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# NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

# ImageFX

INSIGHT

## GENERATE NEW IDEAS

Pro artists reveal how they make unique art

ARTIST OF THE YEAR  
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DEVELOP AN EPIC GAME FIGHT SCENE

INSIDE MARC BRUNET'S AMAZING STUDIO

USE SILHOUETTES TO PAINT ENVIRONMENTS



ISSUE 195

### WORKSHOP

## SPEEDY CONCEPTS

Quickly build up a sci-fi scene with Lixin Yin

RIOT GAMES ART! WE INTERVIEW SENIOR ILLUSTRATOR JENNIFER WUESTLING!



Image by Nick Harris - Tutorial IFX 187

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 ArtRage 6

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



Greetings and welcome to our video games edition. Even if you're not a huge video game player, it's clear that the artists working in this industry produce some of the finest art concepts around. And talking of fine – and action-packed! – art,

I'd like to give a massive thanks to CD PROJEKT RED's Olgierd Ciszak for working with us on the cover and also providing a workshop. It's an honour to have V from Cyberpunk 2077 on our front page.

Another treat for you is our interview with Jennifer Wuestling. She's a senior illustrator at Riot Games and almost every word of her interview is brimming with gold-standard advice about working in the games industry. Turn to page 38. Our workshop section is a feast of freshly picked talent, including great insights from Lixin Yin, Lynn Hye Ryoung Yang and Changqin Wang.

Reading my words above makes me feel very appreciative of the global community of artists that ImagineFX is part of. I always love to hear from you wherever you are, so let me know your thoughts about the industry at [mail@imaginefx.com](mailto:mail@imaginefx.com).

*Claire*

**Editor in chief**  
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### EDITOR'S CHOICE Three of my top picks this month...

10.



#### Artists from around the globe

Our gallery section is a mainstay of ImagineFX! Devour all of the talent from page 10 and also from page 88.

20.



#### How to generate ideas

It's never not a good time to be reminded how fellow creatives come up with new ideas. Go see!

74.



#### Full speed ahead to this workshop

Lixin Yin's work is a masterclass of colour, lighting and composition. I'm delighted that he's in ImagineFX,



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# ImagineFX

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#### Marc Brunet

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Artist Portfolio

## JENNIFER WUESTLING



**"Trusting yourself and your own voice is something valuable to learn"**  
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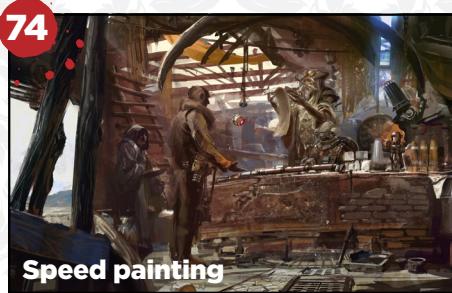
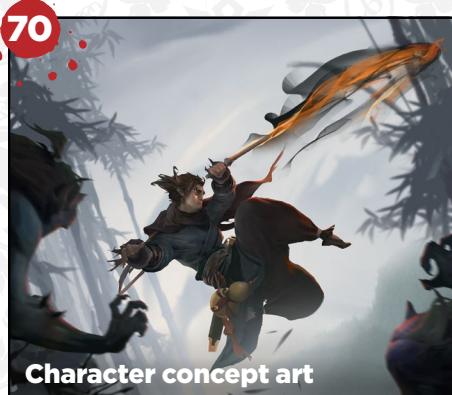


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Artist in Residence:  
Marc Brunet



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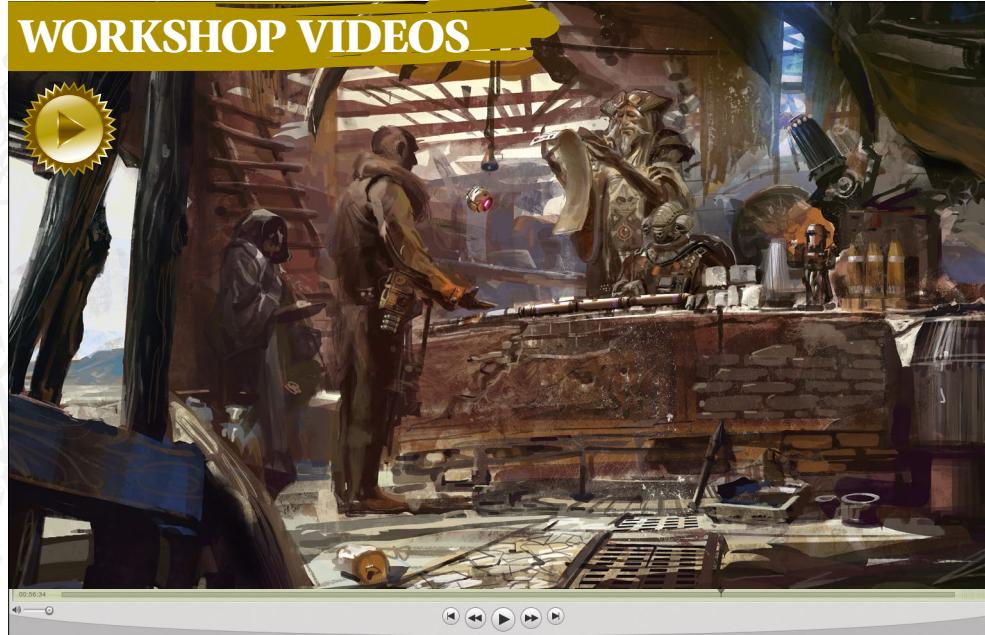
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This US artist on how artist Donato made an early impression.



# Resources

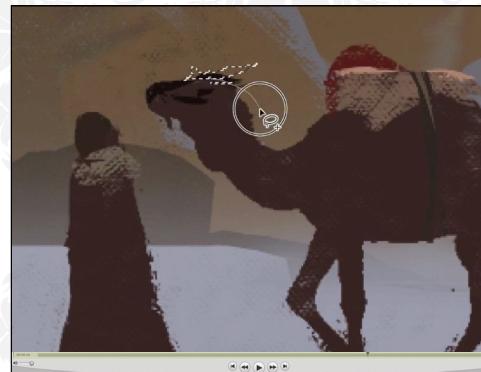
Visit <http://ifxm.ag/game195art> to download this issue's workshop videos and custom brushes

## WORKSHOP VIDEOS



### Capture a story in a single piece of art

See how Lixin Yin applies the art fundamentals – lighting, colour and composition – with an original concept design to bring his grungy market scene to life. His workshop is on page 74.



### Use shapes to create environment concept art

Watch Lynn Hye Ryoung Yang paint a vista with strong silhouettes. There's more on page 64.

### PLUS THESE CUSTOM BRUSHES...



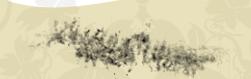
**PEN02**

Changqin Wang uses this brush to create natural-looking ink effects, as well as special effects.



**BLUR'S GOOD BRUSH 4.0 PRO**

One of Olgierd Ciszak's go-to brushes – ideal for painting rough textures and soft tonal transitions.



**B TEXTURE21**

One of three custom texture brushes that Lixin Yin uses to paint materials in his sci-fi concept art.

## ImagineFX

### Editorial

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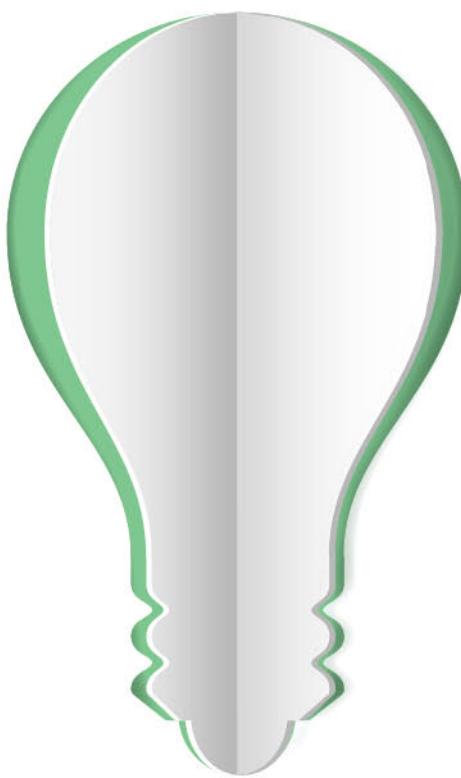
Joel Payne

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# FX Posé

PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART



1



## Daniel Dana

LOCATION: US MEDIA: Photoshop, Procreate, Blender  
WEB: [www.artstation.com/daniel\\_dana\\_art](http://www.artstation.com/daniel_dana_art)

"I draw a lot of inspiration from sci-fi, fantasy and horror, because those genres allow for so much beautiful escapism," says Daniel, a self-taught artist looking to break into the entertainment industry.

### 1 CLOUD CITY

"I used 3D and a more dynamic perspective for this piece to reimagine an environment I made when I was first learning Procreate."

### 2 RGB PIT STOP

"My entry for the Game Day Kitbash3D contest. The task was to create a scene using models from its free Neo City Mini Kit."

### 3 ON WATCH

"Inspired by the breathtaking concept art of The Last of Us Part 2. I wanted to practice my own version of a post-apocalyptic environment."



2

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



Congratulations Daniel, 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)



3

## HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR WORK

Please send us:

- Five high-res (300dpi) images of your work, with a title and a 30-word caption for each.
- Your name, the software you use, location and website.
- 50 words about you.
- A photo of yourself. Email this info to: [fxpose@imaginefx.com](mailto:fxpose@imaginefx.com)

More info and T&Cs: <https://ifxm.ag/artistofthemonth>





## Michael Nicholson

**LOCATION:** Scotland **MEDIA:** Photoshop, ZBrush, Maya, Marmoset Toolbag, Substance Painter **WEB:** [www.artstation.com/mnicholson\\_arts](https://www.artstation.com/mnicholson_arts)

Stylised artwork factors large in Michael's work. His portfolio is filled with characters made from his own concepts, and he usually gets inspired by the daydreams he has while walking his dog.

### 1 DRAGON SMITH

"I liked the idea of a dragon smith using his tail to turn the blade, enabling him to hammer away."

### 2 SQUARE UP

"Done for the Artwar challenge. I created a martial artist who makes use of molten rock to make himself even more dangerous."

### 3 DJINN

"I love doing characters with horns and wanted to do a djinn warrior wielding a magical weapon."

### 4 WANDERER

"This is a free-spirited adventurer based on a monk character I played in a D&D game with friends."

1



2



3







## Jyldyz Bekova

LOCATION: Kyrgyzstan MEDIA: Procreate, Photoshop WEB: [www.jyldzbekova.com](http://www.jyldzbekova.com)

Jyldyz has a wide-ranging education, with a degree in decorative and applied arts from Kyrgyz State Art School, and another in the design of architectural environment from the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University.

### 1 SYNERGY

"All information is transmitted to a person at birth. Without old age there's no youth and vice versa."

### 2 TOTEM

"Man is a part of nature, its child. As a true mother, she protects us, but we've moved away from her and don't hear her voice. Yet she still waits for us."

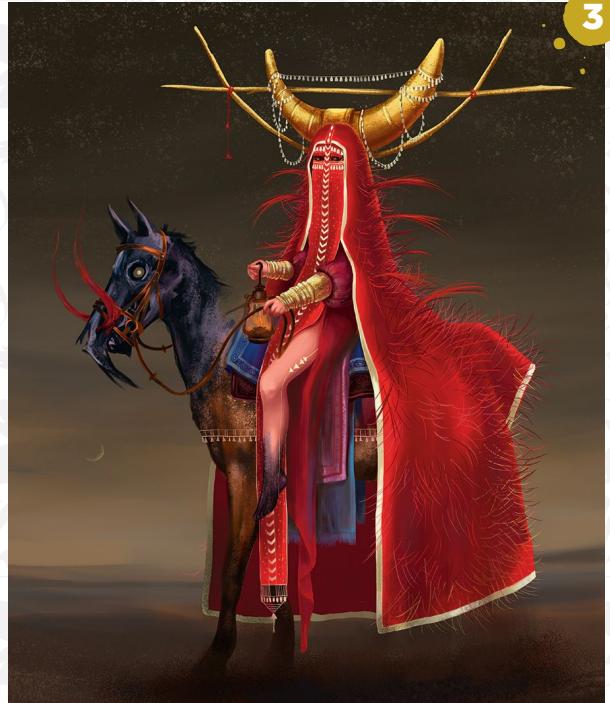
### 3 THE QUEEN OF TIME

"The Queen of Time is the keeper of events, destinies and lives. Her horse is a faithful helper in moving between spaces."

1



3



2



4



### 4 OLUYA

"In the Kyrgyz language, oluya means the seer. There are many seers among our people, even among my relatives and friends. Most often the skill is inherited."



# Daniel Rubio

**LOCATION:** Ecuador **MEDIA:** Photoshop, Clip Studio Paint, SketchBook Pro **WEB:** <https://danielrubioj.artstation.com>

Daniel has a fascination for films, animation, comics and games. He's built a career creating visual content for the entertainment industry as an illustrator, character designer, concept artist, visual development and storyboard artist.

## 1 DINO

"This monstrous creature is a personal piece I created for a project that I've been developing for some time."

## 2 TRICERA

"Another personal piece. This one depicts a primal warrior armed to the beak with muscles and horns."

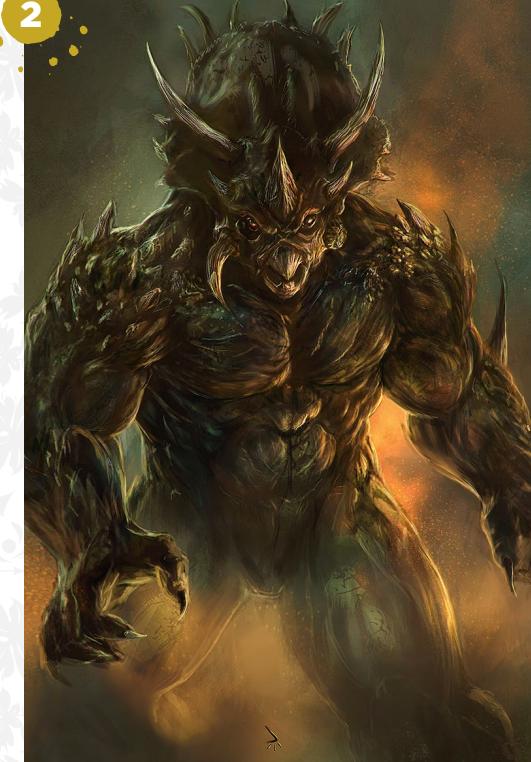
## 3 FLOOD FORTRESS

"This mysterious, glowing building is a piece of fantasy environment concept that was created for a cancelled games project."

1



2



3





## Quentin Castel

**LOCATION:** England **MEDIA:** Photoshop **WEB:** [www.artstation.com/quentincastel](https://www.artstation.com/quentincastel)

After graduating with a degree in fine arts, Quentin spent a year as a freelance illustrator. Now he's based in north-east England, working as a concept artist at art studio Atomhawk.



### 1 SIBLINGS

"I painted this to practise values and edge control. Also, I wanted to add an air of mystery, so I cropped out the monster's body using composition theory."

### 2 MONSTER FAIRY

"This piece was for a training session at Atomhawk. The goal was to improve my shape language, and to focus on effective stylisation."

### 3 EMILIE

"This illustration is a piece of personal work that I completed just for practice purposes. I was inspired by classical paintings done by the Old Masters."

### 4 LEVIATHAN

"Another image inspired by classical paintings. You can probably recognise which ones! Vikings cast magic spells to give this scene a fantasy twist."





## Kerry-Anne Mayes

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

Kerry is a freelance illustrator who's inspired by weird and wonderful women. Her images are full of beauty and unreal elements, as well as combining subtle motifs that allude to deeper storytelling.

### 1 OPHANIM

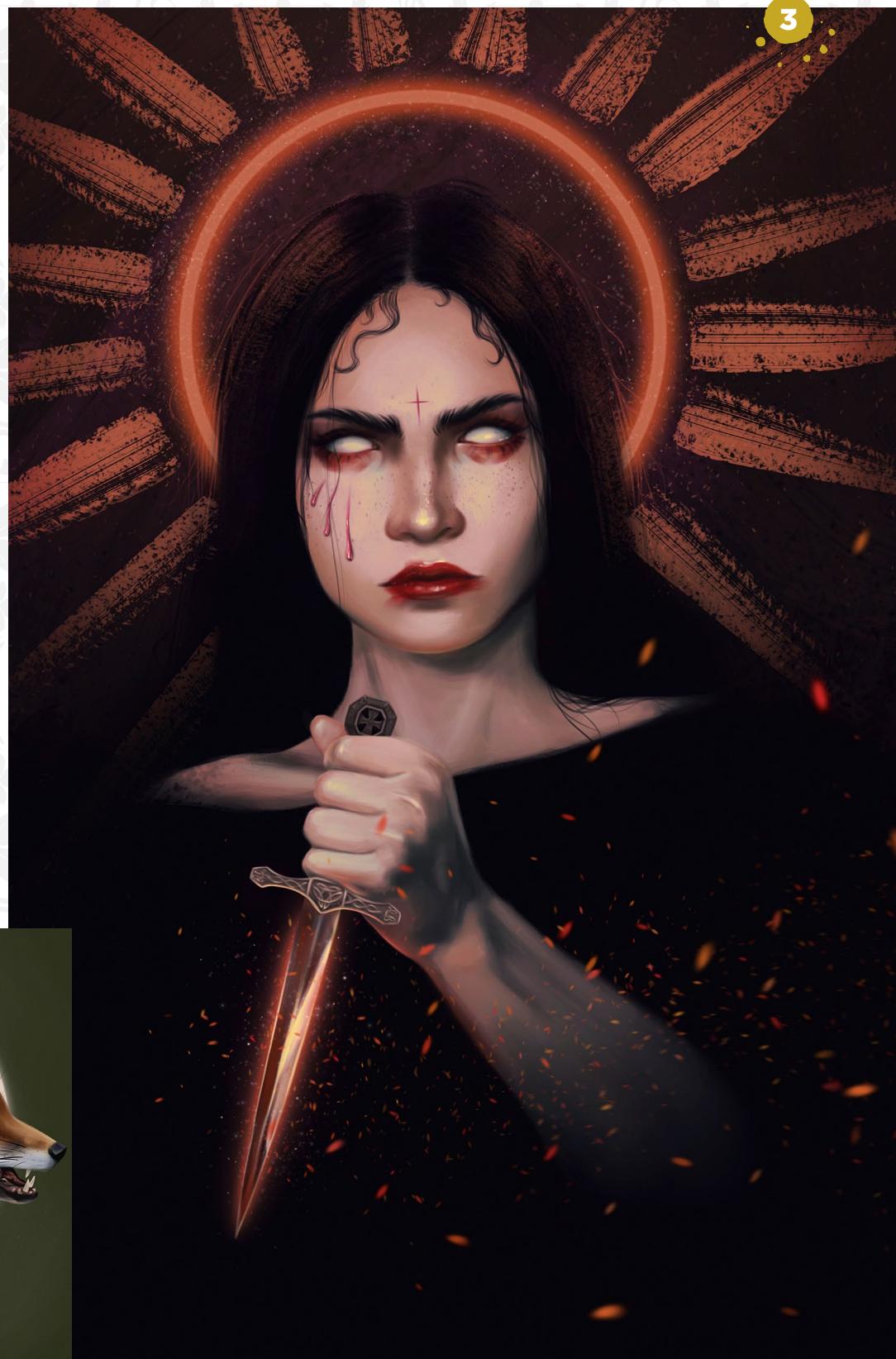
"As you might expect from a figure of a winged person, this heavenly illustration is based on the angelic hierarchy."

### 2 THE FOX AND THE LADY

"The red mane of the fox and the woman's hair blur together in a piece inspired by the term 'fiery redhead'."

### 3 WOUNDED

"As the dagger and wounded face suggest, this illustration is based on grief and revenge."





## 4 EYEBALL

"I feel that this piece creates a striking contrast, as the warm peachy tones are set off by the creepiness of the eyeball."

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NO.1 DIGITAL ARTIST

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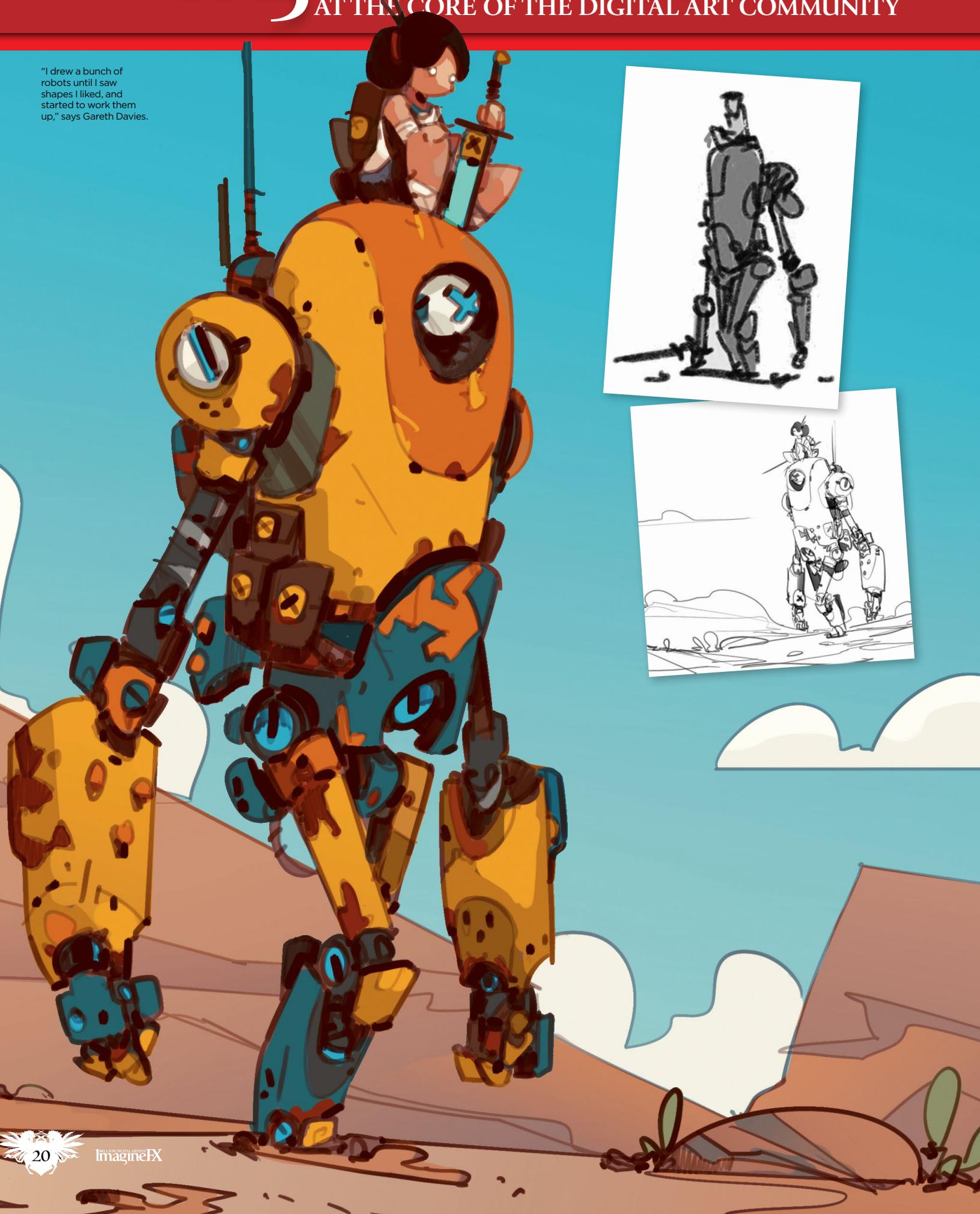


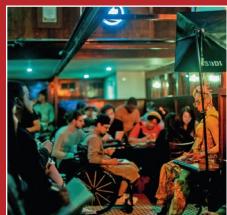
ARTIST NEWS, SOFTWARE & EVENTS

# ImagineNation

AT THE CORE OF THE DIGITAL ART COMMUNITY

"I drew a bunch of robots until I saw shapes I liked, and started to work them up," says Gareth Davies.





## ALL HAIL THE ART HEROES

We talk to the founders of the Concept Art Association and find out how they aim to raise the profile of concept artists in the entertainment industry. **Page 29**



## ENTER A WIDE OPEN SPACE

Artist and YouTuber Marc Brunet invites us into his studio that contains skeletons, a candy store and a monitor that puts the 'wide' into widescreen. **Page 30**



## YOUR ART, YOUR VIEWS

Post your art on social media with the hashtag #imaginefx and it might appear on our Letters page, alongside comments from your fellow readers. **Page 37**



"Facing art block, I started to do studies of athletes, which led to this personal project on volleyball players," says Kofi Oforu.

# How to generate new ideas

**Smart thinking** Pro artists talk to **Tom May** about their go-to tricks for staying innovative and creative

**To be a successful artist, you have to work hard on developing your skills. But technique alone will only get you so far. You also need to generate creative and original ideas that will grab people's attention and truly engage them. So how do you go about it? We asked four talented artists to share their tips.**

For **Kofi Oforu**, a visual storyteller and character designer based in Ghana, idea generation is a continuous process of gathering inspiration. "I'm constantly bookmarking images, videos and links that spark my interest on the web and social media," he says. "I also get ideas for new concepts when I look back through my old sketches. Last but not

least, I love to do studies. Studying enables me to practise my fundamentals, and it has lower stakes so I steadily build my confidence, too."

### LOOK TO THE PAST

Newcastle-based concept artist **Gareth Davies**, aka Spudonkey, similarly finds fresh ideas for his personal art by thumbing through his old sketches. "My sketchbooks are full of little doodles, where I've just tried to make interesting shapes that I see potential in," he explains. "For client work, though, I find the process can be simpler. When you're given a set of requirements, there's often an 'obvious' path to take. So it's about



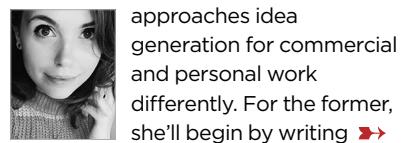
"I always have too many ideas, so I have to be super-critical," reveals Eva Stöcker.

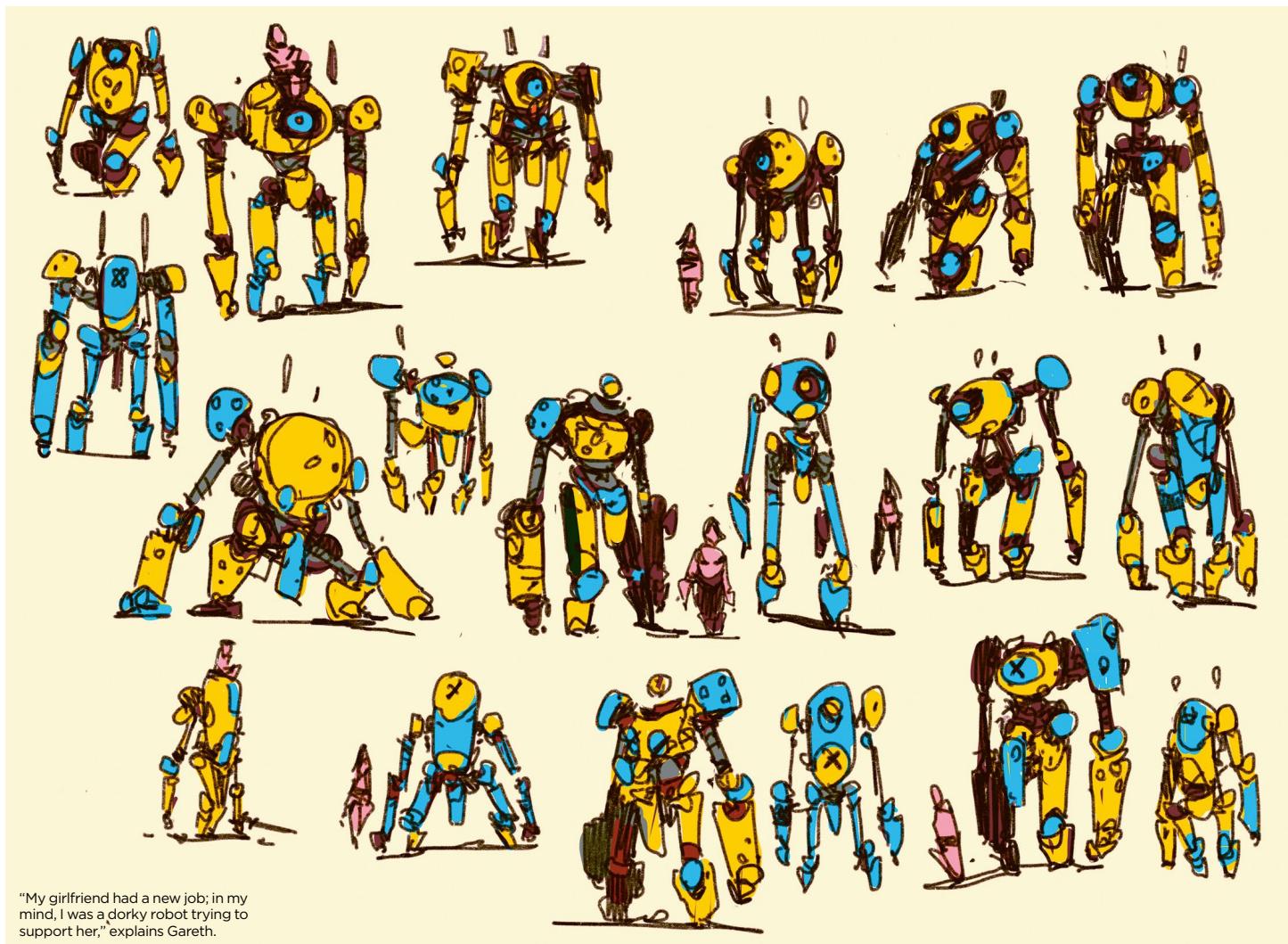
using your expertise to fulfil the problem that needs solving, and offering suitable options to the client."

Berlin-based art director and illustrator **Eva Stöcker** also

approaches idea generation for commercial and personal work differently. For the former, she'll begin by writing ➤

**“I’m constantly bookmarking images, videos and links that spark my interest on the web and social media”**





» down some initial thoughts and clustering them into a mind-map. "I'll follow this with some internet research: reading up information, and collecting references or visuals," she adds. "I'll check whether other artists have already worked on something similar, and ask myself: 'How can I make my work stand out?' Eventually, I'll translate my idea into a first sketch, and come up with a plan of how to develop it."

## WHEN INSPIRATION STRIKES

When Eva's working on personal art, however, inspiration can come from anywhere at all. "My ideas are the result of everything in my messy-potato-head," she says. "They might strike, for example, during a long walk

and appreciating nature, making myself a coffee, watching a new television series, taking a shower, cuddling with my cats, or just enjoying a great meal with friends." For this reason, she always carries a pencil and small notebook with her to write ideas down. "And even if I don't have them," she adds, "I'll record the idea in a note app – my phone is always in my reach."

Spanish author, illustrator and art director **Beatrice Blue** agrees that "anything can trigger a good idea". But for her, she adds, "it's my own

experiences that help me visualise and attach a mood to them." What intrigues her the most, in other words, is less about



Photo by Florian Auprett

**“Anything can trigger a good idea. But it’s my own experiences that help me visualise and attach a mood to them”**



"Any idea can work out if you take the time and effort to do so," says Beatrice Blue.



the detail of stories than the mood that they evoke. "So for example, sometimes when I'm taking a walk and thinking about past experiences, I'll try to think about how I'd tackle those visually. Then certain ideas will pop into my head that match that mood, even if they're different ideas from the actual thing that happened. And while drawing or painting them, I'll try to convey that original mood."

But what if no ideas come to mind at all? First of all, don't panic: everyone

Kofi tells us that, "I'm constantly gathering ideas for new projects on a daily basis."

suffers from creative block at some point. "Being blocked is the worst!" exclaims Eva. "I find that to overcome it, I first have to stop worrying about it, which isn't easy as a classic overthinker. Getting stressed out is like putting obstacles in my way, so I need to force myself to relax." Her go-tos for that include: "Listening to music I love, scrolling through my favourite artist's Instagram feed or my timeline, checking out Pinterest, watching a comfort movie, taking a very long ➤

## INDUSTRY INSIGHT FIVE WAYS TO STAY CREATIVE

Artists reveal their top tips on keeping your artistic flame alive

### 1 Make time to step away from your desk

All our artists agree that it's important to step away from your desk on a regular basis. "I often get hit with new ideas when I'm out jogging or showering," says Kofi Ofosu. "I usually run the idea a number of times in my mind until I get back to my sketchbook, so I can quickly scribble down notes for later."

### 2 It's okay to leave bad ideas by the wayside

If you're failing to move forward with an idea, don't beat yourself up. "Never be afraid to drop a particular piece if it isn't working out, and move on to something else," says Kofi. "You can always have a stab at it later."

### 3 Return to your old art favourites

Not everything you do has to be new and original. "Recently, I faced a bit of art block and frustration," says Gareth Davies. "I'd been snowed under with client work, and felt like I hadn't done anything for myself. So I decided to go back to my favourites, namely robots/mecha, and it really helped."

### 4 Pay attention to people

If you want to strike an emotional chord with your art, pay attention to the people around you. "The people I meet in my daily experiences always give me ideas for things to create," says Kofi. "I'll create a character based on someone I've met, or the stories I hear from others will inspire the stories that I tell with my characters."

### 5 Just keep drawing

"If the ideas aren't coming, just draw it out," advises Gareth. "I very rarely get creative block, and feel this is partly because I'm always drawing."

"My go-to solution when I'm suffering creative block is to stop thinking about art," says Beatrice.







"I have stop myself from overthinking, and stick to one idea until the very end," says Eva.



"I usually have more ideas than I can actually execute, so have to rely on my intuition," says Kofi.

► walk, or looking at some art-of or how-to books by different artists. But ultimately I find the best way to fight creative block is to just draw without a plan, or following something like a #drawthisinyourstyle challenge."

## WHAT'S CAUSING THE BLOCKAGE?

It's useful, too, to consider whether there's an underlying cause to your creative block. "Most of the blocks I've experienced have stemmed from personal issues," says Beatrice. "Either

I've been burnt out, pushing myself too much, or forcing myself to higher expectations than I can manage at that time. Taking a moment to look at what's around me, and doing some other things I enjoy, helps big-time." Kofi, meanwhile, says: "It's been a while since I went through a creative block, and I feel the reason for that is because I stopped comparing my work to the work of others."

Always remember that you don't have to do everything alone: working

**“I find the best way to fight creative block is to just draw without a plan”**

with others can multiple your ideas and creative energy exponentially. "One thing I love to do is to work on both a collaborative project alongside a more personal one," says Beatrice. "It creates a good balance in general."

Also, keep an open mind and have confidence in your ideas, without becoming too obsessed with them. Beatrice spent a year developing her picture book, *Once Upon A Dragon's Fire*, and went through around 15 drafts. "It was hard at some points to believe in an idea and move forward with it, not knowing if it was really going to work," she recalls. "But it helped to step away at times, and to try to build my ideas up with an open mind. I also found it useful to stay open to feedback, which stopped my ideas becoming too narrow. If you focus too much on a specific idea and small, unnecessary details, you can lose sight of the overall vision."



"If I suddenly get an idea that I might forget about, I write it down on whatever I have at hand," says Beatrice.





"This was inspired by lockdown, when I surrounded myself with plants and colourful stuff to cheer me up," says Eva.



# TIPS, TUTORIALS AND INSPIRATION FOR EVERY DIGITAL ARTIST

Find out how to take your art to the next level with the latest ImagineFX Annual, featuring step-by-step tutorials to improve your skills, as well as industry insights from the pros!



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A Drink and Draw session organised by Concept Art Association from February this year, on the theme of Afrofuturism to celebrate Black History Month.



Photo by: @creativenbs5

# Meet the Concept Art Association

**Unsung heroes** We talk to the people determined to elevate and celebrate concept artists and their role in the entertainment industry

**Concept artists have had their hand in the success of films for decades and even more so with the growth of film and video game franchises. Yet little has been done to afford these unsung heroes their rightful spot among the award shows, articles and interviews. The Concept Art Association aims to shine a light on those talented creatives.**

"We wanted to create a space to honour and recognise concept artists and the work that they do across film, TV, games and VR," says co-founder, **Rachel Meinerding**. At the heart of the

body is the Concept Art Awards, where professional, independent and student excellence is awarded, and lifetime achievement awards bestowed.

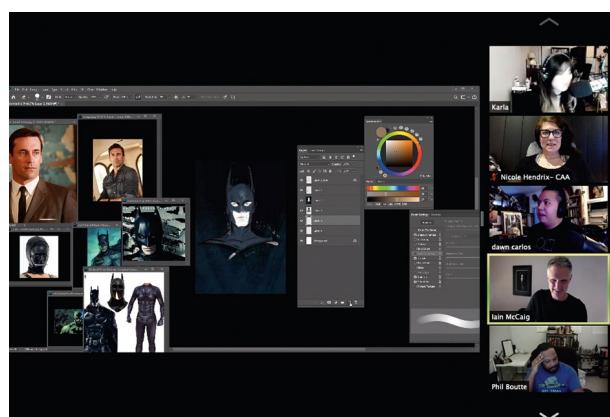


"Our goal is to help concept artists become household names and get into the film-making history books," says co-founder, **Nicole Hendrix**. To achieve this, the association has partnered with the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences' Margaret Herrick Library and is helping to set up a collection for educational purposes.

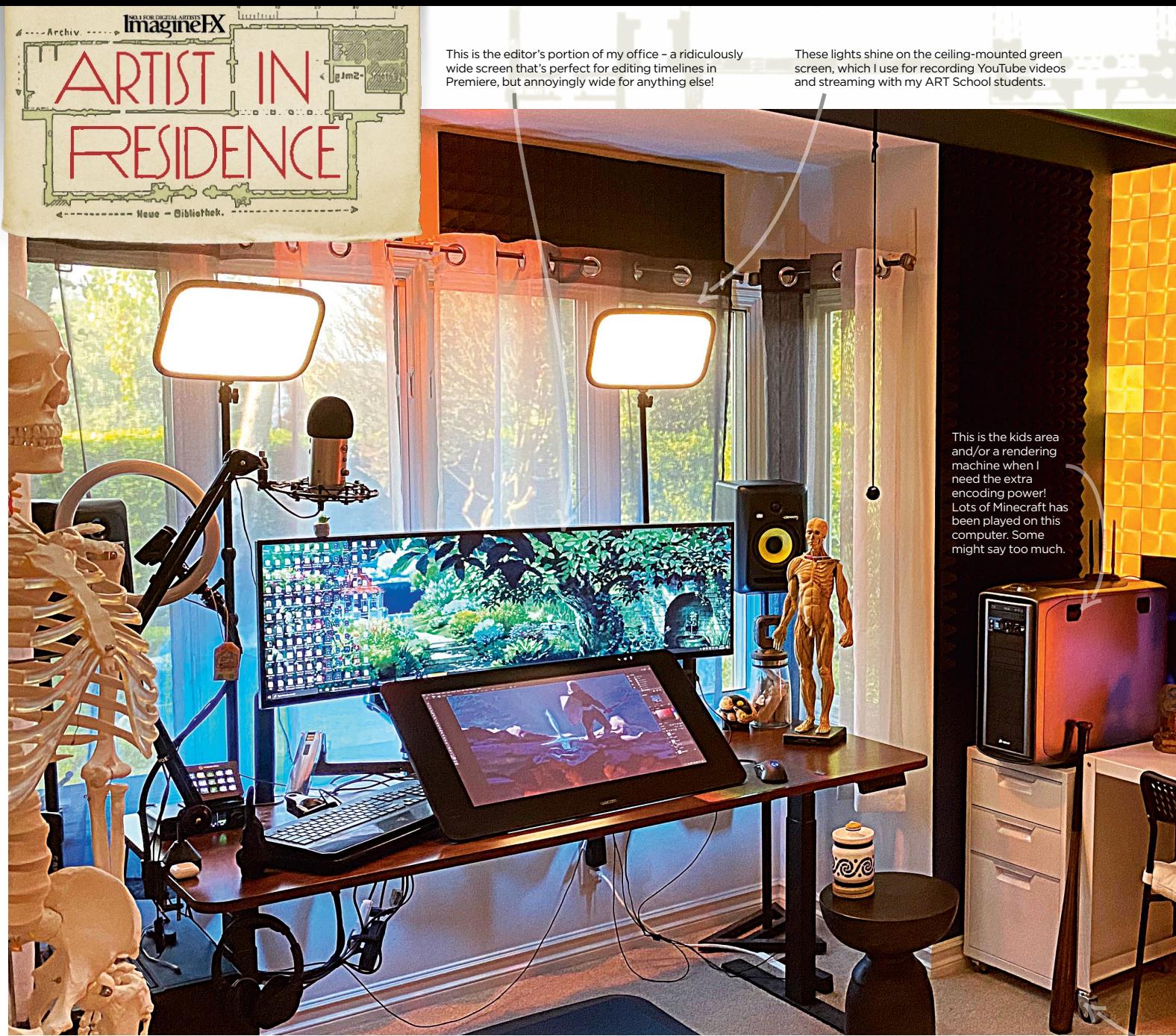
The association's community-focused events include monthly Drink and Draws, and educational panels – featuring some of the leaders of the field – along with members-only mentorship programmes, networking and portfolio events. Membership also includes award-show voting and access to an exclusive job board. See [www.conceptartassociation.com](http://www.conceptartassociation.com).

Concept Art Awards were 'handed out' at this year's LightBox Expo Online.

Famed concept artist Karla Ortiz hosted a virtual drink and draw session in the summer.



# ImagineNation Artist in Residence



## Marc Brunet

**Colours allowed** The art teacher, artist, YouTuber and CEO shows us around his candy store, which also doubles as his work office



**My line of work requires I spend most of my time in the office, so it's important for me to make the place as comfortable as it is practical.**

I create my art on the big Wacom 27QHD that I've have since its release, and edit on the 49-inch Dell ultrawide

monitor right above it. The stacked displays make the position of the mouse and keyboard a bit awkward (being so far apart), and so I've hooked everything up to Ergotron arms (three in total). This enables me to pull the keyboard or any of the screens in and out for the ideal setup, depending on whatever I'm doing.

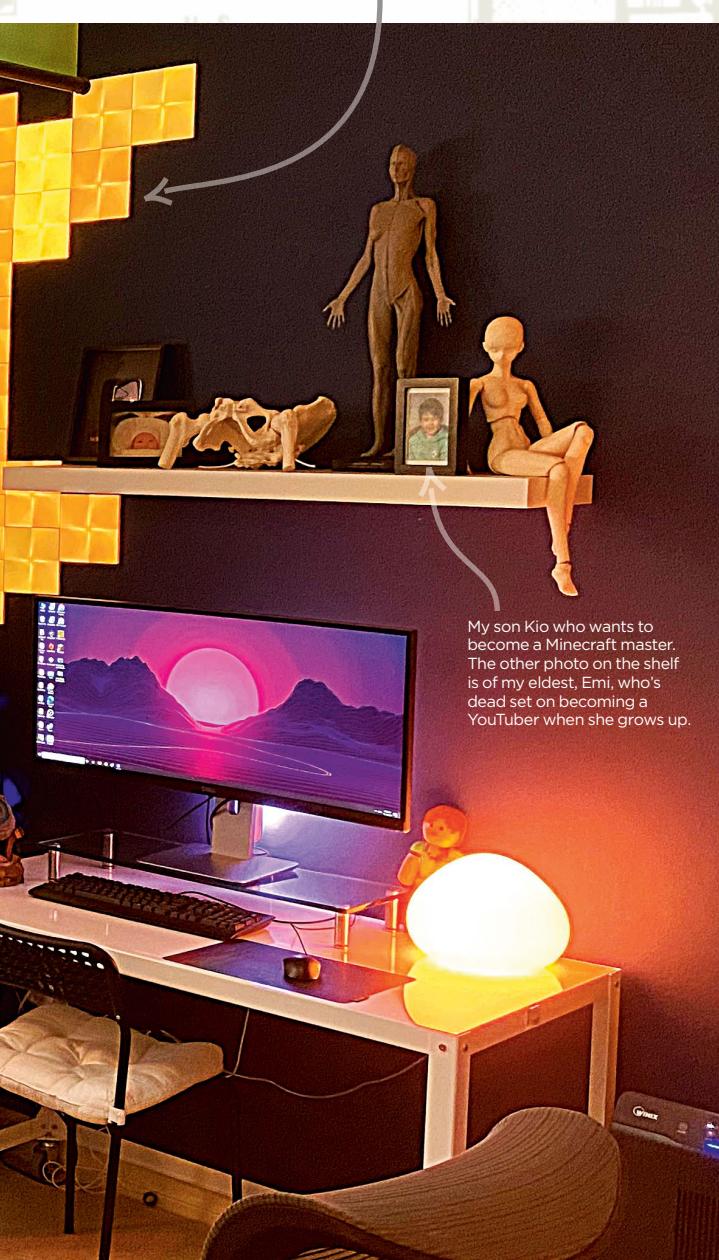
I tend to work later in the day, which is why I've put a little extra emphasis on lights. I work best in warm, dim lighting since that's what I've been used to for most of my career while I was still at Blizzard. My work environment affects my mood more than I'd like to admit, so it's important that everything is always in order. Clean work environment, clear mind!

### CREATIVE RITUAL

Before I start drawing, I'll always grab a few candies from my candy corner, a cool/warm drink depending on the weather and I absolutely have to put on my noise-cancelling headphones ➤

# Artist news, software & events

These small square lights are manufactured by Nanoleaf. They add a ton of ambience to the room and they can be animated, display any colour or even follow the beat of a song. In a word, epic.



My son Kio who wants to become a Minecraft master. The other photo on the shelf is of my eldest, Emi, who's dead set on becoming a YouTuber when she grows up.

In case an intruder ever tries to sneak in to check out my anatomy figures, I'm warning you now that I've been practising my swings!

This is Moko (it means "fluffy" in Japanese). She's our new family member and a fierce golden retriever puppy!



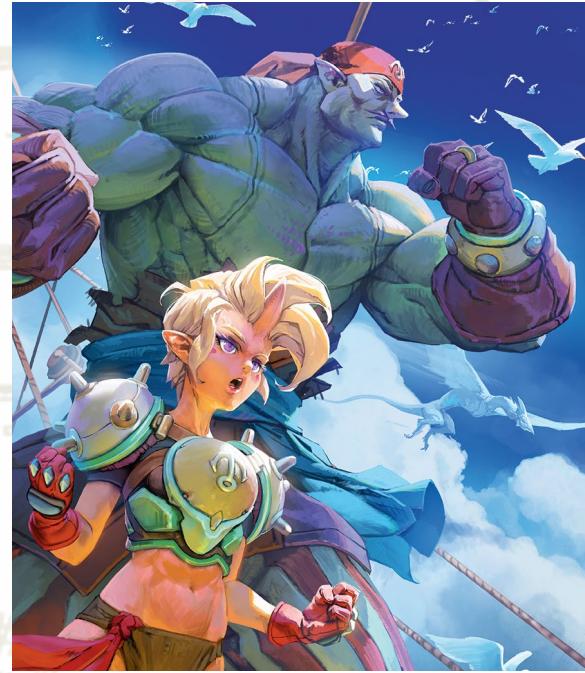
I'm sitting on a large Yogibo bean bag that's within reach of all things important like candies, art books and ImagineFX magazines.



# ImagineNation Artist in Residence

Here's the green screen in "streaming" mode. I just have to pull it down when required, and the screen conveniently springs back up when I'm done.

“ I tend to work later in the day, which is why I've put a little extra emphasis on lights ”



Sky pirate fighters from my personal project Chroma Island. These guys don't belong in any of the land tribes so they live in the skies instead.

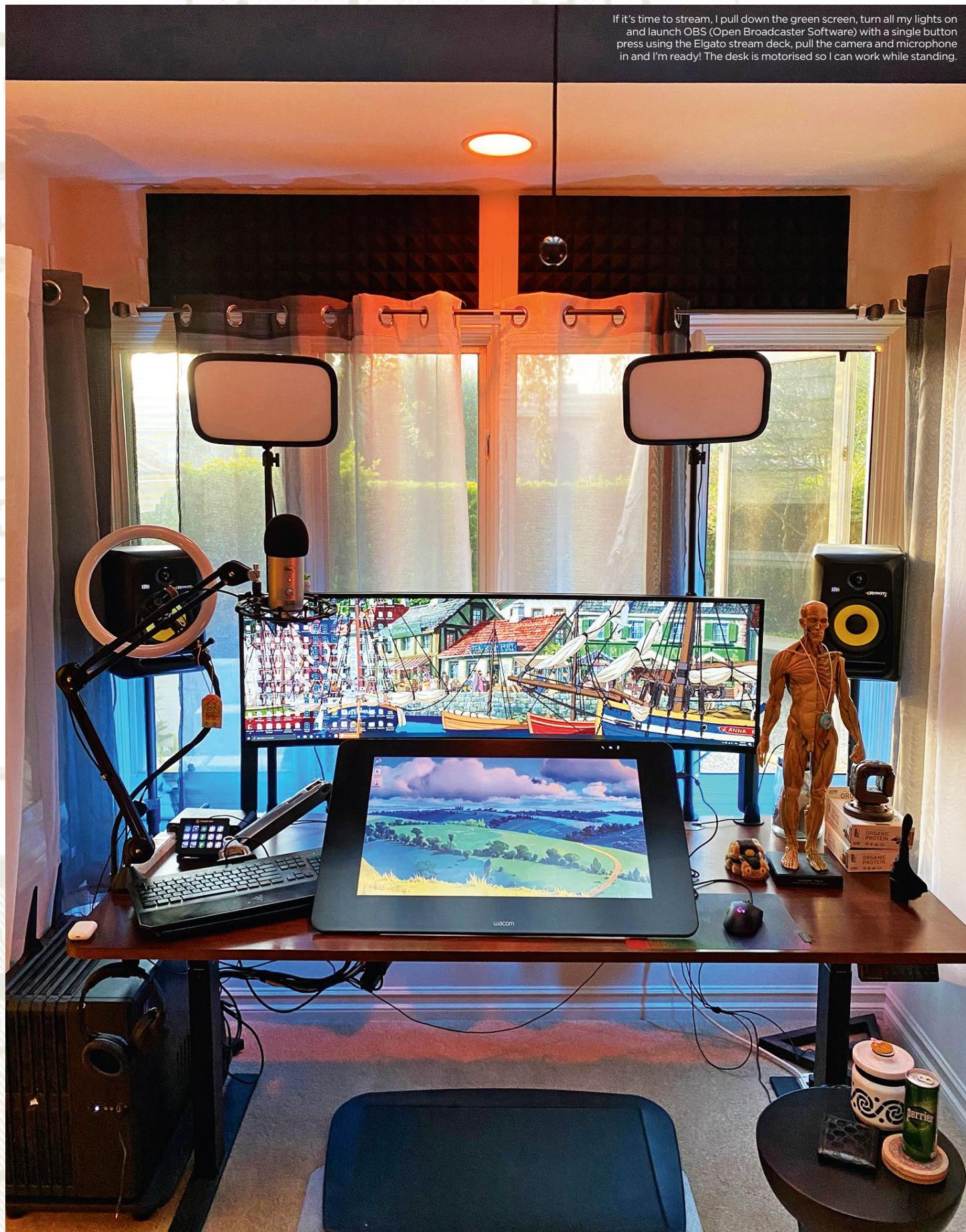


This is the only image I have up on my office walls. It was one of my all-time favourite shows as a kid and a big reason why I decided to pursue art as a career.



I spent just a little under eight years at Blizzard and each employee receives a sword at the five-year-mark. Here's mine – careful, it's quite sharp!

# Artist news, software & events



# ImagineNation Artist in Residence



This is the ART WAR trophy I sculpted digitally and got 3D printed for the winners of the yearly art contest we host over at Cubebrush.



This was based on an old character from 2004 that I recently reimagined for a YouTube video.

► with some good music – otherwise nothing gets done! Rituals like these might seem a bit silly to some people, but this puts me in a peak creative state and it's what I'll do anywhere else too, when I have to work from a different location (when visiting family in Canada and Japan every year).

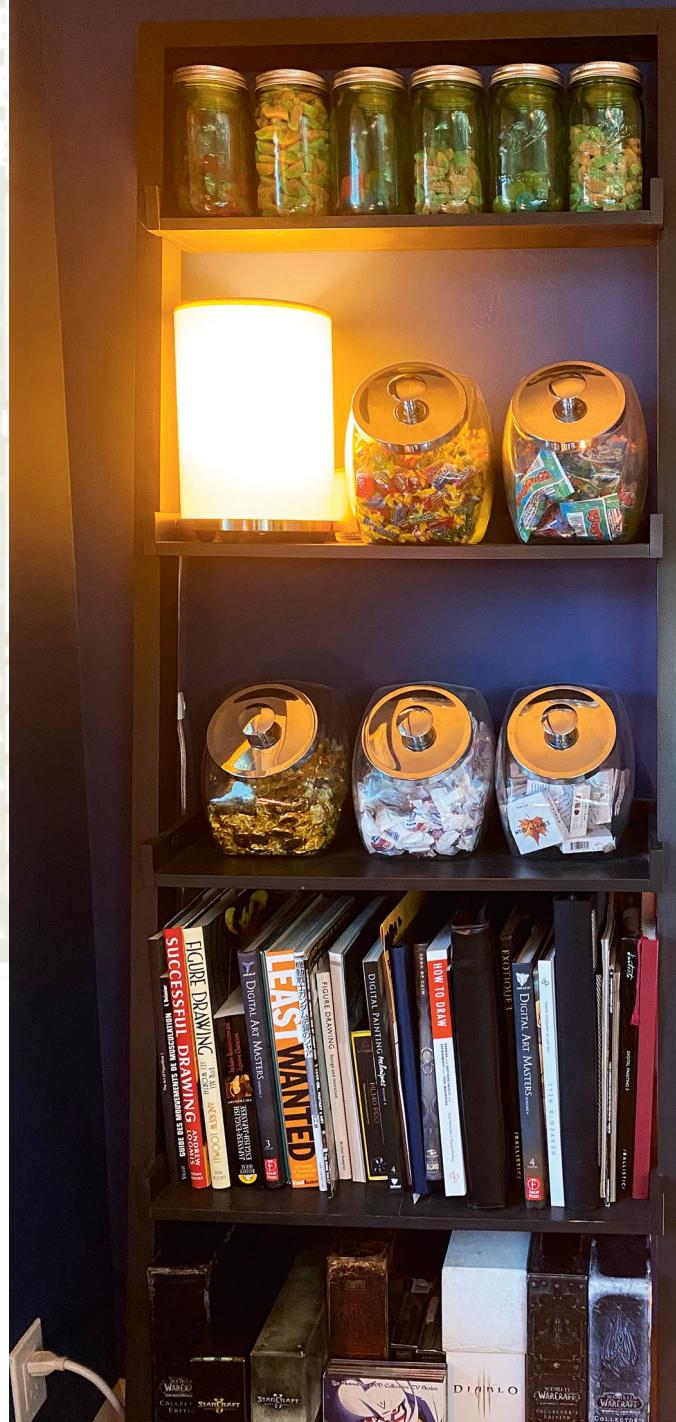
## WORK DAY

I'm a bit of a night owl and so I tend to go to bed late and wake up pretty late, too. This is because most of my team works remotely from Europe and I always try to be available during their working hours.

My day will usually start at around 11am after coffee and a bite to eat for breakfast. First order of the day is usually going through emails and doing some customer support. Early in the afternoon I'll either jump in

**“I’m a bit of a night owl and so I tend to go to bed late and wake up pretty late, too”**

The candy corner has always been an integral part of my home office. If you're wondering if I do anything special to help me create my art, then the answer is: I eat lots of candies.



meetings if I have any that day or go over tasks for my employees for the following day.

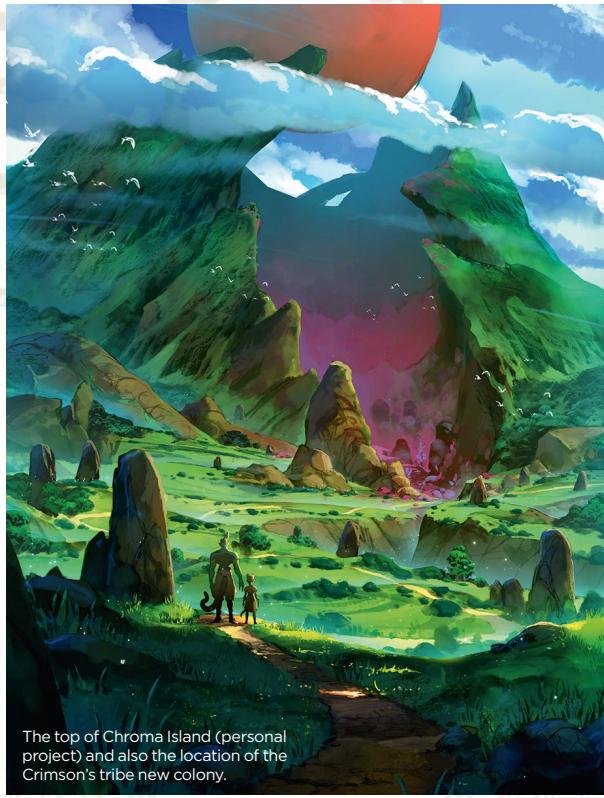
Once all the business stuff is cleared, I'll either move on to working on some art or putting together some content for YouTube or my own Cubebrush store for the rest of the day. In the evening when my team starts to come online again, it's usually a mix of art and

business, depending on what needs to be done. Sprinkle throughout some play time with the kids and that'll wrap up a pretty typical day! Most nights I'll be going to bed at around 3-4am.

*Marc wears many hats as an art teacher for his ART School programme, a popular YouTuber, professional artist, CEO of the CG marketplace Cubebrush.co and father of two. See more at [www.cubebrush.co/mb](http://www.cubebrush.co/mb).*



# Artist news, software & events



The top of Chroma Island (personal project) and also the location of the Crimson's tribe new colony.



This is my malnourished assistant, the ideal partner for any art teacher/artist. I used to have one at my parent's house when I was younger for some reason I can't recall, so it always feels strangely nostalgic to look at it, err I mean "him" (I wouldn't want to get on his bad side).



This shelf is a bit of a mixed bag with my silver YouTube play button I got a few years back, some anatomy figures and of course plastic hip bones that most artists possess. Right?

# GET IMAGINEFX DELIVERED DIGITALLY!



The digital tablet screen shows the front cover of ImagineFX magazine. At the top, a blue banner reads "FREE! PRO ART VIDEO TRAINING + 33 CUSTOM BRUSHES!". Below this, the magazine's title "ImagineFX" is prominently displayed in large, bold, black and pink letters. To the left of the title, the text "NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS" is written in pink. To the right, a pink box says "ARTIST OF THE YEAR" and "SUBMIT YOUR WORK!". The central image on the cover is a vibrant, stylized illustration of a woman with purple hair, wearing a futuristic suit and holding a large, blue, glowing energy weapon. The background of the cover is a colorful, graffiti-style urban scene. Below the main image, the text "LEARN TO PAINT GAME ART" is written in large, bold, blue and pink letters. Underneath that, a yellow box says "Get inspired by the art of Cyberpunk 2077 and master 2D and 3D skills to create cutting-edge illustrations". The bottom of the cover features several smaller text boxes: "ALSO INSIDE", "DEVELOP AN EPIC GAME FIGHT SCENE", "INSIDE MARC BRUNET'S AMAZING STUDIO", "USE SILHOUETTES TO PAINT ENVIRONMENTS", "TAP FOR TEXT-FREE COVER!", "FUTURE", "ISSUE 195", "WORKSHOP SPEEDY CONCEPTS", and "Quickly build up a sci-fi scene with Lixin Yin". At the very bottom, a pink box says "RIOT GAMES ART! WE INTERVIEW SENIOR ILLUSTRATOR JENNIFER WUESTLING!".

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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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**DID YOU MISS THE PREVIOUS PACKED ISSUE?**  
Don't worry – you can get hold of issue 194 at <http://ifxm.ag/single-ifx>



Tickets for next year's virtual Vertex event are now on sale – see [www.vertexconf.com](http://www.vertexconf.com) for details.

### Vertex 2021

I hope you're well. I was so happy to see that the Vertex event will happen virtually next year. I attended the first time in 2019 and couldn't wait for 2020, especially after the announcement that Loish will have a talk as well. I had my ticket and unfortunately couldn't come as my child fell ill.

I know that live events have lots of benefits such as networking, but there's always a group of people that can't attend them for various reasons, be it distance, disability or other circumstances. I hope once the pandemic is over, Vertex will be a live and virtual event, and will be available to a wider audience. Can't wait to buy my 2021 ticket. Stay safe.

**Agnieszka**



Our recent interview with Sam Nassour struck a chord with reader Jamie.



At Vertex 2020, the popular Dutch illustrator Loish spoke about channelling your passions into your work.

**Claire replies** Agnieszka, I'm so sorry that you couldn't attend earlier this year. We're very excited to have launched the tickets for our virtual event in February 2021 and while I'm sad that we can't all meet in person, I'm ecstatic that our event is more accessible to people overseas or who are otherwise unable to attend in person. I hope we can meet and chat via our community channels during the event. By the time of going to press we should have announced our line-up of speakers – it's going to be awesome! Visit [www.vertexconf.com](http://www.vertexconf.com) for all the news and latest information.

### Fresh surprise!

I just received my copy of the October issue 191 of ImagineFX in the mail. What an awesome surprise to see my name in the 'Fresh Paint' column! I'm a long-time subscriber to your magazine and as an artist, it's such an honour to be mentioned in this publication.

Again, thank you so very much. Best wishes, and onward!

**Kait Matthews, US**

**Claire replies** Glad to hear you liked the surprise! I love scrolling through the #imaginefx hashtag on Instagram to see what people are painting. It's a joy to see such creativity. Readers, please tag your art with #imaginefx so we can see your work. Thanks also for being a subscriber, Kait. Your support means a lot to us.

### Sam's sensible advice

Just writing in to let you know that I really enjoyed what Sam Nassour had to say in issue 194. I can relate when Sam speaks of "letting go of perfectionism." I'm only drawing and painting for an audience of one – me – but I still find it hard to resist endlessly noodling certain details, or trying to get the perfect lighting. I'm thinking of setting myself time limits to finish my work.

**Jamie, England**

**Claire replies** That's not a bad idea, Jamie. What other tips do readers have to speed up their creative workflow? We're all ears!



New works that have grabbed our attention



**Hero Wuff**  
[@herowuffstuff](http://herowuffstuff)



**Warren CG**  
[@warrencg](http://warrencg)



**Joel Serrano**  
[@j\\_o\\_e\\_l\\_art](http://j_o_e_l_art)

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



## ARTIST PORTFOLIO

# JENNIFER WUESTLING

The German illustrator tells **Gary Evans** how her success in the video games industry has taken time and patience

Jennifer Wuestling was still a student in Germany when she got an interview for a dream job at Riot Games in Los Angeles. This was 2014. She was in her final year studying design and visual communication at Pforzheim University. She had some experience in entertainment art – she'd recently worked at a Berlin concept art studio as an intern. As well as wanting to talk to her, Riot Games set Jennifer an art task.

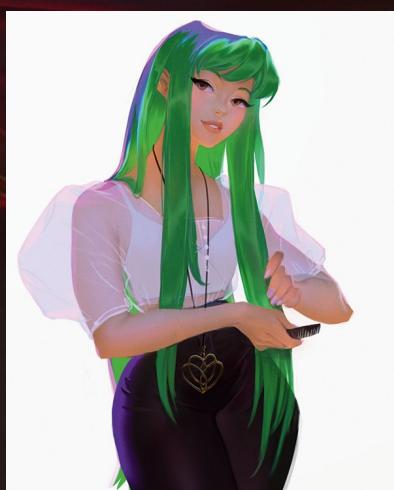
Tests like these, you're given a deadline and certain guidelines. It's a chance to show what you can do, how you'd handle the pressure of working

at a big games company. Jennifer was also working on her bachelor thesis. The art test quickly stressed her out, and she failed.

"I was so happy about the opportunity," the German says, "that I took it on right away, and got pretty stressed. In hindsight, if I had waited a few months and finished my degree, I would have had a more relaxed and methodical approach to the test. The timing wasn't perfect."

### TIME TO DRAW

Jennifer grew up in a small town in the northern Black Forest region of Germany – best known, she says, for cuckoo clocks and Black Forest gateau. There was a lot of climbing trees and riding her bike. At home, she played the latest computer games – her father's hobby. Her mother's Spanish and so Jennifer grew up bilingual. This combination of old and new, nature and video games, and the feeling of being between two cultures... it got Jennifer's imagination going. She was always drawing and making stories up.



#### SUZELIA

"A collaboration with @maxwyn\_art on Instagram. It's my version of their character – I liked simplifying the shapes and focusing on colour contrasts."

### Artist PROFILE

Jennifer Wuestling

LOCATION: US

SOFTWARE: Photoshop and Procreate

WEB: [www.artstation.com/izaskun](http://www.artstation.com/izaskun)

**“I was so happy about the opportunity that I took it on right away, and got pretty stressed...”**

As a teenager, Jennifer was really into manga, liked the line art ("simple, expressive"). First she traced from her manga books, then she created her own characters. She got involved with manga and anime forums, and that led into digital art. She remembers clearly how fun it was to try a graphics tablet for the first time. Digital art offered "endless possibilities."

At that time, Jennifer pictured herself working in science – chemistry,



JENNIFER WUESTLING

**NIGHTBRINGER APHELIOS –  
LEAGUE OF LEGENDS**

"For this splash art it was a challenge to show the duality between these two sibling characters, between light and darkness."

maybe physics. Drawing was just a hobby. Being miles from major cities, she never really saw art as a possible career. She decided on design and visual communication at Pforzheim University because the course sounded close enough to digital art, and the university itself, being near home, was "financially possible." The degree included classes in figure drawing and illustration, but both ended up being "a bit overwhelming." More important was the time: university gave her time to draw, time to think, and time to spend with other people interested in art.

"It took away some of the social pressure of needing to have a job. It was more acceptable to be a student and spend a lot of time drawing at home ➤

© Riot Games

# Interview



than not having a job and spending a lot of time drawing at home."

Part of the degree was a mandatory internship. In 2012, she went to concept art studio SIXMOREVODKA. It was the first time she'd been surrounded by professionals, and she learned a lot. These eight months in Berlin were at times "overwhelming," but they led to her first freelance work. Jennifer continued freelancing throughout the rest of her time at university. She graduated in 2014, the year she failed the art test with Riot Games. Three years later, she got a second chance.

## SECOND TIME LUCKY

Jennifer went to a lot of art conferences around Europe. She liked the feedback sessions – where you get your portfolio critiqued. This is how she got first

### LANCELOT UPDATE

"This is marketing art for Albion Online, a game by Sandbox Interactive. Like most client work, it shows an aspirational game scene, used to advertise a new update."



© Riot Games

© Albion Online

### DUST AND BONES

"This was a sketch I did during a lunch break. I was inspired by succulents and the Californian desert."



involved with Riot Games. After she failed that first art test Jennifer continued freelancing for clients, doing similar work to Riot. The projects were a bit smaller and the deadlines a bit tighter, but it was all good experience. In 2017, she completed a second test for Riot Games, and passed. At first, she got freelance work, but a year later Riot offered her an in-house illustrator job, and Jennifer moved to Los Angeles.

What changed between those two tests? Jennifer had honed more of a routine in her approach. She'd gained experience and grown in confidence. Second time around, the deadline seemed more relaxed because she'd been used to tighter time frames in her freelance assignments. She also freed up time in her schedule. The artist had realised that the most important thing when making detailed illustration is time.

**“Splash art has to be polished and represent the product in its best way... it can take weeks to finish”**

# CRAFTING THE SHAPE OF LIGHTING

Jennifer talks us through her fan art of Melisma from Riot Game's Teamfight Tactics

"I start with a rough sketch. To refine it, I put a layer on top and redraw it with cleaner lines (1). I fill in the basic local colours, then give it a tint that groups them and darkens the mid-tones a bit (2). If you look closely, you can see it's a gradient that darkens her head and legs. It creates a bit of a fill light in the centre of her figure, and groups the values (3).

I like to experiment with lighting, so I create a new layer on top and set it to Linear

Dodge (Add). This enables me to try out different lighting scenarios without having to commit. I try to think of lighting as having its own shape. This stage can be pretty rough – it's just a guide for rendering later. It's nice when light creates interesting shapes and shadow edges (4). It makes it feel volumetric.

Once I'm happy with the light, I merge it down with the colours and lines. I usually like to use masks to isolate the character into its

different elements, and put them on separate layers, especially when things overlap with each other (5). This enables me to lock the transparent pixels so I can start rendering without worrying about painting over the edges (6). It just speeds up the process. I use the Smudge tool a lot to soften edges, by smudging out the line-art and creating gradients. The rest is adding detail and some smaller shadows."



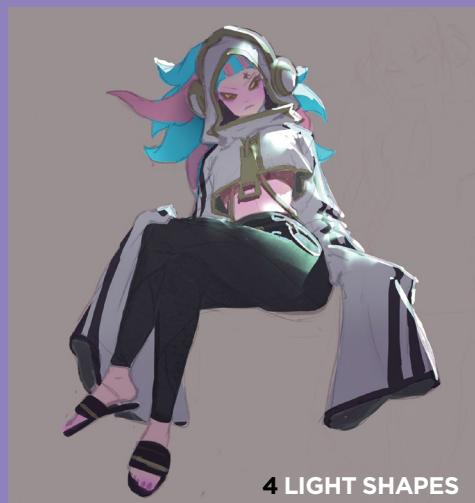
1 CLEAN AND TINTED



2 BASIC COLOURS



3 SUBTLE LIGHTING



4 LIGHT SHAPES



5 MASKS



6 RENDERING

Jennifer is now a senior illustrator at Riot Games. She mainly works on splash art – which, she points out, isn't the same as producing concept art. Splash art comes at the end of a project. It's either used in-game, or as marketing materials.

"Splash art has to be polished and represent the product in its best way," explains Jennifer. "Concept art can be looser – it's earlier in the process, and is really all about finding ideas and creating a product. There might be

many iterations, and the turnaround time for each concept is shorter. Splash art illustrations take weeks to finish."

## MAKING A SPLASH

When creating splash art, Jennifer asks herself certain questions. What effect will the illustration have on the viewer? Is it captivating? Will it keep people captivated? Does it evoke emotion? Take her recent illustration of Seraphine, a new champion in League of Legends. The challenge was to show

the character in an "aspirational way."

Often, because the character is new, she won't have much material to use as reference, so she has to work closer than usual with the design teams. That can mean quite a fair bit of back and forth, because everybody wants to make sure that the new character is "as appealing as possible." It's a lot of pressure, as Jennifer confirms.

"There's definitely the aspect of pressure considering that the ➤

# Interview

» illustration will be seen by millions of players, and it has to be sustainable because it will stay in the game for a long time. But when I'm painting, it's just me and the illustration, and I can usually block out the rest."

Seraphine was a bit different. The character was released to coincide with the League of Legends World Championship, so Seraphine had a big marketing campaign behind her, including her own social media accounts. Jennifer had more references

illustrators – and it doesn't have an art director in the traditional sense. Team members give feedback to each other, and occasionally check in with the design and gameplay teams. Working on Seraphine, Jennifer asked the illustration team for feedback once a week. The piece took around six weeks to complete – though she had her other responsibilities, which include reviewing work from freelancers, developing skills in her team, and sometimes doing small workshops

**“There’s definitely the aspect of pressure considering that the illustration will be seen by millions of players...”**

than usual to work with. But, craft-wise, she still had a long checklist of principles to think about. Working in games has made Jennifer "more strategic in how to show a story in an illustration." For big splash illustrations like Seraphine, she uses colour, lighting and composition to tell the story visually, to lead the viewer's eye around the image. This often means starting with small thumbnails before moving on to the bigger final piece.

The splash illustration team at Riot is relatively small – eight or nine

sessions. With splash art, things move slowly. "The goal," Jennifer says, "is, step by step, getting it closer to the desired result." It's about patience. It takes time.

## DRAWING FAST

Personal pieces are more intuitive. Jennifer often tries things that are simpler, but also more experimental. That means putting just an hour or two into a sketch, and no more than a couple of days into a colour painting. It's a balance between applying the ➔

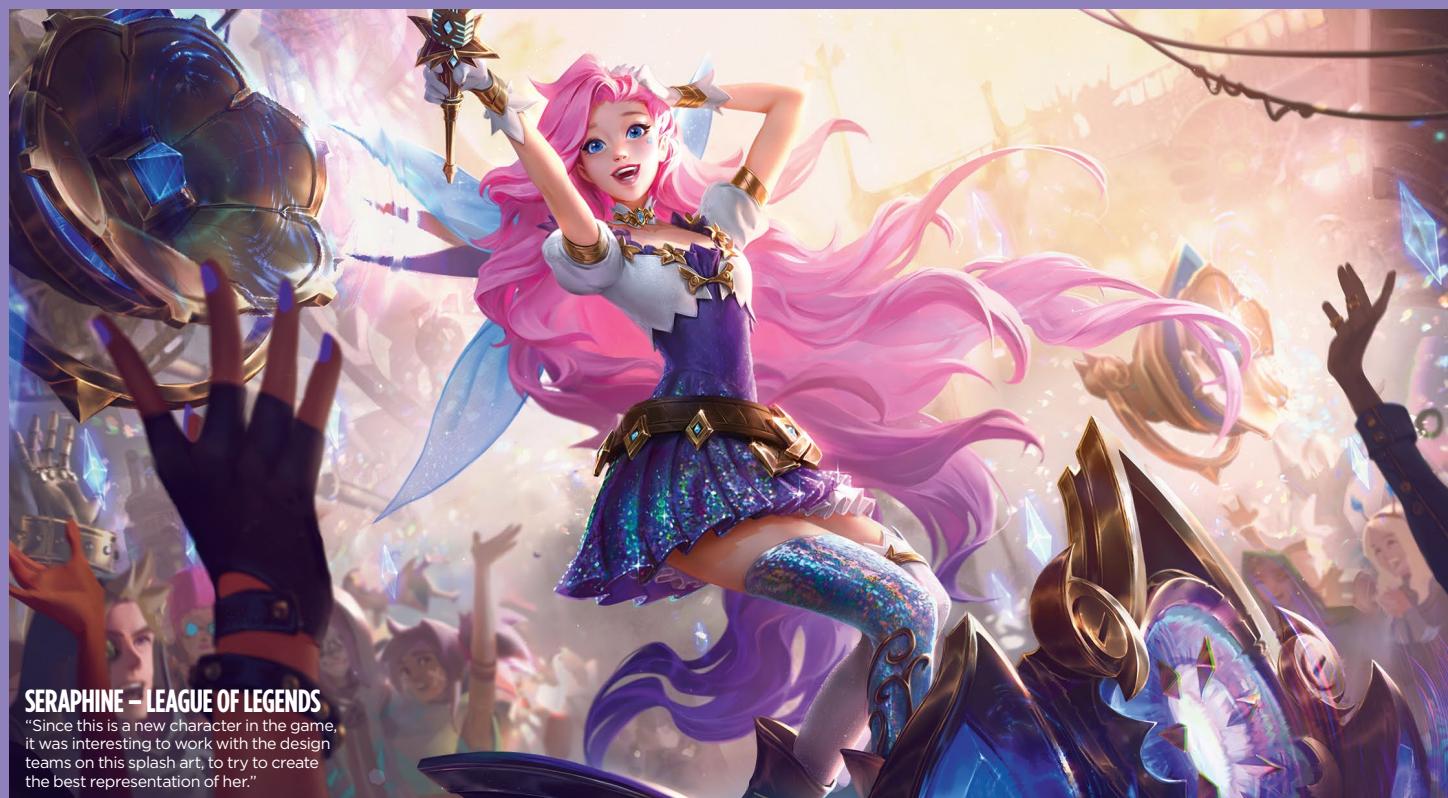


### DAILY SKETCH

"Another lunchtime sketch. Inspired by plants, I created this little character drinking rainwater."

### LIFE DRAWINGS

"Studies created during the Drink and Draw events in Berlin, using Procreate. I love how working digitally enables me to see how light affects a figure."



#### SERAPHINE – LEAGUE OF LEGENDS

"Since this is a new character in the game, it was interesting to work with the design teams on this splash art, to try to create the best representation of her."

© Riot Games

**PUMPKIN FIDDLESTICKS – LEAGUE OF LEGENDS**

"It was fun and refreshing on this Halloween-themed splash art to tap into a dark, spooky scene, compared with the other illustrations I've done for Riot so far."

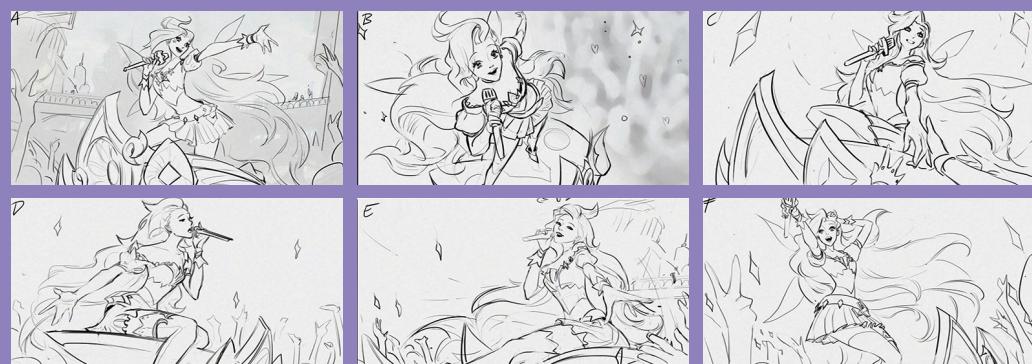
## BUILDING ON THE BASICS

A big part of a video games illustrator is thinking small, explains Jennifer

"In digital art, working with huge resolutions, limitless colours and many tools can be overwhelming. That's why I always start with small thumbnails: it's important to make the big picture work before diving into the details. I often see people getting stuck midway with a lot of problems to solve at the same time – including details they've invested in too early."

I avoid this through good planning and laying out the image in advance. Working at a low resolution first, addressing all major problems, making sure the composition, anatomy, light and colour all work – this is essential at the thumbnail stage. Working like this enables me to start detailing and rendering without having to worry if the picture works as a whole.

Another key aspect is that illustration can take a lot of time. It's easy to feel like giving up midway when it feels messy. Most illustrations

**SERAPHINE IDEAS**

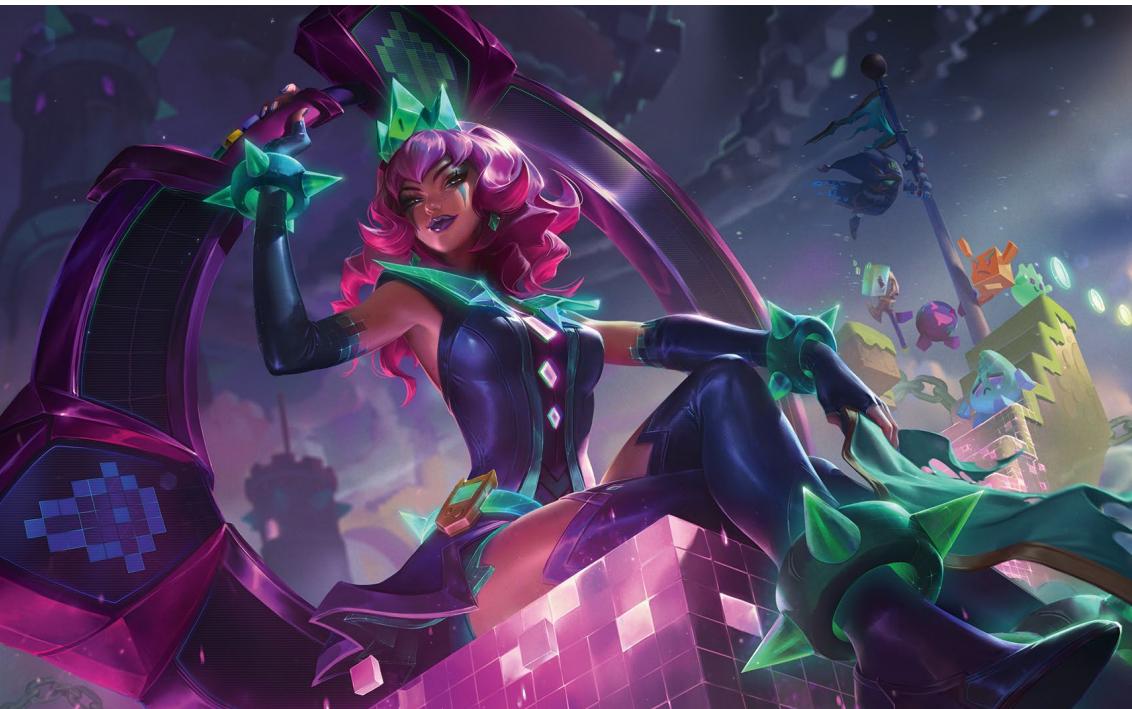
"These are my early ideations for Seraphine. I usually start with rough sketches that just get an idea on to paper, then I do cleaner lines on a layer on top."

go through this 'ugly' stage. Knowing this and pushing though is when people get positive results.

When I started out, there were only a few online tutorials. Now it's all out there. But it can also be as simple as taking a lamp and an object and using them to do a simple study of how the one affects the other in terms of colours, materials or lighting. I also

recommend doing lots of figure drawing, especially if you want to illustrate characters.

For artists wanting to get into games, I always recommend getting better at the fundamentals. Even though it's a world where digital art dominates, all the principles of physics, nature and good drawing skills still apply."



© RIOT Games

→ principles of her splash illustration work, while leaving enough room to try new things. These personal pieces are often about voice.

"I differentiate between voice and personal style. I believe in voice, maybe in the sense of a creative urge that has to be channelled somehow. It's why I make certain choices. It keeps me going. It can make me unhappy if I don't listen to it, but, when I do listen to it, it can make me happy and take me to new places. When the voice isn't attached to a certain style, or certain work, it can continue to express itself in a different way.

"I think most people doing something creative would agree it's something that's in you, and it can be

### ARCADE QIYANA – LEAGUE OF LEGENDS

"This illustration had a lot of arcade-game elements. It's always challenging to render VFX, glows and materials that don't have a direct reference in real life, and make it look realistic."

louder or more quiet, depending how well we can connect to it. For personal style it's something that develops naturally. It's helpful and totally fine to analyse other styles, or study the works of others, but trusting yourself and your own voice is something valuable to learn."

### NEVER A STRAIGHT PATH

Jennifer wanted to give up after failing her first test with Riot. She went months without drawing at all. Now

**“I believe in voice, maybe in the sense of a creative urge that has to be channelled”**



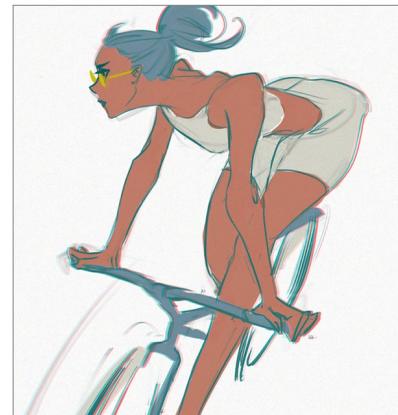
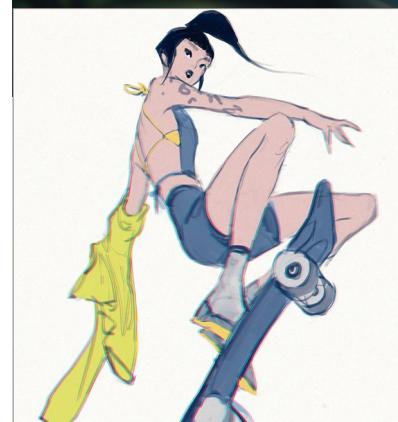
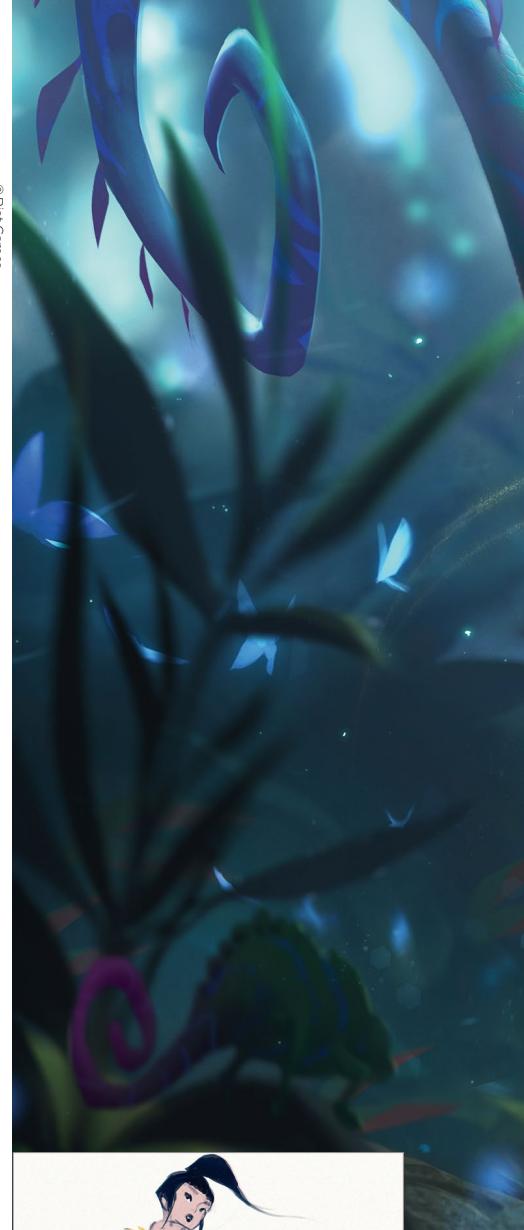
### STATUE STUDIES

"Studies from a museum in Berlin, which contains endless original cast statues. They're all plain white, so it was interesting to study the changing light temperature."

she's at the stage of her career where she would like to do more teaching. It's a chance to share some of the lessons she learned the hard way.

"It's normal to struggle. Time spent on studies often doesn't feel like making immediate progress. The experience I gained from early small work for clients was invaluable, and even if it wasn't always my dream illustration job, it was part of growing as a professional artist.

"I see a lot of impatience with artists starting out. There's sometimes the expectation to go directly from school to the dream job, and anything else is a failure. I always try to share my experience, and what I learn from others, and most of the time it's never a straight path. It takes time."



### SKATING AND BIKING

"A one-hour doodle focusing on loose but dynamic lines and flow. It's inspired by my hobbies – sketching poses like this is easier when I can personally relate."

## NEKO – LEAGUE OF LEGENDS

"I really enjoyed painting a character this colourful. The challenge was to make the image look harmonious. There were a lot of iterations on the face with the design team to represent her accurately."

## SPIRIT BLOSSOM YASUO – LEAGUE OF LEGENDS

"For this splash art I wanted to paint it in a high-key value scheme with a calm composition, because a lot of splash art is action-heavy and on the dark side."



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### Issue 194

Christmas 2020

Cover artist Mel Milton thinks like a sculptor when tackling values, Mike Corriero applies dynamic perspective in his art and Oona Holtrane adds storytelling to her character designs. We also talk to animation artist Sam Nassour.



### Issue 193

December 2020

Embrace spontaneity in your art with Audra Auclair, boost drama levels with Klaus Scherwinski while Phillip Boutté Jr. presents tips on film costume design. Plus we talk to Justin Gerard and look back at LightBox Expo 2020.



### 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.

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August 2020



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July 2020



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# Sketchbook

# Longque Chen

The natural world provides this concept artist with plenty of inspirational material for his awesome sci-fi vehicle designs

## Artist PROFILE

### Longque Chen

LOCATION: US

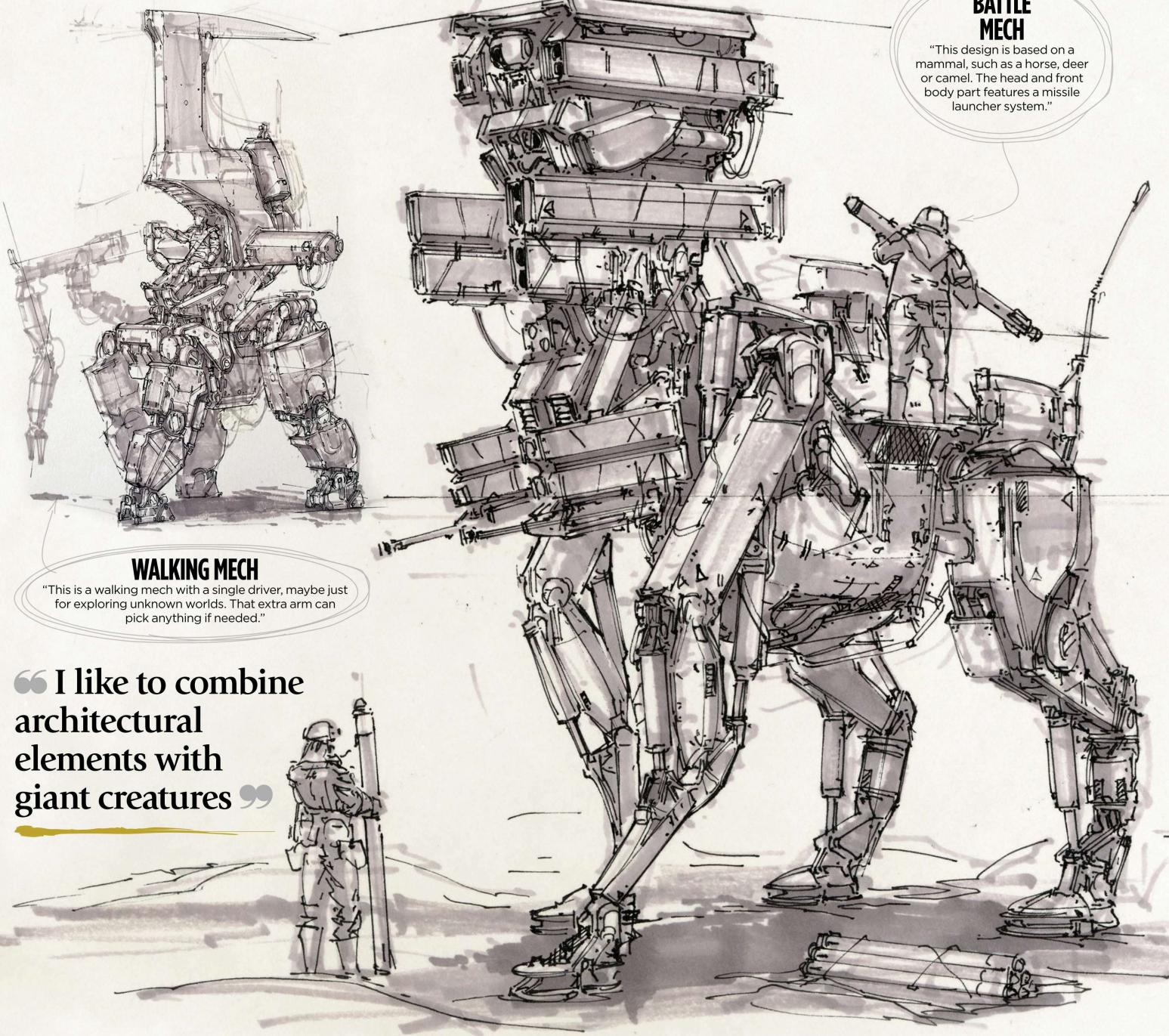


Longque is a concept artist with a background in product design and illustration. He graduated from California's ArtCenter College of Design in 2018 and has since been working in the video game and film industries. He likes watching and observing anything that can inspire him to create his own stories, such as animations, sci-fi films, insects, animals and vehicles – even unusual plants!

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

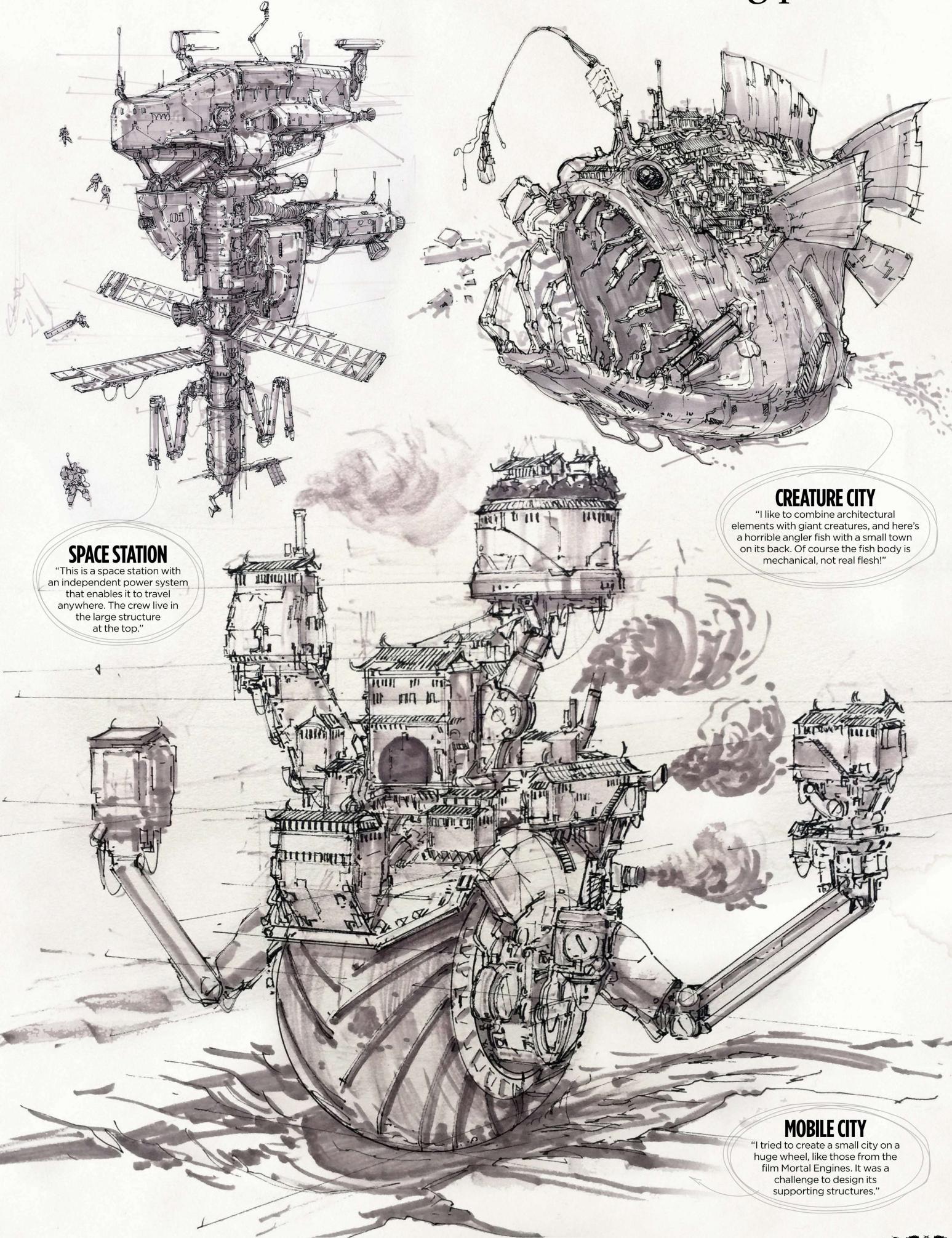
### BATTLE MECH

"This design is based on a mammal, such as a horse, deer or camel. The head and front body part features a missile launcher system."



“I like to combine architectural elements with giant creatures”

# Sketchbook Longque Chen



## SPACE STATION

"This is a space station with an independent power system that enables it to travel anywhere. The crew live in the large structure at the top."

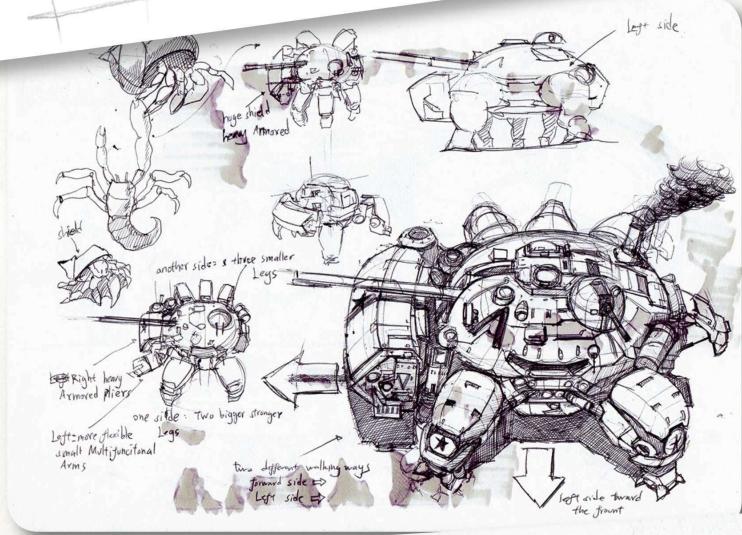
## CREATURE CITY

"I like to combine architectural elements with giant creatures, and here's a horrible angler fish with a small town on its back. Of course the fish body is mechanical, not real flesh!"

## MOBILE CITY

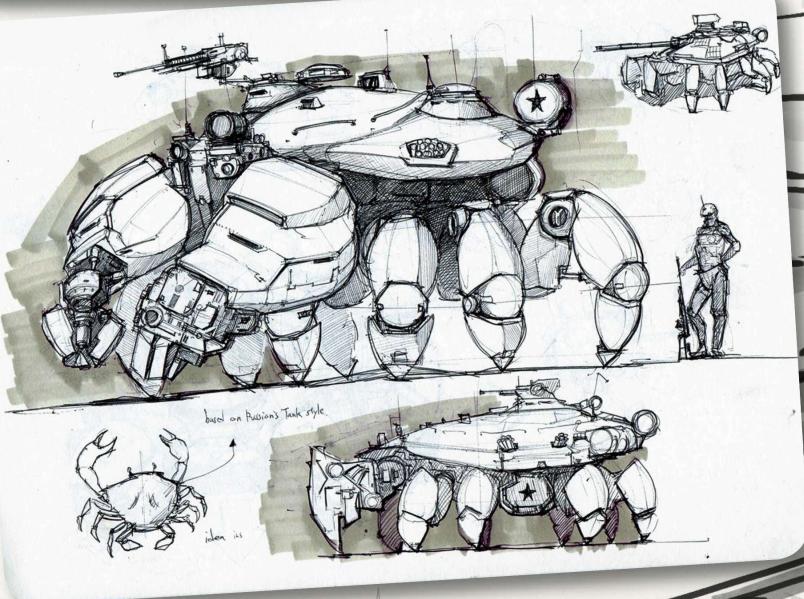
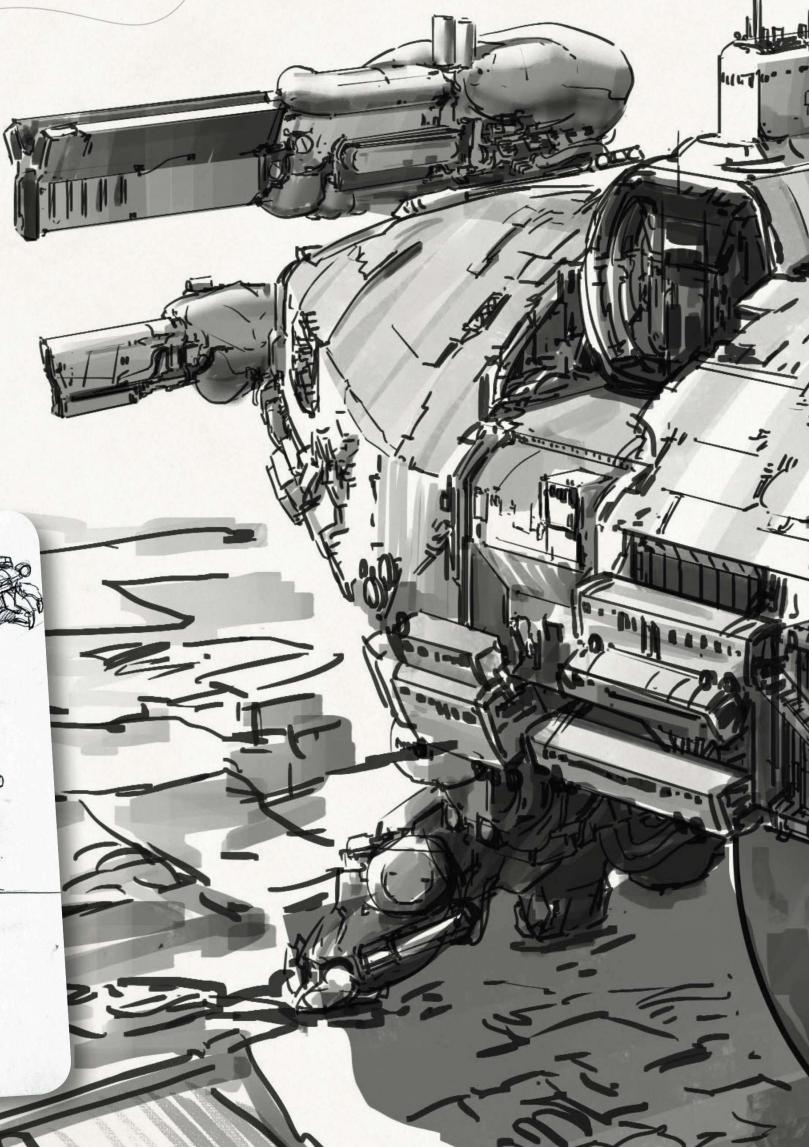
"I tried to create a small city on a huge wheel, like those from the film Mortal Engines. It was a challenge to design its supporting structures."

# Sketchbook



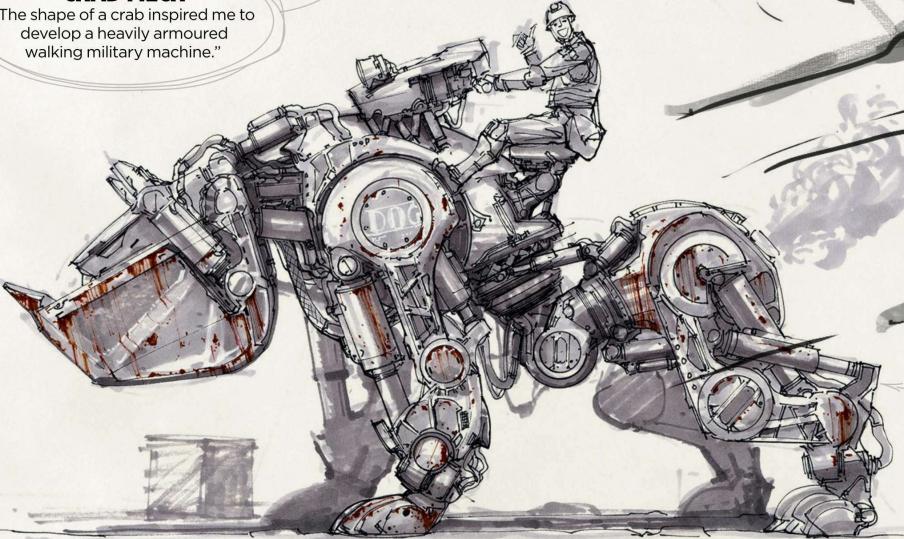
## HERMIT CRAB MECH

"Unlike the crab mech, the hermit crab provided me with a unique asymmetric look. It was a lot of fun to draw."



## CRAB MECH

"The shape of a crab inspired me to develop a heavily armoured walking military machine."



## MECH DOG

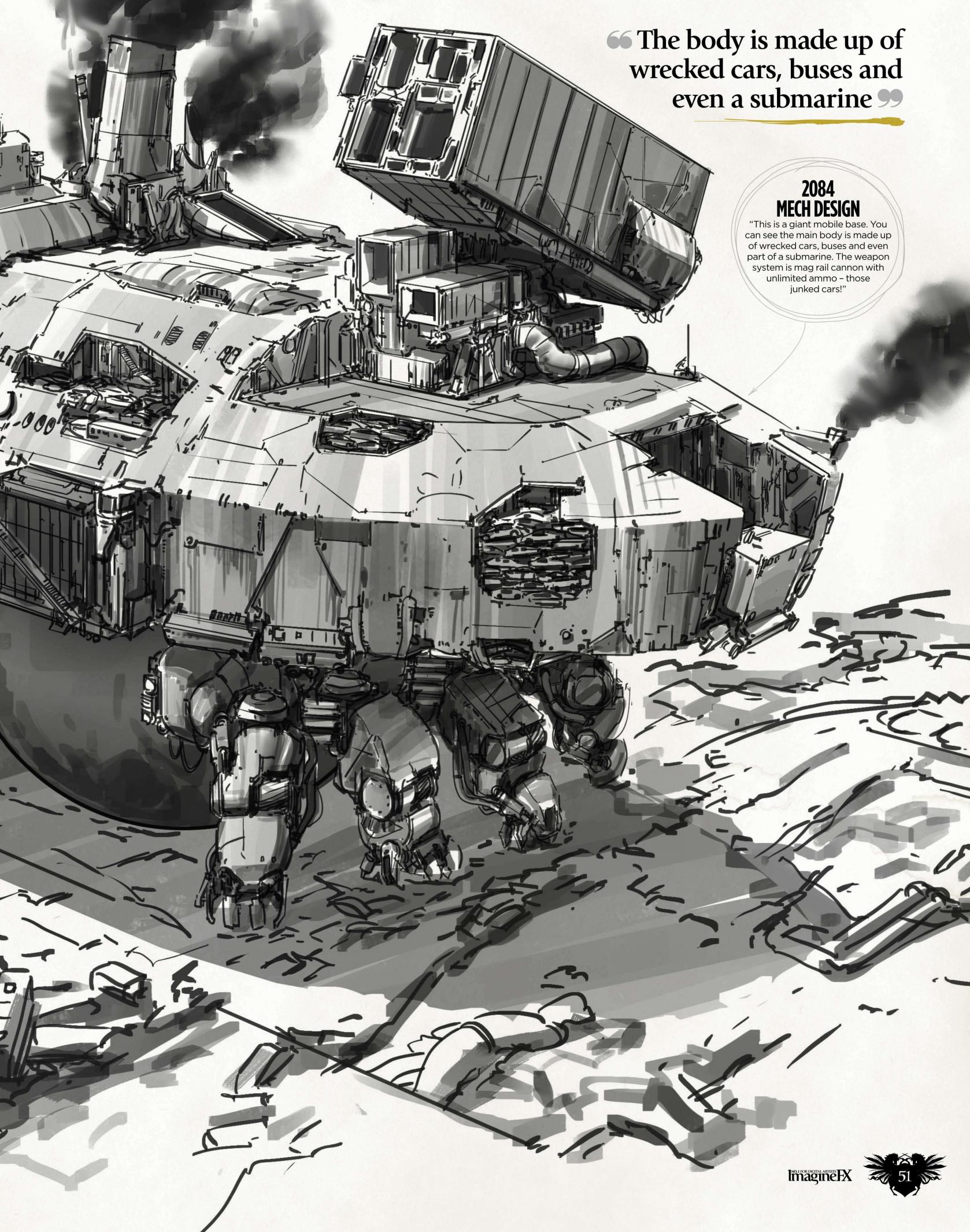
"It was super cool to build a mech dog that can dig through hard rock. Good boy!"

# Sketchbook Longque Chen

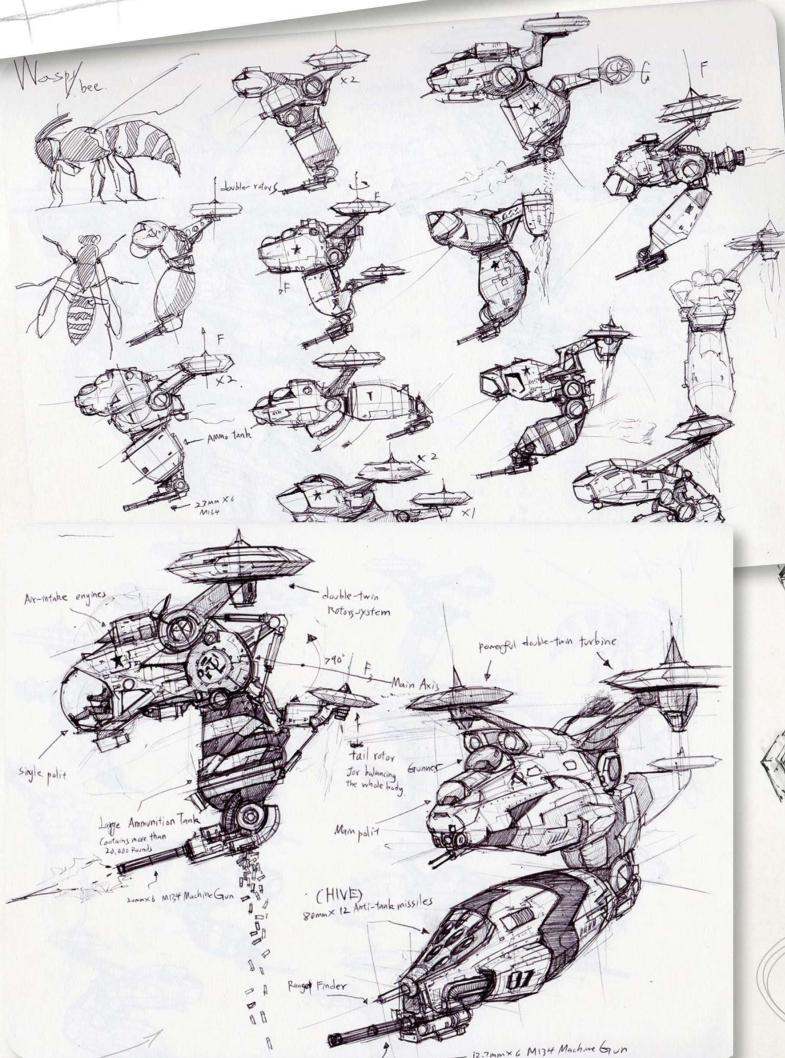
“The body is made up of wrecked cars, buses and even a submarine”

## 2084 MECH DESIGN

“This is a giant mobile base. You can see the main body is made up of wrecked cars, buses and even part of a submarine. The weapon system is mag rail cannon with unlimited ammo – those junked cars!”

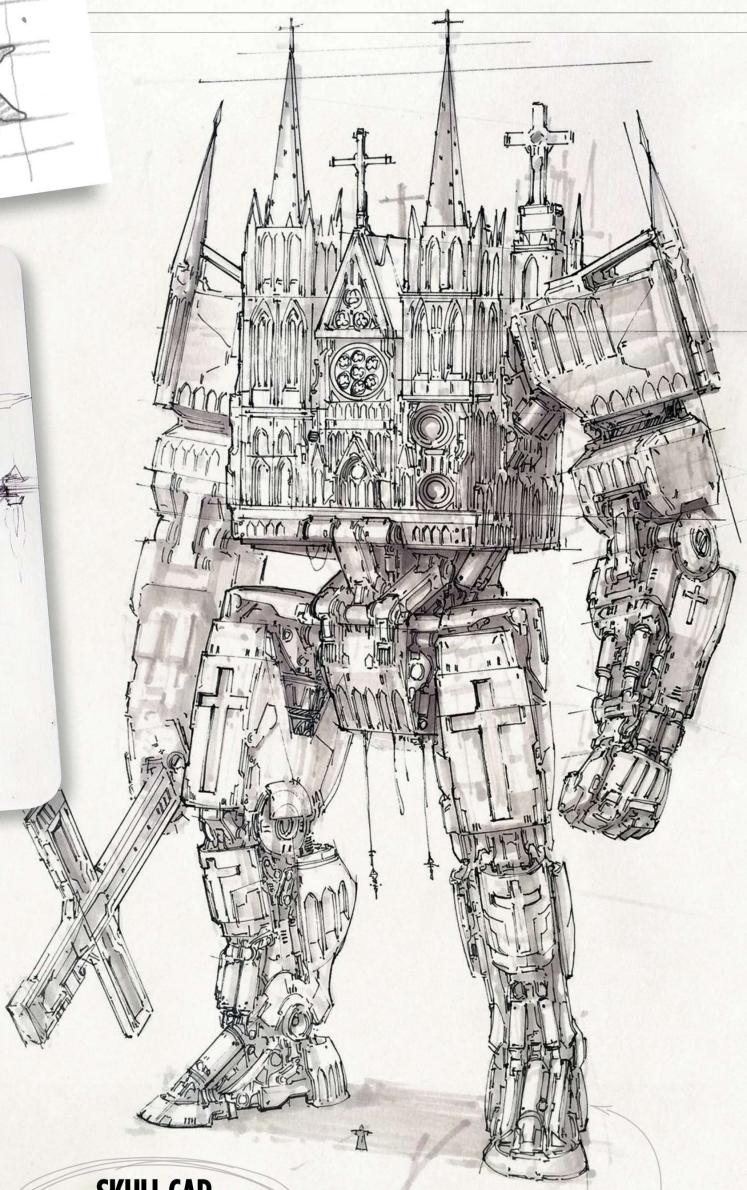


# Sketchbook



## WASP AIRCRAFT

"I looked at the shapes and structures of a wasp and military helicopter, and tried to combine the two. I developed ideas on the first page, where I replaced the propeller with rotors. I perfected the design on the second page. The 'wasp belly' part of the aircraft is an ammo box for its tail gun."

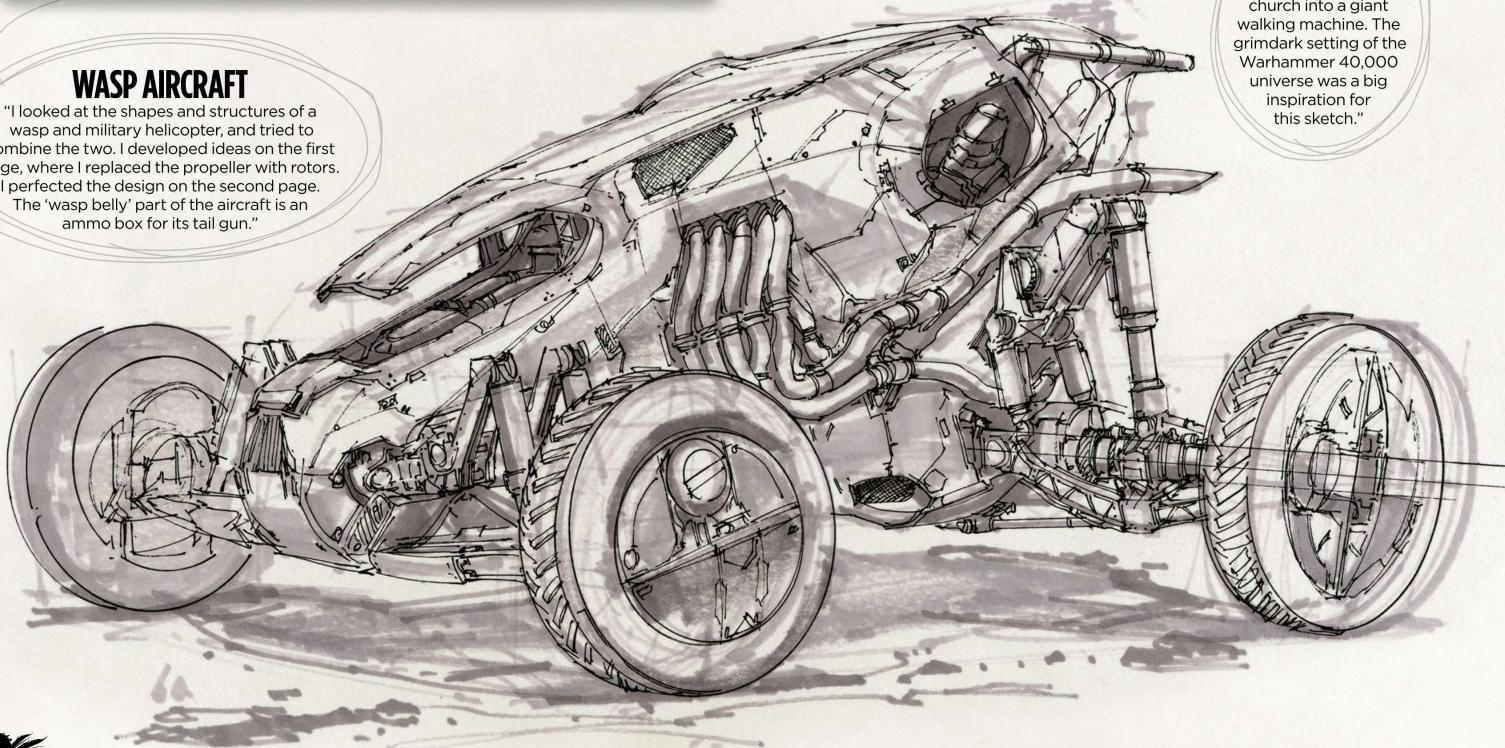


## SKULL CAR

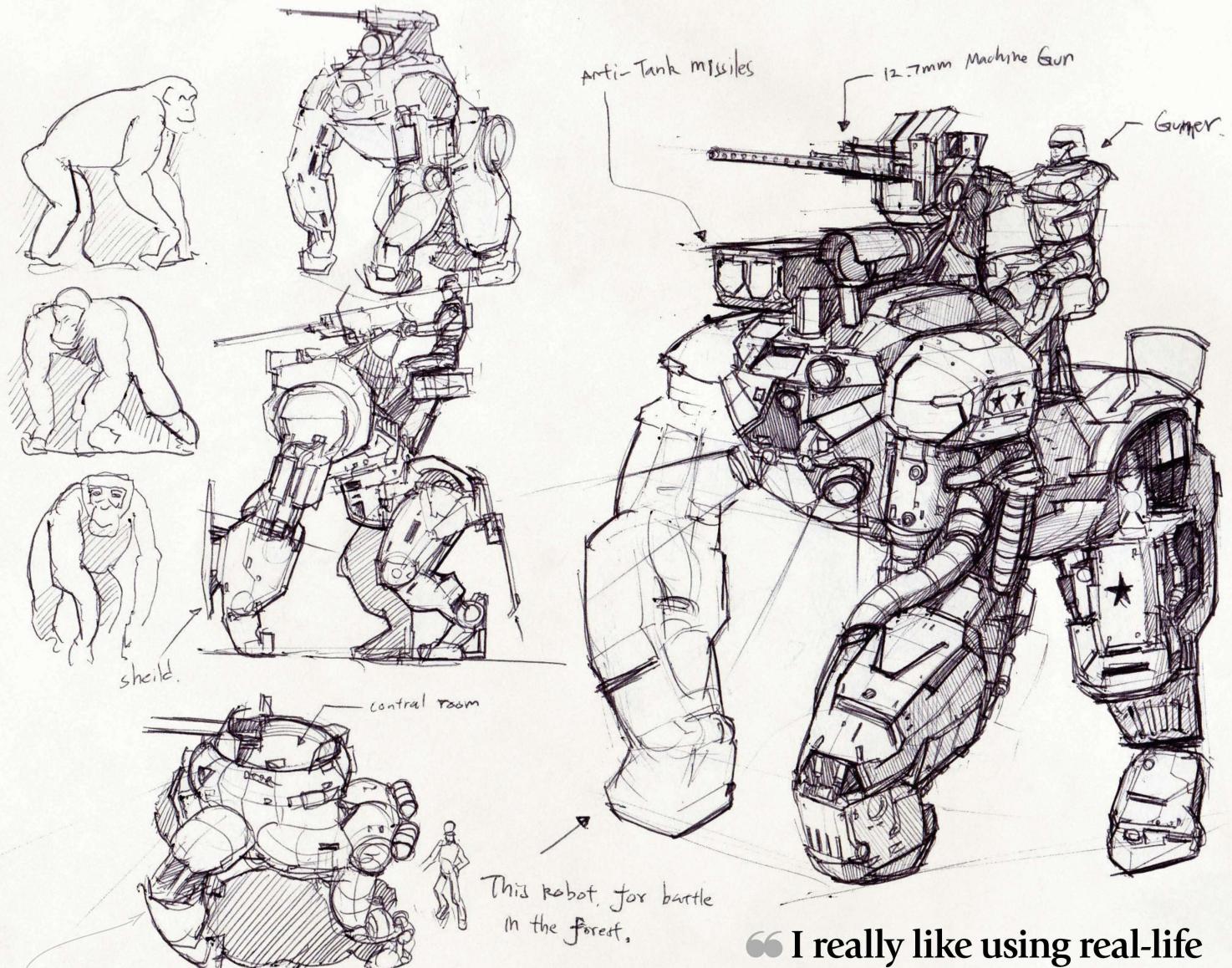
"I borrowed the shape from a mammal's skull to design this fun-looking car."

## CRUSADER

"I tried to turn a church into a giant walking machine. The grimdark setting of the Warhammer 40,000 universe was a big inspiration for this sketch."



# Sketchbook Longque Chen



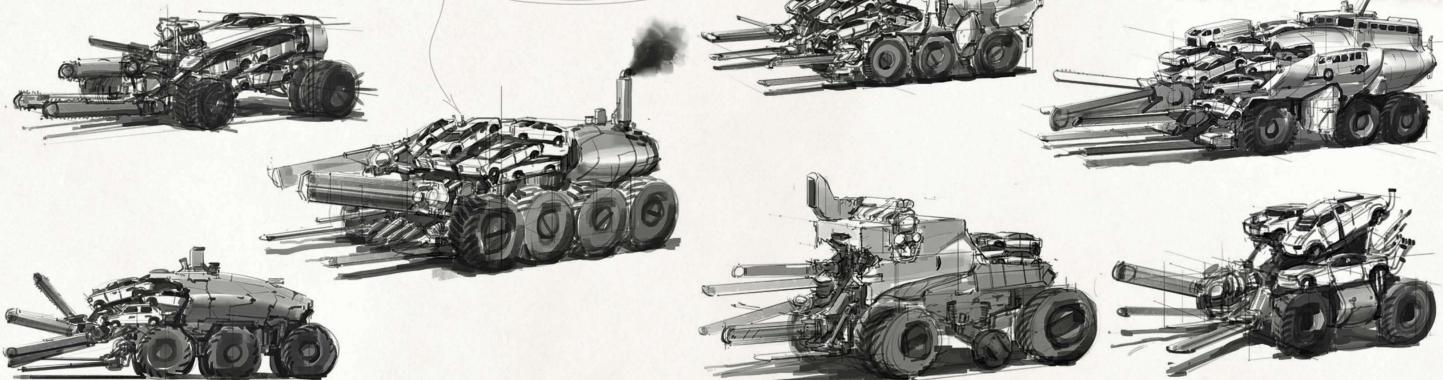
## CHIMP WALKER

"I really like using real-life creatures such as insects and mammals for reference when developing my concepts. Here, a chimpanzee provides the inspiration."

## MAD MAX VEHICLE DESIGN

"These sketches reveal my idea of giant vehicle built partly from used cars. I wanted to design a huge, menacing, mobile machine armed with multiple chainsaws that could tear into enemy vehicles."

“I really like using real-life creatures such as insects and mammals for reference”



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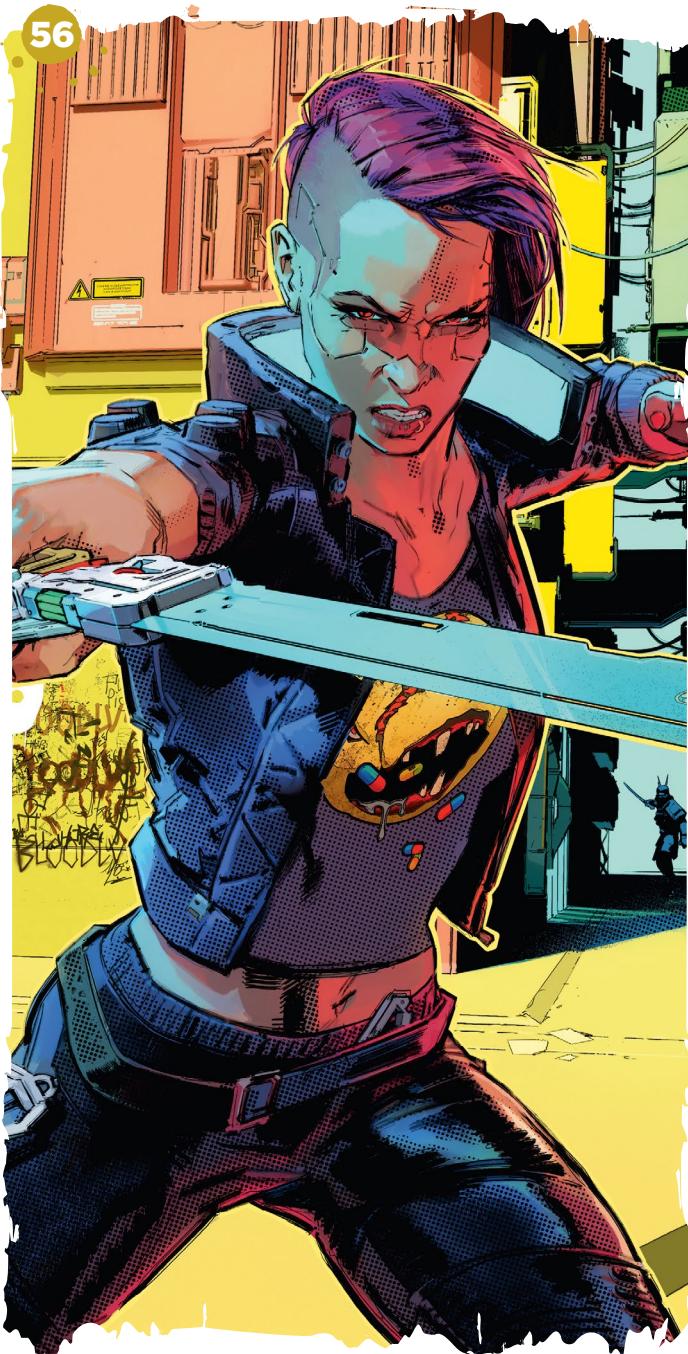
# ImagineEX Workshops

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Advice from the world's best artists



**This issue:**

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Lixin Yin builds up storytelling elements in a scene.

# Workshops



## Daz Studio, Blender & Photoshop PAINT ART FOR CYBERPUNK 2077

**Olgierd Ciszak** captures a vibrant, deadly and futuristic character in his manga-inspired promotional artwork for Cyberpunk 2077



### Artist PROFILE

**Olgierd Ciszak**  
LOCATION: Poland

Olgierd is a senior promo artist working at CD PROJEKT RED, and also creates concept and sequential art. In his spare time he enjoys studying pop culture. <http://ifxm.ag/cdpred>

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The idea behind this artwork was to portray V, the main protagonist from our upcoming title Cyberpunk 2077, in a way that reflects their nature. V is an ambitious and fearless cyberpunk, an urban mercenary equipped with cybernetic enhancements, and is

fighting to survive in Night City – the most dangerous megalopolis of the dark future.

To capture this personality, I took into account the environment V is living in, thinking about what kind of approach to life someone in those shoes would need to develop in order to thrive. It's a ruthless world where it's do or die,

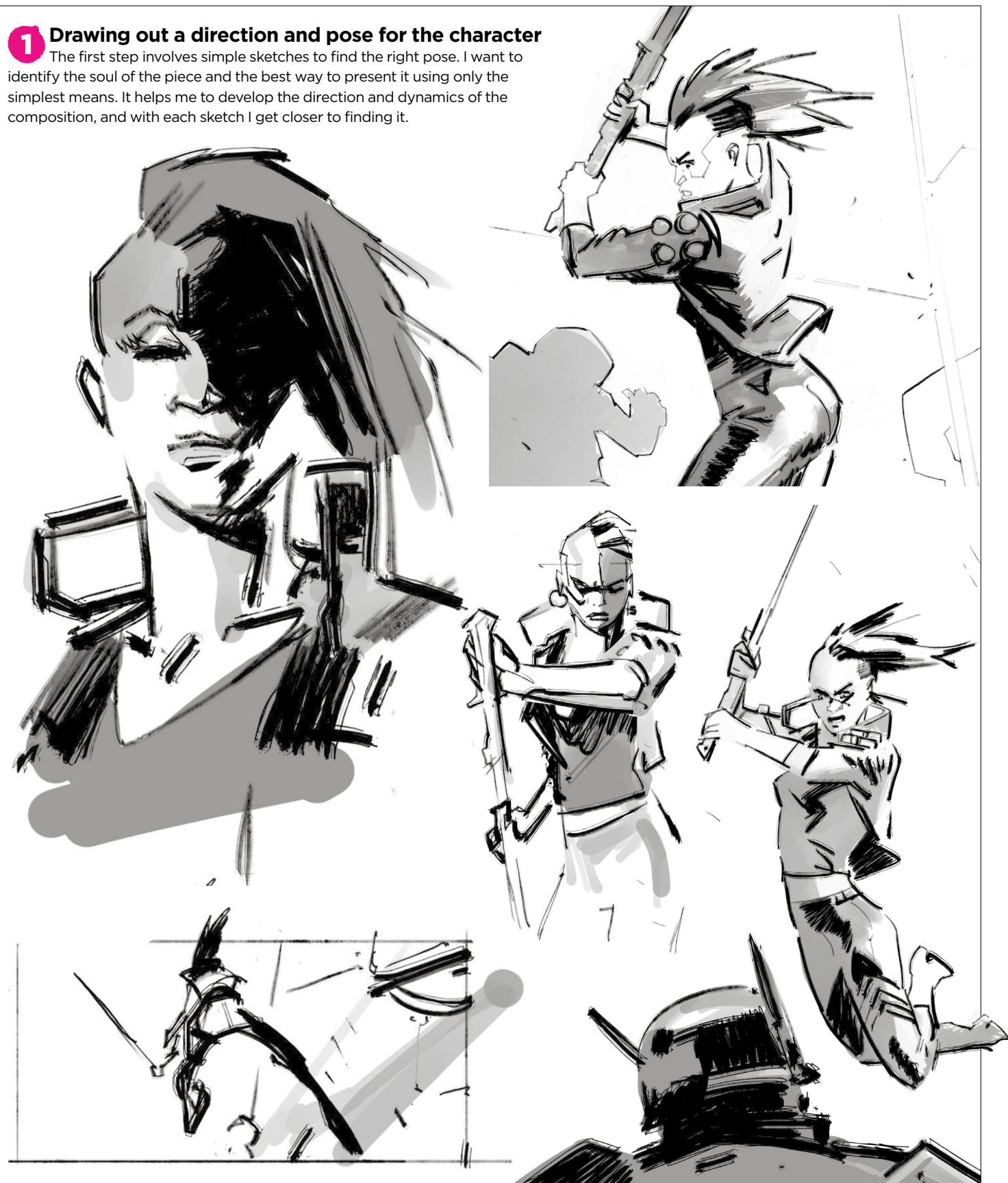
so I chose a dynamic and expressive pose that summarises an essential confidence in one attention-grabbing action. V is no stranger to a fight, and understands the need to take the initiative. I wanted to encapsulate this in a way that represents a feeling of strength and poise – and the innate danger that comes with the territory. ➤

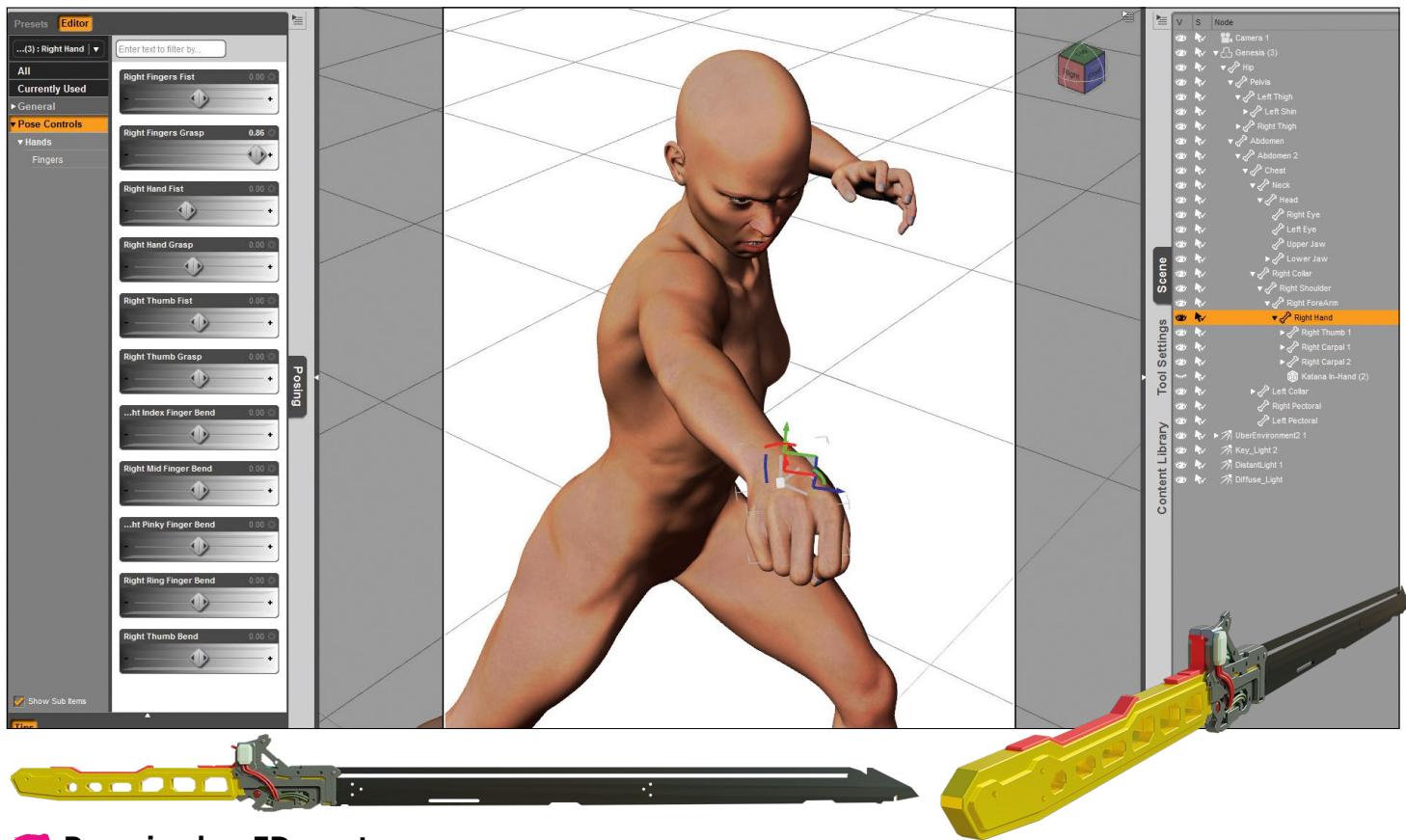
How I establish...

## A SOLID BASE FOR AN ILLUSTRATION

### 1 Drawing out a direction and pose for the character

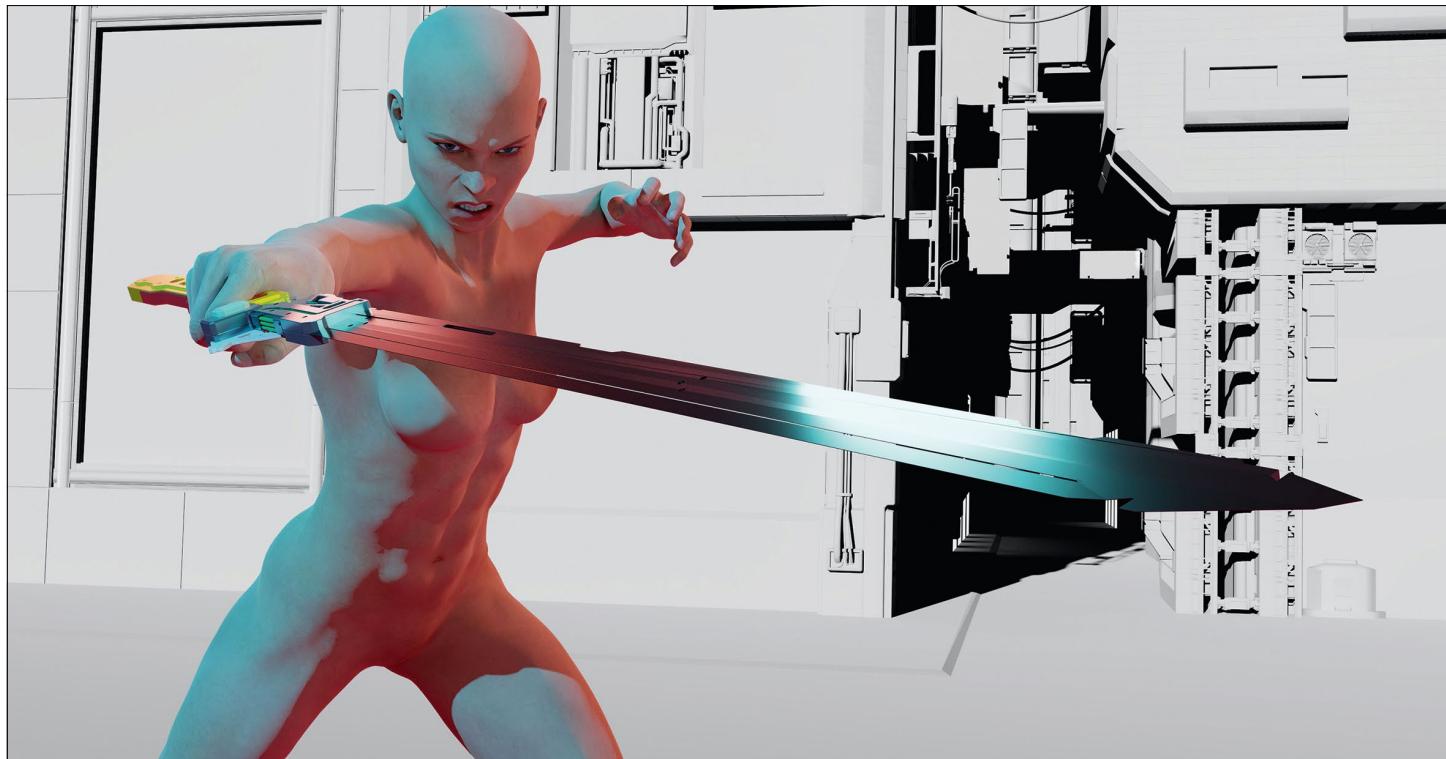
The first step involves simple sketches to find the right pose. I want to identify the soul of the piece and the best way to present it using only the simplest means. It helps me to develop the direction and dynamics of the composition, and with each sketch I get closer to finding it.





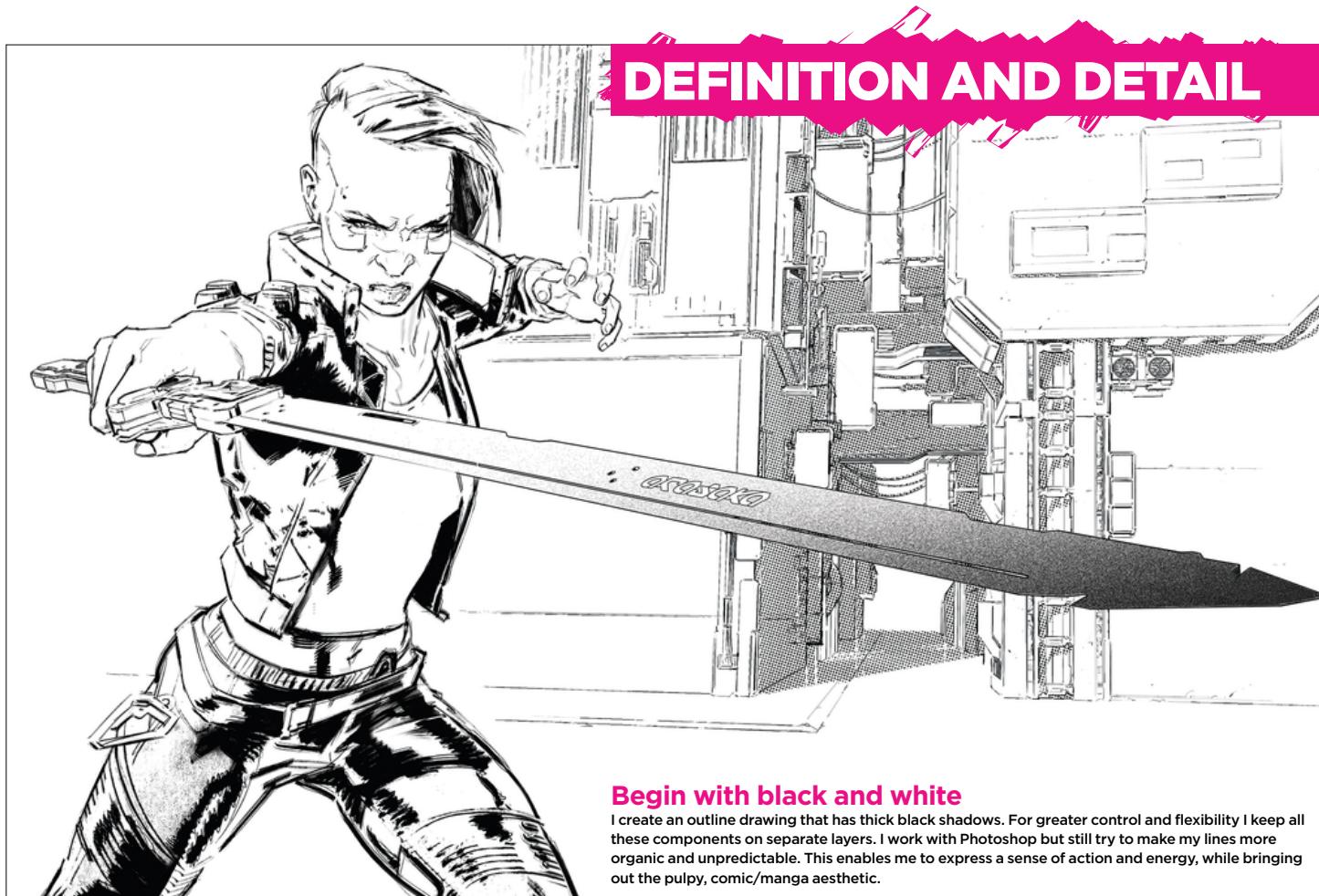
## 2 Prepping key 3D assets

Once I find a direction that clicks, I refine the pose in Daz Studio. I also develop a 3D model of a katana in Blender, based on Cyberpunk 2077 concept art. A blade is a strong focal point, so I test it from different perspectives to get a feel for how it might contribute to the final piece.



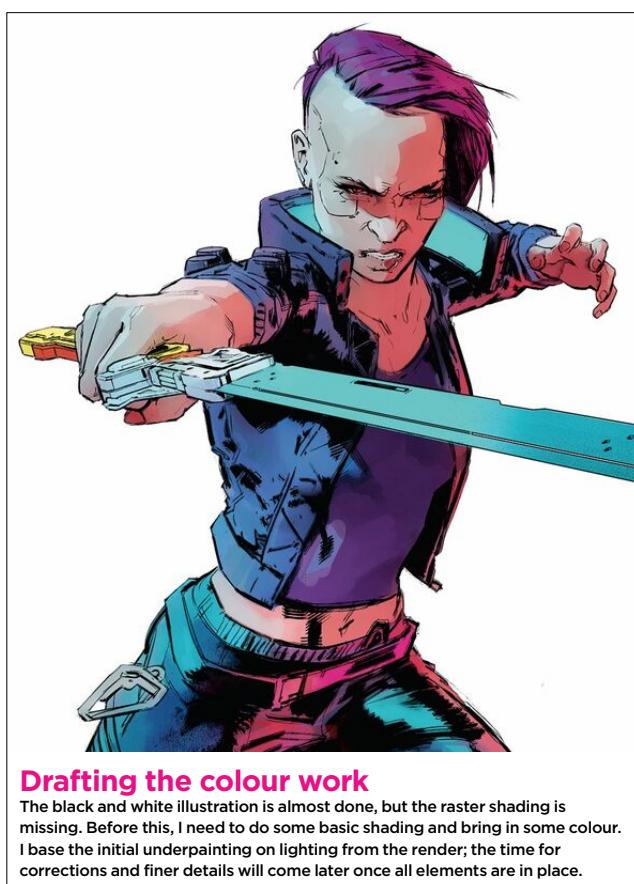
## 3 Setting the scene

After exporting the character I build the scene in Blender, including background, frame, and lighting. I try not to overdo it with carving everything in a 3D environment. Now that I have a solid render divided into planes, I can turn my full attention to drawing - my favourite part! ➡➡



## Begin with black and white

I create an outline drawing that has thick black shadows. For greater control and flexibility I keep all these components on separate layers. I work with Photoshop but still try to make my lines more organic and unpredictable. This enables me to express a sense of action and energy, while bringing out the pulpy, comic/manga aesthetic.



## Drafting the colour work

The black and white illustration is almost done, but the raster shading is missing. Before this, I need to do some basic shading and bring in some colour. I base the initial underpainting on lighting from the render; the time for corrections and finer details will come later once all elements are in place.



## Ready for raster shading

For the final stage, I back up the colour-layered illustration as a greyscale file. I rasterise the colour part using the standard Photoshop effect, and adjust the raster thickness to the size of the picture – its density will depend on the elements that we're rasterising. Then I erase the raster.

## A cyberpunk is always prepared

I try to keep all elements of the illustration in layers, just in case. Even if the artwork has been green-lit, its proportions may change, for example moving from horizontal to vertical. This is part of the job, so it's better to be prepared! I make this part of my process so I can make alterations easily.

## Turning the tables

The illustration shows Arasaka's corporate logo in several places. V uses a sword manufactured by the company, demonstrating its sleek, neomilitaristic, high-calibre design philosophy. The corporate entity is an enemy of the cyberpunk, so the juxtaposition of a merc using its own weaponry against them captures the sense of V's rebellious character.

## Street style

The splash of graffiti on the wall comes from the database of all game-related materials created by our artists. Some technical warning stickers are visible, as are some gang-inspired tags as well as phrases and imagery expressed by frustrated, or maybe just bored, Night City residents.

## Details that bring out the character

I designed the pattern on V's T-shirt much earlier. I chose the version that best suited the illustration. Here, it mimics the intensity of V, and even the expression caught on V's face, adding to that feeling of directness, danger, and confidence.

## Know your enemy

A representative of the Arasaka Armed Forces, ready for battle in his full set of reinforced armour. The futuristic samurai-style harkens to Arasaka's ruthlessness and the corporation's Japanese heritage, while this warrior's place in the shadows reflects Arasaka's subversive, controlling presence throughout every facet of the city.

## RESOURCES

### WORKSHOP BRUSHES

#### PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES:  
SKIN BRUSH: BLUR'S GOOD BRUSH 4.0 PRO

My go-to set of painting brushes that provide soft tonal transitions.

INK SMALL: JONAS DE RO BRUSHES FOR DIGITAL PAINTING

For outline drawing, I often find myself reaching for this brush.

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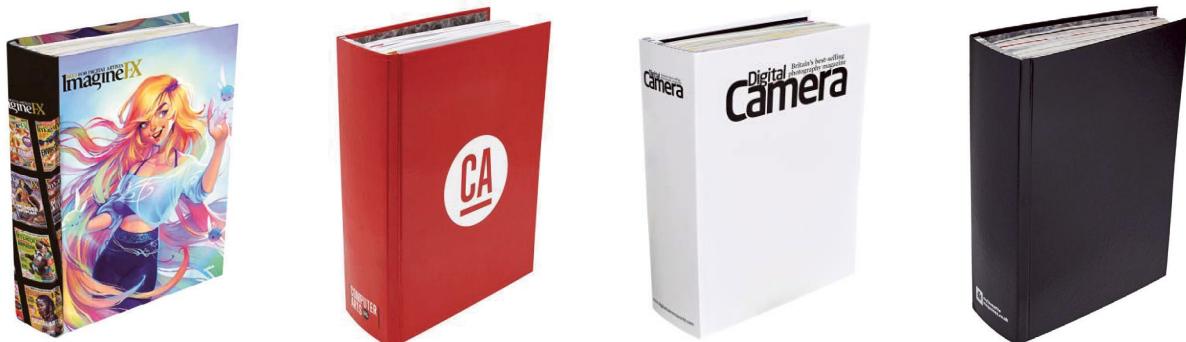
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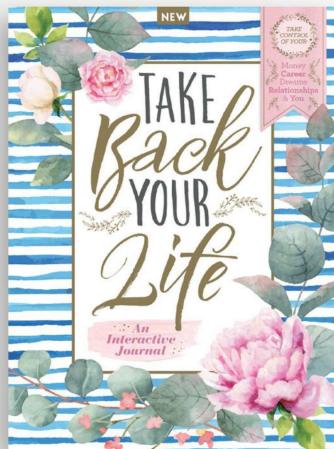
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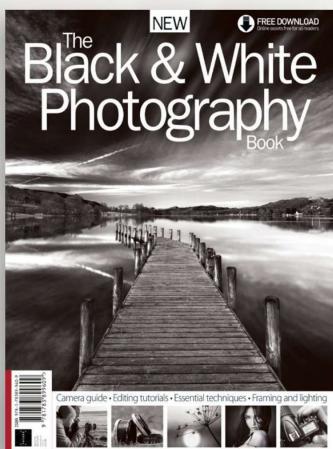


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# Workshops

## Artist **PROFILE**

**Lynn Hye  
Ryoung Yang**  
LOCATION: South Korea

Lynn is a concept artist and matte painter, specialising in creating environment and background art.  
<http://ifxm.ag/lynn-hry>

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RESOURCES**  
See page 8 now!



Procreate & Photoshop

# USE SILHOUETTES AND SHAPES TO PAINT CONCEPTS

**Lynn Hye Ryoung Yang** reveals the techniques she uses to translate an idea into an example of landscape concept art



As an artist, I believe the most interesting and rewarding projects involve bringing an idea to life in a single image. In this workshop, I'll explain my creative approach as I illustrate a stylised landscape.

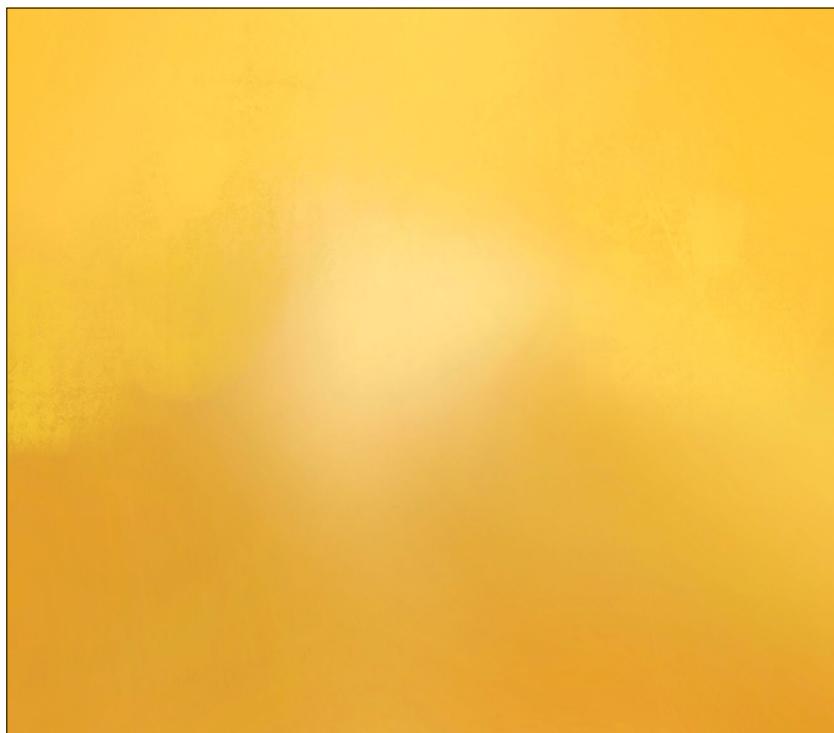
My workflow involves starting out in Procreate before moving on to Photoshop. This is because Procreate enables me to draw using simple pencil tools and paint at the same time. It feels natural to work in Procreate this way, as I work up an idea. Photoshop has a great choice of selection tools – and the Lasso tool in particular stands out for me. It makes

it possible to create interesting shapes for drawing and painting. The Lasso tool can also help me develop a range of interesting silhouettes – ideal for more stylised work.

There are various ways to paint with shapes, and for this article I'll present a quick way of achieving this. I'll also cover my thinking process, because I love painting both digitally and traditionally. I believe that you approach art the same way, whether using a painting program or traditional media. As a digital artist, I appreciate the techniques that are used in transitional art and I want to show how such methods can apply to digital art, too. ➤

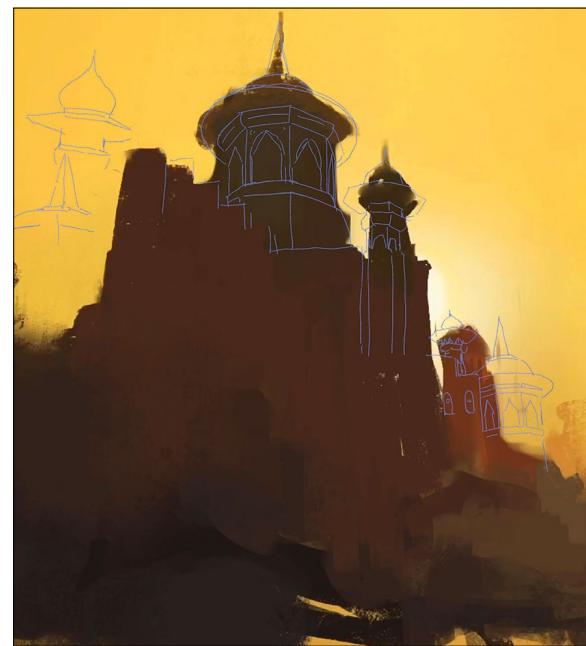


# Workshops



## 1 Taking inspiration from my neighbourhood

I notice a strong yellow sunset while walking in my neighbourhood late in the afternoon. As soon as I see the sunset, I decide that the main colour of my landscape will be a bright yellow sunset during winter. Later, I fill the Procreate canvas with the same yellow colour and add the sun where I feel it's appropriate for the lighting scheme I have in mind. I'll explore more colours as I sketch.



## 2 Developing the setting

I want to build up the mood using both the yellow sky and the hints of bright, saturated colours present in the castle structure. I explore some lighting options while I sketch. With the sun in place, the lighting scheme will be backlit, creating strong silhouettes. I'm also keen to hint at the history and culture of the buildings that I'm sketching, and the bright, yellow sunset with warm colours will enhance this feeling.

**WORKSHOP**  
**BRUSHES**

**PHOTOSHOP**

**DEFAULT BRUSHES**  
**SOFT ROUND 01**



This brush can be applied in many situations: for example, painting a sky or adding dust, glowing areas or fog in a painting.

**WATERCOLOR WASH 02**



This brush is great for adding some texture details in both large and small objects in a painting. The brush's textures help to break me down a large shape into smaller shapes.



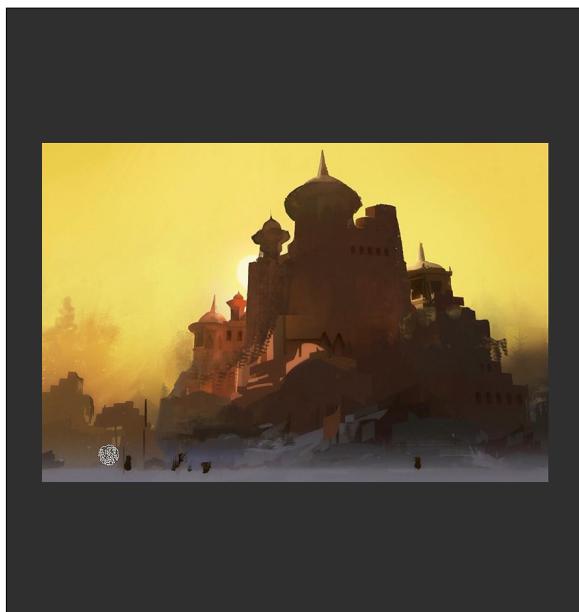
## 3 Establish a lighting scheme

I lay in background colours first and block in some big shapes. This is a step that I take on every environment sketch I create. I think of big shapes and a general colour first, and then progress to smaller shapes and colours. It helps me to quickly establish a lighting scheme and get a feel of the time of day in the scene. I also start to lay in some details here and there, but am open to making revisions and removing elements as I go.



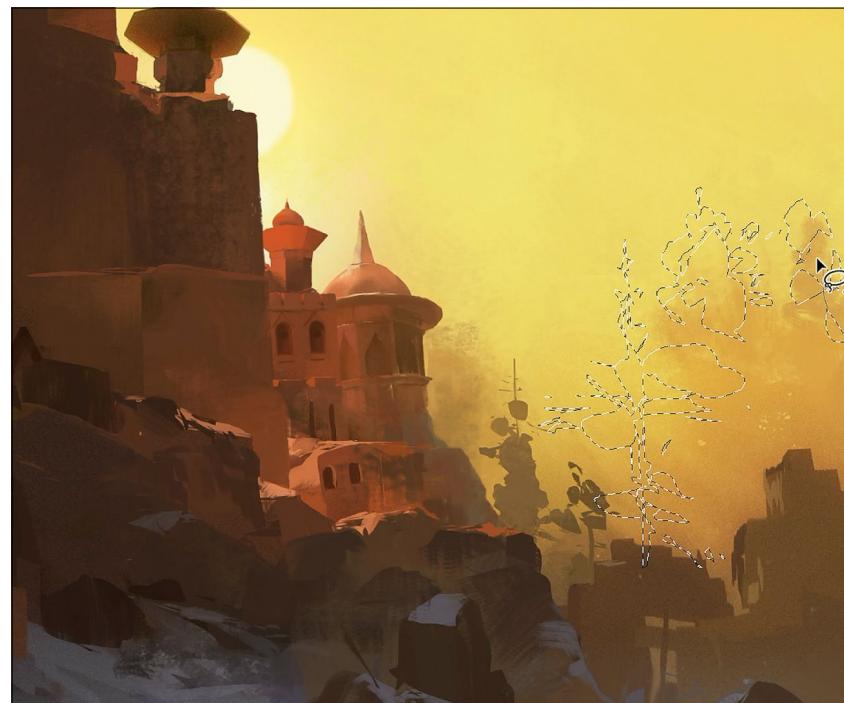
## 4 Working from big shapes to small

As I lay in details, I select a focal point in the scene and figure out how to lead the viewer's eyes to it. I play with a few options: highlights, colours or human activity. I focus on important areas and simplify some less-significant parts of the composition. In this respect it's a little like graphic design. I also use this approach to create contrast between large and small shapes.



## 5 Zoom in and out

I often zoom in and out and flip the canvas horizontally. It helps me to see my work-in-progress with fresh eyes. It also gives me a better idea of where to place more of my details to strengthen the focal point, and what aspects need correcting. At this stage of a painting I'll sometimes do some more thumbnail drawings, then come back to the canvas and rework the artwork based on these new ideas. But I'll always stick to the general theme, to maintain a consistent art direction.



## 6 Shape exploration with the Lasso tool

Shapes are fun to play with and now I use Photoshop's selection tools to create some detailed, stylised silhouettes. I can establish silhouettes with the Lasso tool first and then work on details within those silhouettes. It feels like an endless process where I get to design and create lots of details. Sometimes it can help to develop various prop designs in a separate document, before adding them to your artwork. The details can be trees, faces of building, rocks, grass... anything really!



## 7 Focusing on the first figure in action

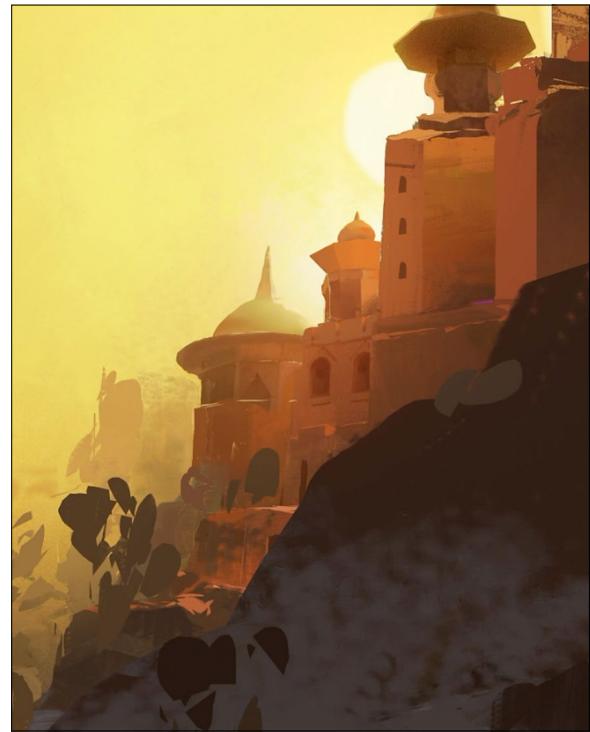
I want the people to be noticed in this piece, so I paint them with strong silhouettes and work up their details. The figure who's leading the beast of burden will be one of my focal points. Even as I was sketching the castle, I knew the viewer's eyes would be drawn down to the area at its base. The figures are small compared to the rest of the scene so it's vital that they have well-defined silhouettes and read clearly. ➤

# Workshops



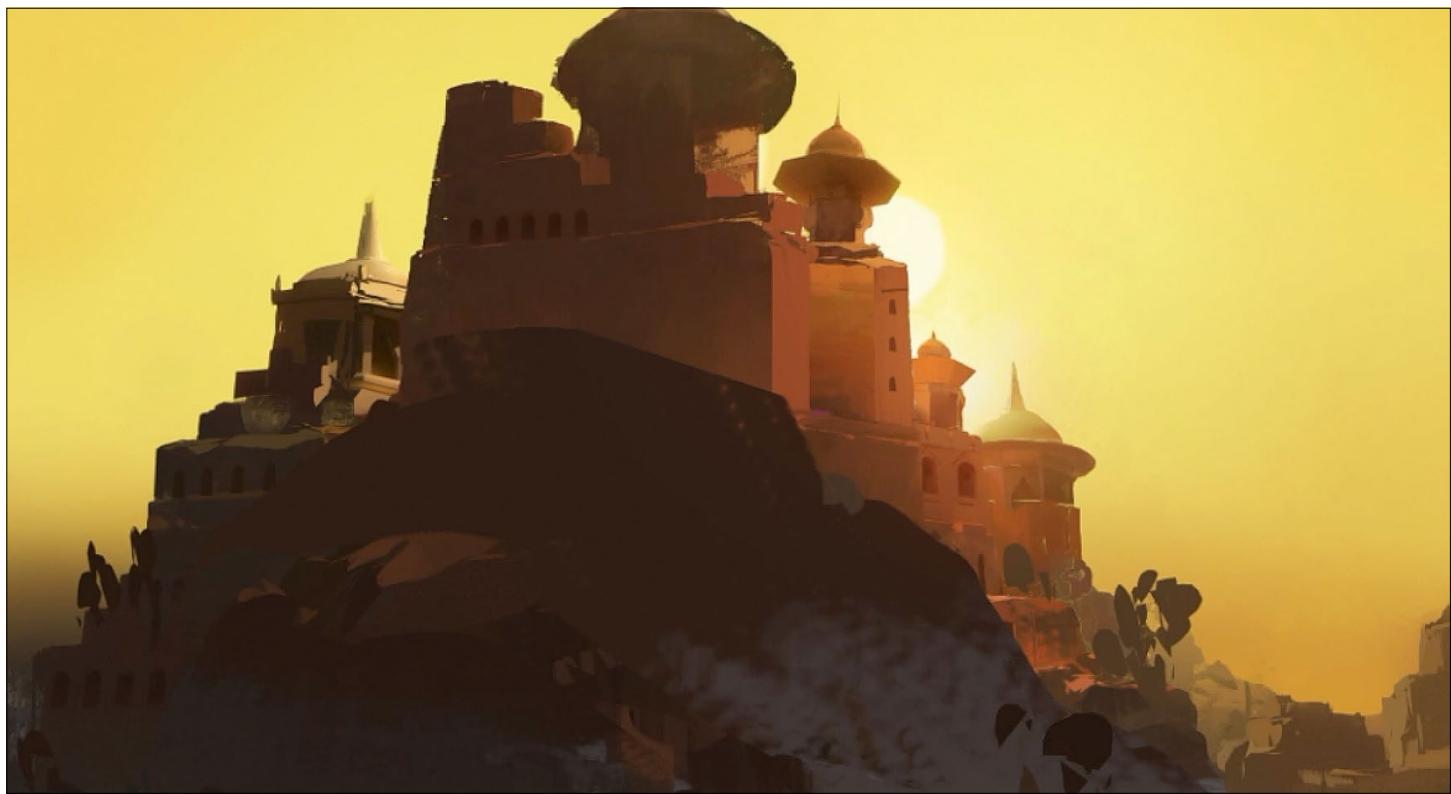
## 8 Detailing the secondary figure

Once I'm happy with how my first figure looks, I move on to a second figure in the scene. I use the Lasso tool to add supporting details, such as their bulky clothing to indicate the cold weather condition and footprints in the snow. These small details may not be noticeable at first glance, but they'll encourage the viewer to explore the artwork and perhaps notice them at second or third viewing. I feel that these small details are fun and make the painting feel more lively.



## 9 Paint more details

I zoom in and out of the painting to see where I can add more details. Buildings are always fun to paint, because I get to design fantasy structures and hint at an imaginary civilisation. I paint trees, windows and rocks, making sure they sit well in the composition.



## 10 Removing details where necessary

I often add too much detail and sometimes a painting becomes busy. In these cases I paint over some details to ensure consistency, so that I'm following my chosen art direction. Try to assess your painting progress with this in mind – it's okay to make corrections as you go along.



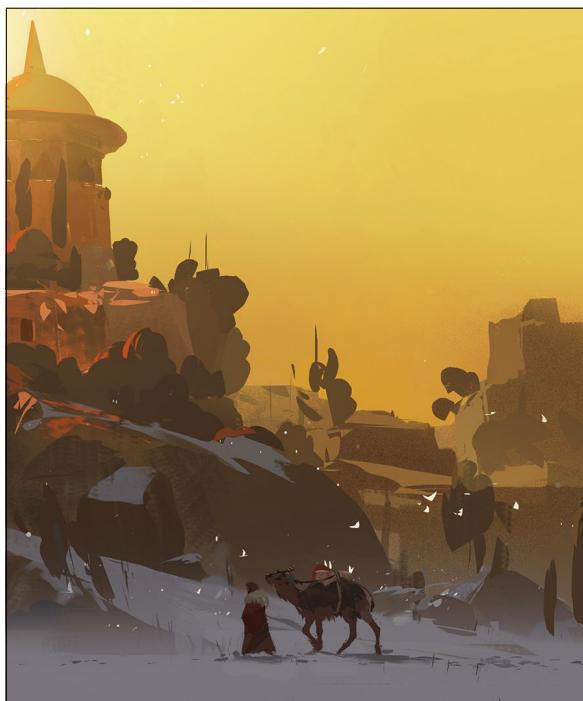
## 11 Correct the perspective

I also use perspective guides to fix anything that looks wrong. I place a horizon line and then work with two-point perspective. I might push the perspective and exaggerate elements to create something that's more fantasy than life-like.



## 12 Leading the eye around the painting

Once I've finished with detailing and making corrections, I move on to making some final touches. I think about how I can improve the figures' placement and lead the viewer's eyes to them. I want the viewer to notice the sun and castle first, then study the rest of the scenery, before finally looking at the people walking along the snow at the base of the structure.



## 13 Working on separate layers

I usually paint figures and backgrounds on separate layers so I can turn them on and off. This process enables me to easily bring these elements to a degree of finish that I'm happy with. I add some birds, painting them so it looks like they're flying around the people.



## 14 Make use of Photoshop filters

Once I feel that everything is looking good, I apply some final post-processing with Photoshop's filters. Because the scene features a bright yellow sunset, it makes sense to apply a glow using a Color Dodge layer, which I blur slightly. I sometimes sharpen some edges and add some noise texture over the entire canvas. This helps to unify all the elements in the piece. At last I call the artwork finished.

# Photoshop DEVELOP CONCEPT ART FOR A GAME

**Changqin Wang** shares his process for designing and painting a blade-wielding exorcist by combining different painting styles

## Artist PROFILE

### Changqin Wang

LOCATION: China

Changqin is a concept artist working at Wildfire Game. In his spare time he likes creating sci-fi vehicle designs.  
<http://ifxm.ag/c-wang>



This is concept art created for the 2D side-scrolling action RPG Eastern Exorcist, which shows the player's character Lu Yunchuan fighting against several demons in a bamboo forest. Lu lives in a world where evil spirits are commonplace, and as an exorcist he's tasked with keeping his region free of demons.

At the beginning of the painting process, I mainly focused on the overall composition and the action

design of the hero. In terms of composition, I wanted to create a scene where Lu is surrounded by several little monsters in a confined space. I was keen to show the exorcist in action: he's light on his feet, and relies on his speed rather than his strength to overcome his enemies.

As the painting progressed, I enhanced the volumes of the various characters – making them feel grounded. Once I was happy with how my characters were looking, I paid more attention to developing

the environment. I used the expressive techniques of ancient Chinese ink painting to highlight the Oriental atmosphere of the whole picture, so that the image conveyed the vividness and freehand brushwork of traditional Chinese ink.

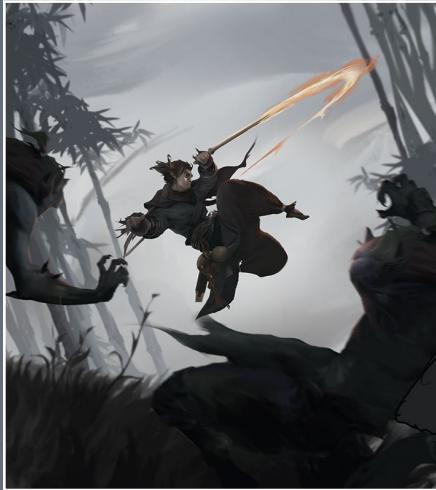
Eastern Exorcist is the first title to be released by Wildfire Game, which was formed in 2017. There are only nine of us, and each team member looked beyond their specific skill set to work with others, helping to bring the game out in August this year. ➤

## How I create... A FAST-MOVING FIGHT SCENE



### 1 Design the composition

I start by creating sketches to determine the positions and poses of the characters and the setting. I don't worry too much about the details of the character at this stage, and instead focus on his styling to ensure that there are no major changes to Lu's look when I move on to the next stage.



### 2 Colouring and shaping

At this stage, I use the Color mode of a Photoshop brush to colour and shape the black and white sketch. The Color mode of the brush can be used to add colour directly on top of the black and white layers, while enabling me to preserve my original black and white work as much as possible.



### 3 Special effects

As the painting nears completion I want to add some special effects along with some ink elements. These finishing touches will both increase the sense of space and fluidity of the action, and enhance the relationship between the human figure and his fantastical enemies.



Next month

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

# Concept art special issue!

Get inspired to draw and paint concept art with help from industry-leading artists



*All this... and more!*

## Peter Popken interview

We speak to the concept artist who's worked on *Dune* & *Blade Runner 2049*.

## Blender's Grease Pencil workshop

All you need to know about this ingenious tool with James Lewis-Vines.

## Patrick J Jones workshop

A figure drawing lesson from one of the best teachers in the business.

## Matte painting techniques

Artist Saby Menyhei reveals 15 tips to creating matte paintings for film.

ISSUE 196 ON SALE IN PRINT & DIGITAL 29 DEC 2020

## CONVEY ACTION

### Versatile brush

I use my PENO1 custom brush for painting most of my hero character. I'm able to generate different effects depending on the Pressure setting – solid when heavy, light with some texture – and paint with a very sharp edge.

### Painting the fire effect

I use my PENO2 brush to depict the fire effect that Lu creates with a quick sword swing. I also add some black ink elements in there, which strengthen the Oriental atmosphere of the image.

### Inking techniques

I use ancient Chinese ink painting techniques to paint the bamboo forest. This helps to create contrast between the peaceful forest setting and the frantic action taking place within it.

### Fast demons

I used a motion blur filter on the demons to convey their sense of speed without drawing too much attention to them.

### Higher, further, faster

In Eastern Exorcist, bamboo leaves are used to increase the momentum of the character's jump move, which adds variety to the gameplay.

### Abstract mountains

I deliberately treat the distant mountains as abstract objects, making them look like clouds and mountains at the same time. This is an approach that's often taken in expressive ink paintings.

### RESOURCES

#### WORKSHOP BRUSHES

##### PHOTOSHOP

##### CUSTOM BRUSHES: PENO1

This brush can create different effects depending on the Pressure setting, and its sharp edge is useful for outlining objects.

##### PENO2



The two sides of this brush are different. One side is sharp, one side is more loose. It enables me to paint a range of special effects.



## Photoshop SPEED PAINTING A STORY CONCEPT

**Lixin Yin** makes use of lighting, composition, colour and concept design as he quickly builds up storytelling elements in a scene

# In depth Speed painting a story



# Workshops

## Artist PROFILE

### Lixin Yin

LOCATION: US

Lixin is a San Francisco-based concept artist, keyframe artist and illustrator, and has over a decade of experience working in the film and game industry.  
[www.lixinjin.com](http://www.lixinjin.com)



During my time at art school I learned a lot about painting theory and techniques. It's enabled me to express my feelings through my art and also to convey my ideas to the viewer.

Storytelling has always been important to artists. It encompasses a wide range of artistic skills and also tests the artist's overall ability. It requires the artist to have a deep

understanding of core skills: lighting, colour, composition and so on. I enjoy finding inspiration in this way, and I've honed my artistic skills through storytelling. It's improved my abilities and productivity no end.

I think that as an artist I should always try to improve my basic art skills, through regular practice. Speed painting is a great way to make these practice sessions more interesting! I paint a lot of these quick doodles

almost every day. If you keep up your practice pieces and then compare your work in a couple of years' time, you'll see an amazing improvement in your skills.

I know many artists struggle with material distinctions, brushes, composition or lighting. So in this workshop I'll share some of my approaches and also explain how I improved my storytelling skills. I hope my article is useful to you.

## GET YOUR RESOURCES

See page 8 now!



### 1 Come up with a story that leads to questions from the viewer

Before painting, I think about a simple story first, which I believe is important. When we create artwork, we need "content". With content, we can beautify our work through art. The content of the story that I want to think about is quite simple. I ask myself the following questions. Who is in the painting? What are they doing? Where are they? This sketch simply shows my idea: a person shopping in a market.

## RESOURCES

### WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES:

- B TEXTURE5
- B TEXTURE21
- B TEXTURE13

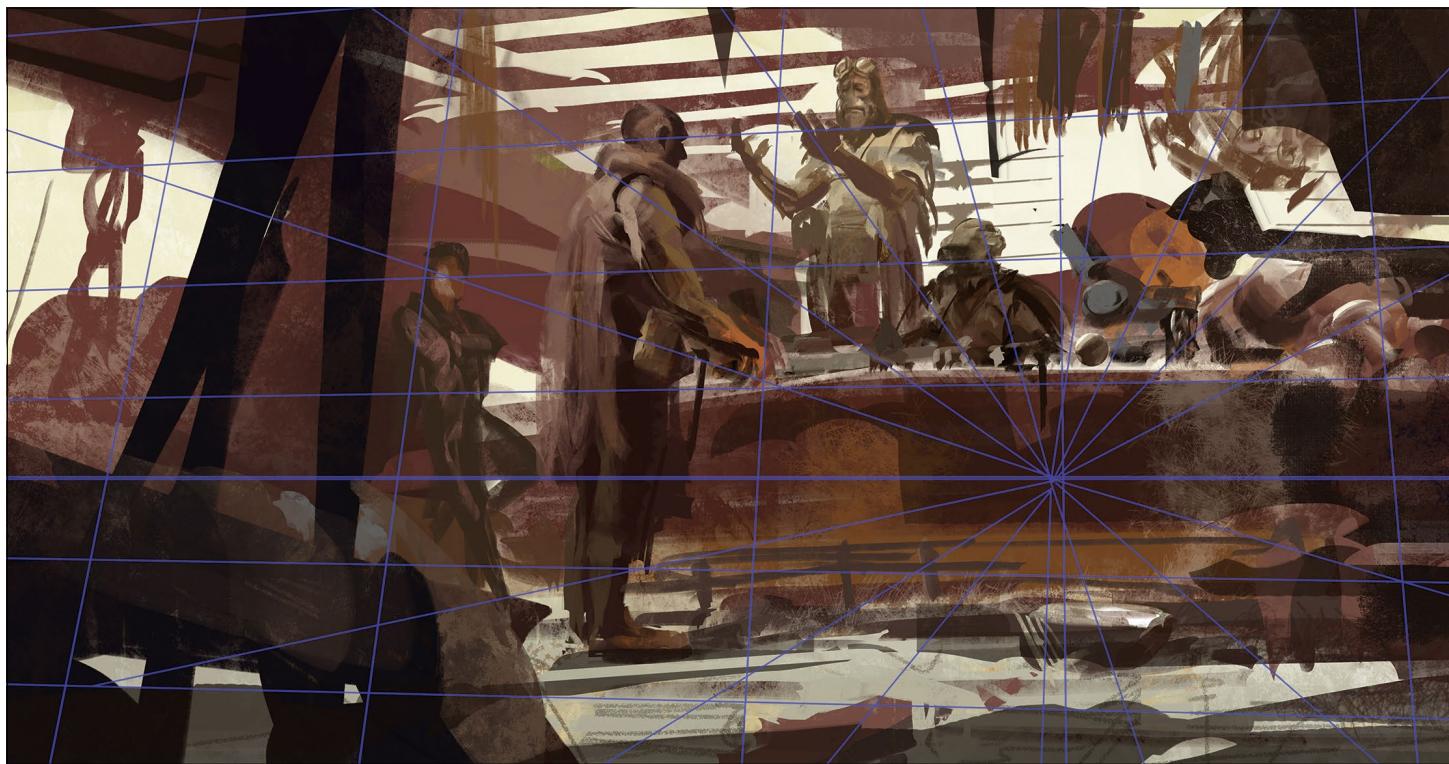
These brushes help me simulate materials, and can help to recreate the look of traditional media.



### 2 Bring in key composition elements

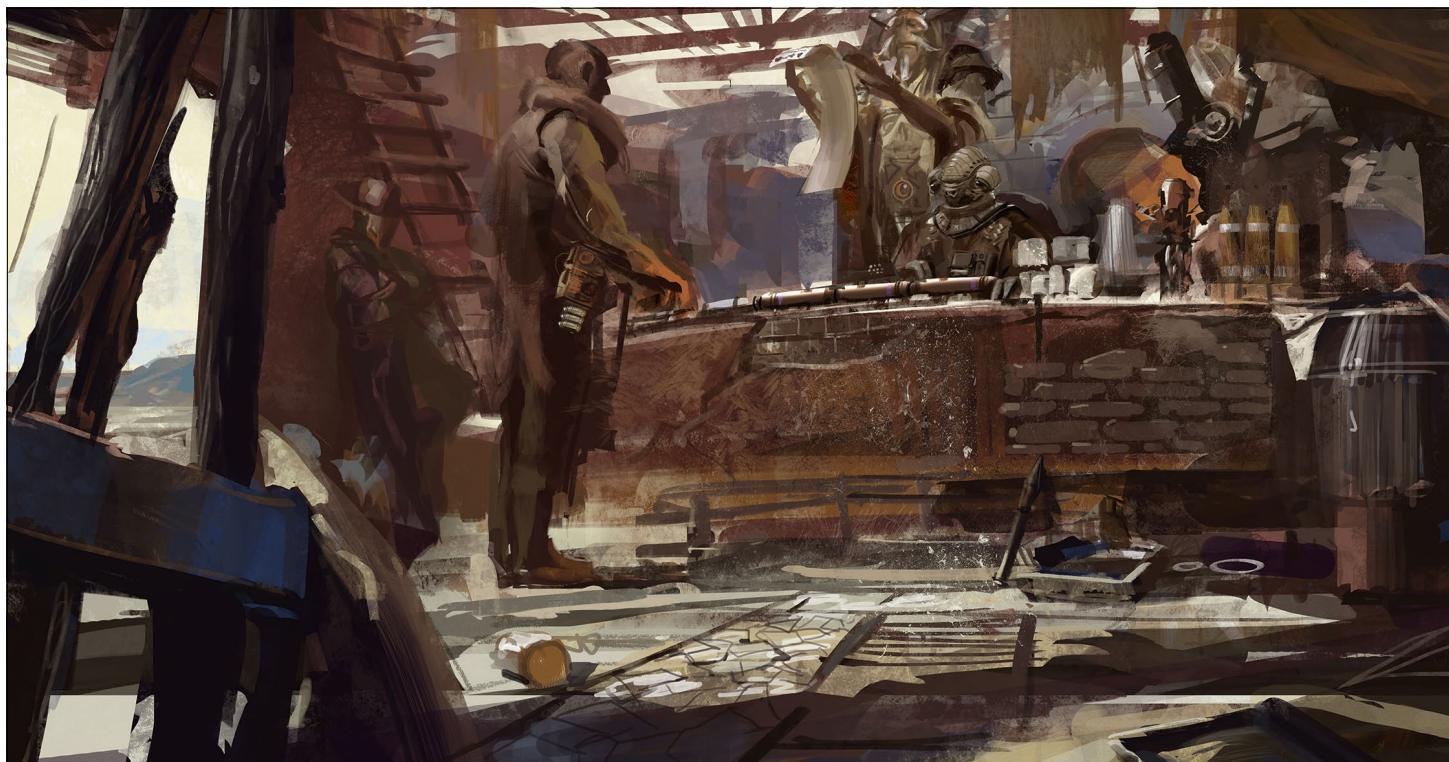
A strong composition that complements your story must be established early on in the painting process. I add buyers and sellers to put the basic story elements in place. Start in black and white if it makes things easier for you. You also need to consider your perspective and camera position, which are key composition factors.

# In depth Speed painting a story



## 3 Getting the perspective right

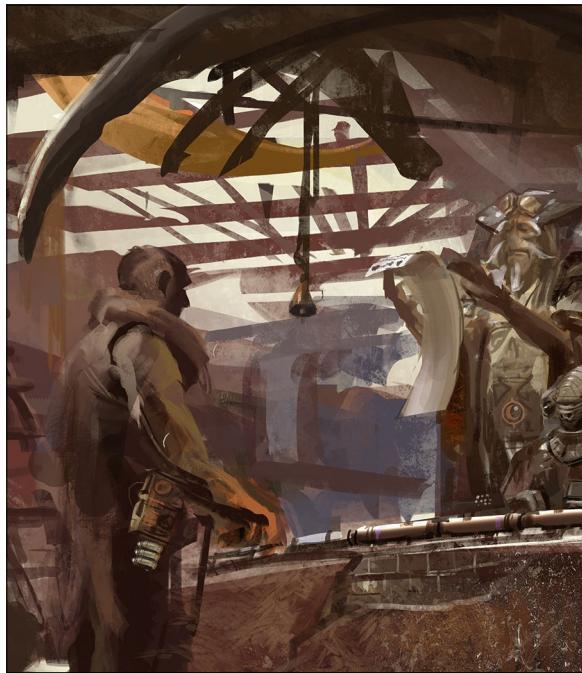
With the basic story in place, we can start to focus on the art. While the sketch establishes the composition, the perspective may not be accurate and so this needs to be examined and fixed if necessary. Perspective helps me to understand the space and create distance, resulting in a more realistic image. It also helps to focus my attention on the structure and the relationship of objects as I paint them. Art painted by developing artists often lack a sense of depth because the perspective isn't handled properly early on. Consider how to fit this step into your own workflow.



## 4 Building up visual interest

I want to start adding details. By this I mean visualising the structure and shape of objects, rather than what they're made from. I think about the environment of this story and imagine that it takes place in a flea market in a desert setting. There are many worn-out mechanical devices and props scattered around. The walls and ground are damaged. I search for some suitable reference photographs for inspiration. ➡

# Workshops



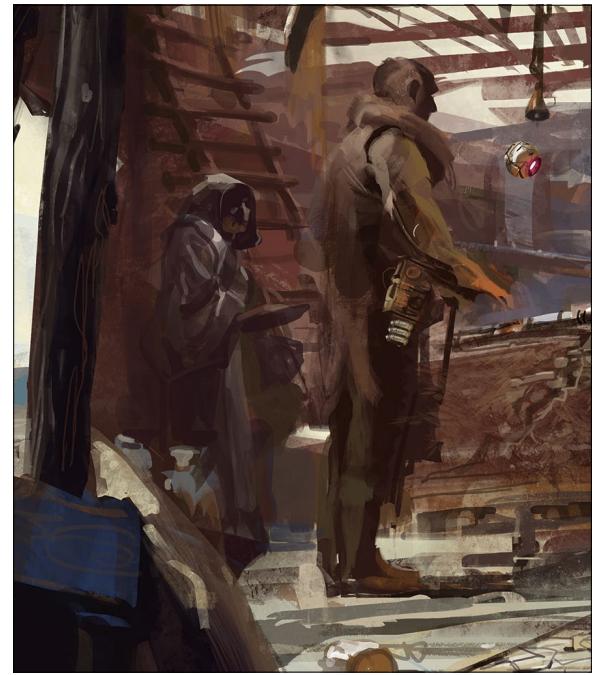
## 5 Using shapes to create a focal point

I paint a large creature's skeleton hanging from the roof and some detail on the ground. The curve of the creature's bones point down towards my main character, making him the visual centre of the image. In my opinion, every modification and addition from now on needs to be done carefully, because it's easy to ruin the compositional groundwork that I've laid.



## 6 Checking that the composition is balanced

I use triangles to express a balanced composition. The skeleton and the ground form an inverted triangle. The characters make up another triangle. I think that a balanced composition is important to the success of an artwork. You'll see this arrangement in countless classical oil paintings and illustrations. Comic art is also well worth studying if you want to see balanced compositions in action.



## 7 Making further refinements

Initially, I worked with colours and composition, then I used some references. Now I start thinking about the specific items that are visible in the foreground, middle ground and background, and why they're in the scene in the first place. I add a ladder, some wooden barrels, some mechanical supports, a large bone support and two pillars in the foreground.

## 8 Strengthening minor details

Next, I add details to the environment and change the appearance of the character next to the door. I was going to make this character similar in appearance to a cowboy, but now I think it's not appropriate. So I gave this character a hood and darken its colour, which gives him a more mysterious appearance.

# In depth Speed painting a story



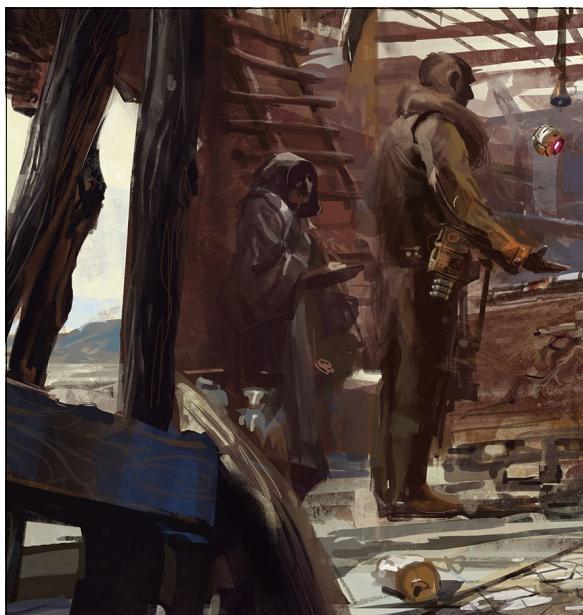
## 9 Picking up on visual cues

I've put these arrows on the artwork to help me check that each character has something to focus on. This makes the whole story feel more rounded. The posture of the characters will indicate to the viewer that they're having a conversation – even though it can't be heard!



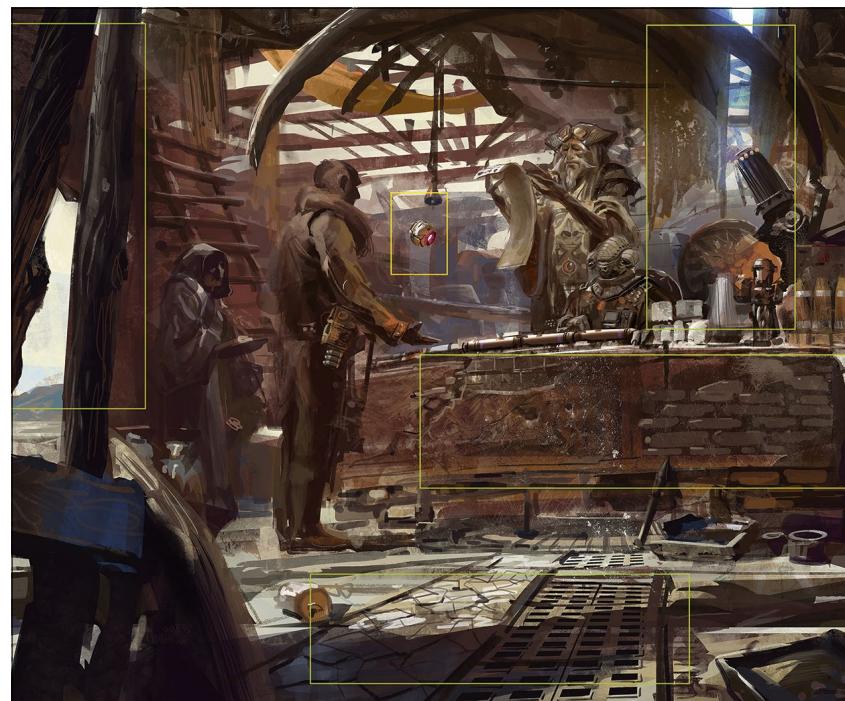
## 10 Improving the lighting in the shop

I feel that the light source of the image isn't strong enough, and perhaps has too much warm colour. One solution is to introduce cool light shining through the gap at the top right of the image. I'm not sure this blue is something we see in the real world, but I've noticed it being used in many films. In my opinion, it balances the temperature of the image.



## 11 Weighing up detail placement

At this point, I begin to examine the entire image and think about where more details need to be added. My belief is that details should be painted carefully. If they don't enhance your story then they're all but useless. Because this is a speed painting I don't spend too long on this stage. It's usually different for commissioned work – the client will give you some art direction. If not, you'll need to judge this stage by yourself.

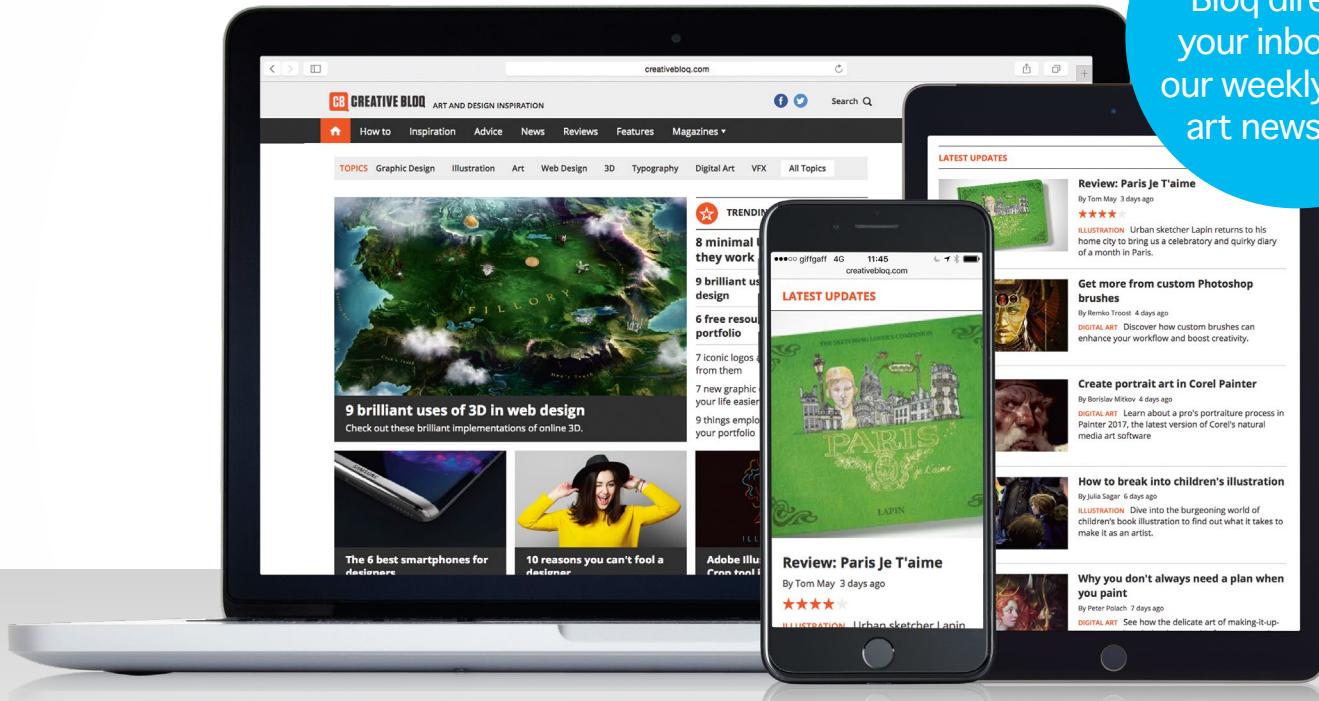


## 12 Consider what objects are made from

Finally, I want to make some visual distinctions between the different materials in the scene – wood, earth, metal and building elements – to make the overall composition more interesting. It's crucial to think about wear and tear, too – what would the floor look like after 100 years of people walking across it, for example? Many people don't think about this when they paint materials. 

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# ImagineFX

# Reviews

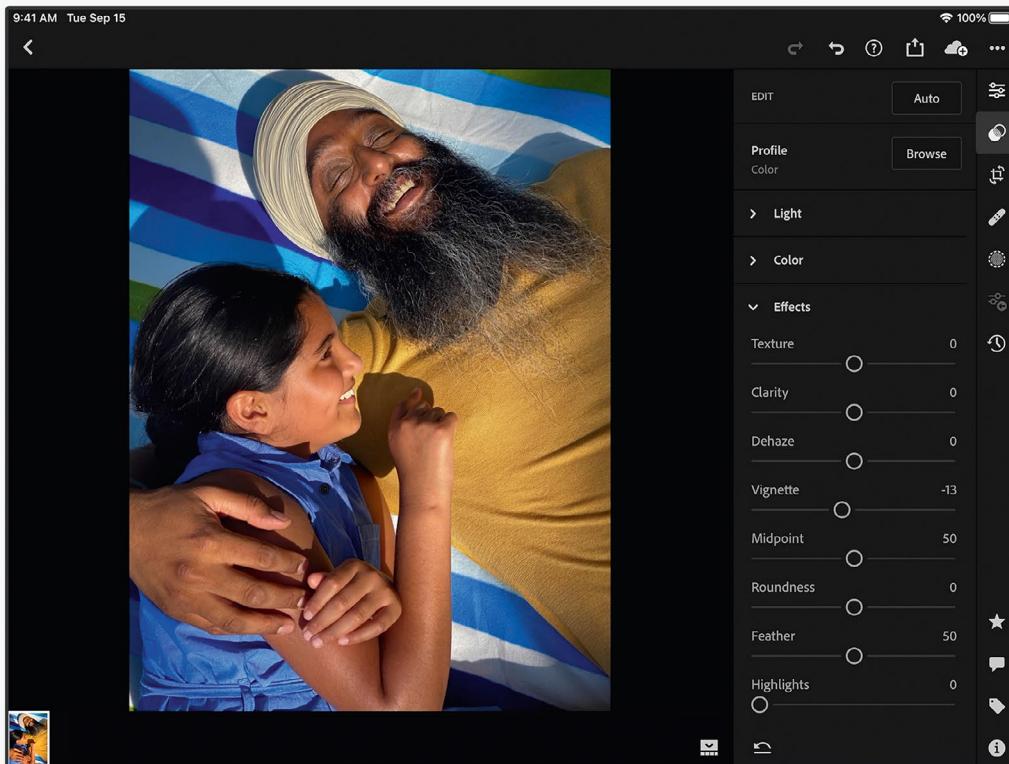


## Artist's Choice Award

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 iPad 2020

While the latest iPad doesn't break new ground externally, there's plenty more going on underneath the hood.

### BOOKS

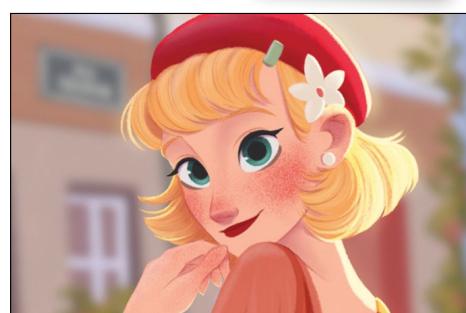
#### 84 The Addictive Sketcher

An enthusiastic and practical guide to all things drawing and sketching from the London-based artist and teacher.



#### 85 Alien: 40 Years 40 Artists

Creatives working in a myriad of mediums come together to salute Ridley Scott's groundbreaking sci-fi film.



#### 85 Beginner's Guide to Digital Painting in Procreate

Find your way around the popular painting app and create art on your iPad with the help of pro illustrators.

### RATINGS EXPLAINED

★★★★★ Magnificent

★★★★ Great

★★★ Good

★★ Poor

★ Atrocious



All images © Apple

# iPad 2020

**LOOKS FAMILIAR** While the latest iPad doesn't break new ground externally, there's plenty more going on underneath the hood

**Price** £329 (32GB model), £429 (128GB model) **Company** Apple **Web** [www.apple.com](http://www.apple.com)

**A**pple's confidence when it comes to its own product design sits somewhere between genius and delusional. Put simply, its latest iPad could easily be mistaken for the original iPad Air (2013).

While it's powered by a nippy new Apple A12 Bionic chip, everything else about the iPad 2020's hardware is identical to the 2019 model. It has the same dimensions, same weight, same Apple Pencil support, same screen size and resolution, same storage capacity options and the same Lightning connector. A testament to Apple's software - we'll say this from the offset - this is still a very good tablet (one of the best drawing tablets

for kids, in fact) - but out of the gate there's very little new here.

The new iPad is made from predictably premium materials. The back is blasted aluminium that's matte to the touch. On the front is a single sheet of glass, interrupted only by the home button that doubles up as a Touch ID fingerprint scanner.

## LIGHTNING STRIKES TWICE

Unlike the new iPad Air (2020) and iPad Pro (2018, 2020), the iPad 2020 charges using a Lightning connector - the same as all iPhones. Bookending the Lightning port at the base are

Artists will want to invest in the £89 Apple Pencil, as well as a copy of Procreate (just under a tenner).

speaker grilles, and a top of the tab is a power button.

Apple tends to get its screens on-point - even in its entry-level lines - and with a resolution of 2,160x1,620 the iPad's Retina IPS LCD screen is clear, bright (up to 500 nits) and sharp enough. It can't stack up to the iPad Pro (its picture looks more washed out side-by-side), but in its price bracket it's exceptional. The fact that the new iPad supports Apple Pencil input (first-generation only), complete with tilt recognition, is also a boon.

If you're coming from an original iPad Air, the new entry-level iPads





You can choose from four different coloured bezels, while the optional Smart Keyboard doubles up as a cover.



have noticeably bigger screens: 10.2 versus 9.7 inches. But otherwise the design of the 2013 through to 2020 models is very familiar. They're also loaded up with bezels, so while Samsung is making mid-range tablets like its Tab S6 Lite look fresh in 2020, as far as design goes there's nothing fresh about this new iPad.

## OPTIMISED OPERATING SYSTEM

Yet the reason iPads are the tablets to beat has more to do with their software than hardware, and since Apple launched iPadOS in 2019 (a tablet-optimised take on iOS), Android tablets have fallen even further behind when it comes to usability.

App support for the new iPad is world-class, with note-taking tools like Good Notes and drawing tools including some of the best digital art

software (namely Procreate) currently unmatched by Android alternatives. Split-screen multitasking on iPads is also a smooth experience, and with mouse support finally available in iPadOS 14, iPads are close to being the laptop replacements Apple always wanted them to be.

Thanks to the power inside the iPad 2020, its software flies. It does feel a touch slower than the iPad Pro, thanks to the lower refresh rate screen of 60Hz vs the iPad Pro's 120Hz. That being said, for creative endeavours core performance is comparable.

iPadOS 14 isn't just about the best iPad Pro apps, though. The new OS adds better gaming support, so it works with both Xbox and PlayStation controllers. Handwriting recognition for Apple Pencil is also baked into the OS, so you can write in text entry

fields, and the homescreen now displays widgets, saving you having to swipe them into view.

## GET THE BIG ONE

Available in either 32GB or 128GB versions, storage capacity is our biggest gripe with Apple's refreshed iPad. The starting capacity is just too small: if you buy the 32GB version, you'll be butting heads with low storage alerts within a week.

While the iPad 10.2 (2020) starts at £329 for the 32GB version, you should avoid the 32GB option unless you plan on picking it up exclusively for video streaming. If you anticipate needing a functional tablet, you should opt for the 128GB version, which costs £429. Add cellular connectivity to the mix and you'll be paying £559.

Additional costs you'll have to factor in if you want the full iPad experience include the first-generation Apple Pencil (£89) and the iPad Smart Keyboard (£159). All this takes the

**“ iPads are close to being the laptop replacements Apple always wanted them to be ”**

price of an iPad (wi-fi, 128GB) with all its accessories to £677. While this is an entry-level iPad, therefore, it isn't an entry-level tablet, with slates like the Lenovo IdeaPad Duet Chromebook costing £299, and shipping with a keyboard and pen.

One thing the new iPad does deliver in the box is a 20W fast charger, which, when coupled with impressive battery life is a nice touch.

If you're craving Apple Pencil support at the lowest price possible, the new iPad is a great shout, provided you pick it up with 128GB storage. That said, there's very little between the iPad (2019) and the iPad (2020). Sure, the extra speed for gaming and video editing is welcome, but most other creative tasks don't push even last-gen iPads to their limits, so the money saved by opting for last year's model could go towards the Apple Pencil or Smart Keyboard costs.

Even with the new iPad's copy-paste design, its software is a joy to use, so this isn't a bad tablet. If you don't need hardware innovation or a tablet that looks fresh in 2020, the latest iPad's function makes up for its form. 

## DETAILS

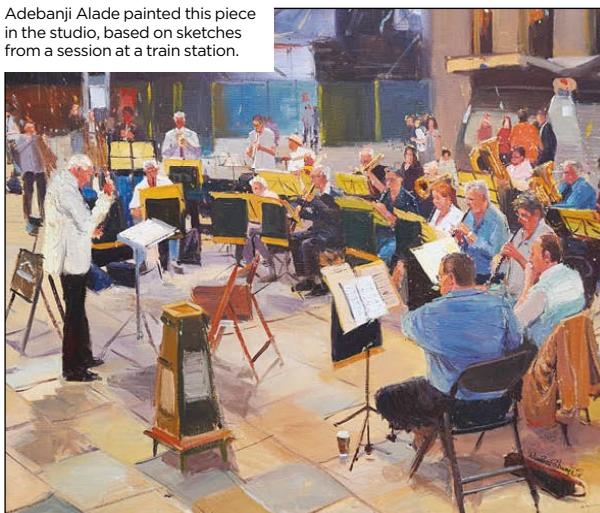
### Features

- iPadOS 14
- A12 Bionic processor
- 10.2 inch Retina IPS LCD display
- 2,160x1,620 screen resolution
- Apple Pencil support (first generation)
- 32/128GB storage options
- 8MP camera
- 1080p HD video recording at 30fps
- Smart connector
- Lightning connector
- Headphone jack

### Rating



Adebanji Alade painted this piece in the studio, based on sketches from a session at a train station.



The many sketching principles that Adebanji covers in his book can also be applied to painting.

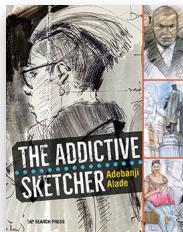
## The Addictive Sketcher

**PENCIL PUSHER** An enthusiastic and practical guide to all things drawing and sketching from the London-based artist, teacher and TV presenter

**Author** Adebanji Alade **Publisher** Search Press **Price** £15 **Web** [www.searchpress.com](http://www.searchpress.com) **Available** Now

**A**debanji Alade is caught up in the joys of a creative adventure, and he wants you to join him on his drawing escapades. A little dramatic perhaps, but as the title suggests, sketching for Adebanji is a way of life rather than just a way to while away an hour or two with paper and pencil.

Following an opening chapter in which the Nigerian-born artist talks about his upbringing and the time at college when his passion for sketching was born, Adebanji describes his mindset and goals to the reader. He writes about appreciating and embracing your work, the pitfalls and challenges, how to maintain momentum, and more. It's advice that comes across as genuine and from experience, delivered in an enthusiastic tone. No surprise really,



Pages from Adebanji's sketchbook. A collection of the artist's city life drawings has recently been published.

seeing that Adebanji teaches at London's Art Academy, and runs workshops in schools and colleges.

Adebanji maintains his conversational tone as he covers the sketching basics, starting with the equipment he uses, before going on to mark-making techniques such as contours, angles and ghosting. It's accompanied by unfussy photography, short walkthroughs, WIPs and finished

**“The heart of the book is given over to specific sketching scenarios”**

art. The artist spends longer covering core art concepts including composition and perspective, and provides a range of finished examples, annotated art and a simplified explanation of technical terms.

The heart of the book is given over to specific sketching scenarios, including public transport, buskers, statues and markets. All are within reach of the average artist and Adebanji provides practical tips on how to approach each topic. He maintains the personal touch, giving anecdotes on what and who he encountered on the day, and lessons learned from the session. Extended walkthroughs show art theory in



The artist at work: Adebanji's equally enthusiastic about sketching, whether indoors or outside.

practice, as the artist takes his rough line art to a degree of finish on a variety of scenes and styles.

The Addictive Sketcher, despite its desire to explain art terms in the most straightforward of language, isn't a book for beginner artists. But it is for those creatives who know they spend too long working at a desk. If this sounds familiar, and you're keen to step outside and start drawing the real world, then Adebanji's on hand to ensure you don't stop.

**RATING** ★★★★☆



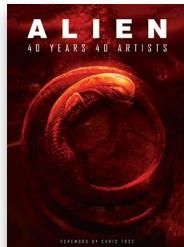
# Alien: 40 Years 40 Artists

**IN YOUR FACE** Creatives working in a myriad of mediums come together to salute Ridley Scott's groundbreaking sci-fi film

**Authors** Various **Publisher** Titan Books **Price** £30 **Web** [www.titanbooks.com](http://www.titanbooks.com) **Available** Now

**T**he clue's in the name: to celebrate four decades since HR Giger's biomechanical horror made its cinema debut, 40 artists were asked for their take on Alien. This large-format book is the result.

Following an introduction from legendary sci-fi artist Chris Foss, we're into the book's raison d'être. Each artist receives a double-page spread. One side is devoted to their

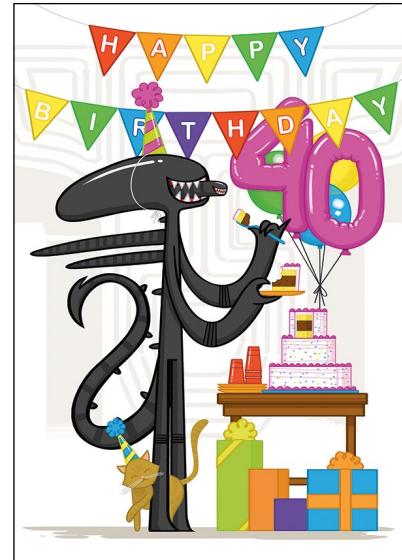


RJ 'Arvalis' Palmer painted a gruesome scene from the film, with plenty of detailing on the Alien's design.

contribution, enabling the reader to study the art in detail. On the facing page the artist reveals what Alien means to them in a short essay, alongside discarded ideas and WIPs. This adds depth and interest to what otherwise might have been a typical coffee-table art book.

Entries range from the gory to the whimsical. Evan Cagle's depiction of the dining table just after Kane's demise and Ripley's space suit-cum-mech courtesy of Edward Pun are two such examples. The art quality is high, while the variety of approaches means there's something for every taste. The book concludes with concept art, posters and biographies of the artists, rounding off a quality project that belongs in every Alien fan's collection.

**RATING** ★★★★☆



What better way to celebrate four decades of Alien than a birthday party attended by the big guy? This is Joey Spiotto's contribution to the project.

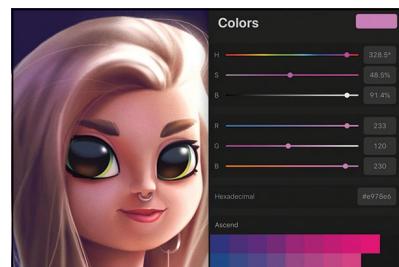
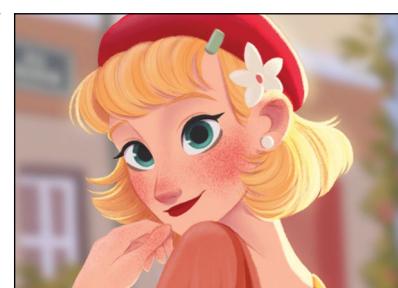
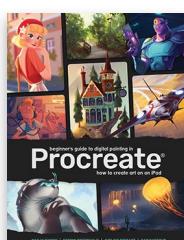
# Beginner's Guide to Digital Painting in Procreate

**ART ON TAP** Find your way around the popular painting app and create art on your iPad with the help of pro illustrators

**Editor** Philippa Barker **Publisher** 3dtotal Publishing **Price** £22 **Web** [www.3dtotalthub.com](http://www.3dtotalthub.com) **Available** Now

**T**he iPad app Procreate has already won over many digital artists. 3dtotal's book aims to introduce a raft of new users to the painting app's many strengths.

The book assumes you've launched Procreate and are thinking, "Now what?" Concept artist Lucas Peinador answers that question, taking 60-odd pages to explain every aspect of the app. Lucas' text is broken up into key



Lucas Peinador uses many examples of his personal art to discuss Procreate's key tools.

sections – Setting Up, Brushes, Layers and so on – and his guidance is clear and encouraging. The app's dialogs and menus are printed large on the page, with touchscreen gestures clearly overlaid on screenshots so as not to obstruct what's being shown.

Once you've grasped the basics, tutorials from eight pro artists help you to build on your knowledge. The presentation is as clear as ever, with

frequent call-backs to Lucas's earlier text and Artist's Tips that contain art advice not necessarily limited to Procreate. Downloadable resources accompany each artist's tutorial, enabling you to follow along or watch the artist at work. At a price that's just as affordable as the app, this book is perfect for Procreate newcomers.

**RATING** ★★★★☆

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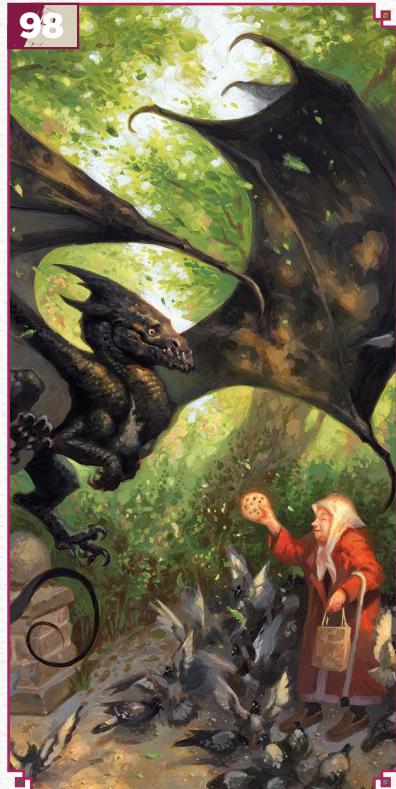
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NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS  
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# Traditional Artist

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: Capture Death's persona in acrylics**  
Milivoj Čeran paints Death welcoming the dead to the underworld, based on a Sideshow Collectibles figurine.

**98 First Impressions: Alex Stone**  
Artist Donato made an early impression on the US illustrator.

# FXPosé

SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL ARTISTS



## Kristin Kwan

LOCATION: US MEDIA: Oil on panel, graphite WEB: [www.kristinkwan.com](http://www.kristinkwan.com)

Kristin creates dreamlike images inspired by the natural world, and by fantasy and myth. She aims to channel this magic and bring it alive on the page.



### 1 DAPHNE

"This piece is inspired by the Greek myth of Daphne who escaped Apollo by transforming into a laurel tree."



### 2 SPHINX

"I love science fiction and fantasy art from the 60s and 70s. I tried to capture the mysterious feeling and lurid look of that era."

### 2

### 3 BRASSICA

"While painting this I enjoyed playing with the subtle blues and yellows, and the satin-like texture of the head of cabbage."

### 4 SUB ROSA

"This started out as a doodle I made while waiting for someone. It highlights the importance of always carrying a sketchbook."

### 3







## Emma Black

LOCATION: England MEDIA: Oils WEB: [www.emma-black.co.uk](http://www.emma-black.co.uk)

Emma is a freelance illustrator whose work combines a surreal mix of flora and portraiture. Her work explores notions of the uncanny, human subconscious and our relationship to death and the natural world.



### 1 THE DISSOLUTION OF MEMORY

"This piece is inspired by the ephemeral nature of memories, and how they can change and transform over time."



### 3 SWEET DECAY

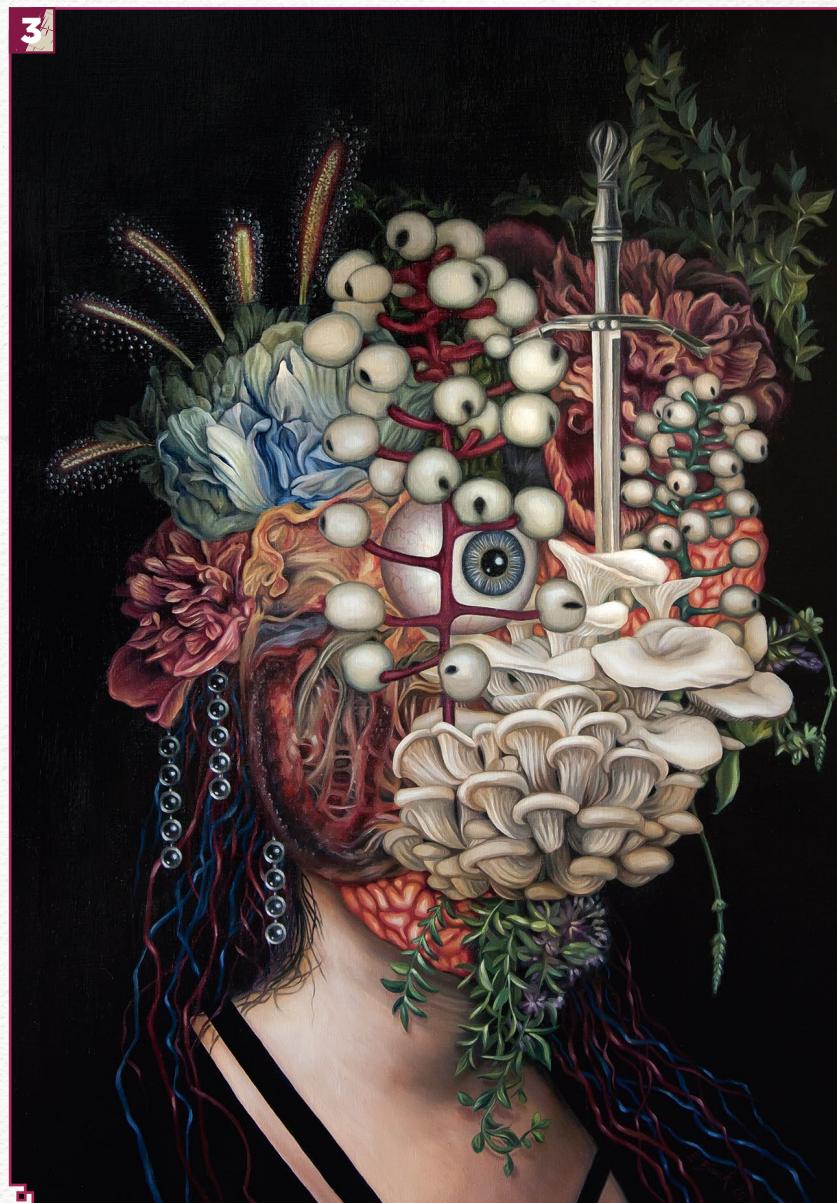
"A piece exploring the subjectivity of perceived beauty. Humans and nature merge into a form that attempts to feel pleasing, but alien."

### 3

### 2 DREAM OF THE WITHERING FOREST

"The figure dreams of a new beginning. As their form alters, a sense of longing is left behind."

### 4



### 4 THE HUNTER

"The figure is proudly displaying their wounds from which new growth is blooming, symbolising the will to overcome difficulties."



# Traditional Artist Workshop



Artwork © Sideshow Collectibles



Acrylics

# CAPTURE DEATH'S PERSONA IN ACRYLICS

Veteran illustrator **MILIVOJ ĆERAN** reveals how he painted Death welcoming the dead to the underworld, going far beyond the Sideshow Collectibles source material

**D**eath, The Alltaker is a well-known character from the Court of the Dead universe, which is a product line from Sideshow Collectibles. The challenge was to capture Death's complex character: is he to be feared or is he your saviour? After all, this is the viewer's first – and likely only – meeting with Death as they make their way to the underworld!

Because I had complete freedom for the composition, I decided to add an element that has long been a favourite artistic feature: a highly decorative border. The macabre nature of the artwork meant it was an opportunity to combine Gothic architecture with skeletal elements.

The artwork needed to have an eerie feel to it. I made sure that every element was weathered, dirty, tattered and even rusty. After all, Death isn't a shiny, new character. Taking this approach enabled me to give him a realistic appearance despite his supernatural origins. The source material is a rather static composition, so I tried to add as many dynamic elements and sense of storytelling as I could.

As well as drawing on the Court of the Dead universe for inspiration, I also studied horror images, comics, fantasy art, pop culture, Gothic art, and 19th century and Victorian art. Illustrators are magpies! I was commissioned to portray a branded character, but also I needed to give it

my own personal touch and style. The painting was commissioned as a limited edition art print, so I decided to paint it at a large size: 75x57cm (29.5x22.4 inches).

In this workshop, I'll open the doors of my studio and share some of my art secrets. The techniques I use are born from years of painting and trying to achieve the best results. We can all use the same colours, papers, brushes and other tools, but how we use them is our personal journey.

 **Milivoj is an illustrator and author of the Norse Mythology art book. His clients include Wizards of the Coast, Blizzard Entertainment, Sideshow Collectibles and Paizo. You can see more of his art at [www.mceran-art.com](http://www.mceran-art.com).** ➤

# Traditional Artist Workshop



## 1 Get some ideas down on paper

Rough compositional sketches help me visualise my ideas. I explore a horizontal composition before deciding on a vertical approach. Quick, loose pencil drawings provide enough information for the composition, camera angle and ratio between Death and the environment. I love to use decorative elements such as borders or scrolls/banners and I study as much references as I can, including books and skulls.

### MATERIALS

#### PAPER

- Fabriano 5 (300gsm, hot pressed) watercolour paper

#### BRUSHES

- Karačić, synthetic Flat brushes (4 to 7cm), and Round (00 to 12)
- Da Vinci Nova, synthetic brushes (Round)
- Cotman (Winsor & Newton) synthetic brushes (Round)
- Wide household Flat brushes (5 to 10cm)

#### AIRBRUSH

- Sparmax Aircomp AC20 compressor
- Rich AB300 pistol

#### ACRYLIC PAINTS

- Winsor & Newton Galeria
- Amsterdam Royal Talens
- Vallejo (acrylic and gouache)

#### MASKING AGENT

- Schmincke, Rubbelkrep (blue tint)



## 2 Make a detailed sketch

Once the key elements are in place I make a detailed drawing. Death's robes are now blowing around, revealing a collection of skulls and bones. A stream of souls are entering the scene, wrapping around his hand and then heading to the underworld. My Death Welcomes You title will be replaced by the Court of the Dead logo.



## 3 Transfer the art to watercolour paper

I stretch the watercolour 300gsm (140lbs) Fabriano 5 paper on the drawing board, and begin to transfer the drawing onto it. I also make a detailed sketch of the ornate border. Using rulers and a divider tool enables me to make precise measurements as I place stone and bone elements within the border.



## 4 Paint and weather the ornate border

I begin colouring the border by using washes of diluted acrylic colours, including blues and browns. I add shadows, and define shapes and volume by thinking about where cracks in the stonework might appear, along with any areas of patina. I'm keen to develop a dirty stone look during this stage, recreating weathered, Gothic architecture. I add organic shapes in the stonework that hint at an underlying anatomy.



## 5 Refine the centre of the artwork

Next, I rework the drawing in the centre of the composition. First, I block in some dark areas of tattered clothing and skulls. Second, I tackle the bluish stream of souls that are wrapping around Death's hand, painting them as distorted bodies and faces. All my shadows are painted in a blue colour – no blacks here!.

## 6 Protect the border from paints

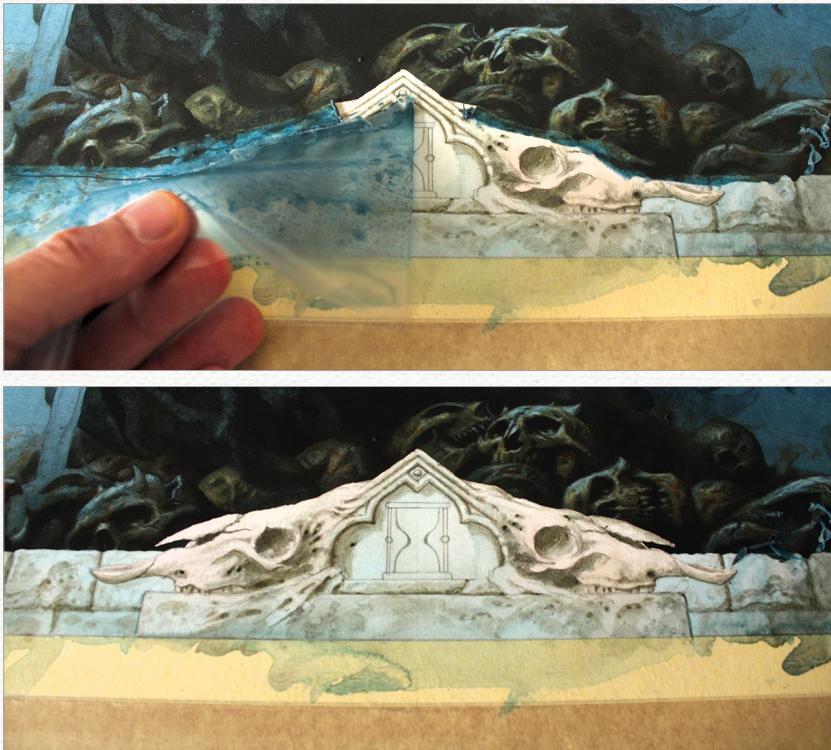
Before I start to splash around background colours, I mask off the border using transparent film and a liquid latex masking agent. Next, I block in Death's clothing using brown, grey and black colours, adding texture here and there. ➤

# Traditional Artist Workshop



## 7 Splash colour on to the surface

I finally start to paint the background. I damp down the paper surface with my widest house brush and then splash diluted acrylic colours on to it. I need to control my colour application to ensure the bluish stream of souls isn't affected. I use a toothbrush to create texture, by splattering water over the wet colours.



## 9 Remove the masking agent

I paint the background and the skulls in the foreground using wide brushes and a lot of splashing. My masking agent protected the border during this stage but now I need to remove the mask. I do so, and am glad to see that the border is in perfect shape! Note that the masking agent can't stay in place on the paper for more than a few days, because it can lead to yellowing.



## 8 Tint the background

The background was looking slightly too grey so I tinted it with a diluted acrylic blue colour. The great thing with acrylics is that you can paint as many layers as you like. Once it's dried it becomes water resistant. Adding more layers won't cause smudging, unlike watercolours.



## 10 Add details to Death

It's now time to paint Death. I start on his face, giving it an unearthly flesh colour. Next, I add some shades and darker brown lines on his face mask and chest armour, so they don't vanish during the blocking colour stage. I cover his scythe with a rust-like colour.



## 11 Apply colour and build up textures

Death's mask and armour is the colour focal point of the piece. A few colour accents help to make the character stand out among his cold, bluish and grey surroundings. I depict areas of dirt and patina on his gold armour, which hint at Death's ageless nature.



## 12 Going back to the woods

I go often back and forth between areas of a composition. This time I add more branches in the woods behind Death, and cursed souls moving between the trees. I paint these supporting characters in white, but only to suggest at their overall appearance because they need to look mostly transparent.



## 13 The devil lies in the details

Now I add lots of details: Death's hand, the walls and landscape in the background, the bones in the foreground. I further define the stream of souls and Illverness City, the capital of the underworld.



## 14 The final art – and the artist pictured for scale!

Here's the finished painting with the masking tape removed. The painting is still stretched to the board so that I can take a high-resolution RAW photo. Finally, I cut the painting from the board and store it in my art drawer. 

# First Impressions

\* Alex Stone \*

Artist Donato made an early impression on the US illustrator



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

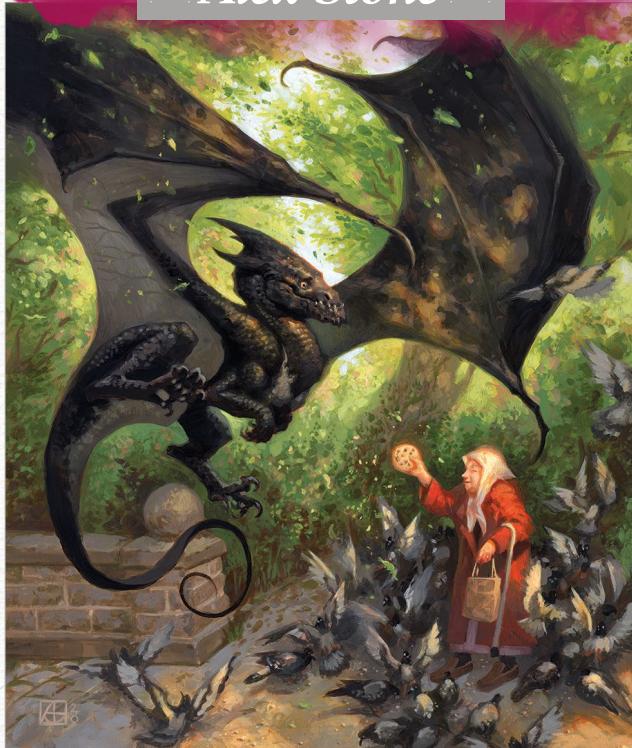
I grew up in Brooklyn, New York. It generally hasn't affected my art too much, but the accessibility of quality arts resources, such as museums and schools, has helped me on the path to being an artist. Recently, New York has also become the focus of an ongoing series of personal work I've been painting, featuring dragons in a contemporary setting.

Does one person stand out as being helpful during your early years?

I had a great teacher in high school who taught an illustration class, which is where I learned what illustration was, and that people could make art for a living. That was probably when I decided to pursue art as a career.

You're a child, you see a painting that changes everything. Where are you, what are you looking at and what effect did it have?

It's impossible to say that there was one piece of art that changed



## FEEDING TIME

*"In this painting I wanted to focus on the storytelling and interaction between the granny and the dragon."*

everything for me, but there is one that always sticks out in my memory. It was a tiny picture in a Magic: The Gathering rules booklet of the Ebon Dragon card, illustrated by Donato Giancola. I found the colour palette and shapes to be particularly striking, although I don't think eight-year-old me would have been able to articulate that. It remains a painting I greatly admire.

“New York has become the focus of a series of personal work I've been painting...”

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

Probably video games, movies, and cheesy 90s sci-fi/fantasy television.

What was your first paid commission, and does it stand as a representation of your talent?

My first paid commission was a pair of card game illustrations that, to my

knowledge, have never been released. They were a struggle, heavily art directed, and in the end, extremely mediocre. I've gotten a bit better since then, thankfully.

What's the last piece you finished, and how do the two artworks differ? The last piece I finished is from my aforementioned series featuring dragons in New York. I've been using these paintings as a way to take something I love (dragons) and combine it with something that's close to me (my home), in order to create something that's uniquely my own. It couldn't be more different from my first commission because it's a passion project that I'm doing primarily for myself. I hope the joy I derive from doing these paintings shows through in the work, and makes others happy as well!

What advice would you give to your younger self to aid you on the way? Try to let go of any preconceived notions of what an art career is supposed to look like, and enjoy the journey more. Find the work that speaks to you and do more of that, rather than only doing the work you think other people want to see.

What does the future hold for you? Who knows! I recently finished my first Magic: The Gathering illustration, which was a dream job. I've got many more ideas for my dragons in New York series, and would love to collect all the paintings into a book in the future. I'd also like to branch out into different areas of illustration that might suit my style, like middle-grade books. In the meantime I'll keep polishing my skills to make more and better art!

*Alex graduated with a BFA from the illustration programme at the Fashion Institute of Technology, and his work has appeared in books and card games, and is also a part of numerous private art collections. You can see more of his paintings at [www.alexstoneart.com](http://www.alexstoneart.com).*

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