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ImagineFX

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MANGA

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+

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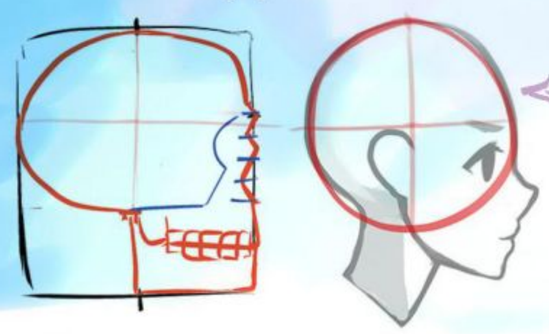

Look, it's Totoro! Read Ilya's manga lighting advice on page 64

PLUS!

5 MASTERS OF MANGA YOU NEED TO KNOW TODAY!

ALSO INSIDE!

THE BEST ART FROM AROUND THE WORLD!
EVOKE EMOTIONS IN YOUR GOUACHE WORK
INSIDE ATOMHAWK CANADA STUDIOS

WORKSHOP

CLIP STUDIO PAINT SKILLS
Artist kiDChan reveals her rendering techniques

CAMILLA D'ERRICO HER JOURNEY FROM COMICS TO POP SURREALIST QUEEN!

FUTURE
ISSUE 185

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Welcome to…

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX

Hello there, I really hope you are well. As I type these words looking out of my window on a cold but bright UK day, I can see the afternoons are slowly getting lighter, which means winter is losing its grip on the calendar and spring will soon nudge its way in. It's a lovely feeling.

Thanks to the incredible Ilya Kuvshinov for creating our smile-inducing cover art. Do you love it? Ilya heads up a glorious issue filled with talented artists both new and established. There's a lot here to keep you inspired!

Have you ever wondered why I haven't featured your favourite artist yet, or have you struggled to learn a new technique? Why not drop me a line with your requests? I will endeavour to feature it.

If you buy a couple of issues of ImagineFX a year then it's worth you looking at our latest print and digital subscriptions deals. There are a plethora of money-savers to choose from, including a new double subscription offer with our friends at 3D World magazine. Turn to page 4 for print and digital bundles, or page 38 for digital editions.

Claire

Editor-in-chief
claire@imaginefx.com

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

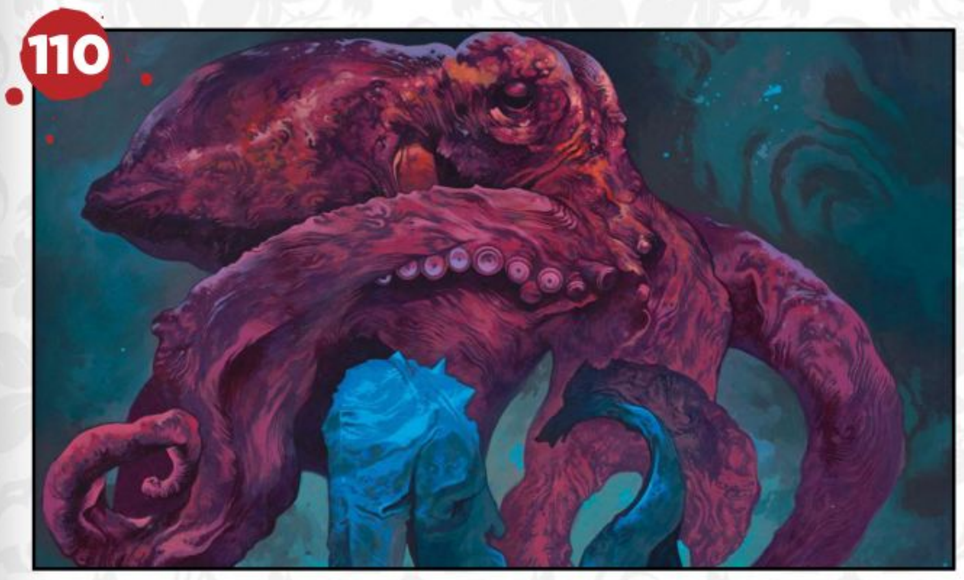
40

The rainbow girl
From Fuzzbutts to fine art collections, illustrator Camilla d'Errico is a true force of creativity and flair.

56

Le rouge et noir
Run, don't walk to the sketchy red and black hatching genius of Spanish artist ZIUK.

110



Figures of eight
I keep going back to pore over the hauntingly surreal oil painting from Steven Black. Mesmerising.

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Cover art for issue 71 by Genzoman

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You submit your work to us and we then show your gorgeous art to the world!

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The Vancouver studio is making a name for itself developing video games concepts.

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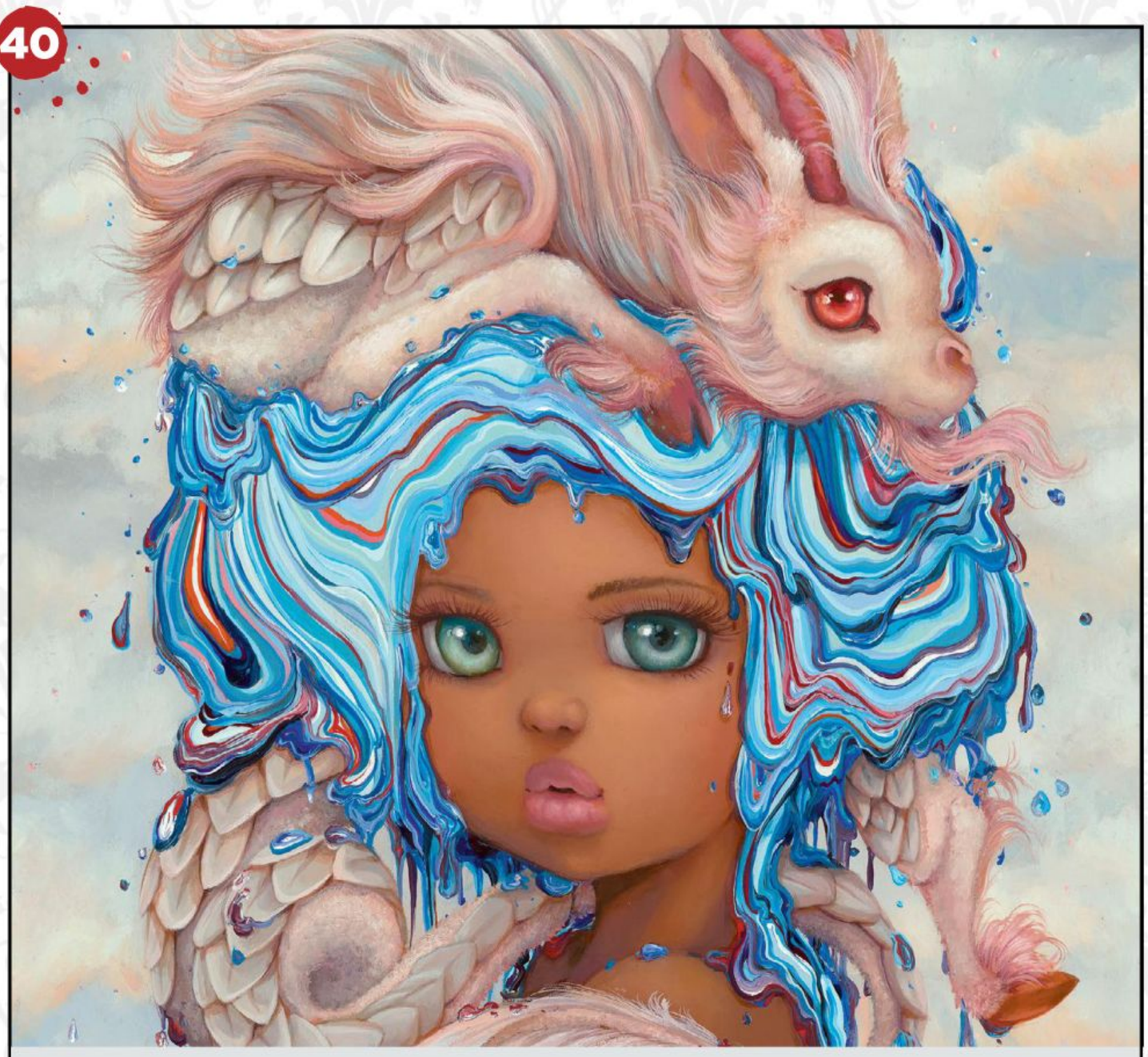

Artist Portfolio
CAMILLA D'ERRICO

"It's endless how much fun I can have with these bees, and it's for a good cause"
Camilla on painting Fuzzbutts

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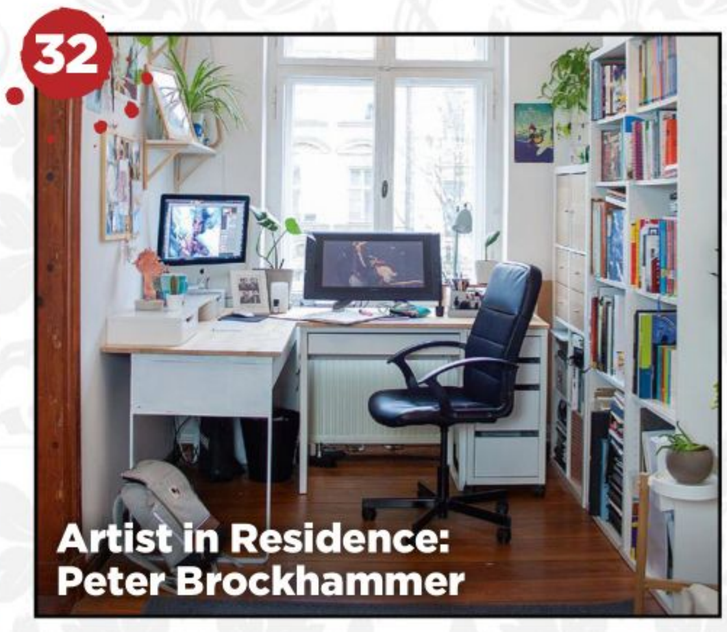
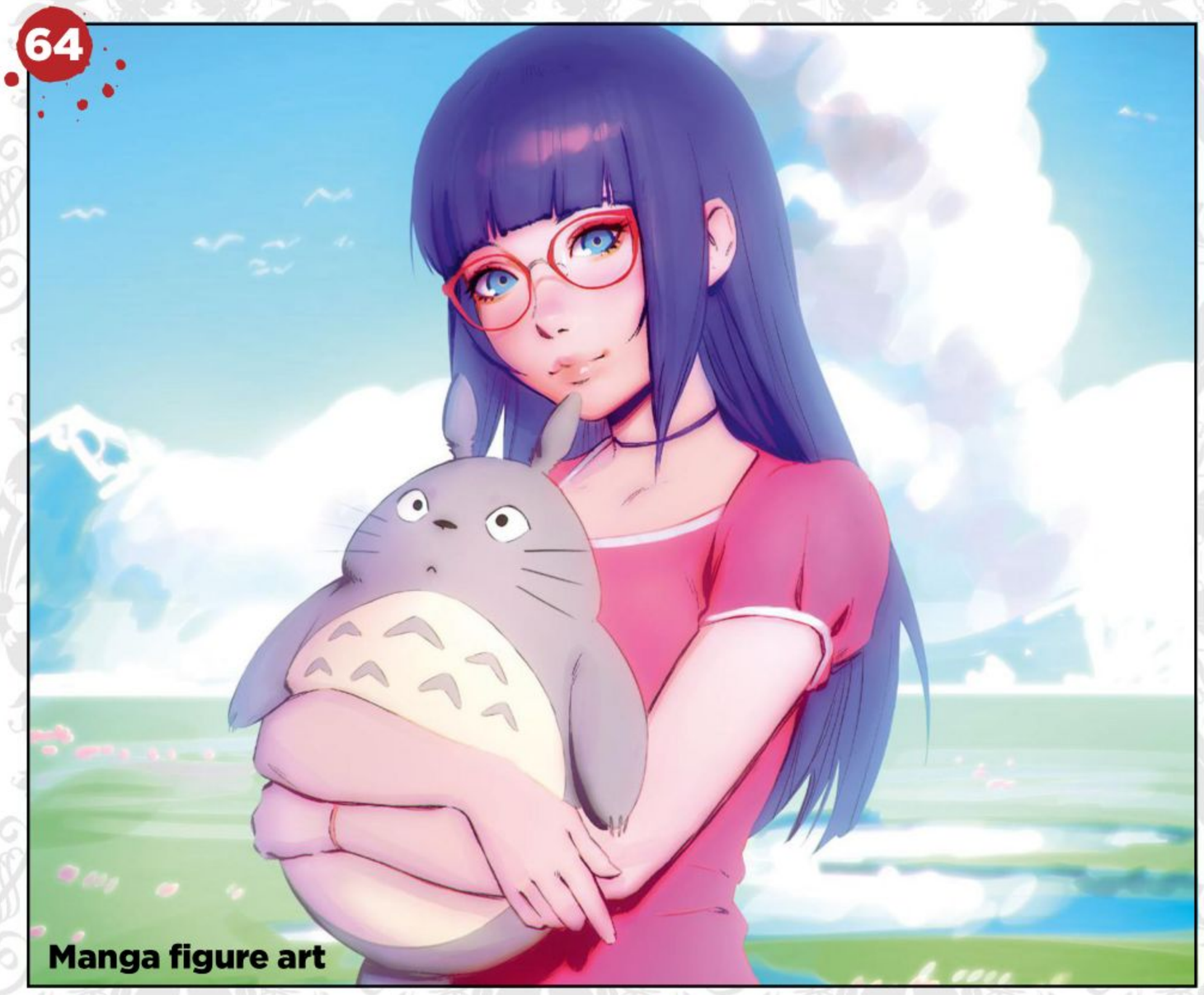
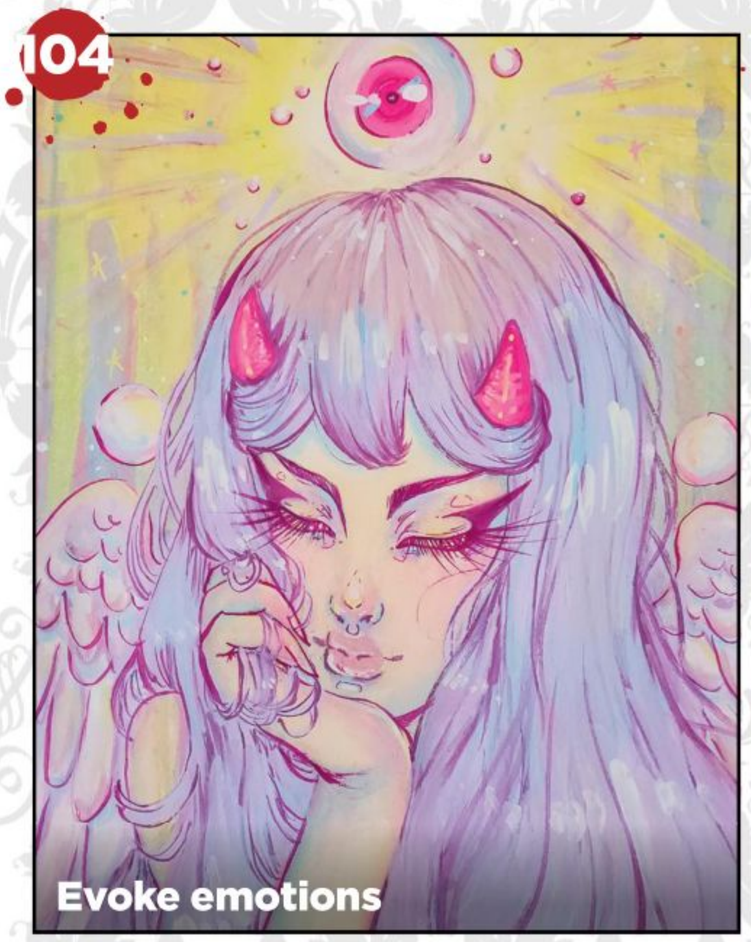
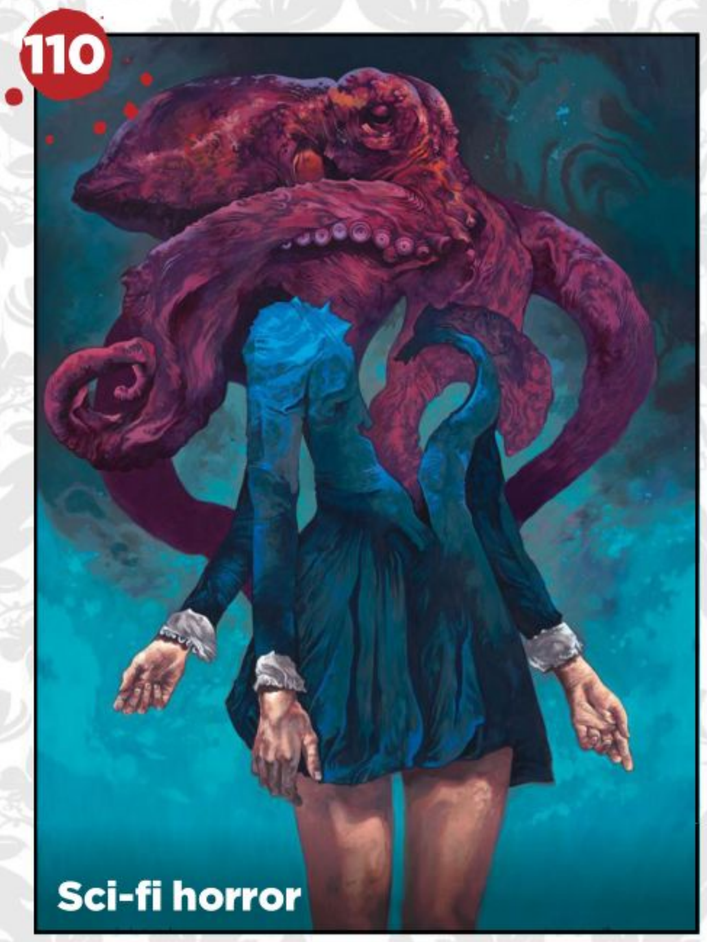








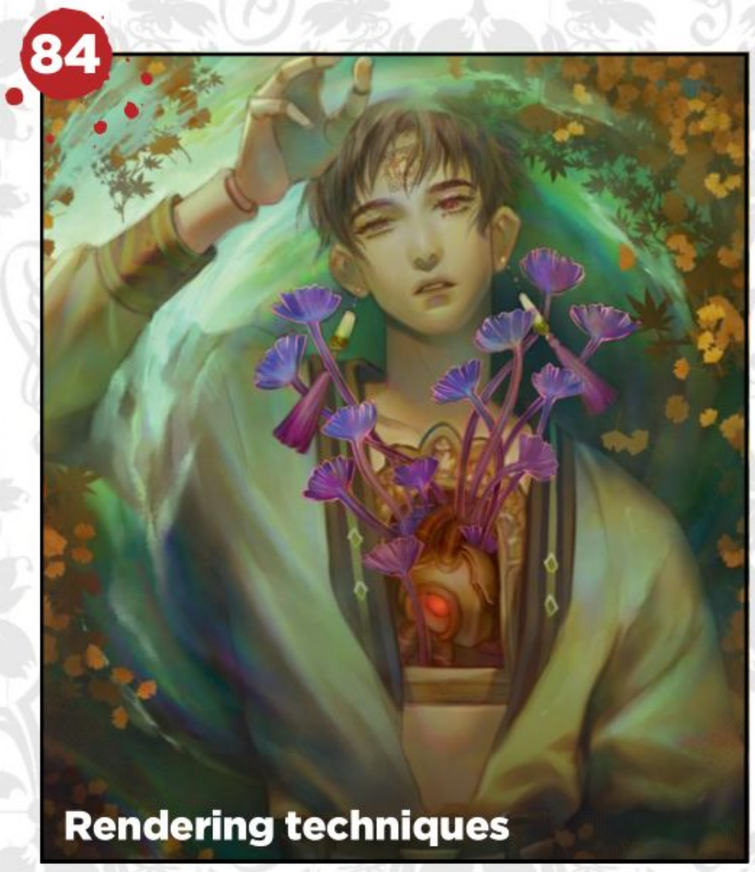
Workshops

64 Create amazing manga figure art
Ilya Kuvshinov brings a girl and her toy to life, using Photoshop blending modes.

72 15 tips on painting manga faces
Learn techniques for creating engaging manga characters from Zakary Lee.

80 Core Skills: Flame Painter
Harvey Bunda shows you how to make your artworks pop with particle brushes.

84 New rendering techniques
Artist kiDChan uses a range of Clip Studio Paint's layer modes and her favourite Rainbow brush in her figure art.



Traditional Artist

100 Traditional art FXPosé
Explore this month's selection of the finest traditional art, sent in by you!

104 Workshop:
Evoke emotions with pastel shades
US artist Ama applies her knowledge of watercolours when using design gouache.

110 Workshop:
From science fact to sci-fi horror
Steven Black creates an unsettling artwork.

114 First Impressions:
Hikari Shimoda
This Japanese artist reflects issues of modern society in her paintings.

Resources

Getting hold of this issue's video resources is easy. Just visit **https://ifxm.ag/amazing185manga**

Create your best-ever manga figure paintings

Watch as Studio Ghibli fan Ilya Kuvshinov applies a range of Photoshop blending layer modes to his deceptively simple composition. Then turn to page 64 for more of his art insights.

Discover new ways of rendering character art

See how kiDChan uses layer modes in Clip Studio Paint. Her workshop is on page 84.

Woodland Angel: Ink Drawing

On page 95 we review Jeff Miracola's latest instructional video on getting started with ink.

PLUS 4 CUSTOM BRUSHES, INCLUDING...

SKETCHY
Ilya Kuvshinov uses this custom Photoshop brush for laying down his line-art and for texturing.

U AIRBRUSH
This brush enables Ilya to generate special effects in his compositions. It features a subtle grainy texture.

Y MANGA BRUSH
Ilya uses this custom brush to put down a darker layer of line-art and for adding an ink-like texture.

ImagineFX

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

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

ISSN 1748-930X

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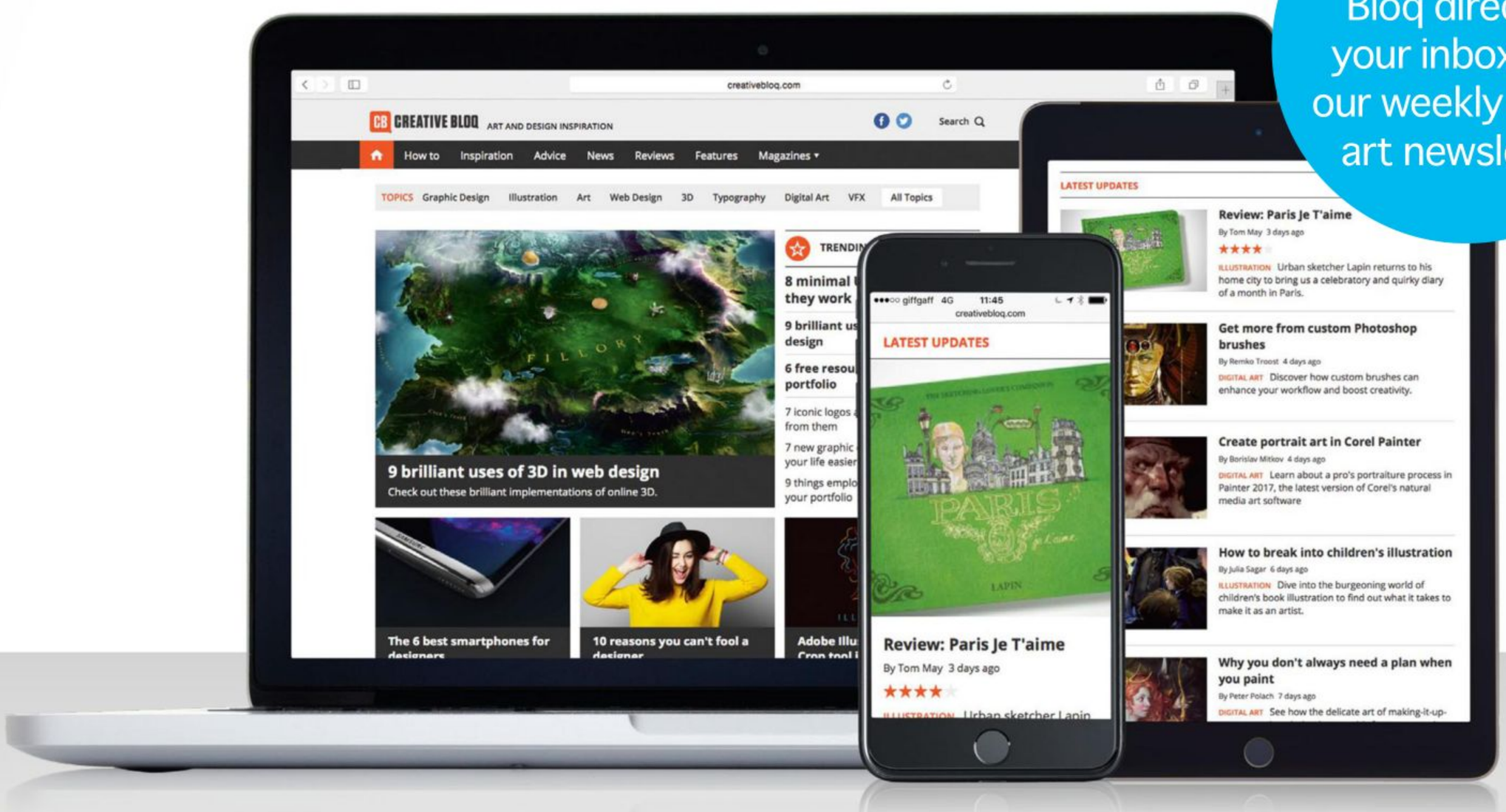

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THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

Irina French

LOCATION: England **MEDIA:** Photoshop **WEB:** www.irinafrench.com

Freelance artist Irina is constantly developing her skills. "One day I hope to produce illustrations for a board game." She's inspired by D&D and all things fantasy.

1 FIRE MAGE
"This is a book cover commission for Christopher Mitchell depicting his fire mage character."

2 SEVERED CITY COMMISSION
"A close-up of a character from the fantasy series. He's a tough Viking-like guy. It was such fun painting him!"

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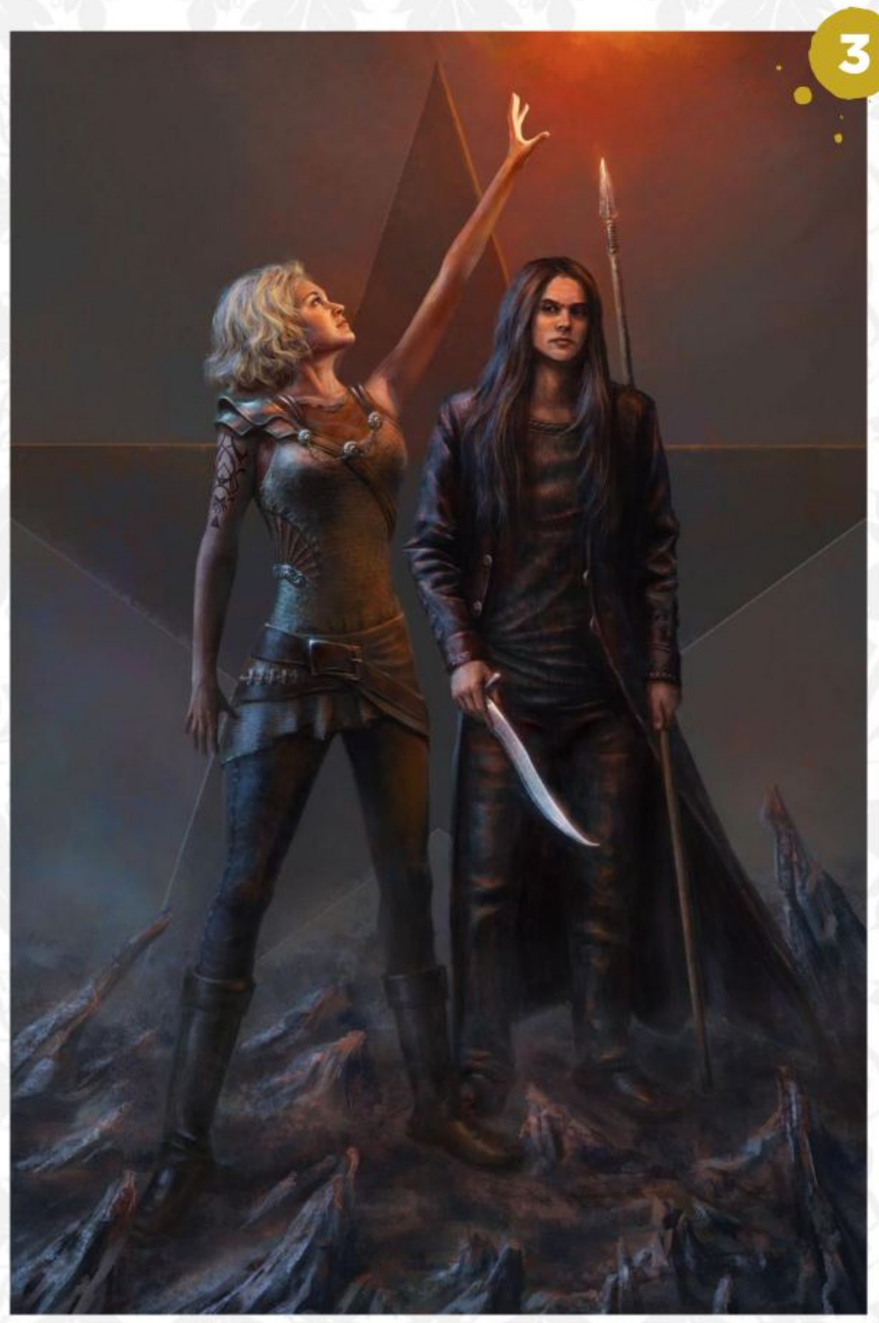

3

3 THE SEVERED CITY COVER
"This is another book cover illustration I created for Christopher Mitchell, showing a crucial part of the story."

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4

4 **THE MAGELANDS ORIGINS COVER**
"In this book cover illustration I've decided to show a cavalry captain thinking of a positive future."

Zu We Chen

LOCATION: Taiwan **MEDIA:** Photoshop, Cinema 4D, 3D-Coat, Octane Render, KeyShot **WEB:** www.artstation.com/chenzoowe

"Concept art is a team sport," says Zu We Chen, "so I've developed a range of creative skills – including 3D concept design and hand-drawn storyboarding – to provide more visual information to the team."

1 MOONWALKER
"A fictional, four-legged walking vehicle that was inspired by a very real source: the Curiosity Rover on Mars."

2 SCI-FI PARK
"This aerial view of a city layout took its inspiration from the Heads Up Display designs created by Ash Thorp."

3 SHELTER
"This design was inspired by the shape of the egg box, combined with techniques from a Jama Jurabaev tutorial."

4 CYBER PARK
"A matte painting study created with the cyberpunk mini-kit from Kitbash3d. It's a study of composition, light and mood."

5 SCI-FI CASTLE
"The science fiction castle was a chance for me to combine traditional elements with modern architecture."

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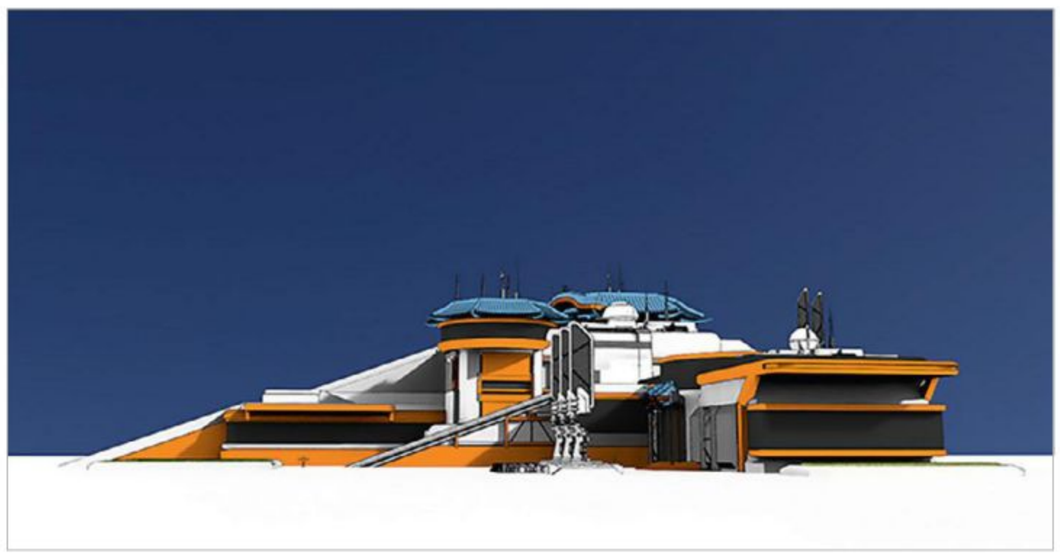


Rachel Walpole

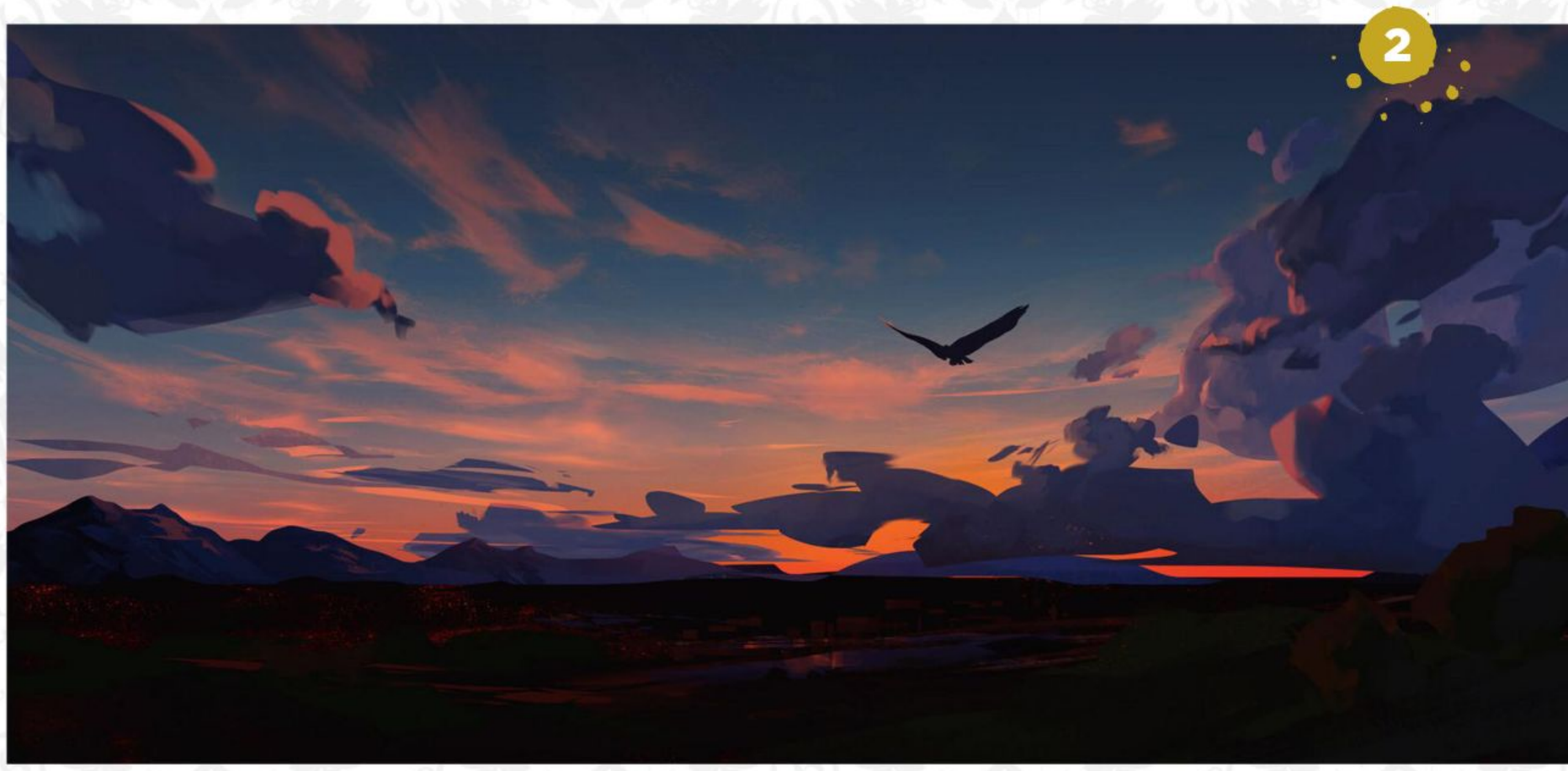
LOCATION: England **MEDIA:** Photoshop **WEB:** www.storyartistrachelwalpole.com

"I've had a passion for art since I was a child," says Rachel. "I whisk myself away to huge floating desert islands, angels with a questionable amount of wings, and creatures larger than countries."

1 RISEN PORTRAIT
"At the time this took far longer than anything I had done, and still stands as one of the best portraits that I've painted."

2 NOT A CARE IN THE WORLD
"Inspired by Assassin's Creed: Origins. I wanted to paint how it felt flying around – free and untamed."

3 REGAL THRONE
"An illustration of Lilly's Throne from the upcoming tabletop role-playing game Theory of Origins, developed by Jordan Campbell."



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Timur Kvasov

LOCATION: Russia **MEDIA:** Photoshop, ZBrush, Blender, 3DCoat **WEB:** www.artstation.com/timurkvasov

Timur is a concept designer and illustrator with over five years of professional experience. A big fan of fantasy and robots, the artist strives to tell viewers interesting stories through his work.

1 CLOUDFALL
"One of the quick sketches I do from time to time. I wanted to do something simple and spectacular – I think clouds are the perfect subject for this."

2 TRIBE OF DAGON
"This work grew out of a fast sketch that I did while taking inspiration from the works of HP Lovecraft and the film Kong: Skull Island."

1

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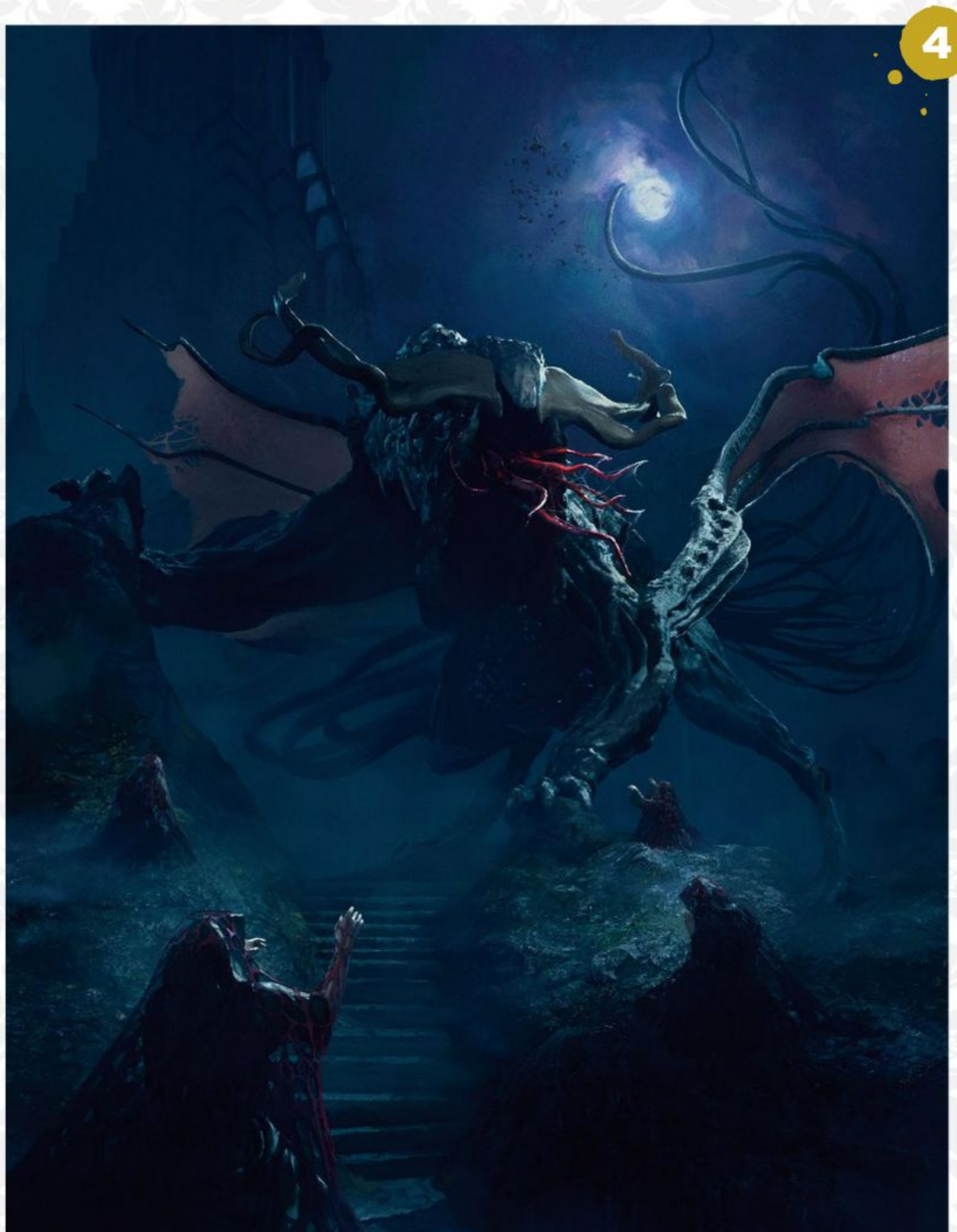


3 **VALLEY OF THE GIANT**
"I wanted to create an interesting location that told the story even from a bird's eye view."

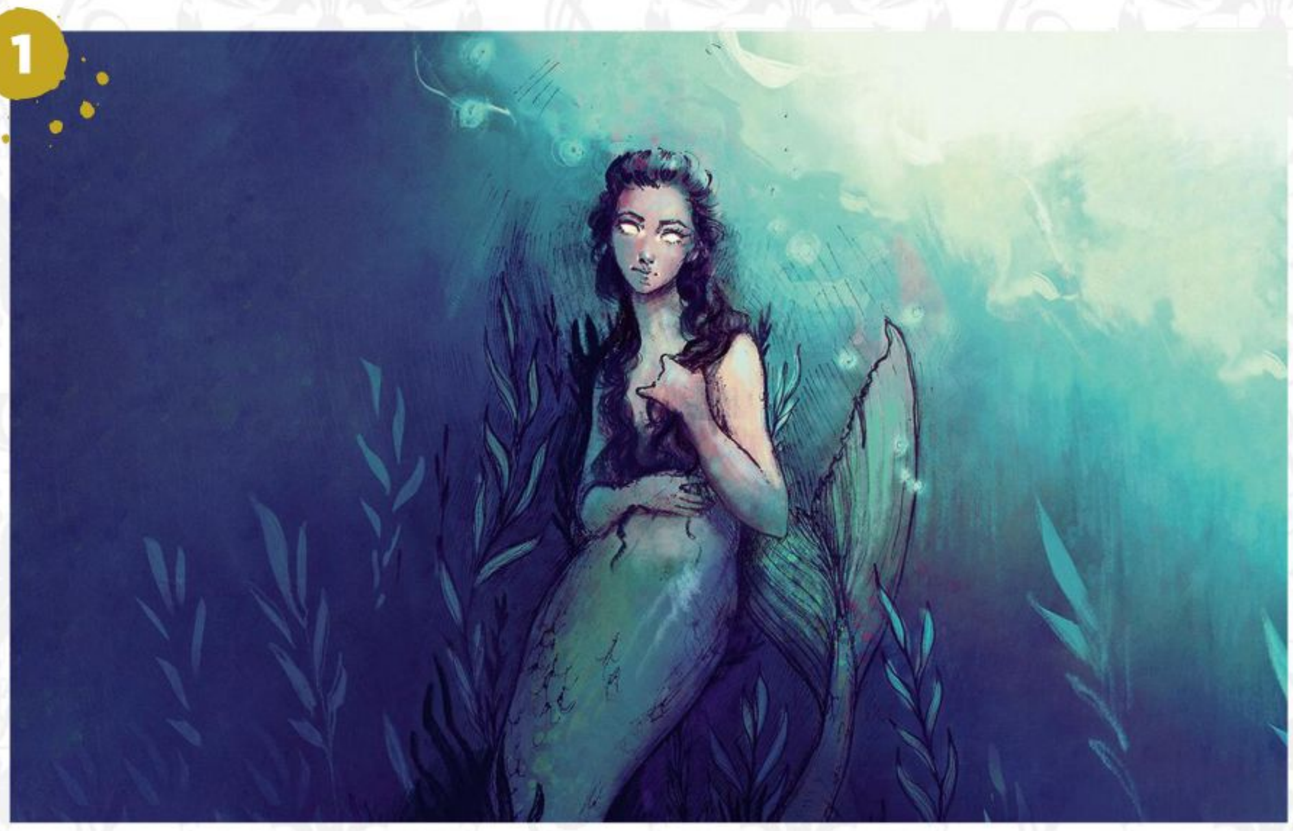
4 **EVILBOOK II – THE ROAM**
"It's hard to imagine a modern fantasy story that wasn't inspired by the Cthulhu mythos. With this painting I tried to create my own chthonic creature."

Dana Alink

LOCATION: The Netherlands **MEDIA:** Photoshop, Procreate, TVPaint Animation **WEB:** www.kaizokuhime.com

This year Dana will be graduating from University of the Arts Utrecht where she's been studying 2D animation. She aims to graduate as a director and writer.

1



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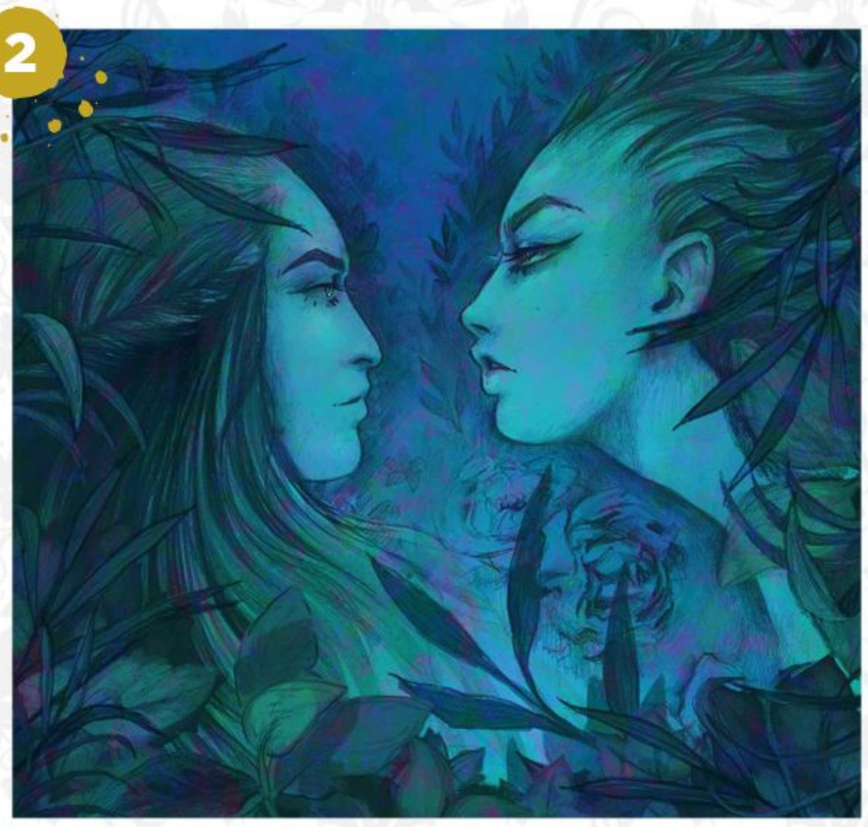

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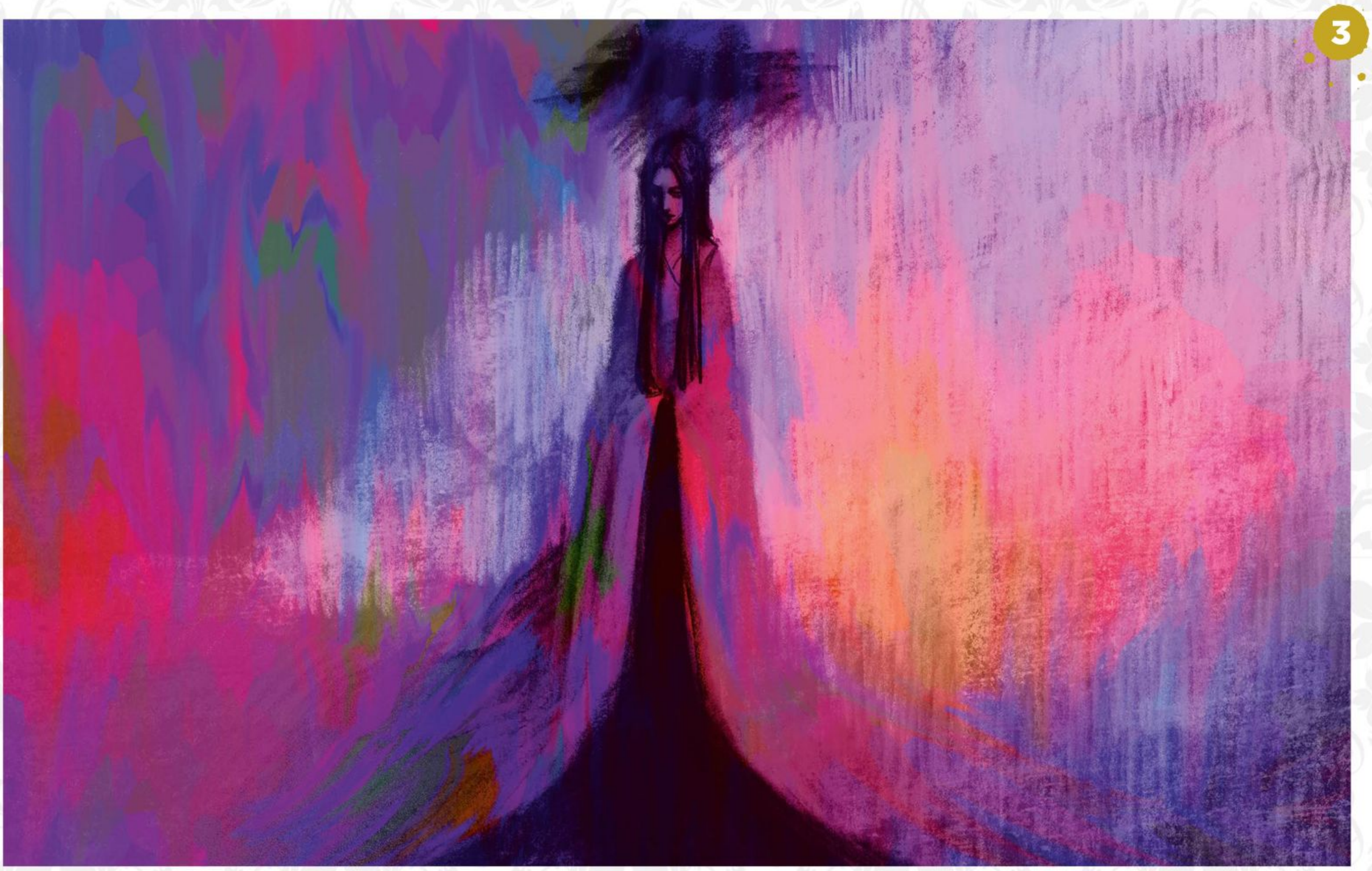

1 SIREN
"This was inspired by William-Adolphe Bouguereau's Meditation. I love studying the Old Masters and I love mermaids."

2 AIDÉN AND EVY
"Aidén and Evy are a couple from my Stormbound book series. Evy is Lilith's sister and their story isn't a happy one."

3 NIMBUS
"Nimbus is part of the Stormbound universe. She was going to be the focus of my graduation project until my plans changed."

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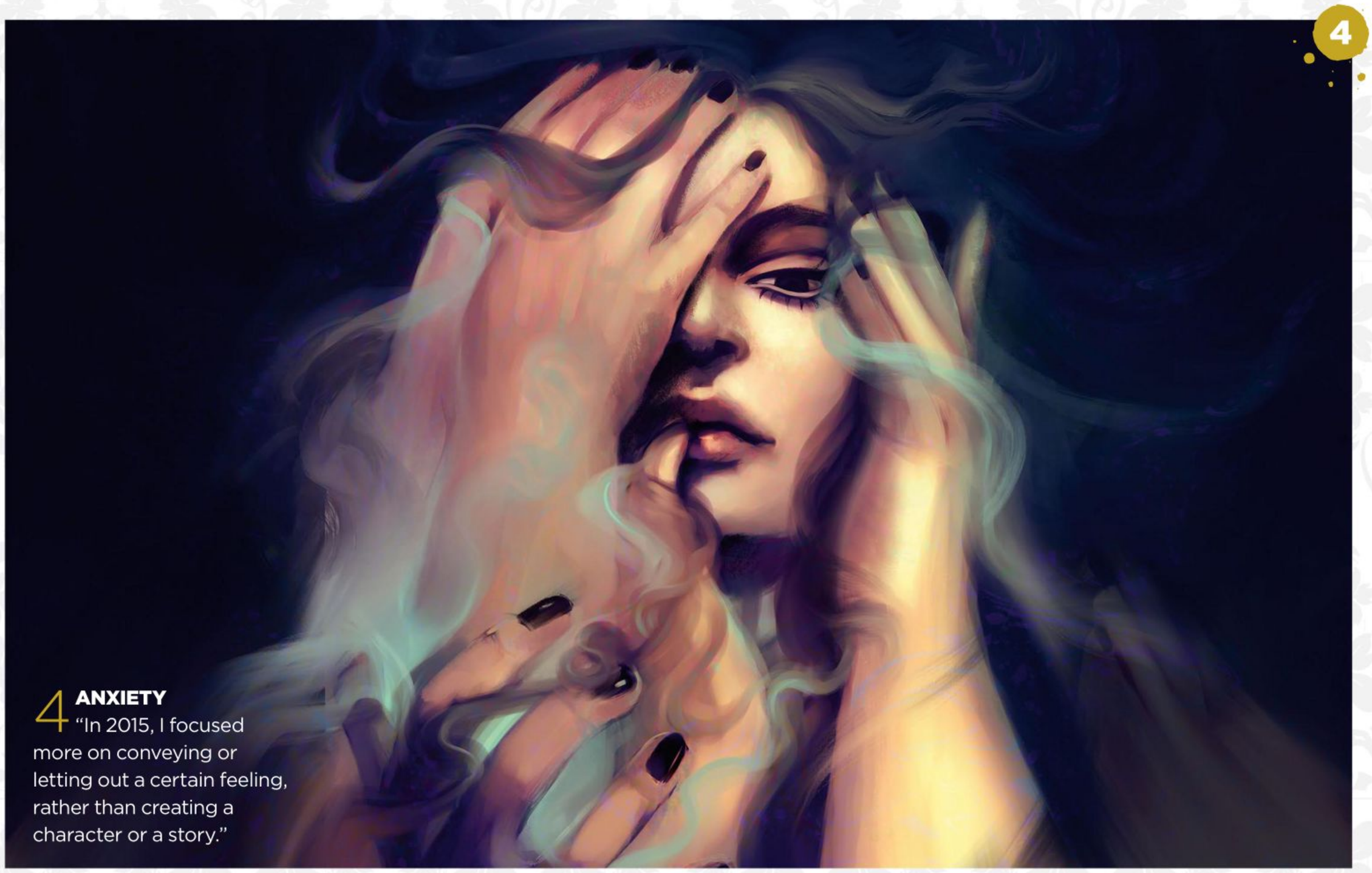

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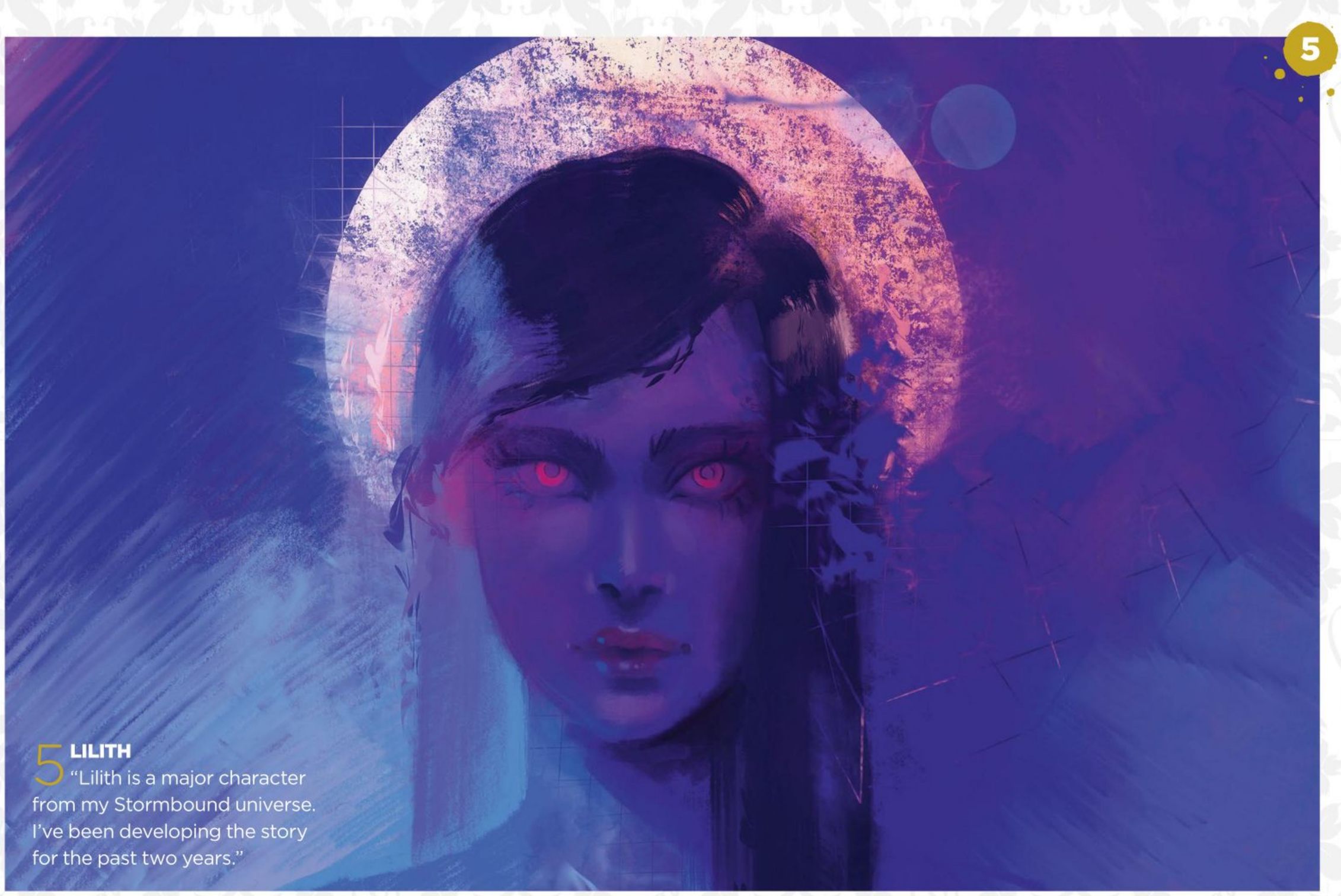
4 ANXIETY
"In 2015, I focused more on conveying or letting out a certain feeling, rather than creating a character or a story."



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5 LILITH
"Lilith is a major character from my Stormbound universe. I've been developing the story for the past two years."

Rebecca Feneley

LOCATION: England **MEDIA:** Watercolours, gouache, ink, Procreate **WEB:** www.rebeccafeneley.com

Rebecca balances fashion and fantasy illustration. She branched out from traditional to digital illustration in 2018. Her characters explore her love of the theatrical through portraiture, high fashion and fantasy themes.

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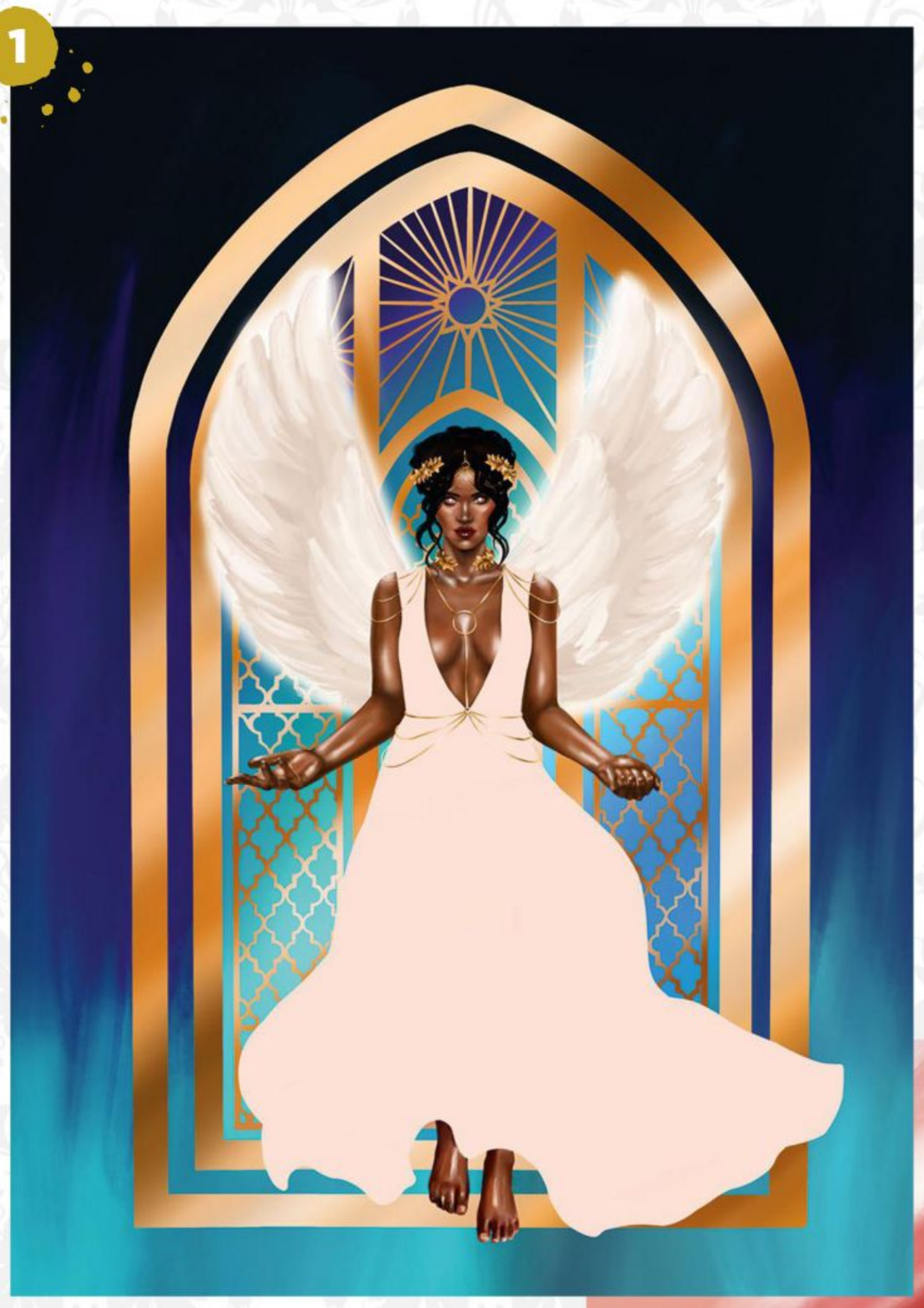

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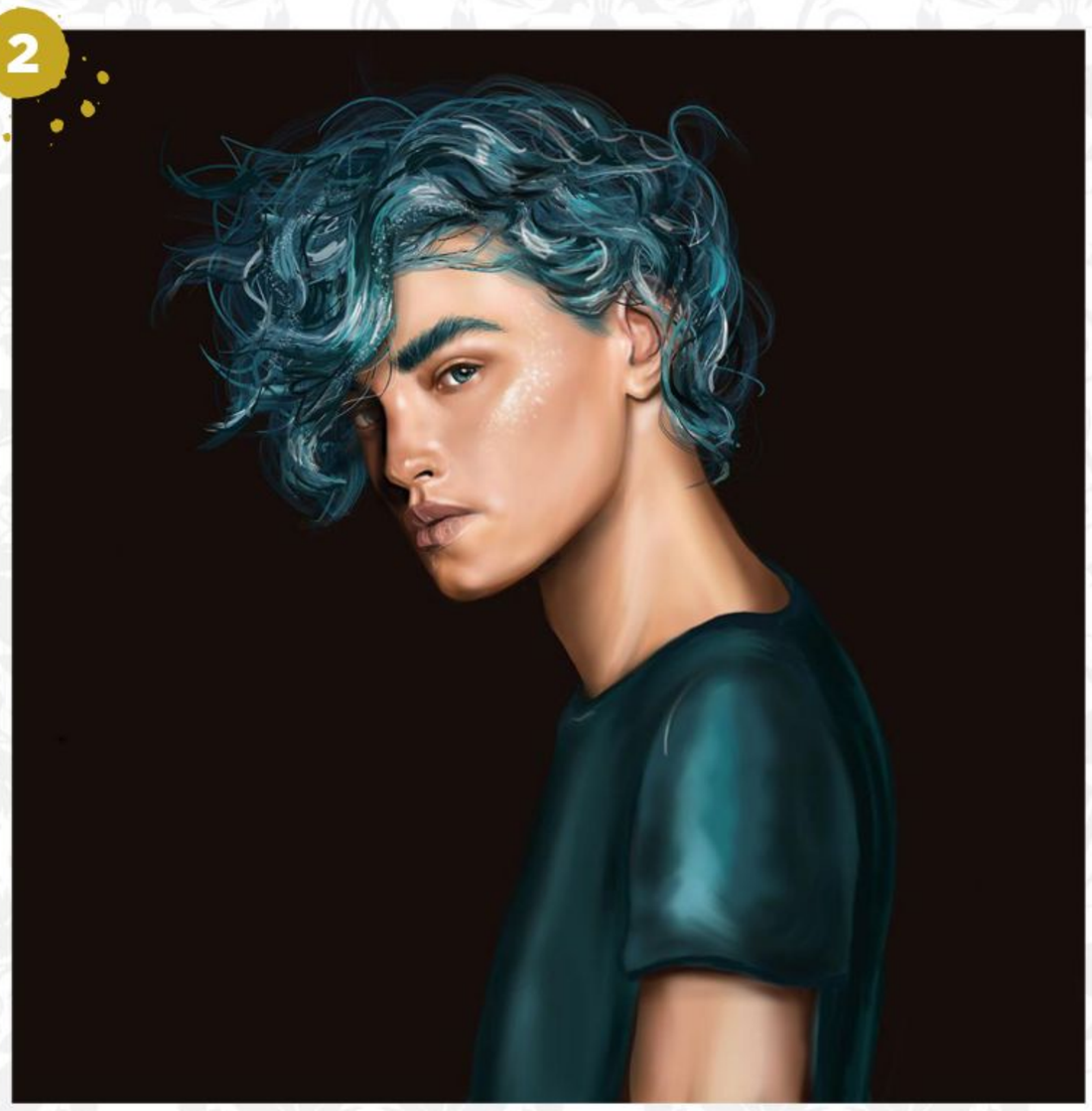


3

1 CREATE AND DESTROY
"This is a conceptual piece that I've had in my mind for years. I wanted to convey the power we all have to create or destroy."

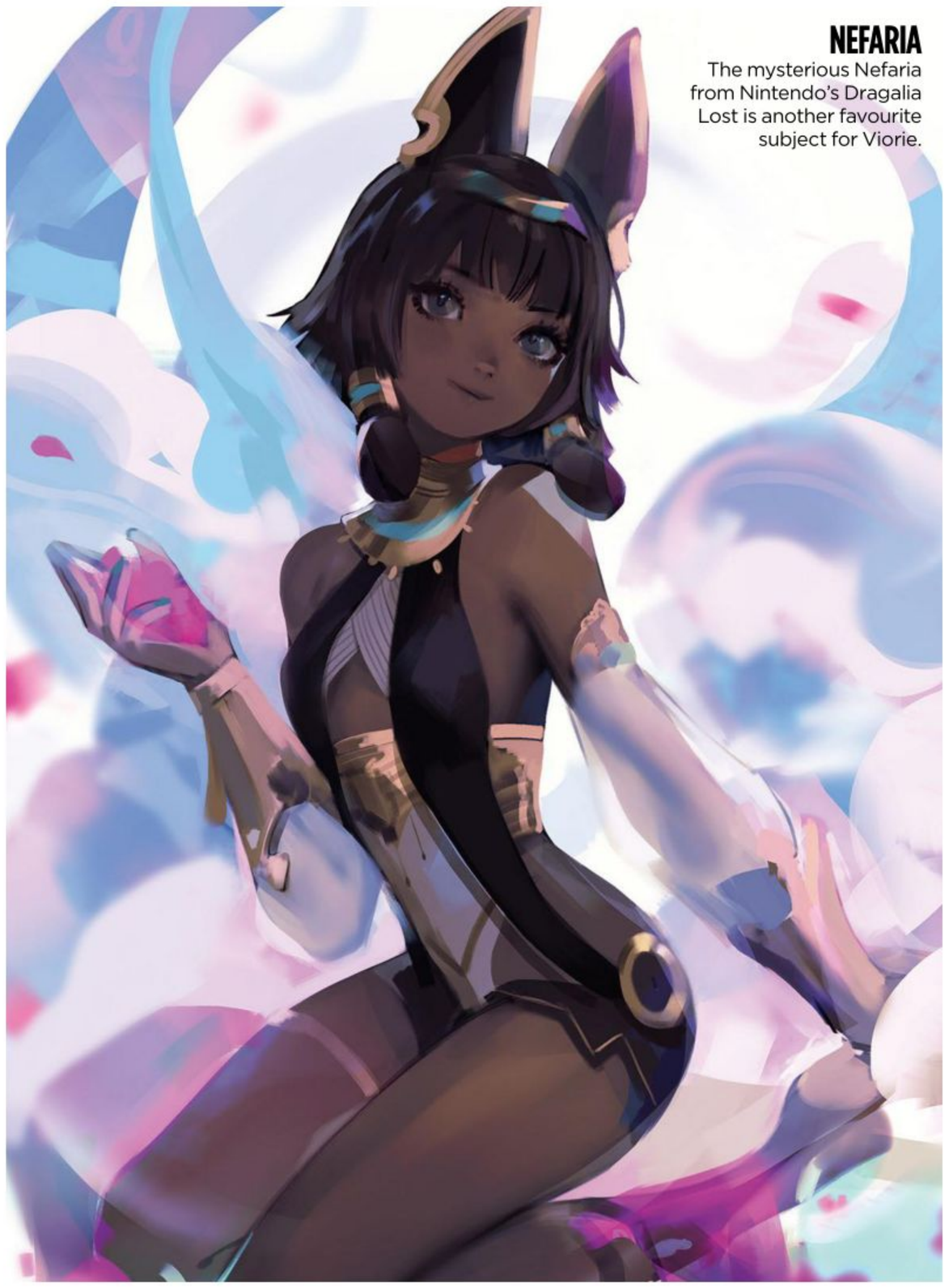
2 ICE
"One of my first digital pieces. I wanted to explore how far I could go with realist portraiture and explore different brushes and techniques."

3 SKY
"This recalls the feelings I have when I return to my childhood home. I'd always wonder at the beautiful skies as the evening drew in."

4 JUNGLE
"I wanted to create a soft but playful piece that conveyed a sense of calm and curiosity."

4

SAILOR MOON
Like many manga artists, Viorie was inspired by anime characters like Sailor Venus.



NEFARIA
The mysterious Nefaria from Nintendo's Dragalia Lost is another favourite subject for Viorie.

MARINE
As well as entertaining audiences on Patreon, Viorie also takes on commission work.

The modern masters of manga

The eyes have it **Dom Carter** meets the break-out stars working in the art genre that's popular the world over

What does manga mean to you? For some people it conjures up images of emotionally exaggerated characters, while for others it brings back fond memories of a childhood spent watching outlandish cartoons.

Considering that the art form can trace its origins back centuries, it's perhaps no surprise that manga has come to be defined in different ways. The fact that there are plenty of genres, each with their own stylistic quirks, also plays its part in these various interpretations.

One thing that manga artists and readers can agree on, though, is that it continues to be incredibly popular. The past two decades in particular have seen the influence of manga spread internationally, with creators outside of Japan picking up a pen, ink brush or stylus and experimenting with the medium.

With this in mind, we've rounded up five of the best contemporary manga artists from around the world that you need to know about.

BRINGING THE OUTSIDE IN

We're mighty envious of Peter Brockhammer's self-designed Berlin studio, which is a white-walled space that's filled with plants and natural light.
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GET IN TOUCH WITH US!

We love hearing what you've been up to and what articles in the magazine have caught your eye, so drop us a line with your news and views. We're all ears!
Page 39

BLOOM
Viorie generously shows her followers how she creates her stunning illustrations.

Viorie

This rising art star of Instagram is only just getting into her stride

Rose Benjamin, known online as Viorie, is an artist who's found a massive audience for her work on social media. Boasting well over 150,000 followers on Instagram alone, her art features stylised expressiveness and eye-catching colours that captivate her audience.

London-based Rose is currently working as a freelance illustrator, and started experimenting with digital art when she was just eight years old. At the age of 20 her career as an artist has only just begun, but judging by the quality of the work that she's already produced, we predict big things in the future.

"I'm self-taught and learnt by studying the works of my favourite artists online, with many of them being anime artists," Rose reveals. "Growing up, I was inspired by video game art and reading manga," she adds, which we can clearly see with characters from popular anime series such as Sailor Moon and Darkstalkers featuring prominently in her portfolio.

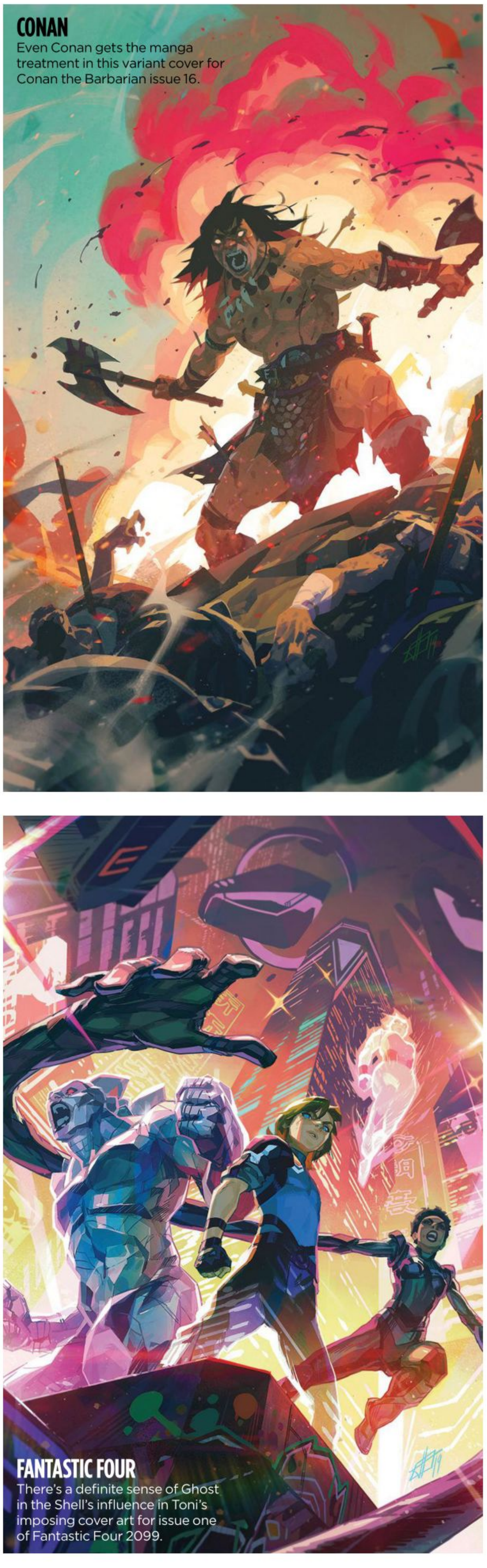
Rose combines classic approaches to manga with the latest digital tools. She uses Photoshop and Paint Tool SAI, along with a Wacom Intuos Pro, an iPad Pro and Procreate to bring her work to life. And if you want to see exactly how she does it, subscribers get to watch timelapse videos on her Patreon channel.

www.instagram.com/vioriie

"I'm self-taught and learnt by studying the works of my favourite artists online"

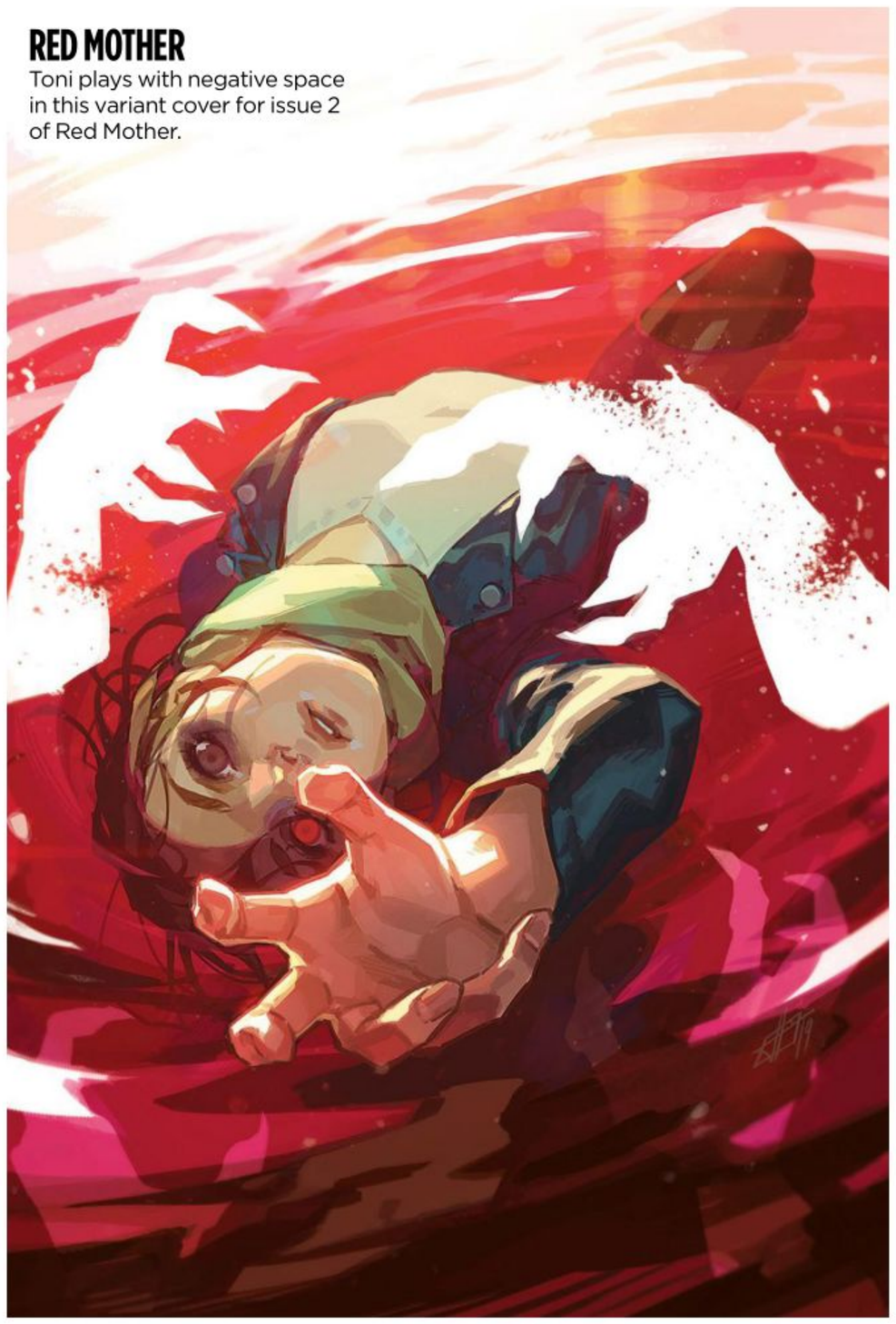
DRIFTERS
Toni brings his Akira-inspired manga style to projects such as this promotional art for Procreate 5.

© Procreate



CONAN
Even Conan gets the manga treatment in this variant cover for Conan the Barbarian issue 16.

© Marvel



RED MOTHER
Toni plays with negative space in this variant cover for issue 2 of Red Mother.

© Boom! Studios

FANTASTIC FOUR
There's a definite sense of Ghost in the Shell's influence in Toni's imposing cover art for issue one of Fantastic Four 2099.

© Marvel

Toni Infante

A childhood obsession with manga still influences Toni's dynamic, narrative-filled artwork

"I've been obsessed with manga and anime since the 90s," says freelance illustrator Toni Infante, whose work includes illustrations and cover art for a huge variety of clients, including Warner Bros., Marvel and Apple. "But no matter the job, from the way I draw hair or clothes, to how I use camera angles or even the lens flares, the manga influence is always there.

Speaking of influences, Dragon Ball had a huge impact on Toni. "That show made me fall in love with comics and animation," he reveals. "The action scenes and Akira Toriyama's art style quickly got me hooked, and I spent most of my childhood just trying to copy his dynamic shapes and poses.

"Later on came Akira, Ghost in the Shell and Evangelion... the Japanese film and animation industry was an endless source of fresh ideas and inspiration for me."

Toni doesn't shy away from the fact that, as an art form, manga has its limitations and detractors, although he thinks that attitudes are changing. "If drawing manga was kind of problematic in the past, barriers between styles are blurred nowadays. Drawing manga is no longer a handicap, and it can take you to working on anything you want."

www.artstation.com/toniinfante

Linnea Kataja

Freelance manga artist Linnea uses her social media audience to gain feedback on her work

NYC-based artist Linnea Kataja has been pursuing a career in manga illustration ever since she graduated with a BFA in cartooning from the School of Visual Arts. And with the help of a strong social media presence (over 60,000 followers at time of writing), she's opening herself up to work by showing her audience the latest developments in her art.

Her comic, A Maid Story, won honours in Ribon magazine's January 2019 Comic Grand Prix. The publication, which is one of Japan's leading shoujo manga magazines, also runs a manga school programme to help train artists who are looking to be published, of which Linnea is a member.

"I'm drawn to manga because of the colourful and powerful femininity and cuteness that exists within the characters of the fictional worlds," she explains. "I feel these stand in contrast to the more masculine and rugged worlds found in American comics."

Linnea's dream is to become a published comic artist. At the moment she's working on Unicorn Death, a death metal shoujo manga about cute but deadly unicorn girls. "My biggest influences include shoujo manga artists such as Peach-Pit, Keiko Suenobu and Koge-Donbo, she adds. "Although my current favourite artist is Aoki Spica."

www.linneakataja.com

LUCRECIA BLOOD
Linnea likes horror manga and anime, and her favourite is Higurashi When They Cry.

TARGET GIRL
You can pick up comics and prints from Linnea at the conventions Otakon and Anime NYC.

DEATH BY UNICORN
Linnea's original Death-Metal Shoujo Manga, Death by Unicorn, is available to read online.

"I'm drawn to manga because of the colourful and powerful femininity..."

UNICORN RIVERS
Want to draw like Linnea? Book an art lesson with her on her site.

MYSTICAL
Laia's love for Disney movies can clearly be seen in the design of these characters for Marta Álvarez's Mystical novels.

© La Galera

LIV
Laia hasn't put her tablet down since learning how to use it: "It's kind of addictive and I doodle on it everyday!"

STRAWBERRY MOON
Laia has also written her own ebook, Strawberry Moon, and illustrated it in her distinctive style.

Laia López

A variety of artistic inspirations helped Laia to infuse her manga art with a unique voice

Spanish illustrator Laia López developed her own art style while studying fine arts at the University of Barcelona. As well as being inspired by watching how the artists she looks up to work, Laia also cites Disney films and anime as the biggest influences on her illustrations.

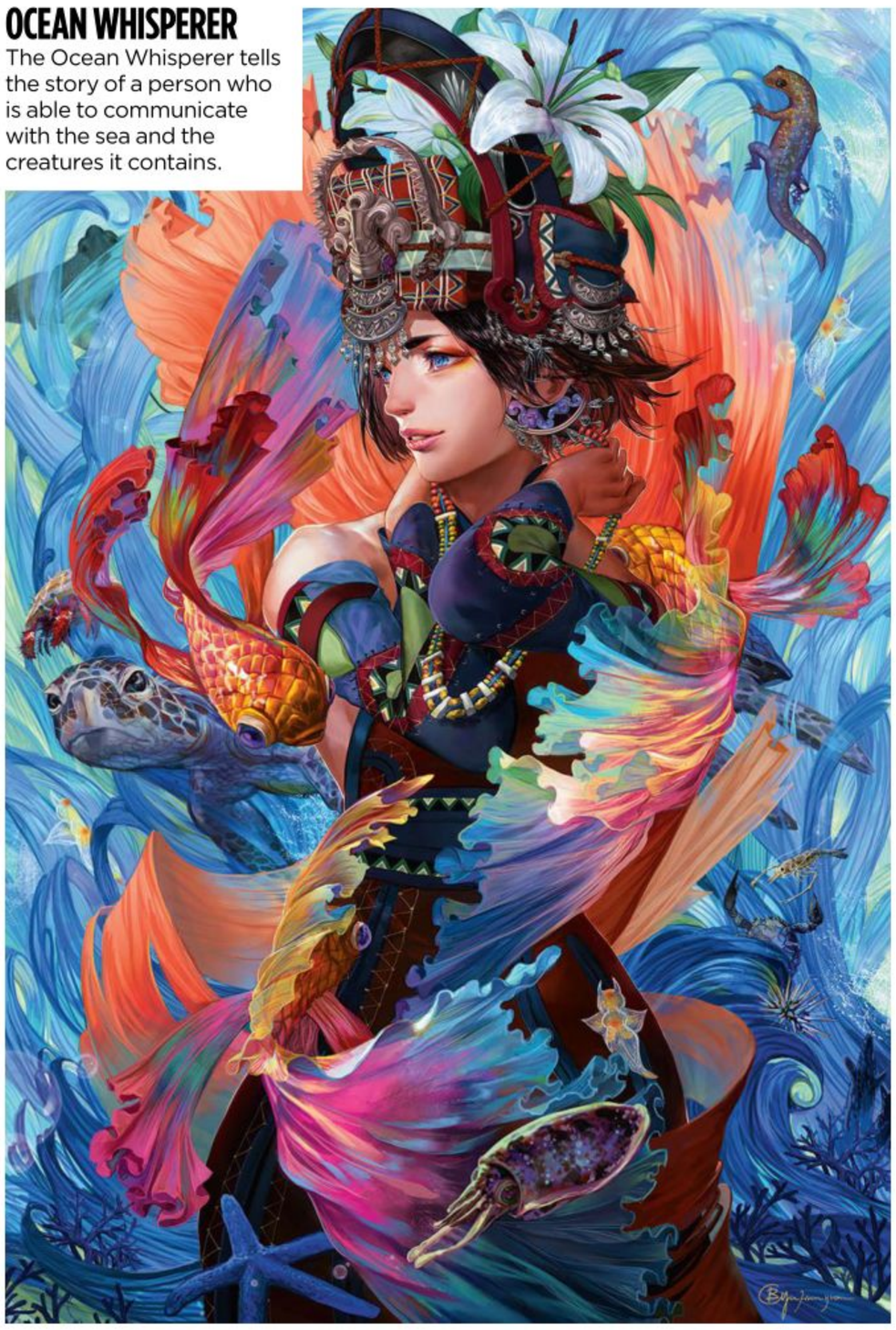
"I'm also a huge shoujo/slice of life manga fan," Laia explains, "and I fell in love with how easily they can portray the emotions and personality of the characters simply through their expressions.

"One of my biggest manga influences is Arina Tanemura. I've admired all of her work for years now and I'm amazed by all the details she puts into her characters: for example, their hair, clothing and big exaggerated eyes.

"Another one of my favourite manga artists that I discovered recently is [creative duo] AidaIro from Jibaku Shonen Hanako-kun. I completely adore the way they use colour and the thick line-art in their art style."

Traces of these particular manga influences can clearly be seen in Laia's work, as she uses objects and scenes that catch her eye in everyday life. "It's not like one day I woke up and thought, 'I want to have a manga art style' though," she adds. "I think it just kind of happened through my interests."

www.instagram.com/itslopez



OCEAN WHISPERER
The Ocean Whisperer tells the story of a person who is able to communicate with the sea and the creatures it contains.

B.c.N.y.

This artist successfully marries fine art with manga in his story-telling illustrations

Like many manga artists, freelance Taiwanese illustrator Han-Yuan Yu – known online as B.c.N.y. – was inspired by the art form after watching anime and reading manga as a kid. And after moving abroad to study illustration at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City, he learnt how to combine academic painting skills with manga.

"My work is created digitally, although I sometimes upload organic brushstrokes to create a more complex and varied look," says Han-Yuan. "However, the most important part of an illustration is the narrative, carrying information and telling a story to people."

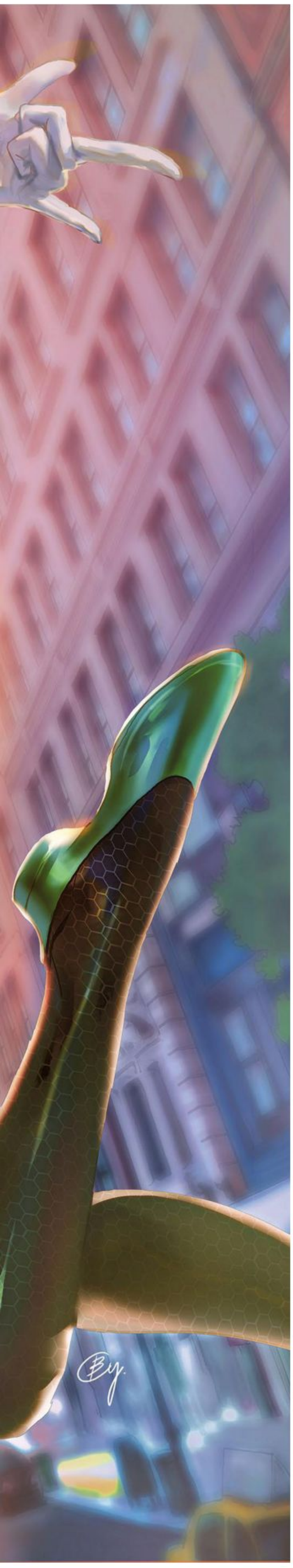
Han-Yuan creates character illustrations for games companies and provides artwork for major comic conventions in Taiwan. His work has also been exhibited in museums and galleries around the world, and his recognition includes the World Best CG award from ASIAGRAPH 2014.

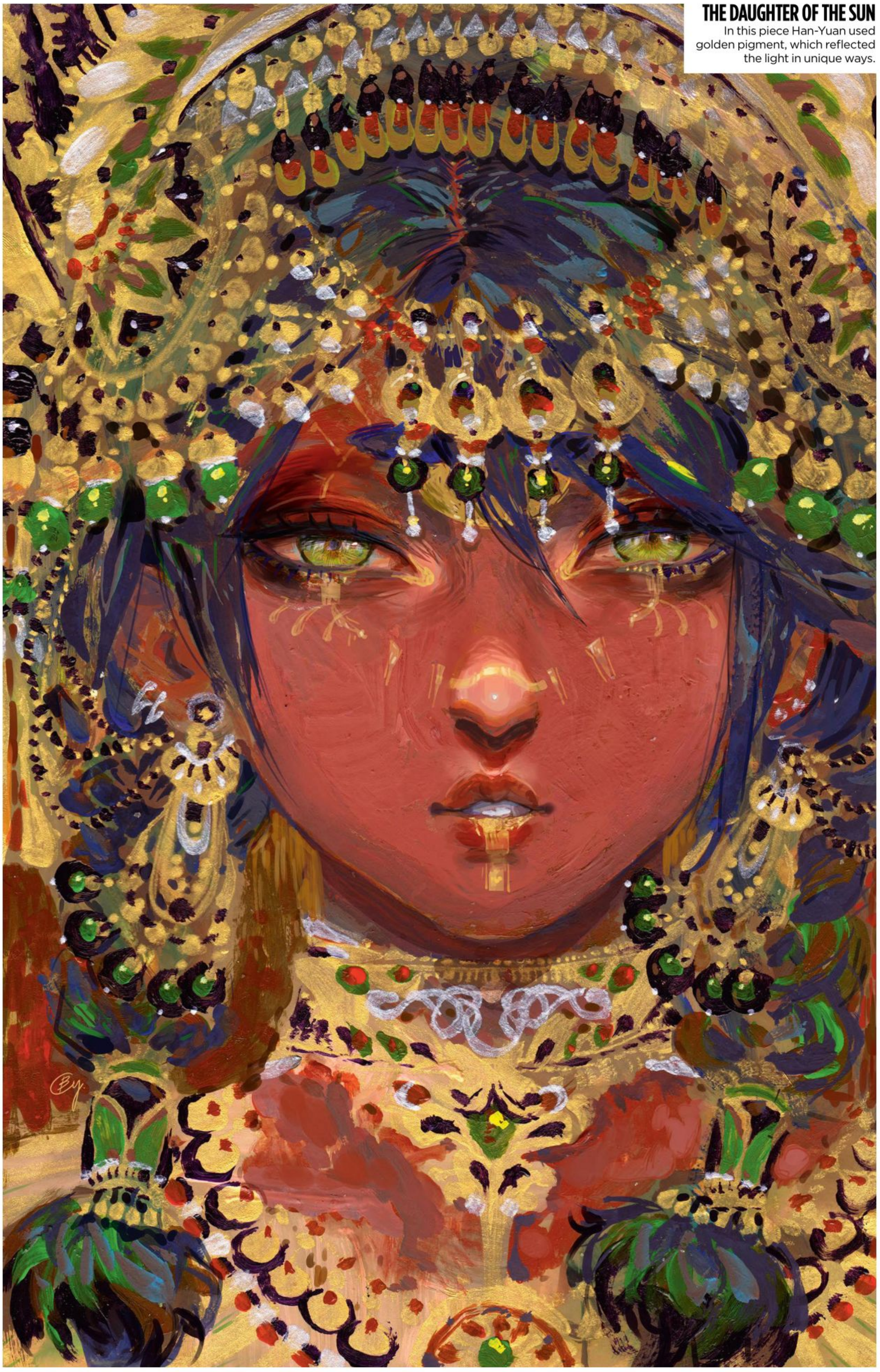
"I believe that art shouldn't just be made for galleries though," Han-Yuan adds. "Art is a universal language that can be used to make everyone happy and smile; and I think that manga in particular is one of the best ways to deliver thoughts and ideas that have been inspired by our daily lives and experiences."

www.instagram.com/bcnyart

SPIDER-GWEN
B.c.N.y. is a fan of Gwen Stacy's character design; her charm can be communicated through various gestures.

> "Art is a universal language that can be used to make everyone happy and smile"





THE DAUGHTER OF THE SUN
In this piece Han-Yuan used golden pigment, which reflected the light in unique ways.

Ariel set me on my path as an artist. My desire to become a character designer and illustrator began with Disney's The Little Mermaid, and I want to be reminded of that fact every day.

When you enter our office the amount of art on show makes it clear whose workspace this is!

On my screen you can see the cover of my upcoming art book, How to Draw with Pietmaen. The Kickstarter campaign will launch this summer, and I'm super excited!

My digital 3D modelling skills aren't all that great, which is why I make models of my character designs the old-fashioned way.

Peter Brockhammer

Zen garden Discover why the German illustrator and character designer likes to fill his customised workspace with plants and natural light…

Almost two years ago, my partner and I moved into a beautiful apartment in the heart of Berlin, the city of street art and vibrant lifestyles. A house move is a good time to rethink the layout of a studio space, and so I wrote down my work process and made a list of my requirements, and combined this with inspirational pictures I found online.

However, I soon realised that I might not be able to find the right type of furniture, and that I needed to bring out my craftsman skills. These came in handy when creating my desk. All the desks I looked at were too small to put my computer and graphic tablet on, and still have extra space where I could work with traditional media. That's why I bought two desks and attached them using two wooden worktops that I had cut in the hardware store. You

> **"You need to be ambitious when it comes to your own requirements in life"**

RESTING YOUR EYES

It's important for me to have a workspace in front of a window, where I can peer into the distance when I need a break for my eyes, as well as benefit from natural light. Light is what humans need to stay awake and healthy. But light can also distract an artist when it reflects on a graphic tablet's screen. In this case, I'm also happy that the window is east-facing, where I have bright sunshine in the

Plants, plants, plants! They're located throughout our apartment. Plants lift my spirits, and it's always an exciting moment when I notice a new leaf growing.

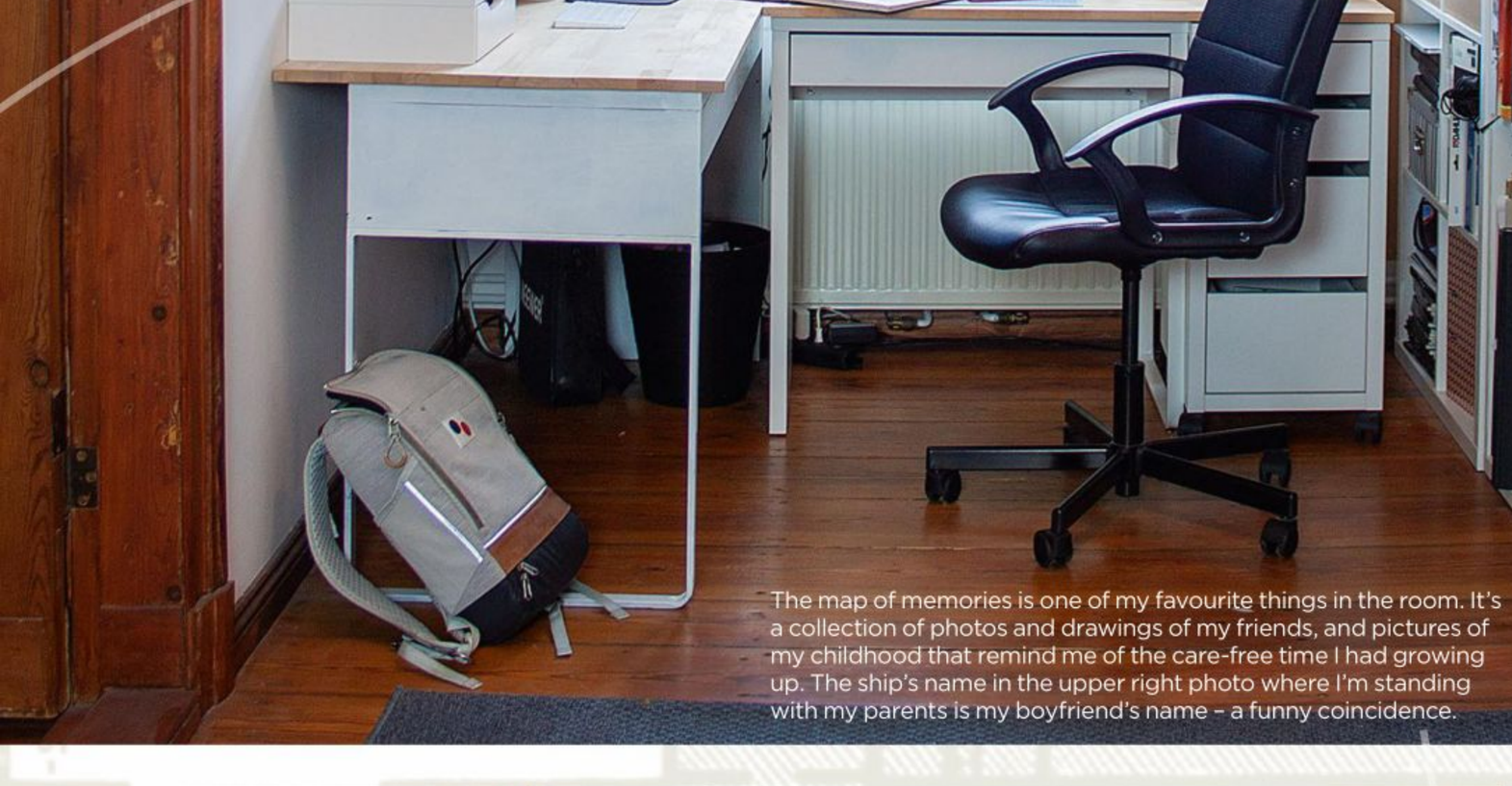
There are no curtains, blinds or shutters on this window. This is a deliberate move because I want every single sunbeam to make its way into my studio.

These are my boyfriend's boxes. He calls them his emotion boxes where he keeps his memories. I'm not allowed to have a sneak, but that's fine – I'm too short to reach them anyway!

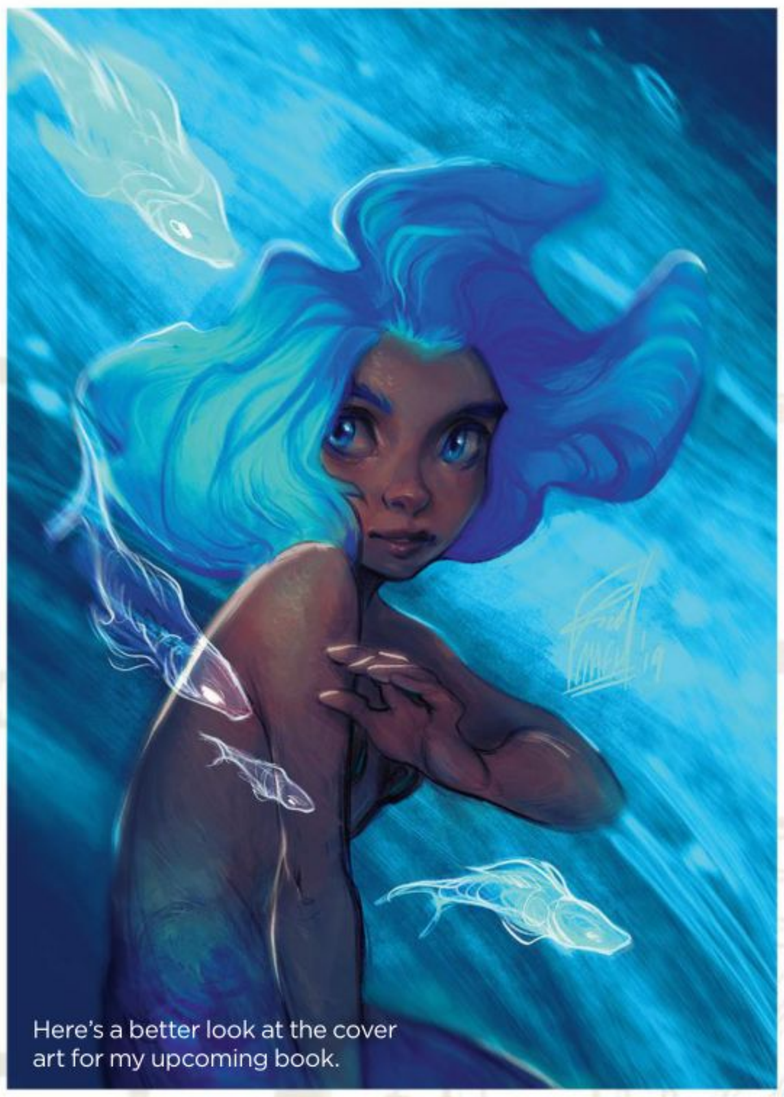
Here's my boyfriend's desk, which is sometimes a good place to find sweets and other confectionary.

The map of memories is one of my favourite things in the room. It's a collection of photos and drawings of my friends, and pictures of my childhood that remind me of the care-free time I had growing up. The ship's name in the upper right photo where I'm standing with my parents is my boyfriend's name – a funny coincidence.

Fig. 9... British Mufem zu London



Art can be very personal. My Jean D'Arc is one of those pieces. One of my boyfriend's nieces had a difficult start in life, but she's fighting to grow up as a normal kid.



Here's a better look at the cover art for my upcoming book.

"It's important for me to have a workspace in front of a window"

One of my aroma diffusers in action. My boyfriend hates them, calling them hocus pocus and a waste of money. Nonetheless, I believe in the power of these devices. At the very least, they make the apartment smell nice!

My treasure trove of 54 sketches. I got my very first sketchbook when I was 16. My high school art teacher told me: "Peter, every time I look into your eyes, I can see how constantly creative you are. Get yourself a sketchbook and start capturing everything."

I love books, especially those with lots of illustrations. While on holiday I buy children's picture books, even if I don't speak the language. Most of them are from Sweden, Norway and Great Britain. There are so many amazing artists out there, and it's important to be exposed to the work of other illustrators. I like collecting books, and will soon need a new bookcase.

The iPad Pro is my new best friend. I'm doing everything on it: animations and drawings in Procreate, preparing concepts for projects, and editing videos.

“After lunch, when the sun is higher in the sky, I can dive into my creative work in front of my computer”

morning. Even when the sun has moved further in the sky, its reflection still hits the façade of houses on the other side of the street, flooding the room with a lovely warm, indirect light for the rest of the day. Luckily, the lighting fits in with my daily routine perfectly. In the morning I can start the day with a cup of tea, and while the sun is rising I do some paperwork. After lunch, when the sun is higher in the sky, I can dive into my creative work in front of my computer.

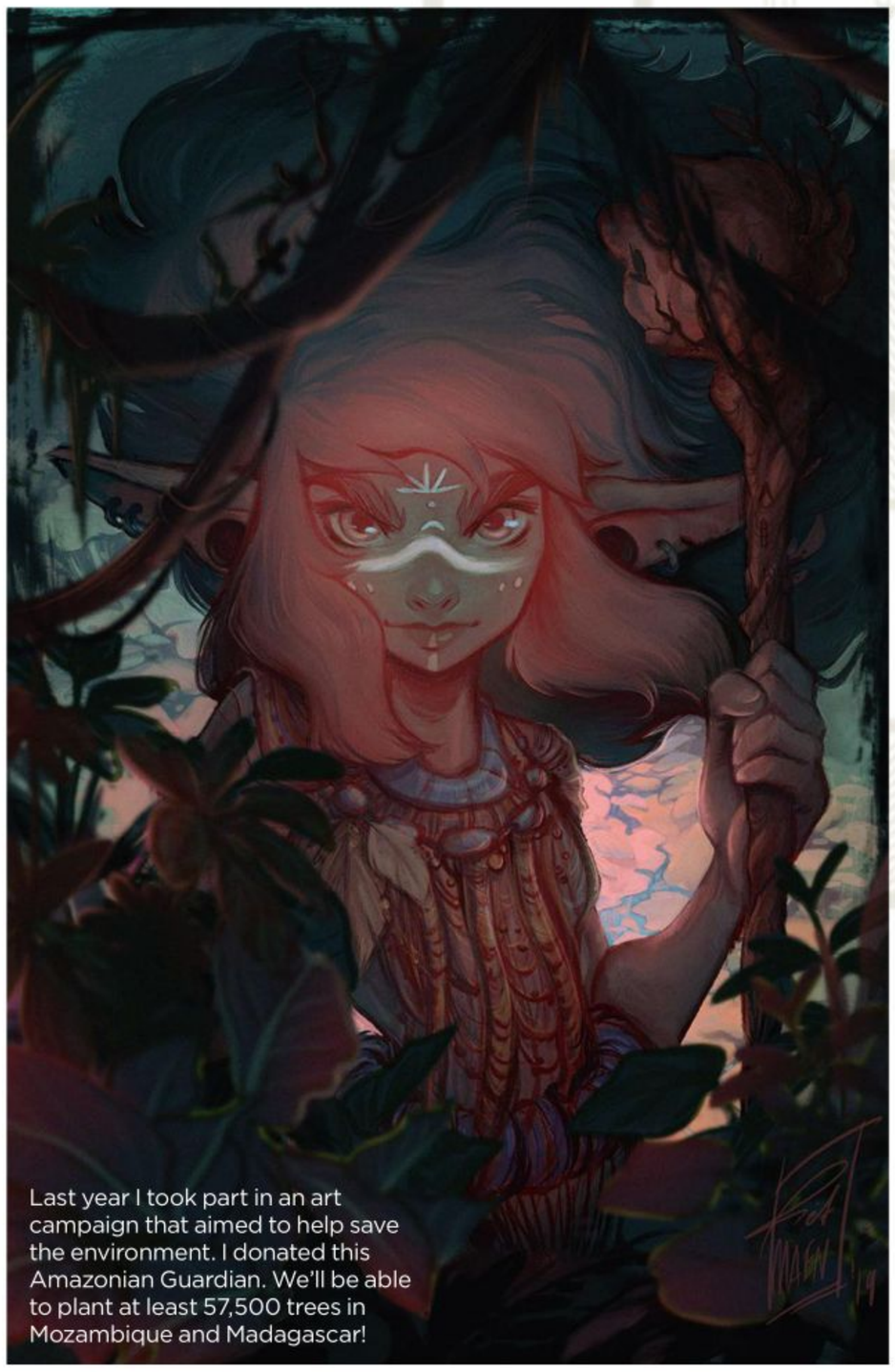
THE BENEFITS OF HOUSEPLANTS

There are days when I can barely leave the house due to my busy workload. On these days, I'm glad to have my plants around me. They bring the space to life. Together with my beloved aroma diffuser, I sit in my environment and remain focused and relaxed. Some people like to listen to music or put on television shows in the background while they work. But I know this would prove a distraction, which is why my Bluetooth speaker is elsewhere in the apartment.

I'm very happy with how my Zen garden has come together. I wouldn't have it any other way.

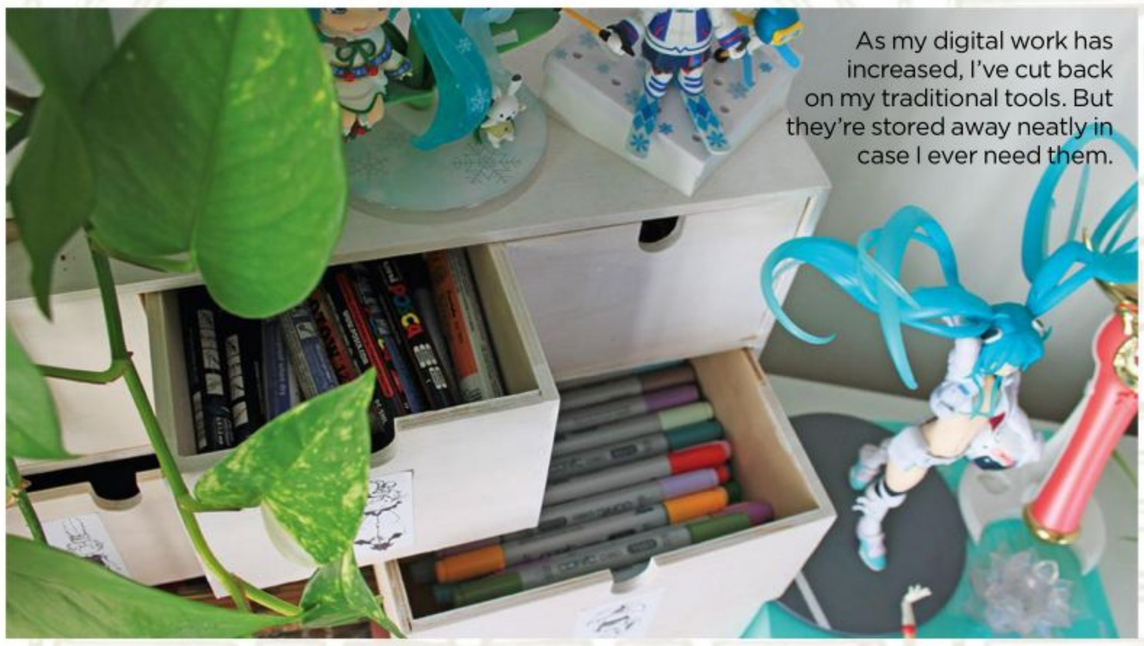
Peter grew up with Disney, Studio Ghibli and Naoko Takeuchi, but the Old Masters also influence his style. You can explore Peter's art at www.pietmaen.com.

Even though I'm more Disney-inspired, Sailor Moon has certainly had an influence on me, too.

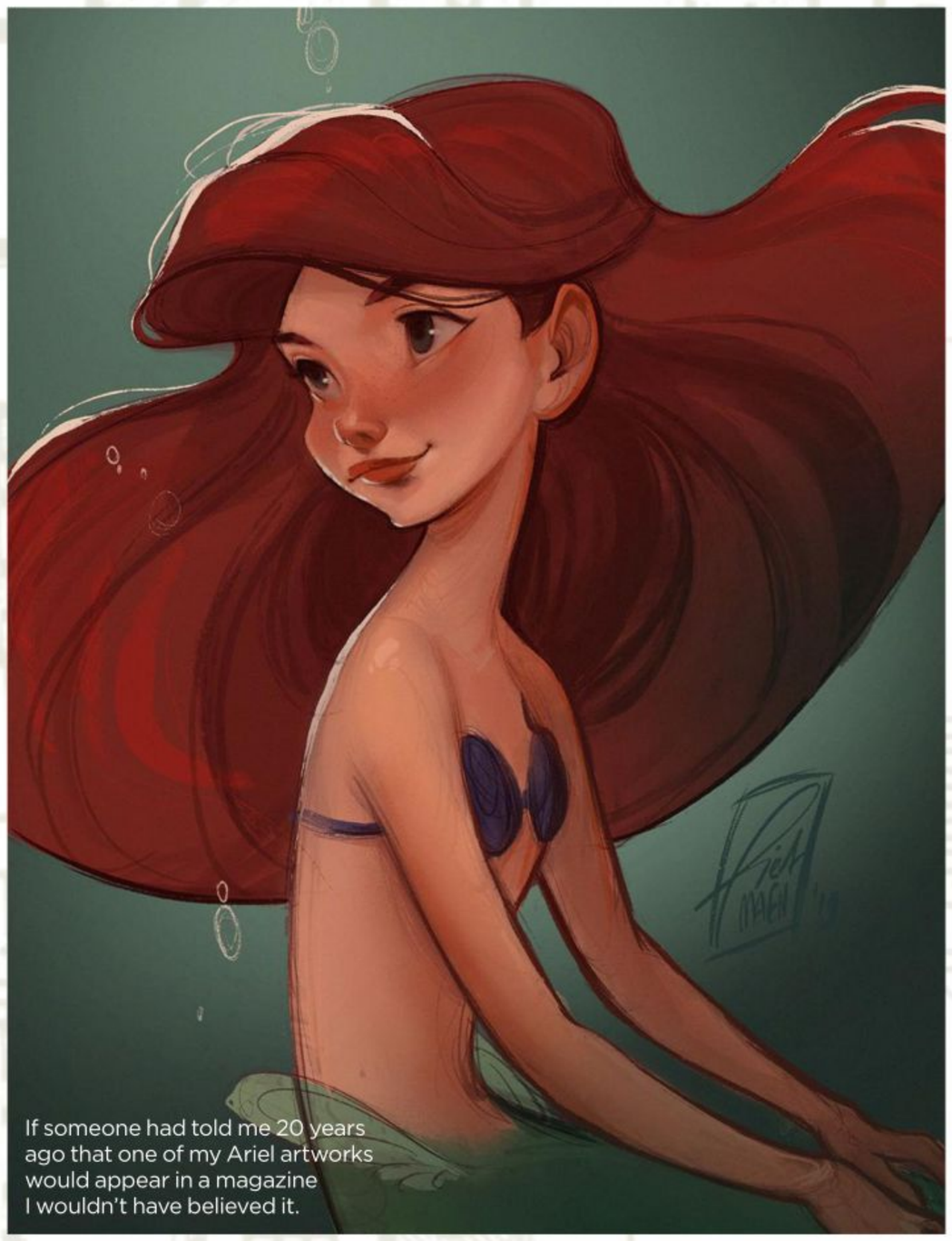


Last year I took part in an art campaign that aimed to help save the environment. I donated this Amazonian Guardian. We'll be able to plant at least 57,500 trees in Mozambique and Madagascar!

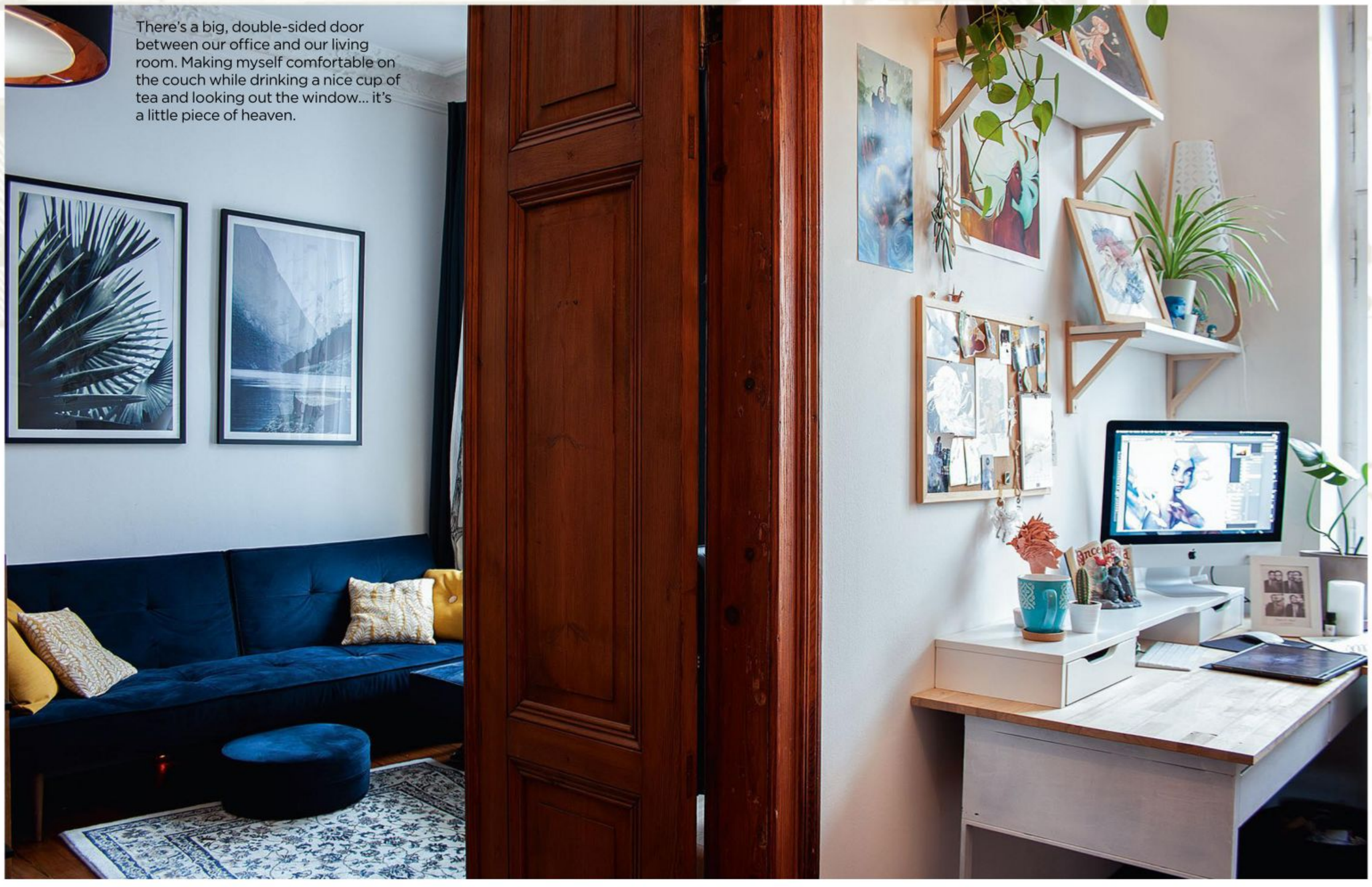
This piece from 2016 reminds me of my journey as an artist and how my style has changed.



As my digital work has increased, I've cut back on my traditional tools. But they're stored away neatly in case I ever need them.



If someone had told me 20 years ago that one of my Ariel artworks would appear in a magazine I wouldn't have believed it.



There's a big, double-sided door between our office and our living room. Making myself comfortable on the couch while drinking a nice cup of tea and looking out the window... it's a little piece of heaven.

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Letters

YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS

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On how to win at failure

The main theme of Paulo Coelho's book The Alchemist is that when you truly want something, the universe conspires to help you. After dealing with a career setback lately and then reading your latest issue with the article How to Win at Failure, I'm starting to believe that.

I've been working in the animation industry for the past seven years. And after working as an animator for high-profile clients such as Disney and the BBC, I've been an animation team lead and animation director for the past four years. Unfortunately, due to a downturn of work at the studio, such supervisory positions have become limited and competitive. Even after applying for other team lead and director roles, I've gotten rejections each time and I've had to step down back into an animator position for the next year or so as a result. This experience has left me feeling despondent, as though I've ended up failing after doing so well in my career.

Issue 184 has come at a perfect time, inspiring me to keep going and work my hardest to prove myself. I was especially energised by sections of that article which talk of recognising a knowledge gap and even making peace with the fact that you may not have been a good fit for a higher position at this current time, but may be seen as a good fit at a later point for something else.

I guess I felt that the hardest part of ending something was starting again, but I realise now that it isn't the end – just the start of another learning experience and a different journey. One that can take my career in a different path, leading to better opportunities and a chance to grow and mature.

That's why I'm going to take the article to heart for the next year and strengthen my animation knowledge, build the most impressive showreel I possibly can and give myself the chance to prove myself as a highly capable animation director down this path and wherever else it takes me beyond that. And I'm very fortunate and proud to be still be given that opportunity.

MK, via email

DID YOU MISS THE PREVIOUS PACKED ISSUE? Don't worry – you can get hold of it at **https://ifxm.ag/buyissue184**

Our recent article on turning failure into success came at the perfect time for reader MK.

Claire replies *I'm sorry to hear about your current work setback, MK. It's heartening to hear that our feature came at the right time for you. Despite the upset this has caused you, I'm glad to hear that you're making positive moves towards your next steps. No one has a straight upwards line to success. There are always many ups and downs, but they make us appreciate the successes all the more. Please keep in touch with what happens next for you.*

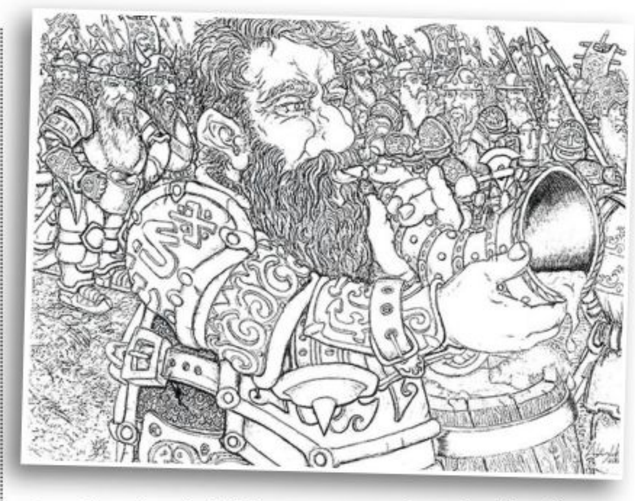
Artist suggestion

Greetings from my state penitentiary. I was beside myself to see that you printed my letter in the Christmas issue – it was the best Christmas gift I ever received. In your reply you said that you hope that I'm able to find a time and place to create art. Let me tell you that my art has improved by leaps and bounds since I've been locked up. My cell is my art studio.

I was reading through an old issue and in your editor's letter you asked for ideas on who to interview. I'd like to suggest Jhonen Vasquez, the artist behind the Invader Zim cartoon.

Alex, US

Claire replies *Thanks for your suggestions Alex. It's also great to hear you're still creating art. I always love to hear suggestions from readers about who we should feature or even your points of view regarding the magazine or about art in general, so please email your thoughts to mail@imaginefx.com.*

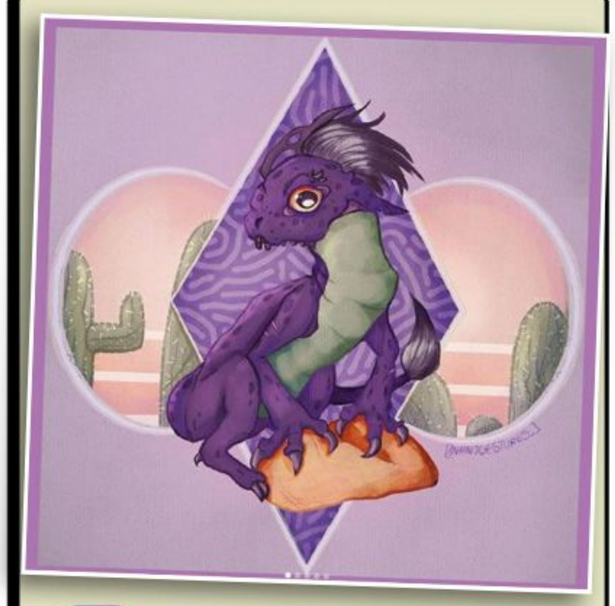


Spending time in jail has not stopped reader Alex from practising his fantasy illustration skills.

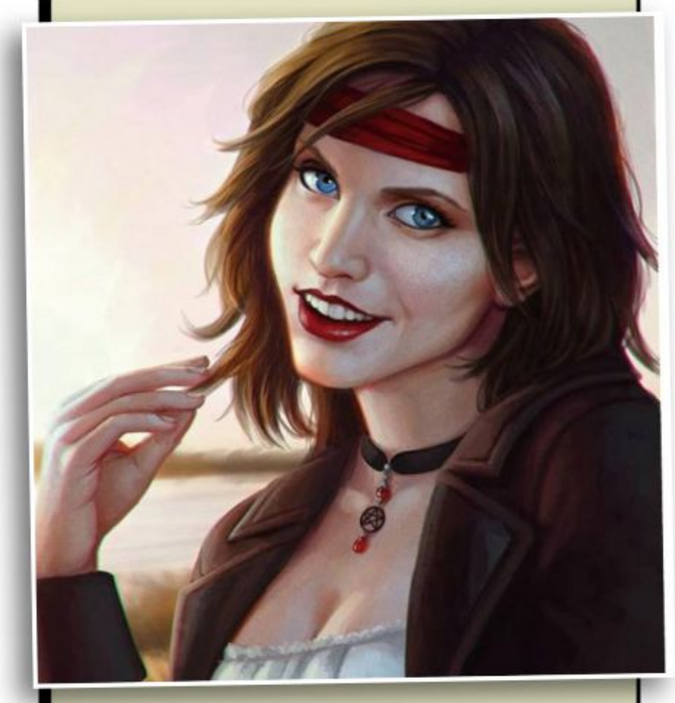
FRESH PAINT

New works that have grabbed our attention

Elisemakesart
@elisemakesart



Handgestures
@handgestures_



Stephanie Brown
@offbeatworlds

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

ARTIST PORTFOLIO

CAMILLA D'ERRICO

Garrick Webster talks to the Canadian artist who's turned her skill with oil paints into a successful creative brand

RAINBOW GIRLS
Beyond the Rainbow is one of Camilla d'Errico's iconic fine art pieces.

AQUARIUS
Nothing exemplifies Camilla's Renaissance take on manga better than her Zodiac series.

Camilla d'Errico is all for diversity in art. "I can't be pigeon-holed and packed away neatly in one box," she says. "I love putting my art on clothing and products, and seeing people experience it as part of themselves."

And for 2020, the Vancouver-based artist will be carrying right on in that vein with the release of custom handbags featuring her Pop Surrealist manga characters. "I fulfilled a lifelong ambition of creating kimonos in 2019, and I'm hoping in 2020 to create a line of high-end handbags – because I'm a total bag-lady!" she laughs.

The list of items that Camilla's work has appeared on is a long one. Her paintings are on snowboards and scarves, mirrors and backpacks, stickers and totes. There are limited-edition necklaces, lapel pins and lanyards, and she's written and illustrated how-to art books as well as graphic novels. Her character designs feature in manga-based app games and she's also produced some limited-edition figurines. There are the comic books where her career began as well, while today she devotes much of her time to fine-art paintings.

> **"I can't be pigeon-holed… I love putting my art on clothing and products"**

In fact, while Camilla is talking to us, she's busy preparing for a solo

Artist **PROFILE**

Camilla d'Errico
LOCATION: Canada
FAVOURITE ARTISTS: James Jean, Mizuki Kawashita, Masashi Kishimoto, Tara McPherson and Mark Ryden
MEDIA: Holbein Duo Aqua oils, graphite and Photoshop
WEB: www.camilladerrico.com

LITTLE MISS GOO
From a solo show entitled Sky, Camilla still sells prints of this Korean-inspired character.

show at the Corey Helford Gallery in Los Angeles. Her exhibition starts in May and will showcase a new approach she's been taking in her art. The series is called The Color Wheel, and with it she places her rainbow-dripping effects within wider monotone images. The excitement is building as the show draws nearer.

"This is a turning point for me where I'm expressing a lot of emotion, taking a big risk by doing the body of work in greyscale with some rainbow," says Camilla. "The rainbows express parts of their personality. Usually it's my characters commanding the attention, but now the separation of the colour and combining it with greyscale takes the stage."

OVER THE RAINBOW

The Color Wheel follows on, in a sense, from her Rainbow Children series, produced in 2012. Including images such as Dream Melt and Beyond the Rainbow, it's the collection that Camilla feels put her on the map in the world of fine art. Although she was already exhibiting at that point, requests from galleries had been stipulating what she should and shouldn't paint. Then, Tara McPherson invited Camilla to create images for the Cotton Candy Machine Gallery in Brooklyn, New York, and everything changed. Tara encouraged Camilla to pour her true feelings into the art. The result was a series depicting crying, melting rainbow girls.

While she responds to our questions, Camilla is busy working on a painting

COLOR WHEEL
The sketch and final artwork for one of The Color Wheel exhibits, which Camilla painted over the course of our interview.

which she confirms is destined for The Color Wheel exhibition. The sketch is of an apple with a bite taken out of it, from which a rainbow is dripping, while eight of her trademark Fuzzbutt bees buzz around excitedly. With a gloopy rainbow created in Camilla's inimitable style and a chorus of furry bees to accompany it, the image couldn't be more fitting as she discusses her career.

"I'm taking a risk by doing the body of work in greyscale with some rainbow"

The Fuzzbutts appear on a whole range of Camilla's merchandise, from petite art prints to jewellery and from bags to scarves. She sells them on her Etsy store, and at comic book, manga and fantasy events she attends around the world. Her Fuzzbutt bees have appeared in a self-published art book and have become a standalone brand.

"The Fuzzbutts are a perfect example of merchandising success, and also stand out for me creatively," says Camilla. "I get to have so much fun with these. I did a Bee-rah and Sailor Buzz-inspired one; these things are like an unstoppable pun force. It's endless how much fun I can have with

MEDUSA
A sketch created for #drawloween that eventually led to an enamel pin design.

GARMENTS
Camilla has turned her Fuzzbutt bees into scarf and kimono patterns.

LET IT SNOW
Strangely, it was painting on Ride Snowboards that led to Camilla's career in fine art.

JEWELLERY
Many of Camilla's favourite manga characters now appear on necklaces.

HYDIE
This character from Camilla's Sky show has its roots in numerous cultures.

MAKING MERCH

For many artists, having a line of merchandise is a dream. Camilla d'Errico shares her experiences

"My biggest money makers are my smallest items, such as postcards, stickers and buttons," says Camilla.

Marketing her merchandise regularly on social media and selling it on Etsy, she's also a regular at comic conventions and other events across the US and around the world. Small purchases lead to larger ones as fans become more engaged with her work.

"It's my belief that not everyone has money for a $200 print, so I want to make something for everyone. Maybe they start off with a $3 button. But it's that little thing they take with them, and they come back another year. I don't know how many times I've heard people say 'last year I could only get a sticker' but they remembered my art and they go on to get a print when they can. They've grown up with me and stayed with me over the years."

"I remember at Emerald City Comic Con two years ago, this group of kids who found me at the end of the con were devastated they had no money left by the time they saw my booth. I gave them each a button as a gift, and one girl was so happy she started crying. The next year at least two of them returned and bought a print. It was amazing to see them come back."

COMIC CON
Camilla's vibrant booth at New York Comic Con 2019.

BEE-RA (LEFT)
Camilla has a blast painting and selling her Fuzzbutt bee imagery.

SAILOR BUZZ (RIGHT)
This Fuzzbutt is Camilla's ode to Sailor Moon, one of her favourite manga characters.

THE NARRATIVE
Tanpopo is where Camilla developed her voice as a storyteller.

↠ these bees, and it's for a good cause, since I donate proceeds of bee art releases to charities and raise awareness about bee conservation."

GREEN CREDENTIALS

One of the things not many people know about Camilla is that she's an eco-warrior. She doesn't always talk about it, but as well as bee conservation she focuses on using eco-friendly products that don't harm the environment. She recycles her palettes, turning them into merchandisable art, and paints with Holbein Duo Aqua water-soluble oils on birchwood.

The fact that Camilla paints with oils, but is inspired by manga, is something that sets her apart in the world of fantasy art. While most manga artists today are using digital tools, Camilla's oil paints align her more with another of her great sources of inspiration: Italian Renaissance portraits. Her unique style is based on the talented way she's combined these two very different influences.

"The Renaissance paintings I'm drawn to highlight the softness of the skin and the way the light resonates off them," the artist explains. "And their eyes are so engaging – they hold all ↠

"The Renaissance paintings I'm drawn to highlight the softness of the skin and the way the light resonates off them"

THE POLLINATOR
Available on Camilla's Etsy shop, this Fuzzbutt image was painted in 2019.

MISS DUPLEXITY
Original oil on wood painting for a show at the Corey Helford Gallery in March 2018.

THE DREAM MELT
One of Camilla's classic pieces, which introduced her melting rainbow motif.

CANCER
Camilla's rendition of the crab constellation from her Zodiac series.

GODIVA
Body positivity is one of the themes in this gallery show painting.

these secrets which you, as a viewer, want to unravel. I love the way they're composed, having one main figure with all these little details around them."

MANGA AESTHETIC

To that depth of character, as captured by the Renaissance painters, Camilla aims to bring a manga aesthetic and colour palette, as well as the narrative side. "I'm creating characters from my own mind, who have their own personalities, stories and adventures," she says. "What I'm trying to bring to their eyes is a story that's very complex. Anime and manga are about complex stories, struggles and characters rising from them."

She continues: "They exist in these supernatural, fantastical worlds where girls save the galaxy in skirts and shoot moonbeams out of their foreheads. And I love that! That's why I bring that fantasy element into portraits – it's what completes the surrealist part of being a pop surrealist painter, for me."

While it hasn't been easy honing her style and establishing her position in the art world, fresh ideas never stop coming to Camilla. She's passionate about every new venture, and one of the things Camilla has learned while developing her brand and turning her art into merchandise is that you have to be patient and practical about what you produce. Whether it's kimonos or handbags, she has dozens of ideas for each new release, but is careful about how many products she introduces and in what quantities.

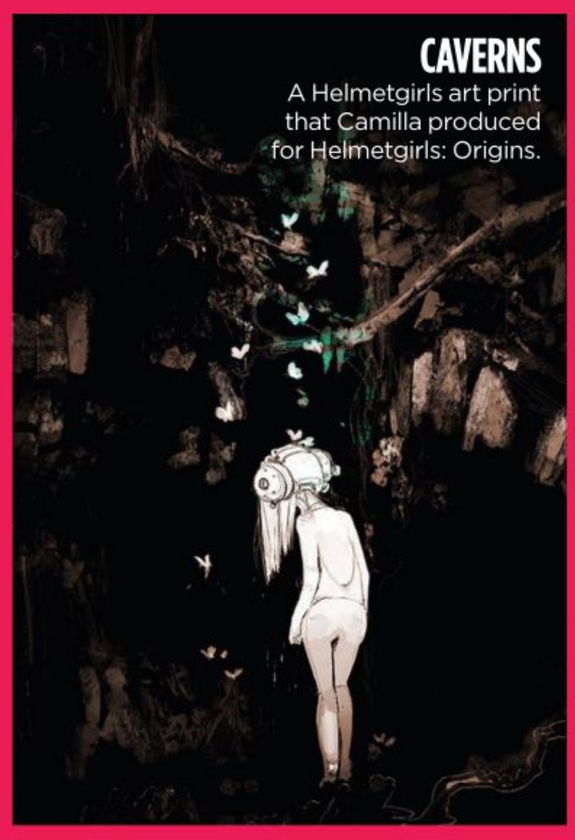
> **"I have to curate my art process and be much more engaged online…"**

Furthermore, the landscape she operates in is constantly changing, and unpredictable. To support her work, Camilla spends a lot of time on social media, sharing new imagery and products and engaging with her fans. "It alters how I create art in the sense that I have to curate my process and be much more engaged online. Which takes up a lot of time. So, there seems to be less time to make the art, and more time spent online. But there's a good thing that comes from that, which is I'm connected to people in a way I never was before. I get to experience my art through them, and through their comments, which is actually quite beautiful when you think about it," she says.

Perhaps the biggest upside, though, is that Camilla d'Errico has managed to design the perfect career for Camilla d'Errico. She's always true to her creative muse, and if she feels it's time to return to her Helmetgirls work, for example, then that's exactly what she'll do. So watch this space. A gala Helmetgirls graphic novel is next on her to-do list…

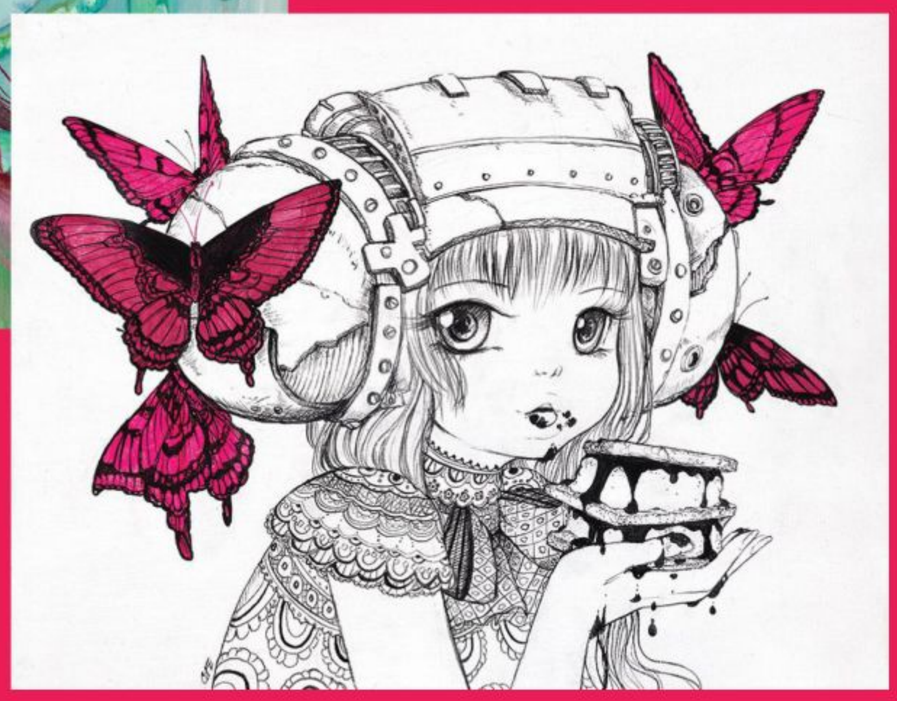
NEW LOOK
Here's an exclusive early look at an artwork painted for Camilla's show at the Corey Helford Gallery in May.

HELMETGIRLS
Existing initially as artworks, the Helmetgirls are destined to feature in a new graphic novel.



CAVERNS
A Helmetgirls art print that Camilla produced for Helmetgirls: Origins.

ART BOOK
Volume 2 of Helmetgirls features Camilla's art series depicting the characters.



SALLY SMORES
Each Helmetgirl wears a helmet tuned to their personality.

MEET THE HELMETGIRLS

Camilla d'Errico launched her career in the world of comics 19 years ago, and she's still drawing them...

Drawing various series for independent publishers in the US and Canada gradually began to open doors for Camilla d'Errico when she began her career in 2001. She's collaborated with Joshua Dysart, Grant Morrison and the singer Avril Lavigne in the past. Her manga-based character designs graced the game Sky Punks, published by Rovio, and the spin-off five-issue comic series Sky Pirates of Neo Terra from Image Comics.

Camilla's also developed her own comic concepts such as Tanpopo, a self-published series about a super intelligent but emotionless girl who makes a deal with the devil in exchange for the opportunity to experience feelings.

The Helmetgirls is a concept from Camilla's art that she'll turn into a graphic novel in the coming year. Each character wears elaborate headgear that expresses their inner personality, and artwork of them was collected together in a volume published by Dark Horse in 2013. For a decade, Camilla has been developing the Helmetgirls and the graphic novel will see them go from paintings into a narrative format.

But that's not all. Camilla's dream is to see them go on to appear in their own anime... watch this space!

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Issue 184
March 2020

Cover artist Ramón Nuñez paints a fun character piece for our cover, while Antony Ward reveals how to depict wet skin. Pro artist tell us how they turned failures into successes, and we talk the enigmatic illustrator Heikala.

Issue 183
February 2020

Elevate your human and animal anatomy skills with the help of Oliver Sin and Aaron Blaise, and discover new brush techniques in Procreate 5. We also talk to MTG's Cynthia Sheppard and illustrator Anna Dittmann.

Issue 182
January 2020

Learn how to paint striking fantasy portraits, starting with Fatemeh Haghnejad's ethereal cover art. We interview John Burton and Djamila Knopf, and find out what successful artists have in common.

Issue 181
Christmas 2019

Video game industry pros help you to take your 2D and 3D art skills to the next level. We explore Kekai Kotaki's sketchbook, salute the world's finest concept artists, and speak to legendary art director Robh Ruppel.

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LOCATION: Vancouver, Canada
PROJECTS: Age of Empires II: Definitive Edition, Mortal Kombat 11, FIFA 20
WEB: www.atomhawk.com

ATOMHAWK CANADA

Tom May reveals how Atomhawk's Vancouver studio is making a name for itself creating video games concepts – and wants to expand its team!

"We get a variety of projects, so the more you can do, the better," says the studio's intermediate concept artist Brock Grossman."

Long-time ImagineFX readers will remember that we featured Atomhawk in the magazine just a few years ago, in issue 138. But in 2016 the company, which provides digital art and design services for clients such as Warner Bros., Sony and Marvel, only existed in one place: Gateshead in north-east England. The following year, Atomhawk launched a brand new studio in Vancouver, Canada, so we figured it was about time we caught up with them, too.

The first thing studio director **Chris Rowe** makes clear is that, despite having two branches on opposite sides of the Atlantic, it's still very much one Atomhawk. "As one team is finishing their day, the other is just starting, so

> **"As one team is finishing their day, the other is just starting, so the production teams typically do a daily sync up"**

ATOMHAWK CANADA

"Style's still something I'm exploring, but I try to reinforce my foundation constantly," says senior concept artist Cristian Vasquez.

© NetherRealm Studios

Concept art by Atomhawk for Kollector, a character who debuted in Mortal Kombat 11.

© Xbox Game Studios

Joan of Arc concept art by Atomhawk for Age of Empires II: Definitive Edition.

"Artists join Atomhawk because they'll work on great projects in a culture that genuinely cares about them," says studio director Chris Rowe.

the production teams typically do a daily sync-up on everything," he explains. That said, each studio usually focuses on its own set of projects, and the latest one Chris can talk about is Age of Empires II: Definitive Edition, a collaboration with Xbox Game Studios. "This was also one of the biggest projects we've ever done, with over 900 panels of beautiful, historically accurate illustrations and paintings being produced," he says. "It required a truly phenomenal effort from everyone involved, over quite a long stretch of time."

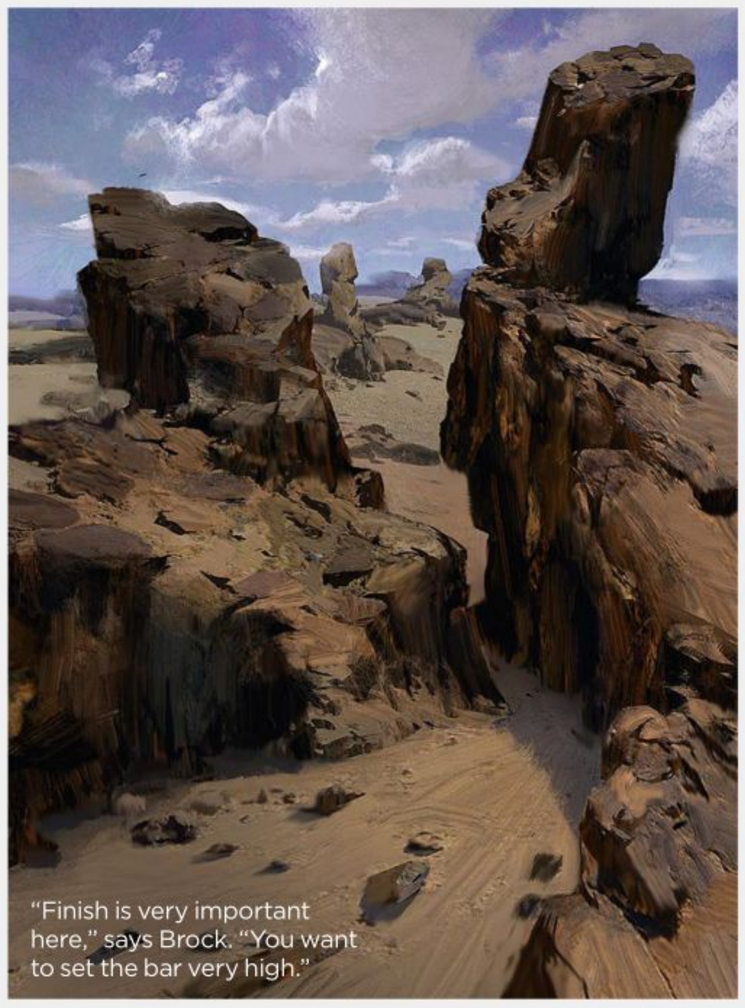
KEEPING ARTISTS HAPPY

Other projects launching last year included Mortal Kombat 11 and FIFA 20. And working on such big-name AAA projects certainly helps keep artists happy, Chris stresses. "Most

Cristian is happy using a mixture of 2D and 3D tools, including Modo, Octane and Photoshop.

> The energy in both studios is always really friendly and lively

"I've worked on a variety of projects, but my preferred type of work is environments," reveals Cristian.



"Finish is very important here," says Brock. "You want to set the bar very high."

"Seeing your work in a released product is always exciting," says Thomas Stoop (pictured here with fellow concept artist Russell Jones in the background).

of the gang are gamers themselves, with their own love and passion for certain genres and IPs," he notes, "so it keeps them motivated to deliver."

To take one example, senior concept artist **Cristian Vasquez**, who

specialises in environments and typically uses Modo, Octane and Photoshop, is enthused about his recent contribution to Mortal Kombat 11. "My contribution to the MK world was exciting," he says. "I learned a lot about implementing new workflows, because I had to tackle a variety of subjects."

That doesn't mean, however, that artists are overworked. "Production always schedules everything in a way where we have enough time to

complete projects, and don't have to do any overtime or crunch," stresses intermediate concept artist **Brock Grossman**. "So we all value our time when we're in the studio."

Intermediate concept artist **Lauren Nichols** started off in the Gateshead studio before moving over to Vancouver. "The energy in both studios is always really friendly and lively," she says. "We try to organise group activities as much as possible, and often hang out outside of work hours. The work and fun balance here is always equal, and it's a motivating place to be."

GROWING FAST

Thomas Stoop, who's also worked at both studios, notes that the Gateshead

one is much bigger, "so it naturally has a wider variety of artists and social activities going on. Whereas the newer

ATOMHAWK CANADA

"I do a lot of stylised 2D work, mostly within the field of character development," says intermediate concept artist Lauren Nichols.

BROCK GROSSMAN

On 3D tools, collaboration and remaining flexible

What are your responsibilities at Atomhawk?
As an intermediate concept artist, I'm responsible for a variety of projects for a number of clients. I typically have multiple things on the go at once, so you can pick something up when there's downtime. My other responsibilities are to be helpful to my teammates and be supportive, especially when on the same project. There's often a lot of collaborating and teaming up: a good learning opportunity.

How would you describe your personal style?
I lean towards fantasy, but I love weird mechs and unorthodox tech design. I try to be adaptive and absorb as much as I can from different genres.

What software and hardware do you use in your work?
It depends on what I'm doing, but 90 per cent of the time it's Blender and Photoshop. Blender has come a long way, and I'd recommend it to anyone keen to get into using 3D tools.

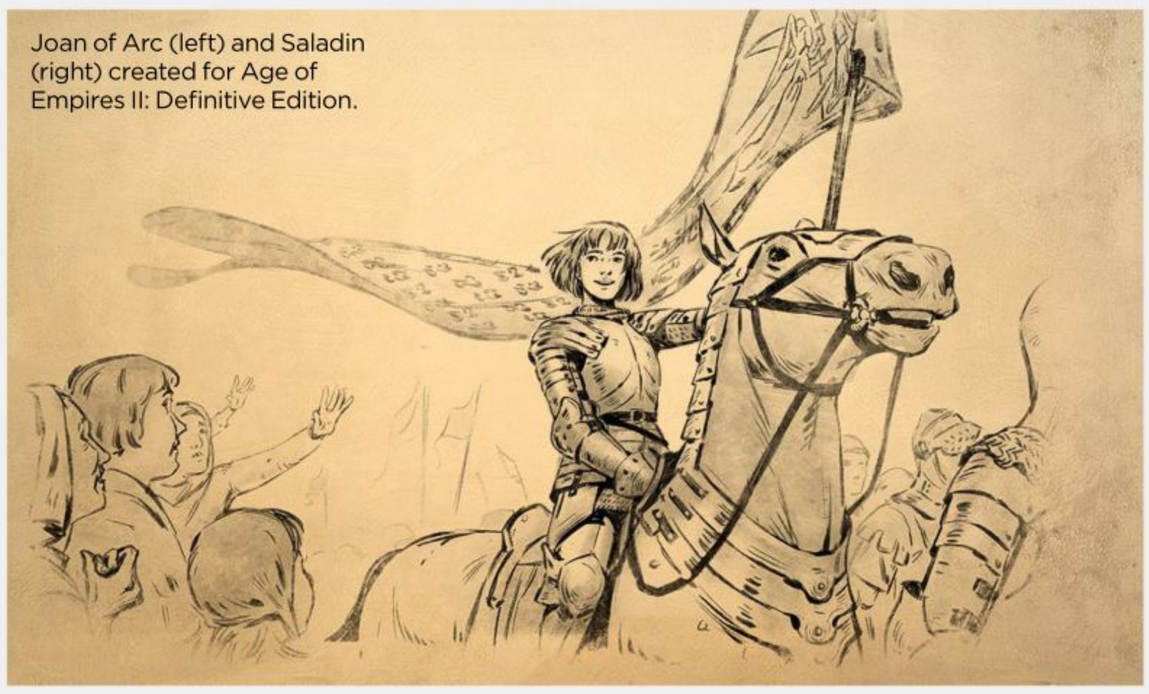
What's it like working at Atomhawk Vancouver?
It's very relaxed, but also very work-focused at the same time. There are a lot of moments where you feel valued.

What advice would you give to a young artist wishing to work at Atomhawk?
A strong portfolio is key, because you want to represent yourself through your work and have it speak for you. Show your process in some situations; it enables people to understand how you work.

Previously a freelance artist, Brock joined Atomhawk Vancouver in June 2019 and now works at the studio as an intermediate concept artist.

www.artstation.com/brockag

"I experiment so much with my personal style," says Lauren.



Joan of Arc (left) and Saladin (right) created for Age of Empires II: Definitive Edition.

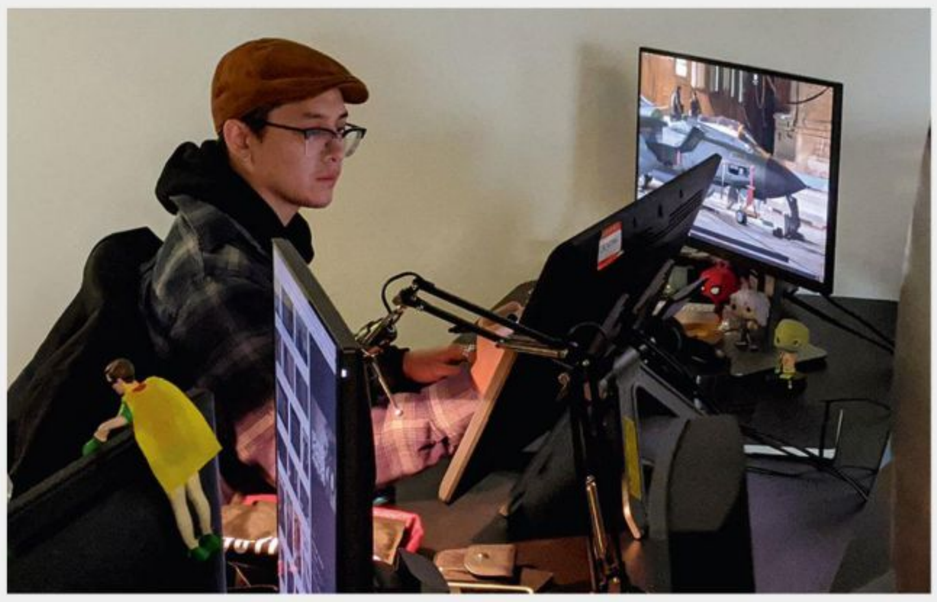
© Xbox Game Studios

Vancouver studio is smaller and quieter, but it's growing fast. As it's smaller, it feels less like a formal office environment and a bit more casual; but no matter where we are, we all work hard and deliver great art."

If all that piques your interest, be aware that Atomhawk Vancouver is now recruiting. "We want to add five new artists to the Vancouver studio in 2020, and our focus is on junior and intermediate artists," says Chris. "We're looking for bright and talented people who live and breathe art and design, and have an interest in video games and popular culture. To support this, we plan to collaborate with several Canadian schools and colleges to create an internship and feeder programme for those who excel and are hungry to become professional concept artists."

> **"We're looking for bright and talented people who live and breathe art and design"**

"New 3D tools and techniques appear every year, and we try to keep up with the technology available," says Cristian.



FOLLOW YOUR PATH

To anyone who wishes to work here, Cristian has this advice. "Focus your energy in what drives you in art and follow that path," he suggests. "Good art takes time and seeing how you get to the final product is very valuable, especially here at Atomhawk. We all have different specialties, but we all want to make awesome art."

Lauren takes a similar line. "Work on a range of projects and styles, even in your own time," she says. "Show that you can be flexible and share your process. Don't underestimate the importance of showing how you work through a problem, as Atomhawk really values that type of insight."

As to the future, Chris is looking forward to growing both the team and the business. "In 2020 alone we'll see both studios moving into fantastic new office spaces, each of the teams grow with new talent, and a number of our existing projects launch to gamers worldwide," he says. "On top of that, we're currently in discussions on several awesome new next-gen projects I know everyone on the team will be pumped to work on. So there's never been a better time to join us and become a 'Hawk'."

ATOMHAWK CANADA

Concept artwork for Mortal Kombat 11's Krypt by Atomhawk.

© NetherRealm Studios

Thomas says that, "I enjoy focusing on environments the most, especially fantasy worlds."

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX

Sketchbook

ZIUK

The artist also known as Edu Quiza shows how he faces his fears and visualises his sources of inspiration in his sketchbook

Artist PROFILE

ZIUK

LOCATION: Spain

ZIUK splits his time between working as a freelance illustrator for various advertising and video games agencies, and teaching painting techniques in his own studio in Madrid. His clients include Lucille Games, El Corte Inglés, Vita Imana, 3D Total Publishing, Apache Editorial and Premium Editorial. ZIUK published his first art book in 2018 and is already working on his second.

www.ziuk.bigcartel.com

SPIRIT

"I was inspired by the work of the artist Nekro when drawing my vision of the blue whale. It's one of my favourite animals."

FÉNIX

"I love the meaning of this creature, although my vision is somewhat less spectacular."

DARK TIGER

"The main idea was to create a tiger wizard. In the end he just stayed as a loose concept. I'll develop it some day..."

“In the end he just stayed as a loose concept. I’ll develop it some day…”

HATCHING

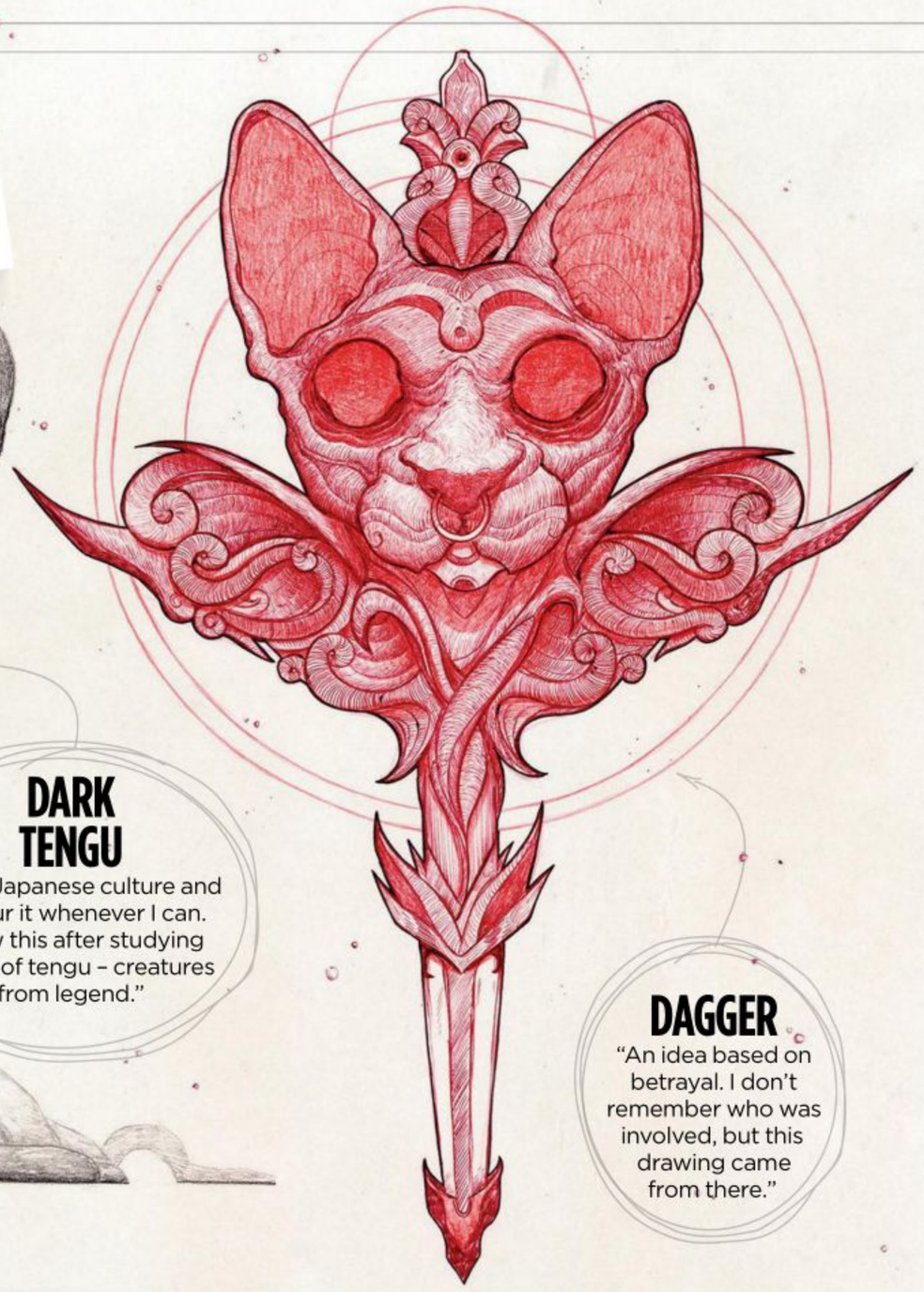
“It’s the representation of the birth of an idea… you never know how it will end.”

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX

Sketchbook

DARK TENGU

"I love Japanese culture and honour it whenever I can. I drew this after studying masks of tengu – creatures from legend."



DAGGER

"An idea based on betrayal. I don't remember who was involved, but this drawing came from there."

> **A mixture of animals and bones… it all makes sense in my head!**

BOOK COVER

"A mixture of animals and bones... it all makes sense in my head! I was inspired by the art of Katsuya Terada and Kim Jung Gi, and this sketch became the cover of my first book."

MADNESS

"I think that there's a hint of madness in everything an artist does, and in this case my head was not well."

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX

Sketchbook

SEPPUKU

"This is my particular vision of the death of a warrior, represented by the Japanese katana and the emissary of his soul (the raven)."

> "This is my particular vision of the death of a warrior..."

THE LAST

"An imaginary world contains the last of these rare, dark creatures. I intended to continue drawing these beasts, but then my plans changed."

MUSHROOM CREATURE

"This mushroom-based concept came out of the Creatuanary challenge that some friends launched on Instagram last year."

LOCKED

"Sometimes, in the midst of artist's block, an idea can suddenly fly out of your mind and you've got no choice to visualise it, as I did with this sketch."

MIEDO

"There are times when I like to face my fears, which is why I chose to draw this sinister octopus-like creature."

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

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NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS
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Advice from the world's best artists

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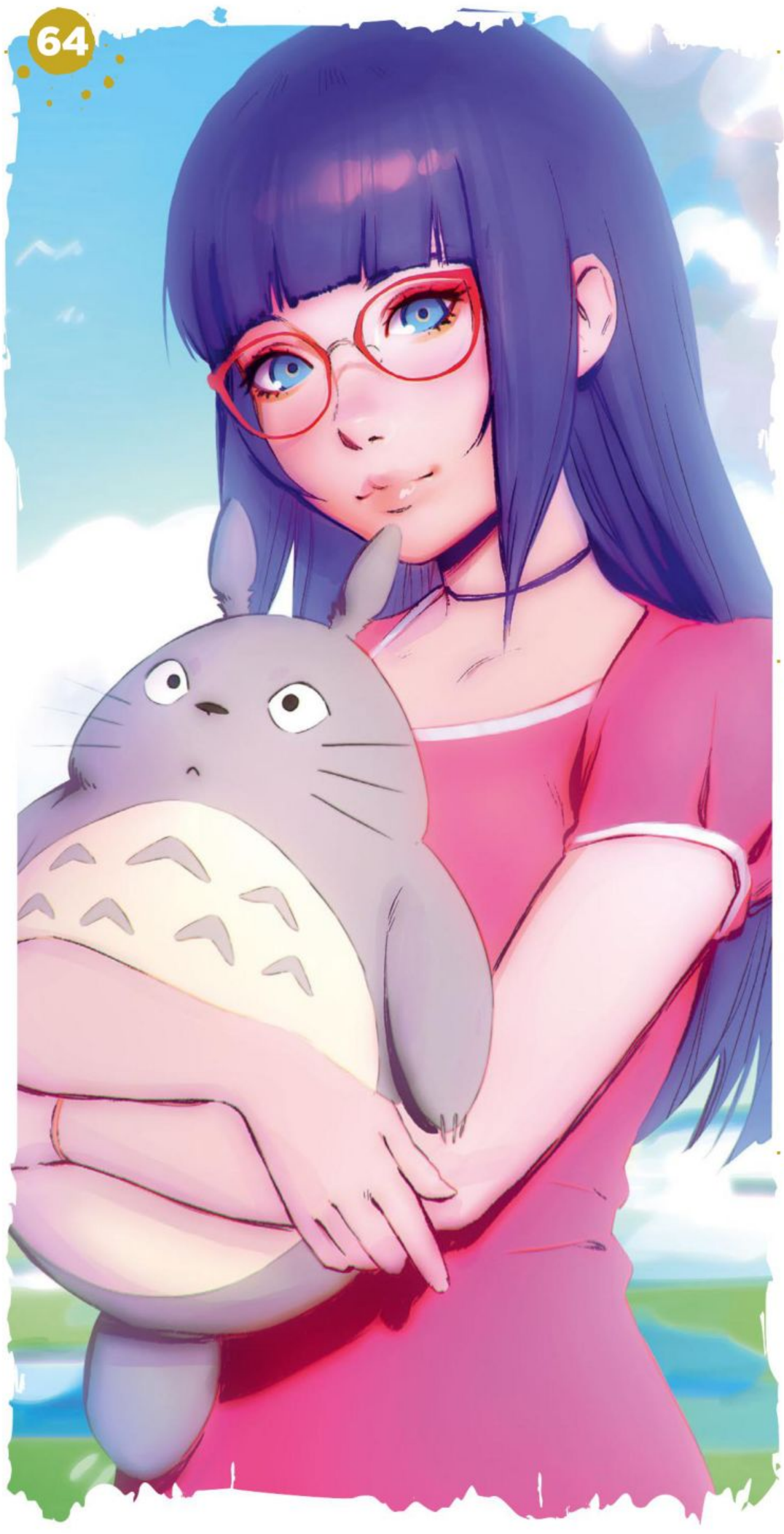


This issue:

64 Create amazing manga figure art
Ilya Kuvshinov brings a girl and her toy to life, using Photoshop blending layer modes.

72 15 tips on painting manga faces
Learn techniques for creating engaging manga characters, explained by Zakary Lee.

80 Core Skills: Flame Painter
Harvey Bunda shows you how to make your artwork pop with Flame Painter's particle brushes.

84 New rendering techniques
kiDChan uses a range of Clip Studio Paint's layer modes and her favourite Rainbow brush.

Procreate & Photoshop

CREATE AMAZING MANGA FIGURE ART

Manga and anime character artist **Ilya Kuvshinov** brings to life a girl and her toy Totoro, using a range of Photoshop blending layer modes

Artist **PROFILE**

Ilya Kuvshinov
LOCATION: Japan

Ilya developed character designs, concept art and animations for The Wonderland, and characters for Ghost in the Shell: SAC_2045.
http://ifxm.ag/kuily

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 8 now!

A decade spent in art education, followed by another 10 years immersed in digital painting techniques have enabled me to identify the different ways of approaching commercial work, and helped me to uncover new ways of expressing my ideas in my personal art.

I usually work in Procreate on an iPad, and Photoshop on an iMac Pro, switching between both applications. For this workshop I created the sketches on an iPad and finished the piece in Photoshop, taking advantage of the bigger screen size and the program's larger range of tools. You'll see how even basic effects such as Lighten, Darken and Color Burn layer blend modes, Gaussian Blur and Liquify can help you to create those pro-level finishing touches.

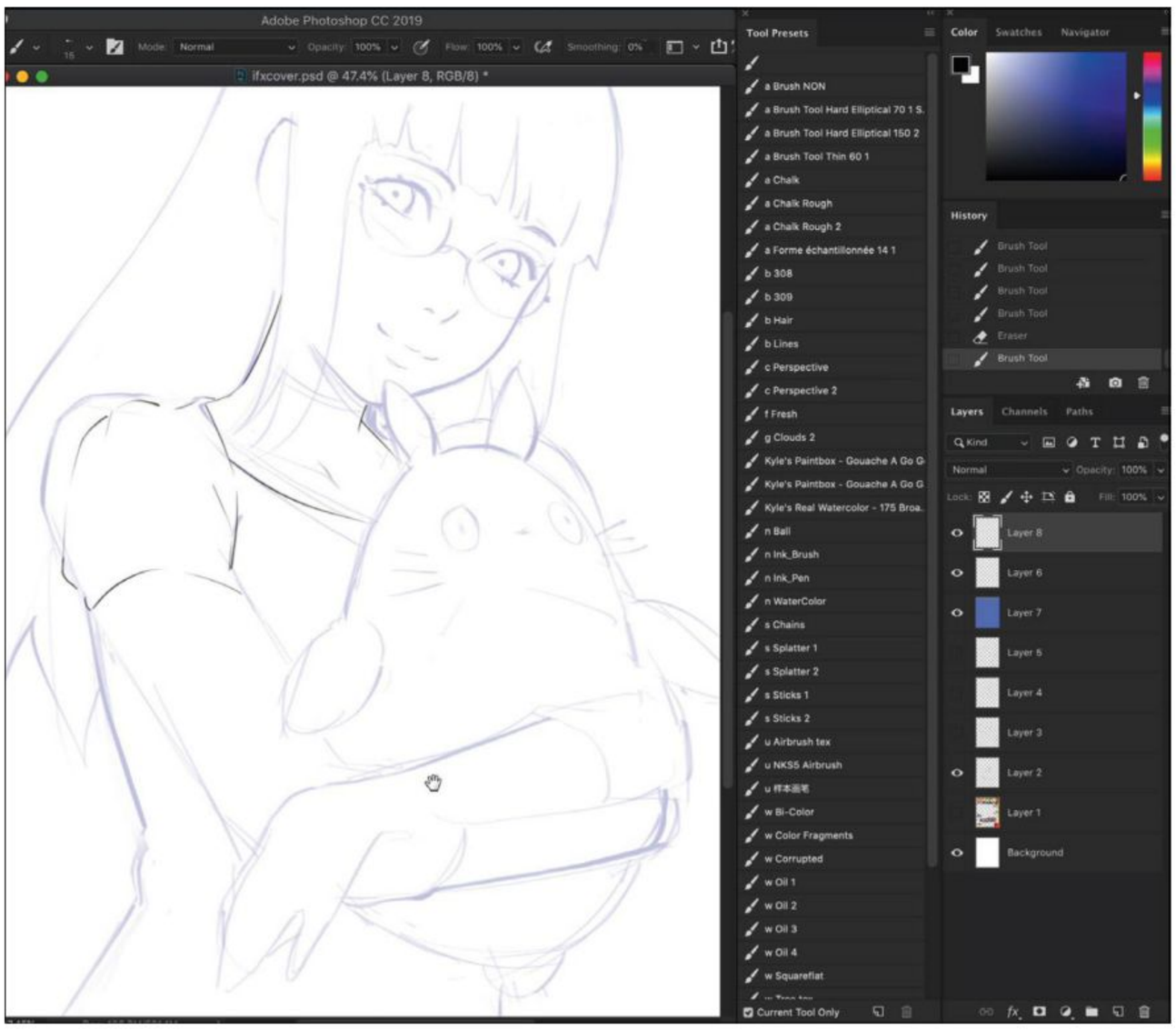
Digital art tools either attempt to imitate the effects of traditional media, or take a painting approach that, for the most part, is far removed from real-world processes. My work doesn't resemble a 'real' painting at all, apart from during the early sketch and line-art stages, and when developing shadows and background. Instead, I rely on Photoshop to enhance parts of the image as I go: first by developing the mood of the artwork, and then adding details throughout the scene. It's a totally different approach to working in traditional media. Here, I've used vivid colours, light blooms and gentle rendering to express my love for the films of Studio Ghibli.

1 Generate rough sketches

The ImagineFX team's idea for the cover is "a girl hugging a plush toy, maybe a Totoro one", so I start by creating four sketches in Procreate: three with Totoro and one with a shark plush toy. I'm mindful of the cover layout, so the face of the girl and her soft toy should roughly be in the middle of the composition.

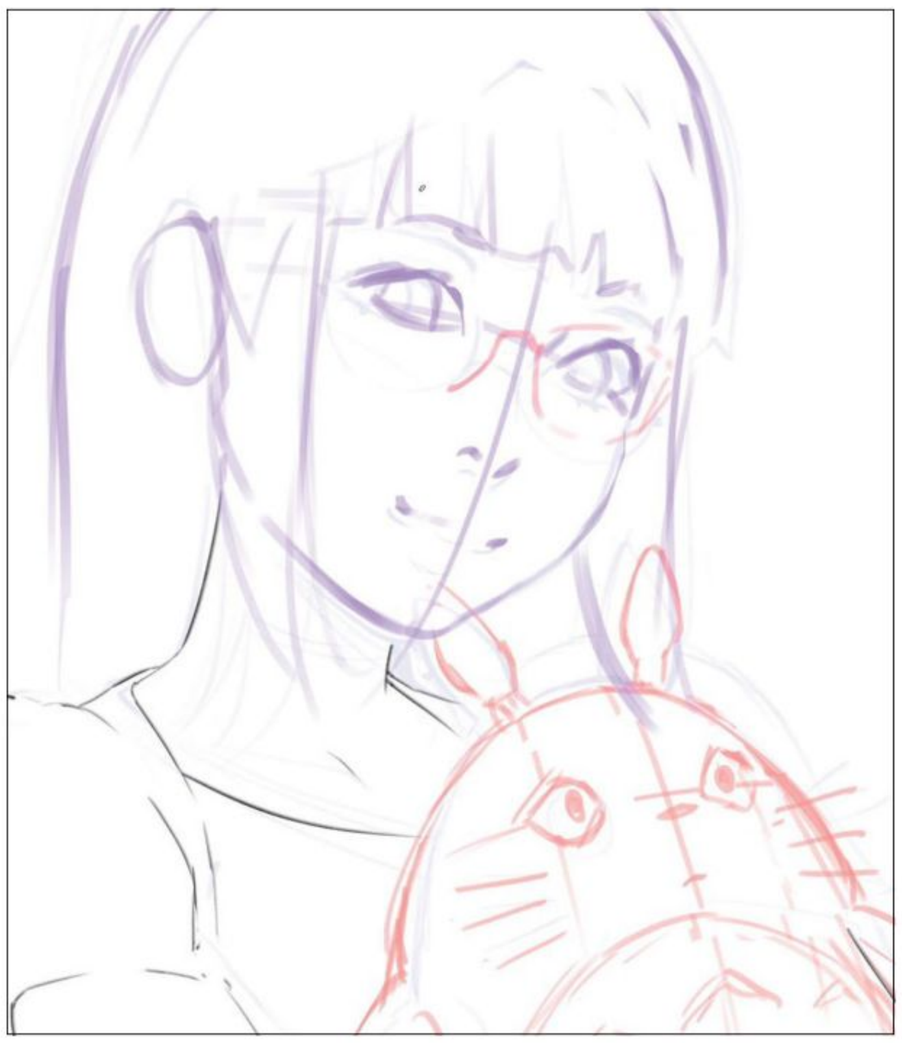
2 Altering the character's age

It's decided that I should proceed with sketch number one. However, I need to make the girl look much older – between 12 and 18 years old. This means I need to change the size and proportions of her head and facial features, making her head and eyes smaller, the cheeks less chubby, and increasing the length of her arms.



3 Create a line-art layer

I take the sketch into Photoshop and roughly double the image size, just in case we need to crop the image to make the cover more effective. Before starting inking, I create a new Lighten blend layer filled with just blue (press Alt+Del to fill the layer) to differentiate the rough sketch from the line art.



4 Line-art time

I start inking on top of the sketch, fixing any mistakes on the fly. Technically, working digitally means I can correct errors even at a late stage in the painting, so I don't worry about making mistakes as I draw the line-art. However, for guidance I add structural sketches for the girl's head and draw Totoro with violet and red lines.

RESOURCES
WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES: SKETCHY

The brush I use for line-art. Ideal for textures and hard-to-block colours!

A BRUSH NON

My main brush for colour blocking; it has no Shape Dynamics or Texture.

U AIRBRUSH

I use this brush for special effects and creating gentle colour gradients.

Y MANGA BRUSH

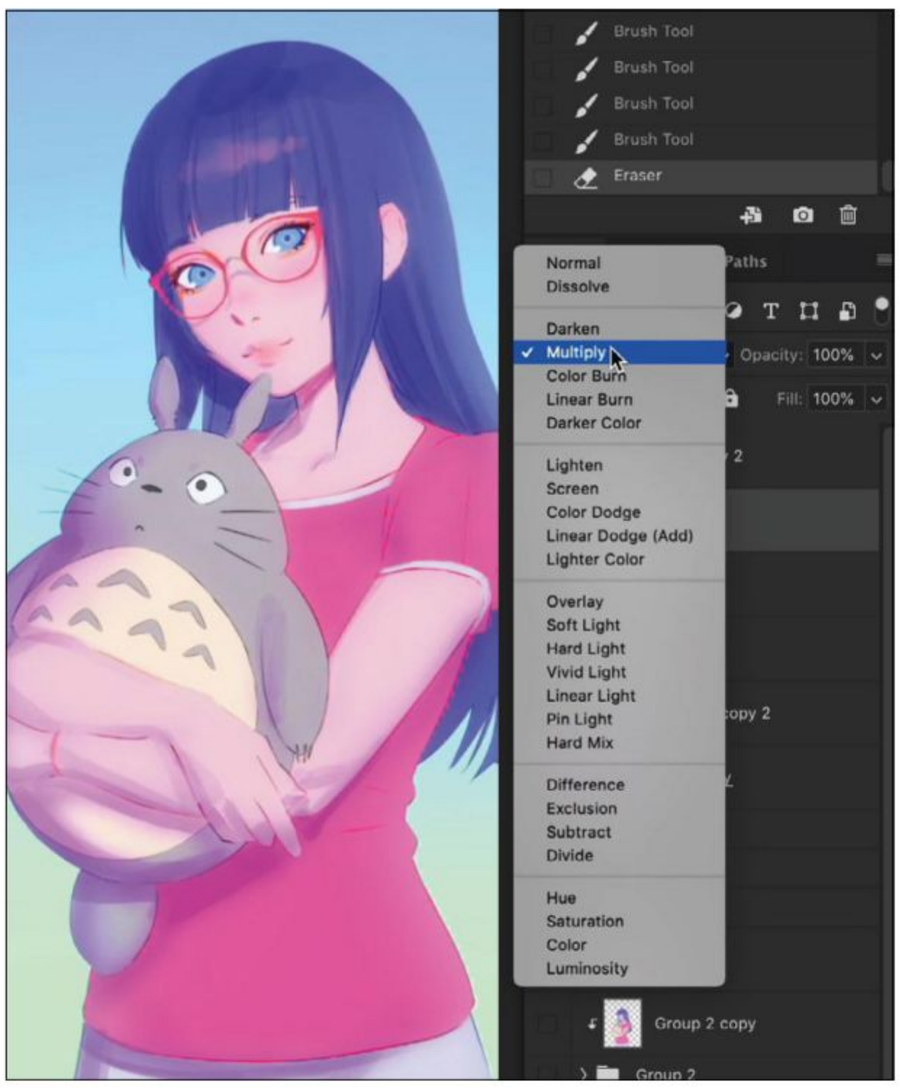
This brush has a lovely texture that mimics traditional inks.

5 Blocking in my colours

I regularly flip the image horizontally, finding and fixing more mistakes as I go along. I finish the line-art in about an hour, and after another hour my colours have been blocked in. The brush I'm using for the line-art makes it difficult to block the colours with the Magic Wand tool, so I have to do this stage by hand.

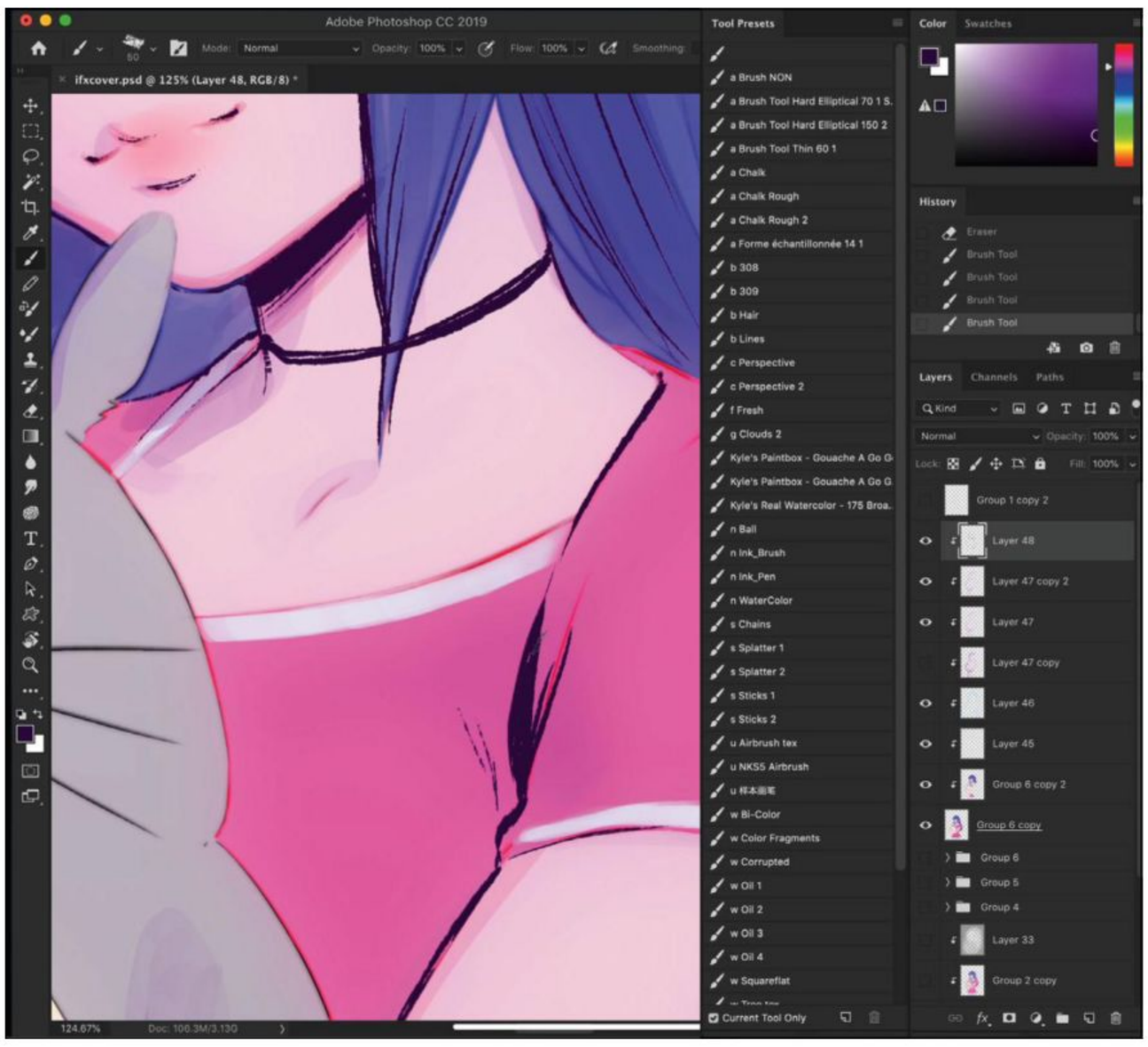
6 Amending the face

I now decide to make some changes to the face, making full use of the Liquify tool, and cutting out the eyes and moving them around. I also fix the shape of the head and width of the arms and waist. I'll be back to fix the face later on in the painting process, though.



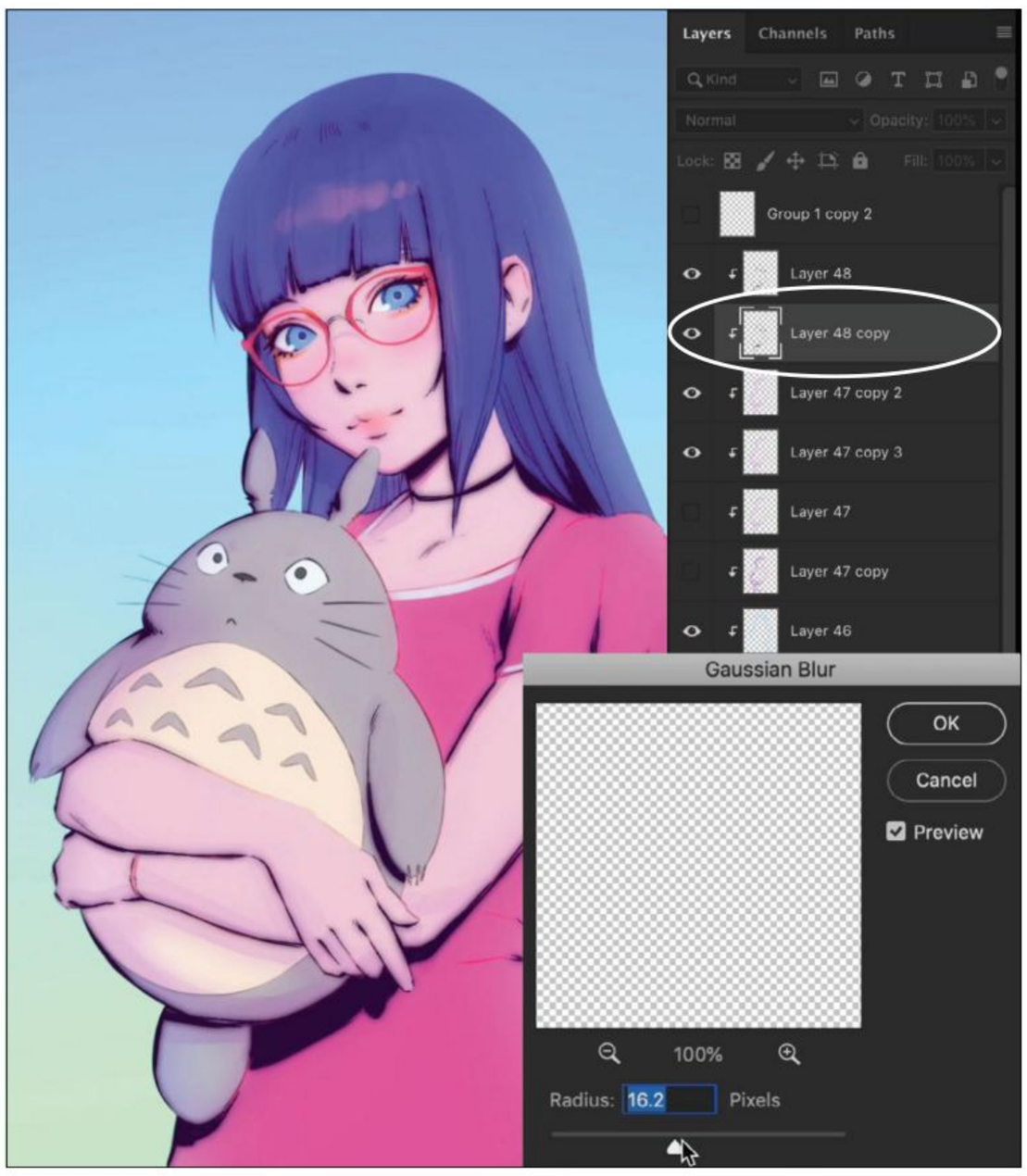
7 Shadow layer techniques

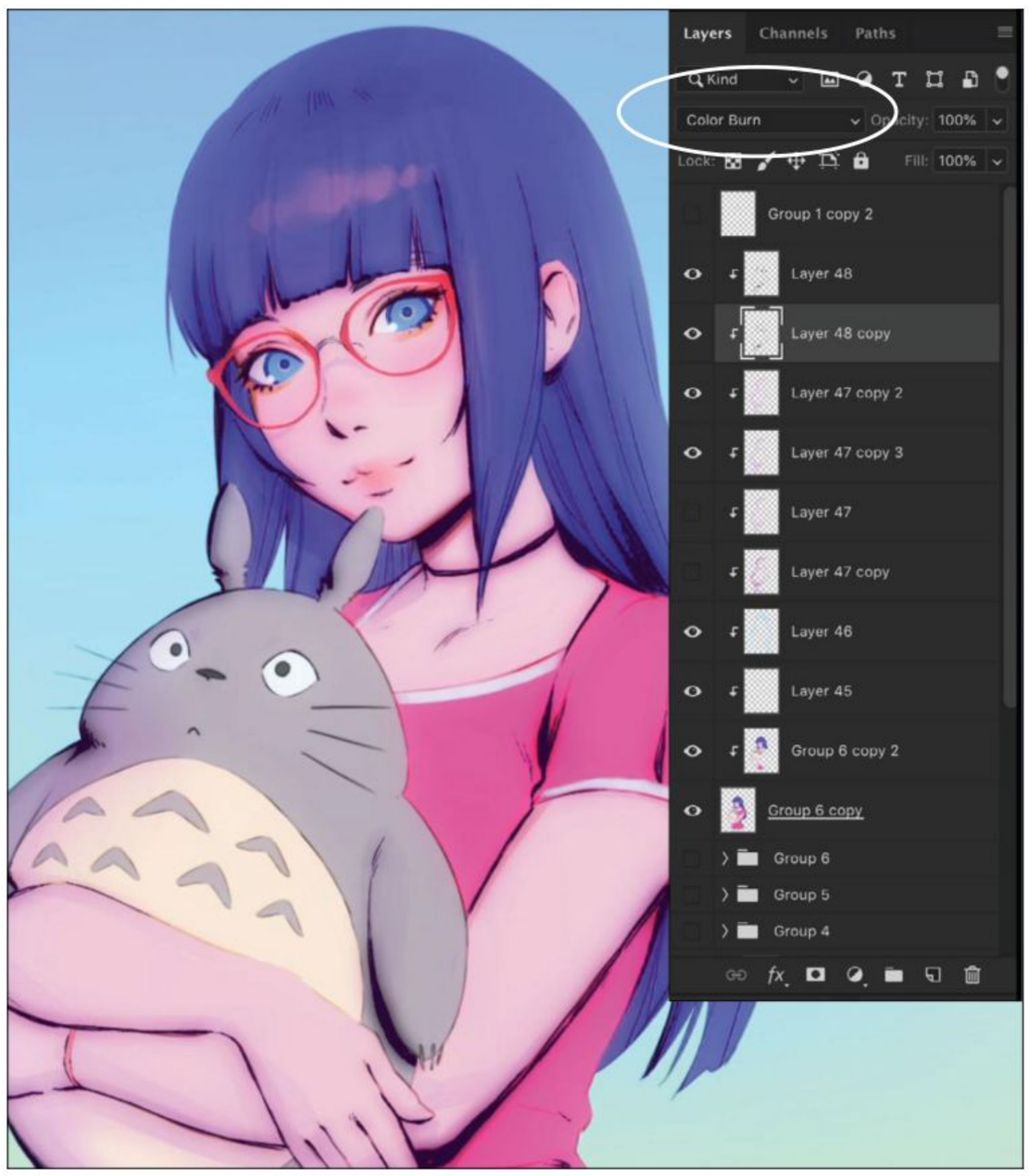
Using a bright violet colour I roughly add shadows on top of the character using a Multiply layer. I also copy the same layer and blur it with Gaussian Blur on top. This softens the shadows and changes the opacity of both layers, creating an even softer shadow effect.



8 Developing a cel-shade look

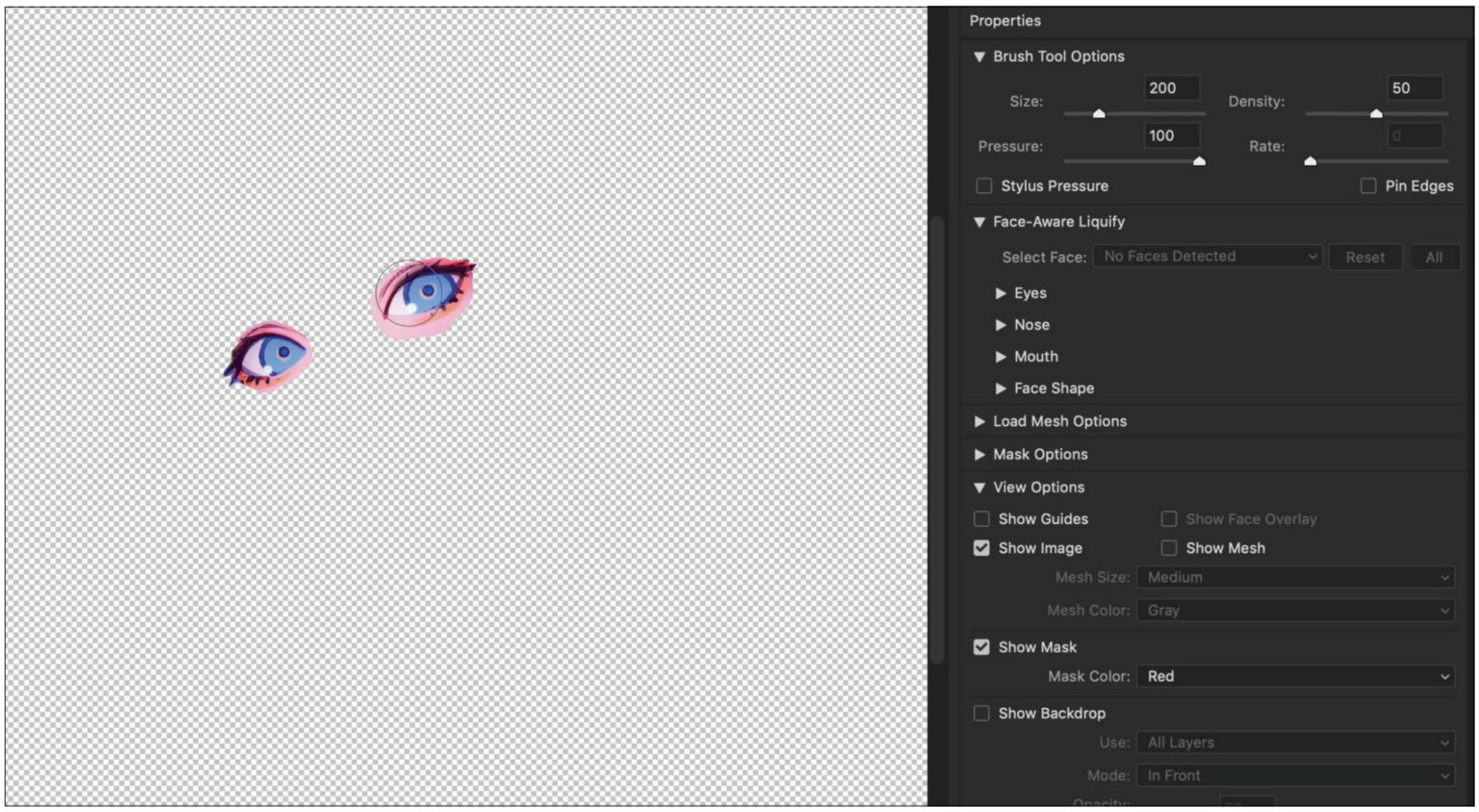
I use dark violet with my Y Manga Brush to add contrast shadows and one more line layer to the figure, which gives the image an aged-ink cel-shading appearance. This step wasn't planned, but it suits the theme of the piece.





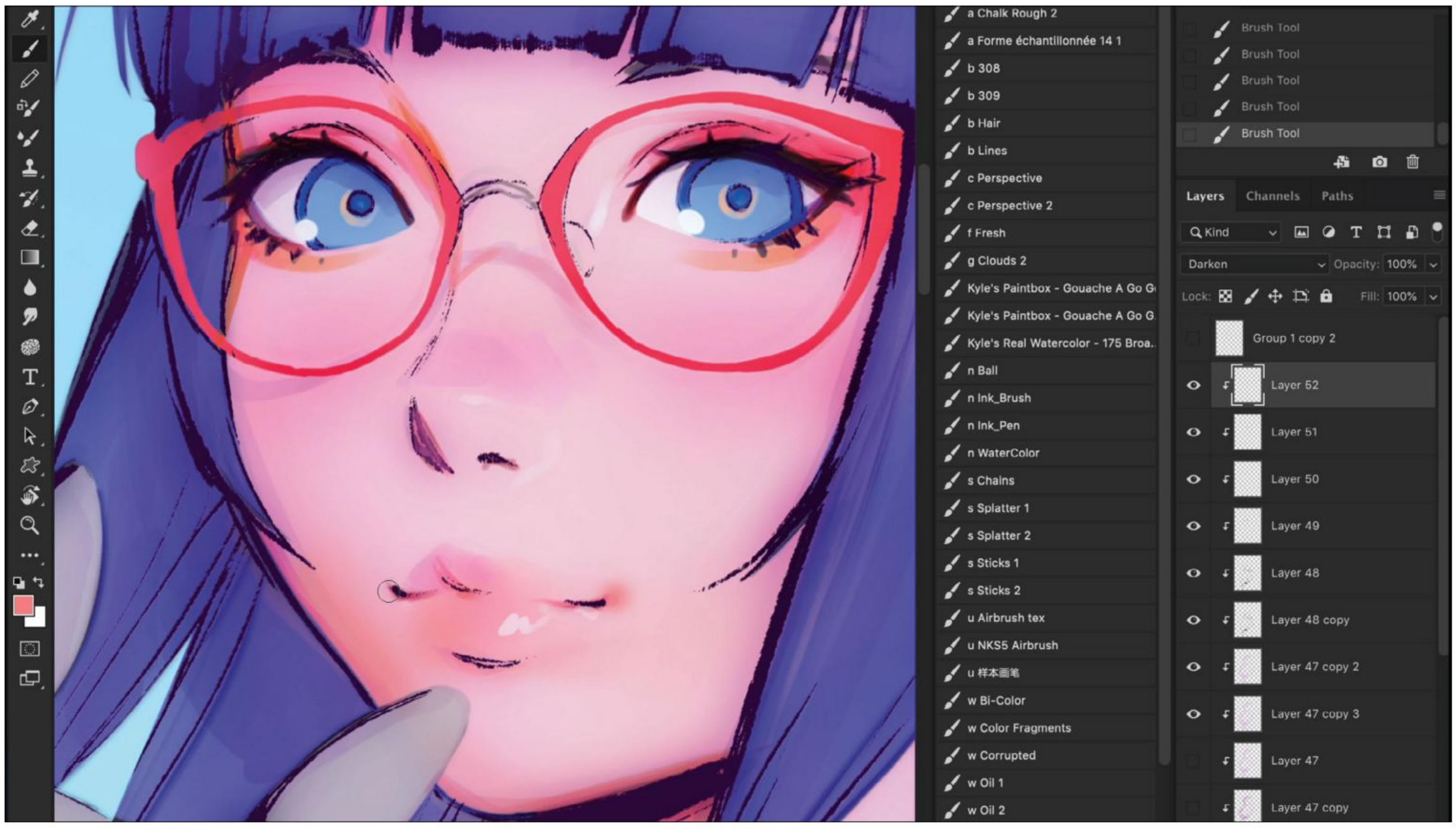
9 Generating a stronger sense of shadow bloom

I copy my new shadow layer, apply Gaussian Blur to it and change the layer blending mode to Color Burn. This generates more shadow bloom in the piece. I did the same with the initial line-art layers earlier, but the effects weren't as noticeable as they are here.



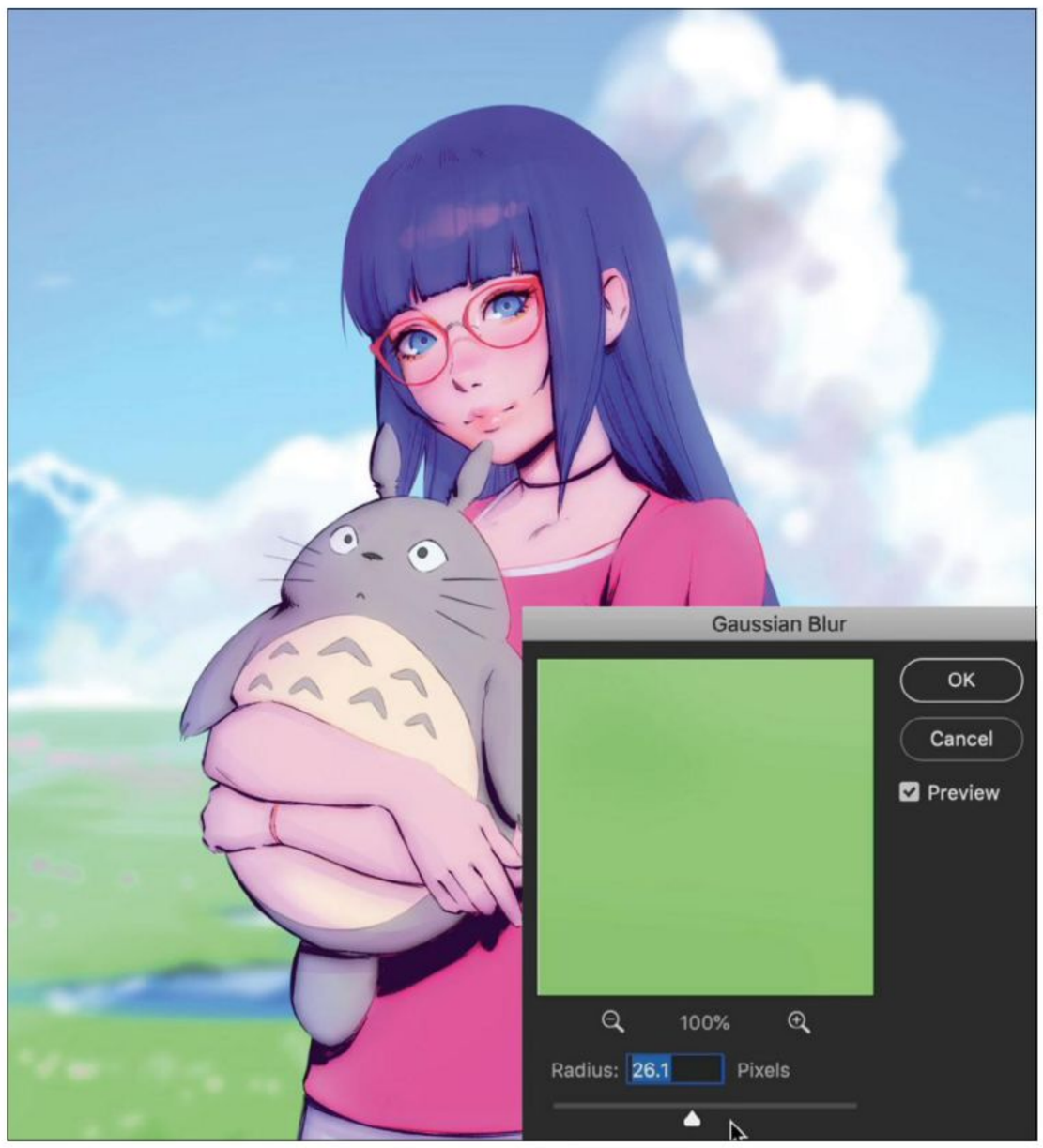
10 Use the Liquify tool to achieve the right shape of eyes

I use the Lasso tool to quickly select the eyes again, before cutting and pasting them onto a new layer. Then I use the Liquify tool to edit their shape until I'm happy with their appearance. I usually spend a lot of time fine-tuning the face on every portrait piece I paint.



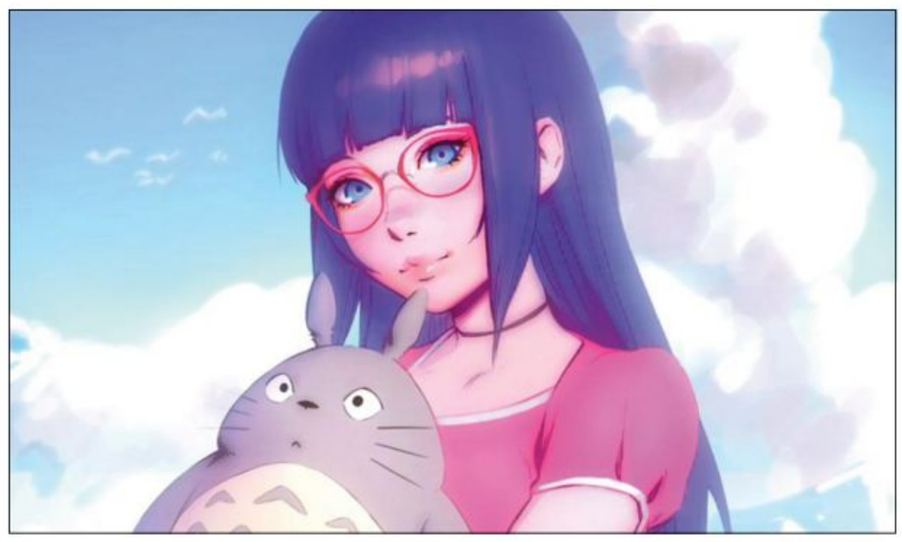
11 Bringing in more details using Lighten and Darken layers

During this stage I add details (mostly to the face) using a lot of Darken blending layers, rather than painting over the dark part of the piece. I also do the same with Lighten layers as well, which enables you to partially see the layers underneath. For me, this is the fun part of the process!



12 Paint and then enhance the background

I roughly paint in the background. I then copy it, blur it and change the blending mode of the blurred layer to Lighten, which generates a depth of field effect while keeping the details visible. I then create a Color Dodge layer and generate some hazy bloom effects with the Air Brush.



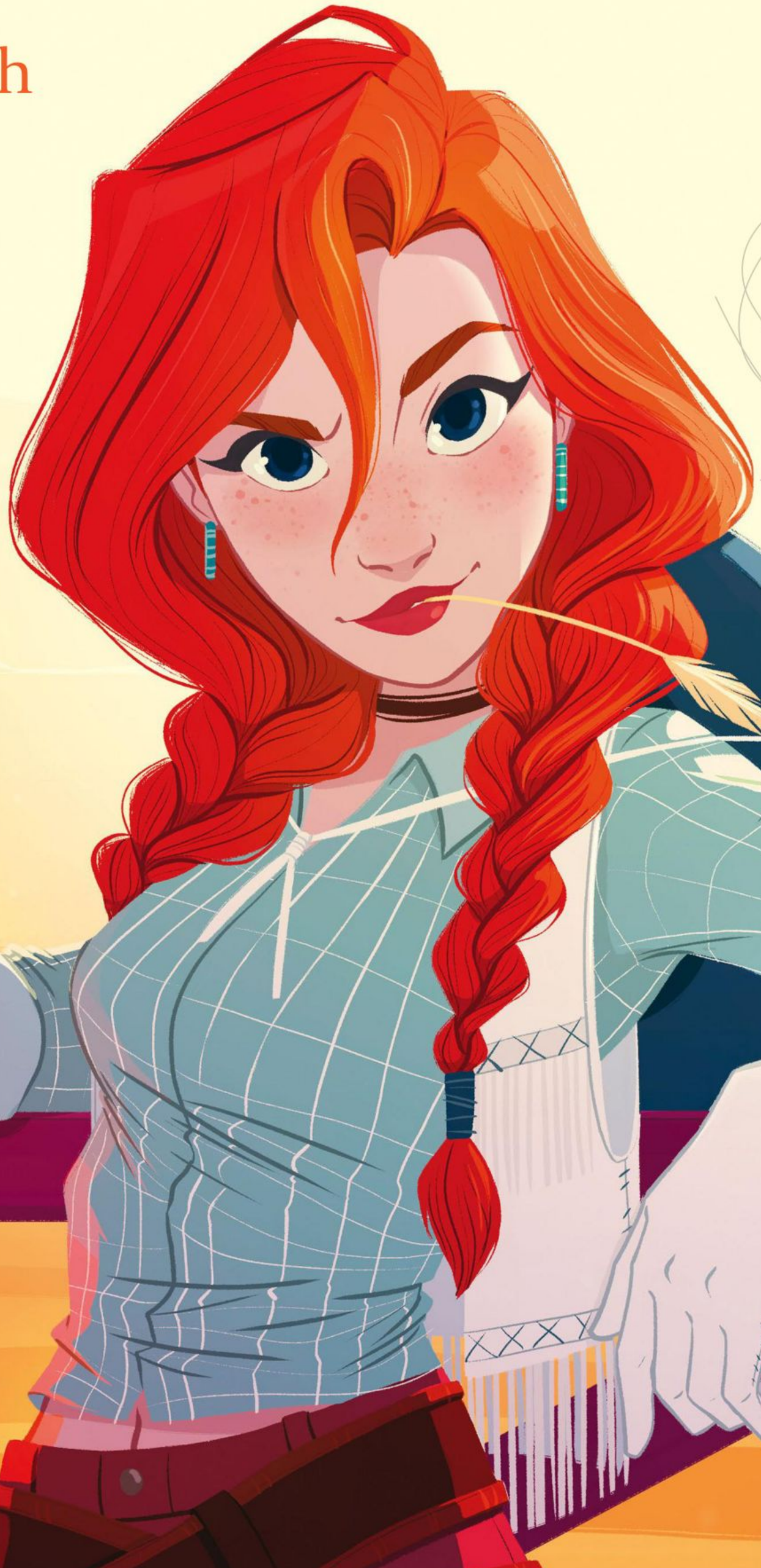
13 Pushing the bloom effect

To reduce the contrast of the ink shadows, I add more red with a Lighten layer. I now copy the whole character layer (clipping it to the main layer), blur it, Lighten it, and erase the parts where I want the details to be still visible. Some colour corrections with the Curves and Selective Color tools and I'm finished… or am I?

14 Spotting and fixing an error at the last minute

Soon after I start to write this workshop I notice one more mistake. The left part of Totoro's body is on top of the girl's left hand, which would be physically impossible. I need to fix this ASAP because I've already sent the ImagineFX team the final high-res file. Phew, that was too close for comfort!

Next month



Step inside Pernille Ørum's Kenyan art studio for Artist in Residence!

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

It's time for animation art!

We celebrate the very best artists working in animation – you won't want to miss it!

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How to plan out scenes with advice from story artist Mark Evan Lim.

Ty Carter interview
The artist at Blue Sky Studios talks about drawing for films and beyond.

Sketching for animation
Artist Prem Sai GS gives tips on adding gesture and movement.

Matte painting masterclass
Follow David Paget's step-by-step to creating this matte painting.

ISSUE 186 ON SALE IN THE UK *20 March 2020*

Artist Insight

15 TIPS ON PAINTING MANGA FACES

Collateral Damage Studios' **Zakary Lee** reveals his techniques for creating engaging manga characters, using a painting-based approach

Artist **PROFILE**

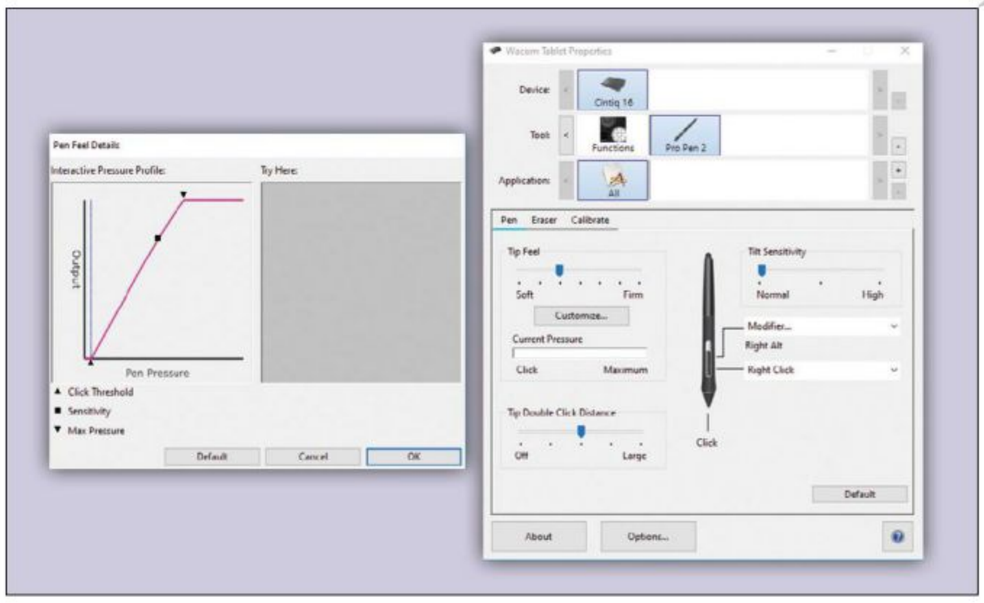
Zakary Lee
LOCATION: Singapore

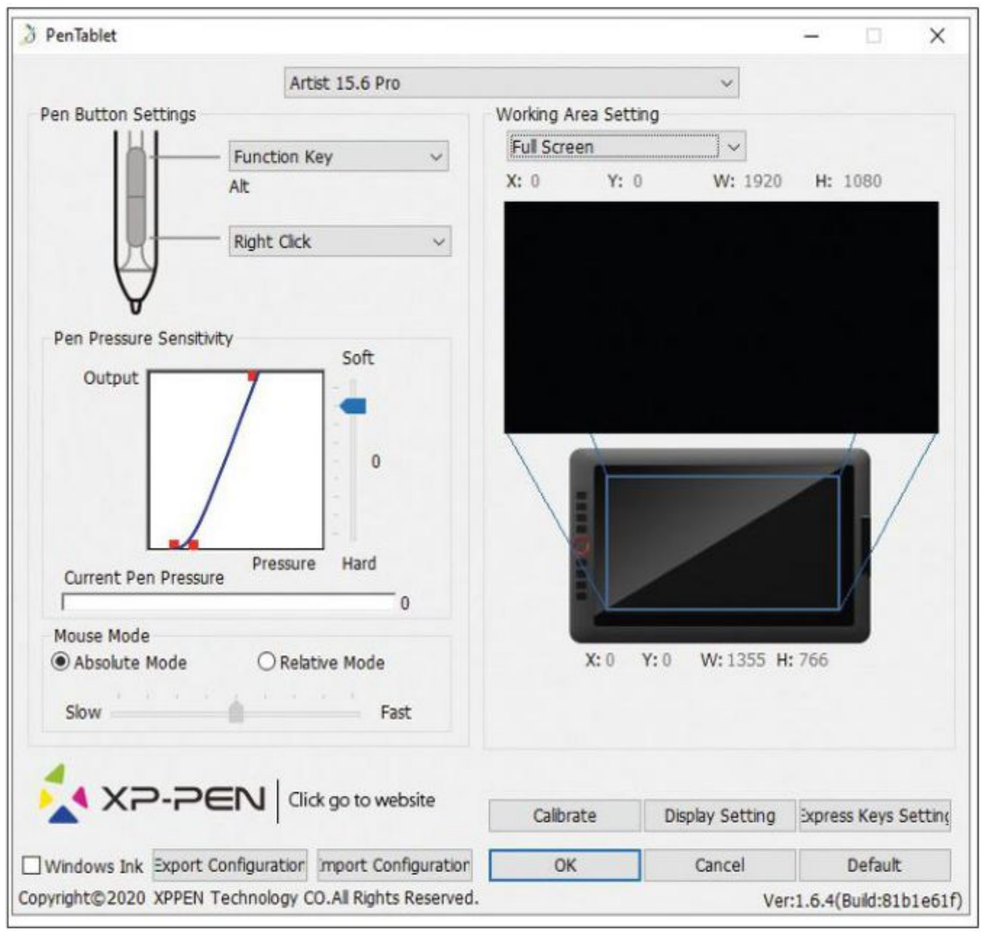
Zakary graduated from DigiPen Institute of Technology (Singapore) with a BA in digital art and animation. He now works at Collateral Damage Studios.
www.collateralds.com

I began my drawing career by learning how to draw manga. During this time I purchased many how-to guides for creating this distinctive art style, and discovered that the drawing methods were similar to those of western comic art. Essentially, you'd use a pencil to draw the head shape and then add lines to indicate the eye position and centre of the face. Once this construction sketch is complete the final line-art is created using ink.

I followed the same drawing method when I first explored digital art with a Wacom Graphire that a friend gave to me. Yet I couldn't get my hand-drawn line-art to look right and I had to use the Pen tool. The resulting line-art was clean, but it felt lifeless and lacked the energy that I would have wanted in the drawing.

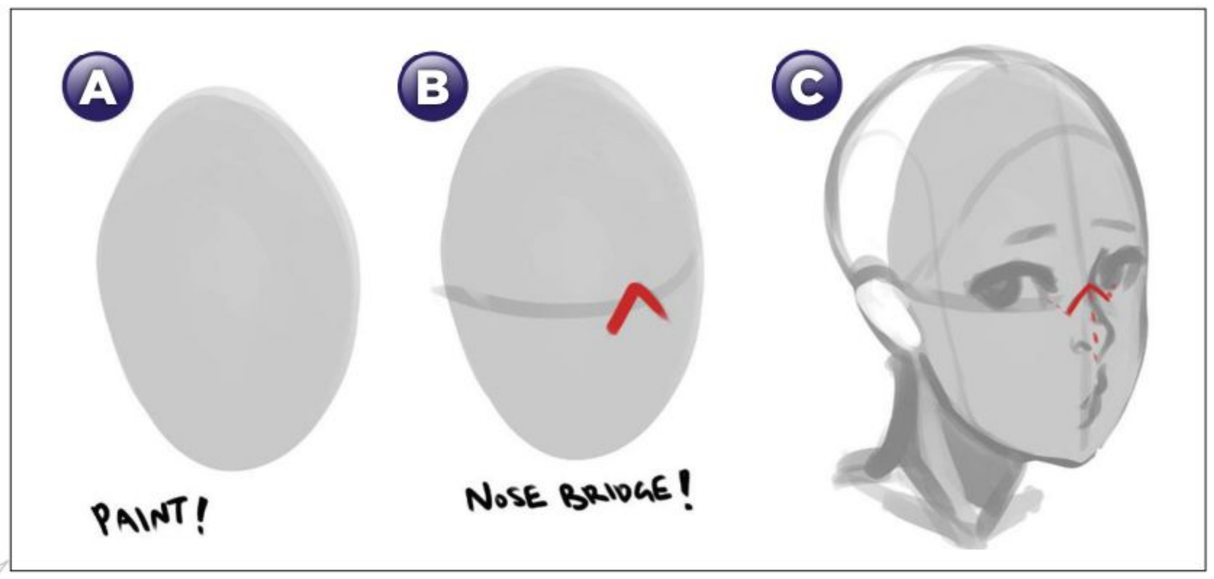
After years of practice I gradually changed my method of drawing characters. Instead of working from a sketch and then moving to line-art before adding colours, I paint in greyscale, then adjust values and apply colours until I'm happy with the drawing. So here are some of my tips for drawing manga faces digitally.





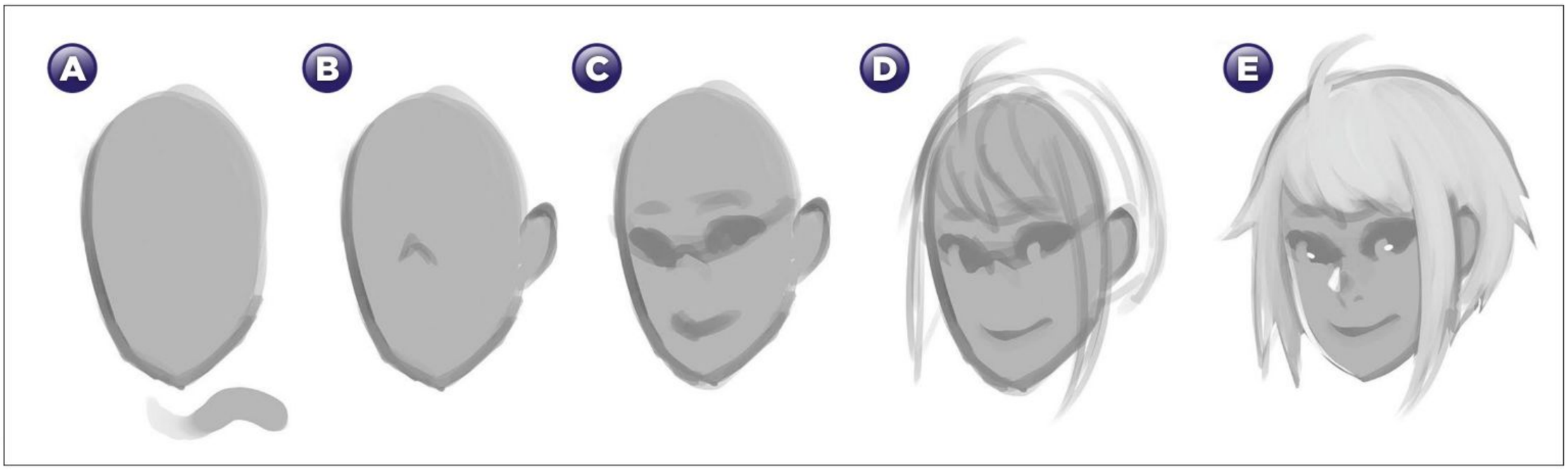
1 GET SET UP FOR DRAWING FACES

Spend a few minutes configuring your drawing tools before you get stuck into the creative process. For example, tablets have Pen Pressure set to maximum by default. You'll have to press down hard with the pen on the tablet's surface to hit maximum output. Drawing with the maximum Pressure and Threshold settings can result in wobbly lines. By adjusting my Pressure Threshold and reducing the maximum output Threshold to about 60 per cent of the Pressure, I can create steady lines without worrying about making my lines look consistent. For Wacom products, this setting is accessed through Wacom Tablet Properties, while for XP-PEN products access the PenWin/Mac driver.



2 USE AN ARROW TO PLACE KEY FACIAL FEATURES

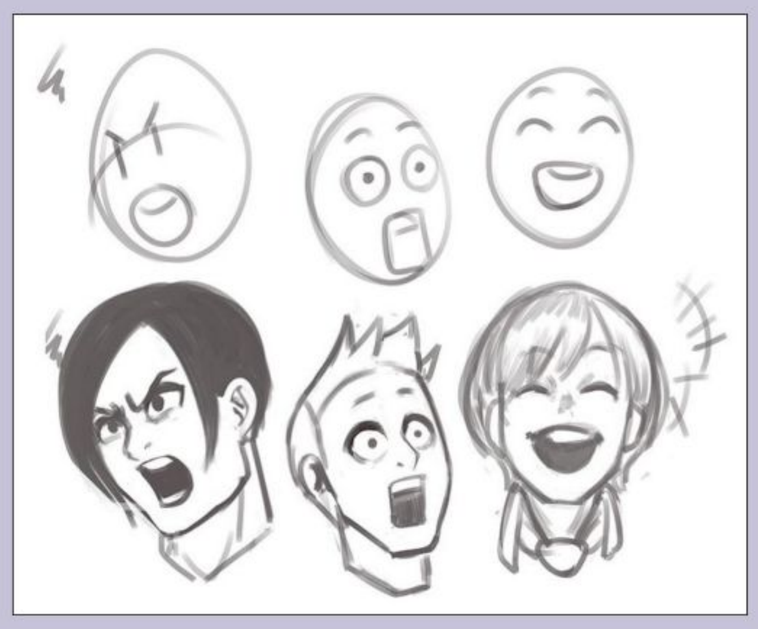
After blocking out the head (**A**) I decide which direction the character is facing. Treating the head as a 3D shape, I draw a horizontal line that curves along the surface. When I draw this line I bear in mind whether the head is tilted upwards or downwards, or facing left or right. To fix the direction of the head then I'll draw an upwards pointing arrow (**B**). This helps me locate where the nose bridge meets the root of the nose. Once this key location of the face has been identified, I can quickly paint and sketch in the centreline for the face, eyes, eyebrows, mouth and chin (**C**).



3 USE A PAINTING APPROACH WHEN SKETCHING HEADS

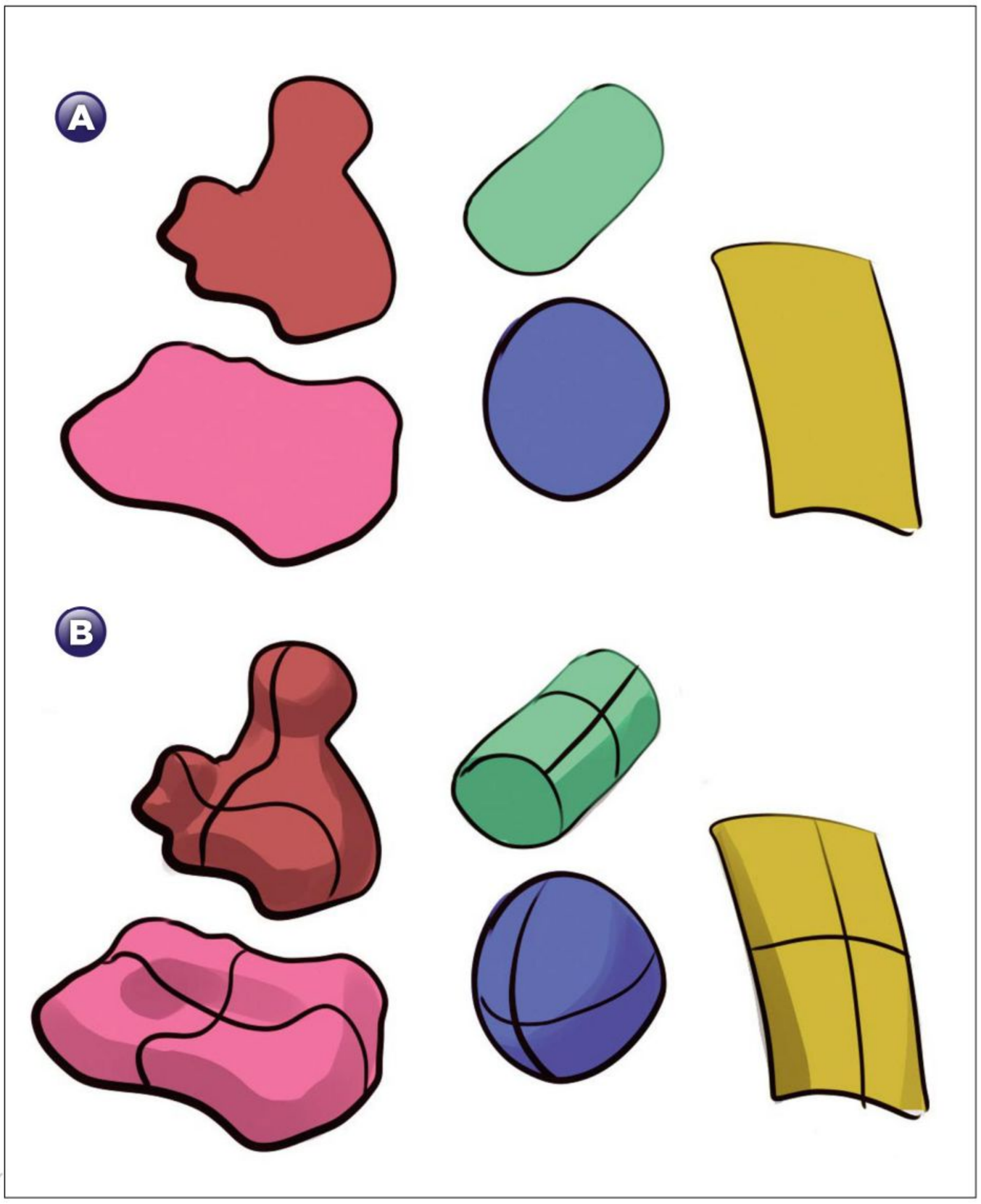
I paint my sketch instead of drawing them with fine lines (**A**). I use a big brush with about 60 to 80 per cent values to block in the head (**B**). Next, using a darker value, I'll outline the head and paint key features (**C**). I'll fine-tune the expression of the mouth and eyes by colour picking the grey tone and painting over the line (**D**). Finally, I'll refine the hair to get a sense of its shape, painting over lines to achieve the shape that I want (**E**).

> **"The key expressive features of the human face comprise the mouth, eyebrows and eyes"**



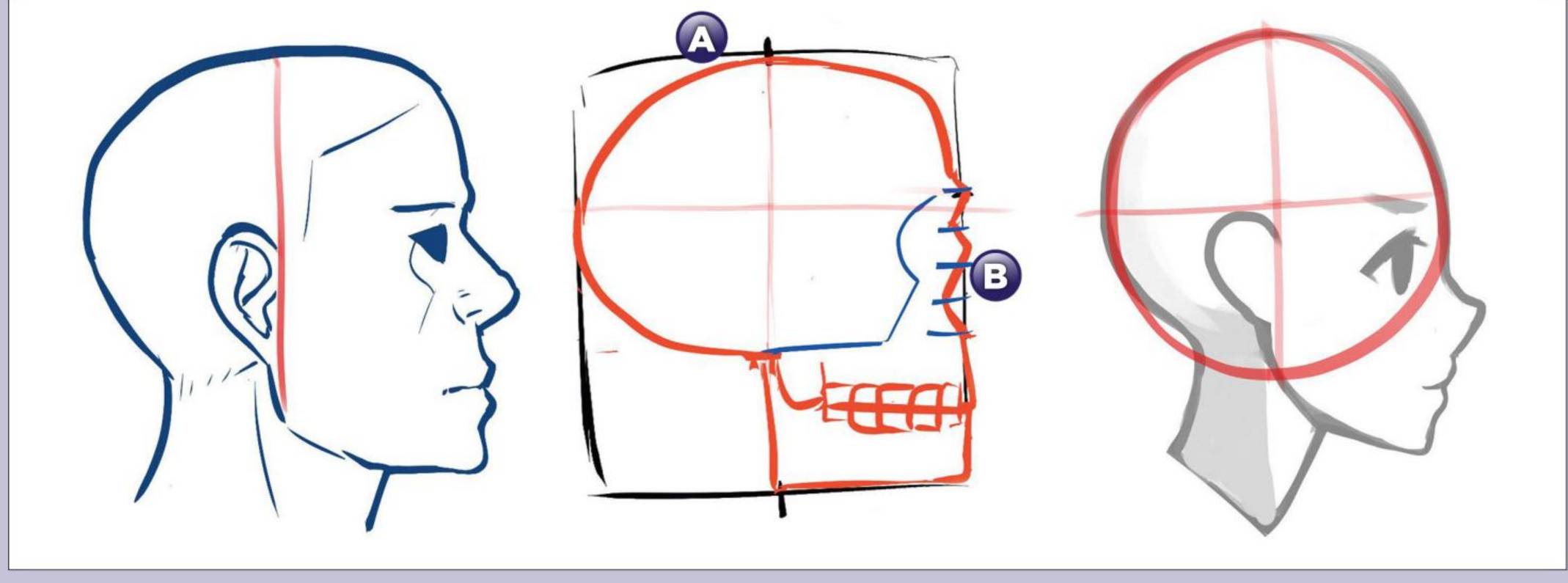
4 CAPTURE EXPRESSIONS IN CARTOON SKETCHES

The key expressive features of the human face comprise the mouth, eyebrows and eyes. When I draw a figure that has a particular emotion I'll first doodle a cartoon-like image of the expression that I have in mind. After this sketch is complete, I'll try to pick out certain facial aspects within the expression. Is the mouth open? Are the teeth clenched? What do the eyebrows look like in the simple expression? I'll take note of those features and keep them in mind while I draw a refined version of the character's design on top of the initial sketch.



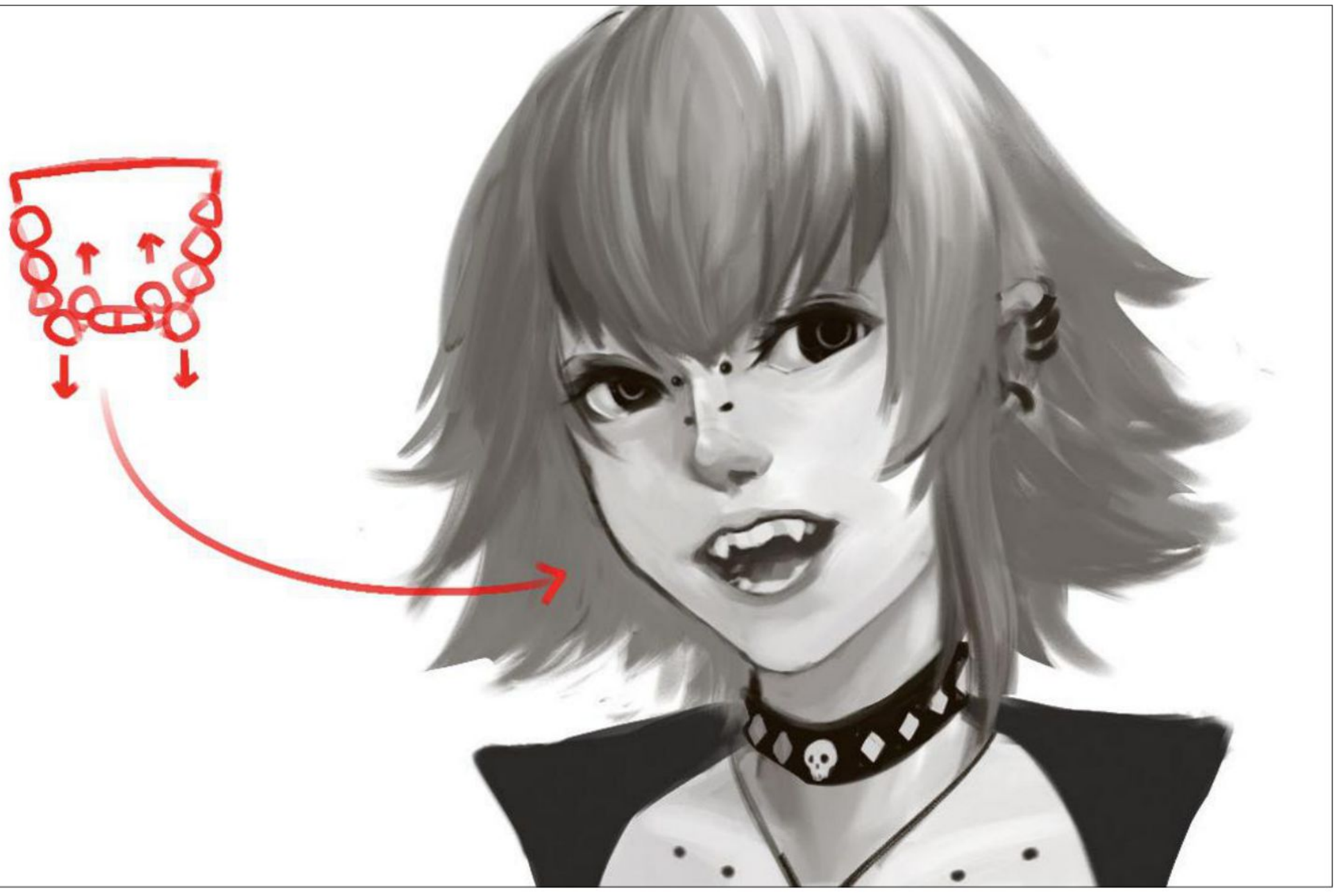
5 DRAWING FORMS AND DESIGNING WITH SHAPES

Here are a collection of shapes (**A**). Drawing a line across these shapes will give a sense of depth to the object, turning it into a 3D form (**B**). After sketching the shape design, I think of them as forms so that I can shade accordingly to the direction of light in the composition. This is good practice when drawing different-shaped heads.



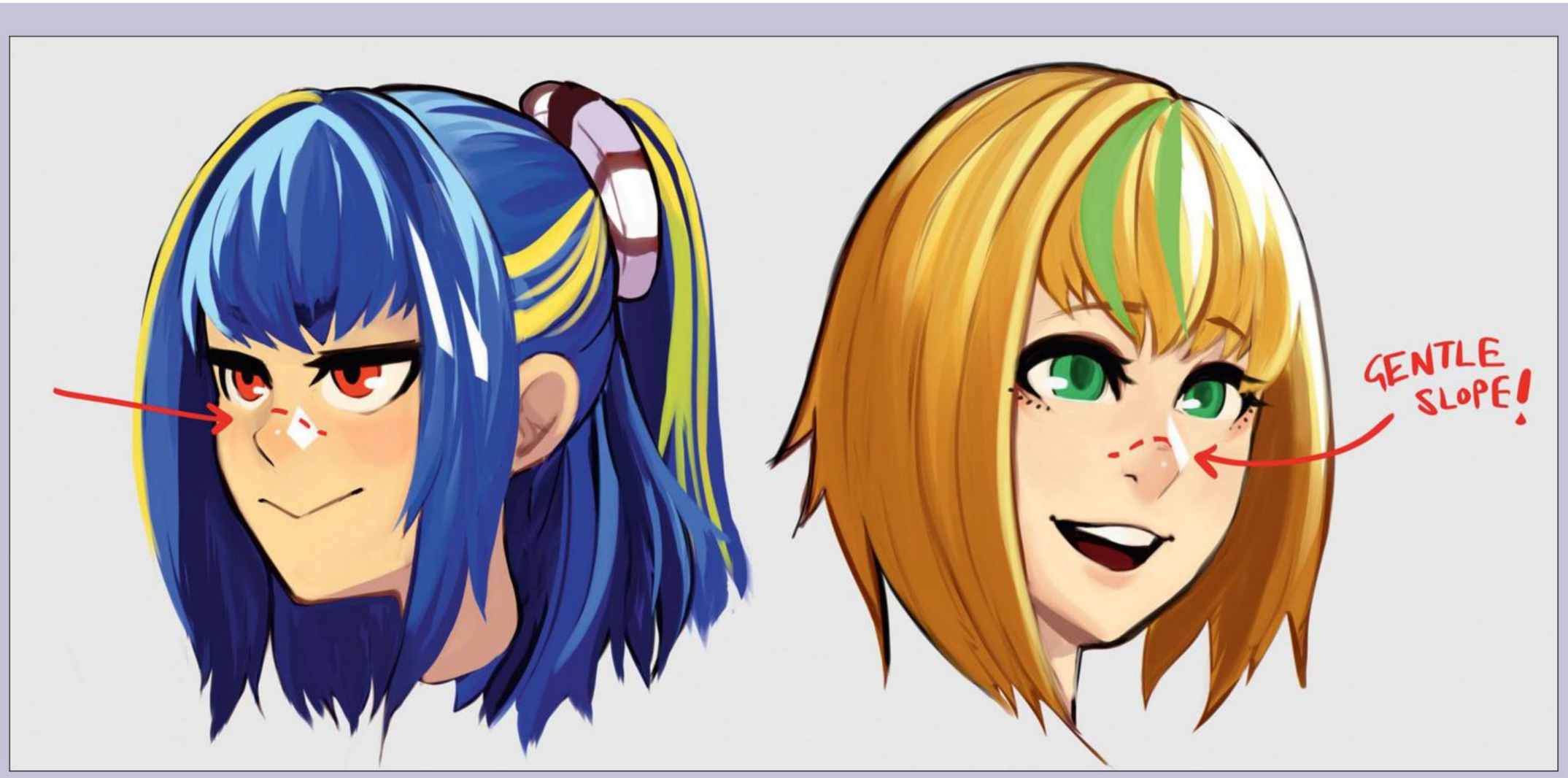
6 HEAD MEASUREMENTS

Manga characters tend to have exaggerated features such as big eyes and tiny noses, but I feel that the profile of the skull should still be consistent with the measurements of the human skull. Above is a simplified drawing of a skull, with the braincase (**A**) and the facial bones (**B**) in proportion with each other. Compare this to a more 'manga' head and you can see that the proportions are pretty similar. The ears still sit on the vertical half of the braincase, while the brow line lies on the horizontal half of the braincase.

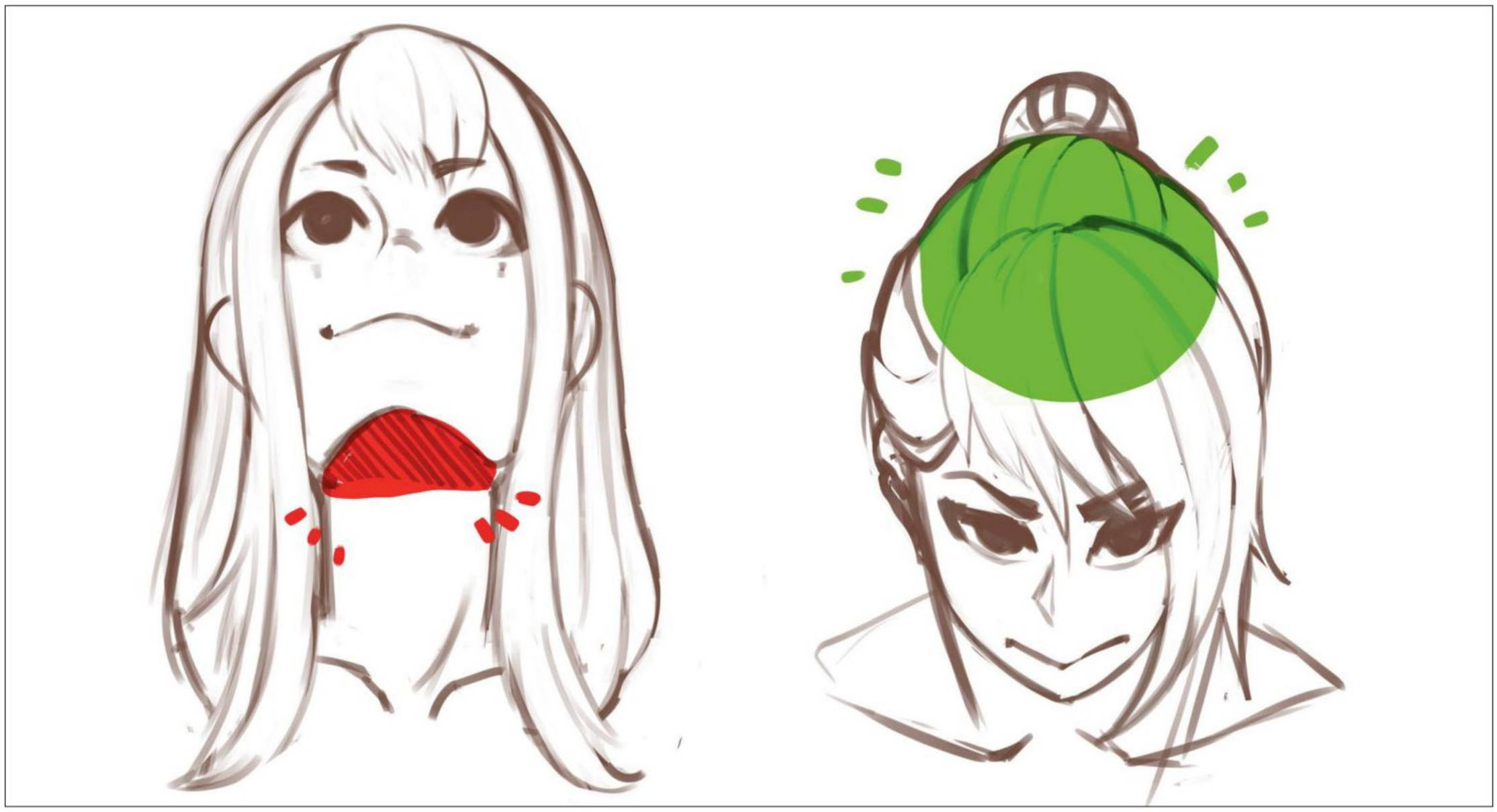


7 TEETH DON'T NEED TO BE PERFECT

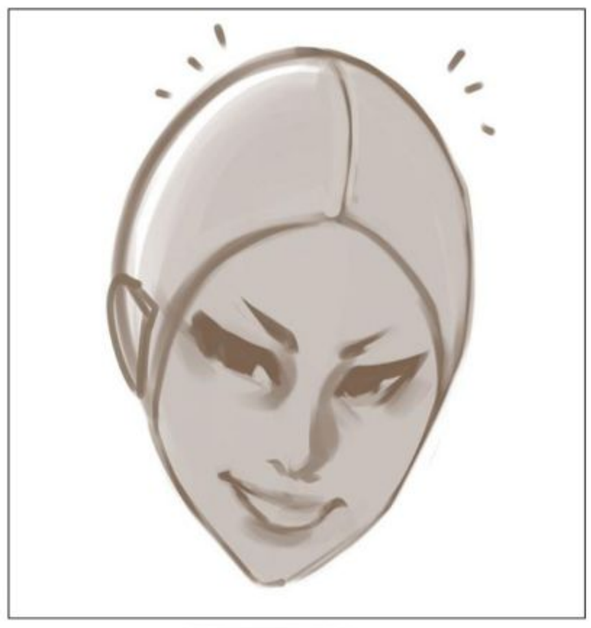
Teeth are one of the things that I really like to draw, and I don't usually draw perfectly straight teeth. Some manga or anime characters have "cute little fangs" that give them a sense of unconventional cuteness. I incorporate this look into some of my characters, although I'll mix things up by painting crooked teeth, some teeth that are pushed to the back and canine teeth that are pushed to the front. ➳



8 USE LIGHT OR SHADOW TO INDICATE THE NOSE BRIDGE INSTEAD OF A LINE
The nose bridge area of the face is actually a slope, and the protrusion would be less pronounced on a manga-styled character. Instead of drawing a hard line to indicate the nose bridge, I use the shadow or highlights with a sharp edge alongside the nose, which highlights the form of the nose bridge.

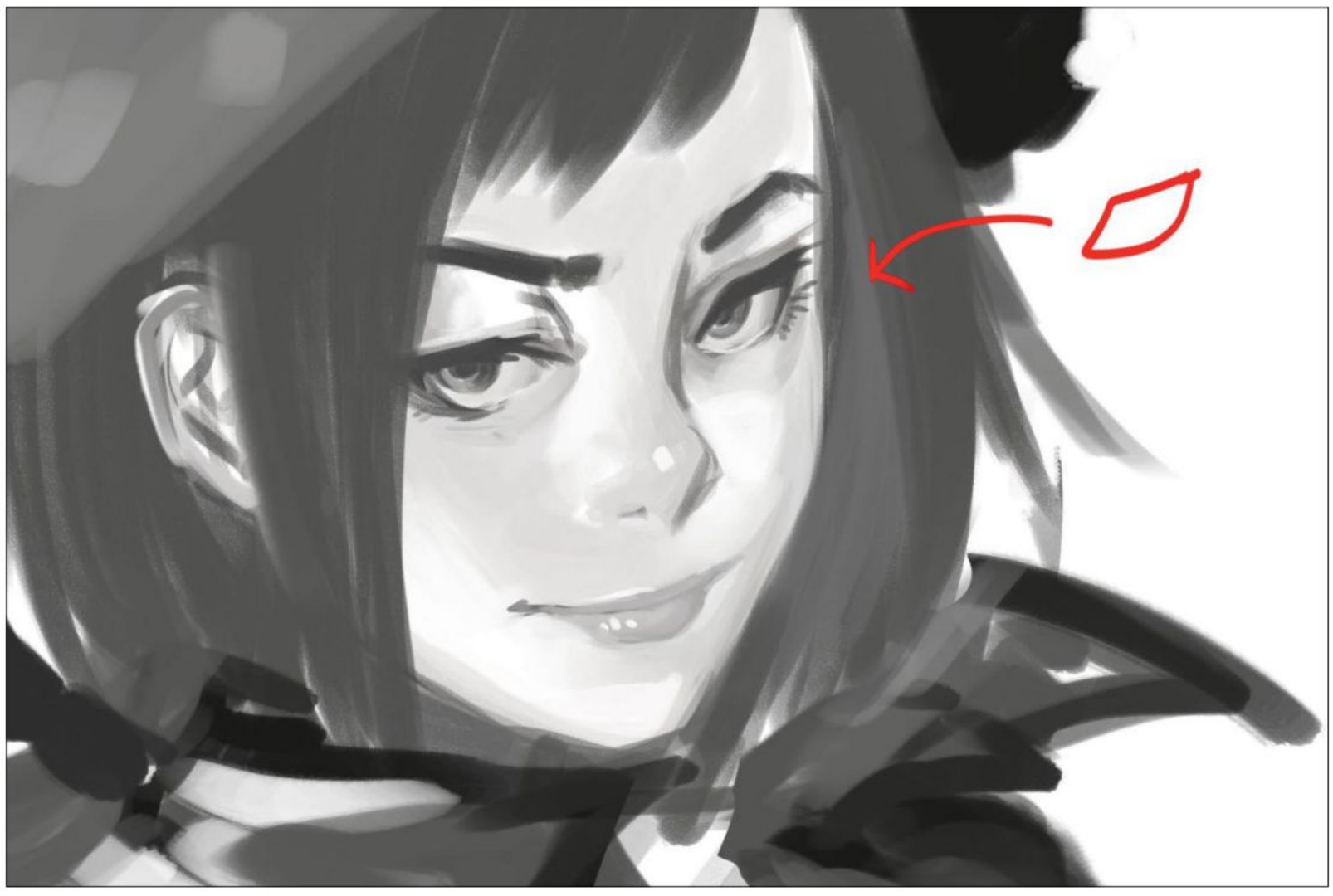


9 HOW TO DRAW FRONTAL HEAD TILTS
Try visualising the head tilt from the profile view. Using a circle and a box, I can visualise what the head tilt will look like from the side. I draw vertical lines extending from key features such as the chin, centre of the braincase, ears and the top of the head. This enables me to see what I'll need to paint when attempting to draw the head from the front. Above are examples of a manga character's head tilted up and down. Remember to draw the underside of the jaw when drawing a tilted-up head, and the crown when drawing a head that's tilted down.



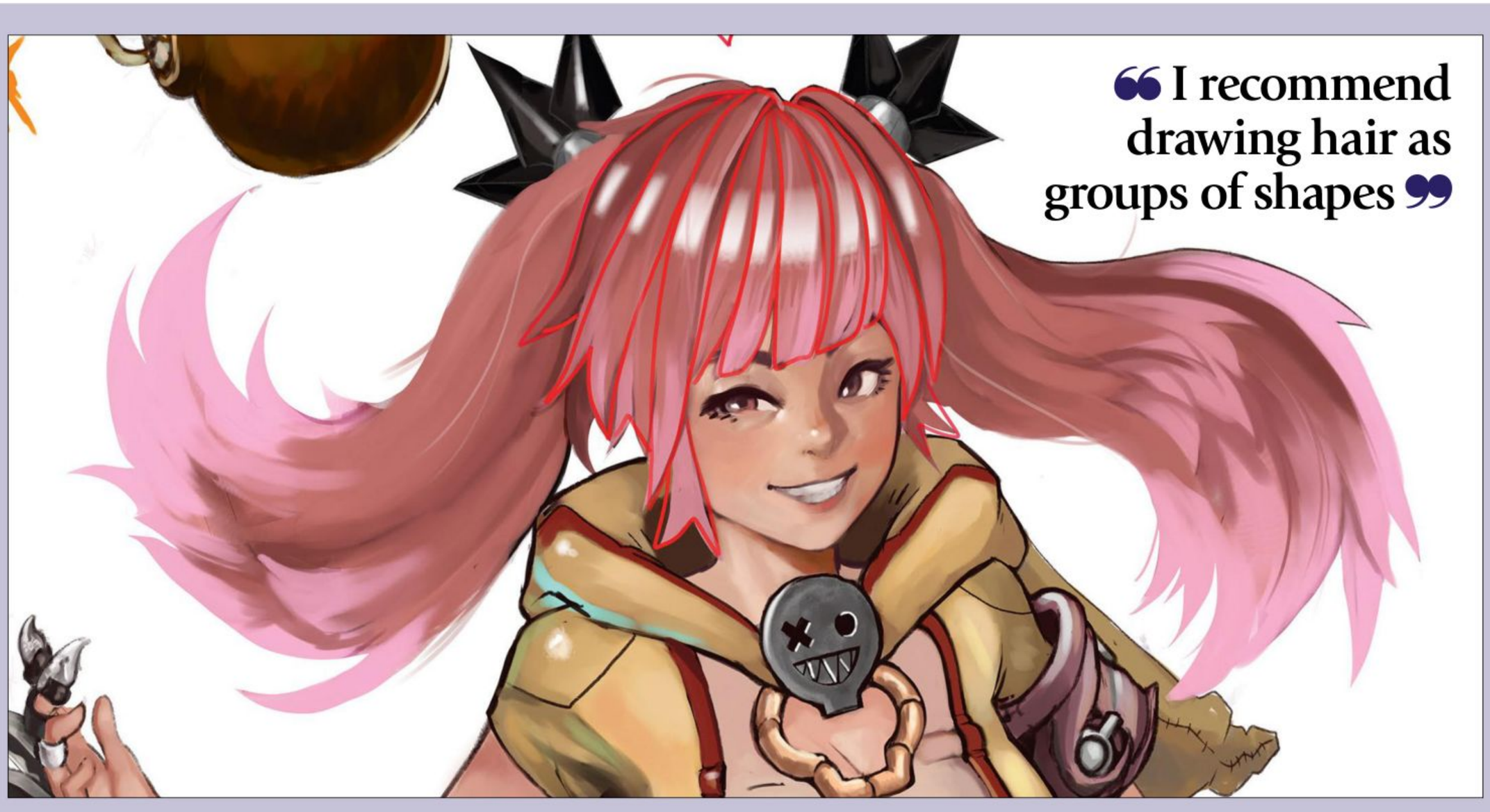
10 USE A SWIMMING CAP FOR HEAD ANGLES

Drawing a swimming cap can help you to determine the angle of the head. Visualise a swimming cap with a seam in the middle and put that on your character. By covering all your character's hair and ears, you can now focus on drawing the facial features. Furthermore, you can use the cap's edge as the hairline, and because swimming caps cover the ears, I can draw the ears behind this edge with confidence, thus placing them in the right position.



11 KEEP THE DRAWING OF THE EYES SIMPLE

The curvature of the eyeball makes it complicated to draw at an angle and symmetrically, so keeping it simple will improve your skill at drawing realistic eyes quickly and relatively easily. Furthermore, take note of the shape of your character's eyes. Does the eye have an inward or downward tilt? Is the iris normally small or large? These will help you sketch your character's eyes at more complex angles.



> "I recommend drawing hair as groups of shapes"

12 DRAW HAIR IN CLUMPS

You don't have to draw every single strand of hair. Instead, I recommend drawing hair as groups of shapes. Start with big shapes such as the whole fringe, back of the head and any ponytails or pigtails that the character might have. Break those big shapes down into medium-sized shapes and then into smaller clumps of hair. You can then add single strands of hair afterwards for added detail. ➳

13 TECHNIQUES FOR PAINTING EYES

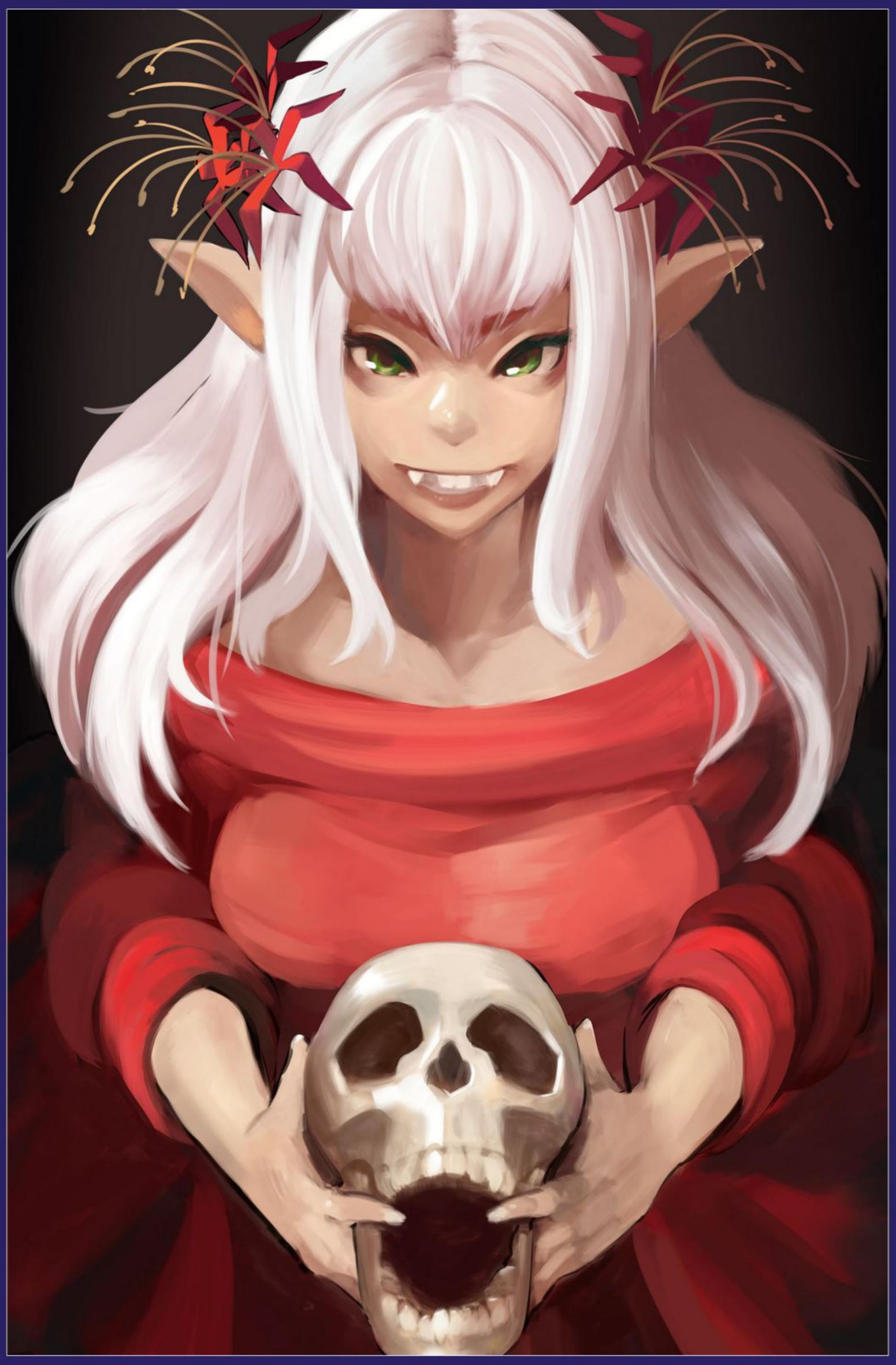
Discover how to ensure your characters' eyes are, well, eye-catching!

A Start with a flat colour for the iris

When sketching and drawing the eyes, paint the whole iris as a flat colour. It can be the same colour as your sketch brush. Painting the whole iris during the sketch phase will help make the sizes of both irises consistent with each other. It also makes it easier to compare and check whether both irises are the same size or not.

B Use the eyes to explain the lighting

During the painting process, I'll spend a little time rendering the upper and lower eyelids. Because the eye socket is concave in shape and the light source is coming from an upwards direction, I paint the upper eyelids in a dark value and the lower eyelids in a lighter value.

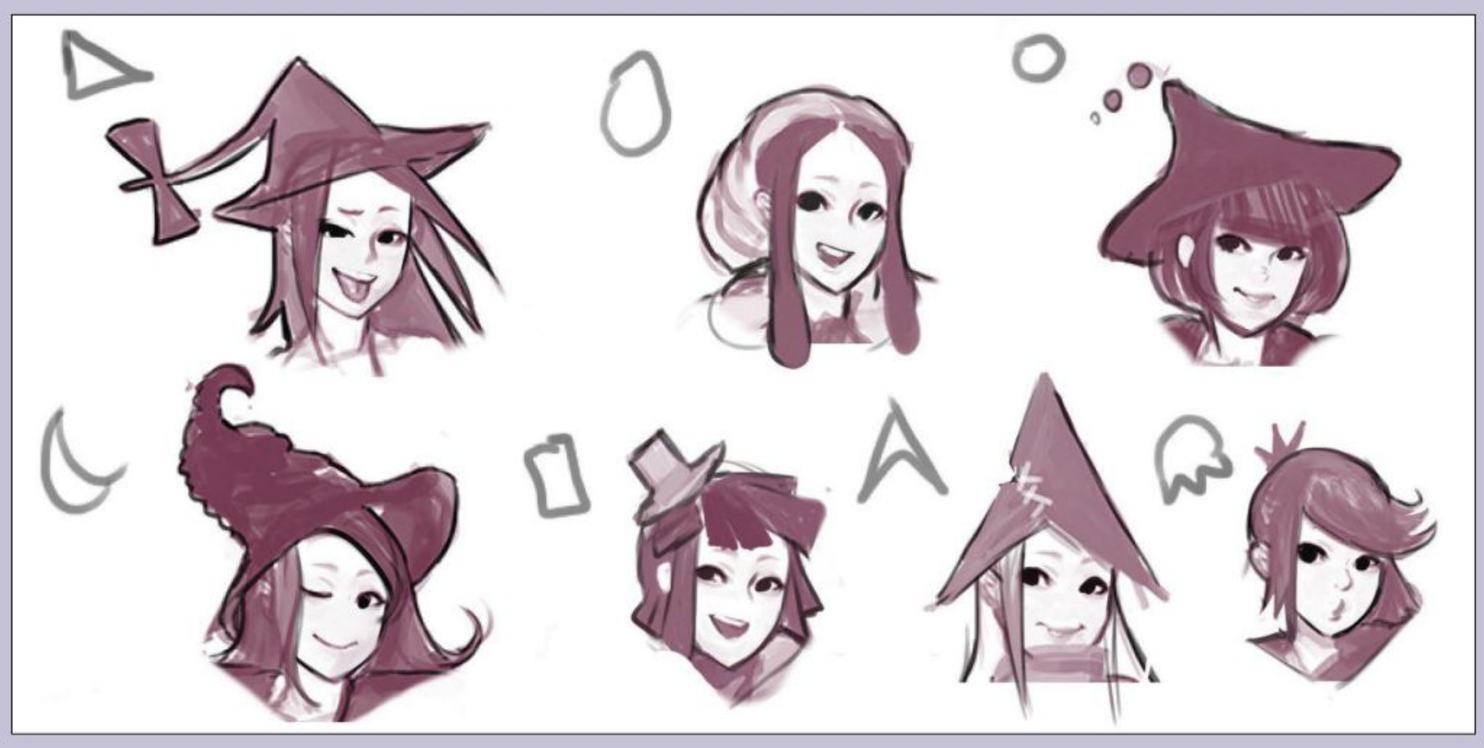


C Pick an iris colour that's based on the rest of the composition

Finally, I return to detailing the iris. I'll take a look at the overall picture and colours that I've used and then decide what colour the iris of the character should be. Because the painting features predominantly red colours, I decide to go with a green colour for the eyes. I also save my white value for the very end, applying a little highlight to the eyes.

14 USE SHAPES IN YOUR CHARACTER DESIGNS

Whenever I've run into a brick wall when attempting to design an original outfit for a character, my solution is to duplicate a character's head a few times and then doodle whatever shape that comes to my mind alongside each one. So I'll focus on a single shape – a crescent or triangle, say – and then design a costume which resembles that shape. This method works with hairstyles, too.



15 TRY DIFFERENT METHODS TO SUIT YOUR ART

Above is a method of constructing the head with a rounded-edge box instead of the traditional egg shape (**A**) – (**I**). I also use the same method to draw three fantasy characters. I skew and manipulate the human skull proportions to fit fantastical characters. Make the eyes smaller, the jaw bigger, or even enlarge the nose. You can use different construction methods to either draw people in a similar style or draw different styled characters, all using the same construction method. It's all about finding the form of the subject that you're drawing. There are many methods of constructing heads, I would suggest testing and trying every one of them that you can find out there! Find a method that suits your art, or develop one for yourself.

Core Skills: Part 4

SPICE UP YOUR ART IN FLAME PAINTER

In this fourth instalment of his Flame Painter series, **Harvey Bunda** shows you how to make your artworks pop with its particle brushes

Artist **PROFILE**

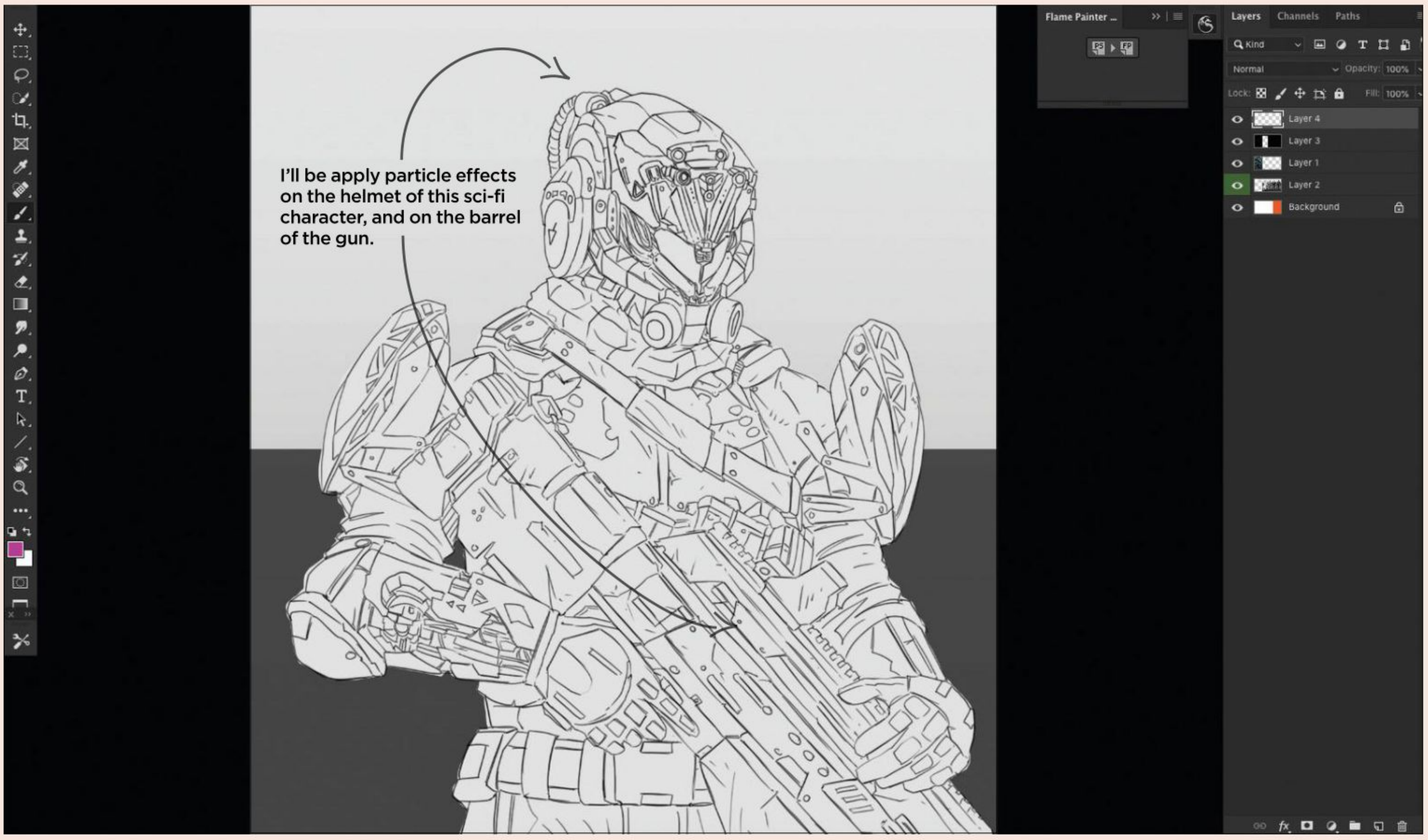
Harvey Bunda
LOCATION: Philippines

Harvey is Gunship Revolution's creative director and co-founder. He's produced artworks for Marvel, Hasbro, Mattel, Lucasfilm and Wizards Of The Coast.
www.harveybunda.com

In the previous issue I covered the various particle brushes on offer in Flame Painter. This month's instalment will take you through the stages of spicing up your artwork using a handful of these versatile brushes. I'll be explaining how you can properly execute an effect and blending options, which you can use on elements in your fantasy and sci-fi compositions, to make them pop.

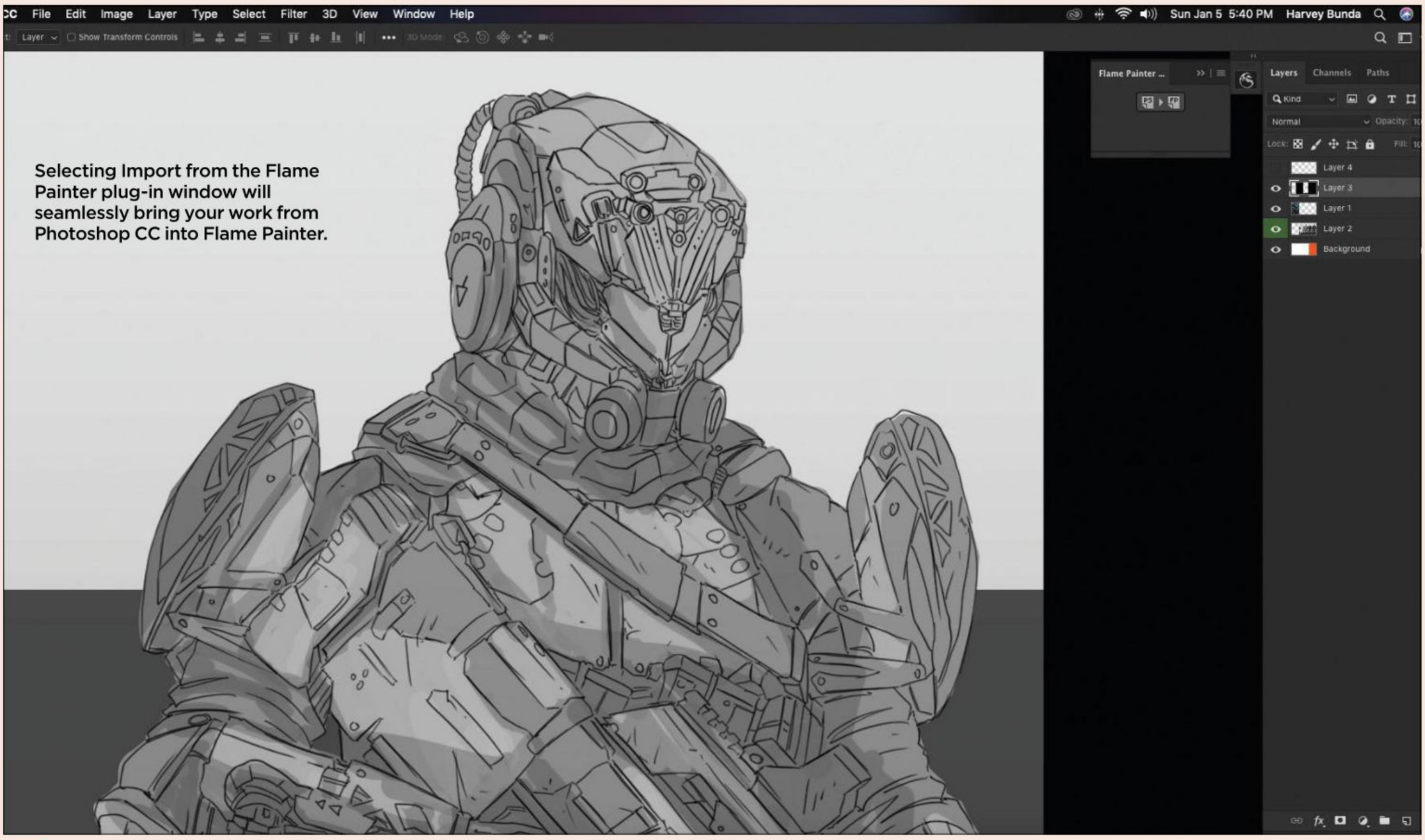
Flame Painter is a standalone paint and particle effects package that makes it possible for you to create original artworks, light effects or unconventional designs. I see it as a great source of inspiration for artists because it broadens the possibilities of digital painting and enhances designs with captivating, life-like organic brushes. With only a few clicks you can generate a cloudy sky, campfire, forest, snow, rain, various plants and much more. There's also a variety of lighting and optical effects that you can take advantage of, enabling you to change the atmosphere of your artworks.

In part two of this series I touched on how you can use Flame Painter with Photoshop CC. I'll be going into more detail on this feature here, explaining how the Flame Painter Connect plug-in enables you to transfer layered artwork between the two programs, so you can make use of all those wonderful particle effects.



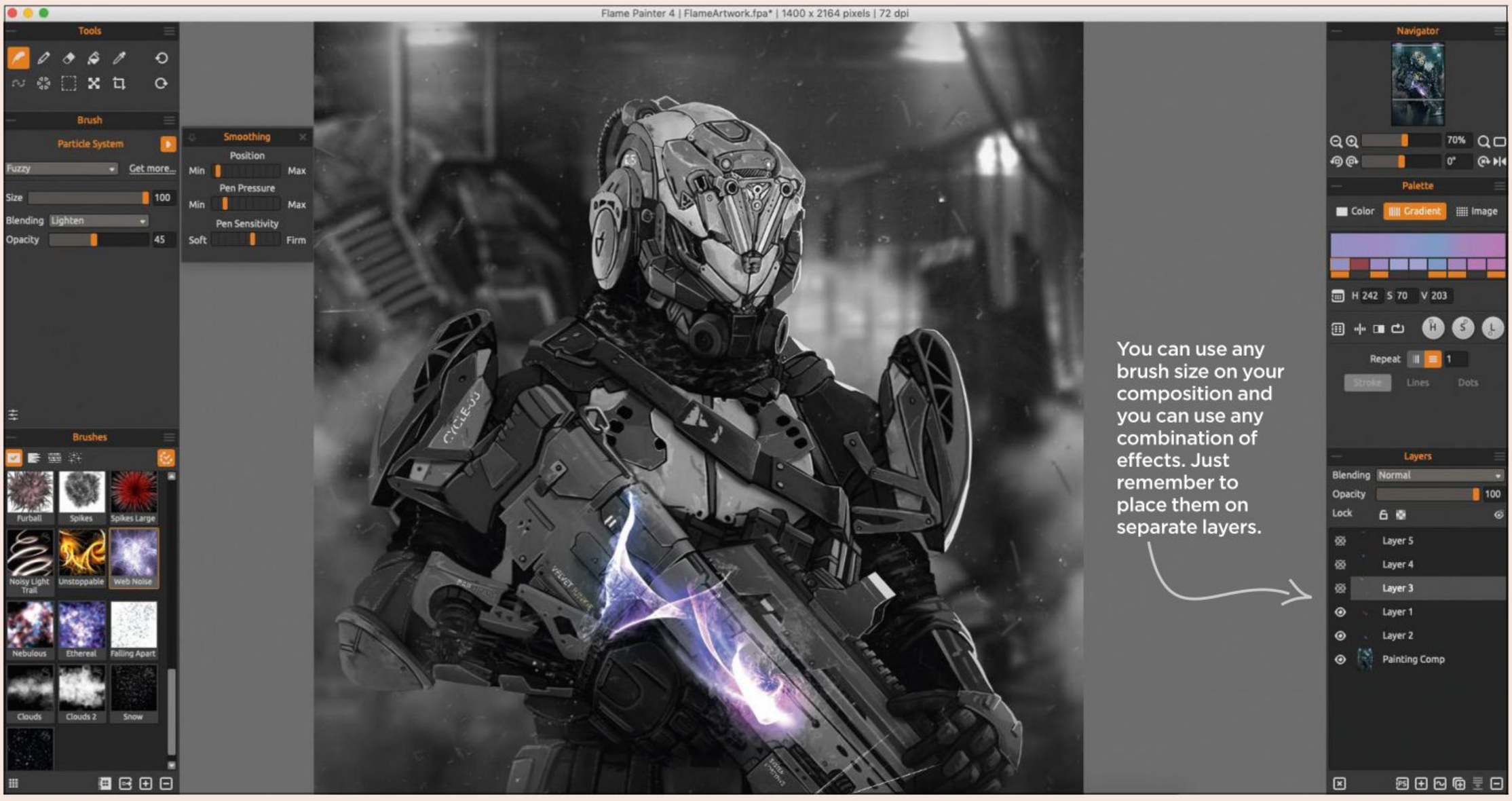
1 Decide on the location of the particle effects

Choosing where you want the effects to appear is a crucial part of the creative process. The last thing you want to do is to smother your work with visually complex effects. You could end up distracting from the image's focal point and confusing the viewer. ➳



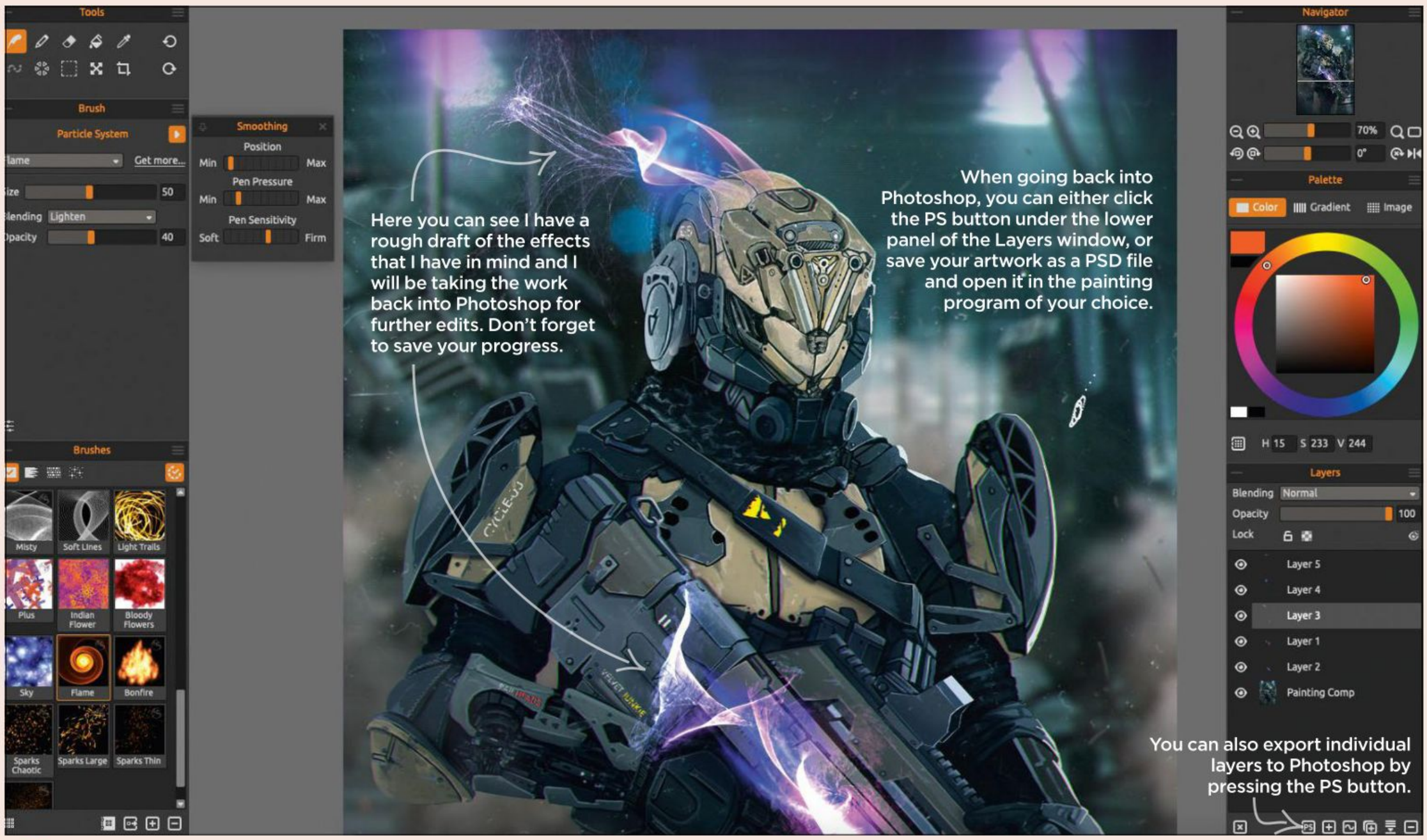
2 Transferring your work from Photoshop to Flame Painter

The supplementary Photoshop plug-in Flame Painter Connect enables you to transfer your art from Photoshop to Flame Painter, and vice versa. You can also open the file directly in Flame Painter if you're not working in Photoshop, because it's compatible with a range of file formats.



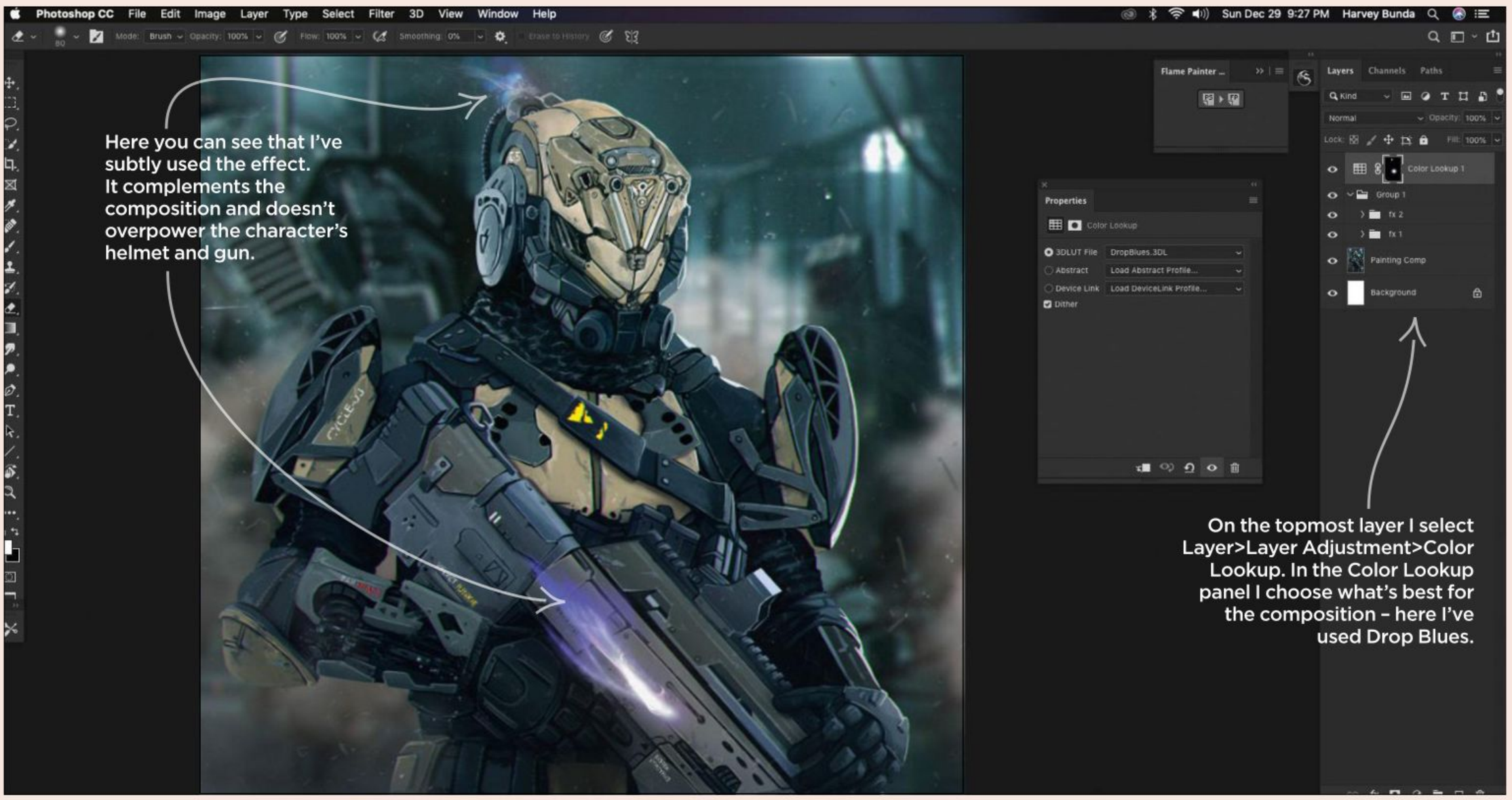
3 Painting with effects in Flame Painter

During this stage I'm using the Flame Particle system and Sirius brush on layer two as my base effect and on layer one I'm using the Fuzzy Particle system and Fractown 2 as my secondary effect. I like to combine various effects to create funky-looking particles.



4 Adding more effects to the composition

I apply another particle effect, this time using the Web Noise effect on layer three, while on layer four I use the Follow Particle system with the Glisten effect. Then on top I apply the original Flame brush effect, before editing the results and erasing unwanted parts of the stroke.



5 Finishing the painting in Photoshop

At this stage I work in Photoshop, blending all the effects into one cohesive particle using the Transform Warp tool. I put the layers on Light or Screen mode (this will depend on your composition's lighting). I also separate the effects into standalone layer folders.

Clip Studio Paint

NEW RENDERING TECHNIQUES

kiDChan uses a range of Clip Studio Paint's layer modes and her favourite Rainbow brush to give her illustration a melancholy feel

Artist **PROFILE**

kiDChan
LOCATION: Malaysia

kiDChan is a freelance artist whose clients include Clip Studio Paint, Samsung, Appxplore and Image Comics. She loves cakes, tea and drawing.
https://ifxm.ag/kidchan

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 8 now!

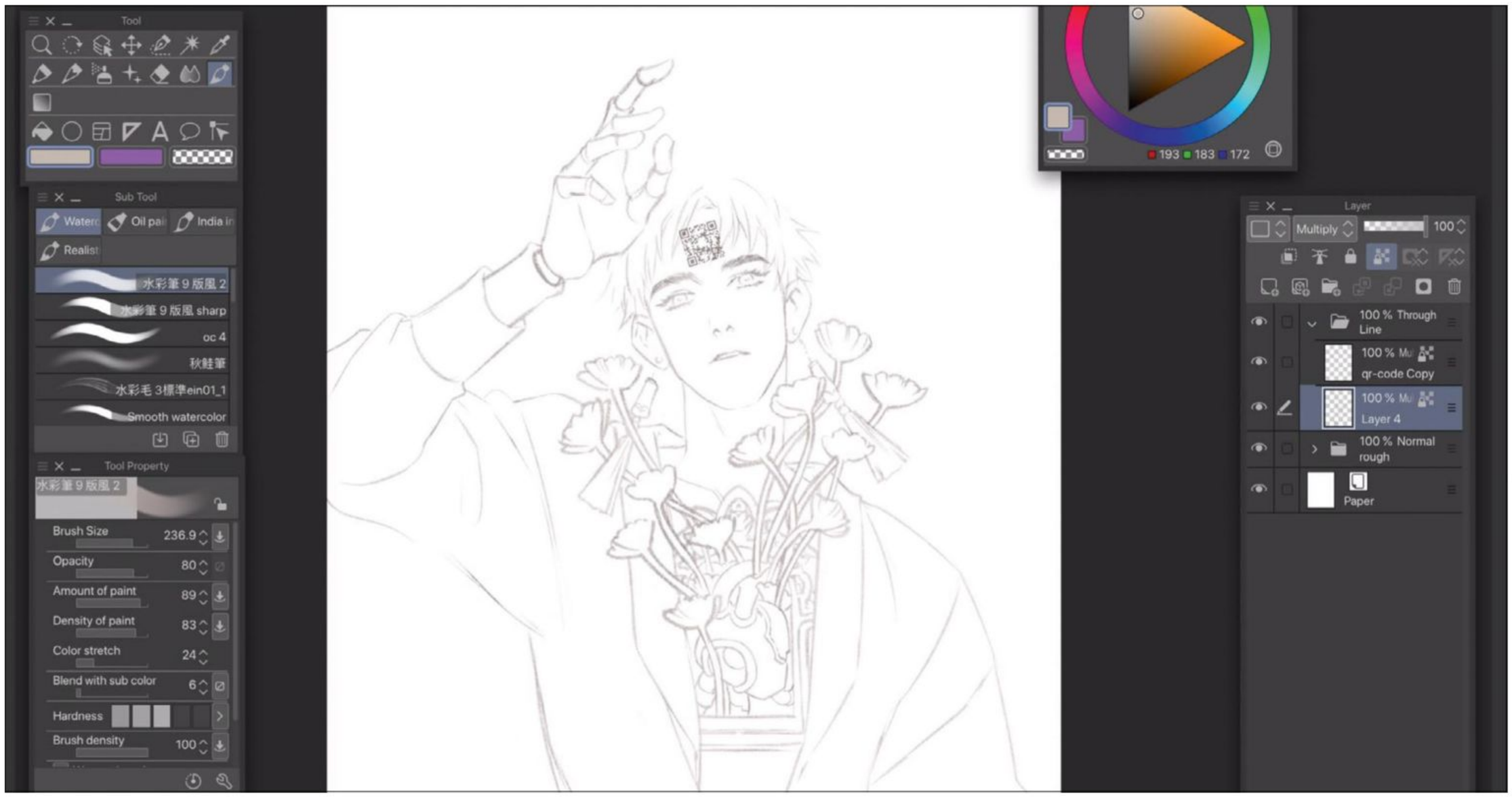
My love for illustration began when I attended a local art college. It was here that I had the chance to study and explore different artists and their painting styles.

At that time I loved Japanese comics and animation (and I still do to this day). A design lecturer told me that I should combine what I love to create my own painting style, and that's how I started to produce illustrations that were a mix of Japanese pop art and classical techniques, such as those used by Alphonse Mucha, Aubrey Beardsley and JC Leyendecker.

In this workshop I'll be explaining how I create an illustration with Clip Studio Paint and with my favourite brush, a rainbow! A long time ago I wanted to paint an illustration of a character floating on water, but I just couldn't find enough spare time to sit down and create the artwork. Now, thanks to ImagineFX, I have the opportunity to visualise my idea.

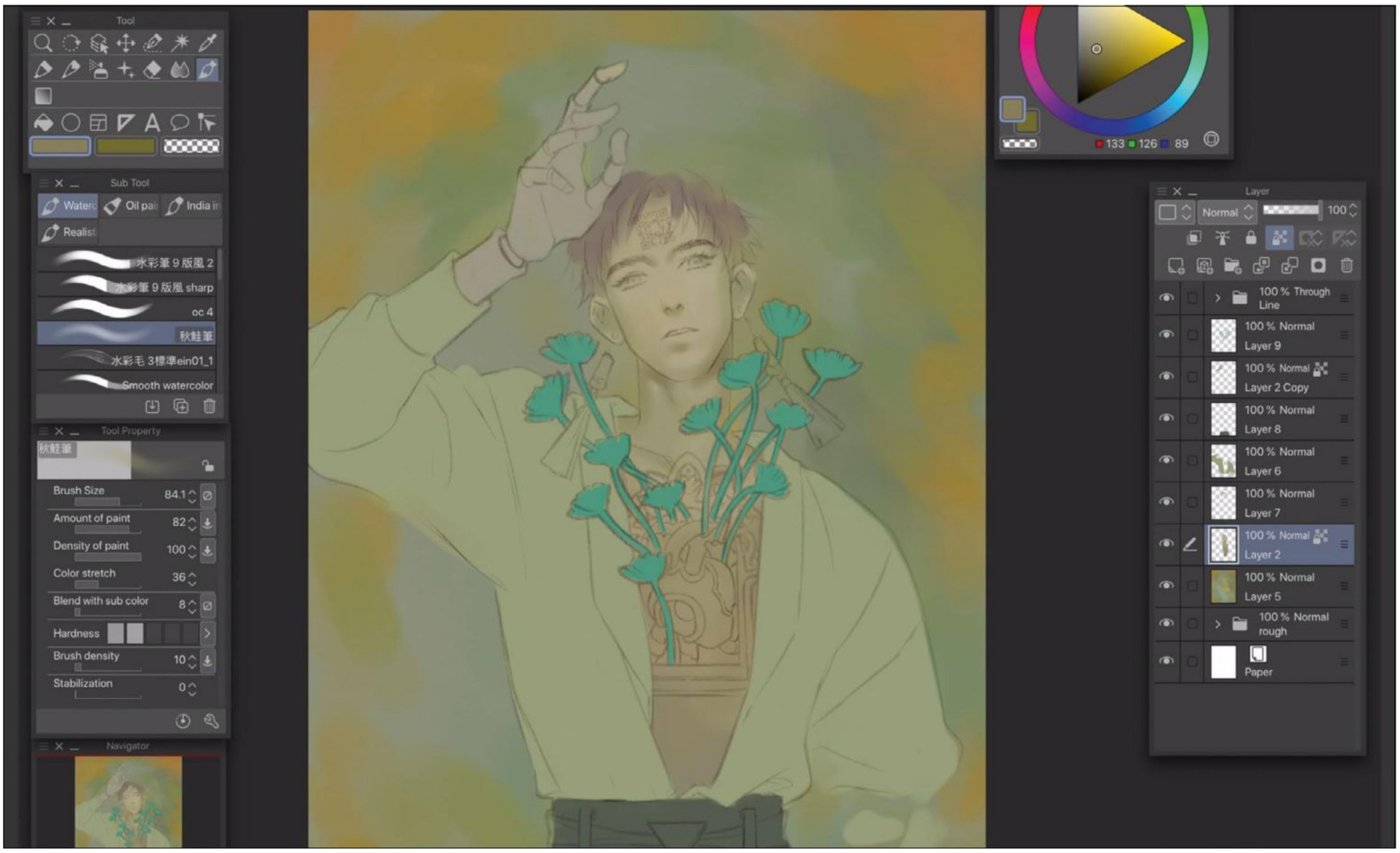
At first I couldn't think of a story for the illustration, but after deciding that the character should be a doll, the idea just went more wild from there. I wanted to make an illustration about a mechanical doll with a mechanical heart. During its construction it becomes more organic and starts to grow flowers from its heart.

Note that although I worked on an iPad, the workflow is the same with any PC or Apple computer that can run Clip Studio Paint.



1 Lay down the line-art with the Real Pencil tool

I usually like to use the Real Pencil tool to draw my line-art, because the results feel natural and the texture is just right. For this key stage I'll set the layer mode to Multiply mode. I can then adjust the value and colour of the line-art by locking the pixels and colouring them with any brush, using lighter, neutral colours such as light brown and light grey. Note that because the character will eventually be portrayed as semi-submerged in water, I don't need to draw all of his features.



2 Deciding on the colour and mood of the illustration

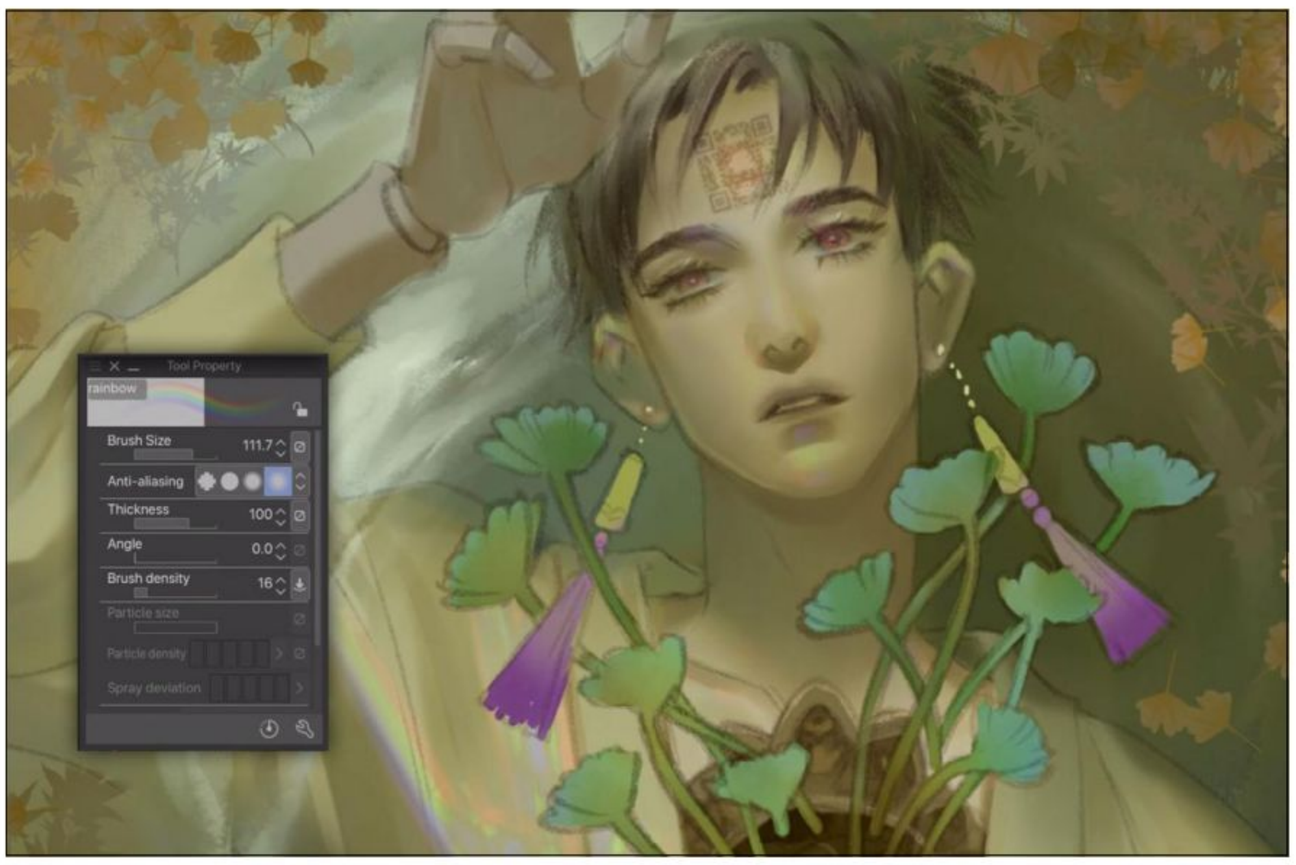
Sometimes I'll colour the background first, so that I'll know what the colour scheme or colour mood will be like. Any colouring brushes are fine for this stage. I've downloaded a lot of my favourite brushes from the Clip Studio Paint Assets site (**https://assets.clip-studio.com**). Once I've chosen the background colour I'll create new layers to paint the character, based on the overall colour scheme. I'm aware this may change during the course of the painting. I use a brush with a soft edge for this base colour step. Because my line-art is textured I don't want the shape of the base looking too sharp. The solution is to select the same brush that I used for the line-art and paint the area nearest to the lines.

3 Adding shadows

I lock the layer's pixels so that I can colour within the base, using a darker colour to paint the basic shadows. I also work on other parts of the drawing, adding layers of fallen leaves. I mostly use Clip Studio Paint's default brushes, along with the Hue/Saturation and Color Balance tools. By colouring the shape of my basic shadows, the rendering process becomes much easier.

4 Begin rendering the artwork

The drawing looks rather flat so I add some light reflections, then focus on rendering. I bear in mind those areas that are lit, and those that remain untouched by light. When blending I'll use the same brush – sometimes the Soft Airbrush but on a lower Opacity – and then pick the in-between colour and start blending. I also use the Blending tool: my favourite brush is Running Color on Fiber because it blends well while leaving a nice texture.

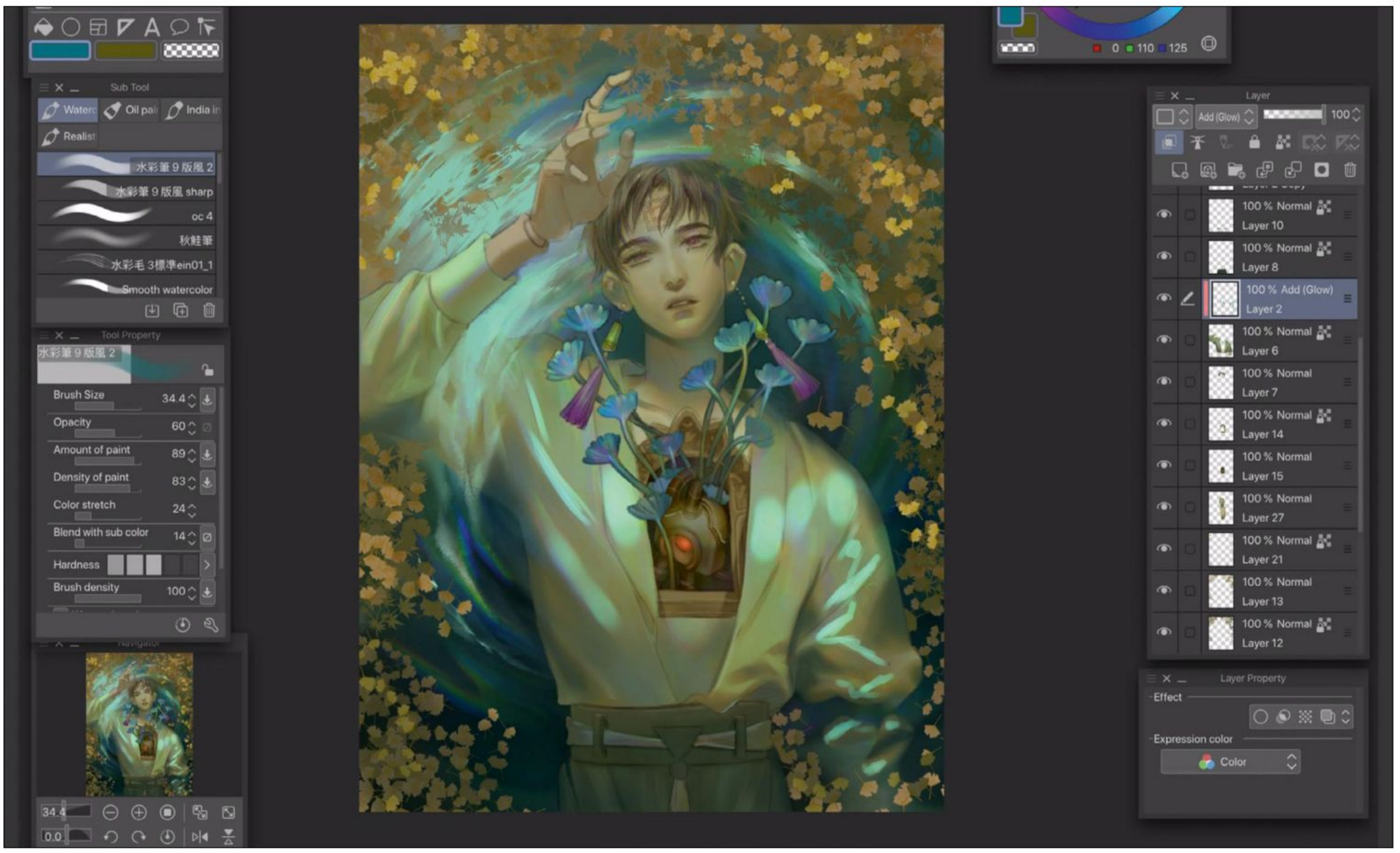


5 Punching up the colours

The colours are looking rather flat and I want to introduce subtle hints of brighter colours, so I select the Rainbow brush (it's one of my favourites) and paint on a Lighten layer. Next I blend my colours using the Blending tool. Alternatively, I'll use the Selection Pen tool to select a particular area that needs improving, then adjust the colours using the Hue/Saturation or Color Balance tools. I repeat this process several times during this stage.

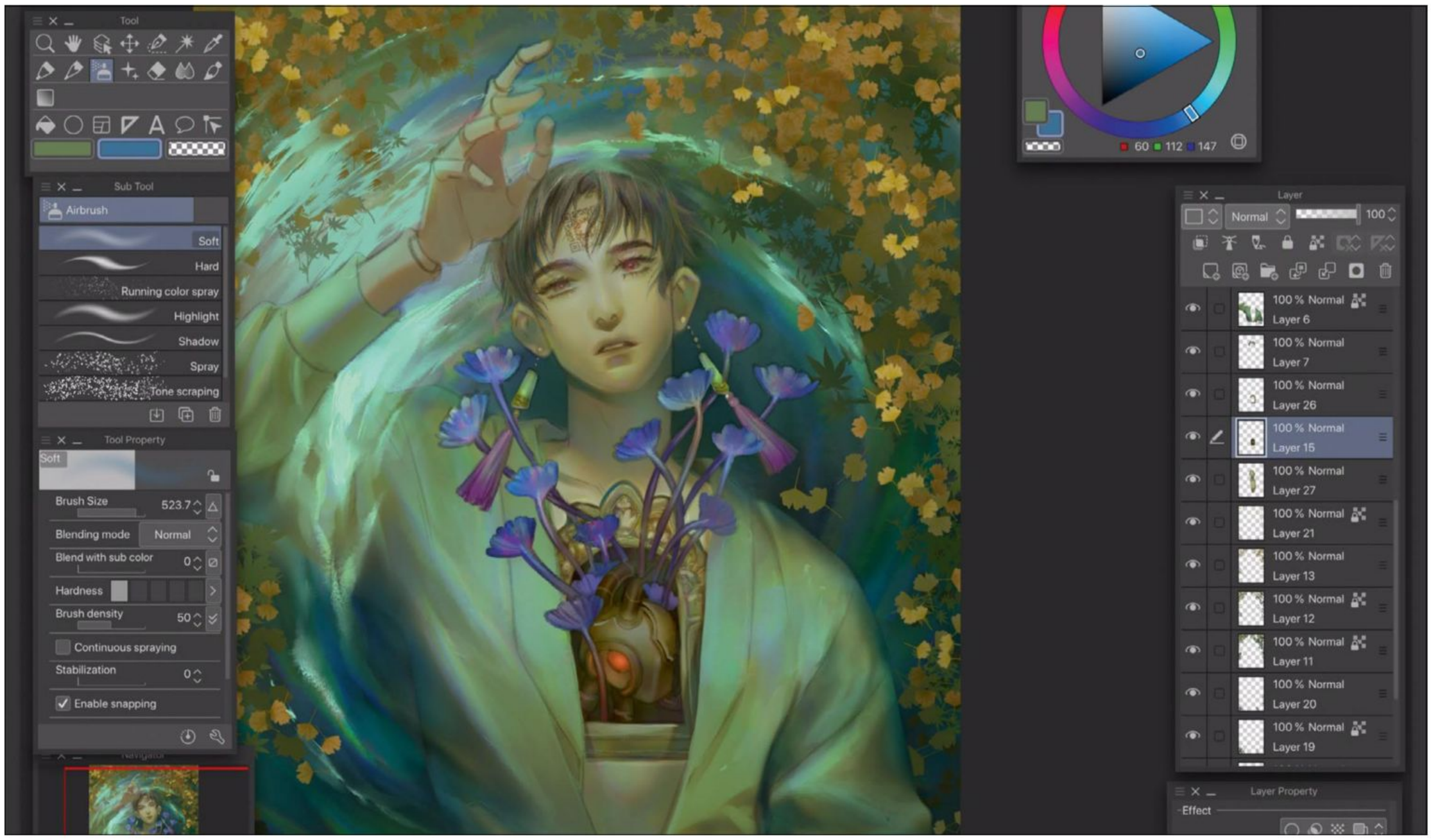
6 Developing colours and textures

I uses the Rainbow brush all over the developing illustration, including the hair and reflections. I have no idea what to do with the flowers, so I use the Rainbow brush to create colour blends. I uses the Real Pencil brush on the character's hair to create texture, while smoothing some strands of hair using the Blending tool. I think you can create interesting results with the Rainbow brush in areas between shadows and light, too.



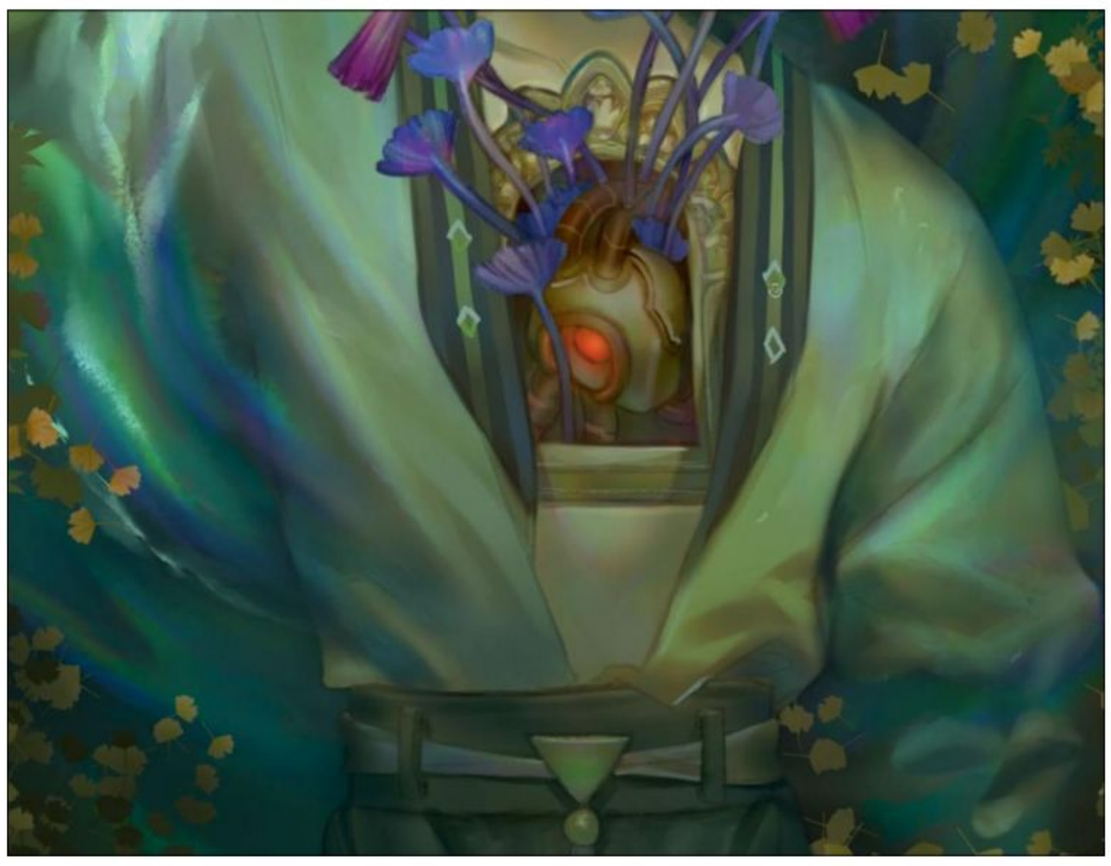
7 Colouring the water and adjusting the overall image to suit

I decide to make the water blue to contrast with the warm yellow/brown atmosphere of the illustration. I then have to adjust the colours of the surrounding area so that it matches the water's colour: the colours of submerged clothing and leaves, for example. The clothing colour is too similar to the skin's, so I make a new layer and change the layer mode to Darken, because this layer mode will only affect light areas. I clip it to the clothing area, fill it with a dark colour and use the Hue/Saturation tool to ensure the clothing matches the colour scheme and mood.



8 Increasing the level of detail in the mechanical heart

The door to the mechanical heart needs more details. Usually, I'll create a new layer, set it to Lighten mode, clip it to the layer in question and work on the details. But I need to make the heart darker and have a sense of depth, so I create a Multiply layer, clip it and then use a light colour to create shadows. If this light area then doesn't match with the overall colour mood, I'll create a Darken layer, clip it and fill it with colour. Then I'll adjust the colour with the Hue/Saturation tool until I'm happy with the results.



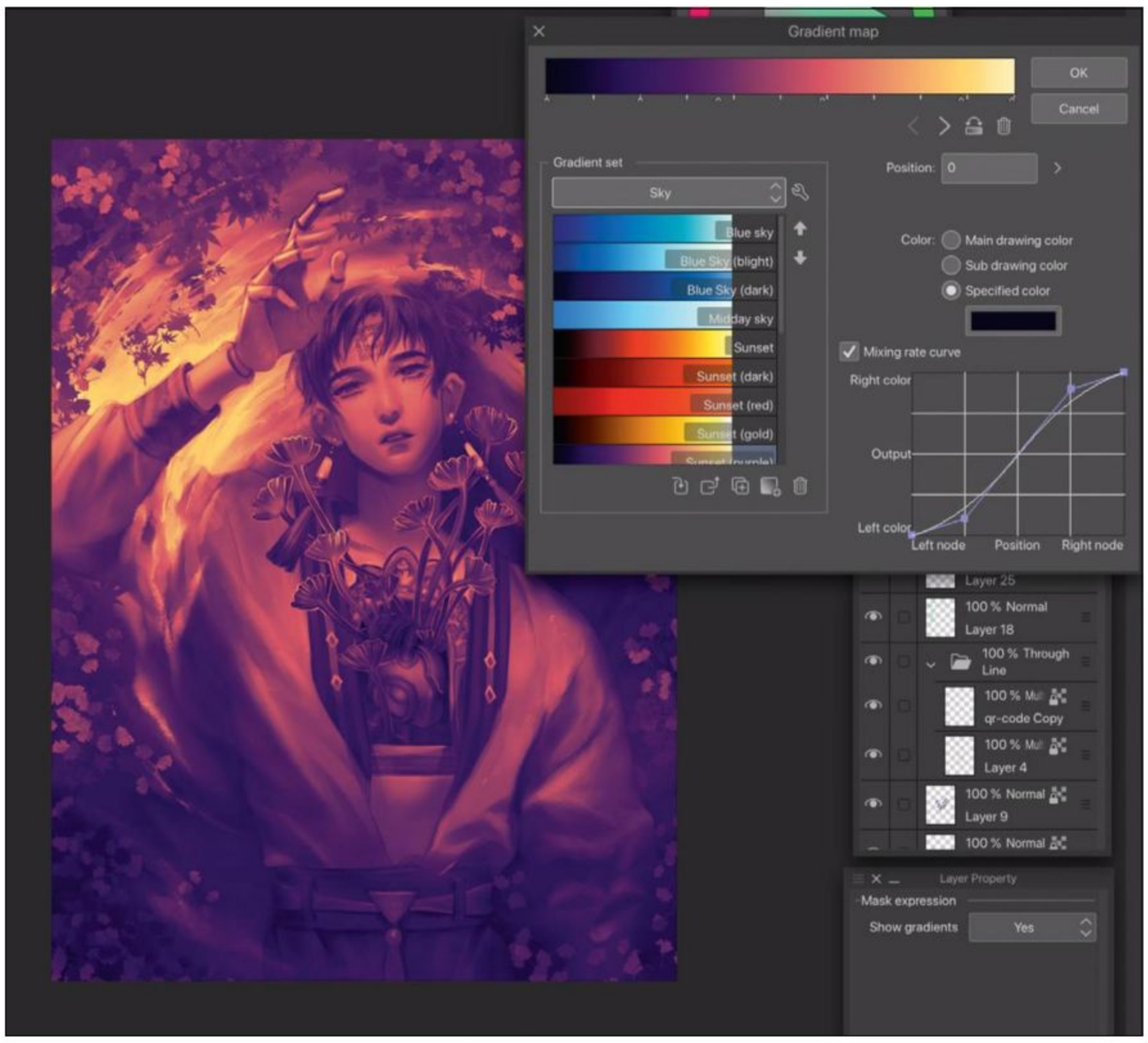
9 Enhancing the clothing and lighting

The character's clothing looks rather plain. The solution is to give the cloth some patterns, so I create some Normal layers, clip them to the clothing area and then draw some patterns. Sometimes I lock the pattern layer to paint the shadows and light, or just create a Multiply layer, clip it on top and paint with a very light colour.

When developing the lighting I can choose from either Screen, Lighten, Overlay or Add(Glow) layer modes. The latter two layer modes can create very bright and harsh results, so I need to reduce the layer's Opacity. I notice that the shadows are flat so I mix in some colours that are similar to them. For example, the character's neck is very close to the water so I paint areas of his skin with colours found in the water. The Flame brush is ideal for painting the water's reflections and ripples. However, because the brush has very sharp edges I soften its strokes using the Blending tool. I also apply the Rainbow brush frequently to create subtle hints of colours during this stage.

10 Recreate the look of batik

The cloth-dyeing technique of batik is popular in Malaysia, my home country. Wax is used to create the intricate pattern on the cloth, and I want to replicate this look digitally on the flowers. I create a new layer on top of all the layers and draw the line-art using a very sharp brush. I control the thickness of the lines by regulating how much pressure I'm applying with my stylus. Then I adjust the colours using the Hue/Saturation tool, duplicate the layer and make it darker, before erasing some areas to create value. Sometimes I'll create a Add(Glow) layer, clip it and colour it to give it more shine.



11 Generate colour moods with the Gradient Map tool

I select Layer>New Correction Layer so my all tweaks using the Color Balance and Gradient Map tools don't affect the original layers. A Gradient Map layer creates interesting colour moods, and it's fun to use with different layer modes. Once I'm happy with the overall colour mood, I place all the layers into a folder, duplicate the folder and merge it. I want to give my artwork a soft look, so I duplicate the merged layers, select Filter>Gaussian Blur, adjust the Opacity and erase the area around the face because I want this area to the focal point of the illustration.

12 Making final adjustments and adding textures

I decide to play around with the colour mood again. First, I create a new layer and select Hatching>Gauze Cloud brush to create the illusion of textures. I then lock the layer and paint it with colours that are similar to the areas I wanted it to blend in. And voilà, I'm done! Now you know how much I love using the Rainbow brush whenever I'm lacking inspiration. Fire up your copy of Clip Studio Paint and give it a go!

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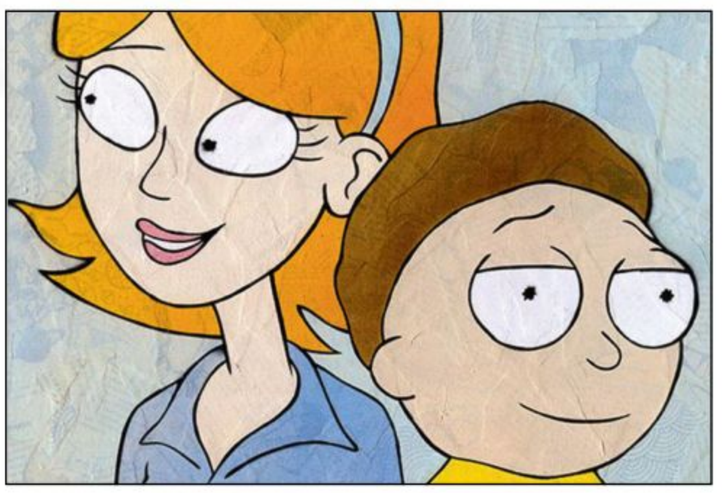
NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

ImagineFX Reviews

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

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

5 PRODUCTS ON TEST



HARDWARE

92 iMac Pro
Apple's latest iMac certainly looks the business, but is this the ultimate all-in-one workstation for professional artists?

TRAINING

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Fantasy artist Jeff Miracola helps you get started with the inking process in a short but comprehensive training video.

BOOKS

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97 Making Call of Duty: Modern Warfare
Explore how the creative team breathed new life into the iconic first-person shooter.

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

The iMac Pro comes with the Magic Keyboard with Numeric Keypad, Magic Mouse 2, and optionally, the Magic Trackpad 2.

iMac Pro

HEAVY HITTER It certainly looks the part, but is it worth shelling out for Apple's latest all-in-one workstation that's targeted at creatives

Price From £4,899 **Company** Apple **Web** www.apple.com

Apple released the iMac Pro as "the most powerful Mac ever made," and we're inclined to agree. This all-in-one packs a punch that's considerably heftier than that of the iMac 2017 and even the iMac 2019.

Yet the iMac Pro doesn't just have sheer power for the sake of it. This workstation is designed for creative professionals, finely tuned to revolutionise any creative workflow. It's highly configurable, enabling you to curate the perfect iMac Pro for your needs, as well as your wallet.

The base model goes for £4,899, which admittedly is pretty expensive for mainstream consumers. If you do have the funds, though, that base model is more than enough for many creative endeavours. It touts an 27-inch 5K Retina display, an eight-core Intel Xeon W processor, AMD Radeon Vega 56 (8GB) graphics, 32GB of error-correcting code (ECC) memory and a 1TB solid-state drive.

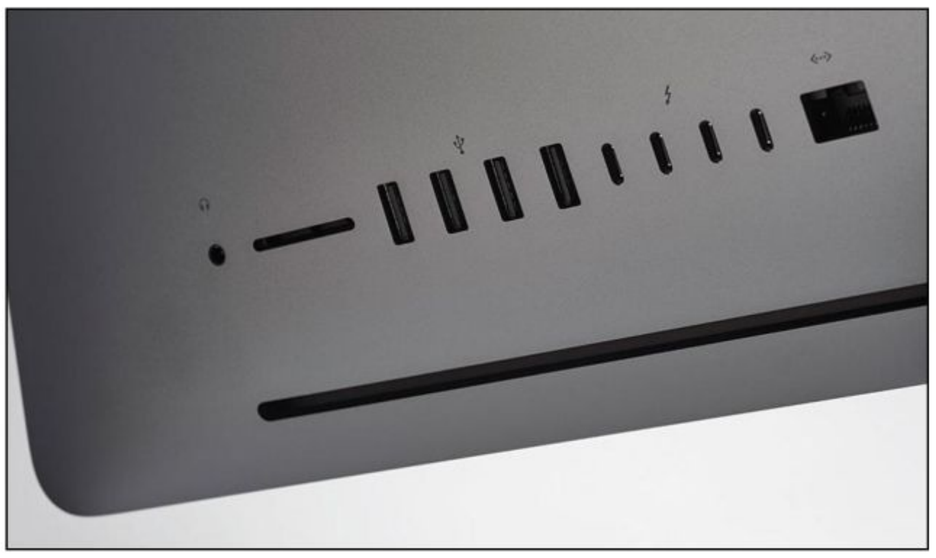
You can max out the iMac Pro with an 18-core Intel Xeon W chip, 256GB of RAM, 4TB of SSD storage and the same AMD Radeon Vega 64X GPU for £13,269. That's a substantial investment, but with it you're getting a lot of power and storage. You can also fine-tune each of these configurations even further, picking any combination of storage amount, processor and graphics card type, and memory size that will fulfil your needs and budget.

COMPUTER OR CAR?

The specs and high price alone will give you an idea of whether or not the iMac Pro is right for you. If spending almost as much as a new car on a computer seems extreme, then look elsewhere. If you seldom use graphic-intensive programs, and you wouldn't know what to do with a GPU with 8GB – let alone 16GB of HBM2 memory, then you're better off with a less-powerful but more affordable machine

Artwork by Martin Nebelong

The iMac Pro sports a new colour scheme – space grey – that sets it apart from the regular iMac models.



The Thunderbolt 3 ports give you options to run multiple displays off the iMac Pro.

from the Apple line or beyond. However, the cost will be warranted if you've found yourself killing time waiting while your current computer renders 3D images, compiles code and renders videos agonisingly slowly. Spending this kind of cash to significantly drop that downtime is an easy sell for the right buyer.

With the sheer power behind the iMac Pro, particularly next to the regular iMac, Apple has outdone itself, all the while maintaining the design of the all-in-one machine. All those powerful internal components are tucked away behind the 27-inch display, resulting in a sleek machine that looks attractive in any office or studio. It's also astonishingly quiet.

How the display performs will be of keen interest to artists, professional photographers, and video or image editors. The 27-inch 5K screen was declared by Apple as its 'best ever,' boasting 500 nits of brightness, an increase of 43 per cent over previous iMacs' brightness. The 5,120x2,880 resolution is just as delightful here as it is on high-end iMacs, which also come with this resolution. In addition, the improvement over standard 4K resolution means video editors can work on 4K video at full resolution and still have space for their editing tools, browser or a music player.

"Apple's macOS High Sierra feels incredibly smooth and snappy, thanks to that SSD"

COLOUR CONSIDERATIONS

Because the iMac Pro has been created for professionals, colour reproduction needs to be as accurate as possible. To this end, the display supports the P3 wide-gamut colour space, an RGB colour space that's widely used in digital film production.

While P3 is wider than sRGB, it's not as wide as Adobe RGB. If Adobe RGB is essential to your work – for example, if you work in print and publishing – then you might be frustrated by the lack of Adobe RGB support. For many people, however, the P3 color space will more than suffice, not to mention a big improvement over sRGB.

There are plenty of connectivity options on offer. You get a 3.5mm headphone jack, SDXC card slot, four full-size USB 3.0 ports, four Thunderbolt 3 USB-C ports and a 10Gb Ethernet port. The four USB 3.0 ports are perfect for older peripherals and devices, while the Thunderbolt 3 USB-C ports support Thunderbolt USB 3.1 devices as well as devices with up to 40Gbps data transfers. The Thunderbolt 3 ports can also be used to connect to additional displays, such as two 5K external displays at 60Hz, or four 4K UHD displays at 60Hz.

Apple's macOS High Sierra feels incredibly smooth and snappy, thanks to that SSD, and the desktop looks stunning on the 27-inch display. But of course, you're not shelling out a fortune on an iMac Pro just to admire your desktop wallpaper, or play a couple of casual games. It's how the computer handles rigorous workloads that's key, and in that regard, the iMac Pro is formidable.

Apple's all-in-one packs a punch while inheriting that slim design and build quality that iMacs are famous for. Obviously, because of its high-end power (and price), the iMac Pro isn't the best choice for the general consumer. For day-to-day tasks, and even casual painting or video editing, its enormous power is overkill. On the other hand, if you use a number of demanding creative applications for work and you need them to run faster and smoother than ever, then the workstation-grade powerhouse iMac Pro is well worth considering.

DETAILS

Features

- 3.2GHz Intel Xeon W CPU (eight-core, Turbo Boost up to 4.2GHz)
- AMD Vega 56 (8GB HBM2 RAM) graphics
- 32GB DDR4 RAM (2,666MHz)
- 27-inch 5K (5,120x2,880) Retina display (P3 wide-gamut colour)
- 1TB SSD
- Four USB-C (Thunderbolt 3), four USB 3.0, SDXC card reader, 10Gb Ethernet,
- 3.5mm audio jack
- 802.11ac Wi-Fi, Bluetooth 4.2
- macOS 10.13 High Sierra
- FaceTime HD (1080p) webcam
- 21.5 pounds (9.7kg)
- 25.6x8x20.3 inches (65x20.3 x 51.6cm; WxDxH)

Rating

★★★★☆

The FaceTime camera can record in 1080p – perfect for client calls.

Dual fans can circulate cool air over components, and expel hot air, too.

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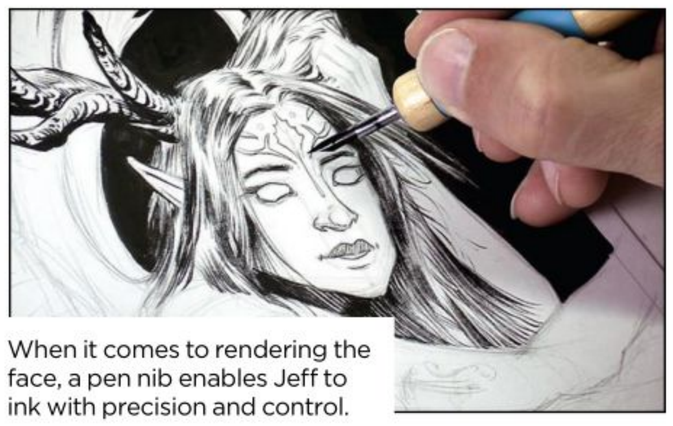
Jeff Miracola's Woodland Angel drawing provides an ideal platform for the artist to show the basics of inking.

A brief tour of some of Jeff's other inked works reveals how spotting blacks can direct the viewer's eye.



When it comes to rendering the face, a pen nib enables Jeff to ink with precision and control.

Spotting the blacks early in the process shows how they frame the figure as a strong silhouette.

Woodland Angel: Ink Drawing

MAKING YOUR MARK Fantasy artist Jeff Miracola helps you get started with the inking process in a short but comprehensive training video

Publisher Three Points Publishing **Price** $8 **Format** Download **Web** www.gumroad.com/threepoints

Even in this age of digital media, we still think in terms of an inking stage to properly finish an initial drawing. While Jeff Miracola is more usually associated with epic fantasy paintings, he's a prolific user of black ink to create artwork on a more intimate scale.

In contrast to the multi-hour DVDs Jeff has been recording to show his painting techniques, Woodland Angel is a brisk overview that's all over in less than 45 minutes. However, it provides a thorough grounding in the subject, especially if inking a drawing is a technique that you're new to.

Jeff surveys the tools and materials you need and makes some recommendations before diving into the heart of the video: a practical guide to mark-marking that relates technique to creative decisions. For example, as well as talking about the process of spotting blacks, he presents inked drawings that use blacks as a compositional aide, placed to attract the viewer's eye to what's important.

There are plenty of nuts-and-bolts tips, including which parts of the hand and arm to employ for different stroke sizes, and how to avoid splatters when you're using a nib.

Jeff also goes in-depth on some of the different textures you're likely to draw regularly, from the minimal line he uses for the female form in his drawing, to the shimmer in her hair and the roughness of her feathers – plus a bit of white-ink splattering for some controlled randomness and mystique.

Experienced inkers will appreciate a glimpse at a process Jeff has taken years to hone, but the real benefit of this video is to novice artists who might have been afraid to commit to the idea of working over a pencil drawing in such a permanent way.

ImagineFX SAMPLE VIDEO

DETAILS

Topics covered
- Tools and materials
- Pencil drawing
- Spotting blacks
- Positioning the hand
- Differences between ink brands
- Inking with a brush
- Inking with a nib
- Defining depth with line

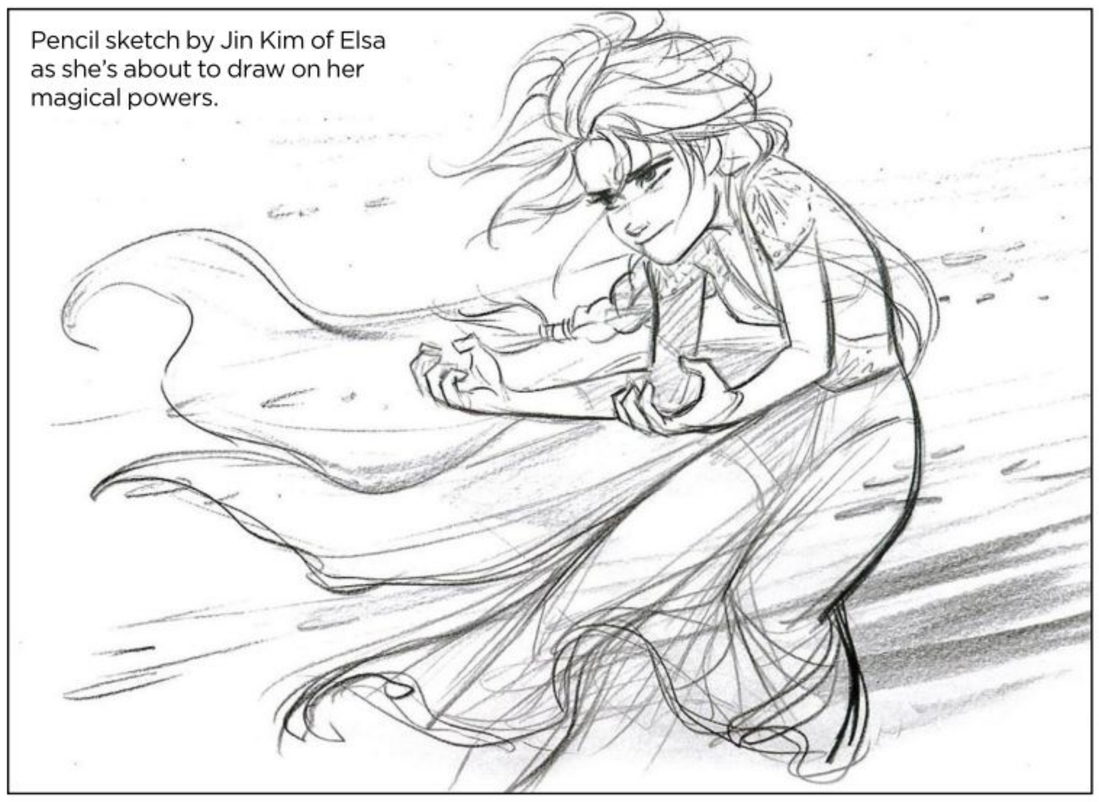
Length
43 minutes

Rating
★★★★☆

ARTIST PROFILE
JEFF MIRACOLA

Jeff attended the Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design before embarking on a freelance career that would lead him to work on Magic: the Gathering and other card games such as Shadowrun, Battletech, Rage and Judge Dredd. Book covers and magazines would follow, as well as toy concepts for Batman Beyond and Animorphs. Jeff has slowly shifted his style of art as he's tackled children's books, editorial work and video game graphics.

www.jeffmiracola.com



Pencil sketch by Jin Kim of Elsa as she's about to draw on her magical powers.

Everyone's favourite snowman Olaf explores the Enchanted Forest, as painted digitally by Lisa Keene.

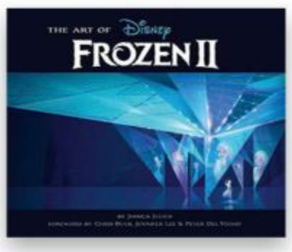
The Art of Frozen 2

DEFROST TIME There's more to the magical world of Frozen than we thought, as this stunning art book for the sequel reveals

Author Jessica Julius **Publisher** Chronicle Books **Price** £29 **Web** www.chroniclebooks.com **Available** Now

Seven years have passed since audiences were first captivated by Disney's Frozen. A lot has changed in that time, both in terms of the characters and the behind-the-scenes wizardry used to bring them to life. And as we see in this art book for the follow-up film, Anna, Elsa and their world have matured considerably since we last saw them.

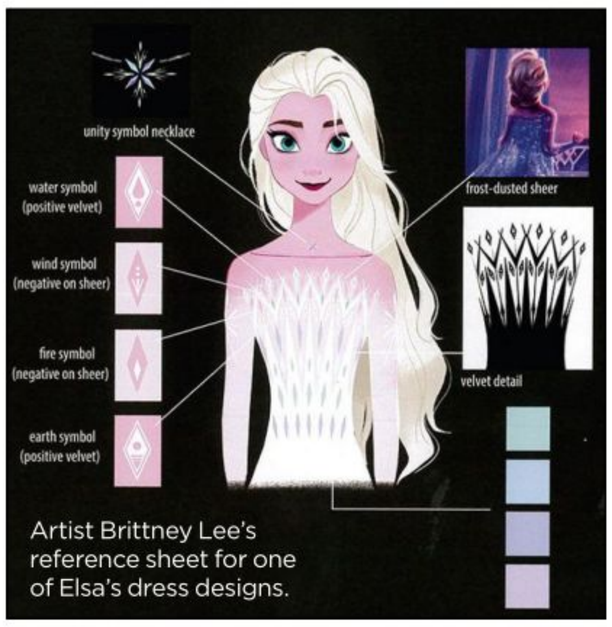
This is a wise move on the part of Frozen 2: after all, a good sequel shouldn't simply retread familiar ground. The first Frozen film took its inspiration from Hans Christian Andersen's fairytale The Snow Queen, but Frozen 2 looked further afield,



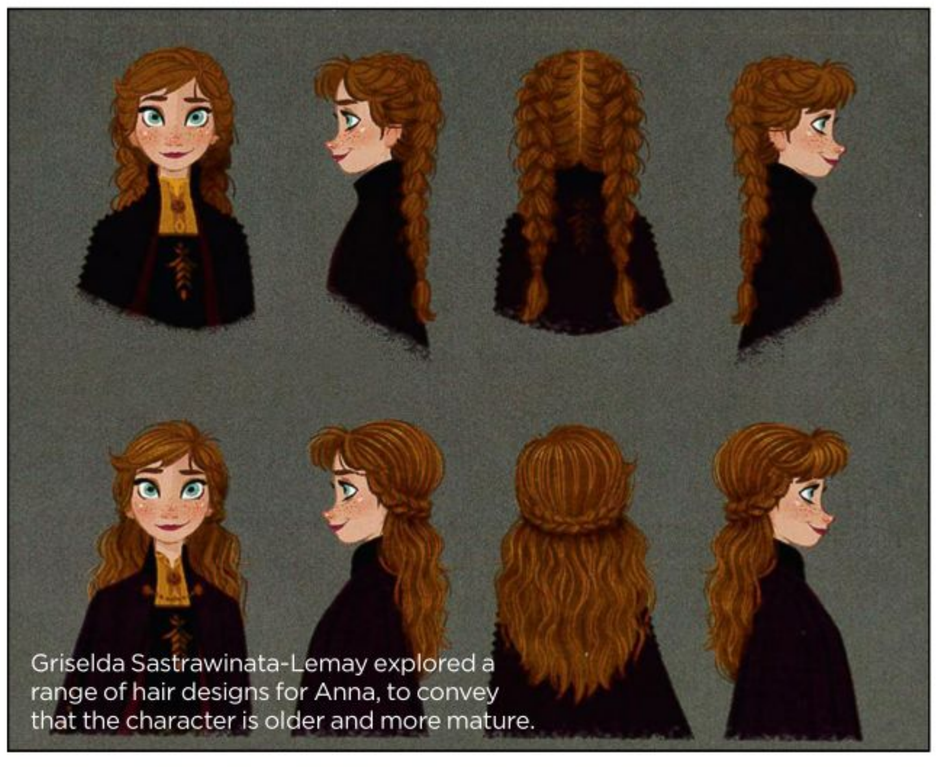
taking its cues from Scandinavian folklore and Old Norse mythology. It also keeps cinemagoers on their toes by switching up the seasons and melting away the snowy vistas that defined Frozen.

To explain how these tales shaped the autumnal look and feel of Frozen 2, this magnificent art book features observations from the director and lead creatives. Together they guide readers through chapters covering

> **"This magnificent art book features observations from the director and lead creatives"**



Artist Brittney Lee's reference sheet for one of Elsa's dress designs.



Griselda Sastrawinata-Lemay explored a range of hair designs for Anna, to convey that the character is older and more mature.

characters, locations, and the four elements of earth, air, fire and water that underpin the plot and visual essence of the film. We're also presented with words of wisdom from visual effects supervisors, visual development artists, look development supervisors and many more to give us a comprehensive insight into how Frozen 2 came to be.

Just like the Frozen films themselves, Anna and Elsa are the stars of the show here. A generous part of the book is set aside to detailing how their appearances have evolved, with reams of fascinating artwork tracking their development from initial sketches through to the refined character designs we see on screen.

Character artists will also appreciate the level of detail that's gone into their costumes, and how their motifs relate to the storyline. Together the pair are a masterclass of storytelling from the biggest studio on the planet.

While the development of settings, supporting characters and spirits are touched on more briefly, they're not underserved. Each is explained with concept art from every stage of the pipeline and artists are on hand to detail how they refined their ideas.

From the careful construction of forests to the refreshing takes on anthropomorphisation, there's plenty here to inspire artistic readers.

RATING ★★★★★

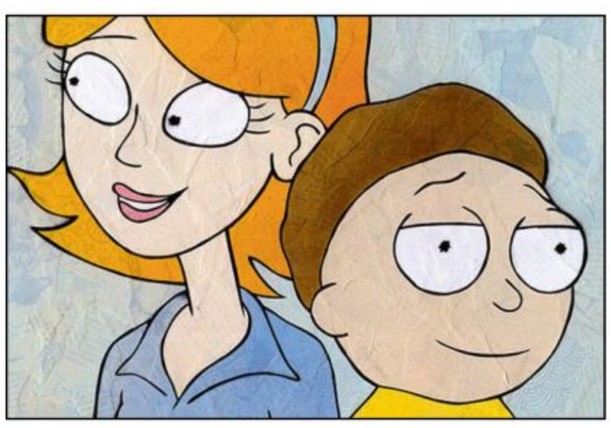
Rick and Morty: Show Me What You Got

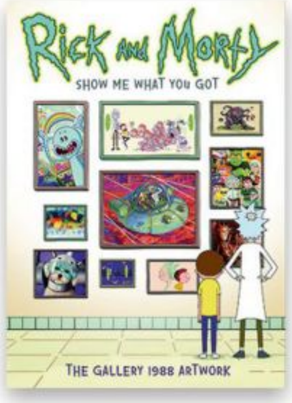
RICKSY BUSINESS Revisit memorable moments and characters from the animated sci-fi series Rick and Morty with this gallery of celebratory art pieces

Author Gallery 1988 **Publisher** Titan Books **Price** £30 **Web** www.titanbooks.com **Available** Now

Thanks to its humour, stories and nuanced characters, Rick and Morty has a legion of dedicated fans. The animated show is also a gift to artists, as shown in this collection of work inspired by the series.

Featuring images from over 60 artists, Rick and Morty: Show Me What You Got brings together specially commissioned pieces that were on display at Los Angeles' famous Gallery 1988. The limited edition artworks sold out quickly, so this book is a fantastic way for fans who couldn't attend the exhibition to see what they missed.



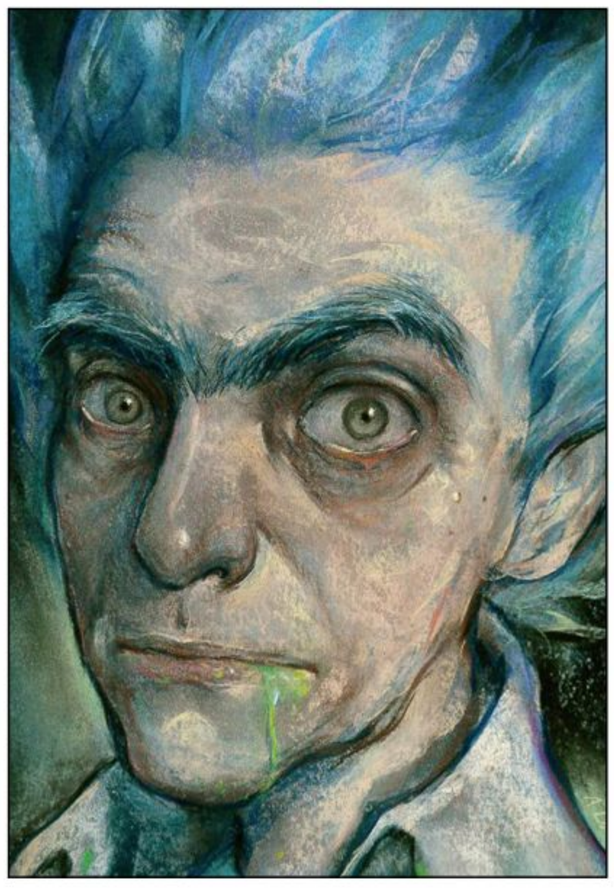


Morty standing next to his high-school crush Jessica, as drawn by US artist Nick Comparone.

Considering that Rick and Morty is a show that riffs on various genres, it makes sense that the artwork here is equally diverse. As well as digital illustration and traditional mediums, there's also work made out of LEGO, cross-stitch and even hip flasks. Each depicts a clever spin on the show, ranging from posters and pulp book covers, through to puppets and toys.

The majority of the book's images are accompanied by insights from the artists, who reveal their creative process and how they interpreted the show for their art. It's sure to please hardcore fans and casual viewers alike.

RATING ★★★★☆



Freelance illustrator Ashly Lovett reveals that she wanted to capture Rick's self-destructive and self-loathing nature in her chalk pastel artwork.

Making Call of Duty: Modern Warfare

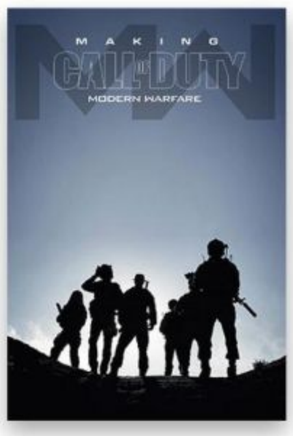
DUTY FREE The latest Call of Duty video game is the most ambitious yet. This book explores how the creative team breathed new life into the iconic first-person shooter

Author Andy McVittie **Publisher** Titan Books **Price** £35 **Web** www.titanbooks.com **Available** Now

Despite having 16 titles under its belt, the Call of Duty series hasn't released a 'making of' book. All that's changed with this look at how the franchise's latest title, Call of Duty: Modern Warfare, was put together.

As Joel Emslie, the studio art director at game developer Infinity Ward, reveals, Call of Duty: Modern Warfare is a step-up for the series in terms of scope and scale. In chapters covering character design, environments, weapons and graphics, we see how the creative team delivered the goods. For the first time, actors helped to bring familiar characters to life, and methods such as performance-capture were used to aid visualisation during development.

The notes for a key character from the new game demonstrate the level of detail and consistency that the game's developers wanted to achieve.



Because it's a making of book rather than an art book, it's no surprise that the majority of the visual material presented here is from near the end of the production pipeline, comprising reference photography, actors in motion-capture suits and a lot of polished 3D renders. The inclusion of early 2D concept art, perhaps showing alternate and discarded ideas, would have been a welcome addition. Yet the book remains an engaging insight into the amount of work that goes into creating a triple-A video game.

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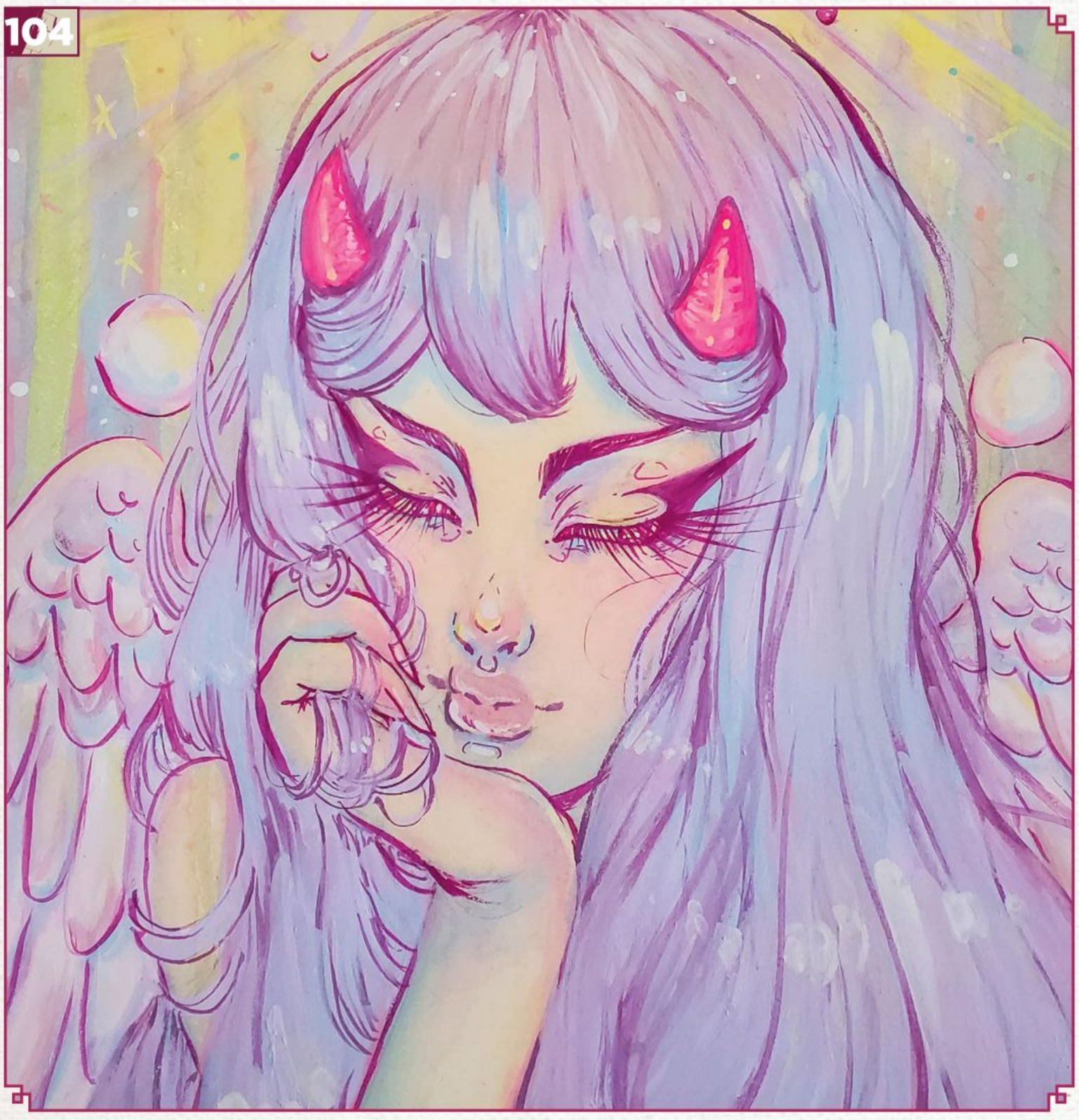
Traditional Artist

Inspiration and advice from the best pro artists



This issue:

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

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US artist Ama applies her knowledge of watercolours when using pastel design gouache.

110 Workshop: From science fact to sci-fi horror
Steven Black creates an unsettling piece of figurative art.

114 First Impressions: Hikari Shimoda
This Japanese artist reflects issues of modern society in her work.

FXPosé

SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL ARTISTS

Jennifer Hrabota Lesser

LOCATION: US **MEDIA:** Oils, pencil **WEB:** www.jenniferhrabotalesser.com

"My work references folklore, mythology and nature," says Jennifer. "I start out with a grisaille underpainting to establish my values before moving into colour."

1 ARTEMIS
"This is an allegorical piece about grieving the hard decisions we must make, and not losing our compassion as we move forward."

2 DAUGHTER OF THE MOON
"This artwork is about the awakening wisdom of adulthood, but also the melancholy that can accompany leaving carefree youth behind."

3 MOONRISE
"I wanted to create a divine feeling. The artwork celebrates and accepts people as a whole, both thorns and petals."

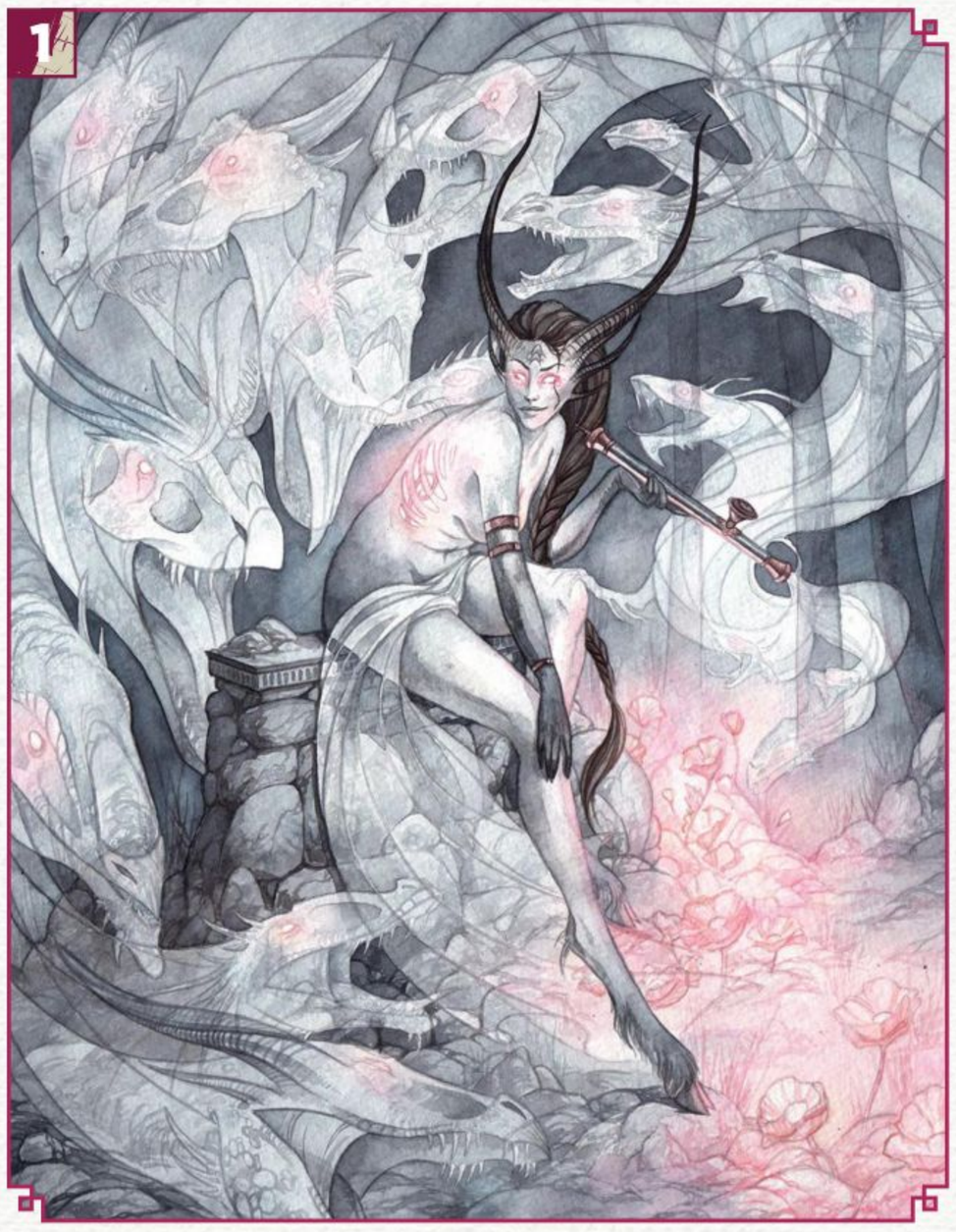
4 NEREID AWAKENING
"The daughters of Nereus were said to be loved and honoured by sailors and fishermen for the luck and safety they brought with them."

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

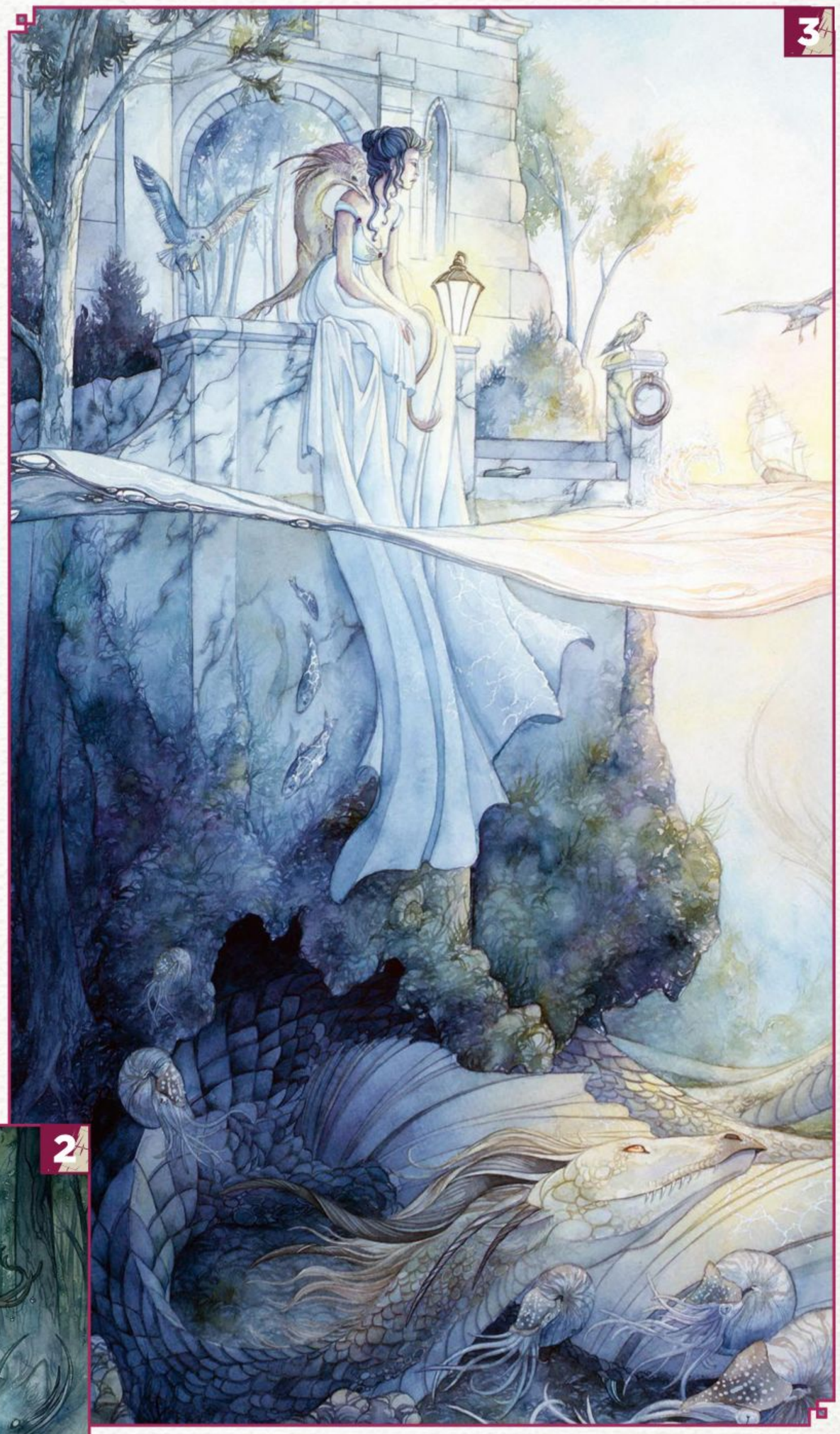
Amelia Royce Leonards

LOCATION: US **MEDIA:** Watercolour, graphite, white ink **WEB:** www.amelialeonards.com

Amelia is a graduate of Montserrat College of Art, where she baffled her professors with drawings of goddesses and antlered women. She's influenced by the beauty of myths, folklore, and the natural world.



1 CHASING THE DRAGON
"Though it may seem tempting, don't chase the dragon – there are creatures hiding in the swirling smoke, a myriad of pale glowing eyes peering and waiting."



2 MELODIE FANTASTIQUE
"There's a breathless pause at the shifting of the season, summer to fall, fall to winter, winter to spring. If you're in the woods at that moment, listen carefully..."

3 MISS CUBBIDGE
"Inspired by a quote from a Lord Dunsany tale: 'The tide roamed on and whispered of master and of myth, while near that captive lady, asleep in his marble tank the golden dragon dreamed.'"

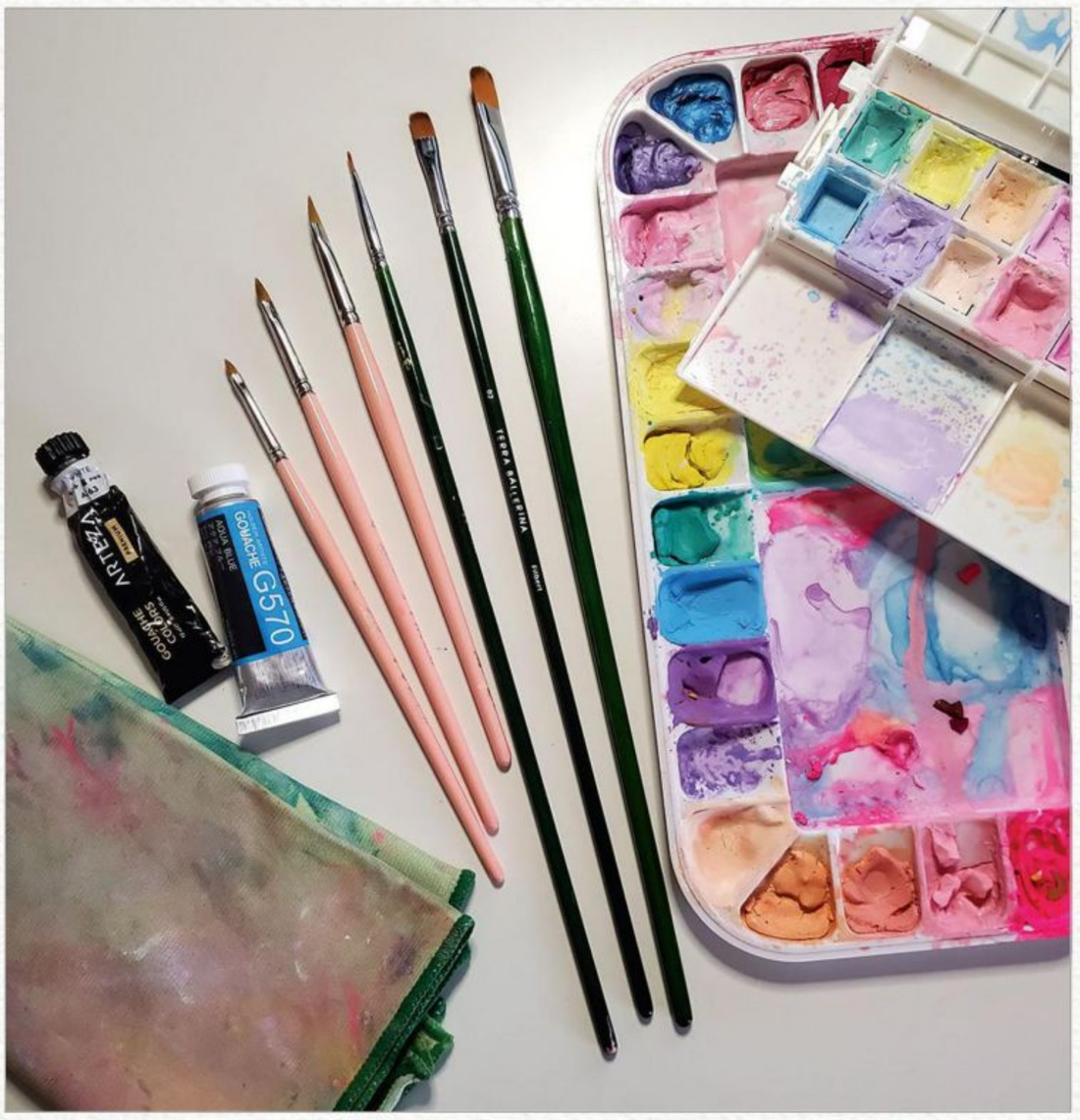
Want to submit your work? Visit http://ifxm.ag/getinifx

4

4 EMHAIN ABLACH

"There's a famous love story about Niamh, a golden-haired fae who lives in the Isle of Apples, and the poet-hero Oisín. It ended tragically when he ignored her advice."

Traditional Artist Workshop



Gouache

EVOKE EMOTIONS WITH PASTEL SHADES

US illustrator AMA is known for her soft and whimsical shades. Here she applies her knowledge of watercolours when painting with pastel design gouache

People often ask me why I only paint in shades of pastels even though most of my concepts feel dark and heavy, and where I get my pastel shades from. The answers lie in the fact that ever since I was little, I loved Japanese animation and how colourful the characters would be. Even now, I can't help but enjoy the protagonist's brightly coloured hair, going against the grain of all the other characters and I think that's one of the many areas that influences my colour usage within art.

Over the years I've played with the juxtaposition of concept and colour, finding that masking my creations in softer hues helps lift the mood while still retaining the message of the piece. I recently stumbled across design gouache back in 2018. Before then I'd been using watercolours, but encountered many challenges when it came to the desaturation of colours when trying to paint in softer shades.

For those who aren't familiar, design gouache is essentially opaque watercolour. These aren't transparent like watercolours hence the word 'opaque,' but they reactivate when water is added and can blend in the same fashion as watercolours. They work differently than their gouache counterpart (acryla gouache). Acryla gouache can't be reactivated when water is applied and is used in the same way as acrylic paint. Design gouache enables me to use similar painting techniques as watercolour that I'm most comfortable with, but still achieve lighter and brighter colours. If you're looking into gouache, make sure you know the difference between the two types because it does affect how you can paint with them!

In this workshop, I'll show you my painting process in design gouache and how I play with pastel shades to evoke emotion.

MATERIALS

PAPER
- ARCHES 9x12 hot press watercolour paper

BRUSHES
- Terra Ballerina watercolour brushes, 00 liner, 02 filbert, 06 filbert
- Trekell oil brushes Mab Graves 06, 04, 02

PAINT
- Holbein design gouache
- Arteza design gouache

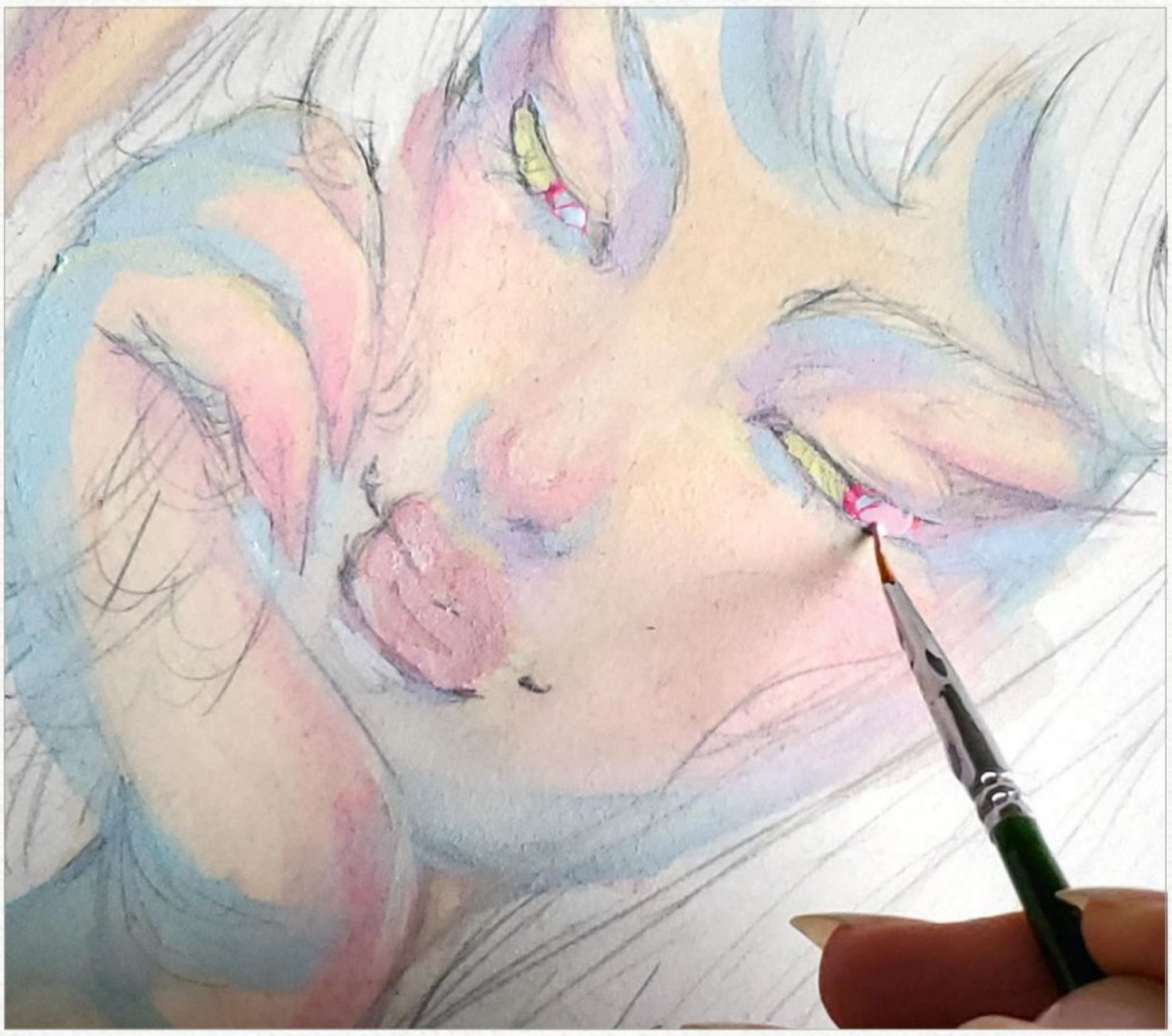
Ama is a US pop surrealist painter and mother who enjoys provoking emotion through her concepts and colour exploration. You can see more of her artworks at www.absoluteama.com.

1 *Grab your supplies and put ideas on paper*

I usually work out of pre-mixed gouache palettes, so all my colours are ready to go and only need to be reactivated with water. You may prefer working from tubes of gouache – either way works! Using design gouache is just like using watercolours so prepare yourself in the same manner. I work out concepts all in one sitting and store leftover sketches to work on for later. I usually come up with between six and 12 concepts that I then leave for days when I'm not feeling as creative and have a hard time getting into the swing of things.

2 Lay down washes

I start with my watercolour roots by laying down washes of colour before proceeding with a painting. Washes enables me to see colour schemes without the commitment of colour. One of the great things about design gouache is that you can paint just as you would with watercolours, but without the fear of being stuck with mistakes.



3 Mapping out the face

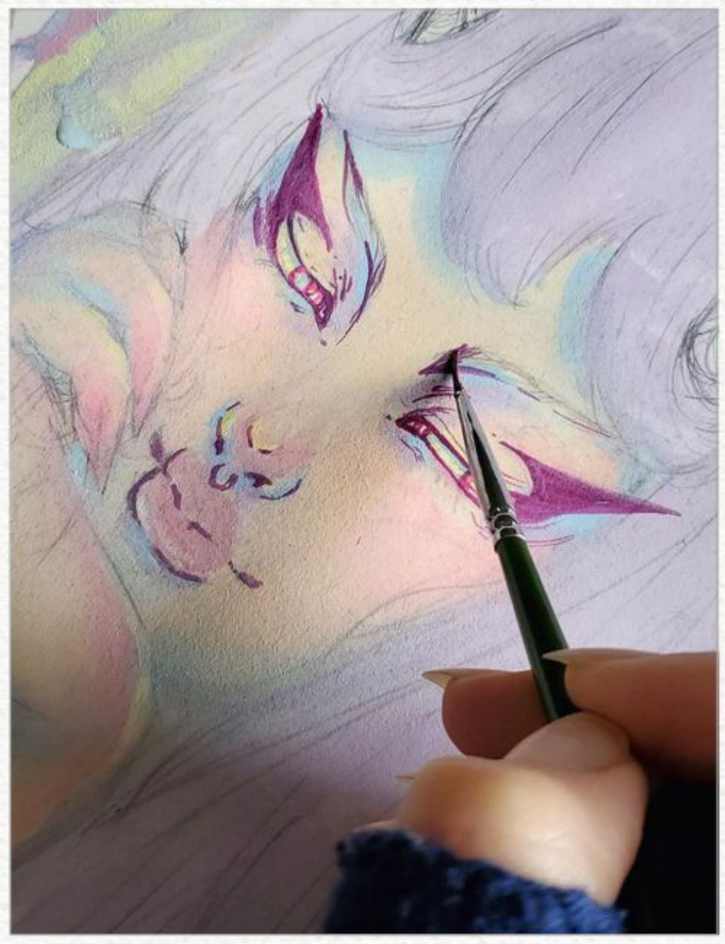
I move on to the face, loosely laying down shadows in stages, waiting for the face to dry before reapplying colour again. This is a slow process so be careful to not go too heavy with paint the first time around, or your colours could become muddy and unworkable.

4 Experiment with layers

Back to the background while the face dries, I build up the washes slowly. Diluted wash down one end: usually yellow at the top, and some sort of purple or blue towards the bottom. Then I blend them together while they're still wet, causing them to melt together or drip into one another.

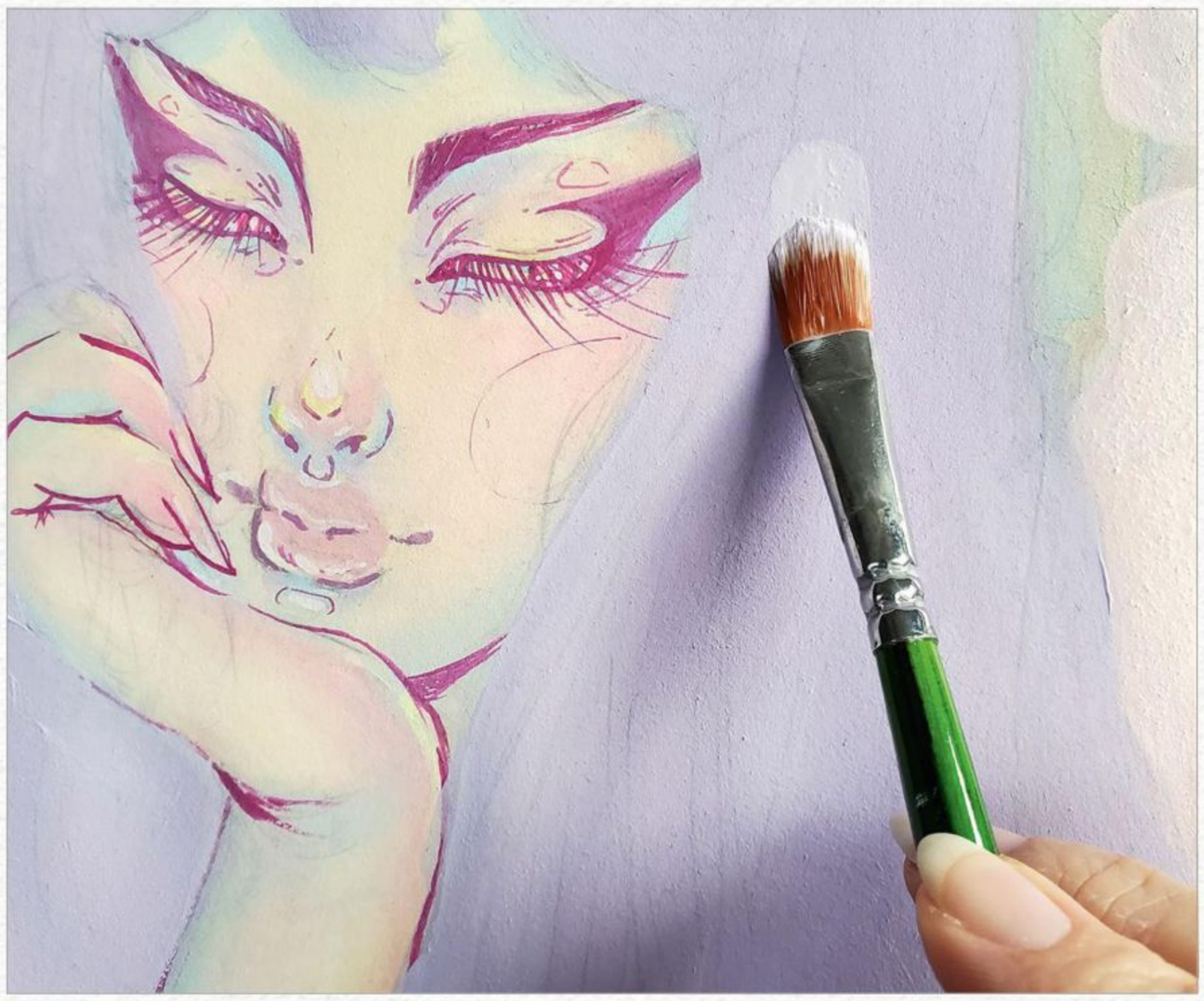
5 Take a step back

I call this the painting's 'ugly stage.' The initial colour washes have been laid down and it's at this stage it's easy to dislike where the painting is going, so I stop painting and call it a day. This means my eyes can adjust and see the flaws next time I sit down.



6 Add some lines

It's the next day and I sort of got lost in this stage so I go ahead and pre-line the face. To do this, I water down a bit of gouache and use my 00 fine-liner to line the painting. If you mess up, you can easily blend it into the painting and try again.



7 Go thick with the gouache

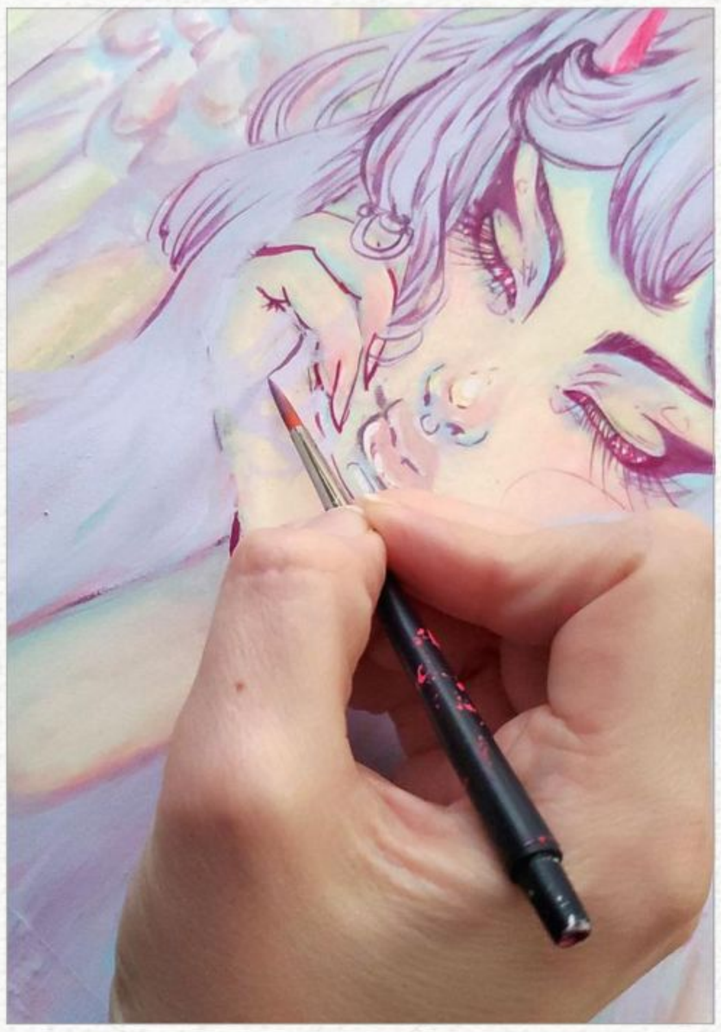
Back on track, I apply the final thick layer of gouache on the hair and wings. These two areas require much more detail, so it's important to have a strong base to work from. The thickness of this layer officially moves the piece from a watercolour painting to a gouache painting thanks to the opaqueness.

8 All blocked in

Now that I have a solid foundation to work on, I can paint various undertones within the hair and wings. This will give the painting depth. For this specific piece, I really like how the lavender colour looks, and I want to avoid overwhelming the hair with heavy colours.

9 Rainbow undertones

I often take colours that I've used on the skin and background and apply them to the hair to make the painting feel more cohesive. These colours may look heavy initially, but after the gouache dries, I'll go over the hair with the original lavender colour which blends all the other colours in better.

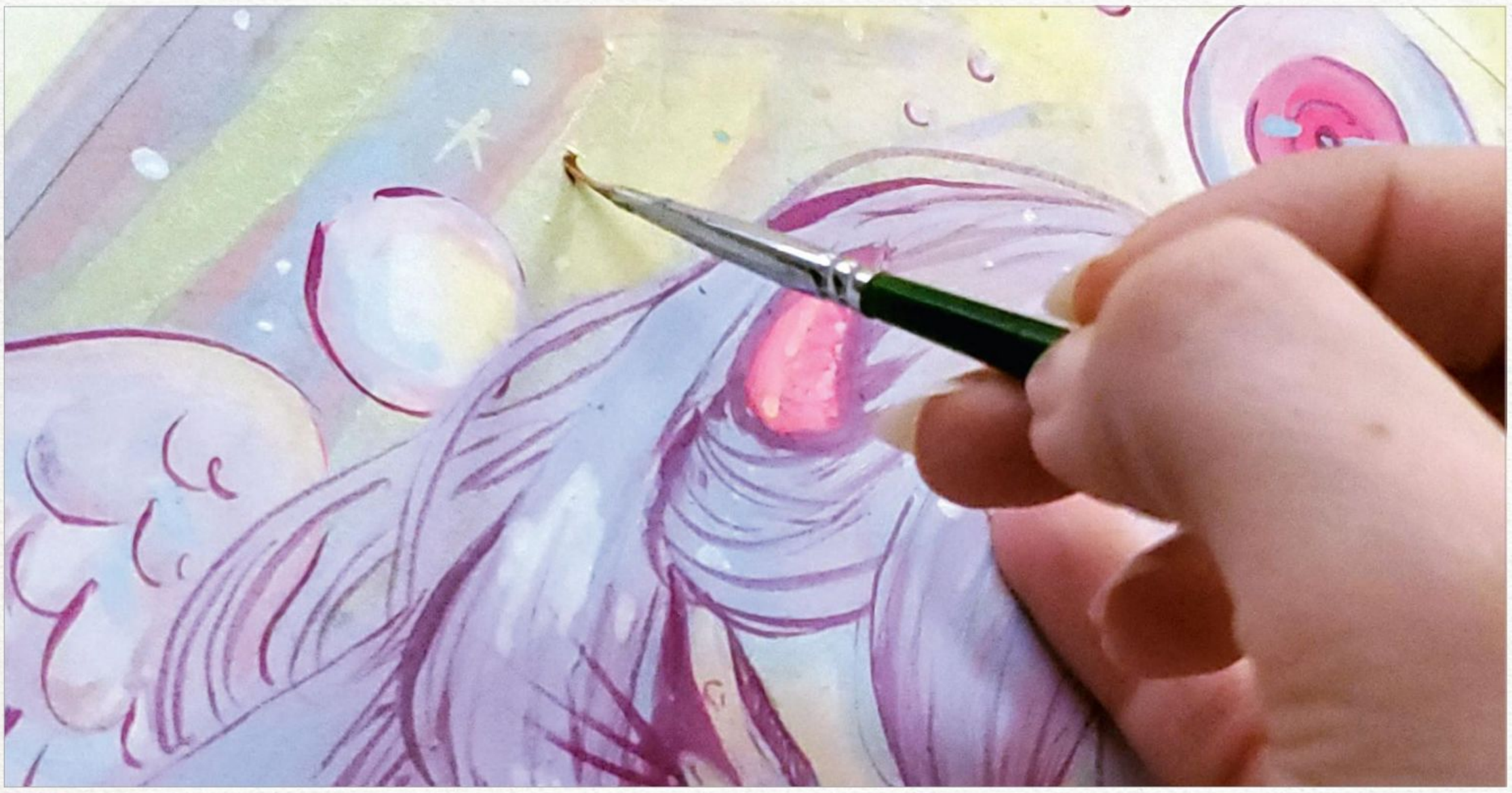


10 Line the subject

When the hair colour has finally dried, I lay down some deep mauve-magenta line-work with the same 00 fine-liner and diluted gouache previously used. I lightly paint soft lines throughout the hair, focusing on areas where shadows would appear. These areas would be more heavily lined than areas where highlights would be placed.

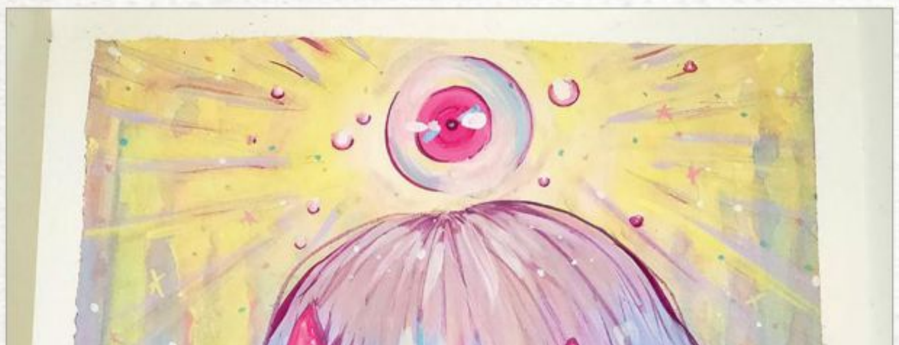
11 White for highlights

Then I add white gouache for highlights. I tend to overdo my paintings with highlights, but I feel it's what gives a completed look. I place thick strokes in the middle portion of the hair and thin streaks at the crown of the head. Don't forget to add to the eyes, lips and nose!



12 *Add sparkles to the portrait*

I'm a sucker for sparkles and stars so I can't help myself but paint some small glitter and stars to this painting. It ties the painting together and fills in some of the emptiness I was feeling from the top portion of the painting. With pastel shades, stars and sparkles are a must-have!



13 *Check for errors*

Before I can be sure my painting is complete I have to check for any potential errors. Usually, I'll find small areas that needs more paint or sometimes the line-work in an area isn't clean enough. Thankfully, these things can be easily fixed with a little bit of water on a brush and gently blended out.

14 *Enjoy the creation!*

With the piece finally complete, I can sit back and enjoy the new painting. Thank you for coming along this workshop journey with me! I hope some of my tips and tricks will help guide you along with your own gouache painting exploration and maybe play around in shades of pastel, too!

Oils

FROM SCIENCE FACT TO SCI-FI HORROR

Discover how STEVEN BLACK uses the unique characteristics of an octopus as the basis and narrative for this unsettling piece of figurative art...

My childhood was spent in a small town in Ohio. As an adopted kid I didn't really get along with my family and I spent all of my days alone. I collected comics and drew all the time, trying to ape the styles of all my favourite artists in the comics I read.

I fell in love with horror and creepy art as a teenager and would cycle to the local used book store and buy, for example, Stephen King's The Stand, illustrated by Bernie Wrightson. Horrific subject matter becomes beautiful when drawn in such a masterful way.

Ever since then, I've been fascinated by beauty in strange places. I love science fiction and horror. Good science fiction starts with science fact: for example, octopi can change colour and shape. I can now twist those ideas slightly to take you on a sci-fi journey. Here I'm taking that fact a bit further: the creature is trying to change colour and shape to match that of a human. But she keeps getting it wrong and casting off the shell, and that's where I get the name Husk for this piece.

Steven's aim is to champion the odd, fringe or otherwise unappreciated beauty in decay. You can see more of his art at www.stevenrussellblack.com.

Step-by-step: Turning subconscious thoughts into real-world art

1 VISUALISE MY IDEAS

Everything starts with a solid drawing that works out the design and anatomy of the piece. This is the time to explore and play, when unexpected elements appear from my subconscious. Once complete, the drawings go up for sale and the most popular ones on social media become a painting. I use social media as my own private target market poll!

2 PRINT THE UNDERPAINTING

My drawing is then printed on to a sheet of DiBond panel. I love its smooth surface. This process enables me to scale the drawings up to whatever size I want and saves time when transferring the drawing to the final substrate. It also keeps the value scale intact, so I can focus on colour matching the underlaying value.

3 OIL OVERPAINTING

Once the surface has been covered in matte medium the oil sticks to the surface easily. After painting in all the home values, I move on to all the little details, which I enjoy doing. I also still paint traditionally because, although the life of the work is online these days, I love having a physical marker or relic that lives in the real world.

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Points of interest: Bodies of work

Enhance textures
I'm in love with the surface texture of things and the octopus skin is a beautiful place to find wonderful textures.

Background work
I try to create backgrounds that have a tangible atmosphere to them – that feel like a dream.

Areas of contrast
I make sure that warm and cool areas push and pull against each other throughout the piece.

MATERIALS

PAPER
- Royal Fiber Kraft

PENCILS
- Prismacolor coloured pencil Black
- General's Charcoal White

SUBSTRATE
- DiBond Panel

OIL PAINT, MEDIUM
- Lavender Spike Oil
- Walnut Alkyd

Act on feedback
There are eight limbs in the piece, When I was in the middle of working on it an art collector mentioned it would be cool if it still had eight limbs and I agreed. It's cool when the audience feedback adds to the piece. That same collector now owns the final painting and it's in an amazing collection.

Seeing oils up-close
There's a depth to an oil painting that's breathtaking to see in person. It's similar in effect to how light passes through the layers of a stained glass window.

Perfect the hands
Hands and faces are the most important part of the work for me and I think I repainted them twice. It was important to get the right balance of detail and a sort of grace in the gesture.

First Impressions

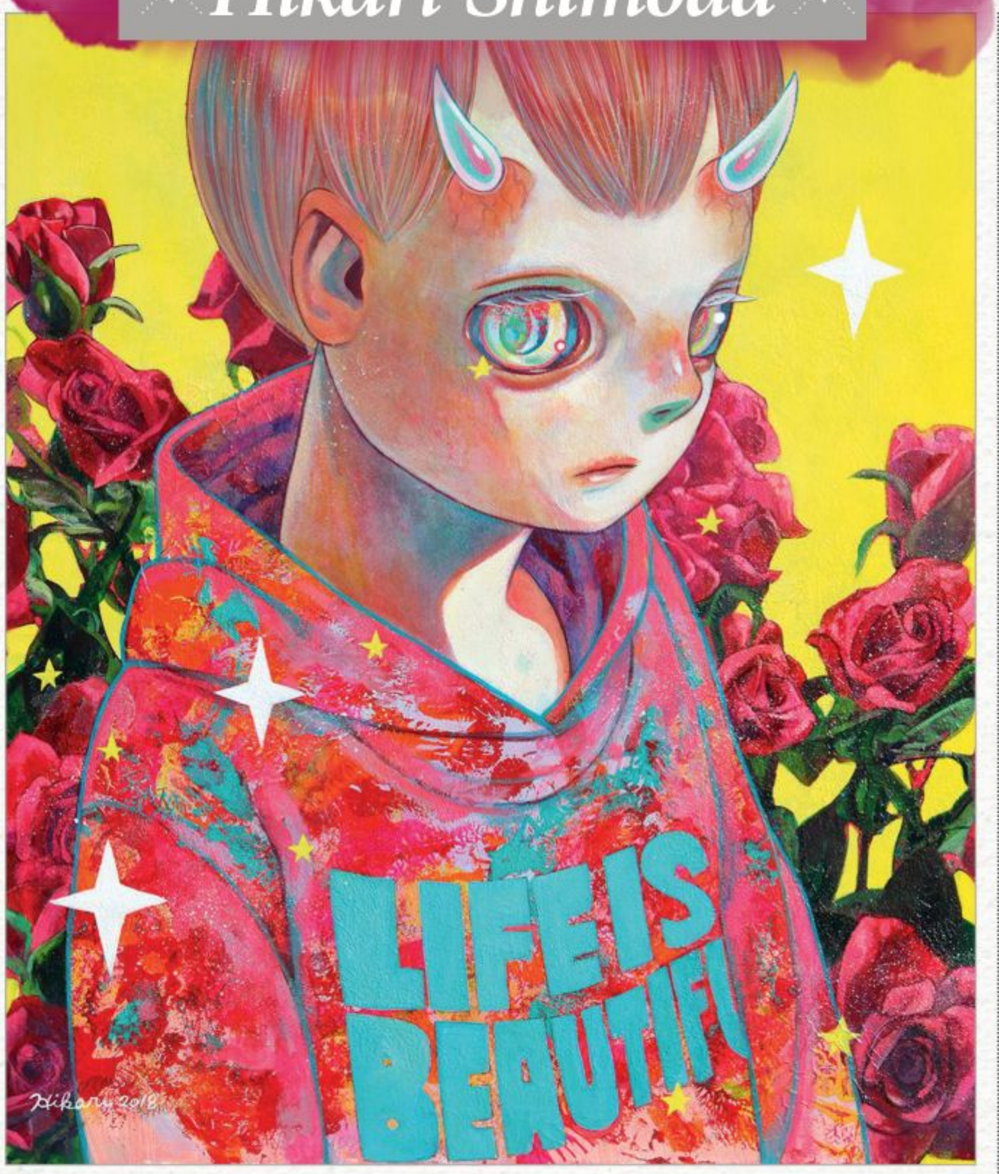
Hikari Shimoda

This Japanese artist looks to reflect issues of modern society in her illustrations

Where did you grow up and how has this influenced your art?
I grew up in the countryside of Nagano, Japan. I loved painting landscapes because there were only mountains and fields all around me, and I remember that I was interested in picture books, manga and anime. I loved my anime and manga books and bought as many as I could, reading them eagerly to see all the new illustrations inside. The reason I use children as my subject is based on my childhood experiences.

What, outside of art, has most influenced your artwork?
This is a hard question to answer because my paintings feature a web of motifs. Lots of things inspire me, like anime and manga, which are products of the human imagination; I'm influenced by Hayao Miyazaki, and how his stories express a love and despair for the world.

Other than fine art, I started painting with a strong influence from sub-cultures, manga and animation. Now that I'm more aware of fine art, I have a strong interest in it and I'm working on my own. My work as a whole deals with



TAMUKERU #3
"This work is part of a new series entitled Tamakeru, which I debuted in my 2019 exhibition, Can Pop Art Show the Way to Nirvana? The title refers to the Japanese tradition of offering something to a god or deity."

WHEREABOUTS OF GOD #32
"This is a part of a series which I've been painting since 2011. Inspired by the Fukushima nuclear power plant accident, I've chosen my hopeless feelings about society and the future as my main theme."

themes that resonate with modern society, so the link between society and art is fascinating to me.

Does one person stand out as being helpful during your early years?
My parents have always supported my work. It takes a long time for an artist to be able to work independently. I thank my parents for their support without criticising or opposing my work.

What was your first paid commission, and does it stand as a representation of your talent?
I'm not sure when was the first time, but around five years old I used to copy manga girls with sparkling eyes for my friends. I think that these memories of drawing those sparkling eye characters are one source of my art now. At that time, I didn't find what I wanted to draw, so I had always just followed what my friends liked.

What's the last piece you finished, and how do the two differ?
My new work doesn't directly reflect the people and society of the world, but rather describes how an individual, like myself, fits in society. The visuals are similar from the previous works, but they're different in terms of concept. My newest series affirms my own personal qualities such as anxiety, loneliness and sexuality.

Is making a living as an artist all you thought it would be?
I don't think of myself as "successful", but I think any success is a result of continuous trial and error. In my case, I've always tried to paint things that are interesting to me, but that others might be interested in, too.

How is your art evolving?
It's hard to scrutinise my own evolution, but I'm always serious about the work at hand and trying to make it great for me and anyone else. I think the evolution of my work and style can be seen when you take a look at everything together, so it's a natural progression. I don't know how it will change in the future.

What does the future hold for you?
Since my approach to my art changes as the world changes, there's no specific plan right now. I'd like to try making works other than painting. I love cartoons as a style of expression. In fact, I used to create animation works or film works in college. So making animation or films is one of my dreams.

Hikari combines paint, text and collage to create her distinctive take on manga while exploring modern-day issues. See more of her art at www.hikarishimoda.com.

> **"My newest series affirms my own qualities such as anxiety, loneliness and sexuality"**

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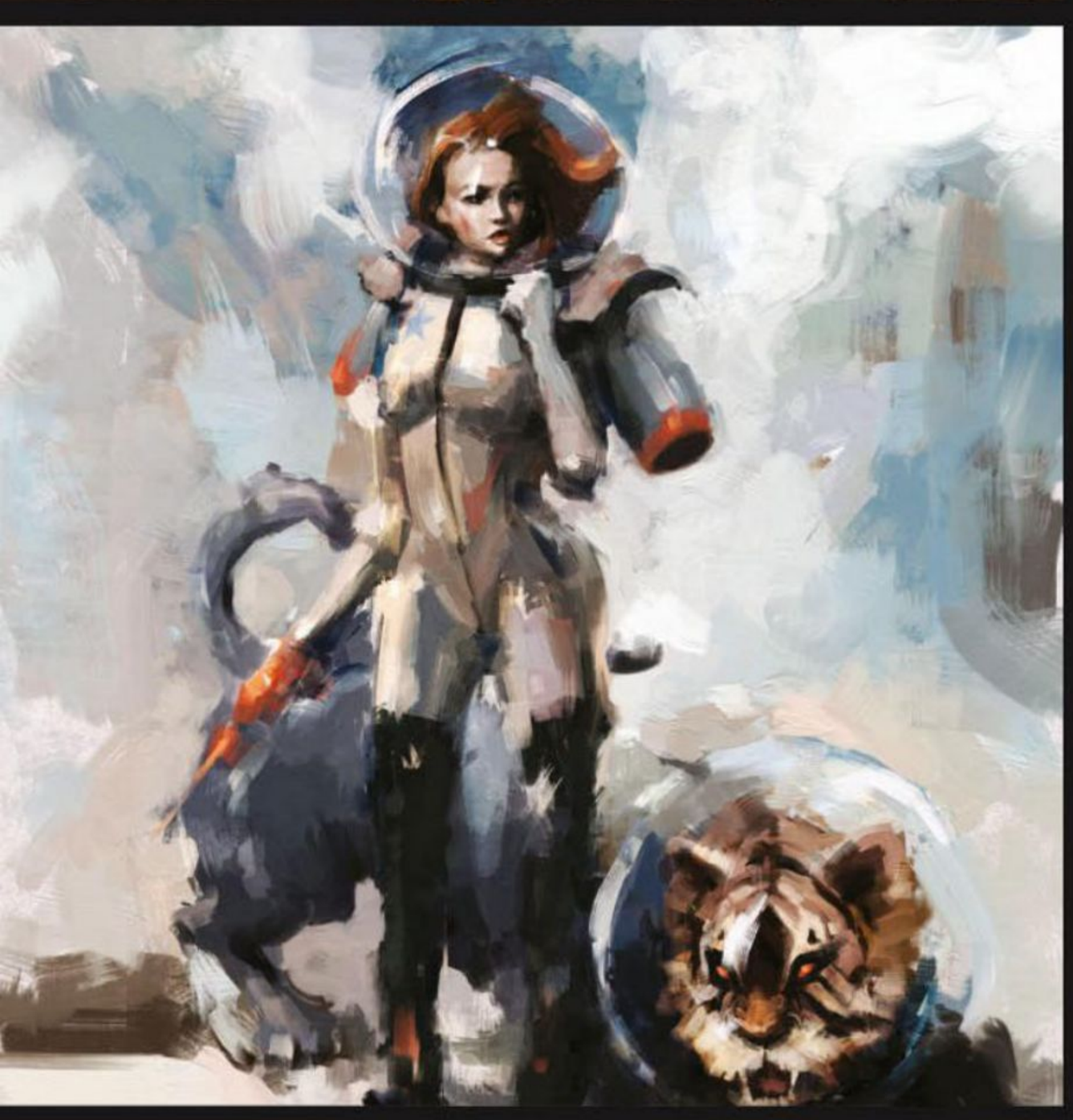

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Whether you are an aspiring hobbyist, student or a seasoned pro, there is something for you at Vertex 2020.

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You'll discover new skills, be able to chat with talent scouts, get your portfolio reviewed and then round the day off with networking drinks at the bar with fellow attendees and speakers and developers. We can't wait to see you there!

Rob Redman,
Editor, 3D World

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VERTEX
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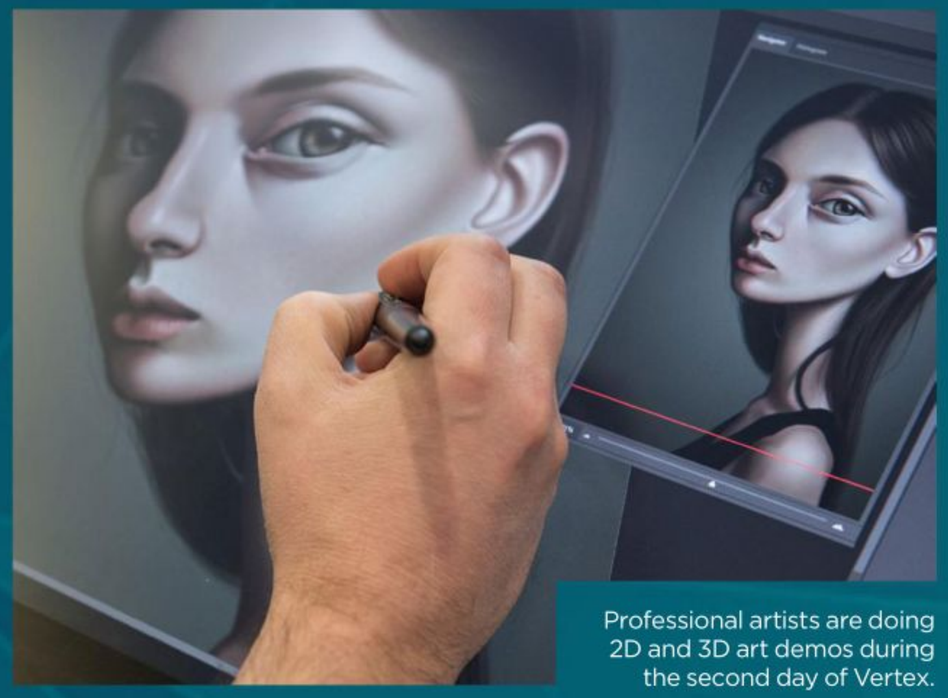
ILM's Alex Wuttke presented a talk at Vertex 2019 on dinosaur design.



Professional artists are doing 2D and 3D art demos during the second day of Vertex.

PIXAR, LOISH AND MORE SET TO ATTEND BIGGEST VERTEX YET

2020 vision Industry-leading 2D and 3D artistic talent join the line-up at the ultimate CG creators event, which is now bigger than ever!

Vertex, the annual conference for 2D and 3D artists, returns for a third time in 2020. Taking place at London's Olympia Conference Centre on 27 and 28 February, the two-day event will feature inspiring talks from industry pros, portfolio reviews, networking opportunities, artist demonstrations and much more.

This will be the first time that Vertex is spread across two days. And to kick things off there'll be a presentation from Pixar in the evening, where the legendary studio will discuss how it utilises its proprietary Renderman technology to create its world-leading animated films.

Shortly after this there will be an animation panel, followed by a drinks reception with a twist as guests are asked to BYOA: bring your own animation. This will be a chance for attendees to get valuable feedback on their showreels from industry pros. This is an opportunity to benefit from world-leading creative insight – you won't want to miss it.

Portfolio reviews at Vertex are your chance to pick up tips from pro artists on how to improve your artwork.

Oculus Medium expert Glen Southern and Atomhawk founder Ron Ashtiani gave talks at Vertex 2019.

Meanwhile, day two will feature workshops from leading studios and artists, including Karla Ortiz, Lois Van Baarle, Goro Fujita, Izzy Burton, Blue Zoo, games studios Media Molecule, Creative Assembly and many more

"I couldn't be more excited about Vertex 2020," says one of the Vertex organisers, and ImagineFX editor,

Claire Howlett. "We're aiming for our biggest and most inspiring event yet. I already know it's going to be one hell of a show, just by looking at the stellar line-up of big-name artists!"

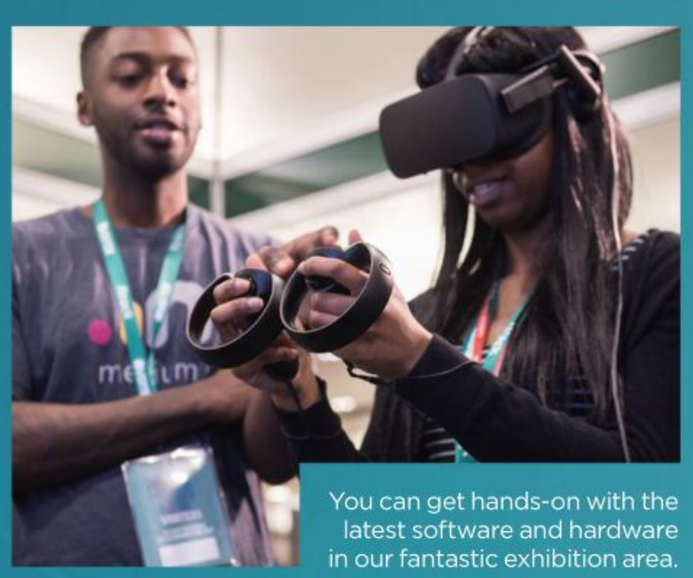
You can book your tickets for Vertex 2020 now by visiting **www.vertexconf.com**. Entry to the exhibition – which includes life drawing and artist demos – is free, while passes to talks and workshops start from £25, or £12 for students.

#vertexconf

VERTEX
THE EVENT FOR 2D & 3D ARTISTS

Leading artist Loish will be giving a workshop entitled How To Be Your Authentic Self at this year's event.

Karla Ortiz, who has worked on Marvel and Star Wars films, is providing expert advice on day two.



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Featured artist: David McLeod

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Come and meet us at Vertex 2020.

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