling," says **Jess McKillop**, an executive producer and head of production resources. "And that can go into any kind of production that a client would be looking for. We try and bring warmth and humour to any idea that our partners may have."



"The truth is: you can have a line drawing, stick figures. If the story's right, then it doesn't really matter what the method is."

FROM MORPH TO CHICKEN RUN

Peter Lord and David Sproston founded Aardman Animations in 1972. Four years later, after moving to Bristol, the



The Bristol studio's recent Try Me Frozen campaign, created for yogurt brand Frubes, took just four weeks to complete and aired on TV that very day.

pair created their first professional production. Its central character – a stop-motion, shape-shifting, gibberish-speaking plasticine man called Morph – would become an icon of children's television for generations to come.

Nick Park joined in 1985. The writer, director and animator created Wallace and Gromit, and Shaun the Sheep. Over

Studio PROFILE

Aardman Animations

LOCATION: England

PROJECTS: Morph, Wallace & Gromit, Shaun the Sheep, Arthur Christmas, The Pirates! In an Adventure with Scientists!

WEB: www.aardman.com

“We try and bring warmth and humour to any idea that our partners may have”

Nick Park joined in Aardman 1985. The writer, director and animator created Wallace and Gromit, arguably the studio's best-loved characters

the next two decades he earned six Oscar nominations, taking home four golden statuettes.

In 1993, Nick and his team completed *The Wrong Trousers*, Aardman's first 30-minute story, one of the most successful animated films ever. It heralded a golden period for the studio: *A Close Shave* (Oscar winner), *Wat's Pig* (another Oscar winner), *Morph's Files* (a full TV series), *Stage Fright* (picked up a BAFTA), *Rex The Runt* (the studio's first animated series for adults), *Angry Kid* (its first series released exclusively on the internet), and *Flushed Away* (the studio's first CG

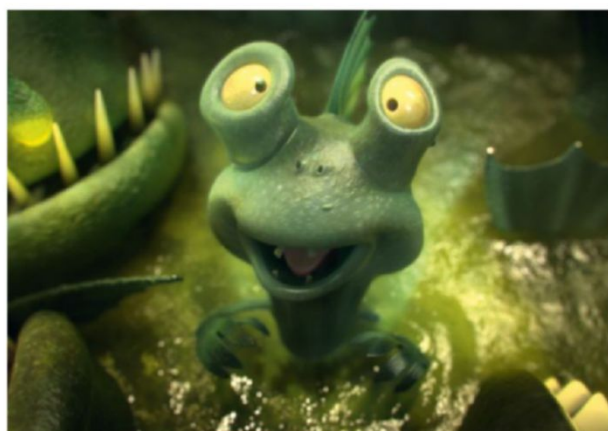
film) ... live action, animation, paper craft, puppeteering; 2D and 3D and CGI and virtual reality; hit after hit, innovation after innovation.

But it was *Chicken Run* that really took things up a level. Directed by Peter and Nick, and funded by DreamWorks, the studio's first proper feature film came out in summer 2000. Reviews glowed. The box office banked over \$220m. *Chicken Run* became the highest-grossing stop-motion film of all time – all of the studio's stop-motion films are among the highest-grossing stop-motion films of all time. In total, Aardman films have earned almost ➡

The Try Me Frozen commercial shows animated yogurts fishing on a frozen ocean and is full of Aardman's trademark humour.



Arthur Christmas was Aardman's fourth feature film. In total, the studio's movies have earned almost a \$1 billion at the box office.



➡ a \$1 billion worldwide. But films are just a small part of what the studio does.

As well as films, TV programmes and advertising campaigns, Aardman works on apps, games and websites. You can see Aardman characters in museums and exhibitions, in live shows and in theme parks around the world.

FITTING ALL THE COGS TOGETHER

Jess works on projects from ideas stage to completion, overseeing all the various departments involved. "Your job," she says, "is to make sure that every single cog in the wheels fits seamlessly together."

Three-minute short animation Ray's Big Idea tells the story of a pre-historic fish who sets out to improve his lot in life.

“You might have a situation where the director wants three different things, and you can only afford two of them”

A big part of Jess's role as producer is bridging the gap between what the client wants and what the director wants: "You've only got a set budget. But you might have a situation where the director wants three different things, and you can only afford two of them."

"The director is more the creative and the producer the organiser. It's not the producer's job to tell the director what to do. It's working as a partnership. And sometimes you have to say, 'We haven't got time for the monkey, the giraffe and the elephant.'"

Jess works on as many as 10 projects at a time. No two jobs are completely alike. But usually the studio receives a script from a client or an agency representing the client. A director joins. The director and client work out a vision between them. Jess helps put together a schedule, a plan and a team – often freelancers support the in-house team.

They record sound first, because the team animates to dialogue. They create an animatic, a timed storyboard.

Designers get to work on the characters, then rig them with a skeleton: physically in the case of puppets, digitally for everything else. Lighting and polishes in sound and overall appearance bring the project to a close. It can take between a few weeks to several months – or years in the case of feature films.

FIXING BROKEN THINGS



Ben Toogood first worked for Aardman on Wallace & Gromit: The Curse of the Were-Rabbit. He joined the company full-time a few years later and is now head of 3D. A large part of his job is "fixing things that've broken ... the bits no one else wants to do, the leftovers."

Ben supervised the Frubes project. His team was small, six people, but it took them just four weeks to complete the commercial, which aired on TV on the same day. Yet in contrast to commercials, Ben says, films offer a ➡



Shaun the Sheep – a spin-off of the Wallace and Gromit franchise – is one of Aardman's most successful characters.

Nick Park came up with the idea for Wallace & Gromit while still a student. Back then, Gromit was a cat and Wallace was a postman.



Two Wallace & Gromit stories, *The Wrong Trousers* and *A Close Shave*, won Academy Awards. The studio has a total of six nominations and four wins.

MAT REES

So, you want to work at Aardman? Read this first...

How does a candidate get their foot in the door?

It's always about your portfolio and demo reel. You could have been to the best school in the world, but if your portfolio doesn't stand out, you're not going to get a job. We have people who never went to university. They're self-taught. But their work was good enough to get them in the door.

What should an applicant do if they don't get in?

We've had people apply for a job and not get in, then reapply the following year and their reel is more or less the same. In that time, you could've done so many more shots and improved. So when you send off your show reel, don't just wait for a response. Keep animating stuff. Keep developing your skills so you're always improving.

Once they get the job, how do make a success of it?

Have the right attitude. If no one wants to work with you – regardless of how good you are at what you do – word is going to get out and no one's going to want you in their team. We've had people who are really good, but you don't want them back in the building, because their attitude's no good.

How do you get your job?

When I joined Aardman, it was a three-month contract. I saw it as a chance to make myself indispensable. And it paid off. You have to go in with that attitude. You have to be out to impress with everything you do. Every piece of animation, I made it as good as I possibly could. Impress the crap out of the people around you!



Mat's a supervising senior animator at Aardman. He recently worked on the Frubes campaign and Special Delivery.

www.matthewrees.blogspot.com



A second feature film starring Shaun is currently in production, following on from the critical and commercial success of 2015's *Shaun the Sheep Movie*.



This Christmas campaign for furniture company DFS shows off Aardman's trademark technique of pairing adult voices with animated characters.



Aardman created the Vimtoad for Vimto soft drinks, an action-packed commercial that sees the character battle with a rival toad.

“Even if a character's not my thing, I still enjoy moving it around, getting something out of it that way”

➡ lot more time to “get down to the nitty gritty” and make it “exactly how you and the director wants it to be.” Commercials are more about the big picture – making sure the bones are solid – and can't always be as slick as feature films. “You can forgive a few bits and bobs here there,” he says.

Project Everyone, from 2015, is a great example of how Aardman Animation manages to tie together its work in so many different fields.

In *The Headquarters of the United Nations*, each country's representative is a furry animal. When the speaker of the house, a llama in spectacles, announces a new initiative to end extreme poverty and to tackle climate change, a huge party ensues. It's charming and full of warmth. We immediately care about the characters and therefore we immediately care about what they have to say.

Mat Rees works as supervising senior animator. He says it's a 50/50 split between the more recognisable Aardman productions – the stop-frame, plasticine stuff – and the CG work, such as the UN project. But even in commercial work, where clients increasingly want more for their money, with budgets smaller and deadlines tighter, Matt still manages to have fun.

MOVING CHARACTERS ABOUT

“In the short films, you have a reasonably small team. So you keep everyone tight. You just have the director to deal with. When you're making commercials you've got the director, and the agency above them, and above them you got the clients. So there are more levels of approval.

“But even if a character's not my thing, I still enjoy moving it around, getting something out of it that way.”



The Pirates! In an Adventure with Scientists!, directed by Peter Lord, was Aardman's first 3D stop-motion film.



When not working on Aardman products like Wallace & Gromit (above) staff are encouraged to use the studio to work on personal projects.



Morph first appeared on television in 1977. A new series of the Morph TV show is planned for next year.



Wallace & Gromit: The Curse of the Were-Rabbit is the second highest-grossing stop motion animated film ever, behind Chicken Run, another Nick Park creation.

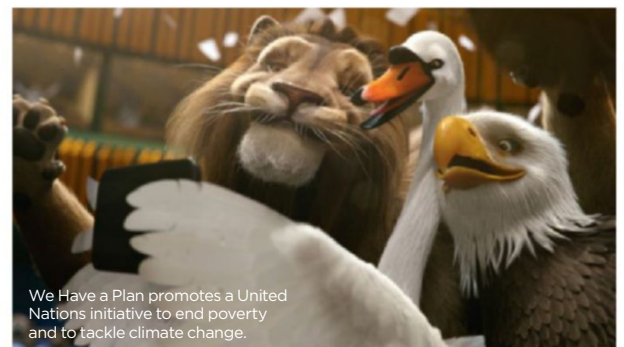
Mat says the studio is also happy to try new technologies. He worked on Google's Spotlight Stories – a series of 360-degree immersive videos for mobile and virtual reality. Aardman's contribution, Special Delivery, is about a lonely janitor on Christmas Eve. The challenge was telling the story in a non-linear manner. Special Delivery offers a number of small stories within the larger narrative, depending on where the viewer chooses to look.

"It's only when you look at stuff in the headset," he says, "that you realise you can do so much stuff with it ... But there's no grand plan. When something like that comes in, we just get stuck in."

In 2018, Nick Park releases his next film, a "prehistoric adventure" called Early Man. There's also a Shaun the Sheep sequel in the pipeline. But for

Mat, the best thing about working at Aardman isn't the big feature films. It's something far simpler, something that encapsulates the studio's whole ethos: Aardman allows staff to work on their own projects. More than that, they can use the studio to do it and other staff members are encouraged to help out.

"That's one thing people are always surprised about," Mat says. "But it's good for your own development, and it adds to the company, too"



We Have a Plan promotes a United Nations initiative to end poverty and to tackle climate change.

Elise Hatheway

Future tech and mythological mash-ups mix with grumpy oldsters and juvenile monster hunters on this animation artist's sketch pages

Artist PROFILE

Elise Hatheway

LOCATION: Canada

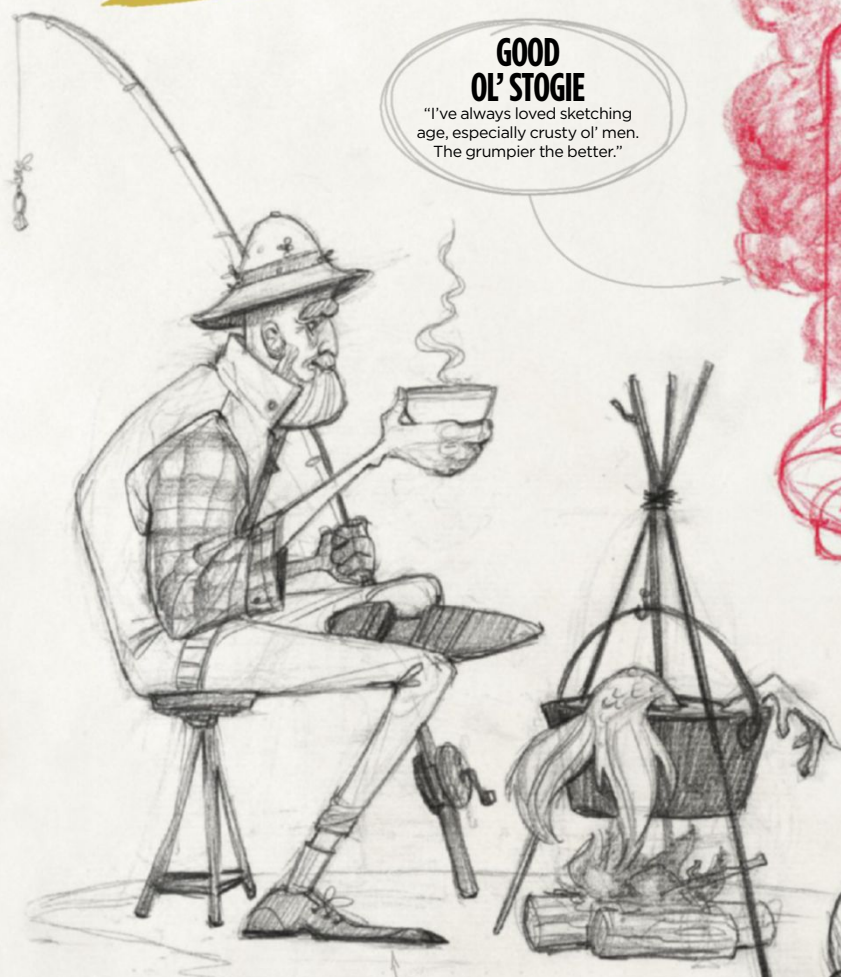


Elise's a vis dev artist from New Orleans with seven years of experience in the animation industry. At the moment she's working at

Animal Logic in Vancouver on the second Lego Movie. Some of her other film credits include Book of Life, Free Birds and Rock Dog. Elise's worked with several award-winning studios including Disney, Warner Bros., Animal Logic, Reel FX and Duncan Studio.
www.elisehathewayart.com

GOOD OL' STOGIE

"I've always loved sketching age, especially crusty ol' men. The grumpier the better."

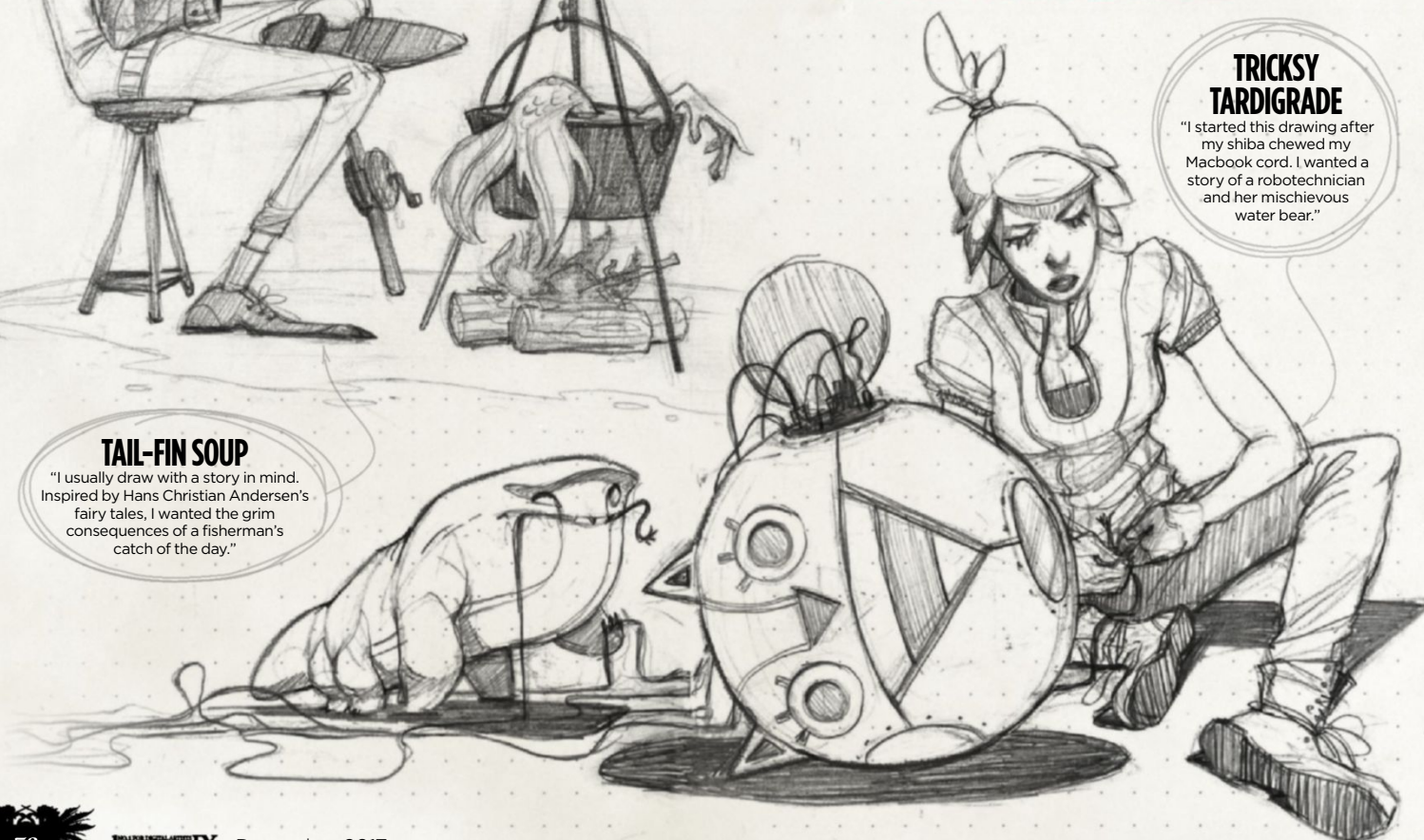


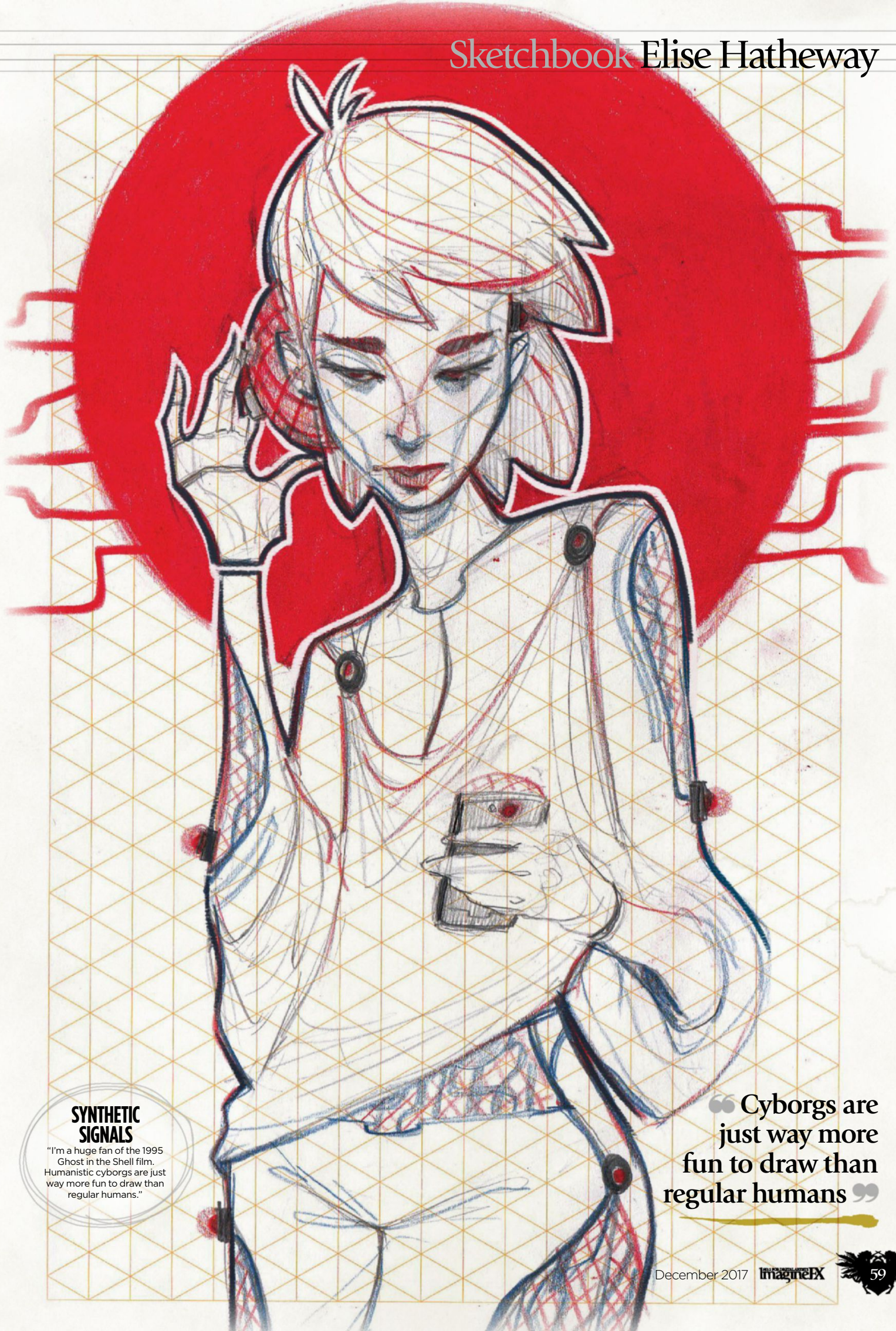
TRICKSY TARDIGRADE

"I started this drawing after my shiba chewed my Macbook cord. I wanted a story of a robotechician and her mischievous water bear."

TAIL-FIN SOUP

"I usually draw with a story in mind. Inspired by Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales, I wanted the grim consequences of a fisherman's catch of the day."





**SYNTHETIC
SIGNALS**

"I'm a huge fan of the 1995
Ghost in the Shell film.
Humanistic cyborgs are just
way more fun to draw than
regular humans."

“Cyborgs are
just way more
fun to draw than
regular humans”

Sketchbook

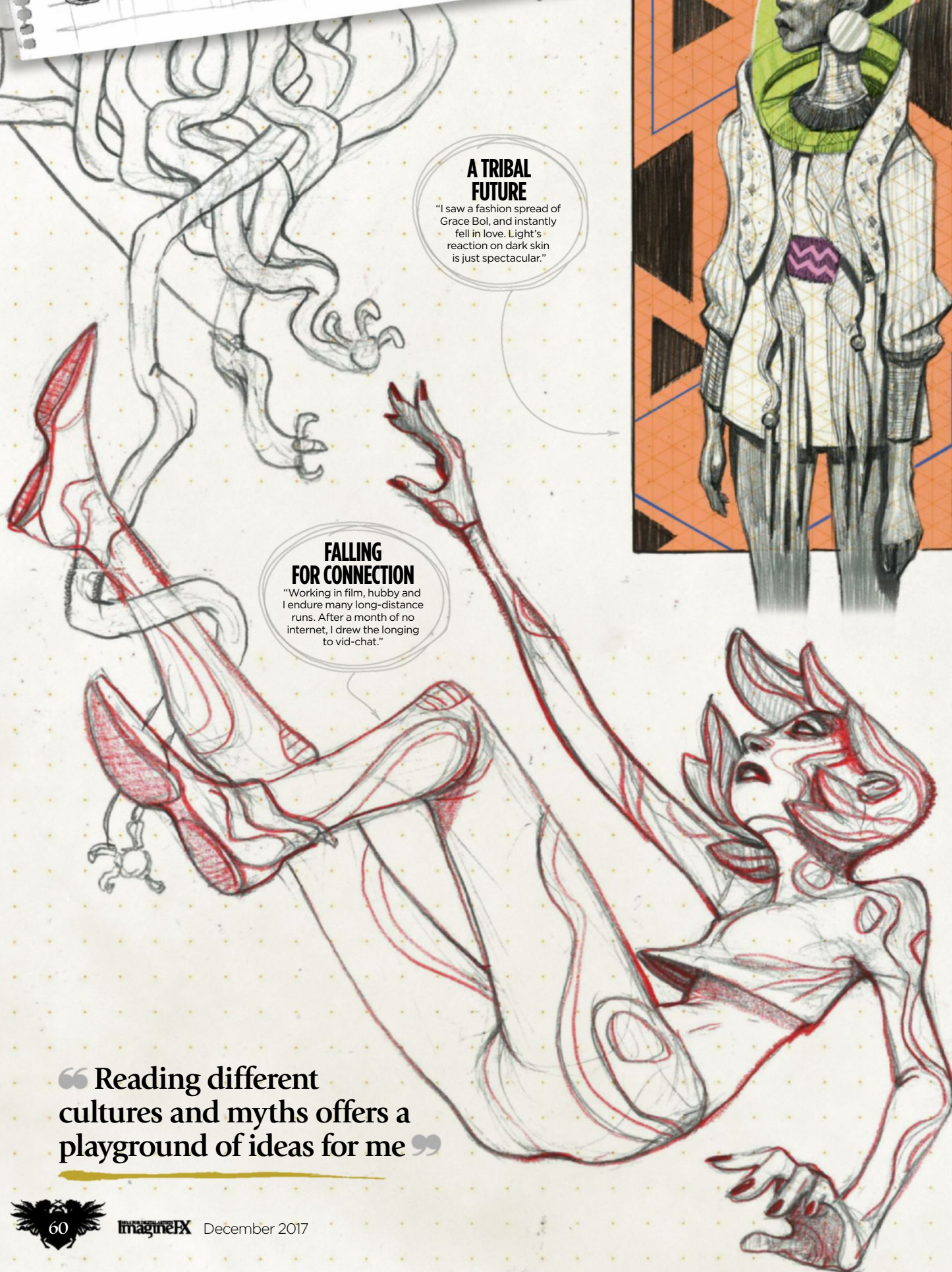
A TRIBAL FUTURE

"I saw a fashion spread of Grace Bol, and instantly fell in love. Light's reaction on dark skin is just spectacular."



FALLING FOR CONNECTION

"Working in film, hubby and I endure many long-distance runs. After a month of no internet, I drew the longing to vid-chat."



“ Reading different cultures and myths offers a playground of ideas for me ”

EAT CROW

"I reference a lot of mythologies in my work. Morrighan from Irish mythology visited the battlefield as a raven."



MONSTER LEAD ME HOME

"Listening to Sara Hartman's Monster Lead Me Home, this visual popped into my head. A serene but impending doom."



THE DRYAD AND KODAMA

"Reading different cultures and myths offers a playground of ideas for me. Here's a Greek and Japanese mythology mash up of tree spirits."

A PLACE WITH A VIEW

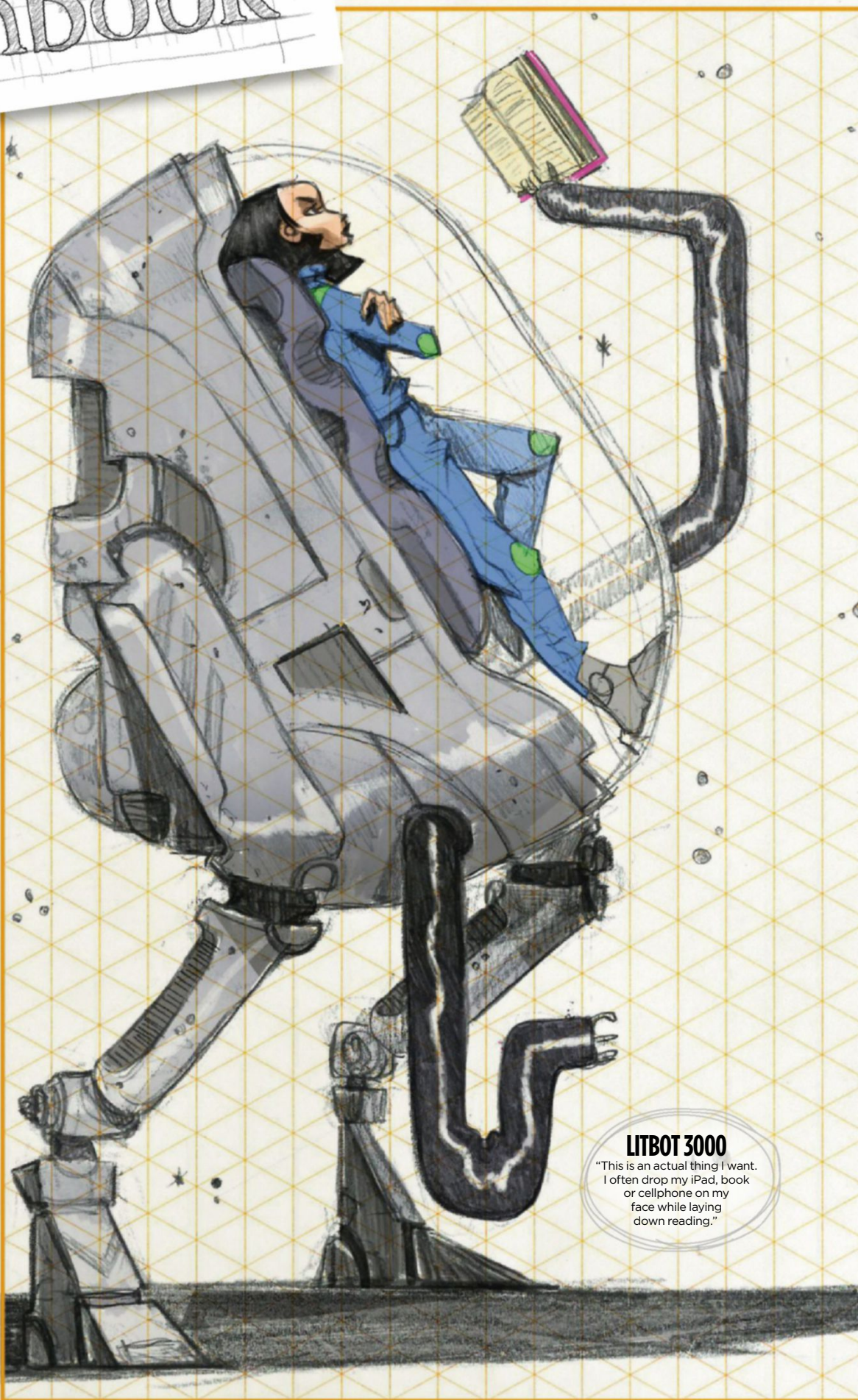
"My husband was writing a story and wanted 'a cute little cottage on a cliff.' A gnome hat cottage seemed spot-on."



Sketchbook

MINIMAL LINKS

"I usually draw women in clothes I wish were the trend. Give me modernist minimalist graphic clothing any day."



LITBOT 3000

"This is an actual thing I want. I often drop my iPad, book or cellphone on my face while laying down reading."

MONSTER HUNTER

"This doodle came out watching some good ol' Ghibli. I wanted to draw a seemingly sweet girl who hunts monsters."

WEARY MONKEY KING

"I read that the Monkey King was imprisoned in a mountain by Buddha and thought he'd probably be very bored."

ALCHEMY SISTERS

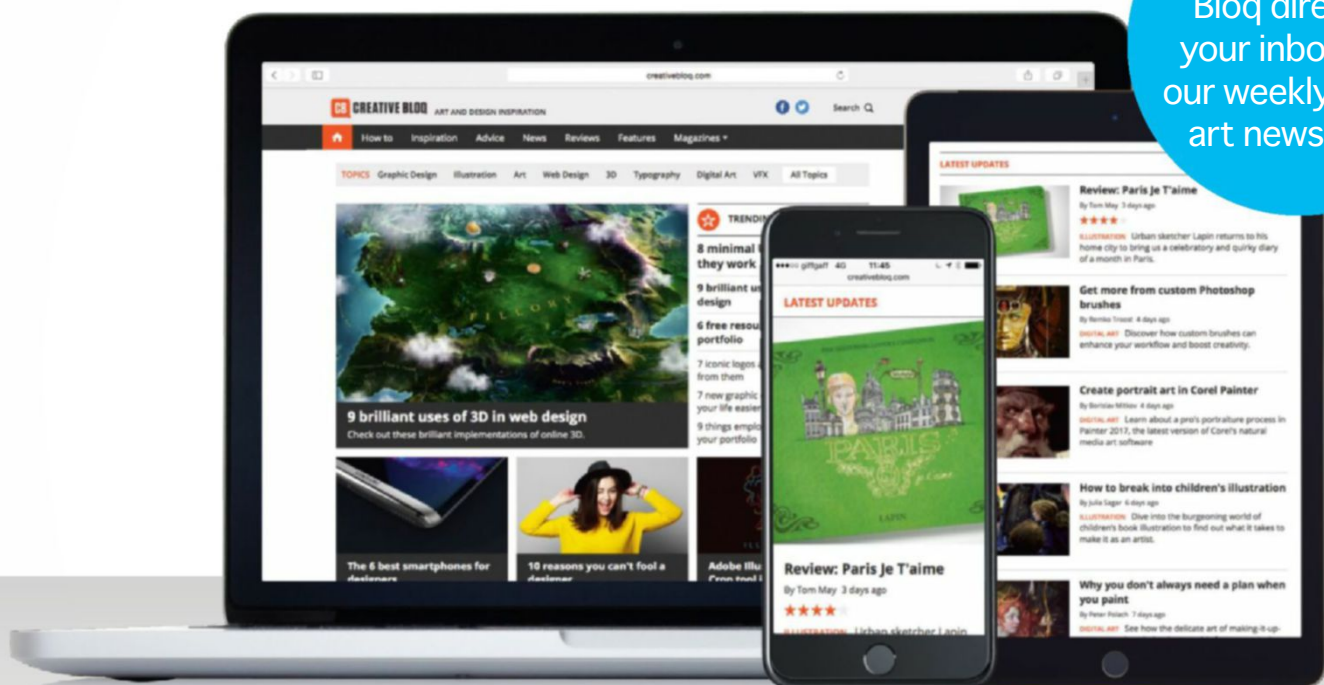
"Inspired by me and my sister's relationship, this sketch is an idea of two sisters bound by alchemy and strengthened by their differences."

“I wanted to draw a seemingly sweet girl who hunts monsters”

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

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**Workshops assets
are available...**

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



Advice from the world's best artists

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66 Paint colourful animation art

Randy Bishop makes use of clean lines, layer modes, lighting and cloth patterns.

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Dive deep into Craig Elliott's creative process as he works up a flooded forest scene.

80 Core Skills: ZBrushCore's Primitives

Pablo Muñoz Gómez creates a range of complex shapes.

82 Create a strong pose and silhouette

See how Pascal Campion brings together characters, lighting and a focal point.

88 Get drawing with Affinity Photo for iPad

Bob Byrne puts the app and Apple Pencil to the test.



Photoshop PAINT COLOURFUL ANIMATION ART

Randy Bishop makes use of clean lines, layer modes, lighting and cloth patterns to create a illustration of a panda being given a great big hug

Artist PROFILE

Randy Bishop
LOCATION: US

Randy works as a character designer in the animation industry. He loves being able to affect how an audience experiences a story.
<http://ifxm.ag/andy-b>

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



During this workshop, I'll be going over several key concepts that I use as an illustrator. I'll be

talking about rough concepts, clean line work, colour, light and shadow, and some of the pitfalls people (including myself) tend to fall into while working through an illustration. I'll be using Photoshop and talking about some of the tools that the program has and how those different features can be of help.

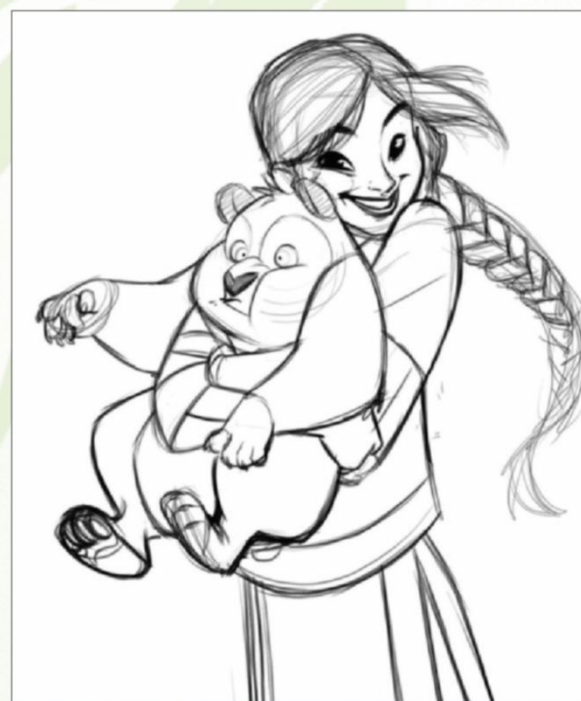


Early sketches of the panda's expressions help shape the tone of the illustration.



1 Coming up with a rough concept

In my experience, every good drawing begins with a solid foundation. Generating thumbnails and working through different concepts quickly helps me to clear my mind and find the best possible solution to any assignment I'm given.



2 Producing a refined sketch

After I've determined which direction I want to go, I dive into the details. I'm working on a separate layer from what I've done previously, and I try to work – as best I can – from large to small. Big shapes to small shapes, general ideas to details. That way I don't find myself devoting too much time to a weak drawing. ➡

PRO SECRETS

Facial warms and cools

Each person has a band of warmth that goes across their face from ear to ear. Ears, cheeks and noses all have a slightly warmer tint to them than the other areas of the face. The top third of the face tends to look slightly more yellow, while the bottom third of the face tends to lean more toward green.



3 Bring in clean lines

Inking is a process I relish. I try my best to keep the line work feeling fresh by avoiding the trap of tracing the sketch underneath. By making a conscious effort to make it feel like I'm drawing this for the first time, I'm able to retain the life that's inherent in the sketch. I use the sketch as a guide, but not as a crutch.



4 Laying in flat colours

On a layer beneath the clean line work, I lay down flat colours without thinking too much about the form. This comes in handy when I want to adjust the colours or values separate from each other. It's important to me that all of the colours are harmonious with each other before light and shadow come into the equation. Although a light source can help to harmonise any combination of colours, I find that creating a harmonious palette to begin with makes me a better artist.

RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES: PAINT

This is the brush I usually use for highly textured drawings and paintings.

PENCIL

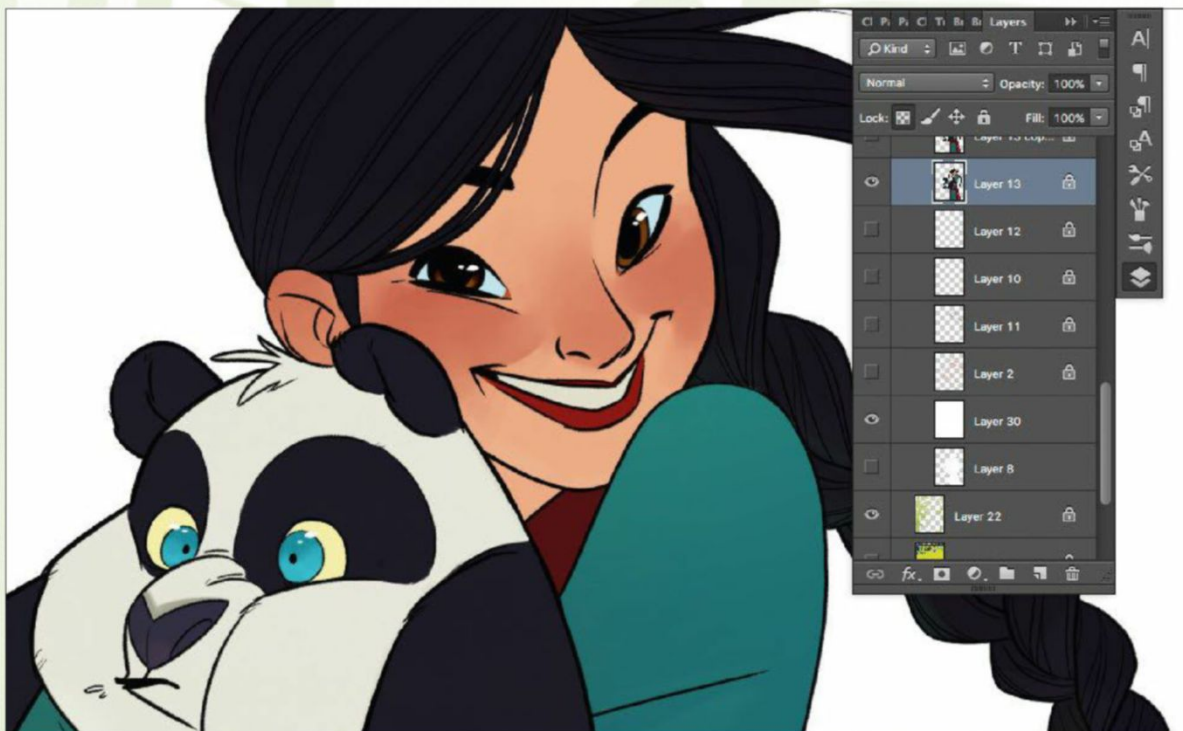
Has less texture than the Paint brush, but ideal for more refined sketches.

INK

This is the brush I use for all my inking. It has a tiny bit of texture to it.

BLENDER

Ideal for soft transitions. I used it for a lot of the highlights and shadows.



5 Duplicating and locking a layer

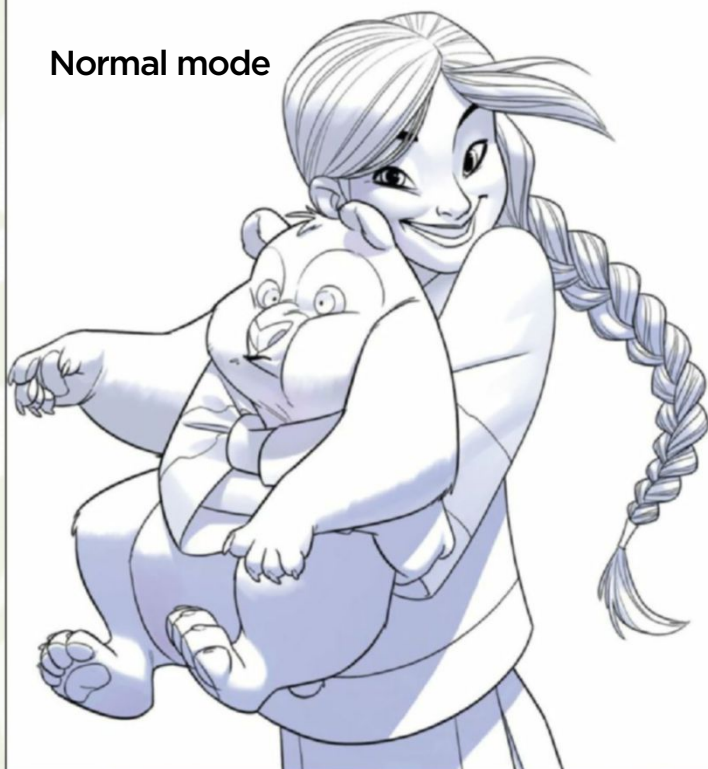
At this stage, I create another layer identical to the colour layer by dragging my current colour layer down to the new layer icon at the bottom of the layer menu. This can also be done by going to Layer>Duplicate Layer. I then lock the transparency of the layer by clicking the checkerboard icon at the top of the layer menu.

6 Filling with grey

Once I have two identical colour layers, I fill the one on top with a mid-value grey. Because the transparency has been locked on the layer, the grey only fills the pixels that are opaque, giving me a grey version of what I've already painted. This comes in handy in the next step.



Normal mode



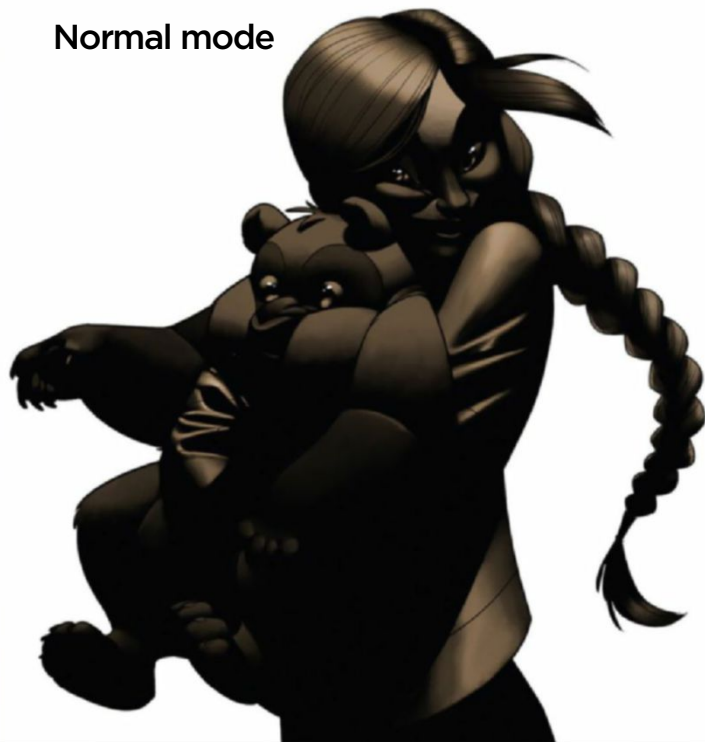
Multiply mode



7 Creating shadow across the figures

I duplicate my colour layer again and fill it this time with white, then I change the layer mode to Multiply. The Multiply layer mode darkens all of the layers beneath it. White doesn't show up on a Multiply layer, but any value darker than white does. This is how I create my shadows separate from my colours. The grey layer over the colour layer enables me to think purely about form without the distraction of the colours.

Normal mode



Screen mode



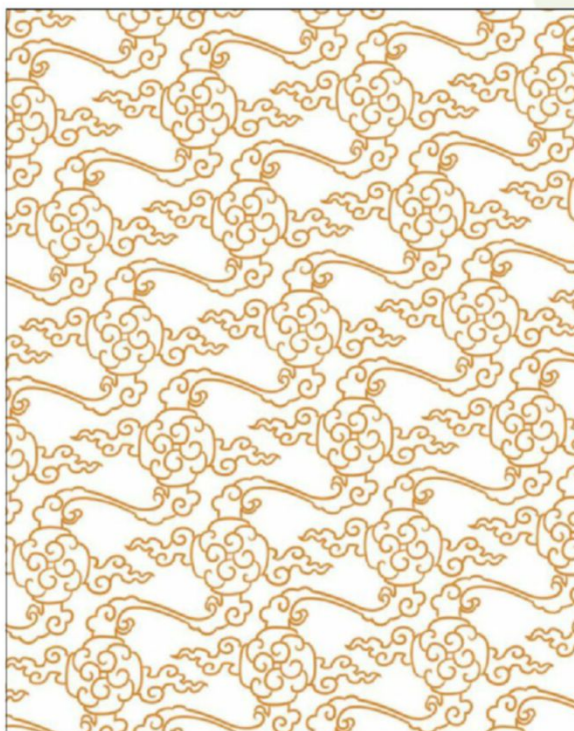
8 Creating highlights with the help of Screen layers

I create highlights the same way as the shadows, but rather than use a Multiply layer, I create a duplicate layer and set it to Screen mode. The Screen mode does precisely the opposite of the Multiply layer. Anything lighter than black will lighten any values on layers that are beneath it.



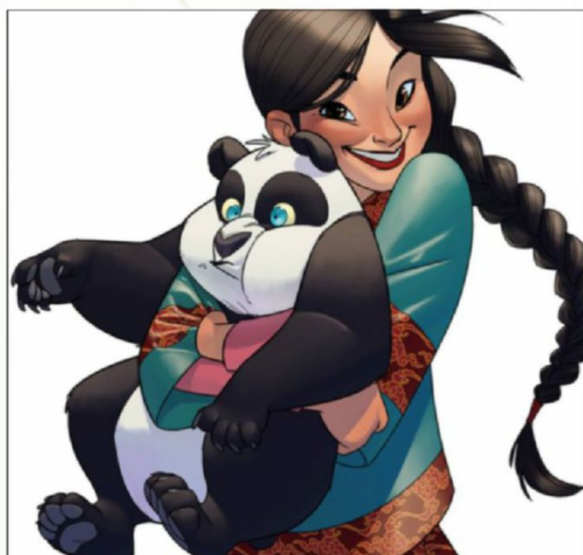
9 Thinking about surfaces

As I consider the highlights and shadows in this piece, I'm also thinking about the way the light reacts to the different surfaces. The silk dress has the strongest highlights and crispest shadows, whereas the fur of the panda diffuses the light so that the highlights and shadows are much softer.



10 Creating patterns

At this point, the illustration is suffering from a lack of visual texture. The girl's hair provides a little bit of a break from the solid blocks of colour, but not enough. So I design pattern to add to the girl's clothing, based on what I've seen of traditional Chinese textiles.



11 Shaping the pattern to the form

To me, the hardest part of designing costuming is creating patterns or graphics that need to wrap around folds and creases in fabric. Fortunately, Photoshop has the very handy Warp tool. To use the tool, I make a selection, then hit Cmd+T, then right-click and select Warp from the drop-down menu. Alternatively, you can go to Edit>Transform>Warp. By dragging your selection around, you can conform it to all sorts of shapes. Usually, I make selections based on where there are breaks or folds in the fabric.



12 Creating a background

Environments are my least favourite thing to do. That's mostly because I'm not as practised with them and I'm not as comfortable creating them as I am with other things. In this case, the background is blessedly simple and the green in it is easy to bring out in the characters to help harmonise the whole image.

PRO SECRETS

Working in low-res

I'm a big fan of texture in my tools when I sketch. For this reason, I tend to do my thumbnails and initial sketches in Photoshop zoomed in, to the point where the texture in my brushes really shows. It's only when I'm cleaning things up that I enlarge my sketches and work in higher resolution.

PRO SECRETS

Hunting down reference

Finding good reference can be hard, especially when I'm looking for something specific. Pinterest is usually my go-to resource for reference because it's comprised completely of sources people have gathered for specific reasons. Most of the time, I can find entire collections devoted to what I'm looking for.

Next month

Andrew Mar
showcases
his pen art
techniques next
month!



ISSUE 155 ON SALE IN THE UK *Friday 3 November*

Next month

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

New skills & techniques!

How to start creating your next masterpiece in oils, pens, inks, digital and more!

With insight from...

Dip pen and ink workshop

UK-based Hassan Torossian inks us a masterpiece and reveals his process.

Greg Manchess interview

We speak with the much-loved illustrator about his new art book.

Character art in Procreate 4

Tatiana Svistunova give us insight into Procreate's new tools for iPad.

Narrative and storytelling

The brilliant Jason Rainville shares his Photoshop techniques.



Photoshop

SHARPEN YOUR VIS DEV SKILLS

Dive deep into **Craig Elliott's** creative process from sketch and colour comp to the details of painting a flooded forest

Artist PROFILE

Craig Elliott
LOCATION: US

Craig Elliott is a film, TV and game production designer, art director and illustrator as well as a fine artist.

<http://ifxm.ag/c-elliott>

GET YOUR RESOURCES

See page 6 now!



Here, I'll be showing the key points of my process in creating this environment piece. I'll also share some key philosophies about picture making. There are

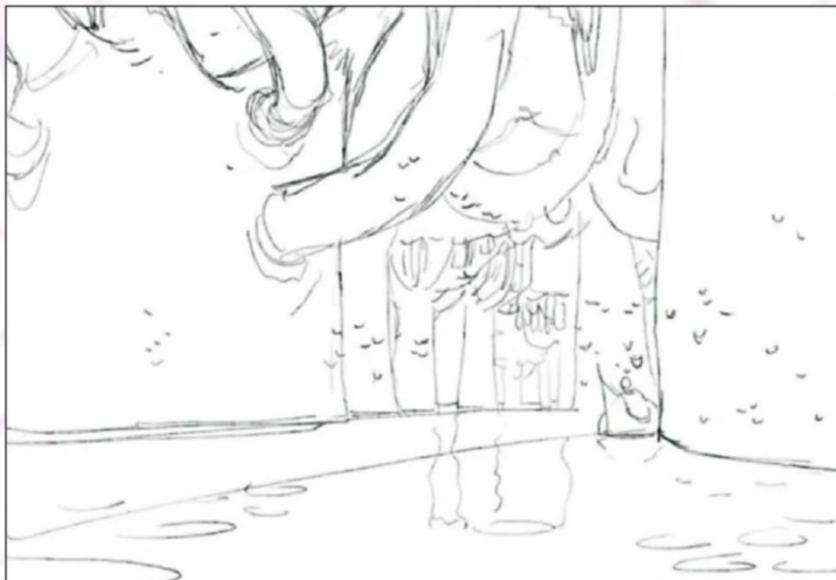
many things to keep in mind when creating a painting that are more important than just techniques or tools. Habits you employ when painting are crucial to developing great work.

I'll begin with a sketch and colour comp, then move on to fleshing out the whole painting. My approach is to work up each part of the image using the same level of detail, as appropriate. So if one part of the painting is 25 per cent finished then I stop and bring everything else up to the same level of finish, before going back to working on that initial element. I'll keep moving on to different parts of the painting, bringing each element along in at least 25 per cent increments. Of course, not everything in the final composition will be rendered to the same level of finish, but that's usually the way in most of my paintings.

I find that it's also helpful to hold off from working on the main focal point for as long as possible. This enables me to keep a truer perspective on the secondary parts of the painting until I've finished the focal point. ➤







1 Place key elements during the sketch stage
Producing a rough layout acts as a great guide when I'm doing the colour key. Having done so many detailed layouts in pencil doing my time at Disney, I've developed a bit of a shorthand process for this stage. I mostly want to place the important elements of the painting and leave details for later when I'm painting.



2 Tonal considerations
After my sketch I play with the tonal setup, mostly trying to take into account where my focal point will be and the necessities of realistic lighting, aerial perspective, and the shadow and light that play across the largest elements in the picture. For this stage I put the line layer on top of the tonal study.

RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES:
WATERCOLOR TRIANGLE

My main brush, and the one I turn Texture and Dual Brush on and off to achieve texture variety.

TEXT01

Great for wild painterly effects, streak effects for hair and blocking in. It responds to pressure and movement.

CHUNKY YEXTURE

Good for foliage, rough hair and especially tree bark. I built this one when working on *The Princess and the Frog*.

SAMPLED BRUSH 3 6

A special use brush. Used mostly for variety and randomness when something seems too painted or overworked.



3 Developing the colour key for the painting
In the colour key I basically paint the whole painting in miniature. I'll be making alterations here and there later on, but things don't change significantly from this stage. Then I increase the resolution of the painting to its final size. This introduces some jagged lines and pixellated edges, but that will all get cleaned up in the final painting.



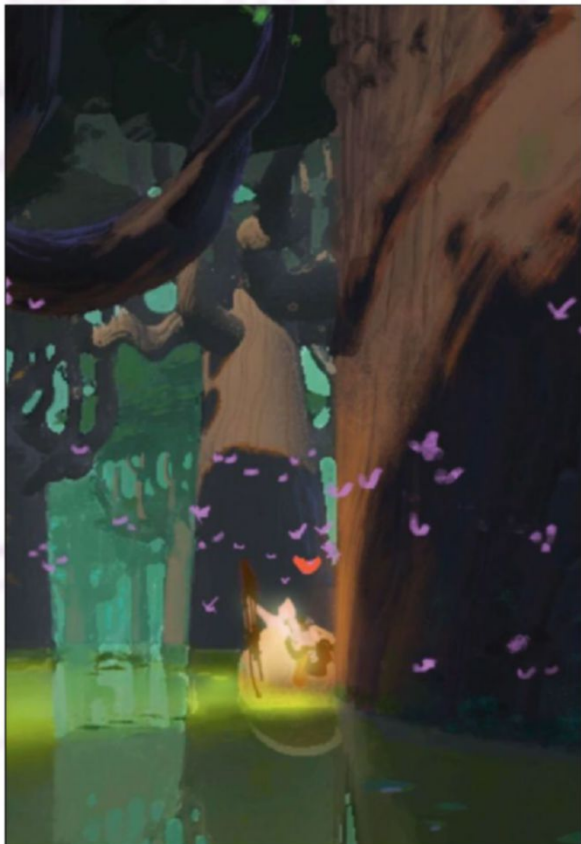
4 Refining my colours

At this stage I adjust some of the colours that I laid down initially to ensure they're both working better and account for additional elements in the shot. I take into account factors such as the cool light from above and the strong light beam hitting the green murky water.



5 Beginning to render the large forms

I like to start my rendering with the biggest volumes in the painting. This may be a mountain or large buildings. Whatever fills the most volume in the shot, go for that first. Don't finish it of course, but make sure the shadows are correct, and introduce any rough form variations and secondary light sources you might require.



6 Cleaning up and adding texture

I take this opportunity to clean up any stray marks and begin to plan any necessary layer separations. I only intend to put the character who's over on the right-hand side and the lily pads on their own layers at this stage, so this is a relatively easy stage for this painting. I've already put the butterflies on their own layer.



7 Water cleanup

I clean all the water underneath the lily pads and removed all traces of the pads from this layer. Now I can paint the pads on a layer of their own that floats on top of the water. This is important because it enables me to paint clean, realistic water underneath the lily pads. ➡

PRO SECRETS

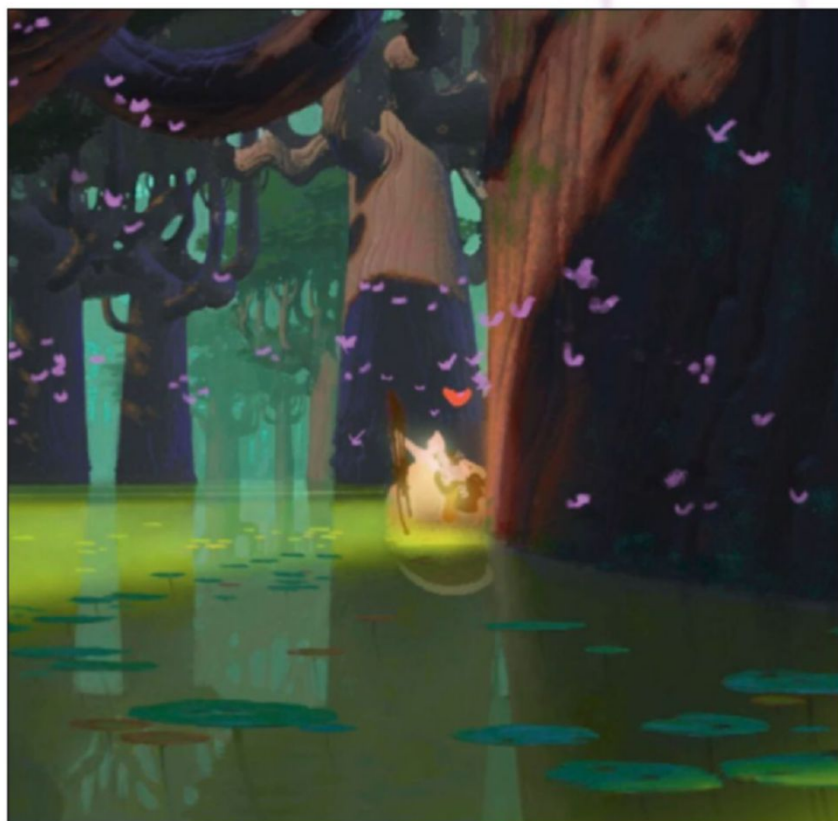
Versioning up

It's important to keep your file size small so Photoshop works as smoothly as possible. Large files can slow your computer down, making it hard to paint decent strokes. The solution is to flatten your layers and save a new version. You still can go back and work on those layers, but your current file size remains manageable.

PRO SECRETS

Be organised

As a production designer and art director, I love organisation. Art created for animation morphs as the production goes on. Directors, executives and story fixers often require changes after a painting is completed. Grouping your layers, naming them and even colouring them are a huge help when making minor (or major) changes to your artwork. Your art director will appreciate it!



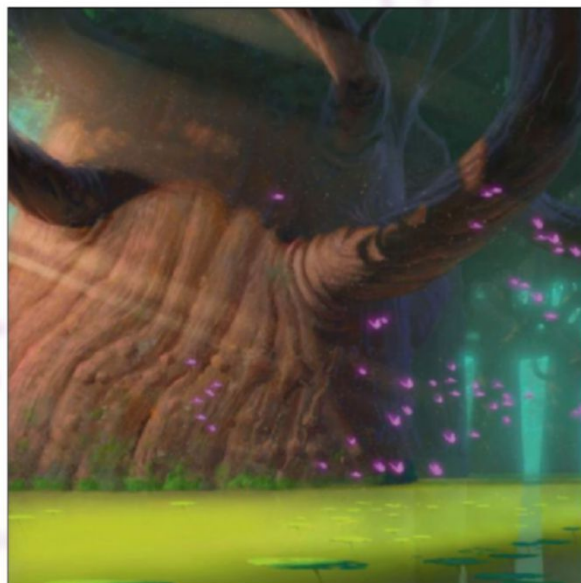
8 Finalising the colour of the water and lily pads

All the water is now cleaned up, and I've adjusted and cleaned up a new layer with all the lily pads on them. The pads still don't have their final detail, but their colour and placement is more or less final. There are still a few lily pad stems and such to do, but I need to move on and not complete this layer if I can avoid it.



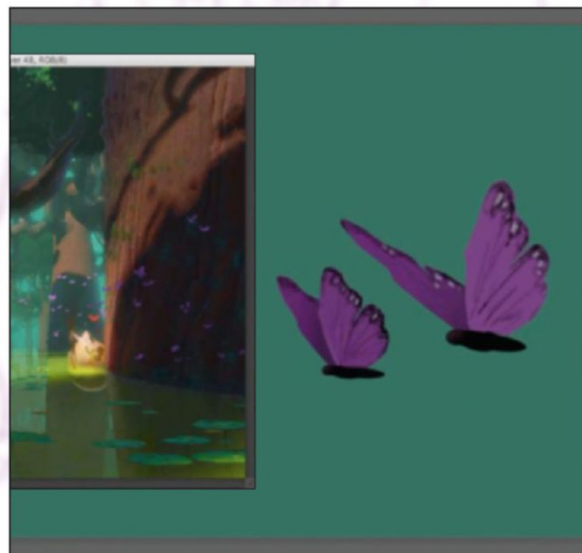
9 The effects of mist

Now I add a level of mist. I realise that the colour isn't quite right, but I can shift that later. I mostly want to achieve the right emotional feeling and be sure that I have a variety of shapes. Objects become more blue as they go further back, and drop in contrast.



10 Light rays and small insects

Adding light rays to the foreground left-hand tree helps to guide the eye towards my main subject, and link the atmospheric background areas to the foreground. In addition to the butterflies in pink, I want to add some tiny insects and dust that the light rays could pick up. So in this stage I add these elements and give them a hint of glow so they look like they're in a slightly misty space.



11 Adding some butterflies

I loosely paint four separate butterflies, making sure that they have a strong and recognisable shape. It's this shape, rather than any recognisable details, that will inform the viewer of what these airborne objects are. After I finish painting the first four butterflies, I copy and paste them into the actual painting, and vary their sizes and shapes. I only put them where I placed the markers earlier in my colour comp.

PRO SECRETS

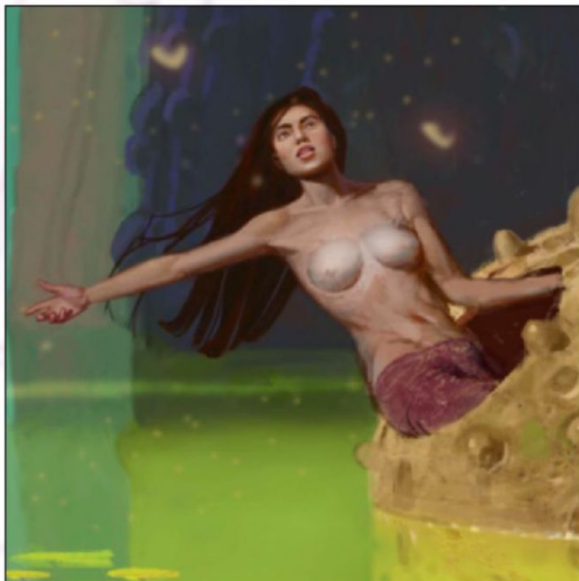
Brush texture toggle controls

It's often useful to toggle the Dual Brush and/or Texture settings on a brush. When doing the initial rendering a rough brush is desirable to keep the rendering from becoming too tight. You can then turn off Texture to bring in the details just where you need them. This can be done all in one brush!



12 Time to bring in the lone figure

I've now painted everything to a decent level of detail and can't hold off painting the main subject any longer. First I draw the figure's outline and shadows in a reddish brown line, then fill in the shape and paint out the background. I focus on pose, gesture, attitude and emotion, without getting bogged down in rendering. Neither the character or the giant floating seed she's in are fully finished during this stage.



13 Cleaning up the character

This is the second stage of the figure painting, where I give the body form and colour variation. There's some outline cleanup here too, as I get the final shapes close to where I want them to be. The character in this painting is pretty small in proportion to the overall painting, so I won't add much more detail than this. I just need to add her bra and clean up the skirt a bit at this point.



14 Finishing touch-ups and added realism

My final refinements to this image include introducing a slight blurring of distant edges to account for the softening effect of the fog, and adding more true blues to the distant sky and tree areas. I need to shift the far colours away from green to make them more realistic. Objects become either more cobalt or warm blue as they go back into the scene, and the colours I had in place weren't working.

Core Skills: Part 3

APPLY PRIMITIVES IN ZBRUSHCORE

Pablo Muñoz Gómez reveals how primitives provide an additional method of creating base meshes and a range of complex shapes

Artist PROFILE

Pablo Muñoz Gómez
LOCATION: Australia

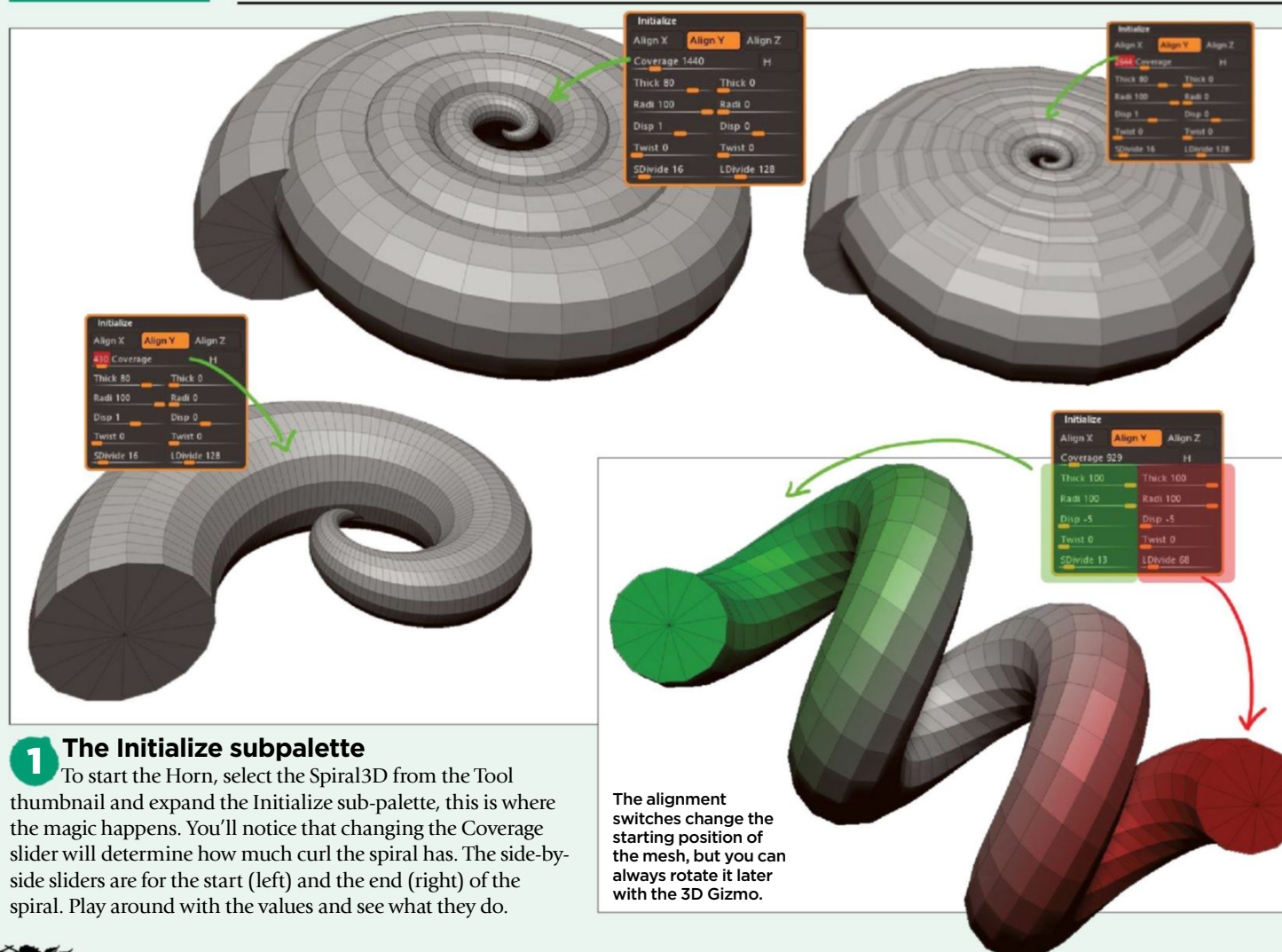
Pablo works as a concept artist and animator in Melbourne. He's also a 3D tutor and enjoys passing on his knowledge to students.
www.zbrushguides.com



Arguably the most popular tools for creating a base mesh in ZBrushCore are Dynamesh and ZSpheres. However, the primitive objects mustn't be overlooked: they have some amazing properties that enable you to create complex shapes in a matter of seconds, as this month's instalment will explain.

When you click the Tool thumbnail, the 3D meshes that you can choose are all primitives. Choosing a Cube3D for instance, will load a seamlessly simple geometry into ZBrushCore. However, if you select the ClayBuildup brush from the bottom of the interface and try to sculpt on the cube, you'll see a message stating you need to convert the 3D-Primitive into a PolyMesh3D.

You can turn any primitive into a sculptable mesh with the click of a button, but the real power of these basic shapes lies in their 'initial state'. By simply changing a few attributes you can drastically alter their entire shape. Every primitive has different settings, but here we'll focus on the Spiral3D to create a horn-shaped object, perhaps belonging on the head of a fantasy beast!

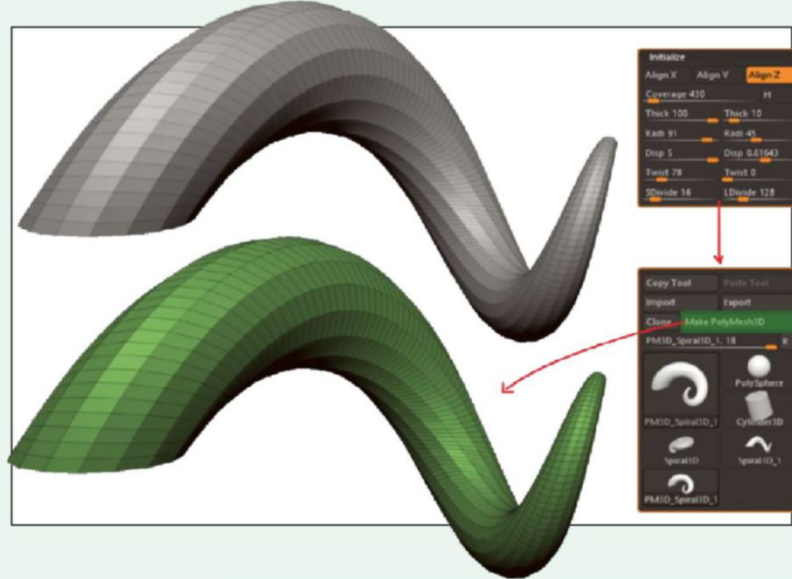


1 The Initialize subpalette
To start the Horn, select the Spiral3D from the Tool thumbnail and expand the Initialize sub-palette, this is where the magic happens. You'll notice that changing the Coverage slider will determine how much curl the spiral has. The side-by-side sliders are for the start (left) and the end (right) of the spiral. Play around with the values and see what they do.

The alignment switches change the starting position of the mesh, but you can always rotate it later with the 3D Gizmo.

2 Turn primitives into sculptable meshes

Turn PolyFrame on so that you can clearly see the alterations to the geometry (such as Subdivisions and Twist). The most relevant sliders to create the horn are the Disp (Displace) and the Coverage slider. Once you're happy with your base mesh for your horn, click the Make Polymesh3D button and you're ready to start adding details.



These are the values I end up using for my horn's base mesh.

PRO SECRETS

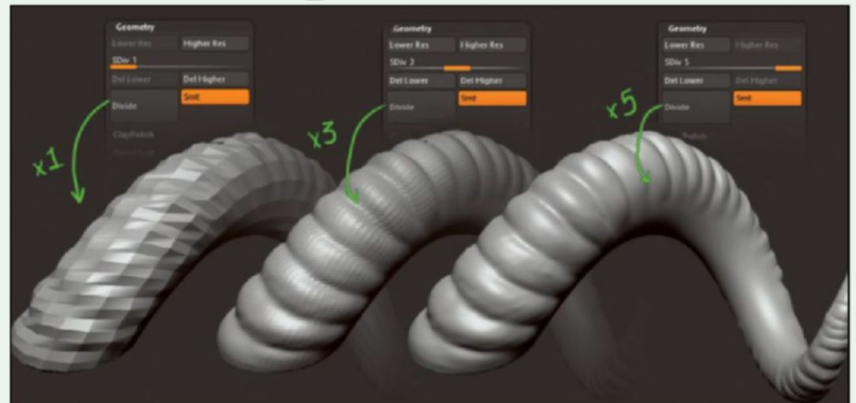
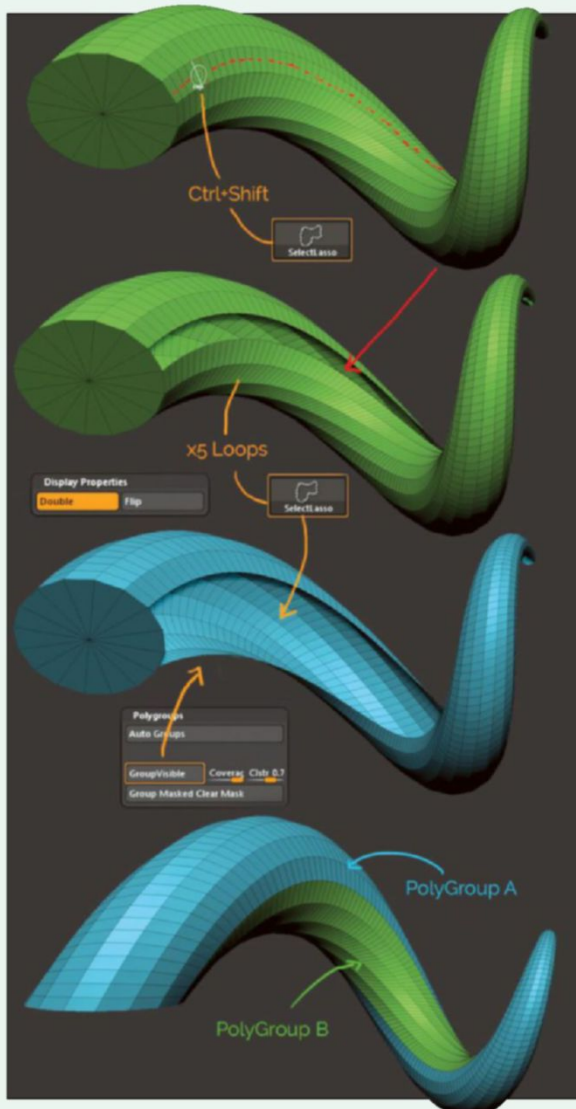
Deformation palette

The Deformation palette provides additional tools to alter the overall shape of your objects. You can make the details in the horn a bit tighter, by moving the Inflate slider slightly to the right.

3 Selection tool

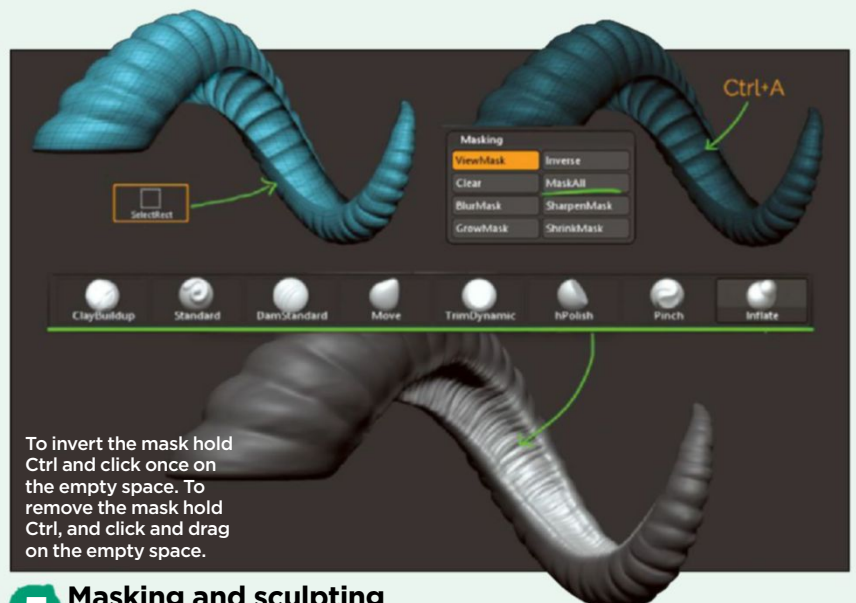
Choose the SelectLasso tool. Hold Shift+Ctrl to access it and click the edge of a polygon in the horn. This will temporarily hide all the adjacent polygons in the loop (do this for a couple of loops). Under the Polygroup subpalette, click the GroupVisible button. Hold Ctrl+Shift and click the empty space to make everything visible again.

To view the inside of the geometry make sure you turn Double on under Display properties.



4 Subdivision levels

Now that our horn is a PolyMesh, we can subdivide it to add finer details. From the Geometry palette click the Divide button. This will subdivide each polygon into four polygons, giving you more geometry to add more details. You can click this a few more times, but I suggest you add new subdivision levels as you progress in the sculpting process and need a higher resolution for these extra details.



To invert the mask hold Ctrl and click once on the empty space. To remove the mask hold Ctrl, and click and drag on the empty space.

5 Masking and sculpting

With the SelectRect tool, hold Ctrl+Shift and click the outer Polygroup to isolate it. Now mask the group (Ctrl+A) and make everything visible (Ctrl+Shift, click an empty space). You can now detail the inner part of the horn.

Photoshop

CREATE A STRONG MOOD AND STORY

Pascal Campion quickly illustrates a scene with a range of characters, lighting and a key focal point

Artist PROFILE

Pascal Campion
LOCATION: US

Pascal's an animator, designer and illustrator living in Los Angeles. He's worked on several animated features as well as on children's books, music videos and editorial work. The artist is best known for his daily sketches, which he's been doing for the past 11 years.

<http://ifxm.ag/pascal-c>



With this workshop I want to paint a romantic encounter between two characters, and

place them in a scene with a strong narrative. The idea is to capture a moment that's part of a bigger story.

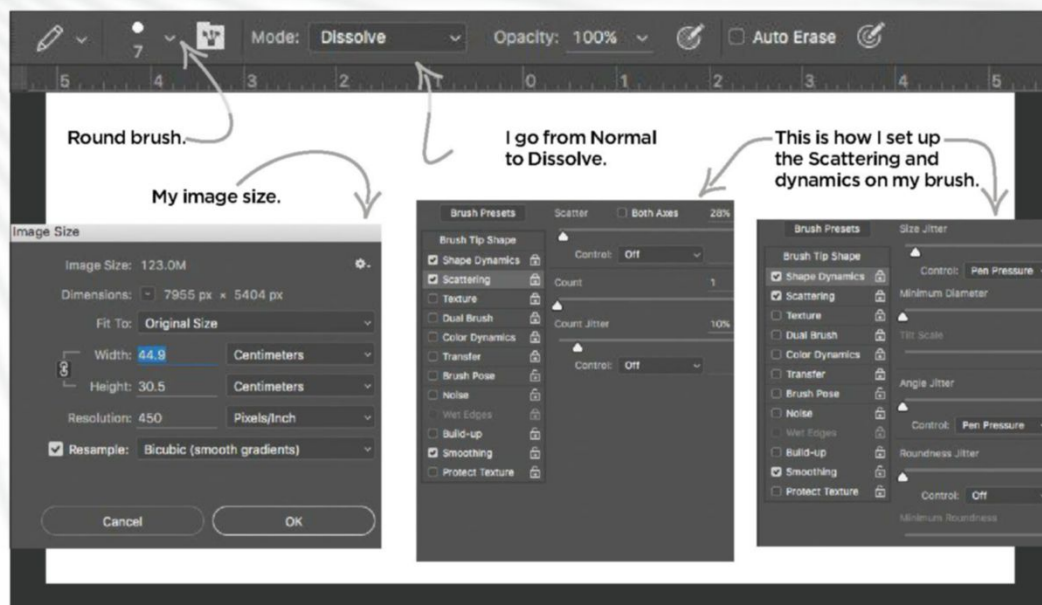
I'm going to control the viewer's visual read of the composition through the use of focal points, and create a backdrop of characters who will reinforce the sense of realism and add some context to the story.

One key element that suggests emotion is lighting, so to generate mood and anchor the moment in a specific time and place, I'm going to light the scene to reinforce the bond between the characters. By doing so

I'll be building a world that lives outside of the frame of the image. In turn, this gives the viewer the sense that the world they're looking at has its own timeline. Events have been taking place in this world before the moment captured on the canvas, and will be happening after this point, too.

I believe if an artist can convey the sense of passage of time in a composition, then they'll have a narrative that works in space and time. This is the foundation of any type of storytelling exercise.

Finally, we'll talk about how colour affects the perception of a story. It's comparable to how the tone of your voice is just as important as the words you're saying. Okay, let's get started.



1 Setting up the file

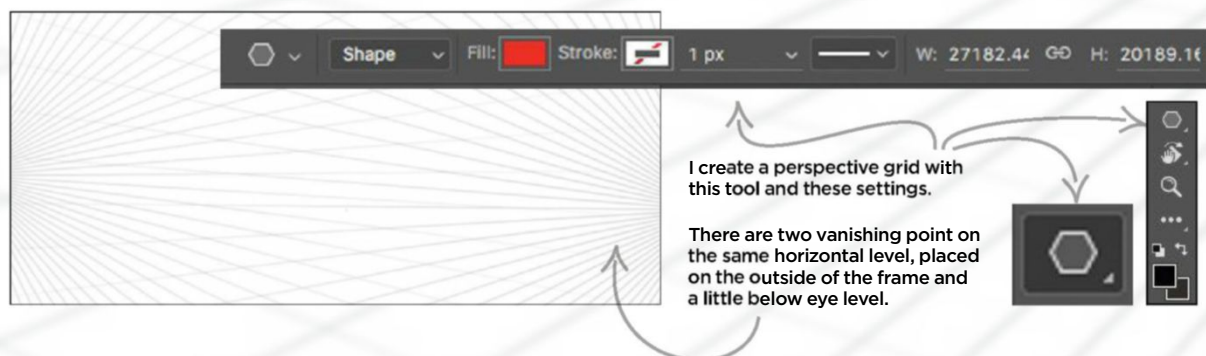
I open Photoshop and create a new image that's 50x30.5cm with a resolution of 450dpi. I'll mostly be using a Round default brush for this piece, but set Scatter to 28 per cent and make use of the Jitter options. I set the mode of my pencil to Dissolve rather than leaving it on Normal.

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 6 now!

2 Perspective grid

I use Photoshop's Polygon tool to create a two-point perspective grid. I set the size to one pt and the number of sides to 99. I create two vanishing points and place them on the same horizontal level, and then put them on each side of the frame, but crucially outside the edges of the canvas.





PRO SECRETS

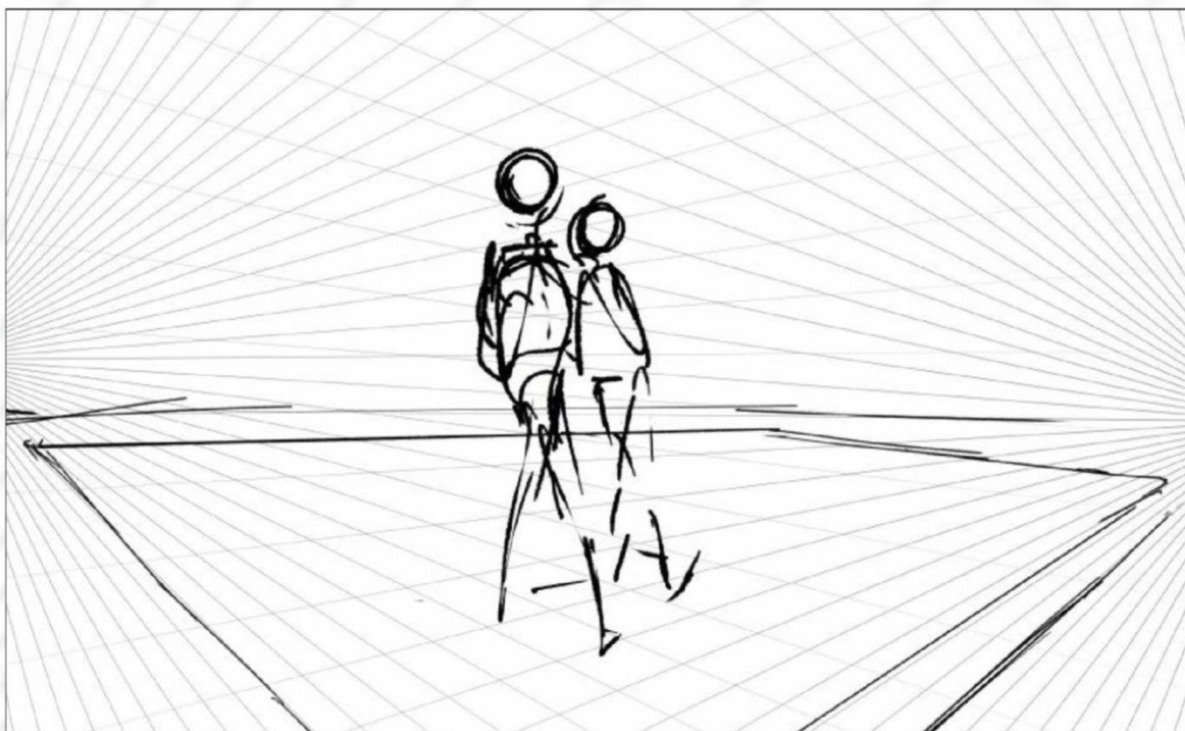
What's right?

Everybody works differently and so we tend to always look for the right way to draw, when really there's no right way. It's whatever works for you and for your own goals.

PRO SECRETS

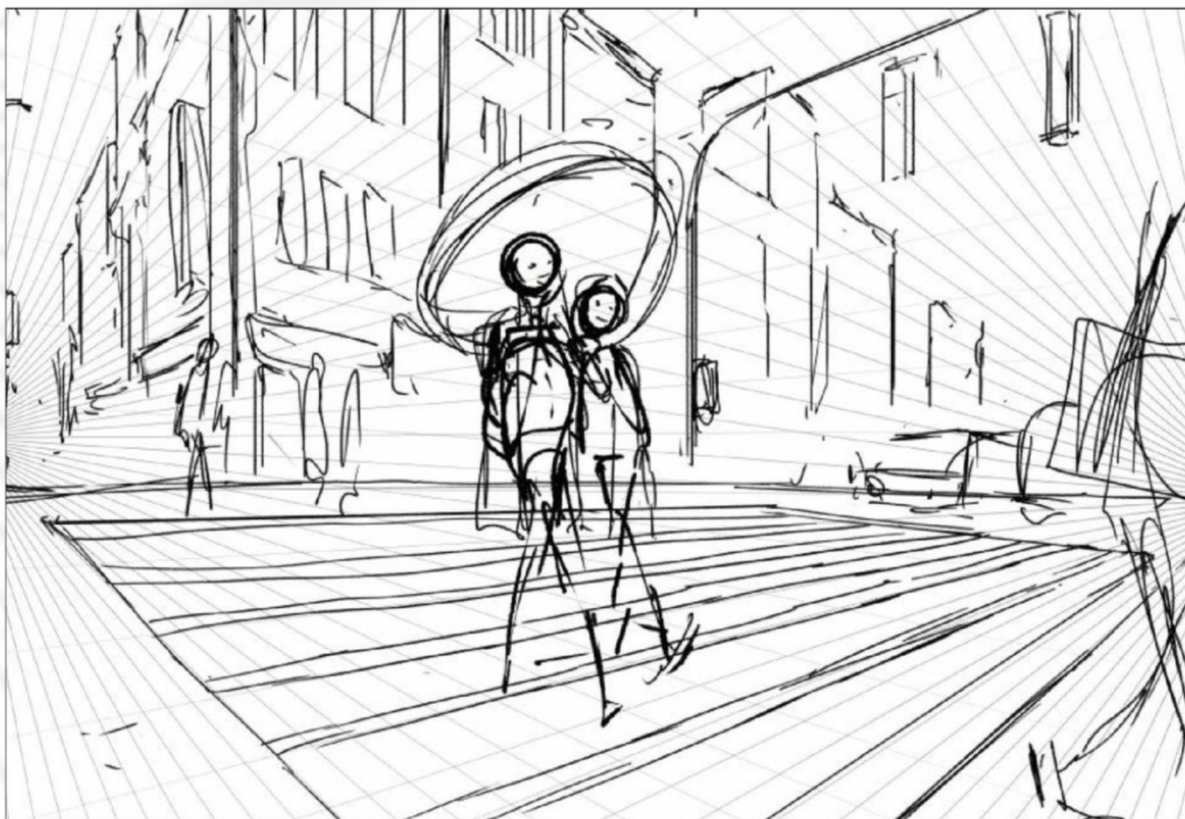
Fun with hue and saturation

I tend to push the images a little more by playing with the Hue/Saturation tool (Ctrl+U). I don't have a particular rule on how to use this tool, so I just play around with the settings and see if I can create an interesting colour scheme. Note that it's easy to overdo it and ruin the colour balance you've already achieved in the image, so either save your work first or work on a new adjustment layer.



3 Setting up your main stage

I always keep my initial drawing very loose. I start with drawing a square on the ground, which will be my main stage. I like to visualise the space that the characters are going to be in because it helps when you're painting multiple figures. Once I have my stage, I roughly sketch in my two main characters.



4 Sketching the full scene

Once I have the characters set up, I start blocking in the rest of the characters. Having the main figures in place means that when I draw other characters and the vehicles, props and buildings in the scene, they won't interfere with the readability of the primary subject. It's going to be a rainy environment, so I give the couple an umbrella.

RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES:
RAIN 025

DIRT BRUSH 2 NAME

HARD ROUNDNAME

I mostly used the Round brush to paint the figures, a square brush for the buildings and a regular stipple brush to depict the rain.



5 Start colour blocking

I change the white background to something else that's not too dark and not too bright. I want to make sure that my starting point on the canvas enables me to brighten or darken the environment as I paint. If I kept things white I would have a hard time making things brighter. Conversely, if the background colour is too dark I'd find it tricky to create strong shadows.



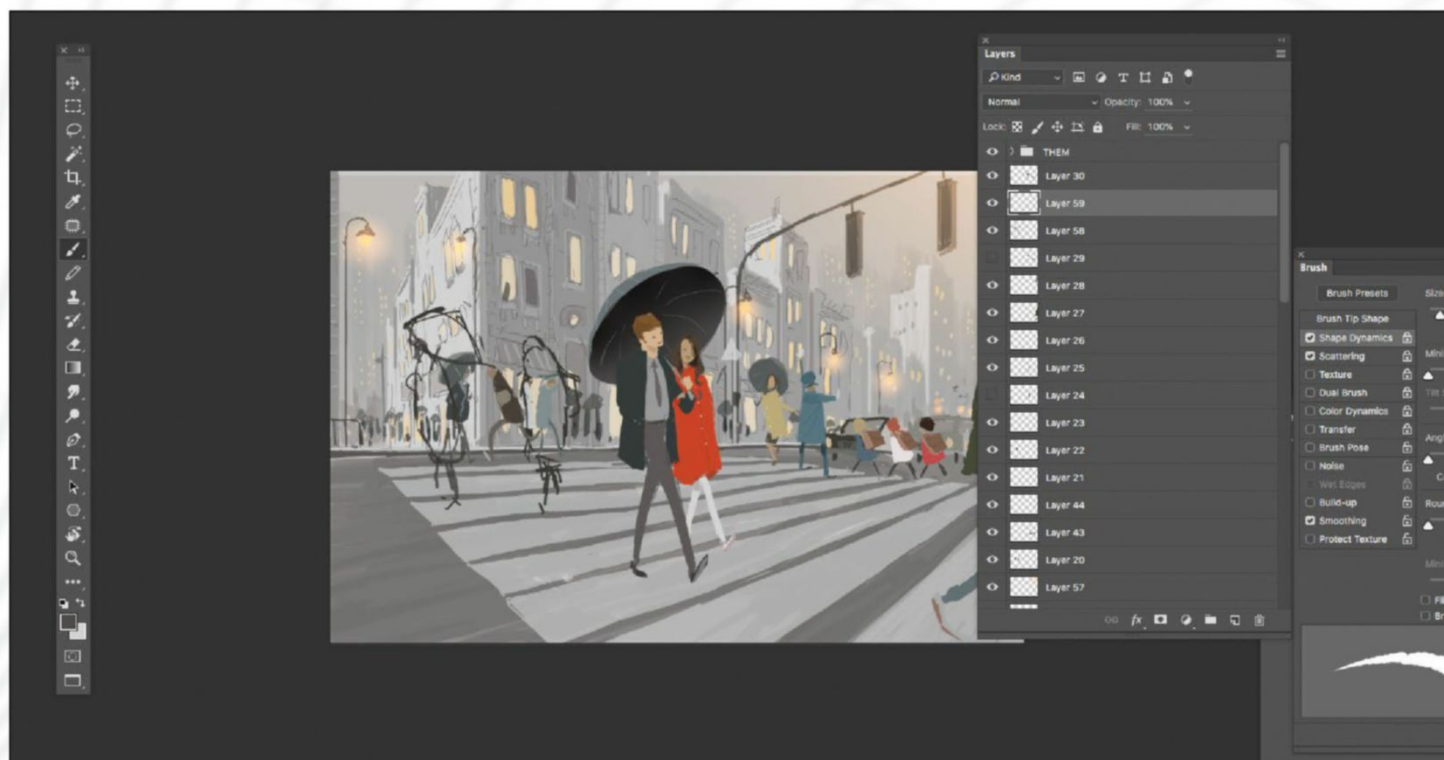
6 Blocking in the shapes

I roughly add colours on to the structure of the characters. I like working with loose figures because it enables me to be more spontaneous when I paint. I find that when I work from very tight pencils it becomes more of an exercise in rendering. Here, I feel as though I'm painting much more freely. As you can see in the sketch, I keep the colour very loose – very much like the initial sketch.



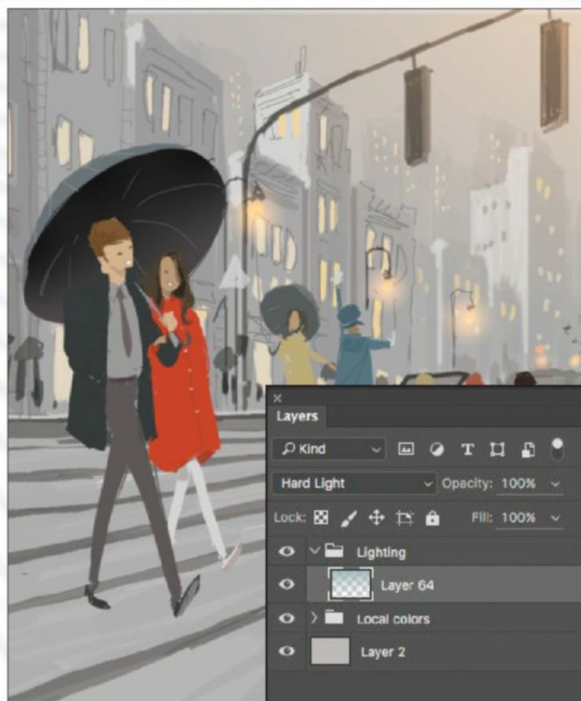
7 Filling out the scene

Once I have my lead characters blocked in, I start blocking in all the others. I usually try to take colours that aren't as saturated as the main characters, and adjust the light to make sure the main figures read clearly. I enjoy creating characters over loose doodles. ➡



8 Finishing the base colours

While I'm progressing with the colour blocking stage, I realise that I need more characters and more objects in the background to fill out the scene. For this I just improvise the design and placement of new elements and I make sure they don't conflict with the readability of the main characters. I also start to indicate where the lights will be, by painting in blocks of lighter colours on the buildings' windows.



9 Focusing on the lighting

I love this stage because it completely transforms and amplifies your image. The environment's weather is gloomy and overcast, so I create a gradient of light blue/grey colour going from top to bottom. I put this on a Hard Light layer, which creates the feeling that a light layer of fog is present in the scene.



10 Anchoring the image

In this step I create roughly the opposite: another gradient with the same colour scheme but from bottom to top, and I put this on a Multiply layer. That helps me anchor the scene because it feels more weighed down at the bottom. Indeed, I think it helps me create a tangible sense of gravity to the world, which helps with realism.

PRO SECRETS

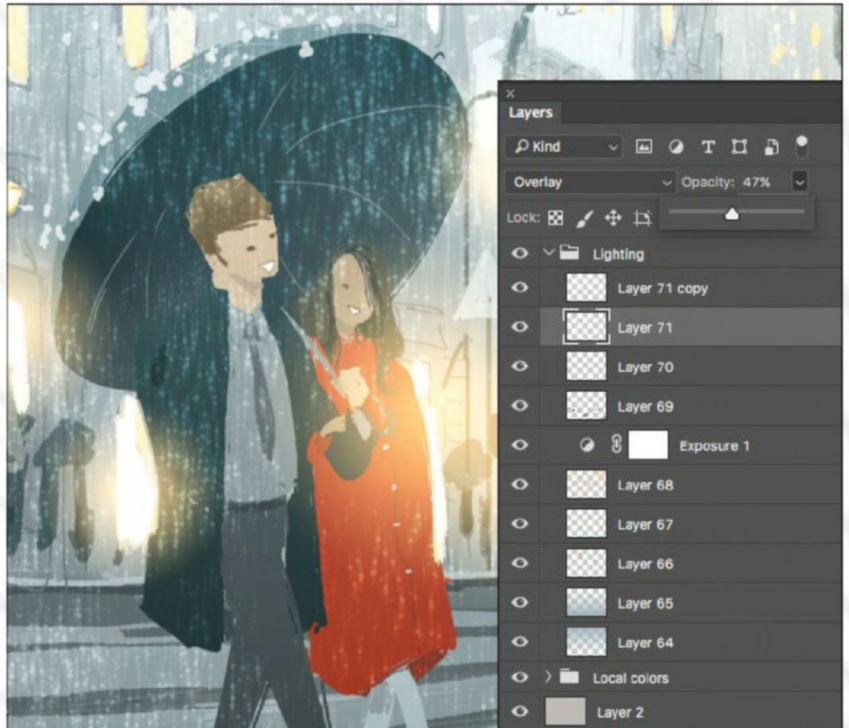
Be aware of your limits

Stay loose, be open to change and realise that your personal emotional state affects how you draw and what you draw. This is particularly relevant if you're a person who's regularly hard on themselves if something doesn't work out quite right (as most artists tend to do). In addition, give yourself the time and space to explore new painting tools and techniques. Being able to work in a range of styles will make a better – and more employable – artist.



11 Rain and spotlights

I start thinking about rain and light from the windows. For the lights, I use radial gradients of light orange or yellow. I centre them on the windows and set the layer mode to Overlay. For the rain I use a stipple brush that I apply over the entire image. I favour the top part of the image, though. I use a light grey for the rain.



12 Blurring the rain drops

When I'm happy with the amount of rain drops on show, I blur them with a Motion blur filter going straight down, to imply the sense of a heavy rain shower. I also add more rain and draw some splatters on the ground. I do this very lightly, using the small Round brush that I've been using since the beginning of the process.



13 Start adding reflections.

I select the Round brush again and loosely paint shapes under the main figures with the colours of the characters. I then lower the Opacity of the layer around 45 or 50 per cent (it depends on how strong I want my reflections to be). For this stage you can be very loose in how you draw the characters' reflections.



14 Final steps and finishing up

I'm pretty much there with the painting. Now I'm just finishing up. I add some more rain drops and some shadows here and there. For instance, I add a shadow on the top part of the characters to simulate the umbrella's shade that it gives. For this, I use the Lasso tool and select the top part of the characters along with the inside of the umbrella, then add a gradient of grey. This gradient is on a Multiply layer. And voilà, that's the scene pretty much finished!

Affinity Photo

GET DRAWING WITH AFFINITY PHOTO

Artist PROFILE

Bob Byrne
LOCATION: Spain

Originally from Dublin, Bob is a game developer, and a comic writer and artist for 2000 AD among others.
www.clamnuts.com

Affinity Photo for iPad comes with plenty of drawing power – here, **Bob Byrne** puts the app and Apple Pencil to the test



Affinity Photo for iPad is clearly an unrivalled photo editor – and it's hard to argue with its one-off price of £19.99 – but how does Serif's app fare when it comes to creating illustrations from

scratch? For this article I've put the app through its paces while drawing and colouring a full comic page.

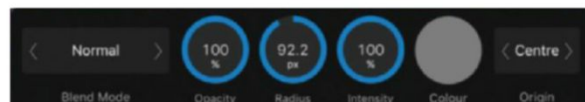
Just to spice things up a little, I decided to create this page far away from my usual studio mess, using Affinity Photo on the new iPad Pro

10.5-inch with the Apple Pencil. It felt great to be truly mobile and to work whenever inspiration struck: in the back of the car on the way to the supermarket, a hospital waiting room and (of course!) a couple of dive bars.

1 Set up and Undo

Let's start with finding Undo. This threw me at first because I assumed it was a two-finger tap gesture. It can be found in the bottom right, along with Redo and the Tooltip Assistant. Using the Rectangle tool I draw one square and then duplicate it to make a row of three. To duplicate something tap Commands>Duplicate. Then I duplicate that row vertically to create a 10-panel layout. To change the stroke width, tap Pen and change Width. You can drag the values up and down by pressing Width or tapping it and typing values numerically.

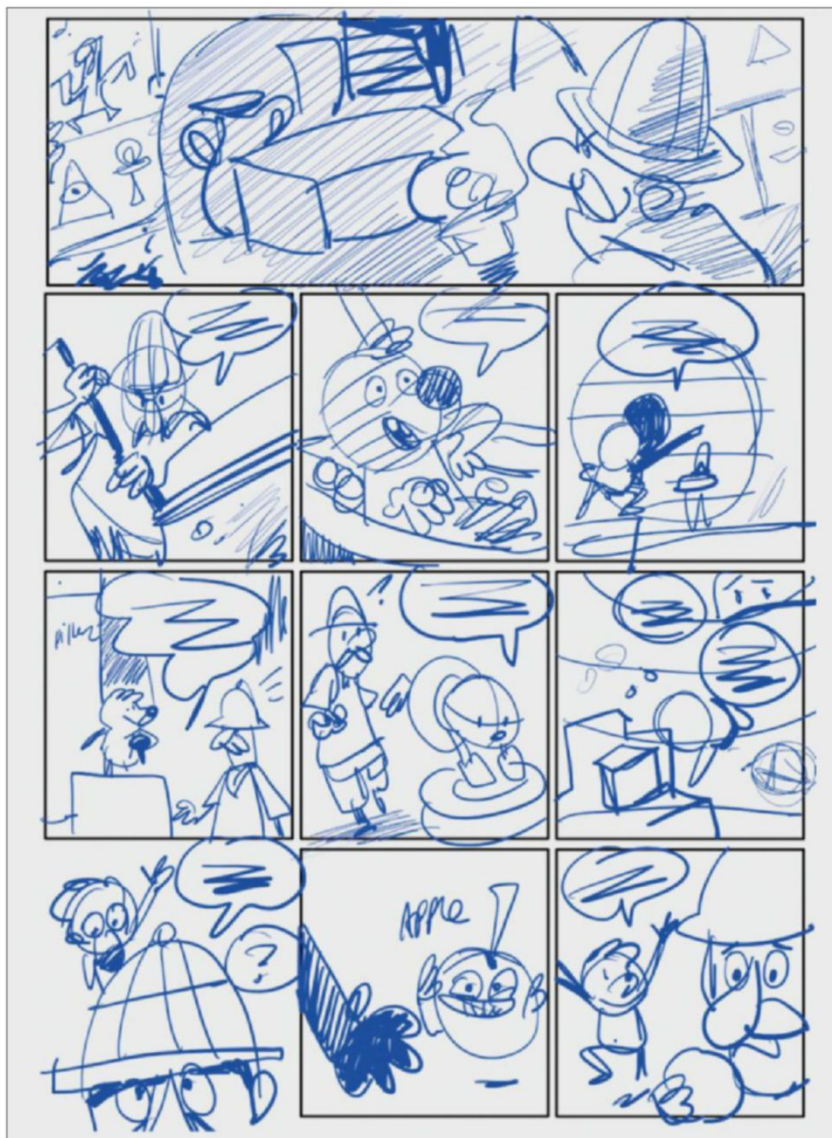
Then I tap Use Fill to remove the colour inside the rectangles. I group all panels and lock them by tapping Layer the More (the circle with three dots) and hitting Lock. You'll find Layer Opacity and Layer Blend Modes here, too. Ideally, these would be in the main Layers panel and not an additional tap away because we're going to be changing and locking layers a lot in this workshop.



2 Sketching and layout

Now I pick any random brush and draw the rough layout of the comic. This is to check that the story flows correctly and that there's enough room for the speech bubbles. A newbie mistake is not to leave enough space for the bubbles; a comic pro uses them to save time. If you know a bubble will obscure a large part of the background, it means less drawing and a longer lunch!

Traditionally, comic artists draw with non-reproducing blue pencils and this has carried over into the digital realm. Choosing blue has no real function, but it makes it easier to draw over. The thinking behind page layout is a tutorial for another day, but the basic idea is to vary the camera angle. If the two characters were just placed side by side in every panel, the comic would soon feel boring.

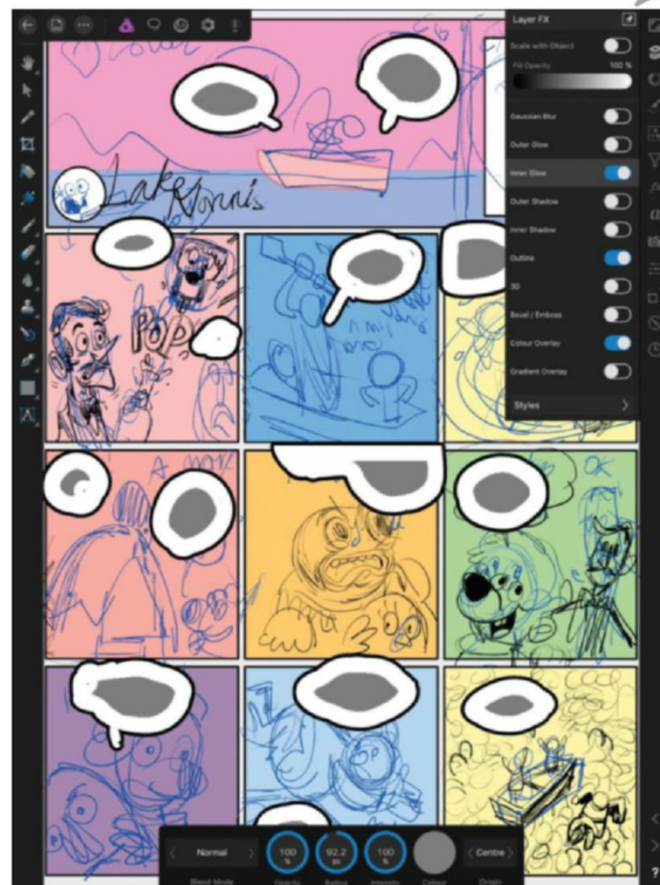


3 Adding text and speech bubbles

In order to get the job signed off by the editor I add quick speech bubbles with the full text. There's a huge range of fonts installed in Affinity Photo, but at the time of writing you can't add your own fonts, so I'll letter it properly later on in Affinity Designer using my desktop computer that's back home.

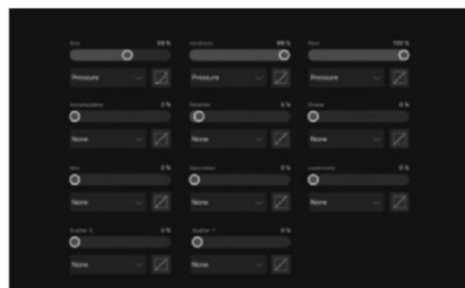
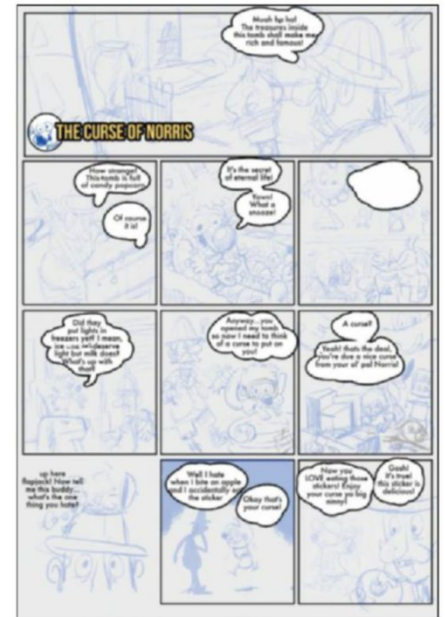
A great way to rapidly create speech bubbles is to first type your text by pressing Text and then Frame Text. Then on a new layer draw a rough shape around the each text block. It doesn't matter what colour this is. Then open Layer FX Studio and apply Outline (black) and Colour Overlay (white fill). Now you can draw speech bubbles on your page layout.

A bonus tip is to add 'mockup text' by selecting Inner Glow. This helps you see the layout better without the hassle of typing in text.



Select Inner Glow in the Layer FX palette to quickly mock up areas of text within your comic panel.

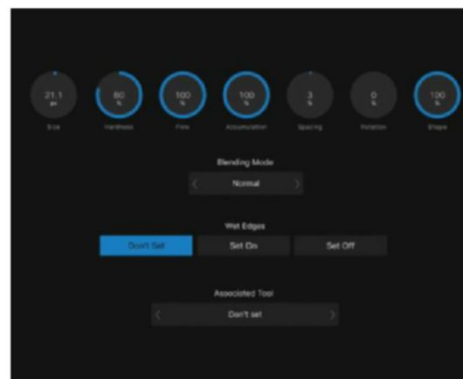
Speech bubbles.



4 Select your brushes

The 12 DAUB brushes that come installed by default are fantastic, but I prefer a much more basic brush for inking. You can create your own brush category by tapping Brush Studio, and then the hamburger icon. Press Add Category and then name your brush. Now press the hamburger again and then New Round Brush.

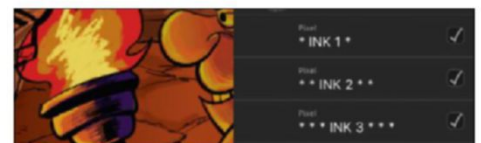
Here are the settings I used. It's all pretty basic stuff. All I need really is a solid brush that tapers towards the ends. You can fine-tune your brush settings in the app to an amazing degree, including Tilt Sensitivity, Hardness by Angle and so on. I should mention at this stage that I'm using an Apple stylus. Do you really need an Apple Stylus to use Affinity Photo on the iPad? For photo editing I don't think it's essential, but for illustration I would say yes. To create lines with variable width it's all about pen pressure.



5 Brush stabiliser option

I was playing with the app for over a week before I noticed the tiny white arrow icon to the right of the sub-tool menu. And what lay hidden there really made my day. I thought the Brush Stabiliser tools were only currently available in the Beta of Affinity Designer 1.6. But here they are! To use the familiar phrase, this tool is a game changer. It enables you to draw smooth curves and lines in a very satisfying way. I love playing with this. So armed with my custom brush and Rope Stabiliser I get to work inking the page.

One thing to bear in mind is that in the current version of the app (1.6.3) there's no line tool. The solution is to simply whip out your credit card and use that as an old-fashioned ruler directly on the iPad.



6 Keep your layers and folders organised

One drawback of digital freedom is that you can get lost within too many layers. I used to suffer from "fear of commitment" and keep dozens of ink layers active, which ended up slowing down the software, and my creative process. Now I've found that the best way to structure your project is to limit yourself to three ink layers. I name them as follows:

* INK 1 *
* * INK 2 * *
* * * INK 3 * * *

Now you can easily identify them. To add these three layers to a master INK folder, slide select or hit the checkbox on your layers and then tap the folder icon. To change the name from Unnamed, tap More (the circle with three dots) to reveal more options. This confused me initially because my folder is called Unnamed while the label says Group. Tap Group and rename your folder. You can rename individual layers the same way.

To merge multiple layers or folders into one layer just select the ones you want and tap Commands>Rasterise. ➡

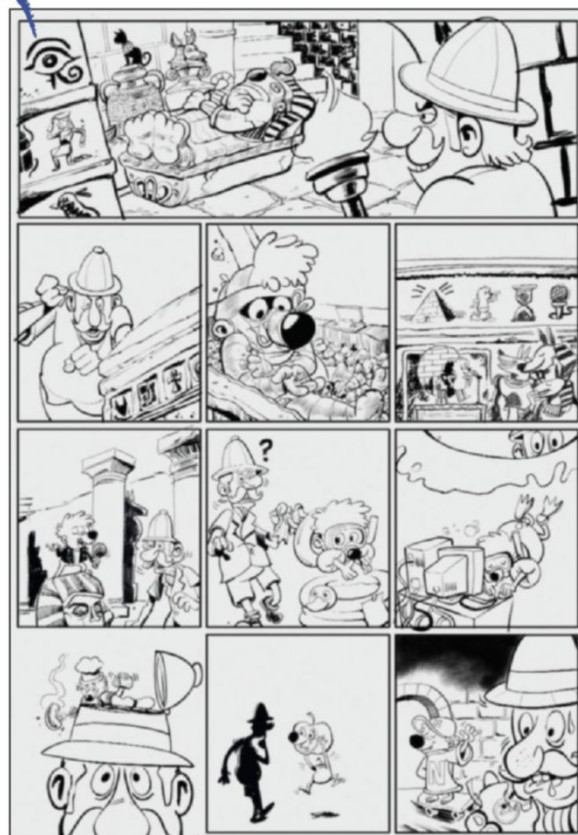


Once you're happy with the line art, blocking in and colouring is made easy through the use of the app's layer system.

7 Colouring the page

Now that the full page is inked, I'm ready to colour it. Tapping Layer>More>Multiply enables you to colour 'behind' your line art. I draw rectangle shapes behind each comic panel. This makes it possible to block out the colours and also use the rectangles as a rough 'n' ready folder to clip all the sub-layers into. When adding the colours I create a new layer and use some of the DAUB Dry Media brushes. Depending on how you prefer to work, you can set the app to create a new pixel layer automatically every time you use a brush. You can turn this feature on or off by selecting Document>Assistant.

For large shapes such as the coffin and the Explorer character I create a vector shape with the Pen tool. This means that I'm able to clip in sub-layers easily and dynamically change the overall colours and shadows using the Gradient tool.



The use of real-world textures, such as this gingerbread cake, adds a nice finishing touch to my comic artwork.



8 Lighting and textures

As a final touch I'll import a real-world texture to the character and introduce lighting to the scene. For textures you can use any photo or image, and you'll always be surprised with the results. Import images to your file by tapping Commands>Place and then choose the location: either from your Photos or Cloud storage. I place a gingerbread texture, resize it and then clip the image into place. To add a powerful lighting effect, tap the Filters Studio>Lighting and drag the control lines. Then have fun experimenting with the Ambient, Specular, Shininess and Diffuse settings. I could play with textures and lighting all day long!

This is the first of hopefully many comics that I expect to create completely in Affinity Photo on iPad. Right now Affinity Photo is only a couple of months old so I can only imagine what future versions will bring. At such a low price, and with no subscription, this is truly a game changer for the profession.

Affinity Photo for iPad is available from the App Store for the one-off price of £19.99. Find out what else you can achieve with the app, and what versions of the iPad it's compatible with, by visiting www.affinity.serif.com/photo/ipad.

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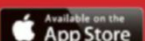
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6
PRODUCTS
ON TEST



ART TOOLS

94 CarbOthello Pastel Pencil Set

Painting with pastel pencils is relatively mess-free. Should tidy artists plump for Stabilo's set of colourful pencils?

95 H2O Water Mixable Oil Paints

Fumes from oil painting getting you down? Then consider these water-based oils, for a less-noxious painting experience.

TRAINING

97 Flower Painting in the Wild

James Gurney explores techniques for capturing the delicate details of flowers, and how to apply these methods elsewhere.

BOOKS

98 How Comics Work

Watchmen artist Dave Gibbons and pop culture expert Tim Pilcher present ideas on how to put together compelling comics.



99 The Fantasy Art of Oliver Frey

Book and magazine cover art from the 80s feature in this artist's updated retrospective.

99 Sorayama - Complete Masterworks

Sorayama's a celebrated name in erotic art circles - this book reveals why.



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



This mid-range set of pastels is a riot of colour that won't break the bank.

CarbOthello Pastel Pencil Set

WOODEN WONDERS These pastel pencils are a great starter set or a strong addition to any collection

Price £37 (24 pencils) **Company** Stabilo **Web** www.stabilo.com

Hailing very much from the art side of the STABILO stable, the CarbOthello Pastel Pencil Set is aimed at mid-level artists. And as with most STABILO products, you're guaranteed a high level of quality.

This 24-pencil set comes in an attractive two-piece tin and includes a decent spectrum of colour choices. The pencils sharpen very well, so you can fashion a good tip with a new scalpel blade and a sandpaper block.

The pencils' dry stroke is perfect for blending, but the fun really starts

when you begin adding water, with some particularly interesting results achievable when working in wet areas with dry pencils. Playing about with the balance of these elements is one of the joys of this set. And when you do, you'll realise that the great advantage of using pastel pencils is the lack of mess at the end of the day.

Stabilo's pencils are fuss-free and solid, with good pigment strengths matched with quality wooden shafts. If you're looking for your first reasonably priced set of pastel pencils, this is a great mid-level entry point.



DETAILS

Features

- 4.4mm lead diameter
- Charcoal-like stroke
- Can be dry-mixed or blended
- Colour fast

Rating



Stabilo's pastel pencil collections also come in sets of 12, 36 and 60.

This affordable box of delights has a comprehensive range of colours that can provide some good results when mixed...



H2O Water Mixable Oil Paints

EASY SQUEEZY We explore the fume-free world of water-mixable oil paints, which can be combined with acrylic and gouache for a new painting experience

Price £41 **Company** Mont Marte **Web** www.montmarte.net

The heady aroma of artists' grade turpentine is not everyone's cup of tea. Aside from the smell, some are worried about reported health concerns associated with the product, and so the need for water-mixable oil paints was born.

What started out as a limited palette of colours from just a few suppliers has now grown into a sizeable range of paints. Australian company Mont Marte has created yet more choices for the smell-sensitive consumer with its H2O Water Mixable Oil Paint set.

The 36-tube set comes in a single-piece cardboard box, with two trays of 18 tubes covering an impressive range of colours. The colours squeeze out with a little splitting as the pigment separates from the oil. A slight graininess can be felt under your palette knife and the finish on some isn't that lovely gloopy gloss you get with high-end oil paints.

When mixing, be careful how much water you add. Anything more than one-part water to three-parts water-mixable oil paint (WMOP) can change the consistency of the paint and cause

cloudiness. You can also mix WMOP with gouache and acrylics, but again, watch those ratios. Adding more than one-part gouache or acrylic to four-parts WMOP can affect how it cures. The colours react well when mixed, and make for pieces that weren't far from the expected results.

If you're looking for a serious replacement to your oil paints, then look elsewhere. But if you're after an affordable and safer oil paint that doesn't require toxic spirits, then you could have a lot of fun with this H2O set from Mont Marte.

DETAILS

Features

- Dries to a satin finish
- Can be mixed with acrylic and gouache
- Water-dilutable
- Easy to clean up

Rating



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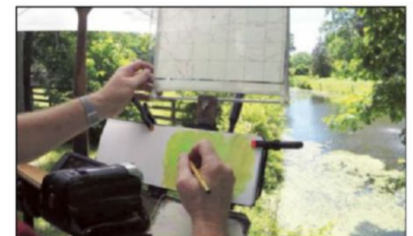
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MATTERS**

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Despite its simple overall form, the peony presents a challenge because of its dense, overlapping petals.



The most ambitious project in this video sees James use a sighting grid to accurately depict wild roses by the water.

Flower Painting in the Wild

NATURE BOY Artist and illustrator James Gurney shows why there's much more to painting petals than meets the eye, in his latest instructional video

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

Flowers? Really? Yet if you're not convinced of the relevance in depicting stems and petals to your fantasy genre of choice, the few seconds at the start of James Gurney's latest video will set you straight. The montage of camera pans over bizarre structures and dazzling colours reminds you how beautiful – and, yes, alien – flowers can be.

Spend some time with the plants in your area and you're sure to find unexpected inspiration – like the cleomes James paints in his first project, with tendrils exploding from the flower heads like fireworks; or daylilies, so named because each bloom typically last no more than 24 hours, meaning the plant takes on an entirely new form each day.

Creative stimulus aside, the six short projects in this video will help anyone developing their painting skills, especially if you're addressing the challenge of portraying complicated visual information.



DETAILS

Topics covered

- Stripping out complexity
- Underpainting
- Painting with negative space
- Using gradations
- Painting in changing conditions
- Painting translucent layers

Length
68 minutes

Rating



James has plenty to say about reducing complexity so that the viewer can 'read' the composition and shapes. Even though the final pictures can look rich with detail, closer observation reveals how James has rendered some areas more simply than others, efficiently directing the eye. In areas where there are lots of flowers, thinking of them as one mass as you start can also help make your painting feel cohesive, as can linking similar areas together across the painting.

He'll also help you explore techniques such as underpainting, where you lay down a wash of one colour then cut into it with another, essentially painting with negative space; or loading a gradation of colour onto your brush to evoke the subtle shifts of hue in leaves.

Far from getting you to paint pretty but predictable arrangements, James' aim here is to show you how to present the true nature of the flower. That's a concept worth applying to any subject you work on.

ARTIST PROFILE

JAMES GURNEY

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



has also written the instruction best-selling books *Imaginative Realism* and *Color and Light*.

www.gurneyjourney.blogspot.com



How Comics Work

COMIC SCANS A relaxed look into every aspect of comic mechanics, co-authored by the man behind the greatest graphic novel of all time



Authors Dave Gibbons and Tim Pilcher **Publisher** Rotovision **Price** £17 **Web** www.quartoknows.com/rotovision

With over 40 years' experience in the comics industry, including work on big titles like *Watchmen* and

The Green Lantern, there's no one better to guide you through how comics work than Dave Gibbons. And in this welcoming book co-written with pop culture expert Tim Pilcher, he does exactly that.

Considering that *How Comics Work* features such a well-known name, there's a refreshing lack of ego on display. Instead, the two writers invite the reader to listen in on one of their many chats about comics, and the pair's enthusiasm comes across in the breezy but authoritative writing style. Rather than being didactic, this book states that the tips enclosed are simply how Dave works, and compliments the reader's intelligence by suggesting that the advice it gives is the first step towards a larger understanding.



The book's seven chapters cover the key aspects of the comic-creation process. These include sections on scripting, character design, lettering, cover design and more. Each is packed with observations from Dave's career that are sure to surprise even those well versed in his work.

Most of the chapters follow a similar structure, opening with early influences on Dave and how he put

“Each chapter is packed with notes from Dave's career that are sure to surprise”

these inspirations into practice, before hearing from the man himself on how he approaches the topic in question. The final chapter is set aside to creative exercises and feels a bit thin on the ground in comparison to the rest. What's there is good, but we can't help but wish there were more challenges from the comics master.

How Comics Work also features scans of Dave's original artwork, sketches, and illustrations that rarely see the light of day. These feature all the way through the book and make it as enjoyable to look at and read as it is enlightening for those looking to learn from its many pearls of wisdom. Every

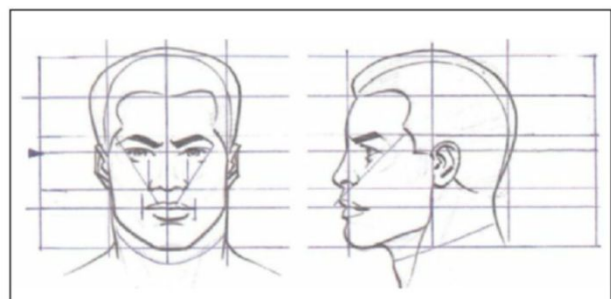


Superman's 'S' is, in Dave's opinion, a stamp of authority. It's a device that sums up the superhero.

image, whether it's a piece of work by Dave or one of his idols, is usefully captioned so readers can do more research into their favourite strips.

While a book on how to make comics is invariably going to fall short in certain ways depending on the reader, *How Comics Work* sets the standard for an approachable examination of how the medium functions and what it can accomplish.

RATING ★★★★★



Referring to model sheets helps an artist to maintain a character's design across the course of a comic strip.

The Fantasy Art of Oliver Frey

COMMERCIAL COVER An updated look into the life and works of the renowned video games magazine cover illustrator from the 1980s

Author Roger Kean **Publisher** Fusion Retro Books **Price** £20 **Web** www.fusionretrobooks.com

Rarely does an artist prefer to describe themselves as a “commercial illustrator” – especially when they’ve worked on the likes of *Superman: The Movie* and *Dan Dare*. Yet that’s how the prolific Oliver Frey likes to define himself though in this updated and extended version of a book that was first released in 2006.

Supported by Kickstarter donations, this edition shows how much



“Futuristic armour and weaponry gone mad” is how Oliver Frey describes this particular artwork, produced for a CRASH calendar.



appreciation there still is for the artist known as ‘Oli’. Most of the new additions in the 250 page collection are images, plus there’s material from the 8- and 16- bit computer revolution.

The book opens with a three-part biography of Oli’s career that balances anecdotes alongside personal photographs and illustrations by the man and his influences. However, the bulk of the book is set aside to Oli’s

cover pieces for magazines like CRASH, Sega Force Mega and ZZAP!.

All of the illustrations are coverline-free and accompanied by captions and dates. For readers of a certain generation, this book offers the chance to plot their nostalgia and appreciate the unique style of the lavish illustrator like never before.

RATING ★★★★★☆

Sorayama – Complete Masterworks

FEMME METAL This reference catalogue brings together a wealth of surreal and erotic illustrations by airbrush maestro Hajime Sorayama

Author N/A **Publisher** Edition Skylight **Price** £27 **Web** www.edition-skylight.com

Covering the career of the renowned Japanese illustrator from the 1970s onwards, this collection contains page after page of his favourite subject: “the erotically charged female nude.”

Hajime Sorayama is famous for his Sexy Robot paintings, but sheltered readers are quickly brought up to speed with an opening single page biography and exhibition profile. The



Sorayama’s stylised female subjects are enhanced further with the artist’s extensive airbrush skills.



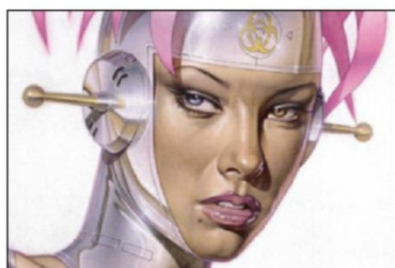
remaining 462 pages are devoted to airbrushed gynoids and women having explicit fun with bondage equipment.

Amongst these illustrations are the occasional un-erotic pieces such as AIBO, the robot dog Hajime originally designed for Sony, and testimonials from the artist’s friends and colleagues. Frustratingly, the messages are in a range of languages

so it’s unlikely one reader is going to be able to decipher them all.

It would’ve been nice for the book to take more of an academic approach as there are only a handful of credits and captions, but in terms of bulk and presentation, this is sure to leave Hajime’s many fans satisfied.

RATING ★★★★★☆



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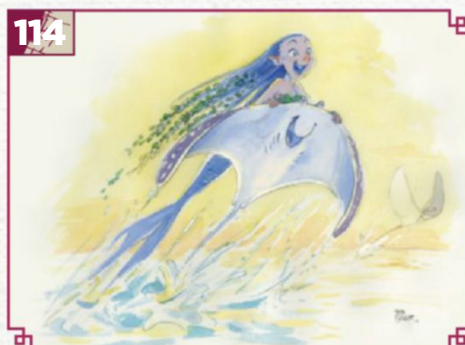
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This US artist achieved a childhood dream when he secured a job at Disney.



FXPosé

SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL ARTISTS



Atsuko Goto

LOCATION: Japan **MEDIA:** Pigments, gum arabic, ink, lapis lazuli **WEB:** www.gotsuko.com

"I paint the hidden emotions and stories our memory builds in our dreams," says Atsuko. She always takes a step back and tries to find meaning in her finished art.



1 DREAMING MONSTER II

"This is one piece from my series entitled Dreaming Monster. I think everybody is a dreaming monster: we dream things that we can't tell anyone."

2 DREAMING MONSTER V

"I wanted to combine two opposing feelings into one picture, so that people would see it differently depending on their current emotional state."

3 BEAUTIFUL FUTURE

"This painting represents things that we might see as strange and unreal nowadays, but could be considered beautiful and common in the future."





4 EMPTY IDOL
“The idol loses its
own spirit in order to
become the container
of our wishes.”



Zach Montoya

LOCATION: US **MEDIA:** Graphite, acrylic, oils, watercolour, ink **WEB:** Zachmontoya.com

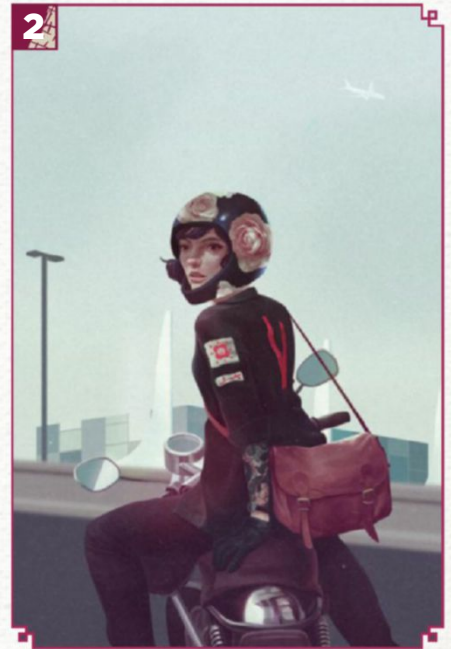
"My work is very atmospheric, generally inspired by my childhood in the Pacific northwest," says Zach. He'll often finish off his traditional art in Photoshop.

1 ZEAL

"I was inspired by Old Master paintings where the earth-toned underpainting shows through in shadows, giving this beautiful glow. I used washes of Burnt sienna liquid acrylic over a line drawing, then passed over it in oils."

2 MEMORY OF RUNNING

"Part of the reason I tend to mainly draw women is because I like the way women's fashion looks. There's also something about sleeve tattoos on women that really appeals to me."



3 GATHERING

"I was inspired by the grey, snowy days from my childhood. I wanted to see how much I could get out of the watercolour textures while still using a tight rendering technique."

4 CALLING

"This was a bit more esoteric in its theme. I often try to reconcile my realistic painting techniques with something more stylistic. I wanted to make the bird and the hair feel very painterly, without being strictly realistic."



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





Oils

CINEMATIC SCI-FI PAINTING IN OILS

BRYAN MARK TAYLOR demonstrates the process of creating a moody and atmospheric science fiction scene using traditional oil painting techniques

Learning how to paint an imaginative sci-fi landscape in oils with convincing light and atmosphere can be a fun challenge. In this workshop, I'll show you my process, from quickly blocking in the initial concept, to the application of the final details. The workshop will include an in-depth analysis of how to handle the challenges and capabilities of oil paint.

Imaginative science fiction scenes can often lose their spontaneity in an artist's pursuit of detail. Here, I'll show you how I design and orchestrate the scene while keeping the painting fresh and loose. Creating expressive strokes while developing a strong focal point can be a difficult balancing act and I'll reveal how I'm

ARTIST INSIGHT

PAINTING MEDIUM

I use Gamsol as a painting medium because of its slow evaporation rate. This gives me more time to push and modify the paint at the beginning of each painting.



able to achieve this goal without overworking the paint. To keep the artwork fresh and loose, I'll introduce a variety of tools and techniques that I regularly use in my work to develop dynamic and spontaneous shapes and textures.

The way edges are used in a painting can be an important part of expressing mood and emotion in an image. I'll show you how I create a variety of sharp, soft and lost edges in my paintings by utilising appropriate tools and techniques.

Developing depth and atmosphere are key components to any imaginative scene. By using my knowledge of outdoor landscape painting, I'll demonstrate tips and tricks on how to build aerial perspective into the piece through

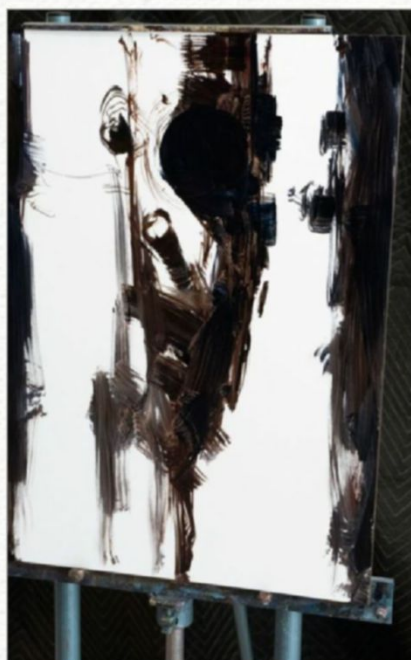
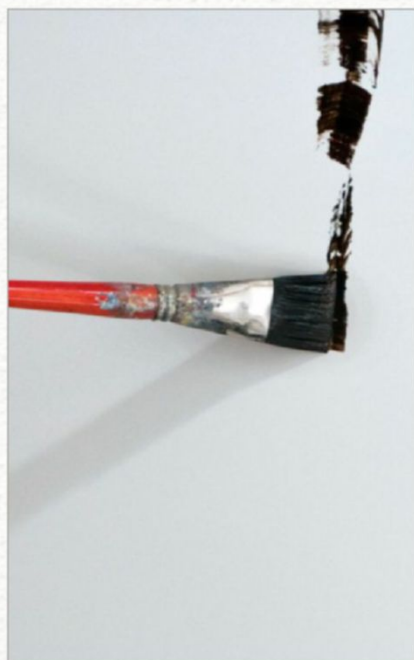
the use of colour, value, scale and overlapping shapes.

I'll discuss the reasons for my limited palette of colours and how to use both colour, value and varying degrees of opacity to create a feeling of natural sunlight. I'll also show how to analyse and spot errors in the painting in order to make important corrections and will demonstrate how to simplify overly complex passages in order to make the painting work as a whole unit.



Bryan has recently turned his attention to creating moody sci-fi scenes based on his observations of urban landscapes and cityscapes, blending elements of impressionism and abstraction into his work. You can see more of his art at www.bryanmarktaylor.com.





1 Making a confident start

Although I'm painting in oils, I begin by using a two-inch watercolour brush. I dip the brush in Burnt sienna and Ultramarine blue, adding some Gamsol to the mixture to make the paint flow like watercolour. With quick, broad strokes I mass in the big shapes on a gessoed panel to establish the general composition.

2 Unify the shadows

I mass in and modify the strokes using a screen printing squeegee. Using the squeegee can quickly add variety and subtlety to the paint without over-rendering the shadow areas. In this stage it's important to keep things moving quickly before the Gamsol evaporates and the gesso begins to absorb the paint.

MATERIALS

OIL PAINT

■ Cadmium yellow lemon, Cadmium yellow orange, Indian yellow, Cadmium red, Alizarin permanent, Burnt sienna, Ultramarine blue, Phthalo blue

BRUSHES

■ Two-inch watercolour synthetic flat
■ No. 00 round red sable
■ No. 4 mongoose hair bright
■ No. 6 synthetic hog bristle flat.
■ No. 2 mongoose hair flat

SQUEEGEE

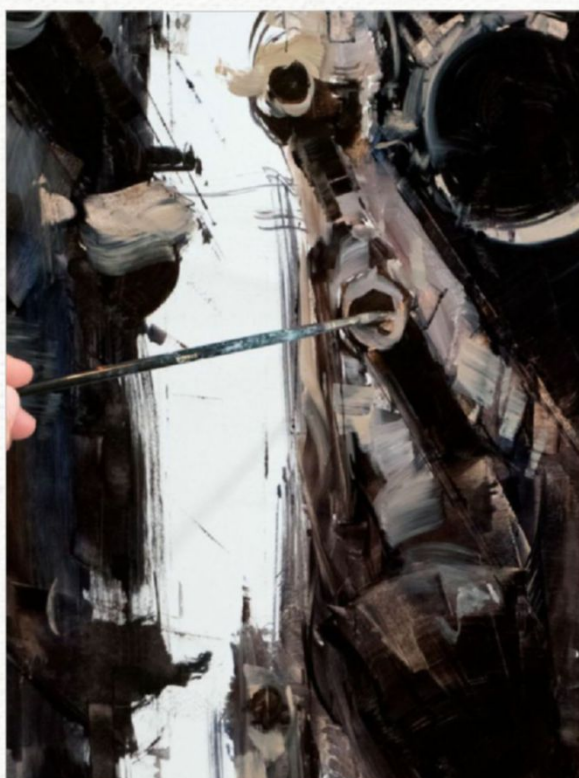
■ Six-inch Speedball squeegee

PALETTE KNIFE

■ 3/4-inch pointed

MEDIUM

■ Gamsol "Panel": 24x18-inch Ampersand Gessoboard panel



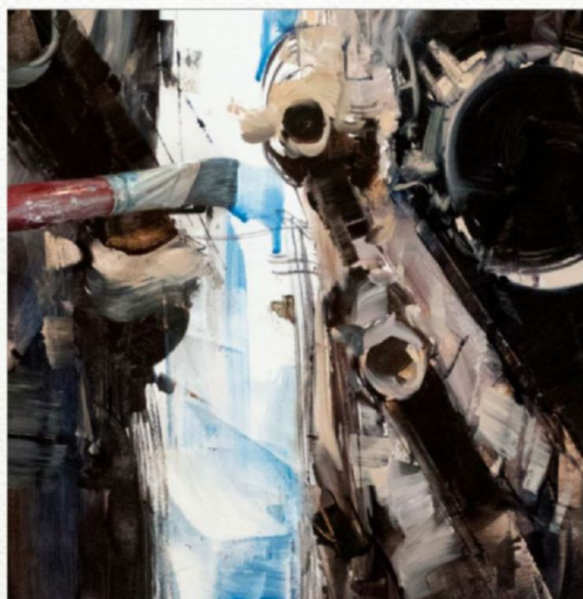
3 Divide light and dark

I take a no. 2 long flat mongoose hair brush and add Titanium white and Cadmium orange to the leftover grey shadow mixture. Imagining the light source coming down from the top left corner, I establish the light side of the central structure and begin to develop the focal point.



4 Tackling form shadows

I modify the light side brush strokes using a one-inch flat watercolour brush and the squeegee. This results in softer transitions, giving volume to the forms by creating soft edge form shadows. Keeping the colour to a minimum helps me to depict the forms' light and volume.



5 Generating atmosphere

Using my one-inch flat watercolour brush I pick a lighter and cooler value for the background by mixing Ultramarine blue with a touch of Phthalo Blue. Adding generous amounts of Gamsol to the mixture so it flows like watercolour, I create a light atmospheric wash while being careful not to overwork the paint.



6 Building up the light

I switch to a no. 6 synthetic hog bristle flat, then design and refine the smaller shapes by adding variety in size and shape. At this point in the painting, I begin using slightly thicker paint on the light side of the forms to differentiate the light side from the thinner shadows.



7 Introducing line work

Next, I go back to the no. 2 long flat mongoose hair brush and apply some delicate line work to break up the larger shapes and connect them to the adjacent forms. Some I leave in, while I take out others or modify them. The line work is used to indicate the presence of civilisation and adds some narrative to the artwork.



8 Increase visual interest by adding small details

With the primary, secondary and tertiary shapes established, I use a small no. 00 round red sable brush to add some tiny details and texture to the painting. The small touches of paint begin to add scale and interest to the surface of the piece. If I accidentally overpaint the tiny details, I simplify with a larger brush. ➡

ARTIST INSIGHT

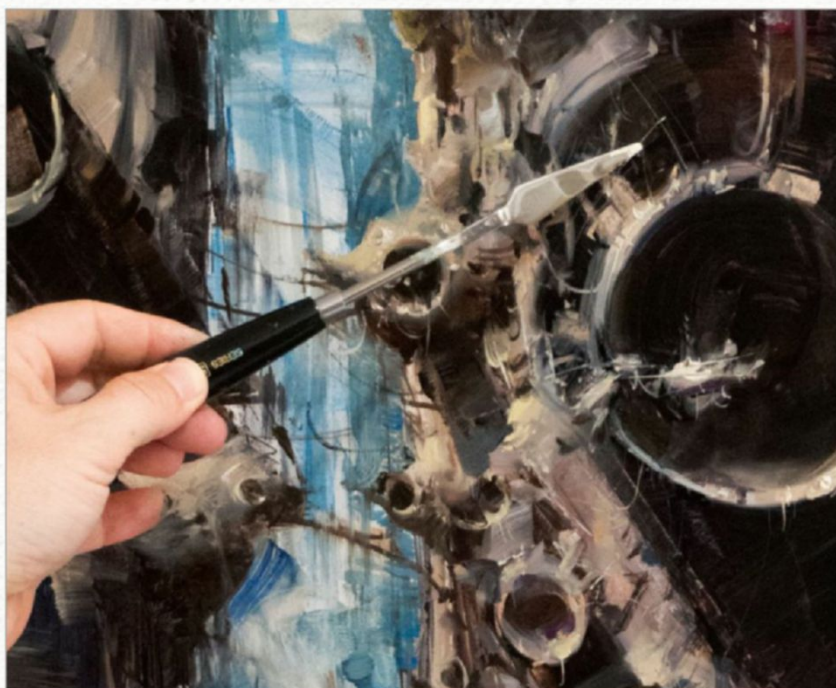
RETOUCH VARNISH

After the painting dries overnight I spray it with retouch varnish to restore the shadow tones. This enables me to match the values more accurately when painting in subsequent layers.

PALETTE TIP

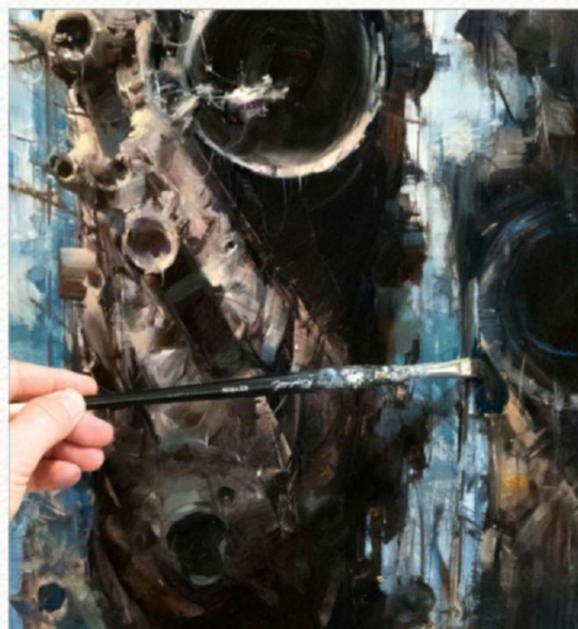
KEEP IT SIMPLE

Working with a limited palette will help you harmonise your colours more effectively.



9 *Apply highlights with a palette knife*

I then use a 3/4-inch pointed palette knife to mix undiluted Titanium white and Cadmium lemon yellow oil paint to apply thicker highlights in and around the focal area. This will add more physical and visual depth to the painting, and further strengthen the focal point from the rest of the canvas.



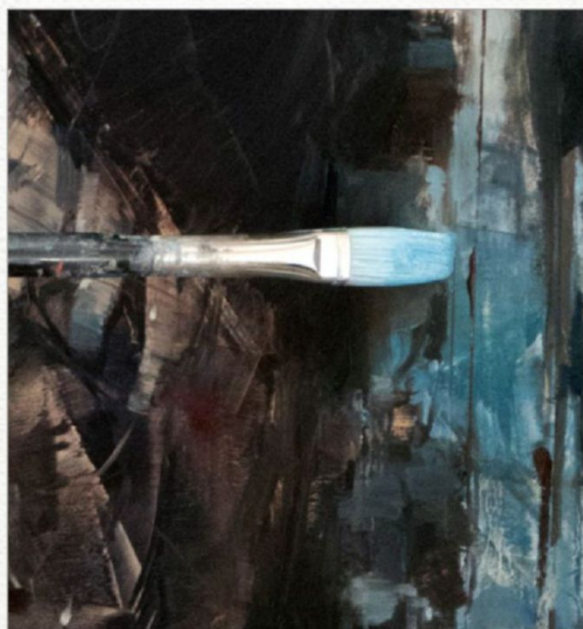
10 *Connecting shapes*

I enhance the idea of the cast shadow from the main circular shape on to the column on the right, using a no. 4 mongoose hair bright. This helps to visually connect the shapes together and reinforces the strong diagonal motion between the two vertical columns. I also refine other cast shadow shapes on the right-hand side.



11 *Bringing reflected light into the composition*

I continue adding interest to the focal point by adding varying degrees of cadmium red and cadmium orange paint using a no. 00 round red sable brush. The end result is that I'm able to emphasise the warm reflected light bouncing off the highlights and into the shadow areas. It's important to be selective and subtle with these tones, so as not to distract the eye from the highlights.



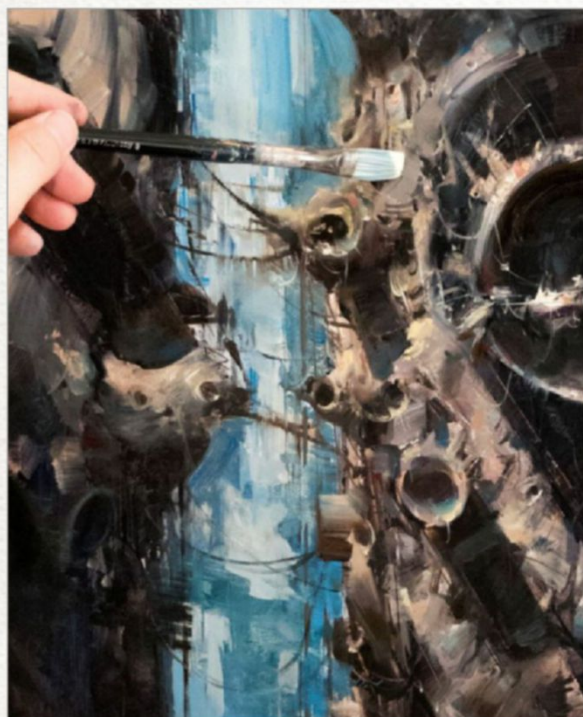
12 *Seeing things with a fresh eye*

I select the no. 6 synthetic hog bristle flat again and work on the background elements, designing complementary shapes to the foreground columns. Up to this point the painting has been executed wet-in-wet; however, after I finish this stage I let the painting dry overnight and come back to it with a fresh eye.



13 *Refining the background*

I continue to refine the details by developing subtlety in the half-tones and highlights, using a combination of the no. 2 mongoose hair brush and the no. 6 hog bristle flat. I also add atmosphere in the bottom left of the canvas by making the distant structure lighter and cooler than the foreground structures.



14 *Making sacrifices*

At this stage I clean up the design and quiet down some of the spontaneous brushwork. After some thoughtful analysis, I begin to edit the right-hand side of the central form by painting the background colour into the darker tones. Simplifying and redesigning busy passages will strengthen the focal point.



15 *Finishing up*

During the final stage of the painting, I go back to a no. 3 mongoose flat and refine the distant layers of atmosphere in the lower left hand side of the canvas by using varying degrees of blue/grey paint, Diminishing contrast between the light and shadow of a given object make it recede into the distance. ■

BRUSH TIP THE BEST BRUSHES

I use Rosemary and Co. brushes. They're expensive so I need to keep them clean, so that they retain their point.

ARTIST INSIGHT

PAINTING FROM LIFE

Having spent several decades regularly painting outdoors, I've learned that it's crucial to observe with a keen eye when painting light and atmosphere. Practise makes... well, if not perfect, then a helluva lot better!

Core skills: Part 4

CONTROL YOUR EDGES IN GOUACHE

Artist and illustrator **LAURA BIFANO** demonstrates the versatility of gouache and the importance of edge control using four basic techniques to paint clouds

One of the reasons I love using gouache is that it comes with all the advantages of watercolour, yet can be used similarly in opaque, painterly layers. Depending on the moisture of your paper and the consistency of your paint, you can achieve effects such as large gradient blooms, soft feathered edges, expressive brush strokes or nice crisp lines.

There are four basic combinations that will give you varying degrees of control over your edges: wet brush on wet paper; dry brush on wet paper; wet brush on dry paper; and dry brush on dry paper.

Each method has its pros and cons. Some offer more control than others, but sacrifice the spontaneity of letting the paint do its thing. With a dry brush you'll pretty much know what you'll get, but nothing can replicate the look of a well-done paint bloom.

The frustration of gouache often comes with not knowing exactly what the paint will do once laid down on the paper. Sometimes I'll put down a brush stroke expecting to achieve one effect, but get another instead. This can be frustrating if

MATERIALS

PAINT

- Gouache

PAPER

- Cold-press watercolour block

BRUSHES

- Winsor & Newton size six sable brush
- Large broad flat sable

MISCELLANEOUS

- Mixing tray
- Blotting material (paper towel or an old rag will work fine)

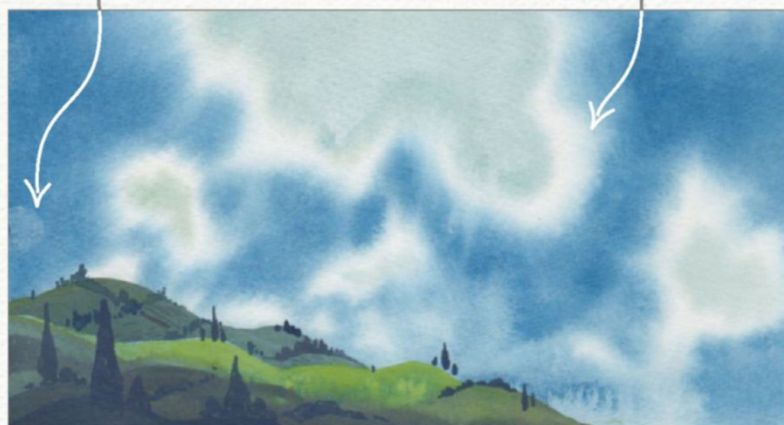
you're trying to produce a thin, crisp line and end up with a soft bleed. Knowing exactly what the paint's going to do comes with time and experience. Luckily, I have a little bit of both, so I'll do my best to outline four basic techniques for painting some nice clouds, although these principles of edge control can be applied to almost anything you'll need to paint.



Laura is an illustrator and production artist from Vancouver, BC. She's worked in film, TV and on children's books. See more at www.laurabifano.com.

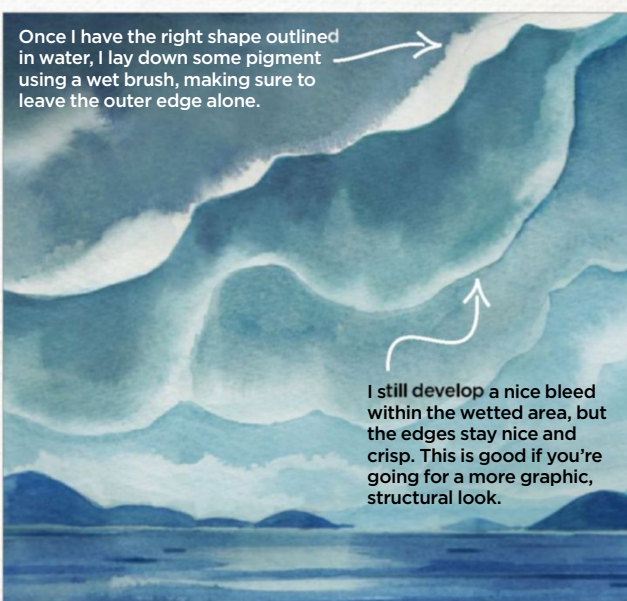
You can see a mistake on the bottom-left of the page near the hills. I handled the paper when it was still wet and left a thumbprint. Normally I would Photoshop this out, but for the sake of this workshop I wanted to show how easy it is to make mistakes.

The one drawback of this technique is that once the paint is down on the paper, you have very little wiggle room to make adjustments. The best-looking bleed is one that's just put down and left alone.



1 Backlit clouds with wet-on-wet

I begin with laying down a heavy wash using a broad brush. I'm using the white of the paper for the clouds, so I'm going to paint in the sky around them and fill the middle in with a warm grey. Make sure your colours are mixed and ready to go before you wet your paper. I've made the mistake of mixing my colours on the fly and laying them down: the paper is too dry. This is almost impossible to fix and still maintain that spontaneous look.



2 Painting clouds using wet-on-dry

Here, I'm starting with dry paper. I still want a nice, bright edge on my clouds, so I'm only wetting the paper section by section, working from top to bottom. The main drawback is that this method takes a long time because you have to wait for the paper to dry before wetting the next section.

3 An overcast sky with dry-on-wet

This technique is similar to the first one, and starts with a heavy wash of water. Only this time, I've squeezed almost all of the water out of my paint brush and am working with a thicker mixture of paint.

This sample took about four minutes to do. I used one brushload of paint and worked very quickly from top to bottom and side to side, making sure to leave gaps between strokes where the light would be coming through the clouds.

You can see that there's a slight line where the pigment gathered and dried at the edge of the mask. It would have been better to get it right the first time.

I'm still getting some nice soft edges, but the edge of the paint bleed is slightly smaller. I have a tiny bit more control than if I had used a sopping wet paintbrush.

ECONOMY TIP

LESS IS MORE

When it comes to painting, try to describe your subject in as few strokes as possible.

I had to walk away to avoid the temptation to fiddle around with it some more! Although I did end up carving in and re-wetting a section of the paper to mask out some highlights on the left. Re-wetting the paper is possible once the initial wash is dry, although I wouldn't always recommend it. Gouache will sometimes reactivate and lift when wetted, so try at your own risk!

I work in lighter and lighter tones, trying to nail down the structure and lighting of this blobby cloud. I save those bright titanium white highlights for last.

I've started this sample by painting a simple sky gradient and then completely letting it dry.

I've worked my midtones in first, just painting in a medium grey blob vaguely in the shape I want. The nice thing about this method is that I can rework things a lot more than using the wet-on-wet technique.

5 What if we put it all together?

Here I've combined a few techniques to their best advantage! I painted the feathery cirrus clouds using wet-on-wet, and the bottom row of clouds was done using dry-on-wet. The nice, crisp edges help push them back in space. The centre cloud was painted using dry-on-dry.

I work front to back, laying down a wash and painting the sky around the wispy clouds.

Having a variety of edges in a composition can help to lead the eye and create focus. The eye will naturally be drawn to contrast, like a hard edge against a soft edge.

4 Cumulous clouds using dry-on-dry

When I'm working with gouache, I usually work this way! It offers the most control over the medium because there's very little chance of the paint picking up or bleeding into adjacent colours.



Once the paper's dry, I work on the smaller storm clouds on the bottom. They're done using wet-on-dry, letting the paint dry in to crisp edges.

First Impressions

✧ Todd Bright ✧

The US artist reveals how he achieved his childhood goal of working at Disney



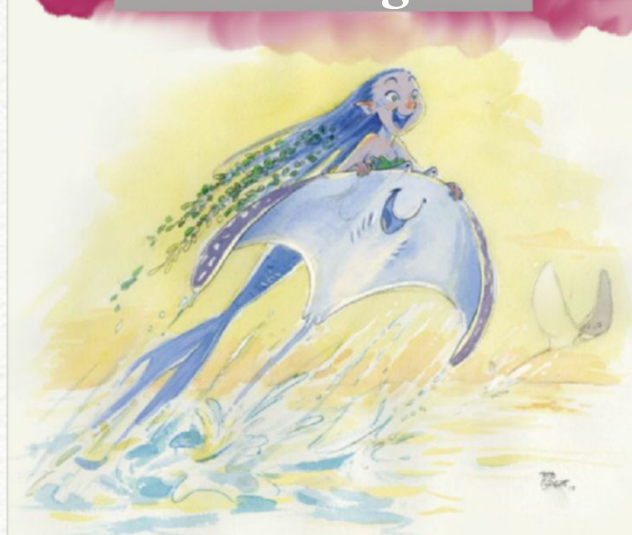
Where did you grow up and how has this influenced your art?

I was raised in a small town called Berea, Ohio. My father had his own design firm, so I grew up looking at his books, taking in illustrators like NC Wyeth and Norman Rockwell. My dad is a Disney fan, so there was plenty of that early influence there as well. I remember copying and drawing things around the studio, learning from art instructional books, and my dad enrolled me in a life-drawing class at the Cleveland Institute of Art one summer.

As a teenager, we moved to Florida. An artist working for my dad told me that one of his friends who attended Ringling School of Art and Design was recruited by Disney for an internship. My mind was made up: I was going to Ringling, learn to draw and work at Disney.

What was your next step in art?

Growing up, I always knew I'd be an artist. I cruised through high school and focused on surfing, relationships, having fun – all the while thinking I could draw. However, going to art school was a huge wake-up call and a complete



MERMAY 2017

"I joined in the fun of the online event created by my old Disney buddy Tom Bancroft illustrating Mermaids during the month of May. I thought of what I might see while surfing."

personal crisis. I was surrounded by some amazing fellow students, and I quickly realised that I had a lot to learn. It was time to grow up and start working hard.

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

The early years, my dad – of course!

“Going to art school was a huge wake-up call and a complete personal crisis”

SABINA AND CHARLIE

"This was a commission for a friend that turned into quite a few more of the little girl and her dog."



What was your first paid commission, and does it stand as a representation of your talent?

I think it was an editorial illustration for a publication in Nashville. It was an ink and watercolour humorous illustration of Moses reading a book or something, I remember I painted his robe this Todd Bright crazy orange colour – why did I do that?

Does it stand as a representation of my talent? Well, that's a hard one to answer about a drawing I did over 20 years ago! However, I was in Nashville because a group of Ringling friends and alumni offered to take me under their wing: specifically one illustrator, Travis Foster, and an ex-Disney artist, Davy

Liu. They taught me how to freelance when I was unable to return to school. I learned a lot, and ended up doing well that summer. So that first commission represents quite a lot to me. I have much to be thankful for.

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

It was an animated commercial for Universal Studios. Certainly the mediums differ, and I hired a small crew of my old Disney friends to join in the project.

Is your art evolving?

Yes. I started out doing illustration freelance, then when I changed gears to pursue my dream of Disney Animation, I focused on drawing and learning to animate. After nine years of working on films at Disney, I shut down our Orlando studio. I went freelance again, but focused on digital mediums and did a lot of advertising illustration and animation for Disney and other commercial work. About five or six years ago, I began pursuing my passions of café sketching, oil painting and teaching workshops. I'm also creating stories: one is a children's book and the other is a short film.

How has the animation industry changed over the years?

Well, I'll always be scratching my head in disbelief that traditional hand-drawn animation is no longer in film. What has changed for the good is that there's a push to get the story right. The new CG animation medium has also created more competition in the industry, which means more studios and jobs.

What's the most important thing that you've taught someone?

Learn to be a great draftsman. Surround yourself with people who are better than you, and be teachable.

Todd's worked on films such as Mulan, Lilo & Stitch, and Tarzan. You can see more of his art at www.toddbright.com.

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The follow-up to the ground-breaking graphic novel is a far-reaching sci-fi epic, a gripping tale of discovery, exploration and rebellion. Humans in a post-Earth future confront mysterious new worlds and alien species, while struggling against their own repressive government. New challenges are faced, dark secrets are revealed and the future of humanity's survival hangs in the balance.