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# NO. 1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX

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FUTURE  
ISSUE 239

WHY GAME ARTIST **GRÉGORY FROMENTEAU** STILL VALUES TRADITIONAL MEDIA



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



In this month's magazine we turn our focus on a number of exceptionally talented artists, as well as some of their tools, tips and techniques. First off, we have our beautifully whimsical cover art, which was created by the talented Selenada. If this kind of art speaks to you, make

sure to check out her tutorial on its creation, and dive into Clip Studio Paint to follow along. There's even a great timelapse video of her process too!

Elsewhere, we talk to Grégory Fromenteau about his years in the business, getting into the world of video game art and the value of traditional media. Not only that, but we caught up with four artists to discuss their advice for filling art with narrative.

In our tutorial section, we have the latest in Charlie Pickard's course on art fundamentals, this time looking at values; a basic yet hugely important skill to learn. And we bring yet more training too, covering how to paint hard-surface sci-fi vehicles and using 3D to aid your artistic workflow.

Lastly we and the wider community reflect on the loss of the legendary manga artist Akira Toriyama.

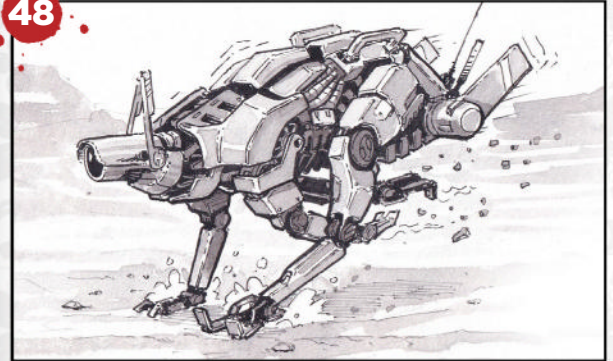
I hope you enjoy the issue.

*Rob*

**Editor**  
**Rob.Redman@futurenet.com**

### EDITOR'S CHOICE Three of my top picks this month...

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#### **Mighty mechs and spaceship designs**

Animal-inspired machinery and flying cars abound in the sketchbook of concept artist Robert Laszlo Kiss.

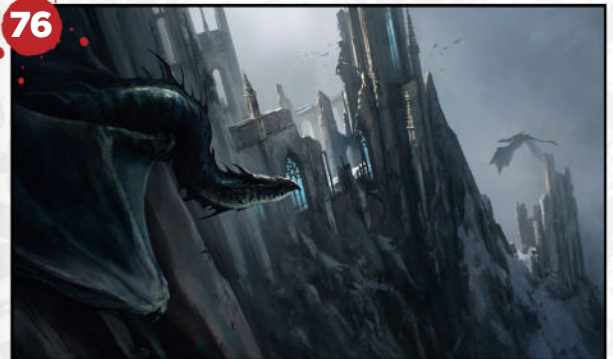
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#### **Draw futuristic vehicle designs**

John A. Frye shares his workflow for painting stunning science fiction vehicles from scratch using Photoshop.

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#### **Develop 3D skills for concept art**

Learn how to infuse tools such as Blender into your process with this fantastic tutorial by Gaëlle Seguillon.

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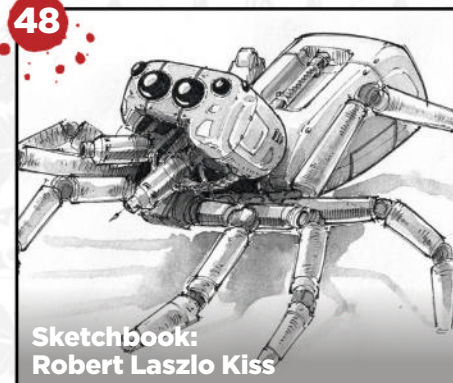
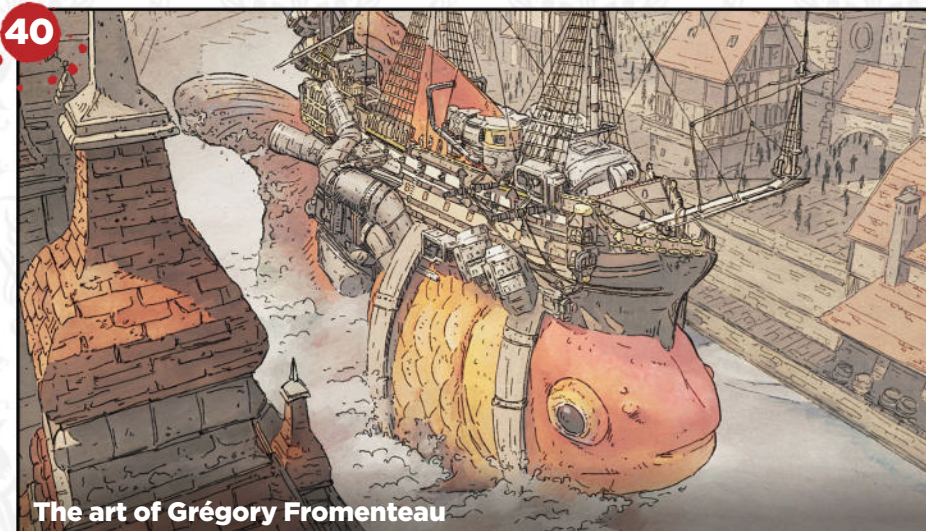
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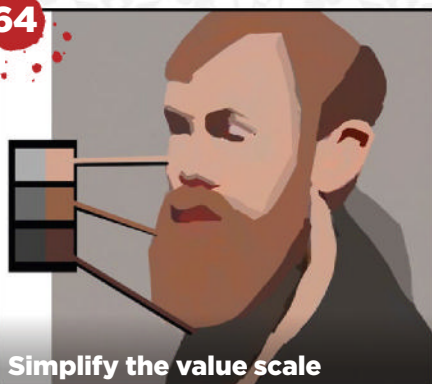
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ImagineFX

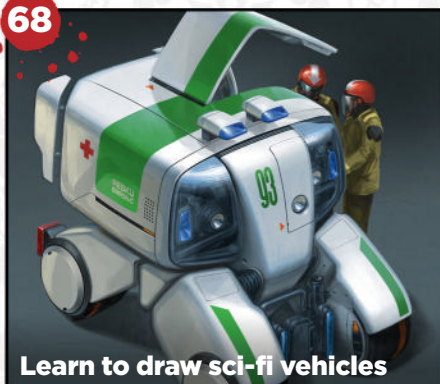


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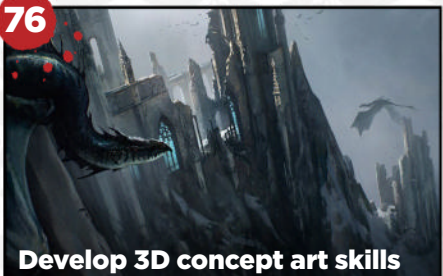
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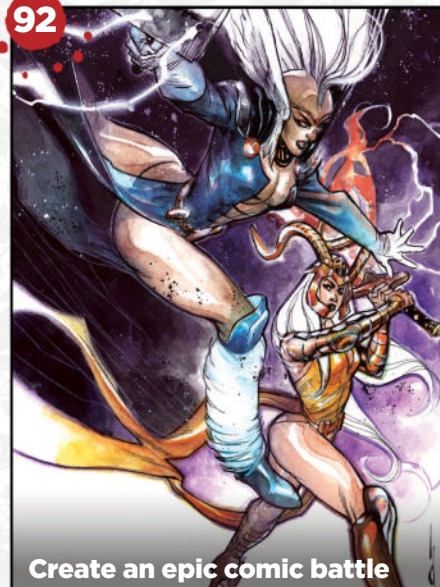
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## GET YOUR RESOURCES

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

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<https://lfxm.ag/clip-studio>

**2 Click the download link**  
Find your files ready for download.

**3 Download what you need...**  
Save the files or watch the videos.

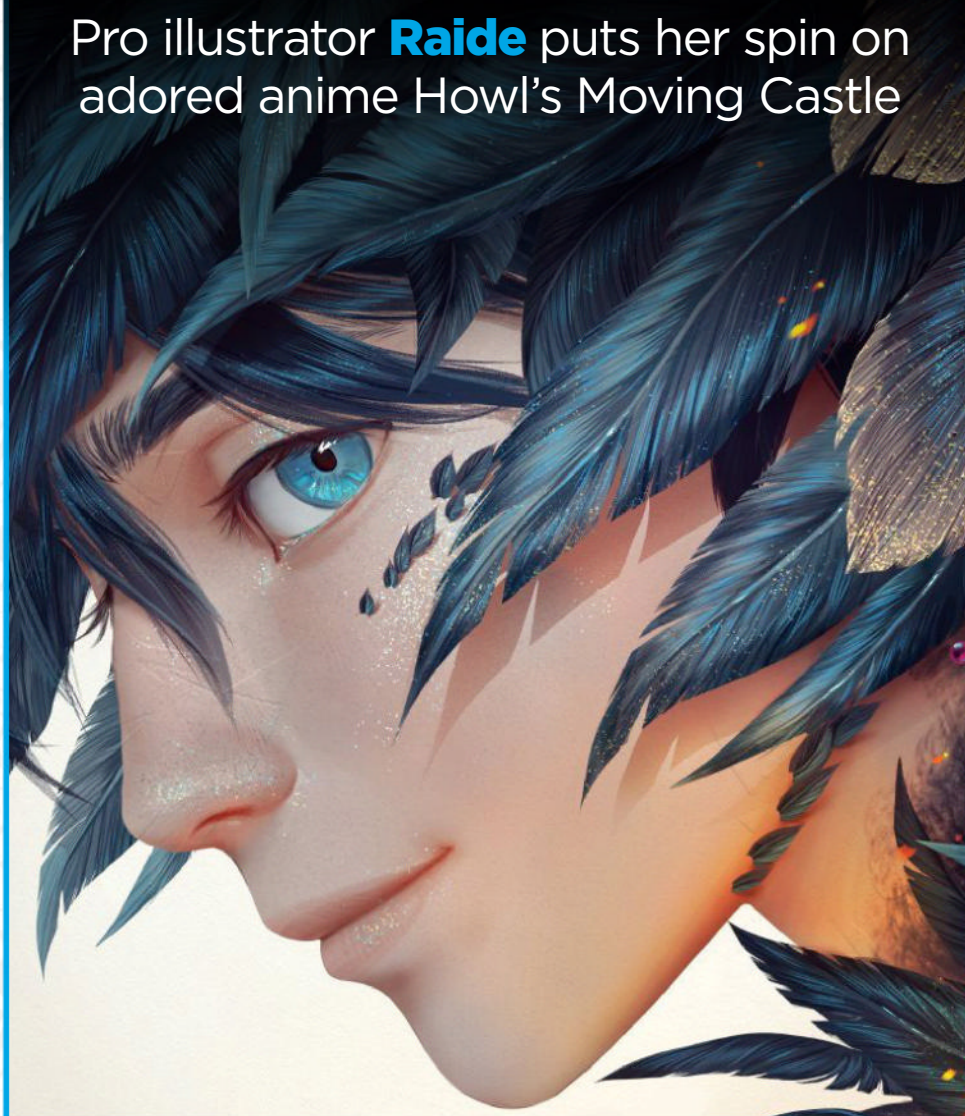


Next month

Next month in...  
NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS  
**ImagineFX**

# LEARN TO PAINT ICONIC FAN ART

Pro illustrator **Raide** puts her spin on  
adored anime Howl's Moving Castle



## Draw surreal character art

Discover how to  
keep your work  
loose with expert  
insight from Moon

## Finding passion for characters

Iryna Khymych  
tells us all about  
what inspired her  
to begin creating

## Advice from a vibrant artist

Juan Diego León  
goes step-by-step  
into how he paints  
stunning fan art

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**ImagineFX**

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# FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART



## Pablo Pereira

LOCATION: Spain MEDIA: PaintTool SAI 2 WEB: [www.instagram.com/breri\\_](http://www.instagram.com/breri_)

Pablo is an illustrator and graphic design student. They are well known for mixing ancient and trendy themes. "I'm especially in love with Japanese masks. You'll hardly see an uncovered face in my artwork!"

### 1 SAMURAI KID

"An excellent example of what I mean by mixing the past and the present in my illustrations. A rare example of an uncovered face, too."

### 2 MOBILE CASE

"Lots of people asked me for this mobile phone case. I started to believe it could be a good idea, so I made it real."

### 3 BY THE SWORD

"This was part of a pair of redraws I did recently. I aimed to ensure that I was improving at drawing. Truly one of my favourites."



### 4 KITSUNE X

"I made this as part of a collaboration with XPPen. They wanted me to integrate an X somewhere in the piece, so I sculpted it onto the character's mask."

### 5 DRIFTING AWAY

"I wanted to get a sense of movement in this one, which is why I put so many stripes floating all over the place. I also needed some parkour references."



ImagineFX



— 기 수 기 리







## Yare Yue

**LOCATION:** China **MEDIA:** Photoshop, Blender **WEB:** [zero0.artstation.com](http://zero0.artstation.com)

Yare has been working in the CG industry since 2013 in both game art and development. They now work as a freelance artist, expanding their repertoire and exploring new styles.

### 1 SMILING FACE

"I wanted to make this character both cute and creepy. What would be more suitable than a clown doll?"

### 2 TRIP: WIND OF SOUND

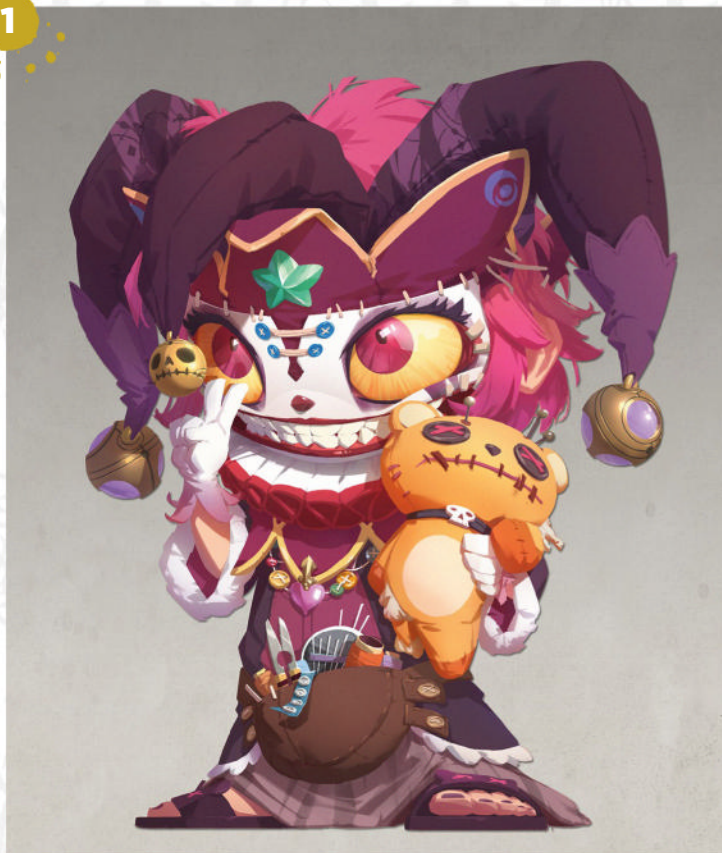
"This is from my personal series, TRIP. A child and his cat escape reality into a fantasy realm. I wanted to physically transform sound into a relic for exploration."

### 3 CONVALLARIA LAKE

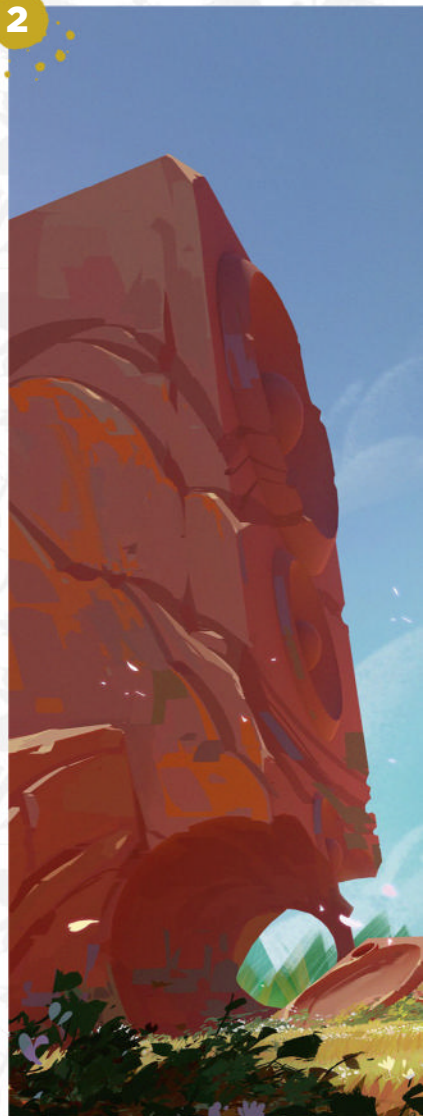
"Another piece from my TRIP series. I didn't want the series to be too fantastical and grand, so it was more of a stop-start in terms of the subject matter and design."

### 4 BABY GREED

"A Halloween-themed character design. The greedy baby doll uses its gigantic mouth to fill his empty shell by swallowing all kinds of different sweets."



2



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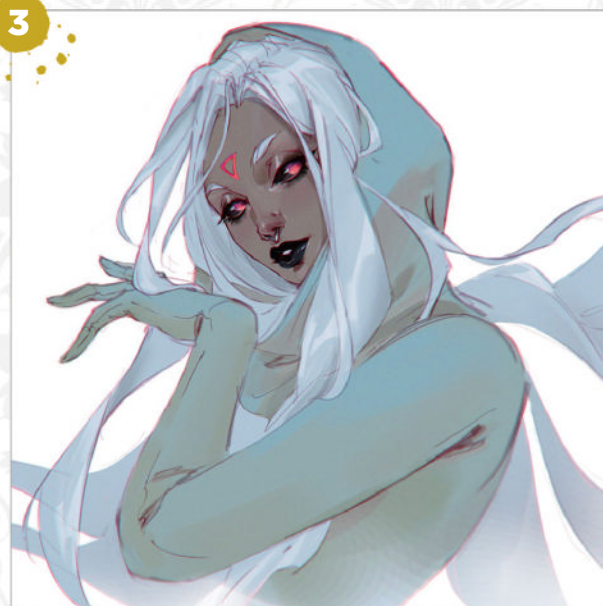
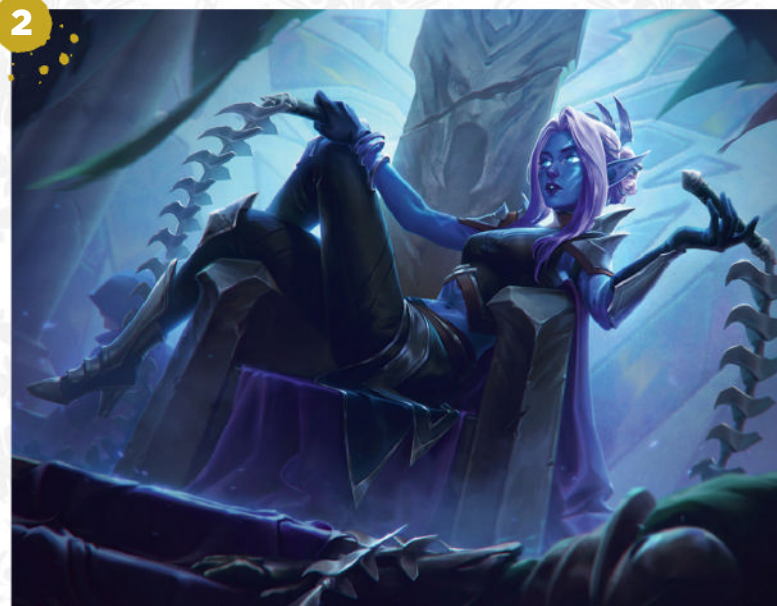




## Aleksandra Alekseeva

**LOCATION:** Serbia **MEDIA:** Photoshop, Procreate **WEB:** [www.artstation.com/aleksandraalekseeva](http://www.artstation.com/aleksandraalekseeva)

Aleksandra is an illustrator and concept artist working in the game development industry. She prefers to create fantasy settings, and most of all loves to draw girls. "It's my pleasure and comfort zone."



**1 LOVE**  
"Love can be beautiful and attractive, but also treacherous and dangerous."

**2 DEMETRIA**  
"A commercial illustration of a game character. I adore cold colour palettes, especially neons and pearlescent colours."

**3 WHITE-HAIRED GIRL**  
"This art piece comes from my experiments with colour and form. I don't know why, but white hair is my favourite for drawing."

**4 MODERN GEISHA**  
"Here I was searching for an interesting look. I settled on one inspired by Japanese culture, painted in neon colours."









## L.J. Koh

**LOCATION:** Singapore **MEDIA:** Procreate, Photoshop **WEB:** [www.artstation.com/kheljay](http://www.artstation.com/kheljay)

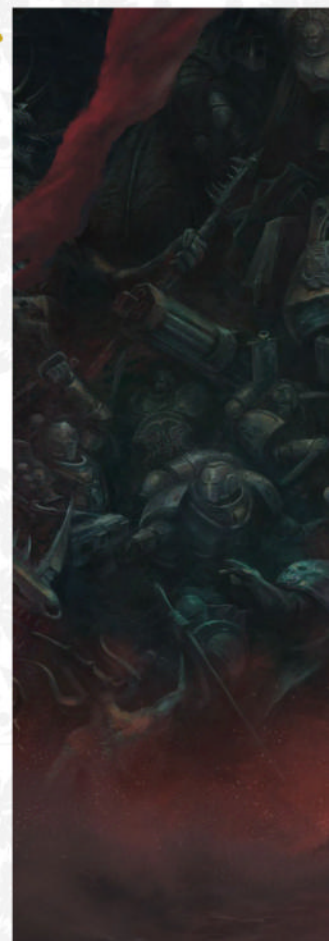
L.J. Koh is a commercial artist specialising in Warhammer 40,000 fan art. "I've worked for the likes of Wizards of the Coast and Games Workshop, and like to replicate neoclassical art in modern sci-fi and fantasy settings."

### 1 THE EMPEROR'S MERCY

"This 40K fan art scene depicts the Emperor of Mankind displaying his full divinity amid the darkened halls and blinding his guards, who became traitors. I took inspiration from neoclassical paintings of Julius Caesar's assassination."

### 2 GUILLIMAN AND HELBRECHT

"With this piece, I wanted to recreate the look and composition of a Lionel Royer painting. I focused the lighting and colour to draw attention to individuals in a sea of bodies."





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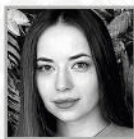
## 3 SANGUINIUS VERSUS HORUS

"This is a 40K fan-favourite scene of a final, tragic duel between loving brothers. I took inspiration from The Fallen Angel by Alexandre Cabanel in the expressions of anger and betrayal."

## 4 THE ANGEL'S INFERNO

"A scene of the 40K Blood Angels commander Dante on a personalised throne looking back at his 10,000 years of endless war. I pushed the angelic heraldry really hard to capture the grand melancholy of the grimdark universe."





## Polina Bivol

**LOCATION:** Georgia **MEDIA:** Procreate, Photoshop **WEB:** [www.artstation.com/bivol](http://www.artstation.com/bivol)

Polina is a freelance fantasy illustrator represented by TomatoFarm Agency. She uses whimsical shape language and gouache-like brushes to add more expression to her art. Her latest hobby is frame-by-frame animation.

### 1 POISONOUS ROUTINE

"Potion-making can be very fun if you have all the right ingredients in the right places, a carnivorous cauldron, and one delicious toad. A helpful magic pet toad, of course."



### 2 CATCHING TIME

"If fish were clouds in the sky, would they still be so easy to catch? I wanted this illustration to portray childlike hope and a belief in impossible miracles."



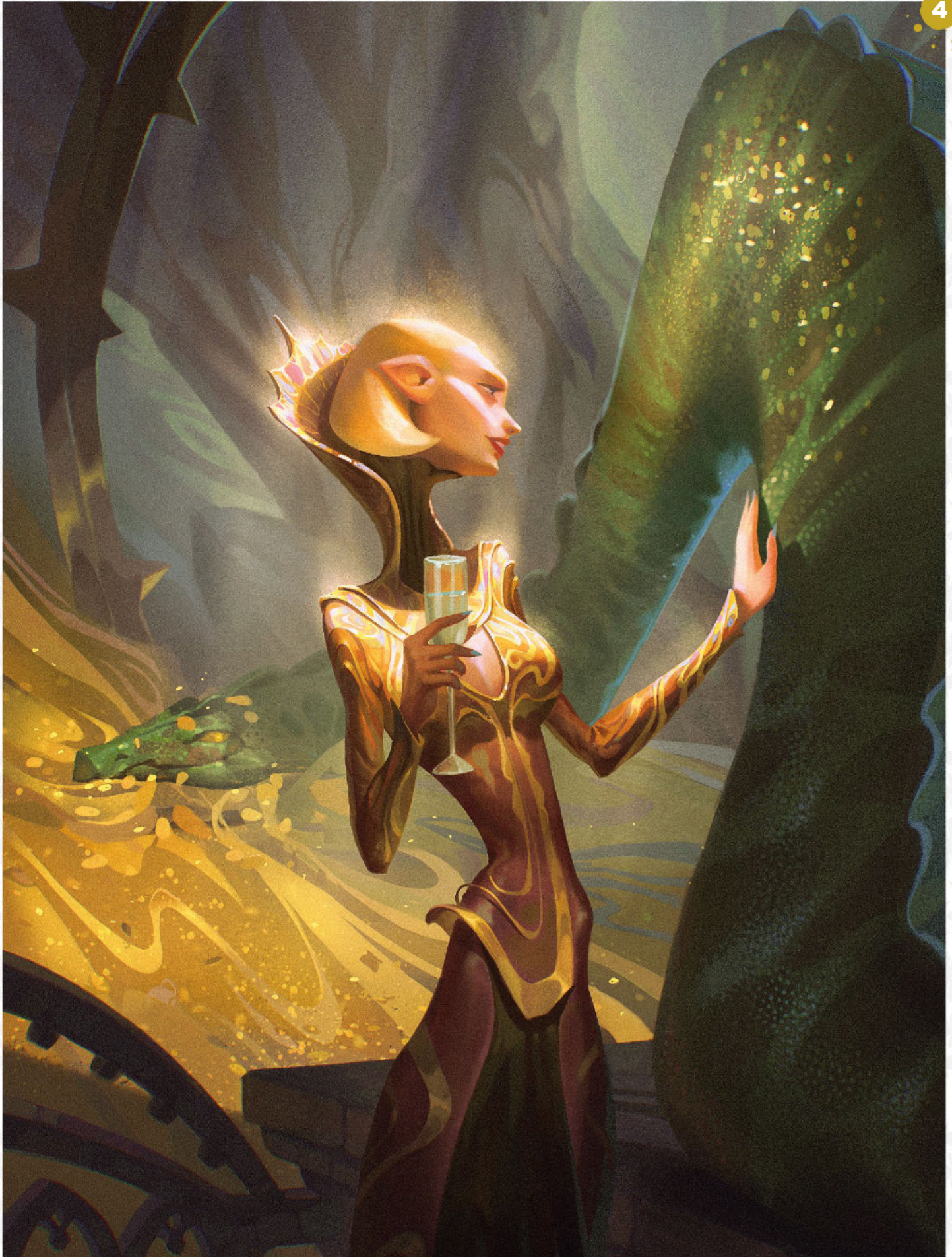
### 3 MIDNIGHT FLARE PICKING

"This illustration is all about the friendliest witch gathering the cutest little flares on the most charming night in a world full of magic, not fear."

### 4 THE EMPRESS

"This piece illustrates the tender love for the most precious treasure in a trove: the royal dragon. It's the only being that the Empress admires."









## Emanuel Freitas Dias

**LOCATION:** Brazil **MEDIA:** Photoshop, Blender **WEB:** [www.artstation.com/emanueldias](http://www.artstation.com/emanueldias)

Emanuel likes to bring personal themes to his work, including spirituality, strong emotions and metaphors. He takes a lot of inspiration from the cinema and daily life to make the viewer reflect on themselves a little.



### 1 KNIGHT

"Imagine a knight walking through a fantasy forest. I used strong colours and a powerful composition, as simplicity is always better."

### 2 GRAVEYARD

"Spirits walk through the cemetery while the crows keep a watch out for any evil spirits that could interfere with the rest of the dead."

### 3 HEALING TEMPLE

"An image about spiritual and physical healing. I brought together contrasting colours and architecture that refer to the idea of angels and healing."

### 4 PILOT

"It's difficult for me to use monochromatic colours. But here I paired them with a strong, graphic design so the scene can be understood from afar."



3



4



**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)





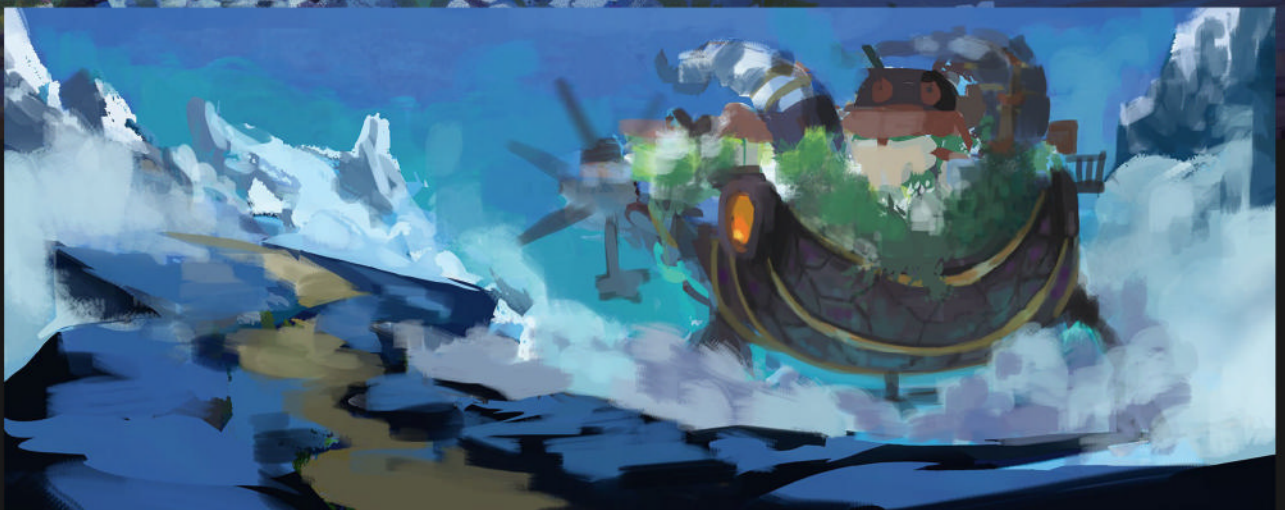
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**YEAR CREATED:** 2023 **MEDIA:** Photoshop

"This illustration is based on the movie Howl's Moving Castle by Hayao Miyazaki. The goal was to create an illustration and interpret the colours and shapes into the Ghibli style. The composition, as well as finding the best way to treat my brushstrokes, proved to be a challenge, but so rewarding. I'm happy I pushed through it!"







## Artist **PROFILE**

**Marin Le Tourneau**

**LOCATION:** France



Marin, who is also known as Iracema, is a second year concept art student at Bellecours École in Lyon, France, and has had a passion for art since childhood.

[www.therookies.co/u/iracema](http://www.therookies.co/u/iracema)



Eleonor Piteira made Secret Keeper as part of the 2021 Month of Love, a challenge with the prompt 'silence'.



## How to tell a story in an image

**Narrative masters** Tanya Combrinck talks to four artists about using visual elements to imbue their work with personal and universal human stories

**While generative AI can produce images with superficial visual appeal, especially to those who haven't seen much AI art, they tend to fall apart under closer inspection. Elements are assembled almost randomly, and the overall image lacks the meaning, coherence and intention that can only come from a human artist.**

A way artists can fight back against generative AI is to lean into the things



"Most of my inspiration comes from older stories and the sense of wonder and mystery they hold, but also the relation they have to human nature," says Amanda Ramsey.

that only a human can do, for example using narrative to capture emotion, and convey something personal about themselves in their work.

### PAINTING WITH WORDS

Some narratives will work better than others in paintings. Consider situations that feature opposing forces or some form of tension. Senior concept artist **Titus Lunter** says: "Interesting stories are inherently about conflict."

Once you've found your conflict, you need to define it in words. Your choice of words is important, because these will be the keywords that you

use to build your image. Titus explains keywords "are broadly understood by most people, but mean very different and personal things to everyone". For example: "While cosy might be under blankets, it also might be by a fire, or on a patio with a nice drink." These are all literal scenarios that you could paint to evoke a feeling of cosiness. "Understanding that these words mean different things to different people will help you understand your own voice," Titus adds.

Your unique voice and perspective is what makes your work different to everyone else's. He says: "In a way, you and your painting are having a dialogue on how to best capture ➡





## TRIBUTES TO A MASTER

Remembering Akira Toriyama, an influential figure of manga and creator of Dragon Ball, whose incredible work has proved inspirational to countless artists.

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## GET SET FOR VERTEX 2024

Discover why you won't want to miss out on attending our digital art conference, and meet a selection of the expert artists who will be sharing their talents.

**Page 32**



## LIBRARY OF INSPIRATION

We peek inside the book-filled studio of Charles Ratteray, who tells us all about the collection of artwork he creates that traverses many mediums.

**Page 34**



"Art is a personal thing. And not every piece is meant to be enjoyed by everyone," says Titus Lunter.

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Save money on Titus Lunter's concept art course with code **IMAGINEFX**

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"Adult life is all about getting disentangled from the influences of other people, and forming ourselves in our own image," says Kim Myatt.



Titus says: "I wanted to show the viewer a very alien structure but in a casual, familiar way."





"I tried to achieve as much as I could with a few brushstrokes, as if I only had a second," says Titus.

➡ what you want to say and what that means." This happens in two ways: your choice of what to paint, and how you use elements such as the composition, colour and texture used to paint it.

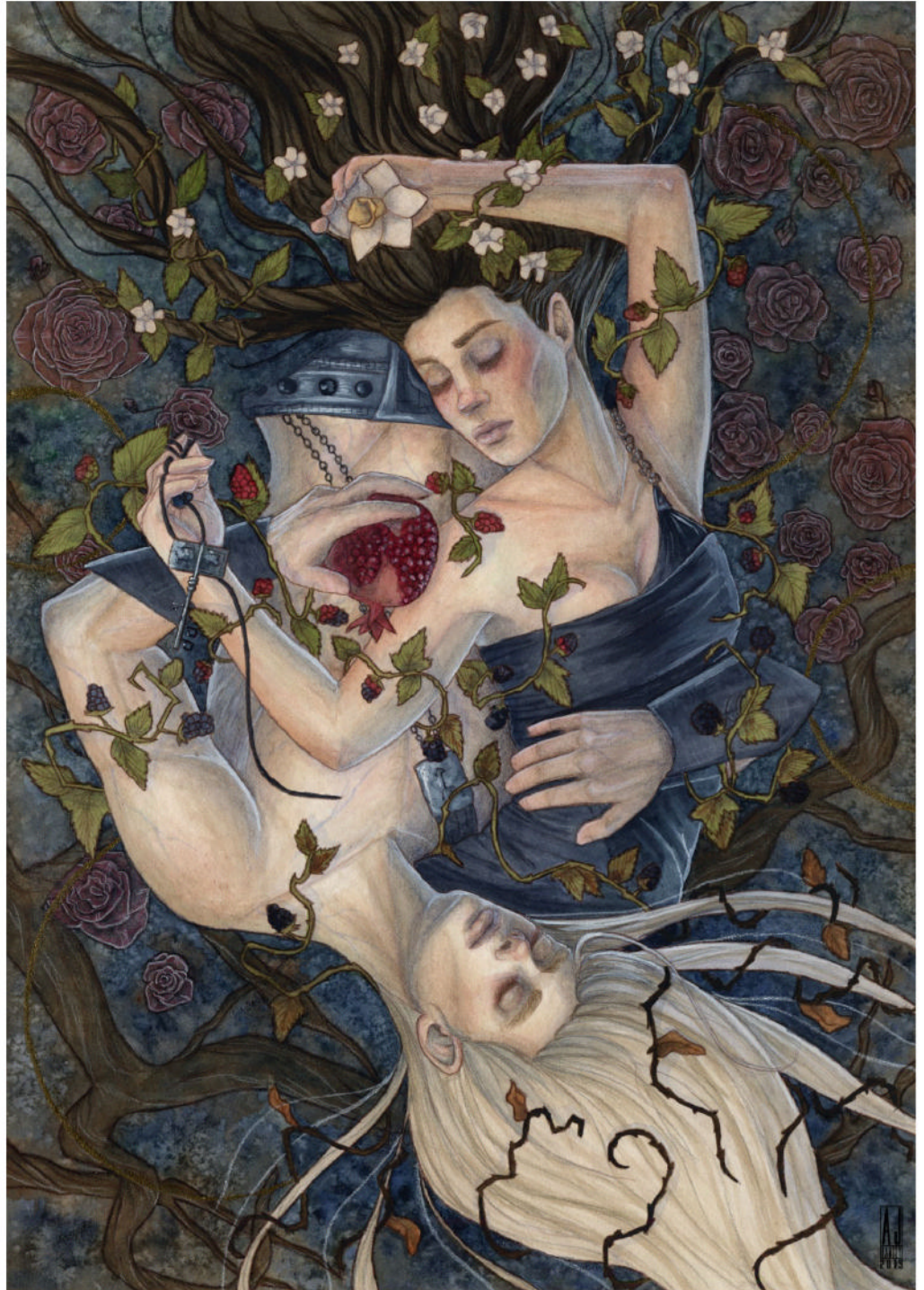
"One of the things that gets easily forgotten nowadays is that painting, and thus storytelling, is a deeply personal journey, which comes to be thanks to introspection, exploration, and creating a bunch of terrible paintings," Titus explains. "The end result is a reflection of the journey you've gone on to try and define these keywords in a way that fits you best as a painter."

Some of the best stories you can

## “The trick with symbolism is to pick which part you lay on thick”

work with are those that are familiar to people, such as folklore and ancient mythology, because a fresh take on something people think they already know about is usually compelling. These types of stories are often told through the language of symbolism.

Similar to Titus's use of keywords, he adds that "symbolism walks a tightrope between being deeply personal and universally understood. The biggest mistake people make is to be too literal and put all their eggs into one basket by trying to tell the entire story through just one of the fundamentals, like the drawing, or the colour, and so on. But the trick with using symbolism is to pick which part of the story you want to lay on thick,



"I incorporated imagery from the original story – the pomegranate, key, and narcissus – and have a bident and the symbol of Hades both hidden on the clothes," Amanda says of *The Change of the Seasons*.

and which you simply allow the viewer to arrive at themselves."

### USE YOUR EXPERIENCES

An artist whose narrative-heavy body of work is largely based around creating retellings of traditional stories is **Amanda "A.J." Ramsey.**



Her way of going on the journey that Titus describes is to first lay out the scene that will convey the familiar story to an audience, and

then "think about my own personal experiences, and how they relate to the story I want to tell".

In one of her paintings, which is based on the Ancient Greek Homeric Hymn to Demeter, Amanda added roses and twisting tree branches to the background. She explains: "They give me a feeling of youthfulness, nostalgia, and a sense of mystery that's entirely personal to me."

She also added blackberry bushes because they are something from her





"Don't be afraid to seek out that depth, and go hard on adding all sorts of meaning to your work," says Titus.

©Wizards of the Coast



Of her painting *A Quiet Place*, Kim says: "I wanted to show the relief and feeling of safety and comfort that comes with escaping into a quiet place."



"I like a bit of theatricality and a dramatic flair, and to invoke a certain degree of awe," says Eleonor.

life, and because they have symbolic meanings relevant to the story. This is a key technique for Amanda; to use elements that are deeply personal to her but also have universal meanings for others to perceive.

She offers a word of warning for those who put a lot of themselves into their art: "Be prepared for nobody to understand your artwork," she says. "Don't be upset; they're just reflecting their own experience and knowledge of the story you're trying to tell." ➡

## INDUSTRY INSIGHT WORKING TO A BRIEF

*Titus Lunter discusses effective communication for commissions*

If you're given a brief to create an image that tells a story, what are some typical challenges you might encounter, and how do you deal with them?

The biggest challenge is using the same language. Each topic is quite personal and people have their own opinion of what it should look like, so getting on the same page can be difficult. Good communication and an understanding of what's at the heart of the story is the most important thing.

The majority of my time is spent on figuring out what it is exactly I want to say. We need to use more nuanced words in order to paint a more nuanced picture. Being on the nose is fine sometimes, but then what about capturing that feeling when your loved one just walked out of the door to go on a long trip, and you're just not that hungry for dinner anymore?

A challenge coming from that last bit is that we can sometimes be way too literal, trying to paint exactly what's going on with lines and shapes, but sometimes an emotion or story doesn't want to be told that way. Think about something epic, like a massive explosion, but painted tightly; it risks becoming dull. Slap some paint on there with gusto, and all of a sudden the texture of the paint is trying to capture some of that energy that's in the brief!

You have a lot of great tools at your disposal; colour, texture, value, and so on. They each carry a part of the story and together paint a full, rich picture. This is a result of a personal journey only an artist can take and can't be replicated by a machine with no understanding of these things.



Titus Lunter is an illustrator and concept artist specialising in environmental storytelling and worldbuilding.

<https://tituslunter.com>





"Stories are being lost to time, like nature is being consumed by concrete jungles," says Amanda.

➡ Folklore and traditional stories are often culturally significant and held up as almost sacred by some. Amanda is sensitive to this. "I try so hard to do it justice," she says. "I research a lot before committing to a piece. I've denied creating paintings because I didn't know enough and was worried I would disrespect it."

## SHOWING RESPECT

Another artist who draws inspiration from mythology and folklore, **Kim Myatt** agrees that sometimes there is a responsibility for artists to be respectful towards the original work.

"On the one hand I believe all artists should be free to represent whatever inspires them in whatever way they want. But on the other hand, if it's released on the internet especially, people will take the artist's rendition as gospel and consider it 'canon'. This can be bad when folklore taken from a specific culture is attached."

Kim has first-hand experience, having seen this happen to elements from her own culture. She reflects: "Although it's nice to have something recognised, it's annoying to see things added that weren't there originally, especially when the original folklore it's drawing from has been crushed by colonialism and needs preservation."

Kim's images tell deeply personal stories about her own life, and she uses her art as a source of comfort. One of her paintings depicts a woman



Eleonor says: "Storytelling in illustration is about showing meaning with intention; this can be as literal as you wish."



laying beneath her duvet, mingled with autumn leaves. It's about going through a difficult time, "wanting to escape into a dream and wake up when the stress is over," she says.

In another, we see a boy being manipulated by disembodied hands that represent the influence of other people's opinions. Of the piece, she explains: "I wanted to express the idea of how words from your past can push and pull you in directions you might not want to go."

Kim points out that your use of symbology is going to land differently with every viewer. "Something that makes me cringe might be cool to someone else," she says, before also explaining that she thinks similarly to Amanda. "I find it helpful to develop your own understanding of motifs and symbols - what do these things mean





Kim's painting *Deep in a Dream* is about a stressful time in her life. "I like the strange contrast between being somewhere comfortable, like your bed, in an unfamiliar environment," she says.



The cover of Veronica Roth's novella *When Among Crows*. "Though seemingly simple, each element has underlying meaning," says Eleonor.

## “I find it helpful to develop your own understanding of motifs and symbols; what do these things mean for you?”

for you – and mix that into the use of more universal symbolism.”

### SIMPLE SYMBOLISM

In her work as a freelance illustrator, **Eleonor Piteira** creates images for book covers and trading card games that convey a specific narrative. Her advice is to simplify your idea, as it's easy for your point to get lost if you use too many symbolic elements. "Choose just one element for the focal point, and build your illustration to serve the purpose of bringing attention to that," she says.



**Eleonor Piteira** creates images for book covers and trading card games that convey a specific narrative.

"You'll want to make sure the most important elements in the illustration are readable. You want people to look at your illustration and understand what they're seeing, so you can hook them into looking at your work with more attention."

If there are secondary elements that are key to your story, you can draw up a hierarchical list and give them an appropriate level of prominence within your image.

"It's all about being intentional with your choices," she says. "But not everything needs to have a reason to be there, sometimes it might just be



"Symbolism should be used to gently guide the viewer, to suggest rather than scream it in their face," says Titus.

because you like it. The cool factor should not be ignored, so have fun with the process!"

If you'd like to learn about these topics in more depth, Titus Lunter has developed his own course about adding story, history and functionality to your architectural concepts, which is available through Domestika. Visit <https://bit.ly/4917t8r> and use the code **IMAGINEFX** to get a 15 per cent discount. Offer ends 5 July, 2024.



# A Tribute To **Akira Toriyama**

**Remembering a legend** Artists from across the world pay homage to the influential manga artist and genius creator of Dragon Ball

**The overwhelming outpouring of grief that followed the devastating news of Akira Toriyama's passing says everything about the impact he had on the art world. To some he was a hero, to others a master or a sensei.**

Akira's career was propelled by his manga series Dr. Slump. The story of a

little robotic girl, her inventor, and their many misadventures, the series was an award winner and swiftly adapted into an anime that ran for more than 200 episodes on Japanese television.

But it was Dragon Ball for which Akira was known best, and launched him into worldwide consciousness.

His manga was first created in 1984, and the journey of Son Goku is now told through anime, movies and more, remaining a global phenomenon that has touched the lives of so many.

The indelible mark Akira has left on the lives and careers of generations of fans was demonstrated by the many touching personal tributes and articles written following the announcement of his passing.

Rest in peace, Akira Toriyama.



"As a kid I had never seen anything like Dragon Ball, and it really inspired me to draw and push myself, and keeps inspiring me to this day. He had such an impact on my artistic journey, as with everyone else. RIP Akira Toriyama."

**Max Grecke**

"Dragon Ball Z and Dr. Slump were a big part of my childhood. Rest in peace Toriyama Akira."

**Goro Fujita**

"Rest in peace to the manga legend Akira Toriyama. The artistry and monumental impact of Dragon Ball will live on in the hearts of fans and creators for generations to come."

**Cartoon Network**

"Ride those clouds Mr Toriyama. Thank you for all the reasons Asian teens have the wildest hair. Just Saiyan."

**Dustin Nguyen**

"There's no way for me to write up exactly what Akira Toriyama meant to me. My whole life would have been different, so much of my childhood revolved around his creations, and to this day I reference his work and design style. I didn't know Akira Toriyama, but I loved him. Thank you. RIP."

**Dave Rapoza**

"RIP to the masterful Akira Toriyama. A brilliant artist, craftsman and storyteller whose reach will extend for generations. A huge loss for creators and fans alike."

**Joe Quinones**

"Adios to one of the most important and influential artists of our lifetime. Gracias, maestro Akira Toriyama."

**Jorge R. Gutierrez**

"Rest in peace. Thanks for everything Akira Toriyama."

**LightBox Expo**



Forty years on from its creation, Akira Toriyama's Dragon Ball franchise is still a phenomenon.

Photographs: STR/Jill Press/AFP via Getty and RICHARD A. BROOKS/AFP via Getty Images

"No words can explain how Toriyama Sensei influenced us all. We've made friends, discovered Japanese culture, and developed a love for manga thanks to his worlds.

Some of us even became artists. His work, style and influence, lives on in all of us and beyond. His legacy lives forever. It's a day to think and be grateful about everything he left us. Thank you Sensei."

**Toni Infante**

"Very heartbreaking news to come out about Akira Toriyama's sudden passing. He was one of the greatest to ever do it; his stories and characters filled millions with joy and inspiration. Almost every artist that I know was in some way inspired by his amazing gift. Rest in peace legend."

**Tony Daniel**

"Wow, I can't believe it! Rest in peace Toriyama Sensei, and thank you for all of your incredible work."

**Karla Diaz**

"That one hurt. Thank you for the great adventures master. RIP Akira Toriyama."

**Pascal Blanché**

"RIP Legend. This one hits hard. You were such a big inspiration for us all. Thank you for everything, sensei."

**Hicham Habchi**

"Rest in peace Akira Toriyama. He is unarguably the most influential artist of these past decades, who inspired millions of kids all over the world and across generations to pick up a pencil and 'draw a Goku'."

**Nico Delort**

"Dragon Ball was for millions of us the first anime and manga we ever saw without even knowing what it was. The colours, the richness of action and design, the humour, the epic: all Toriyama. We were children just watching Tom and Jerry and Disney stuff. Imagine the impact."

**Matías Bergara**

"Thank you Akira Toriyama, the one who taught me to overcome my limits. Thank you, for everything."

**Dan Mora**

"It's a sad day knowing the passing of Akira Toriyama. I grew up watching Dr. Slump and Dragon Ball, and he was a

big inspiration for cultivating my love for anime and art. A true art hero of my childhood. As we grieve for the loss of Toriyama Sensei, he is also an important reminder for us to continue pursuing our artistic dreams and the legacy of human creativity celebrated by so many generations, which can never be replaced by any generative process. RIP."

**Stanley 'Artgerm' Lau**

"Rest in peace king. Thanks for everything."

**Mad Boogie Creations**

"Mr Toriyama was one of my biggest inspirations. Without him and his impactful work, I would not have been so captivated by art and stories as a child. His influence to not just myself but so many others around the world cannot be measured. My condolences to his family."

**Karla Ortiz**

"All the childhood memories, watching the anime on TV, copying the way he drew muscles and cloth folds. Thank you for all the fun, Toriyama Sensei. Rest in power."

**Kael Ngu**



The new home of Vertex, London's Business Design Centre, is a fantastic venue.



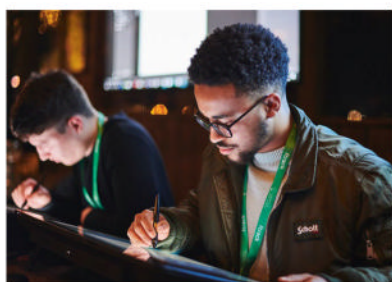
# Get set for Vertex 2024!

**Unforgettable event** Our artist-focused festival returns in person with a host of speakers from the biggest names in the business



**Vertex is back as a live event this year, taking place in London on 19 April, and ImagineFX Editor Rob Redman explains why you should join us.**

"Before the pandemic we launched Vertex, an art festival that brought



Get your hands on the latest tools and tech to see what could benefit your workflow.

together our community and the industry, and now it's back again to give attendees a packed day of practical inspiration," he says.

"If you're out to get inspired, or learn a new skill, Vertex is the place to be. You'll hear about the journeys of your heroes, gain insights from their experiences, and watch as they run live demos.

"Interested in the cutting-edge innovations of creative tools? Get hands-on with them in the expo area! And if you need some tips to land your dream gig, book a slot with our expert portfolio reviewers to get ahead."

Vertex 2024 will take place on Friday, 19 April at the Business Design Centre in London. For info and to buy tickets visit [www.vertexconf.com](http://www.vertexconf.com).



## Five things...

... you must see on your visit to Vertex!

### 1 Insightful talks from top artists

Industry pros will be sharing their stories and career journeys.

### 2 Learn new skills in our workshops

If you're looking to level up then Vertex is the place to be, with live workshops from pro artists on all manner of subjects.

### 3 Expert demos

Peek over the shoulders of pro artists as they work.

### 4 Portfolio reviews

Sign up for a portfolio review to get invaluable advice from the people who count and move a step closer to your dream job.

### 5 Try out new tech

Tour the exhibition to explore all the latest tools and technology to help you with your artistic endeavours.



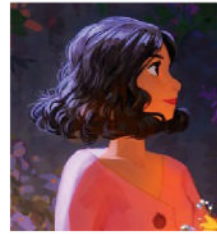
## FEATURED ARTISTS AT VERTEX

From video game designers to big screen hit-makers and more in between, meet our incredible line-up of industry experts ready to share their wealth of insights



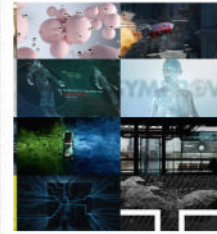
**Alina Fedaseyenko**

The associate art director at nDreams, Alina was integral in the success of hit VR game Synapse.  
<https://bit.ly/3IHvWok>



**RaidesArt and LeffiesArt**

The top twin illustrators are an ideal duo to share their advice for collaborative working.  
[raiffiesart.com](http://raiffiesart.com)



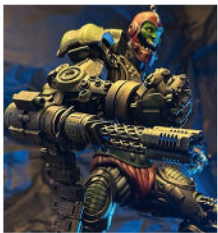
**J.M. Blay**

The founder of production company Blay Studios has worked on films including Guardians of the Galaxy and The Hobbit.  
[www.blay.info](http://www.blay.info)



**Pablo Carpio**

Pablo is a concept artist and art director who has linked up with the likes of Disney, Pixar and Marvel Studios in his career.  
[www.pablocarpio.com](http://www.pablocarpio.com)



**Dolph Souza**

Dolph has a penchant for design-driven animation and storytelling, and will be part of a panel on video game marketing.  
<https://bit.ly/3TIKeRm>



**Charlie Pickard**

Figurative artist Charlie is also an author and trainer who has written a variety of tutorials on anatomy and more for ImagineFX.  
<https://bit.ly/3R3Dcz3>



**Nana Dhebuadze**

The freelance concept artist specialises in environments and keyframes, and has previously worked with Wizards of the Coast.  
[www.nanadhebuadze.com](http://www.nanadhebuadze.com)



**HaZ Dulull**

After starting out in VFX, HaZ switched to directing and producing films, and co-founded his own company, Hazimation.  
<https://hazimation.com>



**Thomas Elliott**

Interested in wargaming? Then you won't want to miss out on the former Games Workshop artist's special talk at Vertex!  
<https://bit.ly/3TLy7Ou>



**Glen Southern**

3D expert Glen runs his own studio, and has worked with Netflix, LEGO, Adidas and many other big names during his career.  
[www.southernmfg.co.uk](http://www.southernmfg.co.uk)



**Hazel Mead**

Hazel has no fear of tackling taboos in her illustrations. She creates stunning art and diverse characters with meaning and story.  
[www.hazelmead.com](http://www.hazelmead.com)



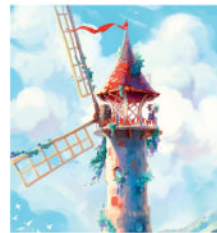
**Mike Griggs**

Mike is a digital content creation consultant who has decades of experience in solving pixel problems for a range of global brands.  
[www.creativebloke.com](http://www.creativebloke.com)



**Simon Hughes**

Union VFX creative director Simon's CV also includes time at studios such as Cinesite and DNEG, plus a host of major film titles.  
[www.unionvfx.com](http://www.unionvfx.com)



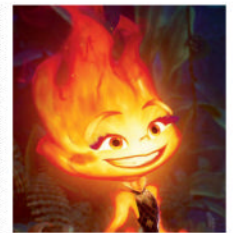
**Anna Hollinrake**

The co-founder and creative director at indie game studio Electric Saint, Anna has worked on video game and TV projects.  
<https://annahollinrake.com>



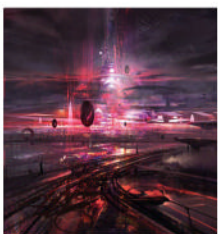
**Andy Poyiadgi**

Andy has a background in commercials, video games and broadcast promos, and is a published comic author and artist.  
[www.ajpoyiadgi.com](http://www.ajpoyiadgi.com)



**Dylan Sisson**

Veteran Dylan has been a key figure at Pixar since 1999, and has contributed to the development of its RenderMan software.  
[www.dylansisson.com](http://www.dylansisson.com)



**David Levy**

Internationally known concept artist David, whose movie credits include Star Wars, will talk about developing his own IP.  
<https://vyleart.com>



**Brynn Metheney**

Monster maker Brynn has had a hand in both publishing and films. At Vertex, she's set to deliver a talk on crafting creature designs.  
[www.brynnart.com](http://www.brynnart.com)



**Ibby Karim**

Ibby is an art director at ICHI, and combines his talents for ideation and incredible visual execution in video game projects.  
[www.ichi-worldwide.com](http://www.ichi-worldwide.com)



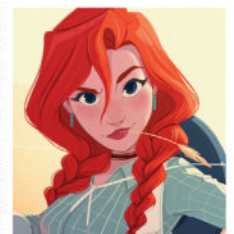
**Rafi Nizam**

An all-round creative, Rafi is an independent showrunner and has 25 years of experience in the media and entertainment worlds.  
<https://bit.ly/3TPVICS>



**Jane Paton**

Jane is the lead compositor at Union VFX and has experience at a number of big studios in the sector, such as ILM and Cinesite.  
[www.unionvfx.com](http://www.unionvfx.com)



**Pernille Ørum**

Pernille was the lead character designer for DC Super Hero Girls and made her comic art debut on Mark Miller's Hit-Girl in 2019.  
[www.pernilleoe.dk](http://www.pernilleoe.dk)



# ImagineNation Artist in Residence



My web camera for taking Zoom calls. On the wall next to it you can see a limited-run promotional poster from Riddick, which I storyboarded on.

I hung these string lights up in the studio to create some general ambient lighting. I much prefer to have low-level lighting when I'm in the studio.

This sculpture was given to me as a gift, rather than being made by me. It's just something that I like to keep among all of my woodworkings.



Here you can see my light box, which I'll use when I'm creating my initial sketches and concept ideas before I get to scanning them in.

A printout of the branding logo that I use for myself. It was also going to be a test piece for the cover of the sketchbook I'm working on.

## Charles Ratteray

**Page-turner** Library meets laboratory in the artist's studio, packed with inspiration and a mix of media



**I often think of my workspace as a lab. I spend so many of my waking, working hours experimenting in here, tinkering, fashioning, ingesting new knowledge, and fostering explosions of creativity. I have several areas designated for different activities.**

The Cintiq area is where I do all my digital professional storyboard and

concept work. On the other side of the room I have a wall that I've set aside for brainstorming. I like the idea of writing out ideas as they come to me, and have taken a section of that wall and layered it with a roll of whiteboard film, which allows me to quickly jot down ideas with Col-Erase markers. I like leaving it up like that because I can remind myself with notes and quotes as I go in and out of the room.

By the window, I put most of my wooden artworks that I've drawn on with markers, pens and pencils. I really enjoy making things with my hands in 3D space and have paintings, clay sculptures, and pieces of wood that I've treated and drawn on dotted all throughout the studio.

Traditional art is truly my favourite, and I usually reserve that form of expression as gifts for people, or ➡





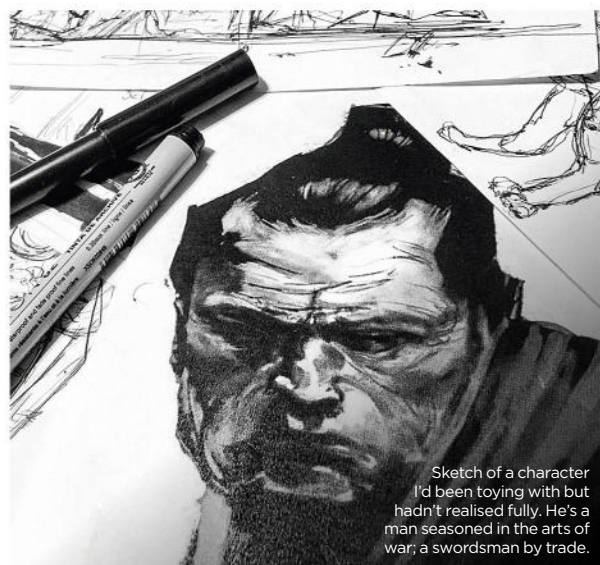
I spend a lot of time in the library each day. I'll sit on the couch as I go from book to book, and often take an organic approach to studying, going through an array of titles. I love how everything is in arm's reach for cross-referencing.



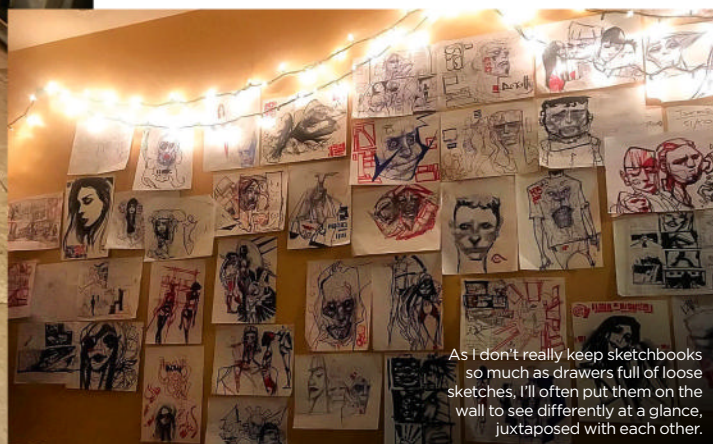
# ImagineNation Artist in Residence



The shelf on the left is reserved for graphic novels and omnibuses, and books on film directing, editing and cinematography, while the top shelf features artbooks from many films.



Sketch of a character I'd been toying with but hadn't realised fully. He's a man seasoned in the arts of war; a swordsman by trade.



As I don't really keep sketchbooks so much as drawers full of loose sketches, I'll often put them on the wall to see differently at a glance, juxtaposed with each other.

➡ for personal use. I typically express what I like to call freestyle art, which is art that's allowed to flow freely from my subconscious and through to my hands, manifesting as it is without any judgement. I'll find myself expressing lots of symbolic, abstract writing and shapes. The characters can manifest, blending and morphing into the next stream of elements.

I love my library. I reference many subjects daily to further my awareness

“ I'll find myself expressing plenty of symbolic, abstract writing and shapes ”

in both the arts and filmmaking. The majority of the books in the library are technical or graphic novels and related to architecture.

As far as the lighting goes in the studio, I prefer soft light. During the day I like to have the windows and blinds open, and the beige-coloured drapes offer a nice softening of the light. In the evening, however, I enjoy controlled low-lit amber LED lighting accompanied by string lights. I also like to burn candles and incense, as both set a pleasant tone in the studio with lingering aromatic notes.

*Charles is an LA-based storyboard artist, concept designer and illustrator who has worked in the entertainment industry for 25 years with major companies including Marvel, Netflix, Riot Games and Disney.*  
[www.artstation.com/charlesratteray](http://www.artstation.com/charlesratteray)



The typical setup I'll have when I engage in a creative sketch session. Papers, pens, and a light table at the ready to refine ideas with traditional tools.



I often draw on blocks of wood with ink, paint pens and coloured pencils. Sometimes I burn them with a torch lighter for an airbrush gradient effect.



# Artist news, software & events



A sculpture experiment I called Surrender. It features a seated man with his shoulders at an off-angle and multiple arms grasping the base.



Check out a collection of the characters drawn on my sketching pages, all beautifully arranged into a single-page compilation.



This shelf is comprised of books on technical figure drawing, anatomy, writing, improv and traditional acting, as well as fashion and graphic design.



A large pen and ink drawing treated with watercolour-type shading for the tone. The ideas on the wall are written with Col-Erase.



A Halloween-style plastic mask that was first painted black with spray paint, before being drawn on using my acrylic paint pens.



Sketch compilations from a page of the sketchbook that I'm currently working on and developing.



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## PRINT AND DIGITAL BACK ISSUES



# Issue 238

May 2024

We go all out on manga with a full feast of tutorials, including the vibrant cover from our star artist Julio Cesar. Blizzard's Airi Pan shares her mission statement in our big interview, plus we visit Wayne Barlowe's curious studio.



# Issue 237

April 2024

Learn how to design incredible book cover art with bestselling artist and author Tony DiTerlizzi. DC artist Liam Sharp also talks about his creative formula, and we get expert advice on painting a ferocious fire-breathing dragon.



# 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 games industry, and how Aaron Blaise made an adorable Disney-style animation.



# Issue 235

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!

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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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Our last issue featured wonderful work from the sketchbook of ChrissaBug.

### I've got the bug

I just wanted to write in and say thanks for sharing ChrissaBug's sketchbook. I'm a massive fan of hers and follow her on Instagram, but there's something extra special about seeing my favourite artists in print. Can we get more please?!

**Dahlia, via email**

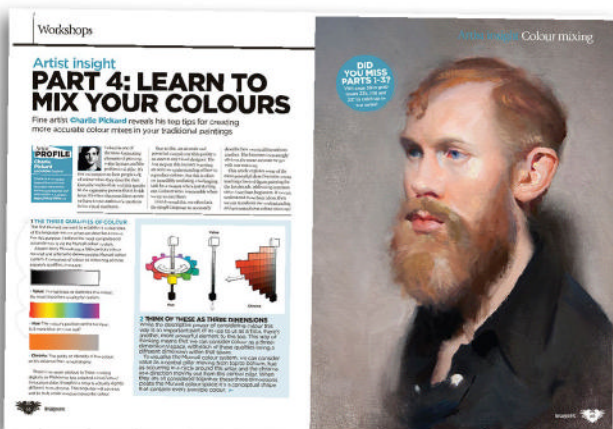
**Rob replies** Hi there, Dahlia. I'm so pleased that you enjoyed our look into Chrissa's sketchbook. We did too! I'm all for following fantastic artists online and you do get some early glimpses of new work, or even upcoming projects, but you're quite right; seeing someone appear in print is very special indeed. It feels that little more permanent for a start. Online, as soon as you scroll down you're likely to never see a piece again, but every time you flick through a magazine you're reunited with that gorgeous art.

### Manga-tastic!

ImagineFX team, you've blown things out of the water with your last issue! Being a huge anime and manga fan, I was so happy to see you cover it in such depth. Not simply because there was a lot of it, but because it was really varied. I don't think a lot of people understand how many styles of manga there are and to see it in my favourite art magazine was awesome. Thank you!

**Micky, via email**

**Rob replies** Thanks so much for the kind words. I always love to hear such enthusiastic responses to the magazine! As for your thoughts on manga, you're quite right. It's easy to think of manga as cutesie, big-eyed, teenage girls, massive swords, and odd creatures, but there's a huge variety in terms of content and art style. We're fans here too, so look out for more coverage in the future.



### Fundamentally fantastic

Hi Rob, I use a variety of mediums in my art, from watercolours to Procreate. I've always found that it's really easy to get information about projects and pieces of art, which can be very useful. However, it can be much more difficult to build up the fundamental skills that make you a better artist.

That's why I wanted to say thank you! I've been reading Charlie Pickard's series and it's exactly this kind of information that I believe will help people learn to develop their creativity. At least, that's how I feel about it.

**Andrea, via email**

**Rob replies** I couldn't agree more there Andrea! There's definitely a place for walkthroughs on existing artwork, as so many people like insights into how others approach their work, but I think it's true to say that if you can become a master of the fundamentals, then that allows so much more scope for creativity. Understanding light, form and values gives power to the ideas that every creative has.

Master the basics of figure drawing with our series by Charlie Pickard.



**DID YOU MISS THE PREVIOUS PACKED ISSUE?** Don't worry – you can get hold of issue 238 at [ifxm.ag/single-ixf](https://ifxm.ag/single-ixf).



New works that have grabbed our attention



**Mate Jako**  
[@EntennStudio](https://twitter.com/EntennStudio)



**Eric Messinger**  
[@ericmessingerart](https://twitter.com/ericmessingerart)



**Jess Amy**  
[@jessamyart](https://twitter.com/jessamyart)

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

# GRIMM FAU





## IN THE CANAL

Grégory's whimsical Fish & Ships series sees nautical craft strapped to oversized marine life.

**Dominic Carter** talks to the artist about getting into games, the value of traditional mediums, and beating burnout

**G**régory Fromenteau isn't afraid to change things up. Over the course of his career, which now spans more than 20 years, he's shifted from animation to video games and picked up a diverse range of skills in the process. We caught up with him to learn more about his work, and why he's reverting to traditional mediums as generative AI starts to creep into the art industry.

**How did you get started as an artist, and what has your career been like so far?**

Since I was a child, I've been addicted to painting. I've always existed in a sci-fi and fantasy world. I was drawing ideas



## Artist PROFILE

**Grégory Fromenteau**



**LOCATION:** Canada

**FAVOURITE ARTISTS:** Jean Giraud, Mike Mignola, Enrico Marini, Craig Mullins

**MEDIA:** Photoshop, Procreate,

watercolours, ink

**WEB:** [www.artstation.com/greg-f](http://www.artstation.com/greg-f)

➔ from the novels I was reading, which included classics by Asimov and Tolkien. Comics were also always available to me, and I liked to mimic their epic scenarios or even combine characters from other comic books.

So it should come as no surprise that I studied literature and art, and earned a baccalaureate. I then studied a master's in visual communication after learning about new media and 3D, which was in its early stages.

I started off as a generalist artist in the cartoon industry; everything from layout to modelling, and texturing to lighting and rendering was covered. It was an excellent way to discover new methods and learn how the whole business operated.

Then, after three years, I made the decision to jump into video games, which had kind of been my objective ever since I began working with 3D. I relocated to Montreal in order to work in this field, and I've been doing it for 17 years now. Over that time, I've worked in a wide variety of roles on well-known series like Prince of Persia, Assassin's Creed, and Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six, and I've learned a lot from each production. Making video games continues to be fun for me, especially the execution.

### SEAL RIDER

An explorer takes to the skies on a miraculous flying seal.



### How has your art developed, and what has driven those changes?

I've dabbled in everything, from concept art and level design through to animation, but what I like the best is the completion of a full project. I worked as a lighting artist for a long time because I loved the technical challenges of striving to produce the best results. I believe that constructing worlds and figuring out how to make things fit together more attractively is

what ultimately inspired me to pursue art direction.

### You're the executive art director at Behaviour Interactive. What does this position involve?

It's a new role for me. As the executive art director, I directly manage the art directors and I'm also in charge of the visual quality we deliver at Behaviour Interactive. So instead of me just being responsible for one specific project, I'm overseeing them all; giving guidance and support to the art directors and creative directors, and sharing my insights from my past projects.

I really enjoy it. The exchanges with the teams and the responsibility to find solutions that achieve the best quality are exciting and motivating for me. I'm always proud of what we can accomplish as a group of artists from different backgrounds. On top of this, I actively participate in the hiring and training to promote and motivate our art community at the studio.

### What made you decide to move from the animation industry to games?

That's a good question. Well, firstly I love video games. And secondly, I think the real-time rendering was appealing as it allowed me to see ➔

### CITROËN DS

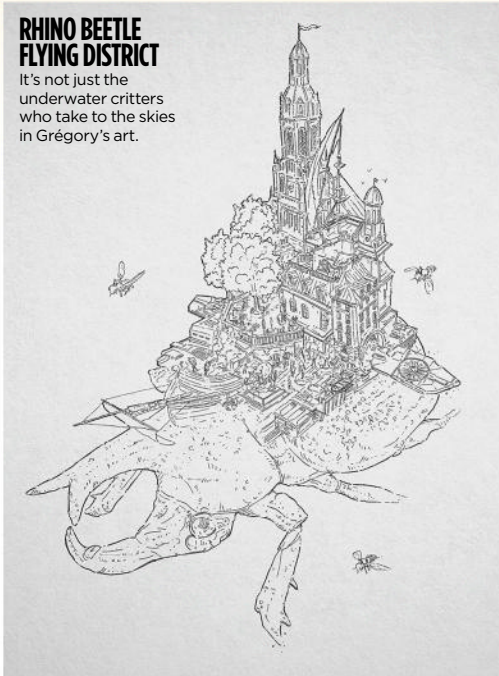
A classic car finds a new home in a strange, futuristic world.





## RHINO BEETLE FLYING DISTRICT

It's not just the underwater critters who take to the skies in Grégory's art.



## KEEPING IT REEL

Grégory shares his top demo reel tips for aspiring game artists applying for jobs

- 1 Make sure there's consistency in your portfolio. Avoid too much variety and skills that you haven't mastered yet.
- 2 Focus on the tasks and skills you want to do, rather than those you 'could do' but don't particularly enjoy doing.
- 3 Be aware of what currently exists on the market and what the company that you're applying to produces.
- 4 Apply for a specific position, even if you have a variety of skills. Mention those other skills during the interview, but don't forget about the position you're being interviewed for.
- 5 My final tip is simple: be yourself and be honest!

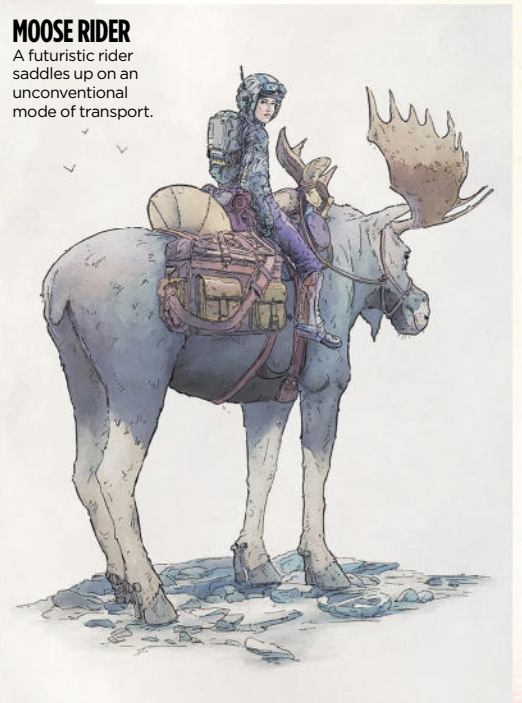
## FISH & SHIP

A medieval city soars through the sky on the back of a giant goldfish.



## MOOSE RIDER

A futuristic rider saddles up on an unconventional mode of transport.



“I’ve dabbled in everything, from concept art and level design to animation”





## TURTLE SHIP

Move over Discworld, this flying turtle is coming through with a galleon on its back.

➡ all the results right away, rather than waiting hours for rendering and compositing, which is what I was used to in the animation industry.

A video game where you control a 3D character gives you the pleasant sensation of being a part of the movie as opposed to just viewing it. My experience playing the original Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time game is what inspired me to play a lot more later on. I had no idea that I would go on to work on the series throughout my professional life.

### How is working in the video games industry different?

It's a different world. There are more technical constraints, but I do like the

challenge. The games need to run on consoles with a good frame rate, so pretty much everything involved is a compromise. With video game production, it's always 50 per cent technical art; it's all about finding the solutions to make a title work and achieve a certain level of quality, so everyone has to contribute and rely on each other. Every millisecond counts, and everyone on the team is key to that success, so I'd say that there is some freedom, but you achieve it in a very different way.

### What does your average working day look like?

To get my head going and see new things, I like to look at some artwork



## MOON FISH

By working with traditional inks, Fish & Ships gains a suitably old-fashioned feel.

on Instagram or ArtStation first thing in the morning. After that, it becomes more about diving into the projects that we're working on right now and collaborating closely with my group of art directors, making sure we're focusing on the proper priorities and

Like many artists, I'm never completely content with my work and rarely proud of it

providing high-level feedback. I like to occasionally draw when I have time.

### Do you ever feel burnout? And if so, how do you deal with it?

Yes, I do, and I believe that's typical. How do I handle the fact that we can't all be incredibly creative 100 per cent of the time? I simply accept it and move on because my brain is telling me that I need a break.

All artists need creative breaks, so instead of getting frustrated, I do



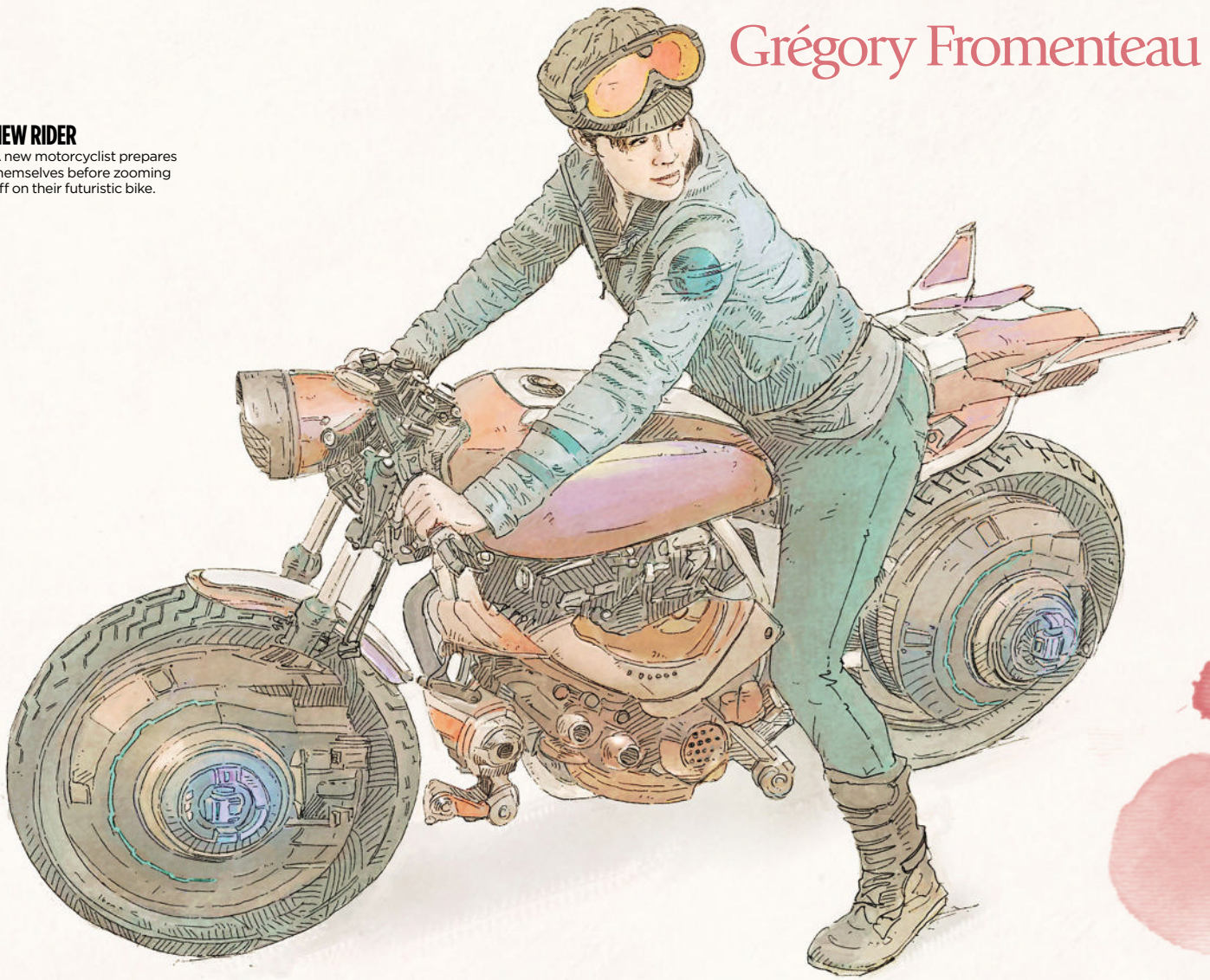
## FERRARI 250 GTO

As a self-confessed petrolhead, cars often feature in Grégory's art.



## NEW RIDER

A new motorcyclist prepares themselves before zooming off on their futuristic bike.



## OVER THE ROOFTOPS

Is it a bird, is it a plane? Nope, it's another of Grégory's whimsical whales carrying a classic ship through the clouds.



A driver takes their Ferrari out for a spin on the roads of tomorrow.

something completely different like taking a stroll, snapping photos, or talking to friends. The inspiration generally returns rather quickly, so I'd say the key is to avoid trying too hard or getting discouraged.

## Of all the work you've created so far, what are you most proud of?

Just like many other artists, I'm never completely content with my work and rarely proud of it. If I had to choose one series that I particularly liked, it

would be the one I created a few years ago using vintage cars that I'd adored as a child and imagined them in dystopian sci-fi settings.

Drawing vehicles is something I've always enjoyed, even though it may be challenging to get the right lighting and reflections. Nevertheless, I was still pleased with how these pieces turned out. I worked on this series for several months, taking my time and meeting no deadlines. It was exciting to bring back these vintage cars ➡



## VIEW FROM THE TOP

The characters and perspective bring an extra dimension to this detailed illustration.

## FANTASTICAL UNDERSEA INSPIRATION

Grégory on the creation of his work *Passing By Over the City*

I love top-down views with extreme perspective, they're great for showing off tons of details while maintaining a focal point. Drawing whales with ships strapped to them is something I regularly do in my Fish & Ships series.

For this one, I started with a rough sketch of the whale and the ship, and gave them a steampunk twist. I usually gather a bunch of references, and in this case I looked up sailboats and old train engines. The city was the second thing added as I wanted more depth besides the clouds. Then I added the foreground character, before including the ocean with the little boats at the end.

Adding depth to a drawing is something I really enjoy, and I even imagine how I could separate the image into layers to make a parallax animation with it later on. Once this is done I do a clean ink pass, add most of the details and remove what's left of my rough pencil sketch. I then scan the image and move it over to Procreate for a colour pass. I use the basic Watercolour brush, but sometimes use real watercolour on paper, depending on the time I have.





## HOUSE ON THE ROCK

Who wouldn't want to live in a remote castle surrounded by flying goldfish?

➡ and entertaining to hear the responses of people who had no idea that they existed.

**You've released a second volume of your sketchbooks. What do you feel you've learned about your work by putting these together?**

During the pandemic, I returned to traditional drawing, and was surprised by how much people liked it. It all started when I participated in Inktober 2020, and many of my friends began requesting prints. I decided to compile them into a book, and because it was well received, I made the decision to publish a second volume last year.

I've appreciated it since it contains much more personal work, which is different from what I draw on a daily basis. There are no restrictions, and I'm pleased to find that traditional art

## NEW BOAT READY TO SAIL

I see no fish; this ship appears to be waiting for aquatic assistance.



still holds great interest among people in addition to digital art.

**What's next for you? Do you have any exciting projects coming up, or are there areas you'd like to explore?**

I'll continue to draw for sure, and yes I do have some very exciting projects coming up that I can't talk about yet. A lot of people asked me to do a comic book with my Fish & Ships universe, so that's something I might look into, but I also know how much work it'll

“Don't forget to give yourself a break sometimes; trial and error are part of the process”

## F40 AT A RED LIGHT

Even in the future, classic cars must obey the rules of the road.

require and how difficult it will be. I have no clue if it'll eventually end up in something, but I'm curious to give it a try. Otherwise, traditional sculpting is also something I'd like to get back into. Traditional art is a medium that is more and more appealing for me, which is surprisingly timed with the rise of AI in the art world. So we'll see!

**What advice would you give to aspiring artists?**

Be curious about everything, don't restrain yourself to only what you like. Art of all sorts should be a point of interest, and your brain will remember what might be valuable in the future.

Draw, and have fun doing it. Don't become a frustrated artist. Enjoying what you do is more important than likes on social media. Keep an eye on the technical aspect of the video game industry, as it's an important part of the equation. You don't need to be an expert, but do be aware of what exists. And don't forget to give yourself a break sometimes; trial and error are part of the process. 🍷





## Robert Laszlo Kiss

The concept artist shows his industrial background as he constructs a variety of marvellous mechanical designs

### Artist PROFILE

**Robert Laszlo Kiss**

LOCATION: The Netherlands

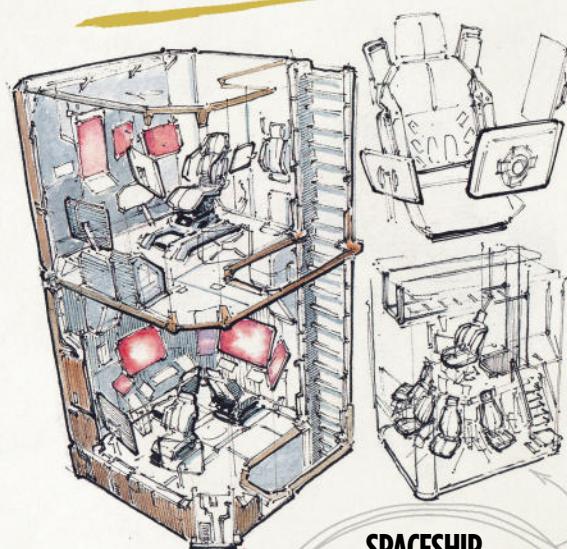


Having studied industrial engineering at university, Robert merged his career with a passion for concept art and went on to work on

Guerrilla Games titles such as Killzone: Shadow Fall and Horizon Zero Dawn. Currently freelance, he also creates content on YouTube and Instagram. [www.robertlkiss.com](http://www.robertlkiss.com)

### WANDERER

"Fineliners and ink wash are two of my favourite mediums to use. I'm not the most comfortable with colour, so working with values in a traditional way is where it's at for me, especially since I grew up with a lot of art like this."

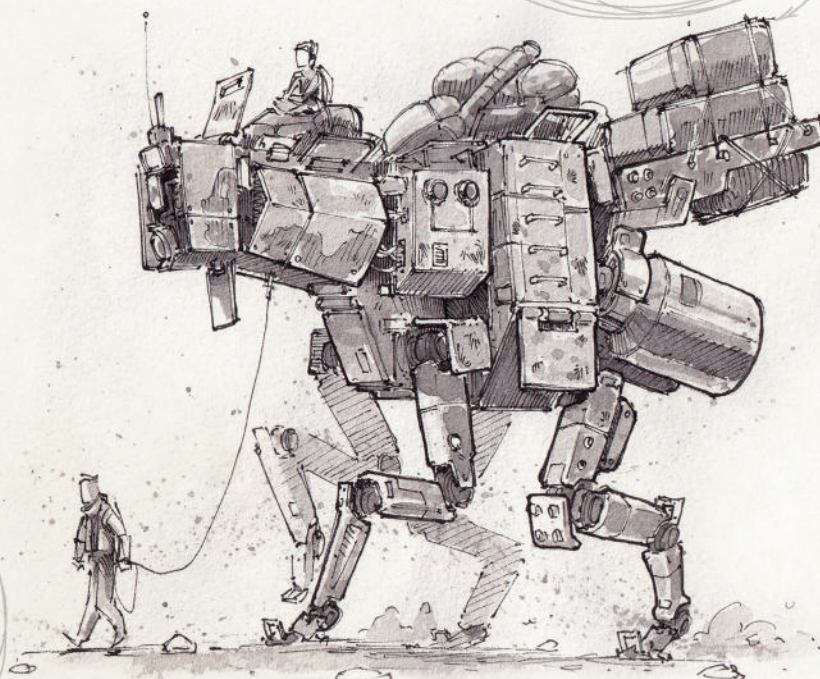
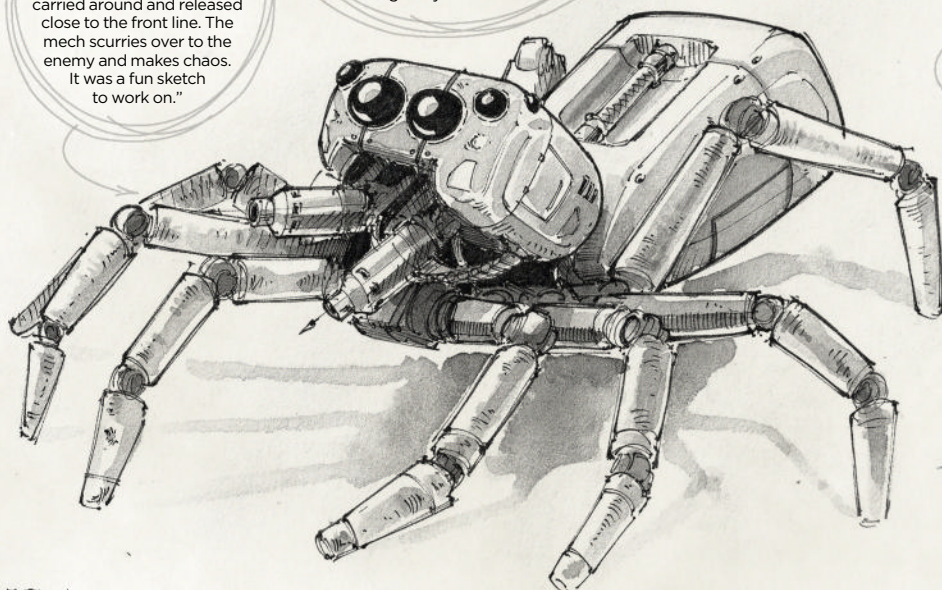


### SPACESHIP INTERIOR

"Interior explorations for a hero ship. I love the gravity created by acceleration that forces ships to have vertical architecture. It's interesting having to think about design that has to work with both gravity and OG."

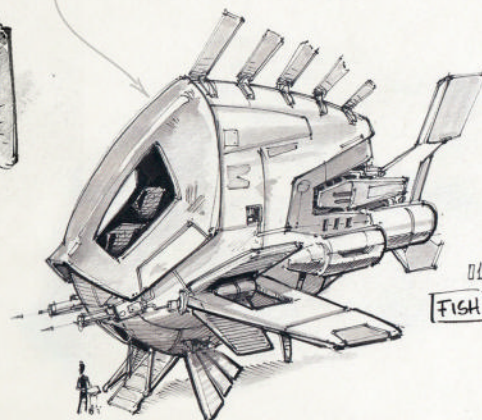
### HAVOC SPIDER

"During one Inktober, I came up with this little spider robot that can be carried around and released close to the front line. The mech scurries over to the enemy and makes chaos. It was a fun sketch to work on."



### FISH SHIP

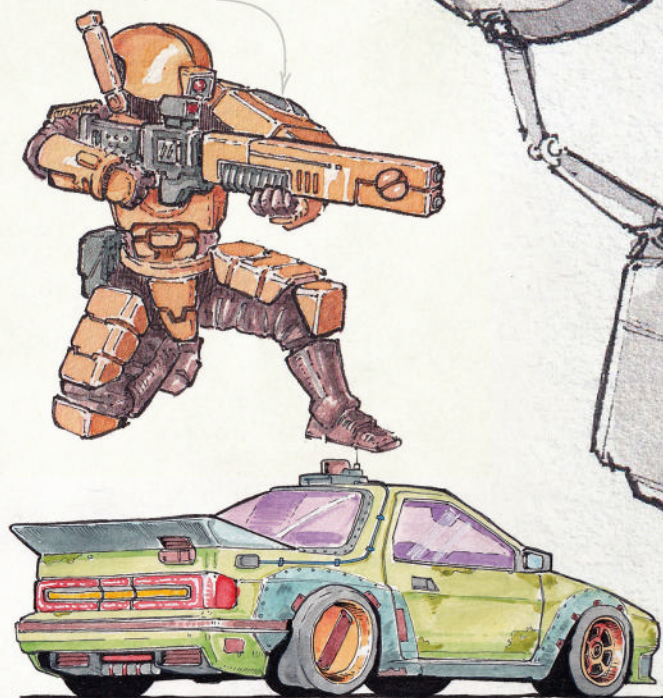
"An ink wash sketch from a previous Inktober where the prompt was 'fish'. That year I tried to only draw spaceships based on the prompts. It's quite a fun challenge to set for myself, and I ended up with a couple of interesting designs."





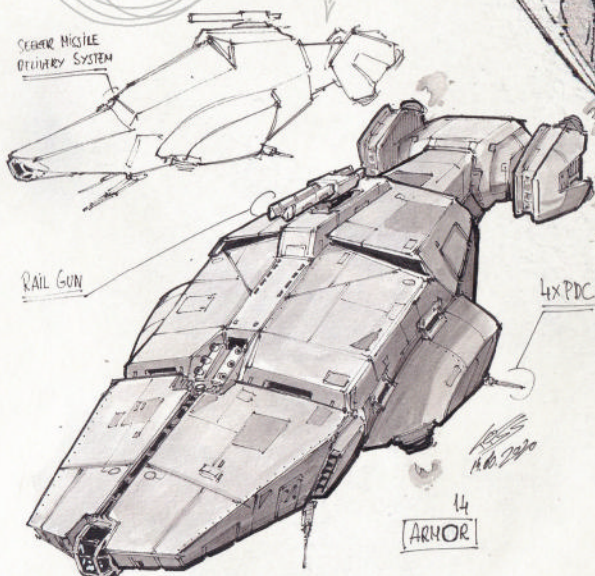
## THE GREATER GOOD

"Ever since I discovered the Tau in Warhammer 40,000: Dawn of War - Dark Crusade, they became my favourite faction in that universe. I love their design and feel I should draw them more often."



## APC CRAFT

"Another ship from the Inktober series where I was drawing ink wash ships. The prompt was 'armour', and I wanted to do a spacecraft that was sort of a mix of something like a Boxer APC and a gunship. I was quite happy with the end result."

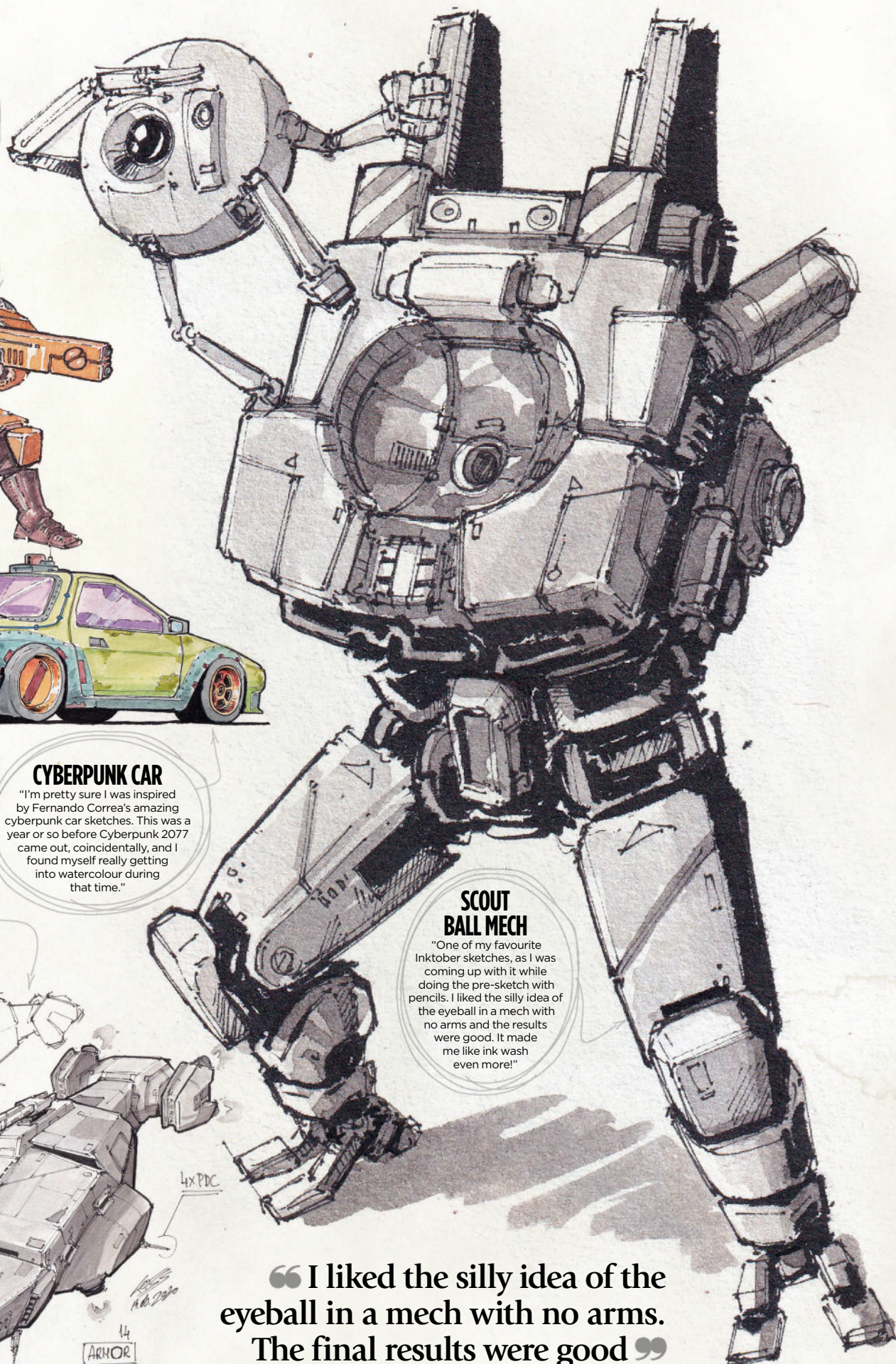


## CYBERPUNK CAR

"I'm pretty sure I was inspired by Fernando Correa's amazing cyberpunk car sketches. This was a year or so before Cyberpunk 2077 came out, coincidentally, and I found myself really getting into watercolour during that time."

## SCOUT BALL MECH

"One of my favourite Inktober sketches, as I was coming up with it while doing the pre-sketch with pencils. I liked the silly idea of the eyeball in a mech with no arms and the results were good. It made me like ink wash even more!"



“I liked the silly idea of the eyeball in a mech with no arms. The final results were good”



# Sketchbook

## LIFE DRAWINGS

"I love life sketching in parks. I have a small travel watercolour set and usually carry a mixed-media sketchbook. On hot summer days I love sitting in parks and sketching what I see."

## MECH WALKER

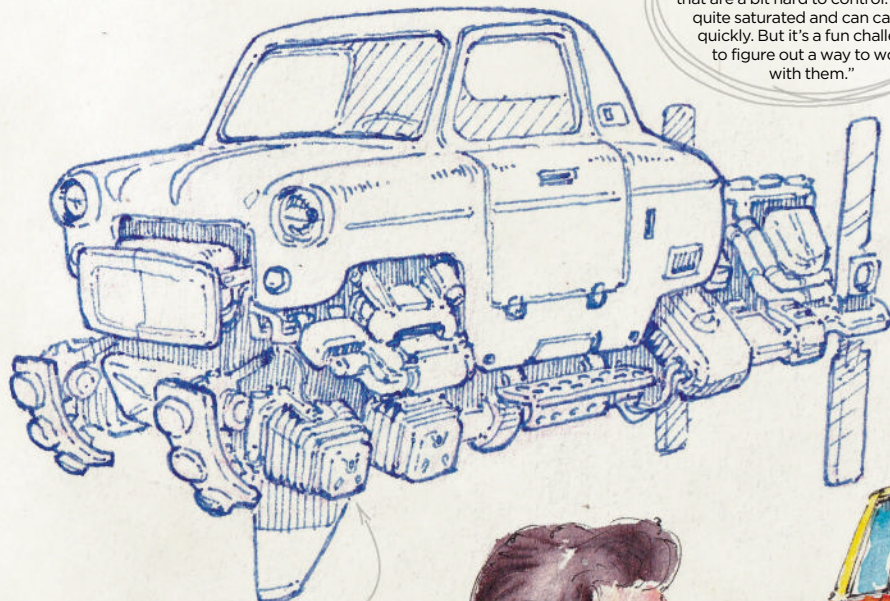
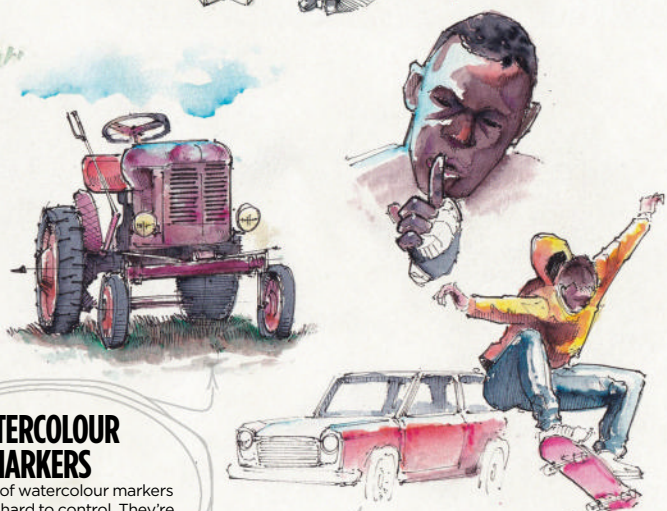
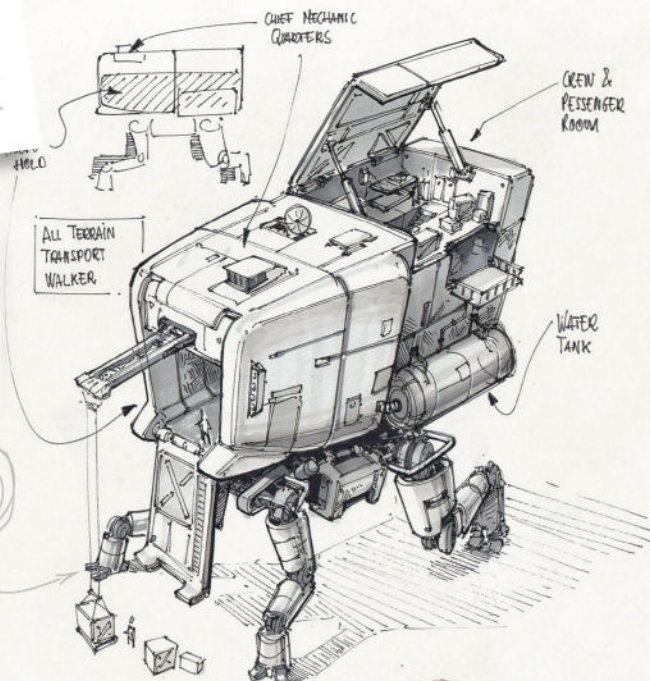
"Inspired by Star Wars, my version of a Sandcrawler mixed with an AT-AT walker. A good old marker sketch with fineliners, this is my comfort zone."

## WATERCOLOUR MARKERS

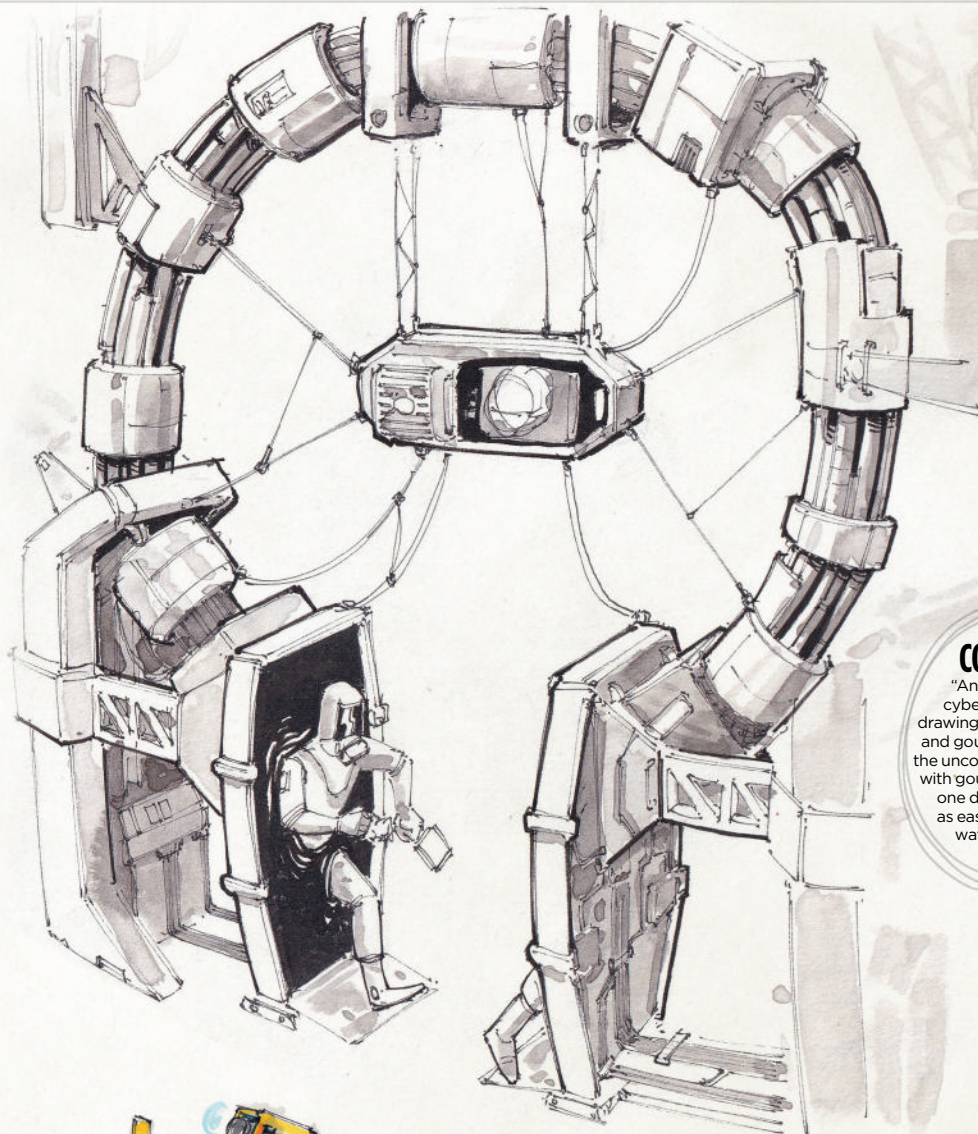
"I have a set of watercolour markers that are a bit hard to control. They're quite saturated and can cake on quickly. But it's a fun challenge to figure out a way to work with them."

## HOVER CAR

"One of my favourite things to do is take old school cars, rip off their wheels, and put hover engines and technology on them. Also, drawing with fountain pens can be quite fun."







## LOOP RUNNER

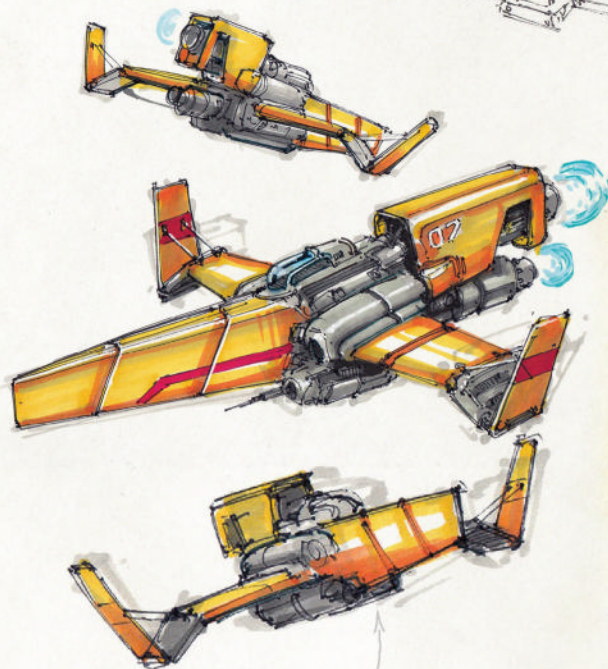
"I love time travel and time loops, so when one of the Inktober prompts was 'loop', I just had to come up with something based on time travel. This is a particle accelerator testing teleportation tech."

## COOL BOI

"Another of my cyberpunk-phase drawings in watercolour and gouache. I'm still in the uncomfortable phase with gouache and hope one day I can use it as easily as I do the watercolours."



“It’s not necessarily about being good, but enjoying the process”

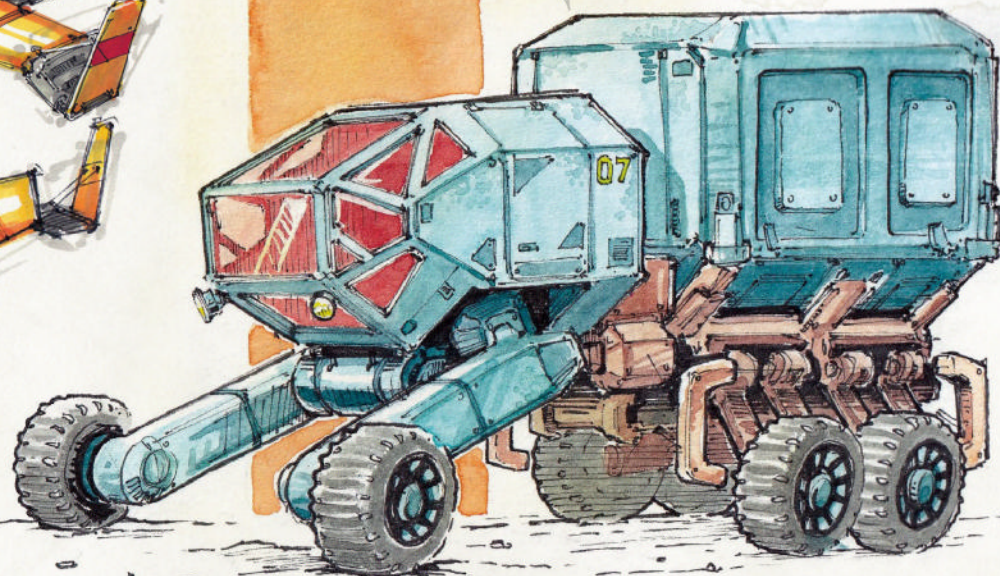


## FIGHTER CRAFT

"Again my bread and butter fineliner and markers, which are the fastest way for me to sketch. No undo, no erasing, living with your mistakes and building on them."

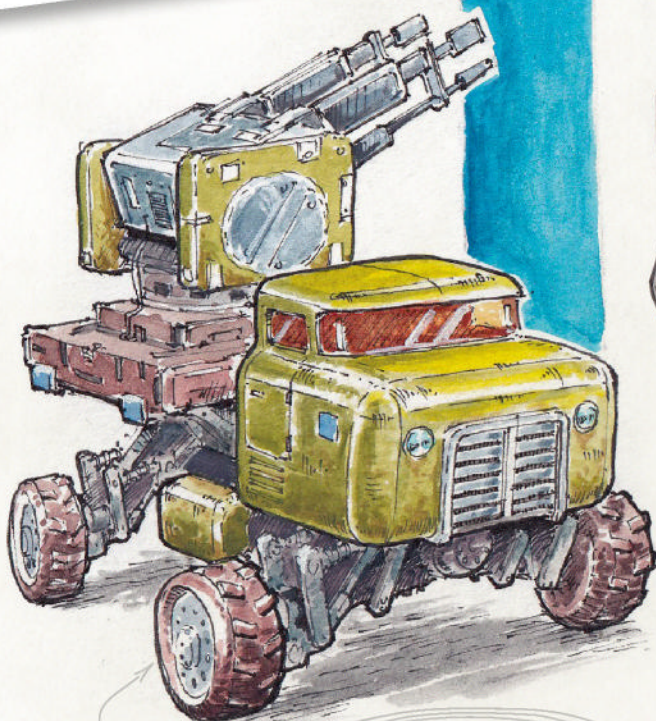
## EXO ROVER

"With this sketch, I started feeling quite comfortable with my fineliner and watercolour workflow. It's not necessarily about being good but enjoying the process and the medium, even if the results aren't what you wanted."





# Sketchbook

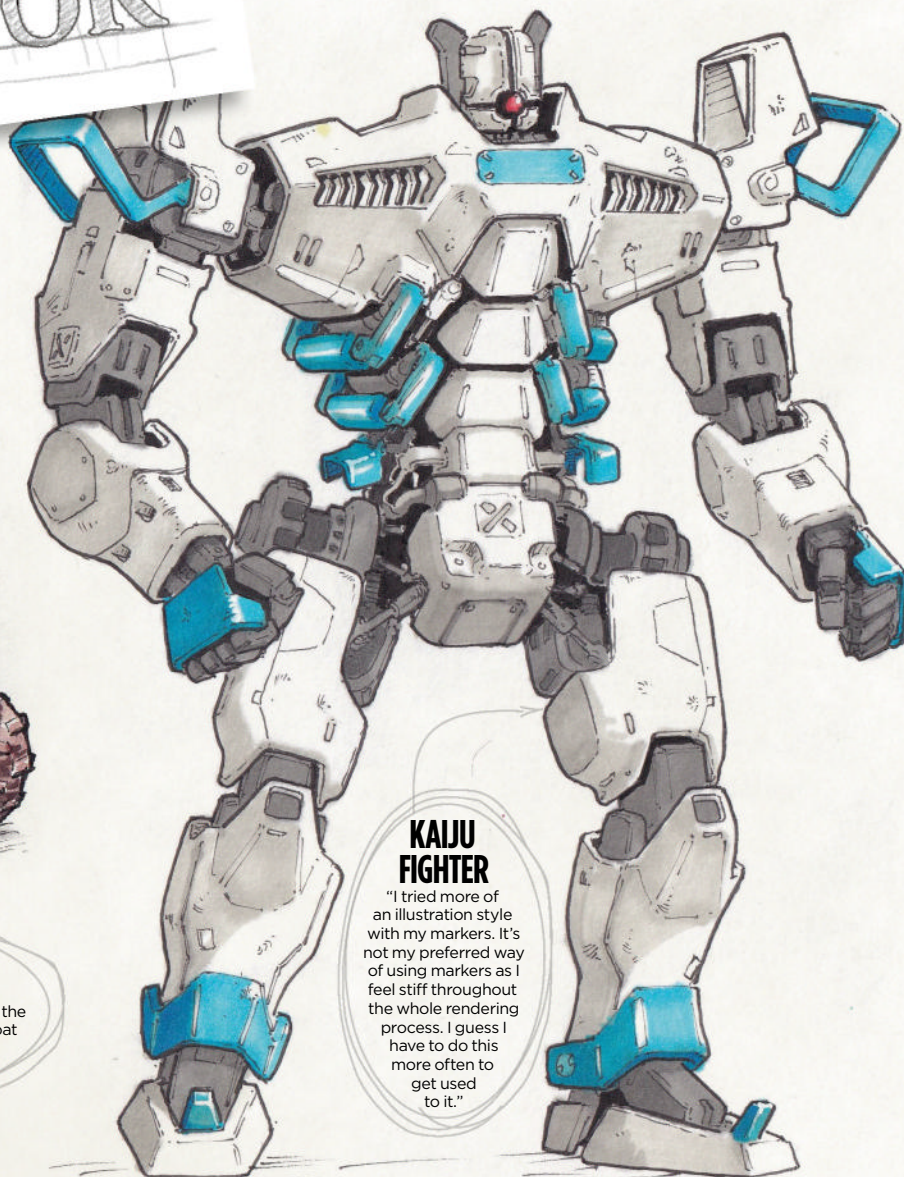
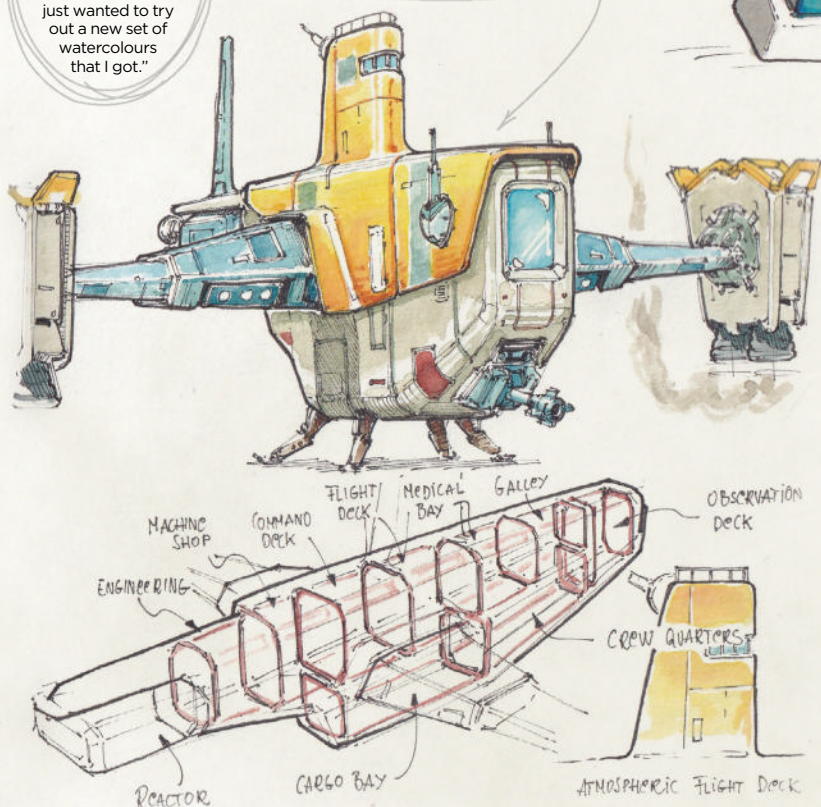


## SILLY AA CAR

"One of the examples where I didn't think too much about the design. I just wanted to try out a new set of watercolours that I got."

## HERO SHIP

"I love sci-fi hero ships. I wanted to create my own inspired by Cowboy Bebop, The Expanse, Firefly and Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic. I had this idea of a slightly U-boat inspired design that also lends to a small, specialised crew and their quarters."

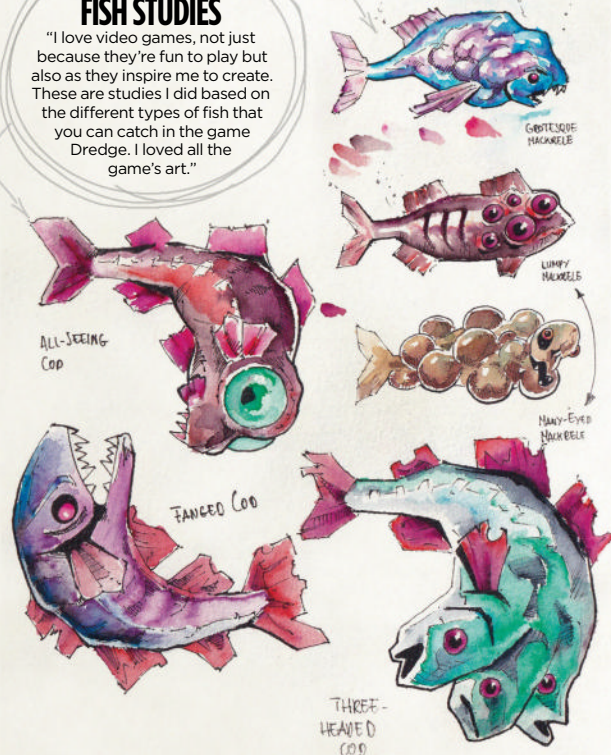


## KAJU FIGHTER

"I tried more of an illustration style with my markers. It's not my preferred way of using markers as I feel stiff throughout the whole rendering process. I guess I have to do this more often to get used to it."

## DREDGE FISH STUDIES

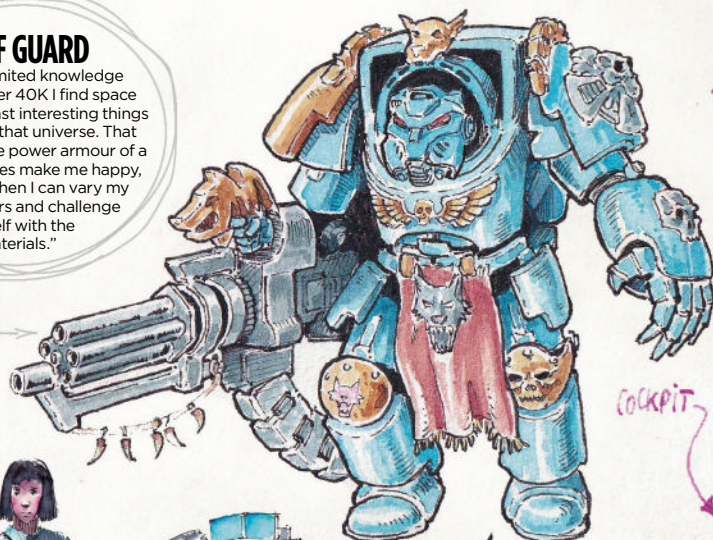
"I love video games, not just because they're fun to play but also as they inspire me to create. These are studies I did based on the different types of fish that you can catch in the game Dredge. I loved all the game's art."





## WOLF GUARD

"With my limited knowledge of Warhammer 40K I find space marines the least interesting things to draw from that universe. That said, the ornate power armour of a Terminator does make me happy, especially when I can vary my watercolours and challenge myself with the materials."



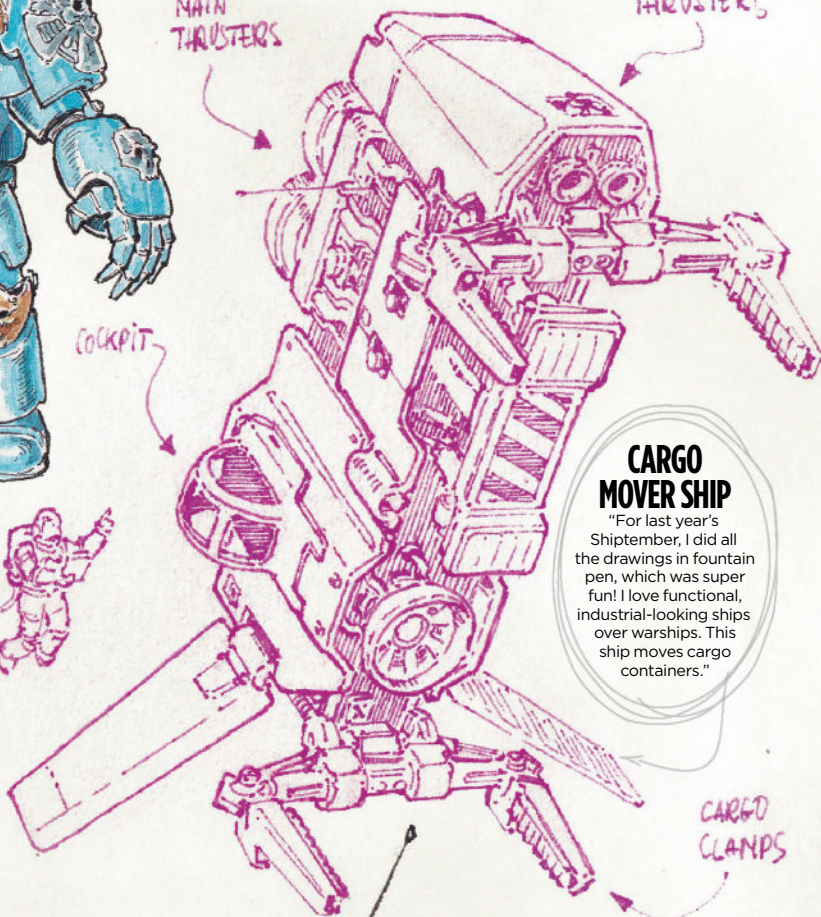
MAIN THRUSTERS

MANOUEVING THRUSTERS

COCKPIT

## CARGO MOVER SHIP

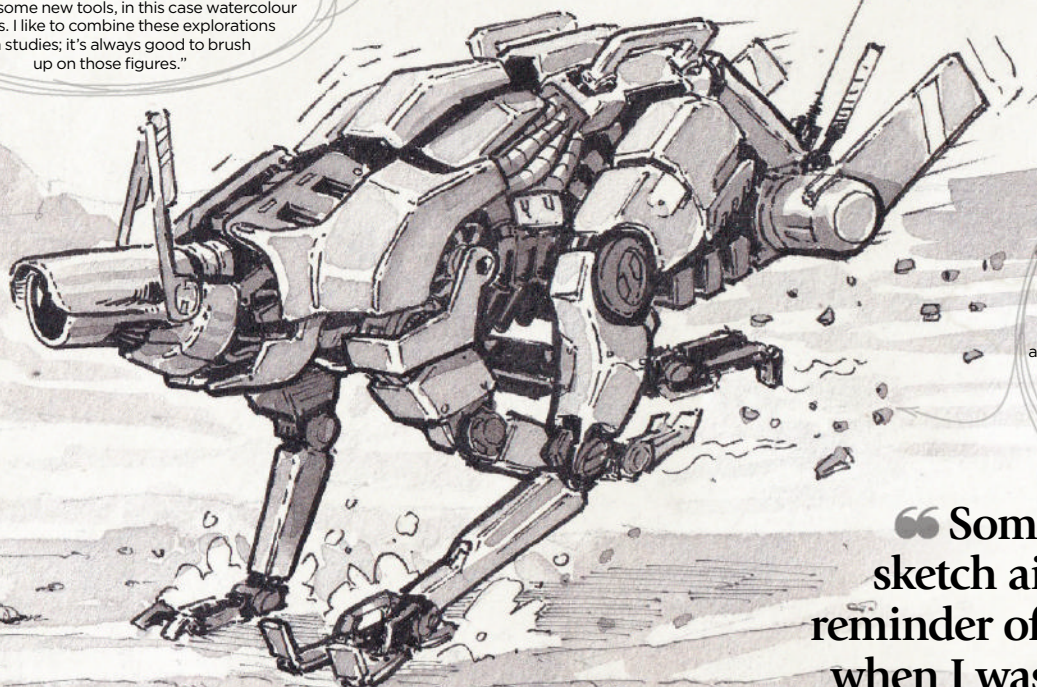
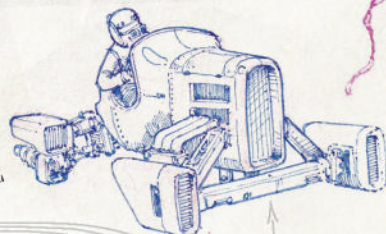
"For last year's Shiptember, I did all the drawings in fountain pen, which was super fun! I love functional, industrial-looking ships over warships. This ship moves cargo containers."



CARGO CLAMPS

## SKETCHING IS FUN

"Sometimes I just sketch aimlessly as a reminder of how I drew when I was young, especially if I want to try out some new tools, in this case watercolour markers. I like to combine these explorations with studies; it's always good to brush up on those figures."



## ROBO CHEETAH

"I love taking human or animal poses and turning them into robots. This was either a dog or a cheetah I assembled into a mechanical beast. You can take the speed and dynamism of a photo into your drawings like this one."

“ Sometimes I just sketch aimlessly as a reminder of how I drew when I was younger ”

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:

### 56 Illustrate a magical character

Follow along as cover artist Selenada walks through her step-by-step workflow.

### 62 Recreate gouache effects digitally

Choro Choi takes an element from her traditional art hobby over to the digital arena.

### 64 Simplifying the value scale

In the fifth part of his series, Charlie Pickard explains the importance of values.

### 68 Draw futuristic vehicle designs

John A. Frye hops into his time machine as he constructs a sleek sci-fi vehicle using Photoshop.

### 74 Draw fast and jot down your ideas

Ashot Avetisyan advises you to note all your creative ideas in case they come in handy.

### 76 Develop 3D skills for concept art

Find out how to use Blender and more in Gaëlle Seguillon's scene, inspired by John Howe's art.

### 82 Start off with simple shapes

Brandon Le uses basic building blocks to create a terrifying leviathan for his artwork.







# Clip Studio Paint ILLUSTRATE A MAGICAL CHARACTER

**Selenada** crafts a stunningly detailed artwork using the wealth of tools in Clip Studio Paint

## Artist PROFILE

**Selenada**

LOCATION: Switzerland

Ulyana Regener, also known as Selenada, has been fascinated with the fantastical since she was a child. After swapping her path from music to art, she has worked on illustrations for an array of leading publishers seeking her touch of magic and immersion.  
<https://bit.ly/3wWAchw>



For this illustration, I was asked to create a fun, bright image with the theme of making artwork magical by

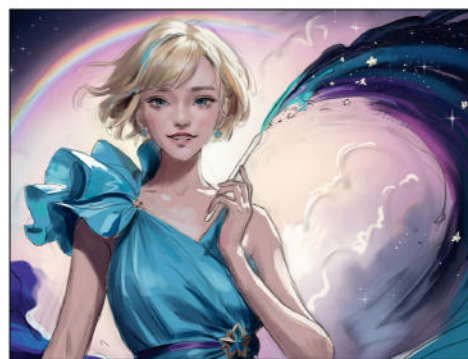
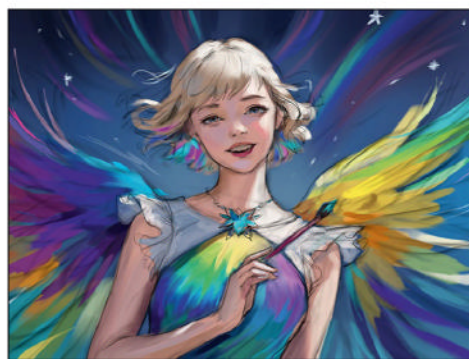
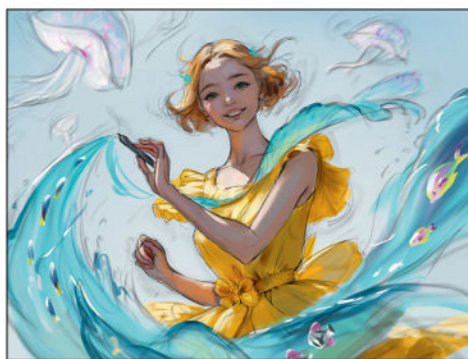
the developers behind the digital drawing app Clip Studio Paint.

Although it was my first time painting with the software, I found myself completely immersed in the world of digital art from start to finish. It features a wide variety of brushes and I loved how the colours mix and blend just as they do when working in traditional media.

In this walkthrough, I'll show you how to use Clip Studio Paint's many features to make each stage of the painting process smoother, from the first sketches right the way through to the painting and making those final tweaks for the perfect image. Now I've tried the app, I can't wait to explore more possibilities with it in my next artwork!



# Workshops

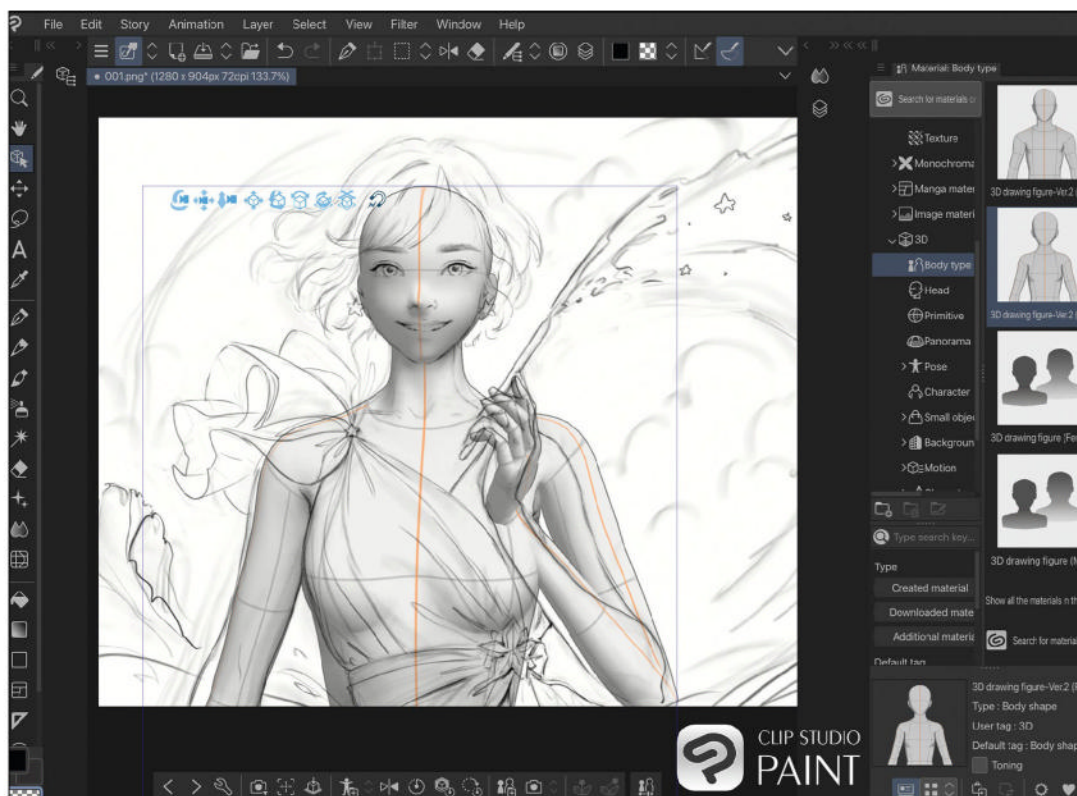


## 1 Rough sketches

Start with a few rough colour sketches to meet the brief, aiming for simplicity. I like to keep lines and colours on separate layers so the painting process is easier later on. At this point, I avoid polishing any details, as the concepts are still fluid and subject to change. This allows me to focus on the overall composition and mood without getting distracted by any intricacies that may evolve.

## 2 Model exploration

The 3D design models in Clip Studio Paint offer an easy way to explore various angles and compositions, and are good for getting accurate proportions and hand placement. With this tool, I adjusted the character's pose for precision and realism. This guarantees the finished art is both natural and balanced.



## 3 Repaint the sketch

Once the sketch is approved, start to refine it. I embraced a shift from a galaxy to a rainbow theme, integrating a new background and reworking the brushstrokes to unleash a spectrum of colours, lifting the backdrop's luminance and injecting a burst of vibrancy.



## 4 Refine sketch lines for painting

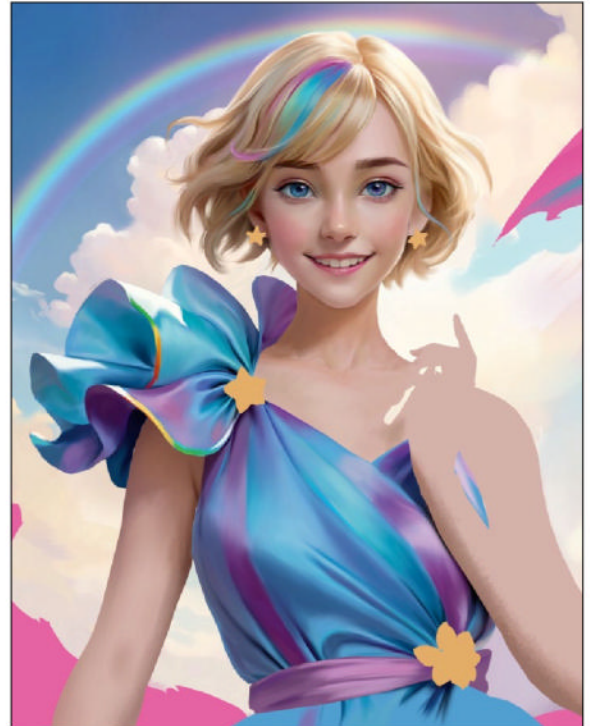
Hide the colour sketch layer, and refine or remove unnecessary details. During this process, I used fine line brushes found in the vast library of Clip Studio Assets. These tools enable precision when you're defining contours and enhancing the clarity of the composition.





## 5 Colour block with Lasso Fill

Block in the shapes of the skin, clothes, hair and paint splash on separate layers with the Lasso Fill tool and Alpha Lock each layer. As my sketch lines are loose with a lot of gaps, it's easier to use the Lasso Fill tool to draw the outlines of the fill areas. If any areas need adjustments to the shape, go back in with the Lasso Fill set to transparency and adjust the shapes.



## 6 Build the 3D shapes

With the layers set to Alpha Lock, start to paint in shadows to make the shapes appear 3D. I prefer to start with the face, as it's the focal point of this illustration. Once there's enough shape to the colours, hide your sketch lines layer and continue painting in more detail. For this illustration, I'm using the default thick paint brushes within Clip Studio Paint. I really like how well they emulate traditional media, which allows me to achieve the desired artistic look.



## 7 Paint satin clothes

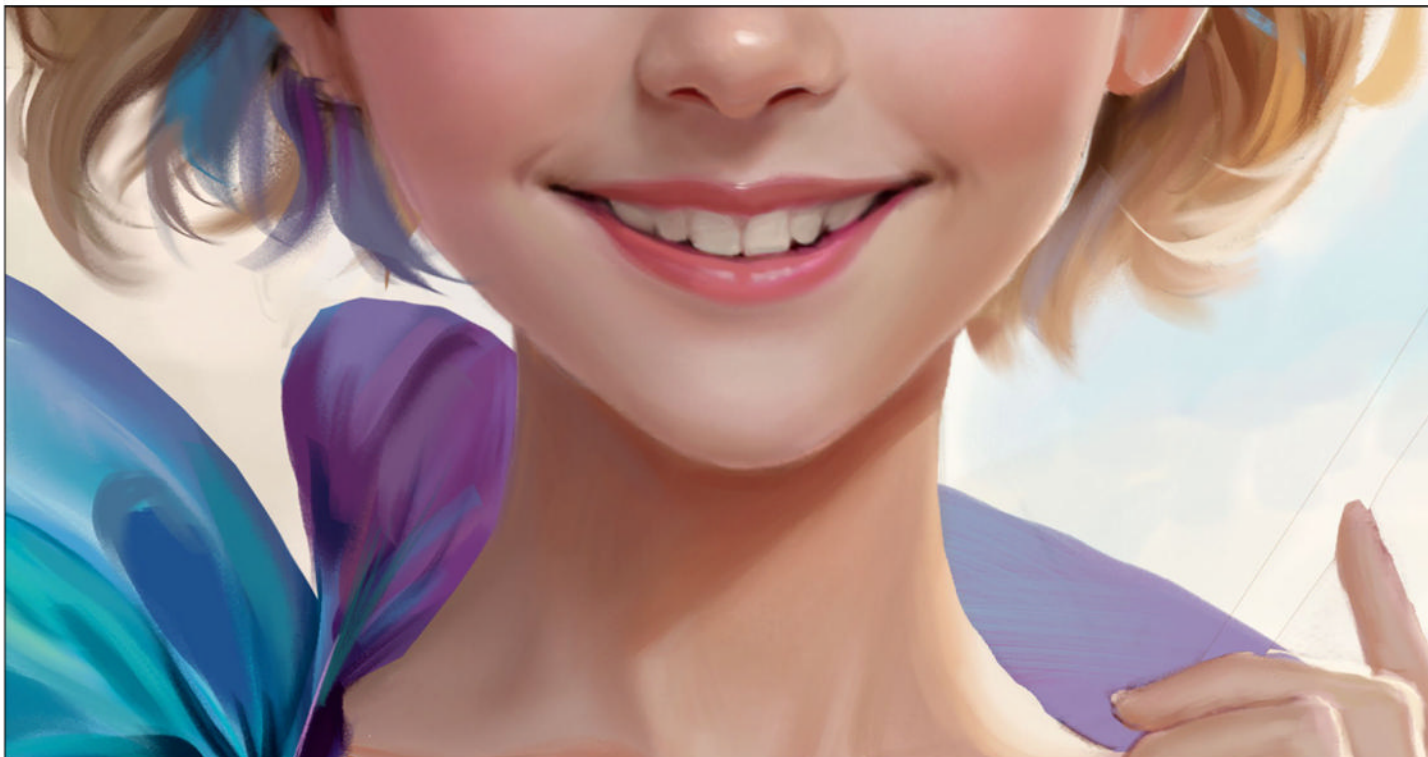
I decided on a glossy satin for the dress in this illustration to get a sleek and elegant look. Express the texture by combining sharp highlights and shadows in the fabric's creases. I particularly did this around the brooch where the fabric is bunched together in small folds. On the larger areas of the fabric, blend softly and leave visible brushstrokes to represent the texture.



## 8 Switching the brooch

After painting the glass accessories from my sketch design, I decided to paint a new brooch that matched the elegant feel. I kept the layer with the original design and then used Layer Comps with different combinations to quickly compare how they came together, before settling on the new feathered design for the brooch. ➡





## 9 Create shadows and atmospheric light on the skin

While painting the skin, make sure to add warm tones in the shadows, as well as reflective rim lighting from the background. On the left of areas like her neck and arms I added subtle blue, which reflects atmospheric light from the sky and bounces onto her skin from the side opposite the sun, creating a balanced interplay of light. With a bounce light from her arm and clothes, these nuances add depth and realism.



## 10 Make corrections with the Liquify tool

While painting, I often use the Liquify tool to fix the shapes, such as adjusting the belt and the fabric around it here. This tool is handy for small tweaks later on so I don't have to repaint everything. It's super easy to use, which helps a lot when I need to change details that don't look right. Using the Liquify tool often throughout my work makes it simple to keep everything looking just the way I want.





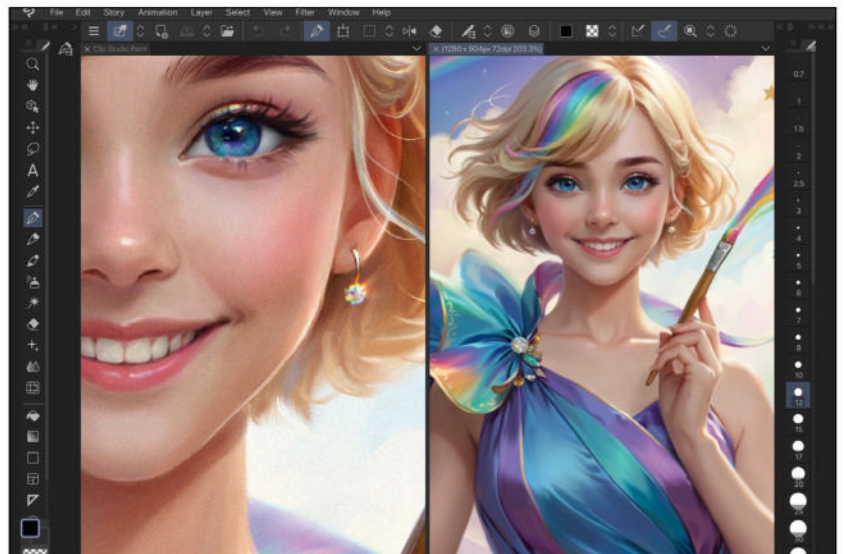
## 11 Develop details in the background

When you're satisfied with the character's rendering, add a little more detail to the background. For instance, I refined the clouds while keeping the shapes soft and painterly. I tried a few variations of the design until I was satisfied with the soft and fluffy look, and then added some stars and sparkles to provide a little extra detail without being too distracting from the focal points of the image.



## 12 Colour adjustments with Overlay

Once the painting is done, I made some colour adjustments to brighten the image and add some more glow to the fabric and glass accessories, painting over on layers set to the Overlay and Soft Light blending modes.



## 13 Chromatic aberration

As a last step, I use the filters for Chromatic Aberration and Noise to soften the overall look. I apply Chromatic Aberration to the brightest parts of the image, such as the jewellery and highlights, to intensify the glow effect and make the scene more radiant. Lastly, I add a fine Colour Noise over the entire image, and adjust the opacity of these two layers until I'm happy.





"I'm interested in images of bones, perhaps because they evoke death and reveal the brighter aspects of life by contrast. This is the first in a series of images based on photos of skulls and animal bones. I started by making a pencil sketch in Procreate, then coloured it in Photoshop and Procreate. Lately I've been painting using gouache and found a love for the unpredictable effects of traditional mediums. I wanted to add that to my CG art, so I used rough brushes and restrained myself from modifying the strokes to recreate a similar look."

## Technique focus RECREATE GOUACHE EFFECTS

Discover why **Choro Choi** has imbued visuals from traditional art into her latest digital pieces





Artist  
**PROFILE**

**Choro Choi**

**LOCATION:**  
The Netherlands

Choro is a concept artist in the gaming industry who currently works at Guerrilla Games. She majored in fine arts and specialises in concepts with a sci-fi, military feel. <https://bit.ly/3IAYZvV>



## Artist insight

# PART 5: SIMPLIFY THE VALUE SCALE

**Charlie Pickard** introduces his top advice for achieving strong values in your artwork to create clear and powerful imagery

### 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>



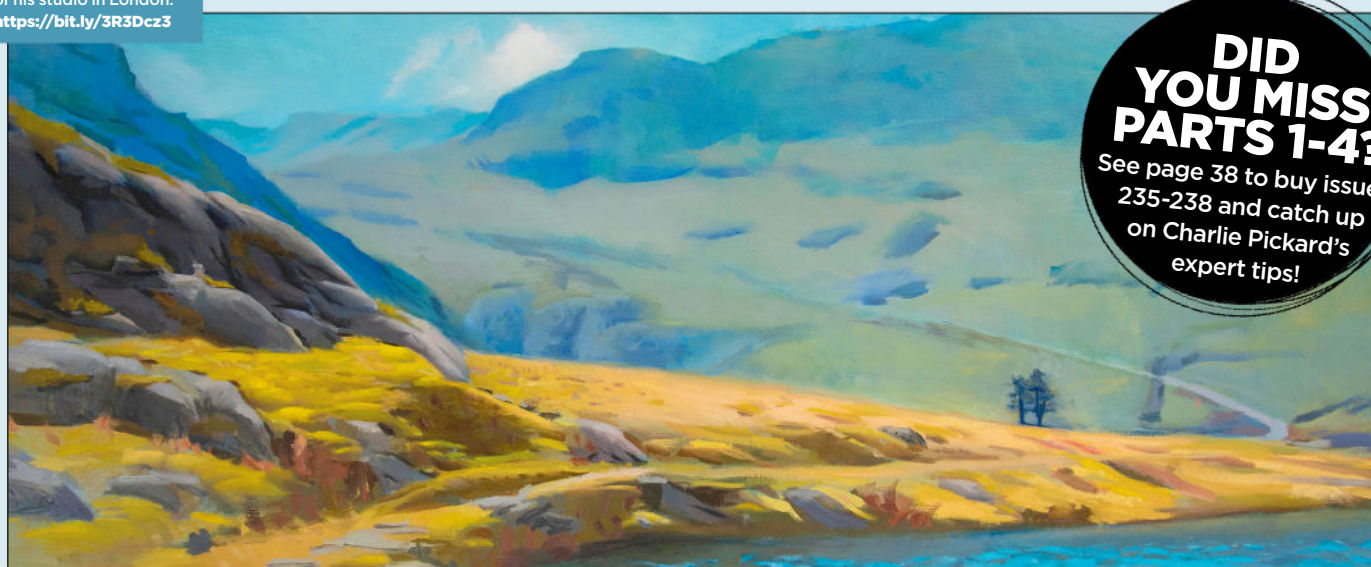
Values are, without a doubt, the most vital consideration when you're creating an image. The full extent of the role that values play in making believable paintings and strong

imagery can't be overstated. They're the most vital element for conveying solidity, atmosphere and readability within your work.

Much has been said and written on this point in art training, and quite rightly so. It's almost always

the number one area for making improvement in beginner artworks.

When speaking of value, simplicity is important for strengthening our imagery, but this can often be hard to understand and achieve. Here, we'll go through the basics.

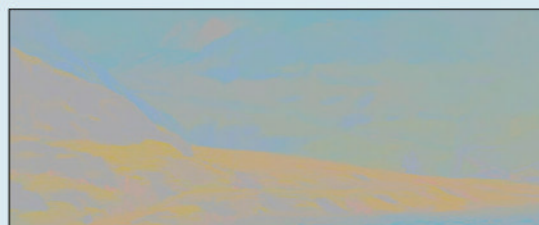


**DID YOU MISS PARTS 1-4?**  
See page 38 to buy issues 235-238 and catch up on Charlie Pickard's expert tips!

### 1 THE IMPORTANCE OF PROPER VALUES

One simple way to see just how important values are is to isolate them out, as I've done in this image. On the first image to the right, I've isolated the value qualities and erased the colour info. Note that while some of the flavour of the image has been lost, the scene itself is still easily understandable, retaining its easy-to-read forms, clear depth and material qualities.

In the bottom image, where the colour has been isolated and the value taken out, it's a whole different story. While the ghost of an image remains, it's almost entirely broken. Without the value structure to hold it up, the colours become difficult to read because the value holds together 90 per cent of any image, and this can't be forgotten. The following are a few strategies that I've found helpful in tackling this element of painting.





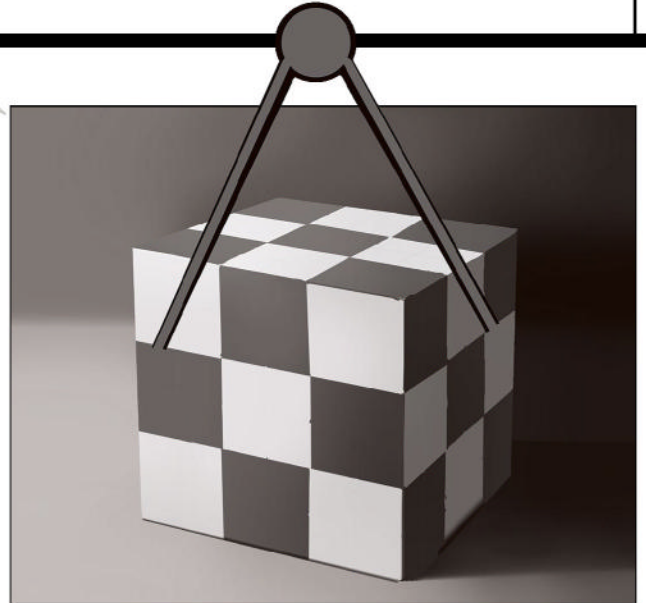
## 2 DECEPTIVE VISUALS

One somewhat surprising element of value is that our eyes often lie to us. We're actually subject to a number of illusions that wreak havoc on our ability to observe accurately. We can exhibit one of these illusions clearly thanks to this image.

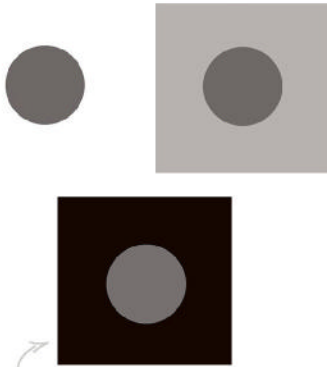
It may be hard to believe, but the highlighted black square in the light and the white square in the shadow

are exactly the same value! I've connected these values together to demonstrate this.

However, you can see, even with this adjustment to the image, the illusion is quite difficult to dispel. We can't help but see these values as different. This illusion battles against us whenever we settle down to create a painting and it's incredibly important we understand it.



“When speaking of value, simplicity is important to strengthen imagery, but this can be hard to understand”

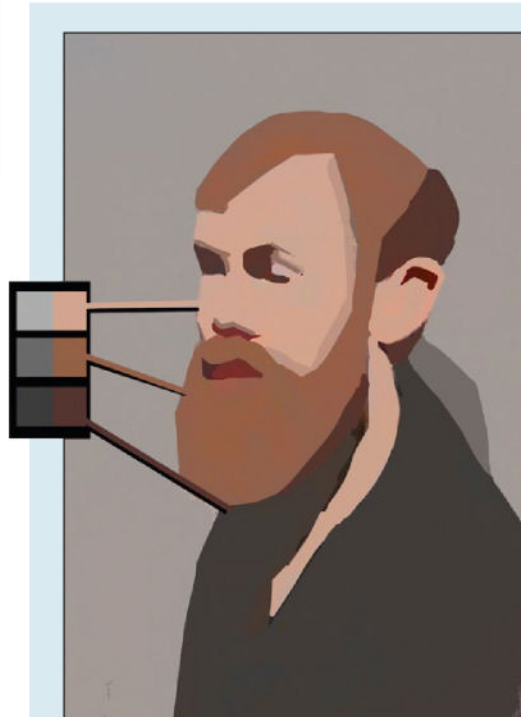


## 3 THE SIMULTANEOUS CONTRAST ILLUSION

The cause of this illusion is that our vision is actually surprisingly limited. We have a much smaller range of values available to our eyes than we're often presented with in nature. Due to this, our eyes rely on certain tricks to fully understand nature.

One of these tricks is called simultaneous contrast and it's the major cause of this illusion. We can see this effect all the more clearly if we isolate it, as above. The three central dots are all the same value. However, as we surround that value with darker backgrounds, we make this central dot look brighter. This happens because the eye does not see values individually, but as a relationship with surrounding values.

This is how the previous illusion works. The square in the shadow is surrounded by darker squares and so appears white, and the square in the light is surrounded by lighter squares, so appears black. This leads us to an important realisation when we're painting: we can't judge any values individually, and must see them as they are in a relationship.



## 4 START SIMPLE

No wonder we have difficulty painting reality. When we can't even see nature accurately, how can we hope to replicate or design it? The key is to see our subjects in terms of their context. Generally, it's important to not delve too far into the details of a subject without first seeing it in the full context of an image. My favourite tool for getting to this context easily and quickly is via value grouping.

This is where we take our complex subject and then simplify it into three sharp values. This simplified way of looking at the



subject is excellent to establish the all-important context as quickly as possible to avoid the effects of this illusion in our work.

Approaching artworks in this way also has the added benefit of forcing us to simplify our thinking and to engage with the largest decisions in our pieces. In this way, we're forced to leave out any unnecessary information and get better practiced at dealing with the most fundamental values that contain the main message of the image. If we can learn to properly control these, we can become powerful visual communicators in our imagery. ➡

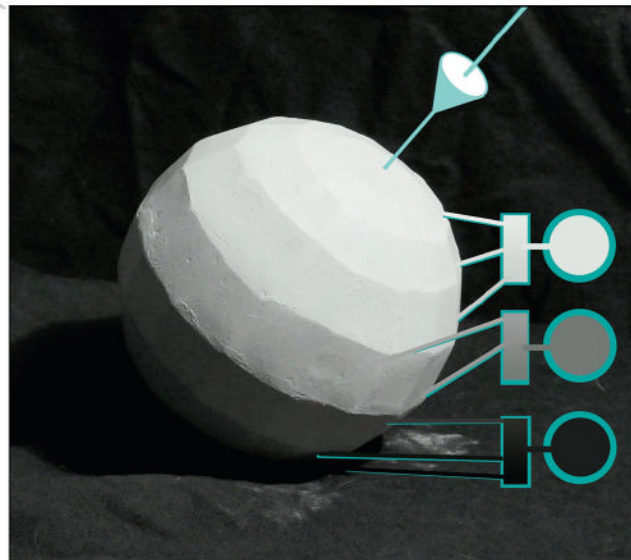
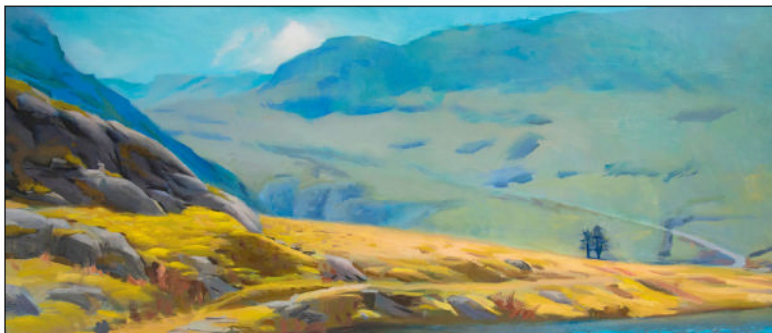


## 5 EXAMPLES WITHIN THE NATURAL WORLD

Another element of this grouping is how, alongside it being an effective tool for design, it's also an effect we can powerfully observe in natural lighting. In this image of a planar sphere, see how closely the values in the lights and darks group together.

Also note that there's a clear band of halftone planes that emerge,

bridging the gap between these two large groups of value. These are the three values that we're typically looking for in objects when we approach painting in this way: the light group, the dark group and the halftone group. They are the most fundamental separations in value and will have the biggest impact on the images that we create if we put our focus on them.



## 6 APPLY THIS KNOWLEDGE TO YOUR MORE COMPLEX IMAGES

Understanding values in this way is the real trick to representing all subjects, and it works well regardless of the complexity we're presented with. While the individual textures and details of a subject might be overwhelmingly complex, this exercise offers us a way to get at the most impactful and important message of the work.

As you can see in this landscape, while there's a fair amount of details and textures in the final image, the main composition and sense of depth is captured quite well within the first few broad values. If we can design our images to read even in this heavily simplified way, we can be sure that all of the details we add on top will not disturb the larger read of the image, and the details will hang together well.

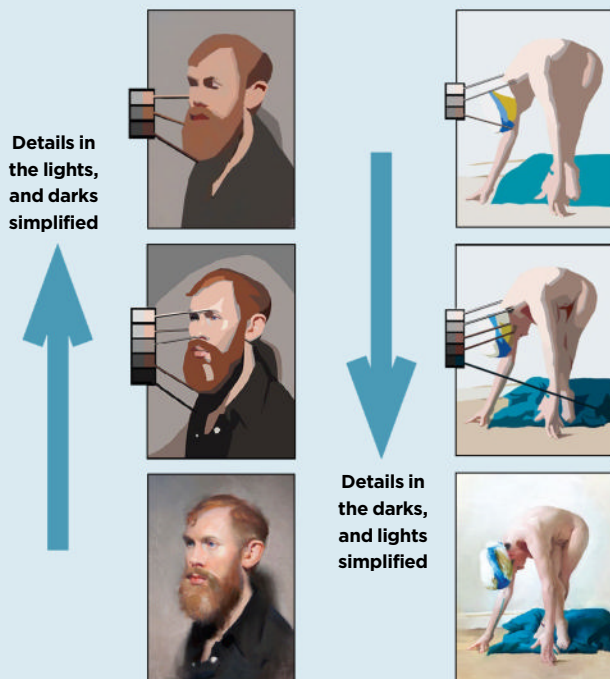
## 7 DECIDE WHERE YOU WANT DETAIL

Once you've got to grips with expressing those first three values, try expanding them to five. Most images will be clear enough in five values, and it's rarely necessary to push beyond this. In fact, straying away from five values can often lead to a confusing effect on the eye of our audience.

However, the subjects we're presented with will often have more than these, meaning some level of editing is needed to get a result with this clarity of values. The necessity of editing out elements in imagery that this approach encourages also allows us

to escape the trap of always aiming to capture our reference exactly. This forces us to focus more fully on designing our image, which is the path to the most powerful effects we can access as artists.

The simplest way to start thinking of this is to pick where you want the main details of the image to sit. Will they be contained in the lights or the shadows? Each choice has a different effect on the expression of the image. Information in the lights tends to talk a lot about form and volume, whereas information in the shadows can emphasise a more airy atmosphere in an image. Try them both!





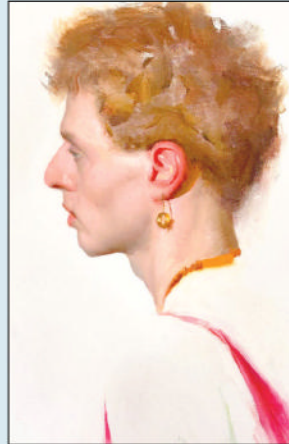
## 8 LIMIT THE SCALE FOR EXPRESSION

Another element that this simplifying of our values enables us to do is think about how particular values impact emotions, which should always be the main motivating factor behind our designs.

Think of the value scale similar to a musical scale. Just like how a song can feel emotionally different if it's played in a major or a minor key, we can draw out different emotions

from our subject. The best way to approach this area of expression is to limit the amount of value scale we use in an image.

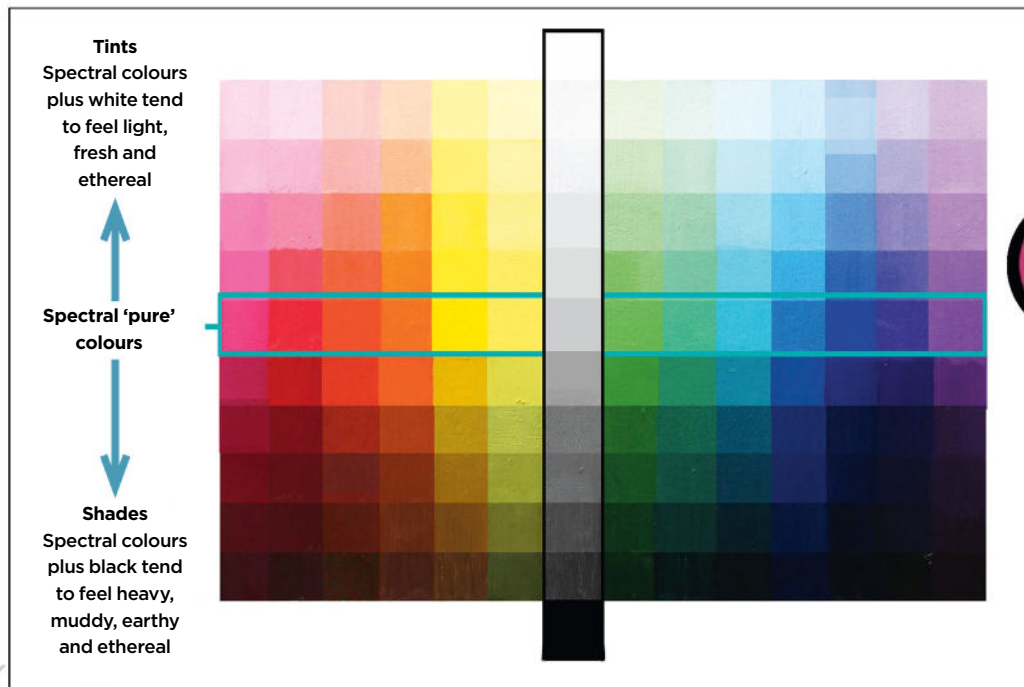
You can see one effect of this in the images to the right. Note the difference in expression of these two images. By limiting myself to the higher values on the scale, I created a low contrast, high key image. Try explore this yourself, limiting your scale on an image and seeing how it makes you feel.



**High key, low contrast**  
Airy and ethereal



**Low key, high contrast**  
Earthy and impactful



## 9 CHOOSE YOUR PLACE ON THE VALUE SCALE

As we start to approach thinking of values in this more designed and expressive way, we can expand this design approach to the level and area of the colour wheel we want to create our image in as well.

The first thing to realise here is that every colour has a 'home' value; a level of brightness at which the colour can be the most saturated.

The lightest high chroma colours are the yellows, with the darkest being the blues and violets.

We also notice that, generally, the most impactful area of the value scale tends to hang around the middle. Therefore, if we want to get full use out of a particular colour, it makes sense to keep our initial value choices closer to the middle of the scale if we're eager to explore a stronger colour.

“Most images will be clear enough with just five values, and it's rarely necessary to push beyond this”



## 10 START WITH YOUR STRONGEST COLOUR

The simplest way I've found to explore this is to start our image with a 'harmony' colour. In the case of this painting, that was magenta. I wanted a powerful touch of this colour all throughout the image.

To get the most out of this strong magenta, I was forced to deliberately subdue how dark I went with my shadows. You're able to set your value groups anywhere you like on the scale as long as you respect their relationships. Try it out for yourself and see how far you can push it. Happy painting!



## 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>.



## Photoshop

# DRAW FUTURISTIC VEHICLE DESIGNS

**John A. Frye** uses just a single brush to transform his messy thumbnail into a bold and colourful hard-surface creation

### Artist PROFILE

**John A. Frye**  
LOCATION: US

John works as an art educator and vehicle designer. His artbook, *Fryewerk 2.0: Concept Vehicle Illustrations*, will be available soon. [www.fryewerk.com](http://www.fryewerk.com)



In this workshop I'll guide you through my workflow of essential and logical steps to creating a clear and impactful illustration of a futuristic vehicle. The fundamental differences between illustrating hard-surface design or vehicle illustrations versus human, animal or other natural forms will become clear.

A major part of what makes my illustration work distinctive is careful consideration of the silhouette of the form, purposeful application of

value contrast, and bold colours. A viewer-first approach to the legibility of the design, attractiveness of the image, and details that draw in the audience are all essential ingredients of a successful illustration that sells the design's intentions. I'll also help you to understand the order of my operations during the process, which starts with nailing down perspective to ensure the vehicle feels as though it exists in a 3D space.

You may be surprised how simple my Photoshop process is, and much can be achieved using a single brush

for the entire illustration. You don't have to use every tool in a software application to produce impactful and realistic illustrations. My process of drawing is similar to sketching with coloured pencils on paper, but comes with the benefit of using layers and the undo button!

Hopefully this workshop will open your mind to the potential to render shiny, colourful and realistic hard-surface vehicles by practising and building off the fundamental elements of my illustration process explained here.

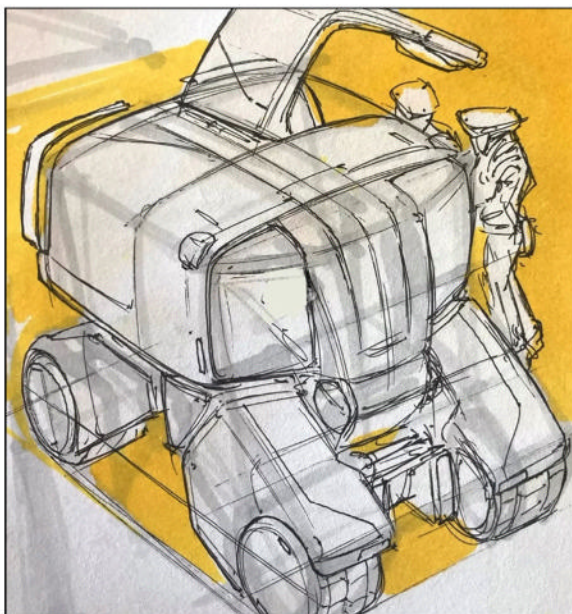
### RESOURCES

## WORKSHOP BRUSHES

#### PHOTOSHOP

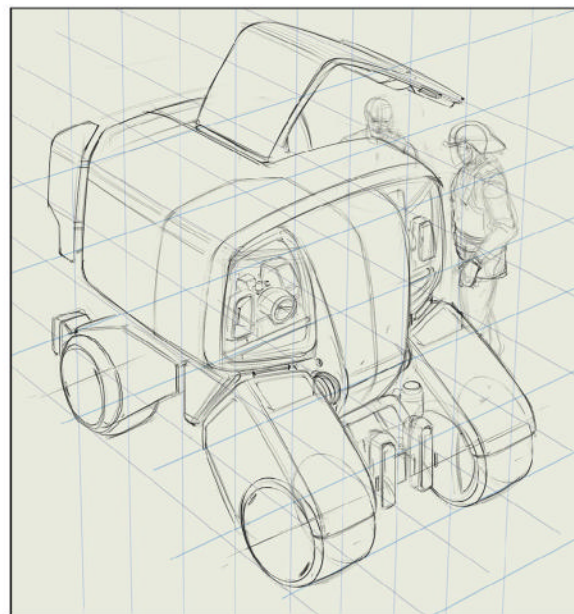
**CUSTOM BRUSHES:**  
THE BRUSH FOR  
PRETTY MUCH  
EVERYTHING

This is it! Set it to draw or erase and use it like a pencil, lightly glazing to mix with other colours; for big, rough textural application to add some soul and grit into your image; or shrink it to a few pixels in diameter and apply with pressure to get clean, clear hard-surface edges.



### 1 Be happy with your thumbnail

It's important to ideate spontaneously, but still iterate thoughtfully on paper or digitally until you arrive at a sketch that grabs you as a messy thumbnail. The silhouette of the vehicle should be playful. While this design is a cube, the orange background dances around the shape with carved out and protruding geometries. You don't need the details finalised yet, but the overall shape should be distinctive and clear.



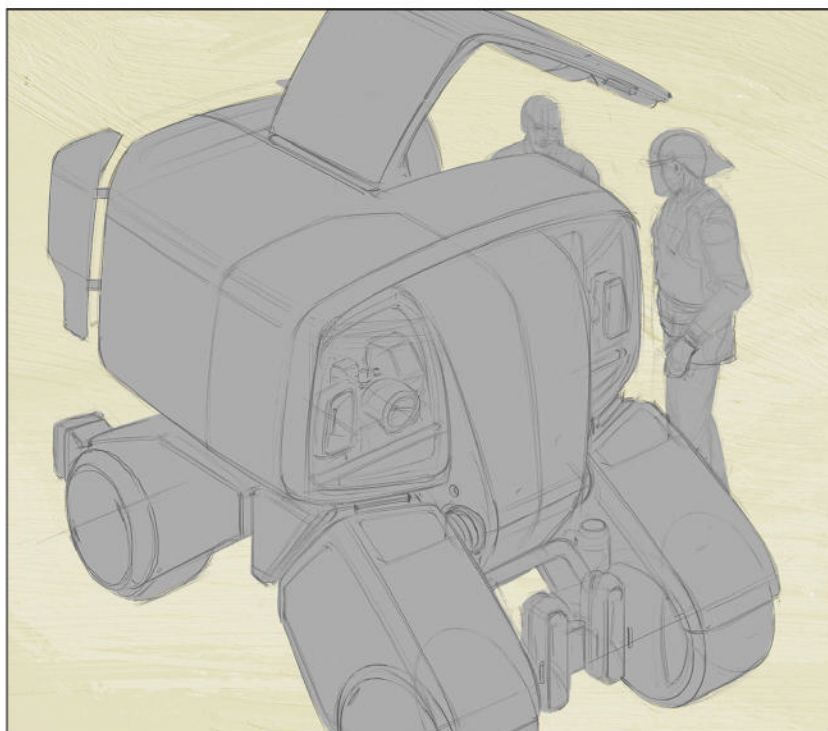
### 2 Lock into 3D space

This is the 'eat your vegetables' part of the piece; it might not be exciting, but perspective construction is essential for a solid-looking vehicle. Creating a three-axis perspective grid as a guide helps to lock in the volume and symmetry. Perspectives that are akin to telephoto lens images, with vanishing points far off the page, are a little easier to illustrate and also communicate accurate proportions with little distortion to the viewer. ➡➡



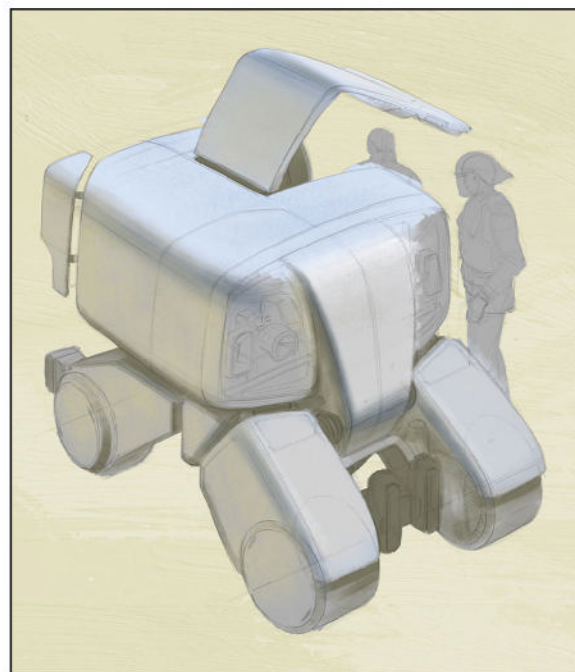






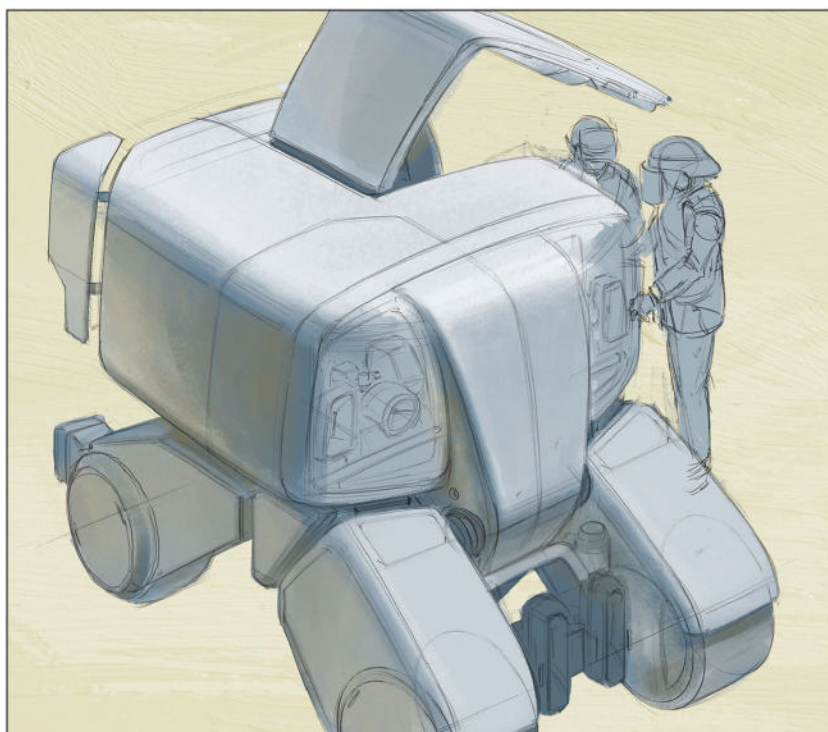
## 3 Background value and silhouette

Float the line drawing on top as a Multiply layer, and then fill the page with values. Apply a background value with textural strokes; here I used an analogue texture of scanned tinted gesso on masonite. Next, blockout the vehicle shape with one value. Apply a transparent pixel lock to this vehicle layer so you can work loosely on top and retain a clean perimeter to the shape.



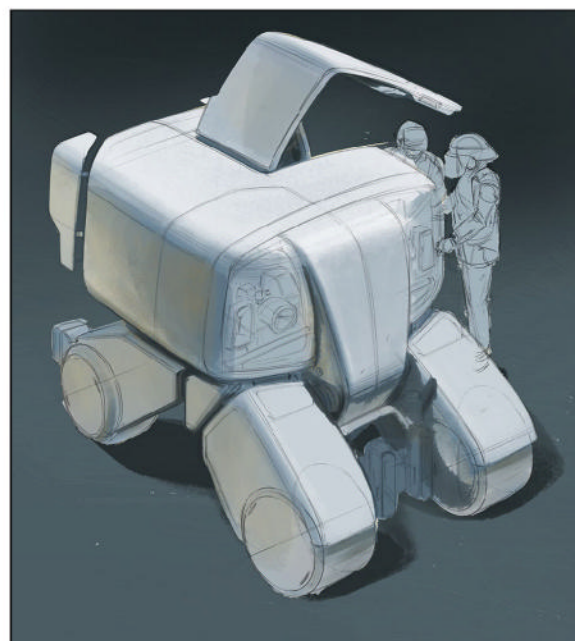
## 4 Lighting colour pass

Build up value incrementally. Start with an idea of lighting your shape with a dark, medium and light side. The upper-facing surfaces will get a bluish sky tone, while the side of the vehicle is shaded and reflecting warmth from the environment. The transition fillets get a dark, neutral value to emphasise the change in direction of the surfaces. Don't go full white or full black yet, be subtle.



## 5 Increase the values

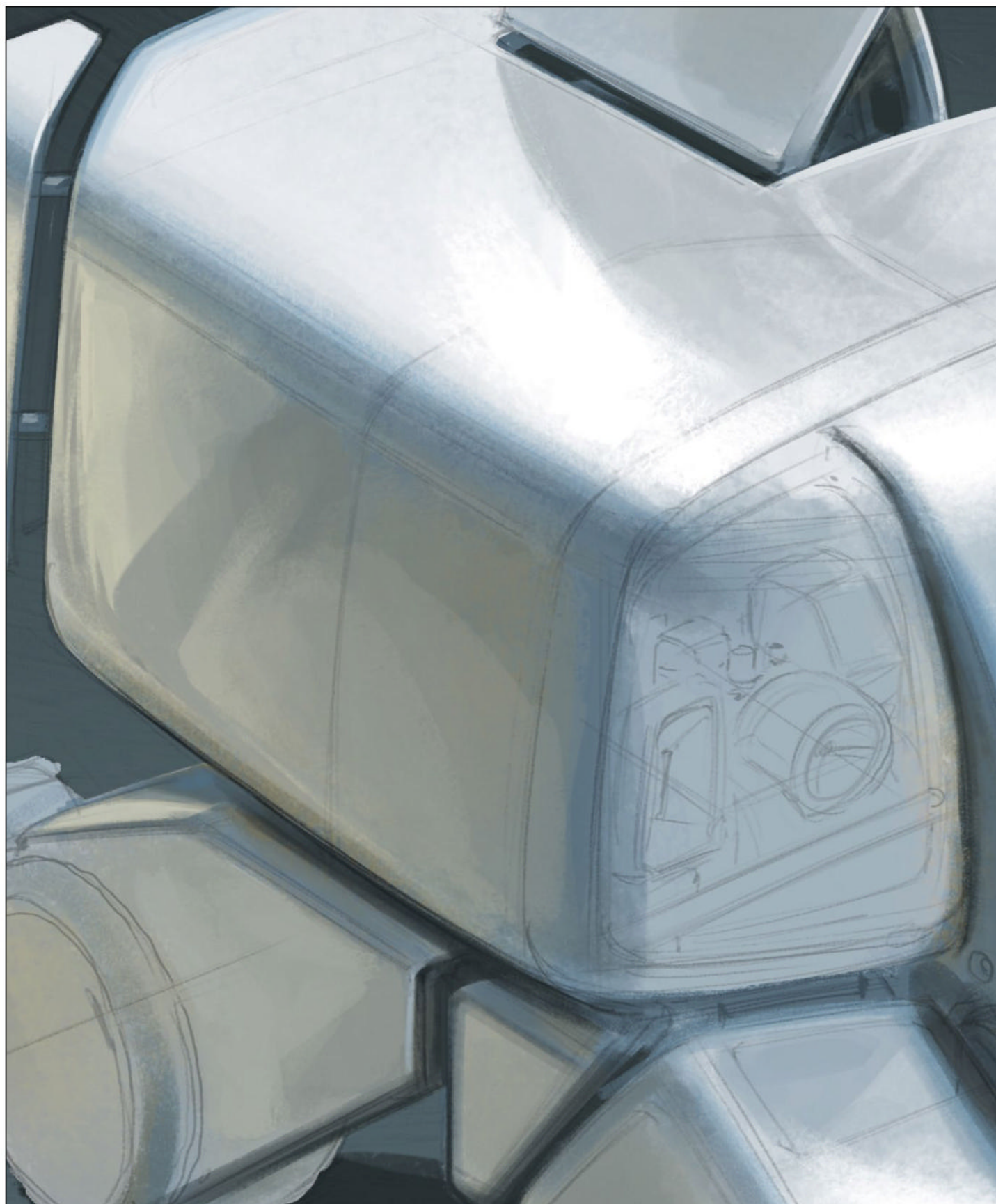
Sketch with light pressure, glazing value upon value to bring up contrast in the lighting. A greyish-blue was dusted over the warm tones on the side of the vehicle to give interest and depth that a single hue doesn't. Shaded areas may have some bounced warm tones, but the overall hue is blue-grey.



## 6 Punchy background contrast

With the background as a separate layer, it's easy to manipulate independently from the vehicle. With the pearl white tone of the vehicle established, it's clear that a contrasting darker value will help to make the rig pop off the page. The bluish toning to the background helps to connect it with the tones established on the vehicle itself. Gradating darker at the top provides a feeling of depth.





### 7 Create reflections on the surfaces of your vehicle

Reflections are tricky, but a lot of fun to create. Think of flat surfaces like a lake; the hinged gull-wing door sits on this silvery white lake and appears as a mirror image. Curved surfaces compress the reflected image (the side edges of cube), while the flatter surfaces stretch out reflected shapes. It's also good to bring in some brilliant pure white on the roof to show sunlit-reflected dazzle. ➡





## 8 Under the glass

To render transparent parts of a vehicle, first draw the details that will sit underneath the glass. These sensor cluster details are tinted as if they're under the shadow of tinted glass, in this case blue. The curved headlight and warning lamp are essentially chrome with the upward-facing surfaces light blue, and downward-facing surfaces darker, earthy tones. Tint the warning lamp bright blue.



## 9 Throw in a touch of glare

Lightly sketch a bluish-white toned glare from the sky over the glassed areas. The Fresnel effect leads to more glare on the upper-facing glass that angles away from you, while the forward-facing surfaces of the glass are more transparent. Glare adds light value opacity. Also note the fit and finish of the glass-to-body area is a clean and clear black cutline. Maintain precise edges on all parts.



## 10 Add dazzling highlights

The sun provides a brilliant spot of pure white to complete the glass illusion. The scattering of reflected solar glare stretches and bends around the curved glass panel. You can also add light and sketchy streaks parallel to the sunlight to suggest scratches on the glass panel that catch the light. Edge away from the more clinical rendering with a painterly application of highlights.



## 11 Line and colour

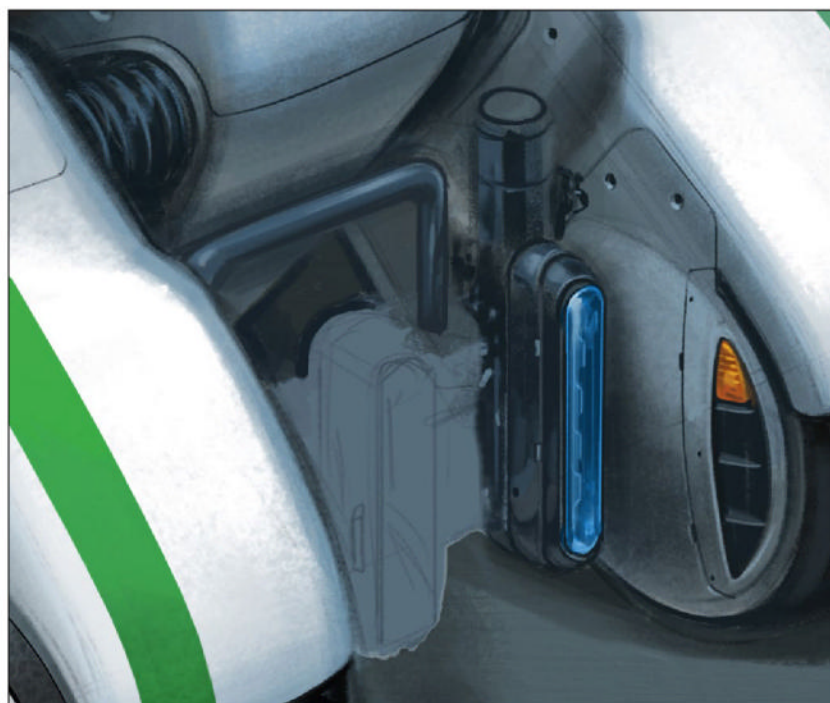
Hard-surface illustration requires an attention to detail. Draw in panel lines with clean, clear fine black lines, while the edges of panels can get thin highlights indicating a tiny curved edge. Adding an accent colour with a green stripe adds character, but also helps show the shape of the vehicle by draping over its curves. Add in some secondary orange detail in small amounts too.





## 12 Place additional interesting details onto the vehicle

Having a large mental library of surface details allows you to add interest to the form. Draw a grid of perforation holes that are initially flat, then use warp tools to make them appear as though they sit on the surface. All the text and graphics should be illustrated flat on a separate layer, before being warped to fit the perspective and form. If you need perspective guidance, use your three-axis grid to check the alignment.



## 13 Greeble in the voids

In the movie model-making industry, adding bits of faux mechanical tech is called greebling. For our vehicle, we can place elements of geometry in the open areas between the front wheel pontoons using a muted dark colour palette, and work from back to front to get overlapping depth. The vertical light bar's blue lens tint should match the upper lights behind the sensor windows.



## 14 Across the finish line

Go over all the edges and perimeters with a small-diameter brush to ensure a clean finish, and add characters to the scene to establish scale. However, as the vehicle is the star, downplay the characters either by facing them away from the viewer or obscuring the faces. Check the overall image value and colour contrast and make adjustments as necessary for maximum impact.







## Technique focus

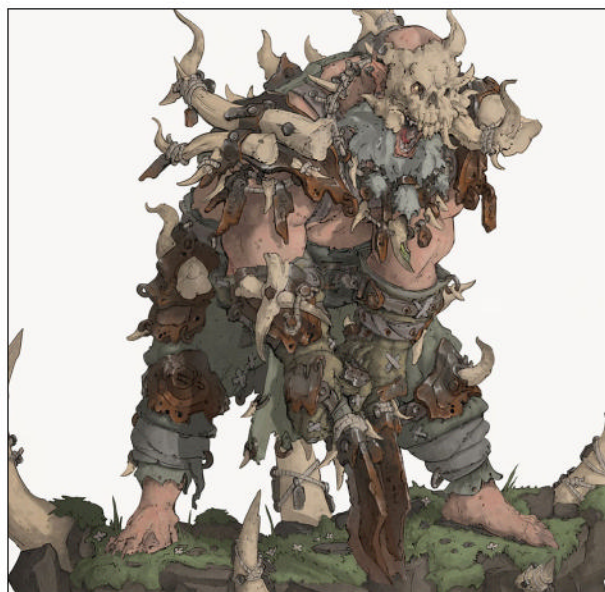
# DRAW FAST AND JOT DOWN IDEAS

**Ashot Avetisyan** designs a squad of fearsome beasts while keeping notes for future projects



"To create this set of berserkers, warriors and mercenaries, I listened to a lot of epic music. I also studied the anatomy of people and animals, as well as looking over the shapes of various mechanisms, plants and a selection of raw materials.

When I get started, I draw a lot of things quickly so that my hand can keep up with my imagination. While I'm working, whenever I have an interesting idea for a character, I like to write about it in my notes. That way I won't forget anything and I'll remember to draw them in future when creating other characters."



## Artist PROFILE

**Ashot Avetisyan**

LOCATION: Armenia

Yerevan-based Ashot is a concept artist who has worked in the gaming industry since 2019. He enjoys experimenting with different art styles and discovering new techniques that can be used in his work.

<https://bit.ly/49ZQG73>







## Blender, Photoshop & 3DCoat

# DEVELOP 3D SKILLS FOR CONCEPT ART

**Gaëlle Seguillon** creates a breathtaking fantasy environment by combining a selection of techniques within her workflow





## Artist PROFILE

**Gaëlle Seguillon**

LOCATION: France

Gaëlle is a concept artist specialising in digital environments who uses CG, digital painting and photobashing. Her work includes Star Wars Jedi: Survivor and Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom. <https://bit.ly/4ah4rhl>



This image, which I've titled Storm Peaks, is one that I believe reflects my overall workflow pretty well, because it has combined 2D, CGI and brainstorming elements.

When I start, the first step is going to be the brief, from a client or from myself. Here I wanted a mountain environment, with dramatic lighting and Gothic ruins. While working on this piece, I wanted it to be a homage

to the art of the legendary The Lord of the Rings artist John Howe, who captures Middle-Earth so well.

While I admire a lot of artists, I've never really been inspired by a single particular artist. What really inspires me is, simply, nature. I totally love to transcribe the beauty of nature in terms of playing with depth of field and different lenses; especially when I shoot photos. I like to picture them in a natural history style and think it makes the image more believable.

Usually, the challenge is more technical than being about finding inspiration. When I start on a project or with a brief, I begin with research and find things that inspire me.

I'd describe my style and aesthetic as very realistic and photographic. Specifically, I like to play with depth of field and natural light to depict natural environments. I'm always trying to bring more storytelling to my images, and that's what makes an image stand out.



AdobeStock/Danill

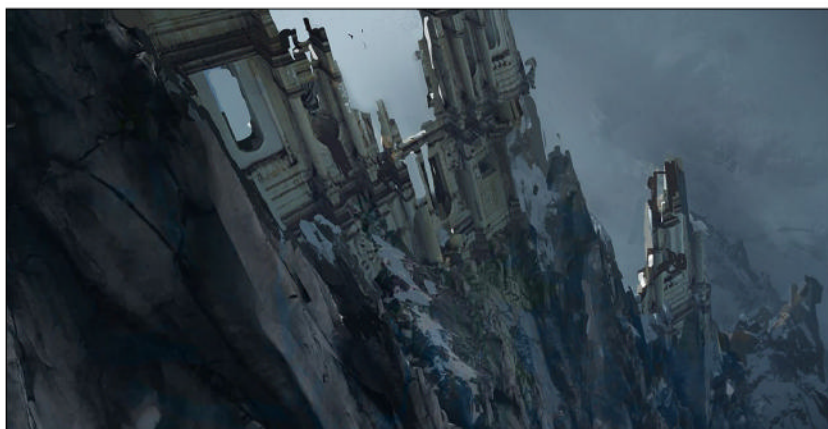
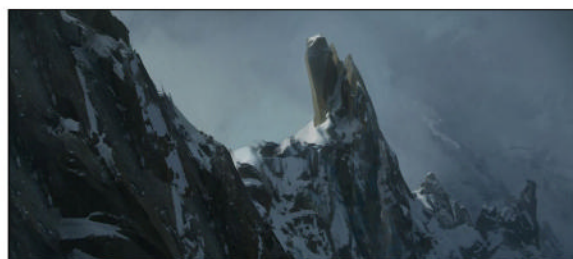


AdobeStock/craab



## 1 Seek out the right references and moods

To get going, I picked out a mountain photo that I particularly liked to get an idea for the lighting, angle and composition, as I thought it would give me a good head start. Additionally, I drew inspiration from photographs of buildings, snakes and fish as starting points for the fantasy elements, which includes dragons and a ruined hilltop fort; essential motifs in John Howe's work.



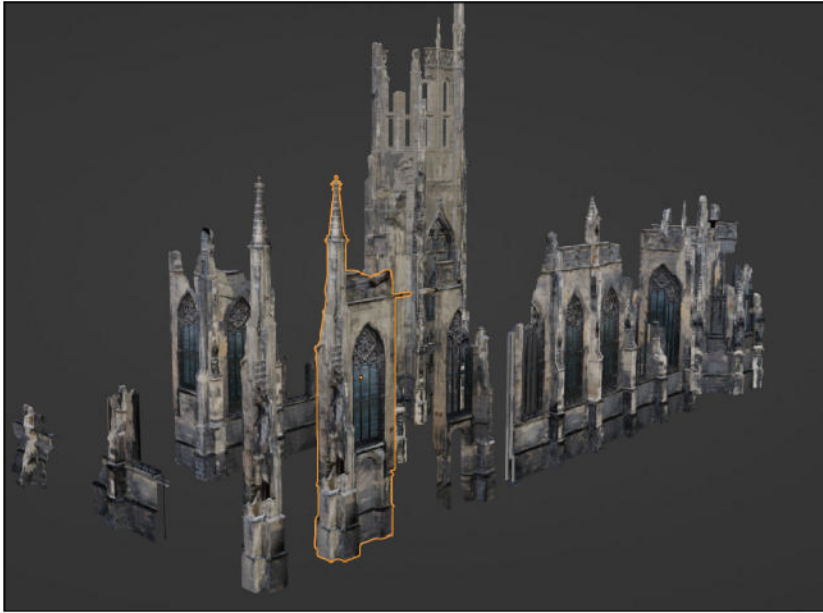
## 2 Inspiration to preliminary sketch

Filled with plenty of ideas for the composition and lighting inspired by my references, I moved on to making an initial sketch for the project. The first step is to import the references into Photoshop, paint over them, and sketch my idea for the piece. When I was satisfied with the composition and lighting, this became my guide for developing the rest of the process.

## 3 Create a sense of perspective

The tilt wasn't really intended, but rather it's a strong perspective to give almost a feeling of vertigo. Usually when I work with a client, this is the first step that I'll show them to make sure I'm going in the right direction. If this sketch is approved, then I start to think about how I'm going to make the final image. But even still, this sketch is something that I do quickly to ensure the image concept is going to work.





## 4 Decide on your tools

From the sketch, I started to consider whether I was going to do the work in 2D or 3D. I quickly understood that I was never going to do the buildings in 2D because the perspective is very strong. It's hard to draw something with this angle, so I decided to use 3D for the ruins and 2D for the rest, and to use photobashing because I already had good photos to refer to. I modified the photos that I had to match the composition sketch I made. Also, I used that as a landmark in the image background so I'd know where to put my ruins.

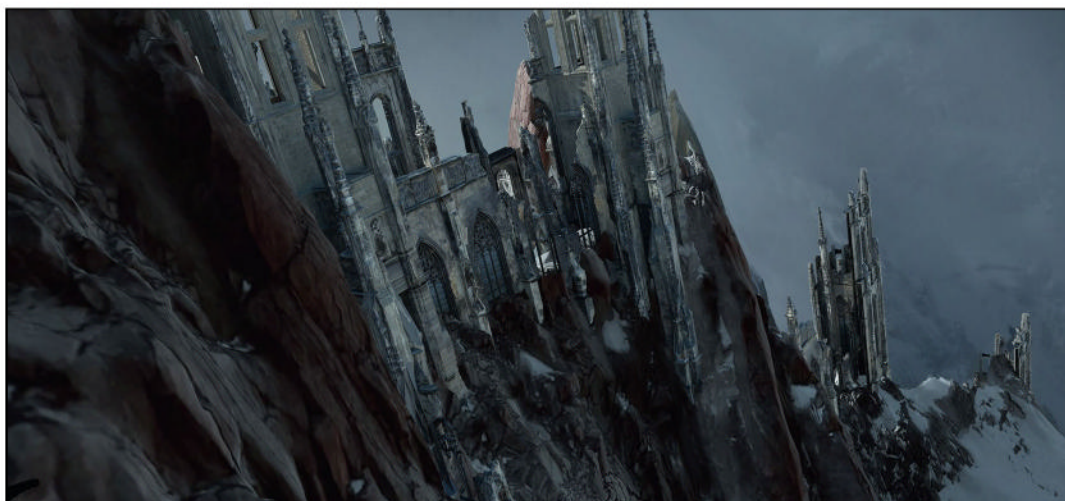
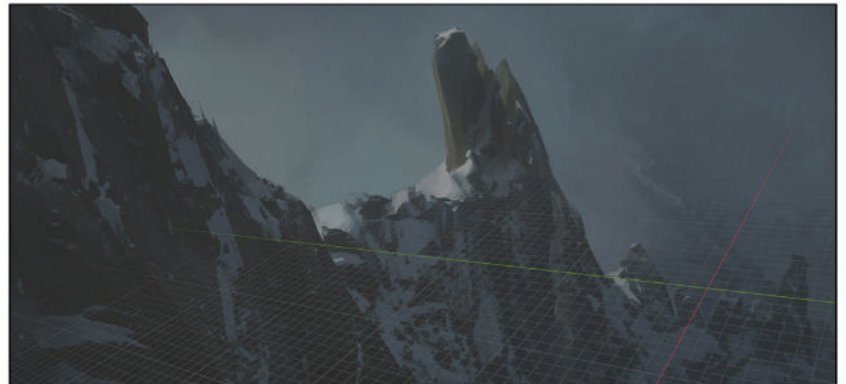


## 5 Place and texture the ruins

The next step was to start doing the ruins in 3D. I decided to create a set of different parts of ruins that I could use to kitbash. To do that, it was a simple geometric that I textured in 3DCoat, software that allows you to project a photo and paint it where you want. For this, I used some of my own cathedral reference images, and painted the photo directly onto the geometry. If you look closely it's actually quite dirty, although I wasn't all that fussed, as painting the photos onto the geometry means that it already looks realistic. The geometry itself is very simple as there aren't many polygons; with this method it's the textures that makes the details.

## 6 Apply geometry to the image

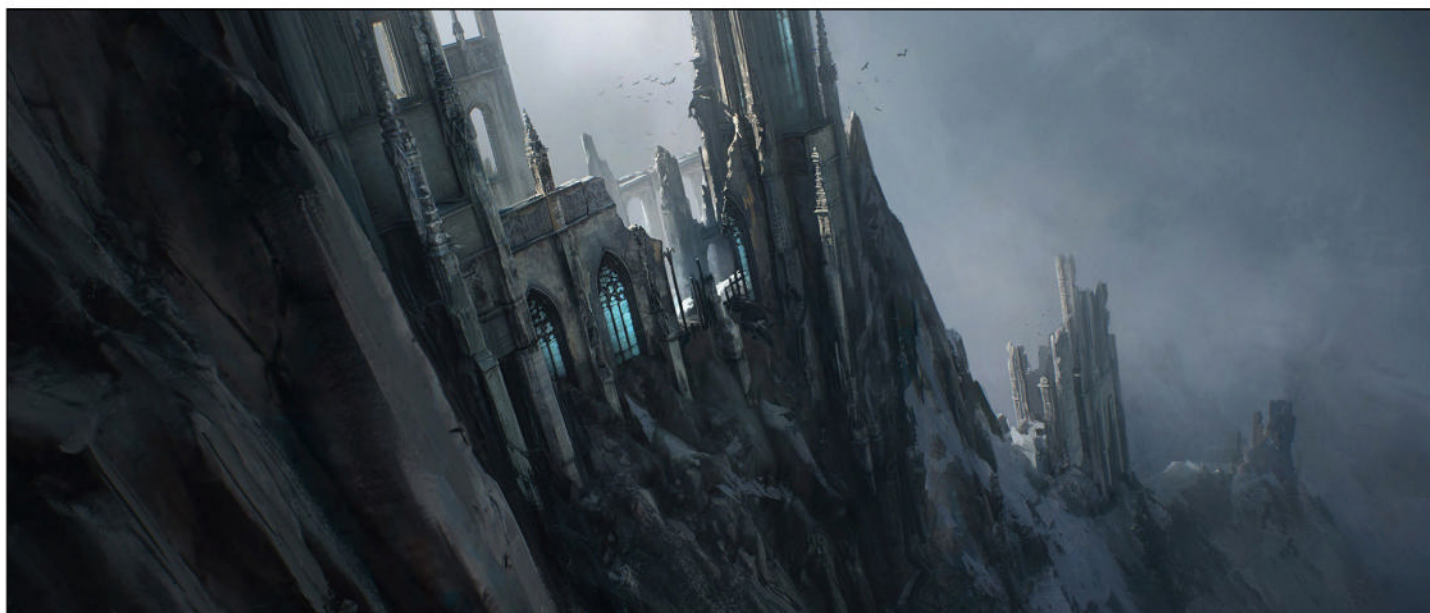
When I'd made the ruins, the challenge was that in my 3D scenes it was difficult to figure out what camera angle would match my sketch given that the perspective was strong. I didn't see any flat ground, which made it challenging to figure out where to put my ruins and judge the correct focal length. To get around this issue, I decided that I needed geometry from the mountains so I'd have somewhere to put my ruins, or else everything would be empty. It was a bit hard to visualise, but as I started from a photo of my own, I knew the locations, and created photogrammetry of the mountain myself, because I couldn't go there and take lots of photos.



## 7 Photogrammetry and camera

I went to Google Maps and took lots of screenshots from the 3D view of this specific mountain in the Alps. I fed those screenshots through some photogrammetry software, which was able to recreate the 3D geometry of the area. When I had this geometry, I then needed to create a camera and place it in the right position and perspective to match the initial sketch. With that sorted, I could place my ruins however I wanted, with the perspective working nicely. ➡

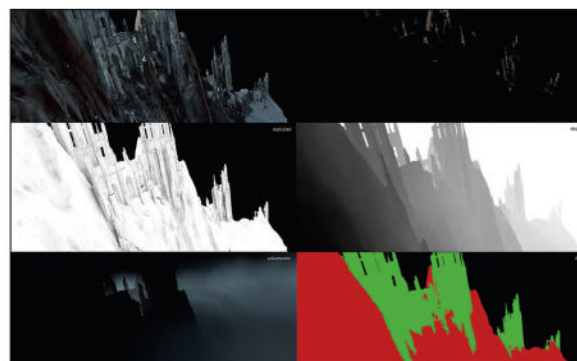
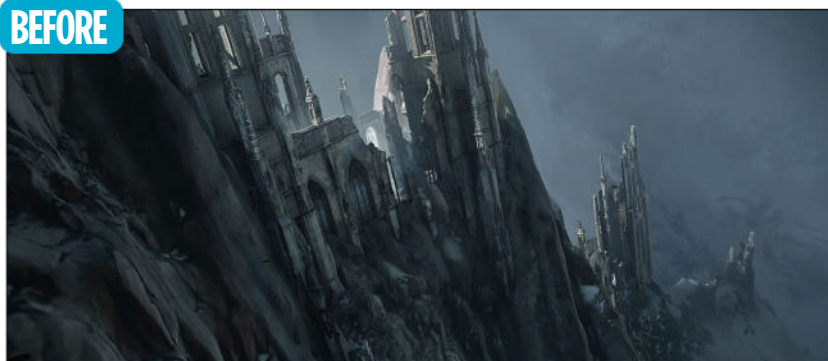




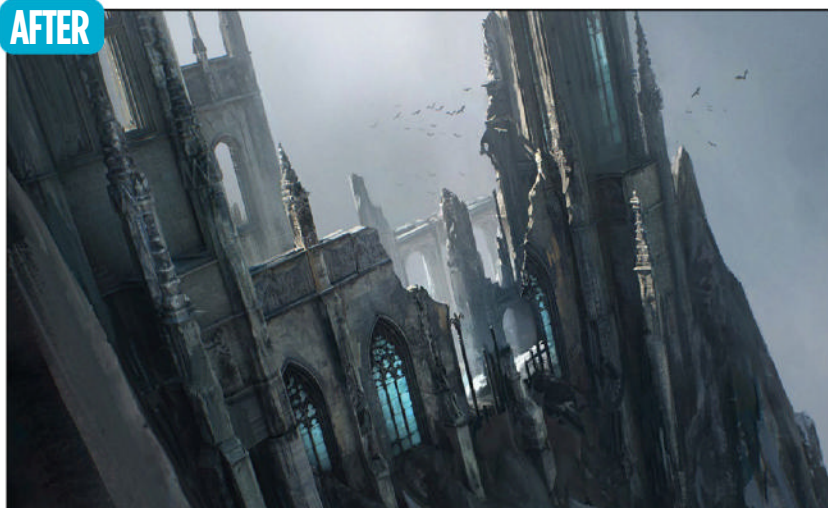
## 8 Simplify the image to bring out the key areas

As some areas were looking a little hard to read, I tried to give more depth to the ruins. Sometimes, especially when working with CG, it tends to look highly detailed everywhere, and so I'm trying to simplify the image a touch. That's why, from the CG render, I began to lose the background. I wanted my focal point to be those ruins on the left, which is why I put the light coming through the windows, as well as some mist, and more contrast and detail in this area, plus a flock of birds.

### BEFORE

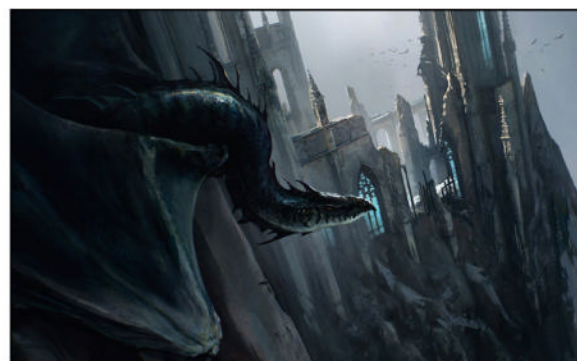


### AFTER




## 9 Focal points and lighting

With the ruins on top, I was happy with the layout, and just had to light and render it. This is something I had in mind from the beginning, as I knew where I wanted the focal point to be. That's why creating the initial sketch is so important, as that's when I decided the general appearance of the image.



## 10 Final render

The orientation of the ruins on the right is designed to bring the attention back to the main ruins. I like to render the occlusion when I need to see more details in the geometry, and I like to use a direct diffuser when I need to increase the highlights. I usually use the depth to add more haze to an image, or to grade the background differently to the foreground to create more atmosphere and depth within the image. Here, the different grading helps to distinguish between the ruins and rocks. 



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## Technique focus

# START OFF WITH SIMPLE SHAPES

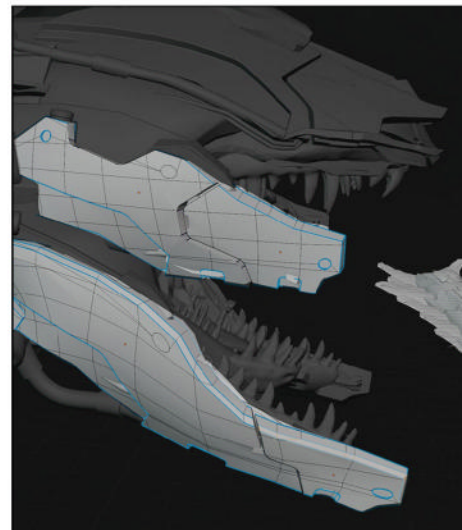
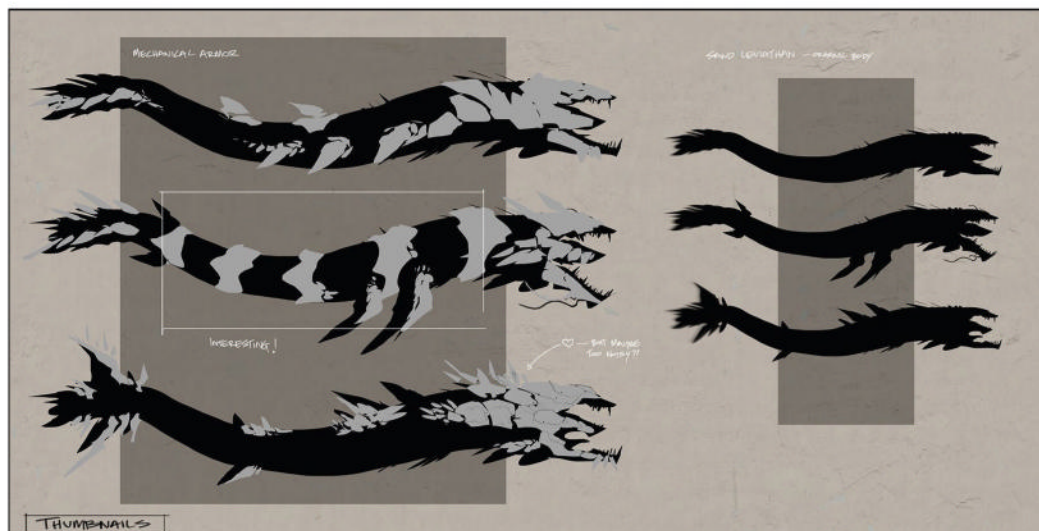
Concept artist **Brandon Le** begins with the basics as he crafts an imposing leviathan



"After sketching some thumbnail concepts to determine the focus of this piece, I jumped straight into Blender to model all the main components. I started off with the primary shape of the leviathan, and then modelled the bone structure of the jaw using Blender's Sculpt mode.

The Mirror tool saved me a lot of time here, then I did a quick and dirty modelling job on the armour. This was achieved with basic shapes as I wasn't focused on good topology.

For the textures, I used the Quixel Megascans library and combined rusty metals with sand and dirt. I then photobashed additional effects in Photoshop to finish." 🍷





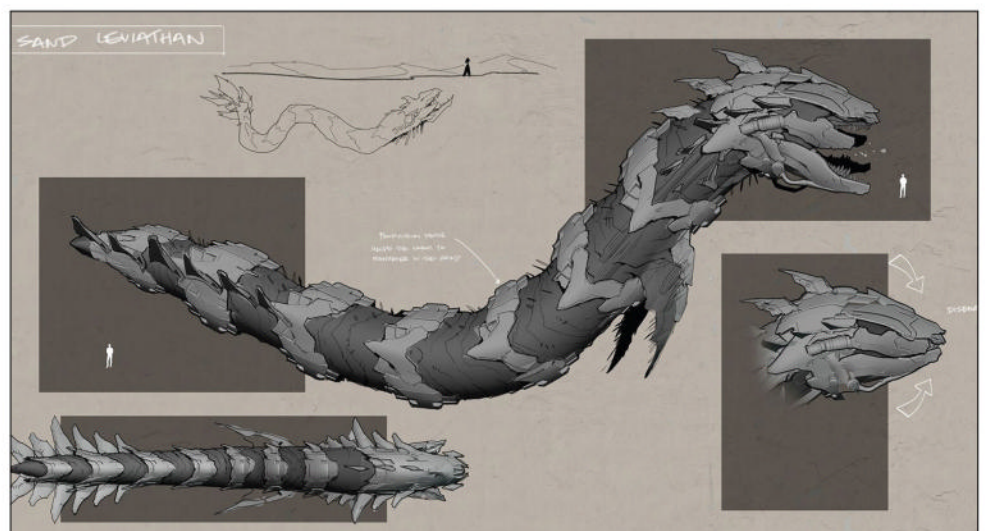


## Artist PROFILE

**Brandon Le**

LOCATION: Canada

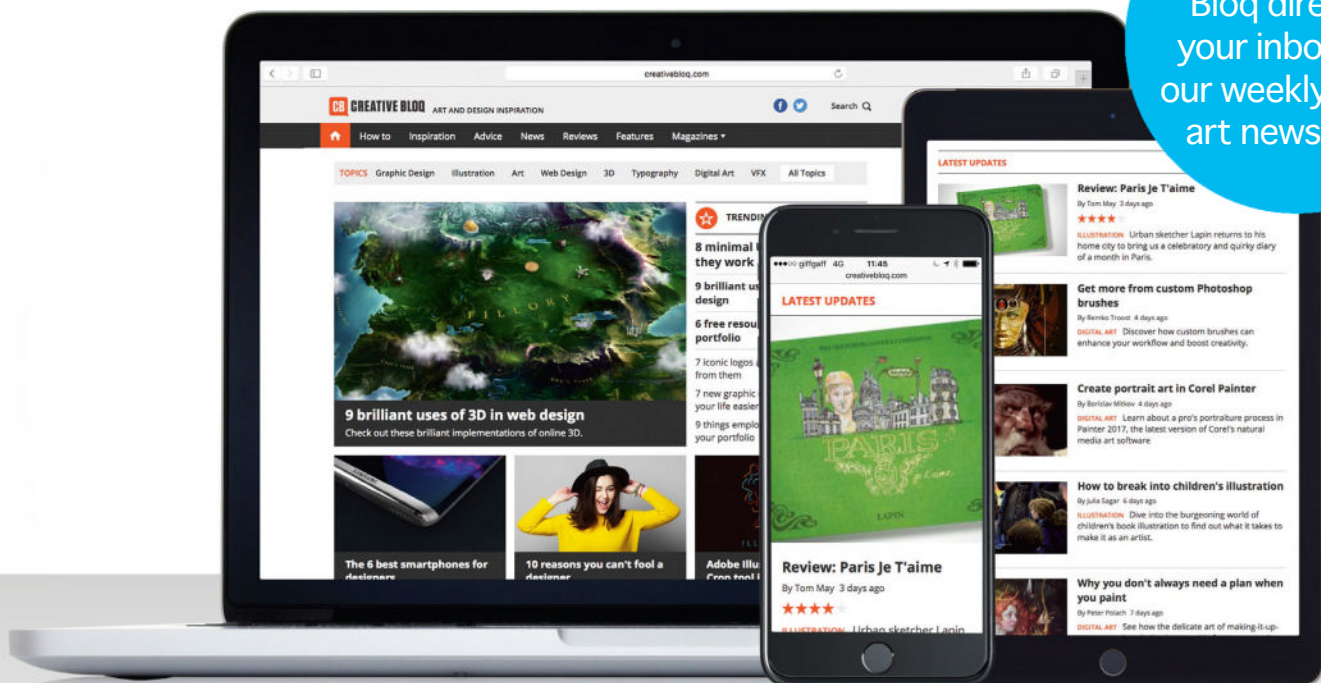
Brandon is a professional concept artist with six years of experience. He is currently working for Activision Blizzard, and was most recently part of the team on Call of Duty: Modern Warfare III. <https://bit.ly/3VpwyqK>





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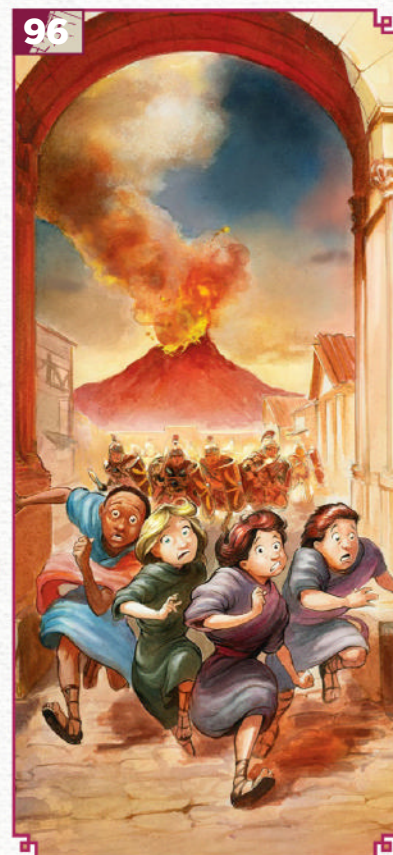
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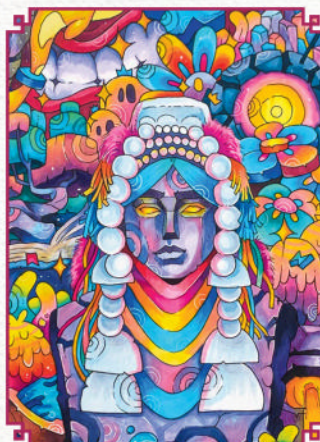
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# Traditional Artist

Inspiration and advice from the best pro artists



## This issue:



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

**92 Create an epic comic battle scene**  
Uko Smith delves into the details of his electrifying X-Men piece.

**96 First Impressions: Scott Brundage**  
The artist talks about his work, including book covers and more.



# FXPosé

SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL ARTISTS



## Kelly Sparks

**LOCATION:** US **MEDIA:** Pencils, acrylic **WEB:** [www.kellysparksart.com](http://www.kellysparksart.com)

Independent artist Kelly creates fantasy portraits and enjoys sketching horses from memory as meditative practice, but admits that most end up as unicorns.



### 1 THE MERMULE

"Sketching in pencil is the best! Sometimes I use references to start, but fill in details and expressions from memory and imagination."

### 2 WHEN WE DREAM, WE CAN FLY

"This personal piece started as a sketch of three horses. It's inspired by Pharaoh's Horses, an artwork I loved as a child."

### 3 HOW TO HAVE AN ADVENTURE

"An illustrative portrait, commissioned to feature a young grandchild with a dragon, a book, and daffodils."









## Teal Newcomb

**LOCATION:** US **MEDIA:** Watercolour **WEB:** [www.metalkirin.com](http://www.metalkirin.com)

Teal works primarily in watercolour with accents of acrylic gouache and coloured pencil. A nature enthusiast from a young age, they draw inspiration from the often overlooked details in the world around them.

### 1 FAERIE SPECIMEN

"A researcher examines a common moth that has become infected with the parasitic Faerie Cordyceps."



### 2 FAERIE FOREST NIGHTFALL

"I did a lot of worldbuilding as a child. Coming back to it as an adult has been both nostalgic and kind of soothing."



### 3 ALICE AND THE FLOWERS

"A reinterpretation of Alice's meeting with the Flowers of Wonderland."

### 4 SPELLWEAVER

"A lot of my work is very organic and unplanned. This one started as a stream-of-thought doodle in my sketchbook."









## Jack AC Art

**LOCATION:** Thailand **MEDIA:** Pencils, marker pens **WEB:** [www.skool.com/doodle-gang-2993](http://www.skool.com/doodle-gang-2993)

Jack is a digital and doodle artist who collaborates with others from around the world. "I adore all art forms, but doodle art holds a special place for its freedom and ease. Creating brings me joy, and I cherish every medium."





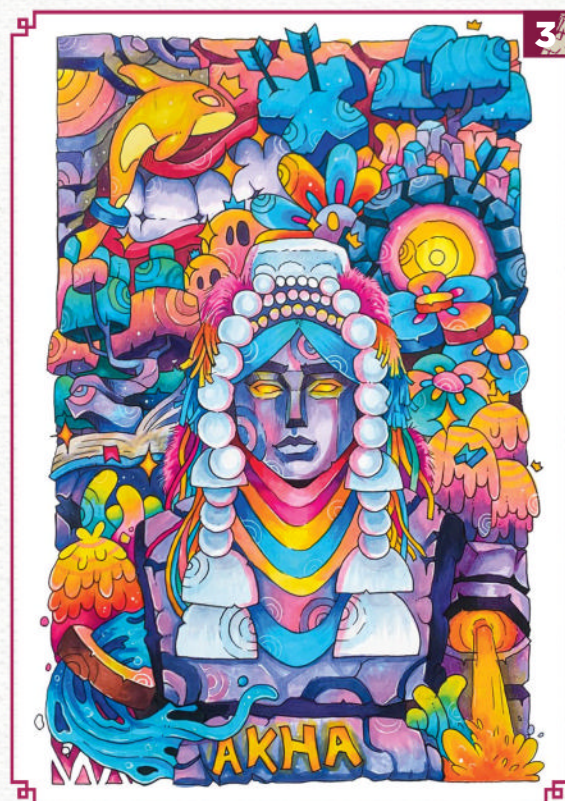
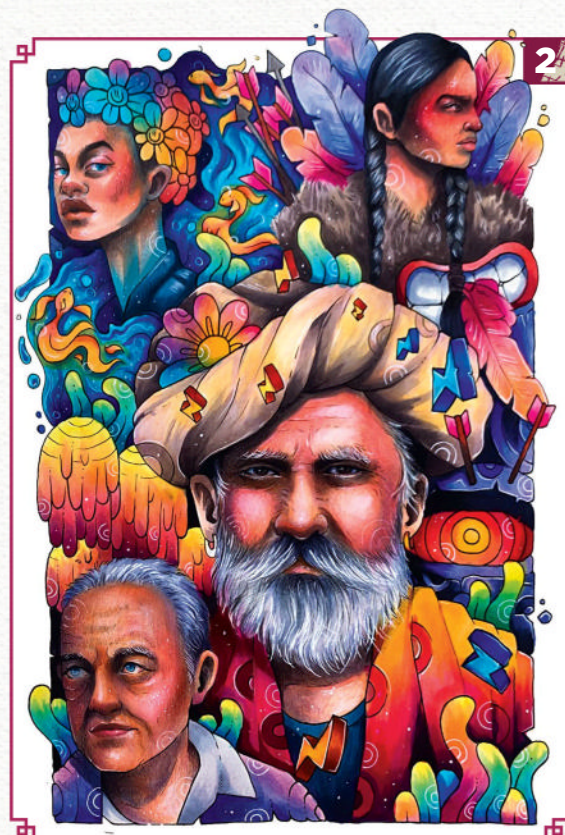
## 1 MAGIC FULL PAGE DOODLE ART

"I embraced the full spectrum of emotions creating this captivating page of doodle art, weaving a tale of resilience, liberation, and the triumph of growth against oppression."



## 2 DIFFERENT TYPES OF PEOPLE

"With this image, I celebrated diversity, portraying individuals from various backgrounds and cultures. Each unique feature highlights the beauty and richness we can find throughout humanity."



## 3 AKHA

"The Akha people, an indigenous group from Southeast Asia, celebrate their heritage with intricate traditional headdresses. In my doodle art, I honour Akha women, showcasing their beauty and pride."



Pencil

Watercolour

## CREATE AN EPIC COMIC BATTLE

Illustrator **UKO SMITH** breaks down the key details as he builds an action-packed scene featuring two classic X-Men characters

This piece started its life as a commission, but when that didn't materialise, I pretty much made it my own. My process begins with a series of preliminary sketches, and I pick the best from the batch to progress with. Next I'll do a greyscale comp to give me a roadmap for the visual interest.

After that, I work on the final pencils. As I love spontaneity, I don't have to fully pencil every detail out. Since the greyscale comp, I made some changes to the action for Storm to make her more dynamic. I wanted a more sweeping design from top-left to bottom-right. Extending Storm's leg made sense here, as did pointing Magik's toe to further add to the

flow. I also made a focal point by using lightning and other elements of the characters' designs. Once these decisions are in place, I move to the early colour stages and final touches.



Uko is an illustrator, concept artist and storyteller working for industry clients, personal projects and commissions.

[www.instagram.com/ukosmith](http://www.instagram.com/ukosmith)

### Step-by-step: Compose a dynamic fight



#### 1 FIRST SKETCHES

In the initial pencil stages, it's important to have the right feel at the beginning. You can see the position of Storm's leg, which changed in the final piece. I know this initial sketch could probably work, but I wanted it more dynamic, so I considered gymnastics. I felt Storm's posture was too stunted and didn't flow, and wanted to elongate her with that serious hamstring stretch.



#### 2 DESIGN FEATURES

In this final pencil sketch, you can see that I had some specific lightning effects in mind to help with the overall design in the top-left corner of the image. Nevertheless, I still felt that some design elements were missing. So instead of wasting my time trying to figure that out, I decided that I was going to allow the piece to be more organic and let it come to me.



#### 3 INITIAL COLOURS

As the piece evolved, I started out with the skin tones first and then worked on the character that had my interest at that point with some base watercolour tones. I won't normally do any inking work until the later stages of the image. For me, this is a way of being able to keep the piece loose while retaining some energy, and being able to create some happy accidents.







# Traditional Artist Workshops

## In-depth: Electrifying elements

### Lightning control

There was already going to be plenty of white with Storm's hair, fur boots and the lightning effects, but I didn't want these different elements to all compete. With that in mind, I wanted Storm's hair and fur boots to stand out, while also subduing the lightning and keeping its reflective effect to a minimum, just letting the energy of the lightning help with the design rather than being the focus.

### Focal points

One of the keys to this design was to create a focus, which could be helped by using the lightning, the flow of Magik's loin cloth, and by utilising the lighting effects from Storm. Even though I wanted to really work the lighting effects, I was wary of that taking away from the overall design by becoming the sole focus. Instead, I only wanted certain areas where you could see the lighting play off the characters.

### Interesting poses

I believe female characters have some of the best curves and shapes, and I try to create points of interest when it comes to the design of a figure on a page. Showing the bend of a waist and a slight twisting of the midsection are all the little elements that can make a piece enjoyable, for both the viewer and myself.

### MATERIALS

#### PAINTS

- Liquid acrylics
- Watercolours

#### BRUSHES

- Aqua and synthetic watercolour brushes

#### MISCELLANEOUS

- Airbrush
- Polychromos colour pencils
- Strathmore 400 Series watercolour paper

### Late addition

I think every artist has their special part of a piece that they enjoy the most once it's done. For me, it's the flow of the loin cloth, which aids the design and also enables it to fade out. This part wasn't planned until the very latest stages of the image, when it was time to wrap it up.



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# First Impressions

✧ Scott Brundage ✧

The illustrator reveals his journey through the world of art



Where did you grow up and how has this influenced your art?

I grew up in Danbury, Connecticut, which is

a relatively mundane suburb about 90 minutes from New York City. The big influence from growing up there was a great cartooning teacher with whom I took weekly lessons, starting in second grade through the end of high school.

It was more my parents hoping to find something I was interested in since it definitely wasn't sports or anything active. I was a pale and very indoorsy child. I'm still pale, but I go outside a bit more. Having a great teacher expose me to good comics, show me great illustrators, and keep me engaged in wanting to make fun pictures was a blessing that I didn't really appreciate until years later.

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

Probably just all the media I've consumed. Books, comics, movies; anything that required a bit of attention and inspired me to doodle with new ideas and images in mind.

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

It would probably be the first time I saw an artist start and finish a professional-level drawing in ink. I don't even remember the guy's name, but he let me keep this drawing and I stared at it for days. Seeing living proof that there wasn't some secret to making a great image by hand was hugely motivating. It kept me aiming higher.



Illustration: HarperCollins

## TIME TRACERS: THE STOLEN SUMMERS

One of the more complex covers I've designed, but no complaints painting bugs with human feet.



## EARLY WORK

My first paid commission for AARP Bulletin, about the funds in social security shrinking. Hopefully you can see the jump in quality since.

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

It was a full-page and handful of spot illustrations for the AARP Bulletin. The art director called me on the phone, a very dated phrase now, and I was so sure one of my friends was messing with me. He ended the call with, "This is the most widely distributed publication in America, so no pressure".

range. That being said, I'm still pretty happy with them.

What's the last piece you finished, and how do the two differ?

I just finished an illustration for the Wall Street Journal. Oddly enough, both that and my first gig have an orange-coloured bull in the mix. The biggest difference is that my technique is way more confident now. The latest image is a lot more

“ Seeing living proof there wasn't some secret to making a great image by hand was hugely motivating ”

I haven't looked at them in a while, but all the main hallmarks of my work are there: the lightly cartooned people and animals, lots of facial expressions to push the idea across. But you can tell I was hesitant with a lot of mark-making, not great at specific anatomy (some wonky hands) and I wasn't editing the images much after scanning my work. So overall the paintings felt kind of pale and lacked a full value

realistic, even if the animals have some slight expressions. I've gotten away from being a watercolour purist and created the piece mainly in acrylic coloured inks. It's just a much more professional and slick-looking illustration.

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

I knew it was famously a low-paying job, and that classic starving ➤





**FLASHBACK FOUR #3:  
THE POMPEII DISASTER**

*Super fun series to work on!  
As I progressed in my career,  
I really came to appreciate  
doing research to inform all  
the details in my work.*



➡ artist trope is stubbornly still around. It took me a good 10 or so years to be able to fully support myself through my work.

I think that a good thing was not having a clear idea of how the income would come. I focused on making a lot of work and chasing the avenues that opened before me. Because of that, I ended up with a toe in a bunch of markets and had a very diverse portfolio. I frequently went from signing for animation and advertising, then to overnight editorial gigs, to full-on picture books. I wish the industry was healthier and I had more income, but I'm pretty sure most people in any industry would say the same.

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

That's a hard question since I keep thanking my younger self for drawing as much as he did. Maybe I'd suggest he look into designing for animation earlier on, as well as embracing digital art sooner. Much of my current work is a hybrid of digital and traditional media, but everything I've done in animation is



### MUTANT MANTIS LUNCH LADIES!

Each cover in this series was a two-image reveal, usually of a normal human then morphed to a monster. The cover was lenticular, so you tilt the book and get the second image.



Publisher: Hyperion

wholly digital. It could have been helpful to have those skills in my back pocket sooner.

## How has the industry of art changed for good since you've been working in it?

What a refreshing question when I'm most often hit with doom and gloom stories about this industry; low budgets, fewer outlets, and the demon of AI. I think the biggest and best change that I've seen through my career has been how open professionals have been about their process. When I started, most artists protected their workflow like some sort of proprietary secret recipe that needed to be protected at all costs.

However, nowadays you can likely find a step-by-step guide from your artistic hero either online or

## “Every single expression is based on me making a specific face in front of a camera”

published somewhere, or pay to get a mentorship and work one-on-one with that same hero. The career is difficult to start with, it only makes sense to share the knowledge with a younger generation.

## What character or scene you've made do you most identify with?

As the majority of my work is zombies, businessmen, critters or middle-grade children in danger, that's tough. That said, every single expression – one of my stylistic calling cards – is based on me making a specific face in front of a camera. My laptop is a hall of shame full of me making distorted faces.

## What are your next steps?

I've been refocusing on illustration work lately since the last animated series I designed on got cancelled along with the last writers' strike. I'm aiming to expand the markets I work in, trying to dip a toe into more gaming and fantasy work. We'll see how it goes!

**Illustrator Scott Brundage has worked on book covers, animation, and for editorial clients such as The New York Times. Visit [www.scottbrundage.com](http://www.scottbrundage.com) to learn more.**

Published in Wall Street Journal



### CHEWING UP THE INTERNET

A lot of my editorial work is taking dry subjects and making fun images to accompany them.

### MONSTERS IN THE BRINY

I loved working on this picture book! I submitted an initial finish after a 90-hour week on a cartoon, not realising how unfinished it looked. After I wisely took another pass, it's now one of my favourite covers.



Publisher: Sleeping Bear Press



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