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Reach new artistic horizons with help and guidance from **Even Mehl Amundsen**



"Gestures will play a central role in selling the image" see page 56

SCRATCHBOARD! NICOLAS DELORT RECREATES A LORD OF THE RINGS SCENE

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



I'm not normally one to quote Forrest Gump, but this issue really feels like a box of chocolates. There's such a dazzling variety of art, inspiration and skill on show that when you turn each page you never know what you're going to get.

This smorgasbord of tools and techniques handily highlights the wide-ranging industry we represent – varied, unique, exciting and international.

There's ZBrush and Photoshop advice from The Mill's Adam Dewhirst, Art Centre College of Design's Ara Kermanikian creates a workshop on mech modelling, the UK's Glen Southern gives insight into VR, while France's Nicolas Delort reveals his scratchboard process... and who couldn't be taken by Norway's Even Mehl Amundsen's cover art? I love Even's work!

If you're stuck in the artistic doldrums, you won't fail to be uplifted by Mel Milton's inspiring guide to getting motivated – even his Instagram profile (@melmadedooks) perks me up! Oh, and why not give us a follow (@imaginefxmagazine) while you're there, too! As ever, please let me know your thoughts at the email address below...

Claire

Claire Howlett, Editor
claire@imaginefx.com

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



Share your art with the world

Showcasing talent is at the heart of what we do. Go to page 10 to see how you can easily submit your work.



Hollywood or bust!

I loved Pablo Carpio's enthusiastic approach to realising his childhood dream of making it as an artist.



Oculus Medium workshop

Our friend Glen Southern shares his brilliant virtual reality techniques with us in a video and workshop.

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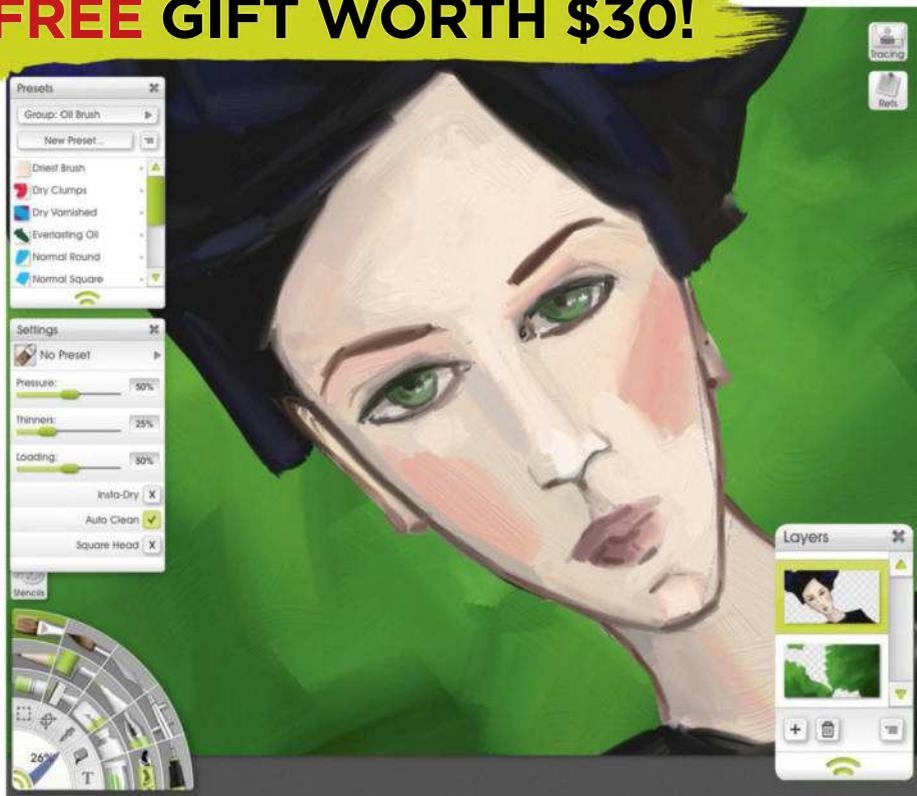
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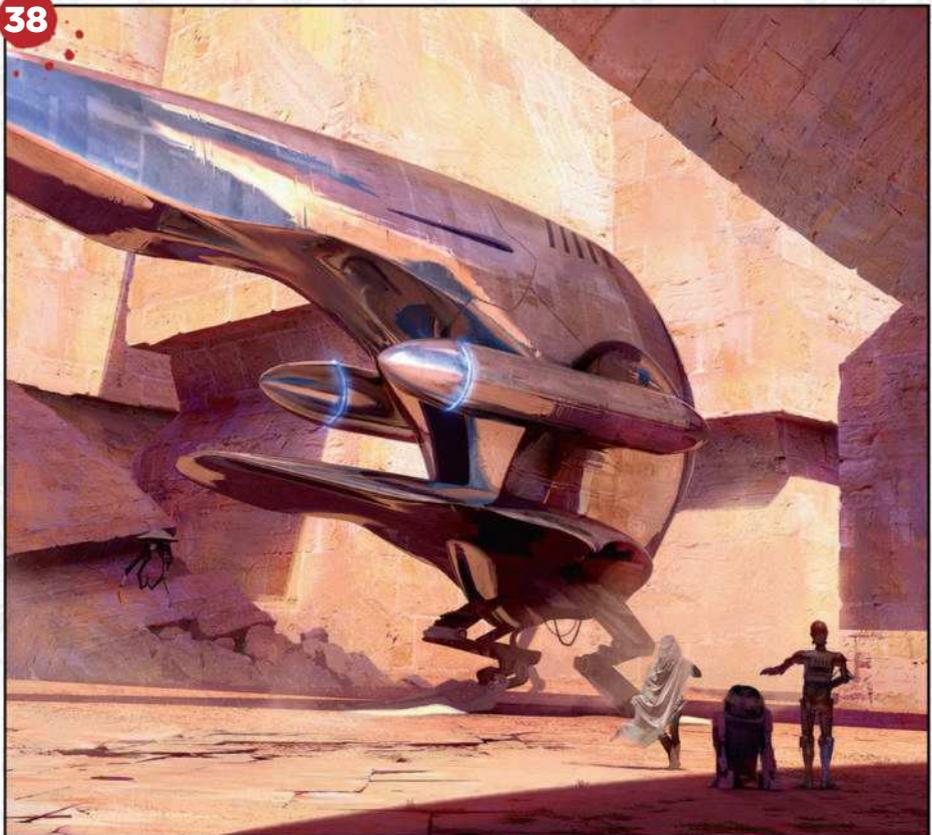
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PABLO CARPIO



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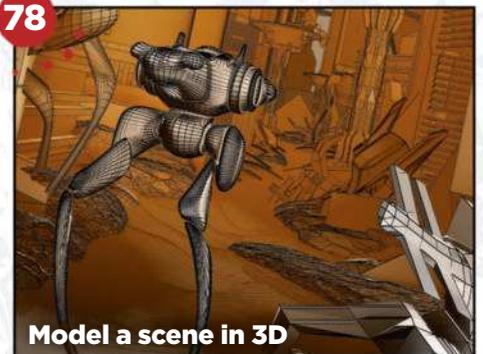
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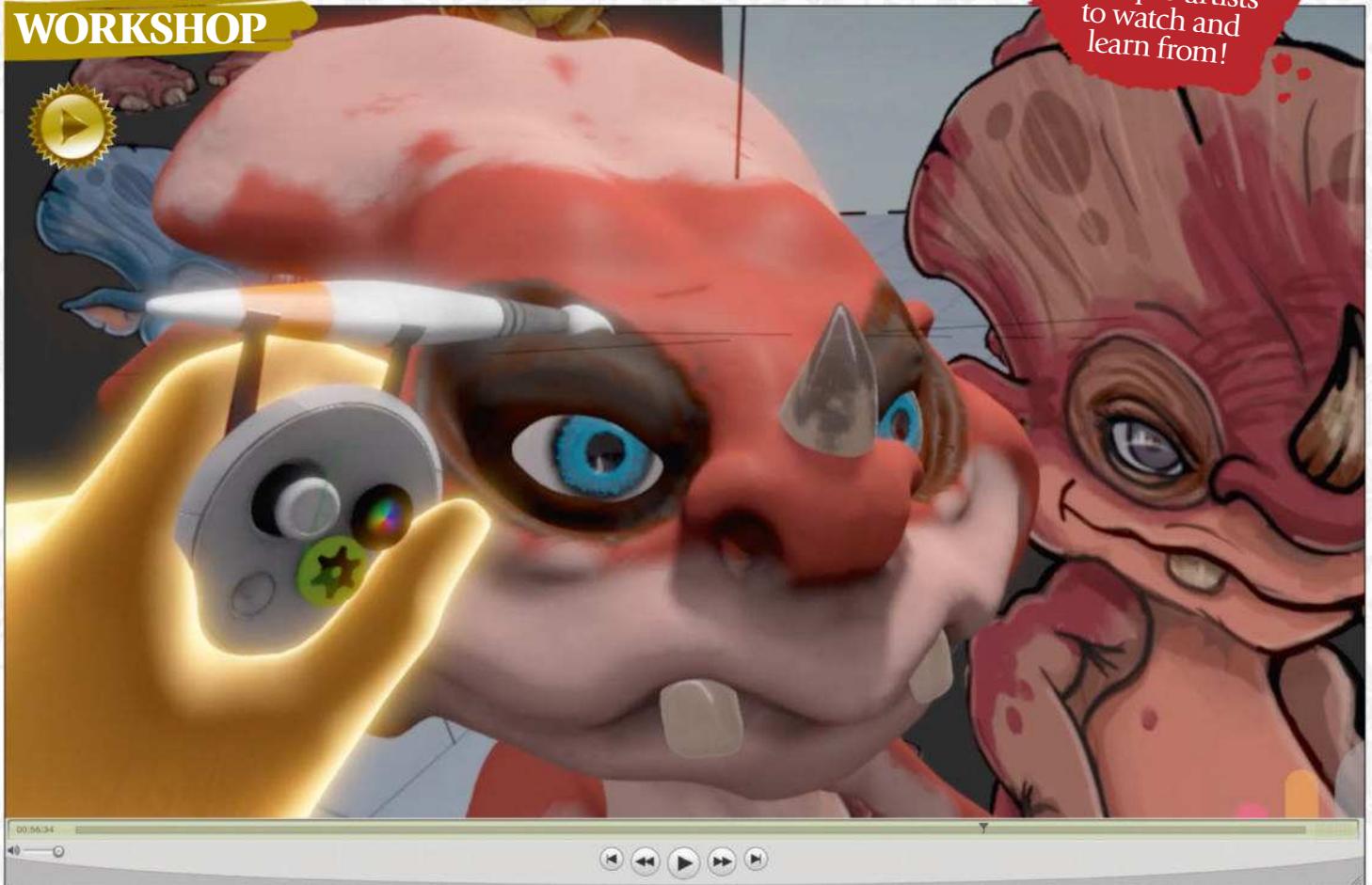
ImagineFX NO. 1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS Resources

Getting hold of this issue's videos and custom brushes is quick and easy. Just visit our dedicated web page at <https://ifxm.ag/beadigital162artist>

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WORKSHOP



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- 2 Find the files you want**
Search through the list of resources to download.
- 3 Download what you need...**
...or alternatively watch the videos on our YouTube page.

Create a cute critter in virtual reality

Glen Southern's video is an eye-opening insight into how he uses Oculus Medium to bring a 2D creature concept to life in three dimensions. It's the future! His workshop is over on page 84.



ImagineFX

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Model a creature in ZBrush, finish it off in Photoshop

In Adam Dewhurst's video you'll see how he works up a 3D creature concept, then paints it and give it extra realism with some photobashing in Photoshop. There's more on page 62.



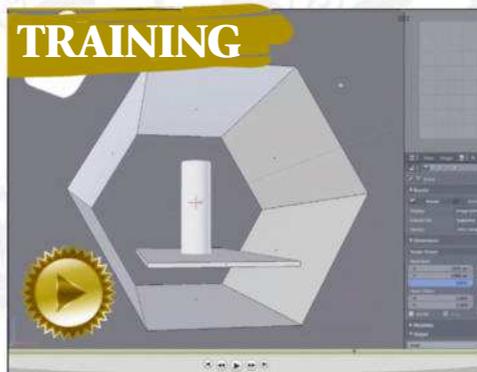
Model a mech in action

See how Ara Kermanikian creates a 3D scene, ready for a paint-over. Then turn to page 78.



Master Photoshop masks

Mark White explains the basics of Photoshop's masking tools in this video. More on page 68.



Sci-Fi Corridor

Check out this clip from Vaughan Ling's instructional video. We review it on page 95.



FXPosé

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MONTH



Lim Wei Lun

LOCATION: Singapore MEDIA: Photoshop WEB: www.pixiv.me/jellysonic

Lim is heavily influenced by anime and music, and enjoys using colours to convey different emotions. He works with Collateral Damage Studios in Singapore.

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1 UNDER THE STARRY SKY

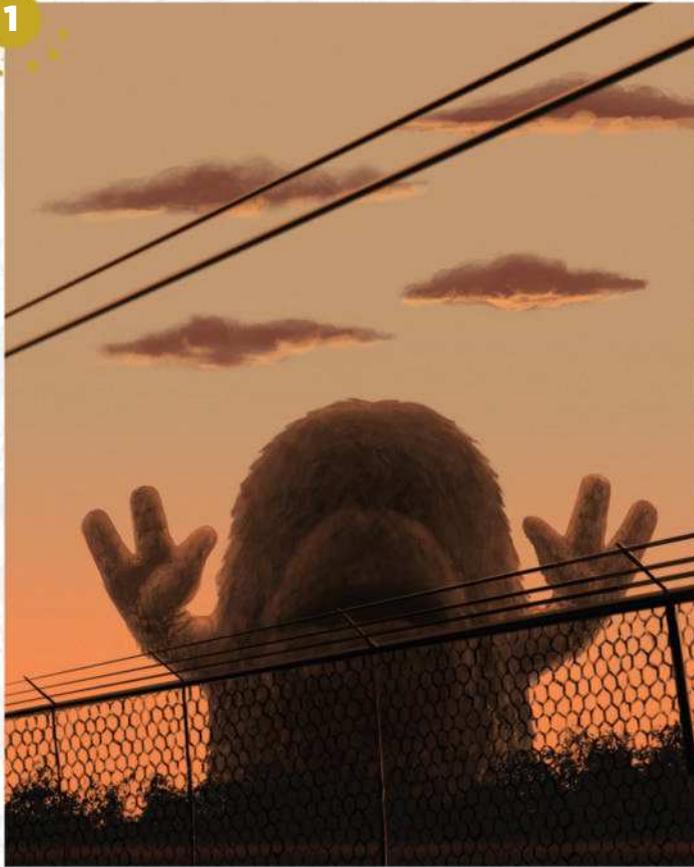
“Ripples and fallen cherry blossom petals help show how water can interact with its surroundings. I chose top-down lighting to focus the attention on the characters.”



Darren Goldman

LOCATION: US MEDIA: Procreate WEB: www.darregoldman.com

Darren's aesthetic is a blend of Jim Henson, Edward Gorey and Margaret Keane. He has a weakness for 'pathetically cute' creatures, and one of his biggest inspirations is his Boston Terrier Lola.



1 SLOW IT DOWN

"I blurred the lines between fantasy art and photorealism, and limited my colour palette to create a dreamlike yet believable world. There's a Muppet influence in there, too."

2 TEETH FAIRY

"Inspired by the Hellboy franchise, I wanted to take the concept of the tooth fairy down a more disturbing path. I played with transparency to create believable movement for the wings."

3 ALIEN LANDSCAPE

"I paint a lot of character-centric pieces, so I challenged myself to focus on the larger landscape here. I kept my colour palette minimal and played with the contrast in values to show depth."

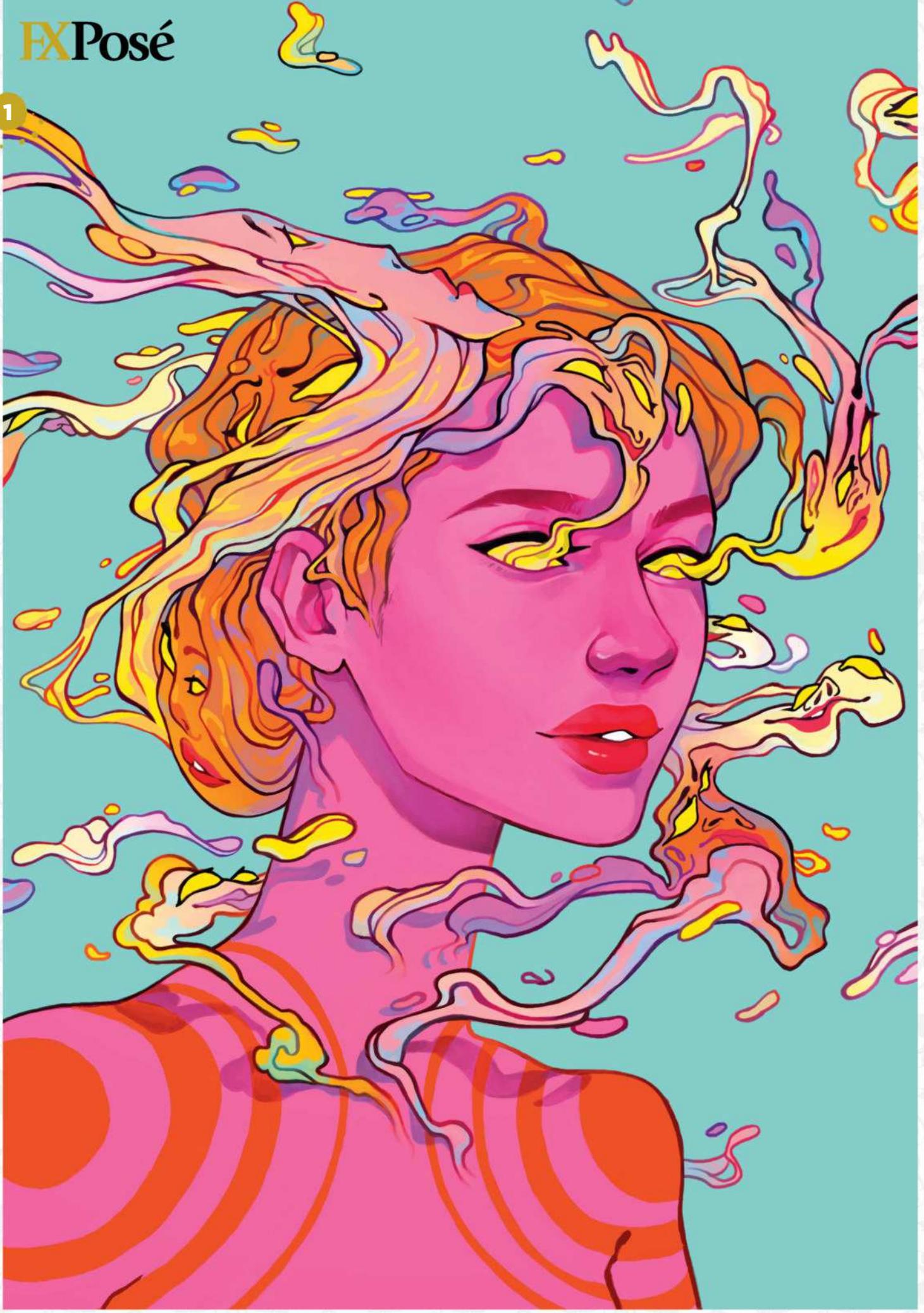
4 TRASH TROUBLES

"I wanted to combine my love of yetis (and yeti-like creatures) and my environmental concerns. I used wide, flat brushes to achieve a more painterly style."





1





Whitney Salgado

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

Whitney lives and works in Milwaukee, US. "I enjoy mixing unusual ideas and playing with colour in a way that creates an inviting image and leaves you with a smile," she tells us.

1 MSFF

"This piece was for the Milwaukee Short Film Festival. It shows a creature who sees faces in smoke."

2 SEUSS

"Just a fun portrait of Dr. Seuss interacting with his characters."

3 VOICES HEARD

"I painted this for the Voices Heard! programme. It depicts a Latinx woman in her own world."

4 X-RAY

"This painting is based on a piece of poetry. In it, a mother describes the tumours evident in her daughter's CAT scan, as 'islands washing her away'."





Nadzeya Makeyeva

LOCATION: Belarus **MEDIA:** Photoshop, pencils **WEB:** nadzeya-makeyeva.com/gallery

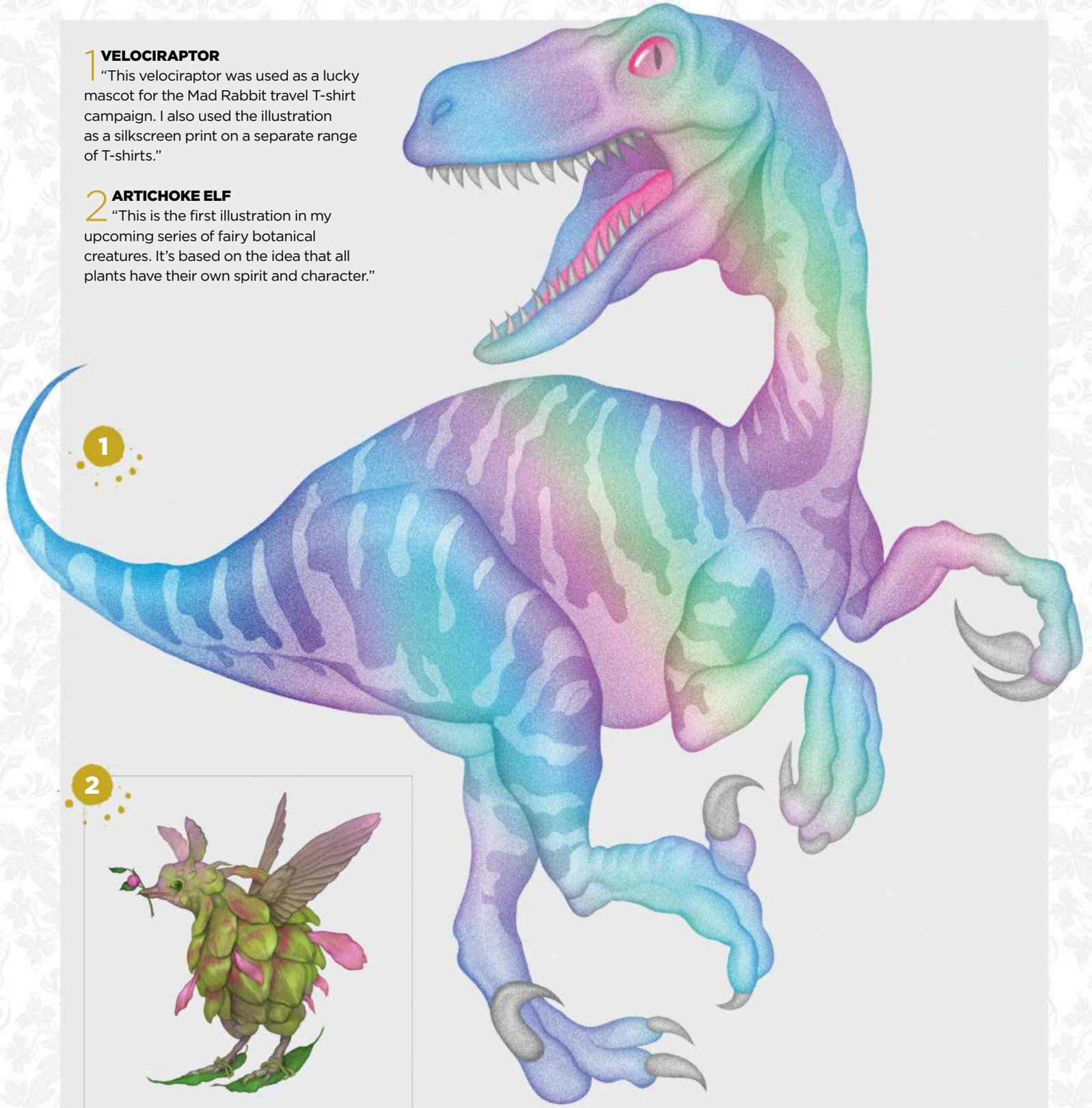
Nadzeya is a multidisciplinary artist who has drawn every day since she was a child. "I'm an illustration maniac," she says, "and my goal is to create bizarre, unique artworks."

1 VELOCIRAPTOR

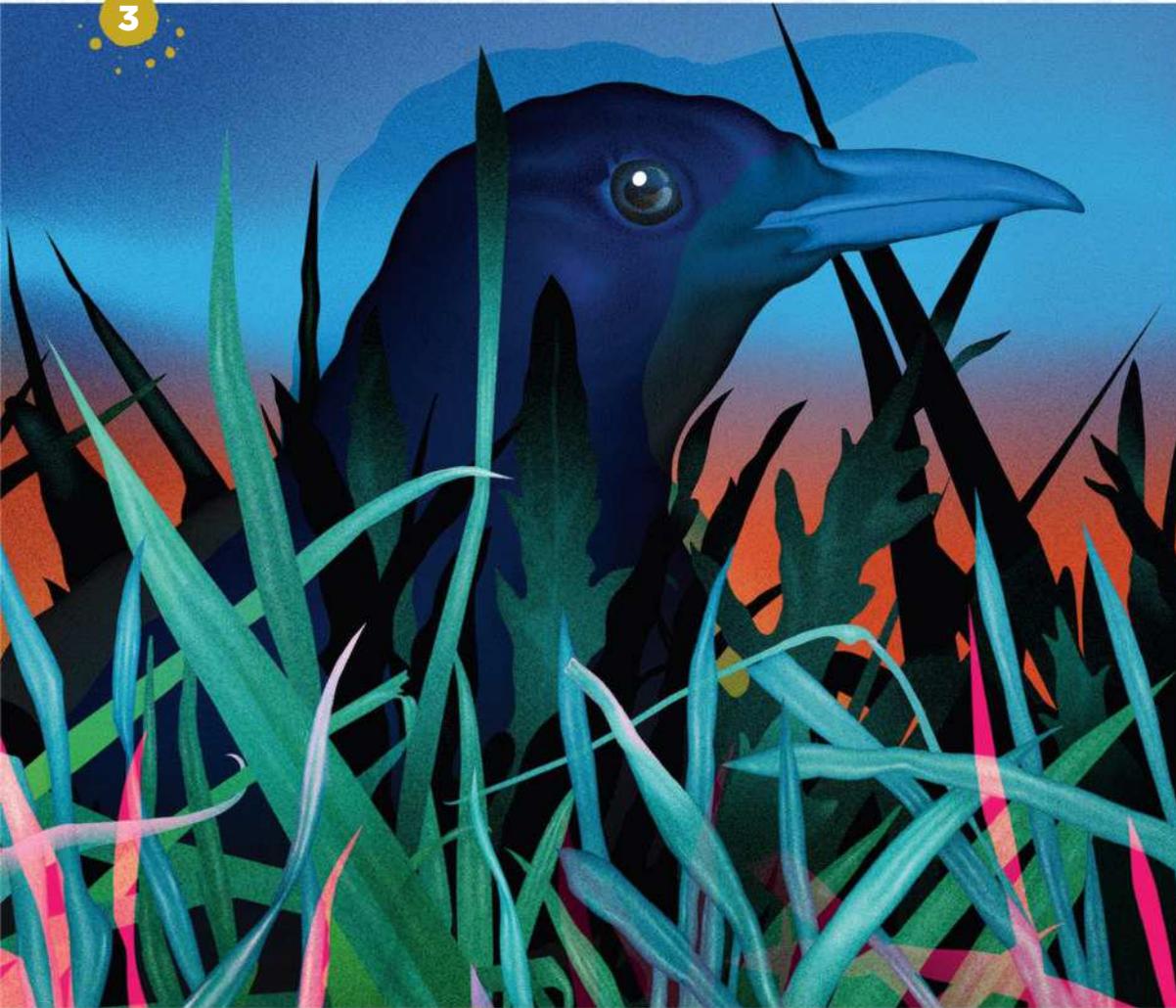
"This velociraptor was used as a lucky mascot for the Mad Rabbit travel T-shirt campaign. I also used the illustration as a silkscreen print on a separate range of T-shirts."

2 ARTICHOKE ELF

"This is the first illustration in my upcoming series of fairy botanical creatures. It's based on the idea that all plants have their own spirit and character."



3



3 GOOD SIDE

"The artwork for the Goodbye June single Good Side. The band requested a mix of hand-drawn and realistic digital painting, but also wanted it to be unique and a bit psychedelic."

4 MAD RABBIT 1, 2, 3

"I had some free time between commercial jobs and decided to create some personal illustrations of absolutely insane rabbits characters. After I published them on Behance they went viral, and a number of people got in touch asking to use them for clothing prints and patterns."

4





Niyas Syed

LOCATION: India **MEDIA:** Photoshop, 3D-Coat, Vue **WEB:** www.niyasck.com

Niyas started as a lighting artist, and moved from one discipline to another until he found concept art and was hooked. He now works as a freelance artist.

1 PLANET STORENUS

"A planet with a red atmosphere (not Mars) somewhere in the galaxy, where humans have built dome-shaped stations. I wanted to create an atmospheric landscape with these strange, spiky rocks."

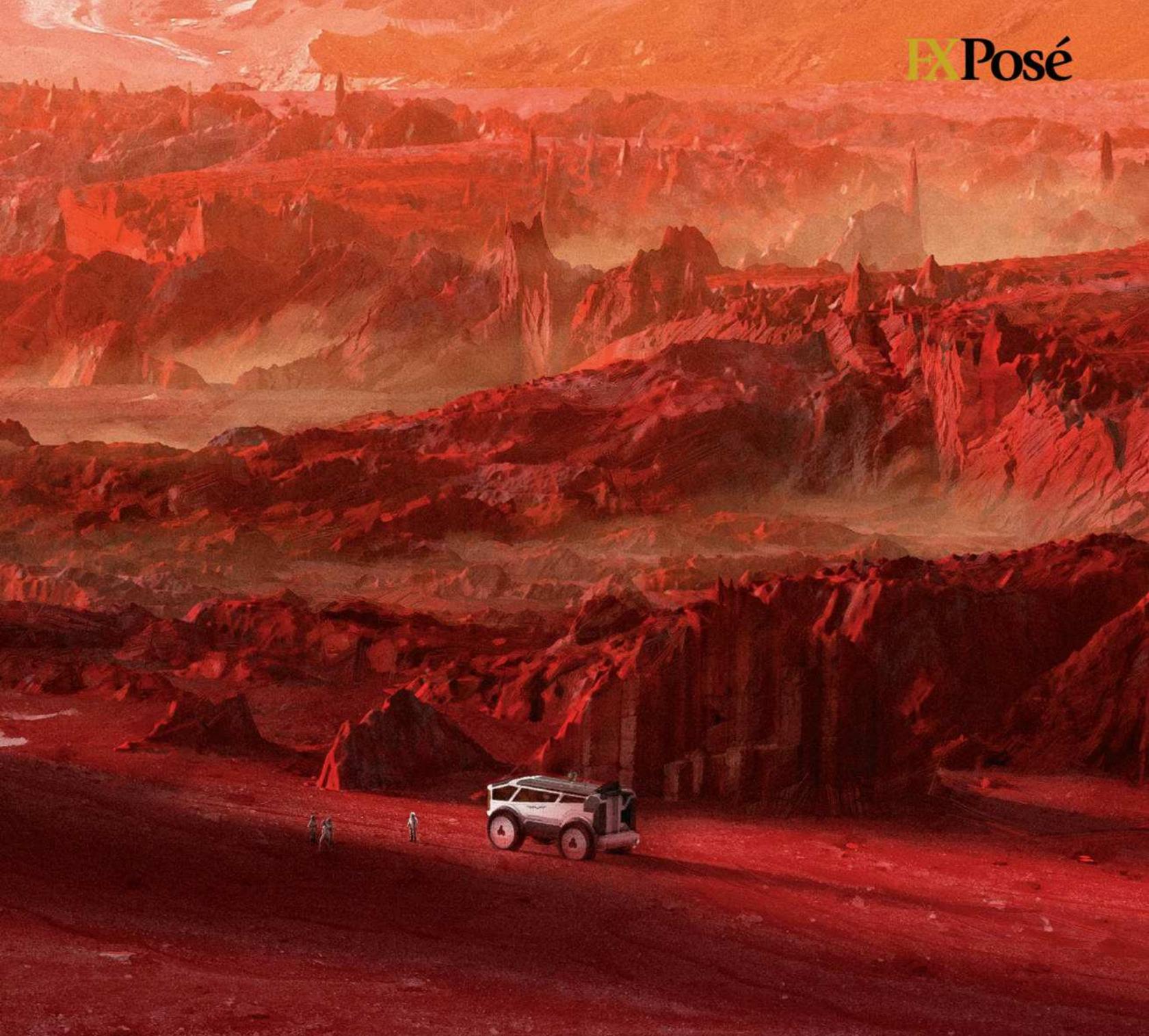
2 VERTICAL VILLAGE

"As the numbers of inhabitants has increased, they have built vertical blocks that satisfy the basic requirements of density and affordability. I took my inspiration from Rio's high-density slums."

3 CYBERPUNK TRAIN YARD

"My goal in this image was to depict a fictional cyberpunk train yard city, drawing inspiration from several photographs of Tokyo and Dubai at night. I fall in love with anything that has an





3D is perfectly suited to Houston Sharp's line of work. "You can reach a photo-realistic image much quicker with 3D," he says.



Is it time you got to grips with 3D software?

Added dimension Is mastering 3D software the key to artistic success, or does it have its limitations? **Dom Carter** speaks to artists about their experiences

Art software has revolutionised how illustrators create 2D work, thanks to features that give users greater control over their creations.

Alongside these tools, software tailored towards 3D art has also changed people's creative ambitions and opened up new career opportunities. Yet, despite the two disciplines having skill sets that

overlap and feed into one another, some artists have initially struggled to move between 2D and 3D.

Even a relatively early introduction to animation and motion graphics



software Maya 3.0 couldn't help it click with Imaginism Studios co-founder **Bobby Chiu**. "It didn't really feel like

sculpting to me back then," says the concept and character designer. "It wasn't until 2017 when I asked a sculptor friend of mine, Justin Goby Fields, to put together an introduction to ZBrush course for artists that

“It wasn't until recently that ZBrush made sense. I've been learning it ever since...”

ZBrush finally made sense to me. I've been learning and using ZBrush ever since."

For 2000 AD artist **Thomas Foster**,



picking up 3D software skills helped improve his confidence in creating realistic backgrounds and vehicles. "Upon

discovering SketchUp, I spent ➔



Philipp Scherer says there will always be a place for concept artists without 3D skills, but observes that, "I would estimate that 70 per cent of the concept artists I work with use 3D software."



WATCH FILMS, PLAY GUITAR...

Giuseppe "Peppe" Cristiano opens the door on his expansive studio, which contains a helluva lot of films and an impressive collection of guitars. **Page 26**



WRITE IN TO IMAGINEFX!

Got something art-related you want to get off your chest. Or want to make your views heard about the magazine? Then drop us a quick line today! **Page 31**



"As an artist, you'll benefit from knowing and using 3D because everything you build in 3D can be used in combination with anything else, like digital kit-bashing," says Bobby Chiu.



Thomas Foster thinks that, "3D posing software can increase an artist's grasp on lighting, composition and 'camera' placement - the better to create dynamically directed scenes."

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

HOUSTON SHARP

The concept artist shares how to learn the fundamentals of 3D

Should artists learn 3D after 2D?

It's a good idea to learn the principles first and the tools later, otherwise there's a risk of becoming dependent on the tools. It's like building a flashy house on top of bad foundations. There are plenty of 3D concept artists who can't draw or paint, and that compromises them when they're asked to quickly sketch something out, or make a certain mood/composition. If you're confident in your foundation, then learn that new tool. If not, it's probably better to hold off until you are.

Are there 3D expectations for artists joining a studio?

It's definitely better to have some knowledge of it going in. If the studio or client is expecting you to fit within their design team, who uses a lot of 3D, it'll be an issue if you can't keep up with them. But concept artists aren't modellers and asset builders, so sometimes just a rudimentary knowledge of 3D is enough.

Are there cost-effective ways to pick up 3D skills?

I can't think of a single 3D software that doesn't offer trial versions of their software, so that's a good place to start if you're too new to know if you want to commit. Some software even have simplified versions of their paid counterparts. If you can't afford ZBrush for example, Pixologic offers a free digital sculpting program that's similar to ZBrush called Sculptris.



Houston is a illustrator and concept artist who's worked on films including Wonder Woman and Rampage.

www.houstonsharp.com



There's no right or wrong way to pick up 3D, according to Steve Argyle. "Every artist's needs are different. These days, specialising is often more advantageous than being a generalist."





➔ a lot of time designing background elements from scratch, or utilising existing assets in order to round out my repertoire."

The further discovery of DAZ 3D, which specialises in rigged 3D human models, enabled Thomas to create full 3D scenes with minimal modelling involved, before he even put pencil to paper. "This meant I always had a solid foundation on which to build my images. The time spent exploring these methods has greatly improved my versatility and the range of resources at my disposal."

CAREER BENEFITS

The speed with which artists can lay down ideas with 3D software makes a proficiency with tools such as ZBrush, Blender and Cinema 4D hugely desirable to clients – especially when it comes to concept art.

Alix Branwyn says 3D can be an invaluable time and money saver. "It enables you to either take on more work or take some time for yourself – something as artists we probably don't do enough."

Thomas points out that the usefulness of 3D depends on the career route. "Those illustrating children's picture books or working in portraiture may not see any significant benefit."



"Designs that concept artists create are meant for one thing: to be built," explains concept artist and illustrator **Houston**

Sharp. "If concept artists can start that 3D visualisation in the beginning design phase, it makes it easier for the rest of the team to understand what needs to be built. From there, the team

expected and working digitally is mandatory," the concept artist and illustrator explains. "Even basic knowledge of 3D tools can be helpful. I have friends working as 2D artists that only know how to navigate in 3D and set up a basic render. But it helps them when they receive files from a third party and they're asked to create a quick painting based on a 3D model."

“The time spent on these 3D methods has improved my versatility and the range of resources at my disposal”

can even take the 3D concept to use as a starting point for the final assets."

Despite its usefulness, artists are still able to get work with no prior knowledge of 3D software. It just



depends on which route you want to take. **Philipp Scherer** reveals that getting your foot in the door still remains the most difficult step to landing projects.

"If you're working in the entertainment industry however, a basic knowledge of 3D is almost

Phoebe Herring, a lecturer in game art at Falmouth University, agrees that 3D art is becoming increasingly vital for concept artists.

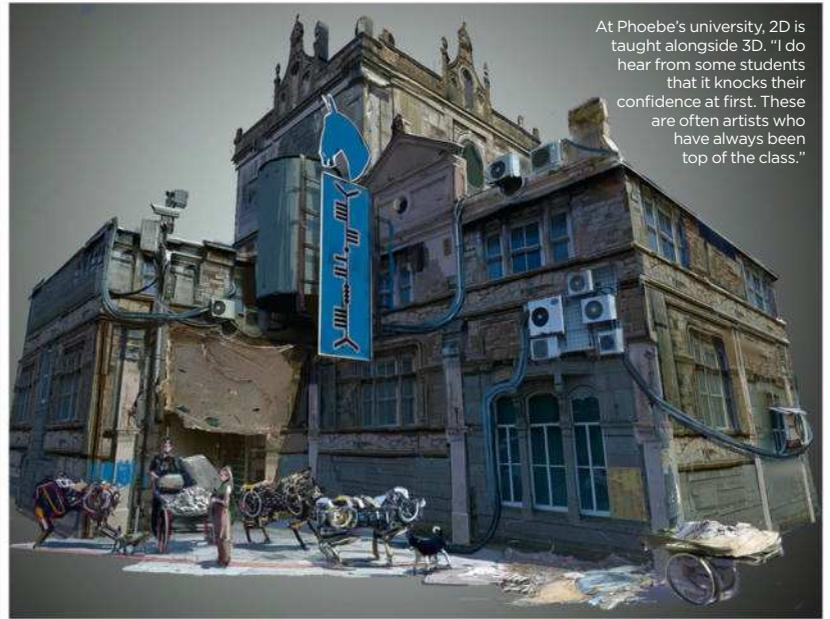


"Clients are interested in the designer's vision, not in waiting around for them to lay out all of their vanishing points by hand."

She points out that physically based rendering offers her students a way to talk about materials that applies to both 2D and 3D art. "3D theory is a great way to talk about this stuff, and



Houston warns that artists shouldn't let 3D take over. "Your 2D skills are just as valuable – if not more valuable – as any 3D program," he says.



At Phoebe's university, 2D is taught alongside 3D. "I do hear from some students that it knocks their confidence at first. These are often artists who have always been top of the class."



students confident in 3D can mock up quick scenes to check the way their creations respond to the light."

GOING IN HEAD FIRST

Phoebe adds that there are other ways 3D studies can push your 2D skills to the next level. "Students often benefit hugely from sculpting proportionate human heads in ZBrush, even if they never go on to do 3D character art. The study forces a real understanding of the way features fall on the skull and reveals weak points for the artist to work on."

According to Phoebe, 3D knowledge can't exist in isolation. "It needs to sit alongside rock-solid perspective, anatomy and design skills. These fundamentals are the real tricky things, and nobody ever stops learning them."



Illustrator **Alix Branwyn** also thinks that without a certain level of 2D understanding, 3D tools can only achieve so much.

"I've found that a lot of the software that's used for posing figures often leaves an unrealistic feel that can seep into the illustration and make it seem 'off'. Faces feel lifeless and a bit 'uncanny valley', and hands often feel

Steve finds 3D useful for roughing out a scene. "You don't have to model in every detail, but if you have some building blocks to work with, everything becomes easier."

"Art is bigger than the software and in the end, artists should remember that 3D software is just a tool," says Bobby.

stiff and waxy rather than expressive and fleshy.

"I look at the use of 3D the same way that I view the use of photo reference and 2D digital shortcuts: it's just another tool to get the work done quicker and make it look good."

Bobby is of the same mind. "If you don't understand art fundamentals, 3D won't save you."

WHERE TO START?

For 2D artists looking to add 3D to their skill set, the range of tools available can be an embarrassment of riches. "Start small. 3D can be overwhelming," advises Magic: The



Gathering artist **Steve Argyle**. "One very good way to learn 3D is to commit to one piece of software at a time and learn the basics of everything it does. Then go deep into whatever it is you want to do with that software."

If this sounds too much like hard work, Thomas still thinks it'll be worth your time. "There's virtually no reason for artists not to learn about 3D. Even if the conclusion they reach is that it's of no use to them, it will, at least, be an informed conclusion. More likely, they will come away with another string to their bow." ●

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ImagineNation *Artist in Residence*

The room is spacious with high ceilings. The big door leads to a corridor and some other rooms, and the stairs takes you to the main part of the house. In the corner I have my recording studio. The bedrooms are two floors above so I can go crazy even in the middle of the night if I feel like!

I bought this Tintin painting in Barcelona many years ago, and I've had it in every studio I've moved to.

My small recording studio helps me to recover from tight, stressful deadlines. Occasionally, I lay down some tracks for my ongoing projects. I've made quite a few records over the years, which are available on iTunes, Spotify, Amazon and so on. Of course they won't sell so I'll keep working on my storyboards.

I have a large collection of guitars and bass guitars. On this rack there's one really special instrument: a Gibson Robot Guitar, which had a limited production run of 1,000. It's self-tuning and based on a Les Paul model.

I still carry around a sketchbook when I travel, even though I love working digitally. I like the immediacy and the simplicity of putting marks on paper.

I'm very neat and organised. I wouldn't make it through the day if I wasn't – especially when working with creatives in the advertising business. I'm always prepared on revisions and ready to go into meetings. Everything I need is within reach. I work with three screens and am ambidextrous, so I use my left hand for drawing and the right hand for everything else.



Lillagrisen means "little pig" in Swedish, and he's my mascot. I carry this little piglet with me when I travel. I usually post a photo of him on my social media when I'm on the road. He has a lot of fans these days.

I keep little toys and small memorabilia that I've collected over the years in this little cabinet. Some of them are giveaways from films and projects I've worked over the years.



“ In a corner is my recording studio and collection of instruments that helps me de-stress... ”



Giuseppe "Peppe" Cristiano

Comfortably organised This artist reveals that his studio is the place where he wants to spend time, not just work



I'm Italian and as a young adult I left Italy to find work and try something different. I succeeded, and for the next 25 years I worked and lived in Europe and the US. Mostly I've lived in Stockholm, Sweden.

I recently moved to a new house with my wife and kid.

I've taken over a couple of rooms on the ground floor as my studio. It's important for me to have space. In the main room where I sit and work I have everything I need to survive long, extensive creative sessions. In front of my desk there's a TV with different kind of play-back devices, even a VHS player. When I'm not in a meeting I can watch something while I work.

In a corner of the main room is my recording studio and collection of instruments that helps me de-stress every now and then (I often jam with my friends in the garage). ➔



My meeting room is also the place where I organise my work. Sometimes I do exhibitions or write a book, and then I need a room where I can leave stuff around for weeks. Behind the doors are shelves of comic books and all sort of stuff.

ImagineNation *Artist in Residence*

This big print was a leftover from one of my exhibitions. I use it when I do a presentation because I'm still fond of it.

I like to browse through records every time I'm at a second-hand market. The Jaws soundtrack is signed by Steven Spielberg.

I thought Framing Films sounded cool so I printed a lot of small gadgets with the phrase. It's also the title of my next book.

This wall is covered by signed work from my favourite artists, which include Moebius, Bill Sienkiewicz and Will Eisner.



My wife gave me this big pig's head for my birthday a few years ago and it was so heavy that it broke the baby stroller she used to carry it home.

I have far too many pillows. I don't really need that many but I always find a new cover that I like. Now I keep them on rotation, just to change the vibes in my studio a little bit.

That is the corner where I spend most of the day using a small tablet. Occasionally I move out of the room and work in some other part of the house.

➔ Next to that I have a meeting room that I also use as a reading room or place where I can organise my exhibitions or works in progress.

Because I always have several projects going on at any time, the space there is absolutely vital for me so that I can leave my art there when something else needs my attention.

NOW SHOWING...

I have a very large film collection – it's probably close to 20,000 titles these days. And it's still growing. I use the other rooms at my disposal as storage

for my work materials, prints, magazines, folders, all sort of papers, canvas and computer equipment. I like to be well stocked.

On the walls around me I have inspiring works, prints or pictures of artists who I admire and that I've had the fortune to meet over the years.

I'm an early bird and I usually wake up at 5:30 to have a coffee. My son (who's three-and-a-half years old) seems to have taken after me so as often as not we spend that moment together. If my wife and son isn't up at that time then I usually begin work. If I don't have any



I collect and buy art books I find interesting. I'm curious by nature and I always do research and find new inspiration. Not just for work but for my own interests and projects.

work from the night before I take my coffee and spend some time updating my blog, social network, posting images and answering emails I've received during the night. When they wake up I join them for breakfast.

I've developed and mastered certain routines over the years and I use those

“ One of my most important routines is that I always do at least one illustration just for myself each day ”





Part of my film collection. There's everything from documentaries, classic movies, VHS, DVD, Blu-ray and TV series. You name it, I probably have it... somewhere!

quiet morning hours for my own projects. They're very important to me. Of course, depending of the meetings scheduled for the day, my available free time varies. One of my most important routines is that no matter what I have on my desk I always do at least one illustration just for myself each day. It can be anything, from a sketch to a finished picture.

BALANCING WORK AND FAMILY LIFE

At around 9am people usually are at their offices and my working day begins, and it sometimes ends at crazy hours since I also have clients overseas. I usually try to finish the advertising jobs that comes in by the evening. I don't like unfinished things since I never know what the next day might bring me, work-wise. And of course, having a family means I want to spend as much time as possible with them.

For many years now I've mostly worked from home. Occasionally I fly for a few days to meet directors for longer or bigger jobs, but we usually continue working over Skype for the following weeks.

I started up professionally in the early 90s so I work both traditionally and digitally. When I travel I carry a Wacom MobileStudio Pro. I try to be up to date with my kit and I leave my



I can't work without music, which is also a passion of mine. I've made a few records over the years and I used to play in different bands. Time is a bit limited now, but I'm still working on new projects.

previous or older screens at places that I visit often, such as my parents, because I sometimes get jobs with only a few days' - or hours' - notice, and always with tight deadlines.

Giuseppe is a former comic artist and scriptwriter who's been drawing storyboards for more than two decades, as well as freelancing for advertising agencies and film production companies. He's also written and published several books and manuals and occasionally gives lectures and workshops. See his art at www.framingfilms.com.



I collect all sorts of pigs. My friends know this so you can guess what I usually receive as gifts!



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Letters

YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS



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Never liked Q&A

I felt compelled to write in after reading the feedback from Thilo Schön about the Q&A section of the magazine being on hiatus. Its removal struck me as a good idea. I always felt the section was too specific to be of any use to me, and likely other readers.

I also feel like readers who write in to complain about the traditional section are missing the point that these also inform digital techniques or often feature skills that are beneficial to every artist, regardless of the medium.

To finish off with some praise, I love your magazine. It's always fun and inspiring to see the different styles and themes represented. I learnt a lot from Stan Prokopenko's recent article and from a feature that discussed values. I loved discovering Simon Stählenhag's work, and even noticed him featured by other artists on Twitter after that issue, which is likely not a coincidence. It's great that amidst social media and the internet as a platform for sharing art, your magazine still has such an impact.

Gemma Gahan, via email

Claire replies Gemma, thanks for an insightful run-through of your thoughts on the magazine. As for having an impact, I can only say that we love finding different artists, themes and skills to share with you, so I can only hope our enthusiasm shines through. Lots of artists say they get amazing feedback from their peers for appearing in the magazine. That's always nice to hear.

I miss Q&A!

I wanted to weigh in on Thilo's letter from the May issue on the Q&A section. I'm also a big fan of this section. It



Gemma felt that the Q&A section covered topics that were too specific for the majority of readers...



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... while Oslo saw the Q&A section as an opportunity to solve readers' art problems almost as they happened.

contains quick tips aimed at specific issues, almost like a call-in help section. It seems about as 'live' as a magazine can get: it connects the readers directly to the artists. I like seeing the 'yeah, I had that issue too, and here's what I did to solve it' from some of the world's top artists. And it covers such specific issues that may be glossed over in a lengthier article. It's a great feature in a great mag.

Oslo, via email

Claire replies I can't win, can I! Thank you for your comments Oslo, sorry to have let you down. Q&A has taken a back seat for a while, but that's not to say it won't come back. For now, I want to give more room to interviews and other features, too. Does anyone else have thoughts on the balance of contents within these pages? Let me know.

You can't beat traditional

I found your magazine around the same time as I started getting serious with Photoshop. I still rely almost totally on Photoshop and ImagineFX to work out new ideas and compositions.

When it comes to the execution of one of those compositions, however, I move over to my traditional art setup. I love making a big mess when I try to create visual art. I can put a work-in-progress up in the hallway and critique it whenever I walk by. When an oil painting is done, I can grab hold of it and even look to see what's on the back.

Please keep at least the same proportion of traditional arts in your excellent magazine.

Jerry Smetzer, via email

Claire replies I'm glad to hear that our relationship is still going strong, Jerry. Thank you for sharing how you create - I love hearing how different artists use the tools around them to make art. Your process reminded me of Erik Jones, our last issue's cover star. Readers, please share your artistic process with me - you might inspire a reader to start a new way to paint.



New works that have grabbed our attention



Maria Becvar
[@becvardoodles](https://www.instagram.com/becvardoodles)



Ken Morris
[@kenmojr](https://twitter.com/kenmojr)



Umut Dülger
[@magaraduvari](https://www.instagram.com/magaraduvari)

If you have created art that you want us to shout about simply tag us on Twitter or Instagram, or find us on Facebook!





Art by Mark Makovey, 5518 Studio's senior 2D artist who's based in St Petersburg. He was inspired by the latest Pirates of the Caribbean film.

STUDIO PROFILE

5518 STUDIOS

Based in America and Russia, the art production company tells **Tom May** how they create a range of art for the games industry

Today's globalised game industry is an increasingly 24/7 world. But 5518 Studios is one art production company that has no problem offering a round-the-clock service.

With studios in Ulyanovsk and St Petersburg in Russia, and a headquarters in Los Angeles (the latter two are 5,518 miles apart, hence the

name), it's able to work continuously on time-sensitive projects across multiple time zones. And that's helped the company carve out a strong reputation for supplying concept art, illustrations, 3D modelling, animation, cinematics and augmented reality/virtual reality to the games industry.

Furthermore, there's another way they're disrupting traditional business models. As 5518 Studios states on its website, "We are not outsourcers, we are external partners."

Founder and CEO **Michael Casalino**, who's based in the LA office, explains what that means in practice. "We want to be a true extension to the team, so we don't like calling the people we work with 'clients'; they're partners. And we want, ideally, to be integrated



Michael Casalino says that it was a "big privilege to work on the iconic Snoopy universe to recreate famous characters and worlds for next-gen devices."

fully into their process and pipeline, whether that's their Skype, their Slack, their Trello, their Jira or whatever."

Since 5518 Studios' launch in 2016, it's worked on more than 15 such partnerships with the likes of Google, UBER, Wargaming, Scopely, Oculus VR, Warner Bros. and Electronic Arts. Headline projects have included ➤➤

Studio PROFILE

5518 Studios, Inc

LOCATION: Los Angeles, St Petersburg and Ulyanovsk

PROJECTS: Striker VR, Paladins, SMITE, Snoopy Pop, World of Tanks HD, Rune: Ragnarok, Walking Dead: Road to Survival, Dice with Buddies, Wheel of Fortune, WWE: Champions and Family Guy

WEB: www.5518studios.com



Studio Profile 5518 Studios



Sci-fi military character concept for a game that's coming out later this year on Xbox and PlayStation.

This is early 2D concept art for a VR experience in a museum exhibit to be shown in New York.



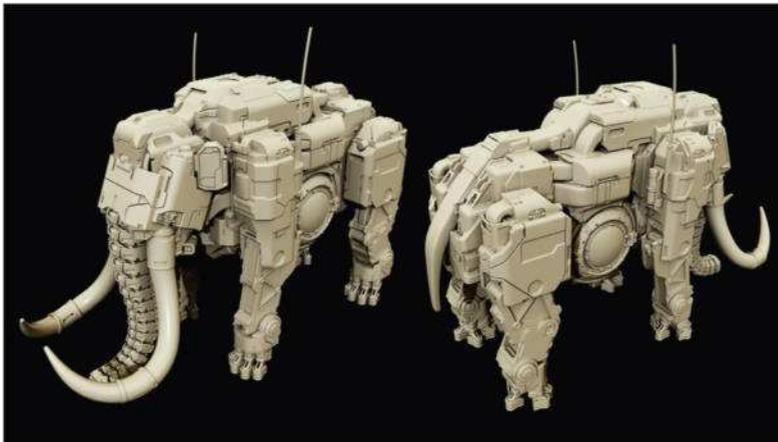
An in-game illustration for *Is It Love?*, the hit mobile title that's published by 1492 Studio and Ubisoft.



A product review session with the team in St Petersburg.

Feature

Michael says, "We wanted to imagine how VR could be used in a mythological setting. Turns out it can be very scary!"



➔ work on *Walking Dead: Road to Survival*, *WWE Champions*, *Family Guy*, *Temple Run*, *Striker VR*, *Paladins*, *SMITE*, *Snoopy Pop*, *World of Tanks HD*, *Rune: Ragnarok*, *DICE with Buddies* and *Wheel of Fortune*.

As of necessity, the art produced by the studio varies in terms of style. But what remains consistent, Michael says, is "high-quality detail in 3D character modelling. A lot of that starts off with strong 2D concept art, and then we take that flat image and bring it to life."

“It starts off with strong 2D concept art, then we take that image and bring it to life”

Inspired by *Horizon Zero Dawn*, senior 3D artist Sergey Tyapkin created a robotic mammoth for an internal R&D project, later to be used by Allegorithmic to promote Substance.

Most of the studio's artists are either 2D or 3D specialists, although they're sufficiently informed about each others' disciplines that they can collaborate closely, Michael adds. "So if, say, we're missing details in the 2D concept art, the 3D artist will say, 'Okay, where do you see things from the concept side happening on this scene over here?' Then they'll work hand-in-hand on patches."

A WORLD OF 3D RENDERING

There have been so many 5518 Studios projects that hard to know exactly where to start. But one that's at the forefront of co-founder and COO **Maxim Miheyenko's**



mind right now is its recent partnership on *World of Tanks HD*.

"It was a big challenge involving physically based rendering art and real-time physics," explains Maxim, who's based in the St Petersburg office. "We worked very hard with Alexey Nazarov, our art manager, and a great team of artists to create next-level, realistic art for Wargaming's well-known blockbuster."

Another project is a mobile game called *Snoopy Pop*, where the studio has been working with gaming company Jam City and the Charles Schulz Group. "All the whimsical 2D artwork we're doing for the backgrounds, the iconography, is all in line with the original Peanuts ➔"

All rights reserved Jam City



This is an in-game screenshot from the mobile blockbuster title Snoopy Pop that 5518 Studios worked on.



5518 Studios created this promo art for SuperSense, an innovative RTS game for the mobile market.

All rights reserved Gungho Online Entertainment/TURBO Studios



Dragon concept art created for the open-world sandbox game Rune: Ragnarok.

All rights reserved by Human Head Studios

FEDOR LOSEV

The 3D character artist on the appeal of the unknown...

How did you come to work at 5518 Studios?

After studying fine arts, I worked as a 2D artist in different game studios. I developed my skills in sculpting and low-poly modelling as a hobby. I came to 5518 Studios in 2017 because I really wanted to work on Battlefield. I met co-founder and COO Maxim online, and soon tons of work came flooding my way.

What kind of art do you create in your job?

I work on sculpting, low-poly and texturing, including organic, hard surface, characters and props, mostly for photorealistic projects.

How does this differ to your personal art?

I like to design 2D original creatures. I think some of these have migrated into my 3D work, but I'm always researching new shapes and new approaches in my personal work. I try to find something unknown and then bring it to life.

What have you been working on lately at 5518 Studios?

I've been creating some exotic and unique hairstyles for next-generation, physically based rendering characters. This has been a real challenge for me, because I haven't done such complex hairstyles before.

What advice would you give to a young artist wishing to work at 5518 Studios?

Research new tools and techniques that will improve your work and time. And don't forget to go out and relax, and also do some sport - that's also very important!



Senior character 3D artist Fedor is busy working on a range of epic characters for Rune: Ragnarok.

www.artstation.com/feddark



artwork – and even as I’m talking to you, I’ve just got chills,” says Michael. “I mean, when I was nine years old, I used to draw Woodstock and Snoopy all the time. That we’re working on this iconic brand... well, I can’t quite believe this is happening!”

A POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT

With more than 60 artists typically working on 12-15 projects at any one time, 5518 Studios is certainly a busy place. But the hectic pace is balanced



out by a positive and nurturing working environment, says art production manager **Elvina Antonova**, who’s based in Ulyanovsk.

“There’s an informal and creative atmosphere, with a lack of unnecessary bureaucracy and pompous meetings, and we feel like we’re one big family,” she says. “Things are run in a similar way to a company like Google, where

people are encouraged to develop their creativity, initiative and talent.”

Most of the artists working in Ulyanovsk and St Petersburg are Russian, along with some hailing from Asia. But 5518 Studios also employs large numbers of freelancers, working remotely from around the world.

Elvina has the following advice for any artist wishing to work with them: “Be ready to learn fast, improve your professional skills every day, and never give up. Play as many games as

“That we’re working on this iconic brand... I can’t quite believe this is happening!”

Art for Toontastic: Cars 3, an education app by Google. Michael says, “It was a big pleasure to work with Thushan, Andy and all of the Google team to bring Cars to children around the world.”

possible. Learn how to use AI tools for artists, Substance, Maya, ZBrush, 3ds Max, and get to grips with as many new techniques as you can.”

Michael agrees that technical skills are vital, and need to be constantly refreshed. “Our artists have to be ready to reset their skills every year, with every new update,” he says. “But that shouldn’t take anything away from your passion and creativity.”

“Here at 5518 Studios we tell stories in every detail of our art. We don’t just create art from polygons and textures, but also try to fill it with life, real history and love. That means being pumped every day, non-stop – we wake up and run to hunt for a new mammoth!”



Studio Profile 5518 Studios



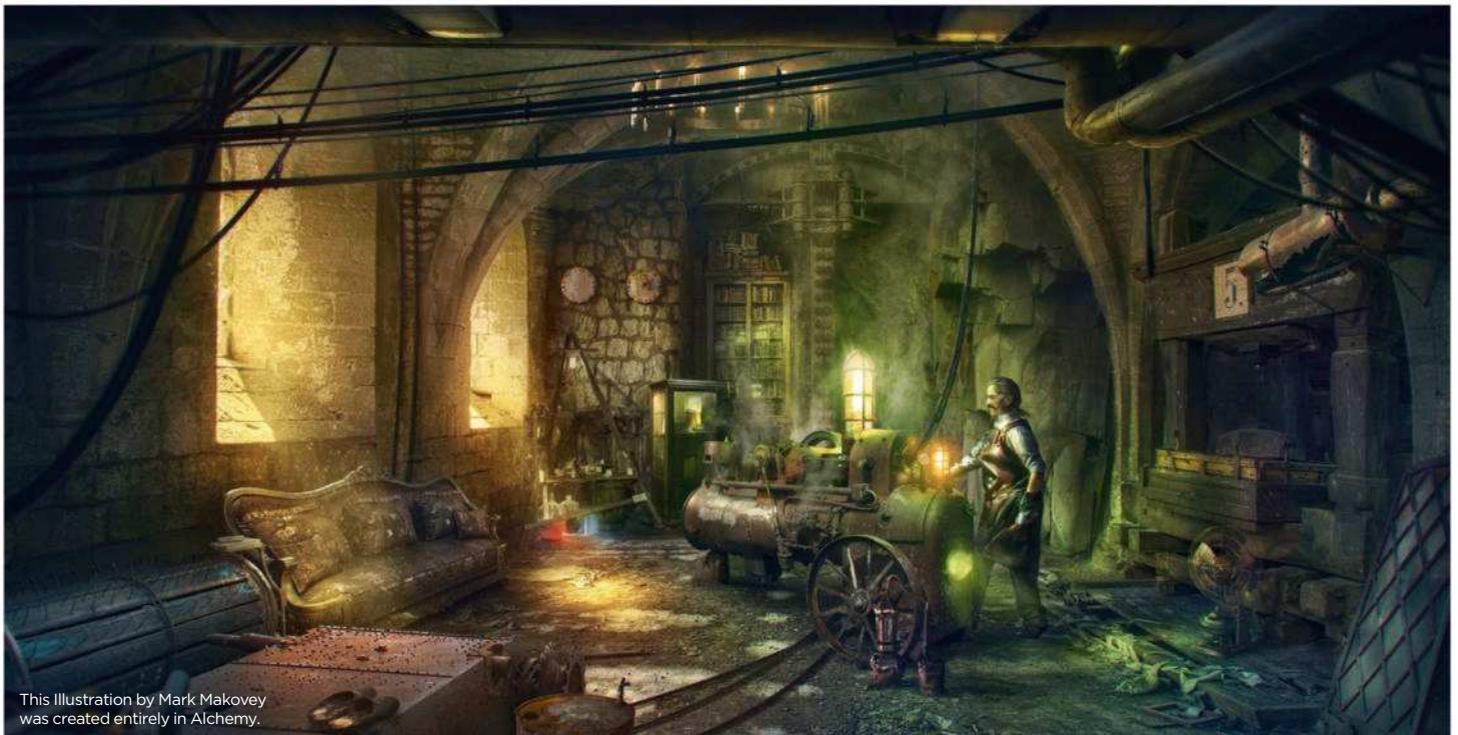
5518 Studios often plays around with some popular iconic game screen shots, adding some new fresh IP to them.



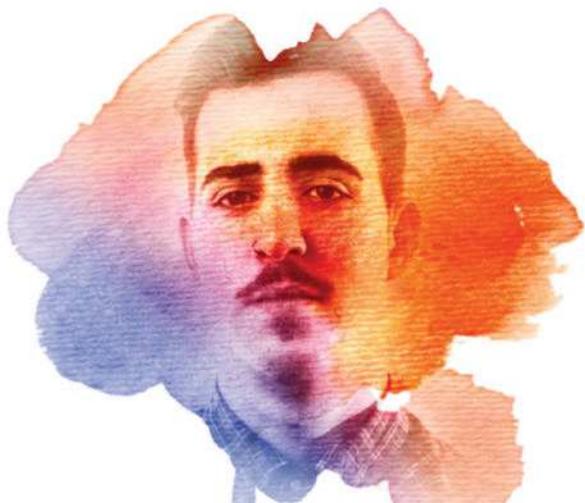
Alexander Stepanchikov, the studio's lead 3D artist, created this orc to teach himself the new version of Substance Painter.



Michael with Maxim, the two founders of 5518 Studios, pictured together at XDS 2017 in Vancouver, Canada.



This Illustration by Mark Makovey was created entirely in Alchemy.



Artist Portfolio

PABLO CARPIO

From having no job to working for Disney and Marvel – **Gary Evans** learns how this artist's Hollywood gamble paid off...

Pablo Carpio had a plan. He'd use the money he put aside for university to pay for a trip to Hollywood. The young concept artist would then go to all the big studios, meet all the right people, and get his big break in the film business.

The Spaniard touched down in Los Angeles. Reality hit. He was alone and had no idea where to go or who to see.

Artist PROFILE

Pablo Carpio

LOCATION: Spain

FAVOURITE ARTISTS: Edward Hopper, Caravaggio, Rembrandt, Francis Bacon, Asher Brown Durand, Frank Tenney Johnson and Jeremy Lipking

SOFTWARE USED: ZBrush, Cinema 4D, OctaneRender, Photoshop

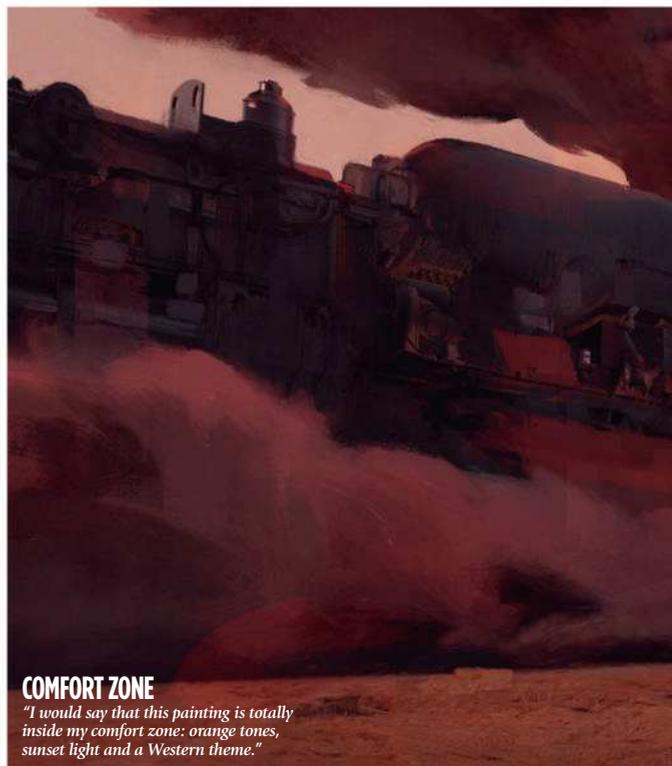
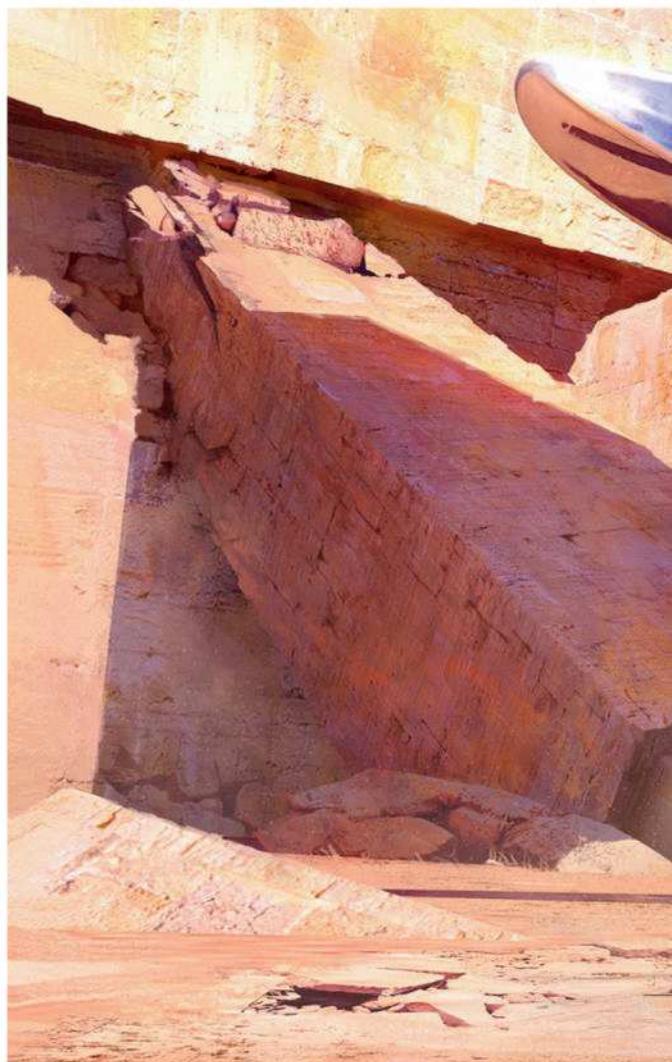
WEB: www.pablocarpioart.com

He needed help. Pablo called up a few people from the digital art community – artists he'd met online and at events. They called up friends, who called up their friends, and pretty soon he had a meeting at game developers Naughty Dog and Riot Games. Then Pablo found himself in Burbank, at the headquarters of Disney Studios.

"At that point I didn't have any job," he says. "Three years later I've been involved in the creation of three films from Disney's franchises."

Pablo grew up in an upper-middle class family in Madrid. He described himself as a rebel without a cause – until he found art. People noticed he could draw, so he worked at it. The more hours he put into art, the more people noticed.

"It was just me having fun and having the curiosity to know what ➤➤



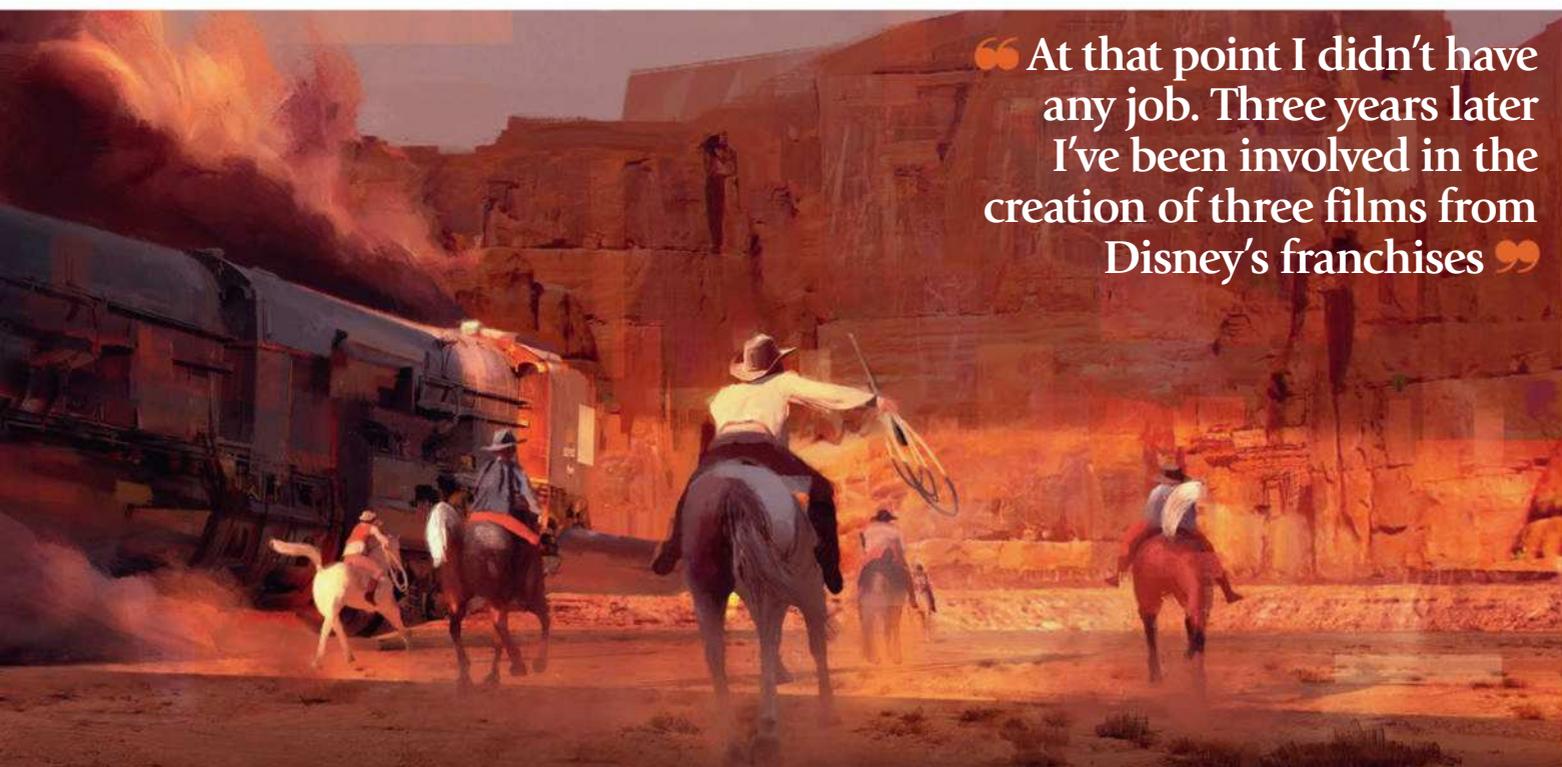
COMFORT ZONE

"I would say that this painting is totally inside my comfort zone: orange tones, sunset light and a Western theme."



STARSHAPES

"This is a painting from almost three years ago, but it was a big step for me! I tried to design a new spaceship for the Star Wars universe that could be a mix between Boba Fett's Slave I, and a Nubian Royal Starship."



“ At that point I didn't have any job. Three years later I've been involved in the creation of three films from Disney's franchises ”

TRIBUTE

"This was a gift for a friend to use it for his magazine cover: a tribute to Mark Maggiori's Western landscapes."



➔ would happen if I could do it a bit better the following day," Pablo says.

He painted Warhammer miniatures, drew copies of the characters from Magic: The Gathering cards, and got into gaming during the PlayStation and PlayStation 2 eras – playing games like Spyro, Tekken and Crash Bandicoot. His art improved, but his schoolwork suffered. "Most people around me thought that I would end up living under a bridge if I kept painting, and not doing anything else."

After high school, Pablo studied fine art at the Complutense University of Madrid. This wasn't like school. Instead of maths and physics, it taught sculpture and art history. He excelled

at his studies. Pablo grew up in an environment that valued a university education, so when he graduated in 2014, it earned him some respect. It didn't last long, though. That same environment also valued money. "The idea of being a successful artist was basically nonexistent among my friends and family."

At university, he got into digital art. All those miniatures, trading cards, computer games – somebody had to

HIDDEN DEPTH

"While working at Marvel I started pushing my 3D skills way more than before, trying to create different characters just as a training exercise. This is one of them."

“I discovered they were designed by real human beings, not by ancient gods”

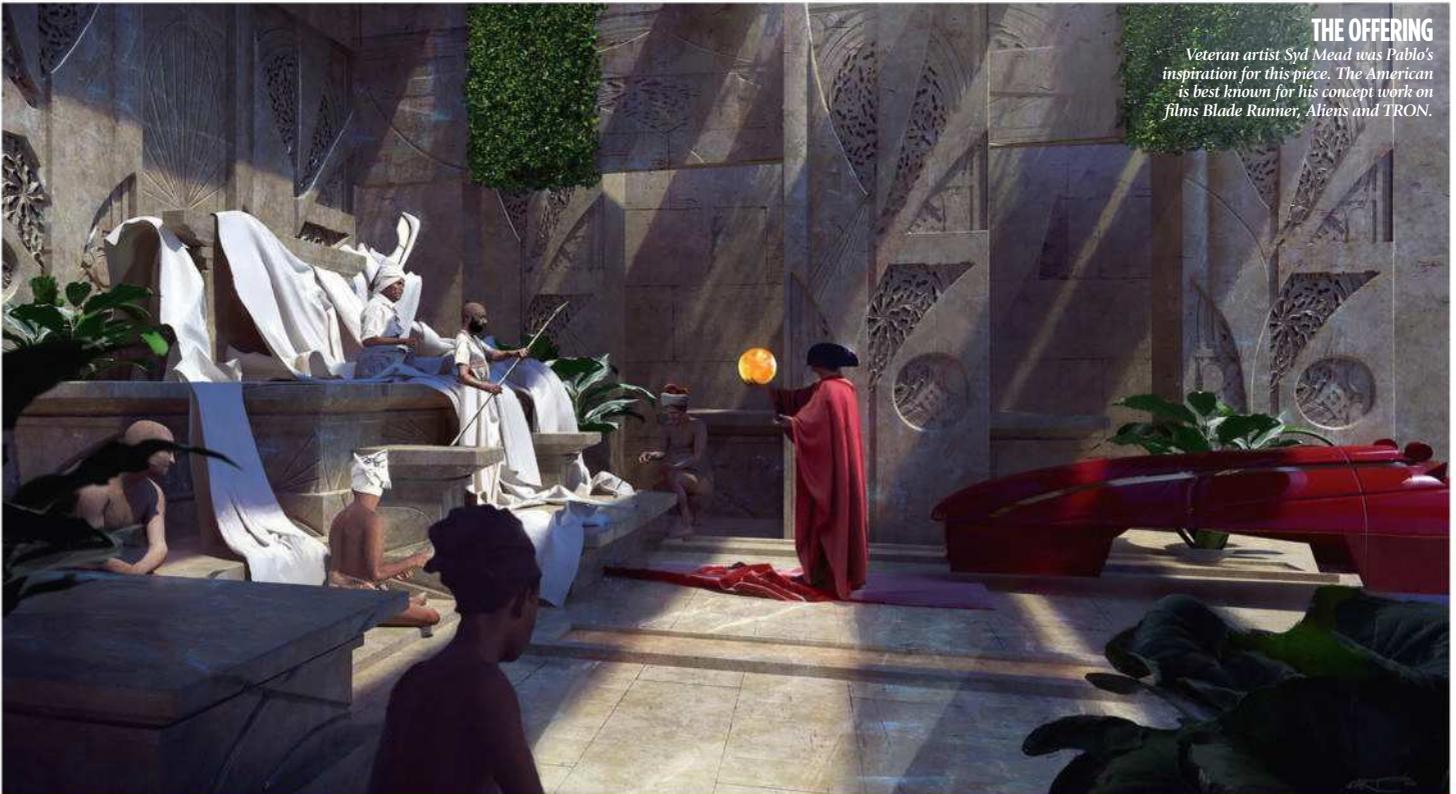
draw them. "I discovered they were designed by real human beings with a salary, and 20 days of holidays a year! Not by ancient gods that had brought them as gifts from the sky. Suddenly, painting and designing monsters had a real purpose. I had an objective for the first time in my life."

ZERO IMPACT

Pablo spent several years trying and failing to break into the games industry. There were lots of rejections. People tried to make him work for free, even steal his art. He wanted a job at a small independent developer, or even a job in game publicity or advertising. "My expectations weren't higher than ➔

THE OFFERING

Veteran artist Syd Mead was Pablo's inspiration for this piece. The American is best known for his concept work on films *Blade Runner*, *Aliens* and *TRON*.



PERFECTLY COMPOSED

Pablo explains how he uses light and colour to lead the viewer's eye and create a strong focal point

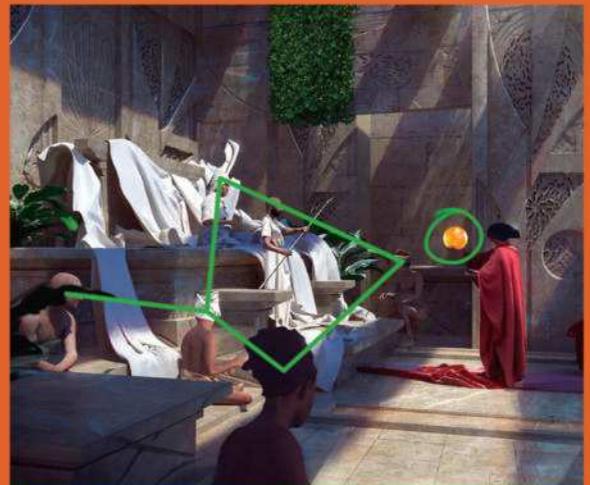
"This is a painting that I did last year, inspired by Syd Mead's work. I tried to make a composition with a definite focal point, which can be tricky because symmetrical shapes tend to make images less dynamic.

As always in my work, I start with a 3D base, throw in a render for the main light and colour, and then paint over it later in Photoshop. My idea was to use colour to hide the guidelines, and light and shapes to push the composition. If you link the heads of the characters, you unveil an arrow pointing to the ball in the

middle of the image, which is the focal point.

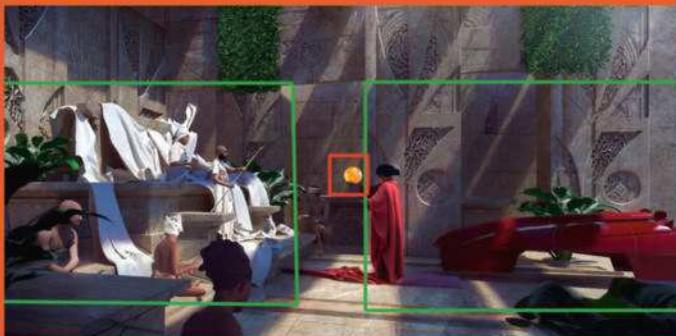
The repetition of the light and its direction is supposed to give narrative structure to the image, leading the eye from right to left, as it travels from the vehicle to the guy in red, and from the guy in red to the ones who are receiving the offering.

The colour scheme is basic, so it clearly separates the characters. One side of the image is white and the other red, and the ball is the only object in the composition that's a different colour."



DEVELOPING A STRONG FOCAL POINT

Pablo loves employing circles in his work. The artist uses them as the key focal points, around which the action in the composition takes place.



BRINGING A COMPOSITION TO LIFE

"I love working up the composition, colour and light. Keyframe and environment work appeals, too, so in my personal work I try to make all these factors work together."



THE LONG ROAD TO ARTISTIC SUCCESS

Pablo spent five years creating and sharing pieces like *The Offering* before he received any interest from video game companies. But all that hard work and determination has finally paid off.



➔ that," Pablo admits. "The beginning was tough: no contacts, almost zero impact on social media, and zero trust in myself and my abilities."

It caused problems with his family. After several arguments, they agreed to let him stay at home without getting a "real job." Every day for the next three years he worked on his art. He drew and painted and hoped an opportunity would eventually come his way. He made friends in the online

digital art community. He went to events and met them in person.

"I started to understand how the business works, and how big video game companies and movie productions were not that far away. It was just about pushing your skills to the limit and knocking on the right doors at the right time."

Finally, Ubisoft Montreal emailed. The game developer behind the Far Cry, Prince of Persia and Assassin's

INSPIRED BY ANASTASIA

"I painted this while visiting some friends in Berlin. I took inspiration from some key scenes in the animated children's film Anastasia."

Creed franchises invited him to work as a freelance concept artist. "I signed the contracts and two days later I was working on a AAA video game. Sometimes reality hits you like a truck. But in a good way."

CONCEPT ART IS IDEAS

Pablo works in both 2D and 3D. He has a simple setup: a tablet, laptop and monitor. The average piece takes him three days to complete: a day for sketches and 3D layouts, a day for detailed 3D modelling and light rendering, and another for photobashing and 2D painting.

He prefers 2D for concept art, but by working in 3D, he can produce lots ➔

“The beginning was tough: no contacts, almost zero impact on social media, and zero trust in myself”

DEMACIA

"Another painting from the series for League of Legends, of the Demacia landscape. I tried to adapt the colour and lighting to previous concepts created by the Riot team."



BRAVE NEW WORLDS

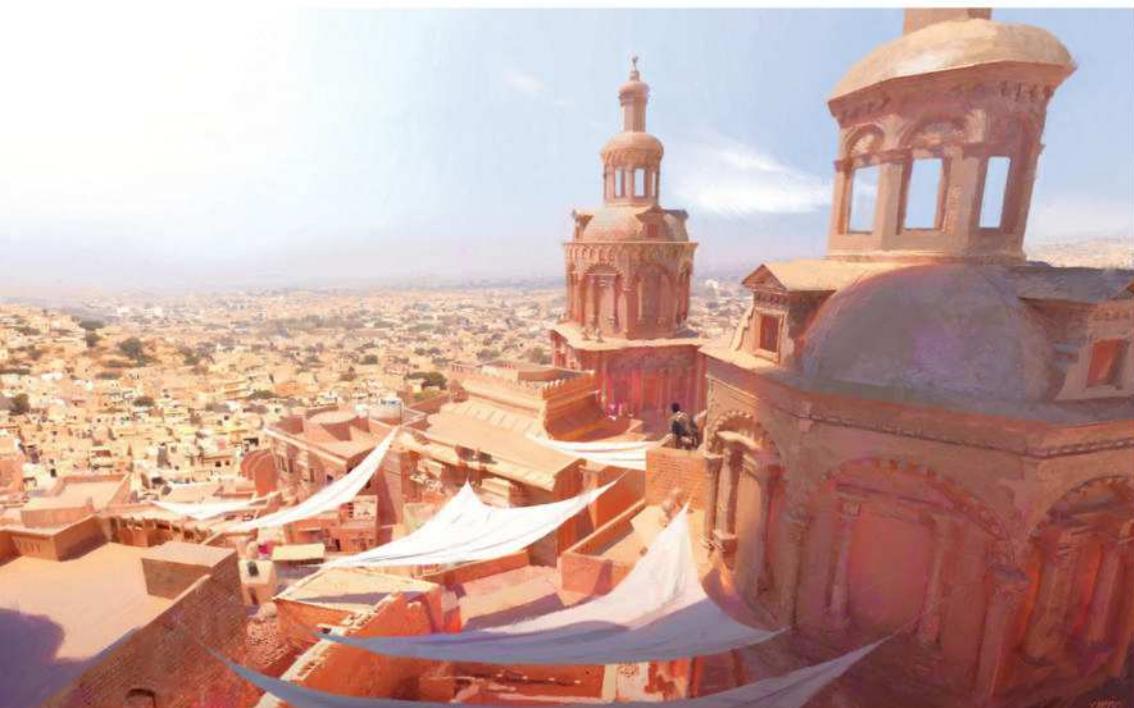
"Since I was a child, I was attracted to the idea of translating thoughts into paintings. I had the urge to make real all the ideas and worlds that I was building on my mind."



A NEW VIEW

"This painting was a way to learn about scale and distant points of view, because these are topics I rarely tackle in my art. I used grey and a diffuse lighting scheme to achieve a more moody-looking scene."





SILVERA

The French band Gojira sang about "dead bodies falling from the sky" in their song *Silvera*, which provided Pablo with a key moment of inspiration.



➔ of images very quickly and very accurately, which is important in game development when time is tight. For him, the idea is always more important than the medium.

There's a difference, the artist says, between drawing something just because "it looks badass" and drawing something because you want to communicate. And this is what great concept art should do: use design language, shapes, composition and

GETTING DEEP

"This was an exercise in depth and scale. I was inspired by the art of Nick Gindraux for Uncharted 4, which is one of my favourite video games."

storytelling to say something, to convey an idea. "Concept art is all about ideas," Pablo says, "not amazing renders with tons of effects."

The Spaniard's work shows us something happening, action, a moment in time. His composition gives us clues to what's going on. He believes that a varied palette of colours keeps the viewer interested. And he uses light to create mood and to guide the eye around the image.

"Apart from all of that, I love circles. Sounds weird, but you can see that all my images have circles somewhere. I think that it's a shape which can bring lots of balance, rhythm and weight to designs."

“ Concept art is all about ideas, not amazing renders with tons of effects ”

MY PROCESS

"I use 3D modelling to create a base for my illustration. Next, I run a first render with basic lights and colours, then move into Photoshop where I both paint and photobash the image."

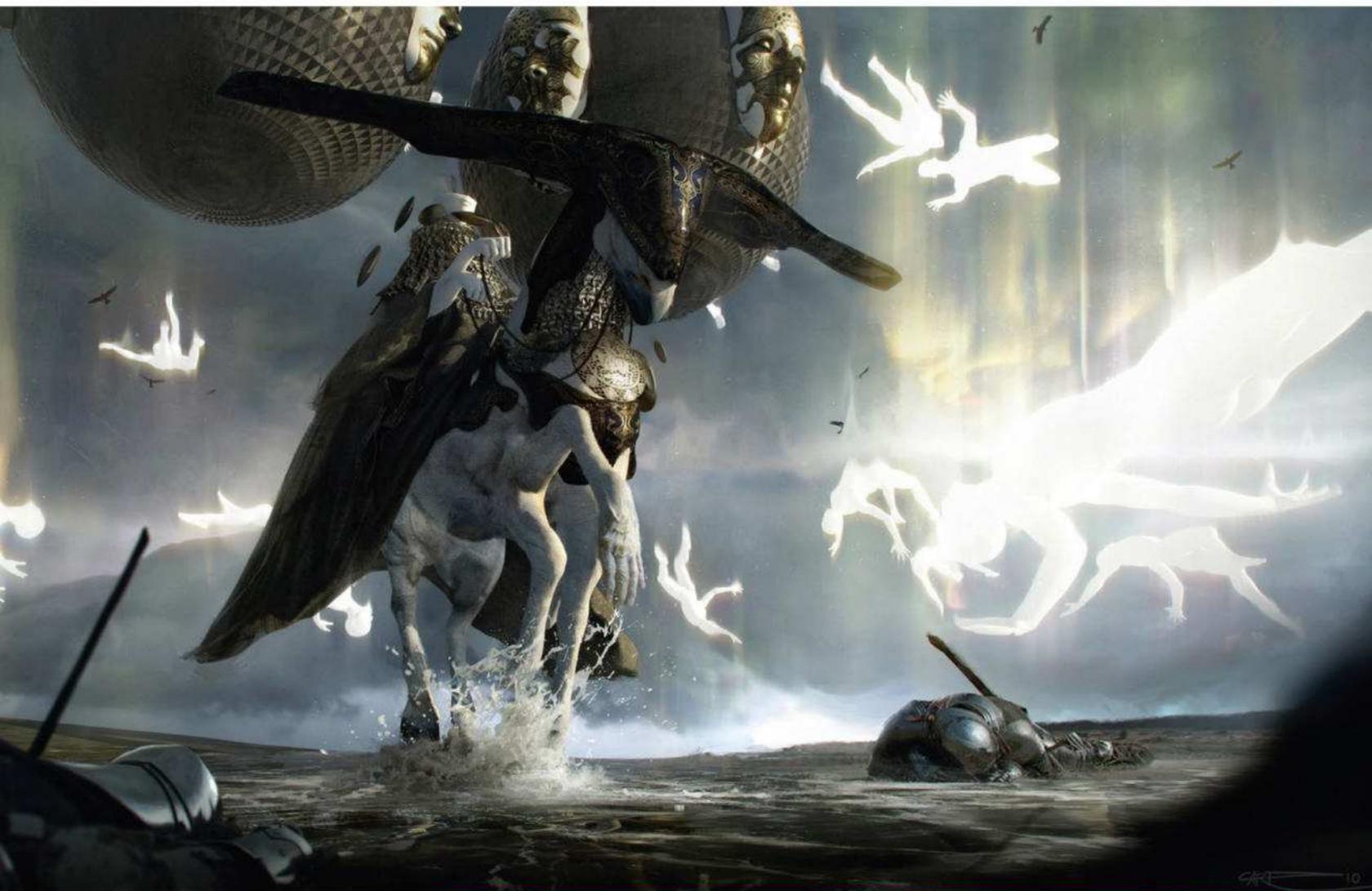


Pablo has just completed work on movies for Pixar and Marvel Studios (unfortunately, he isn't allowed to tell us which ones). Working in these kind of collaborative environments meant that he had to adapt his ideas to fit the given project, the budget and the rest of the team.

The projects posed questions, and it was his job to come up with answers. That, Pablo says, is what a concept artist does. It's not just about making nice pictures. In return, he learned countless new processes, techniques and tools to use in his work.

THE VALUE OF GOOD IDEAS

Something Pablo found difficult was giving away his best ideas. He instinctively wanted to keep them back for personal projects. "In the end, I gain more by giving my best, rather than keeping it all to myself and delivering only half of my potential. It shows that I'm a reliable artist, which



will lead to good words from my clients that can potentially introduce me to new projects and directors.

"The result? A happy client and the chance to leave my mark in a Hollywood production."

Which finally brings us full circle – Pablo's very own Hollywood ending. Dropping everything, flying out to Los Angeles, hoping to make it in the film industry despite not having a single meeting lined up... looking back, that was a bit of a mad idea, wasn't it?

"It's all about always moving forward," he says. "It's about risking what you have and believing in your own abilities, and if you don't have an opportunity, create it by yourself. Making things happen starts by taking bold decisions.

"I happily look back and realise that it wasn't as impossible as it looked when I was still painting on my maths book at high school." ●

ANOTHER DIMENSION

Pablo explains why he doesn't differentiate between using 2D and 3D techniques when creating his concept artworks

"I recently did a personal piece called Silvera. It's in honour of a song by the French band Gojira. The song inspired me to work on character design – something that I don't do frequently. I also took inspiration from the Christian folklore celebrations that happen in the south of Spain during Easter. It's a weird mix, but I had a lot of fun working on it.

A piece like this can take around three days to finish: one for drawing sketches and creating a 3D layout, another for detailed modelling in 3D of the base and rendering of the light, and then a third one to paint in 2D and apply some photobashing.

I like working on 3D more and more every day. Because I'm always improving, it offers me new options and points of view to develop my pieces. 3D is very important in a production pipeline for delivering high amounts of work in a short period of time,

and at the same time to provide mathematically accurate light conditions and colour, especially if the work is going to be used for movies or games that need a realistic look.

However, as a concept artist, normally you deliver your work in 2D, so it's important to also have techniques like photobashing and speed drawing to be able to show things done in very short periods of time. Sometimes preparing 3D is too much work for a morning, so you need to jump directly into 2D to be able to demonstrate certain ideas quickly to your clients.

Of course, 2D and 3D require different skills but what matters in the end is the vision of the artist, and how they control the space, the light and colour. In the end, there's no difference between charcoal or digital VFX when it comes to creating original art."

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Issue 160 May 2018

Comic artists assemble within this month's issue! We speak to Ken Lashley and Tony S Daniel, reveal how to draw expressive faces for your panel art, and then colour it effectively. Plus, how to beat back negative thoughts.



Issue 159 April 2018

Make your mark in the book industry, with pro advice from Wylie Beckert, Dave Kendall and Armand Baltazar. Illustrator Sam Weber talks about emotions, and we find out how fan art can lead to getting paid work.



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Bastien Grivet

The look of the future appeals to this Swiss-born artist, who likes to sketch sleek buildings atop distant mountain peaks in his spare time

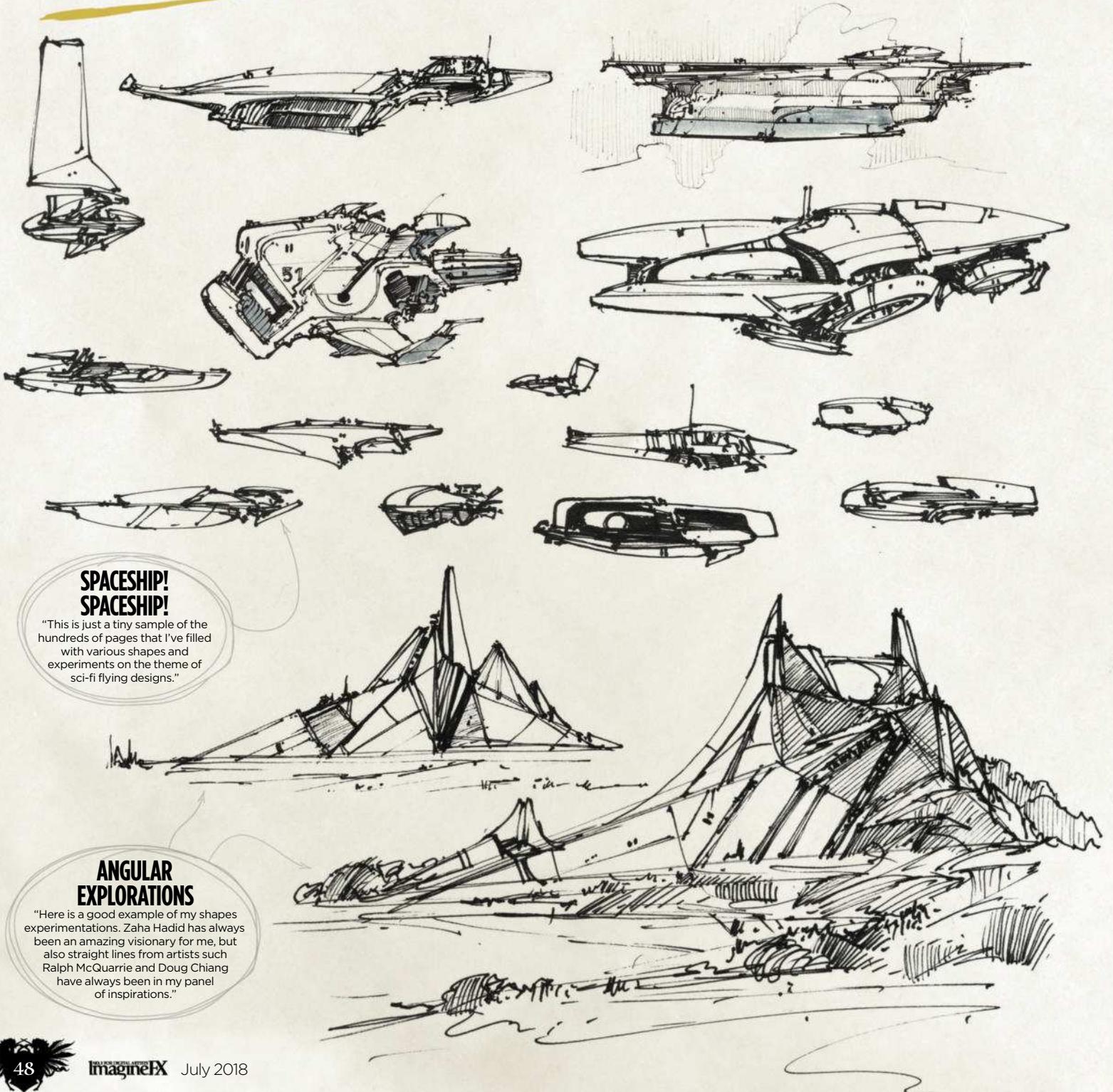
Artist PROFILE

Bastien Grivet

LOCATION: France



Bastien's a Swiss art director, concept artist and composer who's based in Montpellier, southern France. He co-founded Wardenlight Studio with his wife Jessica Rossier and has worked on various big productions around the world such Call of Duty: Black Ops 3, Shadow of War and the upcoming Spider-Man: Into the Spider-verse. www.grivetart.com



SPACESHIP! SPACESHIP!

"This is just a tiny sample of the hundreds of pages that I've filled with various shapes and experiments on the theme of sci-fi flying designs."

ANGULAR EXPLORATIONS

"Here is a good example of my shapes experimentations. Zaha Hadid has always been an amazing visionary for me, but also straight lines from artists such Ralph McQuarrie and Doug Chiang have always been in my panel of inspirations."



“It’s the only time of the year where I get to try something a bit different”

FACING YOUR FEARS

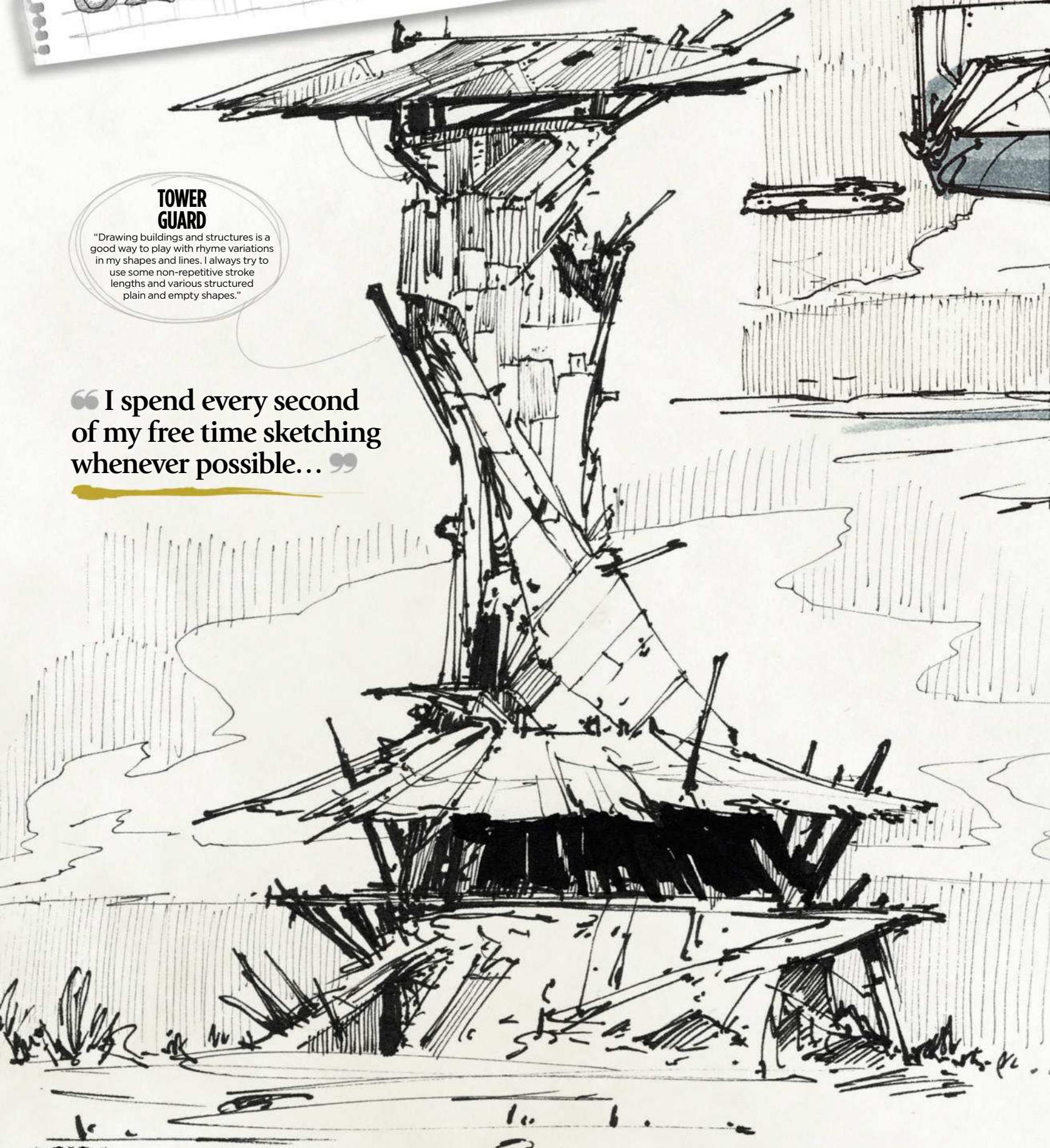
“This is one of my attempts for last year’s Inktober challenge. It’s the only time of the year where I get to try something a bit different.”

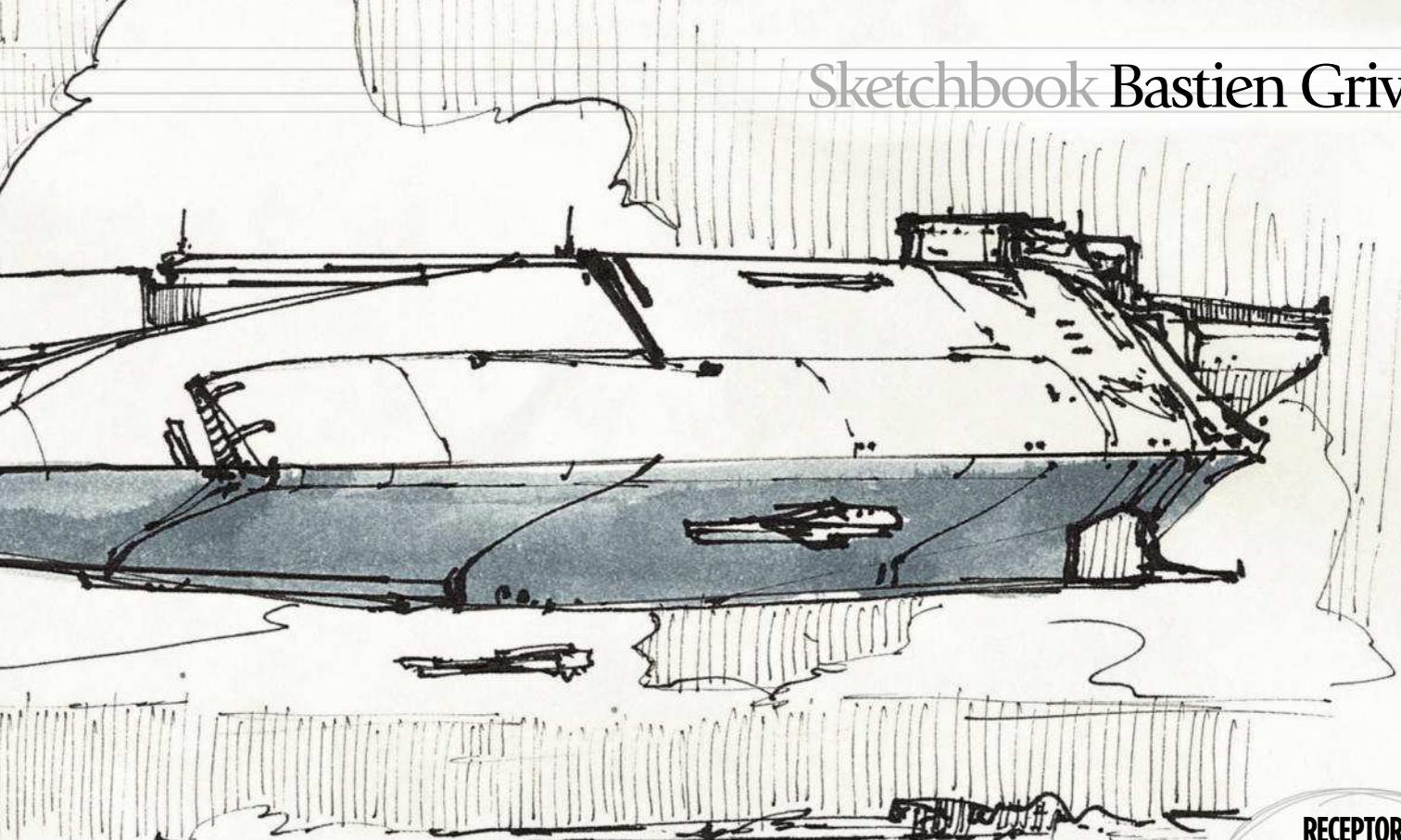
Sketchbook

TOWER GUARD

"Drawing buildings and structures is a good way to play with rhyme variations in my shapes and lines. I always try to use some non-repetitive stroke lengths and various structured plain and empty shapes."

“ I spend every second of my free time sketching whenever possible... ”





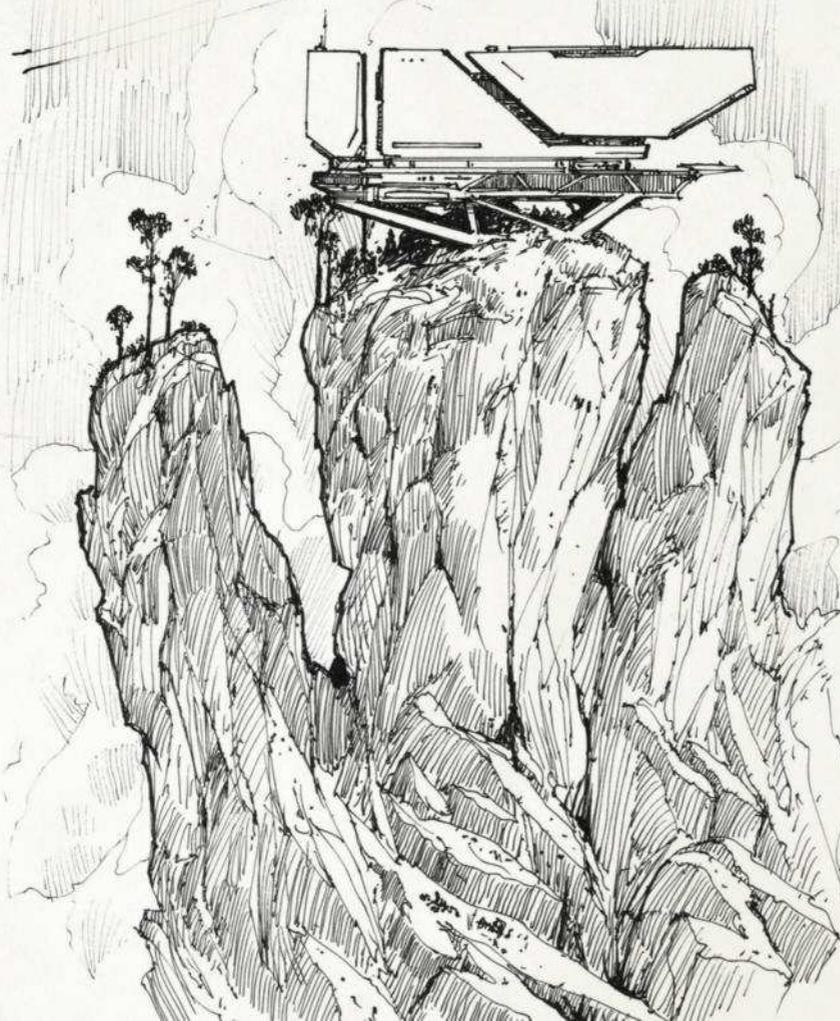
RECEPTOR CONCEPTS

"A fun art task to do is to play with contrast in terms of context. An old barn fitted with crazy sci-fi devices, for example..."



CARGO II

"Flying boats are like iron clouds... Right?"



OUTPOST

"I spend every second of my free time sketching whenever possible: when I'm stuck on a train or plane, or while I'm waiting for someone. But it has to be a nice place. Give me a small coffee table with a warm cappuccino and the world can fade away. You'll never see me draw in a crowded fast food joint or in a dentist's waiting room (it's hard to draw with a trembling hand)."

Sketchbook

GALACTIC RADIO STATION

"I love to use brush pens, which create lovely, soft values. Here, I took an empty brush pen and filled it with water and a few drops of ink."



ALMOST CARBON NEUTRAL

"Yeah, and it's also fun to imagine different types of engines..."

SUMMER HOUSE

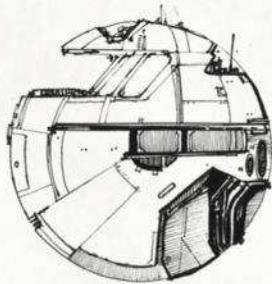
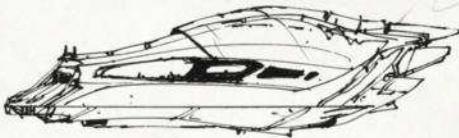
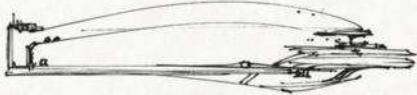
"I love combining futuristic architecture and mountains - perhaps because I'm Swiss and my uncle is an architect. Anyway, my main reference in terms of lines and hatching are Franklin Booth and Bernie Wrightson's Frankenstein. Those two guys are my main inspirations, but I also love the lines of Ian McQue and Raphael Lacoste."

HIGH CITADEL

"I've always loved drawing mountains, futuristic buildings and spaceships. But someone once asked me: "Hey, why don't you draw something else like characters, you lazy so-and-so." And like every artist I felt guilty sticking to one or two subjects. But it was what I loved to do during my free time, so I said to myself: "I don't care, I'll draw in my sketchbook only what I love to draw and I'll be good at it." I'm still learning a lot, but it was one of the best decision in my life. This sketch was the first one based on my promise."

SHAPES AND SPACESHIPS

"Another good exercise for me is to play with a vehicle's shape and the way light and shadow interact with it."

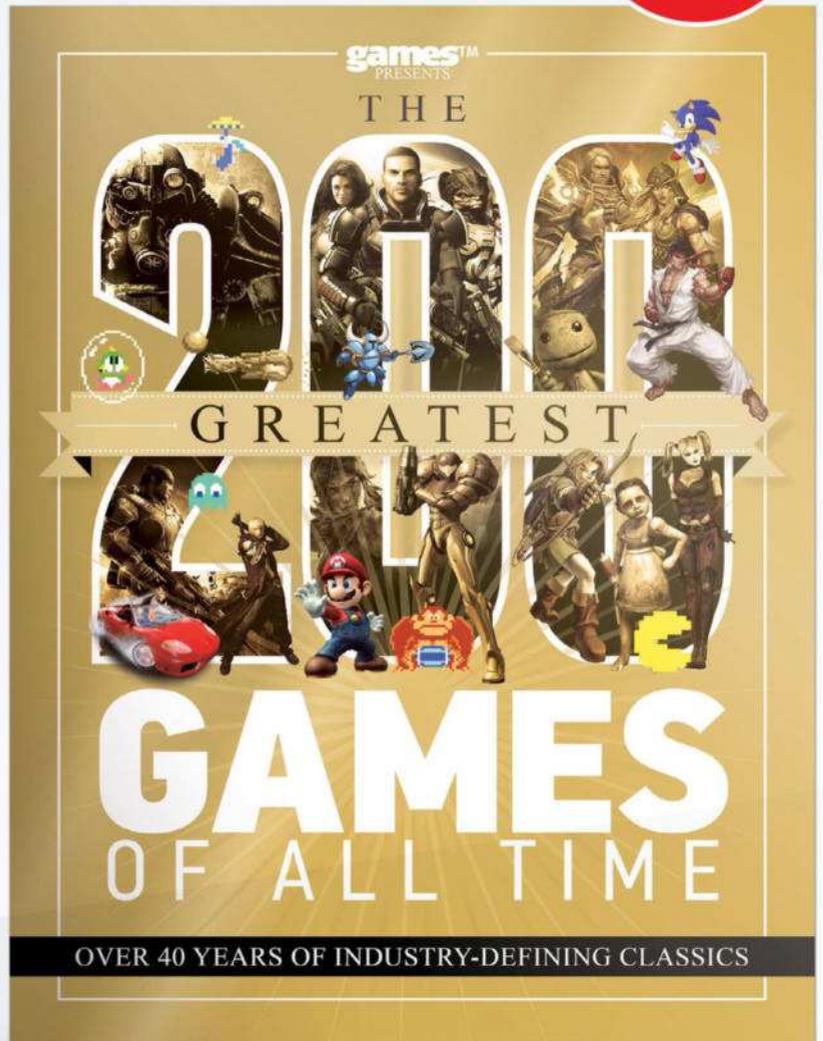
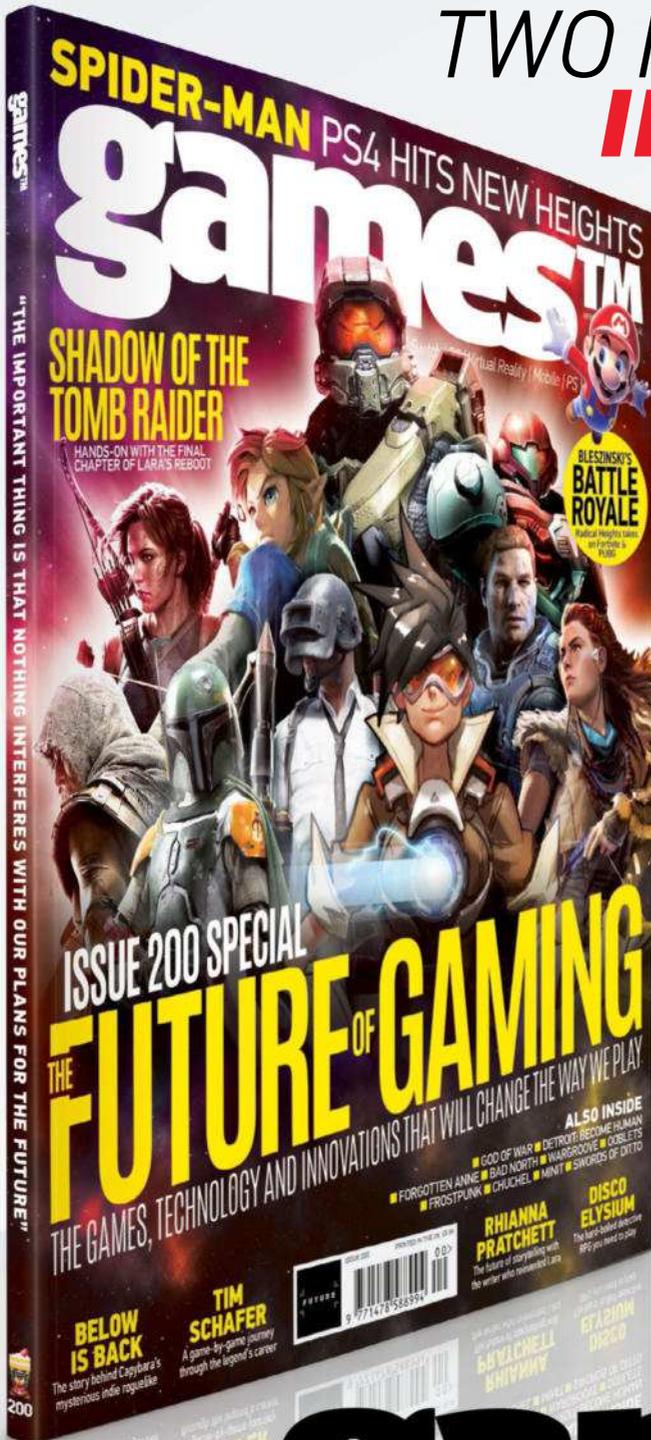


“ I’ll draw in my sketchbook only what I love to draw... ”

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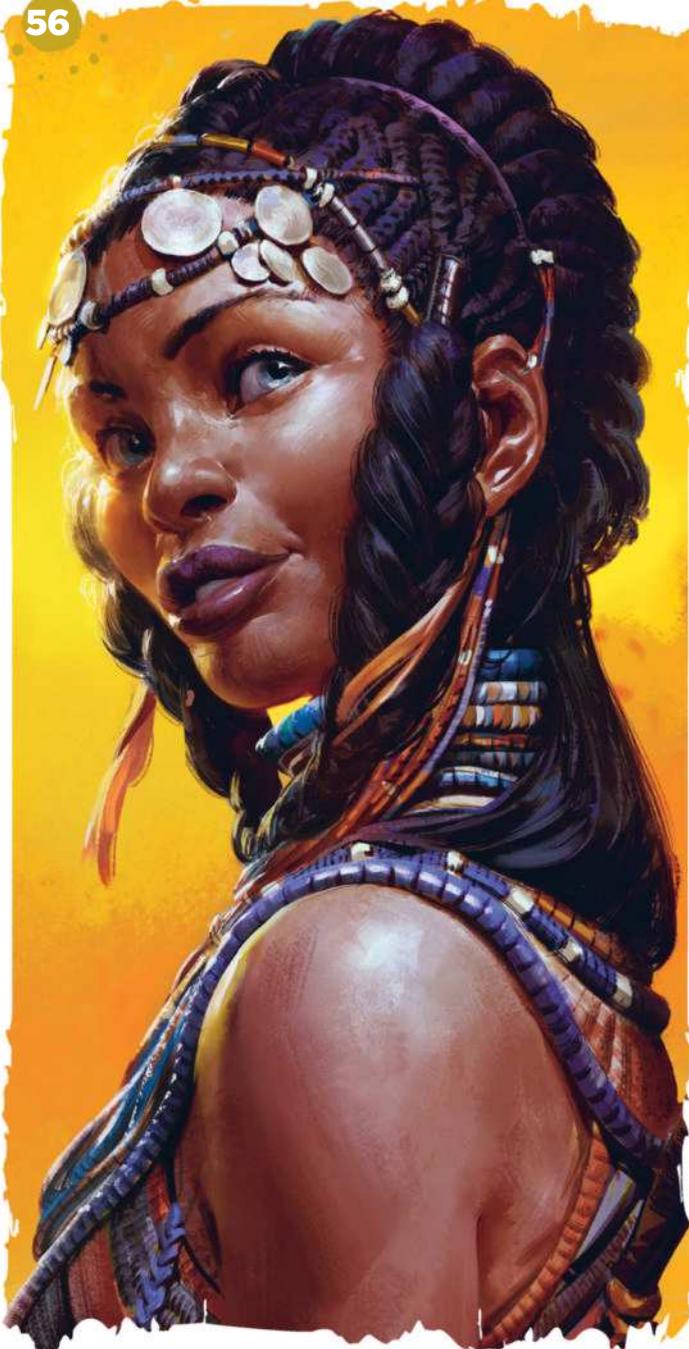
Workshops assets are available...

Download each workshop's resources by turning to page 8. 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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VR skills with Glen Southern.

Photoshop

PLAN AND PAINT A STRIKING FIGURE

Learn how **Even Mehl Amundsen** solves lighting and anatomy problems as he paints a female character that's been inspired by tribal elements

Artist PROFILE

Even Mehl Amundsen

LOCATION: Norway

Even's a freelance concept artist and illustrator based in Oslo. His main fields of work are games and animation, where he creates characters and builds worlds. <http://ifxm.ag/evenma>



Doing the course of this workshop I went through some pretty well-established steps from my creative process, which can be applied either to character work or more elaborate

illustration work. Indeed, my aim was to focus more on the chosen subject matter than on technique.

However, it turned out to be more of a lesson on why it's so important to spend enough time on planning out your pieces properly, so you don't

have to spend your time fixing mistakes later on. A job with even the tightest of deadline is manageable if you put in a basic amount of ground work. So come along and learn some dos and don'ts, and check out where I nearly mucked things up big time!

RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES: AUFGENOMMENER PINSEL 1

This slightly textured chalk-style brush is my go-to tool for most painting needs. It's very versatile.

SUBTLE COLOR RANDOMIZER

This brush can be used for some subtle colour variation, as well as knocking back or even removing sharp edges.

ROUND HARD 70 1

The old Round brush can pretty much be used for anything, especially when drawing lines.



1 Initial character ideas

After I receive the brief and collection of reference material, I work up a very basic sketch. The ImagineFX team has a pretty clear idea of what they want for the piece, so for the technical aspect it's more about making something interesting out of some subtle character nuances. That turn of the head, the crook of the smile, the eye contact. These gestures will eventually play a pretty central role in selling the image.



2 Key shapes and tribal elements

I have a good idea of what I want to do with the figure and her pose, so I sketch it out. I focus on the key details and overall shapes that would both work well and enable me to show off some interesting tribal elements. After I send off my sketch, I receive an edit for the angle of the face, but the rest of the details are approved. ➔

In depth Striking figure





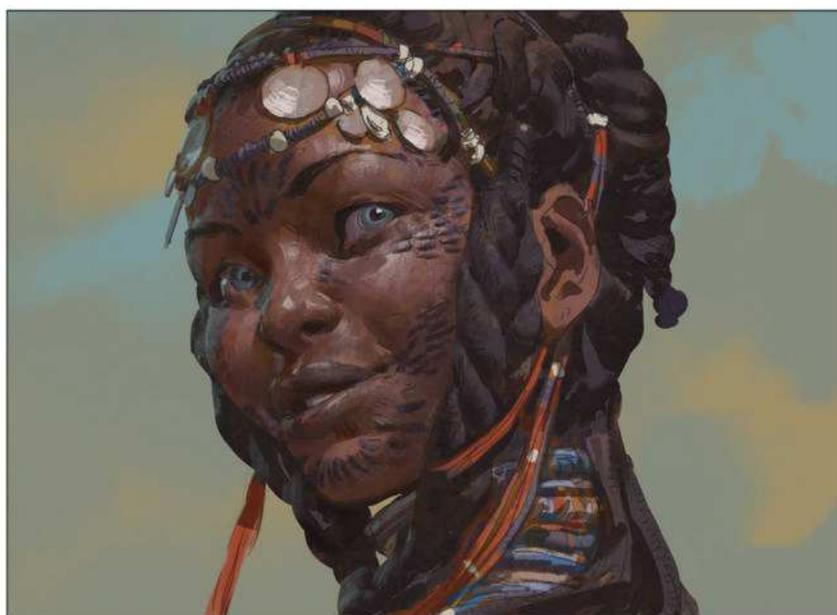
3 Sketching reveals a mistake

Using the previous sketches as a base, I combine the elements into a single sketch, and then set to work creating a clean piece of line-art to work from. It's now that I run into my first mistake. At this stage I should have taken a step back and constructed the face properly. Had I done so, I would have seen what would later be revealed as I began to add colour and light. This does happen from time to time, and it comes down to the fact that you can get away with a lot more in a drawing without it becoming problematic, than you can in a painting.



4 Starting on the colours

I decide on a simple desaturated background to begin with, choosing to focus on a lot of contrast and colour play on the character. During this point in the process I spend time looking up some references. As well as taking some deep dives on Google and Pinterest, I enjoy leafing through Jimmy Nelson's *Before They Are Gone*. This is a book about tribal societies around the world, and is filled with beautiful photos on each of them.



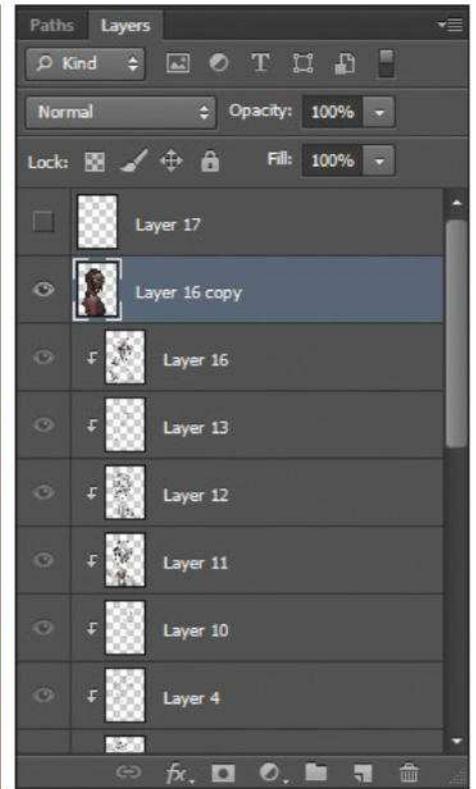
5 Introducing light and shade

Once the colours are established I move on to the lighting and shadows, and in the process run straight into my second mistake. I like to put down my shadows using a Multiply layer: first laying them in very simply and directly, before going over and softening up any edges that need it. I'll usually spend a good amount of time in this stage to make sure I have something I like before moving on, and while I don't rush it here, I should have spent a lot more time working out my details beforehand. Yet I had a somewhat painterly result in mind, and this was my second mistake. I had spent time researching the subject matter, but none on working out the precise execution, and this will come back and bite me in the proverbial ass.



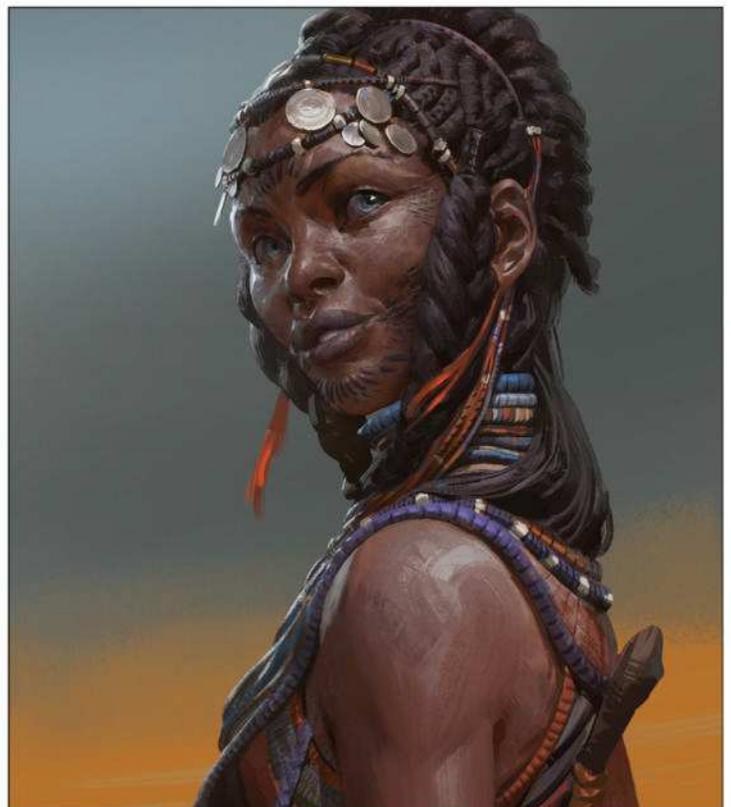
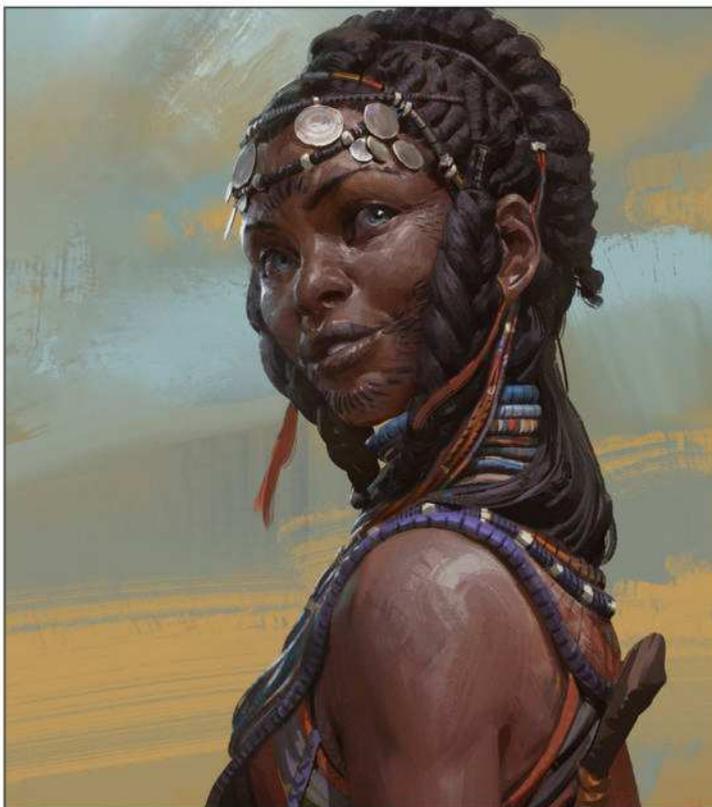
6 Fixing the background

When I have all the lighting information established I pop a Normal layer on top of everything and begin to paint for real. At this point, depending on how well I've done in the other steps, I usually get to have a lot of fun rendering out neat little details, pushing and pulling volumes, and designing all the little elements that gives a viewer a reason for a second look. It's during this stage that I decide the background is looking dull, so I try to rectify things with larger brush strokes. I want to leave it abstract, yet use it to help move the eye. However, because I've already established the light on the character, I can't alter the main elements in the background.



7 Streamlining my workflow

As I began to find something I can push to a finish, I decide to commit to what I've got so far. So I duplicate all the composite layers that make up the character and combine them separately. This enables me to more easily work with the Smudge and Mixer Brush tools.



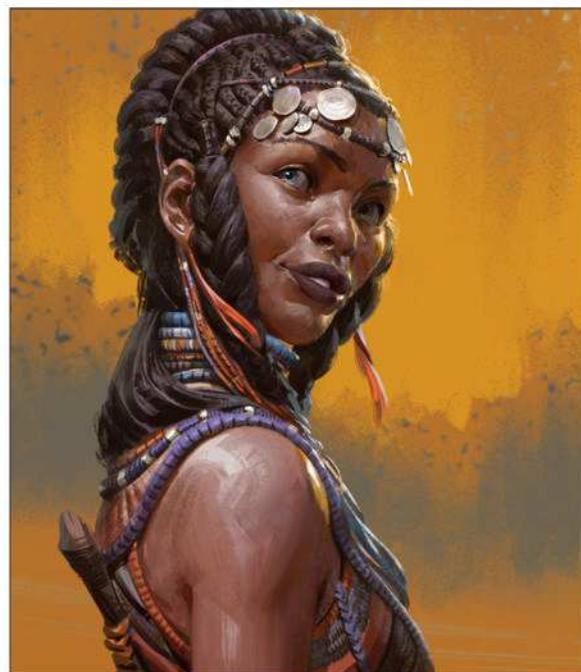
8 Letting the image rest in my mind

At this point I realise that I've stared at this painting for too long, so I leave it for half a day before coming back to it. And of course, by then I've had just enough time to let my insecurities get to me, and so began to fiddle some more with the background. ➔



9 Tackling the values in the scene

It's at this point that I look for values rather than colours, and began to play with the idea of stormy clouds in the background and cold light from an overcast sky contrasting with the tones of reflected light from the landscape. I work more on the character, too – getting her to a place that's close to her final appearance. Once there I send it in for ImagineFX's final approval before finishing.



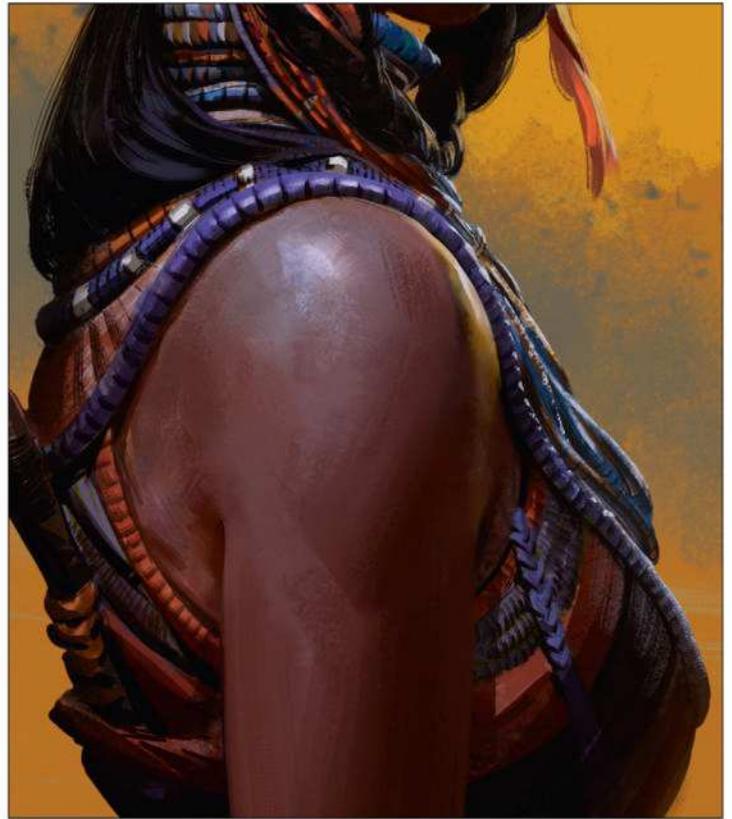
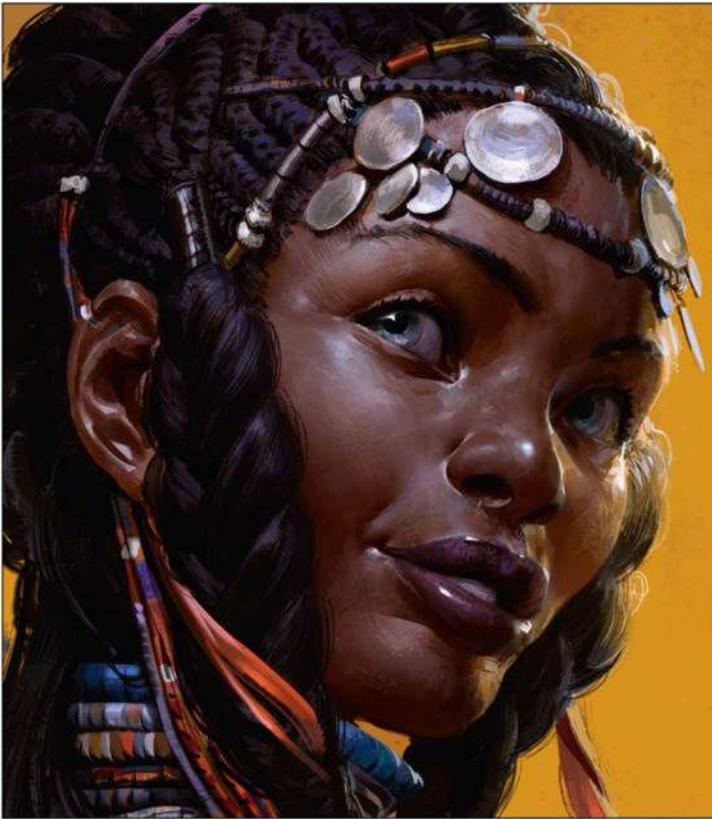
10 Acting on more feedback

After the second round of feedback I go to work addressing the team's notes. In general, there was a call for more colour and a brighter background, perhaps something that would read like a sandstorm. I like the idea of that as a palette, although the sandstorm itself might look odd with the character being so formally dressed. I end up getting what I had wanted before, however – a nice, rough, painterly background – and thanks to the art direction this really helps the image.



11 Punching up the details by increasing the contrast

The second round of feedback had also done away with her tribal scar patterns, and so I want to leverage the details of the figure in another way, by really pushing the contrast within the figure. Using a Curves adjustment I achieve something I like. Then I begin to do a second round of rendering on top, collapsing all contributing layers down into one for ease of painting.



12 Solving lighting issues, and problems with anatomy

As I'm wrapping things up I decide that the contrast between the background and foreground light isn't working for me, so I use a Darken layer to alter the colour of the front light, which sets up a clearer contrast. This is something I should have planned from the start, and could have done a much better job in setting up so that the overall effect would have worked better, but sometimes you just have to improvise. I also have to deal with my sloppy initial drawing when I finally realise that the face is reading too wide. I use the Lasso tool to make the necessary adjustments.



13 Finishing touches

One last round of rendering, when I push a few details around and simplify some of the busier parts of the silhouette, and I'm ready to call it done. I add a final Curve adjustment layer to gently move the colours into the blues, to contrast a little more with the background.



14 Summing up my process

I'm happy with how the piece has turned out, although the path I took in getting here was less than optimal. Solid planning prevents poor performance and in this case it's proved to be true, if not disastrously so. Spend your time where it matters: the initial stages is where you'll ultimately make or break your image. Check that the fundamentals are solid, that your choices aid the image, and always have a plan that you can refer to. That way you won't freak out too much when you realise you've screwed something up, and you'll always find a way to finish the piece. I hope this workshop has been helpful, and I also hope the fine people at ImagineFX will have me back sometime in the future! 🍷



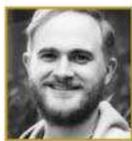
ZBrush & Photoshop QUICKLY WORK UP A 3D CONCEPT

Adam Dewhirst conceives an idea in ZBrush and then turns it into a fully realised concept using Photoshop and photobashing techniques

Artist PROFILE

Adam Dewhirst
LOCATION: US

Adam is the modelling and texture supervisor for The Mill in New York. He has 14 years experience in film, commercials and TV. He was the lead modeller on Guardians of the Galaxy. **Instagram:** @dewhirstadam



When conceiving creatures in ZBrush, presenting a greyscale, unposed sculpt of your idea can make it hard for an audience to realise your vision. Equally when using Photoshop, it might take you some time to achieve a three-dimensional feel to your design. So in this workshop I'll walk

through how to combine both tools to turn a loose concept into a fully realised idea, playing to both programs' strengths.

A basic understanding of ZBrush is necessary, but only the basics because we won't need to use any advanced techniques or workarounds. Essentially, I'll be using ZBrush to block out a design with ZSpheres,

shape it and render some coloured and lit images, and then composite those together in Photoshop.

I'll then use a range of surface samples to bring that design to life, adding skin surface, lighting effects, and a textured environment. It's a great quick way to present a concept for an idea, without having to take it through a complete 3D pipeline.



GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 8 now!

1 ZSpheres block-out

I like to use ZSpheres to rough out the entirety of my character as a first block. It gives me a better sense of the whole shape, and forces me to focus on areas of the sculpt other than the head, which is the clear temptation. In this case, my idea is to create a kind of magical forest hare.



2 Rough concept

Mostly I'm just using the Clay buildup brush to roughly shape the concept. The aim is not to be bogged down with making it look good – isn't. I just want to brainstorm an idea. I want to make the ears look like leaves, and I'm trying out an idea where his skin would imitate bark, and possibly have mushrooms growing on it. My inspiration for this are the faerie-like creatures from Guillermo del Toro's films, such as Pan's Labyrinth. ➔

In depth 3D concept





3 Paintover stage in Photoshop

After about 30 minutes or so I take a screen grab of my loose idea and bring it into Photoshop. Here I can eliminate the weakest areas, and sketch up areas that I want to change or develop further. I'm going to eliminate the mushroom idea, and focus on the four leaf-like ears as the defining characteristic of this creature.



4 New build using ZSpheres

I'm starting from ZSpheres again to block out the main build. This time I'll load in the paintover as an image plane and use it to line my concept up. It's worth taking your time to get the base shape right with the ZSpheres, because it'll save you from having to retopologise or dynamesh the mesh multiple times later.



5 Create a basic sculpt of the creature

Using my paintover as a guide, I can quickly block in the larger forms of my creature. I'm primarily using Clay buildup, Move and Dam standard brushes for this. I also use the Mask function by holding down Ctrl to isolate specific areas such as the nails. To create the eyeball, I use the Insert Sphere tool and then separate it to a separate sub-tool.



6 Polypainting the forest creature

To create a basic skin tone for my creature I set the material to SkinShade 4, and flood the colour with a bright orange. I then place an inverse mask on the cavity to darken up the recesses, and use a combination of ZBrush's default Spotty and Veiny alpha maps to create a distinctive mottled pattern to the skin using red, yellow and brown tones.



7 Lighting the scene and varying the background

I want to ensure I get the lighting direction correct when I comp this into my background, so I bring in a number of different background options as image planes, to see what works. My lighting setup is basic: I have my main light and a rim. I'll create everything else in Photoshop. ➡



8 Pose the figure to convey an emotion
Once I'm happy with the lighting and general concept, I quickly alter the pose to be less symmetrical. I do this using Masks and the Transpose tool, to mask out the limbs, head and torso, then rotate it into a more interesting position. I'm trying to create the impression that this creature is coming out of hiding, and is a little timid or curious. The pose is a great way to convey this to the viewer.



9 Render the woodland beast
I'm rendering in Preview Quality mode, which is the default setting. First I render out my basic shaded/lit image, by pressing the BPR button and exporting the document. Then using only the main light, I reposition it to render out light information as separate passes from the left, right, top and bottom. Finally, from the Render menu and BPR RenderPass options, I export out the shadow, ambient occlusion, depth, sub surface and a mask as separate passes – all in PDF format.



10 Assemble the renders in Photoshop
To assemble all your passes, simply stack them as layers in one document in Photoshop. I then going to convert all my lighting passes to Screen mode and adjust the Opacity to decide how much directional light I want on my creature. This creates a 'cheated' global illumination look. I also add in my shadow pass on a Multiply layer and use the mask I've create on the group folder of all my passes. This means I can work on my creature and background separately.

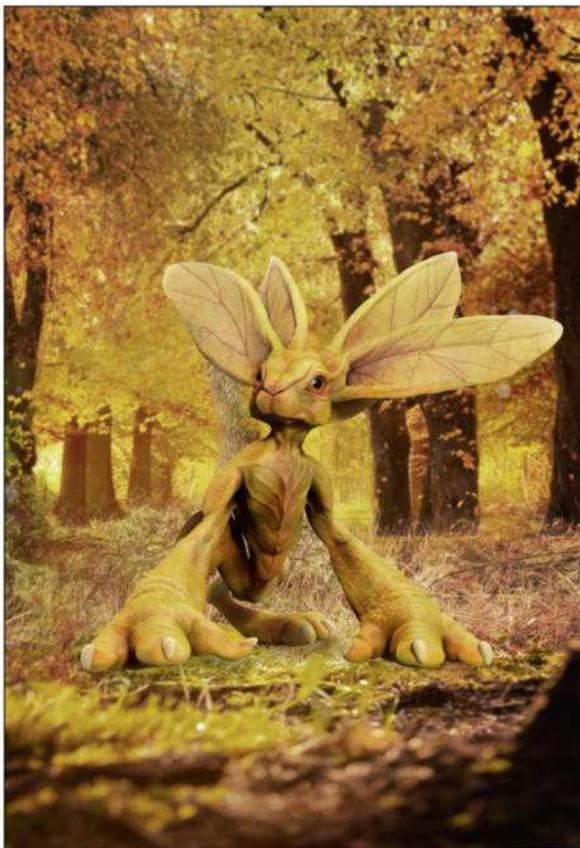


11 Adding texture to skin surface
I've assembled a bunch of images to try on his skin surface to add a little noise. The first one I want to apply is an actual leaf texture, so he has the sense of being crafted from nature. I'm also applying some elephant skin along his arms, and some heavy leaf detail to the ears.



12 Altering the background to suit the character

I don't like my current background image. I want the environment to appear wilder and more magical. The colours are great though, so I blend in other autumn woodland scenes to fill in the blank spaces between the trees, then add some foreground elements



13 Adding filter/vignettes

Gradients and vignettes can frame your work nicely, I use these as Overlay layers to focus the lighting on the character in the middle of the image. I'm going to use a vignette with oranges and circles to give a subtle magical tone to the background, and also a vertical gradient to darken the edges of my images. This helps to place the focus to the character in the middle



14 Final environment touches

In order to sit my character comfortably in the environment, I duplicate the group, merge it and then blur the image. I then apply this as a layer mask and try to match the focus of the background image. I'm also painting in straw and moss at his feet to blend with the foreground image, and faking a little shadow underneath him. Now my creature concept is ready for his close-up! ●



Core skills: Part 4

HOW TO MASTER PHOTOSHOP MASKS

Mark White takes a look at the function of masks, vector masks and clipping masks, and shows you how to use all three effectively in your art

Artist PROFILE

Mark White
LOCATION: UK

Mark is the techniques editor for our sister magazine Photoshop Creative, where he writes tutorials for both Photoshop and Photoshop Elements. www.be.net/mrkjnhwt



Art is all about expression, and sometimes in digital art illusion is just as important as display.

Hiding is as important as showing. Just as the Eraser is as trusty as the Pencil when it comes to making sketches, Photoshop offers its own ways to hide parts of your work, leaving only the polished finished

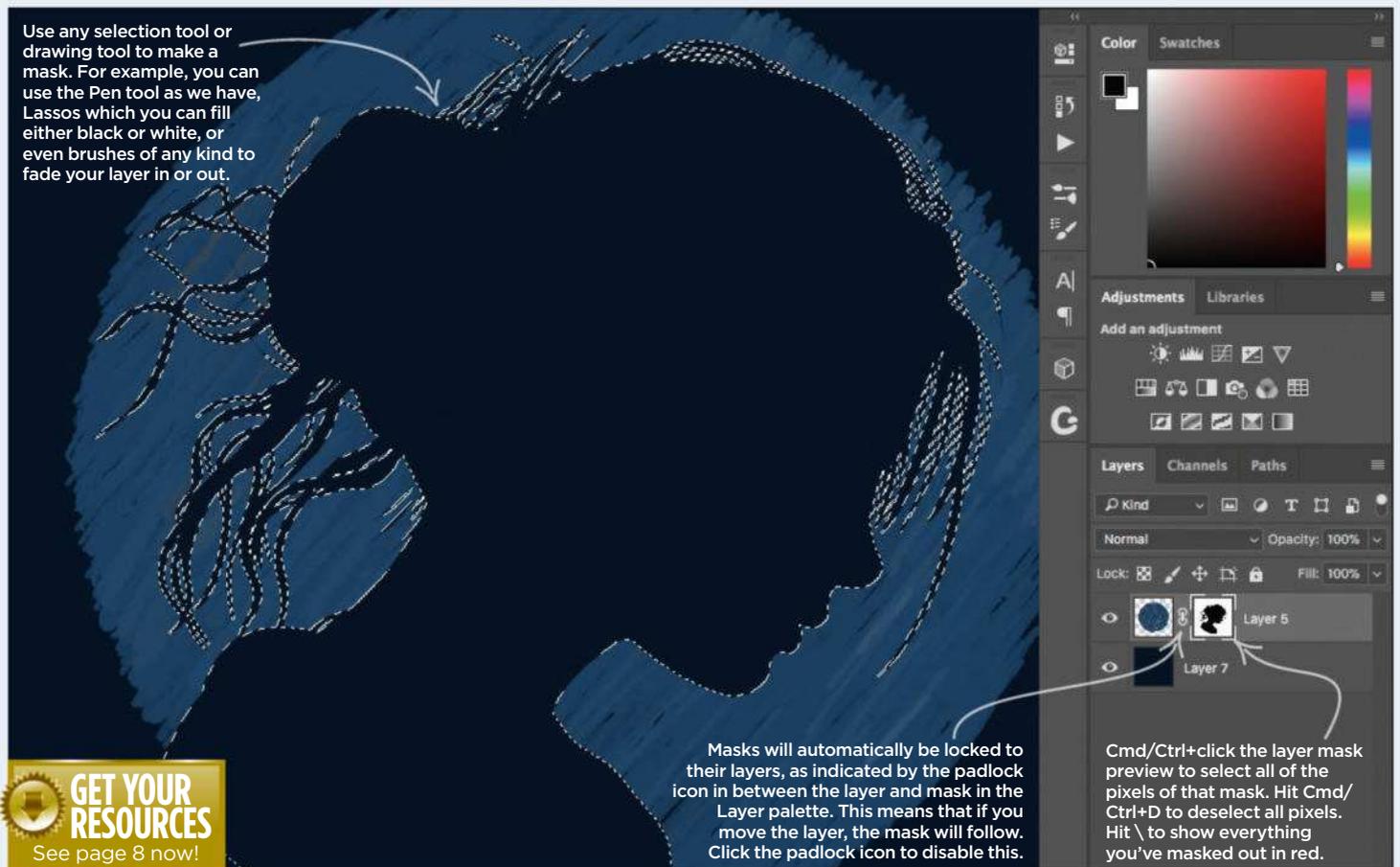
product. The most effective and accessible way is through a mask.

Let's start at the very beginning. Photoshop's workflow is built upon layers for you to draw. But what you draw on a layer doesn't necessarily have to be what you see in the final image, thanks to masks. A mask defines how many pixels you actually see of that layer, while filtering out everything else. Regular layers masks

consist of black and white pixels that either hide or show detail on your layer. A vector mask will create shapes to hide layers. And a clipping mask will help you to add pixels just to the layer below.

Masks are what makes digital art in Photoshop. It provides you with a non-destructive way to erase, and really, what you don't draw is just as important as what you do.

Use any selection tool or drawing tool to make a mask. For example, you can use the Pen tool as we have, Lassos which you can fill either black or white, or even brushes of any kind to fade your layer in or out.



GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 8 now!

Masks will automatically be locked to their layers, as indicated by the padlock icon in between the layer and mask in the Layer palette. This means that if you move the layer, the mask will follow. Click the padlock icon to disable this.

Cmd/Ctrl+click the layer mask preview to select all of the pixels of that mask. Hit Cmd/Ctrl+D to deselect all pixels. Hit \ to show everything you've masked out in red.

1 Create a mask of your artwork

A regular mask is just a monochrome extension to your layer. Here we've drawn the silhouette of a girl on the painted layer with the Pen tool, and then hit the Mask button (that little square icon with the circle inside it).

PRO SECRETS

Save masks on new layers

If you want to save a mask for later, create a layer and fill with your selected pixels. Hide this layer; you can still Cmd/Ctrl+click it at any time and apply it as a layer mask on one of your layers.

We've applied two simple colour-changing layers as a clipping mask to the original painted layer, which has been masked out. You can apply anything: a new drawing, brushstrokes or more.

You can add as many clipping masks to your layers as you like, including Adjustment layers, which will add tonal or colour changes to specific parts of your artwork.

To apply a clipping mask to a layer, move the layer you'd like to use as a clipping mask above the layer you'd like to apply it to and then Alt/Opt-click it to pin it down to its corresponding layer.

2 Alter specific areas of your art with clipping masks

So you've drawn something on your first layer, and then used the Mask tool to only show some of it. By drawing something on another new layer and using a clipping mask, you can apply this layer "within the lines" of your masked drawing.

You don't need to apply the selecting you do in a Vector mask. Just use the Pen tool to create a shape, or multiple shapes, and it will magically appear on the Vector mask.

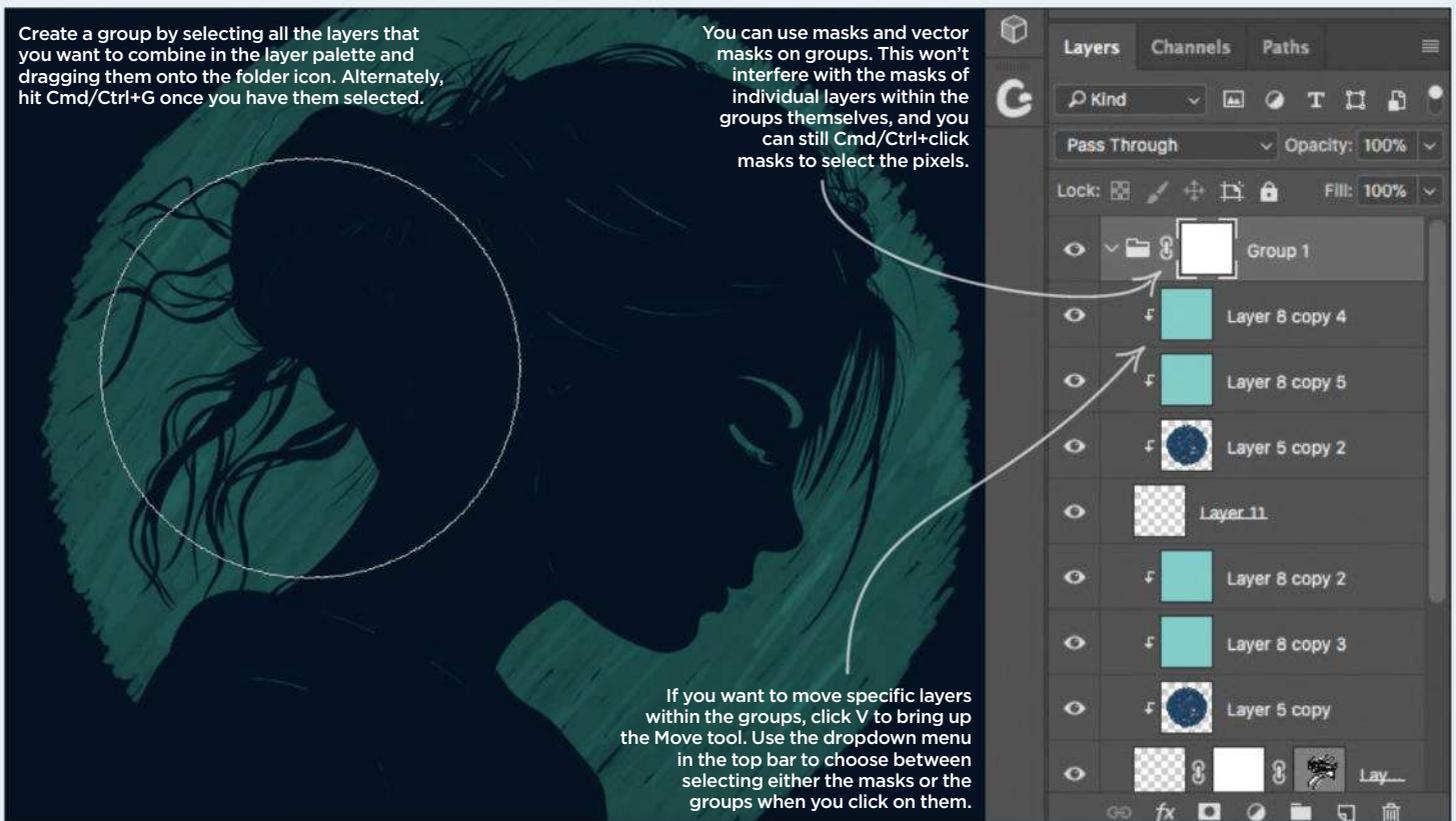
Use the Paths tab to perfect your Vector mask and work on it as you would with any other path that you create with the Pen tool.

Just as with regular masks, Vector masks are locked as default. They use white on the layer preview to show the pixels that are visible, and they can be hidden by Shift-clicking them in the Layer palette.

3 Work within the limitations of vector masks

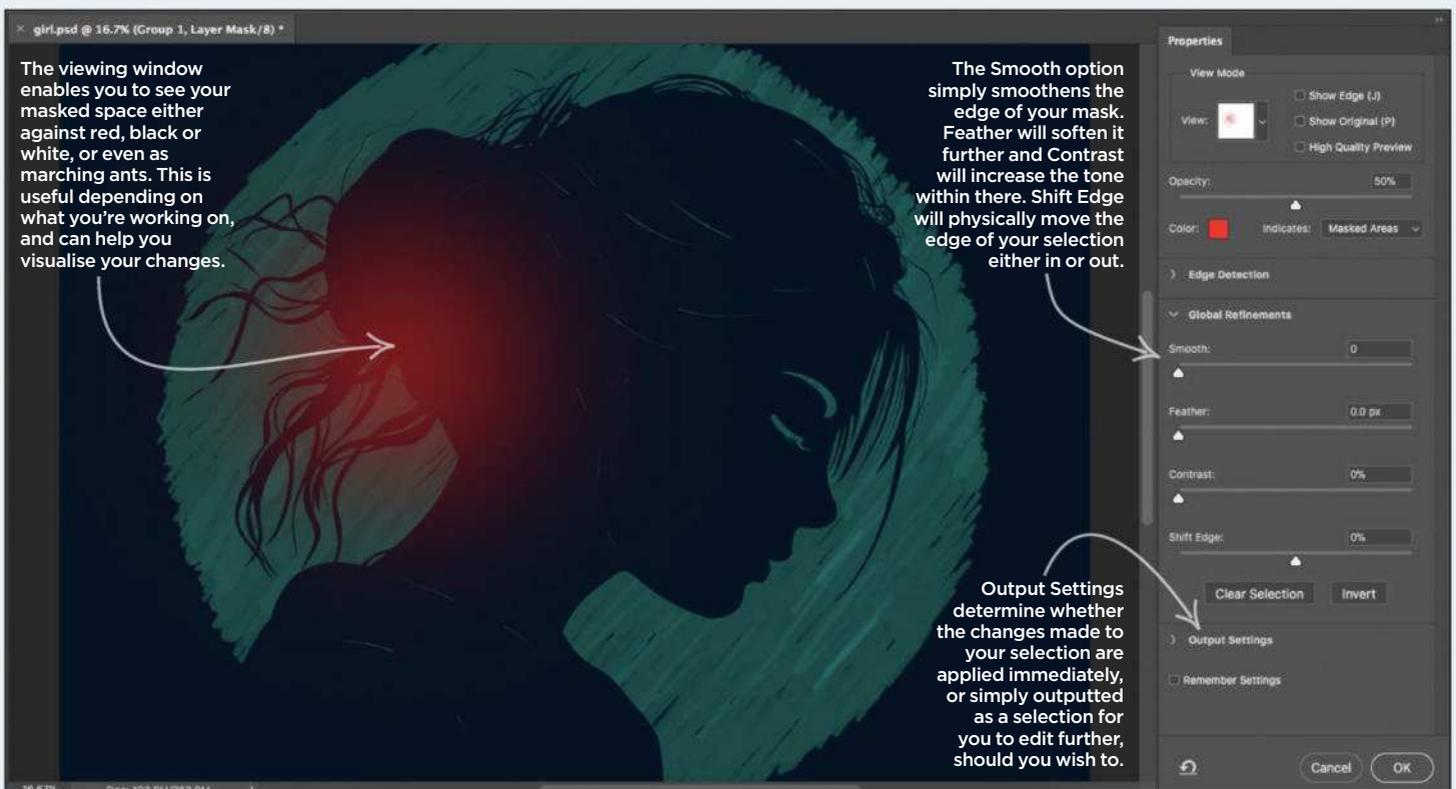
A regular mask will enable you to use any selection tool or drawing tool to either show or hide pixels. In contrast, a vector mask will only make it possible for you to use the Pen tool to show or hide parts of your masked layer. ➡➡





4 Grouping mask layers for more effective working

It's easy to group layers that have masks, and then apply masks to the groups themselves. This enables you to hide parts of your layers that already have parts hidden. You may even want to group individual layers to keep masks within masks as editable.



5 Refine your art with the Select and Mask tool

Once you've made your masks, it's possible to refine that edge even further; that used to be called the Refine Edge tool. Well, now it's called Select and Mask. Ctrl/right-click a mask preview window in the Layer palette to choose this option.

Next month

Toni Infante
brings a sense
of grittiness to
next issue's
cover art!

Next month in...

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

ImagineFX

Manga art!

Collateral Damage Studios shows how it creates great manga.
Plus, check out Riot Games' Paul Kwon's home setup!

ISSUE 163 ON SALE IN THE UK *Friday 15 June*

Artist Insight

15 SURE-FIRE WAYS TO GET MOTIVATED

Are you stuck in an art slump? Then it's a good thing **Mel Milton's** on hand to share his advice on staying motivated and being productive

Artist PROFILE

Mel Milton
LOCATION: US

The former character animator for video games spends half his time as an adjunct professor teaching figure drawing, and the other half raising his daughter. <https://ifxm.ag/melm>



Art has been a huge gift for me and I'm grateful to my past self for taking the chance to pursue it. I didn't try to make a career in art until I turned 30, and I didn't get my foot in the door until I was 33.

Because of what I considered were my limitations, I didn't take this opportunity for granted. I was pretty

fearless early on because I felt as though I had nothing to lose. It was a tough road filled with self-doubt.

I believe that a majority of my growth as an artist came to me not just by practising and learning, but through analysing my mindset during that process: looking at why being an artist was so appealing; where my motivation and drive were coming from; and how that

motivation and drive continues to evolve. While some of these tips may seem basic, I still revisit them to understand why they work so well for me when I'm stuck creatively.

These tips, in my mind, are the foundation for getting clear about how to motivate yourself to create for longer periods and be excited to do so. I hope they're helpful to you as much as they were for me.



1 SET GOALS AND CHALLENGES

You need two things to get where you want to go: a starting point and a destination. Leave out either one and you'll end up feeling frustrated and believing that your efforts are pointless. Goals are the best way to start setting a destination for improvement. For many years I just wanted to get better. The problem was that I didn't take the time to define what it really meant to "get better" – it's such a vague concept.

Having small-, medium- and long-term art goals helps solidify a sense of purpose to your work. One approach that helped me was to limit most goals to about 30 days each. Thirty days of doing a task usually makes it easier to turn it into a habit that stays with you while you tackle other subjects.

Make your first few challenges more about having fun. Connect them to something you geek over (I spent a month drawing different takes on Wonder Woman). Eventually, the 30-day habit will feel natural. You can then move on to challenges that are geared towards areas of weakness. For me, that's handling colours. Carry out small studies and learn one new facet of that subject each day. After 30 days you'll have a strong understanding in that area.

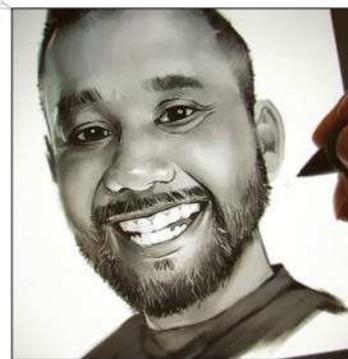
2 WHY YOU NEED A "WHY"

When I was younger, I liked being told I was good at art because I was a failure in pretty much every other aspect of my life. My "why" I drew was easy to see and the results were enough to make me happy with where I was with my art.

When I met my wife, my "why" changed to "I want to take care of my wife and family". Up until this point I had never tried to become a pro

artist. This new "why" took over and I set off to do something I didn't think I could do but now, in my mind, I actually had to. It helped me identify previously unseen opportunities. It also made me focus less on the obstacles and more on the solutions.

The easiest thing to say is, "I want to be a good artist." However, having a meaningful reason for why you want to be a good artist helps you reach that goal much more easily.



3 SET ASIDE A FEW MINUTES FOR MINDLESS DOODLING

Practising specific subjects or techniques can be draining after a while. So when I'm stuck and not motivated, I'll spend 15 minutes just doodling. This is a chance to experiment with shapes, sizes, colours and so on that I don't normally tackle. There's no pressure to learn anything from them and I usually go over the results on a day that I'm in the mood to draw, to see if I can take something from them. I doodle both traditionally and digitally.

Some days I challenge myself to make mistakes on purpose, do as many things that I think don't have appeal, and then laugh about them. Those kind of days give me the ability to not take things so seriously. They're reminders that it's okay to be messy, make mistakes and go a little out there just for kicks and grins. You never know what you're gonna bring back.



4 HAVE A DAY OF BRAINSTORMING

Come up with a list of things that pique your interest. This can be everything from films, video games, books, animals and foods to favourite holiday locations,

sports, and inspiring people and places. With films, books and video games alone, there's a plethora of genres and characters to pull from. I usually do this at the beginning of the week to be consistent throughout that week.

Making brainstorming a long-term habit will get your mind looking into areas that you wouldn't have normally thought of, as well as give you a library of topics to work from when you're lacking motivation. ➔

5 EXPLORE A TOPIC THAT EXCITES YOU

I usually paint female portraits (see tip 6), and have been working on just that subject for about 18 years now. It had nothing to do with work or making money. It became more of a long-term challenge. I always felt I wasn't clever enough to understand anatomy. So I hid that weakness by drawing monsters, where I could make up my own anatomy.

I settled on portraits because I thought if I could capture the subtleties of the female face and form, I would have more control

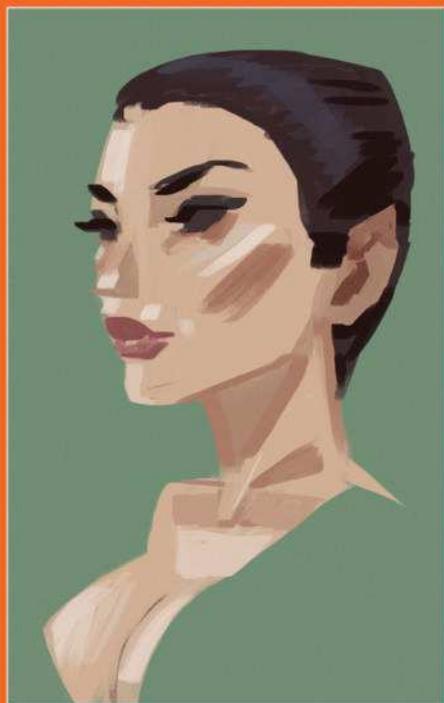
over lines and shapes. All my art heroes could draw women well and make them strong in nature, yet retain the feminine appeal.

What I learned (and still learn) from just the one subject is that I may have a better understanding after all this time, but I know I'll never learn everything on that subject. It's helped me to see things I wouldn't have to know to look for when I first started. I now take those observation skills into other areas of study, which has helped me to be excited to learn things I normally wouldn't have attempted to tackle.



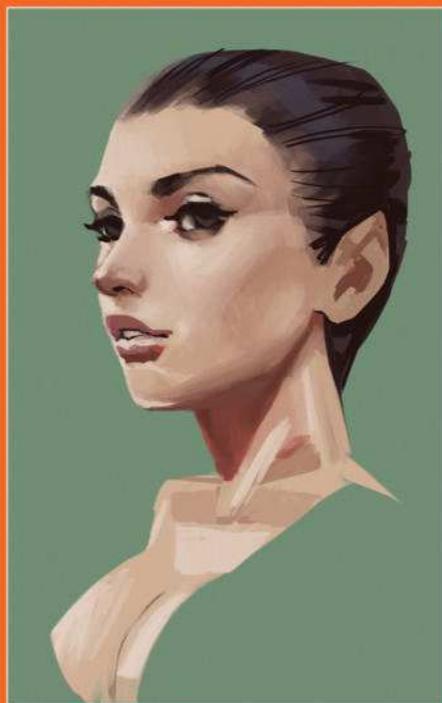
6 WORK FROM BIG TO SMALL

When I'm motivated, it's hard not to just jump right into the polishing stage. Yet by holding off as long as I can, I'll get more done in less time. Observe...



A Going large with strokes

I usually grab my local colours and apply generous-sized strokes that indicate where the main features are, such as the direction of the lighting, large shadow shapes and warm/cool areas. It was tricky for me to work this way early on because I had a hard time looking past all the ugliness.



B Refine facial features

I begin blending colours by softening edges. I also add some slightly smaller shapes and refine others to further refine features like the eyes and nose. This is the stage where you can get caught up in doing the details, but I find it easier to make major changes if necessary during this stage.



C Dive into the details...now!

Everything I add now is to encourage the viewer's eye to travel around the image. I don't go too crazy and make sure everything supports those elements that are important to the picture. If you have a solid image going into this stage, the details become the icing on the cake.



7 DECONSTRUCT PAINTINGS OR REFERENCE WORK

Copying other people's work or references was taboo early on in my journey to become an artist, so I tried to steer clear of it. But when I started my first studio job I noticed that there was a lot of reference usage. My co-workers would gather inspiration pieces, deconstruct them and then come up with something new. I felt betrayed because I thought everything was done without reference!

Being able to access so many great artists these days can be overwhelming and make you feel as though you'll never make your mark on the art world. Yet if done properly, using reference and emulating your favourite artist can give you some great insight into the creative process. Especially when you set aside the original artwork and apply the techniques you've learned in your own way. You'll achieve the right results with the knowledge that it's all your own work.



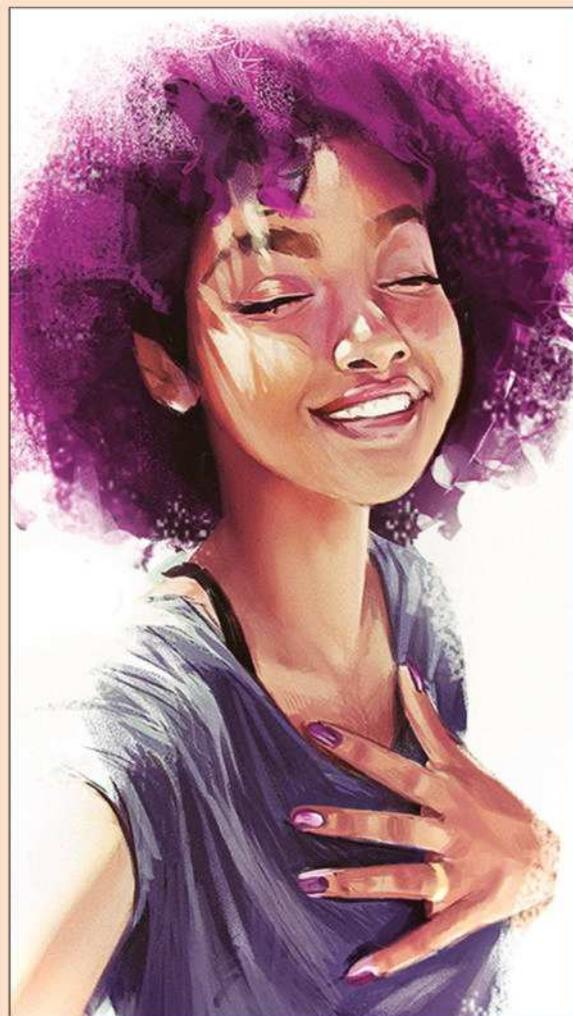
8 MEET WITH LIKE-MINDED ARTISTS

There were days when I wondered if anyone went through the struggles I experienced. It was tough because I didn't have a lot of peers who were into art. I always felt that it had to be easier for others.

Once I decided to become an artist, I reached out to as many creatives as I could, meeting them for lunch to pick their brains. I wasn't after technique advice - instead, I wanted

to know how they handled mental challenges and to see what they were like as people, rather than artists.

I'm lucky to have such a huge pool of creatives in my life. I usually do a weekly draw lunch at the local mall's food court. It's nice to be able to see a variety of challenges that life can throw at an artist in varying fields and at different stages of careers. It's a great way to be educated, connect, to nurture and be nurtured.



9 REMEMBER TO DREAM BIG!

I've been a dreamer my whole life. I believe it's the reason why I've stuck with art for as long as I have. I would imagine all kinds of grand experiences that being an artist would enable me to have. Yet once I made art my career, I noticed that I didn't dream as I once did. I lost some of the sparkle that I had as a beginner artist. It became harder to bring the dreamer out. I didn't want him to get hurt. It's sometimes easier to just go through the motions and play it safe.

When my daughter was born it challenged this approach to life. I realised that it's the dreamer who keeps me at it - even when I don't like what I'm producing. It's the dreamer who gives me the ability to move forward with my art in a positive way. It's the dreamer's imagination that makes it possible to glimpse at the artist you want to become and feel the joy of it now. Take a chance on nurturing that dreamer. ➔

“I realised that it's the dreamer who keeps me at it - even when I don't like what I'm producing”

Workshops

10 KEEP A JOURNAL AND LEARN TO REALLY LISTEN TO YOURSELF

A journal is a great way to see what's on your mind before you draw. For example: "I didn't sleep well last night and had a lot of things that I needed to get done. Man, I'm irritated today!"

I noticed I would take these types of aggressive moods into my drawing time unintentionally. By writing them down before I drew, I learned not to be as harsh a critic after I had finished a drawing. It was understandable that when I was irritated, I didn't produce the same quality compared to when I was in a good mood. I could show myself some compassion, much like I would with a friend going through a tough time. After a while I learned to look for things that could improve my odds of having a better learning experience - to get into the zone.

Another benefit comes if you keep a journal for a long time. You're able to go back and see how different your thought process was and find out what was successful and what negative patterns were showing up that you hadn't noticed before. Writing down my thoughts before drawing warmed up my hand. But it also helped me make more mindful decisions and gave me a boost in my self-confidence.



11 SET A TIME LIMIT

When I chose to stay at home and raise my daughter, I limited my art time so I could focus on being a dad. I always felt guilty when I did some art. Quick bursts while she was eating breakfast or napping became the norm. A benefit from doing this was my inner critic went from saying, "Your art will never be good enough" to "Come on! Fifteen minutes? You can do more than that! I've got exciting ideas you can try if you go just a little longer!"

My keenness to fit in my limited drawing time kept growing and became quite cherished. Stopping short also helped me to carry that excitement into subsequent sessions. I noticed that I didn't suffer art burnout as often and that my mind worked on what I could do the next day more easily. Nowadays, I have a bit more time to dedicate to my art, but most of the time I limit it to short sessions and find myself more inclined to be excited every time I pick up my pencil.



12 GET TO KNOW YOUR FEELINGS

Most of my tips revolve around the mental process. Emotions dictate how we make decisions. Not only as artists, but as human beings. Look at how many artists are insecure with their art! I know I'm one of them. I thought it would go away once I turned professional... nope! Learning how to express emotions through shapes, colours, composition and so on has helped me see both sides: producing as well as consuming art.

When you're working on the basics, take some time to understand why you feel a certain way. When you're working for someone, they're the ones who dictate what they want the end product to represent. It can be overwhelming to create this way because we can't really feel what the other person is thinking, and we tend to make assumptions based on what they say. So when we build a large library of techniques for expressing ourselves in our minds, we have a better chance at hitting the target for someone else's vision.

13 DON'T BE AFRAID TO TACKLE THE BASICS (AGAIN)

In my rush to become better at art, I skipped the basics. My mind would say, "Yeah yeah, I know that." Well, I learned that you don't really know something until you can apply it properly - and more than once. The more I learn, the more I realise I don't know anything. This is a great mindset to have as a creative.

Early on, everyone wants to be the master of their craft. It's mainly where my drive was coming from. The focus becomes this destination we want to arrive at as an artist. I've come to realise the magic doesn't come from the achievement, but from all the things it took to get to that place. When you retain the student mindset and stay eager to learn, you can revisit the basics with a degree of excitement. From there, you can flourish in so many different ways and gain the confidence to bend the basics to your will.

“You don't know something until you can apply it properly - and more than once”

14 BE OKAY WITH FAILING AND BEING FRUSTRATED AT YOUR PROGRESS

Bad drawing days are bound to happen. As long as I've been at it, I've learned that my biggest growth came from those bad days, especially when I looked at them properly. Being an artist, you can be your worst critic, but that's not really the case. We just make it sound that way. When we have those bad days, we tell ourselves how terrible things are, and that we'll never amount to anything.

What's really being said is that you're not where you want to be. That voice wants you to become the artist you want to be. If your goal is to become better at what you do, then dissatisfaction is a ruler on which to measure your progress. Take time to look over how the journey is going for you at that moment of frustration. I think all my work isn't where it could be - more so than when I first set out to be an artist. I'm grateful for this feeling. I get excited through my failures because I know each one is a lesson that's needed for me to grow and improve.



15 HAVE A HOBBYIST MINDSET

I know when I decided to make art my profession, I got serious about it... a little too serious, to tell you the truth. I loved toys, Saturday morning cartoons, video games and comics as a kid. When I wasn't enjoying those things, I drew. By starting late with my career, I spent the early years excited to have finally arrived.

Soon, however, I started seeing it as just a job. I never imagined I'd think of it that way. Especially because I'd never thought I'd get the

opportunity. I was doing enough to get my work done, but was missing the love that pushed me to improve.

Adopting a hobbyist mindset helped me cherish the time I get to "art it up". Even when I actually take on clients, I try to come from this place. I've conditioned myself to get excited at the thought of art. This has made me more productive and excited to learn new things, which could be beneficial to my creative workflow. It's the foundation of why I "keep on keepin' on!"





ZBrush & Photoshop

MODEL A SCENE FOR A PAINT-OVER

In this two-part workshop **Ara Kermanikian** reveals how he uses ZBrush to model a sci-fi composition, creating a strong basis for a paint-over

Artist PROFILE

Ara Kermanikian
LOCATION: US

Ara is a freelance concept designer who also teaches viscom and character design at the Art Center College of Design and advanced ZBrush, animation and storytelling at the Otis College of Art and Design.
www.kermaco.com



In part one of this workshop, I'll use ZBrush to model the main forms of a scene, set dress it, add lighting, decide on a strong composition, and then render it with a toon shader. In part two a snapshot of the 3D scene will be used by Scott Zenteno for a 2D paint-over.

Many artists and students portfolios I'm asked to review are often challenged by the same basic fundamentals. The primary challenge is creating a compelling

composition. The artist may have good painting skills, but if the subject is framed in an unflattering way at a boring angle of view, then it will fail to tell a story or communicate the artist's intent.

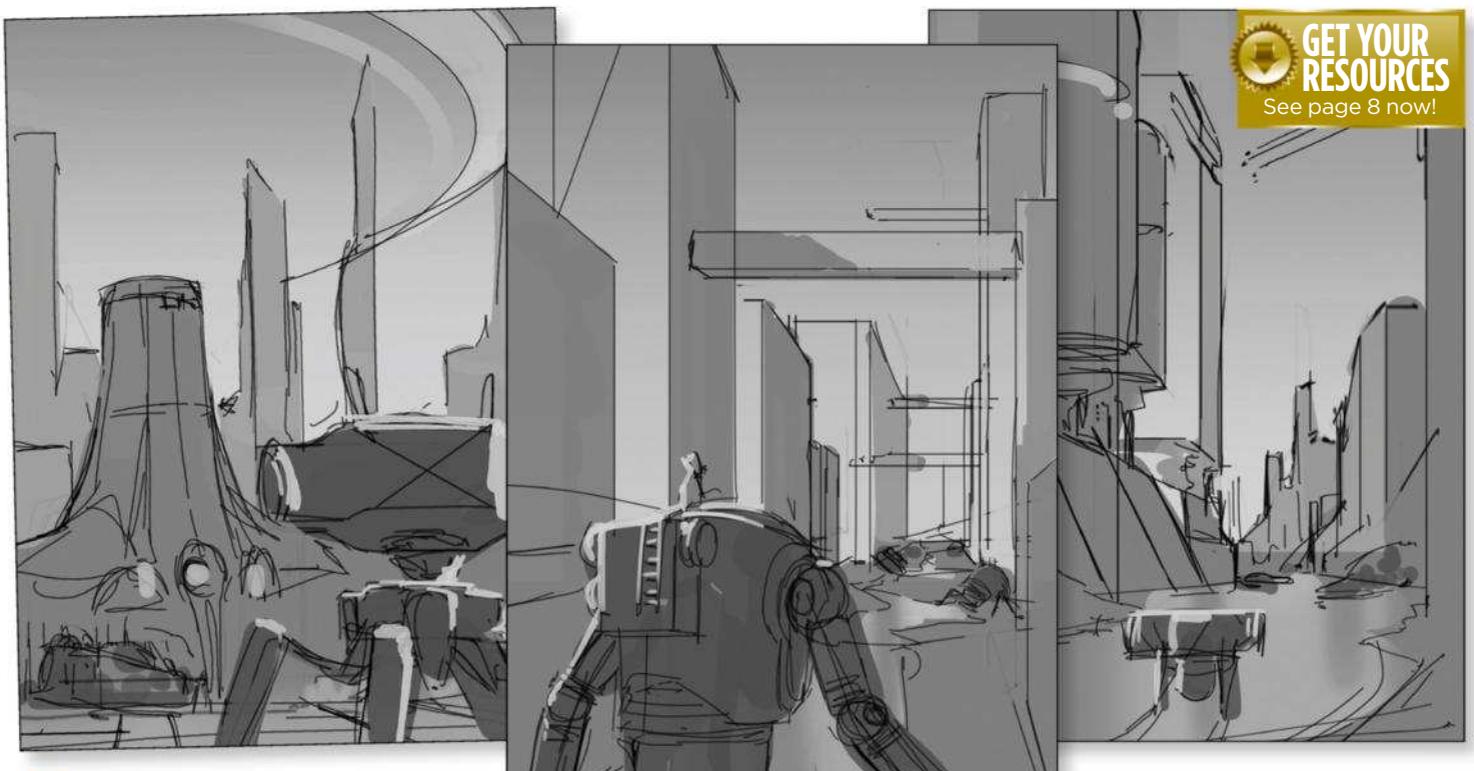
The second biggest challenge is ensuring correct perspective. Unintended errors in perspective and foreshortening can immediately categorise the work as unprofessional and throw the viewer off.

The third challenge is incorrect lighting, where inconsistent values in the image create an uncanny look

because light and shadows aren't painted accurately. Some of these works can be rescued by an experienced artist's corrective paint-over. However, most are unfortunately discarded.

Creating a simple model of your composition in ZBrush overcomes these issues because you can fame "the one" compelling composition, or many camera vantage points that tell the story. Correct perspective is a given, and just as you're able to iterate figuring out the right composition, you can iterate lighting and shadows.

Photo © Cameron Mott, 2016



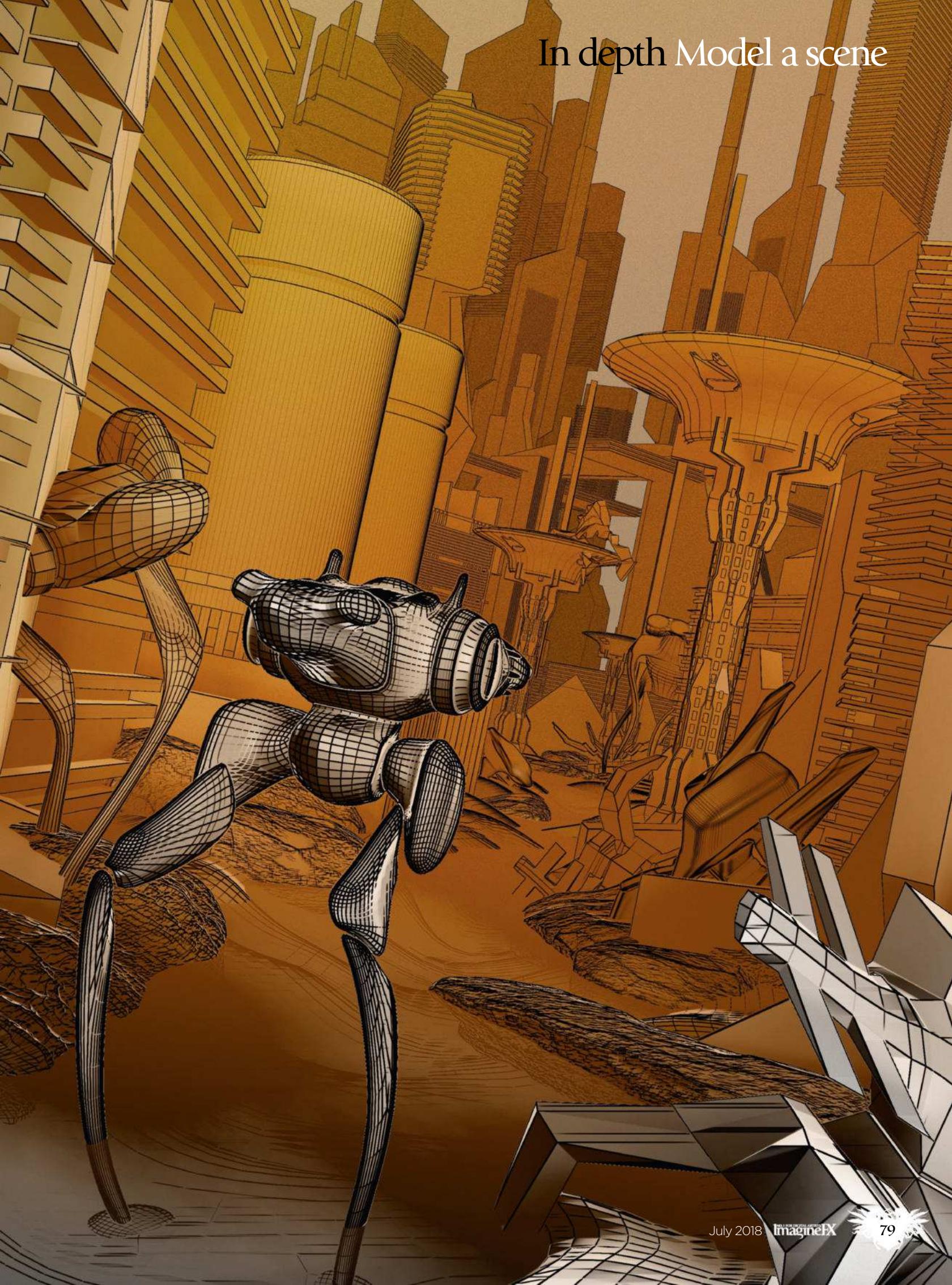
GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 8 now!

1 Last mech standing

The first step of my workflow, if I'm not working on an assignment or script, is to put together a story. "In a futuristic city setting, the protagonist – a pilot in a mech – has just finished protecting everyone from a gang of specialised gunslinger mechs that have come to wreak havoc." Some quick value comp sketches from Scott Zenteno get the ball rolling. ➡➡



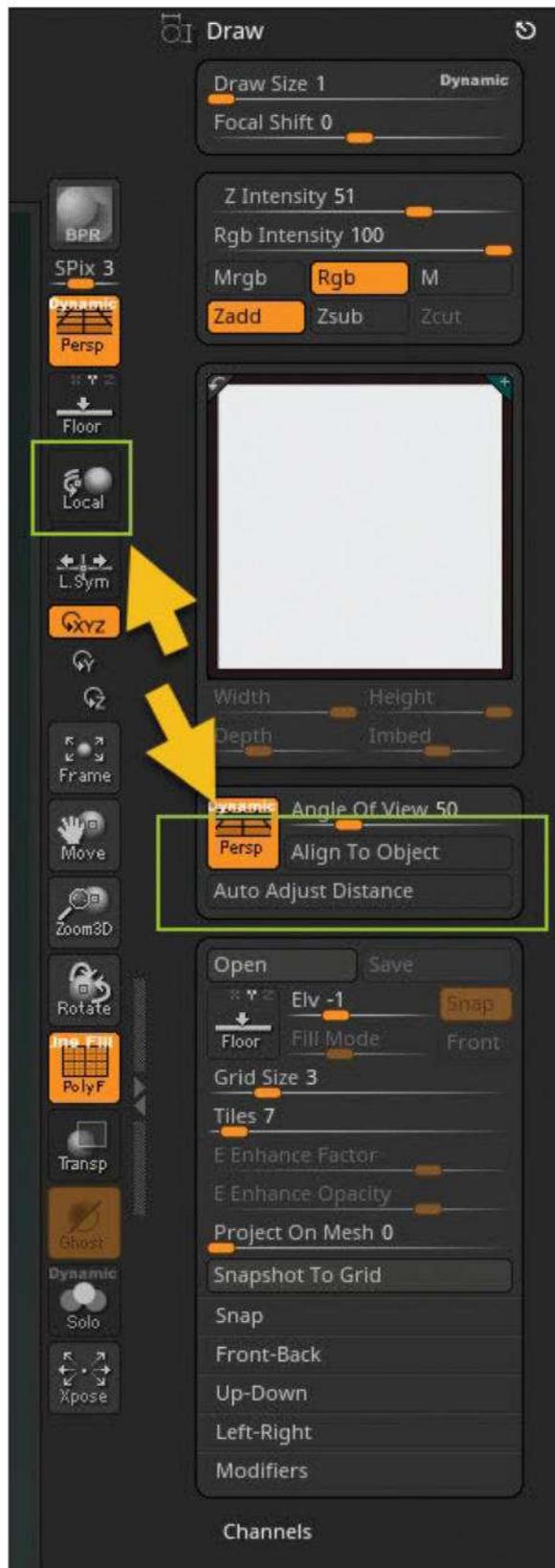
In depth Model a scene



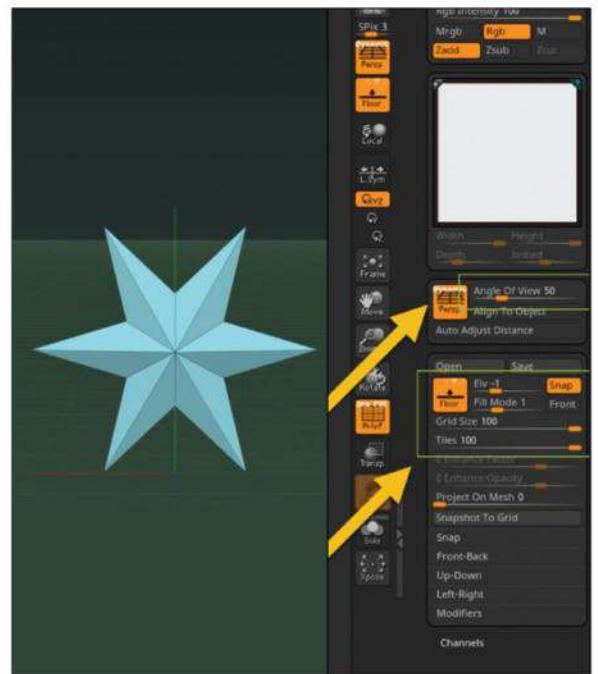
PRO SECRETS

Go back and forth in time

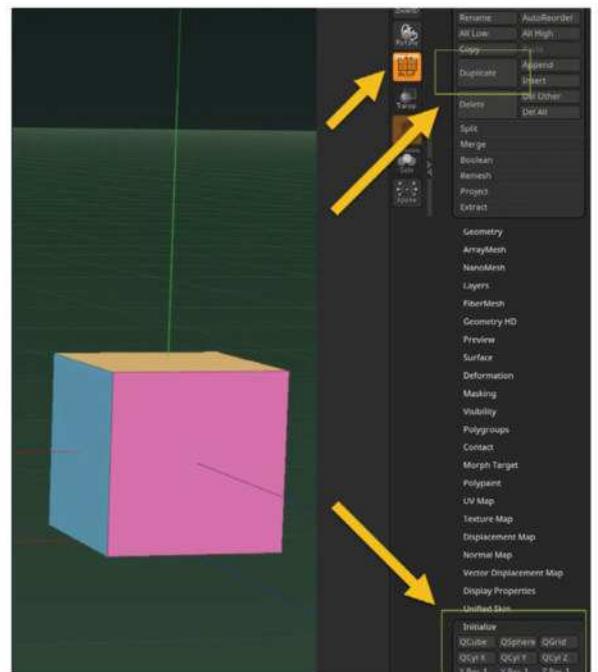
Once you adjust your viewport to determine a strong composition, it's a good idea to save it so you can come back to it if you move objects. In fact, you can save several vantage points. To do this, click Movie> TimeLine to show the timeline above the viewport. Once you have the desired composition click the timeline to add a dot, which will indicate a saved view. You can then click below your dot to snap the vantage point to that view.



2 Establish environment perspective
ZBrush has settings for a variety of purposes, be it sculpting a bust, a character or an environment. Since we're composing an environment we have to change some settings. To establish perspective for an environment, make sure that Auto Adjust Distance and Align to Object are turned off in the Draw Menu. Turn Local off, too.



3 Lay down perspective guides
Ensure Floor is turned on, and in the Draw menu, set both Grid size and Tiles to the maximum 100, which extends the floor to the horizon line and shows the most perspective lines. For the camera angle chose a setting between 60 and 22, which is inversely proportional to the focal lengths of 25mm and 75mm of a DSLR camera.



4 Mech ideation setup
To 3D sketch out some mechs, click PolyMesh3D, and in the Tool>Initialize menu select QCube with the dimensions XRes, YRes, ZRes of 1. Turn on PolyF (PolyFrame) to see each face of the cube in a different colour, to indicate that it belongs to a different Polygroup. In the Tool Subtool menu duplicate this cube 20 times, which will be our starting points.

RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

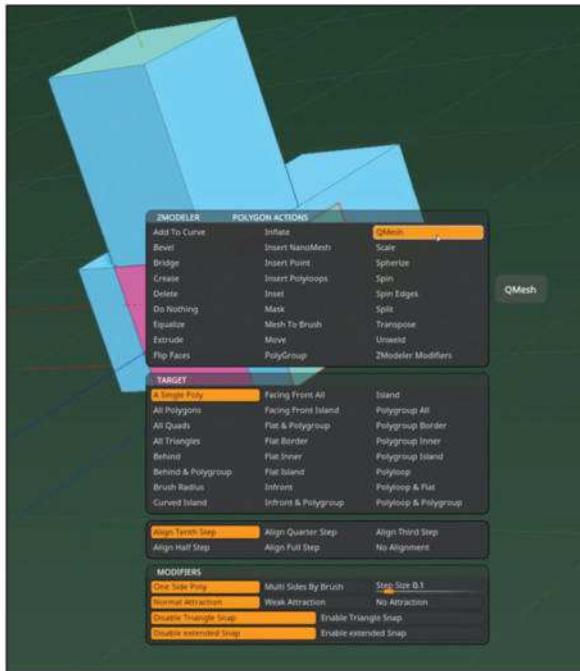
ZBRUSH

CUSTOM BRUSHES: KEMRMACO_MECHIMM

This Insert Mesh Brush can be used to quickly insert one of 20 mechs.

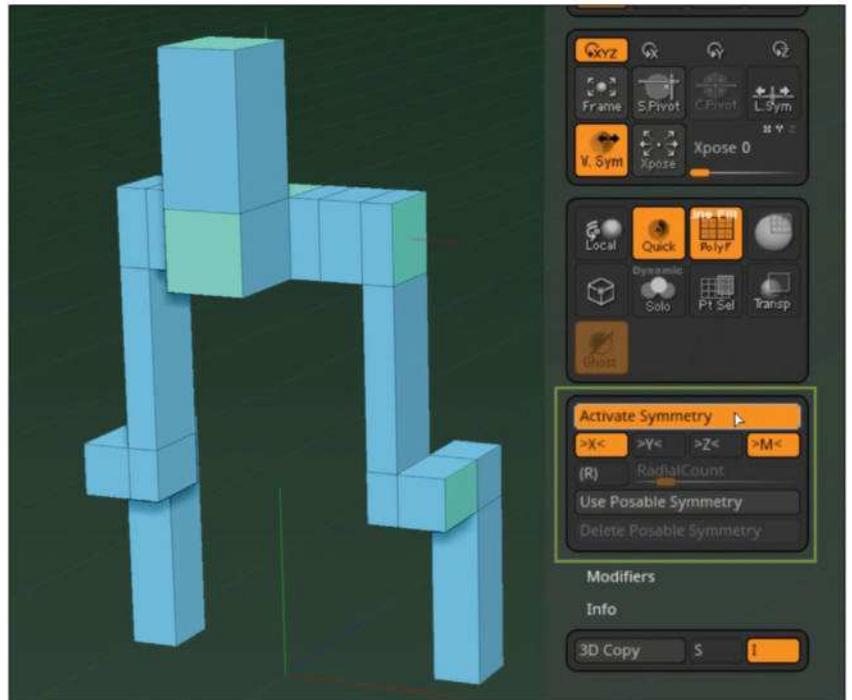
BLDGS_01_IMM_KEMRMACO

Choose from 20 buildings and bring them in with this Insert Mesh Brush.



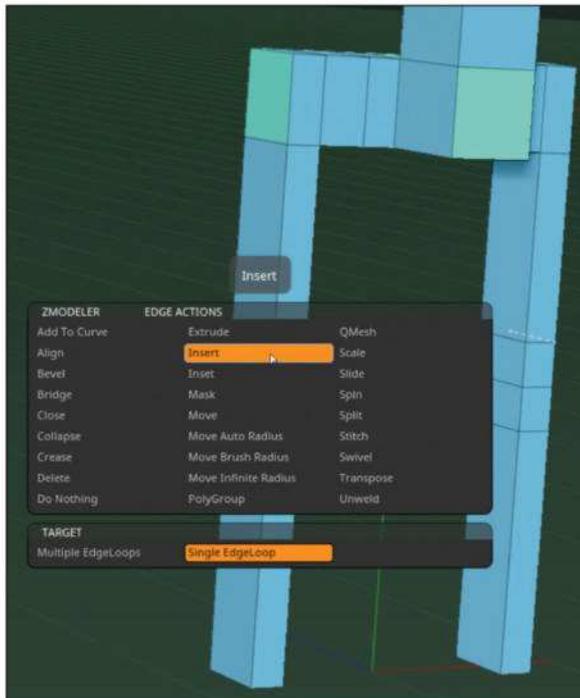
5 Modelling the mechs

Select the ZModeler Brush to block out a simplified shape of a mech. Hit Space while you're on polygon face and select QMesh, which is the default. Use QMesh to pull out and push in polygons from the cube to create a simple blocky view of a mech. QMesh snaps shapes you pull out to adjacent shapes, adding to the volume.



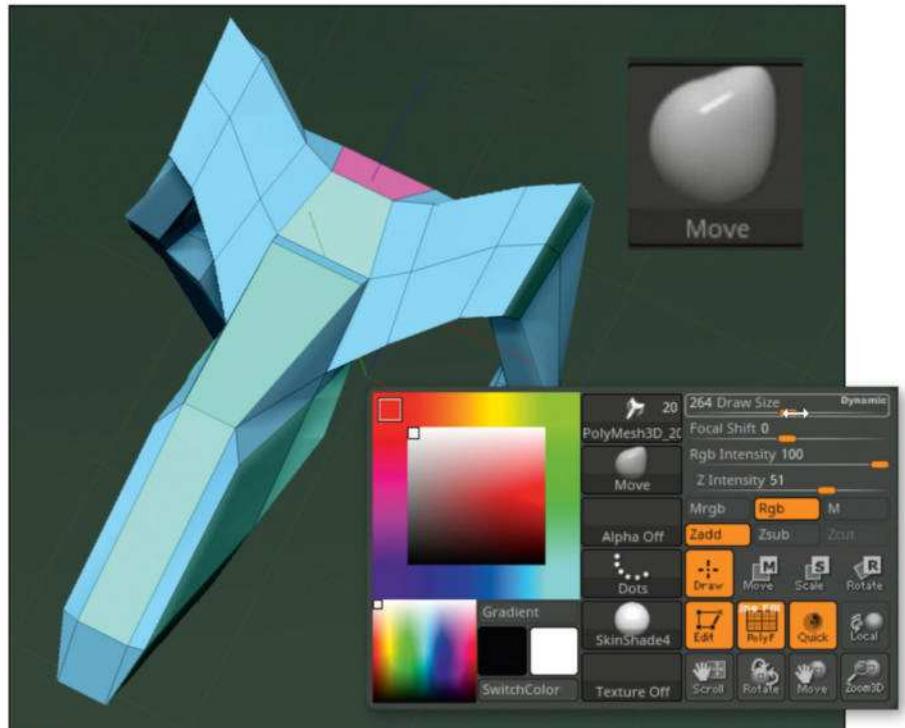
6 Create symmetry with Mirroring

To create a symmetrical mech, press X to toggle symmetry in the x-axis. You can also click Transform>Activate Symmetry to turn it on (note that you can choose X, Y and Z individually, in combination or together). To find out the direction you need symmetry in, click Floor in the right-hand menu to bring up the floor grid. The red line on the floor grid indicates the X direction, green is Y and blue is Z.



7 Inserting EdgeLoops

EdgeLoops help break up a shape such as adding edges to pull out a knee on a leg. While on an edge the ZModeler default action is Insert, which inserts an EdgeLoop while your cursor is on an edge. Once you click an edge, hold down the mouse button to position the EdgeLoop in the intended location.



8 Refining the form

Select the Move Brush to push and pull the form from the block-out shape to add gesture and design to the form. Note that the Draw Size of your brush will dictate the amount of points that you're manipulating, so adjust it accordingly. The displayed circle indicates the size: a bigger circle will make big sweeping changes, while a smaller one will make minor ones. ➡



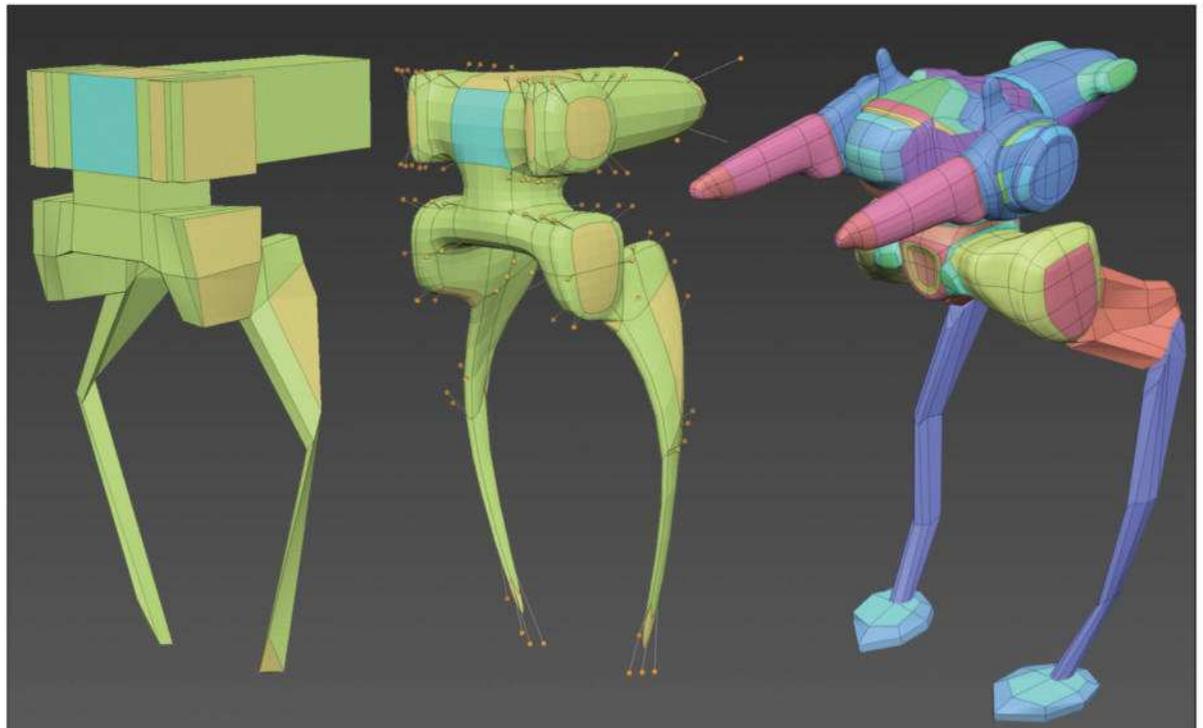
9 Create 20 mech iterations

Spend 10 to 15 minutes growing each of the 20 cubes into a mech design. Click Deformation>Unify on each mech after you've finished it to change them into a uniform size. The mechs will overlap, and you can use the Xpose button to expand them out into an array to select which ones will make it into the scene.



10 Make use of Dynamic Subdivision

Dynamic Subdivision previews ZBrush models as if they're subdivided with the Smooth setting on. However, you can still manipulate the low poly model and see the results in real time. To activate it, press Tool>Geometry>Dynamic Subdiv>Dynamic. You can also choose a setting in between hard edge and smooth by moving the QGrid and Coverage sliders. Once you're happy with the results, click Apply.



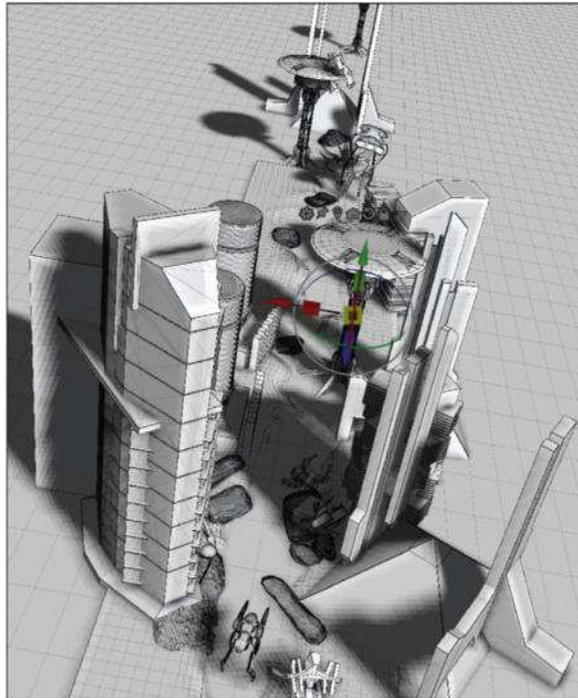
11 Finalise the hero mech's secondary form

Use the ZModeler Brush again to develop one of the mechs as the hero character of the composition. QMesh, Insert, Polygroup and Crease are ZModeler actions that can help divide and add detail to your model. You can also split off parts of the model such as the legs or arms by selecting the parts and clicking Tool>Subtool>Split>SplitHidden.

PRO SECRETS

Quickly create building floors

ArrayMesh can be used to add floors to the buildings. Model a floor layout and scale it so it's nearly flat, then Click Tool>ArrayMesh>Array Mesh. Choose the number of floors and use the Repeat slider to set the number of floors. Then, making sure that the Offset button is clicked, use the Y Amount Slider to move up the floors. Click Tool>ArrayMesh> Make Mesh to create the floors.



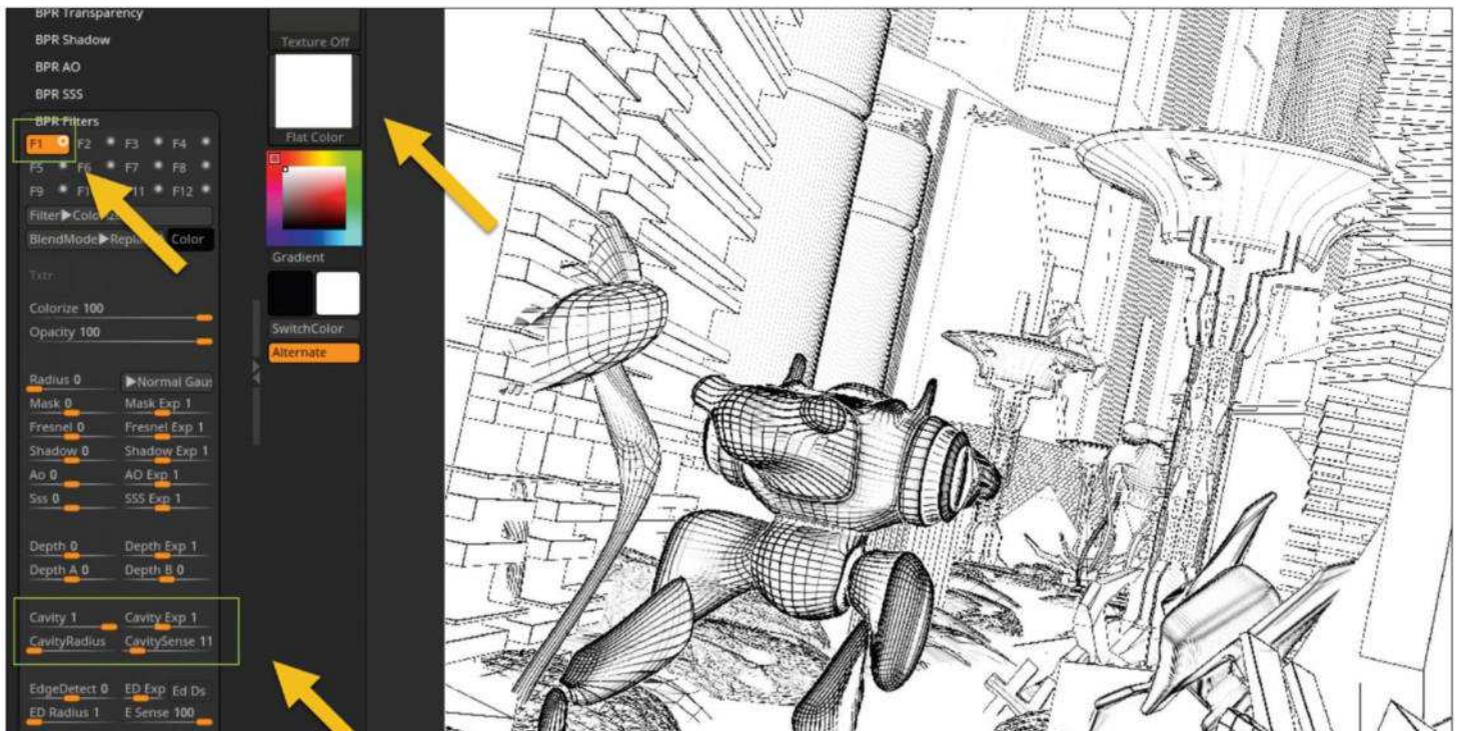
PRO SECRETS
Run BPR render passes
 After you BPR render your scene, ZBrush also generates render passes that you can use as layers to composite in Photoshop. Click Render>BPR Render Passes and you will notice thumbnails for your shaded object, Depth, Shadow, Ambient Occlusion (AmbOc) and an outline Mask. Clicking the individual thumbnails enables you to save them out as PSD files, which you can load as layers into Photoshop.

12 Construct 20 buildings

Now we follow the same process as the mechs, Click PolyMesh3D to start a new Tool. Create 20 buildings to add to your composition and remember to click Tool>Deformation>Unify to ensure they have uniform scale. You now have two tools containing 20 mechs and buildings, respectively. Select Plane3D and click Make PolyMesh3D scale – this is now your ground plane.

13 Compose the scene with your assets

Individually select the mech or building in the subtool list and click Tool>Subtool>Copy and then Paste to copy them into the tool with your floor. Click Move, Scale and Rotate and use the Gizmo to arrange your models on the ground plane. Once you have everything arranged, navigate around your scene to find a good composition and save your scene using File>SaveAs.



14 Render the composition, ready for the paint-over

Select the FlatColor Material from the materials list. Click BPR to render your scene, then select Render>BPR Filters and click the circle into the open position for the F1 filter to activate it. Select the Colorize filter and move the Cavity and Cavity sliders to 1, Cavity Exp to 1 and CavitySense to 11 to achieve the desired outlines. Save your document as a PSD by clicking Document>Export. Next month, paint-over time! ●

Oculus Medium CHARACTER CREATION IN VR



Glen Southern shows how VR sculpting has evolved into a viable tool for taking a 2D concept and bringing it to life in three dimensions

Artist PROFILE
Glen Southern
LOCATION: England

Glen runs SouthernGFX, a small Cheshire-based studio specialising in character and creature design and look development, with clients including Sky, Nike, LEGO, Sainsburys, Disney and Wacom.
www.southerngfx.co.uk



If you follow trends it's hard to miss that VR is going through another revival. It's happened before, but this time it's slightly different because we have more access to powerful computers and graphics cards at home and in our studios.

Companies like Facebook (Oculus) and HTC (Vive) have made VR hardware affordable – presuming you already own a high-end gaming PC.

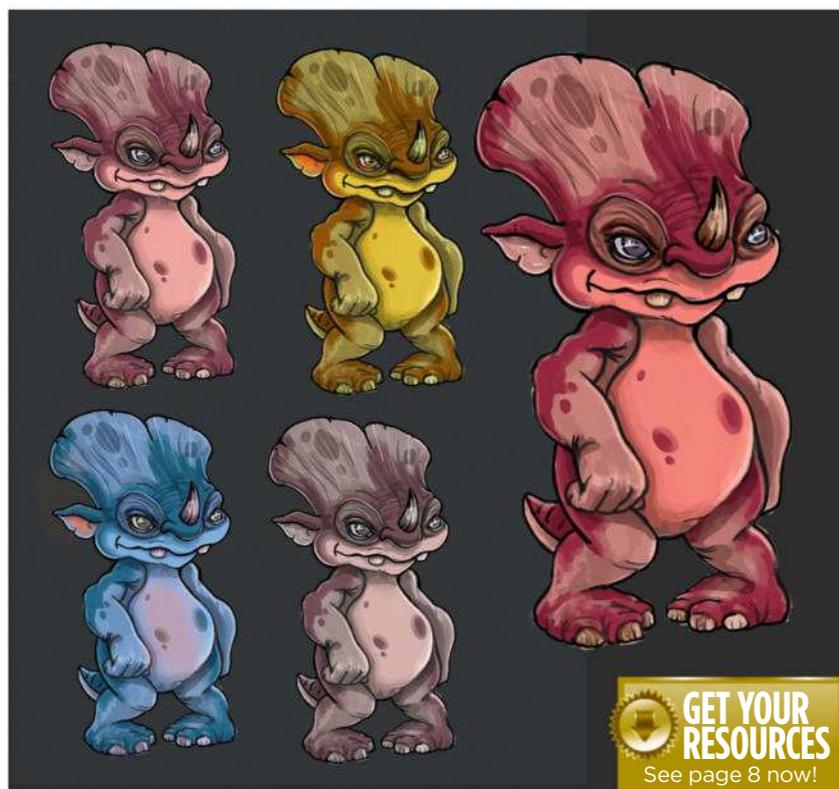
It didn't take long for creatives to start asking what's in it for them, and the call was answered with programs like Google Tilt Brush, Oculus Quill, Masterpiece VR, and the one we'll be using today: Oculus Medium.

This article will show how to work up a 3D character concept from an existing character sketch. You can, of course, work without the sketches and just free-form sculpt your ideas.

Oculus Medium places you into an environment where you can use

the touch controllers to spray clay into the air in front of you and then manipulate it into the shapes you need. There's a layering system so we can break the character down into poseable sections, and you can even take it to a painted, finished concept.

The tool palette has a range of familiar tools like Move, Inflate, Smooth, Paint, Smudge, Cut and the basic Clay Adding tool. You can also make a shape, turn that into a stamp and then use that as your tool.



1 Using reference sketches

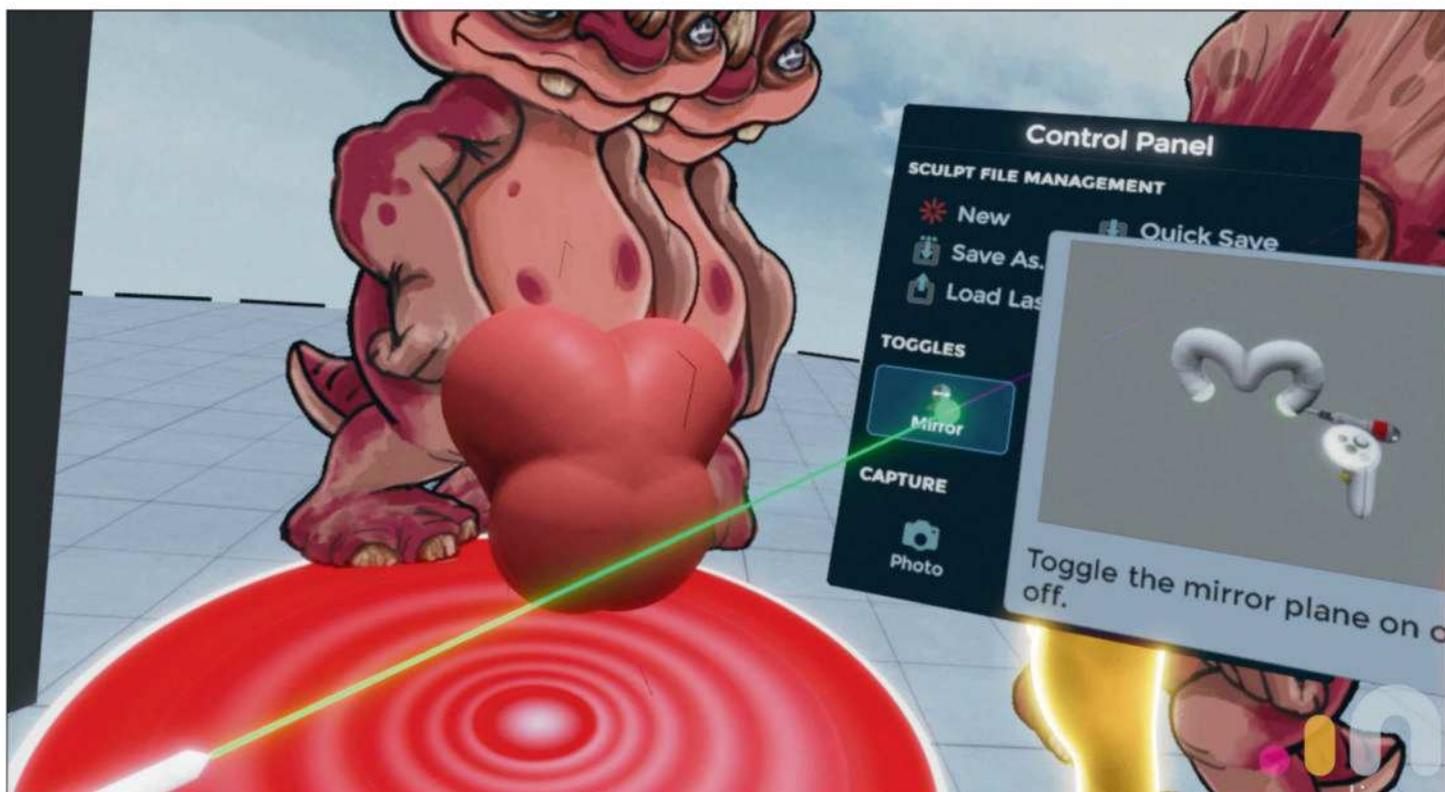
I always try to use good reference in my work. For this workshop I'm using a character sketch of a little creature I've called the Triplotop. I sketch the initial design on my iPad, then produce a few different versions to see what works well as a design. I ink it, colour it and then save out a few PNG versions.



2 Bring the references into Medium

Save the reference images to your Documents Folder (Look for the _import folder). Import the images from the Reference panel to Medium. It's the third button along when you pull down on the thumb stick on the Support Hand. Select the images you need, then in the scene click each one and move it into place. Use the Check button and attach it to your hand. ➡➡





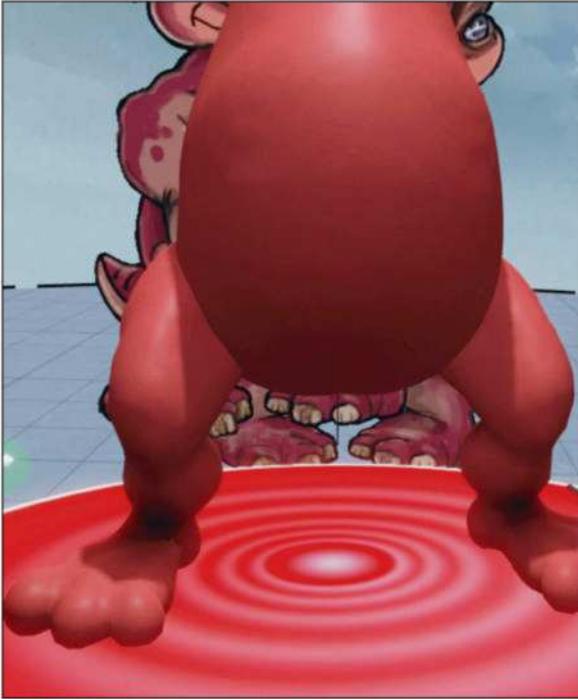
3 Working with the Mirror feature turned on

To work symmetrically, go into the Control Panel (Yellow Button, Support hand) and choose Mirror. Every action you perform now will be mirrored across the work centre, including adding clay, painting, moving clay around and any deleting that needs to happen. Later on we'll turn Mirror off and place my Triplop into a range of more dynamic poses using the Move tool.



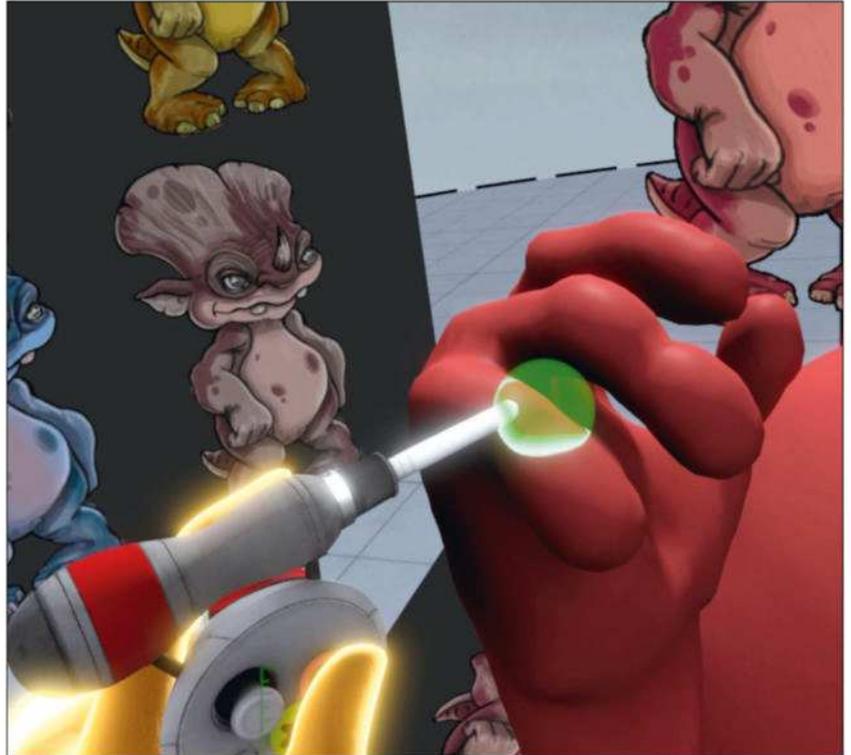
4 Begin defining the body shape, starting with the torso

The character will be built on a few different layers, enabling you to pose it later. The default tool in Medium is the Clay tool and you add clay by pressing the trigger on the Tool hand (your dominant hand). Create a belly and chest area going up to the shoulders. Add in a little tail.



5 Introducing legs

Make a new layer that we can use for the legs. The layer system enables you to adjust parts separately, flip models, and increase and decrease the details level. Using the basic Clay tool, lay down clay for the thigh, calf and a basic foot. Hold the trigger on the support hand to access the Smooth tool and level out the surface as needed.



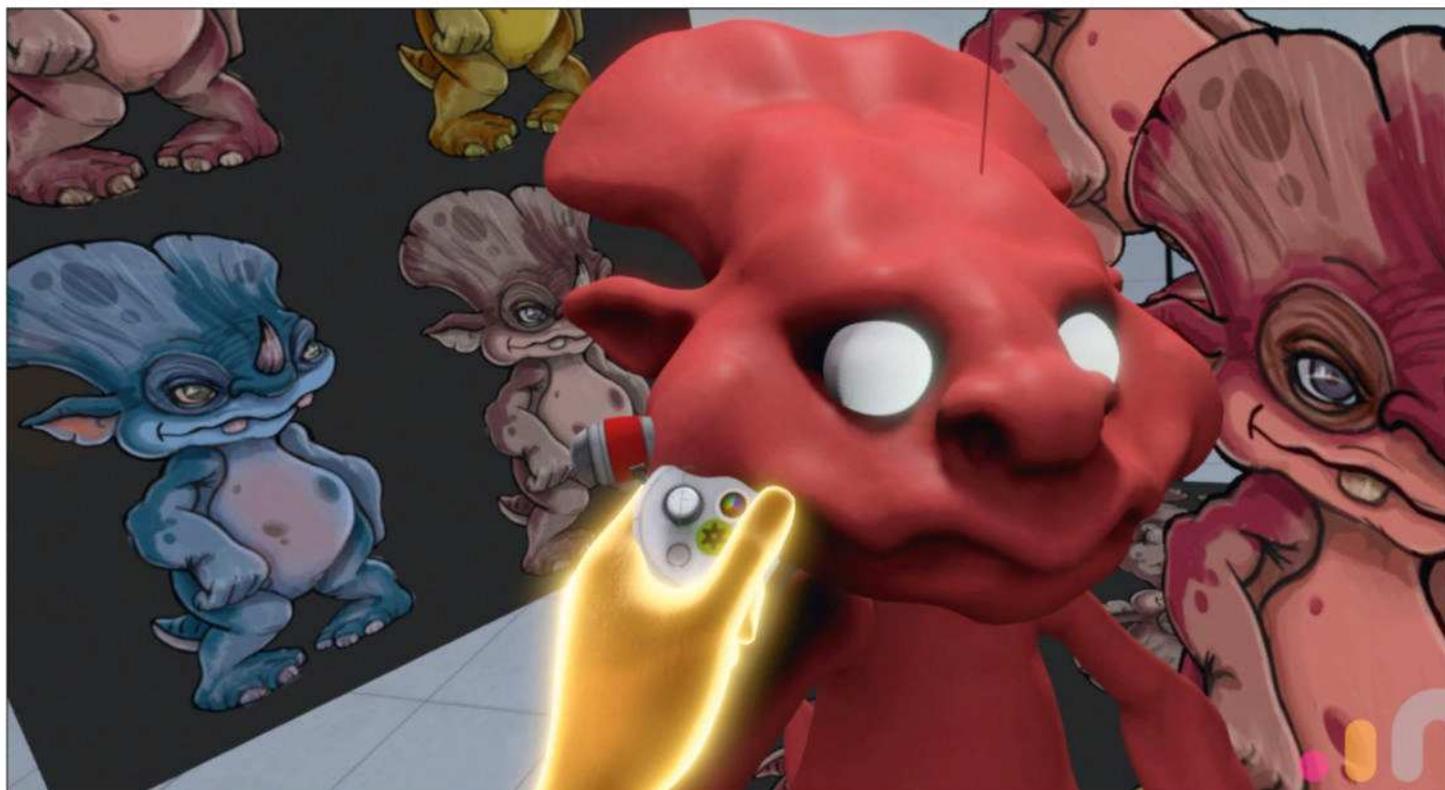
6 Add arms and hands

Add a new layer for the arms and add clay down from the shoulder to form the biceps, the elbow and hand. Then create each finger, joint by joint. Using the Smooth tool to get the volumes correct and then switch to the Move tool to tweak the form (push forward on the support hand to access the Tool palette).



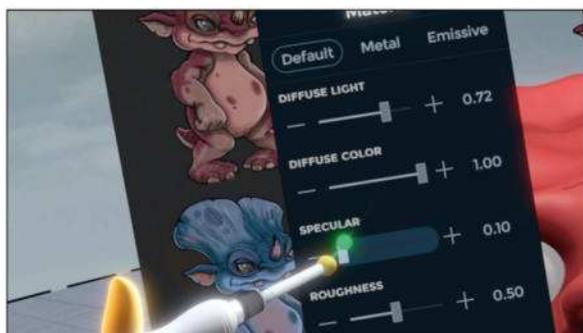
7 Laying the foundation of the head component

Add a new layer and call it 'Head'. Use the Clay tool to lay down the ball of the head. Add volume for the cheeks, the frill at the back, the beak. Double-tap the gear icon on your Tool Hand and the clay turns red. Make two eye sockets.



8 Refine the shape of the creature's head

The most important part of the character is the head and facial characteristics, so I spend the most time on this section. Using the Smooth, Clay and Move tools I make sure that the head reads from all angles and that the mouth and eyes look appealing and friendly. Don't worry about the eye shape until we add the eyes, because it's always easier once a sphere is in the socket.



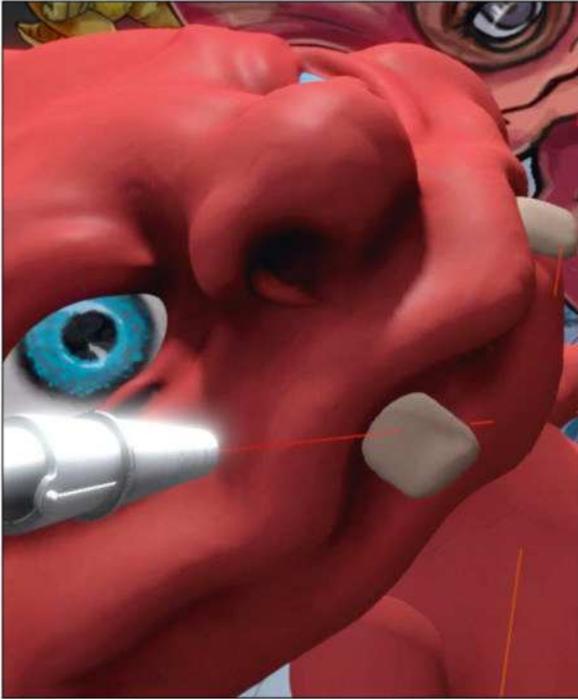
9 Change the eye material

Create a layer for the eyes and use the gear settings icon to change the material. Try metal if that suits you, but the easiest way is to simply increase the specularity of the material to give a glossy effect. Then reduce the occlusion to reduce shadows. Turn on Mirroring and use the Clay tool to add simple spheres for eyes.



10 Give the creature bright blue eyes

Now change to the Paint tool and paint with blue and black to create the pupil and iris. You can change your Clay settings to 'single' rather than continuous; this enables you to stamp down a single sphere rather than spraying constantly. The size of the sphere depends on the size of the brush that you start with.



11 Create teeth and horns

Add a new layer for the teeth and horns. To make the teeth, use a basic Cube tool (click the gear icon on the Tool hand). Draw it onto the character, ensuring it intersects with the upper jaw. Use the Smooth tool to improve the shape and the Move tool if necessary. The horn can be made by spraying the Sphere tool in an arc.



12 Painting the base coat

To lay down the base coat, change to the Painting tool and pick a relevant colour. Apply that to all skin areas. Make the colour a little darker and then paint the recessed areas. Choose a few different colours to match your design and gradually build up the overall look that you're after.



13 Detailing the surface

To add smaller details make the brush very small, then hold your hand quite far back and 'pepper' the surface to generate a mottled effect. Add lighter and darker areas to give good contrast to the skin surface. Check there are no flat-looking areas; if you find some, add in some small details like wrinkles or light patches.



14 Final passes and poses

To pose the model, duplicate each layer (not the head) and delete either one side or the other. That way you'll end up with two legs, two arms and so on. Now by selecting each individual part you can move the parts around to achieve dynamic poses. If you need to go more extreme, use the Move tool set to a large brush. ●

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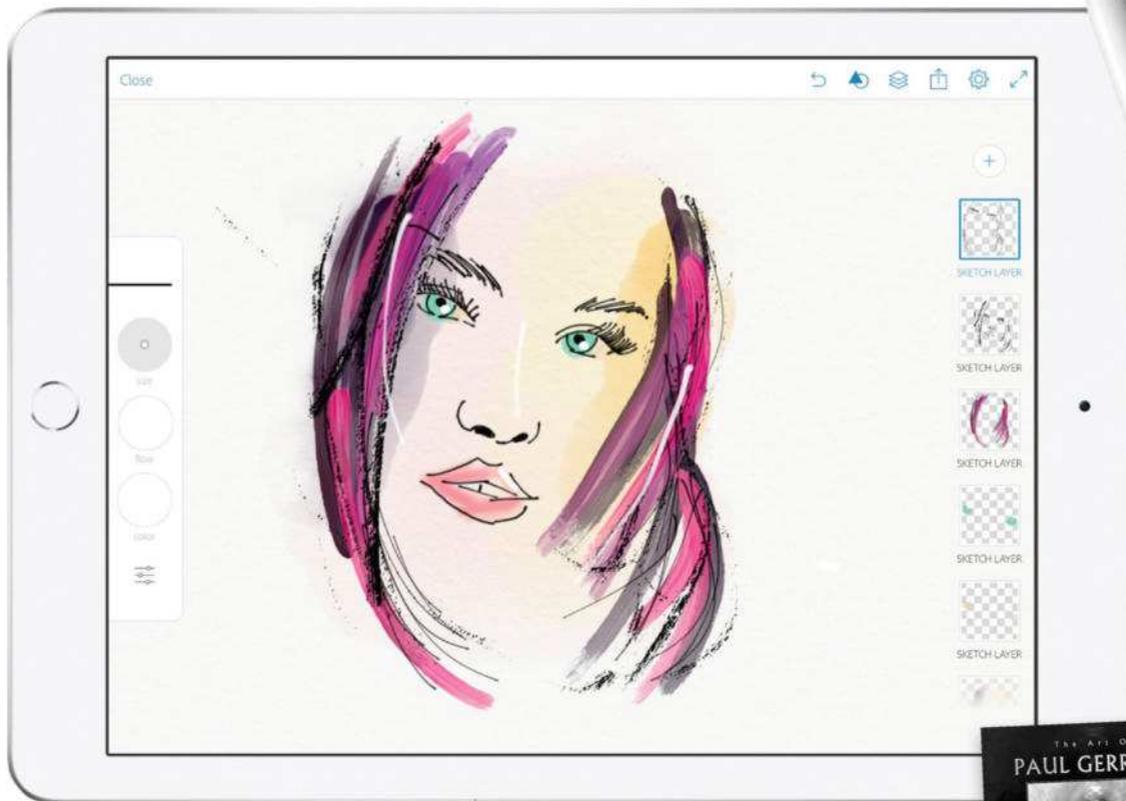


NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX Reviews



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

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



5
PRODUCTS
ON TEST



HARDWARE

92 iPad 9.7

The ubiquitous gadget of the 2010s rolls on into its eighth year, even more laptop-like and art-friendly than ever before.

TRAINING

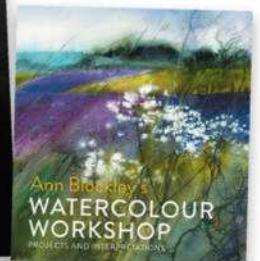
95 Sci-Fi Corridor

Concept design artist Vaughan Ling creates a cool-looking passageway that you can render from any angle you wish.

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96 The Art and Making of Rampage

The production team behind Rampage reveals how it turned furious mutant monsters into heartfelt creatures.



97 The Art of Paul Gerrard: Monochromatic Beginnings

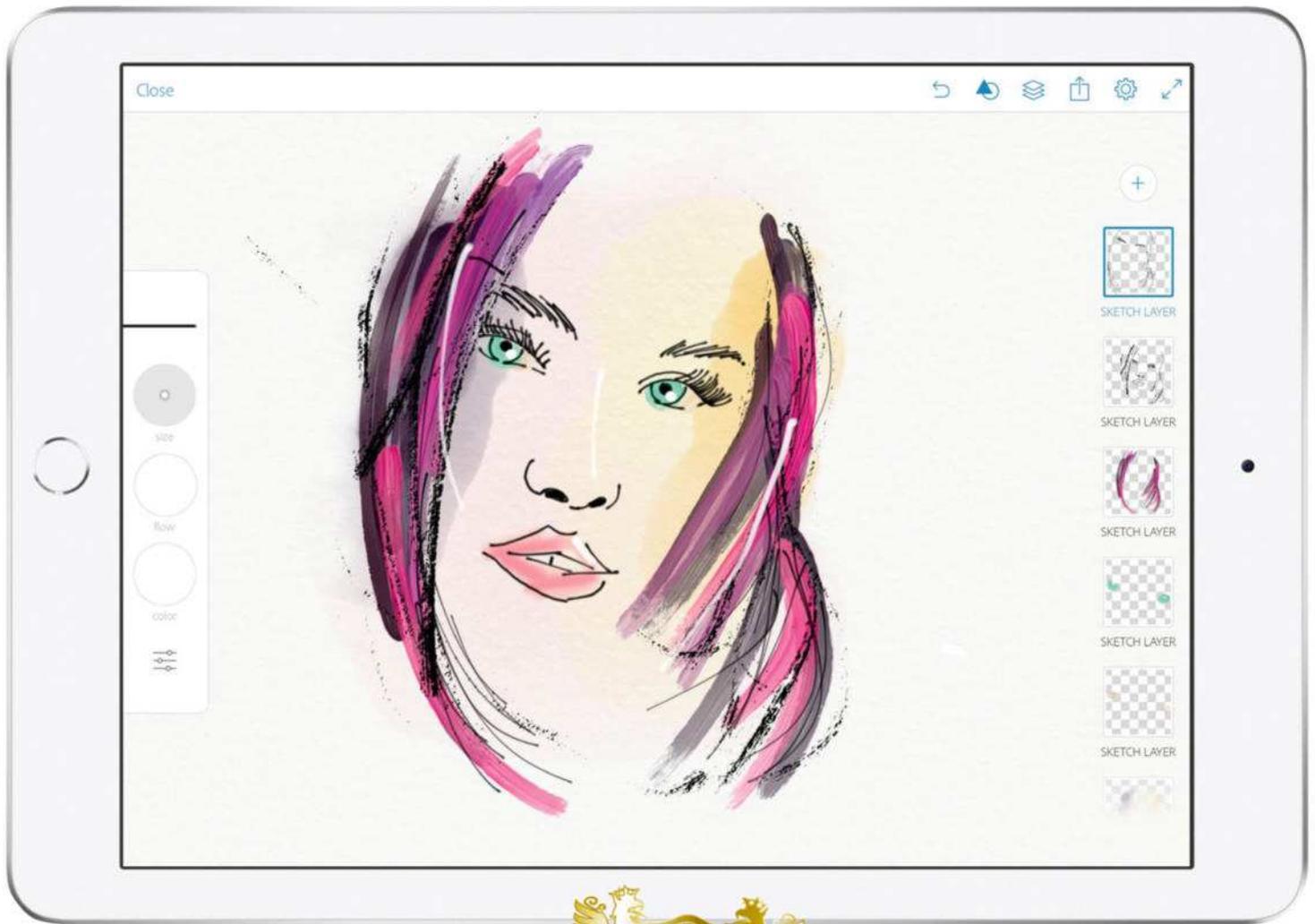
The legendary concept designer revisits the start of his career with this collection of black and white artworks.

97 Ann Blockley's Watercolour Workshop

Discover new ways to paint with watercolours in this book that focuses on innovative approaches to the medium.

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





There are plenty of digital art apps on the App Store that are capable of helping with on-the-go drawing, including Procreate and ArtRage. Here, we used Photoshop Sketch.

iPad 9.7



TABLET TAKING The ubiquitous gadget of the 2010s rolls on into its eighth year, even more laptop-like and art-friendly than ever before

Price From £319 **Company** Apple **Web** www.apple.com

The late Steve Jobs only had one word to describe styluses in relation to his pioneering products: “Yuck”. His idea was that no one would ever need them so long as they had fingers to use, and it was a mantra that persevered at the company he founded, for a little while after he passed away.

When Apple finally did release an accompanying Pencil to use with its iPad, the world referred back to Jobs’s now infamous put-down of the pen.

But perhaps not even Jobs could have foreseen how touch screens would evolve into the new decade.

The new iPad for 2018 promises to deliver the power of Apple’s most ambitious products, with the price of some of its most popular. It’s good news for digital artists. For a start, the Apple Pencil is fully compatible, so you needn’t fork out for the top iPad model. The new chip makes it quicker and split-screening makes it easier for multi-tasking, but the first impressions of the new iPad aren’t exactly

The Apple Pencil is superb for digital sketching, and the iPad makes it possible to rest your hand on the screen without it coming out on your canvas, as it were, as only the Pencil’s strokes will be recognised

brehtaking: same resolution, same old design, same rigid iOS that you can’t completely customise to your tastes. The Pencil certainly makes it a bit more interesting, but then you have to pay separately for that (£89).

Despite these irks, which admittedly come from most customers on new Apple releases, this is the most solid effort from the company yet when it comes to its tablet. It’s got a decent 10-hour battery life and the camera, although barely improved from previous models, still boasts eight megapixels. That’s more than enough for an artist to take reference photographs with.





The design follows the classic iPads of the past. It's thicker than the old iPad Air used to be, but it comes with a whole lot more power to boot, too.

The new iPad's screen is bright and colourful enough for you to get exactly the right shade for your art. Note that the speakers are located at the bottom of the device again, and though the sound isn't particularly bad, it's not as good as the iPad Pro.



“The power is phenomenal compared to previous iPad models. It handles sketching with no trouble whatsoever”

The power is phenomenal in comparison to previous iPad models. It handles sketching, for example, with absolutely no trouble whatsoever, and switching between apps is flawless.

The Apple Pencil is simply light years ahead of most styluses in the market too, with details easy to create with the tip, and shading possible by drawing at an angle. The pressure sensitivity is superb, too; this is good enough to rival many graphics tablets. This is the elite combination for digital drawing on the go, and at a fairly

reasonable price, it's a serious option for the beginner or a professional.

This is still the best tablet on the market. With the rate that touch screens are evolving, it's becoming ever more essential for digital artists to own an iPad to use on the go, and all things considered, this latest iPad is the best fit for the job. It's quicker and stronger and will last far longer than any iPad before; the Pencil too is superb in quality and well worth the money. If Steve Jobs were here today, even he would be impressed. ●

DETAILS

Features

- 32 or 128GB versions
- A10 Fusion chip with 64-bit architecture
- 2,048x1,536 resolution at 264 ppi
- Eight-megapixel camera with Live Photos and Panorama (up to 43 megapixels)
- 1.2-megapixel photos front camera
- 1,080p HD video recording
- iOS 11

System Requirements

PC: Windows 7 or later
Mac: OS X 10.10.5 or later
(for syncing iTunes)

Rating



IN FOCUS

THREE IPAD ALTERNATIVES

There's a tablet out there for artists on all budgets...

Surface Pro

Web www.microsoft.com

Price £799



Microsoft's flagship tablet, the Surface Pro, looks and feels very similar to its laptops. It's considerably more expensive than many iPads, and the Surface Pen isn't nearly as good for digital art as the Apple Pencil.

Tab 4

Web www.lenovo.com

Price £170



Lenovo's Tab 4 is an Android-running, robust tablet with a battery life twice as long as the iPad and expansion options via an SD card. It's nowhere near as slick or quick as the iPad, but it's a good option for artists on a tight budget.

Galaxy Tab S2

Web www.samsung.com

Price £329



Perhaps the most similar prospect on the market to the iPad, the Galaxy Tab has a similar price, build and screen quality. The processor isn't as powerful though, and the iPad is superior for using for creating artworks.



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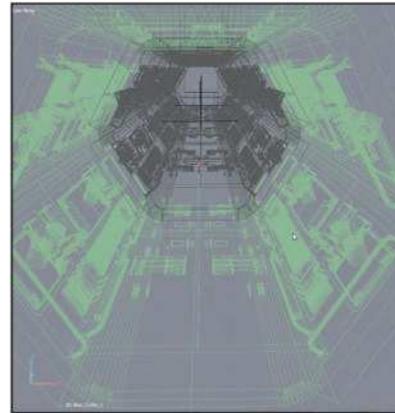
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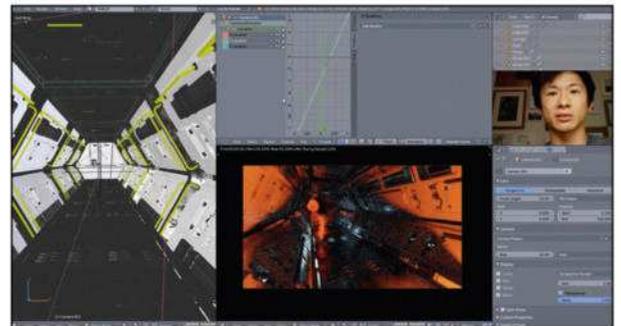


You're shown every stage of the project, with clear instructions showing how to set up essential elements such as surface materials.

Vaughan Ling's 3D corridor makes an ideal backdrop for your sci-fi figures – and you can make your own version in Blender.



There's a brief run-through on simple animation techniques, so you can have a camera track all the way down the corridor.



Sci-Fi Corridor

PIPE DREAM Concept design artist Vaughan Ling creates a cool-looking passageway that you can render from any angle you wish

Publisher Vaughan Ling **Price** £23 **Format** Streaming video **Web** www.gumroad.com/vling



When it comes to taking your first steps in 3D software, Blender is a pretty good choice. Created by the open-source community, Blender is free to download, yet is capable of decent results. It's not as complicated to pick up as programs like Maya, but you can still expect somewhat of a learning curve – which is where good training can really make a difference.

Vaughan Ling's latest training video isn't necessarily for beginners, but it's one of the most accessible projects you're likely to find. Vaughan gives precise narration about what he's doing and which controls he's using at every stage – no mean feat given the length of the video – and makes you feel like recreating this moody backdrop is well within your grasp.

The video's packed with useful skills and techniques. Just one example is when Vaughan shows how you can select objects through their vertices, their edges or their polygons,



encouraging you to choose the most efficient and accurate method for any given situation.

He also teaches some good design skills, taking inspiration from unexpected sources like espresso machines and showing how variations in scale and rhythm can make a potentially dull, industrial environment like a corridor look interesting.

Towards the end, you'll also get some great lessons in setting up the final render, as Vaughan shows how straightforward changes in lighting and render settings enable you to give the same basic scene a few distinct looks, from futuristically clean to ominously moody.

The result is an excellent Blender primer, although it's only available as a streaming video, not as a download. This means the video quality can be variable if the Gumroad server hosting the video is having a bad day, and you don't get a copy of the video to keep – which is a shame given its repeat value.

DETAILS

Topics covered

- Building the base
- Panel details
- Materials
- Text and decals
- Environment styles
- Animating the lights
- Animating the camera
- Rendering the animation

Length
254 minutes

Rating



ARTIST PROFILE VAUGHAN LING

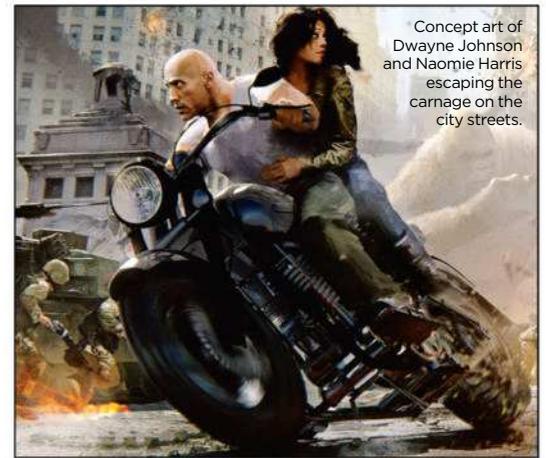
Based in California, Vaughan specialises in designs for vehicles, props, weapons and environments to appear in films and games. Clients have included Warner Animation Group, Disney, Marvel, Psyops, Insomniac Games, Mattel, Honda and Trek Bicycles, and projects have included TRON: Uprising, Sunset Overdrive and The LEGO Ninjago Movie, as well as community collaborations including Ghost In The Shell (Project 2501). Vaughan's also taught at Concept Design Academy in Pasadena.



www.heavypoly.com



Mutant beasts have it out on the Chicago streets, in this dynamic piece of concept art.



Concept art of Dwayne Johnson and Naomie Harris escaping the carnage on the city streets.

The Art and Making of Rampage

CODE MONKEY The production team behind Rampage reveal how they turned furious mutant monsters into heartfelt creatures in this making-of book

Author Ellen Wolff **Publisher** Insight Editions **Price** £32 **Web** www.insighteditions.com **Available** Now

The nostalgia for arcade games is still going strong. Rampage brings the 1986 Bally Midway arcade game of the same name bang up to date with groundbreaking visual effects.

It's not just the look of Rampage that gets spruced up in this latest cinematic outing for Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson. As we learn in the foreword from the man himself, an added element of friendship between man and creature runs through the whole film to give the action sequences extra emotional heft.

In fact, Dwayne's foreword sets the tone for this book. Rampage is sure to be dismissed by some as yet another brainless blockbuster, but this book reveals how much thought and attention has gone into both the story and the effects. Director and producer Brad Peyton underlines this in his introduction, which explores how he



wanted to tackle bigger subjects, such as animal cruelty and antipoaching.

The book starts proper with a chapter that takes a look at its arcade origins and scientific grounding before leading into a chapter dedicated to the two leads, Dwayne's Davis, and George. It's this section that will prove most fascinating to VFX fans, as we're



Motion-capture performer Jason Liles helped to bring George the albino gorilla to life.

“This book reveals how much thought has gone into the story and the effects”

taken through the development of George, an albino gorilla who mutates into a monstrous super predator.

Considering this is both a making-of and an art book, the artistic insights are balanced out with explanations of conventional characters and details of the filming process. While these

The final mutated form of Lizzie the crocodile is pictured against a human for scale.

sections are interesting, it's the studies of creature designs that will be the main draw for many. These breakdowns include words from Weta Workshop effects supervisors, and do a good job of revealing how George builds on previous performance-captured actors found in The Lord of the Rings and Planet of the Apes.

Elsewhere in the book, the evolution of the city-destroying mutants that clash with George are covered. Although given comparatively less page space, there's still plenty of design analysis here to enjoy. Topped off with references to the game that are sure to delight hardcore fans, both the book and the film are painted out to be a refreshingly heartfelt take on your conventional action film.

RATING ★★★★★☆



The Art of Paul Gerrard: Monochromatic Beginnings

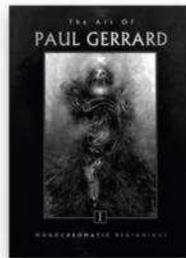
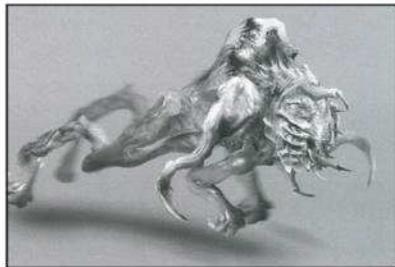
FANTASY FUSIONS The legendary concept designer revisits the start of his career with this collection of black and white artworks



Author Paul Gerrard **Publisher** Self-published **Price** £20 **Web** www.gerrardian.bigcartel.com **Available** Now

Paul Gerrard specialises in depicting dark and surrealistic scenes. His distinctive style of nightmarish fusions has led to credits on the likes of *Battle: Los Angeles*, *Wrath of the Titans*, *Hellraiser: Origins* and *The Shannara Chronicles*.

Before all this though, Paul created monstrous characters and dystopian

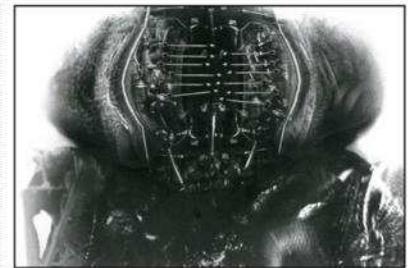


Paul created this concept of an alien in motion to help inform his final design.

landscapes. And it's these creations that are brought together in the first of a series of books put out by the artist. As the title suggests, this period of work saw Paul working in black and white. "Monochrome was my chosen palette at the time, allowing for a heightened sense of realism," he says.

Running at 80 pages, this glossy hardback includes digital roughs that emerged from meditation sessions that saw Paul submerged in a floatation tank, all the way through to concepts for cinematic projects.

There's lots of warped and uneasy imagery to enjoy here, but unlike most retrospective books there's no trajectory to the layout and not much in the way of captions from the author. While a bit disappointing, this



One of Paul's unused concepts for the invading biomechanical aliens from *Battle: Los Angeles*.

approach does fit with the artist's convention-bucking style. Fans will be pleased to hear though that this is the first in a 10-part series of Gerrardian collections, so there's plenty of scope to learn more.

RATING ★★★★★

Ann Blockley's Watercolour Workshop

PAINTING PROCESS Discover new ways to paint with watercolours in this book that focuses on innovative approaches to the medium

Author Ann Blockley **Publisher** Batsford **Price** £20 **Web** www.pavilionbooks.com **Available** Now

Can art really be taught, or is it a skill that a person simply does or doesn't have? It's a hotly debated question, but in her latest book, renowned watercolour artist and teacher Ann Blockley shares personal approaches to help bring out everyone's inner artist.

Ann reveals how to start looking at subjects like an artist, as well as exploring mindsets to help readers



Ann shows how she adds small amounts of concentrated pigment for pollen details, which contrast with the soft colours used elsewhere.



Diagonal, directional sweeps of colour help convey movement of the flowers, together with a crayon layer that creates a loose shimmer to the scene.

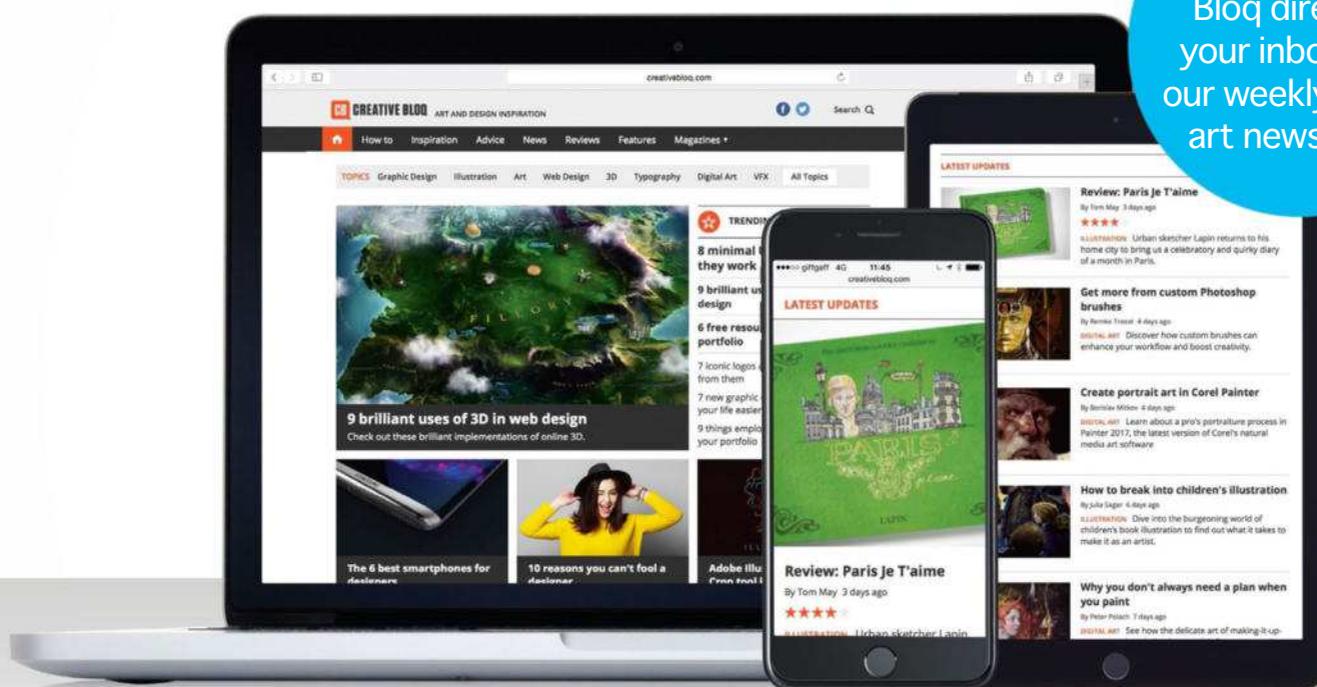
expand their skills in an organic way. She also examines an array of mediums and tools, and how these can be combined in unconventional ways to achieve striking results. Yet the walkthroughs and technique sections never come across as didactic. They're more of a blueprint for readers to build on in their own way, with the help of their ever-growing creative sensibilities.

Designed to be read in any order, *Watercolour Workshop* is as mutable as its medium. Covering textures, mark-making and scenery, before moving on to monoprinting methods and abstract compositions, it's a useful reference to have if you've struggled to go with the flow of watercolours.

RATING ★★★★★

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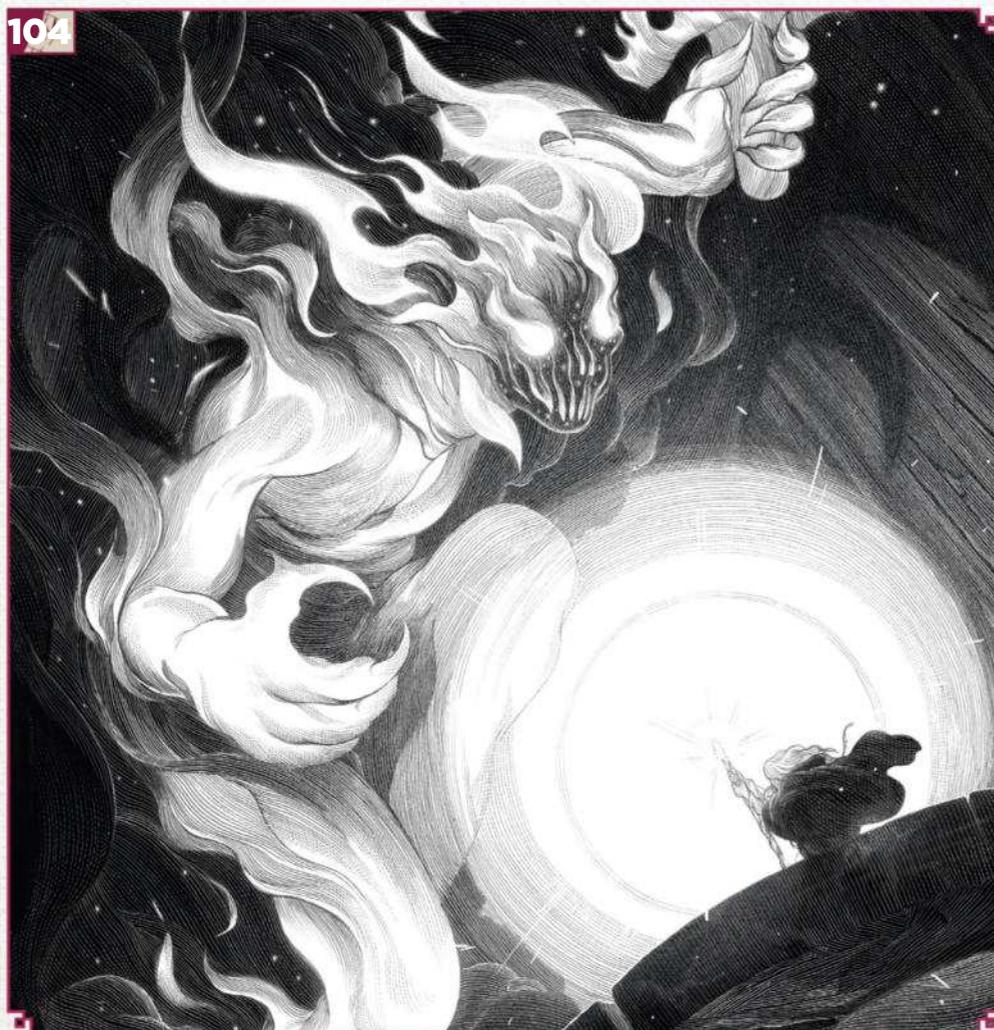
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Traditional Artist

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Workshops assets are available...

If you see the video workshop badge then you can watch the artist in action. Turn to page 8 to see how you can get hold of the video.



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This issue:

100 Traditional art FXPosé

Explore this month's selection of the finest traditional art, which has been sent in by you!

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FXPosé

SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL ARTISTS



Gabriella Eriksson

LOCATION: Sweden **MEDIA:** Coloured pencil, oils, graphite, ink, Photoshop
WEB: www.gabriellaliv.gallery

“Most of my work gravitates towards the weird, dark and emotional,” says Gabriella. “I find inspiration in obscure textbooks, weird fiction and nature.”



1 FLOAT

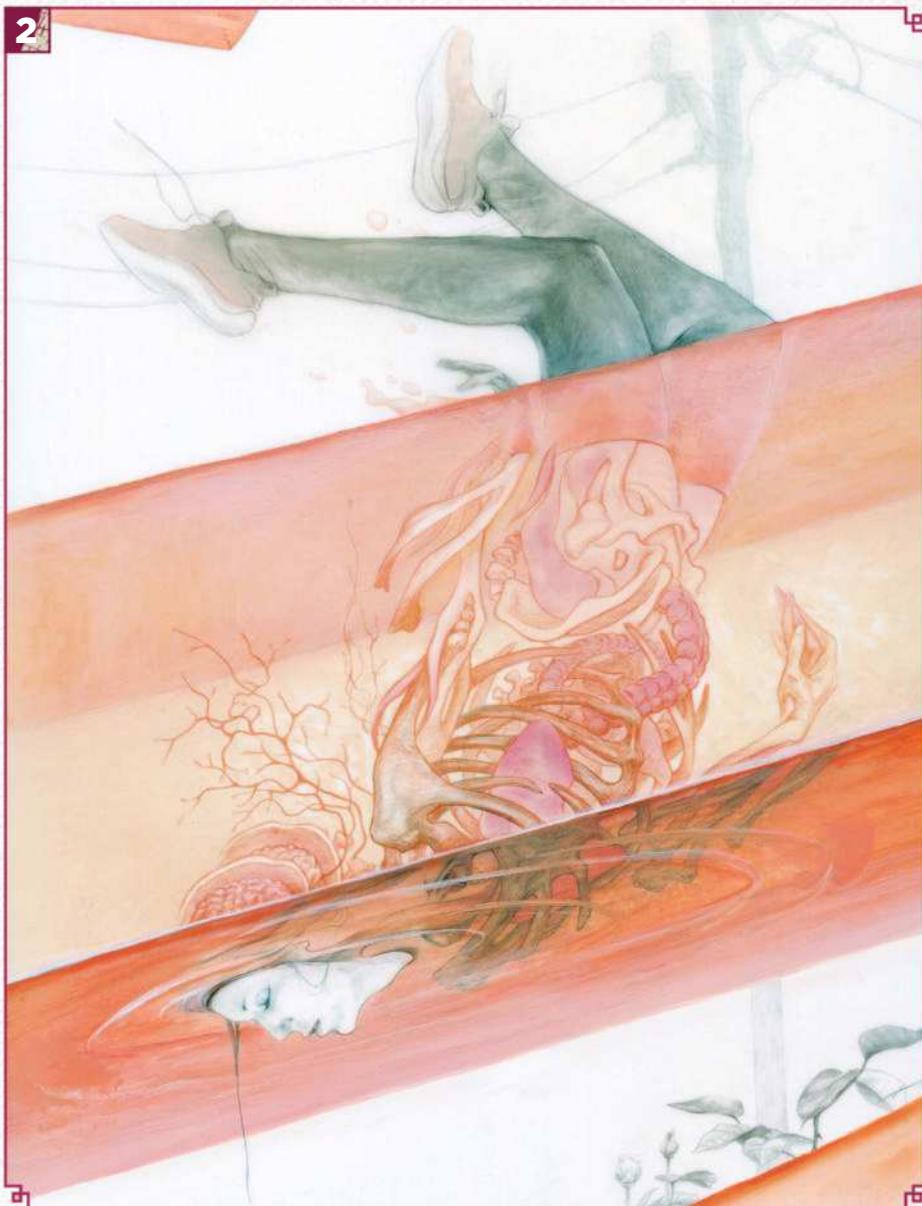
“In this illustration, I wanted to explore the serenity that can be found in embracing discomfort. I love draw to bodies with loose and impossible anatomy.”

2 LEAP

“The idea behind this piece was to capture someone pushing through their fear. I used both sides of the Dura-Lar paper to achieve the see-through effect on the body.”

3 LINGER

“I was inspired by the messy ways we sometimes hold on to bad memories. Unlike Leap and Float, there's no clear divide between the calm and the chaotic.”



4 DELIRIOUS PORTRAIT
“A playful experiment that turned into a trippy portrait piece. I never meant this to capture a specific person, but rather to convey emotion.”





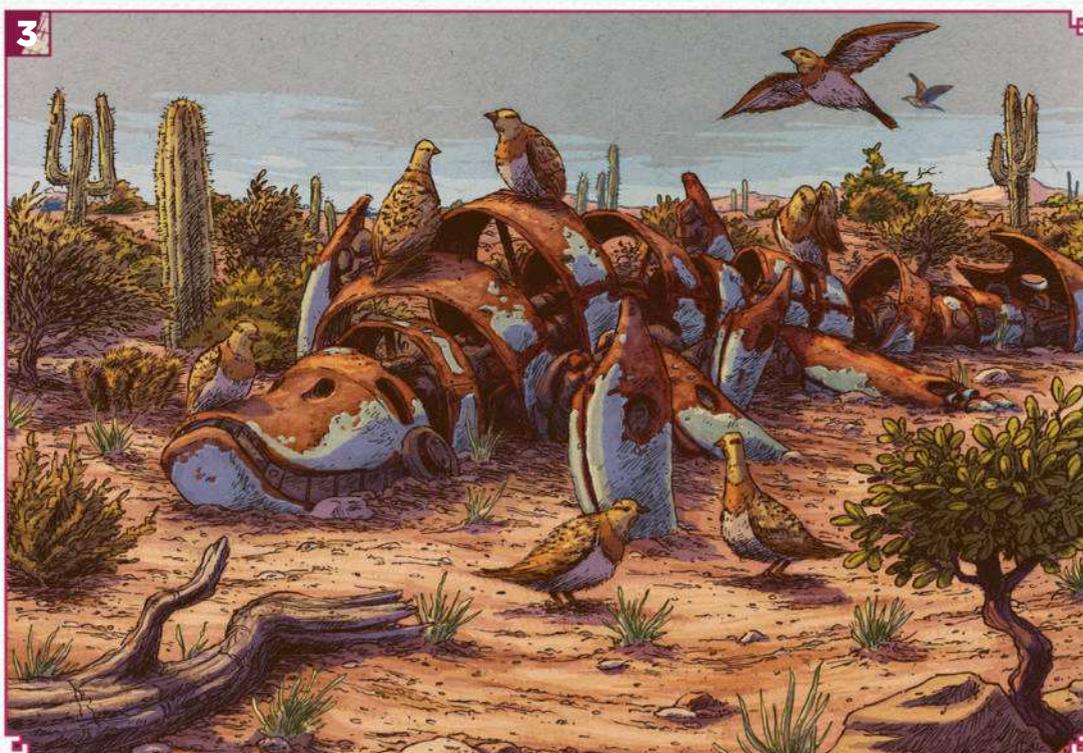
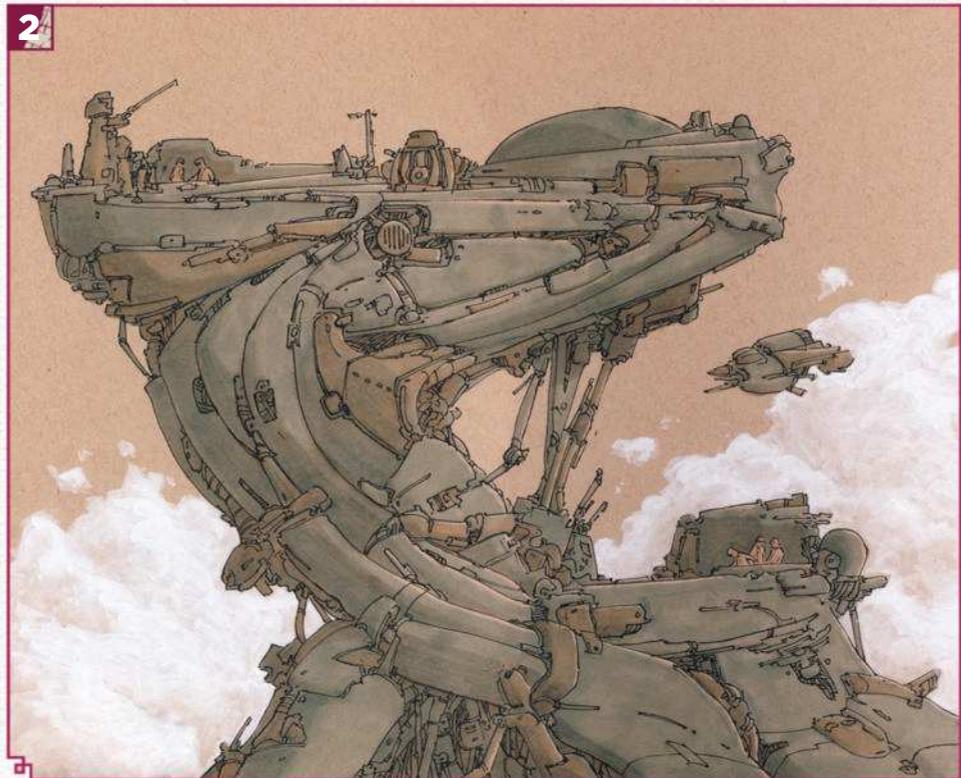
Jerel Dye

LOCATION: US **MEDIA:** Pen and ink, marker, watercolour, Photoshop, Clip Studio Paint **WEB:** jereldye.com

Jerel's been creating sci-fi art and comics since 2009 and has self-published a number of comics and stories for anthologies. He also teaches courses in drawing, cartooning and comics.

1 BUMBLECOPTER

"I drew this in ink then colour it digitally. It's part of a series of whimsical helicopter-style flying machines. In these pieces I wanted to explore a playful mood."



2 AERIAL STATION

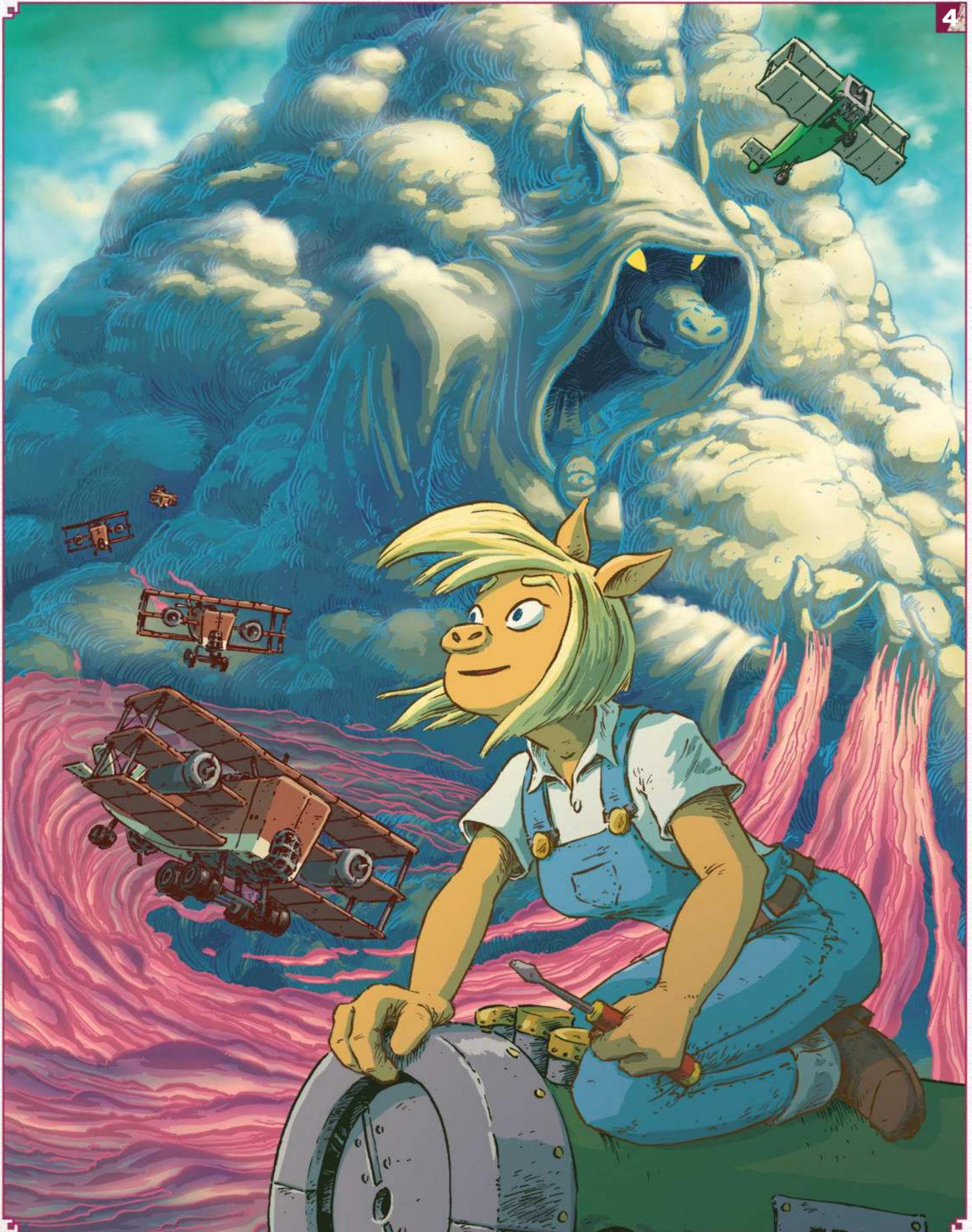
"Part of a long-running series inspired by technological science fiction. With each piece I took a 'stream of consciousness' approach in order to achieve a tangible sense of liveliness and discovery."

3 NEW GROWTH II

"Narrative illustrations can be a lovely form of storytelling, even without text. The images can tell a more open-ended story, leaving the viewer to interpret them."

4 PIGS MIGHT FLY COVER

"In this illustration I wanted to give a sense of the adventure and heroic discovery. This adventure is born out of innovation and boldness."







Pen Photoshop

DRAW AN ICONIC FANTASY ENCOUNTER

NICOLAS DELORT shows you how to create a dynamic and dramatic black and white claybord illustration by exploring all the possibilities the medium offers

Monochromatic artwork has always appealed more than colour art, whether it's charcoal sketches, etchings or pen and ink. While I was still a student, I saw an exhibit of Rembrandt's engravings at the Louvre. I was blown away by the detail and the dramatic lighting, and it inspired me to try and mimic the look with pen and ink.

My first attempts were messy but I had fun doing them. I worked with pen and ink for a while, trying to replicate the look of wood or copper engravings of other artist I discovered, like Gustave Doré, but I felt limited in terms of detail and it was hard to produce clean, parallel lines the way I wanted them to be.

So I did some research on ways I could mimic the engraving "look" without actually doing engraving and

MATERIALS

MEDIUM

■ Ampersand Art claybord

PENS

■ Faber Castell Ecco Pigment in 0.1, 0.3 0.5mm
■ Uni Pin Fine Line in 0.05mm
■ Faber Castell Pitt artist pen 'big brush'

SCRATCHING KNIFE

■ Speedball scratching knives 112 and 113

found out about early 20th century illustrator Franklin Booth, who worked on scratchboard. Since then I've been working with Ampersand Claybord and haven't looked back! It's a fantastic medium that gives you lot of control over your lines.

It comes in two varieties – un-inked and pre-inked – and the pre-inked variety is called Scratchbord. I use the un-inked kind, because it enables me to work both in an additive and subtractive manner. The image I've created for this workshop will demonstrate how I combine those two methods to achieve the desired effect.

Creating art in black and white can be deceptively simple, because you have less means to create contrast between different elements, so you have to find workarounds. Although it looks like you can correct your mistakes by just scratching them out,

in reality things aren't that simple and claybord is less forgiving than it looks. It's for that very reason that I work slowly and methodically, to leave as little as possible up to chance. It's taken a lot of practice to get a steady hand that enables me to create smooth and even lines, but it's been a rewarding process.

In this workshop, I'll try to explain my process, showing how I use lines to creature movement, values and texture by rendering a classic scene from The Lord of the Rings: the encounter between Gandalf and the Balrog on the bridge of Khazad-Dûm.



Nicolas is a freelance illustrator who specialises in black and white claybord illustrations. He's worked with a wide variety of clients such as Blizzard, Mondo and Games Workshop. You can explore more of his art at his website: www.nicolasdelort.com.



1 **Thumbnailing stage**

I always start out an illustration by doing very rough thumbnails with a pencil on paper with printed frames. I like having frames already on paper because it helps me focus on composition. I generally start with a pretty good idea of what I want to do, but this phase helps me find the exact composition I want.



2 **Cleaning up the sketch**

Once I have a thumbnail I like, I scan it, blow it up in Photoshop, colour it light blue and then draw over it on another layer. I use Kyle Webster's Ultimate Pencil brush, because I love its texture and flow. I don't worry too much about the details for now, but I make sure that I have everything exactly where I want it to be.

PEN TIP

MY FAVOURITE PENS

After trying out tons of different pens and brands, Faber Castell Ecco Pigments are really my favourite to use on clayboard.



ARTIST INSIGHT

COMPOSITIONAL RULES MAKE SENSE

They may sound rigid, but compositional rules such as the Rule of thirds are Staples for a reason! They are tried-and-tested methods to create balanced compositions. Don't be afraid to break the rules though!

3 **Planning out the values**

When I'm happy with my sketch, I do a quick digital value study. I keep values simple and not too detailed. It will serve as a reference guide when I do the final, so I know where I'm headed. I focus more on general atmosphere and light source, rather than smaller details.



4 **Transferring the sketch to the board**

I print out the sketch at the desired size (28x38cm) and use transfer paper to trace it down on the board. I don't press down too hard on the carbon paper, because it can be hard to erase from the board.



5 *Outlining the dark areas*

Using a 0.3mm tip Faber Castel Ecco pigment pen, I outline areas that will be rendered in a subtractive manner. That means they will be first filled with black ink and then I'll use a knife to scratch out lines. I generally work from background to foreground, so I start with the Balrog and smoke in the background.



6 *Filling in the dark*

I use a Faber Castell Pitt "Big brush" pen to fill in large areas and a 0.5mm pigment pen to fill in the smaller areas. At this point it doesn't really matter if I accidentally fill outside the lines because I can always scratch out later, but I still try to be as clean as possible.

ARTIST INSIGHT

THUMBNAILING

I've been advised against it several times, but I like doing my thumbnails in pre-drawn frames. It helps me plan out the composition and not go all over the place.



7 *Working in the first values*

At this step, I haven't used my scratching knife yet. I continue to fill in the areas that will be scratched out later and at the same time, with a 0.5mm pigment pen, I start working on the lighter areas by carefully creating tones with parallel lines. I use the direction of the lines to enhance the flow of the piece.



8 *Completing the addition*

I continue working in values on the background with the 0.5mm pigment pen, always paying attention to the general flow of my lines and movement that they create when you look at the illustration from afar. The Balrog is made of fire, and so I want it to look like its form is ever-changing. ➔



9 *Building values with scratched lines*

At this point, the areas in the background that have to be worked in an additive manner are done. I take out my scratching knife and start working in the darker areas, again by creating tones with very thin parallel lines. I can vary the line weight to create different values by applying less or more pressure on the knife.

10 *Depicting insubstantial wings*

I continue scratching out lines to create values in the background. I want the wings to look like they're made of smoke or shadow, so I don't give them definite shapes. The hardest thing at this point is to keep a clear idea of what I want the final values to be.

SURFACE TIP

CLAYBOARD OR SCRATCHBOARD?

I prefer clayboard because I like taking both additive and subtractive approaches.

ARTIST INSIGHT

CLEANING UP A SCAN

I avoid using scanning software to do any adjustments. Instead I scan without changing any of the settings so I obtain a raw scan that's easier to retouch using Photoshop's Levels and Curves tools.



11 *Lightening with counter-scratching*

I use my scratching knife to "counter-scratch" some of the pen lines at a 45 degree angle to create dashes. It lightens the values and create subtle gradients. Now the transition between the pen lines and the white looks smoother.



12 *Darkening and creating texture*

At this point, all the areas in the background are scratched out but to create some darker values, I take my pens and counter-hatch the scratched lines like I did with the knife. Doing this with a pen on the scratched lines darkens the values and also creates an interesting texture.



13 *Completing the foreground*

Now that the background is finished, I can move on to the foreground. The lines on the rock and bridge are straighter than in the background, so we have a contrast of textures. I wanted the halo from Gandalf's staff to be stylised and geometrical to contrast with the rest of the piece, where the shapes are more organic.



14 *Digital touch-ups*

Now that the piece is complete, I scan it in and do some digital touching up. The scan makes the ink look washed out, so I re-adjust levels so that the black is black and the white is white. I also add some subtle levels of grey to add some depth and to give the lighter areas a bit of a glow. ●

Core skills: Part 1

WARMING UP TO WATERCOLOUR

Come on in, the water's fine! Join artist and teacher **KELLY MCKERNAN** in discovering how to work with, not against, this wonderfully surprising medium

When someone finds out that I work in watercolour, their immediate response is often

"But watercolour is so hard!" An unsurprising reaction, perhaps...

I discovered watercolour as a teenager, and instead of being intimidated by its unpredictable nature, I saw endless possibilities. I gradually realised that watercolour offers a unique, collaborative relationship with the artist – one that isn't so straightforward and requires experimentation, openness and most importantly, patience.

By its very nature, watercolour appears to be a difficult beast to tame. After all, its primary vehicle is water! It's key to bear in mind that there'll always be an element of surprise when working with watercolour. Over time and with lots of experimentation and implementation of tried-and-true techniques, I've learned first to control what I can, and as for the rest, work intuitively and allow watercolour to be watercolour. At times it will take the wheel whether you like it or not, but you'll live for those moments when it pleasantly surprises you!

As well as having an open mind and endless patience, working with watercolour requires a particular setup, proper materials, a little technique and a lot of experimentation. In this series, I'm going to share with you how I work with this incredibly versatile and exciting medium and make the best of watercolour's delightfully protean nature.

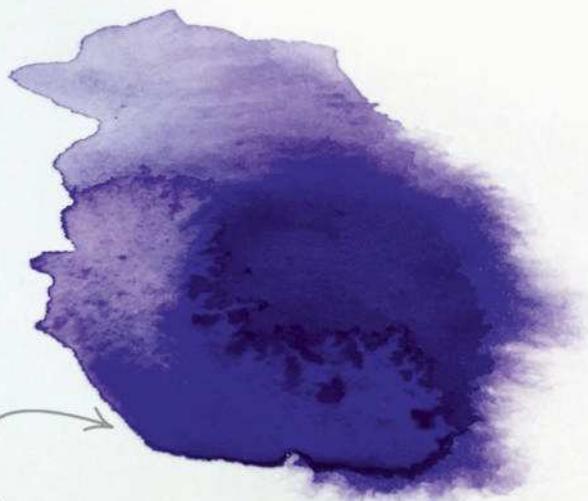


Kelly is an independent artist who creates original paintings for galleries, travels for conventions, and mentors students via her Patreon. You can see more of her art at www.kellymckernan.com.

Cold press watercolour paper.



Hot press watercolour paper.



1 What different watercolour papers are available?

Watercolour paper comes in three textures: hot, cold and rough. Both cold and rough watercolour paper have a bumpy texture, and will give you more vibrant colours. However, I enjoy working with hot press because the smooth texture enables me to achieve sharper details. Watercolour paper also comes in various weights. I recommend starting with 140lb. The heavier it is, the less likely it is to buckle under a lot of water. Aim to use top-brand papers such as Arches or Strathmore, because the quality of your paper is very important.



#7 Size 1 liner sable brush.

Size 0 Kolinsky sable brush.

Size 1 Kolinsky sable brush.

2 Choosing your brushes

Watercolour brushes can vary widely and it can be tough making a decision on which ones to buy. There are both synthetic and natural hair brushes available for watercolour use, and each have their own strengths. I prefer to work with Kolinsky red sable brushes, because the natural fibres hold liquid better than synthetics can, although they are more expensive. Brushes come in many shapes as well, though I most commonly use Rounds ranging from size 0 up to 6. ➔

Size 2 Kolinsky sable brush.

Size 3 Kolinsky sable brush.

Size 6 Kolinsky sable brush.

Size 1 squirrel hair mop brush.



A nice perk to working with watercolour is that it can always be re-wetted when dried, so an old palette can be brought back to life in a snap.

3 Select a watercolour palette that suits your way of working

Responsible watercolour artists typically use a large palette divided into wells for their colours. My particular method of working with limited colour palettes has landed me on a small, cheap eight-well palette with two mixing areas. I keep several around, including larger circular palettes in rotation, so that I can dedicate one per painting. This is useful when I'm working on more than one piece at a time.



4 Pick your paints

Watercolour paints most commonly come in tubes or pans. I prefer to use watercolour tubes because I can achieve better intensity right off the bat. I work with several brands, but my favourites are Grumbacher and Winsor & Newton for basic colours, and Daniel Smith for speciality colours and those that granulate nicely. My techniques for creating texture take advantage of the pigment separation that comes with these speciality colours. Student-quality watercolours won't get you very far, so I'd recommend spending a little extra on the good stuff, since you'll have it for some time anyway. Some of my current rotation of watercolours are over five years old!

Here are some of my most frequently used watercolours, along with speciality Finetec gold and silver pans.



4 Additional tools

My favourite part of working with watercolour involves the tools that push the medium even further. I most commonly use kosher salt and ice cream salt for texture effects (the latter creates larger texture). I'll also occasionally mask to preserve an area of paper with the aid of masking fluid or tape. These technique will be covered in future instalments of this series. Stay tuned! 🍷

First Impressions

✧ Yoann Lossel ✧

An ancient forest had a lasting effect on this French artist...



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

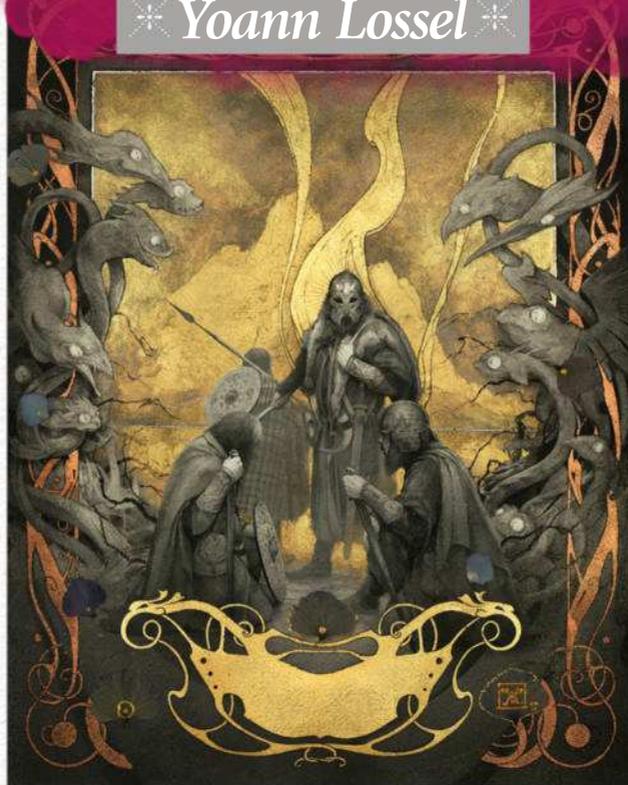
I grew up in Nantes, in the west of France. But

my family comes from all over France, and especially from Strasbourg, to the east of France. These are two regions with different identities and established cultures. This gave me the taste of history, architecture, the desire to settle my work in the roots of art.

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

Nature and the study of myths and legends. After my studies, I went to live in Brocéliande, a forest in Brittany. This place is known to be associated with the Arthurian legend, in addition to the Breton folklore. By extension, Brocéliande is associated to the Pre-Raphaelite painters and illustrators of the Golden Age, which are among my major influences in addition to Symbolist painters.

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



GREDEL'S MOTHER'S MERE

Yoann created this illustration for a limited edition of Beowulf, published by Easton Press. He used graphite, hydrangeas petals, gold (24k), silver and copper leaf to depict the scene.

One of my uncles is a long-time fan of role-playing games. He had a large figurine collection that I look at as a child. It was my first encounter with fantasy in a broad sense.

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

Several illustrations of a tale for a

“I think fantasy art is regaining the recognition and exposure it deserves”

fantastic French magazine The Magic Cauldron. I don't think it's representative of my work, but I liked doing it.

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

A painting for a French fantasy film. Today, I take all the time I need to complete a project – the goal being to create a subtle and elegant

WEALTHHEOW

This is another piece of art for Easton Press's edition of Beowulf. Yoann produced 10 pieces of art for the book, which had a limited print run of just 1,200.

artwork. I'm happy when my work has several levels of interpretation.

What are your painting rituals?

I read a lot about my subject to capture the symbolism of my theme. I visualise my image and evolve it in my mind until it favours my subject. I create the dynamics of the composition with the first sketches, finish my sketch, paint with graphite wash, design my ornaments on a layer, gild my interlacings and other gold parts and then varnish. Throughout the process I listen to a lot of music and conferences.

How is your art evolving?

My art evolves at the same time as me. We work together. My last experiment was to add relief to my work and expand my gilding skills.

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

I don't know, you should ask around me. Perhaps to always be faithful to your aspirations.

What advice would you give to your younger self to aid you on the way?

Hold your course, the rest is exciting.

How has the industry of fantasy art changed for good since you've been working in it?

I think we're taking it more seriously. Today, I work with luxury, high-end clients, and I'm not sure that would have been possible at the beginning of my career. I come from a country that, until recently, saw painters like Gustave Moreau or Alphonse Mucha at the centre of a cultural influence. I think fantasy art is regaining the recognition and exposure it deserves. There's no reason for it to remain a "minor" art. I'm absolutely convinced that the coming decades will be interesting for fantastic art and fantastic artists.

Known for his fantastical artworks that feature gold leaf, Yoann has exhibited his work in galleries around the world. See more of his art at www.yoannlossel.com.

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