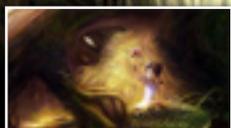


zoo Artist

Concept Art, Digital & Matte Painting Magazine

Concept Artists

A host of Concept Artists grace this month's Issue: John Wu, Philip Straub, Bjöm Börkur Eiriksson, John "Roc" Upchurch & Mark Goemer



Articles

Concept Art of Mark Goemer & Company 3 pushes DI to new limits in "300"

Interviews

John Wu, Philip Straub, Bjöm Börkur Eiriksson & John "Roc" Upchurch

Galleries

Featuring Xiao Bing, Sergey Musin, Kuang Hong, Daniela Uhlig, & More!

Making Of's

'Robyn', a traditional pencil drawing, 'Ply Spell' & 'Under the root, my kingdom'

Tutorials

Custom Brushes 'Chamber', Speed Painting 'Forest Fire', & Painting Male Portraits



www.google.com/tisp for the full story! Thinking of it, we should really start planning next years hoax as it seems to take us so long, so email in with your ideas and we'll get cracking! Back to this month's issue though, Concept Art is the theme this month with 5 major artists, from differing fields of digital art, but all with a special talent for the conceptual image. Loads of great artwork to go with these, and throughout the whole mag, as ever. The 'Challenge' is growing rapidly and we had more entries this month than ever before. You can show off your digital art skills by entering the challenges to win fantastic prizes every month. See the 'Stylised Animal Challenge' section for further information. Anyway, thanks again for continuing to support us, and remember, you can purchase all of the back issues of both 2DArtist and 3DCreative magazines, as well as sign up for subscriptions, which include great discounts, via www.2dartistmag.com and www.3dcreativemag.com. Enjoy this month's monster issue and I'll see you again in May... Ed.

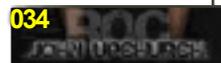
Editorial

Well, April. We couldn't even think of a worthwhile April Fool's joke for you all: how sad is that? My favourite April Fool's of this year goes to 'Google', who have masterfully set up a service where they offer free broadband... wait for it... which works by using the water in your toilet! Genius! Check out

Contents

What's in this month:

- John Wu** 005
Games Concept Artist at Sony Europe
- Philip Straub** 015
Art Director for NCSoft Santa Monica
- Björn Borkur Eiríksson** 026
Eve Online's Lead Illustrator
- John "Roc" Upchurch** 034
Concept Artists, Atlanta USA
- Mark Goerner** 043
The Concept Art of Mark Goerner
- 300** 059
Company 3 Pushes DI to New Limits
- Galleries** 085
10 of the Best 2D Artworks
- Stylised Animal Challenge** 064
This Month's 10 Winners
- Custom Brushes** 096
'Chamber', by Richard Tilbury
- Speed Painting 'Forest Fire'** 103
by Levente Peterffy & Mikko Kinnunen
- Male Portrait** 115
by Daarken
- Robyn** 125
Project Overview by Tuna Ferit Hidayetoglu
- Ply-Spell** 136
Project Overview by David Munoz Velazquez
- Under the root, my kingdom** 141
Project Overview by Olivier Heban
- About us** 151
Zoo Publishing Information & Contacts



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Contributing Artists

Every month, many creatives and artists around the world contribute to 3DCreative & 2DArtist Magazine. Here you can read all about them. If you would like to be a part of 3DCreative or 2DArtist Magazines, please contact ben@zoopublishing



Daarken

Is a 2D Illustrator/ Concept Artist, in the USA. He began working in the gaming industry after graduating from the Academy of Art University, in San Francisco, 2004. He has worked for Wizards of the Coast, Fantasy Flight Games, Widescreen Games, Digital Extremes, & BreakAway Games.
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Patri Balanovsky

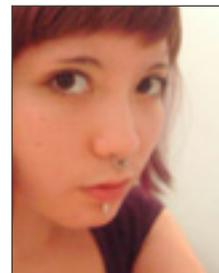
Is a Production/Concept Artist at PitchiPoy Studio, in Israel. He has drawn and painted since he can remember, and creating characters, creatures & fantastic scenes have always been a passion. Telling a story through a single image can be a challenge, but he's always up for it. Keeping his work fresh & versatile, he explores all genres and styles.

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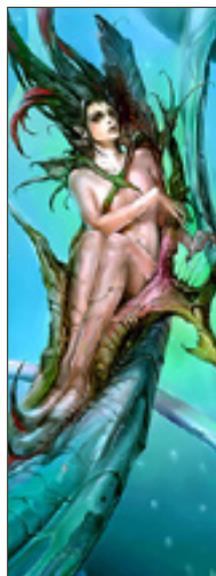
Nami Meta-Murota

Is an Illustrator & Freelancer, in Vancouver. She has been focused on illustration using traditional mediums until recently, when she found an intuous under her Christmas tree & immediately took to CG art. She aspires to pursue Illustration and hopes to one day illustrate children's novels, as well as creating concept art for horror films.
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Mikko Kinnunen

Is an Artist for Team17 Software, in the UK. He is 24 years old and started out as an Illustrator and 2D Artist for mobile games. He has also worked as a Freelance Concept Artist for companies such as KingsIsle Entertainment, and Sucker Punch Productions. He is currently working at Team 17 Software as a 2D/3D Artist.
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Kyang Hong

Is an Art Director, Concept Artist & Illustrator, at Beijing Pantheon Technology Co. Ltd., in China. After graduation, he went into games companies and started in CG. In the future he hopes to have his own studio, publish his own comic & become a unique and individualistic top designer and illustrator.
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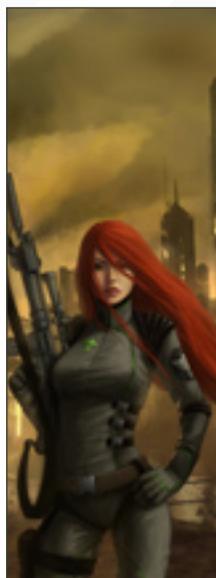




Richard Tilbury

Has had a passion for drawing since being a couple of feet tall. He studied Fine Art & was eventually led into the realm

of computers several years ago. His brushes have slowly been dissolving in white spirit since the late 90s, & now, alas, his graphics tablet has become their successor. He still sketches regularly, balancing his time between 2 & 3D, although drawing will always be closest to his heart. ibex80@hotmail.com



Daniela Uhlig

Lives in Berlin, Germany. She "suffered" school for 13 years, until she finally graduated, and has been working as a Graphic Designer & illustrator for 2 years now. She is thinking about eventually studying art, sooner or later, and she has loved painting since she could hold a paintbrush... and so it can only be described as her "passion".

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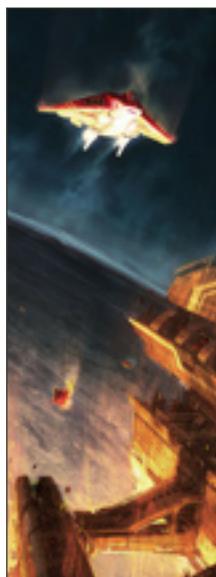


Mark Goerner

Has created various futuristic feature illustrations for quite a few film masterpieces. Those literal, comical figures were instantly

transformed into vivid images which also followed the cinematographic rules, & from there they were evolved into conceptual imaginations that were overwhelmingly inspiring...

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John Wu

In 2001, John got a position as a Character Texture Artist at Insomniac Games, California. He helped create the hit franchise "Ratchet and Clank" for the Playstation 2, which sold close to 9 million units worldwide. More recently, he has worked on "Resistance: Fall of Man" for the Playstation 3 as a Senior Concept Artist.

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Would you like to Contribute to zDCreative or zDArtist Magazine?

We are always looking for tutorial artists, gallery submissions, potential interviewees, making of writers, and more. For more information, send a link to your work here: warin@zoopublishing.com

John Wu

John Wu currently works as an artist at Sony Computer Entertainment, America, and has had several years of experience in the games industry. Having covered all aspects of the production pipeline, from modelling, rigging and animation, to concept art and visual effects, he is a veteran in numerous arenas - both 2D and 3D. And, he even does Kung Fu! ...

"Many games have shown breathtaking artwork. The list of games could go on forever."



John Wu

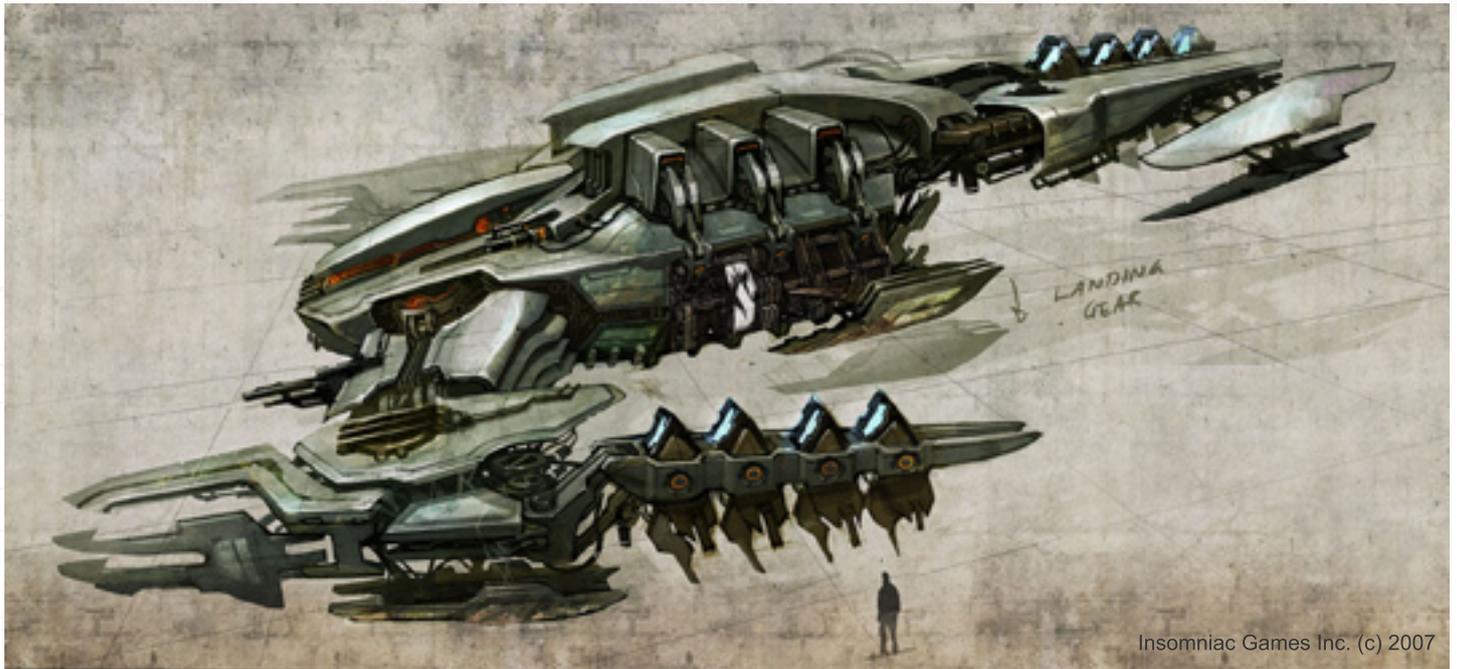
You say in your biography that your ambition was to work in the games industry. Why this area in particular? The main reason why I chose a career in the video games industry, was because I simply love video games. I grew up during the days of Karate, "Rescue Raiders", "Dune 2", and "X-COM", but it was not until my later years in college that I started to think about it seriously. The quality of computer graphics during the late nineties was just starting to look good, and the industry wasn't oversaturated with artists who wanted "in". Most of the artists I knew just wanted to become illustrators, or to get into the film business. So that left many opportunities for folks like me, who simply adored games. It was an untapped market and I was fortunate enough to have entered it at an early stage.

Were there any particular games that made you realise that there was more scope opening up for artistic freedom within an industry that existed, before the main 3D packages arrived? There were two games that collectively steered my decision towards pursuing a gaming career; one was "StarCraft", and the other was "Street Fighter", the arcade series. StarCraft, in particular, made a bigger impact on my decision, because I was simply hooked by their outstanding cinematics. The Street Fighter games, on the other hand, inspired me more on the animation front. I must have skipped at least a dozen or so classes, and have probably spent a years worth of lunch money, just playing them. It was totally worth it! The Street Fighter games, in my opinion, had a perfect blend of Hong Kong action cinema, as well as jaw-dropping animation. Since I was both a fan action flicks and anime, it gave me all the more reason to go for a gaming career, above all else, simply because I could work and play with the projects that I love.

Your break into the industry came in 2001, when you started as a Texture Artist at "Insomniac Games". Over the following five years, what areas of game development did you work in, and which were your favourite disciplines? I started my gaming career as a Character Texture Artist at



John Wu (c) 2007



Insomniac Games. Day in and day out, I would unwrap UVs and texture characters, weapons, and gadgets. Since the company was very small at the time, with approximately thirty people, I got the chance to learn anything I could get my hands on. I accepted tasks from modelling, rigging, animation, level building, storyboards, visual effects, HUD design, and so on. So ,after an educational five years at Insomniac Games, I think I got the art production pipeline down. Of course, this makes it even harder for me to stick to any particular role because, although I enjoy the preproduction side of things, I also dig the nitty-gritty part of production, and coordinating production strategies.

Have you seen much change in the development process in those five years ?
Video game production has changed drastically over the past five years. The artists today are more specialized in terms of responsibilities, and they work in an assembly line fashion for efficiency. One person will model and another would texture. It's hard to imagine that only a few years ago, a modeller would also texture their own work, and sometimes rig them if time permitted. But, because of the demand of higher quality art, and the available technology that supports it, an artist will need to work longer hours refining their characters, especially if it's for normal map generation. Before the normal

map craze, game assets would only have a diffuse map, and perhaps an additional specular map. Things have got a lot more complicated all of a sudden, and the amount of manpower and capital needed to make a triple A title is astronomical.

Which games do you enjoy playing, and why ?
I enjoy games that have great re-play ability, and most importantly, a lot of fun factor. I care more about game play than I do art, which is ironic considering my line of work. The truth is, art gets boring after a few days. Games like "Grand Theft Auto", "Katamari", and even "World of WarCraft", may not have the greatest



graphics in the world, yet they tend to keep the players hooked. As a matter of fact, I still enjoy a few good GTA games once in a while. During the holidays I've been playing games like EA's "Fight Night: Round 2", "Counter-Strike: Source", and "StarCraft: BroodWars". The StarCraft games have been around for nearly a decade, and it just goes to show how good game design can go a long way. I was also into the Street Fighter games until the combos got too complicated for my tiny brain...

Which games do you feel have showcased some of the best artwork?

Many games have shown breathtaking artwork. The list of games could go on forever, but right off the top of my head, I can think of a few that are worth mentioning. Games such as "Gears of War", "Gran Turismo 3" (and up), "Kingdom Hearts", "Silent Hill 4", "Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter", "Ace Combat", and "Rainbow Six: Vegas", have demonstrated some really outstanding graphics.

You have mentioned quite a variety of different games in that list. Do you feel as though artists' jobs vary greatly depending upon the project, or that the tasks remain quite consistent whatever the game? An artist's role can change from one project to the next, depending upon their taste or level of skill. Some artists are happy just doing one thing, whereas others, like myself, enjoy the challenge of multiple responsibilities. It all depends upon the person. Although sometimes, because of a shortage of manpower, an artist may be forced to work outside their areas of expertise. It happened to me during the production of "Ratchet and Clank", and more recently on "Resistance", when I had to jump-start the visual effects team. I wasn't an expert in that area, but someone had to do it because getting the game done for the Playstation 3 launch was all that mattered.

What skills do you regard as being important when working as a Concept Artist in your chosen field?

The most important skill to have as a Concept Artist is not only to be good at art, but to have a good business sense. Most studios would require an artist to work as part of a team or assist in scheduling, managing, or mentoring other team members. Granted, skills such as layout, composition, lighting, anatomy, perspective, and all that jazz are crucial, but besides that, having a good business sense is just as important.





John Wu (c) 2007

Now, that doesn't mean you have to become a shark and boss people around, it just means that you have to be emotionally detached from your artwork because it will be criticized by your peers or art directors, and your work will probably need quite a few revisions. Being able to manage your time and to wear different hats is all part of the job. It is poor and dishonest time management that can make a team suffer, or can destroy a project entirely. Be true to yourself and know exactly how fast you work. Learn everything. This may not be a skill but it is often neglected. A lot of concept artists refuse to learn 3D. That's totally alright if you've already established your name in the industry. But for the new folks, or for the ones who are trying to get in, then learn everything because it will

increase your chances of survival. My advice would be for any artist to learn at least two secondary skills that are important to production.

Can you describe the challenges and rewards of working on a title such as "Resistance: Fall of Man"? We had many challenges during the production of the game "Resistance: Fall of Man". Firstly, we had never done a first person shooter (FPS) of that magnitude before. Insomniac's first game was an FPS, but that was eons ago, and the technology has made leaps and bounds since then. So, there was a lot of catching up to do if we were to compete with games like "Half-Life 2" or "Halo". Secondly, the Playstation 3 was new technology. There was a tremendous amount of



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time spent just learning and creating an efficient pipeline, not to mention that the development kits didn't arrive until much later. Our prototypes were done on PC, two years prior to receiving the devkits. There were also lighting issues: the levels were too big and had to be divided into chunks to make the lighting slightly easier. Fortunately things were simpler on my end. My original job was to create view paintings, asset designs, vehicle prototyping, and visual effects. It was the effects part that proved to be a challenge. Near the end of the project, we still didn't have a dedicated effects department, so it was just me and another tools programmer. Frustrated by this, I decided to get every concept artist in the company involved. There were too many effects for me to handle, and I thought that, by dividing it amongst all of us concept guys, was the way to go - and I was right. Not long after, each artist managed to crank out a handful of effects within a week. It was only a bit of work for everyone and a lot of stress off my back. Just seeing the team pulling together and getting the job done was its own reward. Resistance was completed successfully in the third quarter of 2006, and has become a hit Playstation 3 launch title. I left Insomniac before the game shipped, but I'm very proud to have worked with a team of talented folks.

You mentioned "view paintings". For any readers unfamiliar with this term, could you describe what they are and their application within the context of games? A view painting is a painted-over screenshot that illustrates what the player sees in the game. Its main purpose is to provide the environment artists with visual information regarding the level's time of

day, colour palette, lighting direction, mood, object placements, and so on. In addition, this step also allows the Concept Artist to fix any compositional issues before it is sent off for production.

Can you describe your job now at Sony Computer Entertainment America and the kinds of tasks required of you? My current position at SCEA requires me to use all of the skills I learnt from my past experiences, even beyond that of video games. I was originally hired to work under David Jaffe, the Creative Director of the studio, as a Character Concept Artist. But, just like all my other jobs, I was soon sucked in to do other things, like storyboards, HUD designs, logo designs, 2D prototyping with After Effects, and 3D prototyping with Maya. Most of the work I'm doing now is high level art ideas that support game design - nothing finished or completely rendered. The art is meant to communicate to the developers precisely what the Creative Director has in mind. I would use any tool at my disposal to get the job done, which is the reason why I use several software packages.

When you talk about high level art ideas, do you always have to bear in mind the game engine and technical limitations of the type of game you are working on, or do you have the freedom to be completely creative and let the programmers and modellers worry about how to translate the imagery you produce? The creation of high level art is the earliest step in a game's development, right after the initial game design pitch. It happens even before the preproduction period where things inevitably get filtered



down. The high level art process gives an artist close to absolute freedom in coming up with creative ideas, and the technical limitations aren't even considered, because that only restricts their thought process. Once enough drawings have been gathered, the Creative Director will select the artwork that needs to be fleshed and explored. The purpose of this is to eventually have enough artwork to support

the game design document, and effectively communicate to the production crew the vision of the Creative Director.

What do you see as some of the main problems associated with the way in which games are developed these days, and the pitfalls that many companies face? There are three main problems with the way games are developed

these days. The first one comes down to poor planning and underestimating the scope of the project. The result is wasted time and money when things get cut, not to mention the negative impact that it has on the company's morale. The second problem is the lack of time allocated to prototyping. It is not uncommon to see a character sent off for production, only to have it axed near the end, or even to see an entire



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level cancelled half way through. There goes weeks of artist, animator, and programmer salary, just because someone forgot to apply the “measure twice, hammer once” rule. Marketing interference is the third problem that can disrupt the flow of production. Granted, it is important to build hype for the product, or impress the publishers, but creating marketing videos requires a developer to diverge its resources

away from production just to fulfil a short-term cause. An alternative would be to schedule more time, or to simply outsource it. The difference between a game and a movie trailer is that a video game only looks presentable near the end. A movie can be sent to post on a scene per scene basis. A next-gen video game is several times more complicated to produce than a movie, which is the reason why the companies

who focus on flashy presentations rarely have anything to show for it towards end.

John Wu

For more work by this artist please visit:
www.therealjohnwu.com

Or contact them at:
therealjohnwu@hotmail.com

Interviewed by: Richard Tilbury

totalTextures

v4: r2

Humans & Creatures

The Original Total Texture collection was created in 2001, utilising the best methods and technology of the time. Since then, techniques and technology have both moved forward, and here at 3DTotal we felt that although the original collection is still widely used and highly regarded among artists and studios of all calibers, it was time for an update...

This enormously improved version of the original texture collection now contains 272 individual Materials, comprising of over 938 individual, hand crafted texture maps. Every Texture now has its own unique colour map, bump map. There is also over 50 new alpha and 100 new specular maps.

What's new?
This new collection consists of 272 materials, comprising of 938 individual maps!! (Colour, Bump, Specular and Alpha maps). We have also included 36 psd files for some of the textures, allowing you to customize some new textures of your own.

DVD Contents:
31 Creature Eyes
11 Creature Furs
2 Creature Miscellaneous
6 Creature Scales
14 Creature Skin (Body)
27 Creature Skin (Facial)
16 www.3d.sk images
16 Human Eyes
2 Human Hair
12 Human Misc (Body)
24 Human Misc (Facial)
47 Human Skin (Abnormal)
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Philip

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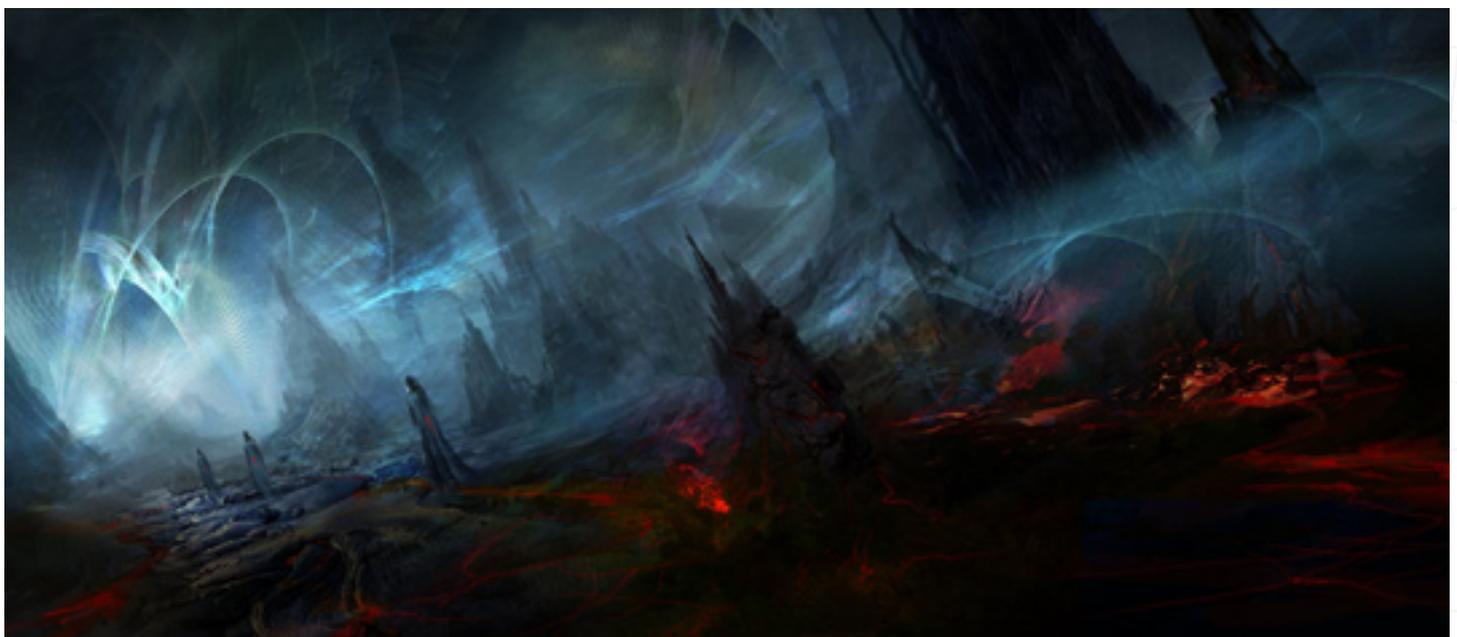
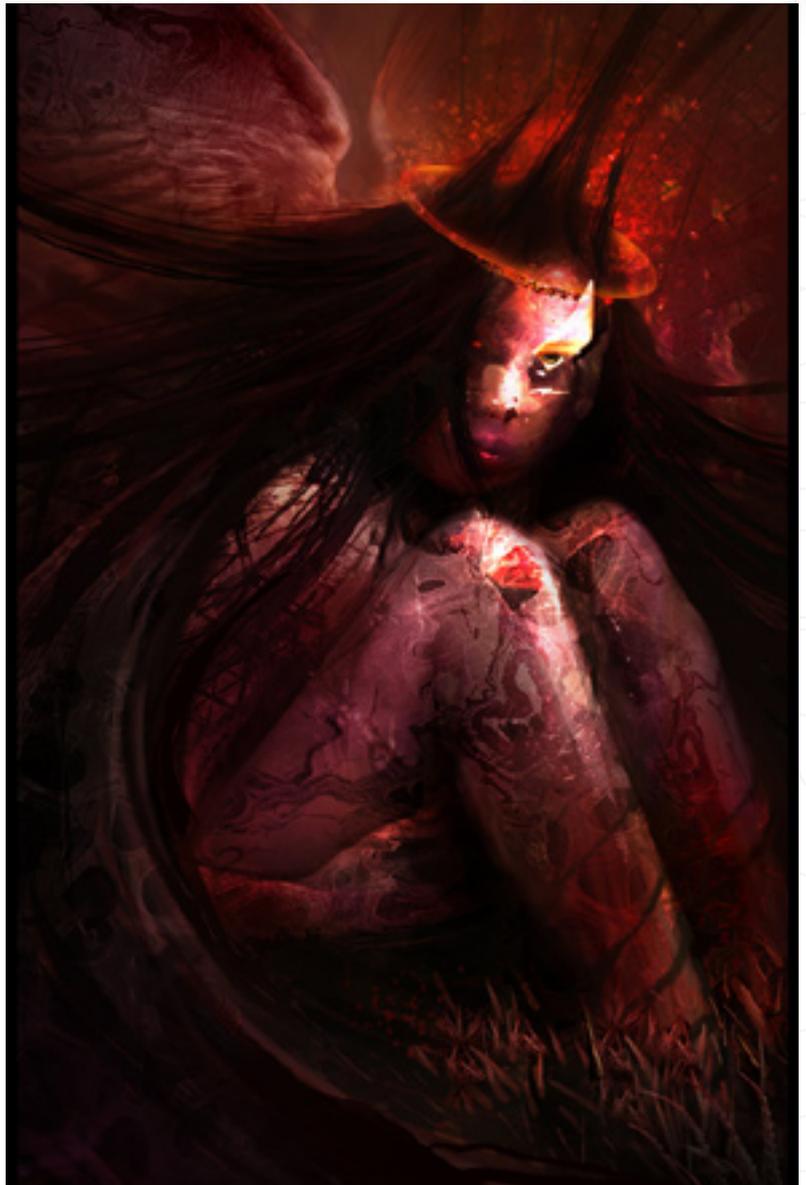
"I think it's imperative that a commercial artist make the time to produce their own art work."

Newly appointed studio Art Director for NCSoft Santa Monica, Philip is a veteran of the 2D Artist game and talks exclusively to 2DArtist magazine about his love for life and his work...

phillip STRAUB

Hi, Phillip. You have a bio as long as this magazine! Where did it all begin for you? Ha ha... I hope it's not too long! I never know what not to include in such things. My professional career began in 1995, working for well-known children's book author and illustrator, Mercer Mayer. He's really the guy that gave me my first break and I owe his organisation quite a lot. I also began freelancing during my junior year in college, thanks to the encouragement of my illustration instructor, Tim O'Brien.

What were the advantages of breaking into the industry in this way? The main advantage of working with Mercer was that his studio first introduced me to digital illustration. Before working on his children's books I primarily created my illustrations using traditional media; oil, acrylic, and graphite on gessoed illustration board. After working with Mercer for over 3 years I moved onto working as a digital background artist for "Funnybone Interactive", a small division of Vivendi Universal games. This strategically, although I didn't know it at the time, placed me in the cutting edge field of interactive games, allowing me the ability to ultimately obtain my job with major console publisher, EA.





You have worked in so many different mediums, in many different industries, books, games, CD roms. Given a choice, which would you choose as a favourite? It's really tough to choose a favourite since all the media mentioned above are really fun to work on and interesting on multiple levels. Overall, my experience with EA as an Art Director and Concept Artist has been the most exciting and challenging of my career. There is constantly something new to learn in the games industry - from a new fundamental art technique to the latest approach to custom brush creation. The worldwide digital illustration movement is evolving at an incredible pace and it's extremely exciting to try and keep up with all the new technologies and techniques out there. EA also allowed me the opportunity to work as Studio Art Director; expanding my responsibilities to a much more global level. Again, it's the challenge of games that keeps me interested and coming back...

What kind of influences inspire your fantasy work, and how does your fantasy work inspire your commercial work?

My influences for my fantasy artwork are derived from a variety of artists, both past and present, films, music and other random events. I really enjoy listening to progressive hard rock and metal whilst painting - it somehow sets the mood just right for me. I've usually got a backlog of sketches waiting to be finished so I'm rarely faced with a lack of inspiration. I'd say my commercial and personal work ultimately work together to inspire each other. I look at each project as a learning experience and am constantly trying out new techniques, workflows, and approaches. I regularly will apply a technique I discovered whilst painting, say, a book cover, to my personal work, and vice versa.



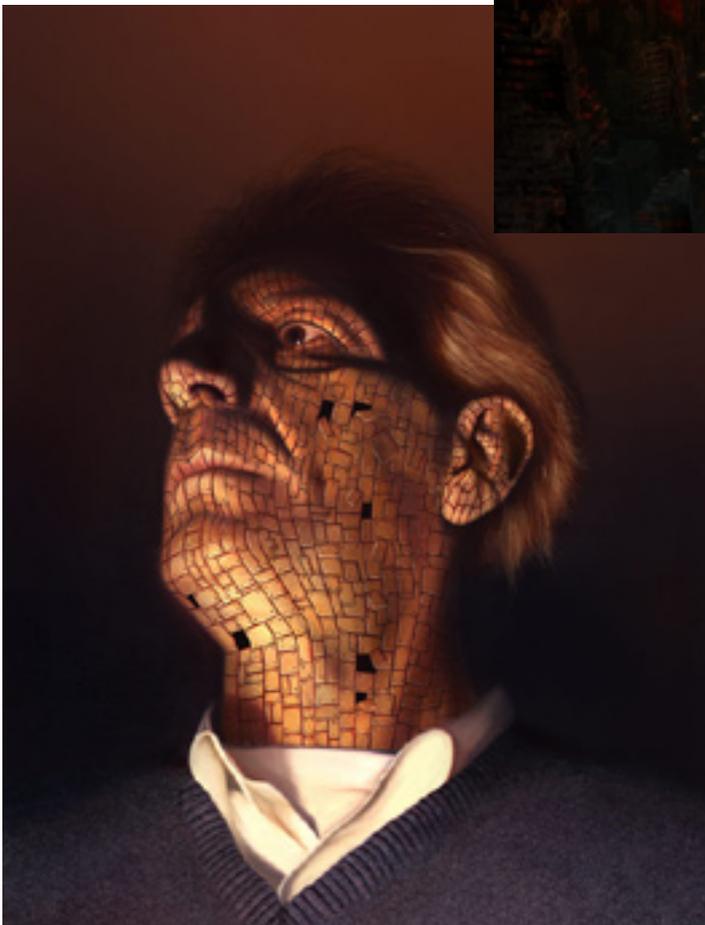


Is there a dream project out there for you?

Yeah... there are a number of scenario's that would be "dream projects". Probably the most ideal would be bringing some of the book concepts I've got in the pipeline to feature film development. Developing my own original IP is definitely something I'm working towards, and is the ultimate goal for me. Aside from that, working on almost any fantasy game or film with a solid storyline, excellent leadership team, creative freedom, and an amazing staff of creatives working with me would be fantastic.

What are the differences between being an artist and an Art Director?

I'd say there are massive differences between the two, and none, all at the same time (does that even make sense?). I see an Art Director being an artist, a teacher, a visionary, a manager, a leader, a cheerleader, a marketing executive, and a diplomat. Whilst an artist's primary focus is on developing their skill set and producing artwork with vision, an Art Director must balance that with a variety of other duties. I personally enjoy turning off and on my left and right brain throughout the day, which by the way is all too common for most Art Directors. I think you have to be a little tweaked to be a successful Art Director in the entertainment industry, and enjoy a bit of organised chaos and balancing of responsibilities. There was a time when I would've wanted to just sit in my chair and paint, but now I enjoy the variety of challenges associated with being an Art Director. It's also important to mention that I see all of the artists I work with as mini Art Directors.



Do you get any time for yourself and your personal projects?

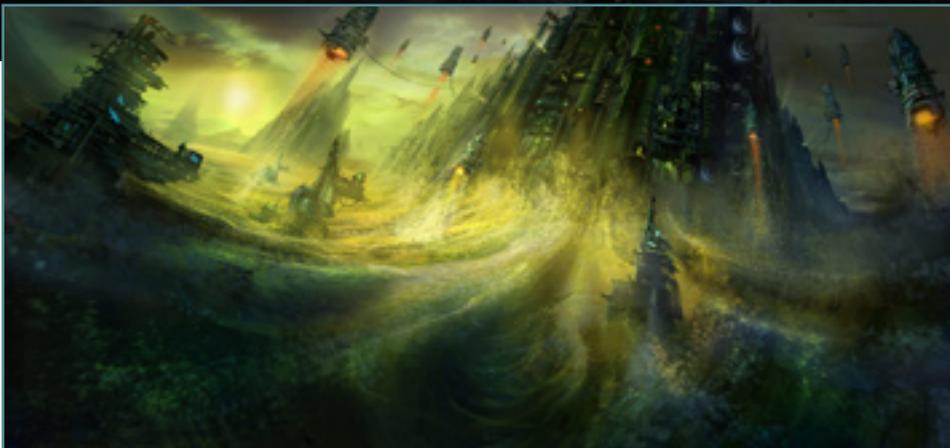
The real question is, do I make time for my personal projects and life outside of the industry? And the answer is, absolutely. I think it's imperative that a commercial artist make the time to produce their own artwork. So much growth and job related experience occurs when an individual is creating their own unique visions. I also find that the artist, or Art Director, that produces on their own garners much respect from their peers, which allows for greater influence and success amongst their teams. I encourage this with all the artists and Art Directors I work with, and the sharing that comes out of that is always inspiring.

Now a Studio Art Director at EA, what does the future hold for you?

Funny you should ask that... and now here's the breaking news, hot off the press: after more than three excellent years with EA I will be moving to Los Angeles to work as Studio Art Director for NCSOFT, Santa Monica. The studio will be wholly focused on concept development for the company and their many franchises. I'm incredibly excited to work with the uber



talented team out there, and to immerse myself totally in fantastic worlds and creatures. So, Los Angeles, here I come! In addition to that, I should finally be completing one of my book projects by the end of 2007... so make sure you add that to your Christmas list! All teasing aside, this has been a dream of mine for many years so I'm happy to see it finally come to fruition.



Looking back, which of the projects you have worked on have given you the most: Personal satisfaction?

Excellent question. This is a tough one! I think I experienced the most personal satisfaction when creating my section of "D'Artiste Digital Painting".

Stress? Most definitely "Superman Returns", the video game.



Artistic Freedom? Any project with Senior Art Director for Wizards of the Coast. Dawn Murwin allows for an incredible amount of artistic freedom. In fact, all the folks I've worked with over there, including their Magic the Gathering division, have been fantastic.





Do you have one piece of advice for an aspiring art director?

Don't forget to be an artist.



Phillip Straub

For more work by this artist please visit:

www.philipstraub.com

Or contact them at:

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Interviewed by: Ben Barnes

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BJÖRN BÖRKUR EIRIKSSON

Björn Borkur Eiriksson is the leader of the illustration team for Eve-Online. In this interview, Björn reveals facts about his ways of thinking and working...

"Perhaps I've been dreaming of the wrong projects all along. I definitely wouldn't say no to scantily clad females doing experiments"

BJÖRN BÖRKUR EIRÍKSSON

Björn leads the illustration team for one of the greatest Massive Multi-player of our time: Eve-Online. Creating individual alien elements is one thing, but combining them seamlessly into complete environments is his speciality...

Hi Björn, can you tell us a bit about your current location and employment?

Hi, I'm currently living in Reykjavík, Iceland, where I also grew up. I'm currently the Lead Illustrator for the computer game company CCP Games, where we focus on creating MMO games.

As Massive Multi-player Online are continual projects that grow and develop after release, does this mean you will work on the same game for the foreseeable future? Would you say this is generally a good or bad thing for an art team, as opposed to working on many smaller projects instead?

With long term projects like MMO's it's always quite risky that people start to get tired after such a long time on one project, but the benefit is that it's possible to emerge oneself much further into it and flesh it out. I would say it's in many ways down to the people who are working on it to try out new things to keep the project fresh for themselves, there is a whole world that they are working on and there should be plenty of things to figure out. Both have its pluses and minuses; short term projects can get very stressful and they lack security. I know a lot of people who have become very tired of the constant pounding of short term projects.



Do your designs have to have any restrictions as they will be used by the 3D artists, or are you totally free to visualize the subject as you see fit?

I like to start as freely as possible, and if there are any problems then I change or define the design better. I don't like restrictions much and sometimes feel a little bit sorry for the 3D modellers when I'm suggesting something complicated with just a few scribbles - it's something I lack a bit of discipline in.



It seems you have a passion for creating alternative worlds; one of things we particularly like is how all the elements (weather, lighting, structures, etc.) work so well together, making the environment so believable. Can you give us some more details about how you achieve this? My passion is definitely creating environments. As to why all the elements work together, I'm not

sure, but perhaps it's because I try to establish the mood first and foremost before anything else - a bit like thinking like an impressionist before anything else happens. I think that ties the whole piece together as a whole, instead of having individual elements that don't really fit together. In this part I start to think about composition as well. I try to keep a good

overview the whole time and take the image in as a whole and do not focus on small individual parts. All forms are really just silhouettes and strange shapes at this point and lack all definition. I try to keep it loose and fun and not take anything too seriously; I just scrub the forms around and if something doesn't work then I'm not afraid to make radical changes.





This, in my opinion, is the most important stage of all, because if the image does not work at this stage then you're either going to run into problems later on, or it simply won't work at all. When I'm happy with what I've achieved (well as happy as I ever can be), I then start to define what I've got and bring some definition and clarity to the wobbly shapes. Painting is, for me, a very destructive progress; if something doesn't look good then don't be afraid to paint over it and start again. It's pretty much all like this - rinse and repeat until it's done. It's a bit hard to say when a painting is done or not, and one of my favourite quotes is that, "a painting is never finished - it simply stops in interesting places", by Paul Gardner.

When you are creating this loose composition, are you working also with the colour palette and lighting, or does that come later too?

I pretty much do everything at the same time; colours, lighting - the whole shebang. These things tend to change very much over time though and I often end up with a totally different colour scheme than I originally started with.





Do you work with layers? If so, how do you divide things up?

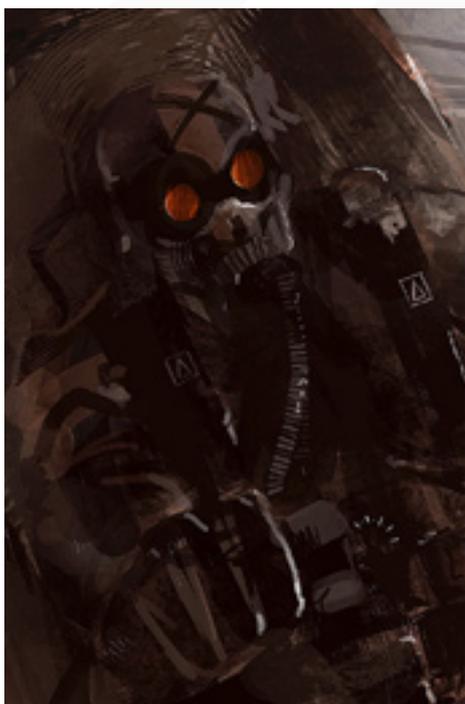
I use layers but usually not in the same way as others. I like to work with as few layers as possible so I usually just have the bottom layer and I create a new layer when I'm starting on something. If it looks good then I merge it down to the bottom layer. I used to keep everything separated on layers - foreground, background, lights, shadows etc. - but I felt it being too mechanical and I lost a certain amount of "flow" when working that way. It was also quite painful to figure out that you've been working on the wrong layer for the last 30 minutes! Today, if I need to keep a certain shape for later use (like a foreground element), then I usually just save the mask to a channel instead of keeping it on a layer.



Moving on to inspiration, which movies have particularly impressed you with regards to visual effects, and why?

"Bladerunner" and "Aliens" spring quickly to mind; the dark atmosphere and believability of the worlds is outstanding. "Se7en" and "Fight Club" have a very nice modern, dark mood that appeals to me as well.





When you are not painting/working what do you like to do? Do these pastimes aid your inspiration?

I like movies, I play some computer games once in a while (although less of late), I often play poker with my friends and play with my baby girl, which is perhaps not the most inspirational thing to make art, but is great fun. I do draw a lot in my spare time and I try to constantly keep my eyes open to the things around me, and so I probably get most of my inspiration from that.

What are your future ambitions?

I'd say I'm pretty much on the right track towards my future ambitions. I'm really doing everything I want to do, I just have to get better at it.

In that case, let's rephrase the question! A total dream commission/project is presented to you, and in your opinion it's the most ultimate thing you could ever work on, even though it's outrageous and crazy... what is it?

Well, the thing is that we have projects coming up in the near future that are in my opinion total dream projects, and unfortunately I can't talk about them...





Do they include a team of beautiful research assistant girls wearing bikinis? Hmm, maybe that's just my dream project... Hmm now there's food for thought. Perhaps I've been dreaming of the wrong projects all along! I definitely wouldn't say no to scantily clad females doing experiments, I just might be able to include some in my future projects.

Well I will be sure to interview you again if that's going on! Thanks again Björn, it has been great talking with you. The 3DCreative team wish you all the best for the future.

Thank you!

***Björn Borkur
Eiríksson***

For more work by this artist please visit:

www.borkurart.com

www.eve-online.com

Or contact them at:

borkur@ccpgames.com

Interviewed by: Tom Greenway

"When I begin a concept, I start with the story: what world or situation the character is in and how it affects their personality type. Things like this really help me to visualize it."

"When I started creating characters and worlds of my own, it was always 'where I wanted to be' or 'what I wanted to do' but in an exaggerated, fantasy way. It was like my escape from the 'real' world." ...



ROCK
JOHN UPCHURCH

JOHN "ROC" UPCHURCH

Hi John, thanks for taking some time away from the canvas to talk to us. So I can see from your Blog [<http://johnnyrocell.blogspot.com/>] that you're a 24-year old Scorpio, currently living and working as a Concept Artist in Atlanta, Georgia. Can you tell us a little about how life's path has led you to where you are today?

Well, I grew up in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. I started drawing at the age of 3. I used to watch my Dad draw and paint, and I thought it was magic. At 17, I moved to Atlanta to go to college to study Animation. After a few years, and a couple freelance jobs, a good friend of mine showed my work to his boss. I was pretty much hired then and there.

Do you still find drawing and painting magical?
Definitely. It's still amazing to me. Artists take a blank canvas and create life: pure magic.

There are a variety of different characters posted on your Blog; greedy girls, warrior chicks, bat chicks, action heroes, 'Pulp Fiction' characters, and even you! What is it that appeals to you about these kinds of characters – why do you like to devote so much time working on them?

I don't think a certain type of character appeals to me more than any other. I like characters with character; characters you can look at and get a sense of who they are, what they do, what they stand for or represent. I also like attitude. I really dig characters with a certain confidence or bravado. I tend to put a lot of my own swagger into the characters I create.

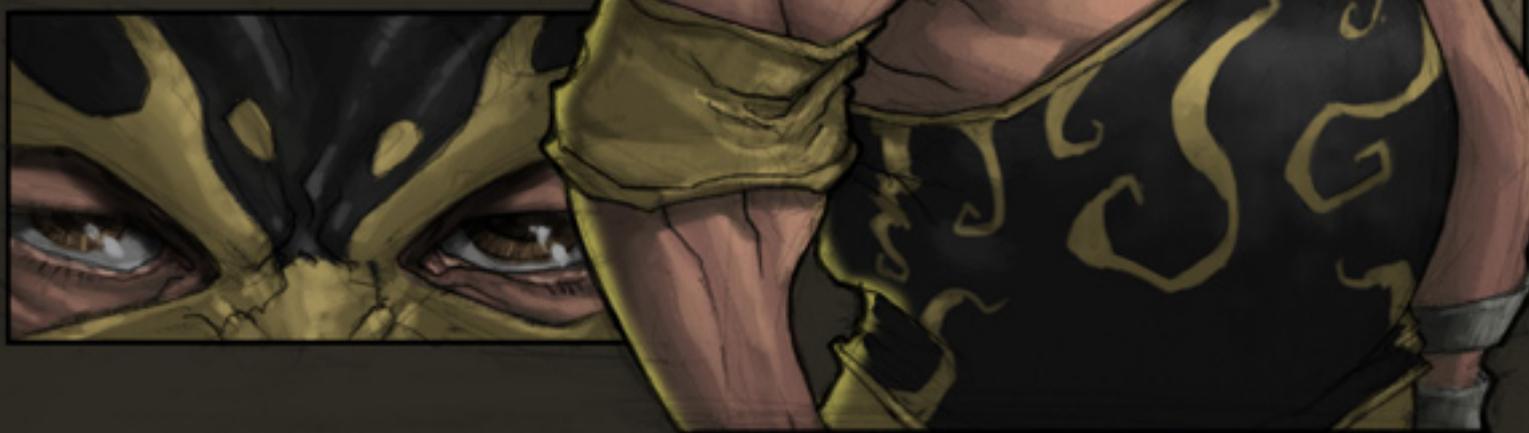


Do you ever find that you can become envious of your own character creations?

I guess you could say that. When I started creating characters and worlds of my own, it was always 'where I wanted to be' or 'what I wanted to do' but in an exaggerated, fantasy way. It was like my escape from the 'real' world.

Can you quickly take us through the basic steps of creation for one of your characters, from concept to painting?

When I begin a concept, I start with the story: what world or situation the character is in and how it affects their personality type. Things like this really help me to visualize it. Then I just start scribbling. I do most of my thinking with my pencils; sketching out shapes until I'm somewhat content. When I'm happy with a sketch, I take it into Photoshop or Painter and paint it up. I used to use coloured pencils religiously, but now it's mostly just a Wacom tablet.



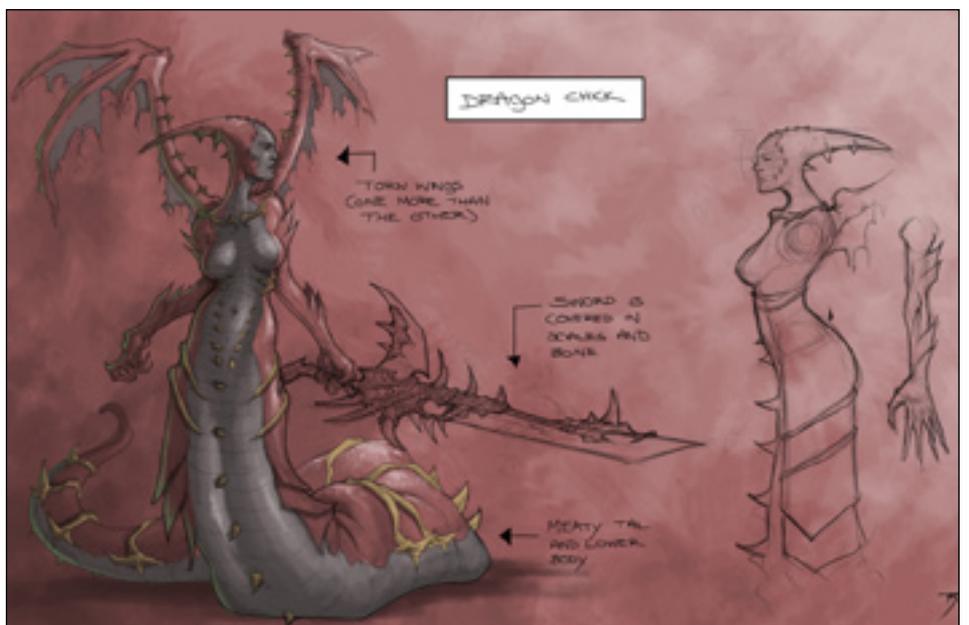
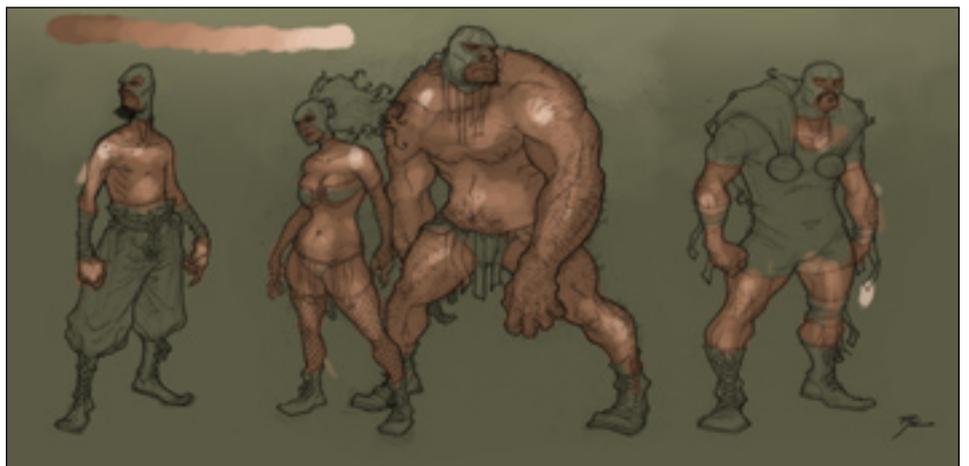


How much of your day do you find yourself simply scribbling in your sketchbook? What percentages of these "scribbles" go on to become fantastic full-on digital creations?

I scribble ALOT. I've got sketchbooks full of nonsense that I hope never to see the light of day. There are a lot of sketches that I want to take to full completion, but time is always an issue. There just aren't enough hours in the day.

Tell us a little about your collaborations with Nick Bradley. How do these come about; how do they tend to work, and what are the end results usually like?

Nick models a lot of my character concepts for work. At one point we had some insane task, like 100 characters in 5 days. It was times like these when we realised how well we worked together and how our styles seemed to mesh. So, we started to collaborate on projects outside of work just for our own entertainment. We would come up with ideas together, I'd get on the concepts and he'd model it up like lightning! We actually have some projects in the works now that we hope will get some major attention.





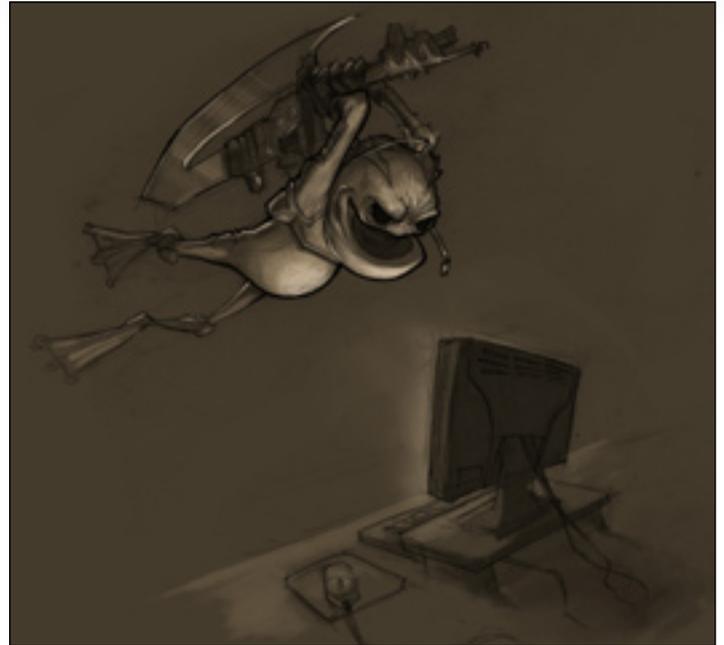
Cool, we'll keep our fingers crossed for you both! Have you ever considered tackling modelling, so that you can bring your own characters to life? Or do you feel that 2D is the best representation for your own artistic endeavours?

I did some 3D modelling in college, but it's not really for me. I like it; it's just not something I would do on a regular basis.

Let's talk about your female character creations; they all have very exaggerated hips, thighs and breasts. Now, are these just your typical observations of women in general, or is it more of an "ideal" that you're creating on canvas?

Both. I'm drawn more to the curves of voluptuous women, in both life and in art. It's much more feminine to me. So I try to portray that in my characters.

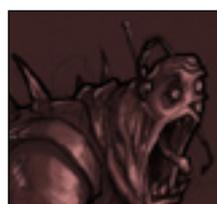




OK, so you are obviously into your comics and action films. Would you say that you gain more - or an equal amount of - inspiration from comics and films for your own artwork, than you do from other artists in the same, or similar, field to your own? What and/or who are your biggest sources of inspiration right now?

Definitely film and comics, but comics' stories more so than the artwork itself. Stories inspire me to create worlds, and in those worlds I create characters and so on. When I was a kid I looked to different artists for inspiration like Frank Frazetta or Norman Rockwell. But right now I look to people like Brian Bendis or Quentin Tarantino.





Did you ever create any characters as a kid that you think would be worth resurrecting now? Or do you think they would lack the attitude and worldly quality that your characters today have, due to the innocence of youth?

There are a lot of those old characters that I want to bring back to life, but they would really need some updating; more in the story than in their appearance. My outlook on the world is totally different now to what it was back then, and so the stories would be drastically different.

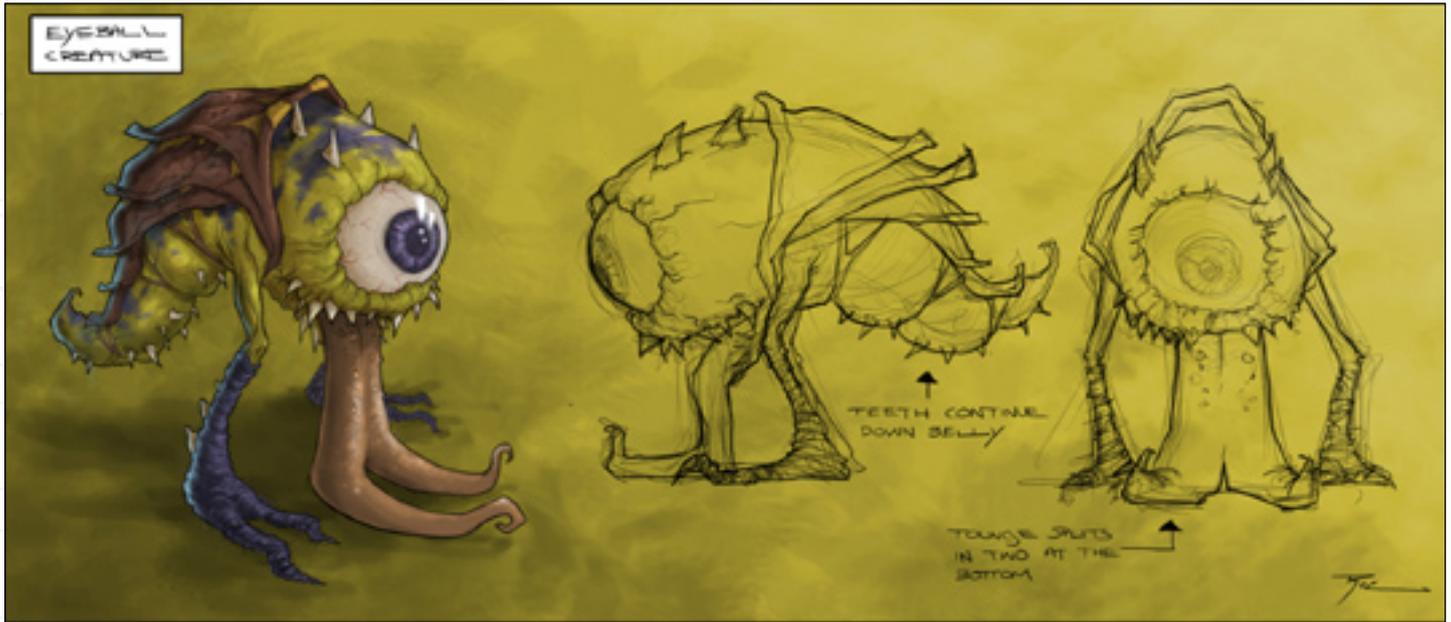
You appear to work using both traditional and digital mediums when creating your artworks, but which medium do you find is the most expressive of your personal ideas and the characters that you create?

What advantages does one have over the other, for you?

I'm better with a pencil, so I think I get my point across better traditionally rather than digitally. But it's more fun for me to play around in Photoshop knowing I can just "undo" if I need to. There's not a lot you can undo traditionally, which is why my trash can is filled with torn-up paper.

Do you feel that the full trash can symbolises a better sense of time spent, as it is hard evidence of your attempts, than when compared with the "undo" tool on a computer? Do you find that, when you don't have an overflowing trash can to bounce paper off that the computer can absorb your time without a real sense of it passing?

I'm always shocked at how fast time passes! If I'm in my sketchbook or on the computer, time just speeds by. I start drawing and I get in a zone, and before I know it, it's 3 am.



So, you're still young at just 24, but what do you imagine you will achieve in the next 24 years? Where do you think you will be; what would you love to be doing; what one thing in particular would you have liked to have accomplished, by this moment in 24 years time?

I plan to do everything from comics to movies and all things in between. There's a lot I want to learn and experience. There's a lot I want to say through my art. Hopefully by that time I'll have gotten a lot of that off my chest. I would love to be living in France or Italy, creating art for the world to see and be affected by. If there was one thing I would like to have accomplished by that time, it would be to have created something that moved people; moved to laughter, to tears, or whatever. To create something that made somebody somewhere feel something is a gift, so hopefully I can do that.

You talk about artwork in terms of it moving people as if you have experienced this first hand. What one single artwork has moved you most recently, and for what reasons?

The most recent piece that moved me was a couple years ago actually. I picked up the graphic novel "Superman: Birthright". I've never really been a Superman fan, but the images in the book were so powerful; so dynamic... they spoke to me. You really got the sense that this was a "super" man. A man whose sole purpose was to do good, no matter what, and to do that you have to be as strong as possible; physically, emotionally, and beyond. Those images, and what I saw in them, inspired me to be a better artist, a better father, a better man all-round. Art has that power. It's truly amazing.

John "Roc" Upchurch

For more work by this artist please visit:

<http://johnnyroccwell.blogspot.com/index.html>

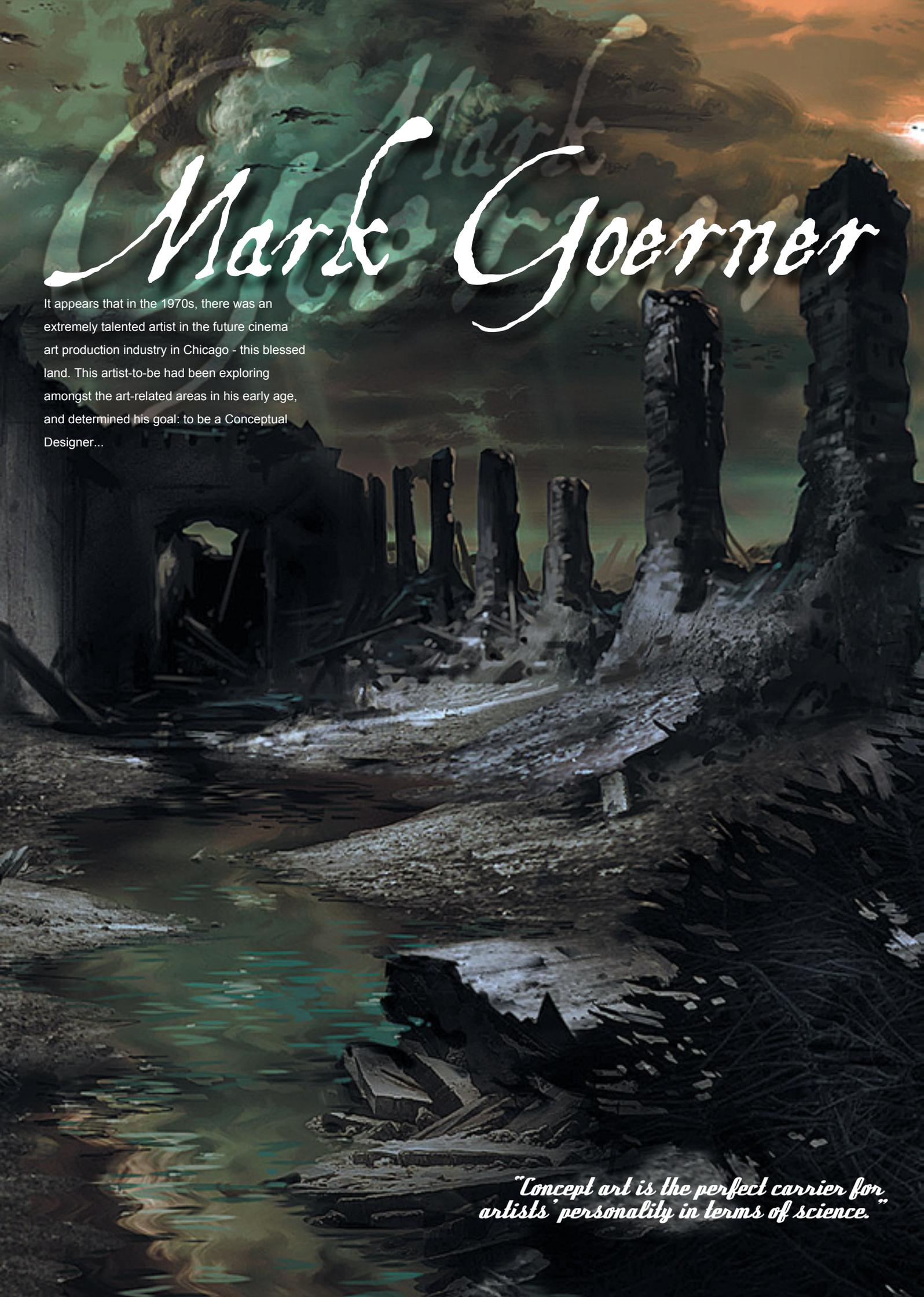
Or contact them at:

johnnyroccwell@gmail.com

Interviewed by: Lynette Clee



John



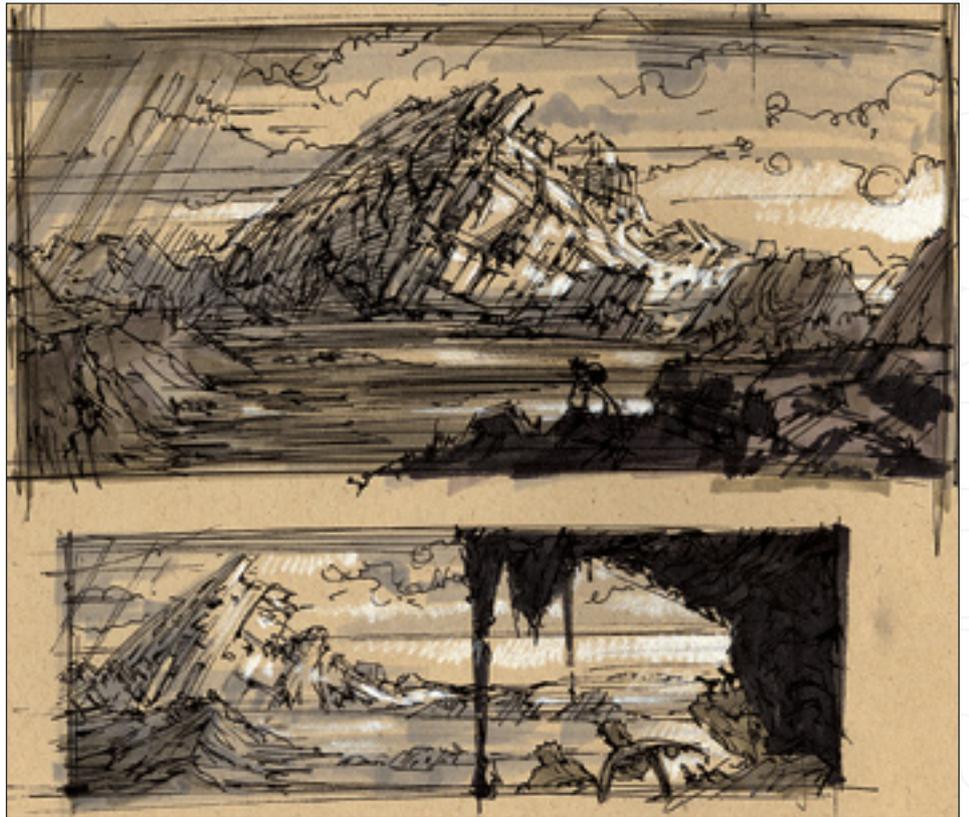
Mark Goerner

It appears that in the 1970s, there was an extremely talented artist in the future cinema art production industry in Chicago - this blessed land. This artist-to-be had been exploring amongst the art-related areas in his early age, and determined his goal: to be a Conceptual Designer...

"Concept art is the perfect carrier for artists' personality in terms of science."

Mark Goerner

Mark Goerner created various futuristic feature illustrations for quite a few film masterpieces. Those literal, comical figures were instantly transformed into vivid images, which also followed the cinematographic rules, and from there they were evolved into conceptual imaginations that were overwhelmingly inspiring. Just like the unified and balanced colours of Mark's iconic work, they not only represent his subjective interpretation of colours, but the wonder of his creativity. He was raised by a family closely involved in manufacturing, and at an early age his industrial inspiration helped fuel a passion for machinery, and a lifelong interest in the fabrication process and a curiosity





for materials. The feelings towards his design work urged me to ask such a question: "Mark, which is your work more focused on, the representation of art or the interpretation of concepts?" His answer was loud and clear: "Currently speaking, my design overcomes art, but I really hope I will be good at both one day!" Yes, he's currently one of L.A.'s best designers, but it's hard to position him as the best artist around. Mark believes that composition, balanced colour and perspective have always been the crucial factors supporting the key ideas of an artwork. Although he has been working in plenty of industries, most of them are consistent of a relatively common theme, which is the concentration on the view of a future world as well as the futuristic transportation and architecture. The future is limit-free, however, the design of transportation and architecture is restricted by the industrial capability.

GOERNER



His wild imagination of the future, as well as his devotion to the manufacturing technology, made him focus mainly on design, which is covered throughout his various works. Mark's projects include "Minority Report", "X-Men 2", "Superman", "Constantine", as well as the BMW, and Toyota companies. These familiar names are not only his trophies, but also his motivation for constant innovation and change. Mark says, "I tried to work on projects that are assigned by clients or companies with the same quality and interests as I work on my personal projects. Sometimes, ideas from films and video games also give me inspirations on something that I never thought about before." Mark's attitude towards the relationship between both assignments and freelance projects made him very reliable for most corporations and clients. Even those automobile companies which are punctilious about the data requirements and representation often invited him to join their design projects. Mark always finishes the assignments before the agreed deadlines. He



thinks that to arrange time for work is such a ridiculous issue. He says, "my solution is to look for experiences from the past, and devote myself to the research as soon as possible. If necessary, I'll try to finish work one day before the due date". In order to share his creations, Mark also actively participates in art-related teaching. By continuously striving for opportunities to express the visions of spaces not yet known, and to seek every unique pathway for authentic representation, he can now do an amazing job in scenario development and conceptual design projects.



Q&A

The Chicago School of the Art Institute is a reputable arts institute. From your art work, I can sense a kind of fastidious precision that is similar to the academic style. How did you find your current style based on the drawing skills that you obtained from the institute?

The motivation to learn new drawing styles from various schools in an arts institute drove me to go there. My way of thinking constantly keeps changing, which provides me more innovative ideas and assists me in learning new methods of observation and spatial communication. What I learned from the institute the most is the inspiration it gave me, which filled plenty of my sleepless nights.

Spencer





Trivialities in life can easily wear down people's momentum to pursue art. How do you maintain the sensitivity towards new concepts and things?

It was lucky for me to become an artist. As soon as you make that choice, it will follow throughout the rest of your life.

It can reflect the talents and emotions that you possess, and it can also indicate some kind of knowledge, new industrial technological skills and philosophical ideology.

Concept art is the perfect carrier for artists' personality in terms of science. I was

trying to bring myself some new experiences and inspiration from my personal interests, which can also be very helpful when I need to solve some problems in a creative way.



If you were to draw something for yourself, how would you prepare for it? Where would you look for the materials? How would you approach it? If I haven't got a mature idea, so I would probably draw some sketches in my sketchbook, then I would make some experimental models with certain shape, size, quantity, or structure. All of these can inspire me a lot, just like a conversation between me and the sketches that I drew in my sketchbook. I would also go through pictures and books that I have collected to fill the gaps in my ideas, using lots of material.

How do you usually accumulate ideas? Do you have an "ideas and concepts database" in your mind? Will you draw them into your sketchbook when the ideas hit you, or you will expect the inspirations to appear as soon as you're holding a pen? Most of my work is based on material from Internet search engines. I have a very large private library, and I take a lot of photographs. Through these resources, I can grab my inspiration and expressive materials to design and to detail my illustrations. When I do

my literary sketches, I prefer to avoid those boundaries and draw according to my own ideas. My sketchbook is a kind of exploration and entertainment towards new representation forms, and it also contains some sort of research of the places that I visited.

What do you think of the formalization and commercialization of concept art? Some consider this kind of artwork is not artistic enough, and even a little bit crude. What is your understanding of "Concept Art"?



I think a lot of artwork is very closely related to commerce; some is created for galleries, some are for various groups of special audiences. I think if your mindset is naturally leaning towards commerce, or your job is to create commercial art, you will come up with strongly expressive artwork, which will gain very effective outcomes and ensure your establishment in many art fields.

When you're working on a project, will you deliberately picture what reactions people might

have when they see your artwork?

Most likely I would say no, but I'm probably lying to you. The greatest part of art production is to observe and to listen to the responses from friends, strangers and clients.

What are the different challenges between designing cars or other transportations and concept design for films?

The challenges are very different. There are many restrictions and special requirements in industrial design, which are all different from

film design. Industrial or fabrication designs are more closely related to the side of the brain which is in charge of the logical and mathematical function, especially when the design itself is a very mechanical process.

It seems that you have very few artworks that are based on nature, but will you try to work on these topics in the future?

I have done a few artworks that have been based on nature. But my assignments are mostly around themes like futuristic space and



concept art. I hope I will have opportunities to explore more topics in the future.

What do you think is the biggest challenge in your career at the moment?

The challenge I'm facing is to keep up with my drawing skills, and to improve the quality of images under a project's certain circumstances.

Of all the artwork you've created, which ones are your favourites?

I think that, even though I like grand and complex landscapes, I still hope to create my personal artwork, rather than playing up to others. These personal artworks would be more abstract and filled with passion.

Where do you think your artwork will lead you to? Please share with us your personal goals in art production.

I want to create a large painting of the polar icecaps, because it will become a real, futuristic concept art twenty years from now.

What areas of restriction do you think that the film industry imposes on concept artists? Such as CG technical skills or other areas?

Using the tools that we currently have has almost made everything become possible. However, to find the right inspiration and to be an original, ingenious and articulate communicator, is a difficult task.

What film character design have you done previously? "Constantine", "X-Men" and "Minority Report" all fall into different categories, so how did you accommodate yourself to all these different projects in a short time?

Besides a few projects that are currently confidential, most of my design work is to create outer space, rooms and cities for those films. The key to this kind of work is the ability to shift between styles and eras, which was guided by the production planning team, and then the settled production outcome was created.

You've worked with many movie production teams, and have also worked for many big companies. Do you think the role of a Concept



Artist is basically the same in different fields?

For every artist and designer, they all have different ways of solving problems, even though they have the same background, and share the same age or interest. The challenge during the production process is to hire the right person and assign the right work to them.

In regards to the film "Battle Angel Alita", its original production was Manga, from Japan. It's not only an animation film; it also has a significant cultural difference. How do you prepare for projects like this?

It's just an animation film by Manga, so surely it will have a significant cultural difference. Since "Battle Angel Alita" is a comic that was released

ages ago, I can't really make any comments on this project. My preparation for a project with this sort of style at an early stage is to have a solid and thorough understanding of the keynote of the main creators of this comic and the film, and bring it back to life.

In the conceptual art industry, do you think being a freelancer or a contractual employee will have different impacts on projects?

The advantage of being an independent artist or designer is that you can choose projects and arrange your time freely. The advantage of being a contractual employee is that you can witness the early process of the whole project during its early stage of project planning.

What do you think is the hardest part in conceptual design: collection of materials, finding of the inspiration, the rationalization of technology or image representation?

The hardest part will be to have a broad range of knowledge in styles, framework and design. The key in conceptual art is to become a professional Concept Artist. On the other hand, collecting materials is a relatively easy task.



What are your suggestions to people who want to become a Concept Artist?

What I want to suggest is: doing such a challenging work, to take it easy is the most important thing of all. If you're lucky enough to become an artist and to be recognized, those different interests and expressed soul essences are the most important things. An art connoisseur often sees through your artwork to look for a deeper meaning, and not just what ideas you have, and therefore a good plot is crucial.



You are also very interested in interior design
and house renovations?

I'm designing a house at the moment, and
I consider its whole space as a sculptural
environment. I've reconstructed a lot of houses
and I enjoyed this kind of space reconstruction
and rebuild of the original design very much.



If you had to pick the greatest human technology, what would you choose?

Besides the computer, the most surprising things are those human achievements which help us to live in this planet peacefully together.

Mark Goerner

For more information please visit:

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*"Virtually every shot
in the film involves,
to some extent, digital
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Company 3 pushes new limits in DI for the
epic new feature, "300". Company 3 Studio
conformed and coloured Zack Snyder's Greek
epic...



300



For "300", Director Zack Snyder's epic re-telling of a battle between ancient Greeks and Persians, Company 3 helped to transform an old world into the spectacular, if often bloody, life. It also helped to spearhead a radically new approach towards making movies. Company 3, which has helped to pioneer the Digital Intermediate (DI) process through its work on such films as "Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest" and "Man on Fire", pushed the envelope with 300, raising DI to new heights





in terms of how it can be used to shape and refine a film's look. 300 will long be remembered, not only for its incredible box office success, but also for the highly stylized, almost otherworldly, look that Snyder used to bring Frank Miller's graphic novel to the screen. The look is the result of the novel way that Snyder has made his film - it was shot almost entirely on green screen stages with minimal sets and moody lighting that makes everything seem as though it were shot at that "magic" hour. Background environments were added during post production in the form of digital set extensions, matte paintings and sky replacements. Virtually every shot in the film involves, to some extent, digital fabrication. The exotic look was honed and finalised in post production, with each scene undergoing several passes of colour treatment in a DI theatre at Company 3. Colourist, Stefan Sonnenfeld, performed the colour work under Snyder's close guidance, with the end result being a highly contrasted look rendered in muted hues and which emits a kind of silvery sheen. It's similar to the look achieved by the



photo-chemical process known as "bleach by-pass." According to Sonnenfeld, credit rests squarely with Snyder for having the vision and the courage to create a film that truly looks like no other. "That's Zack's style," Sonnenfeld said. "It's not only the digital effects, it's also the way he stages the fight sequences and directs the actors, it's the silhouetted compositions and the striking cinematography and lighting." Before Sonnenfeld could work his magic, *Company 3* had to first prepare a conformed master. That was a logistically daunting task as the effects work was split between ten vendors located in three countries. *Company 3* had to boost its internal storage resources merely to hold all of the assets for the film's more than 1500 visual effects shots. "This was not a normal conform," explained *Company 3* DI Producer, Des Carey. "We didn't have the luxury of key-code as everything we received was a composite. As a result, we often had to eye-match from the off-line cut." Even after an initial conform of the film was completed and final colour grading had begun, further refinement of the visual effects was still on-going. As a result, new versions of scenes were constantly arriving at *Company 3*'s doorstep. They had to be worked into the film's master and then be sent back to the DI theatre for further colour grading. "Every shot was re-delivered three or four times as the composites were improved and each new rendition required a new pass by Stefan," Carey noted. "The new composite might have extra smoke or shadow and Stefan had to take that into account while updating the look and feel of the shot." Keeping track of all the revisions and colour passes was a challenge, but it was not unexpected. *Company 3* had a strong team in place to manage the details. "We drew on everyone's strength and our collective experience to tackle a feature as labor-intensive as 300," Sonnenfeld said. "I think we have a crew that is second to none, and we needed all hands on deck for this one." The logistical and technical challenge extended through the end of the project. In addition to the standard film master, *Company 3* delivered masters for D-Cinema and 70mm



Imax releases. Given the complexity of the post production work, it is hard to imagine 300 without DI. It is hard to imagine how the numerous revisions and colour passes could have been accommodated using traditional film methods. At the very least, the look of 300 would have been very different. "This is a film that people will look back on and say 'that movie really embraced the DI process and showed

what it could do,'" observed Sonnenfeld. "Zack nailed it. He hit it out of the park, and we were proud to be a part of it."

Company 3 - 300

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the
2DA
challenge

2DArtist Magazine introduces the new 'Challenge' Section of the mag. Every month we will run the Challenges, available for anyone to enter, for prizes and goodies from the www.3dtotal.com shop and also to be featured in this very magazine! The 2D Challenge runs in the ConceptArt.org forums and the 3D challenge runs in the Threedu.com forums. Here we will display the winners from the previous month's challenges, and the Making Of's from the month before that...

Camels

Stylised Animal challenge



In Association with

Stylised Animal Challenge

Camels

The Challenge

Welcome to the Stylised Animal Monthly Challenge. Each month we will select an animal and post some images in the **Forum Thread** as reference. All you have to do is to create a 2D image of this creature in a stylised / abstract / cartoon style, whilst keeping your creature instantly recognisable. We wanted to publish some content in 2DArtist Magazine on how to create stylised animals, such as you see in the many feature films and cartoon galleries. We thought this regular competition might bring in just the images / Making Of's that we need, whilst giving away great prizes and exposure. If it's a success we will start to boost the prizes up as much as possible! This month's animal was the 'Camel'. Here you can see the top 5 placed entries, as voted for by the public...

What are we looking for?

Funny and humorous entries which break the animal down to its most recognisable components; emphasize these in whichever ways you think best, and render your stylised / abstract / cartoon masterpiece. The rules are pretty laid back: please submit 1 x 2D render (minor post work is OK); it's up to you if you want to have a background; include some graphical elements or text on your image. Renders of the 800 pixel dimension sound about right, but the winners will be featured in 2DArtist Magazine, so if you can create some higher res images too - all the better! There will be one competition per month, with the deadline being the end of the month (GMT). For a valid entry, just make sure your final image is posted in the main competition thread before the deadline. We require the top



10th *Thuru*



9th *Joelucher*



8th *3ve*

3 winners to submit 'Making Of' overview articles that will be shown on either 3DTotal or in 2DArtist Magazine. These need to show the stages of your creation - different elements and some brief explanation text of why, and how, you did what you did. We will format this into some nice-looking pages to give you some great exposure, and for us some quality content. Each competition will have one main thread which starts with the brief at the top. All entrants should post all WIP's, give feedback and generally laugh at the crazy ideas that are emerging each month...



7th Kboss



5th Alzath



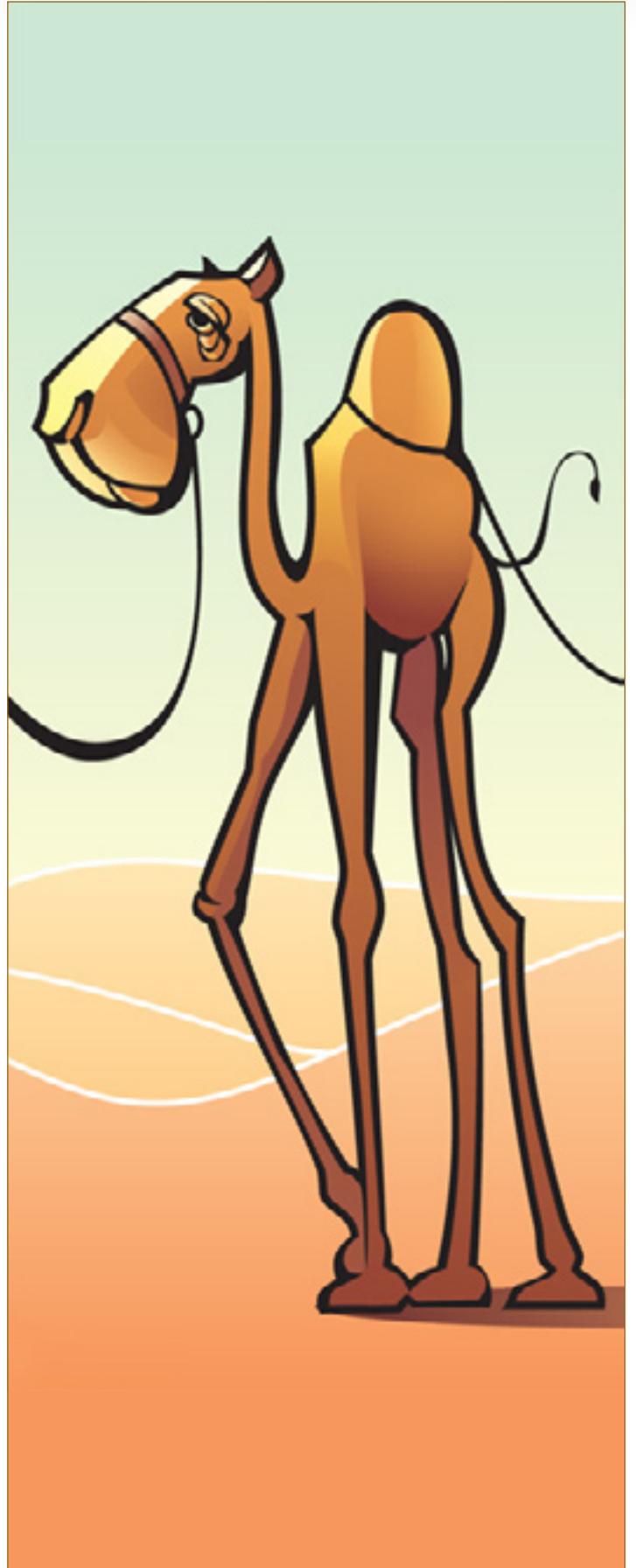
6th Tan L



4th Jakkas



3rd Oslander



2nd zethwing



1st Chuck Mate

Challenge Thread

The entire Camels competition can be viewed here.

The current challenge at the voting stage is:

Eagle

The Current Challenge taking place is:

Anteater

To join the next challenge, or to view previous, and/or current entries, please visit:

www.conceptart.org

Or, for the 3D Challenges, please visit:

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3D Challenge

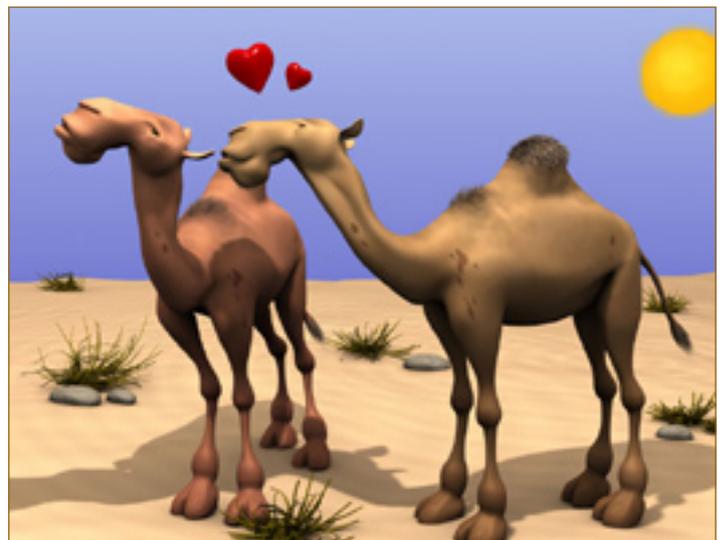
Here are last month's top entries from the 3D Competition:



1st Khalid



2nd Mim



3rd Shahin_bj

Making Of's

Here are the Making Of's from last month's top 3 winning entries...

3rd: David W. Ehlert (AKA Redhelert) When I read the goal of this particular challenge, I knew I had a good idea of how I wanted to roll. I'd recently done a few hours worth of researching octopuses for a previous ConceptArt Thunderdome, called "Last Man Standing". Round 2 was "The Escape" and, in that entry, I had an octopus escaping an eel by detaching its own limb that would in turn flail about and draw the predator away from the fleeing octopus. A few Wiki searches and countless videos online, as well as using the Smithsonian Institutes 'Animal' book (choice buy) for research, I felt I had a really good idea of how to draw an octopus and stylise it the way I wanted to. Since this particular topic needed to be humorous, I initially thought it would be funny to have an octopus swimming upside down with all of his arms balled up close to his body, whilst one auto severed limb stuck up in the air, essentially flipping the predator off as it swam away. Needless to say, this idea changed further down the road, but you're going to see it early on in the process of things. One other thing, there's a serious jump from where I thought I was done and what I ended up calling "done". I apologise in advance and will do my best to fill in the gaps. Maybe that's my ancient secret to keeping one subtle step from you guys <curls end of invisible moustache and laughs mischievously>. I worked in Photoshop CS2 for this project.



Fig01



Step 1 (See Fig.01) Work small; work fast. After learning a few cool tips from Don Seegmiller, I saved a tonne of time by working at 600x800 pixels for starters, and then sized up in pixel dimension as the idea developed. I also generally work on a few layers, if not just a single layer (for the sake of simplicity, layer A = background and layer B = my octopus). Right off the bat, I worked on getting rid of the white of the A layer using a large, soft irregular-edged brush, and a colour that helped set the mood. Please see Appendix 1 and Appendix 3 at the end of this tutorial to see the brushes I used (thanks to Linda Bergkvist), and exactly what they look like on a canvas. Generally, a low to mid saturation blue was all I needed here. The B layer worked in much the same fashion. Keep it loose, gesture, find the character and believe in its existence. This motto helps me to create anything. To begin, I opened up 2 layers, which are layer A (Background) and layer B (Octopus). Then I used a big, soft irregular-edged brush and dropped in some tone on to layer A. It was the same scenario for layer B... just with a shape set down. I knew I wanted this guy to be giving "the bird".

Fig02



Step 2 (See Fig.02) Two layers are now set up: layer A (background and layer B (creature), at 600x800 pixels. I started to develop the octopus by making some markings with a finer round-edged brush, just scratching in some general curves and anatomical features. I made it a bit smaller to allow it to “breathe” inside the canvas. I also added some noise to the B layer (Filter > Noise > add Noise > 3% + Default values). This allowed for some break up of the plain, old pixel painting and also created an opportunity for happy accidents to occur.

Step 3 (See Fig.03). More colour was added to the octopus, and I slowly hit the shape with values to help better define the form of the octopus. I’ve got my lighting coming up from the lower right, with an ambient glow. I chose my light source to be coming up from the bottom right. Keeping this in mind helped me to focus on how the shapes were defined and developed - either facing the light, or turning away and receiving shadows or reflected light. Nothing fancy here - I just stayed loose and allowed the values to slowly become more saturated/vibrant/rich.

Step 4 (See Fig.04) I took layer A and duplicated it, then set it to multiply and merged them together. I wanted to add a bit more depth to the background and this worked quite nicely for me here. On layer B, I added more detail to the octopus. For instance, I picked a complementary colour (e.g. a warm, pink-orange), set my brush attribute to “Color”, and then started painting on the octopus’ head.

Fig03



Fig04



Step 5 (See Fig.05)

At this point I was still working on two layers: layer A (background) and layer B (octopus), at 600x800 pixels. The eyes received a touch of warm yellow to help set them off against the cool background. I defined more of the overall shape, adding in some rim lighting and textures to the octopus' head. I did this by changing to brushes that have more of a spatter effect. As you can see, I wasn't too concerned about painting within the lines - I knew I could always erase those bits later on.

Step 6 (See Fig.06)

Here's the changing point. Layers A and B got a few new layers: C = smoke screen; D = text bubble; E = text. I also felt it was a good time to up-sample my image from 600x800 to 2500x3333 pixels. This meant that, at 300 dpi, I would have a better size, and a good quality print. As stated earlier, this was my initial "ha-ha" idea that fell way short. The octopus is getting away, with a stump for a tentacle, with blood flowing away from



Fig05



Fig06

the fleeing octopus. I personified the octopus by having it say, "B*****d!", but it just wasn't working. For information, the text bubble is a stock vector in Photoshop CS2. Go to the tool palette, and under the Rectangle tool select the Custom Shape tool. Up in the menu bar you should see something called "Shape". Seek out the text bubbles and draw on your canvas the size you want it, and voila... instant image. If you want a visual aid, please see Appendix 2 at the end of this tutorial (screen shot). At any rate, since it's a vector shape, you can tweak it (edit the shape and colour, and so on). Layer C, the smoke screen, was done similarly to the background layer by using a dark value and a irregular-edged brush to rough in the values and trail it off the canvas. I put this C layer between the background A layer and the octopus B layer. I went to Filter > Blur > Motion Blur, and created a sense of action by blurring the pixels in a direction from the upper left to lower right.

Step 7 (See Fig.07)

I thought I was done at this point, but one of my friends on ConceptArt thought it was funny that the octopus was giving "the bird". Eureka! The bird! Why hadn't I thought of that sooner? (Thanks Brendan!) And so, the "B*****d" text went "bye-bye", and I used one of the Custom Shapes, as discussed above. I located a bird and put in place. All of the other layers were pretty much the same - maybe with some details added in here and there.

<<LEAP>> (Secret sauce added here.)

The five layer set up: A (background), B (octopus), C (smoke screen), D (text bubble), and E (bird), made much more sense.

<<LEAP>> (Secret sauce also added here.)

Step 8 (See Fig.08)

Layer A (background): wash/watercolour using an irregular-edged brush (Fig.08a).

Layer A and Layer B (octopus colour): warmer greens/yellows added on a new layer, set to Soft light (Fig.08b).

Layer A, Layer B, Layer C (red and yellow solid fills), and Layer D (blue-black line art): solid fills, and line art (Fig.08c).

Needless to say, I wasn't happy where I had taken my image. I realised that perhaps my



Fig07

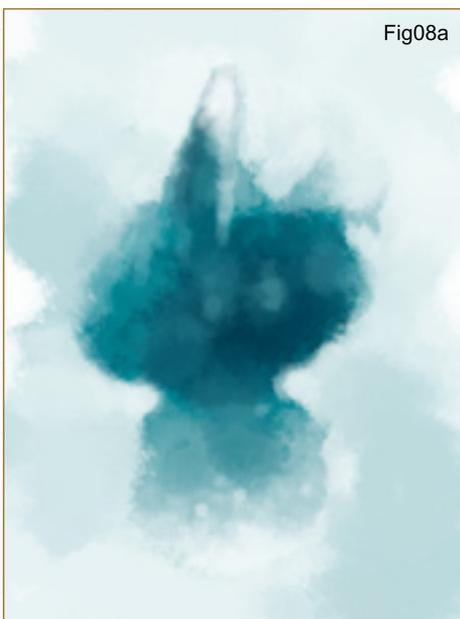


Fig08a

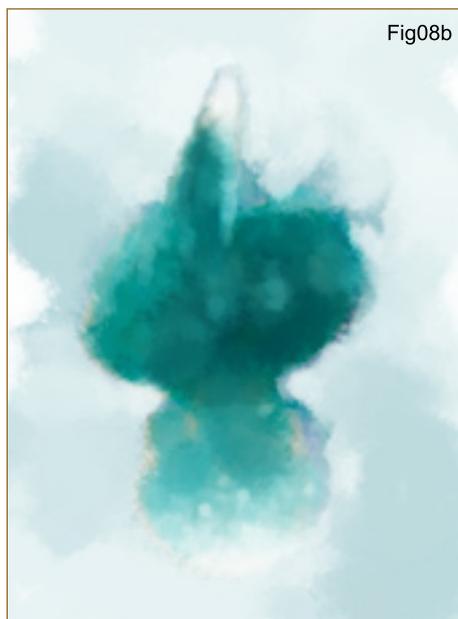


Fig08b

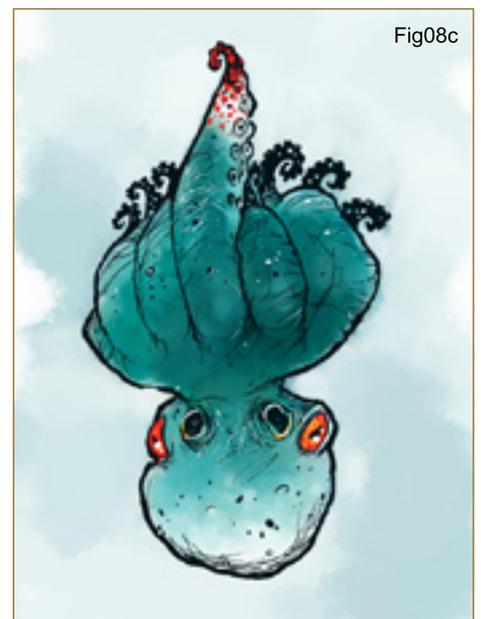


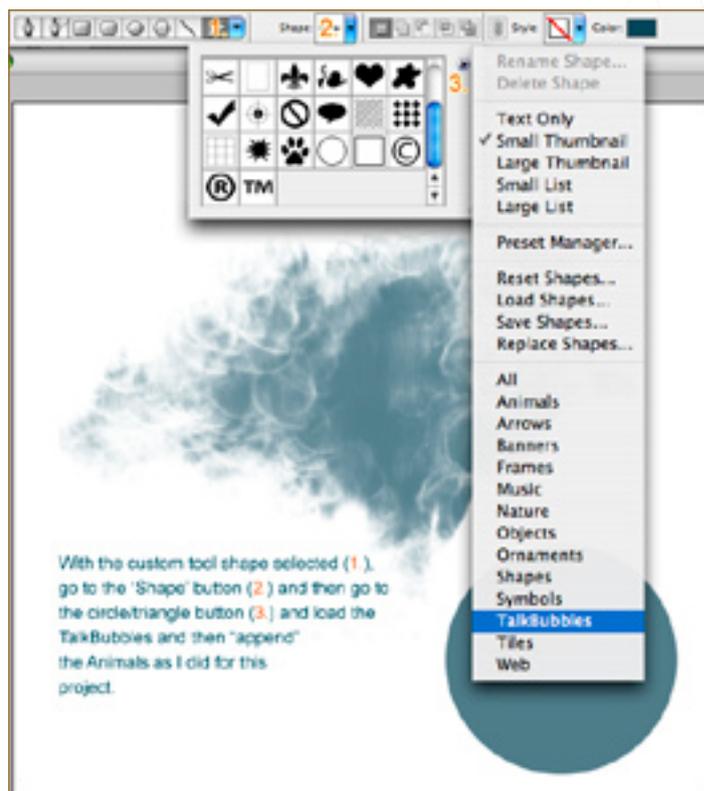
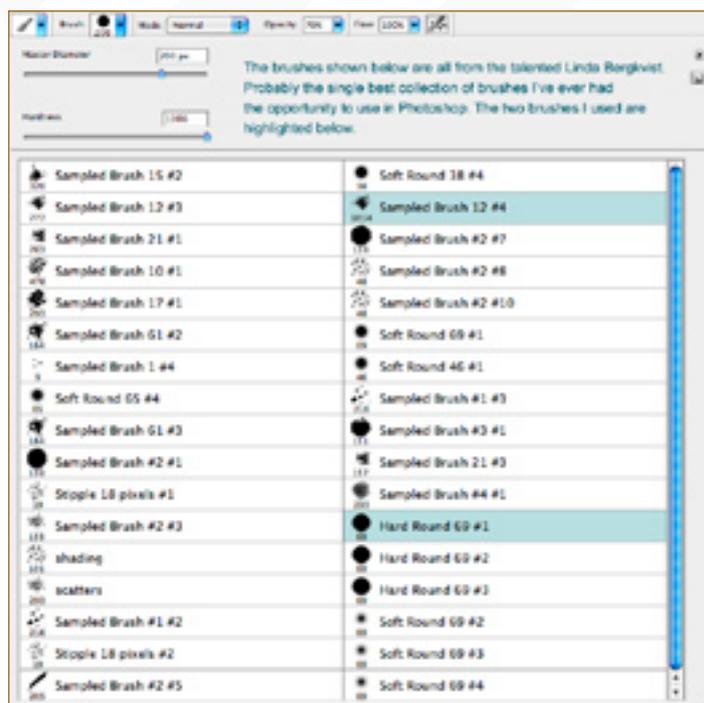
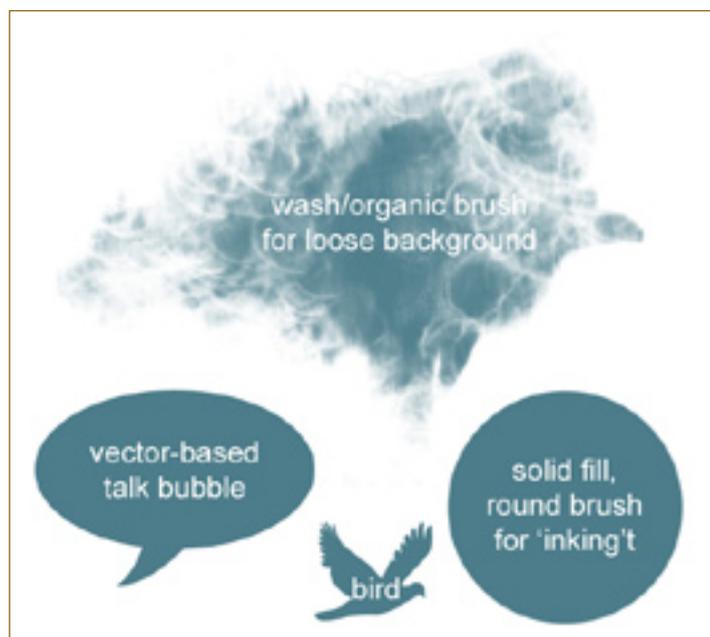
Fig08c

entry was a bit too realistic and was not in the stylised ideal for this challenge, so I went back to the drawing board. I opted to revise my original octopus layer B, killed the smoke screen layer C, and tweaked the text bubble in layer D. I no longer wanted to have a severed limb, but I wanted it to still be flipping the 'finger'. On a new layer, I quickly redefined the octopus form, using the old octopus as a guide. I used a hard-edged round brush, set to 100% opacity and 100% flow, and kept it graphic - scratching in lines here and there, erasing them at other times, switching to white to paint a bit, and so on. This was new territory for me, so I added a few new layers to the process, as I have explained and shown next...

The new octopus took about a half hour to wrap up., which was really easy after an hour or so of the previous drawing. From the bottom layer to the top, see Fig.8 for how everything looked. Layer A was still the background, but I had generated more of a watercolour wash with the blues. On top of this, I created a new layer, set to Soft Light, with some warmer greens/yellows to help set the octopus from the background (see Fig.08b). The next layer on top of these were my reds/yellows for the eyes and the flipping 'finger'.

Step 9 - Final

All layers were on, and I was content with a more graphic conclusion where an octopus is giving the bird, and saying as such (if you don't get it on the first glimpse perhaps the iconography will get the statement across better). Heck, it even looks like it's in the air and not underwater, thus suggesting a bird-like quality. At any rate, I hope my tutorial makes some sense and that you can go and have a great time creating...



David W. Ehlert MAMS, CMI

AKA Redehlert

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Or contact him at: david@cognitionstudio.com

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2nd: Bunny**Sketch & Brainstorm**

Octopi are my favourite invertebrates. They have a whimsical and yet creepy style about them - the way they look, the way they move, their orb-like eyes perched on top of their heads... Of course, being the cephalopod fan I am, I couldn't pass up the opportunity to participate in ConceptArt's "Stylised Animal Challenge", this month. I had a good experience of drawing my favourite animal and participating in this contest. I am currently studying anthropomorphism in art, and branching out



Fig01



Fig02



from my studies to do something whimsical like this was truly refreshing. I'm still not very comfortable when it comes to sketching digitally. Most of my linework I do old-school style, in a big, clunky sketchbook. I didn't bother inking the sketch; I felt that leaving it in graphite would suffice for now - after all, I could easily adjust it in Photoshop later on. It has been said that cleaning your linework up using the "Brightness/Contrast" adjustment is a rather unprofessional way of going about things, but with deadline fast approaching, I had to save my clicks (Fig.01).

Colouring

I deleted all of the white areas and isolated the lines so that I could colour in a layer underneath them. I picked a rich turquoise for the background, and a deep, carrot orange for Dr. Octopus (Fig.02). I picked a darker, desaturated orange for the shadows. I usually use my brushes at 90-100% opacity. This is because I'm used to traditional mediums and it feels a little more "real" this way. I also feel that if I'm painting at a low opacity (below 50%) I have an inclination to paint tentatively, without any confidence in my brush strokes. I find it's best to use a big brush and an opaque colour when blocking in forms or basic tone/shadows. Smaller, less opaque brushes are best used for details (Fig.02-03)..

Suckers

After a few hours of anguish, Dr. Octopus' head and tentacles were pretty much finished. I had to keep in mind that most octopus' suckers are coloured lighter than the rest of their bodies. I tried to give his skin a wrinkly, bumpy texture, but as you can see my attempts failed in a miserable kind of way. But no worries, that'll be taken care of later on. I used a marble as a reference for his eye, and I gave his tentacles some highlights and painted in turquoise reflections in the shadowed areas, to add some tonal variance (Fig.04).

Dressing up Dr.

I was originally going to dress the Dr. in a suit and tie, but I think the tuxedo and bow-tie suit him just fine. Keep in mind that nothing in nature, and not-so nature, is a solid colour. Even in a seemingly white shirt, there is a wide spectrum of colour. I felt that Dr. Octopus's grey-blue tuxedo would compliment the orange of the rest of his features. I would normally shy away from the burn and dodge tools, but I felt it would be appropriate in this instance to add some highlights to his tentacle arms (Fig.05).

Dr.'s friends added

I felt that a solid turquoise background, even if I added some kind of texture and loose brushwork, wasn't very engaging. So, I gave Dr. Octopus some friends. I'm not one to be overly-anal about my concepts; usually the idea I start with is subtly different than the finished product. The addition of octopi in the background didn't deviate too far from my original concept, so why not add them? I would have spent more time rendering them, but as I mentioned previously, the deadline was creeping up on me a little fast (Fig.06).

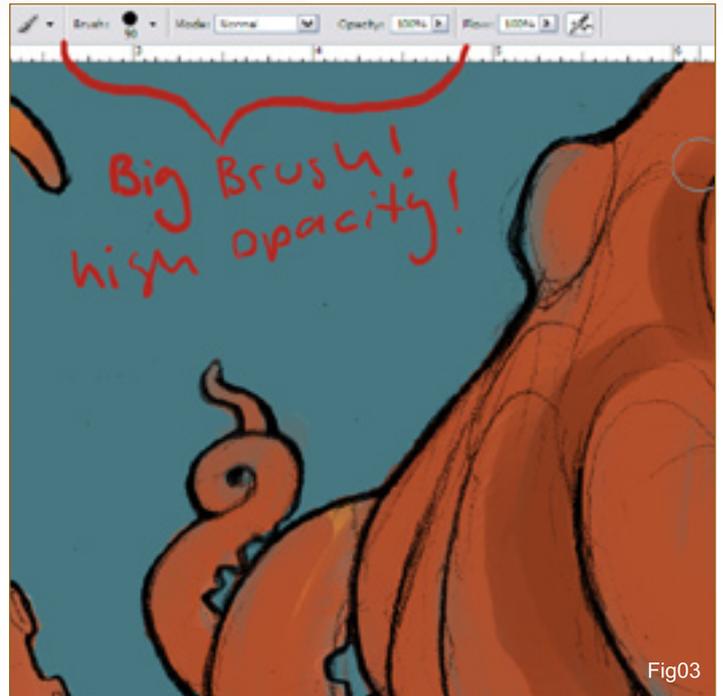


Fig03



Fig04



Fig06



Fig05

Texturing

I chose a suitable texture from my library (this particular texture, and many others, are available at <http://resurgere.deviantart.com>). I placed it in a new layer above my image, changed the opacity to about 30%, and adjusted the Color Balance in the texture layer, to suit my taste. I set the layer to "Multiply", to increase the contrast and saturation of the entire piece, however, before doing so, I masked out certain areas, like the octopus' eye and the tuxedo. I may have also turned up the contrast on the texture layer to add some intensity to the texture itself. I added a highlight to the Dr.'s eye, to make it appear more orb-like (Fig.07-08). I always save my favourite part till last: adding details. I gave the octopus yellow markings and I added some highlights to his right tentacle. It may not seem like much, but a highlight or two can add a lot of depth to an illustration (Fig.09).



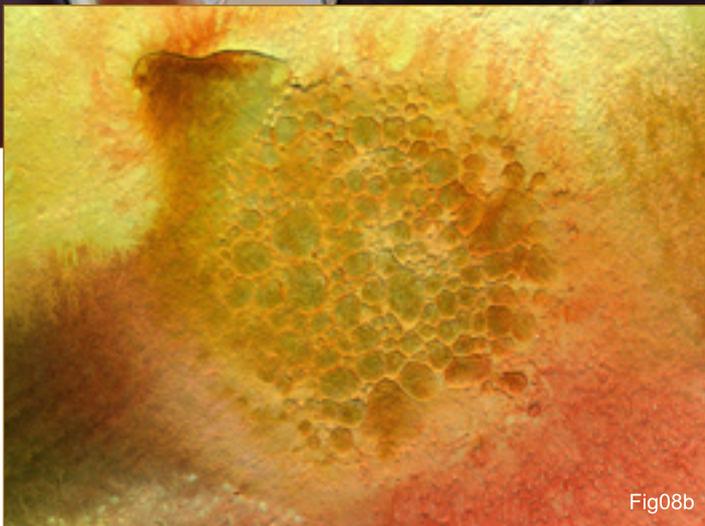


Fig08b

Conclusion

And thus concludes my journey. Keep in mind that with digital art, as with all kinds of art making, the key to success is perseverance, practice, and maybe a little masochism.

Nomi Meta-Murota AKA Bunny

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1st: Chuck Mate

Patri Balanovsky reveals the secrets behind his tablet which won him 'first place' in our Octopus Competition, held on Conceptart.org, and featured in the February Issue of 2DArtist...

Concept

As the concept of the Stylised Animal Competitions is to create funny and humorous entries which break the animal down to its most recognisable components, I decided I'd go for a more graphical, clean, cartoon-like approach for this one, as a nice break from my usual painterly artwork.

Step 1

After looking at photographic references (Reference 1-3) I started off by sketching (Fig.01). A simple, yet effective, form which represents the animal's most noticeable attributes and features - in this case - is the octopus' flat facial area, bulging eyes, and the fluidity of its tentacles. The aloof, and somewhat bored, expression was a personal touch, as I felt this was something that the animal communicated to me.



Reference 1



Reference 2



Reference 3

Step 2

Once I was happy with the general shape and features of my sketch, I turned its colour from black to bright purple, but it could have been any bright colour for that matter. Since I was going to use the Pen tool to redraw the entire thing on a new layer, brightening the sketch helped me to better see what I was drawing on top (Fig.02).

Step 3

With the Pen tool, I started tracing the drawing beneath, creating a cleaner, more defined, version of it (Fig.03).

Step 4

This was where I finished line art of the octopus, on a new layer, with the sketch showing through from underneath. For line weight variation (so that the line work didn't look too dull or lifeless), I erased and reworked my drawing in several parts (facial area, tips of the tentacles, etc.) (Fig.04).

Step 5

Once I deleted the initial sketch layer, I was left with my clean line art. I then proceeded to make a selection of my animal, using the Magic Wand tool, and I cut and pasted it into a new layer (Fig.05).



Fig01



Fig02



Fig03



Fig04



Fig05



Fig06

Step 6

On a Multiply blending mode layer on top, I filled in the octopus' selection with a colour of my choice, which in this case was a dark purple, and mustard yellow for its eye (Fig.06).

Step 7

Using a Lighten blending mode layer on top, I filled, again, the octopus' selection with the same purple colour that I used in the previous step. I lowered the layer opacity to 70% or 80%, thus colouring my black line art dark purple (Fig.07).

Step 8

With custom made brushes (a round one, and a rectangular one, with both Spacings set to 180%, and the Angle Jitter controls set to "Direction"), and using the dark purple colour of the line work, I created the animal's suction units. With another custom made brush, on an Overlay blending mode layer, I used white to scatter some texture work onto the skin on the head area. (When applying white in an Overlay layer, on top of a painting, we brighten and saturate every colour that lies beneath.) Selecting the inner area of the octopus' tentacles, I then filled in a bluish gradient, for some colour variation (Fig.08).

Step 9

I added some lighting to the animal to further define its shape, using a light bluish purple brushed inside a selection of the octopus' body, so that the line work wasn't affected. I applied some dark ochre to the eye, and a small white dot. I selected some of the far tentacles and faded them into white, to add some depth (Fig.09).



Fig07



Fig08



Fig09



Final On a new layer underneath my octopus, I filled in a nice turquoise colour and used a darker blue with a custom made brush for the coral-like texture work. On a layer between my animal and the background, I filled in, with white, a selection of the octopus - expanded by 20 pixels. I drew a speech balloon and left it blank. You'll have to guess what this dude has to say. Some more minor colour adjustments were made, and then he was done. And that's about it.

Patric Balanovsky

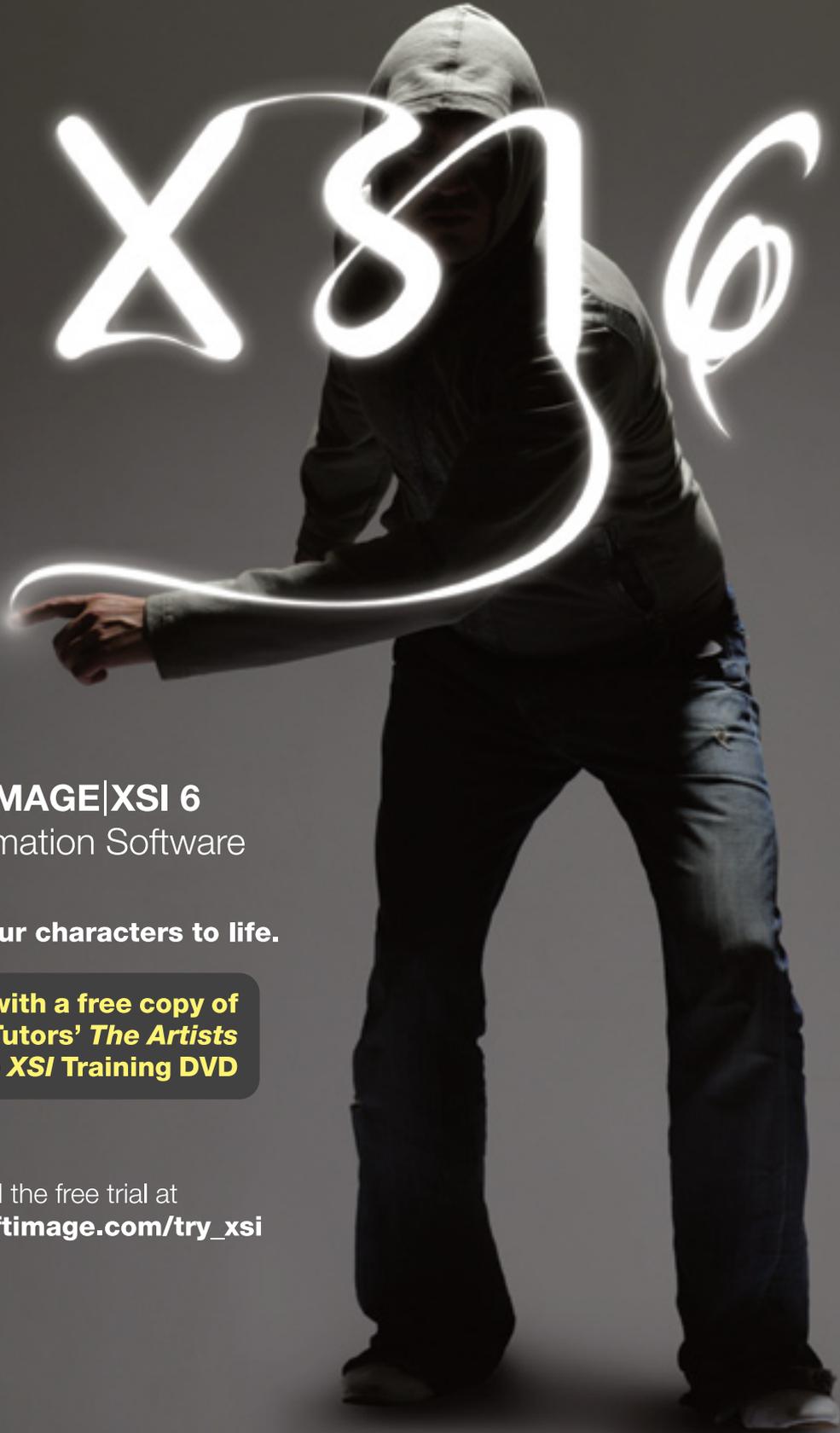
AKA Chuck mate

For more work by this artist please visit:

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You can follow an in-depth making of this image in the May issue of
2DArtist Magazine



Finale

B. Börkur Eiríksson

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You can follow an in-depth interview
with this Bjorn in this issue of
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Under the root, My kingdom

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You can follow the making of for this image later in this issue of 2DArtist

Explosion

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Finding Unknown Kadath

Sergey Musin

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You can follow the making of for this image in the May Issue of 2DArtist Magazine.

Melody of Spring

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You can follow an in-depth interview with Kuang Hong in the March 2006 Issue of 2DArtist Magazine.







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You can follow an in-depth with this artist
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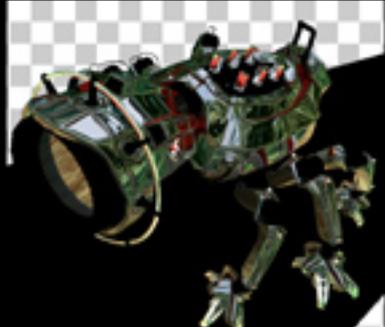
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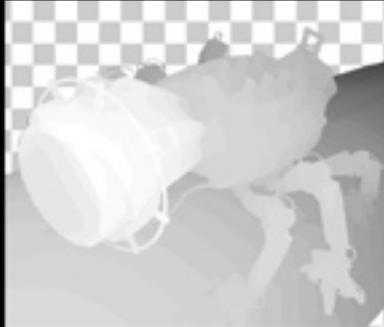
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COLOR



REFLECTIONS



DEPTH



SHADOWS



THE POWER OF LAYERS

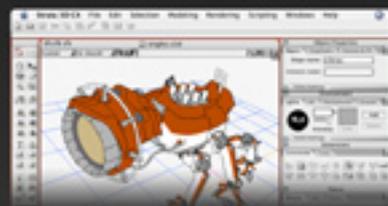


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Custom Brushes

In the following tutorial I will discuss the creation and use of some custom brushes in helping to paint an industrial scene. Photoshop CS now comes with a vast array of different brushes that utilise a number of settings to help the process of painting and create effects that essentially speed up the process. As a result you will more than likely find a number of them suitable for your needs but there are always instances when you cannot find the right brush for the job.

"This is when the ability to customise existing brushes or create them from scratch proves invaluable."

Custom Brushes

Created In:

Software Version Information

Preparation

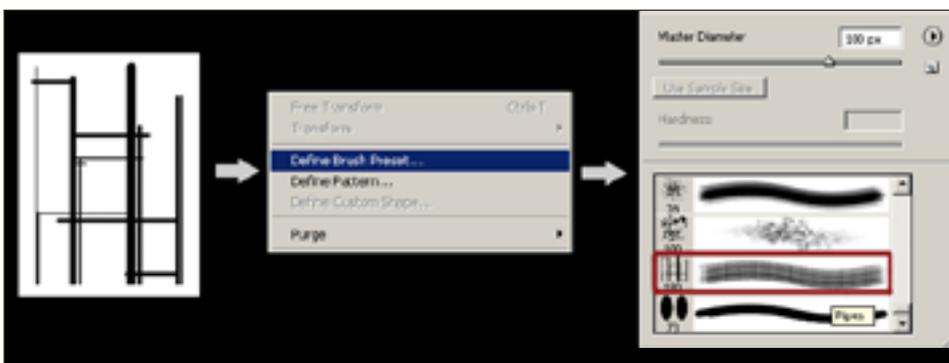
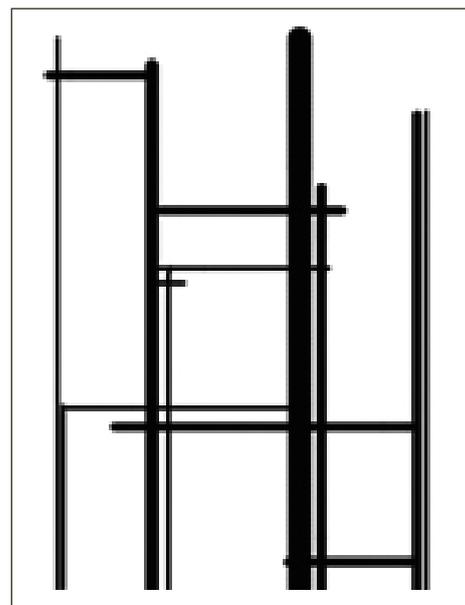
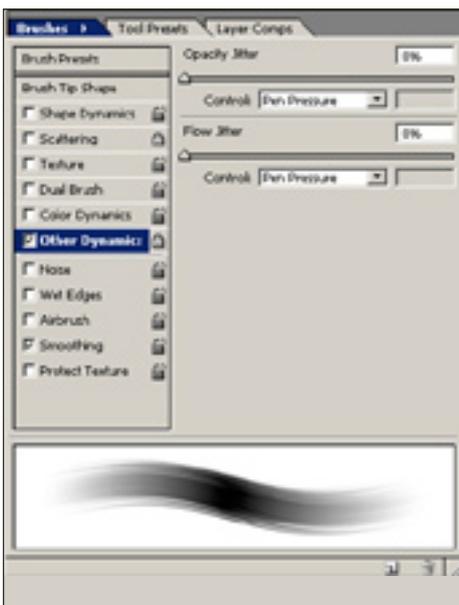
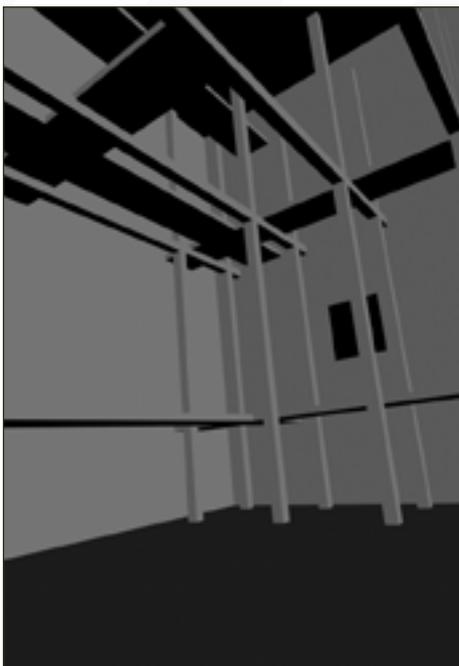
Quite often before beginning a painting I will create a very basic scene in 3D in order to establish the correct perspective and viewpoint. This is a quick and easy way to experiment with different compositions and fields of vision which can lend a certain dynamic to the image. Fig01 shows a simple scene composed of boxes which is shown through the camera and by altering the FOV I was able to create a somewhat distorted perspective which helped exaggerate a sense of height within the chamber.

Tonal Range

Using this background render as a guide I began to block in the main tonal ranges on a separate layer keeping everything black and white to begin with. The reason for doing this is that if the light looks convincing in the picture then you are half way to getting a decent result. Fig02 shows what this layer looks like when the main areas of light and dark are blocked in. You can see that I have maintained the elevated walkways and vertical strokes which will become the girders. At this stage I used one of the default spatter brushes which looks similar to Fig03.

Building the Detail

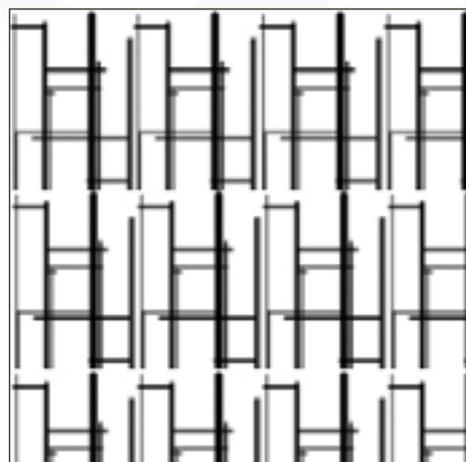
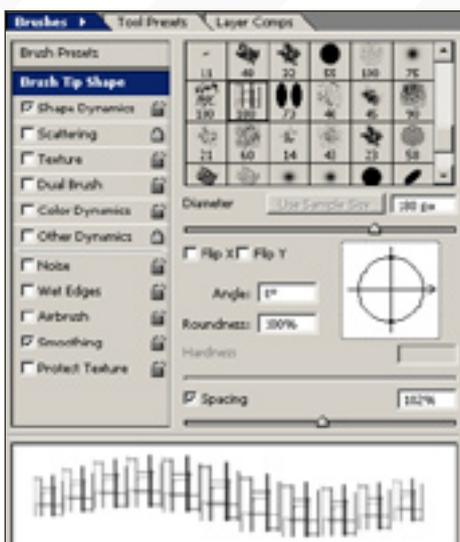
Now that the light source has been established it is time to build on some of the details, the first of which will be some pipework that will adorn the walls. Following the initial render as a guide one could simply draw in vertical lines to describe these but creating a quick custom brush will help speed things up. In a new file I made some



random horizontal and vertical strokes (shift key held down) using a standard hard edged brush (Fig04). I now go to the main menu bar and click on Edit – Define Brush Preset and name the brush “Pipes”. Now when you click on the Brush Preset Picker you should see the new brush in the list as seen on the right in Fig05.

In order for this brush to become useable we must alter the spacing under the Brushes palette. In Fig06 you can see that it is set to 102% which means that when you drag it across the canvas the pipework does not overlap.

Now when the brush is used it creates an even pattern as seen in Fig07. The next step was to add a new layer and draw a vertical line of pipes and then flipping the brush around 180% draw a line adjacent to it. These can then be transformed using the scale and skew tools under the edit menu to fit the left wall so that the perspective matches the render as seen in Fig08. The same procedure was followed for



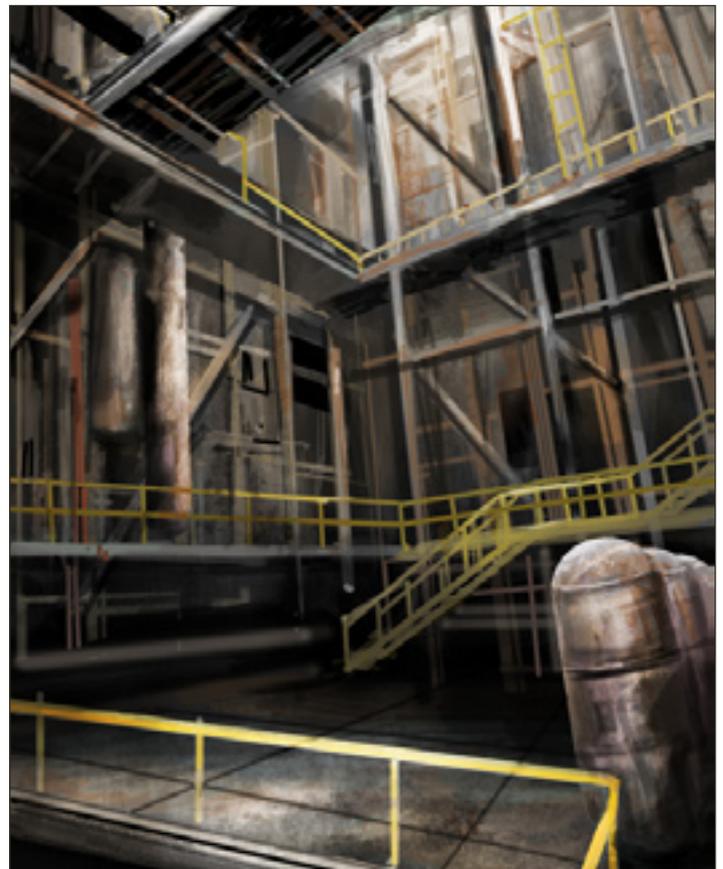
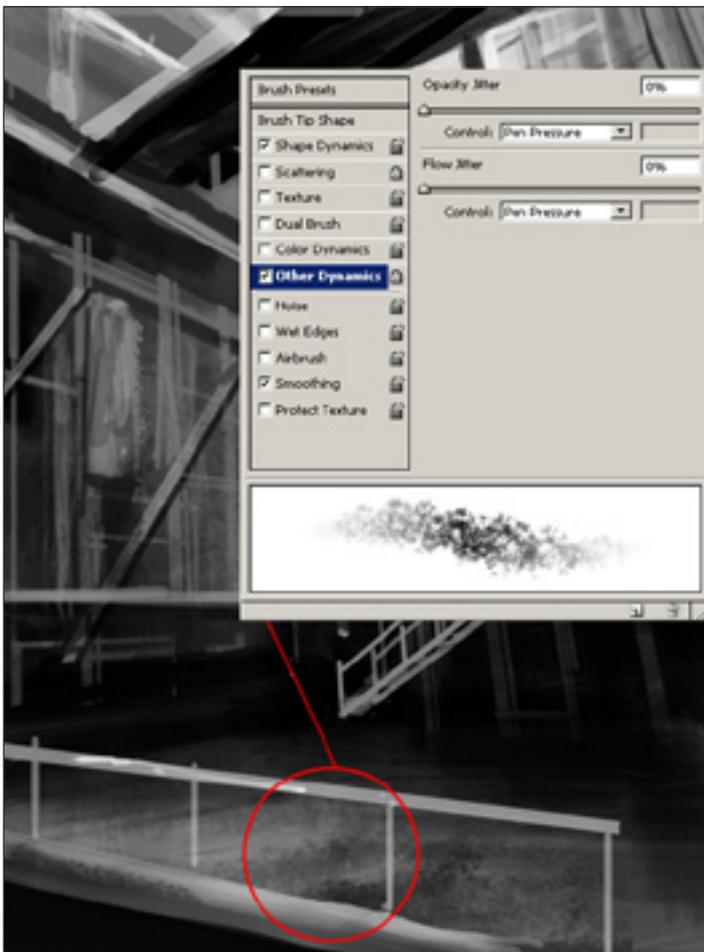
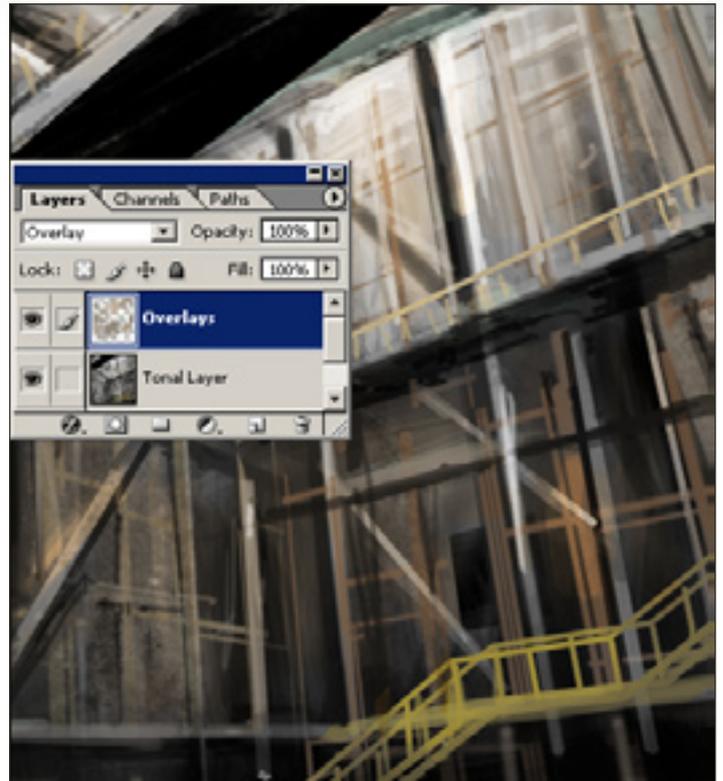
the back wall on the right. The pipes could of course have been hand drawn but this was a very quick method which gave a satisfactory result. Using a standard hard edged brush I then elaborated the details by adding further support structures and handrails as well as a staircase going up to the lower gangway (Fig09).

Dirt

To add some dirt and staining to the floor I used as a starting point a photograph of some old paintwork peeling off stone as seen in Fig10. I made a selection area of the red areas and then pasted this into a new file onto a white background. With some tweaks to erase any evidence of straight edges I then defined a new brush. By altering the opacity settings to that of pen pressure and changing the angle jitter to around 24% I now had a new brush as shown in Fig11. You will also notice that I have made some marks along the left wall to help tie the areas together.

Colour

The picture was now starting to come together but what was missing was a colour scheme. This I did on a new layer which was set to Overlay blending mode and so would not interfere too much with the tonal ranges. I decided for a standard rust type brown which would give the scene a sense of age and also added some cooler blue grey areas to create some contrast. From here I continued to add more detail; the suggestion of cylinders on the left wall, cables, floor tiles and some extra handrails



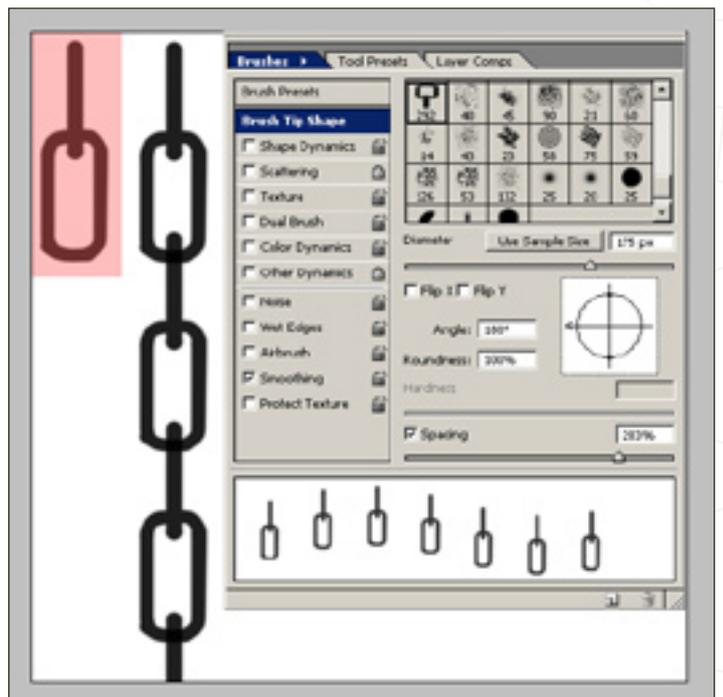
which serve as a structural device to aid the composition (Fig13). You will also notice the three main cylinders in the foreground on the right which were quickly added into the 3D scene in order that they matched the perspective and then pasted into the image.

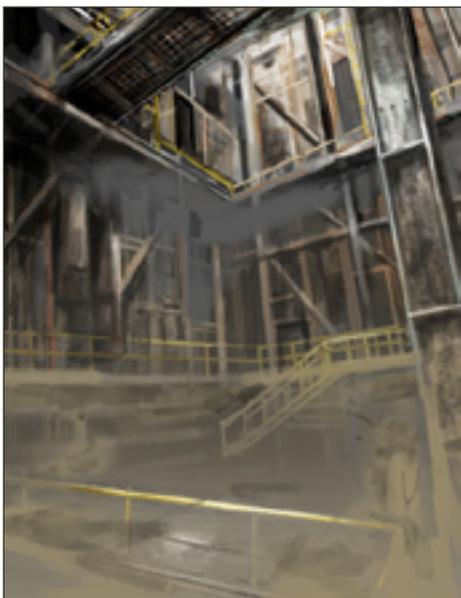
More Dirt

The composition was struggling to cope with the seemingly awkwardly positioned cylinders and so I added a large girder, vaulting upward from the bottom right corner. As this was a foreground object it demanded some detail and so I created a new "rust" brush which can be seen in Fig14. The actual brush can be seen in the upper white square and its texture below. By using the same brush to colour dodge one can achieve an effect to help describe light reflecting of the clean areas of metal.

Chains

In homage to the film "Alien", I decided to hang some chains inside the chamber (If you have seen the film you will know to what I am referring!). This involved creating another custom brush; the process of which can be traced in Fig15. Stage one was to roughly draw two links as seen on the far left in red. Then as before, define this as a new brush and alter the spacing within the brushes palette (in this case 283%). This essentially means that when you draw in a straight line the links have enough space between them to form a chain. Make sure to check the angle setting in order that the chain is created in the right direction – 180° in this instance. These can then be drawn vertically in the image and then skewed to match the perspective as seen in Fig16.





Finishing Touches

To complete the image I decided to paint over the floor mounted cylinders and add some colour gradients that will add mood and depth to the scene and use various blending modes. Each will be done on a separate layer so as to maximize control and further adjustments. The first layer will be set to Soft Light and will add a cool, dull green value to the bottom section of the image (Fig17). The second layer will represent the warm aspect of the light that streams in from the upper left corner which in this case will be a strong pink set eventually to Screen mode with around 50% (Fig18). Fig19. Shows the main light source filtering in and reflecting on the floor and hand rails. This will also be set to Screen mode with around 45% opacity. Finally Fig20 shows a shadow layer which will darken areas hidden from the light and increase the sense of gloomy diffused light which is quickly soaked up in the chamber. Fig 21 shows all of these layers switched on and set to their respective blending modes.



Conclusion

I hope that you have enjoyed this tutorial and have also learnt something of the usefulness of custom brushes in the process. The image is far from polished and more of a concept sketch, but my intention was to demonstrate that by taking a short amount of time to utilise the tools in Photoshop one can ultimately save time by creating new brush presets.

Richard Tilbury

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SPEED PAINTING

Welcome to the Speed Painting section of the Mag. We asked 2 artists to produce a speed painting based on a simple one-line brief. Here we will feature the final paintings and the overview of the creation processes. This month Levente Peterffy and Mikko Kinnunen tackle:

FOREST FIRE



LEVENTE PETERFY

Letting it burn!

In this tutorial I will describe my methods for painting in silhouette.



Fig01



Fig02

Choosing the right colour

The theme is 'forest fire'. The first thing here is to choose the right colour scheme, it can depend on a lot of things. The topic is a common one, so I know I'm going to use a lot of red, yellow and orange tones, representing the warmth and heat of the fire. After having this clear colour scheme in mind, I started by selecting a background colour. I chose a red brown tone. I find painting with silhouettes easier if I have a dark background and paint with light colours onto it. Here, in this image, I scribbled with a brighter colour on top of the dark background. I didn't have an exact idea of what I wanted to paint so I just scribbled (Fig01).

Lighting tree

After some sketching and some testing with colours, this is the result (Fig02). I used the same brush as before, during this first phase of the painting. It's a rough brush, suitable for sketching. When sketching in silhouette, it's always important to paint whilst always first considering the light, and secondly the shapes created. For example I paint the light around the tree, and not the tree itself, this is a fast way of painting when both light and shape is established. I'm bearing in mind that I need a dark background, and a lighter colour on the brush I'm using.

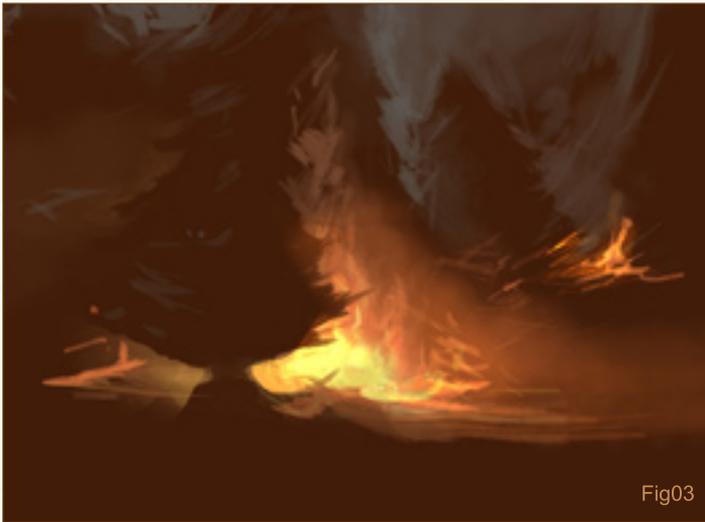


Fig03

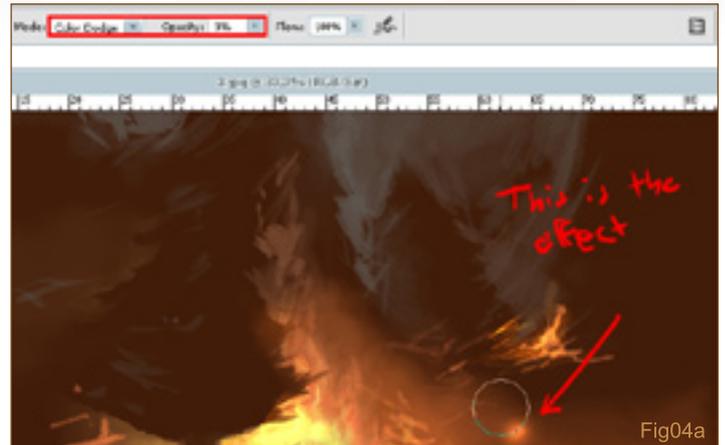


Fig04a

Burning more!

At this point of the painting, the basic colours have been laid down. So in this next phase you can just reuse those colours to paint more objects as I have (Fig03 & 04). The use of the 'colour-dodge' layer style in Photoshop is pretty effective, but it's very important to always use very low opacity on it, I always have the opacity set between 5-15%. The lighter tones in the fire were painted with the 'dodge mode' for the brush. I also used a default PS soft edged brush here to add some of the smoke effects, which had a low opacity on them too. I continued to paint more on the trees, using same colours as before. (Fig 04a)



Fig04

Multiply

This step is simple. I duplicated the painted layer and changed the layer mode to 'multiply', making the image a bit darker. I also adjusted the layer opacity, to tone it down (Fig05).



Fig05



Lake

I felt that the bottom of the painting felt empty, so I decided to add a small lake there. The process of creating this lake is as follows. Draw a 'marquee' around the painting. Press "ctrl+t" to make a free transform. Flip the image upside down, basically grabbing the top and pulling it down. Then squeeze together the image horizontally so it looks like narrow broad box, and finish the free transform by hitting 'Enter'. The last thing is to erase the hard edges of this flipped box so it 'melts' together with the background painting. (Fig 05a)

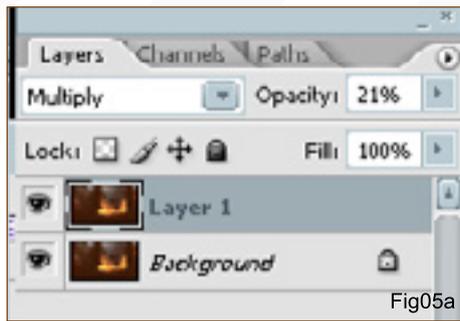


Fig05a

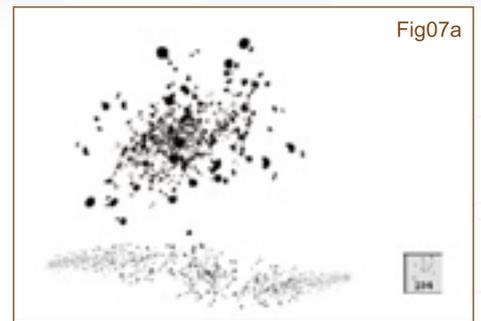


Fig07a

Last minute consideration

I wasn't totally happy with the background because I felt I still had some space to be worked on, also because I wanted to create more depth in the image. So, I decided to paint in some more trees, I used a hard edged brush for this. One of the default brushes in PS (Fig06)



Fig06

Texturing

It's time for texturing, which is good if you have custom made brushes just for this purpose. And I have a custom made brush (Fig07a) that has a sprinkled effect which I used to create fire sparks (Fig07).



Fig07

Final touches!

Alright. The painting is nearly finished but I then decided to play around by adding some more highlights, enhancing the light even more. Lake reflection, treetops, leaves etc. (Fig08). There is also a pretty cool trick you can use to make the illustration look rougher. It involves a flat texture, basically any kind used for 3D purposes. So here it's and I changed the mode too overlay which was the last thing I did on this painting (Fig 09 a, b & c). Over the page is the finished work, which I'm very happy with.



Fig08

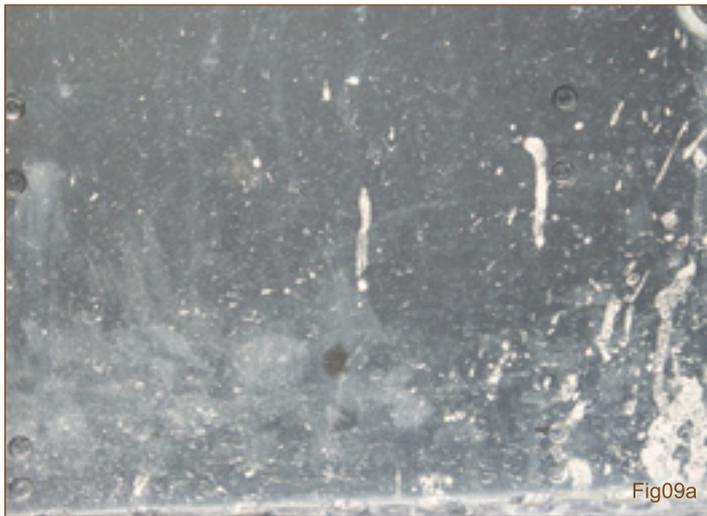


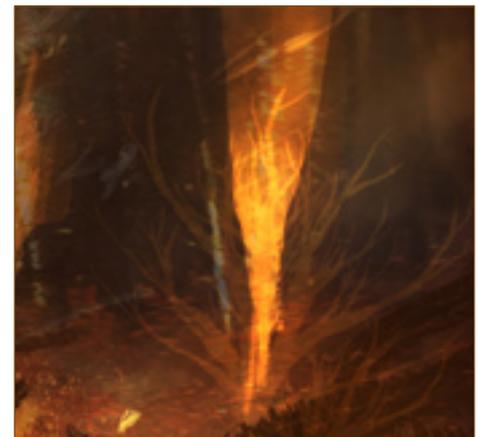
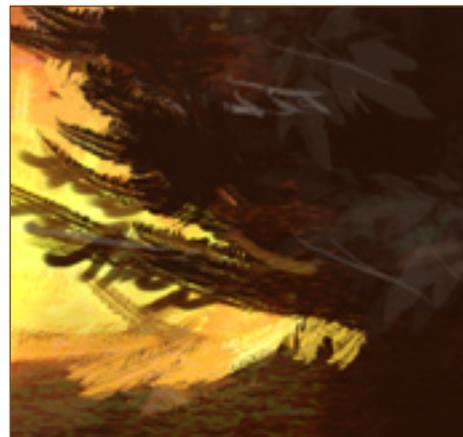
Fig09a

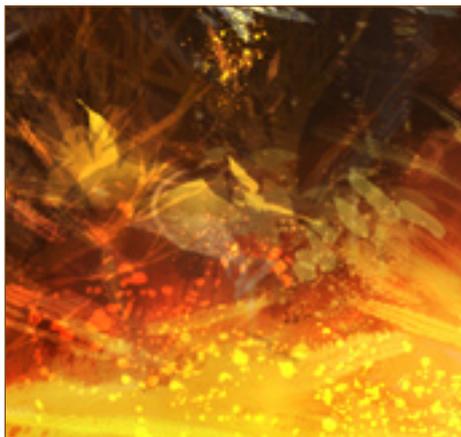
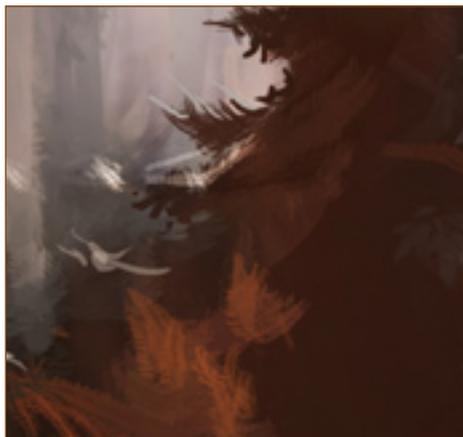


Fig09b



Fig09





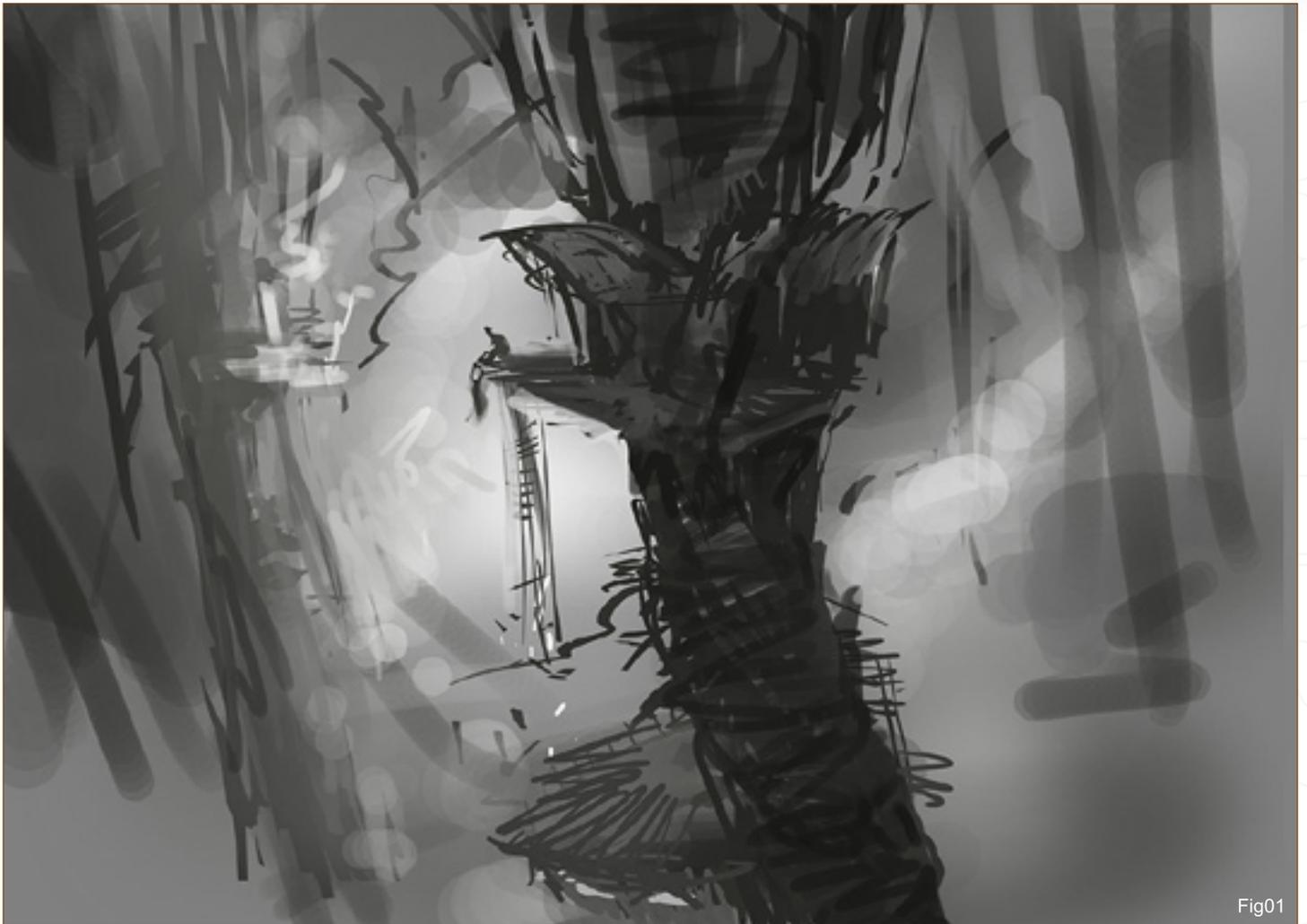
Levente Peterffy

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MIKKO KINNUNEN

Forest Fire

When I start to think about doing a new speed painting, my primary focus is to portray the idea behind the image as well as possible. This means that I try to tell something about the story, mood and the emotion while minimizing the actual painting effort. If you leave out a lot of the rendering process and deal with the problems of the painting on a more simplistic level, you will learn how important it is to get some of the basics right before going further with the details. Doing a rough painting means that most of it has to be well designed, or otherwise people just won't connect with the picture. In this article I will explain the creation process of a image called Forest Fire.

Grayscale sketch (Fig 01)

I usually start to lay down my idea in grayscale to make the process as intuitive and simple as possible. In this case, I already had a given theme I was going to do the speed painting of. To get a jump start to the process, I was visualising the idea in my mind much before I even sat down in front of the computer. Just trying to nail some of the basic themes before starting can be advantageous and you can avoid being threatened by the empty canvas staring at you. I start with simple brushes and quickly sketch down the basics of my design. I'm going for some kind of Ewok-style tree house thing, with the fire surrounding it. There's also characters in there. One of them is about to fall down from the tree and the other is desperately trying to save him/her. I like to add small suggestions of a story to my pieces. That also activates the imagination of the viewer a bit.

Adding colour (Fig 02)

I start gradually adding washes of warm and cool tones to the image. At this stage I'm not concerned about the final look. I'm only trying to get some basic tones in there to build the palette from. In this image the biggest challenge will probably be in depiction of the fire in an interesting and convincing way. I put in some warm oranges and cool greens, something that would feel natural for a burning forest. Without going to extremes at this stage, I add a bit of highlight behind the characters to set up the focal point in the piece. I also add a bit of overlaid texture to the background to get some interesting variation. I keep checking my image as grayscale to find out how my values are working.



Fig02

Defining the forms (Fig 03)

This is the stage where I start to add opaque colours on top of the under painting. I get rid of some of the greens and add a bit of blue to enhance the mood. I want this to have some kind of night setting to contrast the bright fires. I put most of the saturation to the midtones, making them intense orange. The shadows are cooler, and the brightest highlights have a bit of yellow in them. I define the second tree house a bit along with the silhouettes of the trees. I notice that the horizon is perhaps a bit too tilted right now and that will be fixed for the final stages. You can easily spot errors like this if you flip your image horizontally every now and then.



Fig03

Fig04





Finishing the painting (Fig 04)

When I have most of the basic forms and colours in place, I add a bit of random textures on top of the surfaces. I use a mixture of custom brushes and overlays to make some interesting two dimensional variation. I also define the ground plane a bit further by suggesting some sort of vegetation. The most important addition is the bright flames that really up the contrast of the painting. I put in a few more tree branches and define the forest in the distance a bit. The last thing I do is add a couple more of those bright windows to suggest that there's some kind of interiors within the trees. Time is up and this speed painting is now finished!

Mikko Kinnunen

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Follow through with your shapes. I heard this so many times at school. Following through with your shapes simply means you continue the shapes of the body through their clothing. This will help you keep things in the correct place”

Daarken takes you, step-by-step, through this tutorial for his creation, “Male Portrait”. He talks you through the styles and techniques he uses when producing his artwork...

Male Portrait

DAARKEU

MALE PORTRAIT

Getting Ready

For this tutorial I decided I would approach this portrait from more of a traditional standpoint, and not do something that was fantasy or sci-fi. It is good to learn the basics first before going and breaking all the rules and creating something crazy. If you need photo references, I would recommend shooting the reference material for yourself. That way you don't have to worry about any copyright issues, and if you want to sell it later on, then you can. When taking photo references, make sure you do not use the flash, because it will wash out your picture and flatten out the planes. Make sure you have some good, strong lighting, preferably from one main light source. Position your model so that you get interesting shadow shapes. I am not working from any photo references, so we will see how this turns out. My brushes are available for download at the end of the tutorial. A lot of people ask me how many layers I paint on. Most of the time I try to keep things simple by painting on one layer. I have a lot of layers in this tutorial because it is easier to show the process that way. Recently I have started working with more layers for my conceptual work because clients like to be able to turn different things on and off, or change things, like clothing and hair.

The Block In

When I start a painting I usually have no idea what I am going to do or what it will look like, and this time is no different. I have a basic idea of the angle that I want to paint, but that is about it. As you will see, I make a lot of changes throughout my painting. Not starting out with a tight drawing allows me to try different things more freely and to let happy accidents happen. I always start out with a dark silhouette for the shape of the head (Fig.01). I then come in with a basic skin tone and put in where the face will be. I can then come in and put in the shadow shapes for the eyes and nose. At this point I can also begin to set up my colour scheme. A general rule when painting faces is that they are more yellow around the forehead and more blue/green around the mouth. One thing to keep in mind is that you do not have to pick a blue colour in order to make something look bluish. For the area around his mouth I picked a desaturated orange (Fig.02). I knew that this colour would look bluish due to the colours surrounding it. If you place the same colour against different backgrounds

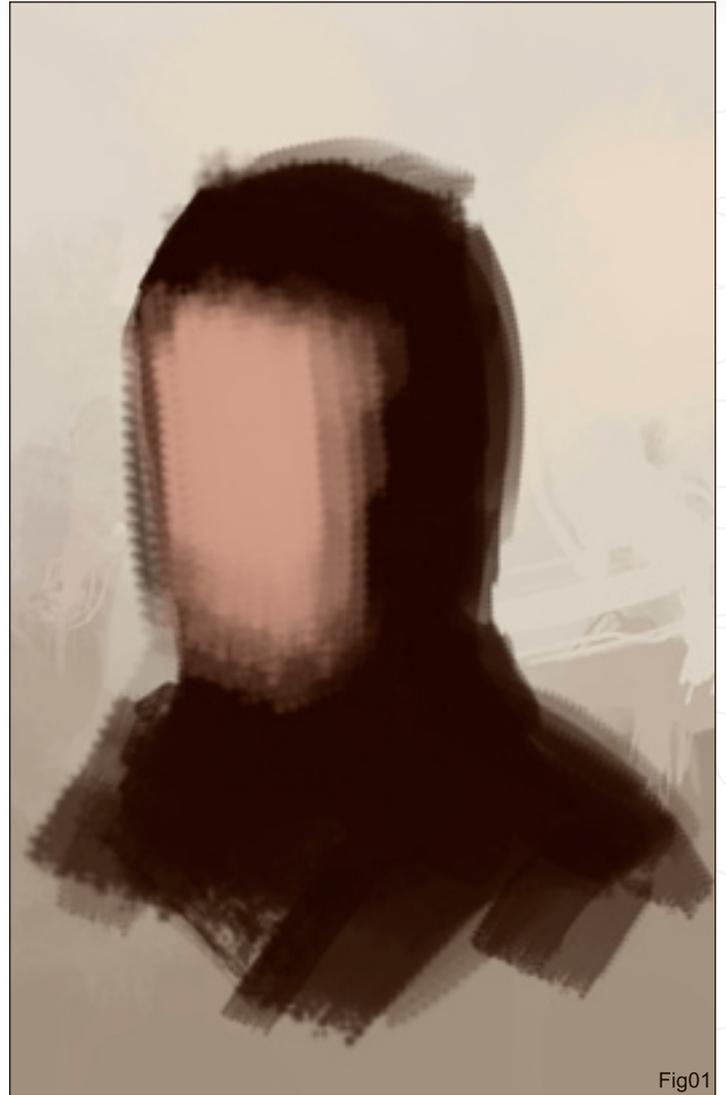


Fig01

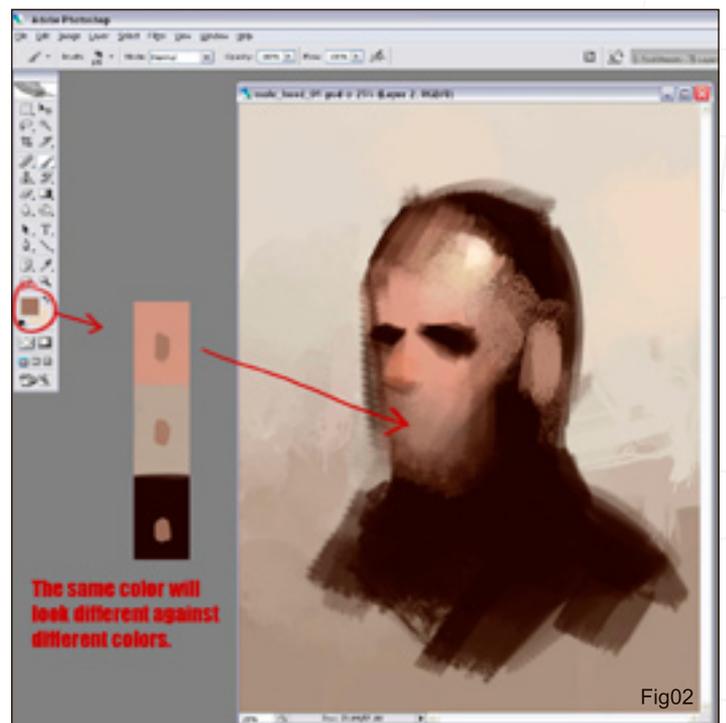


Fig02



Fig03



Fig04

you can see how different each one looks, even though it is still the same colour. "Follow through with your shapes." I heard this so many times at school. Following through with your shapes simply means you continue the shapes of the body through their clothing. This will help you keep things in the correct place. Whenever I am painting a face I always paint them without their hair, and then later on paint the hair on top of their

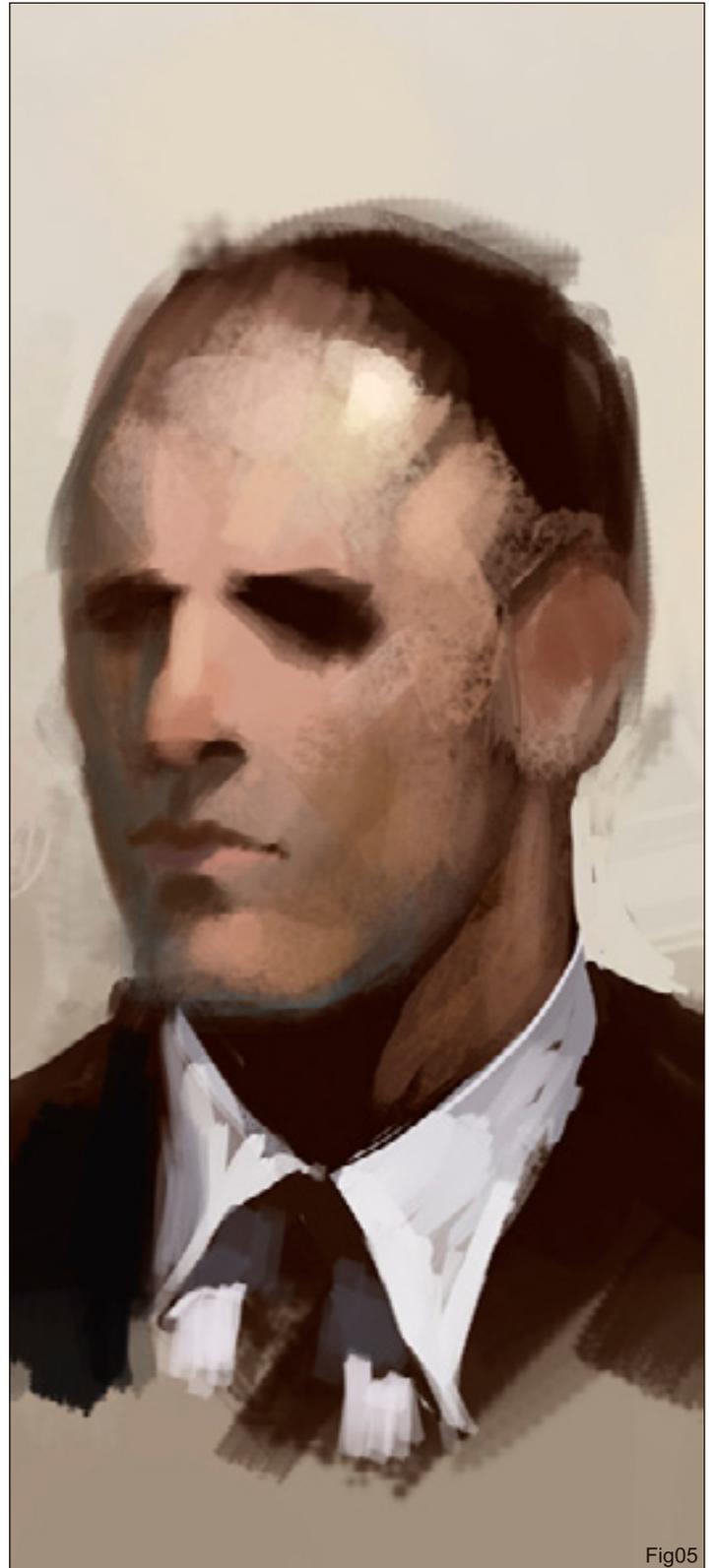
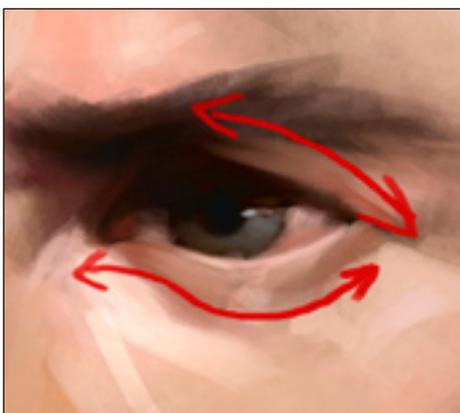
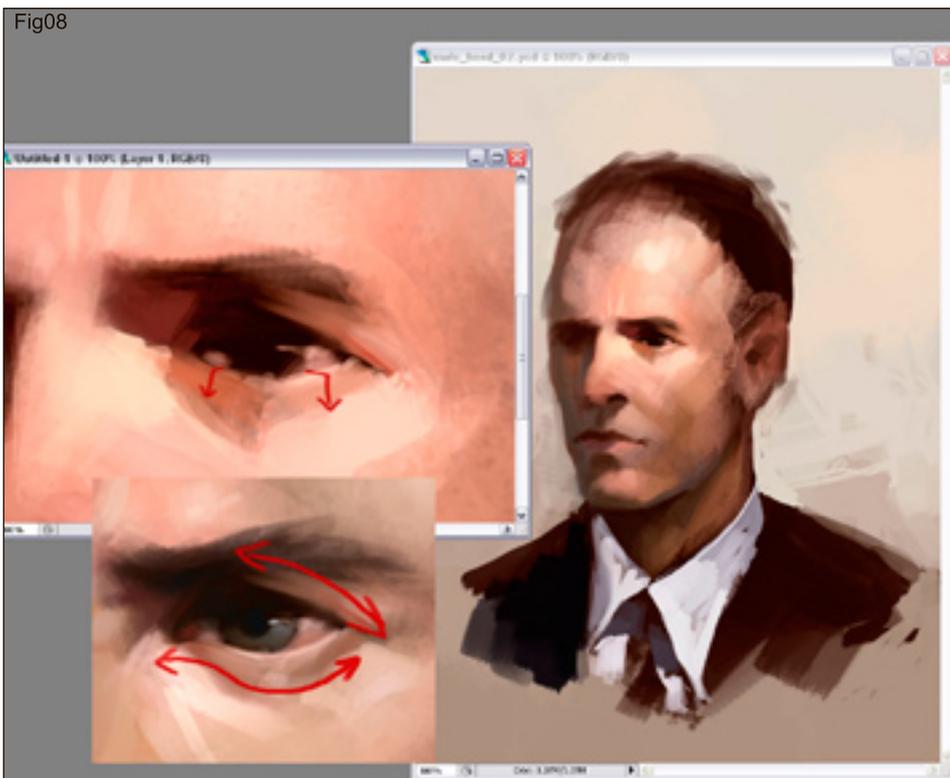
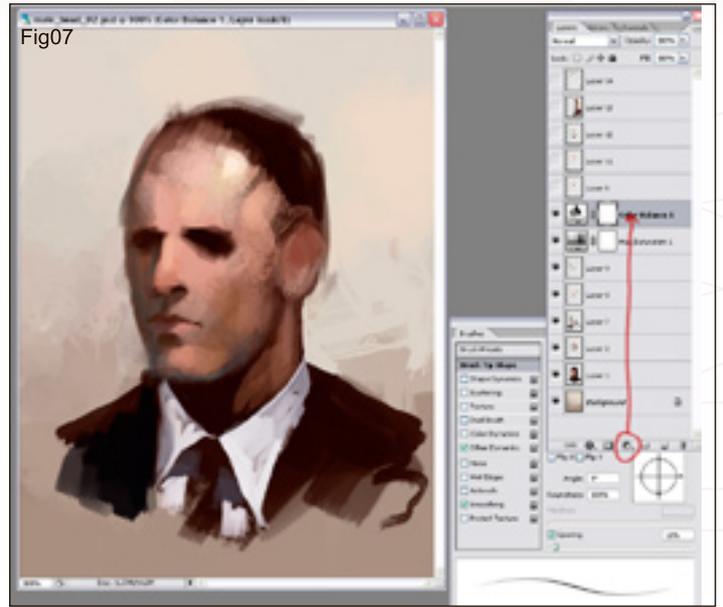


Fig05



the colour of the painting is to click on the little circle that is half black and half white. When you click this, a menu will come up that has many different options you can choose from. From this menu you can change the colours, levels, hue/saturation, etc. Now that I have all of the basic shapes in place I can start going into more detail (Fig.08). The first part I wanted to work on was the eye. Since eyes are usually the focal point in any portrait, it is necessary to be able to paint them correctly and understand how they work. A common mistake I see in a lot of people eyes is that they look very flat. One reason is because most people do not really understand the planes of the eye. The eye is a sphere, and that sphere has an effect on the masses around the eye, like the eyelids. The eyelids should wrap around that sphere. Not only does the eyelid wrap around, but it also has thickness. Think of these planes kind of like a box. Since my lighting is from the top, the top plane will catch more light, whilst the side is darker. Another error that a lot of people make is that they make the eyes too white and they forget the shadows to help the eye wrap around. Again, the eye is a sphere. The top will catch more light, and as you move around the sphere the light falls off and gets darker. If you study the masters, like Sargent, you will see that their eyes are not white, but actually red, yellow, and orange.

head. This helps me get the position of the hair in the right place (Fig.03-05).

Adding the Detail (Fig.06-07) Even though I start out with a basic colour scheme, I tend to change the colours a lot throughout the painting. Sometimes I will completely change the colour scheme, whilst other times I will just fix the colour balance. An easy way to fix the colour balance without actually changing

So far I'm not really happy with where this



Fig09

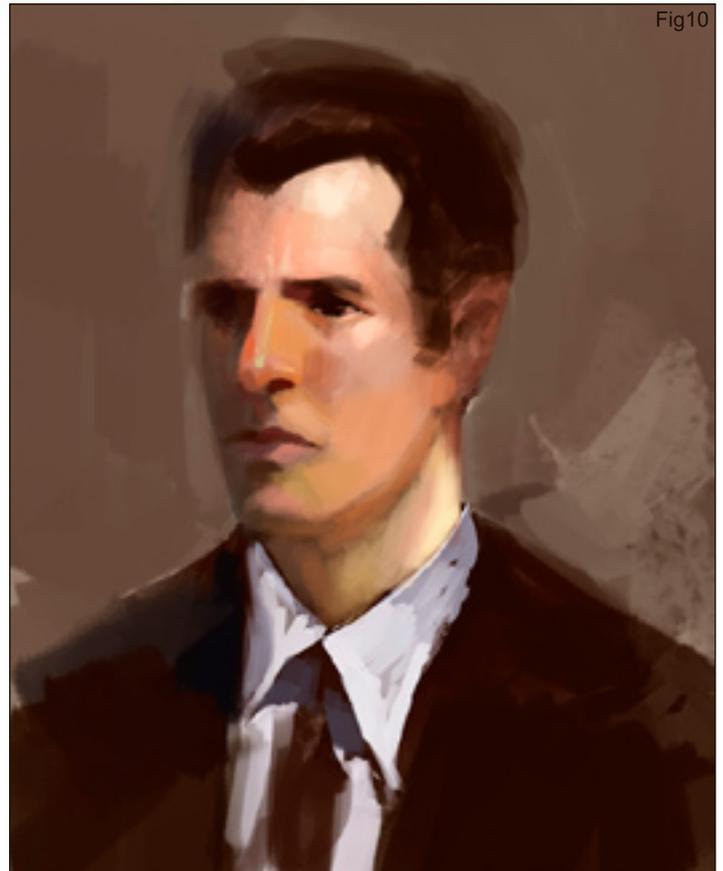


Fig10



Fig11



Fig12



Fig13

portrait is going so I start making changes (Fig.09-10). Now, all of a sudden, he kind of looks like Norrington from "Pirates of the Caribbean", so I decided to change it again (Fig.11-14) by adding a black background and changing his features. The great thing about working digitally is that I can make these changes easily. If I don't like something I can change it in a few seconds, instead of having to repaint entire areas. This medium also allows me to make more daring decisions than I normally would if I was painting in a traditional medium. Something about the face is still

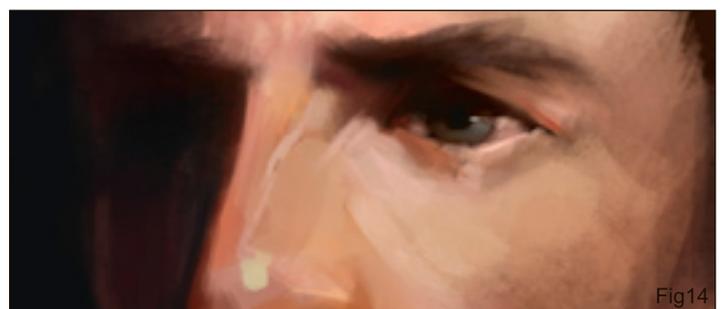


Fig14



Fig15



Fig16

bothering me, so I change it again (Fig.15-16). By cutting off more of the right side of his face and moving his ear back, I can change the angle of his face (Fig.17). He was getting a little lost in the darkness, so I threw in some light in the background (Fig.18). The traditional painting trick for portraits is to put the dark side of the face against a light background, and the light side of the face against a dark background.

The Final Touches



Fig17

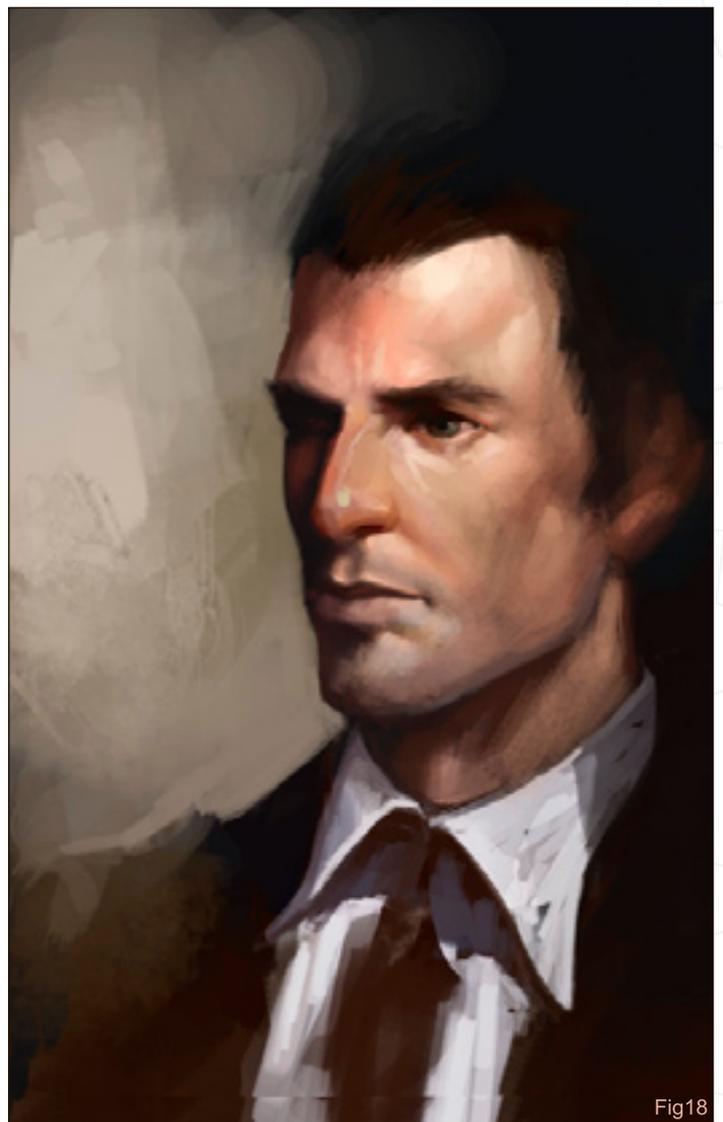


Fig18



Fig19

Now comes one of my favourite parts: the ear (Fig.19-20). I have no idea why, but I really enjoy painting ears. It is weird, I know. I think the thing I like about them is that they have a lot of very unique shapes and structures, and a lot of people tend to overlook them. Within such a confined area you can still find tons of plane and colour changes. I wanted to make him look more like a rough and tough kind of guy, so adding some more facial hair is an easy way to do that (Fig.21). For the stubble I used a custom brush. You can easily make your own by painting some random dots and then going to "Edit – Define Brush Preset." The new brush will be in your brush library at the end. After you make your brush, don't forget to change the settings, like scattering, size, and opacity. I am nearing the end of the painting and now I am just making some minor adjustments to the face (Fig.22-24). I felt like his nose was a little too short (usually the width of the eye is the same distance from the corner of the eye to the top of the wing of the nostril), so I just selected the nose and went to "Edit – Transform – Distort", and pulled the nose down a bit.



Fig20

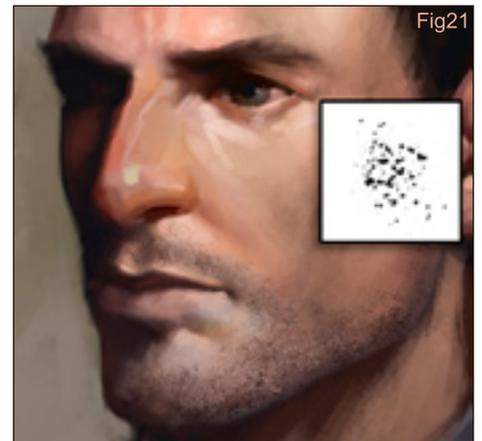


Fig21



Fig22



Fig23



Fig24

Something was still bothering me about the face but I couldn't put my finger on it. I asked my girlfriend about it and she thought that his hairline was a little too high (Fig.25). This can easily be changed by selecting the area that you want to move, and then going to "Edit - Transform - Warp." The Warp and Distort tools are one of the hidden gems of Photoshop. These two tools have made my life a lot easier. The warp tool allows you to pull and push different parts of the selection, and actually can make things turn without having to repaint it. Once you hit warp, a grid will pop up on the screen where your selection was (Fig.26). If you click and drag different points of the grid, your image will move according to the direction that you pull. Once you have everything in place, you can apply the changes by hitting "enter" on the keyboard. As you can see, this painting went through many different changes before

I knew where it was going (Fig.27). With the help of my knowledge of anatomy and some tools in Photoshop, I was able to come to a completed illustration. Be sure to check back next time as I will be doing a tutorial on how to paint buildings...

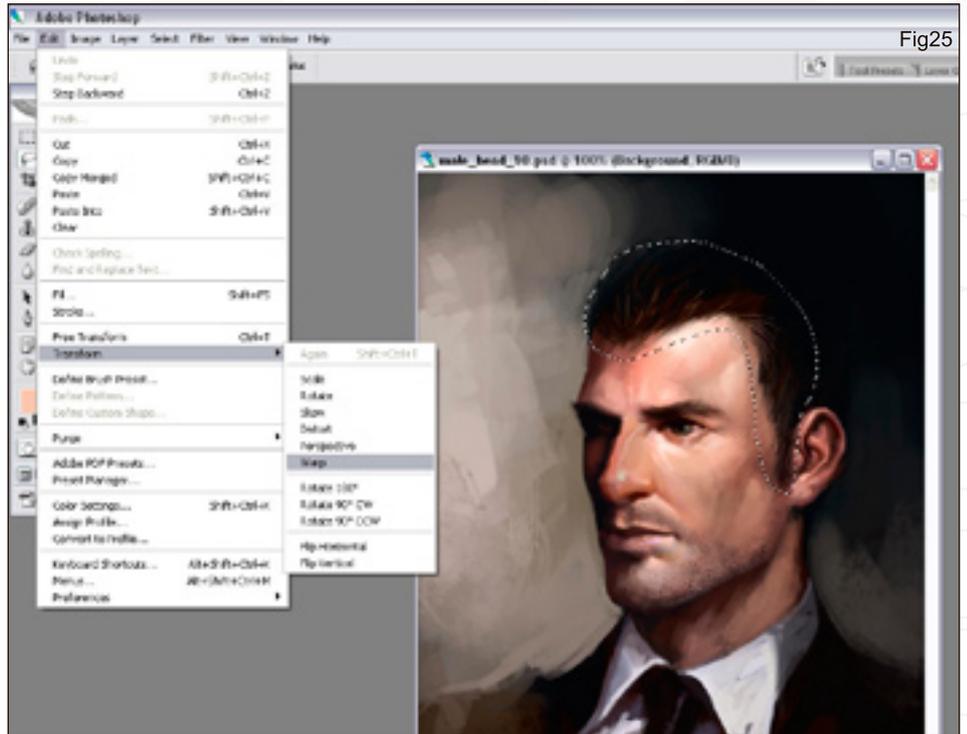


Fig25



Fig26



Fig27

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3dcreative

Robyn

Tuna Ferit Hidayetoglu, an instructor from Erciyes University, Faculty of Fine Arts, talks you through the making of Robyn. He explains step-by-step how he created this illustration using traditional media...

"Whilst drawing this portrait, my aim was to strengthen my control over the pencil, increase my shading abilities, and enhance my knowledge about different textures"

Robyn

Introduction

Hello, I am Tuna Ferit Hidayetoglu, an instructor from Erciyes University, Faculty of Fine Arts. As you may remember, I previously explained in 2DArtist's February issue, the steps of the charcoal portrait of Amy Lee, who is Evanescence's vocalist. This month, I want to

share with you a portrait of an ordinary lady. I hope that the steps covered here will be useful to people who are interested in traditional art, and will help to form a basis for their future drawings. Some artists claim that working on a photograph is unnecessary, and copying it as a drawing is meaningless. In addition to these claims, it has also been said that this kind of work does not have any artistic value. However, I will not comment here upon the artistic value of this work.

Whilst drawing this portrait, my aim was to strengthen my control over the pencil, increase my shading abilities, and enhance my knowledge about different textures, as I discussed in my previous Making Of (February Issue). I also wanted to prove that it is possible to create photorealistic drawings, traditionally. This kind of working method is tiring, and requires patience, but it is also joyful. I also want to briefly mention my model, Robyn, who is my photographer friend from Deviantart. Robyn is 21 years old and lives in Kansas, and the reason I chose Robyn for this portrait is that her beauty is extraordinary; the fear mixed with melancholy in her



Fig01

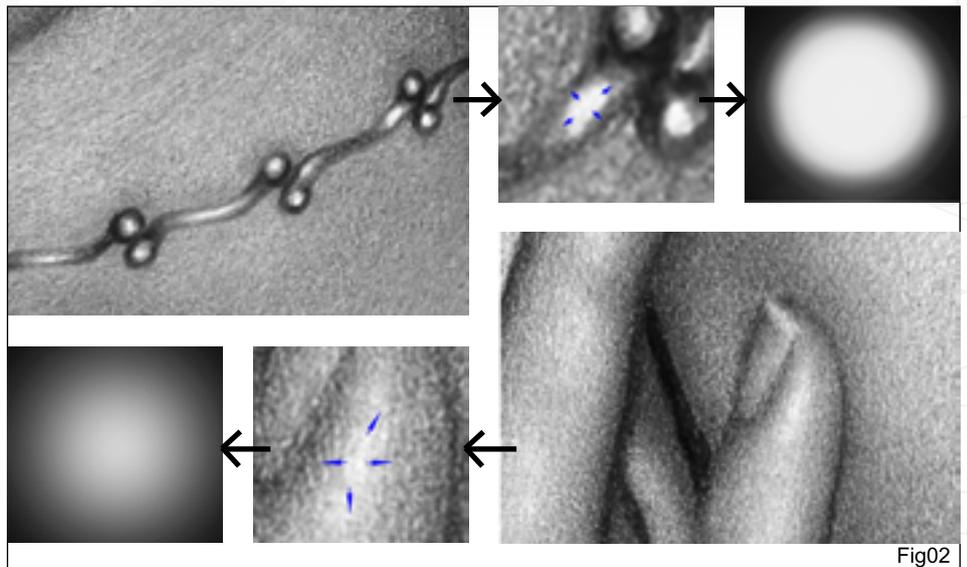


Fig02

face really forms an interesting view. Light and shadow in the picture also form a nice basis for the drawing. And, of course, before drawing this portrait I asked for her permission.

Texture and Tools

I used 2H, 2B, 7B and 8B Faber Castle pencils whilst drawing this portrait. I formed the effect of light in the portrait by leaving the sheet unused, or by using the eraser, as I explained in February. I want to remind again that I do not use a white pencil to give light effects in my drawings. I use two kind of erasers; one is a ductile drawing eraser and the other one is dough eraser. Generally, I use dough eraser to lighten dark shades, and I undo the extra shades by gently touching them (Fig.01). In this portrait, apart from the necklace, in general there is human skin and hair texture. I hope you will understand the drawing differences between skin and metal when I explain the drawing steps. Generally, I prefer to use 2B pencils in my drawings and tend not to use H series pencils. But, in this drawing, I used a 2H pencil on a metal necklace and some nice effects occurred. Since 2B pencils can be rubbed gently, I can generate a skin effect easier with these. Since 2H pencils leave a smooth effect, they are more suitable for drawing metal. I do not recommend the H series for skin drawing because I believe that they have a plastic, or metallic, effect. Since 8B pencils leave too many pencil rubbings, they are not suitable for skin drawing either. I recommend using 7B and 8B for dark hair colour, and the darkest sides of the drawing. Light reflecting from the metal seems sharp and shiny so this should effect should also be seen in the drawing. However, light reflecting from skin appears scattered and dull, and because of this, whilst drawing the effect of light upon the skin, the transition interval from light to dark should be longer (Fig.02).

Procedural Steps (Levels)

The factors that make the photographic effect in this portrait are as follows: transitions between dark and light effects, quality of the drawing,

execution of the details, and suitable light and shade. "Suitable" means that the lightest and darkest values both exist together. Before explaining the next steps, I want to mention here that this entire drawing is completely handmade. There are no digital filters used, such as brushes or layer effects.

Step 01

In the first step I formed the outer lines of the figure and started with the eyes, as I generally prefer to start from the eyes and work outwards. Starting from the inner parts is advantageous for me. When I draw from the inner parts to the outer, my paper becomes less dirty and the shade difference between the parts is decreased. If I were to start drawing from different parts, I would not be able to

Fig03



arrange the shade difference between parts. For example, if I had started with the eye and then drawn the shoulder, the neck which is in between would have been different and irrelevant. Since I finished the eyes first, the face, neck, hair, and the hand touching the face became well-matched to them. As seen in the first step, I have finished some parts of the face already. The eyes are 95% complete. Eyebrows and some parts of the nose have also been processed. It is also possible to see some shading over the cheeks in this drawing (Fig.03).

Step 02

In the second step, I gave a light effect to the eyes with the help of an eraser. Since this is a sensitive process, I needed to make my eraser

Fig04



thinner with a cutter. After completing 95% of the lips, I continued shading over the chin and cheeks with a 2B pencil. We can see that, apart from the mid part, the nose is nearly completed at this stage. Teeth are also completed in this step (Fig.04).

Step 03

In this step, the mid part of the nose was completed and the region was shaded in the points at which the fingers touch the cheek. The upper parts of the eyes (between the eyes and the eyebrows) are partially completed. In this step, we can see the eyebrows, eyes, nose and lips, as a whole (Fig.05).

Fig05

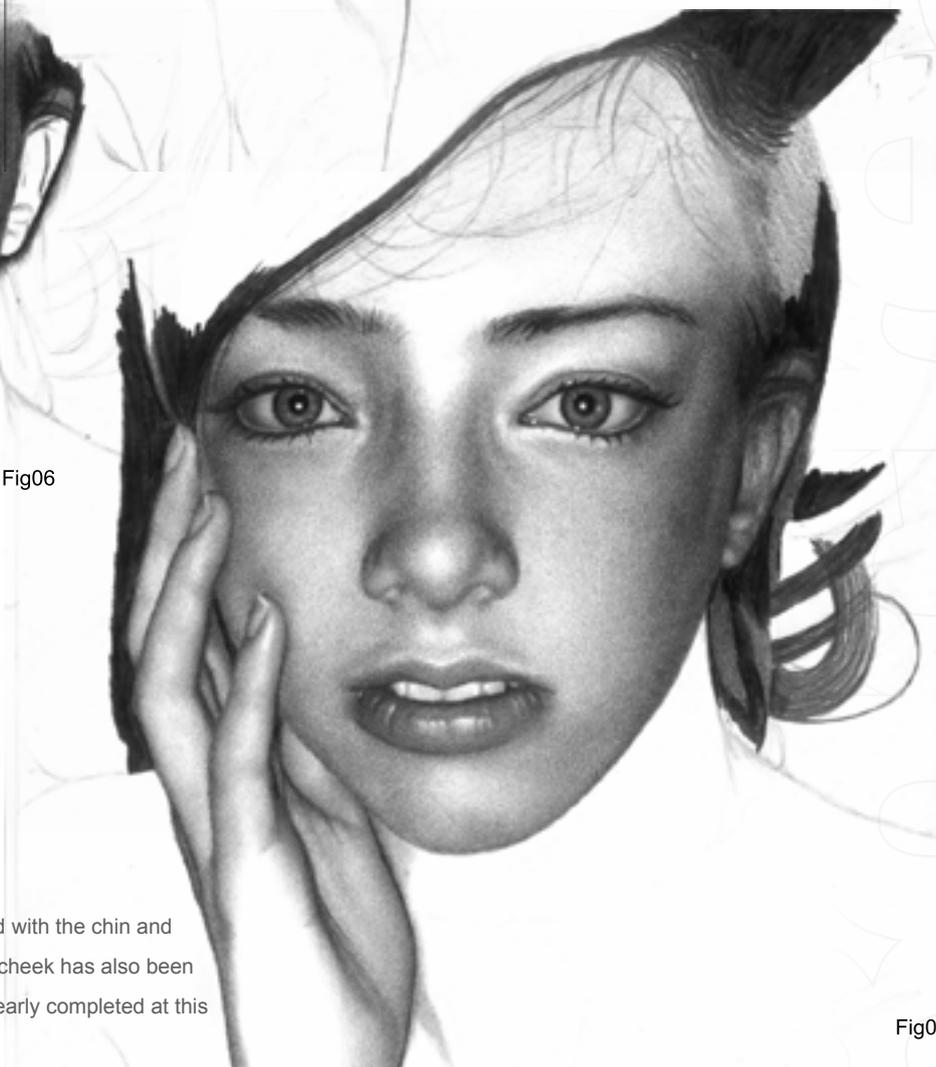


Fig06

Step 04

In the fourth step, we can see that I have intervened with the chin and the lower lip with a 2B pencil. The other side of the cheek has also been shaded. Apart from the forehead, the face is now nearly completed at this stage (Fig.06).

Fig07



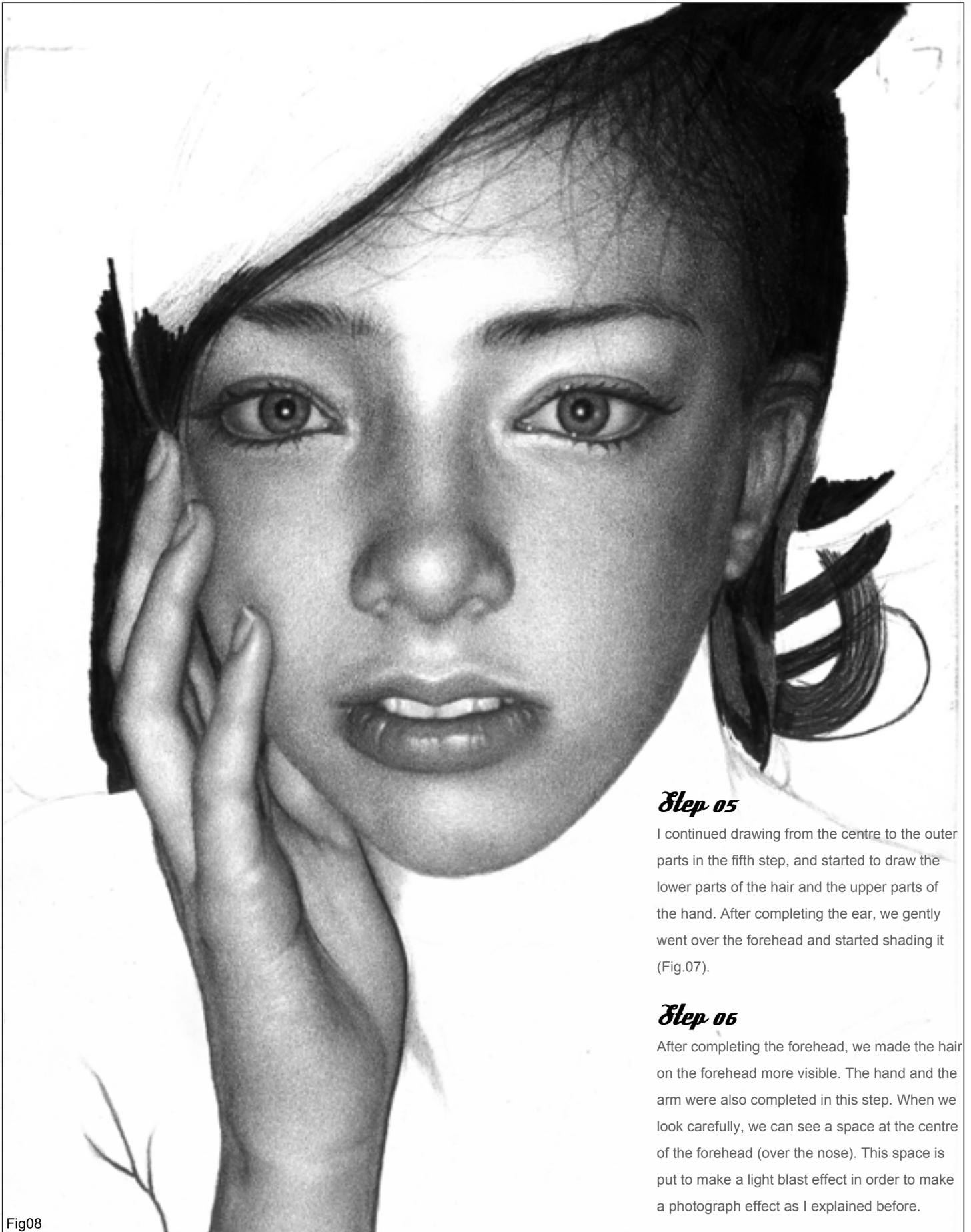


Fig08

Step 05

I continued drawing from the centre to the outer parts in the fifth step, and started to draw the lower parts of the hair and the upper parts of the hand. After completing the ear, we gently went over the forehead and started shading it (Fig.07).

Step 06

After completing the forehead, we made the hair on the forehead more visible. The hand and the arm were also completed in this step. When we look carefully, we can see a space at the centre of the forehead (over the nose). This space is put to make a light blast effect in order to make a photograph effect as I explained before.

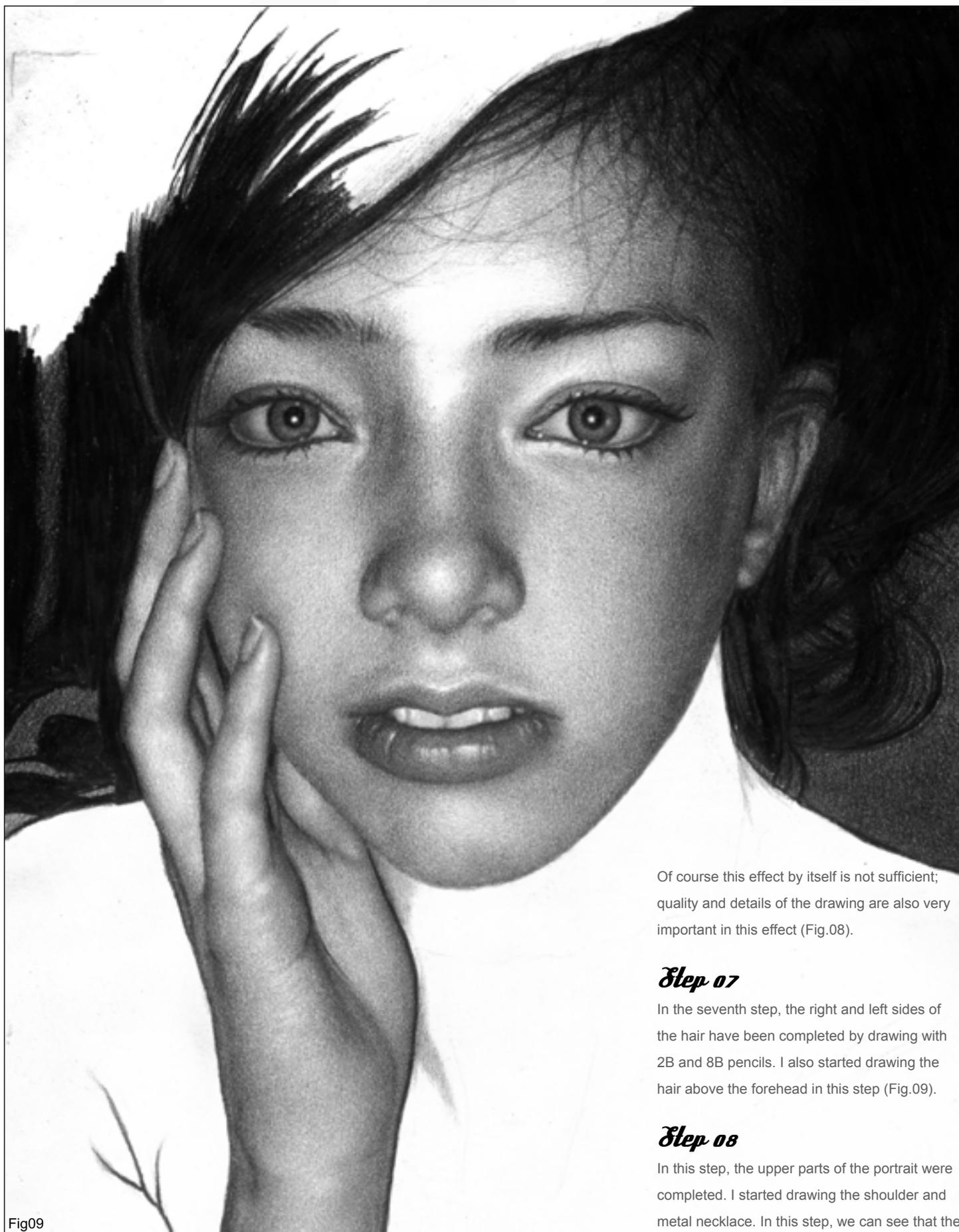


Fig09

Of course this effect by itself is not sufficient; quality and details of the drawing are also very important in this effect (Fig.08).

Step 07

In the seventh step, the right and left sides of the hair have been completed by drawing with 2B and 8B pencils. I also started drawing the hair above the forehead in this step (Fig.09).

Step 08

In this step, the upper parts of the portrait were completed. I started drawing the shoulder and metal necklace. In this step, we can see that the

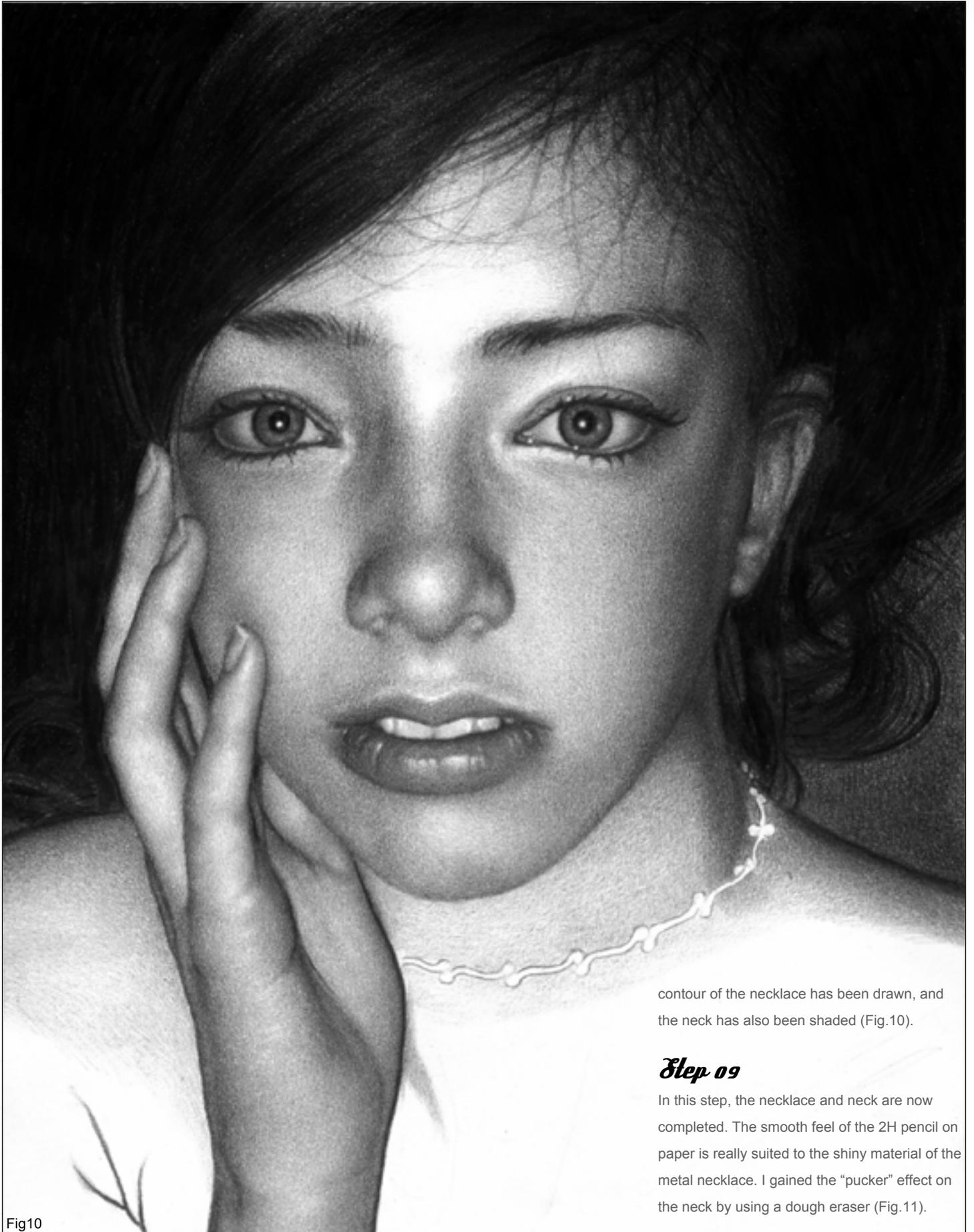


Fig10

contour of the necklace has been drawn, and the neck has also been shaded (Fig.10).

Step 09

In this step, the necklace and neck are now completed. The smooth feel of the 2H pencil on paper is really suited to the shiny material of the metal necklace. I gained the "pucker" effect on the neck by using a dough eraser (Fig.11).



Fig11

Step 10

Here, I shaded the lower part of the neck with a 2B pencil (Fig.12).

Step 11

I made bones and muscles more visible, which were shaded roughly in the previous step, at the lower part of the neck (Fig.13).



Fig12

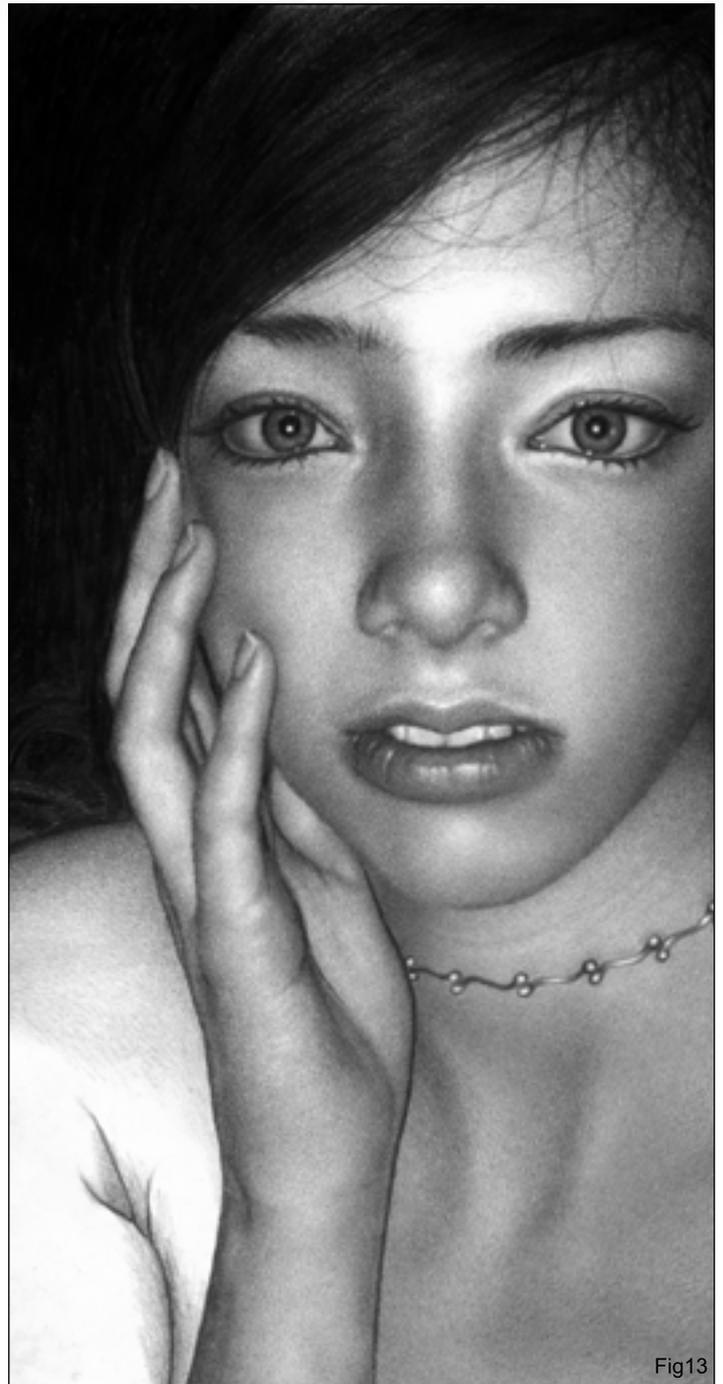


Fig13



Fig14

Step 12

As a last step, I drew the other side of the shoulder and completed my drawing. Generally, I do not exclude making some small retouches to the portrait (Fig.14).



Tuna Ferit Hidayetoglu

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"When a colour is surrounded by the same colour but with a higher saturation it looks more alive and strong"

ply-Spell

Ply-Spell is a design for a Role-Playing character, a Warrior Wizard. David Munoz Velazquez talks us through the Making Of for his Character Design...

Ply-Spell

Introduction

This image is the design of a Role-Playing character; a Warrior Wizard. For those of you who may not be familiar with the term, "Role-Playing character", a Role-Playing character is a character in a game with which the participant assumes the roles of the character and collaboratively creates stories. Participants determine the actions of their characters based upon their characterisation, and the actions either succeed or fail, according to a formal system of rules and guidelines. Normally it is a great help if you can work out the mood of your character, using images that can describe it. In this case, the character will not be animated or modelled in 3D, and so it is simply a couple of images to physically describe the character and his personality.

Concept

The concept of this old man is a Wizard prepared for hands-on battle. A spell that has been cast upon him means that he must manipulate a yarn that grows from his arms, under his shirtsleeves. With this spell, he can take objects and use them as weapons, or whatever he needs, making him as strong as a knight, but remaining a wizard who is able to conjure up other spells. With this magical yarn, he is holding an extremely heavy stone-made axe. He also wears a red monocle which enables him to see living beings through any obstacle within a limited distance. The colour of the monocle would be the colour in which he perceives everything alive. He doesn't wear armour because it would be very difficult to reach him, because the yarn that he creates can be shaped to use as a shield. In the Role-Play, he belongs to a religious sector that adores the perishable, which is why, on his shoulder, is a symbol that represents a silver, skeleton hand.

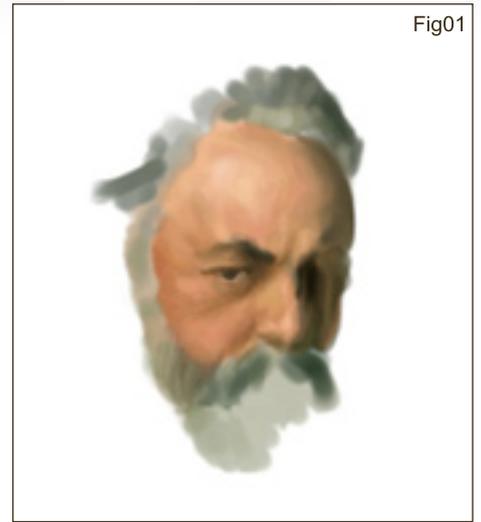
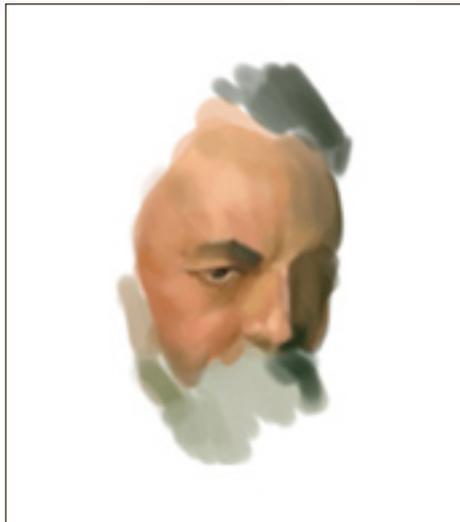
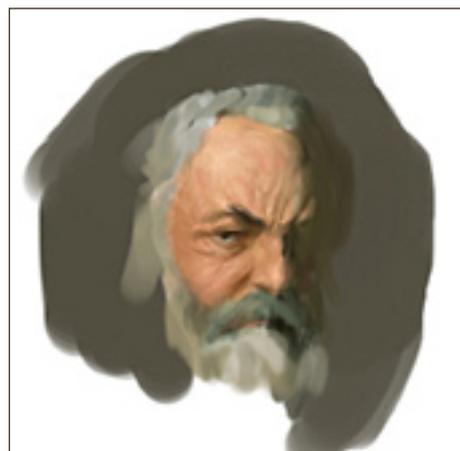
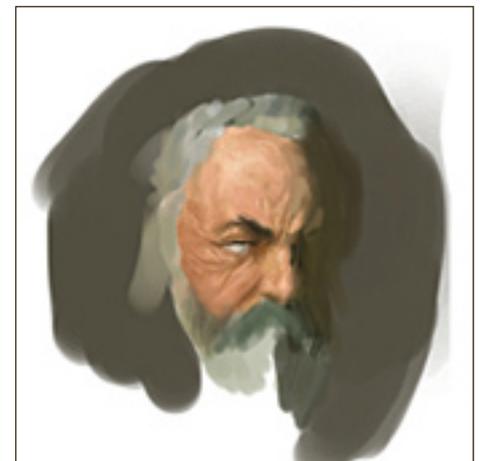
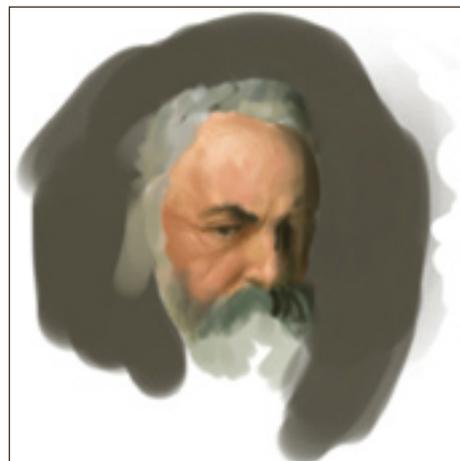


Fig01



I wanted the image to have the spirit of a painting made on canvas, and I wanted to give it a little solemnity and represent a fantasy world which this character belongs to. This sort of world of wizards and warriors used to be represented in ancient times. For this piece, I didn't start with a sketch, but started painting an old man's face. My first idea was to do a wizard that looked like the hermit figure of the Tarot.

But instead of holding a lantern, I wanted him to hold a sort of weapon which looks like he uses it to illuminate his way. I changed this idea very quickly when I decided to give him a more obvious action character look. If I don't have a very clear idea of a character's look, I just paint, and whilst I'm creating shapes I discover some guidelines that can suggest to me something which can move the design forwards (Fig.01-02).

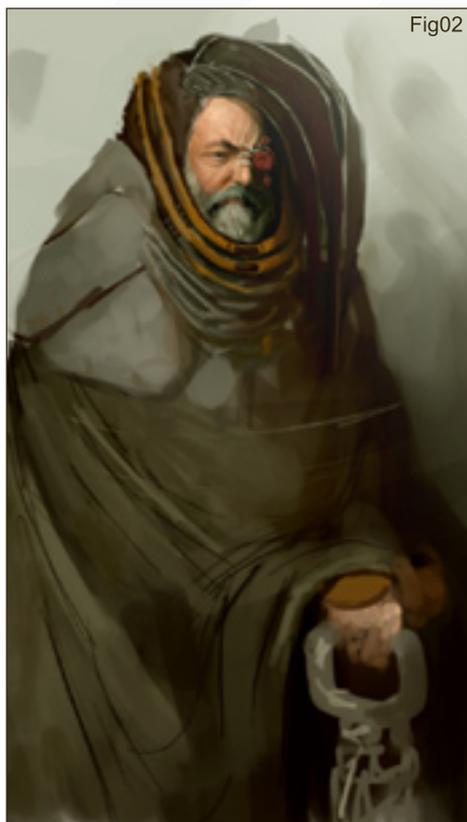


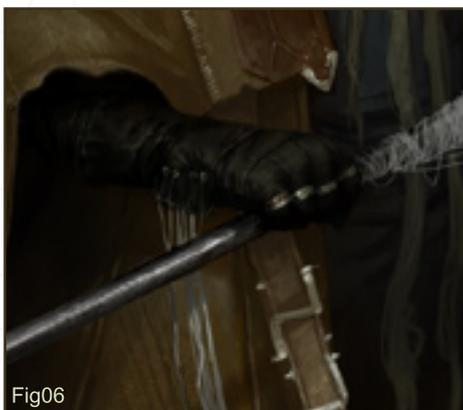
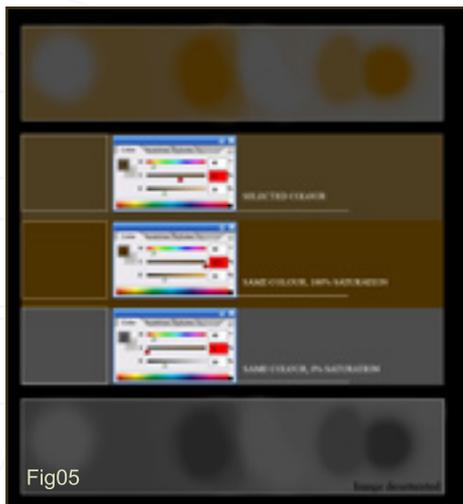
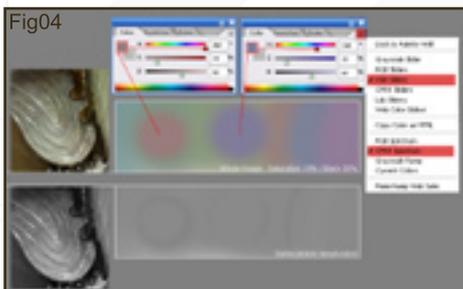
Fig02

Getting Started

With a clear idea, I started to drop rough shapes, and the basic palette of colours, onto the canvas. I wanted him to hold a brightly coloured axe with a simple, black handle. This time the idea was to use a warm palette full of browns and blacks that would contrast with the silver materials of the axe, and some decoration on his clothing. I had a look at some reference images and I liked the way that they represented the hair colours; instead of being grey, I add a desaturated green for a beard with two long dreadlocks, and one cut dreadlock. At this point, I had added the colour of the monocle; it needed a different colour so I chose a red colour that would give more attention to the face. I added some blue colour to the semi-dark areas, and places where there wouldn't be much detail, to give more depth and colour variation to the image. I wanted the background to be bright and desaturated, but quite simple; something that fit in with my idea of a portrait, and gave more importance to the character in the scene (Fig.03).



Fig03



Playing with Colour

This is very useful to give surfaces more complexity, and to simulate some of the shading that appears a lot in Fine Art. The practice is to grab a colour that has been used, and keeping the same amount of saturation and black on the colour, change just the tone of the colour; if it was blue you would therefore change it to red, but you would keep the rest the same (Saturation and Black). If the image that results from that process gets desaturated, it would look like almost a blank, grey colour. This is a great way to give variation and subtle detail to the picture without altering the contrast and

the setup of the dark and light (Fig.04). There is another way to make a colour look more powerful, by playing with the same colour or tone and the same amount of Black, but by changing the Saturation. When I want a colour to be more present on an image, I pick the colour and just give it more saturation, which is a great way to create volume, and certainly makes the picture more attractive, without changing the overall Contrast, and/or the dark and light setup of the picture. When a colour is surrounded by the same colour, but

with a higher saturation, it looks more alive and strong (Fig.05). The combination of both systems provides many options and some very nice results, and gives us the opportunity to understand colours, and their possibilities, a little better. I used both systems for this image, and Fig.06 and 07 better show this. The last image describes how I would like him to look when he is preparing to fight, which was just for fun but I think is an important part in bringing more background to the concept of the character.

David Munoz Velazquez

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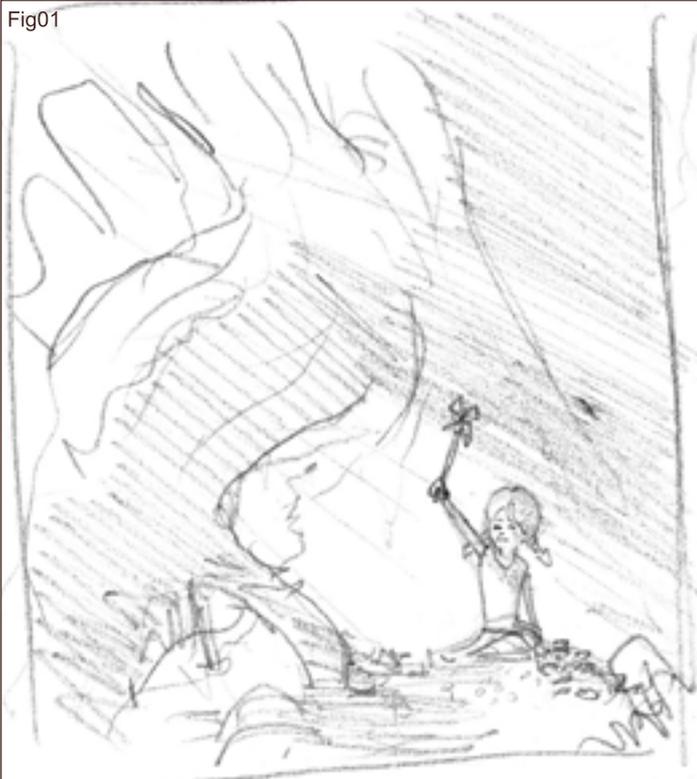
UNDER THE ROOT, MY KINGDOM

When Olivier found out that he was to write a step-by-step about his work "Under the root, my kingdom", he was a little surprised. Follow the steps to find out how this piece of artwork was created...



"I never work directly on my computer. I draw with my old mechanical pen on real paper, yes it still exists!"

UNDER THE ROOT, MY KINGDOM

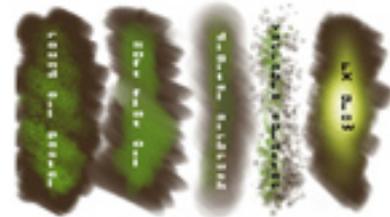


The Story

To put this piece into context, I should talk about the story in which the scene appears. The story is from "Nausicaa and the Old Tree", a children's tale which has a sad mood and a very tough ending for the little girl, Nausicaa (but don't worry, there is hope for her). The illustration is of the only lit scene in the story; a sweet afternoon at the beginning of summer. We see Nausicaa seated under a huge root of "Vieille Branche" (the name of the old tree), on a flower bed, sun-kissed by a beautiful, golden atmosphere. By the way, Vieille Branche is a speaking tree and, in this scene, it's the last time Nausicaa sees him before he is crushed by heavy machinery. Before I go any further, I would like to add something about the necessity of this story. I'm a person who is unable to draw or paint without a story. I believe this is a problem, and I have resolved it by deciding to write my own stories. I feel that this way, an illustration can be given a soul and a reason, but it cannot be fully appreciated without being placed in its context. Now, we can go to discuss the preparations made for the piece...



palette-pic

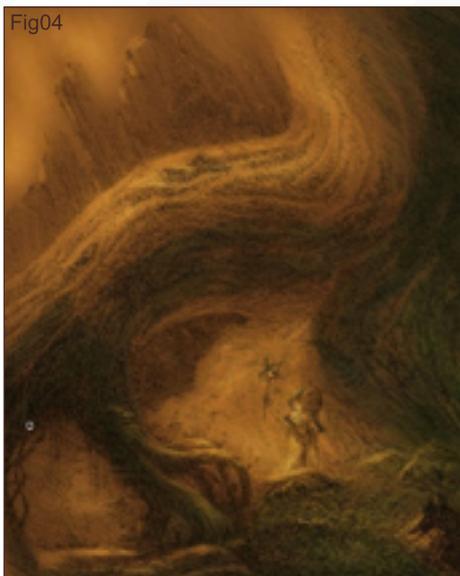
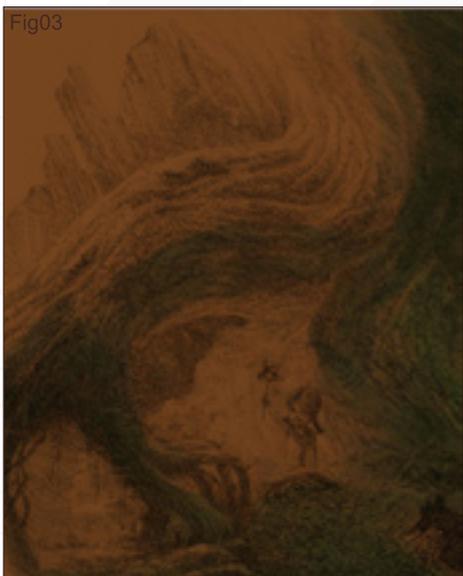


Preparations

I never work directly on my computer. I start by drawing a first, rough version out with my old traditional pencil onto paper (yes, it still exists) A first rough version (Fig.01), and then continue to finely detail the sketch with full texture and lighting (Fig.02). I know that this way seems to be a very long way to prepare, but I work this way because I love to draw - much more than painting, in fact. I then scanned the drawing and took it into Photoshop, using the "Photomerge" option to recompose the original drawing, working very largely at 34cm x 43cm. After that, I exported the image into Corel Painter IX.5 - my main digital tool.

About Painter

I know that Painter is not the most popular software for digital painting, but I haven't found an equivalent for the tools that I like to use, with those in Photoshop. I used the following tools; Round Oil Pastel, Digital Airbrush, Variable Splatter (airbrush), Soft Flat Oil, Just Add Water (blender), Grainy Blender, and Glow Effect (see palette-pic). I also used the Sidewalk Texture paper. My specifications for the Round Oil Pastel were Grain: 63%, Resat: 100, and Bleed: 13%.



Basic Colours (Fig.03-05)

What I love about Photomerge, in Photoshop, is the way it places the recomposed drawing directly onto a new layer. I set the layer to Multiply and started filling in the canvas using the Paint Bucket tool. I chose to work with a golden, brown colour to fit in with the story and the filtered mood of the forest. I also added a



Fig06

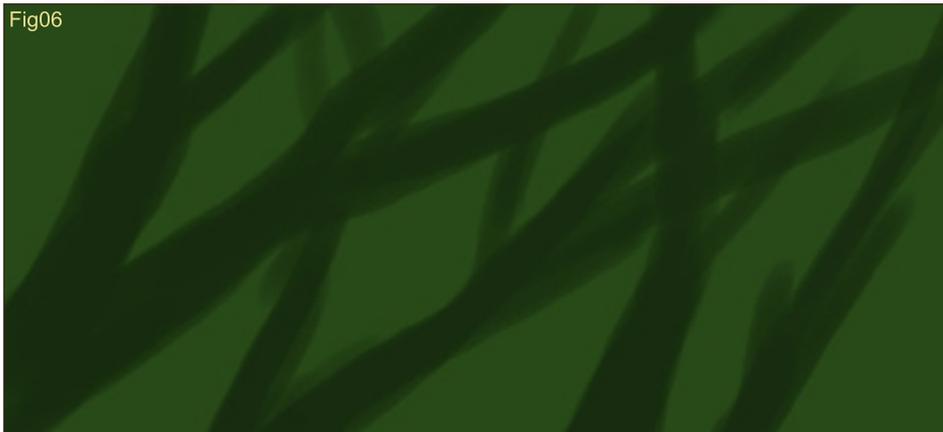


Fig07

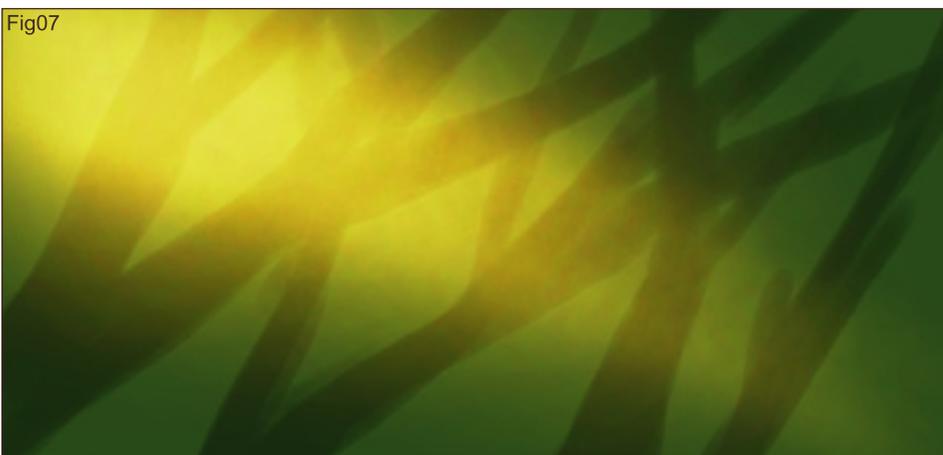


Fig08

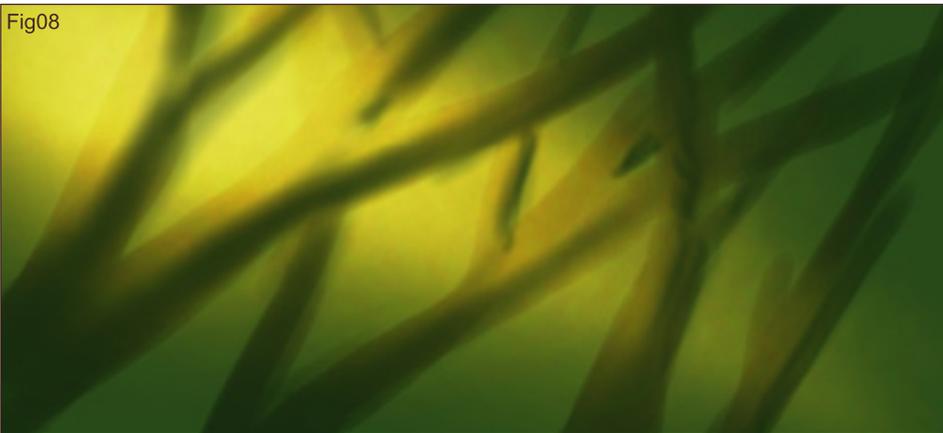
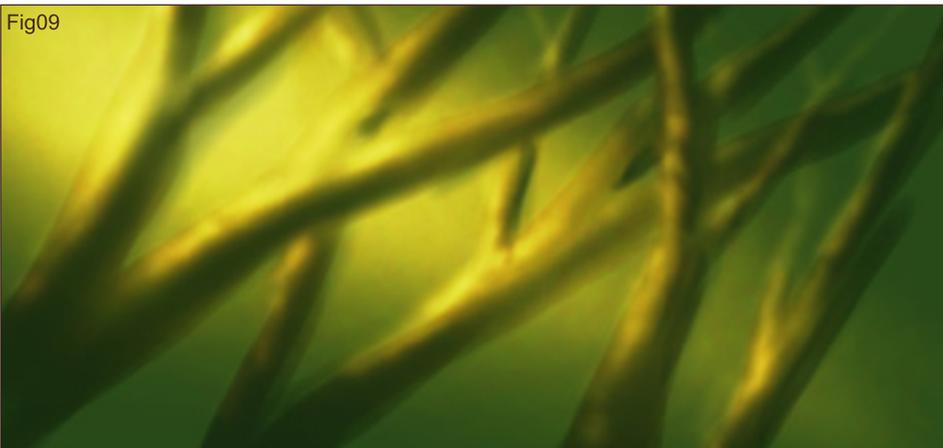


Fig09



green tone, and that was all for the colours.

The lighting

In Painter, I used a Ryan Chuch method, so I don't want to imply that it was my own technique. It was very simple to do and even used a lot of my system resources as my picture was large (Fig.06- 09). **1:** Firstly, I dropped all of the layers (Layers / Drop all). **2:** I then duplicated the canvas (Ctrl + A / Ctrl + C / Edit > Paste). **3:** I selected the Glow tool (in the Effects category) and then selected the colour (I highly suggest using a dark colour here). **4:** I then set the tool as wide as I could, using it at its maximum. Then it was time to spread the light from the light source out to the darkest areas. Don't worry if the tool paints over your shadows. **5:** I then selected the Eraser and erased the light from the shadowed zones that I didn't need. As I did this, I revealed the canvas and the original colours, without the Glow effect. **6:** I could then add some interesting light reflections with the Glow effect, onto local areas, working with the Eraser again (and also playing with the opacity, too). **7:** When I was ready, I dropped my layer, and my computer was happy. **8:** The operation could then be repeated as much as was needed by selecting a particular region of the painting and pasting it into place. At every moment, I was able to play with the opacity of the layer to judge whether the light was too strong.

Detailing

When it came to adding all of the details, all of my layers were dropped. I decided to blend the colours with the drawing on different areas. My own way of working can be very chaotic. I started with the bark, went on to the flowers, went back to the bark, detailed Nausicaa's face, worked on the flowers again, and so on. I also worked a lot with the contrast, too. The best way to explain my method is to give you some examples, depending on the subject I was working on.



Fig10



Fig11

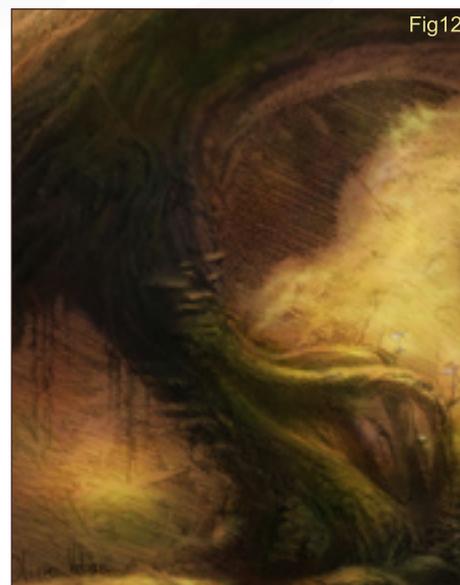


Fig12

The bark (Fig.10-13)

For the bark, my first intention was to mix the drawing with the colours. Still in Painter, I added water to smooth the hard strokes of the pencil first, and then detailed it with the Grainy Blender, which allowed me to give movement to my brush strokes. I didn't blend everything that I could see, instead I used a very instinctive method, and no references. I chose to forget small parts of the original drawing on my painting. I have discovered over time that as many bark varieties exist as skin tones, so I decided to keep the shadows and highlights created by my mix and improvised everything else. I advise you to find as many photographic references as possible, and also check out Alan Lee's work on trees - they are mostly sketches, but he's a great master with trees, mushrooms and creepers. You will realise that it's possible to do just about everything with bark.

In Painter, I went on to create a new layer, which allowed me to add some heavy colours over my mix with a digital airbrush. I dropped it again and worked with my new colours, with a soft flat oil brush. As you can see, I tried to render the light reflection on the bark, depending upon the intensity of the light: bright colours on top and reflected lights ones under the root. I used many layers for each colour (because there are many colours on natural trees too), and I eventually dropped them and began

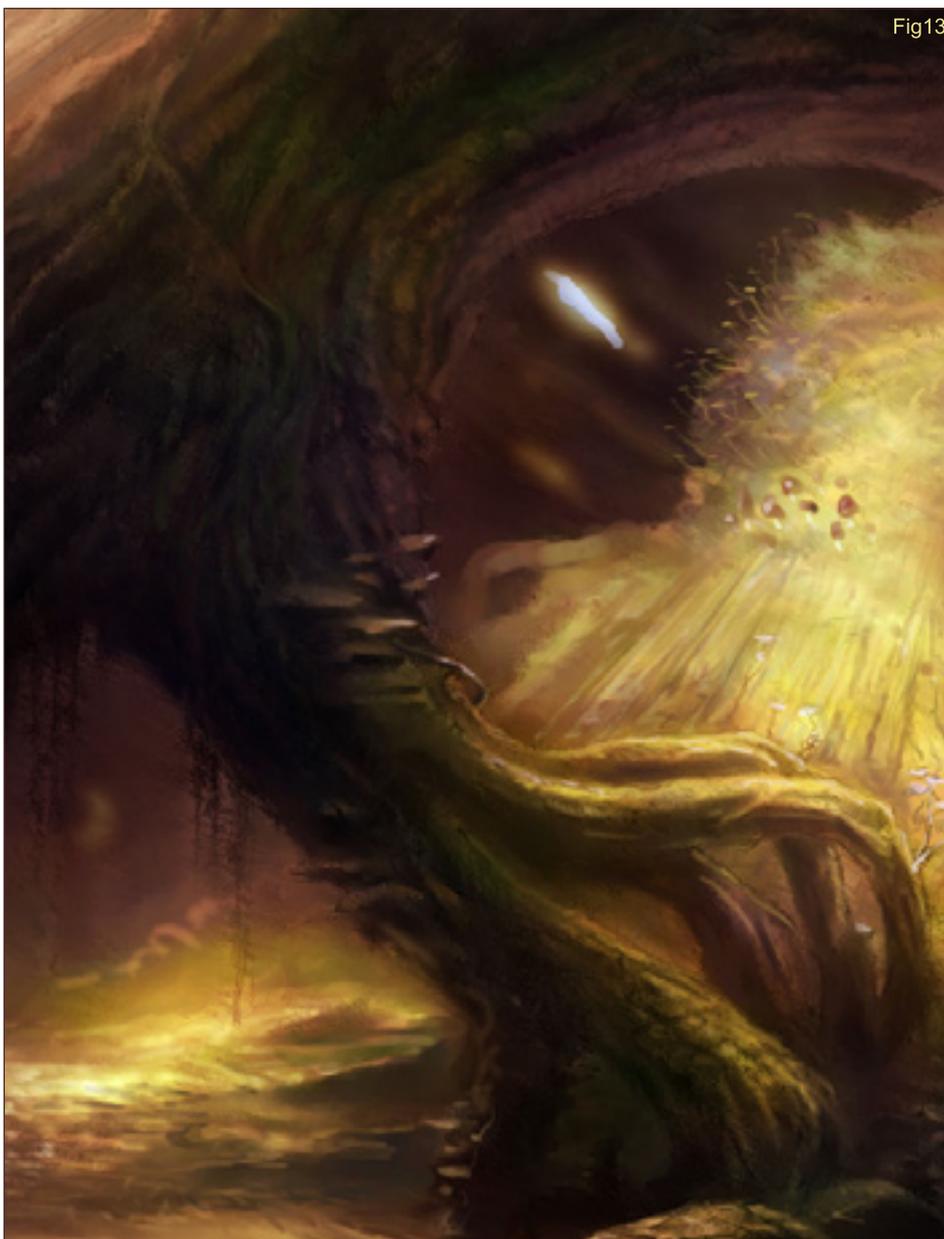


Fig13



Fig14



Fig15



Fig16



Fig17

reworking with textured brushes. You can also add interesting details with the Variable Splatter tool, to add tiny spots over the existing texture.

Flowers and leaves

This method was similar to the previous bark one (Fig.14-17). I used my previous layers to add some green, and then dropped it, filling in the leaves and petals with blended greens and a variety of broken whites. Because the light is an orange-gold, I reflected it upon the green too - using the Round Oil Pastel brush for this work. Even though I mainly used a green colour, I added some burnt pink and orange close to the roots. I wasn't too interested in copying existing flowers and leaves, I just wanted to fill the empty space with lots of elements.



Fig18



Fig19



Fig20

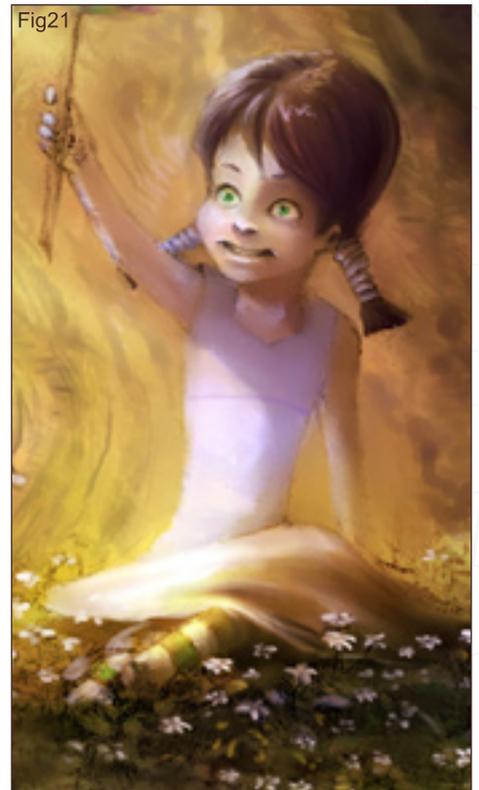


Fig21

Nausicaa (Fig.18-21)

For the little girl, I used the same approach as with the others elements: I firstly blended the pencil with the colours and added more colours and lighting afterwards. I decided to give up details and worked on saturated and diffused light on her dress. I used the previous method with the Glow tool and a selection around the body. I highlighted the dress and erased the excess from around her. After that, I dropped the layer again. I uses cool tones on the shadows and completed her with



Fig22



Fig23

highlights on her hair. For the face, as I'm not an expert, I found this to be one of my weaknesses with this piece. I decided upon using a non-realistic style, which I feel works best with the style of the book. I tried to render the lighting as best as I could, which I think is not too bad.

The Windmill

(Fig.22-24) For the windmill, I firstly painted it in black and white, then created a new layer and I added shadows with a purple tone. Finally, I create a third layer and I added the final, and more unnatural, colours. I highlighted it with a broken white, but not to much because the general mood is quite soft.

Final steps

Once the detailing stages were done, I decided to crop the original because I didn't feel the closeness that the text evokes in this scene. I replaced Nausicaa close to the centre of the scene and closed the top by the massive root. The light now comes in from the holes in the bark in the background, and I again used my



Fig24





Glow tool to overexpose it. And then the image was complete.

I hope that this little step-by-step will be of some help to you. I know that it's not a killer in terms of its techniques, but it's my own way of painting: very free and natural. This is why I chose Painter over Photoshop. Thank you for reading.

Olivier Heban

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