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NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

ImagineFX

WORKSHOP

WORK SMART IN MIDJOURNEY

Learn how to take control of AI for your workflow

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- TAKE A TOUR OF A JUNGLE-LIKE STUDIO
- ANATOMICAL QUICK TIPS FOR YOUR ART

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Meet the creative minds behind the hugely successful **Magic: The Gathering**

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Illustration by Scott M Fischer

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FUTURE
ISSUE 219

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new premium paint app **artrage vitae mobile** (iPad/iPhone/Galaxy/Android/Chromebook)
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Welcome to…

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX

Wizards of the Coast are one of the biggest names out there in the world of gaming, especially in the areas of card and tabletop games. Earlier this year we talked to them about Dungeons and Dragons but, with the release of a new Magic: The Gathering set, we thought it was time to highlight some of the incredible art that you'll find. As well as the main feature, we also have our stunning cover art and, for all you trad artists out there, a wonderful workshop to help you paint your own dynamic card art.

While the argument rages on about whether AI tools are a good thing or not, we take a step back to see how they can actually aid your process as an artist. The talented Rachel Bradley shows you her workflow, which uses Midjourney to add efficiency and provide inspiration.

Human anatomy can be a tricky thing to master, so head over to Charlie Pickard's set of tips to help you get the most from your art, in the penultimate part of his anatomy series.

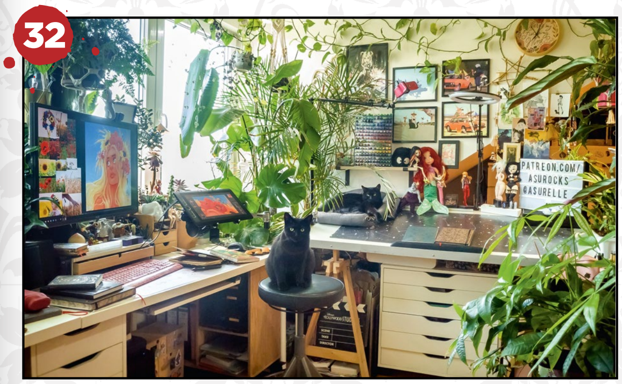
Rob

Editor
Rob.Redman@futurenet.com

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Three of my top picks this month…

32


PATREON.COM/
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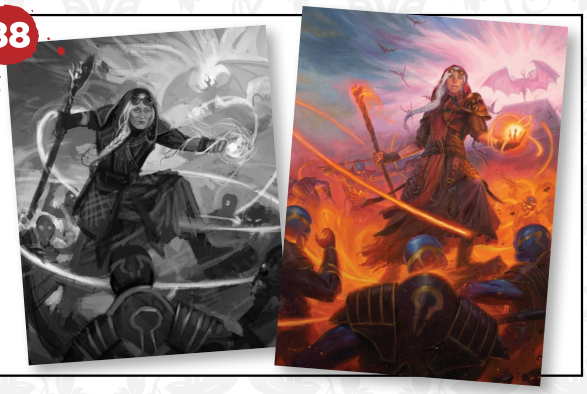
ASURELLE

Artist in Residence: Olga Andriyenko
Peek inside the visual development artist's creative jungle where fluffy predators roam and ideas grow.

88



Paint a magical fantasy battle
Lucas Graciano shares his process for developing an oil painted illustration for Magic: The Gathering.

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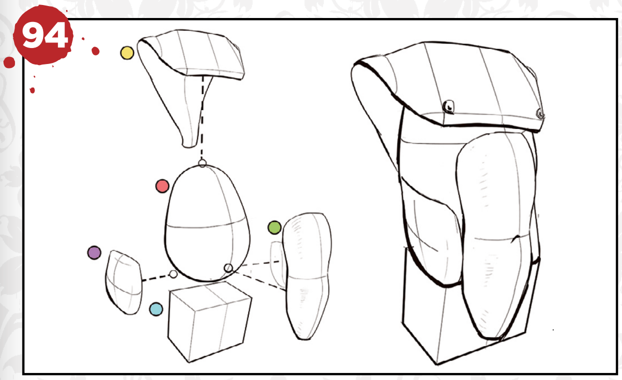

Structural notes on the torso
Charlie Pickard continues his anatomy series, with a look at how to draw the human torso.

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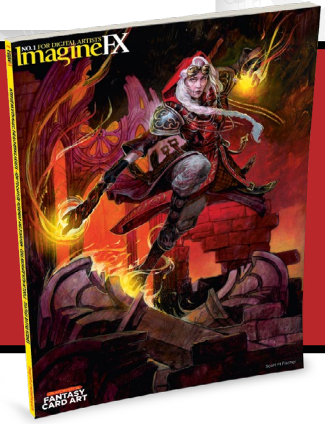
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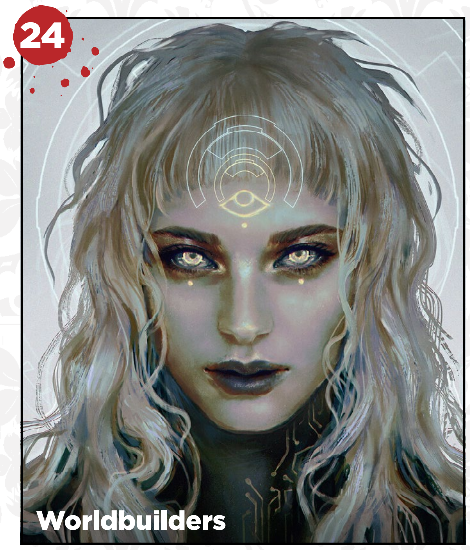

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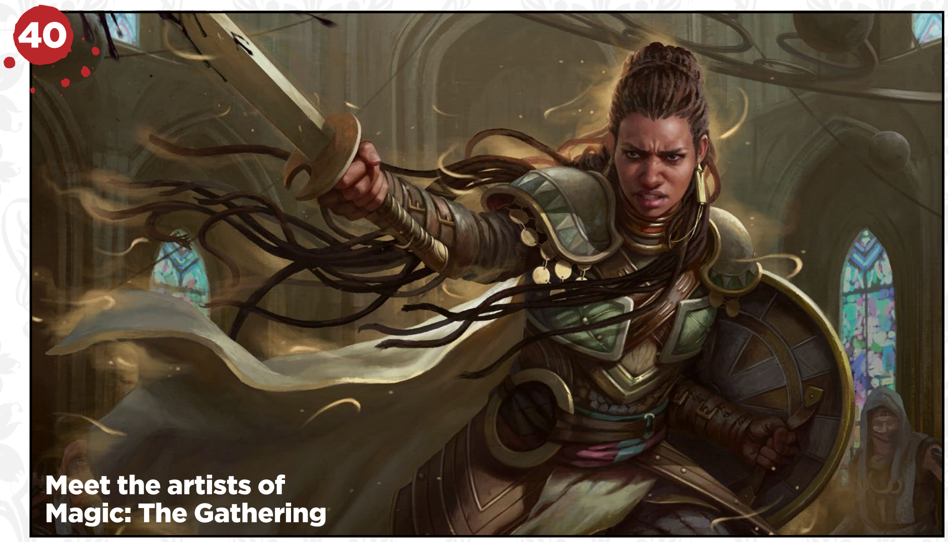

Meet the artists of Magic: The Gathering

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Artist in Residence: Olga 'AsuRocks' Andriyenko

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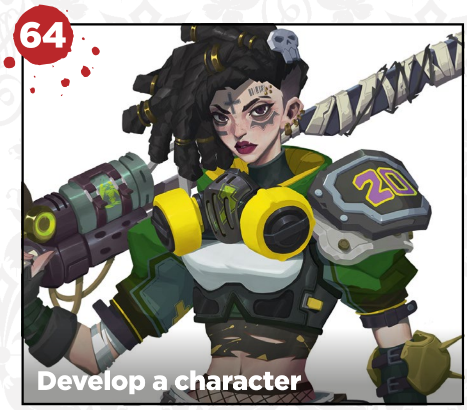
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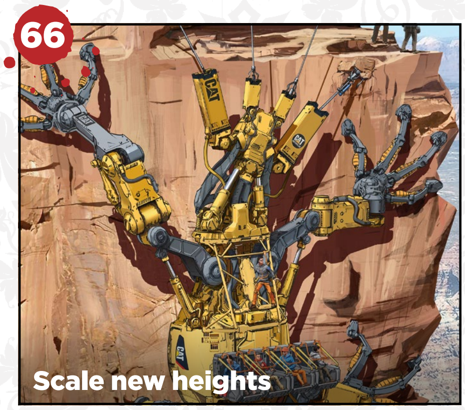
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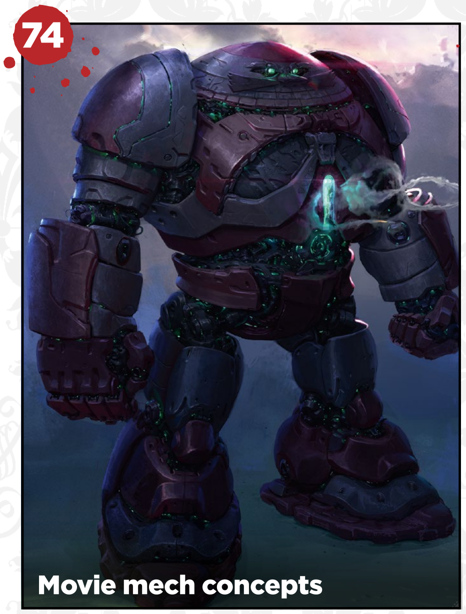
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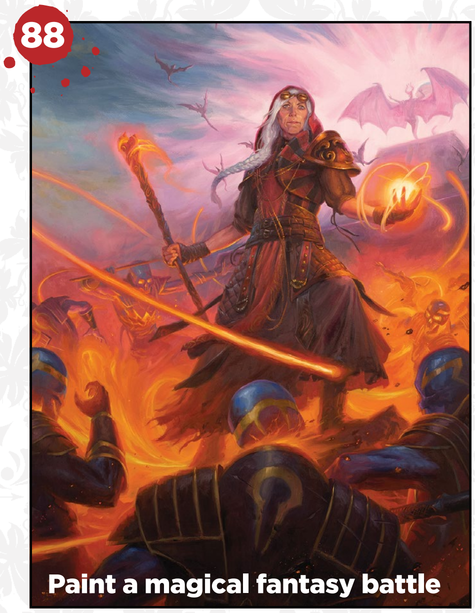
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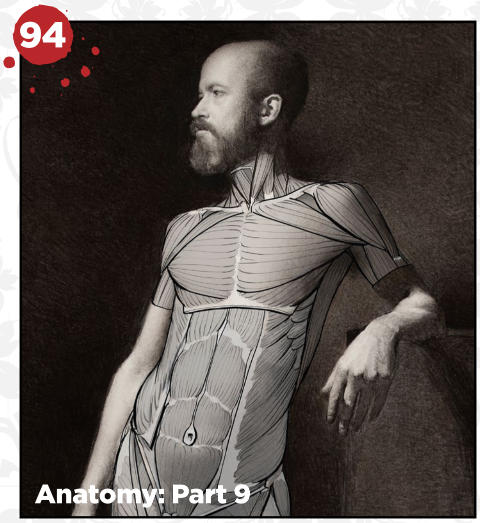
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94 **Workshop: Structural notes on the torso**
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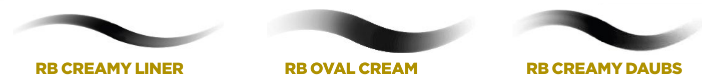
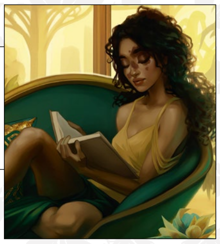
98 **First Impressions: Emily Hare**
The fantasy artist showcases her amazing watercolour art and talks her inspirations.

ImagineFX Resources

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

WORKSHOP BRUSHES





Download Clip Studio Paint brushes

Make use of Rachel Bradley's (p.68) brushes, ideal for smooth blending.

BRUSH ROUND-UP

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ImagineFX

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Printed by Wyndeham Peterborough, Storey's Bar Road, Peterborough PE1 5YS

Distributed by Marketforce, 5 Churchill Place, Canary Wharf, London, E14 5HU www.marketforce.co.uk Tel: 0203 787 9001

ISSN 1748-930X

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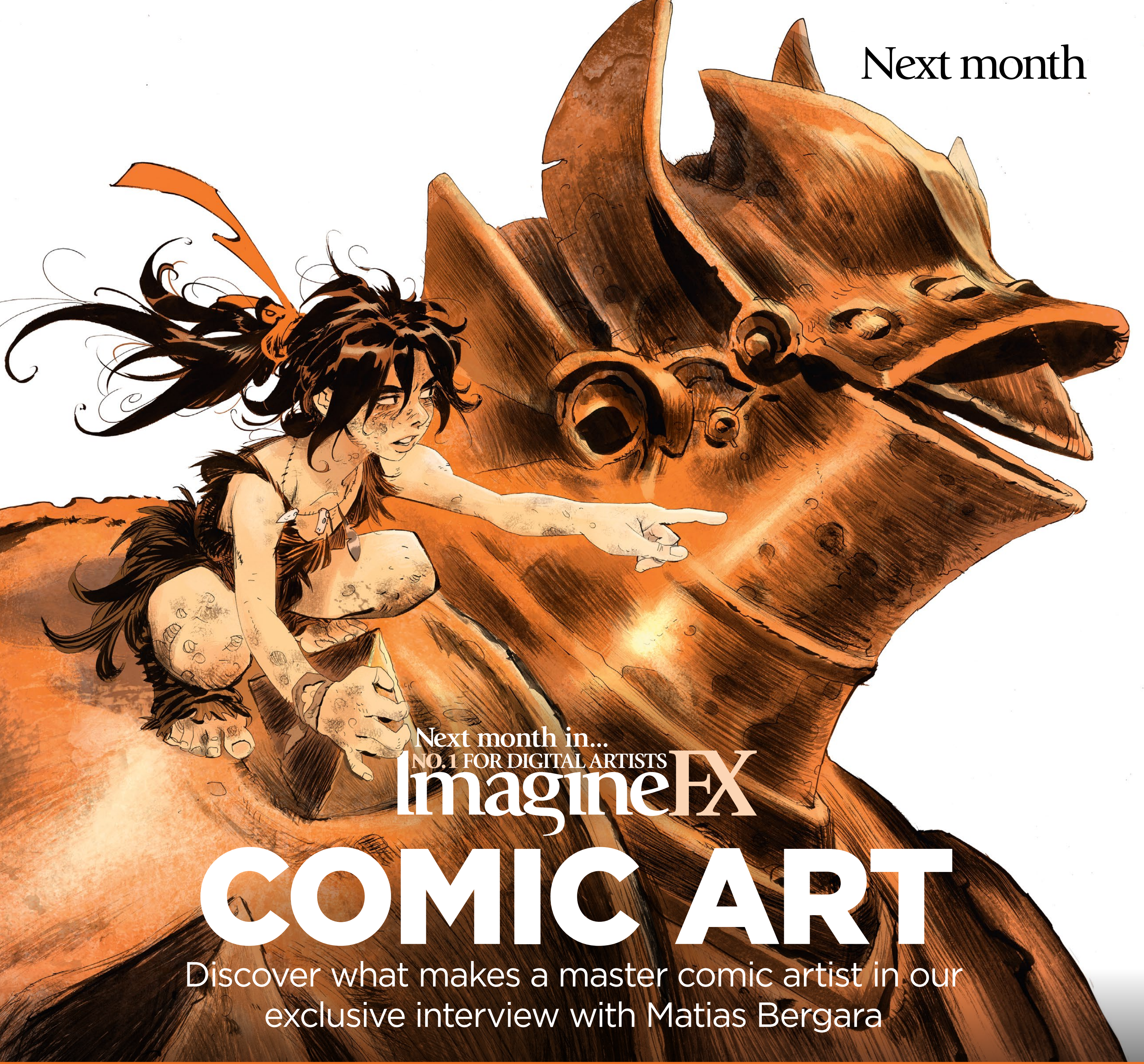

Next month in...

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ImagineFX

COMIC ART

Discover what makes a master comic artist in our exclusive interview with Matias Bergara

Also in the issue…

Imaginative creature design
Aleksa Drageljevic on how to draw novel animals.

Paint fantasy battle scenes
Patrick Jones shows you how in his detailed workshop.

The art of Black Panther
Afro-futuristic concepts from Marvel's latest film!

Inside the artist's studio
Florian Satzinger gives a tour of his creative space.

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FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

Jacqueline 'Jisu' Choe

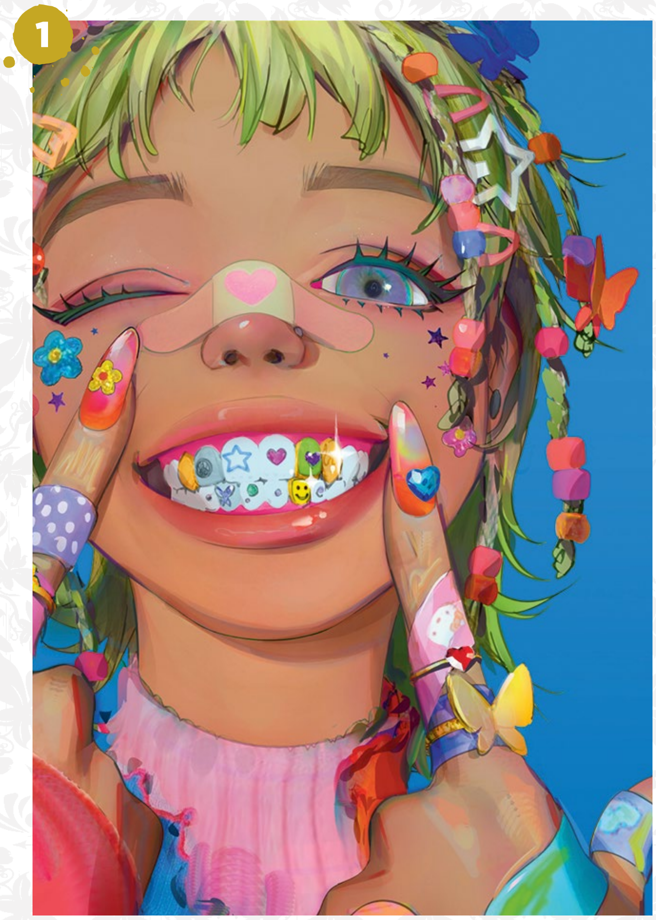
LOCATION: US **MEDIA:** Photoshop, Blender **WEB:** www.jisu.art

Jacqueline is a self-taught artist who specialises in illustrations that draw upon pop culture and her mental health journey. "My life has always been chaotic; so you could say my work is a bit of organised chaos."

1 **SMILE**
"After the storm comes a rainbow – a piece I made to encapsulate the colour I saw in life again after struggling immensely with mental health. I wanted to show the world how I felt."

2 **ANIMAL//ALIEN**
"An original piece for my first ever art gallery exhibition. I interpreted the theme of animals very loosely and melded in my love for abstract fashion and jewellery."

1



3 **ANXIETY**
"An original piece encapsulating my horrible anxieties as a youth growing up in the new digital social media age."

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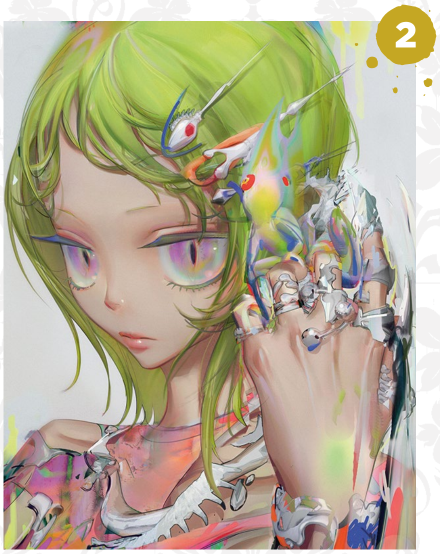

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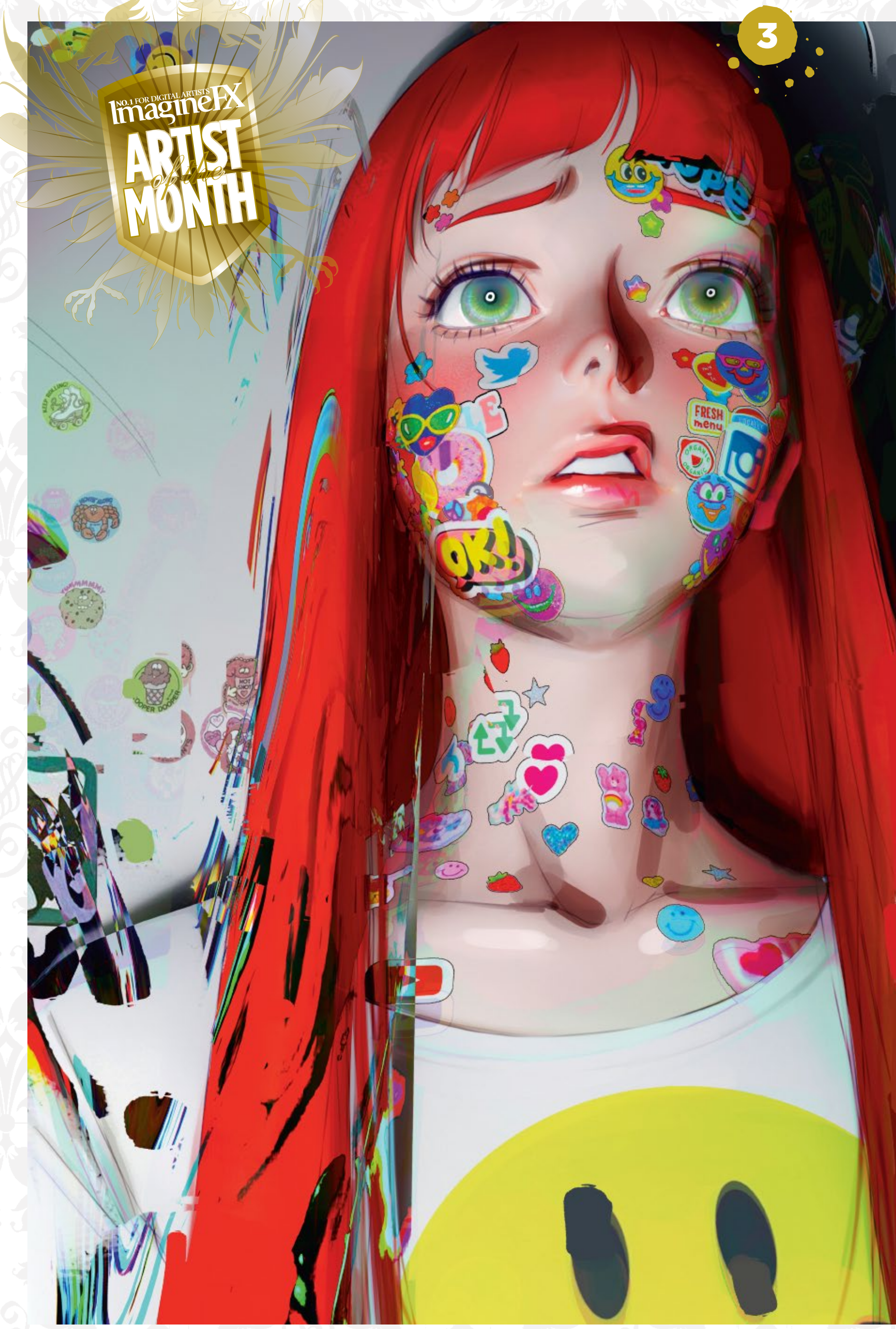

ImagineFX ARTIST of the MONTH

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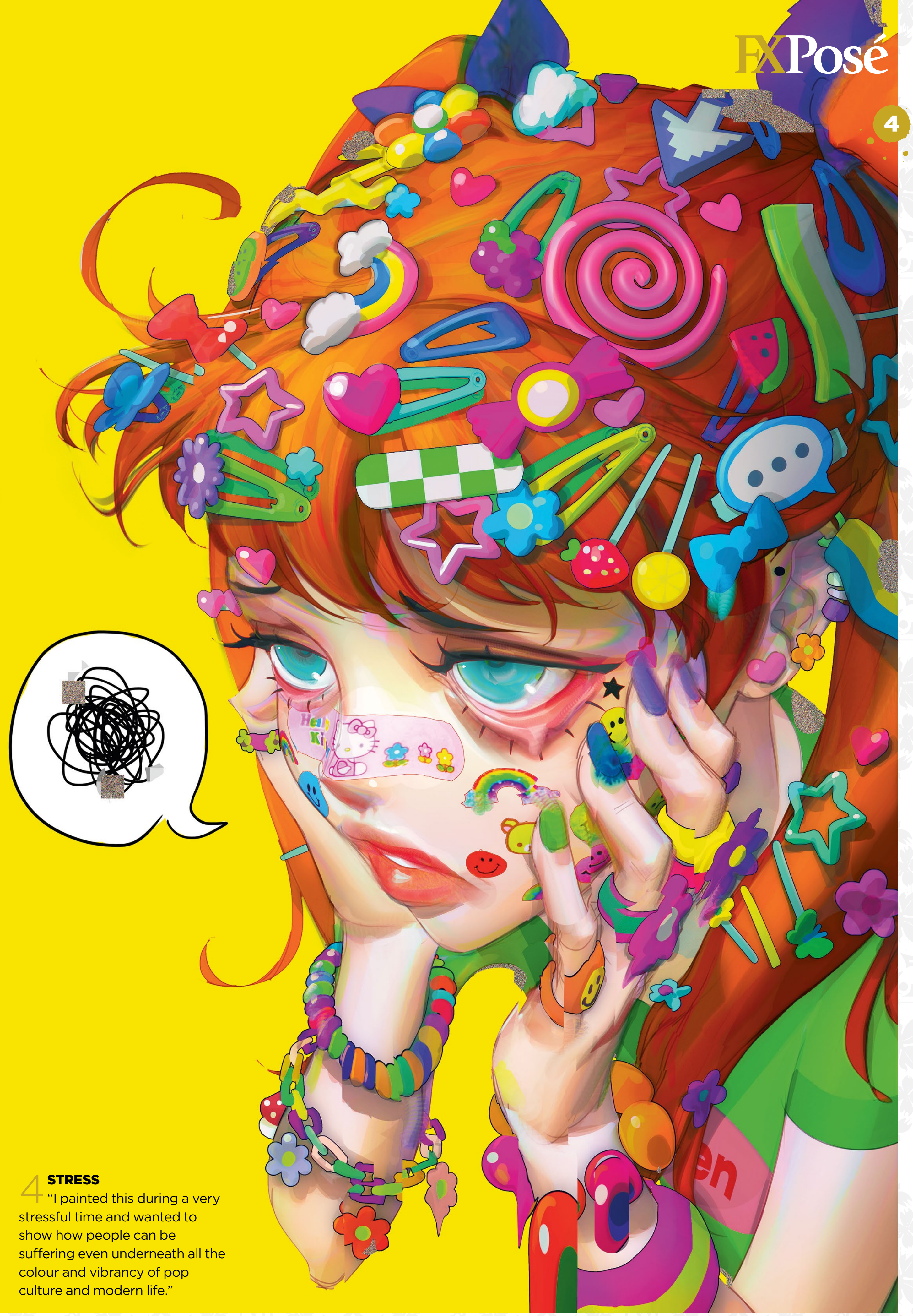

4 **STRESS**

"I painted this during a very stressful time and wanted to show how people can be suffering even underneath all the colour and vibrancy of pop culture and modern life."

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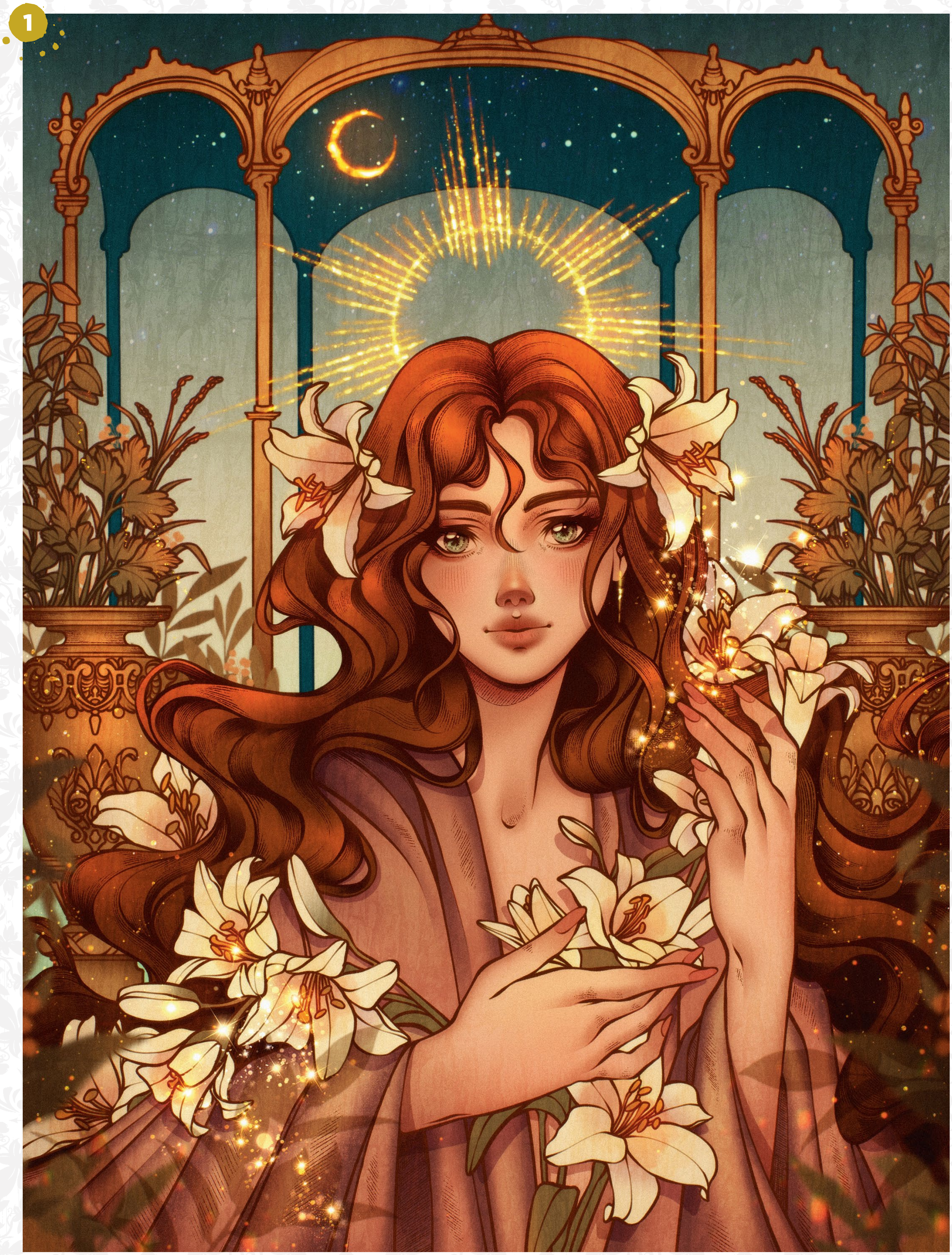
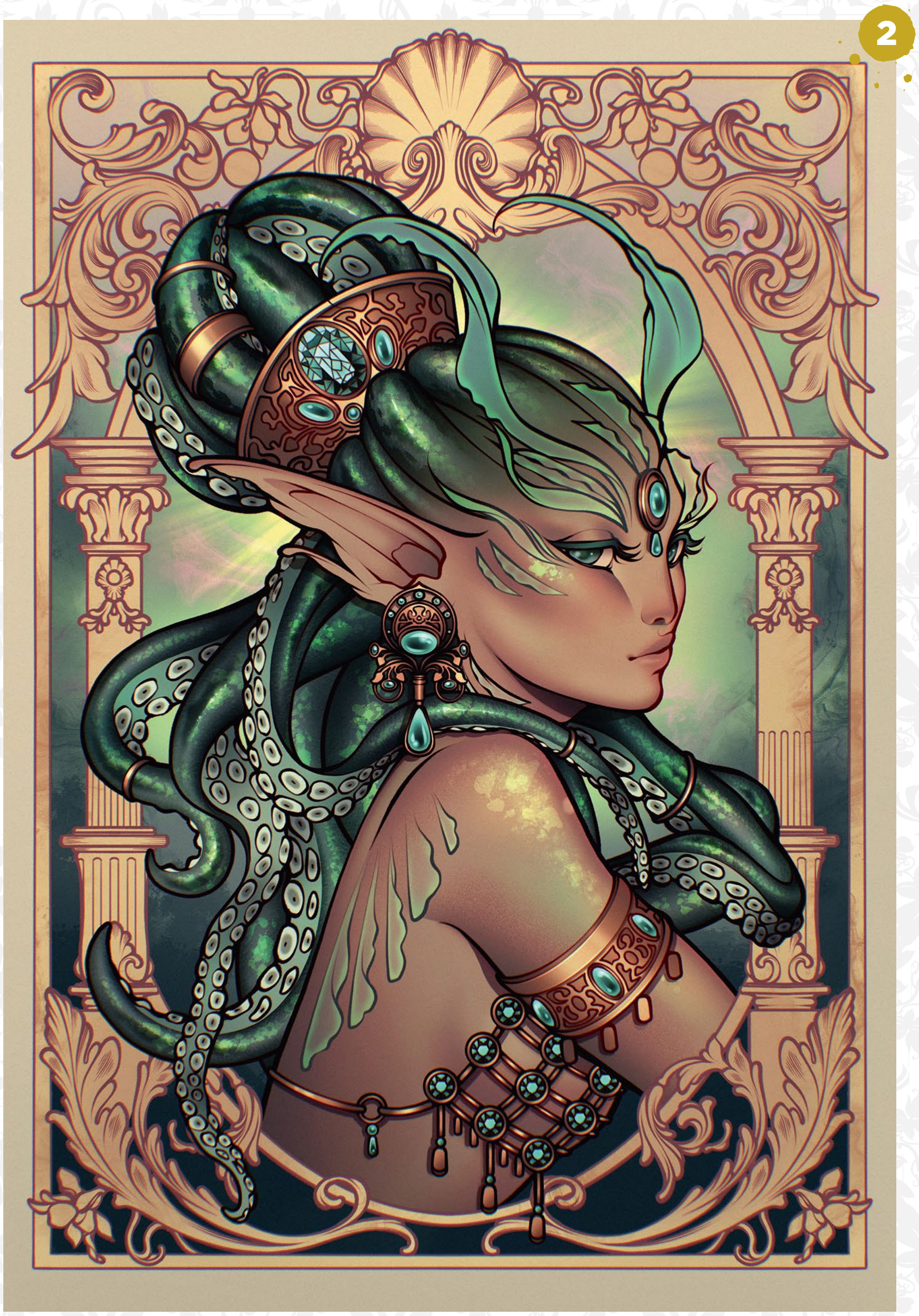


Rebekka Saak

LOCATION: Germany **MEDIA:** Procreate **WEB:** https://zez.am/resaa.art

Rebekka depicts female characters whose unique beauty is captured within detailed, fairytale-like environments. Her art style is influenced by the European Art Nouveau movements and medieval chalcography.



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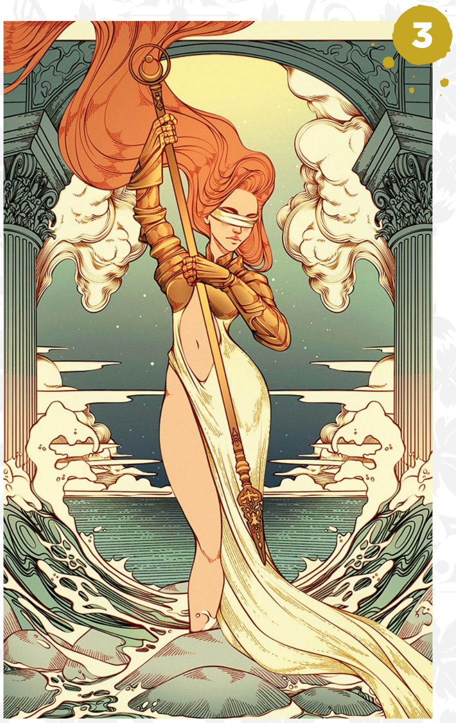

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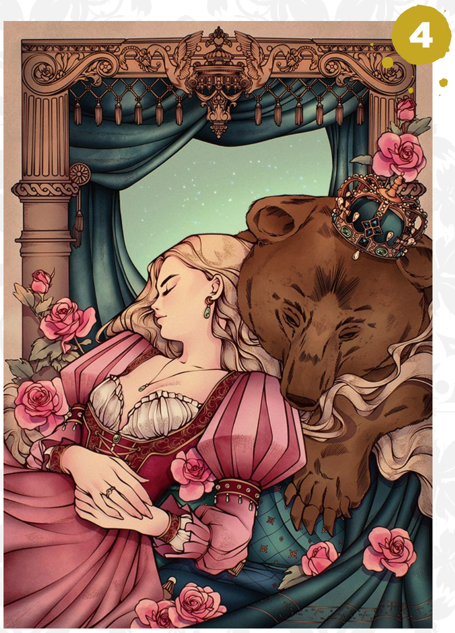

4

1 THE MOONSHINE HERBARIUM

"This represents an earth goddess gently holding lilies to her heart. The background is reminiscent of a greenhouse, whereas the ceiling is capturing the night sky."

2 THE AQUATIC DANCER

"With her distinctive facial features and tentacle-hair, this character embodies an underwater creature. Her jewellery represents her regal nature and is a reminder of oriental influences."

3 THE VALKYRIE DESCENSION

"This artwork depicts a Valkyrie descending from the realm of souls. With her divine power, she is parting the waves to open a doorway to the afterlife."

4 THE DREAMING BEAUTY AND THE BEAR PRINCE

"This piece is inspired by Grimms' fairy tales. The girl leaning on the bear establishes a contrast between tenderness and strength. The frame's swans represent love and loyalty."

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Emanuele Desiati

LOCATION: Italy **MEDIA:** Photoshop, Procreate **WEB:** www.artstation.com/emanuele_desiati

Emanuele's art style has been shaped by a background of reading manga, comics, and playing Magic: The Gathering. He now works as an illustrator and concept/character artist, as well as teaching in private schools.

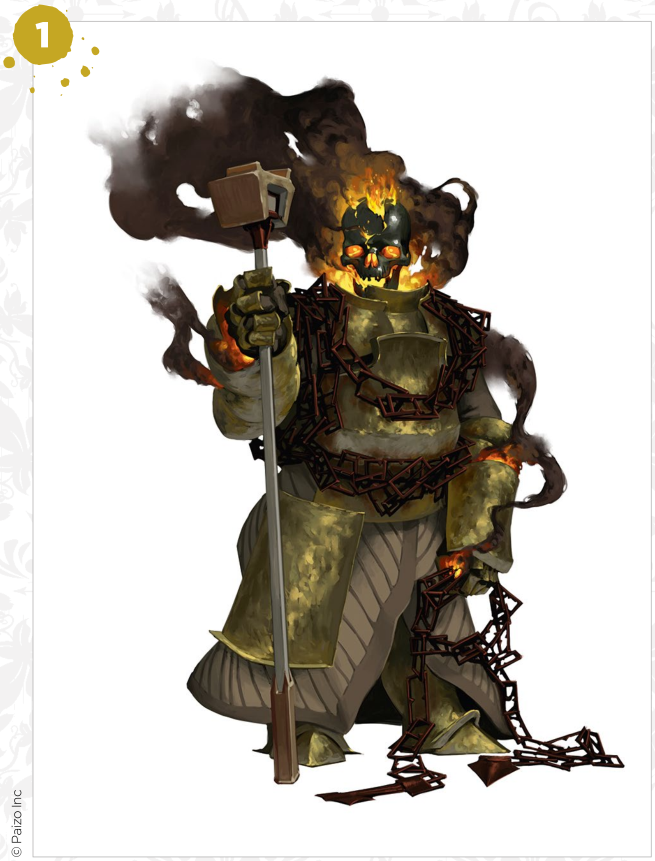
1 SOUL SMITH

"Character design is one of the creative fields I most enjoy drawing. I usually start gathering references, then tons of sketches and suggestions until I get to the final proposal."

2 WELCOME TO MECHITAR

"In this cover for Paizo Inc. I tried to best communicate a fantasy, Egypt-like world where dark magic filled the air and the undead freely walked around the streets."

1



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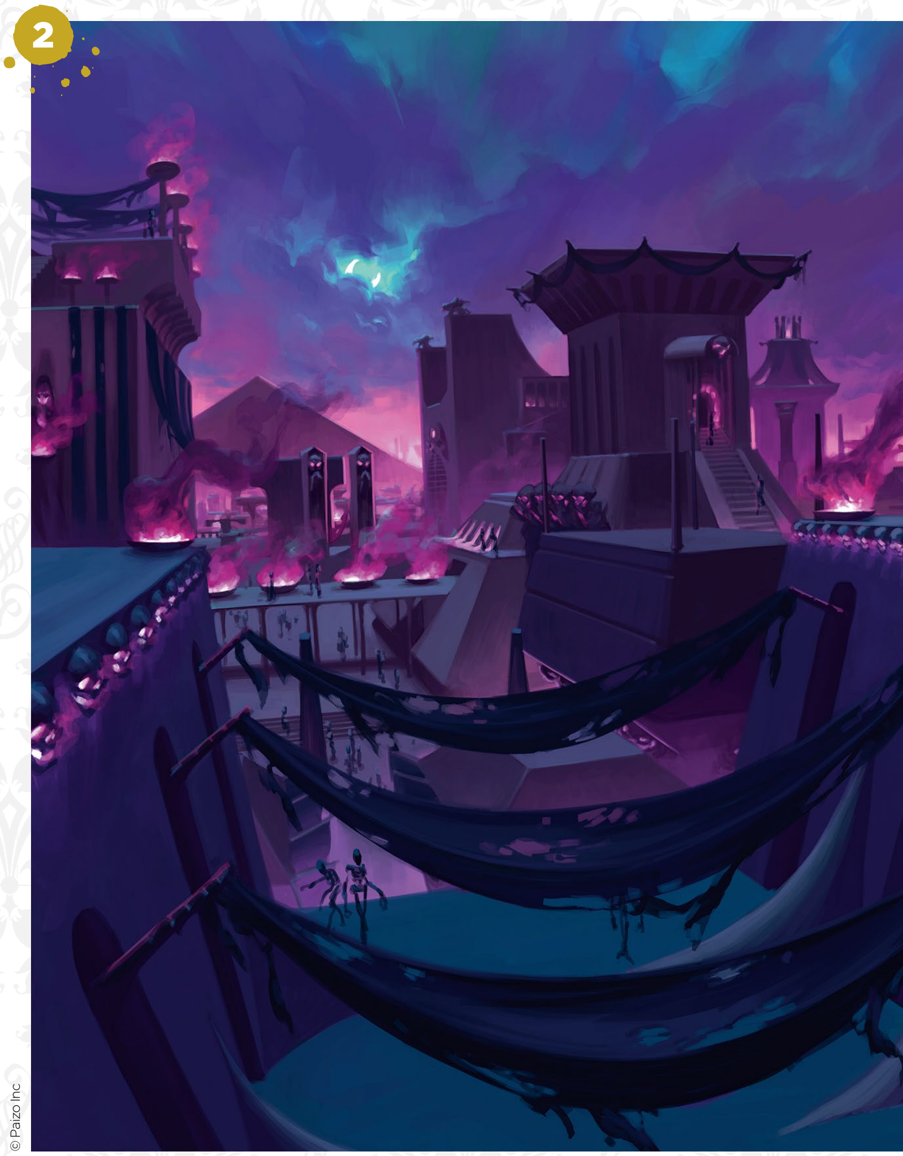

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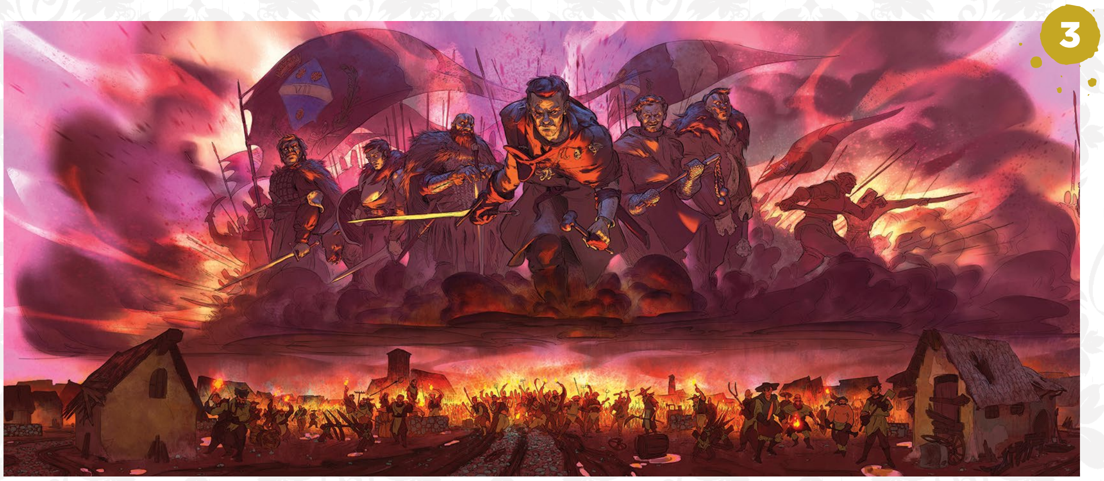

3

3 VENTURE COMPANY

"I really dislike rendering so I am always thrilled when I have the chance to go with simple line art. My own style and graphic solutions best express the mood and atmosphere of the piece."

4 INTO THE SPIDER-VERSE

"Spider-Man was my favourite Marvel superhero, and this film had beautiful backgrounds, dynamic poses and manga influences."

Want to submit your work? Visit http://ifxm.ag/getinifx

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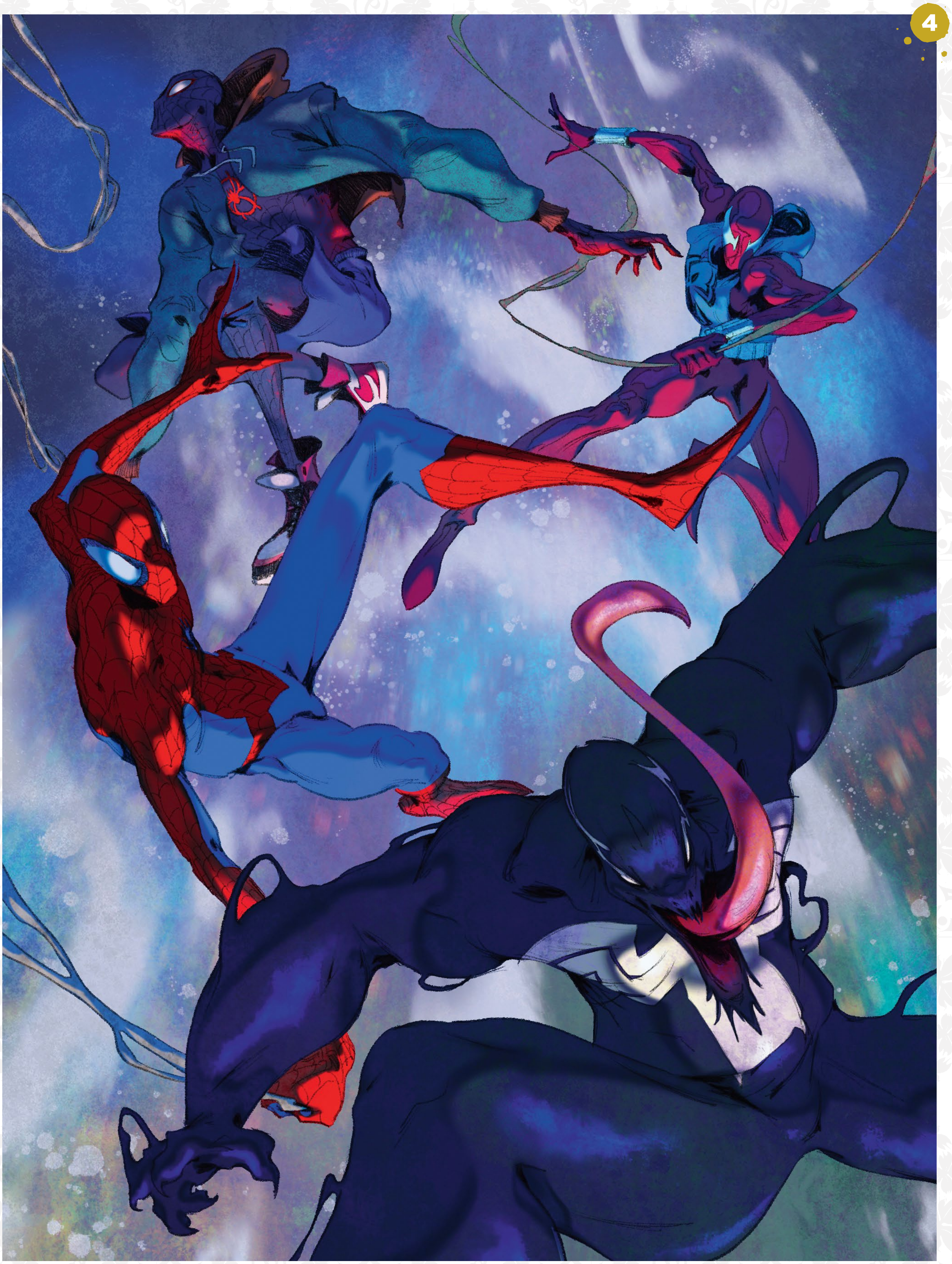


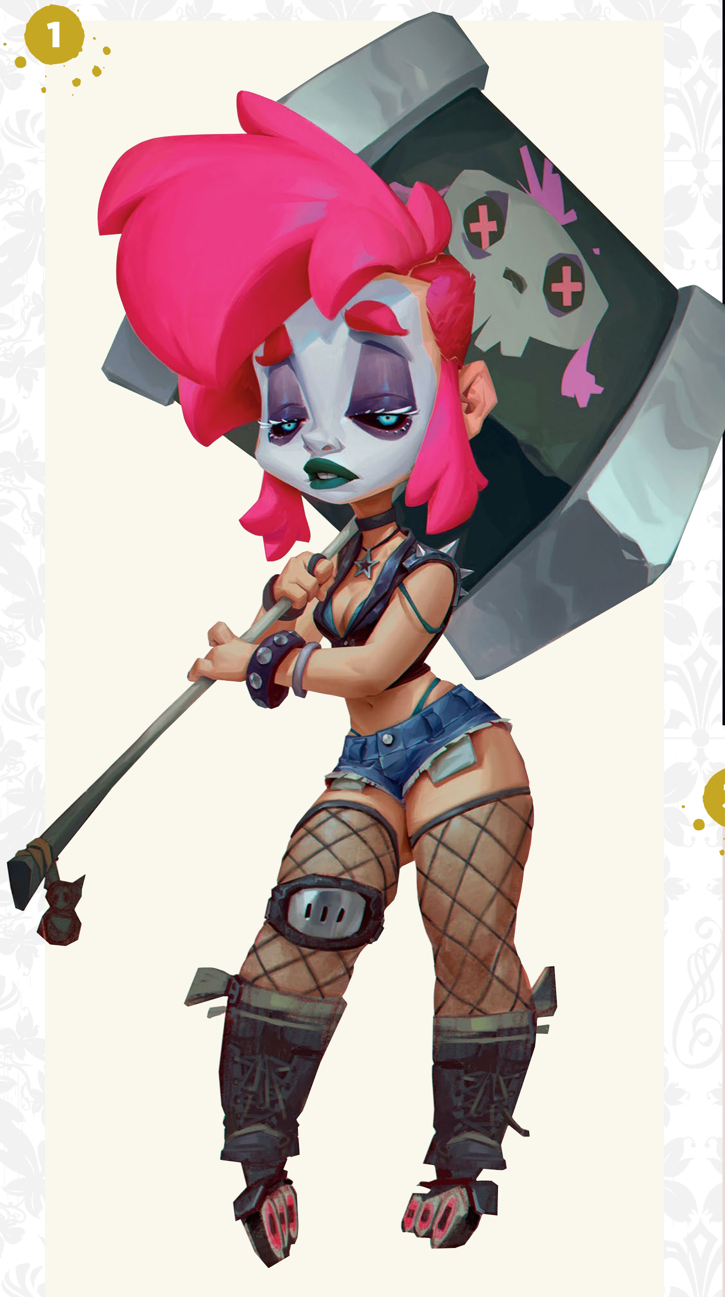
Wu Liu

LOCATION: China **MEDIA:** Photoshop, Procreate **WEB:** http://piaoliudefive.artstation.com

Wu has been working in the game industry for eight years as a concept artist. As an art nerd, his main inspiration comes from comics, as well as everyday life. His art heroes include Norman Rockwell and Carter Goodrich.

1 **PUNK GIRL**
"A fun drawing from an old sketchbook of mine. Some colour in Photoshop finished it off."

1



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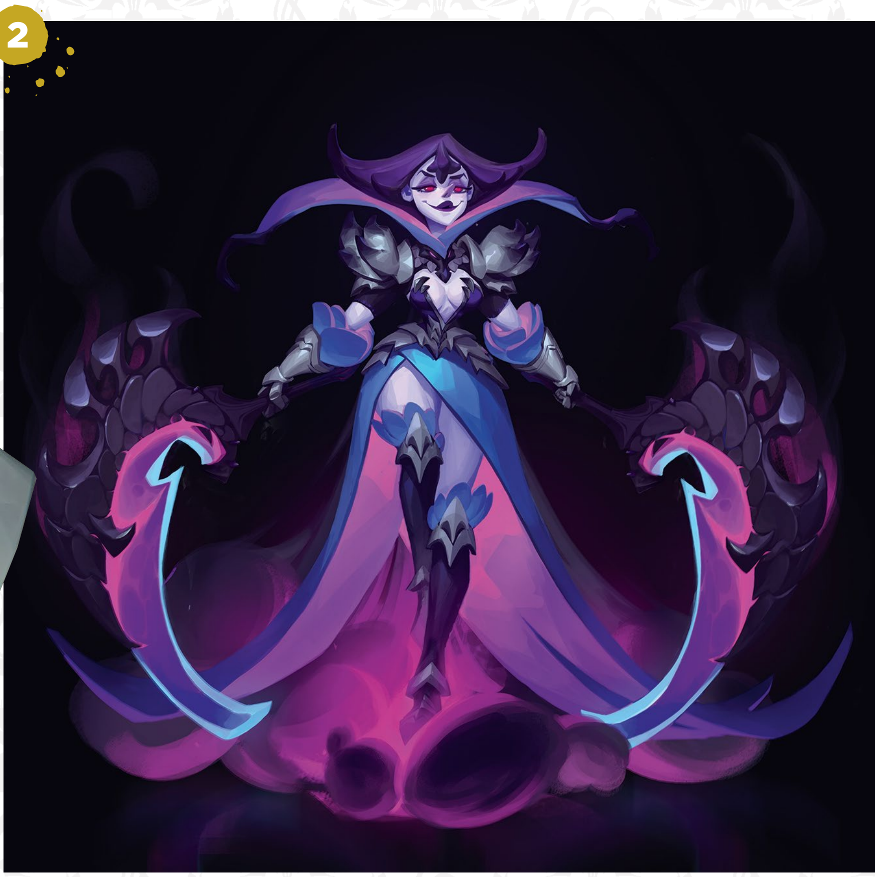

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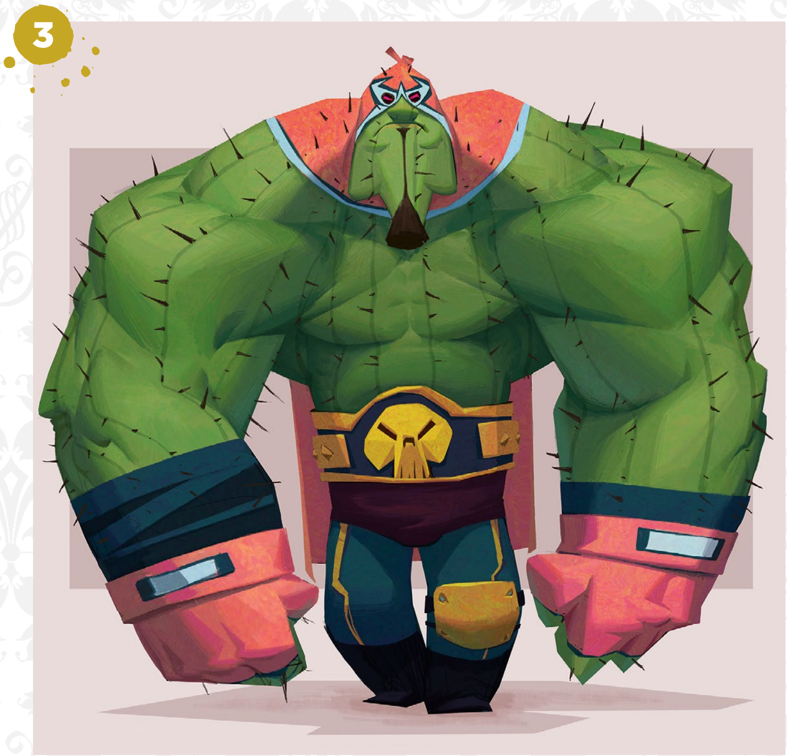

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2 **BLACK DRAGON KNIGHT**
"I really miss the good old days and the people who worked on the mobile RTS game Brave Conquest."

3 **CACTUS DUDE**
"In my spare time I'm always doing some weird doodles and collecting fun ideas that just happen to pop into my mind."

Danijela Antunović

LOCATION: Serbia **MEDIA:** Photoshop **WEB:** www.artstation.com/zeobun

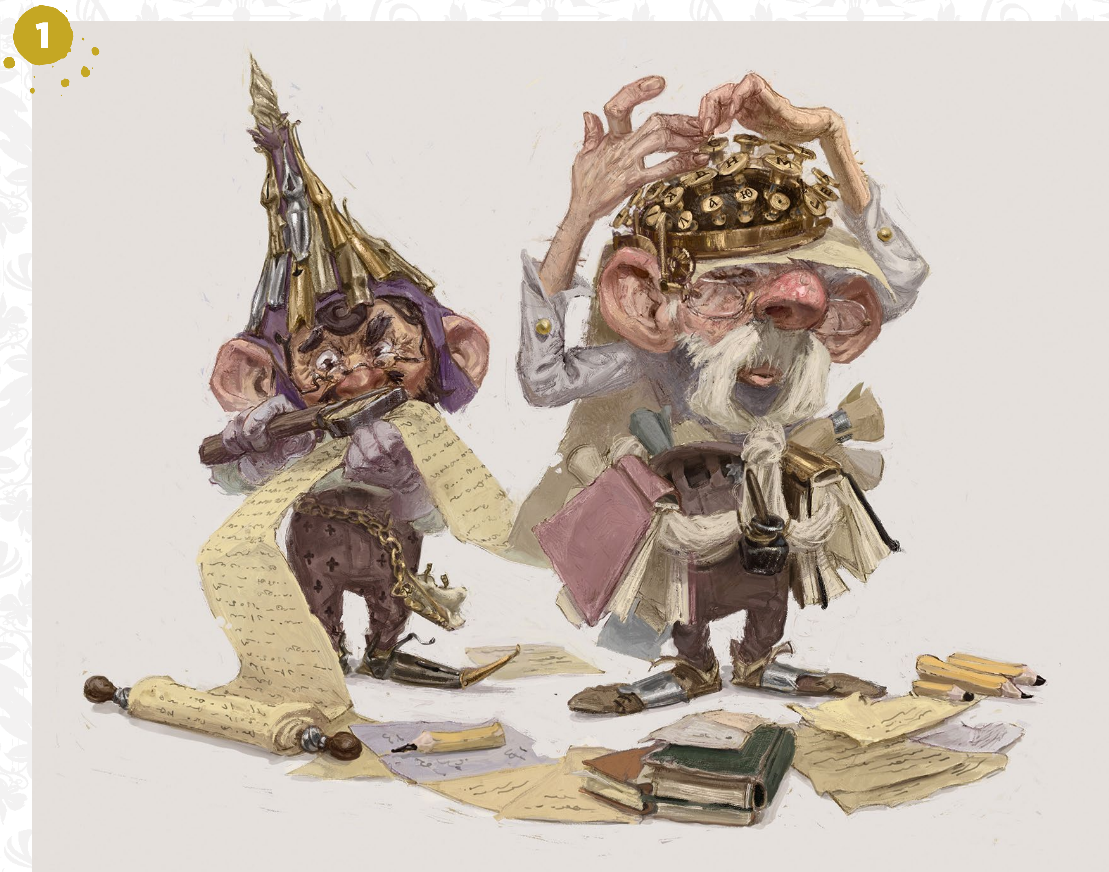
Danijela is a fantasy illustrator who explores the stillness and emotions of fanciful characters. She combines these themes with her traditional art background and painterly style which captures her subjects in a subtle way.

1 **WRITERS**
"The writing of a good story does not flow like one would think, and the discombobulated looks of our writers here capture this struggle perfectly."

2 **WOODCARVER**
"Here we find a fae lost within her craft that she loves so dearly, deep within the Red Cap forest as the sun starts to dawn upon a new day."

3 **TINY GATHERER**
"Small and indistinguishable as she silently twinkles across the glittering snow. Luck comes to those who spot her; so if you do, make a wish!"

1



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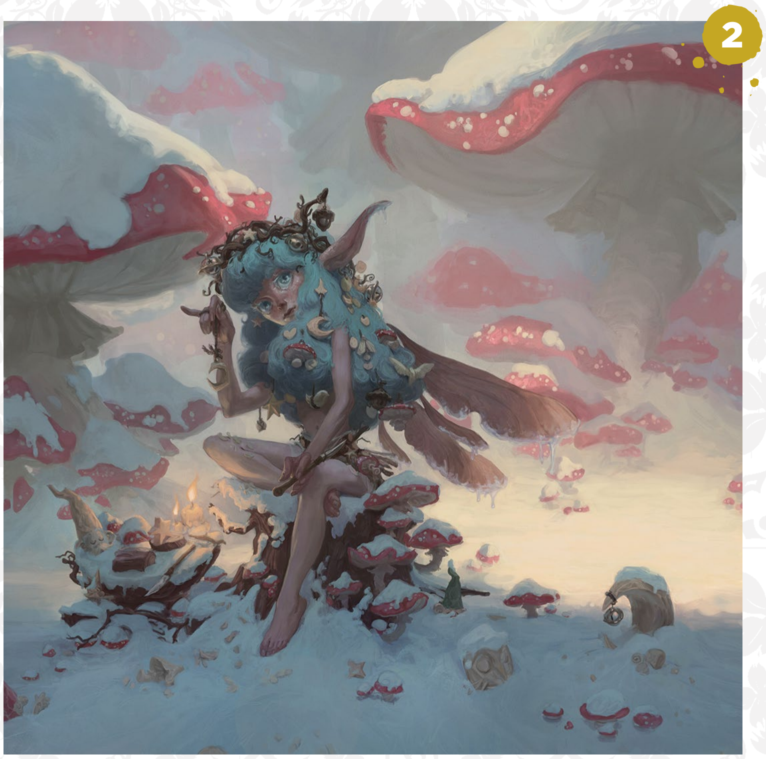

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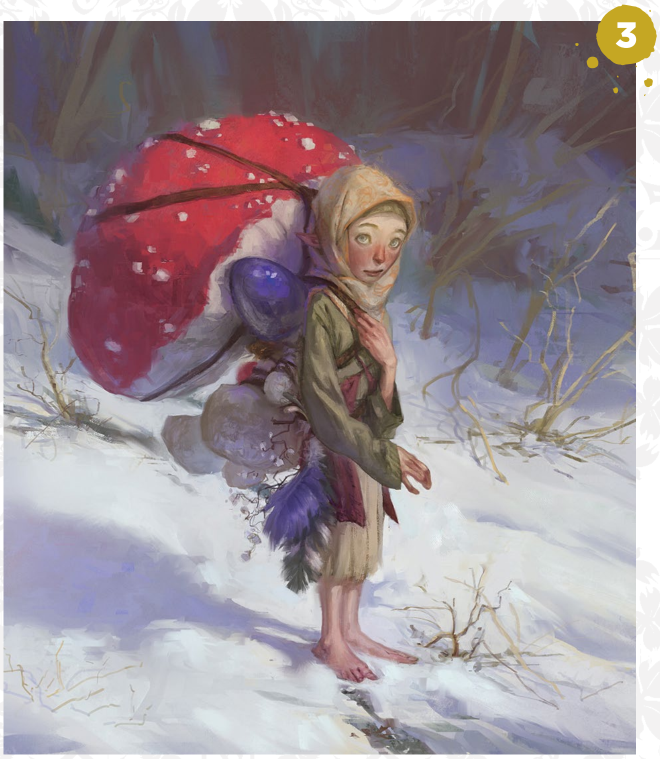

Pierluigi Abbondanza

LOCATION: Italy **MEDIA:** Painter **WEB:** www.abboart.com

Pierluigi is a freelance illustrator and teacher who makes covers for fantasy, sci-fi and horror books and comics. His work has been published by the likes of Blizzard, Zenescope, Ballistic Publishing and Fantasy Report.

1 **THE GARDEN**
"This is a personal piece. I wanted to depict Eve in Eden's Garden as well as the snake seducing her."

2 **IT WAITS ON THE TOP FLOOR**
"A cover illustration for Ben Farthing's 'It Waits on the Top Floor' book, about an evil skyscraper that appeared overnight."

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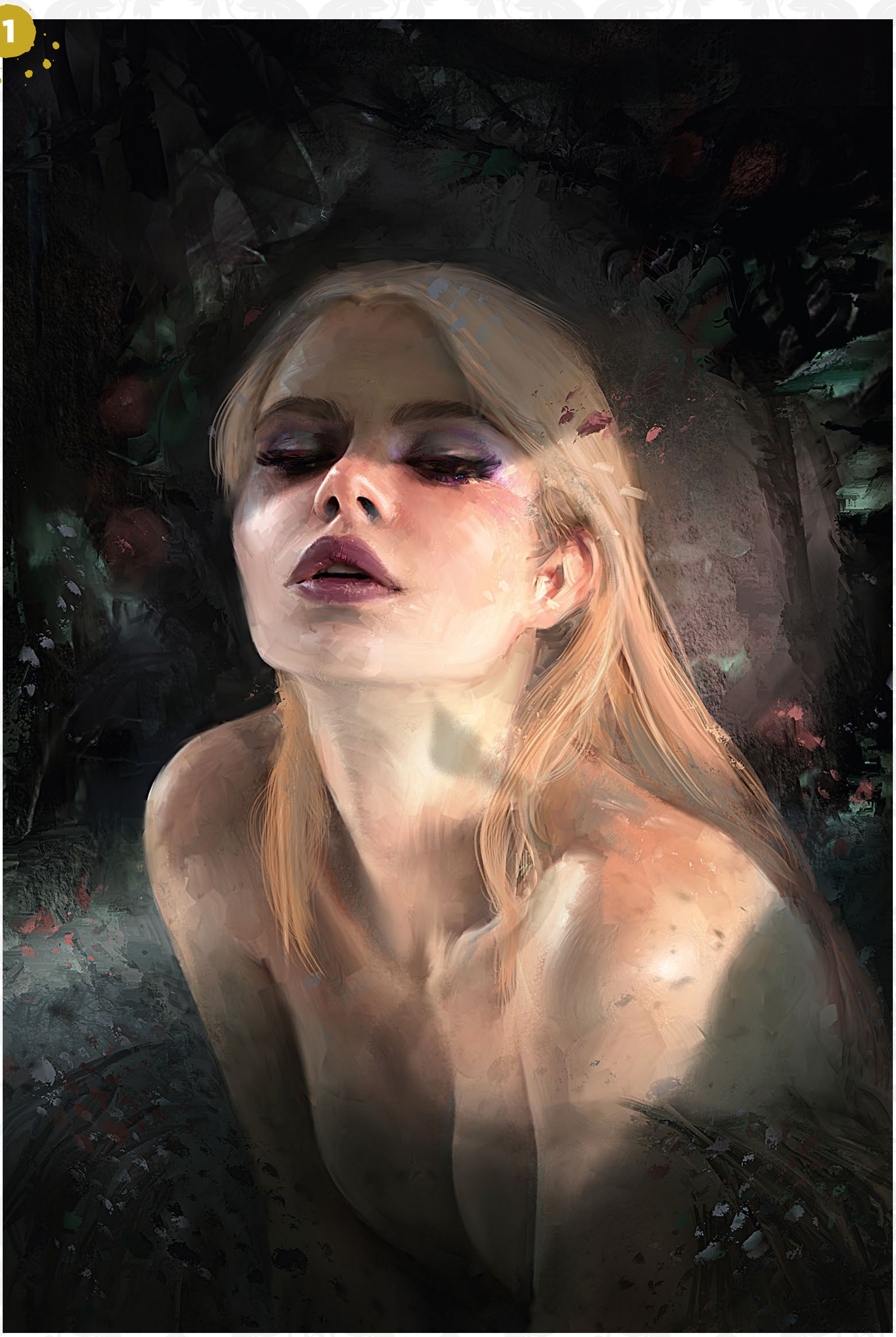

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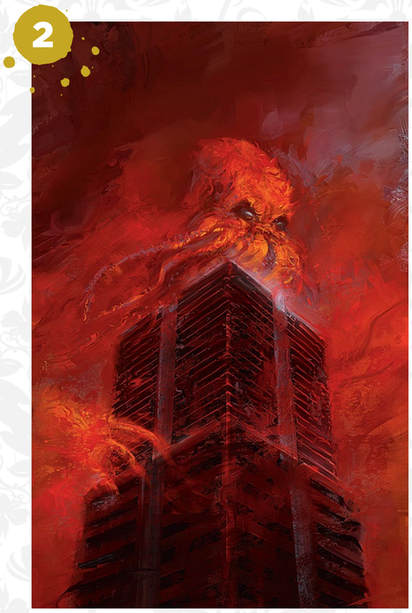

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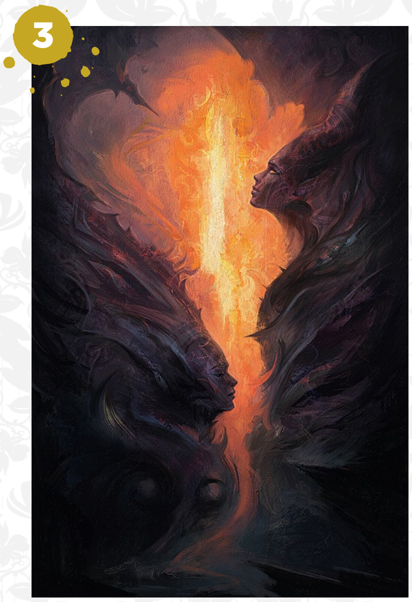

3 **THE PASSAGE**
"During a meditation I had this vision of a passage through dark mountains, so the next day I sat on my painting table and started painting it as close as possible to what I remembered."

4 **INFERNO**
"A cover illustration for 'Inferno', a game book about Dante Alighieri. This piece has been chosen for inclusion in 'Infected by Art Vol. X'."

Want to submit your work? Visit http://ifxm.ag/getinifx

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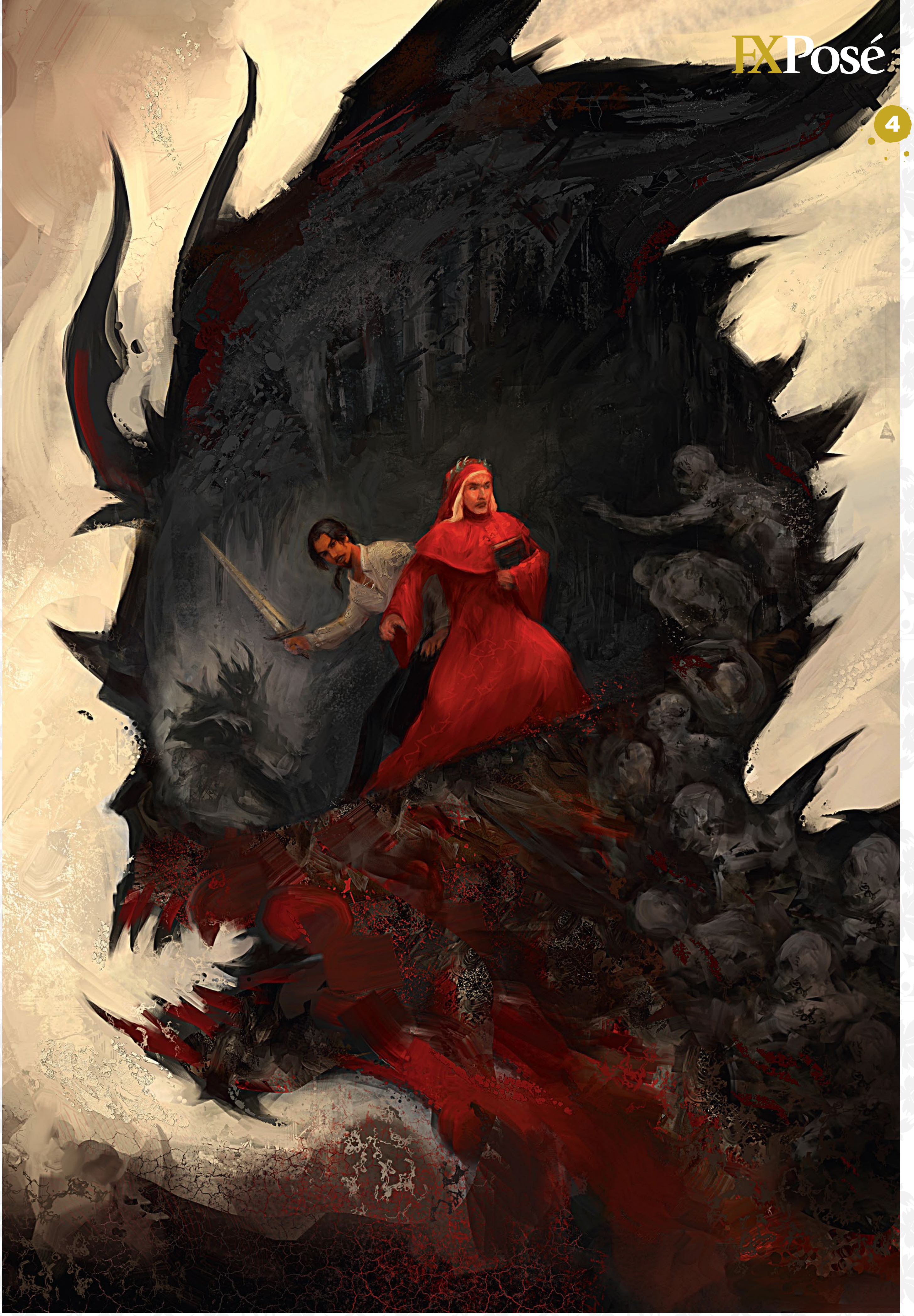

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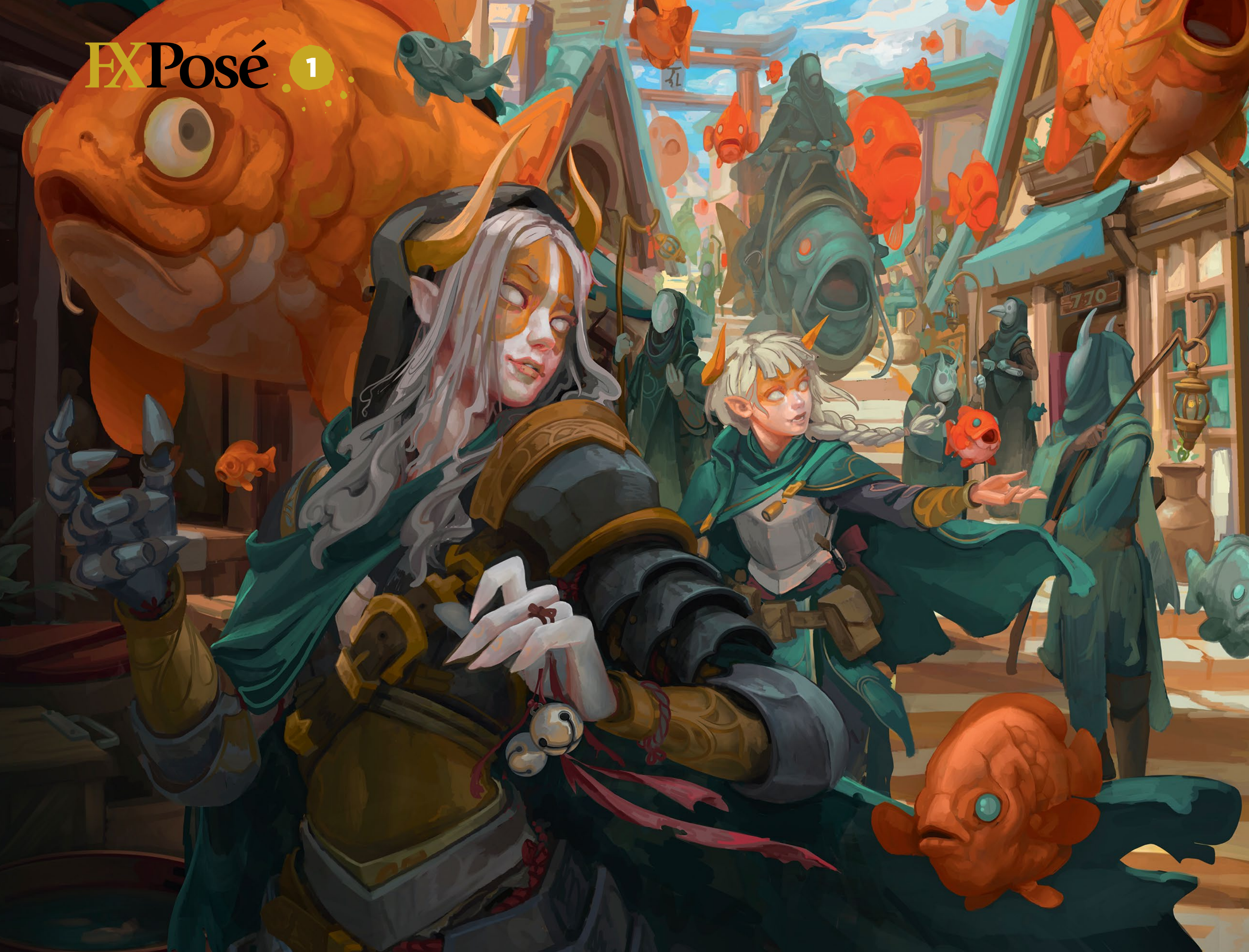


Dustin Panzino

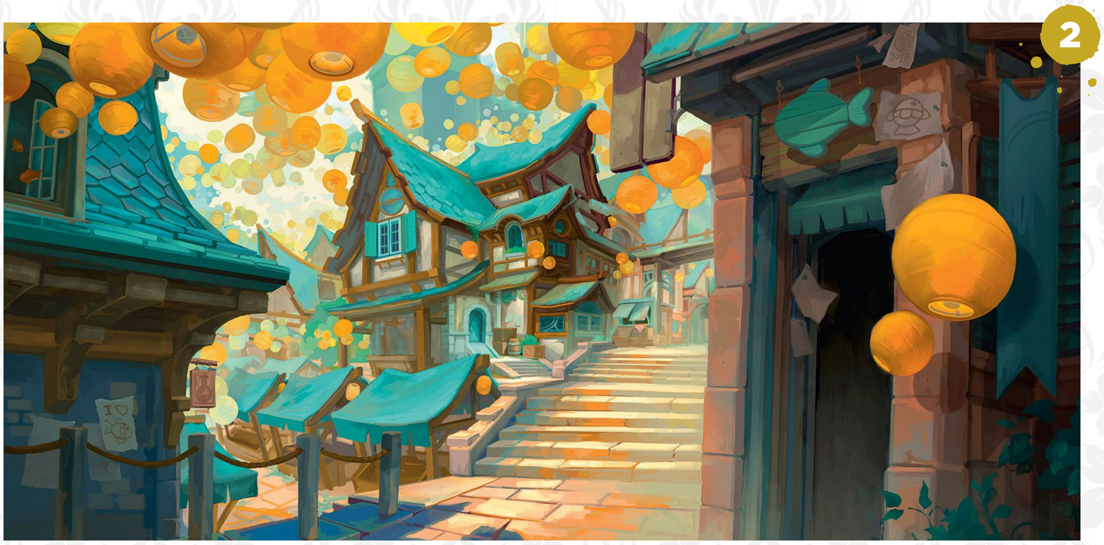
LOCATION: US **MEDIA:** Procreate **WEB:** www.inkwellillustrations.com

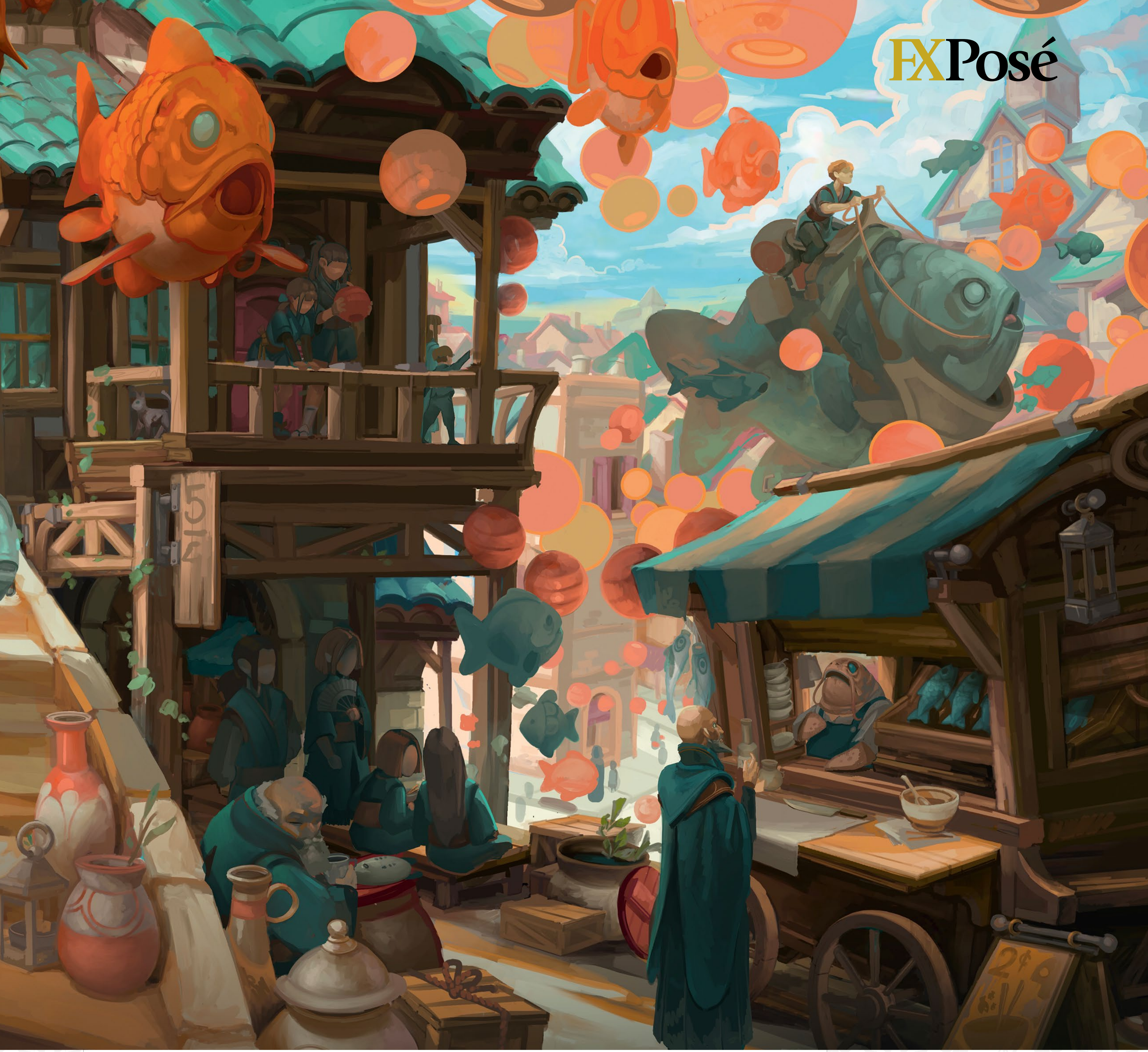
Dustin started his art career as an oil painter working mainly within the gallery world, but in recent years he exclusively works on the iPad. His clients include the gaming and animation industry.

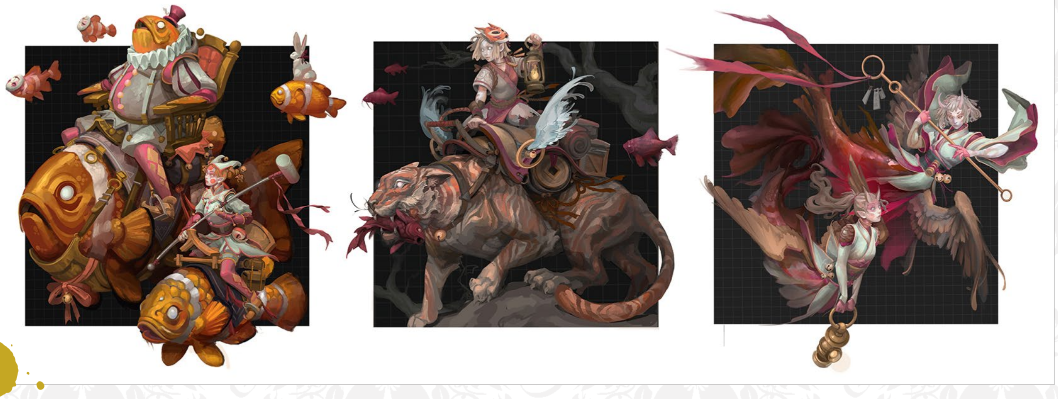
1 **FLYING FISH FESTIVAL**
"In my more recent work, I try to focus on world-building and capturing the intimacy of the image. My hope is to place the viewer within the crowd."

2 **LANTERN FESTIVAL**
"Inspired by Hoi An, Vietnam, and influenced by a mix of Studio Ghibli, DND, and Avatar: The Last Airbender, I created this environment as a teaser for a personal project."

2





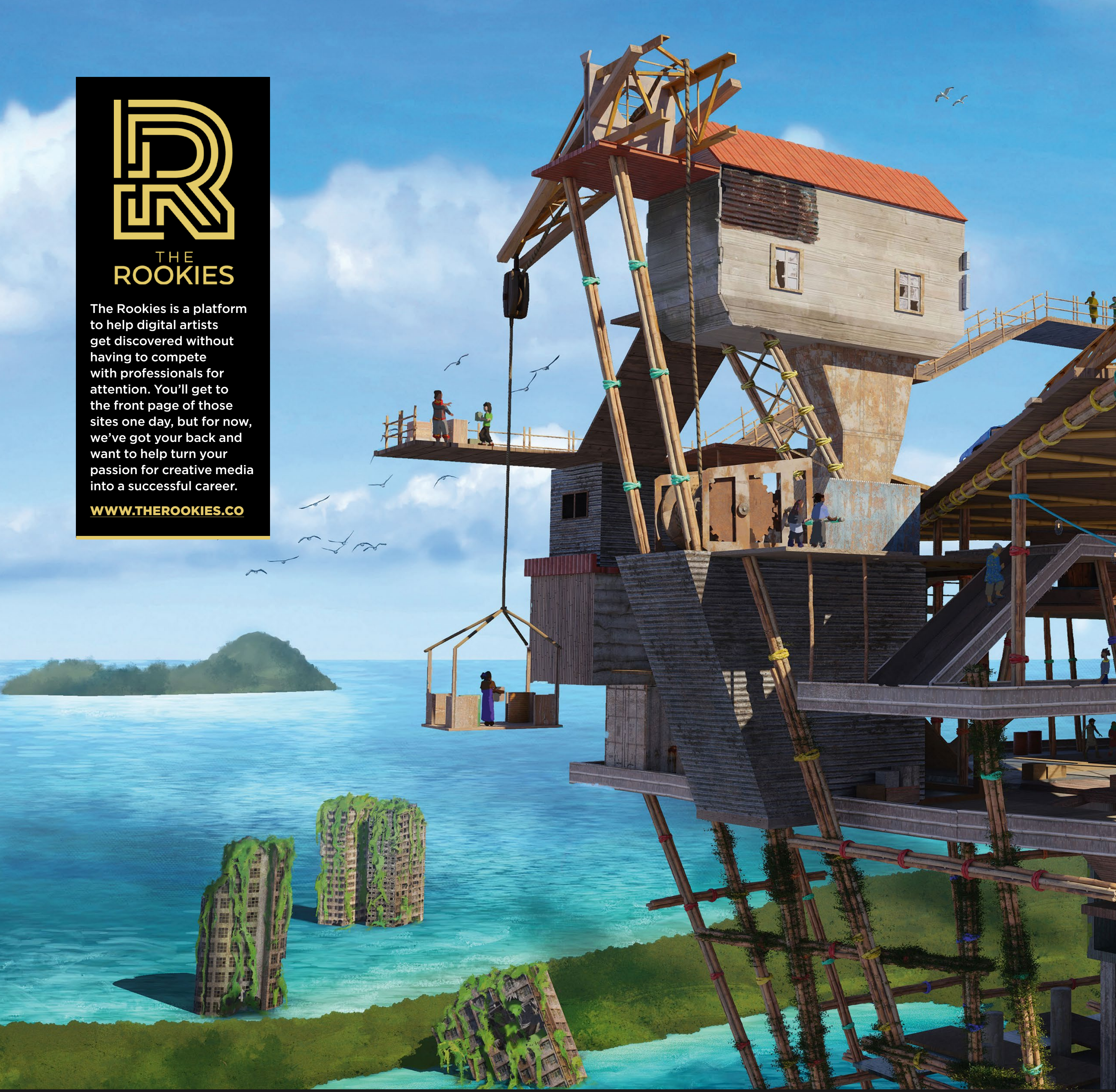


3

3 CHARACTER STUDIES

"I try to do a few of these character studies every month. I'll start with some basic shapes as compositional elements and let the painting develop from there. The end goal is typically a mystery to me."

Do you want to see your art on these pages? Then email five pieces of your work and a short explanation about each artwork, along with a photo and a few details about yourself, to **fxpose@imaginefx.com**



THE ROOKIES

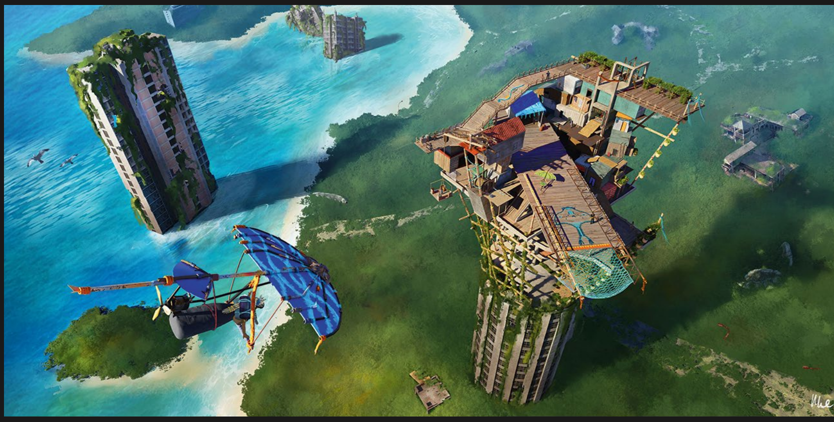
The Rookies is a platform to help digital artists get discovered without having to compete with professionals for attention. You'll get to the front page of those sites one day, but for now, we've got your back and want to help turn your passion for creative media into a successful career.

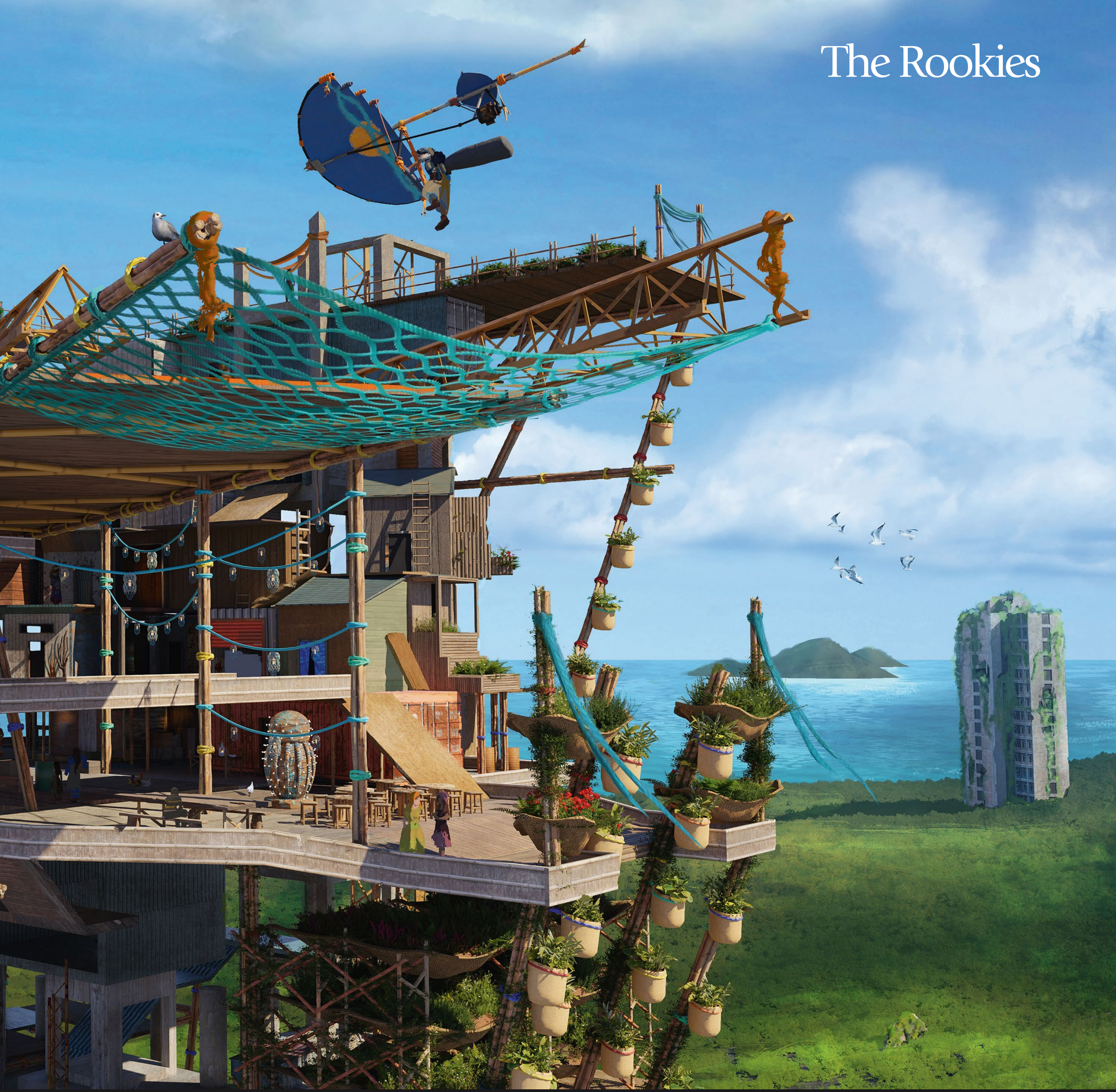
WWW.THEROOKIES.CO

The Messenger

YEAR CREATED: 2021
MEDIA: Photoshop, Rebelle, Blender, ZBrush, Substance Painter

"The Messenger flies on her glider, the Manta Flyer, to bring messages and parcels between different communities. The village she lives in was built on the top of the ruins of a half-finished skyscraper. I wanted to show how a less technologically advanced society would reclaim such a site and make use of the materials contained within it."





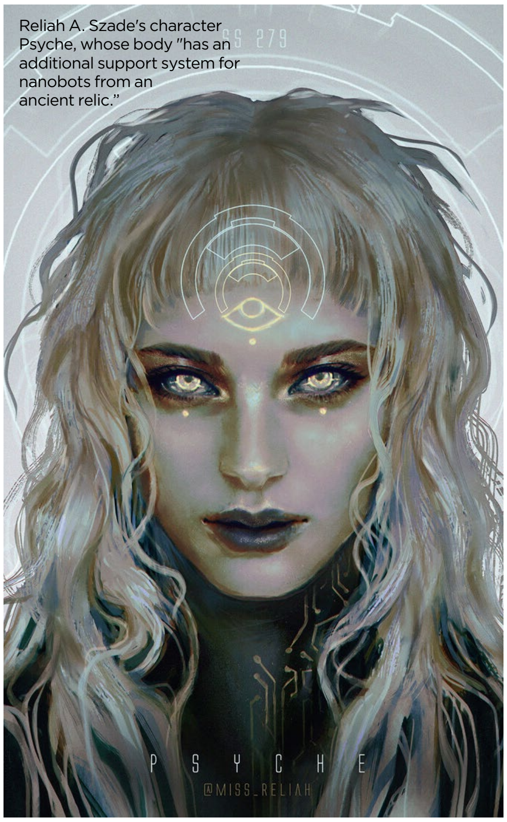
Artist PROFILE

Virginie La Salle

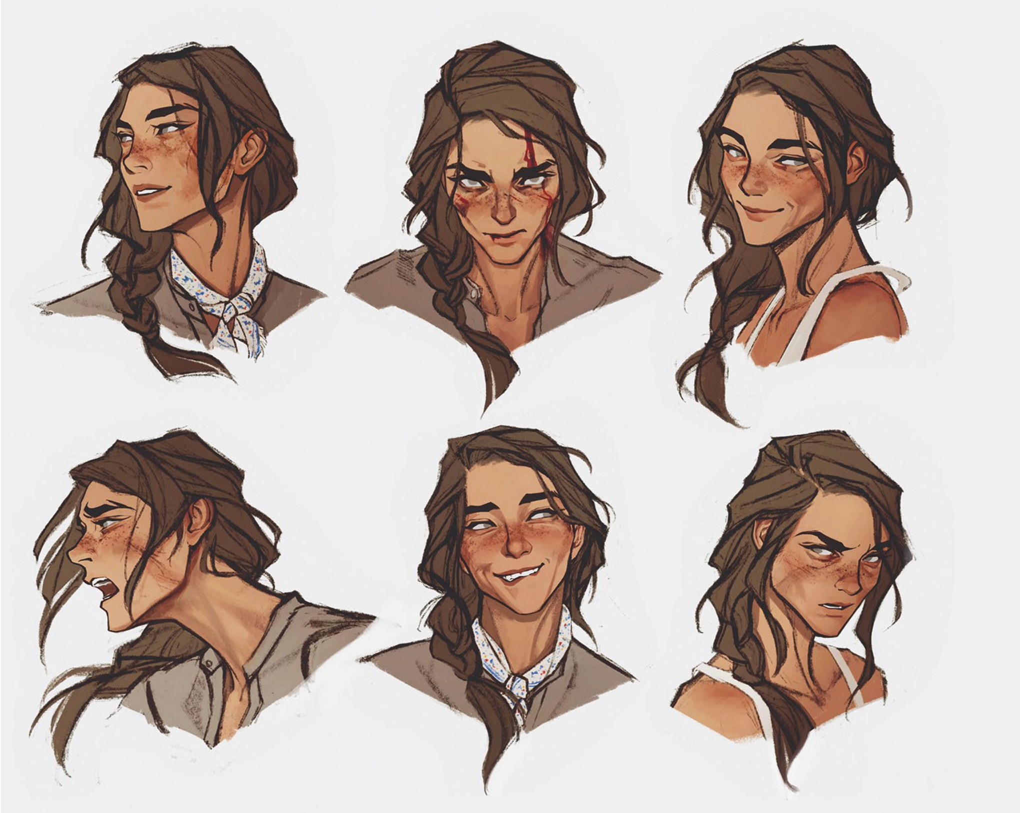
LOCATION: Canada

Having previously worked as a public servant for the Canadian government for ten years, in January 2020 Virginie decided to change her career path. With her love of drawing and painting, and having been a gamer since she was young, she decided to go towards concept art. Virginie is currently finishing her Concept Art program at CG Spectrum and will be doing the Advanced program starting this August.

www.therookies.co/u/SnapV



Reliah A. Szade's character Psyche, whose body "has an additional support system for nanobots from an ancient relic."



"Creating characters is a way of making sense of things, overcoming inner demons, and at the same time, it's an expression of love," says Katherine Wang.

Worldbuilders

The art of storytelling **Tanya Combrinck** meets three artists whose passion projects see them building new worlds filled with their own cast of characters

Working in games, movies or a big franchise you've always loved can be a dream come true, but realising someone else's vision has its limits in terms of your own creative expression. We all want to spread our wings as artists and creators, and there's nothing like conceiving of your own world and inventing your own characters.

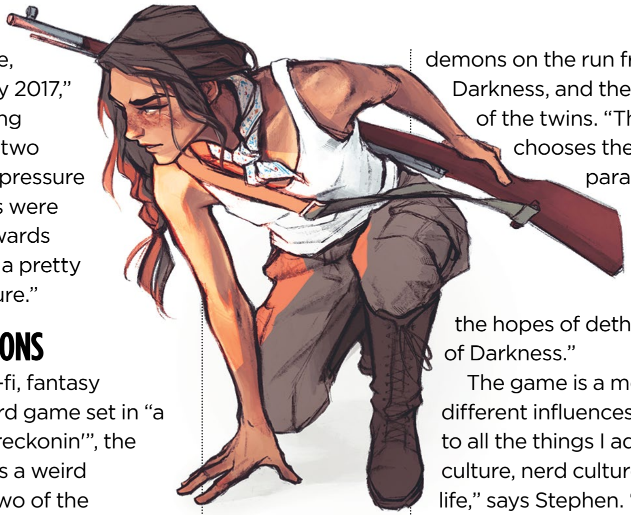
Stephen Gibson is an art director at tabletop games company Arcane Wonders, and is soon to move into video games at Sumo Digital. Outside of work, he decided he needed a solo project when his collaborations with others kept falling apart. "After a few years of noodling away in my mother's musty basement, I successfully kickstarted my own board game, Grimslingers, in early 2017," he says. "After getting married and having two young children, the pressure was on and tensions were high as I worked towards something that had a pretty good chance of failure."

EXPRESSING PASSIONS

Grimslingers is a sci-fi, fantasy western-themed card game set in "a land beyond God's reckonin'", the Forgotten West. "It's a weird western," he says. Two of the characters he's developing for the next version of the game are twin sibling bounty-hunters that were tricked into demon possession by an alien. The players take the role of demons on the run from the Lord of Darkness, and they assume control of the twins. "The God Stone chooses them to work across parallel dimensions and timelines with various versions of themselves with the hopes of dethroning the Lord of Darkness."

The game is a melting pot of different influences. "It's a love letter to all the things I adore in pop culture, nerd culture, and my own life," says Stephen. "I wanted a canvas to tell my stories and express my passions. I re-contextualise the things I love into that setting."

Creating Grimslingers has required a lot of sacrifice, but Stephen ➸

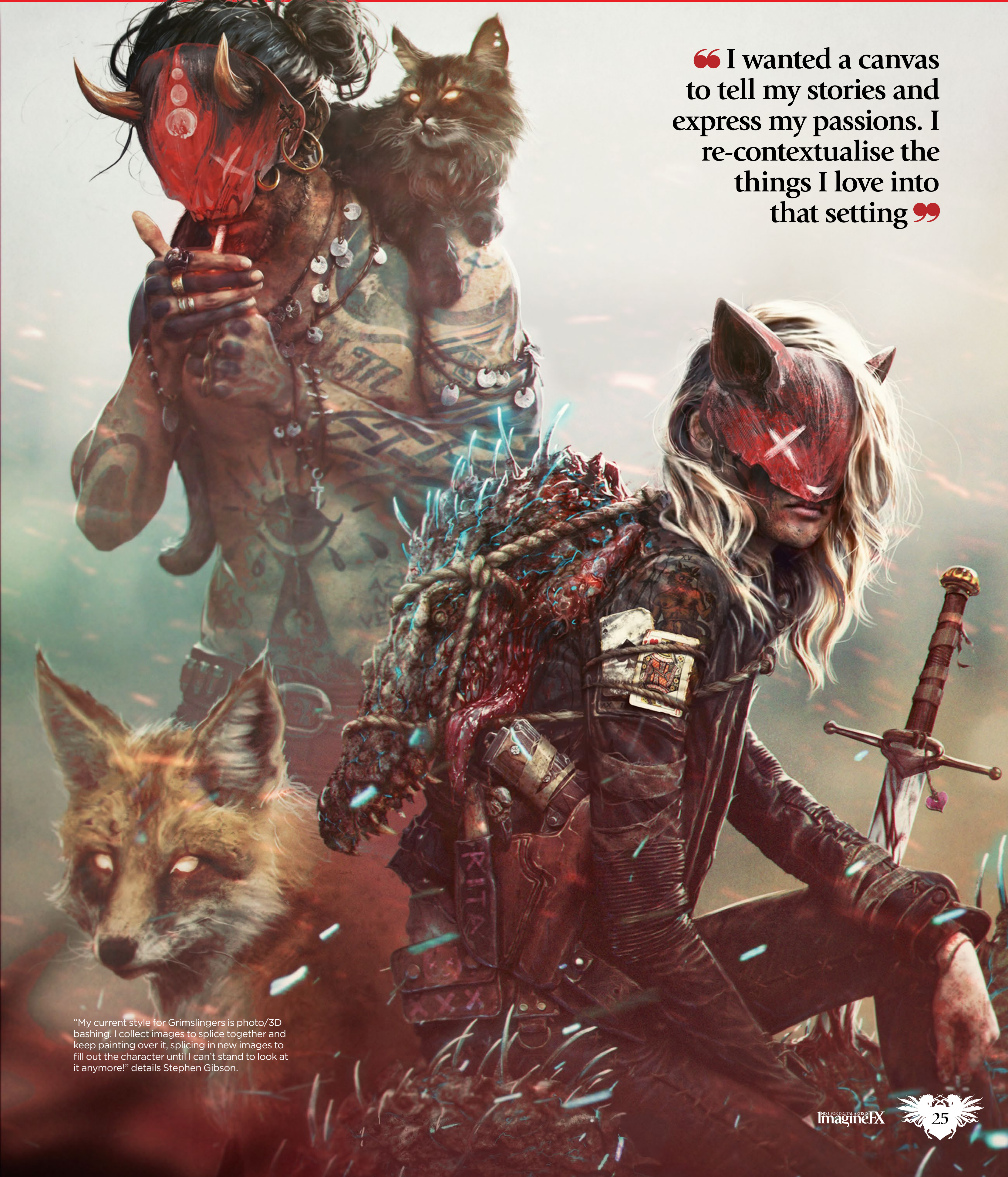


"Farewell My Homeland explores themes of belonging, forgiveness, and learning to live fully even when life is messy and cruel," explains Katherine Wang.

FILM CONCEPTS
Costume concept illustrator, Darrell Warner, gives an insight into how he manages a non-stop schedule, with communication being a key factor.
Page 30

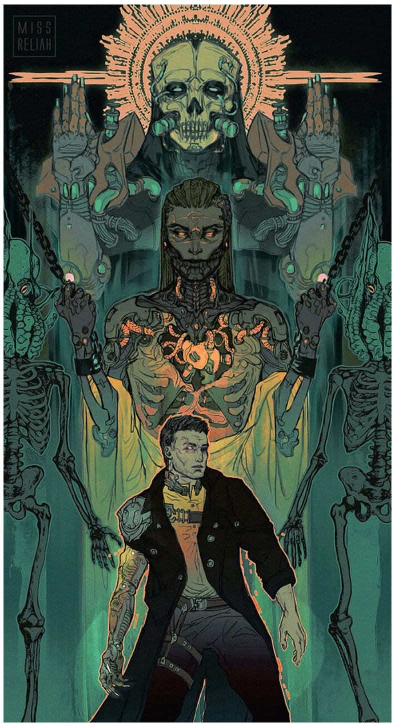
A SPACE FOR CREATING
In this month's Artist in Residence, we take a tour of the jungle-like studio of illustrator Olga Andriyenko, complete with towering plants and furry friends.
Page 32

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 39



> “I wanted a canvas to tell my stories and express my passions. I re-contextualise the things I love into that setting”

“My current style for Grimslingers is photo/3D bashing. I collect images to splice together and keep painting over it, splicing in new images to fill out the character until I can't stand to look at it anymore!” details Stephen Gibson.



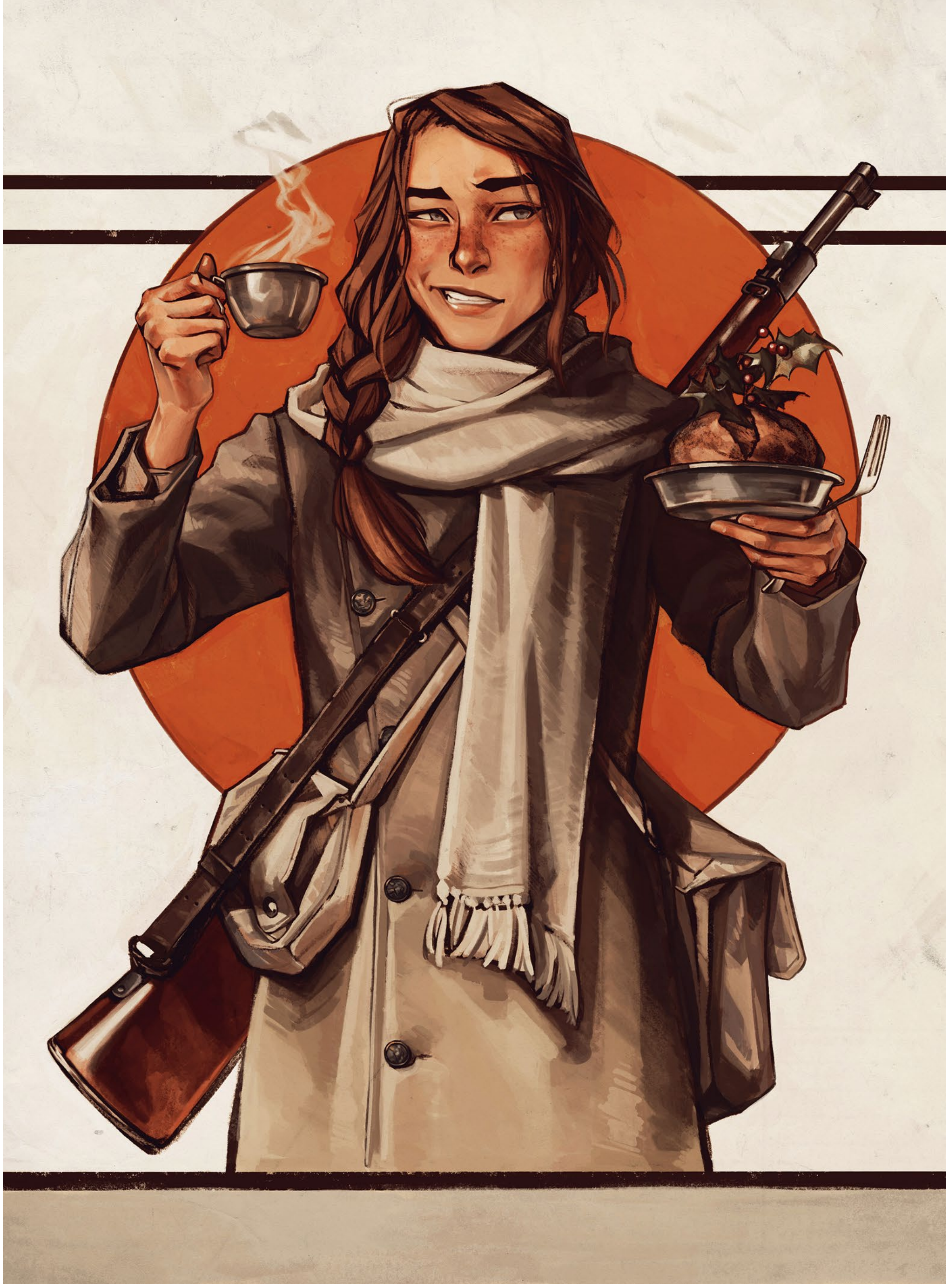
"Your passion project doesn't have to be just a side activity. Dream big!" says Reliah A. Szade.

doesn't regret a minute. "It was incredibly difficult. I doubted myself so much along the way, and so did everyone else! But there was one thought I held on to: what if my childhood dream of making my own games and creating my own amazing worlds could come true? I had to try, and I knew I'd regret it if I didn't."

Stephen sees personal projects as a way to keep your creative spark alive. It also might be the only way for niche products to see the light of day. "The world needs more passion projects and less corporate-controlled products," he says. "My time in the industry has convinced me that something like Grimslingers couldn't exist except as a passion project. It's far too weird, personal and nuanced for the typical business-minded studio head to understand in a pitch, let alone greenlight."

HISTORICAL INSPIRATION

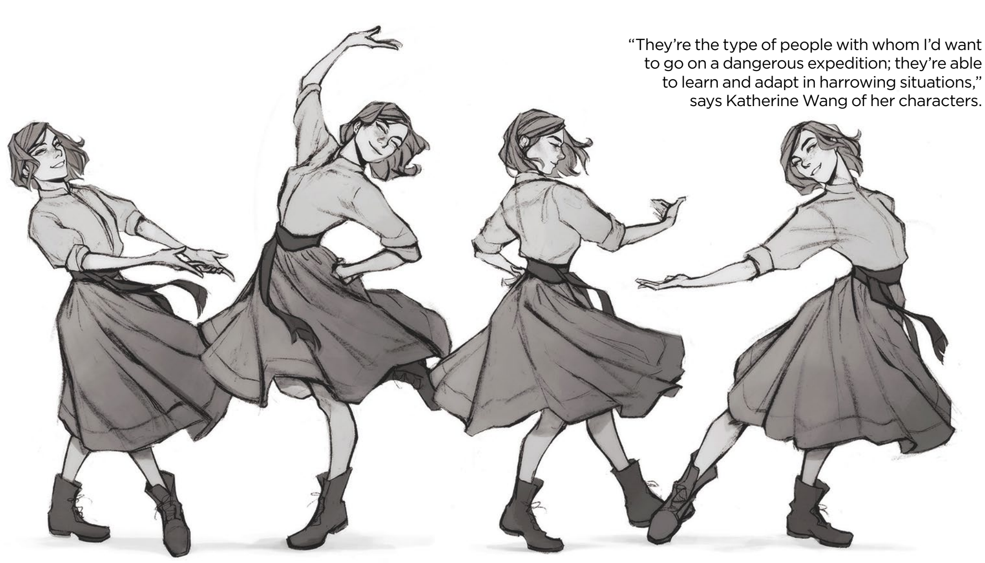
Katherine Wang's passion project is an illustrated novel, Farewell My Homeland, about a young woman searching for her sister during a war. Despite having all the markings of an artist as a teen, Katherine studied political science and economics and worked as a business consultant and an economics researcher before returning to the art world in her late twenties. "I don't regret going on this circuitous route," she says. "I'm glad I was able to study history, immerse myself in literature, and think about various social, economic, and cultural issues. Having this background has informed how I design my characters and worlds."

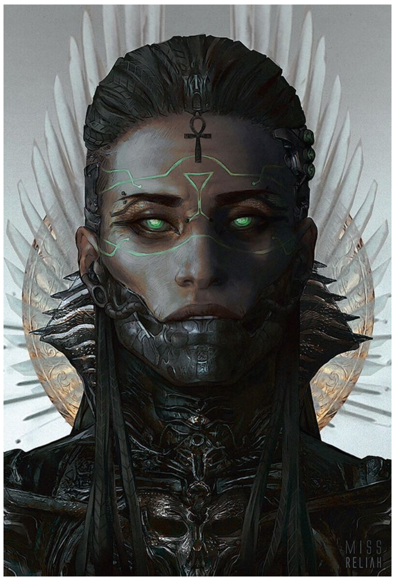


Katherine Wang's spoof/study of Leyendecker's 'A Soldier's Thanksgiving'.

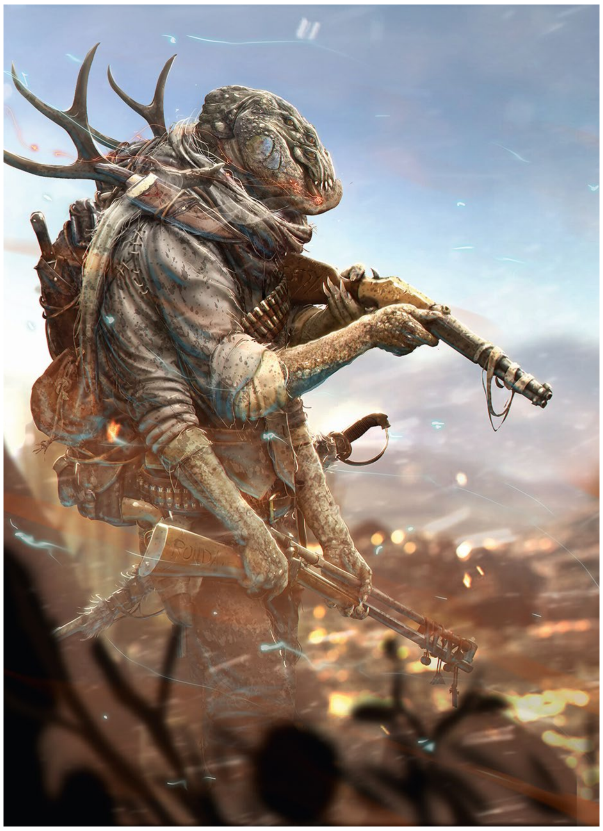
> "Ensure the design choices are functional and exist for a story-based reason"

Katherine's education has led her to create a world that draws upon European and world history, particularly from the early 20th Century. "You see these great changes and dramatic events unfolding," she explains. "The Great War, the collapse of empires, these 'national awakenings' across the world, technological advancements, shifts in social and gender norms, imperialistic expansions… At the same time, I also like having fun with fantastical concepts as well as making up folklore."


"They're the type of people with whom I'd want to go on a dangerous expedition; they're able to learn and adapt in harrowing situations," says Katherine Wang of her characters.



Reliah's Amenhotep keeps his metal jaw as an important reminder of significant events.


Stephen's reptilian man Hank the Hunter is a gun-for-hire who has scratched the nicknames of his rifles onto their stocks, Betsy and Ronda.

In designing her characters, Katherine begins with a moodboard. "I try to rely on primary sources as much as possible, such as studying actual uniforms during a specific time period, because then you get all these unique details, and you ensure that the design choices are functional and exist for a story-based reason."

KEEP LEARNING

Farewell My Homeland takes place in a fictional universe, but it's inspired by real events. "I've been doing a lot of factual research–reading about the economies of pre-war Europe, the use of dreadnoughts, the rise of the Soviet Union, the Eastern Front, Imperial Japan, Central Asia around the turn of the century…" Katherine says.

She also researches the details of people's lives from those time periods by looking at written artifacts such as journals and war correspondence. "But books and papers can only tell you so much," she says. "As a storyteller, it's valuable to experience firsthand what you are trying to convey. Feeling the weight of a Mosin-Nagant rifle, for example, and bracing yourself for the recoil. That level of familiarity can really add richness to your designs."

If you're at a point where improving your art skills is your main goal, Katherine advises that a personal project serves as a good compass ➳

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

MAKING IT WORK

Stephen Gibson on the challenges of making a big project fit into your life

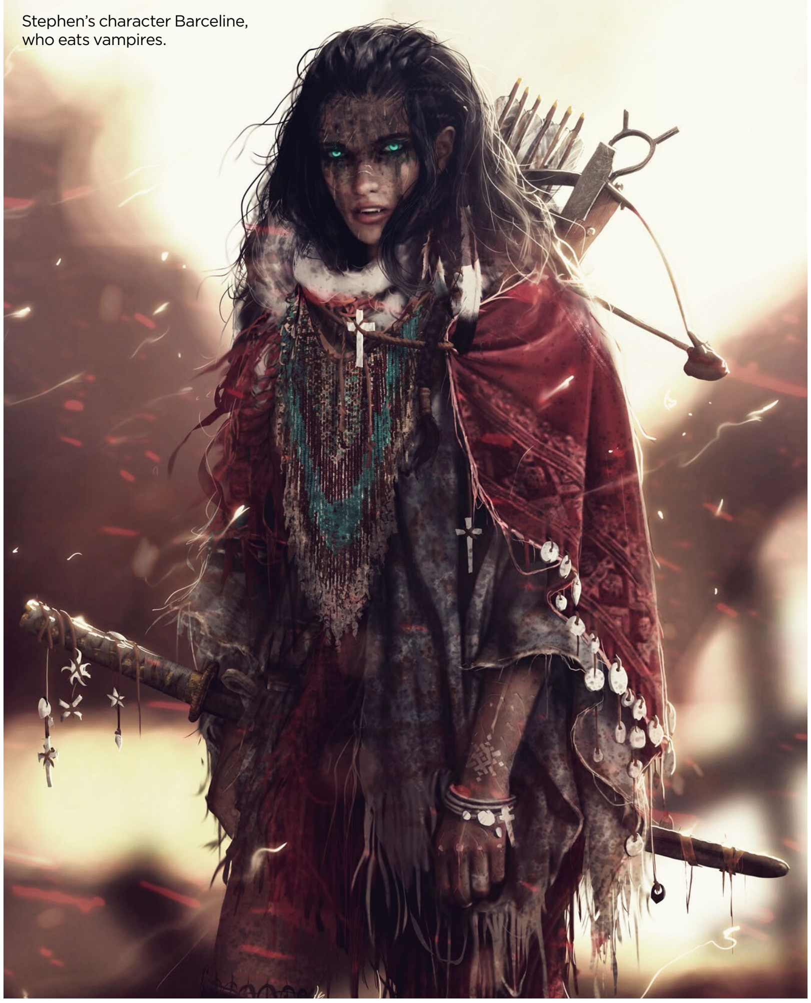
How do you think artists benefit from working on personal projects?
It keeps the fire alive inside of you. I certainly think that most artists would prefer to bring their own ideas to life rather than someone else's. I think that if your own personal creativity is suppressed and put on the back burner for too long, you'll start to lose your passion. The idea of doing art can become too intertwined with the idea of work, grind, clients, revisions, and so on.

How does a project like this fit around your work life?
It doesn't! Well, not really, anyway. Doing something like this requires a lot of sacrifice. Do you watch another episode with your significant other before bed or spend that hour working on your project? Do you spend your days off working on the project or going out with friends? Do you quit your job and try to make your passion into your day job? There's a balance to be had, and one that I've certainly wrestled with.

What research did you do for Grimslingers?
A lifetime of being a weird geek. Since my projects are an expression of all the things I love and am, all the content I consume informs the art, story and game. Late nights listening to Art Bell on 'Coast to Coast' discuss the paranormal, reading books like 'The Dark Tower' and 'Off To Be A Wizard', watching weird movies like Labyrinth, and Tom Cruise's Legend more than I should have.

Stephen Gibson is an art director at Arcane Wonders, soon to move into video games at Sumo Digital.

artstation.com/stephengibson



Stephen's character Barceline, who eats vampires.

by giving you a reason to learn hard things. "It gives you the motivation to get over big, challenging hurdles such as learning the minutiae of human anatomy or wrapping your head around perspective," she says. You can find out more about Farewell My Homeland at **embermarke.com**.

Like Stephen, **Reliah A. Szade** (**missreliah.com**) has built a world that's rooted in the things that delight her. "I want to include it all: ancient mythology – especially Egyptian and Sumerian – my interest in the cosmos and wild theories related to extraterrestrial influence, and issues raised in the genres of cyberpunk and transhumanism," she says. "My most treasured possessions are publications on religious symbols, ancient art, myths and astrology."

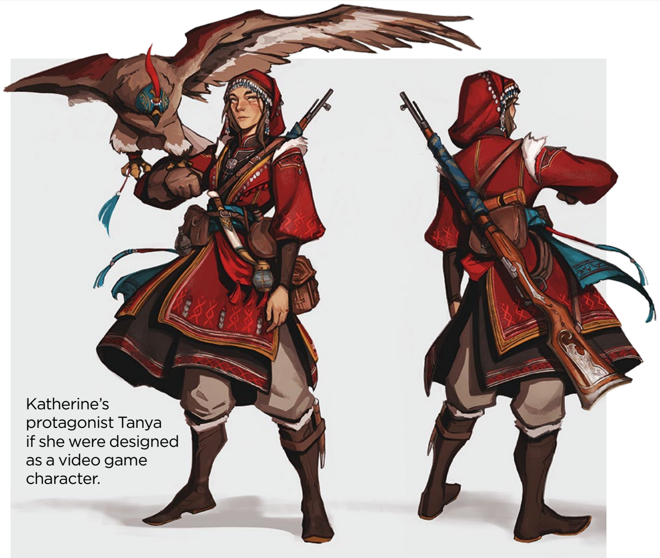
Aesthetically Reliah is inspired by "the organic landscapes of Zdzisław Beksinski, the biomechanical forms of H. R. Giger, and the romanticism of Yoshitaka Amano," but storytelling is always her priority when creating an image. Screenwriter Nobumoto Keiko has strongly influenced her work in this regard.

EXPLORING NEW REALITIES

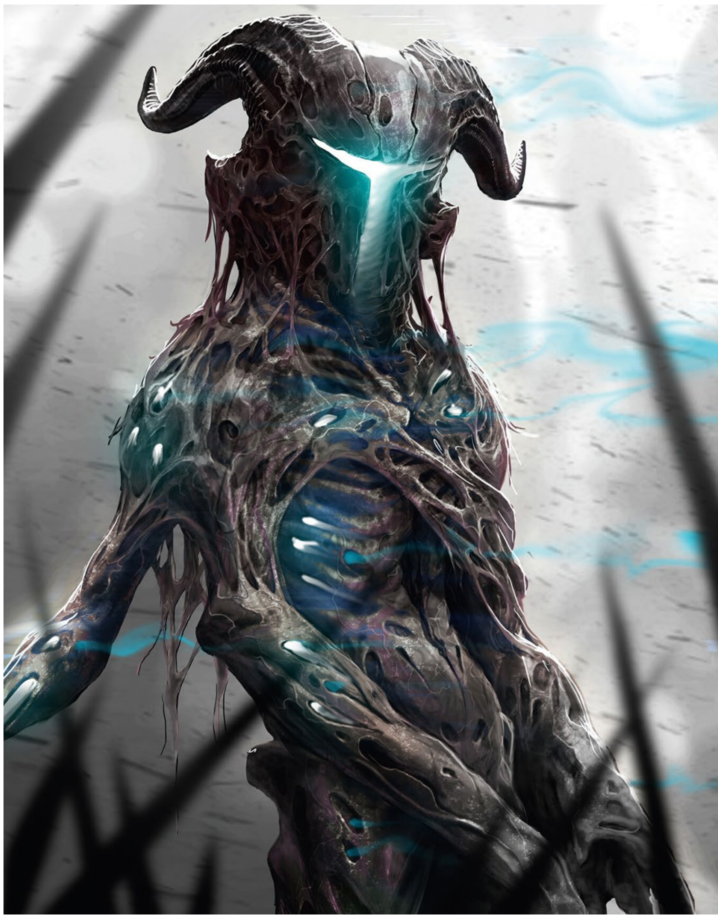
"Rasetau is a futuristic, grim vision set on the brink of the third age of humanity," says Reliah. "It takes place in the mighty Bastion SS279 realm, where tens of millions of people are manipulated by a technocratic guild system controlled by three powers - Necromancers, Neuromancers and Technomancers. Hardly anyone realises that this megapolis is in fact one large living organism that is not of our planet."

Rasetau's main characters are those whose decisions will influence the future of their world, and the 'Entities', forces that inhabit the body of the megapolis. "When I work on a key character, I look for symbols rooted in various mythologies, and I adapt them and put them in a new context," she says. Some of Reliah's characters are fully natural humans, some have biomechanical bodies, and some are beings that can leave their bodies in an astral form. "The more animalistic and organic someone looks, the more dangerous they probably are. In Bastion SS279, organic shapes are

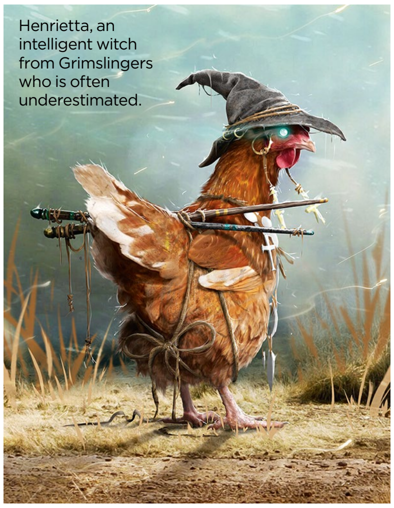
> “Love for what you are working on can help you get to the next level faster”



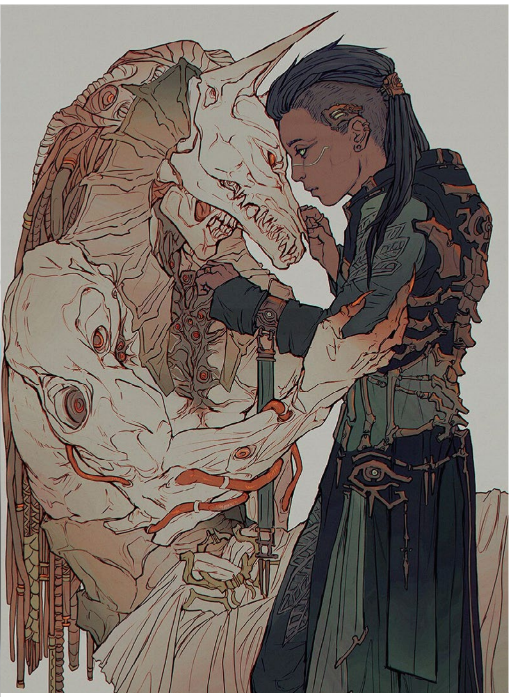
Katherine's protagonist Tanya if she were designed as a video game character.



A Soul Hunter from Grimslingers, a daemonic bounty hunter useful for imprisoning the souls of enemies.



Henrietta, an intelligent witch from Grimslingers who is often underestimated.

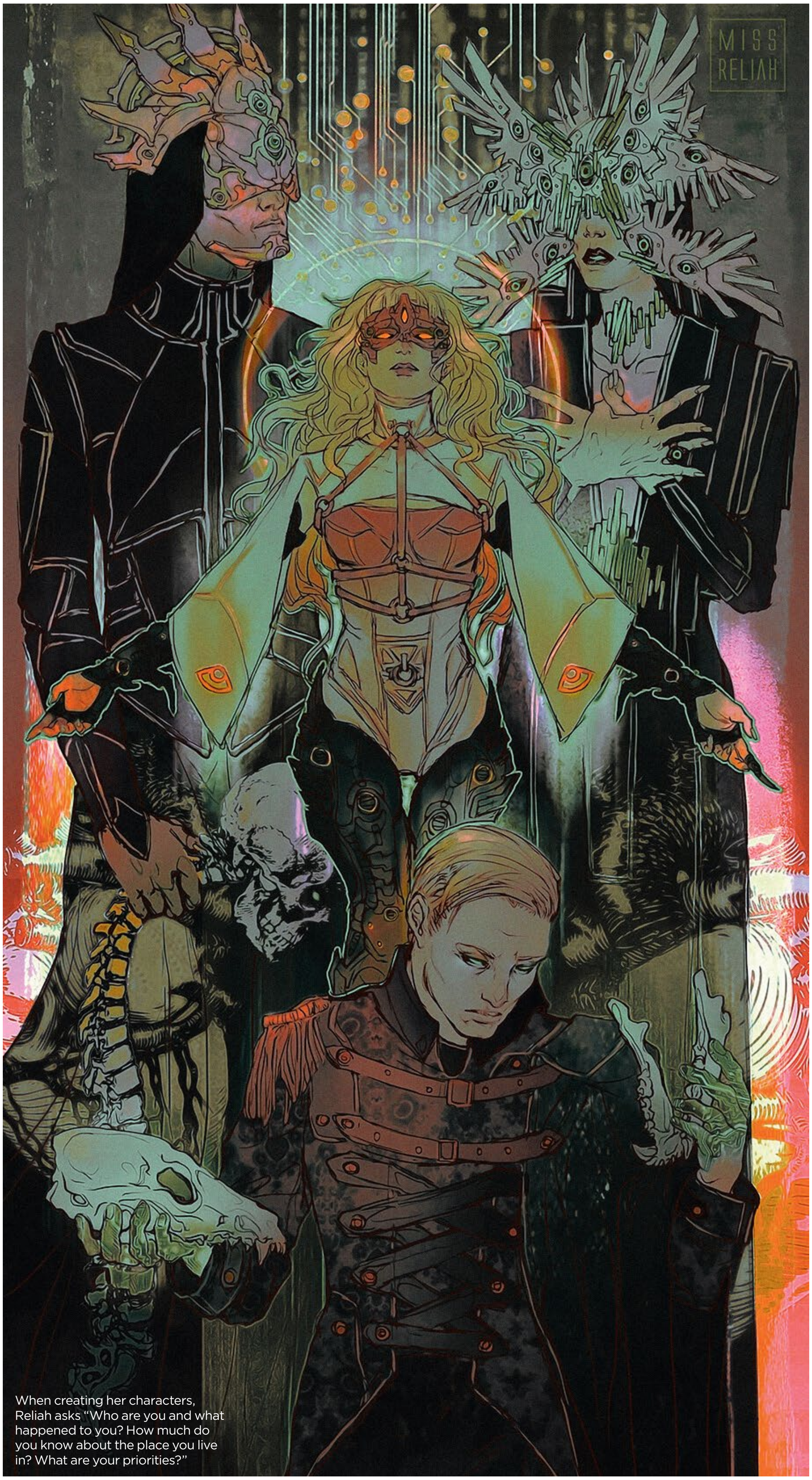


A personal project can keep you motivated "when you feel like you're frozen in place," says Reliah.

associated with something alien and disturbing, so one of the most important antagonists presents himself as a white beast threaded with veins, tentacles and meat tubes."

Regardless of their form, Reliah stresses that most of these beings are bound by very human emotions. "Rasetau in its essence is a story about the romance of souls, highlighting attachment, tragedy and the process of healing."

For Reliah, her personal project has been instrumental in developing her craft. "Love for what you are working on can help you get to the next level much faster than working for a stranger. When I work on personal art, I'm not afraid of experimentation."



When creating her characters, Reliah asks "Who are you and what happened to you? How much do you know about the place you live in? What are your priorities?"

A day in the life of…

Darrell Warner

The invention of image The concept artist for film walks us through a typical day and showcases his art

"I wake up at 6:15am. When I'm home, I have breakfast and take my daughter to school. I want to be in the studio by 9am, and work until 6pm. When I'm on a film, I usually just AirBnB it. I'm at the studio by 7:30am. For lunch, I like to have it with my wife when I can. In summer months, I'll have a quick lunch, then spend 40 minutes in the garden.

I don't start with warmups. I just go straight into it. At the end of each day, I evaluate what I've achieved and let it percolate overnight. I primarily work with a costume designer, and I think you have to be slightly inside their head. I don't necessarily submit artwork every day. I build up trust over time so they know I'll deliver ideas that work. The biggest aspect of everything I do is communication. I rather love working in the studio, because it's the conversations, the exchange of ideas, that are the key to building that trust. You don't get these when you work remotely.

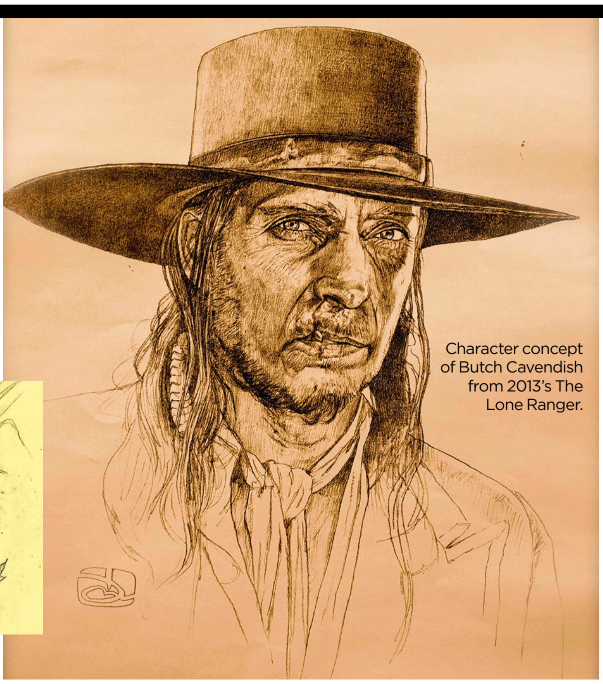
> ❝ It's the conversations, the exchange of ideas, that are the key to building trust ❞

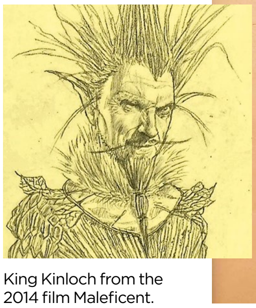
After work, I try to play tennis. We always have supper at 6pm. I've got a teenage son who aims to be a cinematographer, so there will often be a lot of conversation about composition and colour grading. I like to be in bed by 10pm. When I'm away at a studio, I do quite a lot of my own work with watercolours. It's a wind-down. I don't work weekends. I'm beyond that now.

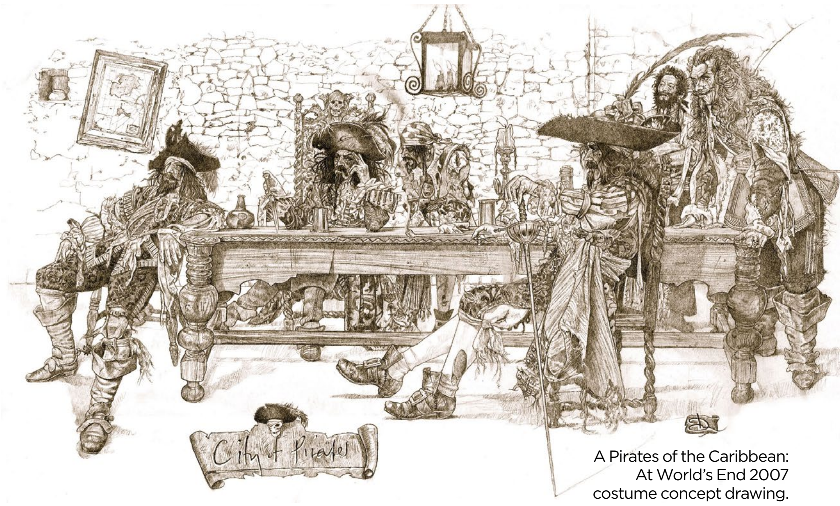
I guess the best piece of advice I could give is: expect to be a journeyman. It's pretty hard work. You have to be prepared to not have much of a social life at times. Because that's what it takes."

CONCEPT ART ASSOCIATION

Concept Art Association is an organisation committed to elevating and raising the profile of concept artists, their art and their involvement in the entertainment industries. Its annual Concept Art Awards Show showcases and recognises behind-the-scenes individuals working in entertainment concept art. **conceptartassociation.com.**


Character concept of Butch Cavendish from 2013's The Lone Ranger.

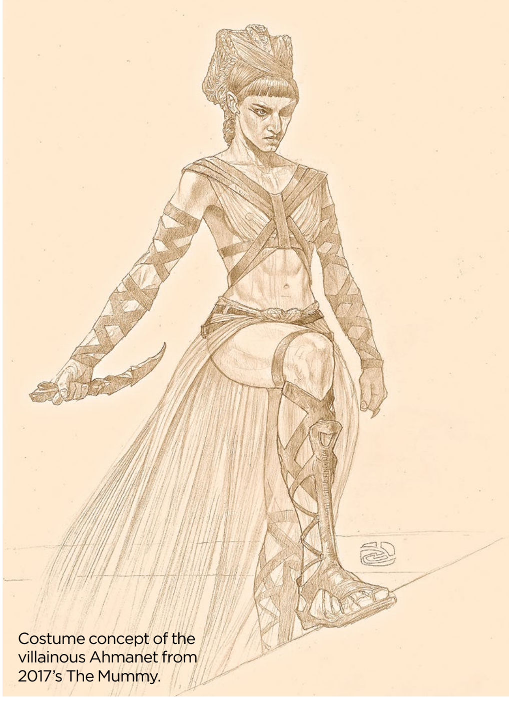

King Kinloch from the 2014 film Maleficent.

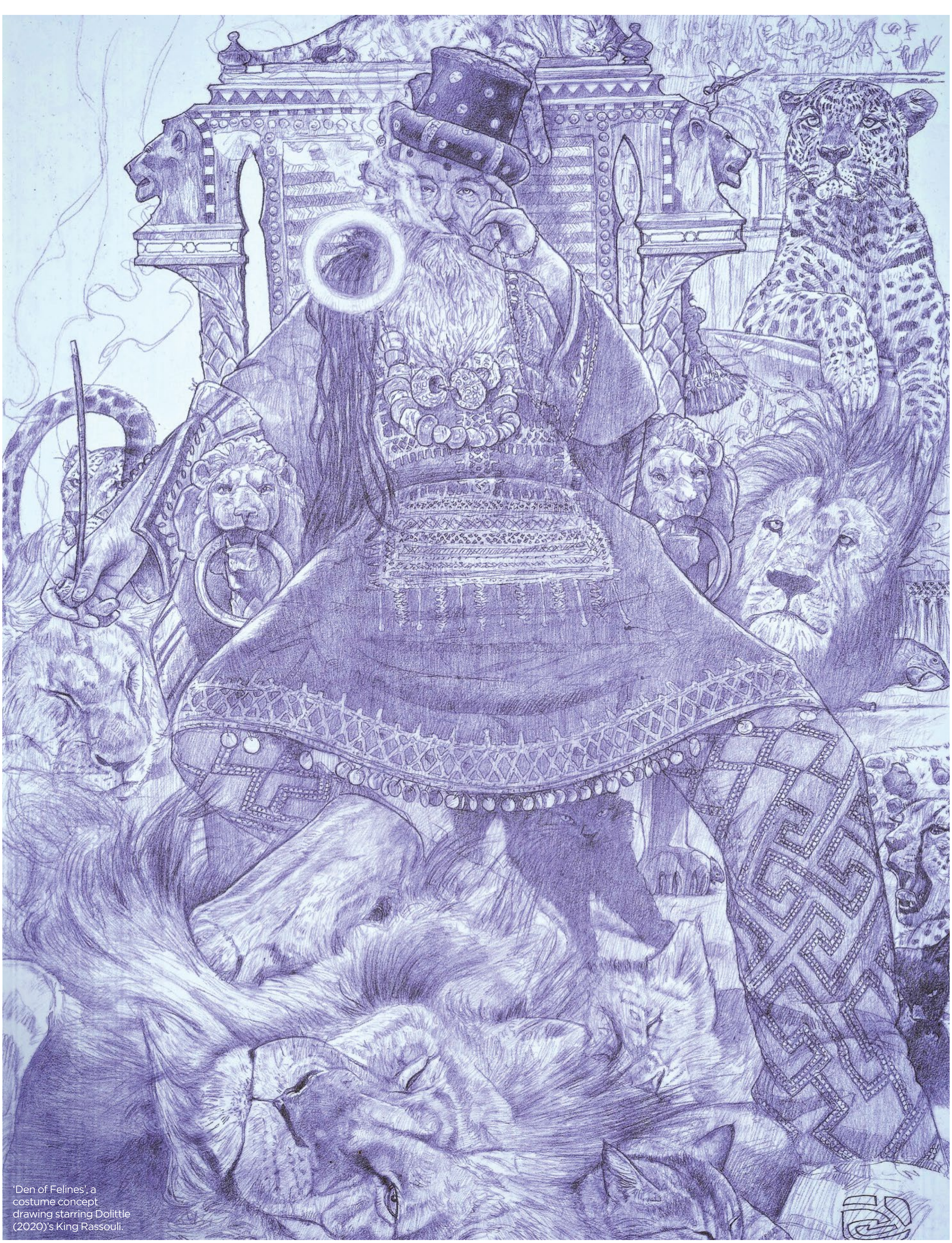


A Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End 2007 costume concept drawing.

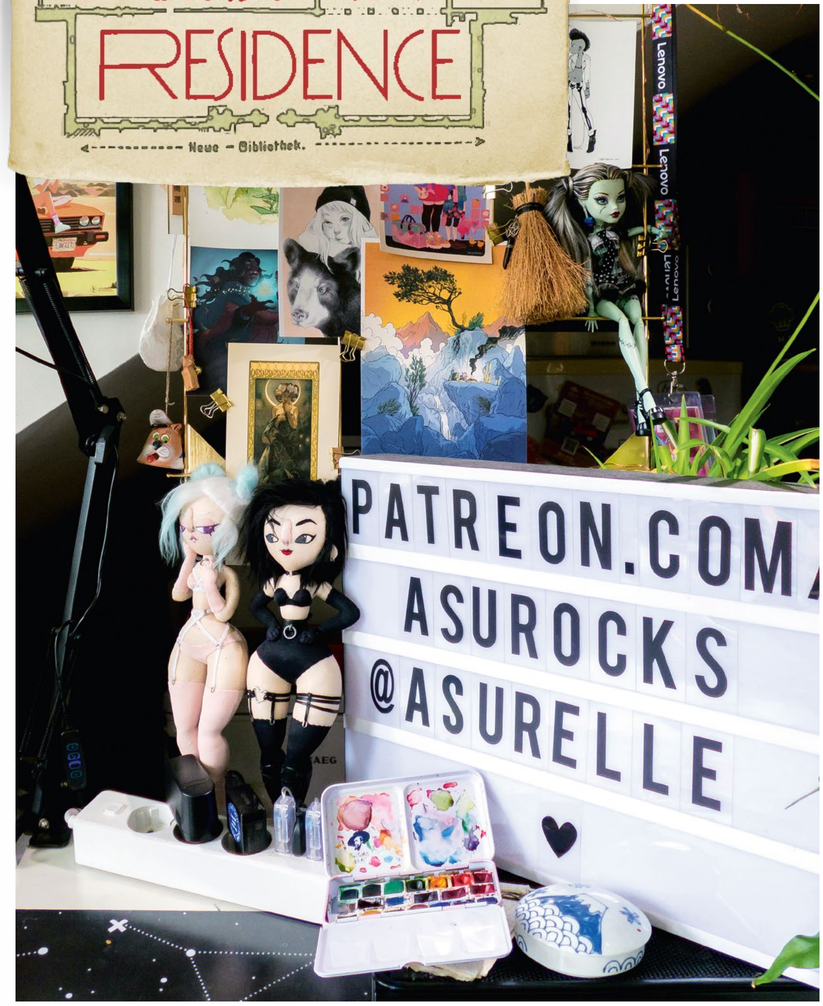
Darrell Warner's workspace. Darrell has been working as a freelance costume concept illustrator for film and television for the last 20 years.

As one of the most highly regarded costume concept illustrators in the industry, and one of the few remaining who still illustrates traditionally, Darrell has worked on Pirates of the Caribbean, Dolittle the first Guardians of the Galaxy, and many others. You can see more of his work on his website, www.darrellwarner.co.uk.


Costume concept of the villainous Ahmanet from 2017's The Mummy.



'Den of Felines', a costume concept drawing starring Dolittle (2020)'s King Rassouli.



I had the idea to have my Patreon URL and social media handle on a light box so it can always be seen in videos. I bought multiple sets of letters and none of them had a /, so in the end I took an X and used nail polish remover.

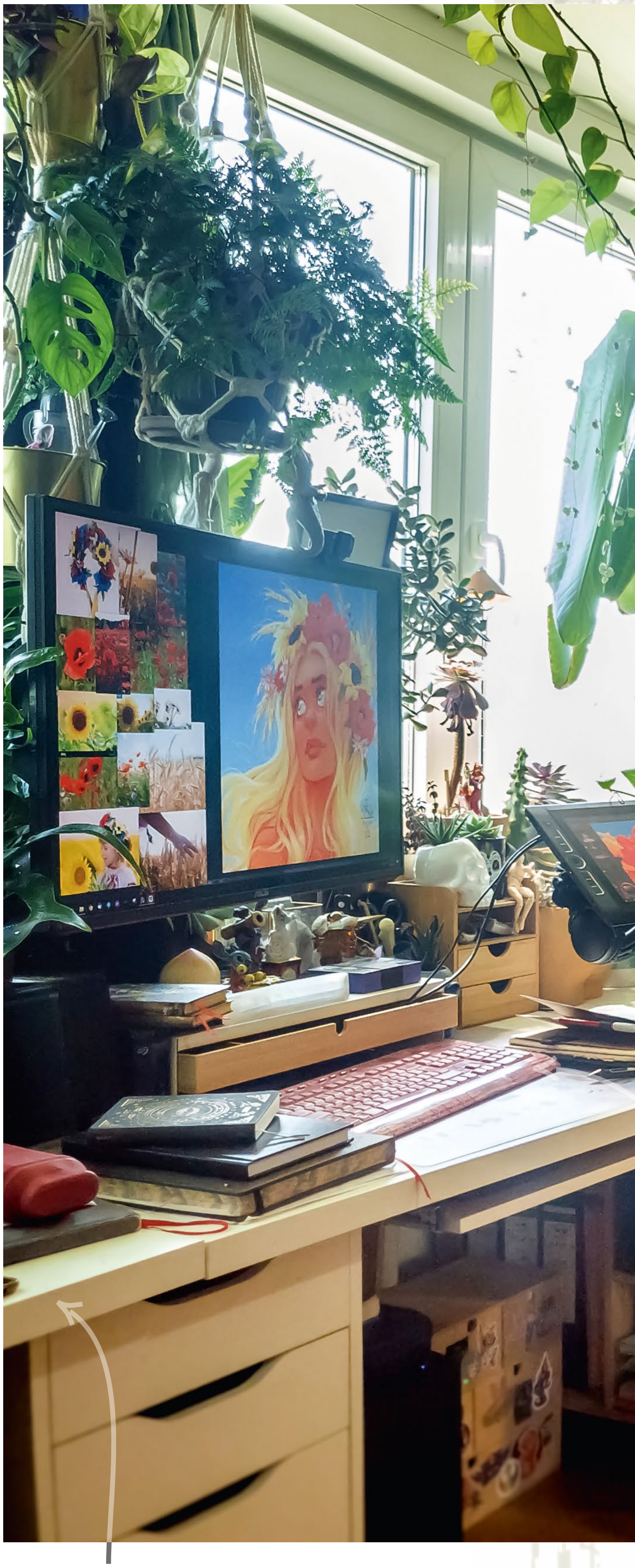
Olga 'AsuRocks' Andriyenko

Plant life Peek inside the easily bored artist's creative jungle where fluffy predators roam and ideas grow

Me and my partner share a two-room apartment in Hamburg, Germany and we both freelance from home. So our living room is also our office and our kitchen, too. And also our garden, I guess. Despite the limited space I enjoy the luxury of having two desks to be able to switch from digital work to traditional art freely. But you can quickly spot the fridge behind my drawing table.

I love many things and get bored fast from monotonous routines, so I try to keep my workspace fun and exciting. Maybe a bit too exciting sometimes, because it's also easy to get distracted – like when I notice that a plant next to me looks thirsty and suddenly I've spent an hour on a complete watering session. On the other hand, this distraction might be exactly the moment when I get a really good idea. It's a gamble.

My main working device is the Wacom MobileStudio Pro. It gives

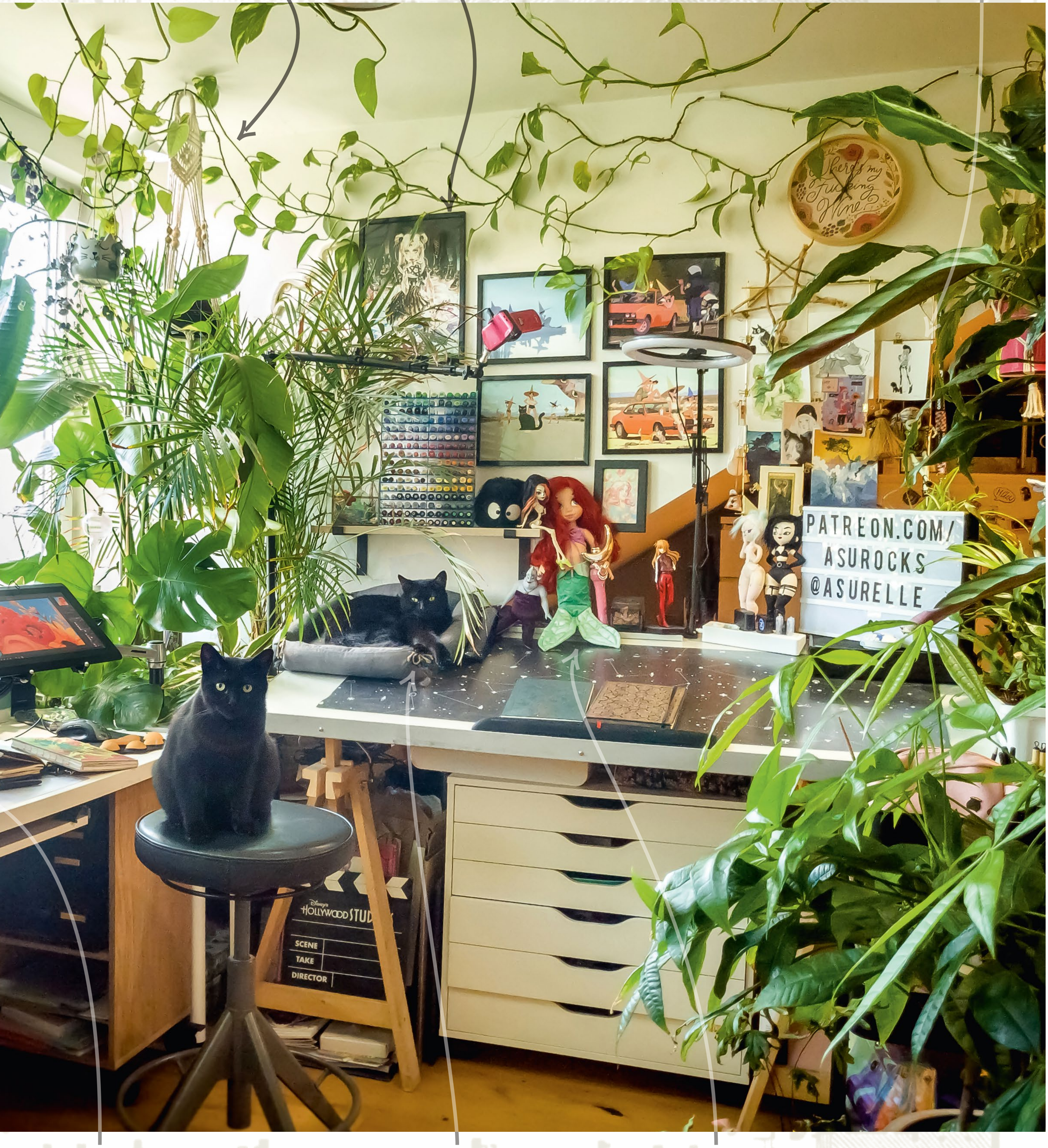


My partner's desk is right next to mine on the left. When we're both working it's great and it's easier to focus when someone is focused next to you. When one of us chooses active procrastination instead (like me deciding to move all the plants to different places) it can be annoying.

I have to be extra careful when watering these hanging plants so I don't water the electronic devices underneath by accident.

I don't have that much wall space for art, so hard decisions had to be made. I chose Sailor Moon, painted by Cosmic Spectrum, and the adorable witch roadtrip series by Woonyoung Jung.

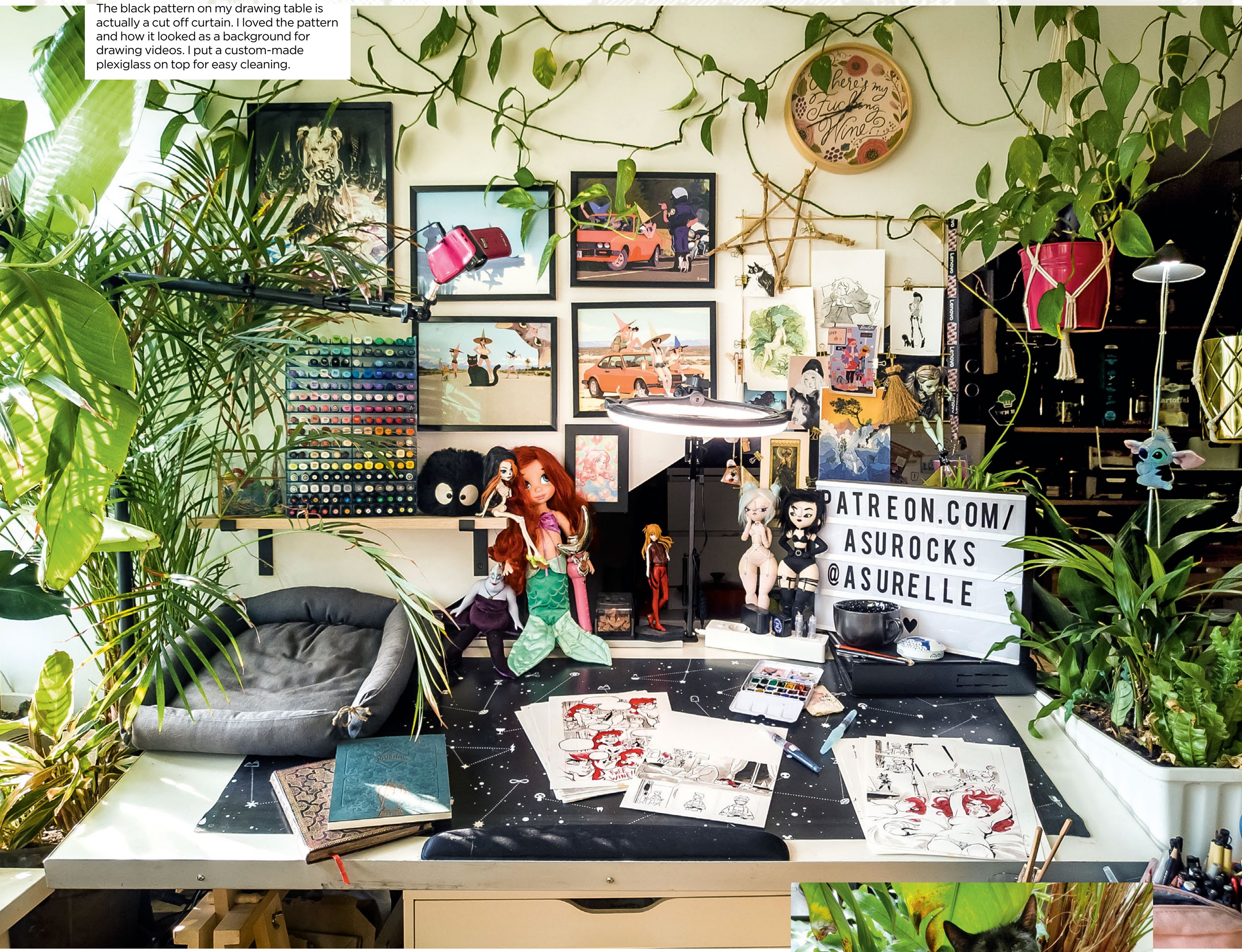
Most of the postcards on this board are from my artist friends. We have built a small and personal community here in Hamburg and it has been a great source of inspiration, advice, fun and mental support for years.



This pink keyboard got handed down to me from a colleague at a gaming company I worked at when she left the company. When I left to pursue freelancing I took it with me for good luck.

When I'm lucky, my cats Luna and Nubis don't lie down on my keyboard or drawing tablet, but in their designated cat bed. Upside: really cute. Downside: sometimes makes me want to stop working and take a nap.

Do any other adults have this problem that they love toys and buy them, but then realise that they don't know how to play with them anymore? That's why they end up around my workspace.



The black pattern on my drawing table is actually a cut off curtain. I loved the pattern and how it looked as a background for drawing videos. I put a custom-made plexiglass on top for easy cleaning.

Where's my fucking wine?
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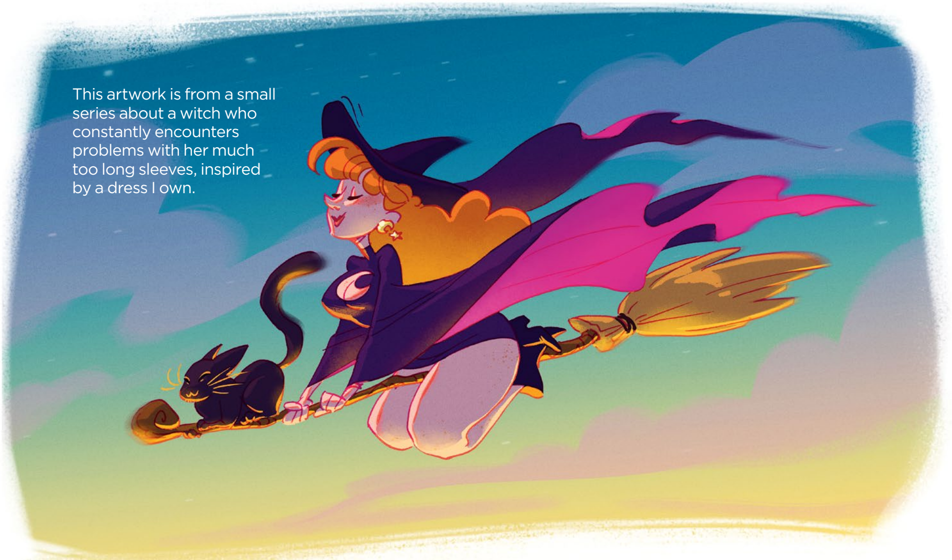
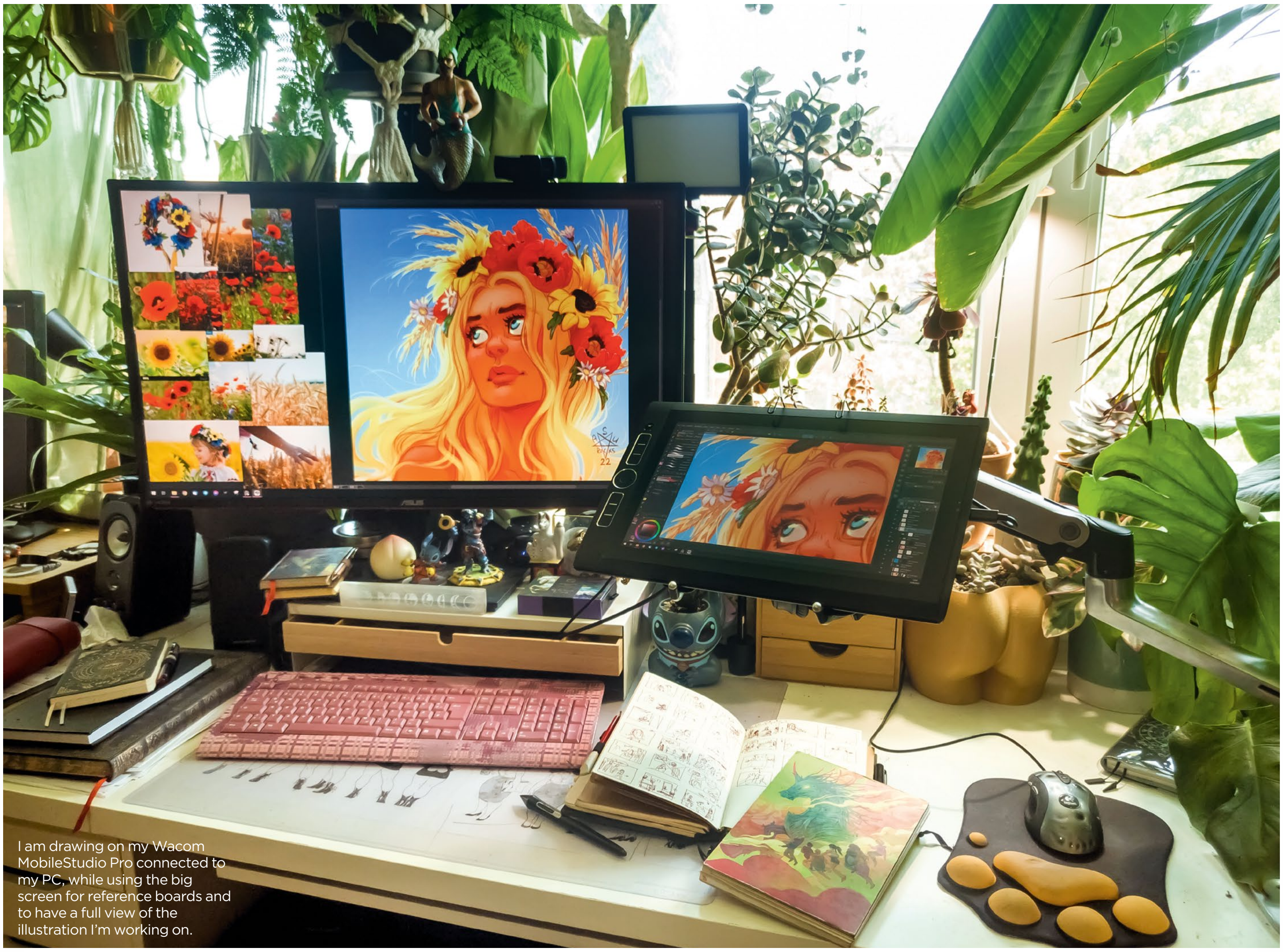


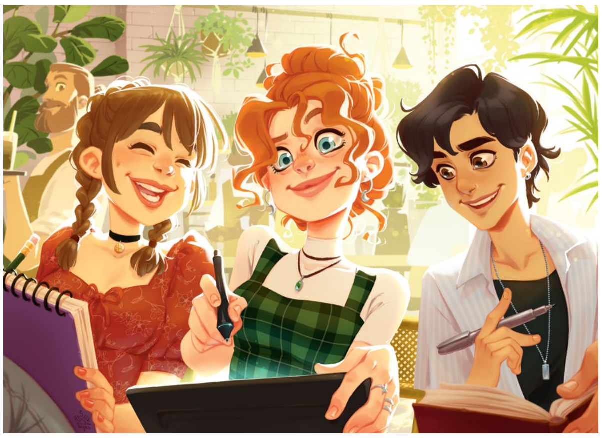
This artwork is from a small series about a witch who constantly encounters problems with her much too long sleeves, inspired by a dress I own.

My demotivational coaches Luna and Nubis working hard.

I know it's very popular for digital artists to hide in dark rooms, but I prefer natural light… even if it means I have to double-check the colours of my illustrations in the evening.



I am drawing on my Wacom MobileStudio Pro connected to my PC, while using the big screen for reference boards and to have a full view of the illustration I'm working on.



I made this illustration for Clip Studio Paint. It's my most-used painting software, so I was really happy about this collaboration.

> “I love many things and get bored fast from monotonous routines, so I try to keep my workspace fun and exciting”

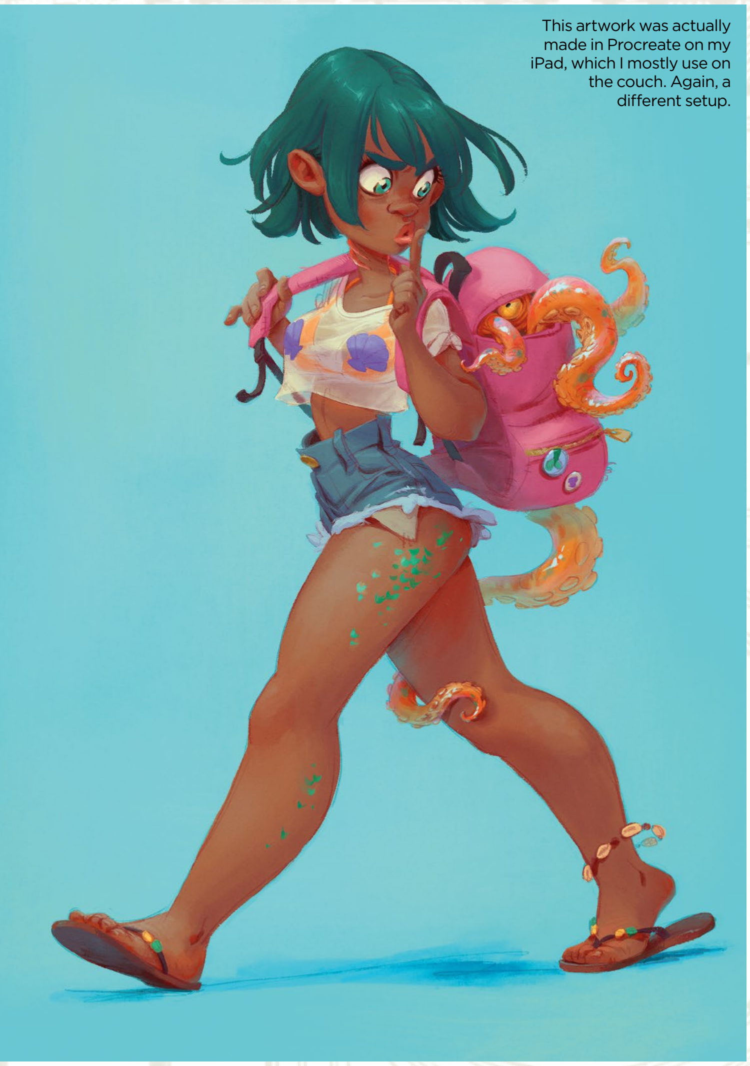
me the flexibility to sometimes work from the couch or even on the balcony (if it's not too sunny). I also take it with me when I travel. But it can also be connected to my PC with a Wacom Link cable, which makes it work like a normal screen tablet. This way I can utilise the higher power of my big machine. I have worked on a big Cintiq tablet before, but somehow I found I prefer the smaller 13” size. My second screen is big instead and allows me to see the whole artwork, have an elaborate reference board or watch YouTube. For colouring I sometimes even prefer to use an 'old-school' Intuos tablet while looking at the big screen. As I said: I like to switch up my routines.

A HEALTHIER SETUP

Recently I have found a way to combine an Ergotron monitor arm with a laptop holder which has the right size for both my MobileStudio and my Intuos tablet, and now I can adjust the placement and angle of the tablet I am drawing on freely. Even standing up from time to time is possible, without the need for a standing desk (I am a short individual though). This has finally made me use my desk more, as I must admit I have spent a bit too much time working from the couch during the pandemic.

For my traditional art table I have tried many things until I found a good setup that also allows me to record or stream my process, which I haven't done in a while. As it turns out, recording drawing videos is the easy part, but editing hours of process into an entertaining length takes a lot of time, which I rarely find.

Olga is an independent story, comic and visual development artist born in Ukraine and living in Germany. She has been working in games, animation and comics for almost 20 years, but is still excited about what comes next. www.asurocks.de



This artwork was actually made in Procreate on my iPad, which I mostly use on the couch. Again, a different setup.

The unicorn sketchbook is my current favourite and it reminds me of the most precious art event I go to every year: Trojan Horse Was A Unicorn. And yes, this is a butt planter! I found it on Etsy.

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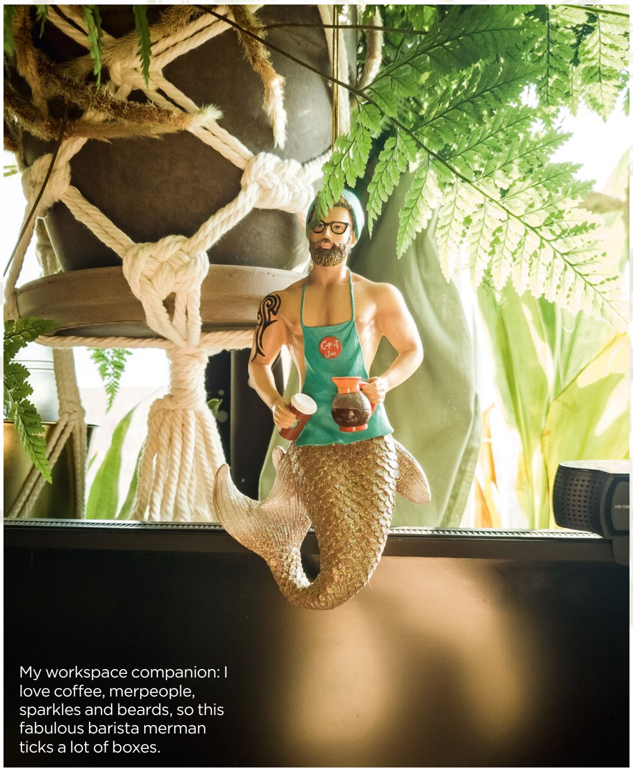
At night I prefer cosy lights all around. For making traditional art at later hours I have my trusted ring light.



My workspace companion: I love coffee, merpeople, sparkles and beards, so this fabulous barista merman ticks a lot of boxes.

During the pandemic some friends started online DnD sessions and now I'm hooked! So I invested in really fancy dice. The figurines are a wild group, but one of them is a 3D print of my first character design for a game I worked on, and the fox is from a shrine in Japan.

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Issue 215
August 2022

In our manga special, we go behind the scenes of beautiful animated film Belle, interview manga artists about their projects, and learn expert tips for mech design, manga-style fight scenes, and dynamic characters.

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Letters

YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS

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High end

Hello, I'm writing in to say well done on your recent issue of ImagineFX. As much as I love the focus on fantasy and science fiction art in its classic forms, it was really nice to see something a little different and that cover looks like something you'd normally see on a coffee table art book.

The accompanying tutorial was great too and I'll be pushing myself to do work with a more high-end feel myself now. Keep it up!

Kev, via email

Rob replies *Hi Kev. Thanks for the kind words. We totally agree here and love the cover for Issue 218. I'm a huge fan of classic fantasy art and love a good elf, dragon or mech of some kind, but it is great to showcase other types of art too. This is one of my favourite covers and we will be looking to do more in the future. For those that prefer the classics, don't worry. Plenty more where they came from.*

If you have any thoughts on styles you'd like to see in the magazine, please do drop me an email and let me know.

DID YOU MISS THE PREVIOUS PACKED ISSUE?

Don't worry – you can get hold of issue 218 at **ifxm.ag/single-ifx**.

Issue 218 had this stunning cover art and a tutorial on how you can create your own.

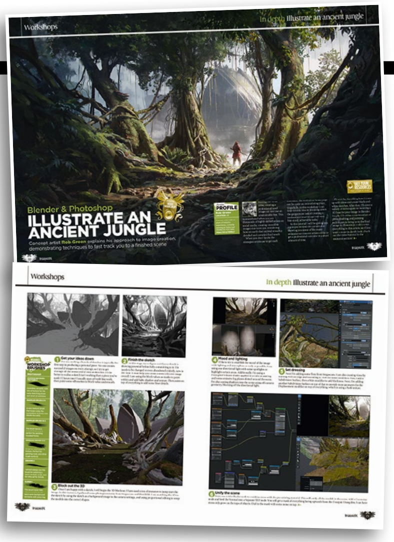
Workshops

In depth Striking portraits

Procreate

PAINT A STRIKING FEMALE PORTRAIT

Discover how Laura H. Rubin utilises colour, emotional contrasts and strong posing in her amazing character portraits



Workshops

In depth Illustrate an ancient jungle

Blender & Photoshop

ILLUSTRATE AN ANCIENT JUNGLE

Last month, Rob Green demonstrated how 3D tools can aid in the process of painting a lush jungle scene.

Landscape love

Hello! Just a quick one to say thanks for that epic landscape tutorial, using 3D to help set the scene. I don't use 3D much at all and had never even considered using it in this way. Now, I'll absolutely be adding it to my work, even if I end up painting over it. That's come in really useful for me and one that I'll read over and over.

Steve, via email

Rob replies *Hi Steve,*

Thanks for writing in to let us know. It's great to hear you've been inspired to broaden your tools of choice and I'm so pleased that we have been able to help with that.

Sometimes adding a new tool or technique to your arsenal proves to be a real push, and you'll start to reach unexpected new heights in your work.

As for 3D in 2D workflows I think it can be a really useful tool. It can serve to aid perspective, or be a really efficient blocking tool for quickly checking compositions.

Really? More AI?

Hi Rob,

AI content has got to stop. It's been featured in a couple of issues recently and it is clear to me that AI is bad for artists and art. Please don't put it in your magazine, which is otherwise great.

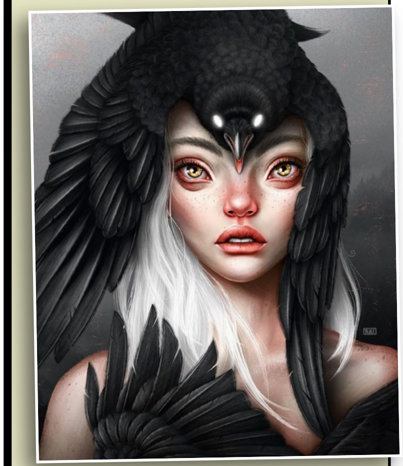
Sue, via email

Rob replies *Hi Sue. I can see why some parts of the community view AI as a threat and we try to keep a balance here. What I would suggest is that AI can actually be utilised as a really useful tool, in a broader workflow. To see what I mean, head to page 68 of this issue. Rachel Bradley's workshop is an excellent demonstration of what I'm talking about.*

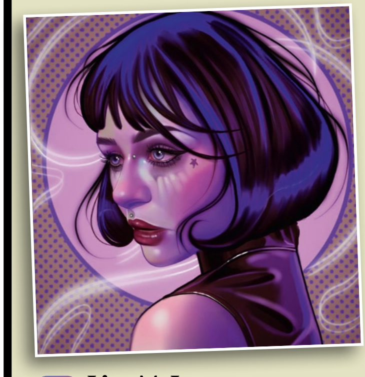
I hope that eases your mind a little and shows you some of the possibilities, for those that want them.

FRESH PAINT

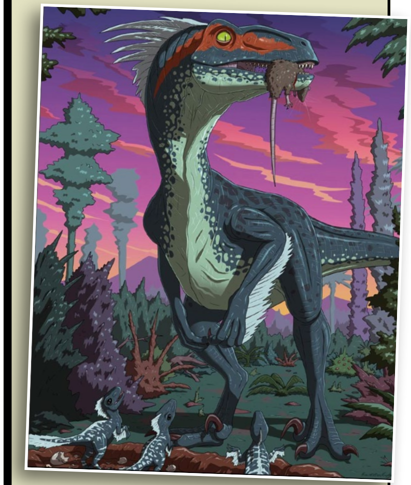
New works that have grabbed our attention



Gülce Baycık @gulcebaycik

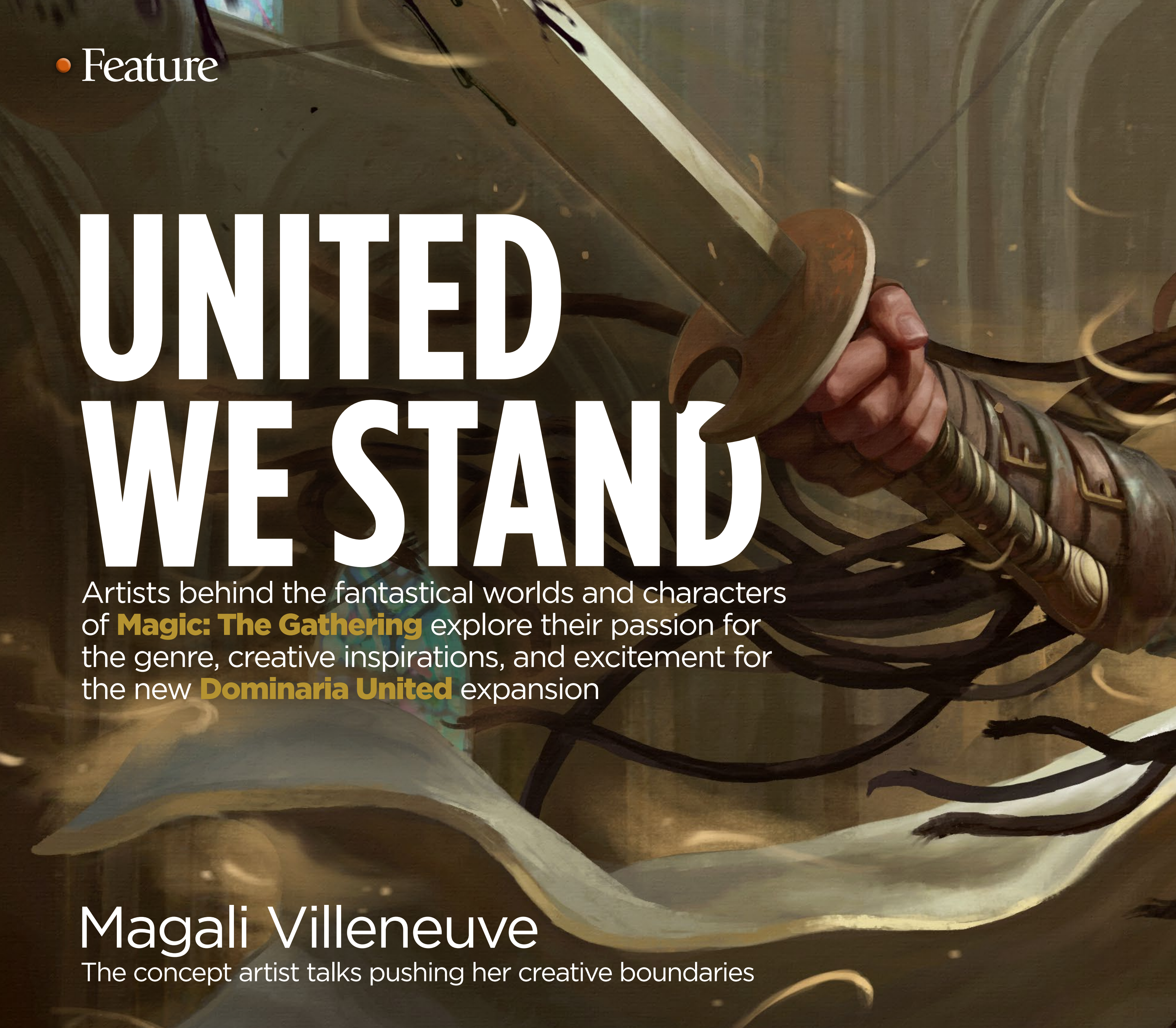


Lisa McIntyre @lisa_mcintyre_art



Brian J Murphy @wootusart

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



UNITED WE STAND

Artists behind the fantastical worlds and characters of **Magic: The Gathering** explore their passion for the genre, creative inspirations, and excitement for the new **Dominaria United** expansion

Magali Villeneuve

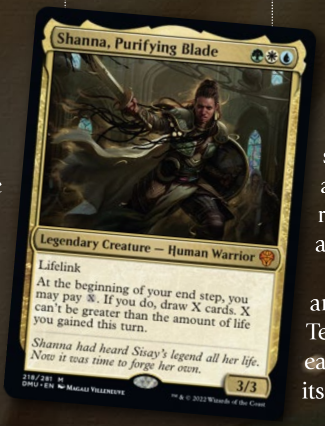
The concept artist talks pushing her creative boundaries

Tell us a little about your background as an artist.

The dream of becoming an artist sparked at age 12, when I first watched Disney's Beauty and the Beast. I was absolutely mesmerised by the Beast's animation and design. For a few years, my goal was to become an animator, until I read my first fantasy book when I was around 18. It was Robert Jordan's 'The Wheel of Time'. This genre I had never experienced before was such a shock that it made me change my goals completely. I started as a professional artist in the book publishing field 15 years ago, completely self-taught. And my first jobs really were for teeny-tiny publishing houses. The least I can say is I started from the bottom and climbed the ladder one rung at a time.

Is the genre of fantasy/sci-fi a focused area for your art or do you work in wider fields?

I would say my art is mainly focused on these areas, because that's what I was drawn to from the beginning. On the other hand, whenever I can make more personal choices in my art, my approach of fantasy tends to be pretty realistic. Naturally, I'm not really into what I would call 'pyrotechnic fantasy', nor the overly enchanting vibe either. If I had to find a way to depict my personal art, it would probably be something like 'dark realism with a touch of fantasy'. A good example of this would be my 'Death's Shadow' art released in my Secret Lair Artist Series for Magic: The Gathering. It was a rare occasion to paint pieces with complete freedom and no art direction. This piece in particular shows clearly my affinity for classical art as I chose to give a personal interpretation of the Pietà.



Shanna, Purifying Blade

Legendary Creature — Human Warrior

Lifelink

At the beginning of your end step, you may pay X. If you do, draw X cards. X can't be greater than the amount of life you gained this turn.

Shanna had heard Sisay's legend all her life. Now it was time to forge her own.

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3/3

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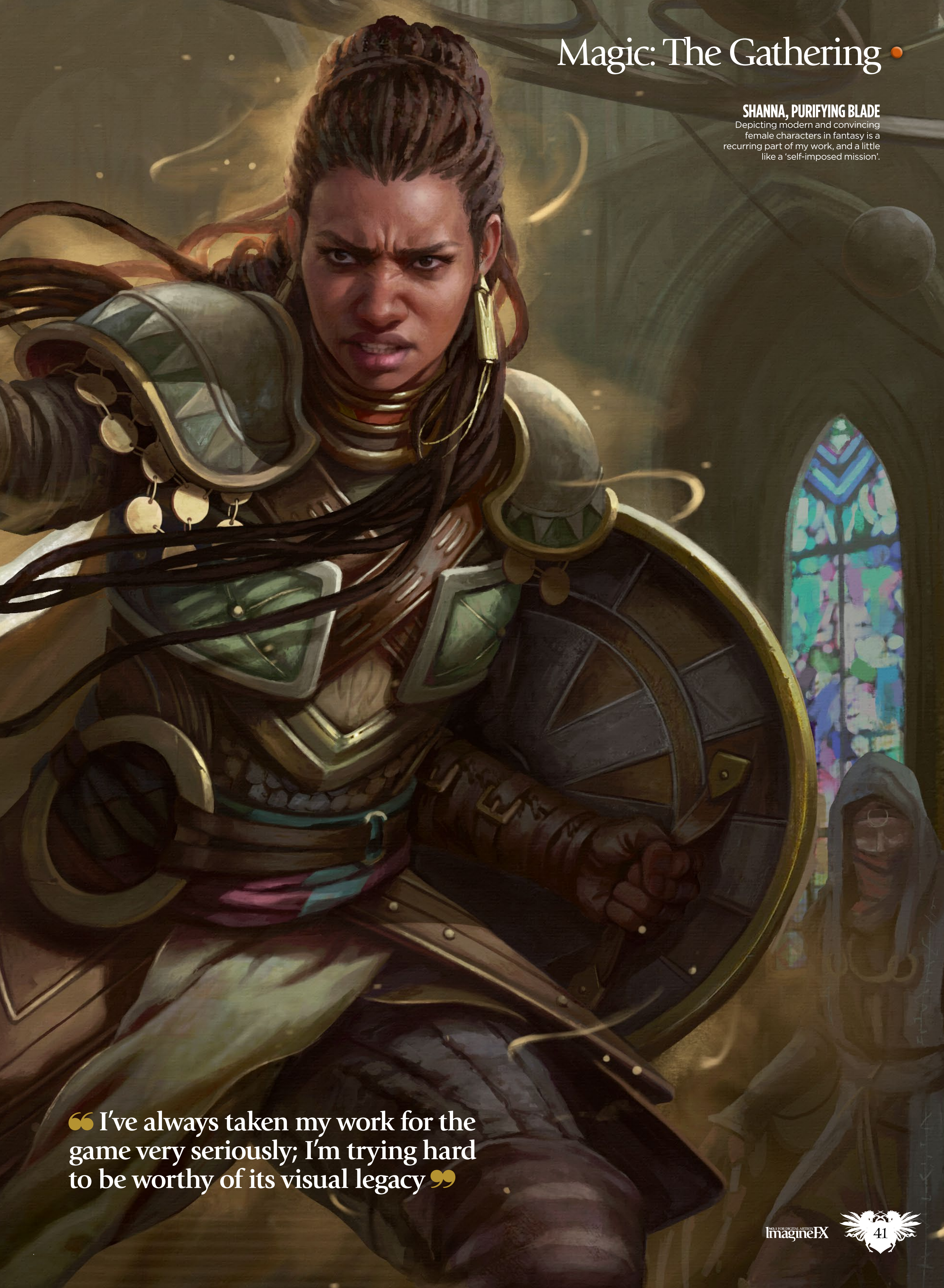
What does Magic: The Gathering mean to your art? Has this universe informed your creative choices?

First of all, it means a dream I thought impossible that did come true. I remember watching guys playing the game back in high school, and wondering how the artists illustrating the cards could reach such a level and work for such a prestigious company.

Then, as a Magic: The Gathering artist, it helped me grow up. Technically, mainly, as each card or each image I'm commissioned brings its good share of challenges. I've

All Magic: The Gathering images TM and © Wizards of the Coast



SHANNA, PURIFYING BLADE
Depicting modern and convincing female characters in fantasy is a recurring part of my work, and a little like a 'self-imposed mission'.

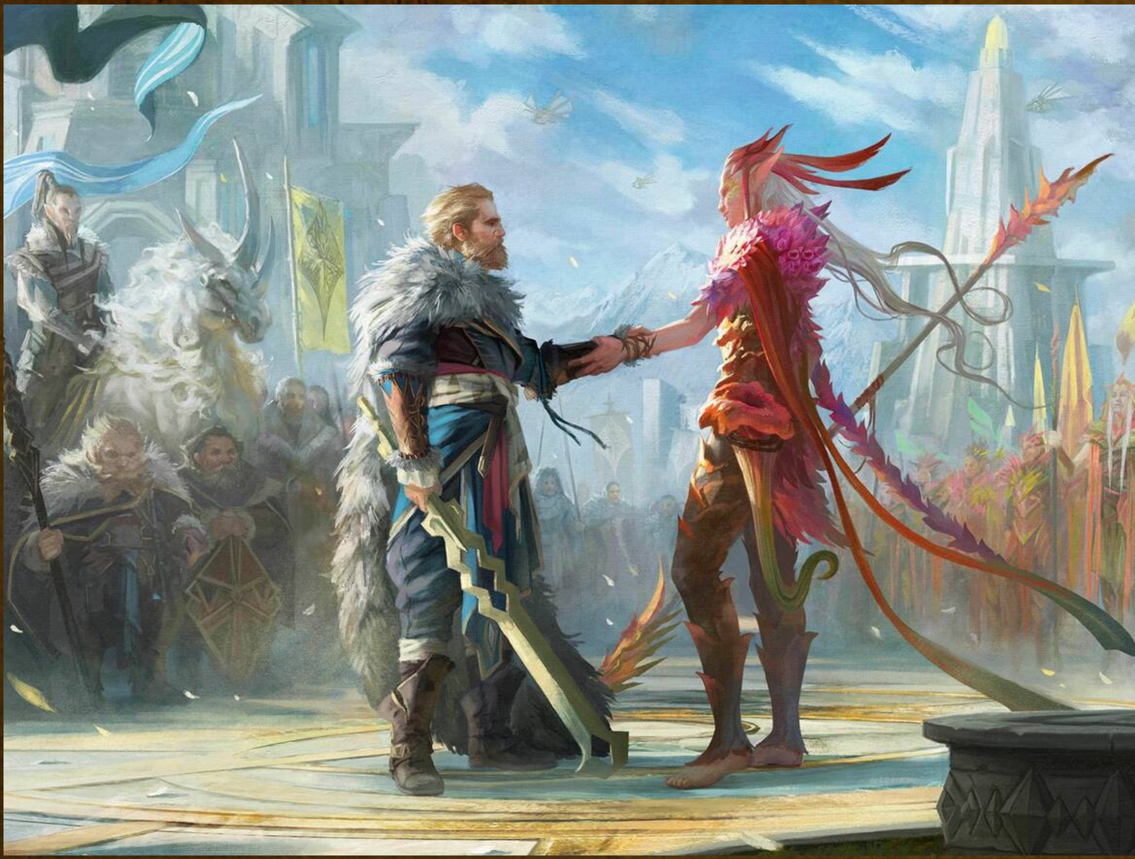
> “I've always taken my work for the game very seriously; I'm trying hard to be worthy of its visual legacy”

always taken my work for the game very seriously; I'm trying hard to be worthy of its visual legacy. Magic pushed me beyond my natural boundaries, especially when it came to more action-y scenes, or magical effects. Or even creatures; I'm really not a creature-maker, but every now and then Magic: The Gathering art directors would trust me enough to ask for a dragon, a goblin, or any other non-human being. In all cases, there's no choice: whether you're at ease or not, you must find a solution to make your image look good. It's the best way I know to learn, and evolve. My art has evolved so much, and has become more mature since my first Magic: The Gathering card, ten years ago. I must clearly thank the game for that.

Are there any artists who have worked on the Magic: The Gathering game who have inspired you and your work over the years?
To be honest, not really. My most important inspirations come from much 'older' things. There was also a conscious effort on my side to not fall into the trap of trying to make my fantasy art look more like this artist's or this one's. Fantasy art is prone to commonplaces. Plus, an artist can easily feel overwhelmed by comparing themselves to other fellow illustrators. My strategy to try to avoid that – and it's only a very subjective approach – is to stay away from my own field when it comes to building my artistic culture and references.

Of course, I know and admire my co-workers' art, past and present, and of course I look at what they do. I also take the time to observe their technical tricks. But I don't let their work be a direct influence.

Tell us a bit about your process. Are you traditional or digital? How do you approach a new piece? What tools do you use?



DOMINARIA UNITED CONCEPT ART
This was made at the very end of the Dominaria concept push, and one of its interests was to show all of our new designs together and see how it worked visually.

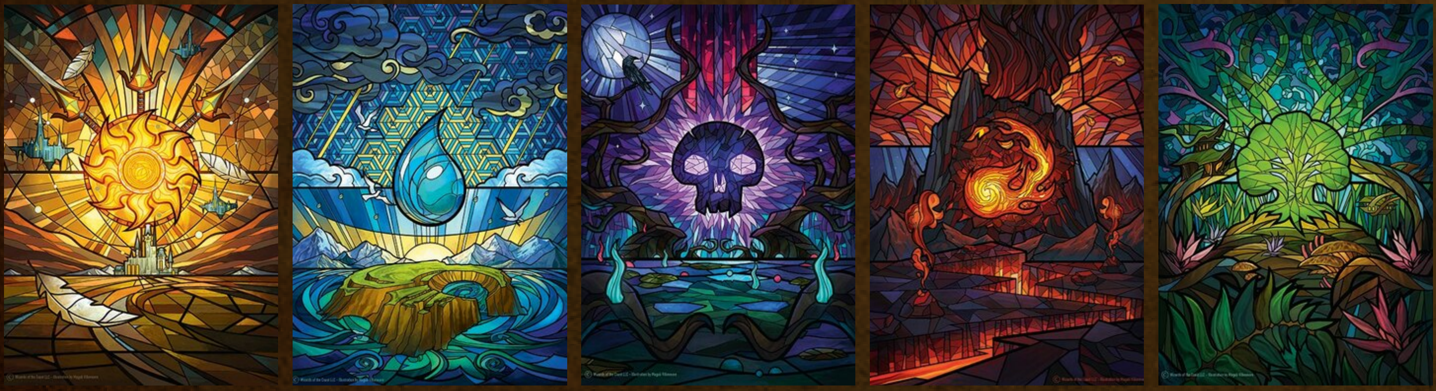
By necessity, for the time being I'm digital. Before I became a pro, I trained myself in the use of oils, acrylics and graphite mostly. But in 2006, it was already clear digital painting was an important skill to get. And honestly, it is safer for my nerves, especially for the revision phases of the work process. A digital painting is much easier and quicker to fix if need be.

When I start working on a piece, I either make a pencil or digital sketch, and I start building the piece's reference board, my number-one concern always being anatomy. I pay a lot of attention to my characters' faces, gestures and proportions. This takes a sound reference library, whether it be stock I buy or personal photos.

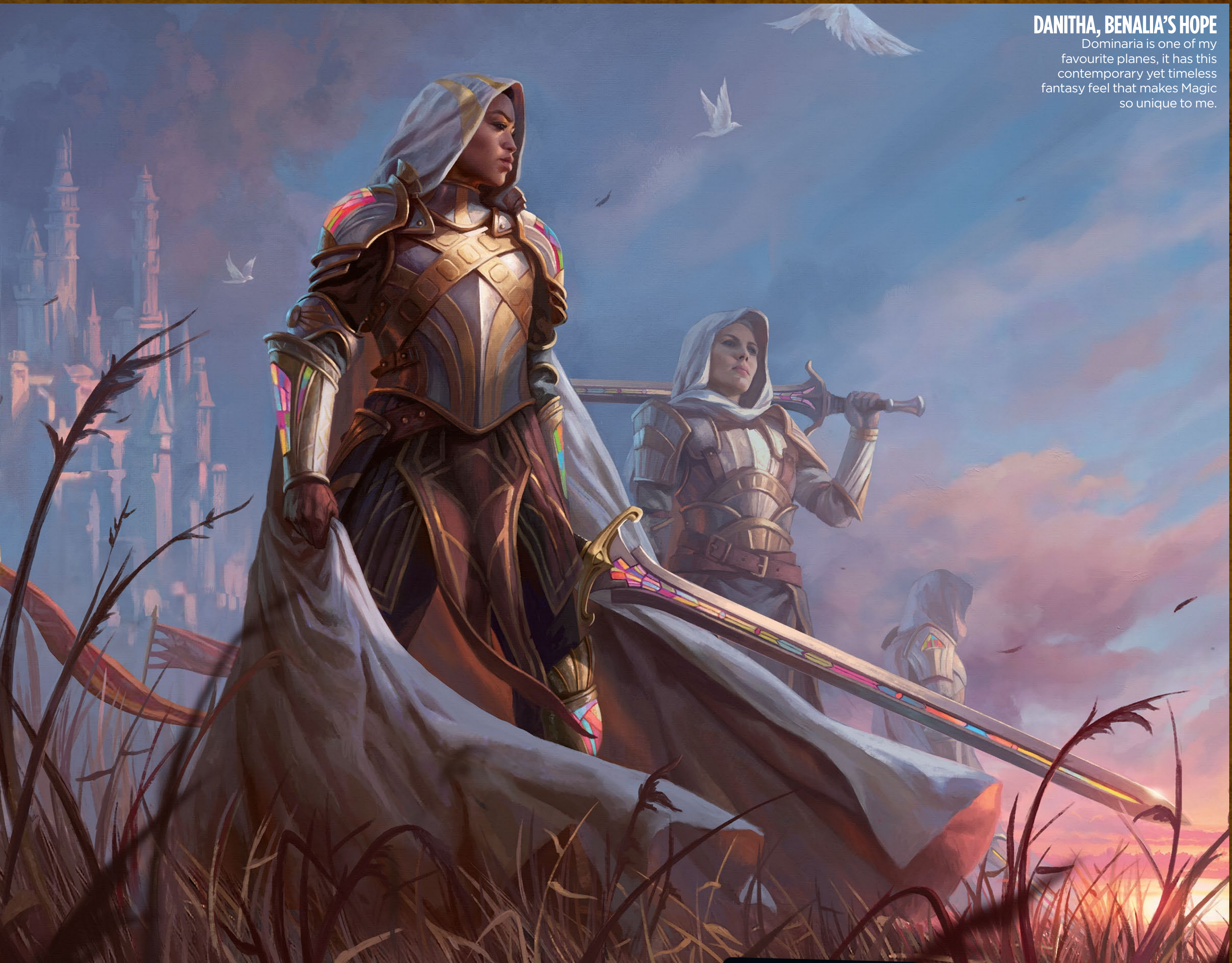
I work with an iMac, an Intuos Pro and a Cintiq. I mostly use the latter when it comes to line work. For example, I used it a lot for my stained glass pieces in Dominaria, as they required a steady hand.

My brushes in Photoshop are all textured, hard brushes. I banished soft brushes years ago, as my technique is very close to what it is in oils: a lot of brush strokes, progressive gradations. I actually have a very minimalist use of the software. It is probably the reason why I'm not a fast painter, but I have my heart set on keeping this kind of 'traditional' way of painting things.

What about the Dominaria expansion excites you as an artist?
Dominaria is my favourite setting along with Zendikar and Kaladesh. Personally, this is where I can feel the game's soul express itself the most



DOMINARIA STAINED GLASS BASICS
Commissions like these are always exciting, and a great opportunity to try something very different, which is not easy to do when you don't have spare time for personal work.



DANITHA, BENALIA'S HOPE
Dominaria is one of my favourite planes, it has this contemporary yet timeless fantasy feel that makes Magic so unique to me.

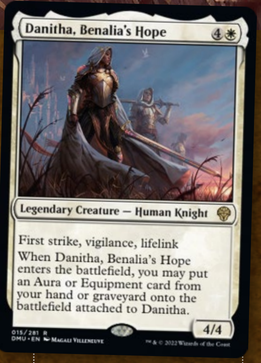
powerfully. So anything based on Dominaria is exciting to me!

As for the upcoming Dominaria United set, I also worked as a concept artist to define the plane's new visual elements. The sets you're doing concept art for are always special, as you get to see how your explorations are translated by other artists on the card art. I am really looking forward to seeing that!

Also, in Dominaria I had my first time ever working on Basic Lands. It may sound surprising, but as a 'character maker' I'm not the art directors' number-one choice for Lands – understandably. Here, I was lucky enough to be commissioned for this set of five Lands based on the stained-glass concept, where I was asked to evoke the plane of Dominaria through these very stylised and colourful designs. It was a fantastic challenge.

How do you feel about being part of such an extensive universe, with such a large and loyal following of fans and players?
There's never a moment, whether working on a piece or attending an event, when I forget about the players.

> There's never a moment, whether working on a piece or attending an event, when I forget about the players



Danitha, Benalia's Hope 4

Legendary Creature — Human Knight

First strike, vigilance, lifelink

When Danitha, Benalia's Hope enters the battlefield, you may put an Aura or Equipment card from your hand or graveyard onto the battlefield attached to Danitha.

4/4

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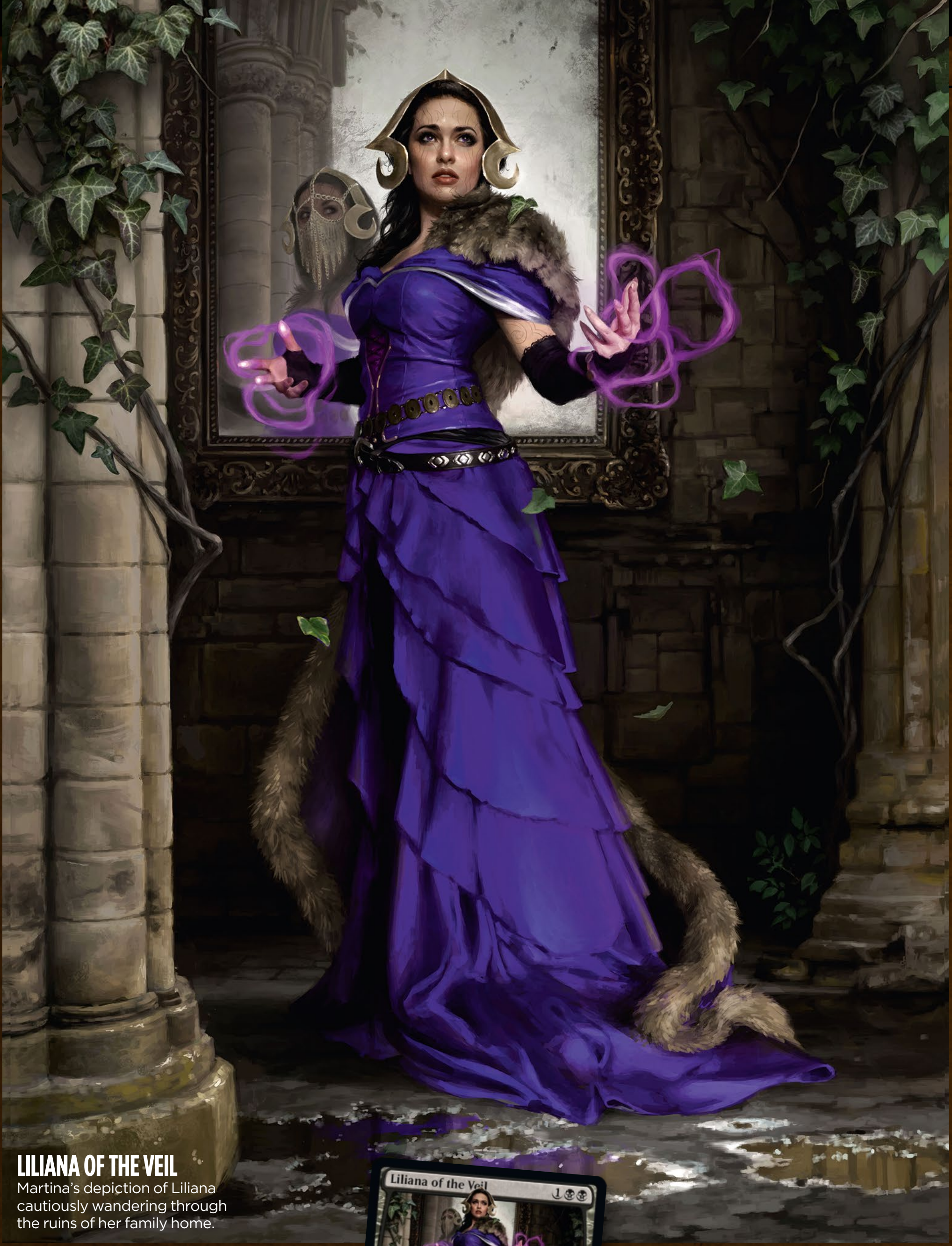
When I'm creating a piece, of course I want to have fun, and I want my art director to be happy with it. But just as importantly, I want my images to, hopefully, enhance the players' game experience. If players weren't there to buy and play the game, we wouldn't be there either. And this game has been around for 30 years… All this deserves respect. I consider myself extremely lucky to be one illustrator out of so many, and even luckier to have so many people looking at my work, sending kind comments, making us illustrators feel like we can bring something positive to their hobby. In ten years, I never grew tired of illustrating the game, the excitement is the same each time I'm receiving a commission. So my goal is to keep working hard to be able to see what's coming next in Magic's journey.

Martina Fačková

How a love for fantasy led to an art career...

Tell us a little about your background as an artist.
I was drawing and painting all my life in a local atelier, but art never seemed as a viable professional path. During my school years I got more and more determined to at least try to pursue my dream of being a professional artist, and I managed to get my first art job at a local outsourcing studio.

After I finished my Master's degree the studio closed and I had to ask myself questions like, "Who even am I as an artist, what do I want to paint?" I stumbled upon Adam Duff´s online mentorship and chats with him helped me confidently paint what I loved (which was dark, dramatic fantasy illustration) and approach other educators and generally just take this art thing head on. I went to a couple Schoolism workshops, did a mentorship with Winona Nelson, I won a Muddy Colors Scholarship and went to IMC where I got to meet Lauren Panepinto, Karla Ortiz, Dan Dos Santos and other professionals from the field. After seeing my work they were all very encouraging of me submitting my portfolio to Magic: The Gathering, and in a couple of months I got my first card!



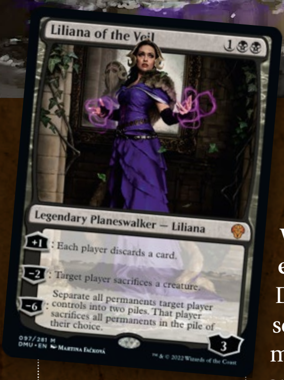
LILIANA OF THE VEIL
Martina's depiction of Liliana cautiously wandering through the ruins of her family home.

> “The details, motion and realistic scenes and characters were something I wanted to be able to do so badly”

What does Magic: The Gathering mean to your art? Has this universe informed your creative choices?
From the beginning, Magic: The Gathering art has been my ultimate inspiration. The details, motion and realistic depictions of scenes and characters were something I wanted to be able to do so badly.

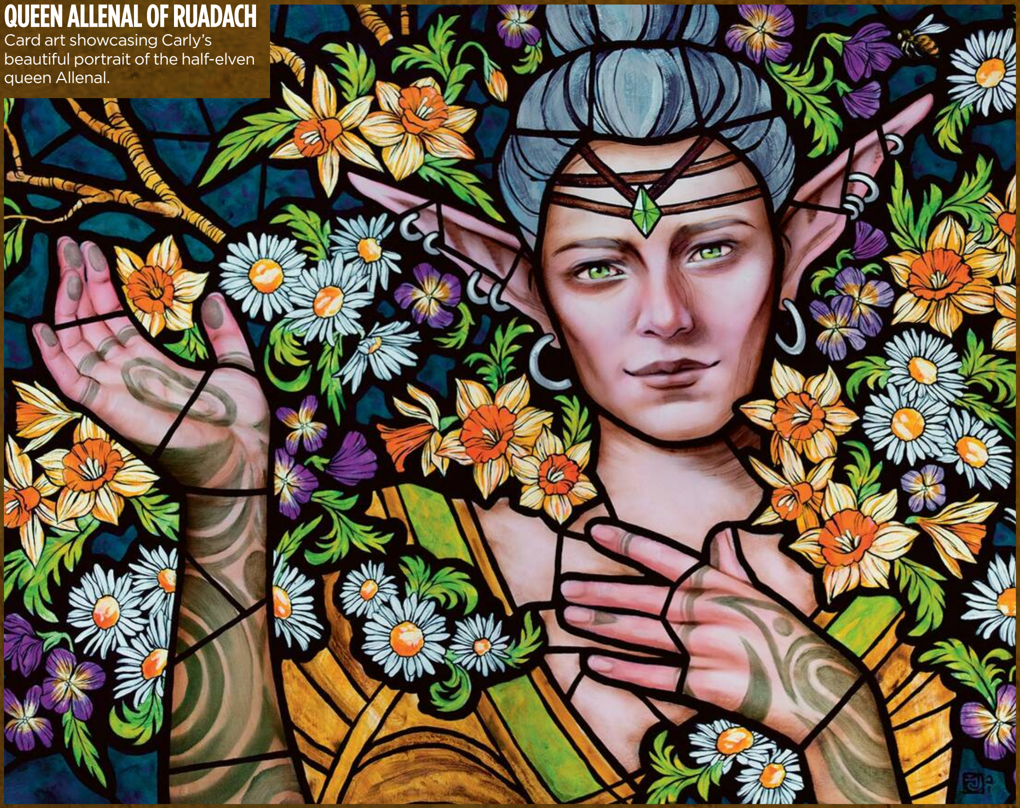
Are there any artists who have worked on Magic: The Gathering who have inspired you?
Oh gosh, so many! But my biggest influences from Magic: The Gathering must be Piotr Jablonski, Karla Ortiz and Cynthia Sheppard.

Tell us a bit about your process. Are you traditional or digital? How do you approach a new piece? What tools do you use?
I do all my new work digitally. My process is quite straightforward. After receiving the brief I fantasise about the scene, I look for design inspiration on Pinterest, in movies, in nature and wherever I can. I pose myself in front of the mirror, I try out different lighting options and I sketch a couple ideas. After one sketch is approved I gather as much reference material as possible and slowly render out the piece until I'm satisfied with it.


Liliana of the Veil
Legendary Planeswalker — Liliana
+1: Each player discards a card.
−2: Target player sacrifices a creature.
−6: Separate all permanents target player controls into two piles. That player sacrifices all permanents in the pile of their choice.
3

What about the Dominaria expansion excites you as an artist?
Dominaria is a classic high fantasy setting, which in many ways reminds me of my own country and places I grew up in. Old castles with mouldy smell and rich history, green plains, dark forests and snowy mountains with knights on horses are all things very close to my heart and served as an inspiration for my work from when I was just a kid with crayons. It's unbelievably satisfying to be able to paint these things for a living.

How do you feel about being part of such an extensive universe with such a large and loyal following?
I definitely feel very grateful. Having so many eyes on my work keeps me determined to make each new piece my next masterpiece.



QUEEN ALLENAL OF RUADACH
Card art showcasing Carly's beautiful portrait of the half-elven queen Allenal.

Carly Janine Mazur

Carly talks growing up with a love of Magic since childhood

Tell us a little about your background as an artist.
My dreams shifted from entomologist/herpetologist when I was about ten; I then knew I wanted to be an artist when I grew up. I went to an art magnet school in high school and started a tattoo apprenticeship when I was 15. I attended Massachusetts College of Art and Design and got my MFA in Illustration. The most credit, however, I give to Rebecca Guay's Illustration Master Class and its roster of amazing artists that really connected me to and taught me the ins-and-outs of the sci-fi/fantasy illustration world!

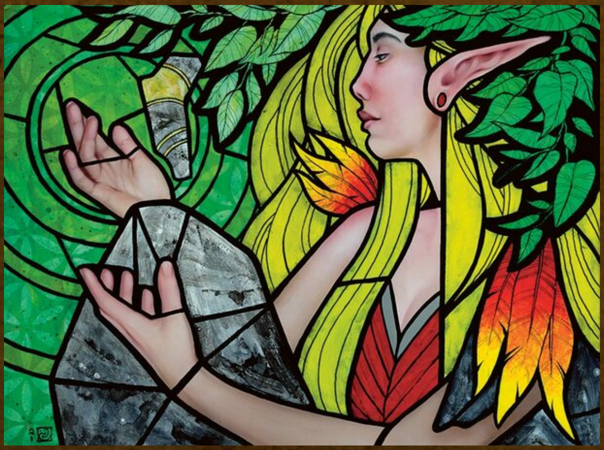
Is the genre of fantasy/sci-fi a focused area for your art or do you work in wider fields?
I'm primarily a pop-surrealist illustrator, but I'm a child of sci-fi/fantasy. I grew up on cartoons, video games, comic books, tabletop and card games. It's where my roots are and where my family is, and when I am able to lend my artistic vision to such things my inner child screams and jumps around!

What does Magic: The Gathering mean to your art? Has this universe informed your creative choices?
Magic: The Gathering was a surefire catalyst to me wanting to be an illustrator. My older brother would take me along to buy packs and play at local comic shops, and I fell in love with the artwork on the cards when I was still a little too young to play.

Are there any artists who have worked on the Magic: The Gathering game who have inspired you and your work over the years?
Rebecca Guay and Scott Fischer, definitely! Each of them have styles you could pick out at a distance, and to this day their respective paths and ever-evolving artwork keep inspiring me.

> **"Magic was a surefire catalyst to me wanting to be an illustrator"**

MERIA, SCHOLAR OF ANTIQUITY
Carly brings her unique style to this young elven artificer.



Tell us a bit about your process. Are you traditional or digital? How do you approach a new piece? What tools do you use?
I work traditionally in oil and acrylic, but Photoshop is my friend. Composition is key, and I mess around with the sketch first on the computer, resizing and moving and rotating every element of the drawing before I then print it out and mount it on board. This is primarily for the figure in my pieces, as my more abstract and graphic elements come more organically while I work in paint.

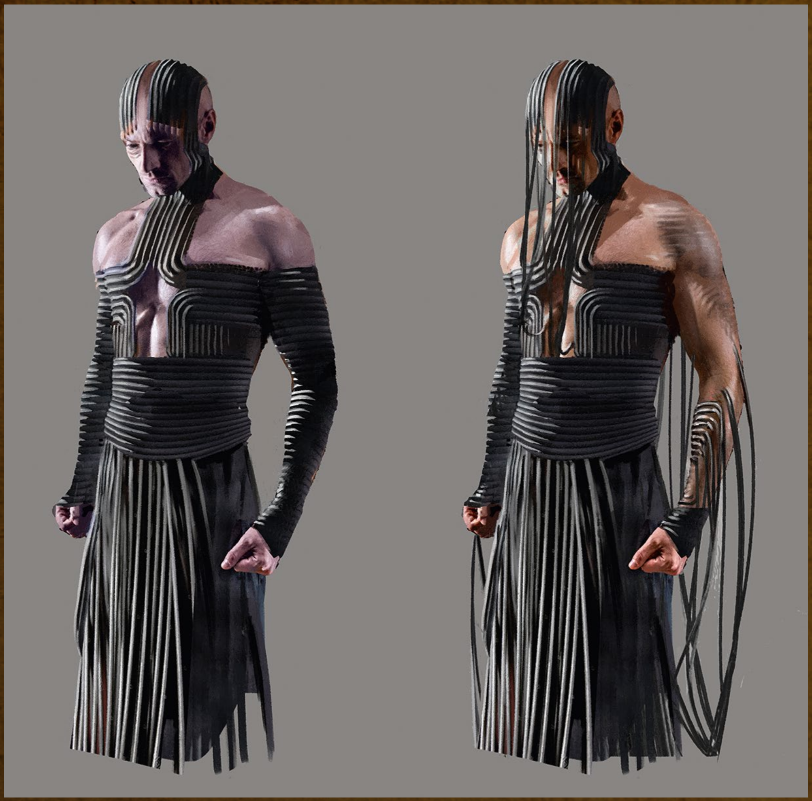
What about the Dominaria expansion excites you as an artist?
Dominaria was where it all began! The world of Magic: The Gathering has expanded so much over the years, but to go back to its roots and for me to be able to lend my artistic vision to the true OGs was a dream come true.

How do you feel about being part of such an extensive universe with such a large and loyal following?
I got into Magic: The Gathering when I was in kindergarten. Having grown up with the game and its universe as I followed my own artistic journey, I wasn't blind to the fact that my own style drifted away from what people expected of the artwork so ingrained to the franchise.

I resigned myself to never being able to contribute my own work, but one day a friend who is an art director for Wizards of the Coast approached me at a convention and asked if I was interested in doing card art. I probably let out some indignant "uuh, you kidding me!?", before profusely accepting the offer, and the rest is history. I know my artwork may not tickle the fancy of some hardcore Magic fans, but knowing I'm helping to pave the way to expand the game's visual catalogue humbles me in ways I cannot describe.

Jehan Choo

Principal concept artist Jehan is also a loyal follower of the game



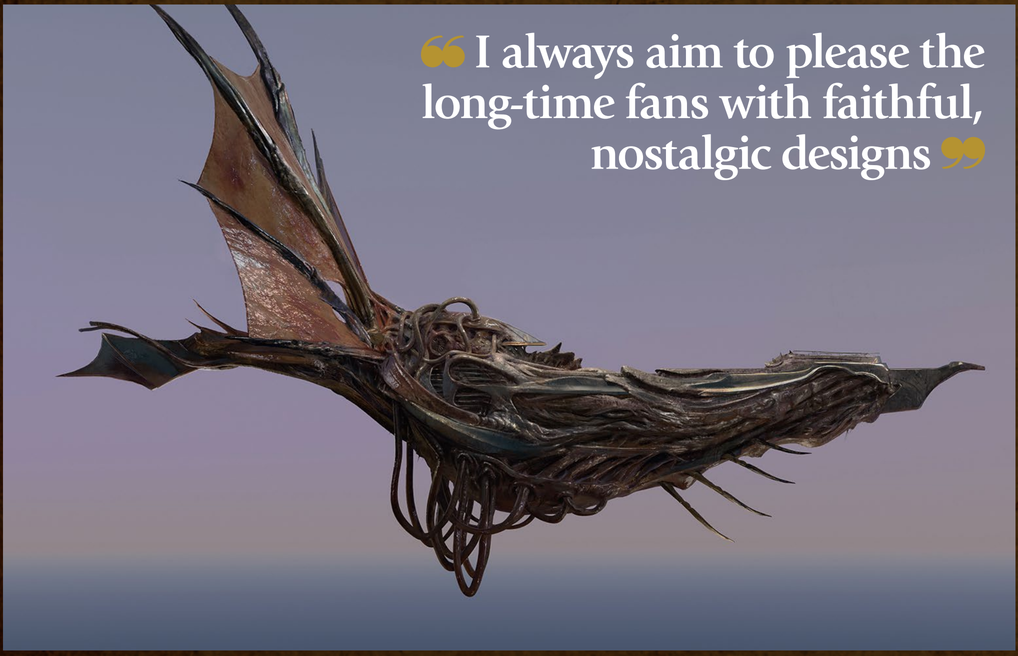
PHYREXIAN FASHION
Coalescing inspirations from across Phyrexia's monstrous history to create clothing for regular humans.

Tell us a little about your background as an artist.
I actually didn't create art seriously until attending art school, which I did mostly because my grades weren't good enough for anything else. My professional career began as a concept artist for video games, working on projects such as Dante's Inferno, Dead Space and Battlefield.

Is the genre of fantasy/sci-fi a focused area for your art or do you work in wider fields?
Definitely a focus. When not working on fantasy stuff for Wizards of the Coast, I spend my free time building a sci-fi world of my own.

What does Magic: The Gathering mean to your art? Has this universe informed your creative choices?
Magic: The Gathering has been a monumental part of my life ever since elementary school, when a friend and I saved our lunch money to buy and split a Revised Edition booster pack (unfortunately for me, he took the side with the Rare and Uncommon cards). My interest in art was subsequently ignited the moment I sifted through my first Fallen Empires pack. Its strikingly dark and visceral art opened new pathways in my young brain and left a lasting impact to this day.

With my professional career, my goal has always been to work on projects that would build my skills and portfolio to some day work on Magic: The Gathering. For example, my character concept work on Dante's Inferno was heavily inspired by my favourite Magic: The Gathering cards, and I think it shows.



“I always aim to please the long-time fans with faithful, nostalgic designs”

PHYREXIAN WEATHERLIGHT
It was fun and heartbreaking to design the corrupted version of this legendary skyship.

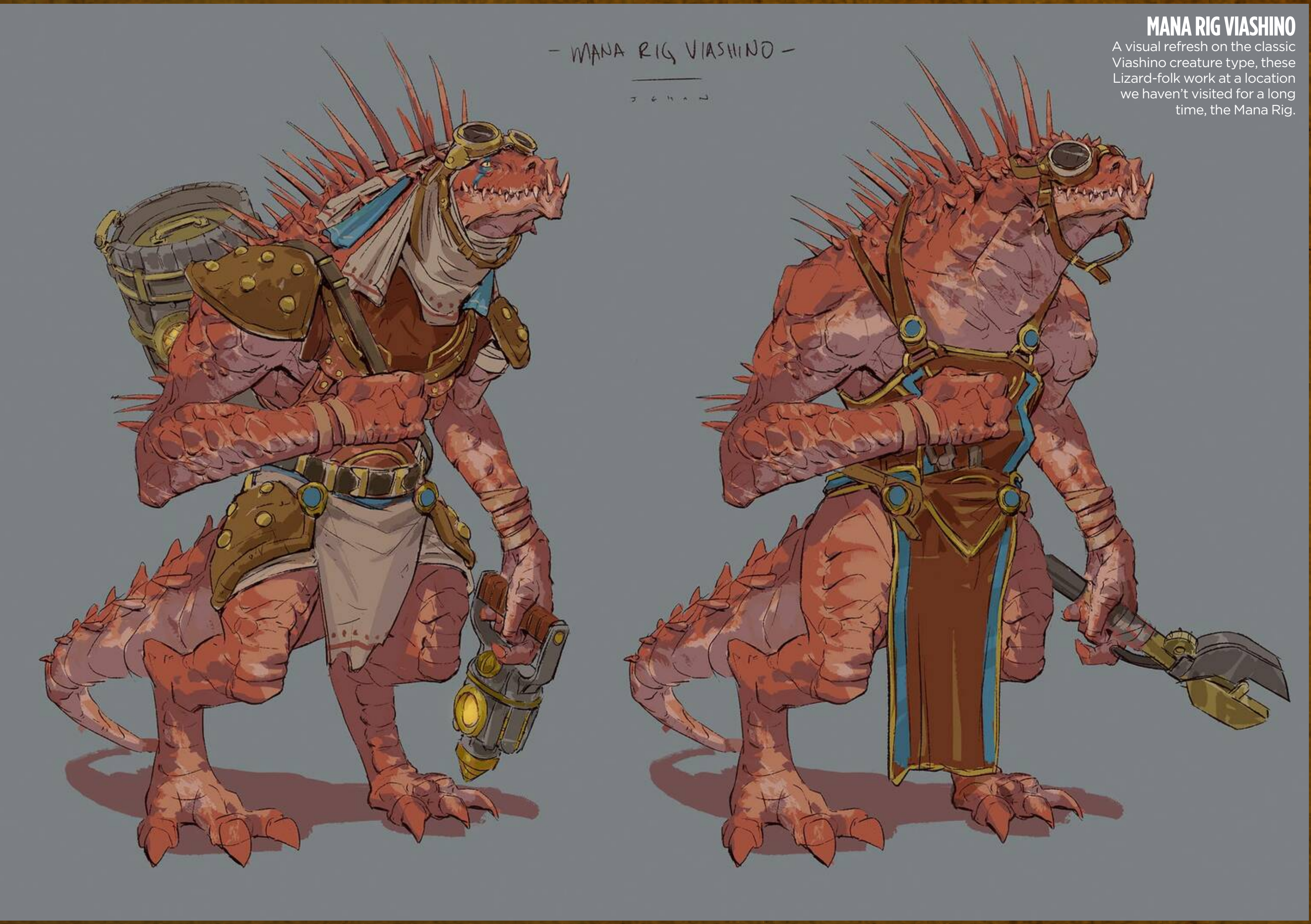
Are there any artists who have worked on the Magic: The Gathering game who have inspired you and your work over the years?
My first Fallen Empires pack featured the unnerving yet alluring art of Anson Maddocks. He would be the first artist I'd ever become a fan of. One of my most accomplished childhood memories is following a monster drawing tutorial Anson did for a Magic focused magazine.

During art school, Tony Diterlizzi became my go-to for inspiration, with his expert draftsmanship and whimsical creativity blowing my mind with each card.

Professionally, I am now honoured to work alongside many of my favourite Magic artists, brainstorming and creating concept art together for each new set.

Tell us a bit about your process. Are you traditional or digital? How do you approach a new piece? What tools do you use?
I had a heavy traditional schooling, but I am mostly digital now. I have the most fun when I'm incorporating new tools and technology into my workflow. Learning ZBrush and Blender have been essential to bolstering my illustrations with the qualities I'm seeking.

I work with a small team of in-house concept artists at Wizards of the Coast, and every couple of months we bring in a mix of outside artists from around

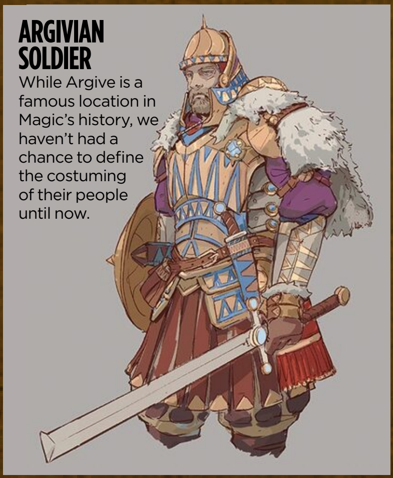


MANA RIG VIASHINO
A visual refresh on the classic Viashino creature type, these Lizard-folk work at a location we haven't visited for a long time, the Mana Rig.

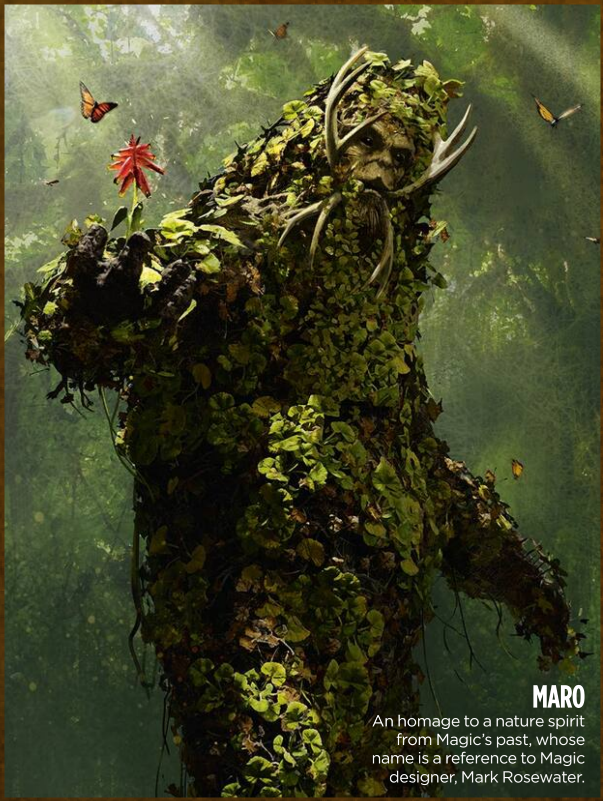
the globe to help begin development of new worlds for Magic.

What about the Dominaria expansion excites you as an artist?
My time in the world of Magic: The Gathering began with Dominaria, and it's been a thrill to revisit the locations, creatures and stories that meant so much to me as a child. I've created personalised stories and visuals in my head over the years of playing Magic, and to have the opportunity to release them all into the actual world of Magic has been surreal. Kind of like how you'd play old pixel-art video games and imagine what characters would 'actually' look like, I've done that and can now share my interpretation with the world!

How do you feel about being part of such an extensive universe with such a large and loyal following?
As a loyal follower myself, it's an honour and unique privilege to work on an IP that shaped so much of my life, my friendships, and my artistic vision. Now that I'm the one contributing to that extensive universe, I can only hope to inspire a young mind out there as much as I was inspired. I always aim to please the long-time fans with faithful, nostalgic designs, while also presenting something new for them and the generations to come to enjoy! ➸



ARGIVIAN SOLDIER
While Argive is a famous location in Magic's history, we haven't had a chance to define the costuming of their people until now.



MARO
An homage to a nature spirit from Magic's past, whose name is a reference to Magic designer, Mark Rosewater.

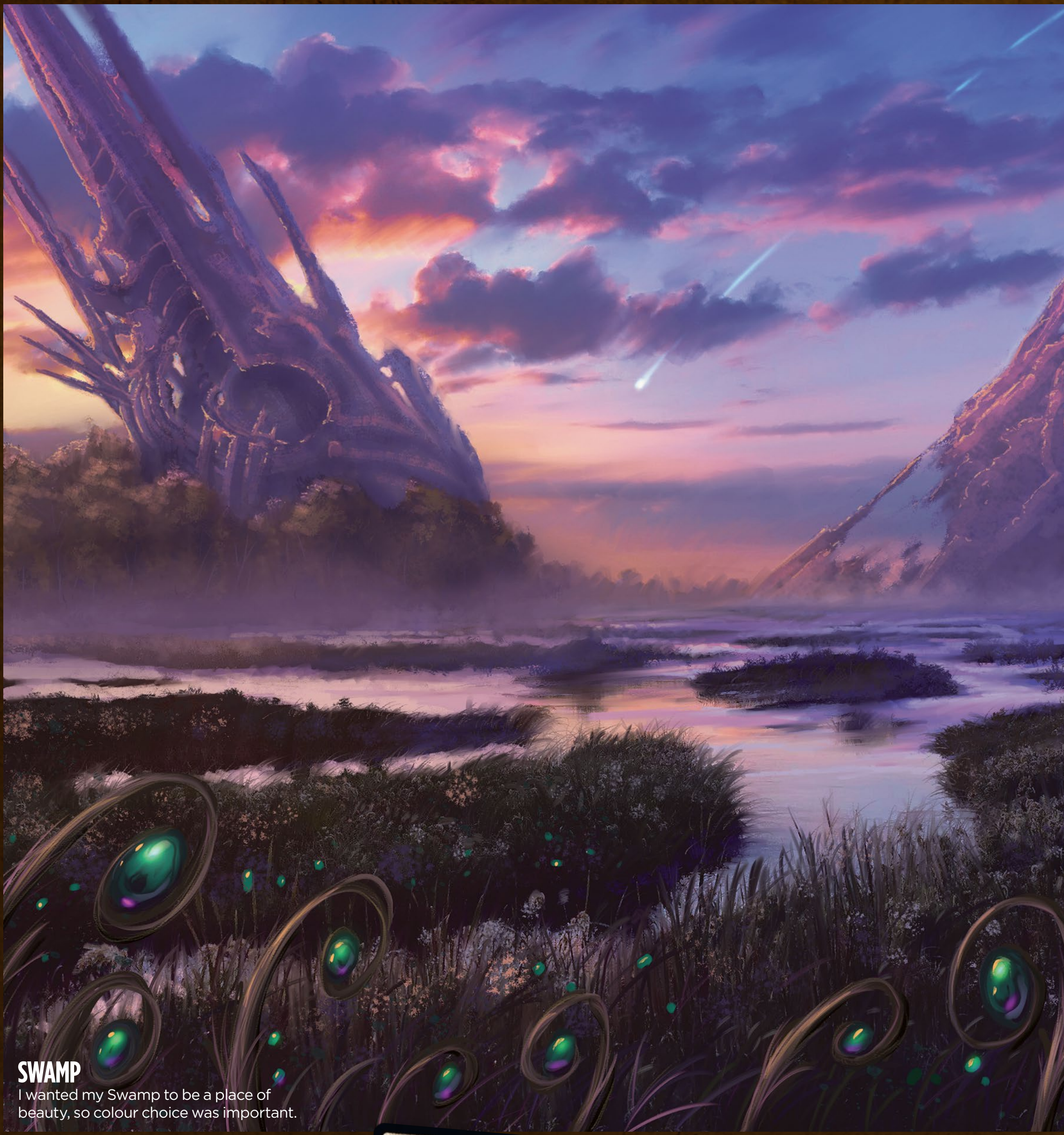
Mark Poole

Art is an ever-evolving journey for this painter

Tell us a little about your background as an artist.
I have always doodled in sketchbooks since high school, mainly influenced by comics. I studied art at the University of South Carolina, but was mostly self-taught by simply just persistence. I read and purchased a lot of art books from artists like Jim Burns, Michael Whelan, Roger Dean, Bernie Wrightson, Larry Elmore and Keith Parkinson. The internet was young back then so most resources were printed. I learned by going to museums and small sci-fi/fantasy conventions.

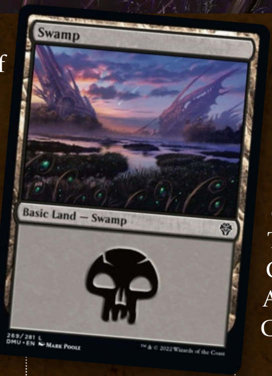
Is the genre of fantasy/sci-fi a focused area for your art or do you work in wider fields?
Fantasy, sci-fi and comics have all been very influential in my interests and visions. In the early years I painted for many genres including wildlife, interior renderings of companies, and product illustration for NASCAR. These were freelance gigs to go along with regular work, but my heart was always in fantasy and sci-fi.

In the early 90s I was able to let go of the regular jobs and focus on the genres I was interested in. That was when I met Jesper Myrfors and Peter Adkison in 1992 while displaying at Gen Con in Milwaukee. Currently I work in the illustration field as well in the gallery fine art side. My personal work has slight tones of fantasy, sci-fi, surrealism and imaginative realism, which is filtered through my contemplative mood visions.



SWAMP
I wanted my Swamp to be a place of beauty, so colour choice was important.

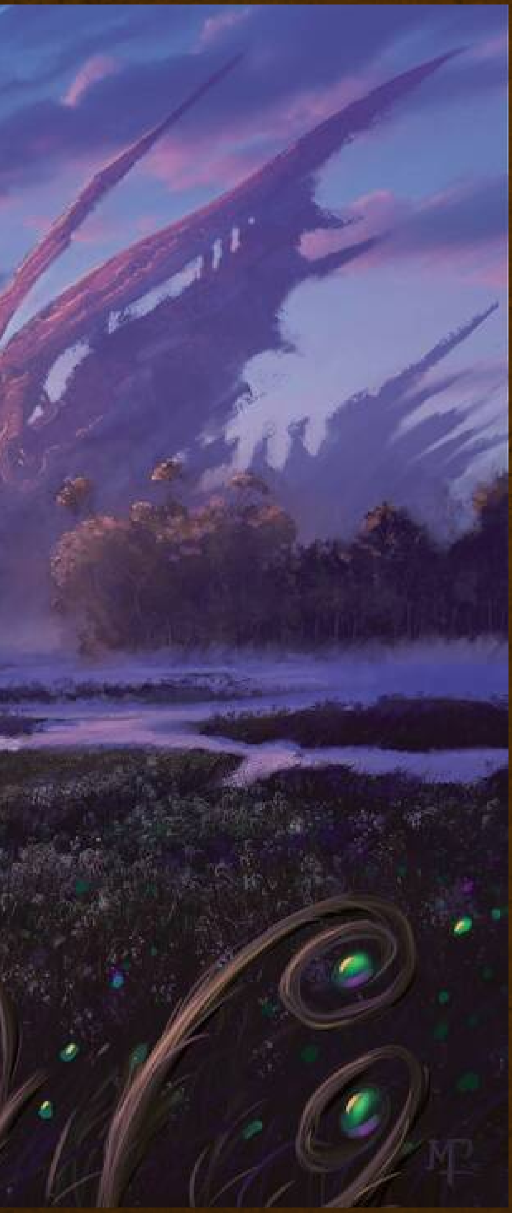
What does Magic: The Gathering mean to your art? Has this universe informed your creative choices?
In the early years my Magic: The Gathering art was more simple, with bright colours in order to stand out on the small scale for which it was to be used on. Some a little too simple, but very easy to recognise from any distance. Many people wonder today if it is even the same artist. Given 30 years to improve I sure hope my art has evolved. I am still evolving. Even technology has changed so much in 30 years such as printing, scanning and the internet. Things have switched to tighter renderings and details, but the old-style guide of keeping the art easy to recognise is still in my thought process today.

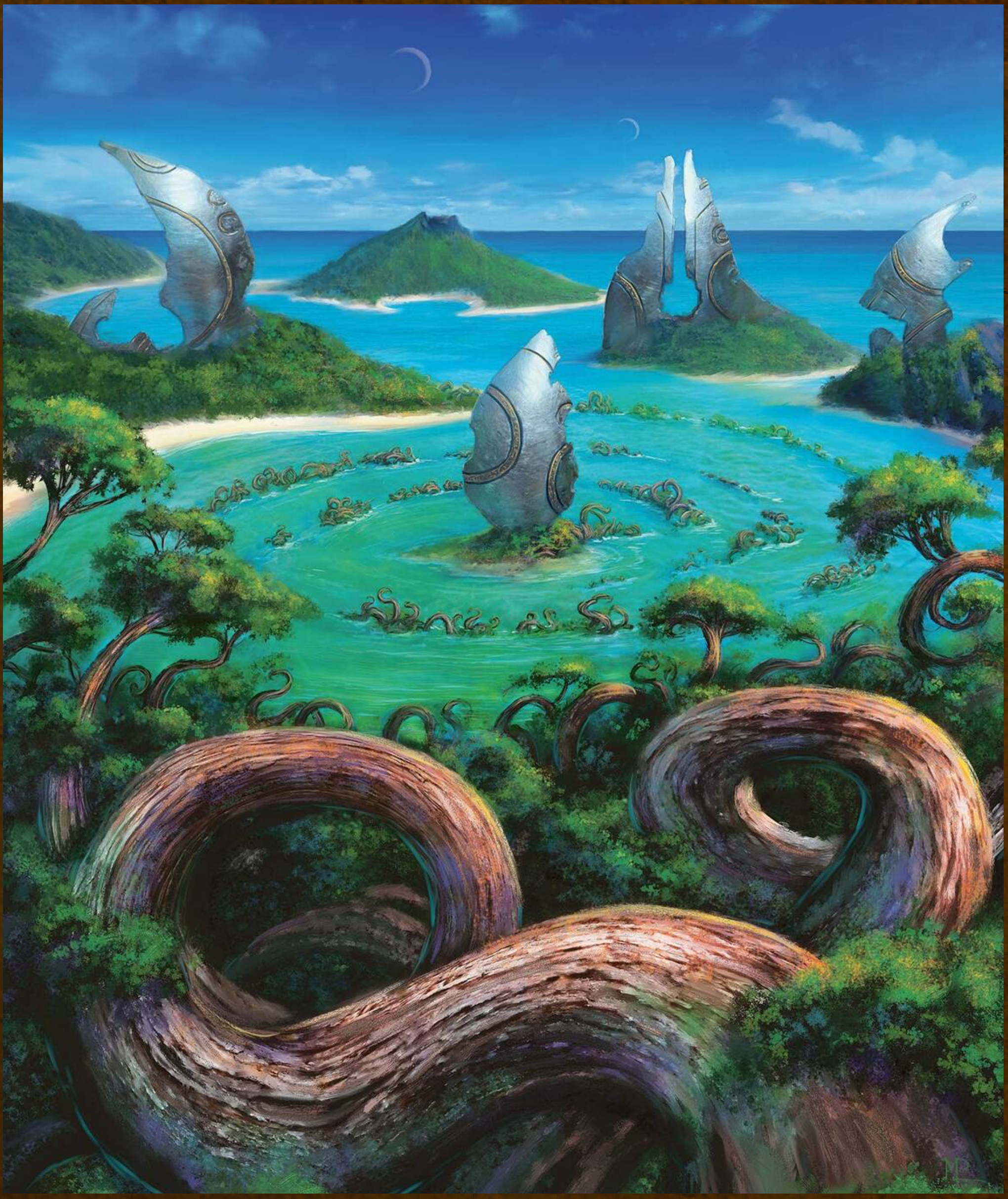


Are there any artists who have worked on Magic: The Gathering who have inspired you?
In the early years we really were just doing our thing, but as years came and went and Magic slowly began to adapt to the point where it is now, I have followed several artists who approach things in ways I may not have thought of. Whether it be colour choices or design elements. To name a few (there are so many): Chris Rahn, Tyler Jacobson, Victor Adame Minguez, Kieran Yanner and Cynthia Sheppard.

Tell us a bit about your process. Are you traditional or digital? How do you approach a new piece? What tools do you use?
My current art, let's say since 2010, is now at the point that my style both for illustrations in Magic: The Gathering and my gallery work balance off each other. I have a mood for both that I have in my colour palettes and my approach to landscapes. I try to convey stories through colour and landscapes.

> “Having a small part in shaping this universe we all live in has simply been exhilarating and humbling”





I like to create texture in my works that may be hard to see on card art. On my paintings I use stucco-style building up of gesso to create random textures, which looks organic when lightly passing the brush over its raised surface, leaving the darker colours alone and only hitting the raised surface. I personally like a tighter feel to my rendering but occasionally flirt with looser applications.

I do all sketches and roughs traditional. Sometimes I will use the computer to make quick colour studies or changes to a piece before transferring to my painting surface. I occasionally use airbrush and acrylics, but primarily use oils. I will also have my painting photographed so I can adjust the art or add effects on the end.

In my studio, which is around 1,000 square feet, I have an enormous book library and collectibles filling the shelves. I have two workstations with printers, three painting easels, and large working tables. I listen to a lot of music like most people do. I categorise the music I listen to with the style of painting I am working on. So in the morning when I start my day, I get my coffee, head into the studio and turn on my music, which is the same as the day before if I am working on the same piece – so it instantly puts me into the mindset I need while I am working on the piece.

What about the Dominaria expansion excites you as an artist?
For me it's a chance to revisit some of the old days of Magic: The Gathering. Some of the early cards still resonate today in Dominaria like forgotten archways, paths and dual moons. Sometimes it's nice to sneak or add some of those images into the new art I do while in the Dominaria realm. I really love the mood that Dominaria has to offer.

YAVIMAYA ISLAND
I wanted motion, so I used curves, spirals and circles to depict this. The only straight line was the horizon.

How do you feel about being part of such an extensive universe with such a large and loyal following?
It really feels like a very large, crazy family. Through the 30 years I have made so many friends with the artists, staff at Wizards of the Coast and the people who buy and play the game. Having a small part in shaping this universe we all live in has simply been exhilarating and humbling. From the early years seeing it come from out of the blue against all odds to the massive empire it has become. I am still as big a fan now as I have ever been of this universe. Just happy, humble and thankful to still be a part of this continuing journey of the Magic: The Gathering adventure.

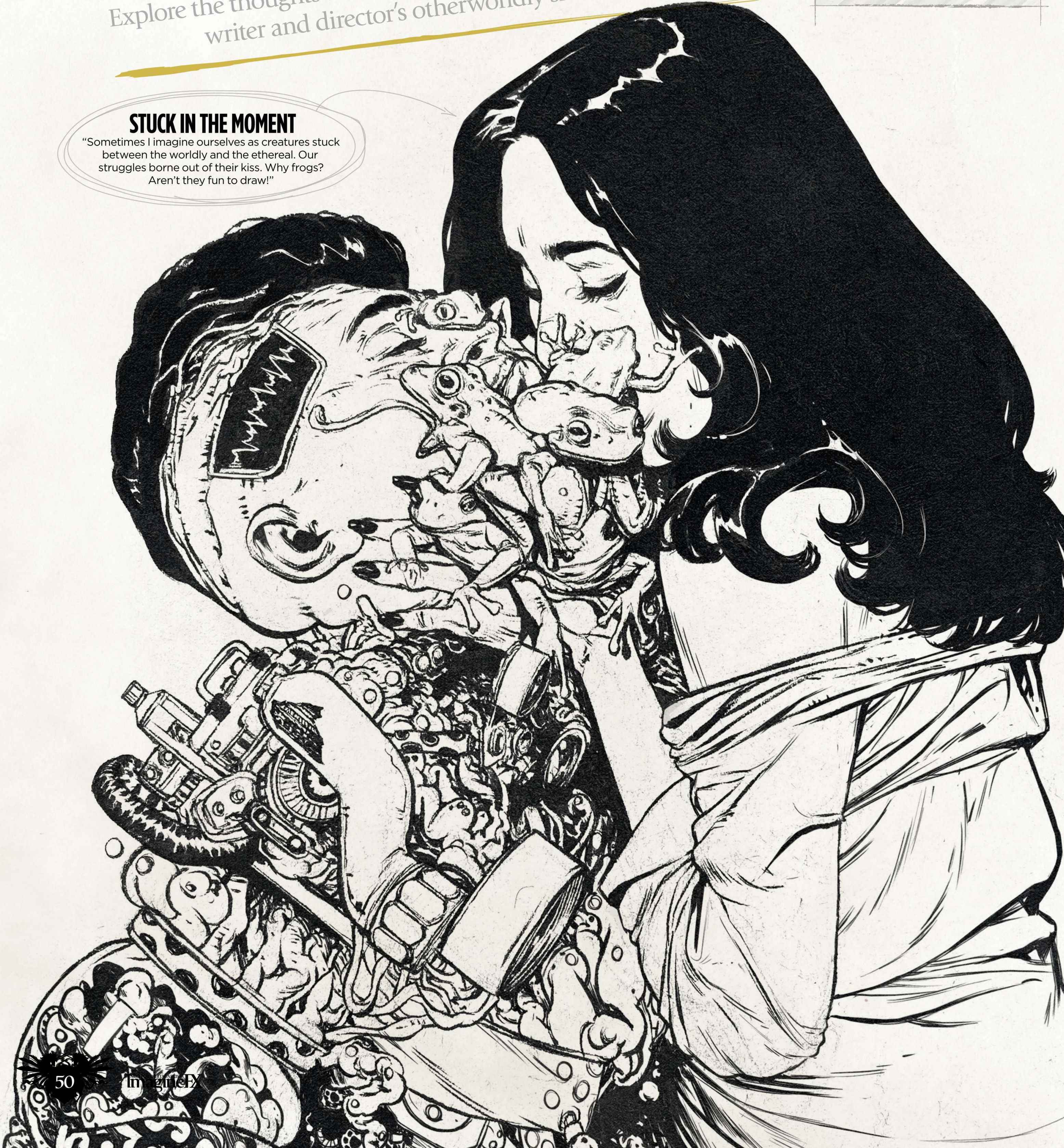
Somnath Pal

Explore the thoughts and themes behind the pages of this artist, writer and director's otherworldly sketchbook

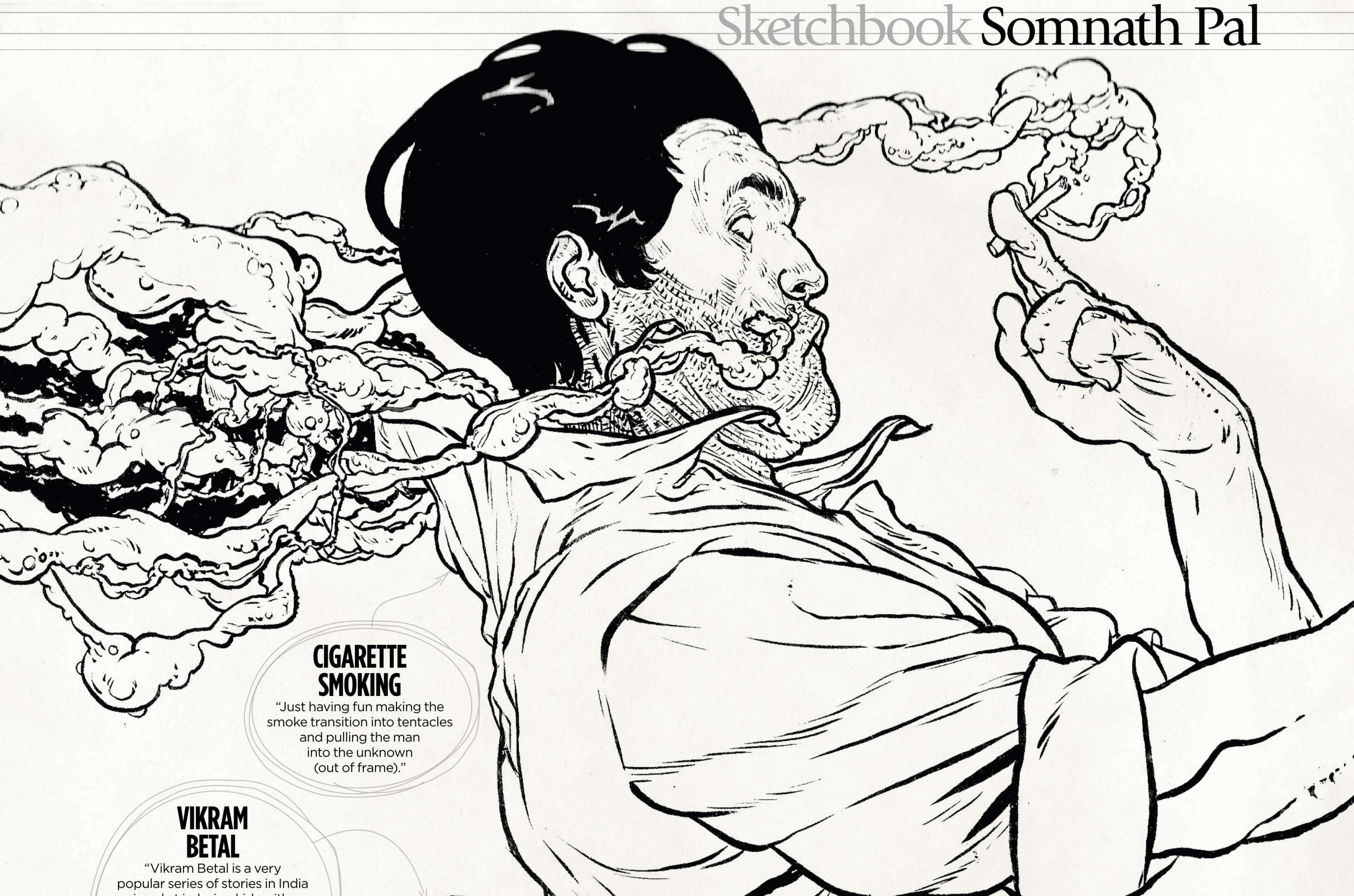
Artist PROFILE

Somnath Pal
LOCATION: India

Somnath Pal is a Superani artist based out of Mumbai, India. He is also an art director with ReDefine, DNEG. In his free time, he engages in writing and drawing to desperately make sense of the world around him. Coffee is his indispensable companion. Check out his course with Coloso.
www.instagram.com/old_qfwfq



STUCK IN THE MOMENT
"Sometimes I imagine ourselves as creatures stuck between the worldly and the ethereal. Our struggles borne out of their kiss. Why frogs? Aren't they fun to draw!"

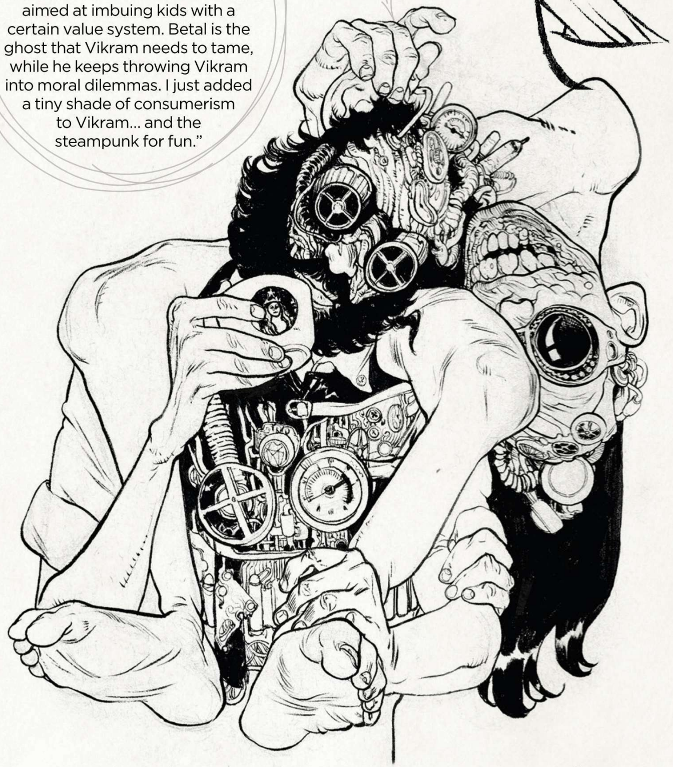


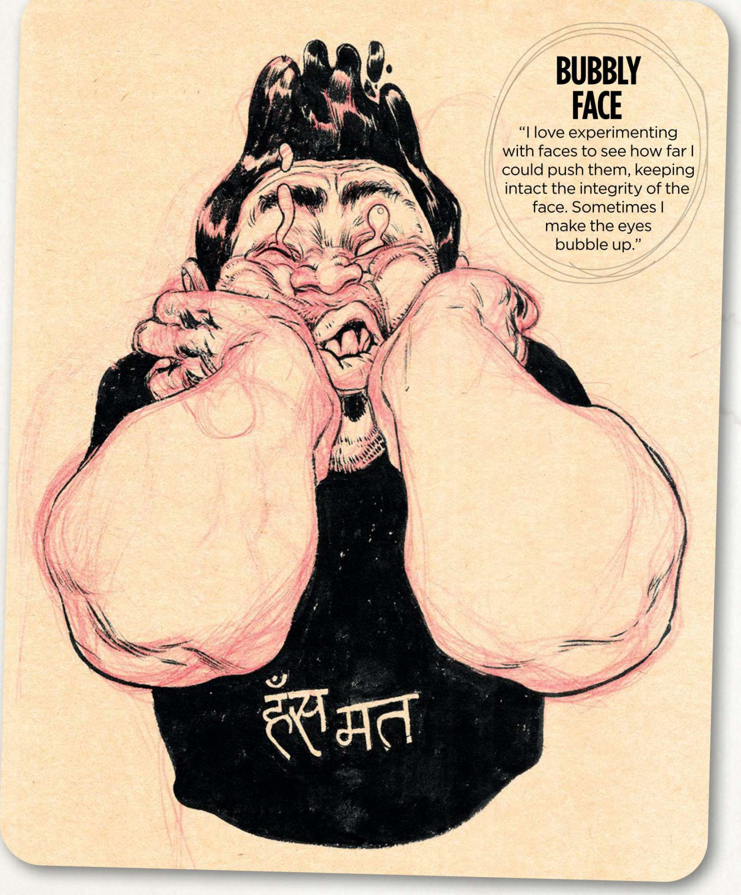
CIGARETTE SMOKING

"Just having fun making the smoke transition into tentacles and pulling the man into the unknown (out of frame)."

VIKRAM BETAL

"Vikram Betal is a very popular series of stories in India aimed at imbuing kids with a certain value system. Betal is the ghost that Vikram needs to tame, while he keeps throwing Vikram into moral dilemmas. I just added a tiny shade of consumerism to Vikram… and the steampunk for fun."





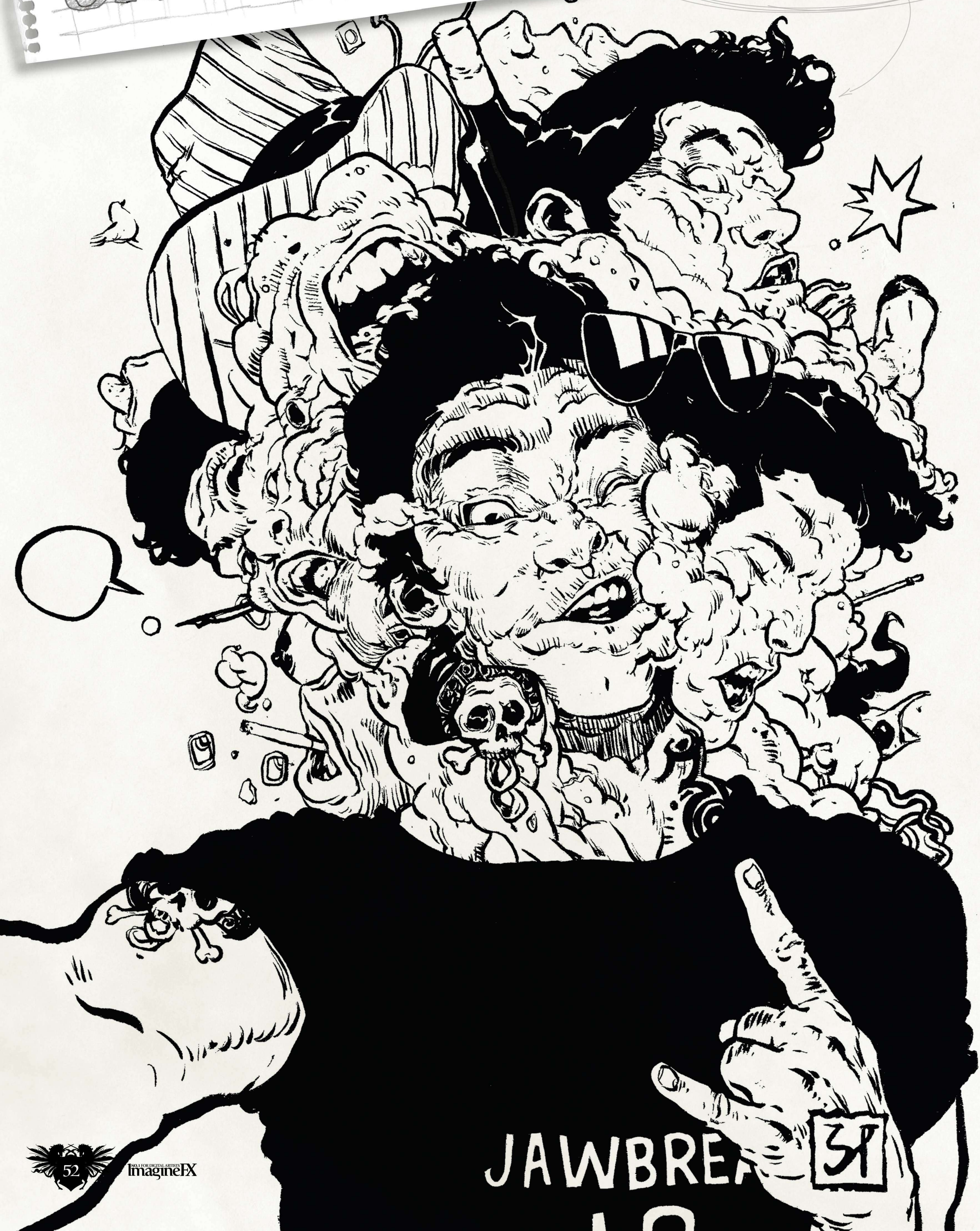
BUBBLY FACE

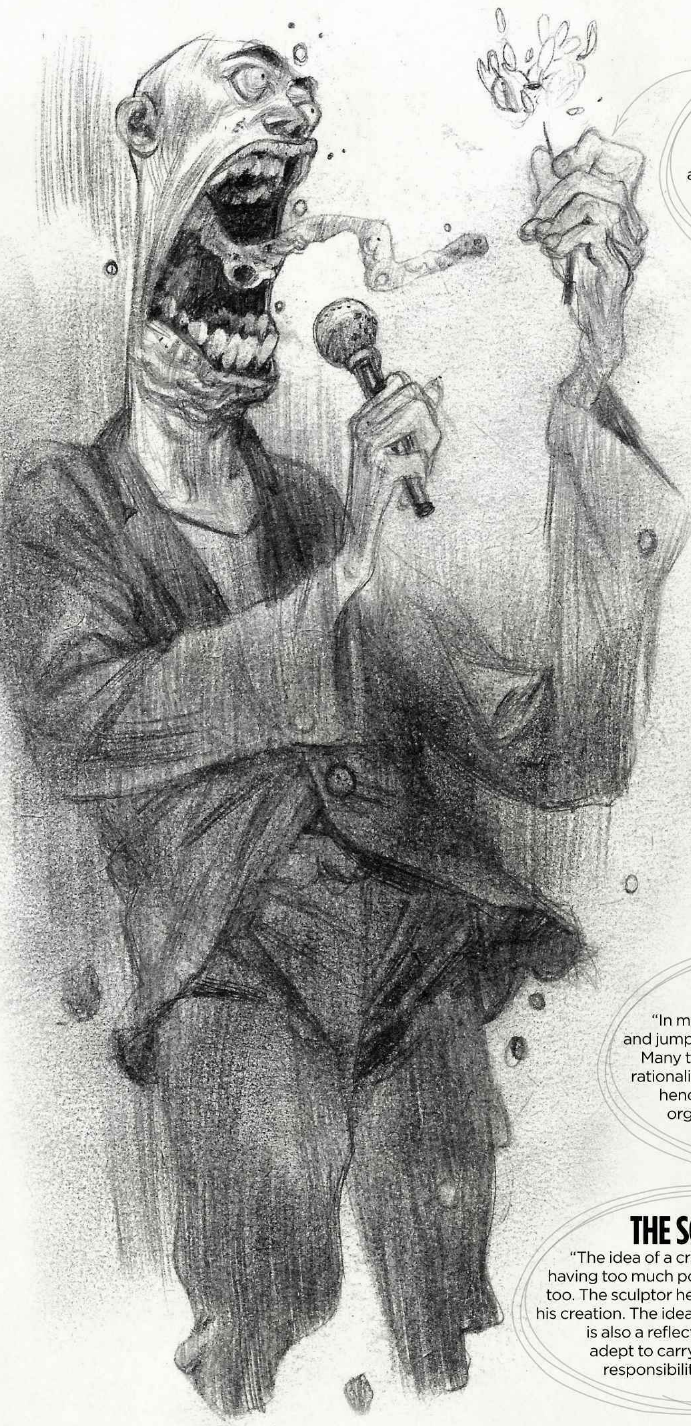
"I love experimenting with faces to see how far I could push them, keeping intact the integrity of the face. Sometimes I make the eyes bubble up."

> "Sometimes I imagine ourselves as creatures stuck between the worldly and the ethereal"

SELFIE

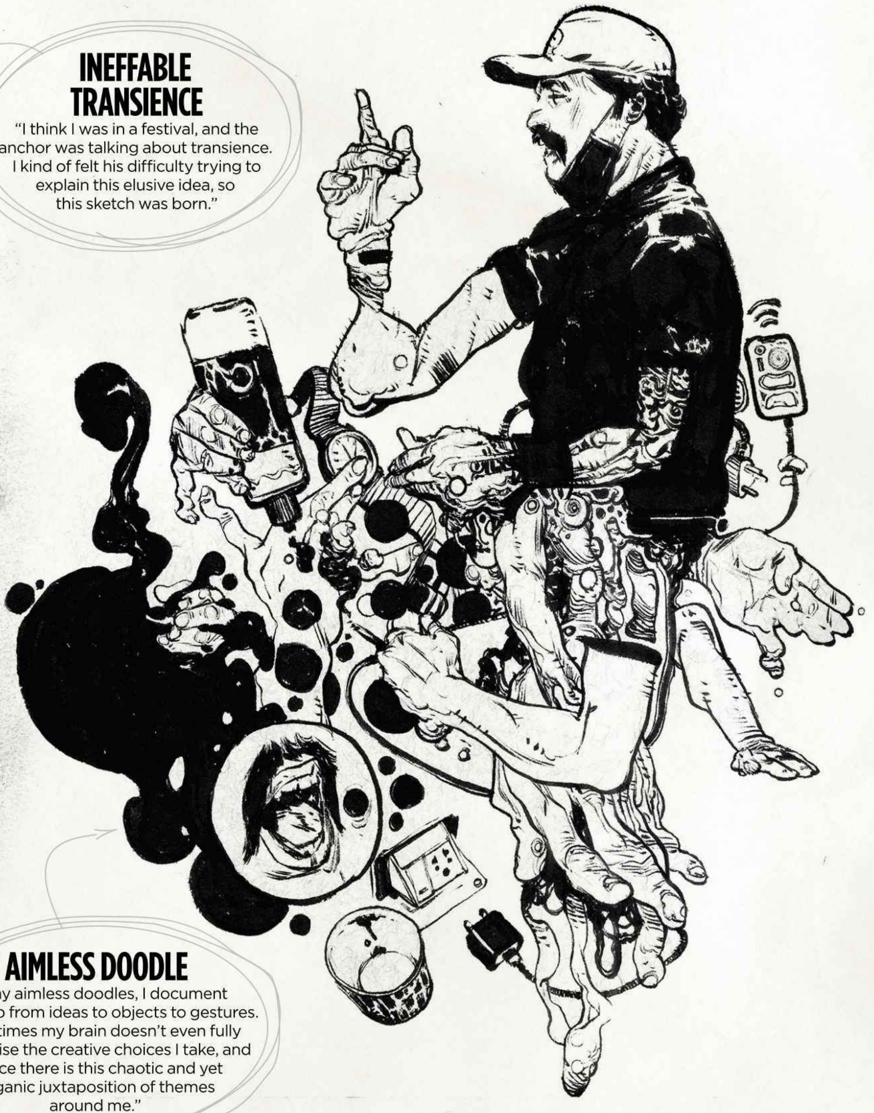
"Selfies are still all the rage. Generally it aims at documenting one's best. Here I turn the idea upside down to document the distorted, twisted self."





INEFFABLE TRANSIENCE

"I think I was in a festival, and the anchor was talking about transience. I kind of felt his difficulty trying to explain this elusive idea, so this sketch was born."

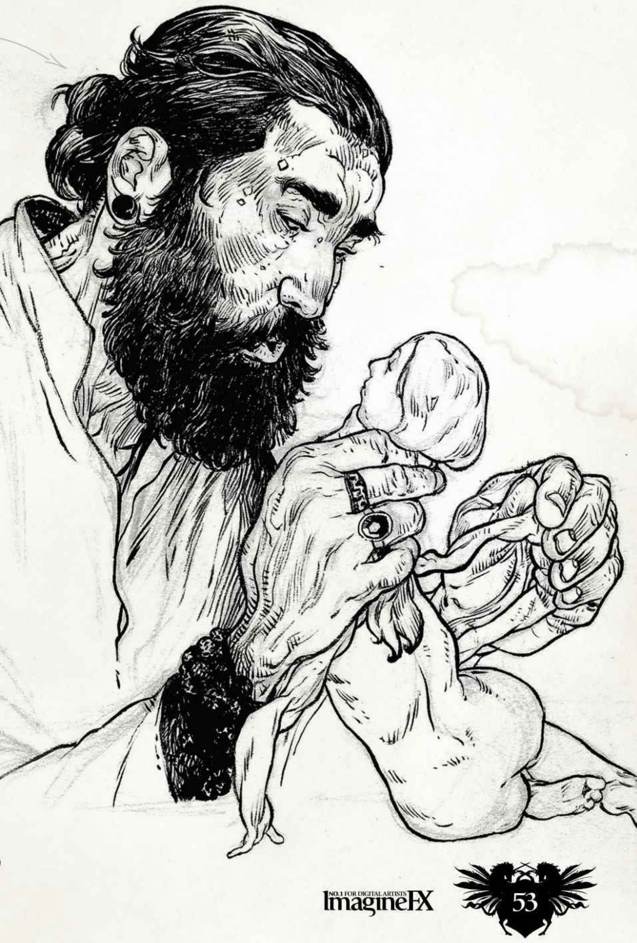


AIMLESS DOODLE

"In my aimless doodles, I document and jump from ideas to objects to gestures. Many times my brain doesn't even fully rationalise the creative choices I take, and hence there is this chaotic and yet organic juxtaposition of themes around me."

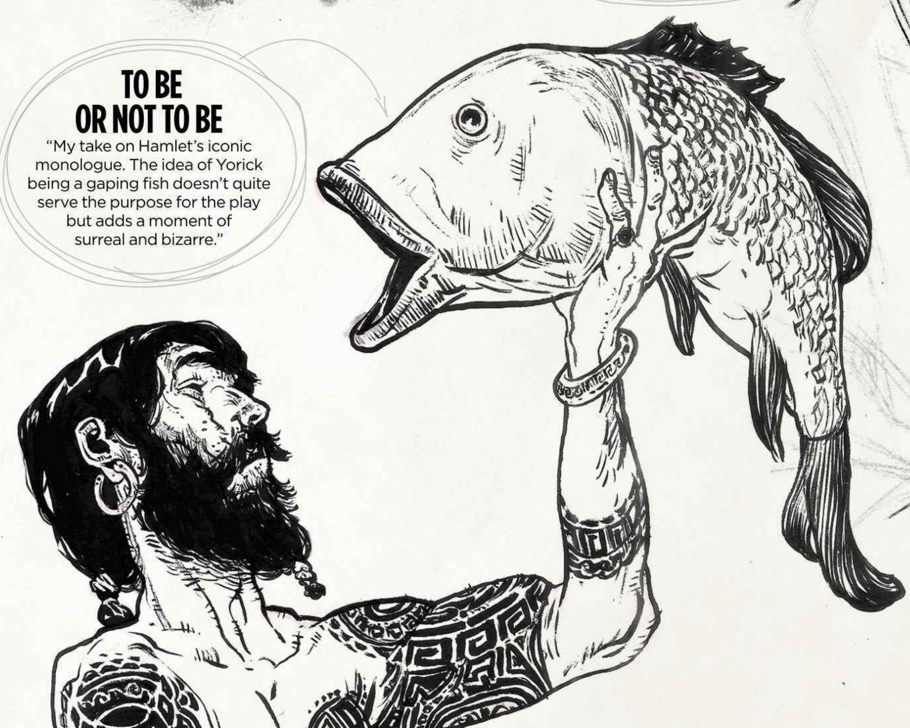
THE SCULPTOR

"The idea of a creator or orchestrator having too much power is a recurring motif too. The sculptor here questionably moulds his creation. The idea of the wrist being so thin is also a reflection of how he isn't adept to carry the weight of the responsibility on his hands."



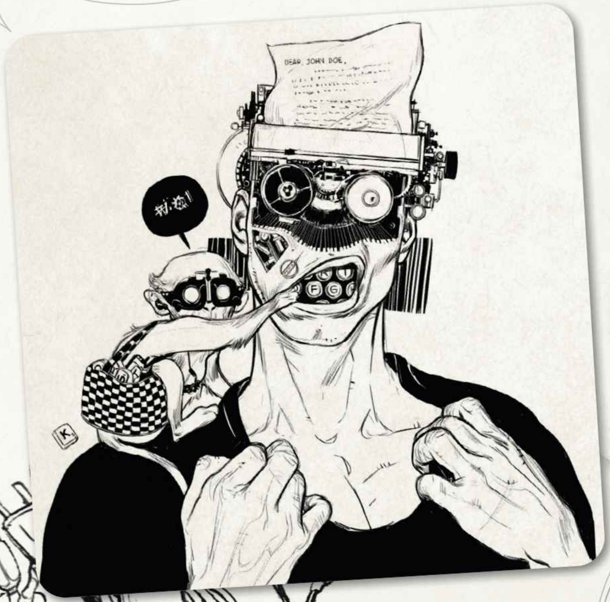
TO BE OR NOT TO BE

"My take on Hamlet's iconic monologue. The idea of Yorick being a gaping fish doesn't quite serve the purpose for the play but adds a moment of surreal and bizarre."



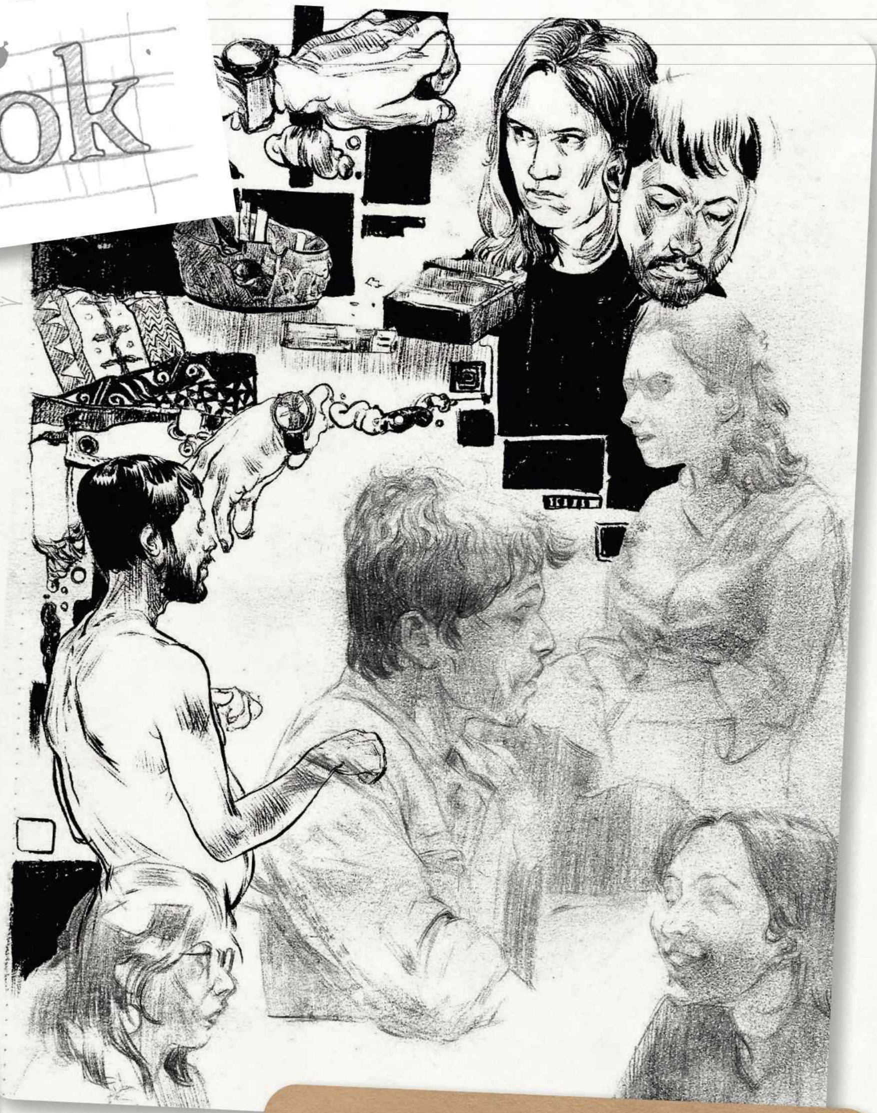
SEEING THE TRUTH

"Here the idea was bringing two disparate worlds together and adding a little quirk to make it fun. Like some of my other works there are recurring themes and motifs, like the Scrabble tiles which I often use to toy around with the idea of language or communication being a game."



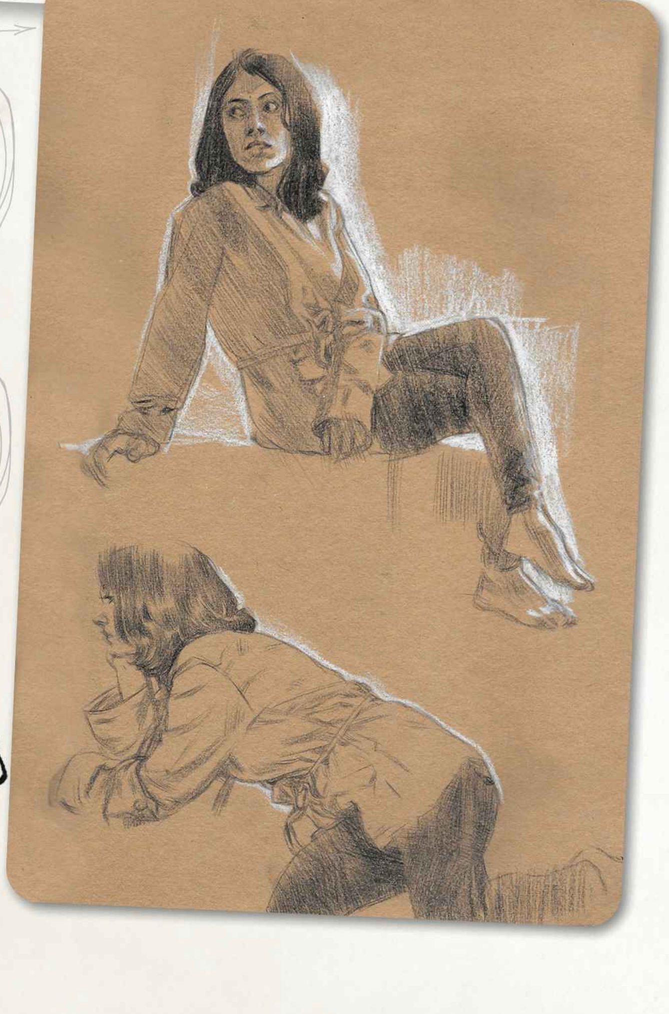
SKETCHES

"While making studies, I keep migrating from one idea to the other – more often it is me who gets distracted, occasionally it is the model who leaves, forcing me to focus on others around me. Many times even the patterns and objects around me become intriguing."



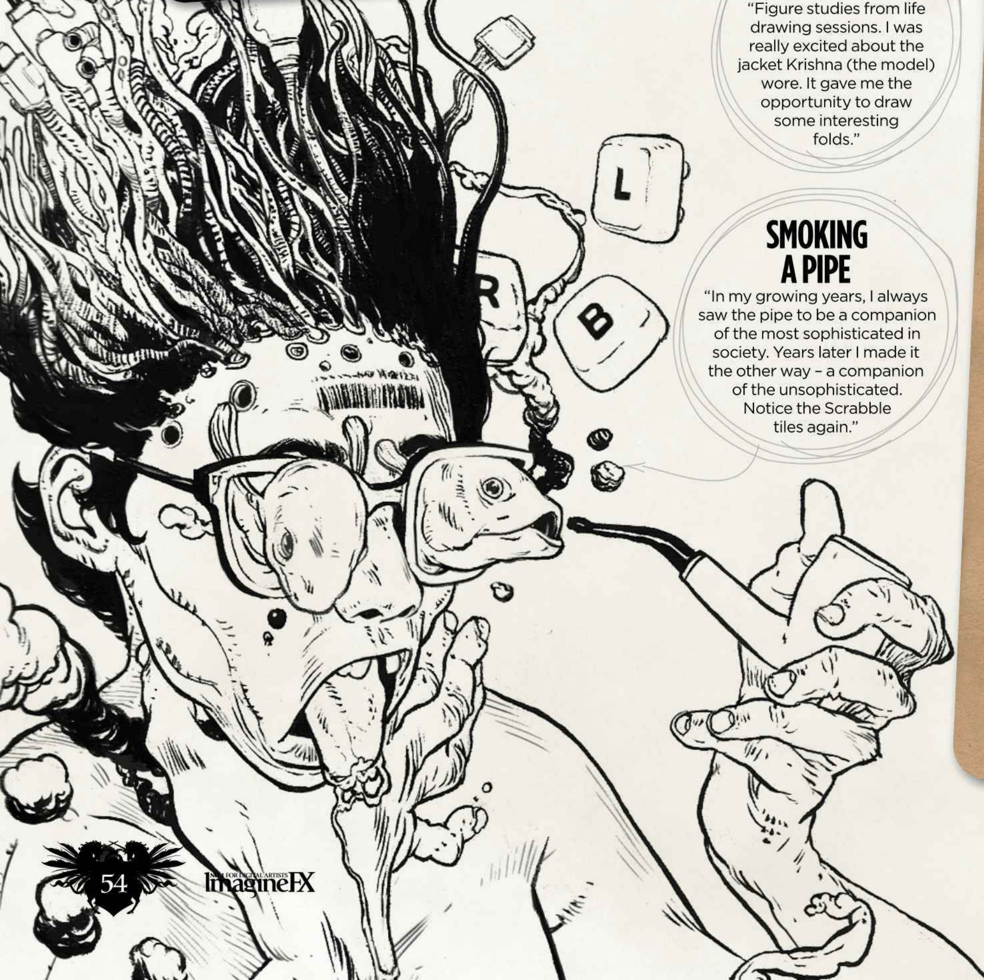
LIFE DRAWING

"Figure studies from life drawing sessions. I was really excited about the jacket Krishna (the model) wore. It gave me the opportunity to draw some interesting folds."

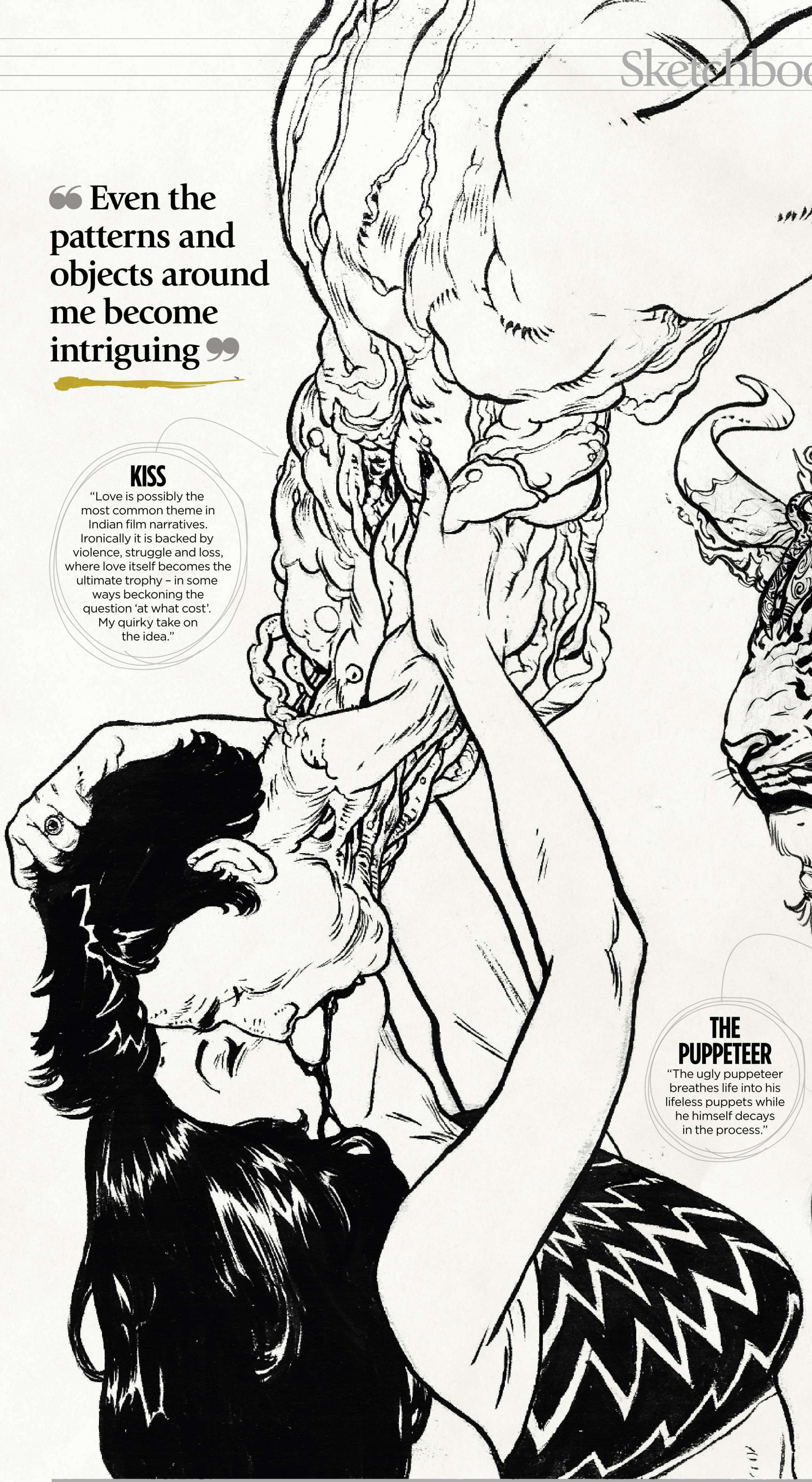


SMOKING A PIPE

"In my growing years, I always saw the pipe to be a companion of the most sophisticated in society. Years later I made it the other way – a companion of the unsophisticated. Notice the Scrabble tiles again."

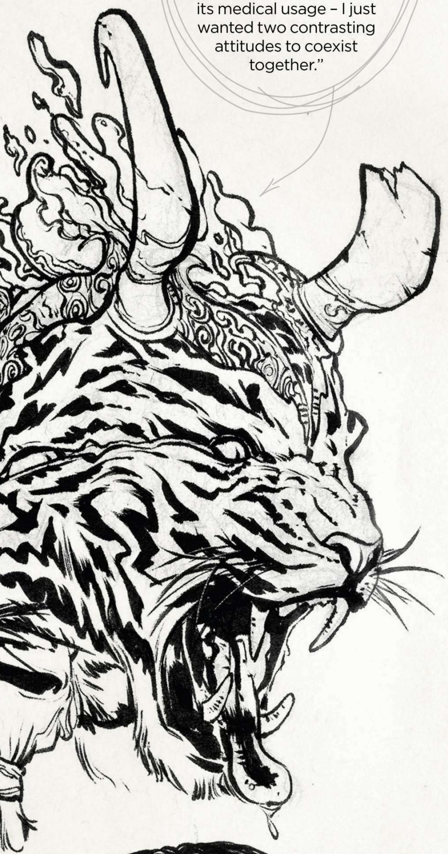


> “Even the patterns and objects around me become intriguing”



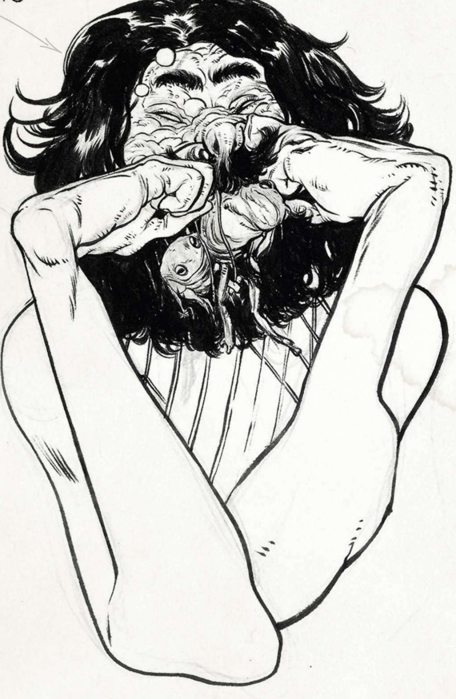
KISS

“Love is possibly the most common theme in Indian film narratives. Ironically it is backed by violence, struggle and loss, where love itself becomes the ultimate trophy – in some ways beckoning the question ‘at what cost’. My quirky take on the idea.”



BIPOLAR TIGER

“I think I was drawing some tigers as part of an assignment, and found a way to keep myself entertained. The term bipolar is not restricted to its medical usage – I just wanted two contrasting attitudes to coexist together.”



THE PUPPETEER

“The ugly puppeteer breathes life into his lifeless puppets while he himself decays in the process.”

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**

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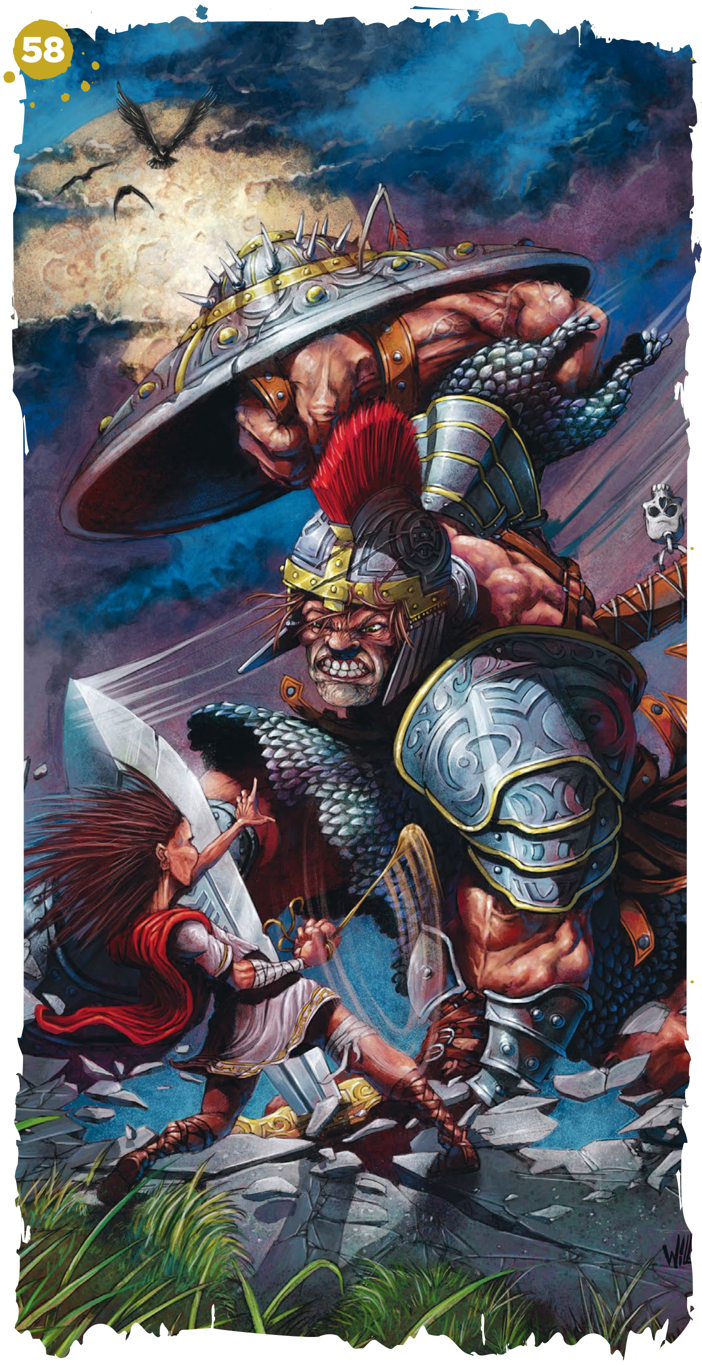
NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX

Workshops

Advice from the world's best artists

58



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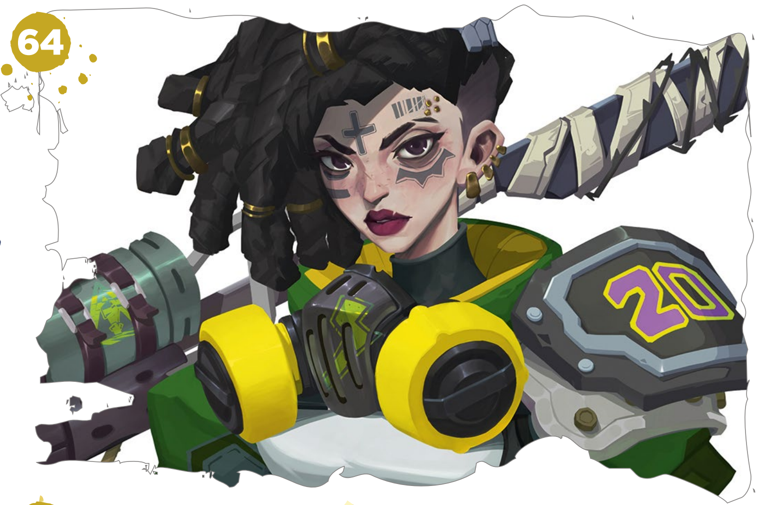

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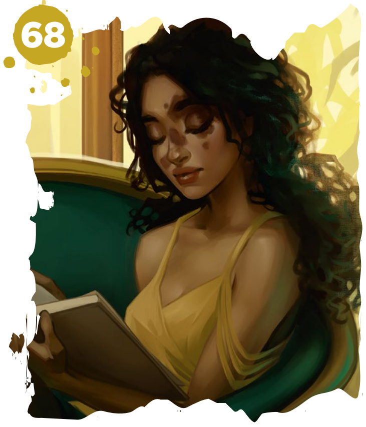

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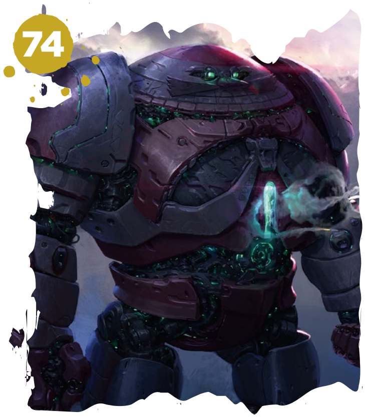

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Krita

BUILD A DYNAMIC COMPOSITION

Toby Willsmer explains how to capture dynamic energy and movement in an action-packed illustration

Artist
PROFILE

Toby Willsmer

LOCATION:
New Zealand

I'm a freelance illustrator in the comic and publishing industries. My work is recognised for its vibrant colours and dynamics.
www.willsmer.com

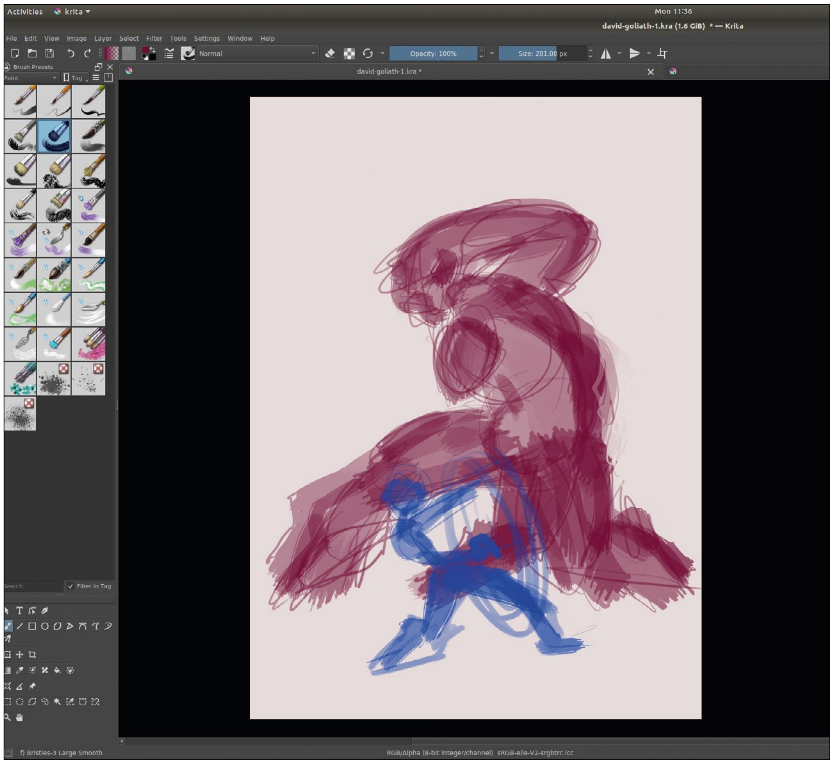
In this workshop I'll be concentrating on some of the techniques I use for capturing dynamics and movement. I'll be using an illustration where I really wanted these elements to be key, and I'll be taking you through the steps I usually take when dealing with this type of dynamic composition.

We'll go from the beginning sketching stages, all the way through to the completed illustration, including some colour adjustments in post in order to make your finished illustration really pop.

I'll be explaining key concepts to keep in mind, like figure anatomy, clothing, surroundings and how to add movement when drawing and painting them. We'll also be looking at light and shadow and how to use these to create dynamic effects in your paintings. Almost all of my work is figurative based, and having a basic understanding of human anatomy will really help you when it comes to drawing your own dynamic poses.

I'll be using Krita for the entire piece; I'll explain the default brushes I used for this illustration and how to give the finished piece pop using a layer filter mask.

Whether you're new to this or learning your craft, concentrating on the early drawing stages and getting the proportions and composition right will be of great benefit to you when you start to paint your illustrations. Okay, let's get stuck in.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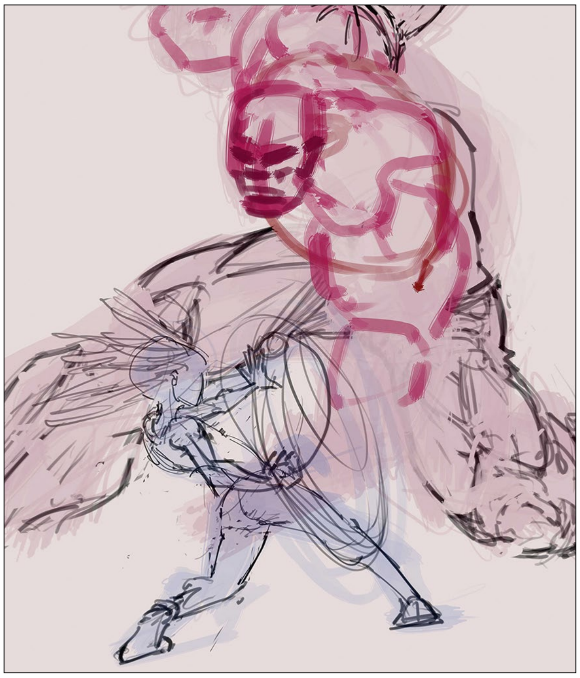
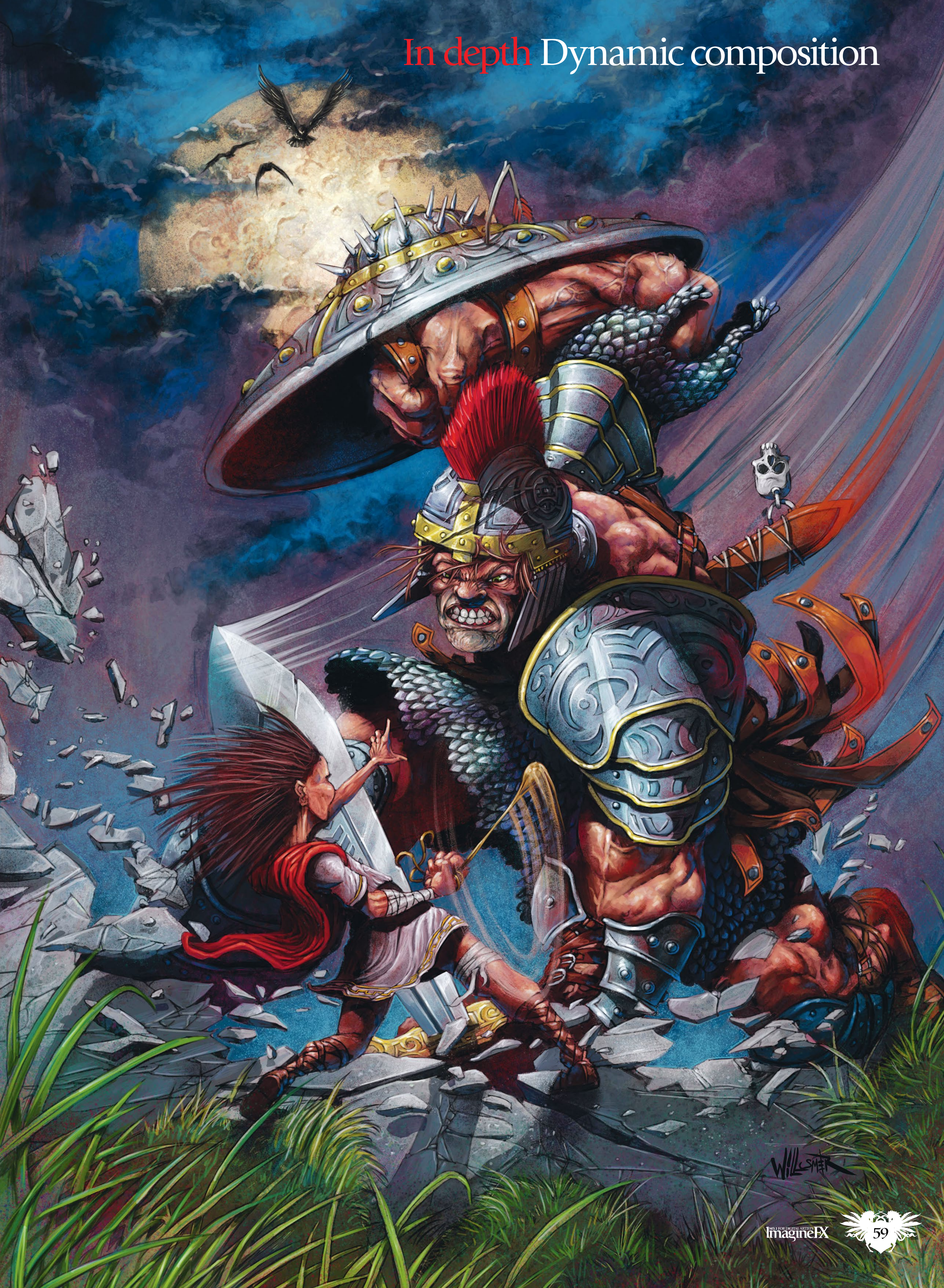
1 Figure out the figures

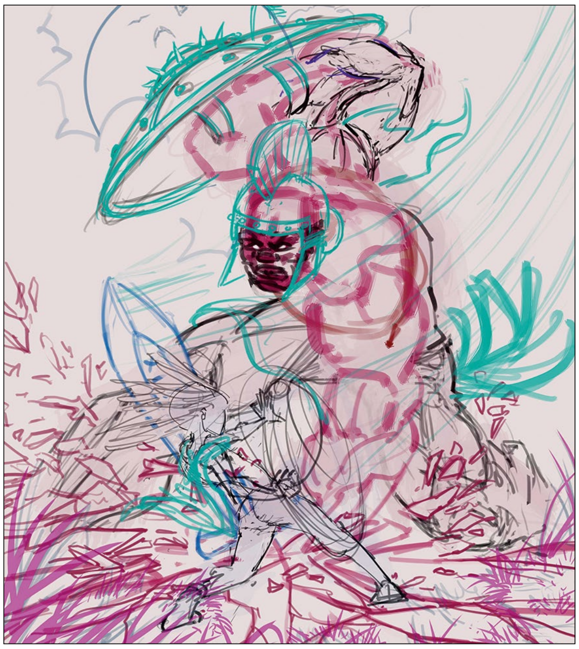
I'll have an idea for the illustration and start defining some basic dynamic body shapes using my go-to dry brush at a large size. There's no right or wrong way to do this and there's a lot of 'nope that doesn't work', bin it and restart. Essentially this is a quick brain dump of ideas for the dynamic composition I'm after.



2 Anatomy and composition

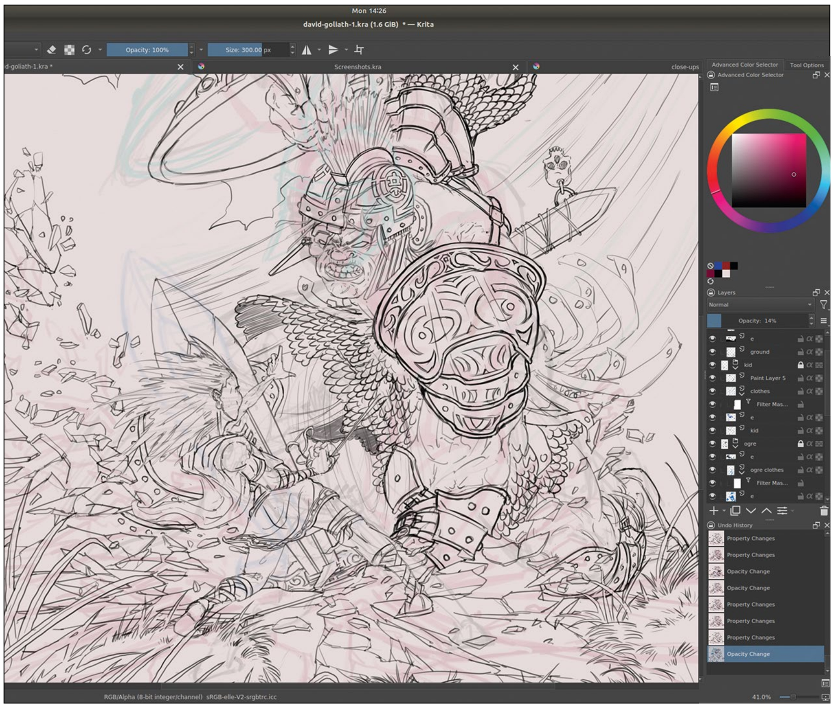
Once I'm happy with the initial shapes, I'll start to map out some basic figure anatomy in a new layer. Dynamic illustrations are all about that snapshot of movement. So making the figures appear off balance or twisting the body is a great way to capture this. Keep in mind that anatomy has its limits and by exploring those limits you can really capture that moment. ➸


WILLSMER



3 It gets messy

As the idea progresses I start to think about how parts of the background are going to interact in the overall scene, along with how clothing will sit and move with the figures. I keep all the parts in individual layers here as it'll change and be moved about a fair bit until I'm happy with the composition. To get to this stage usually takes me a few hours.


Mon 14:26
david-goliath-1.kra (1.6 GiB) * — Krita
Opacity: 100%
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Screenshots.kra
Advanced Color Selector
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ground
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Paint Layer 5
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4 Draw up the outline

Now comes the fun bit, outlining and adding all the clothing and armour. Following the direction of movement for each character, I'll detail their clothing to capture that moment in the image. Again I'll keep all the parts in separate layers for easy editing. For example, at this stage I realised that I wanted the small character to be even smaller and moved to the left more.

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

KRITA

DEFAULT BRUSHES: BRISTLES-3 LARGE SMOOTH

I use this default dry brush the most. From the sketch, to filling in areas and defining the details.

TEXTURE SPRAY

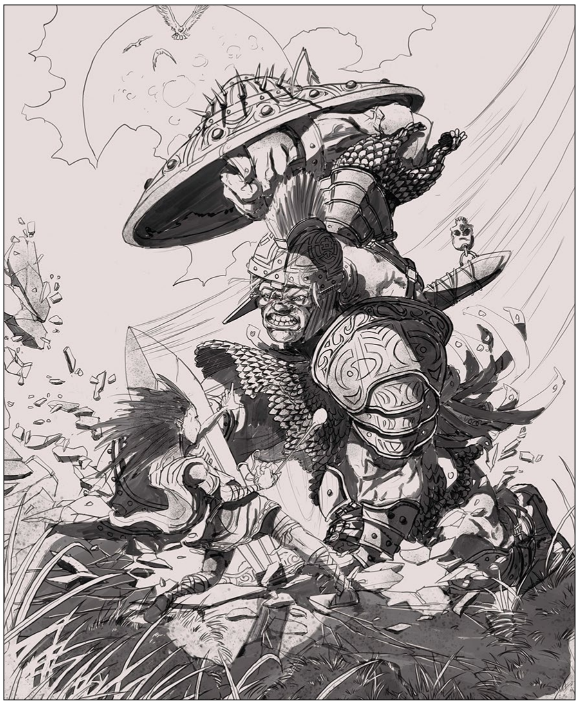
For textured fades at smaller sizes, and at larger sizes for object textures like stone.

WET BRISTLES ROUGH

Used in the background for filling large areas, and for the speed movement effect at a smaller size.

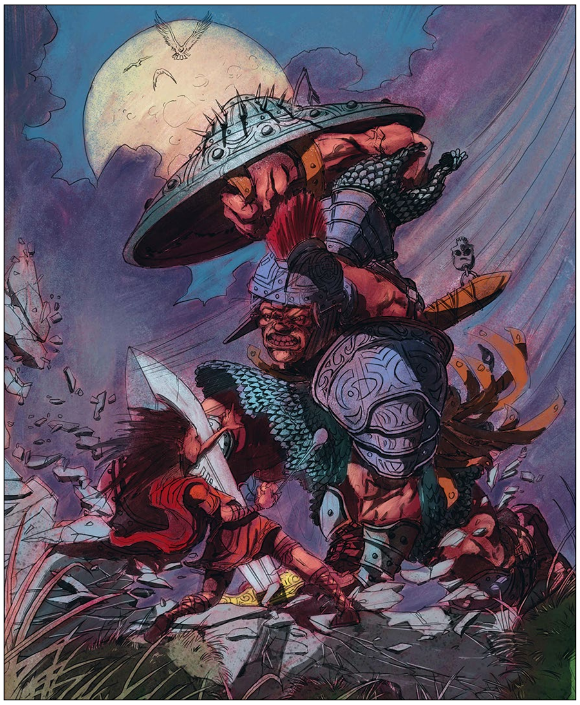
WATERCOLOUR TEXTURE

This brush will mostly be used for the clouds and blue textures in the background.



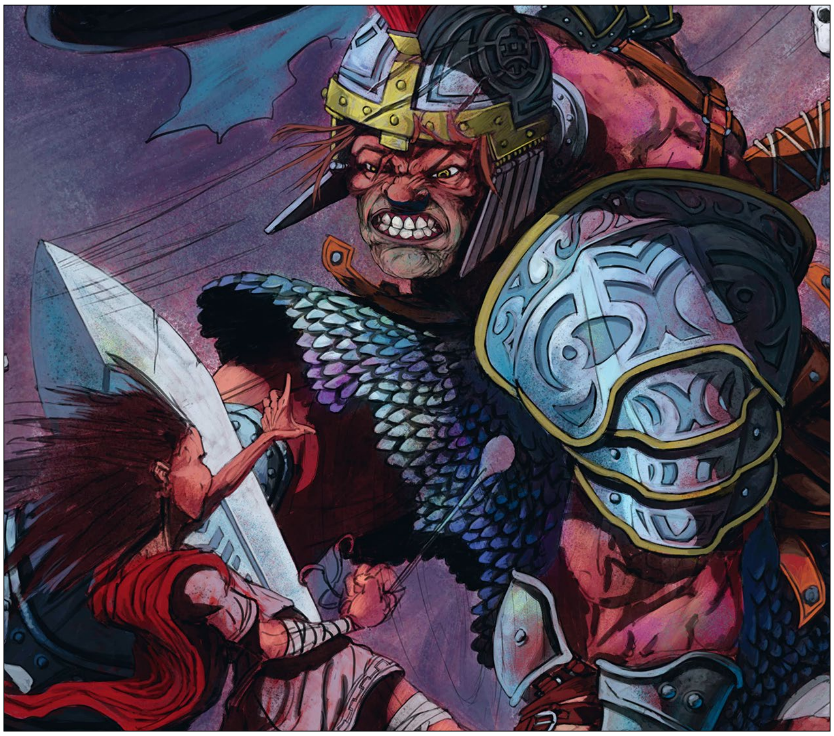
5 Light sources and shadows

Once the outline is done I'll flatten it into a single layer and make a new layer for the shadows. The moon in the background will be the main light source for the illustration and dictates how the shadows will fall. I'll use the dry brush for the hard-edged shadows and a spray brush at varying sizes to add tone, textures and fades.



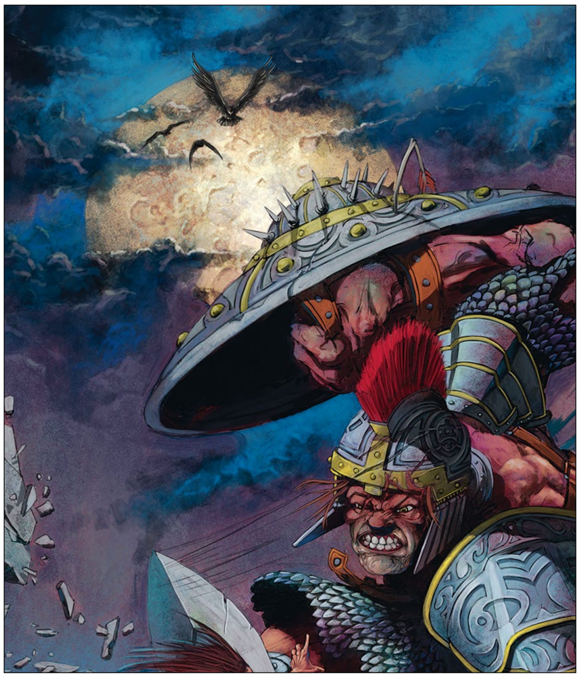
6 Add the base colours

With the outline and shadows done I'll flatten them into one layer and add the base colours in a new layer underneath. This helps speed up my workflow as I can adjust it before I start to paint over the outline. I'll use a mixture of Krita brushes, including both wet and dry and the spray brush, keeping it loose as I add the colour.



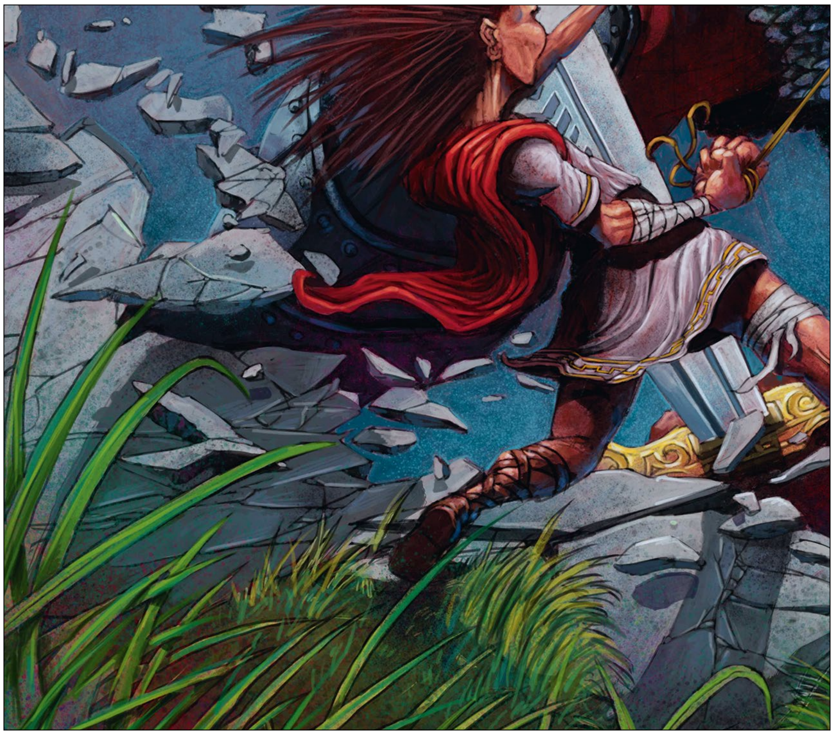
7 Define the focus areas

I'll start to define the main focal parts in a new top level layer using the dry and spray brushes. I like to paint using a minimal amount of layers – usually a top level colour layer, an outline/shades layer and an under colour layer at the bottom. This helps if I need to make any adjustments along the way.



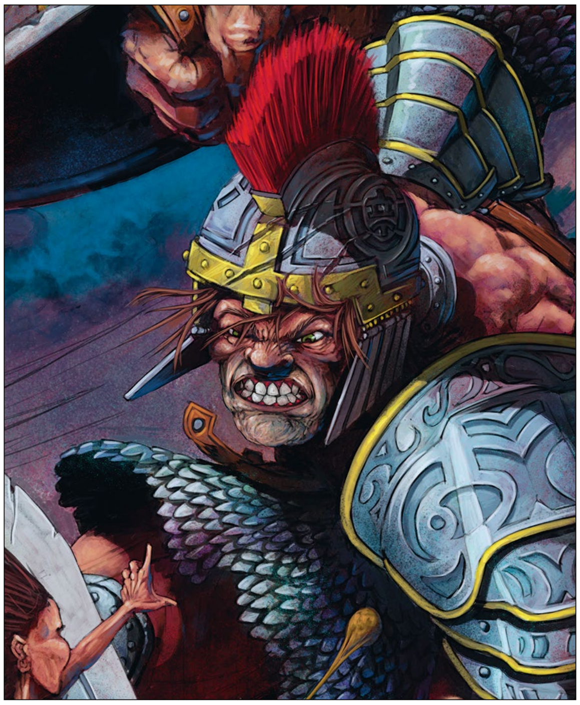
8 Add some background atmosphere

As backgrounds are usually looser and less detailed than the main focus parts, I like to add something in to tie it all together, here it's the birds. I used a Watercolour Texture brush in Krita at varying sizes for the clouds, whilst using shortcut keys for darker and lighter tones of colour. I then add some small details with the dry brush.



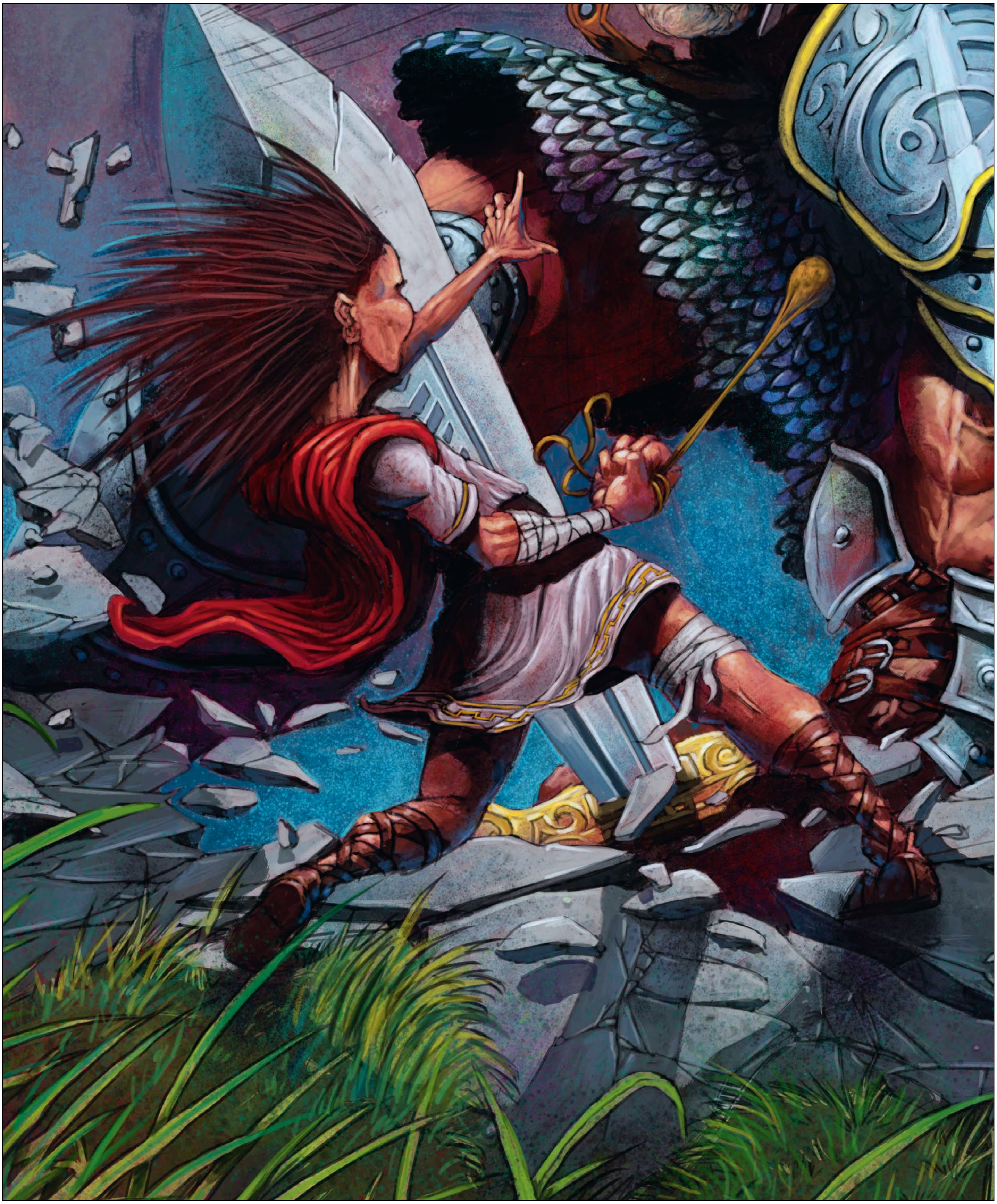
9 Foreground and debris

Even though the breaking rocks aren't the focal part, they are in the foreground and mingled in and around the characters. This gives depth and more movement to the overall scene. Using the splatter spray brush for textures and the dry brush for the details, I'll keep this quite loose, defining only cracks on rocks and streaks of colour for the grasses.



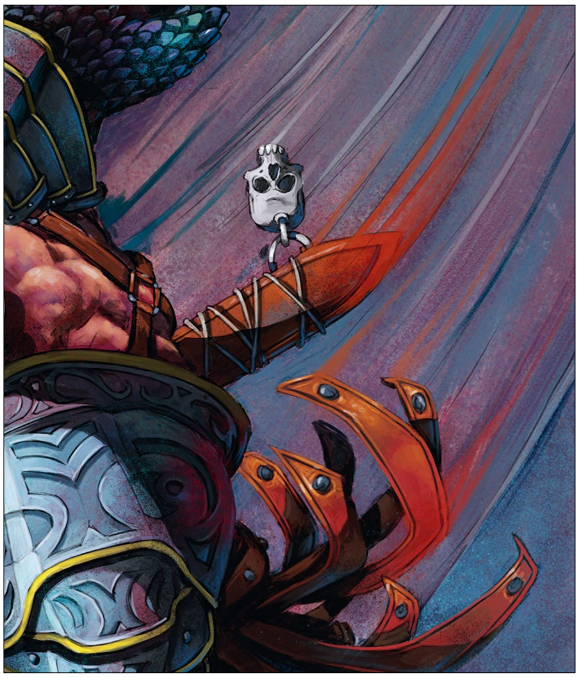
10 Create the angry expression

There's nothing like a good snarling facial expression to catch the eye. With faces portraying motion they might have things like gritted teeth, wrinkles or folds in the skin that you don't normally see. Using some heavier contrasting shadows and highlights you can capture that expression in the face. ➳



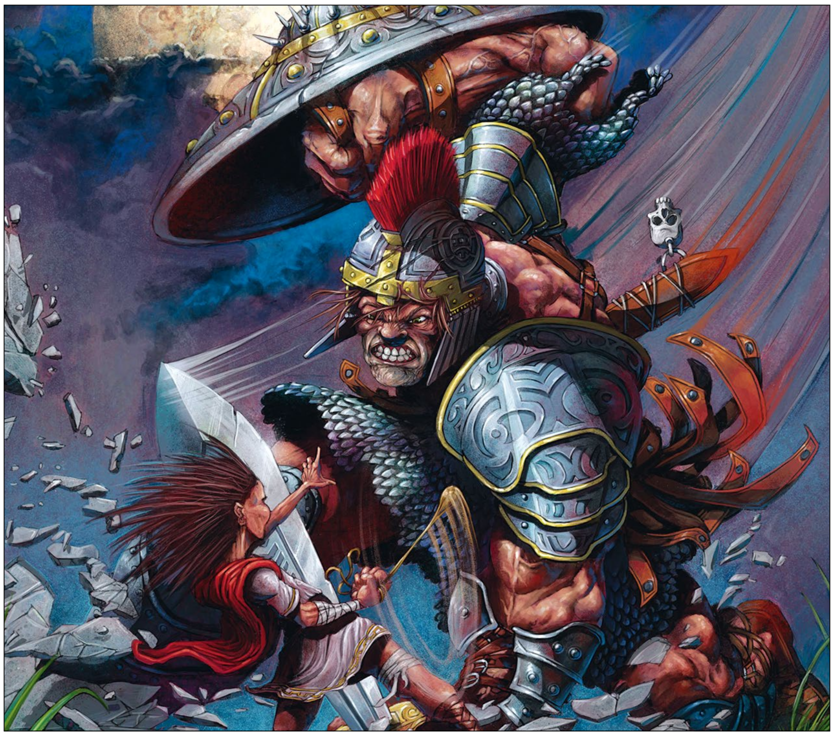
11 Painting movement in cloth

When cloth moves it's very organic – bending, folding and wrapping back on itself, with each cloth texture reacting differently to light depending on its glossiness. In general the folds will be the darkest at the crease and the lightest on the fold itself. I normally use three shades of a colour for this, only adding highlights if the material is to appear shiny or has some lighting on it.



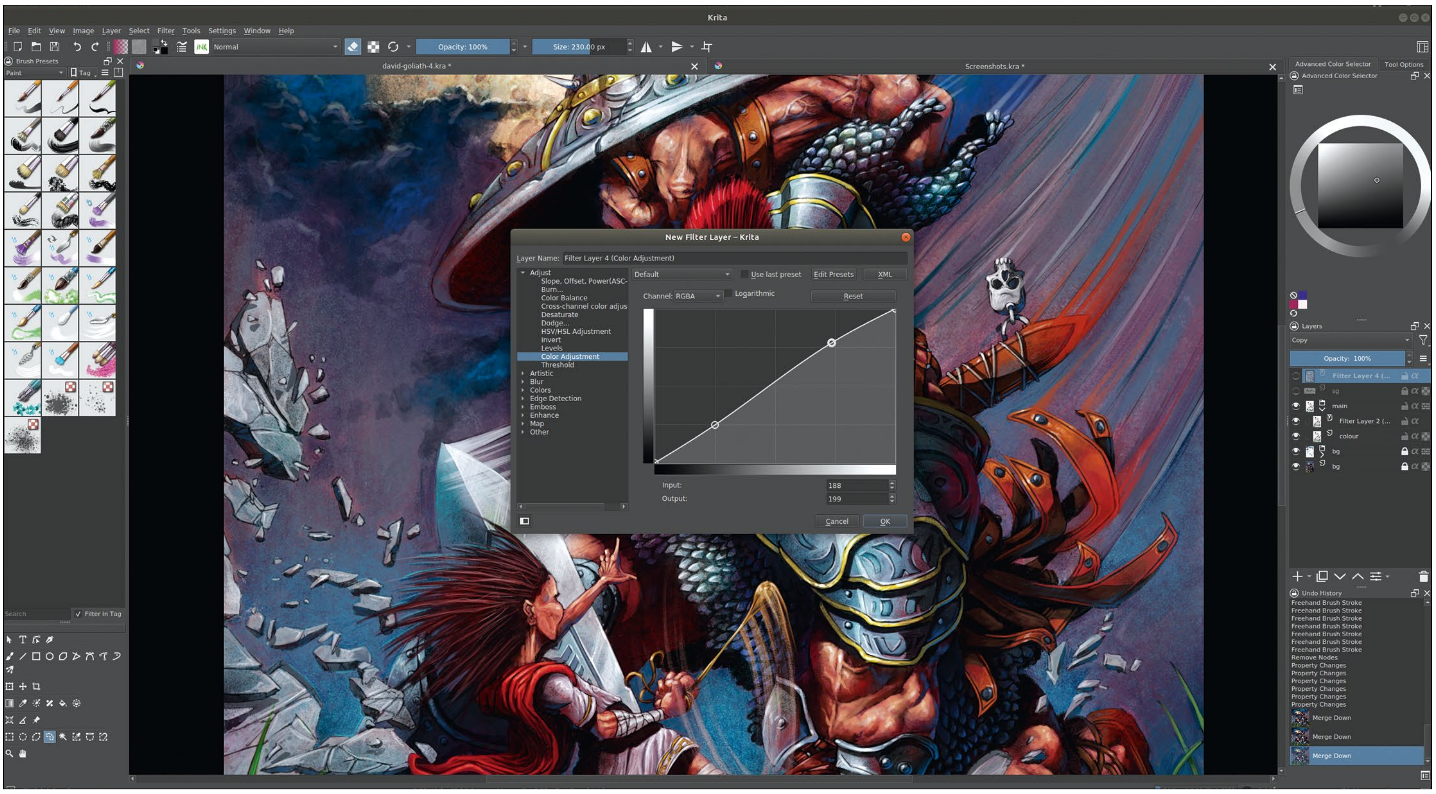
12 The need for speed

Let's give the figure some directional motion. Here I'll add some speed streaks coming off the trailing ends of the moving character. Using the wet brush I'll colour pick the part I am going to streak and make one fast pass to make the mark. Then with the dry brush I'll refine some of the streaks to have more of a tail on them.



13 Bells and whistles

The image really comes to life by adding all the little extras, lighting and highlights. I make the metal look shiny and add details that tighten up those smaller focus areas, like scratches and dents in the armour. I usually do these with the dry brush at small sizes with different opacities creating depth in those details.



New Filter Layer – Krita

Layer Name: Filter Layer 4 (Color Adjustment)

Default

Channel: RGBA

Input: 188

Output: 199

Krita
File Edit View Image Layer Select Filter Tools Settings Window Help
Normal
Opacity: 100%
Size: 230.00 px
david-goliath-4.kra *
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Adjust
Slope, Offset, Power(ASC-
Burn...
Color Balance
Cross-channel color adjus
Desaturate
Dodge...
HSV/HSL Adjustment
Invert
Levels
Color Adjustment
Threshold
Artistic
Blur
Colors
Edge Detection
Emboss
Enhance
Map
Other
Use last preset
Edit Presets
XML
Logarithmic
Reset
Cancel
OK

14 Individual colour adjustments

The illustration is now finished, but sometimes there might be a need for some small adjustments. This will be different for everyone depending on the requirements of the piece. Here on the main colour layer, I use a filter mask layer to make a small RGBA adjustment. Locking the lower darks on the curve and pushing the light end a little gives the main colour layer some contrasting pop.

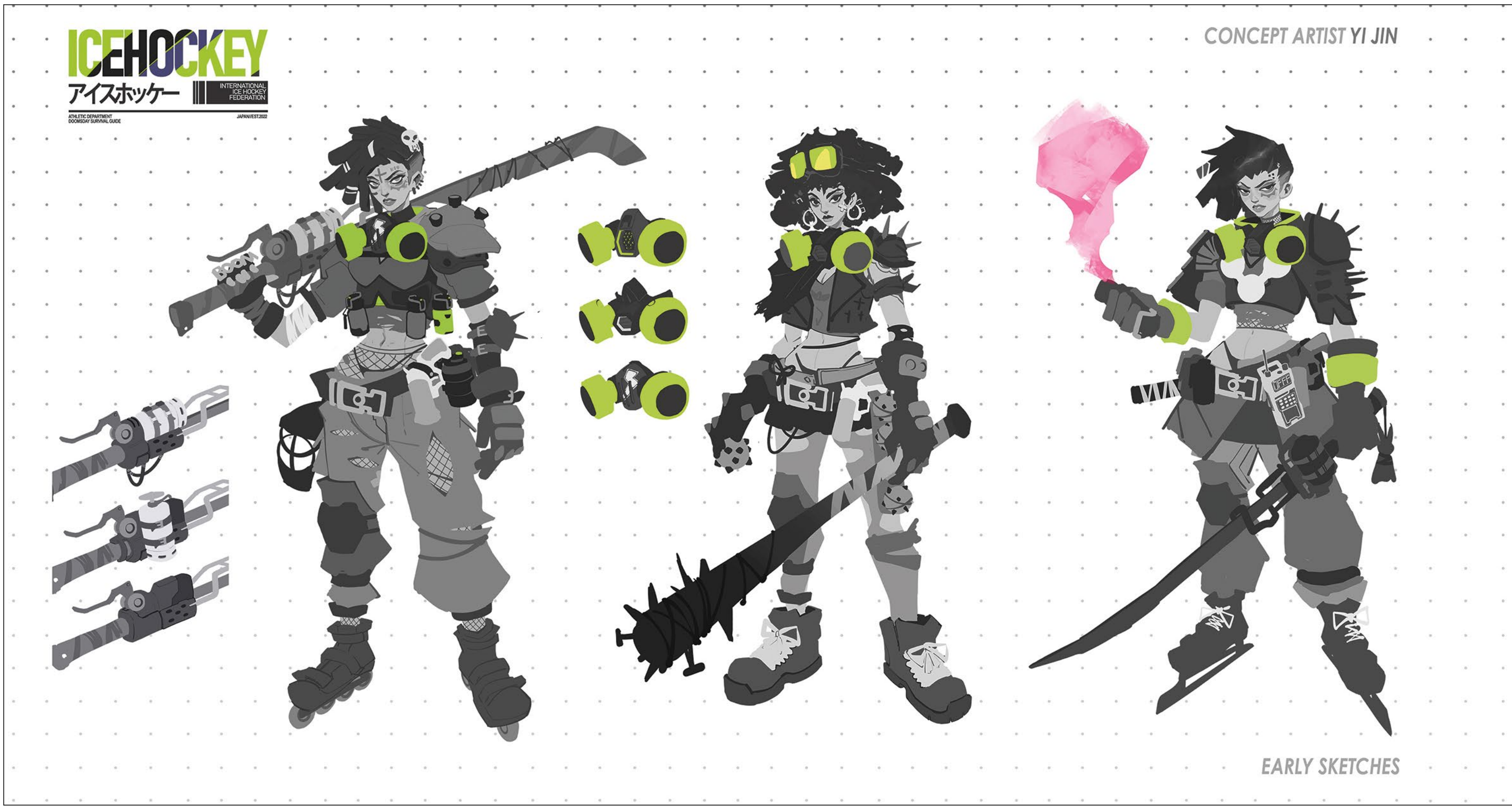
Technique focus

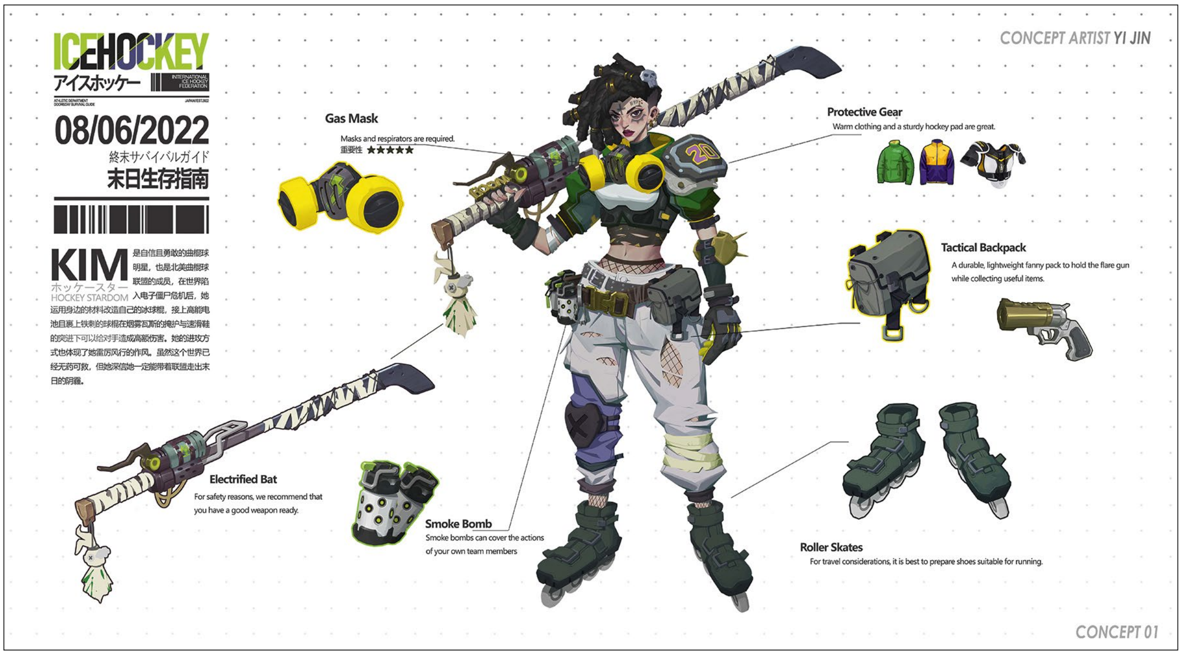
DEVELOP A CHARACTER

Check out this unique, detailed character design by concept artist **Yi Jin**

"Before I start drawing, I will first write a synopsis. This character is set in a post-apocalyptic world where humans need to fight to survive. Then I give the character a persona: this design is of a brave and strong athlete.

Next I create a mood board. This is very important as it reflects the feel of the character. From there I create lots of sketches before getting stuck into the details. Finally, I refine the design, paying special attention to the colour. When rendering, I use different Photoshop layer modes to render the light and texture."


ICEHOCKEY
アイスホッケー
INTERNATIONAL ICE HOCKEY FEDERATION
ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT
DOOMSDAY SURVIVAL GUIDE
JAPAN/EST.2022
CONCEPT ARTIST YI JIN
EARLY SKETCHES


ICEHOCKEY
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ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT
DOOMSDAY SURVIVAL GUIDE
JAPAN/EST.2022
08/06/2022
終末サバイバルガイド
末日生存指南
KIM
ホッケースター
HOCKEY STARDOM
CONCEPT ARTIST YI JIN
Gas Mask
重要性 ★★★★★
Protective Gear
Tactical Backpack
Electrified Bat
Smoke Bomb
Roller Skates
CONCEPT 01

是自信且勇敢的曲棍球明星，也是北美曲棍球联盟的成员，在世界陷入电子僵尸危机后，她运用身边的材料改造自己的冰球棍，接上高能电池且裹上铁刺的球棍在烟雾瓦斯的掩护与速滑鞋的突进下可以给对手造成高额伤害。她的进攻方式也体现了她雷厉风行的作风。虽然这个世界已经无药可救，但她深信她一定能带着联盟走出末日的阴霾。

Masks and respirators are required.

Warm clothing and a sturdy hockey pad are great.

A durable, lightweight fanny pack to hold the flare gun while collecting useful items.

For safety reasons, we recommend that you have a good weapon ready.

Smoke bombs can cover the actions of your own team members

For travel considerations, it is best to prepare shoes suitable for running.

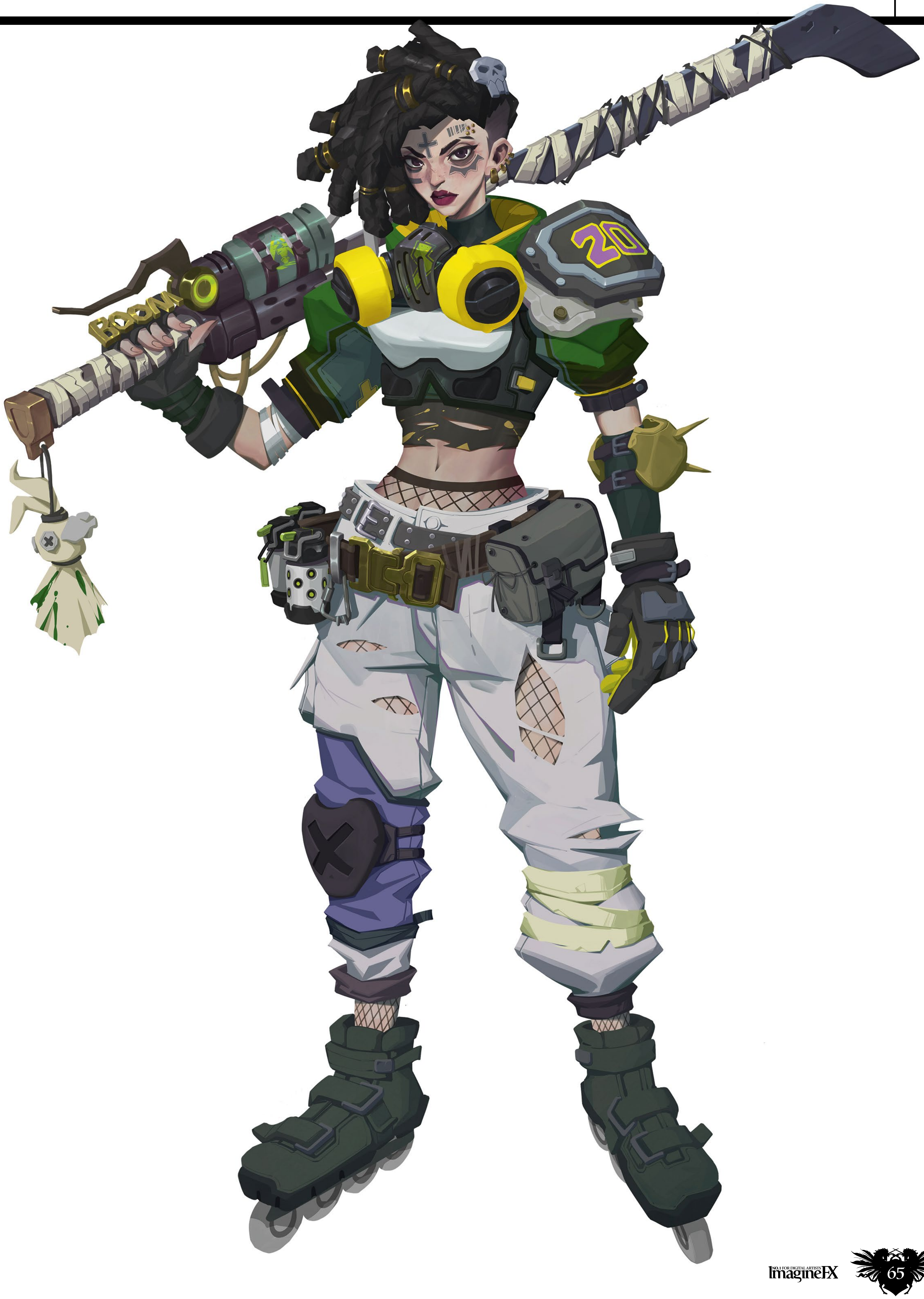
Artist
PROFILE

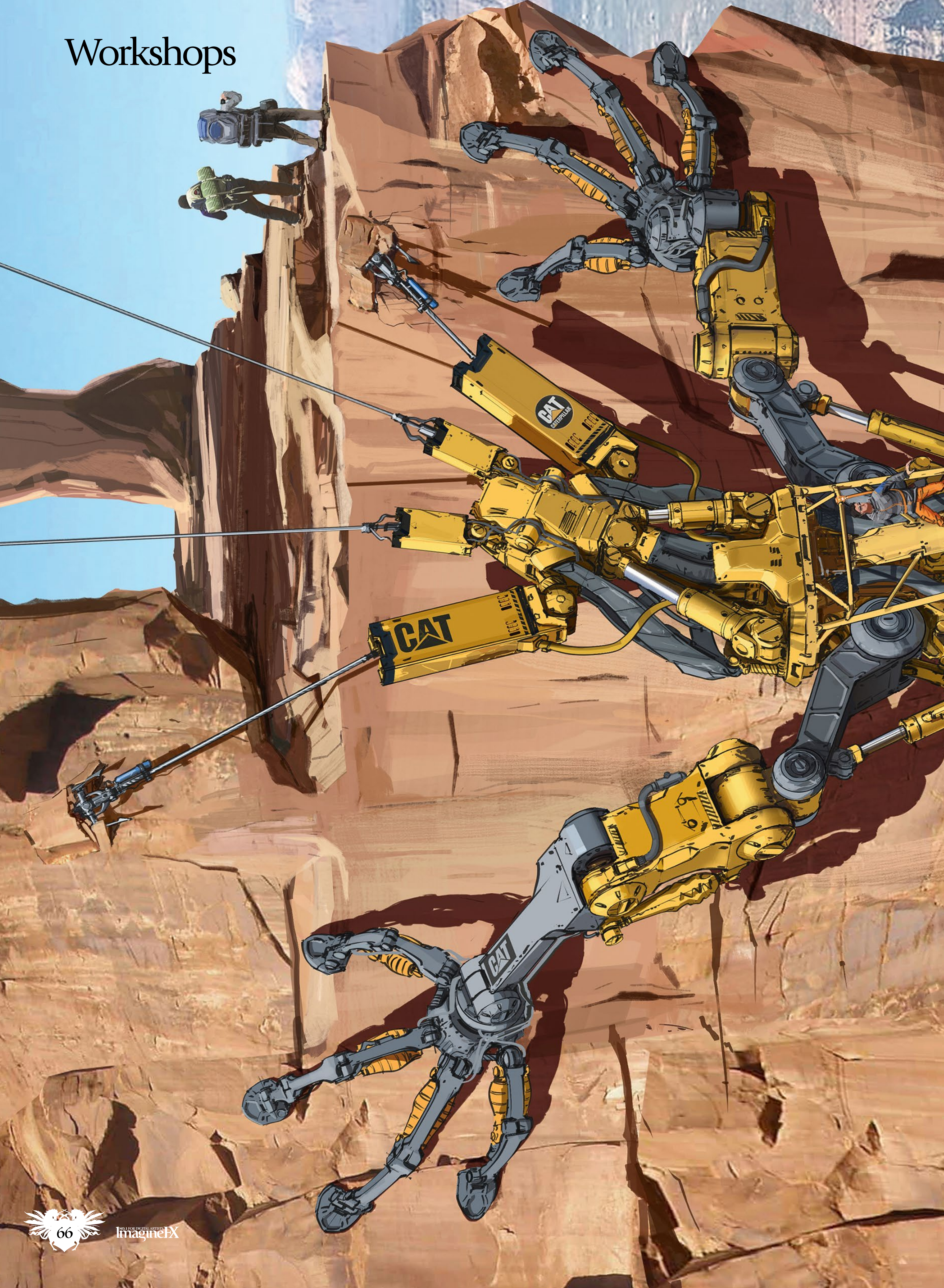
Yi Jin

LOCATION: China

Yi Jin is a CG artist who lives in Shanghai and works at developer Lilith Games. Yi Jin's hobbies include painting, playing video games, building worlds and creating unique characters.

https://bit.ly/3TviyZ6


BOOM
20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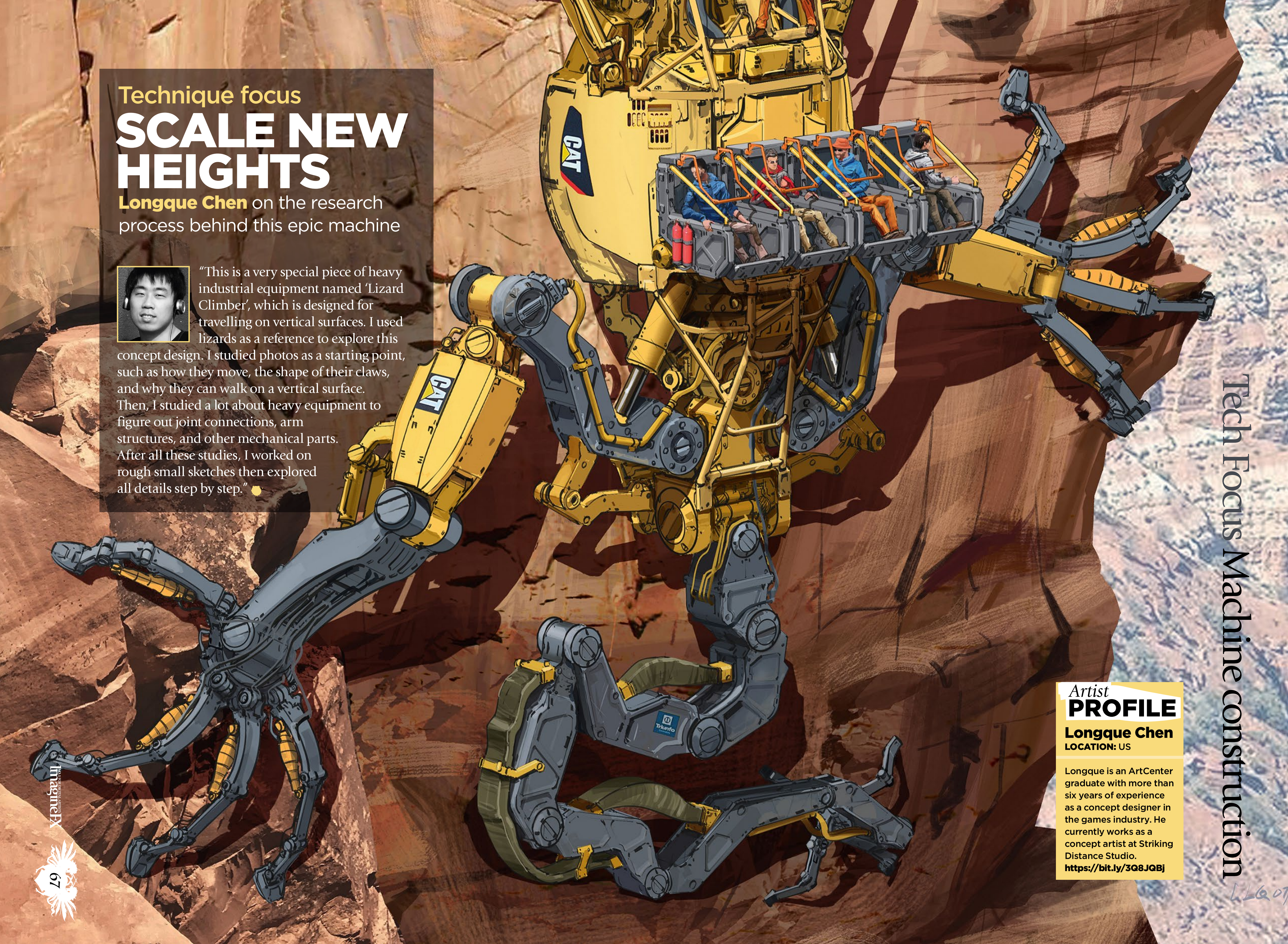


Technique focus

SCALE NEW HEIGHTS

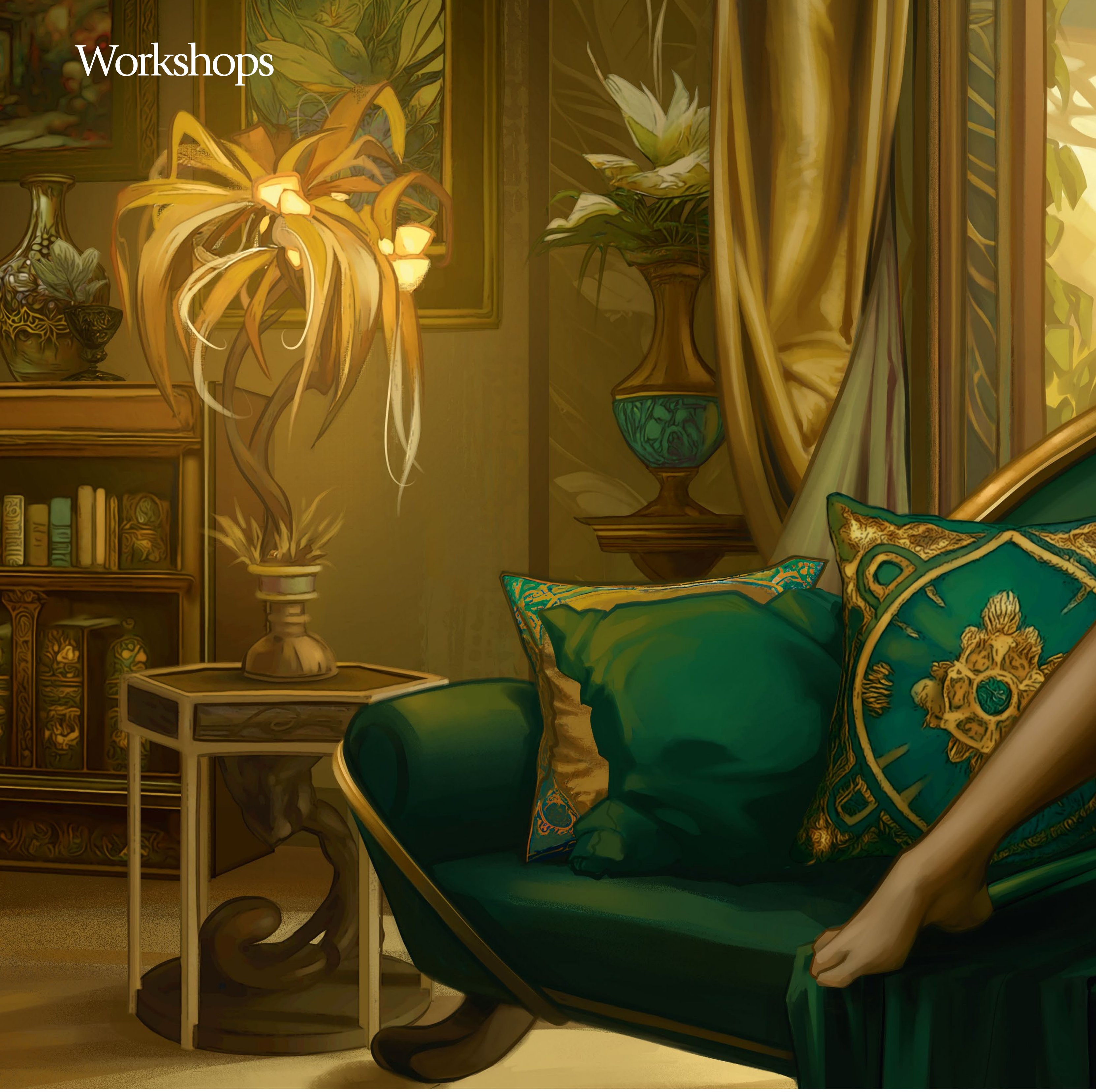
Longque Chen on the research process behind this epic machine

"This is a very special piece of heavy industrial equipment named 'Lizard Climber', which is designed for travelling on vertical surfaces. I used lizards as a reference to explore this concept design. I studied photos as a starting point, such as how they move, the shape of their claws, and why they can walk on a vertical surface. Then, I studied a lot about heavy equipment to figure out joint connections, arm structures, and other mechanical parts. After all these studies, I worked on rough small sketches then explored all details step by step."

Artist **PROFILE**

Longque Chen
LOCATION: US

Longque is an ArtCenter graduate with more than six years of experience as a concept designer in the games industry. He currently works as a concept artist at Striking Distance Studio.
https://bit.ly/3Q8JQBj

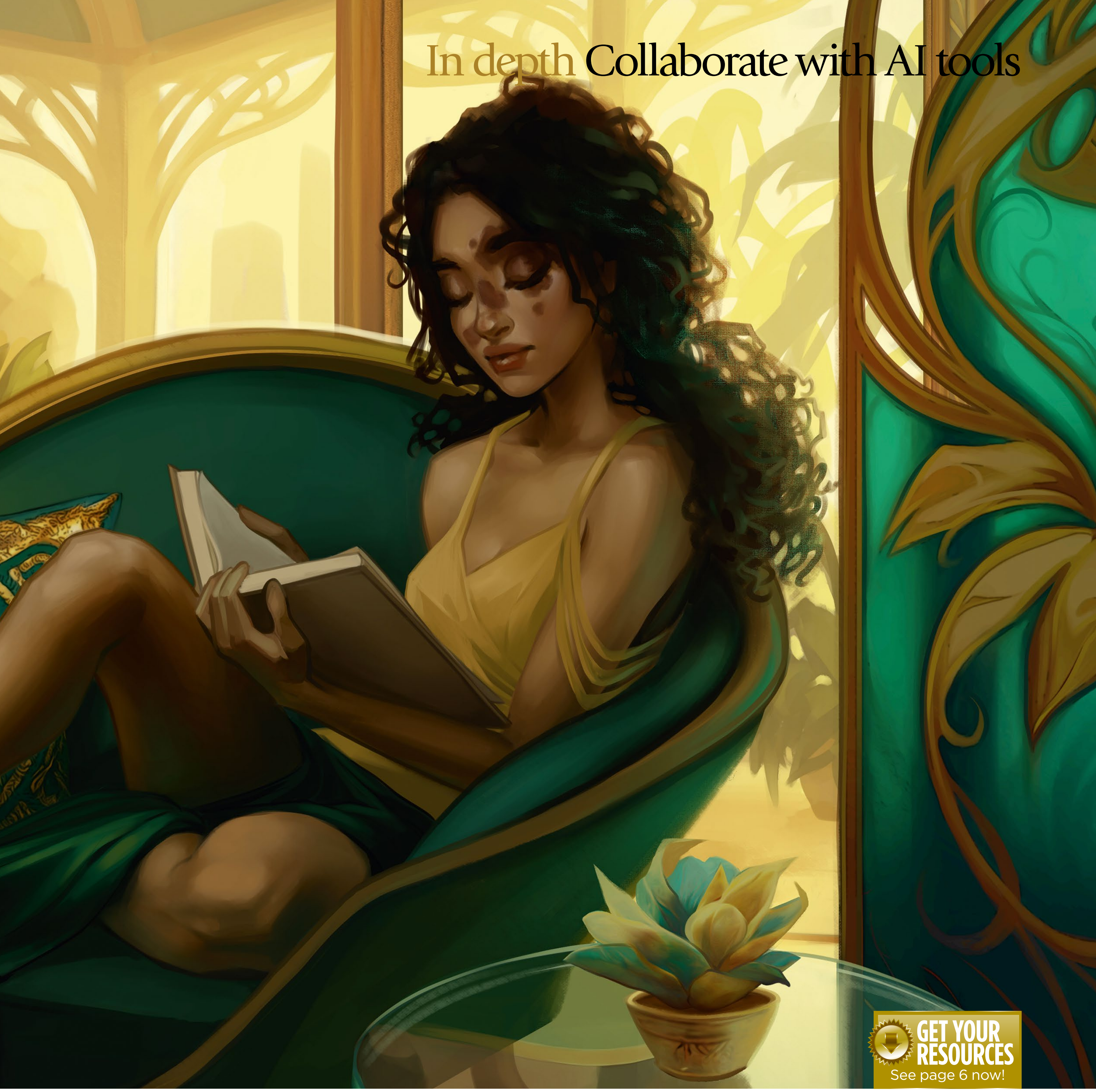


Midjourney & Clip Studio Paint

COLLABORATIVE PAINTING WITH AI

Digital artist **Rachel Bradley** shows you how to use AI in your art, overcoming common pitfalls for a professional result

Collaborate with AI tools

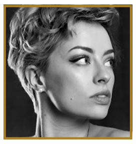


GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 6 now!

Artist
PROFILE

Rachel Bradley
LOCATION: US

Rachel is writing her first novel, The Sum of Our Deeds, and bringing it to life with her illustrations.
imrachelbradley.com

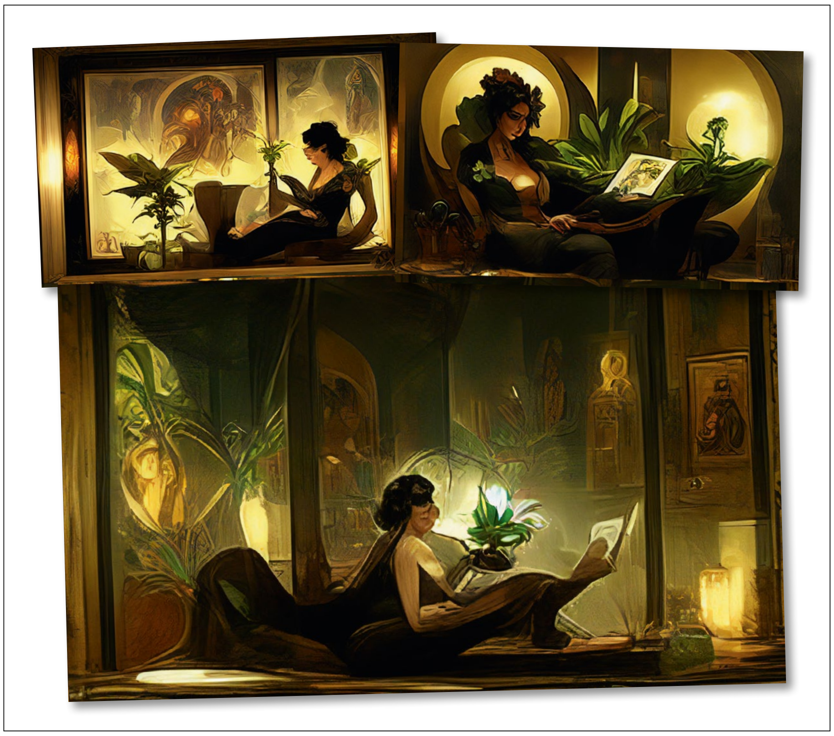


The art world is abuzz with exciting new developments in the AI field. Out of seemingly nowhere, several companies popped up and millions of users have been busy churning out computed-generated artworks of surprisingly high quality. It's presented us with new opportunities to streamline our workflows and expand our ideation.

As with all rapid advancements in technology, though, there have been drawbacks. Used thoughtfully, these tools can massively speed up your workflow and help you push your work to the next level. Unfortunately, so too can it make your work more predictable and less interesting.

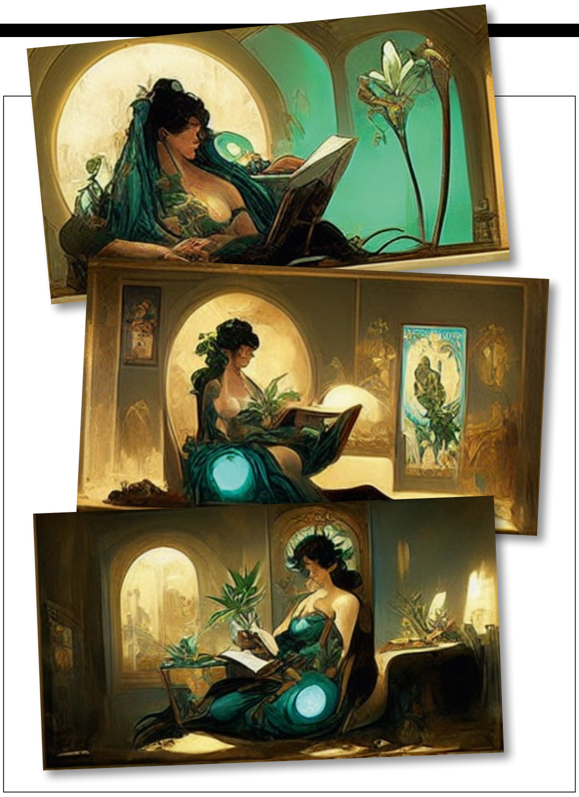
In their infancy, the AI engines produce an iconic look detectable even at thumbnail scale, and websites like ArtStation and DeviantArt are currently awash with fast, minimally edited artwork. On first glance they're cool, but it doesn't take long for the novelty to fade. That which is easily attained is not so highly valued, and anything that is obviously AI generated is often quickly dismissed.

But fear not! There are many ways to benefit from this fascinating new development without surrendering your unique style. In this tutorial, I will walk you through the various ways you can incorporate AI into your workflow to produce higher quality artwork more efficiently, and how to overcome the common problems many face. ➳



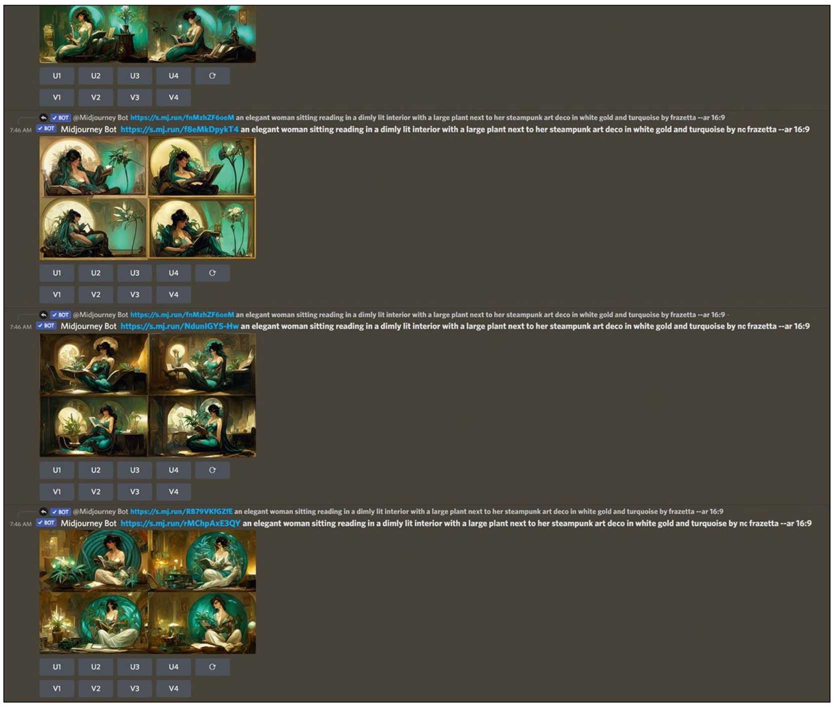
1 Generate the image

To start, you'll need a text prompt to feed the AI. There's nuance to the wording, but there are many great resources online to help you get started. I wanted to create a candid painting of my character, Iselda, cosy in her opulent home. I started with "an elegant woman sitting reading in a dimly lit interior with a large plant next to her steampunk art deco".



2 Hone the prompts

Rarely will the first images you generate be perfect. Finding the right wording and settings takes time. I add "...in white gold and turquoise" and "by Frank Frazetta" to my prompt and keep generating options. I've found that prompting the AI to create variations of my favourite results can really push them in exciting directions.



✓ BOT @Midjourney Bot https://s.mj.run/fnMzhZF6oeM an elegant woman sitting reading in a dimly lit interior with a large plant next to her steampunk art deco in white gold and turquoise by frazetta --ar 16:9

7:46 AM ✓ BOT Midjourney Bot https://s.mj.run/f8eMkDpykT4 an elegant woman sitting reading in a dimly lit interior with a large plant next to her steampunk art deco in white gold and turquoise by nc frazetta --ar 16:9

✓ BOT @Midjourney Bot https://s.mj.run/fnMzhZF6oeM an elegant woman sitting reading in a dimly lit interior with a large plant next to her steampunk art deco in white gold and turquoise by frazetta --ar 16:9

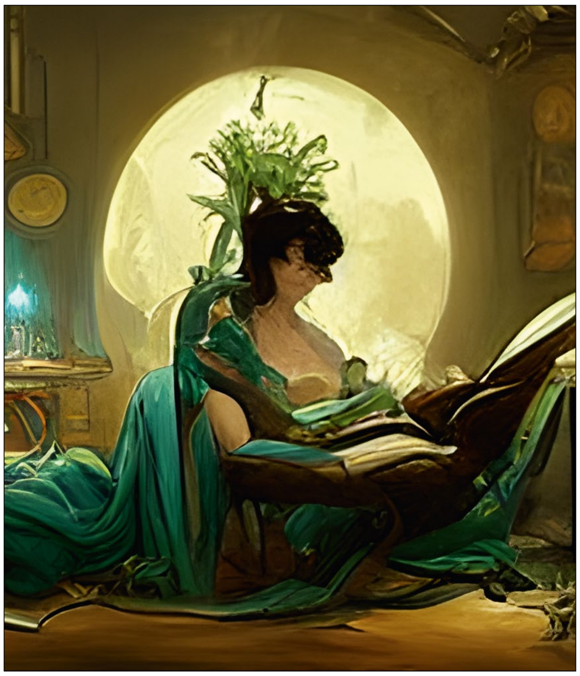
7:46 AM ✓ BOT Midjourney Bot https://s.mj.run/NdunIGY5-Hw an elegant woman sitting reading in a dimly lit interior with a large plant next to her steampunk art deco in white gold and turquoise by nc frazetta --ar 16:9

✓ BOT @Midjourney Bot https://s.mj.run/RB79VKfGZfE an elegant woman sitting reading in a dimly lit interior with a large plant next to her steampunk art deco in white gold and turquoise by frazetta --ar 16:9

7:46 AM ✓ BOT Midjourney Bot https://s.mj.run/rMChpAxE3QY an elegant woman sitting reading in a dimly lit interior with a large plant next to her steampunk art deco in white gold and turquoise by nc frazetta --ar 16:9

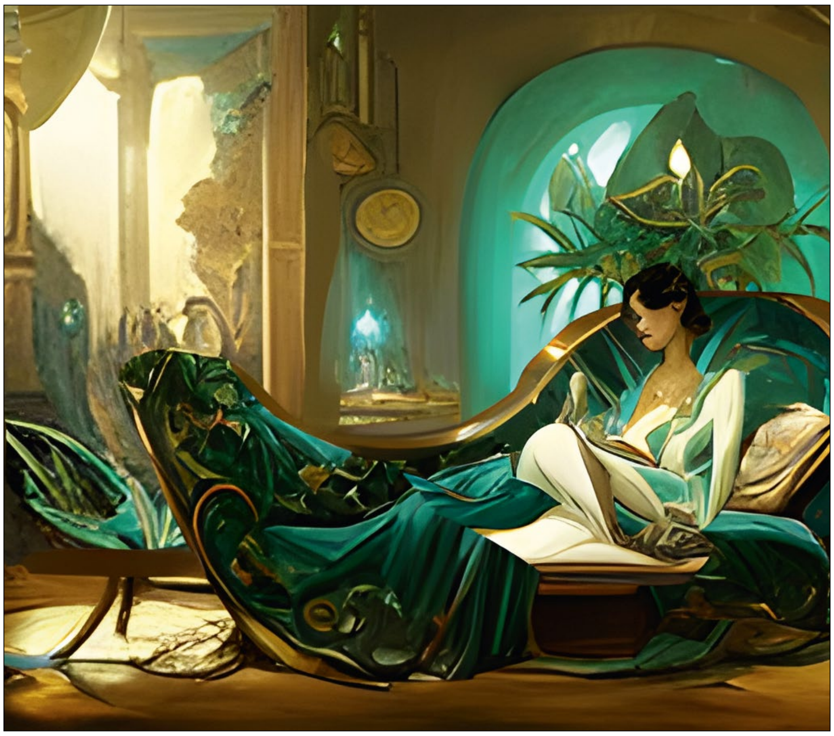
3 Collaborate with the AI

There's a fine balance to generating AI art. If you let it do all the work, you'll sacrifice your unique voice; if you try to control it too tightly, the AI can get confused and generate worse images. Write down your non-negotiable intentions for the piece and stick to them, but for everything else, let the AI suggest different and unexpected paths. You might discover something new!



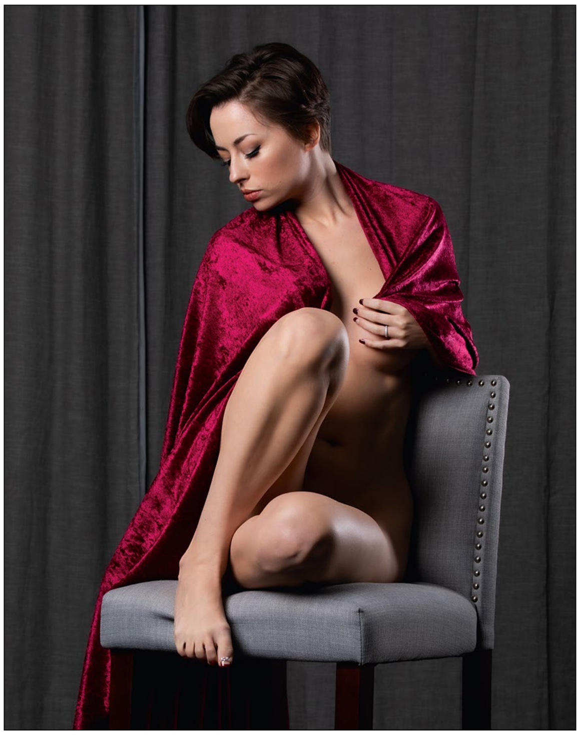
4 Select your results

When picking which image to work with, I try to logically evaluate which images you are drawn to and why. Generally speaking, the AI excels at lighting, colour and composition, so I prioritise images where these are strongest (the drawing and perspective will always need more work, so I don't worry about these too much).



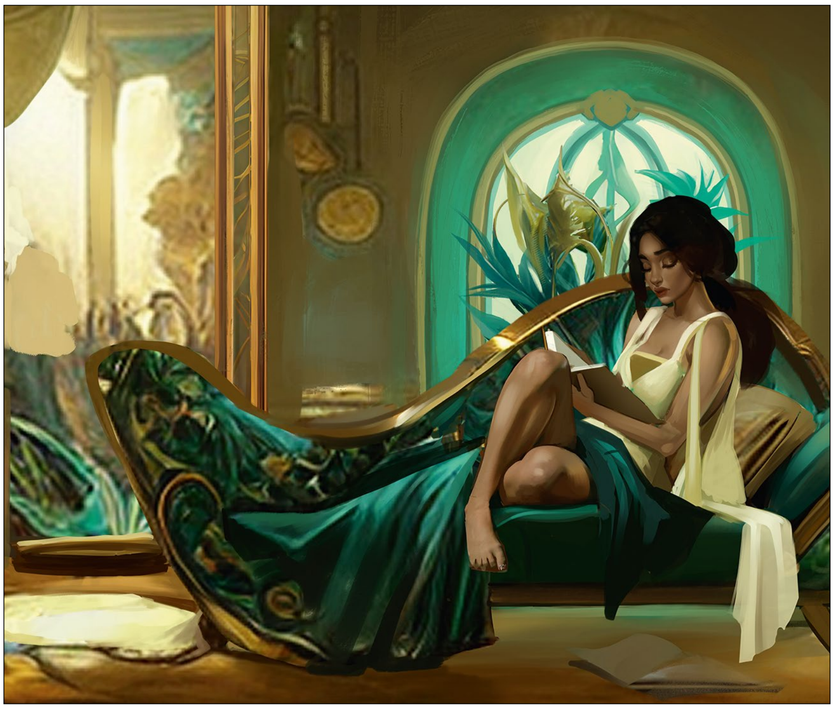
5 Prepare the image

In Midjourney, you can use different upscaling settings to generate various results. I've found that 'Light Upscale' settings produce results that are closer to my style and easier to incorporate. Sometimes I use a JPEG upscaler to push the resolution higher still. You can also combine various elements of different images, like I did here, if no single result is better than the others.



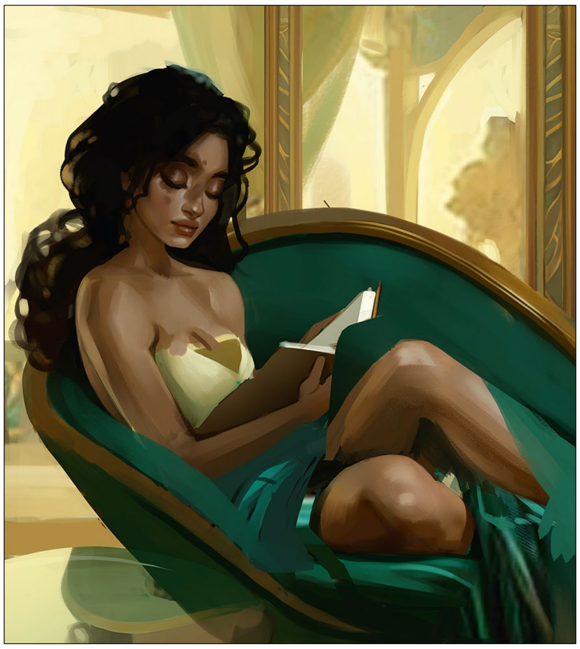
6 Use reference

Now is no time to get lazy about our reference use! AI images subconsciously feed us a lot of inaccurate information about the perspective and proportions, and reference is vital to help us see more clearly and push the image into a more convincing and realistic direction.



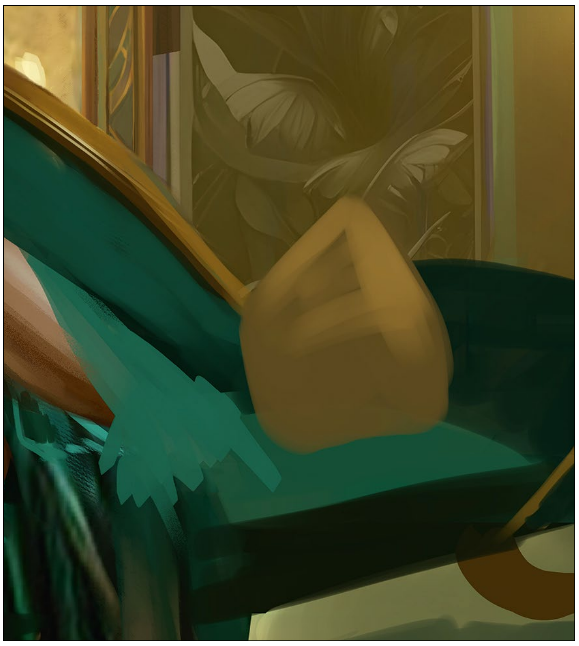
7 Fix the drawing

Finally, we're ready to paint! As previously mentioned, AI struggles with creating accurate drawings and perspective, so we have to fix those as soon as possible. It can be tricky to visualise how the drawing is wrong when working from a seemingly finished image. To overcome this, I place a low opacity white background over the top of the image and correct the drawing on a layer above.



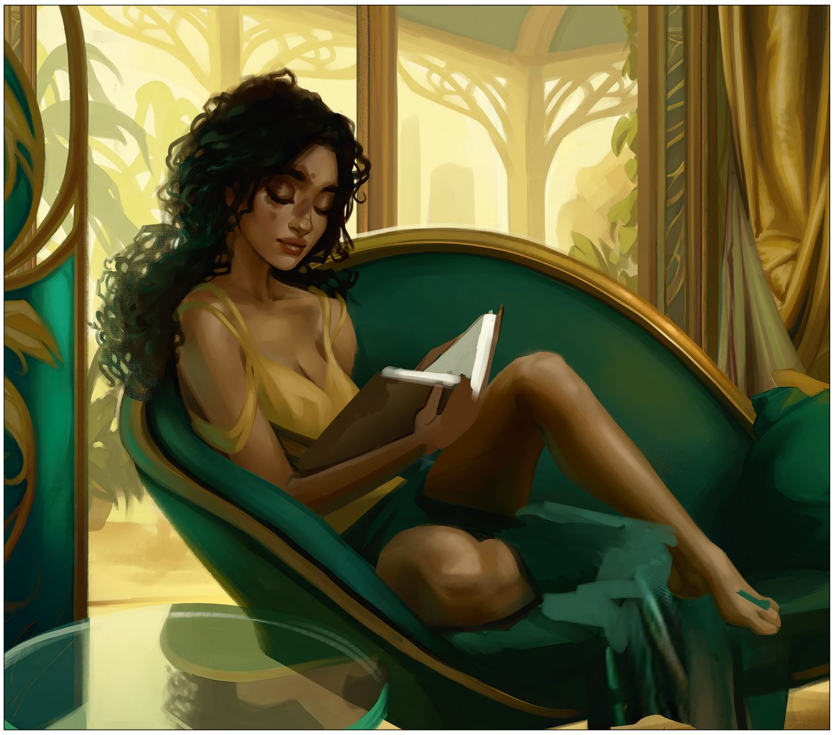
8 Drastic changes

Listen to your gut. In this illustration, I tried to stay true to the composition of the original AI image for longer than I should have. I liked some of the details and wanted to preserve them, but the formal and stiff composition was conflicting with that. Eventually, I realised I needed to break out of the original confines, so I redrew the background and upscaled Iselda. ➳



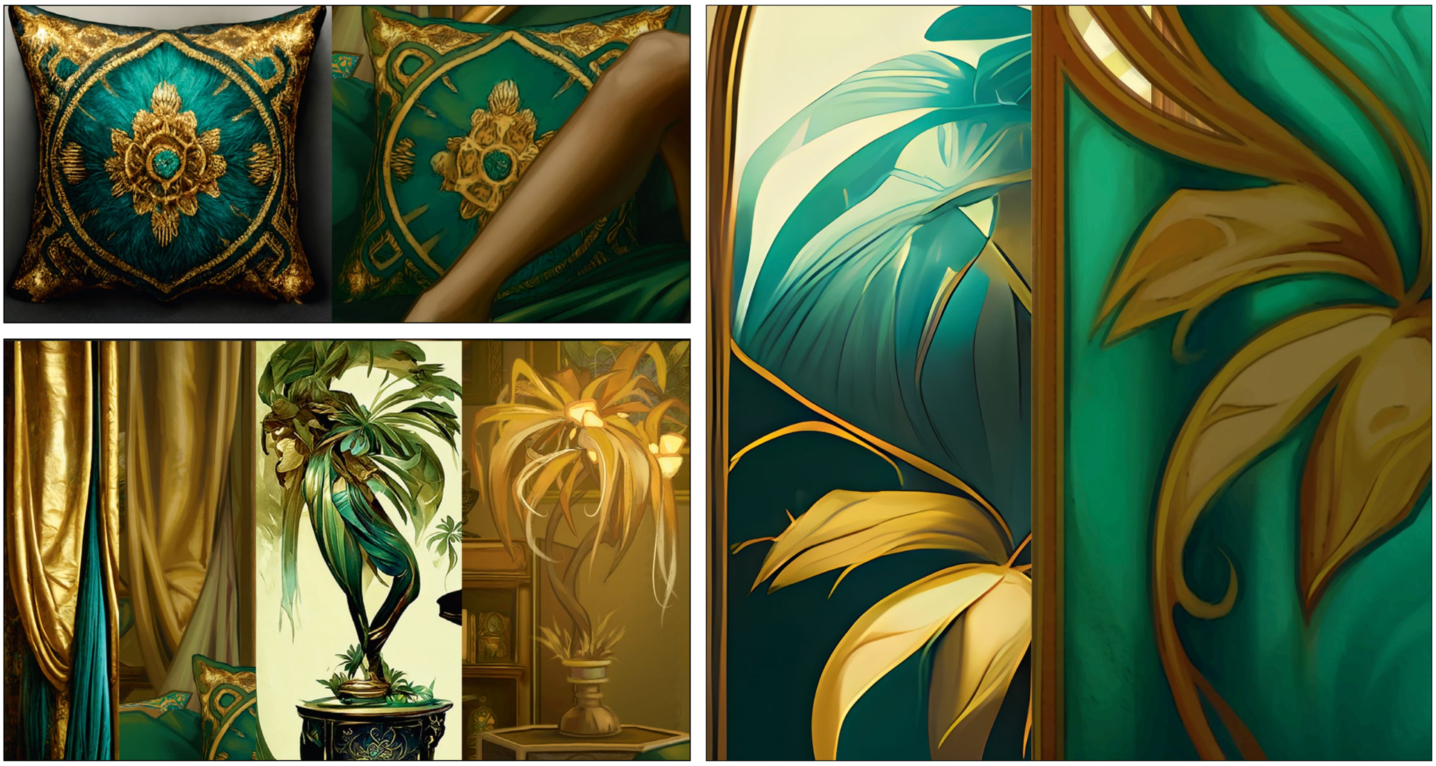
9 Conquering the ugly stage

The ugly stage tends to be longer when painting with AI. You're starting with something that's technically wrong, but is ambiguous and cohesive enough to be convincing. By painting into it, we're breaking that cohesion and introducing elements that are more real, which highlights the 'wrongness' of everything else. It's going to be a mess of different stages of completion. That's entirely normal; don't be discouraged!



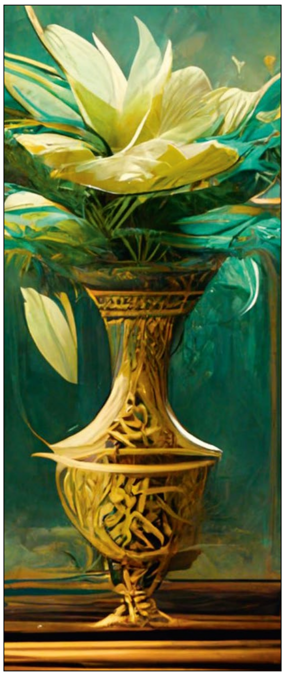
10 Resist the temptation

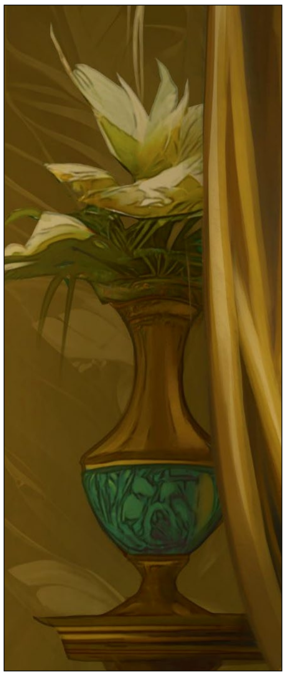
When starting with a base that has a ton of colour and texture detail, it's tempting to dive straight into rendering. Don't fall for it! Force yourself to fix the underlying drawing first. After all, there's no sense decorating a house that's collapsing on its sinking foundations! If you don't address it in the beginning, it'll take much longer to fix later.

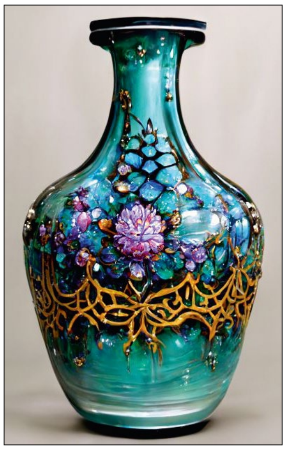


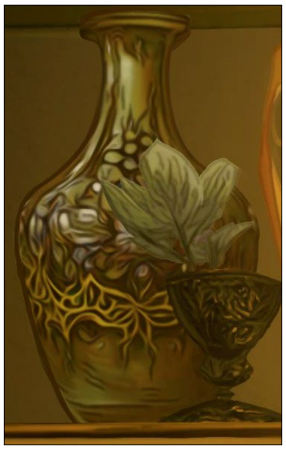
11 Generate elements

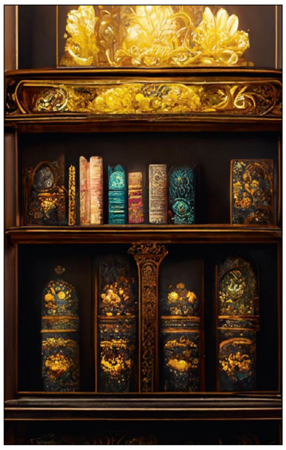
The AI doesn't have to be limited to the initial generation! Throughout this process I generated new, decorative elements to cut and paste in. Not only does this speed things up, it also creates a consistent look through the piece. I recommend using Selective Colour (Photoshop) and Colour Balance (CSP) for fine control of colour adjustments.

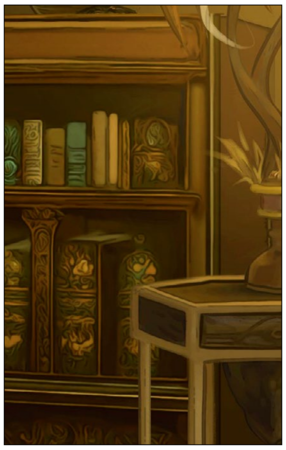












12 Seamless integration

The key to effective AI use is in careful texture integration. Generally, there should be more detail in the focal area and less in the background elements, so it's important that you paint over these elements enough that they don't look out of place. I like to use CSP's colour mixing brushes to smooth out texture, or their Artistic filter (Filters>Effects>Artistic) to blend them out.

RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

CLIP STUDIO PAINT

CUSTOM BRUSHES: RB CREAMY LINER

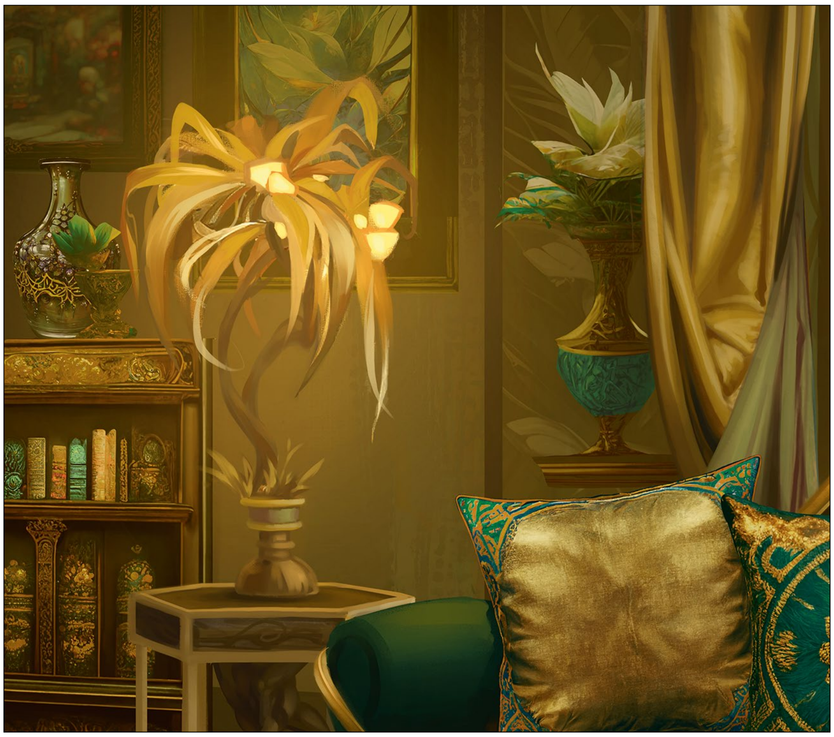
For painting lines back in. Blends beautifully with existing colours.

RB OVAL CREAM

My trusty all-rounder, with colour mixing enabled for buttery smooth blending.

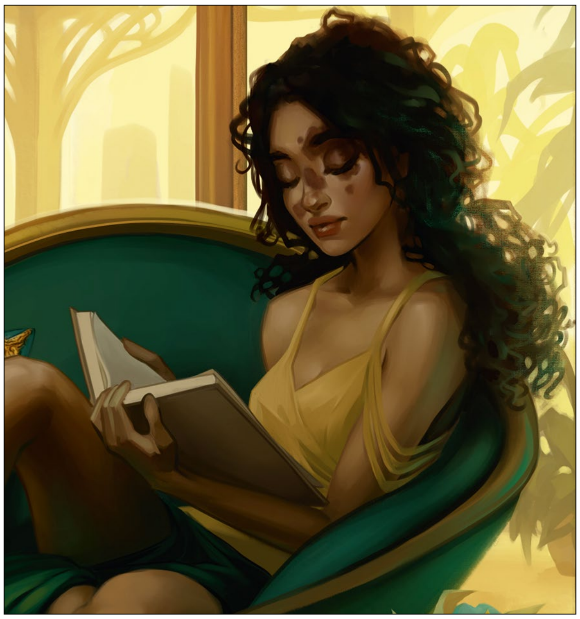
RB CREAMY DAUBS

Chunky, buildable and capable of both chiselling details and softly blending.



13 Refer back

Every now and then, I look back at the original AI images and try to remind myself of what I liked about them. While it's a mistake to remain beholden to the original, we also shouldn't lose sight of what they were contributing. Whenever I started to lose my way, I'd look back on the AI to re-inspire me moving forward.



14 Closing remarks

The final is very different from the original, but that's a good thing! The final time was 40 hours – much faster than my usual for something this complex. AI allowed me to explore initial ideas with incredible efficiency and create a faster and more detailed illustration than usual. By making conscious choices throughout and staying vigilant, I was able to avoid the common AI pitfalls and make it very much my own.

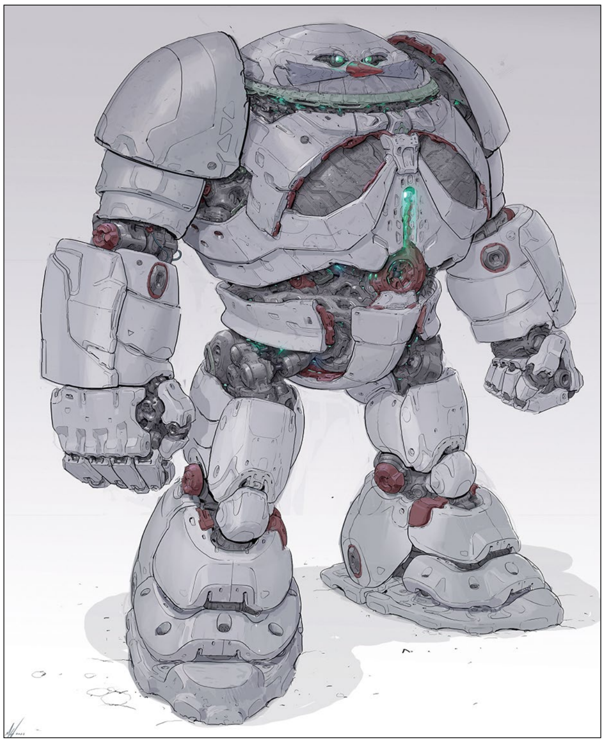
Technique focus

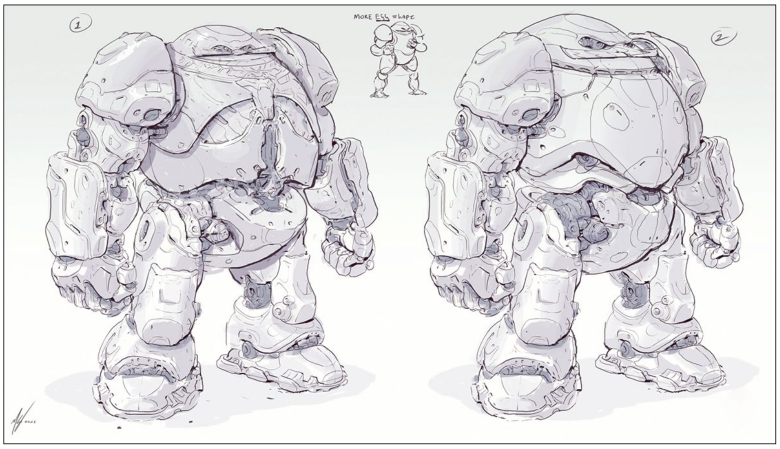
MOVIE MECHS

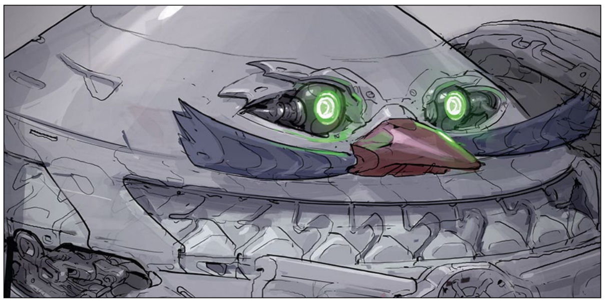
Michal Kus talks designing concepts for Doctor Robotnik's giant mecha in the Sonic 2 movie

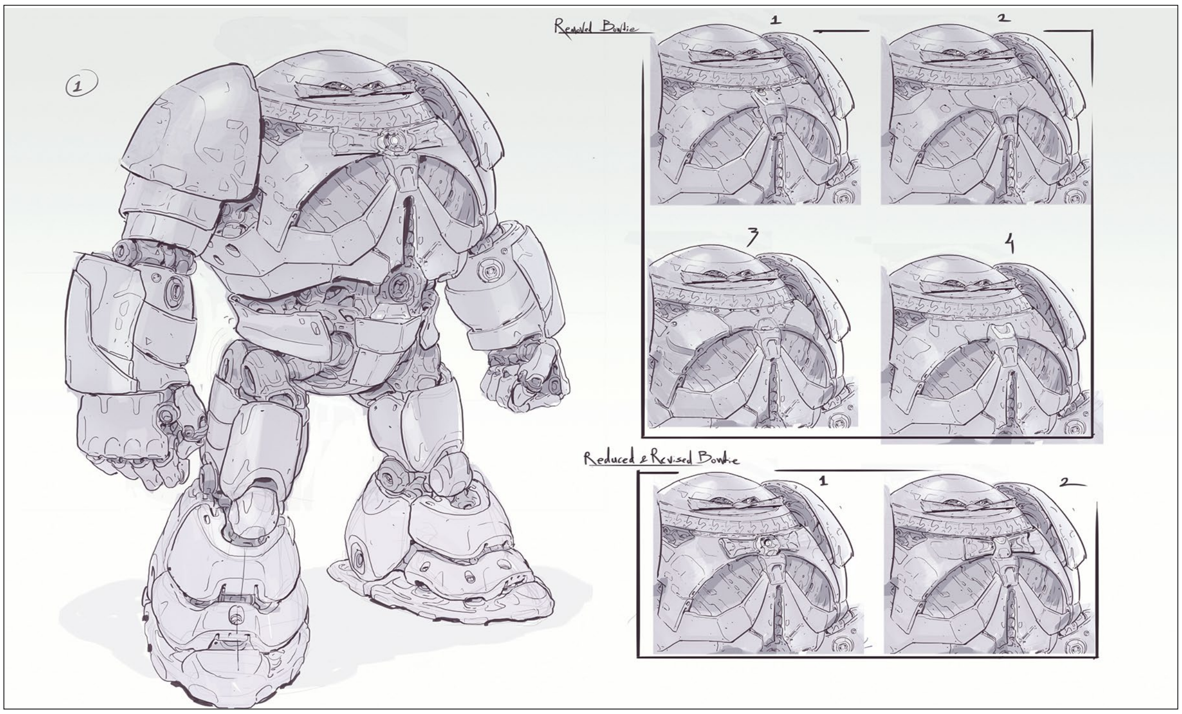
"Jeff Fowler, the director of Sonic the Hedgehog 2, wanted me to capture the personality of this for the upcoming movie. Other talented artists had already outlined basic ideas, but these did not focus on the visual design which needed to shout back to the original games.

What I learnt the most from this is that as a professional I got picked for my specific style, but you can never allow your ego to lead you. The Sonic universe is a well-established IP. Mixing in my own style with the design language was the biggest challenge, but solid communication with a client is the key to success. Always remember you are part of a team. Without the director, FX artists, animators, riggers etc, the Robotnik mecha would not have come to life in the movie."







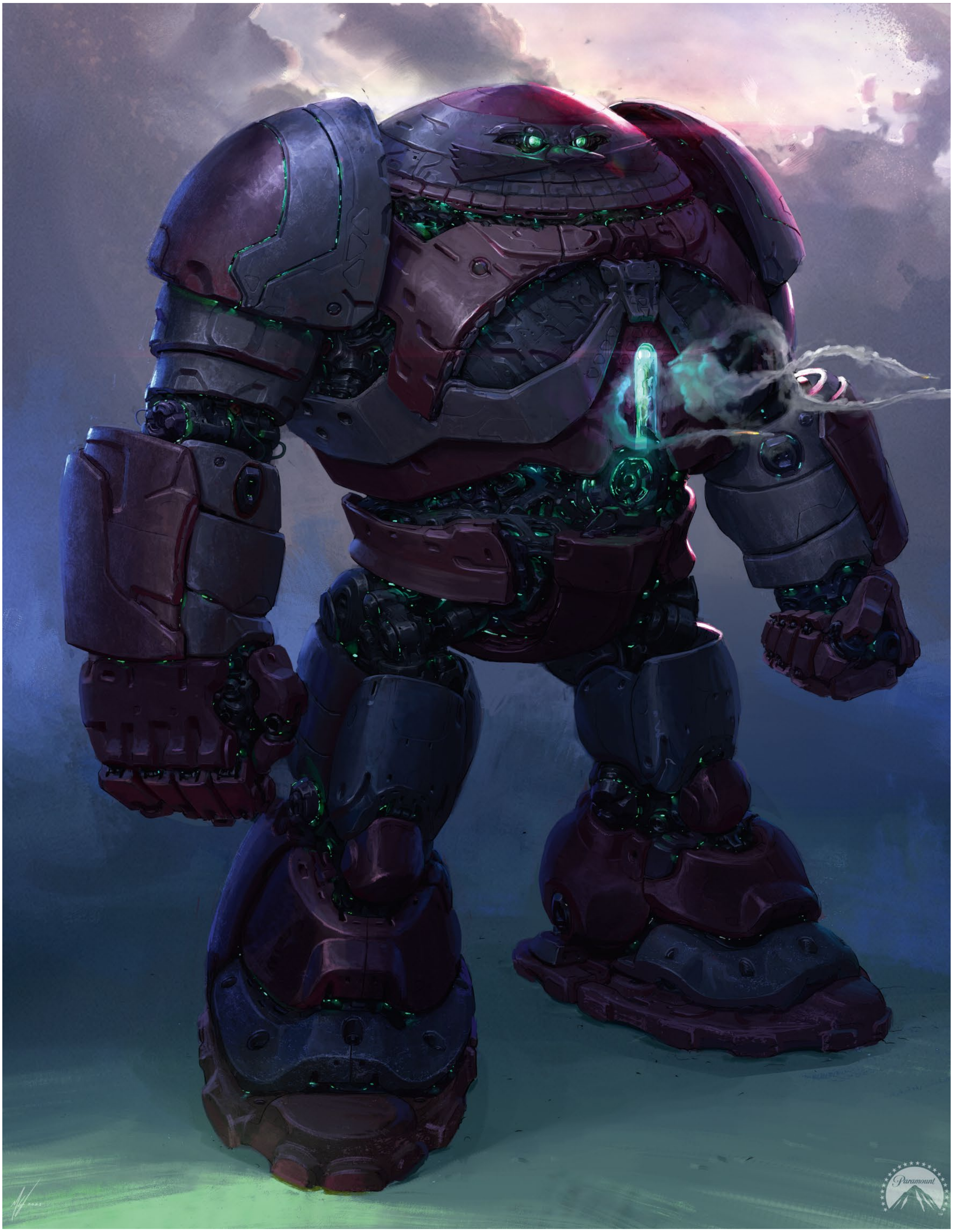


Artist
PROFILE

Michal Kus
LOCATION:
The Netherlands

Michal is a concept artist working in the entertainment industry. His special passion has always been the designing of vehicles, mechs, ships and all kinds of hardware.
https://bit.ly/3cCce19

All images © Paramount



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BEHIND THE SCENES AT
AARDMAN
Steven Shapiro, CTO, discusses new and emerging tech
VFX SECRETS
JORDAN PEELE'S
NOPE
How MPC crafted cloud creatures
NAIL YOUR CHARACTER DESIGN IN ZBRUSH
Page 42
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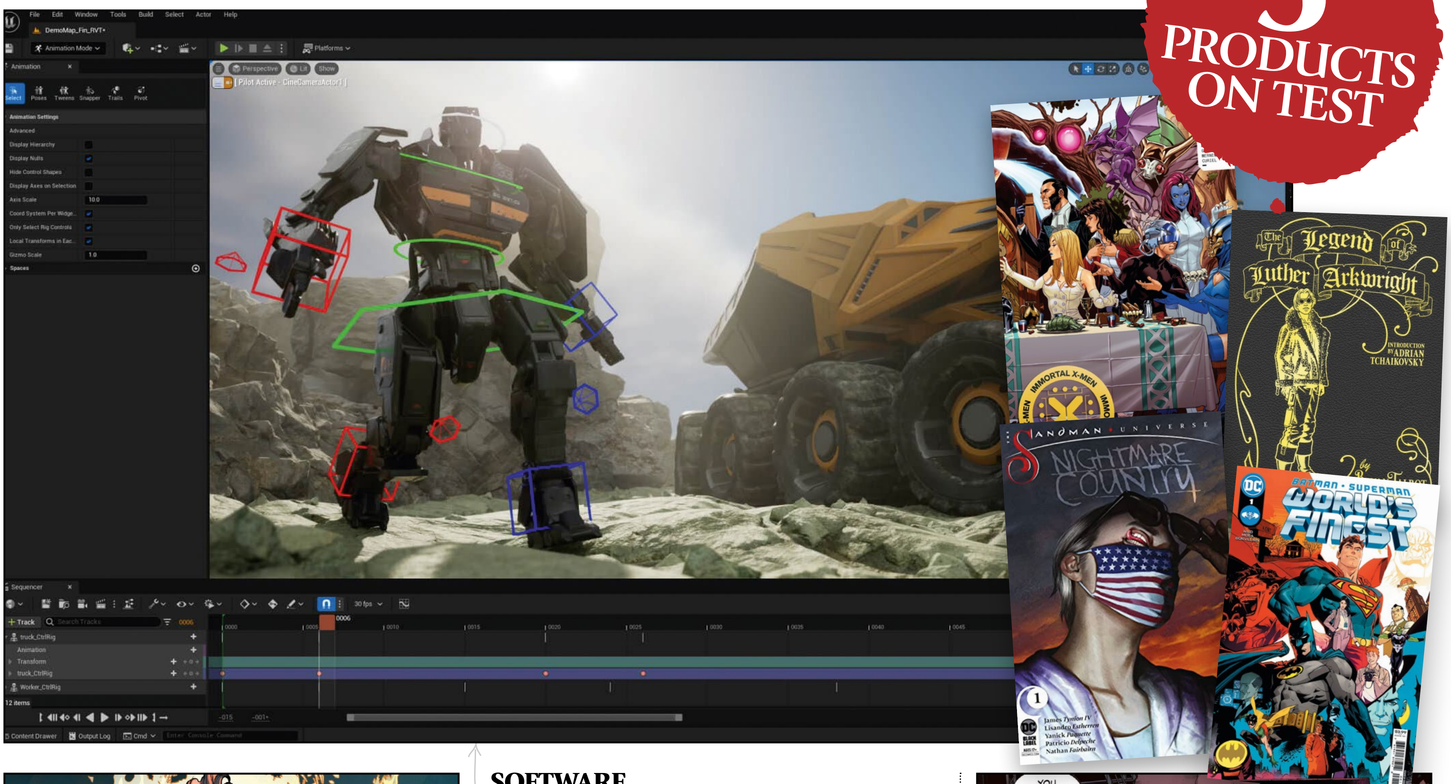
Reviews

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…

5 PRODUCTS ON TEST


File Edit Window Tools Build Select Actor Help
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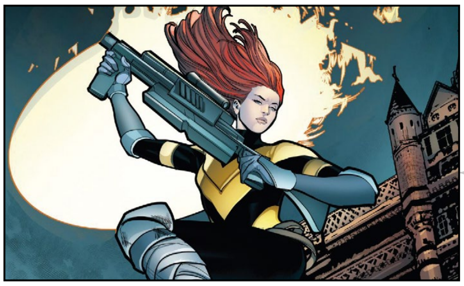
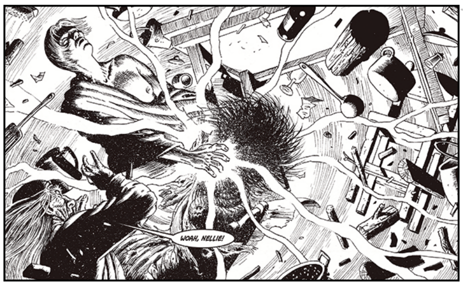
IMMORTAL X-MEN
The Legend of Luther Arkwright
Introduction by Adrian Tchaikovsky
Sandman Universe
Nightmare Country
Batman · Superman
World's Finest
DC




WOAH, NELLIE!

SOFTWARE

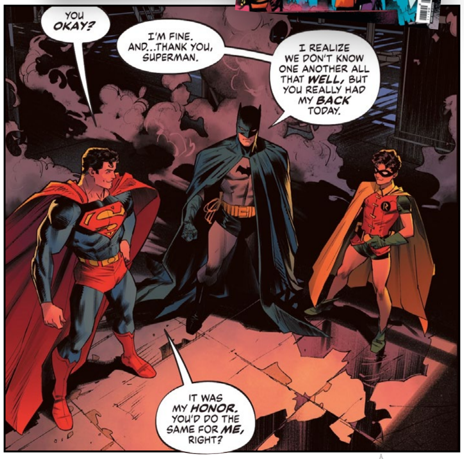
78 Unreal Engine 5
We explore this real-time game engine and its new features that enable the creation of huge, incredibly realistic worlds.

COMICS

80 Immortal X-Men
Intricate storytelling meets gorgeous art in this action-packed new adventure.

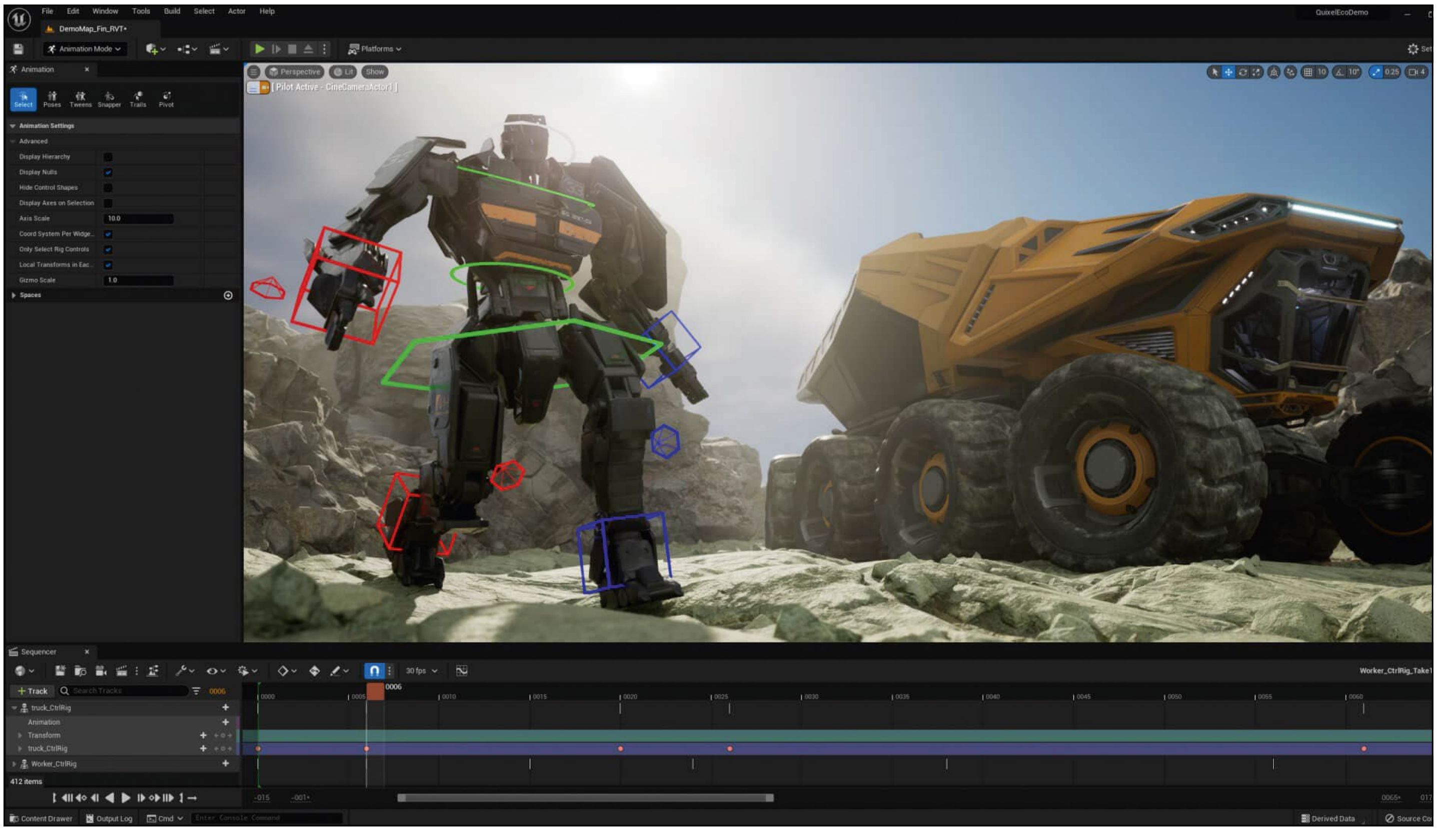
80 The Legend of Luther Arkwright
Discover the first part of a new graphic novel series from Bryan Talbot.

81 The Sandman Universe: Nightmare Country
Nightmares walk the Earth in the latest addition to DC's Sandman line.


YOU OKAY?
I'M FINE, AND...THANK YOU, SUPERMAN.
I REALIZE WE DON'T KNOW ONE ANOTHER ALL THAT WELL, BUT YOU REALLY HAD MY BACK TODAY.
IT WAS MY HONOR. YOU'D DO THE SAME FOR ME, RIGHT?

81 Batman/Superman: World's Finest
Two of the world's greatest superheroes team up for some old-school comic antics.

RATINGS EXPLAINED ★★★★★ Magnificent ★★★★ Great ★★★ Good ★★ Poor ★ Atrocious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DemoMap_Fin_RVT•
Animation Mode
Platforms
Animation
Select
Poses
Tweens
Snapper
Trails
Pivot
Perspective
Lit
Show
Pilot Active - CineCameraActor1
Sequencer
Track
Search Tracks
30 fps
Worker_CtrlRig_Take1
Content Drawer
Output Log
Cmd
Derived Data
Source Control

Animation Settings
Advanced
Display Hierarchy ☐
Display Nulls ☑
Hide Control Shapes ☐
Display Axes on Selection ☐
Axis Scale 10.0
Coord System Per Widge... ☑
Only Select Rig Controls ☑
Local Transforms in Eac... ☑
Gizmo Scale 1.0
Spaces

truck_CtrlRig
Animation
Transform
truck_CtrlRig
Worker_CtrlRig
412 items

© Epic Games

Unreal Engine 5

A new suite of powerful built-in character and animation tools boost efficiency.

GAME-CHANGER We take a look at some of the real-time engine's key new features that enable creators to work with unbelievable levels of realism

Price Standard licence – Free (5% royalty if your project earns over $1 million) **Company** Epic Games **Web** www.unrealengine.com

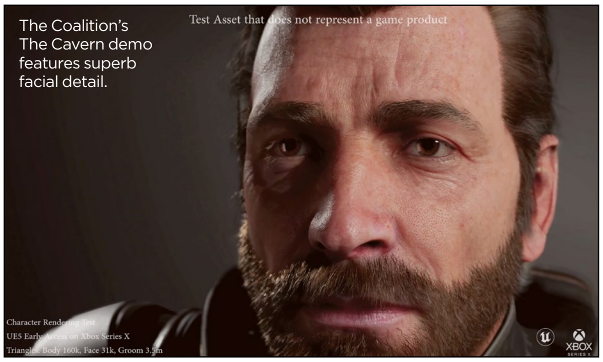
The world has waited years for this: Unreal Engine 5 (UE5). It represents a mammoth leap forward in technology for the games industry and completely redefines the playing field for the future of gaming, augmented reality and whatever the future holds for the digital parallel of the physical world.

We had a sneak peek of UE5 back in 2020 when Epic Games released a demo of what was possible with the engine. This demo, based on a Tomb Raider-like character, wowed the world, as realism which was previously unachievable became eminently possible. In true dramatic style, two years on, we've now been privileged to see another demo, this time from Xbox Games developer The Coalition. The Cavern runs on Xbox Series X and is impressive from start to finish. The main character looks absolutely amazing, especially the hair and beard which alone includes 3.5 million triangles. The scene itself includes 100 million triangles, with everything, including lighting and reflections, rendered in real time. This demo gives us a good look into what is possible with UE5.

The success of UE5 seems inevitable, with Sony and Kirkbi, parent company of the Lego Group, investing $1 billion each. Enough of the hype though. Why is everyone so excited about UE5? Let's take a look at the new developments.

LUMEN

This is UE5's global illumination and reflections system. It has been built for next-gen consoles and is fully dynamic in its implementation. It enables artists to achieve realistic lighting and reflections no matter the scene or time of day, or however complex the lighting setup needed. Its dynamic nature is its strength, meaning


Test Asset that does not represent a game product
Character Rendering Test
UE5 Early Access on Xbox Series X
Triangles: Body 160k, Face 31k, Groom 3.5m
XBOX

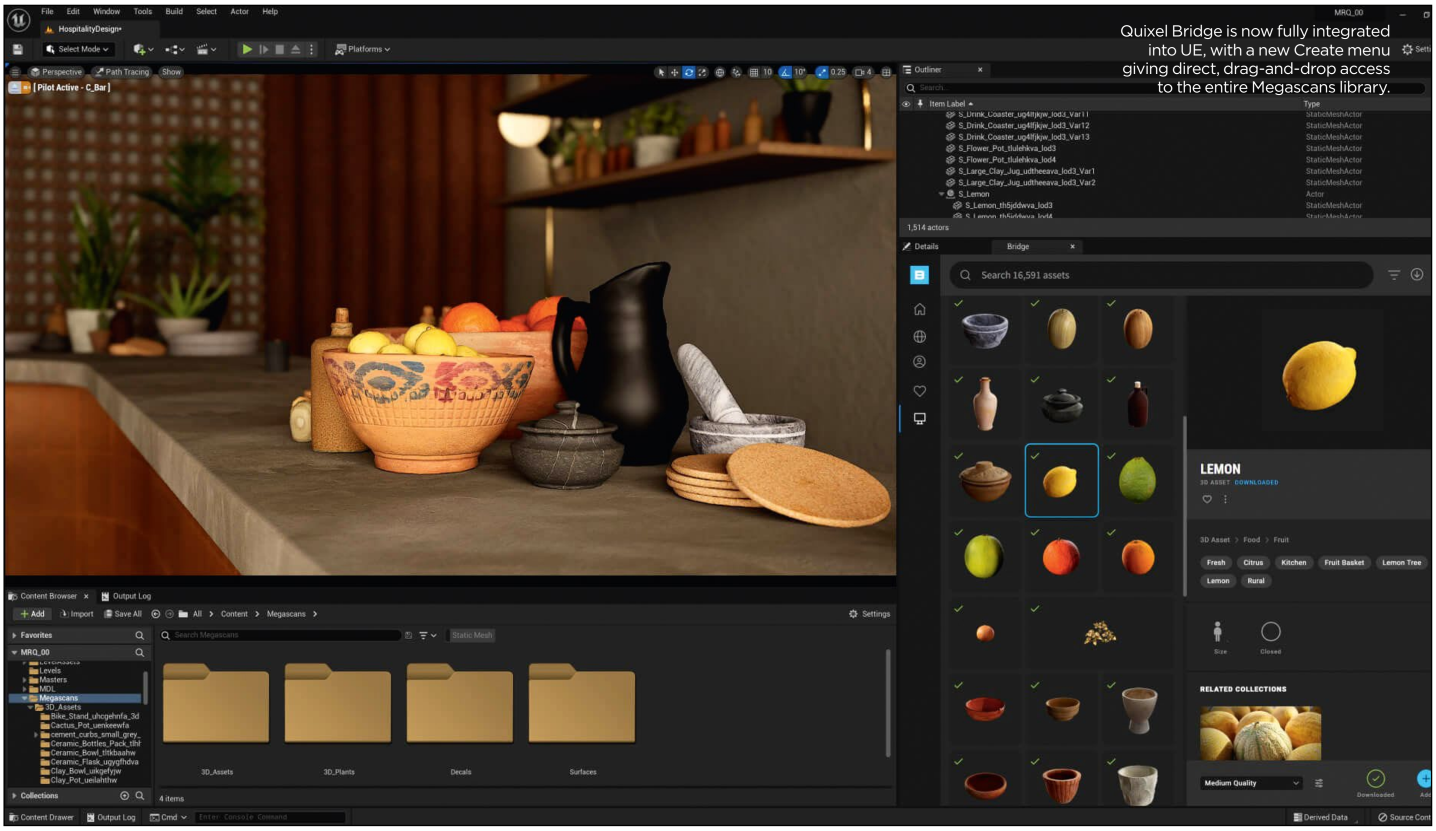
The Coalition's The Cavern demo features superb facial detail.

The Cavern © The Coalition / Xbox Game Studios

Echoes of the End is a new game from Iceland that features performance capture.

Echoes of the End © Myrkur Games / Prime Matter

© Epic Games

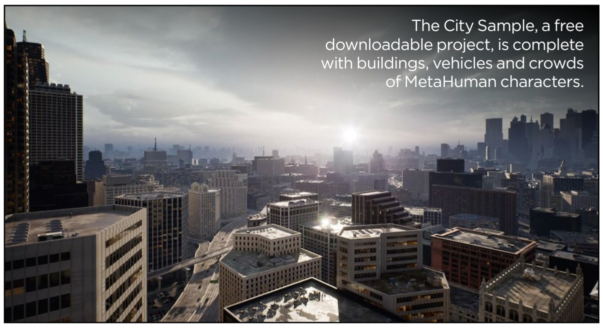

Quixel Bridge is now fully integrated into UE, with a new Create menu giving direct, drag-and-drop access to the entire Megascans library.
File
Edit
Window
Tools
Build
Select
Actor
Help
HospitalityDesign
Select Mode
Platforms
Perspective
Path Tracing
Show
Pilot Active - C_Bar
Outliner
Item Label
Type
1,514 actors
Details
Bridge
Search 16,591 assets
LEMON
3D ASSET DOWNLOADED
3D Asset > Food > Fruit
Fresh
Citrus
Kitchen
Fruit Basket
Lemon Tree
Lemon
Rural
RELATED COLLECTIONS
Medium Quality
Downloaded
Content Browser
Output Log
Add
Import
Save All
All > Content > Megascans
Settings
Favorites
MRQ_00
Collections
3D_Assets
3D_Plants
Decals
Surfaces
4 items
Content Drawer
Cmd
Derived Data
Source Control

everything is dynamically adjusted to light sources in the scene. Much of what is possible in Lumen is achievable in modern-day renderers, but the fact that UE5 does it all in real time makes it even more remarkable.

NANITE

Gone are the days of creating separate models for different levels of detail (LOD). With Nanite, UE5's virtualized geometry system, artists only need to import their high-resolution model and leave the engine to do the rest. UE5 will analyse the mesh and break it down into "hierarchical clusters of triangle groups". This means that during the real-time rendering of those objects UE5 will determine which LOD to display at any given time. With only what is needed residing in memory you'll find your games displaying at much improved frame rates.

With this technology, artists can now import and utilise high-definition sculpts and scans for their characters. The man in The Cavern demonstrates what is possible with impressive levels of detail.


The City Sample, a free downloadable project, is complete with buildings, vehicles and crowds of MetaHuman characters.

We should also explore UE5's new audio system, MetaSounds. It lets you control every sound that your end users will experience. Through major workflow improvements and further customisation, audio designers can create powerful systems with the utmost accuracy and control. Programmers will feel right at home with MetaSounds and many will now be able to set aside middleware engines like Wwise and FMOD. There are, of course, still some limitations to this audio system, especially when it comes to handling complex audio setups and dialogue-heavy games.

Action adventure game Echoes of the End, developed with UE5, centres around the story of Ryn and her unique ability to destroy matter.

The capabilities of UE5 are yet to be fully felt by the industry. Many of the high-profile games using UE5 are still in development, and it'll take years for us to truly experience what's possible.

If you develop a successful project with the engine, you'll only start paying royalties when your project earns over $1 million – with UE5 being completely free to download and create with, it's a bit of a no-brainer to give it a whirl.

> “With this technology, artists can now import and utilise high-definition sculpts and scans for their characters”

DETAILS

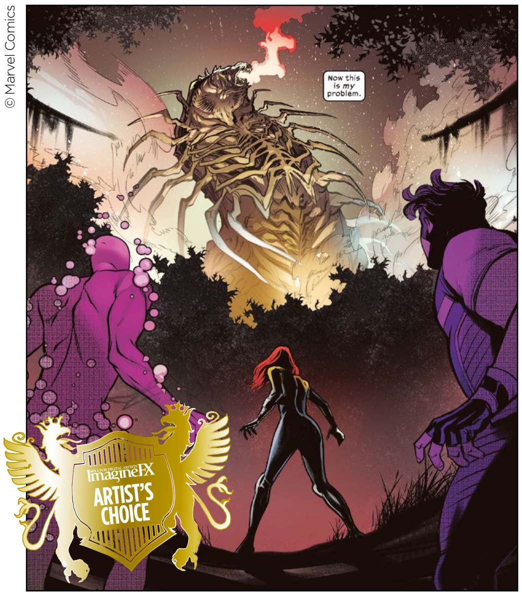
New features

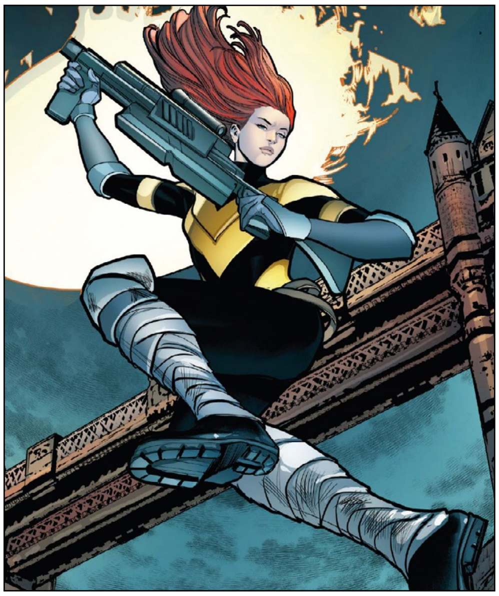
- Lumen, the dynamic global illumination and reflections solution
- World Partition, for bigger open worlds
- Built-in animation authoring tools
- Nanite, for creating with massive amounts of geometric detail
- Quixel Bridge fully integrated
- Virtual Shadow Map system
- Improved modelling toolset
- MetaSounds

Rating

★★★★☆

© Marvel Comics


Now this is my problem.


A sprawling comic-book political thriller, Immortal X-Men is a wildly inventive ride.

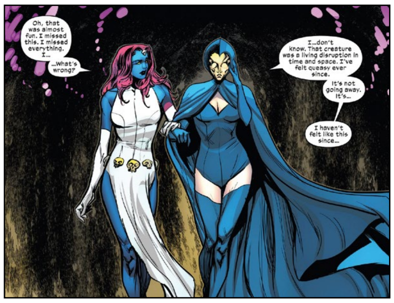
Immortal X-Men

POWER STRUGGLE An intriguing political plot meets intense, gorgeously illustrated action in this ambitious new series

Issues 1-3 **Writer** Kieron Gillen **Artist** Lucas Werneck **Publisher** Marvel Comics

The 'Destiny Of X' era of the X-Men is in full swing, and the latest ongoing title to join the fray is more proof that if you want to have a bunch of god-like superpowered characters scheming and backstabbing, give Kieron Gillen a call.

Immortal X-Men is packed to the brim with Kieron's usual hallmarks of crackling dialogue and intricate storytelling. The focus here is on the Quiet Council, the 12-strong ruling government of the new mutant society of Krakoa, which is already in uproar thanks to the earth-shaking revelations from 2021's Inferno miniseries. When Magneto decides to step down from his council seat, the resulting power struggle goes in some very dangerous directions, but between political shenanigans and giant monster attacks, it's the behind-the-scenes plotting from certain council members that could be the true threat...


Oh, that was almost fun. I missed this. I missed everything. I...
...What's wrong?
I...don't know. That creature was a living disruption in time and space. I've felt queasy ever since.
It's not going away. It's...
I haven't felt like this since...

Each issue focuses on different members of the Quiet Council.

Kieron keeps every scene full of dramatic tension, while knowing when to drop a large-scale set-piece or bonkers plot twist. He's also digging deep into the world-building ideas that have been foundational since Jonathan Hickman's epic relaunch, and introduces a bunch of intriguing new developments with huge potential.

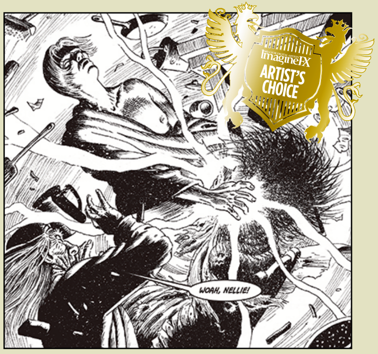
He couldn't have a better collaborator in artist Lucas Werneck, who brings a sense of genuine style and polish to the series. Switching effortlessly from quiet characterisation to massive kaiju-smashing action, Lucas gives the series a strong sense of energy and scope, while also showing a great eye for striking images and gorgeous costume design.

> “Kieron introduces a bunch of intriguing developments with huge potential”

These first three issues are big, brainy and brilliant examples of superhero storytelling at its very best.

RATING ★★★★★

Although a standalone tale, the novel maintains total continuity with the Arkwright mythos.


WOAH, NELLIE!

The Legend of Luther Arkwright

Format Graphic novel
Writer Bryan Talbot
Artist Bryan Talbot
Publisher Jonathan Cape

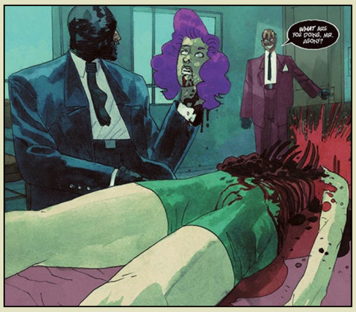
Ahead of its time when it first appeared in 1978 but now bang on trend, Bryan Talbot's multiverse-spanning epic about an enigmatic agent with the ability to move between different dimensions owes more to Michael Moorcock than the Marvel Universe.

The first of the three volumes not to be serialised initially, this 240-page tale benefits from its more expansive canvas, allowing the labyrinthine plot to unfold at a measured pace. Pitted against Proteus, an all-powerful fellow “Homo novus” who doesn't share his benevolence towards mere sapiens, a wounded Arkwright embarks on a psychic cat-and-mouse game across multiple parallels, joined by sidekick Harry Fairfax and Amy, an intriguing new character who boasts some interesting special abilities.

Bryan has returned to Arkwright over the years during periods of political turmoil, and here he draws amusing Brexit parallels, as Arkwright visits an isolationist dystopian England governed by a Boris-esque leader. Eschewing the colour of 1999's Heart Of Empire, he returns to the black and white art of the original Adventures Of Luther Arkwright, imbuing his linework with a rugged naïveté that harks back to his roots in '70s underground comics.

RATING ★★★★★

Nightmares have been set loose on the world, leading to extremely gruesome results.


WHAT ARE YOU DOING, MR. AGONY?

© DC Comics

The Sandman Universe: Nightmare Country

Issues 1-3
Writer James Tynion IV
Artist Lisandro Estherren
Publisher DC Comics

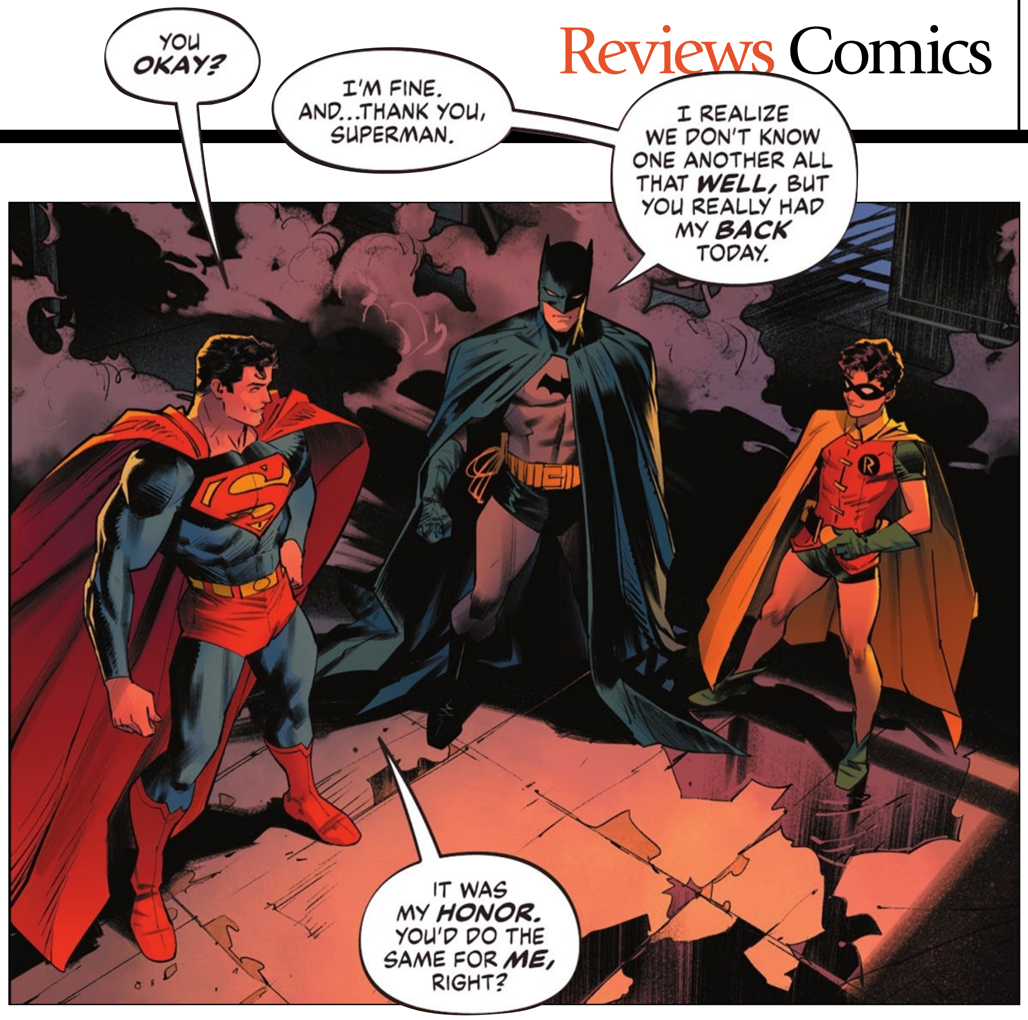
The latest addition to DC's Sandman line puts a new spin on one of the original comic's most memorable villains: the nightmare Corinthian.

Flynn is an artist, but recently she's been painting just one subject: a grotesque figure she calls the Smiling Man. She sees him everywhere she goes, tongues lapping grotesquely from his eye sockets. Flynn's friends are concerned for her sanity, but she's simply convinced that something weird is afoot, even before two demonic assassins force her to go on the run…

Casting the Corinthian as a quasi-detective figure trying to solve a cosmic mystery is a fun twist on a familiar baddy, and the human characters are all well-scripted. Art-wise this is a treat, too, with Lisandro Estherren's pencils and Patricio Delpeche's watercolours presenting a dank and dangerous real world, while an ever-shifting range of guest artists tackle the Dreaming.

Neil Gaiman's work casts a long shadow, though. Mr Agony and Mr Ecstasy are formidable foes, but very similar to Neverwhere's Croup and Vandemar. And while we're promised this'll be a road trip across contemporary America, the first three issues drag their heels. A solid start, but you suspect the best is yet to come.

RATING ★★★⯪☆


YOU OKAY?
I'M FINE. AND...THANK YOU, SUPERMAN.
I REALIZE WE DON'T KNOW ONE ANOTHER ALL THAT WELL, BUT YOU REALLY HAD MY BACK TODAY.
IT WAS MY HONOR. YOU'D DO THE SAME FOR ME, RIGHT?

© DC Comics

Artist Dan Mora ensures that each page is well-structured and visually compelling.

Batman/Superman: World's Finest

SUPER TEAM The world's greatest heroes are back together in this fun, energetic throwback to traditional comic-book action

Issues 1-4 **Writer** Mark Waid **Artist** Dan Mora **Publisher** DC Comics

Throwing together the Dark Knight and the Man of Steel is a team-up strategy that's been popular for decades, and the latest Batman/Superman ongoing title is an unapologetic throwback to traditional comic-book action. This colourful romp is as old-school as they come, offering a bright and largely continuity-free action fest that barely pauses for breath.

The plot of this first arc is simple: an ancient demon called Nezha has risen again to cause havoc, and he's waging a proxy war against Batman and Superman by fighting via some of their most dangerous adversaries.

DC
BATMAN · SUPERMAN
WORLD'S FINEST

> “This colourful, old-school romp offers a bright, largely continuity-free action fest”

It's up to Clark and Bruce to find and defeat this evil, and the stage is set for an energetic if shallow adventure that compensates for its distinctly old-fashioned storytelling approach with the sheer volume of stuff happening. Veteran comic writer Mark Waid seems to be using this first arc to cram in as many DC characters as humanly possible, but does find a few brief pauses between the relentless set-pieces to pull off some nicely played character moments.

The real star here is Dan Mora on art duties, who brings his usual mix of craftsmanship and pop energy to the non-stop action. He can't quite cancel out the story's sense of overfamiliarity, but his art and the genial, accessible tone do at least leave this as an engaging and hyperactive dose of superhero nostalgia.

RATING ★★★⯪☆

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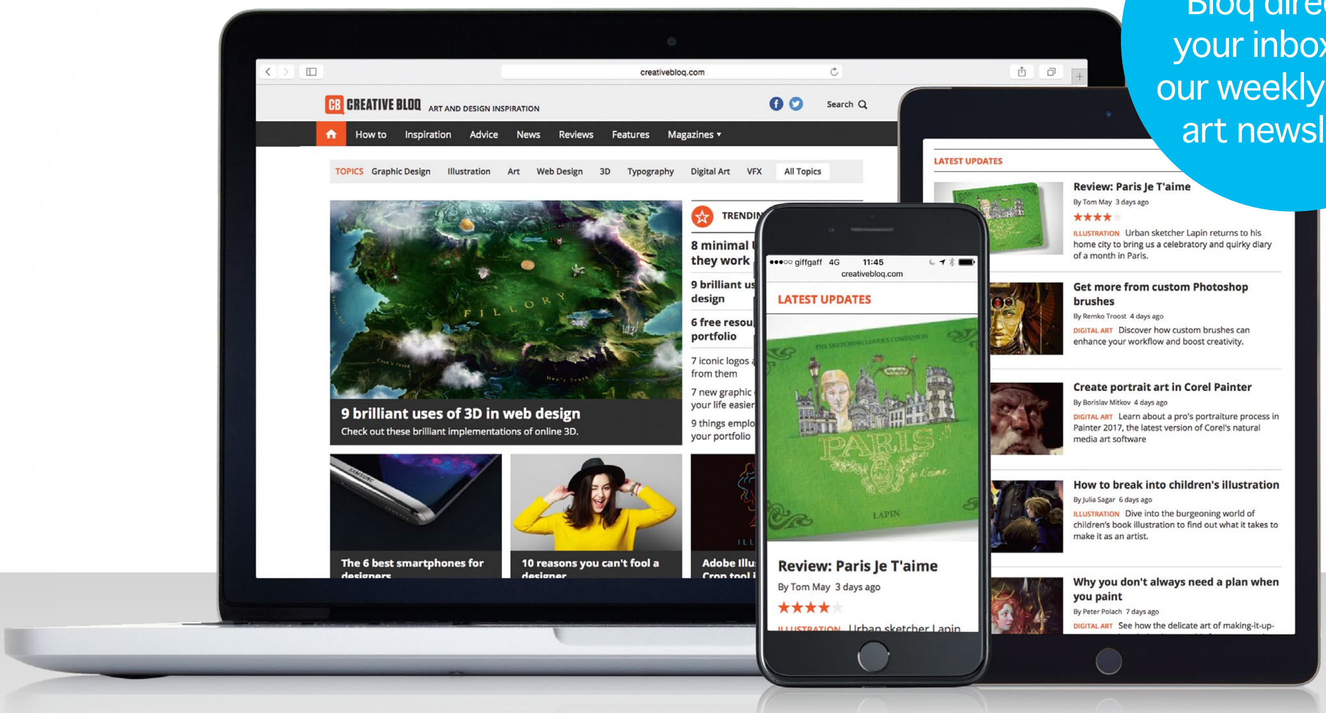
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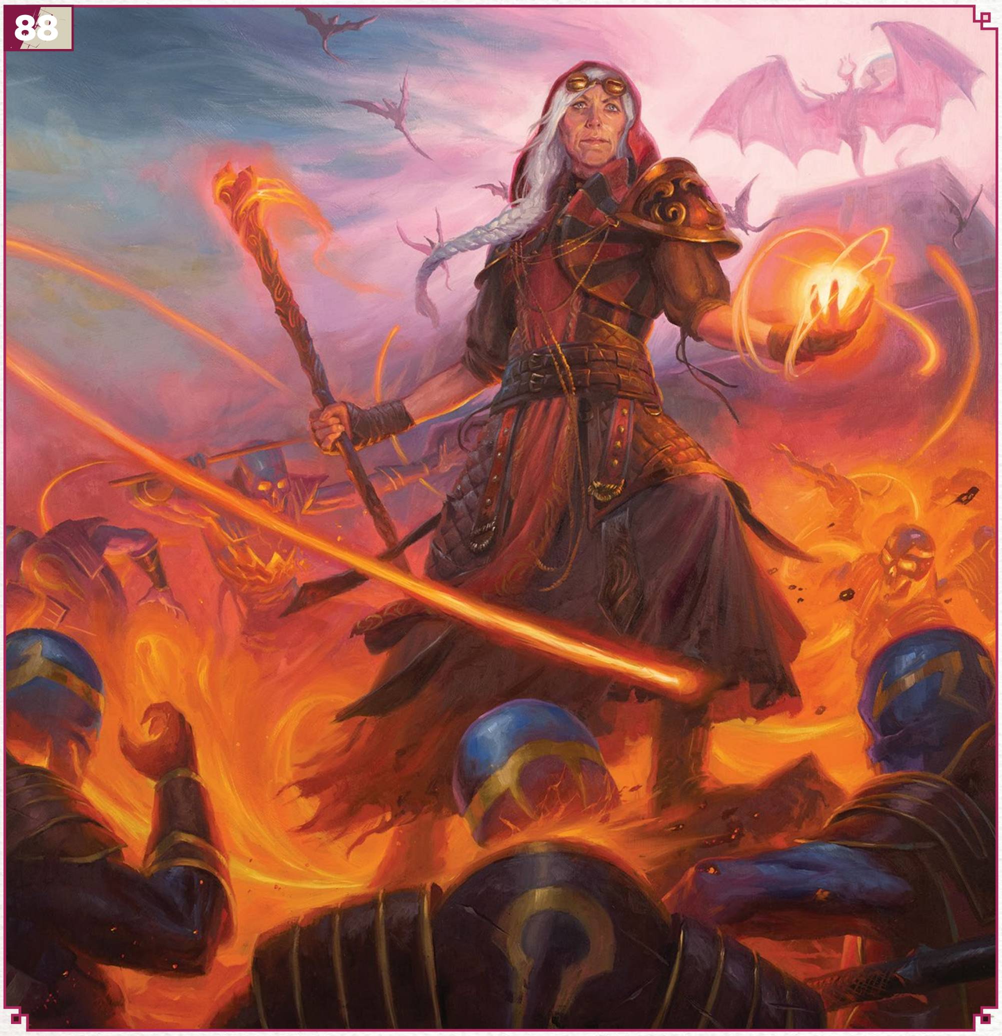

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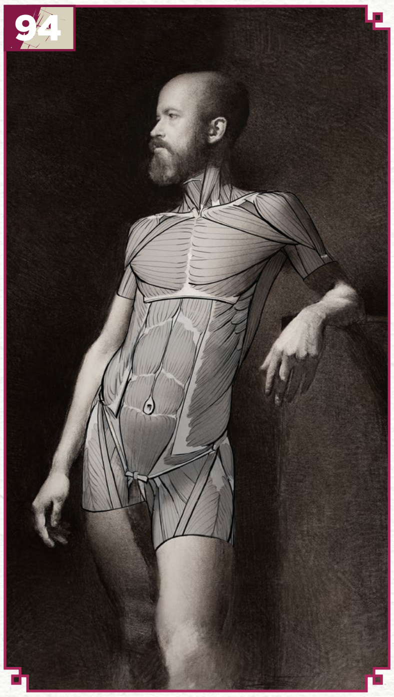

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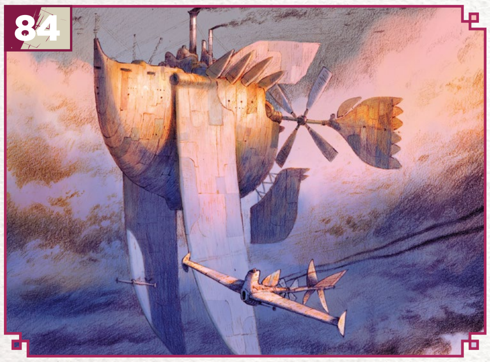

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84 Traditional FXPosé
Discover this month's selection of the finest traditional art, which has been sent in by you!

88 Workshop: Paint a magical fantasy battle
Magic: The Gathering artist Lucas Graciano illustrates his process.

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Part 9 of Charlie Pickard's in-depth anatomy series.

98 First Impressions: Emily Hare
We chat to the watercolour artist about her career journey.

FXPosé

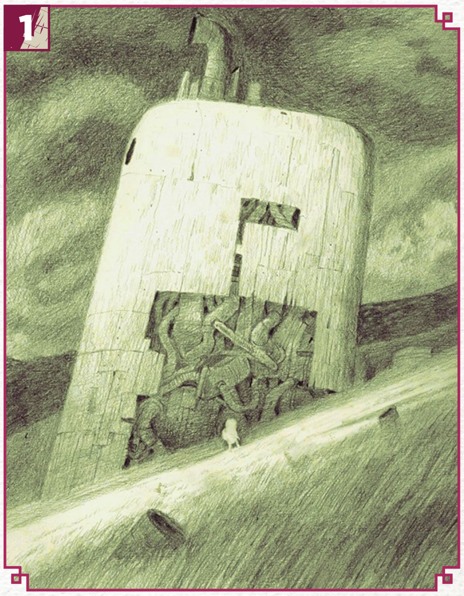
SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL ARTISTS

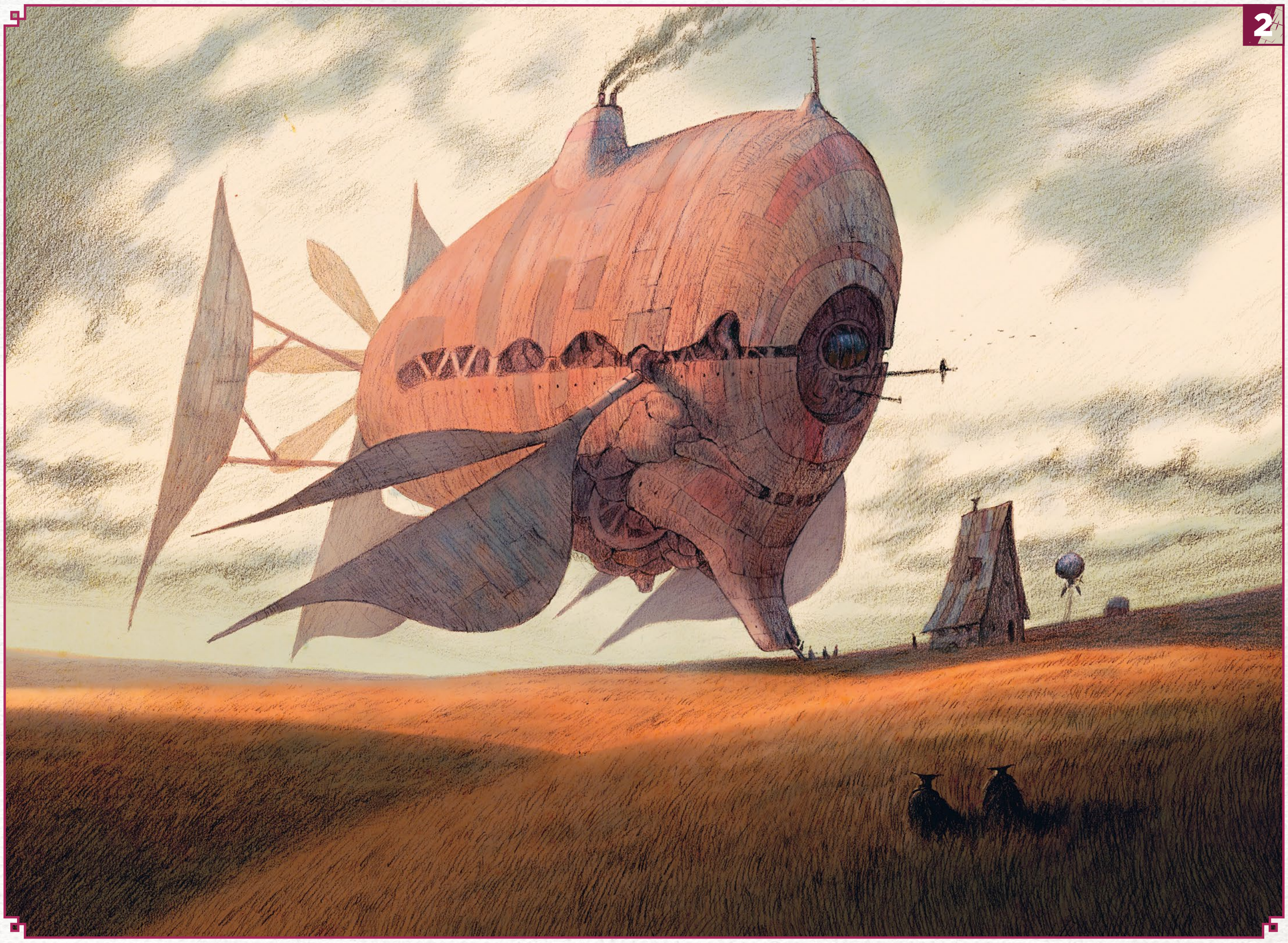
Nik Henderson

LOCATION: US **MEDIA:** Graphite, colour pencils, charcoal

WEB: www.instagram.com/henderson_nik

Nik is an illustrator working in books and animation, with clients including Pixar and HarperCollins. He frequently uses early aviation history as inspiration.



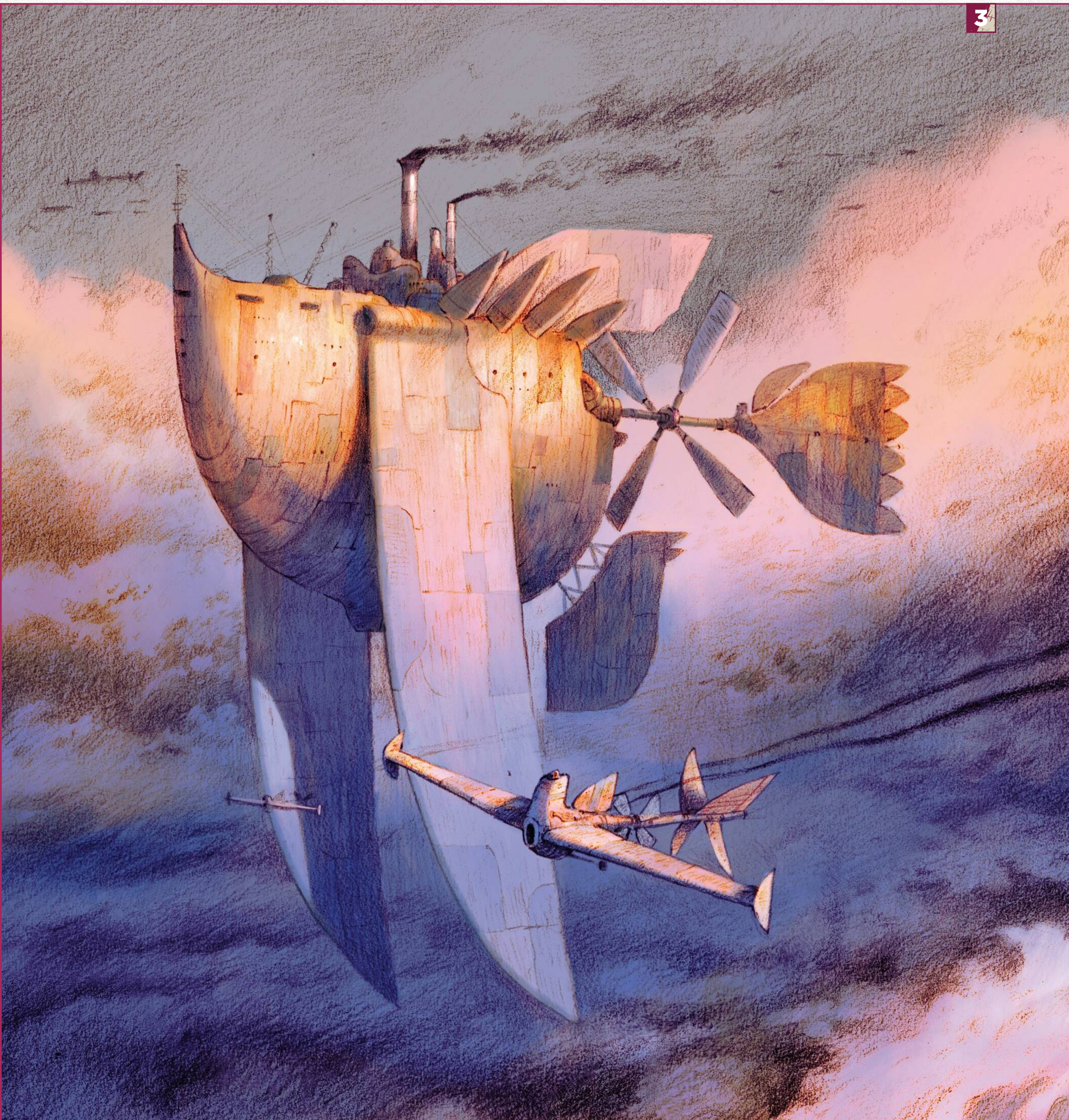


1 **THE OLD MACHINE**
"I enjoy drawing large, surreal machines. This particular piece was inspired by submarine conning towers."

2 **THE VISIT**
"For this illustration, I liked the absurdity of someone popping by for a visit in such a colossal aircraft."

3 **MOTHERSHIP**
"My sketchbook is filled with impossible aircraft, imagining a world where the bizarre designs of the 1800s could actually fly."

3



Roger Olmos Pastor

LOCATION: Spain **MEDIA:** Oil paint, graphite, watercolours **WEB:** www.behance.net/rogerolmos

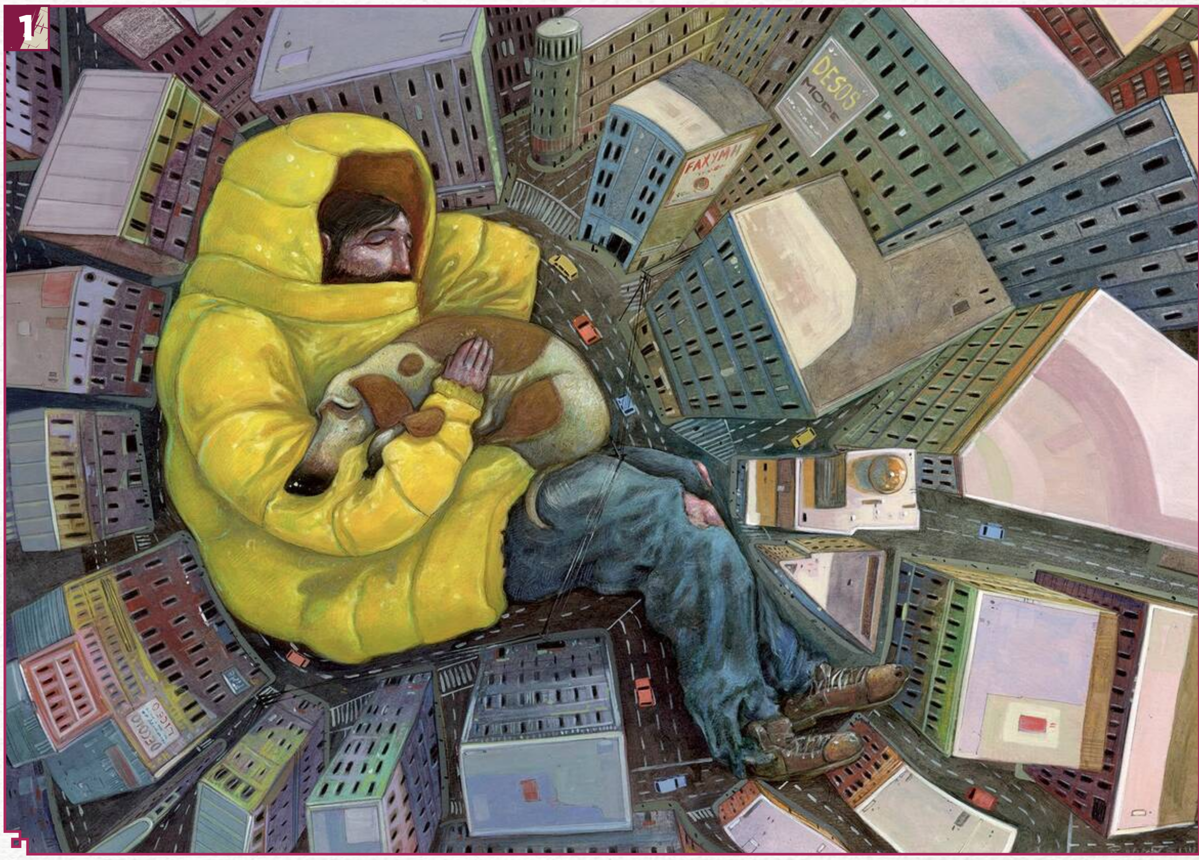
Roger's career has been focused on children's illustration, with a vision to evolve in other fields before reaching conceptual art. "I believe more and more in improvisation, and to let the material guide you on paper."

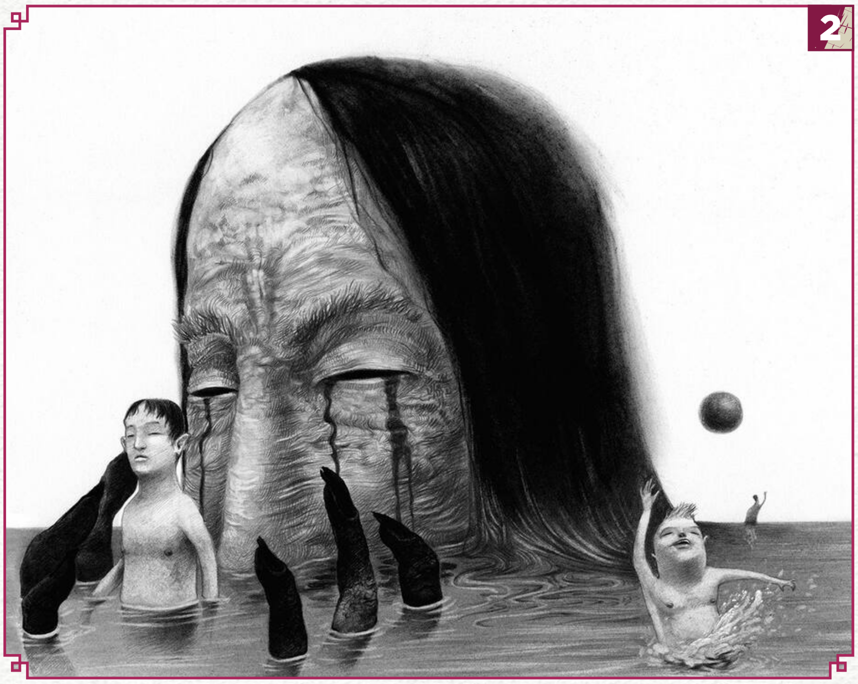
1 **AMICI PER LA PELLE**
"This piece documents the difficult life of people living on the street. Everyone has abandoned him, except for his furry friend."

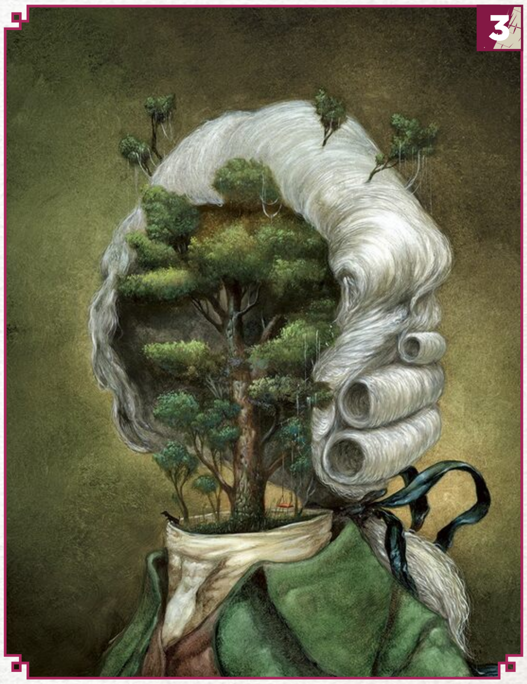
2 **ANXIETY**
"From 'The Book of Bad Luck' by Edu Pérez Bohórquez. Anxiety is still there, even on holidays."

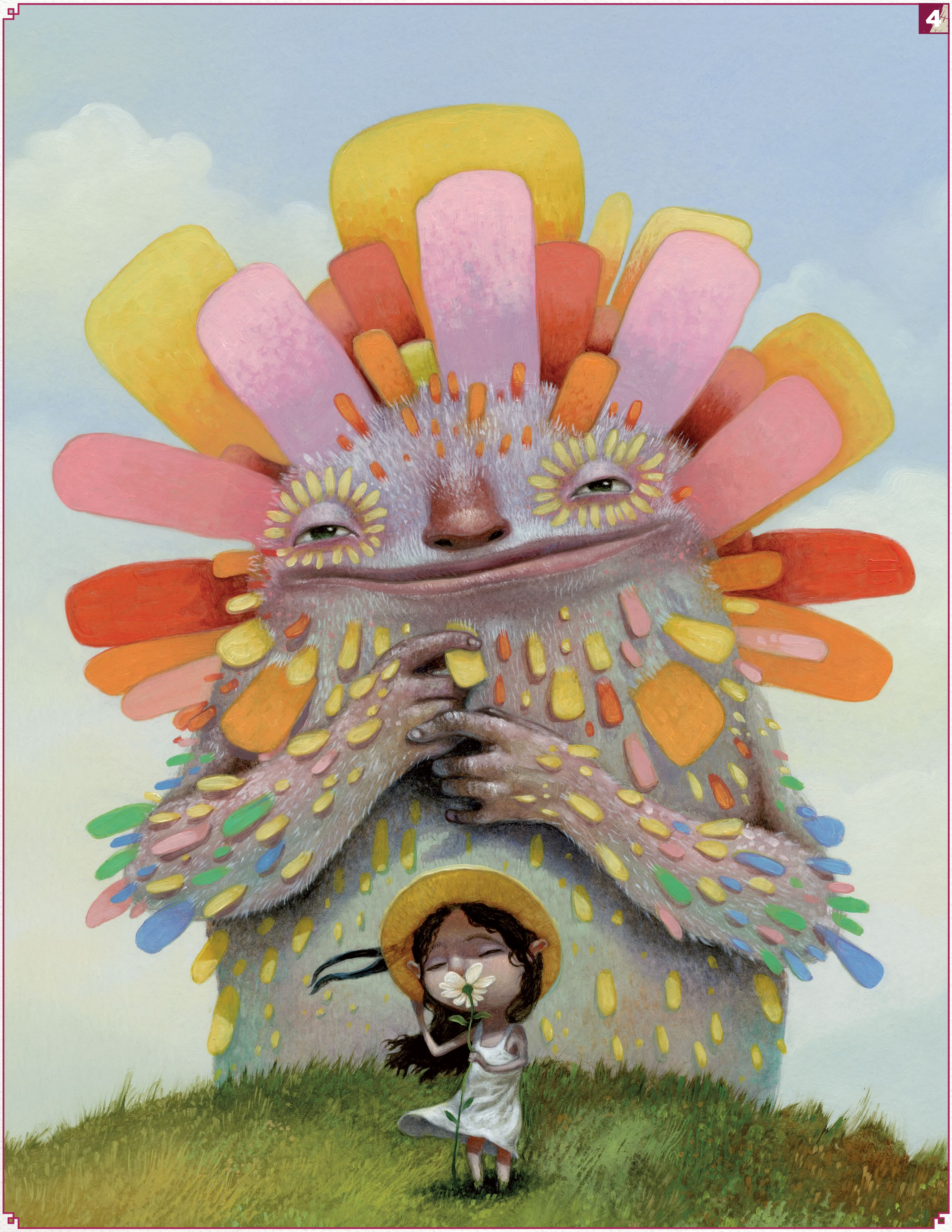
3 **COSIMO**
"Based on the novel 'The Baron Rampant' by Italo Calvino. In this cover illustration, Cosimo and the tree are one."

4 **LA VIDA DE LOS MONSTRUOS**
"From the book 'Life of Monsters'. Normal things happen in life and we don't ask why. This special creature is always behind them."









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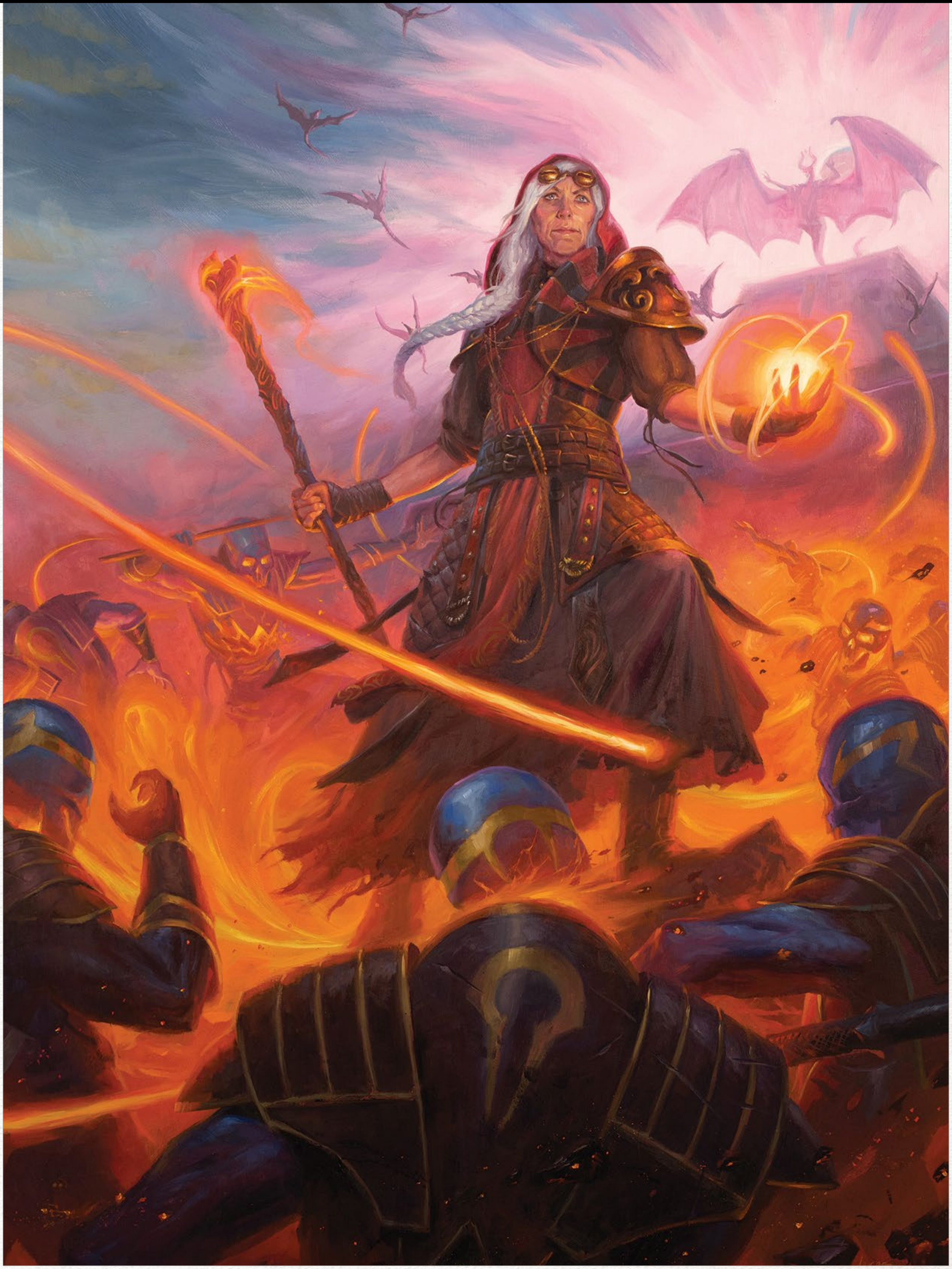

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Oils

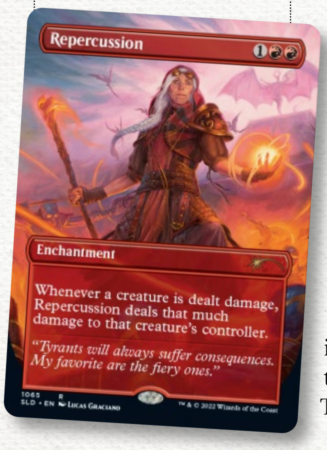
PAINT A MAGICAL FANTASY BATTLE

LUCAS GRACIANO shares his process for developing an oil-painted illustration for the tabletop card game Magic: The Gathering

Magic is one of the most highly sought-after brands for aspiring artists to work on. Its lore is deep and exciting, there's a level of freedom that every artist loves, and its fanbase is huge and worldwide. I have worked on Magic: The Gathering since 2009 and have illustrated over 130 cards for the brand. In this tutorial, I will walk you through my process on how I develop an illustration for the game.

Before I get started, there are a few things specific to Magic that will be important to understand. Magic has five major colour themes in its game, and each of these colours plays a big part in how a card is designed in overall mood and composition. There are also various card types and abilities that are crucial to the gameplay itself: Spells, Creature, Artifact, Land and so on. For example, some creatures have a 'flying' mechanic and it would be important for the illustration to convey this in some way.

Without going into too much detail regarding the specific rules of the game, knowing these facts will help speed an approval for an assignment along.



Repercussion

Enchantment

Whenever a creature is dealt damage, Repercussion deals that much damage to that creature's controller.

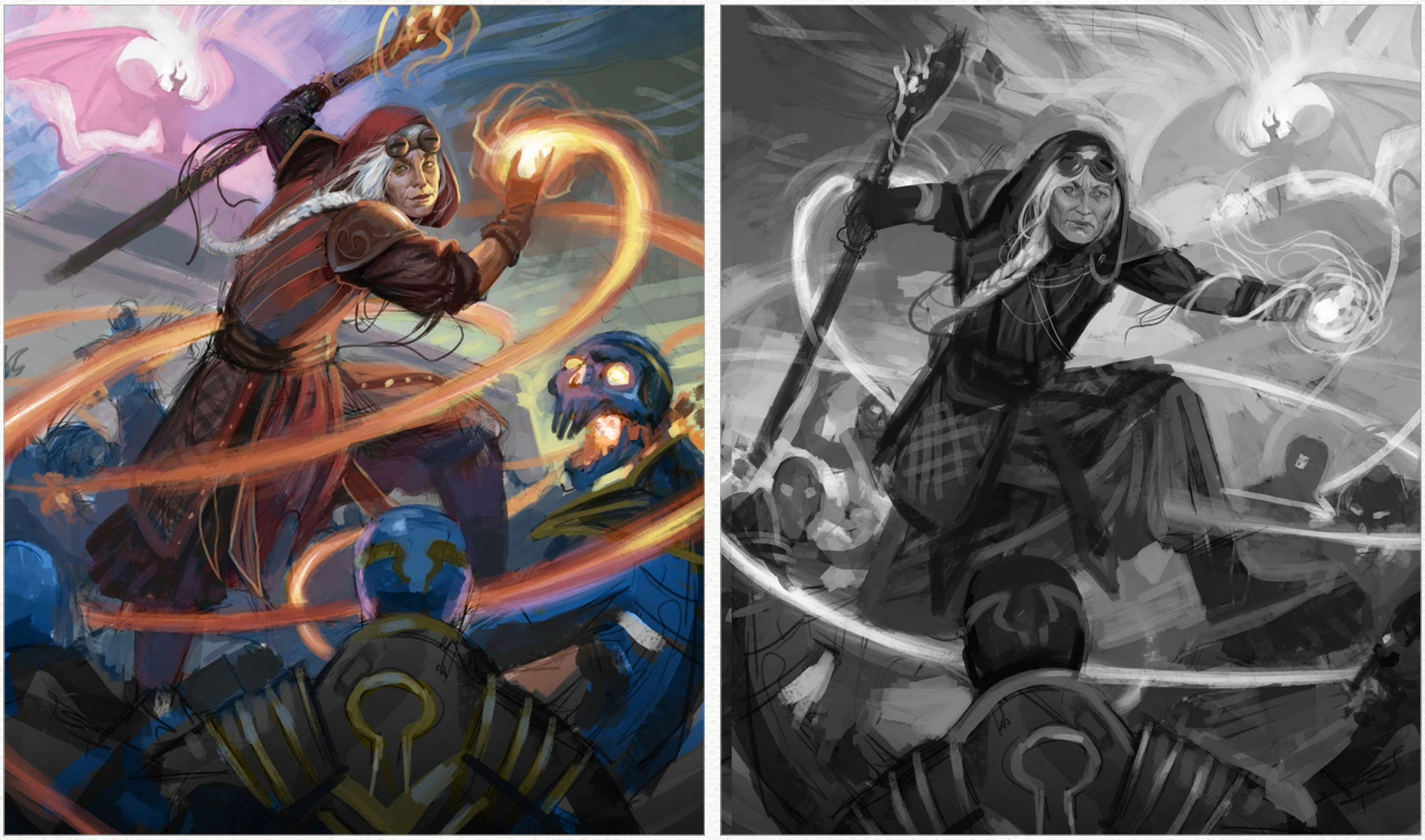
"Tyrants will always suffer consequences. My favorite are the fiery ones."

1065 R SLD • EN Lucas Graciano ™ & © 2022 Wizards of the Coast

TACKLING THE BRIEF

The assignment I will be making this tutorial for is a Red themed Enchantment card, titled Repercussion. This card will be a reprint from a card made in the 90s. The assignment sheet every artist receives has all of the specs required for the job, everything from size, colour scheme, location, description of what's to be illustrated, and general mood they're going for. My art director, Tom Jenkot, sent over this assignment and needed me to showcase one of Magic's main characters, called Planeswalkers. I was to illustrate Jaya, an aged fire mage who has a deep history in the world of Magic. This is her final stand against the forces of Nicol Bolas (big baddie). She was to be showcased at the height of her powers destroying Nicol Bolas' minions. Any assignment showcasing one of Wizards of the Coast's Planeswalkers was going to be an important one, so as an artist, you're expected to give it all the extra attention that is needed. So with these parameters in mind, I get to work right away.

Award-winning artist Lucas Graciano has been working professionally since 2004. He works as a freelance illustrator doing book covers and card art for brands such as Magic the Gathering. www.lucasgraciano.com



1 Rough comps

In the roughs, I am looking for interesting ways of breaking up the space while creating an image within the parameters I am given. I try various poses and spend time thinking about where the light sources will be, to best show off the character. I prefer to do my roughs digitally.

MATERIALS

PAPER

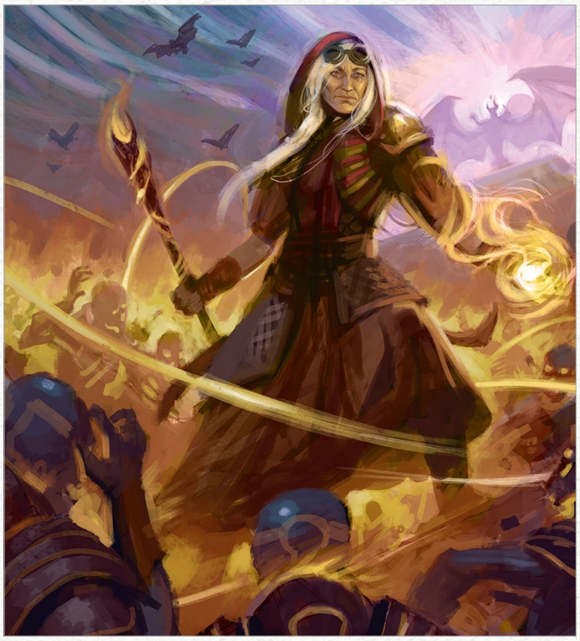
- Primed Masonite hardboard

BRUSHES

- Robert Simmons small round white
- Sable 003, 0, 1 Robert Simmons filbert/flats bristles
- Langnickel mongoose hair flats

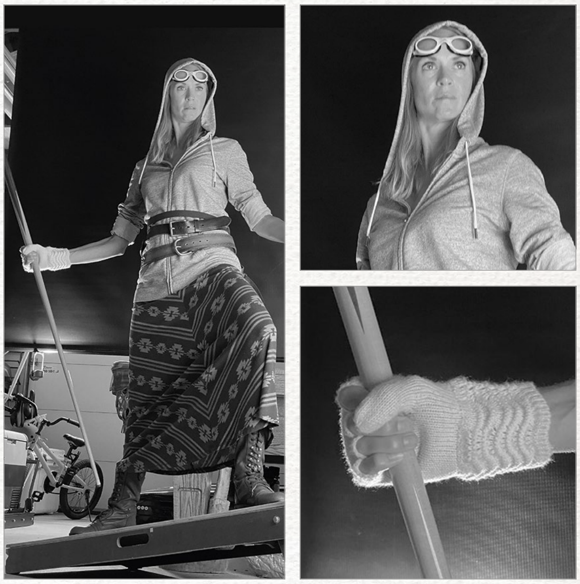
OIL COLOURS

- Titanium White
- Lemon Yellow
- Cad Yellow
- Yellow Ochre
- Cad Orange
- Cad Red
- Burnt Sienna
- Magenta
- Manganese Blue
- Ultramarine Blue



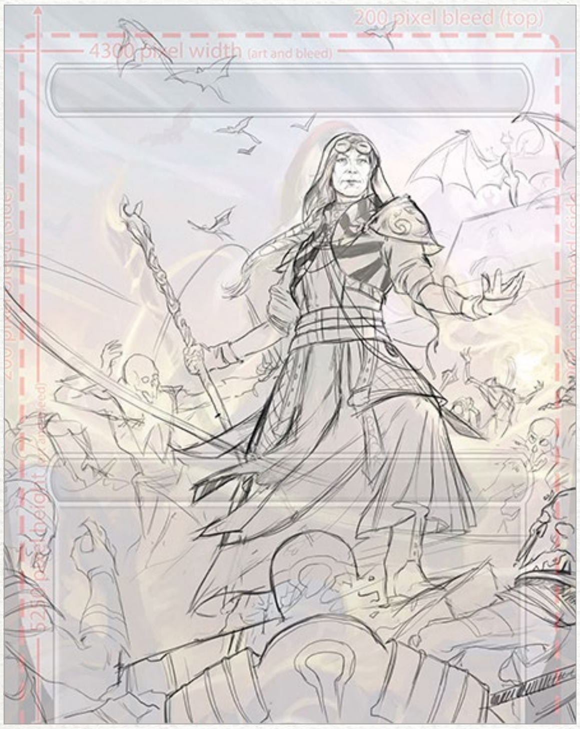
2 A few revisions

My art director, Tom Jenkot, came back with a few notes, which will usually happen with such a high-profile assignment. I tightened up some of the details and changed the pose to create a better fit for the card. After we've settled on a comp that is working, I move on to gathering my reference.



3 Collect/shoot reference

Each Magic artist is given a style guide, for each set, to maintain continuity between all of the artists. The guides will give artists a sense for the characters, creatures, landscapes, and just general shape languages in each set. Gathering my own reference is crucial for my style of work as well. My extremely supportive wife is often thrown into bits of costume and asked to pose while I take pictures for reference.

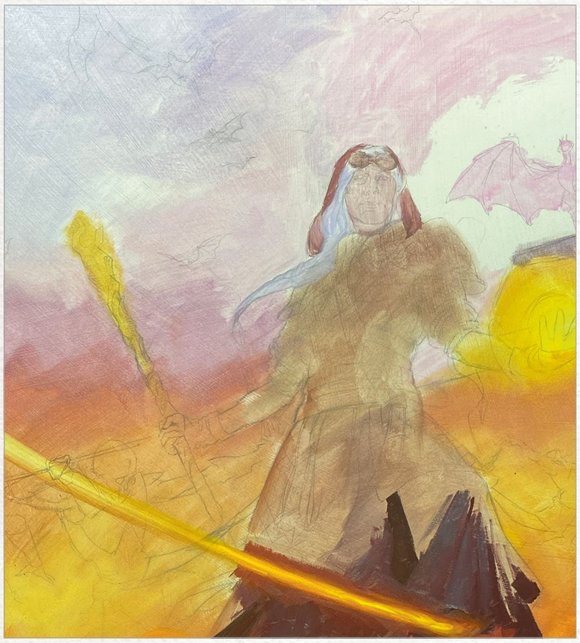

200 pixel bleed (top)
4300 pixel width (art and bleed)

4 The final drawing

Most of the time, my final drawing is done on a layer above my comp, either digitally or traditionally on Bristol board. I like doing this because my initial comp has a certain 'energy' to it and by using it as a base, I can hopefully maintain that. This stage allows me to use the reference I collected to create a more convincing image.

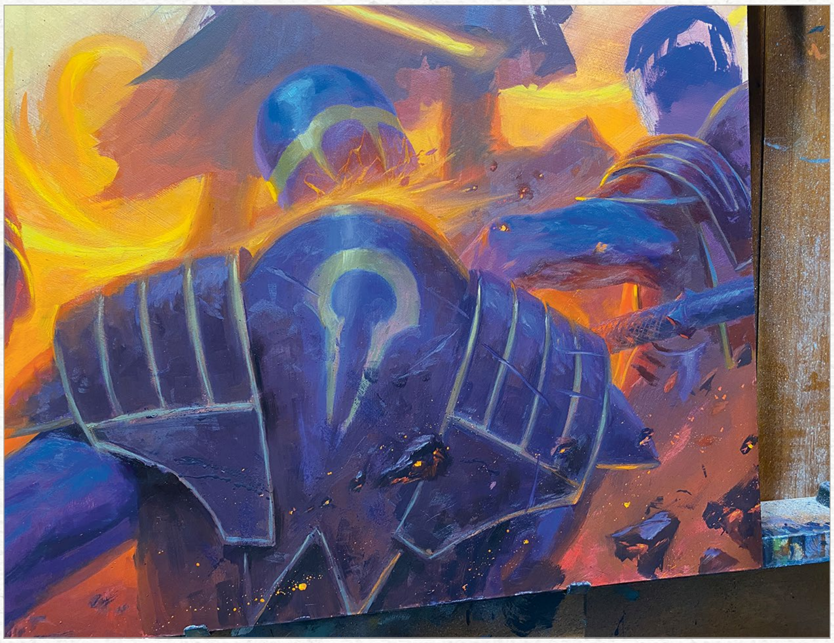
5 Transfer onto a surface

Now that I have the line drawing done, I can put it onto a USB drive and plug that into my projector. I will spend a good 5-10 minutes aligning the projection so the image is not skewed in any way. I make sure that nothing will move during this tracing process. This stage takes anywhere from 15-45min depending on the complexity of the illustration.



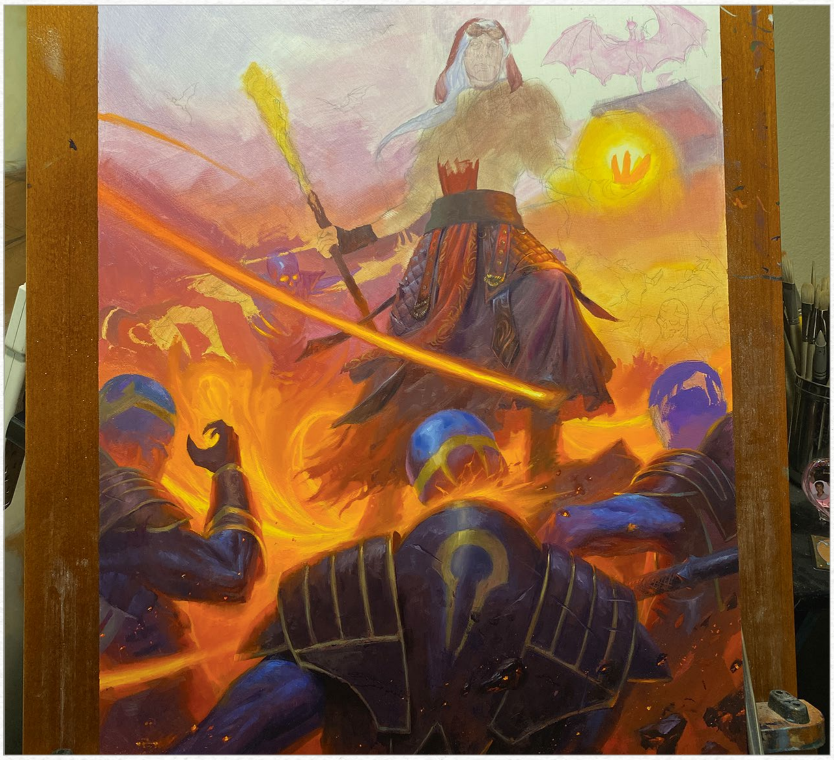
6 Paint washes

After I've traced the line drawing onto the surface, I will then start creating washes of colours to help kill the white of the canvas and establish a rough base to work upon. I like to use bristle brushes to scrub the paint into the surface, for this first part. Bristle brushes are more sturdy than sable brushes.



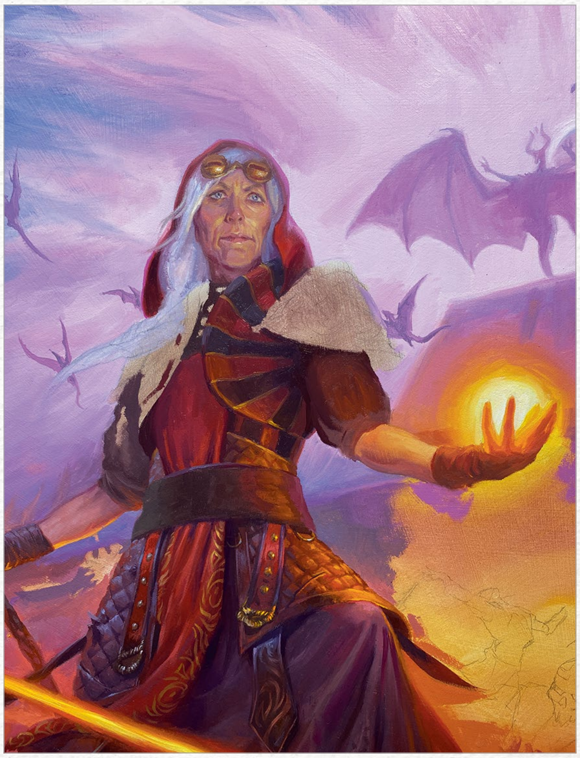
7 The larger forms

I then begin to build up the opacity of the paint and start getting the general forms through value and colour. I used a warm/cool primary palette consisting of: Lemon Yellow, Cad Yellow, Yellow Ochre, Cad Red, Burnt Sienna, Magenta, Manganese, Ultramarine and Titanium White. The plan from the comp was to do a sort of cross-complementary colour scheme. So, the blues complementing the broader, warmer tones of yellow/oranges and reds.



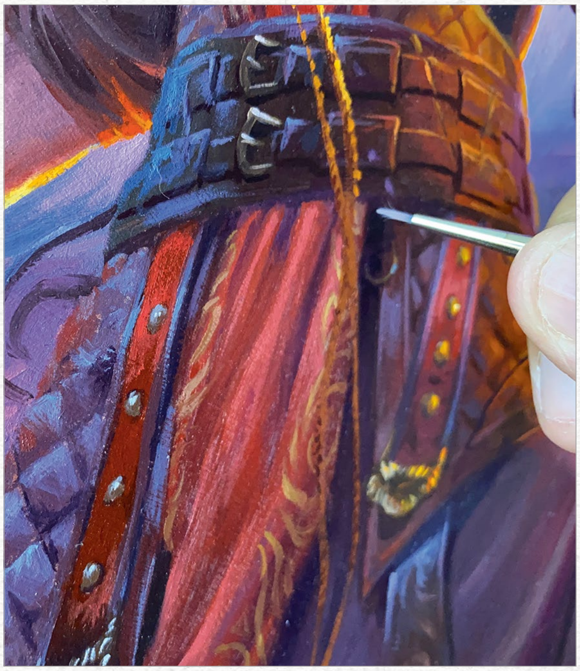
8 Add details

This is the part of the process that takes the longest. Many hours are spent at the easel to finish up each painting I do. This one was no exception. I start the big bulk of the initial block-in by working on the peripheral elements. This allows me to 'warm up' for the painting and get a rhythm for when it's time to paint the most important elements, like the main figure and her likeness.



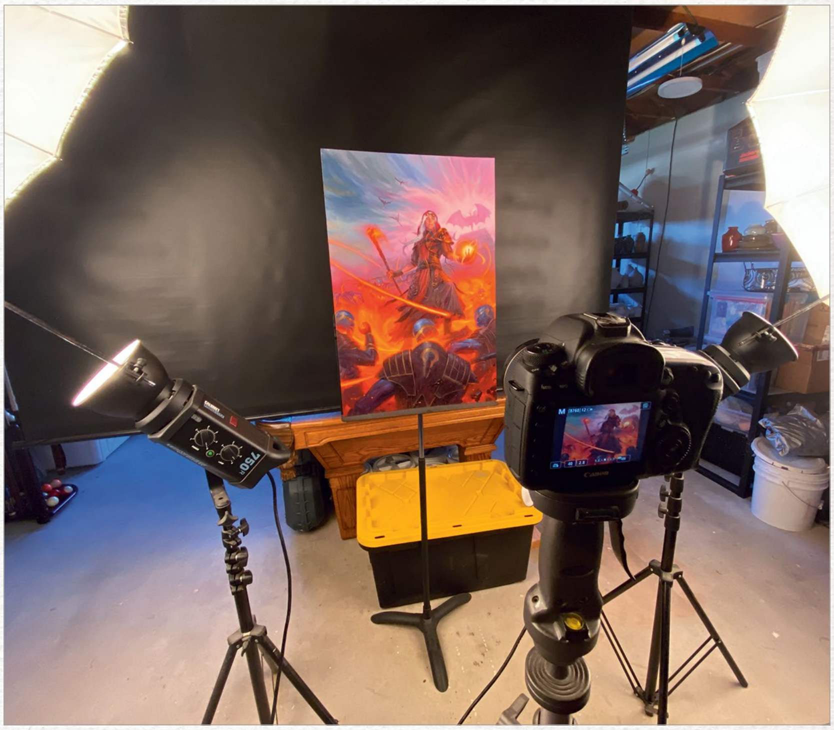
9 Painting Jaya

Every painting has its challenges, for this one it was definitely Jaya's face. I must have painted and repainted it several times before I ended up with the final version. At this stage of the painting I'm using small sable brushes for the details.



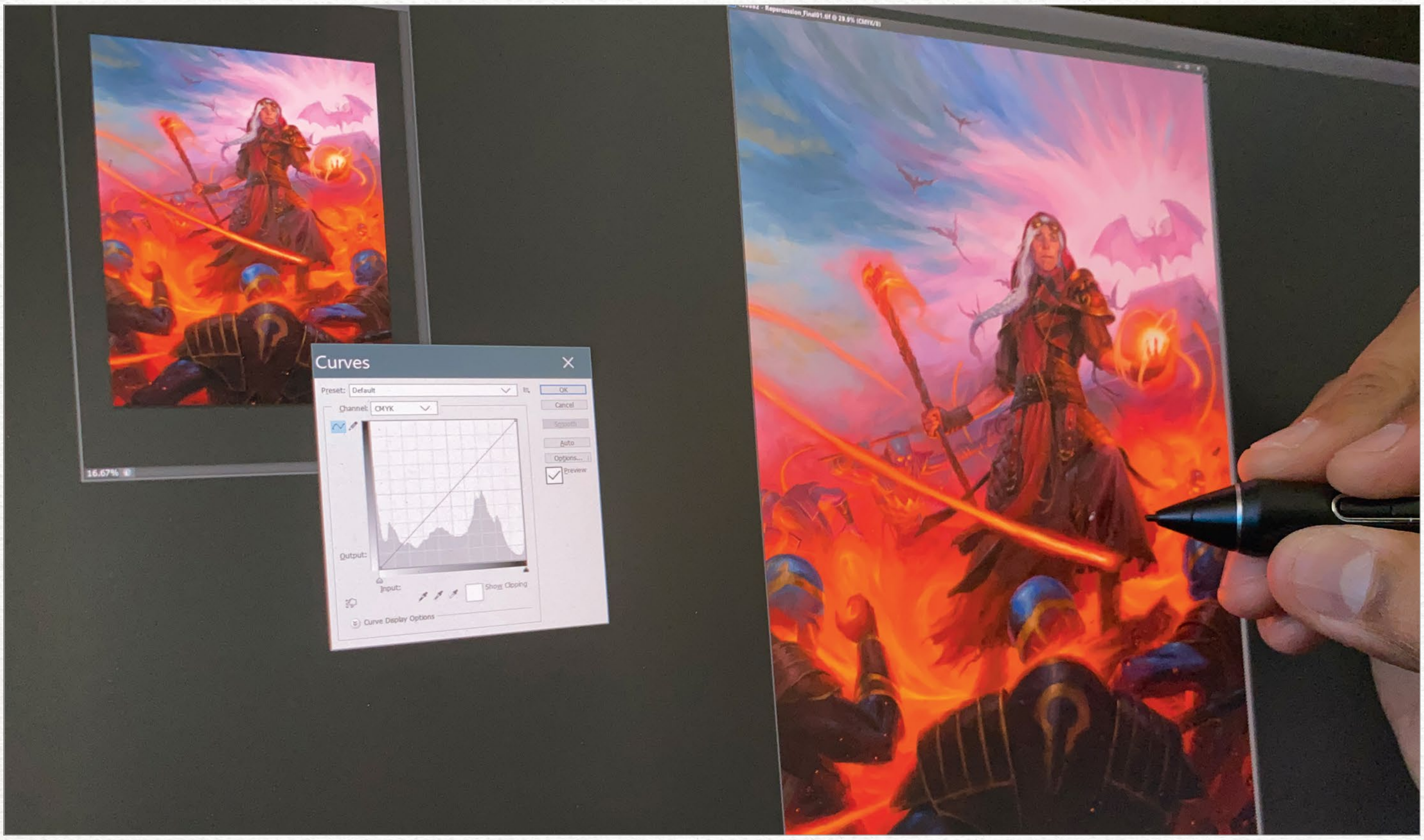
10 Final details

The final details are done when the whole of the general image is there. I take another pass around most of the painting, enhancing form, creating more atmosphere, adding more texture, and so on. This stage is that last little bit of 'umph' the painting needs.



11 Shoot the painting

I shoot all of my own work using a Canon Digital SLR with a 50mm lens and a polarising filter. The filter helps minimise glare you may get when shooting a glossy surface. I use two large umbrella lamps, the kind seen in a portrait studio.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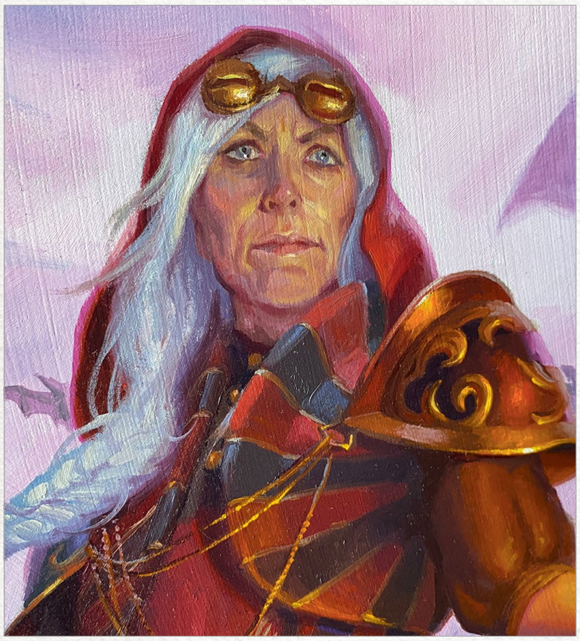
Channel: CMYK
OK
Cancel
Smooth
Auto
Options...
Preview
Output:
Input:
Show Clipping
Curve Display Options
16.67%

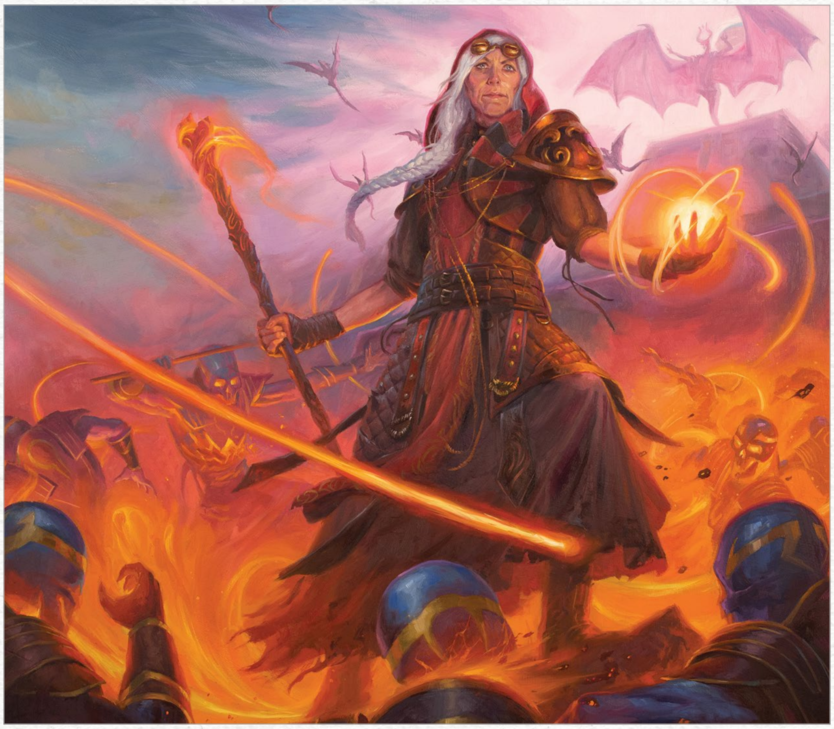
12 *Digital adjustments and submitting the work*

Once shot, I take the file into Photoshop and make any adjustments to match the final painting. Wizards of the Coast has a detailed way it requires each artist to submit their work. I follow these instructions and wait to hear back on whether the illustration needs adjustments.



13 *Varnish to protect*

An oil painting will dull as it dries. In order to counter this, it needs to be varnished. A good varnish will also create a protective layer. After the painting has had a sufficient amount of time to dry, I will add a layer of varnish to help bring out the original intensity of the values and colours.



14 *Selling the painting*

An added perk to being a traditional artist is that you have an original to sell. There's a large collector base who each want to own MTG original art. Sometimes these originals will even go to auction, fetching a high price.

Anatomy quick tips

STRUCTURAL NOTES ON THE TORSO

CHARLIE PICKARD continues his ten-part series of quick tips on anatomy; this month, he explores the core elements of illustrating the torso

The torso is probably the single most fundamental part of the human figure. The reason for this is that it houses and protects the organs that are so important to our ability to survive and thrive.

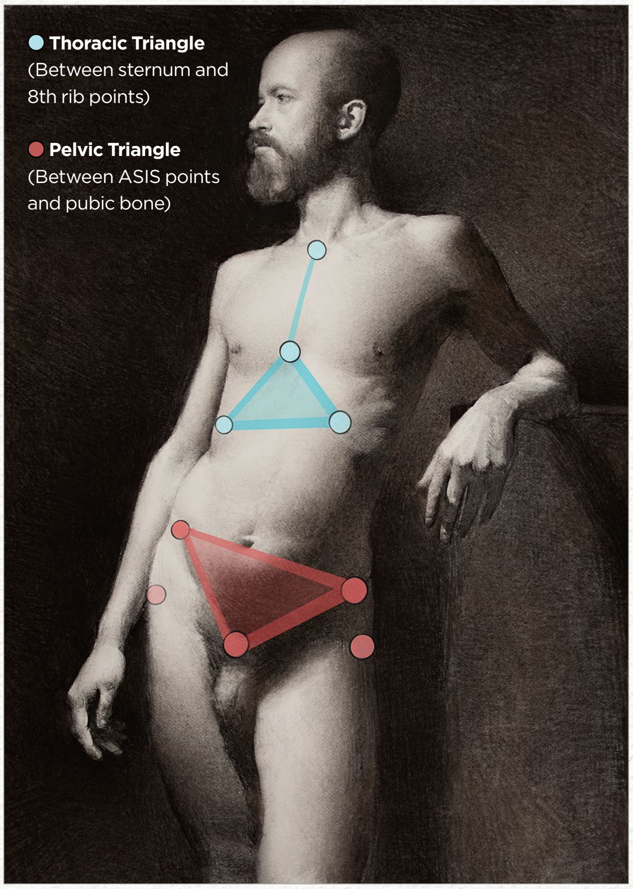
It is the engine of the human machine and while we can go some time without the limbs, even functionally replacing them with prosthetics, without the torso we are lost. I say this because I want to impress upon you the fact that careful study of this fascinating structure is just as important to our artistic study and should be respected. This is the topic of this month's anatomy guide.

ANATOMY – PART 9

It is from this structure that most actions and gestures begin. This makes total sense if you consider that the other parts of the body are appendages or branches rising out of this central trunk. Due to this, many artists begin their figure drawings by careful observation of this central form and branch out from there.

The following are a few structural notes on the torso, gleaned from many years of study of this wonderful form.

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

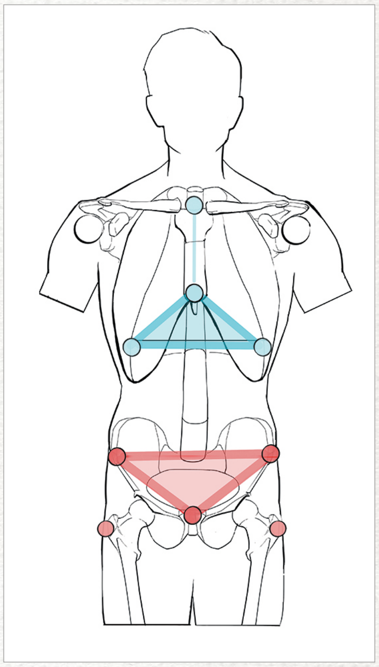

● Thoracic Triangle
(Between sternum and 8th rib points)
● Pelvic Triangle
(Between ASIS points and pubic bone)

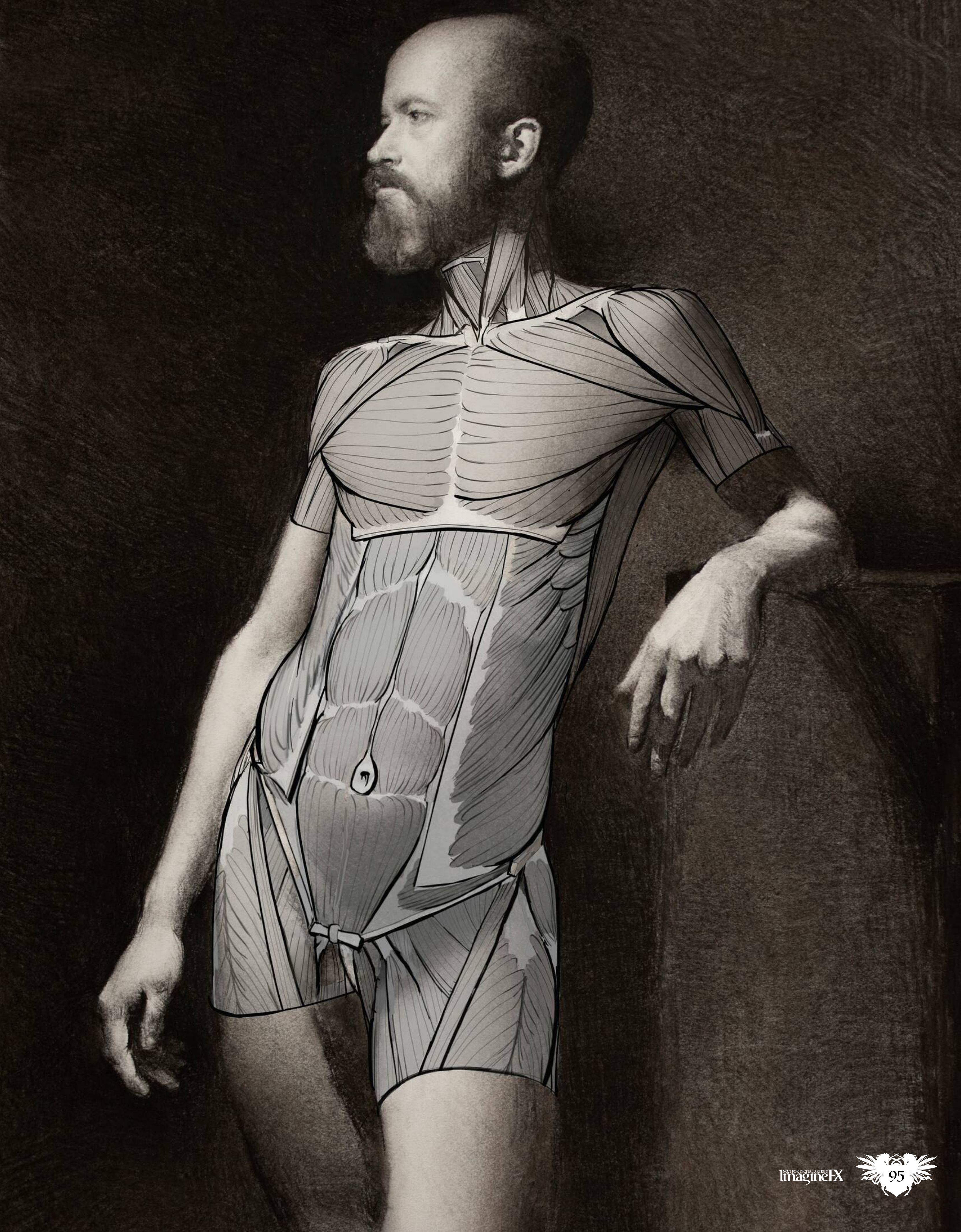
1 *Two triangles*

In previous workshops we have discussed the importance of studying bones and their landmarks, and it is no different here. I won't fully cover these landmarks here (please refer to the guides in previous issues), however I will give you a useful simplification for actually observing these in real drawings.

The most useful simplification of this kind, in my opinion, are the two 'triangles' of the torso. As shown here, it consists of the more well-known Pelvic Triangle below, with the two ASIS points and the pubic bone, and the lesser known thoracic (ribcage) triangle above, existing between the two landmarks of the 8th rib and the central sternum. Observing the particular tilt and orientation of these two triangles will be key to deciding all of the general orientations of the torso in relation to each other.

You might wonder, why not use the shoulder line for this? The reason is that the shoulders are designed to easily move around into a number of different positions, and need to be flexible to fit this function – and are therefore fairly unreliable from pose to pose. In contrast to this, the ribcage is much more of a rigid structure; allowing only for enough movement to breathe, it is therefore the much more reliable choice.





2 *The simple forms*

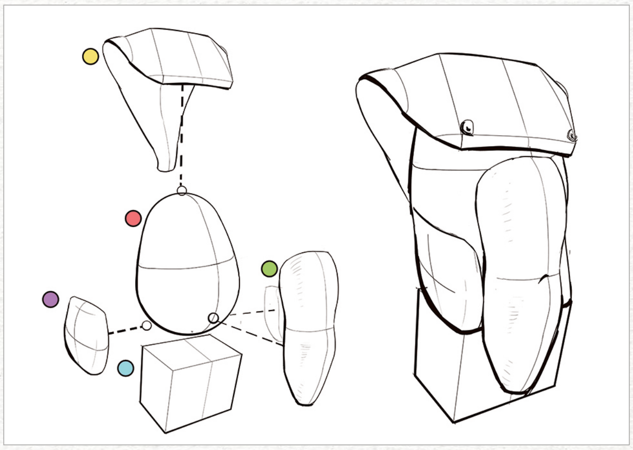
Before we attempt to properly dig in to studying the complexity of this form, we need a simple, basic and repeatable set of forms that make up the foundational structure.

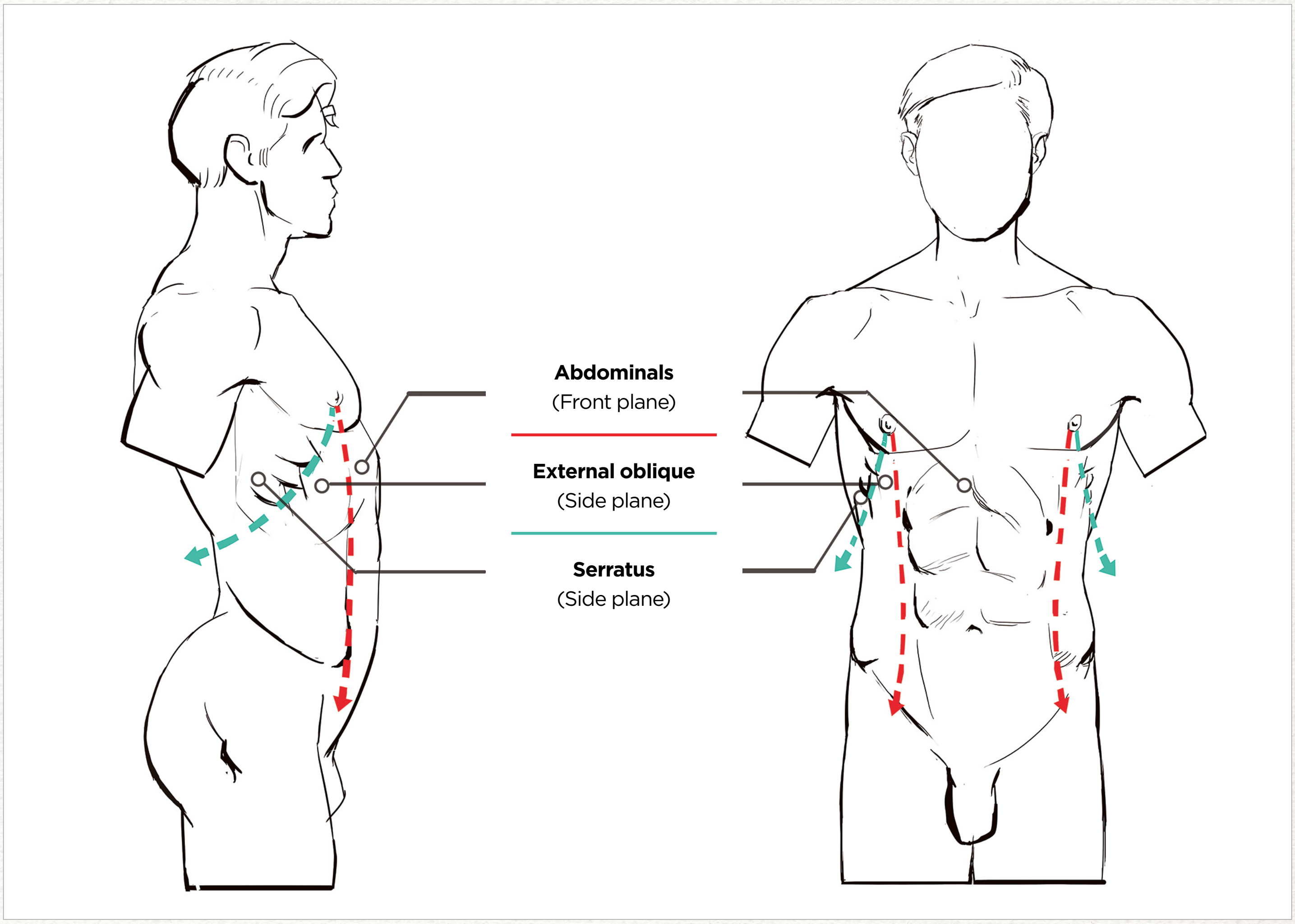
Luckily for us, there is a simple set of six forms that will do just that for us. We can build a more complex and specific understanding of this later, but for now this will work well.

Seen right, these forms are:

- 🔴 **The ribcage** – an 'egg' form
- 🔵 **The pelvis** – a box form
- 🟡 **The pectorals** – a 'cape-like' form, draping itself over the ribcage
- 🟣 **The obliques** – a pair of 'pillow' like forms
- 🟢 **The abdominals** – a similar, larger 'pillow' attaching to the sides of the ribcage form. Note the depression at the navel

Have a go at drawing these simple forms in as many positions and actions as you can. Mastering them will be fundamental to building an understanding that will allow us to invent the torso from any position.





3 *Placing the oblique separation*

Once we understand the front torso's large groups of muscle, it becomes important to find the placement of the separation between these simple groups. The pectorals are rather easy here, lying just about halfway down the form of the ribcage.

Placing the obliques is a slightly more difficult problem, that thankfully has a simple solution. We can think of this separation as radiating out from the nipple, heading towards the ASIS.

Another, subtler upshot of this once we continue to refine our groups is we can use the nipple in a similar way to place the sub-group of the serratus, a fan-like muscle expanding from the back. In this way the nipple can be an extremely useful landmark when it comes to placing these details.

Part of the reason for this is that the nipple exists on the corner of the plane change between the front and side planes of the chest, and more broadly the torso. Since the obliques fundamentally lie on the side plane and the abdominals fundamentally on the front, this relationship makes perfect sense.

4 The pectorals

When we turn our attention to the pectorals, it is useful to examine how this muscle attaches to the bones in a more complex way.

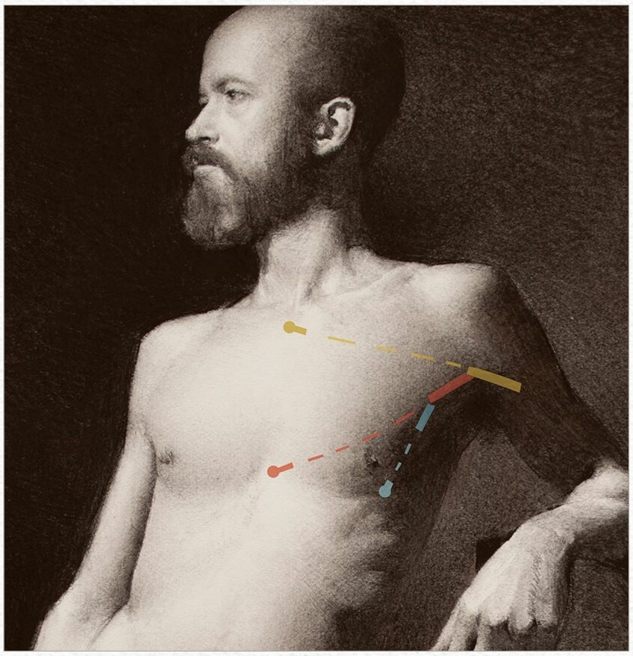
We can separate this muscle into three distinct portions:

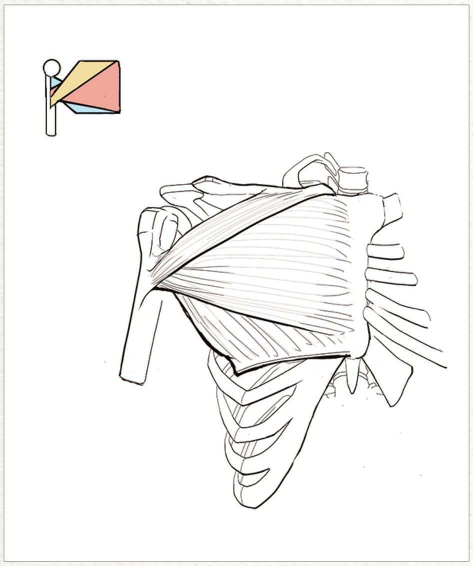
🟡 **The clavicular portion** – This section lays on top and attaches to the clavicle and the lowest point on the humerus or arm bone.
🔴 **The sternal portion** – One layer deeper and attaches to the sternum and the middle of the humerus.
🔵 **The abdominal portion** – This section is the deepest and attaches to the abdomen and the highest point on the humerus.

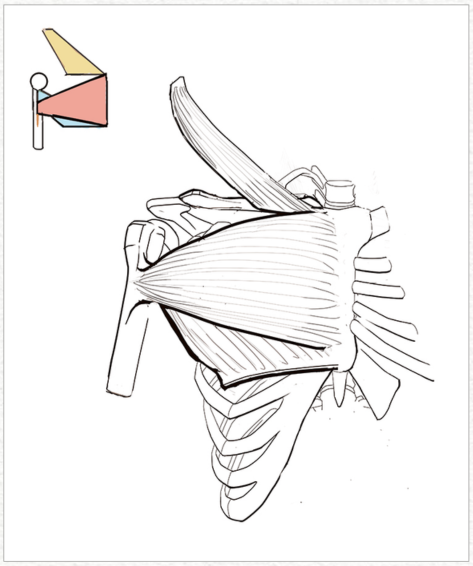
But what is the point of learning about this spiralling nature of the muscle? After all, on all but the most impressively muscular physiques, these sections will not be clearly delineated on the human form.

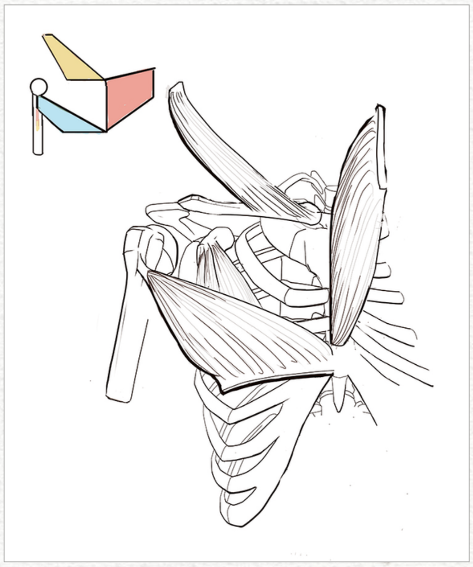
The interesting thing about this point is that, while it isn't explicitly clear on the form, it is always suggested! On the right, as you can see, there are three distinct angles present near the armpit shadows of the pectoral. Note that each of these angles, while not distinct through the entire form, do lead to exactly the correct positions on the clavicle, sternum and abdomen.

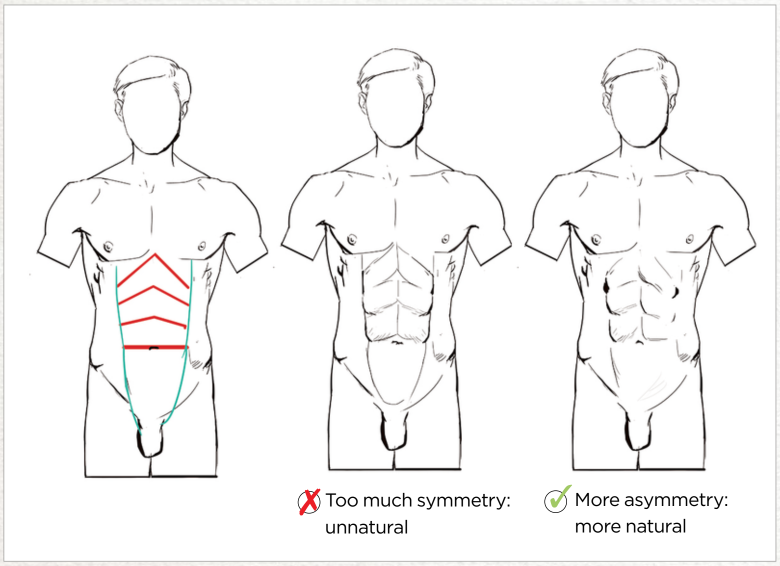
These three angles will always show up on the form, will always lead to the same places on the form, and are always something to look for when trying to refine this interesting area. See if you can spot them in your next drawing!











5 Abdominal asymmetry

Of course, we will not always be required to fully articulate the abdominal, but it is worth discussing it and there are some interesting points to discuss. The first is that there are usually six abs present above the navel and below, one large form, which in larger body types becomes the notorious gut. One interesting element of the abdominals is that the separation begins as a horizontal line at the navel and, in proportion as it arises above the navel, these lines become more diagonal and more similar to the powerful angle of the arch of the ribcage.

One other element to mention is just a common mistake when articulating the abs. Seen in the middle of the illustration is a common error. Here they are presented with near-perfect symmetry and are far too outlined. If the symmetry is too perfect, the form will appear far too robotic, so seek out asymmetry and break up those lines!

As always, the best way to absorb these concepts is to draw them for yourself, so get experimenting!

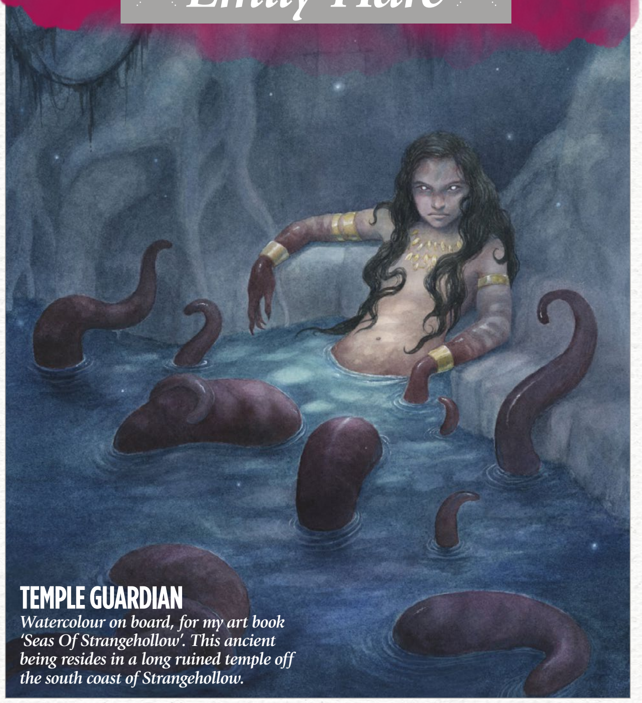
First Impressions

Emily Hare

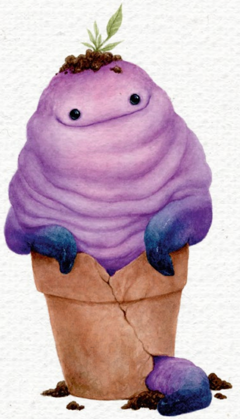
The watercolour fantasy artist shares her creative journey

What, outside of art, has most influenced your artwork through the years?
Fantasy movies! I was 11 when Labyrinth was released and after seeing it in the cinema, I had the VHS tape later on and would watch it on repeat. Anything with creatures in it was just enthralling for me. I also loved the old Sinbad the Sailor movies, Clash of the Titans with the Ray Harryhausen creature design, this all definitely had a huge impact. The natural world and all the weird and wonderful things that it is filled with is also a huge source of inspiration for me.

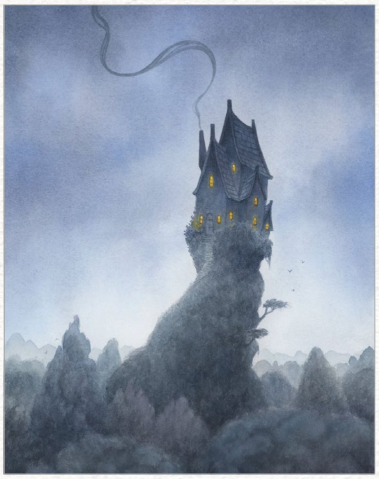
Is there a painting that you saw in your formative years that changed everything? What was it?
Hmm, I think in my early teens I was mostly in love with the Pre-Raphaelites, specifically JW Waterhouse. 'Lady of Shalott' was a favourite for a long time. Also 'Ophelia' by Millais. I don't think there was one painting that changed everything for me, but in more recent years I've had very powerful reactions to paintings in person where they've actually moved me to tears (a couple of Sargent paintings and also one from Sorolla).



TEMPLE GUARDIAN
Watercolour on board, for my art book 'Seas Of Strangehollow'. This ancient being resides in a long ruined temple off the south coast of Strangehollow.



DIGBY
From 'Mini Book Of Monsters'. Digby likes to eat dirt. If you discover any broken plant pots with missing contents, it's highly likely he is the culprit.



WIZARD'S KEEP AT NIGHT
My most recent painting. Watercolour on illustration board (for reprint of Strangehollow).

Is making a living as an artist all you thought it would be?
I'm not sure I ever really had a preconceived idea of what it would be. I think I thought I'd be doing more painting than I am! Now that I'm not doing client work, it means almost 50 per cent of my time is the business side and not the art side. It is a LOT of work.

What advice would you give to your younger self to aid you on the way?
I think I'd have told myself to keep going with art and not stop (I went into working with horses for a few years in my early 20s), as I would be further along than I am now if I hadn't got distracted by other things. But then that was my path and while hindsight is 50/50, what I have done to lead to this point is maybe what I had to do to make the art that I'm making now.

> “My sense of humour and sense of the ridiculous tends to seep into what I paint”

How has the industry of art changed for good since you've been working in it?
I think that the fact that any of us can reach anyone in the world (potentially) through the internet is definitely a huge bonus. It can also be problematic (hard to stand out!), but overall I would say the access to so many millions of eyeballs and also access to some incredible art teachers online is absolutely game changing for artists, especially for me as I rely on the internet completely to sell my books and art.

What character or scene that you've painted do you most identify with?
This is a very tricky one since most of the characters I paint are not even human! I can't say that I relate to any of them really, even though they are ALL me in some way or another. My sense of humour and sense of the ridiculous tends to seep into almost everything I paint, so even when I'm trying to be serious it doesn't always come out that way. I think rather than relating to them, they are just some small snippets of parts of my personality that appear on paper.

What's your next step in art or life?
The next step with my art is completing Seas Of Strangehollow, which I recently funded via Kickstarter. It is VERY close to being finished which is very exciting. After that I plan on some standalone pieces which aren't connected to books. I am then planning a second Mini Book Of Monsters for January/February. Never a dull moment!

Emily Hare is a watercolour artist based in the UK working with her favourite themes, fantasy, folklore and fairytales. Check out her work at www.emilyhare.co.uk.

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