Interview
Brian Sum

Articles
Sketchbook of
Jose Gomez

The Gallery
Paolo Puggioni,
Vitaly Tsimkin,
plus more

Cover Image by Patipat Asavasena

Patipat Asavasena brings
his landmark series to a close
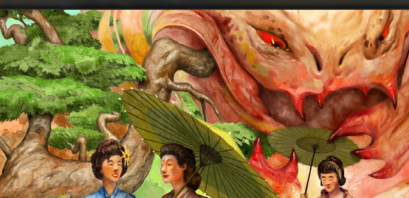by painting the leader of the
Apache tribe, Geronimo.

GERONIMO!

Designing Droids
We round off our Designing Droids series with a massage from the
pleasure droid, painted by **Carlos Cabrera.**

The Six Realms
In the second part of this series, **Dennis Chan** takes us on a trip to the
cold, barren landscape of the Arctic realm.

Painting Creatures from Mythology
Richard Tilbury and **Simon Dominic** battle the final creature in the
gauntlet, taking on the mysterious ittan-momen.

Editorial

Hello and welcome to the August issue of *2DArtist*. In the spirit of the 2012 Olympic Games, which is currently in full swing, we have put together some winning tutorials that will help you develop your own skills!

Let's start things off by taking a look at the fantastic image that adorns the cover of this month's issue, which was created by the talented **Patipat Asavasena** for the final chapter in our Manga series. To wrap things up Patipat demonstrates the workflow and painting techniques he used to create his manga interpretation of the Native American warrior, Geronimo.

We have also reached the final installment of the brilliant Designing Droids series. This series has supplied a myriad of invaluable advice and knowledge so far, and this month is no exception as **Carlos Cabrera** rounds things off with his cool pleasure droid design. Sit back, relax and take a look!

We kicked off our new series, Six Realms, last month, which explores the limitless worlds and different realms within these that are created by talented artists and designers. In the second chapter, **Dennis Chan** takes us through his painting process for the Arctic realm.

Richard Tilbury and **Simon Dominic Brewer** bring our painting mythology series to a close in this issue, with their interpretation of the ittan-momen, a ghostly phenomenon from Japanese folklore. Richard tackles the subject in Photoshop, whilst Simon talks us through his process in Painter.

We also bring you a Making Of in the form of a video game concept by talented artist **Xavier Etchepare**. He shows us how to set the mood, utilize reference photos and use little effects to add that final touch.

So we've got another fantastic issue fit to bust with must-see tutorials, but that's not all – we also have an interview with exceptionally talented concept artist **Brian Sum**, an insight into the mind and sketchbook of freelance illustrator and character designer **Jose Gomez** aka The Chulo, and if that wasn't enough, a stunning gallery featuring the work of **Cristian Popa**, **Ray Jin**, **Alexey Egorov** and many more!

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Free Stuff!
Wherever you see this symbol, click it to download resources, extras & even movies!

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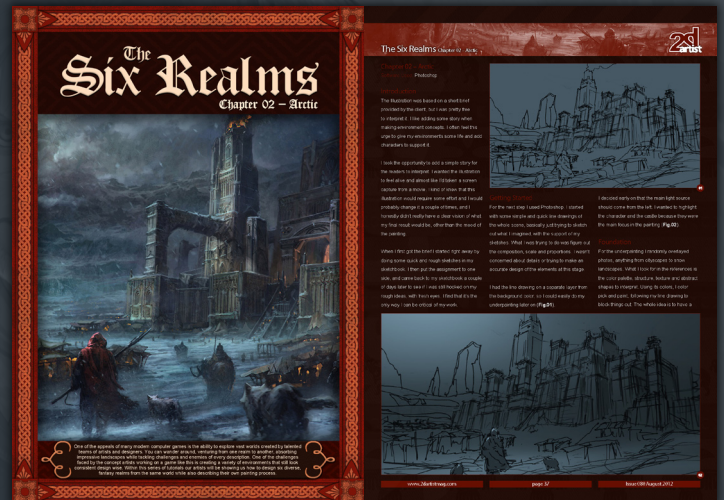
Get the most out of your
Magazine!

If you're having problems viewing the double-page spreads that we feature in this magazine, follow this handy little guide on how to set up your PDF reader!

Setting up your PDF reader

For optimum viewing of the magazine it is recommended that you have the latest Acrobat Reader installed.

You can download it for free here: **DOWNLOAD!**

To view the many double-page spreads featured in 2DArtist magazine, you can set the reader to display 'two-up', which will show double-page spreads as one large landscape image:

1. Open the magazine in Reader;
2. Go to the View menu, then Page display;
3. Select Two-up Continuous, making sure that Show Cover Page is also selected.

Brian Sum

Growing up in Vancouver, Canada, Brian was influenced by Japanese anime and Saturday morning cartoons such as *Macross*, *Transformers* and *GI Joe*. After working in graphic design and animation, Brian discovered his true passion in the concept design industry. He is currently a senior concept artist at Bioware, Montreal helping with the *Mass Effect* franchise.

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Contributing Artists

Every month many artists from around the world contribute to **3DCreative** and **2DArtist** magazines. Here you can find out a bit more about them! If you would like to be a part of **3DCreative** or **2DArtist** magazine, please contact: simon@3dtotal.com
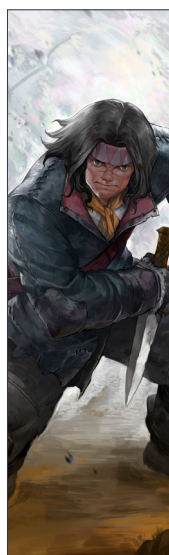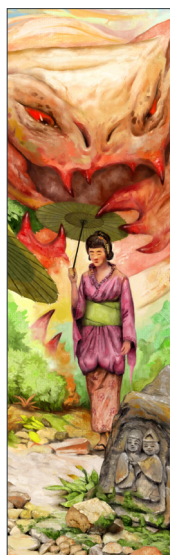
Simon Dominic

Simon is a freelance illustrator specializing in fantasy, sci-fi, horror and the generally bizarre. He paints digitally, applying traditional techniques through the use of digital tools. He has worked on game art, book covers, editorials and magazine workshops since going pro in 2009.

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Patipat Asavasena

Patipat Asavasena is a graduated engineer, but he decided to follow his passion for art. Currently, he's a full-time freelance artist living in Nonthaburi, Thailand. His work has been influenced by Japanese manga, but also has a wide range of styles and he is very interested in art, photography and technology.
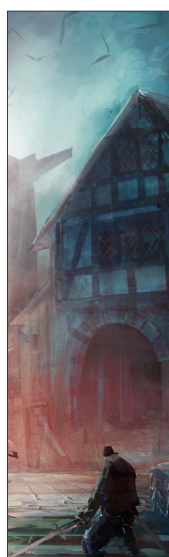
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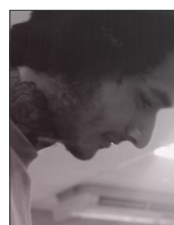
Jose Gomez

Jose was born in a little town in Colombia, in 1991. He has grown up loving art and can't imagine doing anything other than drawing. He loves sketching, and has a clear aim for the future!

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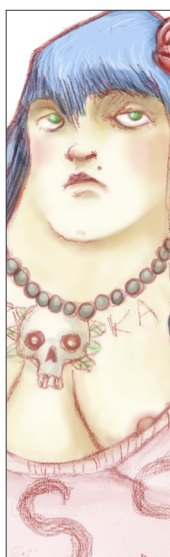
Xavier Etchepare

Xavier Etchepare is a versatile artist who, in the last few years, has worked in advertising, video games and events production. He now works at Ubisoft Studios after choosing to bring his creativity to the video game and animation industry.

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"The sci-fi genre is the perfect springboard to let your imagination go wild..."

BRIAN
SUM

This month's interview is with extremely talented concept artist, Brian Sum. Most recently he has created concept art for BioWare's *Mass Effect 3*, and he has also worked on game titles such as *Mass Effect 2*, *Shadowrun*, *Sonic Chronicles: The Dark Brotherhood* and *Dragon Age: Origins*. He talks to us about how he started out in the industry and what inspires him, and also offers advice for those hoping to follow in his footsteps.

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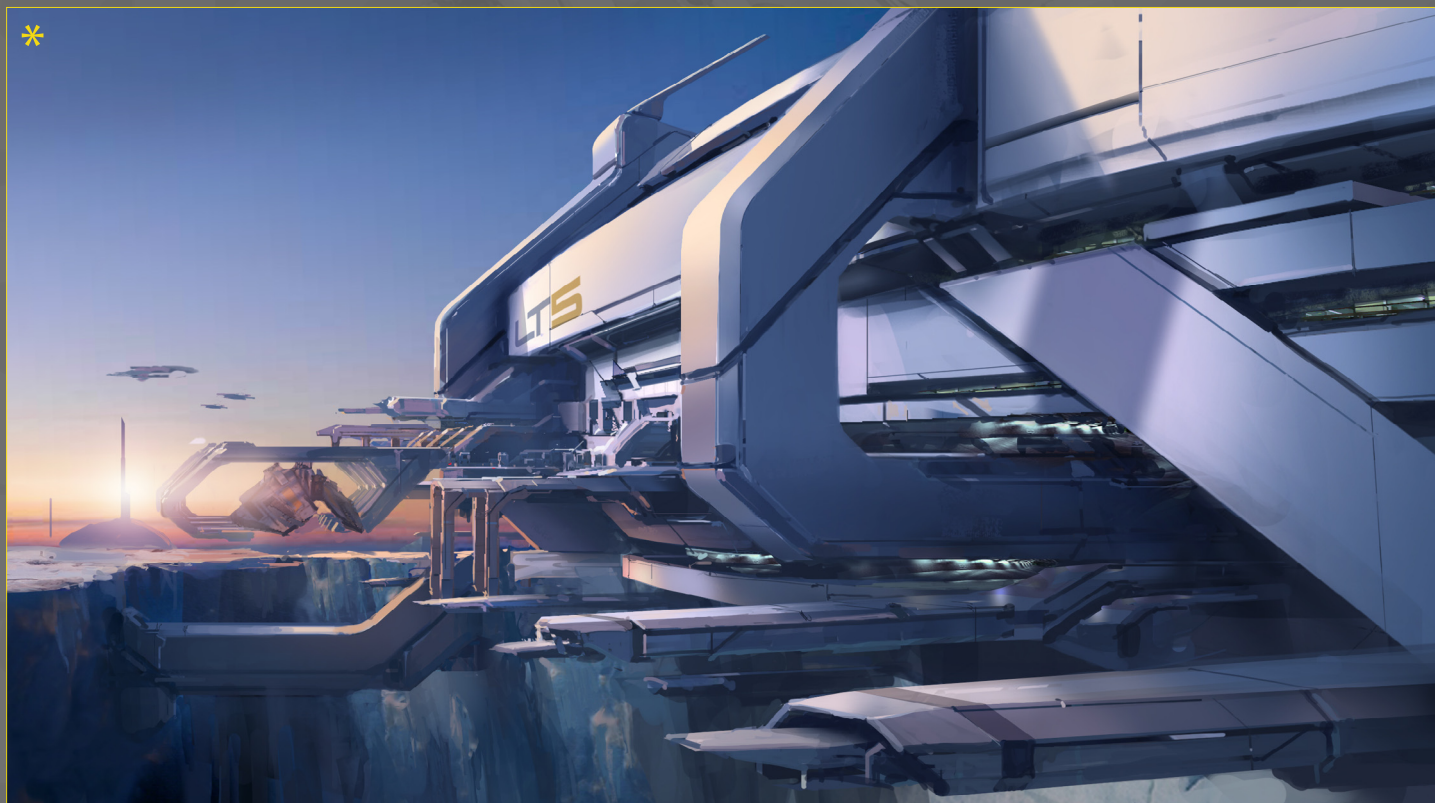
Hi Brian, apart from stating you work for BioWare on some of the game world's most critically acclaimed titles, your site doesn't tell us a lot about you. Could you start with telling us a bit about yourself and how you ended up in the industry?

Sure. I studied Graphic Design and Illustration, as well as Computer Animation and Digital Effects, in my hometown of Vancouver. My first job in the games industry was at FASA Studio in Redmond, WA. I was more of a generalist, which was great starting out, since I was able to learn a little bit of everything. I was able to try my hand at some modeling, cinematics, storyboarding and concept art.

I spent the next five years at BioWare Edmonton, but have just recently transferred to the Montreal studio to support the growing team.

Landing a job at a games studio straight out of university is like a dream come true for a lot of aspiring digital artists – did this happen for you? How did your first job come about? Had you built up a portfolio of work beforehand and made some useful contacts while at university?

Actually I didn't land a job at a games studio

straight out of university. I was enrolled in the Graphic Design and Illustration program at Capilano University and after graduating I worked at a design firm for about a year before I really decided to get into video games. So I went back to school to study Computer Animation and Digital Effects at Vancouver Film School. It was then that I finally got my first job in games at FASA Studio. I was slowly building up my portfolio at the time and my goal was just to start posting my artwork online to get feedback. I made useful contacts while at school, work and especially online.

"Essentially it's trying to make an art piece and a blueprint all in one"

You've worked on titles such as *Dragon Age* and *Mass Effect 2*; did you have to work tightly to a brief or did you have creative freedom? Could you explain a bit about the process behind your images and any challenges you have faced?

I'm usually given a brief, but they aren't too restrictive most of the time. I get a lot of creative freedom, but sometimes I think having some rough guidelines is helpful. Every new concept

task has its own unique challenges. That's what makes my job so exciting and stressful.

I always start by browsing through as much research material as I can find relating to the specific concept. When it comes to doing environments, sometimes I'll take a screen capture of what a level artist has roughly blocked in and start painting over it in Photoshop. I'll use a combination of custom brushes along with some photo manipulation to try and get what I want. One challenge I constantly face is to create an image that describes structural elements and parts that a level artist can actually build within our game engine's restraints, while still trying to make the concept look "pretty". Essentially it's trying to make an art piece and a blueprint all in one.

A lot of your work reflects the sci-fi genre; a popular subject in the industry. What was it that attracted you to this genre?

I've always liked sci-fi, such as *Star Wars*, *Star Trek* (*The Next Generation*) and *Transformers* (Pre-Michael Bay). This was what I watched growing up. I loved designing robots and spaceships as a kid. A very common childhood practice among many in this industry, I'm sure.
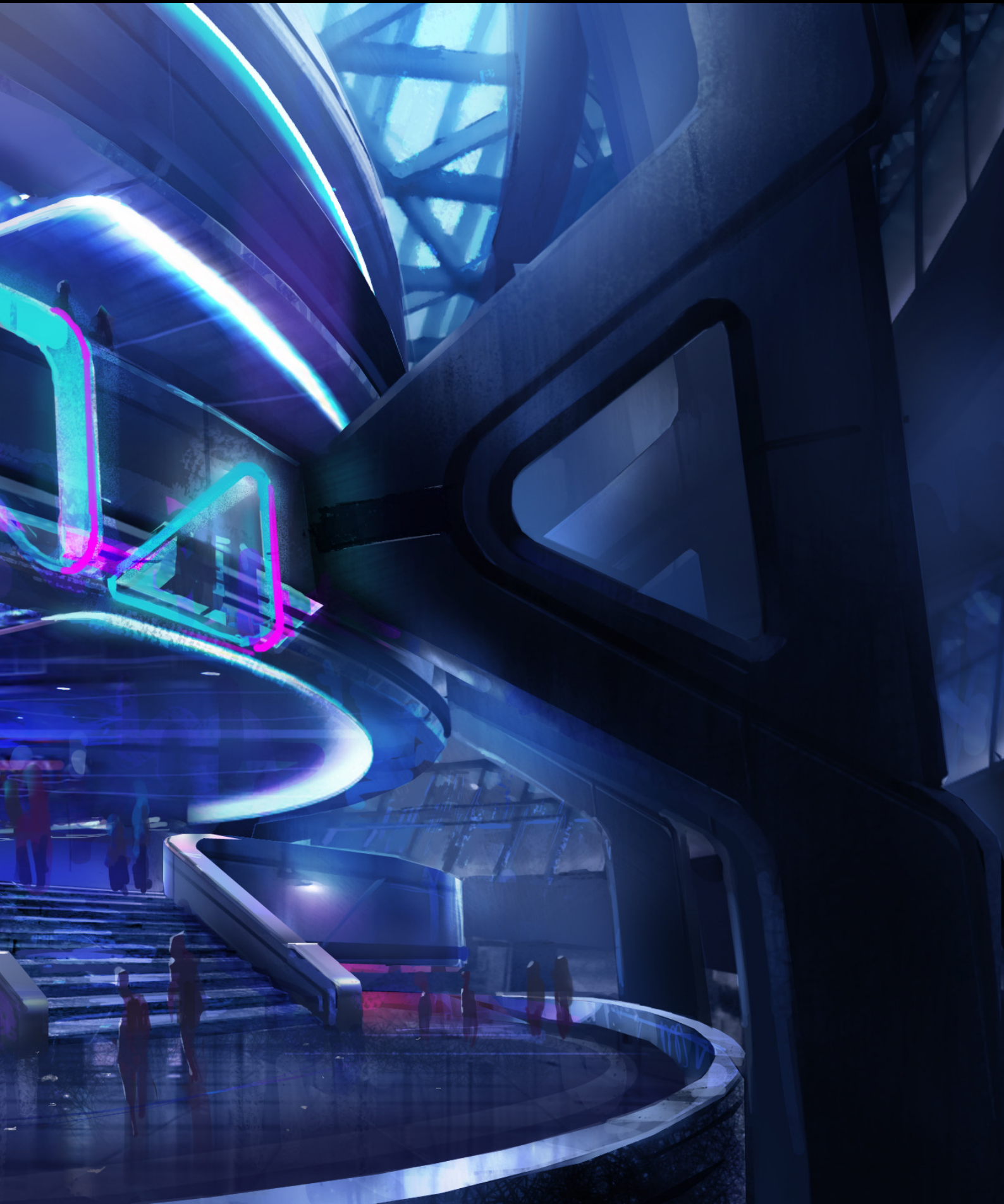
I think the idea of what could be possible in the future was always exciting to me and still is. The sci-fi genre is the perfect springboard to let your imagination go wild.

I love your vast, detailed landscape concepts – where do you draw your inspiration from? Do you have any favorite buildings you use as a reference point?

I'm inspired a lot by modern architecture. I usually browse through countless folders of architecture and interior design photos before starting an environment piece. I love the design of the Lloyd's building in London and Santiago Calatrava's architecture, and I referenced those quite a bit when designing some of my cities. Flickr and Google Images are great sources for reference material of all kinds too. I'm currently riding the Pinterest wave as well.

After finding reference images, how do you encourage your imagination to produce fantastic and original results?

I use reference images as an attempt to search for an idea, inspiration and a general direction to work towards. Sometimes it might be the
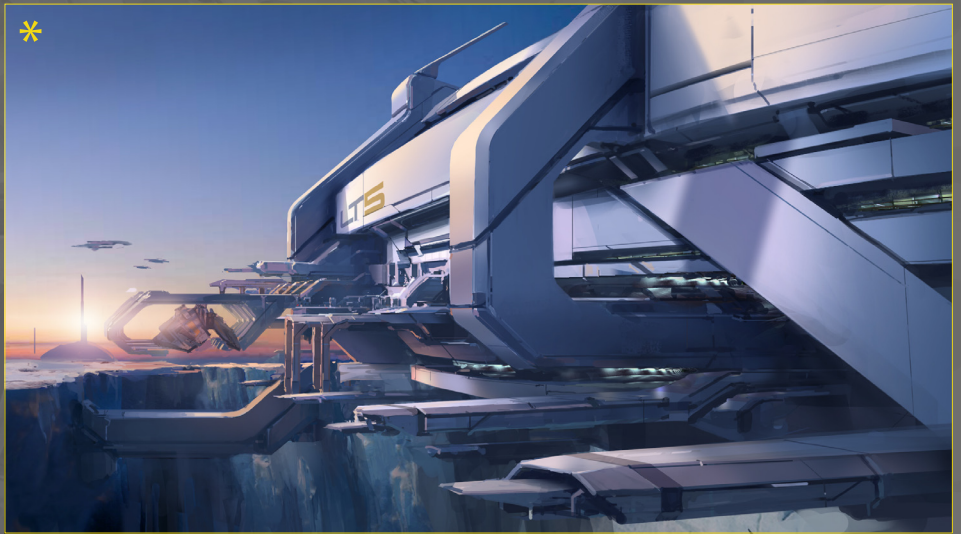
composition of an image that inspires an idea or it could be the colors from a specific painting. From that point on I usually have a general idea that I'm picturing in my mind, and then it's a matter of painting, and using textures and photos to get what I want in Photoshop. It's a process of trial and error to get to a point where I'm happy with the end result.

Do you find yourself working digitally 100% of the time now, or do you spend any time

getting sketches/personal work down on paper?

I find I work digitally more often than I did before, but I still like to do sketches with pen and paper. I still feel comfortable sketching in this way and I find it a lot easier to throw out ideas quickly. There are no "undo" functions so I'm forced to commit and move on with every stroke I make. I'd be tempted to erase and overwork sketches if I were using Photoshop.

Could you tell us about any projects you are working on at the moment?

I'm currently busy working on some exciting new DLC content for *Mass Effect 3*. I'm still trying to learn and grow as much as I can in the area of concept design and I'm always working on personal art pieces just to break from what I usually do at work. I do admit, however, that a lot of my personal work still ends up being sci-fi related. I guess it's a subject matter I'm most comfortable with.

I find that artists are ambitious people. They always have a goal or something they would like to achieve. Can you see a turning point your career could take in the future or is there a dream job that you would like to do one day?

I would say that being a concept artist is my dream job. But yes, I would say there's always a goal or something to achieve and I guess
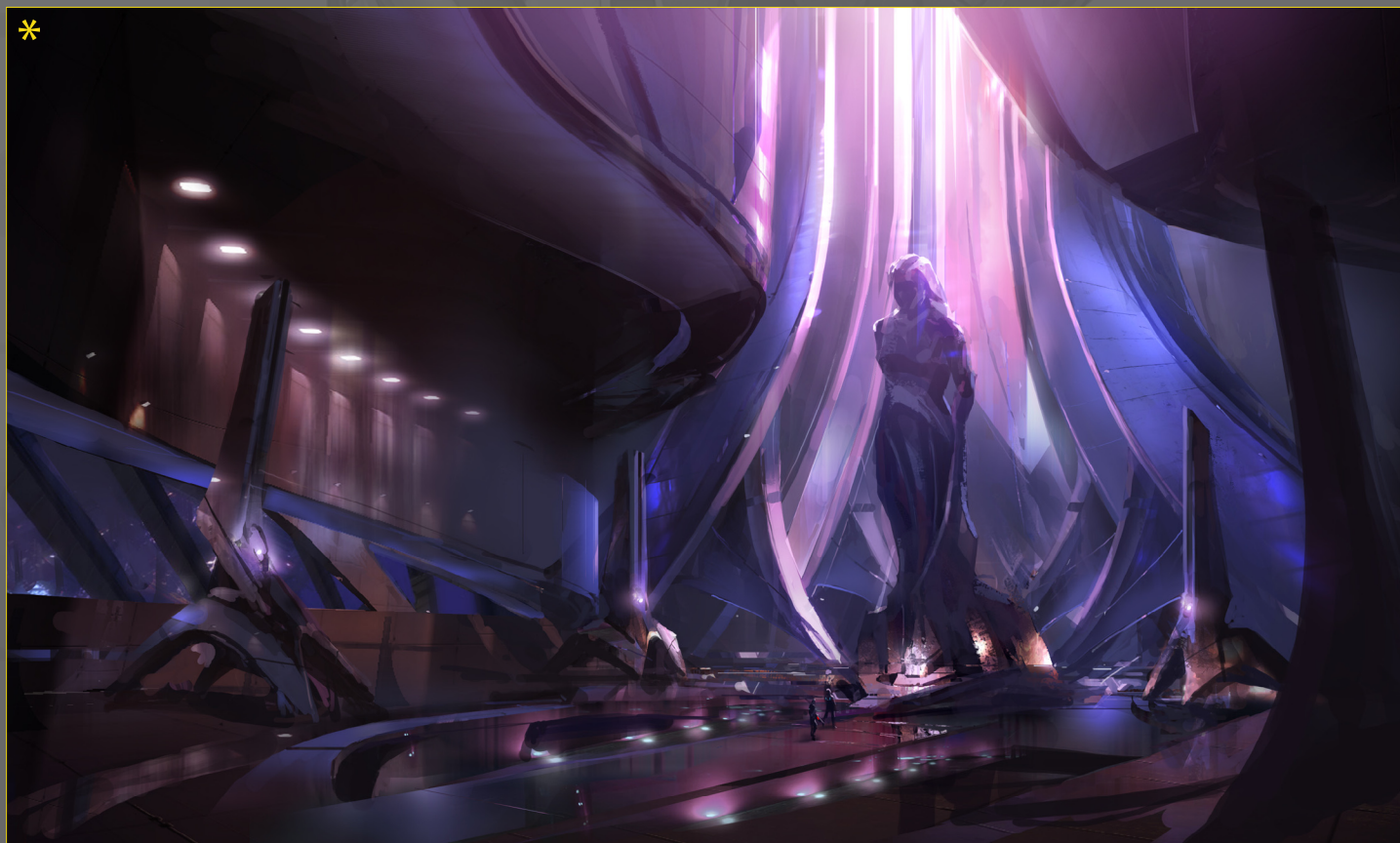
"Being a concept artist is my dream job"

the best job for me would be in a situation that allows me the most freedom to be creative. It could be doing concept art; it could be something entirely different down the road.

As far as turning points my career could take, I'll usually gravitate towards projects that excite and challenge me. Where that takes me in the future, who knows? Concept design is a field I'm passionate about and I can't see myself steering too far from this area anytime soon.

If you could give any advice to anyone trying to make their way into this industry or to progress in their careers, what would it be?
I would recommend studying the best artists out there and using their work as a benchmark for the level your work should be at, if you want to be able to compete in today's industry. The online community today is a great source of inspiration and reference material. Practice makes perfect, but I would say that the more reference material you look at, the more you start developing a better eye for things.

Thanks for taking the time to talk to *2DArtist*!

Brian Sum
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Email: brian@briansum.com
Interviewed by: Jessica Serjent-Tipping

"The truth is, there are a lot of things that can inspire you. I don't think that people without imagination exist; it's impossible"

SKETCHBOOK
Of Jose Gomez (The Chulo)

This month's sketchbook is brought to you by freelance illustrator and character designer Jose Gomez, aka The Chulo. He shows us how he brings his loves to life, with his trusty old friend – the pencil!

Sketchbook of
Jose Gomez

The cowboys, the coffee, the modified people that later change into monsters, animals, music, unknown people from public transport, walking in the street, food, movies, love, a lot of love, my best friend the pencil, situations with my family that I like to bring to life... The truth is, there are a lot of things that can inspire you. I don't think that people without imagination exist; it's impossible.
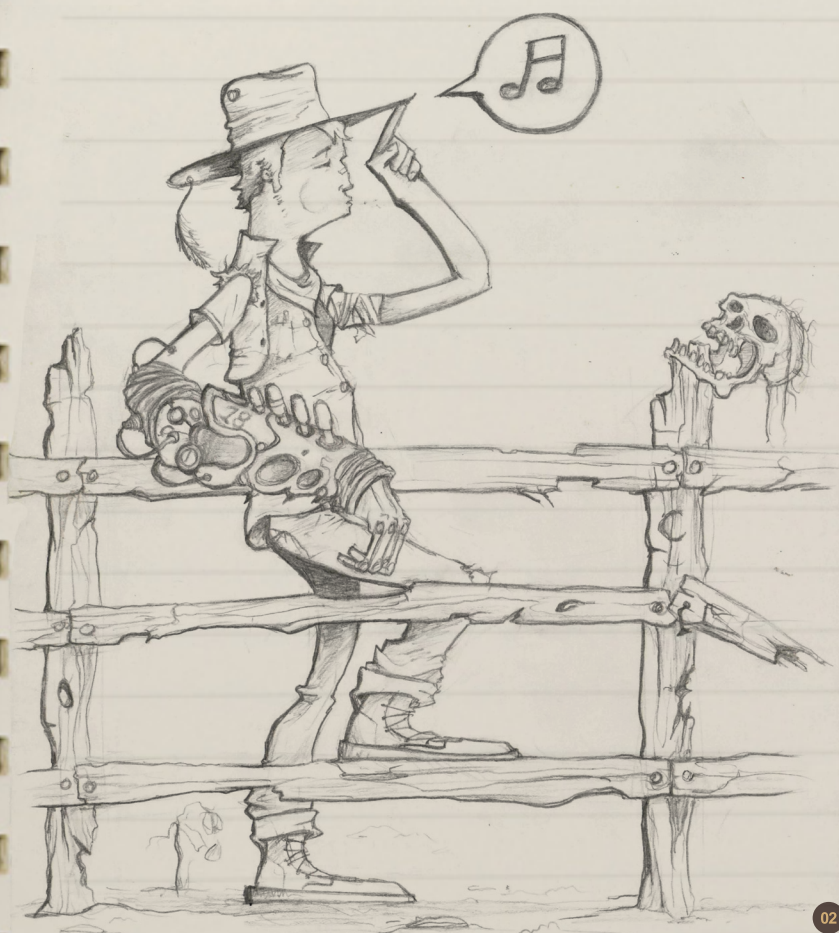
I've always liked cowboys. Everything about them fascinates me, from the way they act and fight, to the stories that they have to tell, and their movements and fearlessness. Then there's the fact that if you spoke up or did something wrong you could end up in a duel and die! (**Fig.01 – 02**).

Science fiction, with all its special effects and futuristic stories, fascinates me to the point where I want to create my own stories and personalities. Well, this is one of them. This is something robotic and bejeweled that looks rather medieval (**Fig.03**).

This blood-thirsty Viking is simply a memory from one of those comics that I read when I was a little boy. *Olaf the Bitter* was one of my favorites and, well, this is like a tribute to the hours I dedicated to reading those amazing and funny stories as a boy. It's also a tribute to the invincible duo of Asterix and Obelix, which is another great comic that inspired me to draw as a kid. Although in this case, we can see my version of Obelix and Idefix (**Fig.04**).

03

04
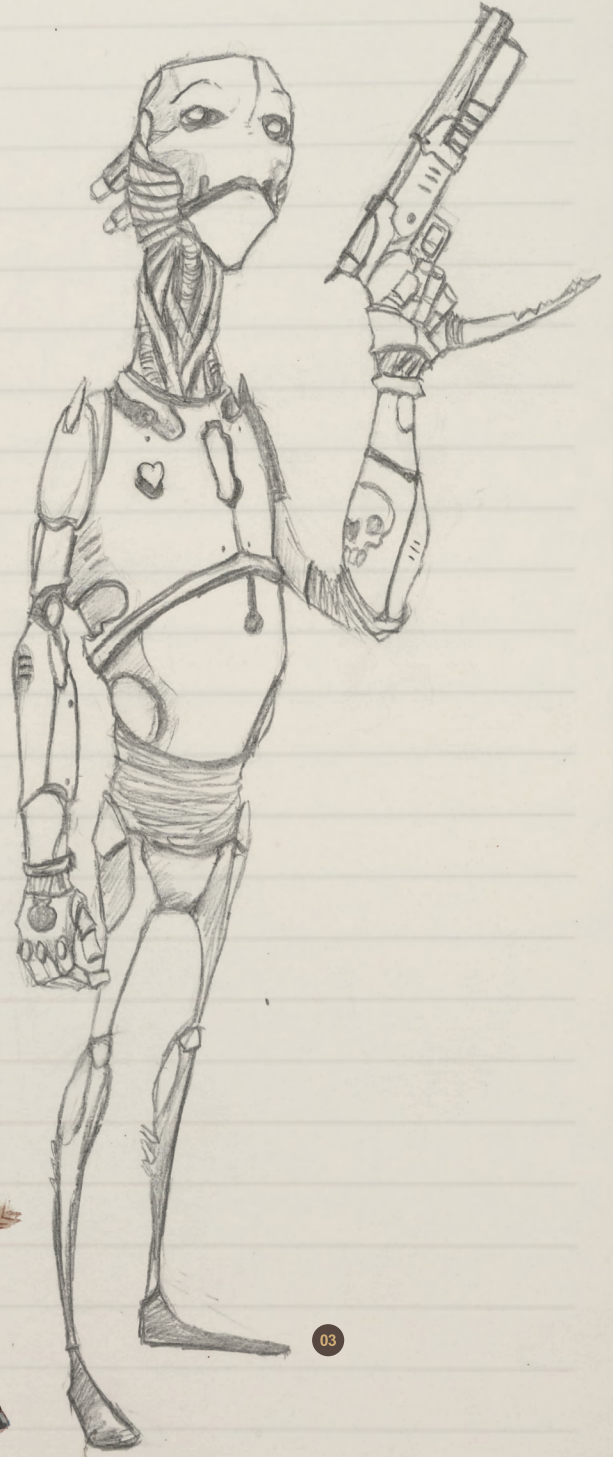
A lot of people like to experiment with tattoos and I see people with them everywhere. However, I don't think that tattooed people are "damaged", as our society likes to say (**Fig.05**).

Calvin and Hobbes. I think that was the first comic that I read when I was a child. It's my favorite. I love the stories and the simple, but direct, drawings (**Fig.06**).

EH... CALVIN...
I ♥ YOU!!

¡ FUCK OFF!

06

In this character there are three things that I like to include in my drawings: my true friend coffee, one of my favorite animals (cats) and of course, skulls, which can't be missed out. All illustrators love skulls. No matter what style we are using, one day we start to work with skulls – some that make sense and others that are done for pure pleasure (**Fig.07**).

07

El Dr Fried, that's his name, is one of the characters in a short movie where I participated as a character designer. This guy has a great personality and is very into science. Skulls and mystery attract him the most (**Fig.08**).

08

David is an extroverted lover of nature and adventure. He loves the speed of the automotive. This character was created for a comic project that later got canceled. How sad, but David is still alive in these pages (**Fig.09**).

I'M CHULO LEOPARDO!!
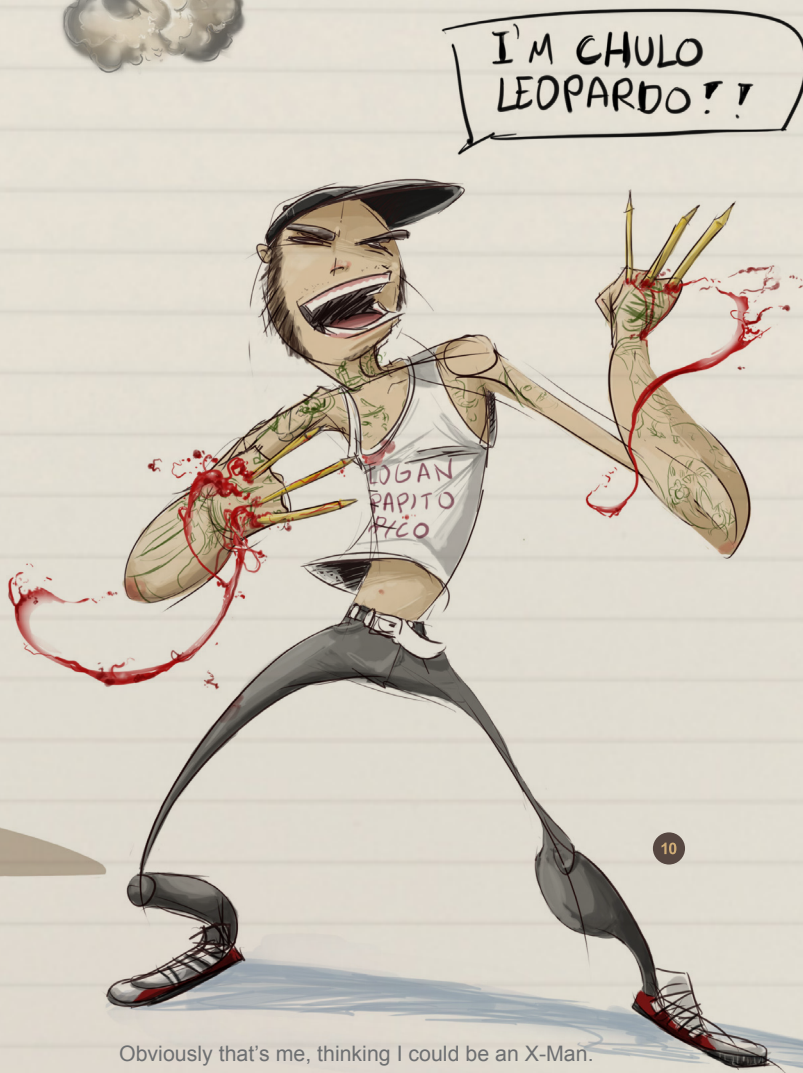
Obviously that's me, thinking I could be an X-Man. Wolverine is my favorite comic-book character. He has a unique personality. I made this sketch in an afternoon where I had nothing to do and was simply playing around, just my pencil and me (**Fig.10**).

Skulls plus my sketchbook; what a good combination and a little bit of digital color doesn't hurt. One of those characters who was created on a cold night, with a lot of coffee (**Fig.11**).

When I was a kid, my family had two dogs. I told everyone that one of them was mine. But my dog didn't like everything that I tried to feed him. Well, dogs don't like yogurts or ice cream. I think that my little friend would like to see this sketch; maybe he would laugh a bit (**Fig.12**).

12

When I was a kid I used to spend a lot of time with my father. I told him to tell me stories, walked with him through the country side and did a lot of other unforgettable things. I did this sketch in a very caring way; it represents emotions and moments that we spent together and the things that made me who I am today (**Fig.13**).

One sketch more, without complications. I just took a pencil and let it fly over the paper, and at the end I looked at what I'd done (**Fig.14**).

13

14

In my country (Colombia) sometimes people come to your house, knock on the door and want to talk to you about religion. A lot of them don't respect it if you are busy, they only want to keep talking to you. But most of their stories are boring and repetitive. It's kind of funny when you try to escape them, but don't find a way to do it, and they just talk and talk. Remember: they just want to talk, no matter what situation you are in (**Fig.15**).

Jose Gomez

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THE GALLERY

This month we feature: Vanja Todoric | Paolo Puggioni | Vitaly Tsimkin | Ivan Kashubo | Cristian Popa

Douah Badr | Fuad Ghaderi | Andrei Pervukhin | Ray Jin | Alexey Egorov

The Hell Saloon

Andrei Pervukhin

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(Right)

Balerion The Black Dread

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© Green Ronin Publishing, LLC

A Game of Thrones and *A Song of Ice & Fire* © George R.R. Martin

(Below)

Under the Bed

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(Left)

Dreamy Place

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(Below)
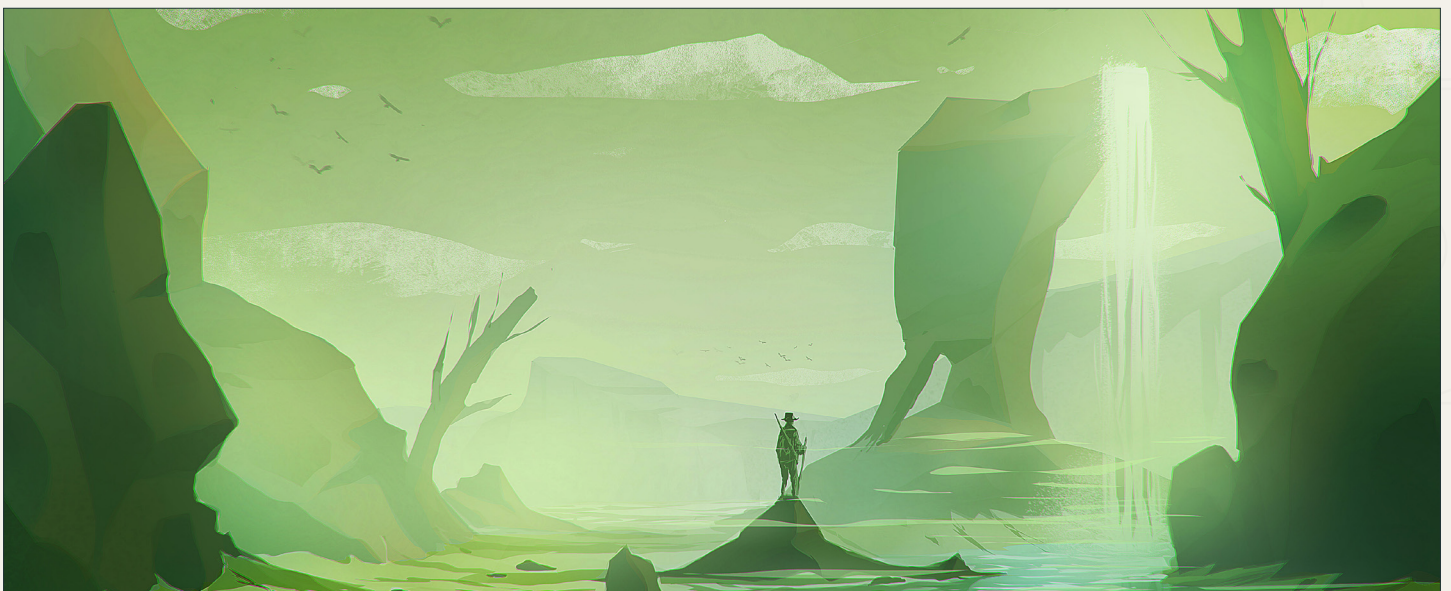
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03

MANGA

HISTORICAL CHARACTERS

CHAPTER 05 - GERONIMO

There are obviously many different styles of art that originate from different countries and cultures around the world. One of the most popular of these styles is what we know as manga. In this tutorial series we will be covering how to create our own manga characters using many of the recognizable features that we see in this style of art. Our tutor for this fantastic five-part series will be insanely talented artist **Patipat Asavasena**, who shows us at how to put his tips into practice whilst painting some super-cool manga historical characters.

Chapter 05 – Geronimo

Software Used: Photoshop

Introduction

Welcome to the last chapter of this manga painting tutorial series. This time I'm going to be demonstrating the workflow and techniques I use to create a manga version of the famous Geronimo. I hope you will get some valuable ideas from my approach and that you can apply them to your own process.

Before we start I would like to tell you about Geronimo's background. Geronimo was a Native American warrior and leader of the Apache tribe. Actually, "Geronimo" was a name that was given to him during a battle with Mexican soldiers. His real name was Goyathlay. He fought against Mexico and the United States for several years to protect his homeland from the expansion of those two countries. He died in 1909 from pneumonia. Now, let's begin the tutorial.

Design Concept

I begin with sketching Geronimo's character in my sketchbook. Geronimo was a skillful warrior, so I decide to choose a muscular figure for him. Also, his body has scars from many battles,

which shows his experiences. His costume is inspired by the Civil War period and his weapons are a rifle and a knife (**Fig.01**).

Draw Thumbnails

I draw many small thumbnail sketches in order to explore various composition options. I initially come up with some dynamic poses for the character, because I want to portray the sense of a battle scene. After the pose is chosen, I

draw two or three additional viewpoints of the same pose and then select the one with most impact for the next step (**Fig.02**).

Create a Rough Sketch

Usually, I like to work with pencil and paper then scan the rough sketch into digital format later, but this time I will use the iPad to develop the rough sketch. First I use the iPad to take a photo of the thumbnail sketch and import it into
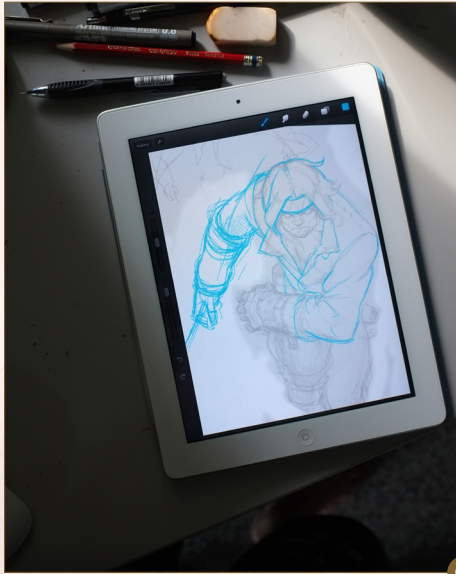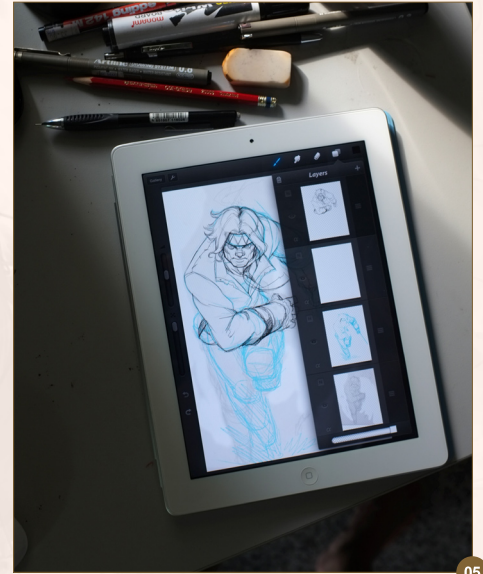
the Procreate app (or you could use another drawing app, like SketchBook Pro, Brushes, etc.) This app is capable of working in layers same as Photoshop. Next I create a new layer and clean up the thumbnail. I export it via iTunes or email when it is done (**Fig.03 – 06**).

Clean up the Sketch

I create a 300dpi A4 size canvas in Photoshop and import the rough sketch from the previous step. Then I transform it to fit the canvas with the Free Transform tool (Cmd + T or Ctrl + T). I use a 4px Normal Round brush to refine the details of the character in the new layer. Finally, I remove the old, rough sketch layer when I finish the clean-up sketch (**Fig.07 – 08**).
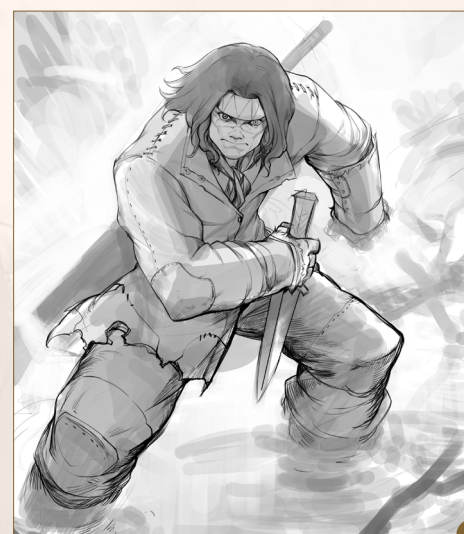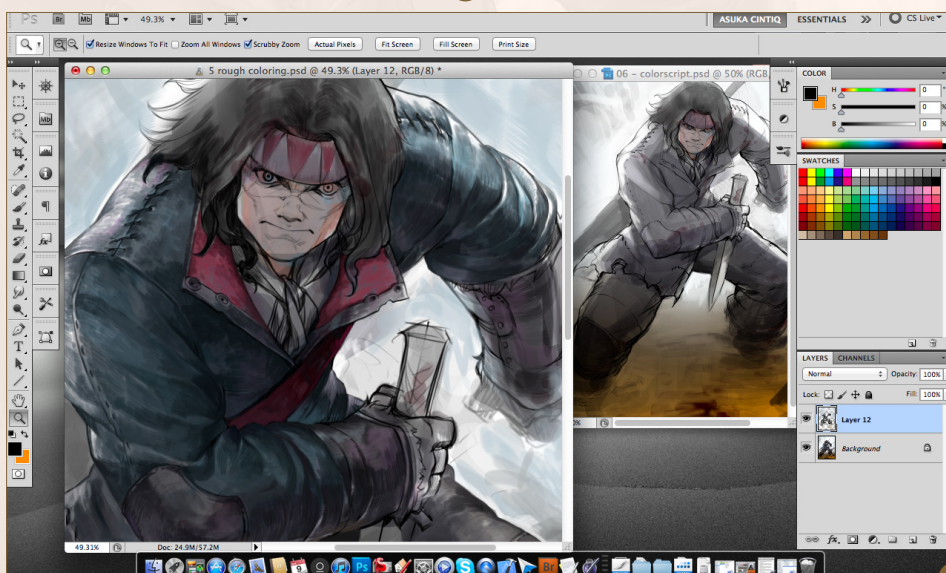
Plan the Tonal Value

I duplicate the current canvas a couple of times for tonal value design and color script. I roughly paint the image in grayscale, so I can decide where I should put the dark and light tones to allow for the best readability, and where the focal point of the image should be. Then, I save the final design as a reference for later steps (**Fig.09 – 10**).

Create a Color Script

On another duplicated canvas, I roughly paint with a large brush and try various color palettes to see which one is the most interesting. By doing some planning first, it helps you to dramatically decrease the time for trial-and-error. Don't forget to save the final color script for later reference (**Fig.11**).

Overlay the Color

Back to the original canvas, I create Multiply layers on the top, and then use a large Bristle brush to overlay the color according to the color script in the previous step. Actually, I like to open the color script file side by side, and directly sample the color from it with the Color Sampler tool (Opt + left-click or Alt + left-click)(**Fig.12**).

Rough Painting

I flatten all the layers and select the Flat Curve Thin Stiff Bristles brush from the Brush Presets windows. Then, I roughly paint over the entire image. I use a brush size between 10 and 45px for painting the small details. I will use an even smaller brush for super-fine details later, but I'm only focusing on the overall image for now (**Fig.13**).
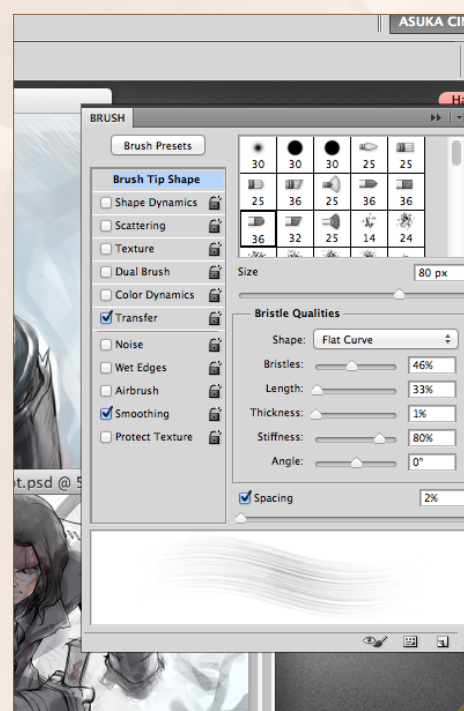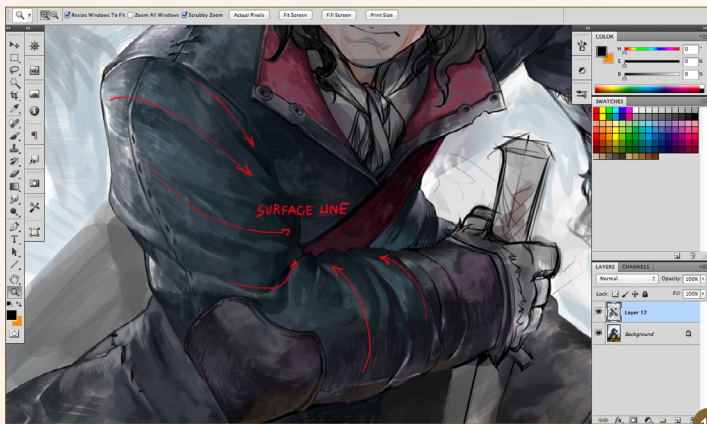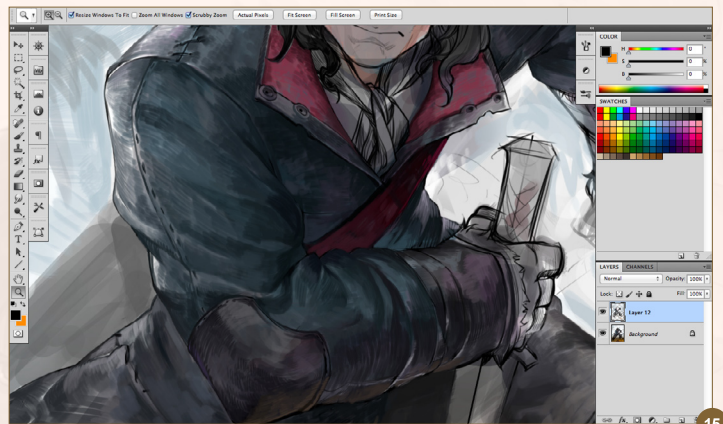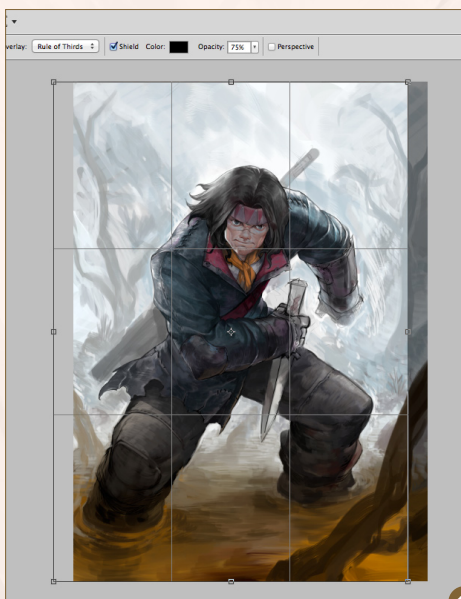
Brush Stroke Technique

This time, I want to create the impression of brush strokes, so I decide not to overuse the soft blending like in my previous tutorial. I carefully align my brush strokes to the surface line, as if I'm sculpting the character. The character will look more realistic this way. Furthermore, it will also have a richness of texture from the brush strokes (**Fig.14 – 15**).

Clean up the Background

I fix the composition a little bit by expanding the canvas with the Crop tool, and then the character fits well in the frame. After that, I add the background elements (trees, water reflection, etc.,) and keep refining those elements until I'm satisfied. I use the same brush from the previous step to handle this task (**Fig.16 – 17**).

Refine Small Details

Next, I select the Normal Round brush to refine the tiny details, especially in the focal area, which, in this case, is the character's face. I use a 2 to 5px brush size and enable the Opacity Pressure Sensitivity option (**Fig.18**).

Add Flowing Particles

I create a new layer and randomly paint solid blobs of color. Then, I select Filter > Blur > Motion Blur and adjust the Distance value to 250. I repeat this step three times with different sized color blobs and Distance values. These will create the illusion of depth (**Fig.19**).

Final Touch

I keep painting here and there until I feel like it's done. Then I flatten all the layers together and do a little bit of Brightness/Contrast adjustment with an adjustment layer. Be careful not to
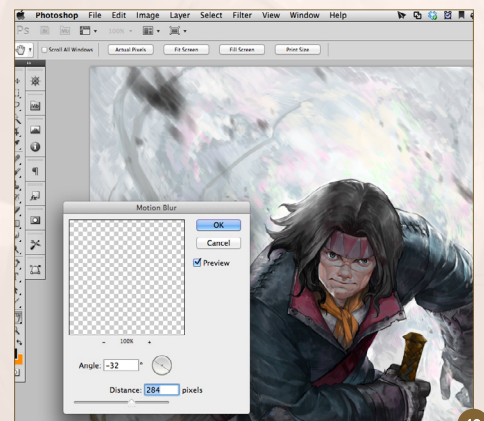
overuse this setting as you can blow out the details in highlighted or shadowed area. That's it; it's finally done (**Fig.20**)!

Final Thought

I hope you enjoyed the tutorial and found it useful. I tried to explain my process as best as I can, although it might not be perfect. If there are any mistakes, I deeply apologize to you. I

hope you get a spark of inspiration, creativity and insight from reading it, as well as my past tutorials.

Keep up the good work!

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The Six Realms

Chapter 02 – Arctic

One of the appeals of many modern computer games is the ability to explore vast worlds created by talented teams of artists and designers. You can wander around, venturing from one realm to another, absorbing impressive landscapes while tackling challenges and enemies of every description. One of the challenges faced by the concept artists working on a game like this is creating a variety of environments that still look consistent design wise. Within this series of tutorials our artists will be showing us how to design six diverse, fantasy realms from the same world while also describing their own painting process.

Chapter 02 – Arctic

Software Used: Photoshop

Introduction

The Illustration was based on a short brief provided by the client, but I was pretty free to interpret it. I like adding some story when making environment concepts. I often feel this urge to give my environments some life and add characters to support it.

I took the opportunity to add a simple story for the readers to interpret. I wanted the illustration to feel alive and almost like I'd taken a screen capture from a movie. I kind of knew that this illustration would require some effort and I would probably change it a couple of times, and I honestly didn't really have a clear vision of what my final result would be, other than the mood of the painting.

When I first got the brief I started right away by doing some quick and rough sketches in my sketchbook. I then put the assignment to one side, and came back to my sketchbook a couple of days later to see if I was still hooked on my rough ideas, with fresh eyes. I find that it's the only way I can be critical of my work.
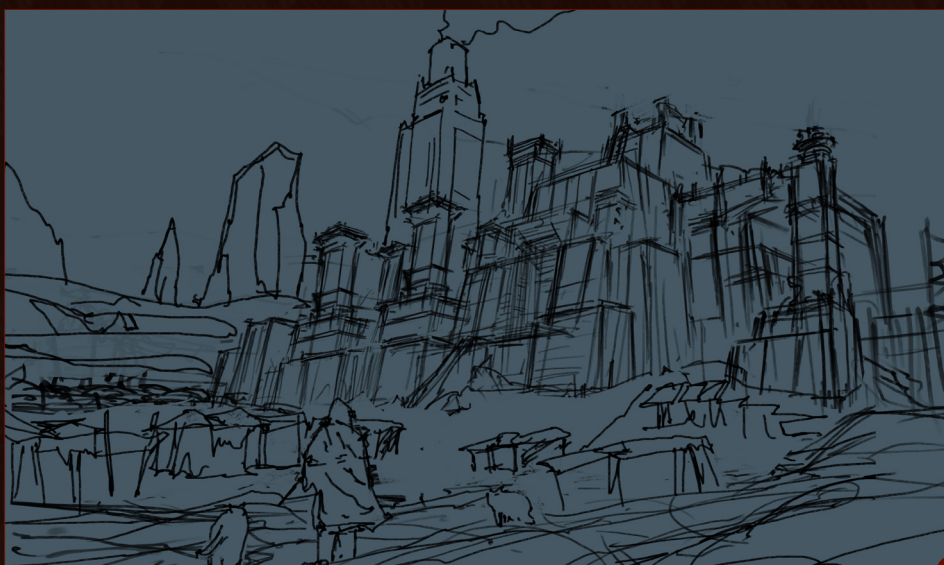
Getting Started

For the next step I used Photoshop. I started with some simple and quick line drawings of the whole scene, basically just trying to sketch out what I imagined, with the support of my sketches. What I was trying to do was figure out the composition, scale and proportions. I wasn't concerned about details or trying to make an accurate design of the elements at this stage.

I had the line drawing on a separate layer from the background color, so I could easily do my underpainting later on (**Fig.01**).

I decided early on that the main light source should come from the left. I wanted to highlight the character and the castle because they were the main focus in the painting (**Fig.02**).

Foundation

For the underpainting I randomly overlayed photos, anything from cityscapes to snow landscapes. What I look for in the references is the color palette, structure, texture and abstract shapes to interpret. Using its colors, I color pick and paint, following my line drawing to block things out. The whole idea is to have a
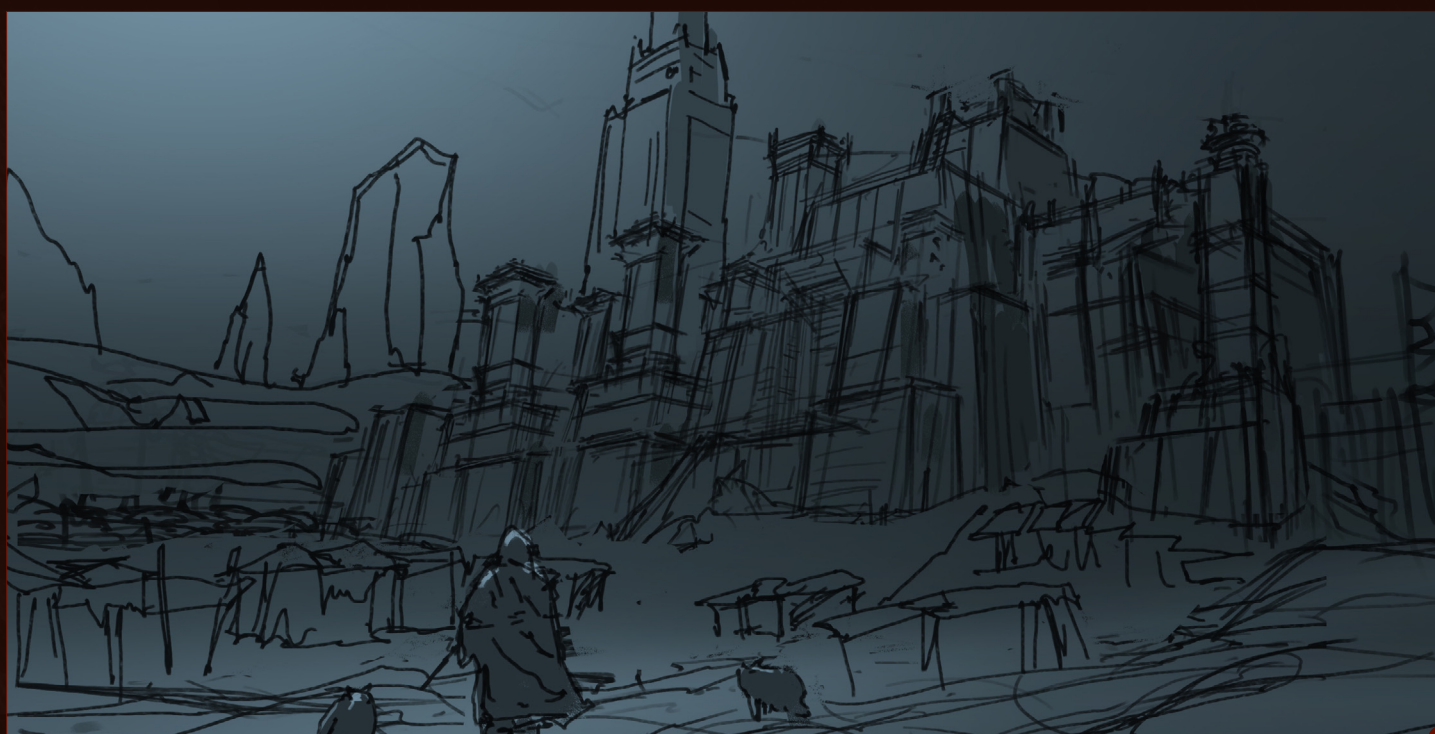
foundation to work with. For this image it was a bit dark in value, with subtle contrasts and colors, but it was good enough for me to start from and I intended to work from dark to light (**Fig.03**).

I used a Curves adjustment layer to push the colors and contrast. I also added some animals into the story to show a bit more of the habitats, rather than just a guy with his wolves in a dead village. Suggestive light sources were also added in the tents to show some sort of activity in them. I worked mostly with mid-tones at this point, though I had elements in the foreground with a darker value just to separate important parts, which would require some attention later on (**Fig.04**).

References

I always have a collection of photo references relevant to my subject matter on my second monitor. I researched on Google, but I also have a personal library taken from my field trips or travels. I find using photo references very important, because I rarely find ones that completely match my needs, which makes studying and having a good understanding of your subject matter extremely important.

Painting and Adding Photo Textures

As you can see, I did a great amount of painting on the village, the characters and the animals. This step was a big jump from the foundation and the process was pretty much repetitive; it was a process of detailing. At this point I worked

with more values and contrast. Since the moon was coming from the top left, I now had a clear light source. I also had a better understanding of what should be in light and what should be in shadow, and painted with that in mind.

Since this illustration was somehow staged with a camera angle just above the horizon, with a large open space and under this light condition, I knew most of the surfaces facing up would be highlighted. When I work on a busy illustration with lots of elements, the image can easily become noisy, so I intended to fake the amount of the highlights and how the light affected the elements and environment to benefit my focus points. So I had my lightest values around or where my focus points were to draw the attention to these areas. I also added mountains and pushed them into the background.

For the mountains in the background I used a snowy mountain photo, set to Overlay with very low opacity – just enough to suggest some details for me to paint later on. I also made some changes to the castle; I was inspired by Gothic architecture and basically copied and pasted part of a church image to get some texture in, which saved me lots of time. I made the moon and other light sources more present and visible. The idea was to be everywhere in the painting and I tried to paint with the thinking that what I did now would effect what I did later. It kind of gave me the opportunity and space to try things and experiment (**Fig.05**).

I also added a rusty texture, covering the whole painting, set to Soft Light with 15% opacity. Since the rusty texture was pretty much red, I almost desaturated the texture. The reason I did this is because it broke the Photoshop look

Soft Brush   Soft Brush with texture
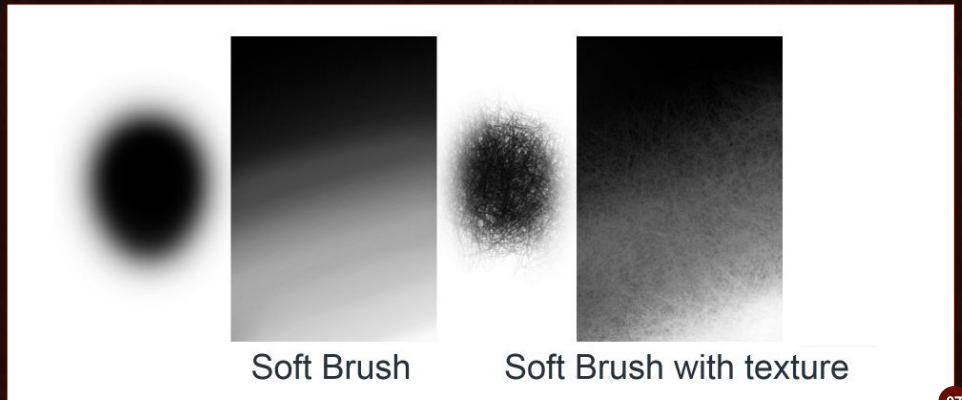
up a bit, gave me a textured canvas to paint on, and also gave me some suggestive details and subtle value differences to interpret. I find most of my textures on **www.cgtextures.com** (**Fig.06**).

The last thing I did at this stage was copy the whole image and open it on a new canvas, decreasing the painting by 60%. Then I copied the decreased image back to the original file and scaled it back up again. I used an Unsharp Mask filter, and moved the sliders around until I was happy with the result the effect gave me. This is something I pretty much do by instinct and I do it very differently each time.

These stages are probably unnecessary, but I feel that my paintings sometimes kind of flatten a bit, the pixels blend and all the brush strokes soften, yet they are sharp, I like to think I get this dry paint effect. On top of that I continue the painting process, defining shapes, and edges, and use adjustment layers such as Curves and Color Balance.

Textured Soft Brush

The image lacked depth and atmosphere, as well as contrast, so I pushed back the background with atmospheric depth. I used a custom made soft brush with a texture, with the brush set to 10% opacity (**Fig.07**). I almost like scratching the surface of the painting to make it less contrasting and saturated. Using a textured soft brush, instead of the normal soft brush without texture, keeps things from looking flat; the texture leaves the surfaces with subtle value differences, and this especially works when I want to push things into the distance with atmospheric depth.

Find Balance

I was not happy with the castle, so I scaled up parts of it, so it took up more of the space and therefore showed less of the sky. I felt that the castle was too small in proportion to the rest of the painting and it needed to be balanced (**Fig.08**).

Finalizing

The last part of my painting process is the most hideous part, in my opinion. I basically run through the whole painting, stepping away, observing, making corrections, removing, adding, color balancing, defining edges and so on (**Fig.09**).

On a separate layer I added some snow particles in the air to depict some sense of motion; I also felt it supported the mood I was going for. Again, I added some more brush strokes here and there until I felt that I couldn't add a single pixel more.

The last thing I did to the painting was use Merge Visible on a new layer, using the Unsharp Mask filter to sharpen up the edges a little bit. Then I signed it off (**Fig.10**). Done!

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DESIGNING DROIDS

PLEASURE DROID

Digital art has it place in many industries, but none of these rely on it as much as the games industry! Obviously games are made of many elements, but you could argue that the most important element of any game is the characters. In this tutorial series our artists will be showing us how to design droids as if they were doing it within the games industry. This will involve them coming up with the design and showing you how to develop it to the point where they will even show you how to create the technical drawings for a 3D modeler!

Chapter 7: Pleasure Droid
Software Used: **Photoshop**

Stressed? Your back feels tight? Do your arms hurt after long hours of making concept art for the buck? Well, suffer no more! Simply ask one of our latest I-pleasure 2000 robots for a free back rub (relaxing music included) and we guarantee you will feel in your twenties again!

Ideas

We start with a simple subject, in this case a "pleasure robot". First of all we have to sketch some ideas on our canvas. As you can see in **Fig.01**, I sketch some simple thoughts for the robot. I choose a "massage robot", so I decide to add a vibrating massage device as the hands; it is better than a couple of hands and keeps the mood futuristic. In the back you can see a big C battery type, to add humor to the design. In the same line I decide that my robot needs a face (as you can see it already has a camera), so I choose a Japanese style for it and why not, a weird, crazy painted face! In the sides of the legs, I add a medic-kit and in the middle of the chest, a kind of panel similar to the common soda machines, so the person can insert a coin and select the part of the body that needs treatment.

Profiles

This step is very important in any production illustration because the design can be used, for example, by a 3D artist, or used to maintain one style in a complex project. Usually I don't use this for a simple illustration, but in this case I will show you the kind of style I use when a client asks for it. If you can do a simple 3D base in your favorite 3D program (for example, in Google SketchUp – remember to catch my past *2DArtist* tutorial with this great program!) it will be a lot easier to work on the profiles.

I do a rough 3D model, as you can see in **Fig.02** and export the different views to Adobe Photoshop. The common style for this kind of work is line art. In the past I painted all the
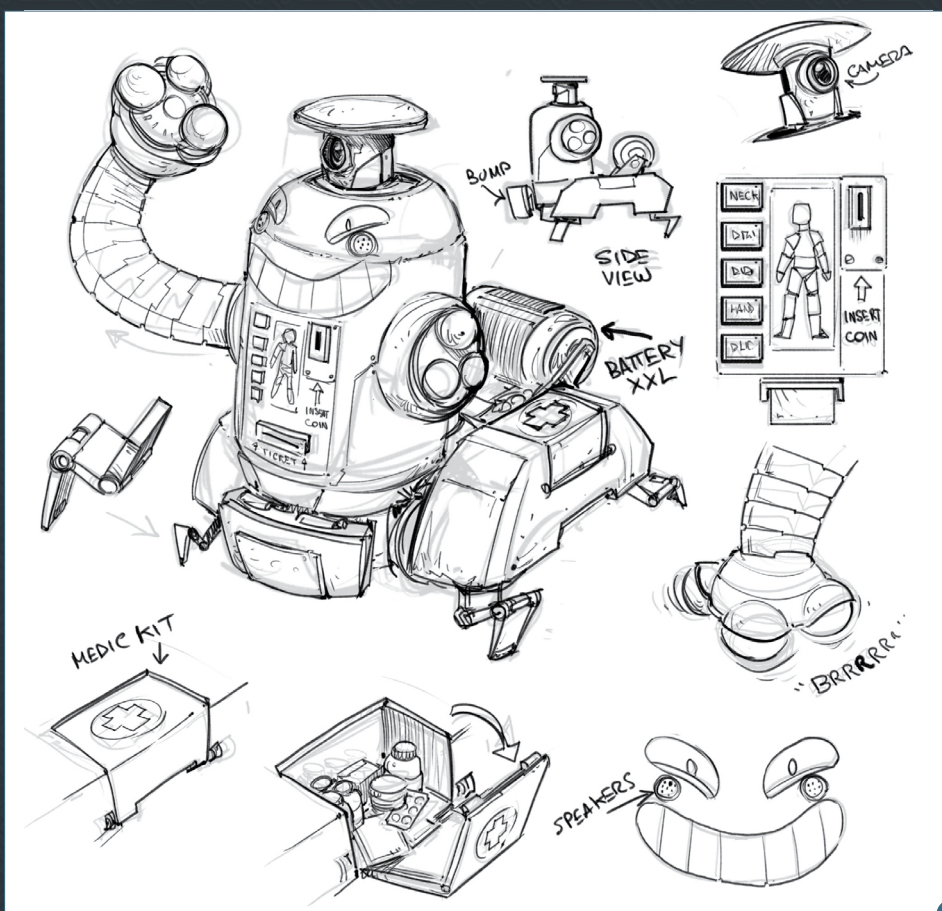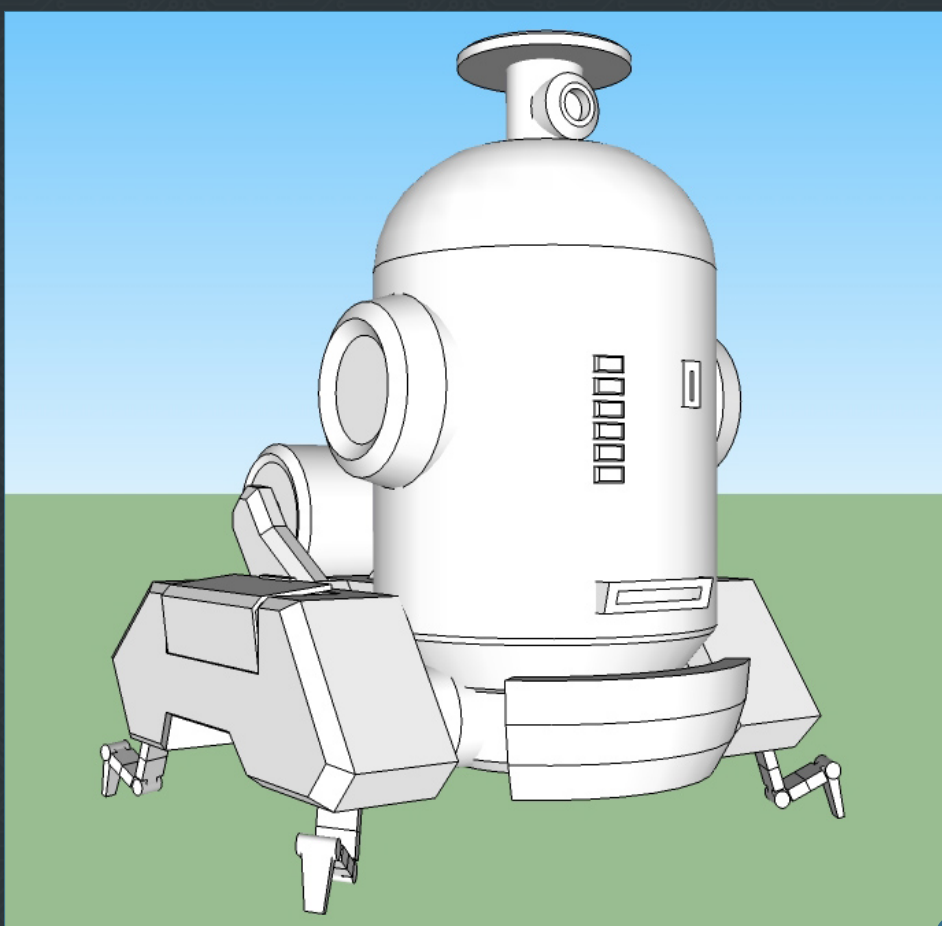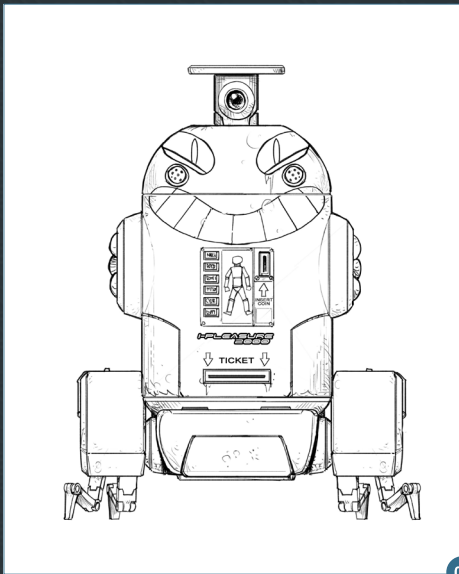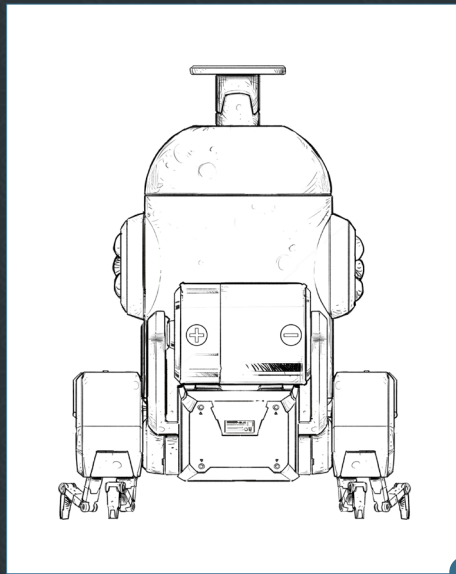
views, but several video game companies told me that this is not necessary and they always used a simple ink line. So forget anything about light and shadow in this stage and call on your interior inker. Check the final result of profiles in **Fig.03 – 04**.

Color Illustration

I start with a rough sketch, which I select from my mind. You can see how fast and quick the strokes are in **Fig.05**. This is because I don't want to think too much about the illustration; I have the idea and now it is time to drop it onto the canvas. So, work fluidly and fast, think of what you want to show and start to draw the rough sketch as I have.

Now it is time to define much more of our illustration. In this step I add better lines and a quick pass of grays to add volume to the illustration. I'm not sure about the lighting, but it is a good start. You can see how all the elements work well together in the composition in **Fig.06**. That's because I did the first step, the rough sketch. I think an empty robot battery on the floor will be great to show how cheap this Japanese massage house is, so I add this in.

Now it is time to add a simple base color, as you can see in **Fig.07**. In this case I pick a brownish one for the entire painting to accentuate the poor hygiene of this establishment (don't tell the inspector!). The blue letters add a cold contrast that works perfectly against the background

and the city behind is a good source of light for our scene. But I'm still looking for the correct lighting and this is an early stage, so I'll probably change the source later on.

You can see in **Fig.08** how I've started to add more color to our secondary robot and client. But you don't have to worry about detail in these early stages, so work loosely over the painting and don't worry about the details at all.

I start to paint the foreground robot. I pick a warm palette, but decide to add a little bit of cold color to the hands, so I pick a violet palette for them, but something is not working and I can feel it. But as I said before, we can fix it later or try other colors; just let the art flow. Sometimes

this kind of exercise is better than thinking too much about an illustration.

Check **Fig.09** to see the rough palette. I've changed the perspective of the front robot too, but maybe it is too drastic. The face of the guy is perfect because it shows how good the robot is at doing its job!

The faces are done, as you can see in **Fig.10**, and I add color to the panel's lights. In the hands I choose a green because I remember a similar device I have at home, but I don't know if this will work for this illustration. I now have several colors on the canvas and a nice cityscape behind. I pick some photos of a city to add a simple texture; I'll paint over it later, of course.

Now we have a floor, a foreground plant and some simple curtains behind. As you can see in **Fig.11** the green isn't as strong now that you can see the floor and the background curtains behind, right? We have to keep working on it and remember that we don't need to worry too much about details. Make big strokes and play with the palette.

In **Fig.12** we have the color scene complete, we have the palette we've chosen, the characters interacting with the robots and some simple details on the curtains. I add a couple of objects to make it more interesting; for example, a carpet on the floor and a briefcase for one of the clients. But now I have some problems. The violet and the green are too strong to work together; I want you to look at the robot, but not just its hands and that's exactly what is happening now. The floor perspective doesn't look right and the light is a little boring.

So I start to think that maybe a good change to the image would be to make the transition to a night-time scene. It's a cheap massage house, the city will look better at night and the glowing hands of the robot will look much better as another light source. So at the last minute I decide to change the ambient light. See how
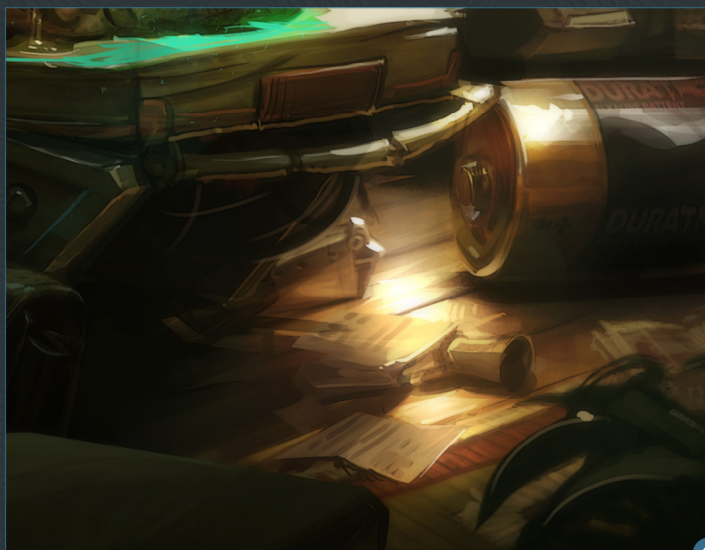
the hands and the light in **Fig.13** are now more turquoise to integrate better with the scene and I've added more detail in the face of the client and a little puddle of drool on the table. The panel's lights are yellow now because I've eliminated the green from the scene.

In **Fig.14** you will see the extra details I've added to the floor to accentuate the dirty place, such as trash, papers and a cup. You can see some reflections too from the lights I will add to the ceiling.

Behind the background robot I put some offer letters to show how commercial the massage house is and put some extra detail on the robot, such as graffiti on its body (**Fig.15**).

Now I darken the entire image with one layer of overlay from the top of the canvas to cover almost all the image. Remember to always use a gradient to do this; don't change the complete painting.

So, with a military dark green on that overlay layer, the painting changes to a night-time image and now is just the time to add the extra details. This is the fun part because you have the final palette and you just have to add all the details you want. As you can see in **Fig.16** the robot has some sparks on the neck because it's a very cheap model and a foggy ambience will give our scene the mood we need. The cigarette smoke I've added is a simple picture of smoke on a layer in Screen mode; make sure you

choose the correct opacity so as not to over-saturate the image.

Well that's the whole process! I hope you have as much fun trying this one as I did. Remember you can always improve or add modifications to your pleasure robots; maybe even make small ones for foot massages or toe nail treatment – that's up to you! See you in the next one; I'm off for a massage!

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Art at Heart

MYTHOLOGY

Myths, legends and fantasy creatures have always been influential when it comes to digital art. In fact, many artists will never really stray too far from these sorts of themes and ideas. In this series a selection of stunning artists will be taking this popular subject and exploring some of its more diverse and lesser known characters. Throughout the series each artist will be given a brief for a character which they will need to interpret and turn into an illustration. To make things a little more interesting this will be done by not one but two artists, one using Photoshop and the other using Painter. This will not only show some of the differences between the two pieces of software, but will also show how the same brief can be interpreted in two different ways. This month **Richard Tilbury** and **Simon Dominic Brewer** tackle the **Ittan-momen**.

Chapter 8: Ittan-momen

Software Used: Photoshop

Ittan-momen is a ghostly phenomenon from Japanese folklore, which flies through the air at night and attacks humans, often by wrapping around their faces to smother them.

Introduction

As you can see from the description above, the ittan-momen conjures the vision of a creepy and macabre creature. This description is open to quite a broad interpretation, but the two things that seem obvious to include are a nocturnal scene set in Japan and someone being smothered.

The notion of a ghost is somewhat less precise in the sense that some have been portrayed as an invisible presence, whilst other versions vary from a translucent shape all the way through to a life-like vision.

I had a vague definition of the creature and so could already picture something in my mind, which was a hybrid between a transparent being and something resembling a solid form. Because the ittan-momen is reputed to wrap around a person's face, I imagined it to be able to extend its body or limbs to perform stealth attacks, silently approaching its victims and clasping them before they are aware of its presence.

With this in mind I could start to work on a composition and block in the characters.

Fig.01 shows two stages of the initial block in, which show a geisha being attacked. I chose to depict a geisha for two reasons, the first of

which is because it is a traditional Japanese female that is widely recognized. The second reason is that they stem from an era long ago when myths and legends were more significant. There is no reason why the scene could not be depicted in a contemporary setting and, in fact, this would prove interesting, however I decided on a more traditional period.

As this was to be a nocturnal scene I envisioned a dark background and the source of light radiating from the creature. I consequently placed the two characters in front of a bland background and emphasized the stark makeup and whiteness of the geisha's face. This inadvertently referred to the cliché that people lose their facial coloring when they see a ghost, as though the blood has been drained from their head.

I was not happy with the posture of the ittan-momen in my first attempt, as it did not imply a very stealthy attack and so I lent the body forward to suggest it was creeping up on its victim. Throughout these stages I used a standard Chalk brush with some texture applied via the Dual Brush settings.

The main objective at this point is to determine the composition and to try and get a feel for the overall structure of the image.

The next stage was to build up the image, clarify some of the rough brush strokes and tighten up the two characters. The focal points would eventually be their faces, which currently looked very sketchy. At this point I was not clear about the creature's facial features and so started to improvise on the original sketch. I liked the notion of an open mouth revealing some teeth, which somehow made it look more threatening and so retained this aspect (**Fig.02**).

I experimented by having his eyes almost shut, which lent him the appearance of a shrunken head I once saw in the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford. These have a very sinister quality and in view of this I painted in some long and

disheveled hair, which is a characteristic of such trophies.

The head was looking okay at this point, but as I had concentrated on achieving a startled expression, as a consequence the geisha's face didn't look very oriental. It was quite a tricky area to get right, not least because their faces appear quite mask-like due to the extensive makeup.

I adjusted the face and tilted the head slightly, before adding a new layer comprising of some provisional color (**Fig.03**). I set the blending mode to Vivid Light, which preserves the tonal range, but in order to see clearly what color has been added see the upper right image set to Normal mode.

Happy with the initial color block-in, I then flattened the PSD and created a new layer, on which I started to make some further refinements. I find this is a good way of working; to utilize a few layers to separate out the details and then intermittently flatten everything before repeating the process. This way, the file size and layer structure is kept within a manageable level at all times.

I created another new layer and added an incandescent glow around the creature using a yellowish hue set to Overlay (**Fig.04**). This had the effect of creating a more ethereal being with a more obviously ghostly presence.

I didn't want to refine the characters fully without paying any attention to the background. Although the surrounding scenery was intended to be dark and somewhat vague by comparison, it did require some definition – albeit in a more

Vivid Light

Overlay

suggestive manner. I looked through the image library at 3DTotal and found some suitable images, namely a bamboo grove and screen (**Fig.05**).

I color corrected these using a combination of Curves, Color Balance and Hue/Saturation, and then blended them in using a soft-edged Eraser.

The other element that I included at this point was a pattern across the kimono. This is something best done using a texture as it will save time. The first step is to copy the image into your file and scale it accordingly. Depending on your intended blending mode you may wish to color correct it also. In this case I selected a predominantly red fabric, but wanted to change the background to a green to match the painting and so went to Image > Adjustments < Replace Color – this can be seen in inset 1 in **Fig.06**.

After changing the color, I set the blending mode to Overlay and then positioned it over the kimono (see inset 2). As this is a flat texture it will not conform to the folds in the cloth and the way it wraps around the body. You can combat this in one of two ways; using the Warp tool or

alternatively through the Liquify filter. In this case I chose the Warp tool (Edit > Transform > Warp). I find the best method is to do it in stages, in order to align the pattern with the varying curves of the cloth.

One area that seemed unresolved was the geisha's left hand. I was thinking of having her holding a parasol, but thought this would interfere with the composition. However her clenched fist did not really express any anxiety or fear and so I decided to change it to a more taut and strained pose (**Fig.07**).

Another aspect that was causing me some concern was her head, which again didn't suggest a particularly traumatic condition. I
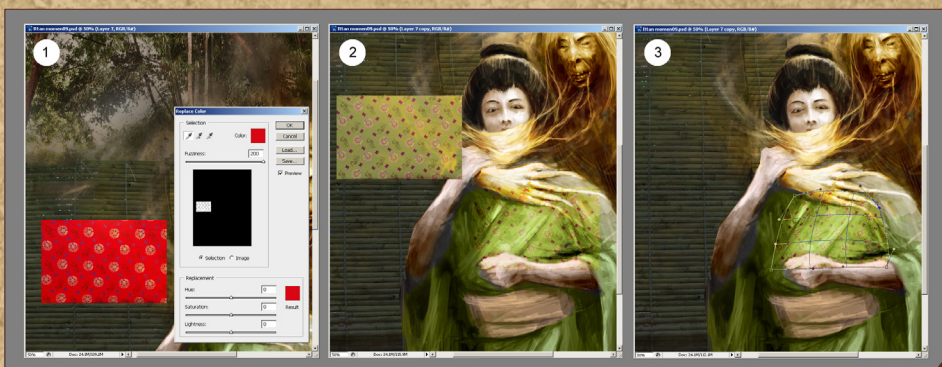
initially liked the fact that she was staring at the viewer, but her head position seemed incongruous with the subject matter. On a new layer I painted in a new version and whilst doing so I moved the pupils upwards, as though her eyes were rolling back. I felt this gave her an expression that was more akin to someone whose life was draining away (**Fig.08**).

The image at this point was nearing the final stages, but there were a few more things that needed to be done. Barring some overall refinements, I wanted to add a spectral

presence coiling around her mouth. I thought it would be interesting to have this connected to the creature's mouth, as well as growing from its head.

Fig.09 shows the smoke-like tendrils enveloping the girl's face and suffocating her, which after being painted in were softened using some Gaussian Blur.

In order to give the creature a more supernatural and ghostly presence, I added a glow by way of a new layer set to Overlay. The initial

experiment can be seen in Fig.08, but I decided to finish it at this point. Using a Soft airbrush I painted in a yellow color, the result of which can be seen in **Fig.10**. The upper left inset shows how it looks in the Normal Blending mode. I made a few more minor tweaks and then the image was complete (**Fig.11**).

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Chapter 8: Ittan-momen
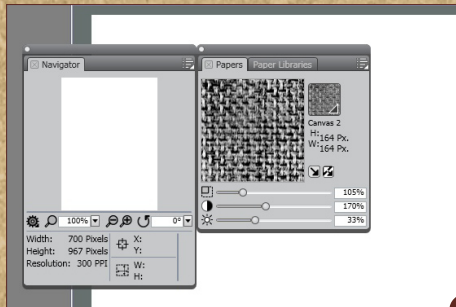
Software Used: Painter

The final mythological creature in the series is called the Ittan-momen, something I'd never heard of before I received the brief! Ittan-momen is a product of Japanese folklore, specifically the Kagoshima Prefecture, and apparently it can be translated to mean "one tenth of a hectare of cotton". The Ittan-momen is described as a ghostly phenomenon, which flies through the air at night and attacks humans by wrapping itself around their heads and smothering them.

Before I start, I collect some reference images of Japanese people in traditional dress, and typical Japanese landscapes. I won't be copying any of these images exactly, but instead I'll be referencing elements from a selection of images and fitting them together – a clothing pattern from one image, a garment from another, a partial pose from another. As for the Ittan-momen, that of course will come solely from my imagination. Browsing through my references I decide to take a little artistic license with this piece.

Whilst the brief says the creature attacks at night, I'm going to set the scene in the daylight. The reason for this is that many of the Japanese garments and landscapes are so colorful it would be a shame to plunge it all into darkness.

Set up the Canvas

I'll be painting this piece using two types of brushes – a Real Watercolor variant, followed by a standard, Circular Grainy variant. When painting with Real Watercolors I find it best to start with a pure white canvas, something I don't normally do when using other brush variants. The reason for this is because of how Real Watercolor paints interact with existing layers. A Watercolor layer is essentially a type of Gel layer and consequently the colors on it cannot be applied opaquely with respect to other layers, and will not show up at all if lighter than the background. Therefore, a white background is the only one that will be true to the applied Watercolor paints.

I start with a small canvas, 700 pixels wide, in the same aspect ratio as my specified full-size dimensions. I choose a canvas-type Paper, which provides texture for my brushes. There is no hard-and-fast rule for choosing the Paper settings of Scale, Contrast and Brightness; I just arrive at my preferences by experimenting with grainy brushes and seeing which settings gave the best effect. I also tweak the settings occasionally during the painting process, to account for different surfaces, such as tree bark and skin (**Fig.01**).
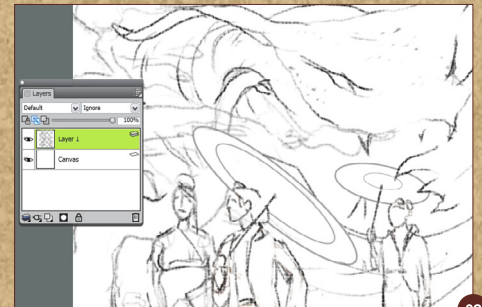

The Rough Sketch

If you're one of those whose sketches look great first time then at this point you'll just create a new layer and draw your sketch, ready for the color phase. On the other hand, if you're like me, you may need to refine your sketches using an iterative process.

To achieve this I create a new layer and onto this layer I create my first rough sketch using the basic Circular Grainy brush. I concentrate on the composition and getting the general appearance of the characters correct. You could almost call the characters placeholders at this stage, undefined rough shapes ready for the addition of proper form and detail.

In terms of content I decide to have our human subjects – three Japanese ladies taking a walk in the garden – unaware of the beast that's looming behind them. The Ittan-momen is described both as ghostly and reminiscent of material, or cotton, so I intend to paint it as a part-ethereal and part-physical creature. I sketch a head in the background, and a partly-formed claw, poised to grab the right-most character (**Fig.02**).
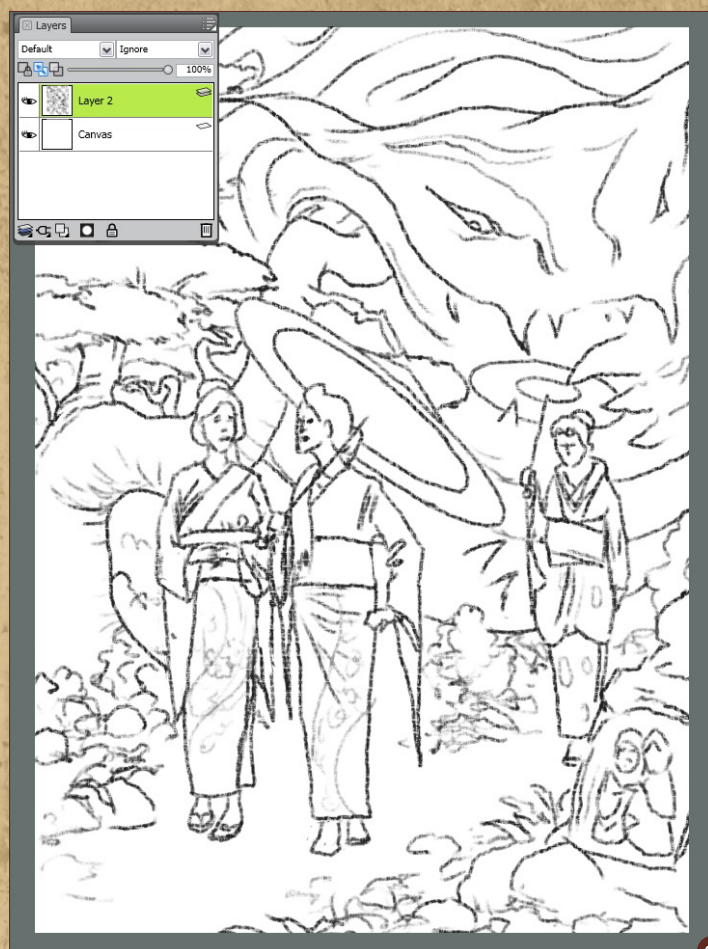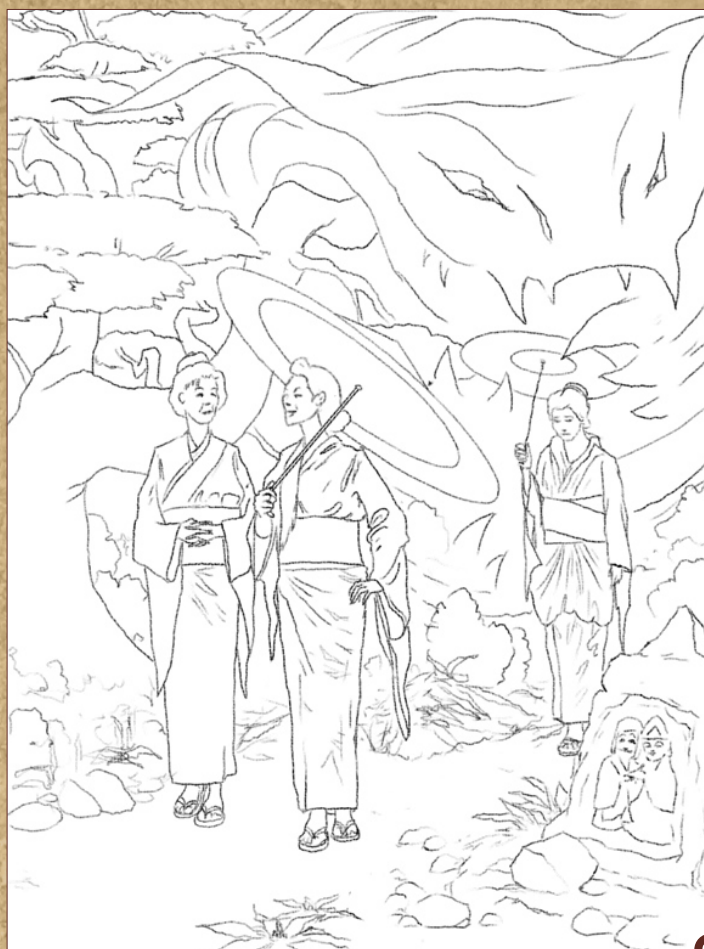
Refining the Sketch

I lower the opacity of Layer 1 to around 30% and create another layer, Layer 2, on top. Using Layer 1 as a guide I render a clearer version of my sketch onto Layer 2. This can be looked on as the intermediate stage, between the chaos of the initial sketch and the more refined lines of the final. When I complete this stage I delete Layer 1, as I no longer need it (**Fig.03**).

The Final Sketch

I resize the whole image to 1500 pixels in height and decrease the opacity of Layer 2 to 30%. I create a third layer and repeat the process in Step 3, the difference being that I use a small brush and pay attention to the detail of the piece. Of course, the amount of final detail in a sketch is a matter for your own judgment and will vary depending on the subject matter. In this case I am satisfied with clean outlines. There is no tonal information and I'll explain the reason for that in the next step. I delete Layer 2 so that I'm left with the canvas and Layer 3, my final sketch (**Fig.04**).

Starting with Watercolor

When using Watercolor I want to paint directly onto a white background, as I mentioned earlier. For this reason I keep my sketch outline only and don't include any tonal information. I choose a Real Watercolor brush and configure it so that most attributes are at or close to 100%, with the exception of the Wind settings (which I leave at 270 and 0) and Evaporation Rate, which I vary from 0% to around 50%. The lower the Evaporation Rate, the more texture and fringing is apparent in the paint dabs.

I select the canvas and as soon as I start to paint, a layer called Watercolor Layer 1 appears between the canvas and Layer 3. I begin with the dresses of the two female characters. I paint the flowery designs at the same time as the rest of the garments' material, taking advantage of the natural fringing effect that arises from low Evaporation Rate settings. Real Watercolor uses a type of build-up method for paint application, which means that the more you paint over an area, the darker it will get. This is

great for applying shadows without altering your basic paint value.

One thing you need to remember when working with watercolors is to save in a RIF format. This preserves the "wetness" of your paint. If you save in PSD or TIF your watercolor layer will "dry" and be converted to a normal layer, meaning that when you resume with your watercolors you will not be able to paint on this layer (**Fig.05**).

06

07

08

09
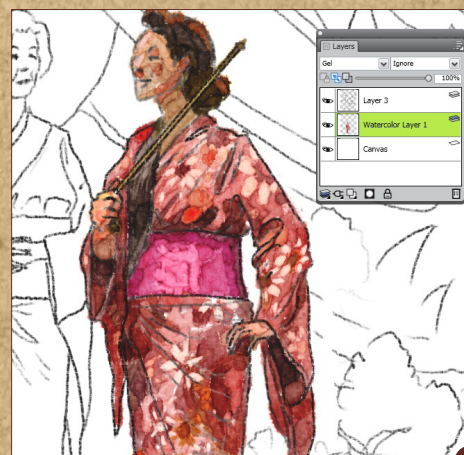
Fill the Canvas

I work my way across the entire canvas, not paying too much attention to detail and concentrating instead on the overall balance of color. The focus of the piece, as dictated by positioning, color tone and value, is the two characters in the foreground. This might seem a little odd, given that the topic of the painting is the Ittan-momen itself, but because the creature is ghostly and furtive I'm considering it to be a secondary source of focus. In this way, with any luck, I can communicate its stealthy nature to the viewer (**Fig.06**).

Beginning the Detail

The next step is to drop all layers to the canvas. I've finished using watercolors now, so I no longer need to preserve the watercolor layer. Before I drop the layers I modify the opacity of Layer 3 – the sketch layer – to 50%, so it doesn't appear too dark.

Next, I resample the image to full working size. I choose a height of 4200 pixels, which I judge will be sufficient enough to allow for a decent level of detail. These dimensions are larger than the specification, but that's fine because I'll simply resize down when I'm finished. I save my image as a PSD as I no longer need to preserve the watercolor wetness. This is simply my preference and in terms of working with Painter I could continue equally well using a RIF.

Using my circular brush I begin detailing the main characters. I don't recognize any "right" or "wrong" place to start, so my choice to begin with the faces is pretty arbitrary. My circular brush allows for solid color to be put down with harsh pressure and an almost pure blending of existing paint with a light pressure. This means I don't need to keep swapping between painting and blending brushes. Painter 12's Brush Calibration feature is a great help in configuring pressure sensitivity for individual brushes.
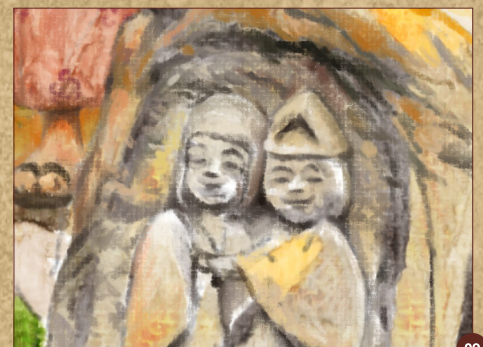
In terms of color I'll mostly pick from the watercolor paint that's already on the canvas. Real Watercolors have the advantage that they can produce significant hue and saturation variations from a single color choice, so color-picking from the canvas produces flexible results. Even so, I often increase the saturation of a color using the Temporal Color palette directly after picking from the canvas, to avoid any potential muddying of the paint (**Fig.07**).

Character Interaction

It's important that the characters in your image are seen to be acting, and interacting, naturally. In this particular piece the two women in the foreground are talking to each other, so I've made it so they are making eye contact. The woman on the left is speaking, and the other woman is listening. If you have two characters that are meant to be interacting yet are staring past each other, or otherwise apparently unaware of each other's presence, this can detract from the painting's overall atmosphere (**Fig.08**).

Adding Interest

Earlier I found a photo of a Japanese stone carving, which legend has it bestows good luck on travelers. I thought I'd include such a carving in my image, to strengthen the Japanese ambience and also as an ironic comment on what's happening in the background (**Fig.09**).

Bringing Out the Textures

The Real Watercolor brush produces some excellent fringed textures and where possible, I want to retain those textures in the final piece. This is particularly relevant to the rocky ground and vegetation, where a small level of refinement with the Circular brush produces realistic, organic shapes such as leaves and rocks almost without trying. The key here is to see patterns within the textures and "tease" them into recognizable shapes, rather than starting with an outline and filling the area with color (**Fig.10**).

Painting Tree Bark

I use the same basic principle that I mentioned in the previous step to paint the tree bark, the main difference being that I paint a subtle spiral pattern in the bark, which helps give the impression that the tree is solid and three dimensional. In the same way, I imagine how the tree might look in three dimensions and

apply some shadows where the trunk and branches curve towards and away from the viewer (**Fig.11**).

Leaves and Foliage

When painting foliage in the distance, or middle distance, it's a good idea to concentrate on the appearance of groups of leaves and not on individual leaves. Not only does this save time, it avoids that overly fussy appearance that can distract the viewer's attention. Again, I try to retain as much of the watercolor texture as I can, whilst enhancing it with vague triangular leaf shapes of varying tonal values. In this way I can communicate the impression of a verdant tree without laboriously painting every leaf (**Fig.12**).

Ittan-momen

Painting our main character, Ittan-momen, is a little tricky and requires me to pay a fair amount of attention to the process. The reason for this is

because I'm used to giving my creatures "bulk", and portraying them as solid objects of flesh and bone. Ittan-momen, however, is a different sort of beast, resembling an expanse of flat or ribbon-like material and being of a ghostly nature. For this reason I need to keep reminding myself to flatten Ittan-momen's form, especially the parts that trail into the distance. The exception to this is the head, which I do bulk out slightly, as if the creature is forming from vapor and poised to bite down on its unsuspecting victim (**Fig.13**).

Hinting at the Surreal

In the background I paint ribbons and steamers as if the Ittan-momen's form is fraying into the atmosphere, or emerging directly from thin air. I use mid-range values for these areas, so that they don't overpower the creature's head and draw the viewer's gaze out of the picture (**Fig.14**).
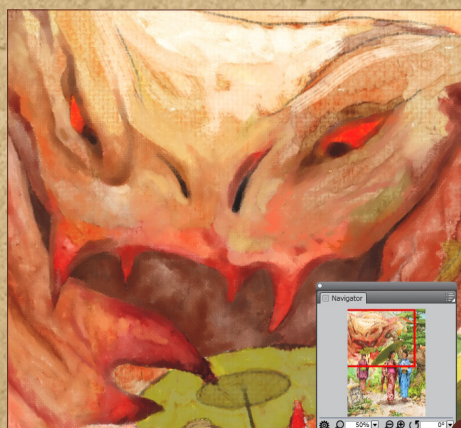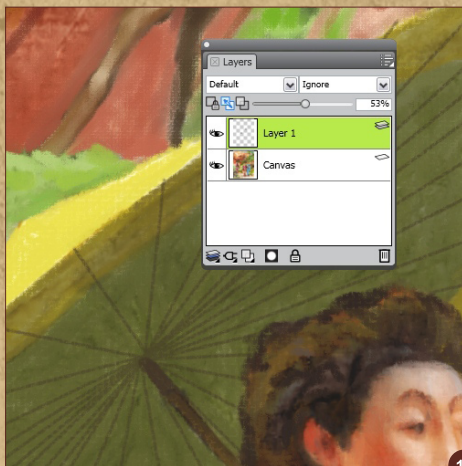
Making Use of Layers

The parasols need some regularly spaced spokes coming out from the center. The easiest way to do this is with a layer. I create a new layer and press V to set my brush to Line mode. I manually draw each spoke from the centre to the edge, pressing V between each line to reset the cursor position. I then set the layer opacity to 50% and erase the portions obscured by the woman's head. I drop the layer to the canvas and press B to return the brush to Normal painting mode before working over the lines, to blend them a little more convincingly with the parasol (**Fig.15**).

Rotating the Canvas

On occasion I'll use the Rotate Canvas tool to modify the canvas orientation, thereby avoiding having to angle my arm or tablet in an uncomfortable drawing position. Rotation can also be achieved by using Space + Alt (Space + Option for MAC). If you're using Windows press the Spacebar first, otherwise the shortcut doesn't work. You can also use the Navigator

panel to control rotation and to reset the rotation value to 0 (**Fig.16**).

Tweaking Values

I notice that the stone carving appears too bright and I think it would balance the composition more to darken the stone. To achieve this I create another layer and set its attribute to Darken. I modify the opacity to around 50% and with a very dark orange brush, I paint over the entire carving. I drop the layer to the canvas and dab some brighter grays and yellows on the sharp stone edges, giving the impression of chipped and worn granite (**Fig.17**).

Pushing the Shadows

For my penultimate stage I work through the image at 100% zoom in order to add definition and contrast to certain regions. Because my light source is diffuse there are few sharp shadows, but despite this there are areas where the shadows need to be deep, almost black. The earth directly beneath the stones, the women's hair, and the deep creases of their garments

are examples of this. I also take this opportunity to refine any textures I missed earlier, so that fringed blobs of watercolor paint become rounded pebbles or patches of moss (**Fig.18**).
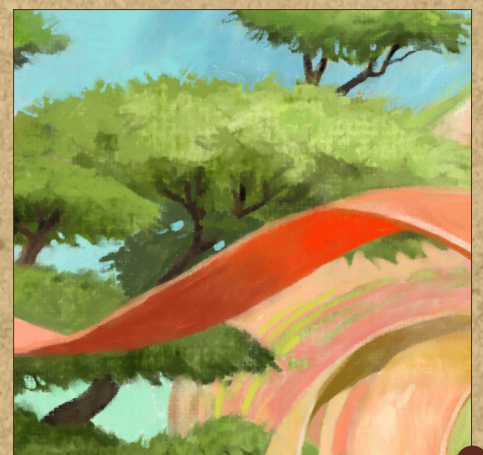
Tidying Up

As always I leave the image for a few days so that I can come back to it with a fresh perspective. Immediately I spot a couple of things that need attention. The tree branches towards the top left of the frame don't seem to agree with the bulk of the tree itself, so I remedy that by redrawing them at different angles. I also notice that the forked path is not particularly clear where it recedes into the distance, so I spend a little time defining the boundary between path and garden vegetation (**Fig.19**).

I tweak the contrast and color balance very slightly in order to fully bring out the varied hues more, and then save a copy of the image at 2480 x 3425 pixels (the specified size at 300PPI). That concludes this workshop and I hope you've found it useful!

2DA next month

Here is what's in the next issue of 2DArtist

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Image By Ken Barthelmey

"Knowing what story you want to tell, working on your layering and shapes, getting as many visual references as possible and developing a good knowledge of light, are crucial in the making of an atmosphere to be used in video games..."

This issue's Making Of is from concept artist, Xavier Etchepare, who talks us through how he created this environment for a third-person shooter game. From creating a colorful atmosphere and using reference photos, to using little effects as a final touch, Xavier covers it all!

MAKING OF BY XAVIER ETCHEPARE
# VIDEO GAME
CONCEPT

Video Game Concept

Software Used: Photoshop

Hello everyone. Recently I have been participating in the making of a video game in Barcelona, at Dark Ride Studios. The game is a third-person shooter and a fantastic playground for an artist, with zombies, time traveling (Ancient China, Middle-Ages, Far West, Second World War and present-day worlds) and the option to play as four badass heroes, with outrageously violent gameplay – pure joy for geeks! Unfortunately this project hasn't found a buyer yet and is still at a conceptual level.

For the concept image I'll be talking about today, the first step was to characterize each era; this consisted of creating a colorful atmosphere, which lead me to make a color script (**Fig.01**), in other words, frames corresponding to the evolution of the color in each level.

The chosen world being a dark and violent one, with the concept dealing with the medieval era, I selected a dark blue palette with different
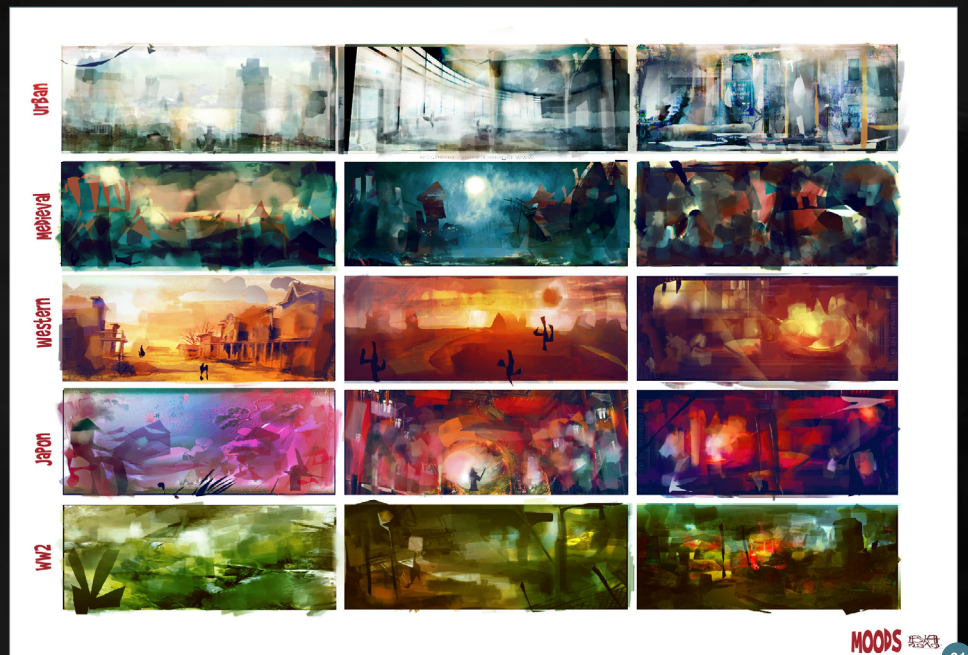
shades from red to pink (blue for night-time, red for danger and pink for magic), as well as an image with high contrasts (very dark shaded parts, adding to the anguish felt by the player). Also I wanted to establish a really worn out, glacial and mysterious atmosphere. You can see this in the second line/strip of Fig.01.

This strip allowed me to reach other concepts based on the same colorimetric palette, which was my reference (**Fig.02**).

The idea was also to put the hero/player in the middle of the plot in a perspective that is similar to that used by the gameplay, to give an insight into the target atmosphere of the game.
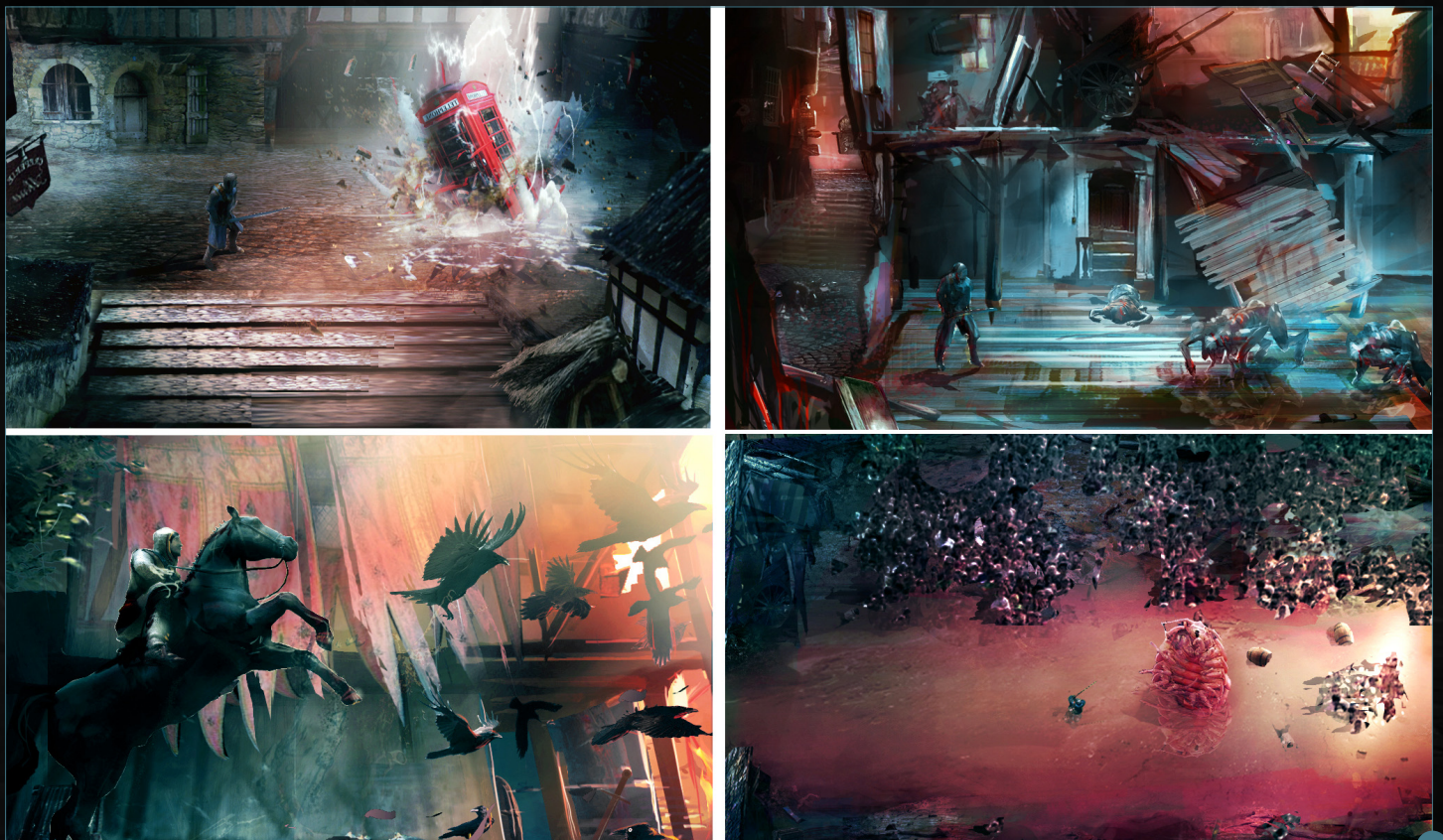
I chose to place the hero in an alley that is surrounded by crumbling houses. The place looks totally devastated and in the midst of a mysterious fog. In the distance, a crashed Boeing can be seen, and threatening figures appear gradually.

To create my image, I used one of my sketches from the color script and made the most of the first emerging shapes to select my composition (**Fig.03**).

I decided that the picture viewing would be based on the centre, exactly like in a third-person shooter, so in the end the most important information needed to be in the middle of the image (**Fig.04**).

However, I definitely wanted to avoid any symmetrical aspect of the setting, and the dullness that an overly central layout could give. Hence I started thinking about how the "weights" in my picture would fall and sketched my intentions (**Fig.05**).
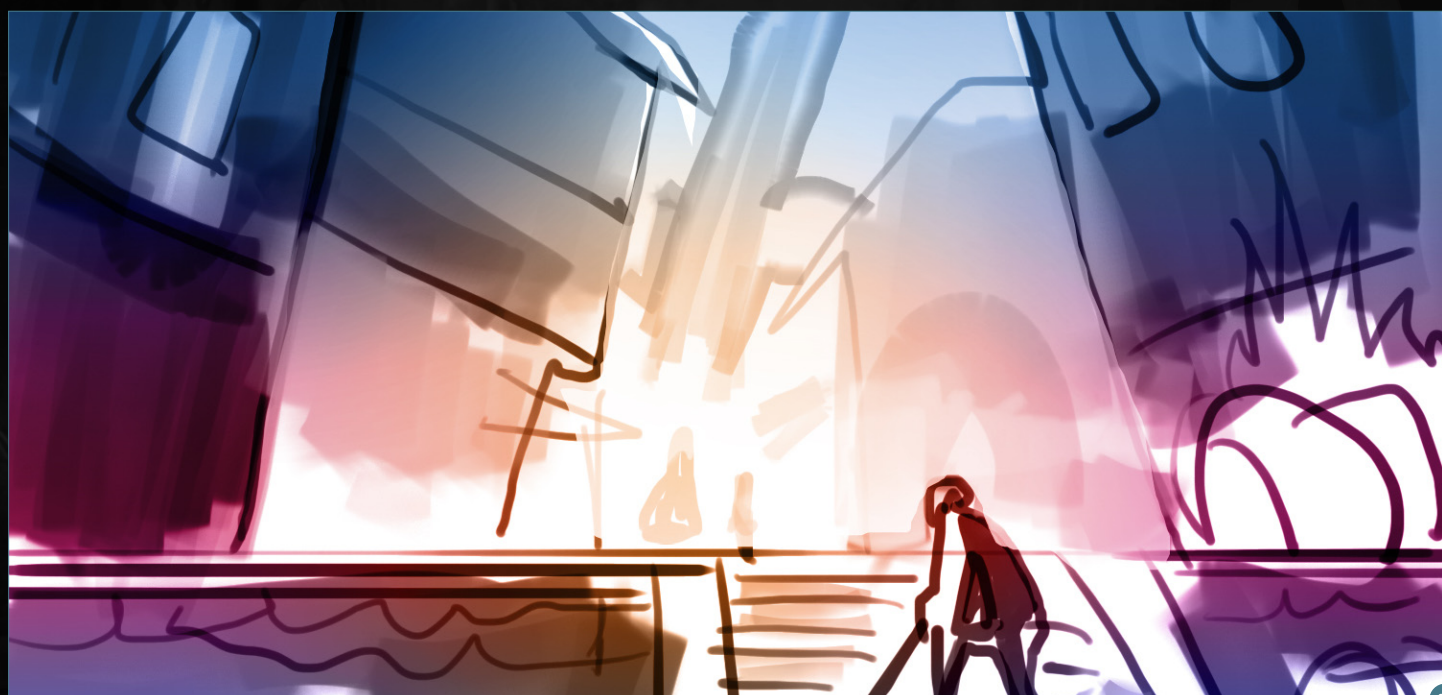
My first goal was to use straight lines in the architecture (angles of the roofs, half-timbered walls, and so on), to guide the eye towards important elements in my image and facilitate
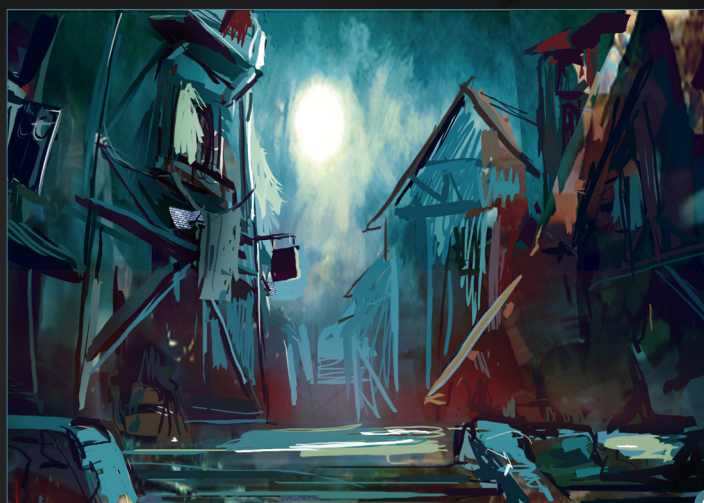

03

04

05

a comprehensive reading of it. As I built my setting, this purpose remained essential to ensure that I didn't lose the picture to the details (**Fig.06**).

By adapting my color script frame to the desired composition, my illustration started to take shape, as you can see in **Fig.07 – 09**. During this stage, my main goal was to focus my work on light, to carefully place dark and light "weights" in my picture.

After this, I incorporated photographic references into the process, to bring the last touch of details and realism that my different surfaces required (building façades, cobblestones, doors, and so on).

The internet is terrific in this regard, thanks to the randomness of the results found by the search engine. It can sometimes give birth to new ideas (e.g., plane turbine on the ground) (**Fig.10**).

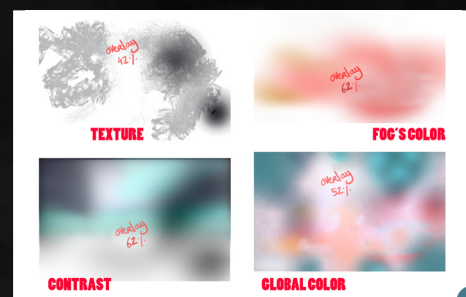We want to be careful though not to conceal all the lines that have previously been drawn

under the photographic elements. Therefore, I used my sources with care as I experimented with new positions for the windows and balustrades (**Fig.11**).

My work was now much richer visually, so I started a phase where I polished the outlines, optimized the volumes and blended the photographic and drawn elements for the final phase.

This final stage was not finished without an experimental light colorimetric layer, "rough" textures, fused in Overlay mode, and shades from black to white to give contrast to certain areas in my illustration. Hence, I created various tracings/copies, all of which had a specific role (**Fig.12**).

My picture was now clean and legible. I improved it with a few effects like bats in the sky, fog patches on the ground and patterns on the hanging flags. At last, my concept was finished (**Fig.13**)!

This first experience as a concept artist has enabled me to establish a quick and efficient creative process that I have now been using in my projects with Ubisoft. Knowing what story you want to tell, working on your layering and shapes, getting as many visual references as possible and developing a good knowledge of light, are crucial in the making of an atmosphere to be used in video games.

A warm thank you to *2DArtist* for giving me this great opportunity to share my work with you all!

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Issue 084 August 2012

Cover image by Oleg Nikolov

Luo Qisheng
3D Character Artist

Gallery
Gallery - 10 of the best images from around the world!

Bagpiper
Project Overview
by Oleg Nikolov

In this month's issue we look at the creation of a weird yet wonderful creature, a droid which is set to pleasure, and a couple of older guys get dressed for the occasion.

THE CHARACTER
COLLECTION

The Submarine Pen
Diving in to chapter two, **Andrew Finch** continues his eight part tutorial series by showing how to turn your whites boxes to custom meshes.

Guide to FX - Particles & Dynamics
All the parts are falling in to place as **Matt Chandler** (3dsmax) and **Mike Zugschwert** (Maya) show us how to animate leaves dropping from a tree.

Character Production
Rodrigue Pralier (3dsmax) and **Anto Juricic** (Maya) will this month focus on hair and clothing as our character series moves towards completion .

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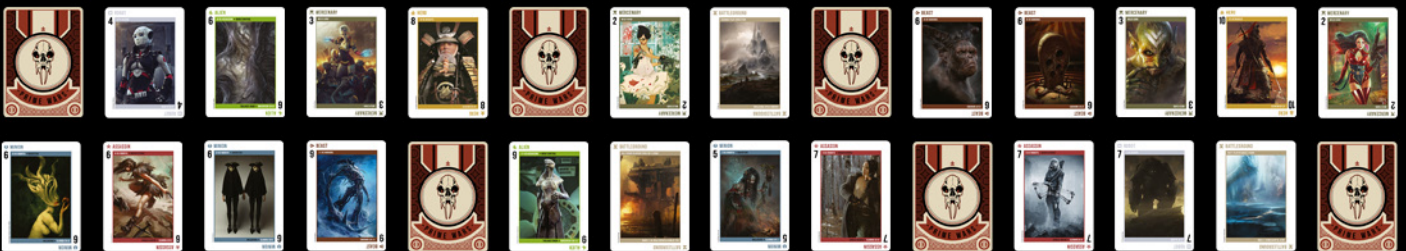to see a full preview of the latest issue, subscription offers and to purchase back issues.

DIGITAL ART MASTERS
VOLUME 6
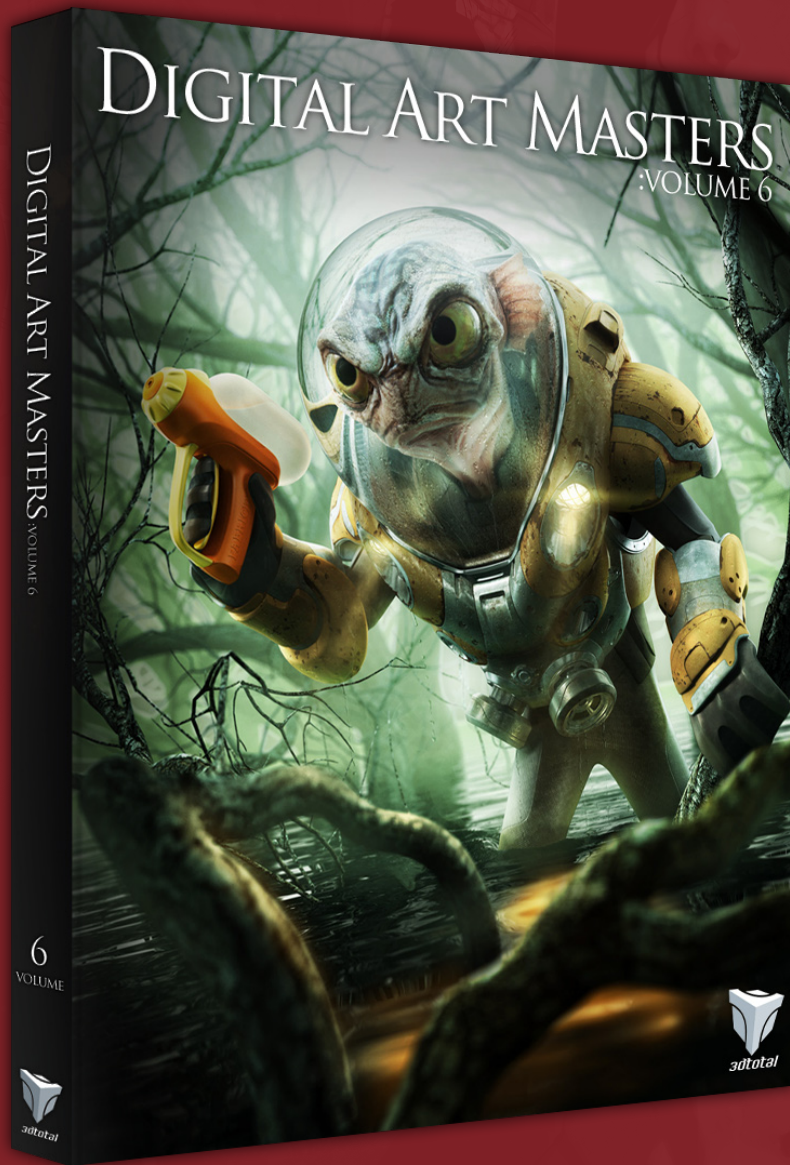
With the release of *Digital Art Masters: Volume 6*, we have some exclusive chapters for you...

This is more than just an artwork book. Not only does it feature full-color, full-page images, but each artist has given a detailed description, in their own words, of the creation process behind each piece of published artwork. And they've done it especially for this book!

This month we feature:

"RIOT GIRL"

BY REYNAN SANCHEZ

The following shots of the "Riot Girl" book pages are featured here in full-resolution and can be read by zooming in...

RIOT GIRL
By Reynan Sanchez
JOB TITLE: Freelance Digital Artist
SOFTWARE USED: Photoshop

INTRODUCTION

I have always been a huge fan of so many artists, from the Old Masters of the Renaissance through to modern day fantasy artists, of which there are too many to mention. But one artist whose work greatly influenced this piece is Simon Bisley. His take on *Heavy Metal's F.A.K.K.2* still amazes me up until this day. This piece really shows off his unique artistic style and it is hands down one of my favorite paintings of all time, so I decided to try and create something a bit like it.

> "FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE INTERESTED IN KNOWING WHAT BRUSHES I USE, BELIEVE IT OR NOT I ONLY USE DEFAULT BRUSHES"

In my days as a young artist my eldest brother, who is also an artist, always brought home comic books and classic fantasy magazines, which explains why I love the classic/vintage style of fantasy artwork.

My goal here was to achieve a sexy pin-up look, similar to what we often see on some on the great, classic fantasy comic magazine covers from the 70's through to the 90's, while trying to incorporate modern stylized designs that you could possibly expect to see in current artwork.

PAINTING

Before we start, I want to emphasize that this tutorial is by no means an attempt to explain every single detail of the process. Instead it will provide more of an overview of the important and necessary steps, and occasionally some silly stuff that I think you readers will find interesting.

So, let's begin with the painting process...

I don't really have any initial concept sketches for this one unfortunately, so we can launch directly into the painting process. I sometimes do quick concept sketches before making a piece of artwork but not often, especially when creating personal artwork.

For those of you who are interested in knowing what brushes I use, believe it or not I only use default brushes (Chalk and Airbrush Soft Round) for almost every piece of artwork I create, including this one. I use these brushes for the entire painting process, including my

Eraser. Although I also use custom brushes sometimes, I try not to rely on them too much which I'll explain later.

As you can see I started to paint in some basic shapes in different tones, which identified each area as skin, hair, and metal etc. This was also the most time-consuming part of the process, as I spent most of the time producing layers again and again. I painted on a layer and then added another layer, which I then painted onto and so on. The more layers I created the more detailed it got. I did this over and over until all the shapes and forms were detailed enough. I used over 150 layers on the first image alone.

© Reynan Sanchez

I think that the painting process that I've outlined here is as simple as any artist's approach, whether traditional or digital, with nothing really special in terms of technique. It's pretty similar and uses the same principles as I employ when using traditional mediums such as watercolors, oil and acrylics (Fig.01).

BACKGROUND

Once I had finished painting the girl, I merged the layers into a single image so that I could easily drag it over to a larger canvas. This canvas acted as my main background for the image, which was a bit larger compared to the previous one. This canvas also included a group of layers that I labeled as "Filter" – this color corrected everything and made the color palette more vivid, similar to a post-processing effect (Fig.02).

DETAILS AND SHADOWS

After everything was in place, I then repeated the same process outlined in the initial stages. I added small details along the way, like tattoos and darker outlines etc., which added up to another hundred plus layers alone before once again merging everything. On reflection

I wanted the background to be simple, resembling a wall or something, and so I added a shadow to make it appear as though there's a wall behind her (Fig.03a – c).

BACKGROUND DETAIL

Although the wall looked good already, it still seemed a little flat. I decided to make it look even better by adding some texture, cracks,

The following shots of the "Riot Girl" book pages are featured here in full-resolution and can be read by zooming in...

ASIDE FROM MAKING THE COLOR MORE VIBRANT THIS BLENDING MODE ALSO ADDS TRANSPARENCY WITHOUT TOO MUCH LOSS TO THE COLOR INTENSITY

a few bullet holes and lots of scattered blood, which made the background more interesting to look at (Fig.04a – b).

BLOOD SPLATTERS
Before we proceed to the next step, I want to provide a brief summary on how I created the blood splatters that you can see scattered everywhere.

The first thing I did was to look for some free custom brushes that you can download over the very reliable internet. I searched for an "Ink Splatter" type of brush. Once downloaded and installed, I then chose a color that resembled blood (obviously the red color) – "Pantone 179c" to be exact. I then used it to paint both the small and large splatters, to a layer set to Color Burn. Aside from making the color more vibrant this blending mode also adds

Transparency without too much loss to the color intensity, making it easier to just paint over a layer without worrying about tone (Fig.05a).

Now let's get back to the ink splatter brush and explain why I don't rely too much on custom brushes. Although it seems that the brush will do the job and be suitable for producing good blood spatters, I'm convinced otherwise because it looks a bit too generic. To combat this I heavily tweaked its appearance by using a Chalk brush eraser set to 40% opacity. I tried to slowly and carefully recreate the appearance by erasing unwanted shapes whilst adding a few more (drips coming from the splatters). It made the blood looked more interesting and unique, rather than the uniform and common splatter look we usually see.

As you can see, I try not to rely on what the custom brush can "create for me". I try to recreate something out of it, making it look unique in some way (Fig.05b).

ANATOMY 101
At this stage I'd almost finished the image, but before I finalized the artwork there was one more important thing I needed to look at: the anatomy. This had been kind of broken right

NORMAL

COLOR BURN

TRANSPARENCY

ORIGINAL

ERASER

THESE ARE TECHNIQUES THAT I HAVE ESTABLISHED THROUGH YEARS OF PRACTICE

from the start, a result of not using a reference I guess. I didn't notice it earlier, so I tried to fix it here.

Fortunately I had a single flattened layer consisting of the character. This layer was separate from the background, which meant it was much easier to fix the problem without touching the background.

After some tweaking, the result was very noticeable. You can see the huge difference between the two images provided (Fig.06). The one on the left looks very bulky and stiff compared to the version on the right, which is far sexier and more appealing. What I did
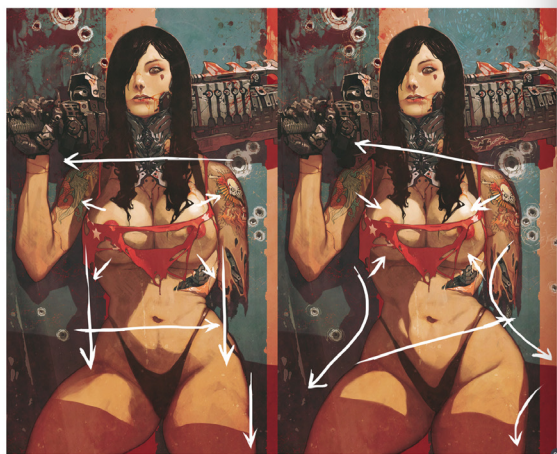
IT IS BETTER TO CREATE AND COME UP WITH SOMETHING OUT OF THE THINGS YOU'VE LEARNED, BECAUSE AS AN ARTIST YOU DON'T WANT YOUR OWN MASTERPIECE TO BE ALMOST IDENTICAL TO ANOTHER ARTIST'S WORK.

was to select some body parts using the Lasso tool and then transform them (Ctrl + T – Free Transform), choosing to Scale, Rotate or Warp the body parts I wanted to fix. I reduced the size of the ribs, made the hips wider and adjusted the shoulders and waist.

FINAL ADJUSTMENTS
At this point I was satisfied with how things had turned out and didn't plan on adding any more details, so decided to apply some final adjustments. What I did was flatten the image

and then duplicate it before applying Filter > Sharpen > Smart Sharpen. Once the image was sharpened, I lowered the opacity to 30% to avoid an over-sharpened image. After that I flattened the layers again and I was done!

CLOSING COMMENTS
So that's it! You've just had a glimpse of how unusual and sometimes messed-up my process can become when creating an image. It can sometimes be a little bit complicated, but the result is well worth it!

I incorporate techniques that I'm very comfortable and familiar with, despite them sometimes appearing complicated and not quite the standard process. Instead these are techniques that I have established through years of practice involving both traditional and digital art. Initially of course you try to get inspiration from other artists and absorb different techniques from tutorials etc., which is something I'm still doing to this day. In fact there's nothing wrong with this and indeed it's part of the learning process as long as you don't rely on it too much. Instead it is better to create and come up with something out of the things you've learned, because as an artist you don't want your own masterpiece to be almost identical to another artist's work. So try to experiment, enjoy art and have fun!

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