

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

# ImagineFX

WORKSHOP

## COSTUME DESIGN

Craft concepts for film, with Phillip Boutté Jr.

# 13

SKETCHES TO INSPIRE YOU TO PICK UP A PENCIL

ALSO INSIDE

HOW TO ADD DRAMA TO YOUR COMPOSITIONS

CONCEPT ART KEY-FRAME TECHNIQUES

REVIEWED: XP-PEN'S BARGAIN TABLET

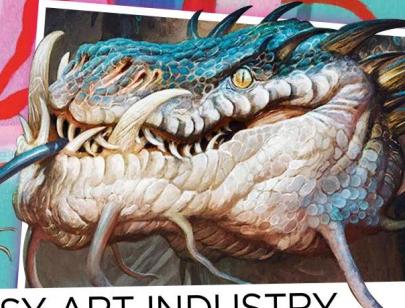
LOSE YOURSELF IN

# ILLUSTRATION

Create ethereal drawings and paintings with advice from the incredible **Audra Auclair**



FUTURE  
ISSUE 193



JUSTIN GERARD ON BEING BUSINESS SAVVY IN THE FANTASY ART INDUSTRY

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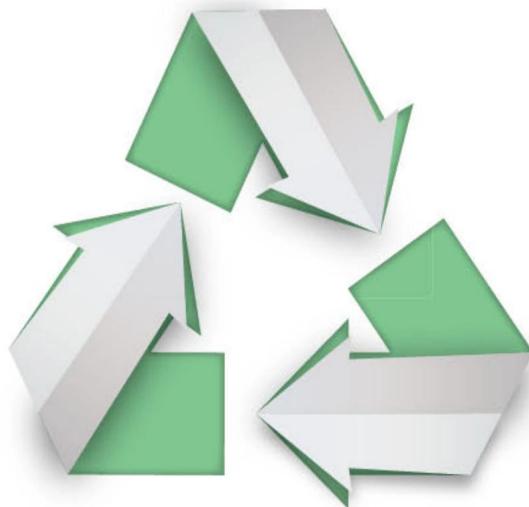
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## Welcome to... NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX



I'm no stranger to the phrase 'let it go', which is mostly due to being a parent of two Disney-obsessed young girls. But while the song from the film *Frozen* has driven me mad at times, I haven't lost sense of the sentiment, especially when it comes to art.

Audra Auclair – our wonderful cover artist this issue – gives us a perfect example of letting go of something that doesn't work in her workshop on page 56. In the early workshop steps, you'll see Audra's initial sketch idea for the cover. I loved it immediately. However, as she started to develop the piece she realised it wasn't working. She let go of the idea and kept moving forward. It's a testament to her skill that she did this rather than struggle to create something that would – in her eyes – ultimately fail. The finished piece is still magnificent don't you think? Don't be afraid to delete, change or stop doing something you know deep down won't work, even if you've spent so much time and effort on it. It's a hard but valuable skill to learn.

*Claire*

**Editor-in-chief**  
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- <http://ifxm.ag/ifxnewsletter-v2>

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Three of my top picks this month...

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We delve into Looona Lou's airy loft apartment with lots of storage and cool features – when can I move in?

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### Setting the scene

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### Dressed for success

A leading light in costume concept design, Phillip Boulté Jr. shares how he finds inspiration in what's around him.



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# ImagineFX

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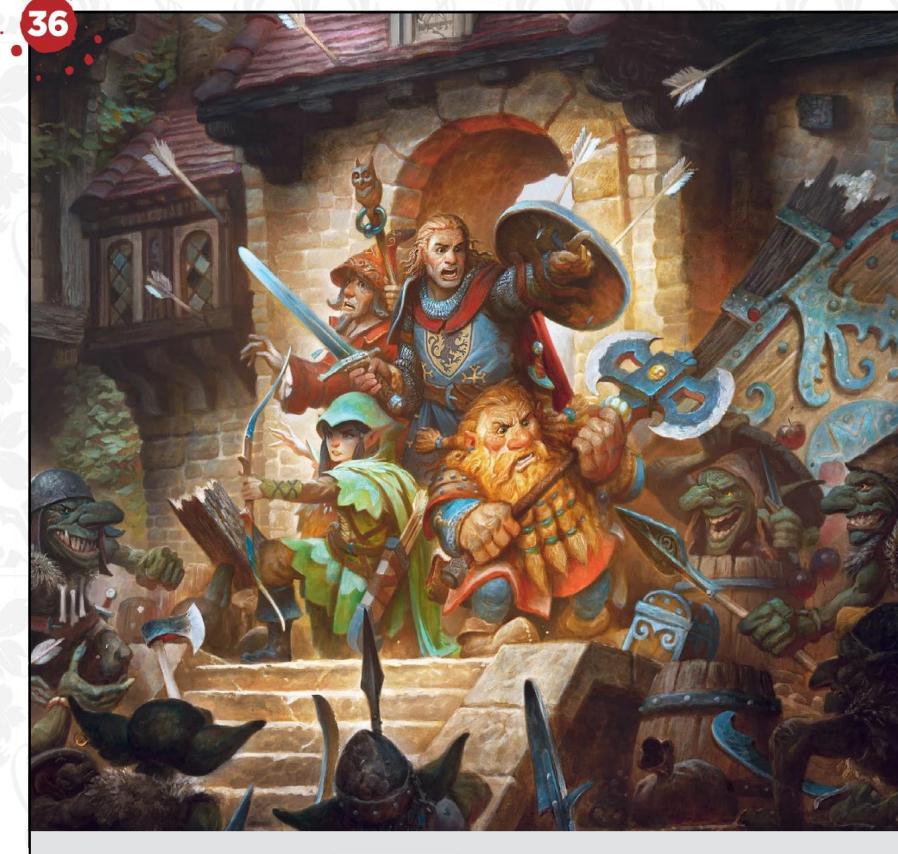
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Artist Portfolio

**JUSTIN  
GERARD**



**"I'm the worst critic of my work. It fills me with a weird anxiety to talk about it."**

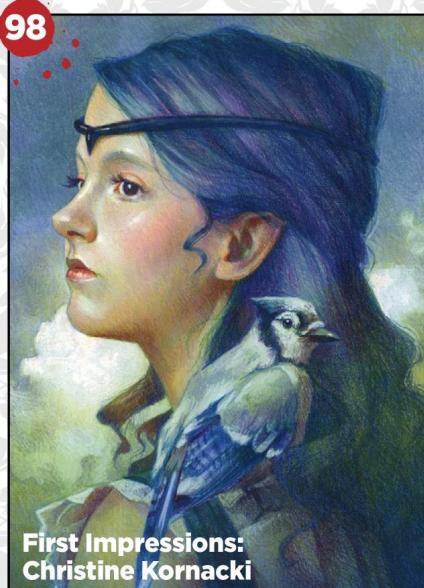
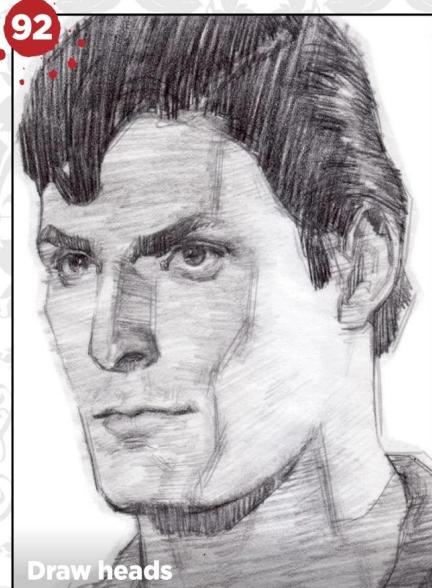
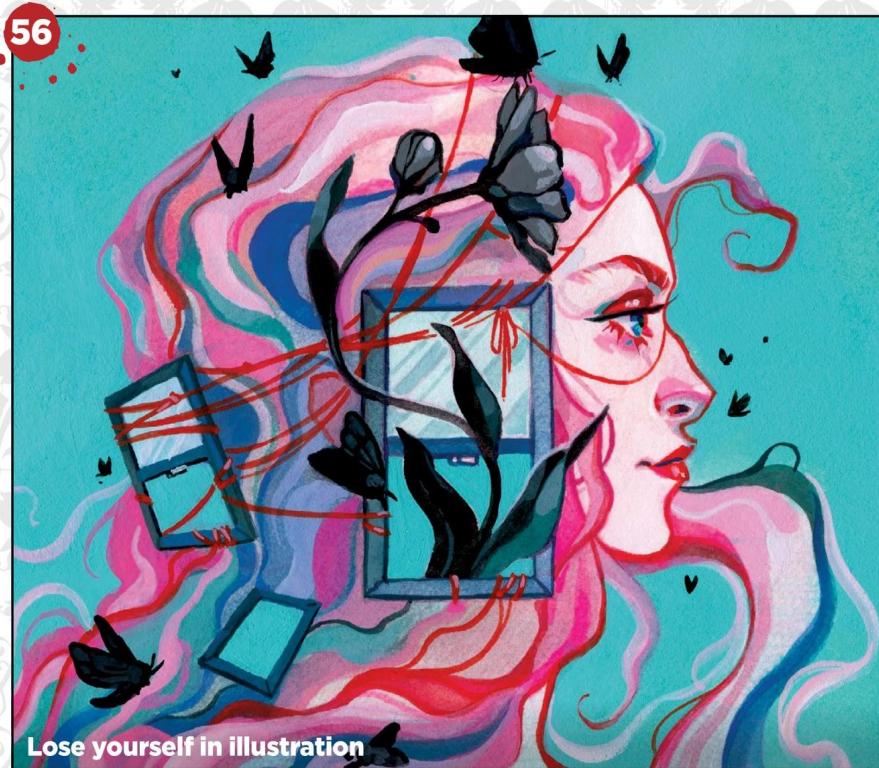
Justin on not discussing his art



LightBox Expo 2020



**Artist in Residence:  
Looona Lou**



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Learn what YA novel had a strong effect on this US illustrator at an early age.



# Resources

Downloading this issue's resources is easy  
- visit <http://ifxm.ag/illustration193skills>

## WORKSHOP VIDEOS



### Four of our best illustration video workshops!

We've gathered videos from Daniel Bolling Walsh, Chantal Horeis, Moon and Rafael Sarmento, who use digital and traditional painting techniques to create stunning illustrations.

## SPONSORED



### Explore the latest additions to Corel Painter 2021

Freelance artist Davey Baker reveals some of the new features in Corel Painter 2021, including the Artificial Intelligence tool that enables you to quickly apply new painting styles to your art.

## ARTIST ALLEY

Did you miss our virtual Artist Alley from issue 187? Download the PDF and share to support your fellow artists.



## NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX

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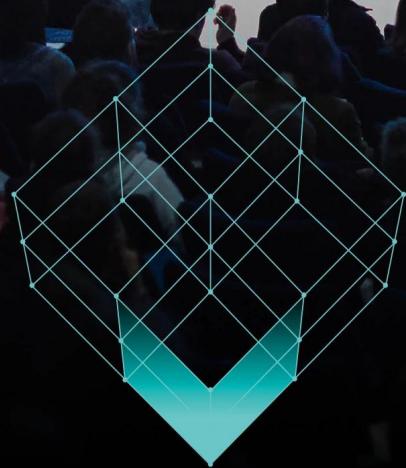
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At Vertex 2020 Loish spoke about developing an art career from doing what you love. The event also featured Karla Ortiz, Izzy Burton, Goro Fujita and so many more! We'll announce speakers for 2021 very soon.



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# EXPosé

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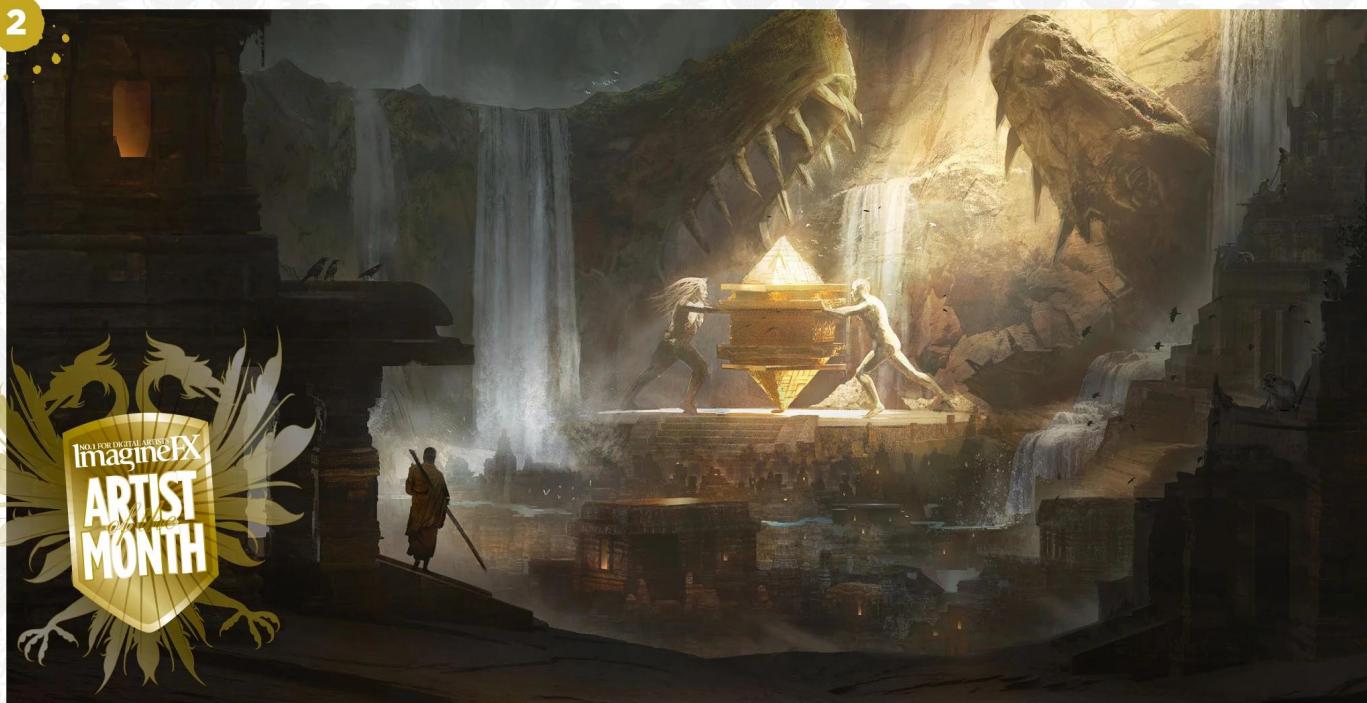


## Reuben Lane

LOCATION: England MEDIA: Photoshop, Blender WEB: [www.reubenlane.co.uk](http://www.reubenlane.co.uk)

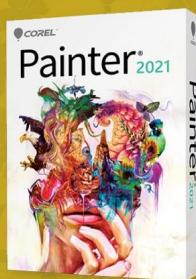
Reuben is an illustration graduate whose previous work experience includes a design internship at Mercedes Benz. The artist is keen to break into the entertainment industry.

2

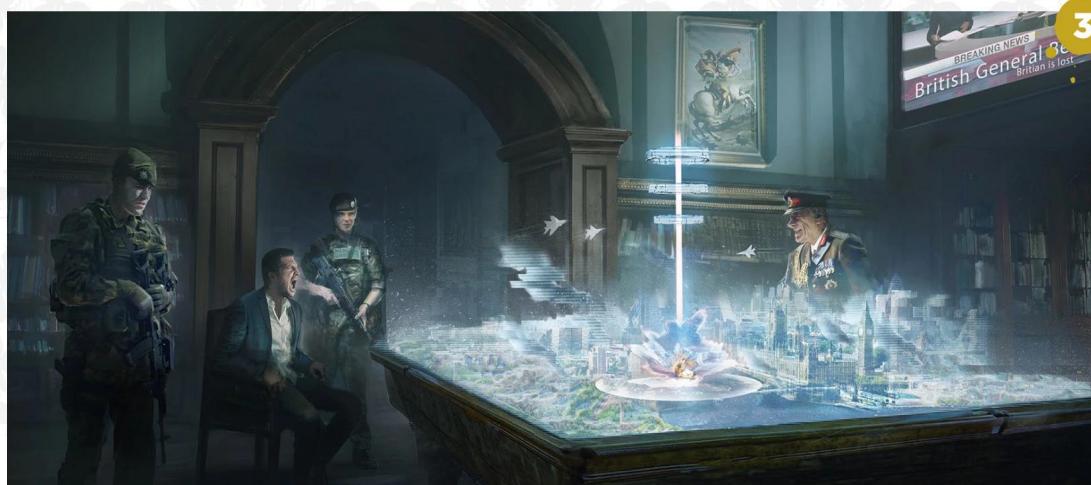




Congratulations to Reuben, our Artist of the Month who receives a copy of **Corel Painter 2021**, together with an **Ultimate Brush Pack** containing over 600 unique brushes, worth over **£1,500**, courtesy of our friends Corel!



We'll reveal the **Artist of the Year** at Vertex 2021, chosen from all our Artists of the Month between now and the event. [www.vertexconf.com](http://www.vertexconf.com)



## 1 ATOMHAWK ADVENTURE ENTRY

"My entry for this year's Atomhawk competition, The Adventure Begins. Competitions are a great excuse to create portfolio pieces!"

## 2 BOX OF MYSTERY

"This was my entry for Artstation's Box of Mystery contest. I wanted to pursue an ethereal and mystical city feeling."

## 3 FALL OF LONDON

"A practice piece for a modern/slightly futuristic interior. The evil English general betrays his country in this Bond-esque scene."

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



## Francesca Resta

LOCATION: England MEDIA: Corel Painter WEB: [www.nijiart.it](http://www.nijiart.it)

Francesca's love for fantasy and science fiction novels drives her art. She paints digital book covers for both US and Italian publishers such as Penguin/Putnam, Simon & Schuster, Sourcebooks, Mondadori and Giunti.

### 1 A NEW SUN

"I often paint something hopeful at the beginning of a new year. This is a depiction of the eternal struggle between light and darkness."



### 2 MEMORIES OF A TREE

"The girl is drawing the memories of a dying tree. I didn't have a clear idea when I started painting this, but the story somehow revealed itself."

### 2



### 3 SELKIE

"I painted this for a collaborative project with other Italian fantasy artists. We made an art calendar with illustrations on myths about creatures who live in the seas."

### 4 ANCIENT STONES

"I've carried this image in my mind for a long time. I painted a previous version in acrylics at the Lucca Comics & Games convention a couple of years ago."

### 3







## Christopher Bretz

LOCATION: Canada MEDIA: Photoshop, Procreate WEB: [www.artstation.com/saltybretzel](https://www.artstation.com/saltybretzel)

Toronto-based Chris is a freelance illustrator, concept artist and art director with a background in the video games industry. He likes to draw traditionally as well as digitally, with a focus on lighting and value.



2



3

**1 FRANKENSTIEN**

"I had this idea that Frankenstein's monster would be put together from corpses of different ethnicities and ages, and so tried to show that here."

**2 ROSIE THE REX RIDER TO THE RESCUE**

"This is a fun personal illustration I did as a genre mash-up. It's a blend of cowboy-steampunk-meets-time-travel-and-aliens."

**3 GOBLINS (WE'VE COME ALL THIS WAY...)**

"This is another personal piece I did of a horde of goblins who should have checked their directions."



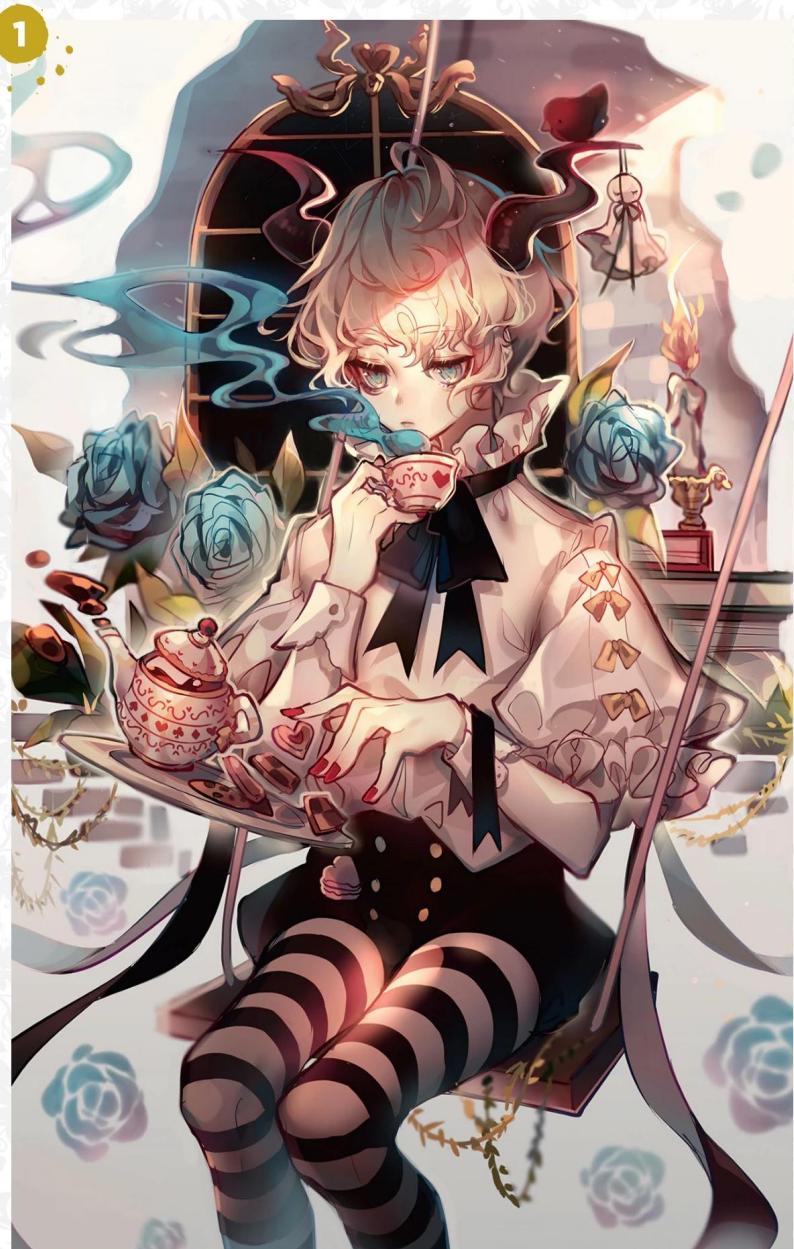
## Kamochiruu

LOCATION: US MEDIA: Clip Studio Paint WEB: [www.kamochiruu.carrd.co](http://www.kamochiruu.carrd.co)

Camille Tran, known as Kamochiruu online, is a freelance illustrator and character designer whose influences include anime, games, and horror. "I love creating dark, intricate and whimsical works that people can get drawn into."

### 1 TEA TIME

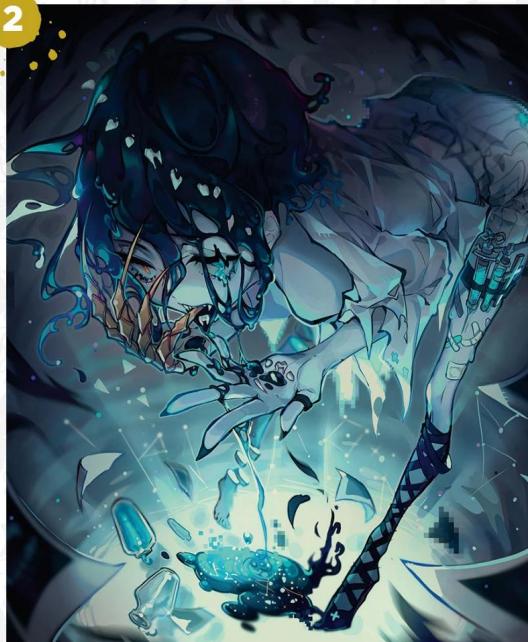
"Normally tea parties are held with others, but this time it's a party of one. The figure appears content with being the last person left in the world."



### 2 DRIPPAGE

"This surreal piece helped me break out of a long art block! I went into it blindly, allowing myself to warp the figure."

2



### 3 POISON APPLE

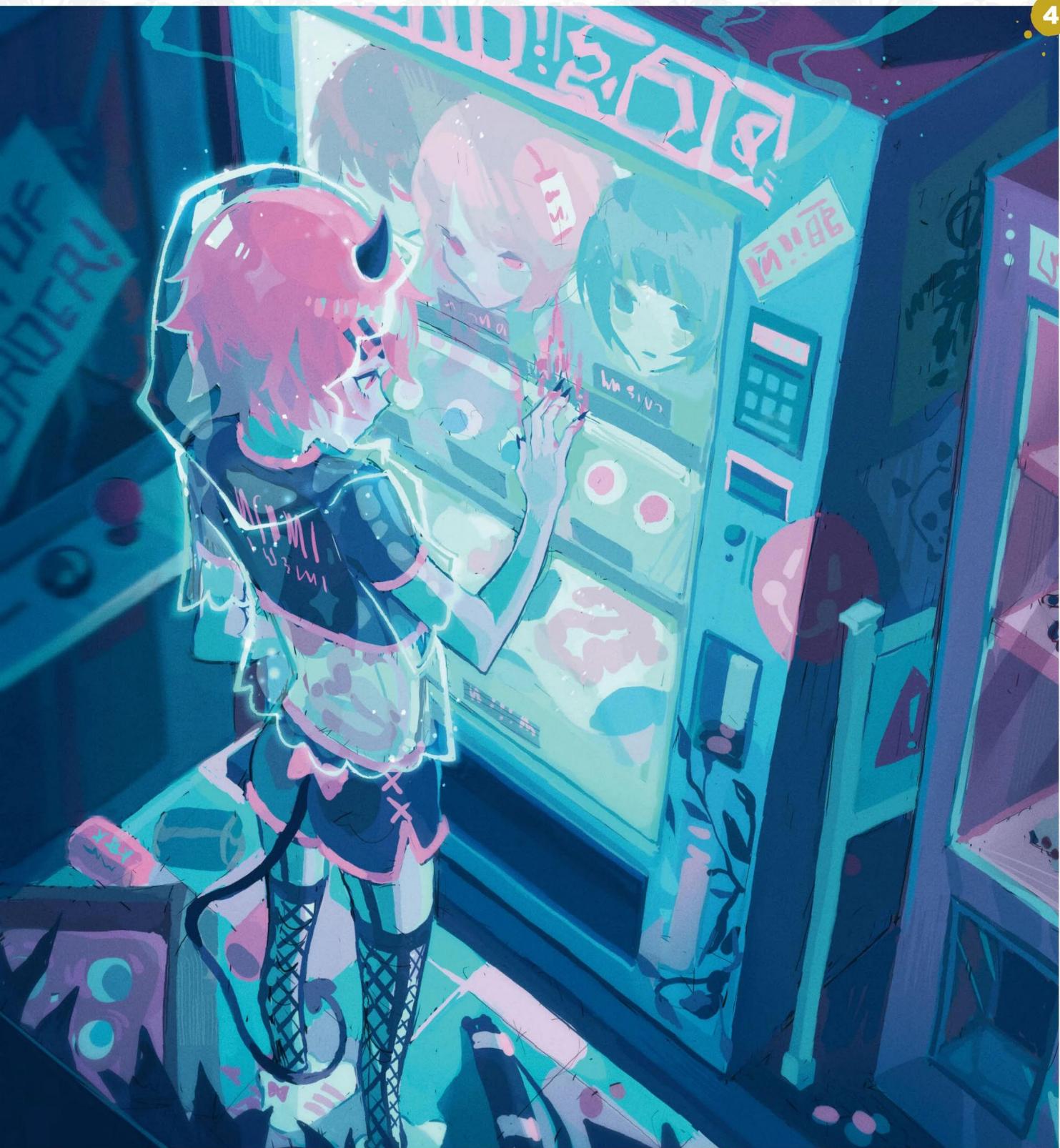
"A portrait of my character, Lucian. It's my take on the classic fairy tale motif of a wicked witch carrying a poison apple."

### 4 PECULIAR VENDING

"Vending machines are known for containing pretty much anything. For this neon-lit piece I thought, 'What haven't I seen in one before?'"

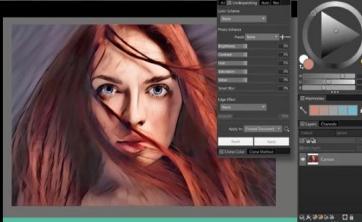
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# ARTIST NEWS, SOFTWARE & EVENTS

# ImagineNation

AT THE CORE OF THE DIGITAL ART COMMUNITY



Armand Baltazar created an oil painting in real time, based on his book *Timeless*.



Ross Tran (below) transformed photos of his fans into video game characters.



Pro insights with Riot Games' Esben Rasmussen (above) and Robaato and Chamba from Udon Entertainment (left).

Regular Magic: The Gathering artist Jesper Ejsing painted a goblin in acrylics.



Ahmed Aldoori created a D&D-style character, with the audience voting on design choices.



## LightBox Expo 2020

**Box clever** The California event for artists moved online this year, but still felt like a real gathering. **Tom May** reveals the many highlights from the three-day event



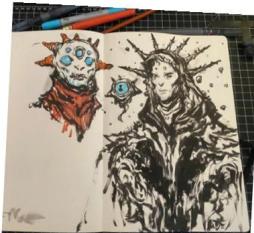
**Ever since the world went into lockdown, event organisers have been trying to turn their physical meet-ups into virtual ones. Most have, in our view, have had limited success. But this September LightBox Expo Online showed exactly how it should be done.**

Focused around illustrators, designers and visual artists in the entertainment industry, the first LightBox Expo took place last year at the Pasadena Convention Center in California. This year, in the face of Covid-19, founders Bobby Chiu and Jim Demonakos decided to recreate it online, with more than 400 guest artists and over 300 presentations. Tickets ranged from \$1 to \$40, with

higher prices getting you cool packs of art, tutorials and other goodies. Yet importantly the \$1 level still gave you access to every online session.

### LEADING ART LIGHTS

The speaker list read like an industry who's who, with artists, animators and directors from the likes of Pixar, Disney, Marvel, Illumination and Riot Games, along with well-known names including Aaron Blaise,



The finished image from Lucasfilm Animation's Dawn Carlos' sketching demo.

Stan Prokopenko, James Gurney, Loish, Nathan Fowkes, Karla Ortiz, Jesper Ejsing and more. Their talks, demos and artist jams could be accessed via the Lightbox Expo website ([www.lightboxexpo.com](http://www.lightboxexpo.com)), and were hosted on Zoom, Instagram Live, Twitch, YouTube Live, Discord and Facebook Live.

In every session we joined, the chat was lively, friendly and supportive, making this feel like a 'proper' event, rather than just sitting at home watching some videos.

"One of the cool things about being virtual was that folks from all over the world could join in," says Dawn Carlos of Lucasfilm Animation, whose

**“One cool thing about being virtual was that folks from all over the world could join in”**





## LOFTY AMBITIONS

We join illustrator Loona Lou in her rooftop apartment, and marvel at how she's made the most of the limited space to create a wonderful studio.  
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## YOUR VIEWS, YOUR ART

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Page 35



Noah Klocek's pastels; right, panel on boosting diversity in creative spaces.

P Increasing Diversity in Creative Spaces

Watch later Share

Top chat

Increasing diversity in creative spaces. I have you tell your story?

Lauren: @mimiclaire just tell me a story. @mimiclaire just tell me a story that is unique to YOU as a person, as an artist, create a mixed character for fun to you, as an artist.

Eye C: thanks for the response! ❤️

Brie Henderson: your voice matters, make it loud so that people will have no choice but to listen.

Diana Ceron: I relate to a disconnection from myself and my culture. I'm Mexican and it's pre-empted. Also, white-representing Mexican art to be really misrepresented and I'm not ok with that.

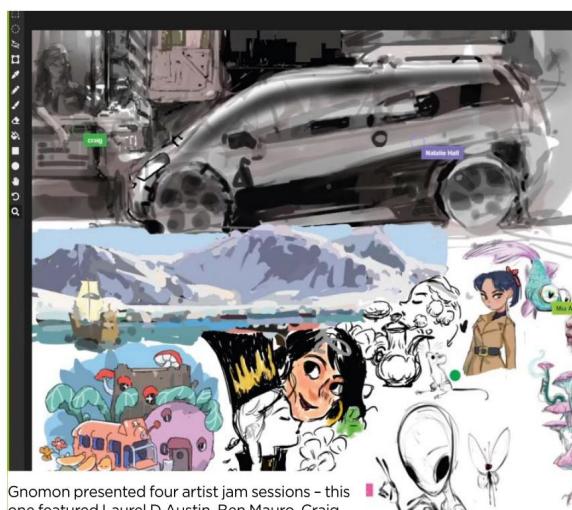
Mia Araujo: @fartanomix start with your own story. You can always add more to show through, to make up for your skills as you learn. Then build on top of that.

Catherine Moon: Yes Lauren! ❤️

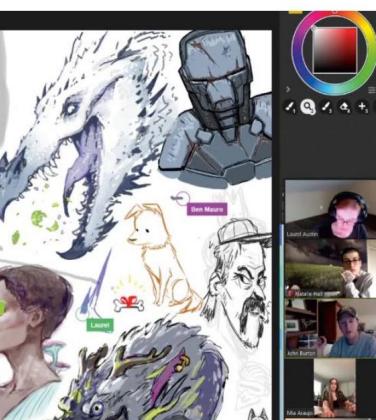
thewhitek: Yes Lauren! ❤️



Armand on creating original stories; below, Illumination's Dawn Yamazi.



Gnomon presented four artist jam sessions – this one featured Laurel D Austin, Ben Mauro, Craig Mullins and many more leading illustrators.



Karla Ortiz took part in several sessions throughout the weekend.

Browse Esports Music ...

Search

STREAM CHAT

user: Planet\_K: That's a good point about people cheating out instead of buying a larger piece

RadarCricket: 25 prints or, or 25 prints total?

Heilononthisfar: If you're looking for on demand printing, always shop around: check the quality, how is the customer service? how much are you getting back? these are great things to be looking at

@Planet\_K: perier\_grey: Price anchoring

spiralsketches: people also mistake stickers as being freebies in my experience ahaha

Replying to @spiralsketches: people also mistake stickers as being freebies in my experience ahaha

perier\_grey: THIS

gesoulstar: @perier\_grey I've been doing small shows for years and no one comes and I don't get many sells and the most I sold was 4 that's it.

camilagm: My first successful event, I sold magnets and stickers

sketching demo can be rewatched at <http://ifxm.ag/dawn-carlos>. "The sheer numbers were really cool to see. I couldn't believe we'd hit max capacity at my talk: I can barely imagine how packed a room full of 500 people would even look like, or if we'd even fit that many people in a conference room. Being virtual meant a lot of

people who wouldn't have otherwise had access were able to do so."

Access wasn't total: most of the Zoom talks were restricted to 500 or 1,000 people, which frustrated some, and the website crashed repeatedly for the first hour of day one. But even when you were shut out of one session, there were dozens more to choose

Amber Aki Huang talked about how to establish your brand.

Below and below left, Artist Alley enabled you to peruse the work of more than 300 artists.

from, and a large number were made available for rewatching afterwards.

Interaction didn't just mean just chat, either. Live portfolio reviews were given by the likes of Anthony Francisco, David Levy, Ethan Becker and Amber Huang. Artist Alley was a 3D virtual environment you could walk through and interact with more than 300 artists and others (including our very own ImagineFX stand).

## ART CHALLENGES

Many of the talks featured downloadable assets, enabling you to follow along and make your own art at home. In addition, there were weekend-long 'Draw This In Your Style' challenges set by artists including ➤

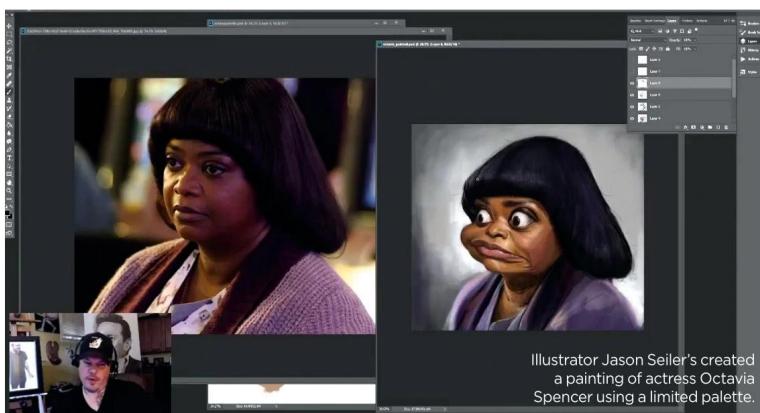


# ImagineNation News



Left, Pernille Ørum's artist challenge; right, caricatures by Lindsey Olivares.

Kim Jung Gi gave an in-depth interview to Stan Prokopenko.



Illustrator Jason Seiler's created a painting of actress Octavia Spencer using a limited palette.

► one by **Pernille Ørum**. "I've always loved doing #DTIYSLBX challenges, because I get to see so much new art and discover new artists," says Pernille. "And I was overwhelmed by the participation, which you can see via the hashtag #DTIYSLBX. So many people joined in, showed their

skills and even implemented things they learned throughout the weekend."

Perhaps the biggest buzz was around Magma Studio, a new browser-based tool that enables artists to collaborate on a drawing. Developed by the Lightbox founders and Code Charm Inc, it was put through its paces during several artist jams.



Jason Chan, a senior concept artist at Riot Games, discussed digital painting skills.



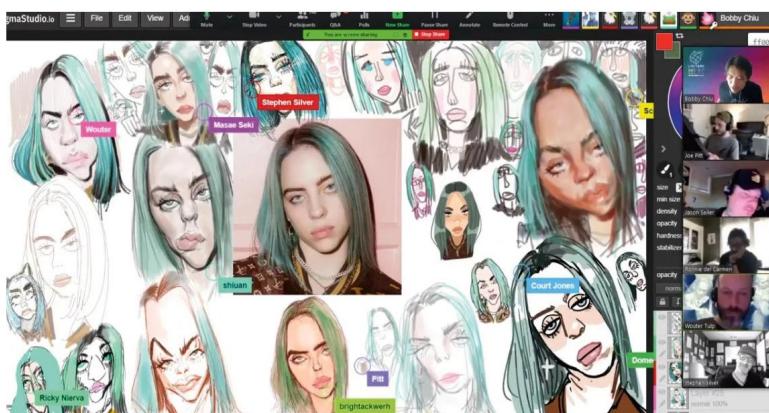
Aaron Blaise painted this adorable creature during a live demo on using photo textures.

Another highlight was the second annual Concept Art Awards, organised by the Concept Art Association and live streamed from the Gnomon School. Nominees were honoured by their peers and the judging panel, along with a celebration of lifetime achievements to pioneers in the field (see who won on the following pages).

Having physically attended LightBox Expo last year, artist and illustrator

**Brian Allen Irvin** was impressed by the online version. "It's evident how much thought Bobby Chiu and company put into the web experience," he says. "There was a virtual solution for nearly every angle of what transpires in the physical space. I'm most excited about the improved access to panels and workshops I missed due to scheduling conflicts. And I plan to spend the following week soaking in everything I didn't get to see on the first pass."

**“It’s evident how much thought Bobby Chiu and company put into the LightBox Expo web experience”**



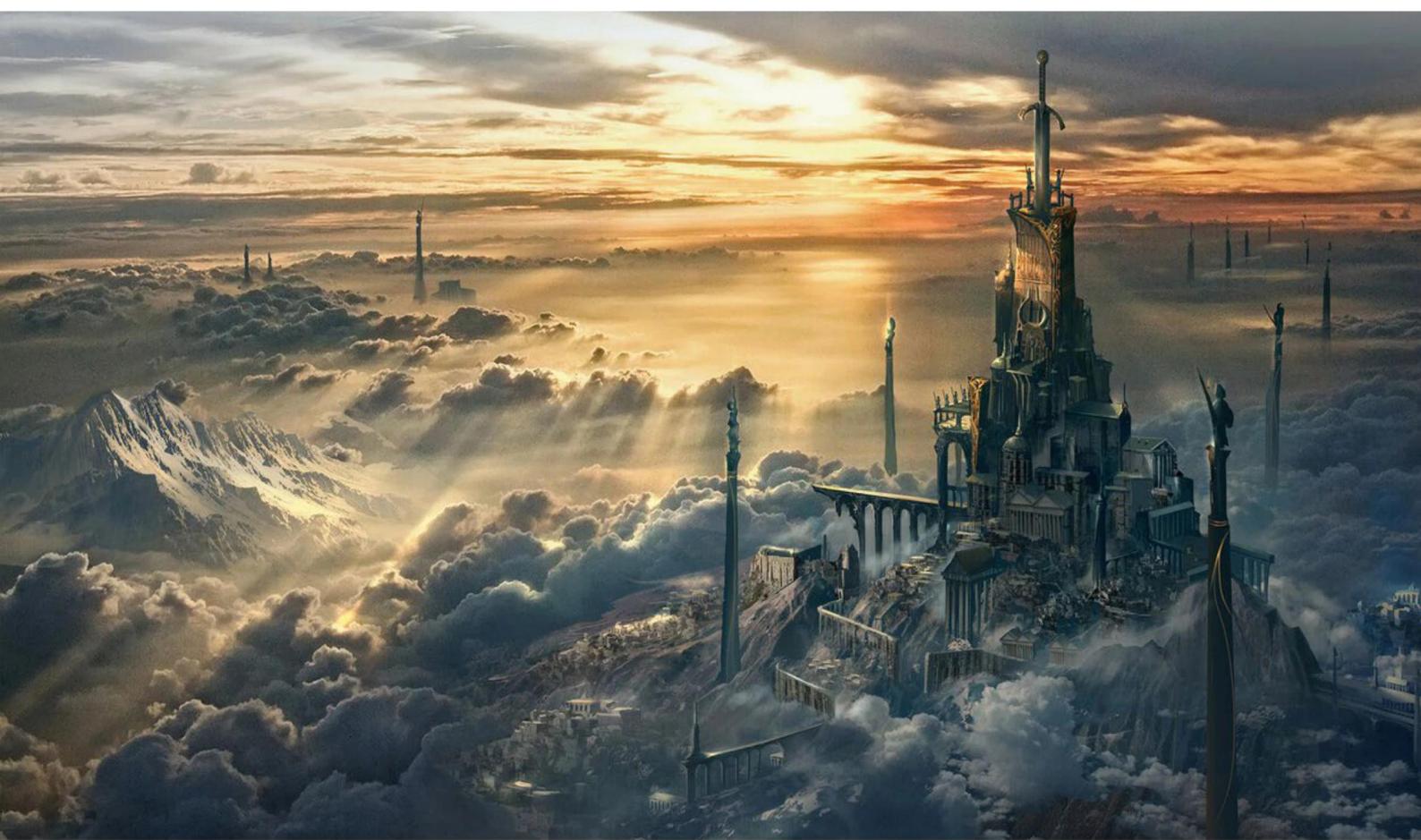
This multi-drawing caricature session hosted by Schoolism took Billie Eilish as inspiration, as suggested by viewers.

# The Concept Art Awards 2020: winners

We reveal this year's winners in the only global awards show that celebrates concept artists



**Excellence in VR:** Stephen Todd [www.artstation.com/stephentodd](http://www.artstation.com/stephentodd)



**Excellence in Mobile Game Environment:** Nutchapol Thitinunthakorn [www.artstation.com/nutchapol](http://www.artstation.com/nutchapol)



**Excellence in Mobile Game Character**  
Chuan Shin [www.instagram.com/shindesigns1](https://www.instagram.com/shindesigns1)



**Excellence in Video Game Character**  
Marco Teixeira [www.instagram.com/marco.a.teixeira](https://www.instagram.com/marco.a.teixeira)

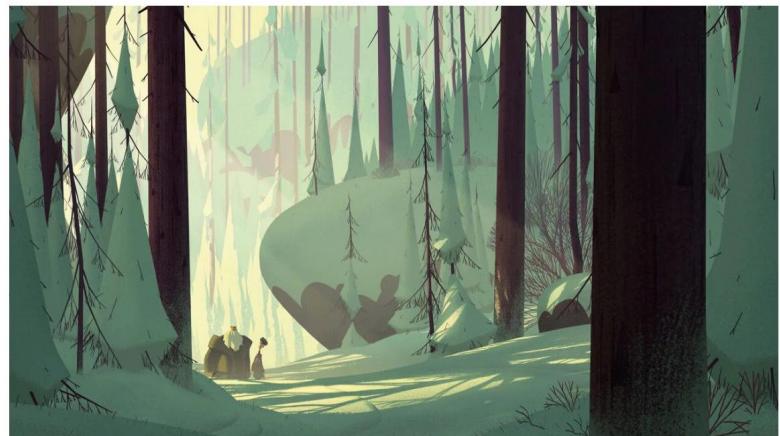


**Excellence in Video Game Environment** Matteo Marjoram [www.instagram.com/marjoramarts](https://www.instagram.com/marjoramarts)

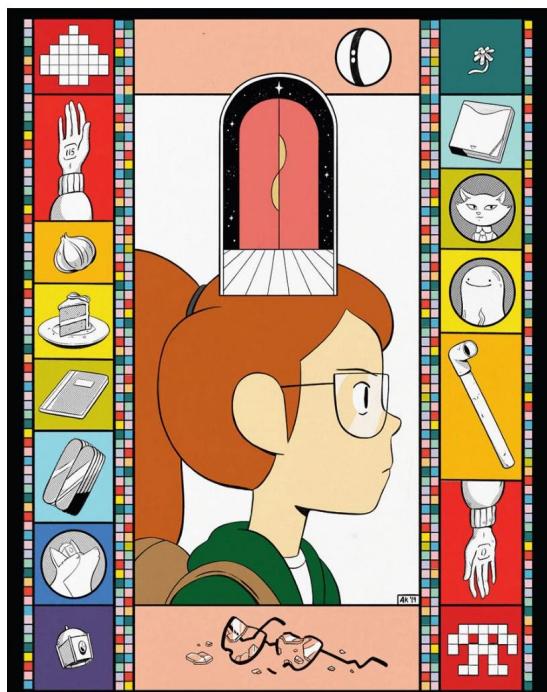
# Artist news, software & events



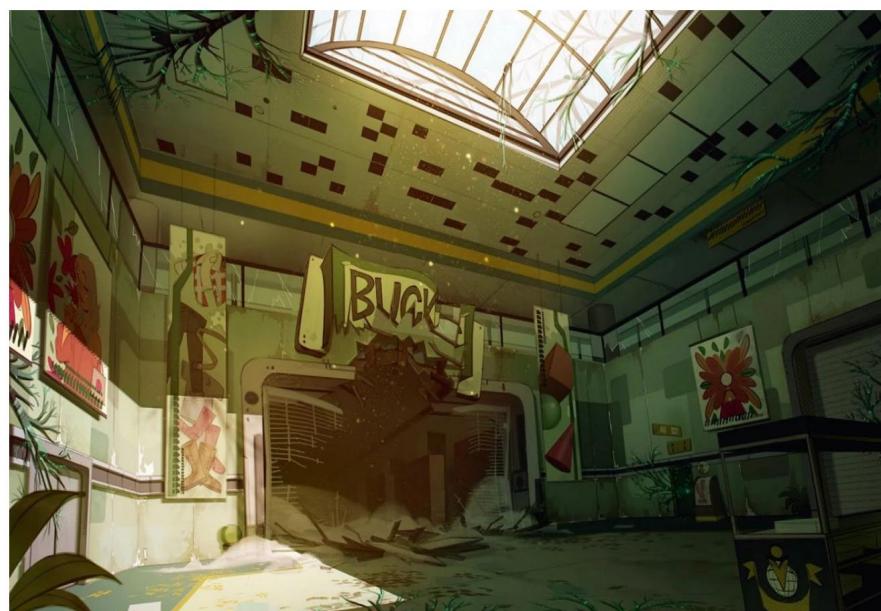
**Excellence in Animated Film Character**  
Torsten Schrank [www.instagram.com/charac.tor](https://www.instagram.com/charac.tor)



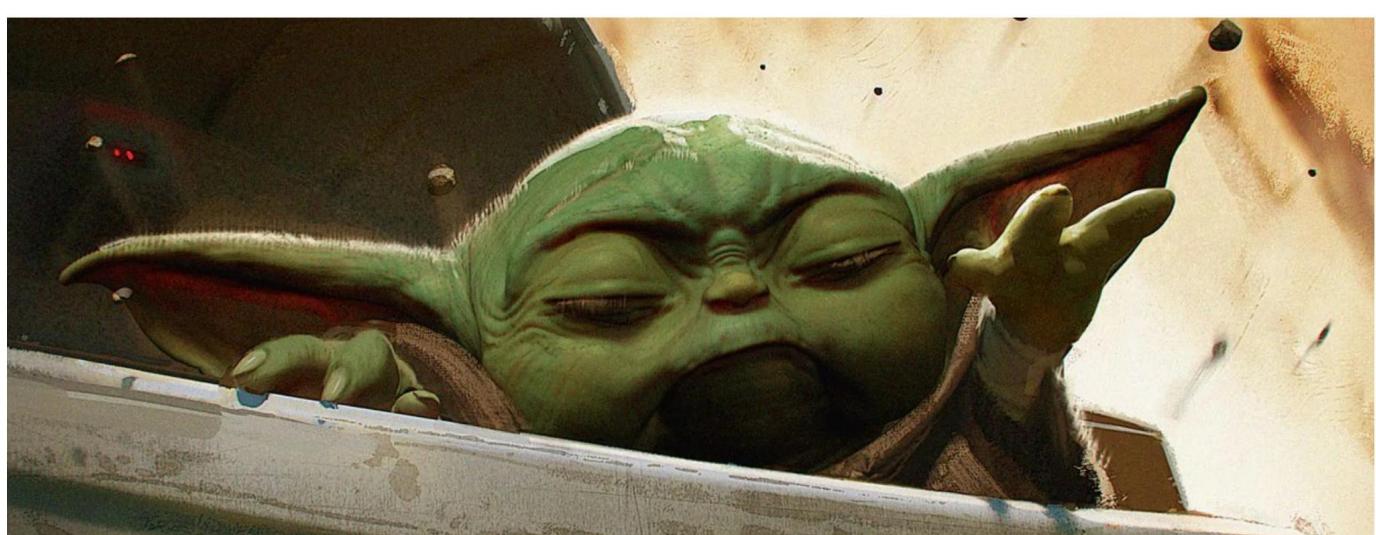
**Excellence in Animated Film Environment**  
Szymon Biernacki [www.instagram.com/szymon\\_biernacki](https://www.instagram.com/szymon_biernacki)



**Excellence in Animated Series Character**  
Allison Kim [www.instagram.com/pocketspell](https://www.instagram.com/pocketspell)

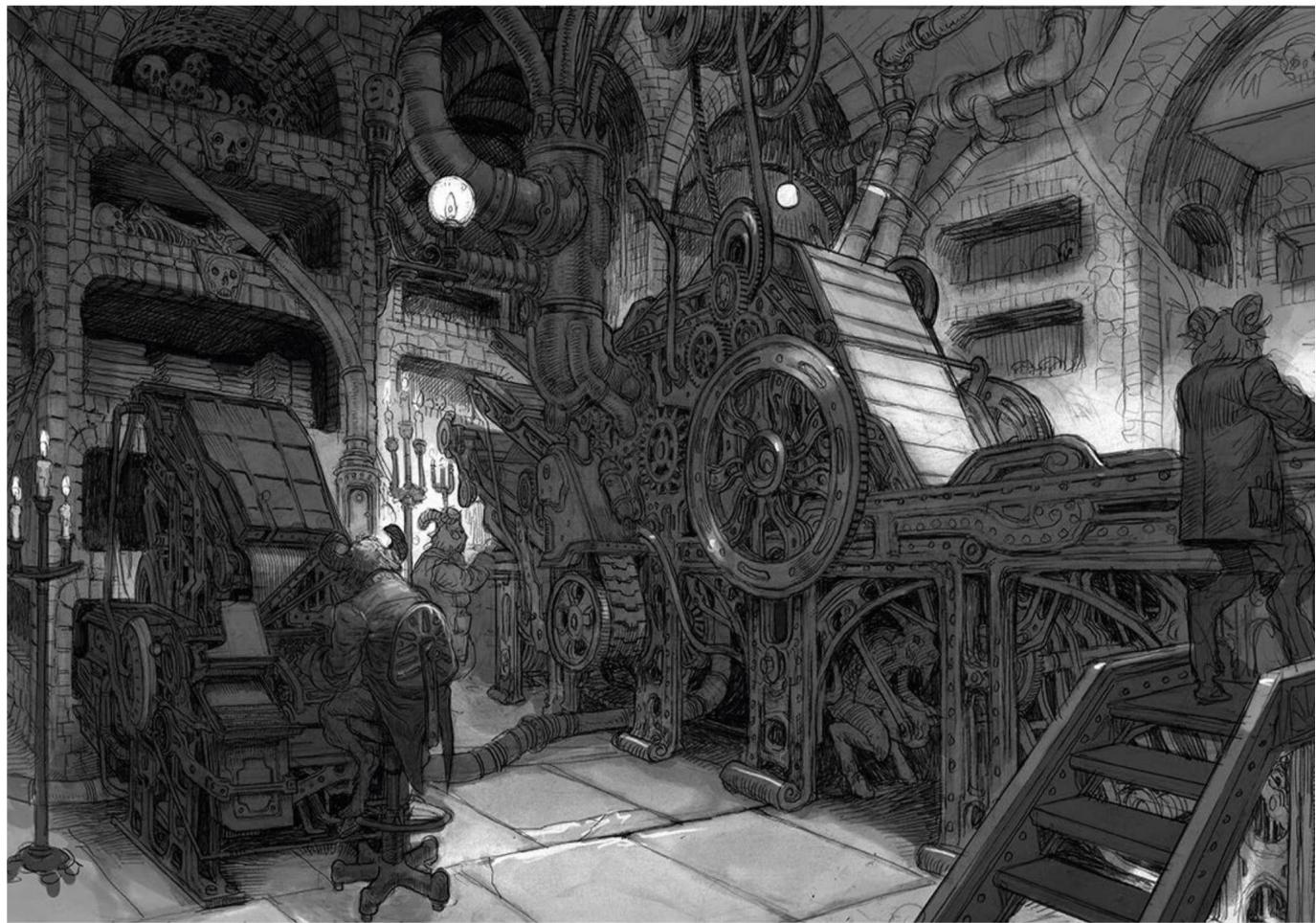


**Excellence in Animated Series Environment**  
Guillermo Esteban [www.instagram.com/guillermoeb](https://www.instagram.com/guillermoeb)

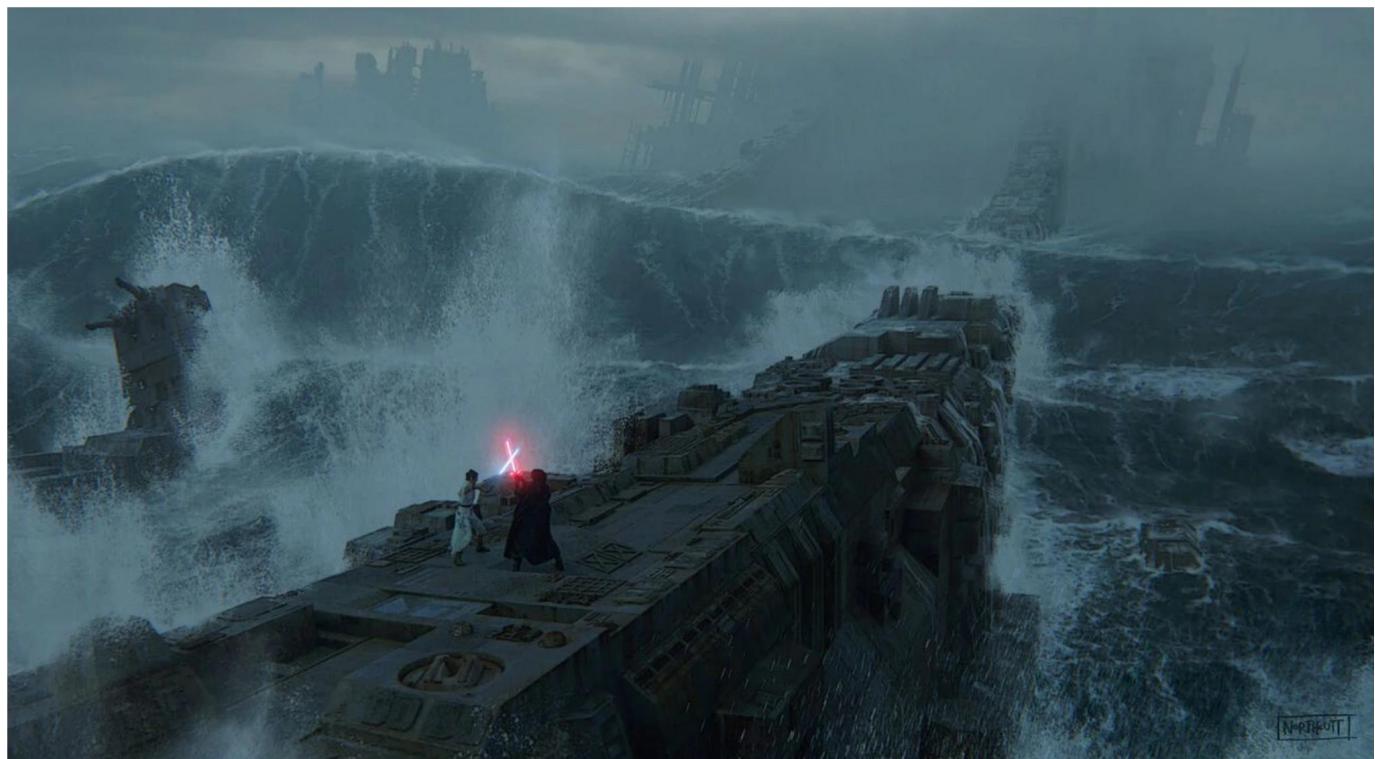


**Excellence in Live Action Series Character** Christian Alzmann [www.instagram.com/calzmann](https://www.instagram.com/calzmann)

© Disney/Lucasfilm



Excellence in Live Action Series Environment **Sean Andrew Murray** [www.instagram.com/seanandrewmurray](http://www.instagram.com/seanandrewmurray)



© Disney/Lucasfilm

Excellence in Live Action Film Environment **Brett Northcutt** [www.artstation.com/bnorthcutt](http://www.artstation.com/bnorthcutt)

# Artist news, software & events



**Excellence in Live Action Film Character**  
Calum Alexander Watt [www.instagram.com/calumalexanderwatt](https://www.instagram.com/calumalexanderwatt)

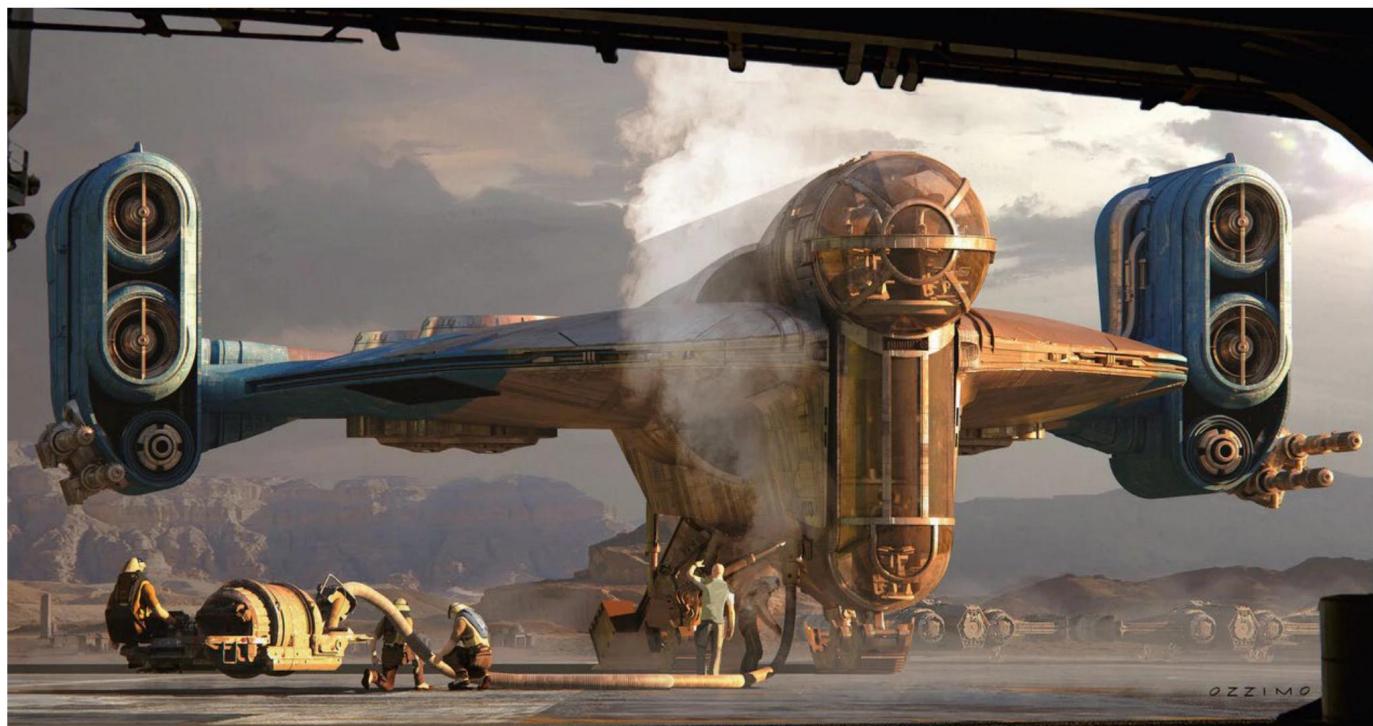
© Disney/Lucasfilm



**Excellence in Student Character**  
Miriam Presas [www.instagram.com/its.miriart](https://www.instagram.com/its.miriart)



**Excellence in Student Environment** Airi Pan [www.instagram.com/pix\\_bun](https://www.instagram.com/pix_bun)



Excellence in Independent Environment Paul Ozzimo [www.instagram.com/ozzimopaul](https://www.instagram.com/ozzimopaul)



Excellence in Independent Character  
Neeraj Menon [www.instagram.com/neeraj.n.menon](https://www.instagram.com/neeraj.n.menon)



Excellence in Fan Art  
Satyaki Sarkar [www.instagram.com/satyaki\\_who\\_draws](https://www.instagram.com/satyaki_who_draws)

# Artist news, software & events



**Lifetime Achievement** Brian Froud [www.fernieberae.com/brian-froud](http://www.fernieberae.com/brian-froud)



**Lifetime Achievement** Hayao Miyazaki [www.ghibli.jp](http://www.ghibli.jp)



**LBX Concept Art Luminary** Christian Alzmann [www.christianalzmann.com](http://www.christianalzmann.com)

Star Wars and The Mandalorian art © Disney/Lucasfilm



## Looona Lou

**Dynamic attic** This German artist takes us around her cosy rooftop apartment and art studio



Almost two years ago we had to leave our first apartment and find a new one quickly. Luckily, I found this

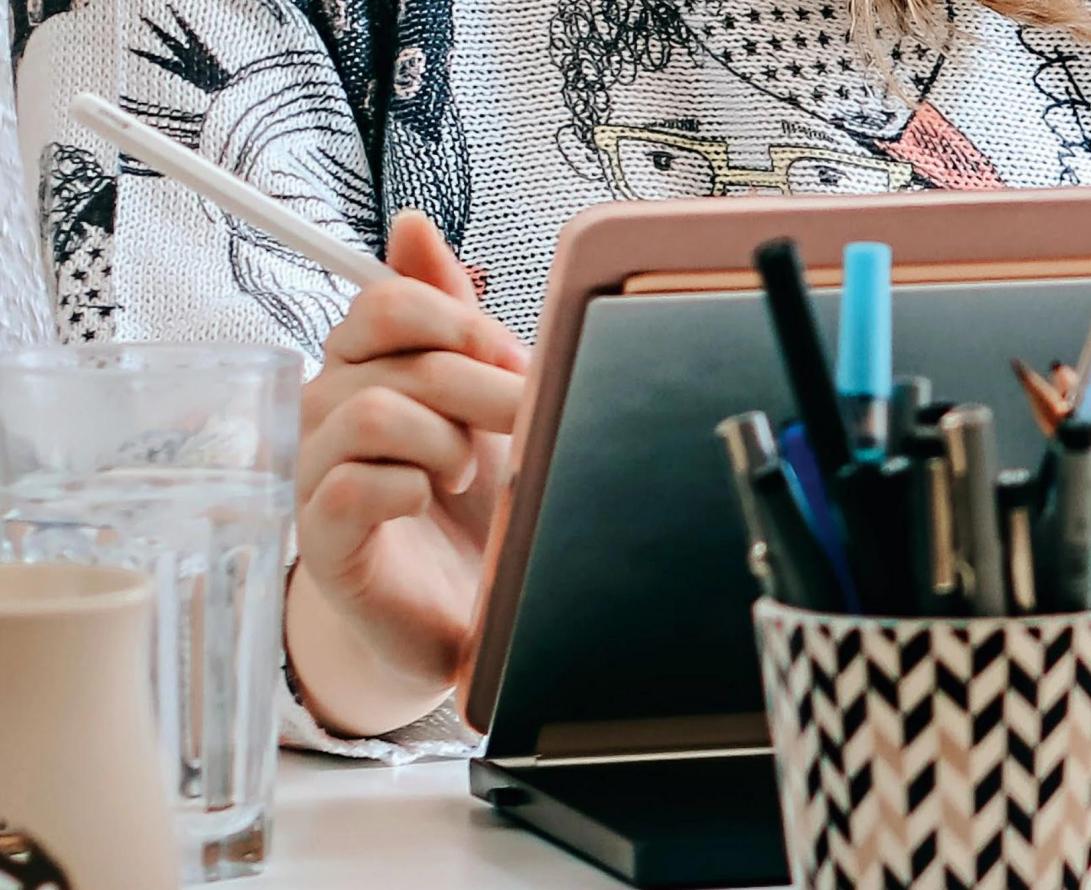
attic apartment in an inspiring spa town that's full of beautiful parks, natural springs and Art Nouveau architecture. Having nature around me is essential: it makes me feel balanced, and it's also why I like to have plenty of plants in our home.

Moving in also marks the time when I bought my first iPad Pro and started my digital art journey using my favourite program, Procreate. After learning and painting almost every day sitting on our cosy couch, I finally

I try to avoid sitting in front of screens for long periods of time. Our eyes do need some rest, so I like to include traditional media in my art process, too.



I had fun painting mermaids for MerMay. Combining aquatic animal and plant elements has endless possibilities!





Because I can't hang much art on my sloping ceilings, I use this drawing board. The art can be quickly removed if necessary.

created a space where I could work more efficiently and, of course, with better posture.

### CAPTURING THE LIGHT

I love having a dynamic workspace. It's spread all over the apartment and changes every now and then. I've given each area a different work purpose to stay more organised. I also work under different lighting situations thanks to the position of the attic's windows. As soon as we moved in, I knew immediately that I wanted to have a foldable table in the little entrance area, so that I wouldn't miss out on that great light during the day. Now I use it for

traditional work or when I really want to concentrate.

My art process is quite experimental. Sometimes I like to do traditional sketches or inked drawings first, to get a feel for the natural flow of the ink and how the paper feels. Then I photograph them, import them into Procreate and use them as the basis for digital work.

On normal days, if I've got nothing special

planned, I'll wake up between 7 and 9am, have breakfast and sometimes do an exercise workout. With a fresh cup of coffee, a glass of water and something to eat in my hands, I like to give myself a relaxing hour of doing what I want, to kick off my day. This could be watching an exciting episode of a series or an informative online class. During workouts I also like to watch skill-share classes or listen ➔

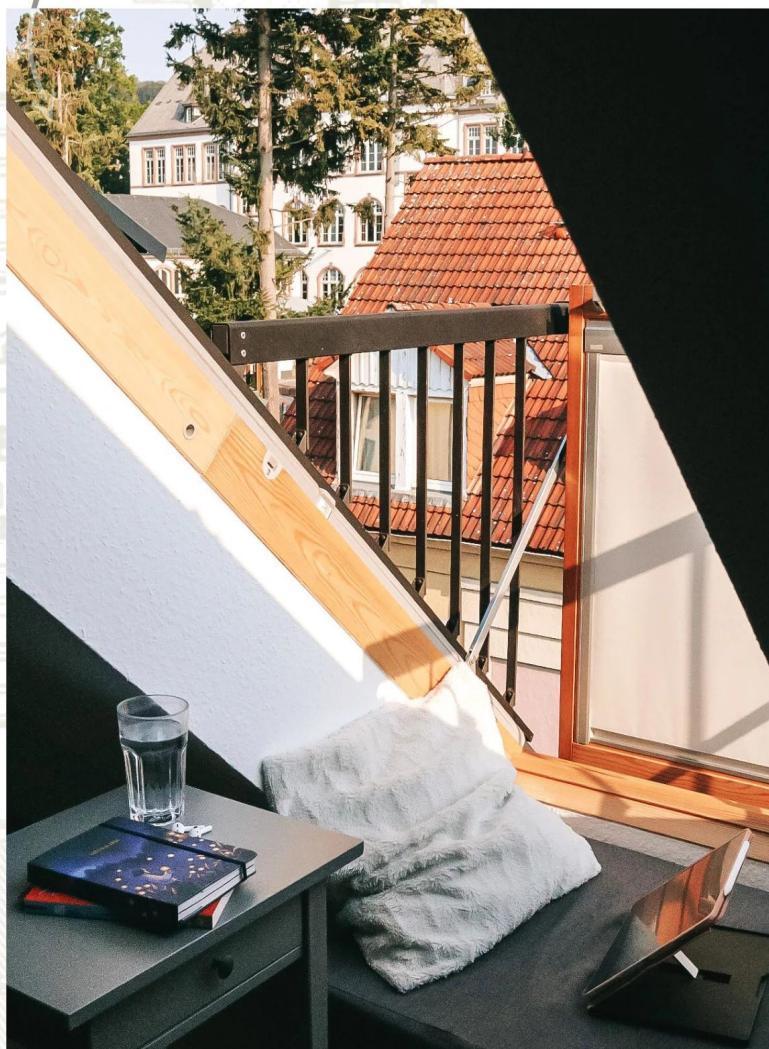


# ImagineNation Artist in Residence



Games, TV series, films, anime and manga have always inspired me, so from time to time I draw some fan art and collect figurines of my favourite characters, such as this cute little Hana Song Nendoroid from Overwatch.

I like to come here to do simple tasks, read, listen to podcasts and just relax on weekends or warm sunny days because these are our biggest windows that open onto little indoor balconies. The seat also folds out into a guest bed. Wow, I really do like foldable things!



This is still an undefined, chaotic corner with an old abstract painting by me, some folders and magazines, but also a lovely print I got from Andrew Mar's art book Kickstarter campaign,



The wooden boxes are full of my most-used traditional art supplies such as watercolour, gouache, inks, Washi tapes and pencil refills. I'm a chaotic person, so I have to force myself to keep things organised and have everything I need within easy reach.

Most of the time I read two books: one to educate myself and one to relax and feed my imagination. Books and stories really help to spark ideas.



# Artist news, software & events



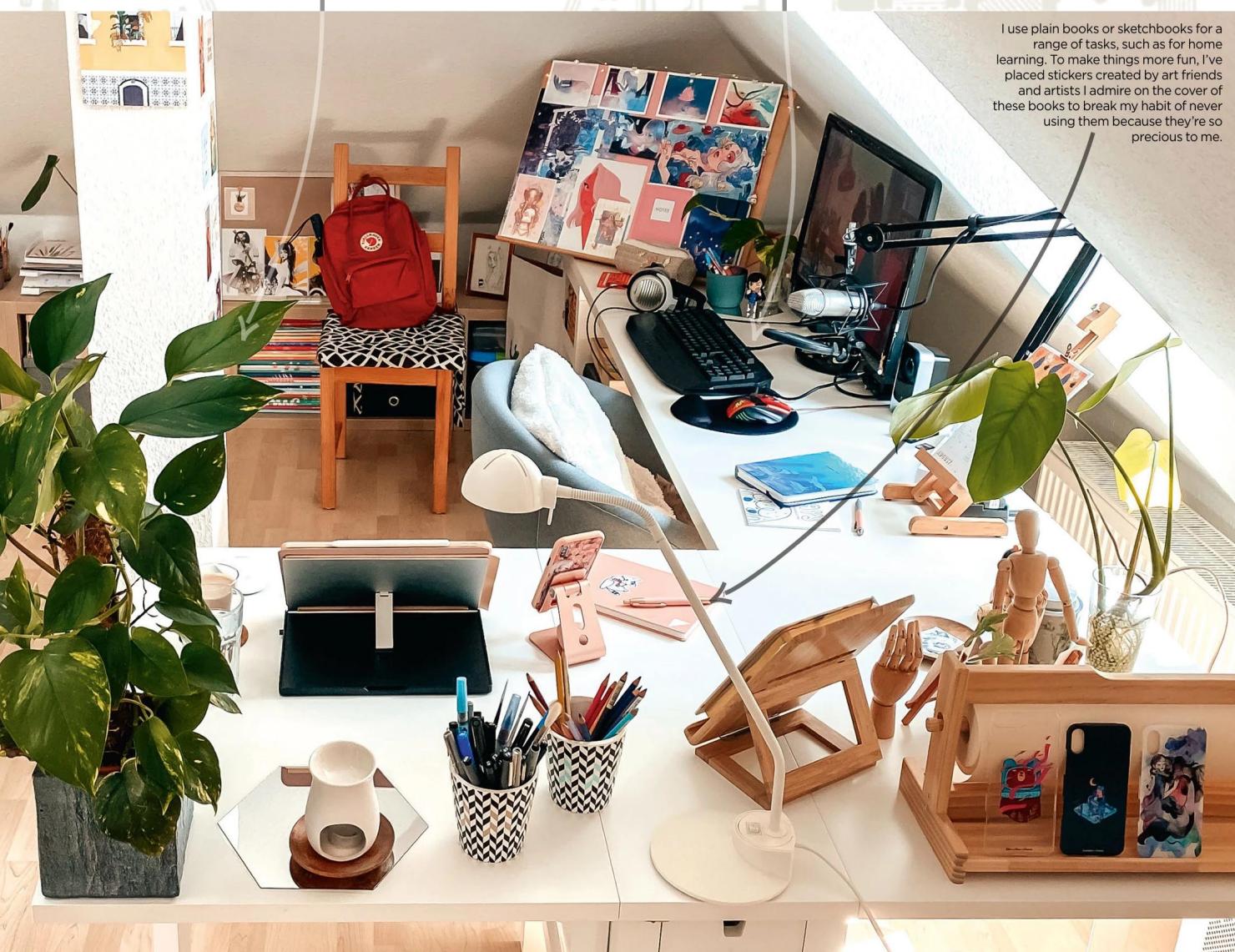
I love collecting pins and have them around me all the time. I put them on my pencil case, bags or on my desk.



There's a reason a leaf is part of my artist's logo. Being surrounded by plants and nature is why I love living in this spa town and go for regular walks. This Epipremnum aureum is a new home buddy I bought. It's also efficient at removing indoor pollutants, apparently.

Gaming mouse, keyboard, headphones and a microphone, what do you think I use this for? Why, they come in handy when talking to my friends on Discord, of course...

I'm still testing out different inking tools and brands, such as colourful inks that I think are actually more like watercolours.



I use plain books or sketchbooks for a range of tasks, such as for home learning. To make things more fun, I've placed stickers created by art friends and artists I admire on the cover of these books to break my habit of never using them because they're so precious to me.

# ImagineNation Artist in Residence



There are art books, children's books and some zines everywhere in the flat and the collection is growing. I like to support artists' Kickstarter campaigns, and buy their books at conventions or in their online shop before anywhere else!

► to podcasts to push through. I definitely trick myself into those healthy routines!

After some administrative work on my computer desk, balancing planning, emails, my Patreon and social media, I move my chair over to the other side and start my day with a warm-up sketch before I work on projects, jobs or commissions. Later, after a lunch break and another coffee, I start on personal projects, studies, or tackle something completely new that I want to master.

## WILLING TO LEARN

Because I never went to art school, I still educate myself a lot on things, such as how to run a business or further developing my art skills. At the moment I'm taking Schoolism classes to refresh and gain new knowledge. I do this for about two or three hours until my fiancé is on his way home. That's the time when I usually leave my



GRIS is one of my favourite games along with Journey, and this is one of my favourite pieces of fan art that I've ever drawn. I also own the art book, which is just wonderful but too big to put on my current shelves.

work area, do some household chores, go grocery shopping and more. I might or might not come back to it after we've had dinner and work again till midnight or longer, but I prefer to paint during the day.

When working I make sure to keep any distractions, such as my phone, away from me - but I do use it to film

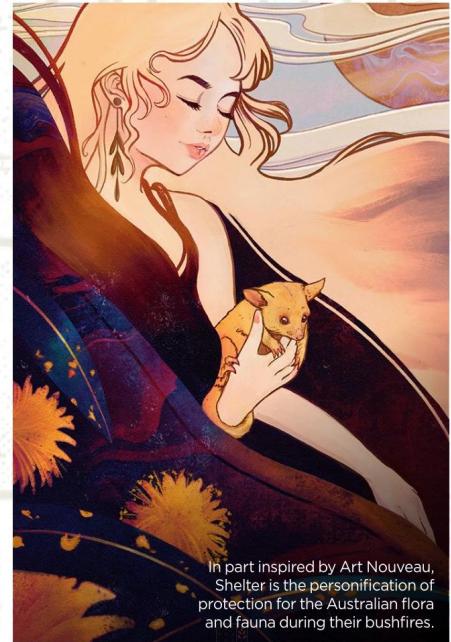
“I'm taking Schoolism classes to refresh and gain new knowledge”

process videos or take photos of my art. I know that music with singing or a fast rhythm often distracts me a lot, too, because it makes me want to start singing or dancing, so I prefer to play relaxing, lo-fi YouTube playlists on my PC, always on full-screen.

In my free time, I like to sit with friends or chat with the lovely creative community online. Seeing their work and talking with them really motivates me! I hope to meet some of them (again) some day...

**Known online as Looona Lou, Sarah is a 2D freelance artist who loves working on personal projects and collaborating with artists. See more at [www.loonalou.com](http://www.loonalou.com).**

# Artist news, software & events



Rather than try to mount lots of artworks on the sloping ceiling, I display inspiring paintings by friends and artist on one of the apartment's pillars.



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# Letters

## YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS



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



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

### Red-haired mermaid?

Still a fan of ImagineFX. Thank you for this great magazine about my craft. I notice you're up to your second (or third?) red-haired mermaid on the cover. As an illustrator I must say that not all mermaids have red hair and look like Disney's Ariel. Here's my latest work: a children's book cover. Mari even comes without a fish tail. That's something, isn't it?

**Nina Dulleck, Germany**



Artist Nina's cover art for *Mari - Girl from the Sea* features a mermaid who has blonde rather than red hair. And legs, too!

**Claire replies** *Nina, you've caught us out. We're suckers for the heady mix of red against a sea of blue! You're right, though, it doesn't always have to be that way. I absolutely love your mermaid painting! Readers, what else should we ditch? Let us know!*

### Digital or print?

I've been collecting and reading ImagineFX since issue 97. I'm now three copies into my eighth binder and my bookcase is groaning under the weight. I'm considering moving to a digital subscription, but wanted some advice first. On the one hand, I love the feel of hardcopy and having it to hand whenever I want it – it's quick and easy to flick through to get to the bit you want. On the other, a binder containing 13 magazines is quite a tome to search through and sit comfortably with.

Digital sounds like a good idea, but how easy it is to access, to flip between pages and search for articles? Can you download the issue or can it only be viewed online? Can you view it on a Windows platform using a PC monitor, rather than just a small Android or Apple tablet? Is it possible to zoom in to view



**DID YOU MISS THE PREVIOUS PACKED ISSUE?**  
Don't worry – you can get hold of issue 192 at <http://ifxm.ag/single-ifx>.

images? And finally, can I transfer a current hardcopy subscription or do I have to wait till it renews?

**Andy, Doncaster, England**

**Claire replies** *Andy, the best Windows option is <https://pocketmags.com/imaginefx>. There are options to read offline and you can zoom in, scroll between pages and so on. As for how easy it is to access, that's subjective and so it's probably best for you to try one out before you commit.*

*Because this and our other digital edition offerings (Apple Newsstand, Zinio, etc) are third-party companies, it'll be a separate transaction to your print edition through us, so unfortunately you're unable to transfer from print to digital. Please note that after you try out the digital option, the best digital editions subscription deal is via our online store (<http://ifxm.ag/sub-ifx>). Hope this helps. Let us know how you get on.*

### I need my hit!

Like an addict, when Covid-19 hit, my supply of IFX dried up. How the hell was I going to get that shot of inspiration from the feel of printed matter and being able to flick pages and wonder at the work before my eyes. I've been gathering these amazing magazines since issue one, and I think my last fix was some time in May. Problems, problems.

Each visit to my magazine dealer came up negative. Desperation, desperation. But wait. Get it online? Yeah! Problem solved. Ahh. Feels good to reconnect with all that inspiration and creativity. Keep up the fantastic work. What a great magazine. Love you guys, but miss the hard copies.

**John Skerlec, Sydney, Australia**

**Claire replies** *John, it's so nice to hear from you! Apologies for the complications getting your magazines to you, but thanks so much for your support. It has been a horrible few months for so many reasons, hasn't it?*

*We decided to go off the newsstands for a few issues (187-189) due to lockdown, stores being shut and air freight not being an option. BUT we've been back on the newsstands since issue 190. It has been a long haul, but we're hopefully out of the worst of it.*

*I see that you're based in Australia. It's taking much, much longer for magazines to get sent round the world. Are you now reading our digital editions? Some people prefer these!*

*If you have missed any editions, most of our recent print editions have been on sale at our online store: <http://ifxm.ag/single-ifx>.*

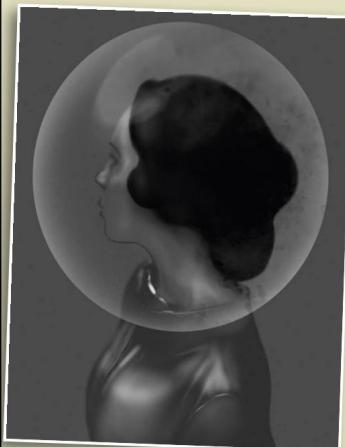
*Thanks again for your support. It means a lot. Stay safe!*



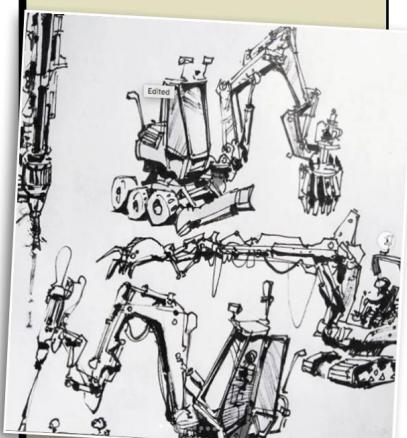
New works that have grabbed our attention



**Brett Schwindt**  
[@brettschwindt](http://brettschwindt.com)



**Gary Castelli**  
[@artgarycastelli](http://artgarycastelli.com)



**Thomas Kleinberger**  
[@thomas.kleinberger](http://thomas.kleinberger.com)

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

# Interview

## GOBLIN AMBUSH

"This was painted in watercolour and gouache, with the colours then heightened digitally."





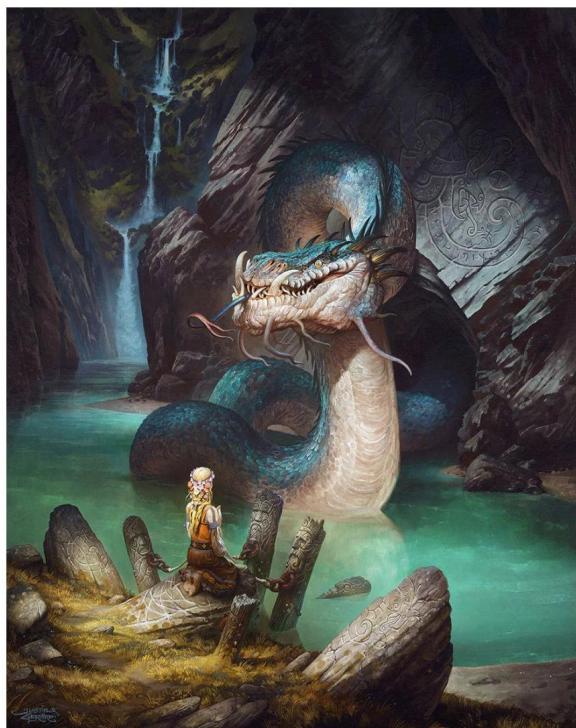
## ARTIST PORTFOLIO

# JUSTIN GERARD

**Gary Evans** discovers that this artist is happy to talk about exotic shrimp, bad business decisions and his former life as a roofer, but not his art...

**THREE-HEADED GRYPHON**

"I painted this for a demo live on Twitch. I love hearing all the crazy ideas in the chat feed."

**THE BASILISK**

"This image was done for a series inspired by the St. George legend."

**J**ustin Gerard is falling off a roof. He's on a job with this big Micronesian guy who looks like Maui from Moana. They're fixing the peak of a gable roof three stories up. Justin's taken a wrong step: he's put his foot down on a roof shingle that's been warmed by the morning sun. The thing about roof

shingles is they're grippy when cool, but slippery when warm. Justin's slipping down the roof and tumbling over the edge, and now it's a straight drop onto solid concrete. He's got just enough time to think: "Well, this is it for me. We had a good run."

Justin shouldn't be on a roof. He quit a few months back, partly because his boss set him on fire with a blowtorch, but mainly because he'd believed he was about to hit the big time as an artist. He had received a commission to illustrate a book, and the money was

good enough to buy himself a "real car." Justin drove his 1995 Nissan Pathfinder to his boss's office, and, just like a movie, told his boss: "I quit!"

Unfortunately, more art work didn't come his way. Justin spent all his money in a few months and had to ask for his roofing job back. Going back to roofing has made him "highly motivated" with his art. He's been roofing three days a week, and spending all his free time trying to build a better portfolio. It's taken nearly a year, but now he's getting enough regular art work to think about quitting roofing for good. ►►

## Artist PROFILE

### Justin Gerard

LOCATION: US

FAVOURITE ARTISTS: Paul Bonner, Thomas Fluharty, Scott Gustafson, Petar Meseldžija and Peter de Sève

MEDIA: Photoshop, oils, graphite and watercolours

WEB: [www.gallerygerard.com](http://www.gallerygerard.com)

**“I said my goodbyes to the misfits and my boss, and never looked back”**

# Interview

► He'll miss it. Roofing's a good workout, the money isn't bad, and he always has a nice tan. He'll even miss his pyromaniac boss ("a good guy deep down"), and the gang of misfits who are his workmates, one workmate in particular.

"Just as I go over the edge," Justin says, "Maui reaches out with his hook and catches me. I'm just hanging over the edge and he pulls me up.

"That was it. The next day, I said my goodbyes to the misfits and my boss – nicely this time – and I never looked back. Thankfully I haven't had to go back begging for my old job a third time."

## A REAL JOB

It's tricky getting Justin to talk about his art, though. Ask him what he does for a living, and the US illustrator might say: "I work in the graphic arts," because people understand that as a category of professional, rather than saying, 'I'm an artist,' which may as well just be: 'I'm unemployed and refuse to get a real job.'

**“Your average art college is more like expensive day care. Don’t bother...”**

## WERE-LIZARD

"This creature was fun to work on because there were so many different challenges with textures to try and sort out. Smooth teeth, leathery hide, hard scales, muddy cloth..."

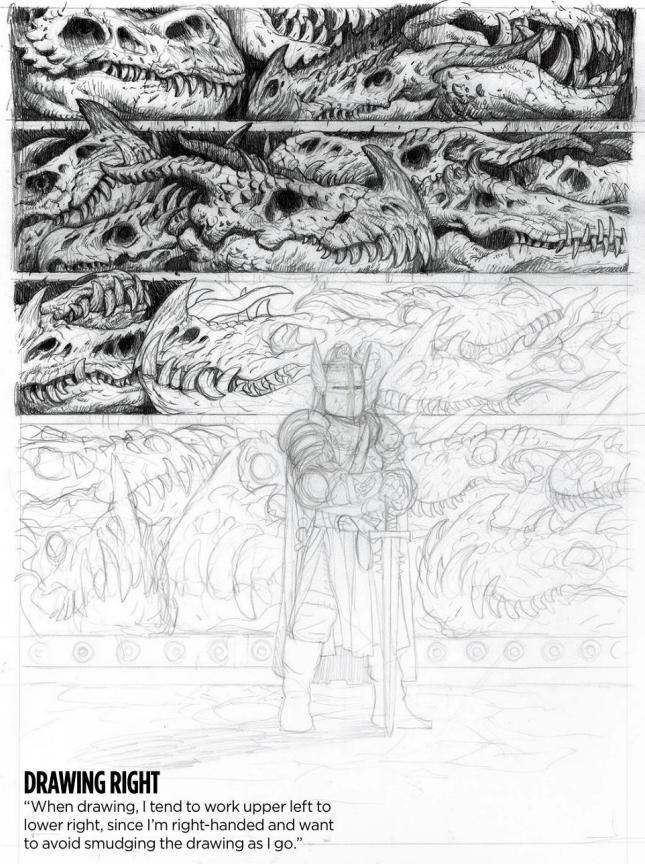


Justin grew up in a very religious community, so he knew nothing about fantasy art until college. His family moved around a lot, but his childhood was running about the woods, getting into bike wrecks, digging streams for salamanders. Justin was a "terrible student." Most classes, you'd find him doodling, not really listening to whatever was being taught. He had a high school art teacher, Mr Koontz, who helped him bridge that gap between doodler and proper artist. Mr Koontz taught him how to really

draw, to never settle for shortcuts. Justin started to consider art as a possible career choice.

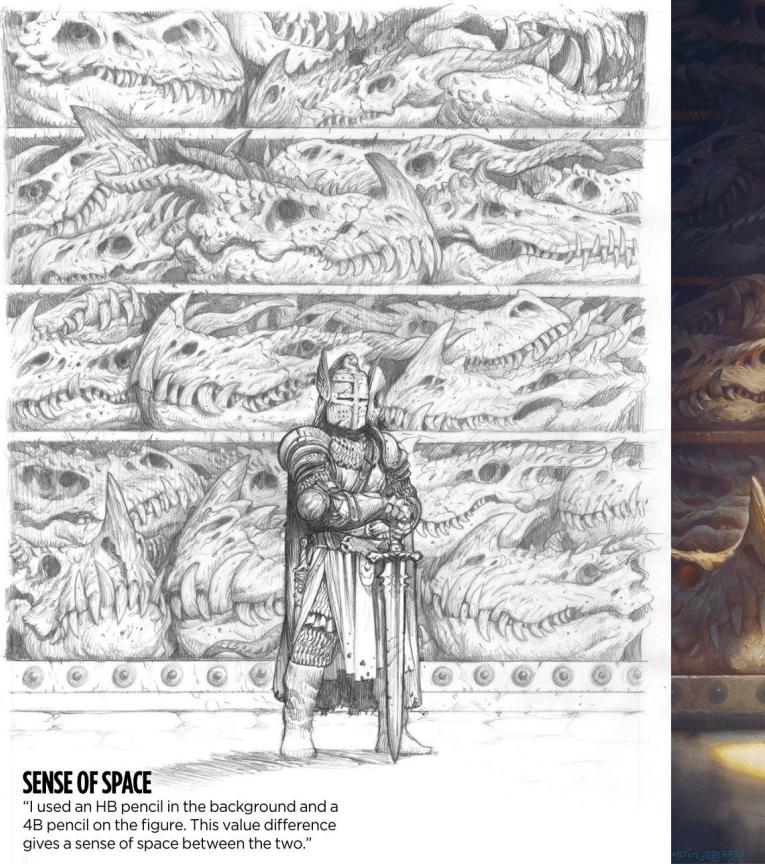
He studied 2D art at "a small college in southern Carolina," and had to unlearn pretty much everything he learned there. Justin doesn't recommend art school unless you want to teach art or you have a lot of disposable income.

He isn't saying there's no place for traditional art education – Mr Koontz was perhaps the most important person in his professional life. The first year of art school was good, when



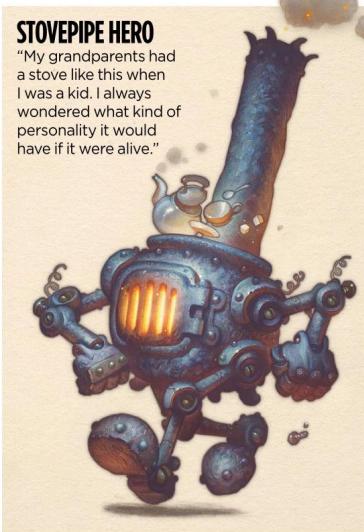
## DRAWING RIGHT

"When drawing, I tend to work upper left to lower right, since I'm right-handed and want to avoid smudging the drawing as I go."



## SENSE OF SPACE

"I used an HB pencil in the background and a 4B pencil on the figure. This value difference gives a sense of space between the two."



### STOVEPIPE HERO

"My grandparents had a stove like this when I was a kid. I always wondered what kind of personality it would have if it were alive."



### BEREN AND LÚTHIEN: DRAWN BACK TO LIFE

"This is Beren and Lúthien from The Silmarillion by JRR Tolkien. There's just so much wonderful material in his writing. I could spend the rest of my life illustrating scenes from it."

### THE DRAGONSLAYER

"I needed an image for my Patreon last year, and I asked Annie to play art director for me and give me a prompt: 'This was the result!'"



he learned the fundamentals. And he knows that some art schools have a good history of getting students into ever-popular studios such as Pixar and Disney.

However, Justin believes that the standard four-year programme at art school isn't practical if you want to be a freelancer or independent artist, because traditional art education failed to keep up with the educational materials available online. YouTube, SmArt School and one-on-one mentorships all offer much better value for the money, especially if art

school would mean taking out a hefty loan first.

"Assume that, as an artist, on the wages we typically make, you'll be paying back those loans for the rest of your life. Your average art college is more like unthinkably expensive day care, and will serve mostly to delay your adolescence. Don't bother. Take or audit some basic drawing classes to get the fundamentals down, and then study directly from the artists you love and want to emulate."

For young artists, or people just getting started, he recommends art courses at local community colleges. It's still good to have peers pushing you to get better. But where art schools

really fail – and community colleges can't really help with this – is preparing artists for "the real world of art."

### THE BUSINESS OF ART

Most of Justin's commercial work now comes from people crowdfunding their own projects. He was recently asked to do the cover for a writer who was self-publishing a book. Justin sent his rates, created a schedule, drafted contacts, and sent invoices, asking the writer to pay a third of the fee up front, a third after sending tight drawings, and the final third when the job's done.

"Most independent creators and self-publishing clients will have no idea about any of this, and it'll be up to ➤

## TIGHT DRAWING

"My general approach when illustrating a scene is to first produce a tight, clean drawing before moving on to colour."



## PUSHING DETAIL

"I don't necessarily stay inside of all the lines when I paint, but the drawing does act as a guide, and pushes the quality and detail of my final painting further."



► you to walk them through it and make it as painless as possible."

Big companies bring different pressures. They don't always pay as well as they should. Work is often sent back for corrections. And you often sign a non-disclosure agreement, meaning you can't share work. But these jobs have their positives. Justin has done work for titles like *The Hobbit* and authors such as Terry Pratchett, and both have dedicated fans. He's also

likely to sell sketches and original art made for the project, which makes up the shortfall in the fee.

"These are things I didn't hear anything about in art school, but turned out to be incredibly important for my survival," he says.

In the 90s, when Justin started as a freelancer, he bought books on "small business for dummies." Today, there are lots of good online courses in running a small business and, to help

you manage your money, software such as Quicken.

The problem, Justin believes, is that art teachers are academics who either have niche real-world experience or none at all: "Worse, many of them, sensing this, will engage in turf protection, where their judgements on people's work seems arbitrary and

**“Art teachers need to keep a grip on their own control as experts in their field...”**

unpredictable, because those teachers need to maintain a grip on their own control as experts in their field and guardians of secret art knowledge. That may sound mean, but it was my experience and is an experience I hear often repeated by students."

## STUDIO GERARD

Justin lives in Georgia with wife Annie Stegg Gerard and their twin boys, a dog, a couple of cats, 17 snails, 27 exotic shrimp, 43 fish and countless other transient outdoor creatures. He and Annie share a studio and ►



## LITTLE STUDIES

"I love making tiny studies and sketches before painting a scene. It helps me explore the narrative possibilities while also developing the characters."

# PAINTING A GHOSTLY FISH OUT OF WATER

Justin came up with this aquatic spectre while challenging himself to paint better and faster

"The Ghost Fish is from my Monster of the Month series, a challenge that I set for myself to improve my working time for painting, while also improving the quality. When I began, these images took me 20 hours. My goal is to get my process down to five hours.

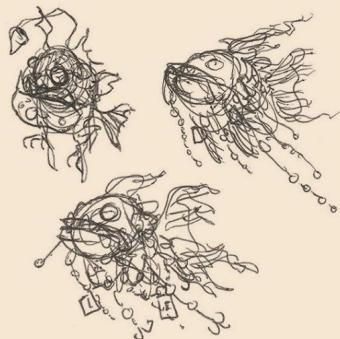
This is the general process on most of my images. I start with rough little scribbly sketches, each taking about a minute or two (1). I hit on one that I like and then do a more detailed free-hand drawing in colour pencil to flesh out the figure (2). I transfer

this to a new sheet of paper using a light table, and do a much more precise, detailed drawing (3).

The next step involves scanning the image into Photoshop, where I begin to add colour (4). I typically colour my line-work first using a colour layer, and then work over this using transparent layers, including Multiply, Color and Soft Light (5). Then I slowly build up to working in opaque layers: Normal, Screen and Hard Light (6). I originally learned how to illustrate as a traditional artist in watercolour and pencil,

so I developed my own brushes in Photoshop to simulate the effect of working traditionally.

I've painted about 70 monsters so far, but have only hit my goal of five hours three times. However, I'm averaging about seven hours per image now, instead of 20, so it's a big improvement, and I think that it's been one of the best projects I've ever done, as far as personal development goes. And the series has been a ton of fun, because who doesn't love a good monster?"



**1 INK THUMBNAIL SKETCHES**



**2 DESIGN PHASE, COLOUR PENCIL DRAWING**



**3 GRAPHITE TIGHT DRAWING**



**4 COLOURED LINE-WORK**



**5 SEMI-TRANSPARENT BRUSHWORK**

**6 SCREEN/SOFT LIGHT LAYERS**

# Interview



## THE HEDGE GUARD

"I painted this as part of a personal project of mine where I set out to do a series of 100 fantasy monsters, both as practice and just for fun."

► office: the studio used for traditional painting, the office for digital work. While Justin does this interview, Annie works on a painting. Playing in the background is a medley of songs performed on piano from fantasy animation show Adventure Time. Justin and Annie started Gallery Gerard in 2013. The studio specialises in fine art and narrative illustration, working with Disney, DreamWorks, Penguin Books, Wizards of the Coast, and plenty of other big names

Sometimes he and Annie work together on the same piece. Justin might do the drawing or the underpainting, Annie the final colour work. Working individually, they help each other choose which sketch to develop into a painting, point out things that might be missing in the image, or even do paintovers of one another's work.

"It's wonderful to live and work with someone who shares your passion and your dreams. I feel very lucky to have found Annie and to have this company with her."

Justin sketches fast and paints slow. He never spends more than a few minutes on sketches. A full illustration painting takes between seven and 12 days to complete. His ideas usually start in his sketchbook. ►



JUSTIN GERARD

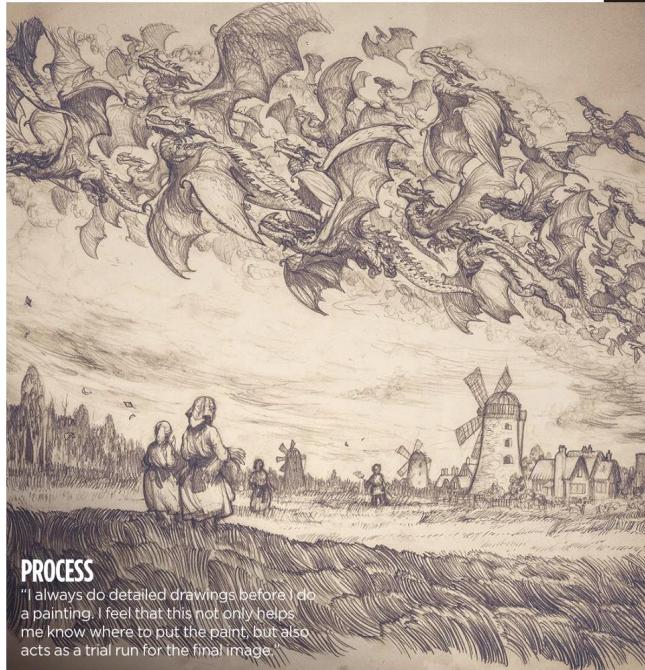
**DOWNFALL**

"This image presented a lot of fun textural challenges: smoke, rock, fire, leather and grass. I love images that offer this kind of variety and challenge!"



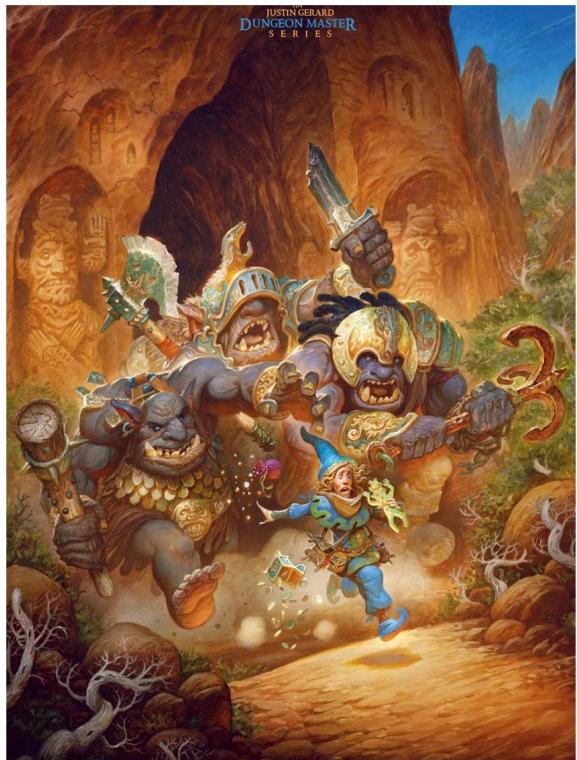
“It’s wonderful to live and work with someone who shares your passion and your dreams”

# Interview



## PROCESS

"I always do detailed drawings before I do a painting. I feel that this not only helps me know where to put the paint, but also acts as a trial run for the final image."



► "I think that's a must for an independent artist. The best teacher is always life itself, and having a sketchbook handy when life gives you ideas is one of the best things you can do for your work. The core of good art is trying to find something that you find interesting, and sharing it with the rest of the world in a way that will make them see it the way you see it."

Justin's happy to give these kind of tips on the craft and the businesses of being an artist, but he's still reluctant to talk about his own art, as if he

## CHOOSING FLIGHT

"This image was done as a love-letter to all those wonderful dungeon master RPG games I played with friends as a kid."



**“Art was a way to process complex emotions, and gave me a way to voice those feelings to others”**

worries he might talk away the magic and be forced back to roofing for a third time. His life is more comfortable now. Clients, no matter how demanding, never set him on fire with a blowtorch. But, when it comes to art, Justin's learned to tread carefully.

## SEARCHING FOR A SENSE OF WONDER

"Like most artists, a lot of my work has been a search to get back to some of the sense of wonder and excitement we find exploring the world as children, in awe at all the amazing wonders and possibilities it holds," Justin says. "Growing up, as real life sets in... that tends to fade. That's where art came in

for me. Art was a way to process complex emotions, and gave me a way to voice those feelings to others.

I wouldn't have explained it that way at the time, but that's what was happening in high school when I started to consider art as a career choice.

"If pressed on my artwork, I might just say, 'I draw dragons and hobbits and what-not' and then try and move the conversation along. Part of this is that I'm the worst critic of my own work and it fills me with a weird anxiety to talk about it. I also believe art ought to speak for itself, and if it needs words to prop it up, then maybe it isn't very good art."



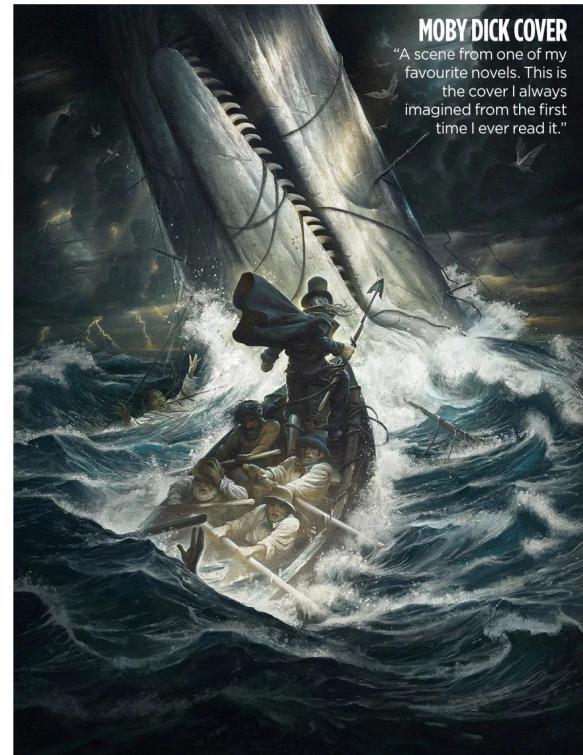
### A PLAGUE OF DRAGONS

"This is the cover image for my sketchbook published last year."



### TOTEM OF THE RAT KING

"Narrative illustration is still my favourite kind of artwork. This is one where not all of the characters have caught on to the impending peril they're in."



### MOBY DICK COVER

"A scene from one of my favourite novels. This is the cover I always imagined from the first time I ever read it."

## SAIL OFF COURSE

Justin on how artists find their voice by becoming lost on an art journey

Justin's work is influenced by artists from the Golden Age of Illustration (from the 1880s to the 1920s). He likes the work of Arthur Rackham, Edmund Dulac and John Bauer, illustrators who were themselves influenced by things that had gone before them, everything from the Pre-Raphaelites to Art Nouveau. It was by following this lineage, learning a little something from each artist and art movement, that Justin was able to develop his own unique voice: "It was not something I did intentionally. It just naturally occurred that I was amalgamating a technique distilled from the work of dozens of other artists."

Justin often returns to the work of Rackham and Bauer in particular. He likes how these artists use line and texture to communicate figures and forms, art that's full of personality and charm. But, no matter how much Justin studies their art, he would never be able to replicate it, and that's a good thing. Justin found his artistic voice not by copying his favourite illustrators, but by searching their work for "clues on how to create a better images," taking a little something from each of them and making it his own.

"It's really hard to truly copy another artist perfectly, particularly as you probably don't know who their core influences were. You don't know the point on the horizon they are sailing for, and so, no matter what, you're likely to end up on some other island, far off the course they were on."

"I had so many different influences. I would be chasing Rackham one week, and then studying Rembrandt the next. By bouncing around from inspiration to inspiration, you develop your own voice as you take small tricks from each of them."

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## PRINT AND DIGITAL BACK ISSUES



### Issue 192

November 2020

Karl Kopinski provides plenty of drawing advice, Iris Compiet tells us about working on Dark Crystal art and meeting Brian Froud, art directors reveal what they look for in applicants, Donglu Yu talks colour studies, and plenty more!



### Issue 191

October 2020

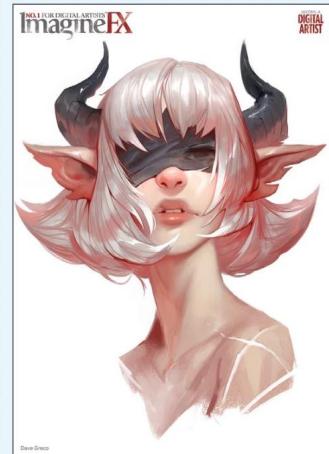
Bring your characters to life with the help of cover artist's Pietmaen's workshop, learn how to paint over a 3D environment, and create a surreal portrait. We talk to Pascal Blanché, and show how to get work via social media.



### 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.

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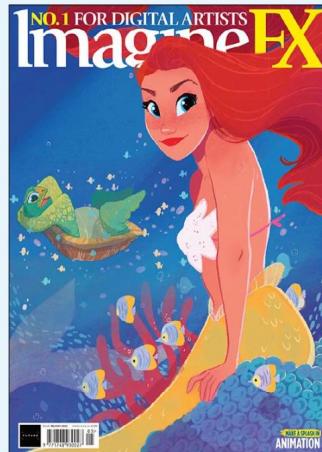
### Issue 188

July 2020



### Issue 187

June 2020



### Issue 186

May 2020



### Issue 185

April 2020



### Issue 184

March 2020



### Issue 183

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# Sketchbook

# Cory Trego-Erdner

Sketching digitally enables this artist to experiment with different drawing techniques while creating art for his D&D campaign



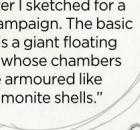
## SEA WITCHES

"A set of characters for my home D&D campaign. These ladies were a blast to draw. It was a lot of fun coming up with different sea motifs to use in their designs."



## HEART

"An abomination boss monster I sketched for a D&D campaign. The basic idea is a giant floating heart whose chambers are armoured like ammonite shells."



“It was a lot of fun coming up with different sea motifs to use in their designs”



## DWARF

"An old dwarf priest from my D&D campaign."



## Artist PROFILE

### Cory Trego-Erdner

LOCATION: US



Cory is a freelance illustrator and concept artist. He's been drawing creatures since he was six, and grew up looking at art books for the Star Wars and Lord of the Rings films. Cory's been working in the industry for just over 10 years, for such clients as Volta, Wizards of the Coast, and Red Fly Studio. He's a huge D&D nerd and so most of his personal art features characters and creatures from his own TTRPG campaigns.

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

# Sketchbook Cory Trego-Erdner



## KENKU

"For about a year, I worked with a couple of my friends on releasing some homebrew TTRPG content. This wise old kenku character is a sketch I did for one of our releases. I was happy with the technique I came up with for drawing her nest."

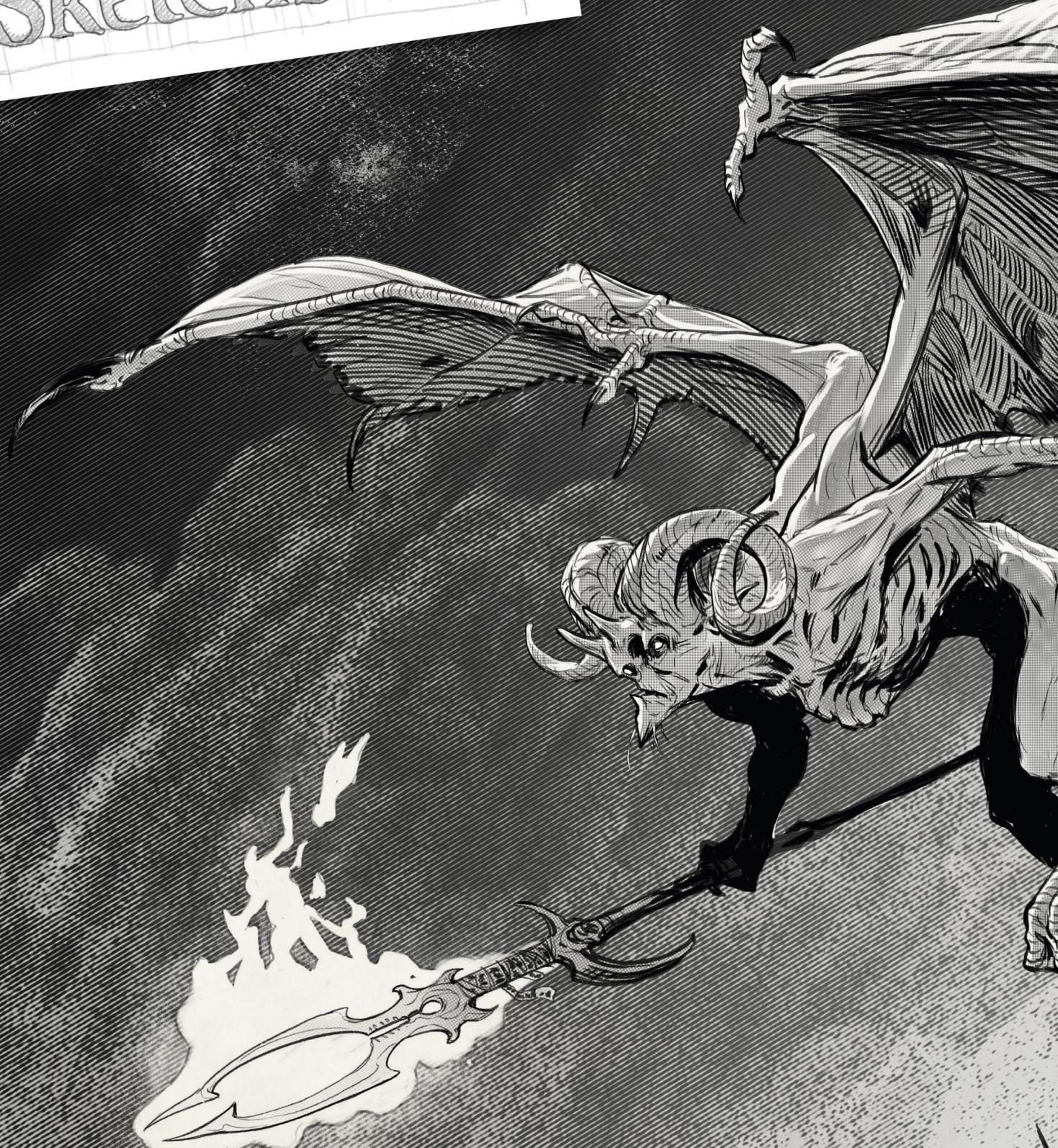


## KAZZAEL

"This intimidating character is from my D&D game. It's another piece where I tried to describe forms with intense hatching, varying my techniques for different materials. Thicker, rougher hatching for his lava-rock throne, and softer and more marker-like hatching for his robes."

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# Sketchbook





## HORNED DEVIL

"I'll occasionally  
redesign some  
of my favourite  
D&D monsters."

# Sketchbook



## PRIESTESS

"This lizard priestess was really fun to draw. I based her design on iguanas and Mexican beaded lizards."



## HUMUNCULI

"Some hideous, witch homunculi creatures I drew for my game. I used to work in a very hatch-heavy style when I did ink sketches, but I don't work in that style as often these days."



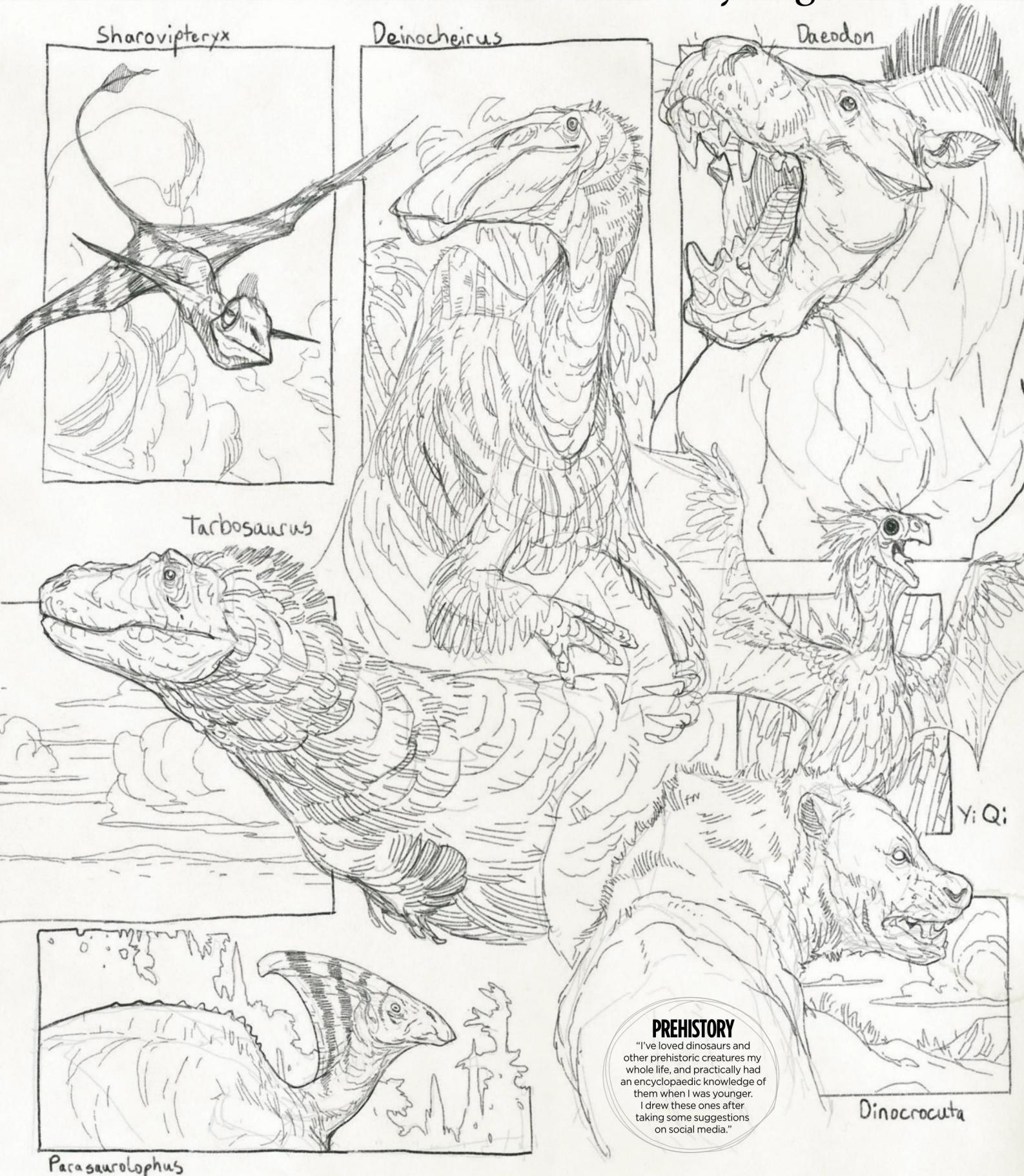
## PALEOHYDRA

"These ink sketches can get somewhat laborious, so my goal with this one was to try to draw more quickly and loosely without sacrificing either detail or quality."



“Finding a new brush or tool can bring a lot of freshness and energy to my work...”

# Sketchbook Cory Trego-Erdner



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

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# Workshops

**Workshops assets  
are available...**

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Advice from the world's best artists



## This issue:

### **56 Lose yourself in illustration**

Embracing change can improve your art, says Audra Auclair.

### **62 Use composition to boost drama**

Klaus Scherwinski reveals how to give a scene more impact.

### **68 16 tips on film costume design**

Take your costume designs to the next level with Phillip Bouthé Jr.

### **76 Improve your keyframe skills**

Bimpe Alliu creates a keyframe using 2D and 3D tools.



# Workshops



# Traditional art skills & Procreate LOSE YOURSELF IN ILLUSTRATION

**Audra Auclair** shares why spontaneity and embracing big changes can not only be freeing, but also help to improve the final piece

## Artist PROFILE

**Audra Auclair**  
LOCATION: Canada

Audra is a Victoria-based artist who specialises in exploring the surreal and beautiful human form with her fusion of fine art and illustration.  
[www.audraauclair.com](http://www.audraauclair.com)



This workshop shows how I use gouache and the spontaneous madness that is my creative process. I've experimented with various mediums, hungry to try everything.

I love watercolour for its fluidity and quick drying times, but I'm not able to change a painting mid-way. Oil has incredible results with the smoothest blending, but it has longer dry times. Gouache checks every box

for me. It can be watered down and used like watercolour, and the hybrid acrylic gouache gives extra coverage when I need to make big changes, which is important to me. I follow wherever the paint takes me; if it takes me in another direction part-way through the painting, I won't resist.

This workshop will focus on conceptualising on the fly. To avoid muddying the colours, I use either watered-down gouache or watercolour for skin and base layers,

which helps me out later because it's easier to blend into this base layer.

Gouache is like a relationship: over time I've got to know and understand that certain paints will dry darker or lighter on paper than it looks straight out of the tube. Because of the variety of which the colours dry, it's helped me to loosen up and see the beautiful variety in tones that gouache's unpredictability may offer. Perhaps our unpredictability is what makes us a great pair...

## WORKSHOP MATERIALS

### PAPER

Fabriano Artistico 300lb hot press single sheet

### PENCIL

Prismacolor Col-Erase in Crimson red

### ERASER

Faber-Castell coloured kneaded eraser

### PAINT

Holbein Gouache, Holbein Acrylic gouache and Schmincke Horadam 48 Half Pan Watercolor Set

### BRUSHES

Princeton Select Artist Series and Trekkell watercolour bushes

### DIGITAL

Procreate on the iPad Pro

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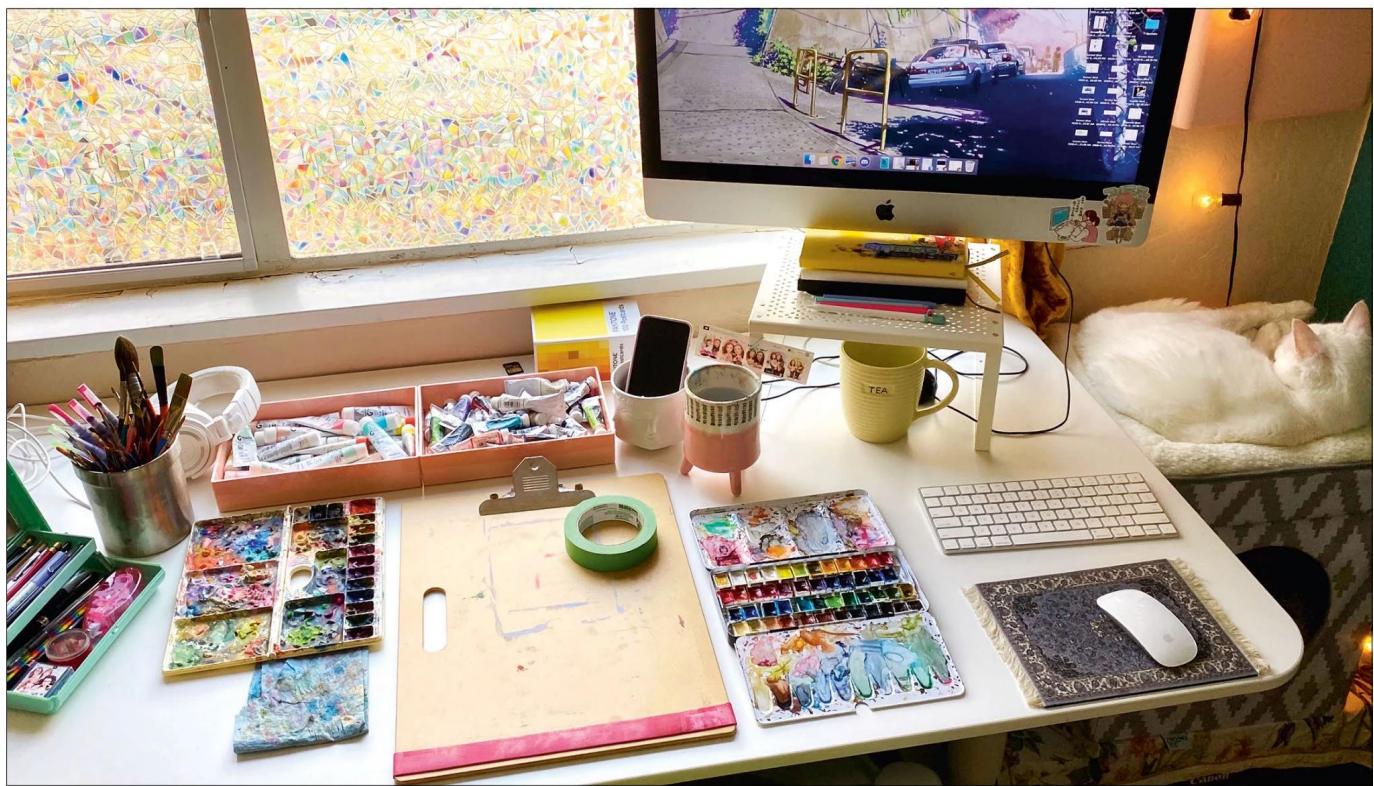
Description:



### 1 Spend time conceptualising the artwork

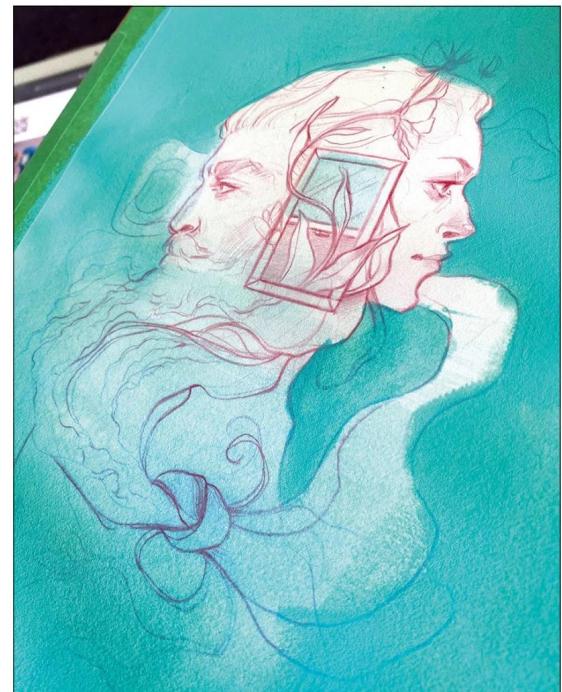
I don't often conceptualise much at the beginning of my pieces unless I'm working with a client. My initial sketches have more movement and interest when I allow myself to work on the fly. But because this piece is for a cover, I create a rough initial concept and then a rough sketch. This two-headed person has been in my mind for a while. ➤

# Workshops



## 2 Setting up my painting materials

I don't keep my paints out all the time, so I have to arrange everything that I'm about to use. This is important to me. I have ADHD, so I need to make sure everything is near me and in the most optimal location for good workflow and to minimise distractions from my art. Having a decent music playlist or TV show in the background helps me stay focused.



## 3 Preparing for sketching

I like to use a blendable coloured pencil for the sketch I intend to build on top (Prismacolor Col-Erase pencils are my favourite). I prepare a thick piece of Fabriano paper and tape it to a board with painter's tape so that the paper won't warp when I add water to it later (it also adds a nice border when it's peeled off).

## 4 Adding a flat background

I begin with a wash of acrylic gouache for my background while keeping it away from areas like the face. I don't mind the background being patchy, because my concept is still a bit loose, but usually it's easiest to perfect your flat background before moving forward.



## 5 Applying base colours

I use regular gouache and watercolours for the base colours. If you can't choose a colour palette, I suggest picking three or four colours and building your painting around them. I had a fairly solid idea in my head of the colour layout, but I suggest doing a quick colour comp in watercolour or markers if you aren't certain.



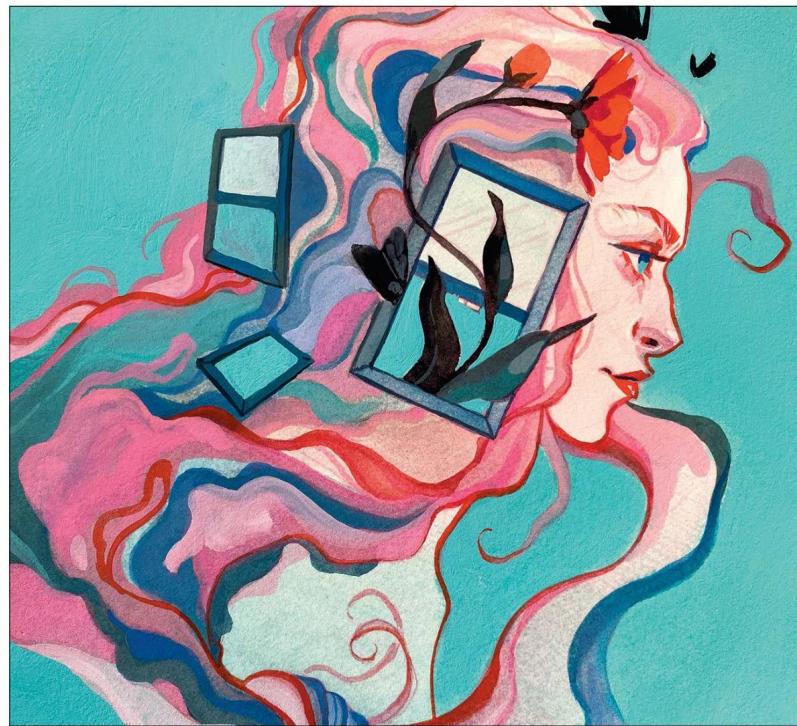
## 6 Time to reconceptualise the piece

After the previous stage, I'm not happy with how the man's head is turning out; it's just not what I had initially envisioned. I want to come back to this double-headed concept in the future, but it isn't working for this particular painting. I take a photo of the painting and airdrop it onto my iPad to conceptualise in Procreate. I'm very happy with the new concept so let's move onward.



## 7 Make edits with acrylic gouache

Regular gouache lifts when you paint over it. It's best not to use too many layers of gouache – that's how it becomes muddy and challenging to use. To make this big change, I use the acrylic gouache hybrid that I used on the background earlier. Regular gouache will work on top of it as long as it's not watered down. I'm using regular gouache for the window sills.



## 8 Build up layers with gouache

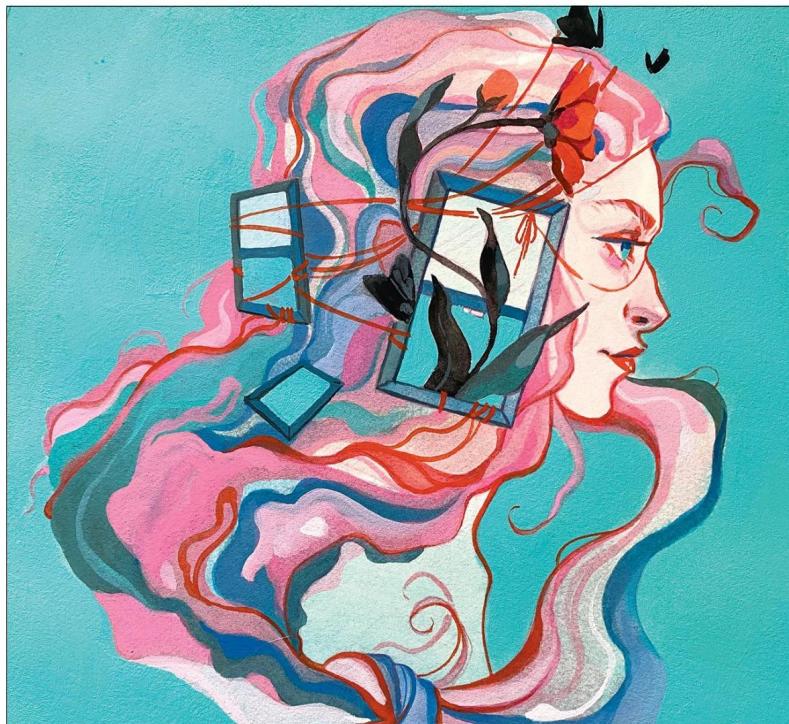
This is the fun part where you get to begin beautifying your piece. I add thicker layers of gouache and solidify the idea that I had in my head. This is a very explorative part for me, as I make micro-edits with regular gouache to see if certain shapes or placements are working well. ➤

# Workshops



## 9 Flip image horizontally

I take some time to flip the image with a mirror to make sure there's nothing out of place with the face before I move onwards. This can reveal any anatomical issues that might be present in the piece. Thankfully, I don't see anything wrong here, so I can move to the next step.



## 10 Background touch-ups and strings

I spend time fixing patches on the background before I begin adding too many details on top of it. After that, I'll add some of the strings with gouache. If I don't like the placements of any strings, I just paint over them with gouache and move them to new areas.

## 11 Time for a flower edit

The red of the flower isn't standing out enough, so I decide to paint it grey. I'm going to use regular thick gouache to paint over it. If I used thinned-out grey gouache, it would pull up the red and just make the petals pink. If you make the gouache thick enough, it'll cover the lower level, but avoid this for too many layers, because it'll begin to get messy.



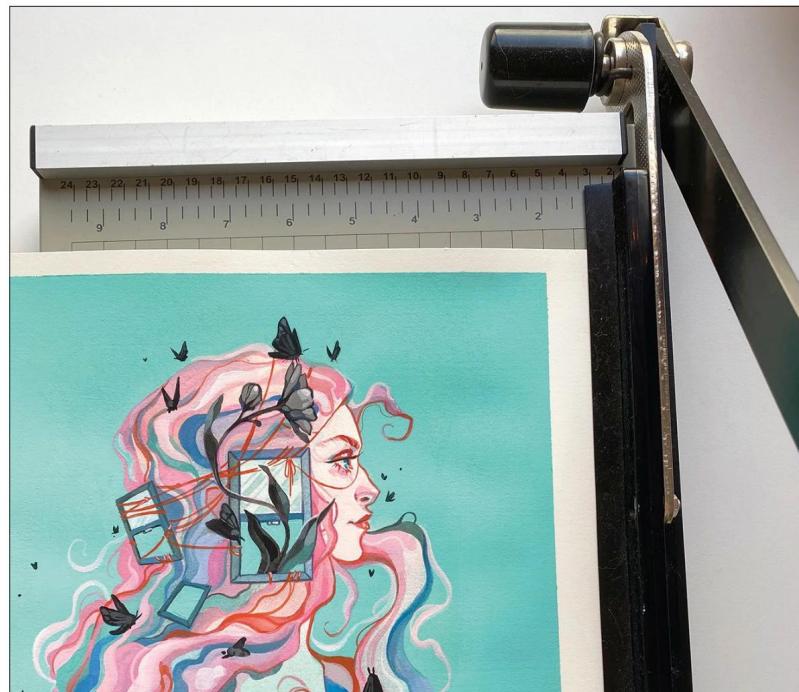
## 12 Putting the final touches to the eye and face

I'm nearing the end of the painting, so I'm going to take this time to add final touches to the face. I apply tiny bits of blue and make micro-edits to the nose and eyebrows. I'm also painting moths to the painting to create more movement and enhance the personal meaning of the art.



## 13 Extend the bottom of the piece

After looking at the painting for a while, it feels a little strange to be levitating, so I decide to extend the hair and butterflies to the bottom. It's something that I might return to in the distant future, but for now, for its purpose, I'd say it's complete.



## 14 Peel tape off and trim edges

Because I'm using very thick paper, I can easily peel my tape off the edges. If you're using tape on a particular type of paper for the first time, I suggest using a blow dryer to make peeling the tape off easier and avoid ripping your paper. I'm also going to finish the painting off by trimming the edges so the white is the same width all around.

# Photoshop & Procreate USE COMPOSITION TO BOOST DRAMA

Storyboard artist **Klaus Scherwinski**  
applies compositional techniques to  
give a dramatic scene more impact



In depth Boost drama



# Workshops

## Artist PROFILE

**Klaus Scherwinski**  
LOCATION: Germany

Klaus has been working in visual storytelling for 20 years. He recently provided storyboards for the upcoming PS5 game *Horizon: Forbidden West*.  
<http://ifxm.ag/klaus-s>



When I give workshops I often encounter student drawings that open up learning opportunities beyond merely addressing fundamental drawing techniques. For example, correctly drawing every joint in a character's hand is sometimes not as important as where their hand is positioned in the drawing, and whether that hand is open or closed.

The initial sketch (shown below left), was drawn well by a talented student storyteller and is already pretty effective in conveying to the viewer the gist of the action. However, with a bit of work (see below right) I can show the student a few staging tricks so the image has more drama in it.

In this workshop I'll be looking at how characters are arranged in the frame to enhance the drama of the scene. I'll begin by highlighting the

original's shortcomings in terms of creating depth and clarity, before examining how I apply techniques in the revised sketch to take the initial narrative to a higher level.

Of course, coming up with an original story and putting down a visual for it is the hardest part of this process, and critiquing it is much easier as an outsider. I'm thankful that I can learn new things by analysing student pieces. Okay, let's dive right in!

### ORIGINAL SKETCH



### REVISED SKETCH



#### 1 Place side by side for easy comparison

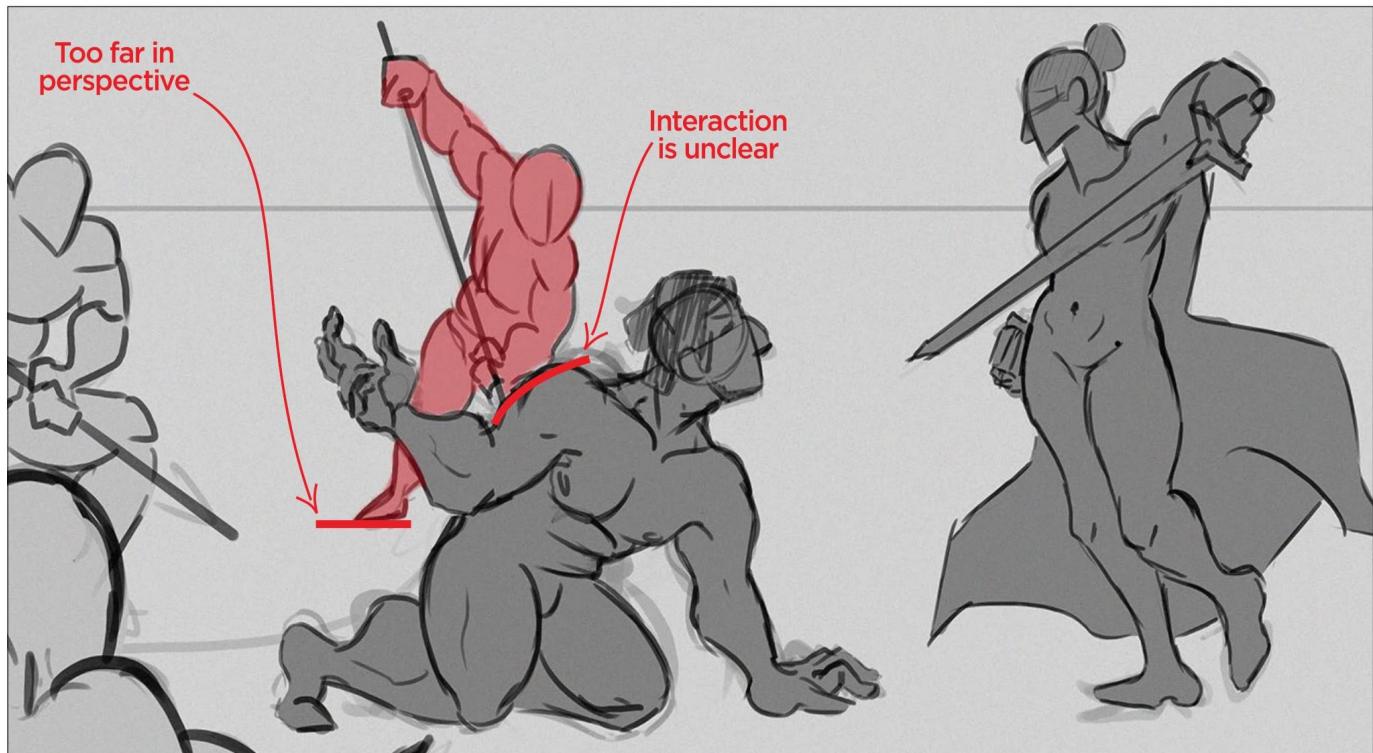
The best way to compare a sketch to its revision is without adding rendering or bringing new, different elements. Fleshing out details, lighting and textures would obscure the lessons that this side-by-side comparison can provide. Both are rough sketches and tell a clear and simple story, but one clearly has more dramatic impact. Let's look at some basic principles of why that is.

Outside the live area



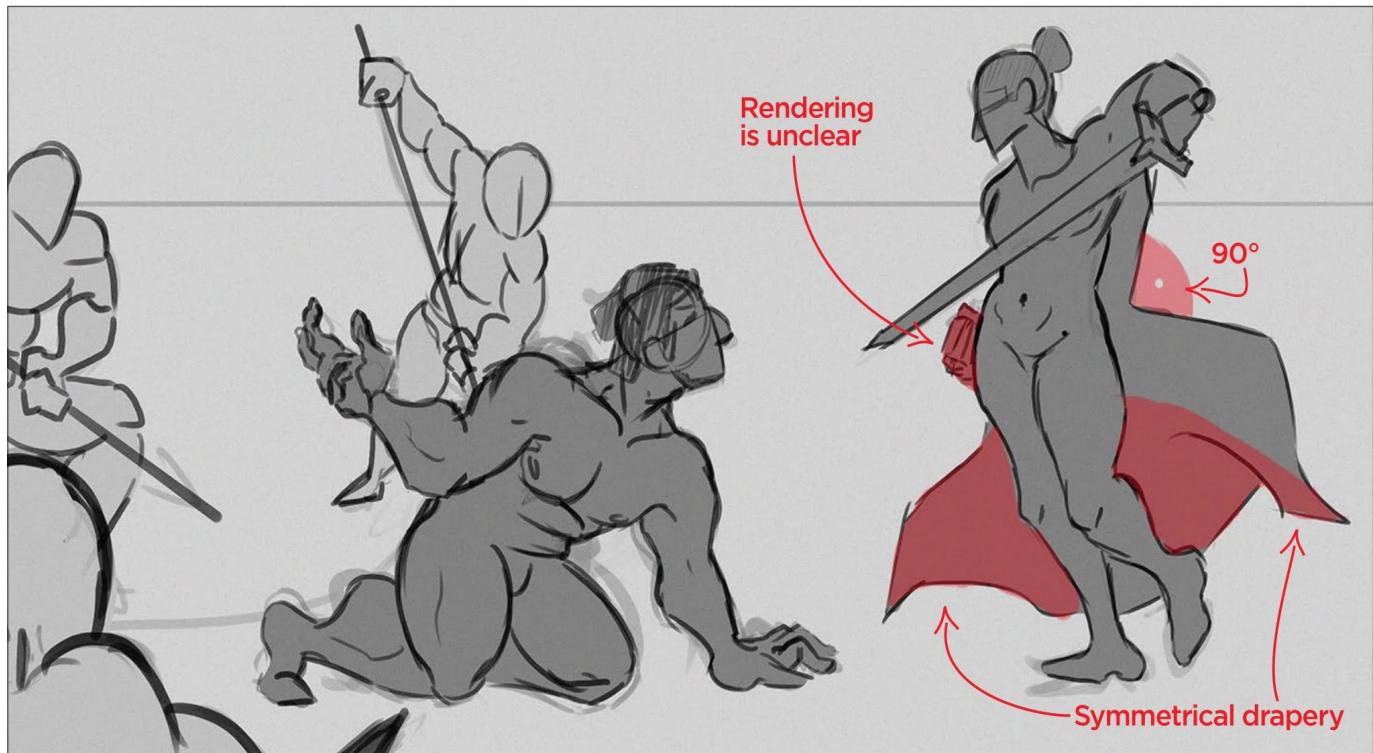
#### 2 Keeping the core elements centred

Always bear in mind the "live area". This is a virtual space that's set well away from the edge of the illustration. The guards on the edge (red) are positioned too far away from the centre and feel unconnected to the main scene. There's no overlap with the central figures and the guard in the corner isn't placed correctly in perspective. Furthermore, he's in the corner. Pro tip: never place key elements in the corner!



### 3 Ensure there's clarity in your characters' interaction

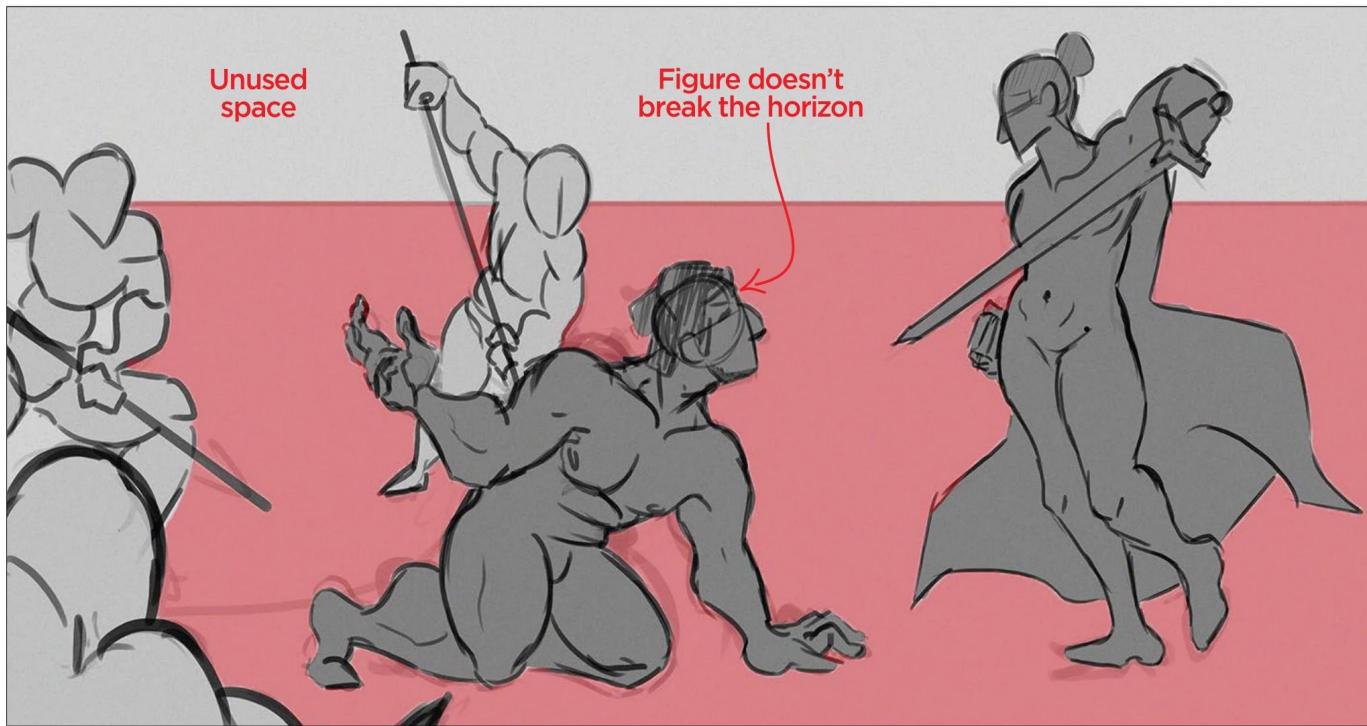
The guard behind the man who's surrendering is too far away in perspective. Ramming the staff into the man's back doesn't work from where he's standing. Some unintended tangents on the shoulder also makes the pose harder to read. Even background characters should have a good read, especially when they interact with the protagonists of the scene.



### 4 Minimal rendering can obscure key elements

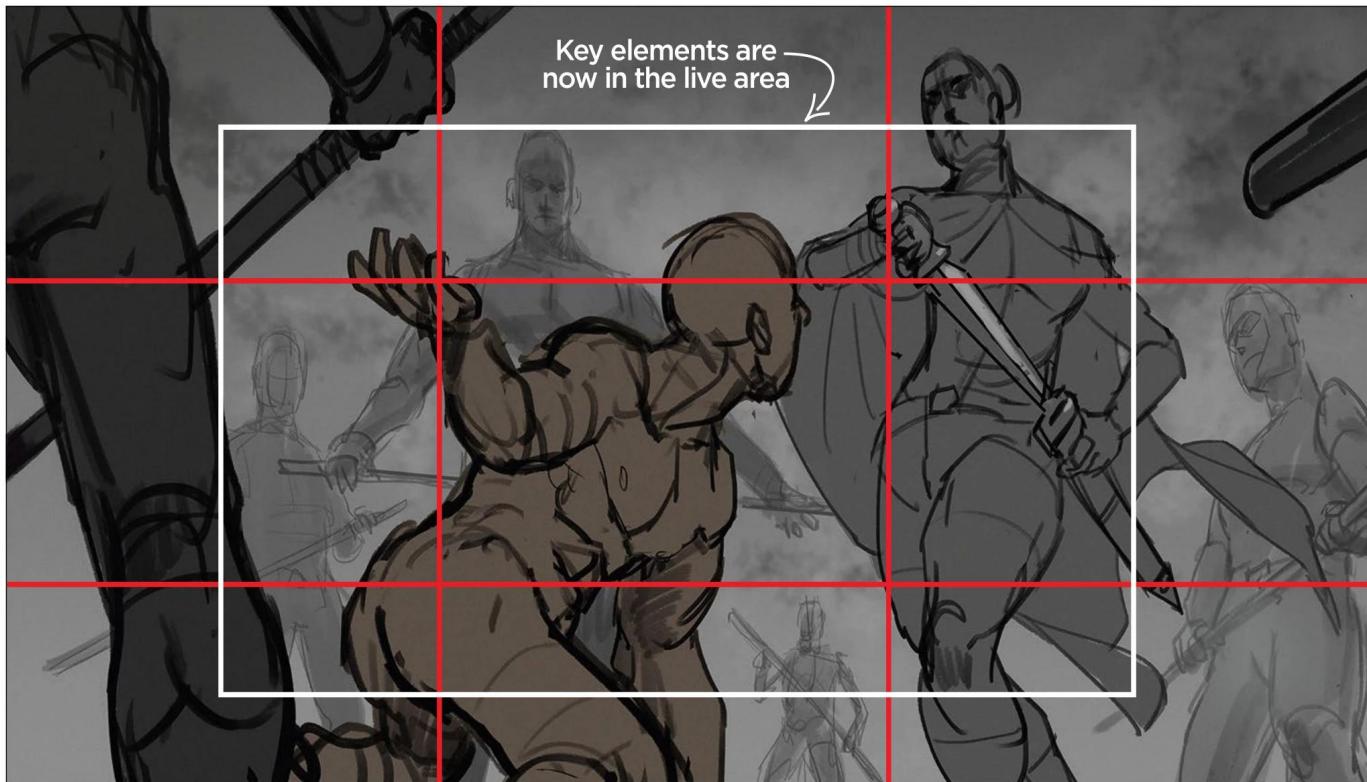
As a rule, any two axes in a 90 degree angle will look static, but particularly with drapery we have to give it as much flow as possible. If we show sideways movement in the female figure we also want to see her cloak move accordingly. Having the end seams fall symmetrically on both sides of the body detracts from this. It took me a minute to identify the hand clutching the sheath of the sword. While this is just a sketch (the bodies are basically naked), a bit more attention to key storytelling elements would be warranted so the viewer can grasp everything quickly. ➡

# Workshops



## 5 Use the available space wisely

This medium-height shot is good for a static overview of the scene, but it also removes the viewer from the action. Do we need to show this much of the ground? I see a lot of empty frame on the left, behind our central story situation, and I think it can be used better. If we lower the horizon then the man's head would pop out against the sky, rather than be set against the (potential) detail of the ground. A lower angle would also embed the viewer in the scene instead of hovering above it, so that's exactly what I opt for in the revision.

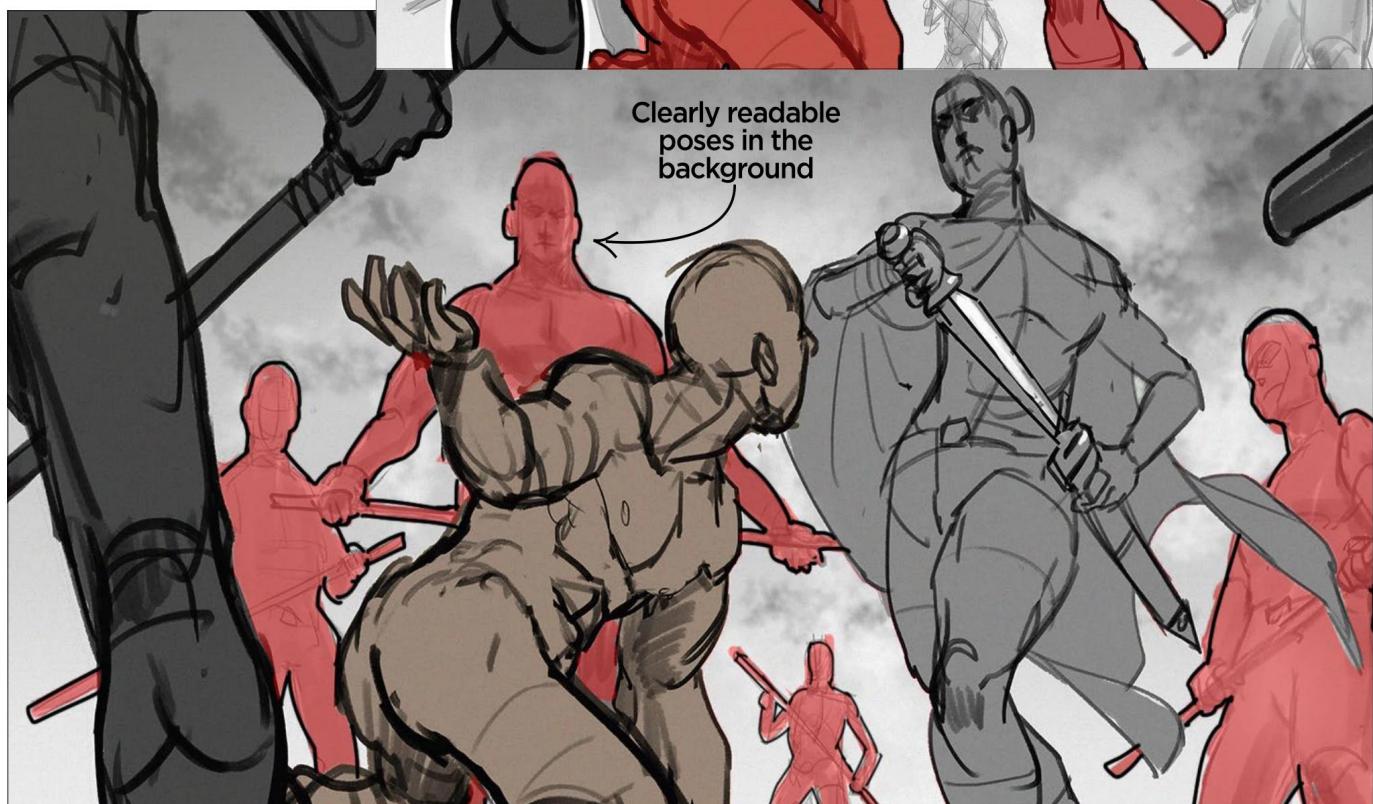


## 6 Back to compositional basics

The Rule of Thirds (the red lines) encourages you to place key elements on where the lines meet. There's nothing magical about these points, however. It's more important to keep everything central to the narrative in the 'live area' (white frame) and guide the viewer into the composition without letting them escape. Placing key storytelling elements on the edge of the frame would be detrimental to that.

## 7 Depth adds story

Using three planes of depth with lots of overlap will help tremendously in luring the viewer into the composition. Employing values (light and dark) and allocating details in the same way will also push your focus. If you look at my revised frame and the finished illustration you'll also notice stronger lines around the foreground figures and more delicate line-work in the background. This is not accidental.

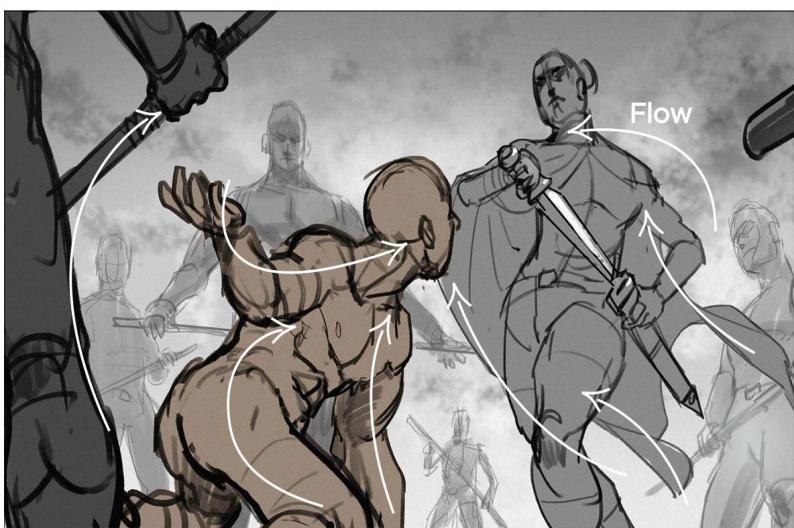


## 8 Clarity in your overlaps

Even background figures should have readable silhouettes. I want to avoid bad tangents so it's clear which elements are touching and which are behind or in front of each other. The student's sketch had too many elements placed alongside each other. I'm giving the background guards more variation in their poses too, with each one holding their staff differently to keep things interesting.

## 9 Letting the story flow

I'm using framing elements to always push the viewer's eye back into the central area, while a range of dynamic edges lead their attention to the essence of the story. I let everything converge on the man's head as he attempts to negotiate and on the female figure's hand as she draws her sword, potentially ending any last-minute discussions. The rest is basically just bystanders, helping us concentrate on what's important: the story.



## Artist insight

# 16 TIPS ON COSTUME DESIGN FOR FILM

Finding yourself stuck on how to take your costume designs to the next level? Film industry pro **Phillip Bouthé Jr.** has some creative solutions...

### Artist PROFILE

**Phillip Bouthé Jr.**

LOCATION: US

Phillip has worked as a costume concept artist for many films, including Black Panther, A Wrinkle in Time and Once Upon a Time... in Hollywood.  
<http://ifxm.ag/phillip-b>



I didn't set out to be a costume concept artist. That gift was bestowed on me over time by following my passion for character design and film, and finding a way to combine them. This involved lots of hard work and being in the right place at the right time.

I went to San Diego Comic-Con shortly after college graduation,

where I saw a panel of costume designers speaking about their job working in the films and television. Armed with just my portfolio, I made my way to their autograph table to take a chance on showing off my work while hoping for a solid review, and maybe even a job.

Encouraged by the designers to join The Costume Designer's Guild, Local 892, I did just that and was

hired a month later by costume designer Sanja Hays to work on my first feature film, The Mummy 3: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor.

Since then, I've worked with some of the most revered costume designers in the film industry. It's because of that experience that I have a plethora of costume ideologies to share, and to this day I use each of them in my daily work.



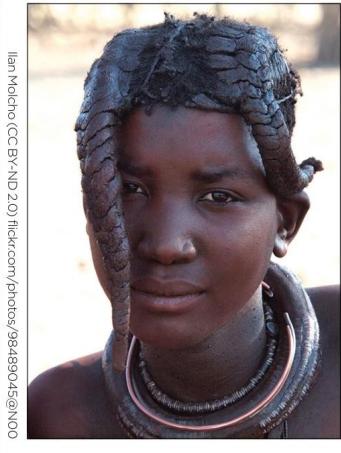
### 1 BE OPEN TO INSPIRATION

Inspiration vibrates all around us on multiple different frequencies. The most important thing is to make sure that your mind is open enough to receive the signal. Working on Marvel's Black Panther was a life-changing experience. I learned and retained so much information about African culture, and I became heavily inspired by Afro-Futurism. Because of this, I decided to try my hand at giving the classic anime Akira directed by Katsuhiro Otomo a character redesign, giving it an Afro-futuristic setting while placing the African Diaspora front and centre.



## 2 RESEARCH IS FOOD FOR YOUR THOUGHTS

Your mind is a muscle and it needs nourishment to grow. Research provides such nourishment! As an artist, you can only draw what you understand and so it's vital to arm yourself with as much proverbial "armour" as possible when tackling the task at hand. For example, travel and take photographs. You never know if you might be able to use those images later on in your designs. In this image you might see the back of an opera house chair, but I see the beginnings of a wicked armoured collar!



Gusjer (CC BY 2.0) flickr.com/photos/gusjer

## 3 ESTABLISH THE "WHY" FOR YOUR CHARACTER

One of the questions I ask myself over and over again is, "What is the why?" This is important. It's not enough to just draw a costume for your character. You must know why they're wearing what they're wearing. Akira's Kaneda is based heavily on the Himba tribe and his hook braid represents his maturity into becoming a man. Tetsuo is also based on the Himba. Her duel braids are often seen in female Himba adolescents and so I chose that hairstyle to hint at her lack of maturity and her impetuous nature.

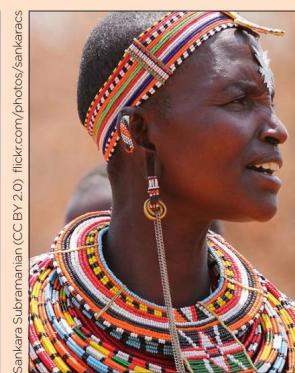


Gusjer (CC BY 2.0) flickr.com/photos/gusjer

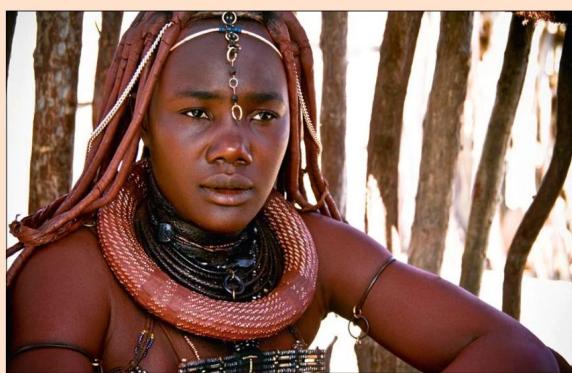
**“It's not enough to draw a costume for your character. You must know why they're wearing what they're wearing”**



WendyJin (CC BY-ND 2.0) flickr.com/photos/wendyjin



Sankha Subramanian (CC BY 2.0) flickr.com/photos/sankha

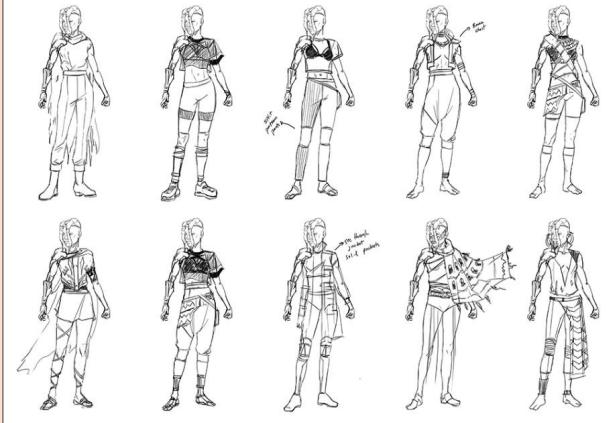
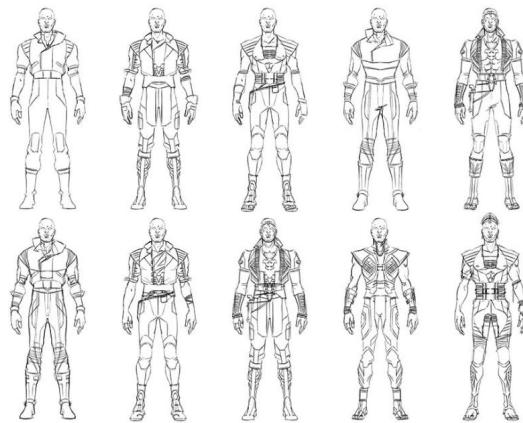


Marc Verhaert (CC BY-ND 2.0) flickr.com/photos/marverhaert

## 4 SET THE MOOD... BOARD

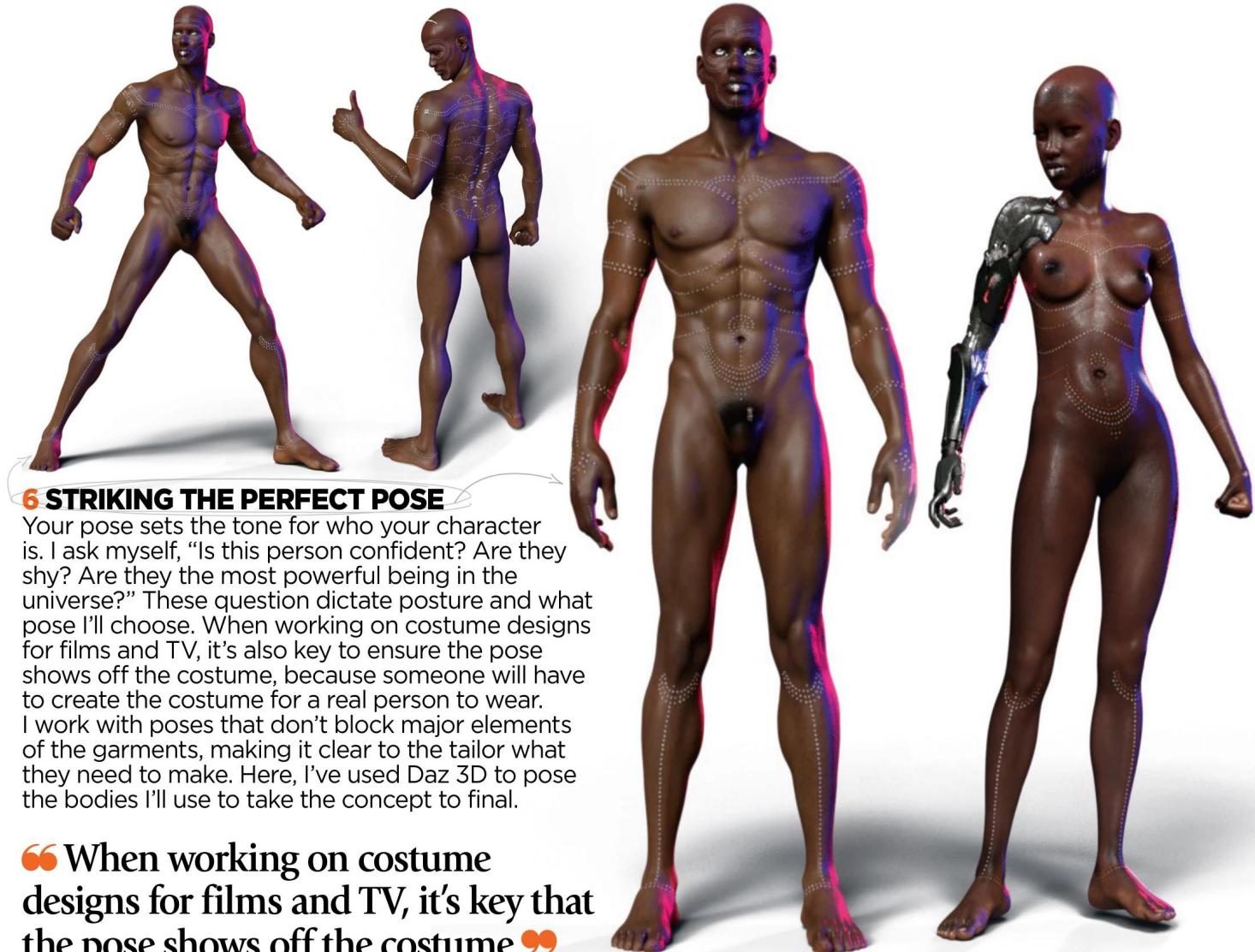
Once I have my inspiration and research, I fill a mood board with reference images that will help me to complete the recipe of the character I'm trying to build. I often think that conceptualising costumes is similar to being a chef. I take the time to pick out the best ingredients, with the ultimate goal being that the flavour profiles show through in the final product. I seek to find images that give me creative reinforcement to the ideas I have, and I want to pick out the best examples that keep me on-topic and on-task. ➤➤

# Workshops



## 5 THUMBNAILS AND BRAINSTORMING

I want to ensure that I'm getting my ideas out quickly without getting stuck on noodling little details. I start with a horizontal canvas where I can set up multiple base figures side by side. I then drop a white fill layer on top of this and reduce the Opacity to 50 per cent. Then I simply sketch ideas on top of the models, moving from one figure to the next. It's important to "know when to say when" and I quickly move from figure to figure, idea to idea, until I have a page of various costume ideas to choose from.



## 6 STRIKING THE PERFECT POSE

Your pose sets the tone for who your character is. I ask myself, "Is this person confident? Are they shy? Are they the most powerful being in the universe?" These questions dictate posture and what pose I'll choose. When working on costume designs for films and TV, it's also key to ensure the pose shows off the costume, because someone will have to create the costume for a real person to wear. I work with poses that don't block major elements of the garments, making it clear to the tailor what they need to make. Here, I've used Daz 3D to pose the bodies I'll use to take the concept to final.

“When working on costume designs for films and TV, it's key that the pose shows off the costume”



## 7 IT'S ALL IN THE FACE

If the eyes are the window to the soul, then the face is the gatekeeper to having a successful costume concept. Now, you may be asking why I find the face to be important when we're talking about costume design. In my experience, a character's face can sell a costume. It's in our nature to look at the face first before anything else, so I want that face to be solid, because I'm well aware that when a director or producer looks at it, the main focus should be approving the overall costume design so that it can go into production.



## 8 THAT SPECIAL SOMETHING

I like to add at least one personal detail that might not mean anything to the casual viewer, but helps me to cement a character into being fully thought out. Tetsuo's gauntlet call-out features a face carving to represent lost souls of the southern cape, Burkina Faso carvings that represent humble beginnings, and lastly, the idea that Burkina Faso is a landlocked sovereign state which shares no borders with an ocean or body of water. This is meant to represent the inner turmoil of a character who craves power and is yearning to belong.

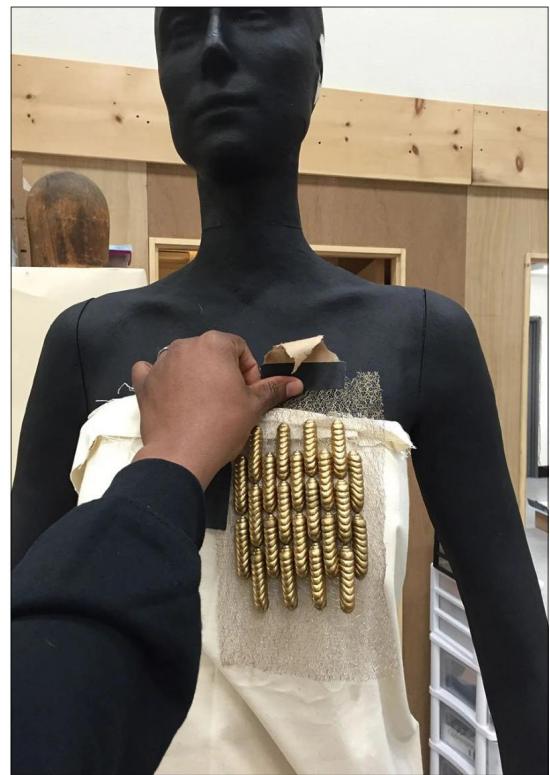


## 9 SHADES OF GREYSCALE

Flesh out your character in greyscale before thinking about complex issues like materials and colour. This step is important because you can focus on aspects such as lighting and design without them becoming complicated. I follow the old adage of painting from general to specific. Remember to keep it simple and add more details as you progress. ➔

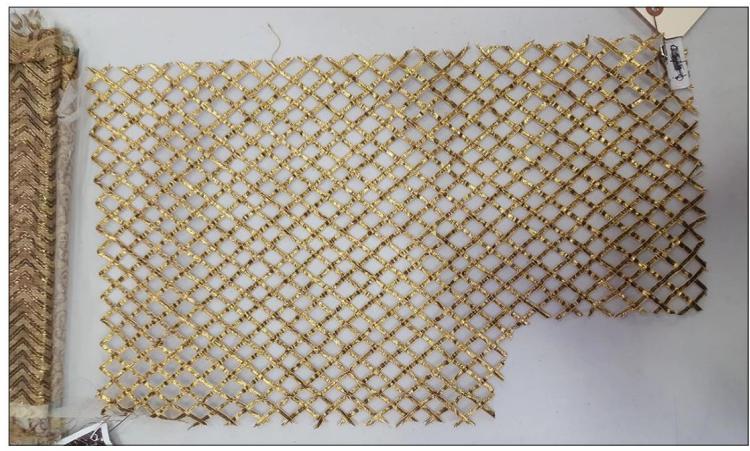
# Workshops

© 2017 Disney/Marvel



## 10 LET'S TALK ABOUT MATERIALS AND COLOUR BLOCKING

Once I have my greyscale character in a good place, I like to do breakdowns to figure out basic colour blocking and what materials I'm going to be using. Being able to distinguish the difference between materials such as leather and chiffon is crucial to making sure your costume feels more grounded. When in doubt, I try to touch the fabric, play with it under the light and get a general sense for how it reacts to different scenarios. For Ayesha's handmaidens seen in Guardians of the Galaxy 2, I used real-world reference to build the costume concepts.



## 11 PAINTING A LIKENESS

Learn how to illustrate faces by taking an approach similar to working in oils



### A Work your values from dark to light

Find a great reference of your actor. Do a basic line drawing of the head and face. Fill it in with the darkest value that you intend to use. Here, I'm going to build up from the darkest value to the lightest.



### B Smooth out key areas and refine shadows

Block in basic shapes and values. You can do this by colour picking from your initial reference or painting values using greyscale only. Use a blending brush to smooth out areas that don't require hard edges. Pay attention to your core shadows to help turn form.



### C Define facial details

Go in and define details such as eyebrows, eyelashes and the highlights that are visible on the nose, top lip and inner corners of the eye. Painting the face means that it will "take" paint better than using a photo. Adding details like hair becomes more about shape and less about detail.

## 12 QUALITY OVER QUANTITY

You're hired for what you know, not what you don't know. Take your time and try to push yourself. I remind myself often that I need to stress the importance of a really solid design over just pumping out sub-par ideas that are executed quickly. The slowdown in pace often clears my head and makes stronger ideas more prevalent.

“I remind myself often that I need to stress the importance of a really solid design...”

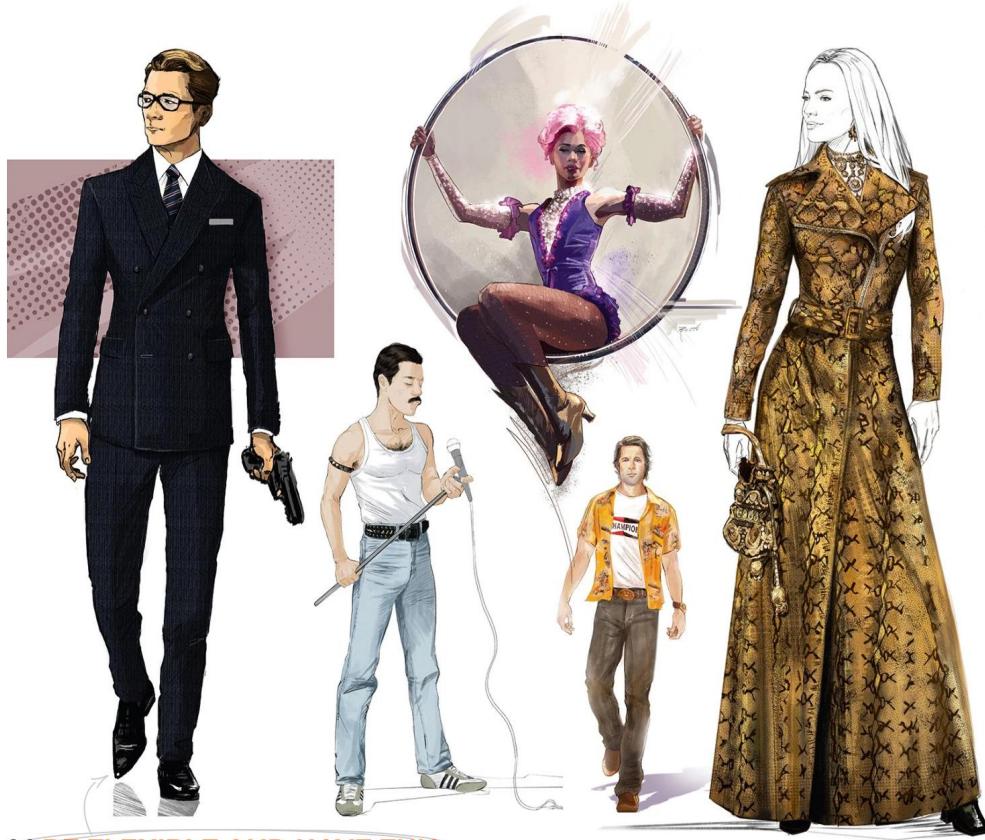


## 13 COSTUME DESIGN SHOULD BE VIEWED AS CHARACTER DESIGN, TOO

Costumes take on a life of their own and they're often the first thing you notice about a character. Character and costume design are one and the same. I use costume in a variety of ways to get my point across. In the case of my Kaneda design, I translated the classic phrase, "Good for health, bad for education" into the African language Herero. Mine loosely reads, "He is in good health, he is in bad health." In addition, Tetsuo wears belts around her waist that represent both male and female Himba aesthetics. ➤

# Workshops

Kingsman: The Secret Service, Bohemian Rhapsody and The Greatest Showman  
© 20th Century Fox/Disney, Once Upon a Time in Hollywood © Sony Pictures



## 14 BE FLEXIBLE AND HAVE FUN

Always challenge yourself in your work, but also have fun. That is, after all, why we as artists gravitate towards art. It provides us with an avenue to get out our inspirations, but it's also quite enjoyable. Often on projects, I like to switch my style in order to highlight the tone of the film that I'm working on. For Kingsman, I illustrated in a more comic book style. For Bohemian Rhapsody, Once Upon a Time in Hollywood and The Greatest Showman, I chose to take more traditional drawing approaches.



Ashley Van Haften (Public Domain) flickr.com/photos/wikimediacommons

## 15 HISTORY IS CONCEPTUAL, USE IT

It's important to look at costume design throughout history to formulate ideals that can help propel your designs forward into being able to think more conceptually. For women, clothing has always been somewhat skewed towards the male gaze. Items like crinoline cages and bustles are used to accentuate various feminine assets. Knowing this, it's then safe to say that if you're designing for a distant alien race that values intelligence, your costume could accentuate or elongate the neck in order to showcase what they hold most important: the head that houses the mind.

## 16 REMEMBER THE ART OF THE SELL

As a costume concept artist, my job is to help sell an idea to the director and the studio. I use all the tips and thoughts highlighted here to ensure the best results and to give the designs a high success rate of being approved. Style choices, adding in backgrounds to cement the character into the action, or even just simply the confidence of the pose all play a part and work seamlessly together. If I can find a little of the human condition represented in the costume, then I know I've been successful. 🍀



Next month

Artist Mel Milton  
paints our next  
issue's cover!  
We can't wait!

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

# Let's paint!

We've got all the inspiration and advice you need to dive into your next work of art!

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## **Get it into perspective**

Mike Corriero on how he works with forced perspective using Procreate.

## **Interview: Sam Nassour**

The art director for Rovio talks cute characters, mobile games and more.

## **How not to be a d\*\*k**

We discuss how the industry can move forward after recent shock allegations.

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Reader art, artist studios, inspiring sketchbooks and lots of art advice!

**ISSUE 194 ON SALE IN PRINT & DIGITAL 30 OCTOBER**



## Octane Render & Photoshop **IMPROVE YOUR KEYFRAME SKILLS**

**Bimpe Alliu** shares her process for creating a keyframe using Octane Render for the foundation before painting in it Photoshop



## Artist PROFILE

**Bimpe Alliu**  
LOCATION: England

Bimpe is a concept artist and illustrator at Industrial Light and Magic London. She started her career in the VFX industry as a runner and art assistant before moving into the role of concept artist.  
<http://ifxm.ag/bimpe-a>



This workshop features a standalone image from a personal piece. My process usually involves modelling or sculpting 3D assets in software like Blender or Maya, rendering in Octane and then moving into Photoshop for the final composition and paintover. I sometimes start pieces with a quick and rough sketch or photobash to help me get my ideas down before I move into 3D.

The keyframe itself was inspired by a couple of photos I'd seen of a similar setting, and I came up with a few ideas of what moment I wanted to capture and how the space could support the characters I wanted to place within it.

Composition and lighting are key elements to visual storytelling and development, so I experimented with different angles and lighting scenarios before taking this into 2D to further emphasise those aspects.

I like to paint over my images quite a bit so I don't tend to spend too much time giving my assets detailed textures. In some cases I may just apply a simple diffuse texture with a bit of a bump or normal map (or displacement, depending on what scene I'm creating). So most of my time in 3D is spent experimenting with my overall layout and composition, and then playing around with lighting scenarios before my final render. ➤

## CAPTURE A DRAMATIC MOMENT

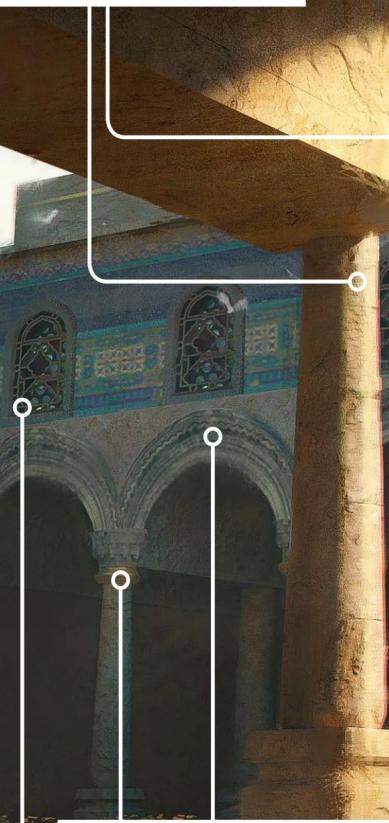
### Breaking the edges

This is a good way to knock back noisy elements while adding focus to the focal point, so the hard edges aren't consistently drawing your eye. I'm careful not to overdo this so my whole image doesn't become a soft blur!



### Exposing for shadow

This was a great tip that I was given from a friend and colleague. For this piece in particular, by almost overexposing the light I'm able to have more colour and value variation in the shadow and have more control over my overall image.



### Architectural detailing

I add a bit of detailing from references and will sometimes apply these with a layer mode such as Overlay, and then add further Adjustment Layers or use the Blend If sliders to make additional changes.

## How I create... A DYNAMIC KEYFRAME

### 1 Composition and lighting

Once I've constructed or laid out my 3D assets I jump into Octane Standalone Render to establish my camera and light my scene. I'll also make any minor composition adjustments as necessary. I usually render out various lighting passes and mix some of these together when I'm working in Photoshop.



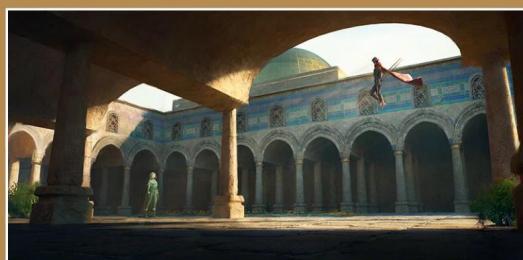


## The focal point

I try to use details and lighting to draw attention to my main focal point. In this case it's a mixture of both. I usually test out a few different things, sometimes finding I need to include or remove certain elements or play with colour contrasting.

## High contrast

I like to pay a lot of attention to this, especially if I have a key character or object. Again, this lends itself to supporting the focal point. If you look at a lot of stills of famous scenes from films and break them down into two or three values, you tend to find that the key element can be found among the highest points of contrast. The same can also be done with colour.



## 2 Adding and removing detail

I like to knock back any artefacts or heavy texture details in the render by painting over them. I also start to lightly smudge certain parts such as hard edges so these areas don't detract from the focal point. I also play around with exposure to emphasis the lighting.

## 3 Final touches and painting over

By this point I'm painting over the artwork to include or remove details and using Photoshop adjustment layers to unify or emphasize certain areas in the scene. I finish by adding a little bit of a saturation adjustment and slight grain.

## WORKSHOP BRUSHES

### PHOTOSHOP

#### CUSTOM BRUSHES: CHALK SMUDGE



I use this with the Smudge Tool to help break up any hard edges that I would like to soften.

#### BLOCK IN/PAINTOVER



My go-to brush (original creator unknown) for blocking out art, and painting over concepts.

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# ImagineFX

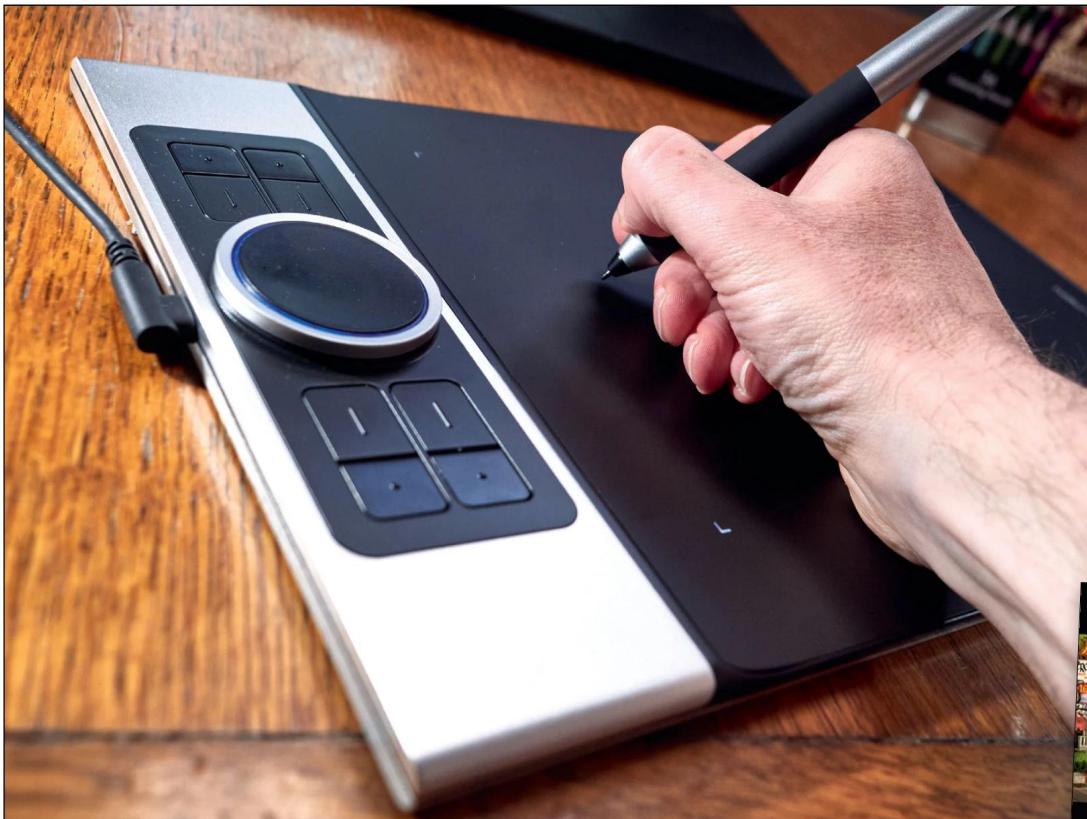
# Reviews



## Artist's Choice Award

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

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



4  
PRODUCTS  
ON TEST



### HARDWARE

#### 82 Deco Pro Medium

We test XP-Pen's latest device to find out if this low-cost drawing tablet can challenge Wacom's dominance in the market.

### BOOKS

#### 84 Fundamentals of Creature Design

Pro artists are on hand to teach you how to approach imaginative creature design.



#### 85 Blade Runner 2049 - Interlinked - The Art

Revisit the world of Blade Runner 2049 through the lens of leading concept artists.



#### 85 The Art of Onward

There's plenty of art magic on display in this exploration of the concepts and storyboards created for Pixar's latest film.

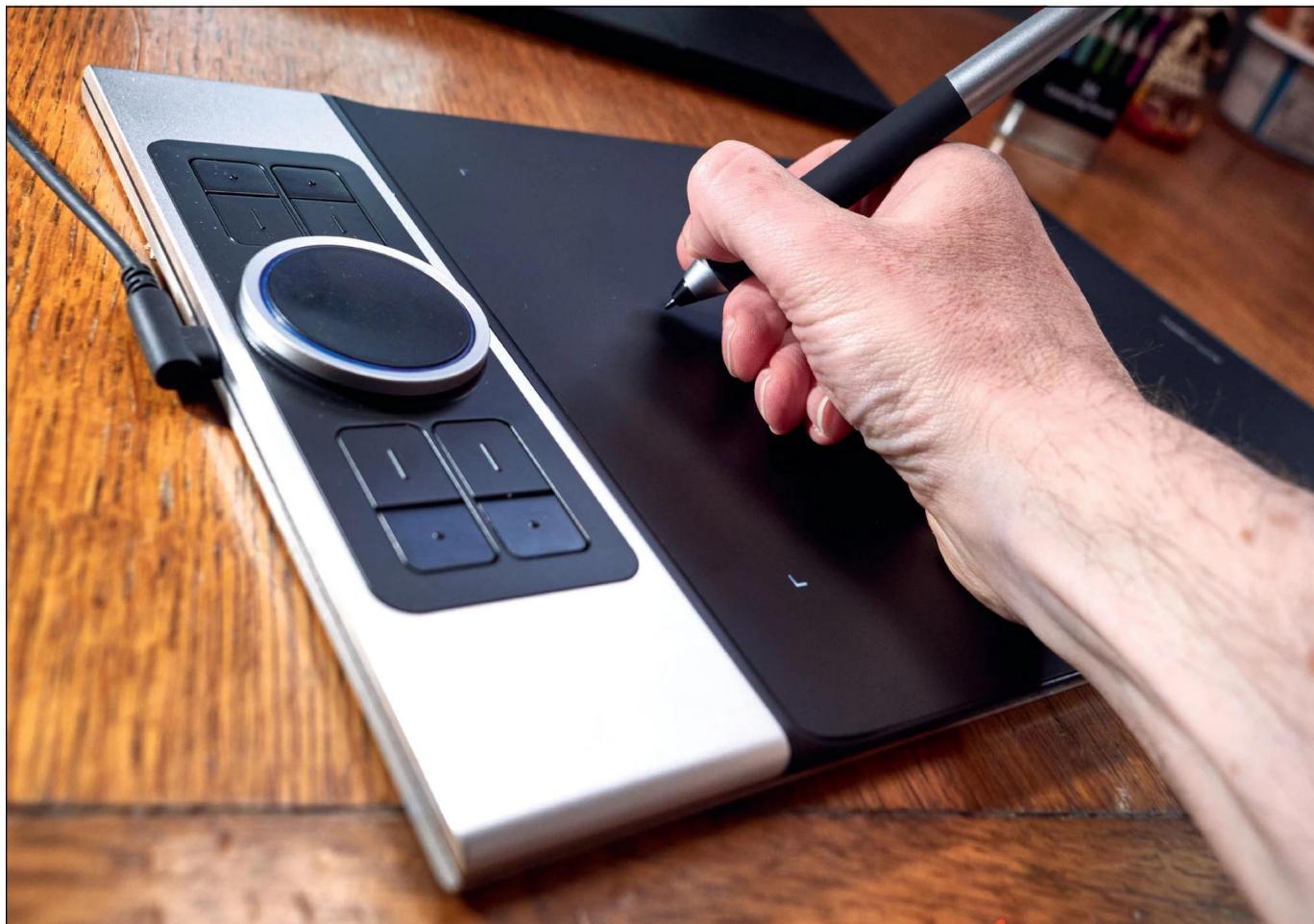
RATINGS EXPLAINED ★★★★★ Magnificent

★★★★★ Great

★★★★ Good

★★ Poor

★ Atrocious



## Deco Pro Medium



The aluminium casing gives the Deco Pro Medium a classy feel, helping to dispel the 'black plastic slab' impression.

**DO THE MATH** Is a drawing tablet a third of the price of an equivalent Wacom only as third as good? We test XP-Pen's latest device to find out

Price £130 Company XP-Pen Web [www.xp-pen.com](http://www.xp-pen.com)

**F**or many artists, there's only been one reliable name in tablets: Wacom. However, over the past few years, companies such as XP-Pen, Huion and GAOMON have released a range of products in an attempt to usurp Wacom's dominance in the tablet market. We were keen to find out if XP-Pen's Deco Pro Medium could hold its own against a similarly specced Wacom tablet.

To XP-Pen's credit, if someone had stuck Wacom's logo on to the Deco Pro Medium, then in terms of the physical design of the device we might not have noticed anything different. The tablet is solid and the drawing surface feels smooth. It's not quite as 'gritty' as a Wacom, but more than

serviceable. Although we weren't wholly convinced by the taper of the Pen that's supplied with the tablet, on the whole we were impressed with the hardware straight out of the box.

### LARGE DRAWING AREA

The 16:9 drawing area of XP-Pen's device measures 11x6 inches and is approximately the same size as a similarly sized Wacom Intuos Pro. Placed on a desk and the Deco Pro Medium definitely feels shorter and less 'massive', though. This could be down to the metal finish on the side of the tablet that gives the Deco Pro Medium a high-end appearance.

The plastics on the Deco Pen are better than expected, too. They're robust, and with no give. This is true



The Deco Pro Medium's Pen has 8,192 levels of pressure sensitivity and 60 levels of tilt. Its taper takes a little getting used to, though.

for the buttons on the tablet, the Pen and the wheel controller. On the whole, the Deco Pro Medium feels a lot like a Wacom – and that's no bad thing.

We used the latest beta drivers from XP-Pen on both Windows and Mac. Unfortunately the release drivers for the Deco Pro Medium are a version behind (at time of writing) and don't



offer all the creative features we were looking for. Software is the area where it's clear that corners have been cut and cost-savings made.

That's not to say that the Deco Pro Medium had trouble running on either computing platform; it worked first time on both Windows and Mac. However, the driver software is clunky and doesn't feel like an integrated part of the operating system, unlike similar offerings from Wacom. This is especially telling on the Mac, where

While the Deco Pen Medium is well made, it doesn't feel as bulletproof as a Wacom. However, the fact remains that nearly three of XP-Pen's device could be purchased for the price of one Wacom Intuos Pro. The value equation of tablets, in general, has been upended with 'cheaper' products like the Deco Pro Medium, which feels like 80 per cent of a Wacom for a third of the cost.

Artists on a budget - students or home hobbyists, say - who are in the

**“From a technical perspective the Deco Pro Medium matches the Wacom tablets with 8,192 levels of pressure sensitivity”**

XP-Pen's software runs as an application rather than Wacom's preference pane. On the PC however, things definitely feel better, if only because Windows drivers never feel as polished as their Mac counterparts.

### PEN LACKS A LITTLE POLISH

The drawing experience of XP-Pro's Pen is similar to Wacom's stylus apart from the eraser function, which is a pen side-button click rather than the button on the end of the Pen. The Pen's software doesn't feel as polished, though. This is a shame because the Deco Pro Medium's pen matches the Wacom's features with 8,192 levels of pressure sensitivity and 60 levels of Pen tilt. Still, for now the software isn't making the most of it.

market for a basic drawing tablet should certainly consider the Deco Pro Medium as a starter device. However, the lower price means sacrifices have been made. Inconsistent drivers can make using the tablet an unsatisfying experience. In use a Wacom tablet is still better - in particular, the software offers a greater range of features and is more reliable. In addition, Wacom provides better customer support should you run into any problems.

It's harder to wholeheartedly recommend the Deco Pro Medium for professional artists who depend on a drawing tablet to help bring in an income. For such artists with a bigger budget to spend, just bear in mind there are more reliable, albeit expensive, options elsewhere. 

### DETAILS

**Features**

- 11x6-inch active area
- Eight programmable buttons
- Combination wheel controller and trackpad
- 8,192 levels of pressure sensitivity
- Battery-free Pen with 60 levels of tilt
- Connectivity via single USB-C port
- Supports left- and right-handed use

**System Requirements**

**PC:** Windows 7, 8 or 10 (32- or 64-bit)  
**Mac:** OS X 10.10 or higher  
**Android:** 6.0 or higher

**Rating**



## IN FOCUS ALTERNATIVES TO XP-PRO

Got a bigger budget? Then consider these mid-range art tools

### Apple Pencil

**Web** [www.apple.com/uk](http://www.apple.com/uk)  
**Price** £119



Costing nearly the same as a Deco Pro Medium, the second-generation Apple Pencil can transform any iPad that can support it into a great creative tool. It provides excellent sensitivity and control when drawing.

### Intuos Pro medium

**Web** [www.wacom.com](http://www.wacom.com)  
**Price** £330



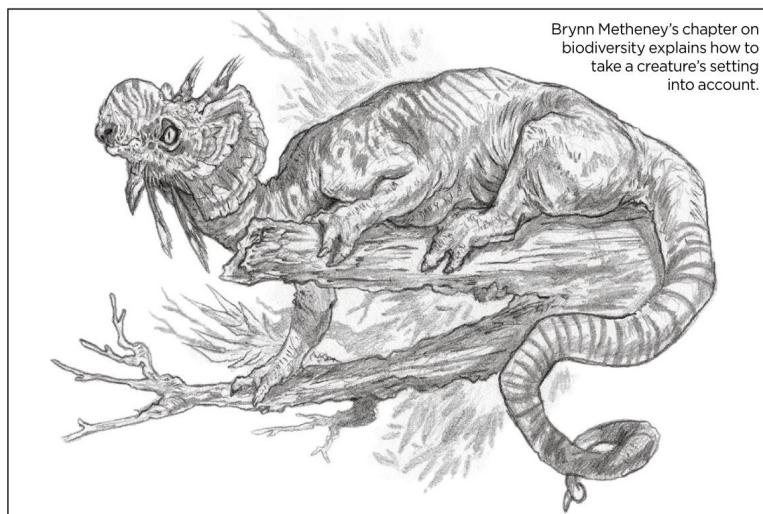
While nearly three times as expensive, in many ways with the Intuos Pro medium you do get what you pay for. The software and support are more reliable than XP-Pen's, and the Wacom stylus is nicer to use, too.

### Intuos Medium

**Web** [www.wacom.com](http://www.wacom.com)  
**Price** £180



Wacom's Intuos Medium, although more expensive and smaller than the XP-Pen Deco Pro Medium, does offer some features that the cheaper tablet lacks, with Bluetooth 4.2 connectivity being the standout.



Brynn Metheney's chapter on biodiversity explains how to take a creature's setting into account.



Edin Durmisevic's werebear, with its strong neck and braided hair, provides a link to its human form.

## Fundamentals of Creature Design

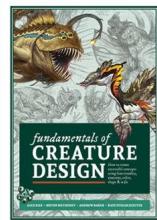
**ROAR POWER** Pro artists are on hand to help teach you the right – and wrong way – to approach imaginative creature design

**Editor** Marisa Lewis **Publisher** 3dtotal Publishing **Price** £30 **Web** [www.3dtotalthinking.com](http://www.3dtotalthinking.com) **Available Now**



**T**he newest release from 3dtotal Publishing aims to give readers the knowledge to create creature concepts that have one leg/tentacle/claw in reality, and the other in the fantastical worlds they inhabit.

The first part of the book comprises chapters written by a range of pro artists. These lay the groundwork on which you can build your design. Any fears that having multiple contributors would result in muddied advice are soon dispelled. Each artist is laser-focused on the subject at hand, conveying their experience through concise passages of text, and annotated full-colour artworks and pencil sketches. Those annotations explain the design decisions taken, so the reader is never left musing over a



particular anatomy feature or body colour choice, for example.

Within this section, Kyle Brown takes an unusual approach for his contribution on general design principles, by discussing creature concepts that do and, interestingly, don't work. However, Dominique Vassie's chapter on anatomy is the standout entry. Drawing on her degree in biological sciences, the artist presents easy-to-understand diagrams that show how bones and muscle groups affect the appearance of a creature, real or imagined.

**“The reader is never left musing over an anatomy feature or colour choice”**



The male of this species performs for an unimpressed female, in artwork from Alex Ries's chapter on Research & Imagination.

Having taken this knowledge on board, you're in better stead to grasp the 'whys' of creature design, as eight artists are given a prompt and produce a finished original concept. Taking the phrase "show your workings" to another level, each artist follows the same format – ideation, anatomy and functionality research, thumbnails, development and final design – to justify their artistic choices and demonstrate how they produced their imaginary beast. If we had a minor quibble, it's that we'd liked to have



A savanna-dwelling wyvern, as painted by Brian Valeza for the book's closing gallery section.

seen the creatures in fully rendered environments, rather than on a white background. As we say, minor...

The book concludes with a short gallery of more imagined creatures, and a collection of prompts that help the reader put their learnings into practice. Did we say book? It's more a self-contained academic course on creature design, with lecturers on hand to pass on their industry-level wisdom. Highly recommended.

**RATING** ★★★★★

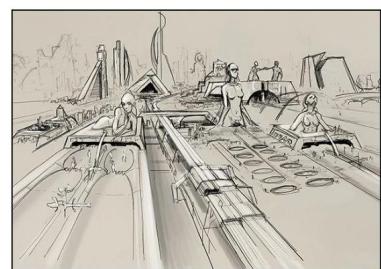
# Blade Runner 2049 – Interlinked – The Art

**LATE ARRIVAL** Strap yourself into your flying Spinner and revisit the bleak world of Blade Runner 2049 through the lens of leading concept artists

**Author** Tanya Lapointe **Publisher** Titan Books **Price** £40 **Web** [www.titanbooks.com](http://www.titanbooks.com) **Available** Now

**T**itan's latest title serves as a follow-up to Blade Runner 2049's art and making-of book that was published in 2017, not long after the film's release.

Unlike its predecessor, Interlinked concentrates on the film's concept art. Vehicles, environments and props are discussed, but with barely any character and costume concepts to show how the filmmakers filled the world of Blade Runner 2049, poring



Loose sketch of an abandoned Las Vegas – the huge naked statues are a not-so-subtle hint at the city's hedonistic past.

over the book's stark imagery is a bit of a slog. Little wonder really, given that the film director's prompt for guiding the creative process was "brutality".

Most of the book's topics receive an introductory paragraph or two from the concept artists involved. The majority of artworks that follow benefit from short captions that give insight into the development process, but on occasions you're left to look over pages of concepts presented

without comment. One large artwork depicting Las Vegas features written notes and art direction – we'd like to have seen more of this approach.

Overall, we're left with the impression that Interlinked – as its title suggests – provides a more rewarding experience when studied alongside the first book. As a standalone publication, it falls a little short.

**RATING** ★★★☆☆

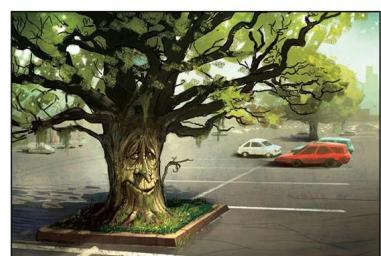
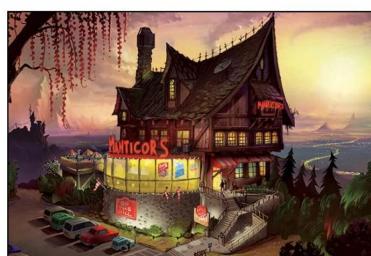
## The Art of Onward

**ADVENTURE AWAITS** There's plenty of art magic on display in this exploration of the concepts and storyboards created for Pixar's latest film

**Author** Drew Taylor **Publisher** Chronicle Books **Price** £30 **Web** [www.chroniclebooks.com](http://www.chroniclebooks.com) **Available** Now

**O**nward has a simple theme at its heart: two brothers go on a quest in a modern-day fantasy setting. This art-of book reveals how Pixar's art magicians brought Onward's familiar-yet-strange world to life.

Chapters reveal locations and characters as and when they appear in the film. For each entry, key players give the reader insights into the creative process, straight from the unicorn's mouth. The artists come



Early versions of brothers Barley and Ian, drawn digitally by Grant Alexander.

across as refreshingly honest as they explain the thinking behind their decisions, and how some clever ideas had to be abandoned. The reader is left eager for more, wondering what other secrets will remain in the vaults.

The imagery is a delightful mix of character concepts, locations, key art and storyboards, created using 2D and 3D tools, and traditional media. Each artwork credits the artist and the medium used, while captions reveal

more details on visualising modern life as seen through a fantasy prism. Meanwhile, a novel reference guide enables the reader to keep up with the many design revisions that occurred as the story was honed to perfection.

Overall, The Art of Onward will appeal to both fans of the film and animation students hoping to step through the gates of Castle Pixar.

**RATING** ★★★★★



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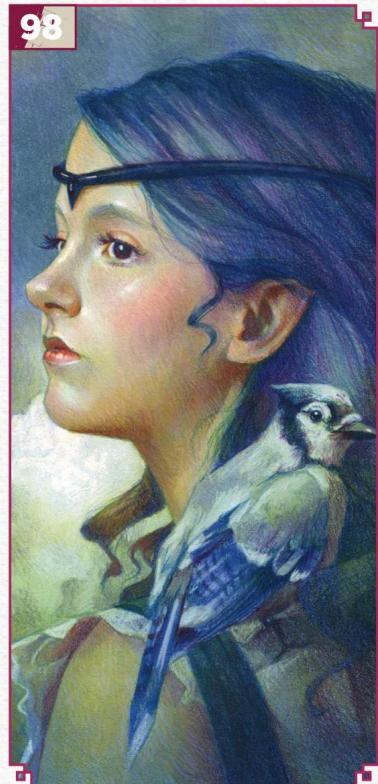
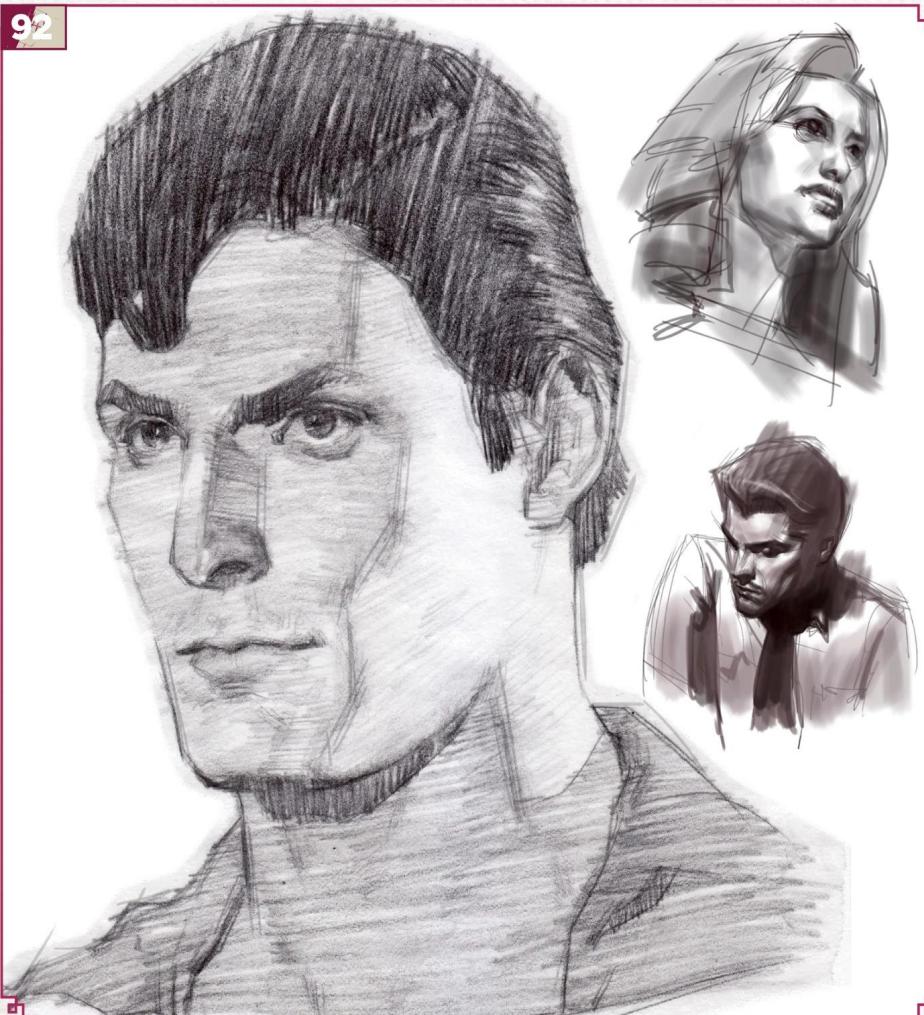
NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS  
**ImagineFX**

**Workshops assets are available...**

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

# Traditional Artist

## Inspiration and advice from the best pro artists

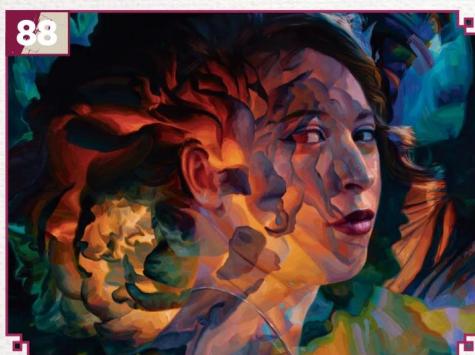


### This issue:

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

**92 Workshop: Draw heads from observation**  
Follow Chris Legaspi's simple, effective techniques for drawing realistic heads and faces either from life or observation.

**98 First Impressions: Christine Kornacki**  
Learn what YA novel had a strong effect on this US illustrator.



# FXPosé

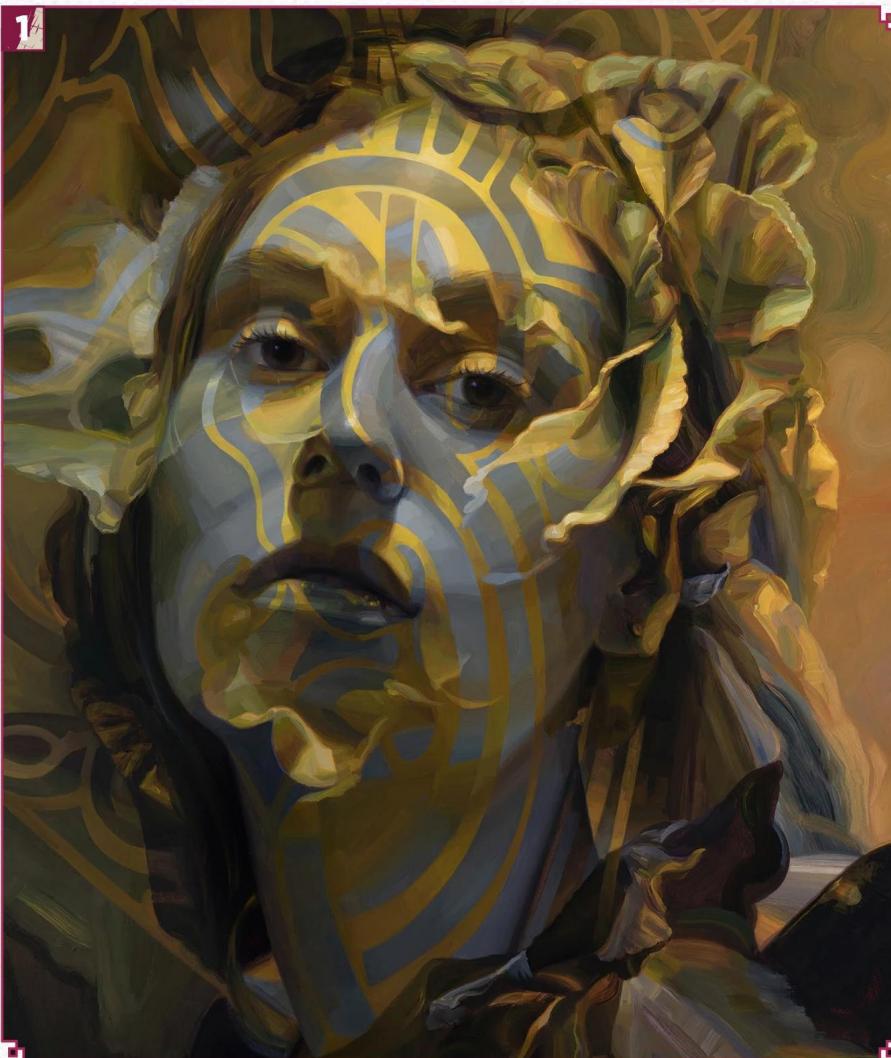
SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL ARTISTS



## Primary Hughes

LOCATION: US MEDIA: Acrylics on masonite WEB: [www.primaryhughes.com](http://www.primaryhughes.com)

Primary's artworks revel in the interplay of light and colour, and the emotional impact in quieter moments of determination and thoughtful reflection.

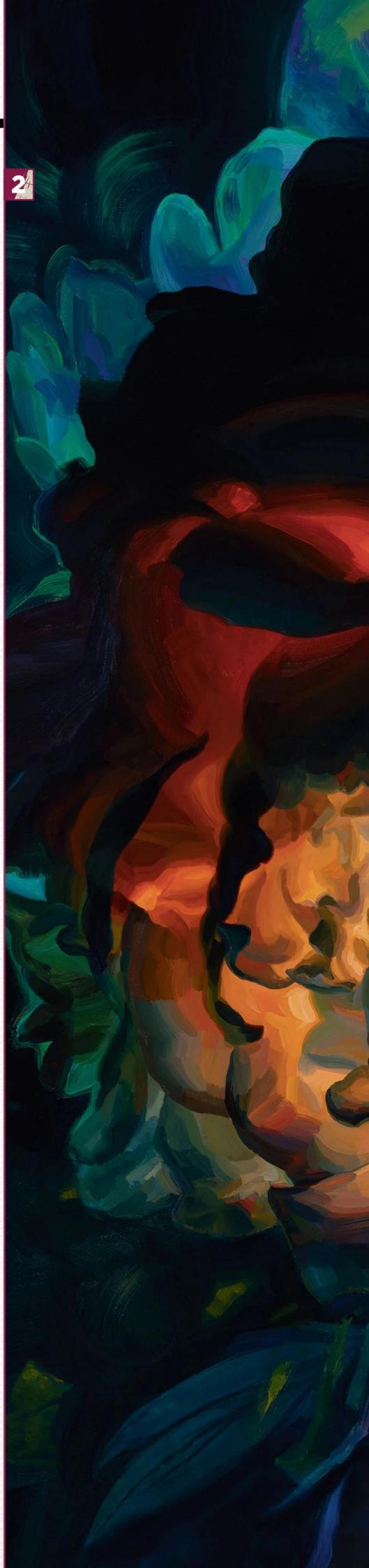


### 1 EPOCH

"Playing on the ambiguity between reality and a fabricated representation, and evoking the façade from Hollywood's golden age."

### 2 INFERNO

"Floral imagery is overlaid and combined with the figure to draw out the roiling spirit inside and make it outwardly manifest."





Inspirational art

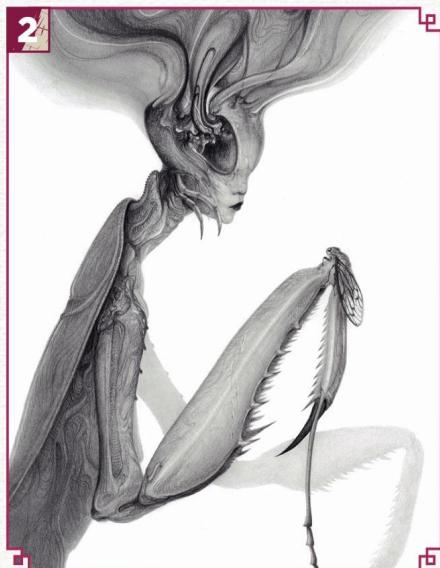
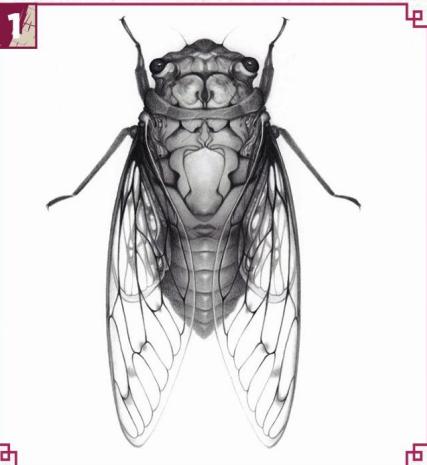
# Traditional Artist FXPosé



## Jamie Wells

LOCATION: US MEDIA: Graphite pencils, erasers, brushes WEB: [www.visualjamie.com](http://www.visualjamie.com)

“My work is formed from streams of consciousness as it evolves and flows through a meditative process,” says Jamie. She creates surreal traditional pieces with a dark ethereal twist as commentary on the human experience.



### 1 MAGICKADA

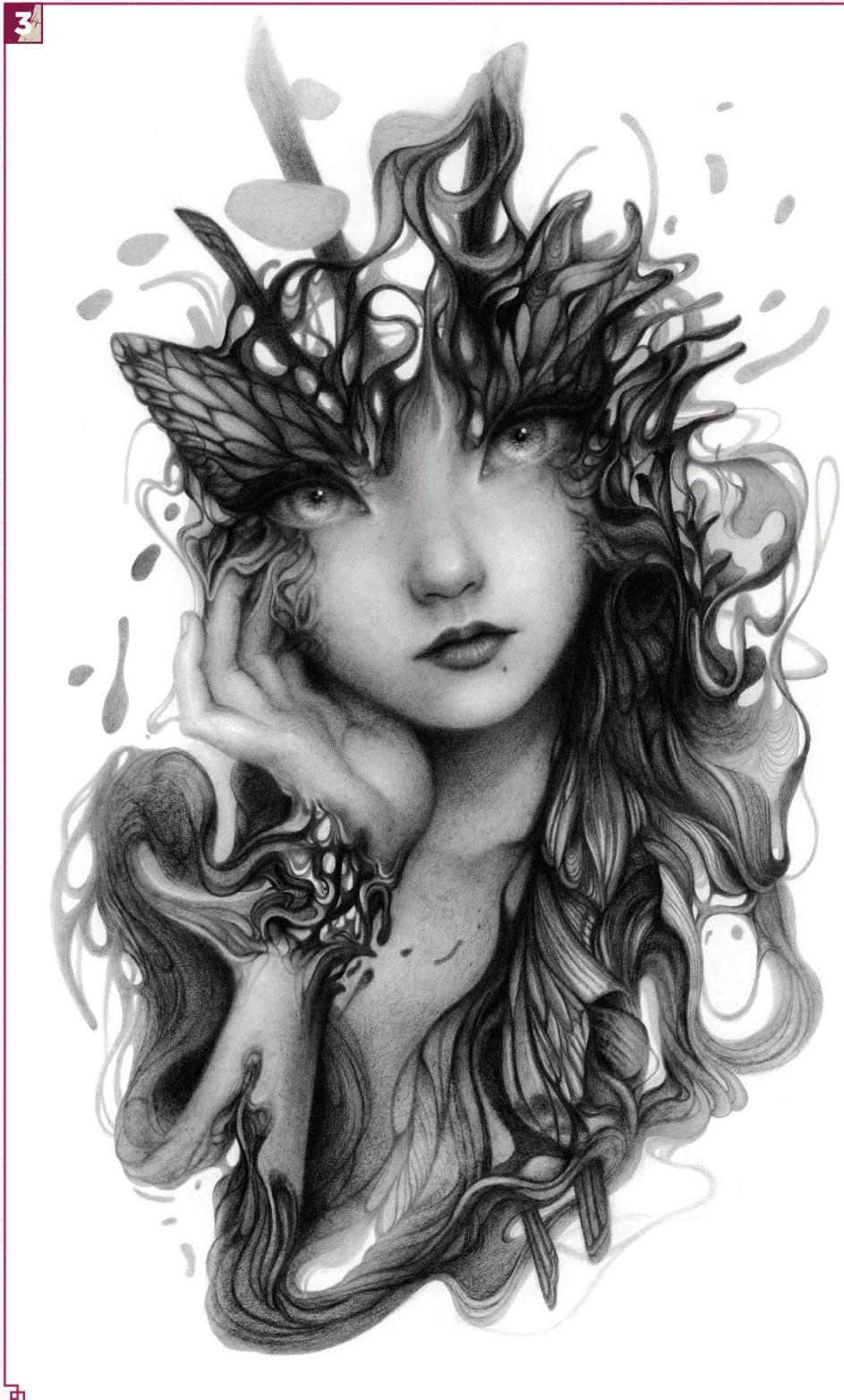
“Cicadas symbolize transformation and rebirth. I imagine she had shed her previous skin and is about to open her eyes.”

### 2 MANTIS

“I was inspired by the quiet moment of noticing a praying mantis and how we’re connected to nature and its creatures.”

### 3 THE EMERGE

“This piece happened while I was struggling to find a way to deal with a chronic skin condition. I eventually found ways to work with it.”





## 4 DISCONNECT

"Realising certain tough situations throughout life were essential for teaching me lessons, I felt like venting that feeling into this work."

Pencil

Pens

# DRAW HEADS FROM OBSERVATION

Follow **CHRIS LEGASPI'S** simple, effective techniques for drawing realistic heads and faces either from life or observation

**B**efore I draw the human head, I observe the shape, planes and rhythms. Then I start by capturing shape and gesture, by drawing the major shapes using big strokes and long marks. I can then position features using the vertical and horizontal centre of the face, making sure the angles are correct. Next, I build in the major planes:

front, sides, and either top or bottom. The secondary planes are the brow, nose and beginning of the mouth. Then I start to refine the features.

If I have time, I add tones and shading. I start by simplifying and massing in the shadow shape to give the illusion of a light source. Next, I add tones in the shadow to soften the edges and create a realistic form. Then I refine the tones and edges to

increase realism. I start with half-tones, adding a light wash and gradually build up their value. Finally, I add highlights and dark accents for contrast.



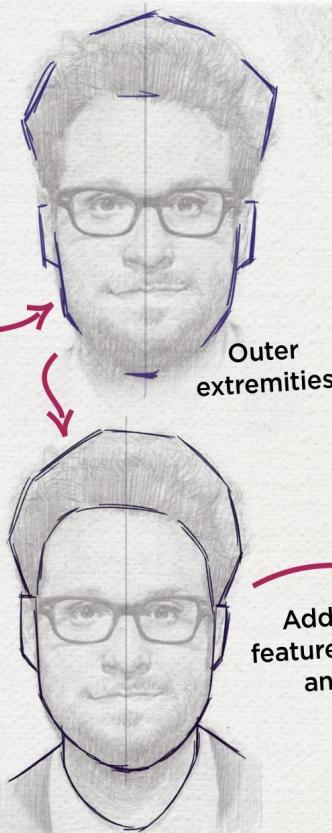
**Chris is a painter, illustrator, video game concept artist and health nut with more than 20 years of drawing painting and teaching experience. See his work at [www.drawwithchris.com](http://www.drawwithchris.com).**

## 1 Find the shape

Shape is important, because if it's designed well then you can get a likeness of your subject right away. First imagine a basic shape that captures the essence of the subject. Next, add the outer extremities of the head to refine the shape, then add secondary shapes.



Basic head shape



Secondary shapes



Add planes, features, shading and tone

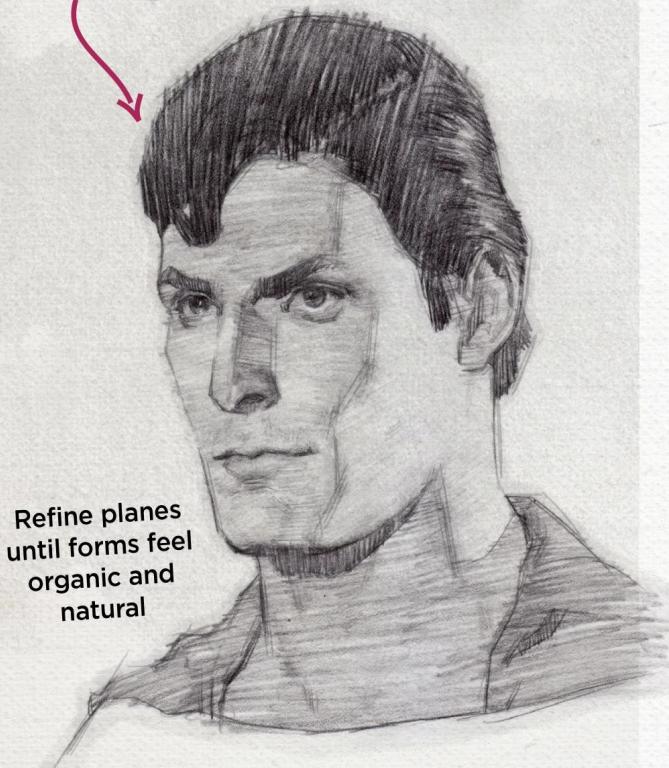
## 2 Include the planes

Planes make a drawing feel like a 3D form. When you study a subject, imagine a basic cube with a front, sides, top and bottom planes. Then look for the secondary, subdivided planes and smaller shapes, such as the brow and the nose.

Box form captures major planes: front, sides, top and bottom

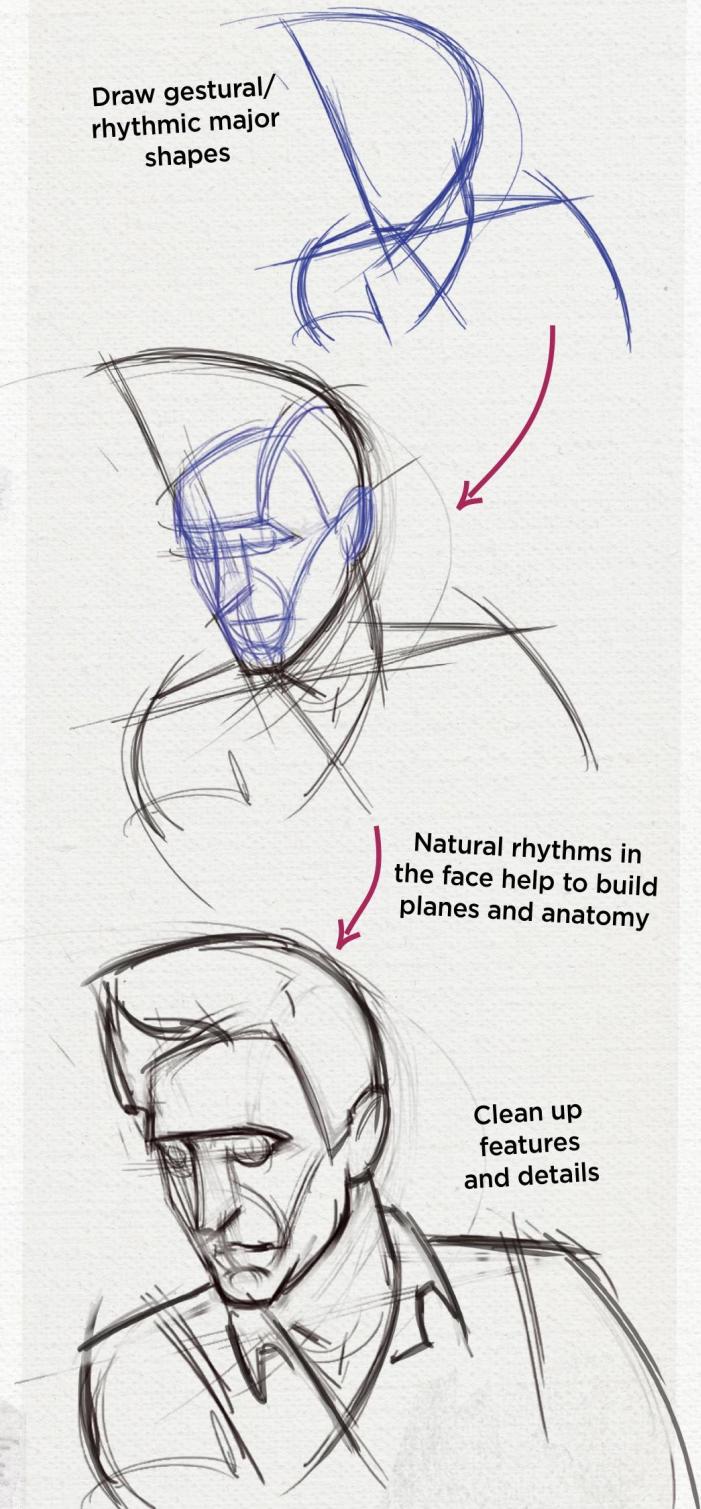


Secondary planes begin the construction process



Refine planes until forms feel organic and natural

Draw gestural/rhythmic major shapes



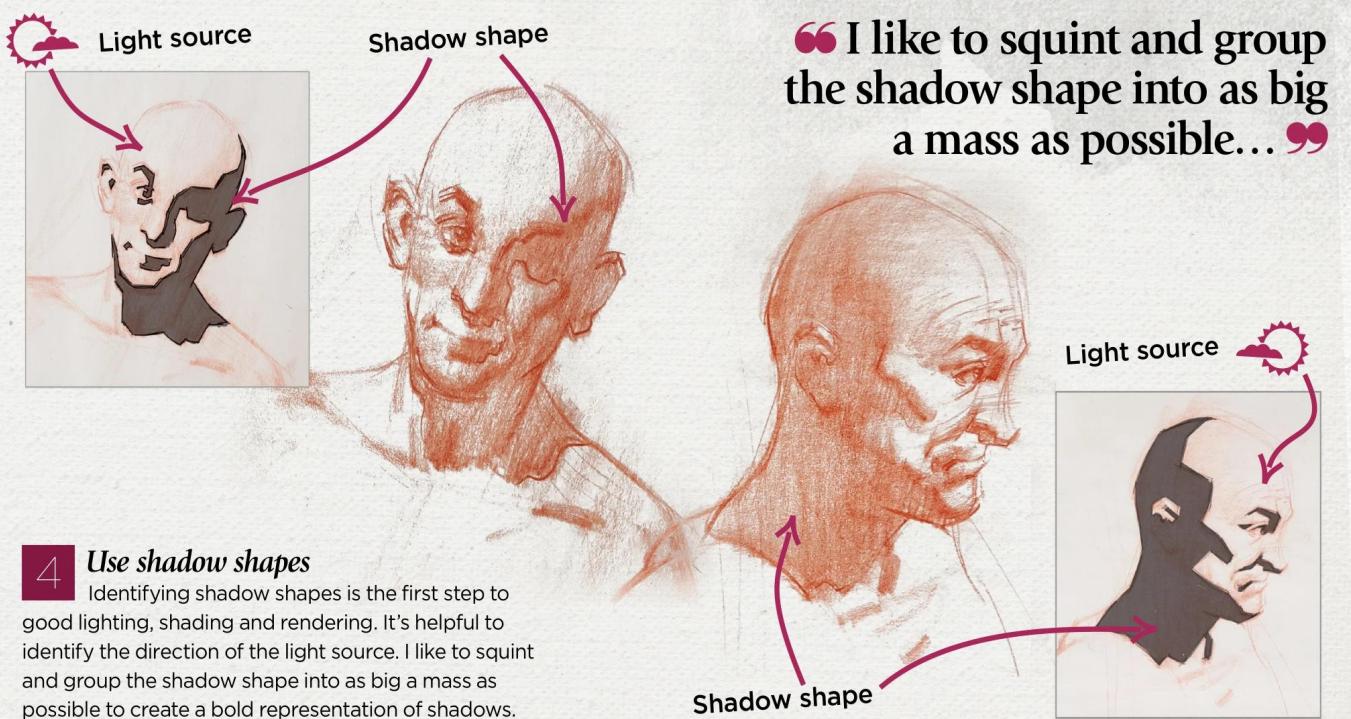
Clean up features and details

“When you study a subject, imagine a basic cube with a front, sides, top and bottom planes”

## 3 Feel the rhythms

Rhythms are naturally occurring lines that usually follow anatomy to create a sense of gesture and movement. First, look at the outer points and try to connect them using big, sweeping gestural marks. Then look for rhythms and lines within the face. These help you to construct and eventually align and place features later in the drawing. ➤

# Traditional Artist Workshop

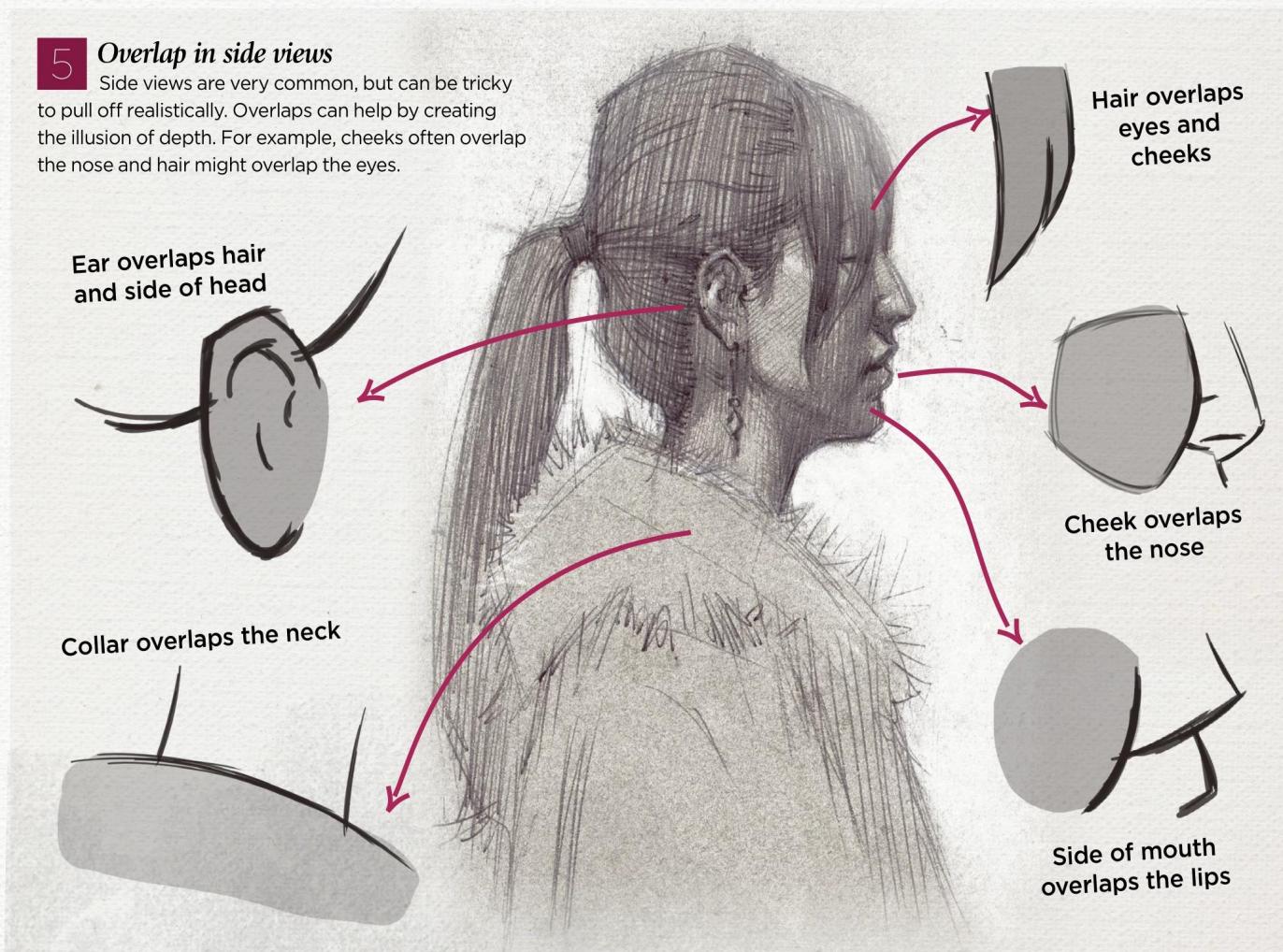


## 4 Use shadow shapes

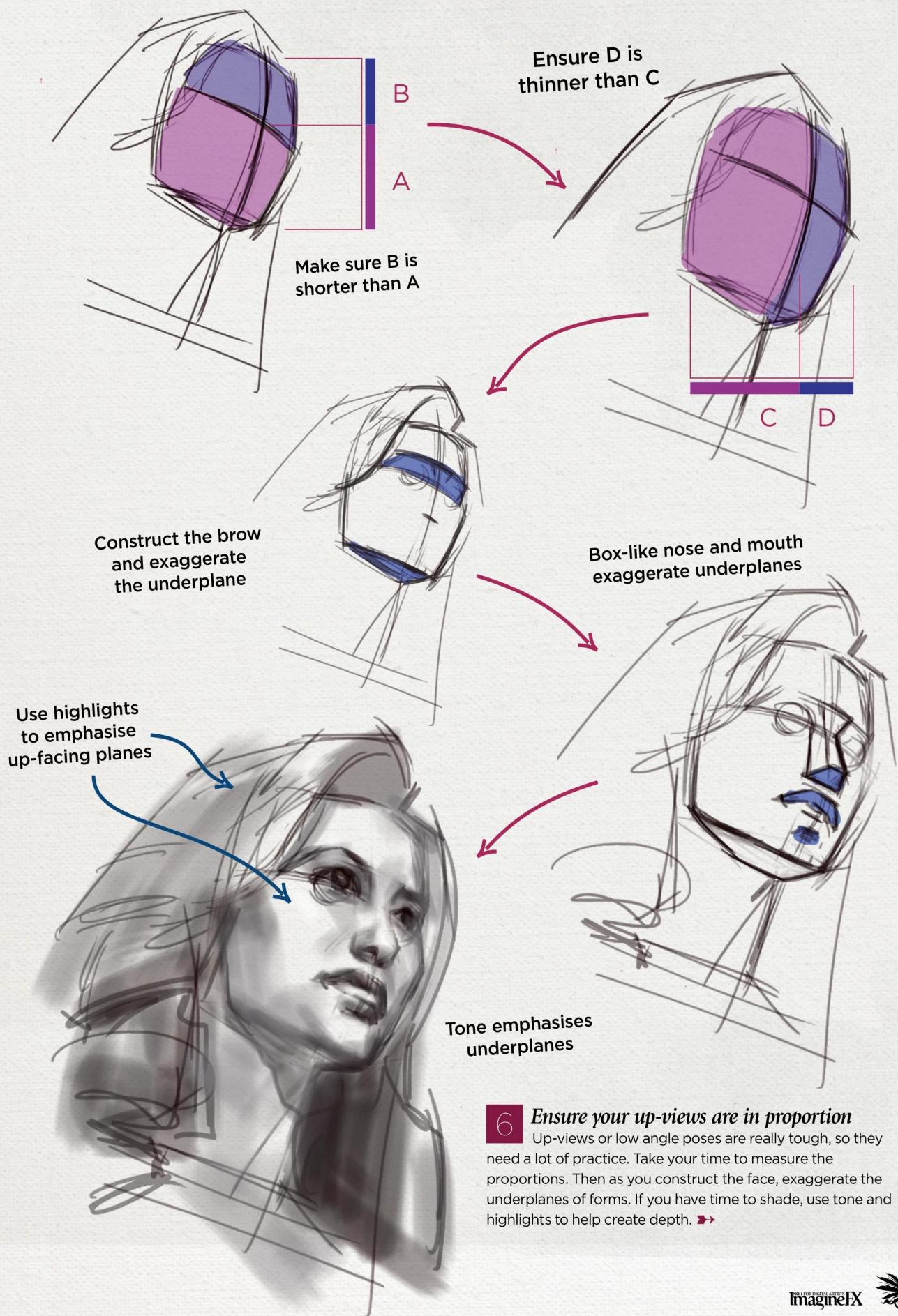
Identifying shadow shapes is the first step to good lighting, shading and rendering. It's helpful to identify the direction of the light source. I like to squint and group the shadow shape into as big a mass as possible to create a bold representation of shadows.

## 5 Overlap in side views

Side views are very common, but can be tricky to pull off realistically. Overlaps can help by creating the illusion of depth. For example, cheeks often overlap the nose and hair might overlap the eyes.



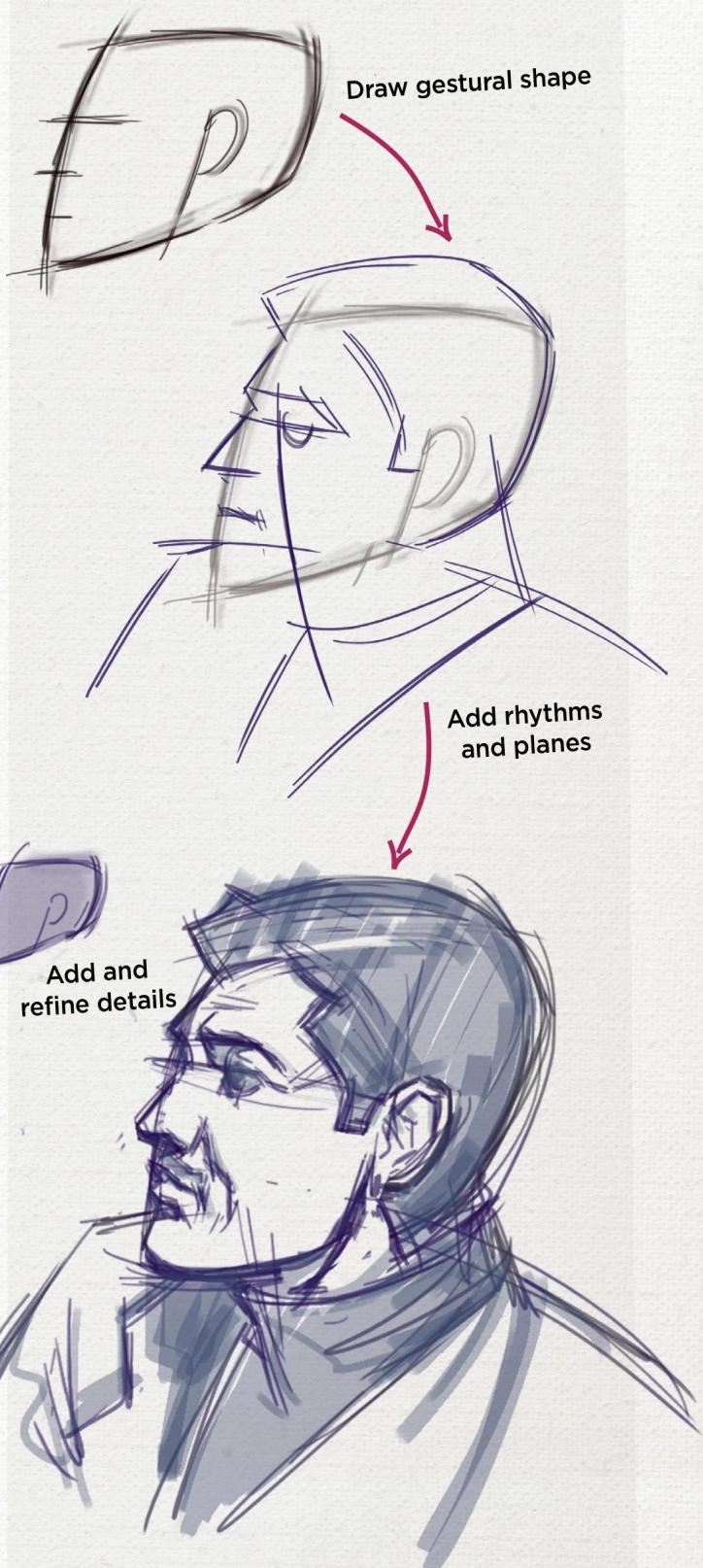
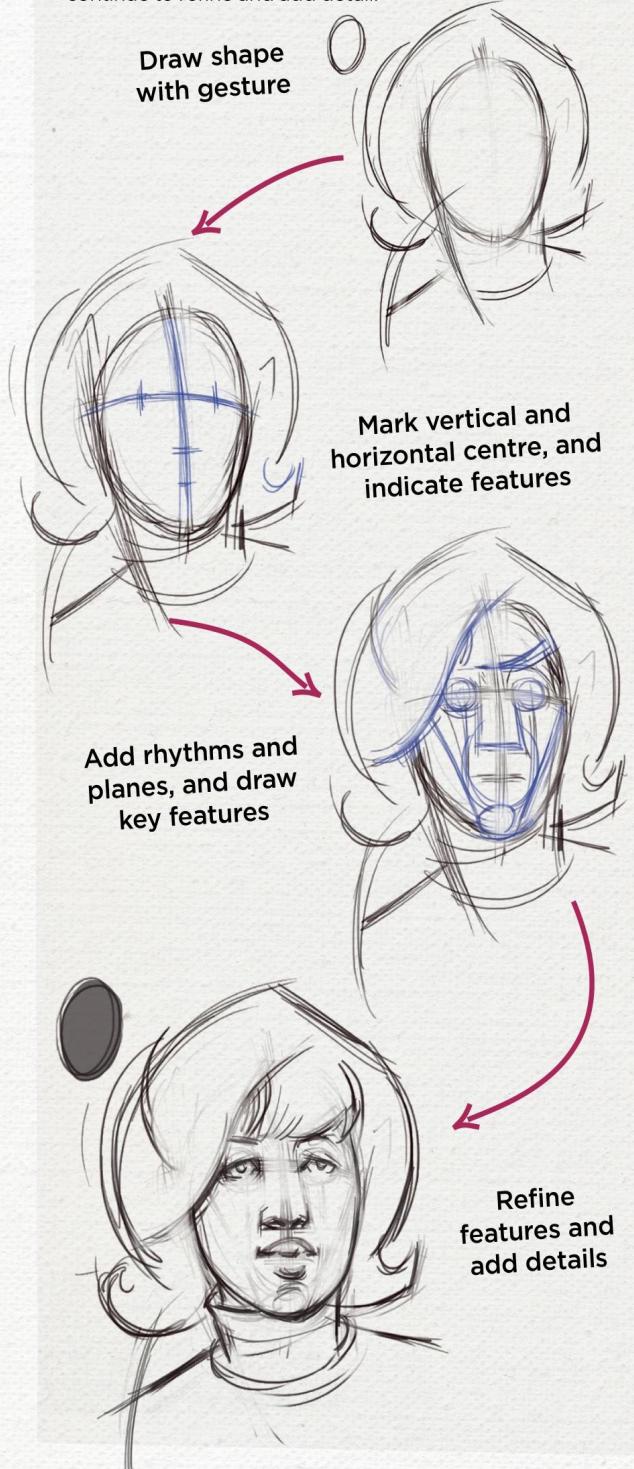
# In depth Draw heads



# Traditional Artist Workshop

## 7 Two- to three-minute process

In a short, two- to three-minute pose, begin by drawing the major shapes in a gestural way. Then add the vertical and horizontal centres and indicate the features. Next come the planes, rhythms and placement of features. With the time left, continue to refine and add detail.



“In a short, two- to three-minute pose, begin by drawing the major shapes in a gestural way”

## 8 Two- to three-minute side view

Side views usually take less time to develop because there's less to draw. Start side views by drawing the major shapes in a gestural way. Next, draw the rhythms and place the features. Then continue to refine, add details and tone.

# In depth Draw heads

Establish the drawing



Mass of tone creates the shadow shape



Apply half-tones



Add darks and highlights

## 9 Shade in five minutes

Five minutes is usually long enough to begin the shading process. Once you've established the drawing, the next stage is to block in the main shadow shape as a big mass of tone. Then add the transition tones in the shadow. With the time remaining, add half-tones and highlights.

Establish the drawing



Mass creates shadow shape



Half-tones



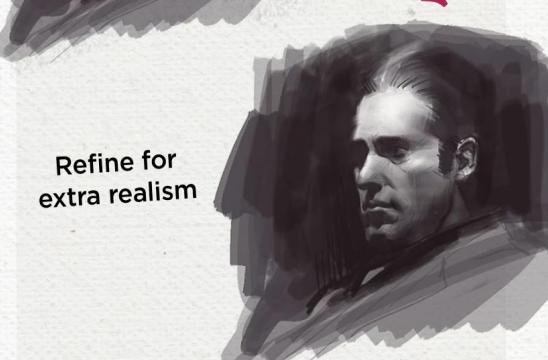
Dark accents



Add highlights



Refine for extra realism



## 10 Longer to refine

My process for a 10-minute work is the same as for a 20-minute or more pose. Establish a good lay-in first, then block in the shadow. Next, add core shadow and half-tones. Finally, continually refine the half-tones, lights, highlights and darks.

# First Impressions

Christine Kornacki

Learn what YA novel had a strong effect on this US illustrator



Where did you grow up and how has this influenced your art? I grew up in a small town in Connecticut just outside of NYC. I lived close to the University of Hartford, a school known for its illustration program. I began taking weekend classes there in high school, followed by getting my BFA and MFA there, and now I teach there as a professor. I owe so much of my life and career to this school.

**What, outside of art, has most influenced your artwork?**

Since I was a kid I've loved stories. My older brother introduced me to sci-fi and fantasy when I was young and I've been obsessed with books and movies ever since. Part of being an illustrator is being a storyteller and I love doing this through my art.

**Can you remember what was your first paid commission?**

This occurred during the last week of



## BLUEJAY

*"My most recent watercolour and coloured pencil portrait sold on Every Day Original."*

“My career continues to grow and change, but that’s what keeps it interesting”

## MULAN'S CHARGE

*"A scene depicting General Mulan as she drives her troops into battle."*

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

My latest piece was created to sell for the online gallery Every Day Original. The focus of my work has changed a lot over the years, as I've found my voice. Early on I did a lot of advertising illustration and children's book art. Lately, my work has focused on fantasy book covers

as I draw inspiration from the types of books I like to read. For my newest work I've using a mixed media of watercolour and coloured pencils and am enjoying the unpredictable colours that I get from layering them.

**What character or scene that you've painted do you most identify with?** In eighth grade I read Tamora Pierce's YA book series Alanna. This was the first fantasy book series I ever read and I was swept away by her story of a girl growing up as a female knight in a man's world. She inspired me to be true to myself and it meant a lot to me to paint my representation of her character.

**Do you have an art tool that you can't live without?**

I've been experimenting with some new mediums for my paintings lately. The thing that always stays the same is my digital sketches using my 22-inch Wacom Cintiq. I love the malleability of sketching digitally. I can get my thoughts down quickly on the page and then move or morph them to fit my composition.

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

Being an artist definitely has its ups and downs, but I love the unpredictability of it. My career continues to grow and change, but that's what keeps it interesting. I wouldn't exchange what I do for anything else.

**What does the future hold for you?**

I'm still relatively new to the fantasy field. I feel invigorated by all the new work that I've been creating and I'm thrilled to keep building my portfolio. I'm looking forward to finding my niche in this amazing community!

*Christine is a children's book author/illustrator and book cover artist living in Connecticut. Transport yourself into her imaginative world by visiting [www.christinekornacki.com](http://www.christinekornacki.com).*



Image by Nick Harris - Tutorial IFX 187

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