WORKSHOP
IMAGINATIVE REALISM
Master abstract mark-making skills

Learn to mix digital and traditional art techniques – page 68

SOFTWARE
LIFE BEYOND PHOTOSHOP
The alternatives you need to try

FREE
2 HOURS OF PRO VIDEO TUITION
+ CUSTOM BRUSHES

BECOME A
FANTASY ARTIST
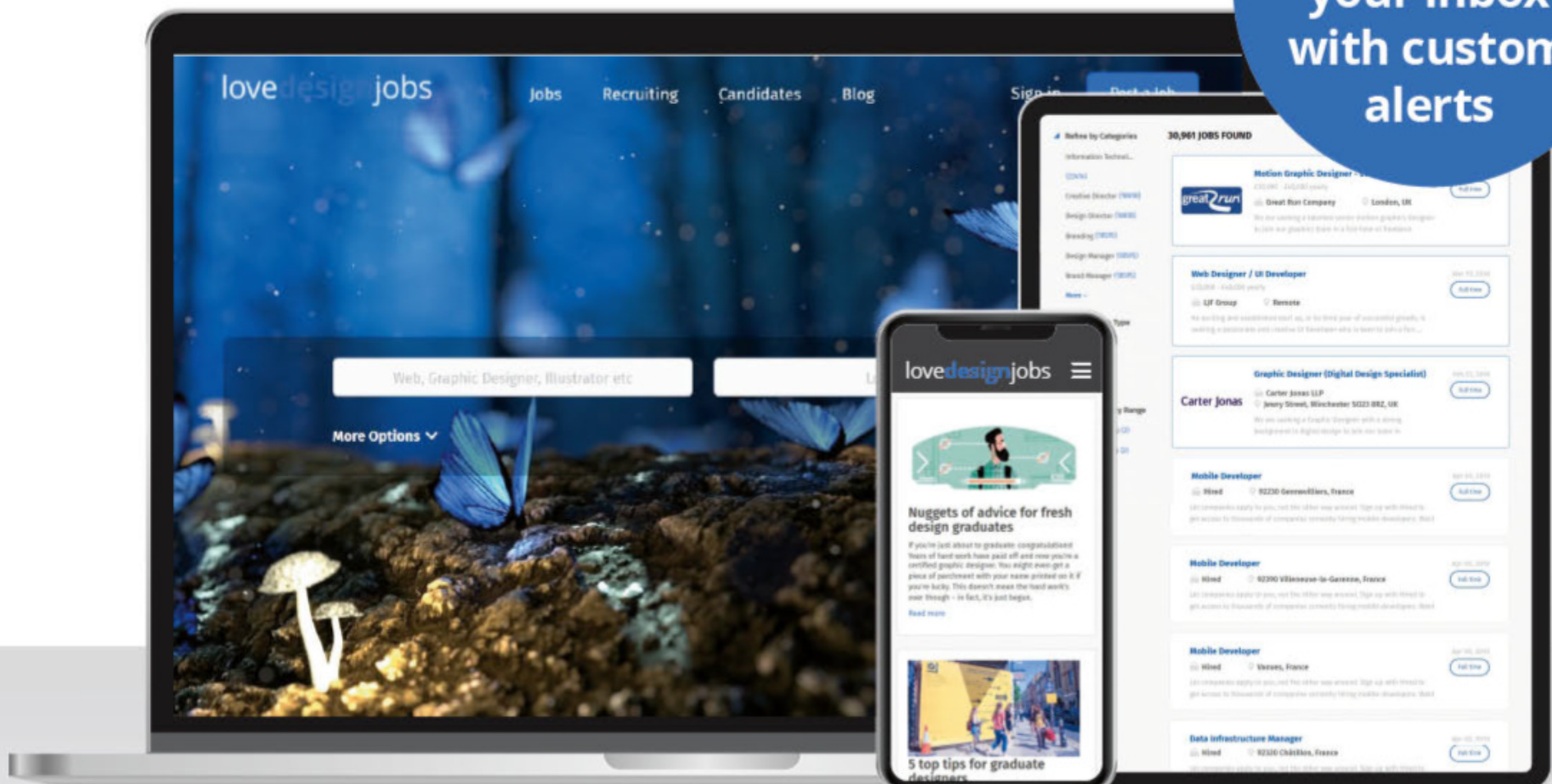Create texture and meaning in your works of art with **Chantal Horeis**

INTERVIEW
JAW COOPER TALKS LIFE, DEATH AND MAGIC

ALSO INSIDE

BRING A FANTASY CREATURE TO LIFE

BASTIEN LECOUFFE DEHARME INTERVIEW

DISCOVER THE NEW TOOLS IN PROCREATE

Welcome to…

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS
ImagineFX

Thanks for picking up this copy of ImagineFX. A few new readers have joined us recently, both in print and digital, so whether you're flicking through the pages of the paper edition or swiping across your screen on the digital version, welcome one and all!

I hope you're enjoying our latest cover. It's breathtaking isn't it? Chantal Horeis is a wonderful artist and we're honoured to have her work on the front of the magazine. Find out how she draws using traditional and digital methods on page 68.

I'm also particularly proud that we've finally got to interview JAW Cooper. Because of her schedule, it's taken quite a while to set up the interview. She seems much like her art – ethereal, elusive and hard to pigeonhole – so I'm glad we finally managed to nab a rare moment with her. It didn't disappoint. Find out more about her on page 38.
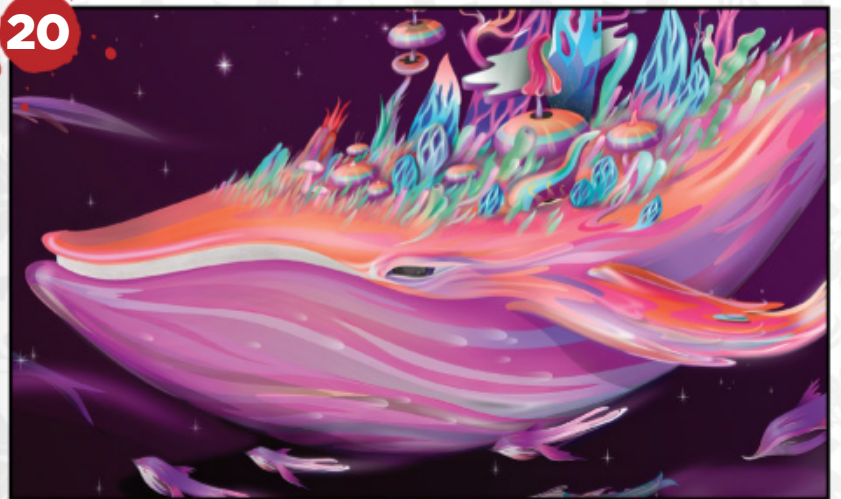
I also recommend taking a look at Fatemeh Haghnejad's workshop over on page 82. She's another artist I've admired for a while, so it was great to commission her to do something for us. Goodness, I'm so lucky to do this job aren't I?

Claire

Claire Howlett, Editor
claire@imaginefx.com

Subscribe and save!

You can save up to 72 per cent off the price of a subscription to ImagineFX! See page 4 for details

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS
ImagineFX
Contents

SUBSCRIBE & SAVE!

Artist Portfolio
JAW COOPER
"My personal work is cathartic…"
Cooper draws out her influences

Artist Portfolio
BASTIEN LECOUFFE DEHARME
"Anatomy, curves, flesh and bones"
The touchpoints in Bastien's art

Photoshop alternatives

**Artist in Residence:
Christine Kornacki**

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/fantasy176artist**

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

COVER WORKSHOP

00:56.34

Mix traditional and digital tools

Watch as Chantal Horeis combines a detailed pencil drawing with digital painting techniques to create this month's cover art. Her workshop on page 68 goes into her process in more depth.

GET YOUR RESOURCES

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

1 Go to the website
Type this into your browser's address bar (not the search bar):
https://ifxm.ag/fantasy176artist

2 Find the files you want
Search through the list of resources to download.

3 Download what you need...
Download the files or watch them via a bespoke YouTube link.

WORKSHOPS

Explore Procreate's new text tools
Max Ulichney's video covers the latest addition to the Procreate toolset. More on page 74.
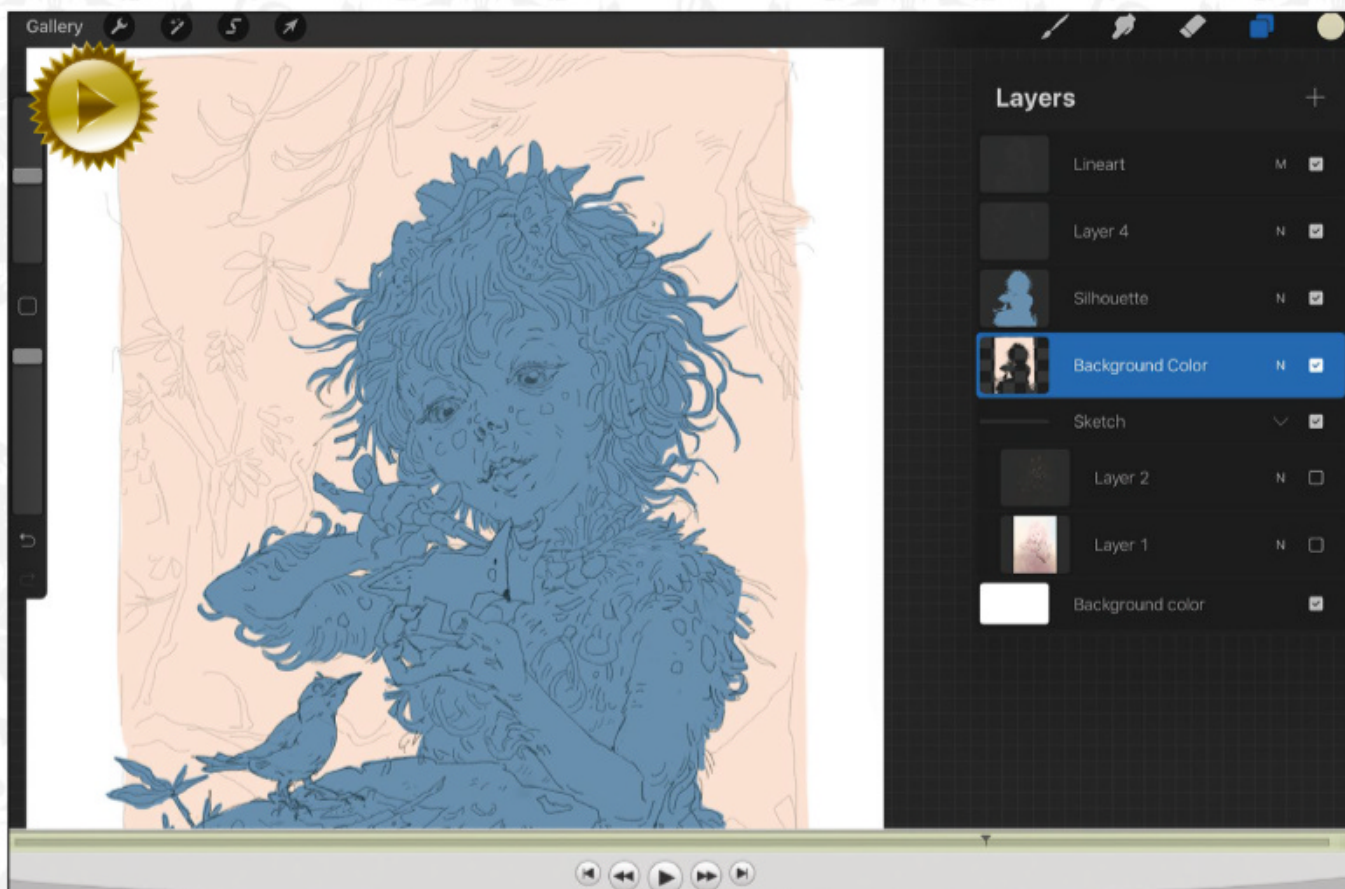
Give your digital art the look of traditional media
See Fatemeh Haghnejad bring a young faun to life in her video, then turn to page 82.

TRAINING The Anatomy of Style: The 3/4 Head Parts 1 & 2
Watch a clip from Patrick J Jones' latest instructional video, which we review on page 95.

PLUS 6 CUSTOM BRUSHES, INCLUDING…

BASIC
Chantal Horeis' Photoshop brush can be used to fill in shapes on the canvas, and for outlining.

MAXU 600 SERIES PENCIL
Max Ulichney's custom Procreate brush enables him to create a realistic pencil sketch, especially with the Tilt setting.

STARS
Chantal Horeis uses this Photoshop brush for painting stars, but it's also ideal for generating noise texture.

FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

Joel Holtzman

LOCATION: The Netherlands **MEDIA:** Photoshop **WEB:** www.joelchaimholtzman.com

Joel is inspired by biblical themes, mythology, the occult, military history and the grotesque. He aims to capture scenes that look like they could have existed.

1 THE CORDYCEPS KING

"In ancient times, the Scythians used incense and herbs to invoke visions of the past, future, heaven and hell; sometimes believing they could commune with the gods themselves."

2 KHAZAR BAGATHUR

"The Shamanistic Khazar Turks converted to Judaism around AD 700. While practising monotheism, some of the traditional warrior castes in Khazaria still used ancient spells in warfare."

3 AMORGES OF THE AZURE HORDE

"This paintings is set in the fall of Babylon in 539 BC. Amorges was one of the invading kings that helped the Persians invade the Babylonian capital."

FXPosé

Adam Scythe

LOCATION: Hungary **MEDIA:** Photoshop, dip pen and pencil **WEB:** www.artstation.com/adamscythe

This freelance illustrator and comic artist is based in Hungary and uses his work to show everyday wonders and struggles. He's self-taught, and works both digitally and traditionally.

1 GOOD MORNING

"A lot of dogs don't appreciate lazy Sundays. My dog, who I based this picture on, makes a distinctive noise that goes with her impatient stare."

2 SOLVING THE WORLD'S PROBLEMS

"I based this on long, nighttime talks with my One [wife]. Those ones when you just talk about everything, and when you check the clock it's already the middle of the night."

3 CAT FESTIVAL

"Cats are awesome. I like how independent they are. It's almost like they have their own secret society hidden from our eyes. They deserve a magical night festival where we can celebrate them."

4 IN FLAMES

"This one is about how hard it is to go forward sometimes. For example, when we're in the worst possible place and everything is falling apart. But we can't just stop, right?"

5 HER

"I drew my One [wife] and tried to mix her personality with her look. She is the cutest and the toughest person at the same time. She's just pure awesomeness."

FXPosé
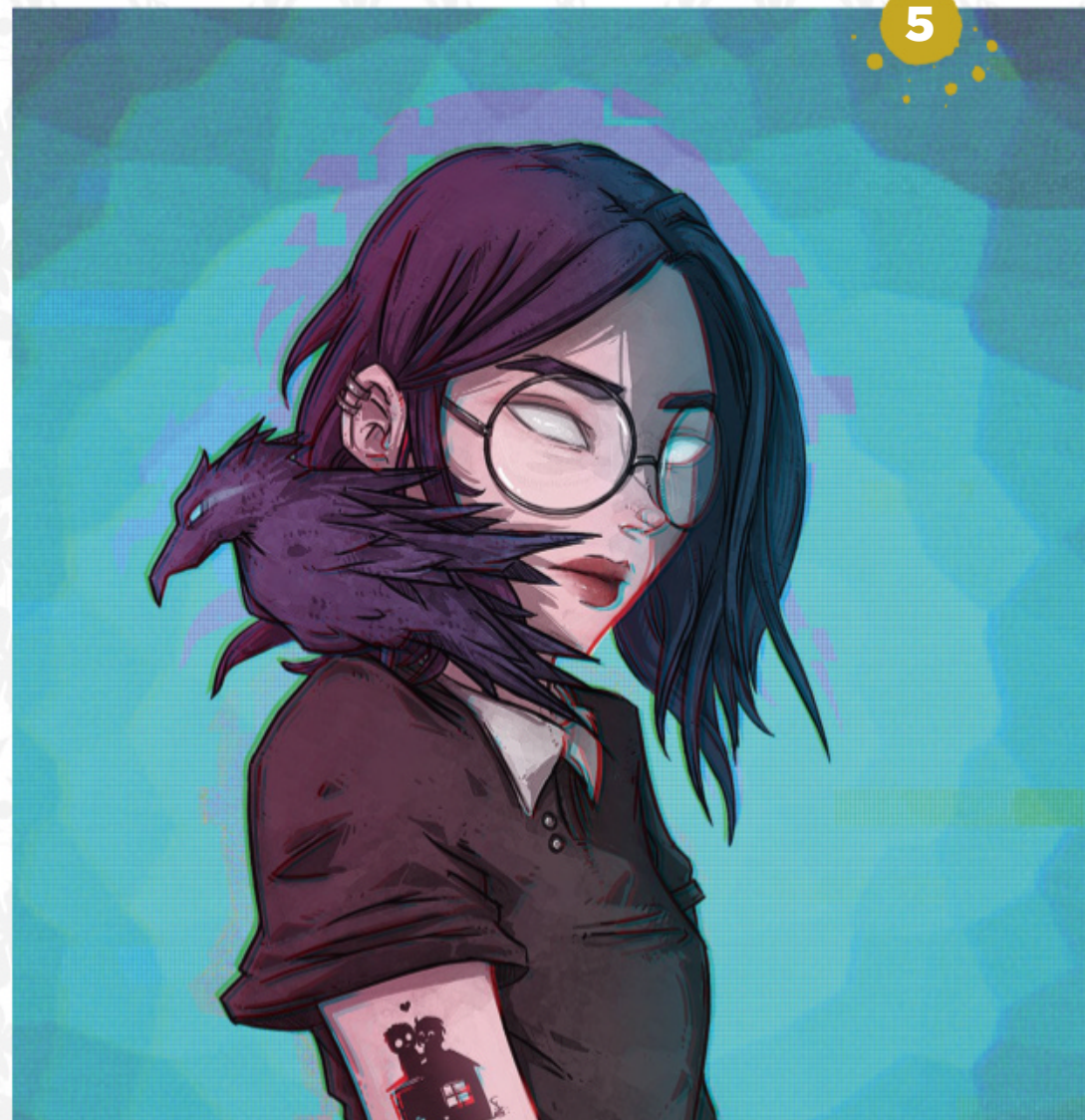
Jenny Suwiwatchai

LOCATION: US **MEDIA:** Photoshop **WEB:** www.artstation.com/jimster_glider

Jenny is a Thai digital freelance artist who's enrolled at Syracuse University – School of Architecture in New York. Her works includes character design, narrative illustrations, storyboards and short films.

1 SMOKE

"I put my own feelings into the character. Waking up to find a super-villain probably feels like waking up to a fire drill with an exam the following morning."

2 MORNING COLLEGE COFFEE

"For this piece, I experimented with light, shadow, foreground and background. I started the overall composition as figure-ground marker sketches in my sketchbook."

3 ROOFTOP STUNT

"I tried to depict an epic chase scene where cars (and motorbikes) don't necessary touch the ground… A fine way to escape."

FXPosé
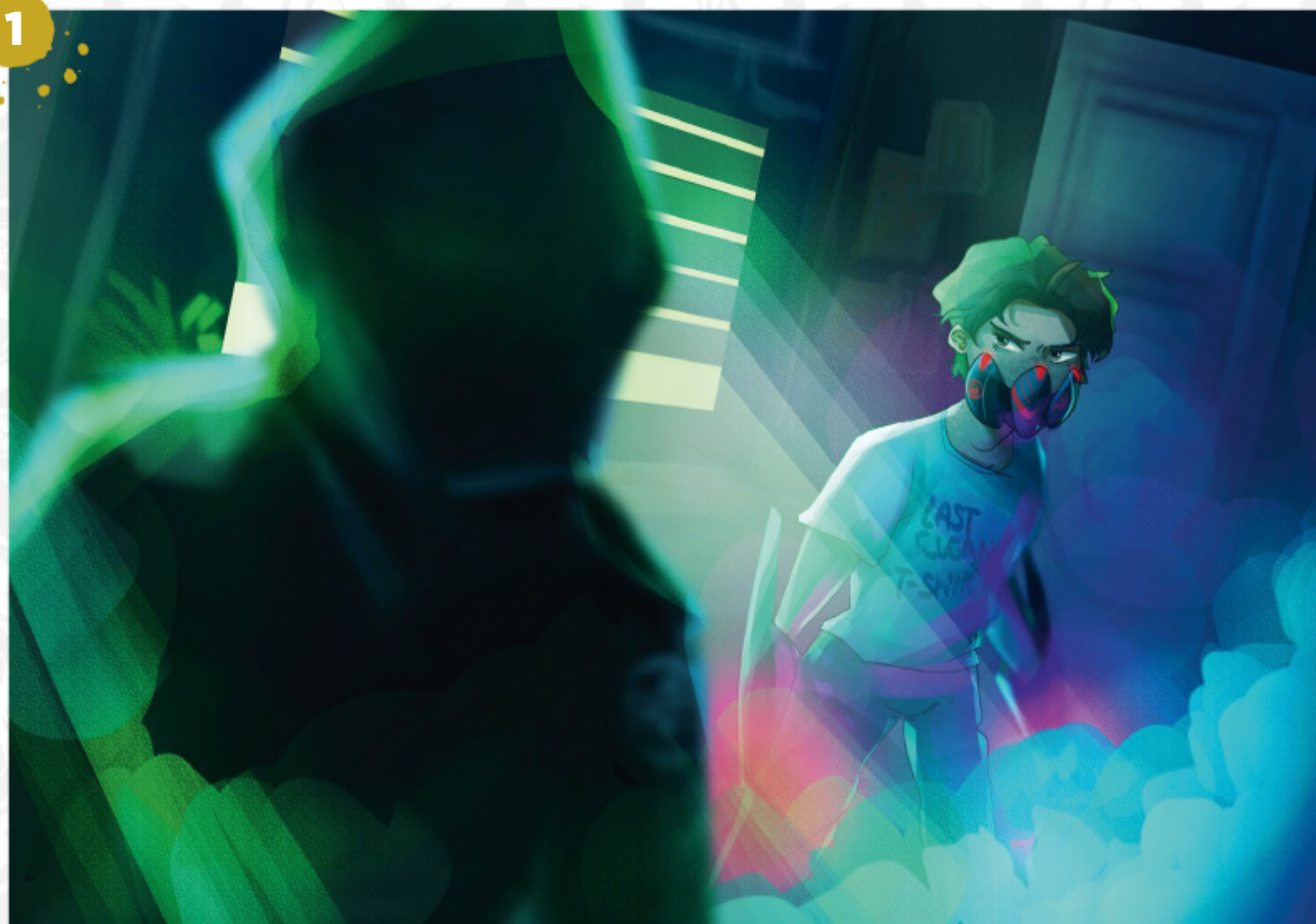
Samantha Kung

LOCATION: China **MEDIA:** Photoshop, SketchUp **WEB:** www.artstation.com/eqkung

While studying architectural design, Samantha became interested in game and film concept design. She's inspired by Macau, where she's based: it has rich cultural diversity and a range of architecture.

1 SWAMP TRIBE
"A mood painting to show how the swamp tribe looks at nighttime, with fireflies flying around. I wanted to create a feeling of mystery and fantasy."

2 BUTCHERY KITCHEN
"This shows the interior of the store where butchers work. I blocked out the basic form in SketchUp first, then added details in Photoshop."

3 MARKETPLACE (AERIAL VIEW)
"A large three-quarter design depicting the open-air trading space and the general layout of the marketplace."

4 MARKETPLACE (VIEW FROM THE GROUND)
"This piece illustrates how citizens move around the marketplace, and how they spend their daily life: celebrating with friends and selling goods."

Colin Boyer

LOCATION: US **MEDIA:** Photoshop **WEB:** www.colinboyer.com

Colin is a freelance artist who works for Magic: The Gathering and creates cover art for Fantasy Flight Games' Star Wars: Legion. He's studied both illustration, and classical drawing and painting.
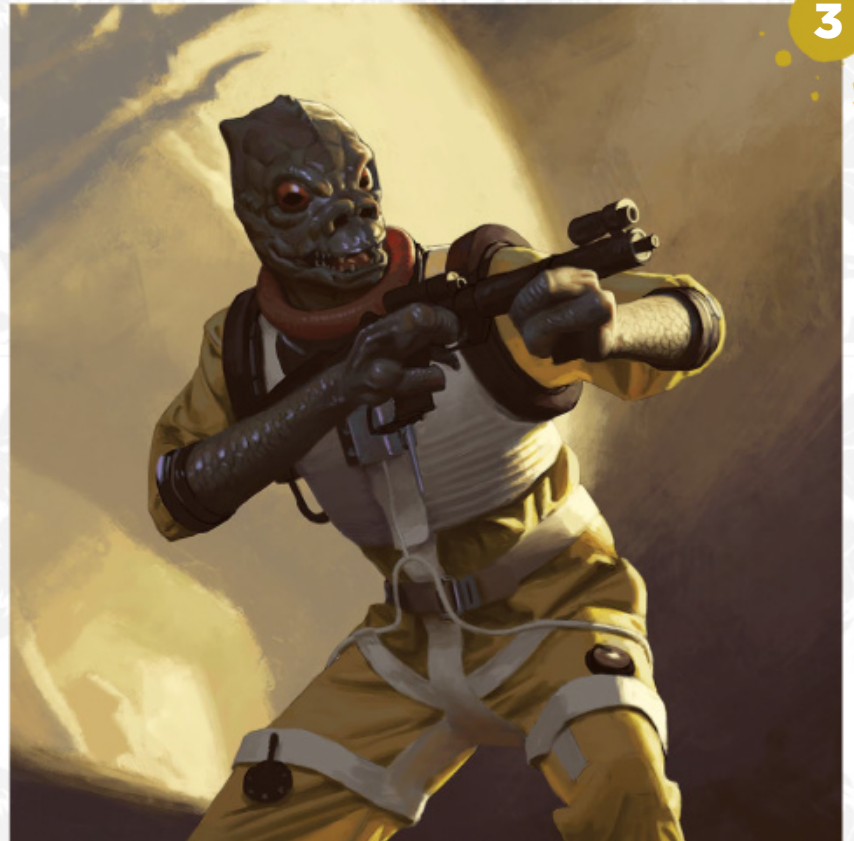
© & TM Lucasfilm Ltd

© & TM Lucasfilm Ltd

2 **EMERGE**
"This personal piece was one of my first breakthroughs. It explores the theme of emerging from hiding."

3 **BOSSK**
"A Star Wars: Destiny cover showing one of the bounty hunters from The Empire Strikes Back. The TV series Rebels explored his home world, where this illustration is set."

4 **TAPESTRY: UNRAVELING FATE**
"This was my first book cover. Art director Tommy Arnold was instrumental in guiding this piece and for teaching me what makes for an effective cover."

Elias Chatzoudis used Photoshop to paint this portrait, but there are plenty of Adobe-free options available to today's artists.

HIDEHISA MIYAGAWA

Give your fantasy character designs a traditional media look with Rebelle.
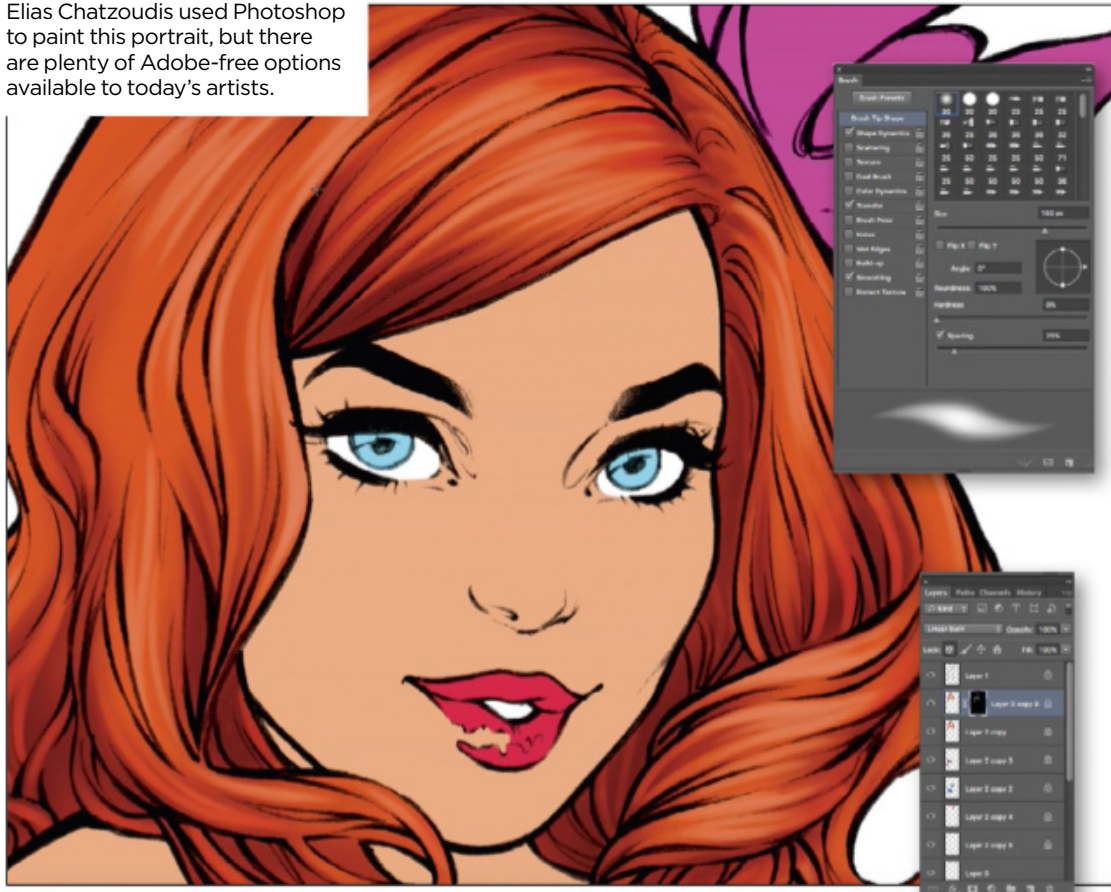
Best Photoshop alternatives for digital artists

Money saver Look beyond Adobe's big-hitter and explore a range of low-cost tools, with **Kerrie Hughes**

Photoshop is arguably the most popular digital art software in the world. The image-editing software was first released in 1990 and has since become the go-to creative tool for artists and designers across the globe. Over the years the software has not only grown in user base but also in technical sophistication, and now features a range of complex tools to help create show-stopping art. It's Adobe's flagship product by some distance.

The lay of the land changed in 2013 when the company decided to change its business model so users could no longer buy Photoshop for a flat rate. While the new Creative Cloud subscription service met the needs of some artists, others viewed having to pay a monthly fee for all of Adobe's products just to use Photoshop as an unwelcome development.

Competitors jumped at the opportunity to try to topple Photoshop from the top spot, resulting in a plethora of new creative software options becoming available. This quest to create the best art program means digital artists now have more high-quality, affordable creative software options than ever before.

So, whether you want to avoid the subscription route, are looking for a simpler art program to work with and/or are on a budget, here are eight of the best subscription-free alternatives to Photoshop on the market.

PHILIPP NEUNDORF

Rebelle enables you to experiment with the properties of watercolour paints.

PHILIPP NEUNDORF

Use Rebelle's Tilt tool to alter the angle of the canvas and make your paints run.

JULIJA LUBGANE

HIDEHISA MIYAGAWA

Rebelle

Platform: *Windows 7, 8 and 10; OS X 10.11 or better*
Price: *£71* **Pros:** *Authentic painting experience, affordable, free trial version* **Cons:** *Limited brush presets*
Web: *www.escapemotions.com*

If you're looking for a program that provides a true-to-life painting experience, look no further than Escape Motions' Rebelle. This excellent, affordable program replicates traditional painting techniques – watercolour in particular – with absolute authenticity.

Rebelle mimics the way paint behaves in the real world, enabling the users to simulate a drop of colour being blown and running in different directions. You can specify blow length, drip size and the amount of water you 'use' with your paints. Meanwhile, the Tilt option makes it possible to let your colours run in whichever direction you choose.

If there's one slight drawback with Rebelle, it's the limited number of brush presets you'll find included. However, the option to create your own is available, with a built-in Brush Creator tool to help making them a cinch.

A highly professional painting software package, Escape Motions is keen to keep the focus of Rebelle on traditional media and the best way to present it in the digital realm. And we have to say it's doing a darn fine job. ➤

Procreate

Platform: *iOS 12.0 or better* **Price:** *£9.99*
Pros: *Excellent value, professional toolset, highly responsive*
Cons: *iPad only, no animation tools, no free version*
Web: *www.procreate.art*

MAGGIE ENTERRIOS

If it's a painting app for iPad you're after, you'd be hard pushed to find better performance and value than Procreate. What first started out as a basic drawing app back in 2010, has transformed over the years into a highly professional tool – so much so

SAMY HALIM

that it even bagged itself an Apple Design Award back in 2013.

With an easy-to-use layout, Procreate is packed with features artists will love, from true-to-life pencils, inks and brushes, to advanced layer compositing and unique digital tools to help realise your creative visions. Added palm support means you no longer have to worry about accidentally drawing over your canvas, and an ever-growing library of Procreate brushes will help you add flair to your artwork.

Procreate has full support for both first- and second-generation Apple Pencils (depending on your iPad model). And earlier this year, users

The latest update to Procreate included advanced text manipulation tools.

Warp and transform options within the new Text tool make it straightforward to add signs to street scenes.

welcomed a long-awaited new Text tool with open arms. 2019 also marked the release of a dedicated iPhone version of the painting app too, aptly named Procreate Pocket.

There's a free handbook on the Procreate website, featuring an overview of all the apps features and tools, to help get you started. Lifetime access to this all for under £10 begs the question, "Why wouldn't you?"

NIKOLAI LOCKERTSEN

TRENT KANIUGA

SketchBook includes over 190 customisable brushes, together with pencils, inks and markers.

GENNARO GRAZIOSO

The program's Predictive Stroke tool helps to smooth out your lines.

PARIS CHRISTOU

SketchBook

Platform: *iOS 10 or later; Android OS 4.0.3 or better; OS X 10.12 or better; Windows 7, 8 and 10*
Price: *Free for personal use*
Pros: *Full version is free, gentle learning curve, large canvas* **Cons:** *Tools focus more on drawing than painting*
Web: *www.sketchbook.com*

When you think about the tools you might use to create your next piece of art, Autodesk's SketchBook might not be one of the first products that springs to mind. But there's plenty more to this nifty little drawing application than meets the eye.

SketchBook offers a varied toolset for artists, with a huge choice of customisation options, especially when it comes to brushes. The program also has an intuitive interface, which remains incognito until you need it to help make the most of the workspace, and a creative workflow that makes it much more accessible than you might expect. That said, SketchBook clearly places the focus on drawing tools, so if you specifically want it for painting then you might find it lacks some of the authentic functionality found in other dedicated painting software.

One of the best things about SketchBook, however, is that it's free to absolutely everyone. And we're not talking a watered-down version either. It includes all the pro tools, including perspective grids, layer effects, premium brushes and the ability to create as many layers as you want. All you have to do is create an Autodesk ID after the initial seven-day trial period and it's all yours. ➡️
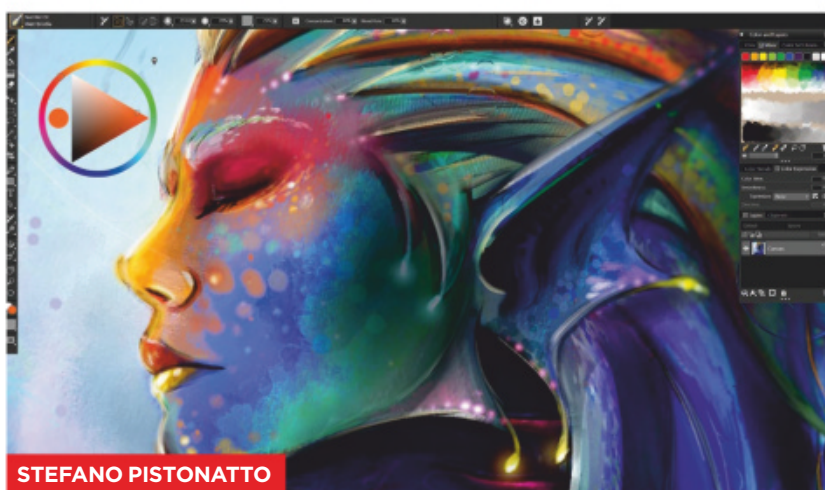
STEFANO PISTONATTO
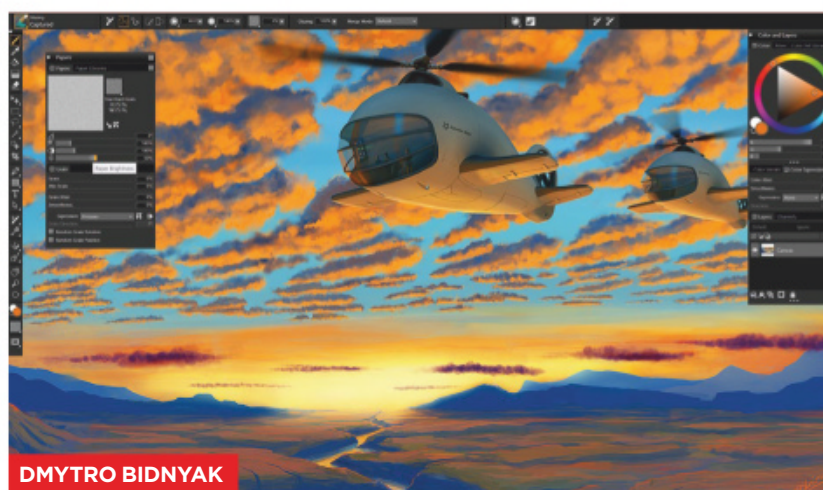
DMYTRO BIDNYAK

As with traditional oils, you can push, scrape and blend your paints on the canvas.

The Temporal Color Selector tool can be moved to any part of the canvas for precise selections.

AJMAL MOHAMMED

Painter

Platform: *Windows 7,8 and 10; OS X 10.11 or better*
Price: *£270 (new); £135 (upgrade from previous version)*
Pros: *Improved performance, modern-looking user-interface, large selection of brushes* **Cons:** *Expensive if purchasing from new*
Web: *www.corel.com*

Corel's Painter has undergone a makeover for its 2019 release, which focused on improving artists' workflow and software performance.

Key new features include an on-trend dark user-interface, with greater clarity on its 650-or-so icons, making it much more accessible for novice users, and an extra 36 brushes added to the software's already extensive collection. Included in the new brush sets is an enhanced version of the Real Watercolor wet brushes, which have the ability to realistically interact with a chosen paper's texture and grain, making watercolour paintings look more natural than ever. Add to that its enhanced support for multicore processors – giving brushes a boost in performance of up to 50 per cent – and Corel's right back in the digital painting game.

Painter is by no means cheap compared to the other programs featured here, but it brings a range of unique art tools to the table and is still better value than a two-year subscription to Photoshop.

MAGDALENA PROSZOWSKA

ArtRage

*Platform: OS X 10.8 or newer;
Windows Vista, 7, 8 and 10 Price: £63
Pros: Highly affordable, gentle
learning curve, realistic-looking paint
Cons: Brush resizing is awkward,
slight lag on larger canvases
Web: www.artrage.com*

ArtRage is designed to ensure artists
can focus on their creativity. It offers
realistic oils, pencils, watercolour,
canvas textures and other traditional
media painting tools, many of which
are fully customisable.

The program's minimalistic interface
disappears when you start painting
near it and returns as soon as you
finish. Popular tools are immediately
visible, with other less-frequently used
features concealed in pods to avoid
taking up space. A small workflow
issue crops up in the program's
multiple ways to resize a brush, but this
is by no means a deal breaker.

If you're new to digital painting and
looking for an affordable, intuitive
program, ArtRage is an option
seriously worth considering. The
software is also available for iOS and
Android, priced at just £4.

STEVE GOAD
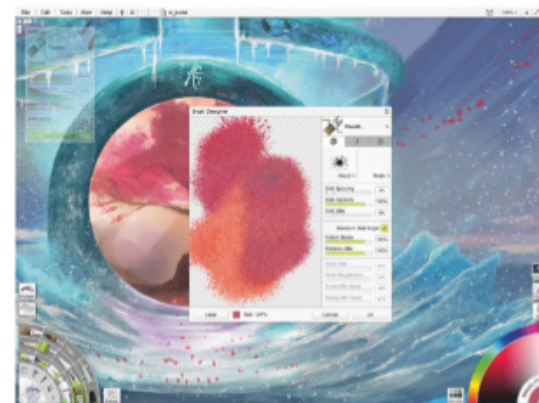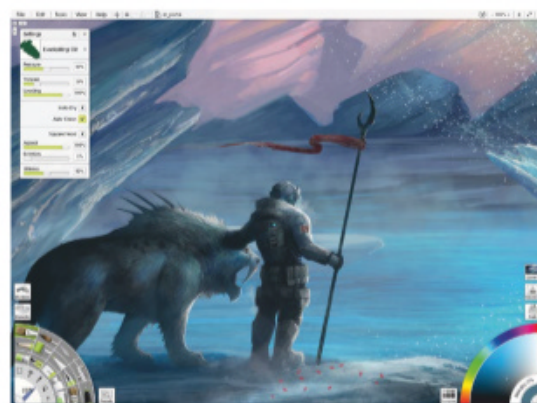
You can use the Palette
Knife to blend and mix
colours and textures
on the canvas.

The Brush Designer
tool enables you
to quickly create
bespoke brushes.

Krita

*Platform: Windows 7, 8 and 10; OS X 10.11; Linux
Price: Free Pros: Intuitive interface, customisable, free
Cons: Small user base, not much support
Web: www.krita.org*

Krita was created by a team of artists who wanted to put
professional, quality tools within reach of anyone wanting to
flex their creative muscles. And over the past decade
they've come up with a pretty special open source product.

Featuring an intuitive and customisable interface. Krita
can be set up to fully maximise workflow and enable access
to its nine unique brush engines, which includes a Color
Smudge engine, Shape and Particle engine. There's also the
ability to import and create and save your own bespoke
brushes, and a built-in brush stabiliser will ensure lines stay
smooth. You also get layers, masks, various transform tools,
HDR support and advanced selection functions.

While a great all-rounder, Krita is particularly well suited
to creating comics and manga art, and features panel
templates, perspective tools and halftone filters. It's an
incredibly powerful painting program with no obligation or
catches – just completely free to download and use
whenever inspiration and creativity strike. ➡

AMIT DUTTA

Right-click anywhere
on the canvas to bring
up a selection wheel
that enables you to pick
a new tool and colour.

Krita gives you nine
unique brush engines to
help you customise
your tools.

MARRHERO

Affinity Designer

Platform: *Windows 7, 8.1 and 10; OS X 10.9 or better; iOS 11 or better* **Price:** *£49 (desktop), £19.99 (iPad)*
Pros: *Excellent value, pro tools, free trial, desktop and mobile version* **Cons:** *No Android version*
Web: *www.affinity.serif.com*

Affinity Designer has been snapping at the heels of Adobe's Photoshop and Illustrator since the day it was first launched in 2014. This extremely powerful digital art application is full of intuitive tools to help bring your illustrations to vibrant life. And, for a one-off £49 fee, it's not hard to see why many artists have already made the switch.

A precise vector graphics tool, Affinity gives you complete control over curves, brush stabilisation options, advanced blend modes and, wait for it, over one million per cent zoom. And for those of you who prefer working with raster graphics, there's the option to switch to a pixel environment, too.

Created initially for desktop, last year Serif announced a companion app – Affinity Designer for iPad – so you can also create on the move. There's little we can find wrong with this highly capable software, but if you want to make up your own minds, give it a whirl with the free trial option.

MAN-TSUN TSANG

JUAN MANUEL OROZCO

The program's brush stabilisation engine makes it possible to draw smooth, accurate curves.

One minute you can be painting with pixels, the next you'll be manipulating vectors – all from within the program.
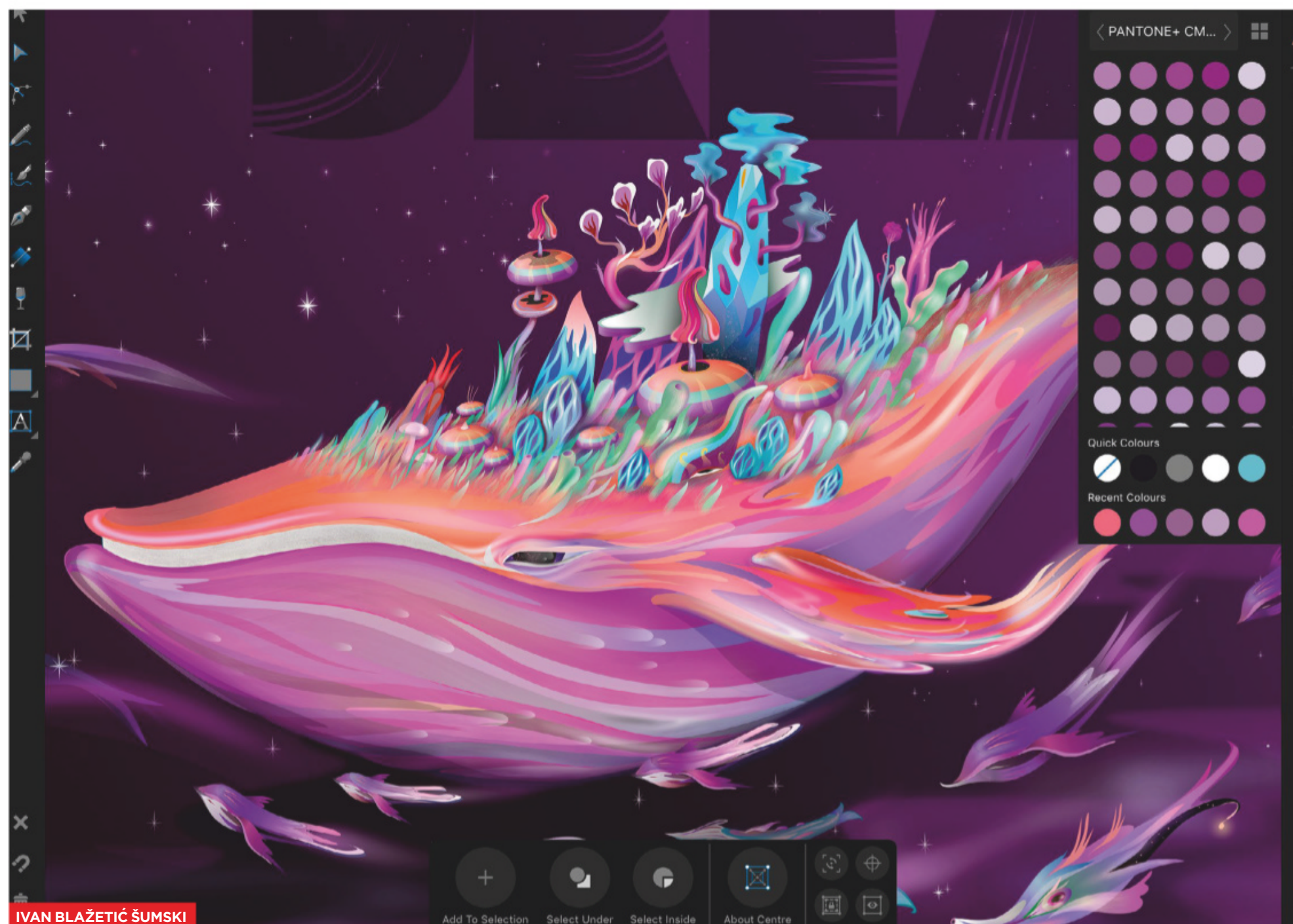
IVAN BLAŽETIĆ ŠUMSKI

NEIL EDWARDS

Clip Studio Paint

Platform: *Windows 7, 8 and 10; OS X 10.11 or better, iOS 11 or better*
Price: *£38 (Pro version), £168 (Ex version)* **Pros:** *Free trial/affordable option*
Cons: *Advanced version considerably more expensive* **Web:** *www.clipstudio.net/en*

If comic book creation or manga art is your thing, Clip Studio Paint has a toolset that lends itself perfectly. It's available in two versions – Pro and Ex – the main differences being the number of tools you have access to, such as being able to create multi-page comics in the Ex version compared to single-page comics in the Pro edition. Yet if you're on a budget, the affordable Pro version still provides you with plenty of painting and drawing tools to achieve professional-looking art.

Clip Studio Paint provides access to 36 pre-designed comic panel pages as well as the option to use the program to create your own. It also offers a variety of assets, including characters, backgrounds, props and effects that you can add to your panels, and advanced pen pressure detection for natural, realistic-looking pen strokes. There are options to work with both raster and vector graphics, and a range of brushes, markers and shading tools. Explore the trial version and see what it can do for you.

Spiridon Giannakis worked with his business partner and co-editor Jean-Christophe Caurette to sign up over 100 artists and launch #hardcover on Kickstarter.

Detail of Pauline Voß's contribution to the #hardcover project, which she entitled Sexmagic.

The juicy story of #hardcover

Under cover Over 100 leading artists take a stand against censorship with this collection of X-rated work

#hardcover is a book of erotic art created by some of the biggest names in fantastical art, funded by a Kickstarter project. More than that, it's a protest against the censorship of work on social media.

The idea came when graphic designer Spiridon Giannakis noticed more and more artists voicing their frustration that artwork was being flagged and removed on social media – and not just erotic art, but life drawings and Renaissance paintings.

Fear of being blacklisted has led to artists heavily cropping or censoring their work, or even avoiding nudity

altogether. "When Tumblr changed its policies and images got taken down for exposed elbows, #hardcover was already running, and it only showed everyone involved how necessary it was to create this book," says **Spiridon**.

Over 100 artists supplied work, including major names such as Kim Jung Gi, Abigail Larson and Pauline Voß. "The artists involved were feeling put off by the limitations imposed on their expression. They hope to show that it's okay to create art without adhering to those boundaries," says

(above) A close-up of Andrew Mar's ink drawing entitled You Are My Rock. (below) #hardcover's plain exterior gives no hint at what's inside…

Spiridon. "Obviously, what resulted was slightly more extreme."

The enthusiasm of artists to create erotic art was matched by the appetite of art fans to see it. The Kickstarter had a goal of just over £7,000. When the fundraising ended, more than £132,0000 had been pledged.

"Aside from some people writing to tell us we were going to hell, people seemed generally excited – maybe even relieved – to see so many of their idols creating adult art without fear," says Spiridon.

If you want to get your hands on #hardcover, priced £35, pre-order it at **https://ifxm.ag/hardcover**.

> 66 **People seemed excited – maybe even relieved – to see so many of their idols creating adult art without fear** 99

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

I'm often working on long-term projects that cover several months. It really helps me to have a quick visual calendar to keep track of things. I painted the wall with teal chalk paint and an acrylic paint marker to create a chalkboard calendar.

This kneeling chair is one of the best purchases I've bought for my health. It helps my posture when I'm working between my drafting table, computer and Cintiq.

I'm almost always sipping on a cup of tea. I have a couple of mug warmers throughout the studio to make sure that it always stays nice and warm.

Christine Kornacki

A reveal in teal Discover how this children's book illustrator has assembled a colourful oasis for the perfect work-life balance

When hunting for my first home last year I had one request: I wanted a big studio. Once I walked into a house with this large, 500 square feet addition in the back I immediately fell in love with the room.

Most people would probably see this space as a family room, but I knew that it was the studio of my dreams complete with vaulted ceilings, skylights and a vintage fireplace (not to mention a built-in bar). I've spent a lot of time over the years imagining how I would set up a home studio to best streamline my creative workflow, and with this house I finally had the chance to make it come true.

I'm a very organised person. I love to make to-do lists and schedules. It can be hard for me to concentrate on working if I don't have things well planned out ahead of time (note my large chalkboard calendar on the wall). That's part of the reason I enjoy children's books so much: it's a large puzzle and I love solving it. When I'm working on multiple oil paintings at once it takes some careful planning to stay on deadline.

I used to be a night-time worker, staying up late every night after ➡

This is Scout (aka Baby Scout), my studio assistant. She spends her days sitting in the window watching for birds, trying to prevent me from working by sitting on my lap, and stealing my seat (despite the many chair options in the studio).

In case you haven't noticed, teal is my favourite colour. I often get comments from strangers pointing out that I match with the multiple teal-coloured items on me at any given time. Teal and navy were also my wedding colours.

During the winter months you'll usually find me bundled up in multiple layers to stay warm. This free-standing fireplace keeps me toasty warm while I'm working.

I use references for all of my paintings and when I want a unique outfit for my character to wear, I'll sew it myself. In college I couldn't afford to buy a dress for a Rapunzel painting, so I borrowed my mum's sewing machine and taught myself how to do it.

All of my finished paintings are in oils, but I do most of my preliminary work digitally. When I'm working on 15+ digital sketches for a children's book it can save a lot of time to have a large Cintiq for thumbnails and sketches.

Throughout my studio you'll find a foam roller to work out the knots in my back, small weights to strengthen my back, a yoga mat and a small pedal bike under my desk. Physical health is important for a working artist.

While lost in the woods, a young girl finds herself face to face with Winter, in this children's book story that I wrote and illustrated.

When I hurt my back years ago I needed a setup to keep everything as close as possible to reduce my neck and back movement. I developed this magnetic easel by propping a magnetic bulletin board on my easel, then I just use magnets to hold up my painting, palette, glass for mixing paint and all of my references, to keep them within easy reach.

Over the years I've been working on a series of paintings where books come to life. This piece was inspired by my trip to Los Angeles, where its vast mountain ranges reminded me of giant, soft pillows.

I'm usually working on multiple pieces at once and it's important to stay consistent. I created this display wall with magnetic paint and a strip of moulding through the centre. This way I can keep an eye on everything I'm working on, plus any other notes and inspiration I have.
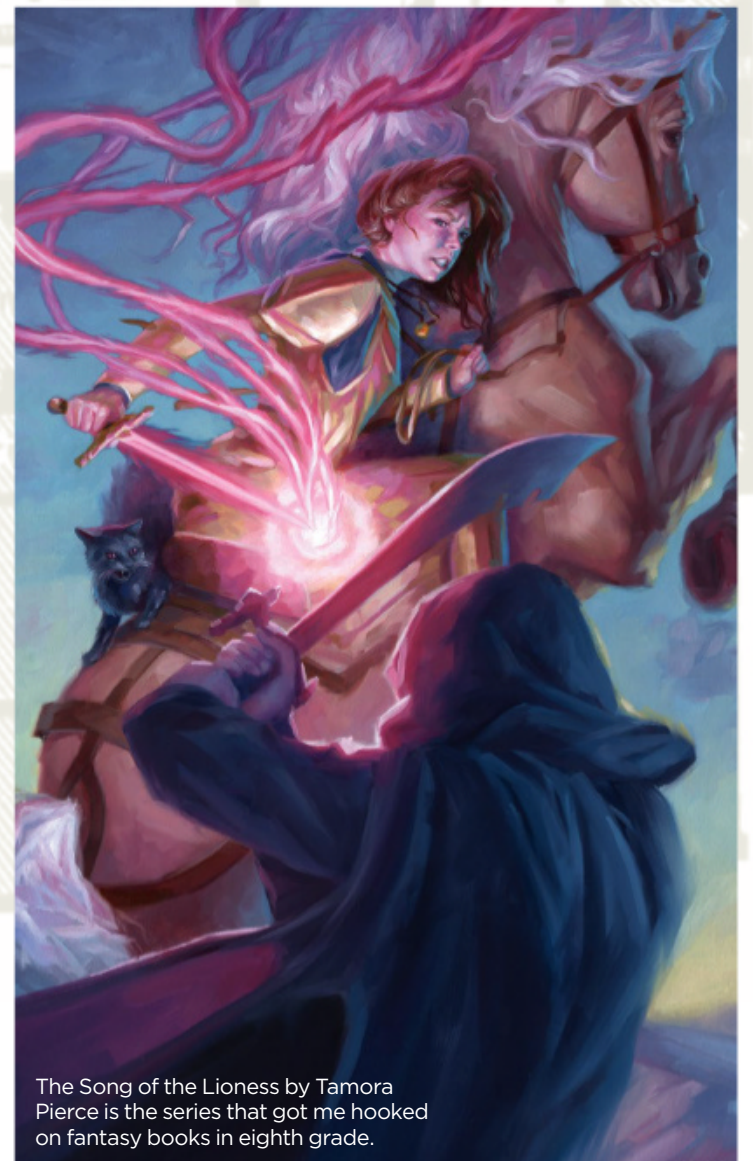
The Song of the Lioness by Tamora Pierce is the series that got me hooked on fantasy books in eighth grade.

I spend most of my time listening to audio books while I paint. This is a cover Illustration for The Night Circus by Erin Morgenstern that I couldn't resist painting after listening to it.

➤➤ I got home from my day job to complete freelance assignments. Working these extreme hours resulted in me suffering several artist injuries that have defined my studio setup. After I met my husband and became a full-time freelance illustrator, creating a better work-life balance became extremely important.

THE DAILY ROUTINE

Every day I typically wake up naturally between 6 and 7am, have some breakfast, make a cup of tea, and then get right to work. You can find me in the studio almost every day of the week (depending on my workload), but I try not to work too many continuous hours doing the same thing throughout the day. I take several tea breaks, with an hour-long lunch, and then do yoga or strength exercises for my back. Having a lounge area in my studio not only gives me the space for, but also encourages me to take those all-important breaks.

Although I have a lot of my artwork on display throughout the house, I wanted my studio to be filled with inspiration. I've started a collection of prints and original pieces by artists I admire. My goal one day is to fill my walls completely.

Once dinner time comes around I'll finish up and spend the rest of the night with my husband. I love cooking, baking and learning new things. Dinner often feels more like another fun project for me and I rarely end up making the same recipe more than once. My goal is to really think about my life and career in the long run and enjoy every part to the fullest without wearing myself too thin.

Christine is a children's book author/illustrator and book cover artist living in Connecticut, US. You can see more of her work at www.christinekornacki.com.

> ❝ **After I became a full-time freelance illustrator, creating a better work-life balance became extremely important** ❞

I like to participate in art challenges such as Inktober and The 100 Days Project. I'm currently doing 100 Days of Strong Female Characters, as pencil drawings in a hand-stitched sketchbook that I made. I filled a bowl with over 200 characters and every morning I choose a name to draw.

When I lived in a small apartment I got a white flat file cabinet from someone on Craigslist. I didn't have the space for it at the time, so I refinished it and added wheels to turn it into a coffee table. I put a cutting mat on top and now it doubles as a large cutting surface.

Letters

YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS

Contact the editor, Claire Howlett, on claire@imaginefx.com or write to ImagineFX, Future Publishing, Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA, England

Follow us on Twitter:
www.twitter.com/imaginefx

Tell us your thoughts on Facebook:
www.facebook.com/imaginefx

Post your art or photos on Instagram:
www.instagram.com/imaginefxmagazine

Animation issue finder!

I thought I would email to say I have just discovered you. I saw something about your magazine on Instagram and went to find it at the newsagent as soon as I could. It's the Quick Draw Animation edition. I was very moved by hearing how and why Aaron Blaise gave up working at Disney. I was so sorry to hear about the tragic reasons. I'm sure he knows he's a such an inspiration and I'm pleased that he's found a new love in teaching.

I really enjoyed looking at the art from Florian Satzinger as I hadn't come across him before – his version of steampunk Mickey was fabulous. It was refreshing to read a magazine with insightful comments for once and not just end up reading about angry people on Twitter on my phone. Thanks!
Daisy, via email

DID YOU MISS THE PREVIOUS PACKED ISSUE?
Don't worry – you can still get hold of it. Visit **https://ifxm.ag/ifx-175**

The imaginative art of Florian Satzinger and our interview with Aaron Blaise made quite an impression on new reader Daisy.

Don't want to wait for our latest issue to be delivered by post? Take out a digital subscription to ImagineFX!

Claire replies *Daisy, I'm pleased that you found us! We've been around for a few years but there's always time for new people to discover us – welcome! Thank you for your kind words about our interviews. I love them, too. I usually make a cup of tea so that I can take my time to discover what they're really about. It's a lovely change of pace to my usual hectic schedule!*

Toooo long!

Why does it take so long for your magazine to arrive overseas. I see you promoting your new editions, but I have to wait WEEKS until I see it in Seattle. Do you all live in the dark ages? Why can't you sort this out? Why can't it be printed here?
Casey M, via email

Claire replies *I hear you Casey, It's just as frustrating for us, too. For a variety of reasons the magazine gets printed here in the UK and then is shipped around the world. You can buy issues from our online shop (www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk), which hopefully speeds up the process and also delivers the magazine to your door. The only other less dark age option for you is to go digital. The issues are available worldwide from the on-sale date. If you turn to page 28, you'll find that there's a pretty decent deal for these versions. They are exactly the same as the magazine, with all the usual workshop resources. Hope this helps.*

Grease lightning!

Can you get artist Jama Jurabaev to do a cover? You can see his work over at **www.artstation.com/jama**. I'd love to see him create something with the Grease pencil in Blender. Thanks.
Christian, via email

Claire replies *We're big fans of Jama. He did a great workshop for us at Vertex this year. He was also one of our sketchbook artists. I'd love to get him in the magazine again! Rest assured we have some cool artists lined up for the cover. Keep your eyes peeled.*

FRESH PAINT

New works that have grabbed our attention

AURA @aura.arts

Keelerleah @keelerleah

Jason Roll @jroll_art_illustration
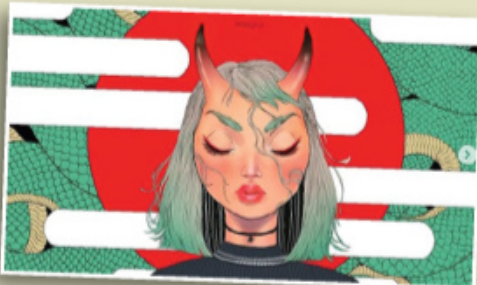
Tereza Grollmusová @tessgroll

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

ARTIST PORTFOLIO
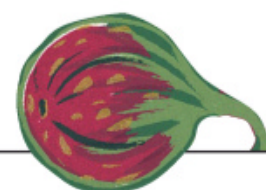
JAW COOPER

Life, death, magic and Rupert the perverted chinchilla: Gary Evans steps into the LA-based artist's alternate reality

JAW Cooper can tell you the exact moment she got into art. Her parents worked in ecology and evolutionary biology, specialising in freshwater invertebrates. Her parents' research took them around the world, so Cooper grew up "somewhat nomadically."

She and her younger sister were free to explore their surroundings. In Ireland, she searched for oysters in the caves of Oysterhaven. In California, she fished mountain rivers with bare hands till her fingers went numb. In Kenya, she "bestowed unwanted attention" on all kinds of animals ("sorry, small wild tortoise who lived in our front yard in Nairobi, that I washed your shell every day").

Her mother also practised scientific illustration. Cooper, aged six years old, spent a summer at a research laboratory in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Here she watched her mother draw birds in great detail, and was "fixated."

"It seemed like such a mesmerising trick to make an image appear using only a blank piece of paper and lines, but I determined I could perform this magic too, if I took a methodical approach to learning.

"I drew grids on paper and then drew a cat in each box, trying to improve on the previous one each time and figure out what worked and what didn't. I had many hobbies as a young child, but this obsession
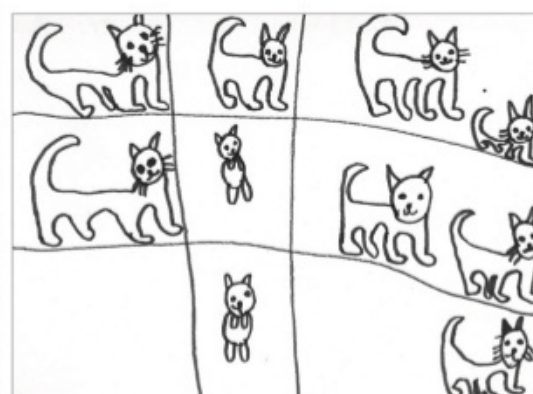
CHILDHOOD DRAWING
"Where it all started! Done as a bored six-year old."

with drawing and improvement was the only one that caught hold and never let go of me."

TOUGH TIME AT COLLEGE

Cooper attended Otis College of Art and Design in Los Angeles. She doesn't remember her time there with any great fondness. But the college was expensive so Cooper felt that she had to make the most of it, and worked hard… too hard. She didn't eat properly and went without sleep. It's an environment she wouldn't recommend to others. ➥

> ❝ I had many hobbies as a young child, but this obsession with drawing and improvement never let go of me ❞

RUPERT
"My chinchilla Rupert is a non-contributing sponge and has yet to ever pay his half of the rent."

STEALTH
"For this screen print the spots of the leopard were printed slightly glossy, so they appeared or disappeared depending on the angle you looked at them from."

Interview

➤ "Otis College is primarily a money-making institution, as are all private art colleges. I have great love for my teachers. I have great love for my fellow students. But I have less love for Otis as an institution than I do for the dealership where I bought my car.

"I wouldn't be where I am today without the connections and friendships I made while in art college, and it may have been the right choice for me, but it certainly isn't the only choice available to you."

ANSWERING THE ILLUSTRATION CALL

Cooper wanted to work in entertainment design – concept art, creature design – but fell in love with illustration and traditional media. After graduating, she struggled for a couple of years as a freelancer editorial

It pleases me that you can't unsee this.

SHITTY CHICKENS
"These may not be the chickens you want... but damnit, they're the chickens you deserve."

VIGOR
"I see myself as an old woman trapped in the body of a slightly-less-old woman. Tough old women are my heroes."

❝ I toil in anonymity as just one small part of a larger, very talented team – which I enjoy immensely ❞

illustrator and doing gallery work, then got a job at an advertising agency, first as a sketch artist and later as an art director on TV and film campaigns. This is still her main day job.

She doesn't deal directly with clients (and signs NDAs so can't name names either), but her work is "100 per cent about fulfilling the needs of the project." In other words, her drawings, usually done digitally in Photoshop, help sell the client an idea. If approved, these sketches end up as photographs. Nobody outside of work ever sees her original drawing: "I toil in anonymity as just one small part of a larger, very talented team – which I enjoy immensely."

Because her commercial work is quite regimented, Cooper make sure she has complete control in projects outside of work. Generally, she doesn't take commissions. She will take on the odd commercial illustration project if it's interesting or challenging. But she's selective about it. Free time is for making books, prints, gallery art.

"My personal work is cathartic and helps me hone my voice, which I'm then able to bring to my ➤

HUNGRY WITCH

"I was frustrated with my work after an inspiring trip to Croatia last year. To break out of my rut I tried forcing myself to be looser while doodling at my usual coffee shop every morning, and made this along with several pieces like it."

RISE

"This was the last in a series of five paintings from 2013 about overcoming self-destructive tendencies and processing grief."
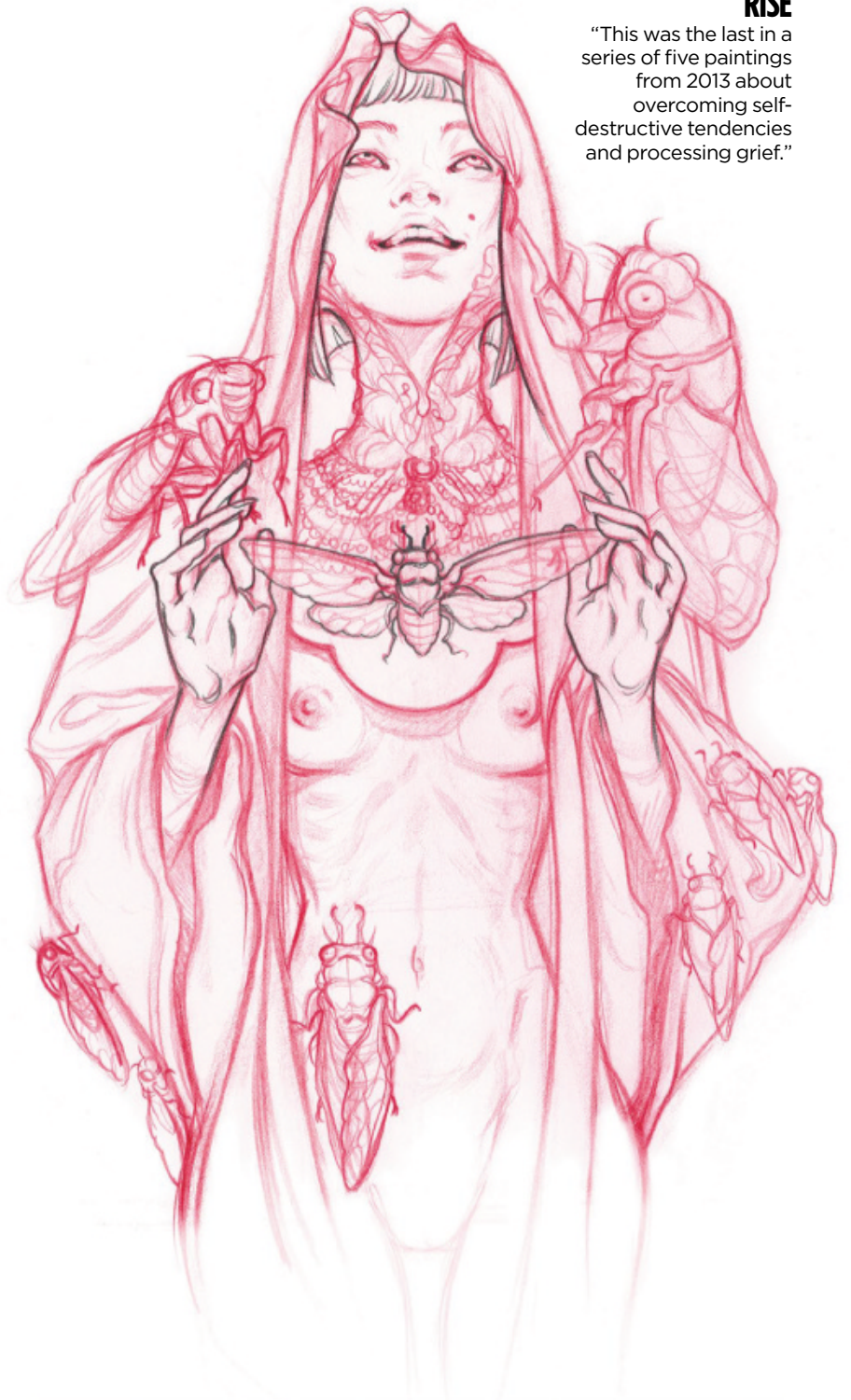
TIDE OF EXISTENCE

"I love listening to Alan Watts' lectures and this was one of many pieces I made inspired by his words. Also, I'm enamoured with old scientific illustrations of vegetables."

FALLING WITH STYLE
Want to paint like Cooper? Better learn to fall down a flight of stairs gracefully

"Each piece is quite different in process because I like to experiment at the last minute. Something inevitably goes awry, then I have to get creative to fix it. Painting feels like falling down a flight of stairs wearing rollerblades and trying to look as graceful as possible on the way down. Here's just one flight of stairs I've fallen down…

I start with a sketch on cheap bond paper with my trusty Colerase pencil in Carmine red **(1)**. Next, I transfer the sketch to a heavyweight printmaking paper, either Stonehenge or Fabriano, using my massive lightbox **(2)**, and then I mount the paper to a rigid gesso-board using matte medium. (I wrote a tutorial on this process over at **www.jawcoopertutorials.blogspot.com**.)

Once the painting is mounted I use thin washes of waterproof India ink **(3)** to seal the drawing in and to begin to establish the value structure **(4)**. I pick out the darkest areas with fluid black acrylic, then wash on gradients to create the vignette effect and introduce colour **(5)**. Next, I seal the surface using several thin layers of GAC 100 and when it's dry I start glazing on deeper colours with oil paints **(6)**. Once dry to the touch I varnish with Gamblin Gamvar **(7)**, let it dry and then remove the tape along the edges **(8)**. And the painting's done! **(9)**"
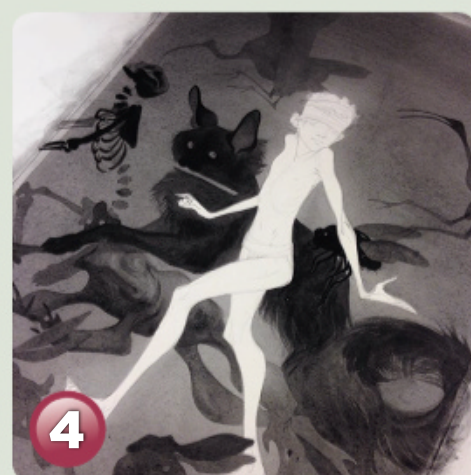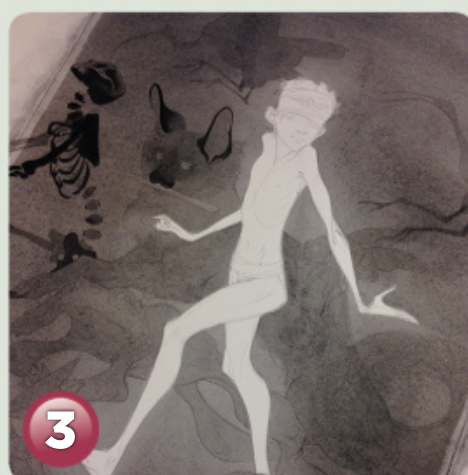
commercial work. In turn, my commercial work enriches my personal work with new ideas and visual influences – and it pays my bills so that I'm able to focus on other things in my free time."

CURIOS AND CHINCHILLAS
Los Angeles is a good place for the working artist. There's a big creative community and good resources. Competition's tough, but there's plenty work to round. It's a town where an artist can "thrive economically."

Cooper has a studio at home. It's a large, open loft with concrete floors, big windows, high ceilings… and Rupert, a "tiny, perverted, 16-year-old chinchilla who rules my life and humps my fuzzy slippers."

She has a big, heavy desk, with two computers – new one for work, old one for storage – a Cintiq tablet, a scanner, and a printer. Next to that, an L-shaped desk for drawing and painting. There are two other desks in the room, both piled with "tons of bullshit."

"A lot of artists have these beautiful, chaotic, messy work areas, with photos, inspiration nailed to the walls, paint on the floor, tools lying around in cans…. but I'm a control freak and I like things tidy. So my work area is upsettingly barren and I currently have no artwork up on my walls."

Art is kept in flat files in the living room, where three large cabinets run along one wall and contain all her traditional art supplies: pens, pencils, drawing paper, oils, acrylics, gouache paints, sculpture tools and power tools. She likes certain brands: Blackwing pencils and Winsor & Newton Designers paint. But the material that

effects her work most is paper. She sketches on Canson Recycled 50lb. It's cheap but feels nice, and it's thin enough to see preliminary sketches placed underneath. For final pieces, she uses Stonehenge and Fabriano Artistico papers.

CABINET OF CURIOSITIES
One area that's not upsettingly bare is the cabinet that contains her curio collection. These are her most treasured possession: skulls and taxidermy("all natural-death and cruelty-free"), and the gems and minerals collected on camping and road trips ("I love how they look like tiny alien planets"). Cooper's other favourite workspaces are the café, with a chocolate croissant; and the couch – with a good documentary about murderers playing on the TV. ➤

Interview
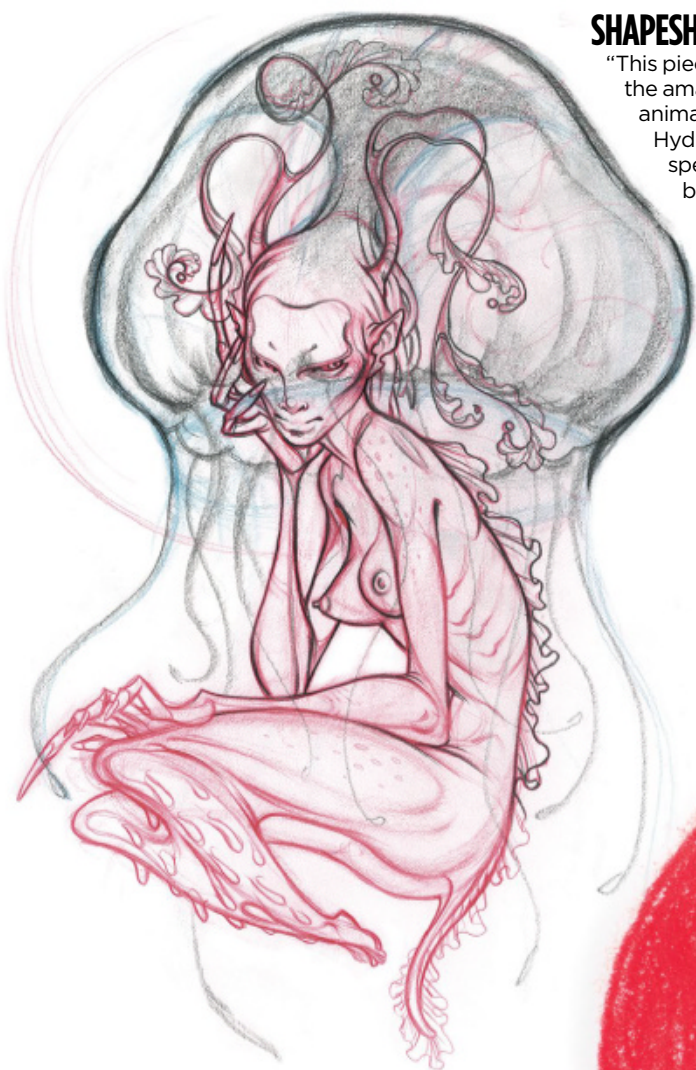
➤ She has a few different ways of working – it depends on the kind of image she's after. Drawing is her first love. She likes the immediacy of it. For quick sketches she'll go to the café, get comfy and then observe. There's no planning. She draws whatever comes to mind.

Landscape paintings – Cooper does a lot of hiking and camping, usually alone. She'll take a ton of photographs before returning to her studio and working up a small, quick paintings based on the photo. Her aim here is to recreate on the canvas how she felt while in this particular landscape.

MANY SOURCES OF INSPIRATION

Narrative pieces have a more intricate process. She makes lists of words. The words become a sentence. And the aim of the sentence is to encapsulate an emotion, an idea, a motif. Cooper photographs herself if she needs need a reference for a pose. Sometimes she does a thumbnail, other times she dives straight in. The sketching process begins by putting down a key element – the main figure, the animal – then she builds the rest of the image around it. The sketch should be falling into place by now. She adds and edits by referring back to the word or sentence that underpins the image.

Routine's good, but not essential. Cooper enjoys getting outdoors too much to keep strict hours. Things ➤

> ❝ A lot of artists have beautiful chaotic work areas… but I'm a control freak, I like things tidy ❞

MEOWTSOURCING
"While sketching for my most recent art book Pastoral I got a little burnt out and decided to meowtsource some of the work…"

BADGER GIRL
""Another coffee shop doodle. I randomly bought a Carmine red pencil on my way to get caffeinated, loved the colour and went to town with it."
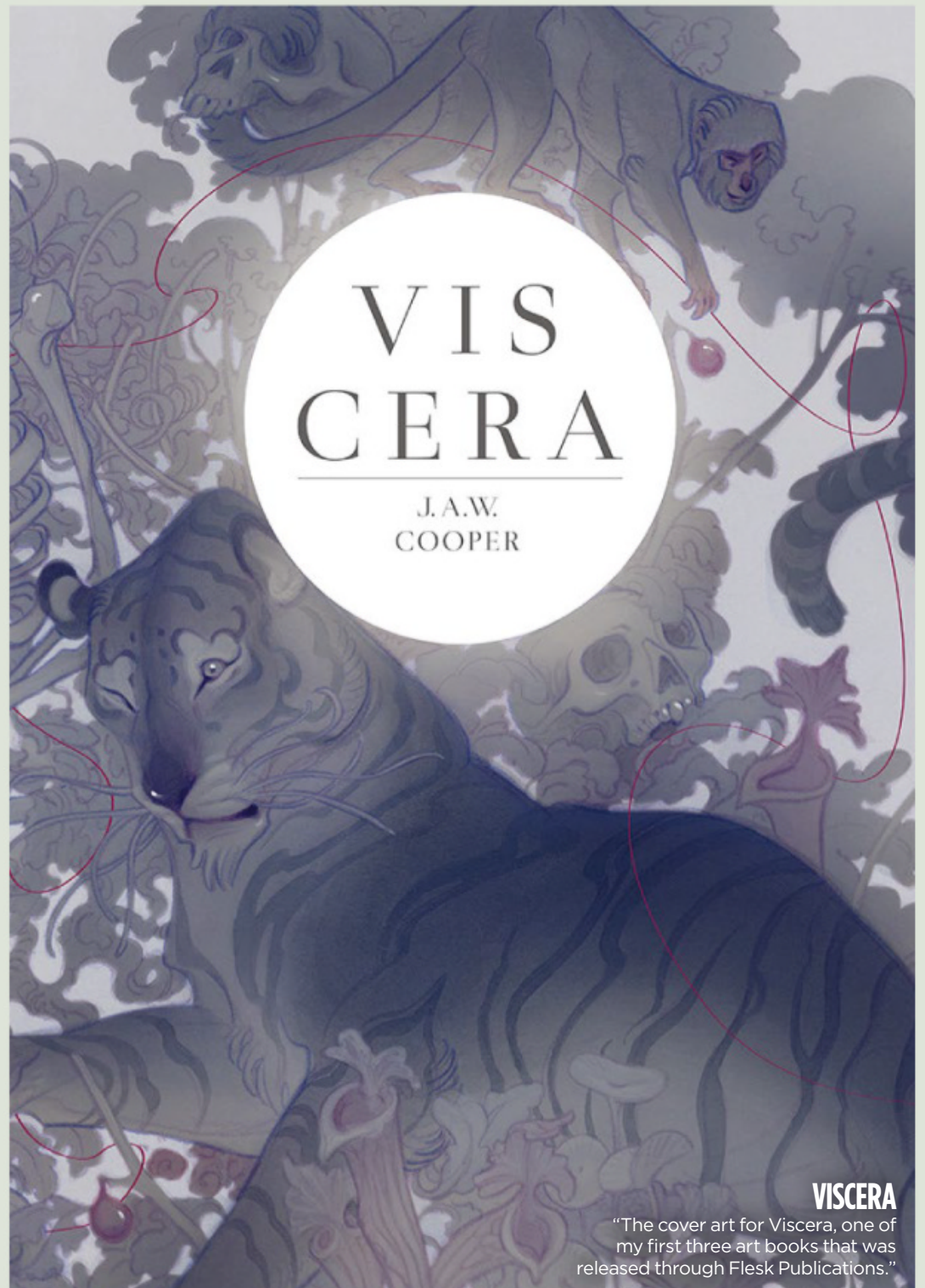
© Flesk

VISCERA
"The cover art for Viscera, one of my first three art books that was released through Flesk Publications."

"RIGHT BACK WHERE I STARTED"

Cooper doesn't particularly like her illustration work. Here's why you shouldn't like yours…

"My commercial work as an art director is 100 per cent about fulfilling the needs of the project. Because my commercial work is so structured I avoid any outside creative control in my personal work. I stopped taking commissions years ago and I'm extremely selective about what commercial projects I accept in my 'free time.' I mostly make work for myself through gallery shows, releasing prints and releasing books.

Releasing my first two books with the incredible Flesk Publications was a recent milestone for me, but I think the 'glow' I felt from that achievement lasted for a week at most before I was right back where I started: working hard to try to outrun my dissatisfaction again.

No technique or commission, or award or job will fulfil you and no loss of a commission or award or job will destroy you. In my experience fulfilment comes simply from making things and chasing your curiosity.

I don't particularly like my work and I hope I never do, because that dissatisfaction keeps me pushing. Yet I adore the process of making it so much that I can't imagine stopping anytime soon."

Interview

COWBOY FROG BLOODHOUND
"I drew this in a coffee shop. I remember a woman came in with an enormous cat riding on her shoulders. The barista poured it some water, which it politely lapped up from a cup."
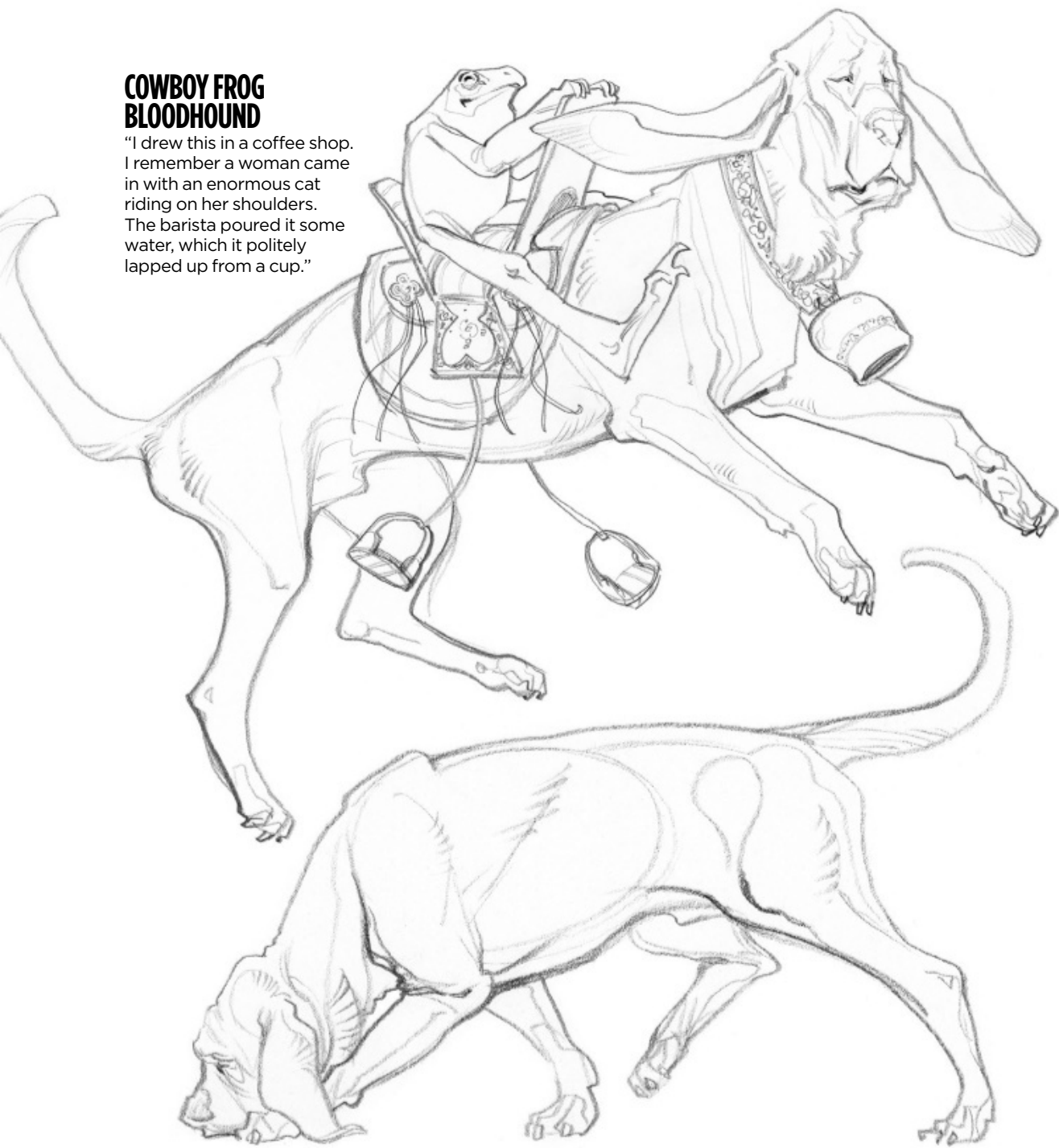
> 66 **Death has always been a big part of my work, but not in a negative, cruel or destructive way** 99

become a bit more rigid when a deadline looms. But usually she works when she wants to work. Luckily, she wants to work a lot.

MAKING THE CONNECTION

If Cooper had to say what separates good art from great art, her hunch is it's "the ability of a piece to connect with a viewer on an emotional level." But how do you do that?

Cooper describes her own work as illustrative fine art – more surreal than fantasy. She once heard her art described as "folklore from an alternate reality." Shes likes that. Her work can be violent, but this is never violence for the sake of it. It should be taken too literally, either. Similarly, nudity isn't always sexual. It shows how a subject can be simultaneously strong and vulnerable, but without being weak or victimised.

Typically, the humans in her work are real, the animals symbolic. The

animal tells us something about the human's interior life. Monkeys symbolise rage and violence. Sphinx cats represent the grey area between the wild and the domesticated. Cicadas mean death.

Cooper's art references everything from philosophy to psychology. But you wouldn't necessarily know it. The challenge is to imply a lot with very little. She makes an image appear using only a piece of paper and lines, and, when it works well, when it connects with the viewer on an emotional level, this image becomes more than some of it's parts – like a magic trick.

"My personal work is a reflection of my past experiences, my perspective on the reality, and whatever I'm currently curious about.

"Death has always been a big part of my work, but not in a negative, cruel or destructive way. To me an examination of death reveals the beauty and urgency of life."

FRUITION
"This is the print we released with my latest art book Pastoral, and is a version of the artwork from the cover."

RATTLE
"A preliminary sketch from my 2013 series on overcoming self-destructive tendencies. This stage was about the feeling of hollowing out before you can rebuild yourself."

Sketchbook

Chase Curtis

Robots of all shapes of sizes – together with the odd alien creature – fill the pages of this visual development artist's sketchbook

Artist PROFILE

Chase Curtis
LOCATION: US

Freelance visual development artist Chase is based in California, and has always had a passion for sci-fi worlds and the supernatural creatures within them. He's worked with companies such as Sony, Marvel and Oakley, and is always looking for new opportunities to bring original characters to life.
www.pkcaconcepts.com

GIANT REPO MAN
"This giant robot was constructed to collect criminals. He acts as a bounty hunter, with help from his flying globe-bots."

BARTENDER ALIEN
"This alien was injured in battle and as a result has tank wheels for legs. I was influenced by the Star Wars dive bar scenes and the different creatures that stopped by for a drink or three."

APOCALYPSE HITCHHIKER AND HIS DOG
"For this sketch I was just messing around with things to fill in the foreground of the scene to the right. I think at the time I was reading Cormac McCarthy's The Road, which really inspired me."

**STREAK
THE BOUNTY HUNTER**
"Inspired by Netflix's Altered Carbon, this bounty hunter is half-human, half-robot and can switch bodies whenever his killing streak ends."

> " I combined animal anatomy with the geometric shapes of weaponry "

**MILITARY
ELEPHANT**
"I came up with this concept during #marchofrobots. I was trying to combine the organic anatomy of animals and geometric shapes of weaponry."

ERIC
"Eric is a lizard-like alien that was raised to be human. His diet consists of apple cider vinegar and fish."

4001-6
"This was a pleasure robot vixen concept I had in mind. She acts as a weapon to lure men in who don't pay their debts."

BRAIN STORMING DOODLE

"I came up with this sketch when I had bad artist block for a character. It's always fun when you sketch something and it turns out to be a happy accident."

PLANET NAVIGATOR ROBOT

"I wanted this robot to help space pirates to navigate uncharted areas on distant planets. The robot would almost serve as a GPS/metal detector to find wanted convicts."

ANCIENT CAVE VAMPIRE

"I wanted this character to be very reclusive and spend most of its time stalking wandering travellers in caves."

SCRAP-PARTS ROBOT PET
"For this sketch I was thinking of a character and his pet robotic protector in a wasteland of machine parts. The main character would walk around and scavenge the world to build and upgrade his robotic companion, which protects him from any threats."

❝ I was thinking of a character and his pet robotic protector… ❞

CORVIS THE BANISHED

"Corvis is an alien serial killer whose radical religious beliefs have led him to wipe out everyone who disagrees with him."

REVALIN THE WISE

"Corvis' older and wiser brother. Revalin is crippled due to his brother's attempts to kill everyone in his family. He is a profit with telekinesis."

BIOMECHANIC SQUID SUBMARINE

"I wanted to draw submarines with a likeness to sea creatures, so that they could blend in, observe and research animal behaviours without being attacked."

WHAT IS AVAXHOME?

❝ **This character's staff shoots lightning bolts into his enemies… ❞**

ROBOTIC ORB
"The robot's floating orb brain leaves its body to upload information from other machines, gaining access to codes that benefit its masters agenda: to break into highly secured areas."
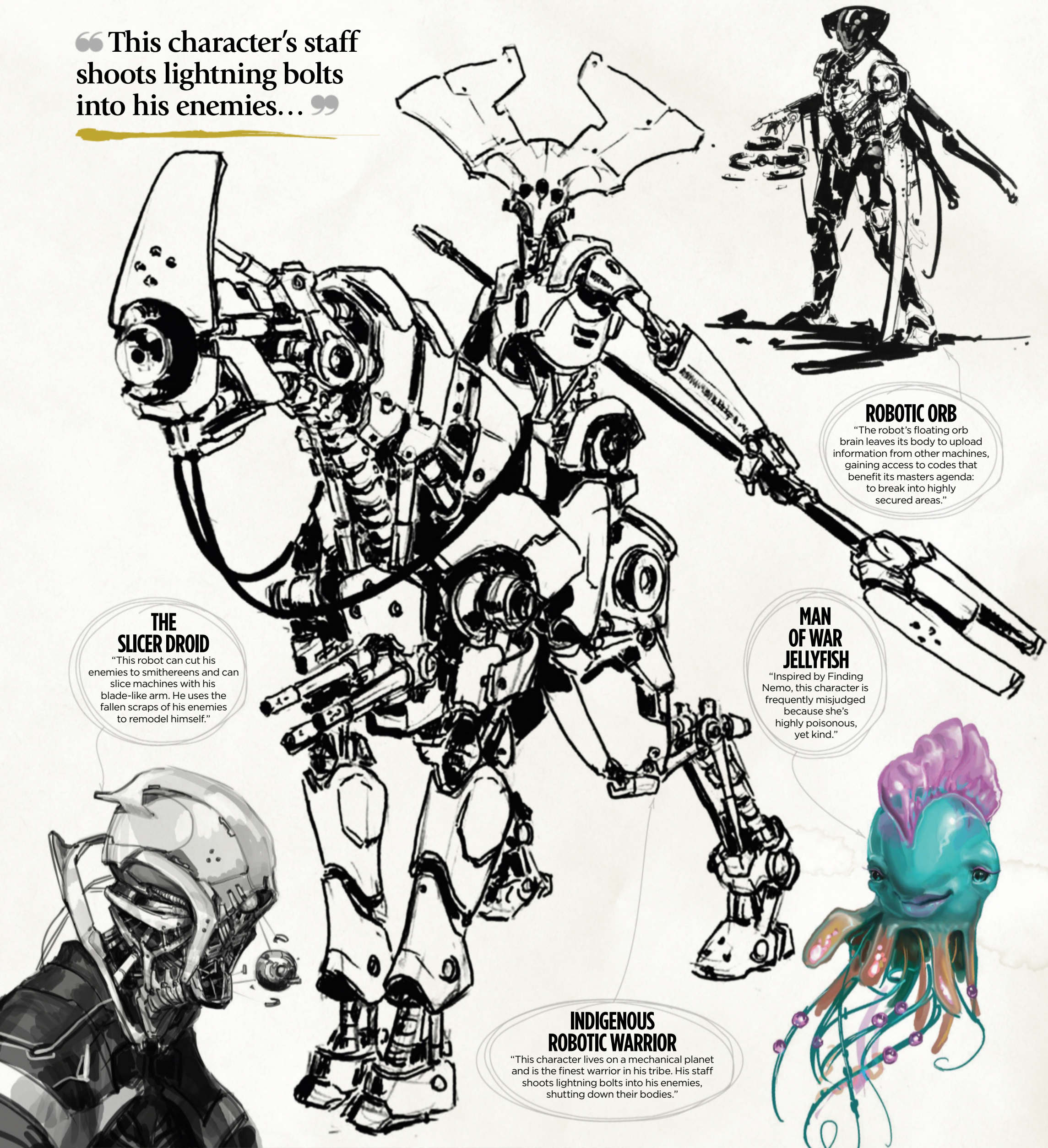
THE SLICER DROID
"This robot can cut his enemies to smithereens and can slice machines with his blade-like arm. He uses the fallen scraps of his enemies to remodel himself."

MAN OF WAR JELLYFISH
"Inspired by Finding Nemo, this character is frequently misjudged because she's highly poisonous, yet kind."

INDIGENOUS ROBOTIC WARRIOR
"This character lives on a mechanical planet and is the finest warrior in his tribe. His staff shoots lightning bolts into his enemies, shutting down their bodies."

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

ImagineFX
Back issues

Missed an issue? Here's how you can order print or digital editions of ImagineFX

Recent print editions
Visit **www.bit.ly/ifxbackissues**.

Apple Newsstand
Download us from the Newsstand app on your device or visit **http://ifxm.ag/apple-ifx**.

Android, PC or Mac
Google News: **http://ifxm.ag/google-halfprice**
Zinio: **www.zinio.com/gb/imaginefx-m2956**

Other devices
We're available via nook on Barnes & Noble and Amazon's range of Fire tablets.

Only the most recent editions are available in print WHILE STOCKS LAST!

PRINT AND DIGITAL BACK ISSUES

Issue 175
July 2019
Learn the art skills you need to break into the animation industry with pro advice on character art, lighting keys, portfolio work and visual development. Elsewhere, we talk to Florian Satzinger, and artist and animator Aaron Blaise.

Issue 174
June 2019
There's a host of top-level comic art talent this issue. We talk to Jorge Jimenéz and Christian Ward, Tony S Daniel creates our cover art, Jen Bartel paints Captain Marvel and Tess Fowler presents her essential inking tips!

Issue 173
May 2019
In space no one can hear you whoop at our film art issue, with its Alien-themed cover by Kevin McGivern, interviews with Blade Runner 2049 concept artist Mike Hill, Marvel Studios' Anthony Francisco and much more!

Issue 172
April 2019
Our manga issue has gorgeous cover art by Asia Ladowska, an interview with US illustrator Sachin Teng, 15 tips for improving your creature designs, and a reimagination of Asuka from Neon Genesis Evangelion.

BUY PRINT EDITIONS OF IMAGINEFX AT: **www.bit.ly/ifxbackissues**

myfavourite magazines.co.uk

RESOURCES ARE INCLUDED WITH PRINT AND DIGITAL EDITIONS*

Issue 171
March 2019

Issue 170
February 2019

Issue 169
January 2019

Issue 168
Christmas 2018

Issue 167
December 2018

Issue 166
November 2018

Issue 165
October 2018

Issue 164
September 2018

Issue 163
August 2018

Issue 162
July 2018

Issue 161
June 2018

Issue 160
May 2018

GET YOUR DIGITAL EDITION THROUGH THESE OUTLETS: Available on the App Store · zinio · nook by Barnes & Noble · Available on fire · Google News
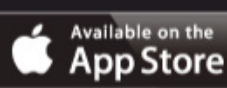
*Resource files are available from issue 85 onwards.

— ARTIST PORTFOLIO —

BASTIEN LECOUFFE DEHARME

Gary Evans gets philosophical with the French illustrator who lives by his own "personal code" – and encourages you do to the same

T he professor wore sunglasses in class and employed… unconventional teaching methods. He would stand at the front, pick up a drawing or painting done by a student, and destroy it. Not verbally. Not with forthright critique. He would literally tear up the canvas.

Bastien Lecouffe Deharme was a student at the University of Rennes. He didn't learn much. The course had no time for the kind of illustration Bastien was into. It was more about conceptual stuff, abstract painting. But Bastien's professor taught him one lesson that stuck. The art academic lay the foundations of what the French illustrator would build into his "personal code."

Bastien was born in Paris in 1982, but his family moved to Auray in Brittany when he was a boy. This was a small town in a poor region with few jobs. There wasn't much to do. But Bastien and his friends had the fields and the forests. Breton myths and legends fascinated him – the many gods, the weird creatures. When he was still very small, Bastien would scribble over the pictures in his illustrated books. His parents felt he was trying to participate in the image. There were artists in the family. His great grandparents were involved in the Surrealist movement. ➤➤

"A figure stands alone in the
Temple of Death. I painted this
scene using references of
life-model McKenzie."

THE SMOKES
"A figure stands alone in the
Temple of Death. I painted this
scene using references of
life-model McKenzie."

Interview

IMPERATOR
"Sevire La Rouge, Imperator of Avhorae, who renames the five provinces after the names of her ravens."

© GODS

NIGHT'S BLOOD
"This shows the direction I'm taking in the development of my role-playing game GODS."
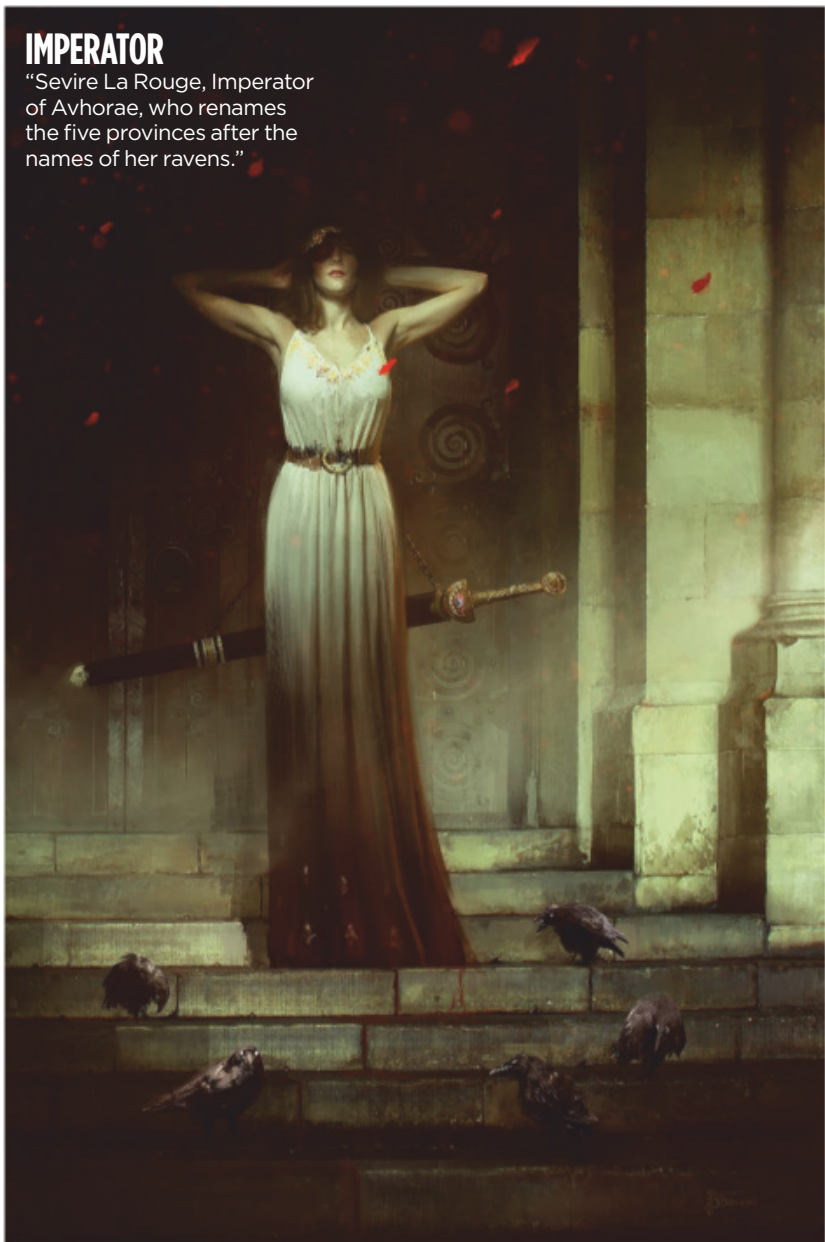
© GODS

Bastien got into "hard music" and "dark role-playing games." He would draw his friends, his brother, and characters and environments from the games. He loved the art on the cards of Magic: The Gathering. He knew somebody had to draw those images. But it never crossed his mind it could be him. He started skipping school. Bastien was in a band. They drank, took drugs, spent all night wandering the streets. They got into some "heavy and not legal stuff." It was escapism – like art, only much riskier.

"I see relationship between those efforts to escape reality in dreams, whether it's with art or storytelling or world-building, and the amount of dangerous situations I put myself into. It was a mix of creative imagination and the need for real-life intensity."

HIDDEN MEANING BEHIND THE ACT

Rennes is the capital of Brittany. Bastien went to university there to give himself time to work out what to do with his life. Plus, the parties were good. He completed his masters in 2006. The thing that left the biggest impression was a lesson from the professor, the hidden meaning, the sensible philosophy behind the bizarre act of tearing up student work: "He

THE CLIFF
"This sketch takes its inspirations from Greek tragedies and Lovecraftian myths."

> 66 **I remember a night where I looked at the image on the screen and made some kind of untold contract with myself** 99

taught us to not get attached to the work itself, but to value the process."

After university, Bastien went to work in a tobacco shop. He was in a "toxic" relationship. But, at night, he had his art, working on a graphics tablet using the art program GIMP. He started to mix drawing and photographic elements. Digital art was new. There was the excitement of developing weird brushes. Something clicked.

"I remember a rainy night where I stopped to look at the image on the screen and made some kind of untold contract with myself. The contract said something like: 'This is actually cool. This is what I am going to do for the rest of my life! No failure tolerated.' Since that night, I've never stopped."

Bastien started sending his work to artists he liked. He hassled friends for feedback on new pieces. He broke up with his girlfriend and met someone else. They moved to Paris together. There were other day jobs – making sandwiches, building hospital beds – but, slowly, steadily, his art took off. He found commissions. And soon, he got jobs as a concept artist and an art director. "Finally, I was there. I was making a living from my artwork."

NATURAL RHYTHM

Bastien and his American wife moved to rural Ohio. It was a world away from Paris, but the Appalachian Mountains reminded him of Brittany. They bought a house surrounded by fields and

MAGIC MESSAGE ON A BOTTLE

Bastien explains how a childhood dream came true, involving a train journey in France and a certain soft drink…

"When I think about the first time my work was included in Spectrum – it feels like it was yesterday. Spectrum was one of those things that I didn't think I could ever reach. It's truly odd how our past goals can become our future standards. I grew up as an artist looking through the book, amazed at every page, and today I have my work published in it every year. I even made the cover once.

Spectrum is important to me because it's recognition from my fellow artists, and it's a community that welcomed me with open arms when I moved to the US.

Six years ago, my wife and I were visiting friends and family in France, taking the train from Paris to Brittany. I bought a small bottle of Coke. 'Share a Coke with Jeremy' was written on it. I checked my emails, and there was an email from Jeremy Jarvis, art director at Wizards of the Coast, inviting me to join the team. This is one of those moments when I looked over my shoulder and saw the kid I was, smiling at me with pride.

For the sake of the story, let's mention that I said 'No.' I had a very full schedule at the time and I think a part of me was worried I wouldn't do a good job. You know, the impostor

LOYAL RETAINERS
"This was a cool card to work on. I paint staircases in almost everything I do!"

© Wizards of the Coast

syndrome, that good old 'I-don't-deserve-it' demon. The next day, I realised I was an idiot, and I messaged Jeremy back. He laughed (I know he did) and he opened the doors for me.

Magic: the Gathering is one of those dreams that came true. When I was a kid, a couple of friends were importing their cards from England.

It was written in a language I couldn't speak, but I was fascinated by the artwork. I remember realising, as a kid, that some people were actually making a living by drawing images. I thought that Magic artists were international rock stars.

It's funny the way time and progress work together. Future dream goals that become past achievements. I remember some clients I left behind. When I look back, I can see all the steps I climbed. I see all those objectives that I wanted to attain so badly, which became almost insignificant once reached. From the path I took, I gained confidence and wisdom. I know that it's all about taking care of that original fire, the spark that I had when I started, which must be preserved with care and dedication.

I look at all those years only to realise I did put myself exactly where I wanted to be. I tell stories with images and words. Through commissioned works and personal projects, I have the life that the little passionate kid I was would have never dared to hope for. And this is also why I teach. To give what I can, as others did for me. To transmit. To tell my students exactly that: you owe to the kid you were to become the best artist you can be."

ASYLUM VISITOR
"This was done at the very beginning of my career, when I was painting vampires."

© Wizards of the Coast

THE BLUE DOOR OF TAMETH
"One of the first visuals I created for my upcoming dark fantasy tabletop role-playing game, GODS. This one is for the gamemaster screen."

© GODS

forests, where coyotes howled at night and fireflies lit up the sky.

He has two studios at home: one for painting, another for everything else. On the wall of his main office is Frank Frazetta's painting Death Dealer and a portrait he drew of his wife when they met in Paris. They remind Bastien why he does what he does.

Bastien likes to wake up at noon and work all night. He used to feel guilty about it. Now he accepts going to bed at 5am as his "natural rhythm." During the day, he teaches, exercises, looks after the land around the house. He eats dinner with his wife. "Then I step into the night. Making images run."

TWIN APPROACH

There are two strands to his work: commercial and personal. He works with clients like Random House, National Geographic, and regularly with Magic: The Gathering, and he creates his own graphic novels and RPGs (Memories of Retrocity and GODS). But, these days, the two strands interact in interesting ways.

Bastien's art is usually a "weird composite" that mixes traditional and experimental techniques. Composition is his big thing, so he uses thumbnails to organise space, values, how the image will be read. There's usually a story he want to tell. The challenge is working out the best way to tell it in a single image. This means he's also working out "narrative hierarchy": who will be the main focus of the piece, and why.

PRIS
"I created this piece for the 30th anniversary of Blade Runner."

> 66 **When the work's going good, it's like the image is making itself – a 'sort of digital alchemy'** 99

Bastien has his own photo studio. He arranges a shoot with a model and takes up to 500 pictures. The shoot usually leads to ideas he hadn't thought of: a pose, an expression, some new composition. He "Frankensteins together" photographs to create the perfect reference. This reference is on one monitor while he draws it on a second monitor in Photoshop with an Intuos Pro.

CREATIVE PROCESS

Bastien starts with shapes, blocks, adds detail, definition, then polishes. He's not the fastest. He prefers to take his time, slowly adding complexity. He builds environments around the figure and blends them together using values, lighting, colour-work. He drops in textures and photographs, using masks and layers to make sure these elements only affect targeted areas. When the work's going good, it's like the image is making itself – a "sort of digital alchemy." But underpinning this magic is a sound knowledge of the fundamentals such as composition, perspective, anatomy and colour.

"Those fundamentals are like a frame that keeps everything in the right place during a process that tends to be a bit crazy. A structure that allows me to have fun and experiment without turning everything I do into some kind of weird digital Pollock. I love digital art for this exact reason: the possibilities it offers."

Bastien always has new things to say in his work. He makes sure of it.

KHALISTAN
"This is a portrait of the people of Khalistan who live in the Wildlands, from my role-playing game GODS."

HUMAN AND MACHINE

Bastien reveals how he used a life-model study as the basis for a bleak futuristic scene from his graphic novel, Memories of Retrocity

2 TUNING THE MOOD

"Painting from a life-drawing session, I establish the composition. Next, I alternate between building up the mood and bringing in details. I paint, paste things together, mix brush strokes and photo textures, while making full use of Photoshop's adjustment tools to fine-tune the mood of the scene. I keep an eye on positive and negative space to make sure that every important element of the image is easily readable."

1 NOT REALLY HERE

"This image is about the relationship between the human and the machine, in a quiet moment when the human who received some mechanical surgery awakes in a world that she barely recognises. The overall composition suggest a lack of stability, and offers nowhere for the character to go. She's looking past us; she's not really here any more."
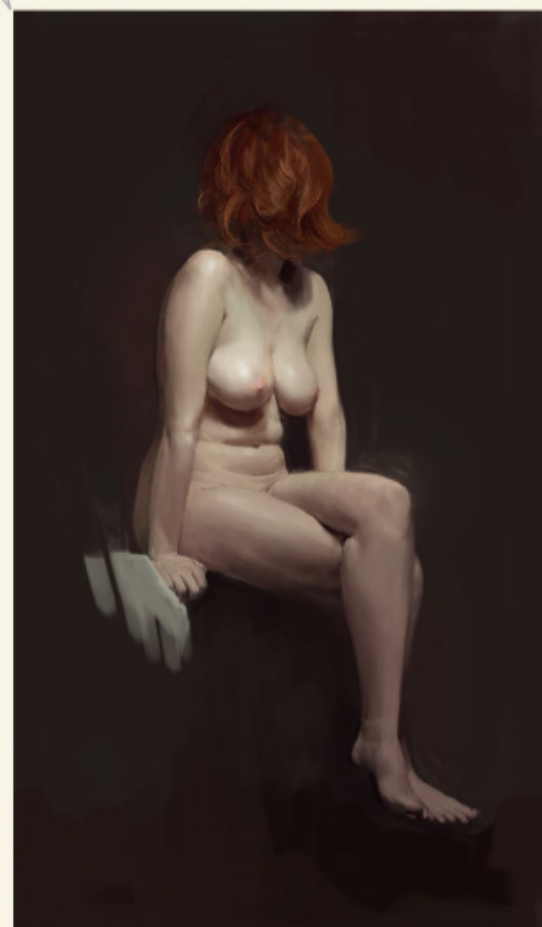
3 INTENTIONAL ACCIDENTS

"One of the truly essential aspects of that process is that I intentionally create accidents. I drop in random elements (bits and pieces of photographs, scans of textures, brushes, and so on) over the image and play with the layer modes to see if anything interacts with the image in interesting ways. If something does then I tune it further and integrate it into the painting process."

4 CONTROLLING THE CHAOS

"I often use masks to control chaos, and to make sure my random mark-making on elements of the image affect only specific areas, which are separated in layers. I let the work drive itself, and this is when I truly enjoy painting. Most of the time my commissioned work is very specific and doesn't allow as much creative freedom, but I still try to imply a healthy dose of this random approach, because this experimental aspect is a key part of my art's identity."

5 FINISHING UP

"During the final stages I turn up the music, turn down the lights and paint for a further couple of hours. I add corrections and make final adjustments. Then I try to get some sleep. I let my image sleep as well: I look at it with fresh eyes a couple of days later."

Interview

STUDY
"This is a portrait of a model called Jasmine. I was using traditional media to experiment with new techniques."

© Wizards of the Coast

SENTINEL OF THE ETERNAL WATCH
"The first artwork that I created for Magic: the Gathering, back in 2014."
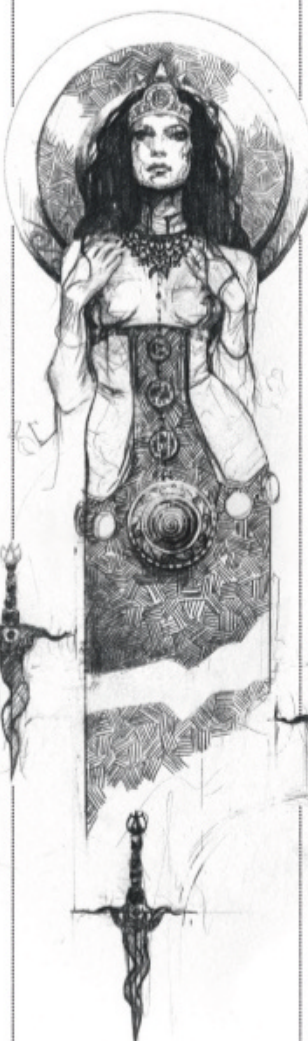
THE SISTER
"This is a pencil portrait of La Fée Morgane, from the Arthurian tales of legend."

➼ The artist reads a lot. He listens to Nick Cave & the Bad Seeds, 16 Horsepower, doom metal. He likes the films of Fellini, Kurosawa, Sergio Leone. It's like food, nourishment: "I see a direct link between what people feed on and what comes out of them. I try to eat well, to not get sick."

Bastien, the reluctant student, is now a professor at Shawnee State University, Ohio. He teaches something called the "personal code." It's a more fleshed-out, but much less extreme version of the university professor's philosophy. The personal code is a formula – the formula – that makes you, you.

Your personal code is made up of all your life experiences and all your influences. You are all places you've been and all the things you've done. But you're also the artists you like, the books you read, the music you listen to, the movies you watch. Bastien teaches students to accept these influence and honour them, rather than trying to deny them "for the sake of illusionary uniqueness or originality."

GOING BEYOND REFERENCES

Yet here's the paradox, as explained by the artist: "This accumulation of references constitutes a different code for each of us and therefore makes us

and our work unique. Creating new art is partly determined by the process of identifying our references, acknowledging what makes us, and learning how to manipulate those to make something out of it."

Bastien's own work is characterised by an "obsession with anatomy, curves, flesh and bones." Weapons to represent tough decisions subjects need to make. Birds seem to come and go as they please – symbols of life. Each image is a sort of self-portrait, even when he and his subject look nothing alike. He paints what he admires, desires fears. His work is dark because we're all heading for darkness. This sounds completely miserable. Bastien

> **❝ The images I make are a place where my visions meet with our reality. They interact thematically and technically ❞**

knows that. But this "awareness of death" should be seen as a good thing.

"I live fully because I know life ends. And it shows in my work… the realism, the mix of drawing, painting, and photographic elements is my way to insist on the crudity of our flesh, our body, ourselves, our existences."

The artist continues: "The images I make are a place where my visions meet with our reality. They interact thematically and technically. Behind every images there are also people I know well. From the models I work with, to the symbols I use, and the way I connect them together to build a visual story, there's an alchemy happening that I discover during the art-making process itself." ◆

© Wizards of the Coast

LE MÉPRIS
"I created for this for Memories of Retrocity, my graphic novel."

ETRATA, THE SILENCER
"This piece was nominated for a Spectrum award this year."

MINISTRANT OF OBLIGATION
"I applied halos of bright light here and there, to make sure the gold would shine."

© Wizards of the Coast

VIDEO
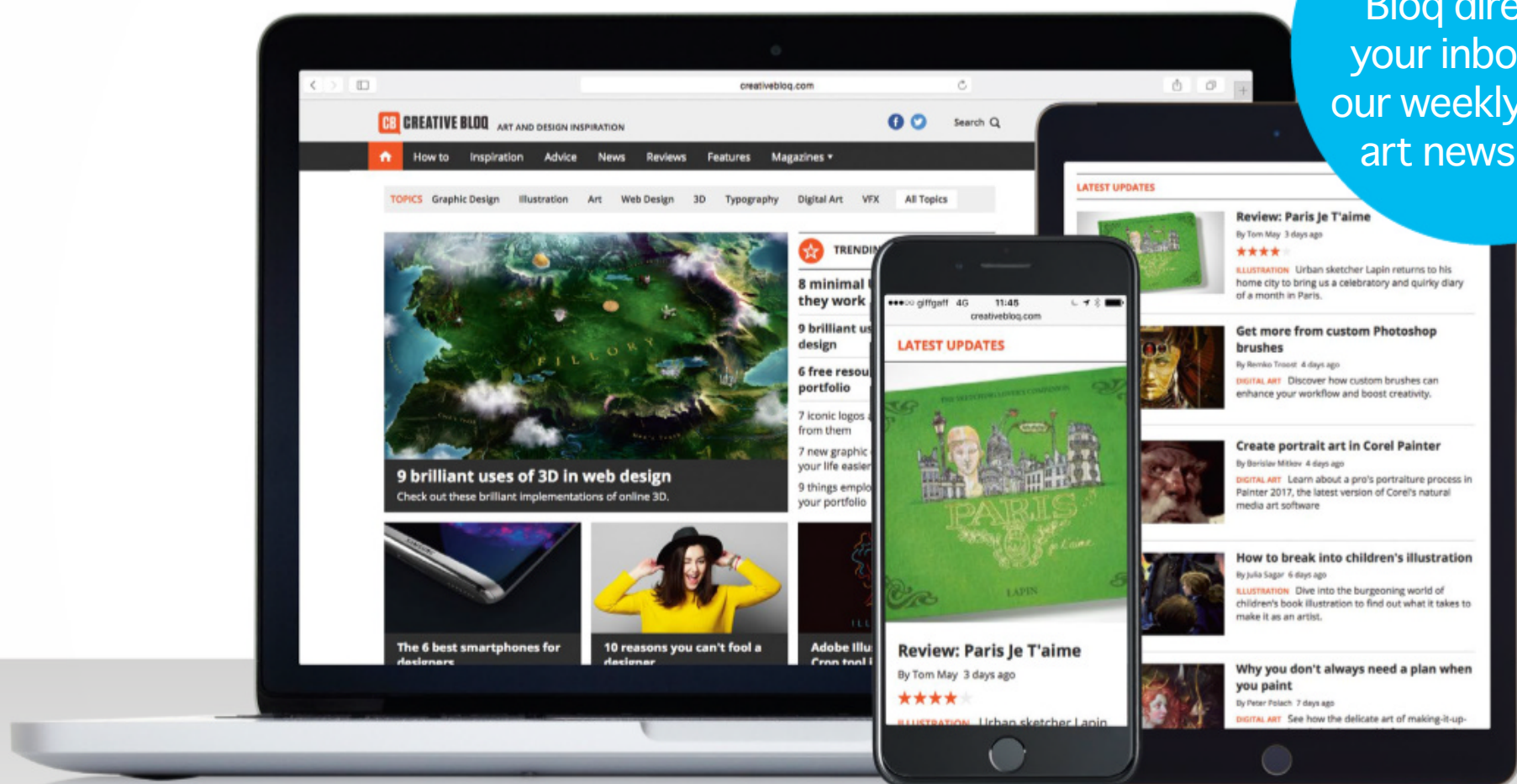WORKSHOP

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS
ImagineFX
Workshops

Advice from the world's best artists

68

74

82

This issue:

Traditional & Photoshop
MIX TRADITIONAL AND DIGITAL TOOLS

There are many ways to use traditional techniques to enhance your digital artwork. **Chantal Horeis** goes through her favoured approach

I love the tactile and sometimes random textures that occur when working with traditional tools. I'm also fascinated by the endless possibilities that digital workflows have to offer, so I never want to choose one over the other.

A couple of years ago I started to experiment with different approaches to drawing and painting. I began creating traditional-digital hybrids and refined my process using custom textures and scanned-in papers. Different textures can be a lot of fun to play around with: they give your artwork a lovely finish. Furthermore, this approach enables you to describe surface textures of specific elements in your artwork, or emphasise certain shapes and objects in your image, making them stand out within the composition.

In this workshop I'm going to show you the process behind one of my illustrations, and explain how I create and preserve textures. For the traditional stages I'm going to use graphite and ink on paper, but you don't have to follow my lead. Just use your favourite traditional medium and play around with the effects you can create with it. This is really about finding the most enjoyable process for you. The following steps are transferable to graphite, watercolours, oils… you name it! I would love this workshop to provide technical guidance, but also inspire you to experiment with different tools to create your unique painting process.
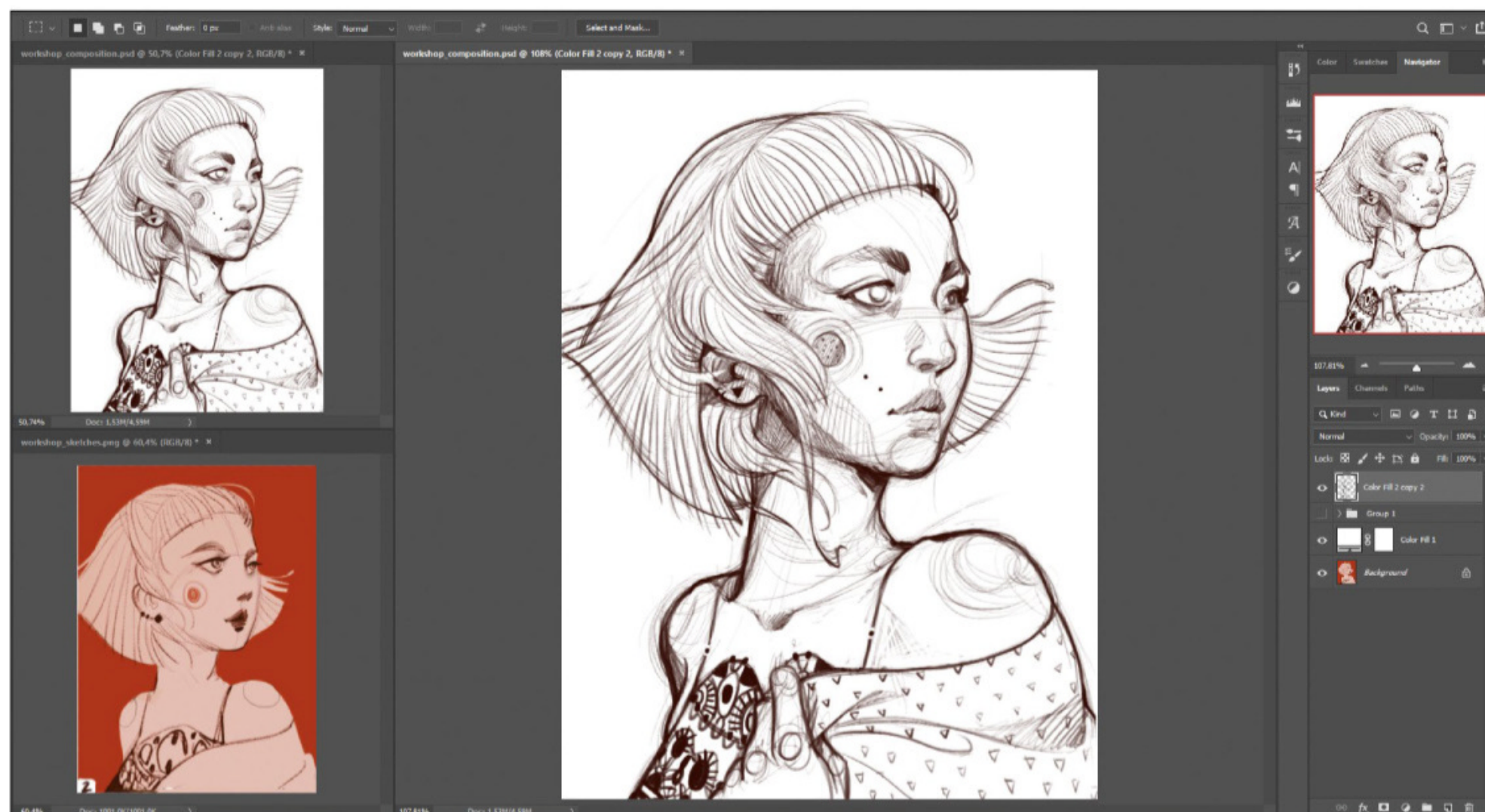
1 Digitally sketching out the idea

When beginning a new illustration I usually start with a simple sketch that captures the main idea of the artwork, just to check whether it has potential. I do this digitally, because I can make any changes in just a few seconds. Once I'm happy that my idea is worth developing I create a more refined sketch that provides greater details and presents an appealing composition. ➤➤

Workshops

2 Transferring the drawing to paper

Since I don't own a lightbox I stick a piece of paper to my screen and trace my sketch on to it. I use a very hard pencil and make very soft and delicate lines. They don't have to be perfect, but rather create the right spacing between elements. I want to get this foundation stage right so I do not have to worry about it later.

3 Enhancing the traditional drawing

Next I refine the paper drawing. I add several layers with different pencils, going from hard to soft, so from light to dark. I hatch some areas very lightly to create textures, but go darker into other areas to create variety. After that I pick up my ink pens to trace some of the lines with ink, which creates an even wider value range.

4 Scanning and preparing the drawing

I want to preserve the traditional drawing in my digital workflow as much as possible. I've developed a process for 'lifting' the drawing from its background. It enables me to colour in the line work later and work underneath the drawing as well as on top of it. I can even use a clipping mask to colour parts of the line work in different colours. First I select all and copy the drawing. Then I go the Channels dialog and create an Alpha channel. I paste in my drawing and then invert it. Next, I create a new layer and Ctrl+click the layer thumbnail to select the linework. Then I fill the selection with a colour, deselect it and then put a white layer underneath.

Selection of the drawing coloured with a fill layer

Adjustment layers
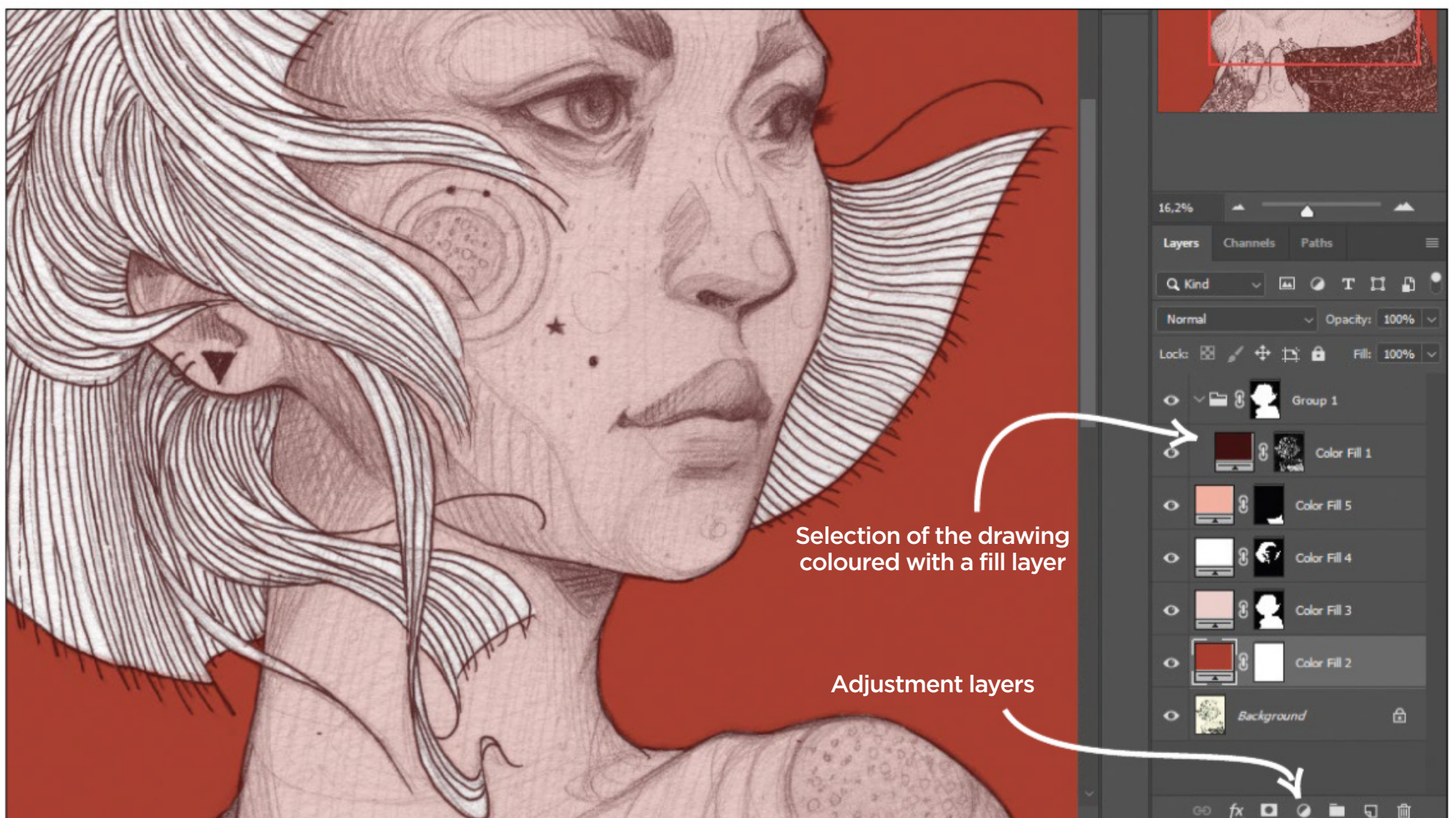
5 **Bringing in basic colours**
Having this cut-out version of the traditional drawing means I can fill in the basic shapes of my image underneath the drawing, without affecting the original line work with Multiply layers on top. I use fill layers for this, so that I can change the colours and find something that I like.

Drawing is duplicated to make it stronger in the eye area using a mask

RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES: BASIC

I use this brush for most of my work, to fill in shapes and outlining.

STARS

This brush is ideal for creating star patterns or noise textures.

SOFT

With this brush I paint soft colour overlays to create more vibrancy throughout the image.
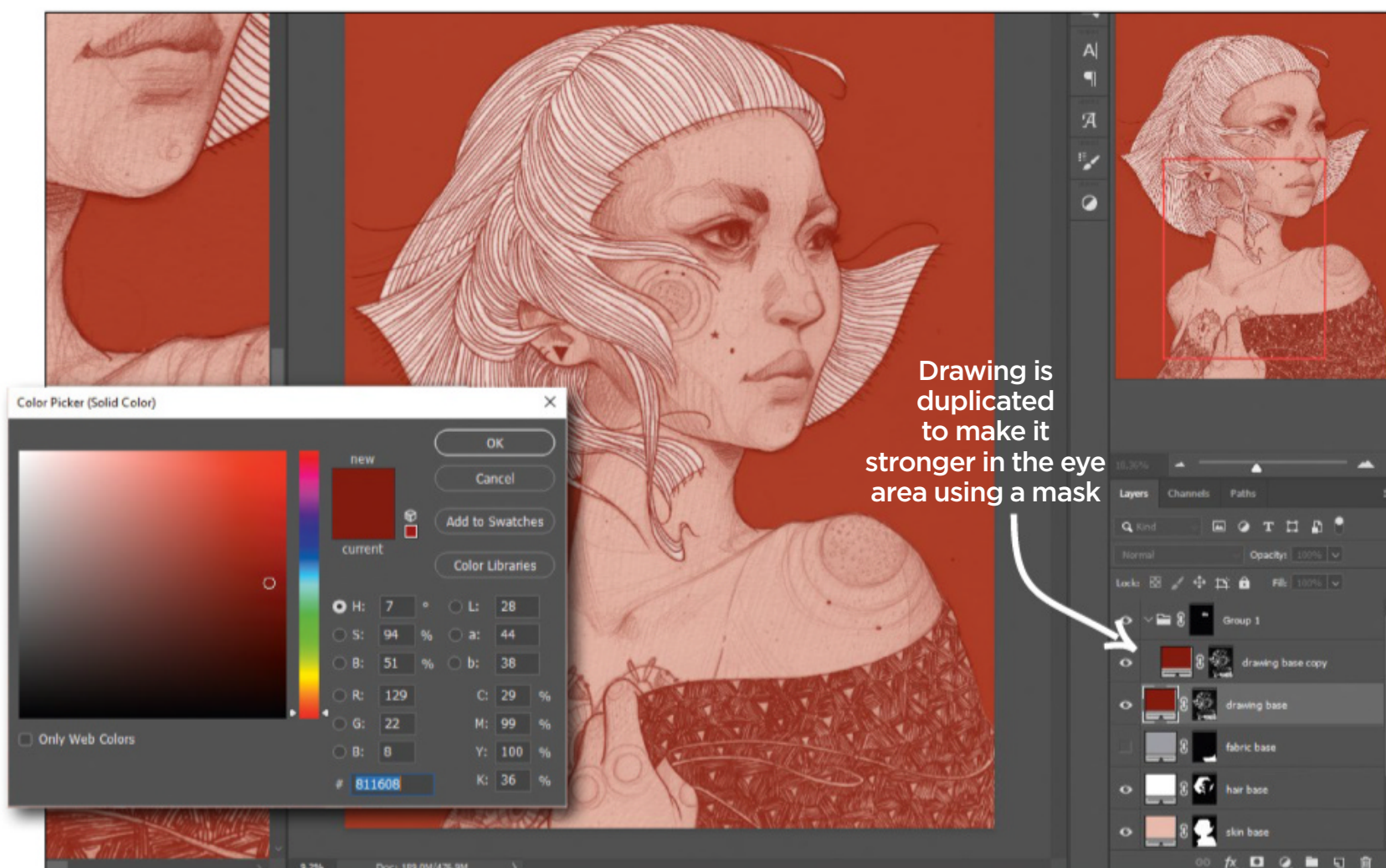
6 **Colouring the traditional drawing**
Because the drawing is separated from its background I can change the colour of the lines very easily. I apply a fill layer on the drawing selection as well and used a saturated darker red-orange. It looks more vivid and complements the underlying colours. It's interesting to see what effect different colours for the line work have on your image.

The left colour is mapped to my dark values, the right one to light values. Then I create a gradient

7 Applying colour effects

I try to go as far as possible without painting on my drawing, instead adding colour effects in different areas. For example, applying a gradient map to the hair. It maps a colour gradient to the value range of your image. This way I can make the dark lines lighter and the fill space darker. I then use a mask to define the shape.
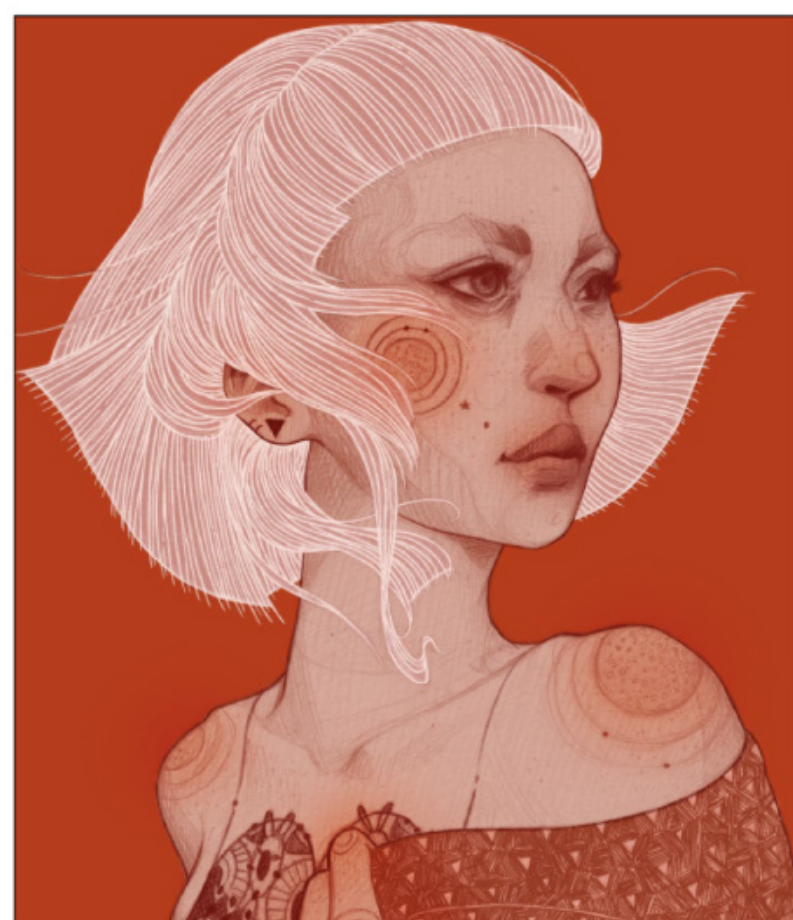
8 Adding colour variations to the skin

I like to add some vibrancy to the skin of my characters. To do that I create a new fill layer in Overlay mode. With a soft brush and reduced Opacity I paint some colour on the cheeks, nose, lips, ears and shoulders. This makes these areas look more alive, while still letting the original drawing shine through.
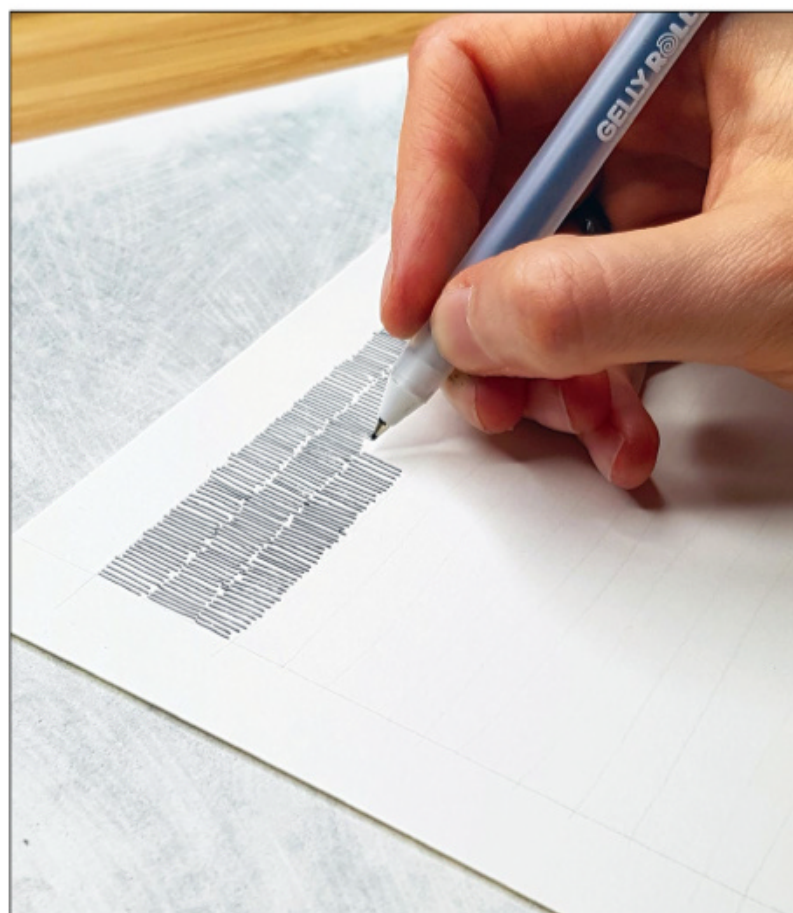
9 Creating more traditional textures

Over the years I've built up my own little library of traditional textures. There are an easy and effective way to add more visual interest to your work digitally later on. I try to be more experimental, and use graphite powder and my erasers for a softer texture that I want to apply to the skin. I also create an ink texture by drawing small repeated lines all over the page.

Still a bit too bright, so I adjust the brightness to match the underlying image.
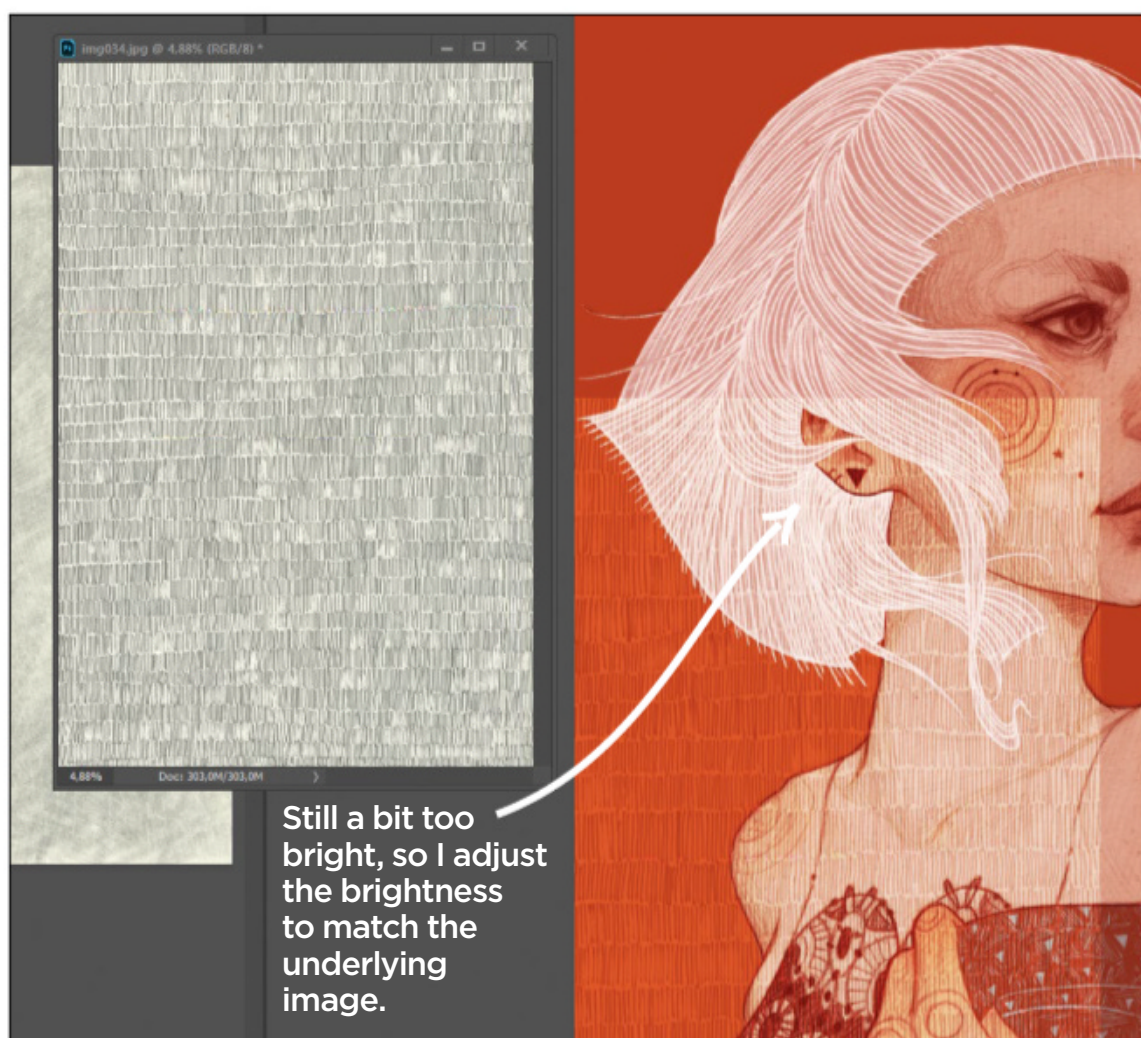
10 Placing textures over key areas

I scan the textures at a very high resolution (1,200dpi), just as I did with the drawing previously, and drag them on top of my artwork. I set them to Overlay and adjust the brightness so that it doesn't brighten the image underneath. Then I place the textures where I want them and use a mask to limit the textures to specific areas.

11 Introducing translucent horns

Although I don't like to add elements later on in the process I really wanted to graft these translucent horns on to her head. I use a couple of layers to work out the translucency layering and play with the Opacity setting. The horns create a bit of a contrast in the composition because they don't have a lot of texture to them.
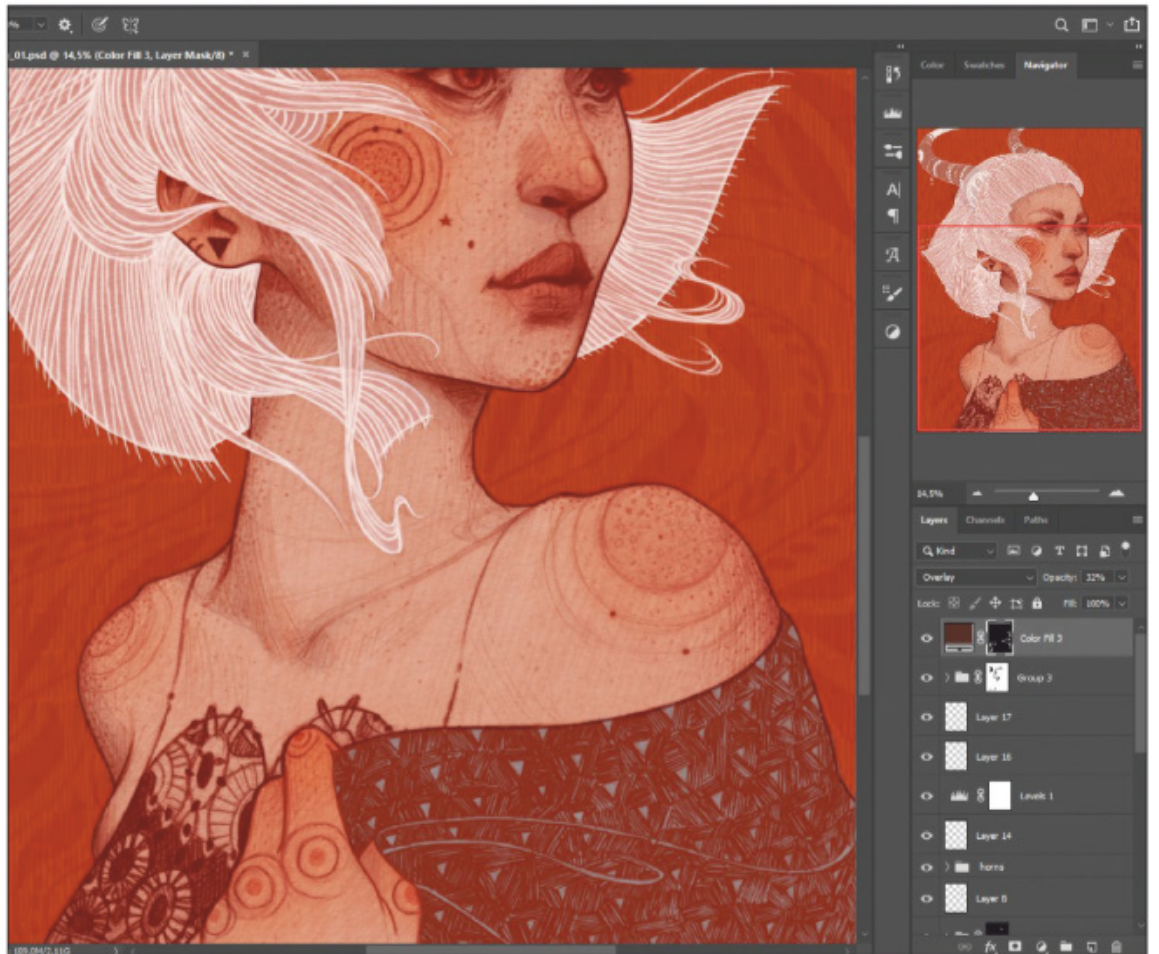
12 Enhancing the background with a pattern

To create an even more textural feel to my image I decided to put a flowing, ornament-like pattern to the background. I keep it very light and delicate, because I don't want to create too much contrast here. I place the pattern on a low Opacity Overlay layer, which enables the underlying texture to shine through. I create this element so that it directs the viewer to the face, and supports the overall visual flow.
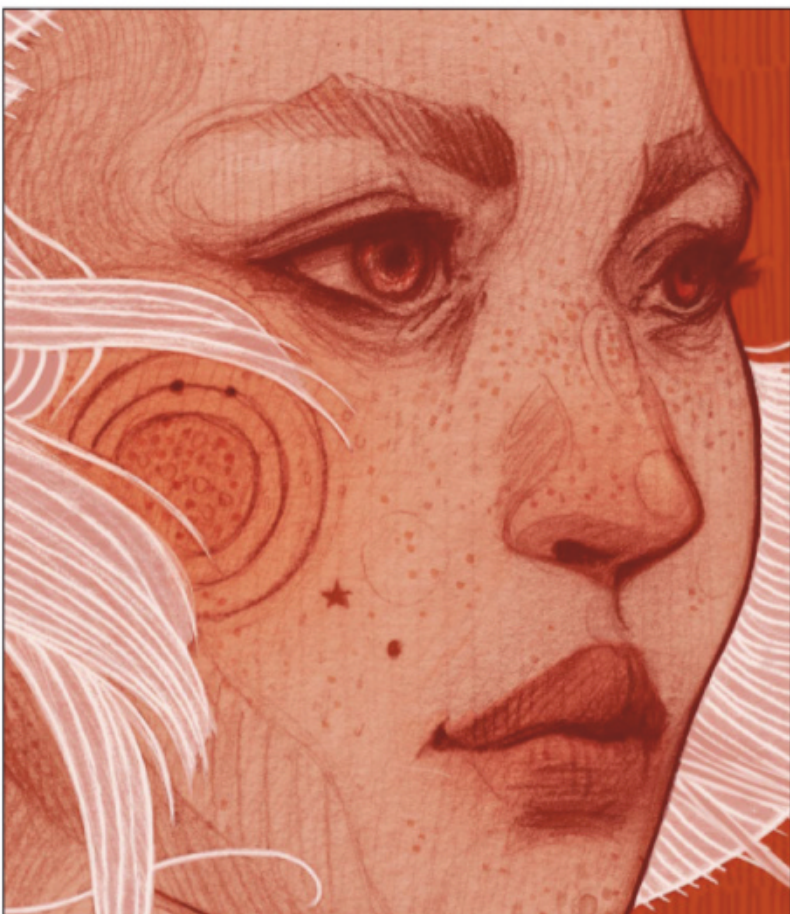
13 Further detailing

I carefully use Overlay, Multiply and Normal layers to add more details to the image, trying to match the traditional texture feel. I apply more freckles to the skin, refine the eyes a little more and add a few more flowing strands of hair. I check the outlines of my drawing and add some where necessary. It's important for me to make these changes look as natural as possible.
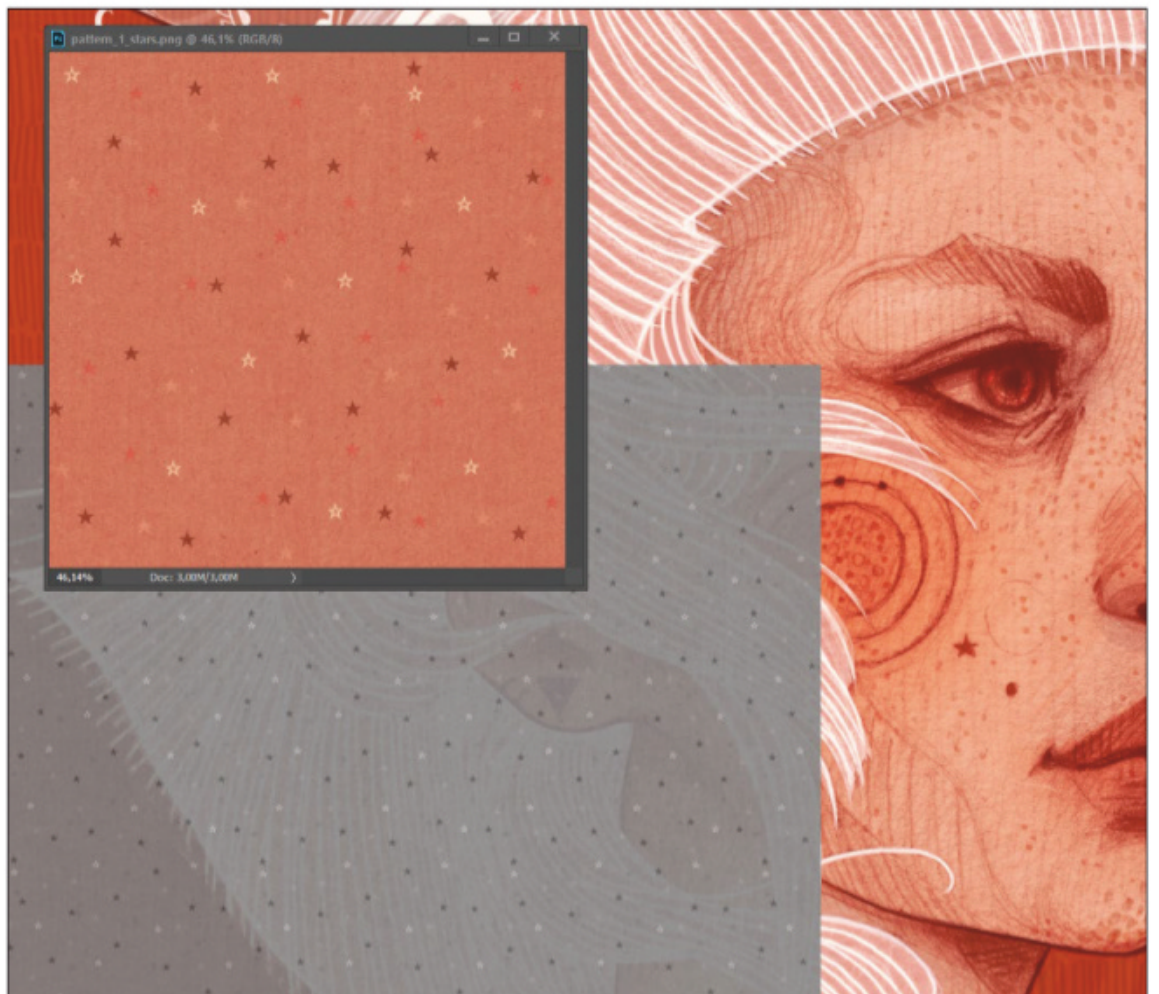
14 Finishing touches with a noisy texture

I take a scanned-in paper texture and add tiny stars with a custom star brush. I use this texture a lot recently to create a finish for may artworks. I put it on top of my image and make it black and white. I then duplicate it several times and fill the entire image with it. Finally, I set the layer to Overlay and adjust the Opacity to give the image a pleasing finished look.

Procreate
USE TEXT TOOLS IN PROCREATE

Animation art director **Max Ulichney** tells us a story and designs a picture book cover while making full use of Procreate's new text tools

Artist PROFILE
Max Ulichney
LOCATION: US

Max is an animation art director and director. His MaxPacks Procreate brushes are used worldwide by professionals and beginners alike.
www.maxulichney.com

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 8 now!

RESOURCES
WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PROCREATE

CUSTOM BRUSHES: MAXU 600 SERIES PENCIL

Used to create a rich pencil sketch. Try using it with the Tilt action.

MAXU GOUACHE GRAINY

Capable of laying down both clean flats and controllable shading.

MAXU SMUDGE GOUACHE GRAINY

Made to be used with the Smudge tool. Built to be paired with MaxU Gouache Grainy for softening shading and adding texture.

For those of us in a creative field, it can be hard to come home and fit in time for our own pursuits. For me, Procreate was a huge help to get me painting for fun again.

In fact, I do most of my personal work on my iPad in Procreate these days. It feels less like work and more like sketching did when I was young. Something about sketching in a coffee shop, at the park or on the sofa puts me in a different mindset than sitting at a desk. Procreate's streamlined interface has encouraged me to paint more intuitively and less technically. So I was very excited when I saw the new text tools included in the latest release. And sure enough, they are true to form and very approachable.

I took the opportunity to put these new features through their paces in service of a hypothetical picture book about a boy and his new friend. I wanted to focus on the feeling of boundless possibilities and fantasy we had as kids. I settled on a story in which all the characters in this story are naively excited about this amazing "dog" that Danny has found. So with that, I saw the chance to show off Danny's gloating pride, his classmate's tentative caution and her dog's utter excitement.

1 Developing the rough layout
I begin with a rough sketch and then set the type right away, so that I can establish my composition and work out any trouble areas early rather than fight them later on. This way I can work the tight pencils around the title and avoid tangents, overlap Danny's hair and have a sense for what my negative spaces will look like.
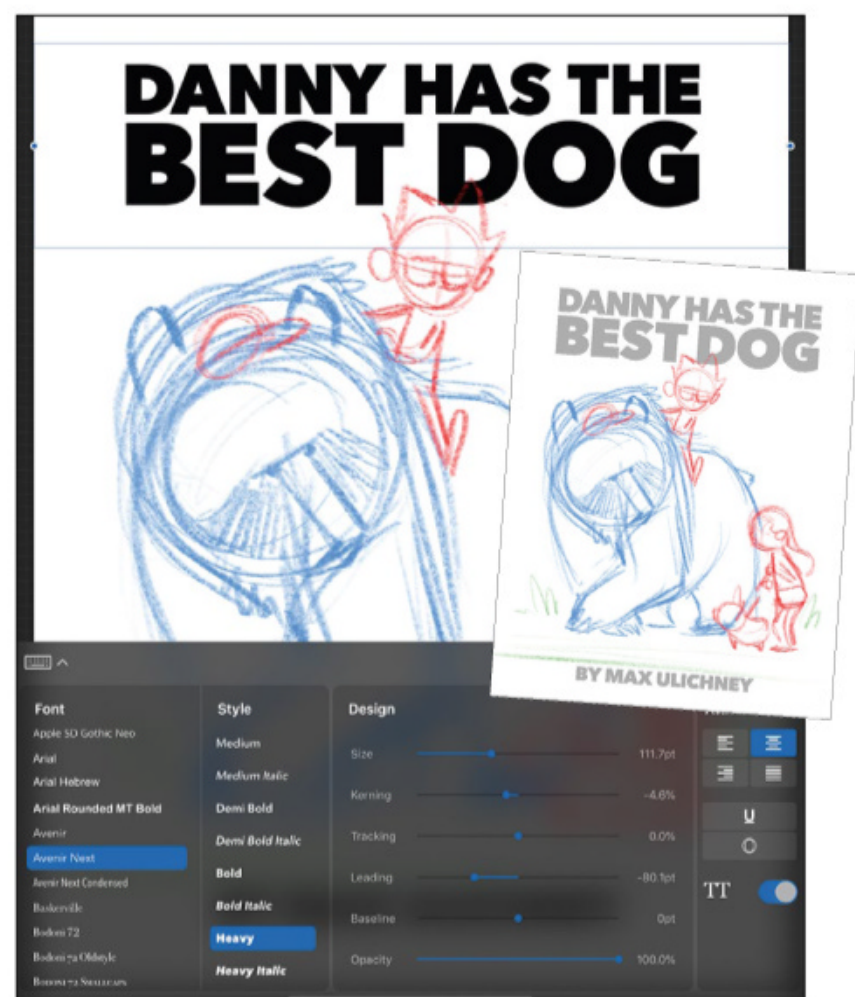
2 Adjust the type setting
Click the Wrench icon to add text. In the Add tab, click Add text to create a text box. In my case, when I'm done typing I click the blue Edit Style button. I drag the text box to fit the width of my image, and set my justification to centred to more easily line up my title. I set my font to Avenir Next (bold), and adjust my size, tracking, leading and kerning to create a chunky title.

DANNY HAS THE
BEST DOG

BY MAX ULICHNEY

DANNY HAS THE BEST DOG

BY MAX ULICHNEY

3 Create the line work for the cover illustration

I've created a new pencil just for this workshop which I'll be using to lay down the line work for the scene, called the MaxU 600 Series Pencil. It's inspired by the iconic Blackwing 602 pencil. I erase with the same pencil brush as needed.
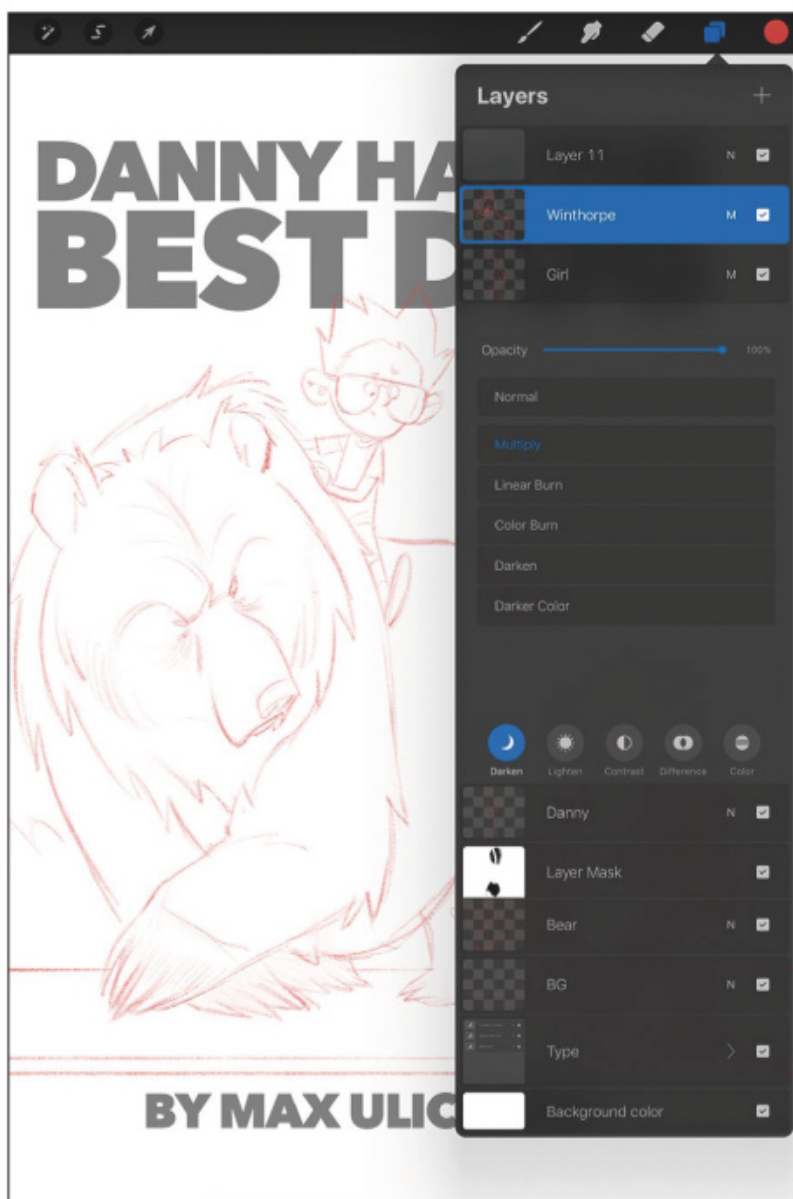
4 Tint the sketch

As I finish, I alpha lock the sketch layers by two-finger swiping right on the layer until I see the background of the thumbnail turn into a checkerboard to indicate that it worked. I could also have tapped the layer to pull up the Layer settings palette and selected it from there. I paint my lines a soft red to mimic a Vermillion Prismacolor Col-Erase pencil that I use in my sketchbook. I set the sketch layers to Multiply and group them.
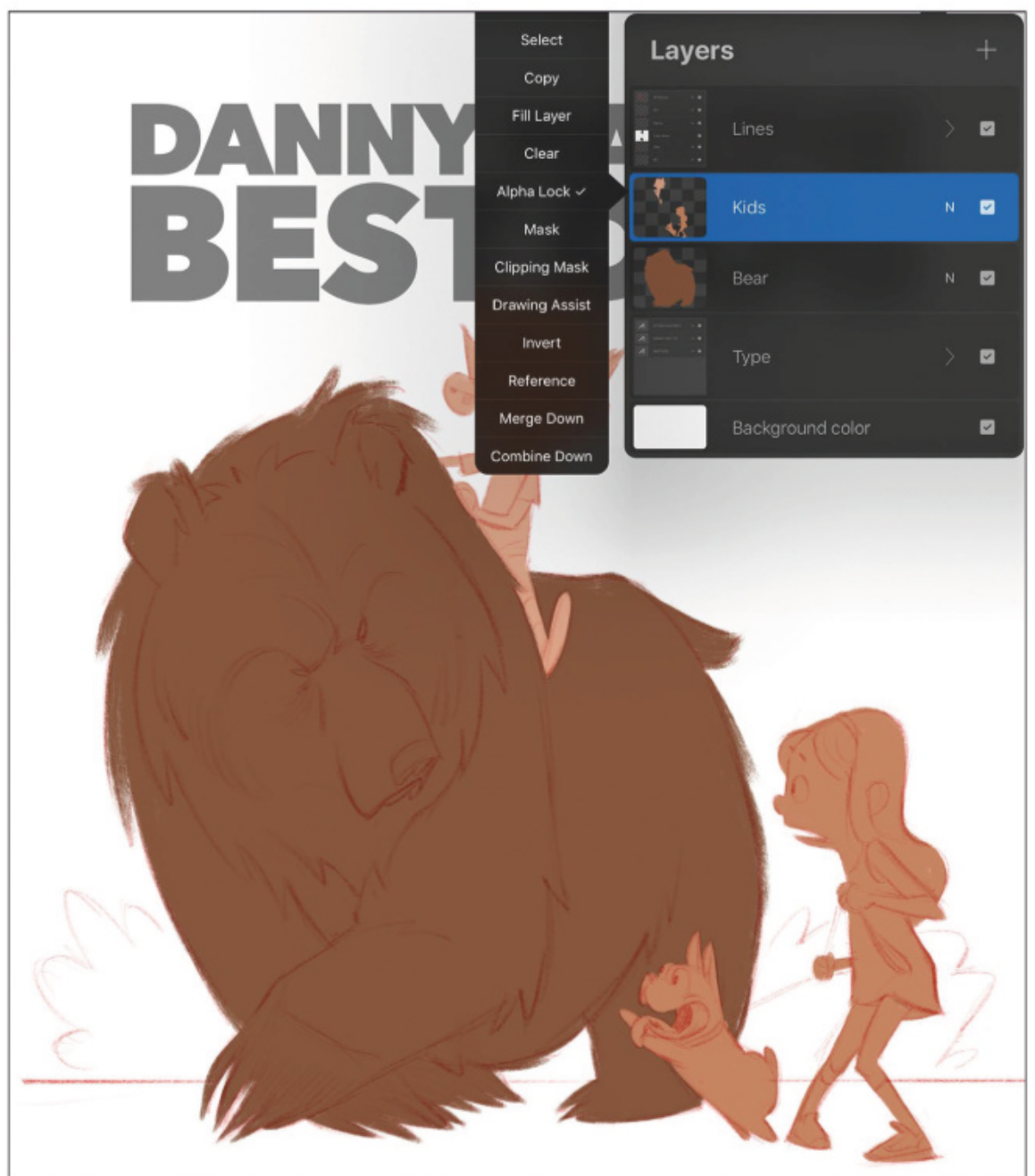
5 Flatting the figures

Below the sketch layers, I start flatting my characters. I begin with the bear because he's the most dominant figure, and his fur will help me establish how loose or tight my silhouettes will be. I'm painting this with my new MaxU Gouache Grainy brush that I made for this workshop. The brush responds well to soft pressure for shading and soft falloff on the edges of the fur.

6 Painting the features of the children

This stage helps me to define the level of detail of rendering that I want to apply, going forward. The first thing that I detail are the kids' faces and hair. I paint Danny's sunglasses on their own layer set to Multiply. ➟

BY MAX ULICHNEY

7 Local colour and clothing

I paint the clothing on layers clipping-masked to the flat layers. To make a clipping mask, make sure your desired layer is on top of the layer you want to clip it to. Tap the top layer and select Clipping Mask from the menu. Now when you paint you'll only see paint where the layer on the bottom is opaque. Because I know that I'll want to dial in these colours a bit later on, I'm keeping things separated and will flatten my layers later.

8 Defining the bear through shading

It's important that I start my shading with the bear, because while the kids are well defined by their flat colour, the bear will be defined almost entirely by shading. I pick a soft lavender colour and fill a new layer by dragging from the Color Picker at the top right of the interface into the canvas. I clip this layer on to the bear, set it to Multiply, then add a mask to the layer by tapping once on the layer and selecting Mask. Next, I tap the new mask layer and invert the mask to make it black. Now I can paint white or shades of grey, and blend transitions using my MaxU Gouache Smudge Grainy in this mask layer to paint shadows where I want them. The benefit of this technique is that I can duplicate this shadow layer for the other characters and only replace the mask. I don't intend for this shading to be the finished product, but it forms a good base to paint more sophisticated detail on later.

9 A spot of graphic design

The colour palette is coming together now, but I know that I want to define a rim light from behind Danny and the bear later on, so I need to darken the background slightly to allow me some room to go brighter than that. I make my background a light blue to help balance all of that brown, and set the type to a dark blue and a bright red. To change the type colours, select Edit Text when you click the text layer. The colour of the Color Picker on the top right will change the colour of the text. The dark blue helps give me contrast so that I can more confidently paint darker shadow colours in the next step.
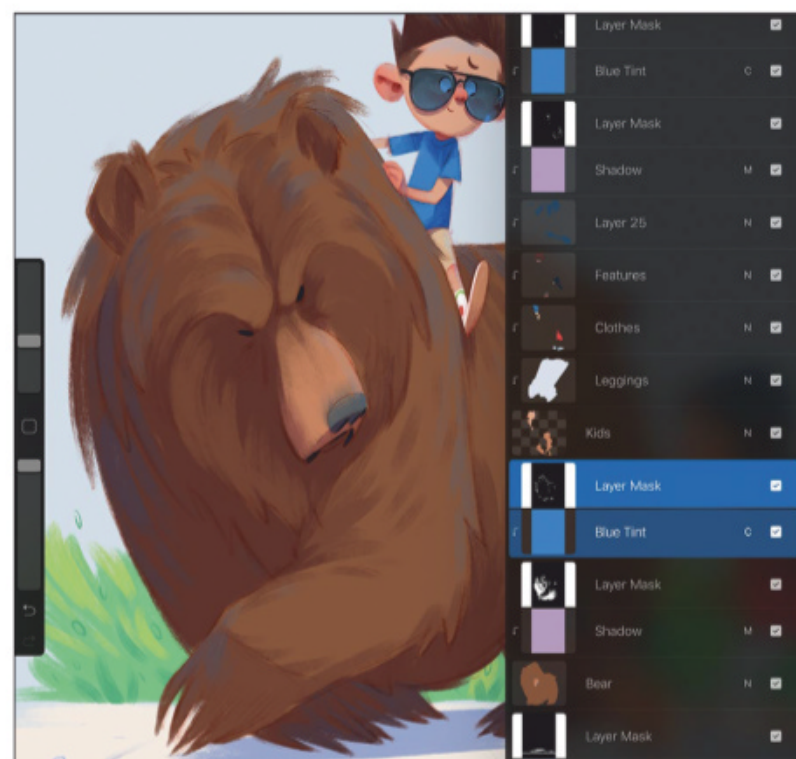
10 Adding sky lighting

I need to break up the colours, so I fill a layer with a sky blue colour and give it an inverted mask, similar to the shadow layers but this time set to Color rather than Multiply, with low Opacity. I paint this mainly on top-facing surfaces and to break up the fur.
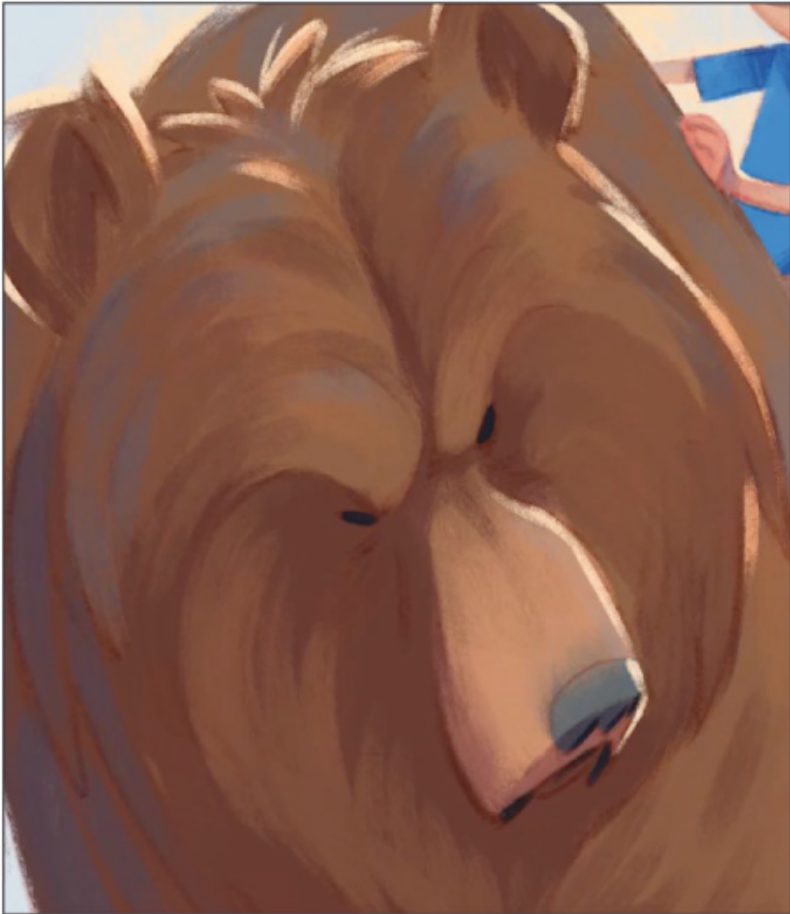
11 Further detailing
Finally, on a new layer over the line group, I begin cleaning up transitions in the shading, paint deeper shadows in the bear's fur, define his face and eyes better, and generally add nuance to the piece.

12 Paint in some rim lighting
As we wrap up, the last element is a strong rim light to help to frame Danny and his bear. This lends them a triumphant mood.
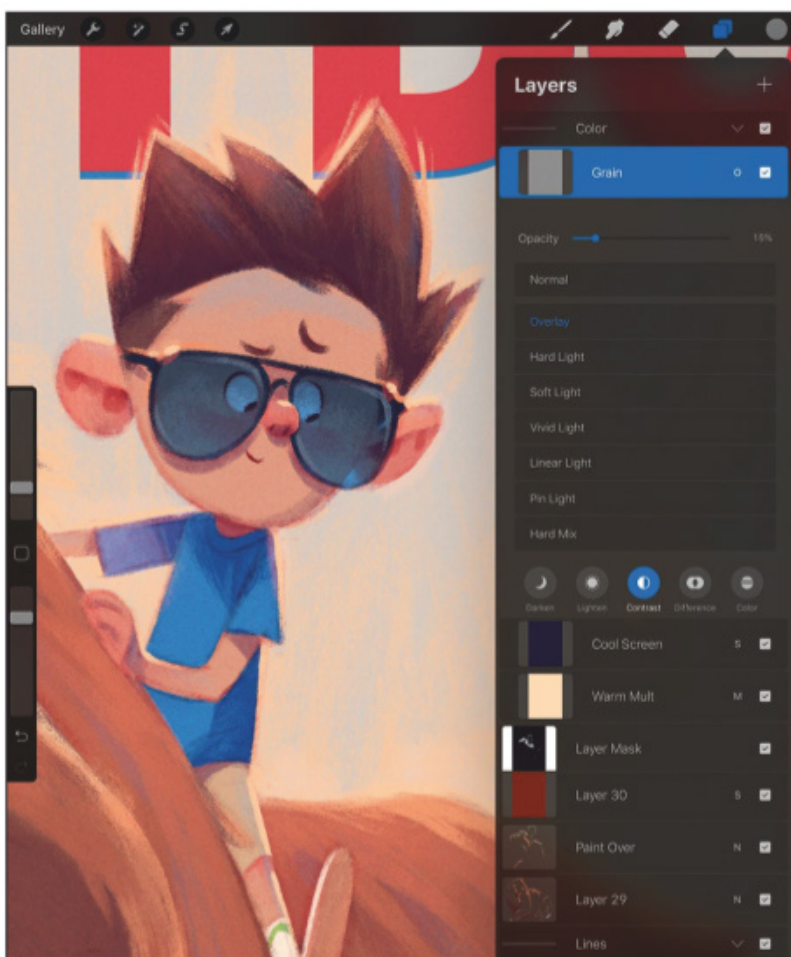
13 Colour correcting the piece
I want to bring greater harmony to my colours. At the top of the layers I fill a layer with a soft light yellow set to Multiply, to warm up my highlights. Above this I fill a layer with a dark blue and set it to Screen. I also add a layer of grain on top by making a 50 per cent grey Overlay layer. I add Adjustments>Noise, and apply a few pixels of Gaussian Blur. The result is subtle, but it adds a sense of atmosphere and light that makes all the difference.

Next month

Next month in...

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

ImagineFX

Character design masterclass!

Next issue, get ready to rip up the rule book on concepting and creating characters!

All this… and more!

Unmissable tips on character art
The brilliant Serge Birault unleashes his character art design manifesto!

Eliza Ivanova interview
We explore the ethereal personal works from this Pixar animator.

Cinematic keyframes
How to concept and generate art for film with Ivan Khomenko.

Fineliner and brush pen skills
Artem Solop takes you through his process of creating unique art.

ISSUE 177 ON SALE IN THE UK *Friday 12 July 2019*

Traditional skills & Procreate
BRING A FANTASY CHARACTER TO LIFE

Fatemeh Haghnejad quickly sketches a young faun on paper, before using Procreate to develop the idea and give it a traditional media look

Artist
PROFILE

Fatemeh Haghnejad
LOCATION: Norway

Fatemeh, also known as BlueBirdy, is a freelance illustrator and character designer working on children's books, young adults novels... and on a secret project with her husband and fellow artist Even Mehl Amundsen.
www.bluebirdy.net

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 8 now!

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PROCREATE

DEFAULT BRUSHES: STUCCO

I use this brush for adding texture throughout the artwork.

NARINDER PENCIL

This brush is perfect for helping me to get the initial line work down.

POLYGONS

For smudging certain areas of my art, this brush is very handy.

In this workshop I'm going to give you an overview of my creative process, from coming up with an initial idea, all the tools I use in Procreate, and how they can help speed up the illustration process.

I want to show you how I'm able to create artwork that could be used in a children's book, for example.

ImagineFX has kindly given me the freedom to choose the subject for this workshop. The first thing that I do is close my eyes, and let myself go to where I want to be and what

I want to do. I love to see my characters come to life in their own world. For this illustration I've decided to draw a sweet faun boy spending his afternoon making dolls that he can bring to life with his breath. With this idea in mind, I pick up my pencil and start sketching…

1 Take your small ideas seriously

If it's a portfolio piece and you're free to choose a subject, then even throwaway ideas are worth considering. For both personal and commissioned pieces, I start by listing the things I need to see in my image. This is because I can easily become distracted when I start a painting, and end up either drawing something else or miss out the key points in the original idea. Furthermore, it helps me to pare back the story that I want to tell with my illustrations. Here are the words that I write down for my idea: faun boy, about 10 years old, warm colours, afternoon, wooden toys, mushrooms. I make these quick digital sketches to visualise my ideas.

2 Let's feel the character

Once I've chosen a design, I start sketching on paper using a red pencil. I think that the lines come easier and more naturally if I use a real pencil. ➡
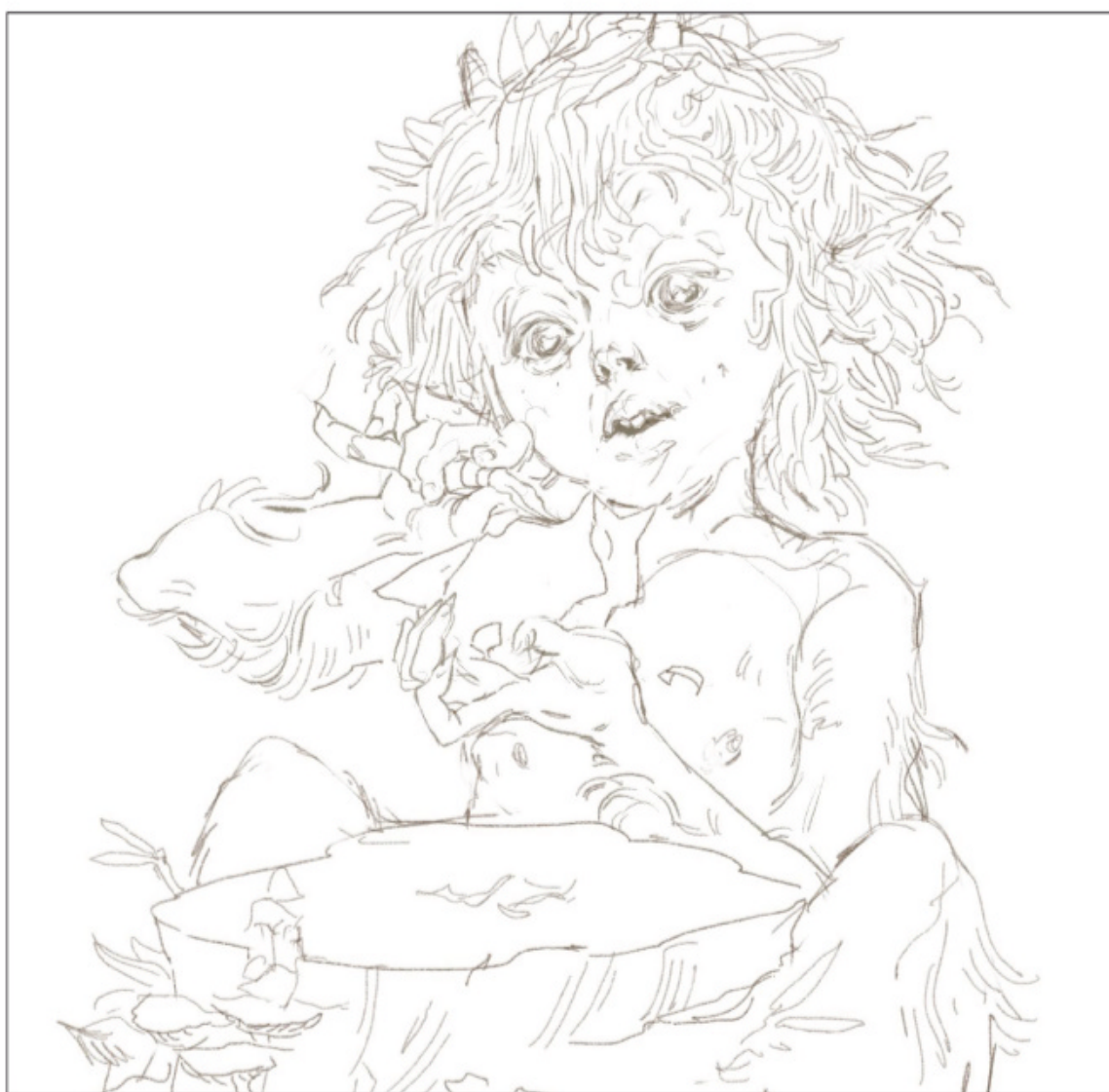
3 Switching to Procreate

I usually ink the line art before scanning it into either Procreate or Photoshop, because this will give me clean lines to work with. However, there's no scanner in the log cabin that I'm staying in at the moment, so I decide to transfer the traditional sketch into Procreate and create the line art digitally. Thinking laterally, I take a photo of my sketch and open it in Procreate. Then I reduce the Opacity of the sketch and trace over it, making a clean drawing on a new layer. The first drawing that I made of the faun wasn't quite right; he was a little chubby and messy.

4 Initial detailing

I create a second layer and pay more attention to my details while avoiding putting down unnecessary lines. My go-to Procreate brush for this stage is the Narinder pencil. I put my efforts into showing the faun's level of concentration and the pressure in his fingers as he grips the wooden toy. I also make his work area look more interesting by adding wood shavings and a friendly bird. I keep the background line art on a separate layer because I'm not sure if I want to have a background yet.
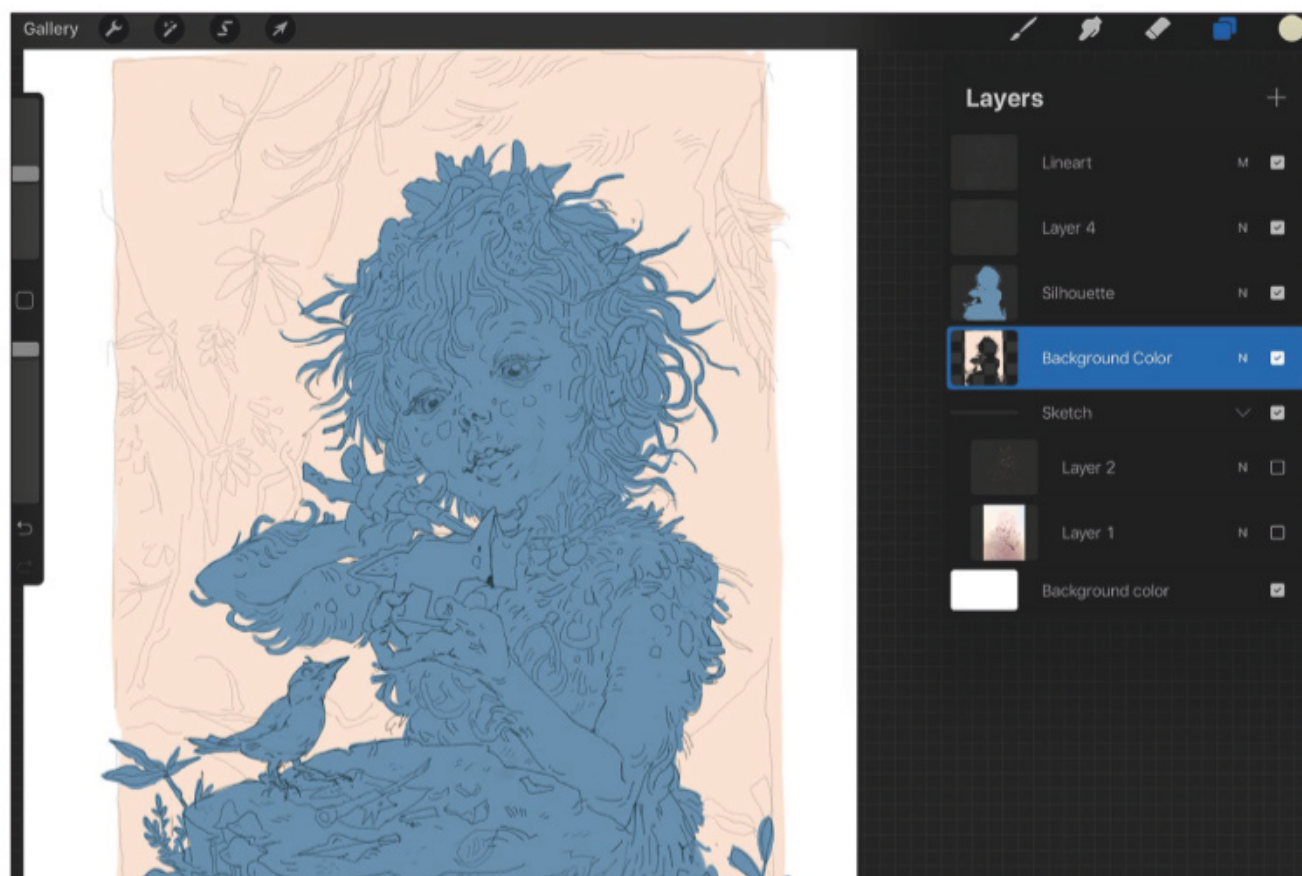
5 Starting on the colours

I'll keep the line art layer on top for almost the whole of my painting process. Next, I open a new layer and colour the silhouette of my characters. To create a simple coloured background I select the silhouette layer and invert it, before filling it with my chosen colour.

6 Laying down base colours

I create a new layer for each coloured element. They're all Clipping Masks attached to the silhouette layer. This approach helps me to add the shading and also makes it easier to select certain areas for colouring.

7 Solve the mystery of light and shade

I've worked out a method that enables me to easily light an object or figure, which I'd love to share with you. I make the form of my character using Super Sculpey (a clay that doesn't get dry out), then photograph it under different lighting conditions, such as bright sunlight, indoor lights or candle light. I also use the light of my iPad or different colours created using my phone screen. Because so much of my work is from the imagination, it's great to know that I can control environmental elements within each piece, such as the lighting. As long as you remain consistent with your choices you can achieve anything! I also find it helpful to draw the direction of different light sources using arrows on their own layer.
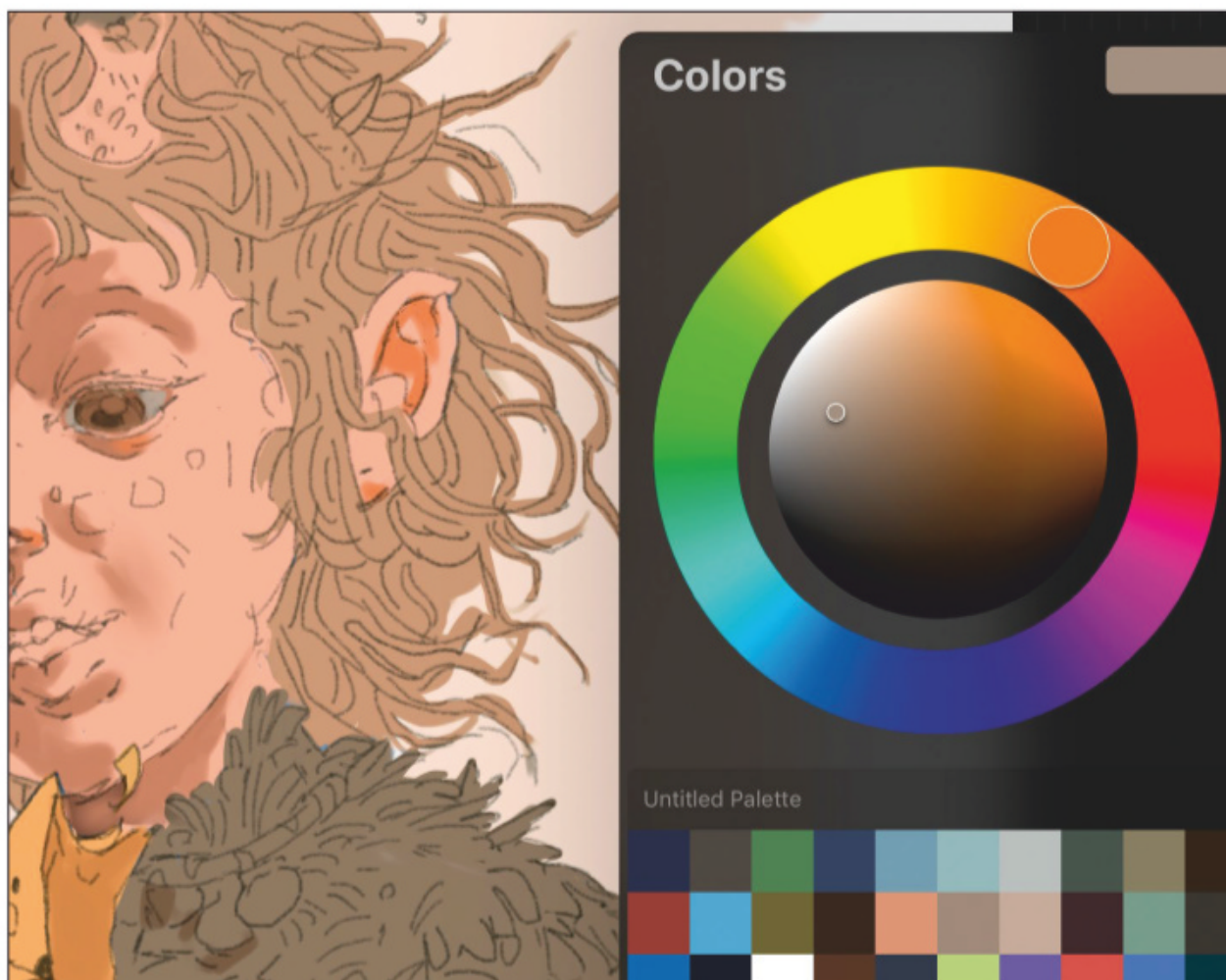
8 Decide on the type and direction of the light

I almost have the base colours in place, and have decided that the scene will feature natural daylight under a treetop canopy. Next, I work out where the sun is located and where I can add reflection. Now that I've chosen the direction of light, I use a medium Hard brush to add all the shadows on a Multiple layer. I paint the shadows with a light grey-yellowish colour, sometimes going either a little darker or a little lighter. I also use different tones such as blue and purple, for variation. On the same layer I add blue shadows from the canopy light and a yellow-green lighter shadow down the left-hand side of the piece, which is reflected from the greenery around the young faun. ➤➤

9 Introducing colour tones
Once I feel that I'm almost done with the shadows, (although I usually need to revisit this layer a few times to fix things), I go back to specific object layers such as the hair or skin and add some colour tones.
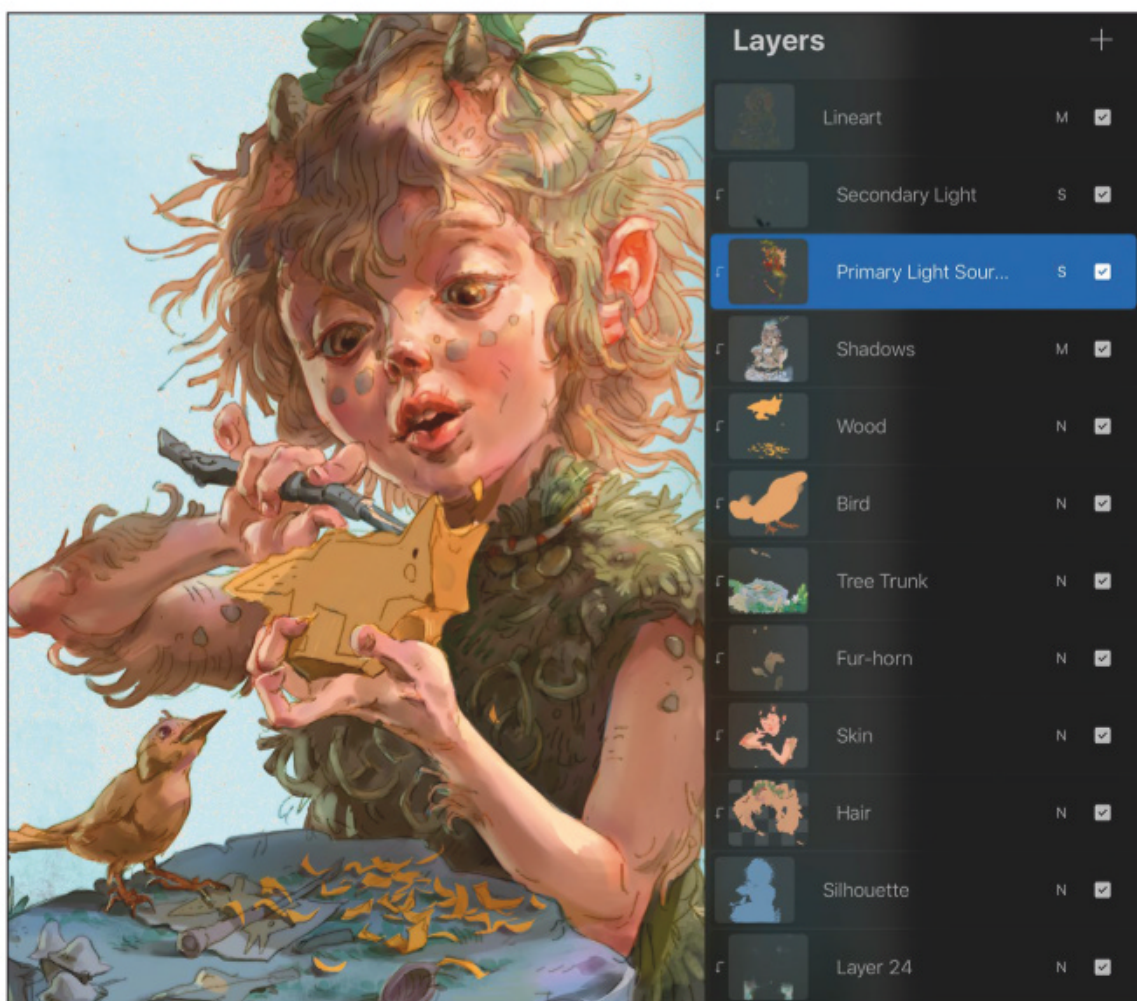
10 Enhancing the sunlight
I chose a Screen layer for the sunlight, and paint with different colours such as purple and orange, which helps to generate different, interesting shades of light.
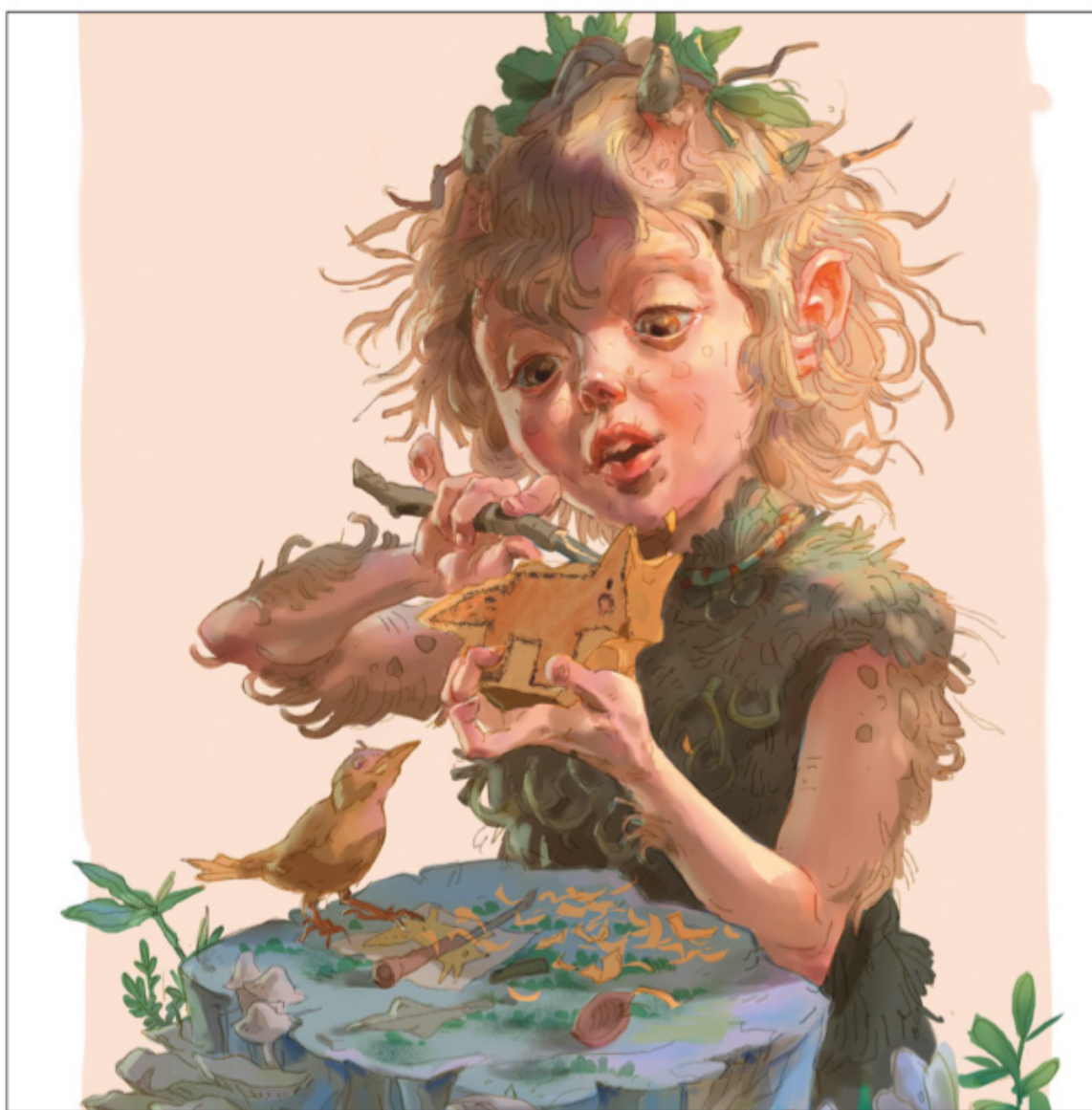
11 Altering the colour of the line art
Now I want to change the colour of my line art, to make the appearance of the lines closer to the colours around them. I alpha-lock the line art layer and make my changes: for example, I lighten the lines that describe the faun's hair.
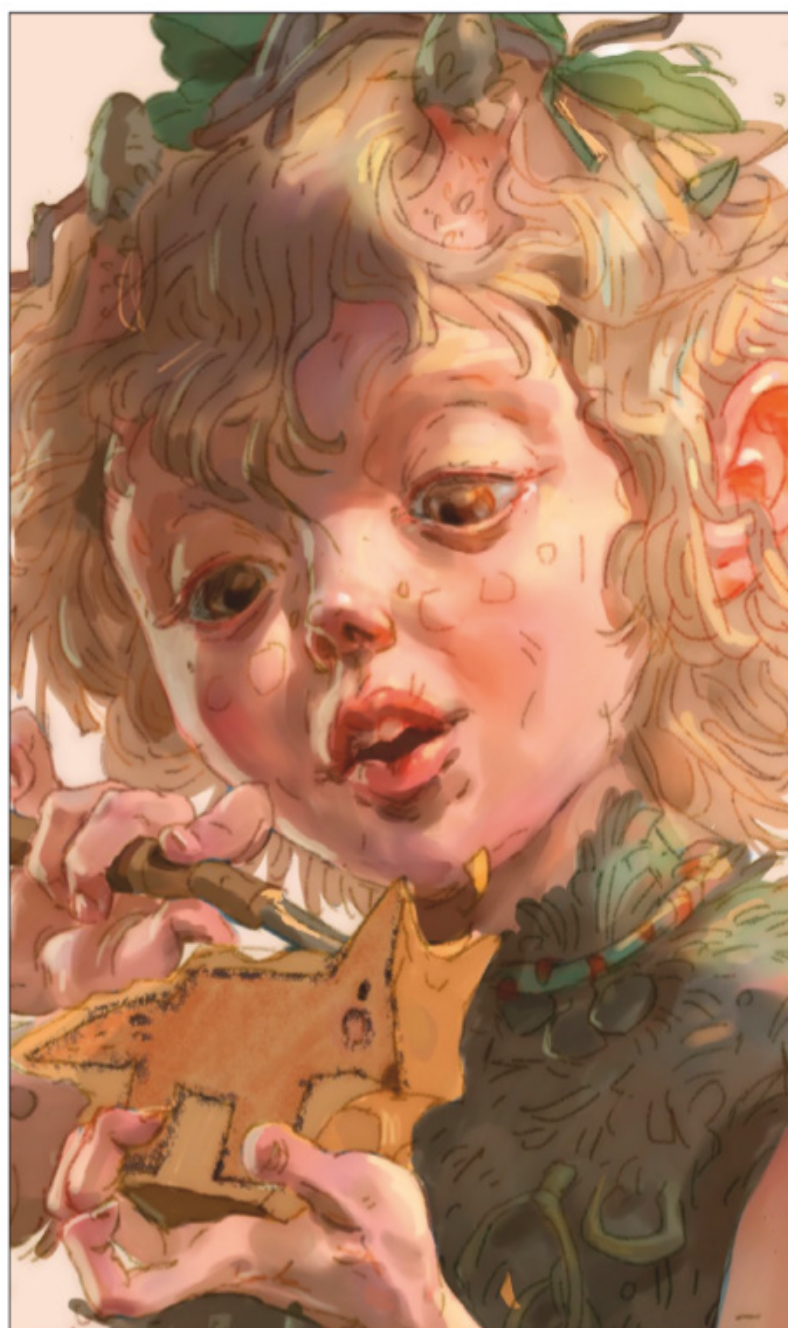
12 Background tweaks and pushing the traditional painting look

I change the background colour using the Color Balance tool to make the character stand out more. Then I add a texture under my background layer and then set this to Multiply (the texture layer can be any texture that you like – I found this one by doing a quick search online). Next, I add some branches and a tree in the background, although I'm not entirely happy with the result so I decide to keep the texture layer and the blue background layer, which is on a darker Color layer. It adds a traditional look to my painting, which I really like.

13 Rendering and solving some light and shadow problems

Although I've finished working in layers, my illustration isn't done yet. To do the rendering I usually copy my entire canvas, paste it all on to one layer on top of everything and paint over the whole thing in a Normal layer. I can use the layers below to quickly select edges for and work on them cleanly on my new layer. I work across the composition to pull the whole image together.

14 Putting in the finishing touches

At this point I'm happy that everything is in the right place and I can start noodling away. I add more texture with the Stucco brush, and paint in some details such as plants in the background and hair strands. Now my faun is finished!

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS
ImagineFX
Reviews

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

5 PRODUCTS ON TEST

HARDWARE

90 Artist 15.6 Pro
A budget tablet that come complete with tilt, pressure sensitivity and a battery-free stylus – we find out if XP-Pen's device can unseat Wacom's Cintiq 16.

TRAINING

95 The Anatomy of Style: The 3/4 Head Parts 1 & 2
Patrick J Jones explores everything from basic drawing principles to the meaning of art in his wide-ranging tutorial.

BOOKS

96 The Art and Making of Aladdin
Return to the bustling city of Agrabah with this behind-the-scenes look at Disney's live-action adaptation of its stone-cold classic animation.
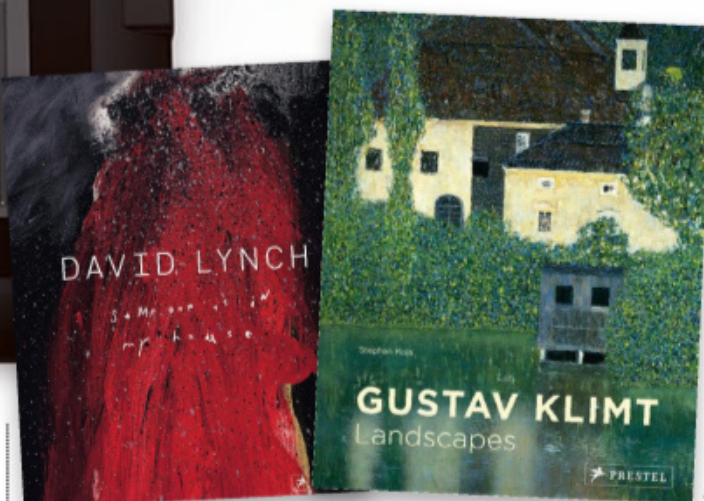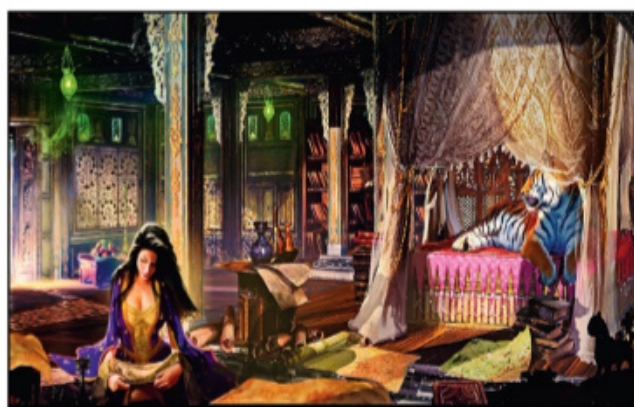
97 David Lynch: Someone Is In My House
Uncover the artistic portfolio of the celebrated American filmmaker.

97 Gustav Klimt: Landscapes
Famed for his striking portrait works, this collection of landscape paintings from the Austrian artist is sure to broaden the mind.

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

Removable and replaceable film covers help to minimise screen glare when working directly under a light source.

Artist 15.6 Pro

MAC & PC

AIMING HIGH XP-Pen wants to sit at the top table, next to Apple and Wacom. Should the budget tablet manufacturer be given a menu?

Price £370 **Company** XP-Pen **Web** www.xp-pen.com

The big question with any new graphics tablet is 'how does it compare to the current market?' Every new contender can boast improved features and specs, but ultimately what we want to know is how it stands up against the big guns – Wacom and Apple in this instance.

With its lightweight screen and pressure and tilt-sensitive, battery-free pen, the XP-Pen Artist 15.6 Pro is arguably the best non-Wacom/Apple competitor so far. But it does have certain limitations that hold it back

from dethroning its competitors. However, the price point/quality level trade-off will be good enough to sway some artists, depending on their particular requirements.

The Artist 15.6 Pro has an active drawing area of 15.6 inches diagonally, which gives it a full HD resolution of 1,920x1,080. The display has an impressive gamut of 84 per cent of Adobe RGB. That's higher than the Cintiq 16, which has a gamut of around 75 per cent RGB. However, the colour accuracy, while good, isn't perfect and so you'll need to use a colour calibrator

to avoid your artwork's colours looking inaccurate if you print it. You can ramp up the brightness of the Artist 15.6 Pro screen and turn it down just as easily, thanks to handy buttons on the side of the tablet.

REDUCTION IN PARALLAX

The screen's surface is laminated and bonded. This reduces the parallax effect to low levels – very similar to those of the Cintiq. Yes, it's noticeable, but you'll soon become accustomed to it during your painting sessions.

The pre-applied and replaceable film cover's anti-glare properties reduce reflections considerably. However, the trade-off is that the tablet surface is slippery, feeling more like a smartphone's screen than paper (the screen, sans film, lacks any tooth). The Artist 15.6 Pro comes with a free anti-fouling glove to minimise marks being generated accidentally.

The supplied anti-fouling glove will help to improve the drawing experience when using the Artist 15.6 Pro.

Don't want to rest the Artist 15.6 Pro on your lap? No problem – just use the included stand.

line lag, which makes drawing smooth lines trickier. Again, these aren't enormous drawbacks for some people, but busy artists and/or perfectionists will be frustrated having to correct brushstrokes repeatedly.

The stylus comes with a hefty plastic pen holder that houses eight replacement nibs and will definitely keep your stylus safe while travelling, while the holder opens to become a pen stand. There's no way of attaching the stand to your tablet, though.

At the time of writing, the XP-Pen Artist 15.6 Pro is available for a very reasonable £370, making it cheaper

66 There are eight built-in shortcut keys down the side of the tablet 99

than the Cintiq 16, currently £515, and considerably cheaper than the latest iPad Pro, which starts at £769 for the 11-inch display, plus £119 for the second-generation Apple Pencil. Considering that the Artist 15.6 Pro comes with a built-in stand, replaceable screen covers, an anti-fouling glove and a considerable number of spare nibs – all of which would cost extra with a Cintiq – the price is an attractive selling point.

POWER OPTIONS

The tablet's USB connection cable enables you to both connect the display and draw power with the same cable. You don't need to attach it to an AC adaptor. It can even be run from an external power bank, which adds to its portability. Durability-wise the Artist 15.6 feels lighter than the Cintiq 16, which is a plus, but it also feels slightly less durable than Wacom's device. Heavy-handed artists may find that the screen distorts both when pressing down on the screen and on the edges if you're near them, but the majority of people will be fine. The tablet runs silently.

There are eight built-in shortcut keys positioned down the side of the tablet, alongside the new red dial, which can be programmed to zoom in and out, alter brush sizes and so on. The Artist 15.6 Pro also comes with a stand that provides a similar angle to the Cintiq 16's foldout legs. The stand works, but the plastic feels slightly flimsy and ➡➡

The stylus is battery-free and boasts 8,192 levels of pressure sensitivity, as well as 60 degrees of tilt functionality. There are some caveats here. The tilt function doesn't feel as sensitive as the Cintiq's Pro Pen 2, and when it's tilted the alignment of the cursor goes askew, frustratingly offsetting the cursor from the nib of the stylus.

The pressure sensitivity feels a little unresponsive too, with more initial activation force required than you'd expect to produce light brushstrokes. Even if you experiment with the Pressure Curve settings, it doesn't feel as natural and fluid as the Cintiq 16. This may not be a deal-breaker to all artists; it depends on your drawing and painting techniques and style. But if you want consistent line width or smooth transitions between low and high opacity, it can become grating.

Similarly, there's a noticeable amount of line jitter present, as well as

rather than attaching to the tablet, it simply rests on it. We leant down too heavily on the screen once, and it did tip sideways, but that was a one-off. There are no mounting holes for mounting to a stand or a VESA mount.

LIGHTWEIGHT AND COMPACT

Even taking the criticisms mentioned into account, the Artist 15.6 Pro is a great bit of kit. It's conveniently sized, and so lightweight that it's very

Furthermore, drawing and painting with it will feel slightly off to artists who work spend a lot of time working with finer details.

XP-Pen's device is the best screen tablet alternative to the Cintiq 16, if your budget is tight. It offers a good-quality screen, with low parallax, useful shortcut keys and limited tilt functionality. However, when comparing its colour accuracy, overall build quality, feel of the surface and line drawing quality to Wacom's

The stylus features 8,192 levels of pressure sensitivity, and comes with eight replaceable nibs that can be stored in a study container.

> ❝ Artist 15.6 Pro is superb value for money, and is a great starter tablet for hobbyists, students and junior artists ❞

portable and easy to set up, even when working on a narrow desk.

The price/quality ratio is brilliant, too. Long gone are the days where only professionals could justify paying for a decent quality screen tablet. The Artist 15.6 Pro is superb value for money, and is a great introductory tablet for hobbyists, students and junior artists.

But while the Artist 15.6 Pro has a lot of strengths, it's hard not to overlook the lack of sensitivity with the stylus.

offering, the Artist 15.6 Pro falls short. If you don't want to make these sacrifices, you're better off spending the extra £145 on the Cintiq 16.

Speaking of money, the price difference between the Artist 15.6 Pro and the iPad Pro is huge. If all you want is a display tablet, this is a sensible way to save money. And if you needed any more convincing, we expect the iPad Pro to be rendered technologically obsolete years before XP-Pen's device is put out to pasture.

The device connects to your computer and is powered by just one cable, reducing desktop clutter.

DETAILS

Features
■ 1,920x1080 pixels, full HD
■ Display colour gamut: 88 per cent NTSC; 120 per cent sRGB
■ 5,080 LPI (lines per inch) resolution
■ 8,192 levels of pen pressure
■ HDMI and USB ports
■ Size: 443x280x 12.6mm
■ Active area: 344.16x193.59mm
■ 11mm thick
■ 4.56kg

System Requirements
PC: Windows 10/8/7 (32- or 64-bit)
Mac: OS X version 10.10 or later

Rating
★★★☆☆

Patrick J Jones uses detailed study sheets to set out the basic principles of head anatomy.
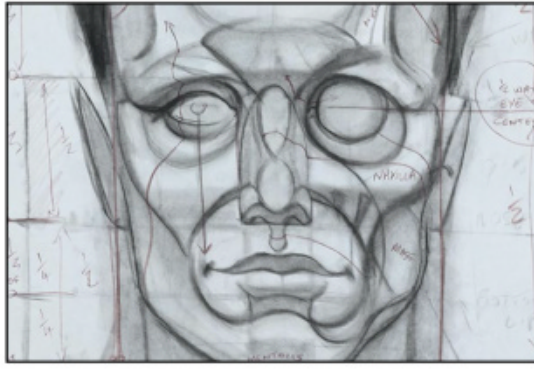
The heads are rendered in sanguine (otherwise known as red chalk or pastel), with erasers and stumps on hand to work back into the drawings.

In his video, Patrick shows how to construct angled heads while exploring the broader meaning of being an artist.
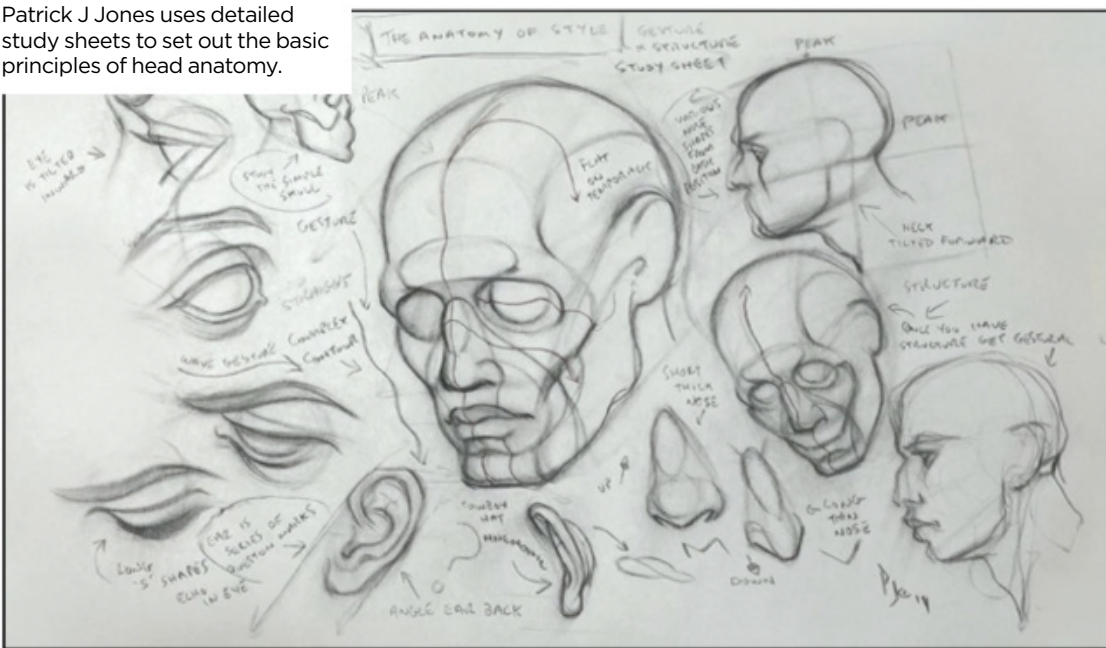
The Anatomy of Style: The 3/4 Head Parts 1 & 2

HEAD MASTER Artist and painter Patrick J Jones explores everything from basic drawing principles to the meaning of art in a wide-ranging tutorial

Publisher Patrick J Jones **Price** AUD $32 **Format** Download **Web** www.pjartworks.com/shop

Structurally speaking, The 3/4 Head is one of the simplest training videos you'll see. Patrick J Jones gets his pencil out, then talks while he draws some heads. But don't be fooled: this is a tutorial that goes deep – not only into its stated subject of head anatomy, but also into what it means to be an artist.

The moment where Patrick brings out his kneadable eraser to work over his developing drawing epitomises the range of his teaching. The illustrator talks about using the eraser not as a tool to wipe out mistakes (which is how most of us think of it) but as a drawing implement as valid as any pencil. This leads into a discussion about the psychology of drawing, and how something as simple as the way you use an eraser can shape your confidence as an artist, for good or ill.

By this point, Patrick has already shown how he puts together anatomy study sheets that he can refer to while he crafts his full drawing (he explains in Part 2 why working from photography is risky). Labels and arrows help to explain the various planes and forms that underpin the anatomy of the head. He's also commenced the first of a couple of beguiling studies in sanguine, the traditional name for distinctive red chalk or pastel. You'll see the blending techniques he employs, including working with paper stumps and that eraser, that give his drawings such a painterly quality, and his gestural approach to using his pencil.

The 3/4 Head is sold in two parts of roughly equal length, priced at AUD $16 each, but this is one of those times when you'll get the most value from buying both of these rewarding instalments.

DETAILS

Topics covered
- Head anatomy
- Study sheets
- Blending techniques
- Effects of ageing
- Light and shadow

Length
194 minutes

Rating
★★★★★

ARTIST PROFILE
PATRICK J JONES

Belfast-born Patrick became inspired to take up art by the work of Boris Vallejo and Frank Frazetta, and moved to London – the first step on a path that would see him travel the world as an illustrator. He's painted book covers for a range of authors, and has created concept art for films. Now living in Australia, Patrick's also written several books on art, and teaches his Anatomy of Style workshops at universities and online.

www.pjartworks.com

The book reveals that scale models were used to determine the size of Princess Jasmine's bedroom, which helped inform the concept art.
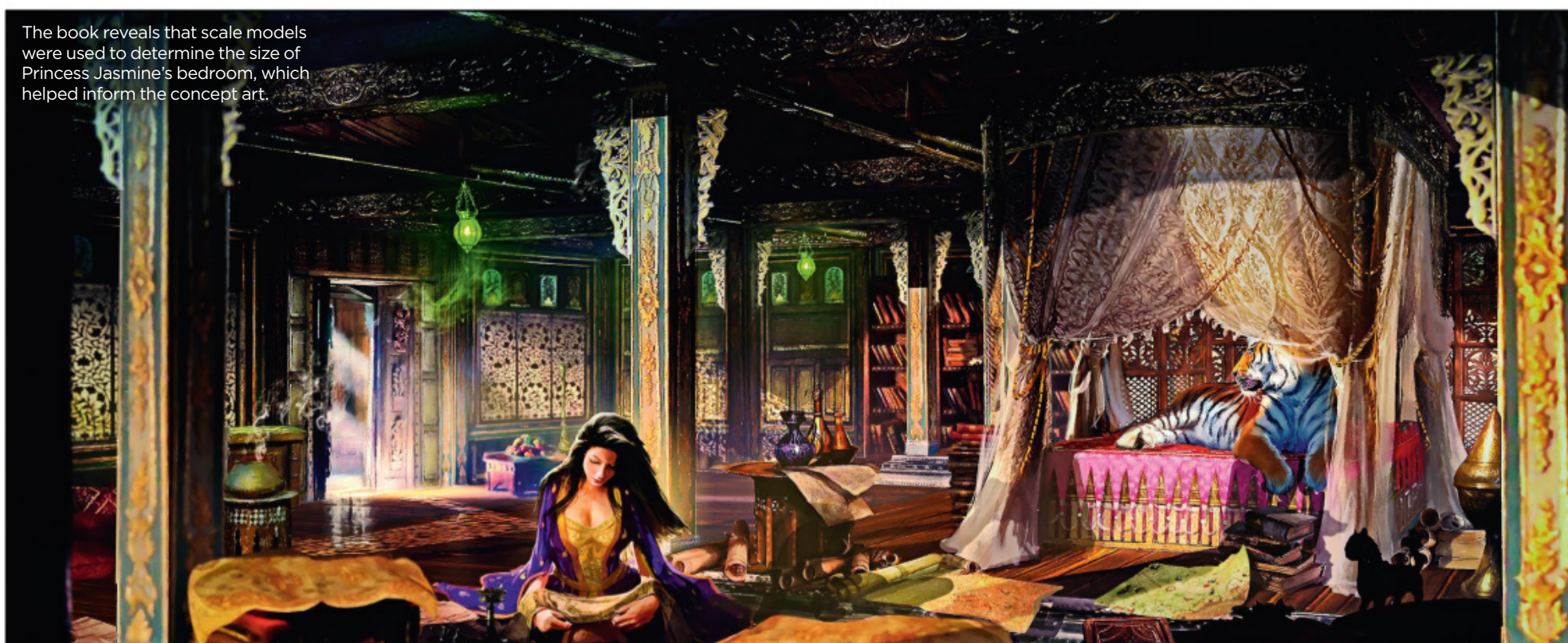
The Art and Making of Aladdin

WISH LIST Return to the city of Agrabah with this behind-the-scenes look at Disney's live-action adaptation of its stone-cold classic animation

Author Emily Zemler **Publisher** Titan Books **Price** £35 **Web** www.titanbooks.com **Available** Now

Live-action versions of classic Disney animations have been hitting the big screen over the past few years, and now it's the turn of Aladdin.

Of course, the 1992 film was itself a remake of a tale found in The Arabian Nights. And while Disney polished Aladdin and the Magic Lamp for contemporary audiences, that doesn't mean more can't be done with the story. As director Guy Ritchie points out in the book's introduction, the new film "needed to have just the right balance of old and new."

Like the treasures inside the film's Cave of Wonders, you might imagine a wealth of concept art on offer within the book, which helped to fire up Ritchie's vision. Sadly, that's wishful thinking. Take the city of Agrabah: a heady mix of palatial opulence, busy market streets and gloomy slums. It's a prime opportunity to show off developed concepts and abandoned early ideas. Instead, any environment art is limited to a selection of polished artworks that are just a short hop from the finished product. And if you want concepts of the inhabitants and countless objects found in the bustling city port, prepare for disappointment.

It's the same story with character design. Hands up who's keen to

> ❝ **There's a clear imbalance between insights on the art and the 'making of'** ❞

examine the explorations of the Genie's many guises (even if they are reined in for the finished film)? How about visual approaches for Aladdin, Princess Jasmine or Jafar? Sorry, nothing to see here. There's barely more than a page of costume concepts, while coverage of creatures such as Abu, Aladdin's pet monkey, is limited to 3D wireframes and fully rendered models.

Despite the book's two-handed title, there's a clear imbalance between insights on the art and the 'making of'. The latter comes off much better, and there's plenty of information to be gleaned on the casting, costumes, stunts and locations in terms of the film-making process. A breakdown of the memorable parade scene ("Prince Ali! Fabulous he! Ali Ababwa…") displays some meticulous scale-model work of the marketplace, dancers and animals, for example.

The high-quality film-making photography, together with close-ups of clothing and accessories, proves that a lot of imaginative vis-dev work went into the design of Aladdin. It's just a pity that this book doesn't explore this as satisfactorily as the on-set observations. And there's the rub.

RATING ★★★☆☆

One of a handful of exterior concepts presented in the book, showing off Agrabah's market.

David Lynch: Someone Is In My House

DARK ART Uncover the artistic portfolio of the celebrated American filmmaker with this collection of his drawings, paintings and installations

Author Kristine McKenna **Publisher** Prestel **Price** £50 **Web** https://prestelpublishing.randomhouse.de **Available** Now

The title 'celebrity painter' doesn't sit well with David Lynch. In the preface to this collection of his work, the filmmaker points out that "once you get known for one thing, it's really hard to jump-start the other thing and be taken seriously for it."

Someone Is In My House accompanies a retrospective of Lynch's work at Maastricht's Bonnefanten Museum, which aims to
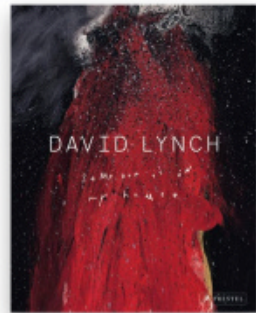
David Lynch painted Six Men Getting Sick in 1967, as part of a short animated film.

correct this imbalance. The book brings together six decades worth of Lynch's artistic output. An introduction by his biographer, Kristine McKenna, and essays by writers Michael Chabon and Petra Giloy-Hirtz help to recalibrate the reader's view of Lynch before venturing into his work.

Broken down by medium, the art on display here is as haunting as you'd expect. The impact of Francis Bacon,

the only artist Lynch has singled as a significant influence, can be seen in paintings of flaming cities, drawings of bestiality on the front lawn, and prints of distorted nudes. Sure to fascinate and disturb Lynch fans and general readers, this glimpse into his wider creative output shows how an artist's vision can span different mediums.

RATING ★★★★☆

Gustav Klimt: Landscapes

NEW HORIZONS Famed for his striking portrait works, this collection of landscape paintings from the Austrian artist is sure to broaden the mind

Author Stephan Koja **Publisher** Prestel **Price** £15 **Web** https://prestelpublishing.randomhouse.de **Available** Now

The conventional landscapes and experimental art that preoccupied Klimt during the later decades of his life are finally given the credit they deserve in Stephan Koja's book.

Tracing Klimt's landscape studies back to their roots during the late eighteen hundreds, Stephan's book brings together all of the known scenic paintings by the artist. Presented in colour where possible, the author has
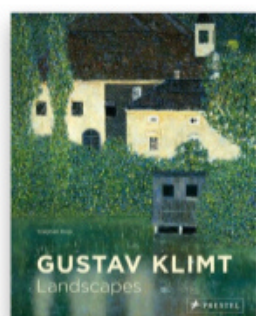
Avenue in Schloss Kammer Park was painted by Gustav Klimt in 1912, six years before his death.
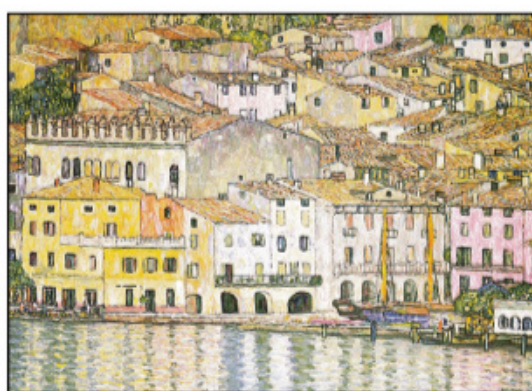
even rounded up images of pieces that are currently lost.

Essays on Klimt's landscape work provide in-depth analysis on his paintings in regards to Viennese Modernism, other Austrian landscape painters, and even how they relate to the telescope. While these passages can verge on the densely academic, they remain accessible enough to enrich the study of casual readers.
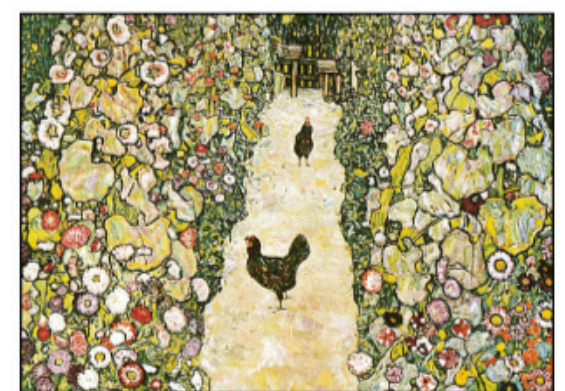
Perhaps the book's biggest appeal is its studies of Klimt's art. These give the reader the chance to study the artist's brushwork in a way that isn't possible outside of exhibitions. And with his works spread out among galleries and private collections, this could be the most enlightening way to examine Klimt's landscapes.

RATING ★★★★☆

COMPUTER DESIGN MATTERS ARTS

THE WORLD'S LEADING DESIGN MAGAZINE
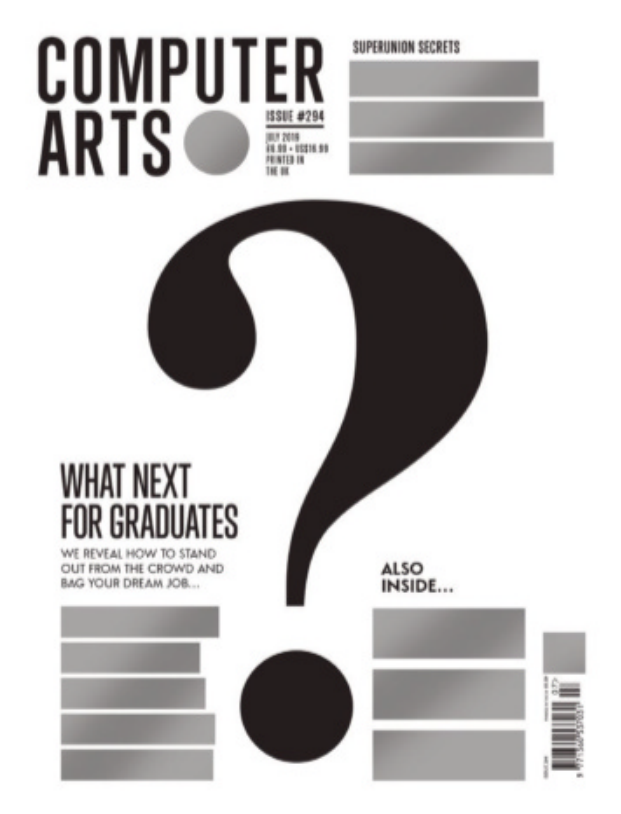
THE NEW ISSUE, A SURVIVAL GUIDE FOR GRADUATES, IS ON SALE 21 JUNE

Computer Arts connects you to the design industry and helps you solve daily design challenges with invaluable industry insight and advice

GET THE NEW ISSUE NOW:

www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

ImagineFX

Traditional Artist

Inspiration and advice from the best pro artists

104

100

This issue:

110

114

FXPosé

SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL ARTISTS

Margaret Morales

LOCATION: Philippines **MEDIA:** Watercolour, ink, graphite, acrylic **WEB:** www.margaretmorales.com

Margaret is known for her portraits of mysterious women. Her work is inspired by her love for natural elements, role-playing games, fantasy images and Japanese culture.
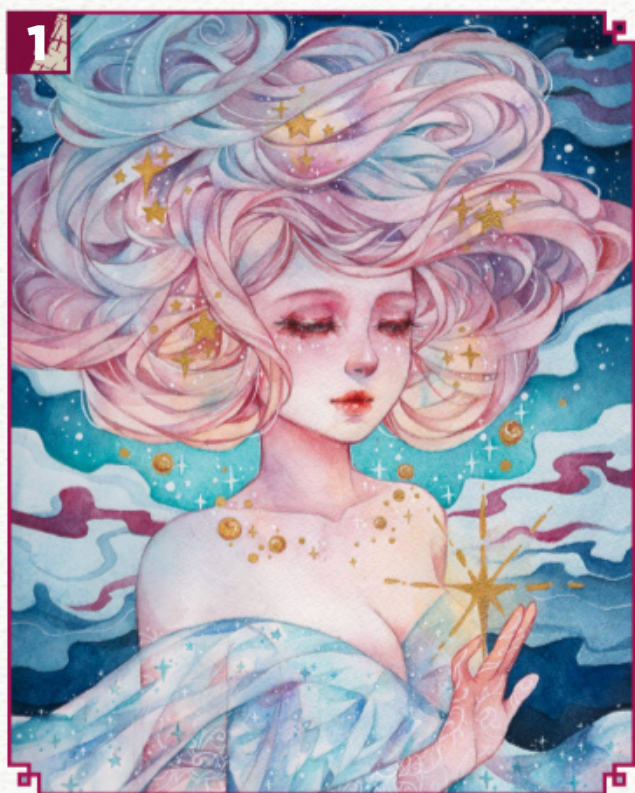
1 THE STARS WHO LISTEN
"Inspired by a book I was reading at that time, I illustrated a version of a star who grants wishes at twilight."

2 LOST AT SEA
"Being born in a tropical country, I've always been fascinated with the ocean – especially the magical creatures that may live in the deep."

3 SLEEPS WITH BUTTERFLIES
"Inspired by Tori Amos' song, the painting evokes the calm sense of dreams and how slumber can bring out one's inner peace."

4 KAKOMU
"With this painting I wanted to explore the flow of our imagination, represented by water, as it passes through our body and within our subconscious."

Daniel Bilmes

LOCATION: US **MEDIA:** Oils **WEB:** www.danielbilmes.com

Daniel is a contemporary painter who's based in Los Angeles. "I've always found myself interested in how something is constructed," he says. "The visual rhythm of textures fascinates me."

1 WOVEN
"Woven from the fabric of reality by the hands of fate."

2 VEILS OF PERCEPTION
"I wanted to show different versions of the same personality, and perception of self. The figure looking at the viewer is the only one that's momentarily self-aware."

3 AUGUR
"We're able to see through our perceptions, but are also blinded by them. What is real when paradigms shift? What is knowledge next to infinity?"

Oils

ABSTRACT MARK MAKING SKILLS

VANESSA LEMEN uses abstract mark-making to conjure macro fantastical worlds within her imaginative realism portraits and compositions in oil

My painting process can be described as responsive and permeable, and I'm fascinated with finding similarities between the familiar and the unknown. There's so much life in both aspects, in the possibility of chance, and in what many might call mistakes or imperfections.

It's what I love about using different tools and materials, and making abstract marks. It enables me to explore and learn while in unknown territory. Experimenting with new tools provokes new ways of processing something, and guides me to the possibility of connecting with something on the fringes or beyond. Exploration is essential to the process, and discoveries can occur in all areas of painting, be it in the abstract or representational areas. It's different sometimes depending on

the area or the stage of the painting I'm working on, but overall it's just a matter of digging deeper and becoming lost in a place of reflection, curiosity and wonder.

What's amazing to think about is how the exploration pertains to the finished painting, too. How the dialogue between artist and surface gets passed along in the form of the painting itself. There's a story there now in the marks, like subtle runes that are left to be deciphered, and it's open to different interpretations. It might even be something that can't quite be put into words – and that may be one of the biggest motivations for us to keep scratching at the surface. The paintings we create and share can invite someone in to connect, to experience that intangible place, and to communicate with one another in ways that are universally understood.

In my studio I have clips that hold smaller paintings in nooks and spaces – wherever there's room to store more wet paintings and have them around and visible to me.

Ron and I also have a studio away from home, where we teach classes in drawing and painting. This school studio is not far from our home, and is an extension of our workspace as well as a great hub for creatives to meet, learn, and make art together.

Vanessa is an award-winning painter living in Carlsbad, CA with her artist husband Ron and their two cats, Rey and Maz. You can see more of her art at www.vanessalemenart.com or on Instagram (@vanessalemen). ➤➤
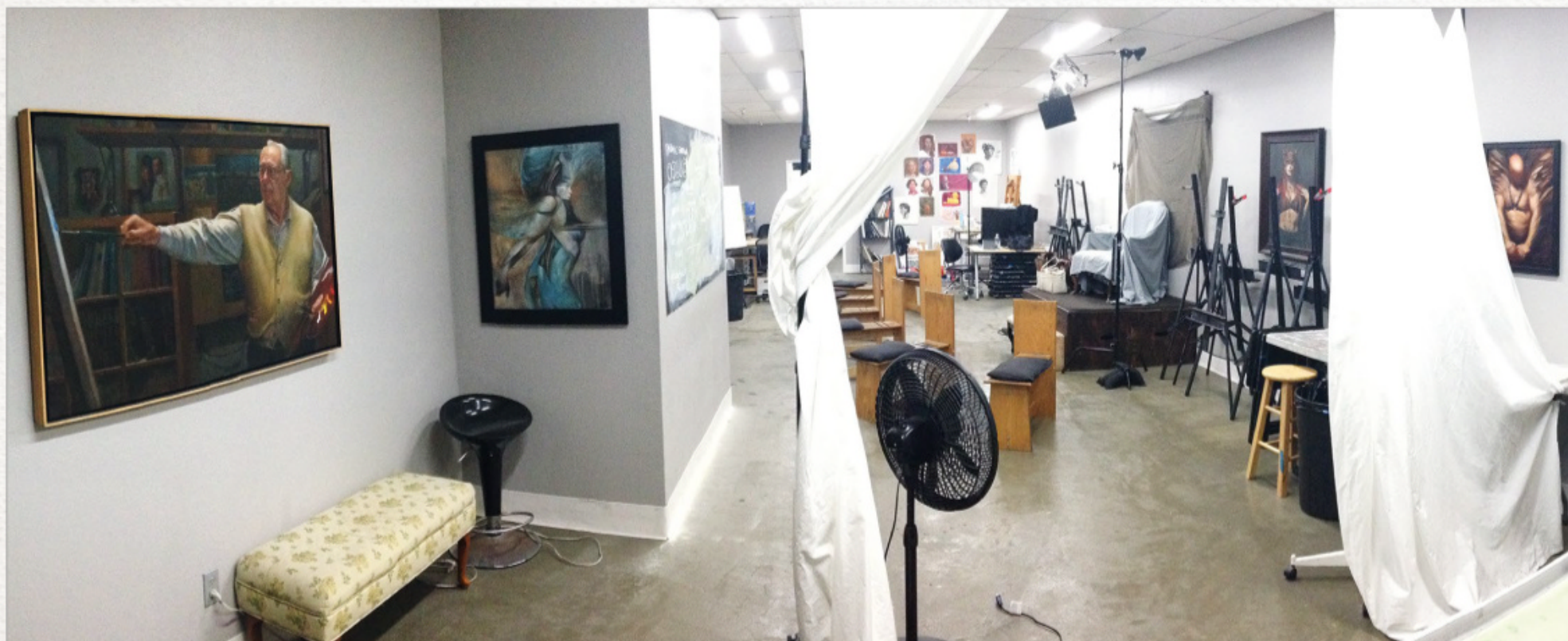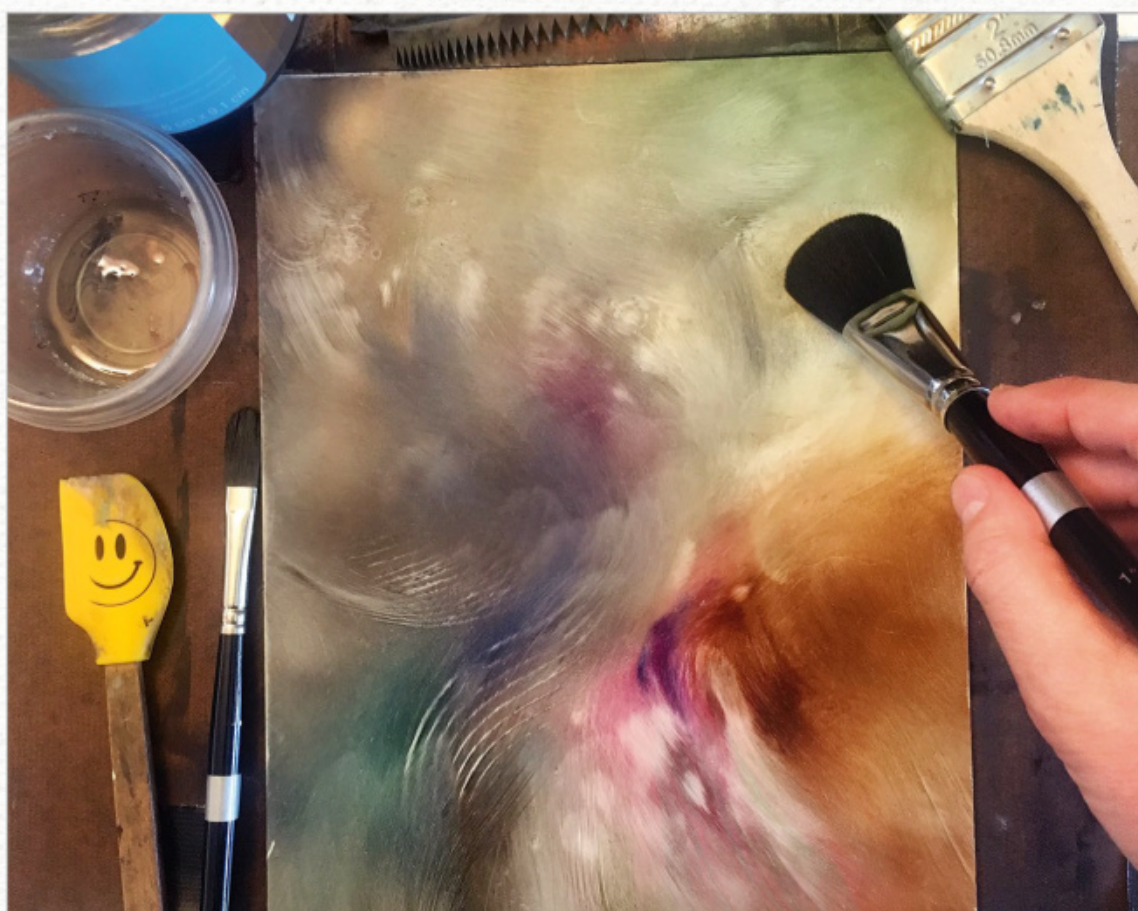
1 Initial mark-making

When I'm in the early stage of the painting process, it usually involves making marks on several different panels. It's a reactive process, and not necessarily about composing a picture with a set plan or outcome. Eventually, something will begin to show itself in the marks that I'm making, and I'll continue working on that panel that speaks to me the most.

2 Choosing a panel

When I'm finished with a day or two of making marks on several panels, I'll set out around my studio on drying racks and shelves, so that I can live with them and let them be there in my peripheral vision, because I might be working on another painting.

MATERIALS

CANVAS
■ 8x10-inch gessoed masonite panel

PAINTS
■ Oil paints (various colours/brands)

TOOLS
■ Silicone spatulas and combs
■ Sable brushes and mops
■ Bristle brushes

MISCELLANEOUS
■ Linseed oil
■ Odourless mineral spirits
■ Rags and paper towels (to paint with as well as for cleaning)
■ Mahl stick (for the rendered areas)
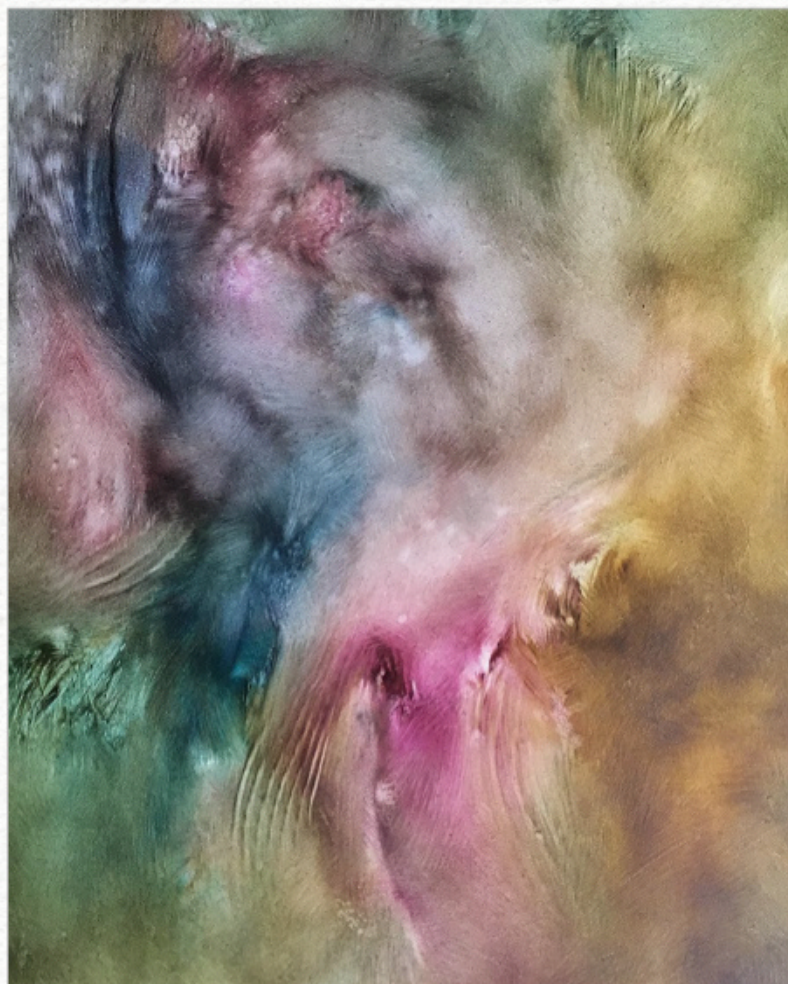
3 What I'm drawn to

There can be many reasons why I might feel that an abstract is successful as a start to work into. It could be the composition, an interesting colour scheme, strong contrast, subtlety, a balance of hard and soft edges... it can be so varied. Sometimes I'm drawn to one as more of a challenge, with problems that I'm excited to solve.
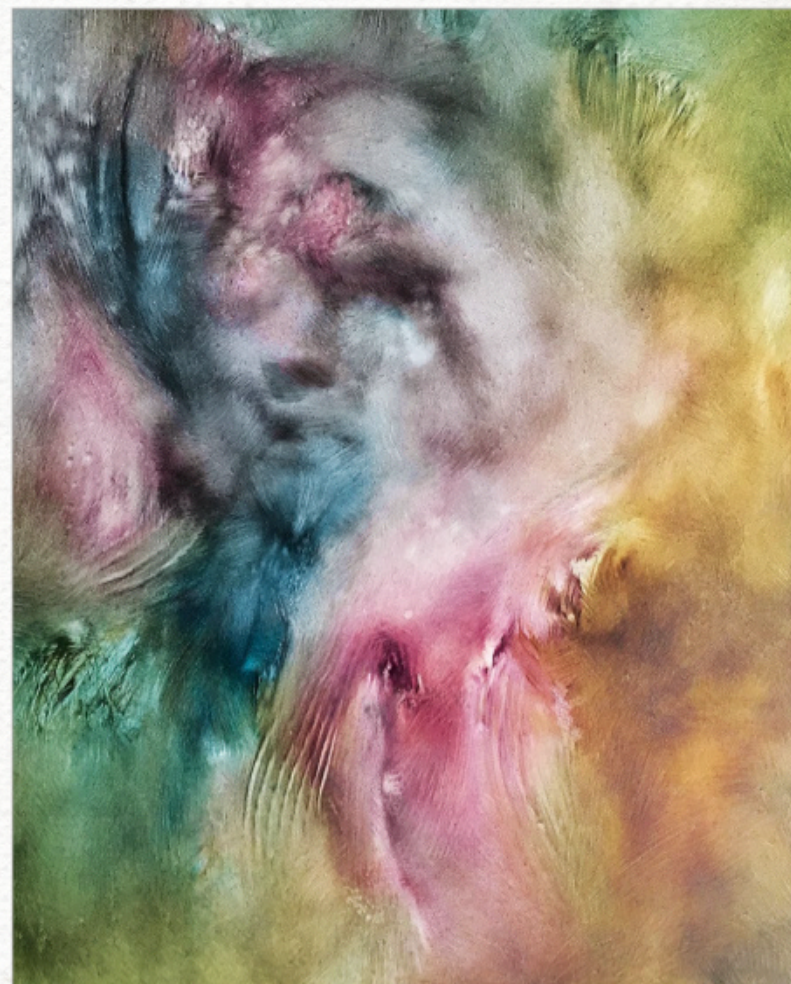
4 Mark-making as note-taking

With various panels surrounding me, most often when one catches my eye, it's because I saw something in the marks that stood out to me – very similar to how we see images in clouds. That's when I'll take it over to my easel and start to make some marks as notes of what I saw in the abstract painting.

5 Thin layers of light

I add lights on the areas of the face where I previously noted in the abstract marks. I build things up in thin layers of Titanium buff. This colour is a little less opaque than Titanium white, and has less of a tendency to cool the colours down that I'm painting on top of.

6 Further exploration on the canvas

I add more light on the face as well as darks surrounding the head. While the new darks are still wet, I scrape out areas or splatter mineral spirits in order to create more texture and abstract possibilities to work with. I see the darks areas as a combination of headdress and landscape, but abstract in its visual representation.

7 Softening the figure's gaze

I work on the face a bit to soften the gaze and develop the features and small forms within the overall face shape. I also soften some edges, to give the illusion of depth as the edge would recede back into the distance since the face is a soft, rounded form with volume to it.

8 Creating small forms

I build up some darks defining smaller forms within the headdress and areas surrounding the face, and work on the far eye to add lights and definition. I'm still working out how to integrate that eye with the abstract marks surrounding it.

9 Further exploration in the background

I shift gears to work on broader areas for a bit, adding opaque colourful lights in more atmospheric areas of the background. These areas I can experiment with and respond to, rather than get caught up trying to force the area of the eye to be a certain way. I'll return to work on the eye again eventually.

10 Consolidating values

Adding the darks and gradations in the foreground shapes next to the light in the atmosphere really helps to push the contrast and creates a visual hierarchy. Sometimes working in an area adjacent to another area is what the other area needs.

11 Weaving colour with brushstrokes

I work on developing volumes in the fleshy forms on the face as well as some details in the features. In these later stages, I often use a smaller brush like this in larger areas to weave subtle colour shifts together.

12 Defining and integrating

Defining small volumes within these areas helps to integrate the picture – from colour and value shifts as well as from details to larger, more abstract atmospheric areas. Prior to doing this, this part of the hair/headdress next to the brow and cheekbone lacked definition and I wanted to add something inside that shape.

13 Inspired by natural surroundings

Working in this "environmental headdress" and the macro worlds contained within it, I've no doubt that I'm inspired by the walks I take especially when it's foggy or misty in the canyons near my house, and the trees and bushes show themselves in distant pockets, moving in and out of the mist and morning or evening light.

14 Light, movement and atmosphere

Another subconscious influence that makes its way to the panel is the brilliant sunsets and sunrises I've encountered, and the light through trees late in the afternoon. The sense of movement and atmosphere is influenced by the dynamic of the overall shapes and forms in the composition, and I reinforce that with the direction of my brushstrokes.

15 Applying the final touches

I add the last touches after having glazed the entire face with a thin transparent layer of a combination of linseed oil, Burnt umber and Ultramarine blue. I also add in highlights in the eyes as well as on the mouth, and a few small accents get applied where a small detail helps to pull the overall piece together.

Pencil   *Acrylic*

PAINT WITH PENCIL AND ACRYLIC

TRAN NGUYEN reveals the process behind her painting In the Dead of Night, and elaborates on the steps for creating an original work of art for exhibition

This painting was created for the group exhibition Gaia Reborn, which took place in May at Urban Nation: Museum for Urban Contemporary Art in Berlin, Germany. Curated by the folks from Beautiful Bizarre, the show's theme focused on Mother Earth, and the harmony between her creations and humanity. The exhibition brought together new works from over 50 of the world's best contemporary artists.

With the theme of Gaia in mind, I decided to approach the painting with a fantastical mindset, choosing to depict the siren: a mythological creature that's half bird and half woman. My goal was to portray the creature's momentous return to the sea and her reunion with Gaia.

I felt the siren should be captured in an almost iconic manner and composed centrally, but also provide an environment for her to exist in and influence. To offset the static tendency of central compositions, I depicted the instant right before her body impacts the sea to hint a bit of movement. In the foreground is a cottage with three inhabitants who come out to witness her return home.

Artworks showcased in galleries and museums should spotlight the artist's aesthetic without restraints, no matter how esoteric it can be. They're meant to evoke a response from the viewer and tell a story through the painter's eyes. I see them as raw interpretations of ideas that are told through a personal symbology that has developed over the course of an artist's career.

Tran is an award-winning freelance artist. She has worked with clients such as World Wildlife Fund, Tiger Beer, Smithsonian magazine and Netflix, and has showcased with galleries across the world. You can see more of her work by visiting www.mynameistran.com. ➤➤

Photo by Jo McCune

Step-by-step: Creating an original work of art for public display
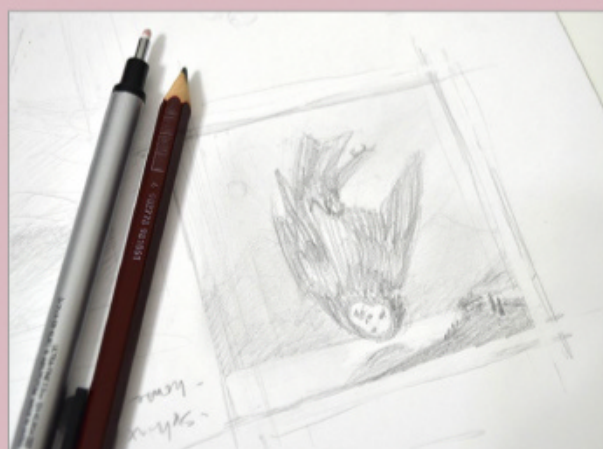
1 DRAW ROUGH THUMBNAILS
I begin conceptualising my ideas with rough thumbnail sketches. With a HB pencil, I establish the general shape of the siren and its placement within the environment. I find that the more loose I am with my sketches, the better my compositions will be. I'm less likely to fall in love my pencil strokes, and I become more daring with the way I handle the design and flow of the composition.

2 ADD PENCIL COLOURS
Once the sketch has been refined to a tight line drawing, I scan, enlarge then and print it directly on to hot press watercolour paper. Afterwards, I use Prismacolor Verithins pencils, in cerulean blue and brown, to redefine the line drawing while colouring in the areas of value. This helps solidify where my lights and darks will be during the painting phase.

3 EXECUTE THE FORM
Painting with a limited colour palette, I use a glazing technique to add value. By overlaying glazes upon glazes of diluted layers of acrylic paint on top of each other, I slowly generate form to the siren's scallop-like feathers. After the shadows are in place, the highlights are painted in using acrylics in titanium white and Prismacolor pencils in white and peach.
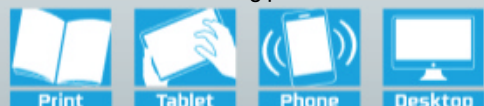
Points of interest: A fall from sky to sea

Finding the perfect frame

It's crucial to find a frame that complements the aesthetic of your painting. Personally, I prefer simple, white wooden frames that act as shadow boxes. The painting is top-float mounted to showcase the deckle edges of the paper, which also creates the illusion that the painting is suspended in mid-air. I usually gravitate towards frames that supplement the art rather than one that distracts.

Burst of warmth against cool

The painting is made with a limited colour palette of different shades of blue. To help break up this monotony, sparing additions of warm reds and pinks can liven it up and help lead the viewer's eye. To offset its cool tones, I add a burst of crimson red to the siren's eyes and lips. These spots of saturated warm colour will balance the overall cool temperature of the painting.

MATERIALS

PAPER
■ Arches 300lb hot press watercolour paper

BRUSHES
■ Escoda Opera round
■ Winsor & Newton Winton filbert
■ Winsor & Newton Monarch filbert

PENCILS
■ Prismacolor Premiere pencil
■ Prismacolor Verithin
■ Tombow HB and 2B
■ Pentel .05mm mechanical pencil

ACRYLIC PAINTS
■ Golden acrylics in Hi-Flow, Heavy Body and Fluid, Liquitex acrylics in Heavy Body

Presenting the art with visible deckle edges

When showcasing in galleries or museums, it's important to think about how your painting will be presented in the space. I love giving my originals deckle edges and framing it so that this quality is accentuated. Simply using a ruler to tear rather than cut the paper can help reconfirm its authenticity and give it an original touch.

Adding a touch of life

Subtle details can bring a lot of movement and life to a painting. Because the overall composition is central and somewhat static, the addition of smoke to the chimney can go a long way. Details like this can help elaborate the painting's story and set the mood. It fills the viewer in on the tale of the siren and the people who live in the house at the top of the hill.

First Impressions

✳ Mong Sang ✳

We speak to the South Korean artist whose work has to resonate from within

Where did you grow up and how has this influenced your art?
I grew up in South Korea. However, my childhood hasn't had much of an effect on my art. I like to think that my adult life and my surroundings are influencing my current work.

Does one person stand out as being helpful during your early years?
I studied drawing from sixth grade in elementary school until I was a senior in high school, and I was influenced by teachers and friends who I met at various academies. Our discussions about paintings and artists helped me to carve out my own art path.

Can you describe the place where you usually create your art?
I prefer to work at home, because I need to be in comfortable and familiar surroundings to be creative. When I'm feeling relaxed, I'm able to put what I'm thinking into the painting. However, sometimes I meet up with my fellow painters and work together in a café.

MATURITY
"I've often been told, 'You must be mature.' I hate this reality of being forced into maturity. I don't want to be oppressed by what I do when others judge me as being either mature or immature."

EGO
"I imagined myself as an explorer looking for a treasure called 'self' that continues to grow in the adventure of 'life.' During this time, you'll have to endure all sorts of emotions to find your completed self."

Is making a living as an artist all you thought it would be?
So far, making a living as an artist is not as easy as I imagined it would be. Producing personal pieces makes me happy, but also raises questions about whether it's financially viable to create art that only I'm interested in seeing. At the same time, creating art that has popular appeal can have a negative impact on my pride and self-esteem. Clearly, there'll be times when my artistic values are shaken up. Reaching a compromise that satisfies both viewpoints is a lifelong challenge for all artists.

How has your painting style evolved over the years?
I've studied various painting styles starting from the time when I was at elementary school. I've come to realise that I'll never be happy with simple doodling on paper. I have to put a lot of time and effort into my

> ❝ I have to put a lot of time and effort into my art, even if I accidently ruin my WIP on the way ❞

Do you have an art tool or ritual that you simply can't live without?
My art is dependent on thick, high-quality paper, watercolours and a very fine brush. Take any of these away and I'm struggling. I always work in bright surroundings because I find a dark environment to be too much of a distraction when I'm drawing, oddly enough. And I can't work at all and quickly get bored if I'm not listening to music.

What, outside of art, has most influenced your artwork?
It's the emotion that I feel in my daily life. No matter who I meet and no matter what I do, even if it's wallowing alone at home and eating snacks, the source of all the influences behind my paintings comes from within.

art and complete it to my own standards, even if I accidently ruin my WIP on the way. I'd rather screw up my art than call a rough drawing complete. I'm happy if my art can be described as unique and exquisite. Over time I've focused on improving my art skills and settling down on a painting style.

What does the future hold for you?
I think I'll still be painting with my sore wrist in the future! But I hope that I can make a living by painting while preparing for more diverse exhibitions and working on commissioned pieces. Above all, I hope I could get more love from the public for 'my' favourite artwork, not for someone else's vision.
You can see more of Mong Sang's work at www.instagram.com/mong__sang.

1,500 FOOTBALL PITCHES EVERY DAY!

Did you know that European forests, which provide wood for making paper and many other products, have grown by 44,000km² over the past 10 years? That's more than 1,500 football pitches every day![†]

Love magazines? You'll love them even more knowing they're made from natural, renewable and recyclable wood

There are some great reasons to #LovePaper
Discover them now,
twosides.info

TWO SIDES