ImagineFX

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

DISCOVER
NEW ART SKILLS

- GET BETTER AT **CHARACTER DESIGN**
- BRING A **3D ENVIRONMENT** TO LIFE
- CREATE SURREAL ART IN **ZBRUSH**

Read how Pietmaen brings movement into his character art on page 60

♥ 1,000

FIND WORK THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA
Top tips to make each platform work for you

WORKSHOP
STORYTELLING WITH SCI-FI ART
How to create a futuristic scene with a strong sense of adventure

PLUS!

OIL TECHNIQUES FROM OLD MASTERS

SKETCH CHALLENGES DURING LOCKDOWN

WE SEARCH FOR THE ARTIST OF THE YEAR

FUTURE

ISSUE 191

PASCAL BLANCHÉ! THE 3D ARTIST'S MODERN TAKE ON FANTASY ART LEGENDS

Welcome to…

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX

Hello there. When I was reading through Carlo Arellano's workshop (see page 74), I gave out a squeal of delight on discovering his method for projects. He explains that he approaches every new design with the acronym F.A.C.T.S. where F stands for form, A is for archetype, C is for characterisation, T is for tools, and S refers to its silhouette. He follows this guide to make sure his art achieves its aim. This speaks to me. I'm a bit of an organiser and planner myself – I love a good list.

I kept noticing even more prepping when reading through the mag… in Anya Jo Elvidge's workshop (page 66) she explains how she starts with a mood board to help see the direction to take. Ashline, our sketchbook guest this issue, takes off to a café for an hour a day to sketch people. She has created a daily routine to help bolster her skills.

How about you? Do you have a plan – no matter how big or small? If you could write a list of aims, what would that list say? It might be a good exercise for you to think that over. Let me know what your thoughts are.

Claire

**Editor-in-chief
claire@imaginefx.com**

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♥ 1,000

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ImagineFX Resources
NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

Visit **https://ifxm.ag/newart191skills** to download this issue's workshop videos and custom brushes

WORKSHOP VIDEOS

OVER 2 HOURS of video tutorials from pro artists to watch and learn from!

Discover techniques for painting over a 3D scene
Watch how Anya Jo Elvidge uses 3ds Max and Unreal Engine 4 to create a 3D environment, before painting over it in Photoshop. Turn to page 66 to read more about her process.
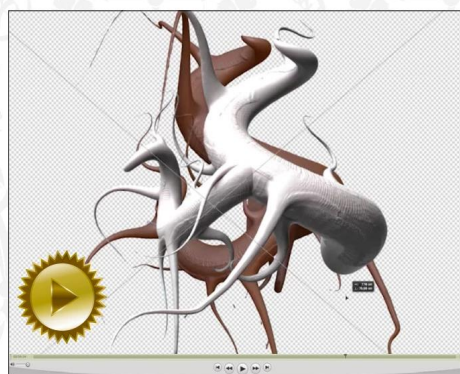
Learn how to combine textures and references for a portrait
See how illustrator and lecturer Ken Coleman develops a surreal portrait using 3D and 2D tools, together with custom textures and his own references. Read his workshop on page 82.

PLUS 29 CUSTOM BRUSHES, INCLUDING...

TRANSPARENT HARD BRUSH
Anya Jo Elvidge uses this custom brush for blending colours using the Color Picker in Photoshop.

KEN DRY PALETTE KNIFE
When used with Layer Masks, Ken Coleman is able to bring out and block in shapes with this brush.

KEN THICK PAINT
As he nears the end of his creative process, Ken uses this brush to add paint effects to his artwork.

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PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

ImagineFX ARTIST of the MONTH

Jess Seto

LOCATION: US **MEDIA:** Photoshop, Clip Studio Paint, Blender, Maya **WEB:** www.artstation.com/l_aciel

Jess is a freelance concept artist and illustrator. They like using composition, colour and lighting to draw the eye and offer a deeper narrative to those who choose to linger.
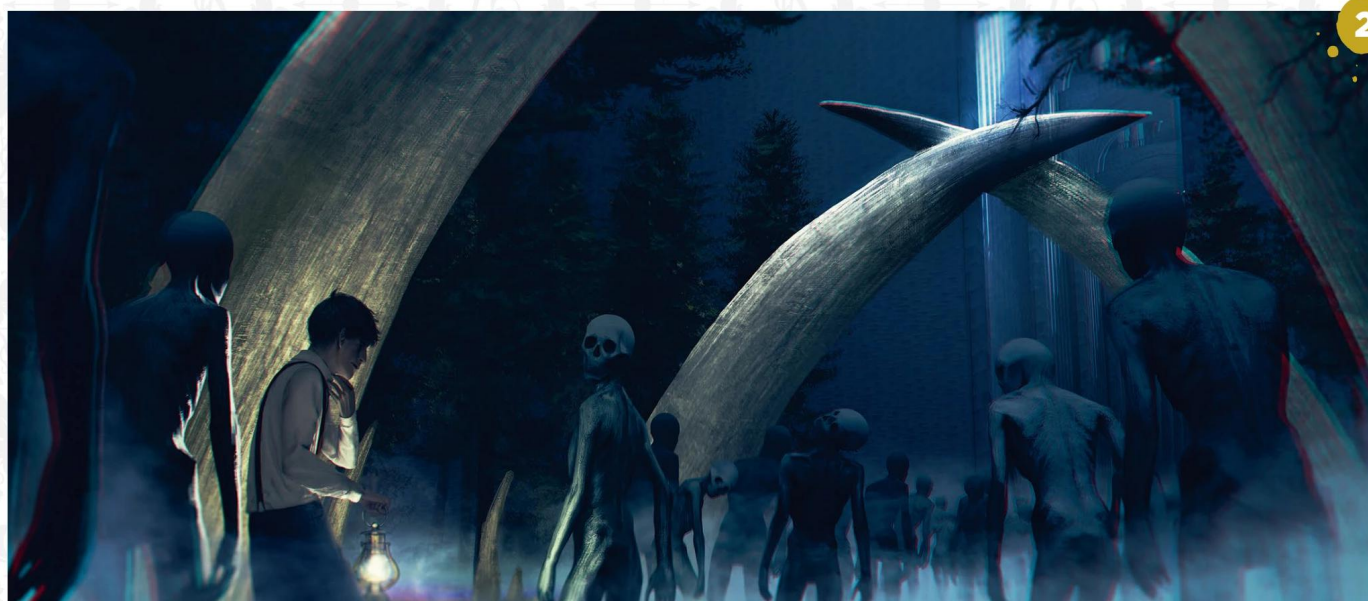
1 REKO YABUSAME
"Fan art based on a game called Your Turn to Die. It was an exercise in designing realistic face and lighting."

2 THE WHITE DOOR
"Environment illustration based on descriptions from the game Cultist Simulator."

3 THE MOTH
"Here's another concept based on descriptions from Cultist Simulator that are mostly text-based with minimal imagery."

4 CONCEPT OF A CONCEPT
"Creature design based on Haruki Murakami's A Wild Sheep Chase. The sheep was described as having feelers."

Submit your work: https://ifxm.ag/artistofthemonth
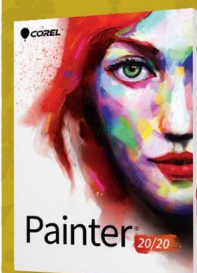
5 ECLIPSE
"Illustration for a project based on Li Chi Slays the Serpent. Thematically it's a combination of cyberpunk, horror and Asian occultism."

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**
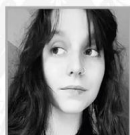
Katherine Souza

LOCATION: US **MEDIA:** Photoshop **WEB:** www.katherinesouza.art

Katherine is an illustrator and game designer who's inspired by myths, fairy tales and palaeontology. She currently works on The Elder Scrolls Online and creates her own little worlds on the side.

1 TIEFLING PRIEST

"An older piece that still has much to like about it. I designed a Tiefling priestess who's exploring magicks even as she ages."

2 SHEPHERD OF THE LOST

"This was a piece for Filippo Magrini's tabletop game Darnimar. It's a moment in the world's history that shows angels roaming the earth."

3 THE WHITE FROG OF THE POND

"This was for a frog-themed zine, but I featured a lepospondyl, an extinct amphibian not related to frogs but just as charming."

4 ADVENTURE BEGINS

"Here my love of palaeontology and fantasy collide. The beasts in the foreground are based on cynodonts, a proto-mammal that we're related to!"

JB Casacop

LOCATION: Philippines **MEDIA:** Photoshop **WEB:** www.jbcasacop.com

"I'm a freelance artist who's been working in the games industry for more than a decade," says JB, who now illustrates tabletop games. He's also exploring 3D printing and practising martial arts.

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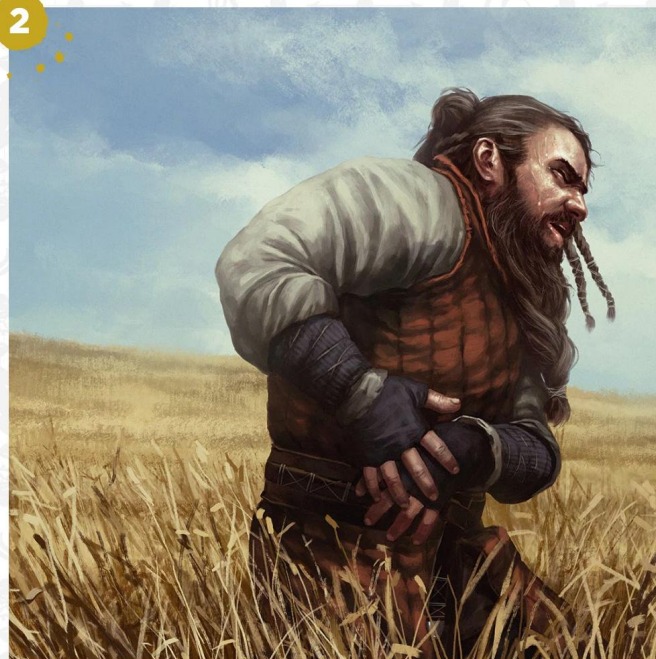
1 BRAVE HALFLING
"An artwork for The Lord of the Rings card game. I used myself and my practice sword as a reference."

2 PAINFUL FATIGUE
"Another LOTR card game piece. I enjoyed detailing the clothes and the expression of this dwarf."

3 GREEN MAGIC
"This is a personal artwork that takes its inspiration from fantasy literature and features elves and their life-giving magic."

4 LULLABY TO THE EARTH
"My inspiration for this is a Filipino song called Oyayi sa Mundo (Lullaby to the Earth). It's an ode to Mother Nature."

5 GOTHIC ANGEL
"A tribute to the 25th anniversary of Magic: The Gathering. It's one of the games that I hope to make art for some day!"
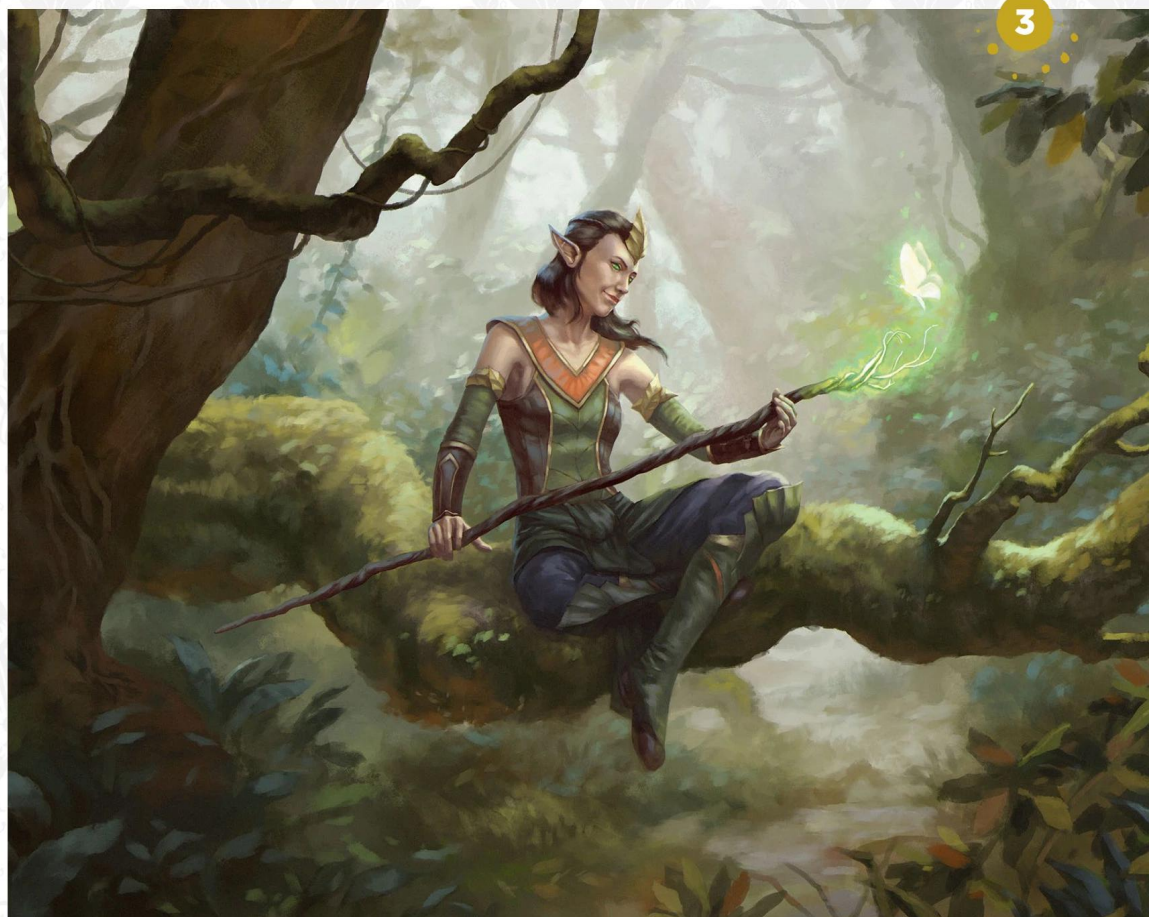
Madie Bryson

LOCATION: US **MEDIA:** Photoshop, Procreate **WEB:** www.madiebryson.myportfolio.com

"Illustrating is a way to relate to others," says Madie, "so I put personal experiences into each piece." As well as freelancing for a multitude of clients, Madie creates colourful worlds and characters.

1 MOSCATO & CHEESE

"My character Moscato (Cat for short) is socially anxious, so she decides to bring her pet cat named Cheese to school with her."

2 SPY

"Sketched while listening to intense techno music. It had me imagining a spy sprinting through a sci-fi city while neon lights flashed to the beat."

3 AQUATIC DISCOVERIES

"This is my character Isla, an underwater archeologist, who's stumbled upon a giant bioluminescent jellyfish on an alien planet."

4 TRAIN RIDE

"This curious character saw some pups sticking their heads out the window, so she thought she'd try it out, too!"
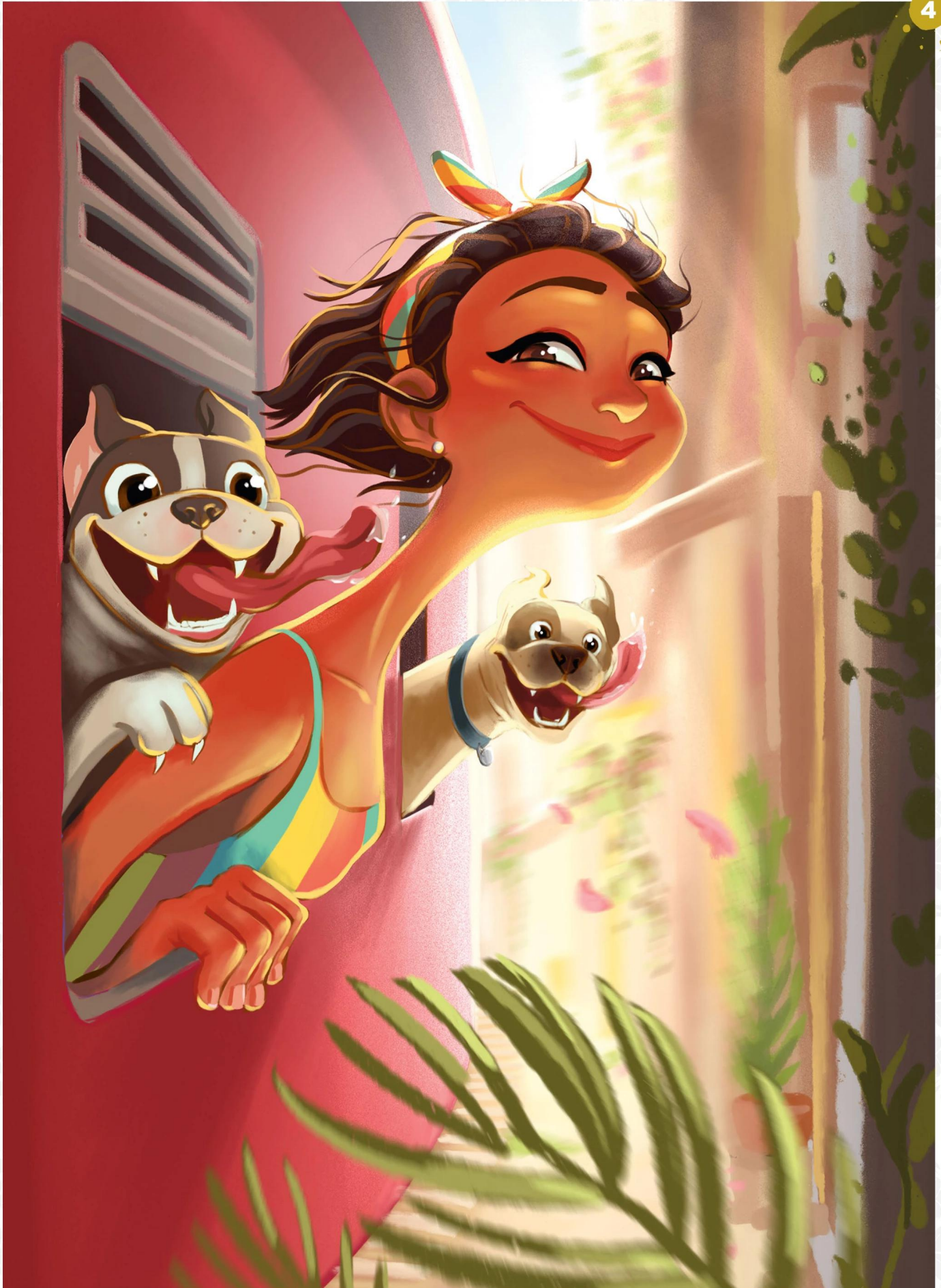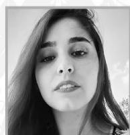
Dahlia Khodur

LOCATION: Lebanon **MEDIA:** Procreate **WEB:** www.artstation.com/dahlia

"I've loved art and cartoons since I was very young and have always been attached to Disney," says Dahlia, who has a passion for creating vibrant characters and bringing them to life with stories.

1 PÜKID

"Cupid grew up into a bullied edgy teen who goes by the name Pükid! He still loves to shoot people with love arrows, though!

2 THE CLOWN

"He's an employee who ended up in a fast food restaurant chain moping bathrooms and serving people. His real dream was to become a rock star."

3 SPRING

"This is the season of spring embodied as a character who's just awoken from a deep slumber. She walks into the forest spreading her aura wherever she goes."

4 NAFT

"Naft means crude oil in Arabic. This character is a valuable keeper of the underground black gold."

5 SARAB

"Sarab is Arabic for mirage. He's a wandering desert spirit who lures weary travellers into his mirages so he can rob them."
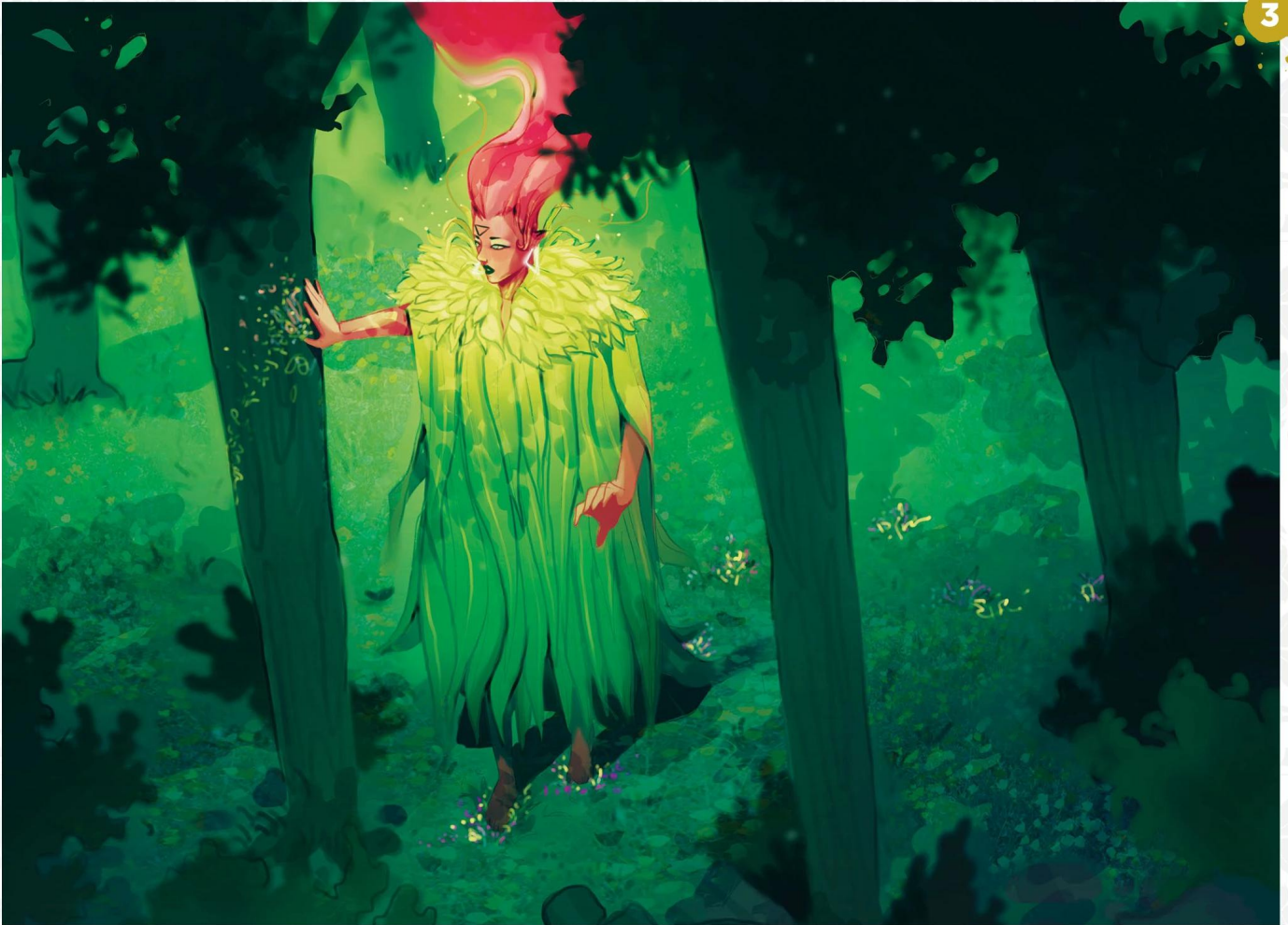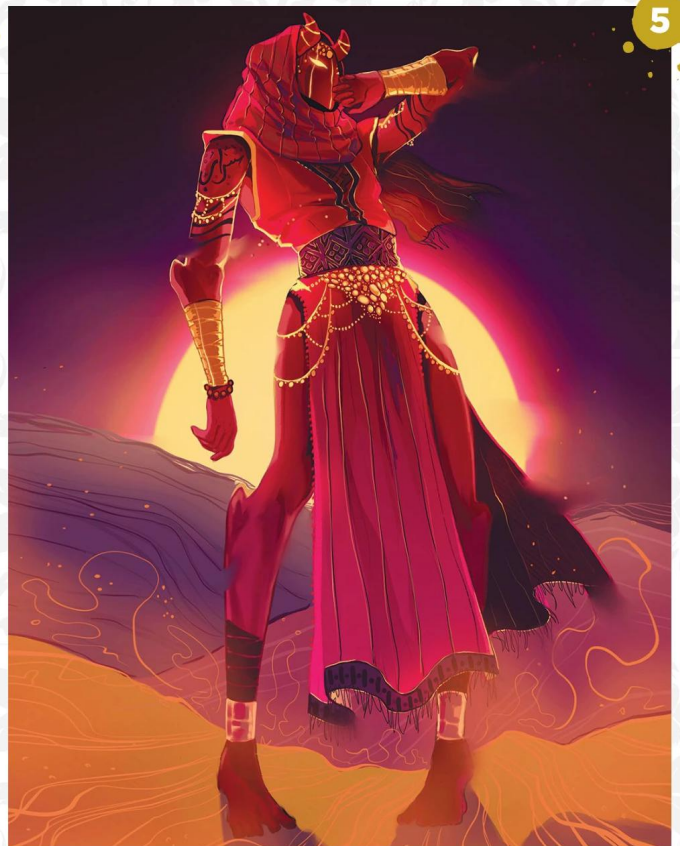
Jemaica Murphy

LOCATION: US **MEDIA:** Photoshop **WEB:** www.jemaicamurphy.com

"I love to draw anime-inspired pieces," says Jemaica. This influence can be found in a variety of her favourite subjects, including paintings of mythical creatures such as mermaids, fairies, elves and dragons.

1 FAIRY DRAGONS
"A whimsical scene of my swamp witch character Tony, summoning some fairy dragon pals with a magic spell."

2 FLOWER FIELD
"A painting made as a commissioned work for annabelleyako on DeviantArt, of her original fairy character Reylana."

3 BLUEBERRY FAE
"I wanted to capture a traditional painterly look while using digital tools for this picture of a fairy girl, which was inspired by blueberries."

4 NATURE FAIRY
Exploring bright colours with my favourite subject – fairies! My design took inspiration from Winx Club, a TV show I loved as a kid."
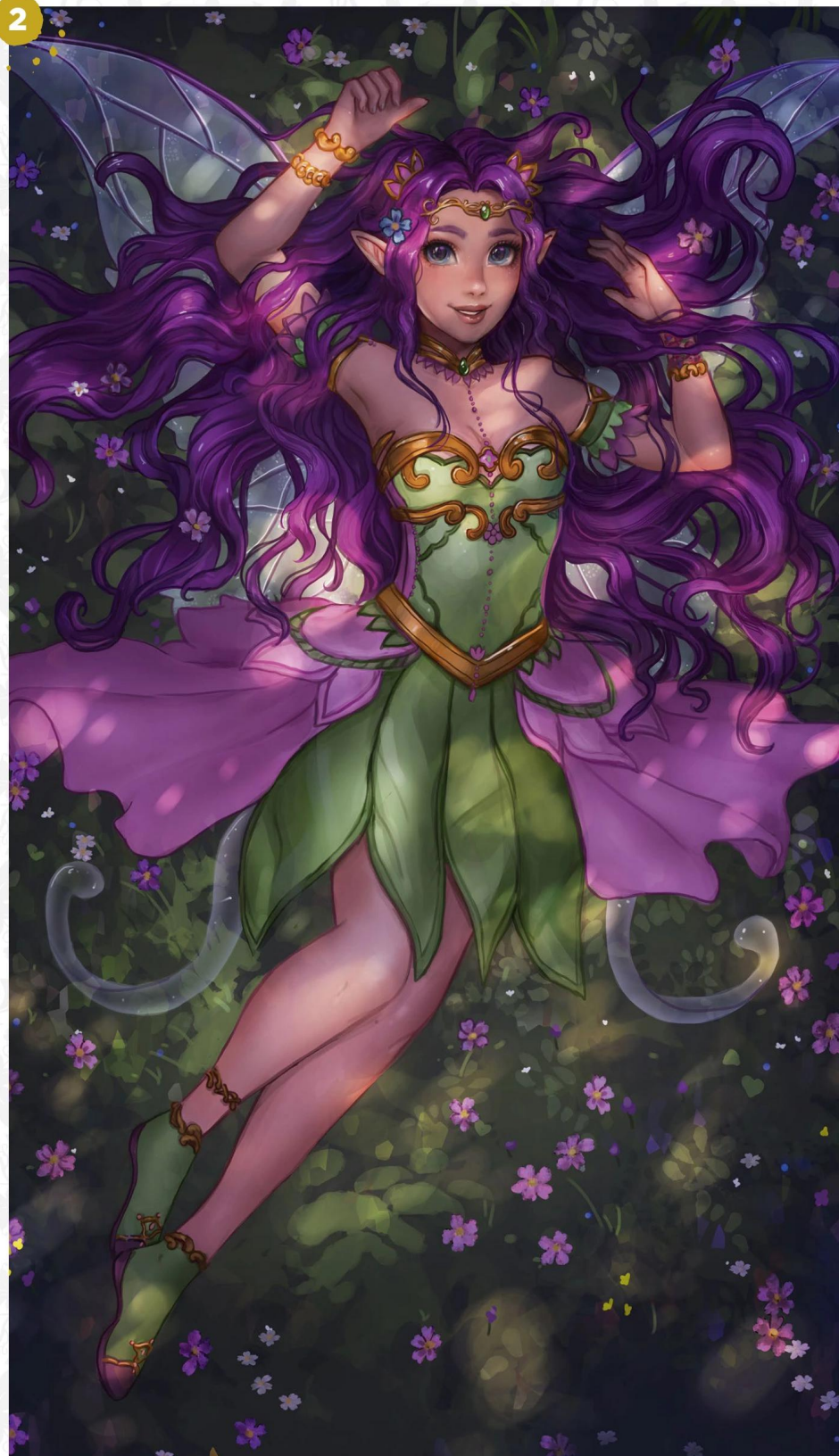
Submit your work: https://ifxm.ag/artistofthemonth

"I'm on all the social platforms, because you never know where the next job will come from," says Jan Urschel.

♥ 1,000

Find work through social media

Spread the word Social media can help you get work, but only if you approach it the right way, says **Tom May**

The past few months have been tough for freelance artists and illustrators, to say the least. With projects cancelled left, right and centre, and with physical networking becoming nigh-on impossible, many have turned to social media as a way to find much-needed commissions.

"If you don't get your art out there then people who can commission you aren't going to find it," says Kenneth Anderson.

There's nothing new in this, of course; there's a long history of artists using social media to make contacts and advance their career. Freelance art director and concept artist **Cosmin Podar**, working with Moon Active, offers a typical example. "I wanted to quit my last studio job so I reached out to someone on Facebook for advice, and he offered

me work," he explains. "In time we became close friends, and I had the chance to grow along a great company with an awesome team."

Pretty simple stuff, right – but has this happened for you? If the answer's no, you're not alone. For everyone who gets a big break through a post or tweet, there's a dozen people with nothing but sore thumbs and a tension headache. ➤➤

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

IMPORTANT UPDATES

New social media features that you may have missed

1 Hide Replies on Twitter
A new feature in Twitter enables you to hide offensive responses to your tweets from public view. While these tweets aren't actually deleted from Twitter, they're placed behind an extra click that will take most of the sting out of the tail.

2 Restrict on Instagram
Instagram now makes it possible to shadow-ban users who comment on your images in offensive ways. As with Twitter's Hide Replies, the public will still ultimately be able to view the comments by clicking a message that appears in its place.

3 Hidden Likes on Instagram
Instagram is running a test that hides the number of Likes on posts for some users. However, note that Likes aren't disappearing from Instagram altogether. You'll still be able to view how many Likes a post has received with a couple of taps.

4 LinkedIn Stories
LinkedIn is testing out a Stories feature in some territories. Like on Instagram, Facebook and Snapchat, you'll be able to share visual stories that disappear after 24 hours. These will also include a messaging feature.

5 Instagram Reels
In response to TikTok, and to capitalise on its recent ban in India, Instagram is rolling out Instagram Reels. This feature enables you to create 15-second videos with audio, effects and other creative tools, which can then be shared on your normal feed.

"Don't put too much time into social media at the expense of developing your skills," says Kenneth.

"I usually post personal work on social media – sketches or made-up projects," says Cosmin Podar.

"The quality of your followers is more important than how many you have," says Jan.

So what's the secret to making social media work for you and your career as an artist? In this article we'll look at four of the most popular social networks in turn, explain what they have to offer artists, and how to make best use of them.

ENGAGE ON INSTAGRAM

The most visual of all the social platforms, Instagram is the go-to place to see work by artists and illustrators right now. And people who give work to artists pay it keen attention.

Illustrator and character designer **Kenneth Anderson** (**@charactercube**) takes a similar approach. "For me, it's a good way to share work I wouldn't normally put in an online portfolio. I show my process and just have fun drawing," he says. "At the same time I'm careful not

> ❝ Because I'm selling my own products, I do a lot of promotion and interaction with my audience on all channels ❞

"Instagram has been the most valuable platform for me in terms of getting commissions," says freelance artist and illustrator **Diego Peñuela** (**@diegoillustration**). "I've achieved this through posting a mixture of personal and commissioned work. I also post process pics and the occasional sketch or experiment. I enjoy seeing other artists' processes so I try to do it myself, too."

to post just anything and everything, as I still want my social media accounts to give a good impression."

To maximise your chances of attracting clients, it's vital to make your contact details clear and visible, says Diego. "Few of the serious inquiries I get come in the form of an Instagram DM," he notes. "They may have seen my Instagram, but they'll usually want a more reliable way of communicating. Serious clients still

"When I joined Behance a while back, it helped a lot in getting an audience," says Diego Peñuela.

"I mainly post personal work or commissions that I like," says Diego.

want to see your website and communicate with you via email or by phone, or even in person."

It's important, too, to post consistently, although Diego cautions against spending too much time on this. "Personally, 30 minutes per day is about as much as I can handle," he says. "Part of me feels like I should post more often, but I think that social media generates too much anxiety and I'd rather spend that time taking care of myself and my mental health, which in turn helps me in my creative process."

That said, if you're using Instagram to directly sell to your audience, whether that's art prints or tutorials, then you may well need to spend more time on it. "Because I'm selling a lot of products with my own brand, I do a lot of promotion and interaction with my audience on all channels," says concept designer **Jan Urschel** (@janurschel). "Often it feels as though it's too much, but I think freelancers need to ➤➤
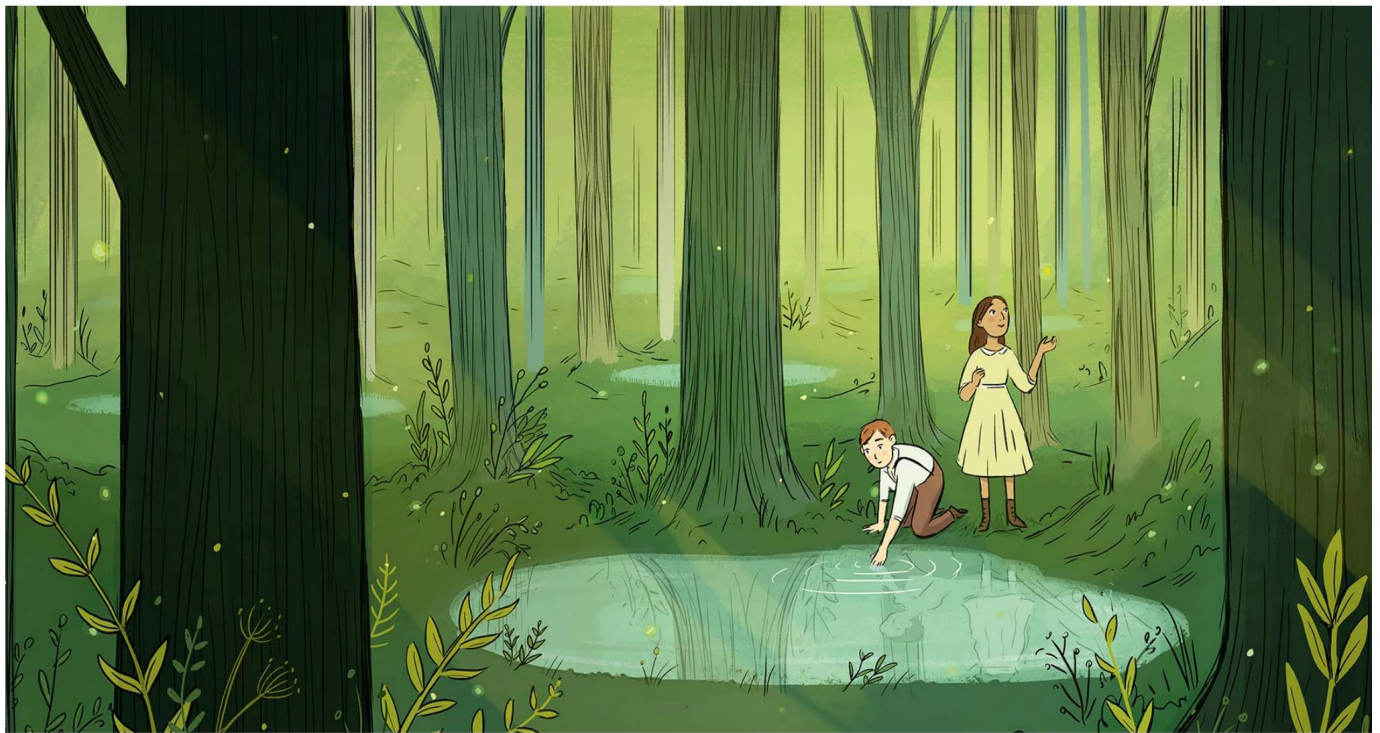
➤➤ embrace it without having too much prejudice about it."

MEET CREATIVE TYPES ON BEHANCE

While Instagram is a social network for everyone, Behance is much more focused on people working in the creative industries, and so can often be a better way to attract the right people. "Behance is one of the social networks best suited for sharing artwork, because it was specifically designed with that in mind," says Kenneth, who can be found at **www.behance.net/charactercube**. "On the other hand, it might not be the best suited for outreach and connecting with people beyond the

❝ Behance is one of the social networks best suited for sharing artwork, because it was designed with that in mind ❞

Behance infrastructure. One way or another, it's a trade-off."

One specific benefit to Behance is that posts aren't centred on one 'killer image'. You can include as many sketches, behind-the-scenes images, text and URLs as you like, making it much closer to a traditional portfolio than any other social media platform. This makes it possible for you to show more of your process and go into greater depth about your work, which

can be especially useful if, for example, you've worked on a collaborative project and want to clearly show where your contribution lay.

When deciding what to post, Jan (**www.behance.net/janurschel**) suggests you focus not just on the work you've done, but the work you'd like to do. "That's exactly what I do on my own Behance page," he says. "If I want to do more keyframes, I post more keyframes. If I want to do more

"I use my social media to promote my personal voice and grow a following around that," says Diego.
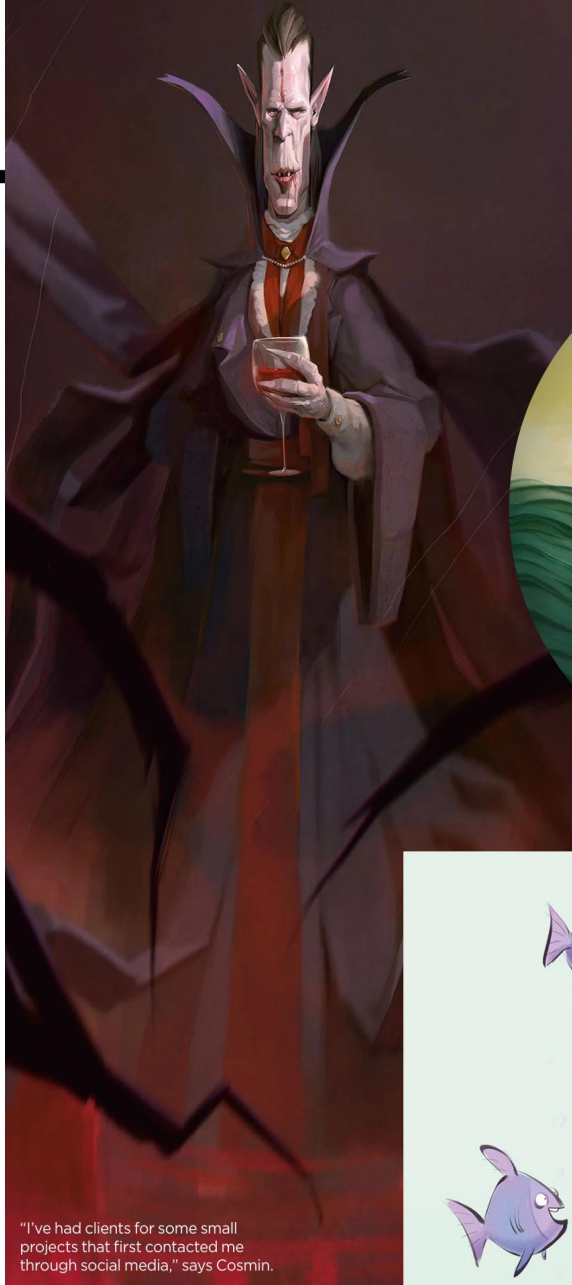
"I've had clients for some small projects that first contacted me through social media," says Cosmin.

work on 3D props, I post more of that. It's a very simple feedback loop."

HAVE CONVERSATIONS ON TWITTER

While Twitter is primarily focused on short bursts of text, it's recently started to offer a new level of flexibility when it comes to images. So for example, you can now add multiple images to tweets (up to four) and add images to retweets, too.

Illustrator **Emmeline Pidgeon** (**@emmelinedraws**), tends to post finished art on Twitter, as well as revealing new projects. "At times, I've had about 70 per cent of my work come through the platform," she says. "It's come about by getting to know people there, or them spotting my work after it's been retweeted, commented on, or recommended by someone else."

Fundamentally, Twitter isn't about visuals but about conversation, so the key is to get stuck in and network.

"Updating twice a week or so is a good balance, but consistency is what's most important," says Kenneth.

Emmeline gives the example of The Lavender Tree, a picture book she worked on with Aidan Moffat. "That project came about because I saw a tweet from him seeking illustrators for a children's project," she recalls. "Replying and suggesting myself felt really cringey, but I put those feelings aside and introduced myself, adding a link to my portfolio. Aidan emailed me a few days later saying he loved my work, and got me on board."

On Twitter, perhaps more than any other platform, everyone wants big follower numbers. But Kenneth cautions you not to get obsessed. ➽

FIVE TIPS FOR FINDING WORK

How to use social media to win more commissions

1 Link to a website
"Social media should complement a solid portfolio website that shows off your best work and outlines your experience," says Kenneth Anderson. "Social media can lure people in, but a professional website might just get you hired."

2 Buy ads on Instagram
Illustrator Subi Bosa (**@subi_bosa**) has found advertising on Instagram has paid off thanks to its targeted use of data. "Over a few ad runs, I've learned that my prime client is an African American woman, who is a mother and posts content about motherhood," he explains. "As a result, I've been able to help these women produce their self-published picture books."

3 Post ideas
Illustrator and art director Jack Noel got the idea for recreating Great Expectations as a cartoon series. After tweeting a mockup via **@jackdraws**, he was inundated by message. "I had meetings at about 10 publishers in the next two weeks," he recalls. Egmont Publishing launched the book in April.

4 Find a niche
"Find a niche you're obsessed with," says motion designer Ben Darvill (**@bendarvill**). "Become embedded within the community, create fans, then rub shoulders with marketing experts within the niche. It makes sense for them to hire people who are knowledgable about their field."

5 Follow hashtags
Illustrator Colin Kersley (**@alt_aesthetics** on Twitter) advises, "Find people you'd like to work with and start a conversation. Follow relevant hashtags to your work for potential opportunities."

"The creative community on Twitter is incredibly supportive," says Emmeline.

The Lavender Blue Dress

Aidan Moffat & Emmeline Pidgen

"I usually spend two to three hours a week on LinkedIn, more if I don't have much work on," says Tahgasa Bertram.
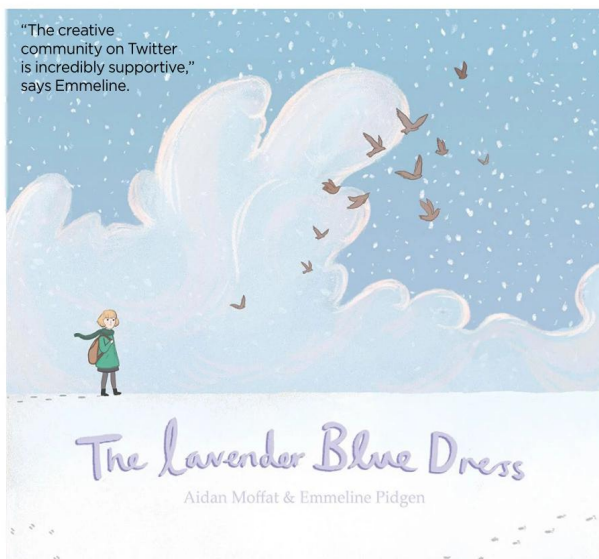
"I spent more time posting personal work on social media than highly polished work," says Cosmin.

➤ "It's only natural for people to see some artists who have followers in the millions and think they need to aim for the same thing," he says. "But you shouldn't confuse the number of followers with ability, or as validation. Not only is that bad for mental health, but I think it can lead to drawing for the wrong reasons. I've been there!"

That said, high follower numbers may be important for specific purposes. "If you want to become a brand and sell artwork or art books then having followers is a must," says Cosmin. "However, if you're learning and growing as an artist , followers should be the least of your concerns."

TAP INTO LINKEDIN NETWORKS
Cluttered and text-heavy, LinkedIn doesn't look like it would be fertile

66 If you care more about followers than your art, you're heading for failure 99

ground for artists and illustrators. Yet in 2020, many are making good use of what is essentially the main social network for business.

Senior concept artist at Ubisoft **Sabin Boykinov** is among them (**www.linkedin.com/in/boykinov**).

"LinkedIn has a professional focus and brings together a huge diversity of people," he says. "I've received many work offers through it," he says. "Recruiters look into your profile and see the experience you have, then they send offers or ask questions."

But beyond signing up and creating a profile, what can artists actively do on LinkedIn? "Follow studios or companies you like and want to be a part of, and seek connections with

"At my first art festival, I saw that many artists used LinkedIn to present their projects," says Sabin Boykinov.

"The best thing about LinkedIn is being able to find people with specific job roles," says Tahgasa.
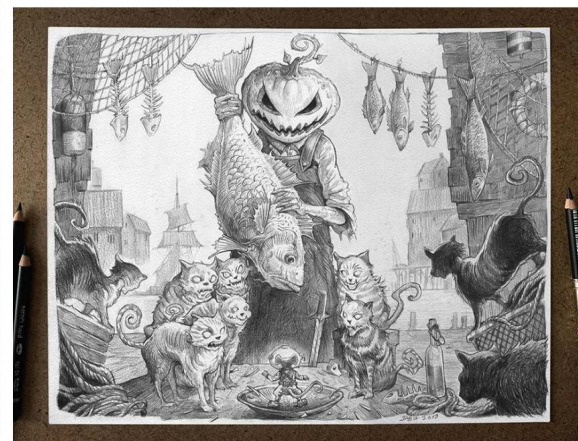
"What I like about LinkedIn is how people behave professionally," explains Sabin.

"A lot of my personal heroes have modest to small followings, and they're still doing amazing work," says Diego.

recruiters and art directors," Sabin advises. "This will help you understand better what kind of portfolio the company expects, and how you can demonstrate your strengths. Don't forget to act professionally, and maintain a good attitude in conversations and comments."

Freelance illustrator **Tahgasa Bertram** has been doing just that, at **www.linkedin.com/in/sweatyeskimo**. "I use LinkedIn to find people in specific roles, who are at companies I'd like to work with," he explains. "That information is much more difficult to find on other social networks. Once I've found the right person, I send them examples of my work and a message explaining why I'd like to work with them, and why my work would be a good fit."

HOW TO CHOOSE YOUR PLATFORM

There are other social platforms beyond these four, of course: Facebook, Snapchat, Artstation,

DeviantArt, The Dots, Dribbble, Dayflash, Twitch and more. So how do you decide which to concentrate on?

Our artists all agreed that it largely depends on whom you're trying to attract. "So think about who most uses a particular platform, and whether that's going to help with finding the work you want," advises Kenneth. "For instance, if a particular company you want to work for uses certain social media accounts, it might help to focus on those to try to grab their attention."

Above all, though, don't let social media take over your life and rob you of your creativity. "My main advice is to focus on doing good art first," says Kenneth. "You can have all the social media accounts in the world, but if the art isn't up to scratch then it's probably not going to help that much. Or as Cosmin puts it: "If you care more about followers than your art, you're heading for failure. So focus on your art, embrace the hard times as a learning experience, and be happy with the results."

Use your creative skills to put your stamp on your very own corner of this island paradise.

Create designs in Animal Crossing

Animal Crossing: New Horizons Personalise your island with these handy tips for downloading, making and sharing custom designs

You might spend your time fishing or catching bugs in Animal Crossing: New Horizons, but custom designs can transform your island retreat into an architectural masterpiece!

Whether you're looking for decking, paths, new wallpaper, clothes or designs for the much-coveted Simple Panels to switch up the entire look of your peaceful paradise, there are many ways to fill your custom design slots. From the Custom Designs Portal to making the most of QR codes, here's a breakdown of how to download, make and share custom designs in Animal Crossing: New Horizons.

THE CUSTOM DESIGNS PORTAL
Visiting the Able Sisters store is by far the simplest way to download new custom designs in Animal Crossing: New Horizons. Once you've unlocked

the store in the game, head to the bright pink touch-screen at the back-right of the shop and you can connect to the internet and interact with the Custom Designs Portal.

It's here where all your dreams of intricate paths, fancy decking and artsy wallpaper can come true, but you'll need to know either the design

Pixel by pixel, you can perfect your custom clothing to wear around the island – or let others model, instead!

ID or the creator ID of the items that you're looking for. A nine-digit number prefaced by MO is the design ID, while MA is the creator code, and you'll then be able to see everything they've created. You can even flick between regular custom designs and Pro versions that have been crafted with a specific clothing item in mind, say. You'll also need a paid Nintendo Switch Online subscription to share your designs and download new ones.

The best places to find creator codes are Reddit, Instagram and even Twitter, where you can search #acnhdesigns or #acnhpattern. Note that some more complex designs such as decking or even paths will require more of your limited design slots – so download wisely!

And if you're switching out an existing design, make sure that you don't have it anywhere else on your island because the new art will fill any area occupied by the previous creation. You don't want a bed decorated with decking, do you?

DOWNLOAD USING QR CODES
So, the Able Sisters is closed for the night and you're still hungry for a custom design or six. Never fear. Using your real NookPhone instead of your in-game one, it's possible to scan QR

codes that you can then download into the game.

First, download the Nintendo Switch Online app onto your real-life smartphone. Then, for the first time since you started playing Animal Crossing, load up the game and don't just press A to start. Instead, hit the minus button to bring up the Settings menu. Here, Tom Nook gives you the option to enable NookLink.

Once NookLink is turned on, log into the Nintendo Switch Online app with the same account you're using on your Switch with Animal Crossing. This will

different palette and shape options means that spending some time just playing with all the different options means you'll have a better chance of creating something special in future.

Just keep an eye on how things will look in the boxes on the left-hand side. Unfortunately, you can't edit any designs you've downloaded from the internet, so if you want to get creative with someone else's work you'll have to start from scratch.

A great place to feel like a design master is by switching to the Pro Designs tab and crafting clothing.

Once you've unlocked the Able Sisters' clothing store, Mabel (or Sable) will be happy to help you with your creative requirements.

> ❝ **Each segment can be designed so that you have the perfect custom threads to wear around your island** ❞

then enable the game to appear under your 'Game-Specific Services' menu on the phone app. Tap it and your very own NookLink will appear with a handy keyboard option to type at lightning speed, and that all-important Custom Designs app.

Using this you can scan a QR code that's been created either by a previous Animal Crossing game or at www.acpatterns.com, which we'll talk about in a moment. Once you've scanned the code with your camera, you can then open the designs app on your Switch and press the plus button to download the design.

MAKE CUSTOM DESIGNS IN GAME

It's easy to download new innovative and creative designs, but don't forget that you have the power to craft your very own pixelated masterpieces. It takes a bit of time to become used to the Custom Designs tool in your NookPhone, but the expanse of

Here, you can choose from a range of six different tops, six dress styles and three hats to customise. Each segment can then be designed separately so that you have the perfect custom threads to wear around your island.

TURN YOUR PHOTOS INTO DESIGNS

If hand-drawn pixel style isn't quite enough to sate your design appetite, there's a way to bring your real photos and art into the game, too. The tools at www.acpatterns.com are a great way to design on a bigger screen, but it also has an option to convert your existing pictures into pixel format.

On a desktop computer you can select your image, choose the colour scale or even whether you want to go moody and monochrome, and the site will then produce a QR code for you to download into your game using the NookLink QR scanner. The innovative free tool even enables you to choose segments of the image that would

Scan QR codes using your NookLink (part of the Nintendo Switch Online phone app) to instantly get your hands on patterns for use in your custom designs.

make it possible for you to paste pictures of KK Slider here in a multi-panel mural across your floors or walls. It's okay to miss him during the week.

SHARE YOUR CREATIONS

So you've created your art and now you want to share it with the world. Then head back to the Custom Designs Portal in the Able Sisters and register as a creator. You'll be given your own ID that you can then share on social media and with friends.

It's important to note, though, that when you register you're adhering to the Nintendo Code of Conduct and thus have a duty not to upload any designs other players might find inappropriate. Once you've uploaded your creations, other players who know your codes will then be able to download your masterworks to their own islands. Yes, you can feel smug.

SHOW OFF YOUR DESIGNS

Finally, you've gone to all that hard work, so what better way to show off your custom creations than with official merchandise in your shop? Approach the back wall of the Able Sisters and you'll find a collection of pre-made designs hanging on the wall. Interact with wherever you'd like to show off your own fashion label and Mabel will ask if you want to look at the top or bottom level. Choose your slot and she'll then ask which design you'd like to display instead. Select your item of clothing and voilà, there it is in all of its painstakingly designed glory.

The best thing about sharing your custom clothing designs here isn't just appreciating them every time you go shopping or even your friends being able to download them to wear, but the fact that your villagers will randomly strut their stuff in your freshly designed togs. Nothing says 'job well done' like Tangy wandering around in a new jumper. ◉

KK Slider.png 1x1
by Unknown
from Unknown
Normal pattern (easel)
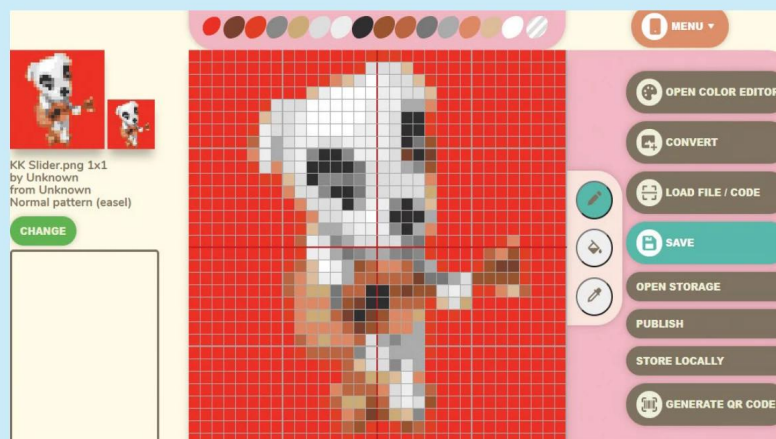
The easy-to-use tools over at ACPatterns.com enable you to rustle up bespoke artwork in no time at all.

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

Christopher Lovell

Pop culture This artist surrounds himself with inspirational nostalgia while balancing work and parenthood

About five years ago my partner and I moved into our home in Somerset, in south-west England. I saw the potential for studio space with its large, bright rooms and high ceilings. Wherever I've lived, I've always tried to have some kind of studio environment – even if it's just a table in the corner of the room.

I've always been a collector of objects that relate to my interests: action figures, statues, posters, prints and musical equipment. The studio soon became a hive of madness that always took visitors by surprise. However, my working environment is important for me and so I can't help but surround myself with my various collections. The energy this gives me can then be channelled into my artwork. ➤➤

I painted Medusa a few years ago for a YouTube process video. I then decided to do a print set of the three Gorgon sisters. This one is Euryale.

This is Fred – he's one of my many skulls. He looks after my hats and sometimes sunglasses for me.

I'm lucky enough to live in a beautiful cathedral city. The whole medieval vibe of the place is very inspirational.

In my early teens I discovered the Dark Horse Predator and Alien comics. I collected them and relished the artwork within the pages.

My skating days are long gone, but when Heroin Skateboards released a Judge Death skate deck I had to own it! He's one of my favourite characters.

A lifelong passion of mine has been building and painting model kits. A big part of the fun is constructing bases for them, like these here. I usually buy clocks and take out the mechanism to use it as a base and build a small environment on.

With my plans to work on lots of YouTube content, my girlfriend got me a decent mic for the voiceover segments. I'd love to produce an art-related podcast at some point.

I usually have an inspiring art book or two close to hand. The two here are Ratspike, a rare book featuring John Blanche and Ian Miller's work, and The Art of Devilman.

I paint so many figures with horns and am always trying to find good references, hence this collection. It's useful to have something to hold, observe the textures and to test light sources on.

Urotsukidōji: Legend of the Overfiend was my first experience of Japanese anime and it was mind-blowing for me as a 12 year old. I'm still obsessed with it.

I have a large collection of art books that I've built up over the years. I prefer to look at art on the pages of a book rather than online – there's something nostalgic and far more intimate about it.

➤ Because I had this space, filling it became a bit of an addiction and I was hunting for stuff on eBay to the point of boxes arriving weekly. I was having to intercept the postman and smuggle stuff in so my partner didn't notice!

FAMILY CONSIDERATIONS

This all changed with the arrival of my daughter. Baby-proofing my workspace became essential and this soon made me realise that my studio had become a museum of nostalgia rather than a productive art environment. Nowadays it's far more minimalist and (thankfully) action figure avalanches are a thing of the past. I have a few choice items on display now, which typically have a design aspect that I enjoy looking at.

My daughter spends a lot of time in this room when I'm working, so my eyes have to be in two places at once. She's very creative and will often be scribbling on pieces of paper and demanding my attention, which I love.

My partner joined my business earlier this year to help me with admin work, packing prints, planning and organising anything that isn't 'creating art'. It's been a huge help and has enabled me to focus on art. It's also fantastic for our family dynamic. She

66 My studio had become a museum of nostalgia rather than an art environment 99

has a desk on the other side of the studio that tends to be far less cluttered than mine, but I insisted that the large, framed HeroQuest painting stays above her desk. I'm sure she loves it really!

I grew up in the 80s and 90s – it was such an incredible time for toy lines, music, books, video games and cartoon series. I seemed to have a deeper interest in these things than most people around me. I became aware of what I liked in character ➤

Skeletor was one of my favourite characters when I was a kid. Some of these figures are so rare that they're an investment – not something I can explain easily to my daughter, who loves to grab them and bend them into shapes they weren't designed for.

I've produced a number of Alien-related artworks over the years. You'll find many xenos in my studio and one of my faves is this one here, perched on my lamp watching over the studio!

I much prefer to be in my painting room working on traditional paintings and filming YouTube videos, but with that comes video editing, social media management and admin. To keep me inspired, I make sure I'm still surrounded by some of my favourite characters, action figures and posters.

These past few years I've been experimenting with adding gold leaf to some of my paintings, with varying results of success. This one presented a number of challenges, but I was happy with the results, even though I was close to scrapping the painting from numerous disasters throughout the process!
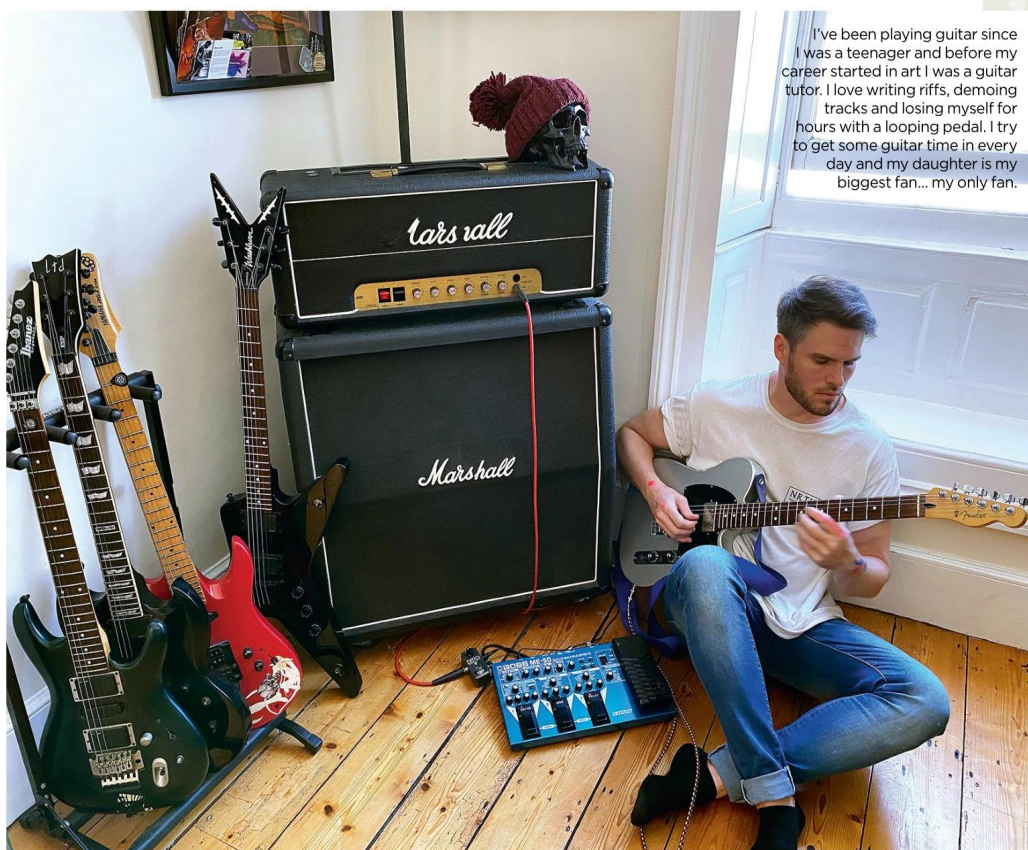
I've been playing guitar since I was a teenager and before my career started in art I was a guitar tutor. I love writing riffs, demoing tracks and losing myself for hours with a looping pedal. I try to get some guitar time in every day and my daughter is my biggest fan... my only fan.

➤➤ design from a young age and I would spend many hours drawing my favourite cartoon characters or creating my own, in a sense practising art without even knowing it.

DAILY/NIGHTLY ROUTINE

I tend to work all day doing different jobs/tasks and sometimes it's dark or at least dusk before I can even think about sitting down and painting, which will mean I'm painting usually until 3am when I start falling asleep with a brush in my hand. Then suddenly my daughter is poking me in the face at 7am. This can be frustrating because light is so important to an artist – not just being able to see more, but also helping me to feel far more focused. However, I've become used to working this way. I'm completely addicted to the creative process and love what I do so much.

I felt a connection to fantasy art from an early age. Seeing it in all of its forms would blow my mind and a lot of what I do now is part of me trying to
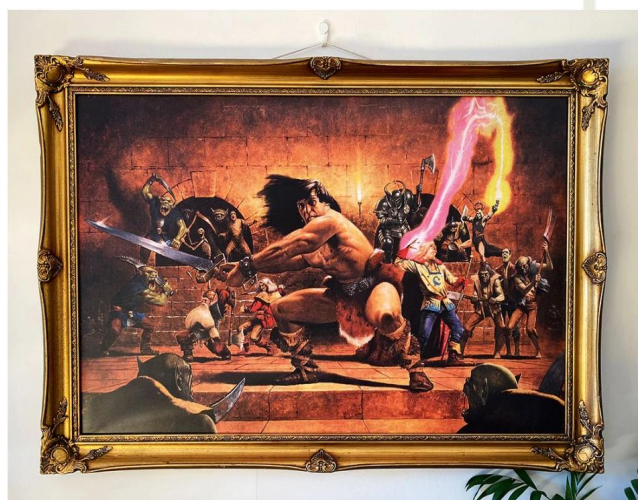
capture what childhood me would have related to. My art is very much inspired by my youth, the album covers of my favourite bands, anime, comics, and horror and sci-fi movies.

I knew I wanted to be a fantasy artist when I was around 10 years old. As my tastes matured I felt less inclined to draw buxom barbarian ladies riding

This is one of my all-time favourite fantasy artworks. It's from the 1989 board game HeroQuest and it was painted by Les Edwards. I remember getting the game for Christmas when I was young and it was one of my favourite gifts.

dragons and instead create a more dark and sinister take on things. I coined the name Dark Nature for a lot of my personal work – I feel this captures the essence of what I create.

VARIED SPECTRUM OF CLIENTS

I've been working professionally for about 13 years now, starting off as a merchandise designer for bands and clothing lines. From this my career has led me to some incredible and varied clients. I've seen my work on everything from video game boxes, Blu-rays, guitar amplifiers, miniatures

> ❝ **As my tastes matured I felt less inclined to draw buxom barbarian ladies riding dragons...** ❞

I realised I needed my painting studio when my daughter was born. It became hard for me to focus on my art and painting traditionally can also be very messy. Having this room out of the way enables me to work traditionally into the early hours, away from any distractions.

and busts, skateboards and even legal tender collectible coins. I feel very fortunate to be in a position now where I can be far more picky when it comes to client commissions, and focus more on the passion projects.

After my daughter was born, I made my painting studio in the attic, which is solely for creating traditional work. Here I can fling paint and make a terrible mess while I work into the early hours. Of course, I have a number of inspirational items and art on the walls to keep me inspired. I love getting into the art zone up there, with a good

podcast or music playing and losing all track of time.

I feel so blessed and grateful that I can have my working environments in my home, that my job enables us to spend all day with our daughter, and that we all get to experience so much as a family.

Christopher is a dark fantasy artist whose work is infused with his interests – from metal music to 80s cartoons and the macabre. His Somerset studio is a shrine to all of his interests and hobbies from childhood to present day. You can see more of his art at www.christopherlovell.com.

This is a work in progress that I started six years ago when I was living in Spain. It's something I return to once or twice a year, but never seem to finish. It shall be completed this year and I have a lot of fresh energy to inject into it.

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

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www.twitter.com/imaginefx

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Apology? What a joke

Hello, I love ImagineFX, but genuinely can't believe your response to a letter last issue. I don't think you should have apologised at all. Perhaps due to recent events you want to tread very carefully? Either way, that person needs to stop being so sensitive. How can anyone get offended by the colour of a piece of paper? It's a joke. What will we get offended by next?
Chris, UK

Claire replies *To fill other readers in on the letter that appeared last issue, we received a complaint from a reader about the phrase 'flesh-coloured paper' that appeared in a past edition of ImagineFX. The complainant stated that this was outdated and offensive. I agreed and apologised. To be clear: I absolutely meant that apology and I stand by it. There's more than one colour of flesh, so therefore we should explain which colour we mean. I am white. It's easier for white people to not get offended or be unable to see why offence was caused, because we're usually the ones represented. Recent events have indeed made me think more seriously about what my skin colour represents and the benefits that I receive as a result of that. I think we need to make this world more inclusive and am happy to make steps towards that.*

More Painter

I've started to work with Corel Painter recently and I like it. However, I haven't found many tutorials on how to use it. The interface is different to Photoshop's and it's not always easy to navigate. I've seen that Corel is your Artist of the Month partner and I'm a bit surprised

Last issue we acknowledged our mistake in referring to paper as 'flesh coloured' in a previous workshop, but reader Chris disagreed with our printed apology.
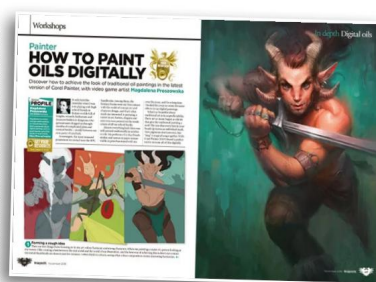
Reader Christian is keen for more Corel Painter articles to appear in the magazine. Watch this space!

there's not much in ImagineFX about this software. Is it possible to push your collaboration with Corel a bit further and publish more articles about Painter?
Christian

Claire replies *Hello Christian, we love Painter as well and over the years have had many workshops using Corel Painter. This issue, there's a workshop using Corel Painter alongside other types of software. I'll look into commissioning a workshop on Painter on its own. Let me know if you have an idea of who you would like to see lead this workshop.*

How about a podcast?

First, I wanted to say how much of a joy it is to read ImagineFX; it's my favourite magazine and the only one I subscribe to.

Sometimes you say we should tell you what artists we want to hear from and Patrick J Jones always jumps to mind. I know you've already worked with him, and it was this magazine that made me discover him and now I'm hooked on all of his lessons. The recent blog post revisiting his articles with the video on figure drawing made me attempt the lesson with great success. An interview with him more on his background and life story would be very interesting. But if you're looking for someone new, have you featured Paul Bonner yet? He is another favourite artist of mine.

One thing I've not figured out is how to draw and read your magazine at the same time. Would be possible as part of the digital downloadable content to have interviews with artists in a podcast style. Hearing their story is always interesting and I could listen while drawing.
Gavin

Claire replies *Gavin, thanks for writing in. Patrick J Jones is always welcome in our magazine. We're big fans of him, he is such a great teacher. We have featured Paul Bonner a few times here and there, but thanks for reminding us of his talents. As for a podcast, that's a great idea but not one we could work on at present.*

FRESH PAINT

New works that have grabbed our attention

Henriette Boldt Illustration @henridoesart

Tristan Tait @tristan.tait

Kait Matthews @kaitmatthewsart

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

ARTIST PORTFOLIO
PASCAL BLANCHÉ

Beren Neale speaks to the artist with a colourful career in games, and an even more colourful body of work

Over the years of working on ImagineFX, it's exciting when you discover an artist who you can identify by their style alone – whether that's the ultra-detailed fantasy portraits of Dave Rapoza, the gleaming surfaces in Serge Birault's pin-up art, or the Old Master depth and weight of Craig Mullins. Pascal Blanche, with his distinct, colour-rich sci-fi scenes that seem to sit in their very own dimension, is one of those artists. His use of 3D modelling, his otherworld subject matter, and of course that striking use of colour, makes you feel that any piece that he posts online could only have been made by him.

CLASSIC SCI-FI ART

Of course, for the French-born artist who now resides in the digital art hub that is Montreal, Canada, he'd tell you he's simply paying homage to a distant age of classic sci-fi art and its practitioners, and that initially colour was the furthest thing from his mind.

"First, I was a real crappy painter," he says. "I mean oils and acrylics… I never managed to understand how to deal with them, so it took me a long time to even think about colour in my work." So where did all these reds and yellows, oranges and greens come from? "I guess I first observed it in artists like Frazetta, Otomo, ➤

XPEDITION 4
A rare piece from Pascal where the landscape takes prominence over the human/alien forms.

➤➤ Druillet, Moebius, Bisley… they all share the same colouring technics in a way: lots of contrasted colours and also very brightly coloured shadows."

Soon his eye started to crave those colours. "Cam Kennedy too, in his Boba Fett comics, had those colourful shadows," continues Pascal. "Same thing in the bright posters of Drew Struzan from the 80s movies." That may all be true, but that copyright quality of Pascal's work remains.

FLIPPING BURGERS, GIFTING ART

Pascal entered art school in Marseille, France, in 1989 when he was 17. There he learned drawing, painting, geometry, photography, sculpture and art history, "but it was on the side that I started to enjoy working on my Amiga 500, on Deluxe Paint and the first 3D software like Caligari's TrueSpace, or Real 3D," he reveals. "The course was five years, but I started to work after the fourth year."

What was his first paid job? "It was in the fast food industry," he jokes, suddenly finding truth in his jest. "More than learning how to flip burgers, it really made me realise I wanted to do something out of my art passion for a living," he says. "It also focused me to think about working in art more as a professional industry than trying to sell paintings for a

55 ORACLE
Being a "crappy painter" didn't stop Pascal going down the digital route of art, and unleashing his unique vision.

living." This led Pascal to get a job at Tilt magazine, the first French monthly video game magazine, which discontinued in 1994. "I managed to find summer work there as an assistant, basically helping out the photographers take screenshots for their reports. Then I started to draw caricatures of the reporters working on the floor, and left them on their desks! Soon I was drawing little comic strips."

This cheeky art gifting paid off when, after a year, one of the full-time artists at Tilt became sick and the editor asked Pascal to step in and do a

WINTER FAERIE
As well as art directing, Pascal teaches the odd Gnomon class – this being the result of a session four years ago.

double-page illustration for them in Photoshop. "I said, 'sure', having never used a Mac let alone Photoshop," he recalls. "But I got the job done… lesson: never say no to an opportunity, and figure the rest out afterwards."

CALLING THE SHOTS

Pascal has now been working as senior art director at Behaviour Interactive for a year. Previously he was an art director at Ubisoft Montreal for ➤➤

> 66 I started to enjoy working on my Amiga 500, on Deluxe Paint and the first 3D software like TrueSpace or Real 3D 99

MAKE IT POP
How to use colour, the Pascal Blanché way...

"Most of my colour inspiration comes from the artists I admire. They all have that specific rich palette tones, and they paint with light. There's also my love for comics, where colours convey emotion and attract the eye. I'm more interested by the romanticism than the realism.

By painting my models with light and strong colours, I discovered how much impact it had on the final result, and I guess I'm still continuing to explore and learn from the experience. It's a process that's half-conscious, in the sense that I know I want stark contrasts and punchy colours

at the centre of my work, but I have almost no control over the final decision. Yellow, blue or red... it can change up until the last minute.

I tend to avoid having anything grey or white in my work. I prefer muted but saturated tones, and almost all the time my Photoshop process is about isolated tones on different layers so I can recolour them completely. I 'crunch' the colours into four to five stark different tones, with almost no in-betweens or gradients. That result is somehow more restful for the eye. It gives it more focus, and ends up getting its own vibe."

RAID
Pascal is nothing if not a fan of 70s and 80s sci-fi art, and loves paying homage to classic artists like John Harris and Chris Foss.

HUNTERMOON

With the iconic stances of Frazetta and bright colours, Pascal's work perfectly combines the golden era with the digital age.

JAAK THE GIANT HUNTER
An image from the artist's Derelict Planet world – an ongoing art project with no ending in sight.

SORCERER
Much like his Jaak artwork, here Pascal plays with the idea of creating a series of similar poses with different characters.

ARMOURED GOOSE
A self-styled "jack of all trades," Pascal loves to play with human and alien forms, epic landscapes and organic vehicle design.

66 The job is not just to decide what colour the sky is. It also requires lots of leadership and social skills 99

At Ubisoft, Pascal was art director on franchises such as Myst IV Revelation, James Cameron's Avatar the game, Mighty Quest for Epic Loot, and Far Cry: New Dawn, on the character side. "The hidden part of this industry is that when you work on new titles, there's a high risk that your project won't make it to the shelves," admits Pascal. "In my career, it's happened six times – and not only at Ubisoft! But you still learn from these experiences."

AN ALL-ROUNDER

Being an industry veteran, Pascal has seen it all and describes himself as a jack of all trades-type artist. He's had jobs working on the modelling, textures, lighting, animation and even post-production of a game. "I know a

bit of everything," he says, "and that's what makes me (I hope) a better art director. The job is not just to decide what colour the sky is. It also requires lots of leadership and social skills, especially when it comes to successfully bringing the vision of a game to fruition." Art, says Pascal, is there to support a game, and there's a creative process between his team of artists and the game design team, or the tech teams, "always finding better visual solutions for what the game will ultimately require."

As we start talking for this interview, Unreal Engine 5 had just announced its step-up in game graphics for Sony's PS5 – a promise of cinematic-quality visuals in gameplay, and phenomenal lighting that reacts with the environment like never before. Is ➤➤

➤➤ over 15 years. A normal day as art lead totally depends on the period of time the game is in production. Fundamentally, Pascal sets the visual guidelines that will become a game's visual identity. He needs to anticipate new requests from the game makers before they get to his artists. "Part of the job is pure art direction, part of it is finding the answers to technical or gameplay issues," he says, "no day is really the same, and no production is like the next one… I like my job."

Interview

WARLORD
Another painting inspired by the great Frank Frazetta, in this case his Against the Gods piece, with "some Kirby and Druillet influences" thrown in for good measure.
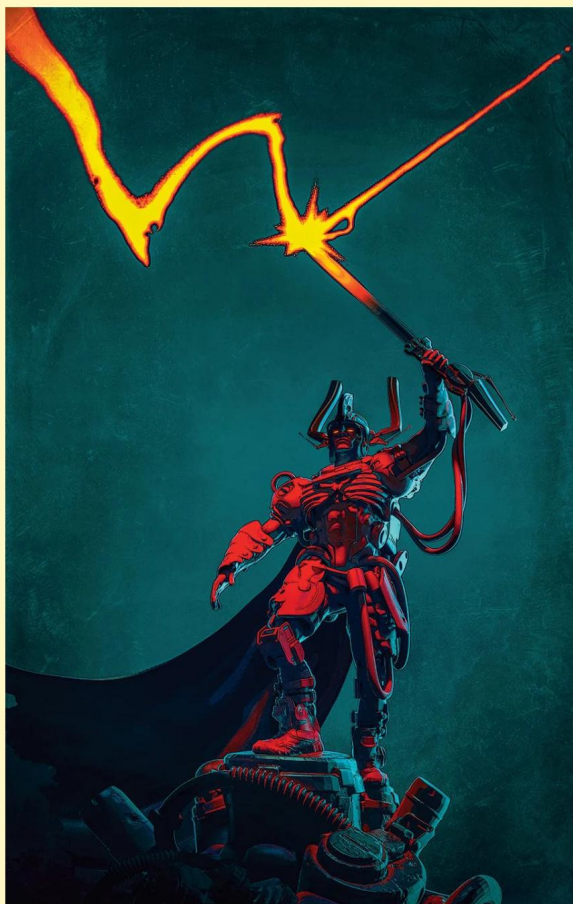
➤➤ this the moment artists will see their work translate seamlessly into game visuals? Pascal, it turns out, is not holding his breath.

"The thing is, I've been around enough not to get too exited by these kind of things," he says. "Sure it looks amazing, but you need to see it running with a real game in the back, not just a one-character demo… but the graphical interface does look

FOSS STATION 77
Pascal seems to sum up so much of Chris Foss in this homage, with its iconic composition and sense of depth.

66 I try to not create too much connection in between each and every design 99

promising," the artist concedes, "and I would love to finally get to work on games that generates better real-time lighting, for sure."

WORLD-BUILDING FOR KICKS
A place where Pascal has no restrictions is in the Derelict Planet – his personal fictional world that he's been building image by image for years, with no narrative thread or ultimate business goal in mind.

"I mostly work three to four nights a week on my personal art," says Pascal, "so roughly 10 to 12 hours, although

not on weekends or in the summer." The Derelict Planet project came about as a homage to "the legendary 70s and 80s artists who inspired me when I started, as I felt it was my duty to pass on the torch and keep that particular art style alive," says Pascal.

Homage it is, but staid riffing on the same style it is not. "I keep my options open, bring in what I feel adds to the universe, |but I try to not create too much connection in between each and every design," he explains. "I like to keep it as an ongoing process rather than seeing an end to it."

Working on a piece, Pascal's process hasn't changed all that much over the years. Seeing himself more as a sculptor than a painter, he envisages his subject in motion, striking a pose, before thinking about theme or ➤➤
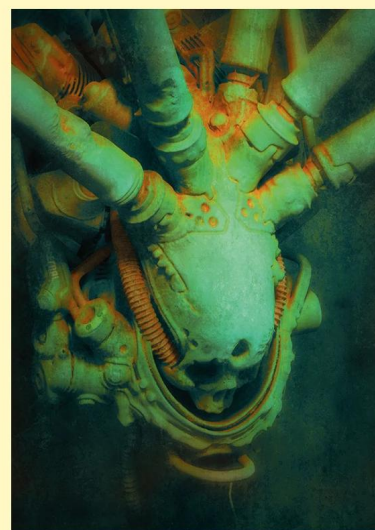
HYPERSLEEP
Pascal leaves it up to the viewer to decide whether this is a scene from a spaceship, or a sunken vessel.

CURSED
Pascal chose to draw on figures from Greek mythology with this artwork of a gorgon, created using 3ds Max, ZBrush, Keyshot and finally Photoshop.

KEEP YOUR COMPOSURE
Pascal gives his views on composition and design

"The story and the pose of the main subject almost comes before I even know what the design is going to be. This is an important element in my personal work.

I used to draw some little doodles to help me out with the general look, almost always starting with a frame and a few lines. Then comes the pose, and with the pose the story behind it. When I have this in place, even roughly, I let the character come into existence through my work.

I always look for a strong silhouette and that comes from my love of comics and animation. I understood early on that a clear silhouette and strong pose gets half of the job done. I find it hard to think of a design without having a pose in mind. Clearly, if your character is a strong warrior wearing lots of armour or a wood elf jumping from tree to tree, their design will be an extension of their activity. So always think of the action first – then the design will flow from there."
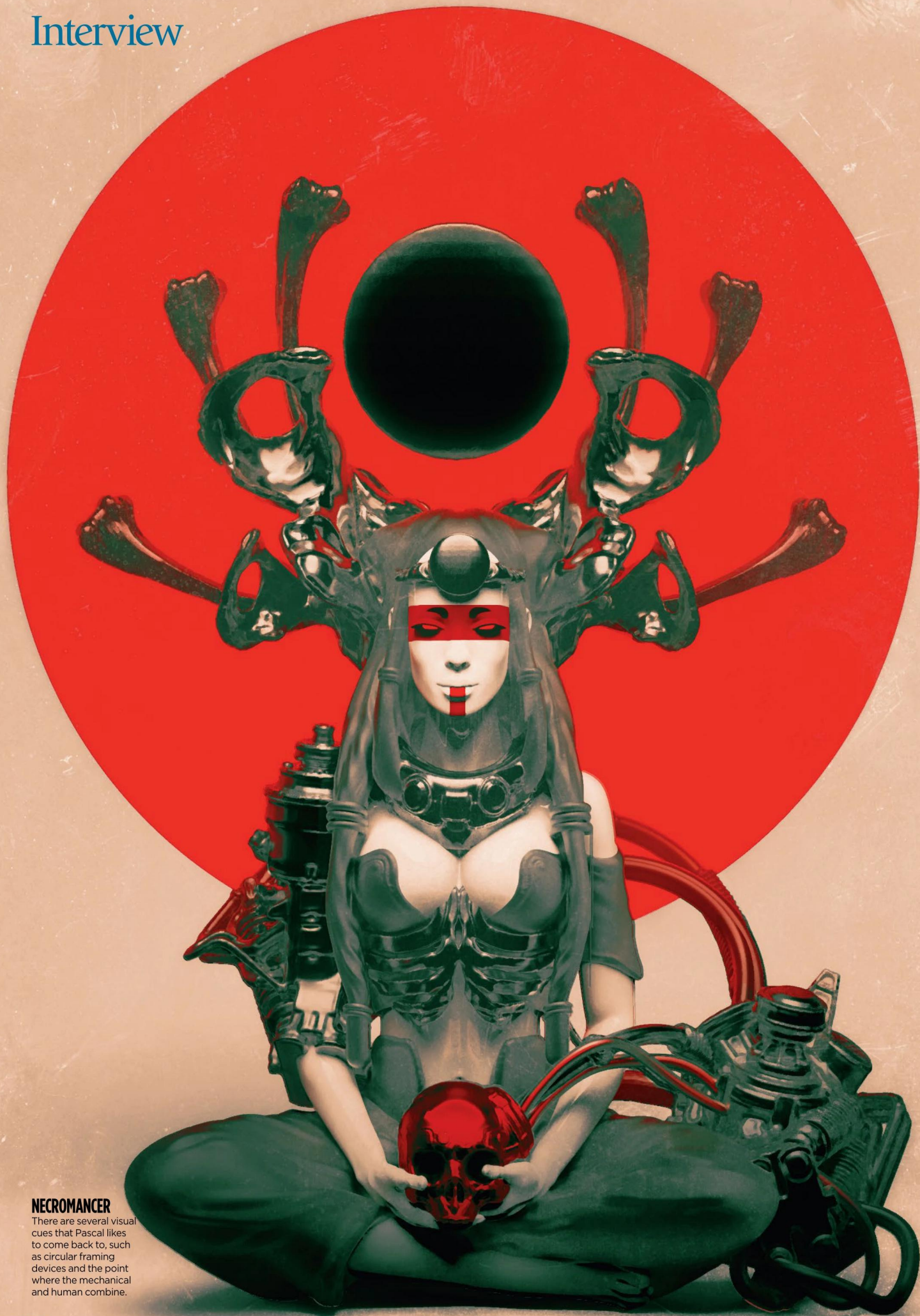
NECROMANCER
There are several visual cues that Pascal likes to come back to, such as circular framing devices and the point where the mechanical and human combine.

NEXUS 9
This intriguing piece is inspired by Blade Runner, Naoyuki Kato and Tsutomu Nihei.

HARVESTER 47
This is the first image that Pascal created live from start to finish for an online class.

> 66 **Keyshot is useful because my scenes are polygon heavy and it enables me to render my work at high resolutions** 99

➤➤ style. "My process goes from 3ds Max and ZBrush, then to Photoshop to rework the colours and give the render a warm, painterly look," he says.

Because the final image is an illustration, Pascal isn't concerned with it looking 'right' from all angles. "ZBrush evolved pretty fast and became the centre tool of my work, but I still use my 3ds Max models and scenes to get a first draft of my character in pose... I also reuse a lot my 3D props that I've gathered over the years," he says. Then for the rendering, everything is exported to Keyshot. "Keyshot is useful because my scenes are usually quite polygon heavy," he explains, "and it enables me to render my work at very high resolutions for printing. Then the rest of the work is done on Photoshop."

ENERGISED BY MUSIC

When he's working at home, Pascal will often listen to ambient records: soundtracks for Blade Runner, Interstellar, Alien, the original Planet of the Apes, the hugely popular MMO video game EVE Online, and some dark ambient groups such as Cryo Chamber. "Music always put me in the right mood to start a new work," he says. Right now though, with lockdown still a reality in Canada, he's
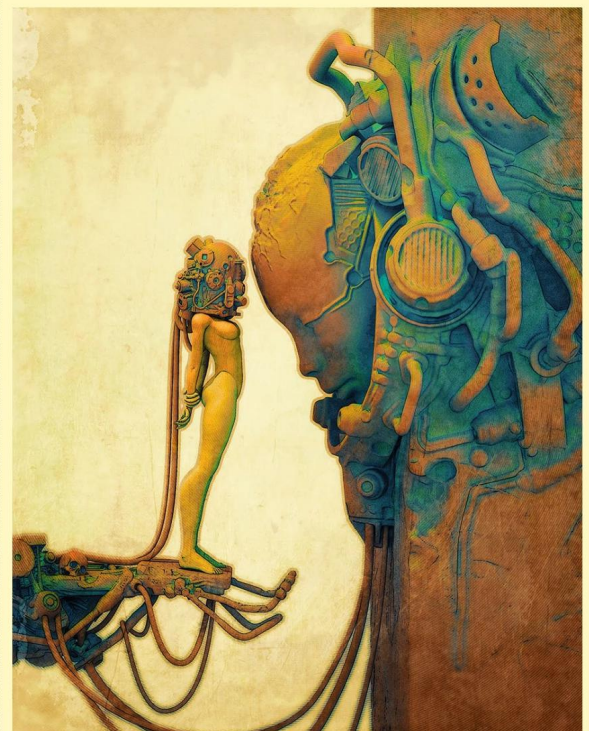
DANU
This has become Pascal's calling-card image, combining homage (in this case to HR Giger) with the artist's own aesthetic.

expanding his personal works to outside the realms of the Derelict Planet, and taken up tai chi with his wife when they're not taking their daily "long walks in my neighbourhood, with lots of green back alleys in the east of town."

We may all be experiencing a global crisis, but colour, it would seem, is still never far from Pascal's thoughts.

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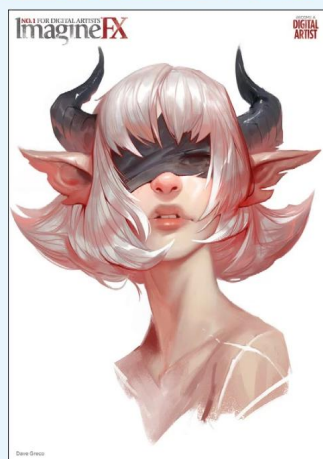Only the most recent editions are available in print **WHILE STOCKS LAST!**

PRINT AND DIGITAL BACK ISSUES

Issue 190
September 2020
Ejiwa 'Edge' Ebenebe's cover art ties nicely with our feature on how to be happy as an artist. We focus on the art of The Last of Us Part II, present tips for a better Blender workflow, help you improve your character design, and more!

Issue 189
August 2020
Cover artist Dave Greco takes another artist's idea and puts a fantastic spin on it, Phil Galloway shows off ArtRage's digital oils and Maria Poliakova uses colour to add atmosphere. Plus we talk to film art legend Crash McCreery.

Issue 188
July 2020
The super-talented Tran Nguyen heads up this month's issue with her cover art and workshop, and interview. There's also advice on lighting in Procreate, speedy figure drawing, and tips on how to stay healthy as an artist.

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!

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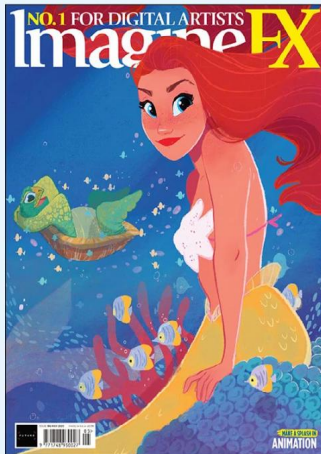
Issue 186
May 2020

Issue 185
April 2020

Issue 184
March 2020

Issue 183
February 2020

Issue 182
January 2020

Issue 181
Christmas 2019

Issue 180
December 2019

Issue 179
November 2019

Issue 178
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Issue 177
September 2019

Issue 176
August 2019

Issue 175
July 2019

*Resource files are available from issue 85 onwards.

Sketchbook

Ashline

Nature and emotions serve as inspiration – and an aide-mémoire
– for this self-taught French illustrator and concept artist
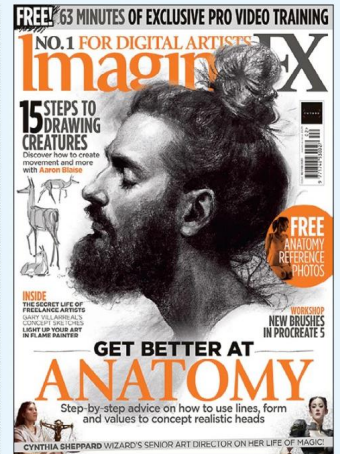
Artist PROFILE

Ashline
LOCATION: France

Taking her inspiration from fantasy worlds, nature and Japanese culture, Ashline is a self-taught illustrator who's worked as a freelancer for almost a decade on projects in the video game, animation and publishing industries. She paints concepts, characters and covers, uses her sketches as a way to develop her skills, and sells her work online as an independent artist.
www.instagram.com/ashline_art

FOG
"This started as a simple sketch, but later I tightened the line-work and coloured it digitally, creating a piece of personal art."

EXPRESSION: CALM
"During the quarantine I've challenged myself to paint different expressions as fast as I can. This has taught me a more efficient way to paint digitally, moving from greyscale to colours."

TEAR AND STRUGGLES
"I'm not really good at expressing myself with words so I try to do this through my art. How I feel often inspires my artworks on nature and people."

CLEO
"I like to start a drawing or sketch with random shapes. Usually, I have no idea what I'm going to draw. Most of them are meditative drawings."

MELTING
"I tried to visually express the feeling of confusion, when it seems that everything is melting into one big mess."

SELF-PORTRAIT
"If I don't know what to draw, I study. One day I used the light from my window to see how it interacted with my face. I'll apply this knowledge to another piece, I'm sure."

> 66 Usually, I have no idea what I'm going to draw. Most of them are meditative drawings 99

66 My sketchbook is like a diary.
I draw almost every day to express a
feeling, an event… anything, really 99

FIRE
"I love to experiment with
different mediums and styles.
The red sketches are probably
my favourites. I use a coloured
pencil and mix my lines
with brushmarkers."

EXPRESSION: GRUMPY

"The first sketch I did during the quarantine. A lot of people have adapted to this new, complicated situation, but I haven't found it easy. I wanted to express that particular thought and used my own face as reference for the expression."

PAIR OF MELTING FLOWERS

"My sketchbook is like a diary. I draw almost every day to express a feeling, an event... anything, really. I've had a hard time during the quarantine, but I enjoyed seeing poppies everywhere so I mixed everything in my sketches."

PEACEFUL

"I don't expect to create a good drawing. My passion comes from this moment I take hold of the pencil and start making marks on the paper."
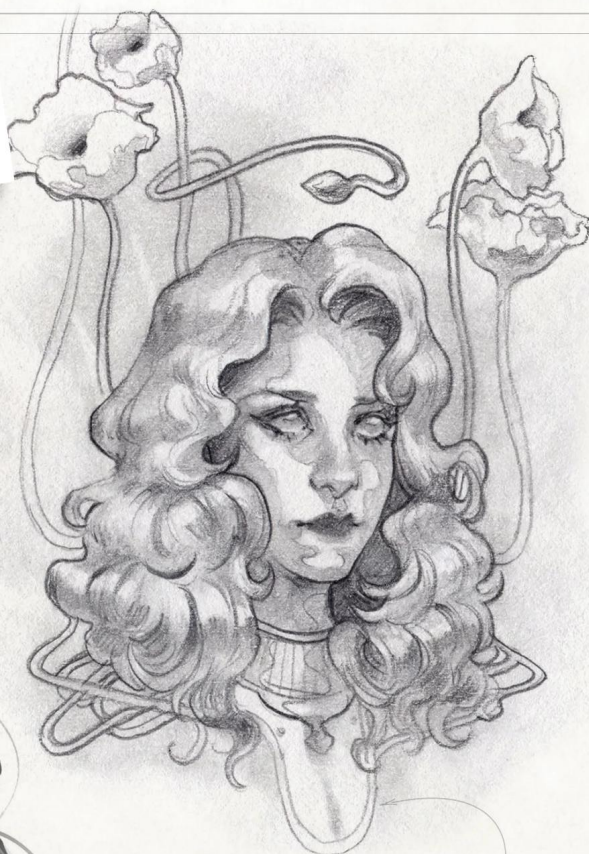
MELTING FLOWER

"Nature helps me to find inspiration when I don't know what to draw. I take a look around me and always find something!"

EQUINOX

"Each sketch is a souvenir. My memory is so bad that I'm glad of this! Looking at them helps me remember where I was, with whom, and the atmosphere..."

❝ Nature helps me to find inspiration when I don't know what to draw ❞

EXPRESSION: SMILE

"I think we all need that kind of smile – a smile that's full of love!"

CAFÉ DOODLES

"For my daily routine I go every morning to a café for one hour. I have no expectations – I only draw what I want and just enjoy being outside."
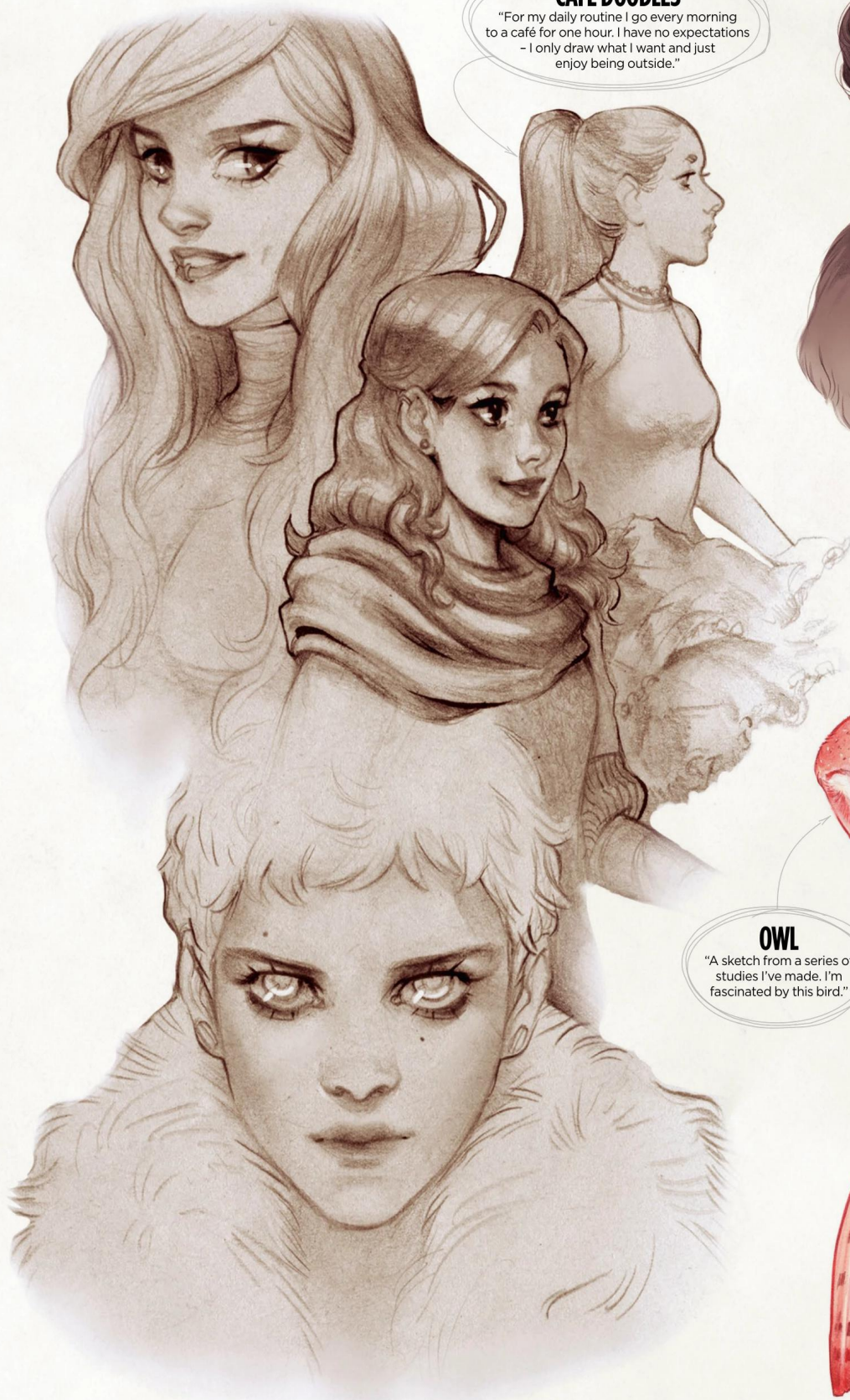
LOOK

"Different styles? It doesn't matter: art is a big laboratory! The more I experiment, the more I learn."

OWL

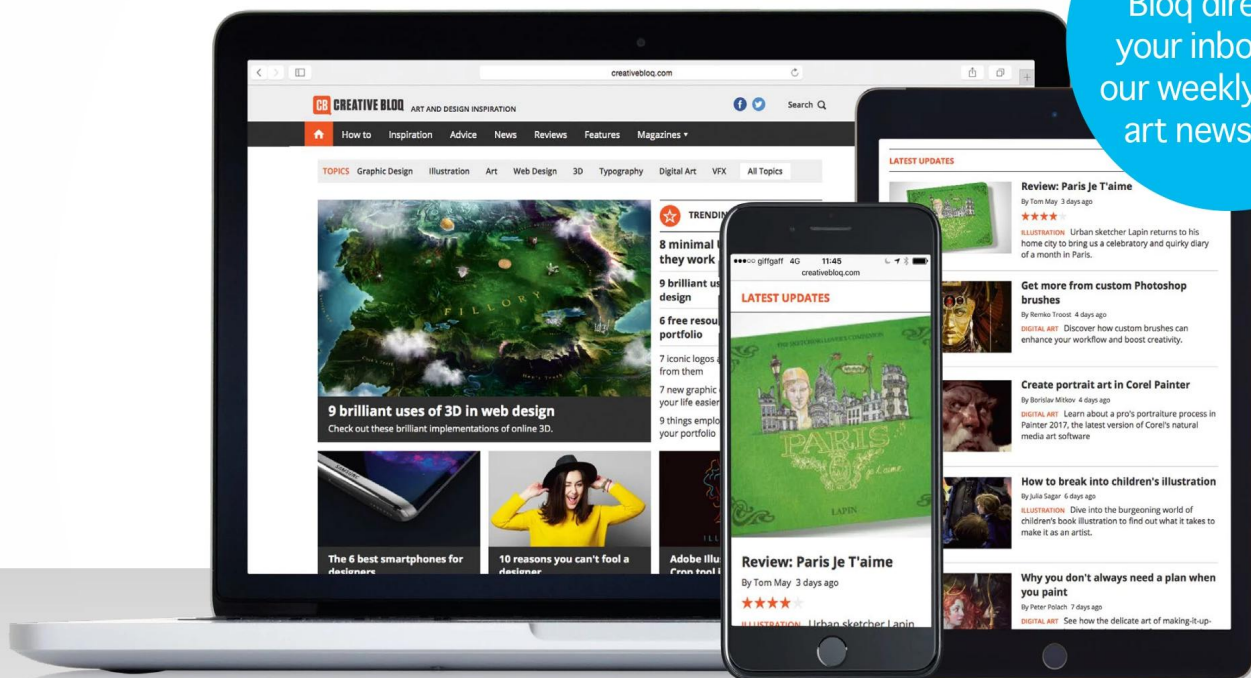"A sketch from a series of studies I've made. I'm fascinated by this bird."

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**

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

ImagineFX
Workshops

VIDEO WORKSHOP

Advice from the world's best artists

60

66

74

80
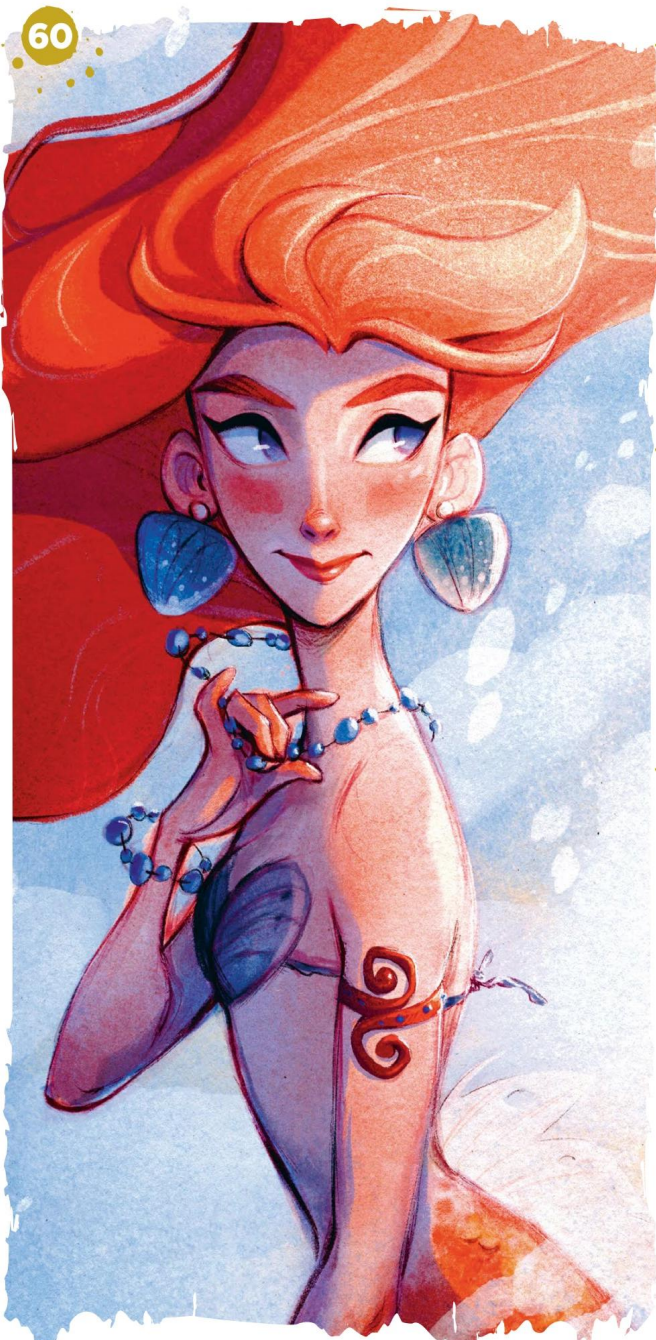
This issue:

Procreate
USE DYNAMIC LINES IN YOUR ARTWORK

Character designer and 2D concept artist **Pietmaen** reveals how using dynamic lines and curves can help to give your art extra visual impact

Artist **PROFILE**

Pietmaen
LOCATION: Germany

Peter Brockhammer, known online as Pietmaen, is a Berlin-based character designer and 2D concept artist who's worked in games and publishing.
www.pietmaen.com

During university I had a great teacher who taught me the secret of dynamic lines, which pushed my skill level and became one of my trademarks. This technique, along with experimenting with different processes and styles in the eight years since graduating, has helped to shape my current art style. Creating characters, telling stories and keeping the viewer curious is what keeps me motivated and happy every day.

In this workshop I'll be showing you how I play around with movement during my painting process. I created a similar-looking artwork for a social media post earlier this year, in which I revealed that I was going to launch my Patreon account at the end of April. In a lovely coincidence, Mermay was just around the corner. So I decided to go with a mermaid. This also fitted with the topic of my first online tutorial, in which I explained about the Line of Action. Et voilà: my two trademarks – mermaids and dynamic lines – combined perfectly for my news.

Afterwards, I spotted a couple of mistakes in the original piece. So I decided to redraw it completely and make it worthy of being on the cover of ImagineFX! ➡➡
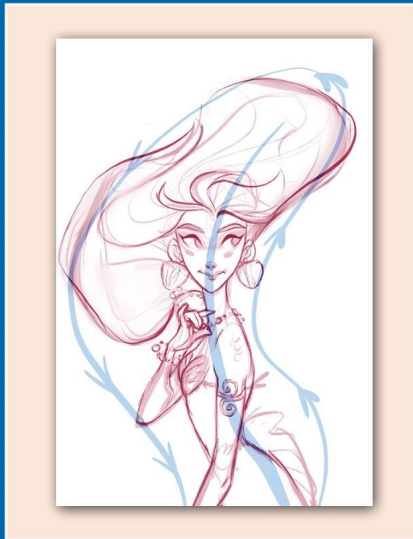

How I create...
A CHARACTER PIECE THAT FLOWS

1 Playing around with lines
Quick dynamic sketches will help you decide on which direction to take your artwork in and give you possible options that you could try out – as well as acting as a general warm-up exercise. You might end up choosing a different sketch instead what you initially had in mind.

2 Maintain the flow
The Line of Action is a well-known first step to creating dynamic art. I'll often create a figure based on a single movement, such capturing their arms in a certain pose or the motion of their hair. My life-drawing teacher advised drawing big and 'feeling' your line-art. I recommend you do the same.
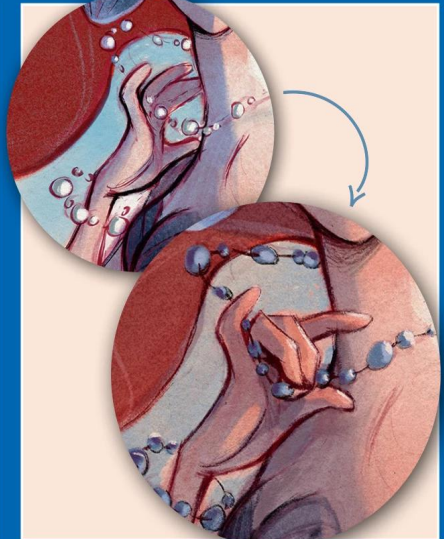
3 It's okay to start again
As I mentioned earlier, I wasn't happy with the first version. I like the sketchy look, but here it was too loose, the mermaid's hand looked off and I needed to extend it down so it fitted ImagineFX's cover. So I went back to the sketching stage and began to change those aspects of the artwork.

COLOUR TECHNIQUES
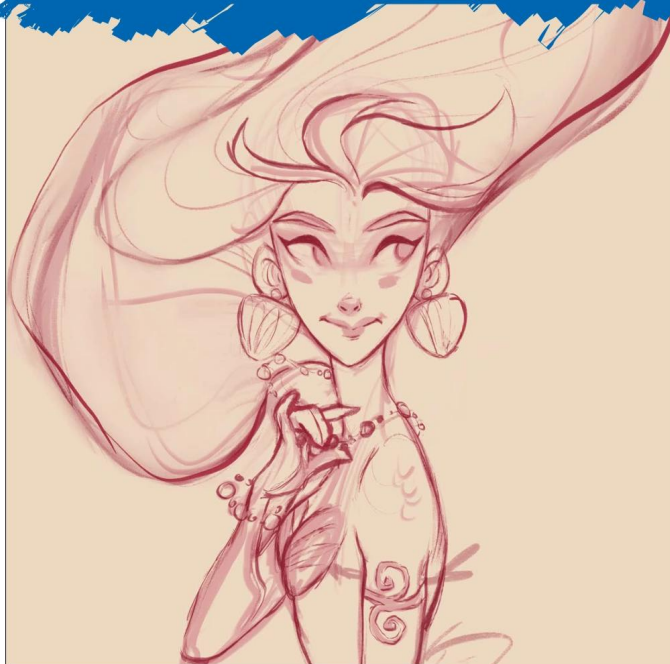
Establish the mood

I prefer to use a coloured background in my personal art. This helps me to stay within the colour family and makes it easier to choose a contrast colour that best matches it. It's the first easy step towards setting the mood. A bright warm colour can create a positive, calming atmosphere; a dark greyish blue generates a cold, melancholic feeling.

Colour blocking on layers

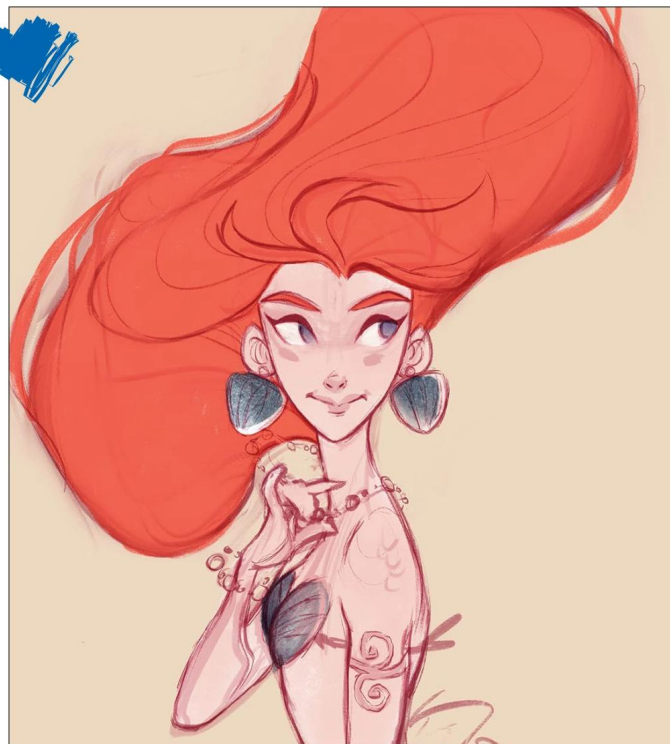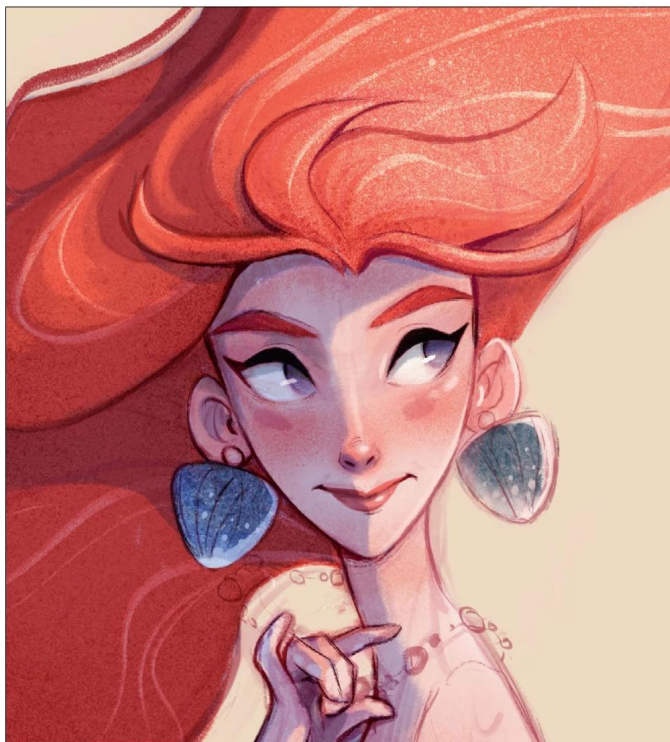This technique involves drawing different areas on their own layers. I do this with the figure's accessories, hair, body and her general silhouette. The benefit is that you don't draw over the artwork while working on a particular layer. I use Procreate's default Chalk 1 brush for colouring because it adds an interesting, painterly texture.

Jumping around the image

I've never been a line-art artist because I could never stick to the structured process. Painting always felt more natural to me because it gives me the freedom to jump between steps. In this case I start defining the face and hair to see where this could lead me to. The individual strands of hair match the sketch perfectly.
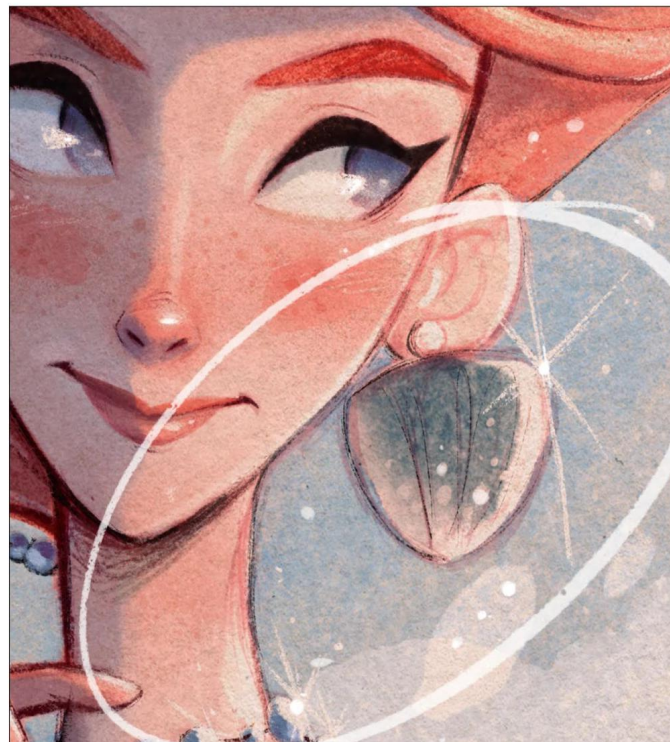
Taking stock of my progress

I've added a lot since the initial sketch and so I step back to see how the image has developed and if anything's lacking. The light's coming from the right-hand side so I add reflections on the jewels and some bright particles floating in the water. I also feel that painting freckles on the figure would make her look more appealing.

Keep the setting simple

Rather than a distracting background and a foreground filled with objects, I want the mermaid to stand out in the piece. However, I don't want her in a plain environment. With the right brushes, textures and suitable colours you can still create interesting surroundings that will place the viewer's focus firmly on the subject of the artwork.

Let's add some texture

I want to retain my sketchy lines because they add extra movement and give an insight into my creative process. I use a soft noise brush with a darker colour than the one I'm drawing with to add this texture over my lines, which helps to integrate them into the artwork.

Fixing the mood

My chosen background has created a mood that's a bit too cold for my liking. My solution is to put a Darken layer on top at 20 per cent Opacity, and fill it with a peachy colour. To push the hand-drawn style further I scan a sheet of watercolour paper which has a rough texture and put it on top on a Multiply layer.

Shadow strategy

A common error is to paint black shadows. There's always a slightly blue or violet tone to them. When you've decided on the direction of the light that's hitting a character, put a Multiply layer over your character, select the character's silhouette and start painting the areas where shadows appears. Here the light is coming from where the mermaid is looking. It conveys a positive mood, which wouldn't occur if the character were staring into the shadows.

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PROCREATE

CUSTOM BRUSH: MAXU SABLE INKER HARD

CHALK 1

DRY INK

ILYA TULJAKOV RAZUM_INC_PRO_II

These are the four brushes I use to create the sketch on which my artwork is based. By adjusting the Opacity and working on Multiply layers, my lines stand out on the canvas, ready for the painting stage.

Connect with the surroundings

So I've decided on the direction that the light and shadows are coming from. But I also need to show the shadows and light already present in the scene. I create a Multiply layer with the colour of the shadow and a layer on Add mode for creating light over the character. Then I paint the shadows and light with a low Opacity using a soft brush in the relevant areas.

Experiment with light

Light is never just white. The easiest way to choose a colour for your light is to take the dominant colour in your art and work with a lighter version of it. Try experimenting with contrasting colours, too. The results might surprise you – in a good way!

Artist Karl Kopinski shares his unique drawing skills with you!

Next month in...

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

ImagineFX

Get better at drawing

Refresh your fundamental art skills with our guides to sketching, colour and more!

All this… and more!

Iris Compiet interview
The traditional fantasy artist on storytelling, folklore and more.

Colour study workshop
Donglu Yu shares her creative process for harmonising colour and hue.

Get hired by an art director
We ask the best ADs in the business what they want from you.

Sketchbook greatness
Devour the gloriously detailed scribbles from Fred Rambaud.

ISSUE 192 ON SALE IN THE UK *4 September 2020*

Photoshop, 3ds Max & Unreal Engine 4
PAINTING OVER A 3D ENVIRONMENT

Anya Jo Elvidge draws on her experience as a video game artist to model a 3D environment before bringing it to life using Photoshop

ImagineFX
VIDEO WORKSHOP

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 8 now!

Workshops

Artist PROFILE

Anya Jo Elvidge

LOCATION: England

Anya works as a 2D and 3D environment artist at video game developer Rare Ltd. She loves creating colourful and inviting environments.
www.anyatheartist.com

The aim of this workshop is to create a beautiful place from your imagination that perhaps you'd like to spend time in. Maybe a cosy room, a secret temple or a relaxing café!

I like to work over a 3D base that I've modelled in 3ds Max and lit in Unreal Engine 4 (UE4). This isn't essential, but because the aim of my process is getting to the fun decision-making bits as quickly as I can, it might be helpful to understand some basic 3D modelling. And if you ever wish to model your concepts, having a base already modelled saves you time because the basic forms are already there for you to work from.

Once I've made my 3D base and lit it in a simple UE4 scene, I'll begin overpainting a screenshot where we can start having fun with colour, lighting and storytelling. I use basic Photoshop brushes, and a lot of how I make images is about choosing placement of shapes, patterns and colours carefully.

Creating beautiful environments is all about finding what you like and condensing it into an image. If you work on what you want, and not what you think others want, you'll create work that you love and are passionate about. People will love your work when you love it first!
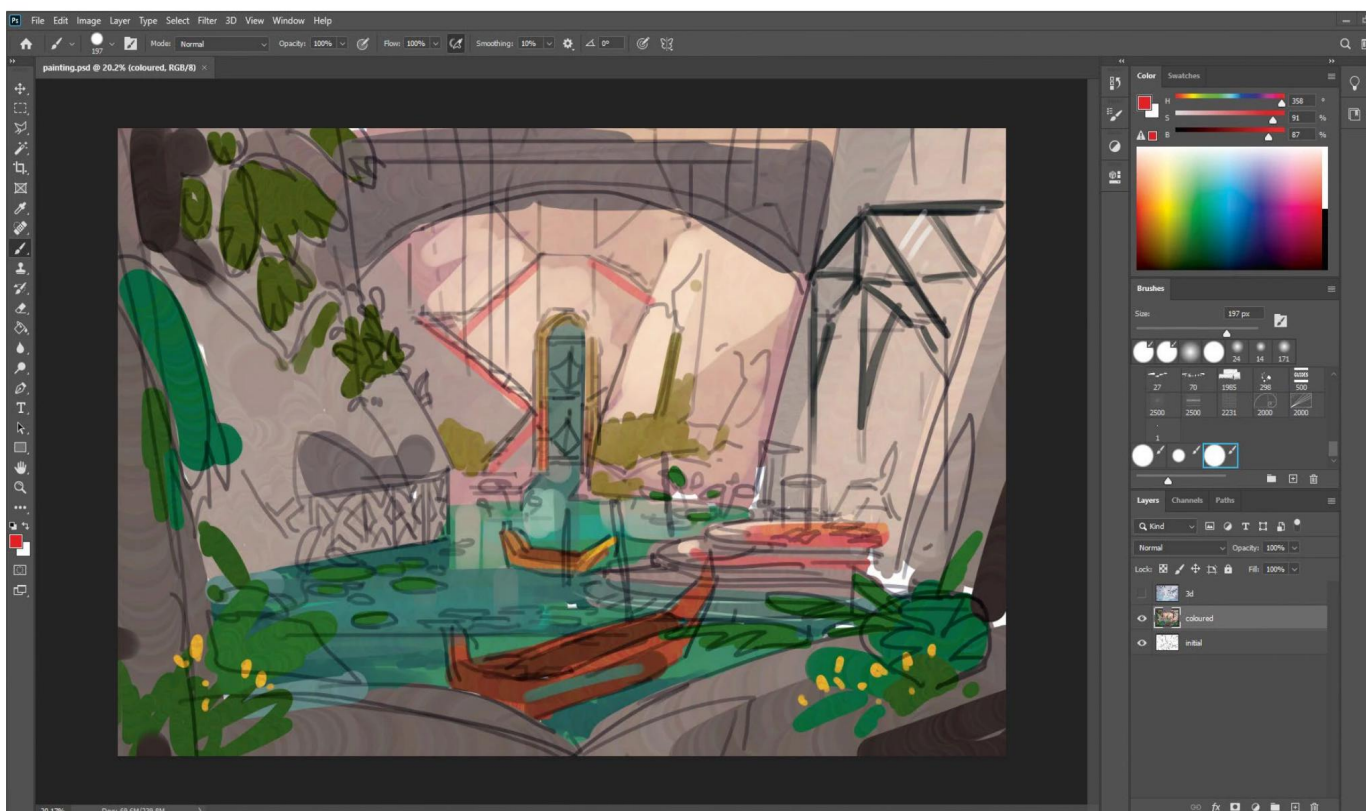

1 The initial plan

When I start a painting I always have a very rough idea of where I want it to go. I put together a quick mood board that features inspiring colours, patterns, plants… anything that's interesting to me. It could be something as simple as a pretty colour, or a wall tile design that I like! Then I start sketching. I'm not concerned about perspective yet, because the 3D modelling will do that for me. I just use a Photoshop hard Round brush to get down some colours and line.

2 Experimenting in 3D

3D is a wonderful resource that enables you to experiment quickly and efficiently. I make my basic models such as rocks, plants and boats in 3ds Max, and then set them up in an Unreal Engine 4 scene. Inside UE4 I just have a Skylight, which controls the shadow colour, and a DirectionalLight, which acts as the 'sun'. All models have a plain grey material applied except the water, which is transparent blue so I can see under the water.
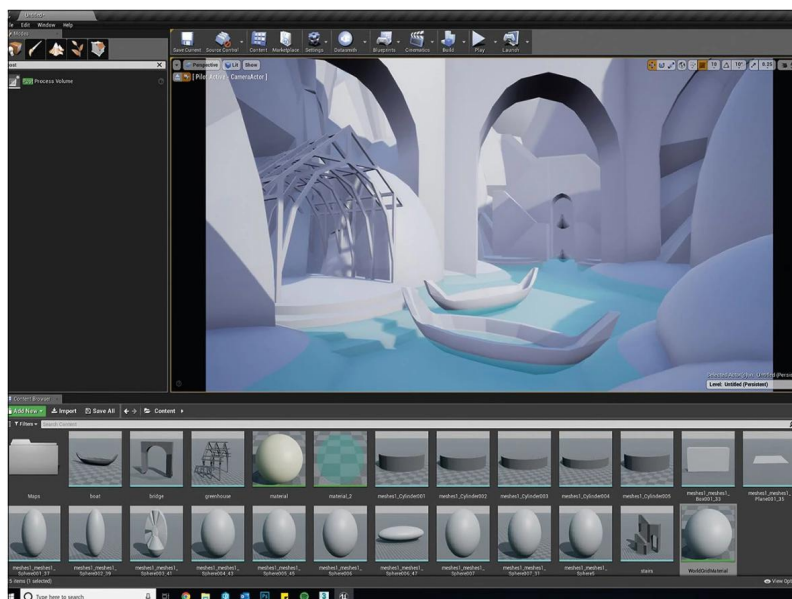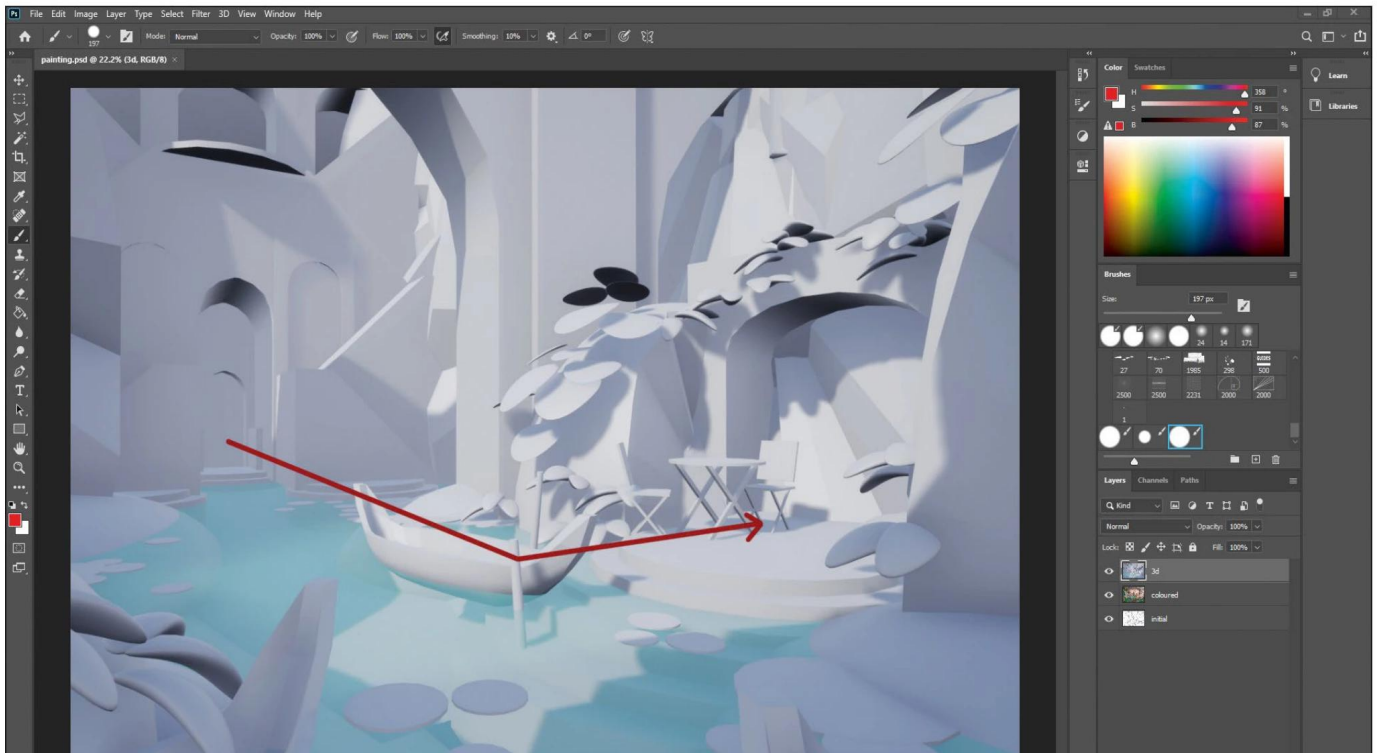
3 Considering the composition

Now I can start to experiment with composition and lighting, by moving objects around and rescaling them, and rotating my sun until I have something that I like. I've scaled a lot of objects up so the scene feels more intimate and small and have also flipped the composition. This means the viewer starts 'reading' at the left, with the archway in the distance, then naturally reads left to right, to the focal point in the sun.
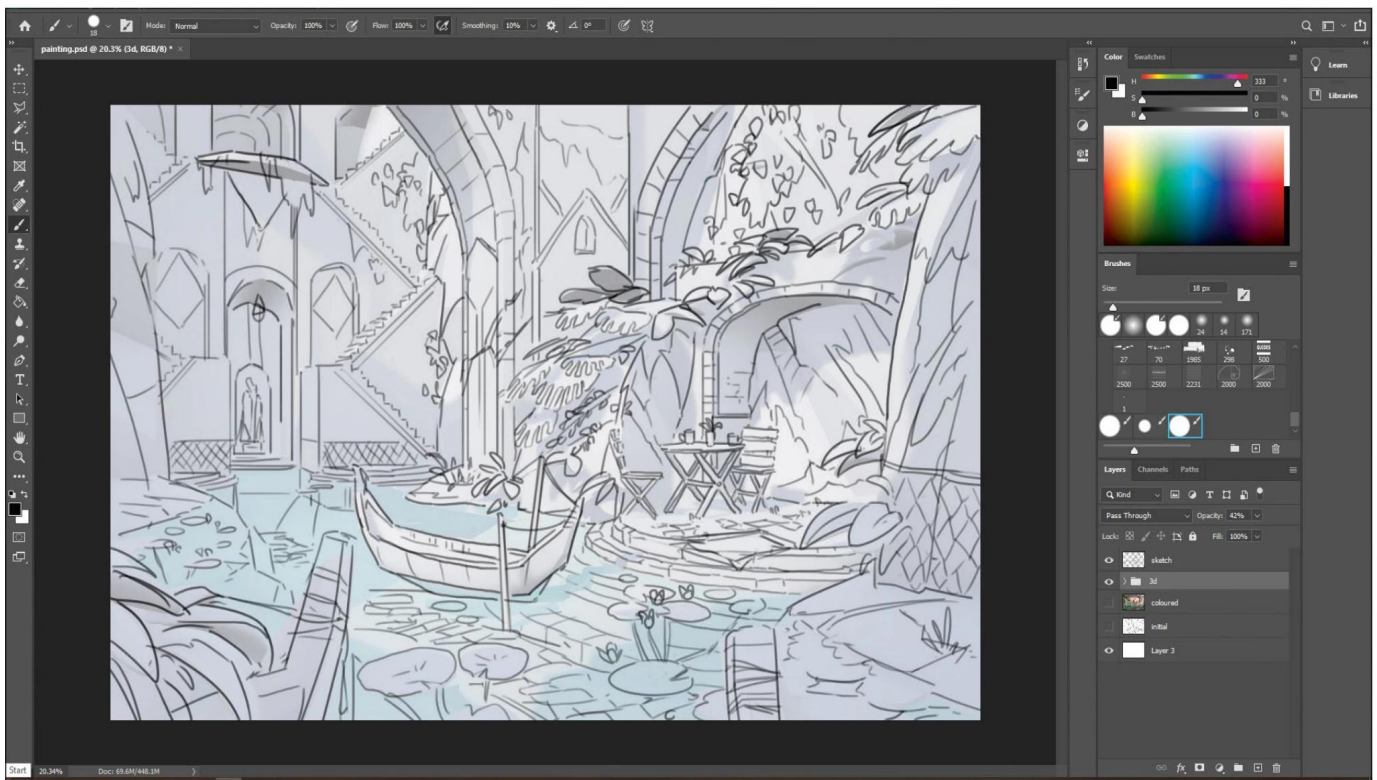
### 4 Sketching over my 3D model

My 3D environment is complete and acts as an excellent reference base for painting. However, it's very simple and doesn't give me much to work with, so back in Photoshop I start to draw in the details that I'll eventually paint. I use the same hard Round brush as for my initial sketch, and start to have some fun with sketching plants, props and details in the scene. ➤➤
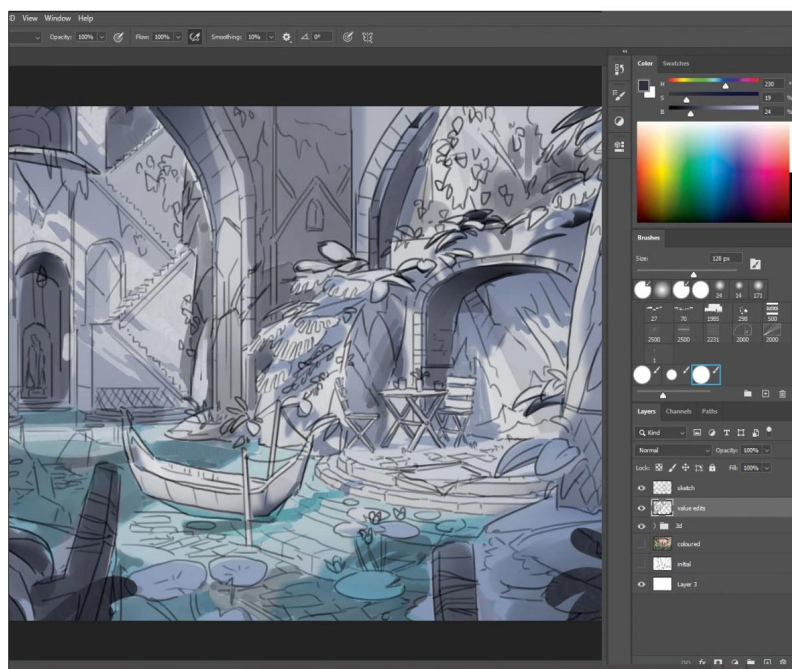
5 Making use of values

Our 3D base provides a good starting point for our values. However, there are some areas that could be improved. I'm not focused on making the image physically correct so much as bending reality to improve the lighting and enhance the image. On a new layer with a large Round brush I just colour-pick from the 3D base and paint in some edits such as new pools of light, areas of shadow and darkening of the foreground.
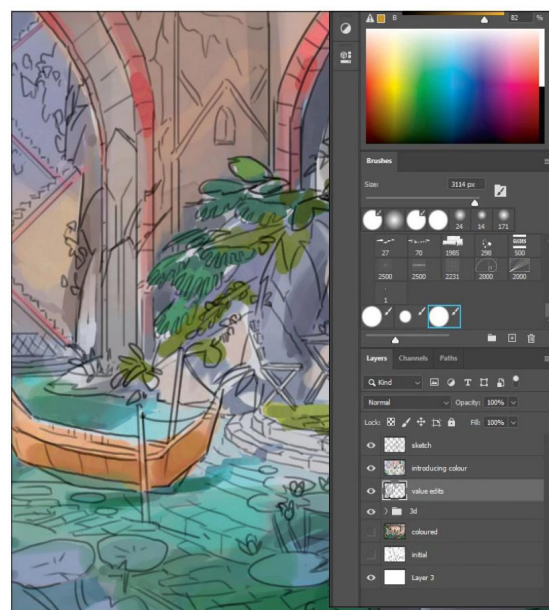
6 Introducing colour

Colour can be difficult to get right so I always make sure I have plenty of reference images for this part. I create a new layer and work over my value edits with a hard Round brush with Hue Jitter. I paint quite softly so that the values still show through underneath, and roughly block in some colours to represent different materials such as rock, water and plants. At this point the colours are simple and quite desaturated.

RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP
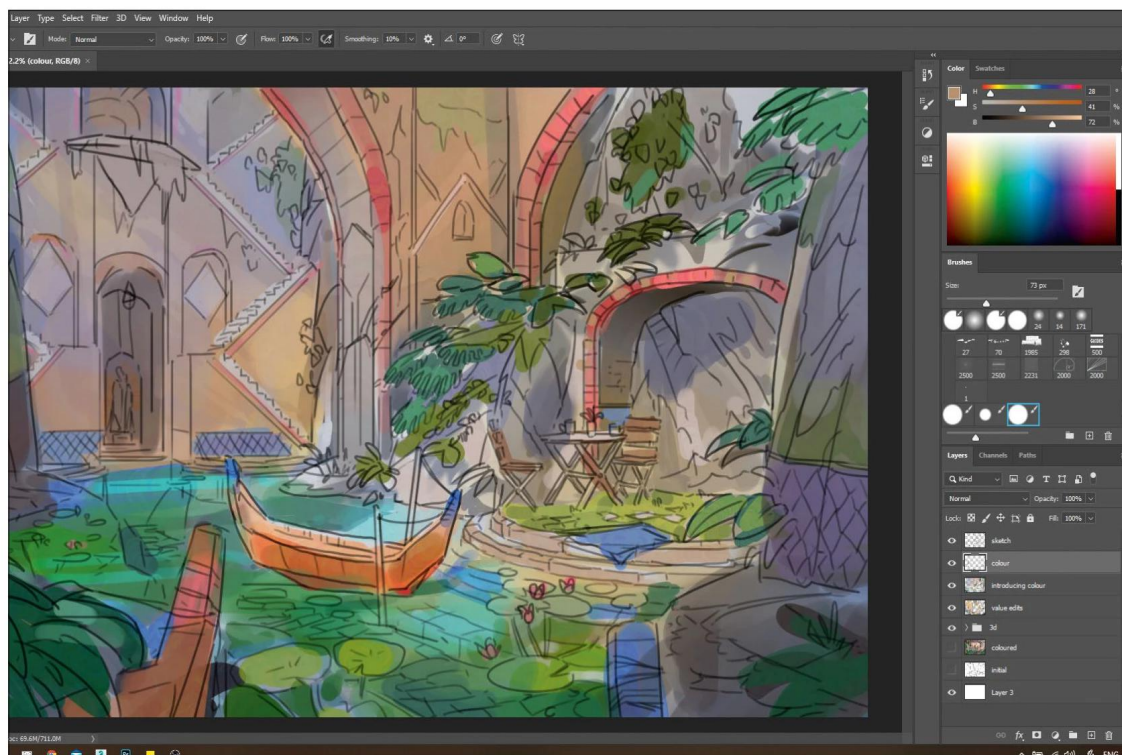
CUSTOM BRUSHES: OPAQUE HARD BRUSH

Brush for painting clean shapes, lines and edges used by holding Shift and left clicking.

TRANSPARENT HARD BRUSH

Ideal brush for painting gradients on surfaces, blending colours using the Color Picker (Alt).

TRANSPARENT ROUND BRUSH HUE JITTER

This is a good brush for the initial colour layers because it adds colour variation.

7 Layering colours and experimenting

A lot of my colour choices come from 'happy accidents' when experimenting with layers and layer modes (such as Screen, Exclusion and Lighten) rather than knowing exactly what colour I'm going to put down for every aspect of the painting. I begin adding new layers underneath the existing colour layers, and painting in blocks of colour with Hue Jitter on to see how it looks. I also add new top-level colour layers and keep roughly laying down new colours.

Multiply Layer, 28% Opacity

Vivid Light layer, 67% Opacity
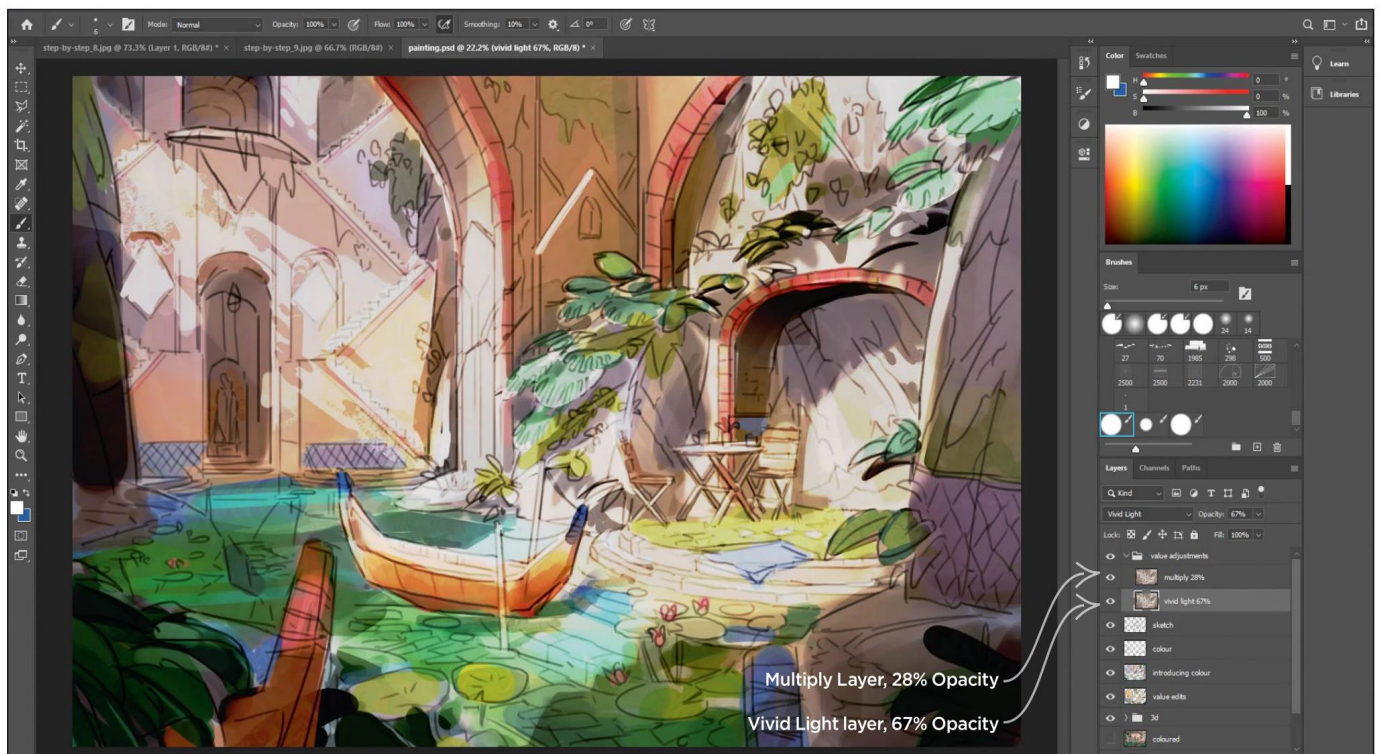
8 Reintroducing value, but with different Layer modes

Painting over with colour causes us to lose our values, so I take my 3D layer with the value edits we made earlier, duplicate it and then bring it to the top of the layer stack. Then I try the layer on different Layer modes. For mine, I choose Vivid Light. I also adjust the hue of the value layer so that it's warmer by going to Image>Adjustments>Hue/Saturation and moving the sliders.

Luminosity layer mode, 59% Opacity + Layer Masking

Lighten layer mode, 48% Opacity
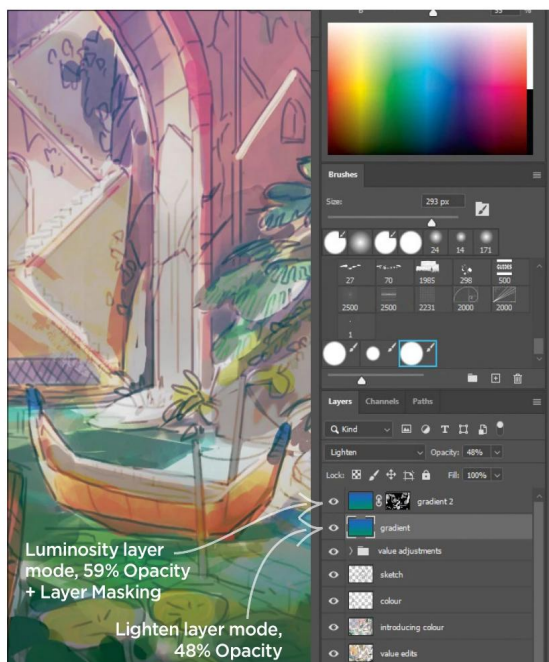
9 Unifying the colours

Now that I've fixed my values, I make a new layer and add a simple gradient with the Gradient tool. The gradient consists of two colours that are relatively similar, such as orange and yellow or green and blue. I test out lots of different Layer modes, and change the Opacity and the Hue (using the method in step eight) of the layer, until I find something that I'm happy with.

10 It's painting time!

Now I can start the actual rendering and painting process. Using the Polygonal Lasso tool, I start selecting medium and large areas to paint, such as rock faces. I use a hard Round brush again, and I often have Hue Jitter switched on for colour variation. Switching my 3D layer on and off, I fill in one area at a time with colour, carefully considering where the light and shadow is. ➤➤

A Brightness/Contrast Adjustment layer
B Foreground foliage painted
C Screen layer mode + masking
D Multiply layer mode
E Linear Light layer mode + masking
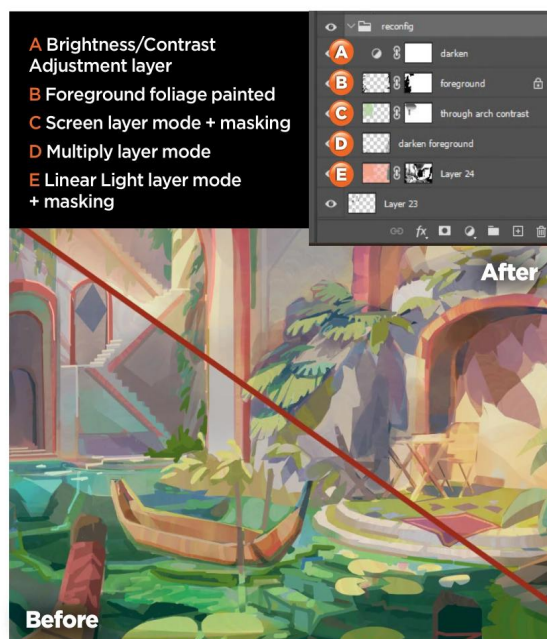
After

Before

11 Working up detail

Once I have painted colour in the larger volumes I start painting in more details. At this stage I begin working into the water, painting what's under the water but not the surface reflection yet. I tackle other areas such as foliage and variation in stone colours, such as edge trims. I also add edge highlights, which are a great way of creating the illusion of detail.

12 Reconfiguring values and colours

It can be easy to lose sight of values when painting, so I check them regularly. Here I decide to make the painting easier to read by decreasing the contrast in the background and darkening elements in the foreground. I use a mixture of Multiply, Linear Light, and Screen layers to push areas back or pull some forwards. I also use these layers to improve the colours so that they're less blueish.

Loose render with Hue Jitter
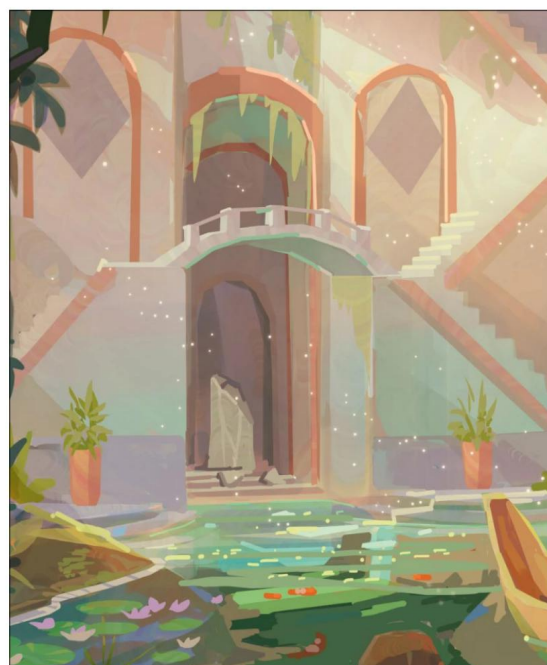
Cleanly rendered area

13 Rendering and creating clean edges

For the final render, I use a hard Round brush with no Transparency. Holding Shift, I tap with my pen to create a 'dot-to-dot' of lines, which I then hand-paint with colour. This creates clean edges. I use this method in certain areas of the painting so I have clean areas to contrast other areas where I've left messy brush work and Hue Jitter exposed. I constantly refer to my 3D render for shadows reference.

14 Making the final touches

Lastly, I add small props and details such as plant pots, fish, water highlights and light sparkles in the air. These are the highest detail level in my painting, and they give the illusion of overall detail in the rest of the scene. The light sparkles also add a sense of magic to the environment. Once I'm happy with these final small touches, I call the painting done.

Photoshop
STORYTELLING IN YOUR SCI-FI ART

Art director **Carlo Arellano** breaks down his design process as he illustrates a science fiction environment with a sense of adventure

Artist PROFILE

Carlo Arellano
LOCATION: US

Carlo is an art director and concept artist with over 20 years of experience in the game and film industries.
https://ifxm.ag/carlo-a

This concept is part of a personal project that combines the pioneering spirit of the American West with an alien planet of rugged beauty.

The brief for myself was a small Western-style military outpost with the clean and idealistic design of late-60s science fiction. Storytelling is incredibly important, and with every design I approach it with an acronym: F.A.C.T.S.

I start with F, where form follows function. The ship is able to re-enter atmosphere like a shuttle and land like a helicopter, so a flattened airfoil shape with some large VTOL engine nacelles are in order. Next, A for archetype: those recurring themes in storytelling that have the ability to communicate recognisable ideas, like a wizard or cowboy. In this case, the archetype is the outpost.

C is for characterisation, or the unique qualities that make a design a specific thing rather than just a trope. In this case it would be the idealised concept of NASA architecture over the archetype of the outpost. T is for tools, or the necessary props or attributes required for the work to function in the game design or narrative. This might be a sword for a character, but here it's things like the communication dish on top of the settlement. Finally, S stands for silhouette: the shapes that convey all of the previous qualities. ➤➤

STRENGTHEN YOUR COMPOSITION

Ground your elements
I add colours from the sky on the topside of the ship and reflected light from the ground on the underside. This will ground the object into the scene.

Engage the viewer
Storytelling is important. This goes beyond just creating a mood – the viewer needs to be inspired so they can engage in your work. The romantic notion of "homecoming" is supported by the lovely sunlit day as much as the clean-looking home and spaceship.

Create visual effects
Using Screen mode on a layer is a great way to add effects to your work. The values of the pixels in the two layers are inverted, multiplied and then inverted again. This yields the opposite effect to Multiply, and results in a brighter picture that's perfect for flames or spell effects.

How I create...
AN OUTPOST ON A FAR-OFF PLANET

1 Sketch out my idea
I create a rough sketch and then just eyeball the composition. Normally I might produce around five thumbnails for a client, but here I have a clear idea of my objectives and composition so I begin with a loose sketch and then study the perspective.
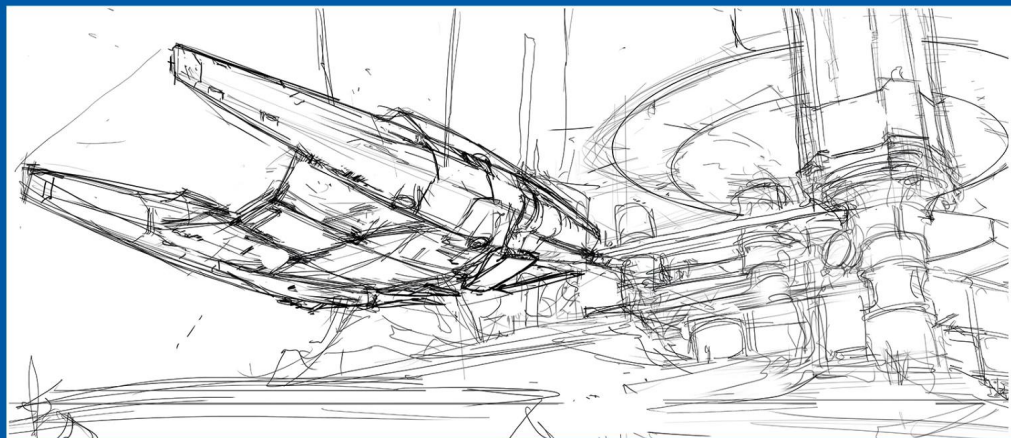
Design basics

One of the questions I ask myself on a design is, "Can a kid draw it?" Think of the way an X-wing starfighter or the Batmobile can be drawn by a kid. This ensures that the design is memorable and that your archetype communicates well. That's why the ship is a flying saucer with outrigger engines.

The importance of creating mini-stories

Composition occurs internally and in the corners of the painting – not just in the overall work. Relationships of colour and form in the smaller areas create mini-stories that support the greater narrative.

Utilise shadows

Many young artists overlook using cast shadows to help describe forms, but you can use shadows as graphic elements to frame important details.
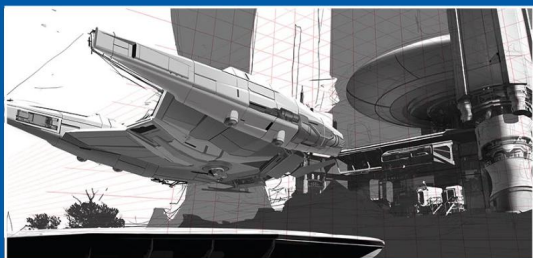
2 **Shadows dictate form**
I draw a three-point perspective grid and block in with four tonal greyscale values. I correct my perspective and study the edges of a surface when I lay in my core shadows. I check if the shadows should be hard to denote a sharp turn, or soft to denote a rounder form.

3 **Add drama through colour**
Using overlay, colour and tinting techniques, I colourise the image and add the hottest highlights, and edit some of the forms to create more drama or improve the composition. I then use gradients and fog to separate the background from the foreground.
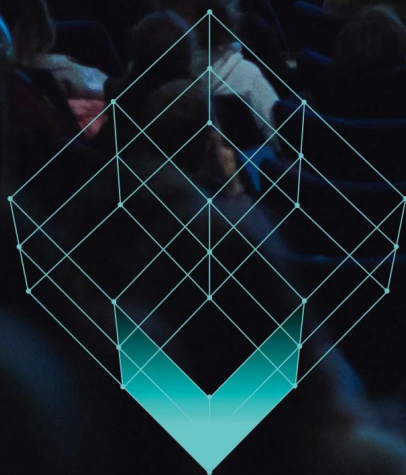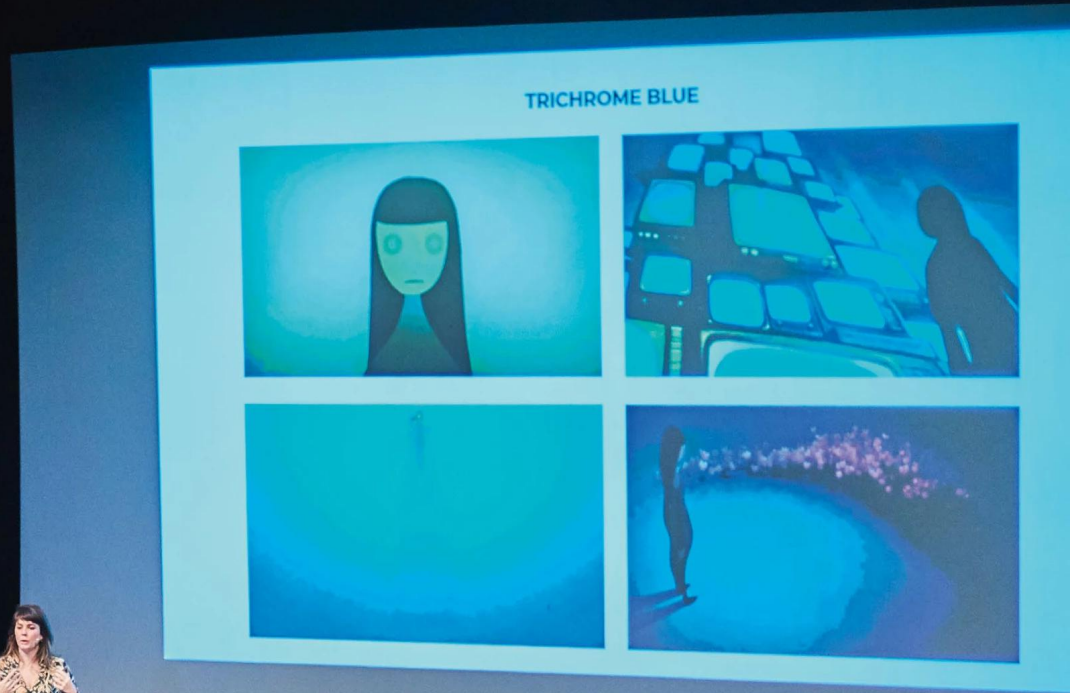
WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

DEFAULT BRUSH: ROUND BRUSH

I only use Photoshop's default brushes, mostly taking the Round brush and flattening the brush shape to create planes.

Photos from Vertex 2020. The event featured Loish, Karla Ortiz, Izzy Burton, Goro Fujita and so many more! We'll announce speakers for 2021 very soon.

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ZBrush, Keyshot, Photoshop & Painter
CREATE SURREAL PORTRAIT ART

Ken Coleman explains his "rinse wash repeat" approach to surreal portraiture using 3D models, textures and brushes

VIDEO WORKSHOP

Artist
PROFILE

Ken Coleman
LOCATION: Ireland

Ken lectures in game art and design at Clonmel Digital Campus in Ireland as well as designing for clients such as Catalyst Games, The Cranberries and Morbid Angel.
https://ifxm.ag/ken-c

In this workshop I'll show you how I create my artwork using my own photos, 3D models and custom brushes. The workshop uses ZBrush and Keyshot for creating 3D models and rendering. Most of the image's shape and composition is built in Photoshop with blends of images, textures and brush strokes.

This process starts with simple shapes that are repeated, flipped and rotated to build out the artwork and find more abstract shapes to fill in the composition. I start in ZBrush, making basic spiral shapes that resemble organic elements such as horns and branches. I then render these in Keyshot with three layers to create light, depth and shadow.

These iterations are then saved as Photoshop files with a transparent background, so they can be dragged into the main composition to build up the overall silhouette.

Once I'm happy with the overall shape of the composition, I'll bring it into Painter and use blender brushes such as Fractured blender and Stencil oily blender to break it up into an abstract painting on multiple layers. Once I'm happy with the overall textures and abstract shapes here, I move the image back and forth between Painter and Photoshop using masks and adjustment layers to finalise the shapes, tones and details, bringing the artwork to completion.

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 8 now!

1 Finding inspiration at home
My son Luke has become one of the main inspirations of my personal work, and I often shoot images of him early in the morning when bed hair and morning light make a great combination. The main elements I use to start one of my personal works are a strong subject, stock photos of props, abstract 3D elements, and images of textures and particles that I create myself. ➤➤
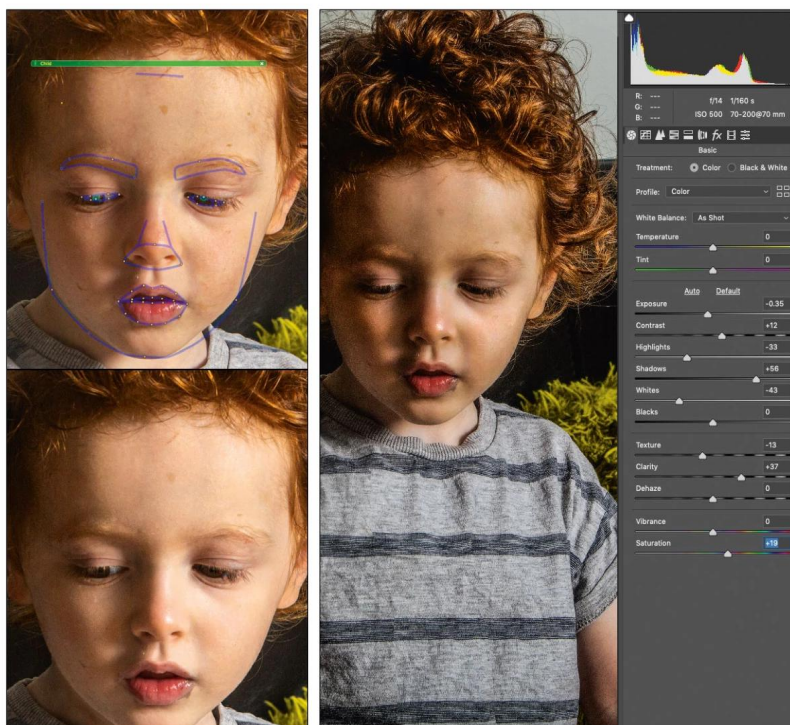
## 2 Prepping the image

I chose an image and use the PortraitPro plug-in (**https://ifxm.ag/p-pro**) to save time on skin editing. My grading process that I use on all my images is to duplicate the layer, then Image>Desaturate on this top layer, followed by Sharpen>Unsharp Mask at 150 per cent at 1.5 pixels. I set this layer to Soft Light to give more depth and shadows to my image. I merge these two layers, then using the Camera Raw filter I increase Clarity and Shadows and reduce Highlights and White.
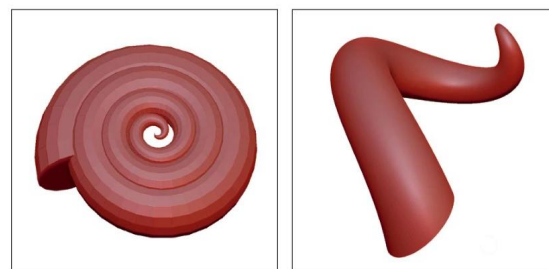
3 Create some abstract 3D

I open ZBrush and select the basic spiral shape. I press T for Transform to turn it into a 3D model and using the Initialise menu, manipulate the shape to resemble something organic. When I'm happy with the form I make it a Polymesh 3D shape. I then sculpt on this form using the Snake Hook brush with Sculptris enabled and a combination of the Fracture brush and Creature tools to create abstract organic shapes.
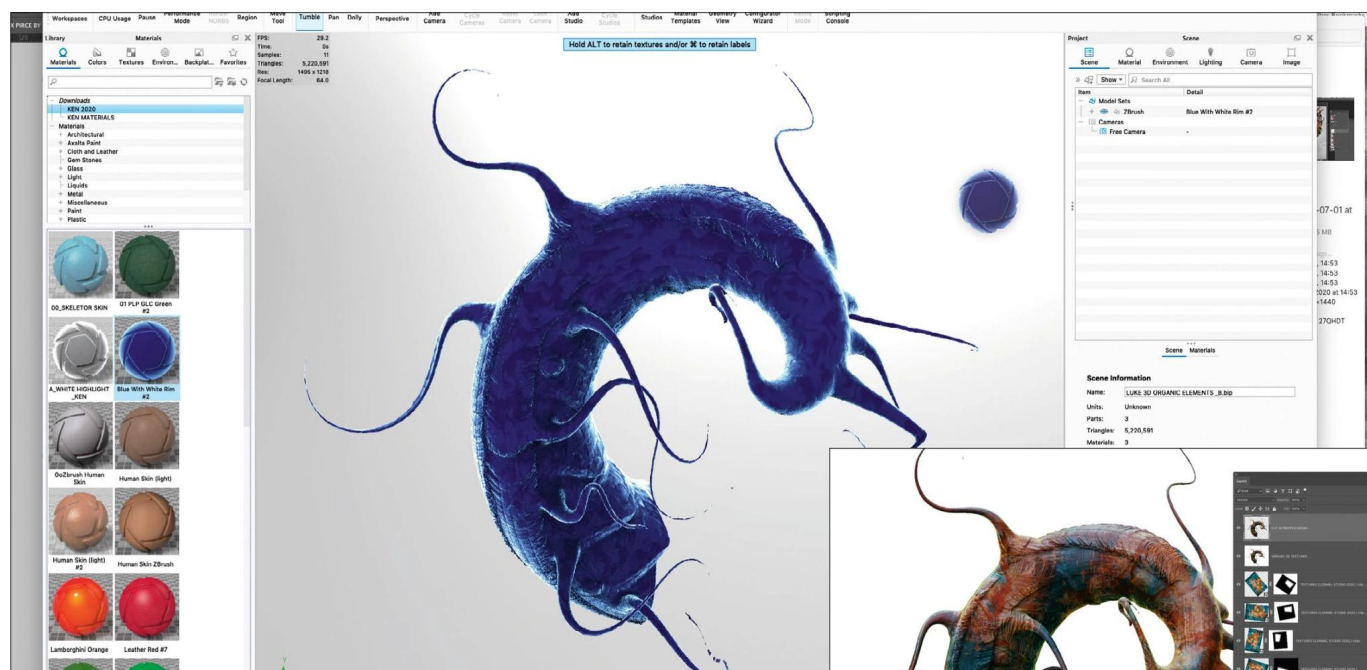

4 Rendering the model in Keyshot

The next step is to bring this model into Keyshot. This is done by selecting ZBrush Render Menu>Keyshot, then pressing the BPR button. This opens the model in Keyshot, which I render in these materials: Red Clay, Blue White Rim and GoZBrush Human Skin. These three materials are then rendered out as PSD files and combined into one PSD file in Photoshop.

NECKLACE 1.psd
2,508 × 3,555

COLOMBIAN NECKLACE.psd
2,152 × 2,026

5 Texturing using blend modes

I combine all three materials using Soft Light mode with Red Clay as the base layer. They're then Merged onto one layer. I select Image>Adjustment>Curves & Image>Autocolour to achieve the right tones. I also bring up the detail and brightness on a duplicated layer with Filter>Camera Raw Filter. The 3D parts can be either textured in the composition or by flattening the 3D model and then adding textures, again with a Soft Light blend mode. By adding a white background and flattening the image, the 3D render can be cut out with the Magic Wand, so that the render and textures are ready for the composition.
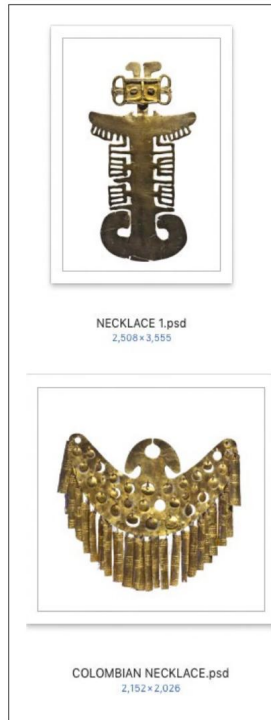
6 Taking inspiration from family heritage

I use the Lasso tool with the Magic Wand to cut out the head and place it on the project's canvas. I then start building the overall shape using the abstract 3D models combined with my own textures and photos. In this case I've opted to use my photos of Colombian artefacts, because Luke is half-Colombian and half-Irish. I use texture brushes and Filter>Blur>Surface Blur to paint the skin. I also use the AKVIS OilPaint plug-in (see **www.akvis.com**) to help guide my brushstrokes.
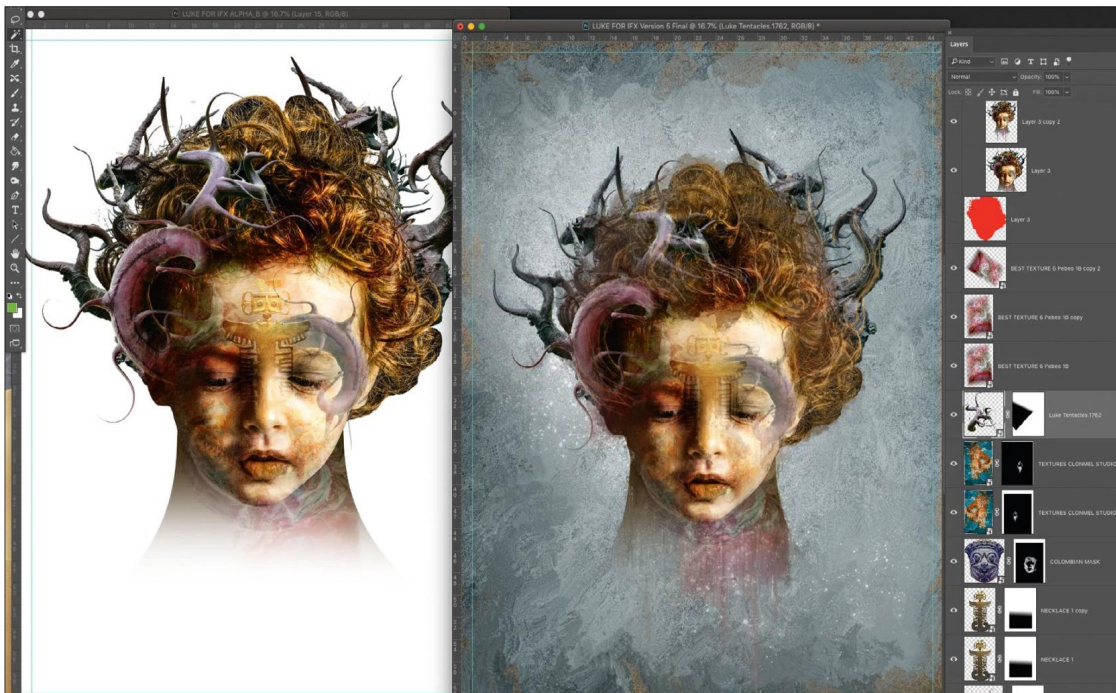
7 Building the composition

Once I'm happy with the overall layout and combination of layers, blended textures and brush strokes I press File>Duplicate to make a copy of the project. I go through multiple iterations and often take parts from different versions to build the final composite. I merge the layers to create the portrait, but merge the background separately. This enables me to make an Alpha or Stencil of the subject to copy and paste back into other versions. ➤➤

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

COREL PAINTER

DEFAULT BRUSHES: SPRING CONCEPT CREATURE

For fine lining and highlighting, set it to around five pixels.

FRACTURED BLENDER

I'll often use this brush to blend, paint and break up the image.

STENCIL OILY BLENDER

On a flattened layer I'll paint over the image to find interesting elements.

8 Paint over the prepped image

To prep my image for Corel Painter. I duplicate the subject layer twice and do the same for the background layers. I then save this file out with the same project name but with 'PAINTER' at the end of the file name so I know which version to open in Painter for blending.
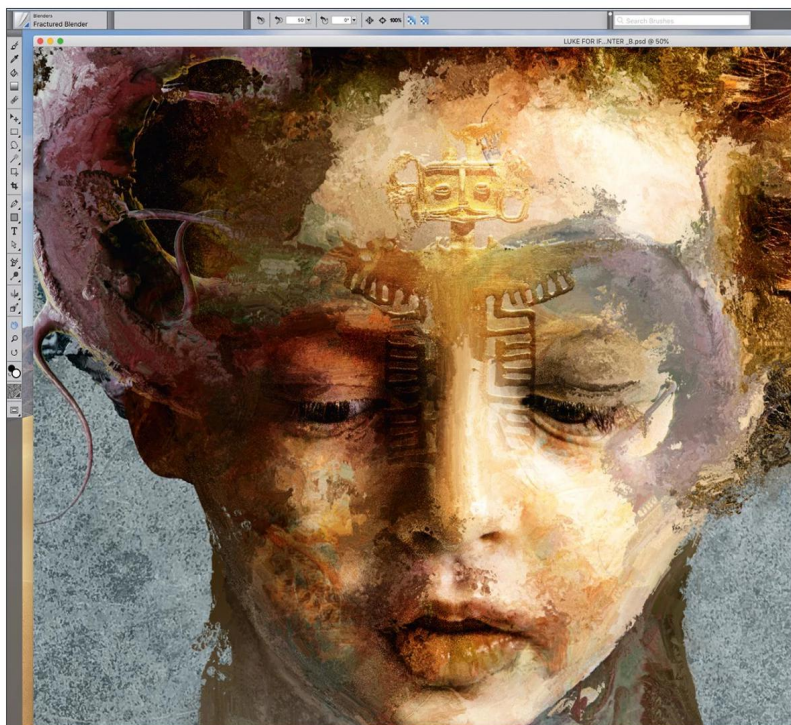

9 Breaking up the image

I use a combination of only three default Corel Painter brushes to start to break up my image, so that it resembles an abstract painting created with palette knives. These are found in the Brush palette. In the Blender Brushes menu I use Fractured Blender and Stencil Oily Blender, and lay down some line-work with the Spring Concept Creature brush that's found in the Particle brushes folder. Satisfied with my abstract layers, I go back to Photoshop to refine these elements.
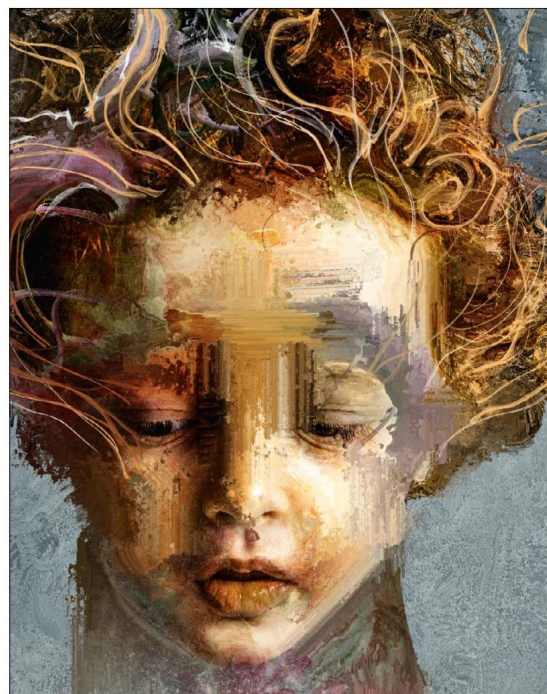
10 Rinse wash repeat

This old saying sums up my process. I can end up with three to six iterations of the same image. I often keep one as the master image and then using the Lasso tool and Quick Mask in Photoshop, cut parts from each and combine them in a master image. I also bring in more textures and 3D objects to overlay and blend into the image. I also reduce the subject's size by 30 per cent.
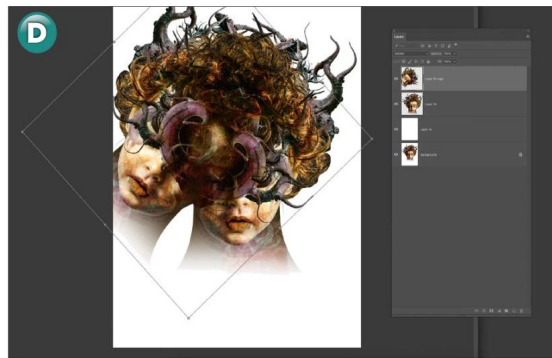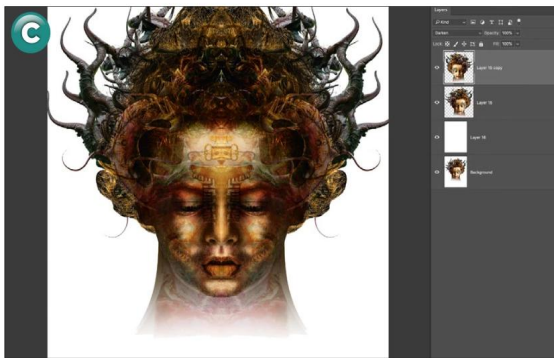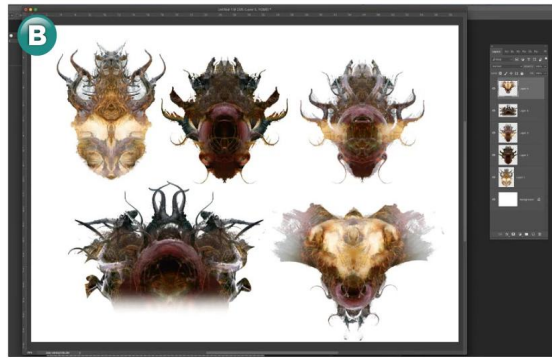
A

B

C

D

11 Using symmetry and abstraction when at a standstill

I make a copy of the image, flatten it, duplicate the layer and flip it on itself. Using Blend modes such as Lighten and Darken (A) I move the top layer over the bottom to find abstract shapes (B). I merge and copy these to new layers and cut out the interesting parts (C). These are laid out and dropped back onto the master copy to see what works (D).
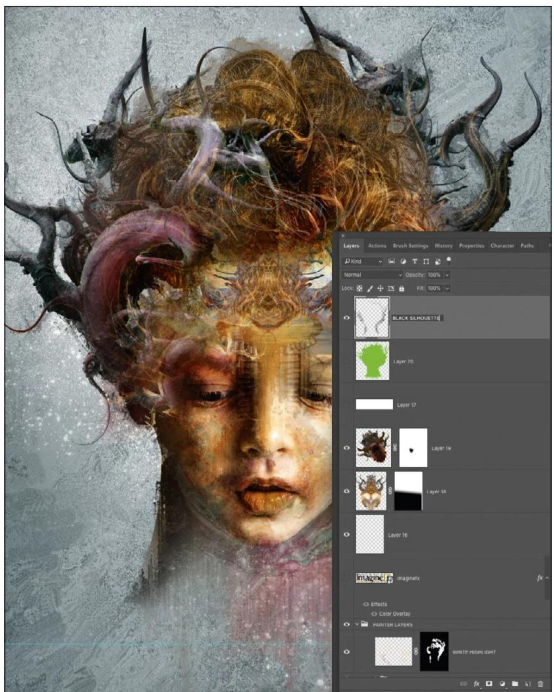

12 Colour adjustments

I save a copy as a new version, before merging all the layers of the subject and the background separately and creating a new Alpha/Stencil. Using this Stencil on a new layer set to Soft Light I paint in some dark edges to give the silhouette a stronger edge. This adds a new layer of depth to the overall composition. Then on a new layer I draw more fine lines on the subject.

13 Adding the final photo elements

I step away from the image for a day and come back with fresh eyes. I decide to reduce the size of the neck. I then add a rim glow under the neck on a new layer using the Lasso tool and apply an orange gradient set to Pin Light blend mode. I bring back the photographic elements to strengthen the detail and cultural aspect. As the piece nears its finish I decide to create one more copy. I cut up the image again using the original Stencil layers from another file. I reduce the size of the neck, enlarge the head slightly and add Grá, which is Irish for Love written in Ogham. This balances out the cultural symbols and the painting is complete.
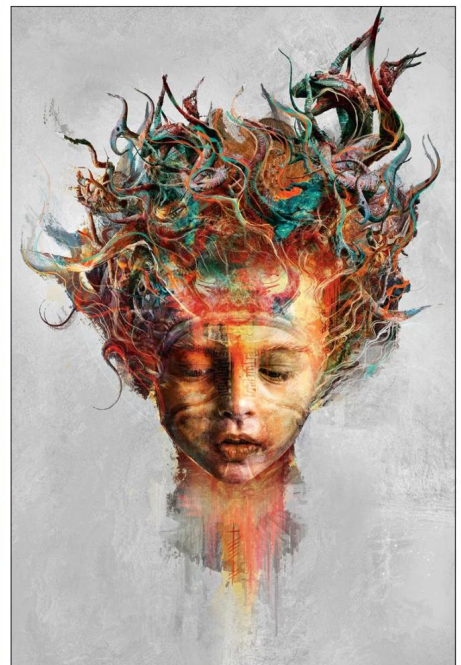
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ImagineFX
Traditional Artist
Inspiration and advice from the best pro artists

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This issue:

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SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL ARTISTS

Allison Reimold

LOCATION: US **MEDIA:** Oil paint, graphite **WEB:** www.instagram.com/allisonreimold/

Art history, religious symbols and the natural world are all influences for Allison. "Vibrant colours and unexpected shapes are also a must in all of my work."

1 NIGHTSWIMMING
"The white lily is a symbol of innocence and purity, mimicked in the young woman's white hair and the vibrant moon above her."

2 LUNA
"An interpretation of the moon and the creatures that thrive in its glow. I love the palette, and the little meteors were especially fun to paint!"

3 MALIBU
"This piece is my homage to the conflicting perspectives of Malibu. It shows an idyllic summer playground turning into an inferno."

4 POPPY
"This piece puts me in mind of springtime and the butterfly migrations that are common in southern California."
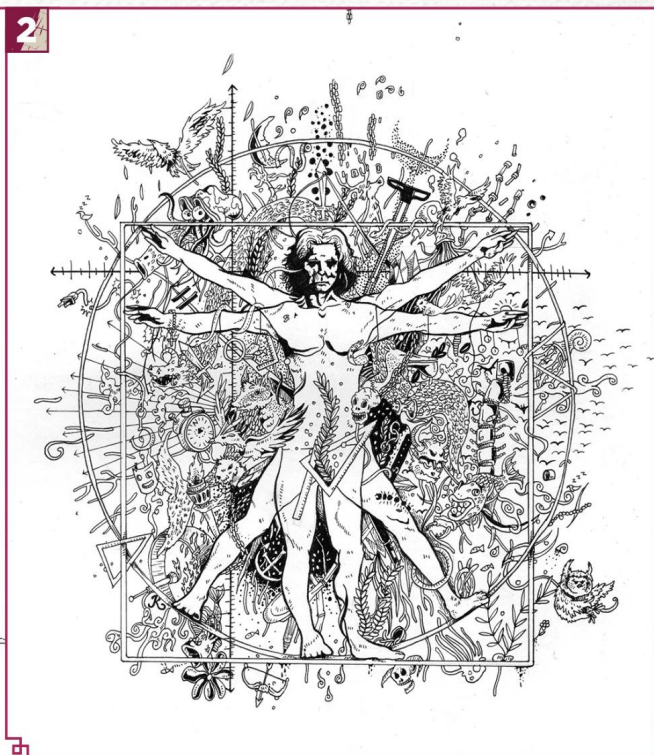
Kenjay L. Reyes

LOCATION: Philippines **MEDIA:** Mechanical pens, graphite pencils **WEB:** www.behance.net/kenjreyes

Kenjay is an architectural student who loves to dabble in illustration, specifically in doodle art design. His artwork has been exhibited globally and his style is inspired by nature, fantasies and animation.

1 PURGATORIO
"A take on Dante Alighieri's Divine Comedy that shows a mind visualised. Purgatorio seeks an abstract representation of Paradise."

2 ANTHROPOMETRICS
"This takes a modern perspective of seeing the Vitruvian Man as a model of art. The intricate doodling technique creates a contemporary art style."

3 HALLOWEEN DREAMS
"A look at what one can see during dreams. The mystical and the whimsical take on a whole new point of view."

4 LIFE AND DEATH
"A study of how we move on from our painful pasts. Positivity helps one overcome the wounds of yesterday and grow."

5 REFORESTATION
"Reforestation seeks to imply a message from nature. Tears are shed from those who need attention the most."

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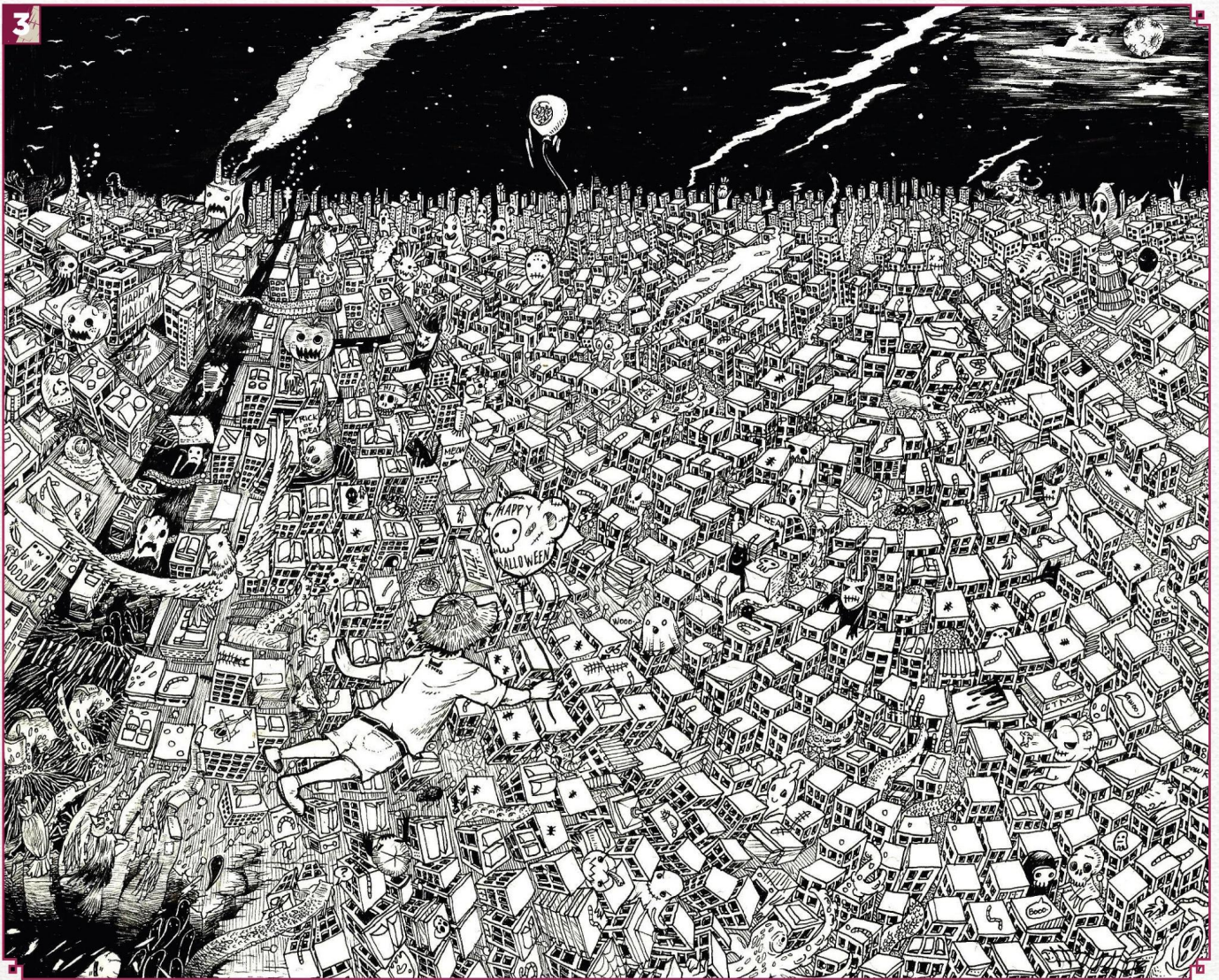
Oils

PAINT LIKE A 19TH CENTURY OLD MASTER

HOWARD LYON looks to artists such as Lawrence Alma-Tadema and reveals how he creates a painting after their ideals

The 19th century was a wonderful time for art. Artists were held in high regard and the public was educated about art. There was a high level of skilled technique on display thanks to the rigorous academic training available.

Artists like Lawrence Alma-Tadema, Frederic Leighton and William-Adolphe Bouguereau created works of great beauty and drew upon inspirations found in contemporary life, but especially antiquity. They all followed a similar process, and a great amount of planning and effort was expended before brush ever met canvas.

We can learn a lot from these Masters and not hurry through the process of creating a painting. Don't rush through the thumbnail stage. This is the best and easiest place to explore your composition. When I can, I like to let my sketches sit for a day or two and then come back with fresh eyes. Once the thumbnails are completed, I spend a little more time refining a sketch to flesh out the idea.

For this project I wanted to pay homage to the artists I love. I was lucky enough to have a friend, Birgitte Smoot, that was not only willing to model but help me with the costume. My friend, Erin Bjorn, made us a costume that was historically accurate.

Paint what delights you and you'll find an audience that feels the same way about your work. Follow me through these steps as I attempt to create a painting that echoes the Masters I love, then create your own painting inspired by your favourite artists. You'll learn more about them and yourself in the process.

Howard has a deep love and appreciation for art history, and has expanded his work to create paintings inspired by his favourite Old Masters. You can explore his art at www.howardlyon.com.
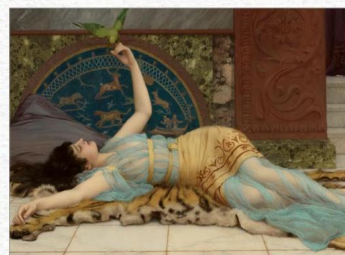
1 Find inspiration

Here are a few examples of the art I love from Leighton, Godward and Alma-Tadema. At this stage I'm looking for inspiration for this painting. There's a richness in palette and a refinement of line that I find very exciting. How can you not be inspired by such beauty? ➤➤
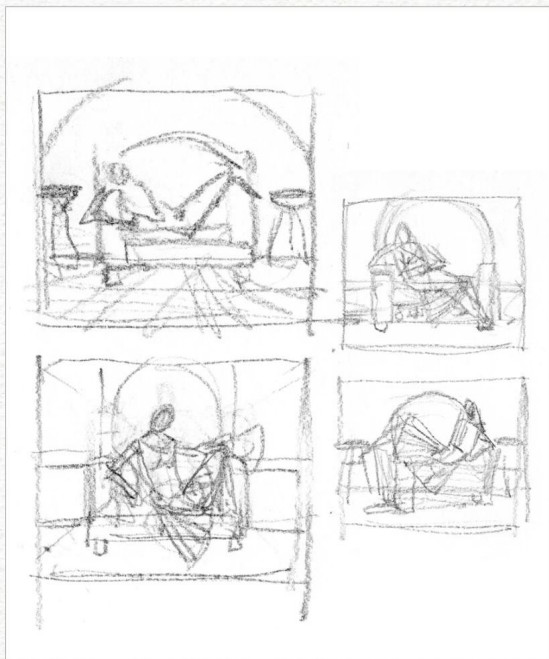
2 Test composition and implying detail with thumbnails

I create many thumbnails for this painting. Here are four of them. They aren't very pretty and are only meaningful to me. A quick line or mark can represent a piece of furniture or figure. Imagination is important at this stage and adds a thrill as one imagines the possibilities!

3 Produce a sketch to solidify ideas

I select one of the thumbnails and take it further as a sketch. I did this one in Photoshop, but sometimes I'll use charcoal or pencil. I like to mix up the materials and tools I use. The goal at this stage is to solidify the idea so that you can gather proper references and direct the model.

MATERIALS

PAINT
■ Blue Ridge oil paints on a wood panel.

SURFACE
■ Canvas on wood panel

TOOLS
■ Rosemary & Co brushes
■ New Wave Art Expressionist Confidant artist palette
■ Sakura Pigma Micron pen

4 Use photography as a tool

Unless you have the enviable means to have a model in your studio full-time, photography will most likely be an invaluable tool. Do what it takes to get the very best photo reference possible, but don't be a slave to your photographs. You're the artist, not the camera. Trust your creativity and use all the tools at your fingertips.
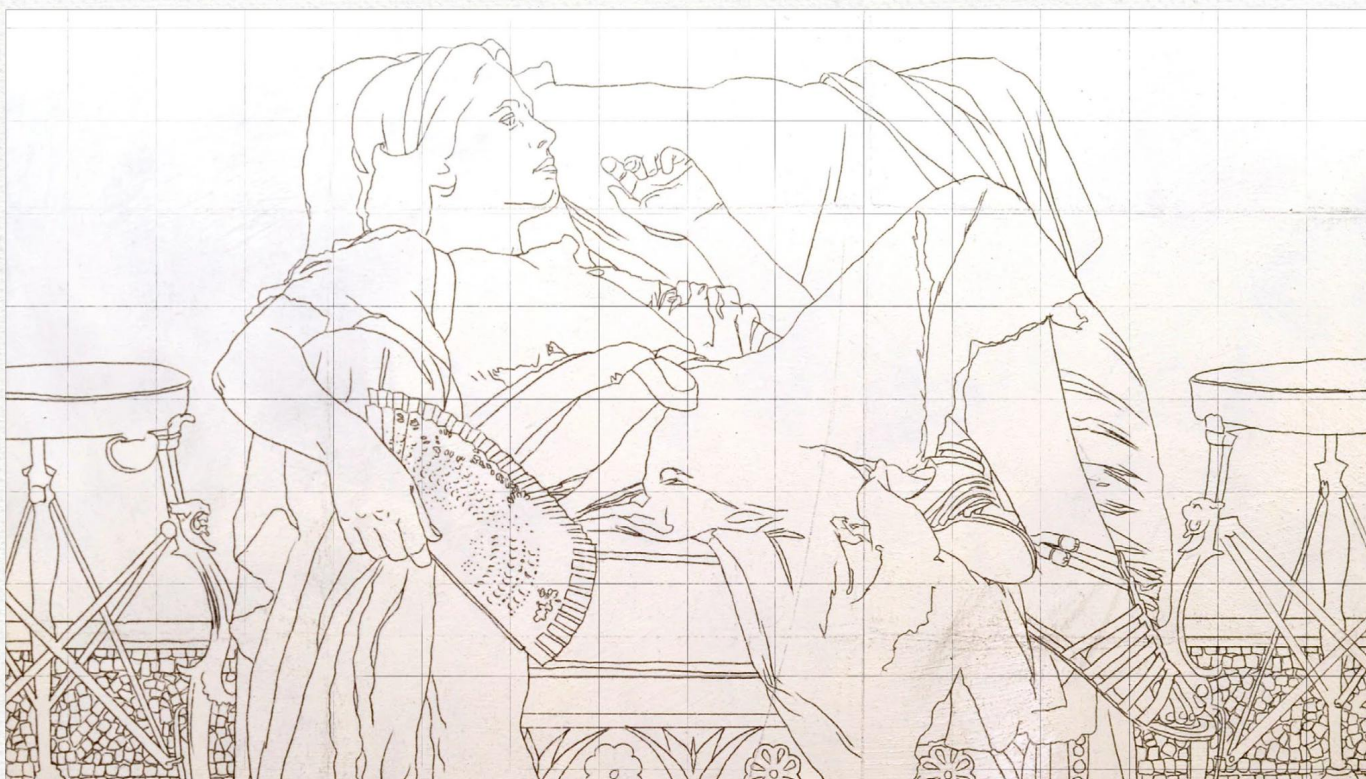
5 **Create a grid and draw out the composition**

The painting is 12x16 inches so I make a one-inch grid on the panel and draw my composition. You don't need to draw every detail, though I draw in much of the mosaic to take advantage of the dark lines in the final pass. Next, I ink the critical lines with a Pigma Micron pen.
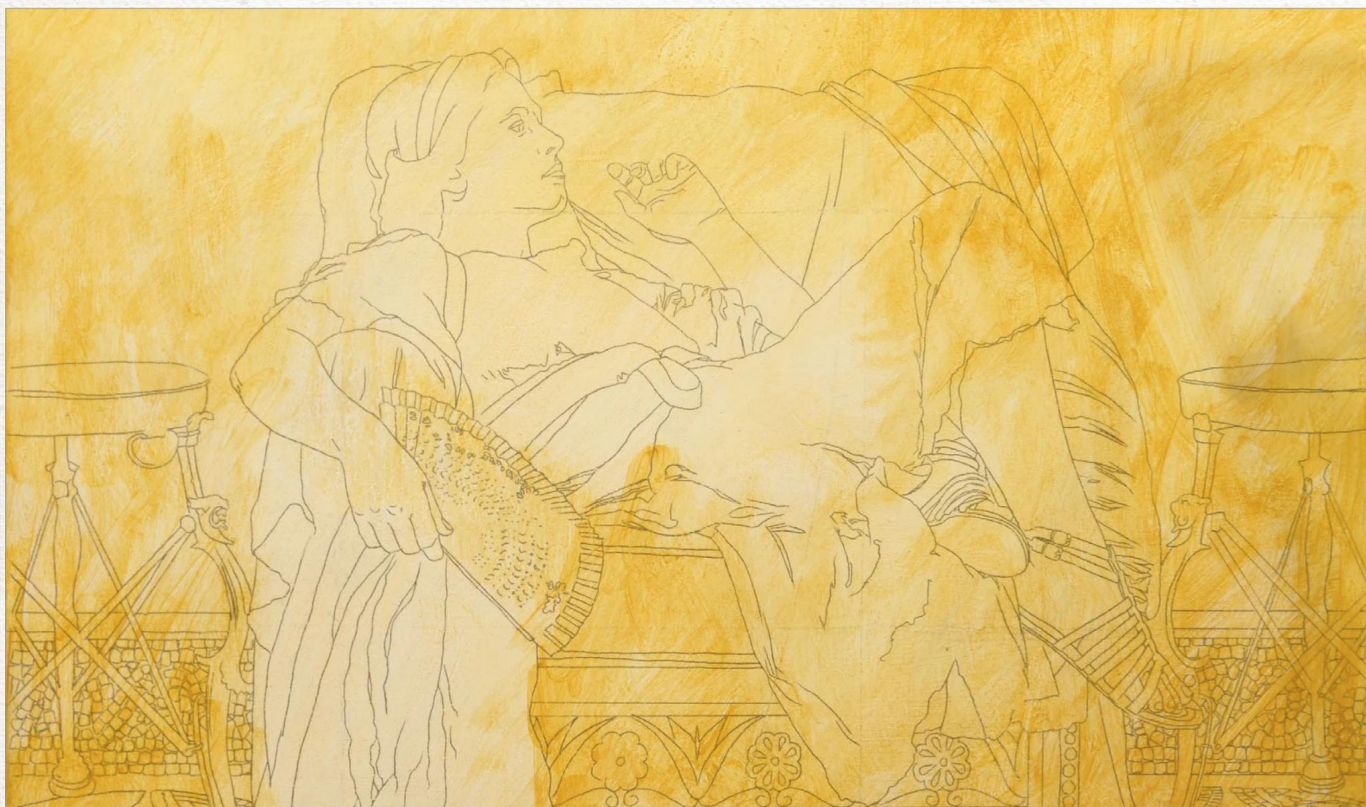

6 **Give the canvas a colour tint**

I erase the pencil grid and start the imprimatura, or tinting the canvas with colour. This makes it easier to judge the accuracy of subsequent layers of paint, and the warm colour will show through in places and help to add warmth and vibrancy in a subtle way. ➤➤
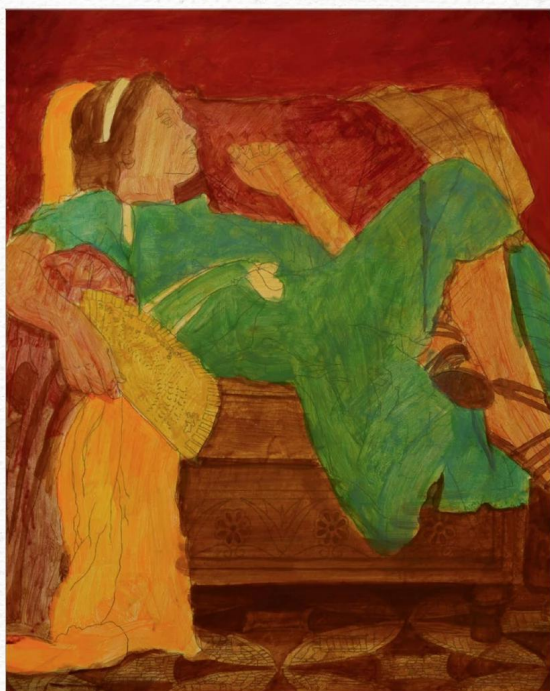
7 Apply a colour wash

I now apply a thin colour wash over the whole painting. I like to use a medium composed of five parts turpentine, one part damar varnish and one part stand oil. It makes the oil paint seem almost like watercolour and it dries quickly. It also keeps the paint semi-transparent, which enables the drawing to show through.
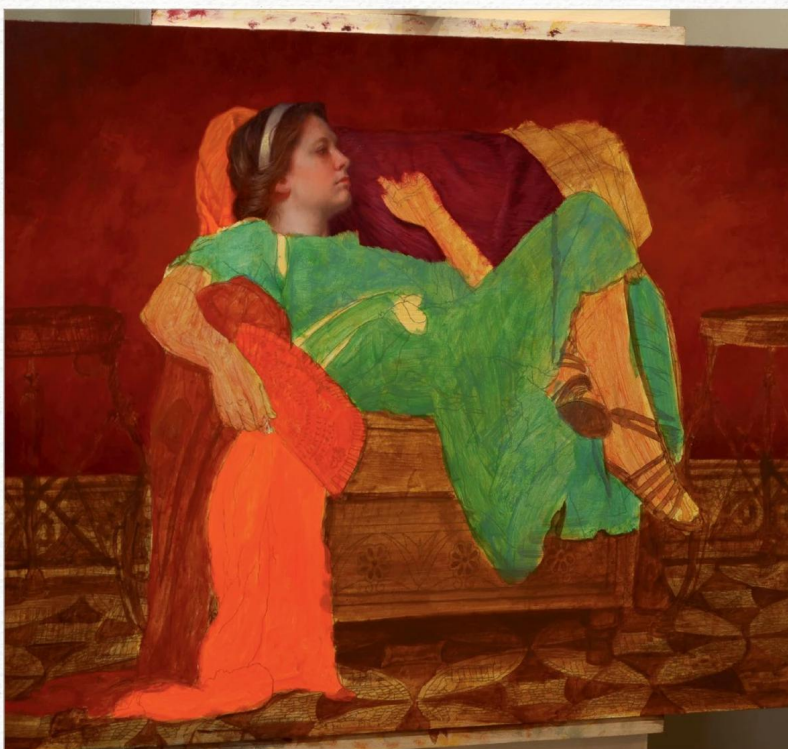
8 Use the first pass to gauge your values

The first pass of the painting is underway. I start with the head and hands, which makes it possible for me to establish the quality and value range on what is usually the most important part of a figure painting. When painting skin under cool daylight, I like to keep the shadows warm and lively.


9 Pace your efforts

When working through the first pass, it's important to remember that you'll have the chance to go over everything again once it dries. Don't fall into the trap of trying to add all the polish and finish in the first stage. It takes some experience, but you'll soon learn when you're just pushing paint around and when you're actually making progress with your artwork.

## 10 First pass complete

The first pass is now complete. Notice that areas are still flat and washy, but the values and colours are well established. The fun part really begins where each stroke seems to make a big impact and you can choose what parts you want to focus on. I'm about 80 per cent of the way towards the finish at this point.
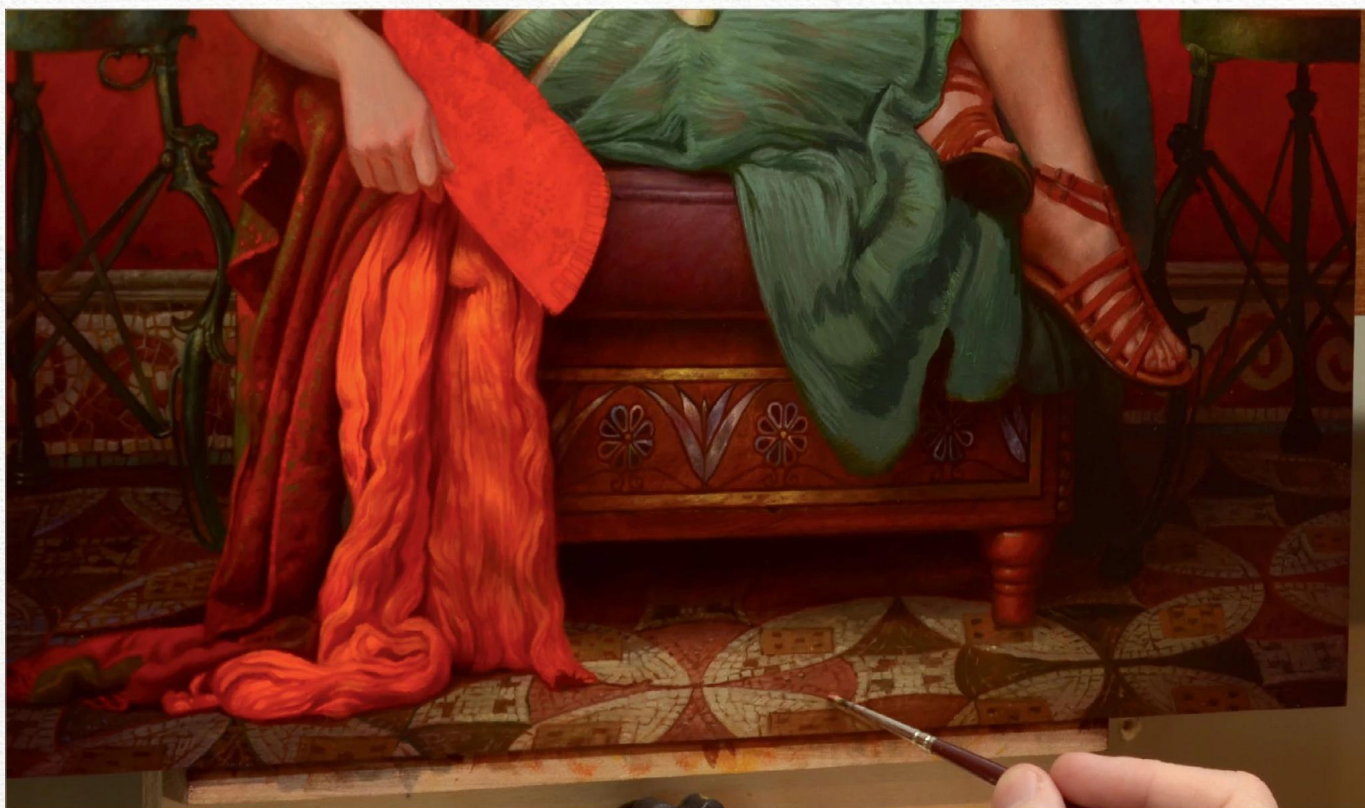
11 **Introduce details to the artwork during the second pass**
In my efforts to paint like my art heroes, I have to be meticulous with the details. For the smallest details, buy a medium sized Round with a very fine tip. This will enable you to get all the detail you need and the brush will hold a good amount of paint.
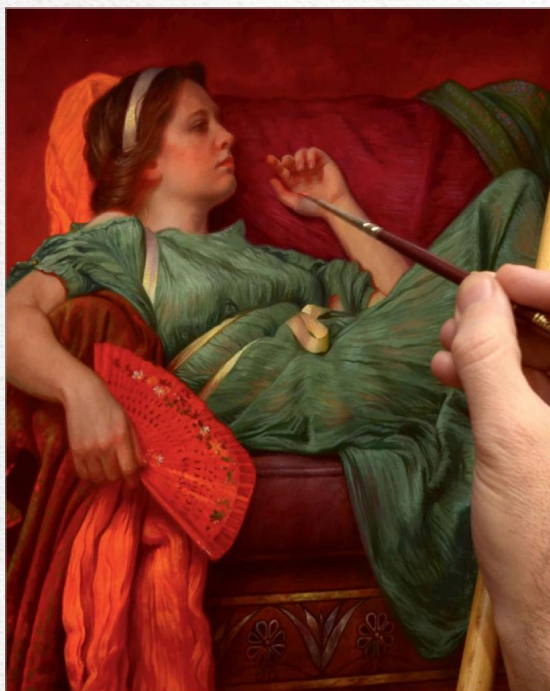
12 **Apply the final touches**
I'm almost at the end of the painting. This is the stage to refine the delicate transitions and add subtle details such as the wrinkles in the hands and veins underneath the skin. I also glaze and intensify colours. I prefer to glaze with transparent colours and no medium.

13 **Be sure to frame your work**
The painting is finished! I was able to create something that echoes the artists of the 19th century that I admire. I was aiming for a sense of classicism and elegance. Don't forget to find a frame to enhance your artwork. I chose a frame from the talented people at Masterworks Frames. The frame is handmade and uses 16 karat gold leaf for a sense of history and grandeur. The arch of the frame was in the back of my mind as I composed the painting.

First Impressions

✳ Paul Lewin ✳

Colour plays a key role in this Jamaican artist's work

Where did you grow up and how has this influenced your art?
I was born in Jamaica in 1973 and moved to the US in 1977. I grew up in Miami, Florida. Miami is known for being a very colourful city, and colour is an important aspect of my work. There's a large Caribbean presence in Miami, and you can see it in the brightly coloured architecture and art throughout the city.

What, outside of art, has most influenced your artwork through the years?
Mostly music and sci-fi films. I love playing music while I work, and I grew up watching sci-fi movies and TV shows. I always enjoyed trying to recreate the art in them.

Is there a painting that you saw in your formative years that changed everything? What was it?
Yes, it's called Sugar Shack by Ernie Barnes. It was the first time that I had ever seen African American figures depicted in that kind of surreal style, with elongated bodies, flow and movement.

HOW LONG 'TIL BLACK FUTURE MONTH?
"This is the cover art for the re-release of NK Jemisin's collection of short stories."

KIANGA
"This piece was inspired by the connection of African folklore, nature, and the spirit world."

Tell us about your first paid commission, and does it stand as a representation of your talent?
The first book cover work that I did was for the new editions of two of Octavia Butler's books: Parable of the Sower and Parable of the Talents, published by Seven Stories Press. Octavia's work has been a huge inspiration for my art, so I was very honoured. It represents my talent

> **The art life and real life are about the journey and not the destination**

well since the image used in Parable of the Talents is one of my most popular paintings.

What's the last piece you finished, and how do the two differ?
My last completed piece was the cover and interior art for the re-release of NK Jemisin's book of short stories titled How Long 'til Black Future Month? that was published by Subterranean Press. The two projects

EJIRO
"Part of a new series paintings I'm working on about the potential harmony of technology and nature."

differ in that this latest work represents the newer direction my work is heading.

Is making a living as an artist all you thought it would be?
Mostly yes, but some things are a bit more challenging than I expected. I love just focusing on my art. I like being able to set my own schedule and choose which projects to work on. But the uncertainty and anxiety that comes with not having a steady pay cheque makes it hard to know when it's okay to take a break.

What advice would you give to your younger self to aid you on the way?
To have more patience with my work and to take setbacks less seriously. The art life and real life are about the journey and not the destination.

How has the industry of art changed for good since you've been working in it?
The internet and social media means artists have a lot more control over their careers than ever before. Much of the art industry has had to change and adapt to this new setting, which I think is a good thing.

Paul's work is inspired by African-Carribean and African folklore, and science fiction, and you can see more of it at www.paullewinart.com.

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SCAN TO SCHEDULE

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