NO. 1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

ImagineFX

WORKSHOP

LIGHTING IN PROCREATE

How to use light and colour to boost storytelling

ARTIST OF THE YEAR

SUBMIT FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN!

SEE PAGE 10

PLUS!

20 MINUTES TO BETTER SHADING

STAY PHYSICALLY FIT AS AN ARTIST

BUILD UP TEXTURES IN WATERCOLOUR

CREATE YOUR BEST

FANTASY ILLUSTRATION

Discover how **Tran Nguyen** paints timeless, captivating character art, in her workshop and in-depth interview

FUTURE

ISSUE 188

VISUAL ARTS PASSAGE

YOUR COMPASS TO THE ART INDUSTRY

Online classes taught in real-time by award-winning artist as personal mentors.

START TODAY WITH A FREE PORTFOLIO REVIEW

SCAN TO SCHEDULE

+1 (323) 366-7053

Artwork © 2020 Jon Neimeister

Welcome to…

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX

Wow, what an opener to our latest issue! I'm certain you'll agree that having the incredible Tran Nguyen on the cover is a surefire way to begin an amazing edition of ImagineFX. Her work is unmistakable. It's modern yet classic, and quite simply a huge inspiration to me and many others in the art community. After reading her interview on page 38 you'll no doubt be rushing to your sketchbook to get scribbling.

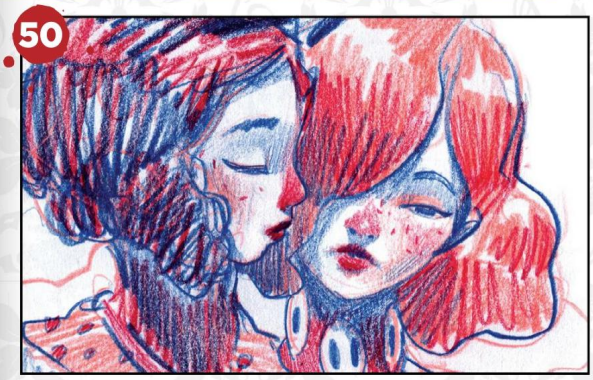
With many people now working from home, we thought it was high time we gathered insight from artists on how they stay fit to be able to create art. You'll get information on what to do if you sit for long periods at a desk, or struggle with repetitive strain injuries. There's also a handy guide to desk exercises (I must do these myself – my back is killing me!). See page 22 for more.

I know it's a trying time for everyone in so many different ways, so make sure you look after yourself and please let me know how you're getting on. Until next issue…

Claire

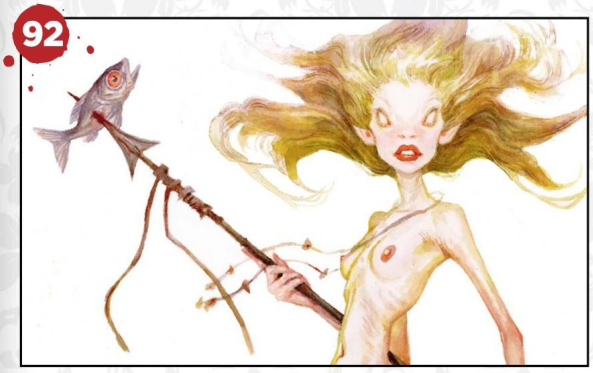
Editor-in-chief
claire@imaginefx.com

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



To the MOON and back
Mournful characters in rainbow-bright coloured pencils. A sketchbook to fit our moods in the current climate.

Max packs it in
Procreate master Max Ulichney takes a detailed look at how to brilliantly light a scene in Procreate.



Watercolour workshop
If you've never tried watercolours before, why not give it a shot? Audrey Benjaminsen shares her process with you.

@imaginefxmagazine
@imaginefx
facebook.com/imaginefx
imaginefx.creativebloq.com
http://ifxm.ag/ifxnewsletter

Sign up for our newsletter!

Subscribe today!
Sign up to ImagineFX so you'll never miss an issue! **Turn the page** to see how you can get 13 editions of art inspiration!

Subscribe and save!

SAVE UP TO 71%*

SIGN UP TODAY!

GREAT REASONS TO SUBSCRIBE

- **Save up to 71 per cent on a digital subscription!**
- Save up to 36 per cent on a print subscription!
- **Exclusive text-free covers for subscribers**
- Never miss an issue, with delivery direct to your door
- **Receive 13 issues a year**

VISIT WWW.MYFAVOURITEMAGAZINES.CO.UK

USE CODE IFX1 AT THE CHECKOUT WHEN ORDERING

***Terms and conditions**: This offer is available to all new subscribers. Applies to all print, digital, and print and digital subscriptions for ImagineFX. Voucher Code **IFX1** provides an additional 10 per cent discount to myfavouritemagazines online sale pricing. The Code can only be redeemed online via **www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk**. You'll receive 13 issues in a subscription year. You can cancel your subscription within 14 days of purchase. Payment is non-refundable after the 14-day cancellation period unless exceptional circumstances apply. Your statutory rights are not affected. Prices correct at point of print and subject to change. Full details of the Direct Debit guarantee are available upon request. Due to the current challenges we have extended the expiry date on this offer for a further two months. For full terms and conditions please visit **www.bit.ly/magterms**. Offer ends 31 August 2020.

Cover art for ImagineFX issue 182 by Fatemeh Haghnejad

Subscribe and save!

Subscribe to ImagineFX and save up to 71 per cent on a digital subscription! See page 4 for details

SUBSCRIBE & SAVE!

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX

Contents

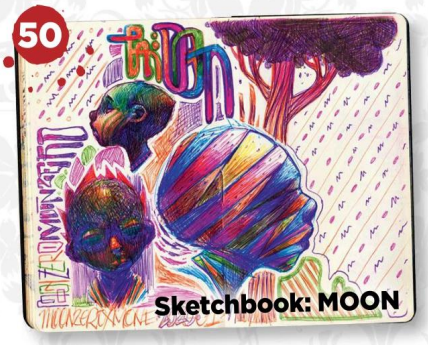
Your art

10 **FXPosé**
Submit your artwork for a chance to become Artist of the Year!

News and events

22 **Stay fit and healthy: how to look after yourself**
Artists on maintaining their physical health.

30 **Artist in Residence: Kerby Rosanes**
We explore this artist's studio/showroom!



Features

38 **Artist Portfolio: Tran Nguyen**
This illustrator's work exhibits calmness, certainty, poise and power.

50 **Sketchbook: MOON**
Colourful sketches of melancholic figures.

Reviews

82 **Software**
84 **Books**

Regulars

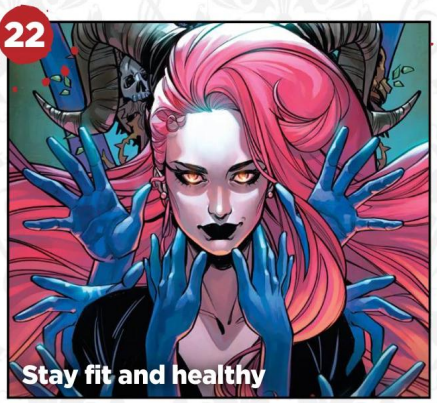
3 **Editor's letter**
4 **Print subscriptions**
8 **Resources**
36 **Digital subscriptions**
37 **Letters**
48 **Recent editions**
72 **Next month**

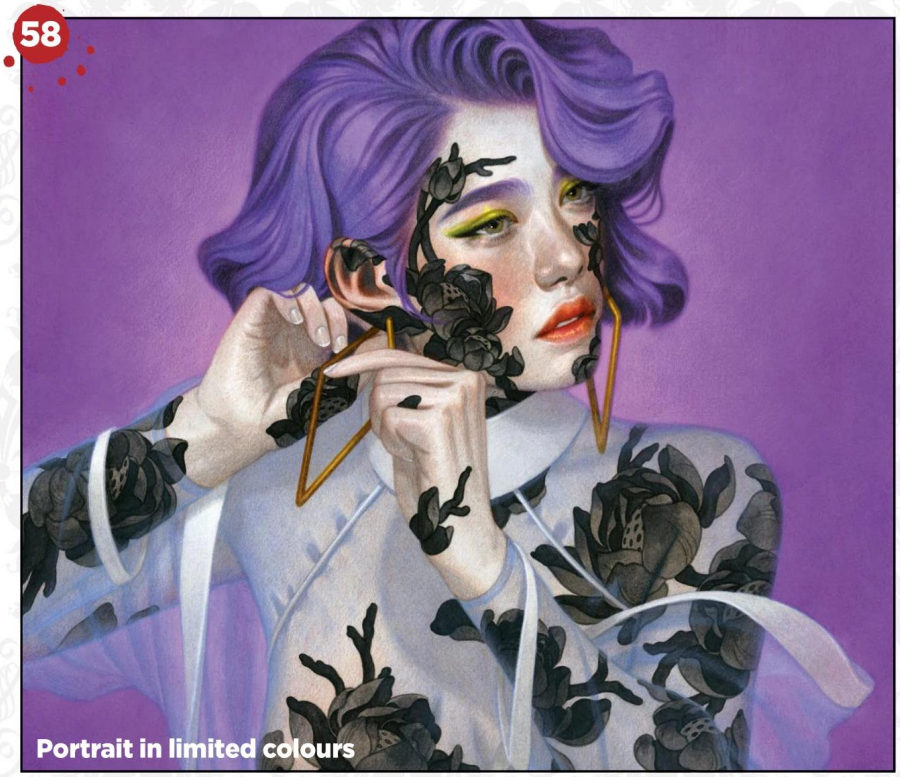
Artist Portfolio

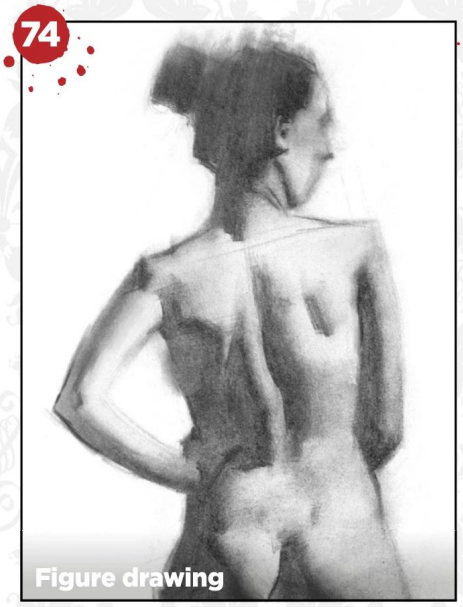
TRAN NGUYEN

"It's best to jump in head first and figure it out as you go"

Tran has this advice for artists thinking of going freelance







Workshops

58 Paint a portrait in limited colours
Learn Tran Nguyen's process of illustrating a female figure in pencil and watercolours.

62 Use lighting to enhance a story
Max Ulichney makes use of Procreate's brush, colour and lighting tools.

70 Colour your painting digitally
Abigail Larson enhances her traditionally painted artwork with digital colours.

74 Draw a figure in 20 minutes
Depict realistic figures using pencil and charcoal, with Chris Legaspi.

Traditional Artist

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

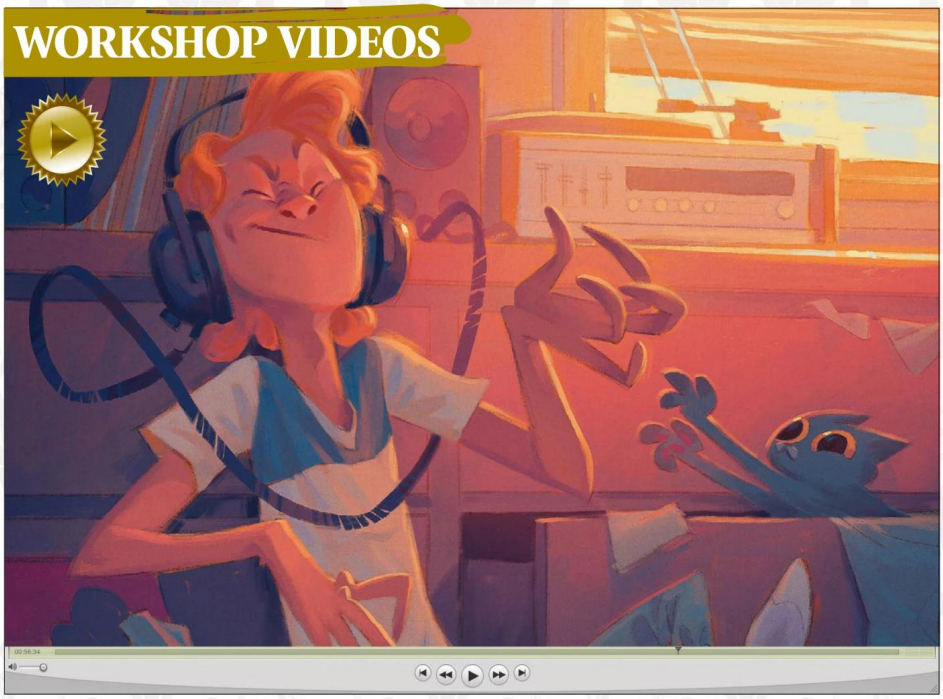
92 Workshop: Create texture in watercolours
Audrey Benjaminsen reveals how she creates a golden mermaid full of luminous layers in watercolours.

98 First Impressions: Margaret Morales
Playing video games has had a strong influence on this Filipino visual artist.

ImagineFX Resources

Getting hold of this issue's resources is easy.
Just visit **https://ifxm.ag/fantasy188illustration**

WORKSHOP VIDEOS



Boost your storytelling through the use of lighting

Watch how Max Ulichney makes full use of Procreate's brush, colour and lighting tools to enhance his artwork of a boy listening to music. See page 62 for Max's detailed workshop.

New watercolour skills

See how Audrey Benjaminsen builds up colours and textures. There's more on page 92.

DESK EXERCISES

Keep in shape while you paint

Use this handy chart to stay healthy while working at your desk. More advice on page 22.

ARTIST ALLEY

Did you miss our virtual Artist Alley last issue? Download the PDF and share to support your fellow artists.

ImagineFX

Editorial
Editor-in-Chief **Claire Howlett**
claire@imaginefx.com
Art Editor **Daniel Vincent**
Operations Editor **Cliff Hope**

Contributors
Audrey Benjaminsen, Dom Carter, Abigail Larson, Chris Legaspi, MOON, Tom May, Beren Neale, Tran Nguyen, Kerby Rosanes, Max Ulichney, Antony Ward

Advertising
Media packs are available on request
Chief Revenue Officer **Zack Sullivan**
UK Commercial Sales Director **Clare Dove**
Advertising Sales Manager **Mike Pyatt**
michael.pyatt@futurenet.com, 01225 687538
Account Sales Director **George Lucas**
george.lucas@futurenet.com, 01225 687331

International Licensing
ImagineFX is available for licensing. Contact the Licensing team to discuss partnership opportunities.
Head of Print Licensing **Rachel Shaw** licensing@futurenet.com

Subscriptions – turn to page 4!
Email enquiries **contact@myfavouritemagazines.co.uk**
UK orderline & enquiries **0344 848 2852**
Overseas order line and enquiries **+44 344 848 2852**
Online orders **www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk**
Group Marketing Director
Magazines & Memberships **Sharon Todd**

Circulation
Head of Newstrade **Tim Mathers**

Production
Head of Production **Mark Constance**
Production Project Manager **Clare Scott**
Advertising Production Manager **Joanne Crosby**
Digital Editions Controller **Jason Hudson**
Production Manager **Vivienne Calvert**

Management
Editor-in-Chief, Creative & Design **Claire Howlett**
Senior Art Editor, Creative & Design **Will Shum**
Head of Art & Design **Greg Whittaker**
Managing Director, Prosumer **Keith Walker**
Chief Content Officer **Aaron Asadi**
Commercial Finance Director **Dan Jotcham**

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

All contents © 2020 Future Publishing Limited or published under licence. All rights reserved. No part of this magazine may be used, stored, transmitted or reproduced in any way without the prior written permission of the publisher. Future Publishing Limited (company number 2008885) is registered in England and Wales. Registered office: Quay House, The Ambury, Bath BA1 1UA. All information contained in this publication is for information only and is, as far as we are aware, correct at the time of going to press. Future cannot accept any responsibility for errors or inaccuracies in such information. You are advised to contact manufacturers and retailers directly with regard to the price of products/services referred to in this publication. Apps and websites mentioned in this publication are not under our control. We are not responsible for their contents or any other changes or updates to them. This magazine is fully independent and not affiliated in any way with the companies mentioned herein.

If you submit material to us, you warrant that you own the material and/or have the necessary rights/permissions to supply the material and you automatically grant Future and its licensees a licence to publish your submission in whole or in part in any/all issues and/or editions of publications, in any format published worldwide and on associated websites, social media channels and associated products. Any material you submit is sent at your own risk and, although every care is taken, neither Future nor its employees, agents, subcontractors or licensees shall be liable for loss or damage. We assume all unsolicited material is for publication unless otherwise stated, and reserve the right to edit, amend or adapt all submissions.

We are committed to only using magazine paper which is derived from responsibly managed, certified forestry and chlorine-free manufacture. The paper in this magazine was sourced and produced from sustainable managed forests, conforming to strict environmental and socioeconomic standards. The manufacturing paper mill holds full FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certification and accreditation

ipso. For press freedom with responsibility

Widely Recycled

FUTURE
Connectors. Creators. Experience Makers.

Future plc is a public company quoted on the London Stock Exchange (symbol: FUTR)
www.futureplc.com

Chief executive **Zillah Byng-Thorne**
Non-executive chairman **Richard Huntingford**
Chief financial officer **Penny Ladkin-Brand**

Tel +44 (0)1225 442 244

Master your canvas.

Paint with a digital art studio that is up to every creative challenge. If you want to stand out from the competition, and step up your game, Painter has the tools needed to realize your vision.

Download a **FREE** 30-day trial at:
www.painterartist.com/future

Painter® 20/20

We are the only specialist arts university in the North of England. We offer specialist creative postgraduate, undergraduate and further education courses, dedicated professional staff and award-winning facilities.

LEEDS ARTS UNIVERSITY EST. 1846

www.leeds-art.ac.uk

Our courses include:
MA Animation
MA Creature Design
MA Graphic Design
MA Graphic Novel
MA Illustration
MA Worldbuilding
BA (Hons) Animation
BA (Hons) Comic & Concept Art
BA (Hons) Graphic Design
BA (Hons) Illustration

Image:
Rosemary Chalmers

In association with Corel® Painter® 20/20

FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

ImagineFX ARTIST OF THE MONTH

1

Berkan Özkan

LOCATION: Turkey **MEDIA:** Photoshop, ZBrush, Keyshot, Daz 3D, Blender **WEB:** https://berkanozkan.

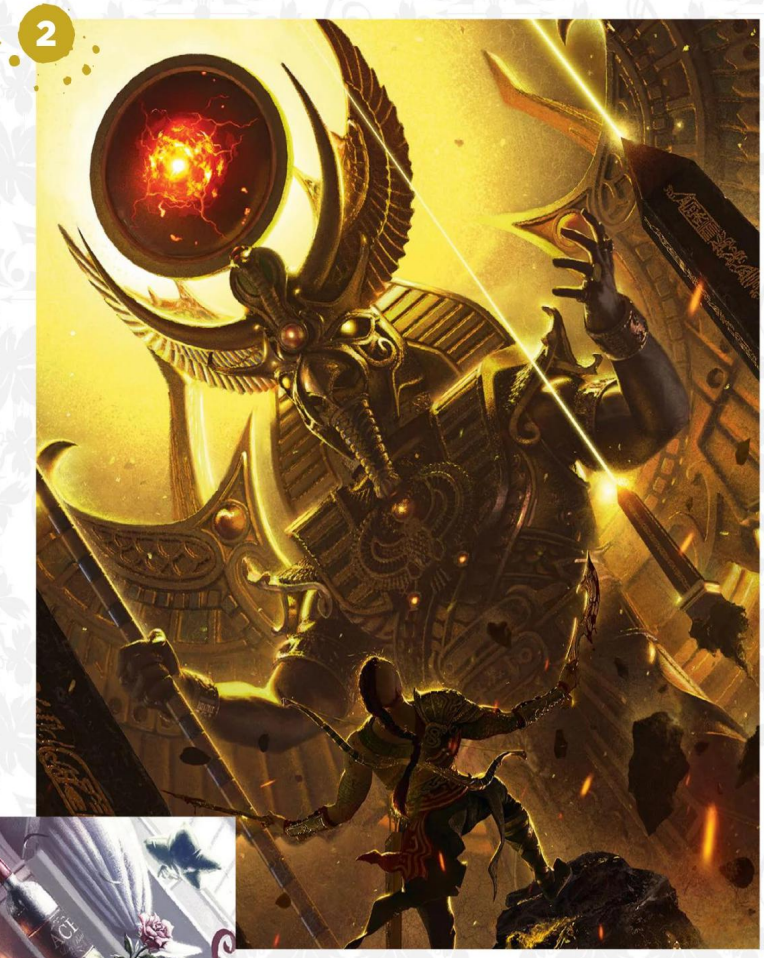
After working as a civil engineer, Berkan chose to study art. "Since then I've been working as a freelance illustrator on comics, children's books and games."

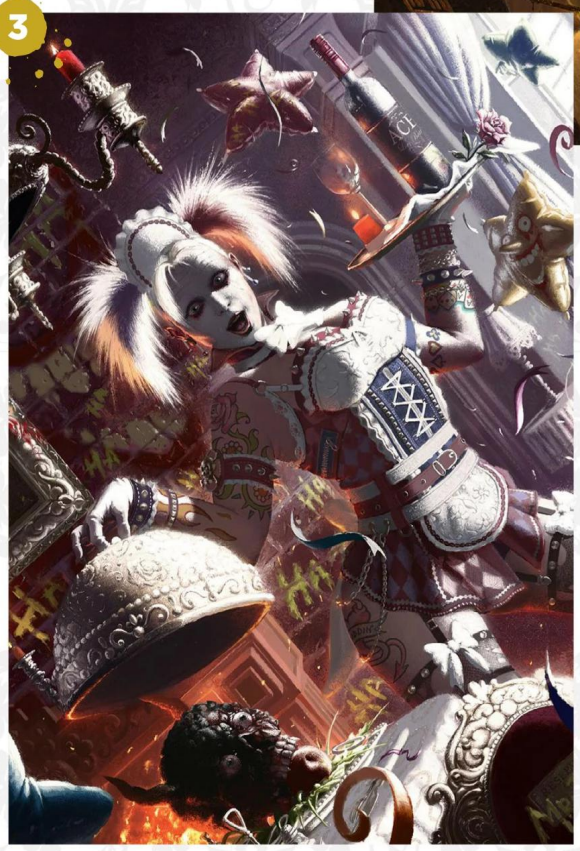
1 BENZIN
"This is a cyborg-commando-rabbit character, which I designed for my own personal comic project."

2 GOD OF WAR
"A God of War game set in ancient Egypt would be amazing! Here I've painted a grown-up Atreus versus Ra."

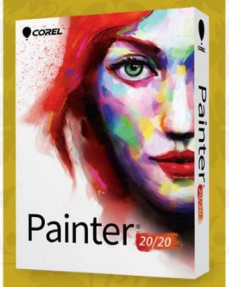
3 HARLEY QUINN
"My interpretation of the famous cupid of crime. She's getting the dinner ready for a romantic night in."

4 AVENGERS
"I've always loved the classic Avengers costumes, so I painted the original four in a dynamic composition."





Congratulations to Berkan who becomes our first Artist of the Month to receive a copy of **Corel Painter 2020**, together with an **Ultimate Brush Pack** containing over 600 unique brushes, worth over **£1,500**, courtesy of our friends Corel!



We'll reveal the **Artist of the Year** at Vertex 2021, chosen from all our Artists of the Month between now and the event. **www.vertexconf.com**

HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR WORK

Please send us:
- Five high-res (300dpi) images of your work, with a title and a 30-word caption for each.
- Your name, the software you use, location and website.
- 50 words about you.
- A photo of yourself.

Email this info to: fxpose@imaginefx.com
More info and T&Cs: **https://ifxm.ag/artistofthemonth**

Submit your work: https://ifxm.ag/artistofthemonth

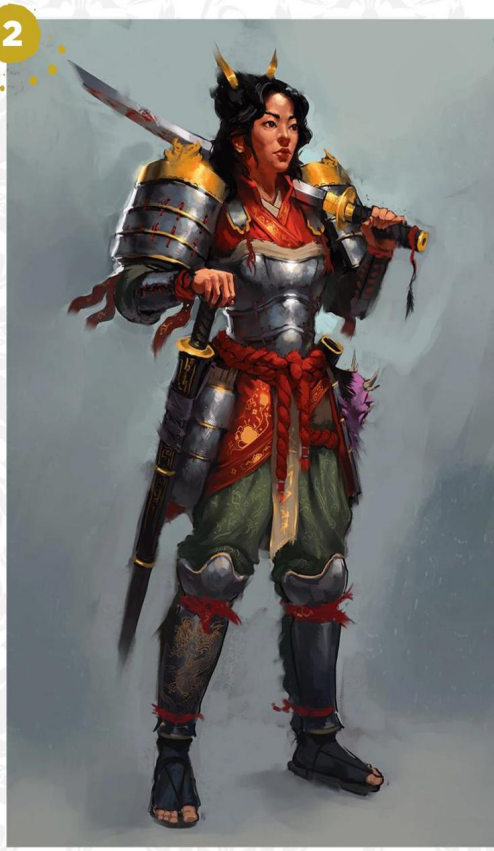
Harry Rowland

LOCATION: England **MEDIA:** Photoshop, Procreate **WEB:** www.artstation.com/harryrowland

Harry is a student who's currently studying game art at UCA (University for the Creative Arts). "I'm inspired by the human form and take a keen interest in anatomy as well as classical artists," he tells us.

1

2



1 INHERITORS OF ESCHATON
"My brief was to depict survivors in a desert landscape with remnants of a previously great civilisation."

2 OKIMI
"This was designed to be the main character in the video game I'm working on. I wanted to create a powerful and strong female character."

3 MEI
"The brief was to create a vicious female cyborg assassin. I'm happy with how it eventually turned out."

4 ERAXAR THE BANISHED
"Once a high guard of the empire, Eraxar was exiled for his crimes. Now he's a mercenary-for-hire."

5 ONI
"Another figure for my video game. This was a chance to test my anatomy knowledge and create something otherworldly yet believable."

Submit your work: https://ifxm.ag/artistofthemonth

3

4

5

Stella Spente

LOCATION: Sweden **MEDIA:** Photoshop **WEB:** www.hereafter.se

Stella loves art and storytelling related to horror, history and fantasy, and reveals that, "My biggest inspirations are biomechanics, Old Norse folklore, and the mysterious things that go bump in the night."

1

1 AFFORDABLE HORSEPOWER
"I painted something I'd like to have myself. Who wouldn't want to tear down the highway on a twin-engine motor-horse?"

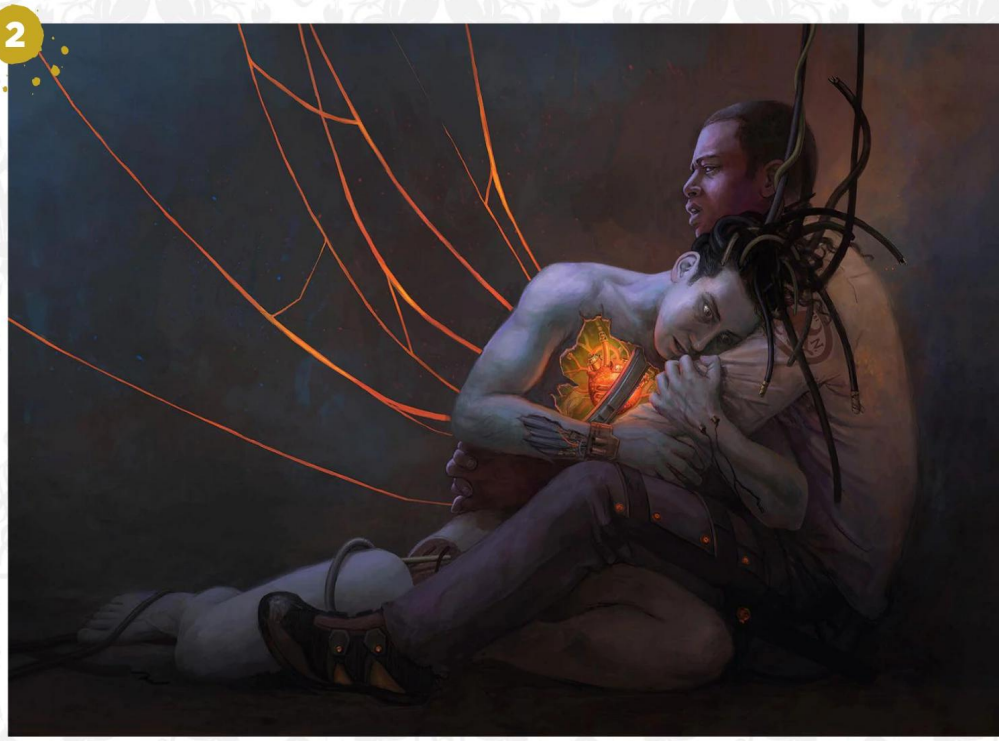
2 BACKBONE PRACTISE
"A damaged cyborg learning to live with a new, weak spine and finding strength in a friend."

3 THOR'S FISHING TRIP
" This is based on the Viking tale about Thor fishing with a giant. The giant knows that if the snake's head rises above the water the world will end."

4 THE WITCH
"A male witch looking at us through his pet monkey. Or maybe it's the monkey that's the witch?"

5 DRAGON LADY
"This lady has a very expandable tattoo – it's a pet and body decoration all in one. I love painting scales so this was a lot of fun."

2



Submit your work: https://ifxm.ag/artistofthemonth

3

4

5

Katerina Poliakova

LOCATION: England **MEDIA:** Photoshop **WEB:** www.artstation.com/katerinapoliakova

Katerina is a freelance artist who also holds a biology degree. "I love games and I enjoy creating art for them," she explains. "My deepest dream is to work on Magic: The Gathering art."

1 WARRIOR
"I enjoyed painting this old, experienced warrior who was created especially for a Dungeons & Dragons campaign."

2 VEDAGOR
"This is a cunning volhv, or shaman, who's one of the main characters from a personal project called Cat Whiskiers Tavern."

© RedTurbanPress

© Red Turban Press

3 SCHOLAR
"I imagined this old scholar mumbling something about his experiment not going exactly as planned."

4 PISCES
"This mighty mermaid represents the zodiac sign Pisces. The illustration was painted for the board game Zodiac War, set to be a Kickstarter campaign this year."

Submit your work: https://ifxm.ag/artistofthemonth

4

© Zodiac War

Dan Watson

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

"I studied and worked as a mechanical design engineer before becoming a full-time illustrator," says Dan. Now he enjoys painting and drawing dreams and nightmares inspired by mythology and folklore.

1 MINOTAUR
"You can probably tell that I enjoy painting spooky scenes. Foggy scenes are some of my favourites."

2 MONSTER OF ELENDHAVEN
"This piece was named after and even inspired by Jennifer Giesbrecht's fantastic story."

3 DREAMS AND NIGHTMARES
"I wanted to paint the moment this creature turns to meet your eyes in the stillness of the forest."

4 MIRROR MIRROR
"Inspired by Celtic folklore. I went to the Wallace collection in London to look at all the different kinds of armour on display."

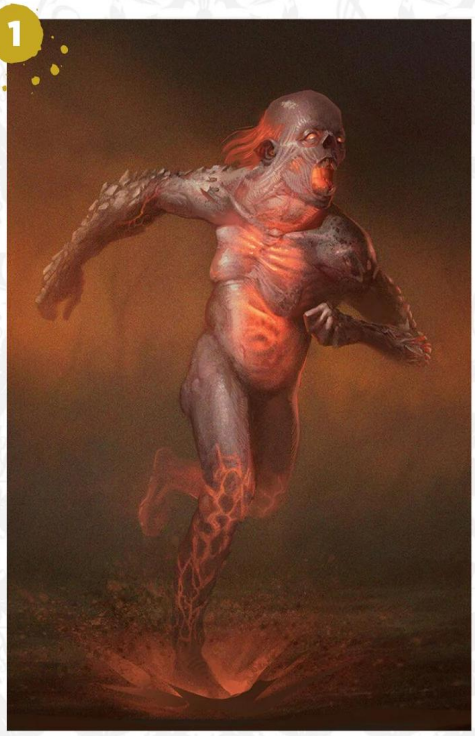
Submit your work: https://ifxm.ag/artistofthemonth

Olivier Bolduc

LOCATION: Canada **MEDIA:** Photoshop **WEB:** www.artstation.com/obolduc1

"I work as a 2D artist in an indie video game studio in Montreal," says Olivier. "When I draw, I seek inspiration in nature and animals we're not used to seeing. For me, the weirder the better!"

1



2

1 FLAMING GUY
"This piece started as a study from a Vance Kovacs concept. But then, I got carried away by my love of anatomy, and only the pose remains."

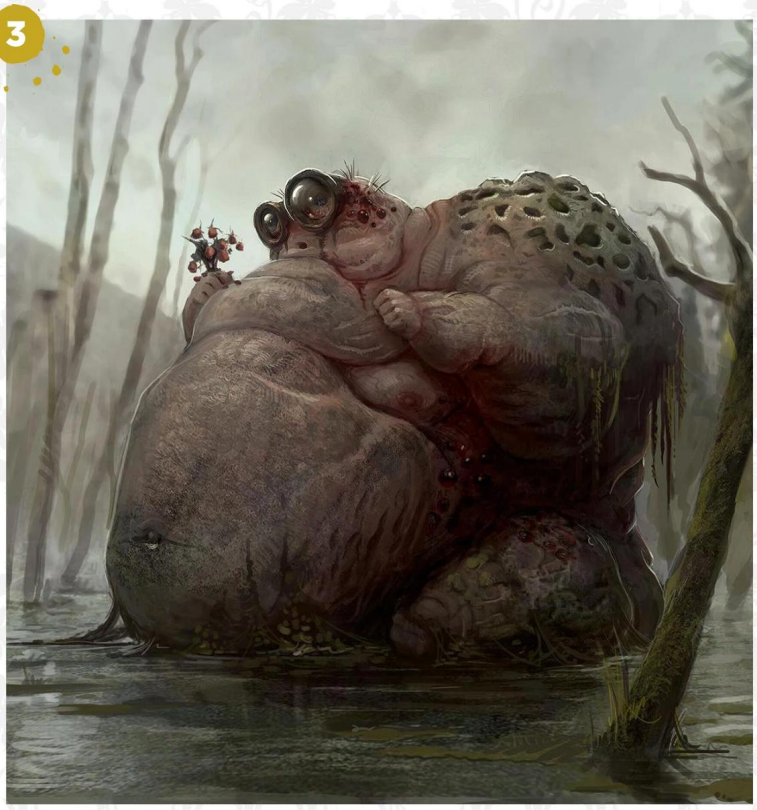
2 GIRL CATTLE CORGI
"I simply wanted to illustrate my girlfriend's crazy yet adorable personality. And watched one too many Apterus [Peter Polach] videos."

3 CREEPY BOB
"Bob's a beloved character from PewDiePie's Pixelings, which I worked on. I was curious to see what a creepier version would look like."

4 ROTTEN BERG
"A weird creature creeping out of the shadows. The only thing missing was a huge mouth and big bad teeth. Also from PewDiePie's game Pixelings."

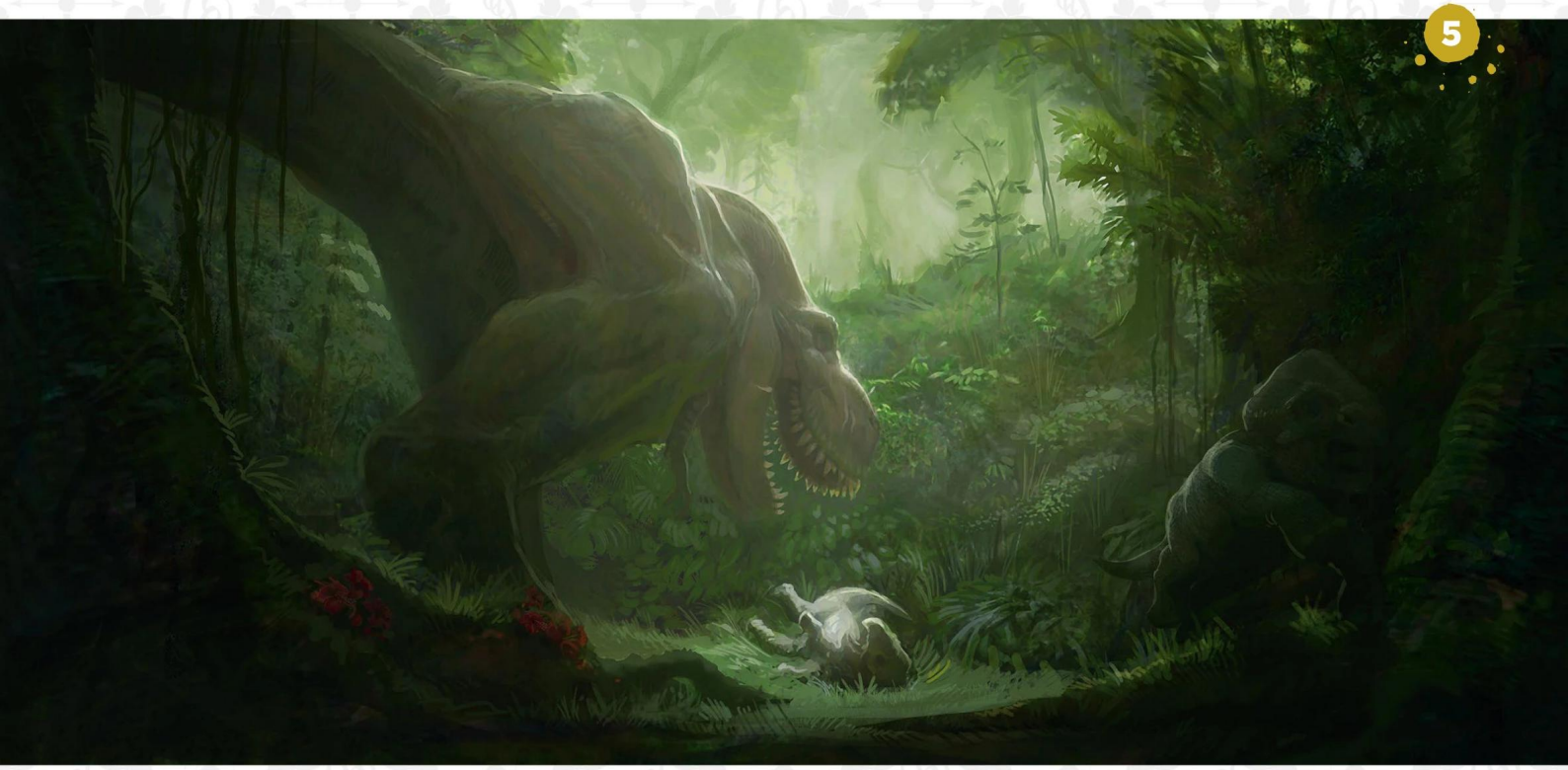
5 NATURAL SELECTION
"I wanted to create a more complete story than I had done before, and emphasise the vulnerability of the victim."

3



4

5



Painter® 20/20

The latest version of the painting software that recreates natural media will enable you to quickly create art in a multitude of styles, with over 900 fully customisable brushes!

- Natural-Media® that replicates reality
- Exclusive media types
- GPU enhanced brushing
- Built-in learning resources
- Customisable workspace & brushes

MAC & PC

www.painterartist.com/en/product/painter

Submit your work: https://ifxm.ag/artistofthemonth

ARTIST NEWS, SOFTWARE & EVENTS

ImagineNation

AT THE CORE OF THE DIGITAL ART COMMUNITY

© Archie Comics

CAREERS ADVICE
Read the inside scope on how to get a foot in the door at ILM, from the very artists who you could be working with. Just remember us come Oscar night...
Page 28

CABINETS OF CURIOSITIES
Illustrator Kerby Rosanes has put his immense toy collection on show in his studio. He says it's about inspiration; we say it's just to make us jealous!
Page 30

LET'S HEAR YOUR VIEWS!
Drop us a line with your opinions on ImagineFX – what you liked, what you want to see more of, or just to tell us how you're getting on with your art journey.
Page 37

10 DESK EXERCISES
How to stay healthy while working at your desk.
See page 8

"I recommend Taiso stretching videos on YouTube," says Melissa Malone on creating a body-friendly workspace.

Stay fit and healthy: how to look after yourself

Body guards Artists rely on their bodies as much as their tools. **Dom Carter** hears how creators should look after them

The Covid-19 crisis is affecting all aspects of life, and as we go to press people are still being asked to work from home wherever possible. For full-time artists this can be an easier task compared to a lot of professions, yet perhaps now more than ever it's a good time to analyse your home setup and ensure that you're not putting your well-being at risk.

Besides the mental health issues we covered in issue 186, artists face physical strains as a result of their day-to-day work – whether it's at home or (during normal times) in a commercial studio setting. Left unchecked, these can turn into serious complications, so it's important to recognise the warning signs and equip yourself with the right tools that will look after your body.

"In my home studio I have a stepper, lots of music, my favourite TV shows and my five cats," says Laura Braga.

> "I was suddenly aware of how much weight I put on my left elbow..."

So what physical ailments do artists face? "Most complain about bad backs and carpal tunnel," says comic artist **PJ Holden**, who was also subject to elbow bursitis. "I was suddenly aware of how much weight I put on my left elbow. I draw with my right hand and would rest my left elbow on a table and rest my head in my hand while I work."

"I build down-days into my schedule to ensure if I do have a bad day or two, it won't kill any deadlines," says PJ Holden.

Meanwhile art director **Melissa Malone** adds that the most common physical health problem for artists is, "without a doubt repetitive stress injuries (RSI), usually in the wrists, neck and shoulder pain and visual impairments." Just like PJ's elbow issues, RSI are a result of how artists work. "I work at a Cintiq for ➳

"I injured myself in my first year of university, pulling an all-nighter for a deadline that ultimately didn't matter," says Anna Hollinrake.

© Archie Comics

"Whenever I'm absorbed by my work, I often forget to take breaks and this can cause some physical issues," says Laura.

eight hours a day so I have to be mindful of the way I'm sitting, or the pain in my trapezius muscle will flare up," adds Melissa.

LISTEN TO YOUR BODY

To avoid poor working habits causing problems down the line, it's crucial to listen to your body. **Anna Hollinrake**, principal artist at Mediatonic, says pain, tension and heat are signs that artists need to give their bodies a rest. "I feel tension in my forearm and trapezius muscles if I've been painting or hunching over for too long," she says. "If my thumb is getting worn out I'll get a 'pulling' sensation along it. Don't ignore those feelings. 'Painting through the pain' is a terrible idea!"

On top of this, Melissa points out that pains in an artist's back and neck can present themselves in ways that aren't straightforward, such as headaches and dizziness. "Fatigue, general anxiety and tightness are warning signs that you need to revise how you're working," she explains.

Visual artist **Laura Braga** adds that this all feeds into an artist's emotional well-being, which is also useful for highlighting the need for a course-correction. "Professional artists are lucky: we work with our biggest passion," she says. "If we realise that we're losing our passion or interest, that means it's time to change our working methods."

This is all good in theory, but how can an artist look after themselves in the face of demanding schedules? For Anna, an accommodating studio can play an important role. "In my last job we would do Taiso Time. Everyone working on the show would get up and follow a three-minute Japanese radio calisthenics stretching video at 3.30pm every day. It's definitely not industry practice, but I wish it was. We did somewhat have the energy of being part of a cult, but I also massively reduced my back stiffness and general neck pain by doing them."

Melissa also enjoyed the benefits of an understanding studio. "We've been offered discounted gym memberships and massages, and standing desks have been made available if you

> **"Don't ignore those feelings. 'Painting through the pain' is a terrible idea!"**

© Marvel

PJ found overworking bad for both his body and mind. "I would draw and draw and get three or four pages done, and go to bed feeling awful because I knew I could do more."

In a previous job, Anna was encouraged to do dynamic stretches. "As well as working your whole body, it was a nice energy boost!"

"I've found the best solution to muscle tension is a microwavable heat compress," says Melissa. "I use a Wheatybag and apply it a few times a day."

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

IMPROVE YOUR WORK SPACE

An ergonomic studio makes for a healthy, happy artist…

1 Follow ergonomic guidelines at your desk

"Make sure your elbows are at right angles to your desk and the top of your monitor is at least two inches above your eye line," says Anna Hollinrake. "Have a chair with good back support and engage your body when you're working. Keep your core tight and pull your shoulder blades back – try imagining that you're holding a pencil between them. Ultimately though, get up and move your body as frequently as possible."

2 Dim the lights

"Avoid bright lighting because it can be harsh on the eyes, especially if you're using a Cintiq as they tend to bounce the light," says PJ Holden. "My workplace is always very bright, but I've managed to adjust the light intensity," adds Laura Braga.

3 Find the right position

Melissa reveals, "I position my drawing table at a high angle (my pencilling board sits around 55 degrees) and my Cintiq sits about 30 degrees. But I can pull the Cintiq into my body so I don't need to stretch too far from it."

4 Source supportive furniture

"A standing desk is great to keep you moving around a lot, but can be pricey," says Anna. "I have a cheaper crank-operated one, but I'm too lazy to wind it up half the time. A good-quality adjustable desk chair and monitor raisers go a long way, though!"

5 Step away from it

PJ Holden works with a Pomodoro timer, which means he takes five minute breaks after 25 minute bursts of work. "I think walking away from the table and changing posture is all helpful. If not actually exercise, it is at least very useful," he says.

PJ looks after himself by aiming for two pages of inks or pencils a day. "You're still batting an average of a page a day, but two pages feels reasonable to me."

© DC Comics

"I like to get a massage whenever my back is feeling tight," says Anna. "Plus, it's a good way to relax and treat yourself!"

have a note from a physio. While these things all help, the responsibility is on the artist to make sure they're not working excessive hours without stretching. You'll likely move studios multiple times in your career, but you only have one body."

FREELANCING FROM HOME

It's a slightly different story for freelancers. "I work from home, so my well-being falls to me," says PJ. "I work with deadlines, and can, usually work around any ill health. Though I might start stretching at the start of the day."

Tight schedules are also a concern for Laura. "There isn't much room for my own fitness, but it's necessary. Many publishers are quite flexible with deadlines, but publications follow fixed dates, so time management is key."

"To keep my legs in a more comfortable and relaxed posture, I use an adjustable platform for my feet so that I can stretch my legs," says Laura.

Looking for ergonomic art tools? "I use an Intuos at home because it improves my posture," Laura recommends.

"The responsibility is on the artist to make sure they're not working excessive hours without stretching"

With the onus on the artist to look after their body, it's unsurprising that there's no one-size-fits-all solution. "I ride my exercise bike and do a steps workout, but mainly a routine of workout exercises on a mat," says Laura. Eye-level monitors and a microwaveable heated compress are what Melissa uses to ease her aches and pains. "I find doing half an hour of yoga two or three times a week at the recommendation of my physio has helped a great deal as well." As for Anna, she goes for a massage once every month or two. "Your back supports your arms and your wrists, so it's good to have any muscle knots or tension points worked out."

"And mental health can be just as important as physical health," says PJ. "For me, that means not piling on unnecessary pressure. One way I avoid that is by setting out a schedule of work for the week and limiting that to two big ticket items per day.

"The other way I manage my mental health is to have an outlet. I do a regular podcast with some friends of mine (**www.sunnysideshow.com**) where we talk nonsense about our lives. I laugh like a drain doing the show and it's a great vent."

How to get a job at ILM

Tom May speaks to ILM and discovers what skills you need to join the studio's concept art team

It's many artists' dream to work on a big film like Star Wars and with Industrial Light & Magic's London studio always looking out for new talent, it's possible to turn that dream into a reality.

At our Vertex event from earlier this year, ILM's Jason Horley, Pablo Dominguez and Bimpe Alliu gave a talk on that very topic. Here, we bring you the highlights, and reveal how to create a well-rounded and varied portfolio that's geared towards the requirements of ILM.

BECOME FAMILIAR WITH 3D TOOLS

It's been a source of debate among concept artists for some time: do you need 3D skills, or can you get by on 2D talent alone? Well, **Jason** was emphatic that at ILM at least, that debate is over. "Every artist in our department has to have the ability to work in both 2D and 3D," he said. "In our work, speed is a key factor, so you need to be versatile, and adapt to whatever the brief is. I've been to universities and met people studying concept art and I'm surprised that some of them still aren't using 3D yet. It can be a bit daunting, but it's definitely an essential tool."

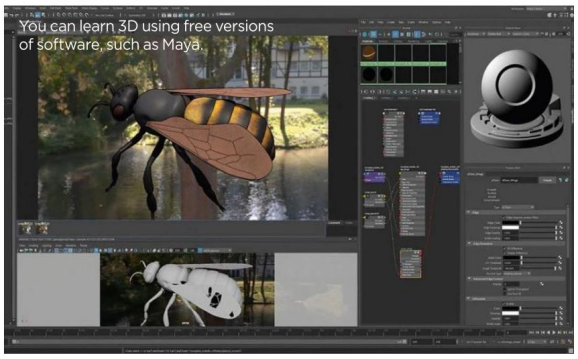
That said, you don't have to invest in expensive software. "There are some free packages out there," pointed out **Bimpe**. "For example, Maya has a free student version, and Blender's totally free, even though it's an industry worthy tool."

SIMPLIFY YOUR ART

During their talk the ILM team showed the audience paintings that Jason had previously submitted as part of his artist portfolio. And one of the themes that emerged was the need to simplify your concept art – something that the artist had definitely taken on board.

When you're creating an illustration, you can put in as much detail as you like, said Jason. But concept art serves a specific purpose, and so needs to be crafted differently. "Directors look at these images so quickly, they have to be very clear; a quick read. Too much detail means you don't know where to look. What you're trying to convey is atmosphere, lighting and mood. If the colour, light and values are good, you can jettison all that extra detail."

How do you know if you've got it right? "From far away, it needs to be something clean and clear, not noisy," said Bimpe. "You want to be able to squint and recognise what those shapes are – get an immediate mood and sense of a story."



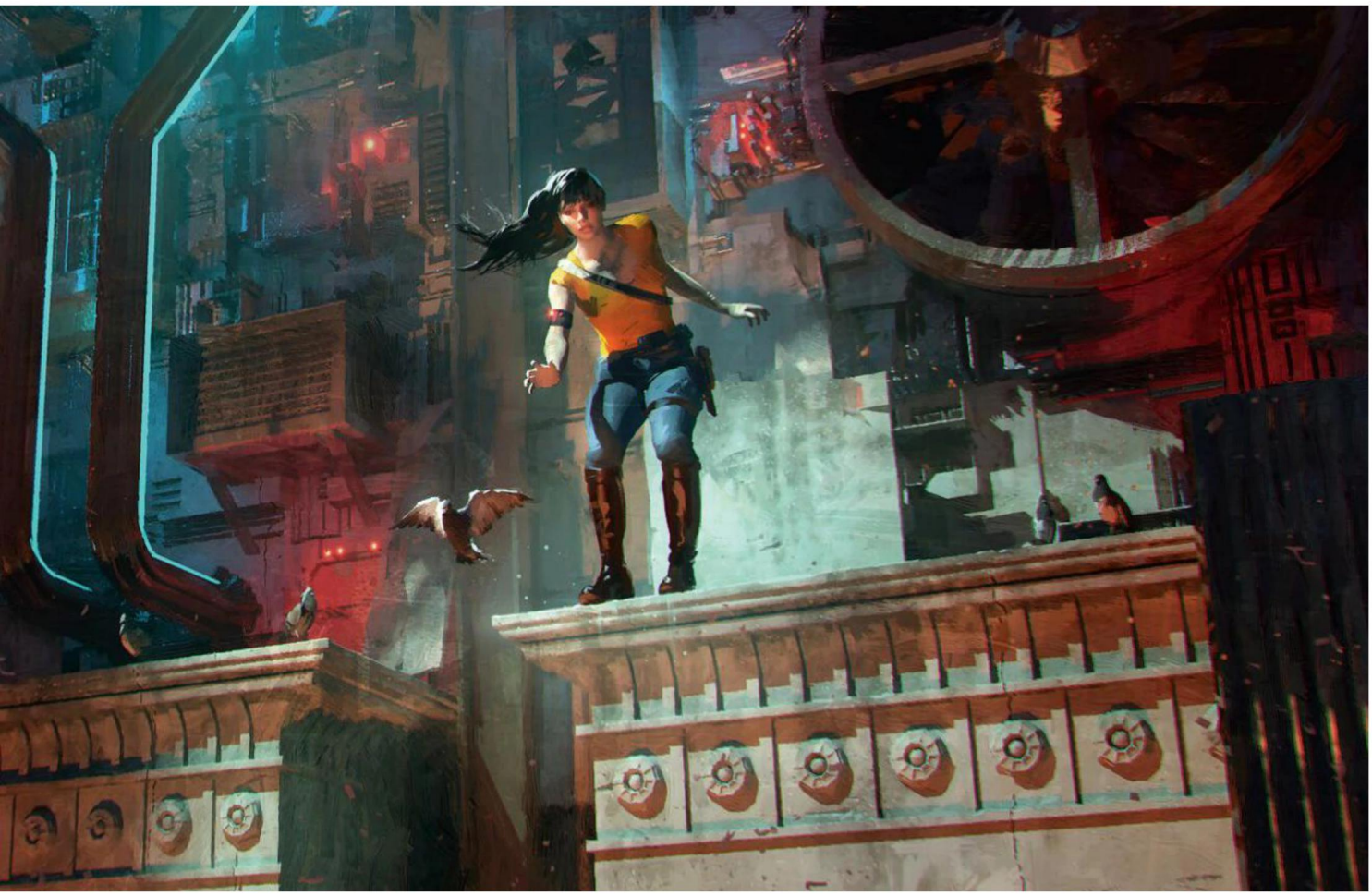
You can learn 3D using free versions of software, such as Maya.

An example of ILM concept artist Pablo Dominguez's personal work.

Of course, simplification alone only gets you so far. The team showed the audience several pieces that may have struck the right level of simplicity, but looked unbalanced and lacked a strong focus. "So it's not only about reducing detail, but thinking about strong composition," said Jason.

LEARN ABOUT COLOUR AND LIGHT

Film-making is famously known as "painting with light", and capturing light successfully in your work is a



Personal art by Jason Horley, supervising art director at ILM.

good way to get the attention of ILM's art department. "When we see portfolios, colour theory is something we often find missing," said Jason. "For instance a lot of people, when they go to shadow areas of their painting, often just go to black."

You might think you've learned all the theory you need to know at art school, he added, but that may not be the case. "When I worked at Disney, which was 2D and traditional, they taught me about staging, about colour, about bounce light, about sky reflections... about all these things that I never learned when I was at college."

For self-study, Jason recommended two books: Color and Light: A Guide for the Realist Painter by James Gurney; and Vision: Color and Composition for Film by Hans Bacher. And you need to practise constantly to translate this theory into action. "Any personal work you do should be a learning process," he noted.

STUDY CAMERA LENSES

Here's something you might not have considered: to become a successful concept artist, you need to understand something about film-making technologies. That's because although you're not making the film yourself, the person who is will talk in those terms, and you need your concept art to match their requests.

"For instance, often a director will talk about rendering a scene with a particular camera lens, such as a long lens," explained Jason. "So you need to know what that means in order to translate their vision into your concept art."

> **"When we see portfolios, colour theory is something we often find missing"**

Interestingly, the ILM team revealed that you don't have to be an experienced concept artist to apply to work at ILM. "There are other routes in," said Bimpe. "There's nothing wrong with working as a runner and working your way up that way. And we employ art assistants, too."

Indeed, one of ILM's current art assistants secured the job by approaching them at 2018's Vertex event, revealed Jason. "She was the very last person who came up to chat with us, and she showed us her sketches," he recalled. "We said to her: 'Go away and learn 3D'. And a couple of months later, she sent me all this stuff that showed she'd done exactly that. We were really impressed, and hired her as an assistant. So you don't have to be a fully fledged concept artist already – there are other ways in."

DON'T SUBMIT FAN ART

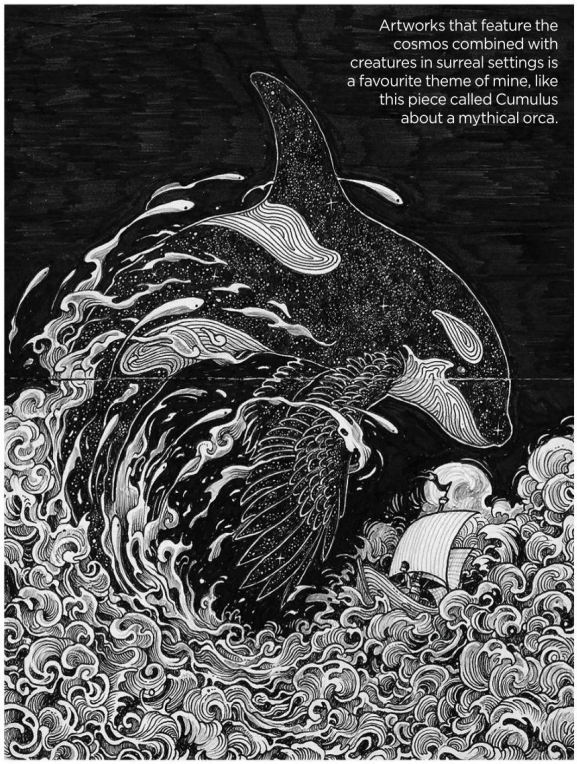
Finally, you might think, "ILM makes Star Wars, I love making Star Wars art, so I should include that in my portfolio." But you'd be making a big mistake.

If you think about it, the job of a concept artist is primarily to come up with new concepts. So fan art is an emphatic no-no. "We often see people have Baby Yodas or Jokers in their portfolio, but what's the point?" said Jason. "If you want to show a cool painting of a superhero character, create something new."

My work space is not too big and not too small, but just large enough to fit my most-used creative tools.

Kerby Rosanes

Figuratively speaking The Manila-based illustrator's creative den is a fine balance of objects for both work and play



Artworks that feature the cosmos combined with creatures in surreal settings is a favourite theme of mine, like this piece called Cumulus about a mythical orca.

Living a creative lifestyle in a crazy busy city like Manila is no easy task. After working for two years as a designer in a printing company, I became exhausted with my daily commute and decided to quit my job in 2014 to pursue my passion in art.

I then spent a long time looking for a nice place to set up my own little studio. Finally, I acquired this two-bedroom apartment in 2016 and turned it into a place that houses not only my work area, but also my growing collection of video games, statues and toys of my favourite characters from TV, comics and films.

This room is where I spend most of my downtime just doing stuff unrelated to art, such as playing games, catching with my favourite Netflix shows and hanging out with friends when they visit. It's also a place where my other statues and collectibles are displayed.

"Living on my own was a challenge, but I also saw it as an advantage because it meant I could configure my place in any way I wanted to"

DEAD OR ALIVE
FRANKY
94,000,000-
MARINE
ROBIN
MARINE
WANTED
KAIDO

My working area has direct access to my balcony with some plants and a beautiful view of the city, especially during sunset. This also allows a lovely amount of natural light into the room.

Some international language editions of my colouring books that I've been hoarding since 2016. I've published eight books – they were released all over the world and some were made available in over 40 languages.

Living on my own was a challenge, but I also saw it as an advantage because it meant I could configure my place in any way that I wanted to. I've set up my work area in the biggest room because it receives a huge amount of natural light, especially in the afternoon when I feel most creative. It also has direct access to my balcony where I usually enjoy my break time – having my favourite drink looking at a beautiful sunset view behind the Manila skyline.

I started designing my work area by hiring local furniture makers to custom-build my work table, floating shelves and an amazing penholder. I don't produce large drawings and so there was no need for a huge work space. Mine is just large enough for a laptop, lightbox, sketchbooks and various paper sizes ranging up to A3.

THE IMPORTANCE OF HAPPINESS

One lesson that I've learned about creative spaces at home is to surround yourself by the things you love and make you happy. Happiness sparks creativity and is as important as your work tools. I've set up an area for play which I call a "no work zone", where I hang out with friends, catch up with Netflix shows and play video games on my PlayStation.

My collection inspires me a lot. The obsession with collecting toys and statues started back in 2016 when I purchased three small figures of Luffy, Ace and Sabo – characters from my all-time favourite anime, One Piece. Since then, the collection has grown, and now contains hundreds of figures and large statues. I've had to add several custom shelves not just to keep books and drawing paper supplies, but also to display my toy collection.

I usually start my day by checking emails and social media while having breakfast. I'll then do house chores such as cleaning, watering plants and checking laundry. I get to jump in and start working at my table after lunch until late in the evening.

Most of the time, I begin work by drawing a personal piece in my sketchbook, warming up for around 30 minutes to an hour, before starting on work pieces. I believe that maintaining a balance between my personal and commercial work is key to keeping my creative fires burning.

Kerby is an illustrator working with ink, pens and markers. His art has appeared in magazines, TV shows and books. See more of his work at www.kerbyrosanes.com.

This is a personal piece inspired by my fascination of monsters and demons in Japanese folklore. Taking inspiration from mythical creatures has been dominant in my body of work.

> "I've had to add several custom shelves not just to keep books and paper, but also to display my toy collection"

This cork board is where I collect various stuff like stickers from friends, postcards, business cards, little drawings from fans at events and other curiosities. It reminds me about the awesome time I've had at events and places I've been.

As if the toys aren't enough already, I recently started collecting posters of my favourite Studio Ghibli films. People who follow my work know how my art is inspired by Hayao Miyazaki's aesthetic.

These are some of the one-sixth scale resin statues from the One Piece anime series that I've acquired over the years. They're in a custom glass display case with LED lights that also serve as an additional light source when I draw at night.

I've always wanted a tidy and organised workspace, and because I use lots of pens of different brands and types, this custom pen holder makes my everyday hustle easier.

My first ever work for a major brand was this illustration for Nike Singapore, way back in 2014. I had it framed because it kinda started my professional career. It constantly reminds me to get things done.

I rarely work digitally, but when I do I have my 2018 iPad Pro to help me. For some projects, especially client work, I usually use the iPad for the initial sketch, print it on paper, then use the lightbox to do the final inking on another sheet.

Most of my personal works are in sketchbooks and the in-progress ones are stored at this corner. They're always within my reach and can be easily brought out whenever I want to sketch somewhere else.

A 'Welcome Box' that I designed for Ubisoft. It features a 360-degree continuous illustration of some of my favourite game characters. As a console gaming fan, this was a really fun project!

After I moved here in 2016, I started to spend time travelling the world for a much-needed break in between projects and a way for me to refuel my creativity. This cork globe is a reminder of countries I've visited so far – 30 countries and counting!

GET IMAGINEFX FROM £2.10 PER ISSUE!

GO DIGITAL!

Our digital editions come with the same resources included in the print edition!

iPad is a trademark of Apple Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries. App Store is a service mark of Apple Inc.

This offer is ONLY available via our online shop

www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/digital

Available on iOS or Android

Letters

YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS

Contact the editor, Claire Howlett, on claire@imaginefx.com or write to ImagineFX, Future Publishing, Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA, England

Follow us on Twitter: www.twitter.com/imaginefx

Find us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/imaginefx

Post your art or photos on Instagram: www.instagram.com/imaginefxmagazine

FeministFX

After having a look at your magazine [June edition, issue 187], I came to realise that it's jam-packed with politically correct feminist material on almost every page. Is this what gender "equality" looks like? You really should change the name of the publication to FeministFX to more accurately reflect its content. It's also the reason I have stopped buying new comic books, which should be reclassified as "indoctrination" books.

John, via email

Claire replies *Hello John, thank you for your email. I replied to enquire which pages in particular from our June issue caused you offence, but you didn't respond. Therefore I'm a little perplexed to know exactly which bits you consider to be "politically correct feminist material".*

The term 'politically correct' is used – usually pejoratively – to describe words or actions that are intended to avoid offending or causing disadvantage to members of particular groups in society. I'm incredibly happy to describe ImagineFX in this way. We're an art magazine that celebrates art and artists in all their forms.

You mention that you've stopped buying new comic books. That's your choice of course, but the changing content of comics reflects the positive changes that are going on in society, embraced by countless comic readers around the world. Sometimes it's hard to accept that other people don't share the same views or outlook, but we'll only move forward if all voices get heard.

Shout out to ImagineFX

I wanted to let you know how much I enjoy and appreciate ImagineFX! Y'all do a great job with a good look at the topic of the month, artists' studios, reviews of products and traditional media. I look forward to each issue (I have a digital subscription… just renewed for the year), and wanted to tell you that I appreciate the work y'all do. Thank you!

David Matthews, via email

DID YOU MISS THE PREVIOUS PACKED ISSUE?
Don't worry – you can get hold of it at **https://ifxm.ag/buyissue-187**

Daniel (top) and Cliff (above) both have key roles on the ImagineFX editorial team.

Issue 187, which featured the colourful comic art of Jen Bartel, left reader John unimpressed.

David, thank you so much! Honestly, the past few months have been tough now that we're working from home and have seen the print editions struggle to get delivered to the newsstands (for now at least), but our digital editions and subscriptions are going very strong. It's great to hear that you appreciate what we do.

Professional looking

Hello from New Zealand. I'm a massive fan of ImagineFX and I have great admiration for the team behind it, because I can tell that a lot of love and genuine passion goes into creating something like this.

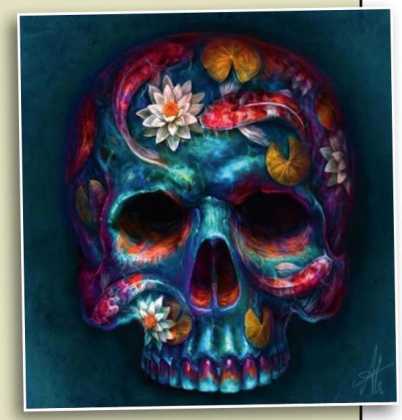
I'm about to start my first year studying graphic design and I'm curious about what goes into creating ImagineFX. How do you put it all together? How do you make everything aligned and looking professional? Have you ever considered doing a behind-the-scenes segment in one issue? I'm consistently impressed by the aesthetic and how cohesive it is.

Hannah, via email

Claire replies Hello Hannah, thanks so much for your kind words on our publication. The reason that ImagineFX looks so professional is down to the skills of our art editor Daniel Vincent who uses InDesign to put together the pages. He creates grids and guides, is a typeface Tsar and has a style shortcuts list as long as his arm to make sure each page looks as it should. Cliff Hope is the operations editor who keeps a sharp eye on the words and also how the page looks after Daniel has designed it. Hurrah for them both!

FRESH PAINT

New works that have grabbed our attention



Alexandra Mannion
@alexandramanniondesigns

Sébastien Michel
@artseb26

Kimmy
@kimmy_illustrations

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

SPIN THE DAWN
"Book cover commissioned by art director Alison Impey of Penguin Random House, for Elizabeth Lim's novel of the same name."

© Penguin Random House

ARTIST PORTFOLIO

TRAN NGUYEN

Beren Neale discovers that this illustrator, like her work, exhibits calmness, certainty, poise and power even during times of crisis

Tran Nguyen has a strong childhood memory of sitting with her family on a long-haul flight travelling from Vietnam to America. It was 1990, she was three years old and terrified.

"My earliest memory was when I boarded the flight from Can Tho, Vietnam, and I cried my head off until the flight attendants placated me with cantaloupe," she recalls. Her family had been sponsored by the US to immigrate. "The embassy assisted us, donating clothes and finding a temporary home until dad was able to find a job," she says.

But Tran wasn't just flying away from "an impoverished life." She was also travelling towards the promise and potential of a new life dedicated to art – regardless of her parents' plans for her. "My parents wanted me to be a doctor," says Tran, and they took some convincing when a passion for watching and reproducing her favourite anime characters eventually turned into voicing an interest in studying art at college.

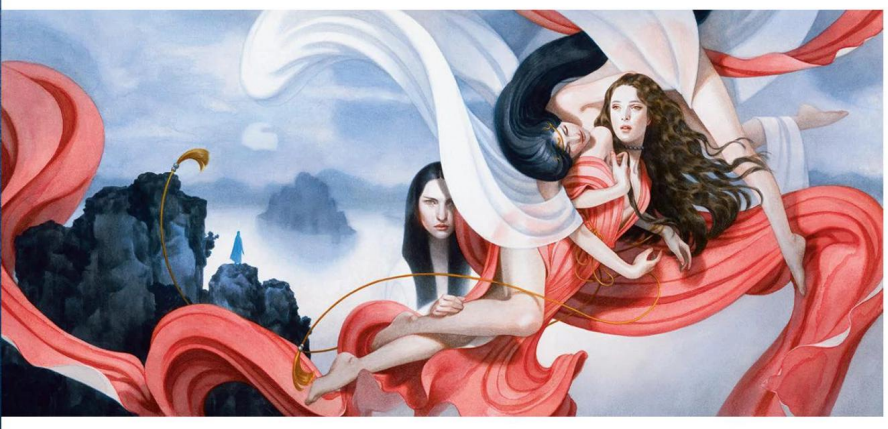
Looking back, Tran totally understands their concerns: "My parents are the sweetest and only mean well. All they want is to know that I'll be able to take care of myself financially once they're not around, and becoming an artist was such a foreign concept to them."

KUSHIEL'S DART I
"Dust jacket artwork commissioned by art director Yanni Kuznia of Subterranean Press, for Jacqueline Carey's first novel in her Kushiel's Legacy series."

© Subterranean Press

> **My parents mean well… becoming an artist was such a foreign concept to them**

Tran's parents were "devastatingly disappointed", and even went so far as to "concoct a mild plan to dissuade me from my decision". But they hadn't reckoned on the artist's mettle. "I easily bulldozed through their opposition and applied to art college," Tran laughs. "My super-strength is definitely determination and I took out ➳



KUSHIEL'S CHOSEN I
"Subterranean Press also commissioned me to create the dust jacket art for Jacqueline Carey's second book in her Kushiel's Legacy book series."

© Subterranean Press

Artist PROFILE

Tran Nguyen
LOCATION: US
FAVOURITE ARTISTS: Pascal Campion, Gustav Klimt, Kay Nielsen, Tatsuyuki Tanaka and Amano Yoshitaka
MEDIA: Acrylics and colour pencil
WEB: www.mynameistran.com

massive loans to attend SCAD (The Savannah College of Art and Design), and kept both eyes on my dream of becoming an artist. I'd like to think my hard work over the years has proved to them that I made a good decision."

BABY STEPS

Yet before the bulldozing came the undiluted joy of art. Her first love was manga and its "colourful character designs, beautifully animated battle sequences, and fantastical world-building." Then anime "had that 'cool' factor that blew my kid mind away," she adds. Even to this day, there are subtle traces of its influence in the artist's work, especially in her drawings. "The way I draw is different than the way I handle a paintbrush. When I draw, I treat the face and billowing elements in a way that's reminiscent of the anime style. It's minute, but it's definitely there."

SOMEWHERE BETWEEN NOW & THEN
"Part of my personal series titled The Flooded Hour II. It was created for a group exhibition at Jonathan Levine gallery in New York City."

THE DOOR-MAKER'S DAUGHTER II
"A personal illustration where I experimented with ink and graphite."

Photo by Jasper Wong

FORTUNE
"A 22x9-inch mural in Kaka'ako, Hawaii, which was painted for the Pow! Wow! Hawaii! art festival."

It was her brother who introduced Tran to Japanese animation and video games; then came the day her parents bought their first TV. "My interest in art accelerated – I watched cartoons non-stop as a kid, including all the anime that Cartoon Network would air, such as Blue Submarine No. 6 and Outlaw Star," she says.

While many kids would have been inspired enough to draw what they saw, Tran started creating under time restrictions. "Back when VHS was still a thing, I rented shows like Bubblegum Crisis. I loved the character Nene so much that I'd carefully wait for an exact key frame of her that I liked to appear on TV, press pause, and quickly draw the still on paper. VHS tapes back in the day could only stay paused for 10-20 minutes at a time, so I would do this until my mum yelled at me for ruining the tape player."

EVOLUTION OF AN ARTIST

Having gathered steam, won over her parents, and taken all loans available to her, Tran's development in college was explosive. She had a taste for experimentation: charcoal, watercolour, 2D digital painting and ZBrush all got put in the mix. She gravitated to acrylic and coloured

> **"When I draw, I treat the face and billowing elements in a way that's reminiscent of the anime style"**

THRIVING ONLINE

Here Tran details how social media self-promotion has had a positive knock-on effect for all of her work

"Working as a freelancer also means being a good business person. Not only do I need to create original art, but it's vital that I learn how to sustain a stable income so that I continue doing what I'm passionate about. It's about diversifying your income and spreading your work throughout all the markets and outlets available to you.

There are several ways I achieve this, including promoting my work on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, my personal blog and Patreon. I try to curate and post content that has substance every so often. The more I engage and post on social media, the more my following has grown, and because of that, I've noticed a jump in original art sales.

There are a ton of collectors and art directors that lurk on these platforms waiting for the right moment to either pick up an original or offer commission work.

I also offer products on my online store and try my best to keep up with a mailing list to help promote new works for sale. While I exclusively sell open edition prints at conventions, I offer collectibles such as limited edition prints and originals for online purchase. I recommend all aspiring freelance artists to self-promote, create a flow of passive income, and keep posting your new creations on social media."

LA BEAUTÉ SANS VERTU
"Art director Irene Gallo of Tor.com commissioned this illustration to accompany Genevieve Valentine's short story of the same name."

© Tor.com

TREADING THROUGH AN UNTRIMMED MEMORY
"An early painting that founded my love for the 'larger-than-life' theme."

TRAVELING TO A DISTANT DAY
"Magazine cover art that was commissioned by Michael and Lynne Thomas of Uncanny Magazine."

© Uncanny Magazine

THE RIVERBED NIGHTINGALE
"A painting that explores my reoccurring theme of the wandering giantess and her findings."

"When I graduated I had no idea what I was doing. I barely had a collection of 10 cohesive images in my portfolio"

pencil, and eventually saw a personal style develop. Boosted, she sent work to the New Contemporary Art Movement gallery Thinkspace, and soon started exhibiting, before her graduation in 2009.

Exhibiting before she had graduated, let alone gone pro – surely her confidence was at an all-time high? "Not at all," Tran says. "When I graduated I had no idea what I was doing. I barely had a collection of 10 cohesive images in my portfolio."

An embryonic style might have been visible, but she was still figuring out what she wanted to say with her work. "Every painting I did in my first years as a freelance artist was trial and error. I was learning how to properly glaze paint strokes, experimenting with different types of paper, and gauging how long my process took so that I met deadlines." For readers trying to figure out the right time to go pro, Tran has this: "It's best to jump in head first and figure it out as you go. It's going to be extremely rocky, but it'll smooth itself out over time."

BEYOND ART

Today, Tran is an award-winning, internationally famous artist. She's worked for brands such as Netflix, BuzzFeed and Penguin Random House, and you'll see her artwork on packaging, on the side of buildings

SLEEPLESS ON A SILK ROAD
"The second cover that I painted for Uncanny Magazine."

© Uncanny Magazine

and in various printed publications. Regardless of all that, she still suffers from self-doubt: "That feeling of not doing good-enough work or disappointing an art director gnaws at me at night," she reveals. "It's even permeated into my social interactions and my ability to paint the way I want to, as oppose to placating (what I think) the client wants."

To counter this, Tran is always on the look out for positive influences for her art, a new creative context that will inform what she creates. "Travelling keeps me sane and fills my creativity reservoir," she says. Whether it's Venice or Dozza in Italy, Bath or Edinburgh in the UK, or a visit back to Can Tho, her favourite thing to do is "wander aimlessly… I don't draw or take many photos," she says. "I see artists who draw in their sketchbooks when they travel, but I like to separate my work and personal life when I can. I'm there to experience the gravity of what that particular country has to offer, so I can take those raw memories and stories back to the studio and paint them."

THE YELLOW PASSERBY & I
"A drawing that revisits one of my favourite stories that I read in middle school called The Yellow Wallpaper."

Photo by Lanny Nguyen

METAMORPHOSIS
"A 40x24-inch mural that was completed last year on the back of the Shaun Lumachi Innovation Center in Long Beach, California."

WORKING IN PROGRESS

In Tran's studio, there are certain do's and don'ts to produce the optimum creative atmosphere. Audiobooks, podcasts, TV shows and even films inspire focus and energy. Less so music or silence. "The better the audiobook or podcast, the more glued I'm to my drawing desk," she explains. "TV shows and movies, on the other hand, have a sweet spot in terms of their quality level. If the movie is either too riveting or too bland, I get distracted or irritable."

Perhaps it's written in her solemn, nocturnal art, but Tran generally works best at night, "because the world is asleep and there isn't a beautiful blue sky to lure me away," she says. "It's quiet and there's nothing else to do but to concentrate on the task at hand," whether that's personal art or a commercial assignment.

> **"That feeling of not doing good-enough work or disappointing an art director gnaws at me at night"**

CLIMB THE MOUNTAIN, DON'T PLATEAU!

According to Tran, it's good to push yourself with experimentation, and strive to learn new skills

"Doing experimental paintings can help you grow artistically and keep your style from plateauing. Every so often, I try to work on a painting study to learn about new tools, techniques, and figure out how to incorporate what I've learned into my professional work.

In doing these studies, I've found fun ways to merge my love for nature by integrating pressed flowers into my portrait paintings. It enables me to take the time to explore different colour palettes such as bright pink hair as well as drawing techniques, which has paved way to my linear drawing style. These studies are meant for happy accidents and mistakes, so I'm free from the pressure of creating something that's perfect or finished.

Taking time to do personal work is another way to elevate your art. It's a chance to think about your own narrative and what you want to say with your art. Over time, it's helped me solidify my visual language as well as identifying reoccurring motifs, such as the small wooden boats that often find themselves in many of my paintings. This is also how I found my love for the 'larger-than-life' theme where I depict giantesses roaming around blue rooftop houses.

Dedicating a few hours a week to work on a study or personal piece refines your process and help rekindle your love for art."

STUDY NO. 88
Tran recently took her Patreon followers through the creation of this artwork.

THROUGH A LONE, WINDING ROAD
"A 16x20-inch piece that was painted for the Pow! Wow! Hawaii group exhibition."

DRAGONS
"A book cover for a high fantasy novel that was eventually unused by the client."

FORBIDDEN FOREST
"A gallery show contribution that focuses on the fantastical adventure of a woodswoman and her avian companion."

THE MAUVE GIRL
"My interpretation of the modern Vietnamese woman."

"My family and our story has always been on the peripherals of my paintings, as well as my artistic journey"

Being a freelancer for more than a decade, Tran isn't much phased by the isolation brought about by the Covid-19 crisis. But it has meant the lines between commercial and personal work have been blurred, leaving her "restless and less inspired". Is there an art community that can help? "Absolutely," she tells us. "The art community has a special place in my heart for what it's done for my career, and it's heartening to see that it's shared vital resources to help artists who have lost work find financial help."

Yet, as we all know, things may get more problematic before they get better. "I anticipate a lull in the rate of clients looking to commission art, since company budgets will be cut or terminated," Tran muses, "but it'll revert over time." And ever the positive, "I see artists focusing more on developing their own IP and relying less on commercial projects."

FROM FANTASY TO REALITY

For Tran, who recently released her first art book called Ambedo, it's also been a time for self-reflection, looking back to that flight to the US and the following years of experimental trial and error. "My concepts used to be much more weird and surreal when I first started my profession," she reflects, "but nowadays my work carries a realistic tone, seems more grounded – less of the odd eyes in tree stumps and floating gold shapes!"

She's even considering revisiting some of the "crazy motifs and lightly-rendered figures that I used to illustrate." But there's been certain themes that haven't changed. "My family and our story has always been on the peripherals of my paintings, as well as my artistic journey," she tells us. "They play a huge role in the narratives of my personal work, and I tend to leave little crumbs of my family's struggle and hope in my paintings."

YOU MUST NOT MISS
"Book cover commissioned by art director Karina Granda of Little, Brown and Company, for Katrina Leno's novel of the same name."

© Little, Brown and Company

ImagineFX Recent editions

Missed an issue? Here's how you can order previous print or digital editions of ImagineFX

Recent print editions
Visit **www.bit.ly/ifxbackissues**.

Apple Newsstand
Download us from the Newsstand app on your device or visit **http://ifxm.ag/apple-ifx**.

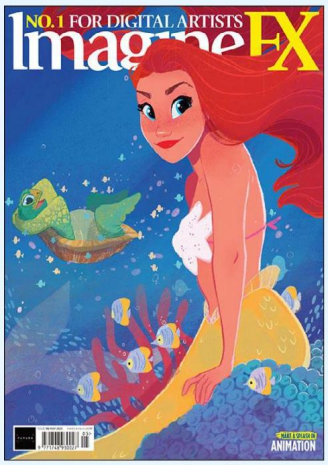
Android, PC or Mac
Pocketmags: **www.pocketmags.com/imaginefx**
Zinio: **www.zinio.com/gb/imaginefx-m2956**

Other devices
We're available via nook on Barnes & Noble and Amazon's range of Fire tablets.

PRINT AND DIGITAL BACK ISSUES

Issue 187
June 2020

A roster of superhero artists appears in our comic art-themed issue, including cover star Jen Bartel, Viktor Kalvachev, Toni Infante and Steve Ellis. Plus Tank Girl comic artist Brett Parson takes us around his studio!



Issue 186
May 2020

Animation artists pass on their character and vis-dev skills, including cover artist Amanda MacFarlane, Mark Lim and Prem Sai GS. Plus we talk to Cécile Carre and Ty Carter about life in the animation industry.

Issue 185
April 2020

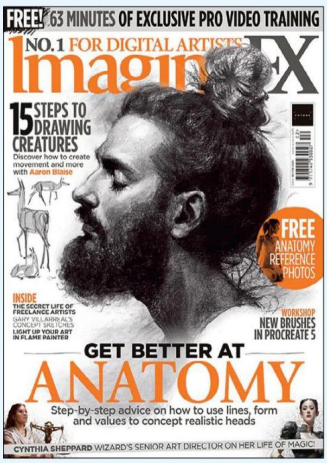
Ilya Kuvshinov's cover art heralds our popular manga-themed issue, with pro advice on painting manga faces, new rendering techniques and more. We reveal the modern masters of manga, and speak to Camilla D'Errico.

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.

BUY PRINT EDITIONS OF IMAGINEFX AT: www.bit.ly/ifxbackissues
myfavouritemagazines.co.uk

RESOURCES ARE INCLUDED WITH PRINT AND DIGITAL EDITIONS*



Issue 183
February 2020

Issue 182
January 2020

Issue 181
Christmas 2019

Issue 180
December 2019

Issue 179
November 2019

Issue 178
October 2019

Issue 177
September 2019

Issue 176
July 2019

Issue 175
July 2019

Issue 174
June 2019

Issue 173
May 2019

Issue 172
April 2019

GET YOUR DIGITAL EDITION THROUGH THESE OUTLETS:
Available on the App Store
zinio™ nook by Barnes & Noble
amazon apps Available on fire
pocketmags

*Resource files are available from issue 85 onwards.

MOON

Colourful sketches of melancholic characters populate this graffiti artist-turned-professional illustrator's sketchbook

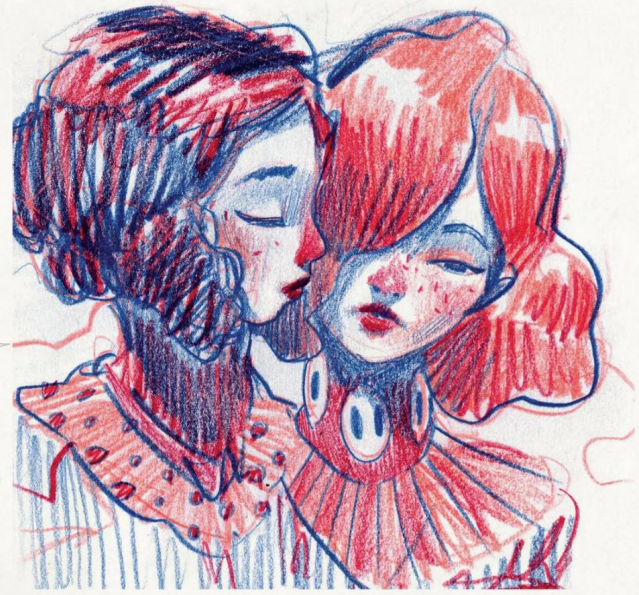
Artist PROFILE

MOON
LOCATION: France

Moon started his graphic career by doing graffiti. He graduated in graphic arts and now works as an art director, graphic design teacher and illustrator. Outside of work he enjoys drawing in the woods, developing his own art and continuing to develop his personal universe by working on a new book.
www.instagram.com/moon_mxtr

PORTRAIT
"A shy girl drawn with four colours and white ballpoint pens on grey paper. One of my many little female figures who live in my sketchbooks."

YOU SAID?
"When I sketch with coloured pencils, I love to work with only two or three colours only."



SAD CLOWN
"A rare sketch of a boy – I usually draw female figures. And this one became a sad clown."

COMPOSITION
"A small sketchbook and four coloured ballpoint pens are my favourite tools for sketching these days. A limited palette can lead to so many possibilities."

> A limited palette can lead to so many possibilities

CRYSTALS
"I wanted to explore the balance between elements. I love to use water on fresh ink to paint the shadows."

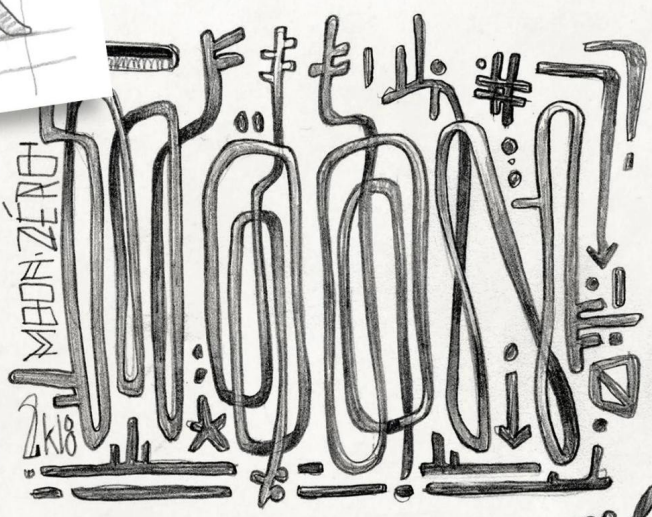
Sketchbook

SKINNY BODY AND LARGE HEAD

"Usually when I start a drawing I don't know where I'm going. Sometimes it's all about mixing colours."

SPRING

"I drew her on the first day of spring this year. It's a kind of spring sprite who's just woken up after winter."



WADER BIRD

"Here's one of my favourite kind of birds; beaks and necks are so graphic. I love to play with letters, too. I wrote 'Moon' on top – a reference to my graffiti past for sure!"

WALL OF SKETCHES

"I love to use patterns or text between sketches to make them part of a whole piece."

Sketchbook

SKULL

"A two-colour sketch with coloured pencils. It's kind of a still-life drawing, and it's funny to know that 'still life' in French is 'nature morte'... or dead nature!"

WHISPERS

"To draw a lonely character can be tricky sometimes, but four at the same time is even more challenging. These figures are not inspired by Little Women!"

SUCCULENT

"I find plants a big inspiration. I never paint from life – I usually memorise forms and then use them to create new settings."

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**

WATERCOLOUR SKETCHES
"I usually paint with watercolour over an Indian ink drawing. Here I wanted to explore watercolour with coloured pencils lines."

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX

GET YOUR BINDER TODAY!

This sturdy binder, featuring cover art from our 150th issue, will store and protect 13 issues of ImagineFX. Prices start at **£10.99**, *which includes delivery!*

ON SALE NOW! www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/ifx-binder

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 8 now!

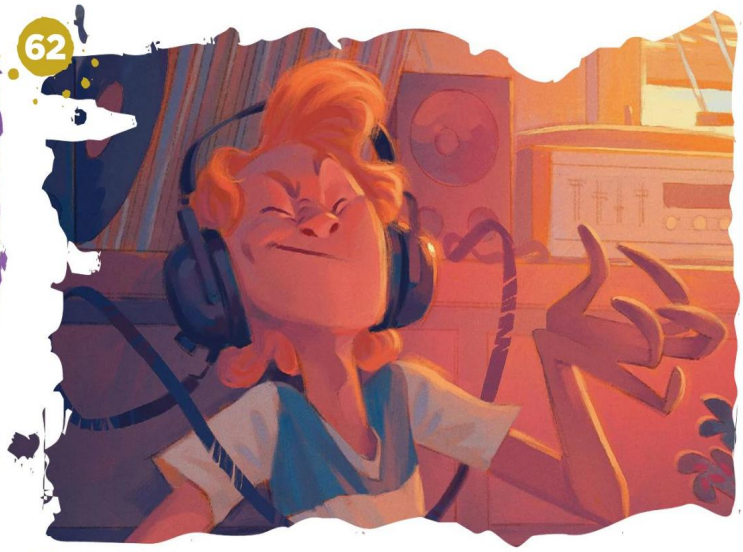
NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

ImagineFX Workshops

Workshops assets are available...
Download each workshop's resources by turning to page 8. And if you see the video workshop badge, you can watch the artist in action, too.

ImagineFX VIDEO WORKSHOP

Advice from the world's best artists



This issue:

58 Paint a portrait in limited colours
Discover Tran Nguyen's process of illustrating a female figure in pencil and watercolours.

62 Use lighting to enhance a story
Max Ulichney uses Procreate's brush, colour and lighting tools to ramp up his storytelling.

70 Colouring your painting digitally
Abigail Larson enhances her traditionally painted artwork with digital colouring tools.

74 Draw a figure in 20 minutes
Depict realistic figures using pencil and charcoal in just 20 minutes, with Chris Legaspi.

Traditional art skills

PAINT A PORTRAIT IN LIMITED COLOURS

Tran Nguyen shares her creative process behind The Mauve Girl and elaborates on the steps involved in capturing a female character

Artist **PROFILE**

Tran Nguyen
LOCATION: US

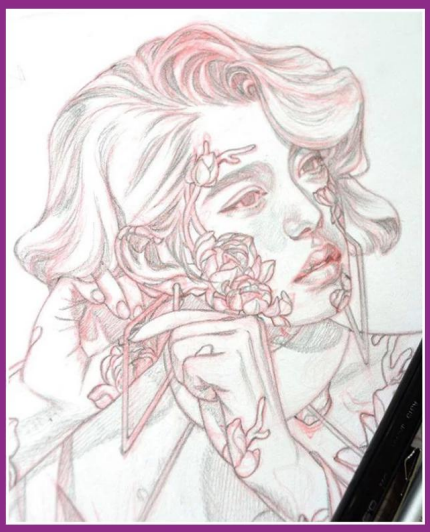
Tran is an award-winning illustrator and has worked with Tiger Beer, World Wildlife Fund, Smithsonian Magazine and Wizards of the Coast.
www.mynameistran.com

This painting was created for Thinkspace Gallery's 15-year retrospective exhibition. It was an open-themed group show celebrating the gallery's life, and showcased over 70 new works of art. For my contribution I wanted to focus on my portrait series that I started years ago. The Mauve Girl is my interpretation of the modern Vietnamese woman, painted with acrylic and coloured pencil on wood panel.

The reason I began the series of portrait work was so that I could focus on colour exploration, floral design and the female gaze. For this portrait I wanted to express my heritage by depicting the Vietnamese woman in a non-traditional light. The painting juxtaposes the everyday female in a modern, translucent áo dài dress with lotus flower tattoos and brightly coloured hair. I kept her expression and demeanour soft while contrasting it with the harsh black lines of the tattoos.

Portrait painting is both complex and simple. Because there's not a lot of components within it, I have to make sure the facial expression and subtleties of her mannerism are handled with care. The better I treat these little nuances, the more of her essence I'm able to capture.

How I create...
A FIGURE IN WATERCOLOUR AND PENCILS

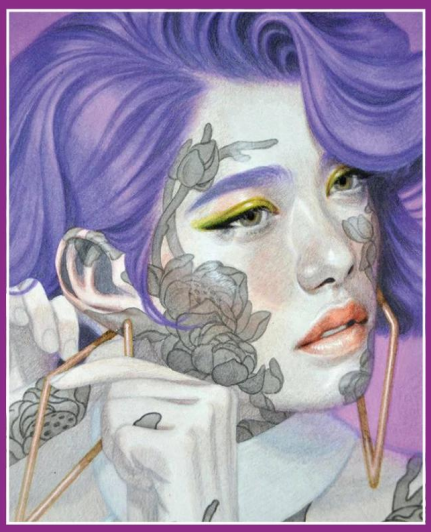


1 Portrait preliminaries

The first step consists of preliminary sketches. I start working on several quick thumbnails to explore different ways to pose the figure. These are five to 10 minute sketches solely meant to capture ideas quickly. After I find a thumbnail I'm satisfied with, I redraw it in detail, which is then refined into a tight line drawing.

2 Prep the substrate

Once the line drawing is finished, I scan it into Photoshop, enlarge it to the actual size of the painting, lighten the line art, and print it directly on the watercolour paper. Since the show requires the painting to be completed on wood panel, I mount the watercolour paper on the panel with matte medium and let it set overnight.



3 Render the form

I apply my paint strokes with a light hand, establishing the shadows followed by highlights. I create form using a technique called glazing, which is where the paint is heavily diluted with water. The coloured pencil is applied on top to help push dark values and fine details that I can't achieve with the acrylics.

PRESENTATION TIPS

Tying the work together

When working with cradled panels, I like to paint the wood frame it comes in. Here I painted the frame with black paint before mounting it on watercolour paper. The black frame mirrors the black of the tattoo pattern and helps tie the piece together.

Modifying the substrate

The gallery show required all the artists to paint on wood panel, which isn't a surface I'm used to. To make it work for my painting technique, I mounted the watercolour paper to it so that the acrylics would be absorbed in the way I'm familiar with. This way, I could work on paper while having the illusion that it's on wood.

Limiting the colour palette

My go-to approach when it comes to colour is keeping to a limited colour palette and sparingly complementing it with a selection of two or three spot colours. In this instance, most of the painting consists of varying shades of purple with hints of pink and cerulean blue. Using a limited colour palette helps me control my values and the painting's overall colour harmony.

Hair treatment

When painting locks of hair, I treat them as if they're pleated fabric. I separate each lock into a layer on top of one another as opposed to single strands of hair. This helps me see the shadows and highlights easier while giving it a stylised look.

Attention to detail

Small fine details that may not seem significant can bring a lot of life to a painting. Because the figure's right hand seems lacklustre, I can add the dimension it needs by applying confident strokes of titanium white to her nail's free edge and lunula.

Rendering translucent fabric

Painting translucent fabric can be tricky, especially when there's a lot going on underneath it. To handle this type of fabric, I keep the shapes and lines that it covers blurry while everything else is rendered with sharp clarity. The highlights within it are made up of the colour of her skin and the shadows consists of the cerulean blue of her garment.

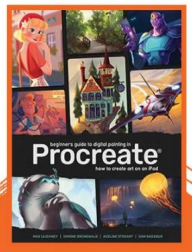
Procreate
USE LIGHTING TO ENHANCE A STORY

Max Ulichney takes a simple idea of a boy listening to music, and uses Procreate's brush, colour and lighting tools to ramp up the storytelling

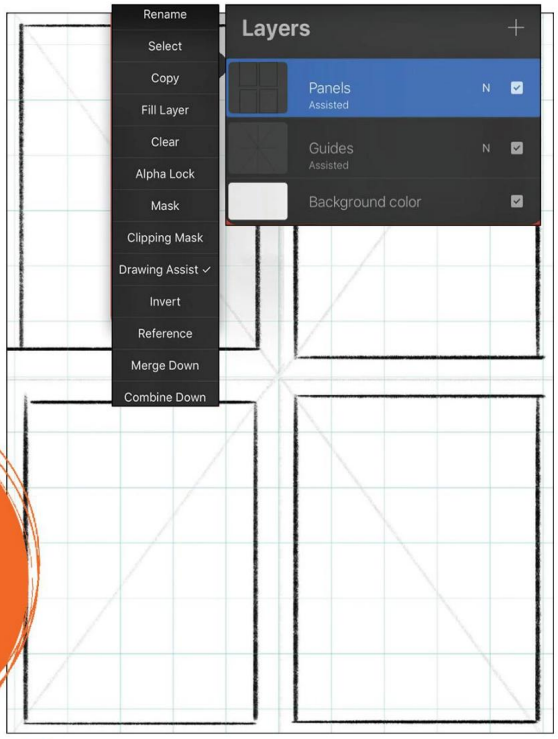
Artists are often taught to focus on design and technique, but it's also important to consider character motivations and storytelling. Characters deserve an inner monologue and desires of their own. This workshop will teach you how to create a fun, nostalgic scene of a boy listening to his older brother's records in the warm, late afternoon light after school when he should be doing his homework or tidying his room. The image will also include good storytelling details such as his cat and a poster of his idol.

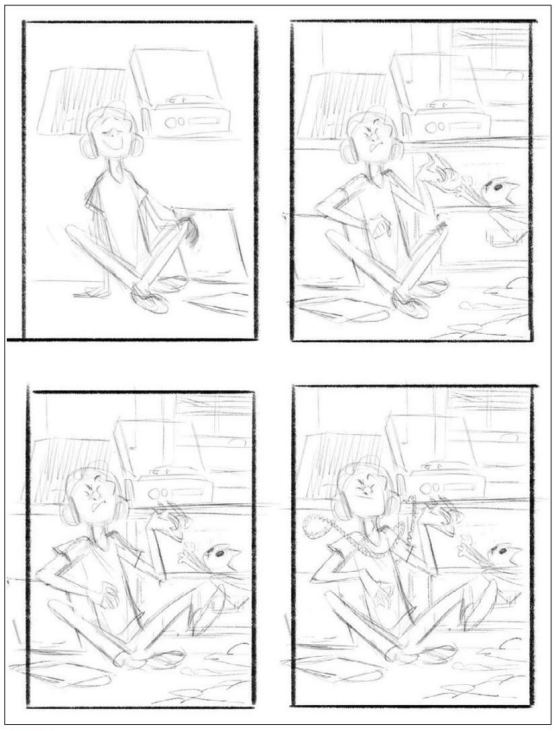
The workshop will cover basic brush techniques, as well as the creation of a new gouache brush. You'll learn how to paint in Procreate in an expressive way that reinforces the subject's playful energy, using a combination of analog-influenced techniques and digital flexibility to create an image that looks rich, warm and traditionally painted, while embracing the strengths of Procreate.

In addition, this workshop will guide you through some complex perspective tricks using Procreate's drawing guides, which make scene construction easier than it's ever been in digital painting.



This article is from 3dtotal's Beginner's Guide to Digital Painting in Procreate. Visit **www.3dtotal.com** for more details



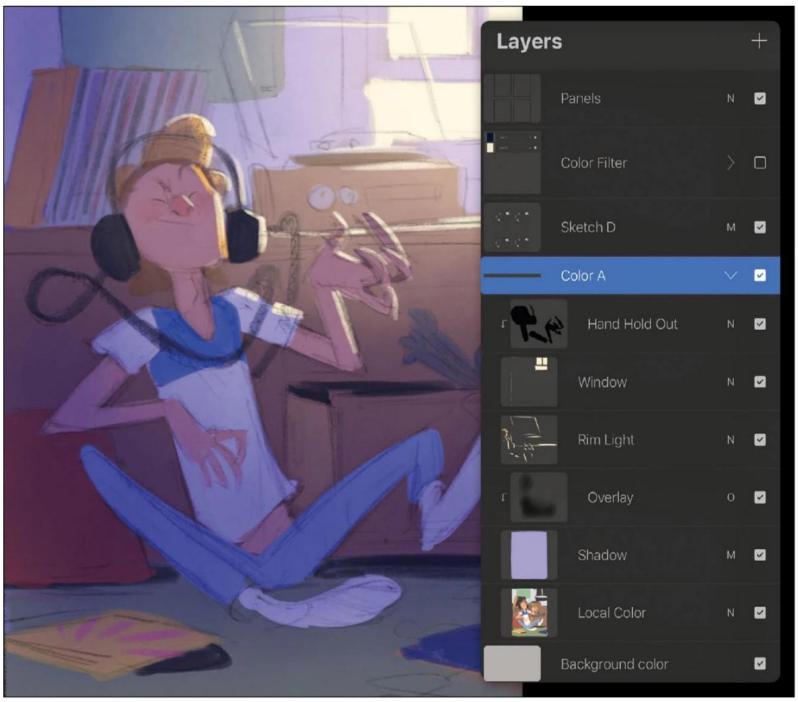


1 Set up frames for your thumbnails

Use QuickShape to draw straight lines from corner to corner, creating an X as a guide. Next, use Options> Canvas>Drawing Guide to create your frames. Enable the drawing guide and tap Edit Drawing Guide below that. The 2D Grid settings are perfect. You can enable Assisted Drawing by clicking a layer and selecting Drawing Assist. Draw vertical and horizontal lines for your frames using the diagonal lines as guides to keep your proportions true.

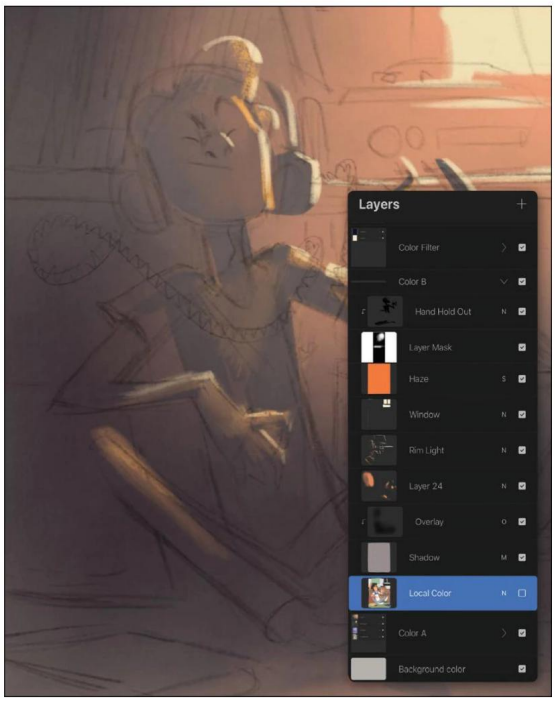
2 Sketch more engaging ideas

On a new layer below the frames, start sketching using the Sketchy Sarmento Pencil. The initial idea was a boy lost in the music; however, this was lacking emotion and storytelling. To iterate on your first thumbnail idea, duplicate the layer, then use the Transform tool to move the new layer to the next frame. Sketching the boy playing his air guitar makes him more active, which leads to the idea of adding the cat swiping at his fingers.



3 Paint the colour roughs

Copy the last thumbnail sketch to all of the frames and flatten them by pinching all four layers together. Make the Background colour layer grey by tapping the thumbnail to bring up the Color Picker. On a new layer, start painting the local colour of the objects in the room. On a new layer above that, darken the room by painting the whole frame a light blue colour and setting the layer blend mode to Multiply. This is all that needs doing here, as the room is dark and backlit, but in most other cases you could paint the shadows more selectively, such as under a character or cast across objects. Consider also using a light colour on separate layers to paint the window light and a rim light on the character and affected surfaces.

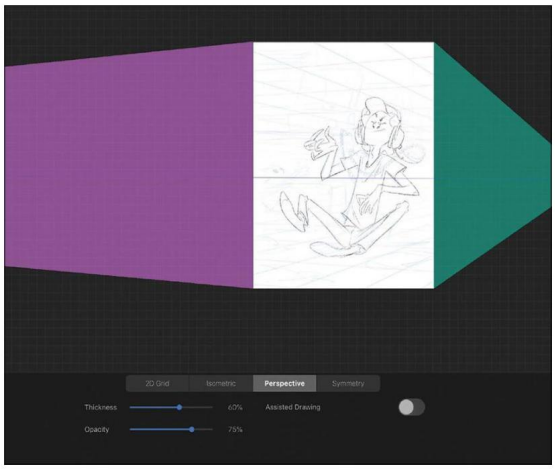


4 Fill the room with a hazy light

Fill a layer with orange, tap the layer to add a mask, tap its thumbnail and invert the mask. Use the Grain Cloud brush to paint white in the mask to reveal the orange. Set the orange layer's blend mode to Screen. To place the character's hand and face in front of the haze, put a new layer over the haze layer and create a clipping mask. This makes whatever you do to this layer act only on the layers it's clipped to. Add the bright window colour on a new layer to give better control independent of the haze.

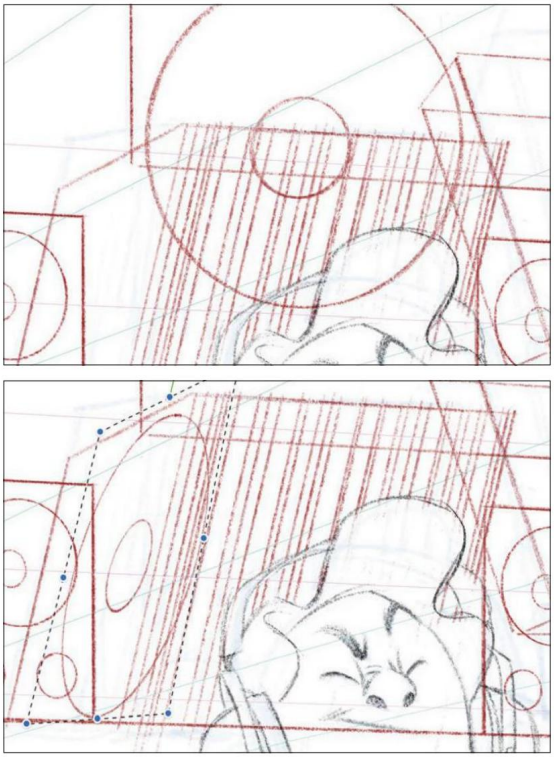
5 Use colour filters to generate the right mood

Group all of these layers together. This will enable you to duplicate the group and make variations to the time of day and colour palette. Use Filters>Hue, Saturation, Brightness to alter the colours of the shadow and haze, to find a colour scheme that evokes a vintage, nostalgic mood using shades you might see in a Polaroid or 8mm camera. If the colours in your frames feel slightly drab, as with the top four frames shown on the right, flatten those groups and then use Filters>Color Balance to push the colours further until you find something you're happy with.



6 Begin refining the sketch

Establishing your perspective early on will help as you start work on your character, to ensure that they feel grounded. Select Options>Canvas>Edit Drawing Guide and switch the mode to Perspective. Next, zoom out and tap once to the side of your canvas at the height of the horizon. Tap again to establish a second vanishing point that's farther off the canvas. This is a good time to flip your canvas, using Options>Flip Canvas Horizontally, to check if there are any weird distortions that you might have missed.

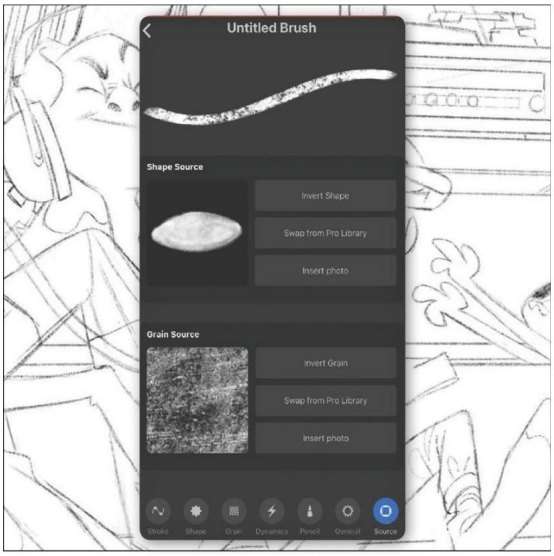


7 Draw perfect circles quickly

Begin constructing your scene on a new layer in perspective using Drawing Assist. Use QuickShape for circular records or speakers, which is invoked by drawing a circle and holding the stylus down until it snaps into a clean shape. Still holding the stylus on the canvas, touch the canvas with a finger on your other hand to snap it into a perfect circle where needed.

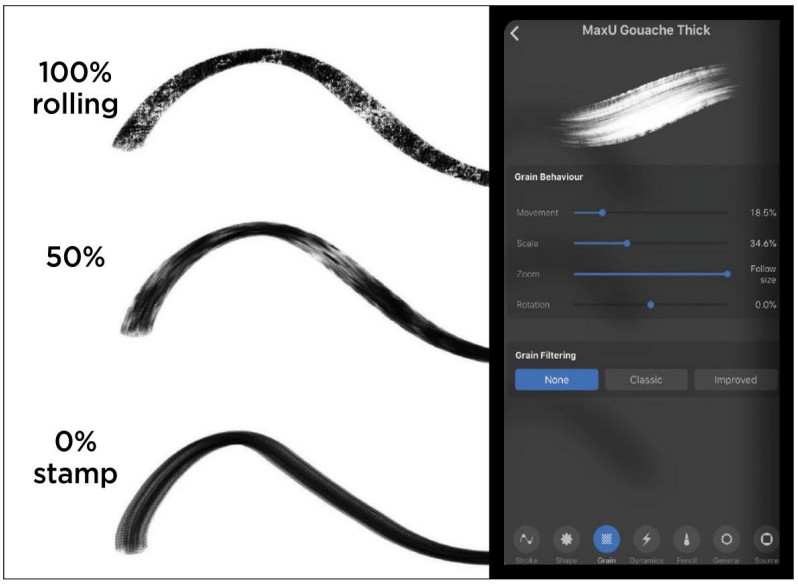
8 Generate objects with the correct perspective

You may find it easier to draw the speakers and album covers flat, and then distort them into perspective using the Transform tool. Tap-holding the corners enables you to warp them to the corners of the albums. Do this for the speakers too. Once you've distorted the records on the ground, make a selection with the Freehand Selection tool and swipe three fingers down on the canvas to open the Copy & Paste menu. A quick Transform moves the record into place.



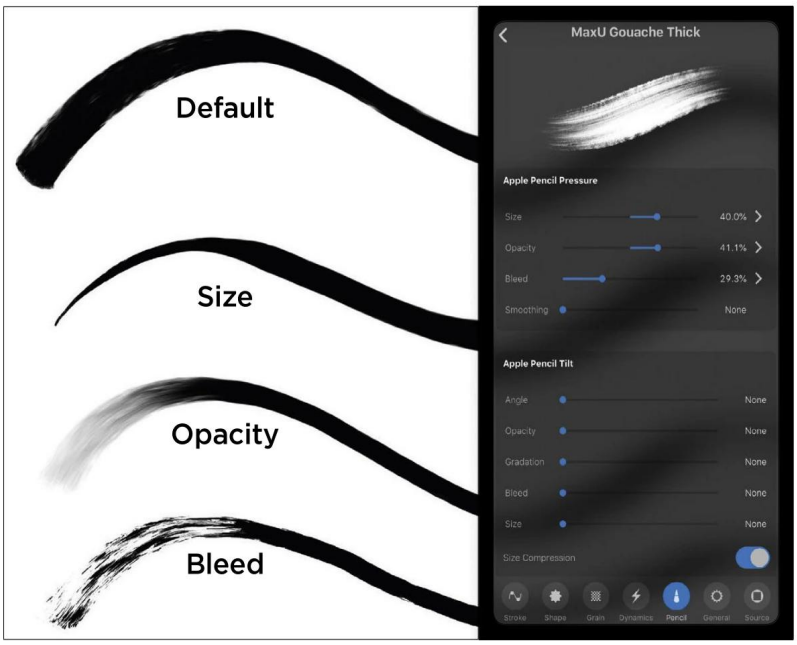
9 Create a custom brush in Procreate

Tap the + at the top of the Brush Library menu. This will open a blank tab for your new brush, where you can add a Shape Source for the brush tip and Grain Source for paper texture, or bristle texture in this cases. Tap Swap from Pro Library to use shapes and textures from Procreate's existing brushes. You could also Insert Photo or tap on Select Shape to load your own custom images.



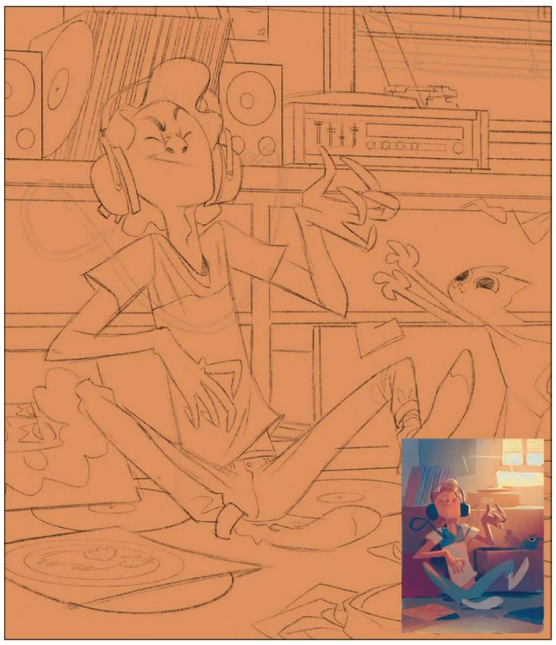
10 Adjust your brush settings

Select Grain>Grain Behavior>Movement. At the default 100 per cent Rolling setting you can create effects like a pencil-on-paper grain. As you drag the slider left, it stretches the grain out along the stroke, creating a bristle effect. Scale determines the size of the grain, while Zoom acts like a multiplier on your brush size. At the lowest Zoom level is the Cropped option; the highest level of Zoom is the Follow Size option. Use the slider to select more subtle levels of Zoom for your grain.



11 Refining your brush marks

Now look at Pencil>Apple Pencil Pressure. Size controls the thick and thin action of pressing harder and making the brush larger. This is seen most notably in paintbrushes and fountain pens. Opacity controls how transparent the mark is, as with an airbrush. Bleed is almost like a high-contrast version of Opacity, ignoring the more delicate pressure and leaving you with bolder, more textural marks. It's perfect for creating a strong dry brush effect. For more detail, examine the settings in the MaxU Gouache Thick brush that's been created for this tutorial.



12 Work from a strong foundation

After lining your image with a pencil-like brush, it's time to start painting. A tight drawing provides a good foundation for more expressive painting. It's easy to lose shapes in the painting stage if they haven't been well defined. With a strong drawing and your colours mostly worked out, you can now work more intuitively. Import your colour study from your other file using Copy & Paste.

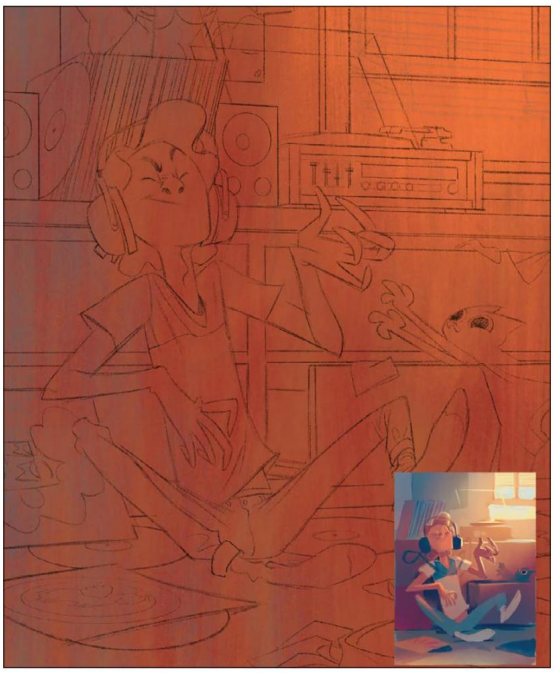
RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PROCREATE

CUSTOM BRUSHES: GOUACHE THICK

This is one of four custom brushes I've used in this workshop. Gouache Thick was created by setting Zoom to the Follow Size option, which keeps the grain size relative to your brush size.

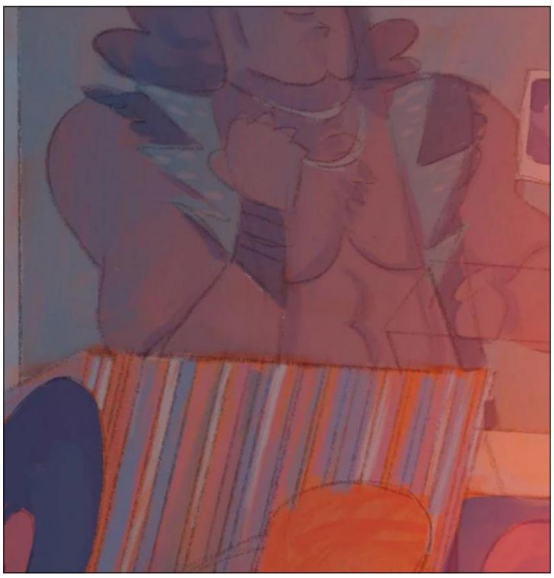


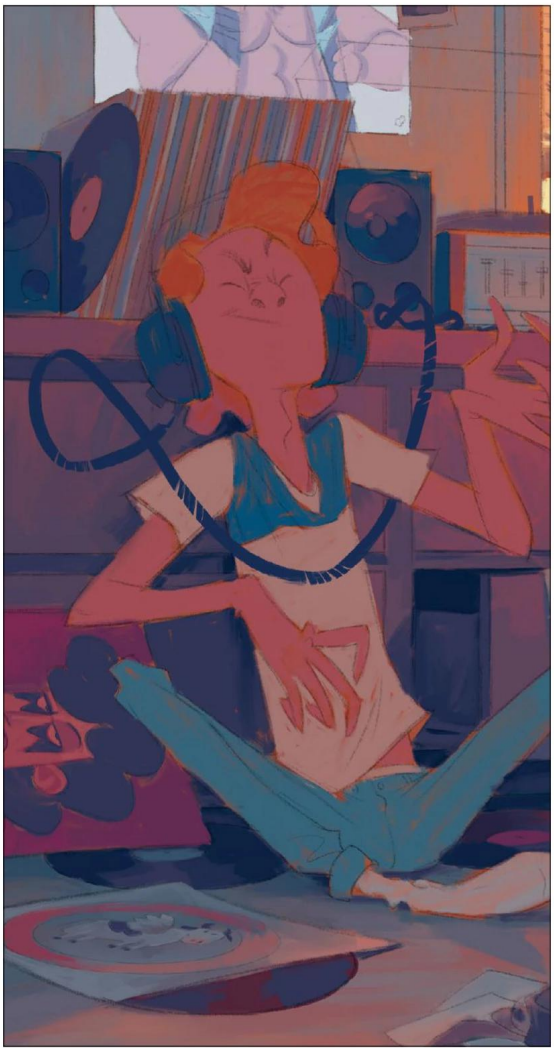
13 Apply a tone to the canvas

Toning the canvas is a common traditional approa. Lay down a base of orange mid-tones to create the hint of a warm glow early on. This enables you to paint loosely and transparently without feeling the need to carefully cover up a white background. A good texture can help when allowing the canvas to show through. Paint this using the MaxU Gouache Bristle Gritty brush.

14 Introduce bounce light

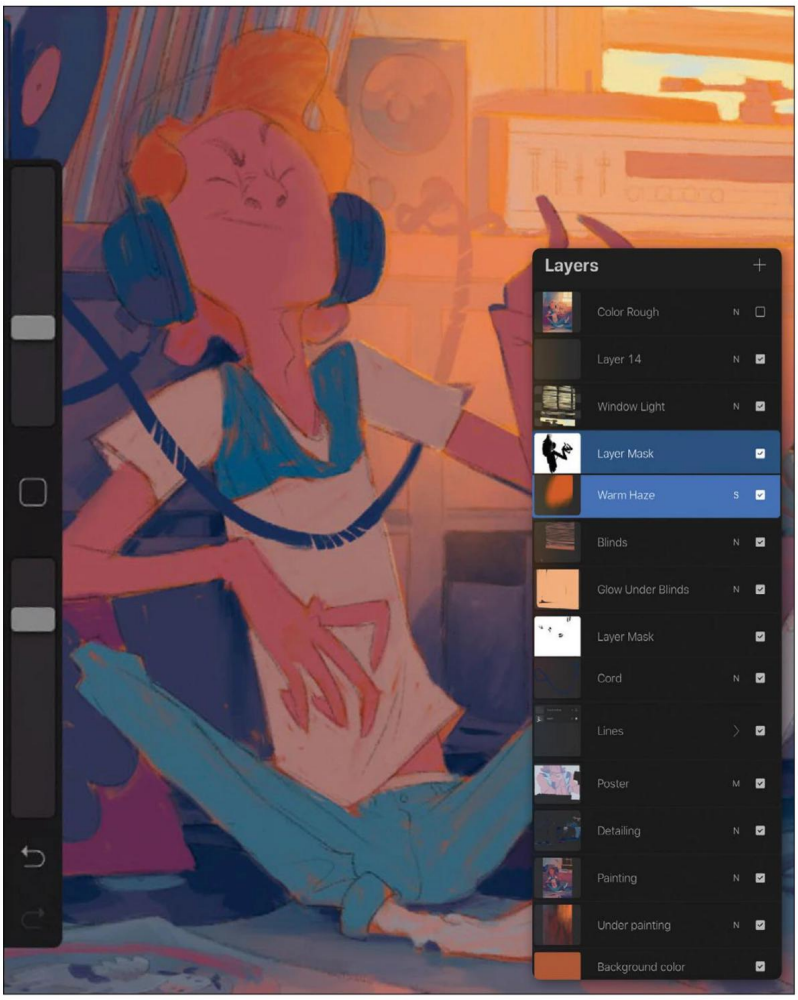
Lay down some loose mid-tones while sampling colours from the colour thumbnail using the Eyedropper tool. To create bounce light from the window, paint warmer tones near the window and cooler tones further away from it. It's fine to work a little messily at this stage and layer in detail as you go.

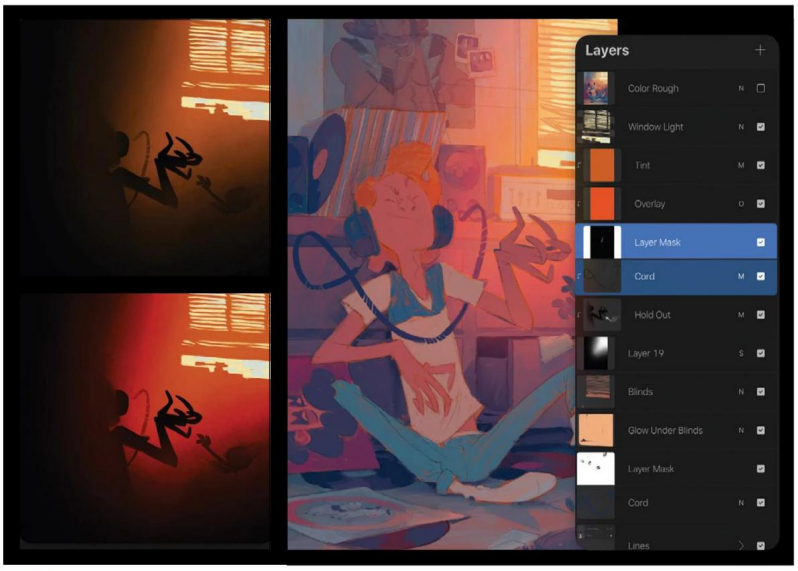




15 Light the poster realistically

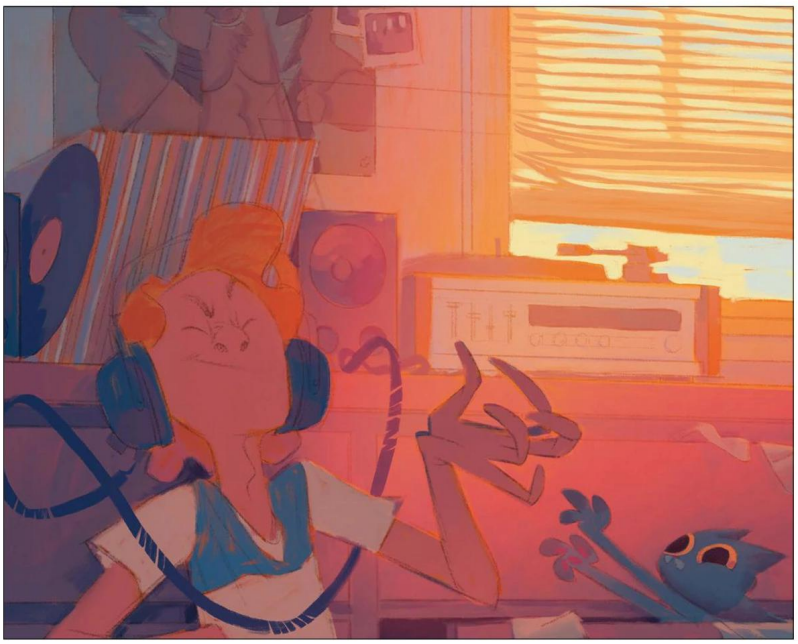
Details such as album covers and posters are fun to paint. Most of the time you can paint opaque colours sampled from the study, but in the case of the poster above the boy's head, paint it unlit and set the blend mode to Multiply, because it's on a white wall that blends from warm to cool as it fades away from the window.





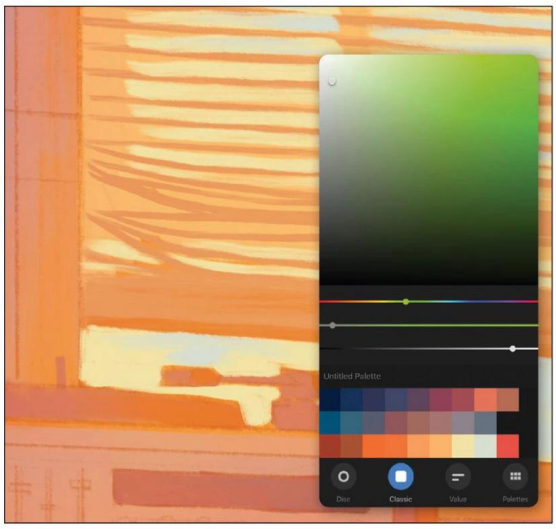
16 Enhance the room's orange haze

To create the hazy atmosphere, take an approach similar to the colour roughs. However, something about the colours looks a little chalky and flat as the haze fades out. This is most noticeable around the cat's paws. Rebuild the layers, painting white haze on a black layer set to Screen, then clipping the silhouettes of the hand, face, cord and cat out of the haze using Multiply layers (called "hold out" layers here). Now the orange colour comes from two layers clipped on top of this stack: one set to Overlay to warm up the greys, and the top one set to Multiply to tint the whole thing. The result is easier to work with and has a more pleasing falloff.



17 Hint at the outside world

The blinds and window frames sit under the haze layer, so benefit from the warm light. Paint the yellow light coming through the blinds on top of the haze to enable you to work more predictably, without the artificial influence of the haze. Mix in a little warm and cool on this layer to imply the sky and neighbourhood outside, which you wouldn't be able to do if there were a big orange layer on top. To give the painting a more traditional feel, embrace imperfections and don't worry about creating perfectly straight lines.

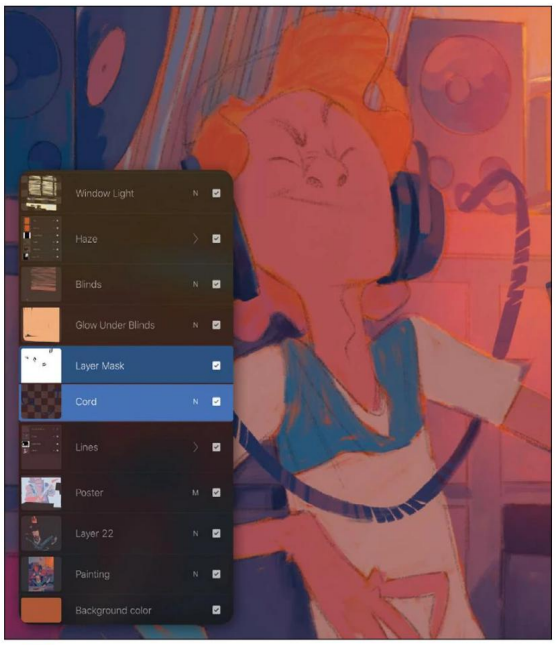


18 Use simultaneous contrast

This means putting two different colours of matching brightness next to each other, creating a feeling of vibrancy and energy. When the warm underpainting pops through the cool walls and carpet, it creates visual interest. The effect is especially visible in the bright yellow and blues of the window. It's perfect for hot light sources, reflected light, rich skin tones and translucency. It's easy to create by Eyedropping the colour you wish to match, then in the Color Picker, moving the Hue or Saturation sliders until you find the colour that matches the brightness and enhances the first colour in the upper right swatches.

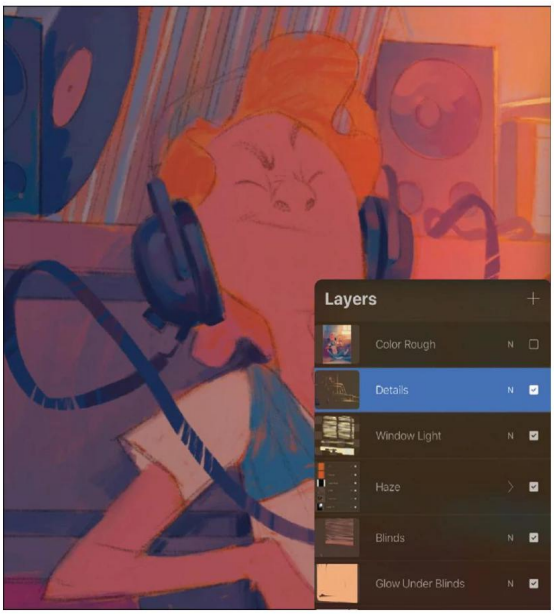
19 Boost storytelling aspects

Details like the poster on the wall are a great way to add story to an image. When the man on the poster was just a funny-haired musician in a goofy vest, he wasn't adding much to the story. However, when redrawn so that he's playing a guitar in a posture that mirrors the boy's, it suggests that the boy idolises him and is enjoying the very same song. The fact that the guitarist is heavily muscled, while the boy is scrawny, adds to the narrative further.



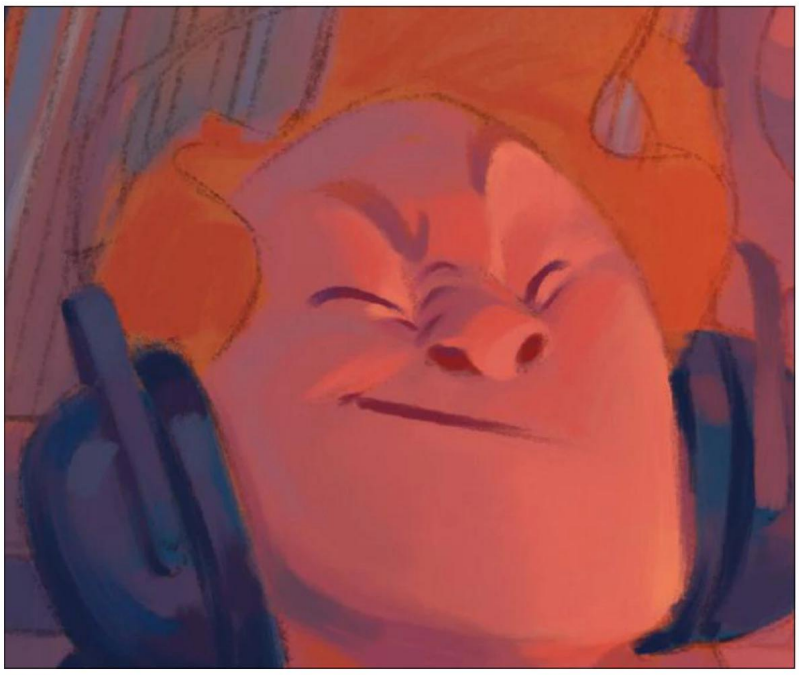
20 Keep some objects simple

The headphone cord is easy to over-detail, so opt for a stylised approach. Create a mask and paint black in some areas, then repaint white loops back in. Break up the shading in the cord by setting the layer to Alpha Lock, ensuring you can't paint outside what's already opaque. The chequerboard background in the thumbnail tells you that it's locked. Next, paint in some warm and cool strokes on the cord layer with similar spiral marks.



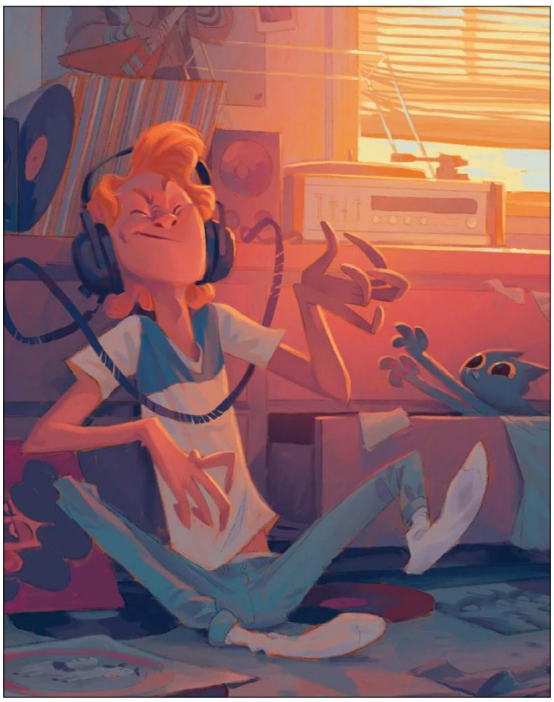
21 Manage your layers

As you sample colours around the painting, turn the haze layers off so your colours aren't diluted by the orange if painting under it. The more layers you have, the more difficult they can be to manage, so at this point you may wish to flatten the layers of your painting. Once flattened, you can begin painting details on top of the painting instead. This saves space and still allows some flexibility in case you make a mistake.



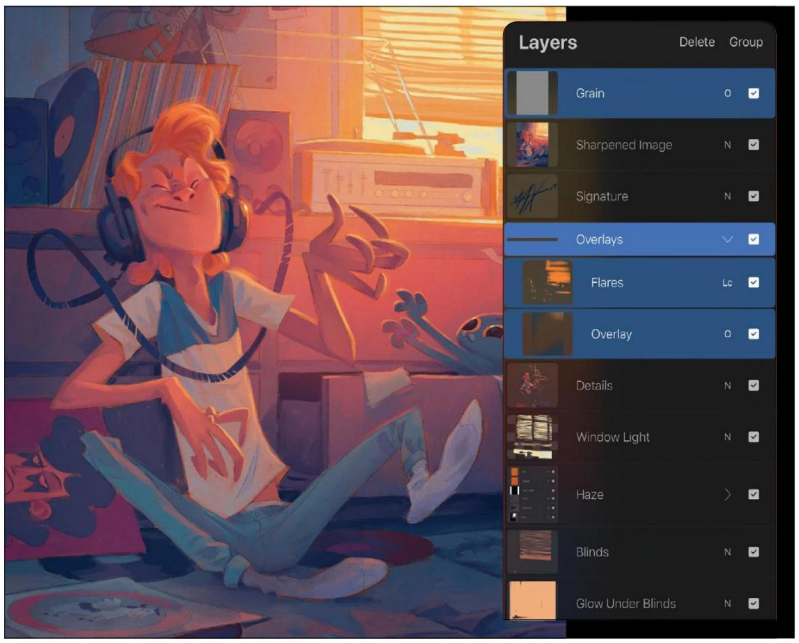
22 Downplay the image's digital origins

Working on top of the flattened image, focus on cleaning up edges by sampling colours directly rather than flipping back and forth between layers. Begin to refine the face and hands; clean up edges but take care not to zoom in too much or scale your brush down too small. Overly clean and sharp brushstrokes are a dead giveaway that a painting is digital, so keep brushstrokes expressive when trying to create an image that looks like it's been created with more traditional media.



23 Lead the viewer to your focal points

The last major element to add is the rim light. This is what draws the viewer's eye to the focal point, so reserve your darkest darks and lightest lights for the boy's face. Similarly, the face and hands should contain the most detail, falling off to the more loosely rendered, lower-contrast room surrounding the character.



24 Add a slight vignette to the room

This will help to draw the viewer in, while the cool tones will complement the warm haze. Do this by painting some soft dark blue shadows in the corners on a new layer set to Overlay. To add a bit more heat to the rim light, use the MaxU Gouache Bristle Gritty on a new layer set to Lighter Color, dry brush in some warm orange around the brightest highlights. Finally, add a little grain by filling a new layer with 50 per cent grey, setting it to Overlay, and using Filters>Noise to add some noise. Using Gaussian Blur, blur the noise a couple of pixels then reduce the Layer Opacity to around 25 per cent so it's subtle. And that's the image finished.

Traditional media & Photoshop

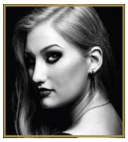
COLOURING YOUR PAINTING DIGITALLY

Discover how **Abigail Larson** makes use of digital colouring tools to enhance her traditionally painted artwork, based on a 19th century poem

Artist **PROFILE**

Abigail Larson
LOCATION: Italy

Abigail specialises in gothic romantic imagery for games, books and comics. Her clients include DC Comics, Dark Horse and Universal.
www.abigaillarson.com



This piece, The Goblin Market, is a recent reworking of a piece that I made several years ago, when I was still developing my style with watercolour. It's inspired by the poem of the same title by the 19th century English poet Christina Rossetti.

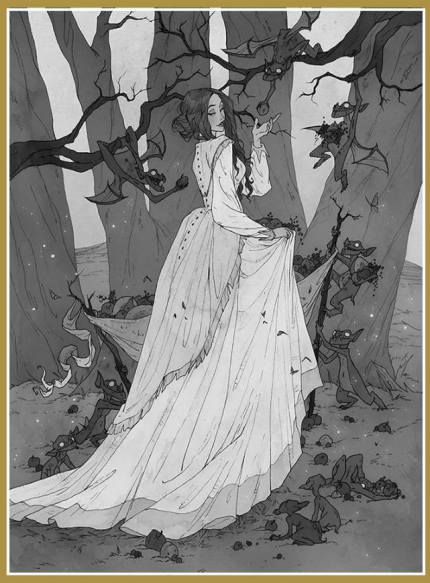
Because it's a Victorian fairy tale, I wanted to make sure my character looked period-appropriate, but that the art itself evoked a nostalgic whimsical setting. I normally start my pieces with rough sketches, but I knew what I wanted to do for this one. I also had the benefit of having my older drawing to reference. So I began the figure sketch and arranged the goblins around her in a way that would encourage the viewer's eye to move around the piece.

Once the drawing was finished, I began the ink drawing on a clean sheet of watercolour paper, and added a light watercolour wash over the page to add texture. Then I scanned it and added colour digitally in Photoshop. This stage is where I select elements of the piece and start the values of the piece in black and white, and then select areas to colour individually.

How I create...
A FIGURE IN A FOREST

1 Create a rough sketch

This is where I work out the composition. I keep it pretty loose, because I know I'll hone the smaller details when I move on to the ink stage. I'm figuring out things like the folds of the main character's dress, the position of her hands, the shapes of the branches, and the goblins' poses.



2 Working on the values

This is the finished ink and watercolour stage, after scanning the piece into Photoshop and starting the values. It's not always necessary to have perfect contrast in black and white, as you can achieve readability with complementary colours, but it does help to shape the piece.

3 Final colour tweaks

I select each element of the piece and add colour using Color Balance and Hue & Saturation I also use Levels to make final adjustments. I don't really "paint" other than to add touch-up to some areas, like the character's blush. Finally, I use Color Balance to push the yellow saturation slightly.

Next month

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

Make art!

Be sure to pick up a copy of ImagineFX next month to learn from the best artists in the world!

© Disney Pictures
© 20th Century Fox
© Paramount Pictures

All this... and more!

Crash McCreery interview
The legendary film artist discusses his blockbuster career.

Is it okay to be self-taught?
We speak to artists who didn't go to art school.

Pro speed painting advice
Artist Dom Lay on how to quickly build up form.

Artist in residence
Emily Hare opens up her art studio for a tour.

ISSUE 189 ON SALE DIGITALLY *12 June 2020*

GOBLIN TRICKERY

Dreamy background

To give this piece a late summer/early autumnal feeling, I go in heavy with the warm yellows, making the grass a little more olive and the sky a warm sunset. This helps the piece feel a little more dreamlike.

Convey movement

Even in a relatively still scene, it's important to convey movement with the subjects. The goblins are the main source of movement because the figure is fairly still, just slightly turning. But I use poses for the goblins in the trees that mimic monkeys or squirrels, to make them feel a little more animated.

Story details

In the story, our main character is lured by goblins to eat their enchanted food, which eventually causes her quite a lot of trouble. I want her face to look a little dreamy, because she's under their spell. I use a large Soft brush on 10 per cent Opacity to add a little flush to her cheeks and nose.

Colour overlay

I select all the pieces of fruit and put them on a single layer, overlaying a reddish orange base colour. I then select certain pieces to be a more "peach" or golden in colour, and darkened some of the red berries. Making these quick, simple adjustments helps give the effect of a wide variation, without having to individually colour each piece.

Layering the trees

The darker branches at the top of the piece are almost a framing device to grab and pull the viewer in. The paler trees fade out into the background, while the more clearly defined branches that are part of the main composition are in focus, drawing attention to the excited goblins hanging from them.

Generate texture

I used a watercolour wash to achieve the texture in this piece, and use it heavily in certain areas. These include the grass, which needs a lot of texture to make it look less flat; the character's gown to define the folds; and her hair, to give it a little bit of shine. In Photoshop, I push that reflected light slightly using Levels and the Dodge tool.

Artist insight

DRAW A FIGURE IN 20 MINUTES

Give **Chris Legaspi** just 20 minutes and he'll give you all the basic techniques you need to depict realistic figure art in pencil and charcoal

Artist **PROFILE**

Chris Legaspi

LOCATION: US

Chris is a dedicated, life-long artist with over 20 years' experience as a professional artist, writer and educator.

www.drawwithchris.com

Shading and rendering is my favourite part of a 10- or 20-minute pose. Here, I'll introduce some of the basic principles, tools and techniques that I use to shade or render in a short amount of time.

Before I begin, I first analyse and limit the values I use. For life drawing, I use a three-value palette of light, dark and mid-tone. This helps me to control values as I shade and render forms.

To define forms, I use a combination of soft or hard edges. Soft edges do the majority of the work and create the most natural look. Hard edges are great for accents or sculpting forms.

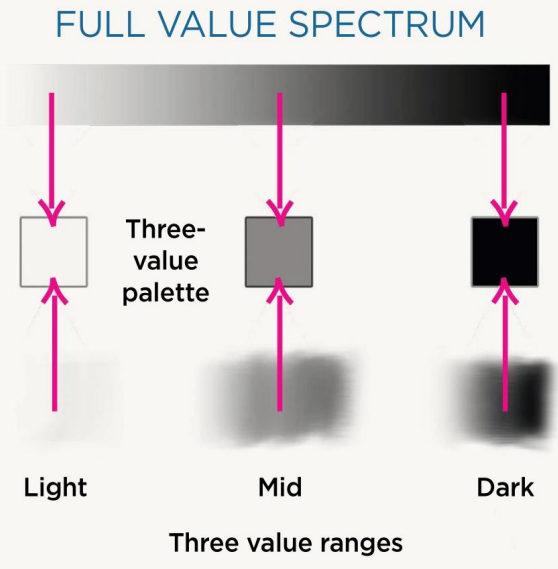
There are many shading and blending techniques that you can use in your figure-drawing art, but they can be simplified into either line or tonal drawing. Line is great for details and texture. Tones are good for coverage and creating soft edges. More techniques will be explored in upcoming issues.

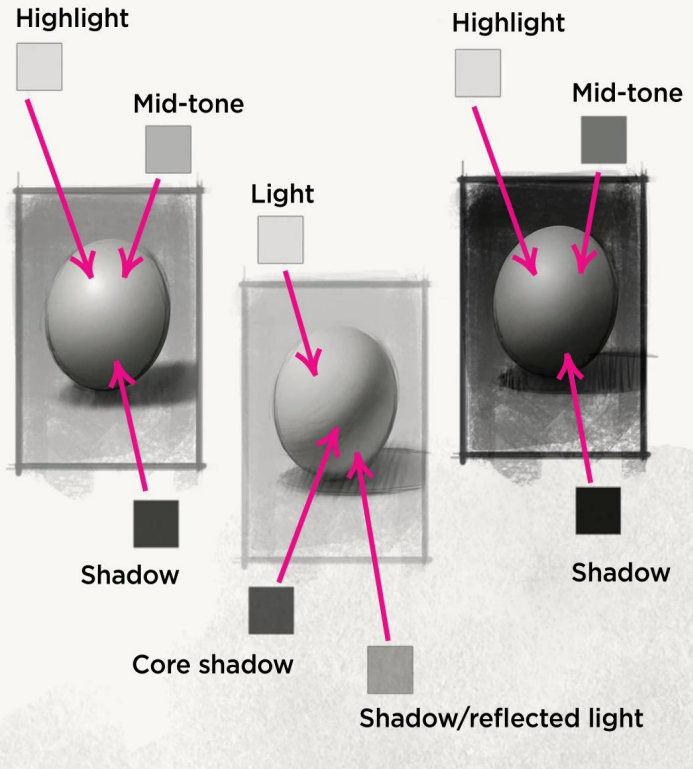
For blending, my favourite tools are kneaded erasers, blending stumps, tissue paper and my fingers. Stumps are good for detail, while tissue is great for making really soft and lost edges. Finger blending is useful, but do be aware that the skin's natural oils can make subsequent edits difficult. A kneaded eraser is a versatile tool that I use for correcting shapes, erasing out highlights and also for drawing and sculpting form.

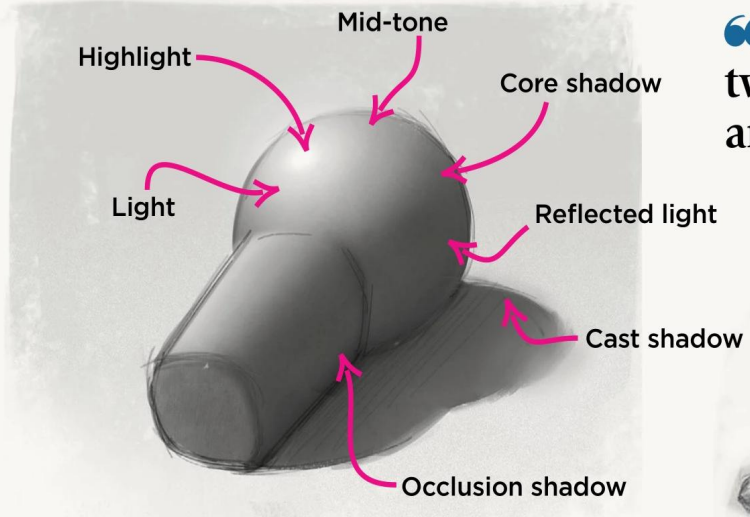
My drawing and shading process varies depending on the pose, but I generally start by shading and refining a focal point area, like the head or torso. Once that's working, I move on to other areas of the figure, as time permits.

1 HOW TO USE THREE VALUES

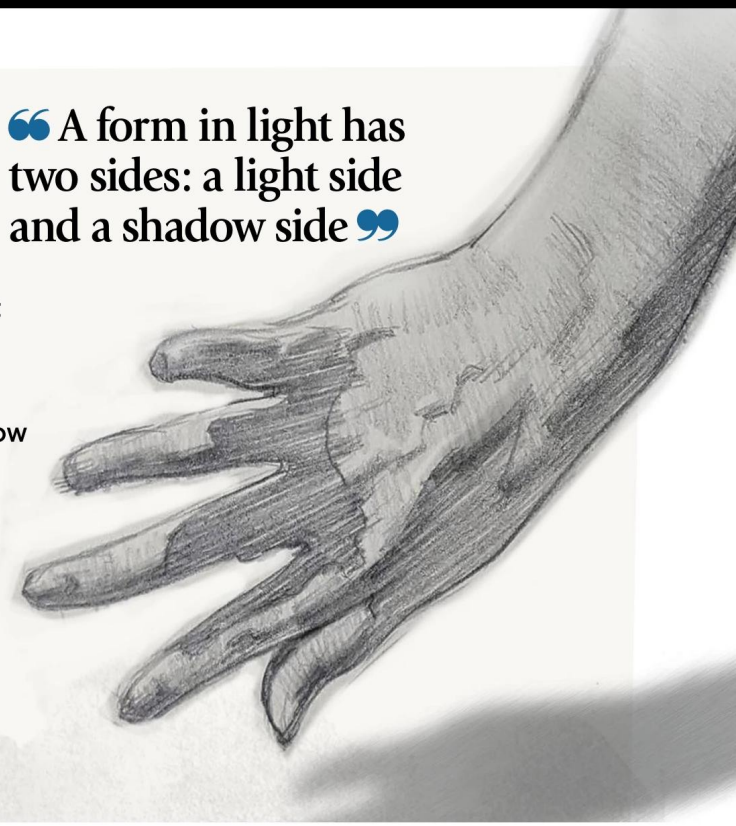
Controlling value is the first step to shading. For life drawing, I limit myself to three values: dark, mid-tone (also known as half-tone) and light. This helps to control values and with careful arrangement of lights, darks and mid-tones, I can render form and even create depth.





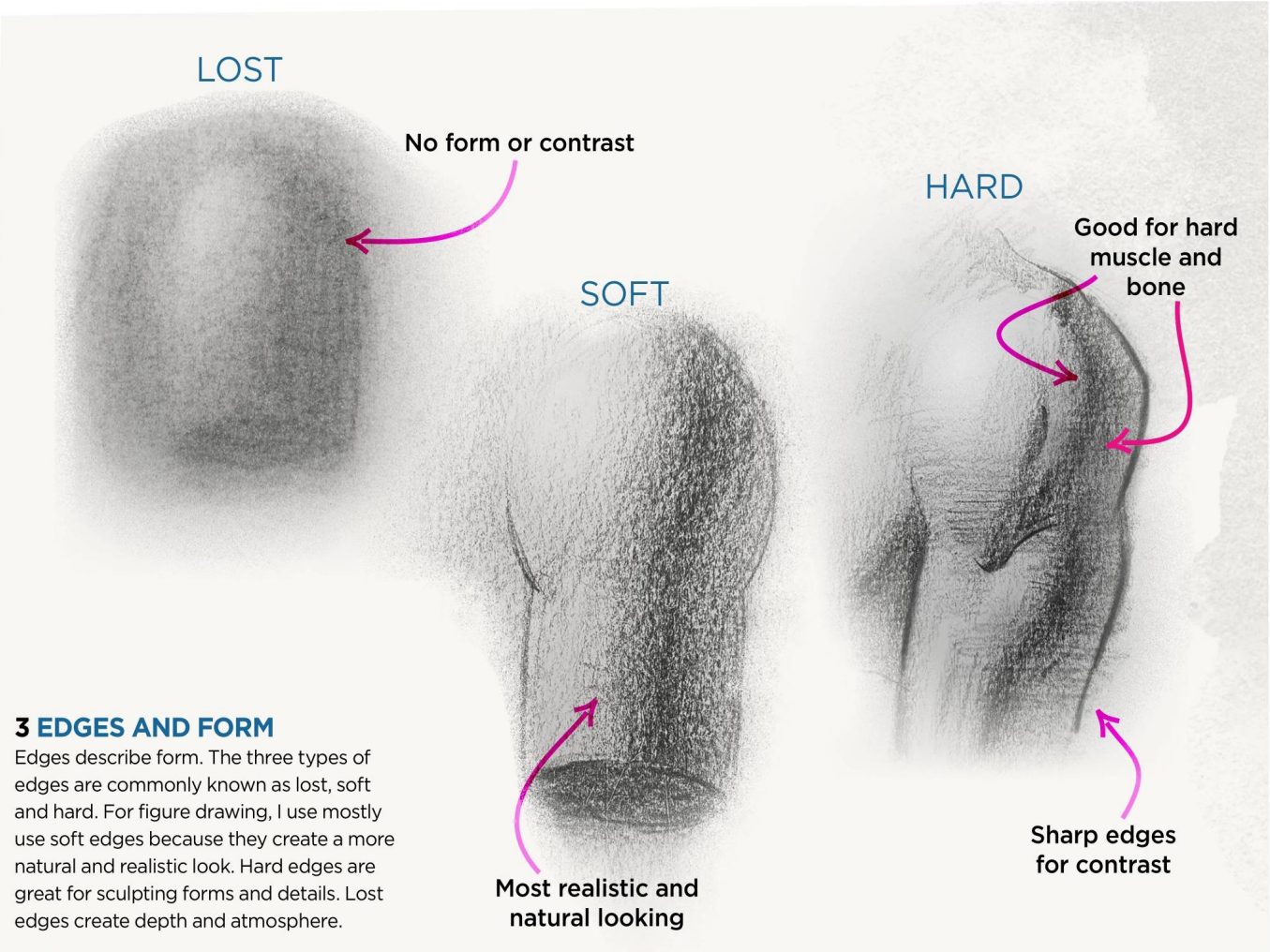


> A form in light has two sides: a light side and a shadow side



2 ANATOMY OF LIGHT AND SHADOW

A form in light has two distinct sides: a light side and a shadow side. The shadow side consists of the core shadow, reflected light, occlusion shadow and cast shadow. The light side of the form is made up of mid-tones, light itself and the highlight.

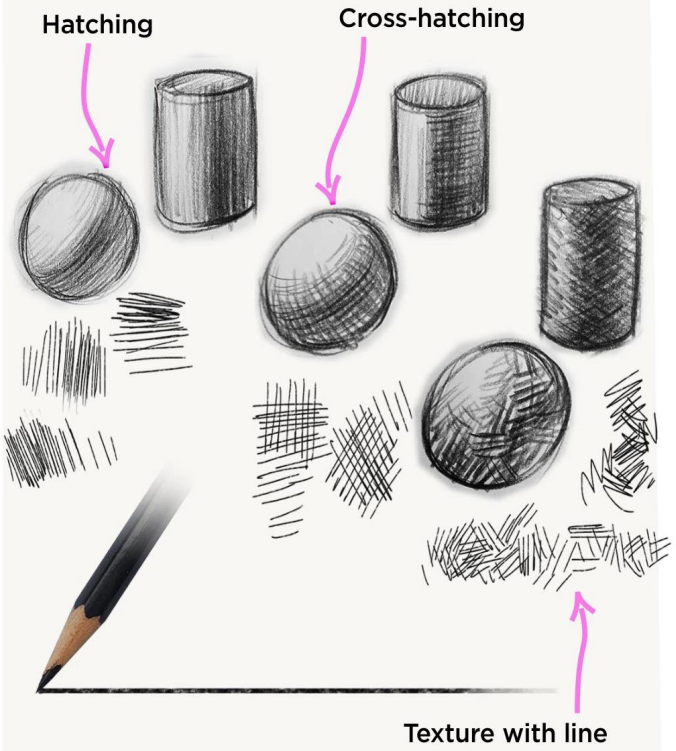


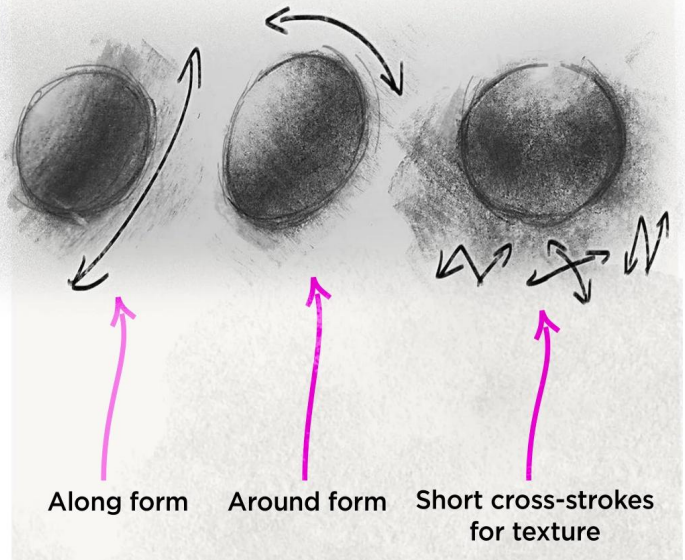
3 EDGES AND FORM

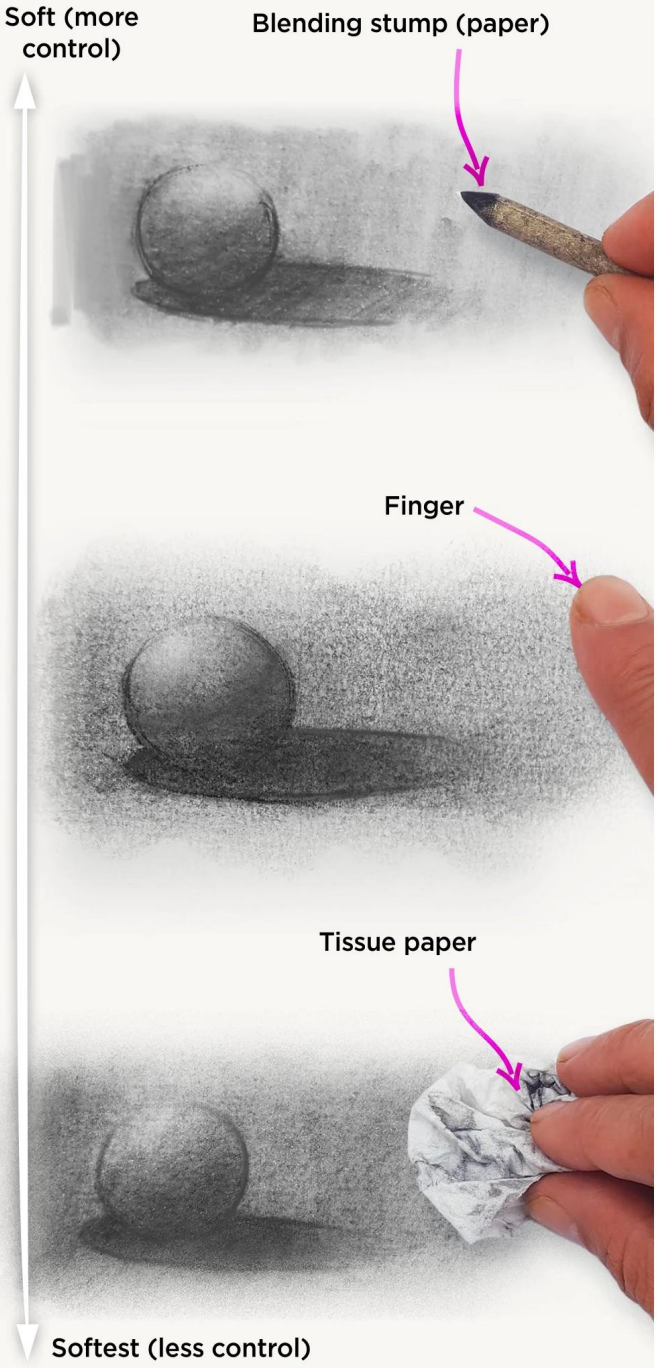
Edges describe form. The three types of edges are commonly known as lost, soft and hard. For figure drawing, I use mostly use soft edges because they create a more natural and realistic look. Hard edges are great for sculpting forms and details. Lost edges create depth and atmosphere.

4 SHADING TECHNIQUES

The two main ways I shade are with either line or tone. For line, I use the tip of my pencil to create hatching and cross-hatching marks. For tone, I use the side of the pencil or a stick to create a variety of broad strokes, tones and texture.







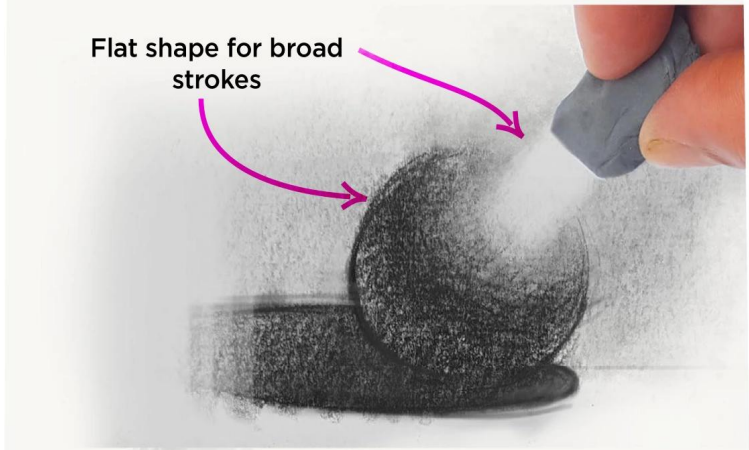
5 BLENDING TECHNIQUES

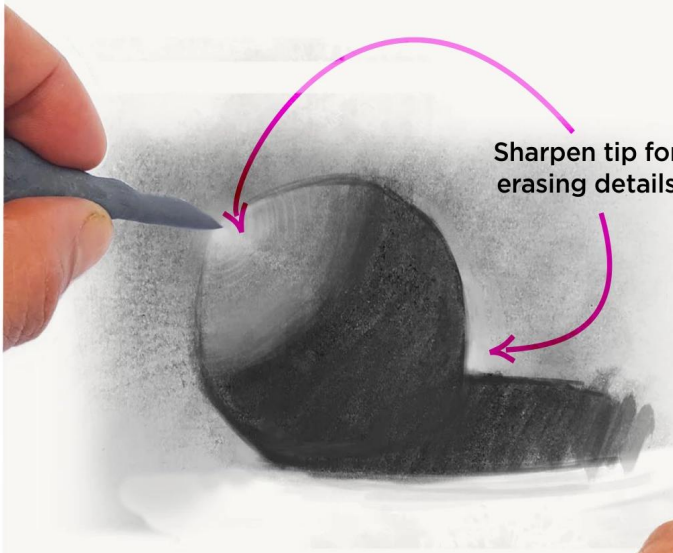
For blending, I like to use a paper stump, tissue paper or my finger. The stump gives me a lot of control and is great for detail, while the tissue is perfect for really soft or lost edges and tones. I use my fingers sparingly because the natural oils can make the drawing difficult to edit.

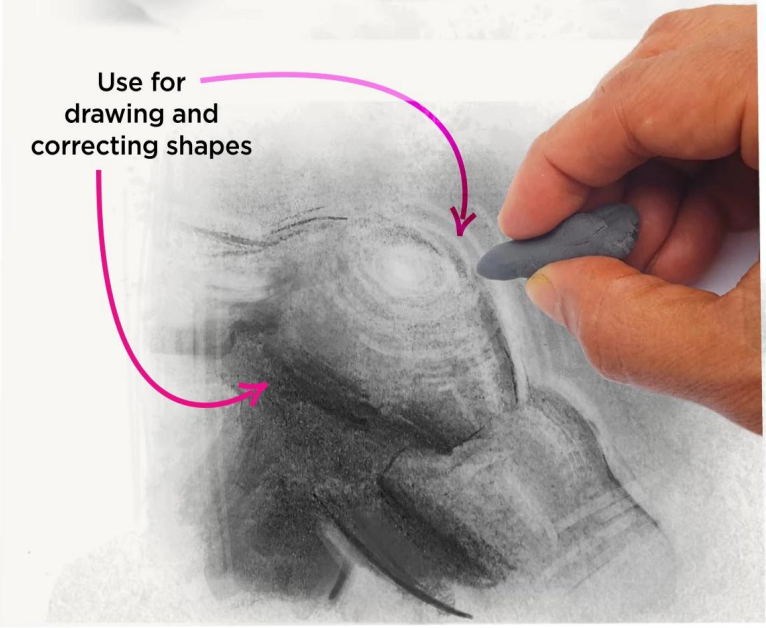
> “I use my fingers sparingly because the natural oils can make the drawing difficult to edit”

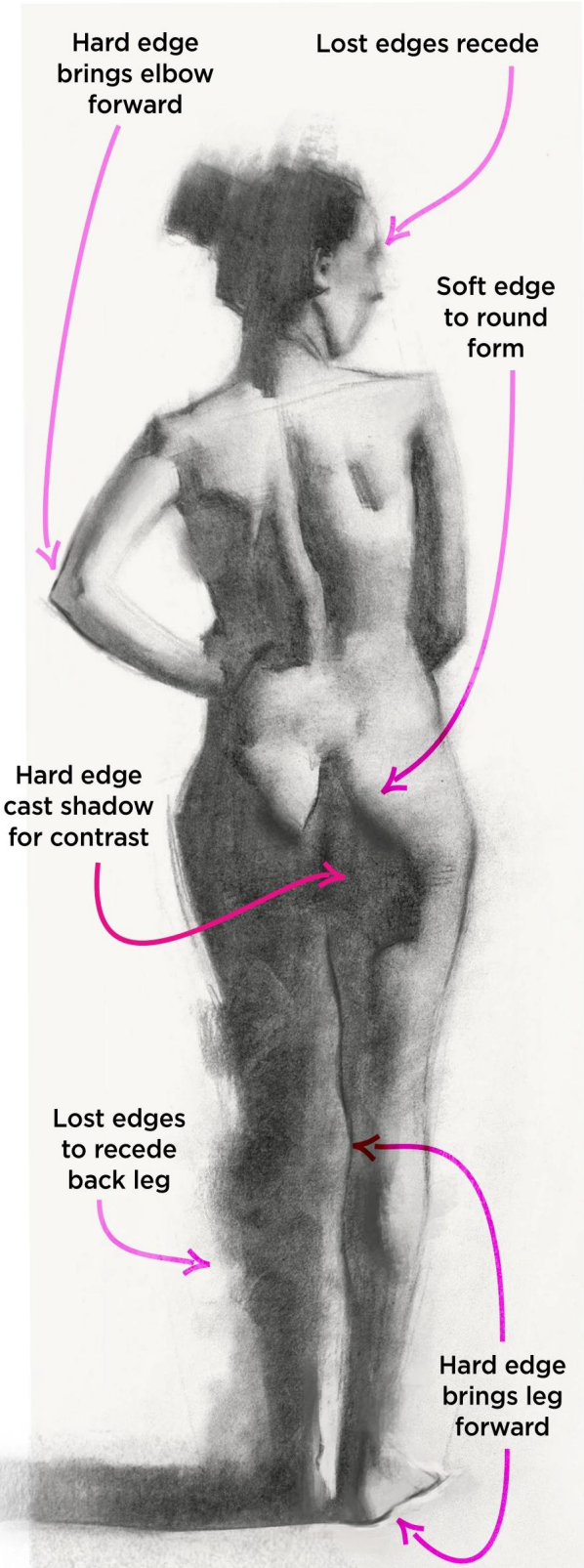
6 ERASER TECHNIQUES

A kneaded eraser is an all-purpose tool I use for erasing, blending and even drawing. I simply sculpt it into different shapes to create a variety of marks. A flat shape is great for broad strokes. A small point or tip is great for erasing out highlights, details, and to draw and correct shapes.



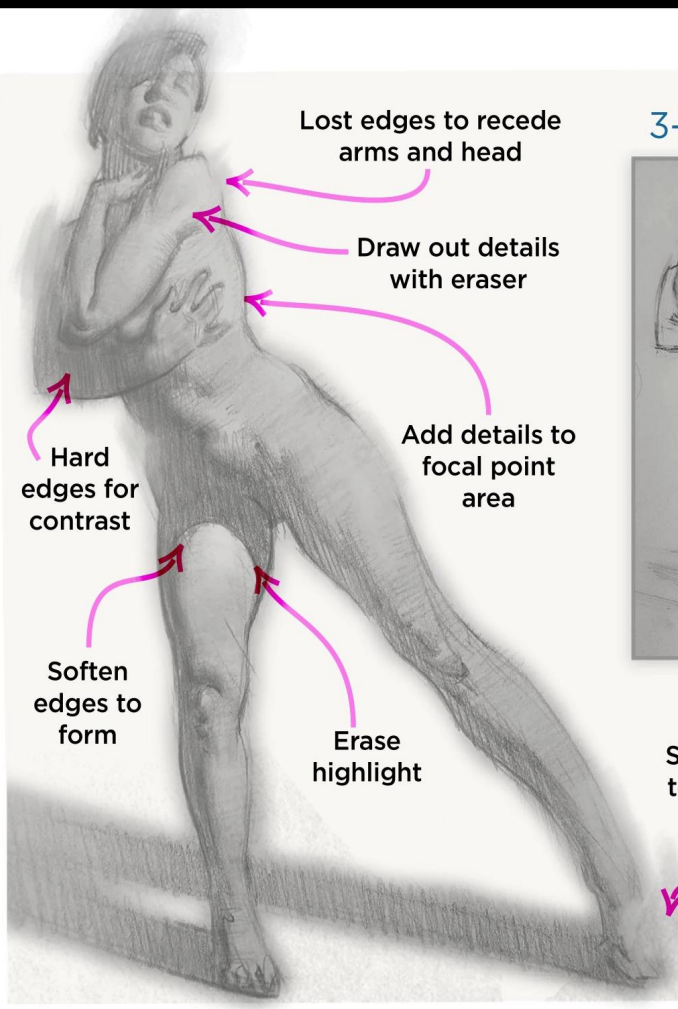






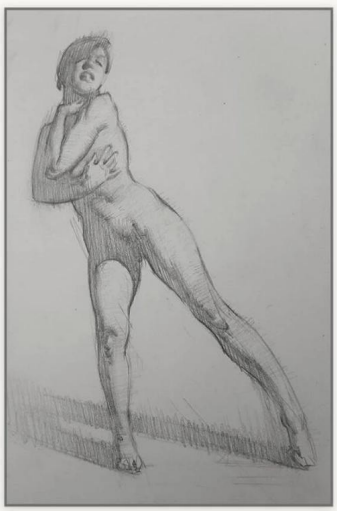
7 EDGES FOR DEPTH

Use edges to create depth. For example, soften or lose an edge to push a form backwards. Harder edges, combined with soft core shadows, bring a form forward. Sharp edges also bring a form forward, by creating contrast.



3-MINUTE STAGE

5-MINUTE STAGE



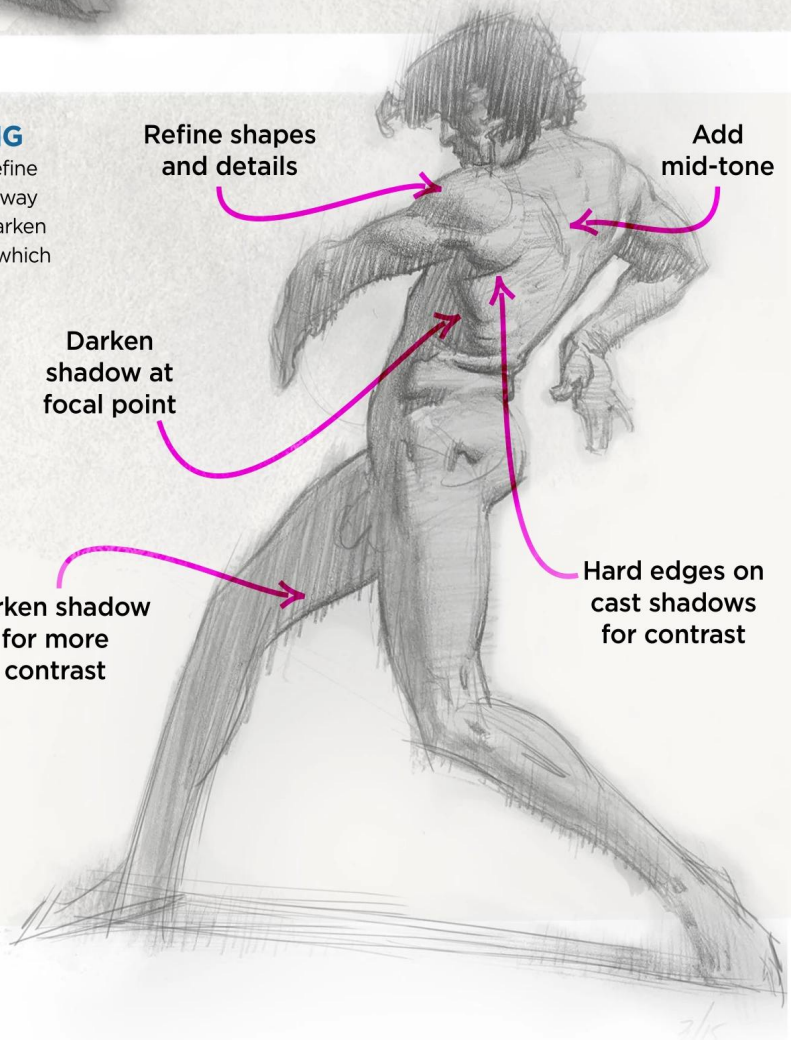
8 AT THE 10 MINUTE STAGE

Once I have my figure drawn and have blocked in the shadow pattern, I continue to refine the light and shadow. I begin with a focal point area and refine the edges and values, which involves making soft edges softer, darkening the core shadow for contrast and depth, and sharpening hard edges to create contrast.

9 STARTING THE 20-MINUTE DRAWING

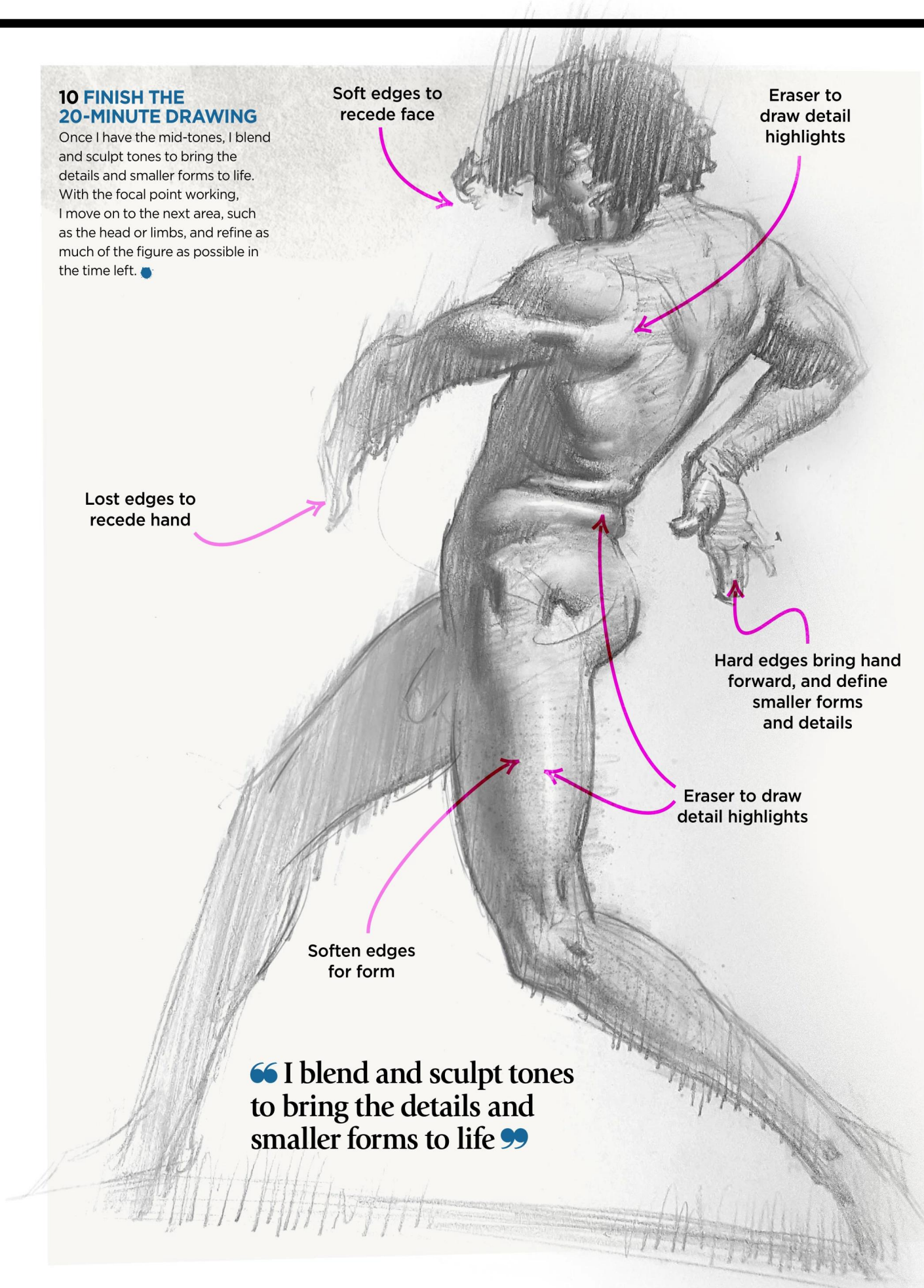
Twenty minutes is enough time to draw a figure and refine shading. I usually start with a focal point and work my way towards the other parts of the figure. For example, I darken and soften the core shadow and then add mid-tones, which help me to sculpt the form.

5-MINUTE STAGE



10 FINISH THE 20-MINUTE DRAWING

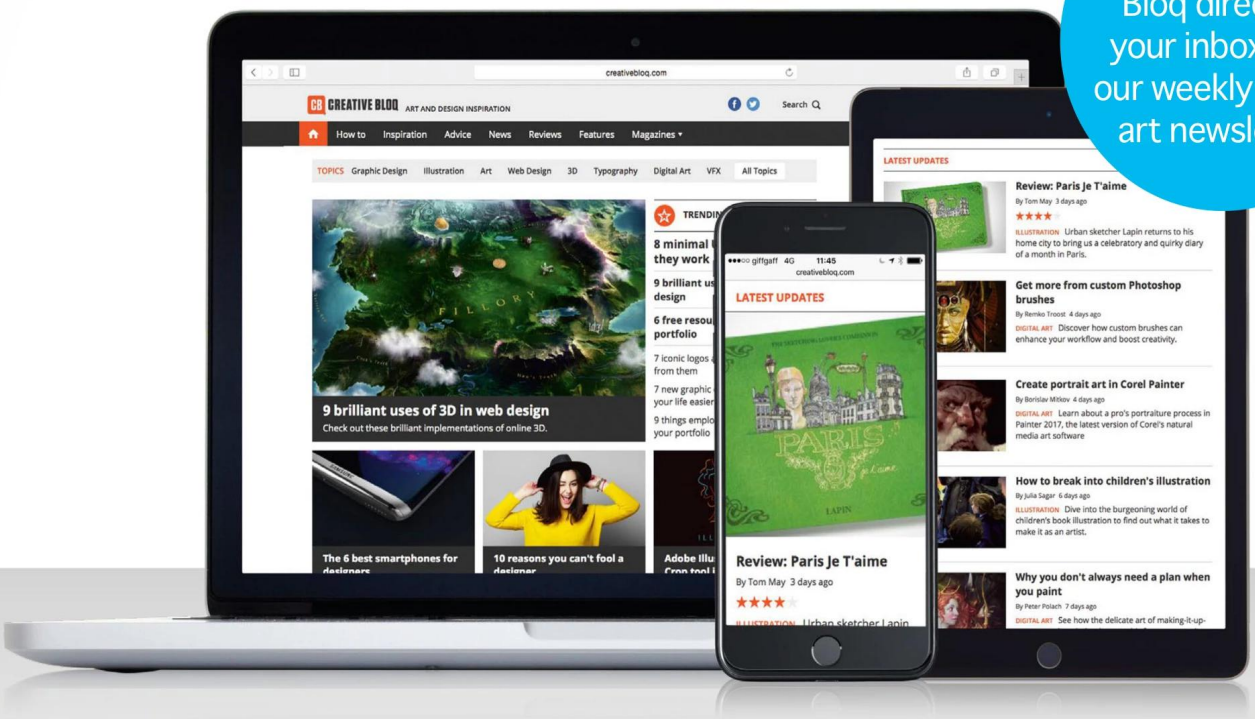
Once I have the mid-tones, I blend and sculpt tones to bring the details and smaller forms to life. With the focal point working, I move on to the next area, such as the head or limbs, and refine as much of the figure as possible in the time left.



> I blend and sculpt tones to bring the details and smaller forms to life

The number one destination for **digital art** news, views and how-tos

Get Creative Bloq direct to your inbox with our weekly digital art newsletter



CB CREATIVE BLOQ

Graphic design | Art | Web design | 3D | Digital art

www.creativebloq.com

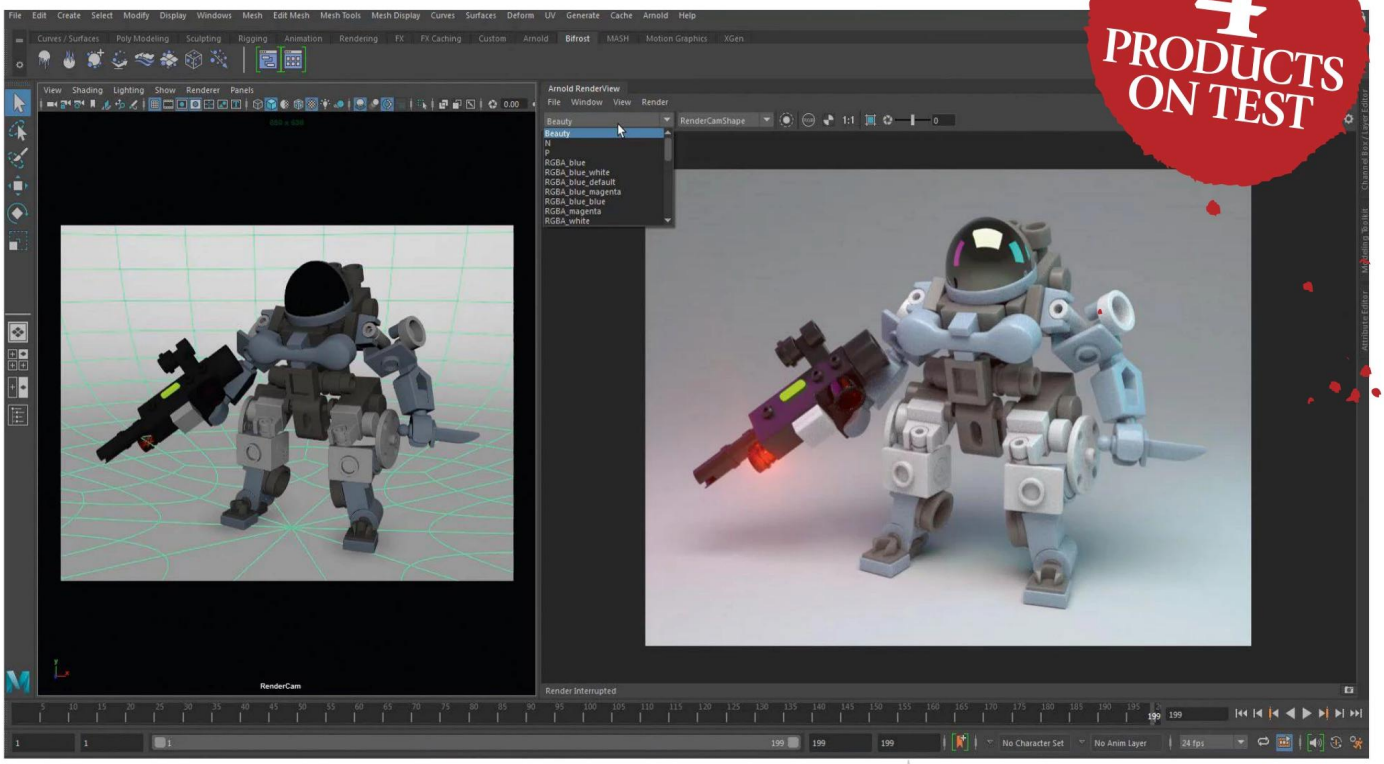
NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

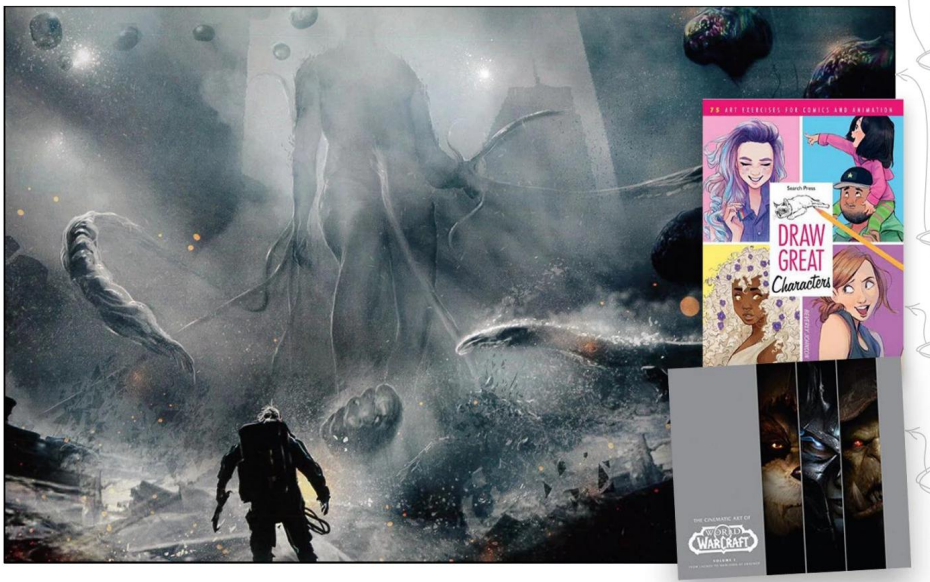
ImagineFX Reviews

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…

4 PRODUCTS ON TEST





SOFTWARE

82 Maya 2020
Has the creative community been listened to for the latest release of Autodesk's powerhouse modelling software?

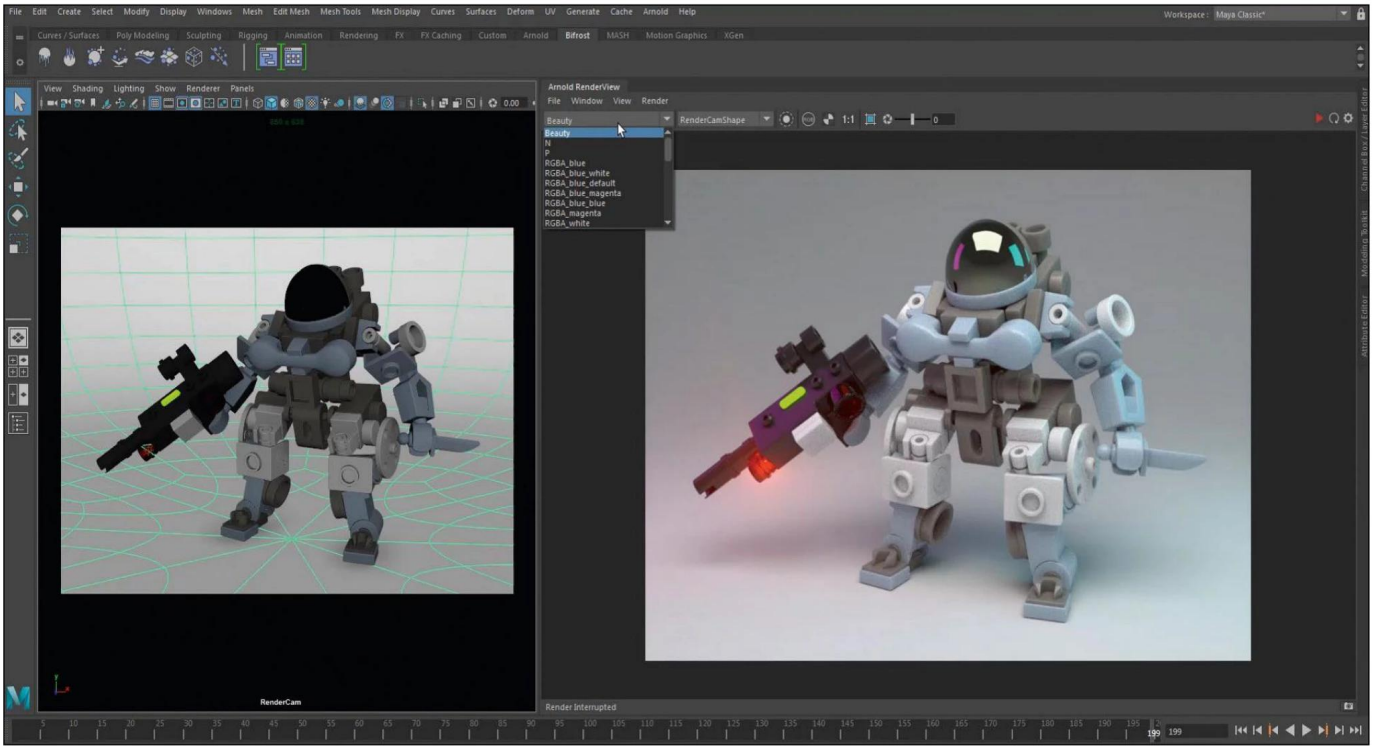
BOOKS

84 The Art of Death Stranding
How the creative leads behind the Metal Gear series brought their latest work to life.

85 Draw Great Characters
Illustrator Beverly Johnson helps you to flex your character design muscles.

85 The Cinematic Art of World of Warcraft: Volume 1
Learn how the world of Azeroth has been visualised via stunning cinematics.

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



Maya 2020 now comes with the latest version of Arnold, which will help to speed up the rendering pipeline in studios.

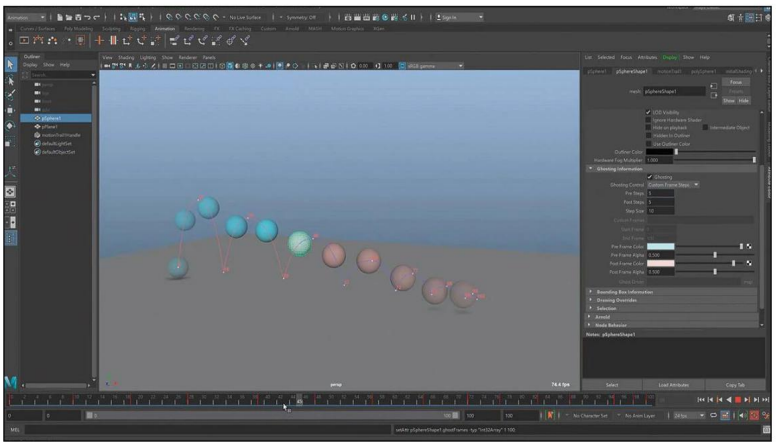
Maya 2020

SHAPE UP Has the creative community been listened to for the latest release of Autodesk's powerhouse modelling software?

Price £234 per month/£1,872 per year **Company** Autodesk **Web** www.autodesk.co.uk

Autodesk has released Maya 2020, the latest update on its 3D modelling, animation, visual effects and 3D rendering software. We put the program through its paces to see if the new features justify the high asking price.

Maya is over 22 years old, and there was a time when you needed a Silicon Graphics machine to run it. Such hardware was expensive enough, but when coupled with the price of a Maya licence it meant you had to spend a small fortune to be creative in 3D. While the software is now more affordable and runs on standard computing hardware, there's an argument that it's still too pricey, especially when compared to other 3D programs such as the free Blender and Cinema 4D (from £662/year).



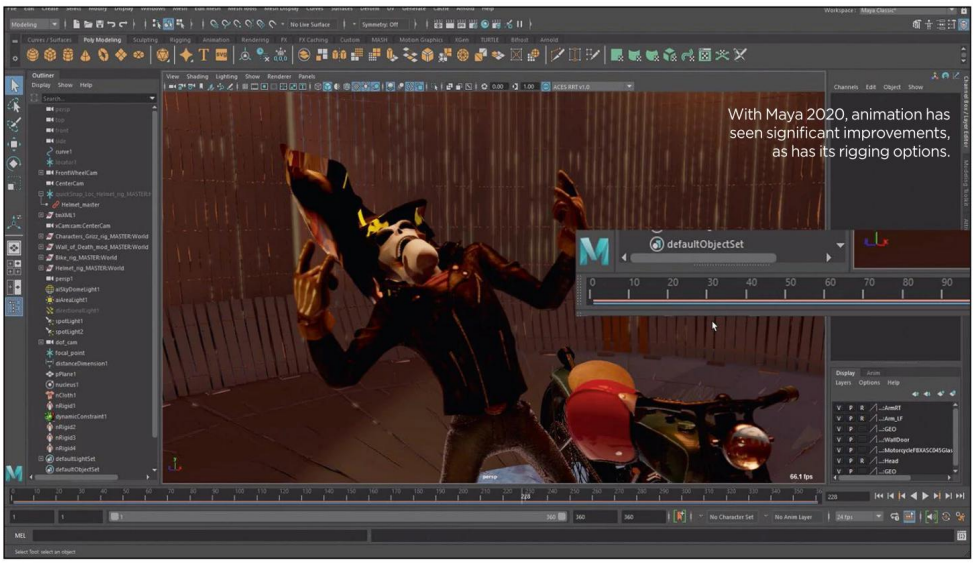
Animators can now see past and future movement with the improved Ghosting preview tool.

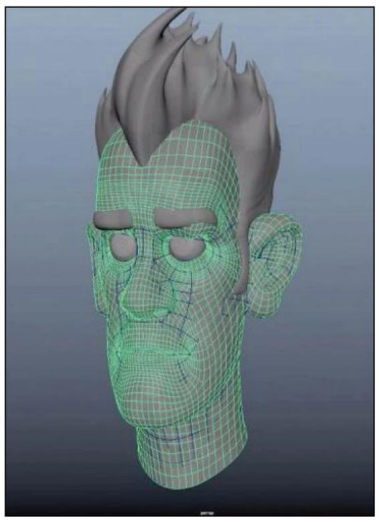
Since its early days, Autodesk has released updates annually. These usually saw new tools and features being added to Maya's arsenal. Such features were welcome additions, but were often aimed more at higher-end animation and simulation work.

The past few years has seen a shift in the direction Autodesk has taken with the updates to Maya. They're now more focused on improving existing systems and implementing features that have been voted on by the artistic community. Taking this approach has transformed Maya into a much-improved application.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

With Maya 2020, Autodesk continues this trend of listening to its users to implement much-needed features. The company has also enlisted Blue Sky Studios – home to films such as Ice Age, Rio and the recent Spies in Disguise – to help refine the animation tools, which has also seen a huge upgrade in this release.





The Proximity Wrap tool can now receive a speed boost from the GPU.

> **Autodesk is taking full advantage of the GPU because it's being used on many other tools to help speed up workflow**

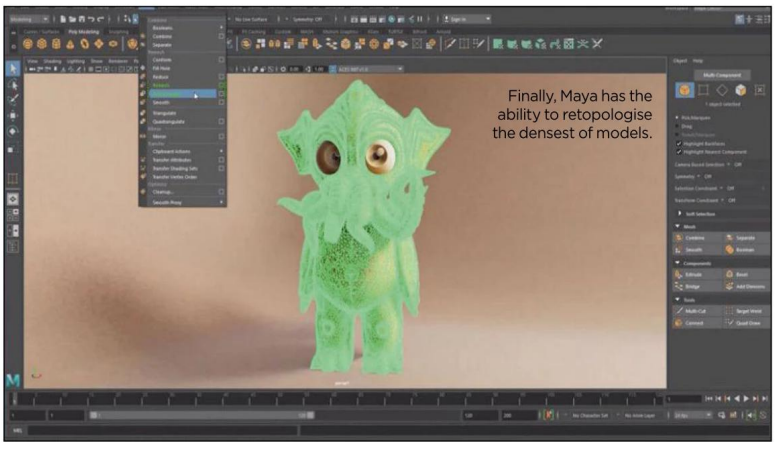
Maya now boasts over 60 new animation features, with the biggest being improvements to the animation cache playback. Originally introduced in 2019, cache playback enabled animators to view their work in real time with little or no need for constant Playblasts (a low-resolution version of the animation). This was the idea anyway, but it came with limitations. The first was a lack of dynamics support, so it couldn't be used alongside these systems. Image planes still relied on legacy systems, so they were slow and hogged memory, and it wasn't as efficient when used with dense geometry.

These issues have all been addressed and make for a smoother experience. Dynamics support is included, using a new layered evaluation system. nParticles, nCloth and nBodies are now supported, with nHair, Bifrost FX and muscle systems coming later.

MAYA, MEET ARNOLD

Speaking of the GPU, another big update this year from Autodesk is Arnold 6 with full GPU rendering support, based on the NVIDIA OptiX ray-tracing engine. Arnold 6 is included in Maya 2020, which will streamline your rendering workflow. With the right hardware there's no longer the need to render to see model and shader updates because they're visible in the viewport in almost real time, although note that there's the option to render on both the GPU and CPU.

On the modelling side of things, Maya now includes Remesh and Retopology functions. These tools will enable clean, quad-based topology, but they have their limitations. As good as the resulting models are, there are no options to dictate edge flow, so for game art, for example, a lot of clean-up will still be required.



Autodesk is taking full advantage of the GPU because it's being used on many other tools to help speed up workflow. The Proximity Wrap tool, which is new to Maya, is an advanced version of the Wrap tool. It uses the GPU to help calculate how the influenced geometry manipulates the surface model, making for smoother interactions. Facial rigs and custom muscle systems in particular will benefit from this.

While on the subject of rigging, the introduction of matrix-driven workflows is an exciting development. These are a series of nodes and attributes that make rigs cleaner and less cluttered. With the offsetParentMatrix attribute, constraints could be used less and less, meaning the art of rigging is more streamlined. Unfortunately, the new rigging tools aren't backwards compatible, so bear this in mind if you creating work for clients who are still using Maya 2017 and 2018.

There's much to be excited about with the new features in this latest version, along with the general modelling and speed improvements. All in all, Maya 2020 is an essential upgrade if you're an animation studio that can afford the high subscription costs. With all the new updates, it could save you a lot of time when working on your projects.

DETAILS

Features

- Bifrost for procedural effects
- Bifrost Fluids
- Ready-to-use graphs
- Cached Playback
- Interactive hair grooming
- Arnold 6 included
- Geodesic voxel binding

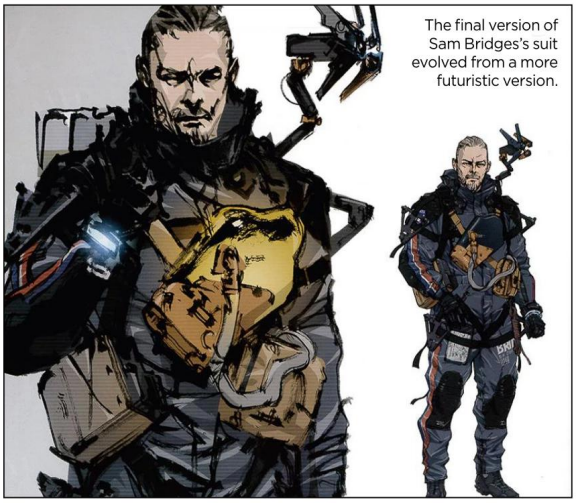
System Requirements

PC: Windows 7 or later, 64-bit multi-core CPU, Maya-certified graphics card, 8GB RAM, 4GB disk space

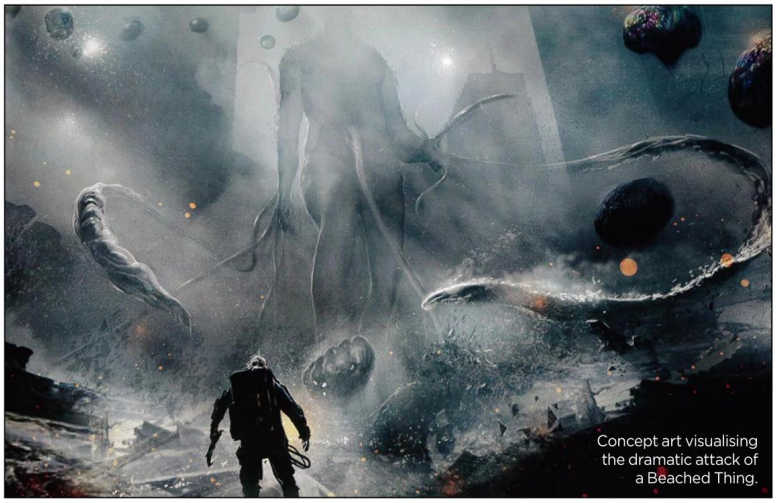
Mac: OS 10.11 or later, 64-bit multi-core CPU, Maya-certified graphics card, 8GB RAM, 4GB disk space

Rating

★★★★☆



The final version of Sam Bridges's suit evolved from a more futuristic version.



Concept art visualising the dramatic attack of a Beached Thing.

The Art of Death Stranding

SPECIAL DELIVERY Journey into the bleak world of Death Stranding with this look at how the talent behind the Metal Gear series helped bring their latest collaboration to life

Editor Kojima Productions **Publisher** Titan Books **Price** £30 **Web** www.titanbooks.com **Available** Now

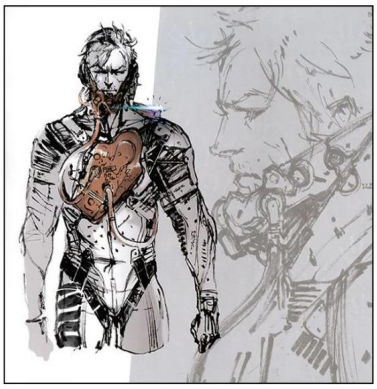
Given that both video game designer Hideo Kojima and artist Yoji Shinkawa have an incredible gaming pedigree, expectations were high for Death Stranding. And while the game didn't quite meet those expectations, Kojima Productions' secretive nature makes any glimpse behind the scenes all the more tantalising for players and artists alike.

It's important to keep these factors in mind with The Art of Death Stranding. Because while the book won't be comprehensive enough for some readers, we're fortunate enough that the mysterious studio has shared an array of stunning art and concept designs from all stages of production.

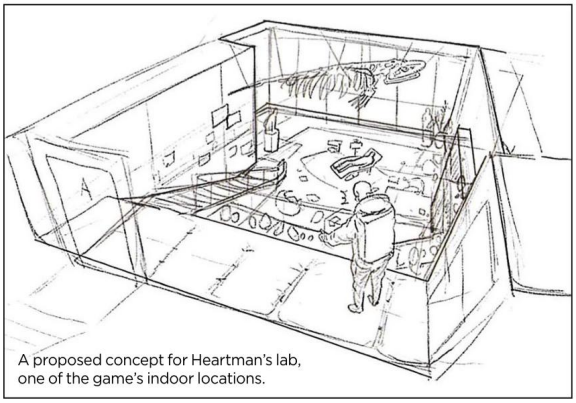
Split into two main sections, The Art of Death Stranding breaks down the characters and locations that players will interact with in the game. We track the development of courier Sam Bridges from a futuristic courier through to the refined design that launched a thousand cosplays, explore the weapons and equipment gamers interact with, and discover the logistics that went into creating a post-apocalyptic United States.

Each section is well represented, with early ink sketches visibly evolving into digital illustrations. The variety of concept drawings is a masterclass on how a top studio tackles every aspect of production, with sketches of boots and umbrellas proving to be just as fascinating as iterations of paranormal creatures and futuristic vehicles.

> "The mysterious studio has shared an array of stunning art and concept designs"



Early design of the playable character, with the red area containing the all-important Bridge Baby.



A proposed concept for Heartman's lab, one of the game's indoor locations.

This makes it all the more disappointing that The Art of Death Stranding isn't as comprehensive when it comes to its presentation. Despite being carefully laid out, individual concept artists aren't credited. Fans of Yoji's work will be able to recognise his distinctive style a mile off, but his isn't the only imagery that powered the look of the game.

The lack of annotations or quotes from artists also feels like a let-down. From the handful of accompanying notes we get a glimpse into the struggles that went into creating nightmarish creatures and ruined landscapes, but hardcore fans will be left wanting more. There are moments where creative choices are explained in terms of gameplay, but again they're few and far between.

Despite these drawbacks, The Art of Death Stranding still packs plenty of stunning imagery that will fascinate devotees of Hideo and Yoj. And it says a lot about the strength and variety of the artwork that it's easy to overlook areas where this book falls short.

RATING ★★★★☆

Draw Great Characters

CHARACTER BUILDING Illustrator Beverly Johnson helps you to flex your character design muscles in this book packed with creative prompts

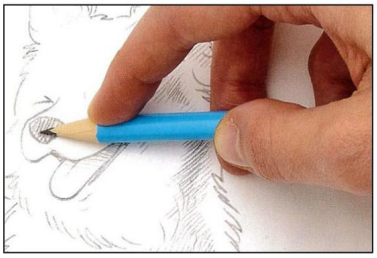
Author Beverly Johnson **Publisher** Search Press **Price** £13 **Web** www.searchpress.com **Available** Now

Artists new to the world of character design can find it difficult to infuse their drawings with personality. Thankfully, this beginner-friendly book by children's illustrator and character designer Beverly Johnson is here to show you how it's done with a series of 75 art exercises.

With chapters covering shape language, facial expressions, body language, interactions and more, this book tackles character design from every angle and finds refreshing approaches to the topic. These include a look at how settings communicate character, and thought exercises to keep you on your toes. Even experienced character designers could benefit from the prompts it provides.

Each challenge also shows how Beverly has solved the brief, so you can see the theory in action. Crucially, this isn't a how-to book on drawing, even though there's a chapter on drawing techniques oddly relegated to the end of the book. And the trade-off for the amount of challenges is that, at times, their insight can feel cursory – newbies might need a bit more hand-holding to pull off the advice. But if you bear in mind that this book prioritises ideas over drawing methods, you'll grasp character design better than before.

Beverly Johnson reveals that inanimate objects such as curtains or rugs can also have great character.



RATING ★★★★☆

The Cinematic Art of World of Warcraft: Volume 1

WORLD VIEWS See how the world of Azeroth has been visualised via cinematics in this unique exploration of the Warcraft universe

Authors Gregory Selano and Matt Burns **Publisher** Titan Books **Price** £35 **Web** www.titanbooks.com **Available** Now

Blizzard Entertainment's cinematics have come on a long way, and by the time World of Warcraft was released in 2004 the studio had settled on a hyperrealistic art style for its cinematics. This book shows how this look continued to evolve.

Complete with concept art, storyboards and stills from the cinematics themselves, this deep dive also uncovers how each short film fulfils a certain function. They're a masterclass in how art and storytelling can work together. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the later titles up until Warlords of Draenor are better represented, while the first cinematic feels a bit thin on the ground in terms of behind-the-scenes art. It's a minor complaint though, as we see a wealth of illustrated ideations for the cinematics in the follow-up games.

More insights from the creative team could've pushed this book to greater heights, but for the creative decisions it does reveal, there's plenty here for gamers and artists to enjoy.

The final concept art for Gul'dan, a merciless orcish warlock who will stop at nothing to achieve power.

RATING ★★★★☆

GET INVOLVED!

Sign up for the NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX newsletter today!

Get weekly news, reviews, tips & inspiration

Out every Tuesday

As a thank you, receive a free **148-page** Animation Artist eBook when you sign up to our newsletter

SIGN UP NOW!

https://ifxm.ag/ifxnewsletter

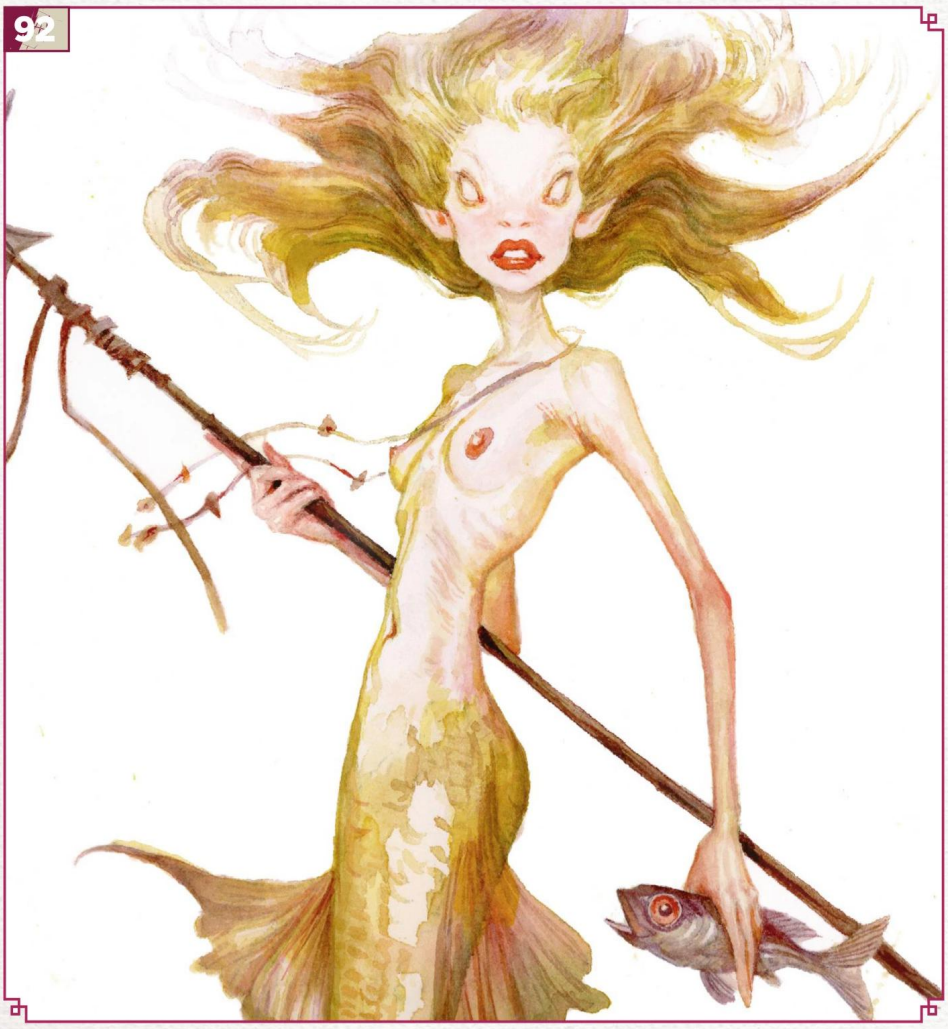
GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 8 now!

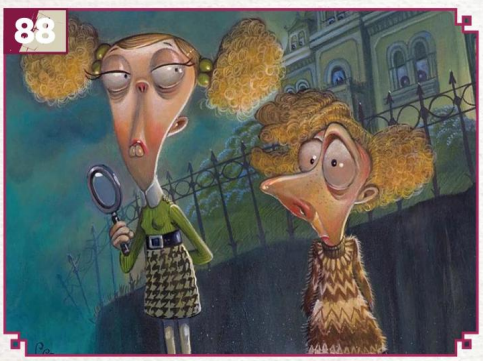
Workshops assets are available...
If you see the video workshop badge then you can watch the artist in action. Turn to page 8 to see how you can get hold of the video.

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX

Traditional Artist

Inspiration and advice from the best pro artists





This issue:

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

92 Workshop: Create texture in watercolours
Audrey Benjaminsen creates a golden mermaid full of luminous layers in watercolours.

98 First Impressions: Margaret Morales
Playing video games has had a strong influence on this Filipino visual artist and illustrator.

FXPosé

SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL ARTISTS

Bob Doucette

LOCATION: US **MEDIA:** Acrylic, oil **WEB:** www.bobdoucette.com

"I learned how to paint animation backgrounds and that along with character design, informed my painting techniques and style," reveals Bob.

1 WHICH WITCH IS WHICH
"This painting was inspired by the amazing work of Brian Froud. I love the way he stacks characters together without explaining much about the background."

2 DEATH AND TAXES
"I find it easiest to approach painting using my storytelling skills. Death and his pet raven Taxes are recurring characters I have painted several times."

3 LUCY WESTERNA
"One in a series of paintings inspired by film design. This was from the 1992 film Bram Stoker's Dracula, directed by Francis Ford Coppola."

4 MYSTERY OF THE MISSING MAID
"These characters are actually based on cartoon characters I devised for a cartoon series called ODDLY MANOR. We made two short pilots, but the show never got picked up."

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

Heidi Taillefer

LOCATION: Canada **MEDIA:** Oil **WEB:** www.heiditaillefer.com

Heidi has been pursuing dual careers in commercial illustration and fine art, with clients including Infiniti Canada/Taiwan and the Cirque du Soleil. She also exhibits her fine art paintings internationally.

1 DETRITUS OF DEVOTION
"This represents the eternal conflict between the three Abrahamic faiths (Judaism, Islam and Christianity), as Religion personified descends to kill Peace."

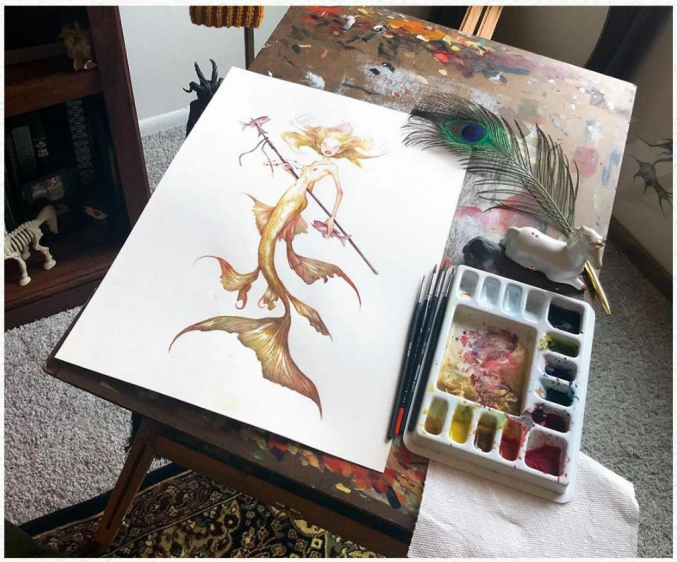
2 STARTING SOMETHING YOU CAN'T FINISH
"This painting is an exploration of the nature of consciousness and ESP, represented by a set of seven chakras distributed along the centre of the image."

3 SILKWORM
"This is a depiction of the afterlife, and explores the idea of transcending one's shadow side (the Ego, represented by the Indonesian shadow set behind the horse)."

4 BREWING THE YANGTZE
"Here, I'm depicting a dragon in solemn resistance to the damning of the Yangtze river in China (Three Gorges Dam)."

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

4
海迪 泰菲爾



Watercolour

CREATE TEXTURE IN WATERCOLOURS

AUDREY BENJAMINSEN explores her watercolour process, from initial design to painting techniques, as she creates a golden mermaid full of luminous layers

There's much to be said about the power of shapes, textures and colour, and the wild variety of ways you can make them play together with watercolour. You can control the medium to an extent, but there'll no doubt be unexpected opportunities and surprises.

I suspect this is why I love it for fantasy art; the material just suits the spirit of the subject matter. This workshop will show how you can take a simple sketch, and transform it into a fully imagined fantasy creature through the magic of watercolour.

You don't always have to have a sketch to paint in watercolour, though. You can jump right in and draw your concept on the paper from your mind. I work both ways, but love the process of drawing my ideas, then designing, editing and planning a bit. All the big questions about shape, structure and colour are answered in my sketch and colour study, so I'm free to explore techniques while knowing everything is going to (hopefully!) turn out okay.

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 8 now!

I'm drawn to the tangible world of traditional materials. It's a marvel the range of techniques you can get from water, brushes and a small amount of pigment. I look at the work of Holbein and Alan Lee and am awestruck that it, too, is watercolour.

One of my favourite tools for building up intricate layers of washes is a Round Kolinsky sable hair brush. Nothing compares to its ability to retain water and shape. I'd also recommend using synthetic ones. They both have their own unique strengths, but one doesn't require the hair of the Siberian weasel. (I mostly use synthetic for this workshop.)

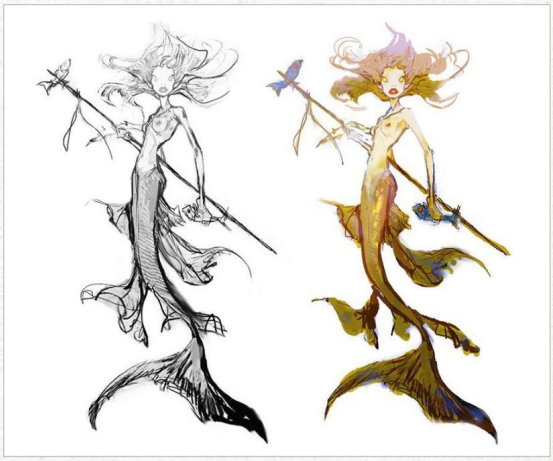
Creature paintings are fun to make, and especially useful when

developing a story. I approach a character by imagining bringing them into existence, thinking about what they would feel like, how they eat and so on. My interests in fashion, textiles and detail often influence my decisions. I'm known to befriend my paintings, and never feel alone when I'm truly immersed in the process.

Audrey is a multimedia artist, freelance illustrator, and instructor based in Michigan. See more of her art www.ataudreybenjaminsen.com.

1 Arranging my workspace and painting materials

Before I start the painting, I set up my materials and workspace. I'll be working on cold-pressed watercolour paper, and using a full spectrum of tube watercolours laid out in a tray. I currently prefer Grumbacher and Winsor & Newton. I'll also use a kneaded eraser, paper towel, a variety of brushes, a pencil and water.



2 Use Photoshop to create colour schemes

To start, I create a sketch of my mermaid. I think a lot about silhouette and shapes as I draw because it's such an integral part of a solid creature design. I also check how balanced the pose is, and indicate some basic facial features. A successful sketch will set me up for a good painting! Having a clear idea of where I'm going with my colour palette really helps me before painting. For this step, I add a layer digital colour in Photoshop to the sketch to give myself a direction. I chose golds and purples to start with complementary colours, and plan to add others as intuition calls.

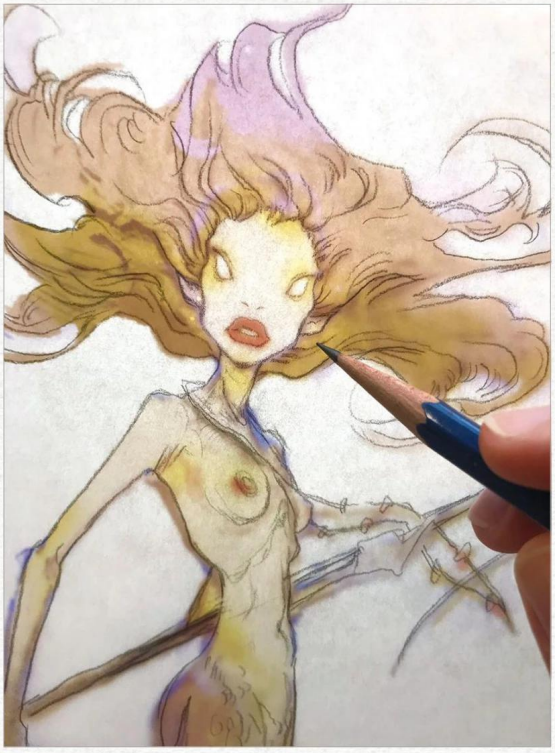
MATERIALS

PAPER
- 12x16-inch piece of 140lb Arches cold-pressed watercolour paper

WATERCOLOURS
(Combination of Grumbacher and Winsor & Newton)
- Cadmium red
- Orange
- Medium yellow
- Lemon yellow
- Hooker's green
- Olive green
- Ultramarine blue
- Phthalo blue
- Quinacridone magenta

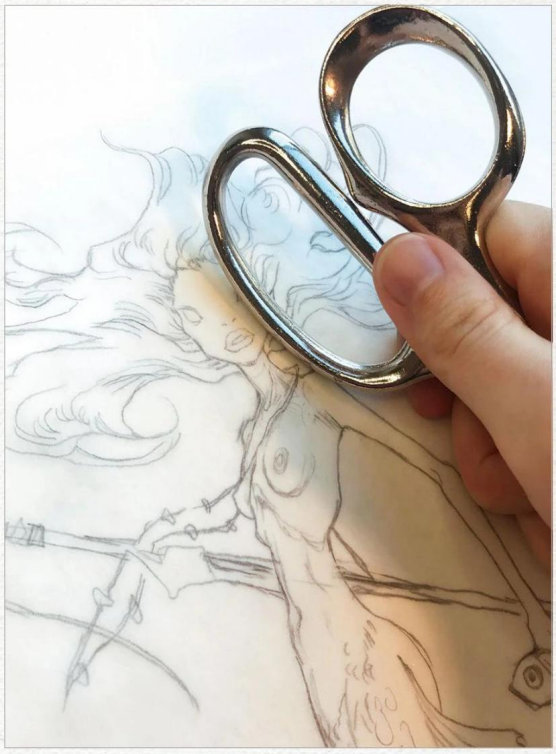
WATERCOLOUR BRUSHES
- Size 3/0, 1 and 3 Round (synthetic and sable hair)

OTHER
- Kneaded eraser
- Photoshop
- Tracing paper
- Light box
- Pencil
- Paper towel
- Water in cup
- Watercolour tray



3 Trace the sketch

Now it's time to transfer the sketch on to tracing paper. I print out the sketch at the size of my paper (making sure the image is reversed!) Next, I put the tracing paper and sketch up to a light box (a bright window will also work), and secure the edges so it doesn't slip. Then I trace and refine the design in graphite.



4 Transfer the graphite to the paper

Next, I transfer the tracing paper graphite side down on to the watercolour paper. It helps to tape it down so it doesn't slide. I've had good luck rubbing the back with a heavy pair of scissors, but other tools work as well. When I pull back the tracing paper I have a nice, clean transfer of the design on to my new surface.

5 Start with the face

Faces are the most fun for me, so that's where I start. I'm using a size 3/0, 1, and 3 Round brush (I also have one trusty sable hair brush) I use my tiniest brush to make careful liner marks over the eyes and nose, fill in the shape of the lips, then start to block in the hair.

6 Adding colour down the body

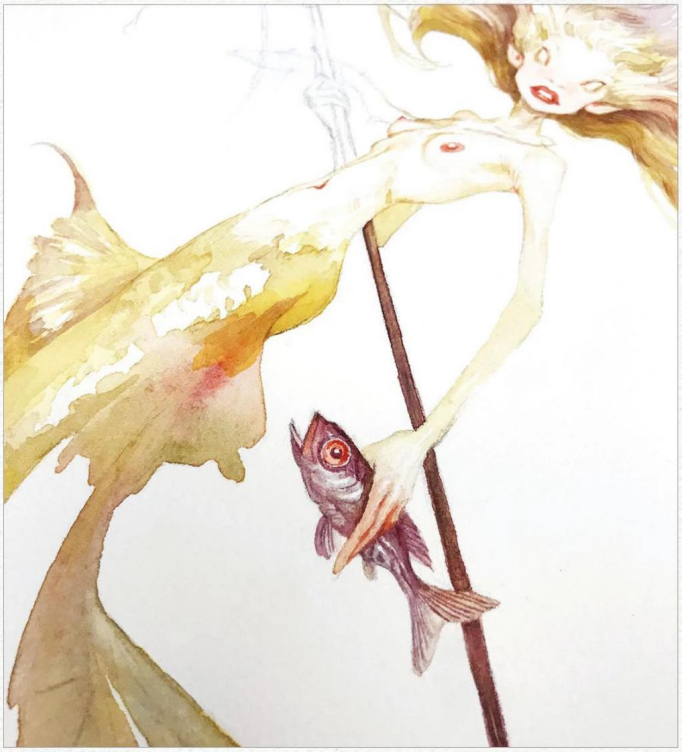
I continue to fill out the hair silhouette in light washes of violet, yellow and some olive green, leaving some of the white of the paper untouched for highlights. I continue down the torso with those colours along with some reds, taking a more linear approach because this area is a lighter value. Dabbing the fresh paint with a paper towel can help control the value.

7 Using wet-on-wet techniques

I then continue down the main section of the tail and the fins, wetting the parts where I want colour to go, but leaving the white of the paper for the brightest values. I brush some yellows into wet areas to start, then continue to add more reds, violet, and greens into the wet areas where the fins transition.

8 Using brushstrokes to create texture

I finish the base later of the fins by continuing the wet-on-wet technique through the bottom of the tail. I touch more reds, violet, and greens into this areas, since is the darker part of the design. The bottom of the tail has a rippled surface, so I make sure that the shapes of the highlights and strokes fit that texture. ➳



9 *Blocking in the fish and building up values*

I paint the first fish starting with violet and yellow to block out the structure. Then I build up the darker values, and add some red for the eyes. I make sure this shape transitions with the mermaid's hand and the bottom part of the spear, adding violet to the spear for colour harmony.

10 *Painting blood and the mermaid's hands*

For the second fish I add some wet-on-wet technique for a little blood, and a mix of colours for the tie on the spear. For the hands, I add a light yellowish wash for the shape, and build up the knuckles and creases with warmer colours. When they're dry, I add more linear marks.

11 Building up details

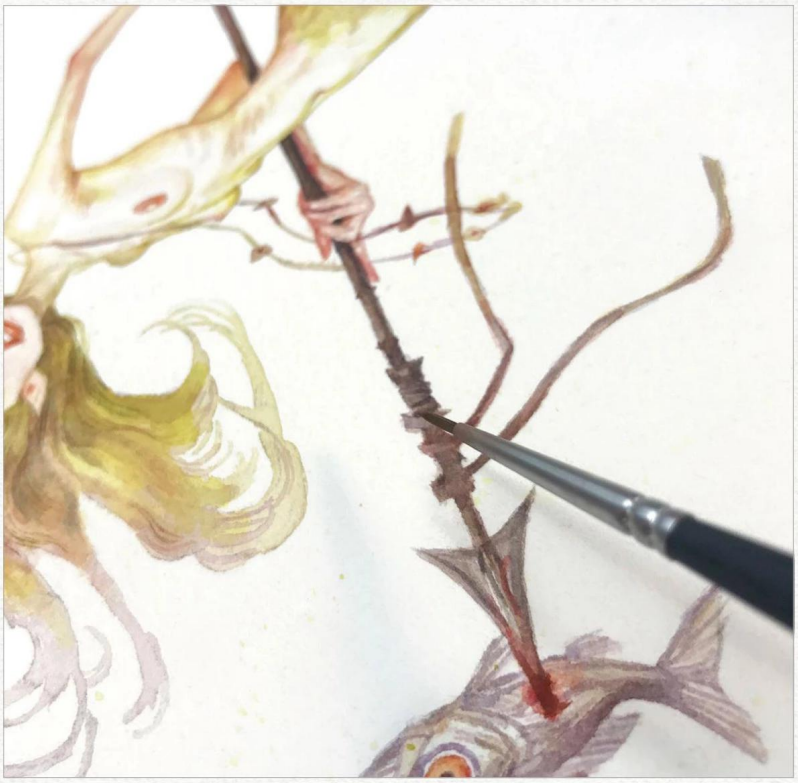
It's time to get detailed! I use a small brush to add finer marks and strands into the mermaid's hair, building up texture and getting the values to transition nicely behind her ears and face. I then give some more attention to her features, adding dimension to her cheeks, eyes, and lips with light washes, and blending with a wet brush.

12 Generating translucency on the mermaid's tail

With warmer darker colours, I paint a second layer of linear strokes on to the fins. This adds the right texture and the look of translucence. Next, I add the scales on the tail with a variety of round and linear marks. (I looked at photos of betta fish to get them right) The scales will look more believable if they follow the form.

13 Blending with water

As with the other fins, I apply more linear strokes and values to the bottom of the tail as well. This adds dimension and texture, and makes for a more finished look. I also use water to blend in areas if needed.



14 Checking values and finishing touches

To finish, I paint in the remaining small details in the necklace, spear, and hands. Then, I do an overall check of the values structure to see of anything is off (I can paint in adjustments if needed) For a little fun, I splatter some paint lightly in the background by flicking my brush.

First Impressions

Margaret Morales

Video games have had a strong influence on this Filipino visual artist

Where did you grow up and how has this influenced your art?
I grew up in a part of the Philippines where the mountains and beaches are just a few hours away. Every year, our family would go on vacations close to nature. I think being immersed in these places, and having a backyard full of flowers and fruit-bearing trees to play around when I was a kid, have greatly influenced my love for natural elements. My parents have also been supportive of our creative hobbies and interests ever since we were little.

What, outside of art, has most influenced your artwork?
Gaming. Not only has playing online games paved the way for me to gain new friends, it's also helped flourish my interest in character designing, costume creation and fantasy worlds.

Does one person stand out as being helpful during your early years?
My mum used to teach both my sister and I how to draw, but it was my sister who really helped me hone my drawing skills when we were young. We both adored the same things and we both loved to do art. She critiqued my progress and became my earliest teacher in drawing characters. There's never been an artist in our family, so naturally, no one ever imagined or suggested that being an artist would make a great career. But my sister has always encouraged me to pursue art and do what I want, no matter what other people say.

DIVINE DESCENT
"An angel descending from the sky. I wanted to portray the calmness and serenity of something ethereal through colours and composition."

> **"It was my sister who really helped me hone my drawing skills when we were young"**

FLUTTER
"An improved version of one of my first-ever watercolour paintings, portraying a lady with a crown of butterflies."

What was your first paid commission, and does it stand as a representation of your talent?
My first art-related commission was drawing a client's portrait. I do love painting faces and I was happy to do them at that time, but it isn't what I envisioned doing in the long run.

What's the last piece you finished, and how do the two differ?
My latest work is an original fantasy piece for a collective auction. It had more detailing, confident lines and more harmonious colour application. That first commission had more realistic features and had stiff lines compared to how I draw female portraits now. I've slowly built up my skills and confidence throughout the years, and the difference clearly shows.

What are your painting rituals?
Before I begin painting, I prepare all the materials and references that would help me build my concept. Clean lines are important to me since they serve as my guide through the painting stage. I also love working with natural light so the space I'll work in should have ample lighting.

How is your art evolving?
My art has changed a lot during the past couple of years, and I think it's started to mould into the style I've been working on. I've been constantly trying to experiment with different mediums, techniques and subjects to challenge myself, and allow room for growth.

What does the future hold for you?
I'll continue to strive and improve my craft. It's been my dream to create an art book that I can be proud of, so it may be something I'll slowly build in the next couple of years. There are also so many projects that I plan to venture in, like character designing and book cover illustrations, so there's a lot to be excited about!

Margaret is a visual artist known for her stylised watercolour portraits in vibrant surreal settings. Her works have been exhibited and sold in various galleries and collectors around the world. Explore more of her art at www.margaretmorales.com.

SAVE 25%

USE CODE 'HANDSFX25'

DRAWING COURSES BY STAN PROKOPENKO

Here's my process for constructing hands from imagination or reference

1. START WITH SIMPLE FORMS

When I begin drawing, my first priority is the big, simple forms. The anatomy informs the design of my simple forms, but I don't start with anatomical details. For the hand, a box is a good starting place. Round off the distal edge to create the arch of the knuckles. Each finger can be a series of boxes or cylinders.

2. SCULPT THE ANATOMY

Once my proportions, perspective, and big forms are established, I move on to the secondary anatomical forms. I can add the three round muscle masses on the hand, and develop the fingers by contrasting straights and curves. I describe the form of the knuckles in small, geometric planes. This will make it easy to shade later.

3. FINISH WITH SHADING

I identify the direction of the light source and separate the shadows and lights. Then shade the details in the lights. I always want the big read to be the big forms (from Step 1). If the details overpower the primary forms (the box of the palm), then I've messed up. Anatomy is cool, but it has to support the picture, not take over it.

Save 25% on Proko.com with any Drawing Course Using Code 'HANDSFX25' Expires 09/2020

Image by Nick Harris - Tutorial IFX 187

Stay Safe and Paint

New in ArtRage 6: (Windows & Mac)

Deeper Oil Paints | Enhanced Custom Brush Designer
Directional Canvas Lighting | Complimentary Color System

Infos and videos: www.artrage.com/IFX

ArtRage 6