

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX

INSIGHT

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Career advice from pro book illustrators

WORKSHOP

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HOW TO BUILD DARK CREATIONS

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15 ways to improve your art with the legendary **Tony DiTerlizzi**



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Image by Nick Harris - Tutorial IFX 187

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 **ArtRage 6**

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



This month's cover serves as a statement of all the myriad treats that are inside the issue. Tony DiTerlizzi's beautifully crafted image is bursting with character, technique and carefully balanced colour – all areas explored over the following pages.

Actually, when we contacted Tony with the idea of what became the fact-filled, 10-page workshop (page 58) he was initially hesitant. The task of distilling essential tips on how he does what he does, said Tony, could easily fill a book! But until that book is released, we think he's done an amazing job of catching some of the magic of what he, an award-winning art legend, does so effortlessly. It's a rewarding read!

Elsewhere, Angela Sung's breakdown of getting better at picking colours (on page 72) made me think differently about breaking down the colour of an image – a great sign for a workshop. And that makes me so excited to be featuring her in our upcoming virtual digital art event Vertex. The event is on 25 February, but ticket holders can watch all the amazing lectures and workshops for a month after! So get yours now here: www.vertexconf.com.

Claire

Editor in chief
claire@imaginefx.com

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

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Step into the spotlight

We're always looking out for passionate artists to feature in our gallery section – so submit your art today!

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As sharp as a samurai's blade

Naomi Baker's art is like her attitude – really cool. We chat about her Ghost of Tsushima concepts and Marvel.

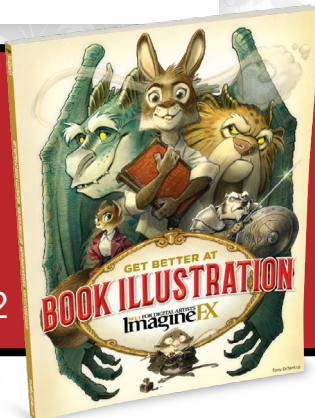
58



Learn from the best

Bestselling author and illustrator Tony DiTerlizzi breaks down how he does what he does, and how you can too.

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

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Explore the studio of the Boston-based artist, which is in a tidy state... for now.

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Artist Portfolio

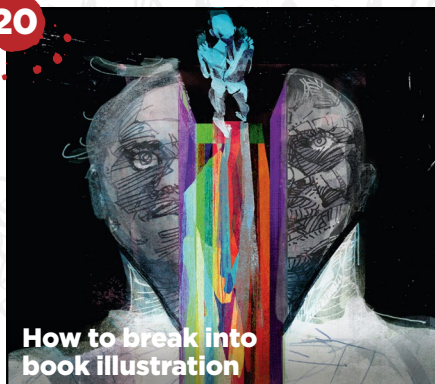
**NAOMI
BAKER**



"I'm here to be the one whose goal is so simple. It's just to draw and paint every day"

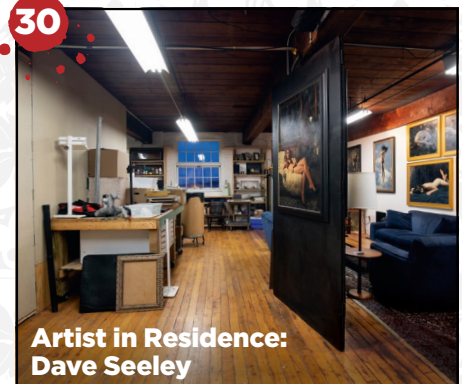
Naomi superbly sums up her career

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How to break into book illustration

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Artist in Residence: Dave Seeley



ImagineFX

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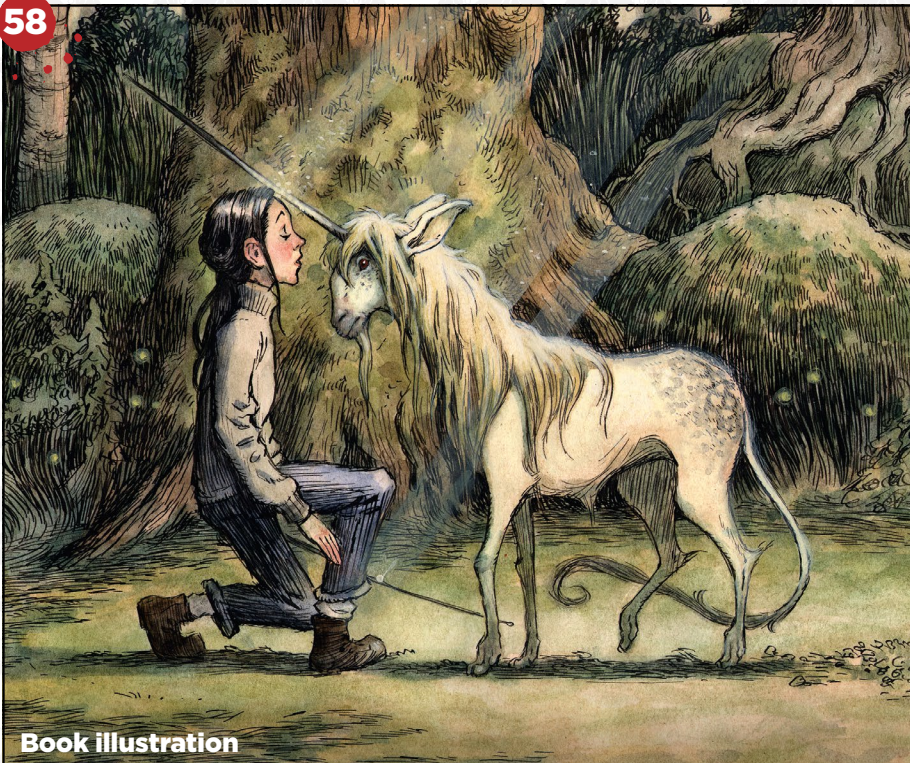
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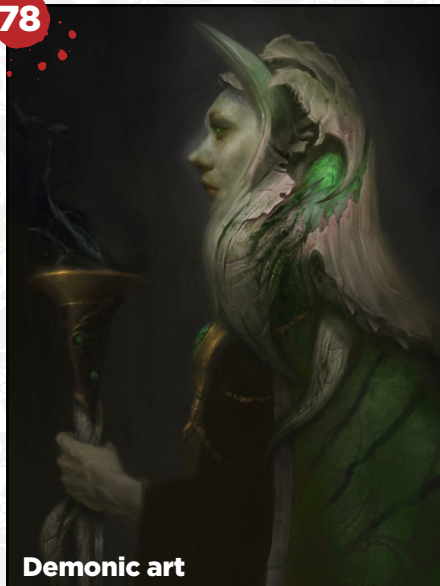
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Traditional Artist

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Discover this month's selection of the finest traditional art, sent in by you!

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Representation lies at the heart of this US illustrator's work.



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Resources

Getting hold of this issue's resources is easy.
Just visit **<http://ifxm.ag/book198illo>**

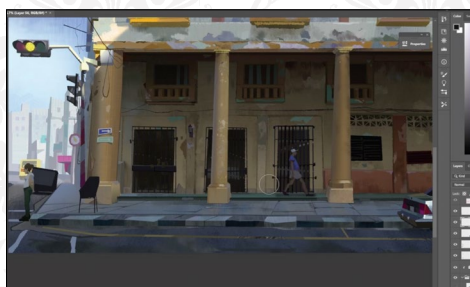
WORKSHOP VIDEOS



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from pro artists
to watch and
learn from!

Discover how to craft a book cover

Tony DiTerlizzi's videos reveal how he drew and painted the cute, cuddly and curmudgeonly characters that appear on our cover. And his tips workshop on book illustration is on page 58.



How to choose your colours for maximum impact

In her video, art director and visual development artist Angela Sung explains why colour selection and application can make or break a painting. Turn to page 72 to read her workshop.



ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

Plus: More video art advice!

Watch Nikolai Lockertsen's Procreate tutorial and Wylie Beckert's mixed-media workshop.

Take a studio tour!

See how Dave Seeley has organised his expansive home studio. More on page 30.

PLUS 10 CUSTOM BRUSHES, INCLUDING...



BLOCK-IN PENCIL

This is Angela Sung's go-to brush for blocking-in her art. The toothy texture creates interesting edges.



VICTORIAN 2

Jim Pavelec uses this Procreate brush for adding unusual textures, once he's smudged its marks.



RAKE BRUSH

Angela's Rake brush with colour jitter is ideal for creating textures and subtle colour/value shifts.

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ImagineFX

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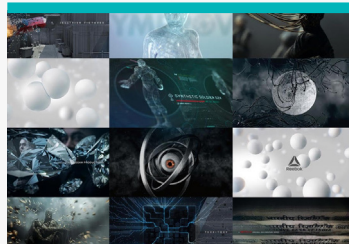
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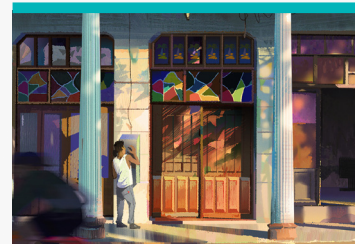
IAN SPRIGGS

The Story of Portraiture



**JM BLAY
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Art of Motion Graphics



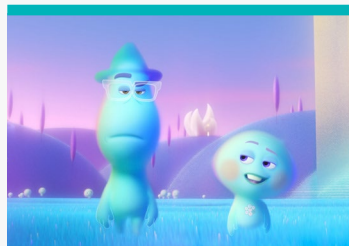
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MACMANUS**

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DYLAN SISSON

*Making Art with Soul /
Exploring Stylized Looks
with RenderMan*



**JONATHAN
CHEETHAM**

*Delving Deep into
Digital Humans*



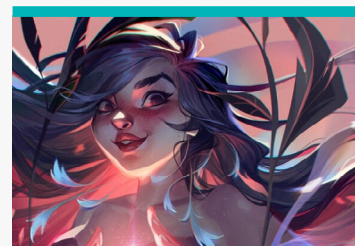
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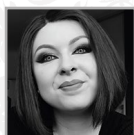
FXPose

PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

2



© R. Talsorian Games



Martina Fačková

LOCATION: Slovakia MEDIA: Photoshop WEB: www.martinafackovaart.com

Martina has created art for Wizards of the Coast, R. Talsorian games and HarperCollins Publishing since 2014. "My work revolves around fantastical realism with a touch of drama, darkness and emotion."

1



© White Wizard Games

IMAGINEFX
ARTIST
MONTH

1 SPELLBINDING TERROR

"Illustration of a vampire created for SmArt school class with Winona Nelson. It was later purchased by White Wizard Games."

2 THE WITCHER'S JOURNAL COVER

"Cover illustration done for CD Projekt Red and R. Talsorian Games. It's a bestiary that adds to The Witcher TRPG."

3 BLACK HALO

"This artwork appeared on the cover of the dark fantasy novel Black Halo, by John Patrick Kennedy."



IMAGINEFX

Email your submissions to fxpose@imaginefx.com



ImagineFX ARTIST MONTH

Congratulations to Martina, 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!



ImagineFX ARTIST YEAR

Submissions for Artist of the Year are now closed. We'll reveal our **Artist of the Year** at Vertex 2021 – visit **www.vertexconf.com**. You can still submit your work to FXPosé, see below for details.

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 information to: fxpose@imaginefx.com.

1





Andrea Alemanno

LOCATION: Italy MEDIA: Photoshop WEB: www.andreaalemanno.com

Andrea is an award-winning artist who describes himself as a compulsive illustrator. In his quest for inspiration he travels the world, always finding new things to draw when exploring cities.



1 DRAGON

"This piece was selected by Infected By Art volume eight. Here I explored my love of painting lights and shadows to tell a story."

2 LAIR

"The concept behind this piece was how dark should a hole be and what could be lurking inside it."

3 THE TROLL

"As an artist I try to explore a narrative in my illustrations. This piece appeared in volume seven of Infected By Art."

4 HARPY

"This winged creature is one of my favourite monsters from mythology, I think it's because she's so fierce."





James Firnhaber

LOCATION: US MEDIA: Photoshop WEB: www.jamesfirnhaber.com

"My work explores the space between reality and fantasy, and its effects on people," says James. "For inspiration, I draw on mythology, magical realism and traditional animation."

1 SPECIMEN 7

"As I draw an image, I mentally flesh out the world it depicts, its characters and their relationships."

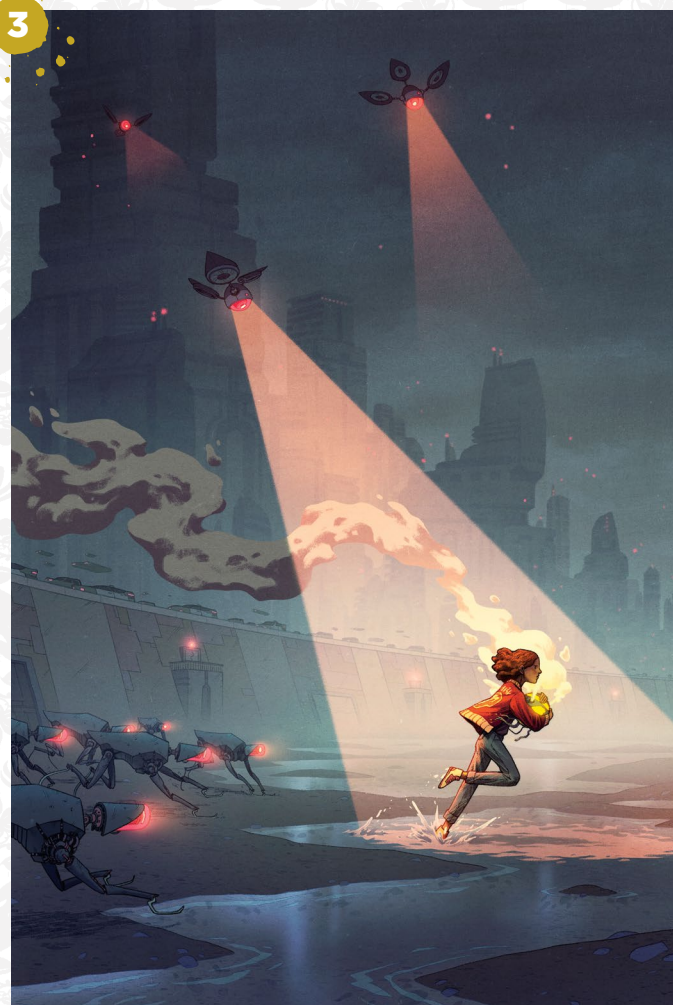


3 THE THIEVES AND THE REBEL

"An homage to Android: Netrunner. I imagined a dystopian police state and a young rebel fighting back."

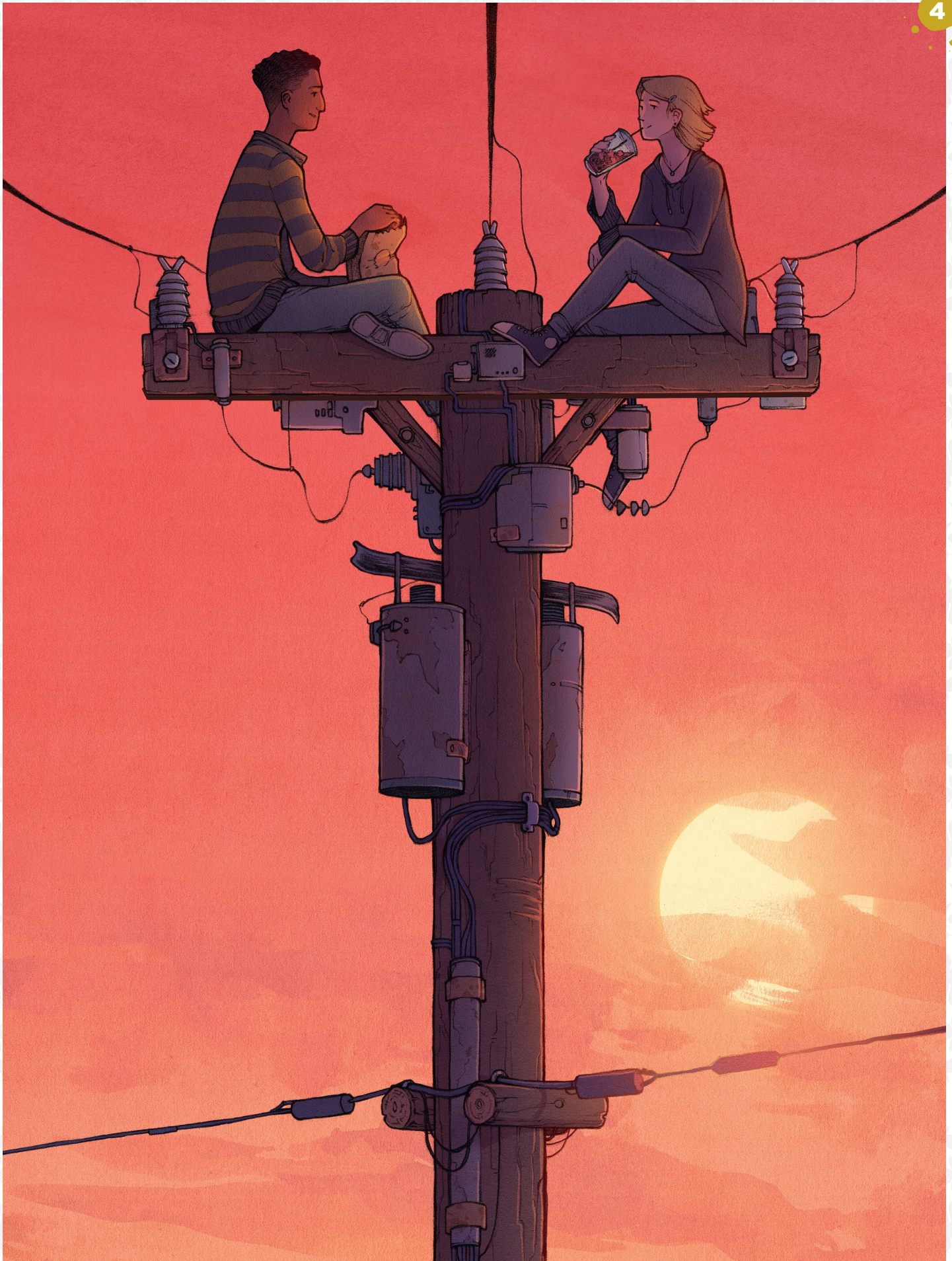
2 THE CLOCKSPINNER

"Based on my love of time-travel fiction. I imagined gloves that enable one to control the hands of time itself."



4 GETTING SODAS

"This piece explores the intimacy of close friendship, and the way it can make even the mundane extraordinary."



1





Cristiana Leone

LOCATION: Italy **MEDIA:** Photoshop, Clip Studio Paint **WEB:** www.cristianaleone.com

"I've been passionate about drawing ever since childhood," says self-taught artist Cristiana. "In 2012 I left my secretary job to follow my dream to become a full-time artist."

1 SKY DANCER

"This was inspired by my love for strong, elegant and mysterious female figures, complete with pointed ears, of course!"

2 POINSETTIA

"This personal artwork was inspired in part by the beautiful winter flower."

3 RHEA SILVIA & MARS

"My take on the legend of Rhea Silvia and her encounter with the god Mars. She was a priestess and the mother of Romulus and Remus."



4 LOKI

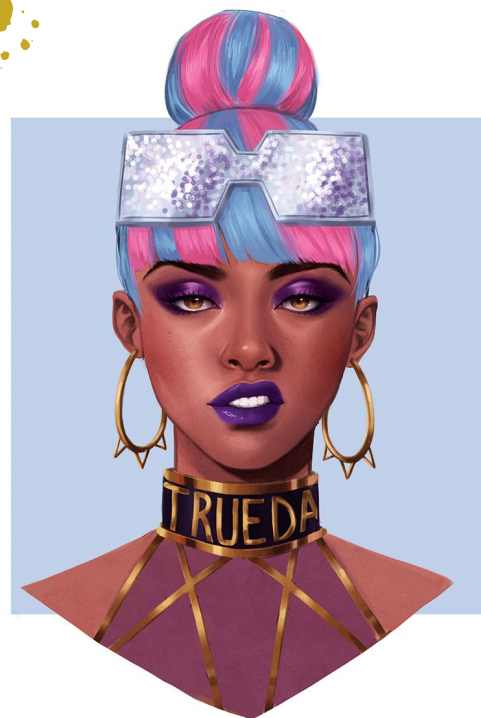
"My interpretation of the infamous Norse god of mischief. This was painted for Gods of Asgard, a collective art calendar project."



Kiyami Omotayo

LOCATION: US MEDIA: Photoshop, Procreate WEB: www.twitter.com/chandeloor

"I've been a self-taught artist for the better part of a decade," says Kiyami, "but recently I've been taking it more seriously." In between juggling a day job and family life, she's inspired by artists on social media.



1 RAZE

"Valorant agent Raze with an explosion erupting behind her, listening to music. I loved her chill personality."

2 QIYANA

"League of Legends champion Qiyana in her 'True Damage' skin, inspired by the group's song GIANTS. I think she's beautiful!"

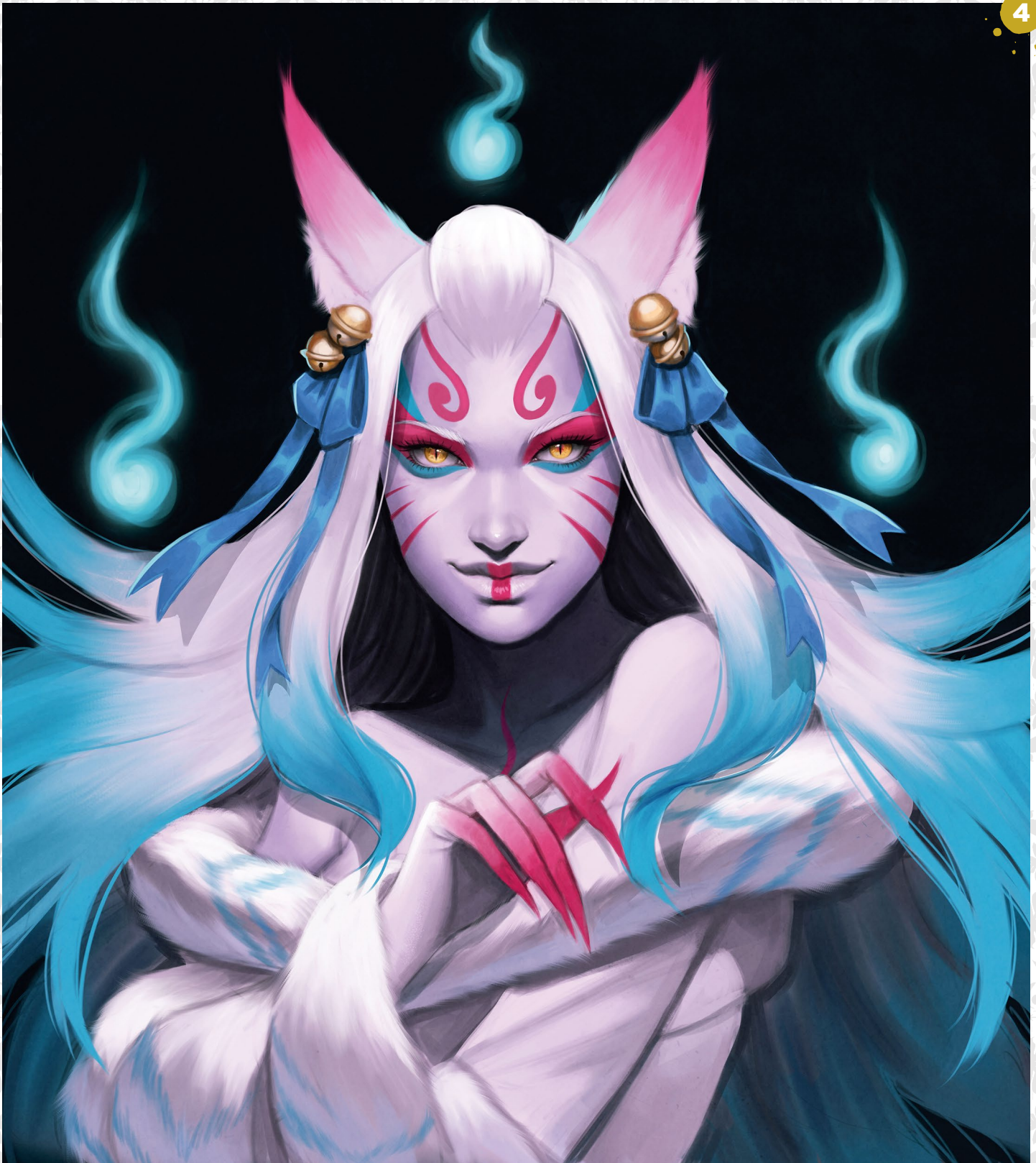
3 EVELYNN

"An interpretation of League of Legends champion Evelyn with K/DA. A demon in the lore, her reflection turns with her."

4 AHRI

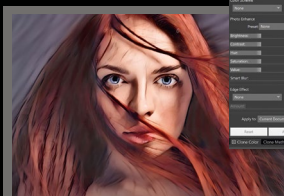
League of Legends champion Ahri in her Spirit Blossom skin. She changes into this form when using her ultimate!"





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AT THE CORE OF THE DIGITAL ART COMMUNITY

Eli Minaya advises learning the division of style between genres: "A style that may work in sci-fi/fantasy may not work for literary fiction, even if there's a bit of magic in the story."





PLENTY OF CHARACTER

Luis Carrasco, an art director at Terraform Studios, takes us through a typical day, producing characters and creature designs for film, games and TV. **Page 29**



CHANGING ROOMS

Architect-turned book cover artist Dave Seeley shows us around the different work and gallery areas within his large loft studio in Boston. **Page 30**



WRITE IN TO IMAGINEFX!

Readers from around the world get in touch with their questions about the magazine, and we do our best to answer them. It's great to hear from you, too! **Page 37**

"Going to illustration events, book launches, and even illustration fairs are all amazing places to make new contacts," says Chris Chatterton.



How to break into book illustration

Hit the books What do artists need to know to enter the world of book illustration? **Dom Carter** talks to professionals to find out

The art found in illustrated novels and picture books is often inspiration for budding artists, so it's no surprise that many consider turning their hand to book illustration at some point in their career. But just like other popular mediums, it can be difficult to know how to approach book illustration. Add publishers, designers and authors into the mix, and the industry can seem daunting, if not impenetrable.

Luckily for aspiring illustrators, this multidisciplinary nature means that there's lots of ways for them to get into it. A strong portfolio is the foundation of any artistic career, and it's no different for book illustrators. Make sure it includes up-to-date work that relates to the work you want to

do in the future. Beyond that though, there doesn't appear to be a specific route to follow.

ROADS TO SUCCESS

"The best advice I can give is to make a lot of personal art, so that art directors can see many examples of how you fit into the process of selling a book," says Tor Books illustrator **Eli Minaya**. "I don't believe it's about qualifications, necessarily. I think if you're making personal art and you're making that art with stories and books in mind (and you're nice to the people you connect with), work will find you."

This is Gus illustrator Chris Chatterton agrees that artists don't



"It may help if your portfolio has a focus," says Rovina Cai. "One thing that you are particularly good at, or passionate about."

"Working as a freelancer, you'll need to wear many hats: accounting, marketing and project management, for example," says Chris.



have to focus on academia, and instead need to do what feels best for them alone. "I myself never studied

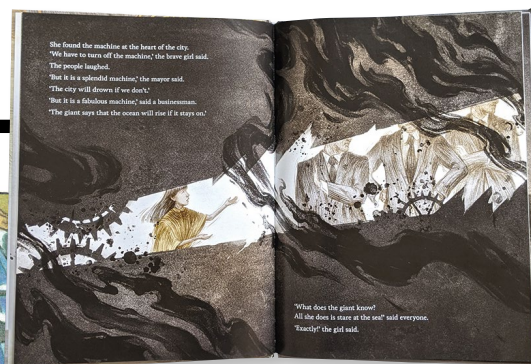
illustration," says **Chris**. I come from a graphic design and animation background which certainly is creative and similar in certain ways." Armed with

this overlap of knowledge, he knows what a good illustration portfolio should contain. "I would include character design - animals and children, environments - interior ➔

“If you're making personal art and you're making that art with stories and books in mind, work will find you”



David Melling suggests engaging with online communities such as The Association of Illustrators (AOI), Society of Children's Book Writer's and Illustrators (SCBWI) and The House of Illustration.



Chris says, "Build up a portfolio with work that reflects the type of book you want to illustrate for."



"Understanding design language is helpful when planning how illustrations fit on a page," says Rovina.

➔ and exterior, diversity, and a good sense of colour and light."

Meanwhile, Hugo Award nominated artist **Rovina Cai** recommends fledgling illustrators indulge in some research "This may sound obvious, but start by looking at some books!



I'm sure we all read books for fun, and to appreciate the artwork, but there's a lot of professional information to be gleaned

"Contact with authors and illustrators these days has never been more accessible," reassures Hugless Douglas creator **David Melling**. "However, my advice is don't be lazy with this accessibility. I receive a growing number of clearly generic emails, so now, like my friends, I'm much more selective and thoughtful about how I respond."



“We all read books for fun, but there’s a lot of professional information to be gleaned from them, too”

from them, too. You can make note of what kind of art appears in books, how the art is placed within the layout, the flow of images from page to page, etc. Also note which publishers produce illustrated books, and the kind of art they commission."

APPROACHING CLIENTS

Once you've refined your portfolio and pin-pointed relevant publishers, it's time to contact art directors. Surely that's easier said than done?

"I must also mention The Children's Writers & Artists Yearbook. This is an invaluable annual publication with up-to-the-minute tips on all areas of the publishing industry, as well as a list of all current publishers, their contact details and what they specialise in. Highly recommended."

Rovina reveals that she has a three-pronged approach to making contacts. "I focus on sending postcards and emails directly to art directors; networking at industry



Rovina reveals that, "I thought every discussion about fees and contracts was terrifying, but it gets better with time and practice."



"Try to get work with literary blogs and magazines" says Eli. "This provided me with great experience in working with stories."

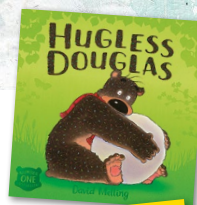
events like conventions (obviously, not in these current Covid times); and social media." And despite the algorithms that govern the latter, it's not something that the illustrator stresses about. "My outlook is that as long as you're putting your work in front of art directors, and you're showing them strong work that fulfils their requirements, then you'll get hired eventually."

A social media presence certainly appears to be the inside track when it

comes to getting noticed. "I know several art directors at publishing houses who use Instagram to look for an artist that's just right for a project they have," says Chris. Although he stresses you should have an account dedicated to your work as an artist, and not your drunken nights out.

WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

Landing that coveted first gig is one thing, but what does the working life of an illustrator look like? "You'll ➔



"If you're viewed as potentially 'high maintenance,' editors will likely look elsewhere!" says David.

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

SKILLS BOOK ARTISTS NEED

Here are six traits you need to make book illustration a success

1 A diverse grasp of drawing

"Knowledge of composition, colour, storytelling and character design is a must," says Chris. Even a little knowledge of the inner workings of book publication is recommended."

2 How art works with design

"The ability to understand layouts and design language is helpful when planning out how illustrations fit on a page, and how the art interacts with text," says Rovina.

3 An awareness of visual storytelling

"Breaking a story into its basic parts is great for coming up with ideas. The only way to learn that is to read a lot," says Eli.

4 Good time management

"Master patience," adds Eli. "Book covers don't happen overnight. There are a lot of moving parts in publishing. A lot of time you'll be waiting on people's schedule to align to receive approval or feedback."

5 Develop revenue streams

"Develop a multifaceted business strategy," Eli advises. "I believe it's a lot of artists' instincts to throw themselves into a single job, but other parts of an artist's business need tending to as well. It takes work to drive pledges, sell prints or work on private commissions and that should be done whenever possible."

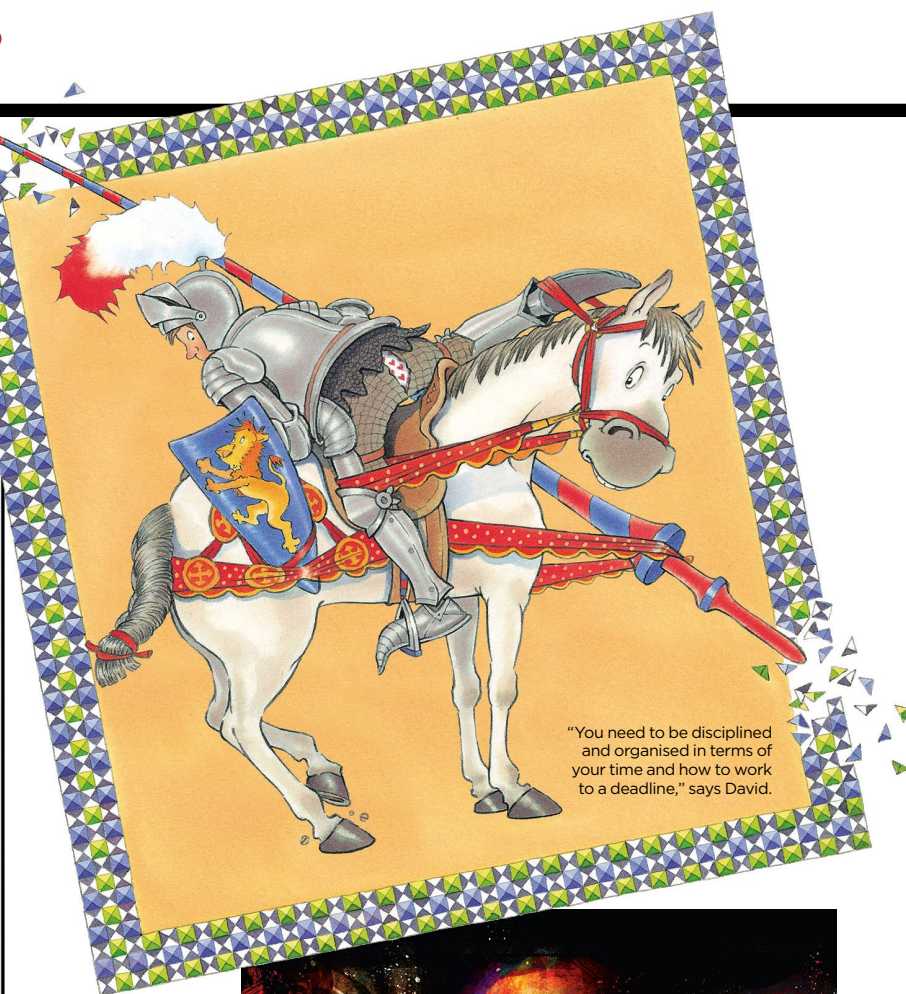
6 An approachable outlook

"You need strong communication skills," says David. "Publishers like to build a 'list' so it's crucial to have a solid, creative working relationship with an editor. One good experience to lead to any number of projects."

In Chris' experience, illustration is a friendly industry to get into: "You will find everyone is friendly and there to help you to create the best book possible."



“I know several art directors at publishing houses who use Instagram to look for an artist that’s just right for a project they have”

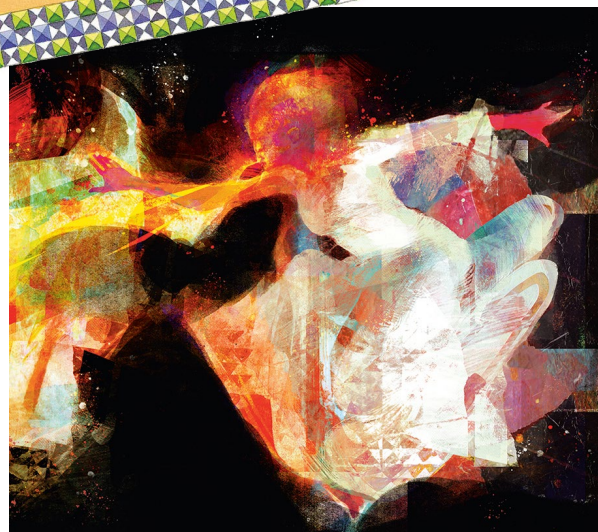


"You need to be disciplined and organised in terms of your time and how to work to a deadline," says David.

"Emailing art directors samples of your work is a good start to getting commissions," advises Eli.



When it comes to dealing with a workload, Chris' advice is clear: "Stay professional and meet your deadlines."



➡➡ work directly with an art director and designer mainly," says Chris. "You hardly ever speak with the author about the text."

"Contact usually takes place via emails, and will typically include you sending the book thumbnails, pencils, rough colour, final art and receiving amends and suggestions. This typically takes place over the course of a few months, although it all depends on the publisher, project and artist schedule."

This lead time is an important factor for Eli. "You don't always have a say over the pace at which a job will go. A book cover may take six months to complete and that pay, which you negotiated at the onset, will not be enough to support you as deadlines shift or life shifts."

IT'S GOOD TO TALK

Speaking of deadlines, David is keen to point out that good communication can come to the rescue if your

"Thinking of 'book work' as just a part of your job as an illustrator is healthy," says Eli. "Try to stay open to all types of opportunities."

Chris says an online presence is a good way to land commissions. "Instagram, Twitter, and your own website are a natural start."

schedule is squeezed. "Most publishers do allow for a little 'slippage' as they call it, as long as you keep the channels of communication open, which is important. Submitting sub-standard work is the worst feeling and, obviously, you wouldn't be doing yourself any favours."

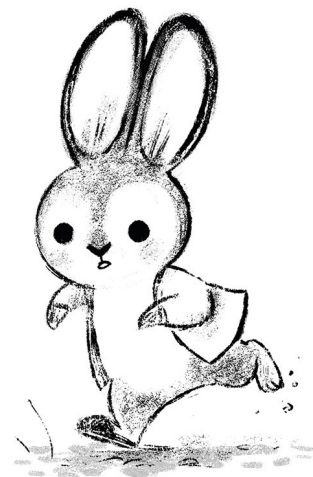
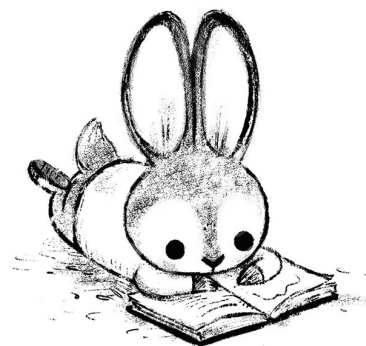
And with designers, typographers and marketers to name a few all having a say on the final product, an approachable and flexible work ethic is a must. "Any working relationship, in my experience, is built on trust, honesty and hard work," adds David. "Both sides want the same thing, and if you're willing to put in that commitment you have every chance of success."



“Most publishers do allow for a little ‘slippage’, as long as you keep the channels of communication open”



"If you consistently make good work, the jobs will follow, whether it be in publishing, or some other area you'd never even considered before," reassures Rovina.



"Build up a portfolio with the pieces of work that reflects the type of book you want to illustrate," suggests Chris.

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ImagineFX



Luis Carrasco can turn his hand to both creature and character concepts, such as this deadly assassin.



Once Luis had finalised his design of 'Thingy', he rendered the creature in Octane Renderer.

A day in the life of... Luis Carrasco

Problem solver We discover what the average day looks like for Terraform Studios' character art director

"I don't start my day at the same time every day. Sometimes I'll work out with my trainer in the backyard and start later, some days I'll start at 8 or 9am. What matters is that I execute the assignment and get it turned in that day. I adjust my schedule around the work that needs to be done."

My workday starts with touching base with Finn [Finnian MacManus, founder of Terraform Studios], and then responding to whatever client

notes and feedback have come in. There's a lot of variation in the projects. Sometimes there'll be a detailed brief, and sometimes it'll just be "blind creature. Both are fun and both are challenging.

I start with Pinterest and make a board for every project. I try to grab things that are more abstract or have interesting shapes, and I'll attempt to figure out how to make that work in terms of functionality. I'll draw sketches on paper using a mechanical



Personal work from Luis: a variation of a character he worked on during quarantine.

“I'll sculpt the sketch into simple 3D maquettes, render them out, take them into Photoshop and draw over them”



Luis doing a live demo session at Creative Talent Network (CTN) Live, held in 2017.

pencil, and just blueprint ideas that I'm thinking of.

I used to struggle with perspective and ZBrush really helped me solve that. I'll sculpt the sketch into simple 3D maquettes, quickly render them out, take them into Photoshop and draw over them. I'll do a page of those over the next couple of days, and write design notes and what it's based on. At 5pm I'll check in with Finn and get his notes and address them before we send it off to the client that night.



Concept Art Association is an organisation committed to elevating and raising the profile of concept artists, their art and their involvement in the entertainment industries. Its annual Concept Art Awards Show showcases and recognises behind-the-scenes individuals working in entertainment concept art. www.conceptartassociation.com.

After work I focus on hobbies that aren't art. I'll play a game, call friends or watch documentaries. The biggest thing for me is learning something new or I'll get burnt out. I avoid being too obsessive about my art.

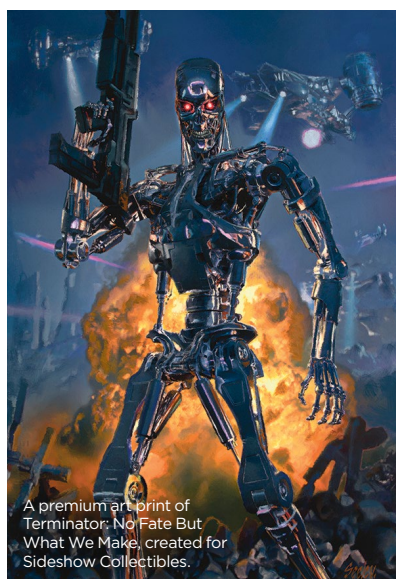
My biggest advice to aspiring artists is to be mindful of your insecurities as you pursue a particular goal, and reach out to others to see how they solved that particular problem."

Luis is a first-generation Mexican artist who's passionate about teaching and mentorship. Before Terraform, he worked at ILM, Cloud Imperium and Blur Studios. He's previously worked on The Revenant, A Quiet Place and Star Wars: The Force Awakens. You can see more of Luis's art at www.artstation.com/luisdraws.



Dave Seeley

Order from chaos Life gives the Boston artist lemons, so he makes art studio lemonade...



A premium art print of Terminator: No Fate But What We Make, created for Sideshow Collectibles.



For 25 years I've kept the remote aspects of my studio space, including woodshop, storage and printing, in my mom's basement. It was an ideal situation, where I could fulfil ancillary needs every fortnight, visit her and tend to her household jobs.

In March 2020, just as the US went into Covid-19 lockdown, I lost her to dementia. In the scramble to clear her property for sale, I had to find another space for remote studio needs, or liquidate the stuff and the equipment. In my search for a new space, it became clear that it was going to take much longer than I had to find the ➤➤



Workshop wall enclosure doubles as a model shoot backdrop.

Snacks and utensils in a pair of lawyers glass-fronted bookcases.

Twilight over the long view to a car dealership repair facility.

Inherited vintage family photos waiting years to become digitised... another project on the to-do list.

Sand-cast aluminium running figure in search of a stabilising base.

Flat file along for the ride on a 4x8-foot rolling work table.

Heavy-duty caster wheels allow the shifting of the chaos, to accommodate the workflow.

I've been collecting way too many frames for 'potential' art... and now I never paint small enough to use 'em!

Triangular display panels surrounding a column bristling with electrical panels and wiring.

This is a new nudes series in search of a traditional gallery.

WATCH DAVE ASSEMBLE HIS STUDIO!

Turn to page 8 to access 'before' and 'after' videos of Dave's workspace.

Inherited crash furniture waiting for the end of social distancing.

“I’m felt most at home when barraged by hundreds (or thousands) of images, all competing for my attention in a steady din”

ImagineNation Artist in Residence

“I’m a true image junkie.
I’m most at home floating
in a sea of possibilities”



The computer workstation
with travelling laptop.

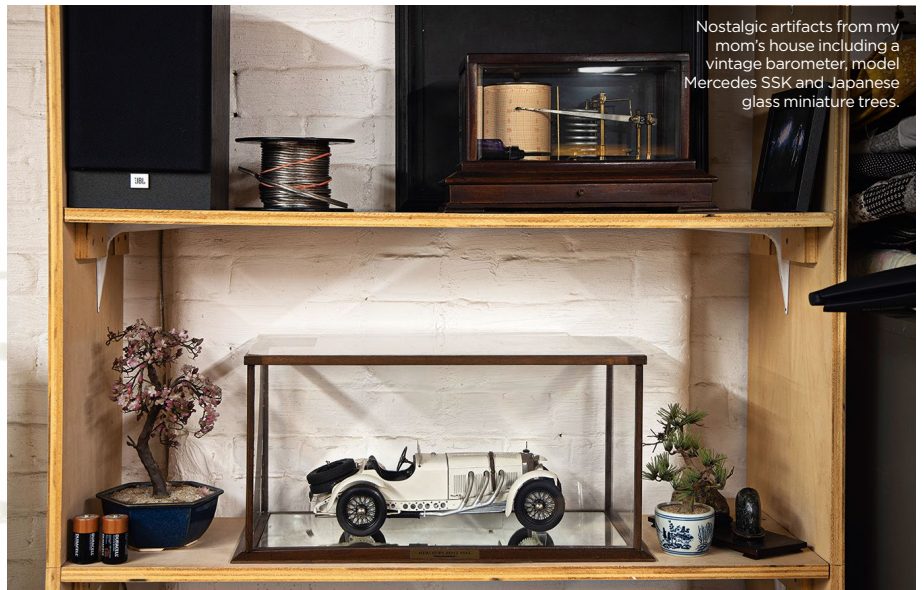


Three hinged display panels enclose a
4x8-foot industrial storage rack.

Artist news, software & events



View from the computer command central with the studio door behind the lamp, enclosed shop in the centre and printer workstation on the right.



Nostalgic artifacts from my mom's house including a vintage barometer, model Mercedes SSK and Japanese glass miniature trees.



The wall shelving was here when I arrived, but modified to hold snacks and stuff, including the centre brass cone "thang" from an MIT old tech flea market.



Cobra Slave - for a Timothy Zahn novel published by Baen Books - made with models by John Doyglass.

© Baen Books

Gluing up a frame in the workshop with a view through to the printer workstation.



“What you see here is a fantasy studio in more ways than one”

➡ right long-term solution. Fellow artist Rick Berry and I looked at a few options around his studio in nearby suburb Arlington. Rick's industrial studio building was slated for redevelopment, but anything we looked at paled in comparison to his studio, and my time was running out.

SHORT-TERM SOLUTION

I decided to move into Rick's building. There were several vacancies, but because I needed 220-volt electrical service for a table saw, the best available space was twice the area I needed. Yet because of the time restriction and suburban location it was affordable! What you see here is a fantasy studio in more ways than one.

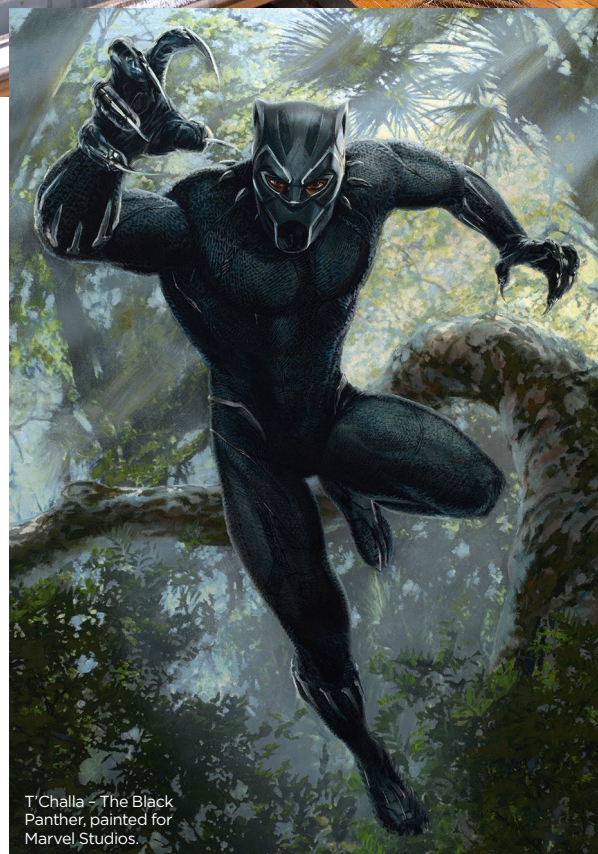
The immediate challenge was how to enclose the dusty woodshop to protect the printer/printshop and digital work areas, so I built over and around some heavy-duty steel tables and a shelf unit, allowing walls with

minimal studs and only a single half-inch sheet of “tackable” homasote panels. I used salvaged windows to share natural light between rooms, and built an eight-foot door to bring large things in and out.

All the extra space meant I could move my Boston loft painting and photography chores to the studio as well, so the layout is designed to accommodate that, but it's allowed me to unstack and display paintings in a “by appointment” gallery space, too. The extra space also enabled me to keep inherited furniture and objects.

I'm loving this space, and it's been fun and novel to work near other artists. Even though it has an expiration date, it's been a great learning experience for how I'll want to set up my next remote studio.

Dave is constantly building pictures for clients and collectors, and increasingly for himself. See his book [The Art of Dave Seeley](#), and his website at [www.daveseeley.com](#).



T'Challa - The Black Panther, painted for Marvel Studios.

© Marvel Studios

Artist news, software & events



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Letters

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Better late than never

Hey there! I'm from the Czech Republic and today I found ImagineFX for the first time in my life. I'm very happy something like this exists! I'd love to order copies of the magazine, but I haven't found any ImagineFX.com website. Where is the best place to order printed versions to be delivered to the Czech Republic please?

Also, I'm a beginner in digital art and have already missed many issues of ImagineFX. Do you think I'll be able to catch up if I start buying the magazine today, or do I need to order earlier editions? Thank you!

Petr Machane, Czech Republic

Claire replies Thanks for your email and I'm glad that you've found our magazine. Here's a link to our online store to purchase editions. We have the last six editions available to buy and release another one every month: www.magazinesdirect.com. There's never a bad time to start creating! I'm sure you'll find helpful insight into painting in our latest editions. Hope this helps.

Digital the same as print?

I'd like to get a subscription to ImagineFX. Does the digital version of the magazine include video tutorials? Do current issues of ImagineFX even still



DID YOU MISS THE PREVIOUS PACKED ISSUE?

Don't worry – you can get hold of issue 197 at <http://ifxm.ag/single-iffx>.



Both the print and digital versions of ImagineFX have videos to accompany workshops from our pro artists.

have video tutorials? Finally, how can I purchase past issues?

Cindy, US

Claire replies Cindy, nice to hear from you. We do still provide video with our editions of ImagineFX – both in print and for the digital editions. You can subscribe to our print or digital editions via our online store at www.magazinesdirect.com. The previous six print editions are available here: www.magazinesdirect.com/az-single-issues/6937004/imaginefx-magazine-single-issue.html. If you want to order back editions of ImagineFX in digital but don't want to subscribe, you can still do this but by going directly to our third-party suppliers, be it Apple Newsstand, Pocketmags or Zinio. I'll leave this up to you. There are more links and details about this on page 36. I hope this helps.

Daydream believer

I know I'm a bit of a daydreamer, but I've been trying to keep busy during Covid with the thoughts of what amazing digital art events that I'll be able to go to this summer (fingers crossed!) What are ImagineFX's top five art events around the world? (I'm in the US, but like I say, I'm a dreamer!)

Emma, Ohio, US.

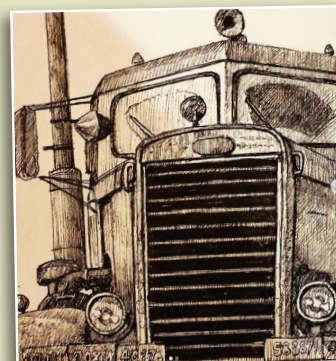
Claire replies Emma, thank you for your email. I know what you mean. I've spent a lot of time recently thinking, "In a perfect scenario, what will I be doing this summer," and visiting some of the amazing art festivals that I've previously gone to is definitely on the top of my list. But alas, there's just no getting away from the fact that the majority (if not all) of art events will either be uncertain of running this year, changing their format to digital only, or simply cancelling. However, I've got good news! We have our own annual art event called Vertex (www.vertexconf.com), and this year we'll be bringing it to the world virtually. It runs on 25 February, is packed with amazing speakers and industry experts, and still has tickets for sale. Check it out!



Tickets are still available for Vertex, which takes place on 25 February, and will enable you to watch sessions from the event for 30 days afterwards.



New works that have grabbed our attention



 **Sébastien Michel**
[@artseb26](https://www.instagram.com/artseb26)



 **Luis Peres**
[@icreateworlds_illustration](https://www.instagram.com/icreateworlds_illustration)



 **Sofia Ellis**
[@summers.artwork](https://www.instagram.com/summers.artwork)

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

Interview

LEGENDARY ART

"This is an illustration for Ghost of Tsushima Legends mode. Catch it as an in-game loading screen!"



ImagineFX

NAOMI



ARTIST PORTFOLIO

NAOMI BAKER

The concept artist and character designer chats with **Ruth Hamilton** about making the leap to Marvel and the magic of traditional media

Concept artist and character designer Naomi Baker has worked with some of the biggest and best-known studios in the world. When ImagineFX catches up with her, she's just finished a stint at Netflix and is settling in at Marvel, but her most recognisable work is in the video games industry.

To rack up such an impressive CV seems like it should have taken strategic career planning, but Naomi's aims were always straightforward. "There's always talk about having a specific goal, and I'm here to be the one whose goal is so simple," she says. "It's just to draw and paint every day."

The focus on games, however, was no accident. Naomi grew up on fighting games like Soul Calibur and Tekken, dancing games like Dance

Dance Revolution and Para Para, and RPGs such as Final Fantasy, and is still an enthusiastic gamer when it comes to specific IPs.

"I'll play any and all Dark Souls or Bloodborne-related works," she enthuses. "I still play Final Fantasy and am very into Nioh and Nioh2. I think Nioh2 helps satisfy that fighting game playing background."

A DREAM GENRE

Naomi's career began with a junior position at a small studio within Activision, where she was able to try her hand at all kinds of concept art – "character, environment, prop, some Zbrush, storyboard, you name it" – but the work that landed her that role was all traditional. "Before that I went to school at Virginia Commonwealth University, where under the ➤➤

© Sucker Punch Productions



© Sucker Punch Productions

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➡➡ umbrella of illustration I clung on to life drawing the most," she recalls. "I posted those drawings online and got a shot at the role at Activision based on those."

Naomi's longest full-time stint was as a senior concept artist at Sucker Punch Productions, where she spent a couple of years working on Ghost of Tsushima – her favourite project so far, and the one that gives her most pride when she looks back at her career.

"I felt super-ready to work on the amazing theme and do something like that justice, with the skills I had accumulated along the way," she says. Part of what made the experience

LORD SHIMURA

"Concept art of Lord Shimura from Ghost of Tsushima. There were about 10 versions of him before the final was settled on."

“The concept art portion can and often does start before writing...”

GUILD WARS

"I remember working on this charr within my first month of joining Arenanet! We did many sketches like this for each of the characters."



stand out was the closeness of the team she was working with, and the technical skills she picked up from her fellow concept artists and art director. But the project appealed on a personal level, too.

"The game itself is such a dream genre. I worked on the history-based single player and the co-op mode Legends, which is really out there with the demons and folklore," she says. "It genuinely felt like a best of all worlds project, creatively."

MASTERING CONCEPT ART

Naomi's role is most important at the start of the process, although a concept artist can be required throughout a game's full development lifeline. The traditional view of a concept artist, she explains, is someone tasked with designing a character, environment or prop in microscopic detail; resolving every last element before handing it over to another specialist – usually the 3D modeller – to take it to the next stage.

Naomi's experiences as a concept artist have been more varied than that,

Artist PROFILE

Naomi Baker

LOCATION: US

FAVOURITE ARTISTS: Nicolai Fechin, Slawomir Maniak, Kinu Nishimura, George Pratt and Adrian Smith

MEDIA: Photoshop

WEB: www.instagram.com/naomiful

though. She might find herself creating beautiful, informative paintings to pitch a certain mood or theme for a game. Or she might offer design ideas by painting an action, either as a full illustration or a storyboard-style sketch.

"The concept art portion can and often does start before writing," Naomi continues. "Sometimes you're coming up with some great ideas alongside the designers. You'll see concept art in the beginning – creating blueprints for assets. It's also needed in the later stages of production, as we can help visualise gameplay areas and layouts to help environment artists."

Artistically, Naomi's inspirations in the gaming world range from the ➡➡



IN THE BLOOD
 "Character illustration from a favourite game, Lady Maria of Bloodborne."

WHAT MAKES A GREAT CONCEPT ARTIST?

From mind-set to skill-set, Naomi's advice will help budding concept artists stand out from the crowd

1 LOVE THE SUBJECT MATTER

For her work on Ghost of Tsushima, Naomi spent days researching every aspect of the project, from masks, to swords, to lore and beyond. "One of the best characteristics for a concept artist is the genuine interest to explore the subject matter of your concept art and understand it in order to translate it to both an awesome and informed work."

2 TAKE CARE WITH COMMUNICATION

Creating a great game is a collaboration between a number of different departments: concept, 3D modellers, tech artists, designers, audio and so on. As a result, great communication skills

are a must. "Listen, be positive and be constructive with your criticism when working with others (even yourself!)," says Naomi. "And be open to new ideas and ways of doing things."

3 KNOW HOW TO DRAW

Naomi got her break in concept art thanks to a portfolio filled mainly with life drawings. "You don't need to be the absolute best draftsman out there, but you need to be able to look at reference and draw shapes together to create designs in a pleasing way. At least a very basic understanding of perspective is necessary too (yes even for characters). Knowing your way around Photoshop is a must."



STEELY GAZE

"This is early concept art for Lord Shimura. I tried to capture the stoic and firm demeanour of a lord."



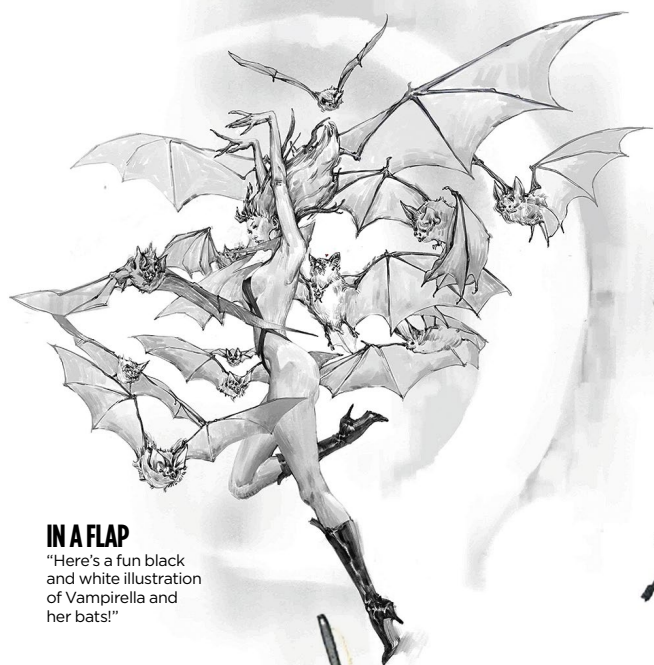
ORIGINAL ART

"These are a couple of personal characters that I hope to develop in the future."

Interview

IN A FLAP

"Here's a fun black and white illustration of Vampirella and her bats!"



FELINE FUN

"A variation on Catwoman, which I created using pen and marker."



ALL WRAPPED UP

"A fun sketch of Poison Ivy. I'm firmly in my comfort zone here."



EARN YOUR STRIPES

"A piece of personal art, in which I blended mermaids with the distinctive lion fish."



© Wizards of the Coast

“One of the biggest challenges when working on a game is trying to stick to the big picture”



STANDING GUARD

"This is my Headwater Sentries card art for Magic: The Gathering, which appeared in 2017's Ixalan expansion."

Interview

© Sucker Punch Productions



BEHIND THE MASK

"Concept art for a player mask in Ghost of Tsushima Legends. It's based on a kappa, from Japanese folklore."

➡ later Tekkens ("The characters are all teetering on the realistic or plussed-up versions of characters. All the personalities are super-fun, too."), to Demon's Soul and Bloodborne ("They do the monochromatic yet very unique feel so well") and Resident Evil ("These were a win for me when it comes to the scary or realistic moods.").

WATCH THE BIG PICTURE

The trick to successful concept art, Naomi believes, lies in the artist's ability to keep one eye on the whole while focusing in on the details. "One of the biggest challenges when working on a game is trying to stick to

the big picture as you're working on individual pieces," she says. "Ideally, everything works as a whole without being a dull, samey-looking grey when everything is said and done (and shipped!)."

Another challenge is capturing what you need to capture while working within the parameters of the studio's technology. "You can paint the most intricate bad-ass boss ever – but if it's too costly tech-wise then it'll need to be reeled in while still maintaining its awesome factor," she says.

While her day job is entirely digital, browse Naomi's Instagram feed and it's clear she hasn't forgotten the power

“There's this feeling that the tactile feel of real paper and pencil gives that I believe is impossible to replicate”

ARMED AND DANGEROUS

"One of the many pieces of concept art I created for the Iyo boss character in Ghost of Tsushima Legends."



© Sucker Punch Productions

of a pencil. "Traditional work has a special place in my heart," she says. "There's this feeling that the tactile feel of real paper and pencil gives that I believe is impossible to replicate, no matter how far technology tries to go. When you spend time with traditional it really gives you a special energy. I recommend everyone to try it!"

The traditional studies help Naomi's personal development in her concept art and character design work too.

COLLABORATIVE EFFORT

"Another concept for the Iyo boss in Ghost of Tsushima Legends. I worked with many departments on this one: design, sound, animation, character and more."



© Sucker Punch Productions

SOLID GOLD

"Here's a piece of my concept art for Guild Wars 2. There was a need for many costume designs, and this was one of them."



SCI-FI EXPLORATION

"In this personal piece I was exploring influences that weren't based in Japan. A fun exercise!"

"I believe that the traditional work helps to make my work feel even the slightest bit less digital... it gives my digital work some of that same energy," she says.

A NEW WORLD

Recently, Naomi's career has taken her away from games completely – although not, she stresses, because she's tired of that world ("After being out of games going on nine months, I'll admit I miss it a ton"), but because she's been offered cool creative opportunities she couldn't turn down. Her first move was to Netflix, where she spent five months on a crash-course in animation.

Naomi worked on the main character designs for the upcoming series *Blue Eye Samurai*, guided by the likes of Jason Scheier – an industry friend, and the one who brought Naomi on to the project – and Jane Wu – the supervising director and producer. It was an experience made all the more intense for having been conducted entirely remotely, from her home in Bellevue, Washington, courtesy of Covid-19.

Ultimately, it served to emphasise what a distinct and challenging skillset animation is, and led Naomi to finding a new role that was a better fit, with a renewed respect for ➤➤

© ArenaNet

CHARACTER DESIGN: CREATING RYUZO

Gain insights into Naomi's concept art process for developing a key figure from Ghost of Tsushima

In Ghost of Tsushima, Naomi was involved in the design of Ryuzo, the protagonist Jin's best friend and member of the Straw Hats. "Ryuzo is driven, snarky and has a dark sense of humour," says Naomi. "Many of his actions and where his story goes are dictated by the fact that while he grew up alongside Jin, he was of a lower class and one way to seem powerful is to become leader of the mercenary Straw Hat ronin." Here she walks through her character design process

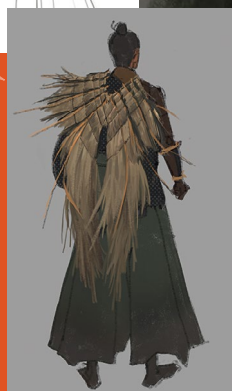
1 ARMOUR AMBITIONS

"Because Ryuzo grew up with Jin, he's very familiar with the honourable Samurai and their armour. I felt it was important to include a strong tie to the Samurai armour he may have coveted by including a traditional armour chainmail sleeve (kote) on his right arm. It's a clear call to what may have been his aspirations, while a toned-down colour helps it blend with the rest of the look."



2 CLOAK STATEMENT

The straw cape was a must in order to define Ryuzo as a Ronin, and set him apart from his Samurai best friend. "It's off-kilter and a bit messy - sort of like Ryuzo," says Naomi. "There's no functional reason for the orange bits or why it's split in two. Sometimes something just needs to look cool!"





© Sucker Punch Productions

3 BACK TO NATURE

"Ryuzo carved his own sword sheath. On it is a running fox, which represents his free spirit and cunning. Other elements like the straw and a wood-themed hand guard (tsuba) tie to his humble beginnings among nature."



4 STRONG SILHOUETTE

"Much like the straw cape and hakama pants, this hat is a must for the iconic Ronin silhouette," says Naomi. "The design needed to be large enough to conceal his face, while still showing enough to make sense in cut scenes when Ryuzo is speaking with Jin."



BLADE WARRIOR

"Personal concept art that I painted after working on Ghost of Tsushima."

“If you know any animators or animation designers personally then buy them a coffee or something...”

➤ animators: "If you know any animators or animation designers personally then buy them a coffee or something, because that's not an easy job to do well!" she says.

COMIC HERITAGE

That new role just happens to be at another entertainment juggernaut: Marvel Studios. At time of writing, Naomi is in the midst of getting stuck into a new role working on character concepts. She's involved in the film side of things, but it's Marvel's comic heritage that initially caught her attention. "I was drawn to the idea that working on Marvel projects would be even a tiny bit close to working on comics. I know it's not literally – but that childhood love I hope can be translated in some of the works."

So far – although she emphasizes that her experiences outside of games is limited, and of course, heavily coloured by having taken place

entirely in the topsy-turvy world of social distancing and Zoom meetings – she's found working in animation and films relies less of a collaborative effort between departments compared to video games. Her creative focus has also shifted: while in games she was tasked with creating the blueprint of a character, which could then be made into the working thing; in films, actor likeness is king, she says, and it's all about capturing the mood of the character.

And while it's different to games in some ways, there's still that essence that's been the through-line in all of her jobs: the chance to spend her time drawing and painting cool things.

"The passion to do that was from looking at Marvel and Image comics early on, and that excitement has propelled me to do whatever it takes to be able to draw and paint every day. If it must be in concept art and I'm having fun, then that's what it is!"

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PRINT AND DIGITAL BACK ISSUES



Issue 197 March 2021

Learn new art skills and be inspired, with advice on lighting, storytelling, getting more from your doodles and more! We talk to acclaimed artist BlueBirdy, while pros tell us how they reach their creative and career goals.



Issue 196 February 2021

Boost your concept art skills with Lane Brown's cover workshop. There's also pro insights on matte painting and Blender's Grease Pencil. Plus we reveal the best concept art schools and talk to film art veteran Peter Popken.



Issue 195 January 2021

Our video game art issue features an exclusive Cyberpunk 2077 workshop from CD PROJEKT RED, an interview with Riot Games' Jennifer Wuestling, advice on storytelling, creating game concept art and lots more!



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.

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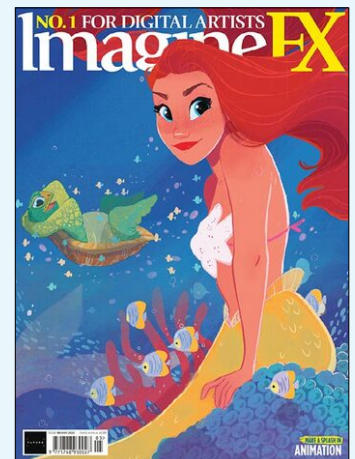
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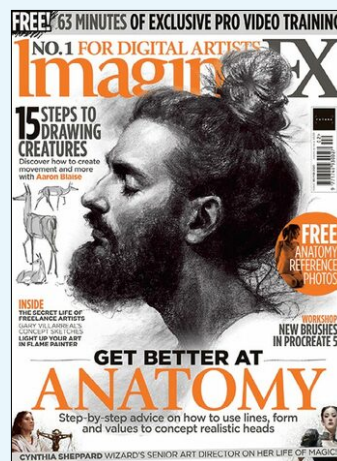
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Mia Araujo

Striking character artwork fills the pages of the US illustrator's sketchbook, including a reimagining of Alice in Wonderland

Artist PROFILE

Mia Araujo

LOCATION: US



Mia is an award-winning Argentine-American artist, born and raised in Los Angeles. She works traditionally, and is currently writing and illustrating her passion project - an illustrated novel inspired by Alice in Wonderland. Since 2007 Mia's artwork has been shown in prominent galleries and conventions across the US and around the world.
www.art-by-mia.com

TRAVEL SKETCHES

"One of my favourite things to do when I visit other cities or countries is to sketch on trains and aeroplanes, or in restaurants and bars. I love capturing the beauty of people in a short amount of time.

Looking through a travel sketchbook afterwards enhances my memories of each trip."

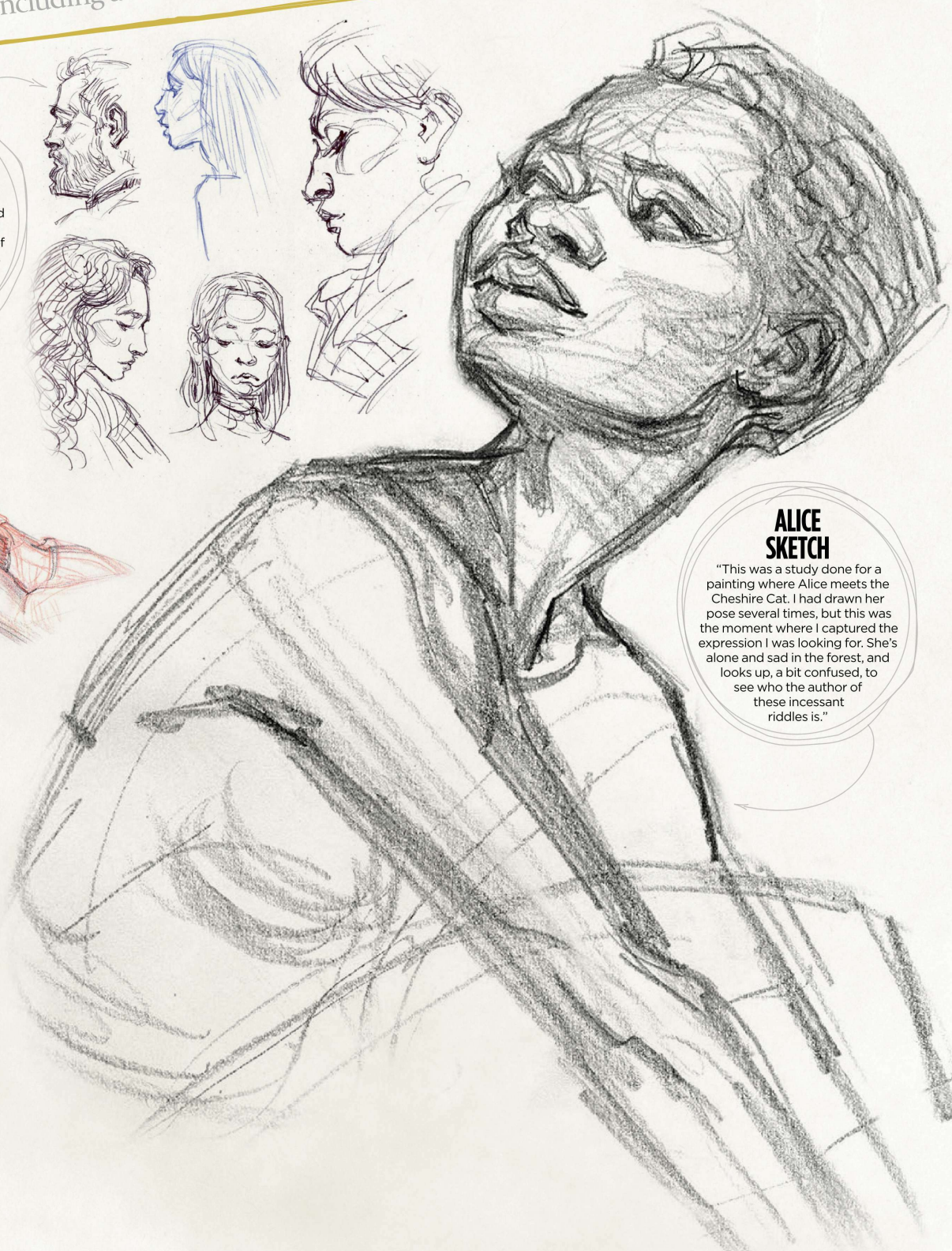


CHILD SKETCHES

"I don't often take commissions, but this was for a good friend. I've drawn both of her daughters when they were this age. Children's faces are so much fun to draw, because the proportions are so different from that of adults!"

ALICE SKETCH

"This was a study done for a painting where Alice meets the Cheshire Cat. I had drawn her pose several times, but this was the moment where I captured the expression I was looking for. She's alone and sad in the forest, and looks up, a bit confused, to see who the author of these incessant riddles is."





“The Queen of
Hearts’s courtiers have
kept their heads, but
they’re dead inside”

**LADY OF
THE QUEEN’S COURT**

“The Queen of Hearts’s courtiers have kept their heads, but they’re dead inside. The beauty and whimsy of the Queen’s court is superficial, barely hiding the horrors of her tyrannical kingdom.”

Sketchbook

CORAL

"This was another portrait of a gorgeous follower of mine, trying to convey 'mermaid' in just a portrait. I usually reserve red pencil for underdrawings, but I liked the soft ethereal feel that this had without using any graphite."



MARCH HARE & DORMOUSE

"When I chose to interpret this story, I wanted to do it in a way that hasn't been done before. Setting it in West Africa was a way to play tribute to beautiful people who don't receive enough representation in either fantasy or whimsical stories."



FIGURE DRAWING: FRONT

"Before the pandemic, I used to attend life-drawing sessions regularly. I've had a lifelong passion of figure drawing since I took my first class at 14, but had my first real breakthrough in 2017."



FIGURE DRAWING: BACK

"It's always tempting to get lost in all the details of the human form, but it's more fun for me to pull back and focus on the overall shape and design of the pose."

“Setting it in West Africa was a way to play tribute to beautiful people who don't receive enough representation...”

#MERMAY FOLLOWER PORTRAIT 1

"I thought it would be fun to turn some of my followers into merfolk for #Mermay, by putting out a call for selfies on Instagram. It was so hard to choose, because each one of the submissions was beautiful!"



Sketchbook

NATURE SPIRIT OF WONDERLAND

"The nature spirits of Wonderland are invisible to Alice, but represent the forces of nature that inhabit every aspect of the forest. This one is a butterfly spirit."



#MERMAY FOLLOWER PORTRAIT 2

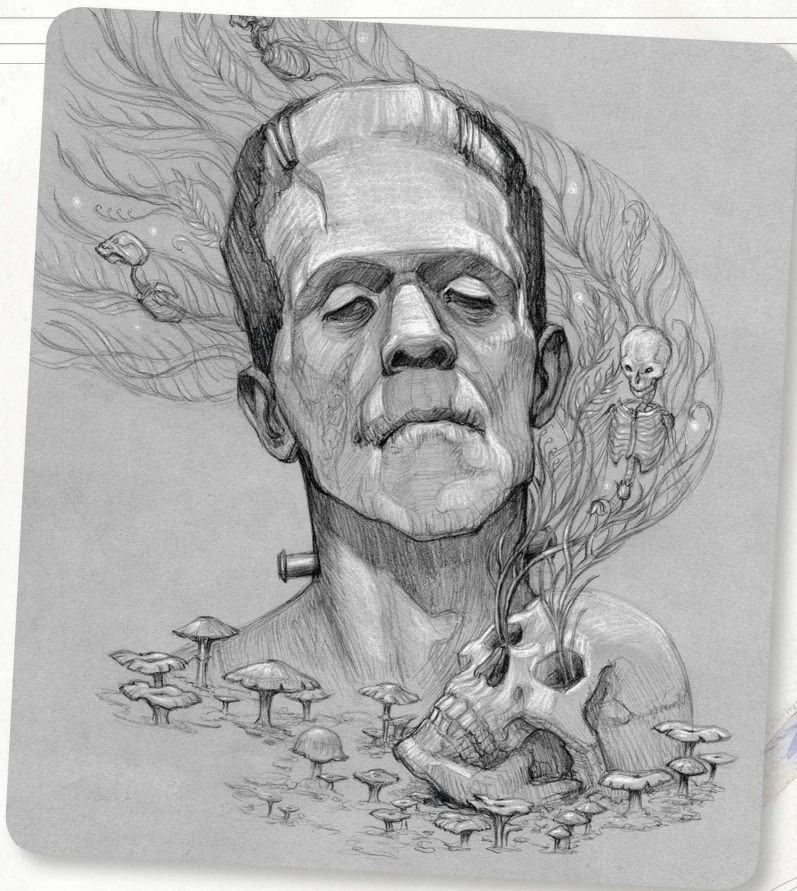
"It was also tough to convey a mermaid with just a portrait (no tail!), but it was a fun challenge, and an honour to capture some of the wonderful people who support my work. When I take portrait commissions, I prefer to transform the subject into a fantastical character like this, rather than recreating a photo or selfie exactly."

MASQUERADE

"This was a little watercolour experiment, and a first exploration for the Queen of Hearts' masquerade ball in my story. It was fun playing with flat vs detail, and using a monochromatic palette."



“It was tough to convey a mermaid with just a portrait (no tail!)”



FRANKENSTEIN'S MONSTER

"Capturing an iconic character in my own style was one of the most fun drawing commissions ever for me. The skeletons are the spirits of the bodies that were used in the monster's creation, as he rises from a mushroom-covered grave."



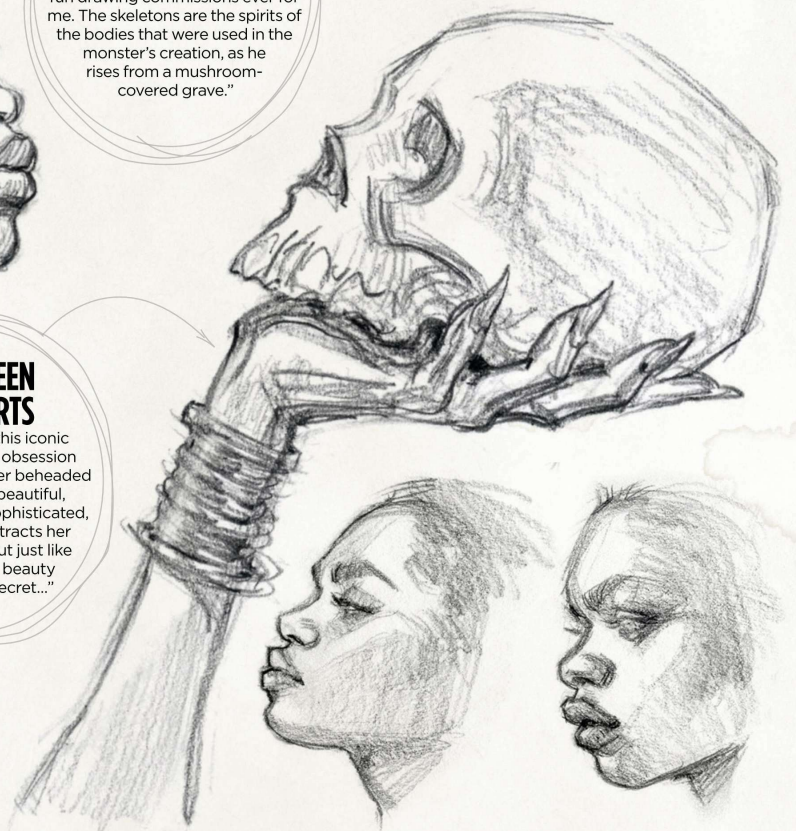
WATERCOLOUR FIGURE

"I reserve watercolors for 20-25 minute poses, which is just enough time to get something down on the page, and just short enough to avoid over-thinking things."



THE QUEEN OF HEARTS

"My version of this iconic character has an obsession with the skulls of her beheaded victims. She is beautiful, charismatic and sophisticated, which is what attracts her victims to her. But just like her court, her beauty hides a dark secret..."



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are available...**

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Advice from the world's best artists



This issue:

**58 15 tips on
book illustration**

Tony DiTerlizzi creates a fantastic world within a book.

**66 Craft a portrait
for a book cover**

Greg Ruth combines Photoshop and paper cut techniques.

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picking colours**

Angela Sung breaks down her colouring process.

**78 Paint and refine
a demonic figure**

Jim Pavelec on the techniques he uses to depict a demon.

Artist insight

15 TIPS ON BOOK ILLUSTRATION

Bestselling author and illustrator, **Tony DiTerlizzi** shares his knowledge on how he creates a fantastic world within the pages of a book

Artist PROFILE

Tony DiTerlizzi
LOCATION: US

Tony is an award-winning and bestselling author and illustrator, as well as a film and TV producer, who's been creating books for children for over 20 years, including *The Spiderwick Chronicles*.
www.diterlizzi.com



Think back to your favourite book from childhood. Perhaps it was a board book you loved so much that you chewed its corners, or the picture book you asked your parents to read to you over and over again as you cuddled close. Maybe it was that dog-eared chapter book you reread until the spine was tattered and cracked. All of these examples served as your introduction to art.

Art plays a critical role in books published for young readers. Illustrations aid in the reader's comprehension of the text, expand the world of the story or illuminate complicated concepts and ideas. Illustration can capture the attention of a potential reader, which is no small feat when you consider the myriad of other distractions that occupy a child's world: toys, games, television and devices that use appealing imagery to excite little

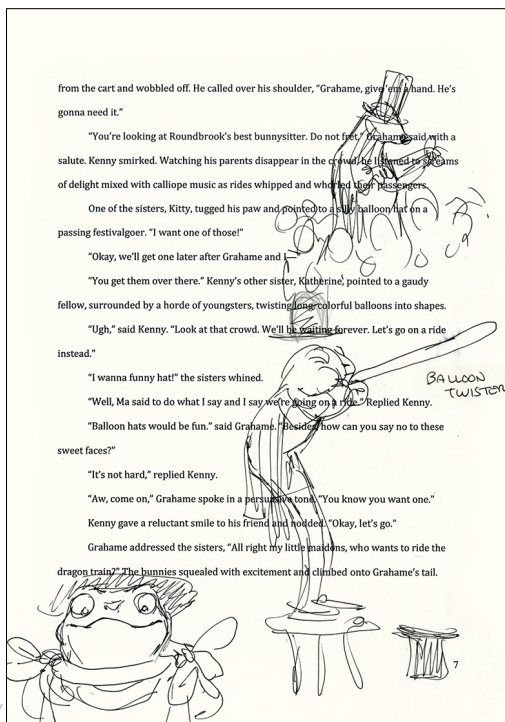
minds. Creating artwork that entices a child to put down a device and pick up a book is the ultimate challenge of this 21st century illustrator.

I'd like to share some tips on my approach to storytelling and bookmaking. Whether I'm illustrating my own story, or another author's manuscript, my goal is always to entertain and delight the reader... and maybe if I am lucky, keep them thinking about the story long after they've closed the book.



1 KNOW YOUR MARKET

Immerse yourself in the world of kid's lit. This is the first step to understanding children's publishing and where your style of art may fit. Board books (for infants and toddlers) usually utilise strong graphic images, rendered in bright colours. Picture books (for young children) run the gamut from simple, stylised art to elaborate, sophisticated paintings. Chapter books and middle-grade novels (for ages seven to 12) are often illustrated with black and white, or greyscale, images. Graphic novels are aimed at most age ranges and rendered in just about every style imaginable. For me, picture books is where I made my start.



2 FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Were you the kid who doodled in the margins of your school homework while your imagination roamed freely? Like many aspiring artists, I was reprimanded for my classroom doodles - now I do that very thing when I first read an author's manuscript (even if it's one I've penned). Those first sparks of inspiration, the flashes of imagery, are exactly what I want to capture before I begin analysing the story on a deeper level. As I read, I also note any descriptive text in the manuscript so that my illustrations will be consistent with the author's narrative.





3 SETTING THE MOOD

What's the overall tone of the story and how does it make me feel? The editor and art director have hired me because they feel my art pairs well with the text. This decision is based on the overall tone they want to convey in the finished book. But how I render, and what medium I choose, play a part in that final presentation. I use colour, tone and shapes to support the mood of the story before I plan the details of each illustration.

INSPIRATIONS



Silent horror movies such as *Nosferatu* (1922) and *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1920) inspired the overall tone of *The Spider and the Fly* (2002).

REFERENCES



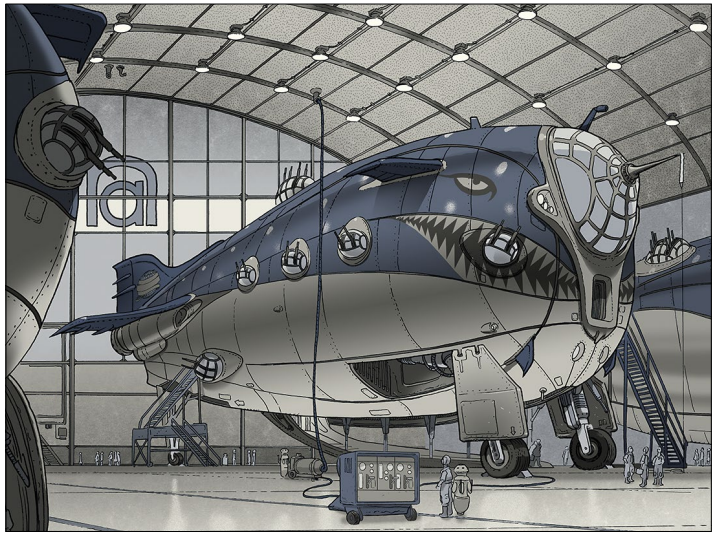
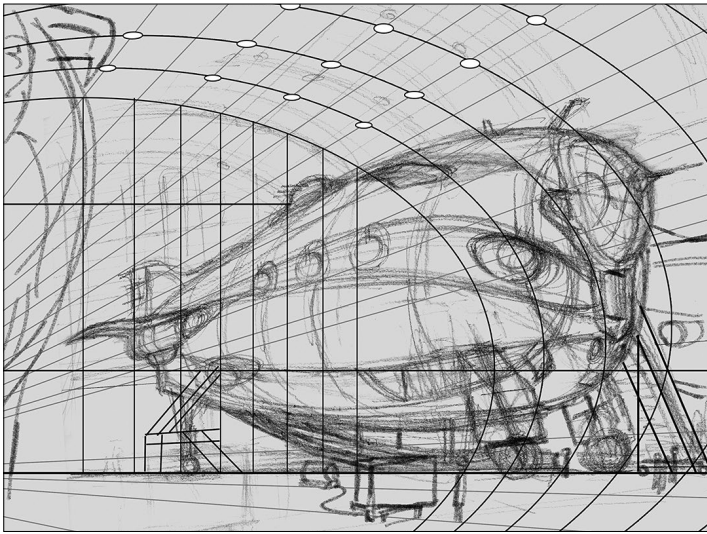
FINAL IMAGE



4 HUNTING AND GATHERING

Even the most seemingly simplistic illustrations require an understanding of the subject. I gather reference for every aspect of the story: characters, costume, artefacts and setting. I do many sketches, to learn how to draw various components of the image, then I often discard the reference and work from memory. This process keeps my art animated and lively. Understanding all the visual elements that go into a single illustration will help create a plausible window to the World Within the Book. ➔

Workshops



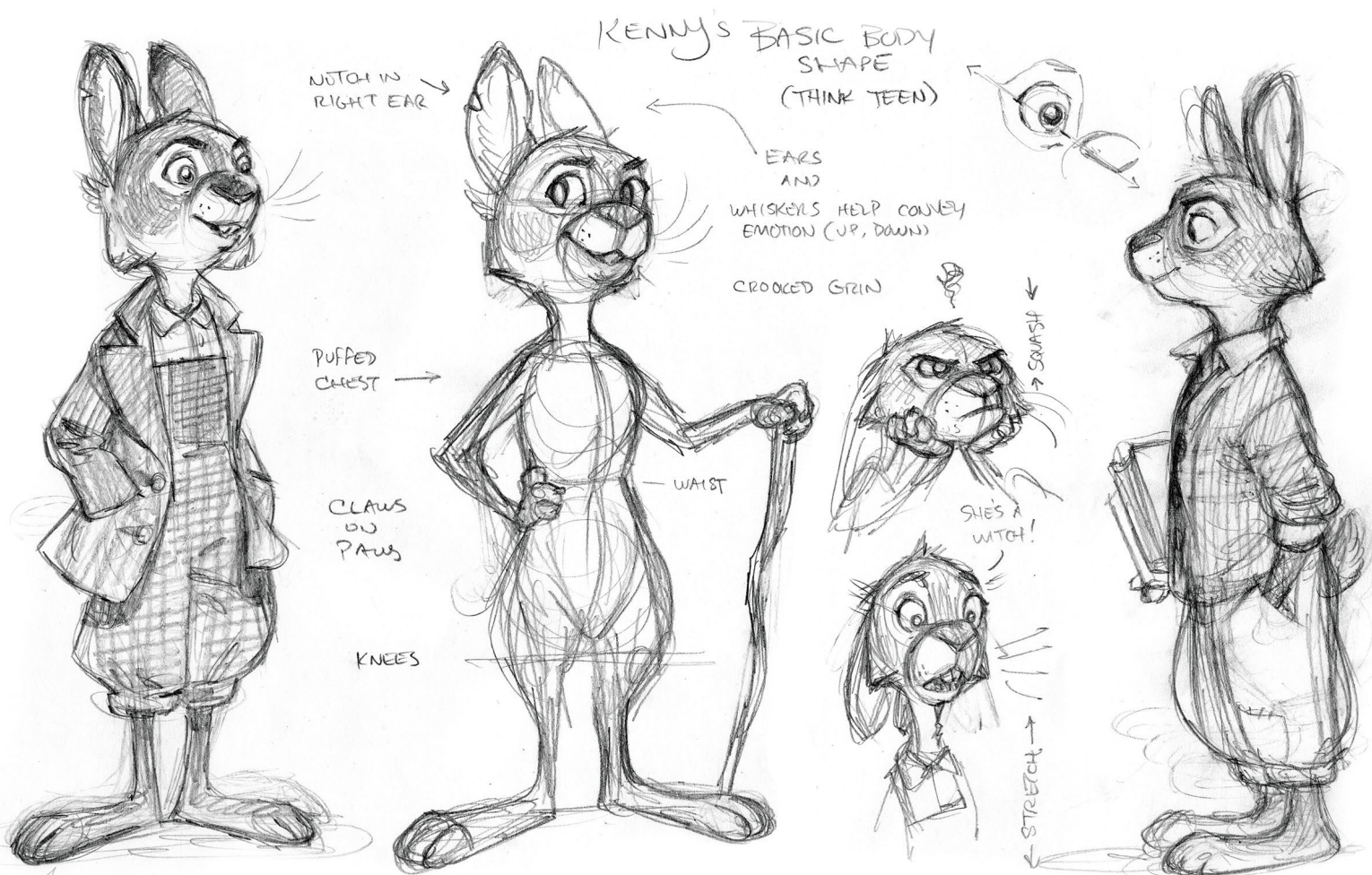
5 DRAW WHAT YOU LOVE AND LEARN WHAT YOU DON'T

There may be aspects of the illustrations that are difficult to render successfully. Take time to brush up on the basics of drawing such as perspective, anatomy and shading. For me, rendering naturalistic subjects come easy, but mechanical and architectural objects are a challenge.

6 ILLUSTRATE BETWEEN THE LINES

Planning precisely what to draw is essential, especially when illustrating a 32-page picture book. What is inferred by the text? What can I add to the story to make it unique and original? This is an opportunity to expand the world beyond what's written in the manuscript. Think of the classic line, "Will you walk into my parlour?" said a spider to a fly." There's a lot of room for an illustrator to interpret the author's words through art.

Mary Howitt's famous poem doesn't mention spooky doll houses or ghost insects, but these additions to *The Spider and The Fly* (2002) expanded the realm of the story.



7 IT ALL STARTS WITH THE PROTAGONIST

Most books follow the main character or group of primary characters through the story. Designing a visually appealing and iconic character is key for enticing readers. I start with simple silhouette shapes that represent the personality of the character. Round forms are generally considered benign, while sharp, pointed shapes are viewed as more

aggressive. The protagonist is likely a combination of many character traits so it's up to me to determine the right design. I focus on aspects of their personality and portray that in shape and form. Once the character's design is established, I create a model sheet that combines sketches of the character drawn at different angles and showing a variety of expressions to aid in consistency. ➡

8 SKETCH BEYOND YOUR LIMITS

I may think I've captured the right image or design in the first few thumbnail sketches, but I don't stop exploring with pencil and paper. More than likely, these initial sketches are regurgitated designs or images that I've seen before, which is why they may feel right to me. Whether it's a character's design, establishing a scene or simply moving the point-of-view of the reader, I push myself to sketch more ideas. My favourite time for doing this is late at night when I'm drowsy. The subconscious takes over, which can conjure interesting, sometimes surreal, results.



9 STEP BACKWARDS TO GO FORWARD

I grew up studying masters of illustration. I like to evoke a classic style in my work – my goal is that the art feels timeless. This hearkening back can be accomplished through medium, composition or even production of the book itself. I'm also fascinated with current technology and methods, so I often combine the analogue and the digital to create something unique and original.



Art by Arthur Rackham, 1920

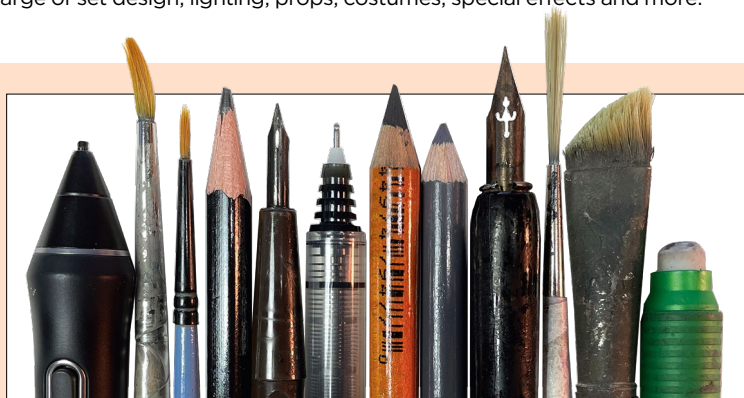


“ Think of the book as a play and you’re the director, in charge of set design, lighting, props and more ”



10 GROW THE WORLD VIA YOUR MAIN CHARACTER

I’ve finalised the design for my main character and begin thinking about the additional characters, props and setting for the story. I use the art style, shape language and colour palette of the protagonist as a starting point. Every aspect of the character’s world should support the story. What does their costume say about them? What items in the background add to the backstory or support the book’s theme? How will these elements change as the plot progresses? Think of the book as a play and you’re the director, in charge of set design, lighting, props, costumes, special effects and more.



11 ACOUSTIC OR ELECTRIC?

When it comes to creating the final art, what medium I chose – pencil, inks, paint, collage or digital – further defines the look and feel of the story. Each rendering style creates a different portal to view the World Within the Book. I often relate it to playing a guitar for a song. What sound best serves the lyric: acoustic or electric? I usually explore the same image in different mediums to determine which works best. ➡





12 SEE THE BIG PICTURE

The rhythm of the illustrations is also important. More often than not, a cluster of climactic events can happen within a couple of pages, so I have to be selective in what moment I choose to illustrate. Quiet scenes are just as important as exciting scenes and, when combined in a single book, create a visually dynamic story. Illustrating a picture book has its own challenges, where the page spread and page turns are key in comprehension, so creating a book dummy is essential. This stage of planning is done by creating a series of layout sketches. I post all of the sketches on a bulletin board so that I'm able to look at the entire book at once. Then sketches are moved around, revised and swapped out.

“I often sketch mood poses of the main character from various scenes in the story”



13 DON'T JUST STAND THERE, ACT!

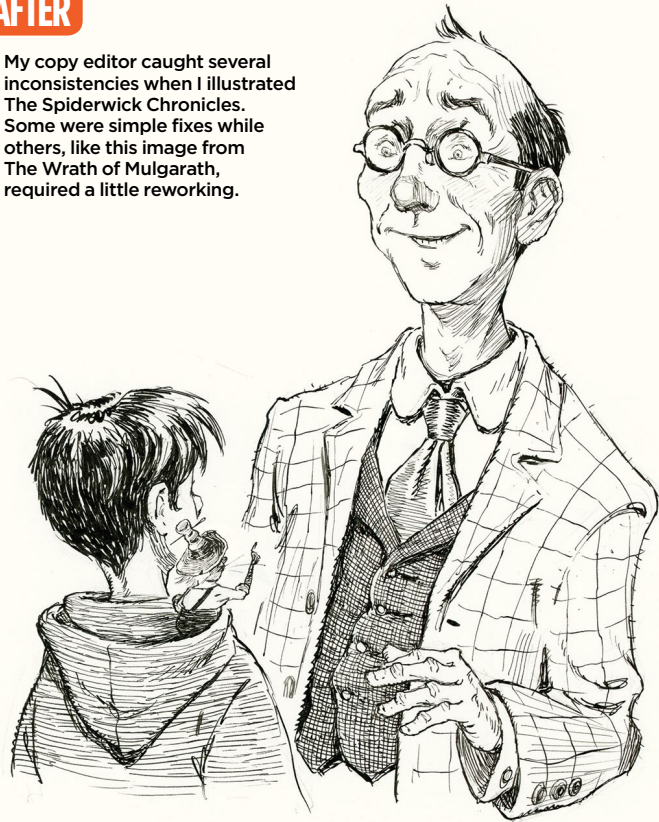
Characters in children's book must convey their actions and emotions to the reader through facial expression and body language. Unlike an animator, who uses thousands of drawings to create the illusion of movement and acting, the illustrator has a handful of single images – snapshots, scattered throughout the plot – to express the character. This is one of the toughest aspects of illustration to master, but also one of the most rewarding. I often sketch a series of mood poses of the main character from various scenes in the story. I also utilise a mirror and snapshots of models to capture the pose I want. Books on animation and cartooning are a helpful reference for me, as is studying masters of the field.

BEFORE



AFTER

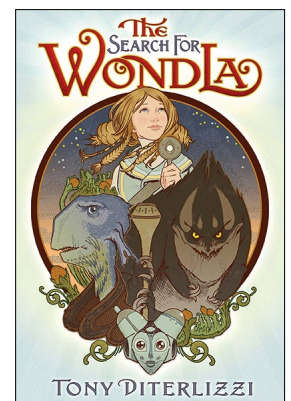
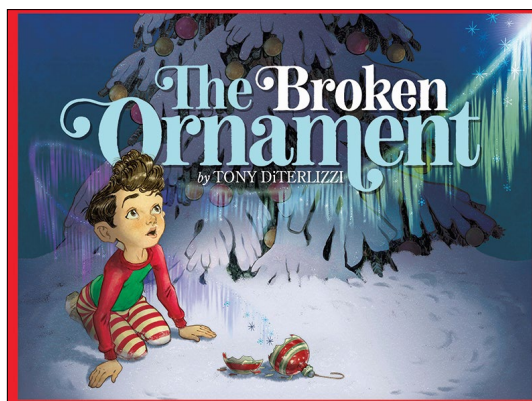
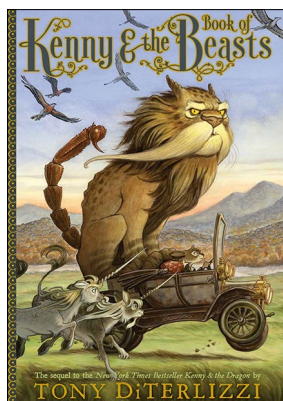
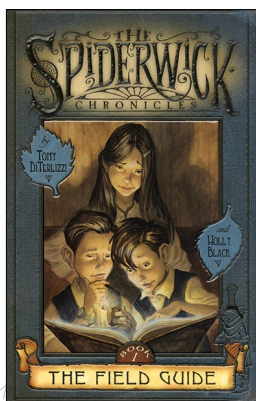
My copy editor caught several inconsistencies when I illustrated *The Spiderwick Chronicles*. Some were simple fixes while others, like this image from *The Wrath of Mulgarath*, required a little reworking.



14 BE OPEN TO FEEDBACK

It may be the author and illustrator's name on the cover, but in reality there's an entire team working to create and sell a book. Illustration is commercial art. That means I must be open to feedback from a variety of channels. Friends and fellow artists offer thoughts and critiques. Once sketches are submitted to the publisher, the editor, art director and designer will have notes

on the images and their placement on the page. The copy editor will often catch inconsistencies with my art and the author's text. The marketing and sales department are also part of the team. They help determine the most successful cover image and how best to represent and sell the book. Although feedback can be tough to hear, I understand it comes from a place of wanting what's best for the book.



15 NEVER ABANDON IMAGINATION

The most important tip I can relay to you is to cultivate your imagination. Even though I'm someone who makes a career in fantasy I can, at times, be overwhelmed by reality. I sometimes question whether my daily venture into a realm of dragons, fairies and spaceships is an occupational perk or coping mechanism. I think it's a

bit of both, but I've always felt that the best imaginative stories comment on real-world experiences. As artists, I believe we should cultivate and share our gift to brighten the lives of others. I've chosen children's books to foster the importance of creativity for the next generation of thinkers, builders and doers. My hope is that they'll embrace their imagination, nurture it and never abandon it. ●

Photoshop & traditional skills

CRAFT A PORTRAIT FOR A BOOK COVER

Greg Ruth lays out the process behind the creation of his portrait for the cover to Nghi Vo's *The Chosen and the Beautiful*, for Tor Books

Artist PROFILE

Greg Ruth
LOCATION: US

Greg has been working in comics, books and film since 1993, and is busy wrapping up his second graphic novel with Ethan Hawke, entitled *Meadowlark*.
www.gregthings.com



I was in love with the idea of this project from just the two-line brief my AD Christine Foltzer reached out with for this book cover. The 1920's art-deco style and magic using paper as a means to expressing it? I was in.

I've done a number of covers for Tor Books, so we have a good sense of each other and the shorthand that can help get the process moving

along nicely. It was a concept I could see immediately, but the expression of it with the cutout forms as a design element didn't come until after a lot of late-night fretting.

I had this notion of applying a cut technique I had picked up when I was just out of school and working as an artist's assistant in NYC, and thought it would be perfect to apply here. We had a short deadline so it meant experimenting on the fly and

putting it to work under the faith it would come together. It somehow did, and there's a lesson there about rewarding risk-taking, for sure.

I tend to work more practically than digitally so that meant bringing in all sorts of possibilities to the piece's execution, but at its centre was my usual graphite portrait. Get that part right and the rest had a chance to thrive. Get it wrong, and nothing else I did would matter. ➔

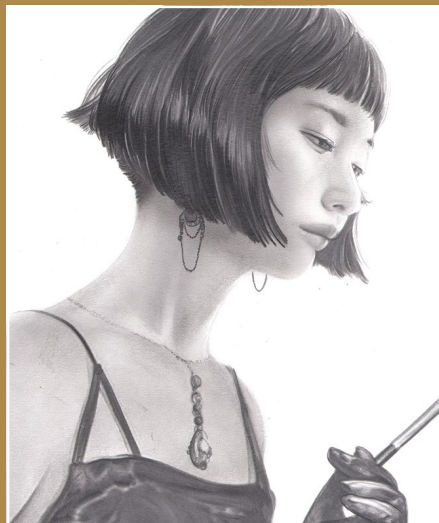
How I combine...

A PORTRAIT WITH PAPER CUT TECHNIQUES



1 Visualise the concept

I started things off with a thumbnail sketch, accompanied by a description of my intent. What I was proposing was new to all of us, so it took a great deal of trust from Christine to let me run amok here. With such a straight portrait, the details matter, despite the visual trickery to invoke her paper-bending powers as an overlay.



2 Enhancing the portrait art

I needed to split the duties between a straightforward portrait drawing, and then applying my paper cut notion upon it. Most of the time was spent on utilising the overlaying effects in Photoshop after drawing the various cut leaves and shadows. The idea was to feel what her magic might look like, as well as show it.



3 Accounting for cover text

The colour was a delicate exercise in scanning in watercolour marks and tones to mute the broad areas of the piece to allow for the title and author lines. No mean feat given the variable visual tonalities, but Christine pulled off a miracle in her final solve. We ended up making some final detail tweaks once she revealed her plan.

In depth Book cover



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PAPER-CRAFT ART

Surprised by shapes

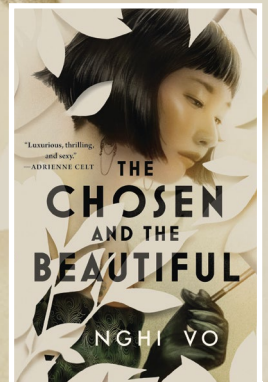
I used a lot of scanning in and redrawing to find the right shapes, sometimes dropped in randomly to keep me surprised by a direction I wouldn't have otherwise planned.

Balancing the cut-out areas

Making sure to cut and crop into lead character Jordan's portrait is always the tricky bit. These sorts of effects can easily appear like wounds and that's the last thing we want. A lot of time was spent making sure we kept her character intact, but also depicted her being consumed by her powers, visually.

Genuine emotion

I drew her expression from the novel itself – a moment or a simple description of how she carries herself – as a leaping-off point to then make a real and legitimate-looking depiction of the author's character.



Room for words

It was essential to design the composition to allow for the required title treatment, even without seeing it, and still make the piece work as a painting on its own.

Feather-light detailing

The detailing of Jordan's dress had to reflect the same ornate simplicity of the design period. The trick was overlaying a hand-drawn peacock feather and inverting it to conform to her body shape without conflicting with the shadows of the leaf pattern.



Real-life reference

Knowing in my head what I wanted to see is different than seeing it, so I made a number of practical paper cut samples to draw from, for this new invention.

Next month in...
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ImagineFX

Create stunning art for animation!

Artists working for Netflix, Cartoon Network and more reveal how to conquer the animation world

All this, and more!

A cornucopia of characters

Animation artist Benjamin Hayte's sketchbook is quite the showstopper!

Avoid creative burnout

Industry pros on how they keep their artistic light burning bright.

A keyframe masterclass

Kan Muftic captures a pivotal moment in an animated film.





Next month

We team up with
viz-dev artist
Kun Vic to bring
you his knockout
art advice!

ISSUE 199 ON SALE FRIDAY 19 MARCH IN PRINT & DIGITAL

Photoshop

GET BETTER AT PICKING COLOURS



Angela Sung breaks down her colouring process and reveals the importance of warm vs cool colours

Artist PROFILE
Angela Sung
LOCATION: US

LA-based Angela works as an art director and visual development artist in the animation industry. She also enjoys painting traditionally.
www.angelasung.com

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 8 now!



Colour catches a viewer's eyes and tells a good story, but can also over-complicate things. Understanding

colour theories is therefore the first step to creating visually compelling paintings.

During my years of painting with both digital and traditional mediums, I've summarised a few key learning points, which I would love to share with you. You'll learn about why 'cool vs warm' is so important, how colours only make sense when compared to their surroundings, and

most importantly, how to select colours in your next painting. In short, this will help you refine the way you choose colours!

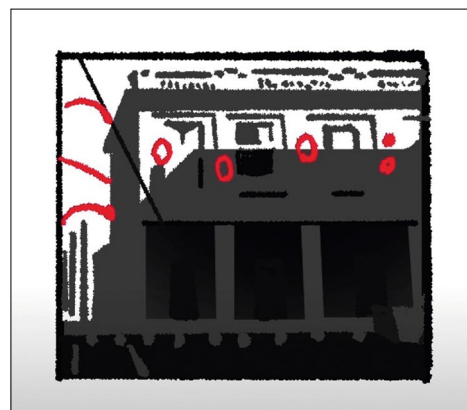
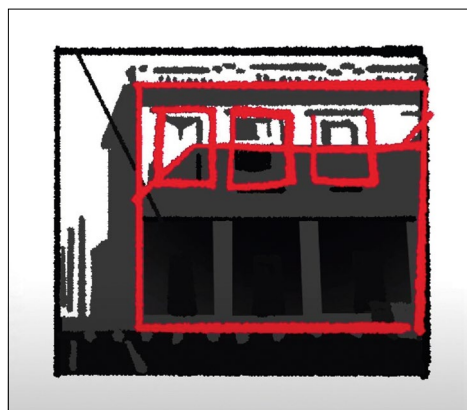
In the workshop, I paint a building based on a photo I took in Cuba. I go over the concepts I mentioned above in five sections. Following the painting process, the key points are highlighted in my video and text. You could follow along and paint with me, or just learn from the video. Note that you'll need a basic understanding of perspective and colour to get the most out of my workshop. Okay, let's get started!



1 Analyse your reference

Before starting a painting, I always try to find references that "speak to me". It may be a moment that was very special to me or an image that just has beautiful colours. Try to analyse and understand why this image interests you. Once you've determined that, move on to the design phase. Here's why I like this photo: this image has great lighting and I love the shapes. ➡➡





2 Organise your design and simplify

It's important to have a main idea for your design – in this case, I want my image to have strong square/rectangular shapes. This will be accentuated by the round shapes of the cloud and chipped paints on the building. This combination helps me organise the dominant and

subdominant ideas of this image. This is the most crucial part of a painting. Being able to boil your design down into something simple and basic will help the viewers understand the image more easily. I begin with a black and white sketch that has only three values. This enables me to group values and simplify shapes.

RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES: BLOCK-IN PENCIL

My blocking-in brush. The toothy texture creates unusual edges.

JITTER PENCIL

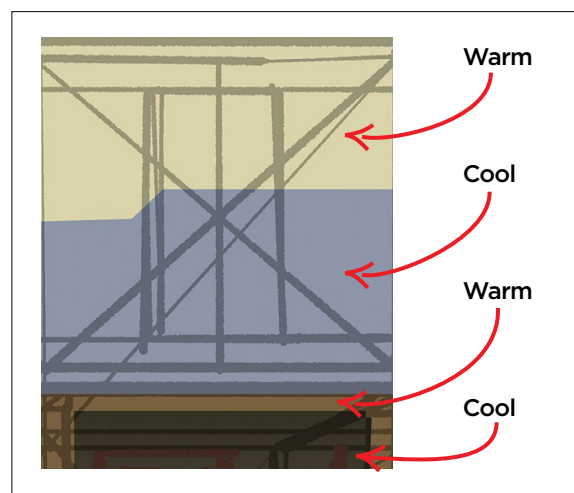
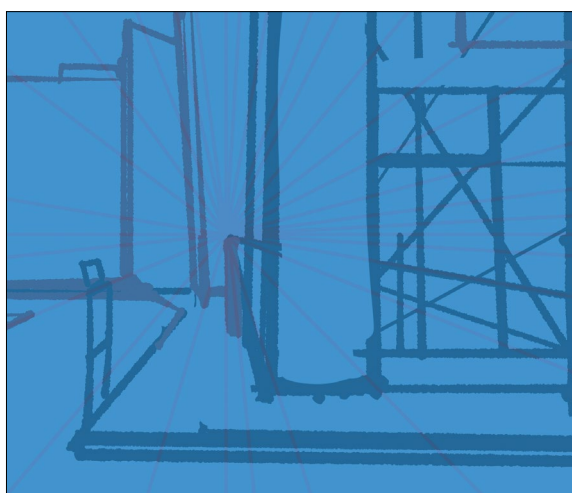
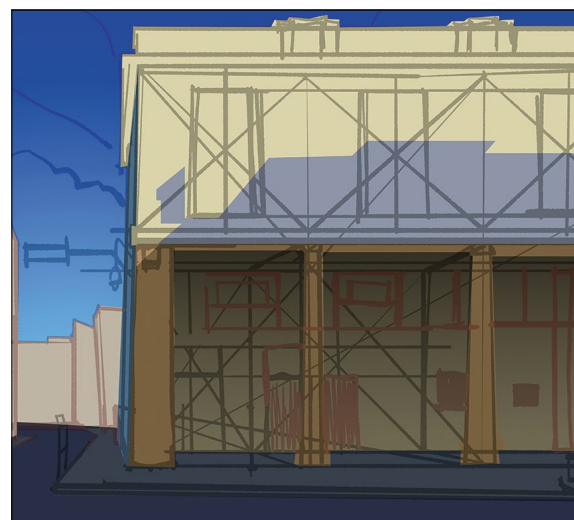
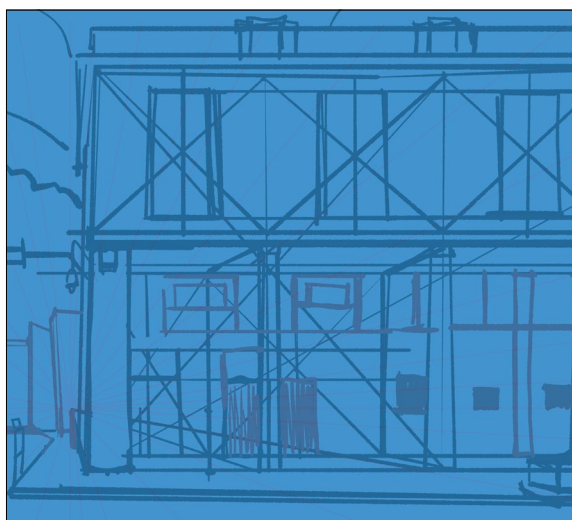
The perfect brush for adding slight colour and value variation.

RAKE BRUSH

Ideal for creating great textures and subtle colour/value shifts.

FUZZ BRUSH

Used for softening edges. Has slight Color and Value Jitter values.



3 Create a loose sketch

Being able to plot things correctly in space helps you choose the right colours. Having perspective knowledge is extremely important when it comes to painting. For the sketching phase, I like to keep things loose. This way, I'm not confined to the space I'm painting and have wiggle room to make adjustments.

4 Colour block-in

Being able to establish the correct cool vs warm colour blocks makes finishing the painting a lot easier. I try to focus on getting an instant yet pleasant read by comparing the colours to one another as I micro-adjust each temperature and hue. Be sure to think big picture first, then little break-ups after.



5 Match the initial B&W design

After establishing the correct colours, I go in and match the image to the initial design. Here I am, slowly readjusting things to make sure it represents the idea I had. Remember that the darks on the top are a different value from the darks on the bottom. Everything is relative! Reference the black and white artwork from time to time to make sure the design remains consistent.



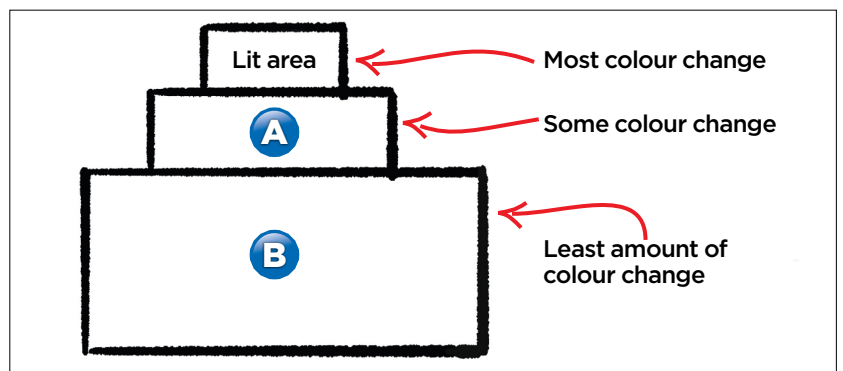
6 Adjust colours where necessary

While correcting the design, I readjust the saturation, temperature and hue. Again, colours alone mean nothing! The more details you add, the more adjustments you need to do. This is a test of patience. Keep reminding yourself to check cool vs warm, and stay consistent with your chosen shape language.



7 Add character to your image

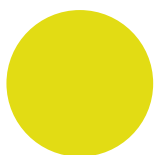
Photo references are awesome! However, we are painters, not photographers. We have the freedom and desire to edit the scene - adding fun details or taking out unnecessary objects. In this instance, I decided to make the building slightly skewed to give the building more character. I also exaggerated the proportions of the 1st floor to be much bigger.



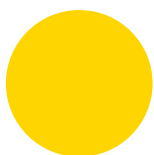
8 Differences between shadows

Shadows in completely covered areas, like the 'B' part of my diagram, will mostly have value change, while shadows surrounded by light, like the 'A' part, will be more influenced by their surroundings. Here, I'm trying to establish a hierarchy of colours. Think about it as a wedding cake! ➡

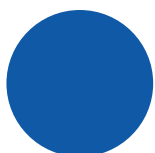
Cool vs warm for primary colours



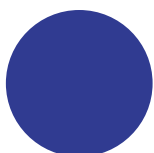
Cool yellow



Warm yellow



Cool blue



Warm blue



Cool red



Warm red



Warm orange white

Cooler yellow-green white

Warmer orange

Cooler burnt umber

Cooler grey

Warmer grey

Orange

Blue

9 Break down your colours further

Break down the colours and temperatures as you paint, and keep some areas in the same value group. Above is how I process colour and value. Rather than using random saturated colours, think about shifting temperatures of a certain hue. This is usually how I achieve rich colours.

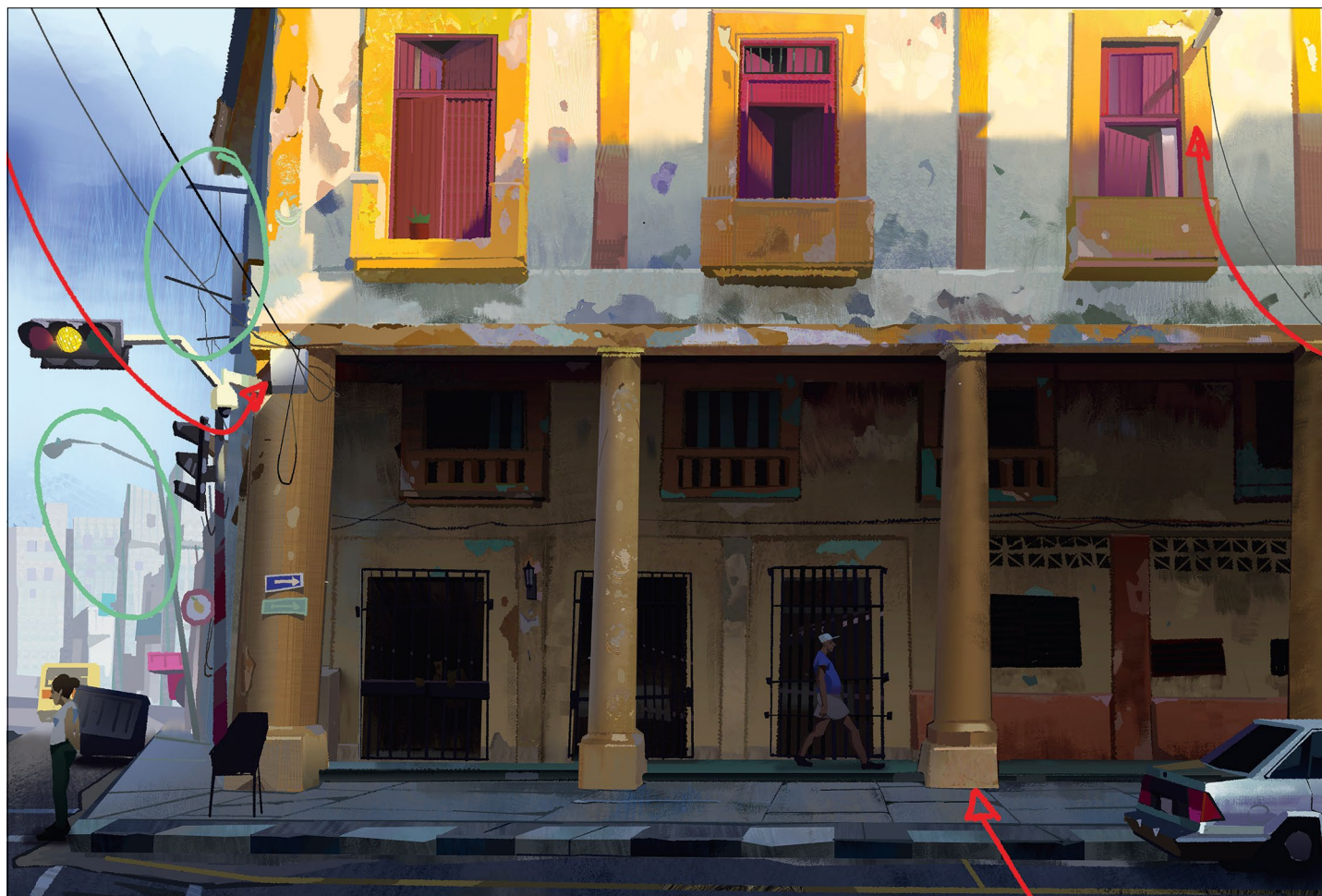


10 Indicate details using colours

Since you brought out so much interest with your colours, the details become secondary. When I think about adding detail, I focus on bringing out the form of specific objects, like the trim of the orange, using colour shifts. This way, you'll be more focused on breaking down your colour more, rather than detailing objects.

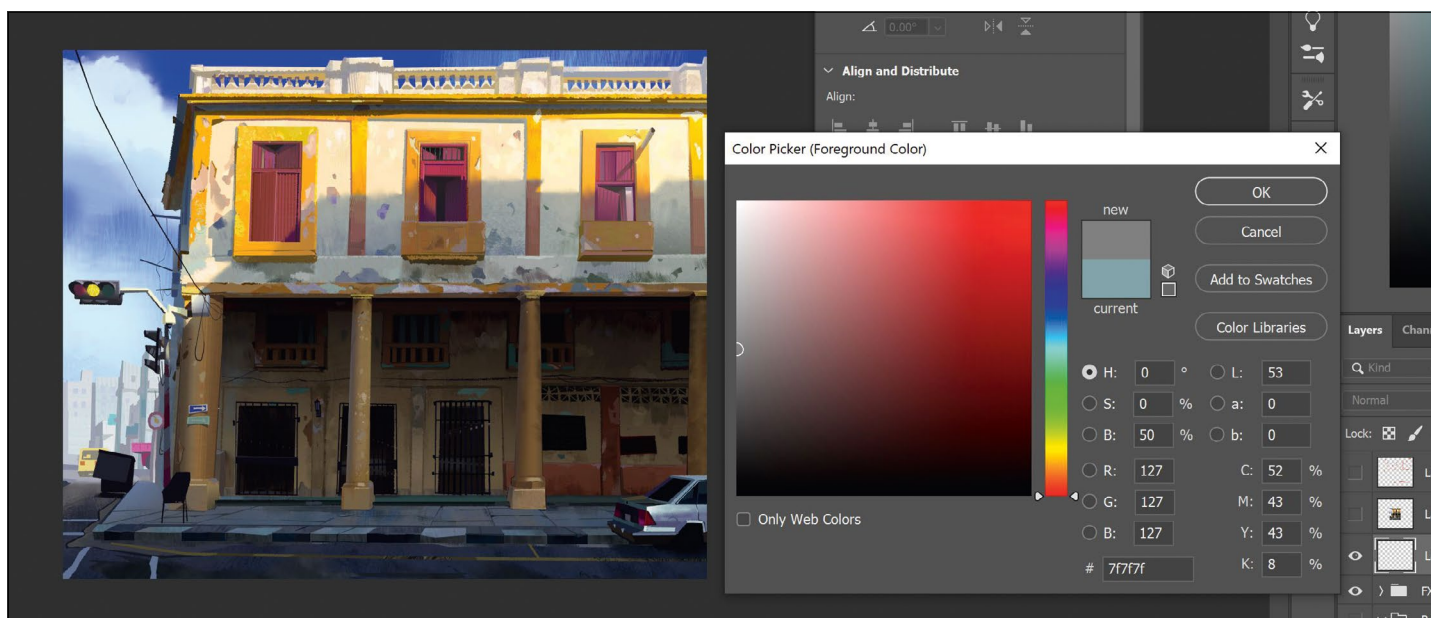
11 Add in (human) scale

I figure out where I want to add my figures after I have the image mostly completed. I like adding in people because it not only gives the environment a sense of liveliness, but also gives the viewers scale information. Scale is important when it comes to the believability of your environment. Always try to add some sort of scale indicator into your paintings.



12 Lead-in elements and silhouette break-ups

When I'm almost done with an image, I try to see if there are any other compositional elements I can toss in. For this image, I thought it'd be interesting to use the wires as lead-in elements. They help the viewers lay their eyes on the main focal point: the building. I also try to break the boring silhouette by adding the objects (here, I've circled them in green).



13 Applying my final adjustments

During the finalising phase, I go through several adjustment steps with different Photoshop layer functions. One effect I enjoy using is the Noise effect. I also use photo filters, Curves and Color Balance for one last unifying pass. The results usually work out a lot better. 🟦

Traditional art skills & Procreate **PAINT AND REFINE A DEMONIC FIGURE**

Jim Pavelec reveals the inspiration and painting techniques used to create the demon Haagenti for his ambitious Ars Goetia project

Artist **PROFILE**

Jim Pavelec
LOCATION: US

Jim dabbles in freelance fantasy and horror illustration, but spends most of his time working on illustrating his interpretation of the Ars Goetia grimoire. www.arsgoetia.net



I'm currently illustrating the 72 demons described in an ancient grimoire (a book of magic spells and incantations) known as the Ars Goetia. In this workshop I'll show you how I developed the art for the demon known as Haagenti. It's very important to me that the pieces in this series be dark and menacing, but also beautiful. Some, such as

Haagenti, fell towards the human end of the spectrum. For pieces such as this I like to emphasise the beauty of the human face or figure, and surround it with monstrous garb or bizarre growths.

Haagenti, the 48th demon of the Ars Goetia, appears in the form of a mighty bull with gryphon's wings, and is traditionally represented quite literally following that description. For my work on this book, I'm

breaking from this literal representation and putting my own spin on these demons.

I like to move freely between traditional and digital painting, and will show you how that's achieved in this workshop. For the digital aspect of these paintings I've been working almost exclusively in Procreate on a 12.9-inch iPad Pro. I find the flexibility and ease of use of that setup second to none. ➡

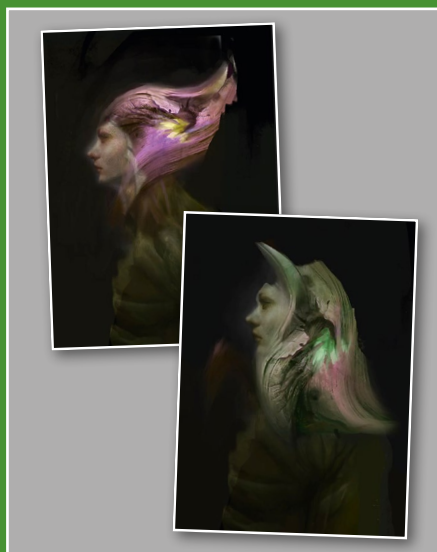
How I combine...

TRADITIONAL AND DIGITAL TECHNIQUES



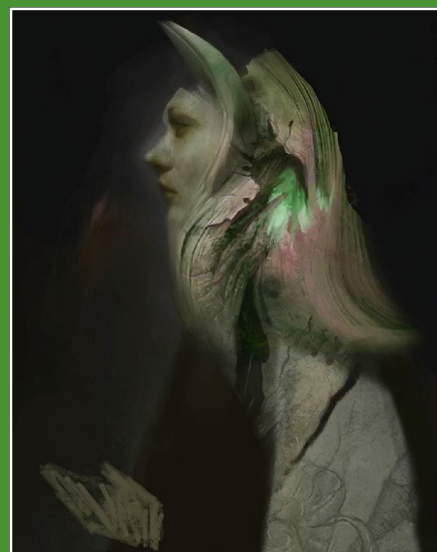
1 Traditional start

Where I begin on a Goetia artwork and where I end are often vastly different. I had a specific model that I wanted to use for this piece, and started the painting traditionally. As I got into the oil painting I wasn't happy with where it was going so I photographed it and took it into Procreate.



2 Into the digital realm

I prefer to let a piece evolve in the digital realm since there are so many fun ways to play with shape and texture. As I was working on the head, I realised that it might be cool to drop in the face of the woman I had painted. I was happy with the result once I rotated its head 90 degrees.



3 Refine the silhouette

At this point I needed to refine the silhouette of the demon. I settled on a kind of robed priestess feel. I love classical paintings by Old Masters such as Rembrandt, Joshua Reynolds and Franz Hals. I decided to use elements of that style of painting to render this hellish priestess.

In depth Demonic figure



ADD TEXTURE AND COLOUR

Taking advantage of layers

Because I work somewhat piecemeal on these paintings, the digital medium is ideal. I can try different things and move objects around in seconds. Once I figured out the overall silhouette for this piece, I needed to go back and work out the proportions of the anatomy so I could have the arm coming out of the drapery at the proper point. So I just created a new layer and quickly sketched the anatomy on top of the piece. Because I had the head size already established it was easy to figure out the rest.



RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PROCREATE

CUSTOM BRUSH: VICTORIAN 2



I like Procreate's Texture brush called Victorian. I decided to make my own version using Victorian clip art. I use the brush to lay down a pattern, and then go over it with a smudge tool to create interesting textures.

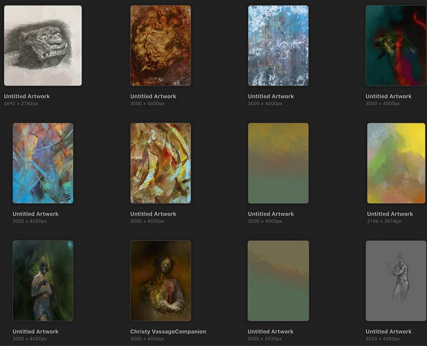


GET YOUR RESOURCES

See page 8 now!

In depth Demonic figure

< Prelims

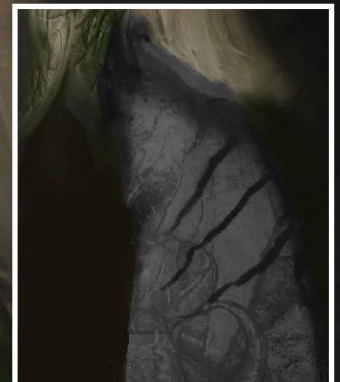
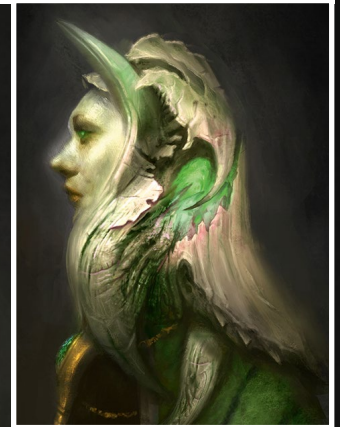


Using other painted pieces

I have a folder filled with dozens of random mark-making, colour and textural paintings. I'll often drop these into a digital piece I'm working on, lower the layer Opacity to 50 per cent and flip through the layer modes to see what kind of exciting effects result. Go through layer modes such as Lighten, Darken, Multiply and Overlay to see what cool and interesting things pop up.

Textures of the bone headdress

Take a few minutes to go online and find reference for any details you're painting. I wanted the headdress in this piece to read as a large bone/horn structure, so I searched online for a variety of animal horns, enabling me to render some interesting yet identifiable textures.



Figuring out value, then adding colour

One issue I've had trouble with over the years is value. How light or dark a thing should be in relation to everything else in the image can be a difficult thing to wrap your head around. One great trick I learned is to work on areas giving you trouble in black and white to make sure you get the value right, and then add colour on a separate Color layer. By eliminating the element of colour, it can be easier to figure out the proper tones. Working digitally makes this very easy. Here you can see how I utilised this technique while working on Haagenti's cloak.

Female hands

Because there are very few visual elements in these pieces, it's important that they all look right. I found a great stock photo reference for this hand, which I purchased and used to make sure the anatomy was correct. Female hands are difficult to paint. Some people make the mistake of ignoring the bony structure of the hand in order to make it seem feminine, and wind up with a 'noodly' look. Like most things in art, you need to find the right balance. In this case, it's a balance of a delicate hand with the proper anatomical structure.

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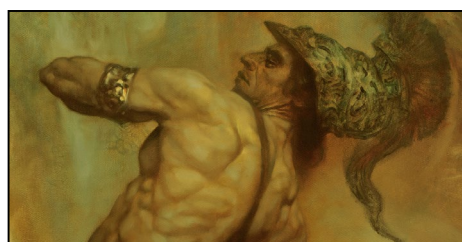
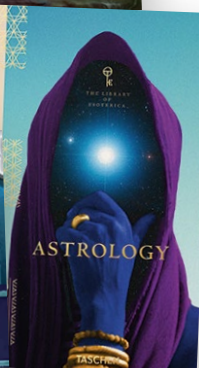


Artist's Choice Award

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

84 iPhone 12 mini

Apple has squeezed its flagship phone technology into a smaller chassis. We find out if the move was a success.

BOOKS

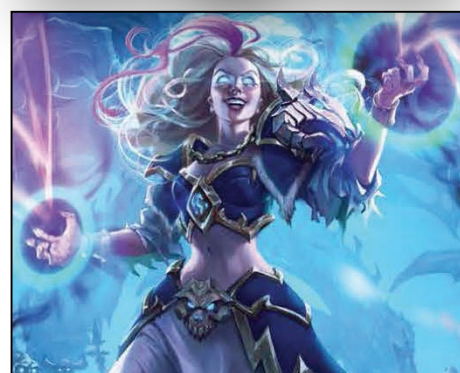
86 Sci-fi & Fantasy: Oil Painting Masterclass

Want to boost your oil painting skills? Then Patrick J Jones is on hand to pass on his extensive artistic know-how.



87 Astrology

Delve into the wondrous art created by painters inspired by the Sun, Moon and planets, and the signs of the Zodiac.



87 The Art of Hearthstone III

Explore the bizarre creatures, objects and settings that appear in Blizzard's expansion to its popular game Hearthstone.

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

iPhone 12 mini

THINK BIG Apple has squeezed its flagship phone tech into a smaller chassis. Was the move a success?

MAC & PC

Price From £699 **Company** Apple **Web** www.apple.com

Smartphones have turned into mini TVs for palms and pockets. In this world of big-screened mobiles, is there really a place for the iPhone 12 mini? In short, absolutely.

Rather than making a pocketable TV, Apple has shrunk its iPhone 12 to create the mini model. Instead of three cameras, as found on the iPhone 12 Pro, there are two – but don't let that put you off. The iPhone 12 mini also has slightly slower wireless charging than its bigger siblings and a smaller battery, but aside from that it's a top-tier flagship in a more demure body.

Available in black, white, (Product) Red, green and blue, each colour is tastefully muted while still looking standout, especially the (Product) Red option. Unlike the iPhone 12 Pro series that feature a polished stainless steel frame, a blasted aluminium frame wraps around Apple's mini.

So just how mini is the mini? While all the new iPhones are the same thickness (7.4mm), the mini's screen is just 5.4 inches. In contrast, the iPhone 12 and 12 Pro's screen is 6.1 inches, while the iPhone 12 Pro Max's screen is

a hefty 6.7 inches. Practically speaking, if you have a first-generation iPhone SE then the mini is a smidge taller, wider and heavier.

On the bottom of the iPhone 12 mini, there's a Lightning port. To the left are volume buttons, a notification slider and a nano-SIM slot, while on the right is the power button. Around the back, however, is where Apple really flexes its iPhone styling. A playful take on design when compared to the Pros, the iPhone 12 and 12 mini feature high-gloss glass backs and two bold cameras that protrude from an elevated camera surround.

Despite being small, the 12 mini never feels like a design compromise, whether talking about the aesthetic, the IP68 water and dust resistance or the in-hand feel. The same can be said of that screen.

OUTSTANDING DISPLAY

As with the Pros, the iPhone 12 mini sports a top-of-the-line Super Retina XDR OLED display. Small but mighty, colours pop, blacks are inky and deep, and picture clarity is on-point. There's HDR10 support and excellent dynamic

“The iPhone 12 mini's main camera is the same spec as the one that's found on the iPhone 12 Pro”



The iPhone mini's Super Retina screen measures 5.4 inches – comparable in size to the old iPhone SE.

The 12MP dual camera can capture photos and video in a range of styles, with an ultrawide option for taking reference photos of landscapes.

range, and thanks to a peak brightness of 1,200 nits, the screen is easy to make out – even in bright sunlight. It's perfect for impromptu plein-air sketching sessions, using one of the many art apps available on the App Store, such as Procreate Pocket or Tayasui Sketches.

The iPhone 12 mini's main camera is the same spec as the one that's found on the iPhone 12 Pro. At the helm, there's a 12MP sensor with an f/1.6 lens, dual-pixel phase detection, autofocus and optical image stabilisation. All that combines to create a camera phone that takes incredible photos. The second camera on the back is an ultrawide. In turn, while the main camera shoots with a 26mm focal length, the ultrawide lens is 13mm – think GoPro snaps and you'll have the right idea.

In daylight, the iPhone 12 mini captures plenty of detail. Unlike Samsung's phones, iPhones taper post-processing, so photos tend to look more natural. Pictures are sharp, and while you may see a bit more

You can purchase the iPhone 12 mini in one of five colours, including the oddly named (Product) Red option.



grain creep in than non-Apple photos, there's less of an artificial finish to them that purists will prefer.

SHOOTING MODES

The camera takes photos, videos, slow-motion video, portrait mode photos and panorama shots. Apple updated its software to make the camera's user-interface simple to navigate. Now, rather than having to rifle through the Settings menu to change the shooting resolution or frame rate, it can all be done from the shooting screen. You're unable to capture RAW photos, mind, but this shouldn't stop you from capturing

detailed reference photographs to use in your painting workflow.

With its improved night mode, Apple's flagships are now competing with the likes of the Google Pixel for the first time, automatically extending capture time to grab atmospheric, detail-rich, low-light photos.

The iPhone 12 mini's ultrawide camera isn't quite as impressive as the main camera. Despite also being 12MP, its detail is weaker. However, colour reproduction is beautifully consistent across all its snappers, including the phone's 12MP selfie camera.

On the subject of selfies, with Face ID sensors that enable SL 3D depth

sensing, the front camera's portrait mode is one of the best around, and while there's no autofocus, shots still look sharp in all but the dimmest scenes. Even then, the screen illuminates to act as a fill flash.

Also impressive is the iPhone's front and rear video. Captured at up to 4K at 60fps on both sides, it's steady, it's smooth and it's high-quality. Low-light video is still a challenge, but at £669, the iPhone 12 mini could still be the best video camera at its price.

SLICK INTERFACE

Running iOS 14, if you're already using an iPhone, you'll know exactly what to expect with the iPhone 12 mini. Its UI is customisable with movable shortcuts and editable widgets, but also locked down enough to ensure you can't really make a dog's dinner of things.

After a couple of months with the iPhone 12 mini, we're smitten. Its compact size, considered design, stellar camera and nippy performance make it a joy to use. We also didn't find it too small to type comfortably on.

However, the phone's battery life leaves room for improvement. With a 2,227mAh battery, it just about makes it through a day if you're using it casually, but heavy gaming, messaging, taking photos or playing videos will leave you out of power by the early evening. There's wireless charging (12W) which helps. It also charges pretty quickly for an iPhone (50 per cent in 30 minutes), but if you'll be away from a wall charger overnight, you'll need to be okay with packing a power bank.

There's nothing else on the market that competes with the iPhone 12 mini, other than perhaps the Sony Xperia 5 II. Both phones are small, powerful, and beautiful - but in the iOS ecosystem, the mini is one of a kind. Sure, the iPhone SE (2020) is another compact iPhone option, but between its more dated design, inferior camera and comparatively poor display, the 12 mini is in a different league.

Of course, as with anything Apple, you pay for what you get, and the iPhone 12 mini isn't cheap. Given what it can do though, it's one of the better-value iPhone options. And so, if you're okay with mediocre battery life and are upgrading from an original iPhone SE or another older, smaller iPhone, this mighty mini option should definitely be on your shortlist.

DETAILS

Features

- iOS 14
- HDR display
- True Tone
- Wide colour (P3)
- 2,000,000:1 contrast ratio (typical)
- 625 nits max brightness (typical); 1,200 nits max brightness (HDR)
- Fingerprint-resistant oleophobic coating
- Support for display of multiple languages and characters
- A14 Bionic chip
- Dual 12MP camera system: Ultra Wide and Wide cameras
- Rechargeable lithium-ion battery
- Up to 15 hours video playback
- Up to 65 hours audio playback

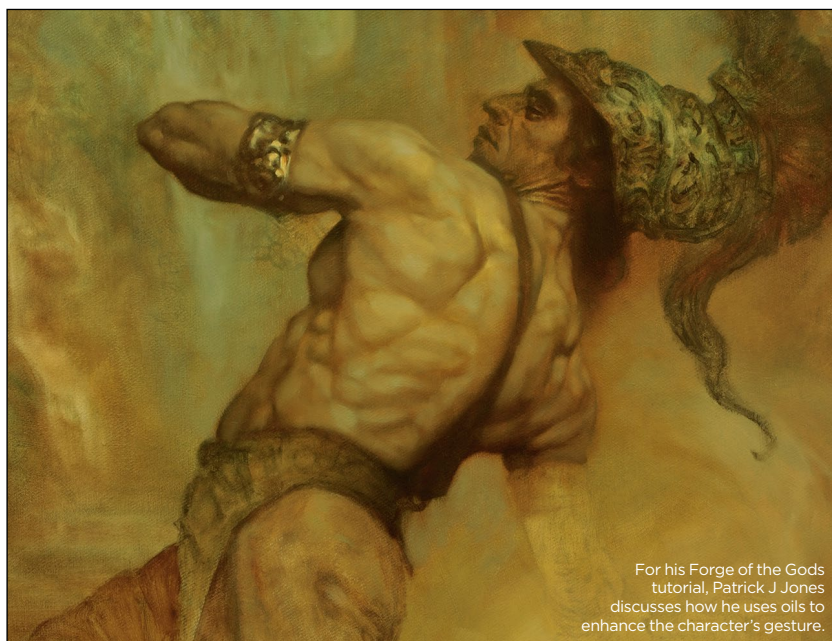
System Requirements

Syncing to a Mac or PC requires:
PC: Windows 7 or later using iTunes 12.10.10 or later
Mac: macOS Catalina 10.15 or later using the Finder; macOS El Capitan 10.11.6 to macOS Mojave 10.14.6 using iTunes 12.8 or later

Rating



Apple states that the iPhone mini's aluminium frame is aerospace-grade, to minimise damage caused by dropping the device.



For his Forge of the Gods tutorial, Patrick J Jones discusses how he uses oils to enhance the character's gesture.



In his book Patrick describes the pitfalls of overworking a piece. Here, he lost interesting background textures as the painting developed.

Sci-fi & Fantasy: Oil Painting Masterclass

PALETTE CLEANSER Want to boost your oil painting skills? Then Patrick J Jones is on hand to pass on his extensive artistic know-how

Author Patrick J Jones **Publisher** Korero Press **Price** £23 **Web** www.koreropress.com **Available Now**

Patrick J Jones has made a name for himself in the fantasy art industry, and deservedly so. His figures are portrayed with impeccable attention to anatomy, set in scenes rich in storytelling. In his latest book Patrick takes the reader through his approach to working in oils.

That reader is advised to have a good amount of art knowledge under their belt, though. Patrick's book isn't a gentle introduction to the medium. Rather, it's a peek inside the painter's mind as he details his creative process while tackling a range of artworks. The emphasis is on how he works with oils, but he also discusses anatomy, gesture, lighting and even his mindset. Patrick doesn't shy away from mistakes made during his painting sessions, and also reveals the highs and lows of working to private commissions.

Patrick's text is never less than engaging, which is a good thing because there's a lot of it. As he covers a painting's progress, he weaves industry anecdotes and

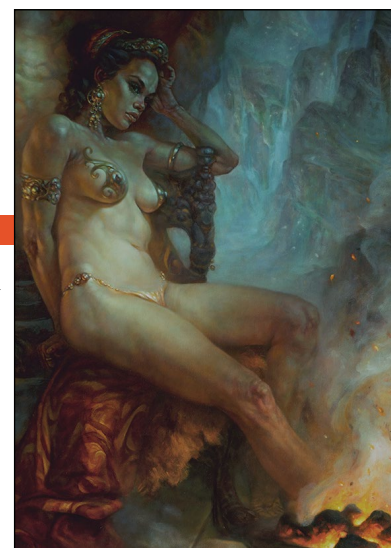


moments of inspiration through his explanation of what his oils are doing on the canvas, or how his figure's anatomy needs to be corrected. This approach can help to avoid the reader becoming overloaded with advice, but sometimes it becomes necessary to re-read the copy or take notes, just to ensure the salient points aren't lost. The artist maintains encouragement, honesty and positivity throughout his

“It's a peek inside the painter's mind as Patrick details his creative process”

tutorials, which comes from his experience as an art teacher working at Queensland University of Technology and online at CGMA.

Accompanying Patrick's text is a good selection of his artworks. These are printed large on the page, enabling the reader to study them in detail. In some instances lines of gesture are overlaid on the works-in-progress, to reinforce what's being discussed in the



Patrick's depiction of the Greek goddess Hestia forms a 16-page workshop in his book.

copy. Occasionally, we found ourselves wishing for more graphic design tricks to help link the visuals with Patrick's text, but the absence of such devices is further acknowledgement that the reader is no art newbie, and is capable of identifying areas of interest on the developing painting themselves.

If you're keen to take your knowledge of oils to the next level, then Patrick's book is well worth your time. And when you're not studying his techniques you can always enjoy high-quality reproductions of his fantastic fantasy art.

RATING ★★★★★☆

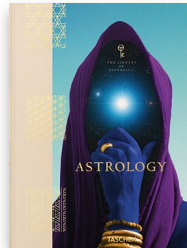
Astrology

HEAVENS ABOVE Delve into the wondrous art created by painters inspired by the Sun, Moon and planets, and the signs of the Zodiac

Author Andrea Richards **Publisher** Taschen Books **Price** £30 **Web** www.taschen.com **Available Now**

For centuries, mankind has attempted to predict its destiny by studying the stars. This has led to artists visualising celestial bodies, taking inspiration from mythology, religion and more. *Astrology*, the second instalment in Taschen's Library of Esoterica series, gathers together a generous sample of such artwork.

Andrea Richards' book begins with an engaging essay on the history



Paul Rumsey created this 2020 piece, entitled *Astrologers*, using his favourite medium: charcoal.

behind the pseudo-science. The accompanying visuals – an eclectic mix of paintings, sculptures and photographs – provide a hint of the varied artwork that follows. The heart of the book is made up of two lengthy chapters, discussing the bodies of the Solar System and the 12 signs of the Zodiac.

The art, which spans the centuries, is never less than interesting and often proves stunning to observe. There are countless examples of painters investing tangible personality into the planets, or going far beyond the literal representation of say, a crab or set of weighing scales. If you're seeking a collection that demonstrates the everlasting appeal of fantastical art, then look no further.

RATING ★★★★★☆



The Magus, painted by Vladimir Manzhos Waone, is surrounded by symbols relating to astrology.

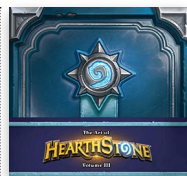
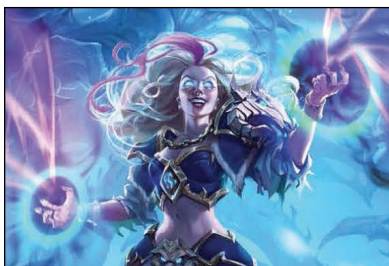
The Art of Hearthstone III

MAMMOTH UNDERTAKING Explore the many bizarre creatures, objects and settings that feature in Blizzard's expansion to its ever-popular game Hearthstone

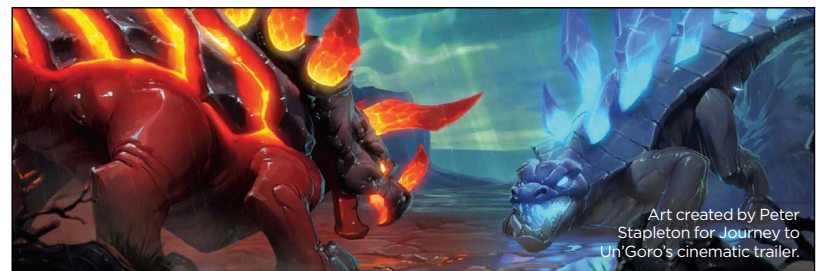
Author Robert Brooks **Publisher** Titan Books **Price** £25 **Web** www.titanbooks.com **Available Now**

Hearthstone, Blizzard's digital collectible card game, was launched in 2014 and now boosts millions of players worldwide. Initially reusing art created for *World of Warcraft*, the game's popularity has meant fresh visuals were soon required. This book covers the art created for 2017's expansion, *Year of the Mammoth*.

While *Warcraft*'s chunky and colourful art style carries through to



Will Murai, a senior illustrator at Blizzard Entertainment, painted Jaina Proudmoore for *Hearthstone*'s Knights of the Frozen Throne campaign.



Art created by Peter Stapleton for *Journey to Un'Goro*'s cinematic trailer.

Hearthstone, it's been channelled into a much more humorous setting. Indeed, across the expansion's three campaigns – *Journey to Un'Goro*, *Knights of the Frozen Throne*, and *Kobolds & Catacombs* – there are some character designs that are laugh-out-loud funny!

Amid the sketches, concepts and glorious full-colour artworks, author Robert Brooks provides insights into the art team's approach to the three

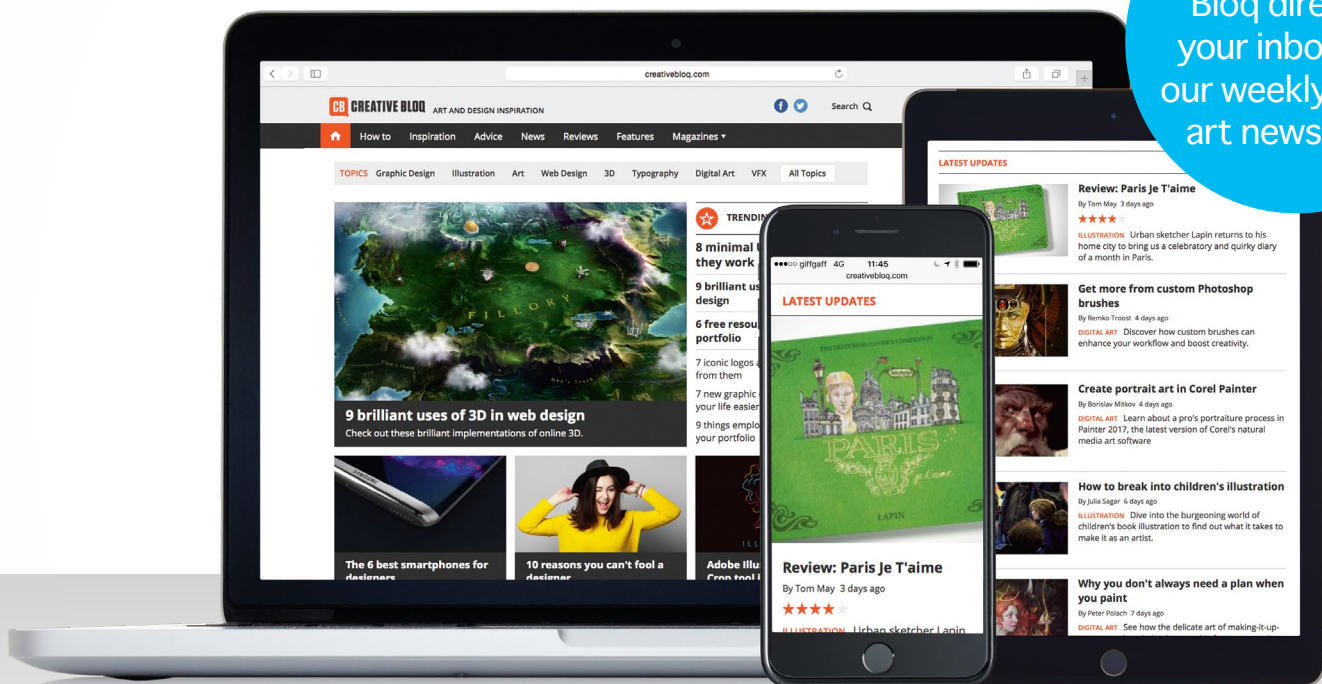
campaigns. As expected, gameplay was a key consideration, such as in *Un'Goro*'s dinosaur theme, in which creatures evolve over play sessions.

Hearthstone's card-based setting means players won't always appreciate the effort that's gone into *Year of the Mammoth*. This book lovingly puts that work front and centre, for all to see.

RATING ★★★★★☆

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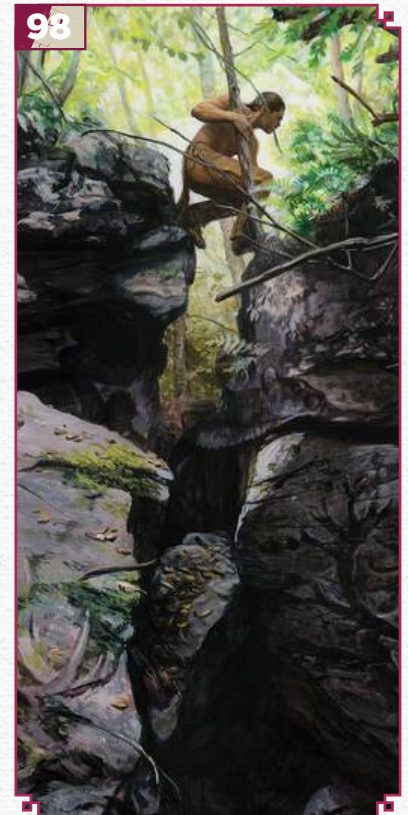
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If you see the video workshop badge then you can watch the artist in action. Turn to page 8 to see how you can get hold of the video.



This issue:

90 Traditional FXPosé

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

94 Workshop: Paint compelling book cover art

Iris Compier creates an eye-catching wraparound cover for her book *Faeries of the Faultlines*.

98 First Impressions: Winona Nelson

Representation lies at the heart of this US illustrator's work.



FXPosé

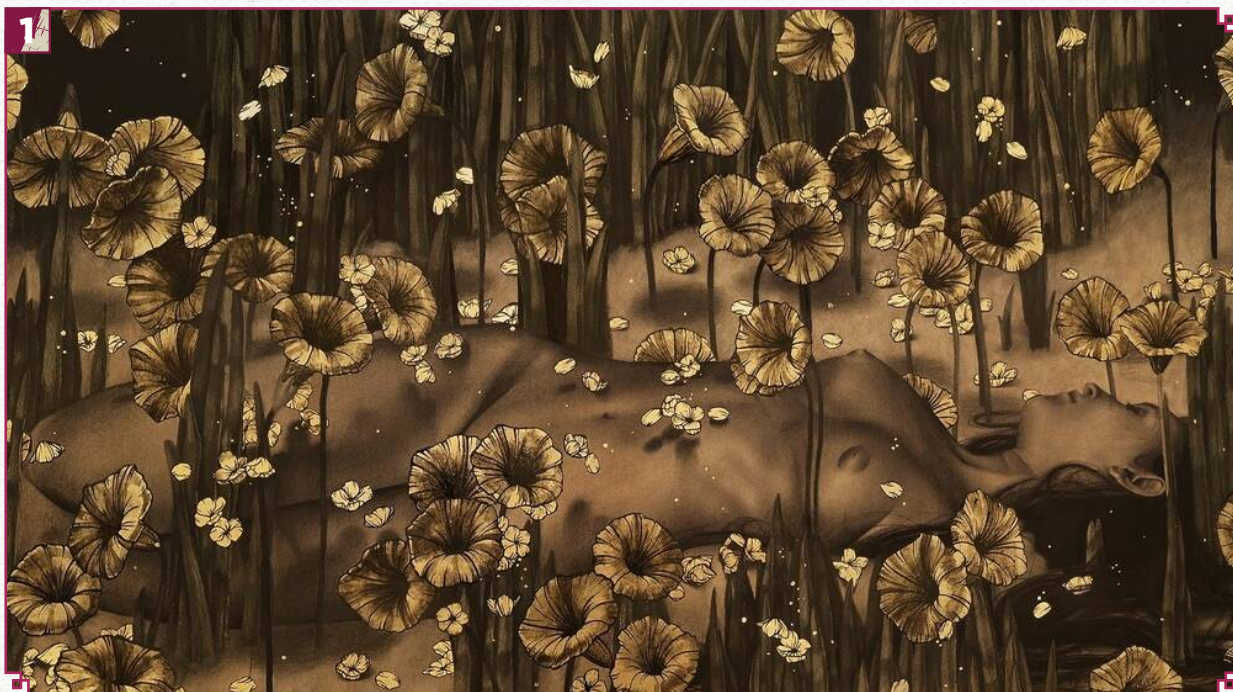
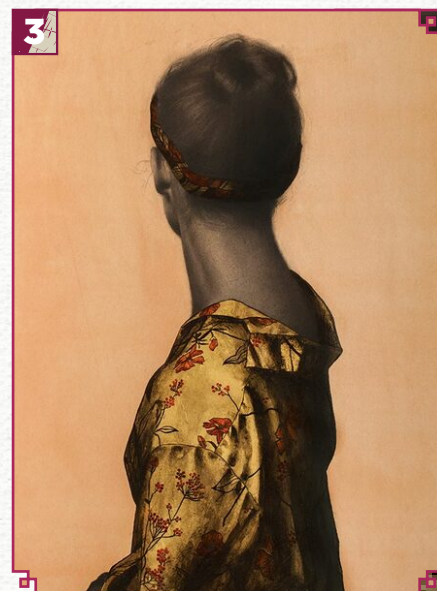
SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL ARTISTS



Alessandra Maria

LOCATION: US **MEDIA:** Charcoal, carbon pencil, 23-carat gold leaf, Sumi-ink, pigmented ink **WEB:** www.alessandramaria.com

"I see my work as a devotion to beauty," says Alessandra, who reveals her life and art is moved by iconography, sacred gardens and even simple magic.

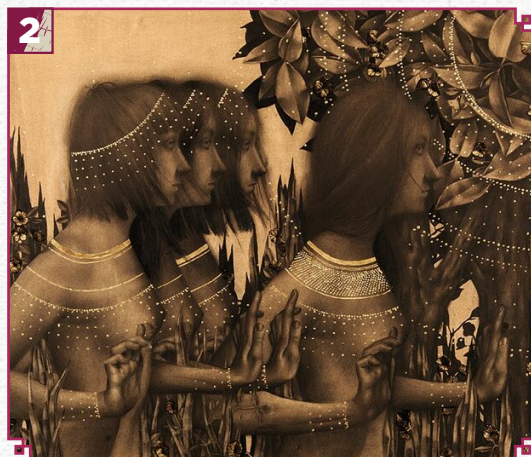


1 UNTITLED

"To build up a sense of sfumato and solidity in my work I build up countless layers of charcoal on walnut-ink stained paper."

2 ENTERING THE GARDEN

"When this piece was turned into gold leaf prints they took five hours to complete. I even added a few dots of gold leaf myself."



3 SELF-PORTRAIT II

"A self-portrait with a difference as the subject is turned away from the viewer. What could it mean?"

4 REVERIE II

"A hand-gilded print of butterflies landing on a woman's face. I invite viewers to interpret their own meaning from this."





Jason D Rodriguez

LOCATION: US **MEDIA:** Pencil, charcoal, watercolour, Procreate **WEB:** www.jdrpictures.bigcartel.com/comic-art

Jason is an illustrator who works in pencil and ink before finishing off his work in Procreate. "I love illustrating the simple relationships between beast and human with a focus on loyalty and kindness."

1 T-REX HUNTER

"This hunter and dragon duo was done first with digital ink, and then using that as the base I created multiple layers to add colour and texture."



2 Y3Ti

"I reimagined the yeti as a pelt-wearing, mountain mech. He's known by government agencies around the world as Y3Ti."



3 DRAGON FRIEND

"This was drawn in my sketchbook and then brought to life with warm colours digitally. I love picturing the moment of wonder and amazement between characters."

4 JACK FROST HELPS OUT

"One of my favourite things to do as an artist is to reimagine characters. Here I wondered: what if Jack Frost was really just a wizard?"





Pencil

Watercolour

Gouache

PAINT COMPELLING BOOK COVER ART

IRIS COMPIET reveals how she paints an eye-catching, wraparound book cover for her book *Faeries of the Faultlines* using watercolour, gouache and pencil on paper

This piece was created as the dust jacket cover for the reprint of *Faeries of the Faultlines*, a book which was Kickstarted in 2017 and has since sold out. I wanted to create a piece that would lure people in, much like a faery would lure you into the forest. It had to be mysterious and inviting, beautiful but also a bit dangerous. I needed to create something that would be a perfect fit for the tone of the book.

Because this book gives the reader a peek into the Faultlines, I wanted to develop the idea that the cover had to feel like a physical boundary between our world and the world of Faery. To create that illusion I felt that a wall of foliage from which a face would emerge would work best. A face that possessed human features but would look and feel slightly different. It would entice people to pick up the book and start to lose themselves in the Faultlines.

Because this piece was created to work as a book cover it was crucial to keep an eye on the placement of text on the front, back and the spine without making it feel stiff or boring. It became the perfect challenge to paint in watercolours.



Iris creates otherworldly creatures with traditional media such as watercolours, transporting you to a world where anything is possible. You can see more of her work at www.iriscompiet.art.

Step-by-step: Create an eye-catching piece of art



1 SKETCH THE MAIN SUBJECT

I didn't do a lot of preliminary sketches – I knew this piece would lean heavily upon chance and the happy accidents that occur when painting with watercolours. However, I had to lay down a simple sketch for the faery's face. Not only would it be the focal point but also act as the framework for the cover's typographic elements.



2 LET THE PIGMENTS PLAY

After wetting the paper I use several different greens, letting the pigment and water mix to create textures. I keep a close eye on what's happening and try to guide the outcome before the paper and pigment dry. I make sure the area of the face is largely untouched. I repeat this step a couple of times to build up a base layer.



3 ADD DETAILS TO THE FACE

I want to create the illusion that this faery is emerging from the foliage. I'm working on her face as well as the leaves that are framing it. This creates balance, so the face won't look like it's a cut-out. Leaves that are further away from her face will be less detailed – this approach enables me to frame the focal point.



Points of interest: Build up vegetation



Adding leaf veins

I use a dip pen and masking fluid to create the veins of some of the leaves. After the masking fluid has completely dried I add another layer of green to the area. It's important to not add too much dark green on top, because the contrast between the vein and the rest of the leaf would then be too much.

MATERIALS

PAPER

■ Arches 300 grams Satiné stretched on marine plywood with paper tape

BRUSHES

■ Escoda Reserva, numbers 10, 8, 6, 4, 2 and 0

WATERCOLOUR

■ Daniel Smith
■ Winsor & Newton
■ QoR

MASKING FLUID

■ QoR

PENCIL

■ Col-Erase Tuscan Red
■ Graphgear 1000 HB

GOUACHE

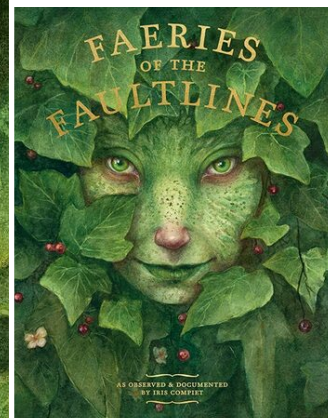
■ Nicker Painter's Gouache (white)

Picking up paint

I hadn't planned on adding flowers to the foliage, but I feel there needs to be something more. With a clean brush and some water I'm able to pick up some of the dark green, creating petal shapes and detailing those with some yellow and orange to create subtle flowers. Together with the red berries they balance things out perfectly.

Never lose sight of typography

Because the top and bottom of this piece will be covered in typography I make sure that the edges of the leaves are softened up and disappear into the background texture. It's all about the suggestion of leaves in these areas; I want to avoid them competing with the typography on top.



The devil is in the detail

I'm using detail to draw attention to where I want the viewer to focus on. I've done this with the leaves: those around her face are more detailed, but most of them are also pointing inwards towards her eyes. Contrast is created by applying softer textures to her face.

Softening and pushing back

After I've gently rubbed off the masking fluid from the completely dry paper I soften the edges of some of the veins, and even go over them in a light wash of colour to push them back a bit. I don't want them to stand out too much and distract from the overall image.

First Impressions

✧ Winona Nelson ✧

Representation lies at the heart of this US illustrator's work



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

I grew in Duluth, Minnesota, on the

shore of Lake Superior. It's a beautiful place with harsh winters, and nature was a big part of my life. I have a deep connection to that lake and the forests of the north, and the stories of my tribe, the Ojibwe. My love for where I come from shows up in my paintings such as Nanaboozhoo.

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

Exploring my relationship with gender and my tribe, and diversity in general, has played a big role in my development and career. Lately I've been inspired by music – punk, rock and goth music in particular.

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

I started out in comics, with one of my first commissions being the gay action sci-fi webcomic *Artifice*, by Alex Woolfson. I've gotten a lot better, but the gestures and acting still hold up pretty well.

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

Leap is an 8x10-inch acrylic and oil painting. They differ in just about every way you can think of. Leap isn't sequential or even narrative, but more just play: letting the paint create interesting textures and placing a fantastical creature into the scene. I love wild, saturated colour and trying to capture the feeling of music, in this case power and stoner metal. The one thing that carries through both



NANABOOZHOO

"Nanaboozhoo is a half-spirit, half-mortal shape shifter, who's a main figure in many Ojibwe stories, which are often both educational and funny."

LEAP

"Lately I've been experimenting with letting my materials create more random texture, leaving room for accidents and spontaneity."



is a focus on solid anatomical drawing and emotional gesture.

What character or scene that you've painted do you most identify with?

Open Your Eyes is a sort of spiritual self-portrait, painted out of frustration with feeling overlooked and underestimated due to being a physically unimposing, female-bodied person. I wanted to show someone of my size as a warrior. These days I feel more comfortable in my presentation, but the feelings behind this piece still resonate.

Is your art evolving?

Oh, always. Lately I've been creating abstract textures and painting or drawing on top of them. The most recent larger experimental piece is *Winona and Child*, depicting my



OPEN YOUR EYES

"I'd focused on technical skills for years, so I started to express more personal feelings through a fantasy lens."

namesake, the mother of half-spirit, half-mortal shape shifter Nanaboozhoo from Ojibwe stories. I'm also playing with graphite powder and water on clayboard.

How has the art industry changed since you've been working in it?

Minority creators have been gaining a lot of representation over the past years, with last year's unrest waking up a lot of industries to the still-entrenched unfairness built into our society. Companies are making a real effort to hire and represent people of all colours, gender identities, sexual orientations and bodies. Representation has always been central to my work and I'm excited to see such a big push to bring the diversity of real life into publishing, games and pop culture.

What does the future hold for you?

I've started working in children's books and editorial illustration, and I'm returning to comics with my own project called *Cut Flowers*, using 9B pencil and graphite powder with digital watercolour.

Winona is a Philadelphia-based artist working in illustration, fine art, comics and concept art. Her work focuses on diversity, empowerment and fantastical imagery. See www.winonanelsonart.com.

“I love wild, saturated colour and trying to capture the feeling of music”



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