

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART

ImagineFX

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

TATTOO ART

SKIN DEEP

How to ink the art that's taking over the world



Let's roll! Your ultimate guide to painting sassy femme fatales

Inside

LEARN QUICK BRUSH SKILLS IN PHOTOSHOP

INJECT HUMOUR INTO YOUR FANTASY WORK

DRAW AND PAINT TRADITIONAL ART



MEET THE LADY KILLERS

Greg Hildebrandt
Adam Hughes
Sorayama
Serge Birault
Daniela Uhlig
Andrew
Hickinbottom
Jace Wallace
Matt Dixon
Aly Fell...
and more!

Future



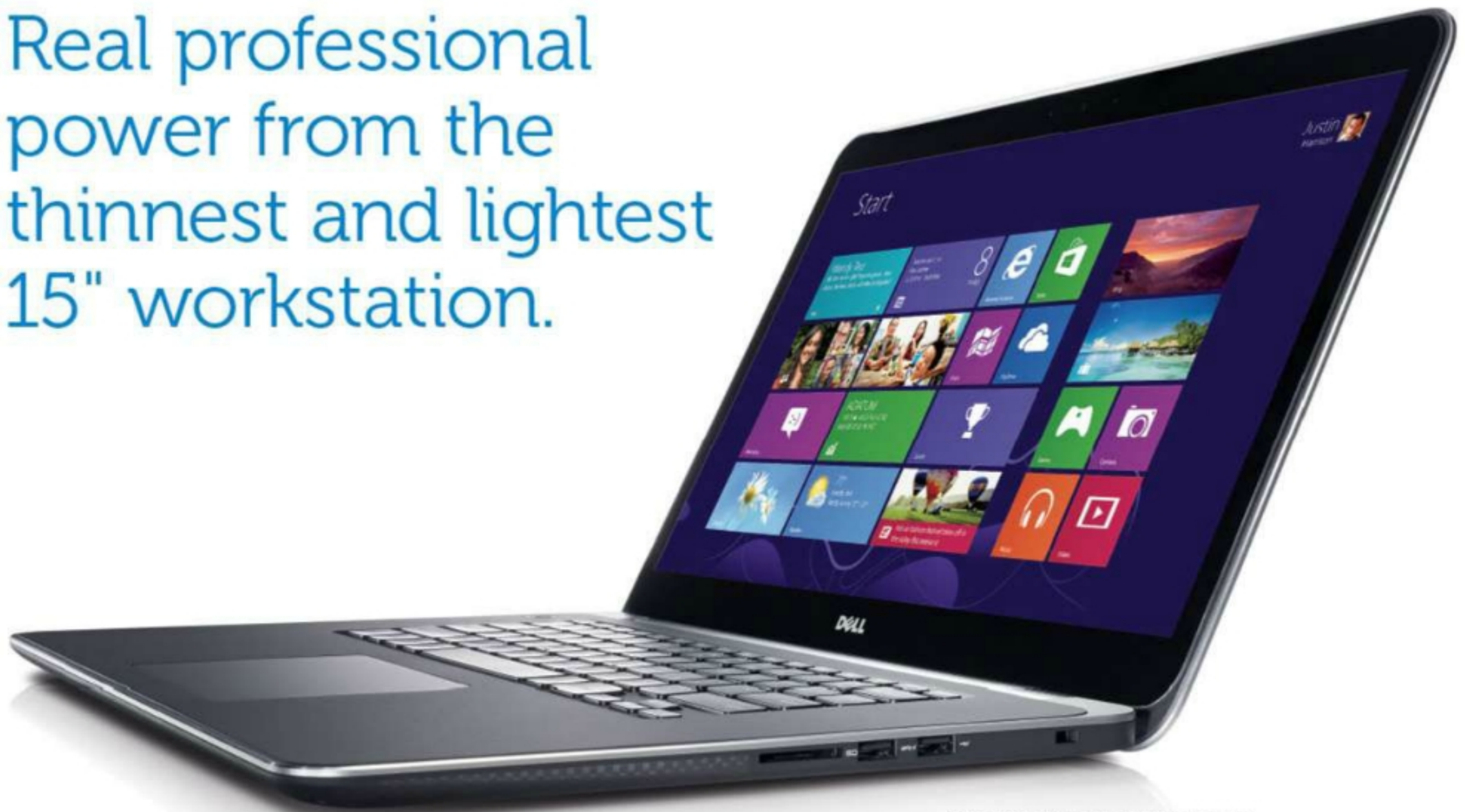
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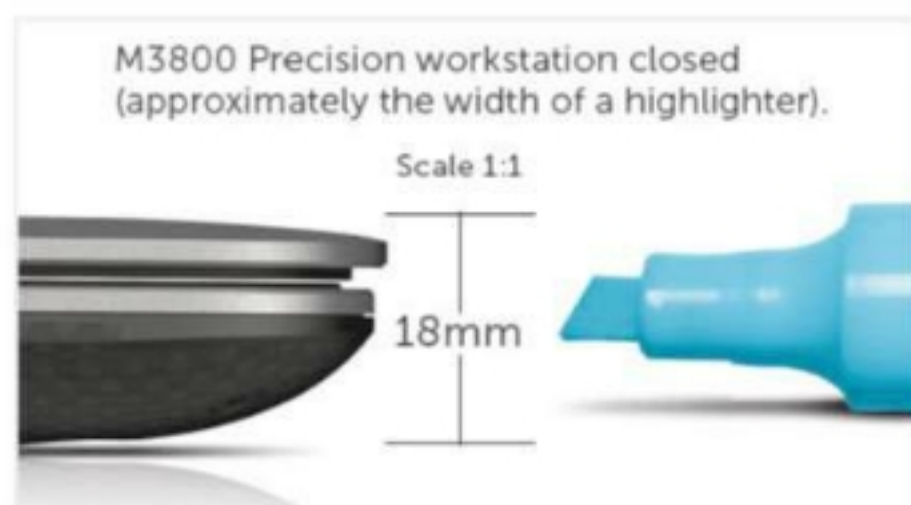


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Welcome... to a cracker of an issue



Pin-up is all about attitude – and I think you'll agree that our sassy roller-derby cover star has it in spades. I loved working with artist Loopydave on this image, and I still smile at the little comedic touches that he added to the painting. See if you can spot them. Turn to page 58 to see how the artist created

our heroine, and to find out who Skinny Al is...

From page 46 we celebrate the artists behind the most beautiful female paintings in the universe. The usual suspects take a bow – step up Adam Hughes, Serge Birault and Sorayama to name a few, but there's also some new artists bringing a fresh approach to the genre.

Elsewhere, we delve into the world of tattoos. Tattoo art has taken a fascinating journey from being the outsider's choice of rebellion, to being a recognisable art form. Find out more about this permanent art exhibition on page 20. Oh, and have you had a tattoo done of your favourite artist's work? Or got a tattoo of a piece of art from the pages of ImagineFX, perhaps? Let us know! Send in your photos and tell us why you had to have something forever adorned on your body.

As always, let me know what you think about this edition – my email address is below. I might not be able to respond to you all, but I always love hearing your views, so drop me a line to share your thoughts and tell me about the art you created after being inspired by what you've seen on these pages.

Claire

Claire Howlett, Editor
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Our special cover for
subscribers this issue.



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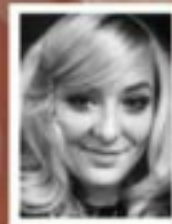
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"Artists are creating characters with more personality and power... things had to change"
Pin-up artist Babs Tarr on the New Wave

Reader FXPosé

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FANTASY illustrator

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Greg Hildebrandt



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Resources

Getting your hands on all of this issue's essential resources is now easier than ever. Just go to our dedicated web page at <http://ifxm.ag/ooolala105>

OVER 6 HOURS
of workshop and
Q&A video to
watch and
learn from!

COVER VIDEO

Portray a sassy pin-up

Loopydave explains how he paints a roller derby player. And meet Skinny AI, the skull that adds a storytelling element to the composition.
Plus WIPs and final image

HOW TO GET YOUR FILES

How to find the video and workshop files in three simple steps...

- 1 Go to the website**
Type the URL into your address bar: <http://ifxm.ag/ooolala105>.
- 2 Find the files you want**
Search through the list of resources to watch or download.
- 3 Download what you need**
Click the asset download button or watch the videos online!



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ImagineFX

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EXCLUSIVE VIDEO TUTORIAL!

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

WORKSHOP VIDEOS



Fiona Meng

Enter this artist's melancholy world and see her soft painting technique in action. **Plus WIPs and final image**



Therese Larsson

Learn how to add humour to a storybook illustration, through body language. **Plus WIPs, brushes and final image**



Geoffrey Ernault

Boost your Photoshop brush skills and create an image from random strokes. **Plus WIPs, brushes and final image**



VIDEO SAMPLE

James Gurney

Watch a clip from the Dinotopia artist's latest project, in which he paints a series of stamps for the Australian postal service.

Q&A VIDEOS



Nadia Enis

Push the anatomy of a pin-up character to make the composition more interesting. **Plus WIP and final image**



Goñi Montes

Discover how to give your pin-up figure perfect-looking skin. **Plus WIPs and final image**



Nadia Enis

Here's what you need to know about drawing a male pin-up character. **Plus WIP and final image**

PLUS Extensive WIPs, brushes and final artwork from Matt Dixon, Serge Birault, Jace Wallace, Tony Foti, Waldemar Kazak, Ien Levin, James Zapata, Guillaume Poux, Kev Crossley and Chris Legaspi.

14 CUSTOM BRUSHES, INCLUDING...

CHRIS WAHL BRUSHES

This was the brush that Guillaume Poux used for his figure's Afro hair style.

BRUSH 1

Therese Larsson finds this brush closely mimics traditional media.

CUSTOM BRUSHES

Use other artists' brushes but vary their use, suggests Geoffrey Ernault.

Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR FANTASY ART

ImagineFX
ARTIST
MONTH

Volkan Kucukemre

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MEDIA: Maya, ZBrush, 3D-Coat, Keyshot, Photoshop, PaintTool SAI



Founded in 2009, Gamester is one of Turkey's first ever gaming startups. The Istanbul-based studio is home to Volkan, who's responsible for artwork and asset development, as well as game design.

The graphic design graduate is not only passionate about traditional and digital art, but also enjoys building plastic models and wargaming miniatures.

"I don't feel like I've developed a style of my own," Volkan says. "Instead, I draw inspiration from various sources as I'm working. Sci-fi and fantasy are really exciting to me."

1 EXOSUIT "This is my most recent work. I used my library of 3D-modelled mechanical parts, much like kitbashing in Maya. Then I rendered in it Keyshot, with a simple matte painting as a backplate. I then put everything together in Photoshop. Fun!"

2 RAPTURE "This was done for Dominance War IV's concept art challenge. Rapture is the demon lord of death, the herald of the apocalypse. This chap's more like an event or disaster than a creature."

3 58TH "I'm a huge fan of Games Workshop's Warhammer 40,000, and this is a tribute to Death Korps of Krieg, 158th Siege regiment, produced by Forge World. It was painted in Photoshop and I used some World War One photos as reference."

4 NET "The theme of this painting is 'digital hell'. It was created for an exhibition, but was never shown."



ARTIST OF THE MONTH

Congratulations, Volkan - you've won yourself a copy of Exposé 11 and d'artiste: Character Design! To find out more about these two great books, go to www.ballisticpublishing.com.



Artist crit

Concept artist Fred Augis appreciates the work that's gone into Volkan's mech



"Volkan has a good eye for robots. Their poses give them an aggressive feel. The matte shades fit the setting to give it a sense of harmony throughout."



Elin Lindehoff

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MEDIA: Photoshop



"I love exploring new styles while still retaining a look of my own," Elin says.

"I think you can grow stale committing to one particular style. If I don't change up the way I draw, every couple of months or so, I end up bored."

Elin is an illustrator turned student of game development. She attends the Game Assembly, a vocational college in Malmö. As part of her course, the Swede is a member of the graphic team behind six fully functioning short games.

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Elin has an interesting approach to art, regularly switching styles to keep things exciting. The common theme in these works – and one I like – is subjects with bags of character, in settings full of interesting subplots."

Gary Evans,
Staff Writer



1 POISON GIRL "The title is borrowed from Angelique Houtkamp's painting of the same title. I love the original and wanted to recreate it with own my personal twist."

2 RYE THE ADVENTURER "Here, I was trying for a much more cartoon-like style, without going overboard with colour and line-art. I really like the outcome, and plan on playing around with this style."

3 THE WHITE DUCHESS "The idea was to paint a portrait of a villain (hence the eye patch), something you'd imagine the subject hanging above their mantle. Most of all, I love the dress."





Andy Fairhurst

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MEDIA: Photoshop



Andy is an English freelance digital painter who's living and working in Wales. The artist has a diverse portfolio that covers everything from character design and portraits, to matte painting and logos. Ballistic Publishing has featured his work in Exposé, Exotique and d'artiste Fashion Design.

Andy's currently working on a range of Doctor Who products with UK-based BIG Chief Studios Ltd. And proving what an all-round multidisciplinary talent he is, Andy is also putting the finishing touches to promotional artwork for the children's novel he's penned.

1 GREAT WHITE "I've always loved great white sharks and their almost mythological status. I wanted this one to evoke either fear or a sort of peaceful symbiosis between man and shark. How you perceive it depends on your attitude towards sharks, I guess."

2 FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE "This was my first proper attempt at matte painting. The inspiration was a photo my brother took of a guy standing on a hill. 'He looks like Superman standing there like that,' he said. So I did this."

3 BOBA FETT: BOUNTY HUNTER "This Star Wars character has always been my favourite - well, since Empire, anyway. He was the ultimate in cool and the inspiration behind countless bad-ass characters since."



Sara Forlenza

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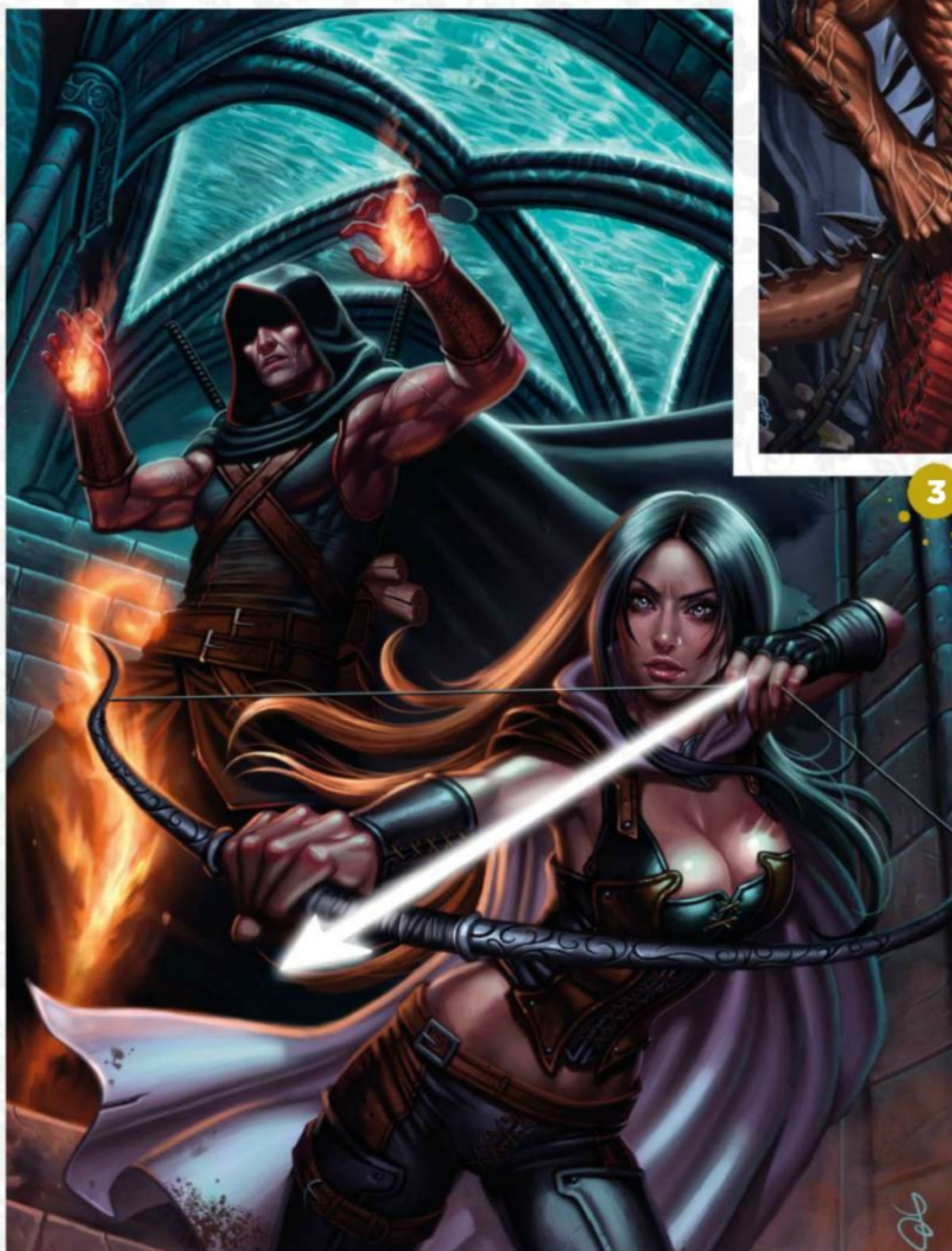
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SOFTWARE: Photoshop, Painter



Sara was originally attracted to traditional media, particularly acrylics. But the Bergamo-based artist found she couldn't express herself in the way she'd like. Inspired by artists such as Todd Lockwood and Matt Stawicki, she turned to digital painting.

Each stage of Sara's artwork is created digitally – including sketches, for which she uses her Cintiq. The artist has developed a clean, sharp style redolent of the Blizzard illustrations that she finds so inspirational. Sara's been working as a freelancer since 2006, finding clients in the likes of Paizo Publishing, Dena Studios and Armenia Editore.



1 DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT IT "I wanted to reinterpret the classic theme of the beauty and the beast in a sharp and ironic way. I worked a lot on the expression of the protagonist's face, because I wanted it show her tough personality."

2 EROS AND THANATOS "I like to draw big bad demons, and I also like to draw female characters. So, I decided to play around with the contrast between these two figures, emphasising differences as much as possible."

3 THE SACRED FEATHER "This is the cover for a fantasy book written by Matthias Graziani. I really like it when I have the opportunity to draw beautiful, strong women. But in this case, the female character also had to have a very sweet face."

4 DIANA "My interpretation of the Roman goddess Diana. I didn't want it to stay too true to the myth, but I did want to capture her wild characteristics."

IMAGINEFX CRIT

"With a colourful and clean style, Sara is equally comfortable painting explosive action or delicate woodland scenes, and her secret is using colour tones to evoke a different feel in each piece."

Beren Neale,
Digital Editor



+ Meg Owenson

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Meg is a fine-arts graduate. Around a year ago, however, she was seduced by digital painting. She loves the versatility, the speed at which she can realise an idea.

"My goal," Meg says, "is to create immersive worlds that capture the viewers imagination. I include as many little details as possible. This, in my opinion, is what makes locations and characters come to life."

Meg's influences range from Albert Bierstadt to Samuel Taylor Coleridge. As a professional artist, her work covers card art, book covers and private commissions, with one eye on branching into the film industry.

2



IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Meg's experiment with a painterly style is a lovely piece of character art. I find myself asking, 'What's this old chap's story?' Perhaps he's spent a lifetime travelling along the dangerous waterways of futuristic Venice..."

Cliff Hope,
Operations Editor

3



1 FELL RUINS "This was one of my first digital paintings. I was trying to create a moody, mist-filled fantasy location, while still getting to grips with the digital process. It was a huge learning curve."

2 WISDOM "This was a personal piece in which I explored a more painterly style. I used lots of textured brushes balanced with very delicate strokes to capture the facial features."

3 VENICE "From a young age, I've always loved Canaletto's paintings of Venice. Architecture is a passion and Venice is full of beautiful buildings. But, at the same time, Blade Runner and apocalyptic science fiction have always equally enthralled me. This was a fun blend of them all."

Dahlia Khodur

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop, Poser



Dahlia believes in a multidisciplinary approach to creativity. Primarily an illustrator, her output also spans logo and graphic design, digital art and animation, all done using various media and styles.

Khodur strives to come up with "original and imaginative designs and characters." There's no secret to achieving this, she says. No shortcut. It's about putting the hours in.

"I work very hard," the Lebanese artist says. "I learn new techniques everyday. My goal is to make my characters feel alive, and to one day break into the video game industry."

1 GYPSY'S VOODOO "A gypsy is suffering from a long-standing love obsession, only to realise that it wasn't the right thing for her. So she decided to kill her feelings using voodoo."

2 ISIS "This is my personal version of my favourite Egyptian goddess."

3 MEDUSA'S GRIEF "This is a tribute to a dear friend of mine. Most people portray Medusa as a wicked, evil witch who turns her enemies into stone. But I always felt that she had a different side. Her grief at turning everyone she looks at into stone makes her lonely and fragile."





IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Camille has put together some beautifully lit scenes here, each with a majestic sense of scale. I especially like how the light bounces off the returning heroes in Home Sweet Home."
Claire Howlett,
Editor

Camille Alquier

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Photo integration, textures, custom brushes: these are the tools of Camille's trade, everything he needs to create his "own heroic fantasy universe."

It's a universe filled with flying dragons and mutant rhinoceros, one rendered with an eye for unique composition and deft lighting.

Camille is not only an exponent of digital painting, but also teaches it at a local art school in his native Bordeaux. His lessons are all about, "sharing techniques and expertise with students." His influences include Vicente Segrelles, Olivier Ledroit, Kekai Kotaki and Craig Mullins, to name just a few. He's clearly a versatile artist, and one whose portfolio we recommend you spending some time flicking through.

2



3



4



1 DARK FOREST "Soldiers dare to enter a dark forest where no one has ventured for a long time."

2 THE PREY "This painting features three characters: a snake, a woman and something sneaking up to them."

3 BATTLE RHINO "A female warrior rides her heavy rhino, about to engage in an epic fight."

4 HOME SWEET HOME "I wanted to depict victorious warriors returning from a battle."

Nele Klumpe
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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Nele was featured in FXPosé way back in 2008. Since then, a few well-chosen words of encouragement from her peers have helped her hone her craft.

"I started studying design," she says. "During that time my art skills were still pretty bad. I didn't know how to improve until a few fellow artists inspired me to start working harder."

It's clearly paid off. Nele is now employed full-time as a designer but continues to illustrate on a freelance basis, sketching every day during her commute to work. Her ambition is earn a living drawing fantasy art.



1 THE JOURNEY BEGINS "This year I took James Paick's environment design class at CGMW. This was my final piece, in which I applied everything I'd learned throughout the workshop. It's also the prequel to The Journey's End that I'd wanted to do for years."

2 THE JOURNEY'S END "I created this illustration for a ConceptArt.org Illustration of the Week challenge a few years ago. The theme was Journey's End. I spent the weekend before the challenge watching The Lord of the Rings series, which was a big influence."

3 DER GOTT DER XO'ARTA "A cover illustration I did for a pen and paper adventure that's part of The Dark Eye RPG. In this case, the brief already defined what I had to illustrate and any similarities to The Lord of the Rings are merely coincidental."



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Thomas Brissot

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SOFTWARE: Painter, Photoshop



Thomas's passion for art has led him around the world. He honed his drawing, painting and modelling skills at L'Atelier de Sèvres in Paris. From there, he moved on to another French art school, ESAD in Strasbourg. But the course wasn't as he'd imagined.

"I learned how to talk about the subject," Thomas says, "without ever actually doing any drawing or painting anything." He left, in 2008, and fell into "a lot of boring advertising jobs and uninteresting illustrations to pay the bills." But the artist had built a portfolio, mainly consisting of personal projects, that would lead to more interesting opportunities.

Thomas is now in the "very exciting and inspiring" position of being a teacher and senior concept artist at FZD School of Design in Singapore.



IMAGINEFX CRIT



"I love how The Trusty Steed has been inspired by the story of Jeanne d'Arc. The clever use of space, small background elements and the proportions of the knight really exaggerate the stature and power of the steed."

Daniel Vincent,
Art Editor

1 VEGETOPIAIRE "These kind of top-down views are a way to reveal a lot about a world. This one was done for a project set during the Renaissance."

2 KIKIDONC COULEUR "I always think of the real title of piece as being Happy Humanist."

3 SANDRA'S WORKSHOP "A view of the interior of Sandra's workshop, a character from a personal project."

4 THE TRUSTY STEED "This personal illustration plays with the idea of a child being able to achieve great things. I find the Jeanne d'Arc theme pretty inspiring."





4

SUBMIT YOUR ART TO FXPOSÉ

Send up to five pieces of your work, along with their titles, an explanation of your techniques, a photo of yourself and contact details. Images should be sent as 300DPI JPEG files.

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ARTIST NEWS, SOFTWARE & EVENTS ImagineNation

AT THE CORE OF THE FANTASY ART COMMUNITY



An intricate and elaborate tattoo by the hand of London-born, Vancouver-based tattoo artist Matt Houston.



"The days of scruffy walk-in tattoo parlours are numbered," says Gastown Tattoo Parlour's Matt Houston. "They've largely been replaced by custom studios with specialised artists."

The rise of the tattoo

Body of work From the underclasses to the masses via Winston Churchill: we chart the art history of ink on skin



"I find it's such an honour that people let me permanently alter their bodies," says tattoo artist Myke Chambers.



Myke Chambers would tattoo his fellow prisoners using a makeshift machine fitted with hand-wrapped coils and hand-sharpened needles.

It was powered by his clock radio.

Having left home at 15 – on the run after an armed robbery – he lived hand-to-mouth hopping freight trains around the US with his little brother Stevie. He began his tattooing apprenticeship in New Orleans. But an itinerant existence, escalating drink and drug problems, exacerbated by the death of Stevie, and his criminal past eventually caught up with him.

After four years in a Texas penitentiary, and after beating his addictions, Myke had to learn his craft all over again. He'd spent too long "tattooing high", he says. "What first attracted me to tattooing," says Myke,

"is something that's pretty much nonexistent now: I loved that it was the part of the underbelly of society and the art world. I started tattooing around 20 years ago and it was still mostly underground and taboo."

The tattoo artist now has almost half a million likes on Facebook. He describes his style as traditional with a strong Americana influence. Home is the Northern Liberty Tattoo studio in Philadelphia, but he continues to travel the world tirelessly. His appointments at festivals and conventions are snapped up instantly.

STREET ART

Growing up in notorious east Los Angeles, his first memories of tattoos were on members of street gangs. While Myke himself embodies the kind of outlaw character historically associated with tattoos, he says ink's image has changed drastically in recent years.

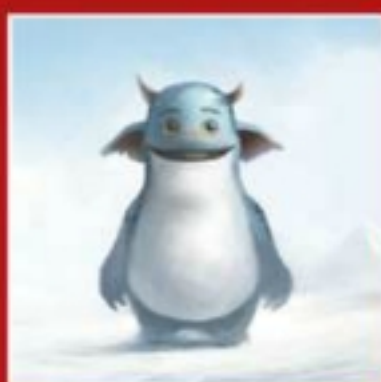
"Only bikers, gang members and servicemen were getting tattooed," he says. "Tattooing has been catapulted into the mainstream by celebrity tattoos, reality TV and tattoo publications. They all make it more acceptable. Seeing someone with a tattoo was once rare, but now you can't walk to a corner store in any city without seeing at least one tattooed person."

Others argue tattoos were seen as civilised long before the 21st century.



Dr. Matt Lodder, an art historian specialising in the history of tattooing as an artistic practice, points to a January 1926 Vanity Fair

© Stuart Mitchell



EVERWINTER IS COMING

A boyfriend-and-girlfriend duo has collaborated on a new children's fantasy book, where the artwork changes according to the story's mood. **Page 24**



CHILD'S PLAY

Motherland Chronicles is an ambitious collaborative – and weekly – project between photographer and artist, inspired by the former's childhood. **Page 25**



A SMALL WORLD

Every inch of Will Murai's small but stylish São Paulo workspace is designed to inspire his art – he needs it as he often works long into the night. **Page 26**



"My heroes are my clients," says Myke Chambers. "The world is my gallery."



Princess Leia by Myke Chambers, who works at Northern Liberty Tattoo in Philadelphia.

was a fan of tattoos found on the Picts – the inhabitants of northern Britain during Roman times, whose name literally means "the painted people". There have been stunning examples of body art found among ancient civilisations in Egypt, Asia and beyond. Tattoos served many purposes, from status symbols to warding off evil spirits, for punishment and for their perceived healing powers.

Perhaps the most startling discovery in

report which says: "Tattooing has passed from the savage to the sailor, from the sailor to the landsman. It has since percolated through the entire social stratum... and may now be found beneath many a tailored shirt." Matt says there's been no wholesale change in the status of tattoos in recent years. It's the aesthetics that have changed.

SOCIAL SKIN

It's rumoured Winston Churchill was tattooed. His mother definitely was. Tattoos were fashionable in Victorian London, with society girls and aristocrats. And many 19th-century European royals had tats – inspired by the dapper future King Edward VII.

It's true that ink was particularly popular with outsiders, misfits and miscreants. By the late 1800s, 90 per cent of the British Navy was tattooed – a turtle signified you'd crossed the equator, an anchor the Atlantic. Bikers and criminal gangs adopted their own iconography. But you can trace tattoos lineage back even further.

Explorer James Cook, in the 18th century, returned home with drawings of what the Polynesians called a "tatau". Julius Caesar

“Ötzi the Iceman, a man who lived over 5,000 years ago, was found to have more than 50 tattoos”



Dark imagery with fantasy elements, like this piece, are a speciality of San Francisco-based tattoo artist Jason Donahue.

the history of tattooing was found on Ötzi the Iceman – a well-preserved natural mummy of a man who lived over 5,000 years ago, and who was found to have more than 50 tattoos.

"Tattooing and its coincident practices are a constant feature of all cultures on Earth," Matt says. "There has always been, and will always be, a group of people driven inexorably to permanently mark their bodies."

He argues the relative percentages of people with a tattoo – "about 30 per cent or so have at least one tattoo" – hasn't changed much in 20 years ago. The change, he says, is more to do with visibility, both in terms of location of tattoos on the body – hand, neck, face – and an increase in the "display of naked flesh in public".

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

MATT HOUSTON

Gastown Tattoo Parlour's rising star talks tattooing

How did you get into tattooing?

I used to work white-collar corporate jobs, busting my balls getting little buzz out of life. My apprenticeship, at a studio in London, was undertaken voluntarily and without pay. I worked for nearly two years unpaid before being regarded as qualified. I quit a top design job with a global blue chip to take my first chair. It was scary at first, but I've never looked back.

What are the best and worst things about being a tattoo artist today?

I love the challenges tattooing presents and the satisfaction it offers. You get out what you put in. I wanted to learn and wanted to work hard. Primarily it was the art that drew me to the job, but also the learning. I love the fact that every day is totally different, meeting new people and encountering new projects. I have also found that fellow artists are just people. Reality TV programmes paint us as 24-hour party people, but most artists I know couldn't keep up their tremendous work efforts if that were true.

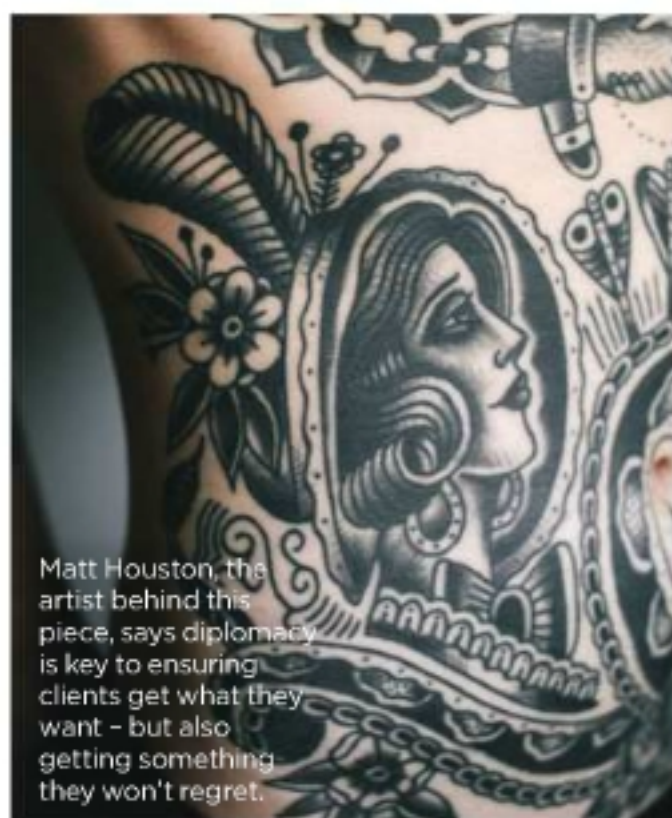
What should be taken into consideration before getting a tattoo?

When I design a tattoo I try to consider how it will look in 20 years or more. I want my tattoos to last and look good forever. I design tattoos that are simple and elegant, but retain a bespoke look. An artist colleague told me that when one designs a tattoo it's a mathematical equation that needs to be solved: how can I equate the elements a customer wants in a way that is aesthetically pleasing and stands the test of time?



Matt began tattooing in 2008. Looking for his first tattoo, he took his design into a shop and was offered an apprenticeship.

www.gastowntattoo.com



Matt Houston, the artist behind this piece, says diplomacy is key to ensuring clients get what they want – but also getting something they won't regret.



"Tattooing will always be a little more craft than art," says Jason Donahue, "because, as a tattooer, there's only a little room for personal expression."



Artist such as Ed Hardy and Thom Devita paved the way for tattooing as an art form, says Idle Hand's Jason Donahue.

Myke Chambers' nightmarish vision of Moby Dick is part of the rich, long-standing tradition of storytelling in tattoos.

➔ "Since the late 90s," continues Matt, "UK trends have moved from tribal, through traditional, into black and grey and now to very stark, graphic, black tattooing – almost prison-esque. We're probably due a revival of large blackwork. There are some incredible artists, such as Tomas Tomas at Into You, doing this remarkable avant-garde digital tribal work – which I think will soon catch the attention of the fashion-hungry youngsters currently into smaller blackwork pieces."

in the demographic of those getting into tattooing.

Myke Chambers suggests the recent "quantum leap in tattooing's evolution" is down, in part, to an influx of art school graduates into the industry – those artists who found work hard to come by after graduating and turned to tattoos. It's one of

“Every tattoo starts as a line drawing on paper, so every good tattooer must first be a good illustrator”

Once you have whichever style of tattoo is in vogue, chances are, like Matt, you won't stop there. University of Westminster psychologist Dr Viren Swami, who's conducted extensive studies of people with tattoos, found most wait between two and seven years before getting their second tattoo. The trend for a more discerning tattoo-buying public mirrors a change

the few artistic endeavours that can pay relatively well from the get-go. But the transition from more traditional forms isn't necessarily a simple one.



Jason Donahue works at Idle Hand in the Lower Haight district of San Francisco. He says many tattoo artists paint with watercolours or liquid

acrylics, as they best relate to tattooing. "I approach a watercolour just like a tattoo," he says. "Black outline, black shading, then colour. Every tattoo starts as a line drawing

on paper, so every tattooer must first be a good illustrator. I think there are so many bad tattooers out there because people start tattooing before they really even know how to draw."

ARTISTIC CROSSOVER

Jason also points to a crossover with sculpture. Tattoo artists need to think three-dimensionally, designing and placing tattoos that'll work with and complement human anatomy – especially when you get into large-scale tattoos.

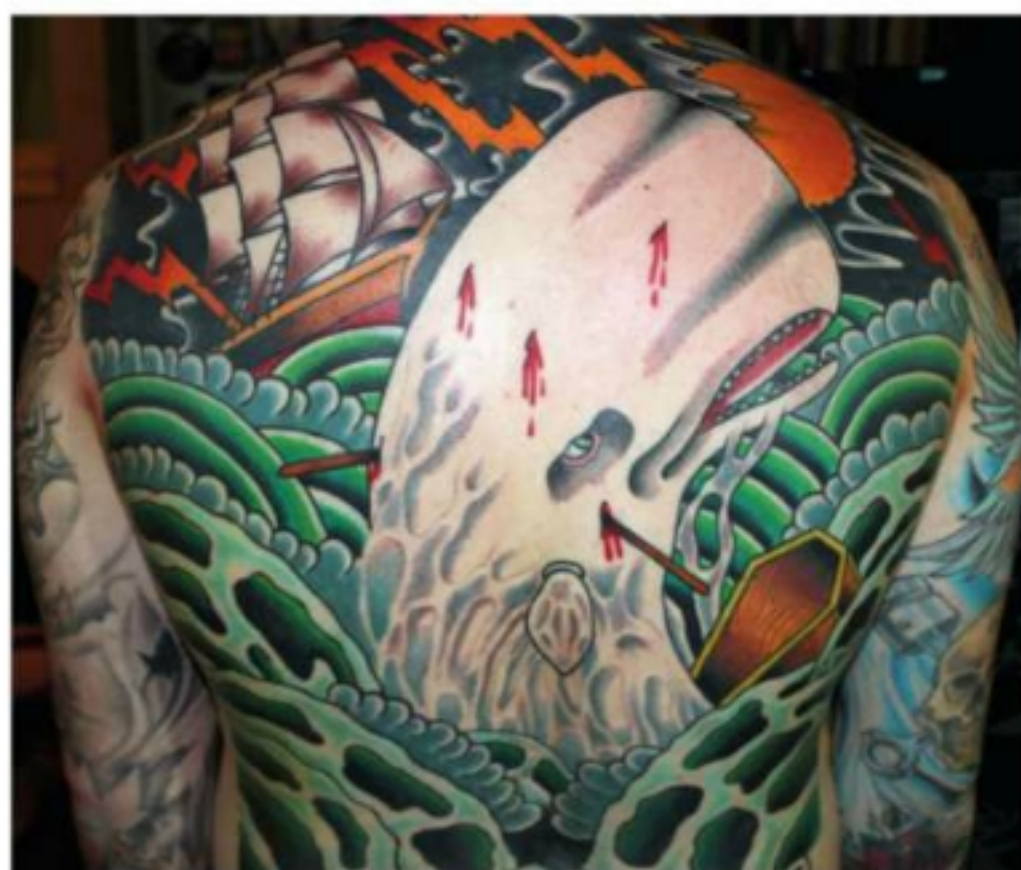
"Being a skilled artist is no guarantee you'll make a good tattoo artist," says Jason. "It's a highly technical medium, so it takes a certain type of person. You need to be artistic as well as mechanically inclined. You're also dealing with blood, so you need training in blood-borne pathogens and cross-contamination."

Jason thinks tattooing's rise in popularity – or at least rise in visibility – is good. And despite conceding he does miss the days when the form was a little more taboo, there's no other profession he'd rather be in.

"I love everything about tattooing. I get to draw for a living. I love hanging out in the tattoo shop. My co-workers are also my best friends. The shop is like our clubhouse. I love all my clients and am honoured every time someone chooses me to do their tattoo. I love that what I do makes people happy. Just the fact that tattooing is possible is what always attracted me to it. It still blows my mind that you can put a picture in your skin, and it will stay there forever." ●



Tiger Lady by Myke Chambers, who describes his Americana-inspired style as traditional.



Lena Le drew this composite CAVE-inspired digital painting, which provided a backdrop to Chris Cheung's introductory talk.



Shine a light: the first CAVE conference kicked off in the not-so-dark Las Vegas.



Out of the darkness

Inspired Digital artists and inspirational figures unite in Las Vegas for Autodesk's first CAVE conference



The dust has settled on Autodesk's first CAVE conference, and Chris Cheung, the mastermind behind it, is finding it hard to explain what exactly just happened.

Ostensibly it was the first creative event to run at the front end of the business-driven Autodesk University Conference, in Las Vegas's grand Venetian hotel on 1-2 December 2013. It was also Chris's personal

attempt to offer digital creatives something uniquely engaging, whatever their field.

"After the success of SketchBook Pro, people formed communities. That led to smaller talks when people like Scott Robertson or CB Cebulski were in town," the Autodesk product line manager explains. "Even though people had seen these guys at

"I would have gone to an event like this if it had existed when I was starting out"

comic conventions, they never really connected with them on an intellectual level. That seemed important."



From the pre-event party where ticket holders saw John Cleese, Neil Gaiman, deviantART CEO Angelo Sotira and Bobby Chiu trading

CAVE attendees were asked to submit short character descriptions and vote for the best three. They were then drawn by pro artists. Bobby Chiu sunk his teeth into this one!



stories over drinks, the spirit of the event was set as open and inclusive.

Lorne Lanning's opening seminar covered



his "lifelong fascination with corruption and irony" mixed with entertainment in his Oddworld game franchise.

Neil Gaiman spoke of the power of understanding one's imagination. "It's enormously important," he told ImagineFX. "This is the stuff people don't tell you. I was lucky because I had punk and the attitude of 'you do something by doing it'. That fuelled me. But passing that on to another generation is extremely important. I would have gone to an event like this if it had existed when I was starting out."

Before the finishing party in the hangar-sized main hall, Monty Python's John Cleese was still making final tweaks to his speech, admitting to ImagineFX that, "I'd much

rather speak at a seminar like this, to open minds, than shoot a film." While Python fans will no doubt wish for the latter, a growing number of digital creatives should be looking to Chris's next CAVE experiment.

Discover more about Autodesk CAVE here: www.autodeskcave.com.



Syd Mead put in a rare appearance, and an even rarer process breakdown of some of his art.

FRESH PAINT

Your art news that's grabbed our attention



Sergio Lopez
(@Mainloop)

"This new piece is Study for Parhelia... for an upcoming show."

<http://ifxm.ag/sergio-lopez>



Charleen Pardue
(@toxic_lady)

"Another #WIP. One of these days I will actually finish something... hopefully this one, today."

<http://ifxm.ag/charleen-pardue>



Nick Veez
(@nickveez)

"Loving the latest edition guys. Your traditional art section inspired me to have a go."

<http://ifxm.ag/nick-veez>



Just finished something you want us to shout about? Send it our way on Twitter (@imaginefx), or find us on Facebook!



Hatboy
by Vaughn Pinpin



Fantasy talk Explaining the inexplicable

"Ever opened a canvas in Photoshop and been overwhelmed by the sheer emptiness of the big white rectangle?"

James Zapata boils down the complexities of artist's block into a simple geometric shape... Page 66

A winter warmer

Hairy tale How a haircut helped inspire the hero of a new children's book

A boyfriend-and-girlfriend duo from the UK has collaborated on a new children's fantasy book. The Legend of Everwinter, by author Tara Behan and illustrator



Matthew Hill, tells the story of three friends on a journey to fulfil an ancient prophecy in a faraway land.



Artist Matthew Hill wore dreadlocks and earrings in his youth, not unlike one of the book's main characters.



The illustrative style in The Legend of Everwinter varies from scene to scene, based on the unfolding action.

challenge was to create a book visually sophisticated enough for adults to enjoy, and colourful and fun enough to capture children's imagination.

"I decided to vary the style of each illustration in relation to the mood of the story," Matthew says. "When something sinister is taking place, the artwork becomes muted and realistic. When something pleasant is taking place, the artwork becomes much more stylised and colourful."

Work began on the book back in autumn 2012, but it wasn't until the final few months of production that its overall appearance was finalised.

One of the book's central characters is inspired by Matthew's appearance in his younger days, when he had dreadlocks and pierced ears. And it may not be the last we've seen of the protagonist, with more tales from Everwinter in the pipeline.

"I'm sworn to secrecy regarding this matter," Matthew says. "But I can say 2014 is looking very promising."

The Legend of Everwinter (£3.99) is out now. For more information and to order your copy visit www.hamptonbond.com. ImagineFX readers can receive a 20 per cent discount by using the code 'tarabehan'.

Created by artist Tobias Kwan, Bunny Yaga is the 18th piece in the Motherland Chronicles series.



The Chronicles creates and publishes a new piece weekly, the 38th release being Tobias's Rider.



Hitting the motherlode

Maternal instincts Two very different creative types join forces on a unique new artbook



Motherland Chronicles is a collaborative artbook by New York-based photographer Zhang Jingna and artist Tobias Kwan.

The project was conceived as a platform for Jingna, who began working professionally for Harper's Bazaar when she was just aged 20, to revisit the things she loved as a child – specifically fantasy art, anime and manga.

For the project she's teamed up with Tobias, a concept artist working at Californian video game developer Ready at Dawn, because, she says, "having a partner is infinitely more fun and exciting than doing a project alone".

The result is a collection of mesmerising otherworldly images, which have so far been featured in My Modern Metropolis, the British Journal of Photography and Vogue.

"Jingna focuses on portraits," Tobias says.



"So I wait for previews from her shoot before starting on a piece to match her characters and provide more context within the environments."

The ambitious collaboration sees the pair create new artwork every week, leading to the release of a book in summer 2014.

Motherland Chronicles includes a stellar line up of guest artists, such as Naomi Chen, cellar-fcp and Noah KH. Find out more at www.motherlandchronicles.com.

"Critiques of your work from someone working in a different medium are really cool," Tobias says. "It gives you a fresh perspective."



In the Secret Garden sees photographer Zhang Jingna revisit her childhood inspirations.



"The process of world and character-building and research makes this project collaborative," says Zhang.



+deviantWATCH

Here are some of the many gems we found on the pages of deviantART...



thecreatorhd

<http://ifxm.ag/psevy>

They're mutants, yeah. But they were mutants before it was cool. Now they're totally ironic mutants. The first in a series of "hipster redesigns" of comic book characters by thecreatorhd, sees X-Men given a Williamsburg makeover - Wolverine in a beanie being a particular highlight.



Mag3llan

www.mag3llan.deviantart.com

"A little world project I've been thinking of lately," writes Mag3llan in his description of this piece. "We'll have to see if it's something I'll continue." With a deft use of light and shadow, a cityscape full of detail, mystery and intrigue, it's certainly something we'd like to see more of.



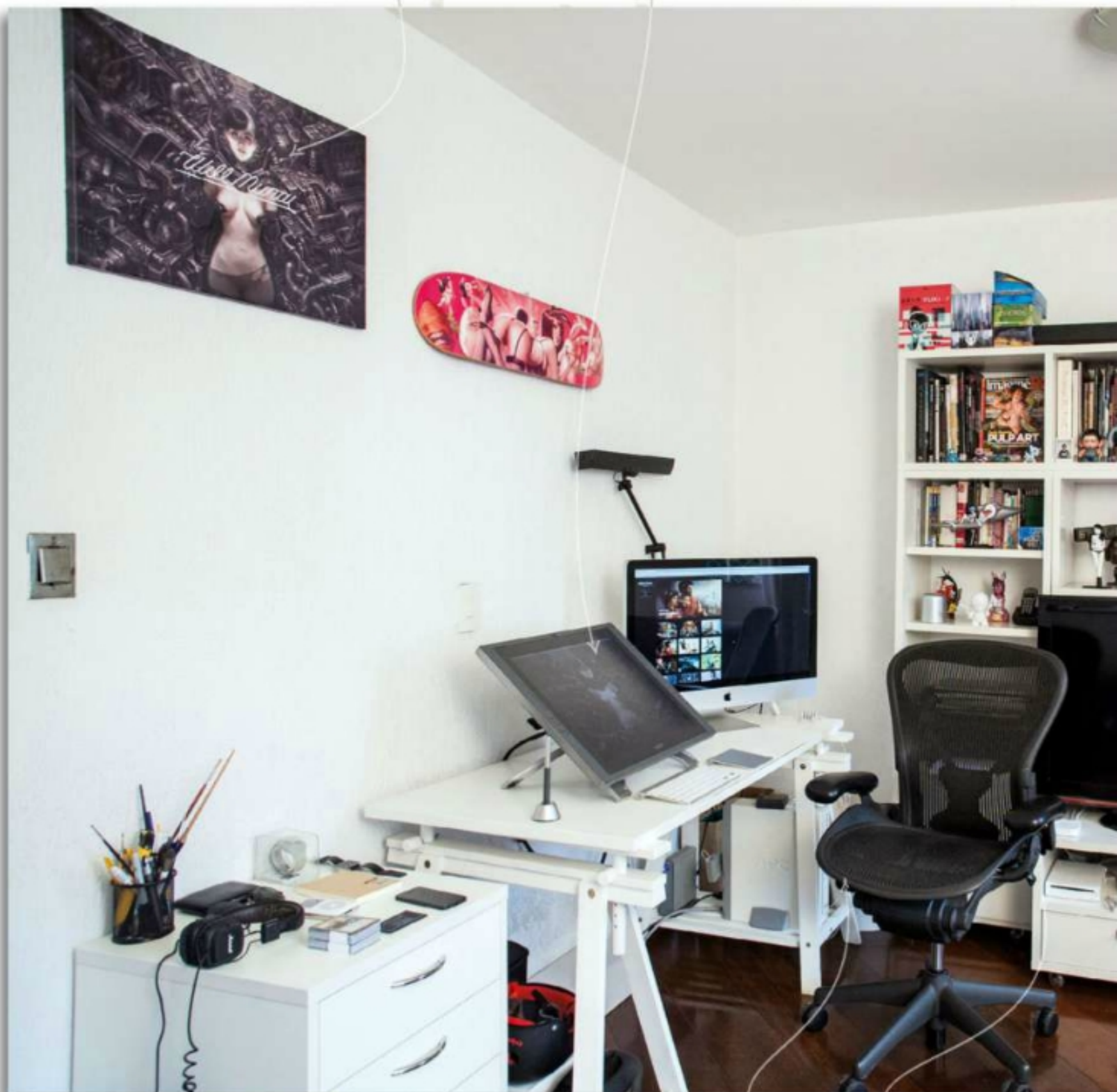
kerbyrosanes

<http://ifxm.ag/krosanes>

This mesmerising work in progress by Kerby Rosanes is part of a commission to create cover art for a forthcoming album by New York's Chuckie Campbell. With a nod to da Vinci's Vitruvian Man, it's a stunning, intricate piece of line work that demonstrates a good eye for detail.

I made this stretched canvas to celebrate the new identity of my portfolio. My great friend Rentz Munhoz (www.rentz.com.br) designed the logo, which has been used on all my products.

The Cintiq, undoubtedly, is my main drawing board and canvas today. It's hooked up to a 27in iMac with lots of RAM and some extra hard drives working as scratch disks.



Every workspace should have ergonomic chairs. I've had this one for about five years and it still feels like new. They're designed to comfortably accommodate the vertebral column. In addition, the mesh assures that your bottom doesn't feel like mashed potatoes by the end of the day.

When I organised this space I made sure all my entertainment and visual stimulation was easy to find: my books, magazines, toys, comics, DVDs, music and games are all just a few centimetres away.

Will Murai

Perfectly formed The busy artist explains how every inch of his small but stylish São Paulo workspace is designed to inspire



Back in 2007, a world-leading game publisher hired me as a 2D artist for its São Paulo branch. Brazil's capital is the largest metropolis in South America, and one of the most influential cities when it comes to arts and entertainment.

I'm here with my wife - who was my girlfriend at the time of the move - and we

chose this great two-storey apartment near one of the busiest areas in the city, two blocks from Paulista Avenue. It's surprisingly quiet for such a busy, inner-city area, though. And we have everything we need nearby: subway stations, shopping malls, museums, as well as restaurants and bars. I also wanted to live within walking distance of the office so I could avoid the infamous São Paulo traffic jams.

Artist news, software & events

Our place is located in one of the busiest areas of central São Paulo, just a few blocks from Paulista Avenue. But it's surprisingly quiet, even during the day.



My wife and I are fanatical collectors of anime figures and toy art. You can find limited edition statues, action figures, vintage toys and Evangelion-related stuff on my shelves.



This is issue 86 of ImagineFX – I created the cover. It sits alongside various other books. One of the best things about working from home is that I can enjoy these things anytime.



Although my work is digital, sketchbooks are always around, so I can quickly visualise an idea.

A few years later, I choose to work as a freelancer, which meant we had to adapt our living room into my studio. Even if a few extra square metres would be useful, the small space isn't a major problem for me because most of my work is done digitally.

I try to keep my workstation as clean as possible, with only the computer and Cintiq on it, and I use a trackpad instead of a mouse. Besides being a great device for multi-touch gestures – such as rotate, pinch to zoom and so on – it also frees up space on my desk.

When it comes to traditional stuff, I only keep my sketchbook and pencils around.

I still prefer to use them to sketch initial ideas and concepts.

In my typical working day, I try to deal with emails, accountancy, meetings and all other organisational activities during the day, then I begin the artistic, creative stuff late at night. I put my headphones on and work until I get sleepy, usually at around 3am or 4am. I find it very productive to be able to work non-stop this way, without any distractions.

Brazilian illustrator and concept artist Will Murai counts Applibot, Marvel Comics and Wizards of the Coast among his clients. You can see his art at www.willmurai.com.



This is a custom, hand-painted Mini-Me I created as a joke. I like to fill my workspace with pieces that stimulate creativity, however silly they may be.

ImagineFX Forum Winners

Image of the month

Ahhhh... aargh! In the real world, petting a cute-looking critter is usually pretty safe. But in a fantasy environment, don't even think about it!



WIN PRIZES!

Congratulations Sezar - you've won two ImagineFX specials of your choice! To get your hands on similar prizes, see our Forum challenges at www.imaginefx.com/forums



Sezar Salzer is a self-taught painter with a keen eye for charismatic character designs. "My main inspirations," Sezar says, "are the gorgeous work of Disney and Pixar artists. I try to create similar characters, in the same style."

Munich-based Sezar, who works anonymously using a pseudonym and avatar, created Cute but Deadly using Photoshop. He began without line work, instead blocking in monochrome before switching to colour with a separate layer for blending styles. The result is a green and furry, but dead-eyed and vicious, creature that's slain a monster more than twice its size. "It was a challenge," Sezar says, "to keep the creature sweet and deadly at the same time." But then, by definition, challenges aren't meant to be easy.

MYFX TITLE: Cute but Deadly

WINNER: Sezar Salzer (SZR)

GALLERY: <http://ifxm.ag/salzer0>

ALL ENTRIES: <http://ifxm.ag/cutedeadly>



In the world of fantasy beasts, nothing is what it seems. Clearly, Sezar's furry creation doesn't like to be tickled behind its ears!

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"I love the story in Sezar's piece and how the highlights bring out busy textures in the foreground."

Daniel Johnson (Squaredmotion)



Sezar blocked in monochrome, then switched to colour with a separate layer for blending styles. He didn't do any line work.

Join in!
www.imaginefx.com/forums



MYFX TITLE: The Dream Catcher
WINNER: Bon Jovi Bernardo (Bon)
GALLERY: <http://ifxm.ag/bernardoboniov>
ALL ENTRIES: <http://ifxm.ag/catcherdream>



"This was my first time entering an ImagineFX art challenge, and I'm grateful to those who voted for my work to be the winner. The captured dreams turn into images that will later be bound into a book by the Dream Keeper. The bowl of water or mirror-like object is a special element called a Dream Finder. With the help of my Dream Keeper, I hope all of my dreams will come true."

"I enjoyed painting the Dream Keeper character," says Bon. "It feels like I'm creating a precious dream while at the same time capturing and depicting it through the painting."



MYFX TITLE: It Came from the Deep
WINNER: Jon Abbiss (Zinc)
GALLERY: <http://ifxm.ag/ionabbiss>
ALL ENTRIES: <http://ifxm.ag/fromthedeep>



"It was good fun creating a trashy, straight-to-video movie poster - complete with beasties, bikinis and a cheesy tagline. If I'm being honest, I probably bit off more than I could chew, considering the time limit. However, it enabled me to experiment with more of the options in ArtRage - a cheaper alternative to Corel Painter, with tools that replicate watercolours and oils."



Jon says he found it tough painting under the challenge's time constraints, but nevertheless his final image was a winning effort.

Letters

YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS



Contact the editor, **Claire Howlett**, on claire@imaginefx.com or write to ImagineFX, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW, UK



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

Go digital!

I purchased a Retina display iPad and tried out an enhanced digital issue. I had been hesitant, because I love the tactile feel of the magazine. But the advantages of the digital version far outweigh those thoughts. Wow! Being able to zoom in on the artwork and text is fantastic. Instantly playing tutorials with the tap of a finger is just great. I love the printed page, but when something comes along that makes the experience exponentially better, it's hard to ignore.

For anyone out there who's sceptical about the digital version of ImagineFX, give it a try – you won't want to go back!

Gary Baker, via email



"Wow!" says Gary Baker after trying our iPad edition. He urges everyone to "give it a try".

Claire replies Thanks Gary. For readers who haven't tried our digital editions, it's worth knowing that we provide all of the resources that come with the magazine. You can sign up for a free trial with the various service providers, and you can find these details on the opposite page, and also on [page 83](#). Fear not, print readers, we are also available as a physical page-turning edition!

No digital!

I've had a print subscription for years and now I want to go digital. But your website says you don't support Microsoft devices. I don't understand that, as Microsoft's Surface is a great tool with a pressure-sensitive pen. As my space is limited I can no longer subscribe to the print version. Please let me know if you plan to support this device in the near future.

Walter Herndlhofer, via email

Claire replies Walter, we do support Microsoft Surface Pro (there are so many tablets, and so many ways to get hold of digital editions it bamboozles us at the best of times, too!). You can use either Zinio or nook to access ImagineFX digitally. See the page opposite for more details.



DID YOU MISS ISSUE 104?
See [page 63](#) for details on how to get hold of a copy.

CD wallet please!

At first I wasn't happy about losing "my" disc, but now I agree with all those who prefer the download versions of your files. However, I prefer to keep a disc with all the files per issue. I store the disc in a plastic sleeve, so here's my question: is it possible to make a printable sleeve each issue?

It will keep my collection of discs up-to-date and when I can't move anymore I'll take them all into my grave, because I'm sure they do not have your fabulous magazine up in Heaven!

You already received so many compliments and they are all right. Really, ImagineFX saves my artistic life. I hope ImagineFX will stay for many, many years because I can't live without it.

Rudy Tent, via email

Claire replies Hello Rudy. Well, it's an interesting request! I'm not sure how many other readers want this, though. So, readers, is this something you want us to do?

Hard to read text

I'm an ImagineFX subscriber. The range of topics, techniques and artists represented is truly brilliant and the quality of the magazine is beyond reproach.

Here is my dilemma Claire: I'm middle-aged! And if this isn't bad enough, my old peepers are not what they once were. So can you and the staff re-evaluate the use of the small, thin, Helvetica-esque font you use for body copy? An example would be the image on [page 49](#) of issue 103, *Dance With the Wind* by Vian Lee [see below]. The text bubble copy is almost impossible to read, even on the dark background colour.

I won't speculate about the demographic target of your readership, but as a middle-aged guy, I can safely say the type is too thin and small to read in the text bubbles.

Tony Stencel, via email

Claire replies Tony, sorry to hear that you are having trouble reading some of the text. Rest assured, you're not alone: being middle-aged is a dilemma we all have to face! Joking aside, I haven't heard of others finding that font hard to read. But we'll keep an eye out for readability in the future.



Tony Stencel says he has trouble reading Sketchbook. Does anyone else have the same problem with our fonts?



Our star letter writer wins a dA Premium Membership!

- Browse more content more quickly
- Customise your profile page
- Receive exclusive discounts & offers
- And more!

A major MS5 fan writes

Greetings Claire! I just read issue 102, my first issue as a subscriber after plucking this magazine from the local bookstore shelves on and off for the past year.

It was nice to see a page on Manga Studio 5 EX, and at the very beginning of the article it mentioned a previous review of Manga Studio 5 earlier in the year. I was wondering what issue that was in, as I fear I may have missed it?

Also, as a major fan of the program, I'm hoping to see more examples of professional-level art from Manga Studio users in future issues. Obviously Manga Studio is excellent for graphic storytelling, but I'm also keenly interested to see how non-comic artists are putting the program through its paces.

This image [below] is my most advanced painting experiment with Manga Studio 5 to date. I'd like to see what other artists, of greater calibre than myself, can do with this software. And I'd especially like to see how they do it. Thanks very much for reading this!

Sincerely, from a devoted reader.

Kyna Hansen, via email

Claire replies Hello. We reviewed Manga Studio 5 in issue 93, Kyna. Hopefully you enjoyed the great Manga Studio 5 workshop from Dave Kendall in issue 104. If you haven't spotted it yet, it's worth checking out.



Kyna used MS5 to create this art – she wants to see what others have used the software for.

COMIC
ARTIST



Learn to create amazing comic art in Photoshop, Manga Studio, SketchUp and more, using 12 all-new tutorials from the world's leading artists!

FANTASY SCI-FI DIGITAL ART
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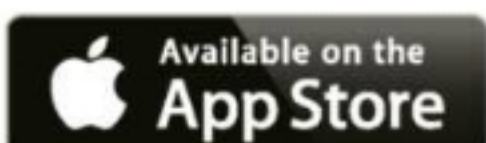
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Artist Q&A

GOT A QUESTION FOR OUR EXPERTS? LET US EASE YOUR ART-ACHE AT HELP@IMAGINEFX.COM



The FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX panel

Goñi Montes



After receiving a BA from the UPR at Mayagüez, Goñi worked as a scientific illustrator for the Puerto Rico Sea Grant. Today he paints fantasy art.

www.goniart.com

Matt Dixon



Matt first created artwork for a video game back in 1988, and has since worked for Blizzard. His pin-up art can be seen in his book *Girls On Top*.

mattdixon.co.uk

Serge Birault



Serge has worked for the music industry, video games, publishing and advertising. His art book, *Corpus Delicti*, is available now.

www.sergebirault.fr

Nadia Enis



Nadia lives in Berlin and works as a freelance artist for the games industry. In her free time she daydreams about drawing her own comic.

www.minosch.deviantart.com

Jace Wallace



Jace has freelanced for magazines, book publishers and produced concept art. He's since been hired by Maxis to do concept art for *Sims 3*.

www.wakkawa.cgghub.com

Tony Foti



Tony is a US freelance illustrator who contributes to D&D and Fantasy Flight Games' *Star Wars* and *The Lord of the Rings* lines.

www.tonyfotiart.com

Waldemar Kazak



Waldemar left art college in 1993 to work as a designer. Inspired by a love of illustration from the 60s and 70s, he's now a full-time freelancer.

www.waldemerkazak.com

Question

I want to paint a feather boa. Any tips would be greatly appreciated

Karen Lindsey, England

Answer

Jace replies



Feather boas are an excellent accessory to complement a pin-up girl. There's just something very sexy about

feather boas and getting that playfulness and sexiness right can really help make a piece stand out from the crowd. However, the focus shouldn't be just on the boa, but also on the pose of the pin-up and how the boa is being used to tell that character's story.

Playful gestures with the figure twirling and twisting the boa around the neck can do a lot to really sell the sexiness of the piece. As usual, collecting reference is a key point in starting any illustration. Getting the reference to match the final illustration as close as possible will go a long way in helping the final piece look great. Yes, you can go online and search around for suitable photographs, but you'll achieve the perfect pose if you purchase a cheap boa and take a few snaps of yourself in front of a mirror.

The brushes I use to paint the feathers in this piece are long oval brushes angled at a 45-degree angle to create feather-like shapes. The brushes are set with a Flow of 22 per cent, Opacity at 100 per cent, Opacity set to Pen Pressure and Size set to Pen Pressure.



Artist's secret

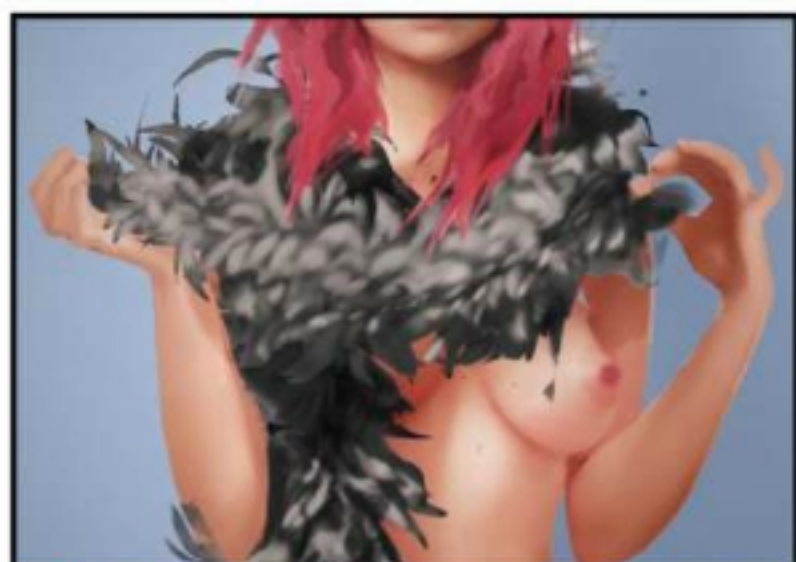
SEEING THE BIGGER PICTURE

Try not to get ahead of yourself. It's best to work on the entire image at once and not focus on a single area. Start out with the broader strokes and build up the details on the whole image slowly.

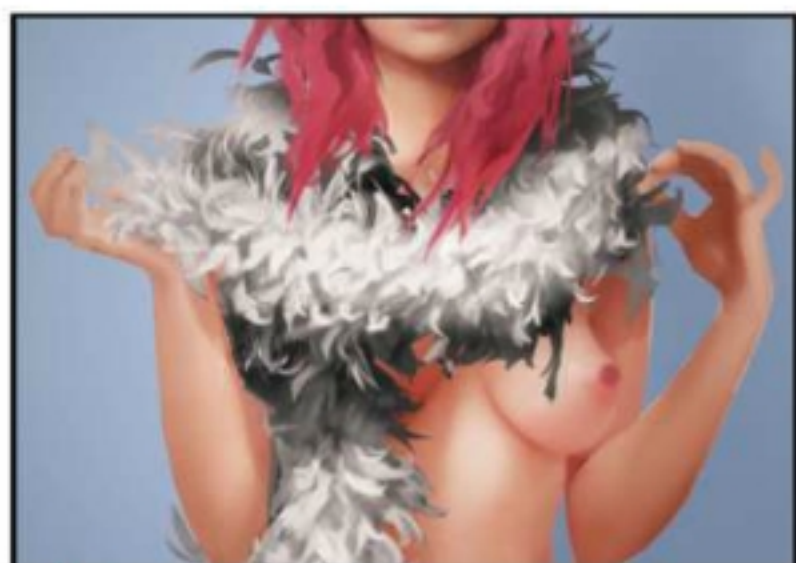
Step-by-step: How to illustrate feathers accurately



1 To depict an interesting feather boa, I need to work on its silhouette. I use the Free Lasso tool to create an interesting shape to work the details in later. After the silhouette is created I use my oval Soft brushes to create a noise layer of values that I'll use to make the feathers. Feather boas are a sort of controlled chaos.



2 It's time to refine my feather boa. I start by building feather forms out of the random value shapes that I created earlier. The brush has the same settings as before, only smaller. This means the edges will be more refined. After some of the forms are brought out I add cast shadows from each feather, which gives them a sense of depth.



3 I want to bring the feathers' shape out some more by using highlights and even smaller brushes. Bright highlights around the edges of the feathers make them look crisper. So while the feathers in the light are sharper, the feathers in the shaded parts tend to be a little less defined, which brings depth to the composition.

Question

Can you give me some ideas for painting classic pin-up hair styles from the 1970s?

Tafari Christianson, Ethiopia



Choosing the right hairstyle for your characters is as important as clothing choice. How people cut and comb their hair can say a lot about a person, so choosing the right shape is simply a matter of personality.

A nice, round shape like this bob moves the eye without making a spectacle. The more novel the hairstyle, the more it'll stand out as a focal point.



Answer Tony replies



To get a feel for specific hair styles, I suggest looking at photos from the time period for a while. Not just television and movies, but candid photographs of everyday people. Certain styles can be attributed to certain personality types. For example, if you saw a man from the 70s with hair down his feet and a long beard, chances are he's not a drill sergeant. Likewise, you wouldn't want to depict someone who's been living on the streets for two years as having a perfectly cut, blow-dried bob that could only be created with a lot of care and attention.

As a general rule, every part of your characters should be telling an aspect of their story. You could use messy hair to imply that the character hasn't showered that day, or incredibly difficult-to-style hair to show that a person spends too much time on their image. For this pin-up I'm painting, I want to give the impression that

she's fun without diverting too much attention from her face.

Similar to painting leather (see my other Q&A article on page 36), one way to break down hair is to think in three layers. Start by painting in a mid-tone, focusing on having an outline that reads well. Using the silhouette as a base, you can then paint in shadow and highlights to create depth.

Artist's secret

SOFT EDGES, SOFT HAIR

The harder your edges are when painting hair, the more rigid it will appear. Long, flowing locks often feel most natural when they're not too rendered. Blur implies motion, so soften your edges whenever an area feels too stiff.

Question

Can you help me draw classic cheesecake facial expressions?

Alf Jones, US

Answer

Matt replies

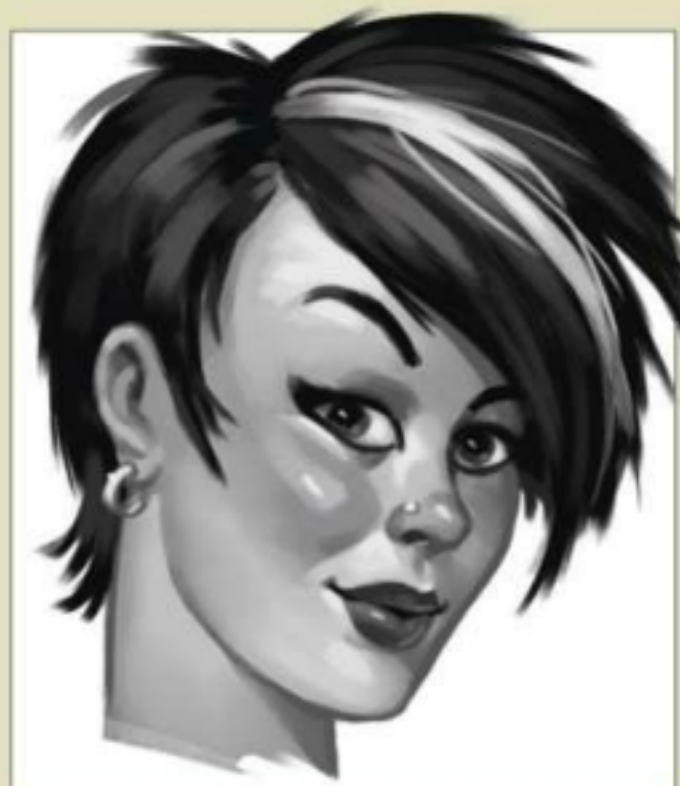


In my view, the facial expression is the defining element of true pin-up artwork. Pose, costume and setting all play their part, of course, but for me pin-up is all about attitude. Choosing an expression that correctly communicates that attitude is essential. The key elements here are confidence, humour and enjoyment.

Confidence is best demonstrated through direct eye contact with the viewer. This shows that your pin-up is unashamed of whatever situation you have chosen to place them in, and helps to welcome your audience into that situation.

Humour doesn't necessarily mean that your image has to be funny or contain a gag, but whatever you choose to paint, your pin-up should have good humour. They should react to their situation in a positive manner, with perhaps a wink or a cocked eyebrow, or open-mouthed surprise at something in the scene.

Enjoyment is perhaps the most important aspect of your character's expression. This communicates that your pin-up is a willing participant in the scene and is in control of the situation. If your pin-up is enjoying what you've painted it'll help your audience to do so, too! A smile or laugh is obviously the best way to get this across.



A three-quarter profile and a slight downward dip of the head is a classic pose. Note that the smile is not just on the lips but also the cheeks and eyes.

Even with more contemporary styling, the right facial expression ensures that this character has a classic pin-up feel.

Question

I'd like some ideas on playing with lighting on my model's face please

Sylvie Seymour, Gibraltar



Here our model is under the hard midday sun. This lighting has a strong visual impact with its cast shadows and bright highlights, but no mood...



This example is the same figure, but under an artificial light such as a light bulb, candle or fire. The shadows are diffused and the overall tone is warm, creating a very sensual mood.

Answer

Jace replies



Warm, soft lighting can be created in a lot of different ways. Sharp lighting as created by the sun during the midday hours reflects in the skin a bit differently than softer lighting created at different times of day or by other sources of light.

In this example I chose my light source to be an artificial light, such as a light bulb. This type of lighting will not only be warm but, since it's also diffused, there won't be many sharp shadows being cast on the face,

which creates a nice, soft mood. Another important compositional aspect to keep in mind when creating a scene like this is colour contrast and balance. To focus on the warm lighting there needs to also be cooler shades present to really push the warm overall atmosphere.

The girl's face in our example will be the warm section and her hair will contrast that with a nice cool colour scheme. This example was created using Photoshop using both hard and soft Round brushes.

Question

What's the proper way of creating a leather-clad lady?

Chris Egan, Cayman Islands

Answer

Tony replies



Some leathers are heavily sanded down during the manufacturing process to remove imperfections, and others keep the original grain. This is one of the most important things to consider before painting, because how reflective an object is has a profound effect on the light and shadows that move across it.

Some leathers are so dull (in terms of surface texture) that light falls on them the same way it would across cotton. Others, like patent leather, are more stiff and shiny. The more glossy the finish, the less light

will follow the form principle (where light appears on any surface that has no obstruction between it and the source). Instead, light will appear as distorted reflections of its source and be generally less prevalent.

Not surprisingly, painting leather is quite similar to painting skin. Feel free to start however you like, but I generally put the mid-tone down first, then paint on the deepest shadows, and lastly add in the light. Not only does this keep the painting process straightforward, but I think the result also tends to look nicer.

Question

How do you depict perfect skin for a perfect pin-up?

WolfKnife, Italy

Answer

Goñi replies



Getting smooth, flattering skin isn't hard at all using Curves in Photoshop. Begin with a simple palette: light peach for your base colour, neutral blue for your shadow, and black, which will be used to intensify blue shadows. After setting up a light source, make sure the shadows hug the figure so as to describe its contours. Always keep the shadows soft by using a combination of feathered brushes, gradients, and the Blur and Smudge tools. Avoid too much contrast – it will make facial features too harsh, angular and inappropriate for a pin-up.

Remember to cast a rim light on the side opposite the light source. After you paint in your blue shadows, make a selection of them and create a new layer. In this layer, add a black gradient, 30-50 per cent Opacity, from the direction of your light source. This helps model the features by slightly intensifying the shadows where they come into contact with the light. Add a low-opacity white gradient right where the light source hits the face. At the top of the stack add a Curves adjustment layer. Select blue from the menu in the dialog and raise the curve on the darker tones, while lowering it in the light tones. Then select red and do the opposite: high on light tones, low in dark tones. This is a good trick to give the skin warmth and depth.

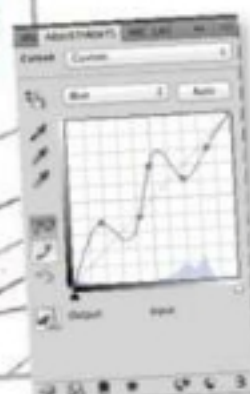
Believe it or not, I've used only three colours to attain this much variety in the skin tones.



Artist's secret



CREATING COMPLEX COLOURS WITH CURVES



Curves enable you to accomplish a lot of complex colours after originally using very few. Experiment with the graph's line – you'll be surprised!

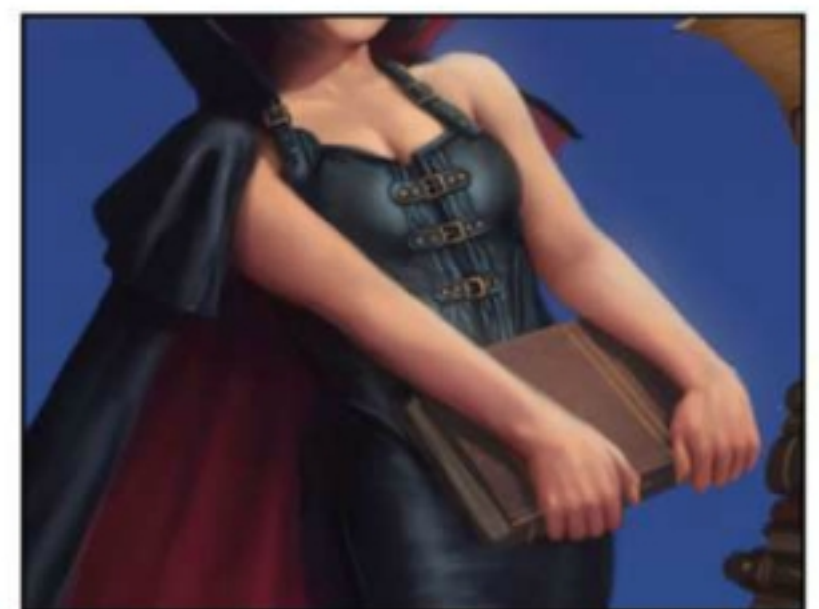
Step-by-step: Illuminating leathers



1 The first thing I do is put down the midtone. Use this opportunity to paint in the main shape as accurately as you can. Silhouettes are an important tool in communicating form, and this is great chance to get it right before complicating things with light and shadow.



2 Study reference to get a feel for the type of leather you're painting. Soft, turning folds need smooth edges, while sharp kinks can be handled with hard, bold strokes. When a surface folds, the creases that form will be getting less light. The deeper the crease, the darker the shadow.



3 For a glossy look, strong light should show where reflections would go. On leather this is often the crest of each fold. Be sure to paint the surface textures that are revealed in the light, particularly in the transition from light to halftone. This keeps the material from feeling too smooth.

Question

Can you help me paint an alternative pin-up?

Shadow Nasty, US



Answer

Waldemar replies



Whether I'm painting classic cheesecake or a snarling alternative pin-up, I spend some time with pencil and paper. Digital offers too many options too quickly. Paper prevents your hand from getting ahead of your imagination, and enables you to develop ideas and shapes at a comfortable pace.

Classic pin-up was all about smiling and fun, and of course being incredibly sexy. Things may have changed as far as what people consider attractive, but some things are still relevant: the factitious pose, the somewhat silly jolliness and an expression of surprise. More importantly for me, the character's lighting should be like a

photo studio's, not natural outdoor light. Even if the girl strikes a pose in bright sunlight, she should have strong reflections coming from the sand, water and parasol. Make the whole picture brighter and shinier than your normal character piece.

Many artists use Photoshop, but I prefer Corel Painter. It may not like layers but then neither do I! I use several specific brushes which are based on real brush imprints. Before painting digitally I spent time using gouache, and I still have some of the brushes I used around my house. So I scan their strokes and use them in most of my drawings. I like their rough texture. And it will fit alternative pin-up better than airbrush, I think.

Mixing pin-up with punk means balancing disparate elements, such as the girl's light shirt, lips and hair, with a grungy textured background.



Artist's secret

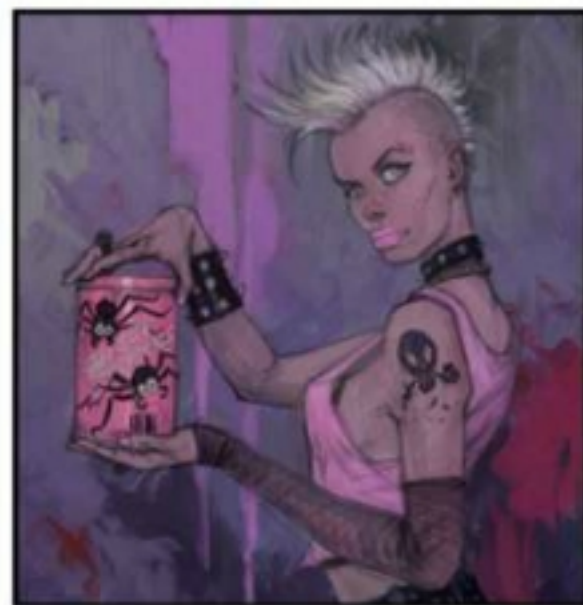
PRETTY IN PINK

Your alternative pin-up can be tough and listen to metal, but she doesn't have to be too dark. I've hinted at her gentler side with the pink shirt. The wall's texture in the background is still rough, mind!

Step-by-step: Depict a pin-up figure with attitude



1 In my pencil sketch I try to define character and composition. I want her face in the centre. I consider the path that the viewer's eye takes, and position her face on one of the diagonals. This guides the viewer through the curve of her body, then along her right hand to the can, and through her left hand back to her face. It's hard to see it yet - tone and colours will help me with that.



2 Pin-up is usually all about tanned hips, blue sky and colourful clothes, but this won't suit a punk character, so I pick a cooler, darker palette. I fill the background with a purple-grey neutral tone, making it easier to define bright and dark colours. The brightest will be her hair, the most saturated the candy box. To emphasise her curves I add a red splash on the wall, and a pink one to balance that.



3 I fix major elements and assign colours to them so they're in harmony. For example, it's useful to use visual 'rhymes', such as the obvious big pink shirt and small pink lips, and not-so-obvious green eyes and red candy box. Now it's time to work on volume and texture, add a second light source - another pin-up trick: hard backlight. I also smooth the girl's features.



4 I hide the original outline drawing by changing its blending mode from Multiply to Overlay. This way I still can find and conceal it again as I work. It may sound inconvenient, but I merge all my layers, making the digital process closer to a traditional one. Finally, I work on details such as the eyes, mouth and rivets. I then use Photoshop for final texturing and colour correction.

Question

Can you give me some tips on painting shiny latex/rubber please?

Jenny Mendzka, Poland



Rubber and latex are highly specular surfaces, and so they are very high contrast.

Answer

Goñi replies



Although not as reflective as some of the shinier metals, rubber and latex must be treated almost equally. For this I use some of Photoshop's simpler brush options: specifically, Opacity Jitter under Other Dynamics in the Brush Panel.

Rubber and latex are highly specular surfaces, and so are very high contrast. This means the light source will be reflected back crisply instead of being diffused across the surface. The entire value range is also encompassed in a very small area, so highlights can abruptly come into contact with shadows.

Start by defining your light source and casting some shadows. These can be left quite sharp. Your highlights will be even more stark and barely need diffusing. Of course, make sure that these highlights and shadows



The colour of your light source will be reflected in your main highlights, but your rim lights will be affected by nearby surfaces casting reflections on your latex or rubber.

hug the figure so they clearly define the body's curves. Trial and error may be necessary.

Your rim lights are extremely important. Highly specular surfaces are very sensitive to light. The original light source will likely be reflected from neighbouring surfaces. Latex and leather will pick up these mild reflections.

Question

How can I push the anatomy of a pin-up to make her more interesting?

Spud Henning, Sweden

Answer

Nadia replies



It's a matter of taste, but a good illustrator tweaks anatomy, perspective and pose so the lines are most appealing. This also applies to shapes and negative space. You can also concentrate on the lines of gesture: in a pin-up the gesture can include bodyweight, gender specific physics and storytelling of the motif, just to give you an idea.

Another guideline is the Golden Ratio, which you can also find in human proportions. You can push your anatomy in this direction. For example, I combine the parts of her hip and thighs into one line. That gives me a pretty line, but it also enables me to shift the focus from the crotch up to her waist. And her waist is in the Golden Ratio. Think in terms of lines, shape and Golden Ratio first, then put in the anatomy required for your style or taste.



When you focus on lines and proportions you're free to push the anatomy any way you want.

Keep an eye on general art rules, such as the Golden Ratio and balance of weight.

Question

How would you avoid clichés in pin-up?

Rich Spifftown, Germany

Answer

Serge replies



There are so many ways to do something different, something unique. Just think about this: to do pin-up art you just have to paint a sexy girl or boy, and the rest is up to you. There are so many things you could try, such as a new composition, mood, style, rendering or colours.

Naturally, pin-up has its own code and there are a lot of clichés. But sometimes it can be fun to work with stereotypes. Take a very bad girl, a super villain, and paint a cute picture with her, for example. Instead of using clean and cartoon lines, try something different – try to achieve a painterly look using textured brushes and classical painting palette. Finally, don't forget that your picture doesn't only have to be a sexy picture. You can also add a mix of feelings and moods.



The composition is very simple, but it adds a quiet mood to the scene. I chose very soft tones for the same reason.

Question

What do I need to bear in mind when drawing a male pin-up?

Jess Acer, US



Answer

Nadia replies



First I want to point out the difference between a superhero and a male pin-up. The superhero was primarily

designed to appeal to young boys, and symbolises power and masculinity. The purpose of a male pin-up is completely different, so don't confuse the two and their specific visual language.

When tackling a male pin-up I would advise following the same rules for depicting a female pin-up. Think about your storytelling elements, the layout and colour choices. In addition, you have to identify specific body areas that admirers of the male pin-up genre will find attractive.

The hands, defined underarm muscles, wide shoulders, strong eyebrows and the space between jaw and ear are some parts you can rely on to catch the viewer's eye.

When you come to the details, such as nose and fingernails, it's good to stick to straight lines, especially if you don't have a clear vision. Doing this will keep the look fresh, masculine, elegant and tight. Don't obscure key body elements with sloppy brush strokes – these details will dictate the quality of your art. Furthermore, if not expressly called for, try not to make your figure too muscular or hard looking. A sense of the erotic comes with the surface softness that obscures the strength underneath.

Attractive male parts are, for example, the hands, triangle shape, underarms and chin area. Exposing those is half the deal.

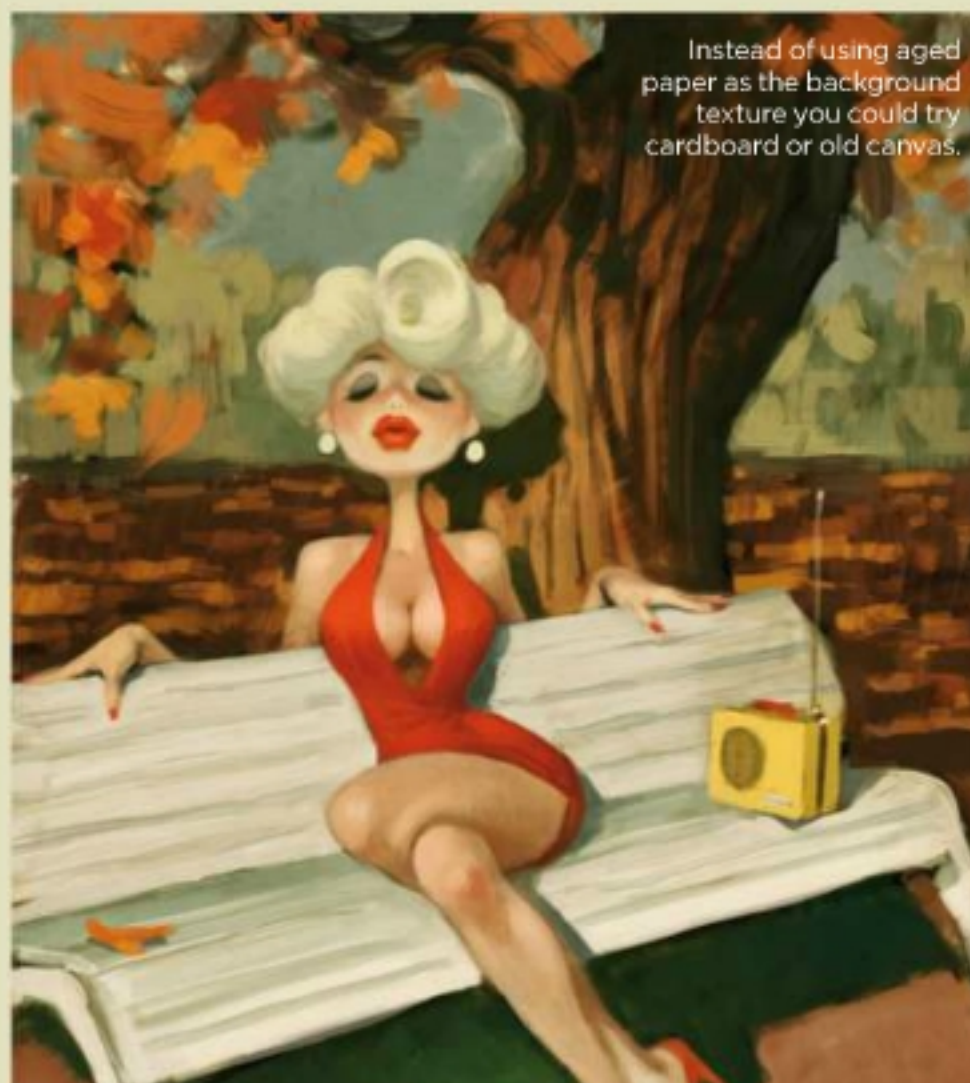


Put extra effort into key body elements such as hands, or else your picture will lose impact.

Question

Can you help me give a pin-up piece a vintage feel?

Carlos the Jackal, Venezuela



Instead of using aged paper as the background texture you could try cardboard or old canvas.



Use Photoshop's layer options to adjust the aged-look of the digital canvas.

Answer

Waldemar replies



I'm approaching this question having created the majority of the painting, so this is more about the texture that I'm going to apply. Sometimes an 'aged' painting is in the detail that you may not even notice straightaway. I'm not talking about taking a cup of tea or cigarette lighter to the edges of a white piece of paper!

I scan in some naturally aged paper from a book, then clone it to the size of my image. In pre-digital days, pin-up paintings were oil on canvas that were then photographed and retouched in the printing colour correction process. I'm going to emulate this process in Photoshop.

I apply the texture of paper, then pretend I've photographed it by boosting the contrast a bit, making the edges slightly blurred. Then, after taking away some detail, I add clarity in shades. First I duplicate the picture layer, and then use Photoshop's Curves or Selective Color to give the shadows and dark areas a cool tone, and the light areas and mid-tones a warm tone. Then I lower the contrast of the entire layer, change the layer blend mode to Soft Light and reduce its Opacity. Next I create another layer and import the texture of the old paper. I set the layer to either Multiply Blend mode or Overlay and drop the contrast. After these digital manipulations I introduce a hint of warm sunlight throughout the image.

Artist's secret

A CLEAR CUT

A good way to keep your figure handsome is to use only straight lines for the construction. After that you can start softening the lines.

Question

How should I approach painting a zombie pin-up?

Robert Palmer, France

Answer

Matt replies



I firmly believe that pin-up is all about attitude. If your pin-up displays the right personality then I don't see any reason why a zombie, or any other horrific or monstrous character, shouldn't be an effective pin-up.

However, I think it's fair to state that a well-rotted zombie with missing limbs, exposed bone and a bloated stomach, trailing pale green juice behind it, is going to be very difficult to present as a pin-up in the traditional sense! I would suggest that the best approach would be to design an image with a strong pin-up flavour first, and then look to add zombie elements in a way that supports or enhances the character and image overall, without causing outright revulsion in your audience.

Consider iconic cues that would mark a character as a zombie: discoloured skin, rotten flesh, matted hair, claw-like fingernails, glazed eyes and so on. Then think about how they might relate to pin-up artwork to find subtle ways to introduce them into your artwork. Glazed, sunken eyes and discoloured lips could approximate makeup. A unkempt hairstyle is a popular look, and is not so far from looking matted. Long nails are a pin-up standard. Rather than show graphically rotting flesh, simply colour the skin to indicate some decomposition.

Bringing all these elements together to create a kind of 'undead glamour' look for your character should be very effective and presents a great opportunity to have some real fun in your image!



I use a putrid purple tone almost like makeup, drawing attention to the eyes and lips and adding some subtle bloom to the cheeks and nose.

Artist's secret



BUILD ON STRONG FOUNDATIONS

The same approach can be used to add unusual elements to any pin-up. Establish a strong pin-up pose in your sketch and that flavour will come through – even if you layer on some bizarre extras!

Step-by-step: Give your undead some oo-la-la

1 Don't worry about the undead elements to begin with. Sketch out your character and concentrate on the pin-up pose, costume and attitude. If the sketch is firmly in pin-up territory you can begin to



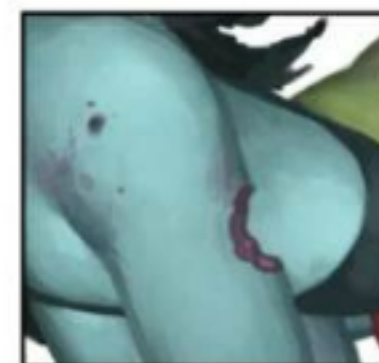
layer on the undead cues with confidence. Even zombies can be playful, so I've chosen to show my undead girls having fun and smiling at the viewer.

2 Next focus on colour. Realistic-looking dead flesh may be unsettling, so consider more saturated tones instead. Cheerful colours will help to temper the horrific elements of your image and keep



the painting light and fun. Dead flesh often turns blue, and green is associated with decay, so they seem like obvious colour choices to me.

3 Now I can start to have some fun and work in some more extreme elements to really establish that our pin-up is a zombie. I simply add a few small areas where the skin has been damaged and



broken. I like the idea that these flesh eaters might be trying to chomp on each other, so I deliberately shape some to look like bite marks.

Got a digital art problem? Is an image giving you art-ache? Our panel can help. Email your question to our experts at help@imaginefx.com or write to **Artist Q&A, ImagineFX, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, BA1 2BW, UK.**

Sketchbook

Alex Stead

Alex opens up his sketchbook to share passions ranging from 1950s female fashion to unstoppable killer cyborgs...

Artist PROFILE

Alex Stead

COUNTRY: England



Alex is a freelance storyboard and concept artist from London. He sees his role as visualising event spaces and the narratives that take place within them. He spends all his spare time writing and producing artwork for his first graphic novel, a sci-fi epic.

www.alexsteadart.com



INK TEST

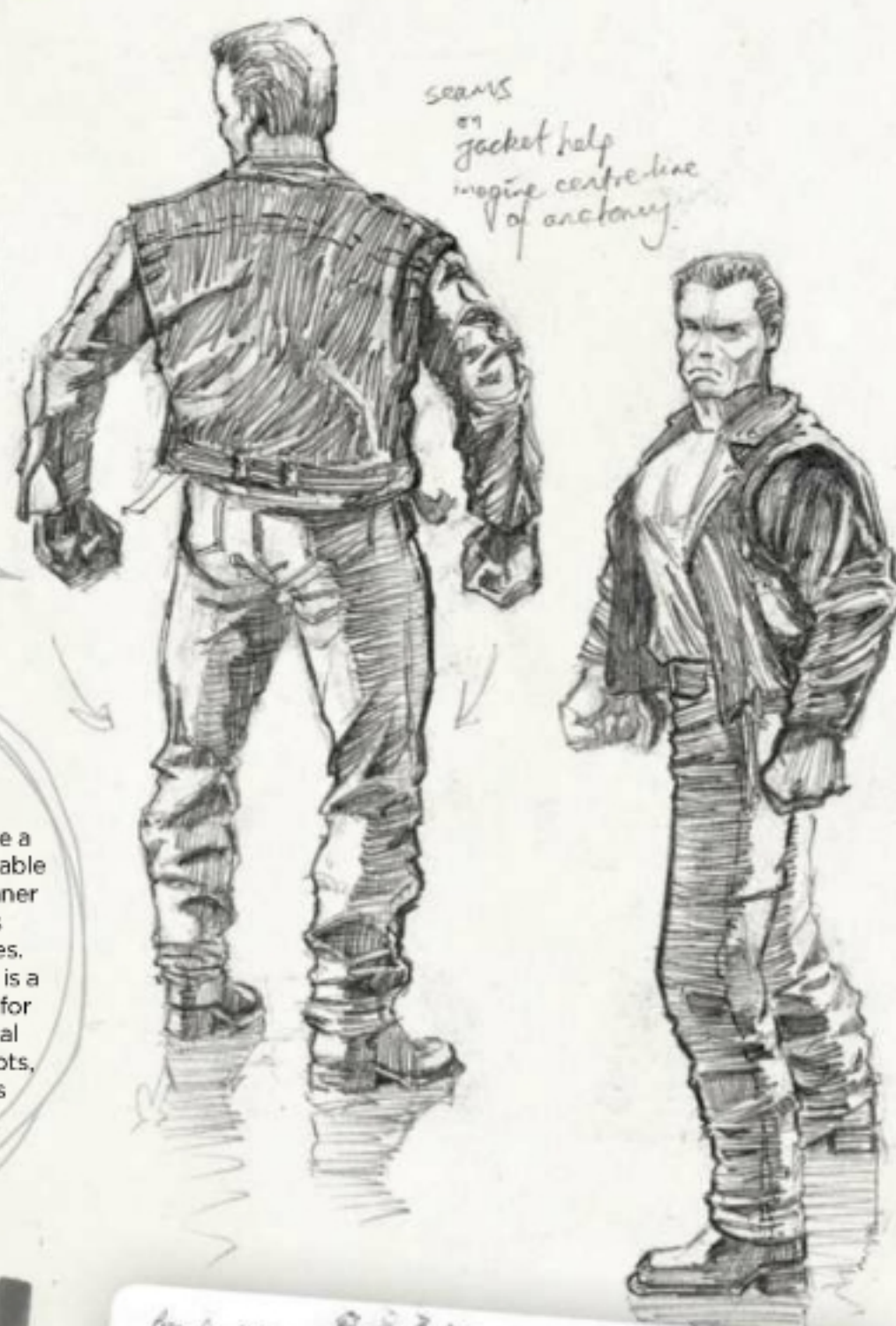
"I treated myself to a brush pen and some markers recently after being inspired by Alvin Lee's posts on Instagram and Whilce Portacio's on YouTube. This was a test for inking techniques and comic styling."

LEG WARMERS

"The things I enjoyed drawing most in this sketch were her legs. It was remarkably liberating to suggest their form by just crudely sketching the topology of the bed covers."

I'LL BE BACK

"All my figurines have a dual purpose: they enable me to embrace my inner geek and serve as invaluable references. My terminator statue is a great reference tool for clothing folds, casual jackets and biker boots, and to light figures dramatically."



NOVEL APPROACH

"A study for my graphic novel. I love drawing the characters for my novel because each of them represents an artistic love of mine - whether it be Americana, 1940s and 50s fashion, Art Nouveau, steampunk, sci-fi... you name it."



DEDICATED FOLLOWER OF FASHION

"My school teacher fashionista. My wife is always bringing back fashion magazines for me - she knows I love the reference. Inspired by some of my cuttings I'm starting to develop this 'paragon of virtue' for my novel."

"My wife is always bringing back fashion magazines for me..."

OLD SCHOOL

"Vintage dresses exploration for schoolgirl character in my novel. A friend of mine has his own picture-framing business and gave me some throwaway mountboard, saying it was great to draw on. It is. And remarkably cheap, too, if you know the right people."



Sketchbook

FOR THE LOVE OF VINTAGE

"My love of 1940s and 1950s women's fashion is being tickled here. I love how markers give really subtle textures and how a brush pen can accentuate the vintage feel of a drawing."



MY INSPIRATIONS

"I love Modesty Blaise, especially the ink work of Eric Badia Romero and John Burns. Inspired by them, I drew much of this page trying to replicate the bolder tonal areas of a classic comic strip."

JUST BECAUSE

"I wanted to draw a stylised oaf and ended-up sticking a big, boring rock in his arms. I asked myself the question, 'Why would he be holding this?' And then it came to me: Why Not?"



MY TRUMP CARD

"One of my entries to the Sketch Theatre competition. I don't enter any now, though. Most of my time is spent working on my graphic novel, but every entry pushed me way beyond my normal sketching parameters. This one was A2 and was about 10 hours of work."



WINGING IT

"Would you ever get a group of paratroopers casually strolling along the full length of an aeroplane wing? No. But it looks good. (Probably a subconscious tip-of-the-hat to Commando comics' Ian Kennedy, too.)"





THEY DO THE MATHS

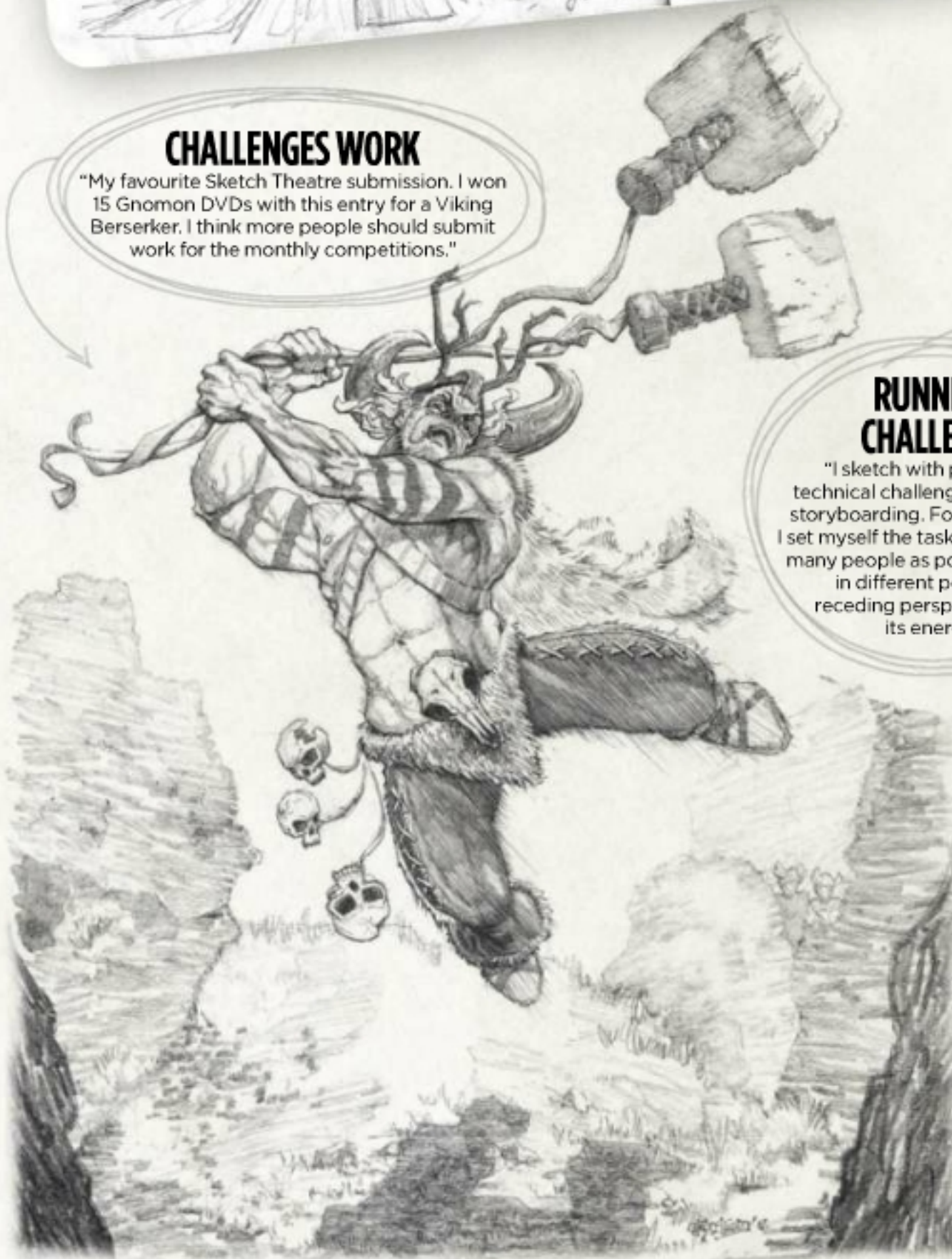
"This is a study into the characterisation of another love: mathematics. The legends of mathematical history are so colourful - their drive, their genius and their desperation. I love the paradox of a logical mind and a thoroughly disorganised lifestyle."

"I love the paradox of a logical mind and a thoroughly disorganised lifestyle"



CHALLENGES WORK

"My favourite Sketch Theatre submission. I won 15 Gnomon DVDs with this entry for a Viking Berserker. I think more people should submit work for the monthly competitions."



RUNNING CHALLENGE

"I sketch with prescribed technical challenges to help my storyboarding. For this drawing, I set myself the task of sketching as many people as possible running in different poses with receding perspective. I like its energy."

HASTA LA VISTA, BABY

"This is what happens when a drawing starts going wrong. My terminator was off balance and not looking very butch so I leant him against a wall, beefed-up his arsenal and surrounded him with destruction. When that didn't work I gave him a cigar and said, 'To hell with it!'"



Want to share your sketches? Then drop us an email, with a selection of your artwork, to sketchbook@imaginefx.com, or upload your drawings at www.imaginefx.com/sketchbook.



NO TELL MOTEL

"I love the rockabilly look, and gritty pulpy subject matter," says Babs Tarr of her evocative 2011 pin-up painting.

The Lady Killers



Pin-up has grown up from its cheeky cheesecake days, with more artists expressing unique visions, brought together by a love of the human form



TEDDY DEAD

This 2010 painting by Aly Fell catches a pin-up with a lot on her mind!

We get to decide what we want to do, and people get to decide if they like it or not." So says pin-up artist Babs Tarr, and she could easily be speaking for a new wave of pin-up artists. Unlike previous ranks of women worshipers, they resist pigeonholing – a loose group of men and women around the world with different backgrounds, interests (other than women), all working in different mediums. In their hands, the genre has never been so exciting.



Golden age legends such as Gil Elvgren and Alberto Vargas are still admired for setting a pin-up standard in the 30s, but with more women artists specialising in a

genre that's exploded in themes and styles thanks to the digital revolution in art, the visual landscape – and the fuel that drives creation – has changed.

"Pin-up artists used to be mainly men drawing women for men. Those women were typically depicted with nothing more than a sweet smile and a couple of contextual props," says Babs. "The current wave of pin-up artists are creating characters with more personality and power. That power is only enhanced when the piece is created by a woman... things have had to change, especially when you have an audience who now wants to be the pin-up, or at least find a narrative in the imagery."

"Things have had to change, especially when you have an audience who now wants to be the pin-up, or at least find a narrative in the imagery"



SCHOOLGIRL

For this piece Lorenzo Di Mauro mixed pencil, vector and Photoshop for a new take on an old-school theme.



LORENZO

➤ Aly Fell has been creating alluring, attractive and often quite dangerous characters for years, and puts his growing female fan base down to avoiding only passive muses or sexy sluts.



"One of the phrases I hear often is that people see something else going on behind the eyes of my characters. And that's what I want to do," Aly says. "The women in my images are looking out at you saying, 'This is my world and you're a guest.'"

“The women in my images are looking out at you saying, ‘This is my world and you’re a guest’”

STRAWBERRY SWIRL

English artist Aly Fell often brings a darkness to his female characters, both in colour and personality.



RAPUNZEL

Setting the standard for beautiful pin-up comic covers, Adam Hughes recently created this image for the Fairest series.

THE GIRL NEXT DOOR

J Scott Campbell produces pin-up art for comic covers and calendars, and with motives as pure as his pin-ups



He's a Marvel comic cover artist and Adam Hughes's favourite contemporary pin-up creator, but J Scott Campbell's pin-up art is infused by the playfulness of his pin-up hero, Gil Elvgren. "I always aim for an approachable quality to my pin up, that adorable 'girl-next-door' look that so many of the 60s Playboy models had," he says.

"As I'm becoming older, I'm fascinated by subtleties," explains J Scott. "It represents a level of sophistication I'm pursuing, and that really lends itself to drawing women."

Not surprisingly for a comic artist, this all has to do with character, with story. "The best pin-up artists are not only the ones who are more subtle, but who know how to build a story, who can hint to the reader that there's a bit of depth to their woman," says the illustrator. "It makes her all the more intriguing and attractive to the audience."



FANTASTIC PIN-UP

With colourist Nei Ruffino, J Scott is releasing another fantasy-themed pin-up calendar in 2014.

For Adam Hughes, the Eisner award-winning artist, his primary area of



commissioned pin-up art is in comics, "where it's resided for the past 20 to 30 years," though even the mighty comic cover master admits that this has meant he's been out of the loop when it comes to current trends in pin-up art.

COMIC CHARACTERS

What he couldn't have missed is that comics are also home to plenty of male pin-ups. Mexican artist Melissa Ballesteros believes that, "A guy may look at a cover of



Wolverine dressed in a tank top, flexing, claws out, and think, 'Cool, what a badass.' Whereas I might look at the same image and appreciate it on a more carnal level. Male pin-up art is out there – it's just packaged differently."

The notion of having a superpower is something many pin-up fans can



appreciate. After all, from Olivia de Berardinis's cheesecake perfection to Rebeca Puebla's modern 3D visions from the dark side, this is fantasy we're talking about. "Pin-ups have a totally magical quality to them. They're a heightened version of us on our boldest, sexiest day," says Babs. "If we choose, we can have this superpower of being a beautiful,

intoxicating creature who draws people in, but also conveys an unapproachable ferocity along the lines of, 'Don't get too close or you'll get a punch in the face.' When I capture that in my drawing, I feel I've nailed it."

True, Zoë Mozert, Pearl Frush and Joyce Ballantyne were among the best in classic pin-up. But where the Golden Age Three ➔

SIGNED: YOUR BIGGEST FAN

Maly Siri injects a bit of retro class into her pin-up art – a perfect marriage of pencil, ink, watercolour and gouache.

TATTOO GIRL 2012

Babs Tarr says, "I want tattoos but I'm too chicken to get anything permanent, so I drew a girl to cover them with. Each tattoo means something special to me."



➡➡ were creating pin-up paintings for calendars shipped over to homesick GIs during World War II, today's artists are more likely to make a series of personal images, to be shared online. There are fewer filters to pass through before their art is in front of thousands of eager eyes.

"I love a tattooed and pierced pin-up woman in her bathroom, with her pet octopus, as much as women coming from



the worlds of burlesque," says German artist Daniela Uhlig. "What I also find eye-catching and interesting is the melding together of different styles.



ORANGE BUNNY

Melissa Ballesteros's image is inspired by the photos of Dan Tidswell.

“With stylised pin-up artwork there are so many ways to put across the attraction”

Especially the mixing of cartoon styles within the classic pin-up form."

Some things don't change. Modern pin-up artists are still trying to find the perfect pose, expression, line and shape. And when clothes, posing, lighting and



expressions are dripping with sensuality, the demands of fans can become very specific. "I'm always asked, 'How do you paint the hair, the skin?'" says French artist Serge Birault. His advice? "Take your time."

SIRENS WITH STYLE

Andrew Hickinbottom, an English 3D artist who turned to the genre in the evening after his day job on children's TV shows, says that pin-up is "an art form with many nuances." If you go to pin-up to see boobs, it can be a base visual thing, "but I find that with stylised pin-up artwork there are so many ways to put across the attraction: cute, sexy,



dark, light, curvy, slender, playful, serious, friendly or dangerous," Andrew reveals. "There are a great deal of approaches to consider,



TENTACLE SLAP

German digital artist Daniela Uhlrig takes themes and props from S&M and other pin-up artists' work.

WHEN SERGE MET SORAYAMA



Japanese pin-up master Sorayama was a big inspiration for the French artist Serge Birault. Here Serge speaks to his idol...

Where does your interest in pin-up art come from?

Oh, maybe just because I wanted to create my own goddess.

Can you explain why you're so inspired by the world of fetish?

I like shiny stuff. I like metallic surfaces, PVC, membranes. I just feel they're sexy. I think this particular fetish is a sort of disease that has affected a small number of people across the generations.

I've followed your work for more than 25 years and your style has changed. Are you going back to vintage pin-up stuff?

From my point of view my style hasn't changed that much. I'm an omnivorous animal so I don't even know myself what kind of poop I'll produce.

What's your main technical influence, and why did you start using an airbrush?

To me, photographs and the art of printing are my technical teachers. Using an airbrush is one tool that's very efficient for small, key portions of each artwork, but it's the icing on the cake.

For a lot of people you're an airbrush artist, yet this isn't your main tool

I'm not that good at the airbrush. It's just one of my soldiers I employ to create illustrations. It's not the only soldier. If people take the time to study my works, they can tell that I don't use an airbrush a

SHINE A LIGHT

This painting by Sorayama is French pin-up artist Serge Birault's all-time favourite – the light playing on the shimmering water making a link with many of Serge's pieces.



lot. I use pencils, tiny brushes and then, at the end, an airbrush.

Do you think the airbrush is a tool of the past? A lot of people still use it as a hobby, but few use it professionally now...

Perhaps fewer professional artists are using the airbrush now, when painting software contains similar filters. But I think there are still professional house or car painters, model kits makers, nail artists, and make-up artists who are still using the airbrush.

Do you teach?

No, I don't. I have some tutorials on the DVD and in one of my books. If I have some free time, I'd rather create another painting.

Do you ever try digital painting? What do you think about it?

I've never tried digital painting and I can't use computers. If I need to use it, I manage and create it to be done elsewhere. If both methods co-exist together and stimulate each other, I think that's wonderful.

What advice could you give to pin-up artists who are just starting out?

The pin-up market is shrinking or being diluted, so if you're thinking about making money as a pin-up artist, then I would say better not become one.

You're my main influence and I'm not the only one – you're an inspiration for a lot of artists or designers. Do you realise this?

If I've inspired any artists, I feel very honoured. I appreciate being the one whose footsteps they follow to find their own unique path. I think excellent sense is inspired by a greater sense and a new technique will be soon taken over by a newer technique. Serge san, let's try our best to survive in this world of art. I think sense is the most important and a necessity in the world of art.



SKIN AND HAIR

Serge's pupils often ask, 'How do you do the hair, the skin?' But what about the latex?!



AIRBRUSH WHO?

Sorayama may be known for his airbrush work, but as Serge found out, he only uses it sparingly.

© Hajime Sorayama 2013, www.sorayama.net



MISS MOSH

Andrew Hickinbottom is one of many current 3D artists taking pin-up and adding different themes to it, as well as another dimension.



NIGHT PORTER

In this image Rebeca Puebla takes inspiration from 1970s Italian art house films of the same name, as part of her *Twisted Dolls* series.



RED CALM

Jace Wallace's personal portfolio is almost exclusively of women – his greatest inspiration.

➤➤ and finding the right combination to suit the right girl is part of the challenge."

For old-school artist Lorenzo Di Mauro, who moved from acrylics and airbrush to



software in the 1980s, the digital age has ushered in new voices and new possibilities. "I love the funny irony of new

burlesque, by pin-up art created by women, as artists or models," he says. "I see 3D as something great that has emerged since art went digital, reaching a high level even in pin-up art."

"I love the funny irony of new burlesque, by pin-up art created by women, as artists or models"

Rebeca cut her teeth painting strong, realistic fantasy female warriors before she discovered the magical world of pin-up. The



saucy sculptures of Colin Christian, fellow 3D artist Andrew Hickinbottom and all the digital painters mentioned here gave her a

glimpse into what pin-up was about: "Expression, emotion, imagination and especially good taste."

Her art is a combination of beauty and terror – comic doll women dressed with

realistically textured clothing, intricate tattoos and vertiginous high heels; sexy models, fully clothed. "Beauty is important in my work, but not only that," Rebeca says, "I'm interested in addressing unconventional issues in an elegant way. I think it's good to shake people's minds."

IMPERFECT PERFECTION

Whether borrowing heavily from the past or creating new octopus-S&M-nun imagery, "there is love coming through these women," says traditional artist ➤➤

TWISTED SISTER

Colourful tattoos, translucent skin and lace lingerie: Rebeca Puebla's *The Butcher's Bride* is a celebration of textures...



Rebeca Puebla discovered the world of fetish and BDSM around 2007, and soon afterwards started her series of highly striking images, *Twisted Dolls*. "It

was a challenge because until then my work was quite realistic," she says, "so I began to mix cartoon and realism. And I thought that making politically incorrect dolls in latex and impossible corsets look elegant was something new."

Elegant transgression

1 I love to make provocative images with strong themes, but I don't like to do typical exaggerated females (big chest, skimpy clothing). I love ambiguity and contradiction, such as a beautiful corset that's impossibly restrictive. This idea might seem a bit seedy to some, so my challenge is to make the final result transgressive yet visually elegant.



Modelling the figure

2 Normally I make a base in 3ds Max and then use ZBrush for applying details. However, for this image I do more of the modelling in ZBrush, and leave a highly polished and smooth surface without too much detail, ready for the lace layer.



Tattoo you

4 I spend a lot of effort getting the tattoos right. They're important to the character's story and must be dynamic, yet soft at the same time.

Lace lingerie

5 For the scene's lighting I try different options, finally choosing one that creates the most contrast. Between the lace, laddered stockings and gold ribbon, there's a lot of texture to pick out.



Final curtain

6 Towards the end of my process I normally tweak the brightness, contrast and colour in Photoshop because I don't usually achieve the right result using 3D software alone.

BIG IS BEAUTIFUL

Les Toil's love for big women has attracted fans who want him to turn their fantasy pin-up dreams into reality

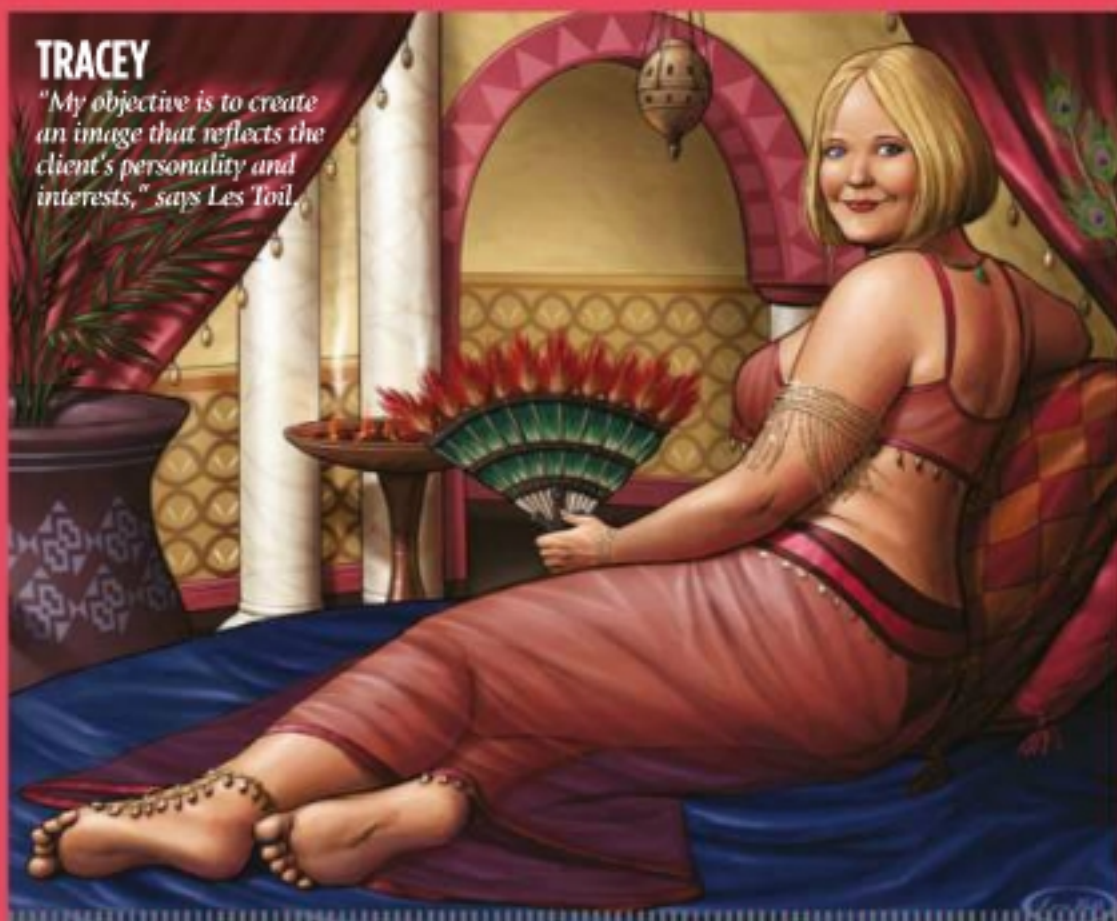


"What inspires me is the positive feedback I receive from the clients that hire me to turn them into pin-up queens," says Les, who's been painting larger-sized pin-ups since the late 90s. "Many of the women who approach me lead a life that aren't glamorous, and these works of art enable them to vicariously live out a dream or fantasy."

"Seeing themselves in the form of an empowered space princess or a mythical goddess often instils a stronger sense of self-worth for those that may have felt marginalised by a size-obsessed society. Receiving that type of positive feedback is fulfilling. I think most artists would like to know someone is viewing their creations as something to be admired and valued beyond its surface aesthetics."

TRACEY

"My objective is to create an image that reflects the client's personality and interests," says Les Toil.



KEEP ON TRUCKIN'

"I'm approached by women to give them the vehicle to be the subject of their own fantasies," says Les.



UNDERCUT 2013

"I love undercuts. Growing your hair takes a lot of effort, and to shave a section of it takes balls. I think that contrast is pretty cool," says Babs Tarr.



Maly Siri. And when you truly love something, you can dispense with tired notions of perfection. "Perfection is boring as all get-out," demands Adam. "An interesting juxtaposition of flaws that results in something desirable is more intriguing to me."

Andrew agrees. "Pin-up is all about exaggerating features, and if you find one of those features to be unconventionally

"A juxtaposition of flaws that results in something desirable is more intriguing to me"

appealing – such as a slight belly, chunky hips or strong nose – then you don't airbrush it out. You celebrate it."

INSPIRATION FROM YOUTH

Even for artists who are redefining what pin-up can mean today, their respect and awe for the female form is rooted in nostalgia – not just of the halcyon cheesecake days, but of their own youthful discoveries. "When I was a kid growing up in Sicily, barbers gave customers pocket-sized pin-up calendars," recalls Lorenzo,



COMRADE VESNA

"This is a watercolour, no model was used, and it's inspired from pulp cover poses and Ava Gardner," says Maly Siri. "She's mysterious and dangerous."

"so pin-up met my growing curiosity of women. Today the art gives me a flavour of the world of my youth."

"When I was a youngster, I invented my own female heroine and drew stories featuring her," says Aly. "Jacqueline was her name. She was a pirate, highwaywoman, Arabian princess – all sorts of things."

Whoever is next to discover Aly's gothic hell raisers or Rebeca's 3D statuettes, one thing is beyond doubt: they're in for a treat.

And they'll be coming to the pin-up images on the artist's terms. "The art



THE WEEKLY TRINQUETTE

Daniela Uhlig started painting in 2004 and has since grown to love depicting beautiful – and funny – women.



PINK AMAZON

"I'm inspired by the fetish and BDSM world, and I love making elaborate latex dresses," says Rebeca Puebla.



that I create is for me," says Jace Wallace. "I have had lots of people criticise me for painting so many women, but in the end

I am not creating art for them. My art is more than just eye candy because women are the greatest source of inspiration in the art world." ■

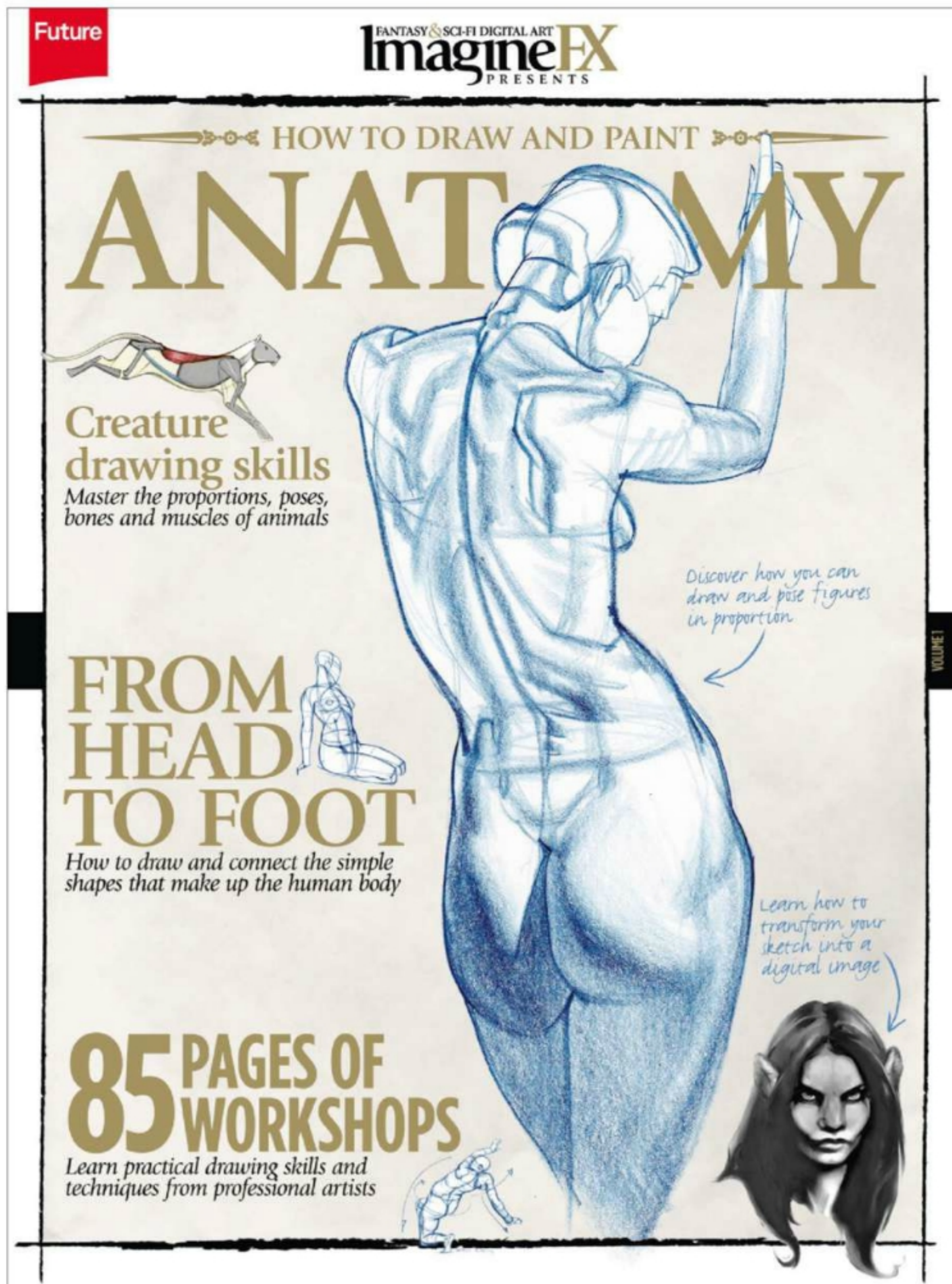
CATHY RAY

"Many of my favourite pin-up illustrators are female," says Andrew, "Babs Tarr, Nic Ter Horst, Maly Siri, Genevieve Farley, Melissa Ballesteros..."



HOW TO DRAW AND PAINT

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Loopydave brings his formidable illustration skills to the pin-up genre.

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Photoshop PORTRAY A SASSY, TATTOOED PIN-UP

Loopydave brings his formidable illustration skills to the pin-up genre, and places the figure in roller derby gear because, well, why not?

Artist PROFILE

Loopydave
COUNTRY: Australia



Loopydave, aka David Dunstan, began his working

career as a graphic designer before switching to the wacky world of freelance illustration which, all in all, he considers to have been a pretty good move. <http://ifxm.ag/loopy-d>

Sometime back I was commissioned to paint a poster for a documentary movie called This Is Roller Derby. I really enjoyed playing around with retro haircuts, sassy fashions, tattoos and attitude – all things that instantly lend themselves to fun pin-up art – and the brief here is to paint something like that again.

In this workshop I'll look at the steps required to paint a roller derby pin-up girl

and possibly dating tips for the single, romantically inclined skull. A couple of notes before I start, though. I paint with the mouse. This often surprises people, but the explanation is fairly simple: it's what I've gotten used to. Switching to digital painting many years ago, I tried a tablet, but at that stage there was an intolerable lag between what happened with the stylus and what happened on the screen, so I just stuck with a mouse. You are, no doubt, much more sensible than I,

and use a Wacom or some other such device, but this will in no way affect the details and relevance of my workshop.

I'll be using Photoshop CS3. It's an older version, but budgets can be tight in the glamorous world of freelance illustration and I have no pressing reasons to update. The principles and details are still applicable to later versions and other programs such as Corel Painter.

So let's strap on our rollerskates, adjust our elbow pads and hit the rink!



PRO SECRETS

Windows on the world

View multiple copies of the project that you're working on. In Photoshop click the Window menu and select Arrange>File name. Having one window showing the full layout leaves you free to zoom in and out on the other as you work. This is particularly useful when you're fiddling around with fine details because you can see them in their full context in one window, and in detail on the other.

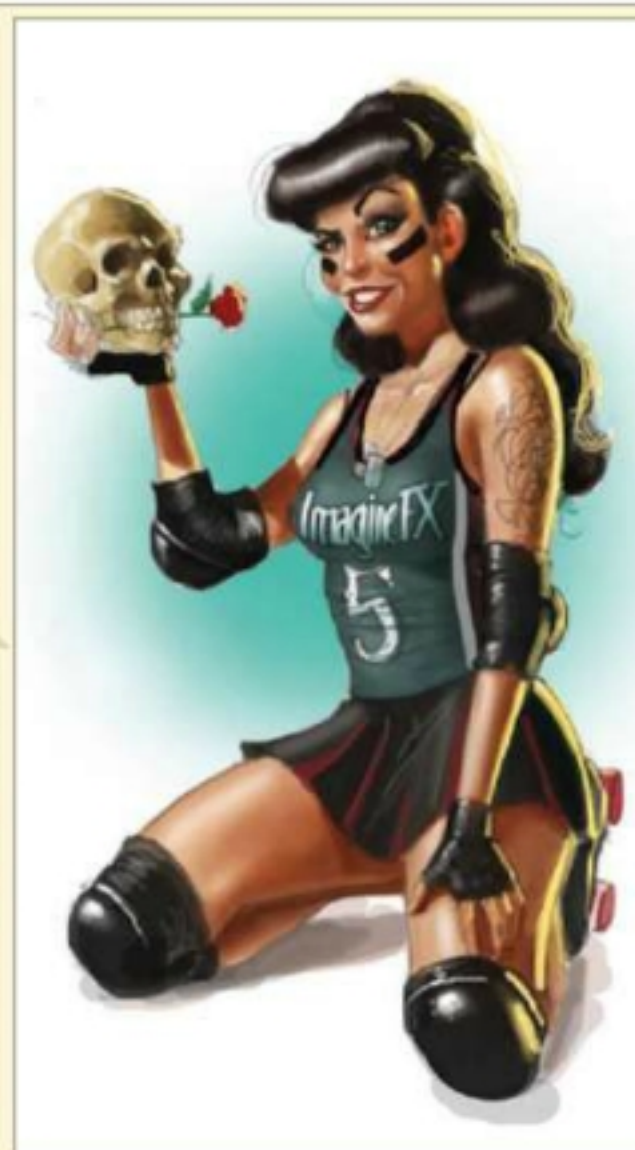


1 The brief

After some pencil concept roughs and feedback from the ImagineFX team, I'm going with a kneeling figure. This solves the challenges presented by the square format of the cover area: the viewer can see both the face and skates, and I can still keep the 'camera' tight in on the character. The skull is here for the narrative. If I cause a viewer to stop an extra second and wonder what the story is, it increases engagement with the image.

2 Colour rough

I do a quick colour rough in Photoshop over one of my initial sketches, because this pin-up will appear with other elements on the cover and I want to give the ImagineFX team an early feel for the palette I plan to use. The feedback is to lighten it a little and create a 'Death Dealers' shirt logo – a really fun idea and nod to the late great Frank Frazetta. I love it!



3 Working sketch

Now I draw up a tighter sketch to paint over. All my sketches are on paper and then scanned in, partly because I work with a mouse in Photoshop but mostly because I love the medium. When I first started painting digitally my drawings included all the shading, light source information and so on. Yet over the years I've got better at solving image problems as I paint and my sketches have become much looser.





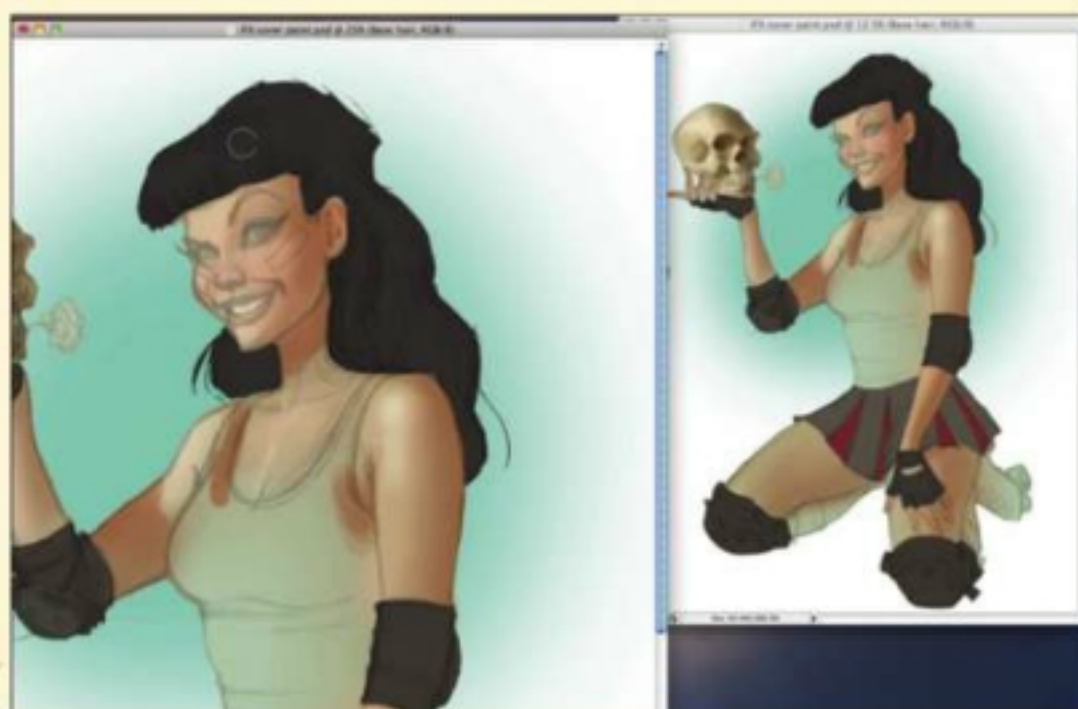
4 Working size

I scan in my pencil sketch at approximately twice the required size – in this case it's 600dpi at A4. It's important to establish the maximum required dimensions with your client before starting and then, if your computer is capable, work at a even larger size – just in case. Image downsizing is easy, but scaling up a painting later leads to image quality issues that can cause anger, hate and suffering... basically, it's the dark side of the Force on a monitor screen.



5 Setting up for painting

Here I remove the background white around my sketch by selecting it with the Magic Wand and then deleting it. Then I copy and paste the sketch on to a new document and choose RGB mode. I set the sketch's Layer mode to Multiply and adjust its Transparency to 30 per cent or so. Now I'm ready to block in my colours in a layer beneath, all the while still being able to view the overlaying pencil sketch.



6 Blocking in the colours

Because I may need to adjust the colour of her outfit later on, I carefully block in each major item on a different layer: the body, shirt, skirt, protective equipment, skull and hair. Blocking in the basic elements can help serve both as a colour rough as well as creating areas that I can select later on by pressing Cmd+mouse click (right-click on a PC) on that layer in the Layer menu to help keep the edges clean.

7 Build on my initial lighting scheme

I work out the straightforward lighting on my colour rough. Once I'm sure that I want a strong rim light along her left-hand side, I need a filler light source at almost 180 degrees so that the darker areas are the ones that butt up against the yellow of the backlight and create the greatest contrast. I roughly paint the yellow backlight as a separate layer and will gradually refine it as I finish each section of the painting.



Shortcuts

Layer selection

Ctrl+click (PC)

Cmd+click (Mac)

Clicking a layer creates a selection of that layer. Useful for keeping your edges tidy.

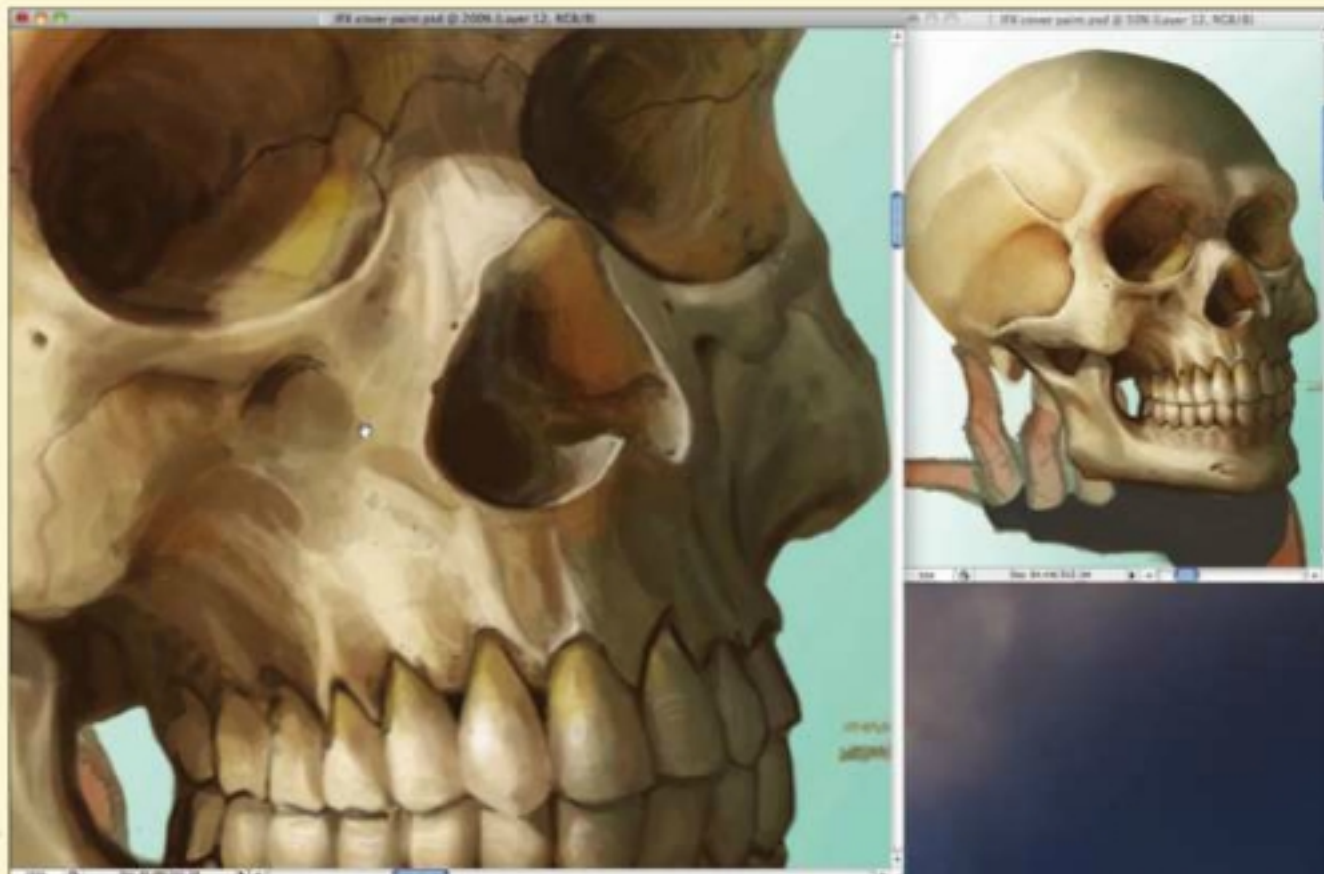
8 Using layers

The number of layers I use varies greatly from project to project. Sometimes I use a single layer, sometime lots more. I know that I'll be using a number of layers on this picture, so I create folders in my Layer menu to keep them organised. For example, I put the layers related to the shirt in a folder called Shirt. It's much easier to keep track of layers as I create more, and enables me to turn off whole sections at a time if necessary.

9 Where to start

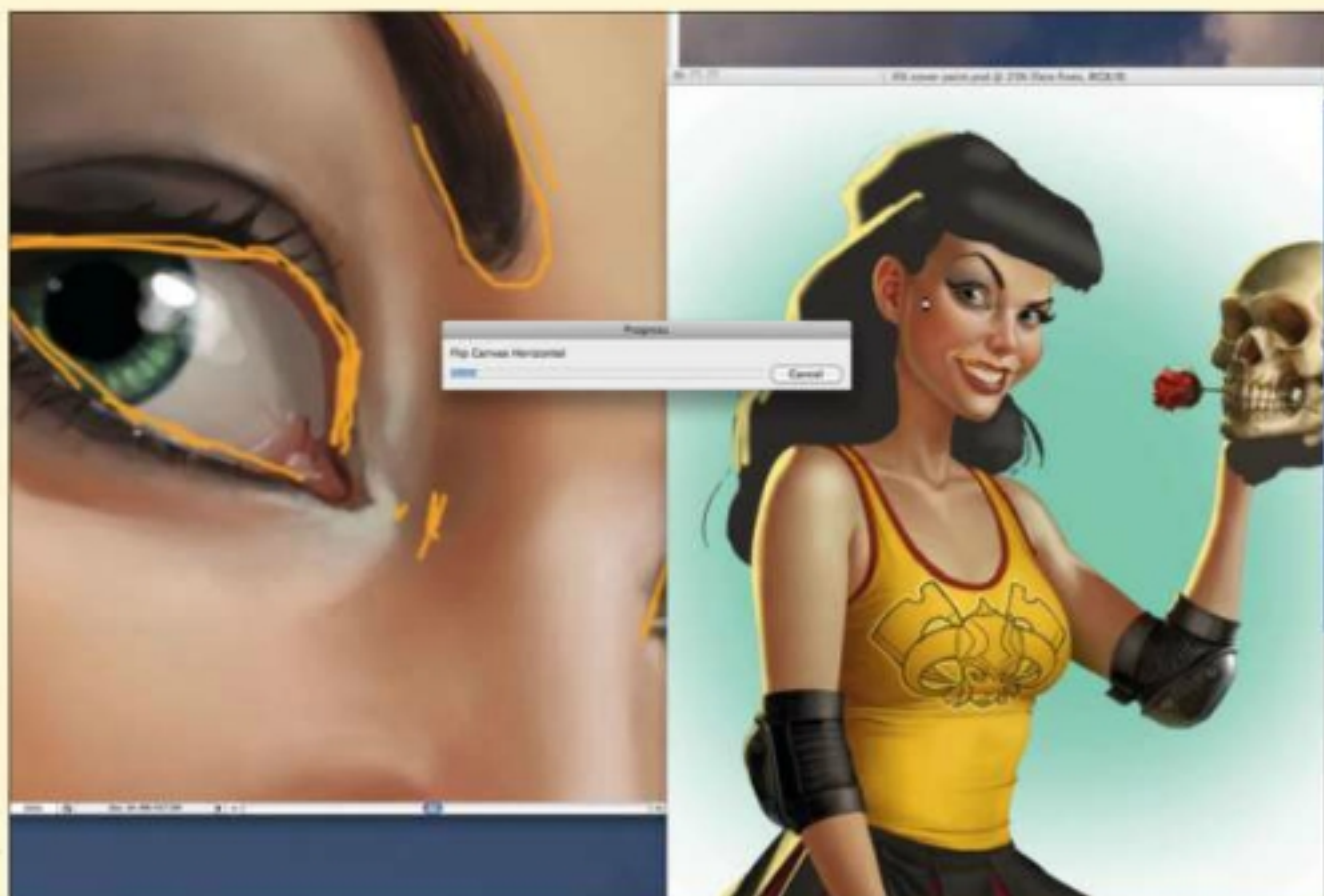
After blocking in my base colours I start painting the face. It's usually the first area a viewer looks at and often takes the most time and effort in the painting process, perhaps along with the hands and hair. I work on it for a while and the basics are now there, but it lacks some of the charm of the pencil sketch. I decide to paint the other 'face' – the skull and his floral arrangement – and come back to my roller derby figure later.





10 Ladies and gentlemen, it's Skinny AI!

I love painting skulls. I have a plastic one on my desk, called Skinny AI, that I'm referencing. It's full of wonderful detail, although it's a bit exaggerated in places, so I'm also looking at a few skull photos for more correct proportions. I use the standard Hard Edge brush set to a low Opacity – around 10 per cent – and build up the colours slowly. This will help create a smooth, yet slightly uneven surface.

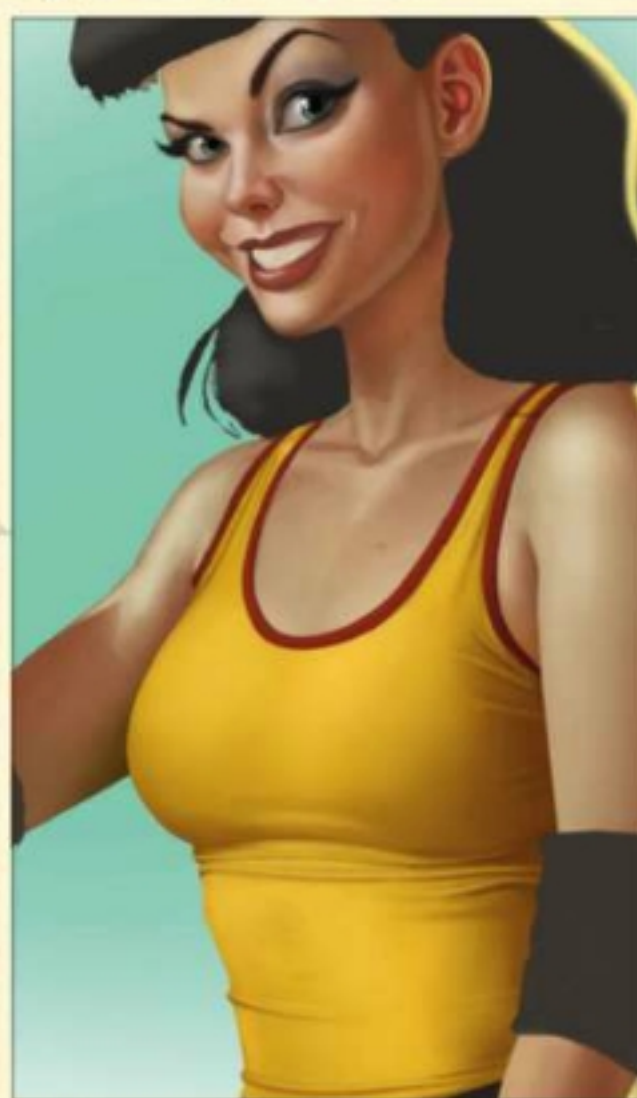


11 Flipping the scene

Back to the face. I flip the painting horizontally (a brain gets used to seeing things a certain way, so flipping an image can help highlight issues you may otherwise miss), create a new top layer and sketch out the proportional corrections as I see them in a bright colour. I flip the image back the original way, but now I have a new guide to fixing the problems.

12 Painting the outfit

Clothing can be tricky to paint convincingly. Fortunately, both the skirt and shirt aren't complicated: I simply put small, sharp wrinkle lines on the pull area for the shirt and a couple of folds where the front leg interrupts the natural fall of the pleated skirt. I've painted these things many times before and I also have a wardrobe full of props and costumes and a mannequin in my studio that I have dressed in a similar outfit.



13 Range of skin tones

I create a swatch of colours that I refer to while I paint. Skin picks up the colours of adjacent objects, so I add yellow to the shadow where the arm is near the shirt, a more saturated orange where different parts of the body are near others (the neck and head, arm and arm pit, and so on). I notice the skin tone is a bit duller than I want, so I adjust the levels so that the skin is slightly brighter and then work with this new range.



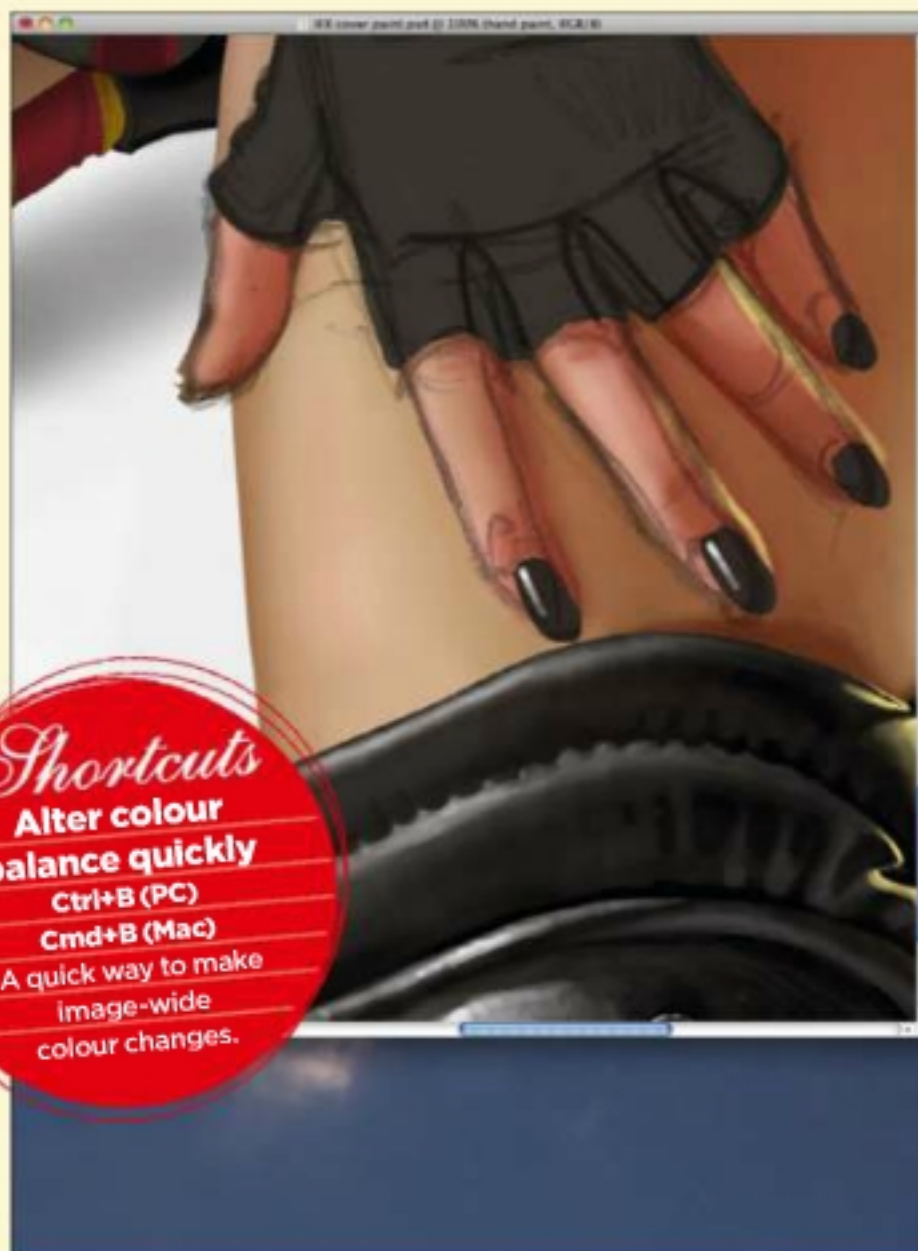
14 Place the shadows

A common problem that I see with painters who are starting out is under or non-use of shadows. Shadows, more than anything, will give an object a sense of solidity, depth and relationship to other objects. I like to have at least a couple of points where there's a sharply contrasted shadow/highlight area on a painting, so in this case I have them predominately on the neck and the front arm.

PRO SECRETS

Control your colour strokes

Regardless of which brush you're working with, setting it on a low Opacity (say, 10 per cent) and selecting adjacent colours as you paint will give you a lovely smooth grade without the 'tearing' caused when using the Smudge tool and greater control than a stronger-flowing Soft brush.



Shortcuts
Alter colour
balance quickly
Ctrl+B (PC)
Cmd+B (Mac)
A quick way to make
image-wide
colour changes.



18 Shirt logo

The Death Dealers logo is a tribute to Frank Frazetta, using similar facial proportions to those he liked (although these are lost a little when placed on the figure's shirt) and a helmet and axe design from his Death Dealer painting. I apply it in a similar manner to that of the tattoo: inked artwork set to Multiply and then distorted a little using Edit>Transform>Warp.



19 Final checklist

Towards the end of a painting, I sit back and run a critical eye over the whole image. I write down a list of all the things that aren't quite right, harmonious or finished. This stage is critical and saves me from kicking myself later when I've sent the image off. I work my way down a list, darkening the top finger shadows, repainting the back shoulder a little wider, increasing Skinny AI's smile, and so on until I'm happy the picture's finished.

15 Painting hands

I have a thing about hands. They are one of the first things that I look at in a painting, and I see them as a litmus test of an illustrator's skill and attention to detail. Consequently, I spend nearly as much time depicting a hand as I do on a face. I notice some scaling problems – it's the price I pay for a quicker, looser sketch – so I scale the top hand down a bit, along with Skinny AI.

17 Defining the hair

I draw the directional lines that I want the hair to follow on a separate layer, as a guide for painting individual strands as well as helping me work out where the highlights should go. I use a larger Soft brush to paint the highlight areas and then a 1-2 point brush to paint strands of hair. I use the Eraser tool to ease back the intensity of the dark hairs over the brightest areas and then a 1-pixel Gaussian Blur to soften the single brush strokes a little.



16 It's tattoo time

I use a quick but fairly effective method of adding tattoos. I open a scan of the tattoo design I've drawn, tint the line work with a hint of blue/green, add some basic colours with a Soft brush and then paste the artwork on to my painting. I set its Layer mode to Multiply, the Opacity to around 80 per cent and then I use the Warp function under the Edit>Transform menu to wrap it around her arm. I then run a little noise through it under the Filter menu, and we have a tattoo!

PRO SECRETS
Save regularly
I save and copy a flattened version of my painting's progress as a layer in a new file, usually screen height, as I go along. It's useful for reviewing the day's process, gauging how long things take (which is handy when it comes to billing your client) and comes in handy if you ever need to create a tutorial later on.



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Comic Artist



Fantasy Illustrator



Anatomy: Volume 1

BACK ISSUES

If you want a print back issue, only the previous six (below) are available. We provide a much larger back catalogue with our digital editions*

Issue 99 September 2013



To celebrate Magic: The Gathering's 20th birthday, we talk to some amazing card artists, such as Jason Chan, Scott M Fisher and John Stanko, while workshop artists include Aleks Briclot and Volkan Baga. Elsewhere, Sparth 'sculpts' a sci-fi vista and Dave Rapoza paints a dark, brooding scene.

Issue 102 December 2013



Traditional skills meet digital methods in Jean-Sébastien Rossbach's cover art, which also heralds a new section in the magazine that's devoted to bringing you the best in traditional fantasy art. We talk to Keith Thompson and Daren Bader, while Jim Pavlec brings an Eerie gothic creation to life.

Issue 100 October 2013



Our bumper 100th anniversary issue looks back to our past, and casts an eye over the artists of the future. There's a countdown of your 100 greatest artists of all time, a review of your favourite covers, plus workshops from Jason Chan, Raymond Swanland and the mighty Genzoman!

Issue 103 Christmas 2013



Discover the skills you'll need to break into the video games industry, as we speak to the people behind The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt, Star Wars: The Force Unleashed, Remember Me and Mass Effect. Traditional fantasy artist Tom Kidd paints a book cover, and Dave Kendall puts Manga Studio 5 to the test.

Issue 101 November 2013



Let our sci-fi artists take you to strange, new worlds: John Berkey, Peter Elson and Chris Moore visit a galaxy called 'Inspirational'. Our workshop section includes art from Keith Thompson, Emma Vieceli and Thom Tenery, and we chat to the artists of imaginary Friends Studios.

Issue 104 January 2014



This month's artists will help you push your painting skills into previously untapped areas, with advice on developing your artistic voice, creating art from smoke brushes, and more. Simon Dominic breathes life into an old concept, and we reveal the winners of this year's Rising Stars contest.

*Resource files are only available from issue 85 onwards.

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Photoshop CREATE A STRIKING FANTASY TATTOO

From initial design considerations to inking on the body, tattoo artist **Ilen Levin** shares his process for producing engaging skin art

Artist PROFILE

Ilen Levin

COUNTRY: Ukraine



Ilen is the founder and creative director of Atelier Noir.

He's also an established tattoo artist as well as a product designer.
www.ilenlevin.com

Since my early childhood I've been drawing, trying out every tool and medium I can get my hands on. In my teenage years I was an airbrush artist, then a photographer. But I've never attended art school and didn't actively try to improve my drawing skills before I became a tattoo apprentice. Indeed, my introduction to tattoos was accidental, yet had a big effect on my life.

There were already a lot of tattoos on me and by then I had lost my interest in

photography. So I decided to try something new. I wasn't aiming to become a well-known tattooist with a recognisable style. But I became fascinated with the art of tattooing and in turn worked as hard as I could to get where I am now.

My main inspirations are wildlife, science and engineering in all forms, religious/occult societies, the Middle Ages and mathematical/geometric art.

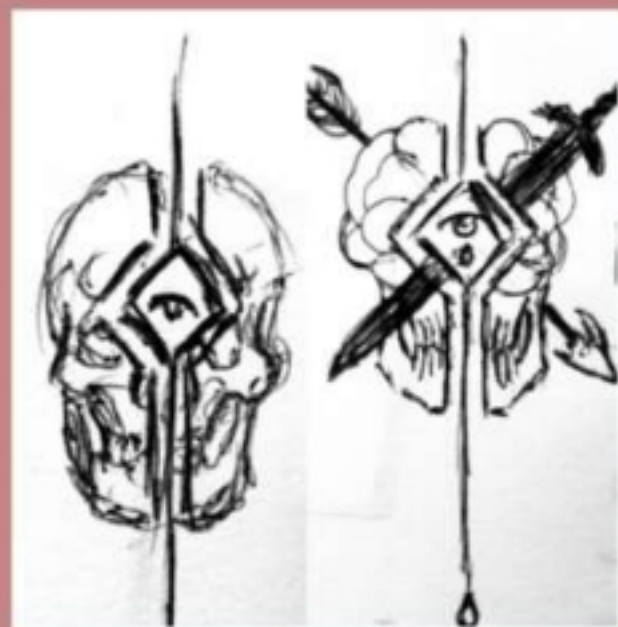
It's difficult to explain my process when I design a tattoo. I have a discussion

with a client, then I draw the design and tattoo the skin with my design. The process from start to finish can take any amount of time – like any art form, really. Painting a picture isn't an exact science, and likewise neither is tattooing one of my designs.

Before taking the design into Photoshop, I use pencils and pens, rulers, compasses and tracing paper. Nothing special. It's what you produce at the end of the day with these basic tools that should catch the eye.

How I create...

A TATTOO FOR A WARRIOR



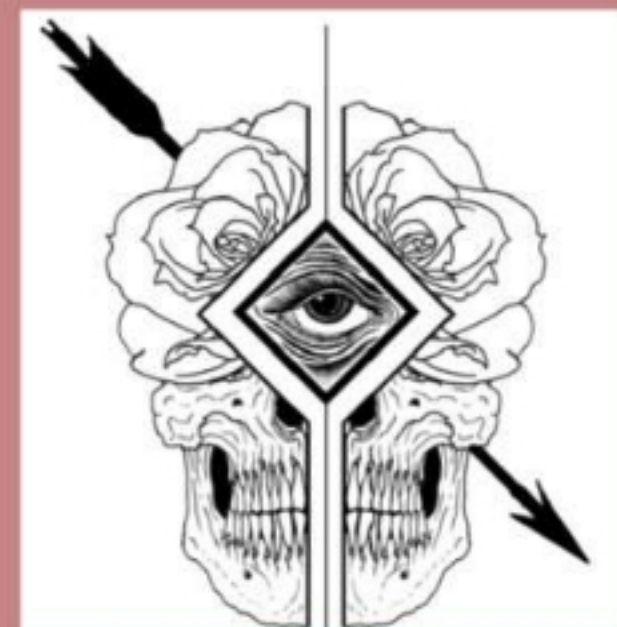
1 Initial ideas

Once a client has given me a basic idea for an image, I've found that the design process becomes easier if you distil an idea into a few keywords or 'tags'. My tags for this design are love, warrior, sadness, pain, death and war. In addition, my client asks me to place a straight line through the centre of the tattoo, and asks me to use solid black in the design if possible.



2 Use of symbols

When conceptualising, I prefer to use simple but powerful symbols. Here, a skull represents the death and warrior tags, with sadness and pain alluded to by an eye with a teardrop. Now I'm able to create the first raw sketch to see if the general composition is working. The top of the skull looks empty, so I cover it with roses, to represent love and to contrast with the smooth skull.



3 Finalising elements

Placing the solid black arrow at an angle creates some dynamism in the piece. While moving the teardrop to the bottom of the image enables me to increase the size of the eye, and in doing so gives the other elements room to breathe. To create the stencil of the tattoo, I recreate the separate elements, before merging and mirroring them in Photoshop.

Be prepared

A bad tattoo can look great when on the body, and a masterful tattoo design can fall flat when it's in situ. The key is to create a design that will suit the specific area of the body where it's going to end up. Ensure you know the design, size and location of the tattoo before taking things further. In addition, create a life-size tattoo design, rather than one that has to be scaled to fit.



Description

Don't try to draw something that looks like a tattoo, and don't limit yourself to so-called tattoo styles. Don't limit your imagination - mix everything and keep experimenting. The best tattoos looking nothing like a tattoo when they're on paper.

Texture considerations

If you're working in greyscale, you'll improve your design skills by learning how to differentiate different parts of your tattoos, not only with shades but with textures. This will highlight the different surfaces. Try to keep the lighting balanced while playing with textures. Some areas can be solid black or white, feature smooth or whip shading, engraving-style line-shading or even dot work (stippling).





Artist PROFILE

James Zapata
COUNTRY: US



James is a freelance illustrator who's done work for companies like Applibot and Wizards of the Coast. His influences include films and music, among many other things. He's also developing his personal fantasy project titled Moon and Crow.
www.jameszapata.com

Photoshop

GET AROUND ARTIST'S BLOCK

Stop telling yourself there's "nothing to paint" and see how **James Zapata** tackles a painting with no plan of attack



Ever opened a canvas in Photoshop and been overwhelmed by the sheer emptiness of the big white rectangle? You might even have heard yourself saying, "I should have planned this out before starting."

Approaching a painting doesn't always have to be such a precise and calculated exercise. You'll find that exploring different techniques along the way can help add a whole new factor of fun and

intrigue to the process that you may have not considered before.

Of course, we shouldn't forget the basic fundamentals. I don't want you to interpret "experimentation" to mean "reckless abandon." For you to take new approaches to your work you can't forget core art elements: value, composition, perspective, colour and even narrative should always be kept in mind. These basics will be your anchor while you explore new territories in creation.

I hope to introduce you to a few new ways of approaching design, including taking a freestyle attitude to the process. You'll see how my initial intent and focus shift in the middle.

Painting is, in many ways, a journey of the mind. When I started out as an illustrator I often complained about having artist's block. It would often be the case that I just didn't know what I wanted to paint. Hopefully this workshop will help you get over that wall.

1 Taking the plunge

I jump right into the painting by creating a circular selection and filling it with a gradient. From here, I like to use the Smudge tool with a Hard Round brush selected at 100 per cent Opacity to push and pull the values in the object. I make sure to have Sample All Layers unchecked so that I only affect the object and no other layers. I'm not concerned with the end result at this point. Right now it's just playtime.



3 Repeating shapes

Once I'm comfortable enough with the shape to call it a robot, I set course to fill the canvas in an interesting way, and start thinking about some of the major elements that will make up my composition. I duplicate the robot head shapes and start tinkering with their general shapes to differentiate them. I do this by using my Smudge tool technique from before, as well as Clone Stamping.

PRO SECRETS

Send in the clones

Clone stamping is a great way to quickly generate a base for your design. Have your Clone Stamp tool selected with whichever brush shape you desire. Next, sample an area of your painting with the Color Picker tool. Now you're able to clone that sampled area anywhere. It's great to use as a base for painting over later. Be careful not to rely so heavily on it that your design ends up looking like the same shapes have been copied and pasted everywhere.



4 Starting the composition

I create a sense of depth by situating one of my objects in the foreground/midground and the other in the background. I also fade the bottom portion of the background shape to give a sense of atmosphere. I carry on with designing my foreground shape. Because it'll be taking a bigger place in my composition than the background robot, I need it to be more readable. It's the central figure and will therefore establish the overall design language.



5 Setting the mood

After some extensive design work done over the initial shapes, I'm ready to dive into finalising the composition. I do this by creating a space in the foreground that I've decided to use as a 'stage' for a few characters I plan on adding to the mix. Next, I start to think about what colours will help describe the general mood of the image.

Shortcuts

Color Picker tool

Alt (PC & Mac)
Use this in conjunction with the Clone Stamp to quickly create a base for your painting.

2 Seeing shapes

After a few minutes of playing with the shape I can form an opinion of what my object has become. I now look for shapes and lines. I like to compare this to seeing things in clouds. You start to put the pieces together and decide what direction your painting will take from here. I've decided this messy shape will become the head of a giant robot. From here, all my efforts will be geared towards that idea.



6 Picking your elements

I've decided, at this point, that the environment will be a volcanic area, so there will be lots of orange and dark browns. The sky will be dark for this piece, to help push the brightness of the underlighting on the machines. Up to now I've kept all the elements of the painting on their own respective layers, so managing the colours and values for each aspect individually is a straightforward task.



7 Lighting considerations

Now that I've acquired the stage, I need to light it. I hint at the volcanic lava below by lighting the robots from underneath. Underlighting is a great way to express a sense of suspenseful drama. In this case, I want there to be a sense of mystery as to the purpose of these giant machines. When establishing your lighting, it's important to remember that this step will influence the composition. So think carefully about where you have value shifts.

Shortcuts

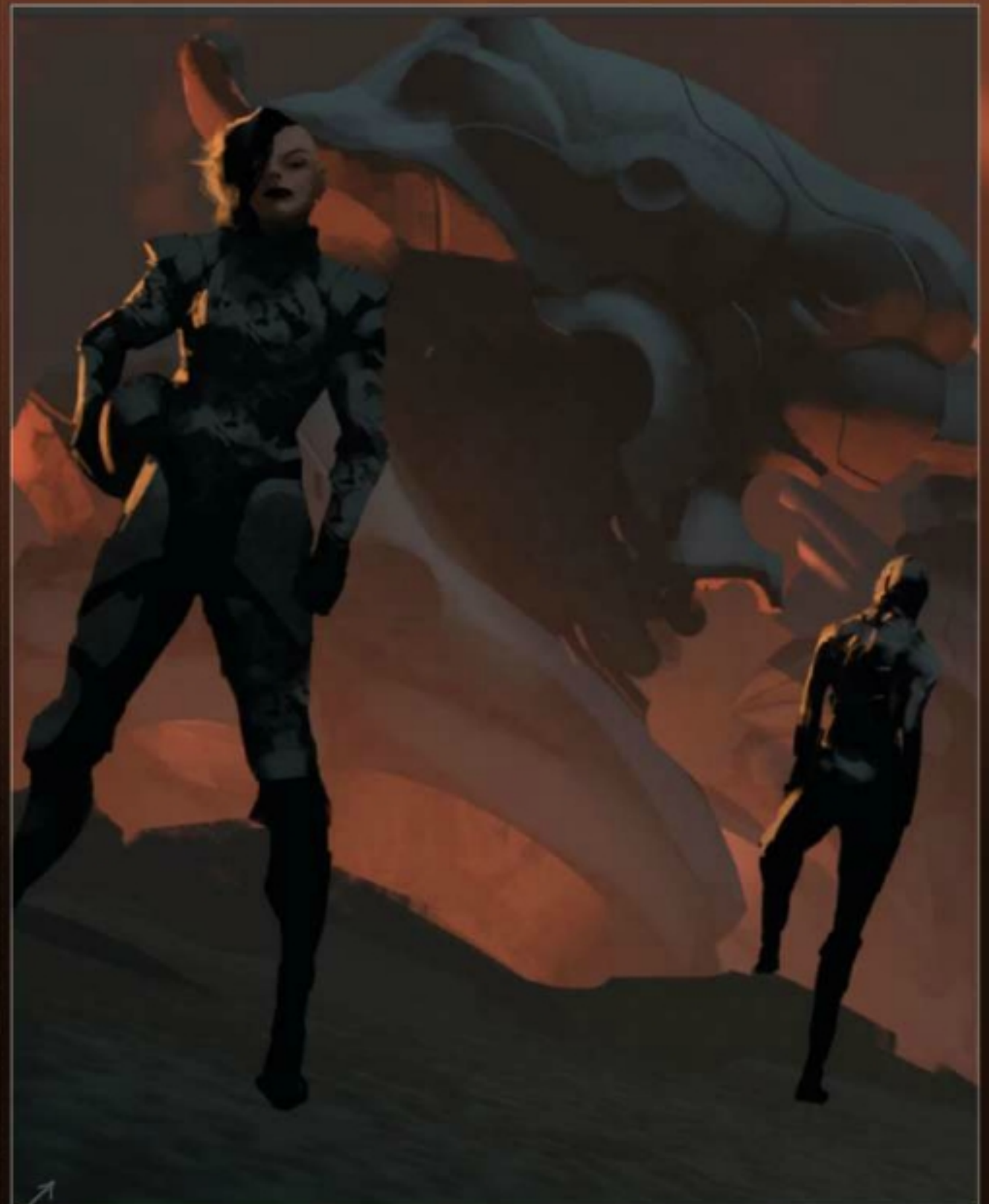
Rotate View tool

R (PC & Mac)

I use this to paint at angles that would otherwise be awkward to reach.

8 Cast your characters

It's a good idea to add a human character or two when painting a fantasy or sci-fi scene. It grounds the image and enables us to plug ourselves into that world. In this case, it's also a good indicator for scale. Now we see the true enormity of these robots. I want to give the pilot some intrigue beyond her just being just a mech pilot, so I decide to give her a cool haircut. Now she's got character!



9 Integrating your figures

Because my characters pilot these giant robots it makes sense for their suits to follow a similar design language. I don't worry too much about functionality, but I do want there to be a visual connection between the characters and their mechs. Some more clone-stamping here does the job of "sprinkling design" throughout the suits. ➡

10 Adjusting the composition

I'm unhappy with the way the composition feels like it's "falling" to the right, regardless of there being a Dutch tilt, so I decide to push the right figure up in the canvas. I also increase the size of the mechs in the background, further adding to their size and filling more space in the canvas. In addition, I bump the values to give the image more contrast between each object. This generates a more defined composition.



11 Special effects

Now comes the fun part. I begin by adding lava splashes behind the foreground layer with a Splatter brush set to a bright orange/yellow. I set this layer to the Linear Dodge (Add) blending mode and duplicate it once or twice, then merge those layers. You'll find blending modes in the drop-down menu of your Layers palette. These effects help breathe life into your painting by adding a palpable sense of movement.



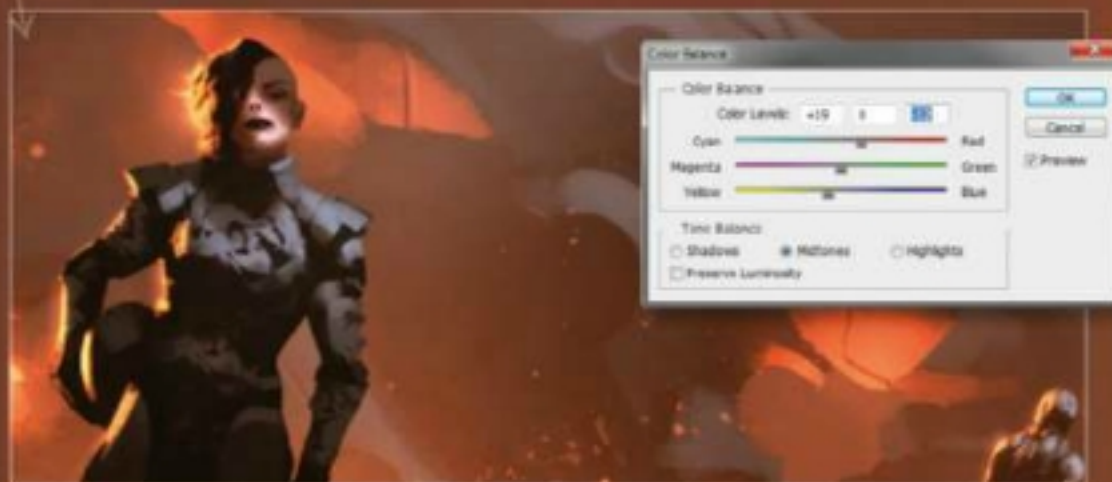
PRO SECRETS

Reading your image

You should always endeavour to keep your objects readable in a composition. This means keeping a close eye on contrasts, both subtle and obvious. A good way to remember this is "dark against light and light against dark." If you take care of your values, especially in the early stages of a painting, then you'll have a much easier time maintaining them throughout the entire painting process.

13 Colour tweaks

I'm nearing the end of my painting, so I decide to unify everything with some colour adjustments. For this step, I like to create a new layer with all the elements merged, so I select Edit > Copy Merged and then Paste. Now I have the entire painting on one layer. I can use this layer to adjust the colour balance (Image > Adjustments > Color Balance) and play with the sliders until I'm satisfied.



14 Neutralising your dark values

I duplicate the merged layer and use a Gradient Map from here. To access Gradient Maps, navigate to Image > Adjustments > Gradient Map. Gradient Maps assign a colour to any number of values in your image. I select one of the default presets, then bring the Opacity of the Gradient Map layer down to about 12 per cent and set it to Lighten. This will push the colour contrast as well as lighten the darks with colour.



15 Finishing touches

It's time to wrap up the painting. At this late stage I like to tighten any loose ends. I adjust anatomy if I feel it's a bit incorrect, clean edges where it's needed, and so on. I feel that the bottom-left of the image is a bit bare, so I decide to add some dust clouds to give more depth in that area. I also light up some more of the main pilot's torso, giving her more of a complete appearance.



12 Make it juicy

I intensify the brightness of the lava using the Color Dodge tool. I sample a mid-value from the image and with a Soft Round brush with its Transfer set to Pen Pressure, build up my highlights and hot-spots. I think about where my lights will be the brightest and start from there. I also decide to give my characters more of a spotlight. The added contrast helps make them stand out from the background and surrounding elements.



Manga Studio 5

FLATTING YOUR COMIC ART



In the first of a two-part series, **PJ Holden** takes you through the process of “flattening” a page of line art in Manga Studio

The process of digital colouring a page of comics has, over the years, been simplified into two parts: flattening and colouring. Indeed, many professional comic book colourists will hire professional flatters to prepare their pages for colouring.

Flattening a page involves taking the original black and white line art and

adding a layer of simple flat colours to the artwork that the colourist can then select using the Magic Wand tool. These can then act as individual masks for sections of the artwork for the colourist to work on. Manga Studio offers a number of great tools for helping to speed up this somewhat mechanical process and in this article I'll take you through this core digital comic skill.

Artist PROFILE

PJ Holden

COUNTRY:
Northern Ireland



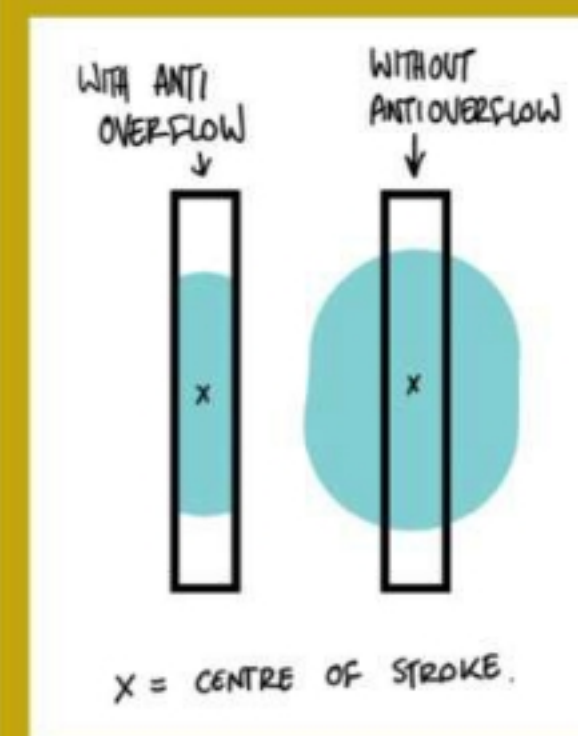
PJ has been a professional comic artist for over a decade,

drawing predominantly for 2000 AD on Judge Dredd, Rogue Trooper and more. He's also the co-creator, with Si Spurrier, of Numbercruncher.

www.pauliholden.com

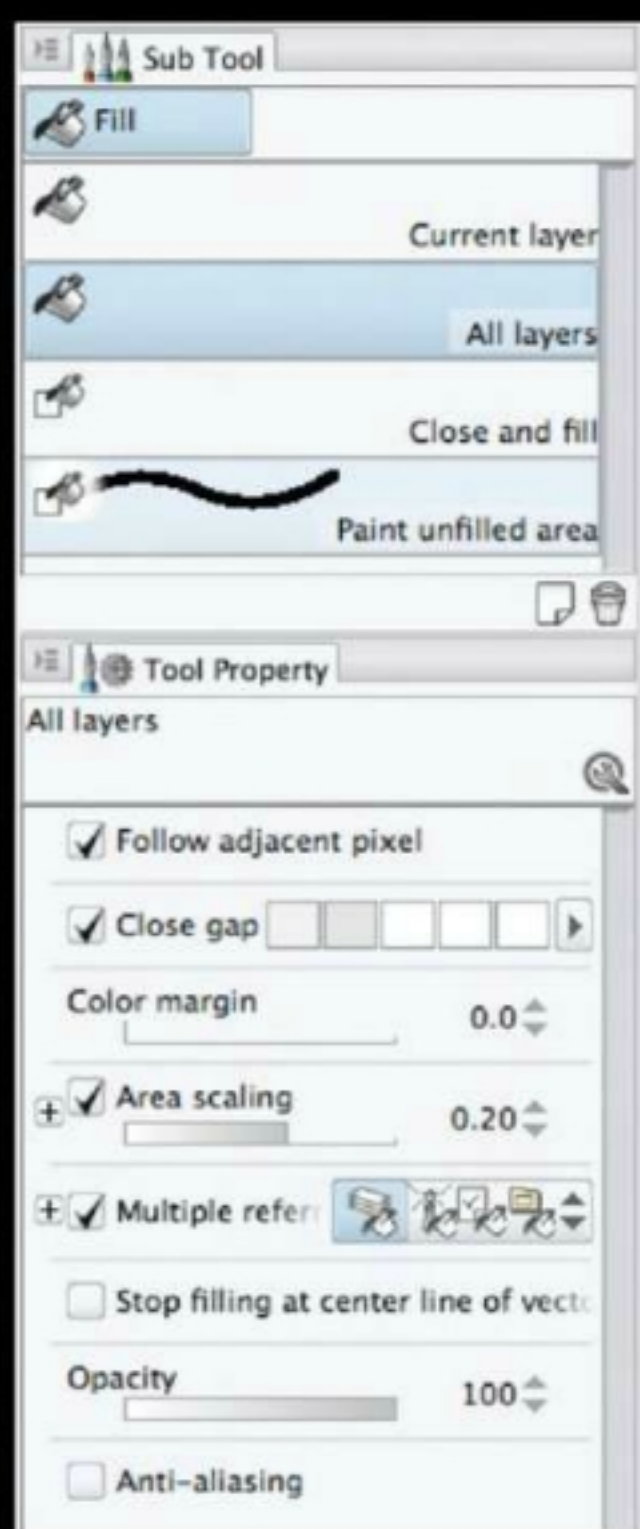
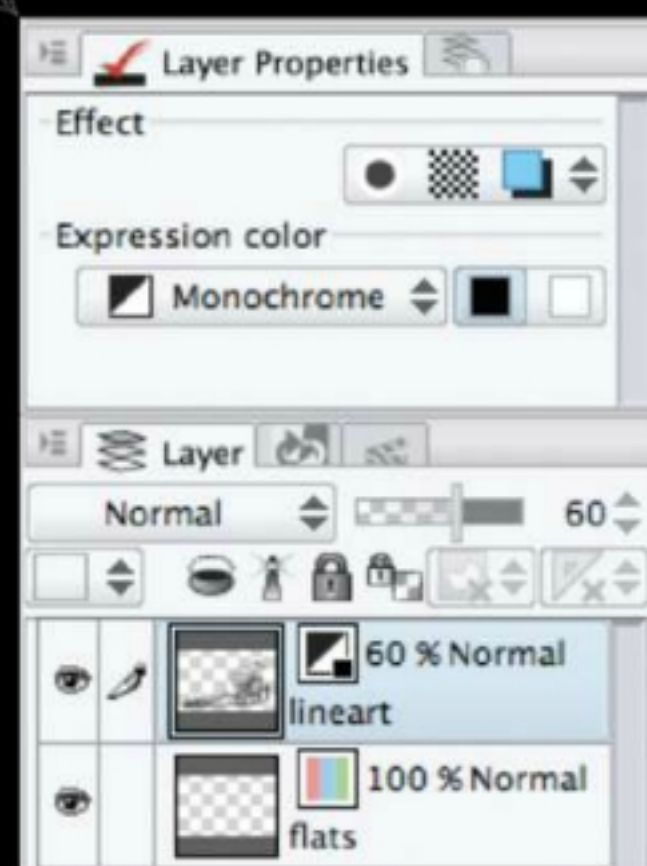
ANTI-OVERFLOW

As well as using the fill methods for flattening, there's also an Anti-Overflow option in all of Manga Studio's pen tools. This rather clever setting requires that you set the line art as a reference layer. But any time you draw colour – as long as you keep the centre of the drawing point inside the area you wish to colour – no colour will spill outside the line art, regardless of the size of the brush used. This makes it very easy to colour artwork which is a little more awkward than simple flat fills can cope with.



1 Prep the layers

Set the line art layer to Monochrome via the Layer Properties window and then convert all white elements to transparent, by pressing the Black Only button in Layer Properties. Next, drop the Opacity of this layer down to about 60 per cent, which will help ensure that the flats are under the line art rather than running against it. Finally, create a full-colour layer below the line art and select it. This is now your 'flats' layer.



2 Fill your artwork with colour

Select Fill All Layers, set Close Gap to about 30 (this is the second box on the close gap settings) and set Area Scaling to .20 or so. Now fill in any large open areas of the artwork. You should be able to quickly flat a large proportion of the page in this manner. Just make sure that adjacent objects have different colours.

Next month – part two explains how to render the colours in your line art.

3 Mind the gap

Invariably, you'll be left with lots of little gaps where the flood fill couldn't reach. So select the Fill tool's Close and Fill option. Ensure its settings are the same as Fill All Layers and draw lassos around any area of art that's not filled. Manga Studio will now fill those areas with the foreground colour.



Photoshop & Painter

SOFTEN YOUR PAINTING STYLE



Enter the bittersweet and melancholy world of **Fiona Meng**, as she explains the techniques she uses to 'softly paint' a pin-up figure

People know me for my smooth renderings and graceful figures. After reading this workshop, you'll know all my secrets of how to paint softly.

Usually it takes me two weeks to paint a pin-up image like this one. The painting itself takes about a week. I then like the art to sit for a couple of days after it's finished. During which time, I try not to look at or think about the painting, which enables me to come back to it to carry out the final alterations with fresh eyes. Ideally, I'd stretch out the alteration period for as long as a month, leaving the painting to rest for a good two weeks. At

this point, my mentality is that if I can wait this long to just have a fresh second look, I'm going to make my artwork great, regardless of how time-consuming the changes may take.

I end up doing 95 per cent of the painting in Photoshop, and five per cent in Corel Painter – in essence, the blending stage. The latter program does a wonderful job of mimicking real paintbrushes, but that's not something I'm into, so I don't use it as much. In addition, some larger brushes may take a while to render, especially toward the end of your painting process when you already have a large file.

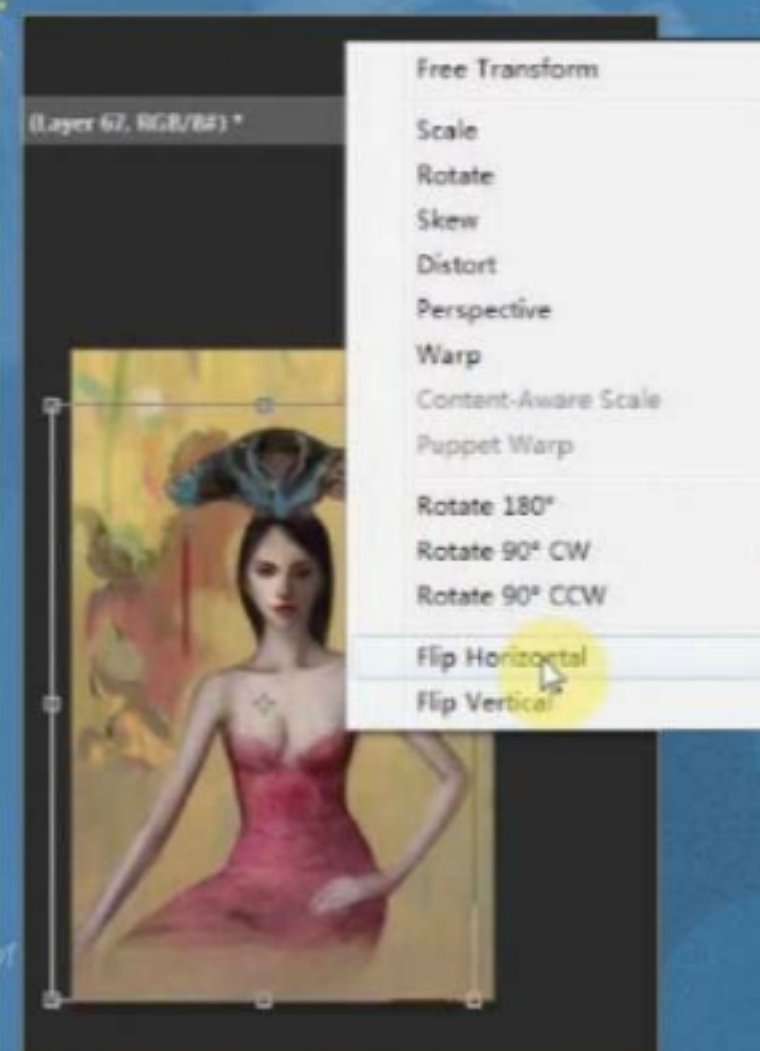
Artist PROFILE

Fiona Meng
COUNTRY: US



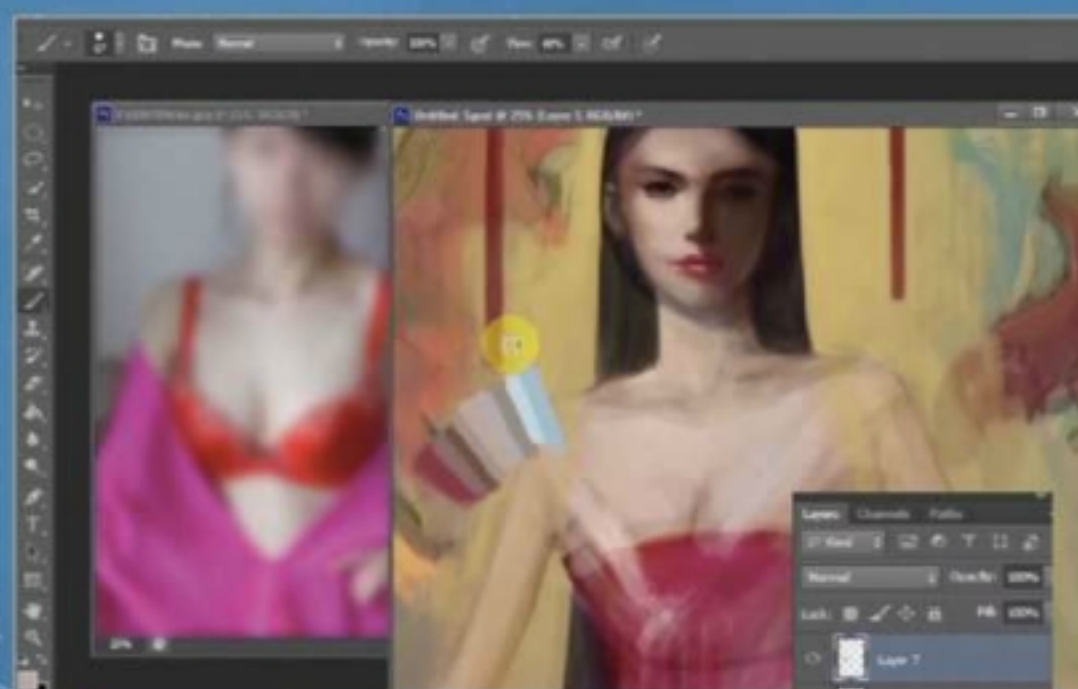
Experience of both Eastern and Western cultures meant that Fiona developed an elegant hybrid illustration style. She works as a freelance illustrator and painting instructor at the Academy of Art University in San Francisco.

www.fionameng.com



1 Colour rough

I usually start my painting process by producing a colour rough. This gives me a general idea of how certain elements will be arranged in the composition and what colour scheme will work best. Sometimes I might even set the colour rough as a background and use it like an underpainting.



2 Refine the anatomy

I separate the figure and background onto two layers, then lock the background layer while painting on top of the figure layer and gradually merge the new layers down. I set the new painting layers as Normal for lit areas and Multiply for shadows. Using a Hard Round brush that's set to 30 per cent Opacity and 60 per cent Flow provides a good amount of softness. Because the colour rough is very sketchy, lots of areas still need more definition and corrections. Before I spend a lot of time on details, it's important to get the anatomy of the figure right first.

Shortcuts

Merge layers down

Ctrl+E (PC)

Cmd+Mac

Keep your layers under control by regularly merging them.

3 Reverse the painting

I've found that after painting for a while, sometimes I start to lose the freshness to the figure. When that happens I flip the figure horizontally, and see if everything is anatomically correct, or simply looking right. This step is essential if you're painting a figure full-frontal. The pre-defined shortcut in Photoshop is Ctrl/Cmd+T>right-click>Flip Horizontal, but you could always define a hot key for this.







4 Environment line-art

I create this the same way as I do the patterns on cloth, using a very fine brush so the line-work comes out gracefully. It may seem like a lot of work, but many areas are repeated. Just be sure to change the sizes and flip certain elements when copying and pasting.

PRO SECRETS

Learn how to paint softly

I do two things to make sure that my art has a smooth rendering. In Photoshop I choose a suitable brush, then set the Opacity to 30 and Flow to 60. Then I practise the "paint 100, give it 50" method. I paint on separate layers at full Opacity, then lower the Opacity and gradually build things up with dozens of layers. Next, I bring the files into Painter and use the Dry Palette knife to smear. It has to be the Dry Palette knife - a Loaded one won't work.



5 Lay in the flats for the environment

As part of my regular painting process I use a Hard Round brush set at 100 per cent Opacity to block my flat colours in. This makes it straightforward to select and delete certain areas in the painting later on, using the Lasso tool. You could also use the Magnetic Lasso Tool for selection purposes. It's not as precise, but it's much quicker. Depends if you're in a hurry or not! The Eraser tool is ideal for cleaning up smaller, fiddly areas.



6 Hair decorations

Now it's time to work on her hair decorations. Initially, I'm not keen on tackling this because, frankly, there's so much of it. But as it turns out, it's actually not that difficult. I paint one pearl and one ruby, and copy and paste the rest. One thing to keep in mind when copying and pasting is to be careful about the light directions. All pearls must have a cohesive shadow side.



8 Paint the details

The forehead and the chin should be colder than the cheek, so I add a little green or blue to these areas. I apply darker green and purple to the neck because it's partially in the shadows. The chest area should be colder and lighter in value because it's rarely exposed in the sun. Except for the cheeks, where I use a Soft Round brush to add the blush, I use a regular Hard Round brush. I set the Opacity at 30 per cent or lower, and paint on layers upon layers, so my brush strokes aren't evident.



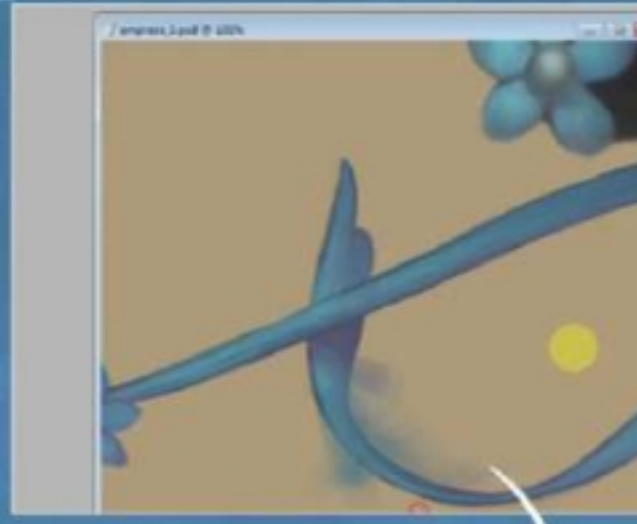
7 Create a pattern on the clothing

I draw the line-art on a new layer first, and then set the mode to Multiply. I prefer to use a very fine Hard Round brush, between 3 and 5 in size, for this stage. Then I block the colours underneath the line layer. After the design of the drawing is finished I wrap it to match the figure's curves, so it looks as though she's wearing the dress, rather than being covered by patterns that have simply been pasted on top of her.



9 Soften the edges

I bring the Photoshop file into Painter and use a Dry Palette Knife to smear the edges. Note that if your original file format is TIF, you need to convert it into a PSD in Photoshop first before you bring it to Painter. Painter doesn't recognise layers in TIF files.



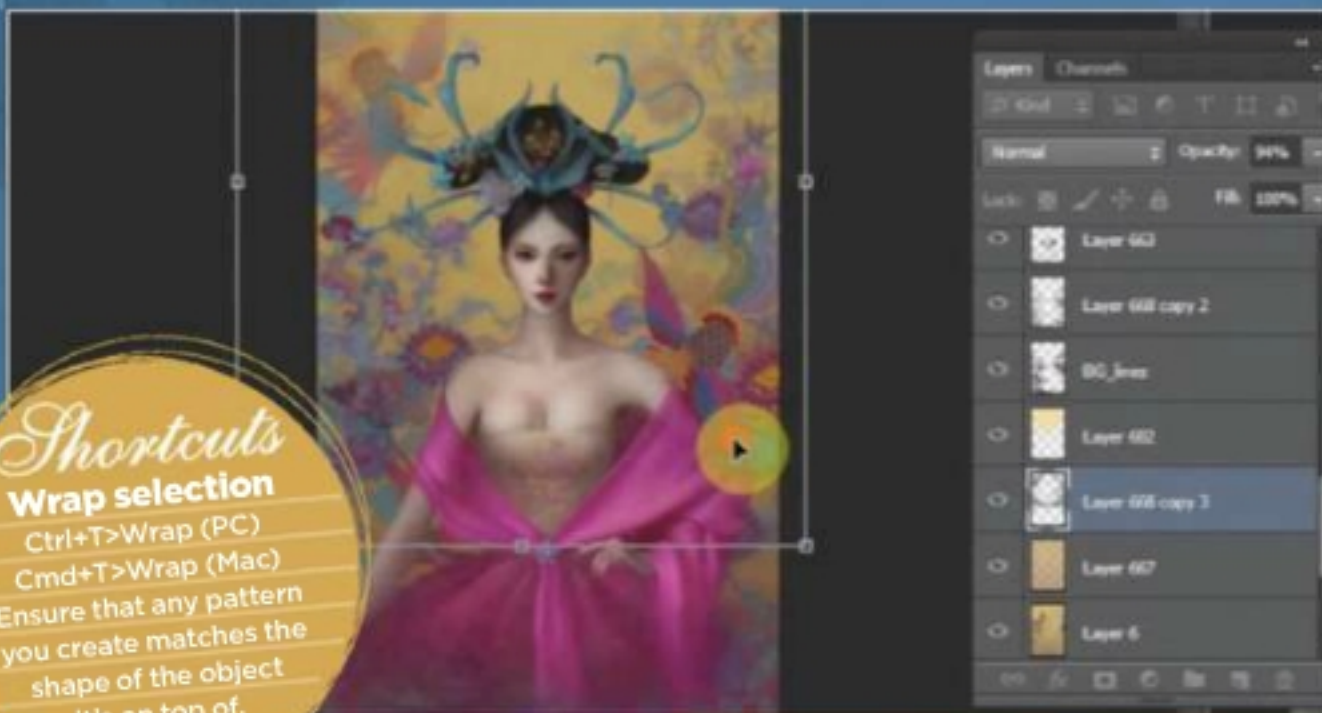
10 Edge control

After I soften everything, I bring the file back into Photoshop and refine some edges. I select the Easer and set the Opacity to 50 per cent to clean out some of the unwanted smear and give the edges a little "lost and found" feeling.



11 Background

I copy the colour layers of the phoenix and flowers, then flip the layer vertically and enlarge it. I place it at the top of the image where there's some dead space, then lower the Opacity, apply Gaussian blur and set the layer mode to Multiply. I want to fill the empty space while keeping the environment cohesive.



Shortcuts
Wrap selection
Ctrl+T>Wrap (PC)
Cmd+T>Wrap (Mac)
Ensure that any pattern
you create matches the
shape of the object
it's on top of.



12 Check for tangents

Tangents can bring unwanted attention to less-important areas in a painting, which can prove distracting to the viewer. In my painting, the phoenix's wing and the hairpin have created a tangent, so I erase the tip of the wing.



13 Finishing touches

Now I just need to do a few touch-ups to make sure the painting has good colour harmony. I check to see if I have some foreground colour in the background, and some background colour in the foreground. Voilà! Now I have a finished painting.



Photoshop DRAW A STYLISTED DYNAMIC FIGURE



Guillaume Poux catches the blaxploitation vibe of the 1970s with this study of a gun-toting female character. Can ya dig it?

Artist PROFILE

Guillaume Poux

COUNTRY: France



Guillaume, aka El Gunto, is a freelance character designer and illustrator. He works for many publishers as an illustrator and creates concept art for the entertainment industry.
www.elgunto.com

I have a little weakness. I love drawing pretty girls. In fact, I love drawing pretty, bad-ass girls. I can't help but draw this kind of character when I'm between two commissioned works and have some free time. It's how I started this image. I just wanted to draw a strong, sexy character.

A few weeks before, I'd seen a very cool blaxploitation movie starring Pam Grier, called Foxy Brown. Why not draw an homage to this character? At the beginning of the process, I didn't have the idea to make a poster. I just wanted

to draw my version of Foxy. Then my girlfriend suggested that I add a hyena to the composition. Her reasoning was that packs of hyenas are generally led by a dominant female. I found the idea really cool, and perfectly in tune with the idea of a strong woman character.

As I do for almost all my images, I searched a lot of references for the clothes and the hyena, and uncovered a lot of inspiring old blaxploitation movie posters. Thanks, internet!

I have the idea and the references – now it's time to begin my image...

Aged poster treatment

After I've finished the characters, I put them on an aged poster background, to match the 70s blaxploitation theme. I use old paper textures and a yellow/vintage white contour, and then play with the Opacity and layer modes. Usually Overlay mode works well.



How I create...

A FOXY FEMALE



1 Character sketch

I start with a very quick and rough sketch. For this one, it's a digital sketch. Generally, I prefer to use a pencil and paper which I then scan, but I didn't have any paper to hand. When I draw my sketch, I have a very loose line and I often let my hand command the drawing. The most important thing is to get an interesting shape, even if the character's posture is relatively straight.



2 Strong shapes

For the colour version of the painting, I begin with the general shapes of the characters. I use the Pen Tool and make the shapes. Afterwards, I block this shape and paint the different elements, such as the jacket and boots. I choose very simple colours: black, red and white. The image must catch the eye of the viewer and have strong contrast.



3 Light and shadows

At this point the colours are almost finished. The important elements of the composition, such as the hair, fur and face, and the thin contour line on some areas, are also in place. Each element sits on its own layer. It's at this point that I notice some things need to be improved and reworked. I'm going to add some lights and some shadows to increase the contrast.

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES:
CHRIS WAHL

I use these special brushes made by Chris Wahl for the hair, fur and the aged feel of the poster texture.

DON'T LIGHT HER FIRE!



The silhouette

Keep it simple! A character's silhouette must be easily readable. When you paint a cartoon-like figure, you have to push the shapes and have an asymmetrical outline, which will give your drawing added dynamism. So place a straight line against a curve, a fat shape against a thin one, and so on.

Painting leather

I want to depict a shiny material for the character's boots, such as leather or latex. My technique is very simple. After all, you don't have to be ultra-realistic in cartoons – you just have to suggest shininess. I place a very white spotlight on one side and slightly reflect it on the other side. Simple!

Wild hair

For this important part of the character, I use a custom brush from Chris Wahl. Find them at <http://ifxm.ag/c-wahl>. I love the rough and wild effect it gives to the hair. It contrasts nicely with other areas of the drawing, which are smoother and feature flat colours.

A GUNT PRODUCTION

LADY

DYNAMITE

ISAAC HAYES' SOUNDTRACK ALBUM AVAILABLE ON STAX RECORDS

A UNIVERSAL PICTURE – TECHNICOLOR

R

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Photoshop BRUSH SKILLS IN PHOTOSHOP



Geoffrey Ernault showcases his method of generating an image from random brush strokes in a short time

Artist PROFILE

Geoffrey Ernault

COUNTRY: France



Geoffrey has been painting since 2008, and is mostly self-taught.

He began freelancing on short movies, video games, book covers and much more.

<http://itxm.ag/gearnault>

For me, the best part in doing concept art is finding new ideas and solving design problems. I love painting anything that deals with sci-fi and fantasy, and more generally anything that gets my creative juices going. I use mostly Photoshop, but also enjoy mixing other software into my workflow, such as UDK, 3ds Max or ZBrush.

When I started discovering Photoshop, I often ended up in front of a blank white canvas and didn't know what to paint. And when I did, I would have trouble finding an interesting idea, and this could become frustrating and intimidating. Five years later, I'm now using a supercool method that enables me to always have something I can work on and develop.

This method is useful when you have time to paint, but either have nothing specific to work on or just can't come up with ideas. It also trains your brain to recognise shapes and create compositions quickly, which is also useful.

Bear in mind that some of the methods shown here don't always work on detailed images. For instance, when I work on more final images, my layers are much more organised, and I spend a lot more time on finding the right composition at the start of the process.

In addition, even though it's great to be able to do an image in under a couple of hours, it doesn't always help you develop your core skills. To be able to do this well, you need first to know how to do things the slow way. This is why mastering the fundamentals is essential! ➔



DOWNLOAD RESOURCES WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP
CUSTOM BRUSHES

I use as many brushes as I can, and never rely on a single brushpack. Most of the time, I use a mix of brushes by Levi Peterffy, Maciej Kuciara, Jaime Jones, Sergey Kolesov, Luke Mancini and Shaddy Safadi. The best way to learn about brushwork is to change your brushes as often as possible, and try to copy pictures by using any kinds of brushes. For instance, try painting clouds using brushes that you would use to create rocks!



1 Generating chaos

The first thing to do, of course, is generate chaos! Simply start off with a white canvas, and slap on a good amount of brush strokes. Usually, I use a simple brush with a bit of texture, but mostly Opacity controlled by pen pressure. You don't even have to watch the canvas! Just paint some brush strokes, and vary the pressure that you apply with the stylus.



2 Adding a ground plane

When I've got a couple of shapes and brush strokes on the screen, I select the Lasso tool and take a random part of the image, which I deform to have a texture set in the correct perspective. This will help me see the ground plane in the image, enabling me to work around it. This also helps when setting the camera height, depending on how you place it.



3 Reading shapes and finding the idea

After a while – 30 minutes, an hour, or more if I have the time and haven't found anything yet – I usually start seeing shapes that remind me of something. "Hey, this looks like an alien structure!" is what I think when I see this weird shape on the left. When you start getting the idea, start refining it and working a bit more in the direction of the idea you have. If you see a forest, for example, start adding some trees!

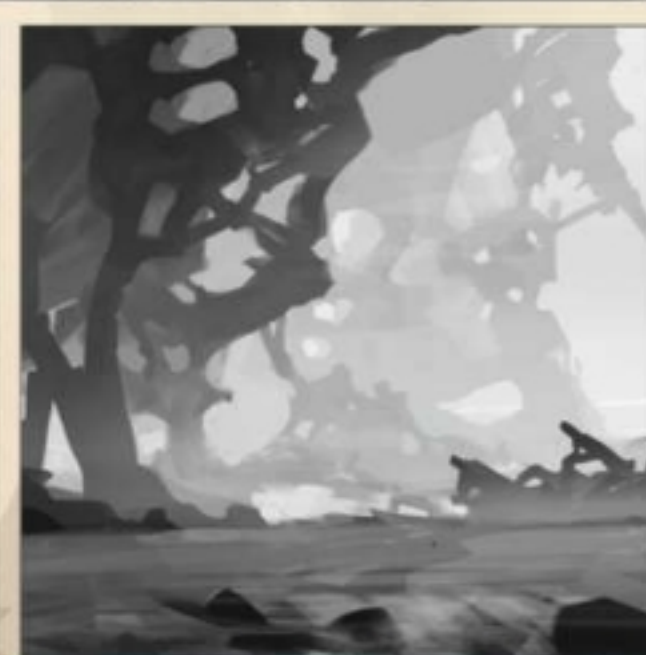


4 Adding lighting, refining shapes

I like to add light early on. To do so, I use the Dodge tool with a Soft brush. Just paint with it where you want to add light, and Alt-click to add shadows. I usually leave the tool set to Midtones and keep Protect Tones checked. Try not to increase the Exposure too much, or you might burn your image. I usually use this trick early, as the tool can burn an image easily.

5 Getting more chaotic details

To create more details easily, simply copy parts of your image with the Lasso tool, and turn them around and scale them to generate new shapes. Compare this step with step three. See that new structure on the left? It comes straight from the other one right next to it! I also like to copy the whole image and stretch it a lot, then set the copy layer to Multiply or Screen mode to add a bit of detail to those open spaces.



6 Checking the composition

At this stage, I want to be sure that the composition is good before jumping into colours. Just zoom out, look at the whole image and see if it works. Is it dynamic? Do you have interesting shapes? Is there a focal point? Is the perspective right? Solving these questions early on saves a lot of time later.

Shortcuts
Brush size
[and] (PC & Mac)
Tap the left and right square bracket keys to change the brush size quickly while still working.



7 Adding colours

This is the fun part! Usually, when I start thinking I have something solid I can work with, I drop in a picture or an old painting of mine to get some colours and textures. You don't need anything that looks like your subject – the goal here is to get some noise going, and produce some happy accidents. I usually set the image on top to Multiply, Overlay or Soft Light mode, but be sure to check all the layer modes – you could get some nice surprises and results. After this, I just sample colours from the result, because the colours mix with the values.

PRO SECRETS

Flip it!

Be sure to flip your image horizontally anytime you can! This will refresh your view of the image and allow for clever image correction. It's also useful for seeing new shapes, and of course getting ideas!



8 Adding light

Now that I'm happy with the colour palette, I just sample from it and start repainting everything little by little. The key here is to adapt it so that the values aren't destroyed. At the same time, I start adding light. I simply define the area I want the light to come from, pick the value that's there, and add more brightness and a bit of saturation to it. You can also do this by sampling the colour, then painting it on a layer set to Screen, Lighten or Color Dodge. Again, depending on the situation, the Dodge tool is also useful.

9 Sculpting shapes with light

Now that I have my light source, I keep it in mind for the rest of the image. The key trick here is to render the image as if you were a computer: visualise the light source in your head in 3D, and figure out where it hits. Of course, you can cheat a bit to add some highlights here and there, even if it's not always 100 per cent realistic. Here, I add some highlights on the structure in the background to define the structure, and also at the bottom left so that the little spikes will stand out more. Be sure to add volume to objects by keeping their shape in mind and thinking how light hits them. In addition, try limiting the main lit area to a specified area of interest.



Shortcuts Colour palette

A (PC & Mac)

I've set this to A, so I can pick a colour quickly. Any key on the left will do, if you use the brush in your right hand.

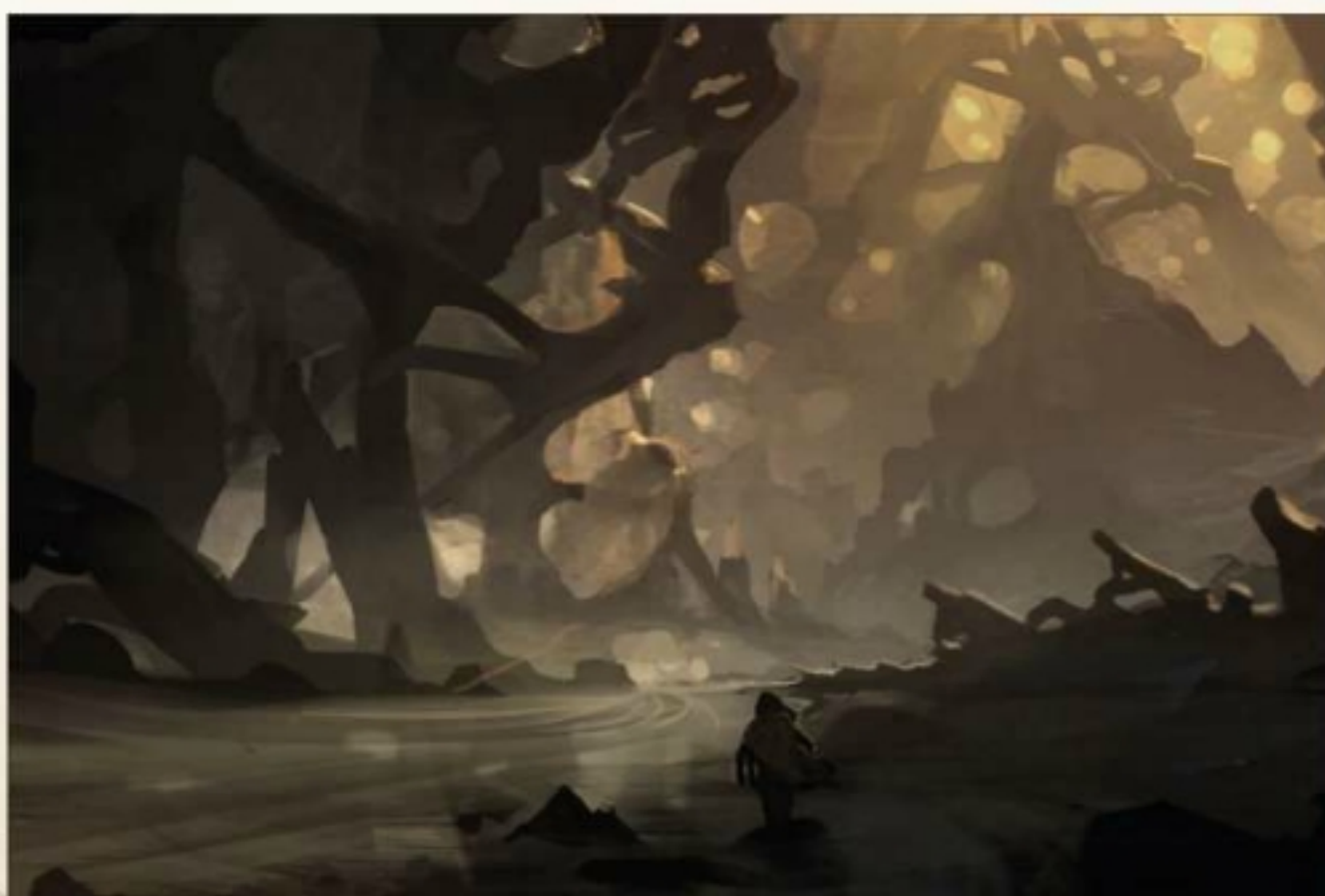
10 Adding lighter areas to the painting

Although I love using Layer blend modes to add light, I also like using Curves. Using a Curves adjustment layer, I can level everything up and brighten or overexpose the whole image. Now, I select the Curves layer's mask, and Fill it with black so that the adjustment is hidden. Then I simply use a Soft brush to paint on the mask with white in the areas where I want to have some spots of light or light beams in the image.

11 Detailing the structures and scale

In a landscape with weird shapes and structures, you want to be sure that the scale reads right. For this, I just add a humanoid character, or a design that can be seen in everyday life: something like a tree, a lamp post or a car will do the trick. The eye then sees the size of this object, and can compare it with the rest of the environment. I also start refining the shapes so that they have a bit more flow and connection with each other. At this stage, I add some light circles in the background, to indicate that there's a light source from behind there. I use a Color Dodge layer for this.





12 Producing a warmer image

I try to always stay close to the mood I want to go for in my image, linked to the idea. Here, I think it would be nice to have a sort of warm desert planet. For this, I use a Color adjustment layer, and add more red and green to the shadows. I do the same for the midtones. I also use a Hard Light layer, on low Opacity, with a warm orange. This layer is then erased to leave just the top of the image more orange than the rest.

13 Playing around with light beams

You may have noticed by now that I love playing with light. Something else that I use to define light easily and play with focal points is adding light beams. This also enables you to add highlights on shapes to give them more volume. In this example, I add highlights on the structure at the top, and also create a bit more visual interest to the ground on the right. It also places the focus back on the structure on the left, rather than on the one in the background.



14 Small details and particles

Little bits of visual interest enable me to give the impression that the whole image is detailed. Remember, it's a speed painting, and you want to give the impression of a final image. Here, I simply created small vegetation elements to add detail to structures and the ground, and dust particles to give the light beam extra definition.

15 Hide it in the mist!

A good trick to save time is to introduce areas of smoke or mist. You can do this simply by using a brush with scattering on it (press F5>Scattering), using a low Opacity and Flow, and paint on a Screen layer. This technique can also be used to add depth and haze.



PRO SECRETS

Working on the big picture

Always work at a high resolution, and upload or share your image at a smaller size. This will force the viewer to focus on the overall image, and not details. This is also why you want to always work zoomed out. An image that works zoomed out will still work when you zoom in. The opposite isn't true.



16 Go wide

When I'm near the end of the image, I apply a Wide Angle filter (Filter>Adaptive Wide Angle). Just play with the settings and you'll see how it transforms your image by stretching the sides, which creates a sort of perspective effect that adds depth.



17 Final filters and effects

Now all you have to do is add that little crisp, photorealistic effect. To do this, I use Smart Sharpen (Filter>Sharpen>Smart Sharpen). On top of this, I add a noise layer to blend everything together: I simply go to Filter>Noise>Add Noise, and when the noise is in place, set the layer mode to Soft Light at around 10 per cent Opacity. I also stretch the image horizontally slightly, to produce something a bit more dynamic. Be careful, though – just like the Adaptive Wide Angle filter, this might end up cropping part of your image!

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Rising Star Wylie Beckert shares her
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Find out next issue...



Brian Froud

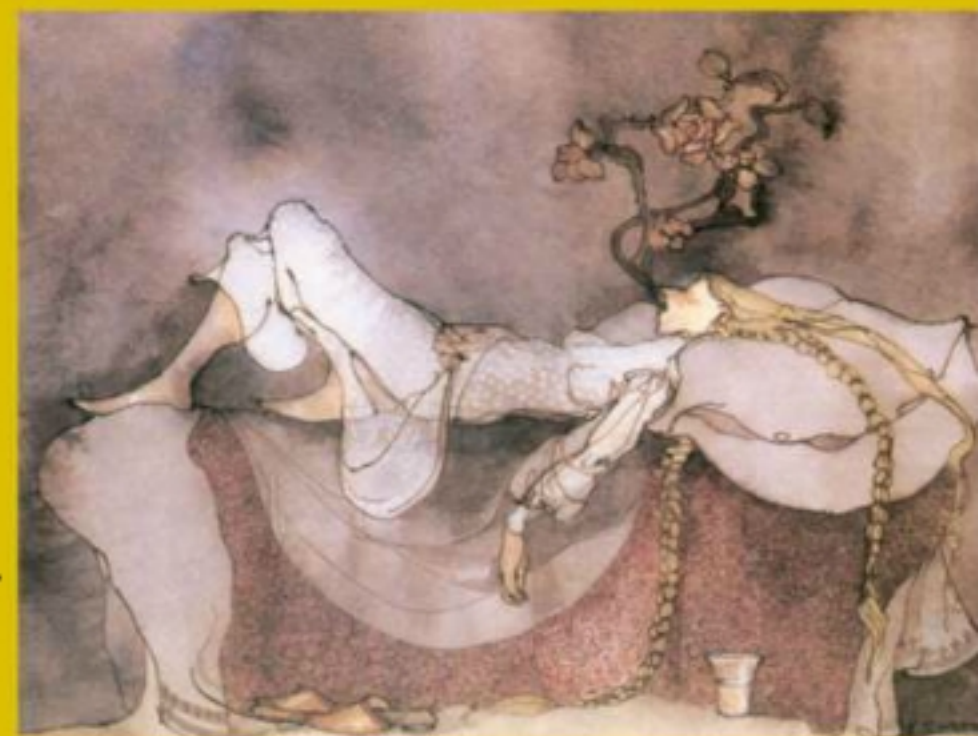
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*Photoshop*

INJECT SOME HUMOUR INTO A FANTASY SCENE



Therese Larsson shows you how to amuse the viewer in this storybook illustration from a classic children's fairytale



Artist PROFILE

Therese Larsson

COUNTRY: Sweden



Therese is a freelance illustrator based in the Swedish

capital Stockholm. She has worked with clients such as Google, Disney, Adidas and Coca-Cola to name but a few. She says her specialities are animals and character design. <http://ifxm.ag/tlarsson>

Over the course of this workshop I'll demonstrate the techniques I use to create digital storybook art from scratch. I prefer to have a more traditional approach to my art, using underpainting techniques and painting on as few layers as possible, and sculpting light and shape using some of my favourite brushes that I've acquired over the years.

I like to use brushes that emulate real-life media, such as oil colours or chalky pastels. I believe that textured brushes

add a lot of life to a composition, and that there's beauty in an object that doesn't look overly polished and smooth.

Textures can also make an illustration feel more detailed than it really is, saving the artist a lot of time.

I plan to depict a scene from the well-known children's story of Little Red Riding Hood, but with a funny twist to it. Dog owners will recognise the way canines can become oblivious to their surroundings and be completely mesmerised by food, and it's always good

to have people be able to connect to the art by showing scenes which are funny in an everyday way.

People love to feel and think when they look at art, so try to tell stories with your illustrations. It's more important to have a great idea presented in a fairly straightforward manner, than produce a more advanced painting that has no story to it. So before you start, give yourself time to think. What's your theme? Can you add a twist to it? How do you make people connect to your art?



1 Sketchy beginnings

I start off by creating a new document. I like to work big: around 8,000-10,000 pixels wide or high, depending on the format, and always at 300DPI. All sketching is done on a new layer over the background layer, so that I can easily paint underneath it.



2 Start the underpainting

I choose the background layer and fill it entirely with a rather neutral forest green, which will serve as an underpainting. On top of that, I pick a Soft brush, increase its size and start blocking in different tones of brown, green and blue. I like to keep a traditional approach for my digital art, so I try to always go from big to small, so that the finest details are saved for last. Once I've blocked in the main colours, I change brush to a Chalky one and start to flesh out the environment, sculpting out the general shapes of the backdrop. It's still too early to start detailing.



3 Refine the light

Once I feel that I have a good base painting I start to refine the light. When creating light I usually switch between three layer styles, depending on how harsh I want the light effects to be. Those layer styles are Overlay, Soft Light and Hard Light. I do a lot of trial and error, letting my mind tell me when something looks off or not. Reducing the Opacity of the lighting layers works, too. When lighting the scene, I go for two separate layers: the first one is set to Overlay and the other is set to Hard Light. When working with light, I always use a big, Soft brush. Only for direct light would you want to use a Hard-edged brush.



PRO SECRETS

Assess your image's values

A good contrast of value in an illustration is very important. To see how well your art reads to the viewer, go to Layer > New Adjustment Layer > Black & White. If your illustration looks good in black and white, the values are well balanced and the art will work in colour as well.

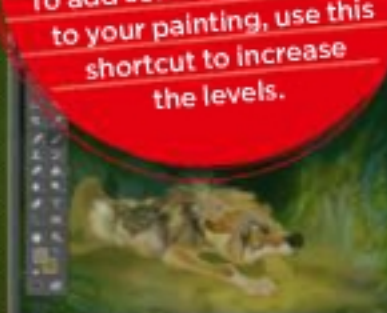
Shortcuts

Adding contrast

Ctrl+L (PC)

Cmd+L (Mac)

To add some extra contrast to your painting, use this shortcut to increase the levels.



5 Blocking in light

When it's time to block in the light for the wolf, I add a new layer that I link to the base wolf layer by pressing Alt and clicking in between the two. I set it to Soft Light and begin working in the basic light. I suggest trying Overlay, Soft Light and Hard Light, and seeing which one works best. Think about where the light is coming from, work in more yellow light where the sun will be hitting, and some green bounce light on the surfaces where direct sunlight doesn't hit, but which is affected by the surrounding green light of the forest. Once I'm happy with how the image is developing, I merge some of my layers by going to Layer > Merge Layers or by pressing Ctrl+E. For personal art, I try to have as few layers as possible; my final art is almost always one single layer. But for professional work, it's better to keep a couple of layers in case the client wants to change certain elements.





6 Adding details

Once the basic light has been painted in, I start to work more on details. I paint in big fur clumps using a rather unrefined Chalky brush and then switching to something more smooth and tight for painting individual hairs. If you have a solid base to work from with correct light and blocked-in shapes, you're able to spend less time on details yet still achieve believable results. Paint as if you were brushing an animal using a hair brush, following the direction of the hairs. Study photos and real life. Fur flows in different directions depending on where you are on the body, so pay attention!



7 Changing brushes

I leave the wolf temporarily and start to block in Little Red Riding Hood. I use a softer brush for the character. Pick your brushes according to what you're going to paint: think about what the surface would feel like? Is it bumpy and gritty, or soft and smooth? When I paint, I note the colours and light of the environment. For example, her hand is shaded from the sun as she presses the wolf's nose. So it's not lit by yellow light from the sun, but by green light that has bounced from the surroundings.

PRO SECRETS

Set up two windows

To get a better overview of the whole picture when you are down in detail mode, create a new window by going to Window>Arrange>New window for filename.psd. This means you don't have to zoom out to see how the details affect the art from a distance. It's very easy to get lost in detailing and lose sight of the bigger picture.



WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES: BRUSH_3

This is my favourite brush. It has a nice texture and feels like working with traditional media. It can be used for both early, rough underpainting as well as for details.

BRUSH_4

This is a good chalk brush for blocking in and working with during the underpainting stage.

8 Thinking in 3D

Little Red Riding Hood is further fleshed out and her picnic basket, bottle of milk and apple is also painted in. Try to think in 3D when you paint. What surface areas will receive more light? How is light broken up when filtered through glass? How does an apple shine? Study real life, and try to learn the principles behind the effects. This will enable you to apply them to other scenarios.



9 Merging layers

Now that all the separate elements have been placed on the painting it's time to merge all my layers and start on the detailing process and applying a final lighting scheme. The reason why I prefer to work using as few layers as possible is to that I can unify the whole piece into a scene where the elements feel as though they are one. I use the Color Picker tool a lot during this stage, which also helps to unify the art.



10 Colour adjustments

Little Red Riding Hood is looking slightly too yellow, so I add a new Color layer. Then I pick a red tone and start to paint on her skin to remove some of that yellow. I still want to keep some of it, so I reduce the Opacity, which ensures I still keep some of that glow. Let your eyes be the judge: what looks good? If you feel as though you've stared at a painting for too long, flip it by going to Image>Image rotation>Flip Canvas Horizontal. That way you'll reboot your brain and can spot mistakes more easily.

11 Bringing it to life

Now I just basically keep detailing and drawing all the little bits that make the art come alive. Stray hairs pointing in different directions, whiskers, mushrooms growing on the mossy rocks... little details here and there. Small points of secondary interest are good too, such as a little owl and a squirrel that help keeps the viewer interested and leads them around the composition. This phase is really the last step - I'm tying everything together into one finished illustration.



Shortcuts

Merge layers

Cmd+E (Mac)

Ctrl+E (PC)

Select the layers you want to merge and quickly make them into one.

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FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX Reviews



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

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



SOFTWARE

92 Procreate 2

With a new engine, incredible features and a whole world of brush customisation options, the world's best iPad art app has just got better.

BOOKS

94 The Art of Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs 2

Go behind the scenes on the joyous animation feature.

95 Digital Painting Techniques: Volume 5

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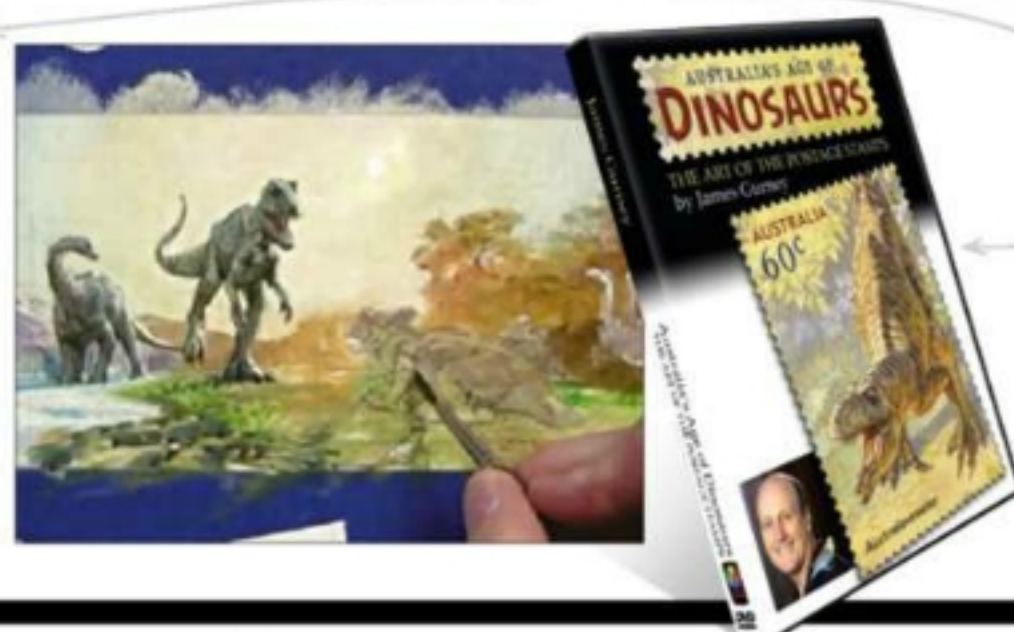
95 The Art of Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag

This book of concept art is a real chest of secret treasures.

TRAINING

97 Australia's Age of Dinosaurs

James Gurney offers a brief but nevertheless rewarding look into a demanding natural history project.



RATINGS EXPLAINED ★★★★★ Magnificent ★★★★★ Good ★★★★★ Ordinary ★★★★★ Poor ★★★★★ Atrocious

Matt Hubel's redesign of Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles' Shredder began in Procreate, before being taken into Photoshop for a lick of visual gloss.



Procreate 2 iPAD ONLY

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Price \$5.99/£3.99 **Company** Savage Interactive **Web** www.procreate.si **Contact** feedback@savage.si



Pablo Uchida used Procreate's curves feature in his curvy creation Prospace.



When the iPad was released some three-and-a-bit years ago it changed everything. Software companies saw their chance to get in bed with the new shiny techslate. Autodesk's SketchBook Pro proved to be a decent piece of software for quick drawings, Adobe created casual vector-based drawing with Ideas, and Ambient Design translated ArtRage from the desktop to the tablet.

Yet one piece of software fared better than all of them: Procreate. Created by Savage Interactive, it was written exclusively for the iPad so the Aussie developer could concentrate on making a great art program without the faff of Android cross-compatibility or rescaling it to fit on an iPhone. The

app was well-received and bagged an Apple Design Award for its natty integration of hardware and software.

Procreate 2, then, has a certain amount of prestige to live up to – and we're pleased to say it's improved on perfection. The most immediately noticeable change is to the aesthetic, which is brought in line with Apple's iOS7 translucent update.

Fire up a blank canvas and you'll see the option for 4K, another new feature. This size is becoming more prevalent in the world of digital art, but it's rarely used as a preset on tablet apps because of the size of the files involved. Thankfully, Procreate utilises the 64-bit power of the latest generation of iPads (Air and iPad Mini with Retina) to handle epic compositions.



Patipat Asavasena's art was created in Procreate, despite having a polished Photoshop look.



You're given plenty of options to achieve the perfect brush stroke in Procreate.

Adjustment tools such as Curves and Color Balance mean you don't necessarily have to export your work into another art program to finish it off.

“Brushes are Procreate's forte and even these have been made a lot more granular”

The software also taps into the powerful GPU to provide some awesome effects that you'd usually only find in high-end desktop software. Options for Gaussian Blur, Sharpen, Noise, Color Balance and Curves are all available to give your images a bit more (or less) of an edge, and once applied they can be adjusted instantaneously by swiping your finger across the screen.

Brushes are Procreate's forte and even these have been made a lot more granular. The level of customisation is incredible: each brush has six menu pages so you can adjust shape, grain and dynamics. We found it best to simply fiddle with the sliders, but there's a comprehensive information screen available for each. That Procreate has a vibrant Photoshop-esque brush sharing community says it all.

The only disadvantage to all these new features is that it lags a little on our first-generation iPad Mini. It's still smooth and sharp, but zooming and moving a 4K file around results in noticeable pauses and choppiness. But it's such a refined and gratifying app that it's quite possibly the best reason in the world to upgrade to a new iPad.

DETAILS

Features

- iOS 7 redesign
- 64-bit optimisation for iPad Air and iPad Mini with Retina Display
- GPU-accelerated filters and adjustments
- Gaussian Blur
- Sharpen
- Noise
- Hue, Saturation & Brightness
- Color Balance (Highlights, Midtones and Shadows)
- Curves (Gamma, Red, Green and Blue)
- Includes latest SDKs for all styluses

System Requirements

iPad: iOS 7 or later

Rating



ARTIST INTERVIEW

MATT HUBEL

Matt explains why Procreate is the only iPad art app for him

What do you like about the new version of Procreate?

I think that the brush creation engine is amazing. It's incredibly simple to tweak settings on existing brushes to achieve the exact feel that you want, and creating a brush from scratch couldn't be simpler or more flexible. If you pair that with one of the many pressure-sensitive styli available, then you have a formidable drawing app.

And what's your favourite improvements in Procreate 2?

It might seem like a small addition, but adding the Curves, Color Balance and Hue and Saturation tools is a huge thing for me. Colour correction is an integral part of my work flow and it's great to see it integrated so beautifully.

Do you use Procreate alone, or do you paint with it alongside other software?

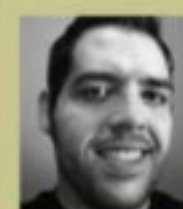
I tend to use Procreate on a more casual level. I like it for painting thumbnails and sketching ideas while I'm on the go. I'll then take those sketches and finish them out in Photoshop or Painter. I still like having a workstation to sit at while I create.

Is there anything you'd like to see added to Procreate?

I would love to see Procreate have a feature similar to the Gradient Map adjustment layer in Photoshop. I use that all the time for quickly colouring a greyscale sketch.

How do you think Procreate compares to the other iPad art apps on the market?

When compared to other apps, there's no competition. Procreate is ridiculously affordable, it offers the largest canvas size; the best, easiest-to-navigate user experience and user interface design, and the best brushes by a mile. I've purchased all of the other art apps out there and they just collect digital dust.



Matt paints in 2D and 3D, and is currently working as an illustrator in the video games industry.

www.matthubel.com



The Art of Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs 2

TASTY CONCEPTS Go behind the scenes on the animation feature where 'foodimals' threaten to destroy civilisation

Author Tracey Miller-Zarneke **Publisher** Titan Books **Price** £30 **Web** www.titanbooks.com **Available** Now

The original *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs* was a riot. Huge fun. And it looked brilliant, too. Sublime character design, quirky personalities played out through exquisite detail and a great overall look. The sequel looks just as fun, with the lead character Flint trying to stop his invention – The FLDSMDFR – creating 'foodimals' (animal and food hybrids) that threaten to destroy the world. Anyhow, there'll be nothing to spoil your appetite for the film here. What we will share with you is the beauty of this book.

The tome is split into two main chapters: character design and production design. In the first chapter we're given an introduction to the main characters in the movie – starting of



The visual development team consciously chose whimsy over physics to try and capture a sense of dreamlike adventure.



course, with Flint. This gives the reader some interesting background to the design decisions behind them, and is backed up with gorgeous renders, and a mixture of storyboards and invention designs (in Flint's case, anyhow).

There's some excellent work by Andre Medina, with his – deep breath – Forkenknifenspooniator piece being a top pick. Steve (Flint's pet monkey) and Earl Devereaux (voiced by Mr T no less) are character designs to look out for. We also adore the posters of Chester, who's the CEO of Live Corp.

This chapter concludes by presenting some hilarious early sketches of Barb – the orangutan with a human brain. The early drawings of Live Corp employees are a masterclass in generating many characters with different yet similar looks.

When you begin flicking through the production design chapter you find some real gems. Our favourites by far are the ingenious designs for Watermelophant, Shrimpanzees and Hippototamus – the latter having a blob of melted butter in its mouth, in a sketch by Craig Kellman. Amazing. Barry the strawberry is also pretty cool. Of course though, in the production design chapter you'll also find delicious drawings of sumptuous



To jalapeño and back: Flint's lab exterior colour key by artist and animator Seonna Hong.

worlds. From Pickle Village to Breakfast Bog, early and worked-up environmental sketches give you a real taste for the movie. Dynamic colour keys by Brandon Jeffords are particularly interesting.

In the foreword, Sony Pictures Digital Production president talks of the "undeniable charm, silly humour and eye-popping imagery" of the films and the book captures that perfectly. As if we haven't stuffed enough food puns into this review, go buy this book if you're a fan of production art. It'll certainly satisfy your appetite for quite a while. Indeed, it's absolutely delicious.

RATING

Digital Painting Techniques: Volume 5

DIGITAL SKILLS Discover insider digital techniques from some top artists in this latest volume of 3D Total's training books

Author Various **Publisher** 3D Total **Price** £30 **Web** www.3dtotal.com **Available** Now

Digital Painting Techniques hits Volume 5 and offers more of the same step-by-step tutorials from artists around the world on different subjects. There's something to be said for the simplicity of the design – the steps are easy to follow. However, the layout can feel slightly bland in places, even with a few paint-splattered tips boxes.

The book itself is divided neatly into four chapters: subjects, styles, techniques and the obligatory gallery.



Ivan Smirnov, who painted this cartoon environment, likes adding colour early on.



Subjects cover weapon design, creatures from mythology, character portrayal and battle scenes. Workshops from Simon Kopp and Michal Lisowski run you through painting an alien-world scene and a street riot. These give nice start-to-finish insight into the artists' processes.

It's the techniques chapter where the book becomes more interesting. Workshops on connecting using simple

brushes give a good introduction to roughing out form, and the aging materials section has some good advice on making your buildings and vehicles look older and worn.

For £30 DPT Volume 5 is decent value and if you're keen to discover techniques from brilliant artists it's worth a flick before you commit.

RATING

The Art of Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag

ME 'ARTY For all pirate and art lovers – not just video game addicts – this book of concept art is a real chest of secret treasures

Author Paul Davies **Publisher** Titan Books **Price** £30 **Web** www.titanbooks.com **Available** Now

Aaargh! 'Tis a fine book. Sorry, we were just getting into character there after flicking through the feisty, fiery pages of this cutlass-sporting tome. Of course, it's a behind-the-scenes look at the artwork of the latest in the Assassin's Creed series, but the truth is, if you love pirates, you'll love this.

From the terrifying depiction of Blackbeard by ImagineFX favourite Raphael Lacoste, to the captivating environments by Grant Hillier, there's



Martin Deschambault explains how scenes such as this require film-style 'takes'.



some stunning concept art from some of the world's best within this luxury title. The map on the inside front and the metallic skull with spot varnish hiding under the cover add to the luxury, although it should do for £30.

Interesting historical info starts the chapters and the book takes a captioned approach, which enables the artwork to breathe and gives you some short, punchy quotes from the artists.

However, we'd like a little more information in some areas. Elsewhere you'll find some detailed ship and weapon designs, and it's always a pleasure to see Kobe Sek's expressive concepts. Whether you're a fan of the game or not, it's a masterclass in game art. If you're an Assassin's Creed fan, it'll be a doubly brilliant purchase.

RATING



Where great art begins...

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OF ARTIST
SKETCHES!**



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On sale now at WHSmith, Barnes & Noble, www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/design
and for iPad at <http://ifxm.ag/ipadifx>



James Gurney was asked to paint dinosaur art for Australian postage stamps.



James' dinosaurs are a composite painting: cleverly the stamps work as a collective image but also as stand-alone images.



Australia's Age of Dinosaurs

SHORT AND SWEET James Gurney offers a brief but nevertheless rewarding look into a demanding natural history project

Publisher Gurney Studio **Price** \$32 (DVD), \$15 (download) **Web** www.jamesgurney.com/site/videos

Hard on the heels of James Gurney's superb *How I Paint Dinosaurs* (reviewed in issue 102) comes this look at how the master illustrator researched, planned and painted a beautiful set of stamps for Australia Post. The video's quite a brief watch at 38 minutes, but it covers a lot of ground in that time.

You'll see, for example, the work James puts into research, making sure his versions of these long-extinct creatures adhere to the latest scientific thinking of how they looked and behaved. The video also shows every stage of creating the artwork, including building reference maquettes and trying out colour schemes, as well as offering an insight into planning a composite image, where each stamp works as a self-contained piece of art, while also fitting together to form a larger, whole scene.

James calls the approach of Australia's Age of Dinosaurs art



DETAILS

Topics covered

- Fossil study
- Research in the bush
- Building reference models
- Concept sketches
- Painting the canvas
- Paleontology
- Interview (DVD only)
- The making of Dinotopia (DVD only)

Length

72 minutes (DVD), 38 minutes (download)

Rating



instruction rather than training and what you'll get from this video is an overview of the process, rather than the full-on details on how to execute it yourself. But his process is so meticulous that getting into the artist's mind through this video can't help but encourage you to invest more in your own work.

The earlier *How I Paint Dinosaurs* release is arguably better value, showing two full projects in 53 minutes rather than the one project here. But it's hard to quibble with a film that charms and entertains as much as it informs, with high-quality editing and presentation throughout.

The download version is a sumptuous 1080p presentation, although its 1.6GB could take you a little while to download. The DVD version is nearly double the length of the download, with a selection of extras that includes an excellent look at the evolution of James' famous Dinotopia franchise. ●

ARTIST PROFILE

JAMES GURNEY

Best known for his book series *Dinotopia*, James specialises in realistic images of scenes that can't be photographed, from dinosaurs to ancient civilisations. James taught himself to draw by reading books about Norman Rockwell and Howard Pyle. He received a degree in anthropology at the University of California at Berkeley, but chose a career in art. As well as the



Dinotopia series, James has written instruction books, *Imaginative Realism* and *Color and Light*.

www.gurneyjourney.blogspot.com



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FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART
ImagineFX
PRESENTS



FANTASY

illustrator



This issue:



100 FXPosé Traditional
The best traditional art revealed.



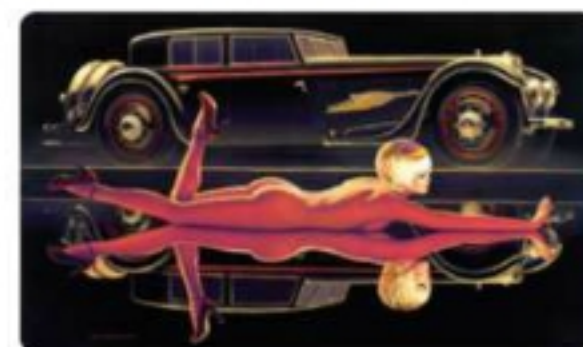
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We visit Art Macabre: London.



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Kev Crossley paints a fight scene.



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Foreshorten the figure.



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Greg Hildebrandt isn't satisfied.

FXPosé Traditional

SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL FANTASY ARTISTS

Lucas Durham

LOCATION: US

WEB: www.lucasdurham.com

EMAIL: lucasdurham1000@gmail.com

MEDIA: Watercolour, gouache, oils



It was at the Florence Academy of Art that Lucas first began merging classical techniques with modern sci-fi and fantasy narratives. The US artist, a graduate of the American Academy of Art, travelled to Italy as an exchange student and fell in love with Renaissance and Baroque art.

"I consider myself fortunate to be part of the sci-fi and fantasy art community, where mentors continuously challenge me to cultivate my skills," says Lucas.

The Chicago-based freelance illustrator began his career creating concepts for collectibles company the Bradford Exchange, before moving into card game and literary art.

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"I never thought I'd empathise with a dragon,

but Lucas's wintry scene gives the fire-breather a quiet, calm, almost vulnerable character in his freezing surroundings. Legacy is equally full of feeling."

Beren Neale,
Digital Editor

1 LEGACY

Watercolour and gouache on board, 16x25in

"Shortly before going to the 2013 Illustration Master Class, my paternal grandfather died. This is an homage to birthrights passed from fathers to sons. It's my largest watercolour painting."

2 WINTER DRAGON

Watercolour and gouache on board, 17.75x23.5in

"I grew up in a house full of prints by the naturalist, Robert Bateman. This painting is inspired by the artist's technique of depicting animals and environments with equal emphasis in his compositions."





Erik Gist

LOCATION: US

WEB: www.erikgist.com

EMAIL: emgist@erikgist.com

MEDIA: Oils



It's not hard to see why Erik is such an in-demand artist. The California-based freelancer has a portfolio full of gloriously macabre, highly inventive artwork, which has found clients in the likes of Wizards of the Coast, DC Comics and Blizzard Entertainment, to name just a few.

His work can be seen adorning the cover of Dark Horse Comics' adaptation of Guillermo del Toro and Chuck Hogan's vampire novel series *The Strain*, and the forthcoming *Aliens vs. Predator* title.

Erik studied with acclaimed artist Jeff Watts before going on to become a lead instructor at his school, Watts Atelier of the Arts. Working in the video game industry as a concept designer, 3D artist and as an illustrator, he's picked up nominations for the Illie Award and Chesley Award, and has won the Horror Comics Award.

1 THE FALL #2

Oil on gessoed hardboard, 14x22in

"I met Guillermo del Toro at a horror convention a couple of years back. He liked my work and recommended me as the cover artist on the comic adaptation of his novels *The Strain*."

2 LAST CHARGE

Oil on gessoed hardboard, 18x24in

"A little while back I was hired by Green Ronin Publishing to do a cover for its *Dragon Age* pen-and-paper RPG. The description I was sent reminded me of one of my favourite scenes in *The Two Towers*, and so I set about doing my version of Theoden's charge."

SUBMIT YOUR ART TO FXPOSÉ

Send up to five pieces of your work, along with their titles, an explanation of your techniques, a photo of yourself and contact details. Images should be sent as 300DPI JPEG files.

Email: fxpose@imaginefx.com
(maximum 1MB per image)

Post: (CD or DVD):
FXPosé Traditional
ImagineFX
30 Monmouth Street
Bath
BA1 2BW, UK

All artwork is submitted on the basis of a non-exclusive worldwide licence to publish, both in print and electronically.



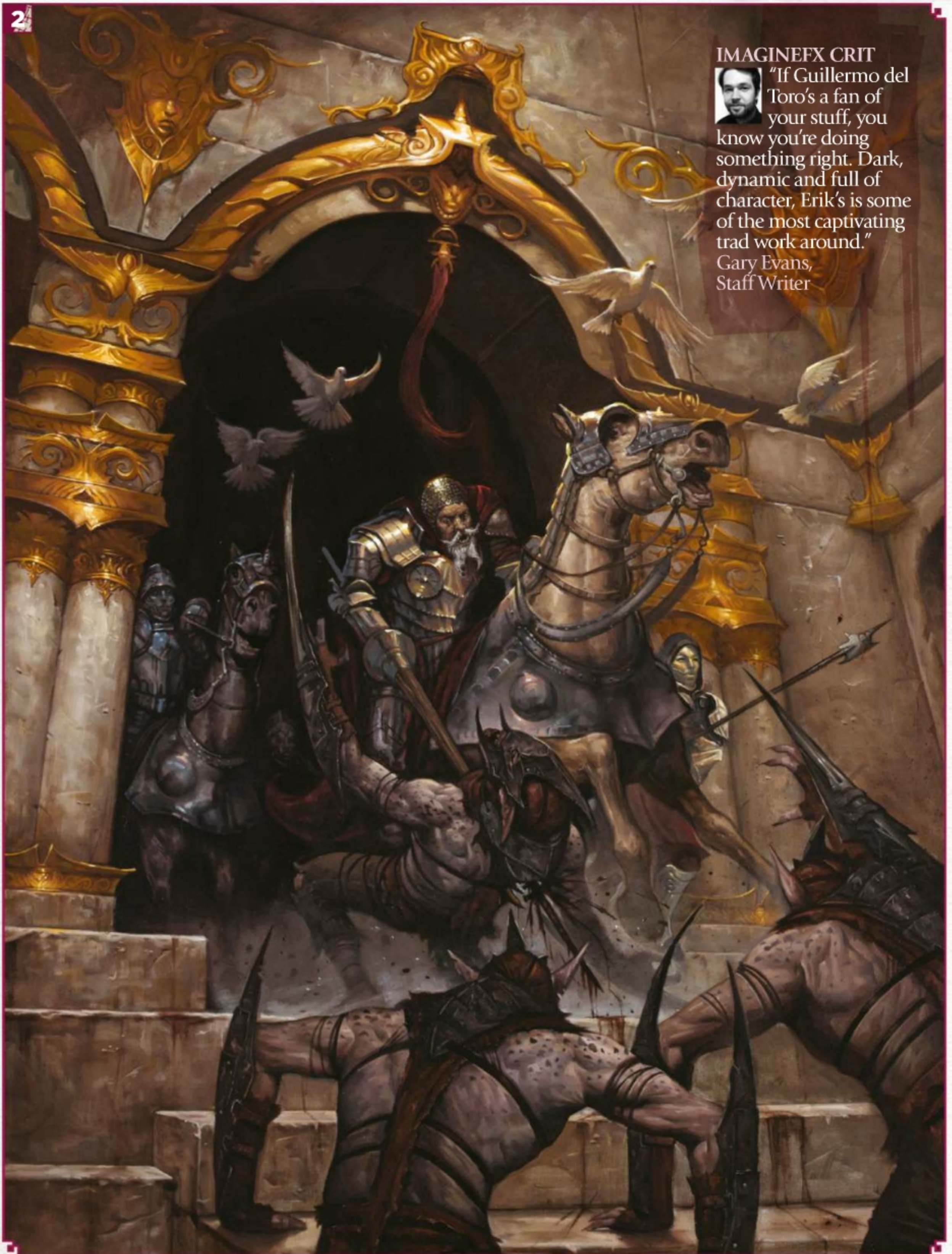
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IMAGINEFX CRIT



"If Guillermo del Toro's a fan of your stuff, you know you're doing something right. Dark, dynamic and full of character, Erik's is some of the most captivating trad work around."

Gary Evans,
Staff Writer



Creative Space

ART MACABRE: LONDON

Sounding the death knell for dull drawing groups everywhere, **ART MACABRE** was founded to make a morbid spectacle of still life

Walking cadavers.
Hitchcockian birds
in gilded cages.
A whodunit hosted
by film-noir inspired
femme fatales. Art Macabre is nothing
if not adventurous.

The London-based salon was founded to "inject a lethal dose of theatricality and the macabre" into art groups. Each meet has a new theme and setting, with costumes, props and multimedia tools. And nudity. Lots of nudity.

"There's a tradition of the nude form," says founder Nikki Shaill, "contrasted with skeletons, skulls and symbols of mortality. Memento mori artwork assists people in reflecting on the beauty yet fragility of life. We aim to update this tradition, with a twist."

Back in 2010, Nikki ran a special Halloween edition of her more traditional art group. It proved so popular she decided to pursue the death-drawing theme, and Art Macabre was born. Past events have had titles such as Midsummer Night's Scream, Kiss of Death and Hot Cross Bunny Boilers.

The sessions are open to all, with the aim of helping people gain confidence in mark making, developing their skills and "pondering death in a different way."

Death Drawing has gone from strength to strength, with a string of future events lined up in and around London, but it's with some trepidation Nikki welcomes a landmark on the horizon. "I've said that I'll take the plunge and pose nude for the very first time at Art Macabre's 100th event. Which I may regret, as it is approaching quite swiftly."

Go to www.deathdrawing.com for more and follow @ArtMacabreLDN.

Do you
want your school
or art group
featured here? Email
mail@imaginefx.com
and we'll do
the rest!



Art Macabre meets at different venues, such as Barts Pathology Museum.

Creative Space Art Macabre: London

Facing death: one of the founding ideas behind Art Macabre is to encourage artists to "ponder death in a different way".



A DYING ART

A selection of deadly drawings from Art Macabre sketch groups



Aaron Jacob Jones's rendering of Lorraine of Terror, drawn at the Horror Hospital special.



Models are invited to choose the music that accompanies their session.



Materials are provided for each session, making the events accessible to artists of any standing.



All models use makeup, costumes and props to bring each theme to life.



Aaron Jacob Jones switches to red ink for this sketch, also from the Horror Hospital event.



Morbid fantasy: yep, it's safe to say Art Macabre is not your typical sketch jam.

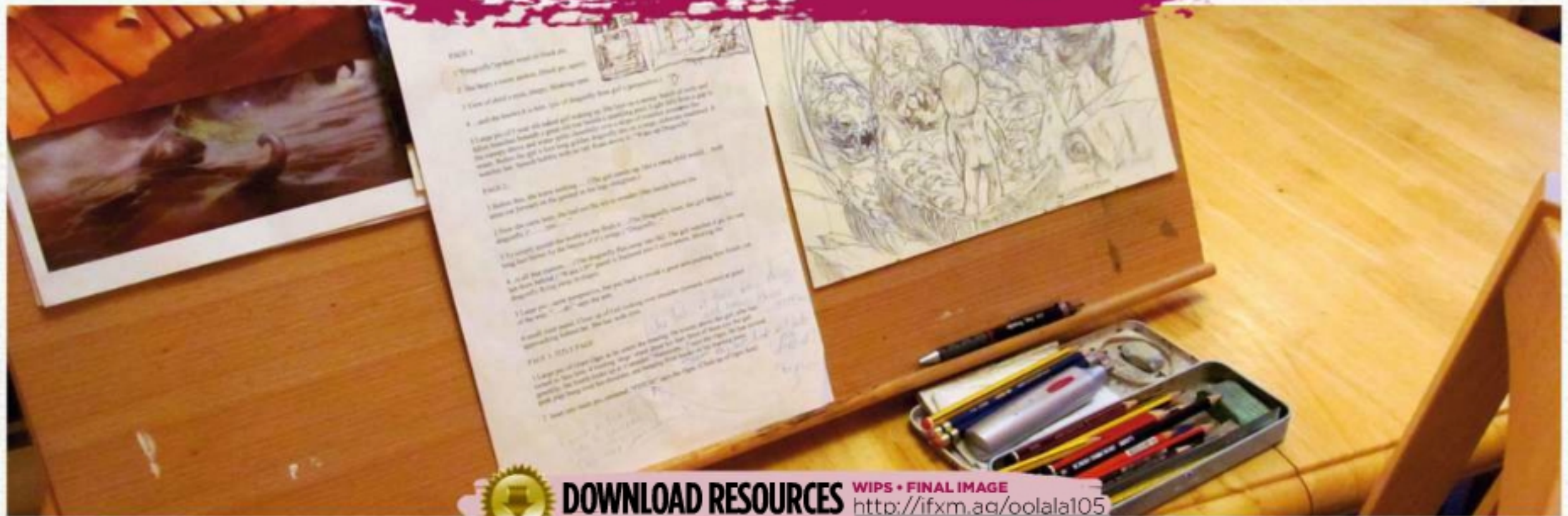


At Art Macabre's 100th meet founder Nikki Shail has pledged to life model.





Workshops



DOWNLOAD RESOURCES [WIPS • FINAL IMAGE
http://ifxm.ag/oolala105](http://ifxm.ag/oolala105)

Watercolour

Acrylics

PAINTING AGAINST A DARK BACKGROUND

KEV CROSSLEY breaks out the easel, brushes, pencils and paints, and tackles a classic pulp fantasy composition with a twist

For this painting I wanted to pay homage to the classic fantasy compositions I loved as a kid. The image of a lone hero battling atop a mound of fallen foes is perhaps the principal cliché of fantasy art. But the dramatic potential is huge and besides, it's great fun to draw! I was also inspired by the Pre-Raphaelites, in particular John William Waterhouse and the infamous Baroque painter Caravaggio. They utilised dark background colours to contrast against the pale skin tones of their subjects with striking effect.

While still at school, I taught myself how to paint using watercolours and coloured inks. I never received any formal instruction, so I had to work out the rhythm and flow of the medium by trial and (much!) error. The looseness and versatility of the paint when applied in wet washes was endlessly rewarding. Complex colour planes could be built up by layering consecutive translucent washes, and I enjoyed how the wet paint

MATERIALS

SURFACE

- Heavy textured art-board
- Watercolour paper

PENCILS

- Orange Col-Erase, 2H and HB

BRUSHES

- Watercolour brushes
- Toothbrush to add texture

PAINTS

- Blue, green and red watercolour
- White ink for highlights
- Glazing medium

sometimes dried to leave abstract marks and patterns. However, because of the transparent nature of watercolour it isn't practical to paint light over dark, and this became a limiting factor when I sought to emulate the oil paintings of the old artists who inspired me so much. I began to use the paint thick, straight from the tube with little water, but watercolours simply aren't intended to be used in this way: the colours become lifeless and flat.

It was during this time that fully painted art began to appear in sci-fi/fantasy comic 2000 AD. I discovered acrylics were the medium most frequently used, so I bought my first set and began the long process of teaching myself to use them. I found I was able to get closer to that classic fantasy art feel, but I haven't put away the watercolours for good.

A common practice among oil painters involved producing a watercolour sketch of a painting before starting work on the final oil version. The artist would experiment with the colour palette and tone balance, saving time later on.



After 15 years designing video games, Kev turned freelance, illustrating monsters and warriors for gaming books, working for 2000 AD and various US publishers. He also provided writing and art for books, and in 2012 illustrated Ian Livingstone's 30th anniversary Fighting Fantasy title, *Blood Of The Zombies*.
www.kevcrossley.com



1 Initial sketches

Sketching helps you define what your composition and the characters within it will look like, so it's worth taking the time to explore a few different ideas. Here's the final sketch I decide to use, along with an alternative concept.



4 Watercolour and tone

For my watercolour sketch, I start with a watery black wash to work out how the dark areas might look. I apply consecutive washes over the same areas after the previous washes have dried, to build up the tone study.



ARTIST INSIGHT USE WATERCOLOUR PAPER FOR EFFECTS

You can create interesting structural effects using textured watercolour paper, which is available in a range of weights and colours.

5 Colour wash

Next, I apply light washes of colour over the pencils. I use a range of blues and greens for the ant women, with a fleshier tone for the barbarian. I lay down a red wash and use a finer brush to create contrast.



6 Digital tweaks

Here you can see the finished version of the watercolour. I use white ink to enhance the lighter areas and create highlights, and do a few tweaks in Photoshop on the scanned image. I adjust the colours and also produce a stylised tone study.



2 Character ideas

I opt for mutant ant women as my horde, but it takes me a while to settle on a tarantula head (or is it a helmet?) for the barbarian. Here's a selection of sketches exploring ideas for the characters.

3 Finished pencils

After I've rendered the finalised version of my pencil drawing on heavy textured art-board, using orange Col-Erase, 2H and HB pencils, I produce a smaller, simplified duplicate on lighter watercolour paper using a 2H and an HB Rotring automatic pencil.



in depth Dark background



6

Digital tweaks

February 2014

ImagineFX

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7 *Acrylics and tone*

This is the end of the watercolour sketch stage – a preliminary study for reference. I now redraw the final acrylic painting from scratch on art board. The first stage echoes the watercolour stage. I create a wash of black and carefully paint over shadows and dark areas. I repeat the process to build the tones and use a toothbrush to add texture.



PENCIL TIP

LOAD YOUR LEAD

2H is good for fine line work. HB is good for strengthening 2H lines.

2B to 6B are soft and good for large areas of dark tone.

8 *Apply a colour glaze*

I mix a glaze by adding water and paint to a glazing medium, which helps delay the drying process. I use reddish brown to add depth to the blacks, and apply the glaze irregularly for extra textural interest.



9 *Lighter tones*

To develop the underpainting I use white to enhance the lighter areas, which greatly improves the dynamic drama. Then I finish with more dark washes, and a final glaze of light ochre to knock the harsh white paint back a touch.



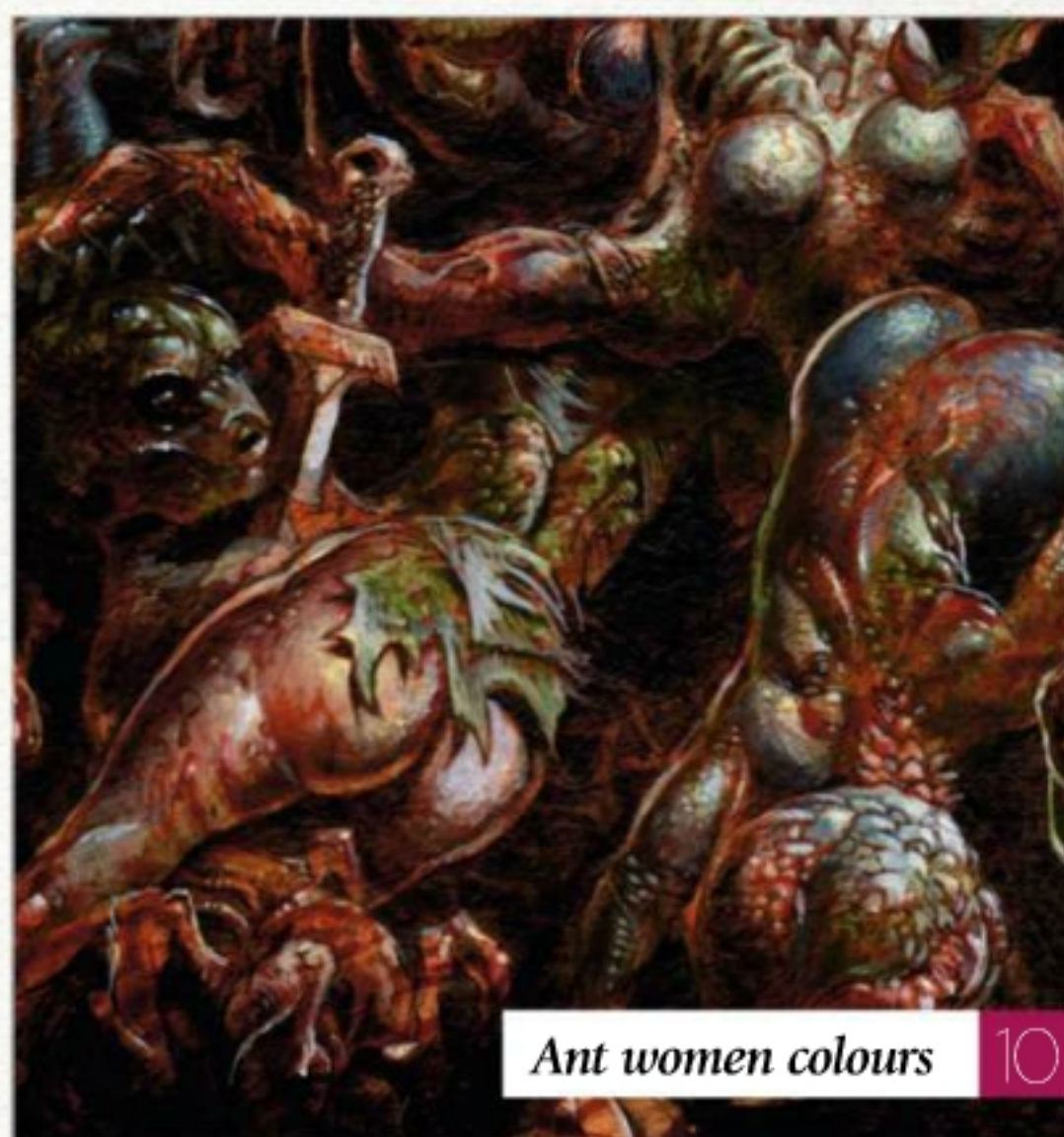
ARTIST INSIGHT

USING A GLAZE

Applying a translucent coloured glaze over an acrylic or oil painting helps to balance colours and smooth out tonal variations.

10 *Ant women colours*

I don't want to overwork the colours though, so here I adopt a textural, impressionistic style to add dabs and washes of blues and greens over the bodies of the ant women. By doing this I'm enabling the reddish tones of the under-painting to show through.



Ant women colours

10



ARTIST INSIGHT DIGITAL COLOUR BALANCING

Using Photoshop to adjust the colours, balance and saturation of a scanned painting is the digital equivalent of using glazes!

11 Barbarian colours

I use a similar approach when adding colour to the barbarian. Too much intensive over-painting would cover much of the tonal work, so I apply the colour in thin washes, with thicker hues in specific areas.



12 Background

I create a sense of depth by breaking into the dark background with lighter shades, dabbed on with a dry brush. I use reds and pale yellows to enliven the region around the characters, with the toothbrush providing additional texture.



12 Background



Finishing up

13



BRUSH TIP SIZING UP

Use large, wide brushes to build tone or colour. Size 3 or 6 is suitable for most painting work, 00 to 0000 (tiny!) for detail.



13 Finishing up

I paint trickles of red and other texture details over the bodies of the characters, using a very fine brush. I add more toothbrush spatter in varying hues over all parts of the image, and then I call the painting finished.



Pencil

Ballpoint pen

Charcoal

FORESHORTEN THE FIGURE

Anatomy expert **CHRIS LEGASPI** presents his tried and tested strategies for achieving accurate foreshortening in figure drawing

Using good observation and simple strategies, achieving proportionally accurate perspective can be simple and fun. I first see the figure as simplified geometric forms. The most useful form for describing perspective is the cylinder, because it's both round and straight in character. As such, it's ideal for describing the position of a form.

Position is where a form is in three-dimensional space. The keys to position are direction and eye-level. Direction

refers to which way the form is moving, while in terms of eye-level, I can either be above or below the form.

The primary tools I use to achieve perspective are tapering cylinders, cross-sections and overlaps. A tapering cylinder both mimics the natural forms of the body and also suggests perspective. Cross-sections are the curved lines that segment a cylindrical form. If my eye-level is below the form, then my cross sections will curve up, and vice versa. The exceptions to this rule are when the form moves

MATERIALS

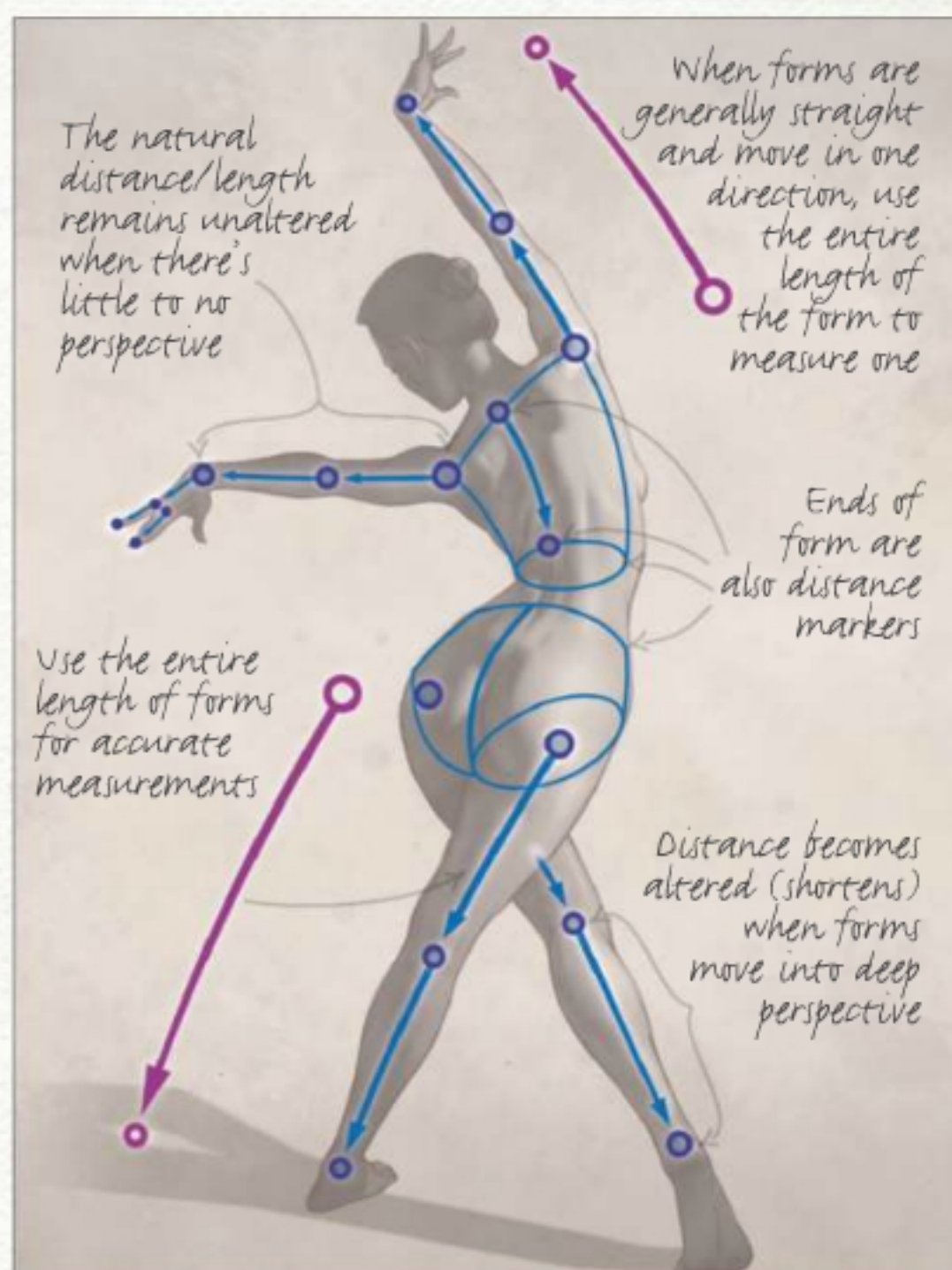
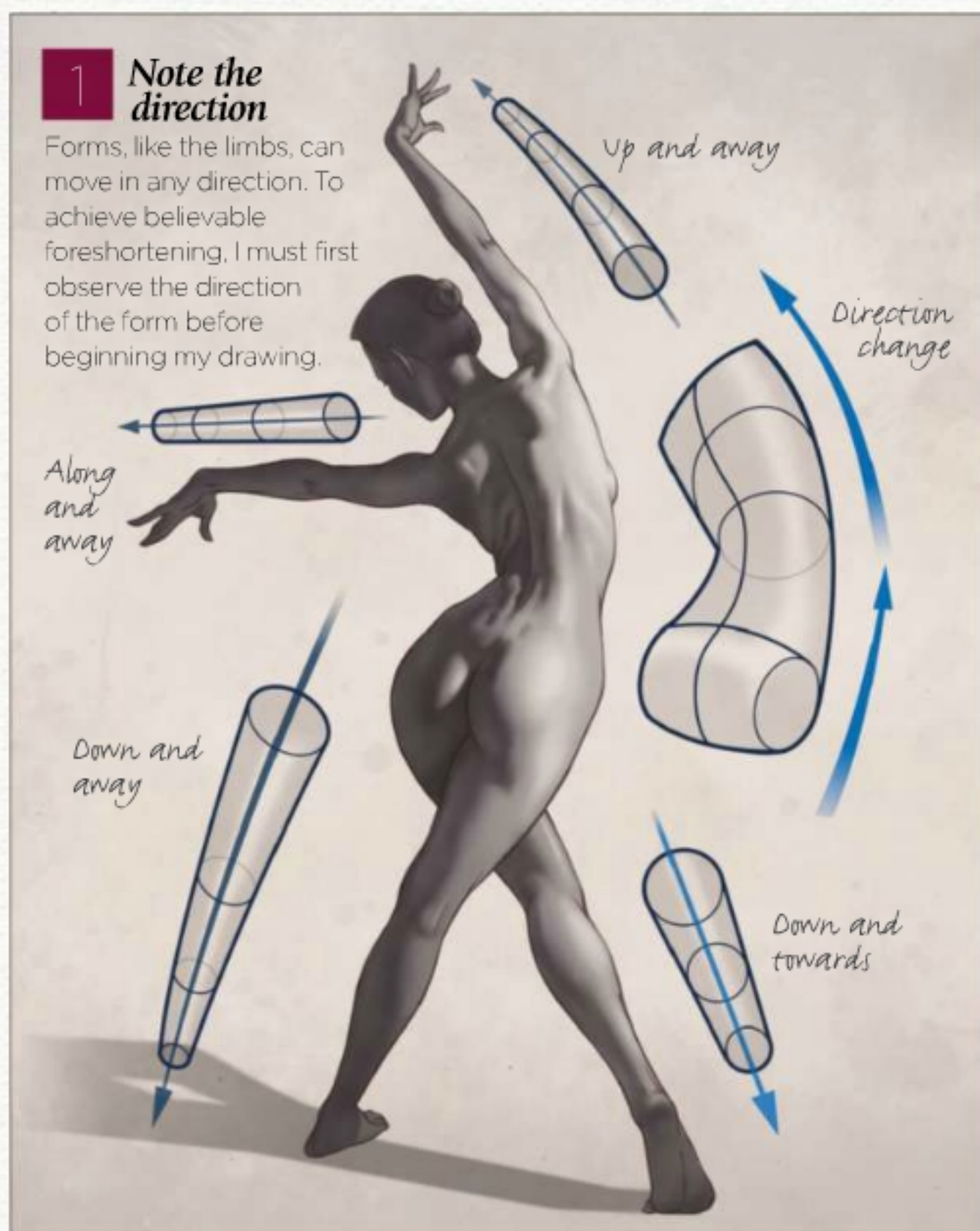
- Smooth newsprint paper
- Carbothello pencil, black (or Conte' B) or Willow charcoal sticks (medium grade)
- Kneaded eraser
- Ballpoint pen
- Sketchbook

toward or away from me in perspective. In either case careful observation of the direction is the key.

I use overlaps to achieve deep perspective. I'll often exaggerate existing overlaps or sometimes create my own. This gives me one more layer of depth that really helps to push the illusion of foreshortened, three-dimensional form.



Chris is keen to share his knowledge of art theory. You can see more of his work at www.freshdesigner.com.



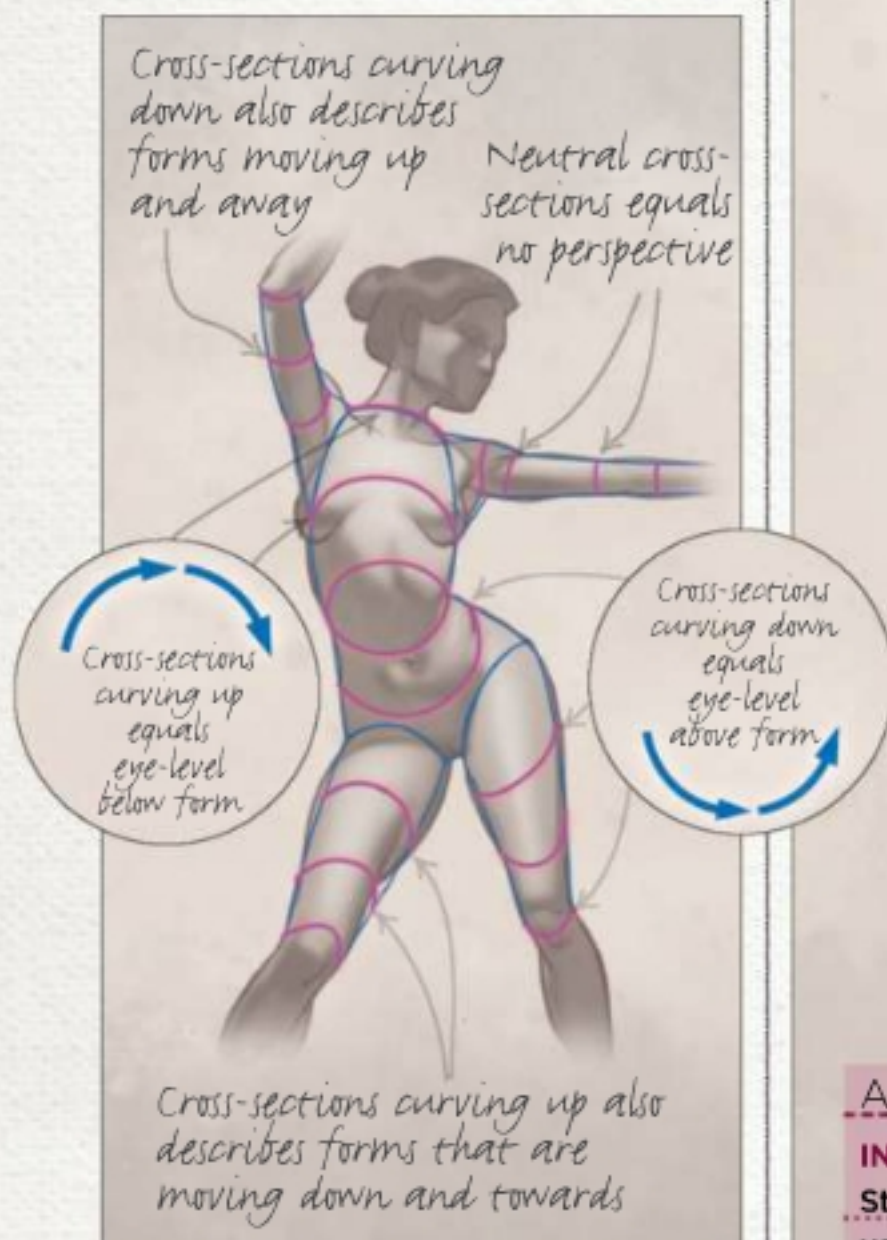
2 Start with the joints

To begin the drawing, I establish the location of the joints, especially the shoulders and hips. This gives me a more accurate gauge of the correct distance when a form is foreshortened.



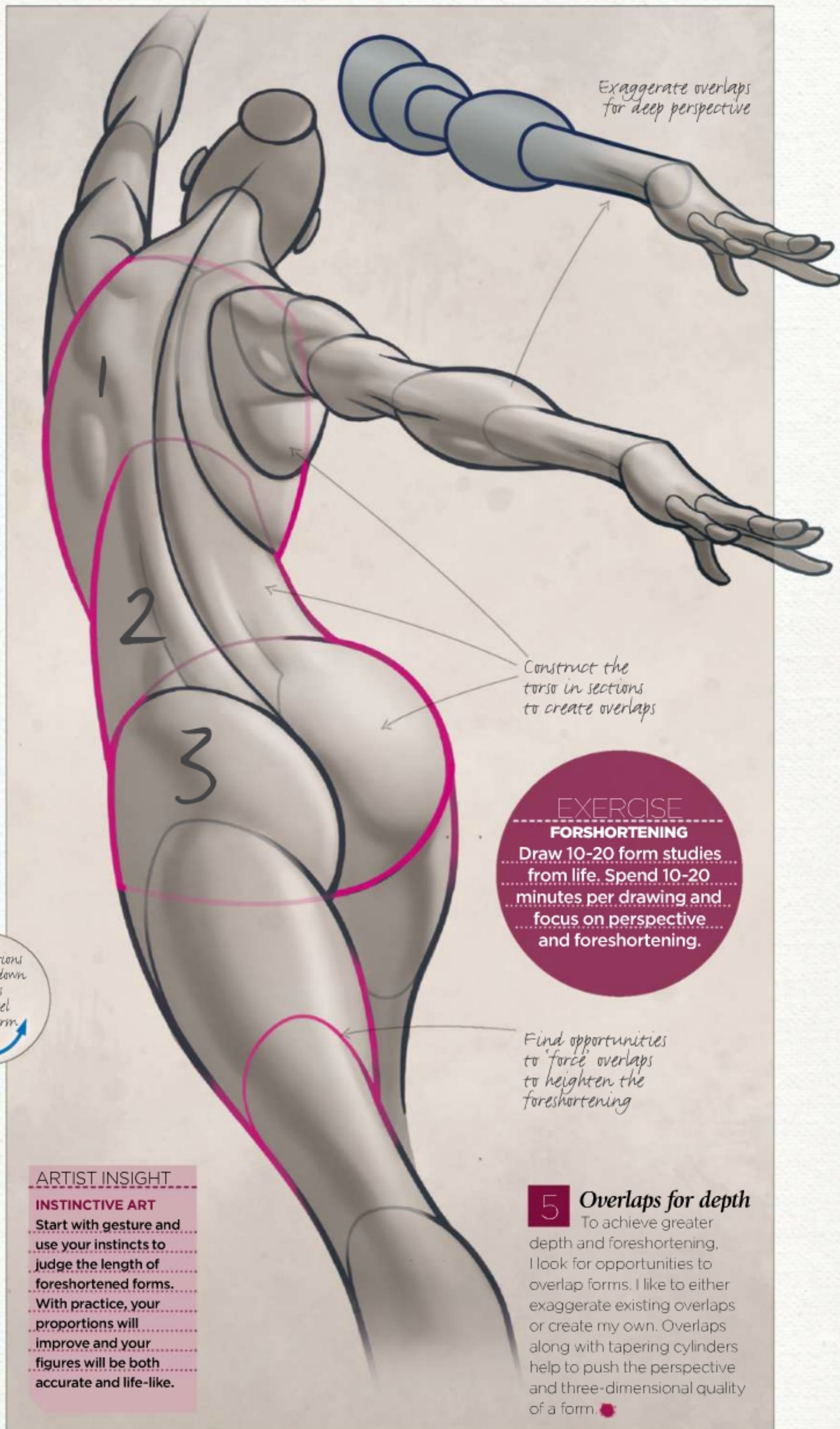
3 Tapering cylinders

Cylinders are a useful shape for describing perspective. Tapering cylinders are better, though, because they quickly suggest perspective, especially forms that are moving away. They also mimic the way organic forms naturally bulge and taper.



4 Cross-sections

I use cross-sections to not only describe the nature of the form, but more importantly to establish eye-level. If my eye-level is beneath a form, I make the cross-sections curve up. When I'm above a form, I'll make the cross-sections curve down.



EXERCISE FORSHORTENING

Draw 10-20 form studies from life. Spend 10-20 minutes per drawing and focus on perspective and foreshortening.

ARTIST INSIGHT

INSTINCTIVE ART

Start with gesture and use your instincts to judge the length of foreshortened forms. With practice, your proportions will improve and your figures will be both accurate and life-like.

5 Overlaps for depth

To achieve greater depth and foreshortening, I look for opportunities to overlap forms. I like to either exaggerate existing overlaps or create my own. Overlaps along with tapering cylinders help to push the perspective and three-dimensional quality of a form.

First Impressions

✧ Greg Hildebrandt ✧



Greg says he hasn't nailed a painting yet. We respectfully beg to differ...



What do you consider to be the first pin-up image you created, and why do you think you are drawn to paint women?

The first painting I did in my American Beauties series of 40s-50s pin-ups is called Emerald Evening. Why I paint women is an interesting question and the answer is so simple: they are beautiful and I love to paint beauty.

Which pin-up artist was your first artistic crush on and why?

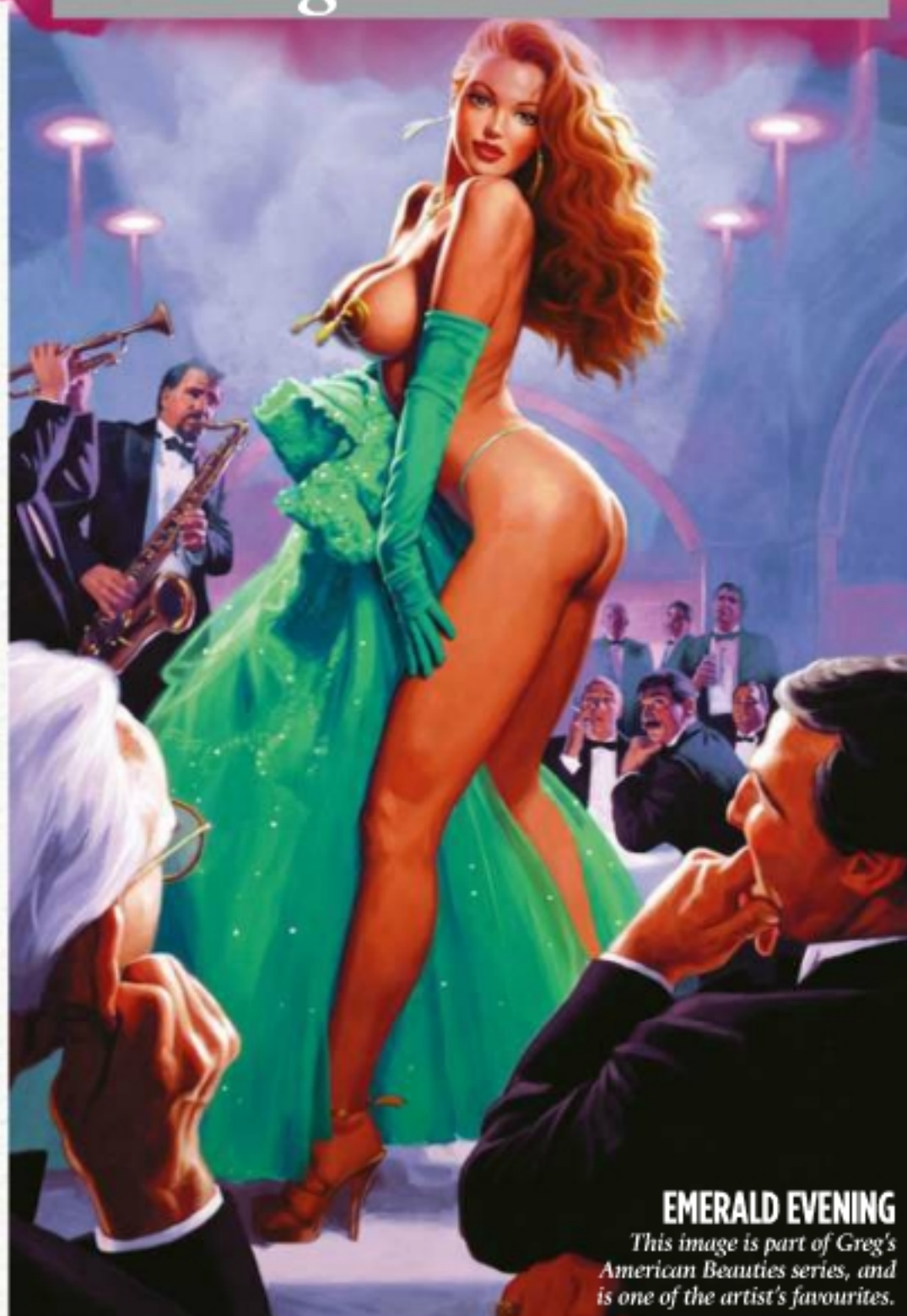
Gil Elvgren. As a young boy of eight I saw my first Elvgren pin-up calendar in my grandfather's basement. I had no real clue what I was looking at, but I knew it was amazing.

Do you have a ritual for when you start a painting?

If you are asking me if I have to chant before I paint, the answer is no. If you are asking me my process, that's a different story. I do multiple rough sketches before I choose a pose. Then I get a model and take my photos of her in costume. Then I do my finished sketch that I'll transfer to canvas. Then I sit down, mix my paint and begin.

When did you first realise you wanted to be an artist?

I guess I never realised I wanted to be an



EMERALD EVENING

This image is part of Greg's American Beauties series, and is one of the artist's favourites.

“I was never satisfied with anything I ever did artistically. That is what kept me going”

DOUBLE VISION

Luxury cars and glamorous models have long been used in advertising imagery, but Greg's pin-up artwork takes the concept to the next level.



artist. Art chose me, I did not choose it. My earliest memory of doing art was at three years old. My mother told me years later that my brother and I were colouring in the lines at three. She said she was amazed at the fact we would sit for hours at that age and never get bored of colouring.

Do you remember the first image that made you think you'd nailed it?

Unfortunately, I will be 75 in January, and I've not nailed it yet. But I keep trying. As far as pieces I'm really happy with there are a few of my American Beauties that I'm very partial to: Emerald Evening, Hotel Nights, Ledge, Lady in Red, Yellow Rose of Texas, Made in the USA, Hot Rear Ends, American Beauty, Lipstick, Casting Couch, Science Gone Wild, Grease Monkey, Sudden Danger,

Mad Science, Saturday Night Special, Double Vision, and Smooth and Sensual.

What was your first pin-up commission?

I started the American Beauties series for myself in 1999. The first pin-up commission I did for a client was in 2009 and it was called Thoughts of Midnight. I painted a girl on the nose of a 1943 P-38 Lightning WWII aeroplane, for a collector of WWII warbirds in Texas.

What was the first bit of praise that you received that spurred you on?

After I finished Emerald Evening my agent contacted Lou Meisel. He wrote the book *The Great American Pin-up*. He knew my fantasy art. When he saw my first piece he said it was amazing, and the next thing I knew I had a one-man show planned at his SoHo gallery. All I painted for a year was pin-ups for that show.

And your first knock-back?

I don't want to sound like a jerk, but I really can't remember one. There were always changes that clients wanted and you made them. That was my job and I did it. If anything, I was never satisfied with anything I ever did artistically. That's what kept me going all my life.

What advice would you give to artists starting out?

Never quit. Never pay any attention to criticism unless it's constructive. Learn something new every day of your life. Be passionate about your art and always give 1,000 per cent of your capability to what you're working on.

Who's the first artist that you turn to for inspiration?

I could list them but I would take up your magazine. They stretch through time and through genres and through mediums and each one is a gift.

If you could go back to the start of your career, would you change anything?

No.

What was the last pin-up image you painted, and were you happy with it?

The last painting I completed was last week and is called Going My Way. And yes, I am happy with it.

You can see more of Greg's work at www.americanbeautiesart.com

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