

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

# ImagineFX

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**THE SPIDERWICK  
CHRONICLES**  
THE SEARCH FOR  
**WONDLA**

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW  
**LIAM SHARP**

How the DC artist finds his flow for comic creativity

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**CATWOMAN**  
**SUPERMAN**  
**BATMAN**  
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## Welcome to... NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS **ImagineFX**



As I write this it's mid-January and quite chilly here in the UK, so if venturing into the great outdoors feels like a struggle for you right now then why not settle down at your desk with a hot drink, get yourself inspired and master some new skills from our tutorial section.

This early in the year it's good to glance ahead, and in this issue we have a look into the art trends that technology is breeding for 2024. You can also get your creative juices flowing by reading all about DC comic artist Liam Sharp's formula, or learn about Boris Pelcer's journey.

There's also plenty to learn too, headlined by our legendary cover artist Tony DiTerlizzi, who tells us how he revamped the dust jacket for his bestseller *The Search for WondLa*. We also have the third part of Charlie Pickard's excellent figure drawing series, which this month delves deep into the world of ambient occlusion, an excellent technique to have you mastering light and shadow in your art with a focus on bounced light. Plus much more, from epic fire-breathing dragons to otherworldly beings.

Enjoy the issue!

*Rob*

**Editor**

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Take a tour of a gorgeous creative workspace, home to an artist couple, retro decor and their mischievous cat.

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Discover how the masterful Tony DiTerlizzi returned to a much-loved book to create his, and our, cover art.

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#### Paint the perfect shadow

Master light and shadow with part three of anatomy expert Charlie Pickard's figure drawing course.



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Artist in Residence:  
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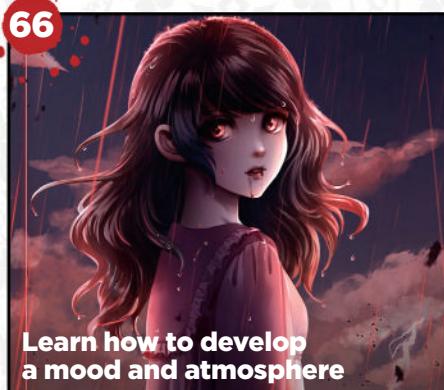
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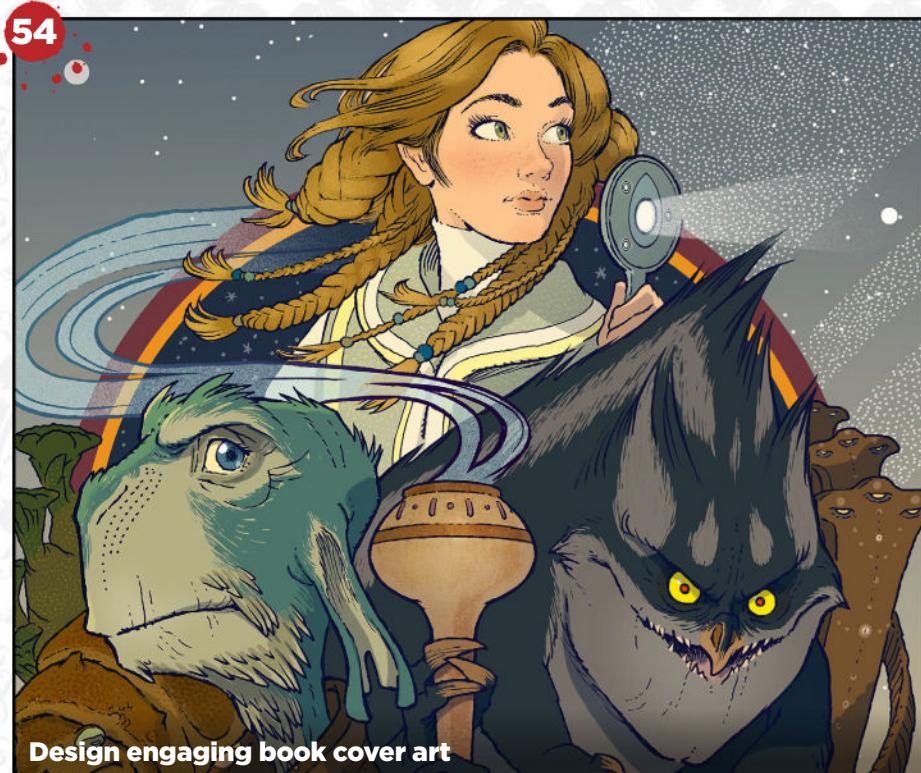
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Velibor Stanojevic



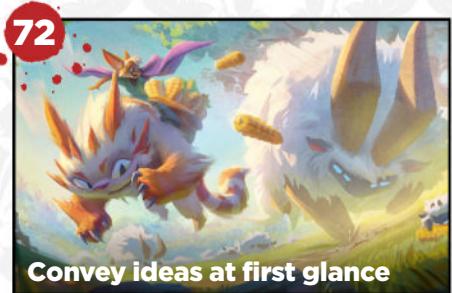
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You're three steps away from this issue's resource files...

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Type this into your browser's address bar.  
<https://ifxm.ag/WondLa>

#### 2 Click the download link

Find your files ready for download.

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Next month

Next month in...  
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# BECOME A MANGA MASTER

Learn how to create vibrant characters  
with art director **Julio Cesar**



## Inside a fantasy artist's realm

Enter the darkness with a tour of the legendary Wayne Barlowe's studio

## Divine doodles to get inspired

ChrissaBug opens her sketchbook of characterful elves and friendly faeries

## How to perfect your anatomy

Our in-depth series showing you how to nail the human form continues

**ISSUE 238 ON SALE 12TH MARCH**  
**IN PRINT & DIGITAL**

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS  
**ImagineFX**

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Printed by Buxton Press Limited, Palace Rd, Buxton, SK17 6AE

Distributed by Marketforce, 5 Churchill Place, Canary Wharf, London, E14 5HU www.marketforce.co.uk. For enquiries, please email: [mfcommunications@futurenet.com](mailto:mfcommunications@futurenet.com)

ISSN 1748-930X

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# FX Posé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

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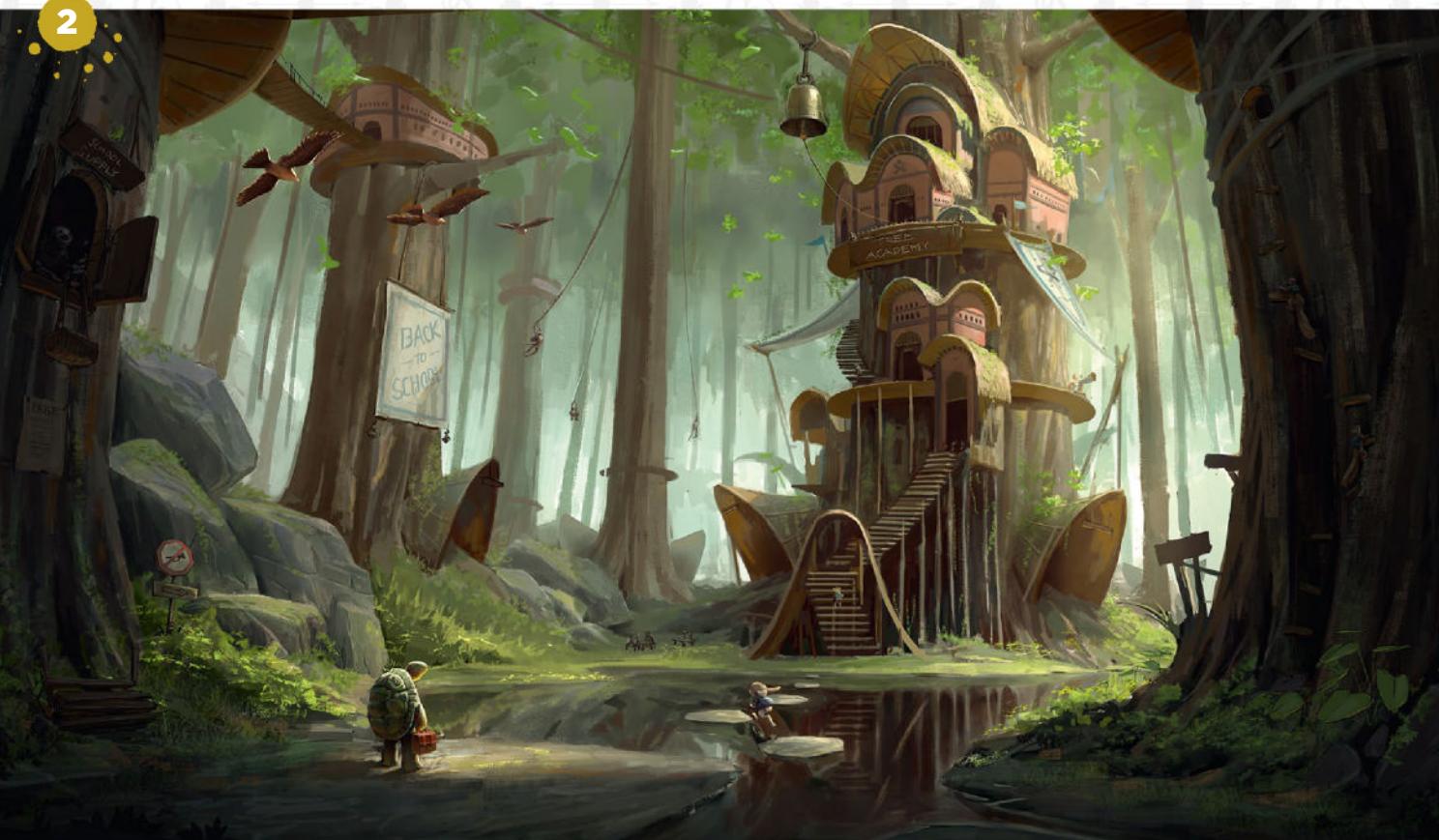


# Juan Salvador Almencion

LOCATION: Philippines MEDIA: Photoshop WEB: [www.artstation.com/djilumpia](http://www.artstation.com/djilumpia)

Juan, also known as DJ Lumpia, is a game artist and illustrator whose work is greatly inspired by fantasy-themed elements. In terms of style, he takes his influence from artists like Dave Rapoza, Tyler Jacobson and Even Amundsen.

2



3



### 1 KOBOLD RANGER

"A Kobold Ranger character with a painterly style I made for Metal Pen's Art Jam. I kept in mind the clear silhouette and its overlapping elements."

### 2 FIRST DAY

"This is a piece I drew for Atomhawk's 2020 art contest. I tried to depict a relaxing mood through the environmental lighting."

### 3 DWARF VICTORY

"This illustration was made for the Brushpoint Academy Art Jam. It imitates Magic: The Gathering art by focusing on dramatic lighting and establishing a clear separation of the character and background."



## Violetta Pavlovskaya

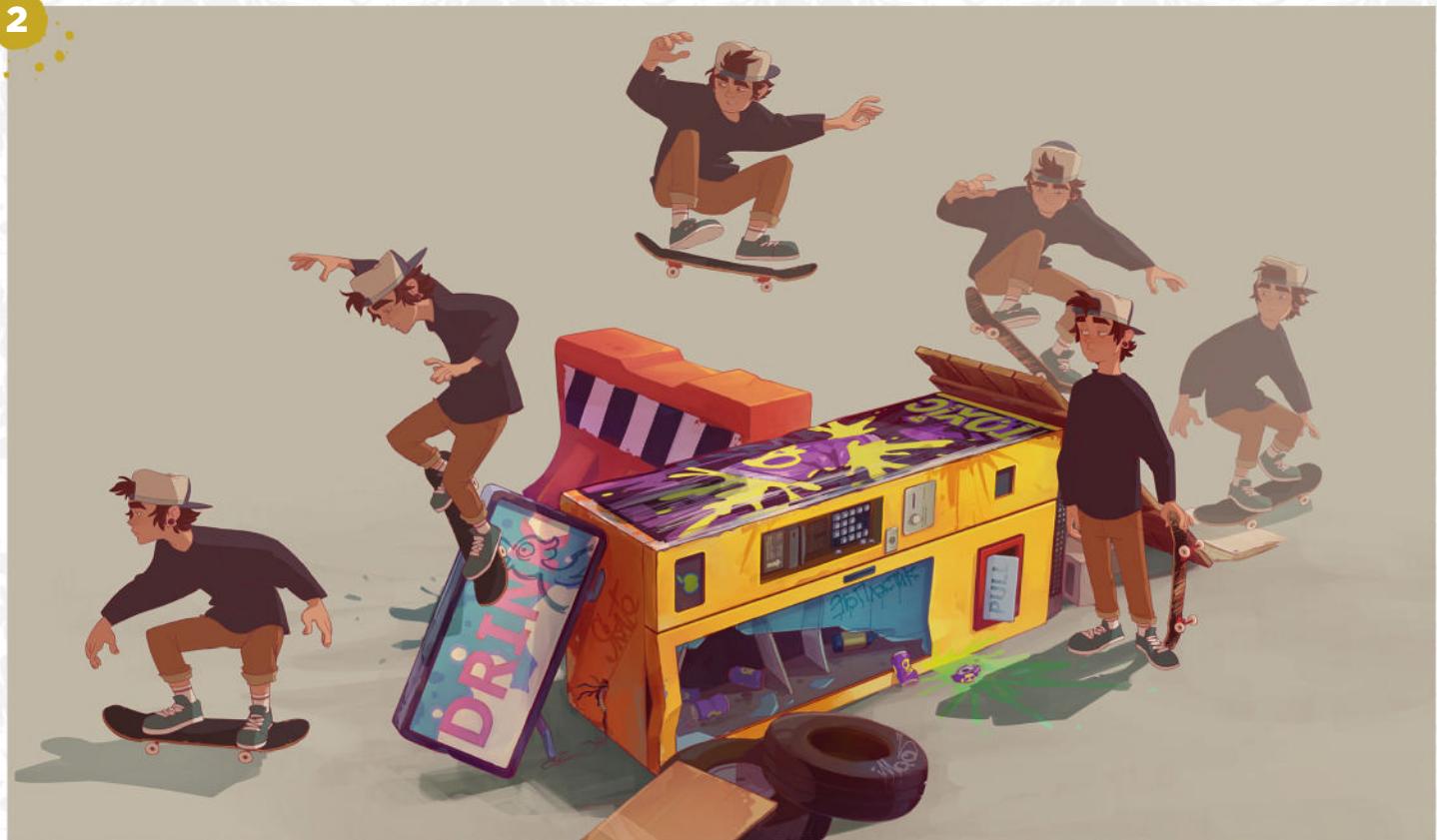
LOCATION: Georgia MEDIA: Clip Studio Paint WEB: [www.instagram.com/puba24](http://www.instagram.com/puba24)

Also known as PUBA24, Violetta worked as a freelance concept artist in the animation industry before moving into gaming over the last couple of years. She likes to create stories and moments that everybody can relate to.

1



2



### 1 CHILL ZONE

"The goal with this piece was to make a space where young people could hang out, far away from socially accepted rules."

### 2 JUNKY KICKSPOT

"This is a concept piece from one of my personal projects. Here, I wanted to create a place the teenagers have built themselves with the trash they've found."

### 3 BEFORE SUNRISE

"This artwork was a piece of colour research. It's set in a place that's incredibly hot during the night, and even hotter when the sun has risen in the morning."





## Park Hyunwoo

LOCATION: South Korea MEDIA: Photoshop, Blender WEB: <http://rainmanp.net>

Park Hyunwoo, also known as Rainman Page, is an environment concept artist for MMORPG titles. He has also worked in animation, and especially loves to create fantasy concept art. "When I draw, I draw the places I want to see and experience in real life."

### 1 QUEEN

"Hidden in a cave at the end of the dungeon is an ancient statue of a queen. The crystal on her head is said to have mysterious powers. You must climb up there and collect it."

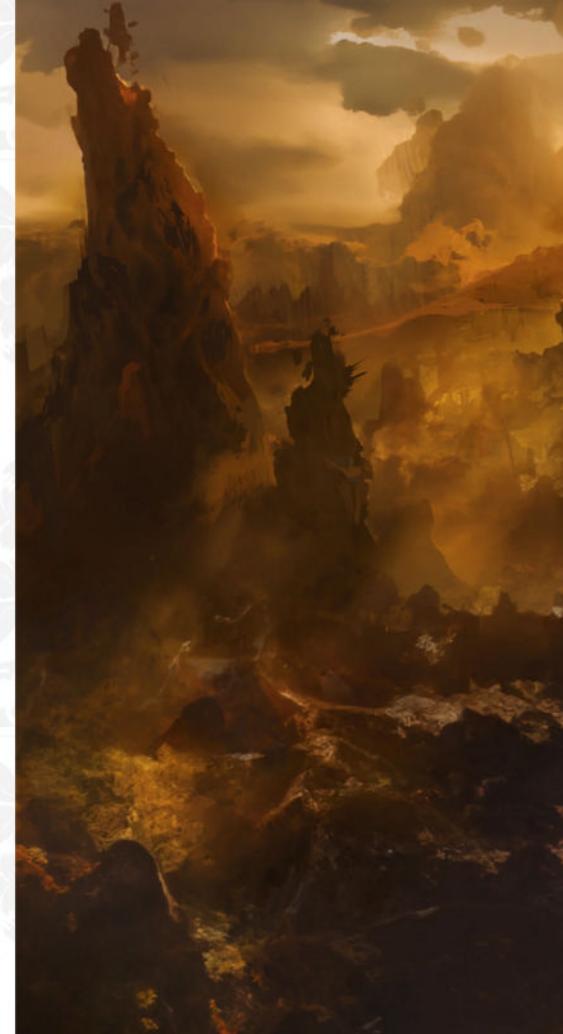
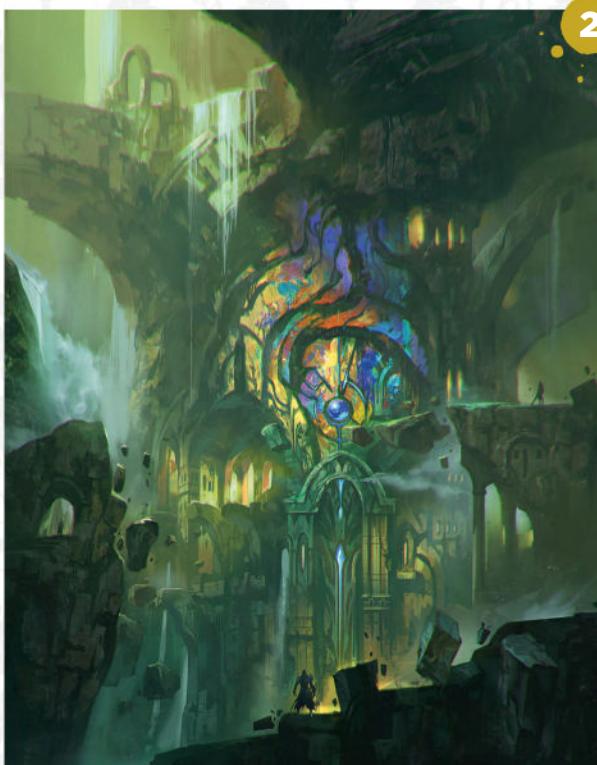
1



### 2 CRYSTAL CAVE

"Deep within a vast labyrinth of caverns is a giant crystal. You found it while exploring the maze of caves."

2



**3 SEA DRAGON CITY**

"There is a sea of terrain that rises up like a dragon. Towns and cities have been built to utilise it."

**4 RED DESERT**

"The entrance to an ancient, legendary dungeon hidden at the edge of the red desert. This is where a new adventure begins."

# Justine S. Florentino

LOCATION: Philippines MEDIA: Clip Studio Paint WEB: [www.instagram.com/justine.florentino](http://www.instagram.com/justine.florentino)

Justine is an illustrator who loves to paint portraits and character artworks. Her clients include BOOM! Studios, Disney and Wizards of the Coast. She also creates a lot of character art for Dungeons & Dragons campaigns.

## 1 LILIANA VESS

"Here I captured the moment Liliana gained possession of the Chain Veil. I chose to give her a soft smile while she admires the life-changing artefact."

1



## 2 ALICE NEVER AFTER

"Something sinister is coming and Alice is becoming aware of her predicament. The details in her eyes and the background show a familiar look on her face."

2



© BOOM! Studios/Wizards of the Coast

© BOOM! Studios

3



© BOOM! Studios/Wizards of the Coast

## 3 ELSPETH

"I wanted to depict the most noble planeswalker in a regal portrait, with a golden light shining behind."

## 4 CRYSTAL DAGGER

"The Elven Queen worries of danger as she holds the Crystal Dagger in her hand. Here I explored painting a weapon made from a fragile material."





## Merilliza Chan

LOCATION: Philippines MEDIA: Photoshop WEB: [www.merilliza.com](http://www.merilliza.com)

Merilliza is an illustrator who specialises in fantasy. She has worked for various games companies and as a book cover illustrator. In her work, she likes to reveal characters and tell stories through details and expressions.

### 1 FASTER FALLING

"One of my underrated pieces, but nonetheless a fun character illustration. The girl is falling through a bizarre alien world. Energy and thrill were my keywords."

### 2 WATERS OF SALT AND SIN

"The story behind this illustration takes place in the sea. I decided to focus on a circular composition and accompanied it with a wavy flow of energy."

1



2



3

### 3 RED WARRIOR

"For this piece it was important to portray the character's strength. I tried my best here to give her a dignified look, to show she's not the type of character who's going to back down from a fight."

### 4 ANOINTED WITH STARS

"I've always been fascinated with space and astronomy. I wanted to pay tribute to that passion with this piece and create an artwork that would emanate something pure and true 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](mailto:fxpose@imaginefx.com)





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## Go Fishboy

YEAR CREATED: 2022 MEDIA: TVPaint, Photoshop, Cinema 4D, After Effects

+

"The seed for the story came from the writing games we did at school, and two of our team members, Sebastian and Zhen, came up with the idea of a boy who's a fish and whose dad is a sushi chef. We brought many other ideas to the table, but this was a particular one that we all

loved and felt could become a great story.

We did a lot of brainstorming and talked about our personal experiences and feelings. This moment in pre-production was crucial for both the story and the team dynamics. It brought us closer to each other and

helped us build a bond that would become stronger with each passing month.

From the very beginning we knew that our story would need to take place in the real world, and more specifically Japan given the sushi aspect, as well as the importance of family traditions and legacy within the country. For this reason, and given that none of us are from Japan, we conducted a lot of

research and consulting to be sure that our story would be respectful of their culture.

However, we also wanted to create a story that would be universal, even more so given the fact that we are all from completely different countries and cultures. Because of this, the story came together from various elements that we're all interested in, and somehow everything matched well."

# The Rookies

## Artist PROFILE

### Andrey Kolesov

LOCATION: France

Andrey's interest in animation began at a young age. Self-taught in both 2D and 3D animation, he started working in the industry as a freelance generalist and later obtained a master's in character animation and animated filmmaking at the Gobelins school in Paris. Andrey's drive pushes him to new challenges within animation. He enjoys experimenting with different mediums and finding creative solutions within the production pipeline.

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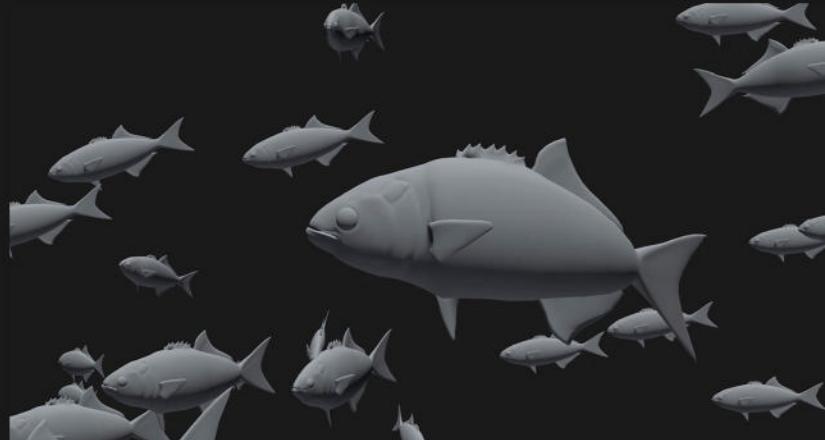
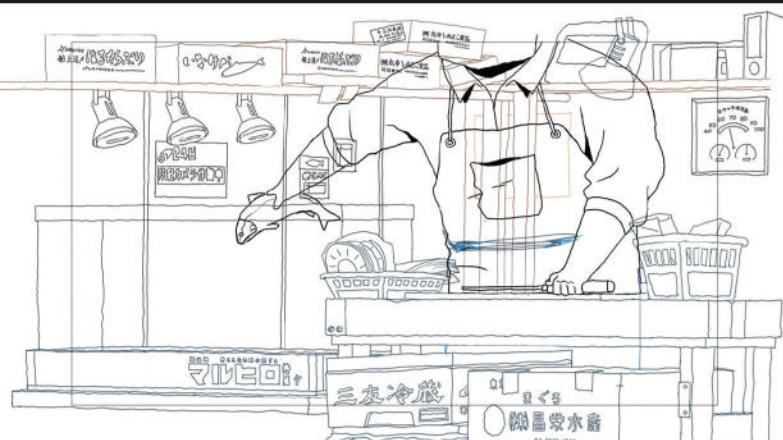
DENISE CIRONE SEBASTIAN DORINGER ANDREY KOLESOV CHIAYU LIU ZHEN TIAN LAN ZHOU

## 行こう魚太郎 GO FISHBOY



ORIGINAL MUSIC: Jürgen BRANZ VIKES: Kazuki TERAMOTO, Yu-Jan HSUUNG, Yume NANBU, Yumi NARITA, Yugo YAMADA WR: Mathieu TIGER

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# ARTIST NEWS, SOFTWARE & EVENTS

# ImagineNation

AT THE CORE OF THE DIGITAL ART COMMUNITY

"Procreate is still my go-to tool, and I'm excited for Procreate Dreams!" Katherine Wang says.



"I anticipate an increase in legal issues that might make using AI less attractive for companies," predicts Nia Kovalevski.



## Tech trends for 2024

**Traditional desires** Four artists tell **Tanya Combrinck** how technology has sparked a demand for human connection, nostalgia, and visuals that make the digital tangible

**The digital art world today sits at an interesting point in its history. The tools we have at our disposal are now more powerful than ever, but the ability to create overly slick and polished visuals for films and games, or to create a complex image from a text prompt, has led to a feeling that the human touch is slipping away.**

People are looking for connection when they consume art, and there's now a sense that technology might be coming between the artist and viewer. The result is a series of trends that are reinforcing the human connectedness that people get from art, and rejecting output that threatens it.

One example is the film industry's move towards 2.5D stylised animation. Audiences are losing their appetite for

Geoffrey Ernault says: "Today, artists have to compete with people using AI who post thousands of images a day, which makes it hard to be noticed."



perfect lighting and smoothness, so we're starting to see a different look where 3D animation is combined with 2D illustration.

Sometimes the effect is a painterly, dreamlike cinematic with a hint of jumpy movement that harks back to storybook illustration and analogue animation techniques. Other times

you'll see a comic book aesthetic. But one way or another, this technique is being used to produce a look that evokes a sense of the hand-drawn and the human-made.

### SEEKING SUBSTANCE

Another movement that's set to gain even more momentum is the backlash against the world-rocking impact of generative AI. With greater exposure, people are becoming more discerning and can see through the superficially pleasing aesthetic of AI art. They want something more substantial, as well as an industry that supports the human artists who create it.

In conjunction with all of this, social media platforms are exerting their influence on the art world by, ➡➡



## PAINT-A-THON PRIZEWINNER

Check out the winning artwork from the latest Holly Jolly Paint-a-Thon and get the thoughts of the triumphant team that created the cosy Christmas scene.

**Page 28**



## A DAY IN THE LIFE OF...

Creative challenges are in full flow for vis dev artist Chrystin Garland, who tells us all about her artistic endeavours and shares advice for aspiring newcomers.

**Page 30**



## A VINTAGE WORKSPACE

Concept artists Ryan Shi and Snowy Zhang give us the grand tour of their shared studio, with a little help from plant-munching feline assistant Taco.

**Page 32**



"With the popularity of 2D animated shows, I think we're going to see more 2D in studio-produced animation and on social media," says Tamara Osborn.



Nia painted fellow artist Lauren Brown for the D.C. project, which celebrates human artists.

→ ironically, making it harder for artists to attract and keep an engaged following. In a bid to find their tribe, we're starting to see artists drill down into more specific and individual art styles as a way to build those stronger connections with their fans.

## RESURGENCE OF THE NICHE

Fantasy character artist and illustrator



**Tamara Osborn** talks about this last point in terms of "the growing necessity to be not only an artist but a brand". She

says that social media drives artists to be "easily palatable, marketable and profitable in an overcrowded space that does little to foster creativity and passion". The reaction to this, she predicts, will be a resurgence of the niche, as artists and consumers of art "burrow themselves into neat little pockets based on the specific four-

"AI models quickly went from producing messy, fun blobs that could be used as a base for texturing or rough composition to finished-looking images that resembled existing work," says Geoffrey.



**“As artists fight against generative AI, they are going to start showcasing more sketch, concept and process work”**

walled-internet-bedroom they have curated for themselves".

Tamara is anticipating an increase in the creation of fan art as a way of building niche communities. "With the rising popularity of animated series like Legend of Vox Machina, Blue Eye Samurai and Arcane, and RPG video games such as Baldur's Gate 3, Hades and The Legend of Zelda: Tears of the Kingdom, it's becoming easier for artists to find viewers who relate and seek out the kind of artwork they're creating," she says. "Creating media-related artwork feels like a vital tool in online growth."

Artists posting demonstrations of their workflow is another trend that Tamara has her eye on. "I believe we'll see far more behind-the-scenes content cropping up on our screens,"

she tells us. "As artists fight against generative AI, they are going to start showcasing more sketch, concept and process work as a means to say, 'Hey, look, I made this! Me, a human.'"

## DREAMS JOINS THE SCENE

While generative AI and social media algorithms work to make artists' lives more difficult, there are still some new technologies that are aiming to bring enrichment. Procreate Dreams is a case in point: an affordable, accessible and powerful animation app that has been received with much delight by the digital art community.

Tamara believes we'll see a surge of creativity that feeds into the prevailing demand for less polished and more personal work because of Dreams: "With this new software, I believe →



05 DESIRE / EROS

# Artist news, software & events



"I believe artists will lean to individualism, catering to the niche as algorithms shift," says Tamara.



In-universe character designs for the Kareva sisters, who feature in Katherine's illustrated novel *Farewell My Homeland*.

## INDUSTRY INSIGHT

### THE JOY OF CREATING

Artist Katherine Wang on the enduring desire to be creative

"The industry is currently undergoing startling changes, notably with advancements in AI. These developments are undoubtedly impacting the nature of work in the industry, raising questions about ethical versus unethical methods of creation, and for some even challenging the definition of art itself and the value we attribute to 'human-made' artwork, as opposed to something created by an algorithm.

Regardless of how I or other artists are feeling about this, it's clear that the technology is only improving, and will keep on doing so. I don't see AI going away. And as well-intentioned as certain regulations are, I don't know if it's realistic to hope that laws will ever fully protect artists and other creatives from these technological tides of change. So, I think 2024 will be another year of soul-searching.

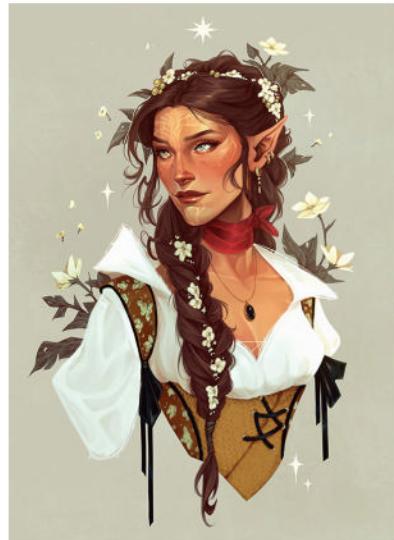
But that's not to say that this is all doom and gloom! From an independent artist's point of view, my passion for creating remains unchanged. Only I can create the things I want to exist in this world. There's still joy and a sense of accomplishment in the act of creating. At the end of the day, it's on me to improve my skills to bring my ideas to light as beautifully as I can.

And despite some of the negativity that's out there, I see many artists I admire continuing to create really amazing stuff; art far more unique and intentional than whatever can be generated with a prompt. I believe there will always be a place for the hardworking creators who make the things that they're genuinely passionate about."



Katherine Wang is an independent digital designer, illustrator and aspiring writer based in Colorado.

[www.embermarke.com](http://www.embermarke.com)



"There's been a sense of nostalgia-craving recently, and I believe it's about to hit digital art," says Tamara.

➡ we're going to see a huge wave of chunky and awkward but beautiful and human-made 2D animation, and that's going to bring along with it a wave of nostalgia into digital art."

Accessible art resources are a good thing, although their availability has made the industry more competitive. "Learning digital painting has become easier thanks to the wealth of courses and information available, as well as the affordability of quality graphic tablets," says illustrator

**Nia Kovalevski**. "As a result, there are many more skilled artists in the industry compared to a few years ago. So it's becoming more important to differentiate oneself and attract an audience that appreciates and seeks out your work."

In seeking to stand out, artists should ensure that their way of doing so aligns with their passions. "I firmly believe that only with passion will you be willing to devote a significant amount of time to it," Nia adds.



She also notes that the 2.5D stylised animation trend is something that opens up opportunities for artists to explore a broader range of creative expressions. Nia says: "I'm hopeful the trend of experimenting with different art styles will advance further, as seen with Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse, Puss in Boots: The Last Wish, and Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles:

Nia says: "Animation studios are more ready to take risks and invest in diverse visual styles, so artists have more freedom to propose their visual concepts."

Mutant Mayhem. I hope that these successes will encourage studios to explore a wider range of styles, and that projects with unique visuals will receive funding, especially as there are now more affordable ways to apply various art styles to 3D animation."

## AI OVEREXPOSURE

On AI art, Nia sees a visual fatigue beginning to set in with viewers. "AI images tend to have a recognisable unhuman style, and after you've seen hundreds of them, it becomes easy to spot AI-generated pieces," she says. "Viewers might become saturated as our brains crave variety and freshness, something that the current AI artwork struggles to offer. That's why focusing on individuality and infusing greater storytelling and emotion into our art, which is difficult for AI to replicate, might be a wise approach."

But boredom with the material is just one aspect of the pushback



Geoffrey on AI art generators: "The easier a tool is to use, the less value is perceived from a hiring standpoint."



"As a dark fantasy illustrator, I'm pleased that scary thriller stories such as *Stranger Things* are gaining popularity with a wider audience," says Nia.

## “It’s now becoming more important to differentiate oneself and attract an audience that appreciates your work”

against AI-generated artwork. An artist working within the video games and movie industries, **Geoffrey Ernault** points out that recent use of AI art by creative companies has received far from a positive reaction among their fans.

Marvel's decision to use AI to create the intro sequence for its show *Secret Invasion* received backlash on social media last summer, while Wacom and Wizards of the Coast were criticised for the AI-generated imagery in their marketing materials.

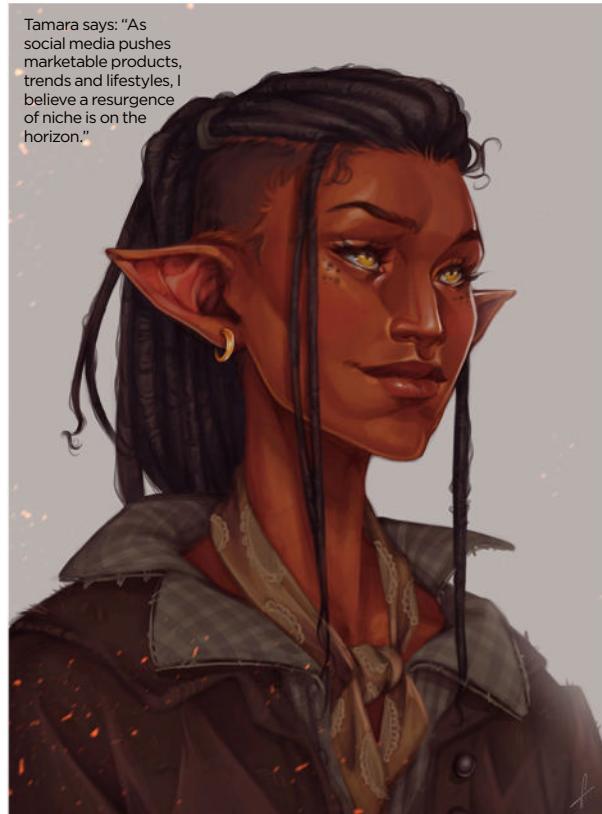
Both Wacom and Wizards of the Coast claimed to be unaware that AI had been used to create parts of the images because they were purchased

from third parties. But the message from fans was loud and clear: they want these companies to support artists by rejecting AI art.

These incidents highlight the need for better information on the origins of imagery. Geoffrey says: "I'm hoping to see more legislation towards AI so that models are trained on controlled and traceable data, and we have a way of knowing whether something is AI-generated or not."

He continues: "I do think there's a world in the future where we can use artificial intelligence in tandem with digital artwork and elevate what everybody does. However, I don't believe that stealing people's work by basically doing the equivalent of a

Tamara says: "As social media pushes marketable products, trends and lifestyles, I believe a resurgence of niche is on the horizon."



Katherine says: "I've been trying to be more intentional about what I'm creating. Does it tell a story? Will the end product be something I value, even if no one else does?"

Google search into a \$10 monthly Discord bot is the way to do that."

Nevertheless, Geoffrey isn't fearful of the future, as he believes that the creativity, understanding of core art fundamentals, and problem-solving abilities of human artists will always be needed. "All this strangely, in a way, has me excited, as I believe we'll see people go back to the drawing board and focus more on things like art style, story and user experience."



The winning artwork featured a touching scene following the warm and cosy theme set.



## Holly Jolly Paint-a-Thon: Winner

**Friendly competition** The top team from the latest festive LightBox Expo challenge discuss the process behind their touching Christmas artwork

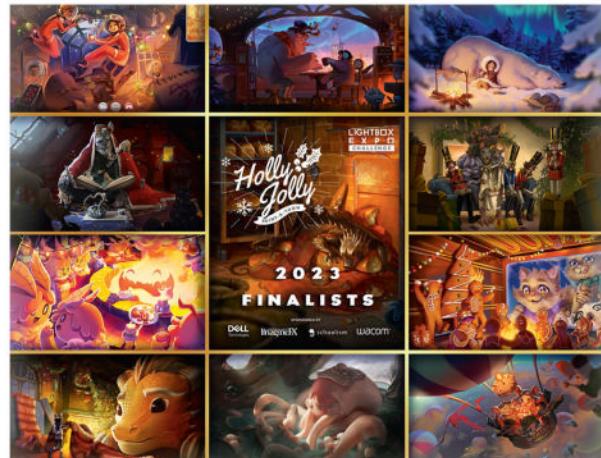
**The Holly Jolly Paint-a-Thon, now in its seventh edition, has become an eagerly anticipated holiday tradition within the global art community.**

Hosted on the LightBox Expo Discord server, this annual online art event challenges teams of 4-8 artists to a 24-hour creative marathon, with the aim of making one collaborative art piece following a mystery holiday-themed prompt revealed at kick-off. A team challenge at the heart of such a welcoming, supportive community ensures everyone has the opportunity to join in and contribute their unique talents to a group piece.

The prompt given for the 2023 instalment was 'warm and cosy', and had industry-leading artists Nathan Fowkes and Devin Elle Kurtz on hand with their expertise as guest judges. The Holly Jolly Paint-a-Thon is more than just a competition; it's a much-loved holiday tradition that keeps growing every year and always brings many incredible experiences, results and stories that resonate well beyond the holiday season!

*LightBox Expo 2024 is all set for 25-27 October. To find out the latest details for this year's event as they're revealed, head over to <https://lightboxexpo.com>.*

Selecting a winner was a tough choice with so many incredible artworks among the finalists of 2023's Holly Jolly Paint-a-Thon.



### THE WINNING ART TEAM



**Eri Welli**

Working on this challenge was awesome! I'm thrilled to be part of this team. We were super organised with a schedule for each stage and a democratic way of discussing ideas and solving any problems that arose.

[www.artstation.com/eriwelli](https://www.artstation.com/eriwelli)



**Greez (Grégoire Lebrun)**

This challenge is an opportunity to work as a team, and I met so many talented, friendly artists. We're so happy to know each other! This challenge isn't only about illustration, it's also about sharing something together.

[www.artstation.com/greez](https://www.artstation.com/greez)



**Joseph del Rosario Chan**

I was graciously brought onto this team by Kuya Jaypi as an illustrator and loved the idea of teamwork and a prompted piece of work! Collaborating with such high-calibre artists was an honour and I'd love to do it again.

[www.artstation.com/kunomd](https://www.artstation.com/kunomd)

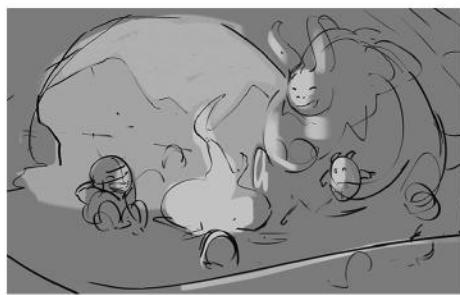


**Kuya Jaypi**

Seven years ago I met Nathan Fowkes at a challenging phase in my artistic journey, and he gave me renewed optimism. To win a challenge judged by Nathan and Devin Elle Kurtz with my friends is the highlight of my year.

[www.artstation.com/kuyajaypi](https://www.artstation.com/kuyajaypi)

## TEAM CAPTAIN KUYA JAYPI SHARES THE GROUP'S PROGRESS



### 1 Initial ideation

We spent the first six hours generating story ideas and creating concept drawings. Due to the different strengths of our team, we ended up with a wide variety of images that we could use to create the thumbnails.

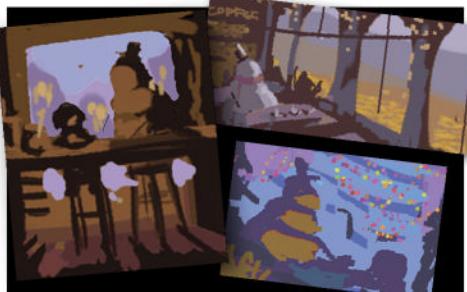


### 4 Building a snowman

We decided on a snowman because we found the notion amusing and ironic; as a snow creature, he wouldn't be able to enjoy the hot chocolate. This choice highlighted the innocence of both characters.

### 2 Concept choice

We knew we wanted to illustrate a warm-hearted interaction between a little girl and a giant creature. We explored different options, and it was interesting to observe other teams choosing ideas we rejected.

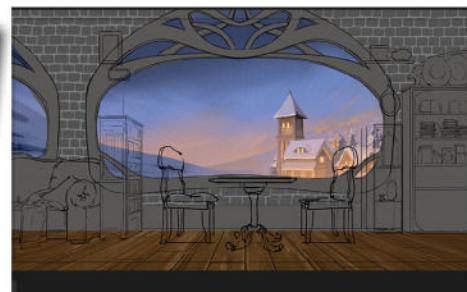


### 5 Theme focus

Ultimately, making the Paint-a-Thon's theme of 'warm and cosy' unmistakable from the very beginning was our main goal, and made up the primary focus planning out every aspect of our artwork.

### 3 Satisfying teamwork

Despite facing a tight deadline, and with around 50 teams participating, we enjoyed the process. It was satisfying to see our ideas materialise and to delve into small side stories that enriched the final artwork.



### 6 Collaborative creation

Now it was time to create the layout. We decided to use Magma, which enabled us to draw a picture together in real-time in our browsers. All in all, we spent about four hours collaborating on our scene.



### 7 Colour and mood

We explored some colour variations and moods based on a colour rough in our next step, which was another important facet when trying to really nail down that feeling of a warm and cosy scene we were tasked with.



### 9 Group rendering

Upon completing the colour sketch, we divided it into segments for rendering by each artist. We finished this an hour before the deadline, with enough time to upload and address any potential technical challenges.



**Marcel Berg**

*The idea of a 24-hour challenge was quite overwhelming at first, but we managed to play to our strengths quickly and distribute tasks. The chemistry was just right and despite not knowing each other, it was holiday magic!*

[www.artstation.com/marcymaxus](http://www.artstation.com/marcymaxus)



**nin Jason Chan**

*Our team were well organised and weren't shy to take and give criticism. It was my pleasure to create 3D models for everyone to paint over, as well as suggesting story ideas to make the environment more entertaining.*

[www.artstation.com/ninjason](http://www.artstation.com/ninjason)



**Philtomato**

*This was one of the toughest challenges I've participated in, but I'm so grateful to work with such talented individuals. I mainly worked on the female character, using my strengths in character design and stylisation.*

[www.artstation.com/philtomato](http://www.artstation.com/philtomato)



**Yi Chen Shen**

*I'm so proud of what the team accomplished. We worked so well together! Hanging out with them for the 20 hours I was awake during this challenge was a blast. Big shoutout to Greez, who streamed the entire challenge.*

[www.artstation.com/onecschen](http://www.artstation.com/onecschen)



**A day in the life of...**

## Chrystin Garland

**Free-flowing creativity** From painting to creating cosplay costumes, the vis dev artist fills us in on her daily spree of creative endeavours

**Visual development artist Chrystin Garland works in the animation industry. She started in comics out of The Savannah College of Art and Design and also spent time designing flash games to help children build social-emotional skills, before finally working her way across to the world of TV animation.**

"My alarm goes off at 7am, and I hit snooze a lot. I truly roll out of bed around 8.30am. My kittens will start howling at the door, so I do the cat chores, make myself coffee and I'm ready to go, starting with emails.

I have a selection of Spotify playlists that correspond to my stress level, or I like to put YouTube videos on in the background. If I'm at the beginning of the process, I'll look up references and create a mood board.

Mornings are spent painting, and sometimes I'll have a huddle with the art director. If it's a big concept piece I'm worried about, I'll take breaks and work on something else so I can come back to it with fresh eyes. It's about finding the balance between making something beautiful and staying within the confines of the schedule.



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](http://conceptartassociation.com).

Chrystin has Spotify playlists prepared for almost any eventuality while working away at her home desk.

My lunchtime arrives at 1pm, when I'll make a grilled cheese and tomato sandwich and watch a show. Working from home is kind of monotonous in that way. I do miss the social aspect of working at the studio, for sure.

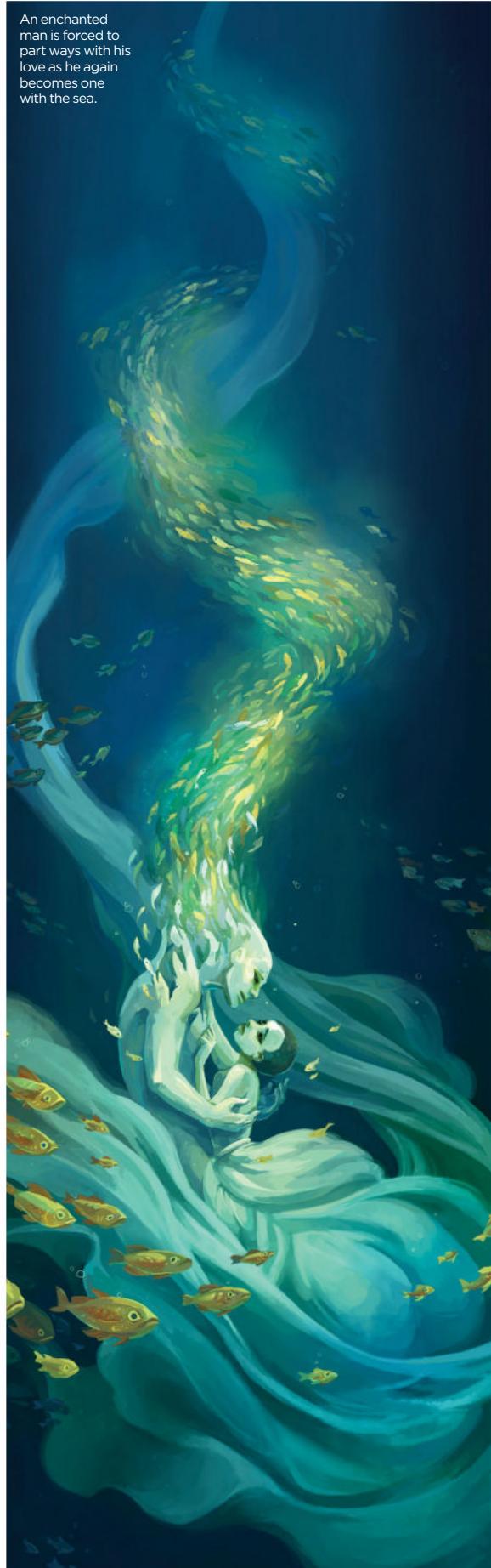
I work until 6pm. My boyfriend and I are training for a half marathon at the moment so we'll go for a run, then cook dinner. I've also started taking a class for modelling, so I'll get a little of my homework in, or work on the cool costume I'm making for an anime expo I'm going to. My creative juices are finally flowing again after I got really burnt out during lockdown.

Looking back, I wish I'd built a bigger community earlier. I wish I'd had a mentor to say, 'Hey, that deal isn't normal,' or, 'Yes, those rates are good.' Also, just being surrounded by people who are breaking into the industry is great. There are so many indie projects that you could band together and make your own path. It's worth putting your energy into that."



**Chrystin is currently an art director on a project at Wild Canary. She works mainly as a vis dev artist, most recently on *My Dad the Bounty Hunter* for Netflix. To find out more about Chrystin and her art visit [www.ladygarland.com](http://www.ladygarland.com).**

An enchanted man is forced to part ways with his love as he again becomes one with the sea.



# ImagineNation Artist in Residence



Character concept art created by Snowy as part of her personal project, which has a theme built around sci-fi, fantasy, and Soviet iconography.



The golden record! Another replica. The idea of a record full of human messages floating in space is so cool. We hope that a friendly creature finds it.

## Boyuan Ryan Shi and

## Xiaoxue Snowy Zhang

**Vintage vibes** The concept artists invite us into their studio to explore a trove of treasures from an antique typewriter to old school cameras



**"My girlfriend and I are both concept artists, and fortunate enough to work for companies that support remote work," says Ryan.**

**"Since we spend most of our time at home, a comfortable workspace is crucial for enhanced productivity.**

As we don't own a house, we opt to stay in one place for a maximum of two years before moving. One reason is that life can become repetitive if we stay in one place for too long. We begin to notice our moving pattern, and it becomes monotonous. One added bonus of frequent moves is the chance to decorate and design the

layout of our new place. This process poses a challenge because there's no perfect apartment, but we concept artists thrive on challenges.

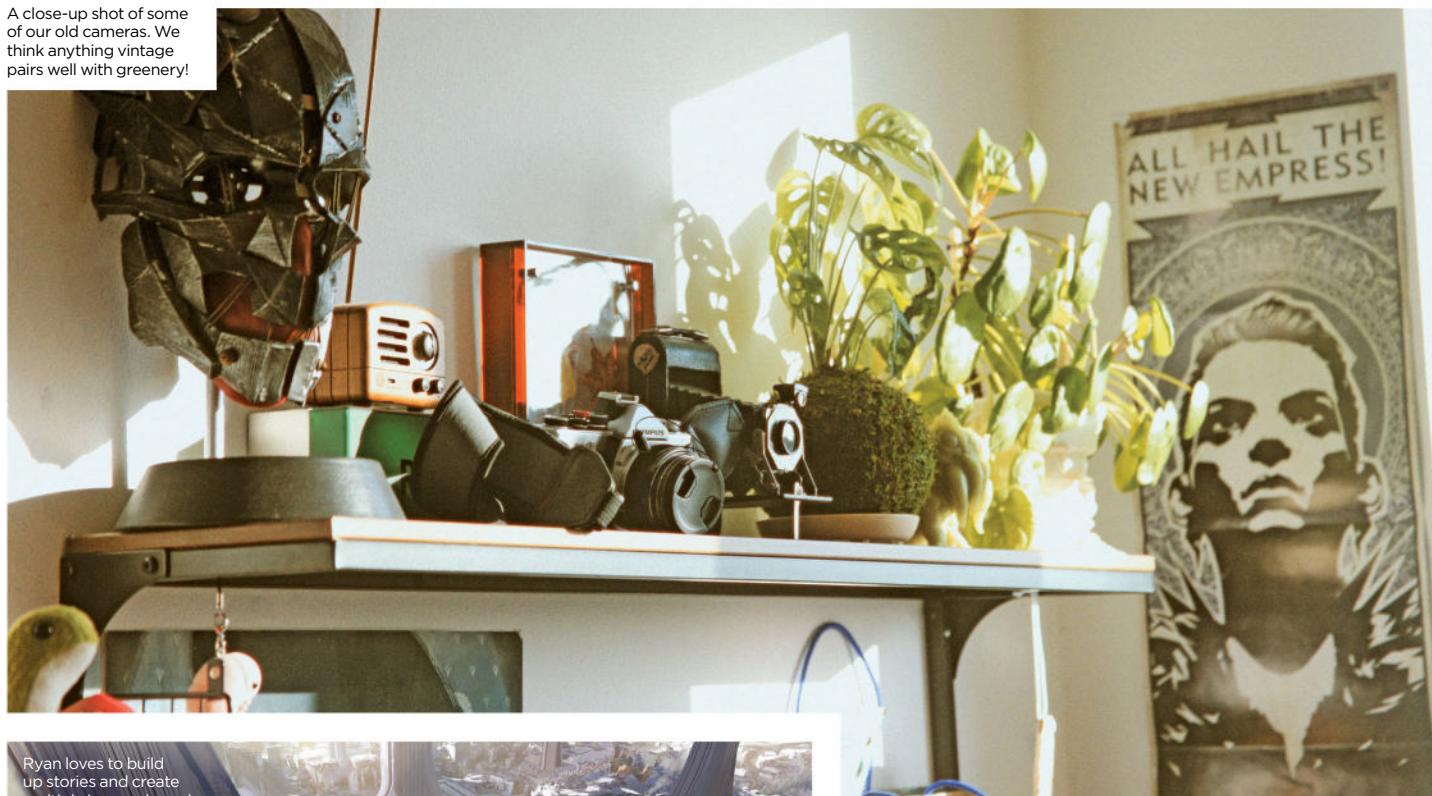
Choosing to set up our workspace in the living room was deliberate, given its ample sunlight. Additionally, we sometimes engage in personal work or play games on our own ➡

# Artist news, software & events



# ImagineNation Artist in Residence

A close-up shot of some of our old cameras. We think anything vintage pairs well with greenery!



Ryan loves to build up stories and create multiple images based around them.



“One added bonus of frequent home moves is the chance to decorate and design the layout of our new place”

► devices, allowing us to maintain conversation instead of isolating ourselves in separate rooms.”

## PLANTS VS KITTY



Snowy adds: “You may have noticed we have several live plants. They provide us a pleasant distraction when we’ve been staring at screens for too long. Acquiring these has gotten addictive, and keeping them alive is rewarding.

Most of the time, our cat, Taco, will share the space with us. Consequently, we’ve chosen the largest tabletop we could find to give Taco more space should he opt to join us in our work, sip our water, or

simply just bother us. Strangely, he loves to chew on all the greenery except for catnip, so safeguarding our plants from Taco has become an ongoing battle.

We aren’t keen on displaying our own artworks on the wall, so we’ve chosen to exhibit pieces from other artists we admire, or items that hold personal meaning to us. See if you can recognise any of them!”

*Boyuan Ryan Shi is a concept artist working in the games industry for Crystal Dynamics. Also a concept artist, Xiaoxue Snowy Zhang works at Respawn Entertainment. Check out [www.instagram.com/ryanshiart](http://www.instagram.com/ryanshiart) to see Ryan's work, and for more of Snowy's art visit [www.instagram.com/snowwweee\\_art](http://www.instagram.com/snowwweee_art).*

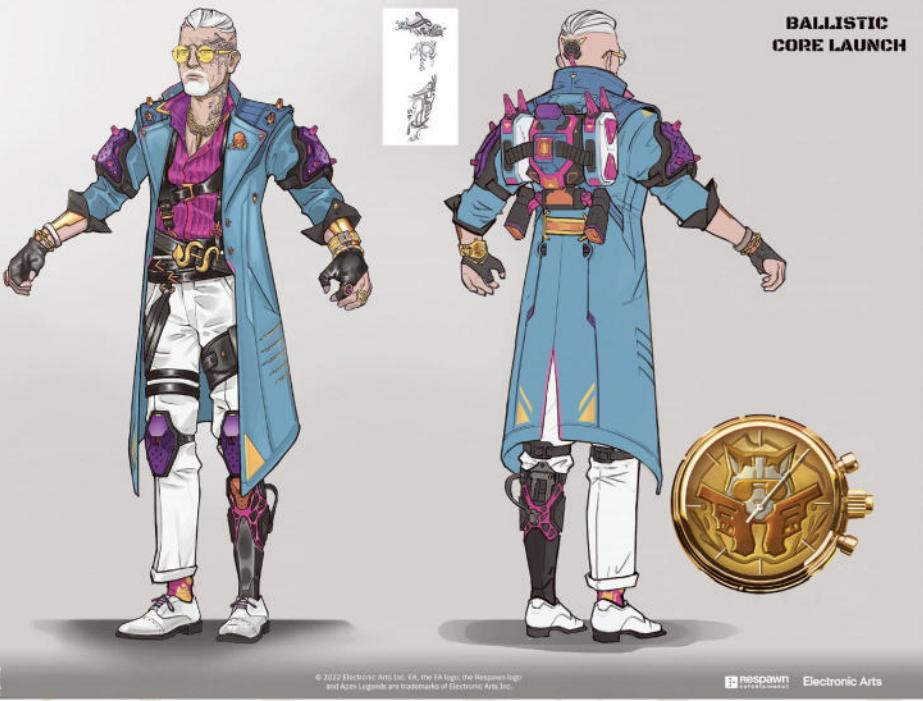
Music is vital to our lives and work, so we finally decided to invest in an entry-level vinyl player. Does it sound better? Perhaps. Does it bring joy to our daily lives? Absolutely.



# Artist news, software & events

Snowy created this concept art, a skin design for Ballistic, for the hit battle royale game Apex Legends. She says it was a true team effort to bring the piece to life.

This is one of Taco's bedrooms, surrounded with some beautiful artworks, our fiddle-leaf fig tree and a rubber plant! He often likes to chew on our plants.



A beautiful corner to store all the remaining toys and plushies we couldn't fit in our living room. Snowy organised them into groups and they look adorable.

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## PRINT AND DIGITAL BACK ISSUES



### Issue 236

March 2024

This month's awesome cover star Daniela Uhlig shows you her pro techniques for creating Procreate portraits. Plus, we discover what life is like in the game's industry, and how Aaron Blaise made an adorable Disney-style animation.



February 2024

Become a master of anatomy as expert artists share their insights. We learn to unleash the power of foreshortening, and speak to the legendary Disney teacher Glenn Vilppu. Plus, discover 15 must-see tips to improve your sketches!



### Issue 234

January 2024

Incredible artists bring you a host of advice to up your game, from making animal-based characters to lighting and composition tips. We also find out how to make your artbook dreams come true, and tour a Disney artist's studio.



### Issue 233

Christmas 2023

It's Colour Dodge time! Discover how YouTube phenomenon Ross Tran created this issue's gorgeous Hatsune Miku cover art. Plus, we talk to Phillip Bouthé Jr. about his concept art career, and learn how to boost artwork with backstory.

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# Letters

## YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS



Contact the editor, Rob Redman, on [mail@imaginefx.com](mailto:mail@imaginefx.com) or write to ImagineFX, Future Publishing, Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA, England



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### Feeding AI datasets

Love the magazine. Just wanted to share that I feel Christina Kraus really hit the nail on the head in issue 226 about how AI will be in the future.

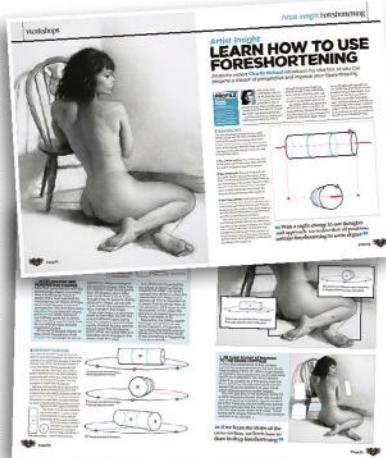
A lot of the arguments I hear for AI at the moment are that it can't replicate human imagination or some similar principle. But the profit lies in making it able to do this, and whenever someone types in "make it more painterly" or, worse, "make it in the style of XXXX", the AI is creating a dataset. As much as we might all believe our creative work to be inspired or ethereal at times, it really is just our in-built intelligent minds that are compiling training of methods and influences. Those are our datasets.

What worries me is that economically it will be cheaper to get a person to be an AI art prompter, who's job it is to corral the AI to something usable. That alone would eliminate scores of teams from the art industry. Heck, even the music industry as well. And it'll work because it will, just like so many other things, be packaged as a convenience.

We've covered AI in the art industry a few times, and the topic is one that will continue to raise passions for a while yet.



**DID YOU MISS THE PREVIOUS PACKED ISSUE?**  
Don't worry – you can get hold of issue 236 at [ifxm.ag/single-ifx](http://ifxm.ag/single-ifx).



Starting in issue 235, our current series by Charlie Pickard teaches you fundamental anatomy skills.

I hope this doesn't come across as a tin-foil hat conspiracy as it does when I bend my friends' ears about it, but people who are seeing the issue with AI are fully aware the issue is worse so in the future. I worry too that ethical datasets are one thing (not using artist names for example), but consider how musicians tune their guitars to certain levels or use the same pedals, tempos or signature sound if you like. All of those things have terminologies that aren't infringement on copyright.

Anyway, that's my soapbox. Thanks for covering the issue in an unbiased way. Keep up the good work.

*Jaye, via email*

**Rob replies** Hi Jaye and thanks for writing in. You make some good points there and while it's still too early for me to know what's going to happen, I think you are on to something. Artists rights shouldn't be superseded by profit though, so hopefully legislation will fall into place that deals with these issues.

### How not what

Hello ImagineFX. I'd like to congratulate you on a good balance in your magazine recently. I've very much appreciated that the tutorials you provide haven't just been about recreating a piece of art, but showing more of the theory of how to paint or draw, like in the anatomy series you're running or the article you had on volumetric painting. This is so useful for us newcomers. Thank you!

*Elise, via email*

**Rob replies** Thanks for writing in and letting us know you found those tutorials useful Elise. I think there's a place for the inspiration-based workshops, but absolutely agree that teaching the techniques behind making amazing art is key too.



New works that have grabbed our attention



**Randy Ruedisueli**  
[@randyruedisueli\\_art](https://randyruedisueli_art)



**Dani Parker**  
[@daniparkerartist](https://daniparkerartist)



**Maria Henriksen**  
[@mariahrenrik](https://mariahrenrik)

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

# THE ART OF LIAM SHARP

**Joel Meadows** chats with the artist about his creative formula, comparing comics to cinema, and doubling as an author



**B**est known for his work on *Wonder Woman*, *Batman: The Brave And The Bold*, and *The Green Lantern* for DC in recent years, British artist, painter and author Liam Sharp has been able to carve himself out a unique niche as a comic illustrator with a distinctly idiosyncratic feel.

Ahead of this year's launch of the *Spawn: The Dark Ages* series that he's writing, drawing and colouring, we caught up with Liam to find out a little more about his art, process and career to date.

**Your work schedule has evolved since your earlier days as a professional. What has shaped this change in work patterns?**

When I was younger I used to be a bit more cavalier with my working days, and I'd have four days, for example, when I'd go bonkers. I'd find that naturally my days would be about 26 hours long, so they'd always get a little bit later every day that I was left alone with my work.

But then what would happen is that you'd have these massive bursts of inspiration and working your socks off for a number of days, then you'd ➤

**OPENING THE TOY BOX**

Liam's work on DC's The Green Lantern saw him playing in the company's cosmic toy box.





## HORN OF PLENTY

Liam's more personal work exercises a different part of his artistic brain.

→ just crash and burn, and be out for the count for a few more days. So you felt like you got loads done, but all that time that you won would be lost in the ensuing crash.

It was weird as I think it was having kids and the whole school time that changed my working habits. Family life just tends to get more important. I tend to rebel against anything that's a

that, provided I did some work every day, I could keep it going. If I didn't burn myself out and I didn't work too late, then I could run for much longer periods of time in a state of creativity or successful creativity. What the days look like has changed again recently as the kids have all flown the nest now, so once again I'm back to a slightly later start each day.

**I tend to rebel against anything that's a little militaristic or pinned down. I think that's a natural state of artists**

little militaristic or pinned down. I think a natural state of artists is to push against things like that.

But I did find that having the discipline of children and getting up and doing school runs really focused me. So what I slowly discovered was

## Artist PROFILE

### Liam Sharp



**LOCATION:** England  
Liam is a British comic writer and illustrator who started at Marvel UK in the 1990s. He has since worked for publishers including Marvel US, DC and Image Comics.

**WEB:** [www.sharpynet.net](http://www.sharpynet.net)

**You like to start your work day as early as possible once you get up?**  
I wonder sometimes if it's something to do with being closer to your unconscious state of dreams. If you come straight out of that into work I find that's much more successful. If I leave it any longer, it's where other things occupy your brain, so if you're thinking about work or admin that will be a distraction.

Also having just moved back from America, it was weeks before I could fully get into it. So that was really disruptive, just getting everything out of storage and sorting out the room, getting the lighting sorted out. We had to put new windows in at the back too.

*"God Killers does that most difficult in fantasy fiction: it rewards its influences – China Mieville, Lovecraft and M. John Harrison – but feels like a personal, unaffected reiteration nonetheless. It should be the kind of book that makes you feel like a genuine geek. Sharp's trademark fantasy with the assurance of an otherworldly project."* SFX

*"Liam Sharp's world-building impresses even, but it's an characters' mounting momentum and the rich, layered texture of their prose that impresses most."* MELISSA MCKEE

*"A significant achievement. Will convoke a delight in everyone."* CLAUDIO CHAMOISEAU

*"Lyric, bawdy and excellent. A rock."* PAUL CORNELL

*"Dark, bawdy and with an assured lightness."* DOUGLAS RUSHKOFF

*"Elegantly frenetic."* STEWART

*"Muscular, melancholy and full of integrity – fiction that moves."* CHENA MIEVILLE

**GOD KILLERS**  
LIAM SHARP

**MACHIARIUS POINT & OTHER TALES**

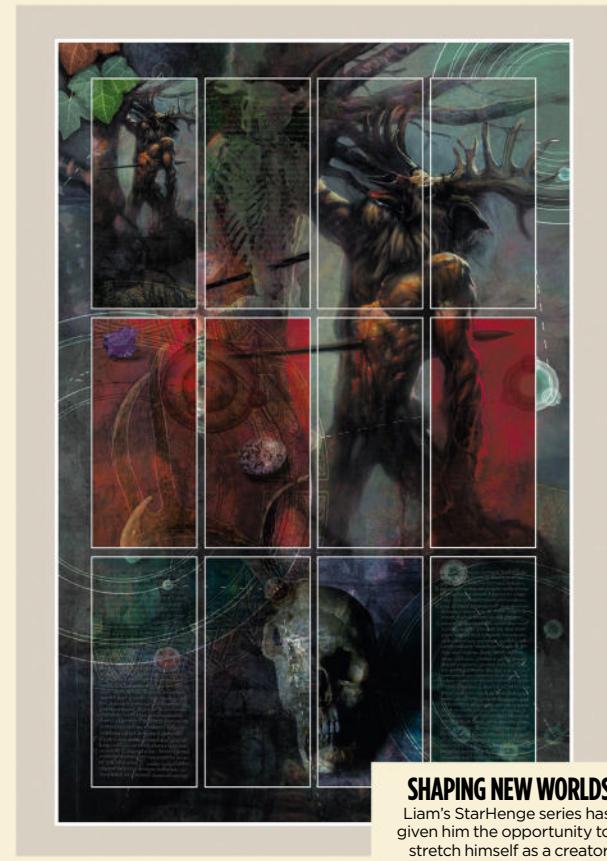
### KILLER CONCEPT

God Killers gave Liam the chance to shape worlds with prose instead of paintings.



### LOCAL HERO

Liam was celebrated by his hometown of Derby, where he has returned from the US.



### SHAPING NEW WORLDS

Liam's StarHenge series has given him the opportunity to stretch himself as a creator.



## VILLAINOUS INTENT

StarHenge was designed to fuse work from magazines like Heavy Metal with Liam's obsession with British fables.

## READY-MADE TEXTURES

Liam Sharp keeps a lifetime of materials on hand to call upon when developing new looks for projects

On StarHenge and X-O Manowar, what I have is a massive library of textures that were often created with layers and layers of scanned painted materials that I've messed around with again and again over the past 50 years. I'm probably still working on a bunch of those old textures, but I've still added some extra textures over the years.

For me, I look at the script and it might say this particular panel is, for the sake of argument, a castle on a bleak moor in a storm, and I'd often think of the backgrounds first; the world or the environment that they're in. Then I'll go through the textures and I'll ask myself, 'Okay then, which one of these colours feels right here?'



### COVERING ALL THE BASES

This striking painted cover from Liam for Valiant Comics' X-O Manowar offers a unique selling point for the book.

© Valiant Comics



### STORY OF STEEL

Liam's portrayal of Superman in Where Is Thy Sting offers a different take on the Man of Steel.

Originally my studio was out there in the garden, mainly because of kids and family, so I've reclaimed this room now. I enjoy being back in the house. My day starts with a cup of tea in bed doing emails, then it's a cup of coffee and I jump straight into work.

### Is the drawing board in your studio the one you've used for many years?

This is the drawing board I've used for a long time, and we got it shortly after we moved to Derby. We went online to find a drawing board and it's always been great. It's been in the shed the whole time we were away. The one I've had in America is being shipped back and will go in the shed, in the other studio, so I'll have a workspace there too. It'll be like an overflow space. ➤

### TOOL OF THE TRADE

The artist's drawing board is a tool that continues to play a major role in his work.



“I find that the less I have messing with my head, the quicker I can work”

© DC



## TRUTH AND LIES

Liam worked on pages for both The Lies and The Truth series of Wonder Woman comics.

» A lot of artists like to work to music. Do you pick specific things to listen to so you can set the tone for the particular work you're creating? I found that, and this isn't true of absolutely everybody, but an awful lot of my friends in the business are particularly enamoured with things like progressive rock. This is mainly because they tend to be long pieces, so they put you in a space and keep you there. It'll be that or classical or jazz. Also, post-rock stuff is interesting because it tends to be experimental. There's also electronica and neo-prog that's interesting. Bands like Beardfish have been doing massive experimental stuff. There'll also be a bit of classic rock and bands like Gentle Giant, as I'm just fascinated with things like madrigals. When I'm doing layouts or writing I won't have music on.

Is that because listening to music could influence what you write?

I think the thing there is even that music can influence the tone, so if you

were going to be writing with music you'd then need to be very careful about what you're putting on, so I tend not to. I find the less I have messing with my head, the quicker I can work.

How different is your drawing process when it comes to completing work rather than starting it?

The thing with finishing pages is that it's a craft. It's not the thinking process or the art process, so you can put on music then and go for the ambience of the room. You can almost switch your brain off a little bit and just work on stuff. There are some days when it's just nice to do that.

Obviously there are days when it's bloody hard and nothing is coming easily, and you just have to crack through it. I've realised belatedly that that's actually the job. In fact, that's the job more than anything else.

You're a writer as well as an artist. Are you good at compartmentalising your working day?

You have to do so much every month to hit your deadlines and get the work done, and if you want to do all the ➤



## THRILLING FINALE

Ares looks upon a conquered battlefield in the conclusion to Wonder Woman: The Truth, written by Greg Rucka.

© DC



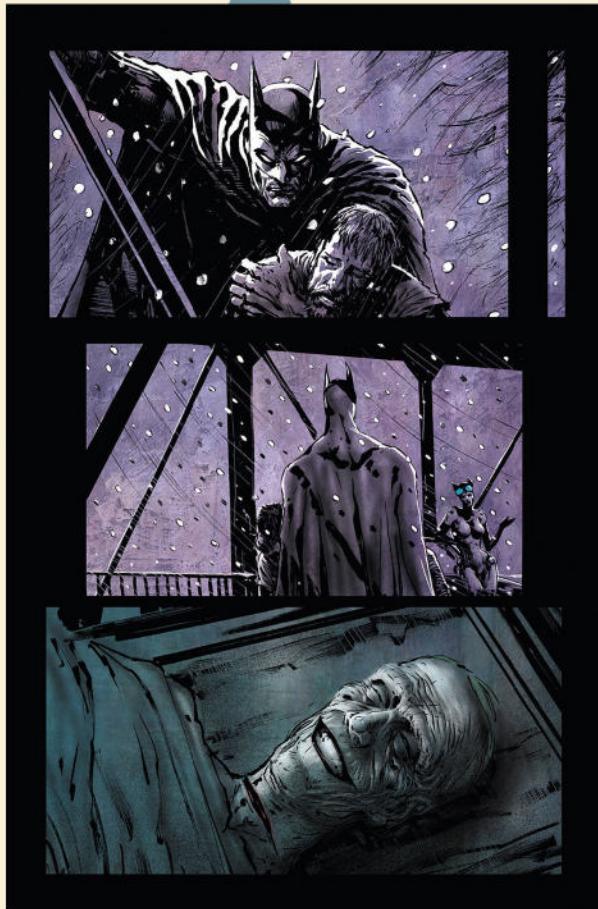
## REPTILE HUNT

Batman: Reptilian sees the Dark Knight searching for a monster terrorising the underworld of Gotham.



© DC





► things you dream of doing then that's just how you have to work. Often I've got one major project, then another somewhat smaller project at the side, and writing projects off to the side of that as well, so I'll try to get each job done and silo that.

If I'm doing a six-issue series before I start working on a side project that's, say, 14 pages long and for which I'm doing four pages a month, I'll try to get a whole issue done and finished so that's not hanging over me and I have

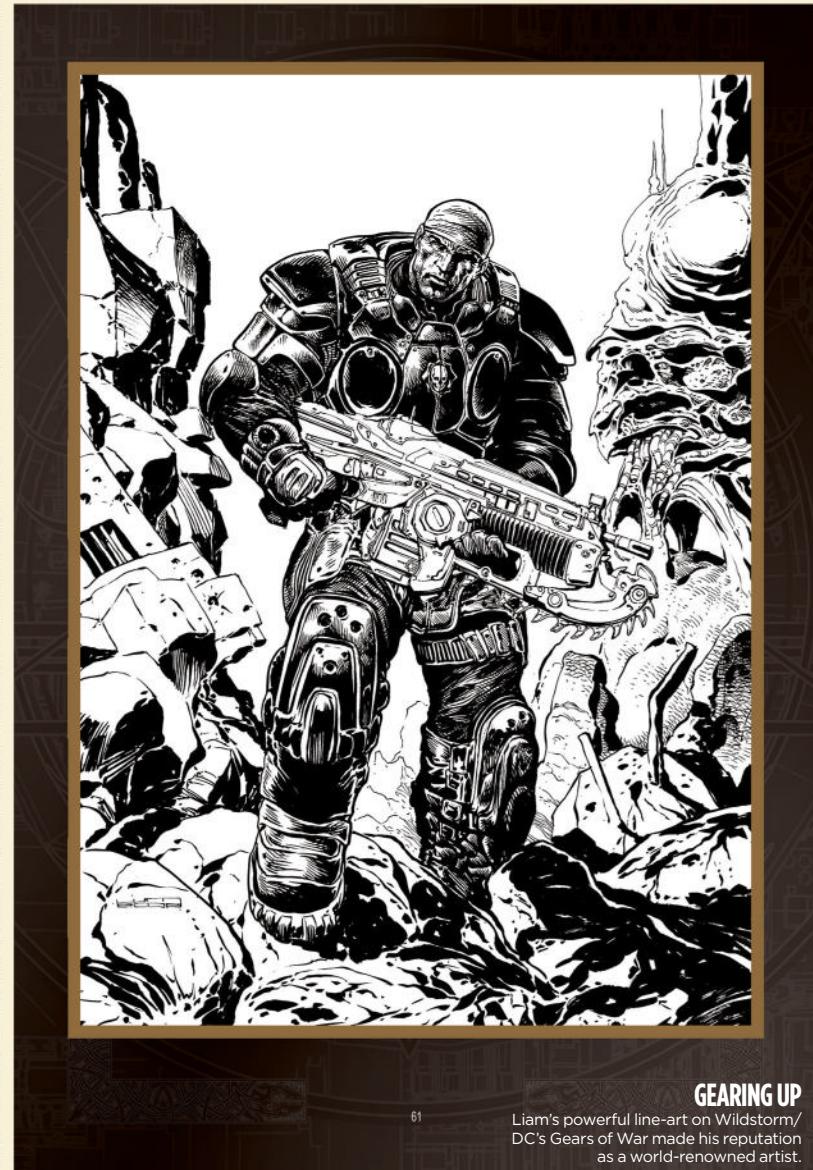


### BLACK AND GOLD

Stunning monochrome artwork created for Wonder Woman: Black & Gold #6.

### SCALES OF JUSTICE

Liam's painted work for Batman: Reptilian, written by Garth Ennis, gave a unique portrayal of the character.



### GEARING UP

Liam's powerful line-art on Wildstorm/DC's Gears of War made his reputation as a world-renowned artist.

a clearer head. If I'm going back to the writing or novel stuff, then for me it's frustrating as I don't have any income from that particularly, so I do that for the love of it. It's a small part of my creativity, but it's one I love the most.

**What happens if you're working on an art piece and aren't happy with it?** When you're not getting things right, sometimes it's like pulling teeth and you agonise over it; nothing's coming but you've just got to muscle through it. It's a nightmare. Quite often the best thing is when you come back and look at those pages after giving them a bit of space, and you can see a lot fewer problems with them.

There was a piece I did when I was doing Gears of War back in the day for Wildstorm, and it was the piece that got me the job. It was of Marcus Fenix alone with one of those preposterous lancer guns, and I remember it was agony drawing that page. I thought, 'What the hell am I doing with this? It's a nightmare'. But when I looked at it afterwards with a bit of time and distance, I saw that it was really good.

**People compare creating comics with cinema, but for you this isn't exactly an accurate comparison is it?** For some people comics are a performance, and that's something we don't hear about very often. I've

► Often I've got one major project, then another smaller project at the side, and writing projects off to the side of that ►

## A MASTER OF MANY TALENTS

Why inking his own work allows Liam Sharp to develop art how he wants

I produce loose layouts with my art and then finish, because I've found by doing that you can get a page finished and inked in about the same amount of time it used to take me to do very tight pencils for another inker. Essentially doing the tight pencils to me is pretty much like inking. It's like you're doing it again, so I think that's a big part of it. I don't think I could do what I get done if I wasn't working like that. But the other thing is that I don't do thumbnails, so I just go straight to page for layout.

People have talked about this and I'm not the first to say it, but they talk about doing thumbnails and how there's an energy in a thumbnail that they then can't replicate with the pencils or the layouts, and it's really true. So when I do the layouts, it's basically a thumbnail and you can be really loose.

© DC



### LOOKING SHARP

A strong sense for colour and composition has garnered Liam a huge reputation.

### GREEN LANTERN LINE-ART PANEL

Liam's black and white line-art has an epic composition that can blow the reader away.

### SENSE OF DREDD

The artist has also turned his hand to creating striking covers for 2000 AD featuring iconic characters like Judge Dredd and Judge Anderson.

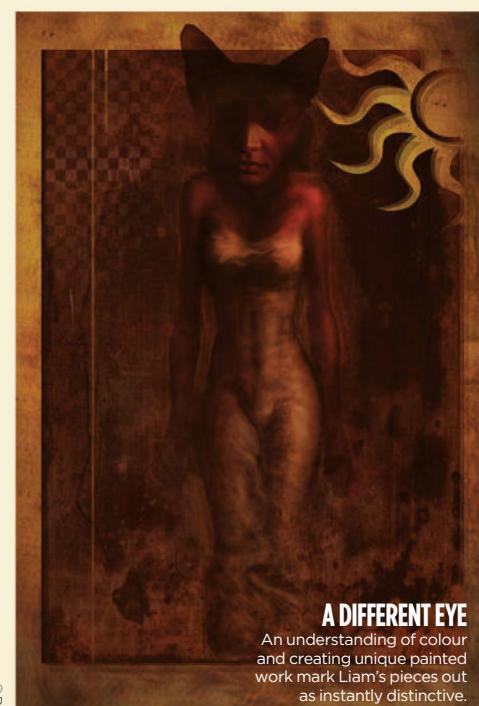
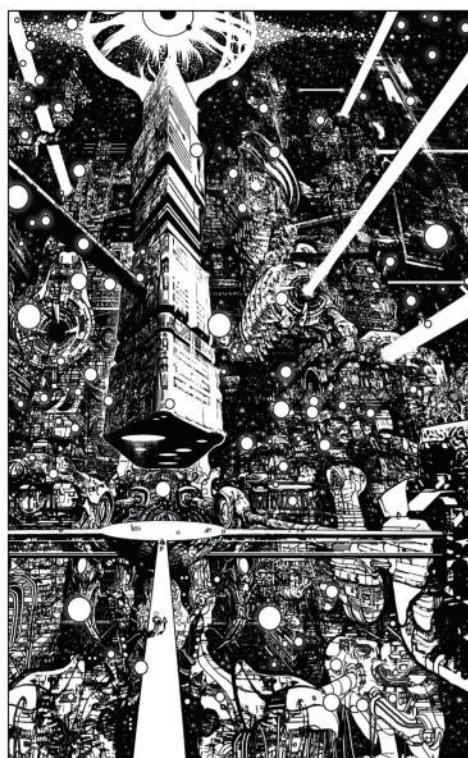


© Rebelliun

realised this more and more as the years go on and at some point this was quite controversial, but it's not so any more: the notion of who's the director.

The reality is that no one is because it's not cinema. It does have common elements, but I wouldn't say that the writer is ever the director. The reason is, if you ever read a screenplay for a movie, they'll have all the shots in there and telling the director exactly what they want. But no one's calling them the director.

Comic scripts are almost the same. They call the shots but don't execute the shots. So the act of making the art is literally one end to the other. You're the cinematographer, choreographer, lighting and camera man, production designer, and the editor.



### A DIFFERENT EYE

An understanding of colour and creating unique painted work mark Liam's pieces out as instantly distinctive.

# Sketchbook

# Velibor Stanojevic

From cosiness to comics, the multi-talented artist opens up his many sketchbooks to show us a huge variety of subjects

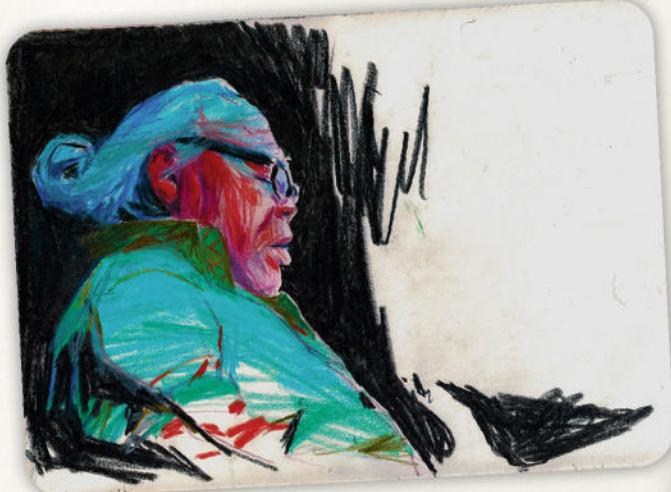


## DEEPER

**DEEPER**  
"This is a sketch for one of the beings for the imaginary horror comic Deeper. I have a bunch of sketches for that project; some are quite loose, but I gave this one a little more attention."

## ALL THAT JAZZ

"Jazz is my favourite type of music, so my sketchbooks are full of drawings of various jazz artists."



“Jazz is my favourite type of music, so my sketchbooks are full of various jazz artists”



## Artist PROFILE

### Velibor Stanojevic

LOCATION: Norway



Velibor Stanojevic, also known as Well-Bee, is a freelance artist living and working in Notodden, Norway. His work includes comic art for publishers like Marvel and Image Comics, cover design for books and comics, concept art for games, and vis dev for animation. <https://wellbee.artstation.com>

## NEW YORKER

"A drawing of an imaginary cover for The New Yorker. I did this in my sketchbook, trying to describe the Norwegian concept of Koselig. It's a word that's hard to translate; the English equivalent is cosy, but the meaning is so much more. Use Google if you want to learn about it!"



## DAREDEVIL

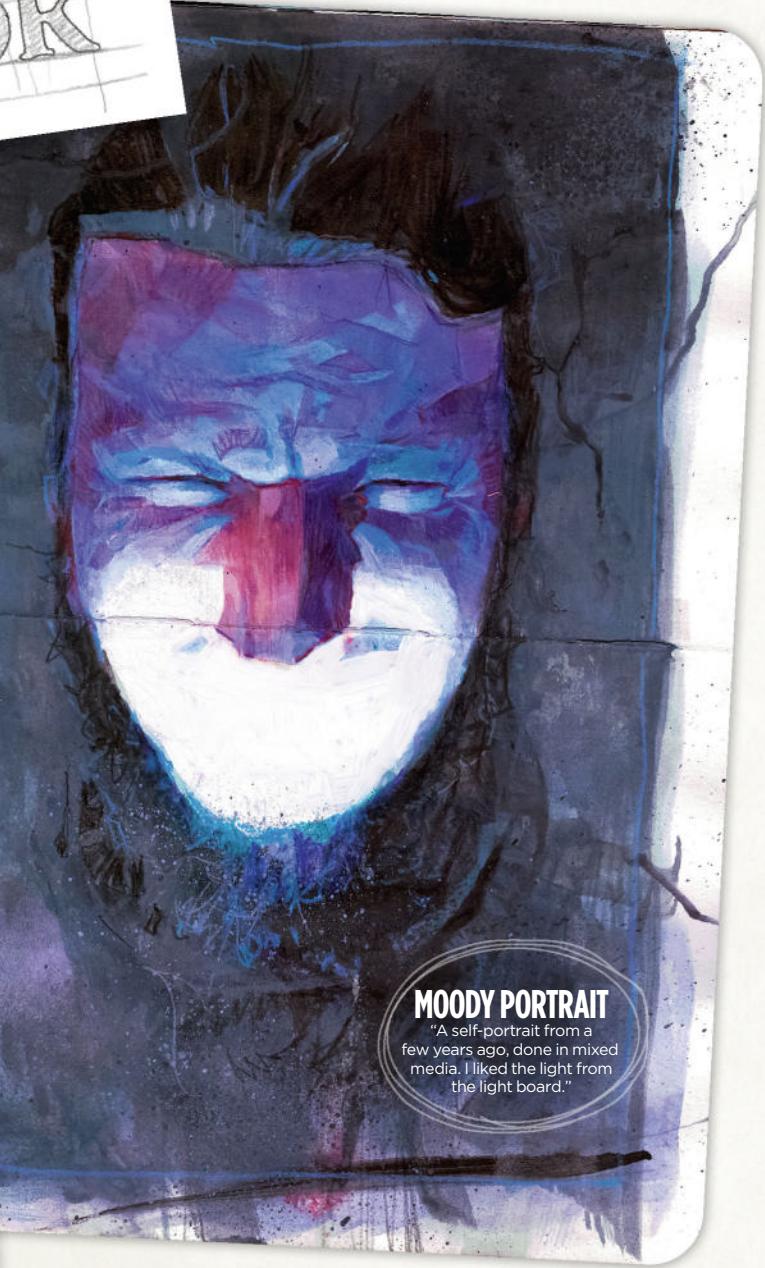
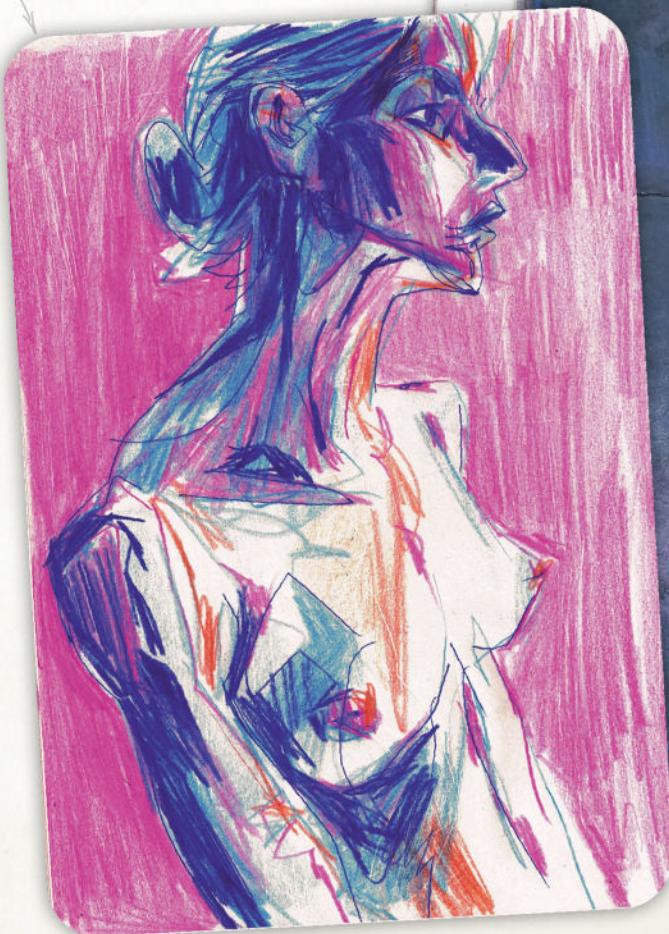
"An extremely dear sketchbook page from a couple of years ago. It's a collaboration with my son, who was very young at the time and trying to draw Daredevil. He got angry and crumpled up the paper. I picked it up again and glued it in my sketchbook, and then drew Daredevil. So we drew him together in a way."

"VAKAN I TATA"

# Sketchbook

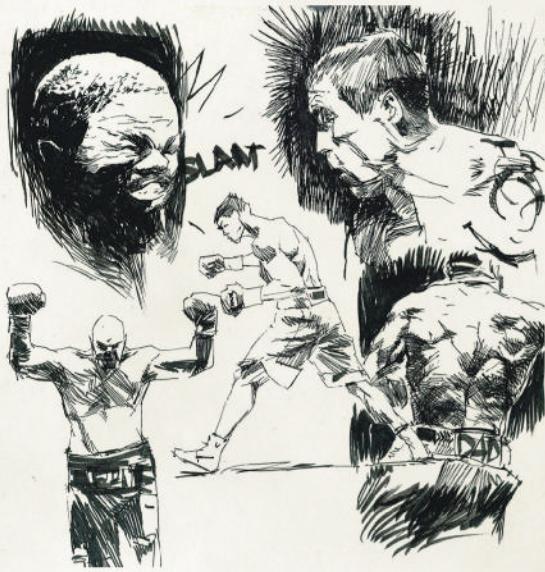
## NUDE

"I currently have three sketchbooks in which I do different things. This is one of the more recent drawings."



## MOODY PORTRAIT

"A self-portrait from a few years ago, done in mixed media. I liked the light from the light board."



## BOXERS

"An alla prima drawing done with calligraphy markers. Boxers are always a good exercise for movement and anatomy."

## Horror Comic: DEEPER

"Another page from the Deeper series."



**DEEPER**

# Sketchbook Velibor Stanojevic

## MAD MAX

"Mad Max: Fury Road is a magnificent cinematic and visual achievement of the last decade."



## THE LAST HOUR OF FRIDAY

"This is also recent. It's probably a direction I want to explore more in the future. This was drawn with coloured pencils."

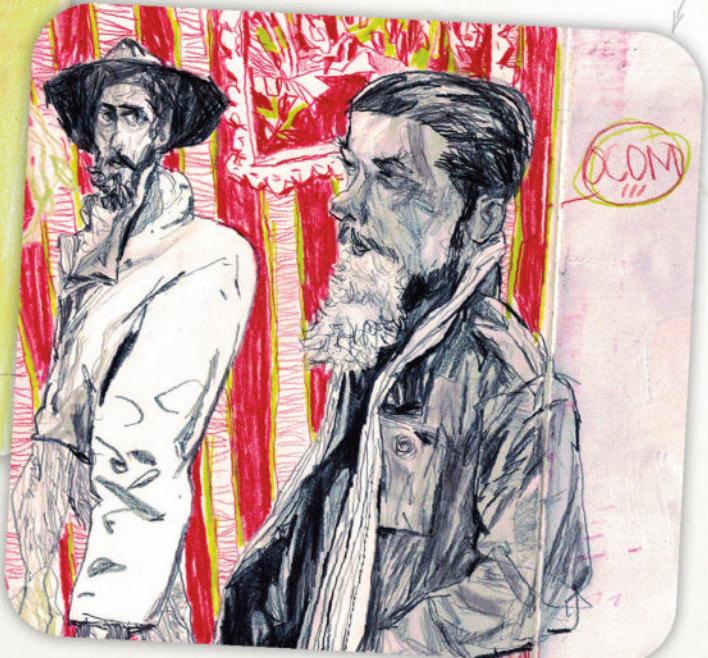


## SOLDIER

"A page from the same sketchbook as Mad Max. That book is full of studies of soldiers for some reason. I don't recall if I did it because of a project, or whatever else inspired me at the time."

## OCOM

"Random drawing of some art dudes from an exhibition in my imagination. 'OCOM' sounds like 'awesome' when spelled out in my native language."



“I don't recall if I did this because of a project, or what else inspired me at the time”

# Sketchbook



## NORWEGIAN LANDSCAPE

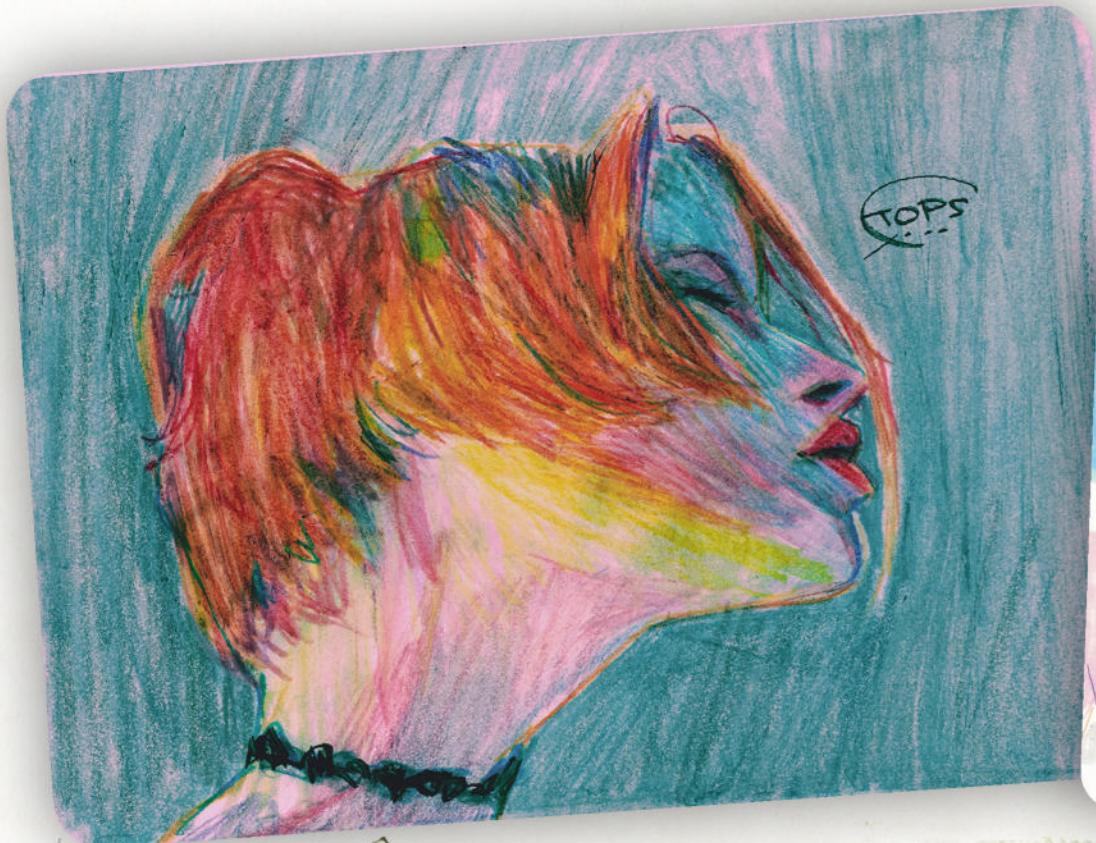
"Norway is one of the most beautiful and inspiring countries on Earth. You can see incredible scenery everywhere!"

## JAZZ IT UP

"Different sketchbooks, same theme. Just a little more jazz."

“Norway is one of the most beautiful countries on Earth. Incredible scenery!”

# Sketchbook Velibor Stanojevic



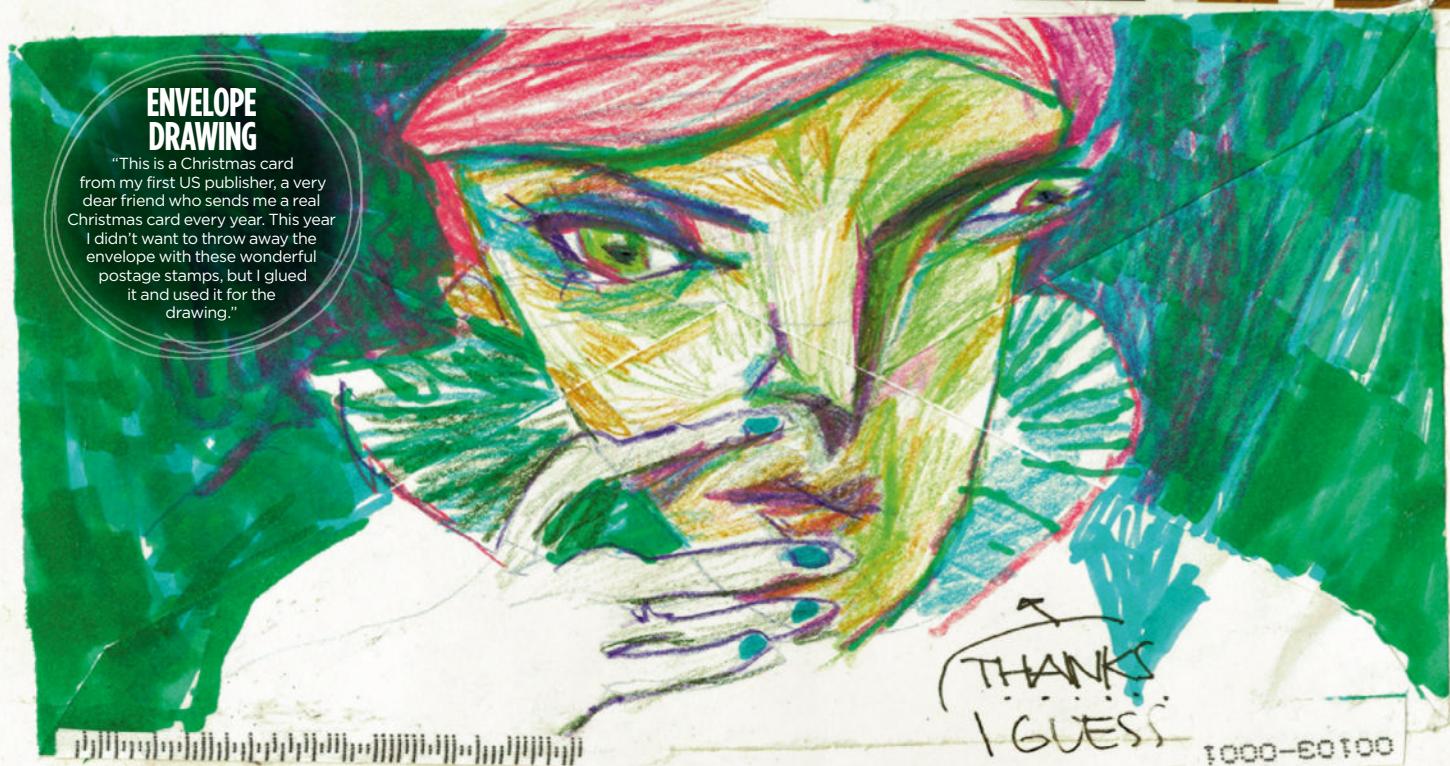
## ON THE FARM

"Animals are hard to draw. Actually they're not, I just don't draw them very often. These are sketches that were made in gouache."



FOR ME? //

SAN DIEGO  
12 DEC 2023



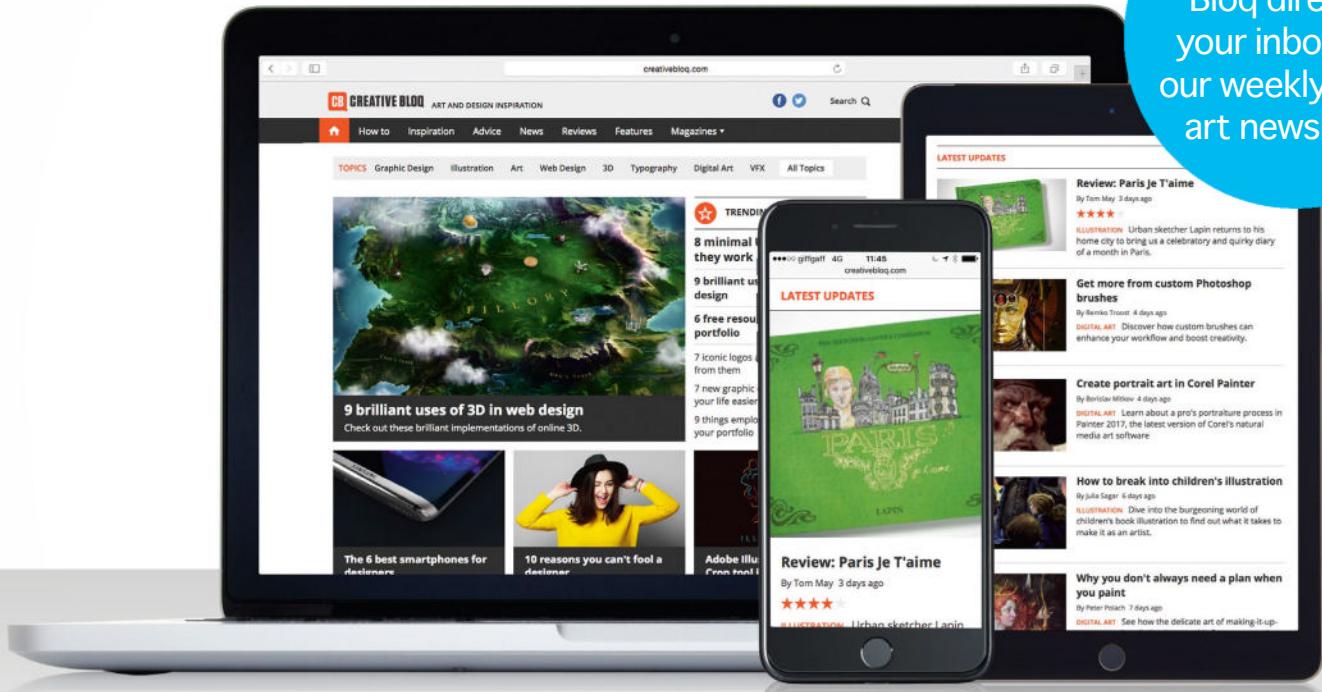
## ENVELOPE DRAWING

"This is a Christmas card from my first US publisher, a very dear friend who sends me a real Christmas card every year. This year I didn't want to throw away the envelope with these wonderful postage stamps, but I glued it and used it for the drawing."

**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](mailto:sketchbook@imaginefx.com)

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Advice from the world's best artists



## This issue:

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Artist and illustrator Tony DiTerlizzi updates his cover for *The Search for WondLa*.

### 60 Prepare your colour palette

Why Fernanda Suarez won't progress to painting without having a plan in place.

### 62 Shape powerful fantasy figures

Get more from your characters with Mariia Bulgakova's tips, including colour and texture.

### 66 Develop a mood and atmosphere

Set the tone for your story with visual elements before switching it up for a brand new version.

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Leave the viewer in no doubt about the meaning of your art with Kate Fedorchuk's advice.

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Charlie Pickard explains the use of ambient occlusion in the third part of his anatomy series.

### 80 Keep it simple and impactful

Flowing shapes and mystical colours for Maximilian Degen as he revisits an old image.

# Photoshop & traditional media DESIGN ENGAGING BOOK COVER ART

**Tony DiTerlizzi** refreshes his cover for *The Search for WondLa* to celebrate an anniversary and its upcoming TV adaptation

## Artist PROFILE

**Tony DiTerlizzi**  
LOCATION: US

Multi-talented Tony is a bestselling author and illustrator. He was also the executive producer for TV versions of *The Spiderwick Chronicles* and *WondLa*. <https://diterlizzi.com>



Creating a dust jacket that stands out amid a store packed full of bestselling books is a tremendous challenge, especially if it's an older title. To compete with flashy new releases publishers will periodically redesign the jacket's artwork.

This might be done to highlight an anniversary or build anticipation for a TV or film adaptation. Fortunately, the *WondLa* trilogy is celebrating

both, with a TV series debuting on Apple TV+ later this year. Since I'm not just the author but the illustrator as well, I felt that this was an exciting opportunity to revisit old friends and introduce them to a new generation of young readers.

Along with the design team, I had to keep in mind the essence of the story and who the intended audience is. The first book from the trilogy, *The Search for WondLa*, is a middle-grade science-fiction story that has

added fantasy elements. Its intended audience is 10 years old and up.

I looked at current jackets for that age range to figure out how to create a package that feels familiar while presenting something new and fresh. For me, that was designing a cover inspired by art nouveau motifs and classic *Star Wars* movie posters, rendered in a style akin to modern-day graphic novels. It's also a refresh based on the first edition hardcover jacket art from 2010.

## GET YOUR RESOURCES

See page 5 now!

### RESOURCES

#### WORKSHOP BRUSHES

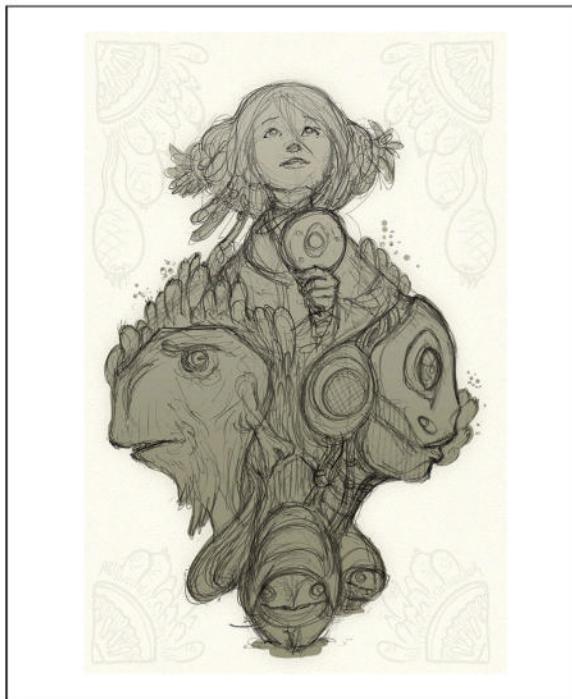
PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES: TRUE GRIT TEXTURE SUPPLY STIPPLER

Perfect for recreating the screentone film patterns comic artists once used.

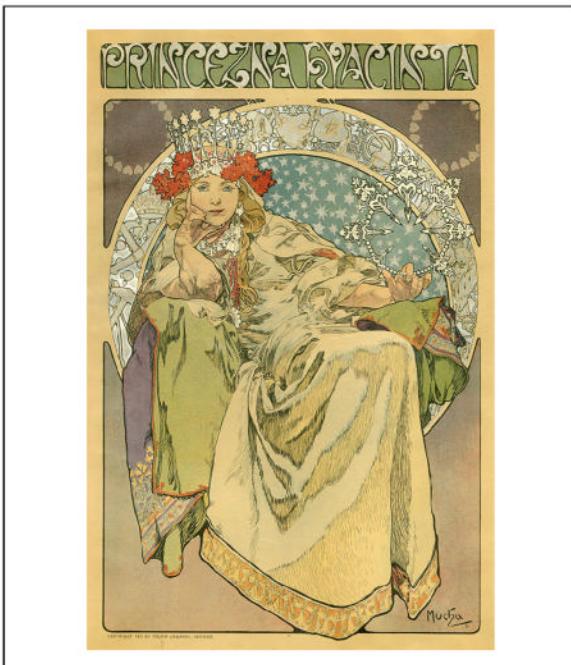
TRUE GRIT TEXTURE SUPPLY RUSTY NIB

Ink traditionally, but still tweak digitally. These brushes feel like their real-world counterparts.



### 1 Drawing from imagination

To appeal to the widest audience possible, I decided on a montage design, inspired by old movie posters from my youth. I wanted the protagonist, Eva Nine, featured prominently at the top, and to also include some of the aliens, creatures and robots that are primary characters in the story. I added some of the strange vegetation as well to give a sense of the otherworldly setting.



### 2 Inspiration from the masters

I wanted to anchor the characters in a central, circular design, like the composition used in illustrations from master artists such as J.C. Leyendecker, Alphonse Mucha and Norman Rockwell. A central graphic can easily be scaled to give adequate space for the titling and author's name. At this point, I'm thinking about how to combine the separate elements – the art, titling, author, tagline and background – into one cohesive package. ➤



# Workshops

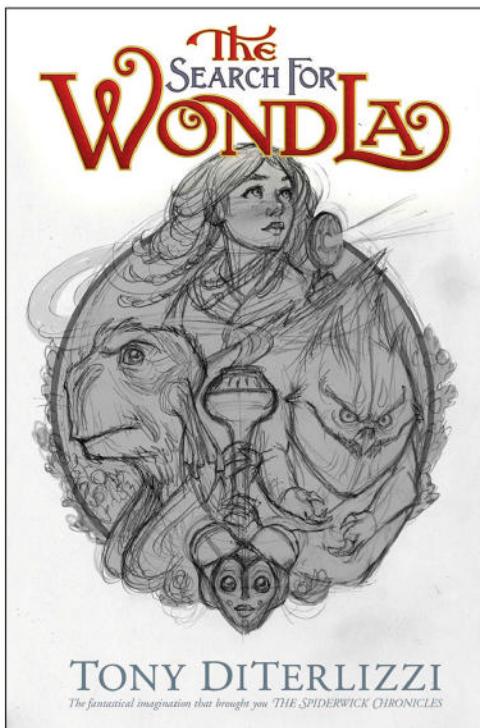
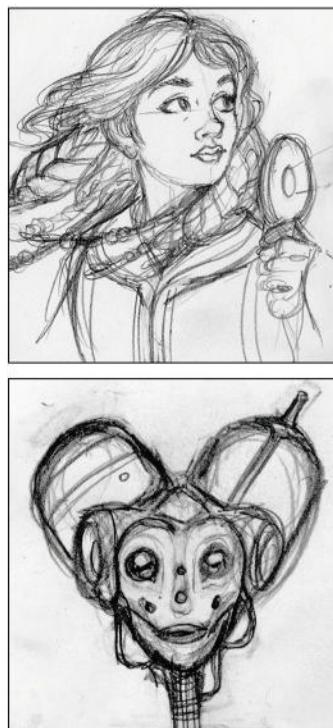


## 3 Time for a refresh

When I rendered the jacket art for the original release of *The Search for WondLa* back in 2010, I was at a disadvantage because it was completed before the book was illustrated; done so the publisher could pre-sell the book. At that point, I wasn't adept at drawing the characters. However, after illustrating three novels I was much more confident updating the design.

## 4 Sketching old friends

I used the original composition as my starting point. If you compare the two, you can see that here the characters are pushing out from the circular border and breaking it more dynamically than the original. I also added more characters and explored the symmetry of the silhouette. This is all about fitting puzzle pieces in an exciting composition that flows around the central circle.

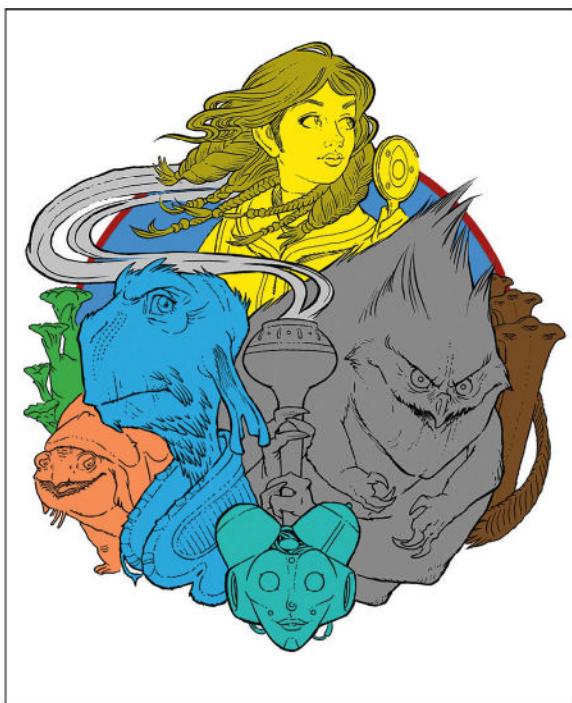


## 5 Remember the purpose

From the start, I looked at the relationship between the image and the titling. This must read as one unified package, not just an enticing piece of art. What does the buyer see first? Where do their eyes travel next? How do we get them to pick up the book to learn more? Once it's off the shelf, you're halfway to a book sale.

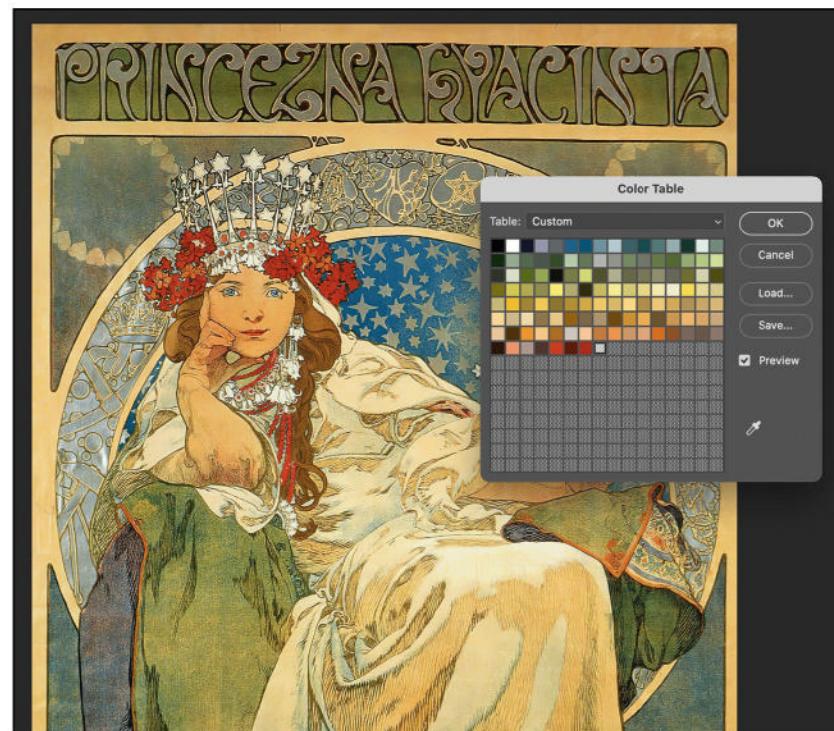
## 6 Traditional inks

Although digital brushes have come a long way in the 30 years that I've been a professional illustrator, I like to ink traditionally. I've chosen different types of pens for different effects. For instance, I used old-fashioned crow quill pens when illustrating *The Spiderwick Chronicles* to emulate art from the 19th century. For the *WondLa* books, I used Staedtler Pigment Liners on a sheet of vellum laid directly over the sketch.



## 7 Define the elements

The ink drawing was scanned in, and I began work in Photoshop. Like a comic book artist, I flattened the colours so I'd have silhouettes of the various characters and elements. This aids the process of colouring as I can now easily select individual elements and work on them separately or in combination.



## 8 Create a colour palette

There are many ways to come by a harmonious palette for your digital colourisation. My preferred method is to create it from my inspiration, in this case Alphonse Mucha's 1911 poster for the ballet Princess Hyacinth. I indexed the colour in Photoshop and saved the colour table as a palette that I imported directly into my swatches. I customised it further from there, but this is where I started. ➤



## 9 Back to the drawing board

The importance of managing your time is the opportunity to step away from your work and return with fresh eyes to see if the piece is satisfactory. Once this piece was coloured, I took the weekend off and returned only to realise that I didn't care for the drawing of Eva. Not only that, but I felt the Mucha-inspired palette was too muted and might not appeal to a young reader. ➤

# Workshops



## 10 Deeper exploration of the image

I abandoned my initial colour scheme and colourised an alternate image using a limited palette. I knew we wouldn't print this version, but I needed to shake up my process by trying something risky and new. In doing so, a couple of aspects stood out: I loved the colour of the blue work, and I preferred the image without all the dingy textures I'd used in the previous iteration.



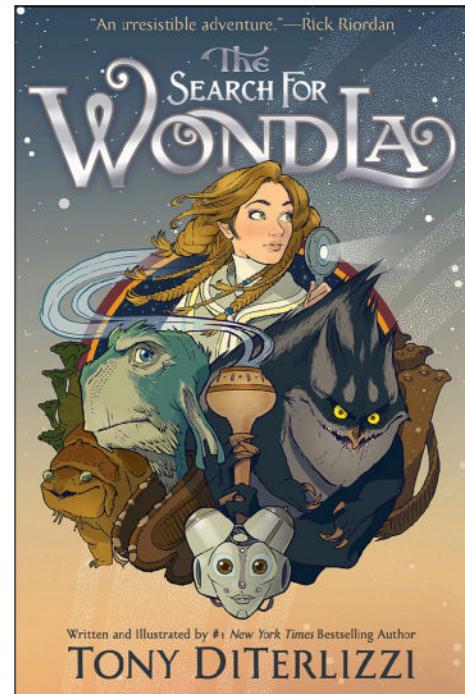
## 11 Updated version

This is close to the final artwork printed on the cover of the book. It integrates aspects from my original inspiration as well as ideas gathered during my exploratory process. For me, these little discoveries – like the blue line work and redrawn Eva – are some of the most exciting experiences of creating. There's some texture here, but it's used sparingly and is a custom brush from True Grit Texture Supply.



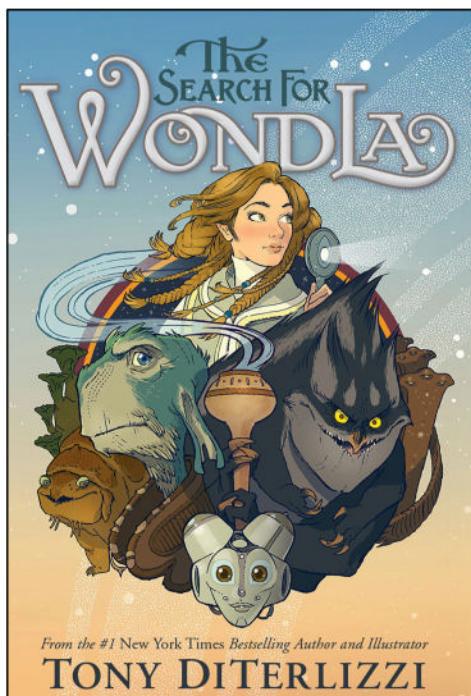
## 12 Background selection

But I'm not finished. Remember, the central illustration is but one component for the entire jacket. Inspired by the dusky sunset imagery of Star Wars, I decided on a simple gradient for the background complete with a star field and planetary rings. The central image is a separate layer so art director Lizzy Bromley could scale and nudge the art to fit the titling and text in her design.

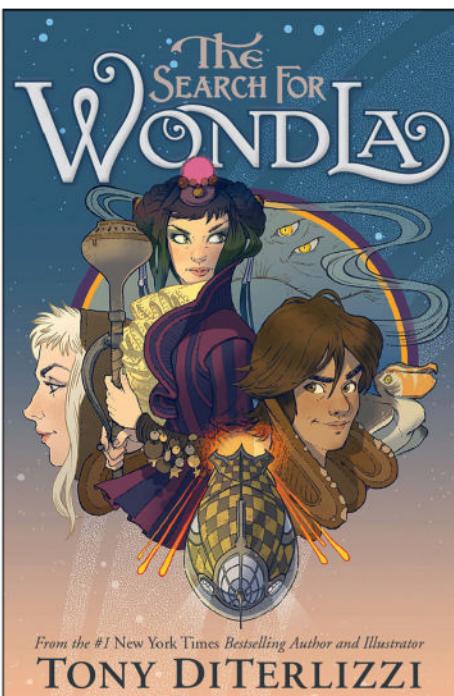


## 13 The complete package

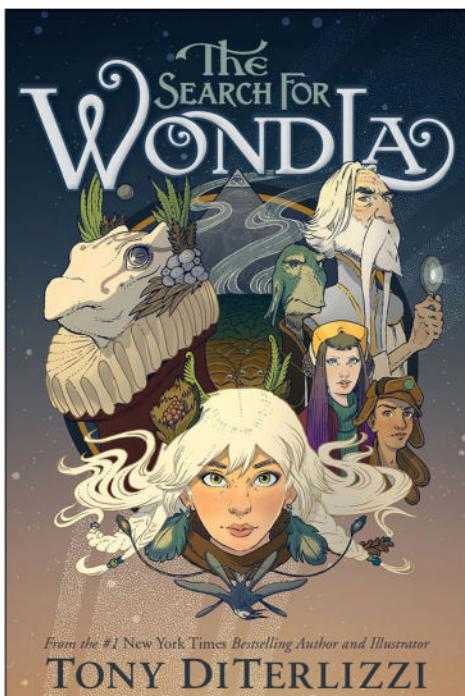
Here we see the results of Lizzy's work. If you read the cover from top to bottom, you'll see how hard it's working to sell you this book. From the testimonial blurb at the top, the beautiful foil-printed typography by Tom Kennedy of Letterhead Fonts, to my tagline and name, the jacket is enticing young readers to pick up this book from the shelf.



From the #1 New York Times Bestselling Author and Illustrator  
**TONY DITERLIZZI**



From the #1 New York Times Bestselling Author and Illustrator  
**TONY DITERLIZZI**



From the #1 New York Times Bestselling Author and Illustrator  
**TONY DITERLIZZI**

## 14 Creating additional cover variations

This cover was one of three that work together as a whole, but we varied the design to keep each unique. For instance, I deepened the background on each subsequent jacket to reflect the increasing dark tone of the story. The chance to revisit these titles after a decade was a rare and exciting experience, and allowed me the opportunity to continue to produce the highest quality books for readers.

# Workshops

"This piece was inspired by the lyric 'I need my golden crown of sorrow, my bloody sword to swing' from the song King by Florence + the Machine. I imagined this character in a dark, empty space and continued from there. I then gathered references to help draw a sketch, and took some photos of the pose I wanted. After that I chose my colours and made a value scheme to ensure I could achieve the eerie, moody look I had in mind, then it was a case of finalising the rendering. I always recommend choosing your colour and value schemes before you start painting. I also like to prep a colour palette to work from so I can make sure the image stays cohesive." 



## PREPARE A COLOUR PALETTE

**Fernanda Suarez** on why choosing colour and values before painting is a must for her artistic process

# Tech Focus Colour and value



## Artist PROFILE

**Fernanda  
Suarez**

LOCATION: Chile

Fernanda is a digital artist from Santiago and has a huge passion for painting characters. She has been drawing and painting her whole life, and studied fine arts. <https://bitly/3HotN02>

# Photoshop SHAPE POWERFUL FANTASY FIGURES

**Mariia Bulgakova** uses colour, texture and a symbolic silhouette to provide her otherworldly character artwork a sense of danger

## Artist PROFILE

**Mariia Bulgakova**  
LOCATION: Bulgaria

Mariia is a game dev artist and content creator with more than 100,000 social media fans. She enjoys creating picturesque fantasy art.  
<https://bit.ly/47G3kq2>



I thought up an idea for a new illustration of a female fantasy character who wields significant magical power in her hands. I wanted to express her strength and magic with textured brushstrokes, keeping clear of any sharp lines and infusing each stroke with a sense of weightlessness.

Initially, I thought of the character as levitating and wanted her to

directly face the viewer, but as the piece evolved the idea transformed and I adjusted the character's pose, particularly the position of her hands. I decided she'd be holding a magical orb, with the hands placed to form a triangle and flowing fabric surrounding her legs. By using this approach I was able to break up the monotony of the simple straight-on perspective, and made her overall silhouette resemble the shape of a

dagger blade, as her hands and feet both come together to form separate hidden triangles.

Towards the end of the illustration, I also decided to add clouds beneath her feet, as if she were floating in the sky and commanding the space around her. Another fun little touch for this piece came with a bit of help from my followers, as they chose her name, Deyanira, which I think fits her character perfectly.

## How I create...

### A SUPERNATURAL CHARACTER

 **GET YOUR  
RESOURCES**  
See page 5 now!



#### 1 Monochrome start

I make a black and white sketch to understand what I want to create and how it should roughly look. I focus more on the face and general pose rather than thinking about colour. Initially working in just black and white simplifies the task as there's no colour to distract you from the main idea. Even at this early stage I work with textured brushes to set the overall mood.



#### 2 Introduce colour

Next I begin working with colour. I think about where the light will be directed, where the shadows will be, highlights on the character – in this case the hair and sphere in her hands – and the clothing. This can be done with adjustment layers such as Color, Overlay and Multiply. In general here, I'm working with shapes and designs in colour, and continuing to add texture.



#### 3 Background and detail

Now I'll delve deeper into rendering, adding in extra details, and developing the background. I think about how to fill the emptiness in the background without overcomplicating the overall image. In my opinion, the moon and clouds handle this task well. At this stage I'll also place more texture where it's necessary, for example on the metallic elements.

In depth Fantasy figures



## FANTASY FORMULA

### Complementary colours

Using colour contrasts as well as tonal contrasts is important. That's why I like to use complementary colours in my work and adhere to the warm-cold theory. An example of this is having blue eyes against warm skin, then warm skin against a cool background. Plus I add gold elements and purple shades on the leather areas of the costume.



# In depth Fantasy figures

## Gold texture

To add this sort of texture to the metal, I used Sampled Brush 17 30. I often use this brush, both for sketching and adding detail to an image. The Brightness/Contrast tool can be used in tandem with it too, as well as a mask to help you achieve your desired level of texture. I also added metallic highlights this way.

## Real-life hands

I used photobashing for this, specifically by photographing my hands in the exact same position and then using them in my work. The photo alone wasn't enough as it was taken in poor lighting conditions, but nevertheless helped me to figure out the basic shape and anatomy. As a result, I did a lot of overpainting and made a number of colour corrections.

## RESOURCES

### WORKSHOP BRUSHES

#### PHOTOSHOP

##### CUSTOM BRUSHES: SAMPLED BRUSH 17 30

I use this brush to sketch and render. I find that it's especially well-suited for texturing metals.

##### SMEARY CALLI WET

This brush is excellent to emphasise details and also a must-have when working on hair.

##### DEFAULT BRUSH: HARD ROUND PRESSURE

A basic brush I like to pair with a textured one. Good for blending at 50 per cent transparency.

## Clouds and moon

I spent a long time thinking about a background to support the sense of the character soaring and to emphasise her strength. Initially it was a boring monochromatic sky, but I then thought it would be cool if the clouds were surrounding her feet. To add extra emphasis on the face, I decided to frame her head with the moon.



## Character lighting

The lighting comes from above the character's head, which brightly illuminates the hair, while I also highlighted the tip of the nose as a focal detail on the face. The light then falls on the character's chest and arms. I get this lighting effect using the Color Dodge adjustment layer with a dark grey, and also apply a red Overlay at the edges of the light spots. In the shadows, I add both cool and warm shades, and generously bring in red and orange reflections on the skin.



## Sense of form and silhouette

The overall silhouette portrays sharpness. The tips of her feet converge into a triangle, while the hands are folded into a second triangle, and the flowing hair and dress decor complete a third triangle. Each of these elements is meant to convey the character's dangerous nature. If you look closely, you might also notice that the character's entire silhouette roughly matches the appearance of a dagger.

# Clip Studio Paint

# DEVELOP A MOOD AND ATMOSPHERE

Learn the tricks **Jolene Yeo** uses to power the visual storytelling in her paintings, then flip the script with a brand new iteration



Mood and atmosphere are essential in the realm of art. They help immerse viewers into the image and can have a dramatic impact on how the artwork is interpreted.

There are a couple of things that contribute to setting the mood in art, with colour and lighting being key elements. Colours invoke different feelings and emotions, and delving into colour psychology can help you

decide on what colours can be used to bring your art to life.

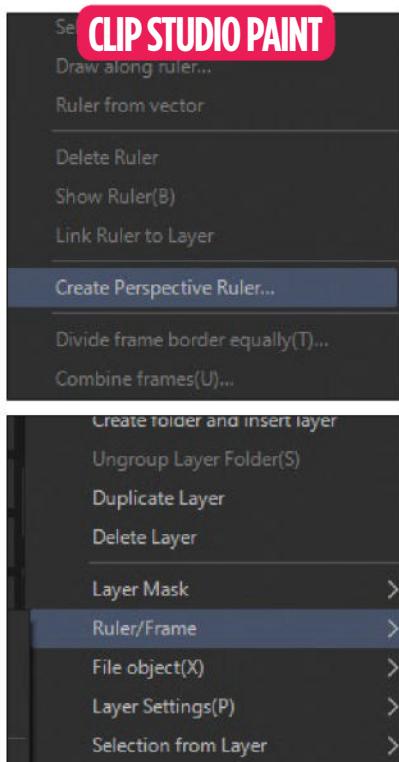
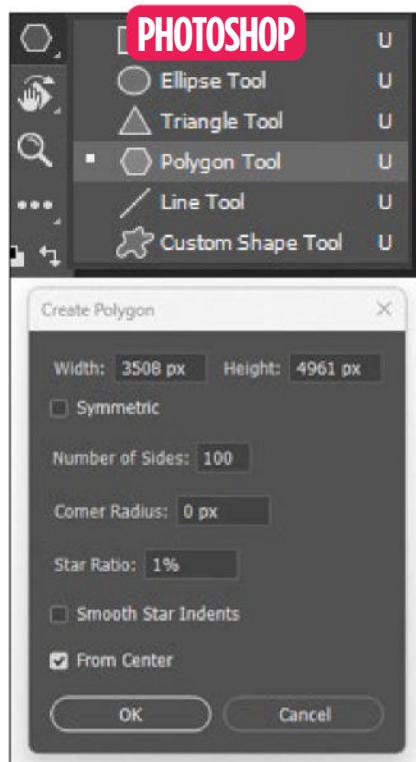
Another contributing factor would be the lighting setup and how you wield light and shadow. Employing strong, dynamic lighting will usually invoke a sense of drama, and softer, subdued lighting will provide your image a more serene look.

The atmosphere is what helps us set a sense of dimension, depth and space in a painting. This helps the viewers place themselves into your

work a little more, and can also affect the mood of a piece.

In this tutorial, we'll be working in greyscale before moving on to colour so you can set the lighting without needing to be too concerned with the colours initially. This also makes the process of changing your colours much easier as we'll be doing two variations of the same painting.

Hopefully you'll find this a fun exercise and pick up some useful pointers for your next project.



## 1 Plot the perspective

Because this image will feature a deep background, we'll need a perspective grid. As I'm using Clip Studio Paint, the Perspective Ruler feature is perfect, and I chose a one-point perspective for this piece. However, if you're using Photoshop you can create your grid using the Polygon tool with the settings as shown in the above screenshots. The width and height will be according to your canvas size.

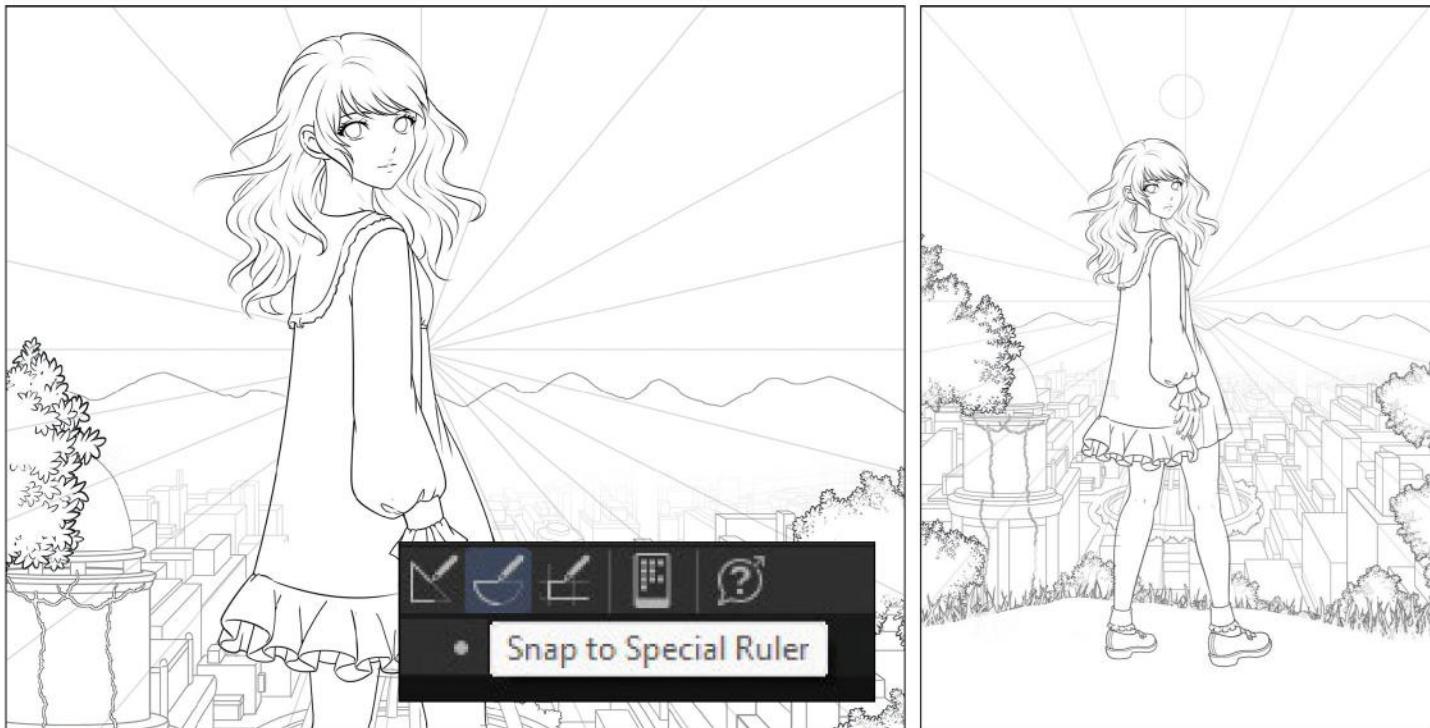
## 2 Sketch a character

Start with a character sketch and roughly plot the distant background. I use G-pen in Clip Studio Paint, but any brush you're comfortable with will work, ideally one with a harder edge. Try to avoid soft edges in the drawing as the forms can become muddled. I always like to add a little movement in the character's hair. Even if they're just standing still, I feel like it adds some life. ➤

In depth Mood and atmosphere



# Workshops



## 3 Draw your background landscape

Next we'll sketch the landscape, which is where the Perspective Ruler in Clip Studio Paint becomes so useful. Ensure that Snap to Special Ruler mode is enabled, and check that your current drawing tool has the function enabled too. This will enable you to draw according to the Perspective Ruler you've got set up with minimal effort, and help save you loads of time.



## 4 Clean up lines and rough values

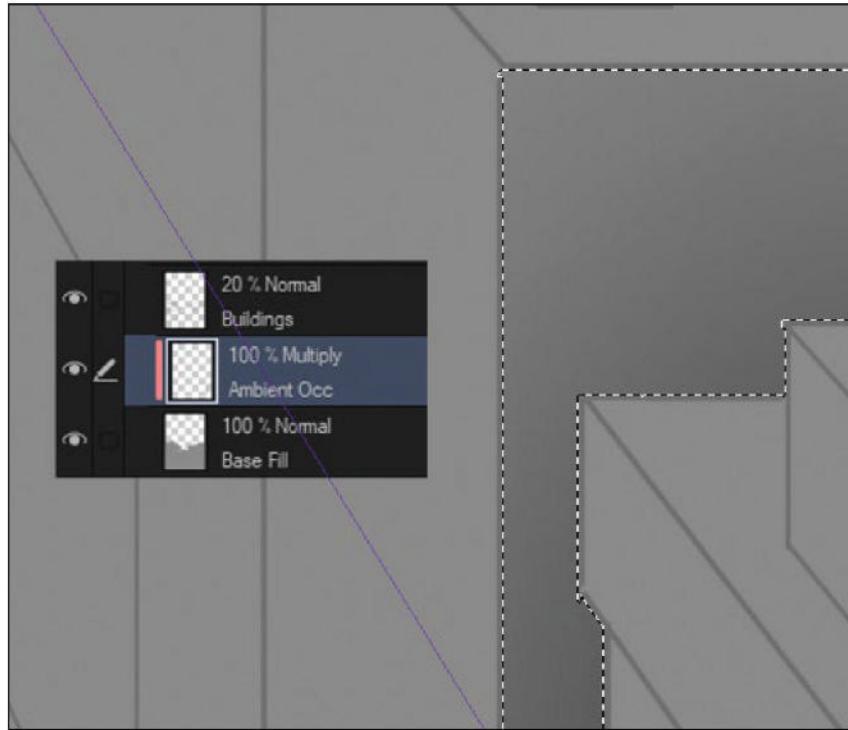
Now's a good time to clean up your sketch if necessary, though if you intend to turn off the line work later you can skip this step. Personally, I like to give rough values. There won't be any shading or painting yet, just filling in different shades of grey. Keep in mind the sense of depth and atmosphere, even at this stage, as the further from the foreground, the less contrast there should be. However, as this will be a night scene I'll fill the sky with a deeper grey. I added windows and clouds here to save time sketching them out individually. As the windows will emit light, they'll be a brighter shade than the buildings. Just keep their sizes and shapes slightly varied; the further away, the smaller they should be.



## 5 Ambient occlusion for the character

The first task here is to separate the layers for the character, foreground, background and sky to make our lives easier. When painting ambient occlusion on the character, you'll generally want to keep it soft as these are naturally occurring shadows. I like to paint this on a new layer set to the Multiply mode on top of the base fill. You can either paint it via selection (Ctrl+click) or by clipping it to the base. Personally, I like to set my line layer to a lower opacity so it doesn't impact my perception of form.

# In depth Mood and atmosphere



## 6 Background ambient occlusion

Keep in mind that the background is further away, which means the elements might be less detailed and have less contrast than your character, who is the main focus. For this step, I like to select and paint so the edges are harder, as the buildings need to have crisp lines to bring out their form. You can use the Polygonal Lasso or Magic Wand tools to make the selections.



## 7 Create the lighting

Determine your light source and start blocking in the light. I like to use large semi-hard-edged brushes here, while you can also clean up the edges later on with the eraser. Ensure the edges of your buildings don't look soft and muddy, or they won't have a hard, structured look.

## 8 Add the colours

Now we bring the colour to our piece! You can start with either the background or character. It might look a little odd at first due to the grey undertones from the ambient occlusion, but we'll fix that shortly. On a new layer, clipped to the base fill or painted via selection, set your mode to Colour and fill it in. ➔

**WORKSHOP  
BRUSHES**

**CLIP STUDIO PAINT**

**DEFAULT BRUSHES:  
SOFT AIRBRUSH**

For ambient occlusion on skin, soft washes of colour, and light glow.

**HARD AIRBRUSH**

I use this brush to paint the clothing, buildings and so on.

**G-PEN**

Useful for sketching, lines, specular reflection and hard edges.

# Workshops



Soft light and Overlay layers to enhance colours



Multiply mode and Glow Dodge (Colour Dodge)



Gradient map (Bluish gradient)

## 9 Colour modes, gradient mapping and adjustments

The image probably feels a bit strange right now but fret not, we can bring it to life in a number of ways. You can use one or two of these suggestions, or all of them if you like!

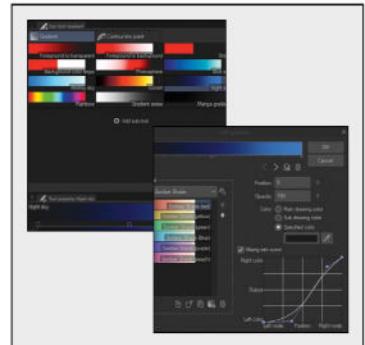
**Colour Balance:** This adjustment layer enables you to tweak the colours in your image. In order to eliminate the greyish hue, consider playing with colours under the shadows, which focus on darker values. You can use this to give your shadows a tint of colour according to the lighting.

**Soft Light:** A great layer mode to enhance and saturate colours. I like it for mid-tones.

**Multiply:** This is perfect for adding in more depth, dimension and richness to shadows.

**Colour Dodge/Glow Dodge (Clip Studio Paint):** Wonderful for bringing out the brightest parts of the image. I love using this for highlights and enhancing rim lighting.

**Gradient Maps:** This is useful for adding overall colours. You can pick your colours to create your own desired gradient. I like to set this to Soft Light and lower the opacity.



## 10 Add atmospheric effects

We can now bring in fun effects, like making the city lights glow and adding some little orbs for a mystical look. I even placed subtle tears in the character's eyes to give the image a slightly melancholic vibe. You could also add a layer between the character and the background, and paint it softly with an airbrush to enhance the depth of field by making the background further out of focus.

## 11 Complete the image

Do some touch-ups and adjustments as you see fit, perhaps adding more detail or polish.

# In depth Mood and atmosphere



## 12 Adjust your colours and values for a new mood

Let's create a whole new scene using our painting, but give it a different feel; something more chaotic! Save the image as a new file to avoid overwriting your work, then start by adjusting the hues and colour balances. You could also go to the colour layer and fill it with a red base. I shifted the dark blue gradient to a deep red and changed the windows from yellow to red. This will take time, but do it slowly and experiment.



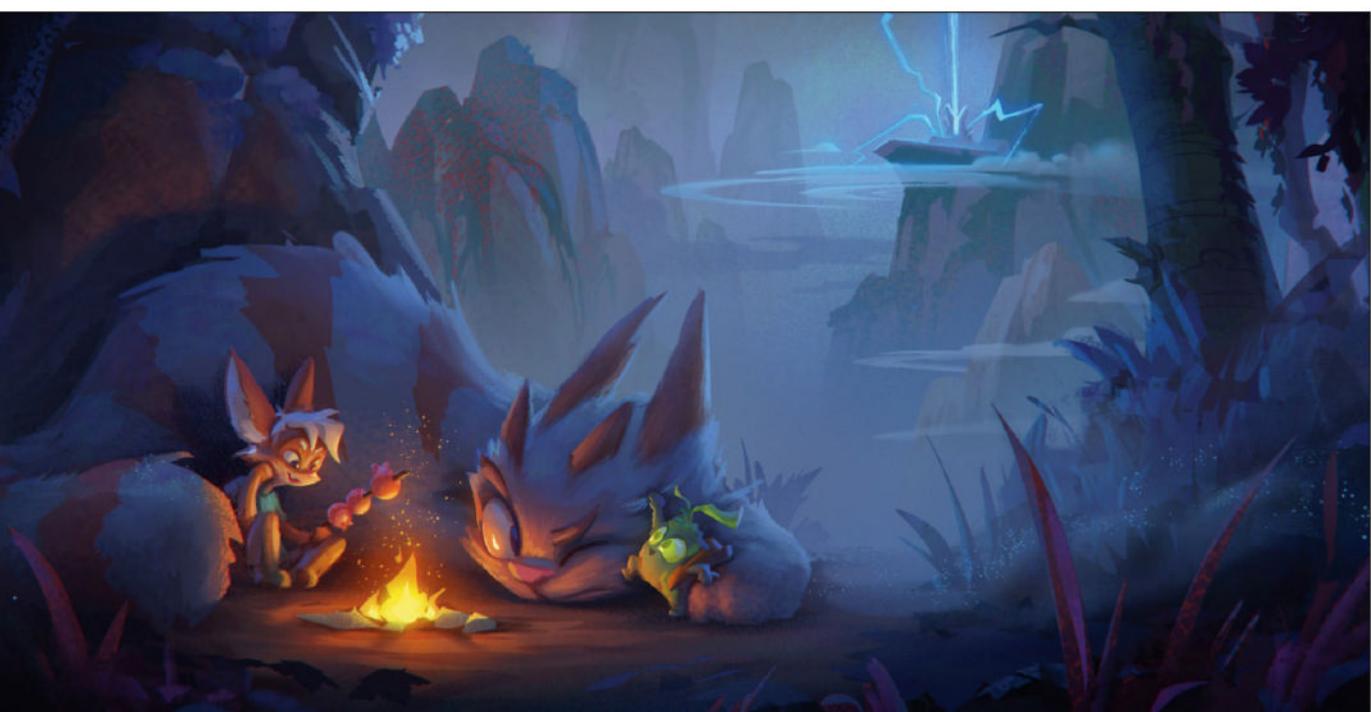
## 13 Employ different effects

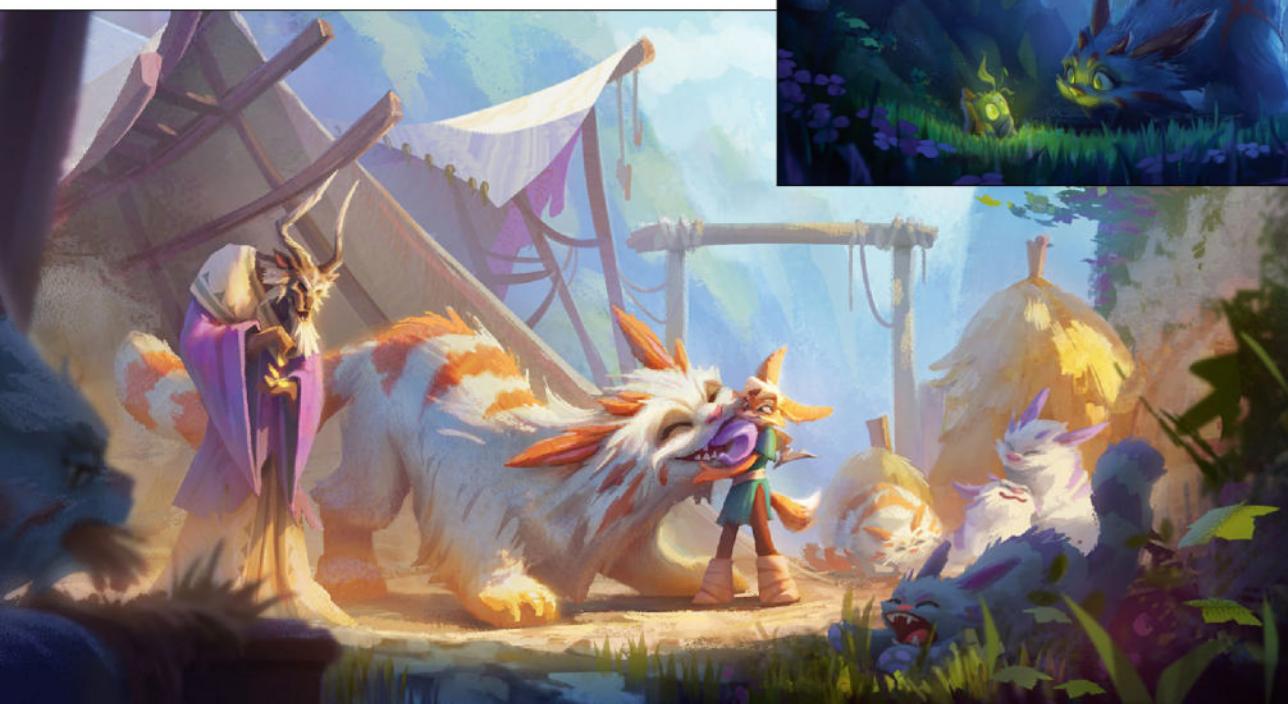
I opted to delete the little glowing orbs and sparkling dust, and instead paint ash, lightning and red rain to add to the chaos of the image. I like to paint rain with a hard-edged brush, though there are rain brushes available online. To create depth, place larger raindrops at the front and smaller, more packed-in raindrops behind. Lightning is a bit trickier, and you'll want to find some reference images for it. I like to keep the strokes a little random and erratic. To make it glow, duplicate the layer and set it to Colour Dodge/Glow Dodge, and then blur it slightly using the Gaussian Blur.

## 14 Refine and finalise

I also added some blood dribbling down the character's chin and on her clothes to give her a slightly sinister aura, and added a Colour Balance layer to harmonise the colours a little more. While the initial stages of the tutorial will take more time, once you have the important details prepared, you can easily switch it up with any of the tools we've gone through here.

# Workshops





## Technique focus

# CONVEY IDEAS AT FIRST GLANCE

Discover how **Kate Fedorchuk** creates instantly readable statements to tell stories in her artwork



"Northwood Tale is a project that's still in progress. The main characters are friends Mira and Puff, who live in a vast fantasy world. It's a story about friendship, growing up, and the search for one's place in life.

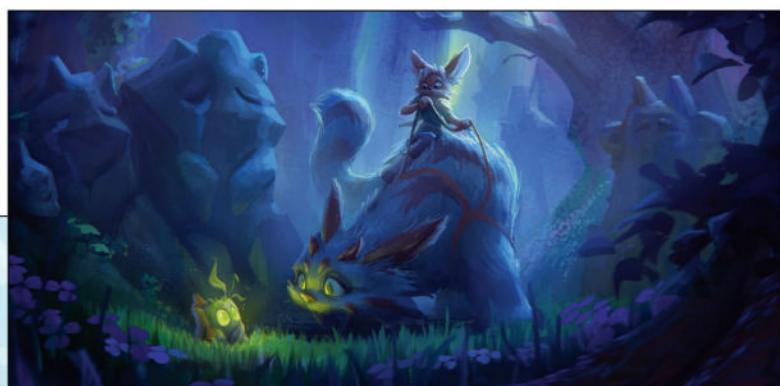
In each illustration I make, the most important focus is on the idea; creating a simple statement that can be seen at first glance. That's why I approach illustration in certain steps.

First I come up with the idea and the emotions that the picture should evoke, then work on thumbnails and composition. When the sketch is ready, it's blocked in either in black and white or colour.

The key at this stage is values. Each object should be readable in values, and all lead to the focal point. An artist can manipulate the viewer and guide them where to look.

When working with colours, also pay attention to the readability of silhouettes in values. The silhouettes of shapes are what the human brain reads first, colour goes after that, and details, volumes and textures aren't the main focus.

Having a good foundation and all the basic elements in the illustration, I can move on to the volumes, details and overall atmosphere. The picture and its focal point are read by the viewer in seconds, so I prefer not to delve too deeply into details."

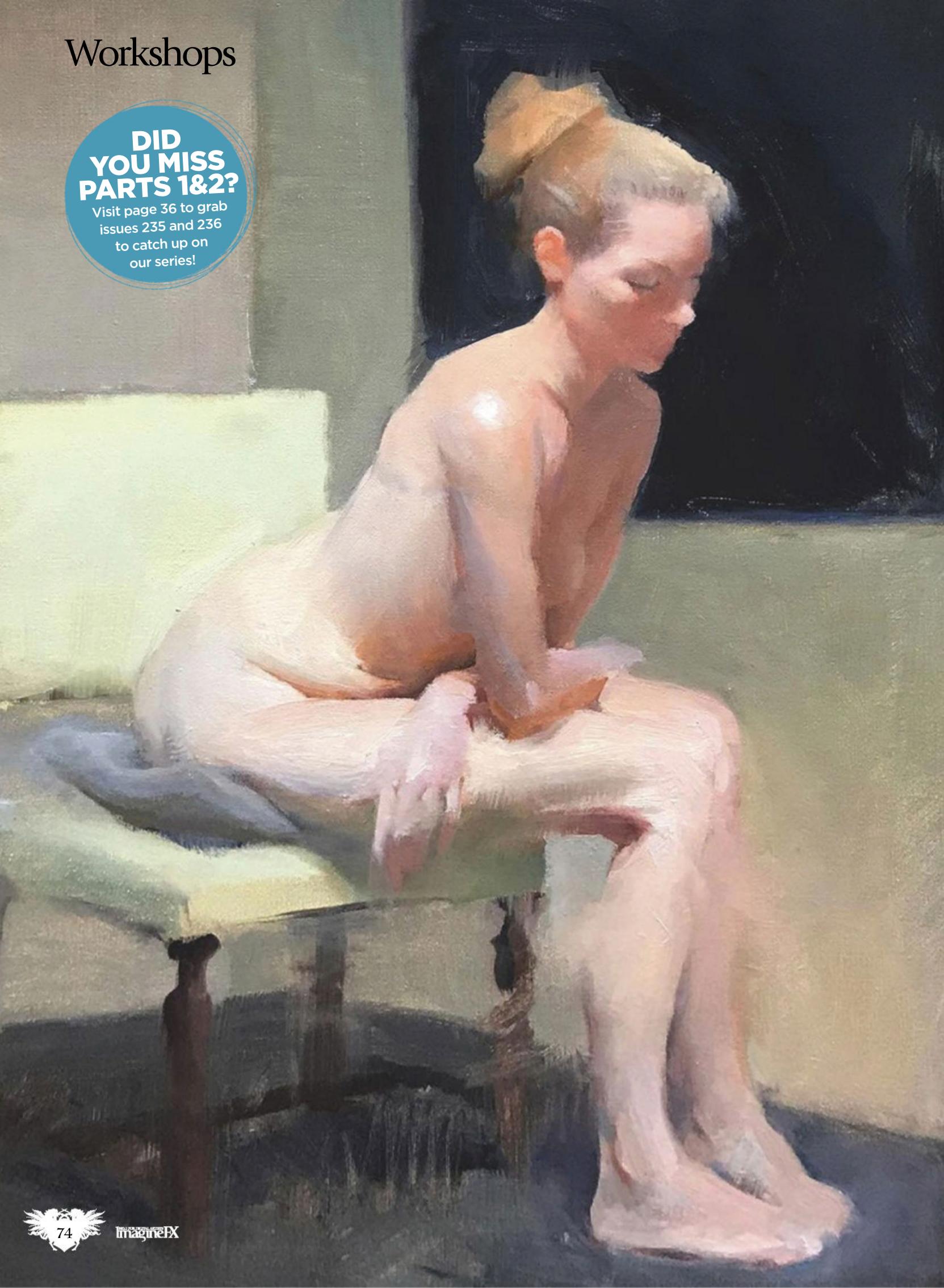


## Artist PROFILE

**Kate Fedorchuk**  
LOCATION: Ukraine

Kate is a freelance visual development artist with experience in the games and animation industries. She works mostly with colours and light to get the desired atmosphere.  
<https://bit.ly/4aVHSV>

# Workshops



## Artist insight

## PART 3: PAINT THE PERFECT SHADOW

Anatomy master **Charlie Pickard** breaks down how to properly build powerful shadows in figure paintings with 10 expert tips

## Artist PROFILE

**Charlie Pickard**  
LOCATION: England

Charlie is a classically trained fine artist and illustrator who works, exhibits and teaches out of his studio in London.  
<https://bit.ly/3R3Dcz3>



Shadows are often the source of most of the mistakes in students' early artworks. If we handle them properly, they can be an incredibly powerful part of our artwork, but they can be tricky. The value differences that make them up are often some of the

most subtle in nature and they are easily overdone.

Shadows have the potential to add a tremendous amount of atmosphere and graphic impact to our work and this tendency to over-render them can destroy these wonderful effects, leaving us a picture that's broken up. It's important we understand how to

approach them in a way that doesn't destroy this overriding unity.

What I want to do today is discuss a few common mistakes that I see often in my student's work, and put forward a few simple changes to our approach and thinking that can help make this often challenging area so much simpler.

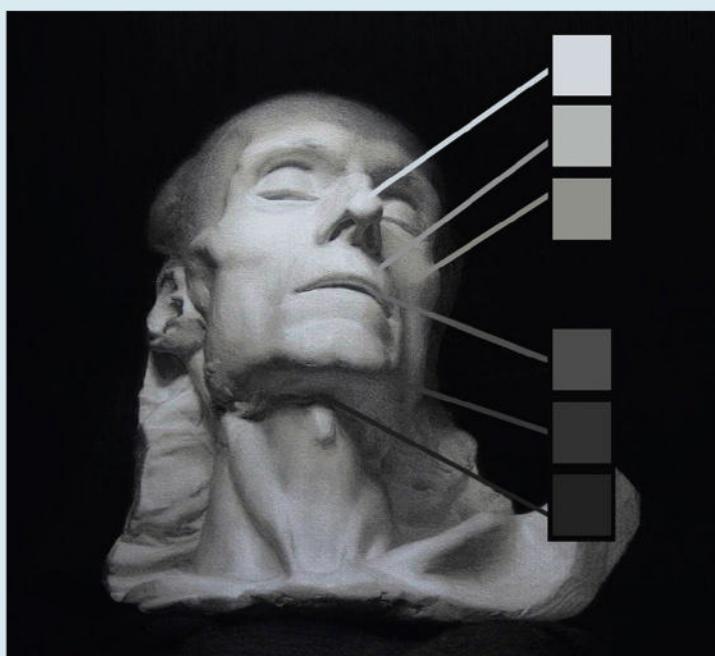


Limiting the reflected light looks much better  
Too much reflected light harms the image

## 1 DON'T OVERDO THE REFLECTED LIGHTS

The most common early mistake all of us made at some point is to make the reflected lights far too bright. They're never quite as bright as we think and overdoing them can lead to a broken-up look overall. Shadows will start to be confused with lights by our viewers, and at best we'll have the sense of an extra light source shining into our shadows, which isn't ideal.

There are quite a few reasons this mistake often happens. It can be due to illusions such as simultaneous contrast and the tendency for us to want to overexplain each detail. Reflected lights can often be completely ignored without losing much in the final art. In fact there are many artists that do exactly this, and it may leave you with a more powerful work. If we choose to include them, we have to remember to make them subtle so as not to ruin the overall effect.



## 2 KEEP THE SHADOW VALUES SEPARATE

The first way we can avoid this common mistake is to enforce the absolute separation of light values from shadow values. While the reflected lights may appear bright, they can never be as bright as the primary light source. This is because it's secondhand light that has bounced off a surface and become weaker as a result. The general rule here is that the lightest dark must be darker than the darkest light. Not respecting this separation is what ultimately leads to this broken-up effect. ➤

# Workshops

## 3 START OUT SIMPLE AND GRAPHIC

The easiest way to actually apply this strong separation of lights and darks is to start our paintings in a simple, graphic way. Think of the shadow shape in terms of a single value and ignore all of the form and

details that you see within it. Treating the shadow in this way makes it much easier to focus on the large, graphic statement of the piece, and you might be surprised by just how much atmosphere comes out when you approach them with this simplified manner.

Once we have this method established, it's much simpler to approach adding details by working into this large, simple mass. However, if we don't solve the tendency to over-lighten the reflected lights this won't quite solve all of our problems here.



## 4 DIRECT LIGHTING

A lot of problems are also caused by the overreliance on a simplified concept of lighting that makes us only add values to define form. One that most of us are already familiar with is the concept of direct lighting.

### This form of light relies on the logic:

- As the plane turns towards the light, it gets lighter until it reaches the highlight.
- As it turns away from the light, it gets darker until lost in shadow.

This understanding of light is often where we start learning and works well defining form in lights. However, with the shadows this tendency to define form by lightening is more destructive. This is the main reason students tends to break the shadow context when trying to add details.

We need a new way to understand defining form that can maintain the quality of separation in shadows. For my money, the best concept for this is ambient occlusion, though this is a slightly more complex aspect of light and will require some explanation.

“We need a new way to understand defining form that can maintain the quality of separation in shadows”

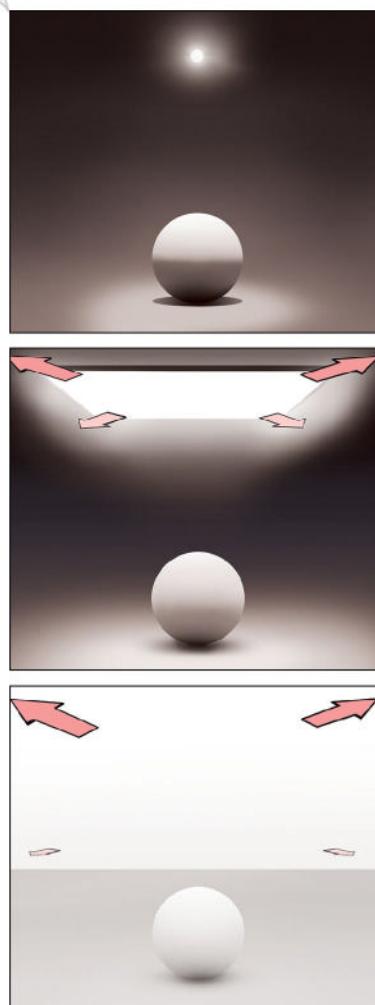


## 5 WHAT IS AMBIENT LIGHT ALL ABOUT?

So what is ambient occlusion? How can it be useful to us in representing shadows? In order to answer this properly, we first need to explain what ambient light is. In order to understand this term, let's examine the 'hardness' of this direct lighting. What exactly is hard light and what causes the softening of light?

The first thing about hard light is that it's only possible in a true sense from a point source light, which has no width. As you can see, when we expand our light source the effect is that the shadow size shrinks and the shadows soften. This is diffuse light, and it's intimately connected to the width of the light source. The wider the light source, the softer the light.

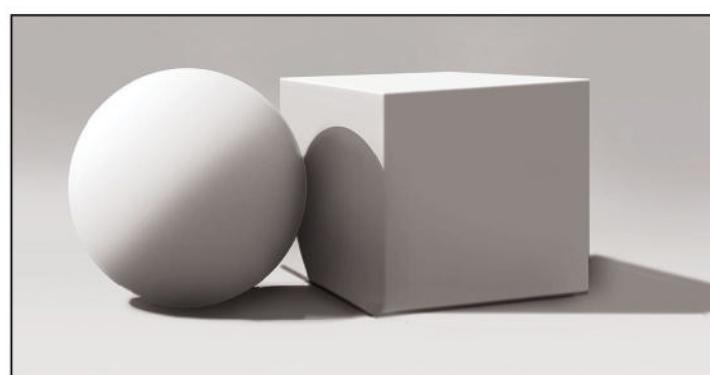
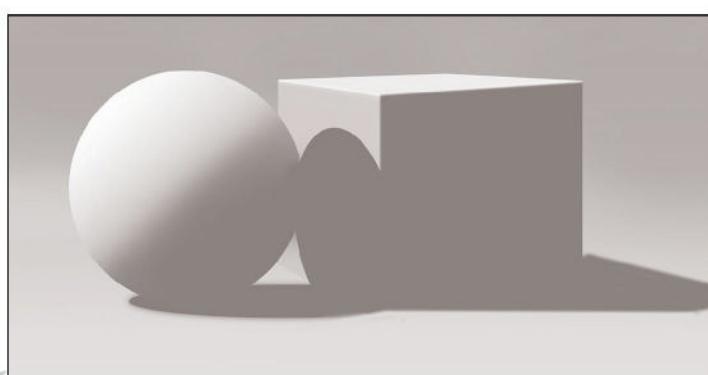
As a final question, what happens if the light source expands infinitely in all directions? The shadow shapes completely recede and disappear! Our conventional ideas of lighting fall away, so all we have is this general darkening as the sphere turns to the floor. This type of light is called ambient light and is what we often associate with overcast days, as the entire sky is the light source. Take a look next time it's overcast, there are no shadows to be found.



## 6 AMBIENT OCCLUSION LOGIC

As direct lighting logic won't work for non-direct ambient lighting, where does that leave us? There's a simple approach here: ambient occlusion. To occlude something is the opposite of including it, so this refers to the darkening of ambient light. With light bouncing in all directions over the form, there aren't many places for this occlusion of light to occur. The only places it does occur are where the forms come close enough together that they cast soft shadows onto each other. As the forms come closer they darken, and lighten as they move further apart.

- **Direct light:** Turning towards light = lighter. Turning away from light = darker.
- **Ambient light:** Forms far apart = lighter. Forms close together = darker.



## 7 WHY WE SHOULD CARE

You might also be asking why you need to know all this. Sure it's true, but only happens in weird lighting situations. How is it helpful for describing shadows in more normal light?

To answer this it's helpful to realise that, while living on Earth, there are extremely few true shadows anywhere. One of the only true shadows that we can actually see from the Earth is the Moon. If you look up at it you won't see anything, only black, the reason being that space itself is black as there's no reflected light to speak of, so all we can see is black. In order for us to see any colour in a

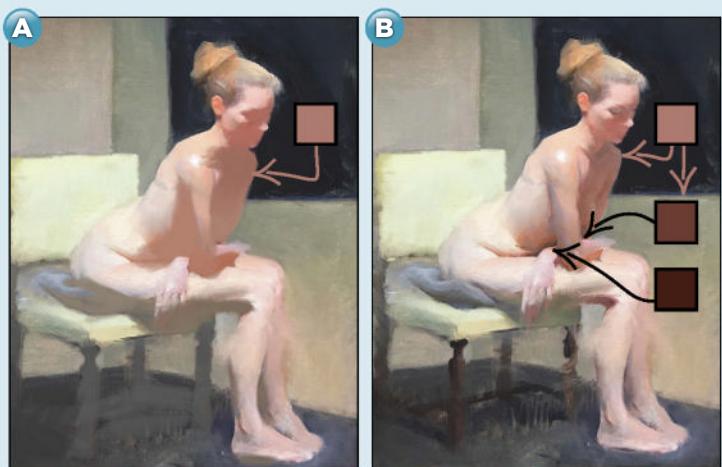
shadow at all, there must be something there to be lighting it up.

So if there's only one light in a room, what's lighting the shadows? The answer is that the environment itself is a light source. We know this because we can see the environment, and for us to see it, it must be sending out a form of light. This realisation is important. There are no shadows on earth, really, only differing strengths of light. One of these is always the average of the environment itself, which is the ambient light. However, it's a weak effect and easily overpowered. Due to this, we only see its effect in the shadows.

On the left, you can see a simple direct lighting setup with flat shadows. Although it looks understandable, it's not particularly realistic. This is the initial graphic stage that I'm encouraging. Next to this you can see the added level of reality we can achieve by bringing in the ambient occlusion as a subtle darkening effect to the shadows, with no reflected light needed.

This effect is where much of the reality of shadows in an image truly comes from. We even get a sense of the reflected light effect here, even though all we've actually done is darken our image. ➤

# Workshops



## 8 GENERAL APPROACH

This would be the main approach that I'd advocate you use in order to maintain the strength of this graphic statement and separation of the shadows, while still being able to create a sense for the details and movements of the forms in the shadows. Due to the fact that by using this method we're only ever darkening the shadow values, nothing we can do has any chance of crossing over into the territory of the values of the lights, which means the separation of the values is maintained.

### The general approach here would be:

**A** **Apply the graphic shadow:** One value for all of the shadows. Make sure that this is the lighter average of your shadows.

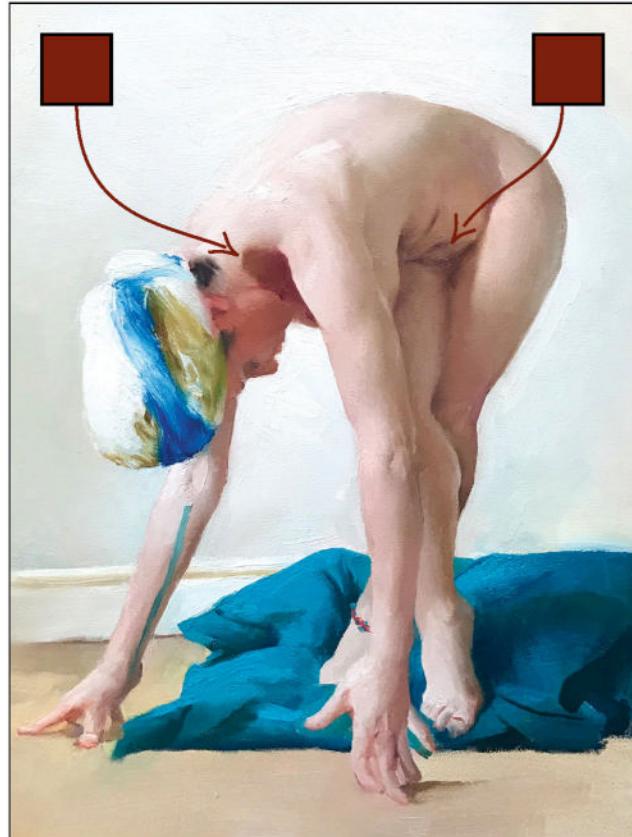
**B** **Apply darker values into this larger average:** Use purely darker values to express the various forms within the shadows.



## 9 USE AMBIENT OCCLUSION TO ADD DARK ACCENTS

As you're placing in these darker values, make sure to use the concept of ambient occlusion to guide you if you ever find yourself confused. Look for places in your subject's shadows where the forms come closer together, as well as for darker notes around these sections. This was the main strategy I used when developing this painting. The most obvious place you can see this effect here is in the darker note as the person's belly comes closer and closer to their legs. Painters often refer to these darker notes as the dark accents of the painting, and they're the true anchors for the information in your shadows, so be sure to look out for them.

“Ambient occlusion darks tend to be the strongest, most chromatic colours for skin”



## 10 LOOK FOR COLOUR!

One fun, final bonus idea that's worth talking about is how this effect works in relation to the colour of the skin. Given that only some light is able to penetrate into the deeper crevices of form, the light that enters does so at an extremely shallow angle and will bounce around a lot.

Because of this and another effect, subsurface scattering, these dark accents tend to be some of our best opportunities for powerful, chromatic colours. Ambient occlusion darks tend to be the strongest and most chromatic colours for the skin. Including this powerful colour in the deep darks is one of the best ways that you can communicate the translucency of skin, and is an extremely effective and exciting effect to explore when you're painting figures.

Something I like to do is try to keep these dark accents painted with an absolutely pure mixture of paint for as long as I can throughout the painting process. Try to look out for their colour, and I think you'll be pleasantly surprised by the effects it creates. Happy painting everyone!



### ARTISTS' MASTER SERIES: COLOR & LIGHT

This article is an excerpt from the Artists' Master Series book that Charlie wrote in partnership with 3dtotal Publishing. In the book he delves into this and many more topics in greater detail, with in-depth tutorials from other artists featured. To carry on learning, check it out at <https://bit.ly/4837PM9>.

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# Workshops

## Technique focus

# KEEP IT SIMPLE AND IMPACTFUL

**Maximilian Degen** turns back the clock to take a second run at an old image with new knowledge



### Artist PROFILE

#### Maximilian Degen

LOCATION: Australia

Maximilian is an illustrator with 13 years' experience. During that time he has worked as an artist for video games *Ori and the Blind Forest*, *Overwatch*, *Fortnite*, *Hearthstone*, and *Crash Bandicoot 4: It's About Time*. <https://bit.ly/48Xdp9w>



"This artwork is based on a sketch that's over five years old. I always liked the idea behind it and the mystical feeling, so I wanted to see how I could paint it today. I like blocking out shapes, such as in the thumbnail, and then drawing on top loosely to help me refine certain areas. The primary focuses of this image are the flowing shapes in the smoke that take the form of a snake, and the fire. When adding colours, I really wanted to push that mystical sensation. I decided to go with some unusual colours within the fire, but made sure to keep them harmonic." 

Tech Focus Making impact



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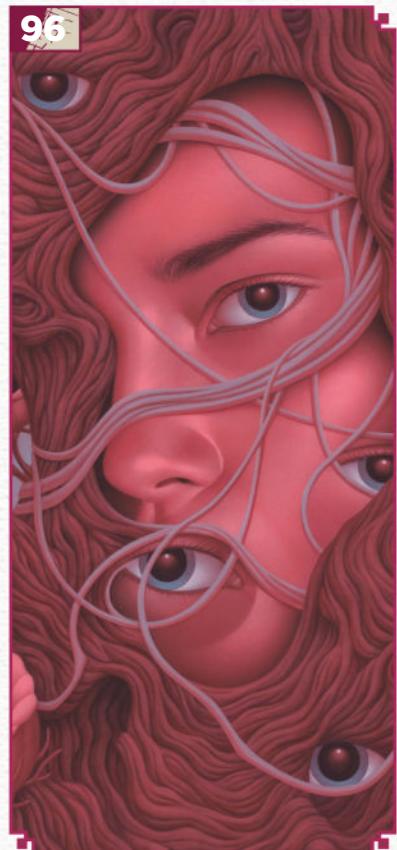
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# Traditional Artist

Inspiration and advice from the best pro artists



## This issue:

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

**90 Paint a blazing dragon scene**  
Find out how Greg Rutkowski creates an epic fantasy artwork.

**96 First Impressions: Boris Pelcer**  
The artist on the life experiences that led to his surreal art style.

# FXPosé

SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL ARTISTS



## Yukoring

LOCATION: Japan MEDIA: Watercolour WEB: [www.yukoring.com](http://www.yukoring.com)

Yukoring specialises in expanding the pop culture illustration of Japan in the context of traditional art. Challenging the growth of AI illustration, she hopes to prompt a re-evaluation of traditional artwork.

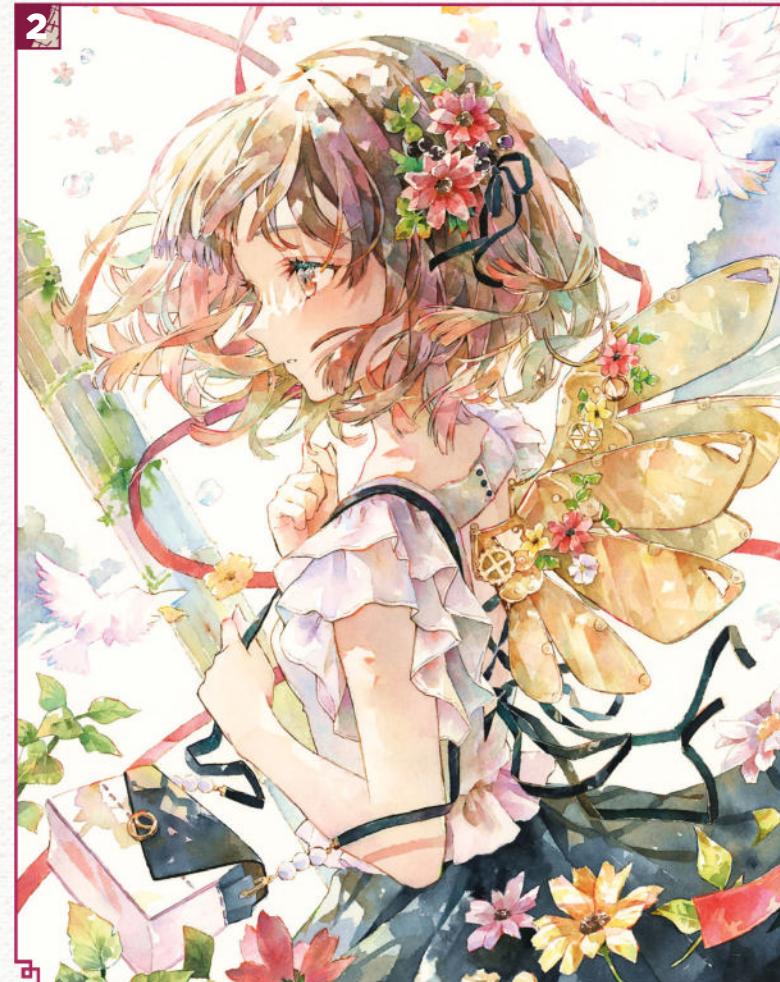


### 1 LARGE FLOWERS

"The pandemic forced us to change our lifestyle, but I'm hopeful this change will lead to our lives blooming like a large flower in the future."

### 2 MECHANICAL WINGS AND GIRL

"In this artwork, a girl is about to embark on the exploration of a world where artificial and natural elements intertwine."



### 3 FRAGRANT COLOURS

"With this piece, I created a scene where the great orange-tip butterflies are drawn over to the flowers, painted with the girl's fragrant colours."

### 4 NEW YEAR KIMONO

"I vividly depicted Japan's New Year culture in this painting. The bird at the bottom-right is the yamagara, or the varied tit, commonly found in Japan."





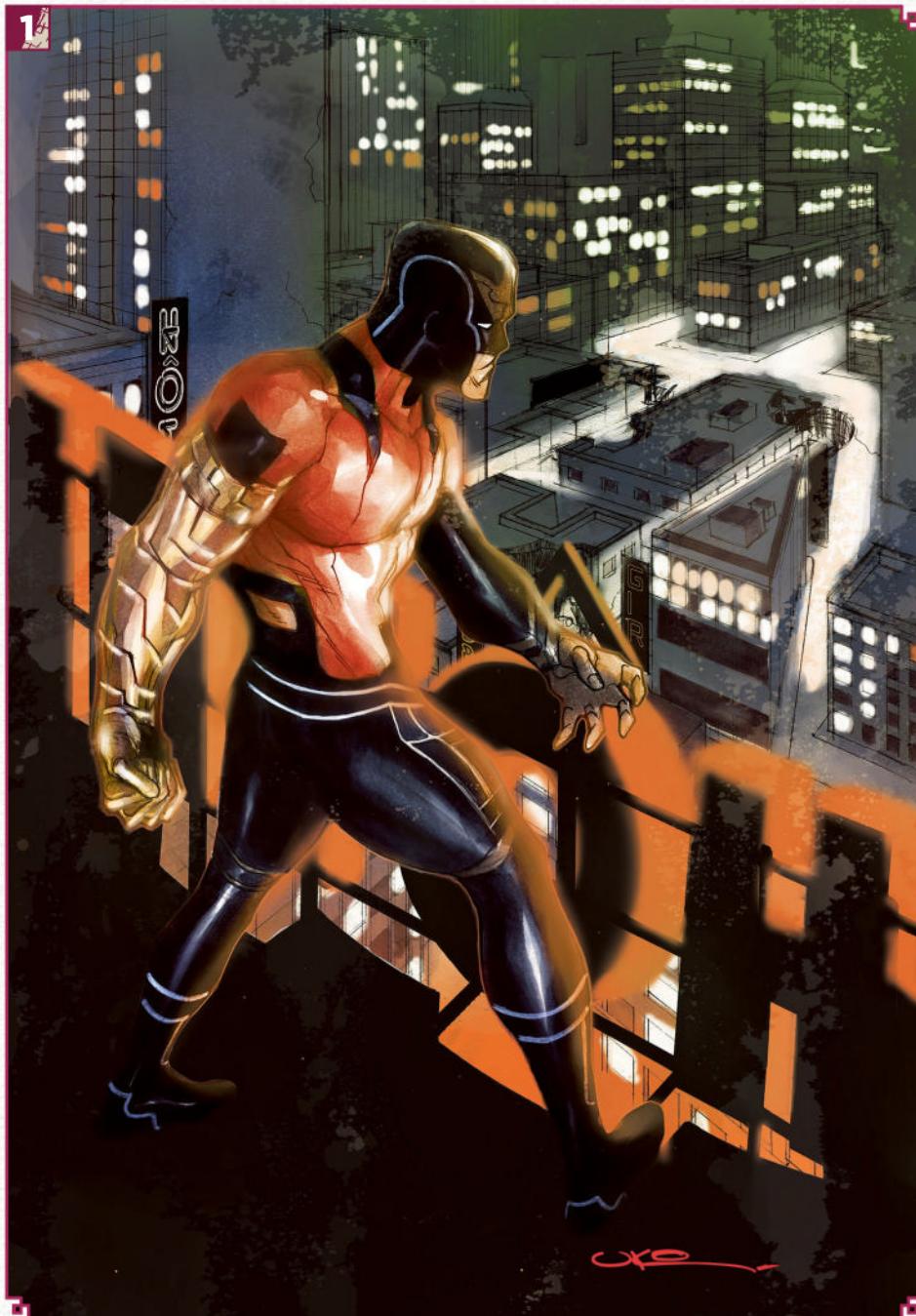
## Uko Smith

LOCATION: US MEDIA: Pencil, ink, Copic markers, watercolour, acrylic, Photoshop WEB: [www.instagram.com/ukosmith](http://www.instagram.com/ukosmith)

Uko is an illustrator, concept artist and storyteller who balances work for industry clients, commissions and personal projects. He enjoys creating art featuring women, technology, shapes, emotion and energy.

### 1 NORTHEGARD

"A challenging cover with a lot of elements. After a series of preliminary images, I found this composition the best. I love the challenge of perspective to help tell a story. Completed with Copic markers and Photoshop."



### 2 STORM

"When I get to work on strong female characters, I look at areas I can highlight. For Storm, I look at her hair, lightning and figure. The energy and spontaneity was infectious when it came to rendering this piece."

### 2



### 3



### 3 WAR MACHINE

"I drool at the chance to figure out the shapes and perspective for any characters with technology. He has a lot of gear, so I felt a bird's-eye view would be the best."

### 4 MAASAI WARRIOR

"A commission for the SolCon show. My concept was to represent the cultures of the show and its exhibiting creators."





## Stella Langecker

LOCATION: Germany MEDIA: Ink, watercolour WEB: [www.artstation.com/langecker](http://www.artstation.com/langecker)

Stella is a freelance illustrator and comic artist with a background in biology. In her work, she combines her love for flora and fauna with mythical creatures, fairy tales and a good dash of whimsy.

### 1 ROADSIDE PICNIC

“The snowdrops signal that spring is on its way. But while the cold still lingers, taking breaks with hot tea and toasted sandwiches warms the heart and soul.”



### 2 BRAHMAPUTRA RIVER MERMAID

“Along the Brahmaputra River and its tributaries, wherever the current is more gentle, the mermaids rest below the lotus leaves and blossoms as fishing cats go hunting among the stalks.”



### 3 PET DRAGON

“Dragons, although theoretically capable of swift and graceful movement, are actually partial to lazily lying around. When an amenable human is at hand, they enjoy being carried around, too.”

### 4 LATTICED STINKHORN

“This was done for the Feybruary 2021 event, during which participants designed feys inspired by either plants or fungi. These little guys are based on *Clathrus ruber*, also known as latticed stinkhorn.”

### 5 NIGHTSHIFT

“Rumour has it that this city was once home to little people who would finish your work and chores at night, when everyone else was fast asleep.”





# Traditional Artist Workshop





Acrylic

# PAINT A BLAZING DRAGON SCENE

Depict a dramatic, fire-breathing dragon like GREG RUTKOWSKI as he recreates his epic Magic: The Gathering card art with traditional tools

Fantasy art has been always an influential genre for me. I remember being a little kid, looking at any image that I could find showing fantastical creatures or knights fighting evil as a form of inspiration and an escape from reality.

I wanted to be able to not just show my ideas, but paint them in a convincing way that creates a specific atmosphere. I was always seeking for solutions when it came to painting fantasy creatures. Dragons became a major subject for me. I found them interesting not just because of their legends and place in mythology, but also because of their interesting, complex shapes; textured skin and

## MATERIALS

### PAINT

■ Acrylic paints

### BRUSHES

■ Sable, natural and synthetic for acrylics

### CANVAS

■ 100 x 70cm (39 x 27in) stretched canvas

### MISCELLANEOUS

■ Gesso primer  
■ Water  
■ Paper towels

spikes, the interesting shape of the head, and obviously the wings. Those elements combine to create a beautiful form to paint. Each time in a bit of a different pose, each time with a bit of a different message that you can pass on to the viewers.

This step-by-step tutorial will show you my initial thoughts and process for painting a fire-breathing dragon, set amid a dense atmosphere filled by smoke, flames and falling ashes. For me, one of the most important elements when I'm creating this kind of painting is capturing the essence of its atmosphere and mood.

This piece is special. Originally I created it in Photoshop, not thinking too much about the importance of

the physical aspect. When we're creating art digitally, we're losing the physical aspects of size, dimensions and the intensity of real paint. That's why I decided to repaint Drakuseth, Maw of Flames on canvas; to show the physical aspect of my idea and make it more real.

Here I'm going to show you all the parts of my workflow that help me create this image, including close-ups and explanations of the key points as all hit the canvas.



*Greg Rutkowski is an artist and illustrator. He started his professional career in 2009 and has worked for the likes of Wizards of the Coast, Blizzard and Disney. [www.greg-rutkowski.com](http://www.greg-rutkowski.com)*

# Traditional Artist Workshop



## 1 Plan from digital sketch

The first step is one of the most important. I'm carefully planning every stroke to fit the digital sketch and make this transition as smooth as possible. If you have a digital sketch, you can use a few different methods to move it to the canvas. I usually use a projector to trace the most important parts of a painting.

## 2 Shape and colour blocking

This step is much easier but also quite important. This time I'm blocking out the bigger colour shapes. I'm taking my time while painting the bigger chunks of the underpainting and focusing on catching the value to guide me into the next step.



## 3 Develop the image

While the previous steps used only a few colours, just to hint at the value and blockout the shapes, this time I'm starting to use more brushes and colours. In this step I'm trying to bring more definition to the focal point, which in this case is the dragon's head and torso, while slowly building up the more recognisable shapes and accurate colours. To be consistent in my workflow, I'm trying to add more layers of the paint in each step, getting closer to the final colours.

## 4 Add definition to the fire

Fire is one of the most demanding elements. As I'm doing a repaint it's even harder. I'm focusing on abstract shapes, marking those with oranges and a slightly diluted burnt umber. Remember that flames affect the background; it's worth polishing areas overlapping the fire so that the least intense strokes of flames are over the finished part of the background.

# In depth Paint a fire-breathing dragon



## 5 Background progress

As I polish the background surrounding the fire, I'm moving forward and applying the final colour tones to the top area of the background. Each time you paint bigger areas in acrylics, try to keep just a few colours on the palette because of how fast it dries. To keep the gradients as smooth as possible, keep the canvas wet, applying water with a clean brush before painting.



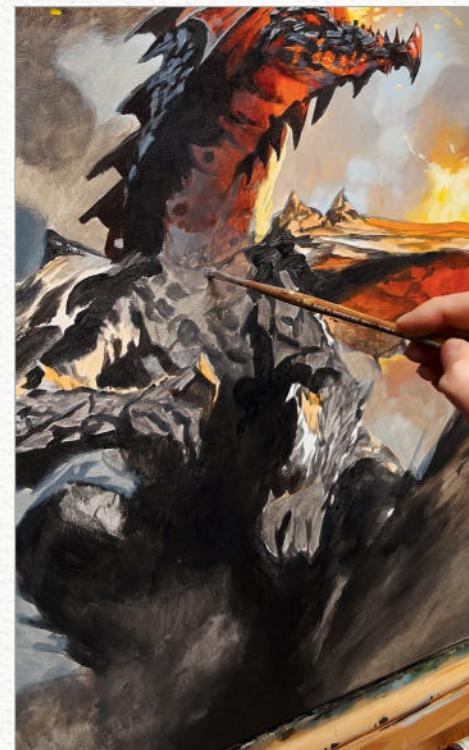
## 6 Balance design and dynamism

Now it's time to work on the dragon's head. Since this is a repaint, I need to stick to the original brushstrokes and keep everything in their rightful places. I don't want to change the shape of the head without following initial design, but on the other hand I need to have this loose way of painting to keep the dynamism of each brushstroke. Finding a balance is the key here.



## 7 Finalise the values in the painting

At this point I'm ready to work more on the overall value. I'm trying to set the final values so I can focus on polishing each part separately without thinking about being accurate with the value. I'm moving from the top to the bottom of the painting, and adding a touch of diluted colours in order to have better control over the value.



## 8 Torso tones

After setting up the overall tone, I'm getting to the details. Because the head is more polished than the rest of the body, I'm moving on to the torso. It's important to add a little vibrancy in the shadowed areas. I'm using a bit of ultramarine with burnt umber to get more variation of the colds and warms on the dragon's torso. ➤

# Traditional Artist Workshop



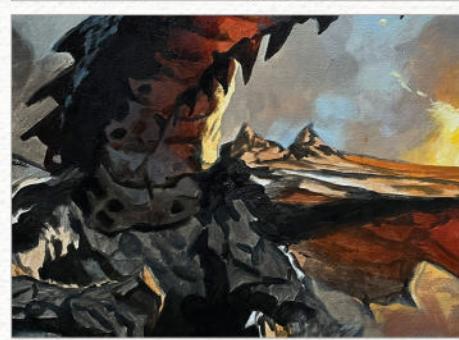
## 9 Lighter tones first

It's important to check the brightness of the area you're working on. In my opinion it's better to be slightly lighter with the tones rather than making it too dark from the start. It's much easier to apply a thin layer of darker colours over an area that's too bright, rather than adding a thin layer of brighter paint over a dark area. With brighter paint the shadows are foggy and it's harder to get rid of.



## 10 Take a step back

From time to time I'll take a big step back to check the overall value and colours. I'm doing that to control which parts of the image are sticking out too much and which are satisfying. That allows me to plan where to move next and keep the consistency in my workflow. I'm not a big fan of polishing one part from the beginning and moving to the next. Instead, I'm a fan of gradually applying paint on every part so I can see the overall progress and not just a part of it.



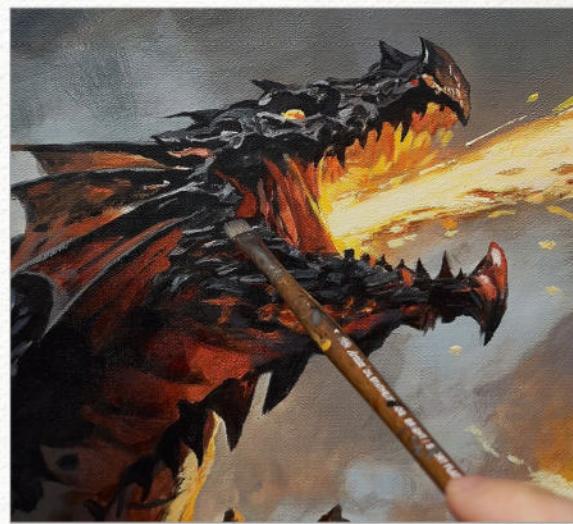
## 11 Dynamic brushstrokes

At this stage I'm polishing area after area. Adding more details while choosing the biggest brush possible allows me to make more dynamic strokes and build shapes with better efficiency and form. It's always better to see the direction of the brushstroke left for the viewer rather than smoothing everything so it's barely possible to see them. I think that making those marks is a part of the art, as it lends the painting a little more of a human aspect to the image.



## 12 Make further checks

We're coming close to the final stages now as I've almost finished painting. I like to squint from time to time, or just step further back to check if the scene looks final. At this point I can make my decisions about which parts of the image still require some work, and which are all set and finalised.



## 13 Head touch-ups

I decided to go back to the head and add a few more details to get the final definition so I wouldn't have to go back to this area again. The final touches were mostly light accents that make the details pop out a little more. It's also a good idea to add darker dots here and there to increase the local contrast on the head while sharpening the shape a bit further.

# In depth Paint a fire-breathing dragon



## 14 Paint the smoke

For this step I'm finishing the smoke around the dragon. As I said before, when I paint gradients using acrylics, I'm trying to wet the canvas before applying the paint. It's also worth pointing out that for these darker areas I'm trying not to use pure black, but rather a mix of black and white with slight tints of ultramarine, burnt umber, carmine and burnt sienna.



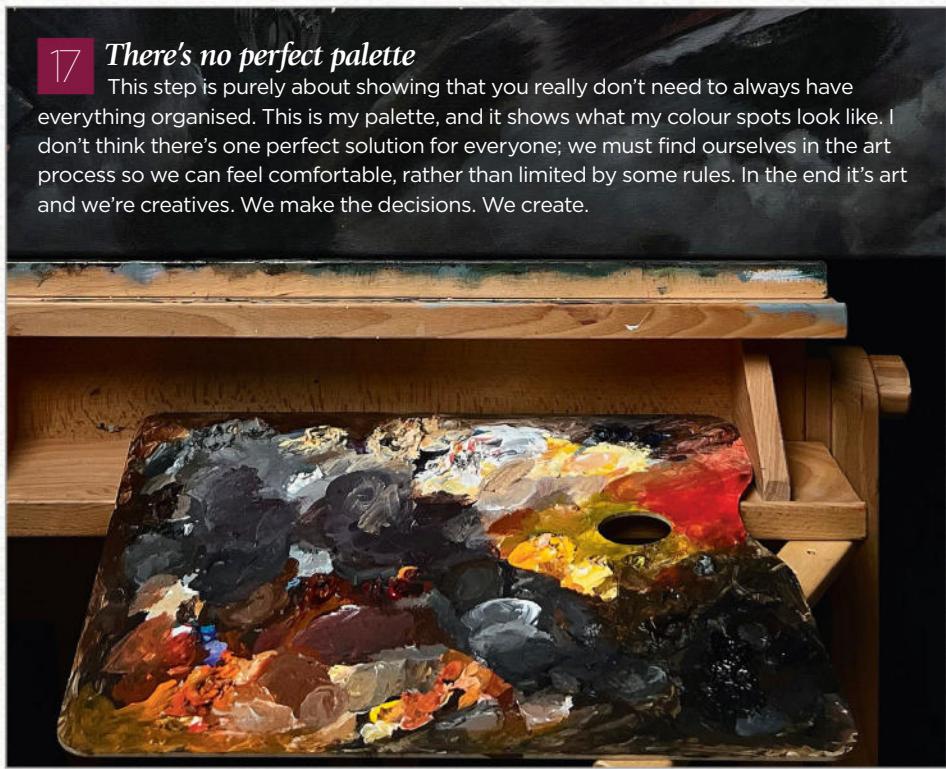
## 15 Details on the wing

The last thing to polish is the dragon's more visible wing. It has a reflective surface but also some translucency, so it's essential to add a bit more variety to the cooler palette in this area. This will make that spot more complex in terms of the colour, but it's also reacting with the surroundings, making it more realistic.



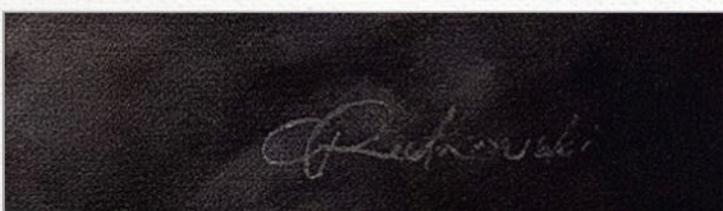
## 16 Trust your gut

One last check before calling it final. It's time to add the last touch-ups and details. This is the most stressful stage as you have to make a decision on when to call it final. It's a never-ending struggle between leaving it too loose and over-polished. I'm always trusting my gut here. I've learned how to accept that certain parts will be more loose, rather than pushing them towards being over-cooked.



## 18 The final sign off

It's final, so now's the time to place your signature. This is also the time to appreciate your work, accept small mistakes, and realise where you can improve in the future. We artists are built to struggle in many different areas; we learn to accept our flaws but also have this huge creative force that pushes us forward to new artistic goals and inspires us to work more on our craft.



# First Impressions

\* Boris Pelcer \*

How a life of varied experiences shaped the artist's surrealism



Where did you grow up and how has this influenced your art? I grew up all over. I was born in Sarajevo, Bosnia, and the fall of Yugoslavia led to us seeking refuge in Kosovo. In 1998 another war broke out, and my parents fled the Balkans to start a new life in the US. We went to Lincoln, Nebraska, and later moved to Milwaukee, where I live now.

Throughout my life, art served as an escape and a way to process my feelings. As a kid I drew Disney and Looney Tunes characters. There was something fun and innocent about them, which provided a contrast to the harsh life as a refugee.

Life for me has felt surreal and absurd in many ways. It's probably why when I was experimenting with style in my teenage years, surrealism felt the most natural way to express the nature of life as I knew it.

**What, outside of art, has most influenced your artwork?**  
Life itself has influenced my art profoundly. Ultimately, all art seems



## EGO DEATH

*An ode to self exploration. This is life. It is brief. Love is present. Accept it. Now surrender to it all fully, in this moment, here and now.*

to revolve around an individual's response to the human experience and their yearning to capture its essence. Becoming a war refugee at age six accelerated my maturation, imposing a burden on a vulnerable young child.

These abrupt changes prompted me to contemplate reality's nature. I questioned the existence of an

**“My art remains a vehicle for navigating the complexities of human existence”**

entity like God, pondering why my life unfolded as it did. I sought out refuge in imagination, art, cartoons, games, books, playing outdoors and the mischief of exploration.

Approaching 25, I delved into the suppressed parts of my childhood. Reading, travelling, dating, falling in love, making friends, and taking risks became how I comprehended the intricacies of life.

## LABYRINTH

*Life can sometimes feel like a repetitive Sisyphean struggle, trying to balance the rational and impulsive mind, all while making my way through the labyrinth of life, seeking out meaning, fulfilment, purpose and happiness.*

Around 27, my art matured as I underwent personal transformation. I sought to explore the reflections of my life through my art. Today, my art remains a vehicle for navigating the complexities of human existence.

**Is there a painting in your early years that changed everything?**

When I was in a high school art class and Salvador Dali was introduced, I remember being fascinated by a very different approach to creativity. Even though I didn't know it then, I think something in my brain resonated with surrealism. Seeing the surreal way in which Dali expressed himself was really intriguing.

Out of the contemporary artists, I'd say the first time I saw the work of James Jean around 2004, it blew my mind. It had a surreal, ephemeral quality that almost captured the essence of my thoughts and feelings. It's like his work embodied what I unknowingly wished I could capture through my own work, and inspired me to dive deep into the surreal.

**Tell us about your first paid commission. Does it stand as a representation of your talent?**

My first commission was for a music magazine called Hal Leonard; a few illustrations of jazz musicians. It was a fun project and my initial exposure to the world of freelance commercial illustration. Those pieces possessed a somewhat surreal quality, offering a glimpse into the trajectory that my art would take.

I haven't revisited them in a long time, 18 years or so, but I hope they still provide insight into my artistic talent. One thing's for certain, which is that my art has improved since.

**Is making a living as an artist all you thought it would be?**

It's been a challenging journey. I don't think I really had a great plan. All I knew was that I wanted to create for a living. I went into art college with the desire to create and was guided into an illustration ➤

**PERCEPTION**

*I'm fascinated how much of my psyche seems so uncharted. It feels like there's a wilderness in the depths of my mind, until those moments I find myself staring at a manifestation of my mind as it stares back at me.*

# Traditional Artist Interview

degree because I could make money in a commercial way while still getting to create. By the time I graduated from art college, I'd been introduced to many professional illustrators. However, I don't think I really sat down and thought about whether I'd truly enjoy working in freelance commercial illustration. I had to explore various fields to see what resonated with me.

Right out of art college, I got a job as a graphic designer for an apparel company. While my typography and graphic design skills weren't the best, I welcomed the challenge and over the span of three years I really got into it, especially typography.

Despite this, I felt unfulfilled and believed there was so much more for me to learn and discover, so I quit my job to pursue my master's of fine arts. To earn money in those three years, I freelanced and taught art and design courses. Halfway into my degree, I realised I'd been too afraid to truly explore who I am and create art about that. Something clicked in me, and I switched from experimenting with graphic design and typography to leaning into creating personal fine art.

I was happy with the work I was creating during my master's, but once it ended the reality of having to create for a living set in. I tried to get back into the fashion industry, but as my portfolio ended up being mainly fine art and personal illustrations, it was hard to get a full-time commercial art job.

Even though I never wanted to freelance in commercial illustration, I decided there was no other option. Constantly hustling for projects and



## FLAMES OF LIFE

*A flame ablaze in my essence's core, with a life, a yearning, wanting more. In pleasures it manifests, a dance so keen, yet at its core, a call to replicate, unseen. A desire that echoes through the human scheme, to mirror oneself, a compelling dream. Oh, the fascination in this human song, a dance of creation, where echoes prolong.*

commissions took a toll on my mental health, so after six years I took a job as a fashion illustrator for a big clothing company in the US.

The stress I experienced during those freelance years stifled my creativity. I made some amazing personal work over those six years, but a lot of the personal work was about how strange and absurd life felt during the years I struggled.

**“The struggles I experienced contributed to my appreciation for everything I have today”**

## What advice would you give to your younger self?

I would advise them to explore more within personal art and have a clearer vision of how to earn a living as a creative. Additionally, I'd have urged my younger self to be more patient. I believe that if I'd taken the time to understand myself earlier, I might have made better decisions along the way.

Nevertheless, I think things had to unfold the way they did for me to learn the lessons I did. Many of the struggles I experienced contributed to my appreciation for everything I have today. So perhaps I'm glad

## MORPHEUS

*In Greek mythology, Morpheus is a god who shapes and forms dreams, through which he could appear to mortals, making him a messenger of the gods. I wonder what really happens when we dream, and if there's an entity who offers contact with something beyond.*



## UNRAVELLING

*Inner journey. Seeking order and meaning. Letting it come undone to understand the parts as it comes back together. There I find some clarity. Peace, for now.*

everything played out the way it did so I could learn everything I needed. No regrets, only lessons.

## Which character or scene that you've painted do you identify with the most?

I'd say the characters in my Journey series are the ones I resonate most with. They aim to depict something at the core of my human experience, which means it's at the core of everyone's human experience. And that's something I've been striving to make more of; art that's deeply personal but is depicted in a way that invites the viewers to embark on their own interpretive journey. It's all about finding the universal in the personal.

## What are the next steps in your art and your life?

My next step is becoming a father for the first time, being present for that amazing experience, and seeing how that shapes what I turn to creating next. That's really it.

Of course, I'm still intrigued to see how the potential of an artificial general intelligence will impact not just art, but our lives. I also wonder what the future will hold for us all in the next two to five years. Truly, we're living in what is a fascinating time to be alive.

*Boris Pelcer is a visual artist based out of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He creates his work as a way to explore the complexities of human existence. Boris's art offers a glimpse into his psyche, while inviting viewers to find personal interpretations. Find out more at [www.borispelcer.com](http://www.borispelcer.com).*

# IF I HAD SOMEWHERE TO LIVE...

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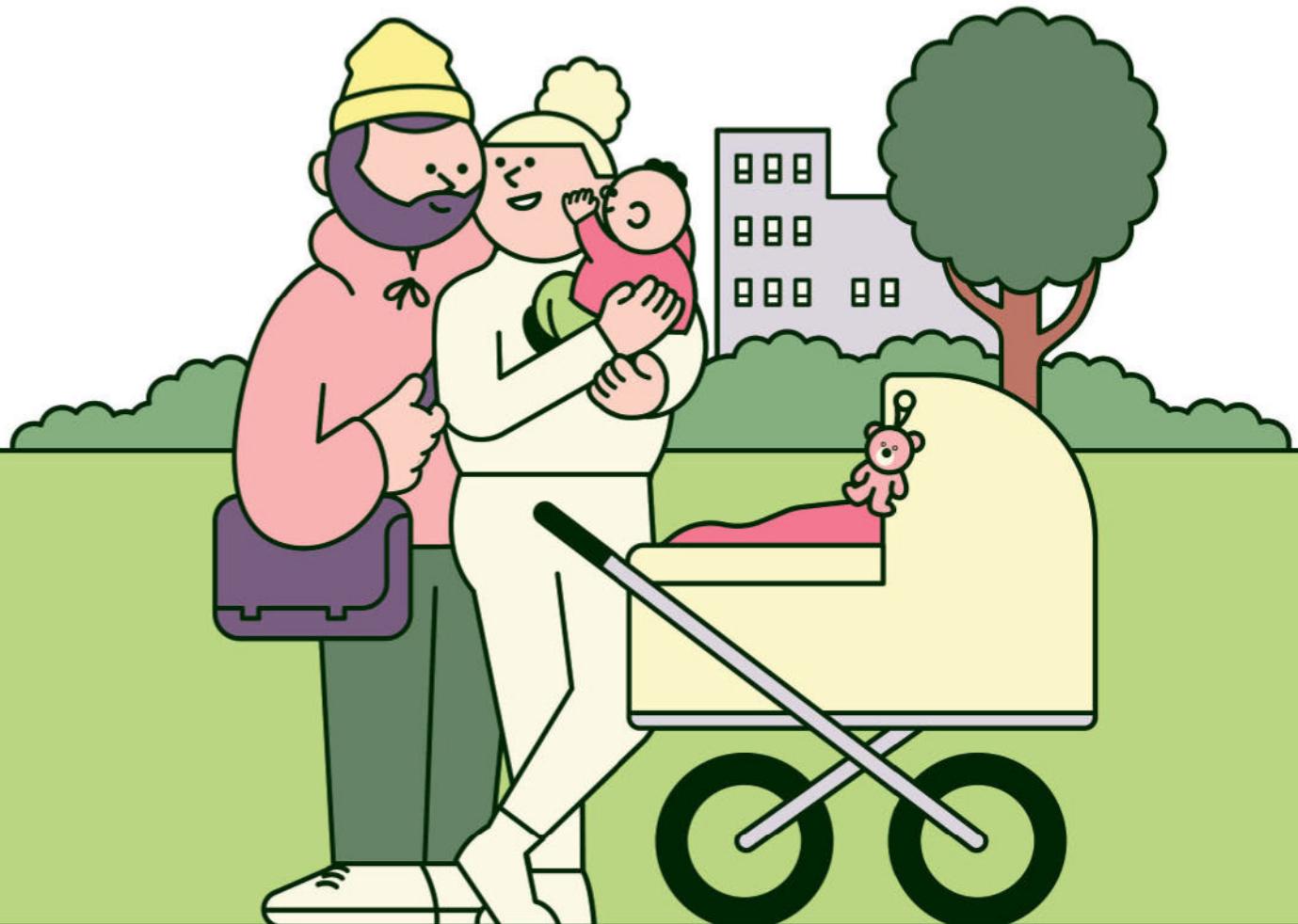
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