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Tips and techniques for building striking compositions



*Illustration by
Hicham Habchi*

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



Manga is one of the world's most easily recognisable art styles, so this issue we set out to celebrate it and help you master your own manga-inspired creations.

We cover a wide range this month, including a look at some western manga created by the wonderfully talented Linnea Kataja and B.c.N.y., who share their art and passion starting on page 34. Then over on page 46, we delve into the wonderful art of Belle, the animated movie by Mamoru Hosoda.

As always, we want to help you level up your own skill set and this issue is no different. We have training covering a range of topics, from drawing manga-style fight scenes on page 66, to using 3D tools to create a striking anime scene on page 72.

For the more traditional of you we have a fantastic workshop on painting dynamic characters full of motion and energy on page 90.

We also test and review the Samsung Galaxy Tab S8 Ultra, to find out whether it's up to the task of creating digital art.

Rob

Editor
Rob.Redman@futurenet.com

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Dario Jelusic's sketchbook

Check out some of the stunning Croatian folklore inspired art, created by this month's sketchbook artist.

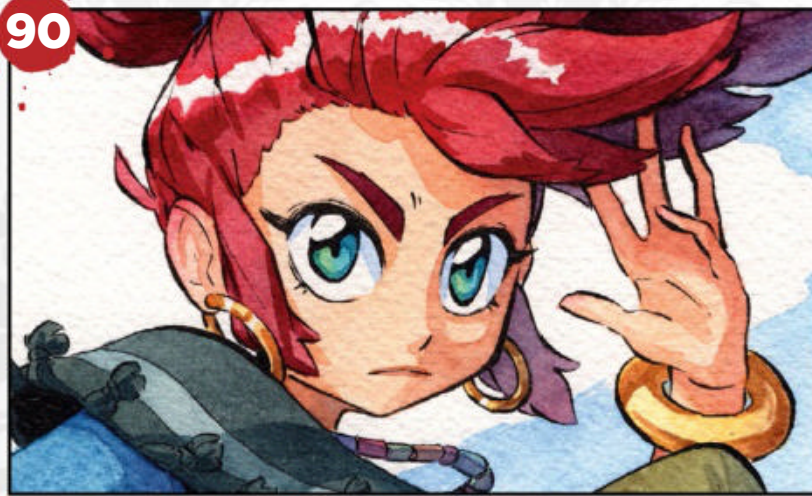
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Create narrative concept art

Learn to add storytelling elements to your concept art, with these tips from artist Romain Jouandeau.

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Paint a dynamic character

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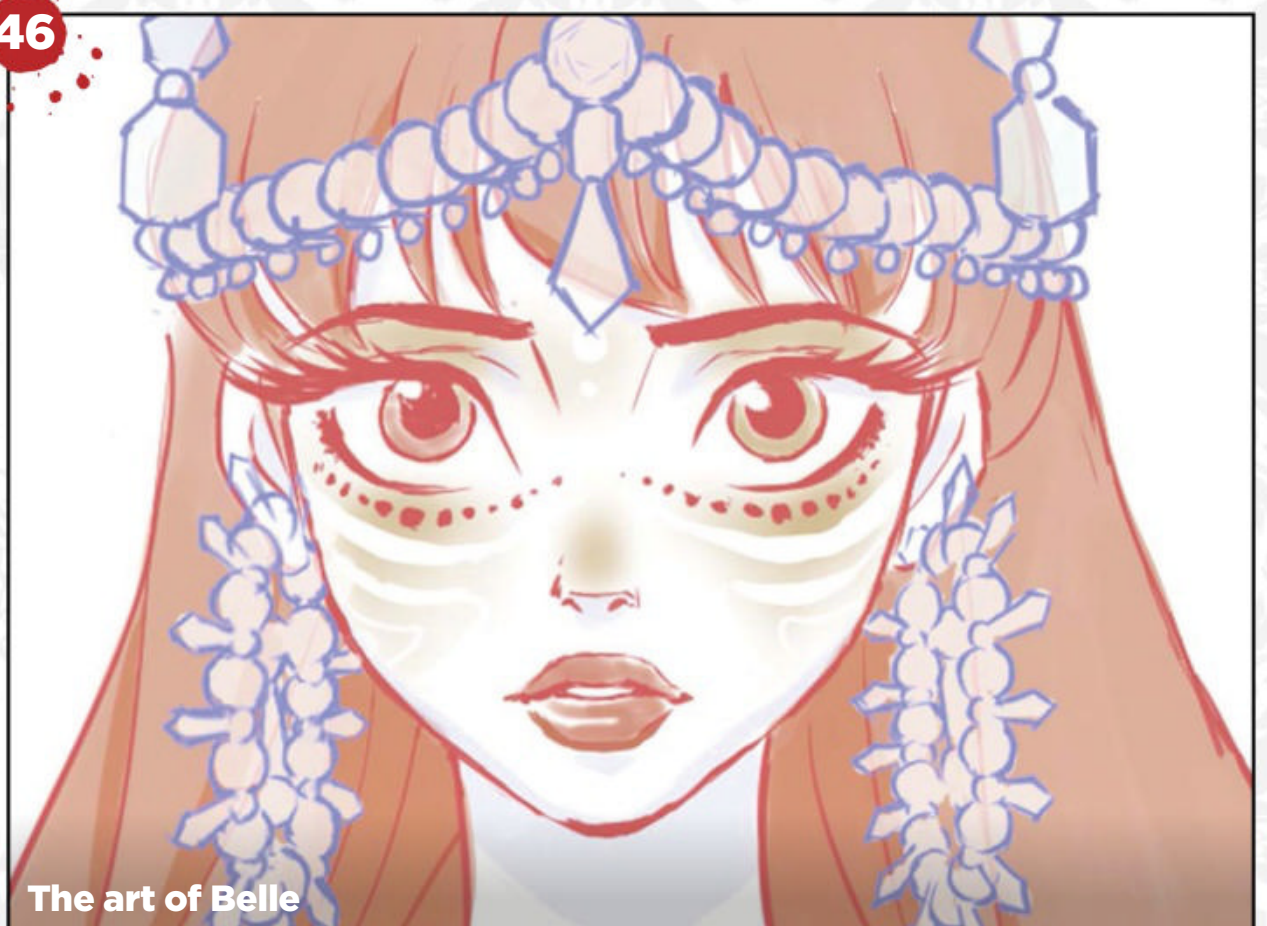
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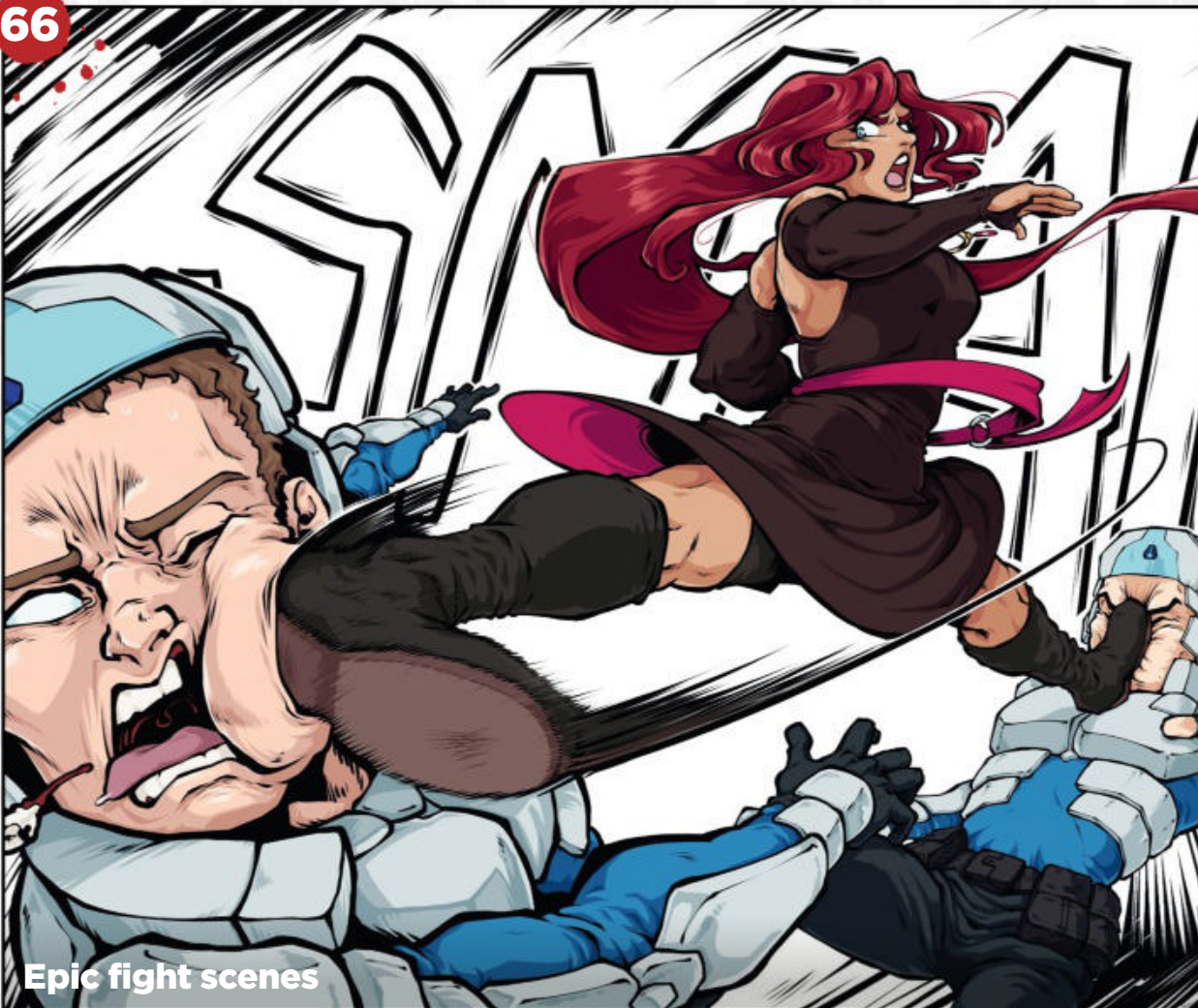
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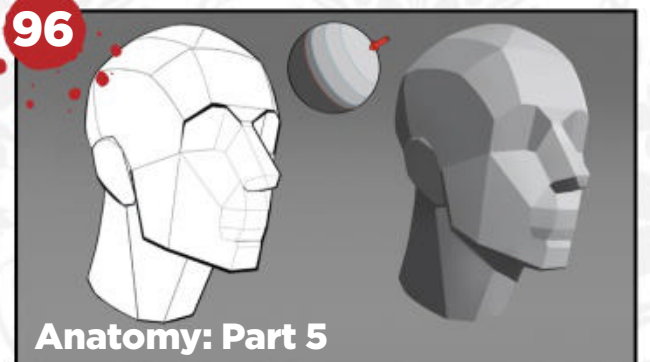
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Resources

Getting hold of this issue's resources is easy.
Just visit: **<https://ifxm.ag/manga>**

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Next month

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Fantastic Beasts

Discover the art of the latest movie from the world of Harry Potter



Also in the issue...

Learn sci-fi character design

Follow along with our masterclass in creating a sci-fi heroine painting.

Create an anime mech

Learn how to build an awesome mech concept with our in-depth guide.

Master anatomy

Our series on learning how to draw the human body continues.

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Discover how to paint stylised, whimsical creatures using Photoshop.

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1



David Garrido

LOCATION: Spain **MEDIA:** Photoshop **WEB:** www.instagram.com/davidgarrido.ink

David grew up loving animation, cinema and comic books. Originally a graffiti artist, he now combines teaching alongside illustration commissions. He also has a comic book project currently in the works.

1 ANKALAWELA

"An illustration for the music band Ankalawela. In this image there are co-existing elements referencing New York and hip hop along with Andalusian culture."

2 FUTURISTIC EROS

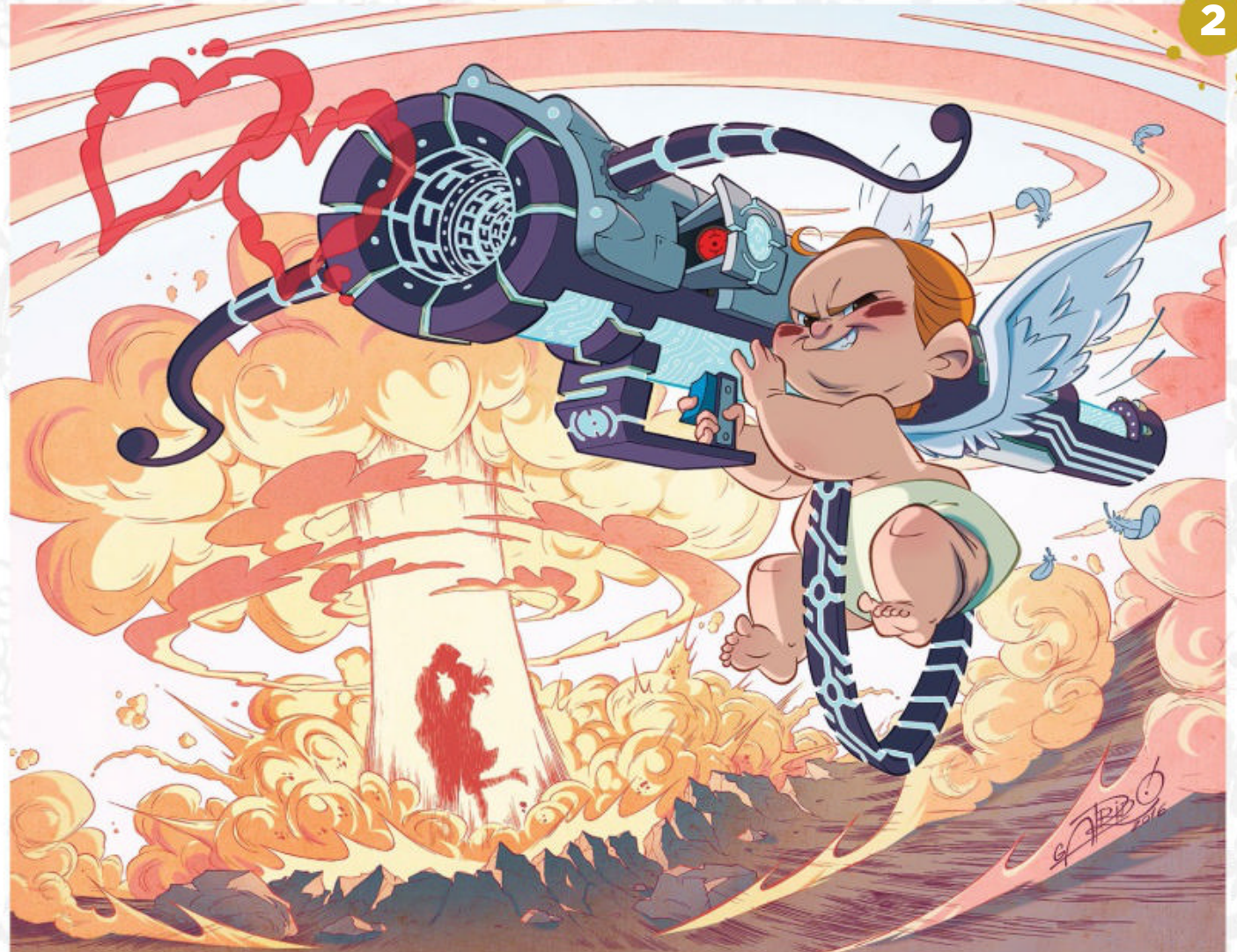
"Illustration for a two-page spread in Once Upon a Time Machine, a book containing comics and illustrations including Greek mythology characters in a sci-fi context. Published by Dark Horse."

3 ULF THE RED

"I created this character inspired by Norse mythology. I'm interested in the romanticised idealisation of Vikings as imposing, unbeatable warriors."

4 THE SPELL

"Spirited Away fan art. This is a tribute to Hayao Miyazaki, who has been one of my greatest sources of inspiration since I was a kid."



Celia Lowenthal

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

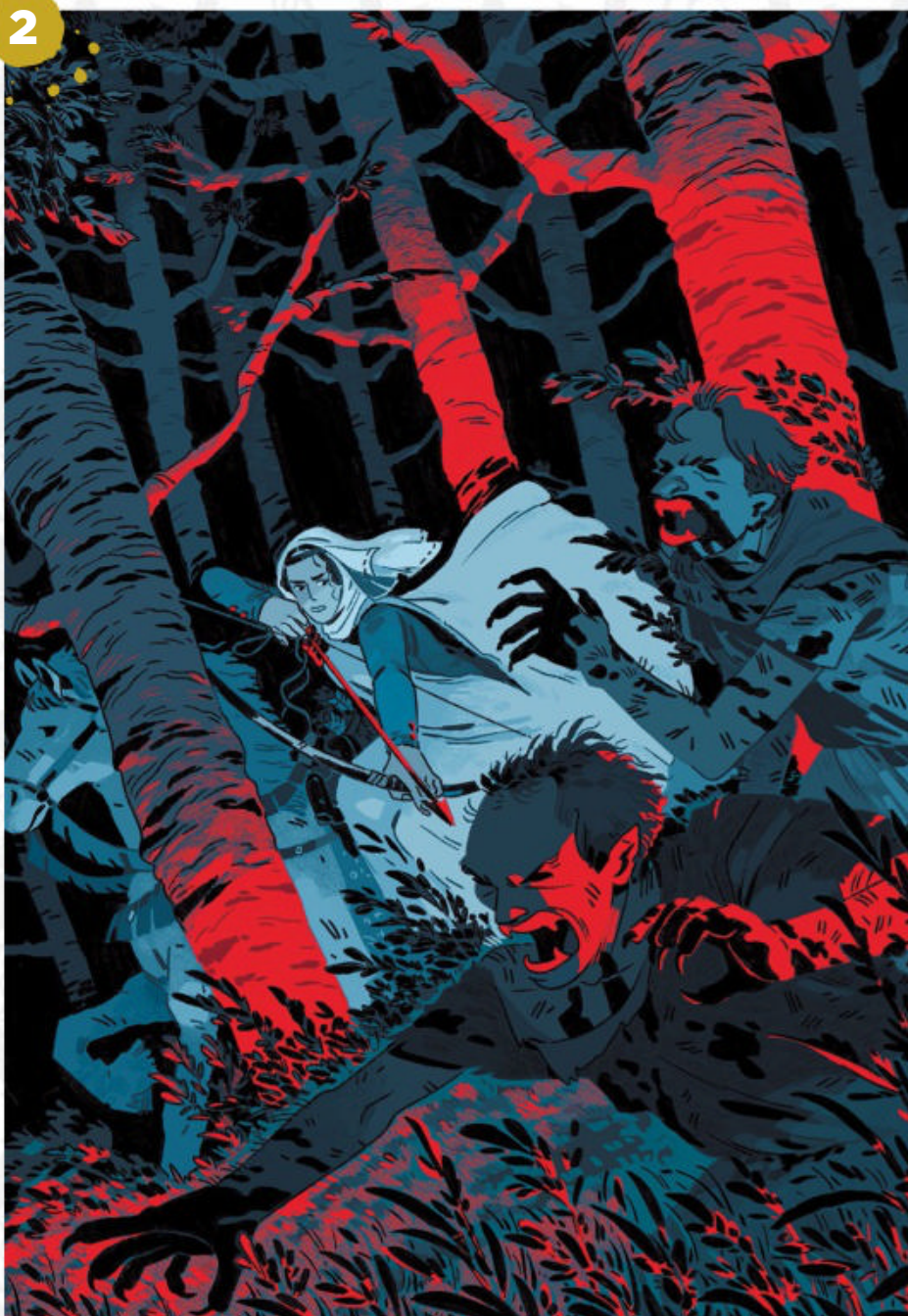
Celia is a fantasy illustrator and comics writer/artist whose past clients include IDW Publishing, Clip Studio Paint, and Devolver Digital. She has a BFA in Illustration from the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore, MD.

1



© IDW and Wizards of the Coast

2



© BOOM! Studios and 20th Century Fox

1 MINDBREAKER

"A cover for IDW Publishing's 'Dungeons & Dragons: Mindbreaker'."

2 VAMPIRE SLAYER

"Cover for BOOM! Studios' Buffy the Vampire Slayer series."

3 THERE'S MORE BLOOD THAT WAY

"Unlucky sacrifice to an unknown god. A piece of personal work."

4 THE SOLAR TEMPLE

"Personal work from 2019. It shows an expedition of explorers looking into flooded ruins."



3





Paul-Emmanuel Separi

LOCATION: France **MEDIA:** Photoshop, gouache, watercolour **WEB:** www.artstation.com/paulemmanuel_separi

After discovering Studio Ghibli movies as a teenager, Paul Emmanuel decided to study fine art at Emile Cohl school while also learning Japanese. He now works as a concept and background artist for Sun Creature Studio.

1 FARMER'S MARKET IN PORTLAND

"A background for Travel Oregon based on a layout by Noemie Leroux. I tried to make the market look as colourful and charming as possible."

2 CITY OF PORTLAND

"A background I painted for the last clip of Travel Oregon, released in 2021 and based on a layout made by Coralie Nagel."



© Psyop and Sun Creature Studio



2



Philip Sue

LOCATION: New Zealand **MEDIA:** Photoshop **WEB:** www.philipsueart.net

Philip is a Chinese artist born and raised in New Zealand. "Drawing and creating is all I seem to find myself doing and I can't get enough of it." His art depicts experiences, thoughts and emotions through visual storytelling.

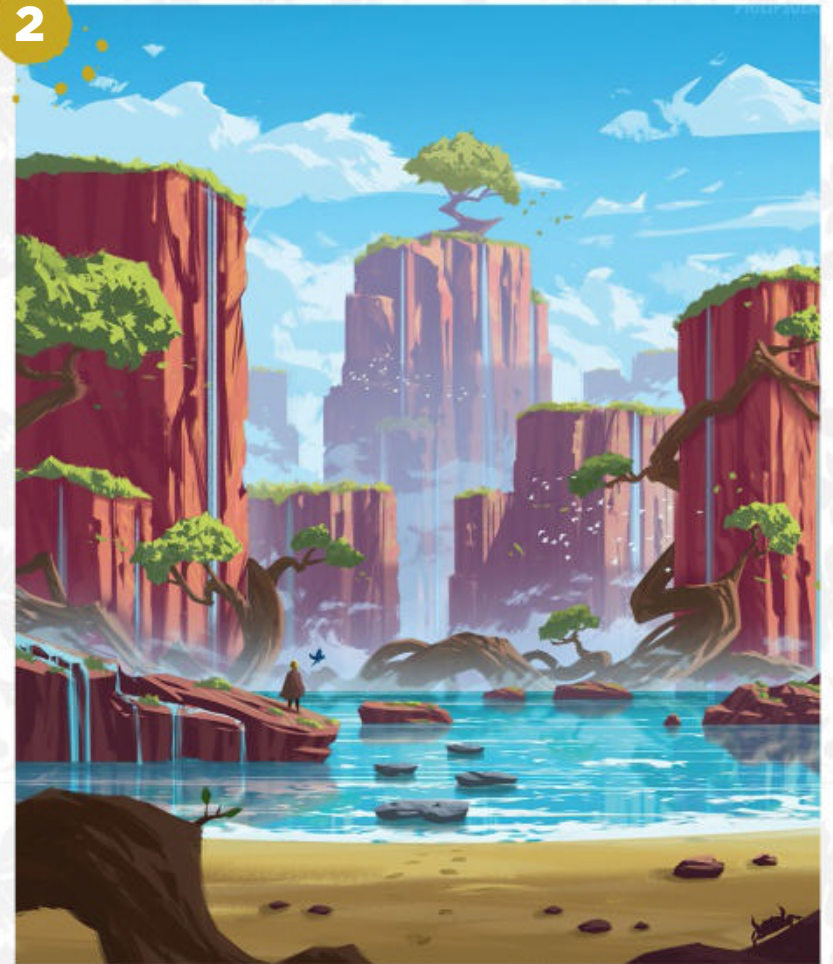
1 SALVATION

"This piece is about self reflection and understanding myself. The more I learn and realise about myself, the more I feel the beauty of life."

2 VISTA

"Art from a personal project where my character 'Abel' takes on an adventure to discover locations of interest in a fantasy world."

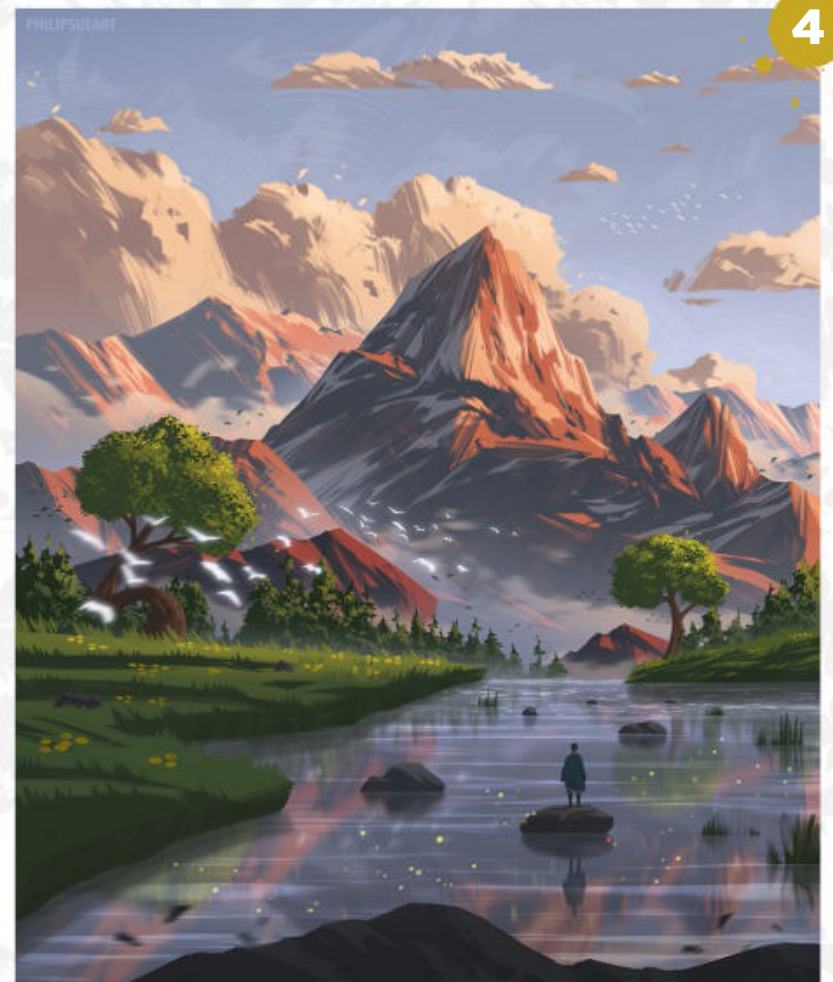
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1



4



3 NE ZHA & AO BING

"This is inspired by my passion for culture and mythology. The composition is inspired by the relationship between yin and yang."

3



4 SEEKING

"This was inspired by the warmth of a beautiful sunset I saw on my way home, and it gave me the feeling of wanting to seek and explore more of it."



Ivan Stojković

LOCATION: France **MEDIA** Inks, acrylic paint, Photoshop, Procreate, After Effects, TVPaint, Harmony

WEB: www.artstation.com/ivanstojkovic

Ivan is an illustrator, animator and comic book artist who has worked for TV and film. He balances analogue and digital media with experimentation to create powerful imagery.

1



1 WARRIOR

"A postcard illustration for a comic book publisher. I wanted a statuesque but dynamic setup, so the emphasis was on elegant posing and line flow."

2 TENNIS MATCH

"Inking a particular kind of printing paper allows the paint to be scratched off with a razor blade. It gives this film production concept an interesting quality."

Baron Gottfried von Cramm project, courtesy Sidewinder Films V, LLC, © 2022

2



3 HORROR POSTER ART

"I wanted this one to have a bit of an old horror poster quality. A nice simple design allows me to keep the lines messy and sketchy."

4 JACK ERIDON

"Inking with a 'painterly' tool, like a razor blade or spatula, allows me to develop an expressive look and creates interesting effects."

3







Gabriele D'Aleo

LOCATION: Italy **MEDIA:** Photoshop **WEB:** www.deviantart.com/gabrix89

Gabriele is a digital illustrator who loves to create fantasy and sci-fi artwork, especially landscapes and knights. Having drawn since an early age, Gabriele is inspired by books, especially The Lord of the Rings.

1 OBSCURE CREATURES

"The black dragons will only appear when evil has awakened; and the time has sadly come! Only those who possess the blessed sword will be able to defeat them!"

2 FALLEN ANGEL

"A creature appeared in the dreams of the chosen ones, a saving angel able to foresee your future and decide the fate of your life."

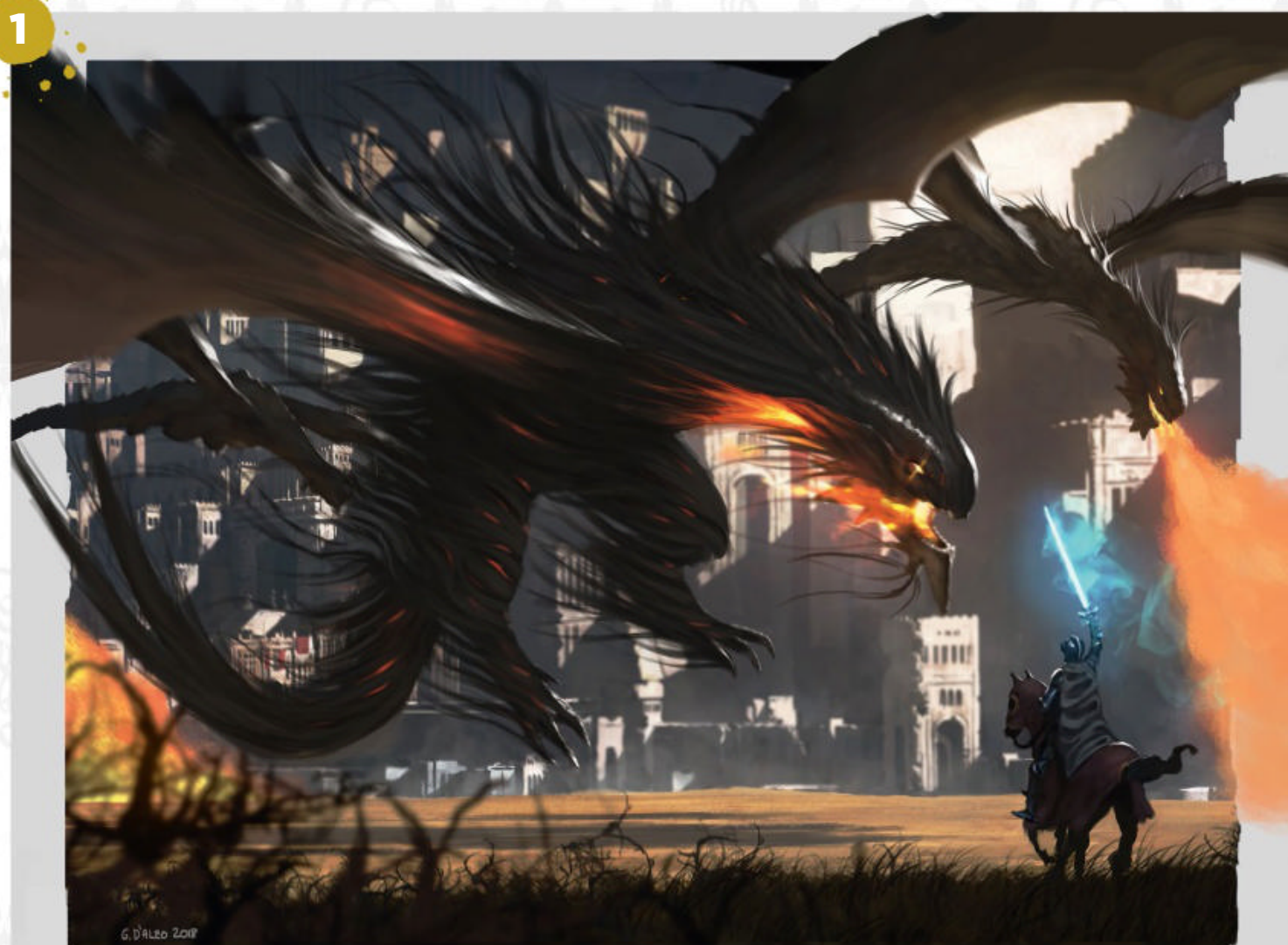
3 DEUS IN TERRA

"A gigantic being has fallen from heaven. It is the master of our lands, and has come to claim what is his."

4 VOLCANO VALLEY

"The desert is terrifying. After many days of travelling in the heat, now comes the worst time: to cross the valley of the volcanoes and reach the lake."

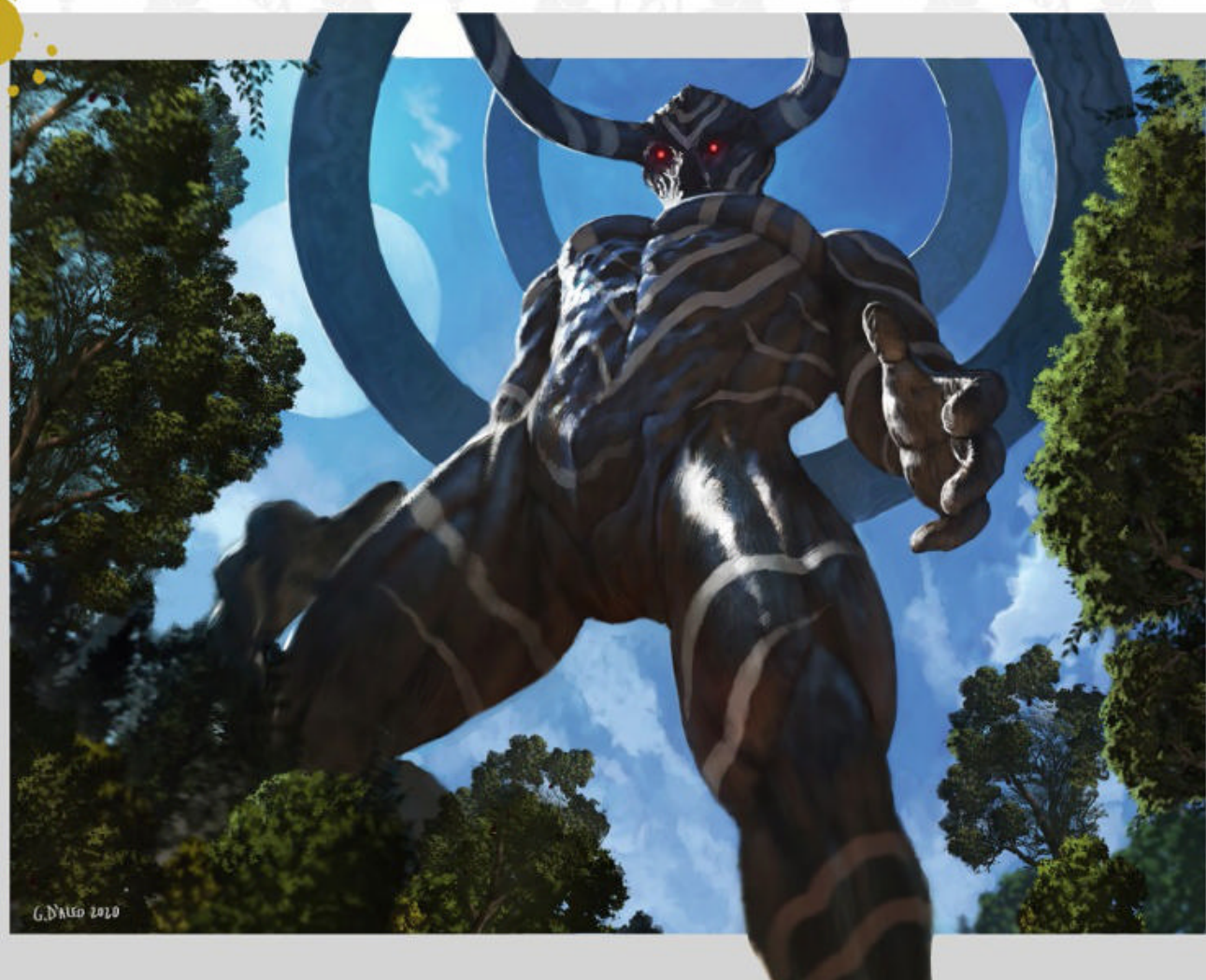
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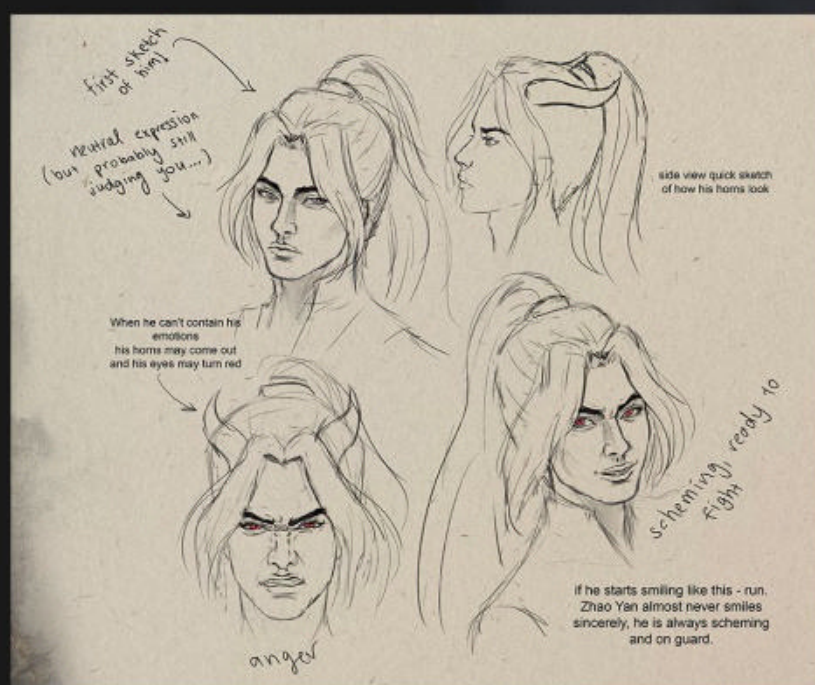




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YEAR CREATED: 2022 **MEDIA:** Photoshop

“The Dragon Prince is an ongoing personal project inspired by Asian and Chinese fantasy and mythology. I wanted to incorporate my own culture into one of my works, and after walking by the television and seeing my parents watching an Asian fantasy movie, the inspiration for these characters struck me! The entire process was very enjoyable and I was happy to create something that had some ties to my roots.”





Artist **PROFILE**

Mabel Wang

LOCATION: US



Mabel Wang is a junior level concept artist who has a passion for games and art and is looking for opportunities in the industry. Growing up, games gave her a safe place to escape to – so her dream is to work on a game that brings other players the same sense of happiness.

www.therookies.co/u/mabelwang

The worlds of surreal fantasy

New realms Tanya Combrinck meets three artists whose work enters darkly surreal unrealities of mystery and magic



'Enthrobeing' by Martin de Diego Sádaba, from his project 'The Great Nothing', a story of an underlying alternative reality.



'Voidite Maiden' by Martin de Diego Sádaba, also from 'The Great Nothing', a world that can be discovered by "reading between the lines" of our reality.



A mysterious, otherworldly image by Mélissa Houpert, titled 'Decision'.

Illogical and unnerving scenes have long been used by surrealists to depict the machinations of the unconscious mind, and taking inspiration from this genre has opened up these artists' own personal dreamworld.

Concept artist **Mélissa Houpert's**



journey into the unreal began with a painting by dystopian surrealist Zdzisław Beksiński. "It haunted me for a long

time," she says. "I found something in it that I had not seen anywhere else." Although the art had affected her profoundly, it took a while for Mélissa to feel confident enough to put something of this into her own work; she thought it wasn't what people wanted her to create, and doing so didn't feel legitimate to her. "I painted a lot of environments and I always loved the melancholic feeling they had. But

'Equinox' by Carlos Quevedo, created in collaboration with Max Solve.



one day, a client whose work I admire came to me for an album cover and it gave me a chance to express myself, and to believe in myself. It was the kick I needed to trust in my process."

A GATEWAY TO INFINITY

Studying literature nurtured her fascination for certain symbols and themes, which she developed and explored through her art. "The image of the tunnel, the portal, and the mirror are important to me. I love the way

they lead us to another universe, another way of thinking, or just another reality. I like the concept of transition," she says.

Cosmic elements feature strongly in Mélissa's work; she enjoys the idea of them as a gateway to somewhere else that is beyond our world. "It's the huge infinity. I have always loved the sensation of being nothing compared to the stars and the galaxy," she says.

Large bodies of water are another important element that Mélissa ➡

“I have always loved the sensation of being nothing compared to the galaxy”



ART NOUVEAU STUDIO

The house of French artist Yoann Lossel is one giant art studio, and he takes us around his favourite rooms, which combine his love for nature and art.

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YOUR VIEWS, YOUR ART

Readers write in with their art news and opinions on what we've covered in ImagineFX. Plus we feature art that's caught our eye on social media.

Page 33



'Sahasrara' by Mélissa Houpert. "Sometimes we have to look deep inside ourselves to find the strength we need," she says.

INDUSTRY INSIGHT CONTRASTING THEMES

Carlos Quevedo explains the thinking behind his characters

How do you come up with your surreal compositions and characters?

I use surrealism in whatever way I can to convey meaning, and I like to hide small details in my imagery, such as words and symbols scattered in a surreal way. My characters form part of a mystical world filled with spirituality; there is darkness but also a lot of light.

I like to tell stories from a single character's perspective and I try to express their own attempt to reach divinity. I take inspiration from the symbols of different cultures, and Greek and Norse mythology are also very important to me.

Tell us about the darkness in your work.

I like the mystery, the mute tones, and those stories that show a contrast between light and dark, good and evil. I think there is a lot of depth and beauty in dark themes, and a great opportunity to express some deeper ideas.

How did you develop your artistic style?

I began by making images of mythical creatures and then incorporating textures and symbols relating to different religions and cultures. I use things I find meaningful, that relate to my thoughts and feelings, and my style grew out of that. My journey isn't over though, there is always so much to explore and learn.



Carlos Quevedo is a digital artist based in Columbia currently working as a full-time cover designer.

carlosquevedoart.com

➡➡ makes use of in many of her artworks. “It evokes in me the same thing as space: the idea of infinity, but more mysterious. It reminds me of something subconscious. This sense of the infinite, combined with a lot of melancholy, is the emotion that drives me the most when I draw.”

Mélissa’s process for coming up with new compositions starts with doodling, experimenting, and combining ideas from her sketches. “I use my intuition to create the more surreal elements, and when I come up with something that is mysterious even to me, it’s the best feeling,” she says. “If I’m stuck I listen to a lot of audio content, go on walks in nature and do other hobbies. I try to keep my spirits high and my curiosity going. Sometimes just walking is all I need to overcome an artistic block.”

FORMS OF EXPRESSION

Mélissa’s gnarled, faceless creatures may seem monstrous to some, but she doesn’t perceive them this way. “I completely understand that the viewer may experience this feeling, but I always have a tenderness for them,” she says. Her creatures are the product of her interest in exploring the human body and how it can be expressive. “Mostly I don’t draw their faces because it doesn’t seem necessary to feel their emotions, and I don’t want

“The oniric world is a big influence. Most of my dark artworks are dreamscapes”



‘Warm Voidite Demigodess’ by Martin de Diego Sádaba, a character from “a place of void where beings flow in forms.”



A mixture of angelic and dark elements combine to make this ‘Seraphiel’ image by Carlos Quevedo.

the viewer to be distracted by some kind of judgement. I think not drawing a face can help with this.”

Faces, by contrast, are central to the work of illustrator and concept artist **Martin de Diego Sádaba**, who paints portraits of semi-human and non-human entities which sometimes appear to be partly made of machinery. Bodies merge with non-biological material, and mouths and eyes crop up in unexpected places.

Martin’s workflow begins by painting with his custom brushes to create texture variations, and then searching within those textures for pareidolia – shapes that look to him like objects,



‘Nightwalker - marauder’ by Martin de Diego Sádaba.



Mélissa Houpert’s design for a tarot card, The Empress, which represents creativity, abundance and femininity.

expressions or body parts. “Most of the time I see faces because of how the brain works, so I try to extract what I see there,” he says. “It rarely happens easily, but a dialogue begins, a dance between the image and the artist. I never know where or how it’s going to end, I just know the mood I want to keep. I enjoy these moments of ‘painting unconsciousness.’”

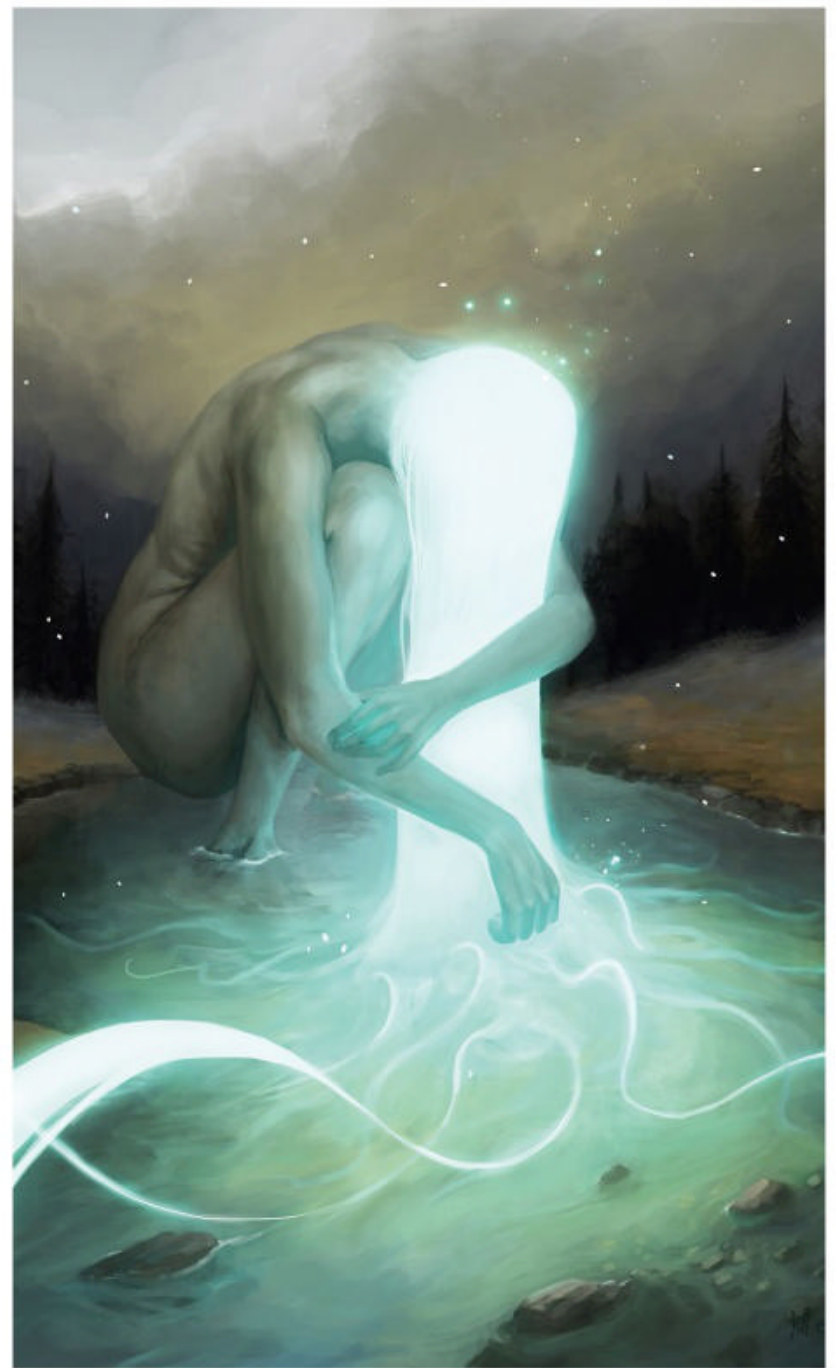
DARK AND DREAMLIKE

Martin was attracted to darker themes at an early age. “I remember myself at five years old drawing Frankenstein monsters, Dracula and aliens; I rarely did anything other than monsters except in the case of student or client work.” He remembers the era of his childhood, the 1980s, as the golden age of horror movies, makeup FX and heavy metal album covers, but he acknowledges that it was also an age of colour and light, pop art and pop music. “I guess we all choose our own path, and I chose mine very early.”

For Martin, creating dark art is something he feels he needs to do as a form of therapy. “It just comes out of me, and it’s always dark. Darkness can be calm and warm like the inside of a mother’s belly, or cold and painful as in death. Darkness is where we live one third of our lives, when we sleep, and the oniric world is a big influence for me. Most of my dark artworks are dreamscapes and dream beings that I call ‘Nightwalkers.’”



'Anatema', a striking portrait by Carlos Quevedo.



'The place I'll return to someday', a personal project by Mélissa Houpert.

Like Mélissa, Martin also cites Zdzisław Beksinski as a big influence, as well as H.R. Giger, who designed the Xenomorph in the film *Alien*. "I always enjoyed the bells of unreality," he says. "I unconsciously travel to my interpretation of the antithesis of our daily life, and it's full of all the things that have had the biggest influence on me, including the likes of history, mythology, religions, esoterism and mythology but also fantasy, science fiction and horror movies."

His tools as well as his influences have played a role in the evolution of his style. "The custom brushes and the symmetry I use – and abuse – are landmarks. The rest comes from my own artistic or thematic obsessions and how I interiorise and reinterpret

those artistic elements that have influenced me over the years."

OTHERWORLDLY THEMES

Religion and mythology are core inspirations for graphic artist **Carlos Quevedo**, who works more explicitly with theological themes in his surreal, otherworldly images. He began his religious studies as a young child and this education had a powerful influence on both his art and his worldview. "Over the years I searched for answers from theology; it opened my mind and helped me decide what to believe in," he says. "I like to express these themes in my artworks; my characters are gods, saints and profane entities."



The contrast of light and dark is used to great effect in Carlos' work, with bright white sunlight often cutting through an otherwise sinister scene. His characters sometimes have both angelic and demonic aspects, and their worlds are filled with ambiguous symbols. "The lost faith and decadence of religion is my main subject. I think of my art as a kind of digital iconoclasm, because it deconstructs religious imagery and its holy state."

Carlos creates his pieces by incorporating an assortment of photographic materials, 3D elements and stock images into his paintings, using Procreate as well as Photoshop to combine them. "I love the results you can get from mixing things in these programs. Sometimes I get a totally unexpected result in terms of composition or colour that ends up being completely separate from my main sketch or initial idea. I love it when that happens, it feels as though the character has come to my canvas by itself."

ImagineNation Artist in Residence



I collect books from the golden age of illustration. Some are signed by Arthur Rackham.

I love mixed media. I work on an easel or on a drafting table, depending on the technique I use.

We created the wainscoting, which is a replica of 18th century French panelling.

This piece of furniture is an old serving trolley. I love it, I use it all the time to take my drawing materials wherever I am.



This plant study book is illustrated by M. Pillard-Verneuil, a student of the famous Art Nouveau artist Eugène Grasset.

This statue was created by MoonCrane Press based on one of my artworks: The Rise.

I use many different varnishes depending on whether I am working with graphite, pastel, gold leaf or oil paint.

I love to depict psychopomp animals: white animals that symbolise the ability to travel between worlds.



Yoann Lossel

A timeless space This French artist's studio is immersed in an Art Nouveau aesthetic



My house is located in France, in the heart of the forest of Broceliande. I live there with my partner

Psyché Ophiuchus, who is a photographer and model. Together we edit our books, create our own prints and carry out various artistic projects. The whole house is a huge art studio but I will mainly present two rooms: my studio and the room dedicated to printing.

My studio is a timeless space, a tribute to the art of the late 19th and early 20th century. We designed it in 2021 with the help of a cabinetmaker friend, on the occasion of the release of my book *Forgotten Gods*. It brings together my passion for art and my love for nature and was designed to inspire and immerse me in my own world. It is a kind of laboratory-library, where I can test different techniques and look for ideas with everything at hand. There are many tools that accompany me in my work, in particular painters' tools and

Portrait photo by Psyché Ophiuchus

ImagineNation **Artist in Residence**



The dagobert armchair immediately reminded me of Mucha's famous portrait, I love the green men sculpted on it.



A tribute to my favourite French poet, Charles Baudelaire.



This part of my studio is dedicated to writing and thinking, I work there when I have to make sketches or when I start my creative process.

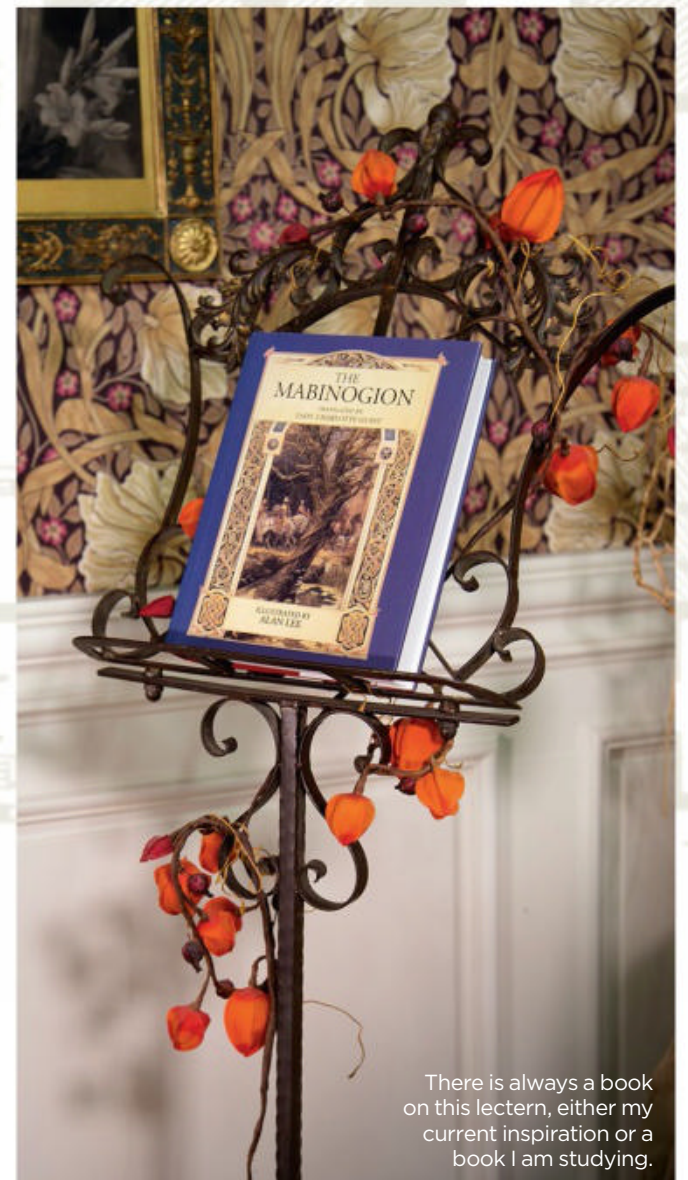


This shelf is completely twisted, I kept the shape of the original branches. It contains my books of inspiration, as well as some books I participated in or want to read or study soon.

“My studio brings together my passion for art and my love for nature”



The Rise is the story of how I met my wife, Psyché. Graphite, gold leaf, silver leaf and hydrangeas petals on paper.



There is always a book on this lectern, either my current inspiration or a book I am studying.

ImagineNation **Artist in Residence**

In this part of my workshop I have all my equipment nearby. I can work with any traditional technique.



➡ gilding material, as well as many decorative objects, antiques, books...

DEDICATED SPACE

I need to surround myself with what I like and what I find beautiful, in the pure tradition of Arts & Crafts. With this in mind, and to bring nature into my studio, I chose to decorate the walls with one of the famous tapestries by William Morris (whose philosophy and art I am passionate about). It goes perfectly with the yew shelves I made about ten years ago, which have followed me everywhere.

Psyché and I are night owls, although we try to be careful not to work too late. I'm used to working with artificial lighting. For our activities

“The house is a huge art studio... designed to immerse me in my own world”

we have a lot of spotlights with adjustable colour temperature and intensity, so I can work with the exact lighting I need.

The second room is a space dedicated to printing techniques. The room features the likes of an A1 printer that allows us to produce our own fine art prints, an intaglio press for embossing and engraving, and screen printing equipment dedicated to creating prints that we gild using a special technique.

This intaglio press allows me to emboss my prints. I cast my logo in a tin/lead alloy so that I can leave a personalised imprint.



We also have photography equipment and a room dedicated to computers with calibrated screens and storage servers. Psyché also has a photo lab specialising in the creation of wet collodion, an old photographic technique that requires a bellows camera. We plan to gradually redecorate the whole house with our artistic influences.

Yoann Lossel has exhibited his work in numerous galleries around the world. An award-winning artist, he is well known for his meticulous work combining graphite and gold leaf. www.yoannlossel.com



A tachi and a makila. The makila is a walking stick doubled with a weapon belonging to the Basque culture and tradition (in the south of France).

Artist news, software & events



Some of my gilding material: gold leaf, gilding size, burnishers, varnishes...



Part of my collection of old books. I have been collecting them for many years with a preference for signed first editions.



When inking, I use these antique Art Nouveau inkwells and penholders. It inspires me a lot to work with this material.



Les Jardins de Nuit was inspired by the starry ceilings that can be seen in some manors and castles.

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Inspiring spaces

Having been a subscriber for many years I have been a fan of lots of what I read in ImagineFX, but I think the pages I go back to look at more than the rest are the Residence pages.

It's so inspiring to see where other artists work. Last month you showed a beautiful studio full of plants and now I find myself looking for plants for my own space.

Hannah, via email

Plants galore

Wow. I just read ImagineFX issue 214 and I loved seeing inside Anna Podedworna's studio. Thank you for showing that. What an incredible workplace! That must be a wonderful place to paint.

Giles, via email

Rob replies Thanks for writing in. I couldn't agree more. Seeing inside the studios of other artists can be a true inspiration, and changing things up in your own studio can definitely give new life to your work as well as lift your mood.



DID YOU MISS THE PREVIOUS PACKED ISSUE?

Don't worry – you can get hold of issue 214 at ifxm.ag/single-ifx.

Seeing inside other artists' studios can inspire your own and breathe fresh life into your work.



The world of Dungeons and Dragons is truly enhanced by its incredible artwork.

Classic fantasy

I was so pleased to see the last issue with all the Dungeons & Dragons art. I've been playing D&D for over 30 years now and always thought the art was what drew me in, even more than the game itself. It was a pleasure to see it in your magazine and getting to know a little about the artists involved was really interesting. If I have one complaint it is that there wasn't enough.

David, via email

Rob replies We packed in as much as we could but don't worry, plenty more classic art to come in future issues.

Abstract art

I've just picked up a copy of your latest issue and I have to say I loved reading the tutorial about painting abstract portraits. It was just what I needed.

Jose, via email

Rob replies Thanks for writing in and I'm so glad you got some inspiration from Ken's tutorial. He is a great artist and demonstrates the process really well too.

Unknown artists

Hello,
I'm writing with a question. I love the magazine but am wondering where you find the artists you feature. Do you ever showcase unknown artists, or people who haven't worked on high-end projects? Asking for a friend.

Hilda, via email

Rob replies Hi Hilda. Glad you like the mag and what a great question. We don't mind what projects artists have worked on. Many people do it for love, rather than a job, but that doesn't mean it's not worthy art. If you, or a friend, have work to share then please do email me. I look forward to seeing it in my inbox soon!

FRESH PAINT

New works that have grabbed our attention



Padhraic Moneley
[@bealtaine_99](https://instagram.com/bealtaine_99)



JJDM
[@jjdm designs](https://instagram.com/jjdm designs)



Jonathan Ly
[@lyart_jo](https://instagram.com/lyart_jo)

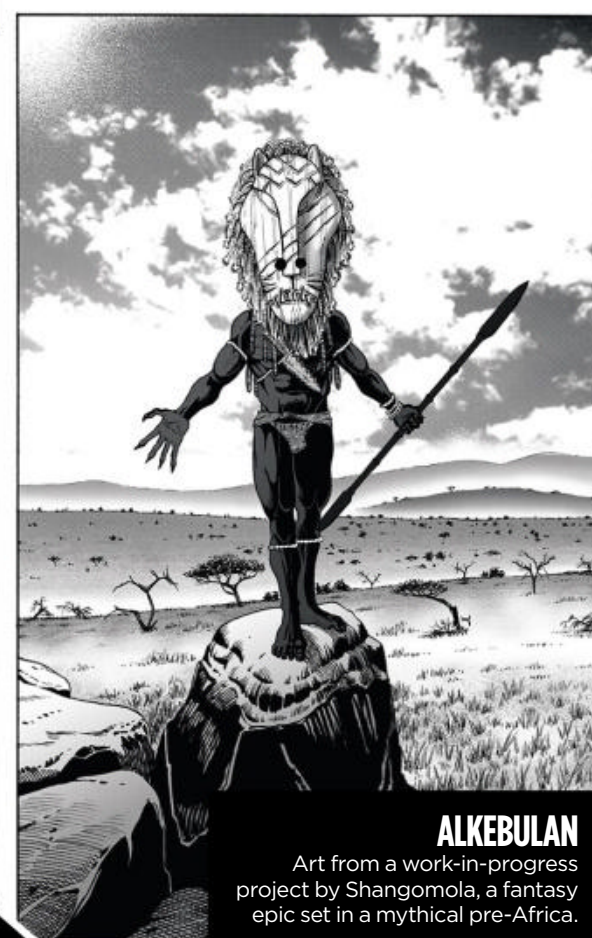
If you've created art that you want us to shout about simply tag us on Twitter or Instagram, and use the hashtag #imaginefx



ATTACK ON TITAN FAN ART
Fusing digital with traditional approaches is a founding principle of B.c.Ny.'s work.

EXPLORE THE WORLD OF MANGA

James Clarke speaks with manga artists in the UK and the USA about their processes and creative impulses.



ALKEBULAN

Art from a work-in-progress project by Shangomola, a fantasy epic set in a mythical pre-Africa.

Linnea Kataja is a manga artist in the USA whose work enjoys a faithful and evergrowing online audience. In 2019, her project A Maid Story won recognition in Japan via Ribon magazine's Comic Grand Prix. Linnea talks us through her influences and her creative processes.

"I saw the anime Tokyo Mew Mew on TV as a child and started collecting the manga shortly after. There was something 'different' about it compared to American comics and

cartoons. The cuteness of the characters, the highly detailed illustrations and captivating stories, all of it enchanted me. I couldn't stop trying to replicate the style, it became my passion and I made it my goal to become a manga artist. I want to create the same type of



captivating work I've grown to love," Linnea explains. "My main influences are shoujo manga artists

"The captivating stories enchanted me"

and 'moe' style illustrators, especially the manga series published in Kodansha's Nakayoshi magazine such as Shugo Chara!, Tokyo Mew Mew and Cardcaptor Sakura to name a few. On the horror side, series like Higurashi no Naku Koro Ni and Madoka



*SHATTER

...if I
throw
myself
forth...

パ
キ
ン
*CRACK

...will you
chase me
too?

...with
those
Galaxy
Eyes

IDOL ROYALE

For Linnea Kataja (aka
Keikokup), the feeling
of hand-drawn images
is key to her style.

➡➡ Magica have been my biggest influences. I love the contrast between the cute characters and the horrifying situations they have to experience. Compared to normal horror media, this contrast makes the darker elements stand out in a captivating and disturbing way, since such cute characters shouldn't be experiencing such terrifying situations."

THE ARTISTIC PROCESS

Speaking about creative challenges, Linnea notes that, "My current project Idol Royale has certainly been the most challenging. I'm always trying to push myself more and more with every project I make, and Idol Royale includes a lot of scenes that are difficult but rewarding to create. I always have to spend a lot of time on the action scenes or scenes where there's large crowds of people."

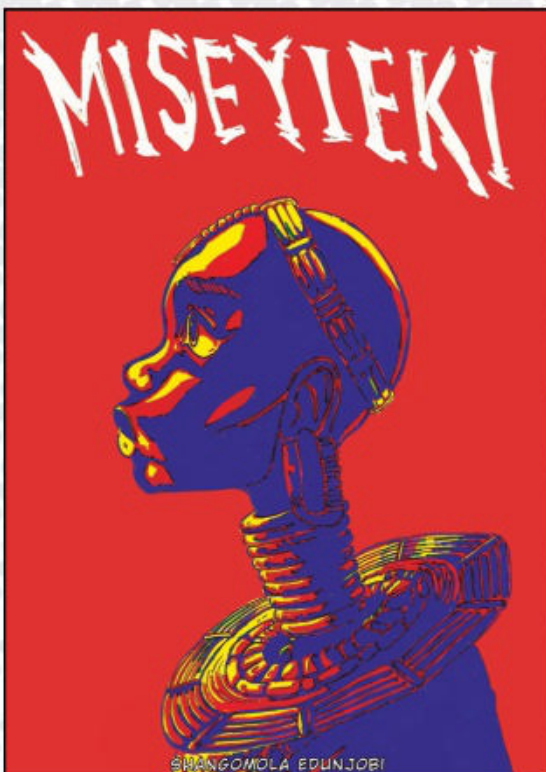
In her work, Linnea uses a Huion Kamvas Pro 16in at home and iPad Pro when working outside. She uses Clip Studio Paint EX with both tablets. "Even though I work fully digitally," Linnea explains, "my style replicates the feeling of traditionally drawn manga. Using a digital brush that resembles a G Pen and textures that resemble manga screentone (the gray/dotted texture in manga) help to keep the 'hand-drawn' feeling that manga can have."

"I can see the influences from these artists on my work"



PURSUIT OF NOTHING

A excerpt from Shangomola's thought-provoking work, tackling the theme of freedom.

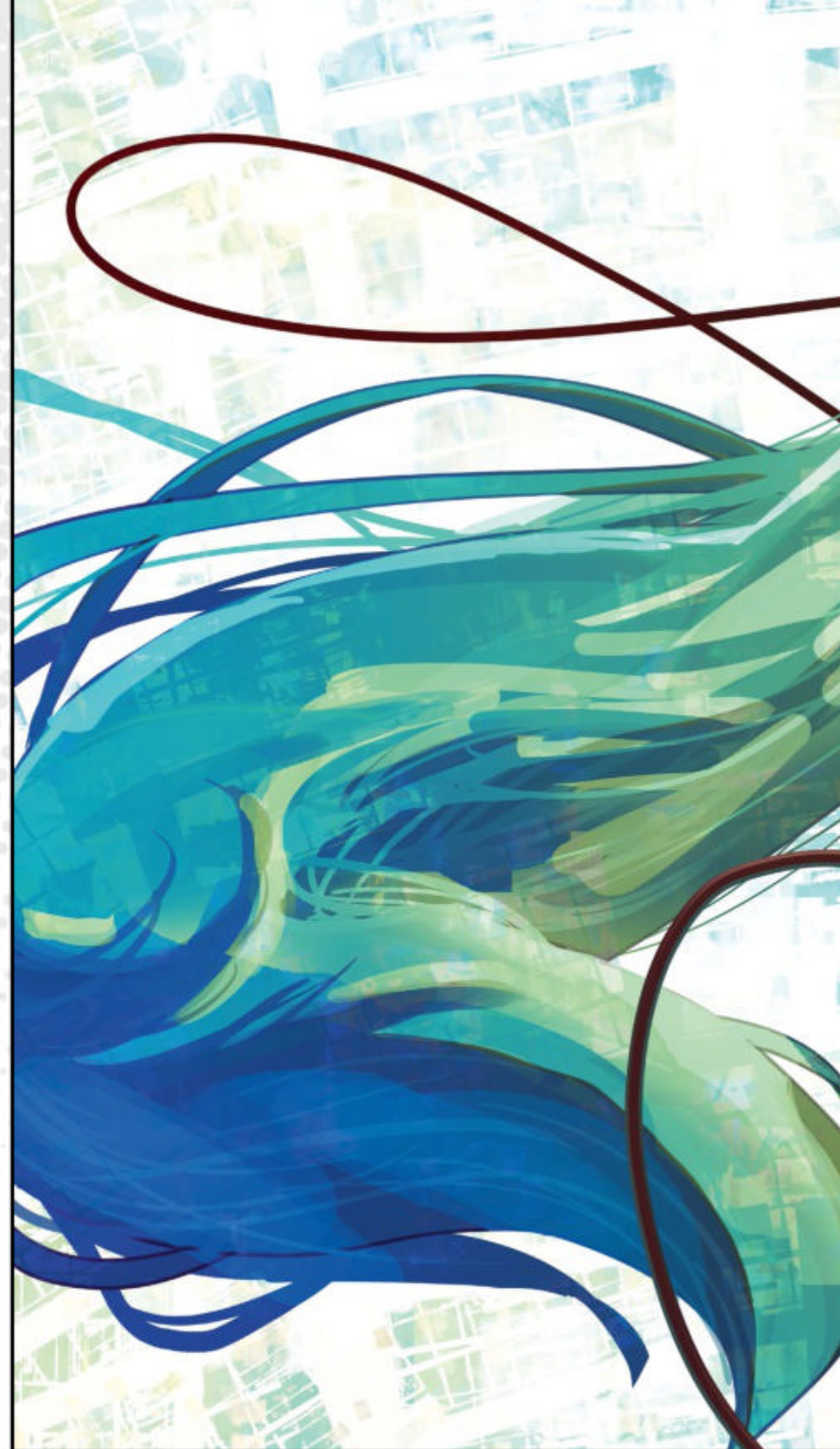


BREAKING TRADITION

Shangomola's Miseyieki project, telling the story of a 16-year-old Maasai girl in Kenya, explores the representation of people of colour.

Han-Yuan Yu, who goes by the name B.c.N.y, is a manga artist based in the USA, and he takes us through his influences. He begins by explaining that "I love manga and still read it daily, and there are many manga artists who have influenced me. In my childhood, Usui Yoshito and Toriyama Akira gave me a lot of joy and inspirations; during my teenage years, Hojo Tsukasa, Sadamoto Yoshiyuki and Yamada Akihiro were my favourite manga artists; and when I started to pursue art as my career, I couldn't leave without the manga from Samura Hiroaki, Toume Kei, Tsuruta Kenji and Murata Range, their drawing skills are phenomenal! Even today, I can still see the influences from these manga artists on my artwork."

Han-Yuan Yu goes on to discuss his process: "I usually finish artworks digitally since my clients generally require digital files. However, I love to play with traditional drawing methods and materials, and then combine them in my digital creation. For example, I love to do tiny character doodles on paper as I feel it's more intuitive and easier to observe its shapes and outlines. In addition, I found it is easier to finish linework ➡➡



SHOUJO AESTHETIC

Linnea's work captures the feel of the manga images that she first encountered as a reader.

The World of Manga

HATSUNE MIKU FAN ART

B.c.N.y.'s images fuse acrylic and marker work with digital retouching.



MANGA'S WIDER USE

Han-Yuan Yu discusses how the manga style continues to grow in its wide-reaching appeal

"I would say manga is not only for creating manga pages as books, it could be seen as a style of art that can be applied to everywhere artistically," says Han-Yuan Yu. "In recent years, manga art has been widely accepted around the world because of the high popularity of Japanese manga and anime. Since many people grew up with the influence of manga, manga art has become a style that is no longer valued just for children. Since manga art is good at attracting audiences, with the thriving of the internet and the online games industry, the demands of manga art continue to grow."



CUTE GIRLS... PLUS WEAPONS!

Linnea Kataja's Idol Royale combines the cute world of pop idols with psychological horror.



CAPTIVATING CHARACTERS

For B.c.N.y, manga has ever-increasing audience appeal.



A MUSICAL BLOODBATH

With each of her projects, Linnea seeks to challenge her creative process.

OLD AND NEW

Linnea Kataja discusses how tradition informs her work

"Even though I work fully digitally my style replicates the feeling of traditionally drawn manga. Using a digital brush that resembles a 'G Pen' and textures that resemble manga screentone (the grey/dotted texture in manga) help to keep the 'hand-drawn' feeling that manga can have."



CAFE

A range of influences inform B.c.N.y.'s work, from his favourite anime series and games, to popular virtual idols.



PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

B.c.N.y.'s Coffee project allows him to continue pushing his style and process.



INSPIRATION

Influences on Shangomola include the work of Eiichiro Oda, creator of One Piece, the highest-selling manga.

➡ on paper rather than on the computer, because I usually spend extra time refining little details of each stroke of lines under 300% zoom that might not be necessary at all. On the other hand, I also try to finish paintings by acrylic and markers on canvas traditionally, scanning it and retouching it digitally. I enjoy playing with actual pigments and painting materials! Moreover, creating my own textures on paper with inks and pigments that can be utilised digitally is also a fantastic experience."

For Han-Yuan Yu, his preferred drawing tools are Photoshop and Intuos Pro Medium.

PERSONAL GOALS

Han-Yuan Yu talks us through one of his works – Daily Life with Coffee, as seen above. "I started the illustration by creating the draft," he explains. "In

The World of Manga



DAILY LIFE WITH COFFEE

B.c.N.y reworked this image, bringing in green to balance the blue/brown palette.



REPRESENTATION

Important to Shangomola is telling the stories of other cultures within his manga work.



KILL THE COMPETITION

Linnea's work is inspired by the likes of Madoka Magica - cute characters experiencing horror!

this step I focused on the composition and overall relationship among the objects, to see if they were well balanced and whether the focal point was good enough. Once the draft was settled, I drew the clean linework so that, later on, I could focus on colouring itself without spending extra time on figuring out what the contours for each object were. During the colouring process, I finished the objects' colour one by one.

"When I finished the first round of colouring, I found out that the girl, which should be the focal point, wasn't strong enough. It might have been due to her colours being too similar to the surroundings. I tried several colour combinations but I wasn't satisfied, therefore I decided to redraw the character. Because I wanted her to be more obvious, I enlarged the character compared to the previous one. When I had the new draft, I

found it was good and kept working on it. Once the linework was done, it was time to move to the colouring process: I decided to choose bright blue as the character's main colour for this illustration."

In the UK, a rising name in the manga community is Shangomola Edunjobi and he begins by describing



his main inspirations: "I would say my two main influences are Eiichiro Oda, author of One Piece, and Kentaro Miura, the creator of Berserk."

Of his own work and process, Shangomola reveals that, "My most challenging work to create to date was Miseyieki, which was a story about a Maasai girl dealing with the pressures of marriage and tradition. I have



LINE WORK

Shangomola strives to suggest the tradition of ink and dip pen in his line style.

always had an issue with the representation of black characters in manga and upon visiting Japan and speaking to some of the creators there, a few have expressed difficulty in drawing characters of colour. As a black creator myself, I feel a responsibility to create work that can improve this representation, and Miseyieki was my first published attempt at this."

"I try to recreate the traditional effects on paper using fine liners"

For Shangomola, he draws traditionally and scans his work in order to finish it digitally. Digital elements of colour, text and screentone are added using Photoshop. "I don't use the traditional ink and dip pen that is associated with manga artists, but I try to recreate the effects on paper using fine liners and other pens. I value being able to understand and know how traditional artists created certain effects on paper, effects that are now so easily applied digitally, so that I can pass on that knowledge one day."

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Issue 213 June 2022

Discover top tips for original character design from Blizzard's Dave Greco, replicate a traditional woodblock aesthetic, and get experimental with portraits. Plus, we interview sci-fi artist Amir Zand about his striking style.



Issue 212 May 2022

Learn anatomy skills from the professionals, discover expert tips for creating a comic, and enhance your creature concepts. Plus, take a tour of Robert Hunt's amazing workspace, and get to know ArtRage's unique toolsets.



Issue 211 April 2022

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Dario Jelušić

The concept artist shares his incredible sketches, many of which are inspired by Croatian folklore and mythology

Artist **PROFILE**

Dario Jelušić
LOCATION: UK



Dario Jelušić is from Croatia and currently lives in the UK. He works as a principal concept artist in an art studio, and in his

free time he works on his personal fantasy project called Croatian Tales of Long Ago.

www.artstation.com/dariojelusic



PLAYFUL

"He heard sounds of snapping twigs and hundreds of little feet running around. After a few seconds, they started to snarl and hiss from the corners of his room. Then the lights went out. He knew... it was their turn to play."

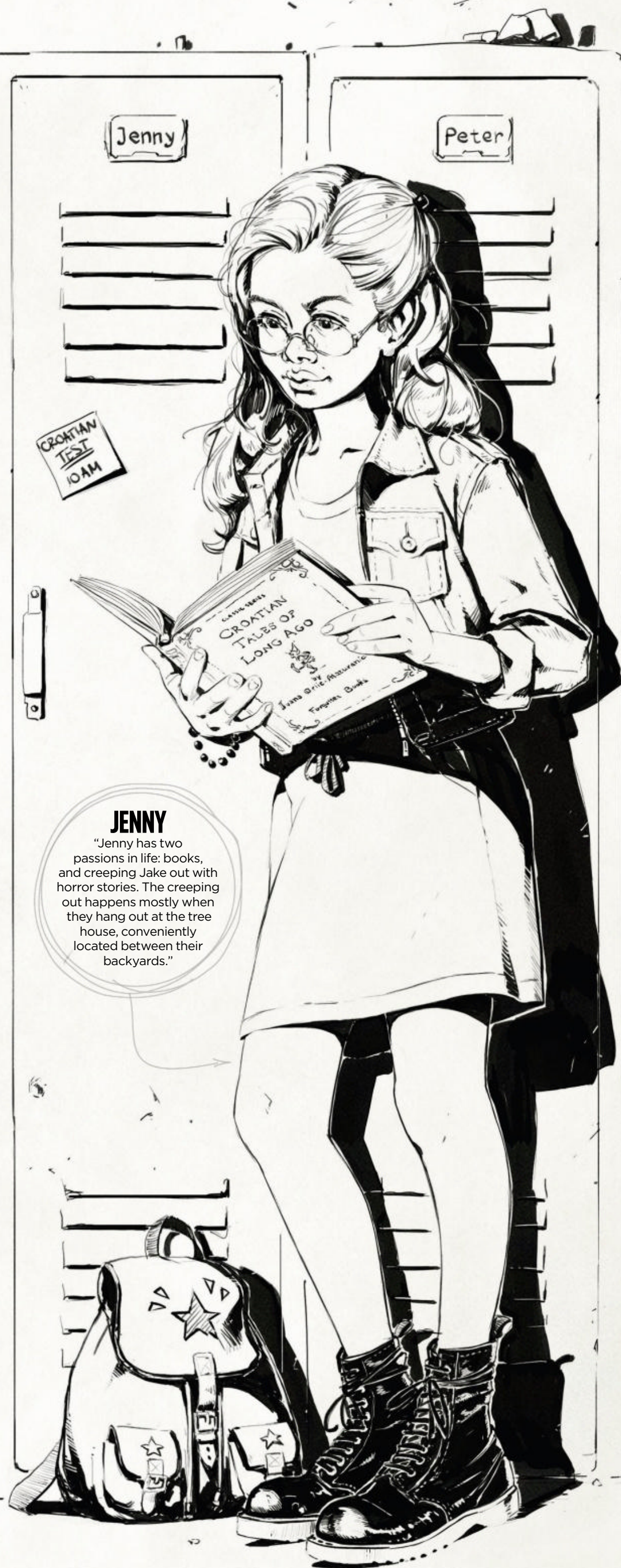
BOY WITHOUT A HEART

"What if Pinocchio enjoyed being a wooden boy? What if Geppetto was just his human puppet, and what if Cricket was a giant, pipe-smoking bug? I always have lots of fun redesigning well-known characters."



HALLOWEEN

"For most kids Halloween monsters are just scary masks, but for Jake and Jenny the monsters are real and out to get them."



JENNY

“Jenny has two passions in life: books, and creeping Jake out with horror stories. The creeping out happens mostly when they hang out at the tree house, conveniently located between their backyards.”

Grace

WOLF HUNTER

“This sketch followed the one I did for Pinocchio. With redesigns, I will always try to push the idea outside of the box. That is how two little piggies ended up with a wolf-hating big brother.”



“With redesigns, I will always try to push the idea outside of the box”



JAKE

“He learned really quickly that repellent is the best weapon to use against giant, chatty houseflies. Jake was part of a little project I did during the Inktober challenge.”

Sketchbook

50-Y

"In the depths under the city, they are gathering around 50-Y like moths to the light. His oratory capabilities are elevated to extraordinary levels by his trusted hovering head."

ASSASSIN

"Her skills are the best money can buy and corporations are not shy spending big \$\$\$ to remove their competition from the equation."

LION PRINCE

"As I was exploring various mythologies of Africa, I stumbled upon the god Apedemak. Suffice to say I was inspired and Lion Prince was the first to come out wielding the god's power."



“Croatian folklore is full of some extraordinary mythological creatures”

GIANT RESTING

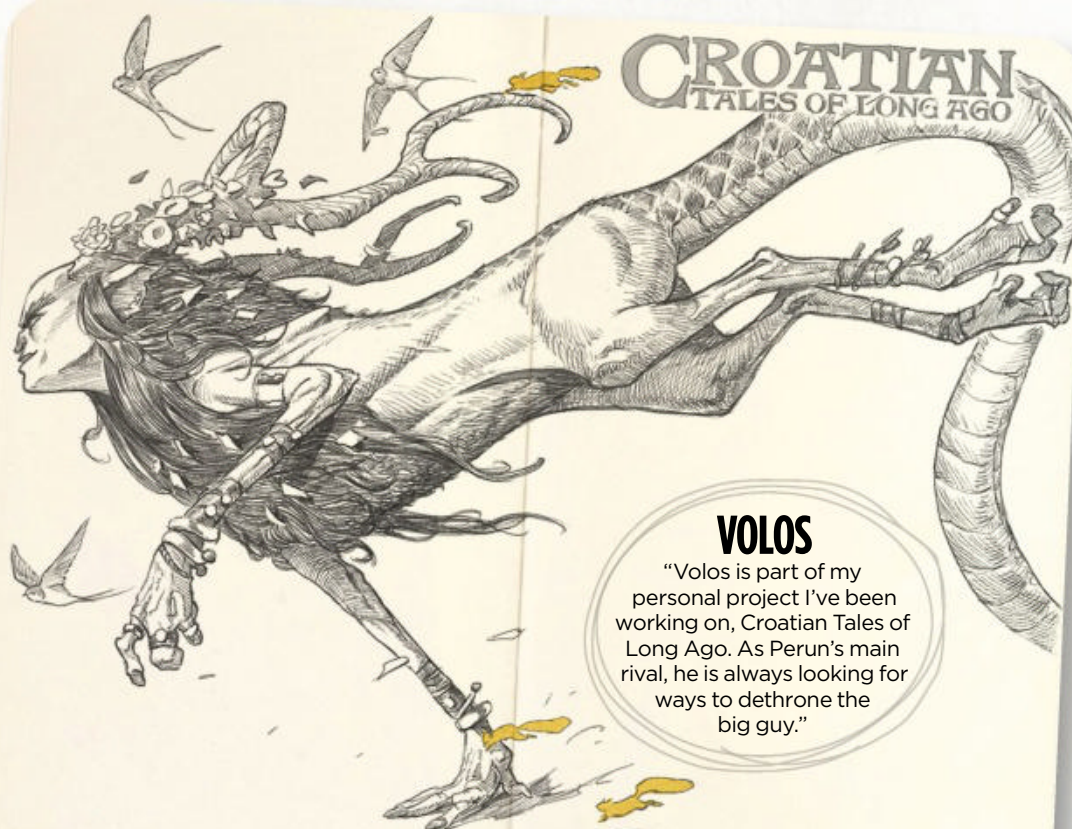
“Croatian folklore is full of some extraordinary mythological creatures. Some of them are giants. They like to relax and enjoy the little things. Sun, trees... and goats.”



CROATIAN TALES OF LONG AGO

VOLOS

“Volos is part of my personal project I’ve been working on, Croatian Tales of Long Ago. As Perun’s main rival, he is always looking for ways to dethrone the big guy.”



BJESOMAR

“Croatian folklore is populated by a vast pantheon of gods. Bjesomar might be small, but if he was as tall as he was furious he would be a giant.”

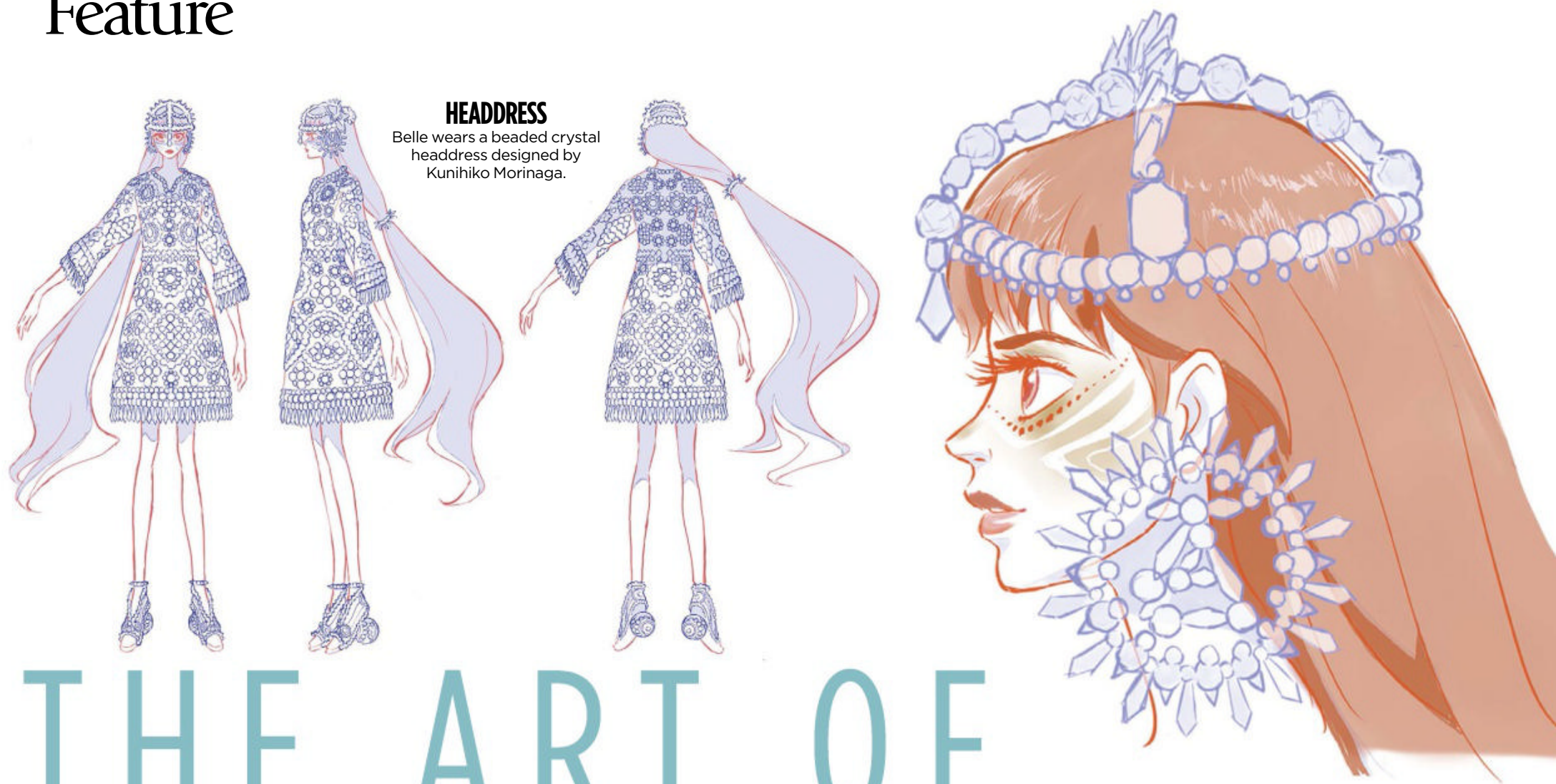


VEDI

“These gentle forest people are called VEDI. Their three favourite things are their golden soup, a good laugh and a big hug.”



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



HEADDRESS

Belle wears a beaded crystal headdress designed by Kunihiro Morinaga.

THE ART OF BELLE

Trevor Hogg unveils the creative minds responsible for the world building and character design of gorgeous anime film Belle

Exploring the impact of the internet on society has become a favourite theme for Japanese filmmaker Mamoru Hosoda, who revisits the subject matter in Belle where a teenager still grieving the childhood drowning of her mother literally rediscovers her voice as a diva avatar in the virtual realm known as U. "I tried to imagine if there was this complete melting pot of different cultures and all kinds of backgrounds gathering in a single cybernetic type of space, what would it look like?" explains Hosoda. "It was a much more colourful palette. It was a



ANIME STYLE

Belle's original design was elongated for a more 'anime' look.

megacity type of visual depiction. It has this vitality where people can come and express themselves. In contrast, the more remote areas that Suzu Naito lives in in her reality, I wanted to depict them losing their strength or position in this more globalising economy, and yet they have such wonderful natural landscapes. But there are fewer young people sticking around in these small areas. I wanted to depict that social issue, in the sense that there is no one seeing that other extreme of what this globalising economy has produced in some ways."

CONSTRUCTING U

Placed in charge of conceptualising U and making his debut as a production



designer was London-based architect **Eric Wong**. "Director Mamoru Hosoda looked at my Instagram or Pinterest and asked Digital Frontier to get in contact with me to produce some concept art," recalls Wong, who discovered the email request in his junk mail folder and upon double-checking discovered that it was legit. "I worked through a few design packs with Digital Frontier using the script, and some key words and cues from them such as omnidirectional cityscapes, skyscrapers, and

The Art of Belle

“A melting pot of different cultures gathering in a cybernetic space”

floating whales. Afterwards, I was in direct contact with the director almost every week with design iterations. The crazy thing is that we were working virtually predominantly on Skype and Zoom, which also adds to the virtual narrative in relationship to the film.” Various opinions were expressed by Hosoda. “He has a vision and then gives you space to have your interpretation of it as long as it’s backed by a fair amount of research and thinking behind it.”

APPEARANCE OVER FUNCTIONALITY

Architecture in real life and movies have different motivations. “Real architecture has to be functional,” observes Wong. “When you’re dealing with the speculative realm of things you can be as impossible and daring as you want, because it serves the visual needs.” Small 2D sketches were drawn in a thick notebook while travelling to and from his full-time architectural job. “The majority of my sketches happened in 2D and then a lot of my design process happened in an old-school CAD program called MicroStation. It’s an architectural program much like AutoCAD or ➔

All images © 2021 STUDIO CHIZU/ Courtesy of Studio Chizu and GKIDS.

HUMAN APPEAL

It was important that Belle be a human character and appealing in her design.

Feature

GRAND ENTRANCE

Our protagonist Belle enters the virtual realm of U for the first time.

PREVAILING DESIGN

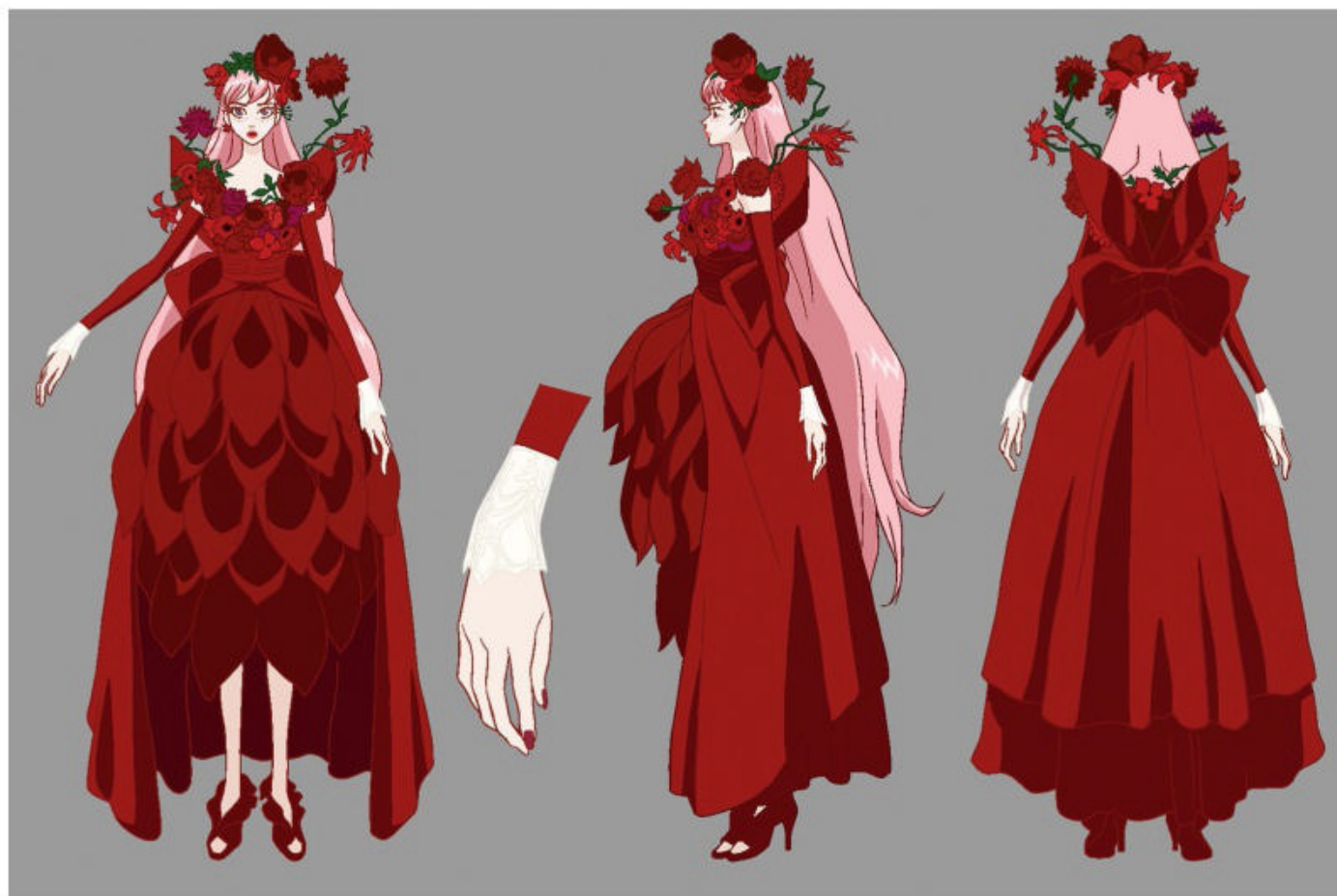
Other character designers submitted ideas for Belle, but Jin Kim's version prevailed.



➡➡ Rhinoceros 3D except that it's older, but handles lights well. It was a program I used during my architectural education at the time. MicroStation is both 2D and 3D. I tried to match the 3D as close to my 2D sketch as possible to try to get the feel and atmosphere I was looking for."

INSIDE THE VIRTUAL WORLD

A previous film by Hosoda influenced the first few iterations of U. "This could be Summer Wars Part 2," remarks Wong. "How do we design this new version of it? Summer Wars is circular, has an equator and a totem feel to it. In the script there were notions of whales and I also drew other architectural references that I enjoyed, such as the City in the Air by Arata Isozaki, which has the array-like feel; Tokyo Bay Masterplan by Kenzo Tange; and an artist I love Hariton Pushwagner and his drawing 'Self Portrait', which has a dichotomy that feels like a virtual world." The desire was to have something iconic that represented U. "I didn't want it to be an object like a sword. I wanted it to be part of the city, so that's why I made it part of the architecture." There was also the concept of a bright night. "You



ORIGINALITY BLOOMS

Mamoru Hosoda hired flower artist Megumi Shinozaki to design some of the costumes worn by Belle.

can depict night in different ways whether it be the changing size, opacity or shape of the moon. This is the point where I said that the icon of U is not represented in the city itself or an object, but the changing shape of the moon."

Other key references for Wong were King Kazma from Summer Wars, Belle from Beauty and the Beast (which inspired the narrative of the story), and musical instruments such

as the harp, Gravikord, organ and wind chimes. "The harp because at the time the title of the film was called Love Song." The string of a harp became the foundation of U when Hosoda decided to abandon emulating the totem architecture found in Summer Wars. "We spoke about how this single line is reminiscent of the river that Suzu passes through in the real world by the bridge, which made it fitting as a starting point. You ➡➡

“I studied the gestures and attitude of a classical singer as the starting point”

The Art of Belle

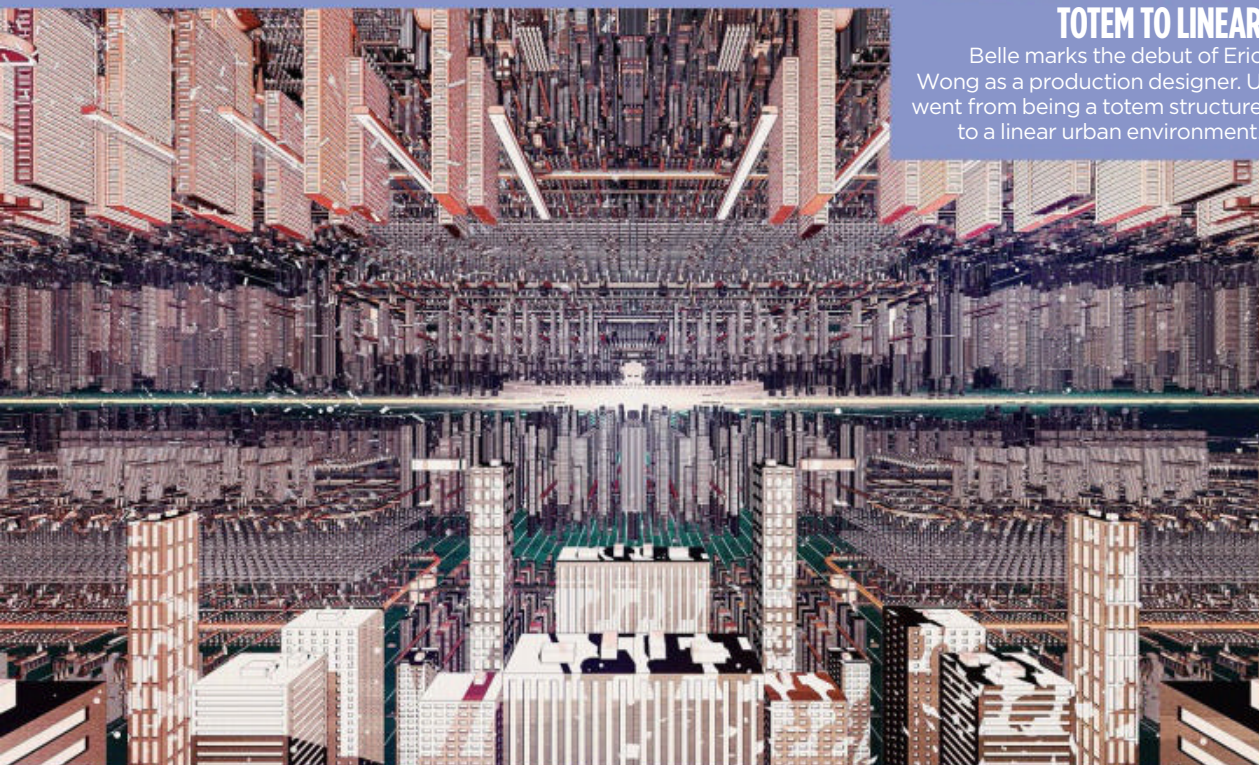
WHALE SONG

For Mamoru Hosoda, having Belle standing on top of a whale covered with speakers and singing puts her in a special class of her own.



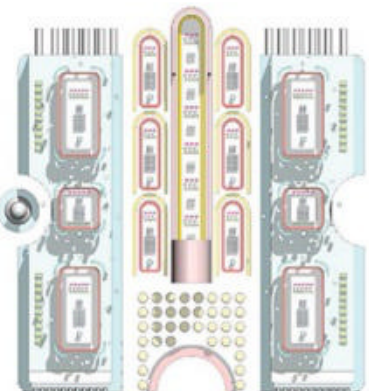
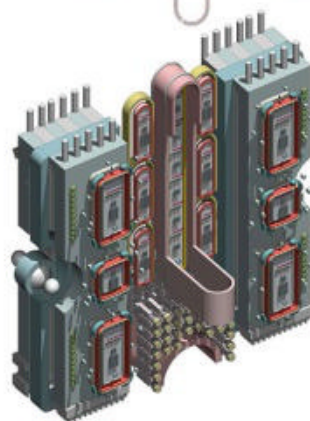
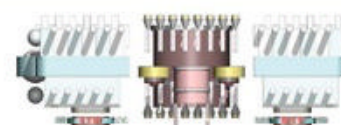
TOTEM TO LINEAR

Belle marks the debut of Eric Wong as a production designer. U went from being a totem structure to a linear urban environment.



PUZZLE MODULE REVISED

An upside down 'u' shape is incorporated in the architecture.



DESIGNED FOR U

A social network interface had to be designed for the vast virtual world, as Eric Wong explains



Particles in various shapes and sizes became a signature element of the world as well as the app icon. "We looked at what it might look like with colour, how it would differentiate from the rest of the apps, and how it might glow," explains Wong. "Then I started testing different options of the interface where the U is along the edge of the outline, the U touches the top, or is simply in the middle. If it is different, does that mean you interact with it differently? Do you swipe through it and would the interface be different if you swiped up? We revisited the idea of U being pushed to the side and went with the more simplistic, normalised phone, because the director said that Suzu is a small-town girl who lives in a country town; he wanted the real world to feel real, so when we enter the virtual world it's more spectacular."



BRIGHT NIGHT

The concept of a bright night was explored by Eric Wong.



➡ zoom into this world with a whale gliding through geometric shapes, skyscrapers, and pan down into what is the gathering hub for the avatars." A spherical stadium sits in the linear city. "I abstracted a puzzle piece into organs and speakers. But then the director said the stadium was too big so the puzzle pieces became screens."

INTERPRETING BELLE

Among those conceptualising the animated cast was Jin Kim, a legendary character designer who has worked on *Over the Moon*, *Big Hero 6*, *Tangled* and *Treasure Planet*. "We asked the character designers to design their interpretation of both Belle and Dragon/Beast," states Hosoda. "We had a lot of different discussions, ultimately settling on Jin's interpretation of Belle. I recall having a lot of conversations with Jin about what appears to be these two extremes are actually the same person deep down. Belle has a lot of strength or vitality plus a strong soul in many

TATTOO FRECKLES

Jin Kim interpreted the freckles of Suzu as a cartoon tattoo on Belle.

SUZU TRANSFORMATION

The virtual environment where Suzu transforms into Belle was actually inspired by 2001: A Space Odyssey.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

Belle is an adaptation of *Beauty and the Beast* that explores the positive and negative impact of the internet on society.



“What appears to be these two extremes – Belle and Suzu – are actually the same person deep down”

ways. Suzu may look quite introverted, but her soul has this strength that is still dormant. That's the kind of creative process we went through with Jin Kim to finally settle on a design."

Being colour blind has not impeded the career of Kim. "I started my career as a traditional 2D animator. They don't use colours. Just black pencil and paper. I've been lucky," states **Jin Kim**. Belle was the first Japanese production for the South Korean artist. "I worked on this project as a fan. I like the sincerity of Hosoda-san's movies. When he asked me to do some designs, I had no idea what it was going to be like. I don't know much about the work

process and pipelines in Japan. I was curious and excited. We worked remotely; that was challenging."

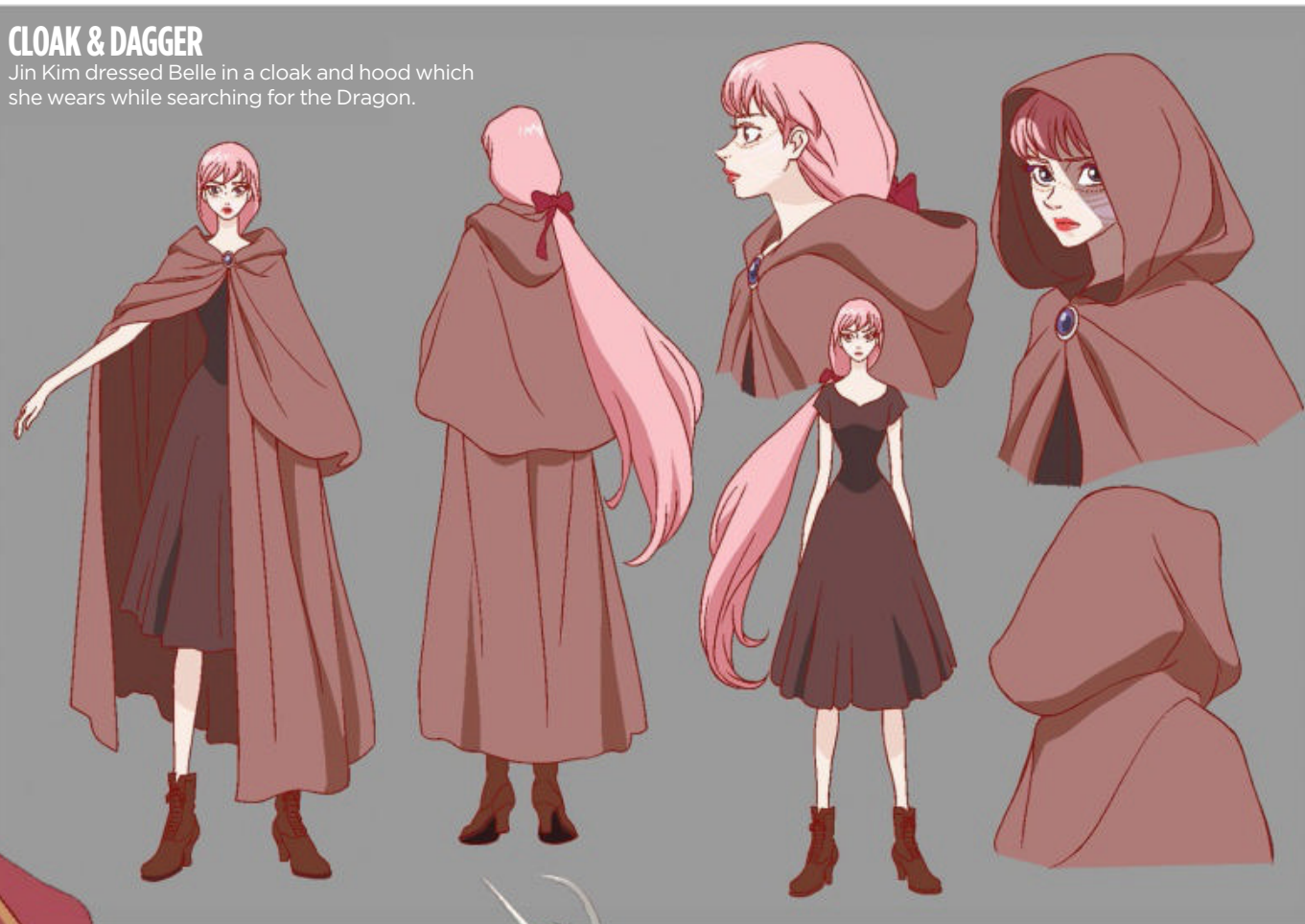
Unlike American animated projects where the voice drives the animation, the reverse is true in Japan; and there were other differences that existed. "When I'd start designing at Disney, usually there were a lot of images such as sketches from directors or storyboard artists, even some reference photos that the director and producers gathered. For Belle, I got only the script and some ideas from the director about this character. That was it. I saw some drawings in the real world of Suzu Naito and Shinjiro Chikami character drawings. That was it. Director Hosoda let me do what I do."



The Art of Belle

CLOAK & DAGGER

Jin Kim dressed Belle in a cloak and hood which she wears while searching for the Dragon.



BEASTLY REVEAL

The Dragon design by Jin Kim was not accepted as it resembled the Disney classic character. The bruises on the cape are a signature part of the look as well as a major plot point.



Reference photos were gathered. "Belle is an avatar," notes Kim. "She is not real. I wanted to mix a modern feel with fantasy. I looked at K-pop artists and opera singers. There is a famous Korean opera singer, Sumi Jo; she is a classical singer and I studied her gestures and attitude. That was the starting point of developing Belle."

AVATAR DESIGN

A classmate of Suzu was the inspiration for her avatar. "Suzu wanted to be like Ruka Watanabe, the most popular girl in the school. But at the time there was no design for the girl in the real world." A certain physical trait of Suzu was translated into her virtual persona. "Hosoda-san asked for some kind of connection between this avatar and Suzu. When people make their own avatar, they want to put something that represents themselves. In Suzu's case, freckles are the trait that was put into the avatar. In the freckle design I didn't want to do random spots like real freckles. I

SHALL WE DANCE?

A homage to the Disney classic is the ballroom dance scene between Dragon and Belle.



GOING WITH THE FLOW

Jin Kim did not alter his workflow but enjoyed the change in pace...



"I start to rough out a first pass on a Wacom tablet using Photoshop then show them to the director," explains Jin Kim. "He picks some drawings and then there are more passes on the Wacom tablet. For the final stage, we choose one design and I make different angles and facial expressions. Then I go to my drafting table and start using pencil and paper. I sketch it out, and scan it. Then, I go back to digital and use Photoshop for effects like the darker shades. That's the process."



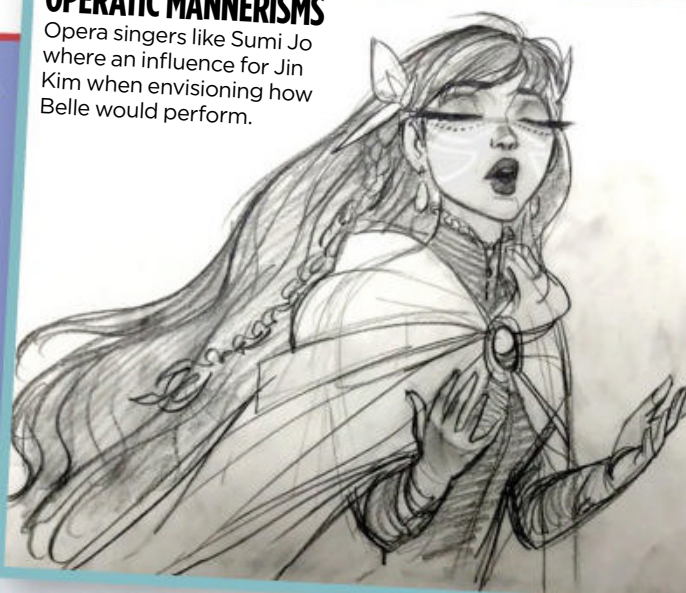
RIGHT MIX

Jin Kim mixed a modern feel and fantasy into the character design of Belle.



OPERATIC MANNERISMS

Opera singers like Sumi Jo were an influence for Jin Kim when envisioning how Belle would perform.



ANIMATION BLEND

The real world was expressed using 2D hand-drawn animation, while the cyber environments of U were created using CG.



ANIME DEBUT

Belle was the first Japanese production for Jin Kim.

➡ designed a cartoon face tattoo and Hosoda-san liked it."

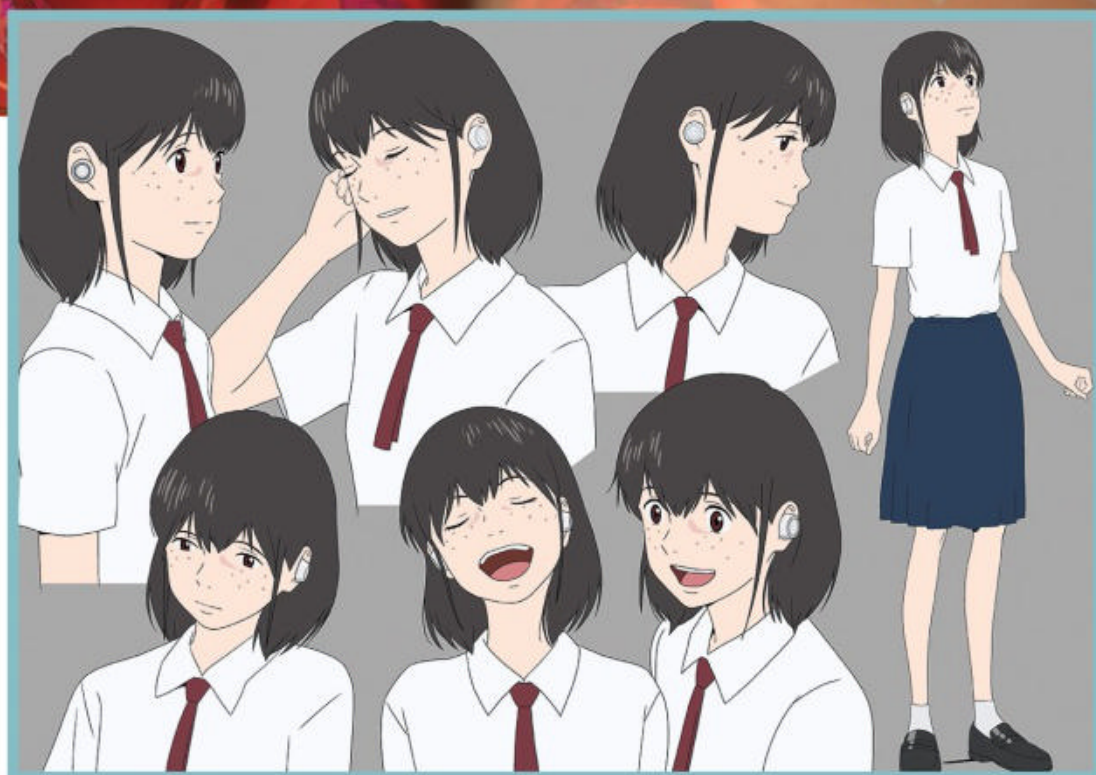
CHANG'E VERSUS BELLE

Kim was responsible for another larger-than-life singer, the goddess Chang'e from Netflix animated feature *Over the Moon*, directed by famous Disney animator Glen Keane. "When I started this design, it was almost at the end of the production of *Over the Moon*. I was finishing the project. When I read the script and heard the description of the character, I found that there were lots of similarities between what I did on Chang'e and Belle. She sings, and physically their proportions are otherworldly; the body is so long.

"One of the big differences is that Chang'e is more active, close to a K-pop artist. She dances, and there are lots of movements with the Chang'e character. But I figured Belle is Suzu. Suzu is an introvert character. That's the real her. Maybe she doesn't move that much. Even when Belle performs, she sings like an opera singer. Opera

SUZU

Suzu was one of the first characters shown to Jin Kim when he began to work on Belle.



RUKA

Belle resembles the classmate Suzu wishes to be, Ruka, who was actually created after the avatar.



“I’ve done so many female characters in animated movies... it was a challenge to make a unique design for Belle”

singers are more about hand gestures. Also, most of my female designs have big eyes. Chang'e's eyes are more realistic in proportion, while Belle has bigger eyes."

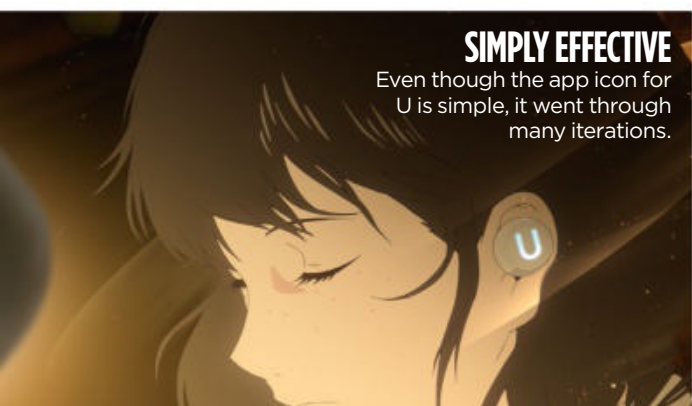
Kim continues: "I designed Belle like a tall human being. But in the end, they gave her a longer body. I didn't think of this U world character as being anatomically different from the real-world character. I did the same approach when I did these turnaround drawings." Belle was featured in a basic costume. "I remember Hosoda-san saying, 'She's hiding her face.' The most common thing is a cloak and big cape. The

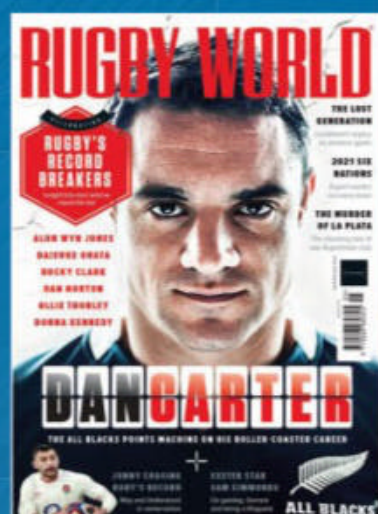
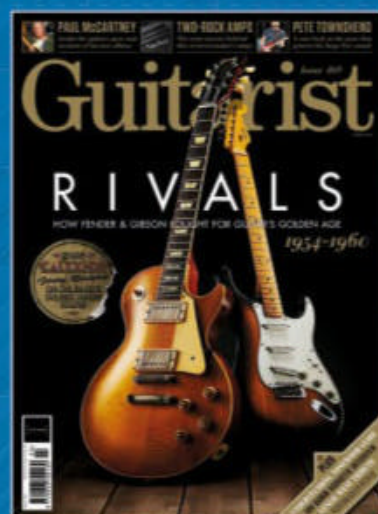
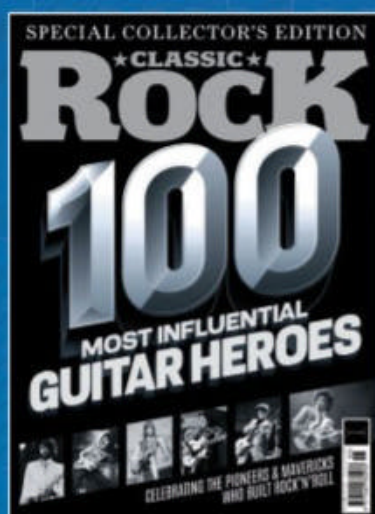
other beautiful costumes with the crazy flowers were done by the costume designer."

Repetition is not an option for Kim. "I've done so many female characters in animated movies that I wanted to make her look different. That was challenging, to make a unique design. I don't know how other designers do it, but I have my own style. Whenever I start to draw, the first few drawings look like the characters I've done for the other movies. This is not the one. It looks like Anna from *Frozen* or Chang'e from *Over the Moon*. So I keep drawing to find another shape, something unique."

SIMPLY EFFECTIVE

Even though the app icon for U is simple, it went through many iterations.





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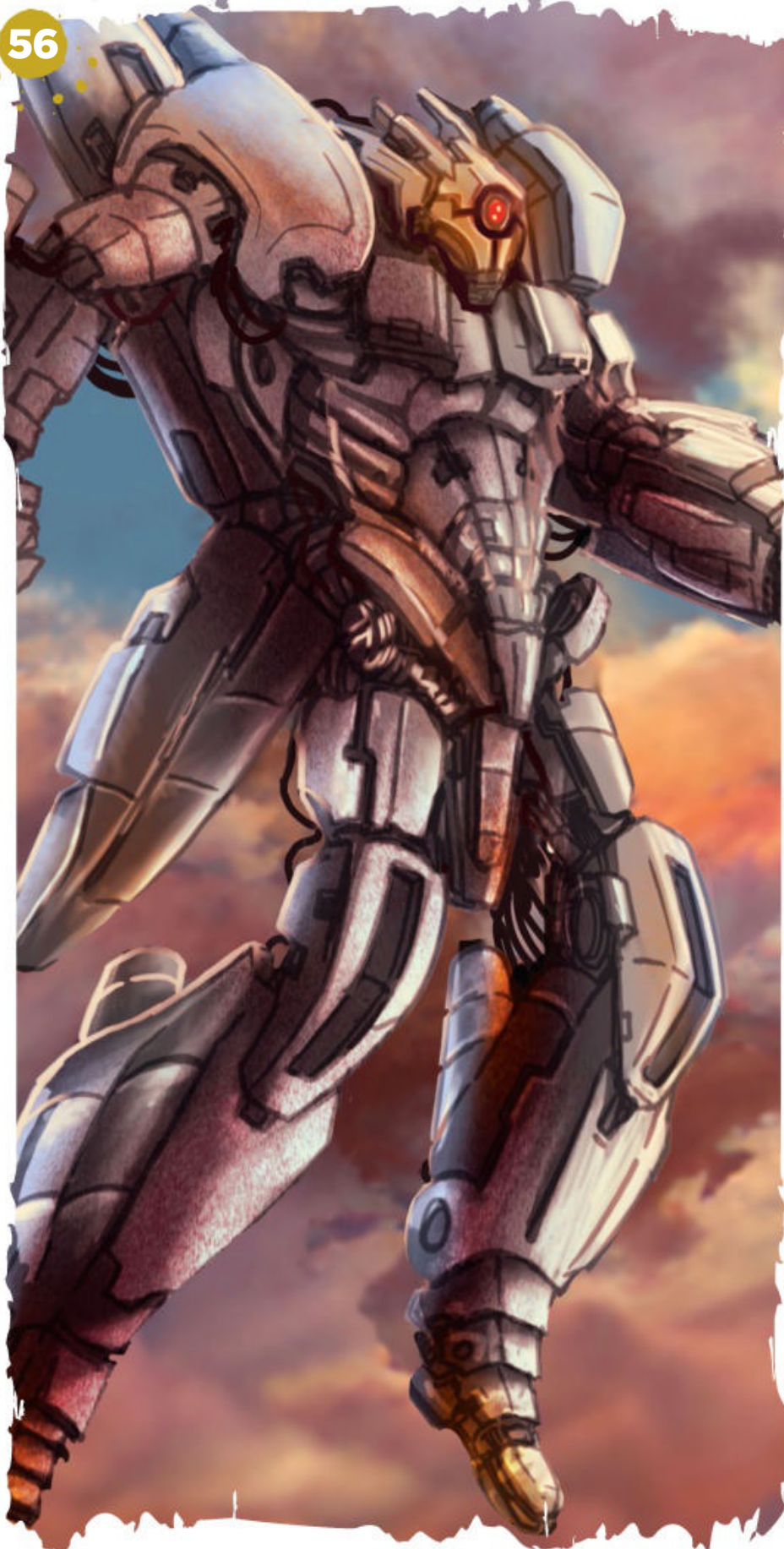


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are available...**

Download your resources by turning to page 6. And if you see the video workshop badge, you can watch the artist in action, too.

Advice from the world's best artists

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Use Nomad Sculpt to create a mech with Glen Southern.

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Create action-packed fights with this guide by Rebekka Hearl.

72 Create striking anime-style art

Art director Tonton Revolver reveals his process.

Procreate & Nomad Sculpt

DESIGN A MECH CONCEPT SKETCH

Glen Southern shows us how to block out a mech using 3D tools, which can then be used as a reference in Procreate

Artist PROFILE

Glen Southern
LOCATION: UK

Glen runs SouthernGFX, a small, Cheshire-based studio specialising in character and creature design. He has been using and training ZBrush in the UK for over 15 years, and more recently he has been creating in the VR space working with companies like Adobe Medium and Gravity Sketch.
<https://ifxm.ag/3JFeJdE>



For most of my career I've been creating 2D drawings that will eventually be transformed into 3D.

In this tutorial, I'm going to take a look at using a 3D blockout from a program called Nomad Sculpt, which you can find on the iPad, then taking that as my reference to work up a painting in Procreate. I love this approach because I can take simple primitive shapes and use them to

define the look of my character very quickly. In this case, it's going to be a Gundam-style mech design. I can then use that 3D blockout to try things like lighting and composition before I ever turn to my preferred painting program.

Being able to work out all the complexities of perspective and overall composition before even starting to sketch means that I can start detailing my design quite quickly. Once I have the design

locked down I'll then start using a very reliable method of layer management that I use in almost all of my work, and it was a system I was using with Photoshop well before the iPad came along. Having the hard stuff worked out with a 3D program allows me to relax and enjoy sketching and painting even more. Plus, the good thing about having a 3D blockout is that you can pose it and try different angles and lighting styles with relative ease.



1 Block out with Nomad Sculpt

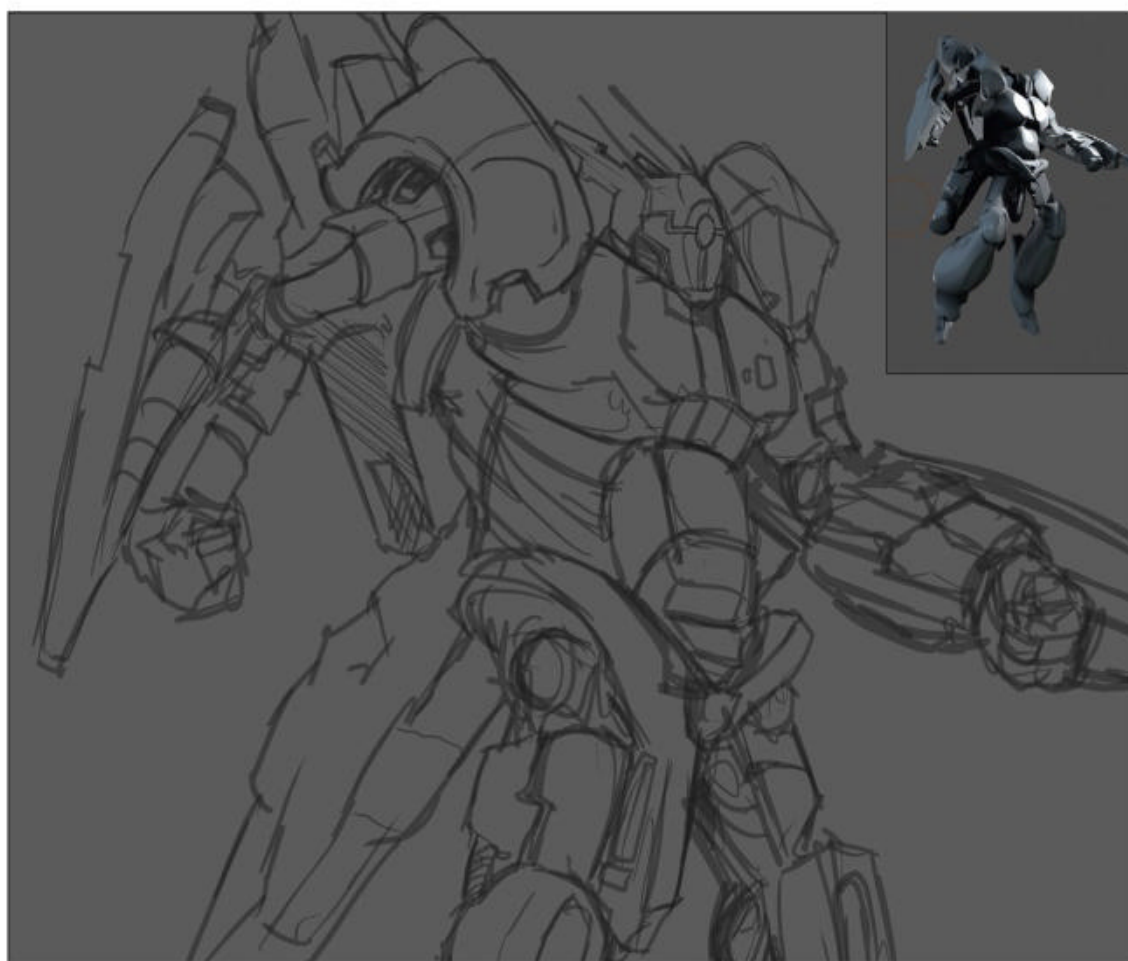
Any 3D sculpting package can be used for this part of the process, but I like to use Nomad Sculpt on the iPad. It's cheap and flexible, with lots of different tools to create the kind of shapes we would want for this project. I found some great reference for Gundam mechs, then proceeded to block out my ideas.

2 Pose with primitives

Next I focused on the pose; the actual shapes of each individual body part are not so important at this stage. I just used spheres, cubes and a few pyramid shapes and blocked out the body, arms, legs, and a basic head. I used the knife tool to trim off parts of each of the primitives to get some nice chamfered edges that might catch the light. Where needed, I merged the parts together – for example, the forearm.

In depth Sketch a mech concept





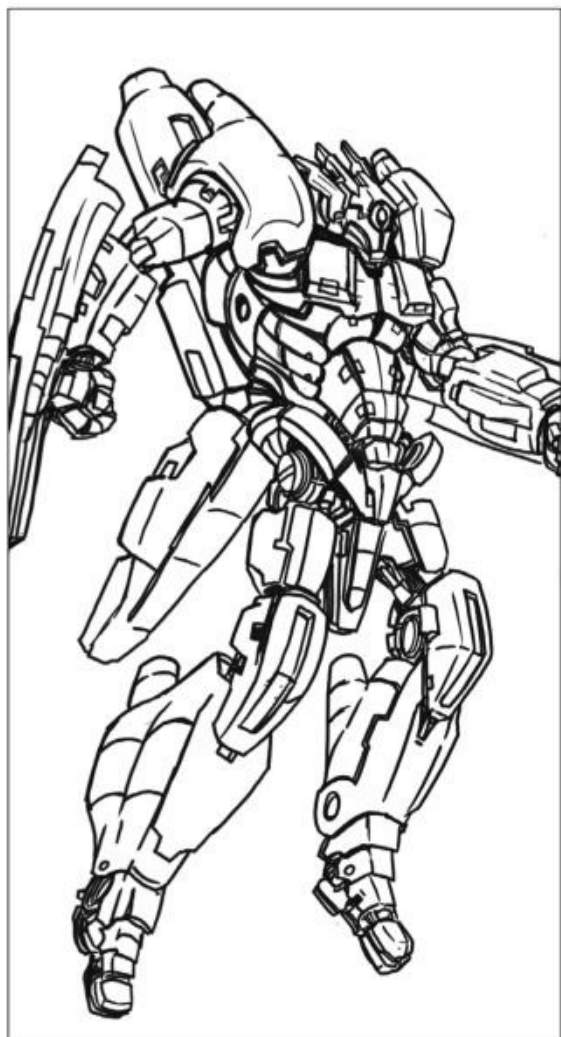
3 Sketch the design

I started in Procreate with a fairly large document (4,000 pixels high). I added a screengrab of the mech design on a layer. I often use the Procreate Reference feature but for this project, it was simple enough to have the reference in a layer. I made a layer for Sketching and I drew out the basic sketch based on my design. I used the Technical pencil set to 50% opacity.



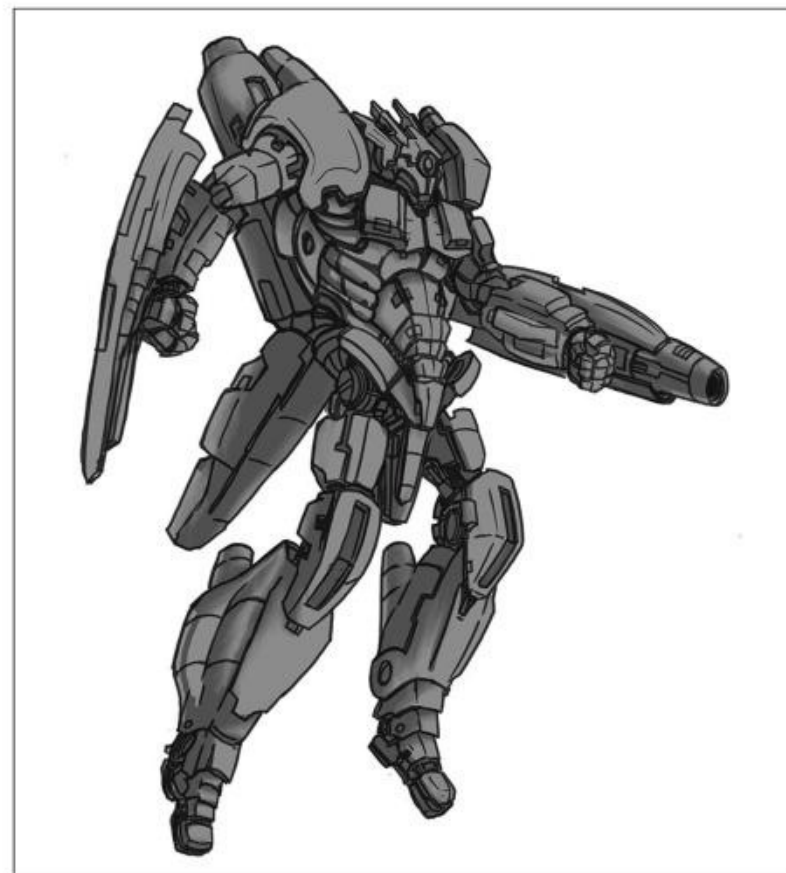
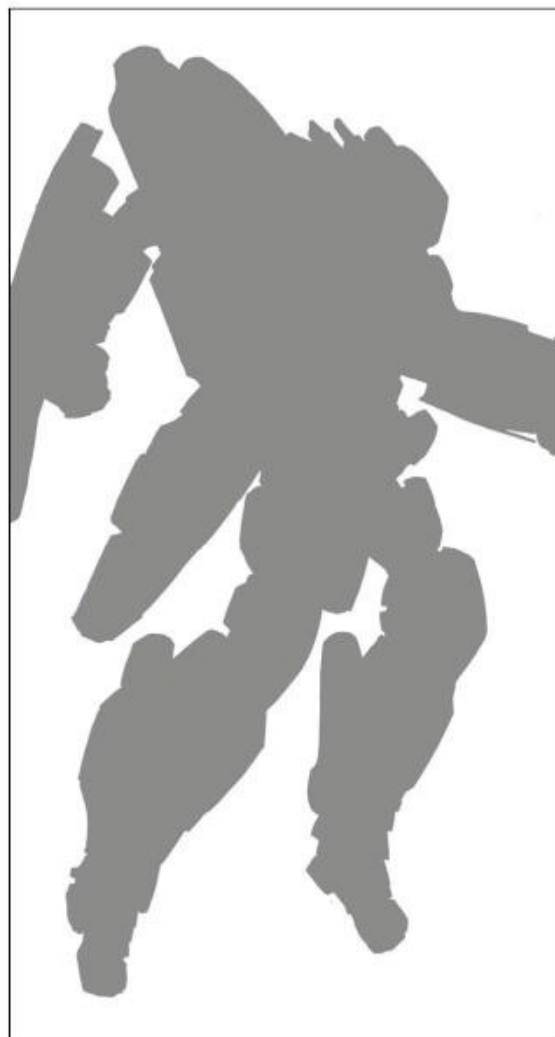
4 Ink a layer

I created a new layer and set the sketch layer to about 50% opacity so I could barely see the lines of the sketch underneath my new layer. I then took the Technical pen with a 90% opacity and I began to do a more detailed line drawing over the top of my own sketch. I always take my time with these lines as I need to make sure they're quite accurate and everything is joined up, as I may need to flood fill parts at a later stage.



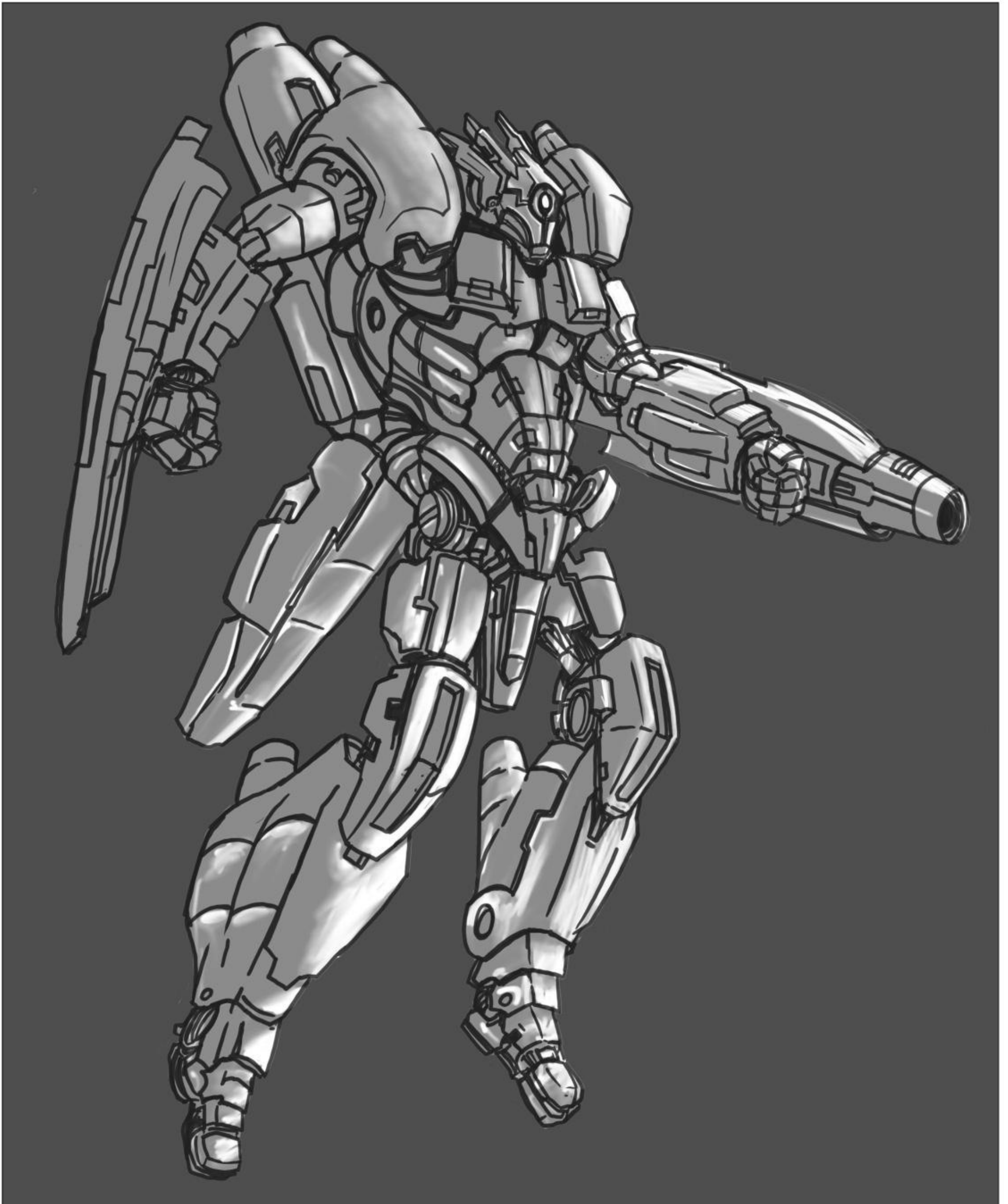
5 Clean lines and a silhouette

Once I had a really clean line drawing of the mech, I created a new layer underneath that one and then proceeded to draw out a silhouette. It doesn't matter what colour this silhouette is at this stage, as it will be used for a few things in later stages and will be changed as needed. I use a mid grey to start with.



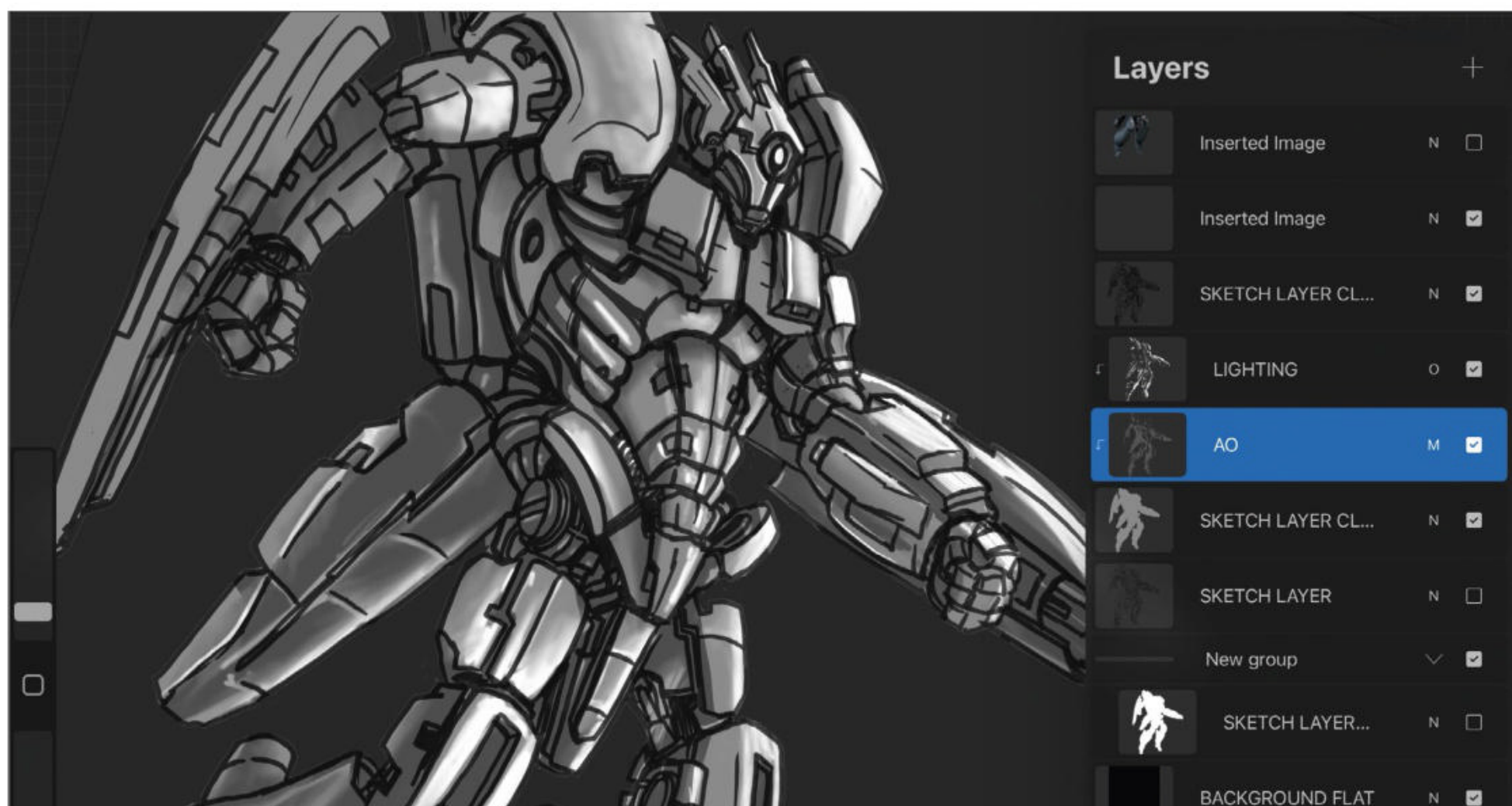
6 Ambient Occlusion layer

I decided the light was going to be coming from the top right. I made a new layer above the Silhouette layer and below the Ink sketch. I set this to 'Multiply' as a blend mode and also set it to 'Clipping Mask', so that it used the silhouette to constrain any painting into the shape from the lower layer. I then painted in dark areas where I wanted occluded shadows – mostly in the lower areas and in cracks.



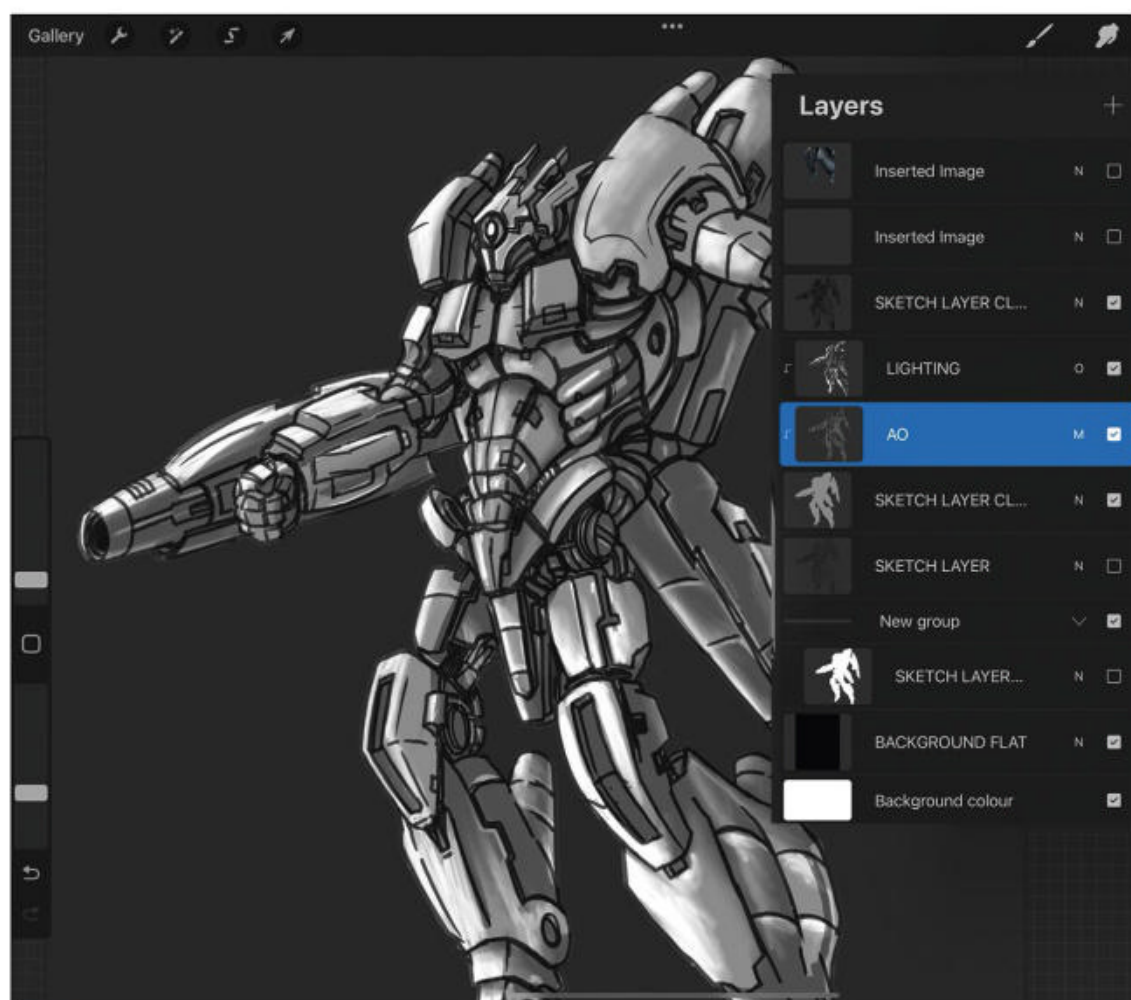
7 First lighting pass layer

I made a new layer and set this one to 'Overlay' and also to 'Clipping Mask'. I placed it above the silhouette but below the sketch layer. This layer is where I add the main lighting details, and as I had already set it to come from the top right it was almost a reverse of the ambient occlusion layer in terms of placement. I used the basic brush and smudged it where needed. ➡



8 Layer management

It's really important to understand this type of layer management in programs like Procreate and Photoshop. Having a good understanding of blend modes and how to use tools like Alpha Lock and Clipping Mask means that you can work in a non-destructive way, and if you want to make tweaks later it is simply a case of changing something on a layer, not on a merged document.



9 Flip it good

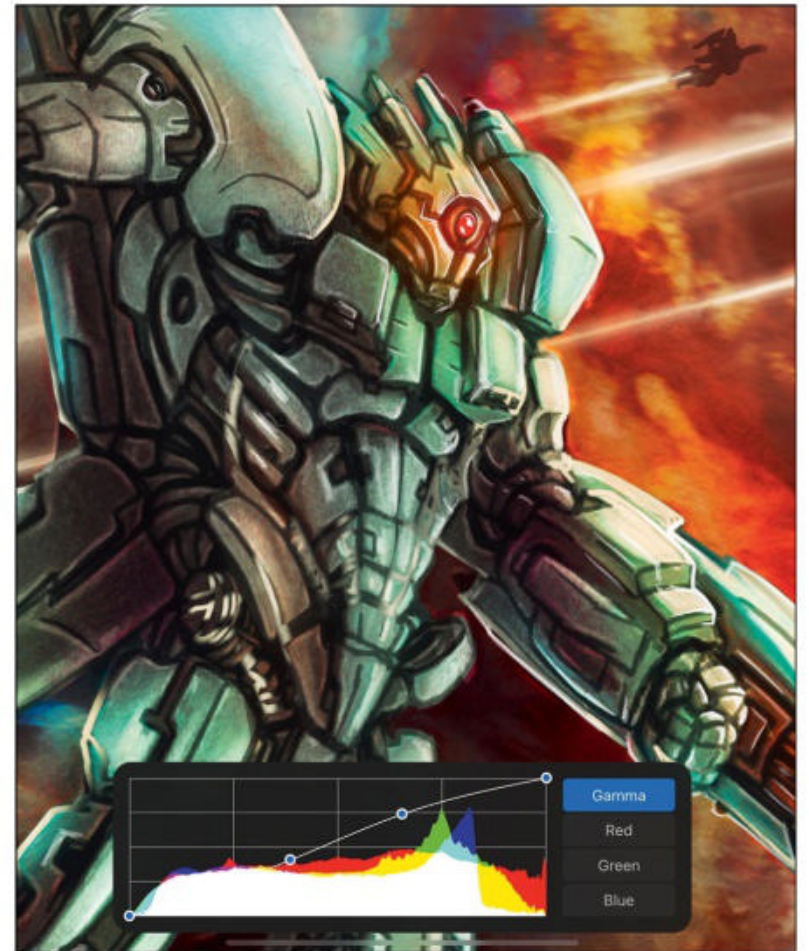
I normally flip an image at an earlier stage in the process and I forgot to do it for this one. The reason we flip this kind of image is to see what it looks like from the reverse angle, as you can sometimes spot problems before you go further into the process. I flipped the mech and I was pleasantly surprised that most things seemed to work, and I attribute that to the fact we started with a 3D reference.



10 Monochrome background

I made a new layer below all the current layers and used a cloud brush to block out a rough scenery and some clouds. I only used greys, blacks and whites as I just wanted to play with the value of the overall sketch and I knew that this would change at a later stage.

In depth Sketch a mech concept

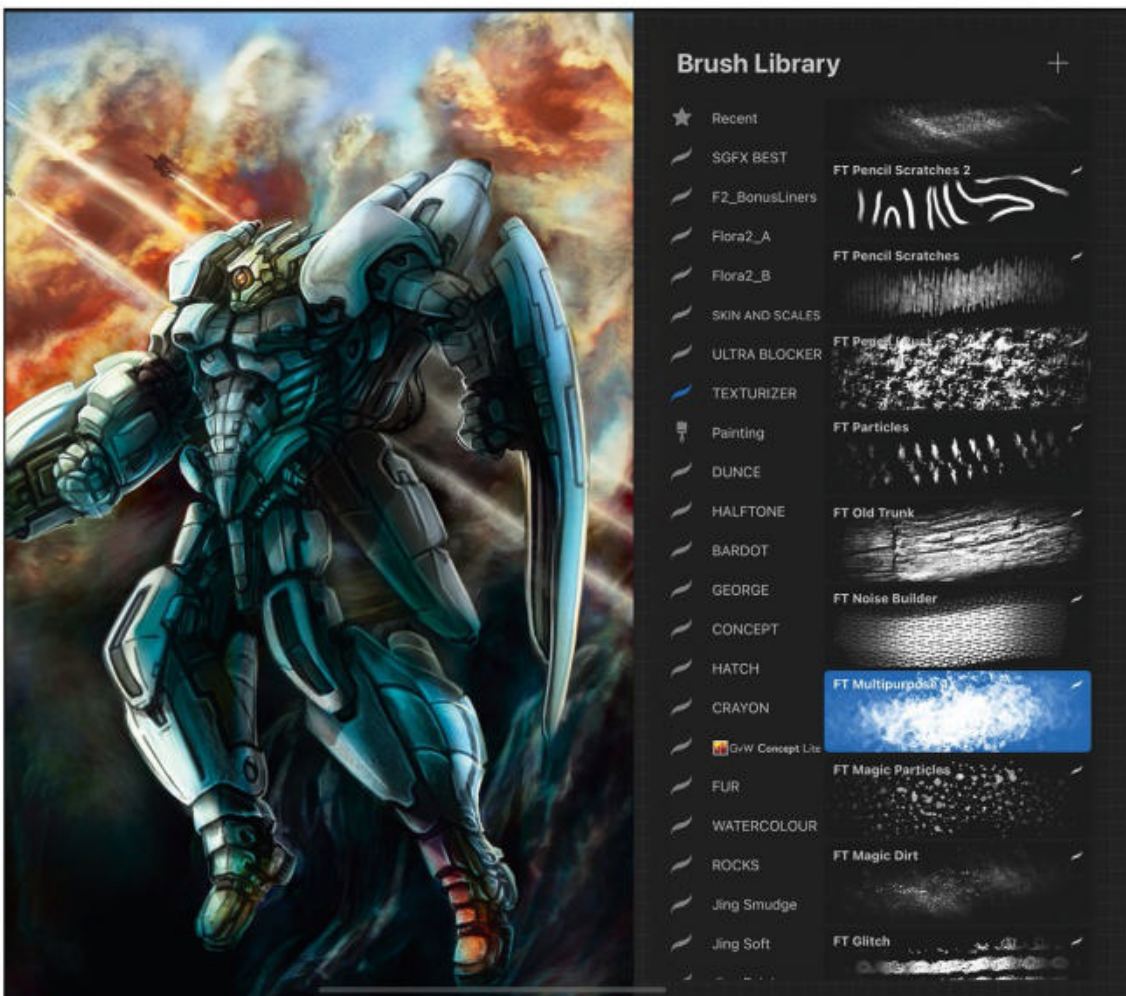


11 Colour wash

When I was happy I added a new layer and set it to Multiply over the top of the background. I blocked in some of the basic colour washes, which were reds and blues initially. I painted some basic colours into the silhouette layer and took a look at that colour version compared to a desaturated, value-only version.

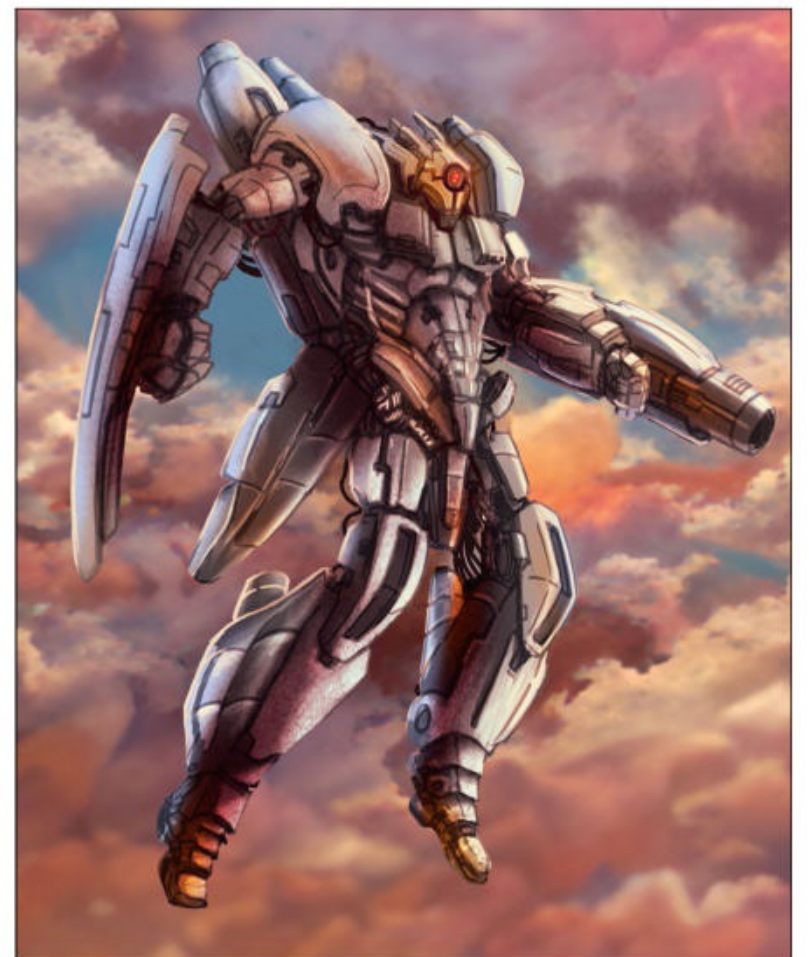
12 Hue, brightness and using curves

I wanted to explore the colour layers a little so I used the curves feature and also adjusted the hue, saturation and brightness a few times. Procreate doesn't have a contrast button so I used the curves feature to play with the range curve and push the contrast up and down.



13 Texture layers

One of the last steps I do is to create some texture over the top of the colour layers. I make a new layer and set it to Multiply and then use a wide range of built-in brushes to add speckles, scratches, dust and damage. It doesn't really matter which brushes you use, just find ones that have some really nice visual interest. I purchased a lot of extra brushes and added them to my own packs.



14 Crush the layers

When I'm happy with the composition, I merge all the layers down and then carry on working on the image with Smudge, Blur and adding more lighting as needed. I change the background a few times before the final image, so make sure that before you cross the layers you are happy with the overall finished piece. 🍷



Photoshop & Blender **STORYTELLING IN CONCEPT ART**

Romain Jouandeau shares his process for taking concept art to the next level by bringing storytelling elements into his painting

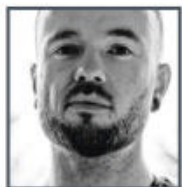
In depth Storytelling in concept art



Artist PROFILE

Romain Jouandeau
LOCATION: US

Romain Jouandeau is a French concept artist based in Los Angeles, and has worked for studios such as Warner Bros, Sucker Punch and Naughty Dog. romain-jouandeau.com



This painting is part of a personal project that I've been working on for the last few years, called Purpura

Petiosa. It's also the first image of a series of seven paintings that is supporting a class I am teaching with Learn Squared. With Purpura Petiosa, I'm trying to create a believable world, with its own rules and history. I think one of the main purposes of concept art is to convey

that sense of connection, that when all put together can portray a world that feels like it could really exist.

The series of images shows Adamu, the hero of my story, being caught in a storm and eventually being forced to crash. In this first image, I wanted to show him leaving the place he was staying at, under a clear day. I wanted it to feel peaceful and safe, in order to bring more menacing and dramatic elements in the following scenes.

To achieve this, I went through my typical process. First I'm trying to articulate what story I want to tell in my image, but also in the series as a whole. I like to start with basic sketches on paper, of each of my frames put together, like a storyboard. I then build my 3D assets from modelling, texturing, lighting and rendering. Here, only the ship was done in 3D, everything else was with Photoshop using a mix of photobashing and painting. ➡➡

WORLD-BUILDING TIPS

Design

Before jumping into the 3D stage, I make sure that I have a clean and precise design to follow. I like to have a blueprint ready that covers any potential design issues, and that will let me focus on the execution without having to go back and forth trying to fix design problems in 3D.

Movement

The image is so simple that it could easily become stiff, yet we are up in the sky and the wind is blowing strong. So I made sure to have anything that could move to be floating and flapping in the air, especially on the character, to ensure that the attention would be on him.

Don't forget the small details

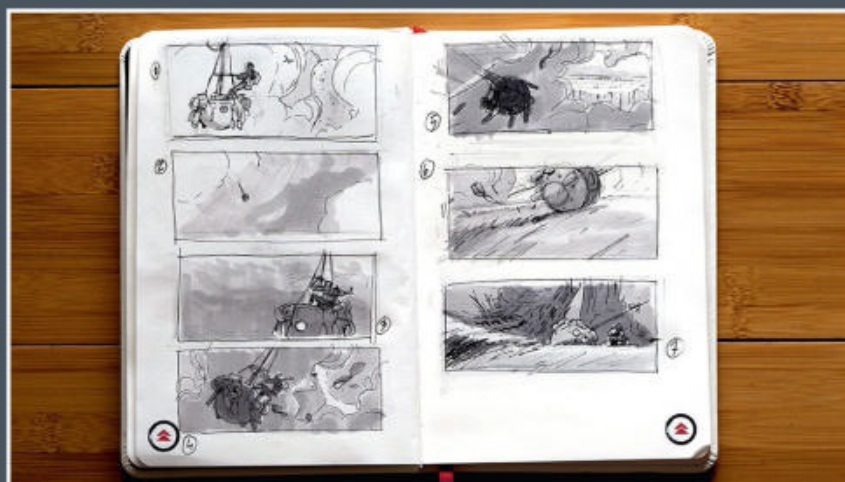
I like to make sure that every element makes sense. Here for example, I spent time painting the ropes and straps correctly tied, without anything randomly floating. Small details may seem unnecessary, but all put together, they actually make all the difference when trying to achieve a believable look.

How I create...

CONCEPT ART WITH 2D AND 3D ELEMENTS

1 Establish the composition

Starting off with a strong composition is a huge step towards a successful image. Anything sturdy needs strong foundations. I explored a few different compositions before settling on this one, and kept in mind how it was going to work as part of the whole series. I personally like to sketch on paper, because I like how loose and organic it feels.



In depth Storytelling in concept art

Detail vs empty

Nothing works better than having tight, crisp silhouettes in front of a very simple background. The image remains simple and easy to digest, yet feels believable. I like to work in high resolution, up to 8K, to be able to paint the crisp details.

Visit <https://ifxm.ag/3PvY2oU>
Check out Romain's full course for this image and more at Learn Squared.

RESOURCES WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

DEFAULT BRUSH: BASIC BRUSH

Useful for anything that needs to remain clean, paint through masks etc. I also use the airbrush one a lot.

CUSTOM BRUSHES: TEXTURED BRUSH 1

I use this brush for anything that is drawn, like ropes, small details, highlights etc.

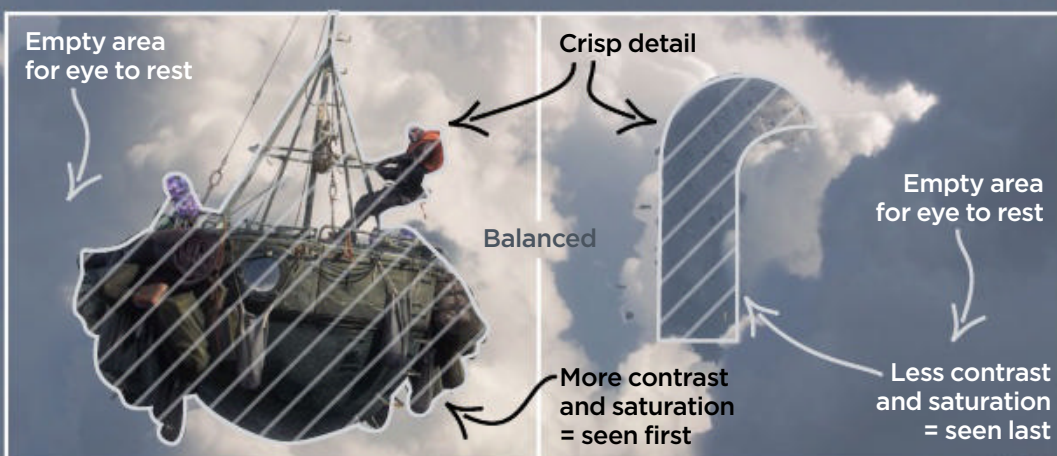
TEXTURED BRUSH 2

I use a few like this one when I need to enhance large areas using light opacity, but still want to feel grain/texture.

**GET YOUR
RESOURCES**
See page 6 now!

Contrast

I wanted the tour to be very simple and full/plain, as well as having it mostly in shadow against the brightly lit clouds - to contrast with the vaporous shapes and feel of the clouds. Making the image easy to read is very important to me, and having clear contrasting masses helps the eye to navigate from one element to another.



Eye-catching end result

Since this image is the first one of the series, I wanted something striking and extremely easy to read. Online, images are usually consumed in a couple of seconds, so I made sure to have something that would catch the eye right away.

2 Build in Blender

The 3D step has become pretty important in my workflow. I wouldn't say that it's a time saver (although it definitely can be if you reuse the same elements), but I find that it brings a better quality and consistency to my images. I used Blender, and render in Cycles. I find this program incredibly easy to learn and use.



3 Polish in Photoshop

My favourite step is probably when assembling everything together in Photoshop. That's when the magic happens. I use a lot of photo references, mixed with pure painting, and I love spending time in my image fully zoomed in, to polish everything and make sure all elements are tied coherently together.



Clip Studio Paint

LEARN TO DRAW AN EPIC FIGHT SCENE

Comic artist **Rebekka Hearl** demonstrates how to use Clip Studio Paint's action line tools to illustrate a dynamic manga fight scene

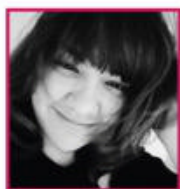




Artist PROFILE

Rebekka Hearl
LOCATION: England

An illustrator, designer, comic artist and rhythm video game enthusiast who sells their artwork online, and at UK-based comic cons.
<https://linktr.ee/ParaParano>



Manga is a diverse medium that encompasses a wide range of styles and genres; it is complex and ever-evolving, pushed by the skills and imagination of the mangaka who continue to take the medium to new heights, exploring intense themes and analysing the human condition. But sometimes, you just want to see anime girls kicking the crap out of their enemies.

We'll be looking at some fundamental drawing techniques,

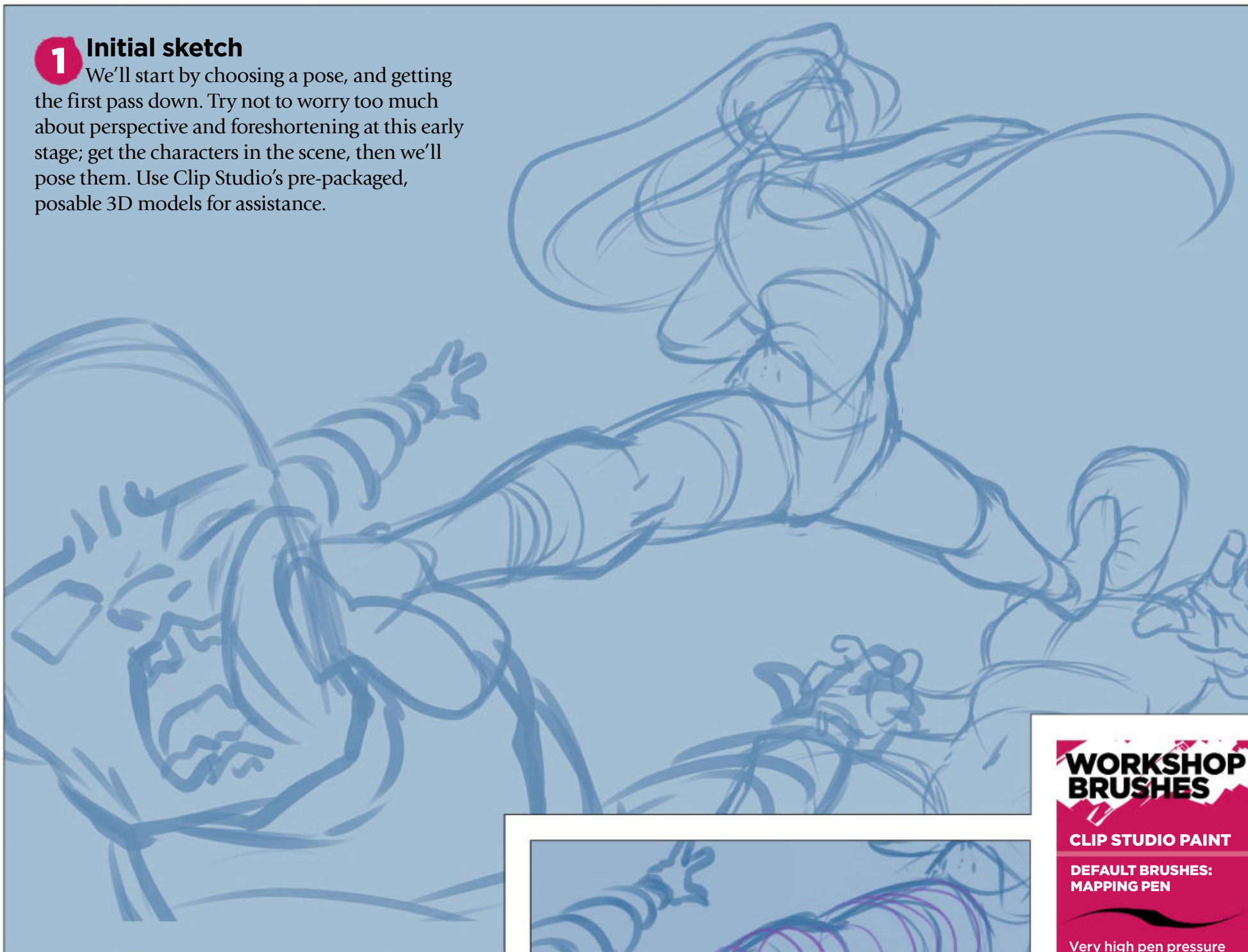
practised widely by mangaka and comic artists, that will help you to apply a sense of movement, force and impact to your manga artwork. Crucially, we will focus on how to apply this sense of movement to your character first. An over-abundance of action lines is a classic stereotype in manga, and though they can be used to great effect, you should never rely on them as a crutch. Apply extra movement lines to the background if they are warranted, but consider beforehand: how much force do you want to

show in this scene? Is the force enough to justify removing the environment entirely, in favour of action lines?

This tutorial will show you how making use of 'S' curves, foreshortening and line weights (rather than relying solely on speed lines to imply movement) in your character drawings can result in more effective, convincing action scenes. We will also cover the tools pre-packaged with Clip Studio Paint that can help to streamline the creation process.

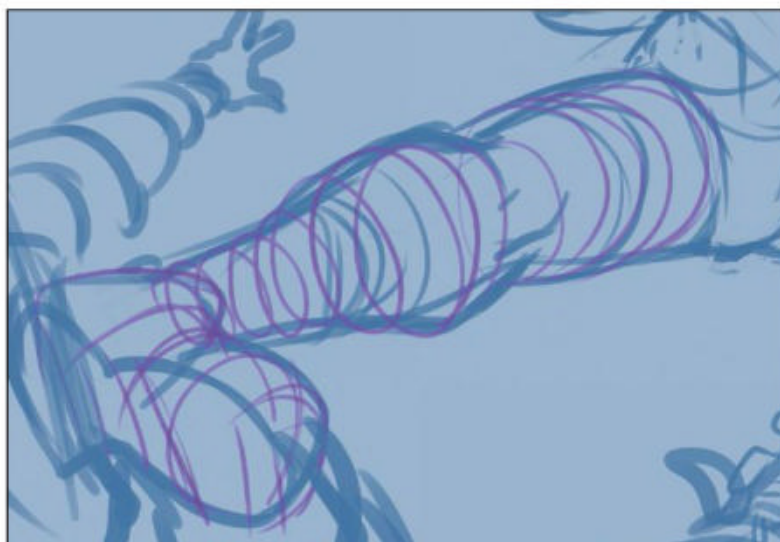
1 Initial sketch

We'll start by choosing a pose, and getting the first pass down. Try not to worry too much about perspective and foreshortening at this early stage; get the characters in the scene, then we'll pose them. Use Clip Studio's pre-packaged, posable 3D models for assistance.



2 Shapes and coil technique

Perspective and foreshortening: the dreaded combo! Try applying the coil technique to make things simpler: 'feel out' the shape of the limb by drawing circles – coils – to find its form. Get as messy as you need: we'll be drawing the final shape of these foreshortened limbs on another layer.



WORKSHOP BRUSHES

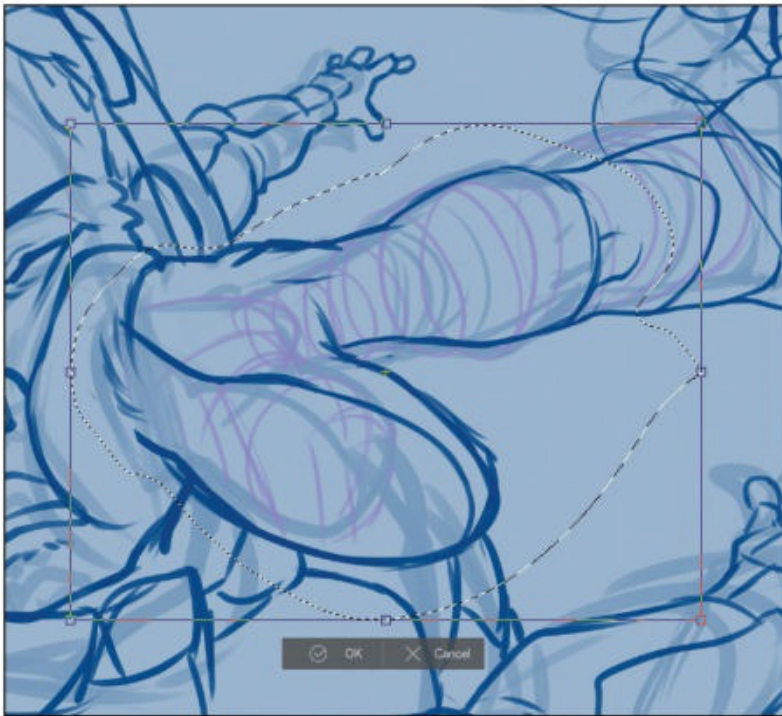
CLIP STUDIO PAINT

DEFAULT BRUSHES: MAPPING PEN

Very high pen pressure sensitivity – great for producing lines with varying thickness.

G-PEN

General use pen, lower pressure sensitivity, good for filling in spot blacks quickly.



3 Perspective adjustments

Look for places in your drawing where the perspective and force could be pushed further. The lady's foot that is closest to the camera is a good example. Use the transform tool (the Scale and Perspective settings) to adjust the size and position of the foot to create a greater sense of depth.



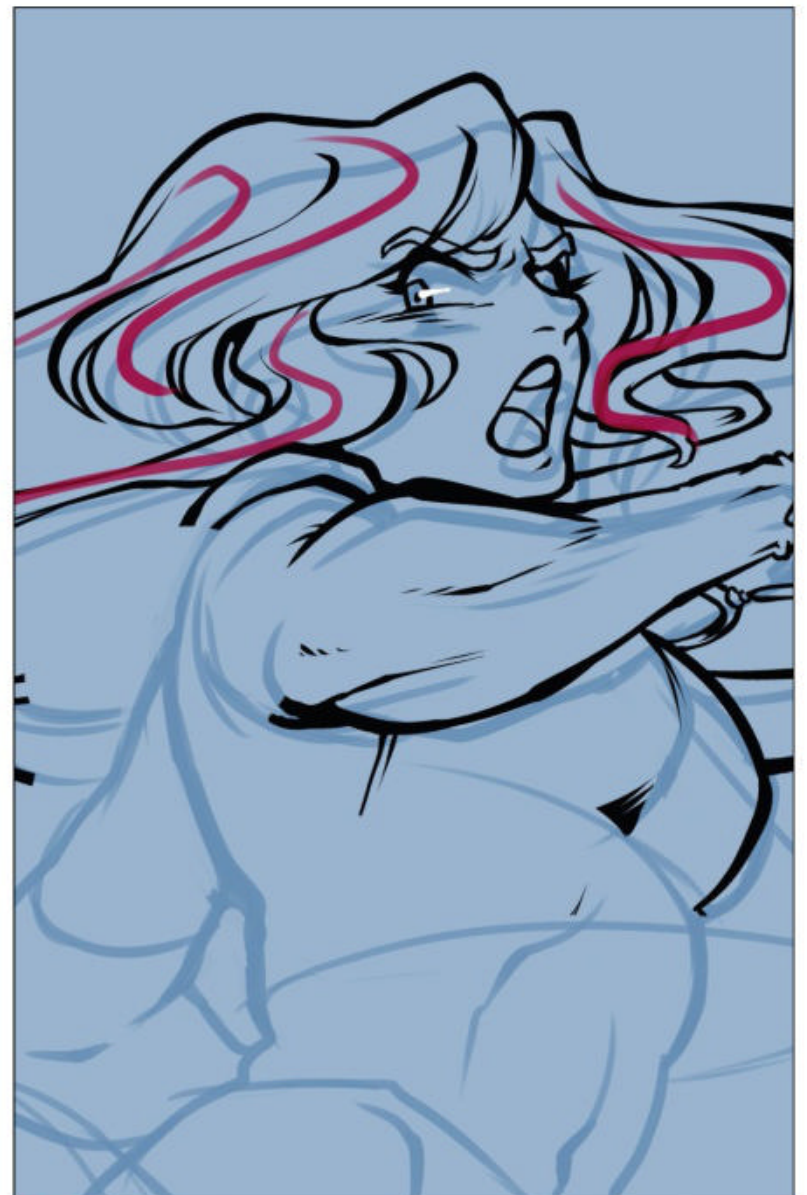
4 Refined sketch

Consider force in poses as you draw. Where in your drawing will you need to apply inking techniques to bring out more impact and movement? Now's the time to push the poses and facial expressions, and make any last adjustments in anatomy or forced perspective, so you'll have an easier time while inking.



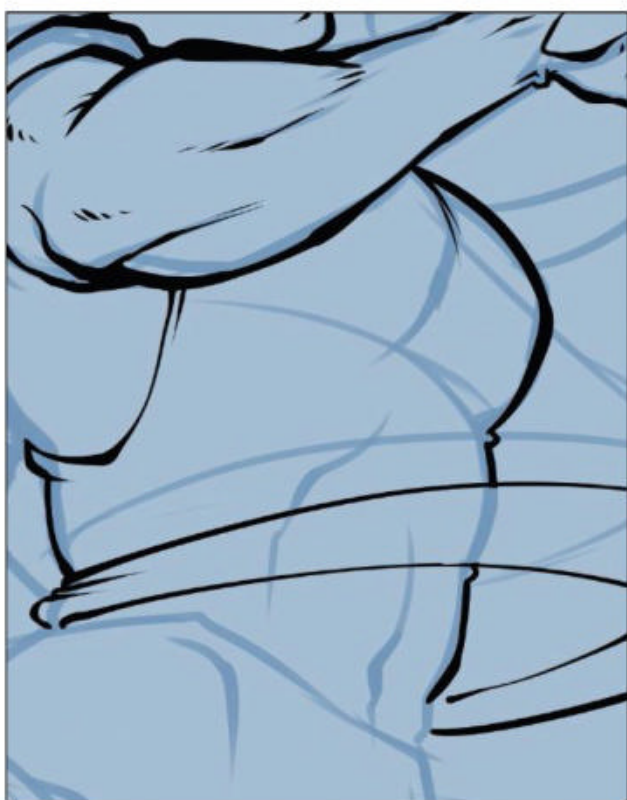
5 Line thickness variation

Use line thickness variation to suggest distance: thicker for closer, thinner for further away. Dashed lines can suggest motion, as well as force: draw dashed lines around the area of impact to illustrate the strength of the blow. We'll also be making use of spot blacks to further emphasise line thickness variation.



6 'S' curves

This is a technique used by animators which can be applied to comics too. Drawing literal 'S' shapes in your art creates a fluid look that is pleasing to the eye. Make liberal use of flowing fabrics or hair to suggest a line of movement and 'S' curve. ➡➡



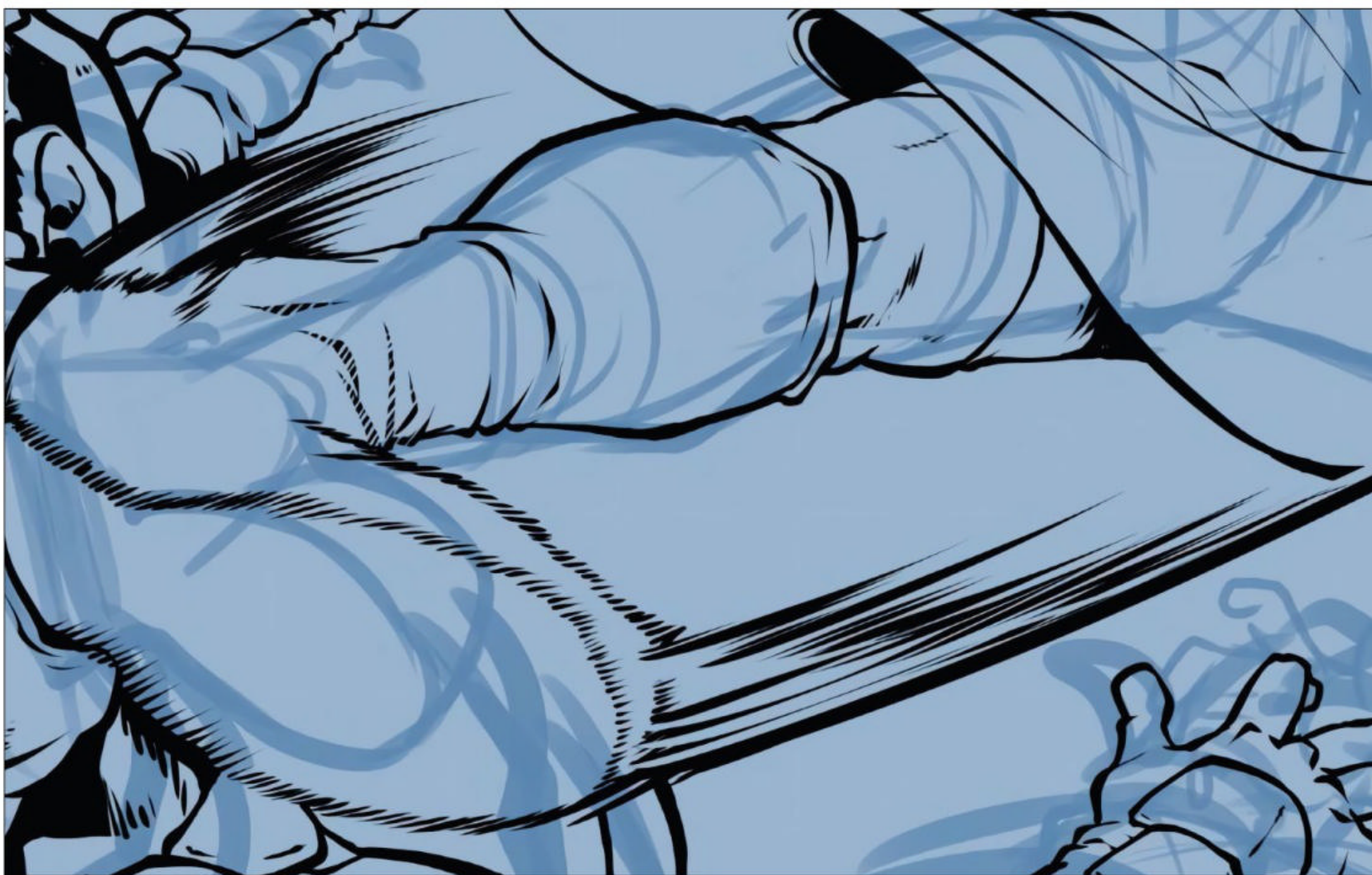
7 Drawing long lines
Long lines of movement or 'S' curves can be effective, but tricky to get right. When drawing long, curved lines (hair, sash, etc), apply this fundamental: don't look at where the tip of your pen is on the drawing, look at where you want it to go. Aim, then fire.



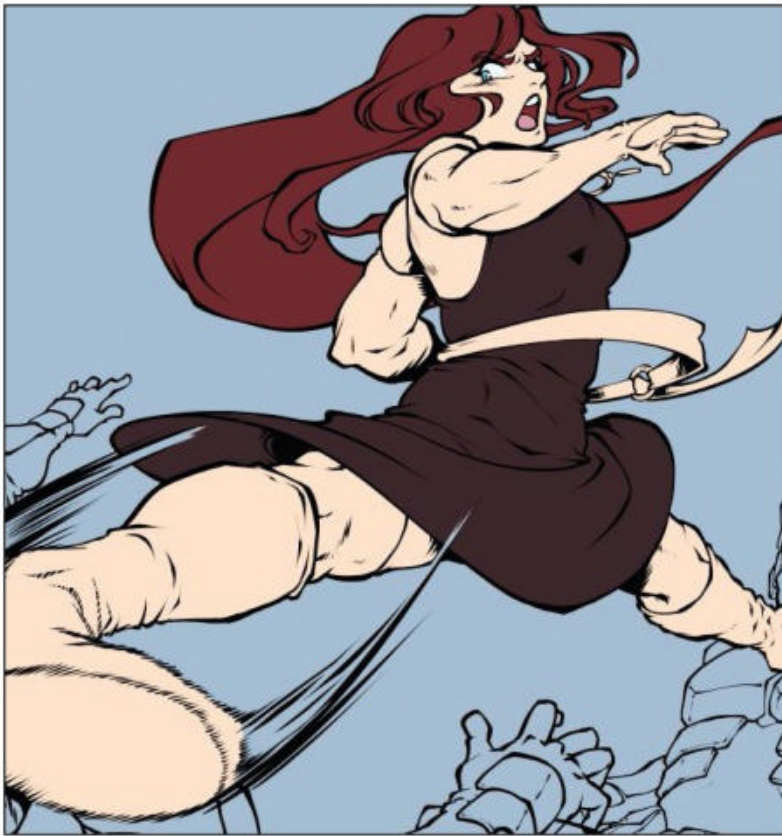
8 Clothing folds
Creating force in your drawings is fun, but make sure your anatomy doesn't get lost in the process! Use clothing folds and creases to maintain anatomical form during movement; imagine the clothes wrapping around the shape of the body as you draw. Of course, 'S' curves can be applied here too.



9 Facial expressions
Use facial expressions to emphasise impact and sell the intensity of the scene. In the case of this poor guy getting his face kicked in, his expression is barely needed! Cartoonish slapstick comedy isn't foreign to manga, so feel free to get creative with scenes like this, and disregard his facial anatomy.

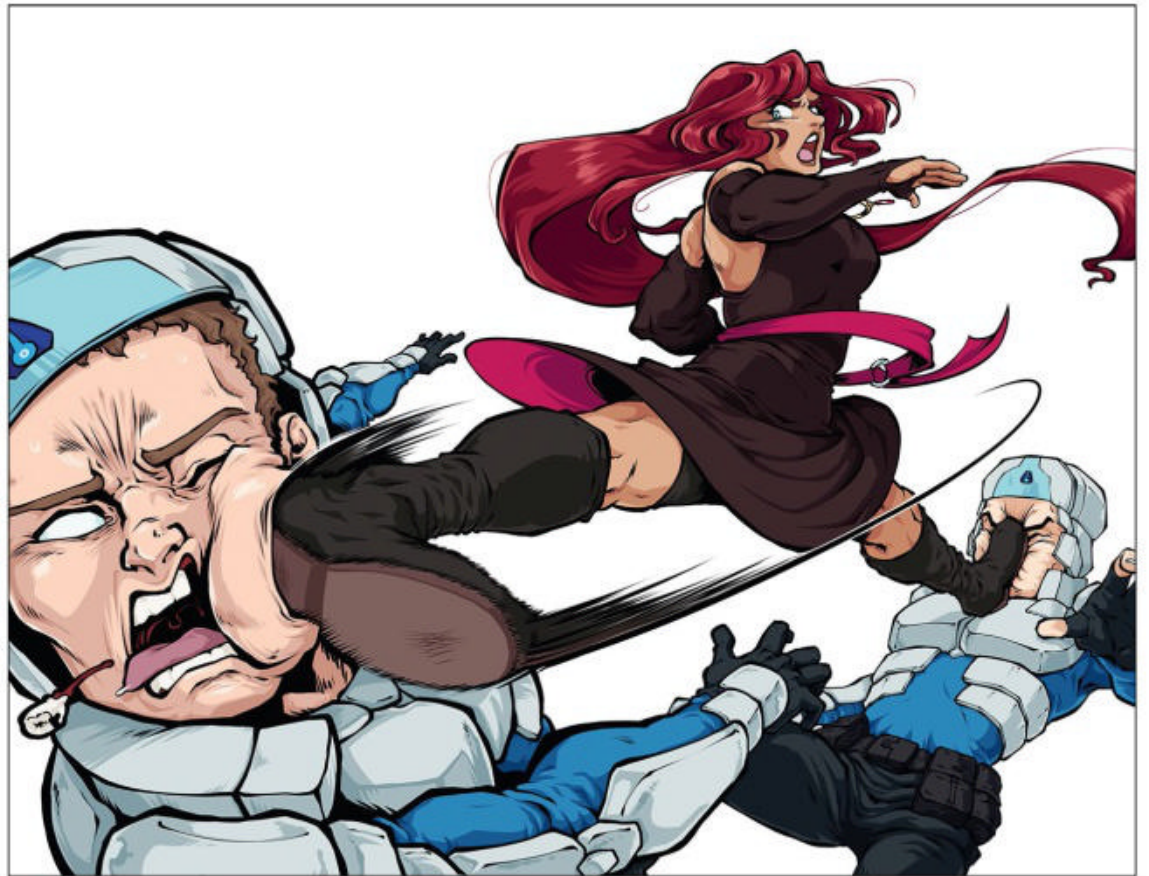


10 Motion lines on characters
Add more force by drawing dashed lines in the direction of movement, such as with the lady's foot here. In some cases, manga artists will entirely obfuscate the impacting limb with motion lines, but we don't want to get so carried away that the shape of the foot is entirely lost.



11 Flat colours

On a separate layer below the line art, start laying down the flat colours. Keep in mind: due to all the action lines, your line art may have gaps in it that the wand selection tool will slip through. Either increase the gap selection setting, or colour in the missing areas by hand.



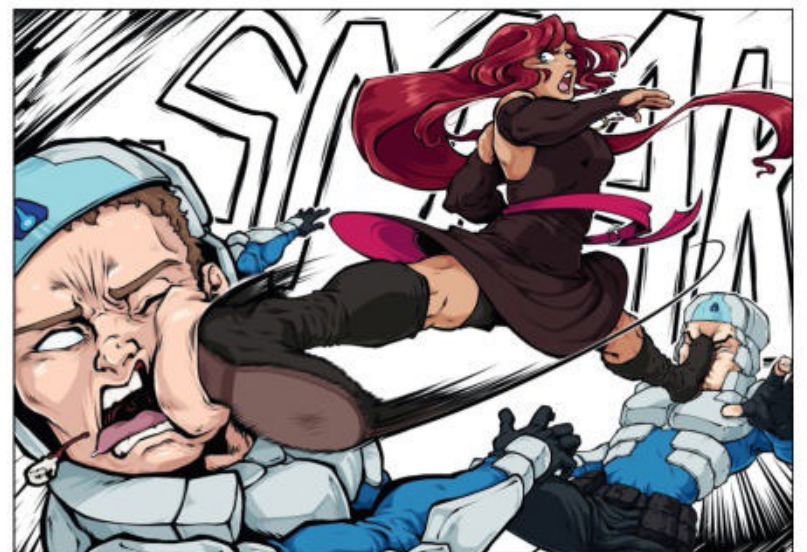
12 Shading to assist movement

Like the action lines we added to our characters, try to aim the shadows in the direction of the motion (such as the dress, and around the contours of the characters) as much as possible. As with your lines, 'wrap' the shadows around the character's bodies and clothing folds.



13 Background motion lines

We'll be using Clip Studio Paint's pre-packaged Saturated Lines tool to create 'burst lines'. Using the 'burst' tool under the Saturated Line tab, draw a circle outward from the centre of the bad guys' faces. Hold the CTRL key, and use the vertices to adjust the positioning, direction and curve of the lines.



14 Final touches

Now's the time to add extra action lines, or adjust any that are pointing in the wrong direction. A few extra touches, such as stray strands of hair, can add more dynamism. Last of all, add a big sound effect in the background: essential for any manga action scene!

Blender, Daz, KeyShot & Photoshop

CREATE STRIKING ANIME-STYLE ART

Explore one of the methods art director **Tonton Revolver** uses to make a kickass, anime-inspired illustration

Artist PROFILE

Tonton Revolver

LOCATION: France

Art director working in the video game and comic book industries. Some of my recent work includes Suicide Squad: Kill the Justice League, Assassin's Creed Valhalla, Far Cry, Todd McFarlane's Spawn and some unannounced IPs. www.artstation.com/tontonrevolver

GET YOUR RESOURCES

See page 6 now!



Starting a piece of art can be pretty scary. Fear of failure, a blank sheet, losing patience, thinking that you are lacking skills or that you will never be able to reach the level of quality you are seeking.

Then there's the easy access to several tools, software, advertising, tutorials and videos that make you think you can become Yoji Shinkawa in five minutes. Things can all get pretty confusing very quickly, can't they? Okay, first things first. There is no such thing as a good or a bad tool, just like there is no software that will magically make you a 'concept artist' or an 'illustrator'. The magical tool does not exist, and no software that will make a good and

inspirational piece of art for you with the simple click of a button.

In my opinion, nothing can replace good old traditional art knowledge. But! There are some pieces of software that can help you in your journey, and get rid of some of your fears.

Still, keep in mind that you will have to find your own creative process and the tools that fit your mindset/art style, and trust me, it might take a while.

So, in this tutorial I will show you one of the many ways I create an illustration with a striking composition. This process is probably the one I use the most on a daily basis, using the help of 3D and 2D software to work productively and efficiently.



RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES: HARD ROUND 2

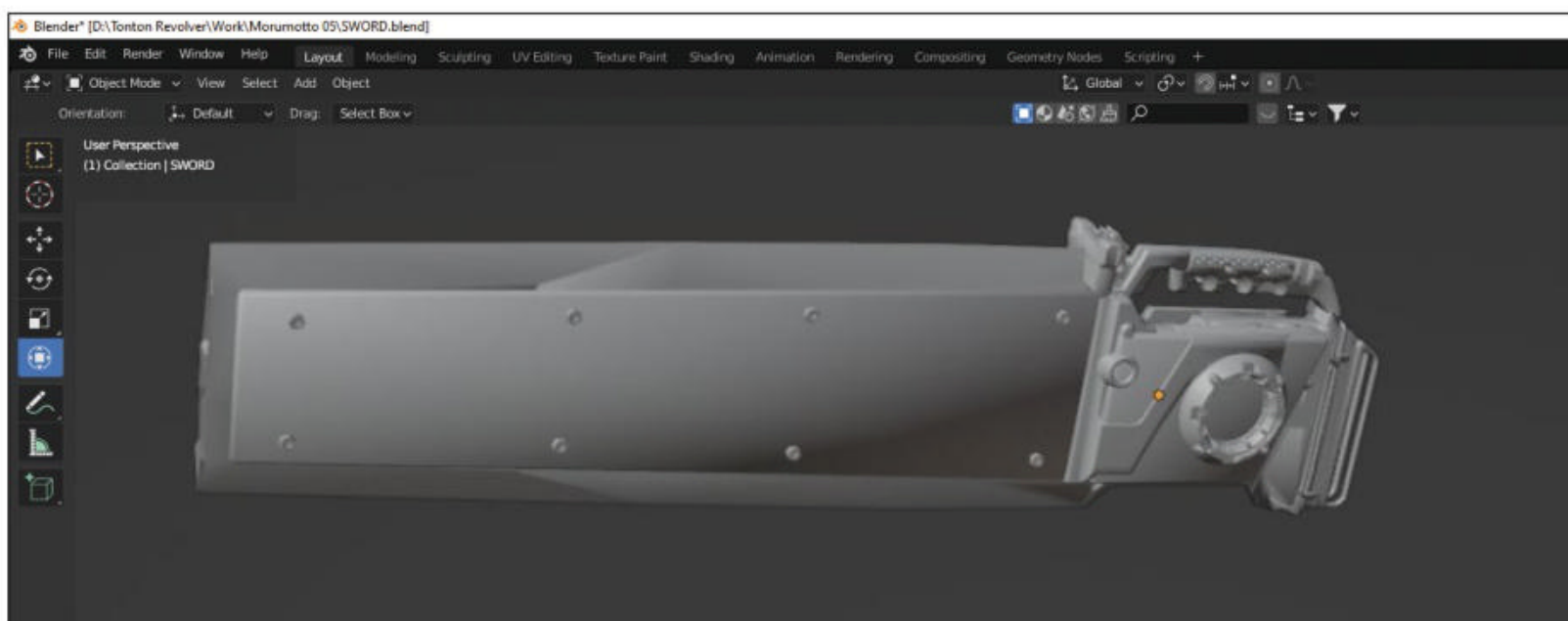
Perfect for linework, this brush is my go-to for digital inking!

HARD ROUND 3

A standard brush I am mostly using to paint flat colours with hard edges.

SOFT ROUND 300

A perfect brush for painting something with smooth edges.



1 The beginning

For me, the process of working on a personal piece is quite straightforward. To start, an idea of a character, story, or framing pops into my mind (in this case: a badass protagonist with a giant sword in the middle of an environment full of

pipes). Then I will start working on it without making any sketches. When it's a personal project, I am going straight into production and letting the creativity do the job.

The most important thing at this stage is to block out all the assets; in 3D, I will need to create my piece

without any constraints. Here I am modelling a very basic sword in Blender, to achieve the sense of shape/scale I am looking for. No fancy stuff, just a rough blockout.

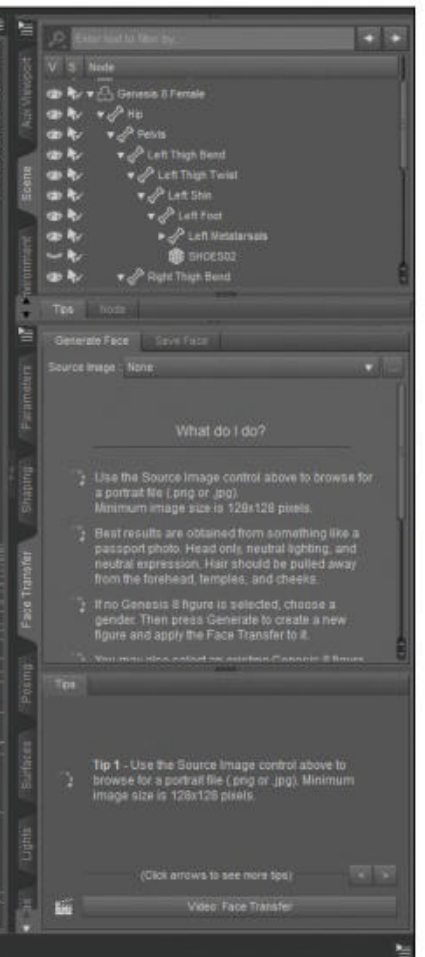
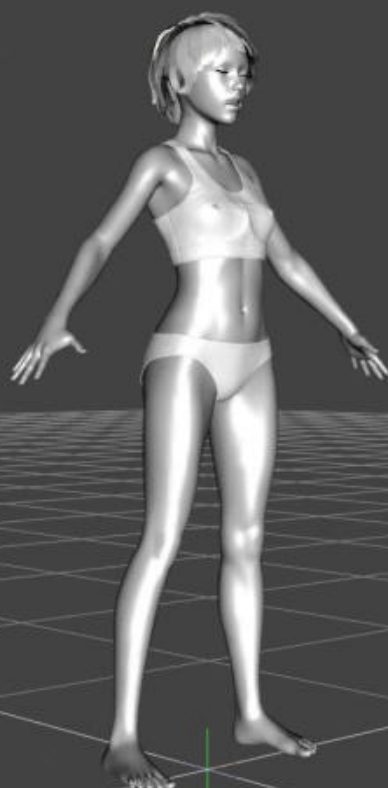
Once I am satisfied with the result, I export an OBJ of the sword and close Blender.

In depth Anime-style scenes

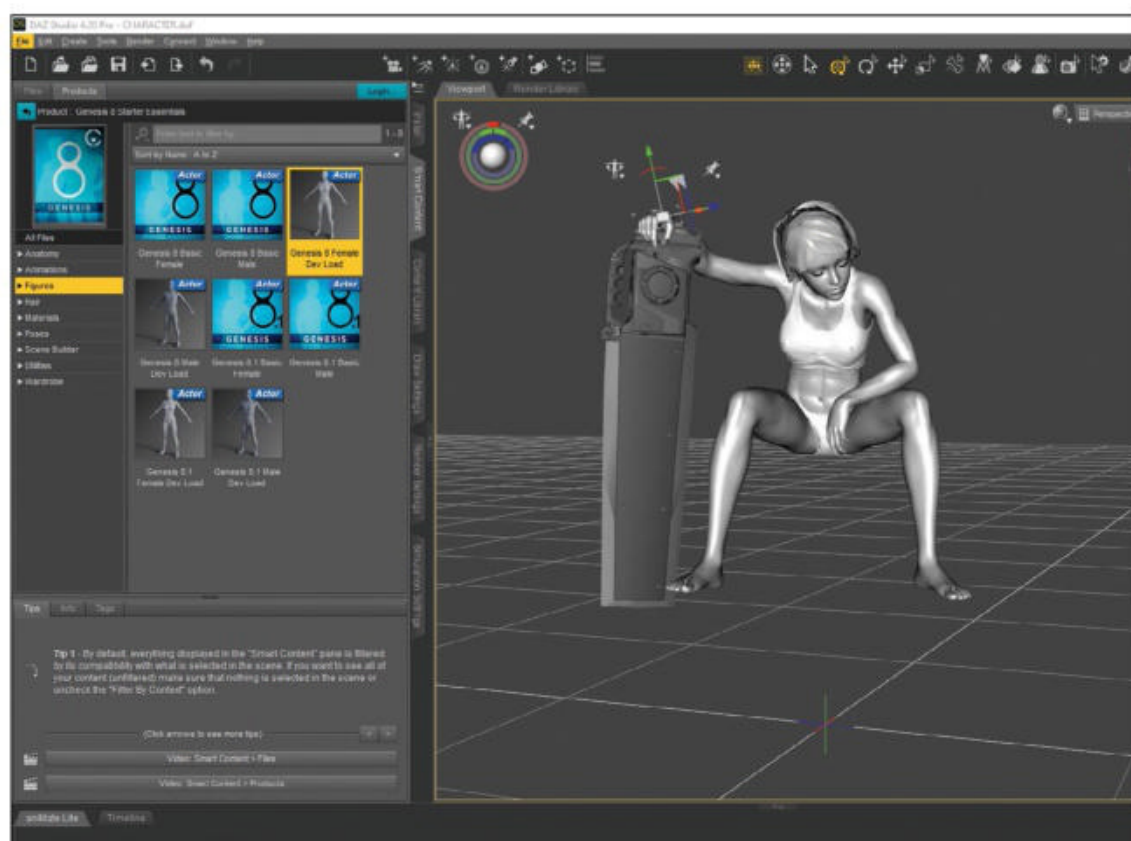


2 Daz model

I can now open Daz and export my sword next to a generic Daz female character (in this case, I'm using the Genesis 8 female figure). Daz is a pretty solid software, and it's free – I use it all the time when I need to pose a character efficiently in just a few clicks. ➡➡



Workshops



3 Pose in Daz

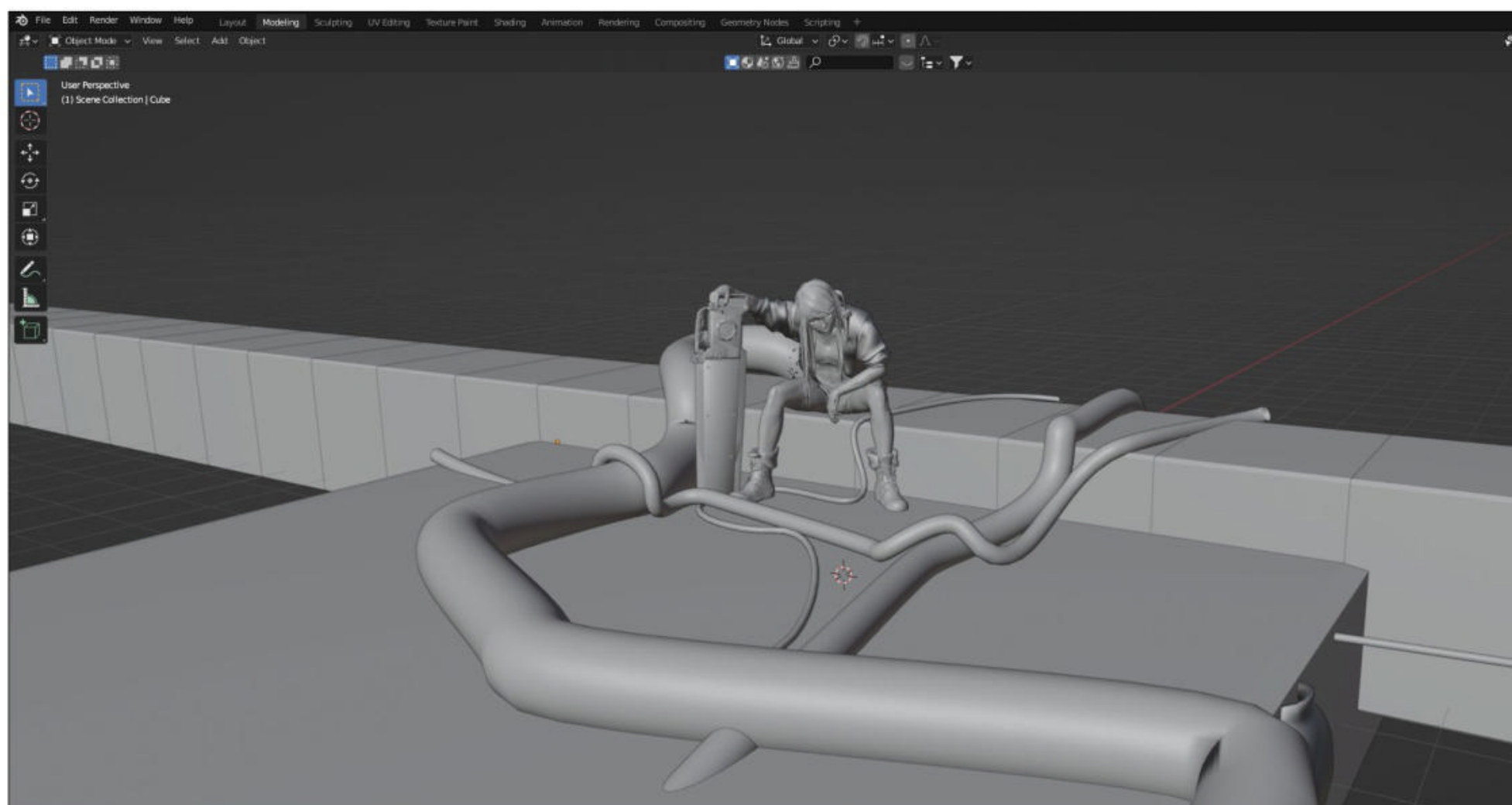
This is one of the most critical parts of the process: making the right pose, indicative of the attitude and mood I am aiming for. What I am looking for when I pose a character is always the same thing... and it's called 'MOTION'! Here, my take is to create the feeling that the character is about to move while she is sitting.

This step can take a while, because I like to keep it organic – you could consider it like a sort of sketch phase; I am moving the gizmo around to get the exact position I want, body part by body part, pixel by pixel. This posing is going to drive the entire flavour of the piece, so I have to be really picky about it. Once I am satisfied with the result, I export an OBJ of the scene (character + sword).



4 Back to Blender

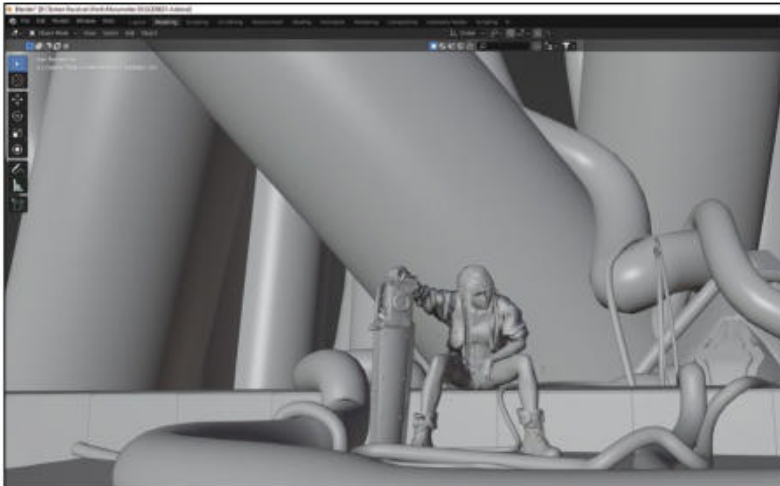
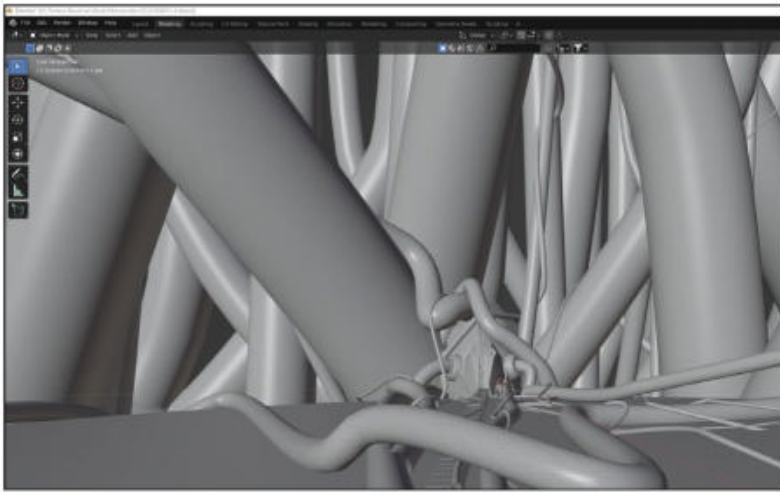
I can now re-open Blender and import my Daz character. Once again I will start blocking out a few elements, this time on the top of my character. For the sake of efficiency and not wasting too much time in Blender, I decide to re-use some assets I did a while ago (in this case, a pair of shoes and a bomber jacket), dropping them on my character. Then I roughly move some polygons around with the sculpting tool to make my props fit with the anatomy and pose of my character.



5 Environment - foreground

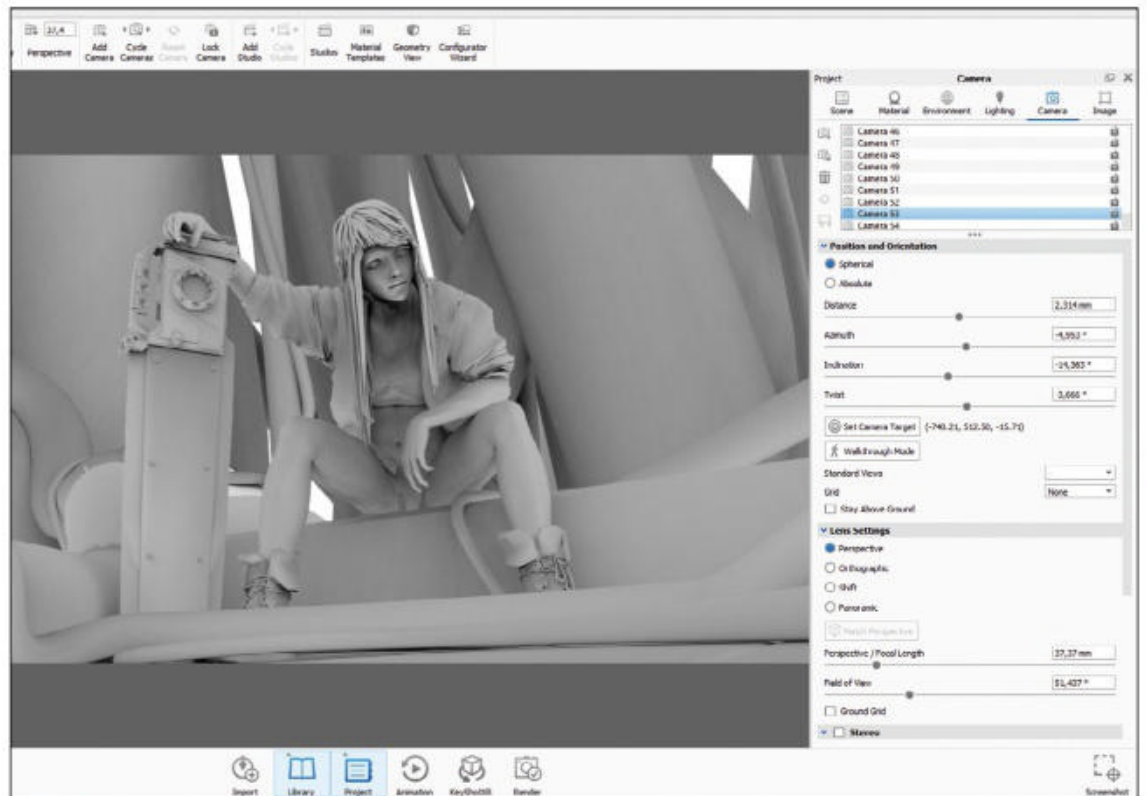
I can now start building my environment. This is a pretty straightforward step: here I am blocking out my foreground using basic cubes. Then, I create some pipes by using the Bezier curve tool, shaping them one by one and making them follow the shape of my initial blockout, and trying to obtain the sense of motion I am aiming for.

In depth Anime-style scenes



6 Environment – background

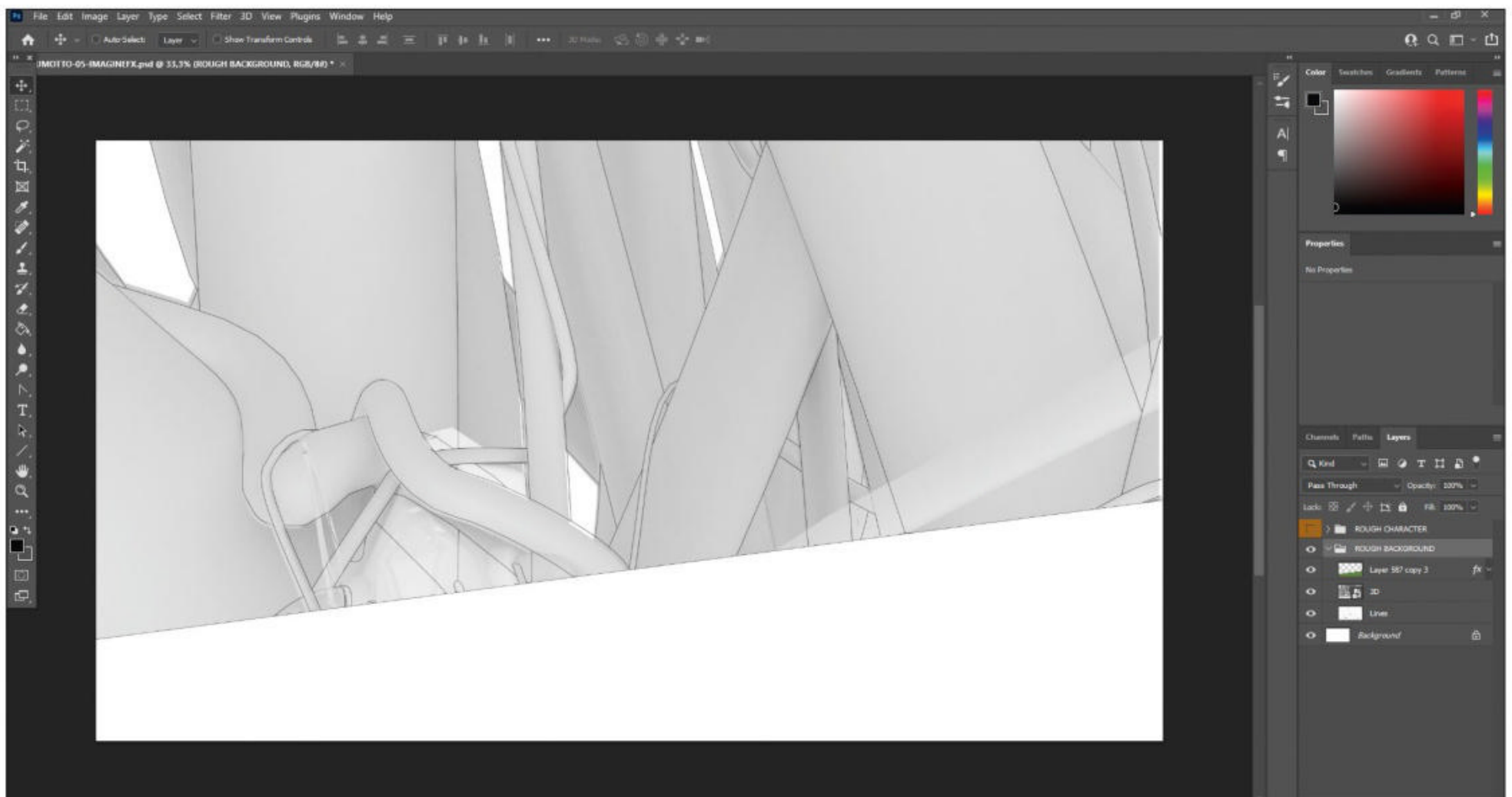
There are a lot of tools in Blender that can help you speed up the creation of this kind of environment. But what I personally love the most is to handcraft all my props – making, on purpose, a few ‘mistakes’ that are going to make my scenery feel more organic and ‘alive’.



7 Frame in KeyShot

Next, I am importing the OBJ of the scene I did in Blender and then moving my KeyShot camera into my scene, tweaking FOV, Focal Length, Distance, and so on – once again pixel by pixel – then tweaking the camera to reach the perfect framing for my illustration. This part can take a while for me, because even if I always have a pretty clear idea of the framing I am looking for, I like the fact that by moving my camera around I can sometimes get fresh and even better framing than what I had in mind in the first place.

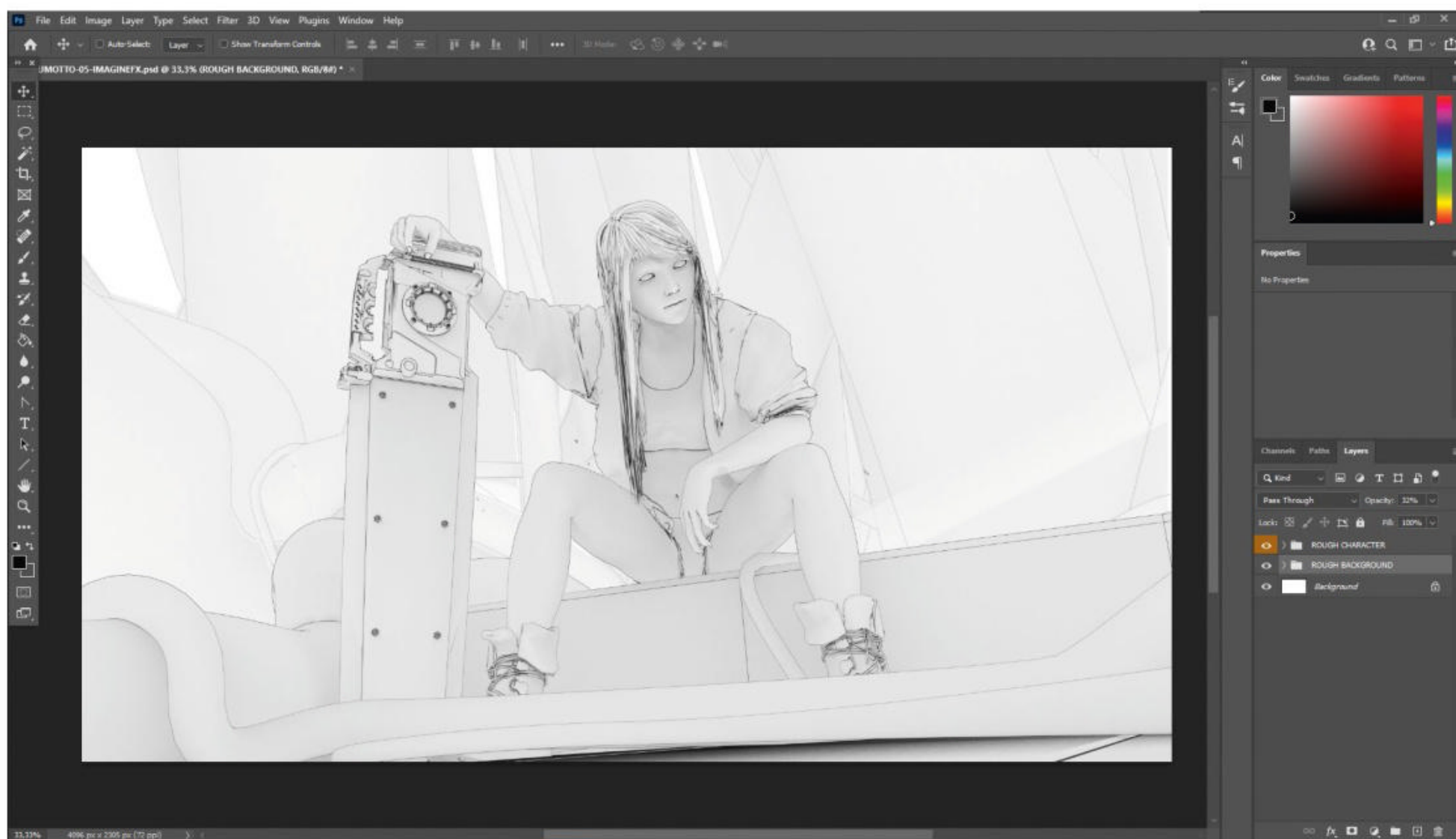
You can, of course, do the same thing in Blender, but in my opinion the camera tool from KeyShot is much more friendly. I can now render two separate 4k screenshots, one for the background and one for the foreground.



8 Linework in Photoshop – background

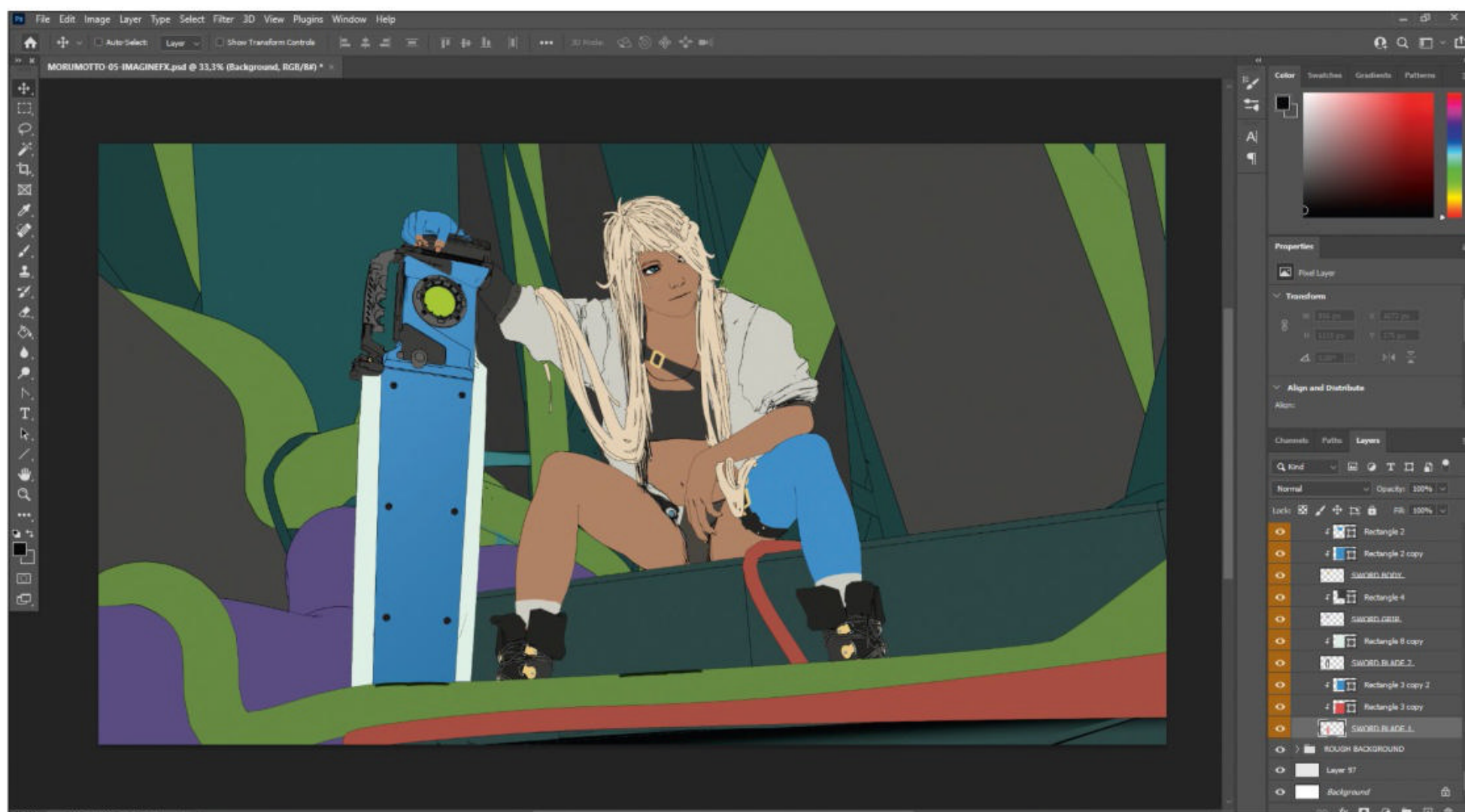
I am now importing my KeyShot renders in Photoshop, then creating two layer groups. One is called ‘Rough Character’ which is our ‘Foreground’ we did previously, and the other is going to be for the ‘Background’. I am always separating background and foreground – this kind of mindset can save your life, trust me. I can now roughly trace over my 3D model, using a two pixel-sized brush and a new layer. ➡

Workshops



9 Linework in Photoshop – foreground

I am now using the exact same process as the one in the previous step. Keep in mind that my goal at this stage is just to get an overall sense of the shape language and a strong foundation, so I am not going to spend too much time on the linework quality and the details.



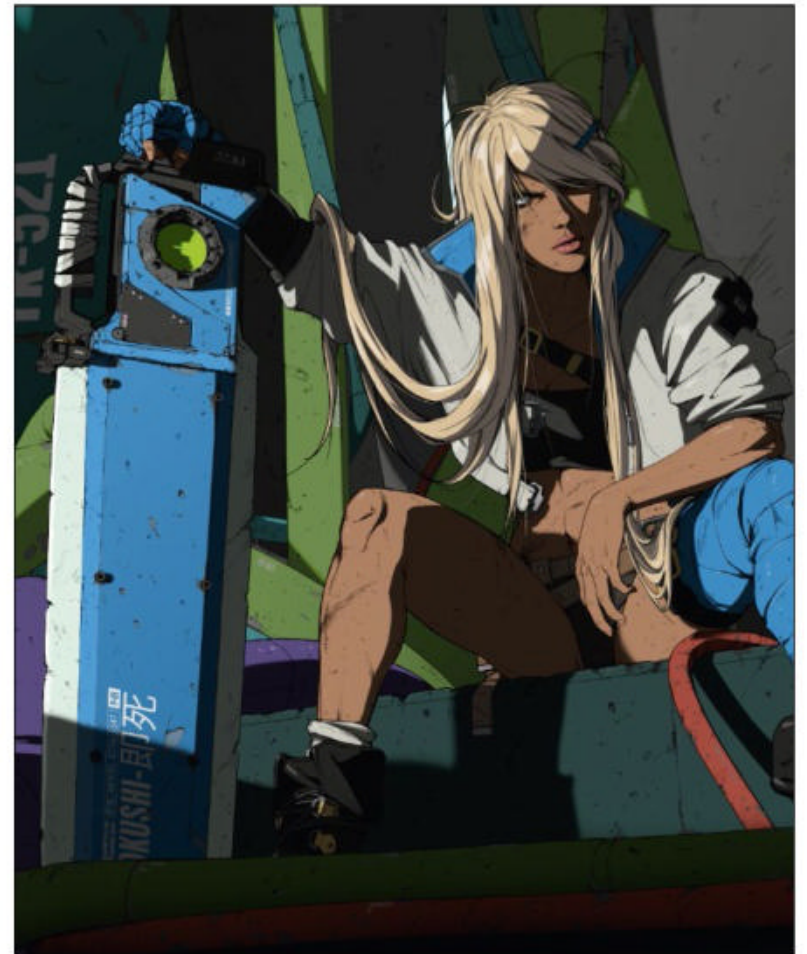
10 Colour scheme

My rough linework is done. I can now start adding flat colours, prop by prop, part by part (pipes, legs, arms, shoes, sword parts, etc...) and define the perfect colour grading. Each colour is separated on a different layer, so I can tweak every single colour independently.



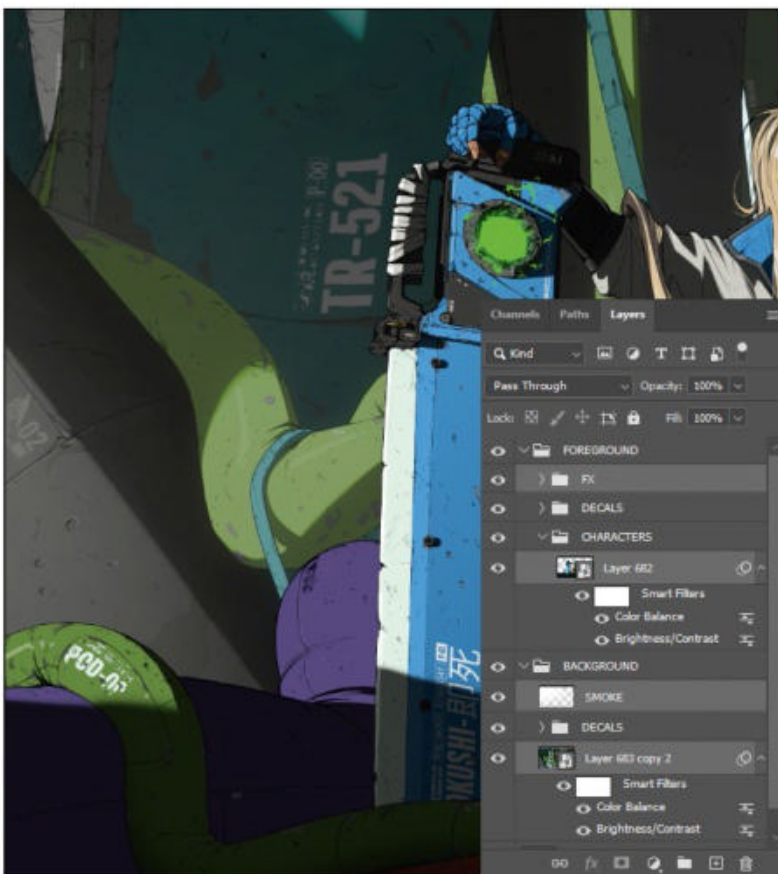
11 Add shadows

Once I am happy with my colour scheme, I merge the layer of my foreground and my background but still keep them separate. Here I am creating two layers (in Multiply mode), one for the background and another one for the foreground, and start painting my shadows on each of them using a full black colour and two basic brushes (a hard round brush and an aerograph brush).



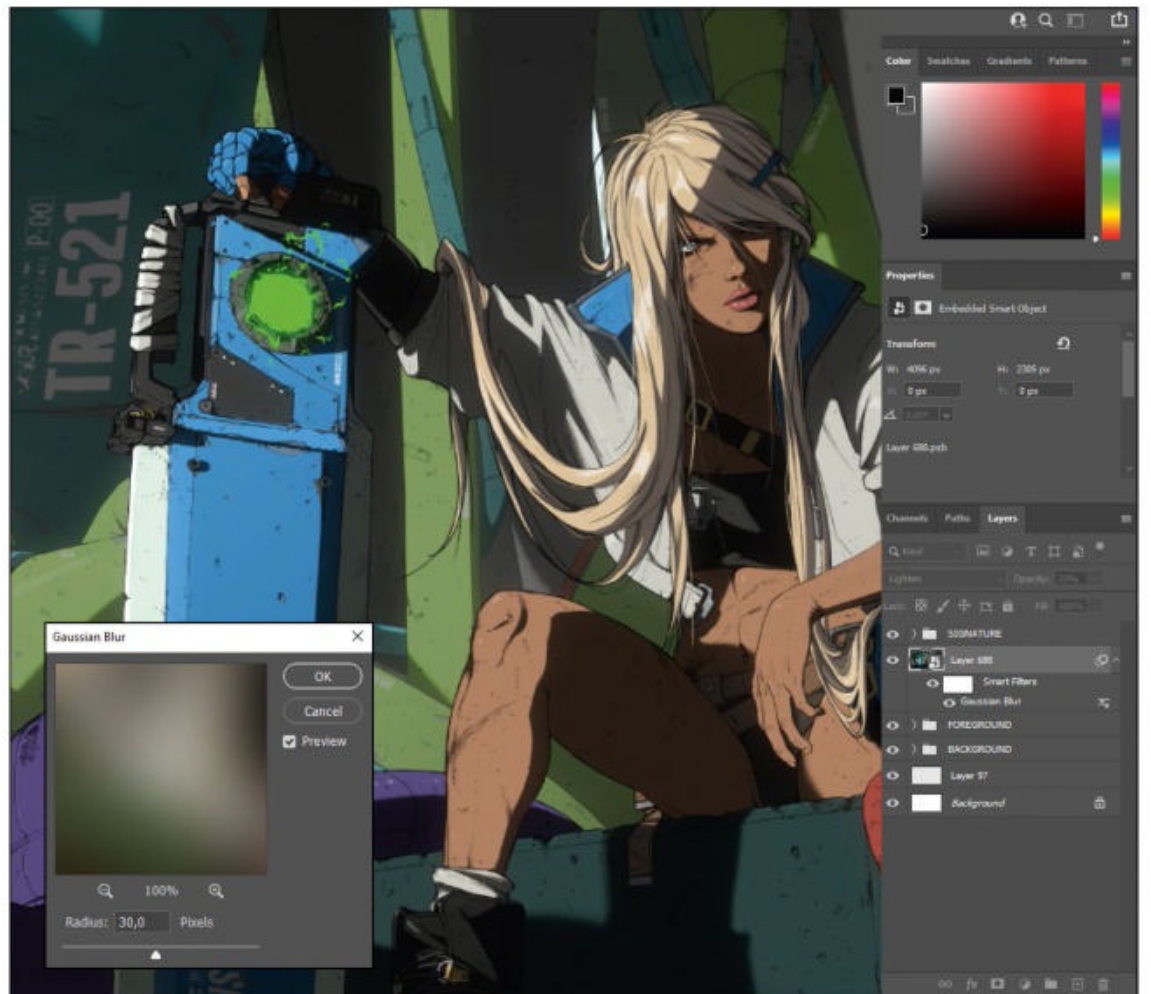
12 Paint and polish

Now I have everything I need to get this scene done! At this stage it's just about painting, painting, painting, tweaking, fixing, and adding details like decals, splatters and scratches. There is no secret technique for this step: patience, dedication and experience will be your best tools to achieve what you want.



13 Calibrate whole scene

The painting step is now complete. Next I am tweaking my colour grading here and there on my background and my foreground by using 'Colour Balance' and 'Brightness/Contrast'. I am also adding a bit of smoke on the background to help the separation between the foreground and background, to make my piece more readable.



14 Fake a global illumination

Almost done! This is the very final touch, here I am duplicating all my layers, merging them, and converting them into a smart object. Open the Gaussian Blur filter, fix the Radius to 30 pixels and put this layer in Lighten mode. This simple trick is going to fake some sort of a global illumination.

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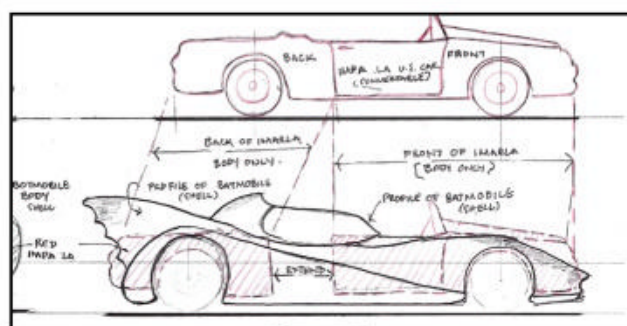
NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX Reviews



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

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

4
PRODUCTS
ON TEST



HARDWARE

80 Samsung Galaxy Tab S8 Ultra

With its simply immense screen size and top-tier power, this Samsung tablet is a definite rival to the iPad Pro.

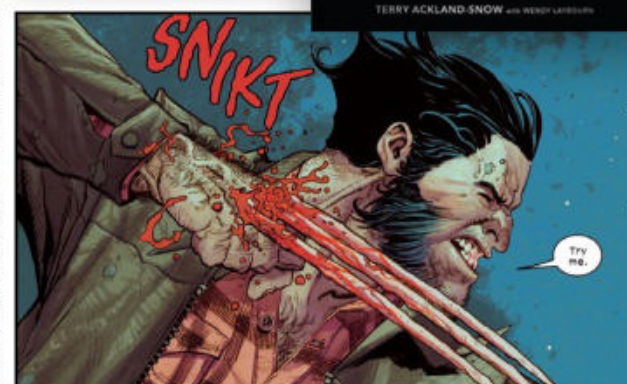
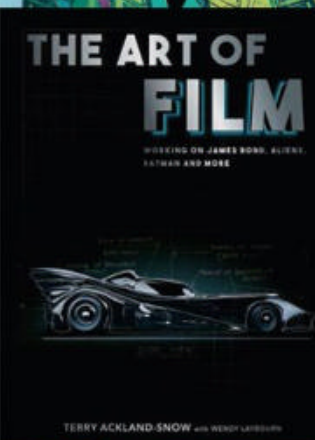
BOOKS AND COMICS

82 The art of film

We check out this memoir by production designer Terry Ackland-Snow, as he shares his experiences on numerous film sets.

83 Batgirls

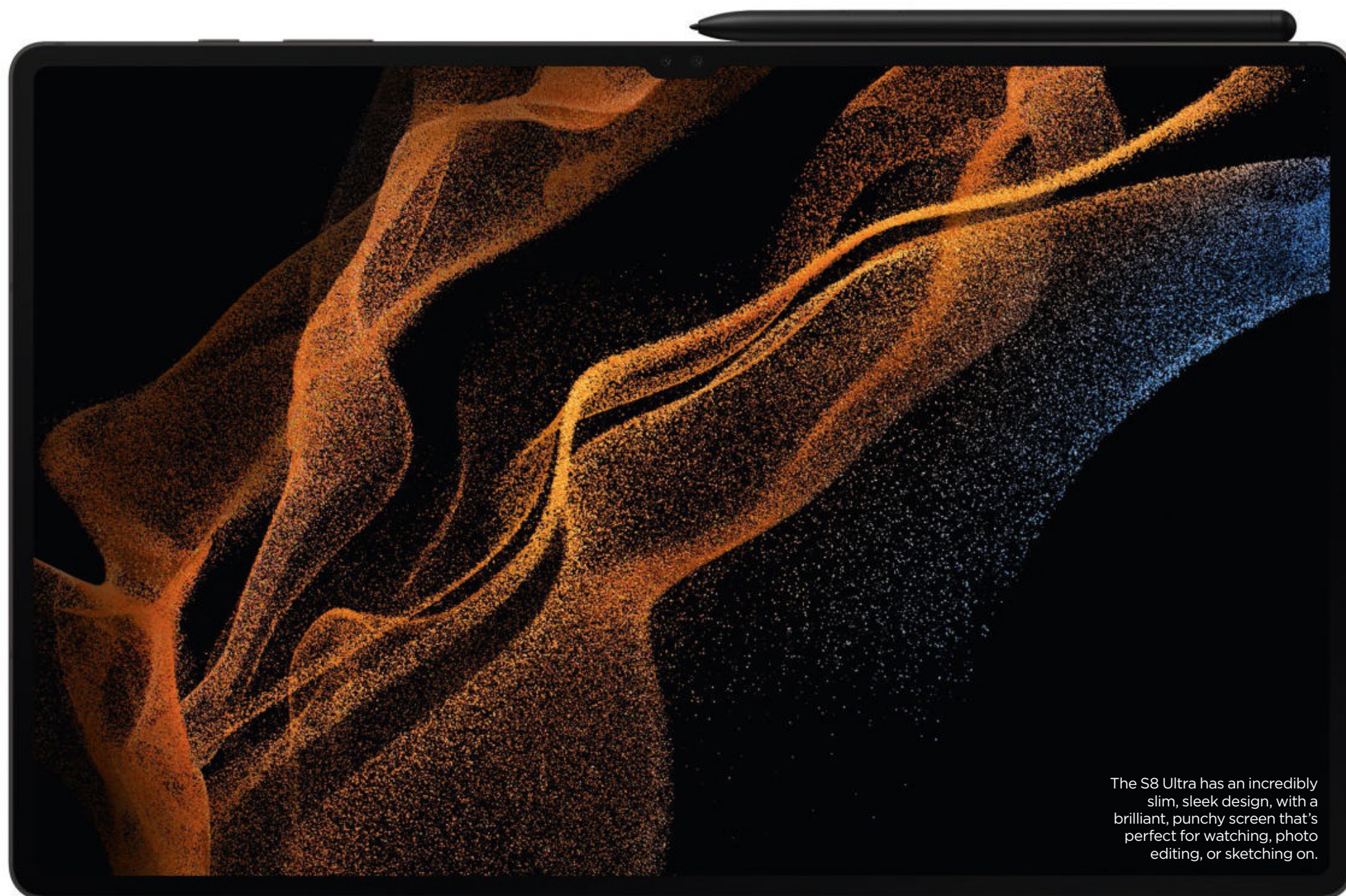
This colourful, high-energy adventure featuring three Batgirls features excellent visuals and some fun character moments.



83 X Lives/Deaths of Wolverine

These two interlinking miniseries, starring a time-travelling Wolverine, offer some interesting plot twists and plenty of action.

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



The S8 Ultra has an incredibly slim, sleek design, with a brilliant, punchy screen that's perfect for watching, photo editing, or sketching on.

Samsung Galaxy Tab S8 Ultra

BIG AND BOLD An iPad-beating screen size meets Wacom pen tech, a sleek design and plenty of power to ensure this novel tablet grabs our attention

Price From £849 / \$1,100 **Company** Samsung **Web** www.samsung.com

Samsung's Tab S8 Ultra is the biggest tablet we've ever seen. The largest iPad Pro screen is 12.9 inches;

Samsung's Tab S8 Ultra is 14.6 inches. Samsung's clearly pushing the bar when it comes to tablet size, but bigger isn't always better.

No tablet has truly been able to beat the iPad Pro for creatives. That isn't down to the iPad being larger, having a better screen or a more premium design – it's down to the apps. Apple's App Store has more high-quality creative apps available than Android's Google Play Store – it's that simple.

Samsung isn't taking defeat lying down though. With its AMOLED screen technology, which is incredibly deep, vibrant and rich, as well as an S Pen in the box and loads of software

smarts, can Samsung's latest slate finally topple the iPad Pro's creative reign? We test it to find out.

BIG AND BOLD

We neither love nor hate the Tab S8 Ultra's utilitarian aesthetic. Its matte metal looks premium out of the box, but clings onto fingerprints, albeit more subtly than glossy glass. The Tab doesn't look quite as good as an iPad from the back, but it does feel incredibly special given how slim and solid it is. From the front, it's also a sight to behold thanks to that brilliant AMOLED screen.

When we fired up a 4K video of Tokyo city on the Tab S8 Ultra and showed it to some friends in a dimly lit

Thanks to its Armor Aluminum body, the tablet is robust, and weighing 728g, feels solid in the hand.

The S Pen is more versatile and intuitive than Apple's Pencil, but with moving parts and a more fragile nib, it's also less premium.



All images © Samsung

room, they were convinced it was a 3D screen. That's how striking the Ultra's display is.

Unlike iPads, which use LCD screens, the Tab S8 Ultra features the largest AMOLED screen to grace any tablet to date. That means its blacks are deeper and inkier, its colours richer and more eye-grabbing, and its contrast-levels superior. If you want a



Just like the iPad Pro, the screen has a silky smooth 120Hz refresh rate. This means menus and feeds scroll smoothly, adding a real sense of speed to the whole user interface.

tablet for movies and watching content on, this is it.

Another boon for movie watchers is the Tab S8 Ultra's aspect ratio. While iPads are a bit more square, with a 4:3 aspect ratio (the same as a traditional photograph), the Tab S8 Ultra's screen is 16:10 – just a little wider than Full HD. That means whether you're watching a Netflix series in Full HD, or a feature film in 21:9, the iPad will always display

“Top-tier power and ridiculously smart software mean it's a beast when it comes to productivity and performance”

massive black bars on either side of the picture. The Tab S8 series, on the other hand, will not.

There's one area Samsung's flagship tab falls behind the iPad, and that's brightness. While the iPad Pro climbs to 1,000 nits and higher, the Tab S8 Ultra caps out at around 420 nits. This is more than bright enough for easy watching, notetaking and working indoors and in overcast outdoor spaces, but if you tend to use your tablet outdoors in bright

environments, then viewability might be an issue.

THE SAMSUNG S PEN

Unlike iPads, the whole Tab S8 series ships with a pen in the box – specifically, an S Pen. This Samsung stylus is a touch shorter than the Apple Pencil, and it feels more natural on first use given the softer, more pen-like tip. It also uses Wacom tech and

supports up to 4,096 levels of pressure sensitivity with tilt recognition – and it works great.

Pre-installed software that helps you get the most out of the S Pen includes Samsung Notes and Clip Studio Paint. Third-party S Pen apps are also available – Autodesk Sketchbook, Concepts, and Wacom Bamboo Paper to name a few. However, these aren't a patch on some of the finest iPad apps like Good Notes and Procreate, which ultimately offer a



An official Tab S8 Ultra keyboard folio case is available at £150/\$350.

The S8 Ultra may be a massive tablet, but it is also ridiculously slim. At just 5.5mm thin, it feels like a sliver of tech.

DETAILS

Specifications

- Display: 14.6" Super AMOLED
- Dimensions (HxWxD): 208.6mm x 326.4mm x 5.5mm
- Refresh rate: 120Hz
- CPU Speed: 2.99GHz, 2.4GHz, 1.7GHz
- RAM Size: 8GB
- Resolution: (Main Display) 2,960 x 1,848 (WQXGA+)
- Processor: 4nm
- Typical battery: 11,200 mAh
- Weight: 728g
- Front camera: 12MP
- Dual Front Camera (Ultra Wide + Wide)
- Rear Camera: 13.0 MP + 6.0 MP
- Video recording resolution: UHD 4K (3,840 x 2,160) @30fps

Rating



higher quality experience. While you can get core Adobe apps like Lightroom for the Tab S8 Ultra, unfortunately, the full suite of iPad apps – including Adobe Fresco – isn't available for Android just yet.

PERFORMANCE BOOST

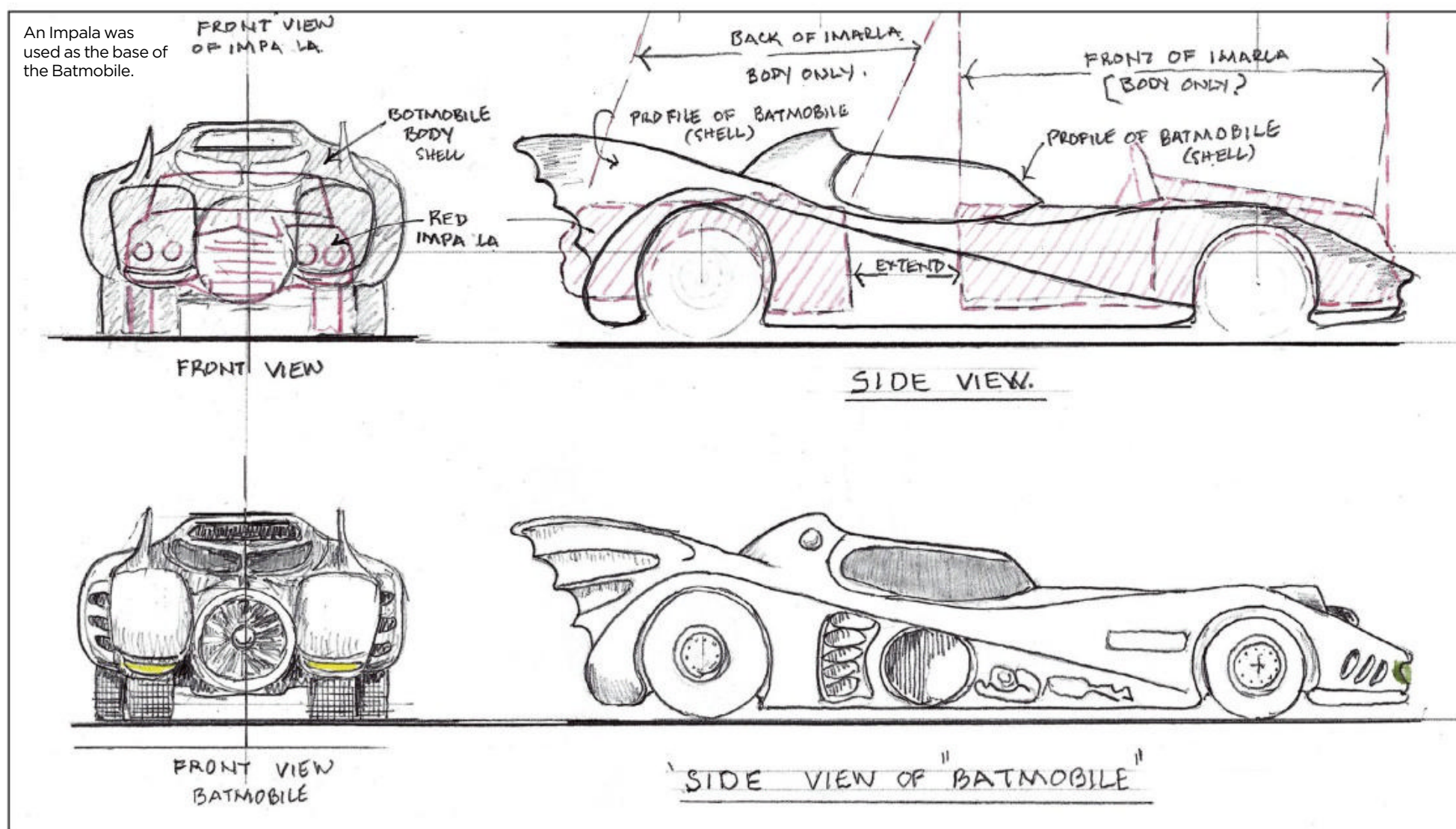
Top-tier power and ridiculously smart software mean the Tab S8 Ultra is a beast when it comes to productivity and performance.

DeX is Samsung's desktop interface for Android phones and tablets. It fires up on the Tab S8 Ultra's mammoth display, or when you connect to an external display. Connect a Bluetooth keyboard and mouse, and you can work across multiple windows with ease, making the oversized tablet feel like a traditional Windows or MacOS-style device.

You can also use the Tab S8 series as an extended monitor for your Windows 11 computer too, and with its ample display, it's a perfect companion for a 15-inch laptop, giving you a portable, dual-display setup.

For anyone after a creative tablet first and foremost, the iPad Pro is the better option thanks to its far superior app support. This is especially true for Mac users who can take advantage of Apple's cross-device integration.

However, if you have a Windows 11 laptop and an Android phone, and want the biggest, best companion device money can buy, the Galaxy Tab S8 Ultra is a marvel of modern technology. It pushes boundaries, and gives you more screen (and in turn, canvas) than anything else on the market – so if you can fit it into your workflow, you won't find anything else that can offer what it can.



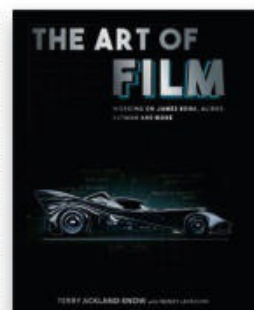
The art of film

BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD Production designer Terry Ackland-Snow recounts his vast experience on a wide range of sets

Author Terry Ackland-Snow **Publisher** The History Press **Price** £25/\$35 **Web** thehistorypress.co.uk **Available Now**

Essentially a smoke and mirrors specialist, Terry Ackland-Snow has served as draughtsman, art director and production designer on over 80 movies, earning credits on such blue-chip franchises as Bond, Batman and Aliens.

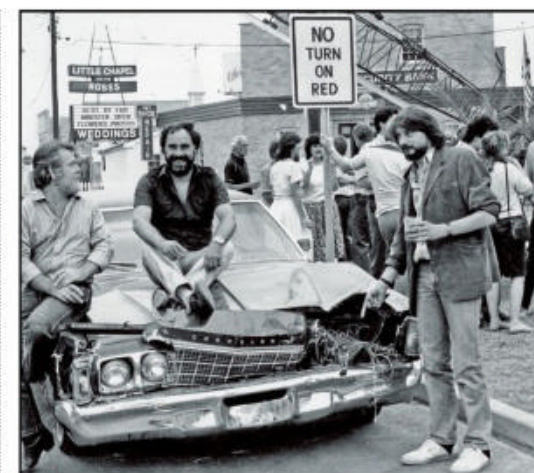
This is his memoir, though straight biography is consigned to the intro,



leaving the remaining chapters to focus on his more memorable assignments. It's certainly an impressive CV, with the occasional shimmer of international glamour – he became a Class III diver to carry out a Caribbean recce – but it's a tale told with British modesty and professional discretion. Death On The Nile's director was “a little tricky to deal with,” while memories of Stanley Kubrick fall equally short of insight. Cubby Broccoli did, at least, cook squid and pasta for the crew.

Examples of Terry's meticulous, inventive draftsmanship offer the real value. A diagram sets out the assault on Blofeld's Alpine lair in On Her

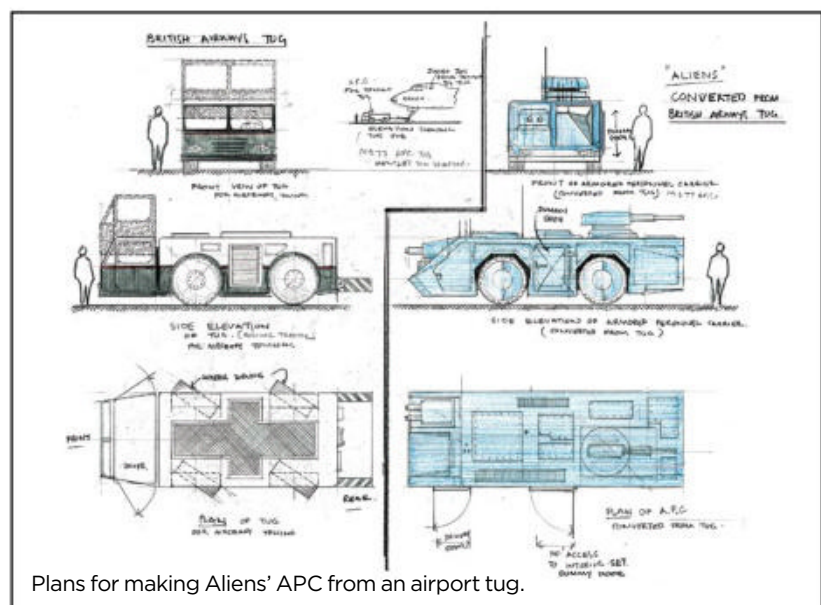
“He became a Class III diver to carry out a Caribbean recce”



Terry Ackland-Snow rests on the Supergirl set.

Majesty's Secret Service, complete with attack helicopters; another shows a cross-section of set for The Dark Crystal, revealing how the puppets were filmed without exposing the puppeteers. Meanwhile a Batmobile schematic comes with a winningly self-deprecating anecdote: as Tim Burton pointed out, he'd neglected to include any doors...

RATING ★★★★★



Plans for making Aliens' APC from an airport tug.

The characterful visual style works well with the fun, three-hero story.



© DC Comics

Batgirls

Issues 1-3

Writer Michael W Conrad, Becky Cloonan

Artist Jorge Corona

Publisher DC Comics

Barbara Gordon may be the original and best-known Batgirl, but she's not the only one; teenagers Cassandra Cain and Stephanie Brown have both had short but successful runs as the character, and DC has finally given all three of these costumed vigilantes their own joint series.

This colourful, fast-paced adventure picks up from recent events in Gotham. With Barbara out of the action and acting as overseer, both Steph and Cass end up neck-deep in problems thanks to a new street artist with a dangerous line in mind control, and the series is soon cranking the energetic set pieces and colourful visuals up to maximum.

Three issues in, there's a likeably cartoony sense of knockabout fun to Batgirls, and the new status quo of Steph, Cass and Barbara as flatmates is surprisingly endearing, with Barbara in unintentional 'surrogate mother' mode.

There are points where the high-energy approach risks getting exhausting, and anybody not up to date on current Bat-continuity is going to be seriously lost, but the in-your-face vibe and youthful energy is matched by gorgeous, wildly expressive art.

The kooky, characterful visuals perfectly counterpoint the fun interplay between the three protagonists. Despite a few flaws, Batgirls is a welcome dash of bright, eye-catching fun on Gotham's usually gloomy streets.

RATING ★★★★★☆



© Marvel

X Lives/Deaths of Wolverine

INTERLINKED Slice and dice twice with this pair of adventures, filled with energetic, blood-soaked action

Issues 1-3 **Writer** Benjamin Percy **Artist** Joshua Cassara, Federico Vicentini **Publisher** Marvel Comics

With a brace of new X-Men comic launches approaching, it'd be easy to assume that Marvel's latest event comic would just be a fun placeholder. And yet, while these two five-issue miniseries are strangely structured and bewilderingly titled, they're also an intriguing and surprisingly significant chapter in the saga.

Published across ten weeks (with each series appearing on an alternate week), this linked pair of adventures for everyone's favourite spandex-clad berserker mirrors the structure used in Jonathan Hickman's House Of X/ Powers Of X event from 2019,



although the connections between the two stories aren't quite as strong here.

Indeed, three issues in, X Lives Of Wolverine could easily be taken for a mostly self-contained tale, with Wolverine embarking on a dangerous voyage of mental time travel back through his own life. The resulting violent adventure references plenty of previous iconic Wolverine adventures, and is crammed full of blood-soaked set-pieces, abrupt twists, and plenty of "Snikt!" sound effects. But it's in X Deaths Of Wolverine that things get a lot more daring and creative.

X Deaths relies heavily on Terminator references in its first three issues, while linking back to the dark and apocalyptic future hinted at in Hickman's Powers Of X, and the story is told at such an energetic pace that it's hard not to be swept along by it.

While the two-series structure is awkward at times, this weirdly satisfying superhero thriller is far more interesting than a Wolverine-related event comic has any right to be.

RATING ★★★★★☆

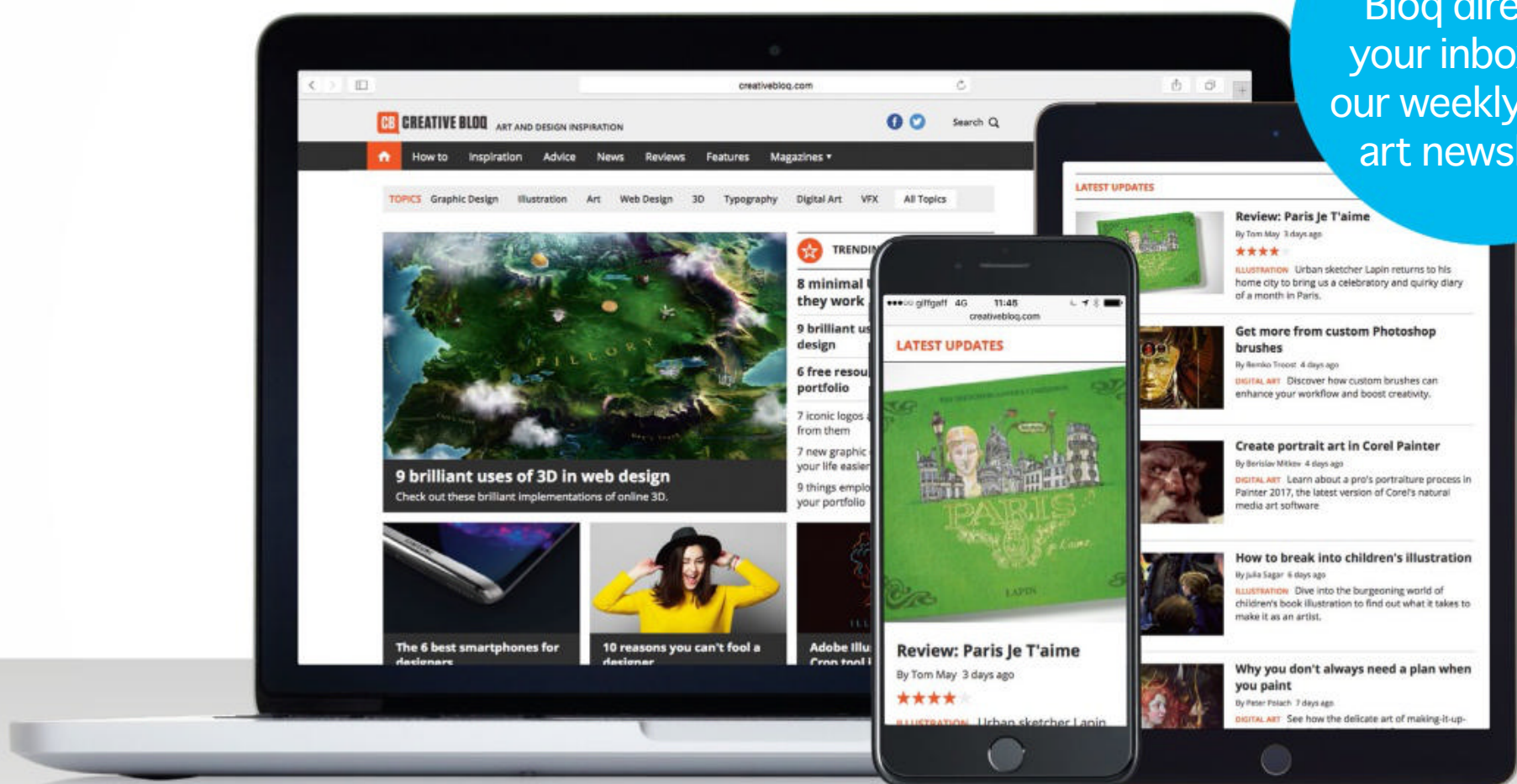


© Marvel

Wolverine travels in time to save the life of Professor Xavier, reliving important moments from his past in the process.

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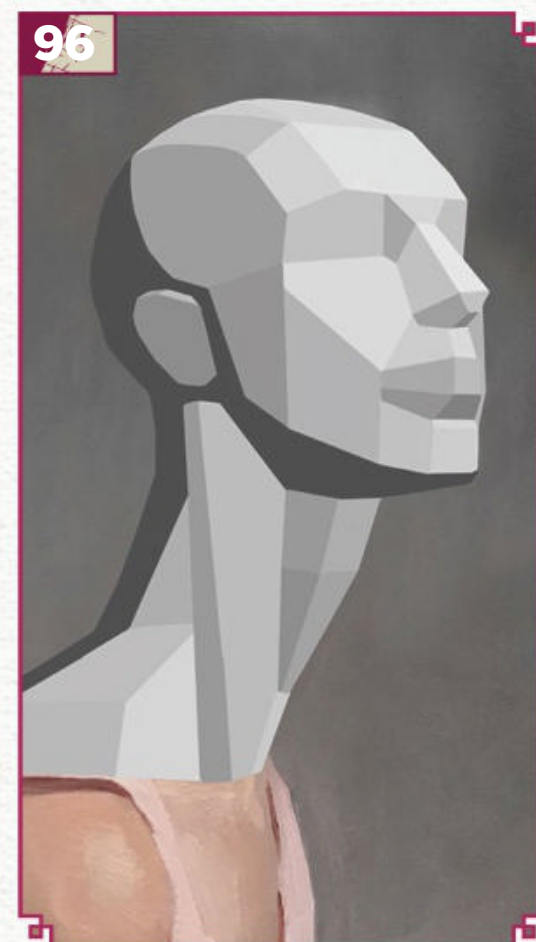
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This issue:

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

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Marcel Mosqi demonstrates how to paint an anime-style character.

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Part 5 of Charlie Pickard's ongoing anatomy series.

98 First Impressions: Alessandra Maria
We gain an insight into this artist's beautiful creations.



FXPosé

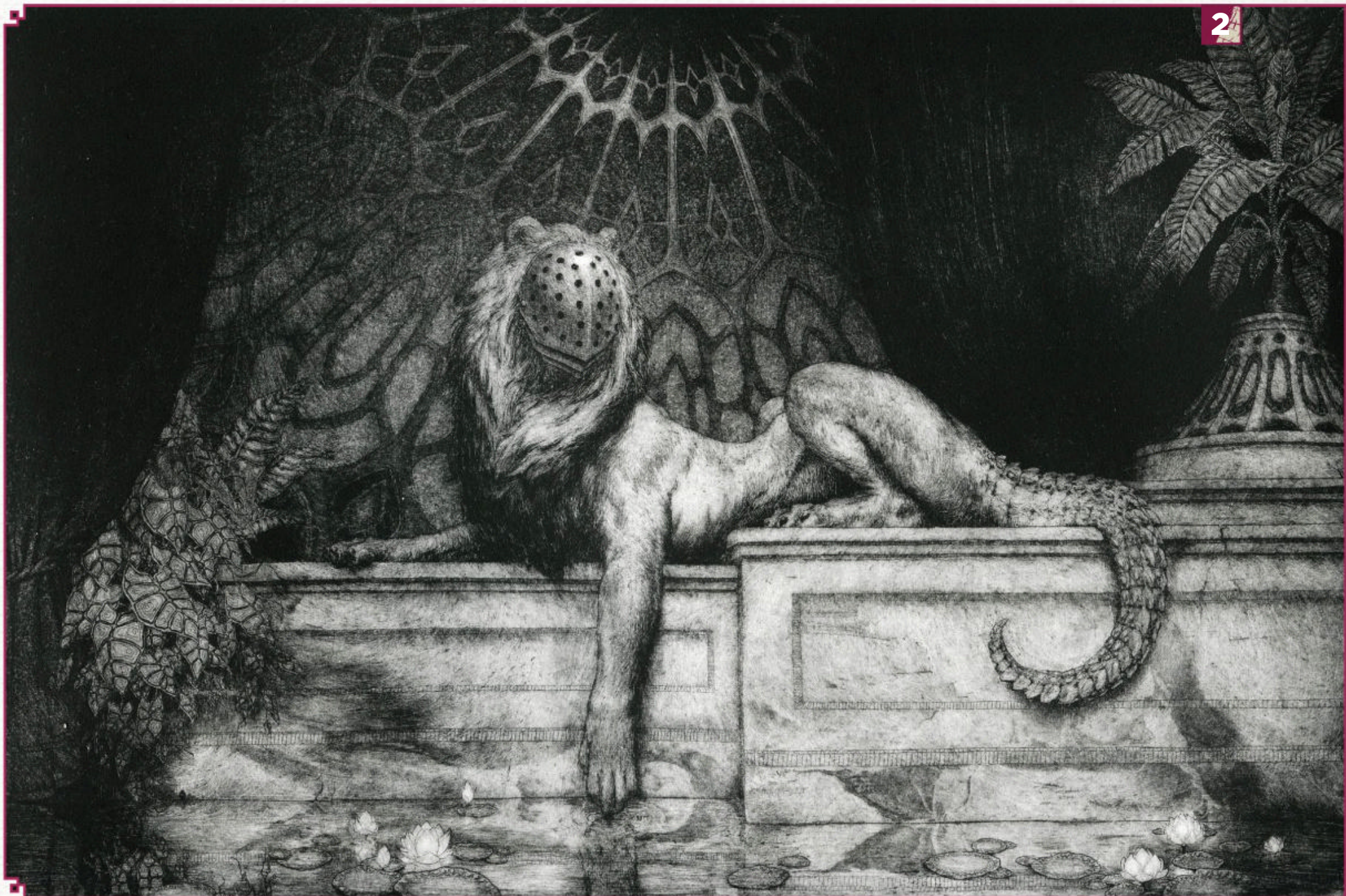
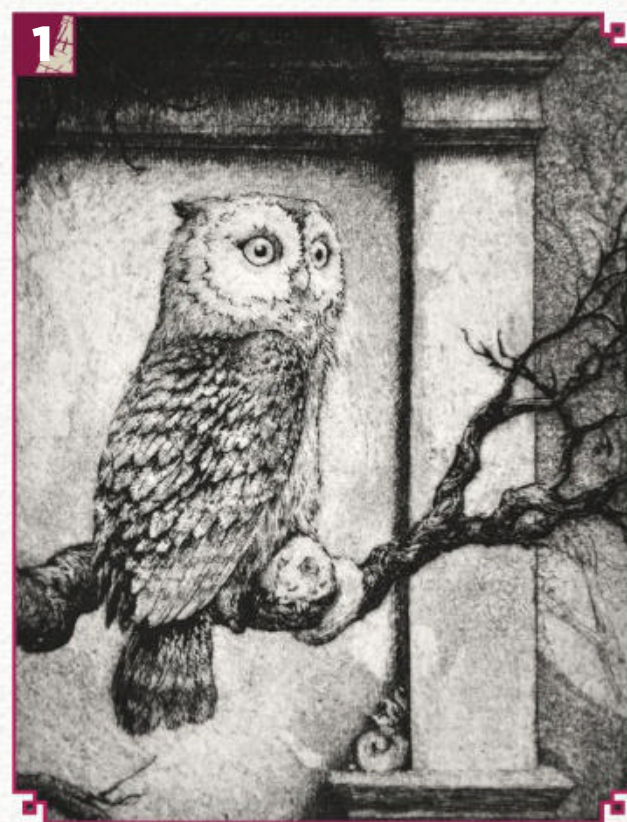
SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL ARTISTS



Petra Frankova

LOCATION: Czech Republic **MEDIA:** Etching, graphite **WEB:** www.frankfolium.com

Petra is a traditional printmaker and illustrator from Czech Republic. Her meticulously detailed work deals with quiet and uncanny moments. In these spaces creatures hum silently in their dread and eeriness.



1 OWLET

"This work was done by a classical technique of etching, where a copper plate is submerged in acid and then hand-printed."

2 SPHINX

"The mythical creature of Thebes. However, in this version of the story Oedipus failed to answer the riddle."

3 LOTUS MANTIDEUS

"The holy man treaded lightly on the dirty surface of the lake, and one after another, water lilies grew from his footprints."





Gaboleps (Gabriel Leonardo Romero)

LOCATION: New Zealand **MEDIA:** Oil painting, pencil, charcoal **WEB:** www.artstation.com/gaboleps

Gabriel has worked in the entertainment industry since 2005, mostly as a concept artist and illustrator. He currently works as a freelance illustrator for Magic: The Gathering, and sometimes as a musician.





1 WORK

"Hands are tools we use to create, and they give meaning to our lives. The finer the crafting the more effort it takes. These fists are a gesture of struggle."

2 GIFT

"Altruism is the noblest act I can conceive. So this is a gift, or a message, to value yourself beyond what you are or what you have."

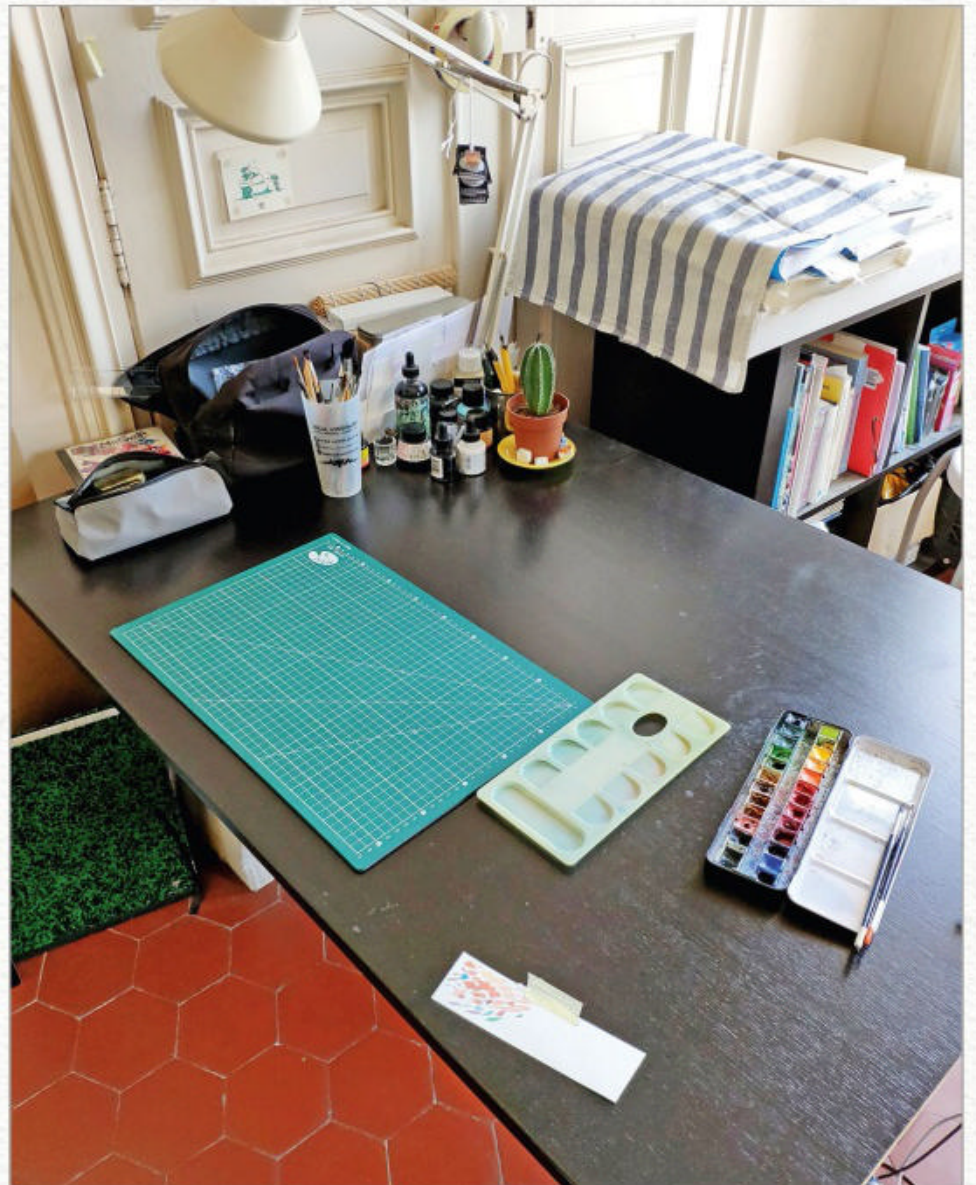
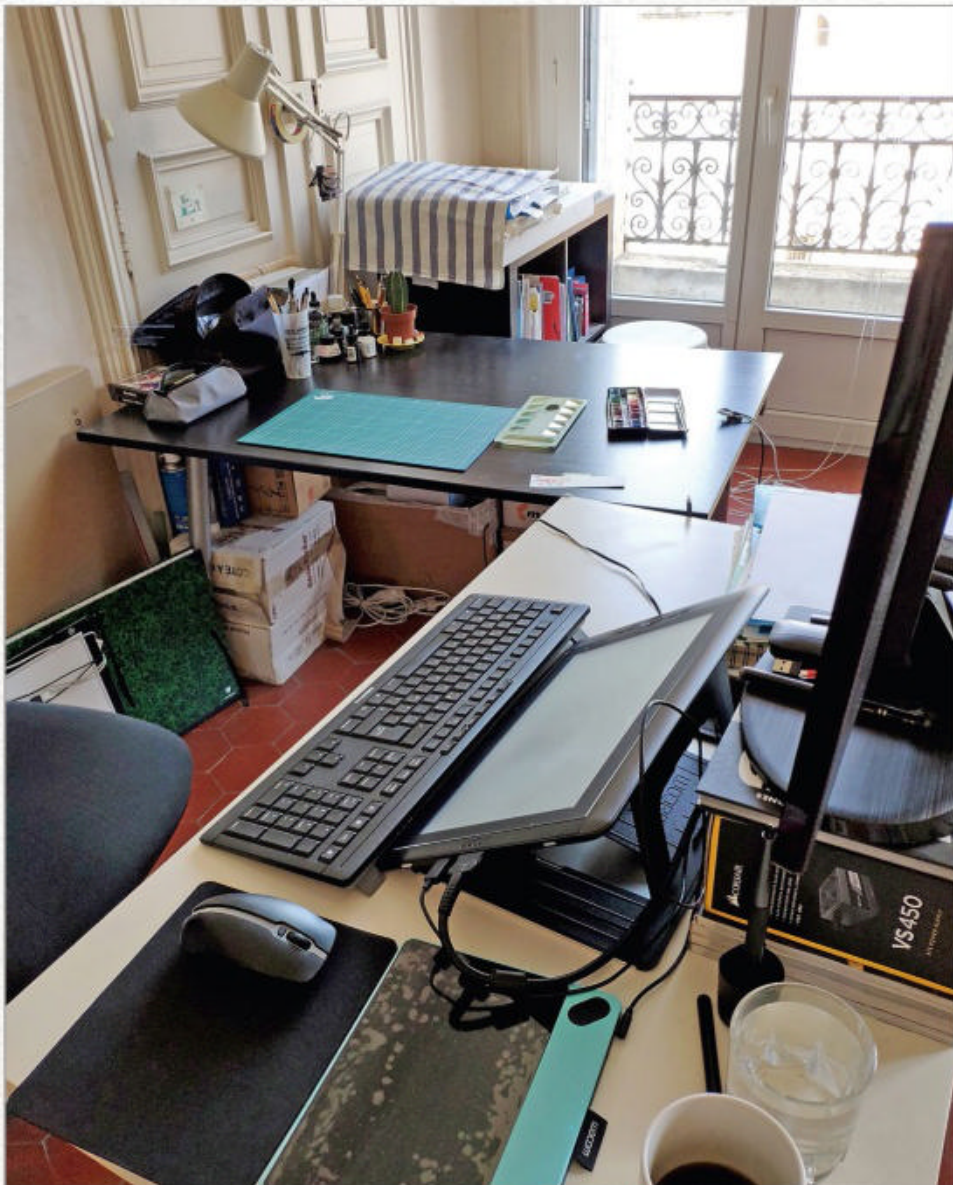
3 ORANGE

"Anything we do has a direct effect on ourselves; we are not independent of our context. Our stories are tangled with anything we perceive."

4 CREATING

"It is all about focus. Doing and making stuff. As we are moving towards a reward we need to focus and do stuff right now. Waiting is a false hope."





Ink

Watercolour

PAINT A DYNAMIC CHARACTER

MARCEL MOSQI describes his step-by-step process to painting a vibrant, stylised character in an action pose using Indian ink and watercolours

While using digital media is a brilliant way to create or enhance artwork and simplify the creative process, going 100% traditional is a great exercise and a very interesting experience. For this illustration I'll work on cold pressed watercolour paper, which I find easier to paint on, produce deeper colours, and add variations to the tints when they're not dry yet. This tutorial will work with hot pressed

MATERIALS

PAPER

■ Arches 300g cold pressed watercolour paper

NIB PEN

■ Zebra G pen

INK

■ Royal Talens waterproof Indian ink

WATERCOLOUR

■ Sennelier

paper as well, it's just not as flexible and won't allow much in the way of modifications, but will be way easier to ink.

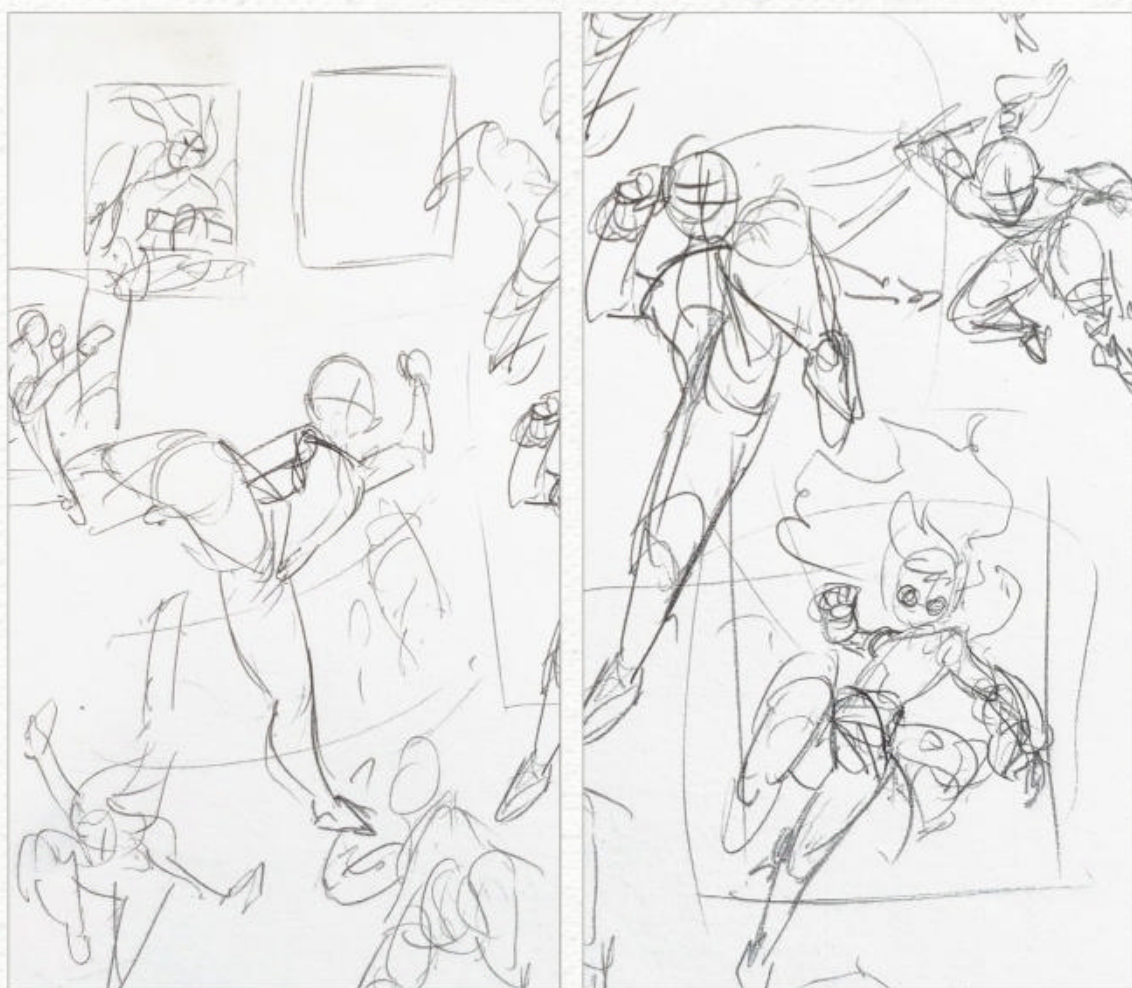
With regards to the inking medium, any waterproof ink or pen can be used, but the Japanese G pen offers a great variety of line variations and is very satisfying to use. There are many ways to draw with it, but it requires some practice and patience. It will disagree with the grain of the paper, but it's worth the pain – the sharpness of the line it provides is a

great way to make any drawing dynamic. A good way around it is to use a fine brush with the Indian ink.

In this tutorial, I'll go over my key steps for designing and painting a character in an action pose, from the first sketches to the final details.

Marcel Mosqi is a freelance illustrator and concept artist specialised in watercolour painting, working in different fields including video games, tabletop RPG and board games. He's inspired by Japanese animation, manga and Hong Kong action movies. www.artstation.com/mosqi

Traditional Artist **Workshop**



1 *References and sketching*

The first step I take is sketching and looking for as many references I can for what I have in mind for the illustration. Sketching at a small size helps me quickly test different compositions and poses for the character. I display photos and illustrations on my computer screen to get more poses and colour ideas.



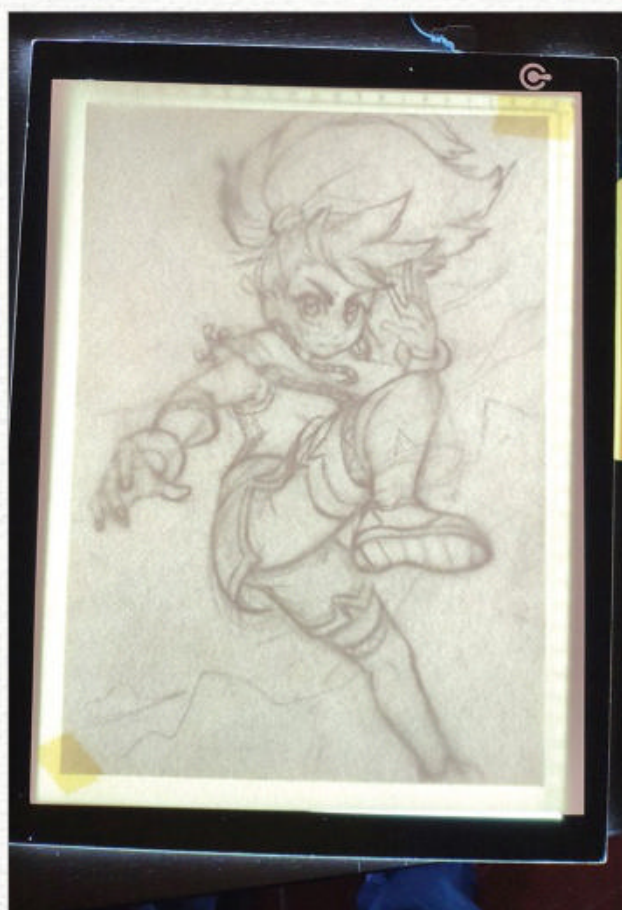
2 *First look*

The initial base sketch lays the foundations of the drawing; I use cheap paper to be able to sketch and erase freely. Even if it's messy, that's the moment to get the proportions and pose right to make it look dynamic, using foreshortening, movement and flowing details like fabric and hair.



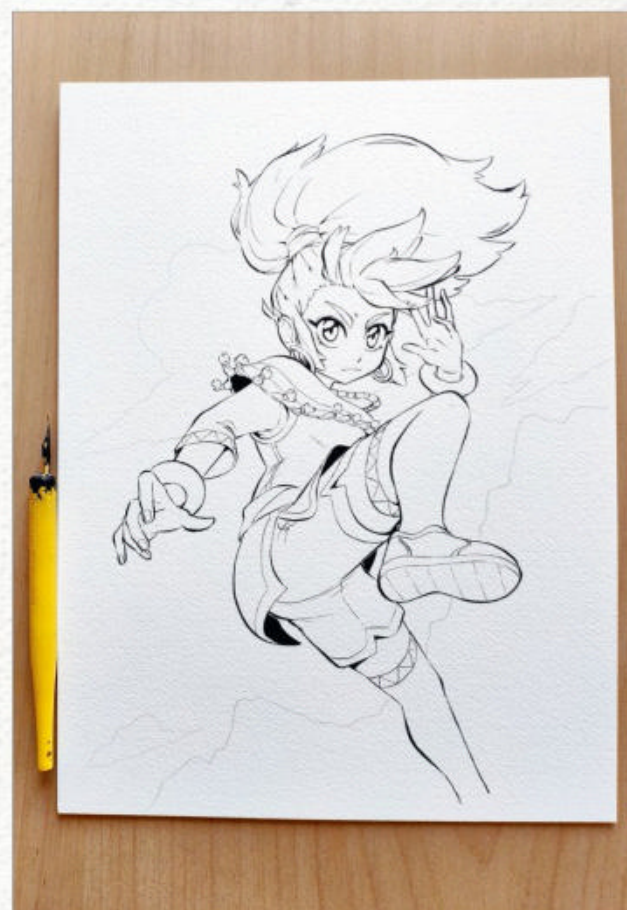
3 *Clean sketch*

Having a detailed and rather clean sketch is important to avoid mistakes and misinterpretations at the next step. This is the moment when the design of the character needs to be set, to avoid having to think about it or improvise when inking, and be able to focus on the line.



4 *Lightbox*

Using a lightbox allows me to avoid sketching and erasing on the watercolour paper, which would damage it and make painting and inking much harder. This 300g watercolour paper is thick, so it might require to be in the dark, or having a powerful enough lightbox in order to see through it.



5 *Inking*

The drawing needs to be inked with water-resistant ink. The cold pressed watercolour paper I use makes it quite hard to control line variations and ink flow with a nib pen, that means going slower than on other types of paper. I draw the details of the background with a pencil.

In depth Paint a dynamic character



6 Preparing to paint

Taping the paper to a cutting mat prevents the paper from warping too much because of the water, while letting me turn it around to paint details more easily. Then I think about what colours I'll use, and before painting the sky I prepare the colours I'll need on the palette, and use a scrap of paper to test them.



7 Wet on wet

Before painting the background, I lay water on the sky areas to make a gradient and to be able to paint it without risking unwanted colour demarcations. These occur when paint dries a little before coming back to it with the brush, which can give interesting results, but I won't want them on the sky here.



8 Background first

Painting the background first helps set the atmosphere and colour harmony of the painting. I always start from the farthest, less saturated, to the closest elements. Masking fluid can be used to mask other elements, like the clouds and the character, but I often find painting around quicker.



9 Wet on dry

When starting to paint the character, I like to begin with the skin; I adapt the other colours to it and not the opposite. I never wet the paper with water for small areas but directly use paint, and try to add touches of red or pink to the ears and fingers while the paint is still wet. ➡



10 *Painting shadows*

When I have laid the base colour for the skin and the paint is dry enough, I paint the shadows with warm or cold colour variations, and try to have smooth gradients to avoid unwanted colour demarcations that would be very visible on a face. This can occur when having too much or not enough water on the brush.

In depth Paint a dynamic character



11 Close colours

Next, I paint the other areas that have close colours while these are on my palette, like the hair and shoes, to save time. I use specific colours for the shadows of each area, adding variations to the base colour. While an area's base colour is drying, I go and paint another before coming back for the shadows.



12 Removing paint

Here I thought the shadow on the arm was way too dark and attracted too much attention. While it's not easy, you can wash an area with a brush loaded with water, and then apply tissue on it to remove some paint. This paper allows it more than others.



13 Different methods

The arm's colour is now lighter, but the paper is a bit damaged and the colour might look a bit different – this can be used for creating certain texture effects in other circumstances. I'd rather paint in one or two washes each area, in order to have 'clean' and vibrant flats, but it's possible to paint by fine layers of colour.



14 Painting shadows on white

While it can be done way earlier in the process, I usually paint shadows that are on white areas at the end. They're the easiest areas to add colour variations, as they won't have hazardous interactions with an underlying colour, and provide much more control on the tint.



15 Final details

The last step consists of painting the smaller details like the lips, the shadow on the necklace, and darkening a few shadows. My way of using watercolours aims to produce vibrant and dynamic illustrations, but there are multiple ways of using them and a wide variety of possibilities that can be explored to create unique styles and artworks. ●

Pencil

PLANES FOR LIGHTING THE HEAD

CHARLIE PICKARD continues his ten-part series of quick tips on anatomy; this month, explore how to apply the concept of planes when lighting a head

Last month, we discussed the structural idea of planes and their importance in learning the construction of various anatomical forms.

To recap, these are flattened, faceted surfaces that serve us in various ways when trying to fully understand the forms that we represent in the figure.

While so far we have discussed the use of these planes in constructing sound line drawings, they also have

ANATOMY - PART 5

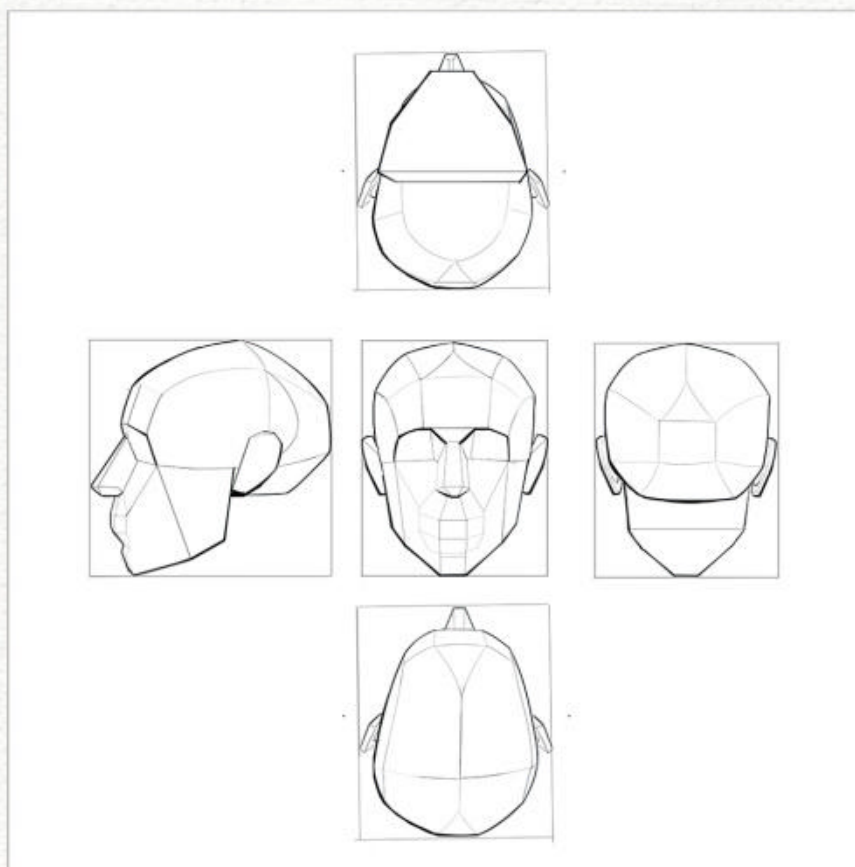
an important application in learning properly sound lighting. This issue, as we reach part 5 of our ongoing series, we will discuss how to approach learning this important concept by applying it to the simple planes of the head.

The primary reason this concept is so important when learning to light the head is that it offers us a consistent basis for applying any type of lighting to the head that we desire.

Whether working from imagination or from reference, understanding these planes will be the key to unlocking a powerful control over this fundamental skill.



Charlie Pickard is a classically trained fine artist and illustrator. Recently awarded the Philip de László Award for excellence, Charlie continues to work, exhibit and teach out of his studio in London. www.charliepickardart.com



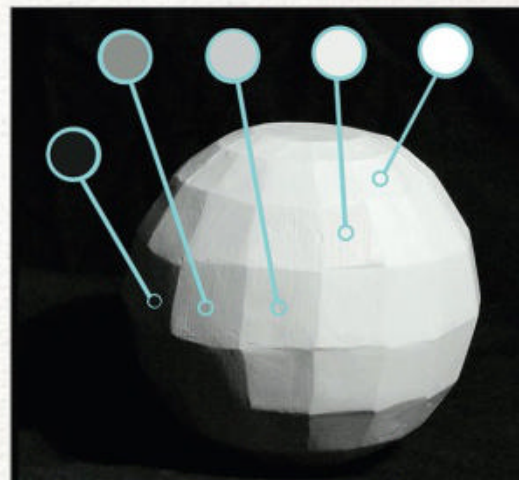
1 Start with the orthographic views

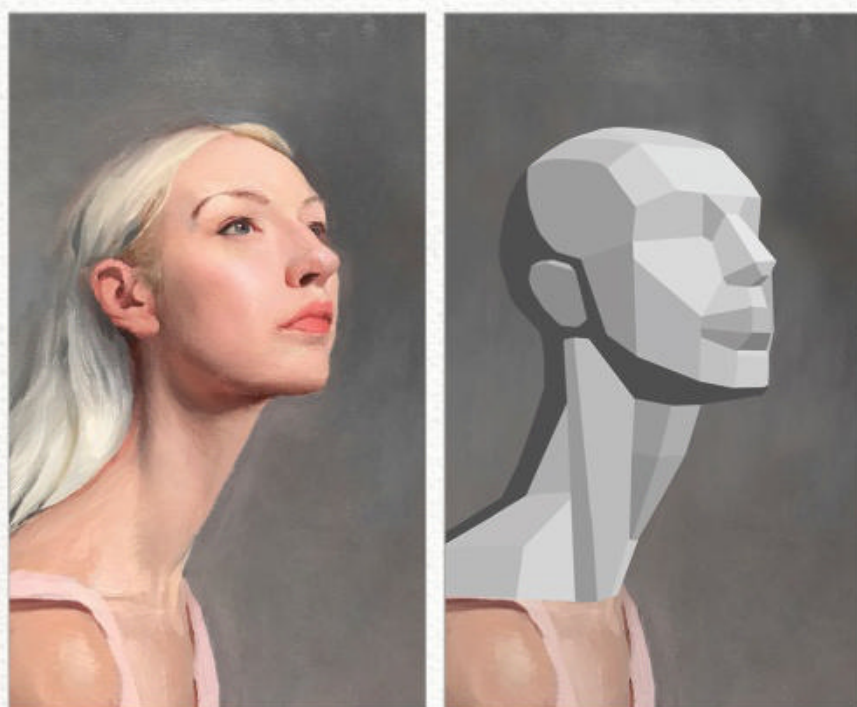
Just like last time, the orthographic views will form the basis for our study of these simple planes. These six simple views will be invaluable reference for us to fully understand these forms. Note that these planes of the fully fleshed out head are more or less the same as the planes of the skull we discussed last month, with a few simple additional planes to describe features like the nose and ears. Learn these well and watch your understanding of the head grow!



2 Change in plane = change in value

Once these planes are fully understood we need to simply apply lighting to them. Luckily for us the basic theory for this is relatively simple. Each individual plane will have its own single value applied to it. These planes will be lighter towards the light source and darken as they move away from it, before falling fully into shadow.



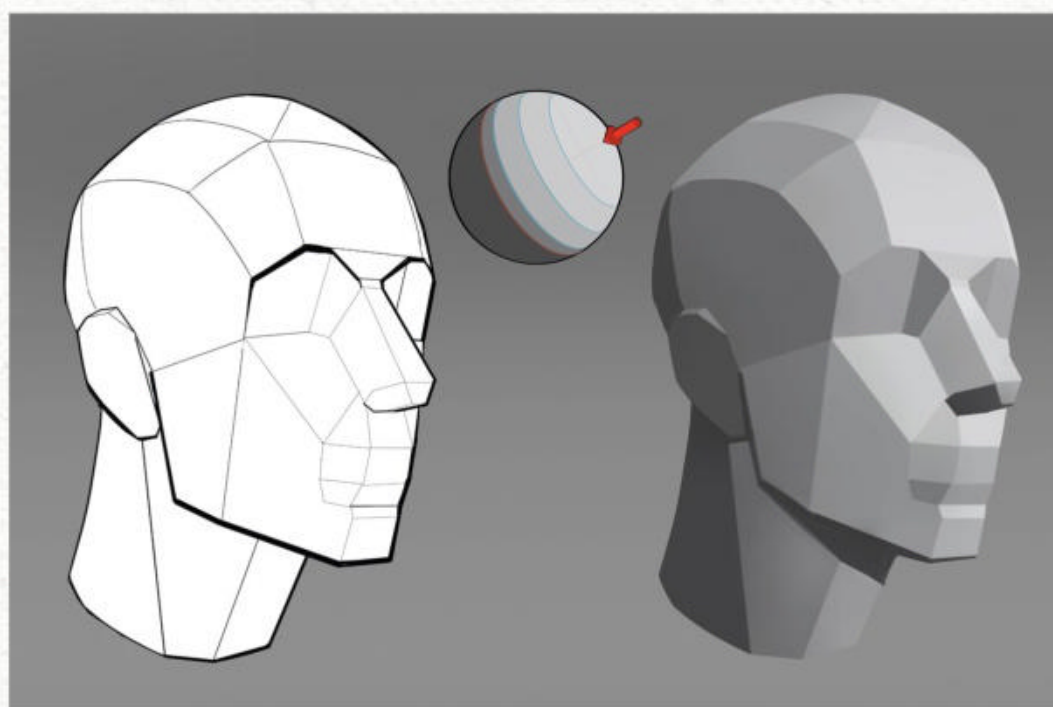


3 *These work for every face type*

Once you feel sufficiently familiar with the orthographic views the next step is to apply them to reference. Here I have applied this idea to one of my own paintings but you can (and should) apply yourself to this exercise from every type of reference you can get your hands on.

Working from a reference that already has lighting to compare with will offer an easy early exercise to begin understanding how these planes work in practice. Try to match the lighting of the reference in your planar study.

Every head you paint will be made up of these planes. The more heads that you can apply this idea to, the more you will realise how consistently these planes show up in all types of heads. While the particular shape and exact proportion will change from head to head, the same planes will be present.



4 *Lighting sphere reference*

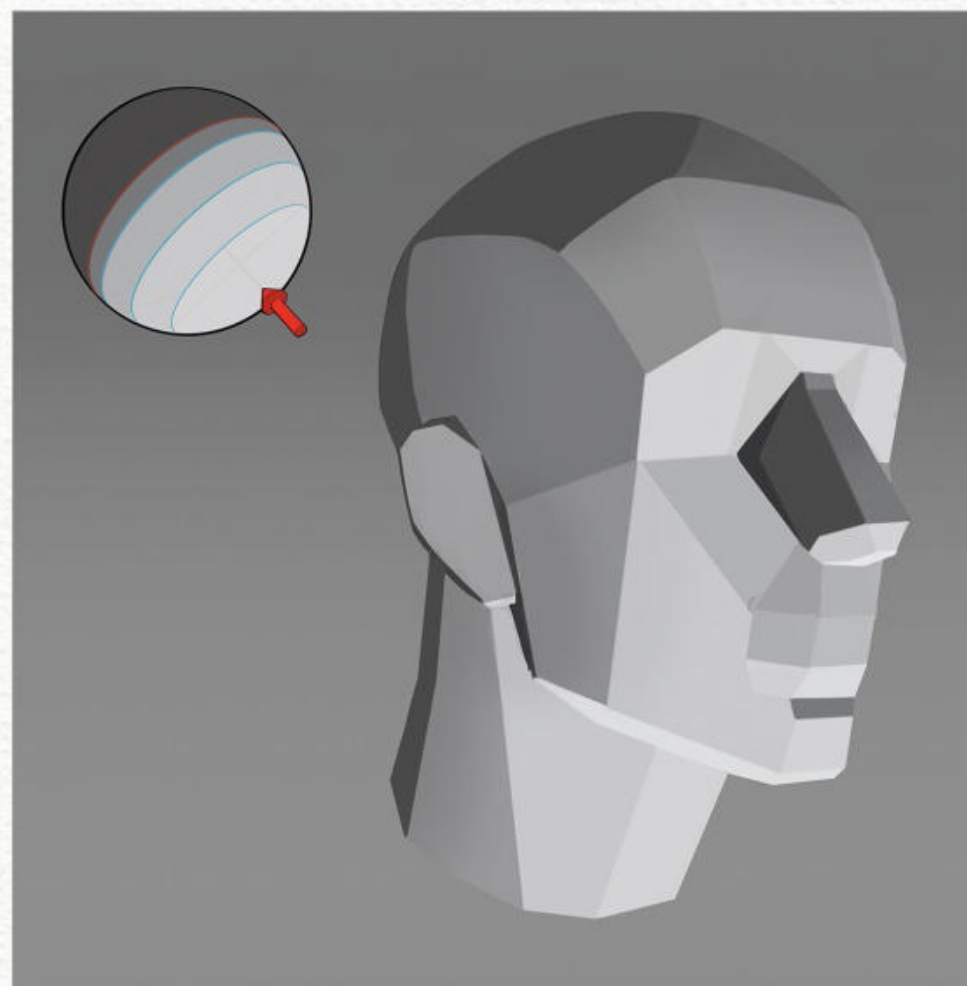
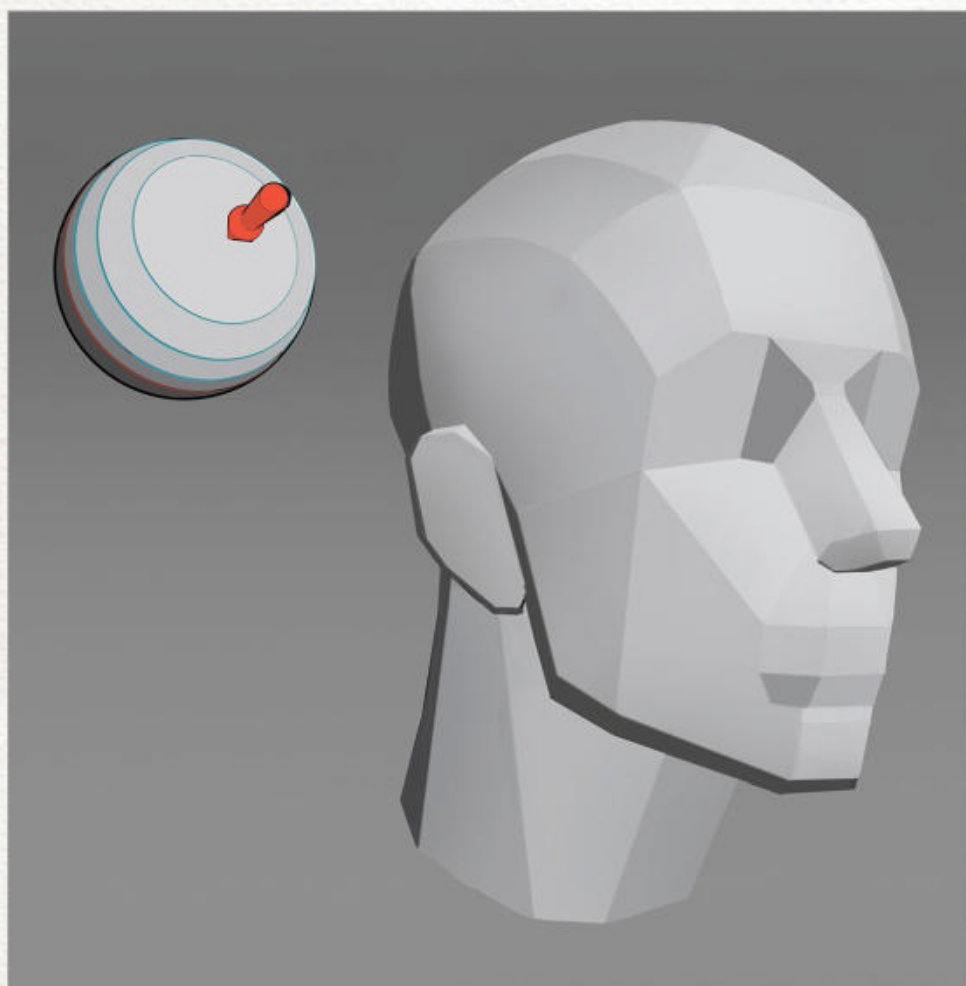
Once we have become familiar with seeking out and copying planes from an already lit reference, the next step is to learn how to truly visualise our own lighting on our work.

Lucky for us there is a simple solution that will help us immensely in this. If we can first light a simple sphere (seen above), we can use it as a handy guide for the values we apply to our planar head.

The angle of each plane towards the light source is the single most

important factor in deciding how light or dark the plane will appear; a sphere represents every angle possible for our eye to see on one form. Due to this, once we have our simple sphere form lit, we have all of the information we need to light the planes of the head.

Simply consider the value of a plane of the same orientation on the sphere. If you are ever unsure on the exact orientation of any plane, simply hold your pencil in front of your eye and try to intuit the same position on the sphere. Give it a try!



5 *Try to apply different lighting to the same line drawing*

This method will work for any type of lighting, and the best way to learn and master it is to practise; try to take one of your drawings and light it from as many directions as possible. How many can you think of? Happy drawing! ●

First Impressions

✧ Alessandra Maria ✧

The Brooklyn-based artist explores her key influences



What, outside of art, has most influenced your artwork through the years?

Probably fantasy literature. When I was a kid, books like these were my escape from the mundane. Reading expanded my imagination and inspired me to make up all of these wild worlds in my head. I'm currently in the middle of preparing for a solo show, and I started out preparing by asking myself why I started drawing in the first place. And I realised the reason was because when I was young, I wanted an outlet for all these worlds and societies I was creating. In a way, I'm still doing the exact same thing.

Is there a painting that you saw in your formative years that changed everything? What was it?

Yes, there's three paintings that really changed my life. The first two were when I was younger: Botticelli's Primavera, and Da Vinci's Burlington House Cartoon. I was so gobsmacked by these works when I was about seven years old and saw them for the first time in a book. It was just beyond my comprehension how someone could make something so magical, almost



REVERIE X

I was trying to create a feeling of weightlessness, and a moment of connection with the eyes. Art is powerful in that it can create visceral, physical sensations in the viewer, if it's done correctly. That was my goal for this work.



sacred-feeling, and I wanted more than anything to be able to make things that beautiful someday.

The third piece was Klimt's Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer I. I saw that piece at the age of 20, when I was in art school, knee-deep in theory and all of the 'shoulds' of the art world. Seeing that painting made me realise that I could just make things that were overwhelmingly beautiful, and there was space for that. I didn't have to try to be the

“I started drawing because I wanted an outlet for all these worlds I was creating”

big, brash artist who is taking on art history and aiming to be important. I could do something a little bit more humble, a little more simple in its goals: just pure, sincere beauty.

Tell us about your first paid commission, and does it stand as a representation of your talent?

The first work I ever sold was actually one of my senior projects from college. It wasn't that

remarkable, but I had enjoyed making it, and it was such a big deal to actually be paid for the first time for my artwork.

In terms of it standing as a representation of my talent? Well, this might sound a bit controversial, but I actually don't believe in talent. I have a pet theory that 'talent' is just extreme interest, and a resilient willingness to be honest about where your work is strong and where it's weak, then using that information to compare obsessively with other artists and learn how they're accomplishing what you're not. That, in essence, is just what I've done for a decade. I went from drawing bad anime as a teenager to growing into my own voice.

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

Mainly that constantly berating myself isn't helpful. Art should be a joy, a source of pleasure... That's the only thing that will actually sustain a lifelong practice, in my opinion.

Paradoxically, letting go of the need for success in the art world was the biggest step I took towards being able to do the comparative improvement process that I mentioned above. There's a difference between egotistically looking at other artists' work and thinking "they're better than me, I am terrible", and clinically evaluating their work and saying "what are they doing that's making this better?" – one has a lot of ego in it and uselessly wastes energy, the other is just objective and relaxed.

What's your next step in art or life?

I am going to keep preparing for this big solo show that I'm having. It's such a joy to be making this work, and I feel so grateful that I am able to do it.

Born and raised in Seattle, Alessandra Maria now works in Brooklyn and showcases her beautiful artwork at a number of exhibitions around the country. alessandramaria.com



URGENT APPEAL



Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine is not just a humanitarian crisis for the Ukrainian people; it's a child protection emergency.

Up to 100,000 children warehoused in Ukraine's vast orphanage system – a network of over 700 buildings – risk being forgotten. Left to face the dangers of war alone as staff flee. As families are torn apart or forced from their homes, many more children are at risk of being separated from the love and protection they desperately need. Worse still, they are at risk of trafficking, or being placed in overcrowded, understaffed and poorly resourced orphanages in border countries.

We must act now.

Born out of the Balkans conflict 30 years ago, we've championed the vital importance of family and community-based care of children and our teams are on the ground in Ukraine, Moldova and Romania to ensure this war does not rob children of the love and protection they need now more than ever. Across all three countries, we're directly supporting displaced families and unaccompanied children with material and emotional

support. We're working closely with authorities to keep families together when they are at their most vulnerable and to fight for the safe tracking, monitoring and care for children without parental care. And we won't stop when the fighting stops.

Will you help us by donating?

With your help, we can avert a child protection crisis of epic proportions and ensure children are protected and kept in families. Never orphanages.

To help protect vulnerable children, donate online at: **www.hopeandhomes.org/donate**. Or call **01722 790 111** Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm.

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