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



In her interview on page 98, Amanda MacFarlane says: "Artists are a little bit like sleuths. Every character they draw is a mystery and they have to figure out what makes them tick." To me this quote neatly encapsulates how much work an artist puts into creating

worlds and telling stories so that others can engage with and enjoy this art form.

Each line on a drawing represents a hard-fought decision made on that character's personality type and back-story. Initial thought processes and tiny incremental decisions are constantly being made to help build and grow a character until they become real and relatable.

This issue is – in part – an homage to that process. Artists such as Kun Vic, Brittany Myers, Sarah Webb, Jackie Droujko and more provide a glimpse into their unique ways they develop a bond with their creations as a part of their process. And now it's over to you to do the same. Become a sleuth and find out what makes your art story tick and maybe it'll be your work engaging with the world in times to come.

Claire

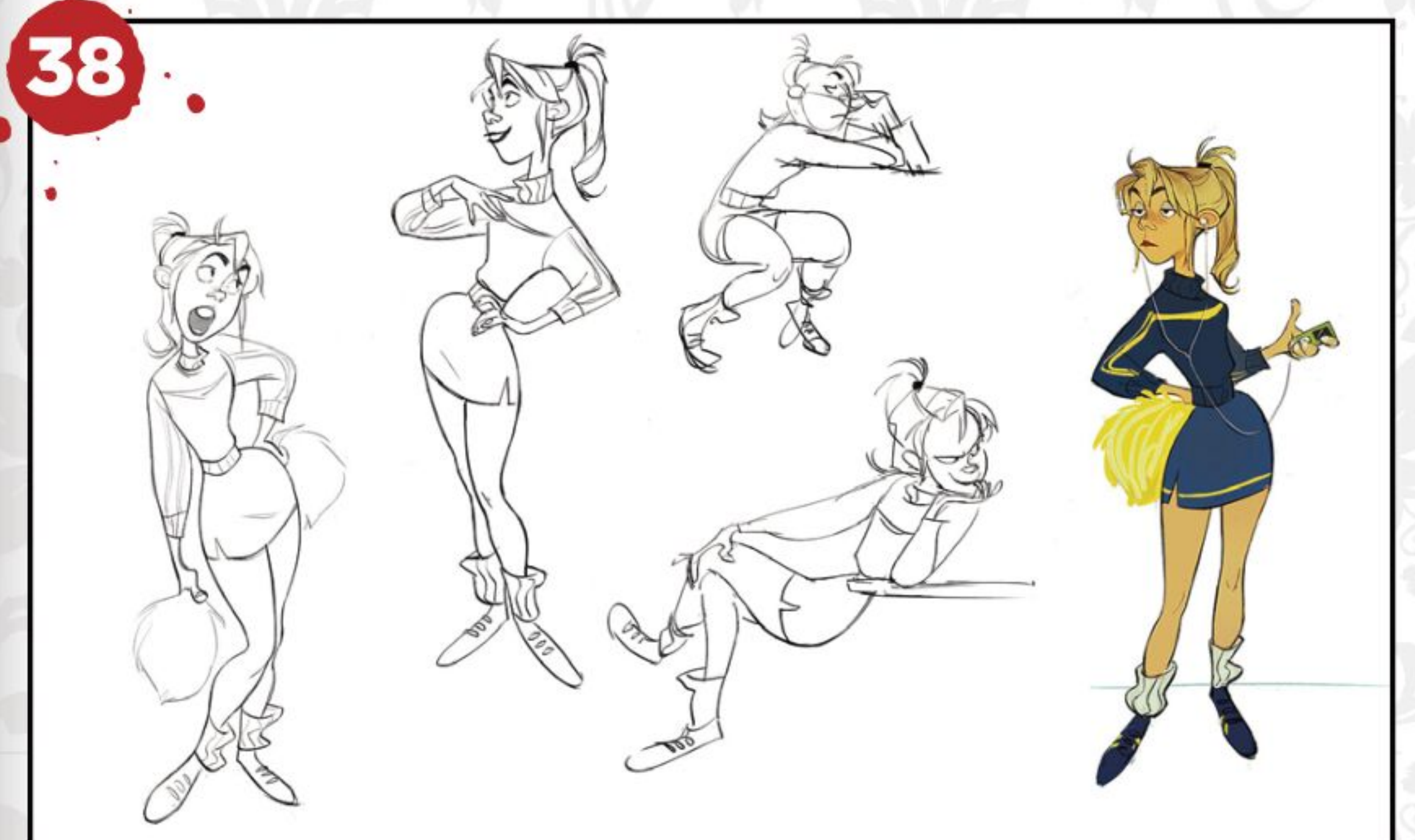
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EDITOR'S CHOICE Three of my top picks this month...



Liana Hee's studio space

Liana talks honestly about the highs and lows of dividing work and life when working from home.



Brittany's over the moon

You'll find an abundance of character development ideas in Brittany Myers' interview. Go see!



15 tips to take you from student to pro

Drew Hartel outlines his manifesto that should get you on the career ladder in animation in no time.

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Artist Portfolio

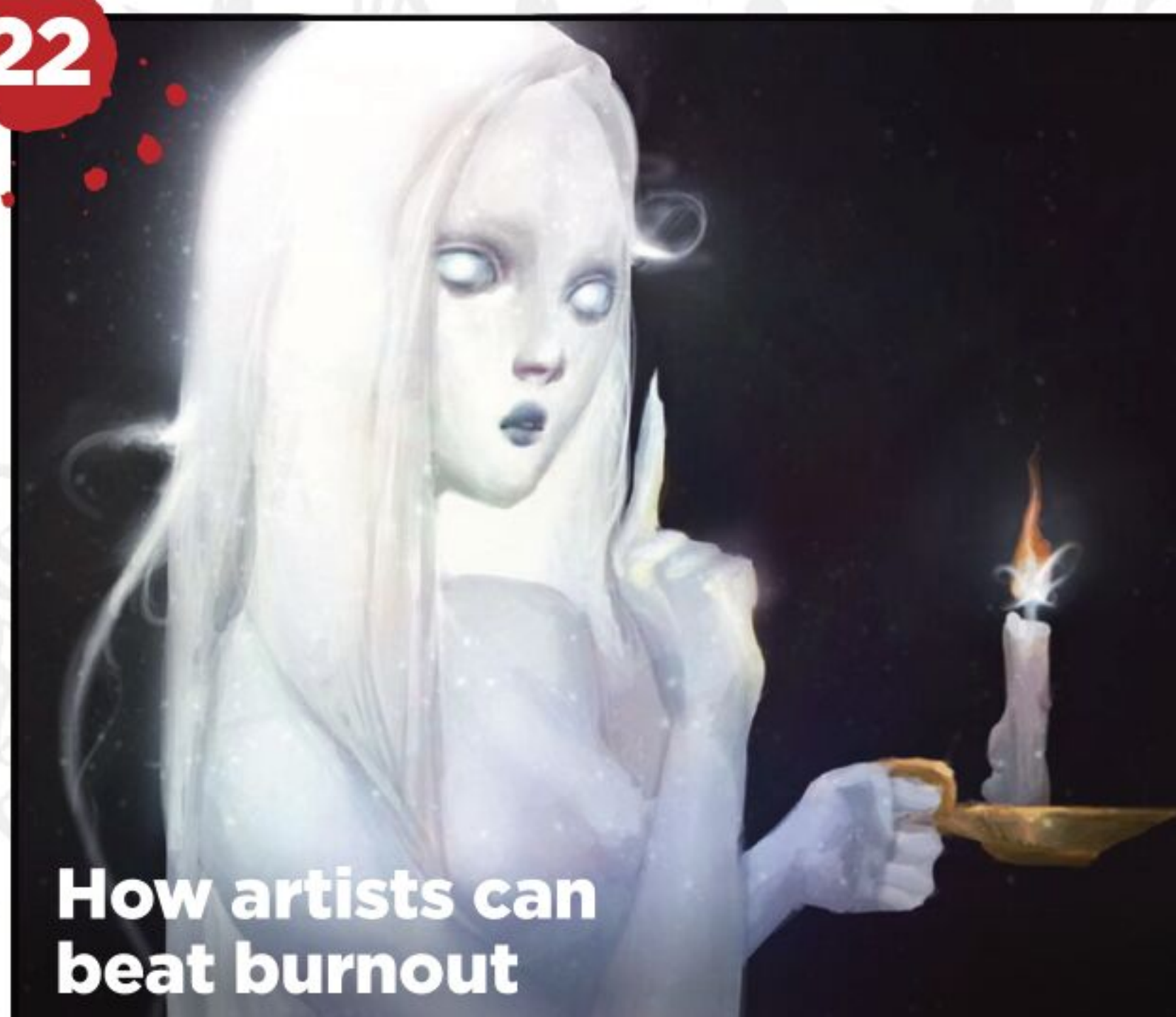
BRITTANY MYERS



"It forces you to focus on the feeling more than anything"

Brittany on practising drawing groups of moving people

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How artists can beat burnout

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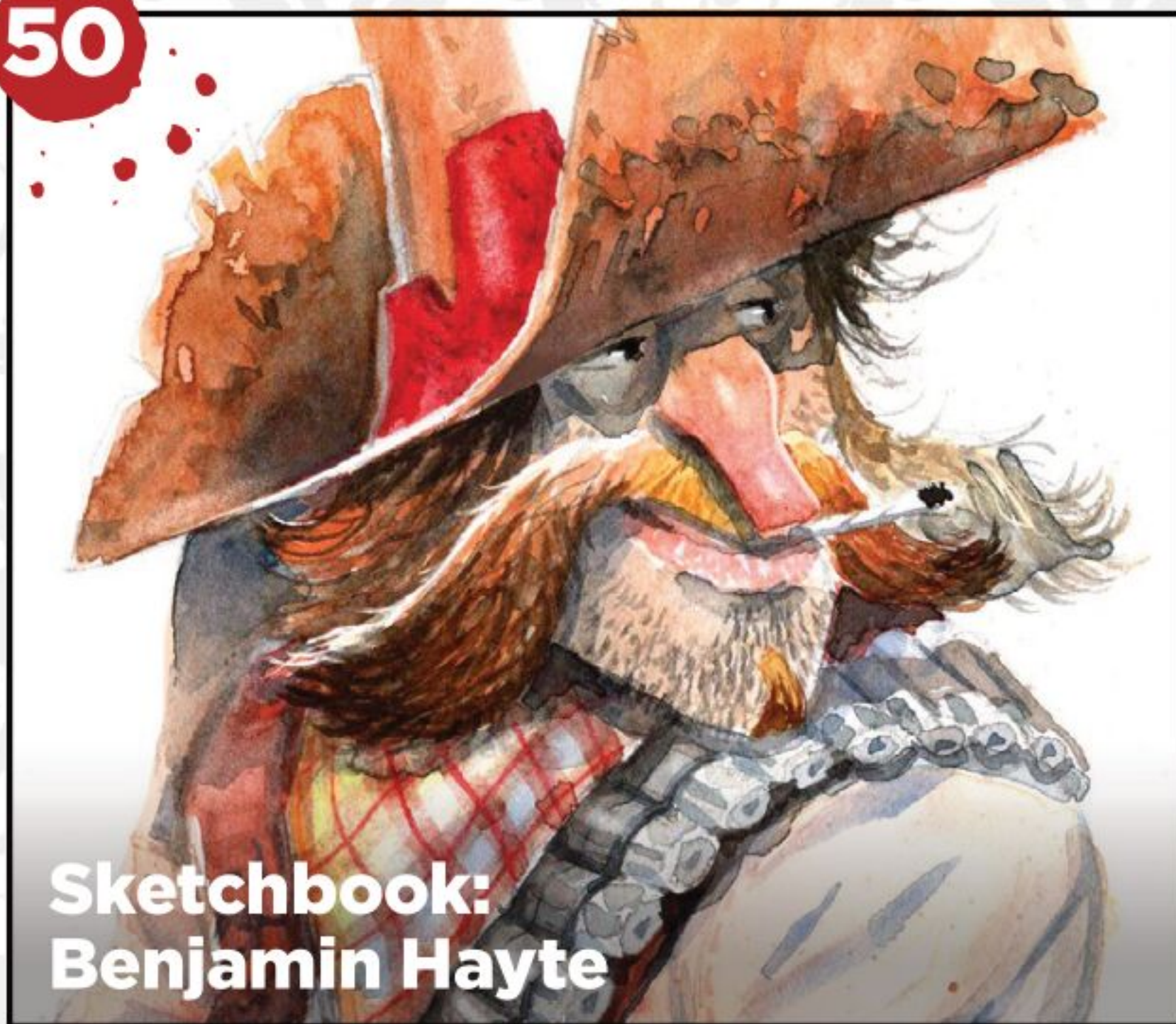


Artist in Residence: Liana Hee



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Resources

Getting hold of this issue's resources is easy.
Just visit **<http://ifxm.ag/animation199art>**

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Online orders **www.magazinesdirect.com**
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Printed by Wyndeham Peterborough, Storey's Bar Road, Peterborough PE1 5YS

Distributed by Marketforce, 5 Churchill Place, Canary Wharf, London, E14 5HU www.marketforce.co.uk Tel: 0203 787 9001
ISSN 1748-930X

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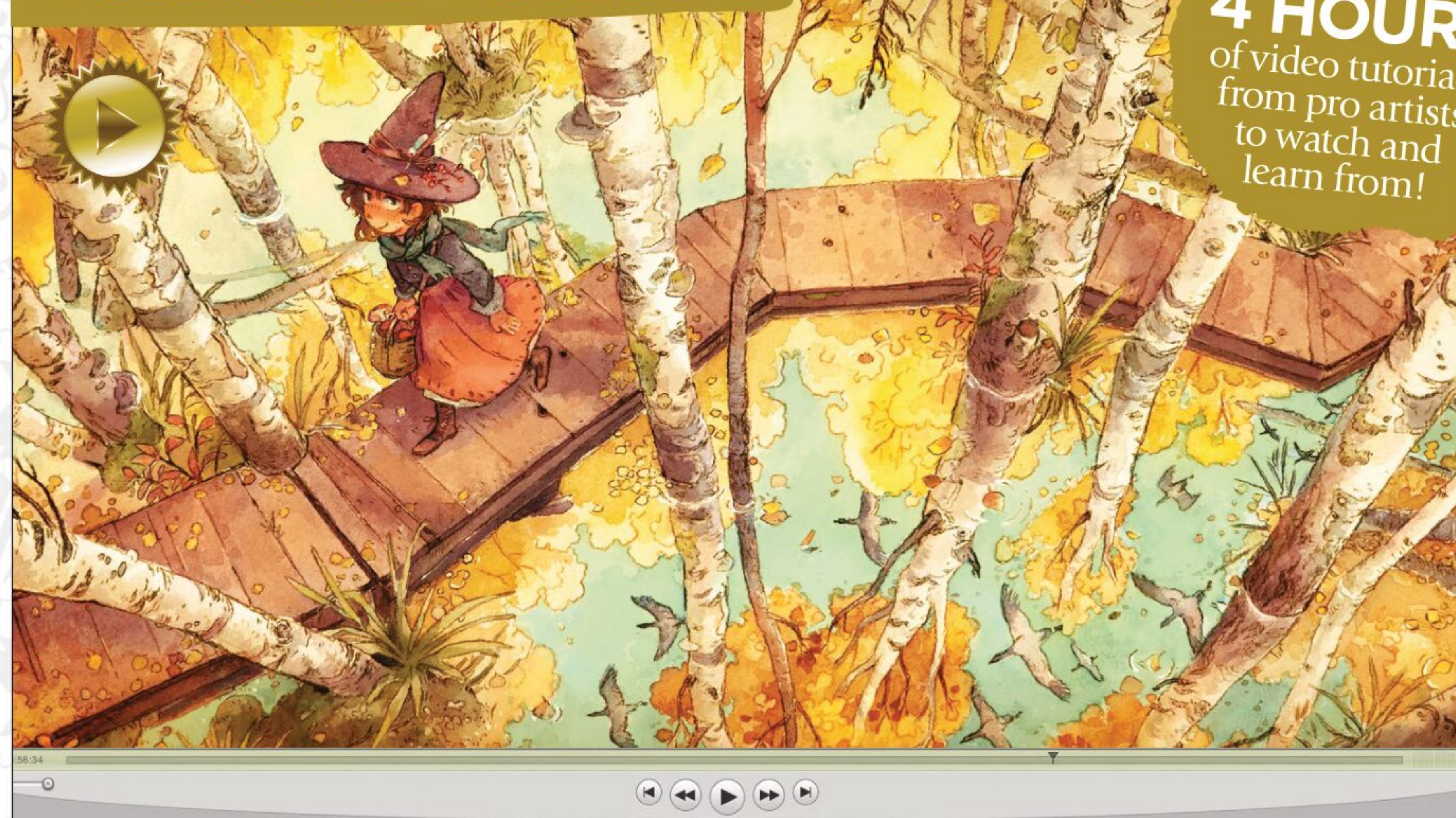
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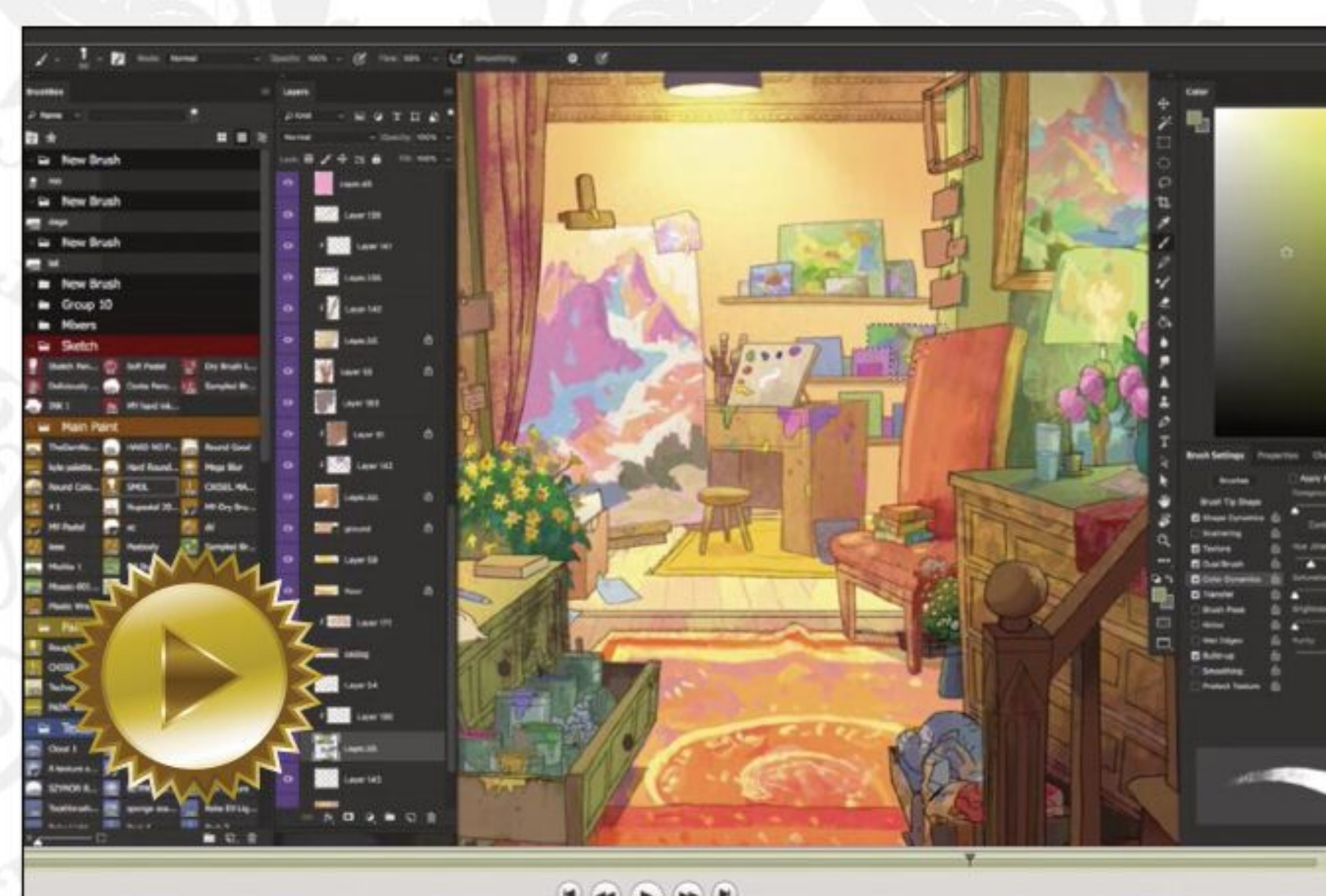
WORKSHOP VIDEOS



OVER 4 HOURS
of video tutorials
from pro artists
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learn from!

Capture an autumnal scene in watercolours

See how Sarah Webb redraws her loose sketch using a light box, before masking areas off and bringing her artwork to life with watercolours. Turn to page 92 to read her in-depth workshop.



Four video workshops to boost your animation art skills!

Learn from Disney artist Mingjue Helen Chen, veteran character designer Randy Bishop, Disney environment artist Nick Kennedy and Aardman animation director Bader Badruddin!



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LOCATION: Canada

WEB: www.artstation.com/jude_smith

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FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART



Julia Metzger

LOCATION: Germany **MEDIA:** Photoshop **WEB:** www.juliametzger.net

Julia has been working on a variety of projects across her career. She likes to explore the human condition through mythological stories.

1 THE DREADFUL SUMMONER

"One of my favourite personal paintings – and I'm still surprised how the mix of ideas came together, especially with the skull tree."

2 EROS & PSYCHE

"I followed the challenge to distil the classic Greek love story down into a single illustration, arriving at this interpretation."

2



1



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ARTIST
MONTH

3



4



5



3 THE SUN

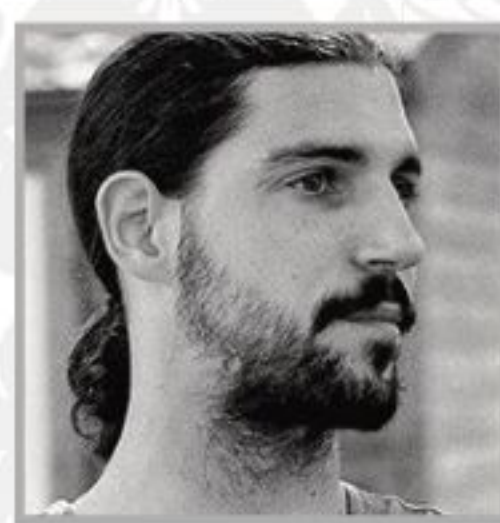
"The idea of having paintings within paintings is something I like to explore, to add layers of symbolism and/or story."

4 FIEND ARTISAN

"This is my answer to the isolation of lockdowns - your friendly neighbourhood artist stuck somewhere, painting away."

5 THE MOON

"This one feels almost like an excuse to use some of my favourite colours, and dig into the play of light and shadow."



Julien Hauville

LOCATION: France **MEDIA:** Cinema 4D, Blender, Photoshop **WEB:** www.artstation.com/julienhauville

Julien worked as a delivery driver while completing personal projects to hone his concept art skills. "I now work in the concept art industry with Ubisoft and more."





1 SOMEWHERE IN A CASTLE

"A lady looks out from her windswept castle. Will she ever see her knight come back to her?"

2 ICE_01

"A personal piece of concept art for a video game project. A team investigates a strange light from the frozen mountain."

3 THE GATE

"Another personal concept piece. This one depicts a mysterious gate that people can use to travel between different worlds."



Sacrinoxia

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

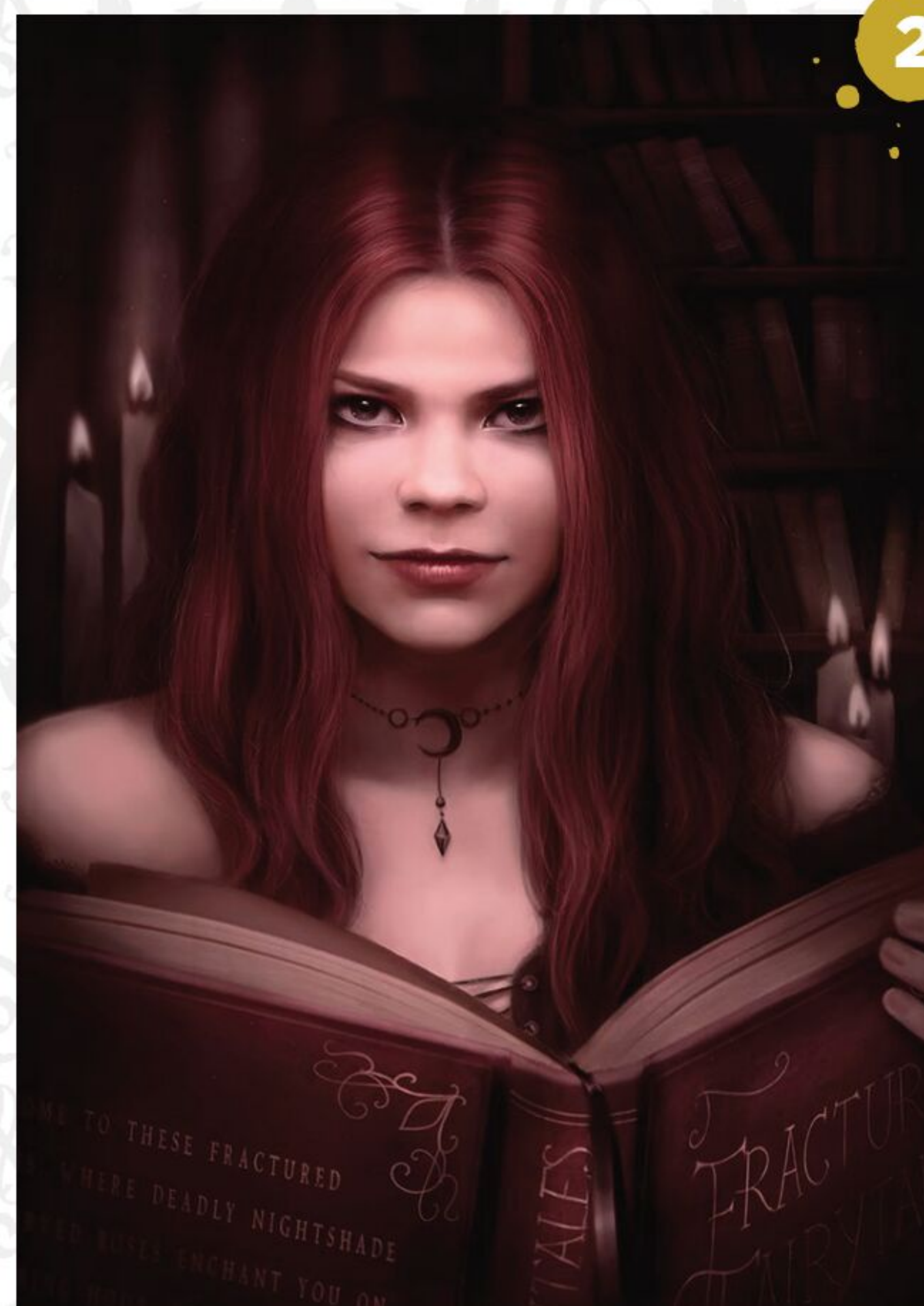
When she's not being commissioned to paint pets, Sacrinoxia (also known as Shannon Rose) loves to create fantasy- and gothic-inspired portraits. "I hope to become as skilled as artists such as Mélanie Delon," she says.

1 ZENITHA

"I've always admired images of people wearing big headpieces, so wanted to attempt something similar myself."

2 FRACTURED FAIRYTALES

"Fan art of Zora from the band Blackbriar. She's reading Fractured Fairytales, inspired by one of their EPs."



3 AIR

"I aimed for a dreamy effect for this portrait, so tried to limit the harder edges and small brushstrokes to the face area only."

4 BLOOM

"Stepping out of my usual comfort zone of dark themes, I painted flowers and butterflies to tie in with a bridal look."

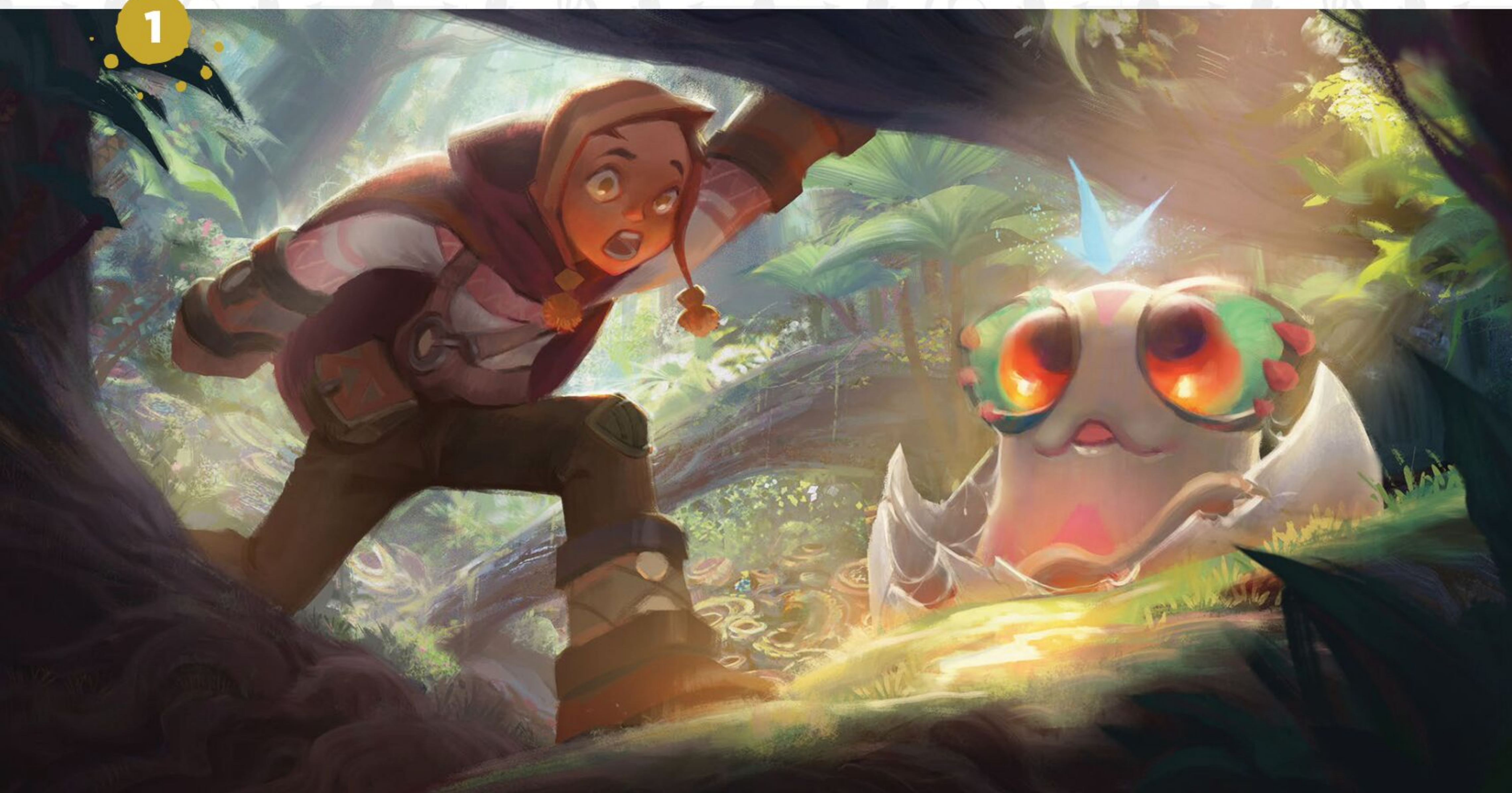




Kaining Wang

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

"I enjoy creating different worlds and stories," says concept artist Kaining. "I'm inspired by movies of all genres, fine art, novels, manga and what happened around me in this world."



1 ENCOUNTER

"The little girl accidentally found a living baby behemoth while hunting. It's the first time in history that humans have encountered the living behemoth."

2 UNA'S FUNERAL

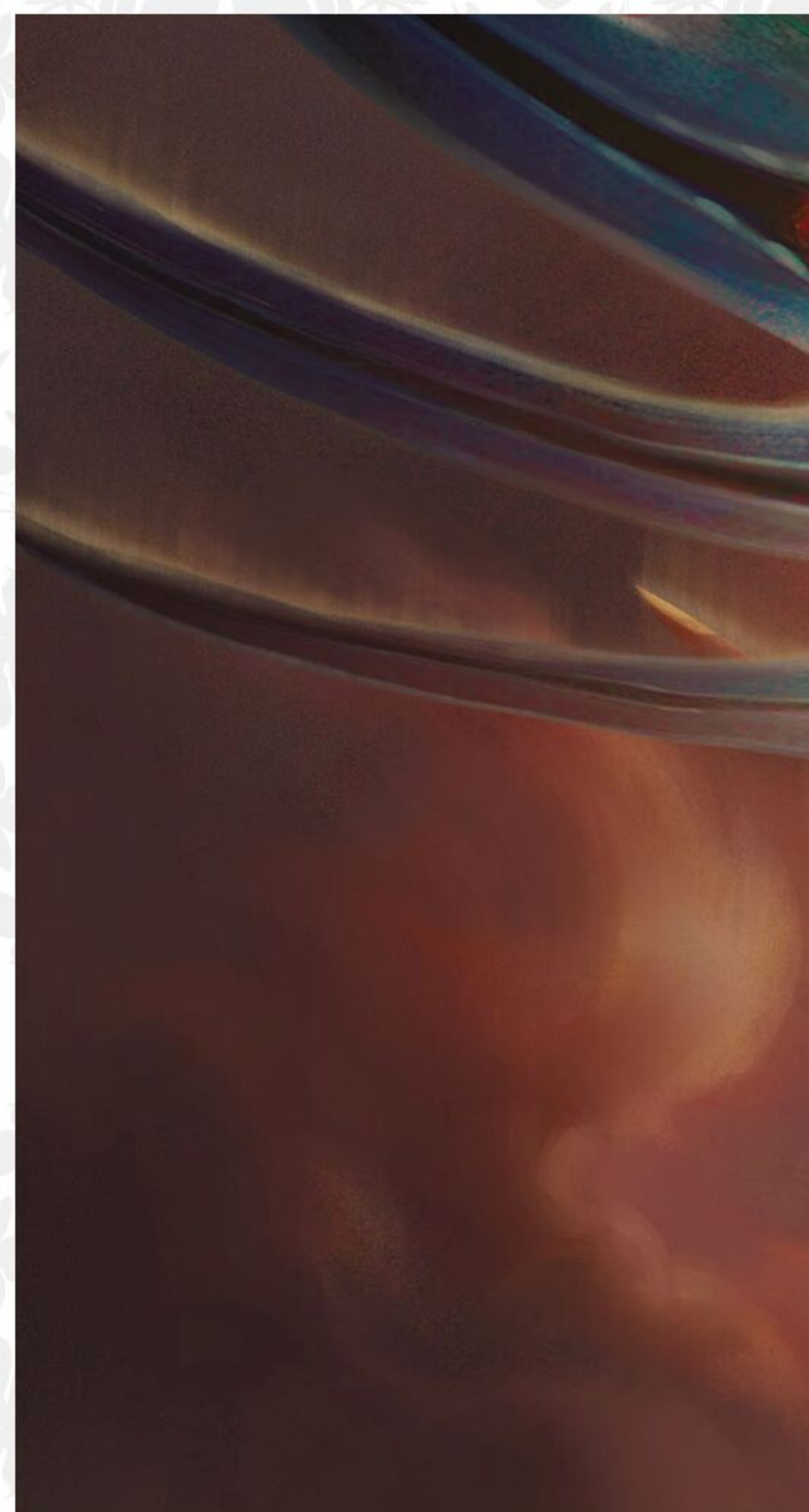
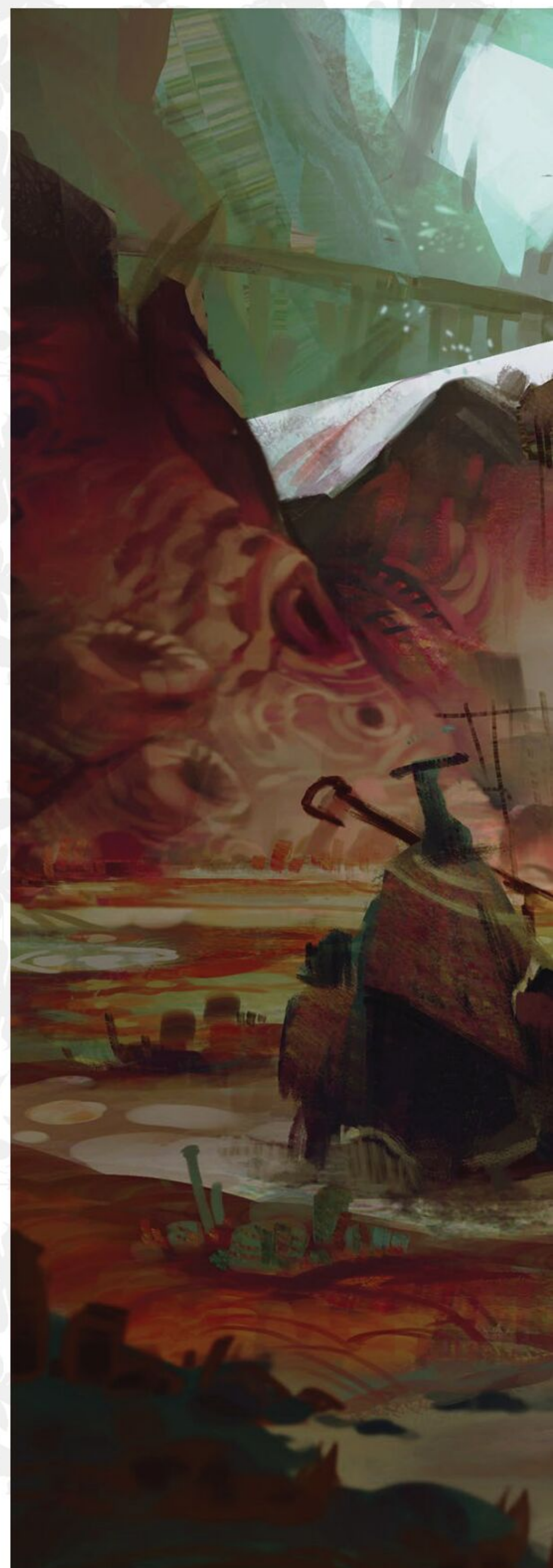
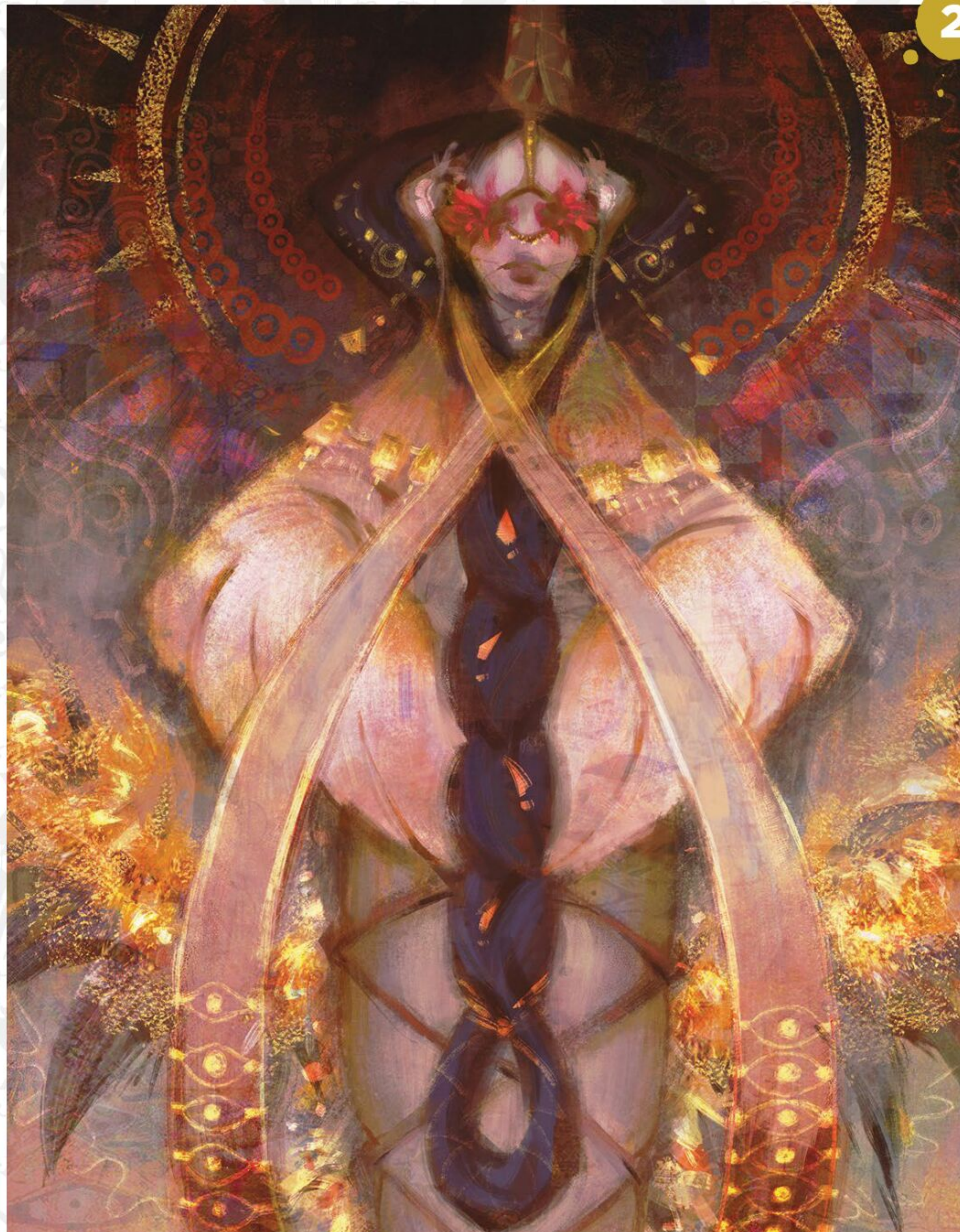
"A girl's sister passed away. The village decorated her body with glorious ornaments that would suffocate a living human."

3 HUNTER SEASON

"In the distant future, on a planet that's similar to Earth, a sacred creature called Behemoth has fallen from the sky."

4 THE ARRIVAL

"In the end, she arrived in front of the whole village, bringing groups of the living behemoth in front of them."





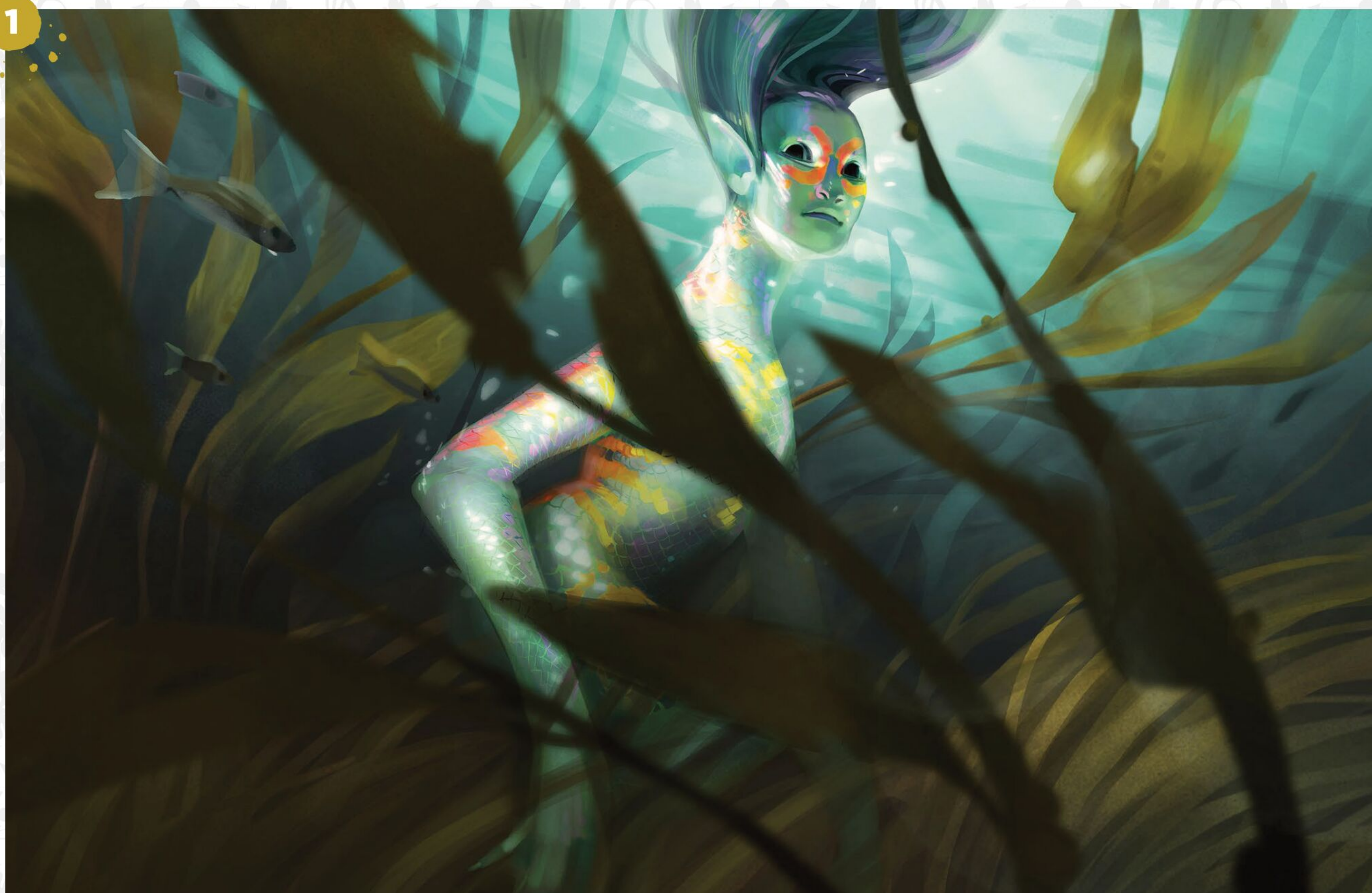


Sarah Mills

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

Sarah is a digital painter who splits her time between working, writing, instructing and speaking about the magic of creating images that speak to viewers.

1



1 KELP ELF

"This sea elf's arresting gaze serves as a moment of calm in tumultuous waters – a frozen moment captured amidst chaos."

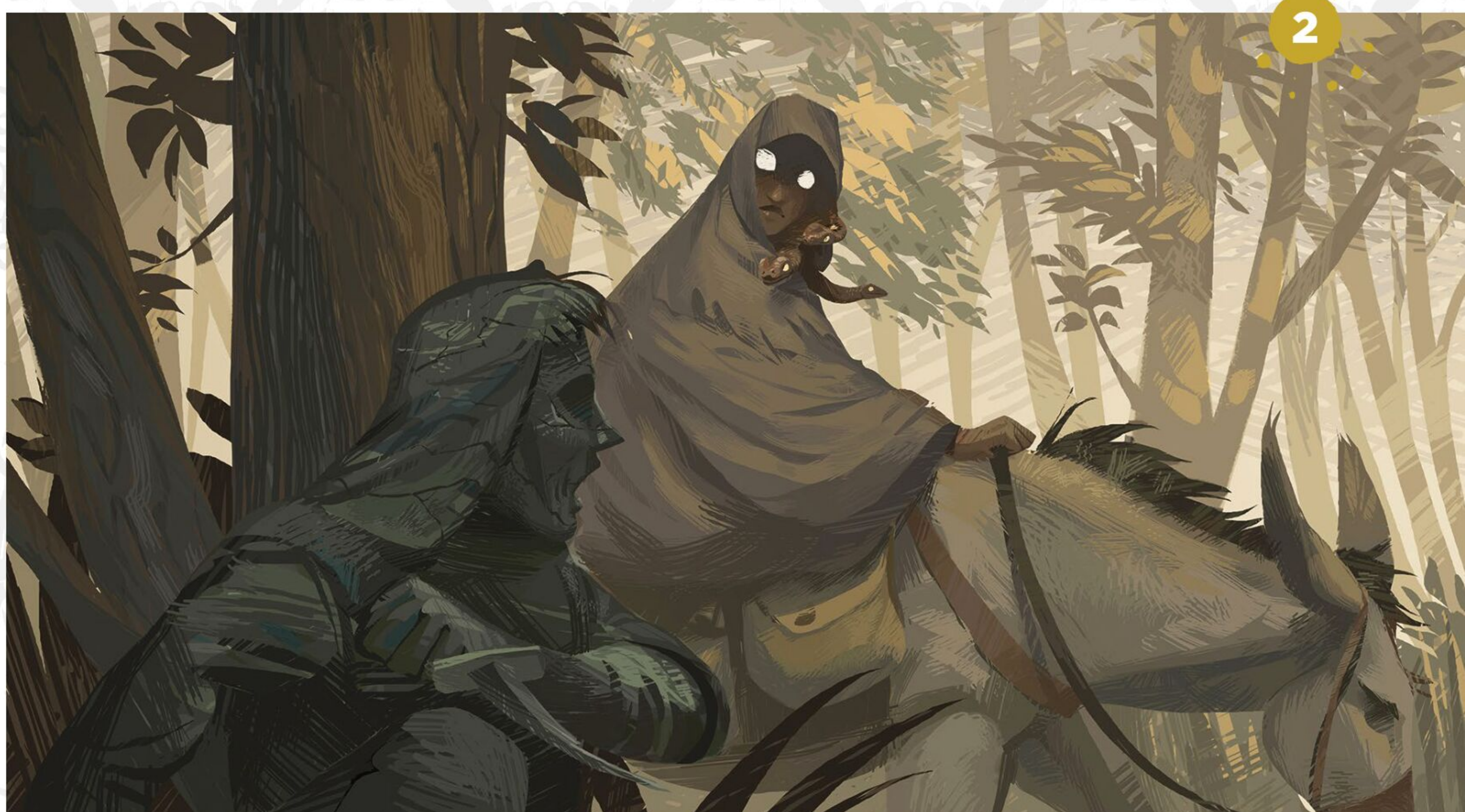
2 MEDUSA & THE HIGHWAYMAN'S NO GOOD, VERY BAD DAY

"This originally started as a colour exploration, but I couldn't resist exploring a story – the split second after the Highwayman makes a decision."

3 WONDERMENT

"This piece captures a moment of longing, of wanting to be anywhere but where you are – the focus is on the journey."

2







Dorothea Ruth Busch

LOCATION: Germany **MEDIA:** Procreate, Photoshop, Notes **WEB:** www.instagram.com/sumibumii/

"I work as an animation manager, storyboard artist, and illustrator," says Dorothea. Her style developed in 2020, and her visual trademarks are "feminine, airy motifs paired with contrasting black backgrounds."

1 PRIDE

"I posted this to show my support for the LGBTQ+ community. This illustration opens the opportunity for a series of flags."

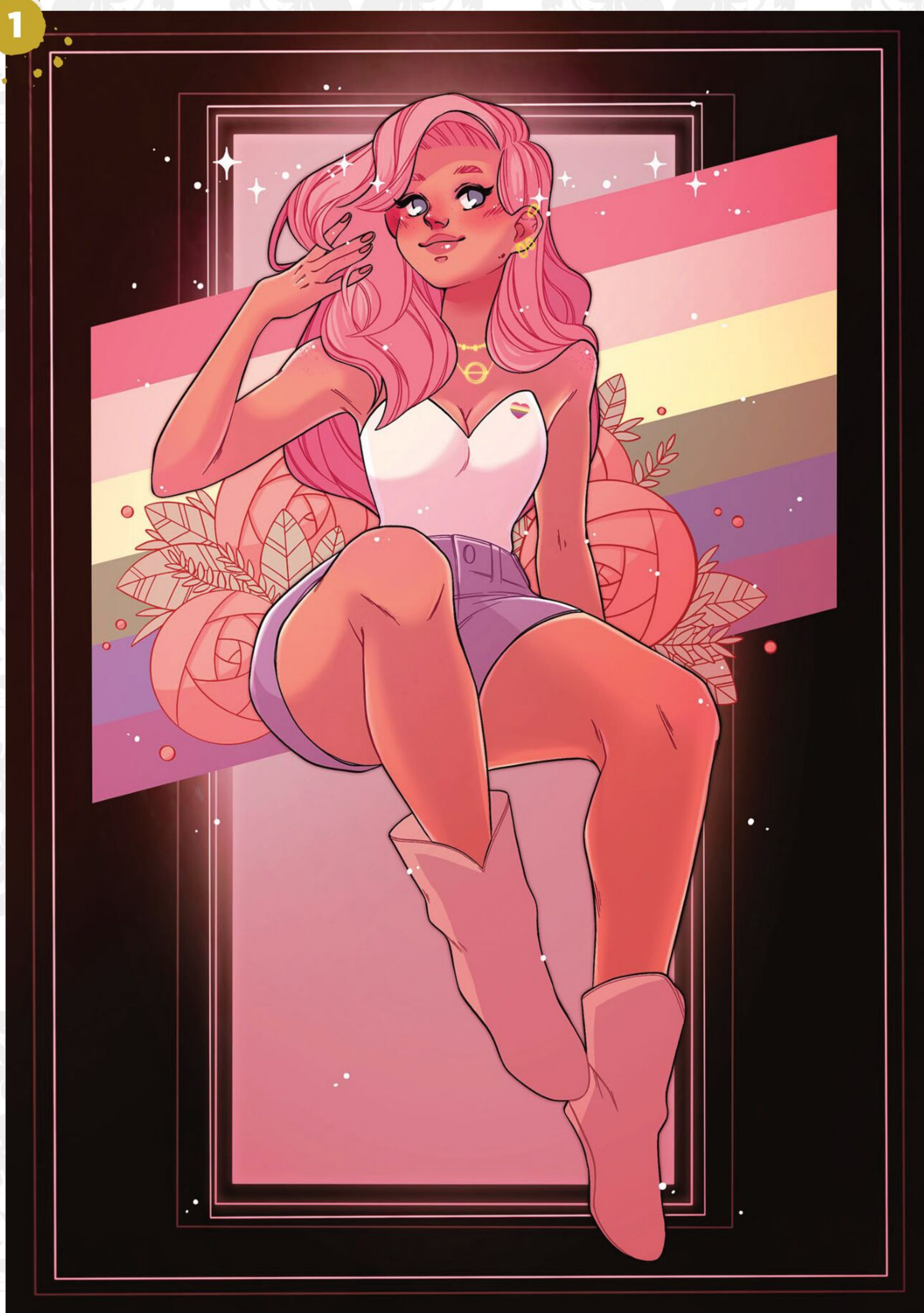
2 SAMURAI

"I've always felt inspired by tattoos and implement them in a lot of my illustrations. In this one, the tattoo is inspired by Japan."



3 WINTER

"Working with clean shapes, I wanted to welcome the colder weather of the season while capturing an aura of serenity."



Do you want to see your art on these pages? Then email five pieces of your work and a short explanation about each artwork, along with a photo and a few details about yourself, to fxpose@imaginefx.com

4 SPIRIT

"Inspired by my close connection to Japan, I came up with this character holding a traditional kitsune mask."



"Being an artist makes you more prone to burnout because of the constant churning of ideas and techniques," says Miguel Ycasiano.

How artists can beat burnout

Under pressure Being an artist isn't always easy. Leading creatives tell **Tom May** their tips for when stress becomes overwhelming

You love making art. But one day you wake up, and you just... can't. What's happening?

Burnout isn't just a throwaway catchphrase, it's a real condition, says



Dr Lynda Shaw a neuroscientist, business psychologist and change specialist. "It can be caused by periods of

additional anxiety or pressure, difficulty separating work and personal life, or a work/life balance that's out of kilter," she explains. "Working too many hours, spreading yourself too thin, and especially at the moment, facing pressures of an

Photograph by Gail Dalmaine



FLYING HIGH WITH HIS ART

Between working at 9B Collective, the art studio he co-founded that comprises mainly BIPOC artists, and working out, Michael Uwandu's day is packed! **Page 29**



UNDER THE WEATHER

We've heard of bringing nature inside, but this artist has gone one better by hanging clouds from the ceiling of her studio. Do they have silver linings...? **Page 30**



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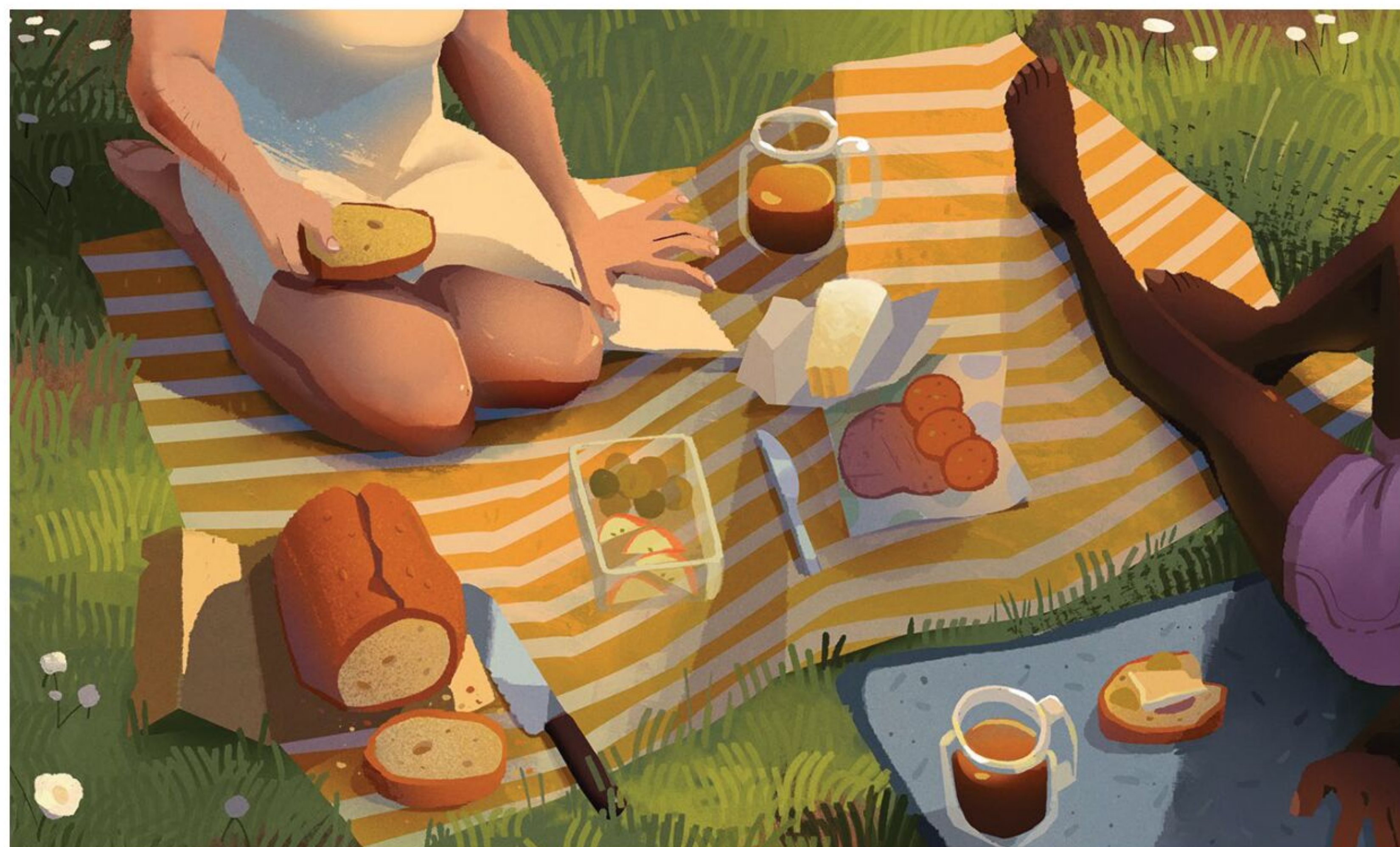
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"Poor management of energy is what leads to a lack of productivity, fatigue and burnout," says Alex Beddows.



"Sometimes I have the drive to create until 2am. Other times, I don't want to pick up a pencil," says Jill Becker, aka Paintixir.



uncertain job market, will all contribute. Feeling burnout can influence every aspect of your life, from your work to relationships, to your physical and mental health, and can leave you feeling you have very little left to give."

In medical terms, burnout relates to the release of cortisol, a stress hormone from the adrenal glands. "We need the right amount of cortisol

to survive," says Dr Shaw. "But cortisol can become toxic if allowed to continue for long. Persistent and overreaction of these stress systems can be detrimental to our health."

Anyone can suffer burnout, but



Domareen Fox, a London-based art director, production designer and visual development artist,

"With no other hobbies to turn to, art block often leads to feelings of failure or guilt," says Domareen Fox.

believes that creatives are especially prone to it. "Whether it's working for yourself or someone else, our creativity is often drawn from a personal place," she points out. "And it can become incredibly taxing to continuously pull from this source, day after day."

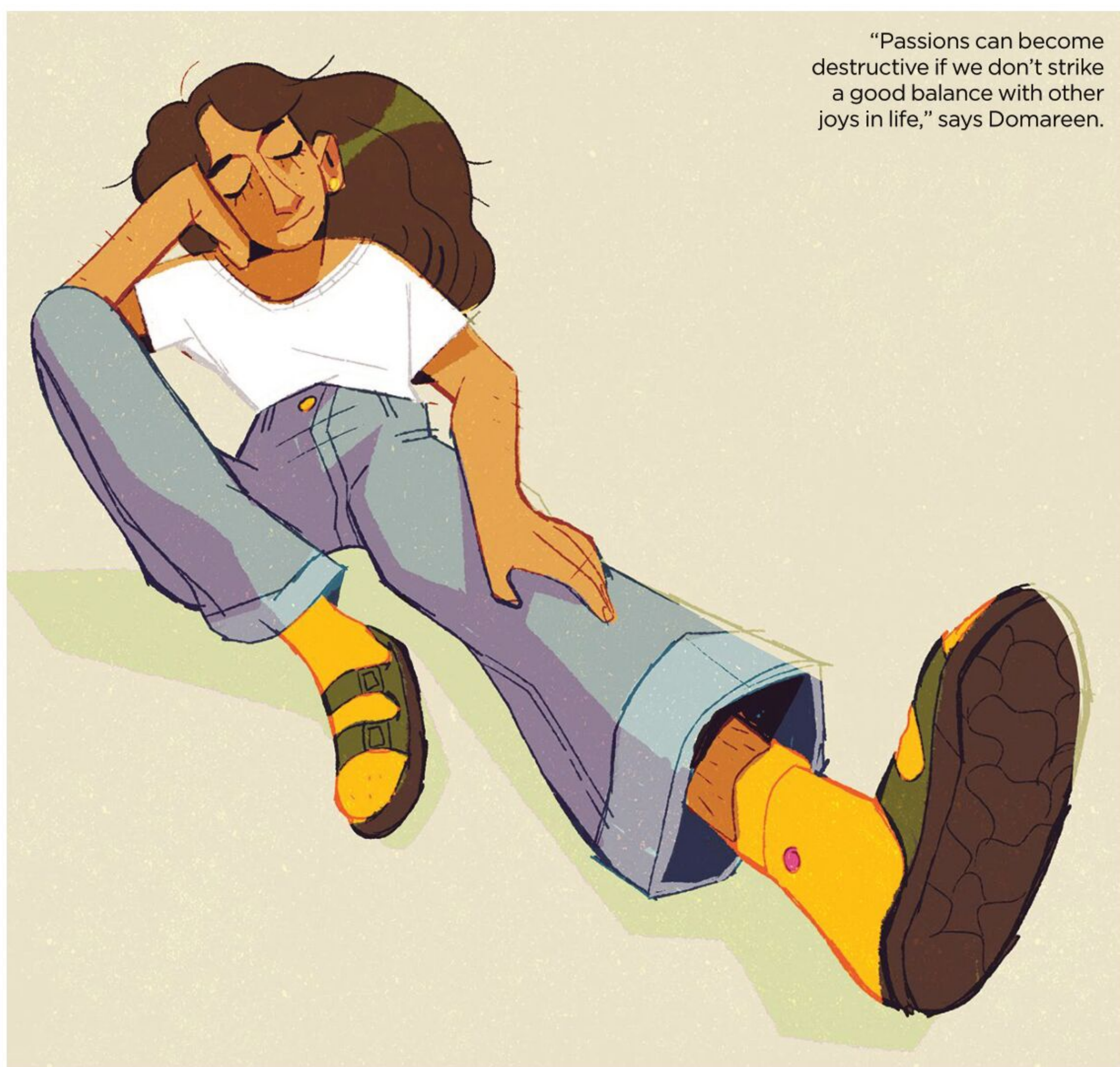
ALWAYS THINKING ART

While some people switch off the moment they leave their workplace,



being an artist is more a state of being. As **Alex Beddows**, a British 3D artist working in the video games industry, notes: ➡

“Burnout can be caused by periods of anxiety or pressure, or difficulty separating work and personal life”



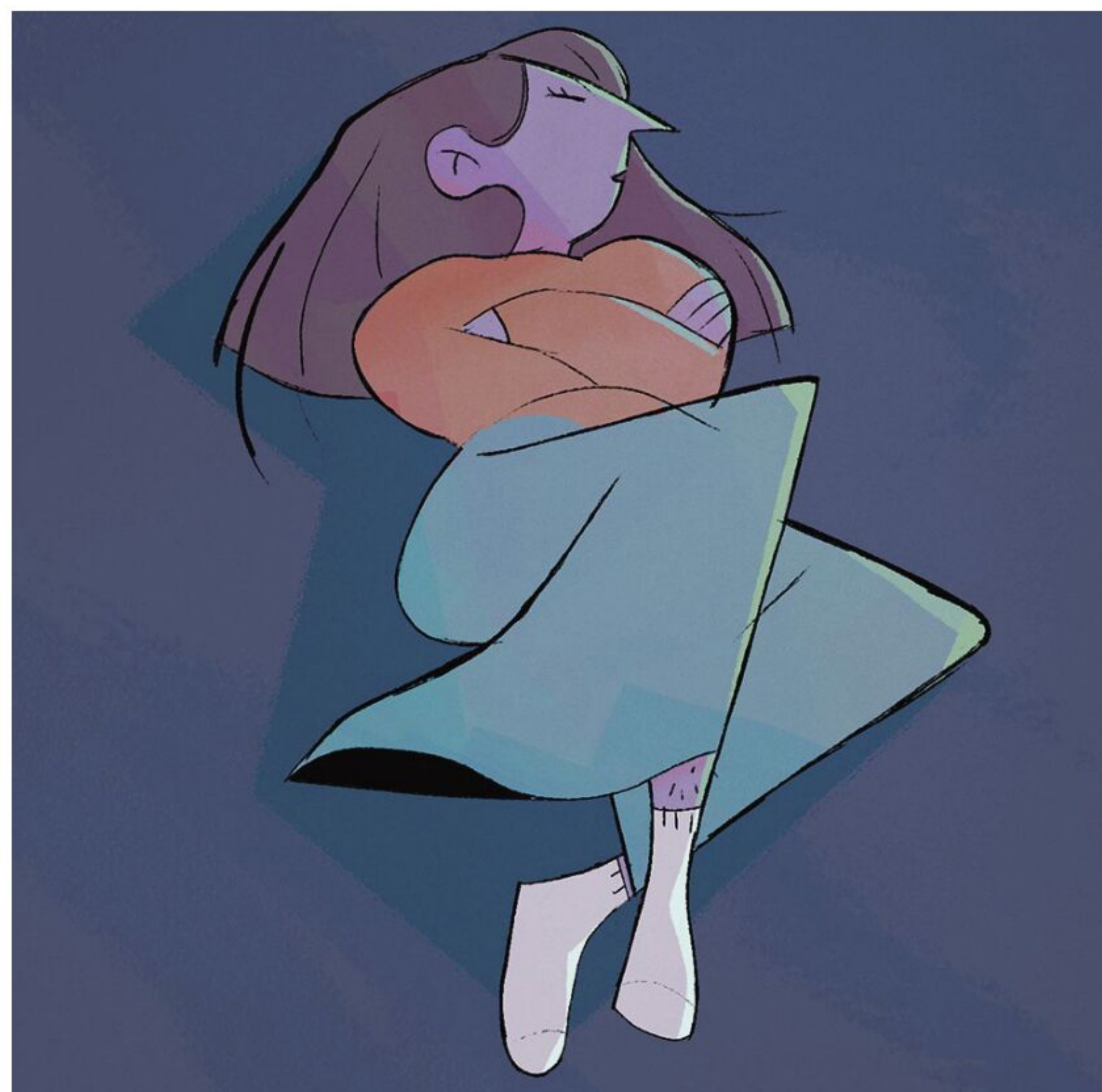
➡ "With anything that's a career and not just a nine-to-five job, the boundaries are far more grey. In addition, direct comparison to your peers can lead us to push ourselves further than we have the capacity to maintain."

So how can you avoid burnout? Deadlines are deadlines, and it's impossible to remove all the stress from your working life. But you can find better ways of dealing with it, believes Domareen.

"I suffered burnout when I held supervising and art direction roles on numerous projects, for four years straight at the time, and neglected taking any breaks or holidays," the artist reveals. "I developed bad work habits too: unnecessary overtime and talking about work after work hours, to name a couple. As a result, my mental and physical health began to decline."

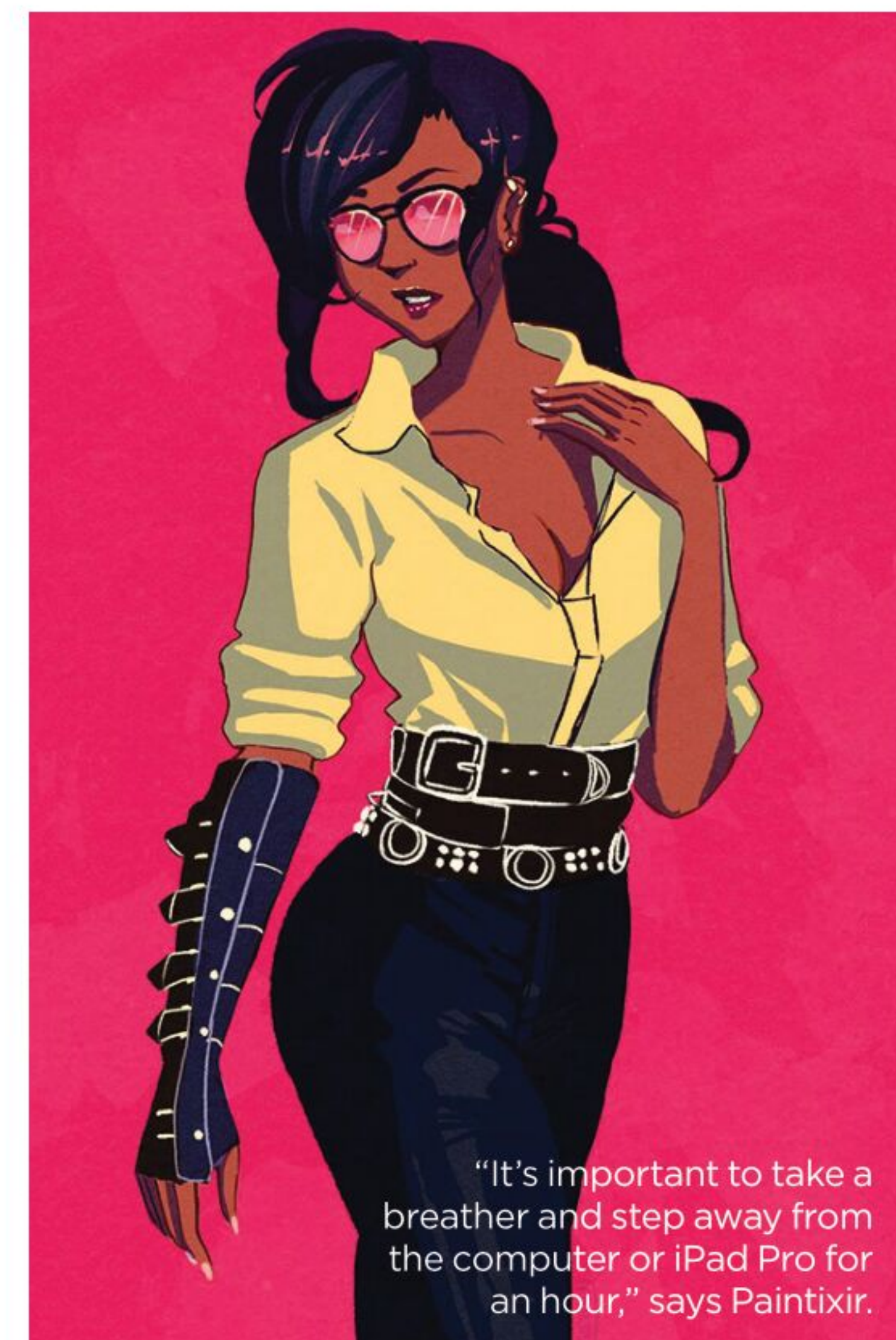
PHYSICAL TOLL

Her wake-up call, she says, came when she was diagnosed with fibromyalgia, a condition where pain occurs throughout the body. "After that, I planned my finances, and took a



six-month hiatus," she says. "I didn't draw for myself during that time either. And it was bliss: this was the year I got into gardening. I realised I'd been putting 100 per cent into career advancement, but zero per cent into personal development, health or just living life. I learned the importance of listening to your body and mind."

"My policy is to be full of honesty with my direct manager, production staff and supervisors," says Domareen.



"It's important to take a breather and step away from the computer or iPad Pro for an hour," says Paintixir.

“It's great to be passionate about your work, but you can't let that passion overtake everything else”

"It's great to be passionate about your work, but you can't let that passion overtake everything else," adds Alex. "Yes, you need to make sacrifices, but some things are more important. So for example, the deadline for a project takes priority over crazy sock day at school. But putting some extra hours into personal development is definitely not more important than your mother's birthday."

This means, among other things, not over-committing yourself, which can be particularly tough in the ➡

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

PJ HOLDEN

The 2000 AD artist offers his tips for dealing with burnout

How do you avoid falling into the burnout zone?

When a page is edging me close to frustration or – possibly – burnout, I try and turn my approach upside down. Either I'll go back to first principles (thinking how do I draw heads, for example) or I'll redesign the layout that's the foundation for the page (what happens if, instead of doing panel one as a wide panel, I draw it as a tall panel?)

And if I get really stuck, I'll set a Pomodoro timer: a simple 25-minute timer that you can use for task management. And then I'll try to forget all the complexities and just draw.

Do you ever overload yourself with work?

Freelancers break into hives when turning down work. So yes, I've definitely taken on too much in the past. But I've usually risen to the occasion, and if the work is fun then burnout is rarely a problem.

The biggest difficulty is taking on work that I know I won't enjoy, simply because it's offered and I'm a freelancer. I've tried to get better at saying no to projects that I don't feel I'll get a big kick out of.

What are your tips for avoiding burnout?

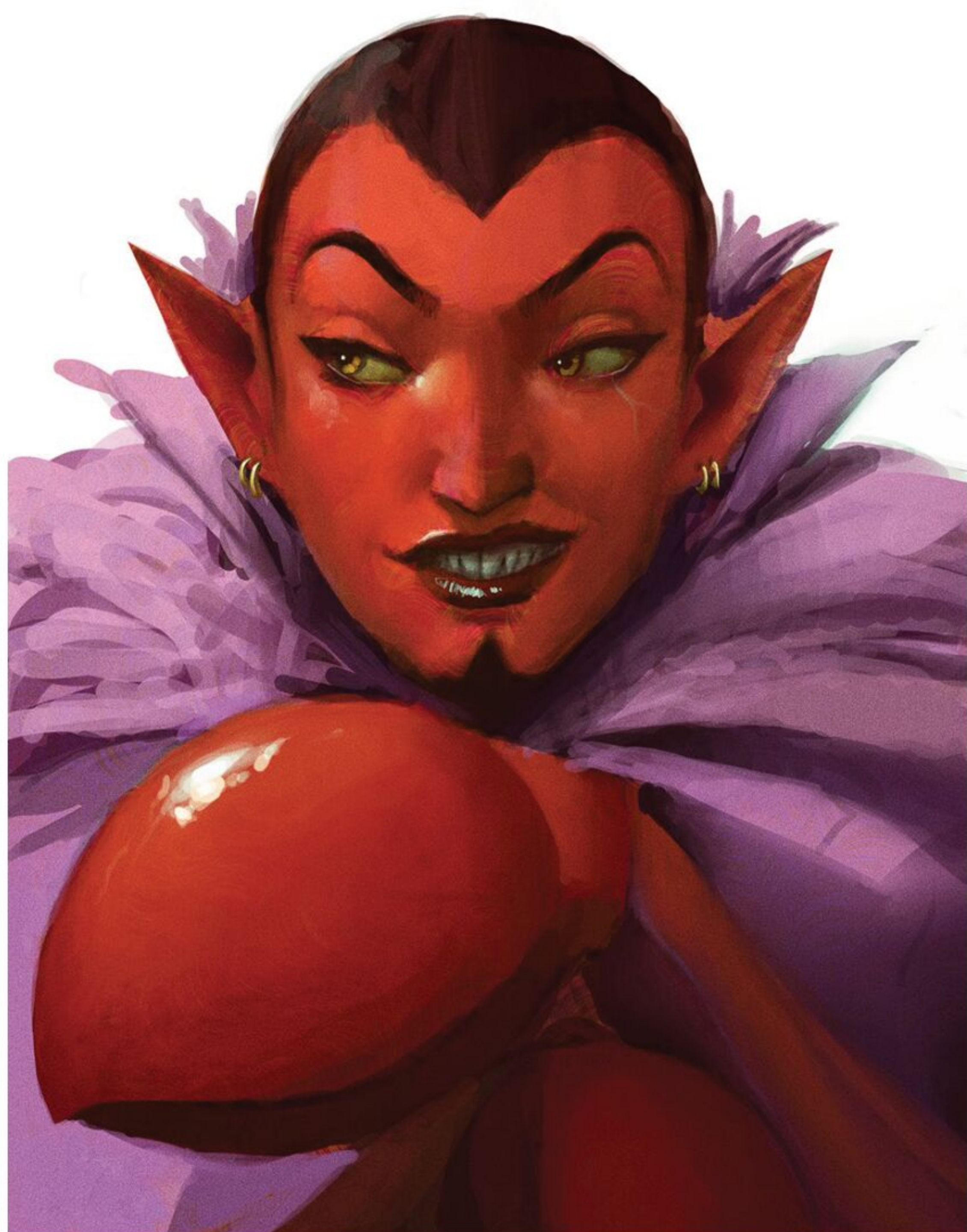
Know when your deadlines are, know how much work you can do, and it should be fairly simple to 'do the math'. Right now we're in the middle of a global pandemic, so all bets are off. But keep your editor in the loop – they'll be understanding. Learn to say no to projects that don't fire you up. And try and get outdoors – a bit of fresh air works wonders.



PJ has been a professional comic artist for the past 20 years. He's best known for his work on 2000 AD.

www.pauljholden.com

"Burnout for me comes when I can't get near the drawing table – as in during lockdown and home schooling," says PJ.



➡ early stages of your career. “For me, taking on too much work led to burnout, because of how many deadlines I had to meet – sometimes even sacrificing some deadlines for others,” recalls **Miguel Ycasiano**, a concept and character artist based in Quezon City, Philippines. “This taught me to be more measured with time management because it takes time to create pieces, and it becomes difficult to create quality work if you take on too many projects at once.”



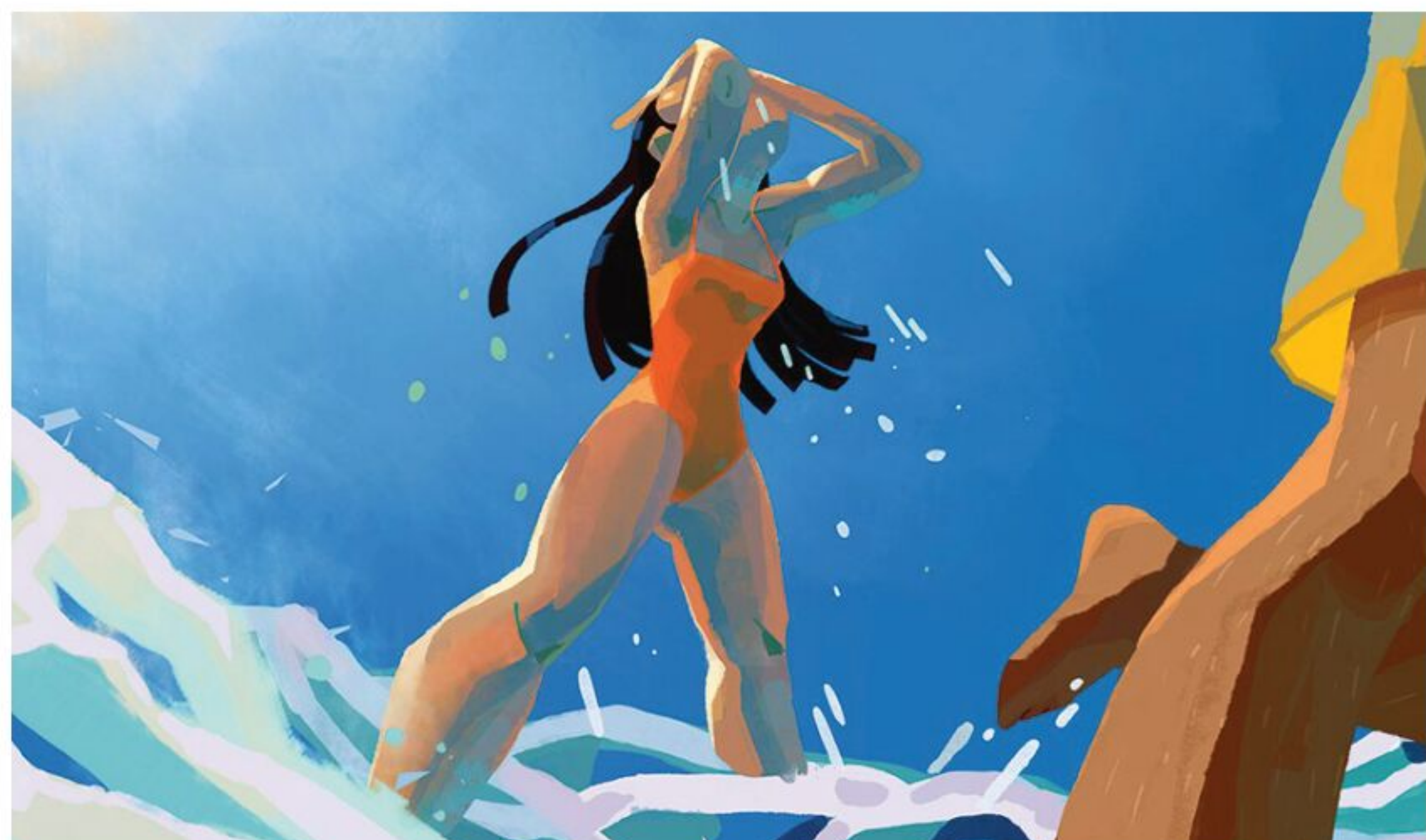
“Timing how long it takes to create work, from start to finish, helps you to plan better,” says Miguel.

“Understand that you know enough about the craft to produce decent work, even if your passion has evaporated,” says PJ.

LEARN TO SAY NO

When personal priorities clash with the demands of work or education, Domareen advises a policy of full honesty. “After my hiatus, I vowed only to do overtime when really necessary, and to give realistic

“As creatives, we’re often too nice and prefer not to say no to that ‘bit of extra work,’” believes Domareen.



“Trusted friends can do more for your long-term career and mental health than any tutorial or course”

estimates on delivering work,” she remembers. “I’m fortunate to be working with a compassionate team, so I’m completely transparent with them about my physical and mental struggles. I’ve also learned when to say no, and to speak out against unhealthy work practices.”

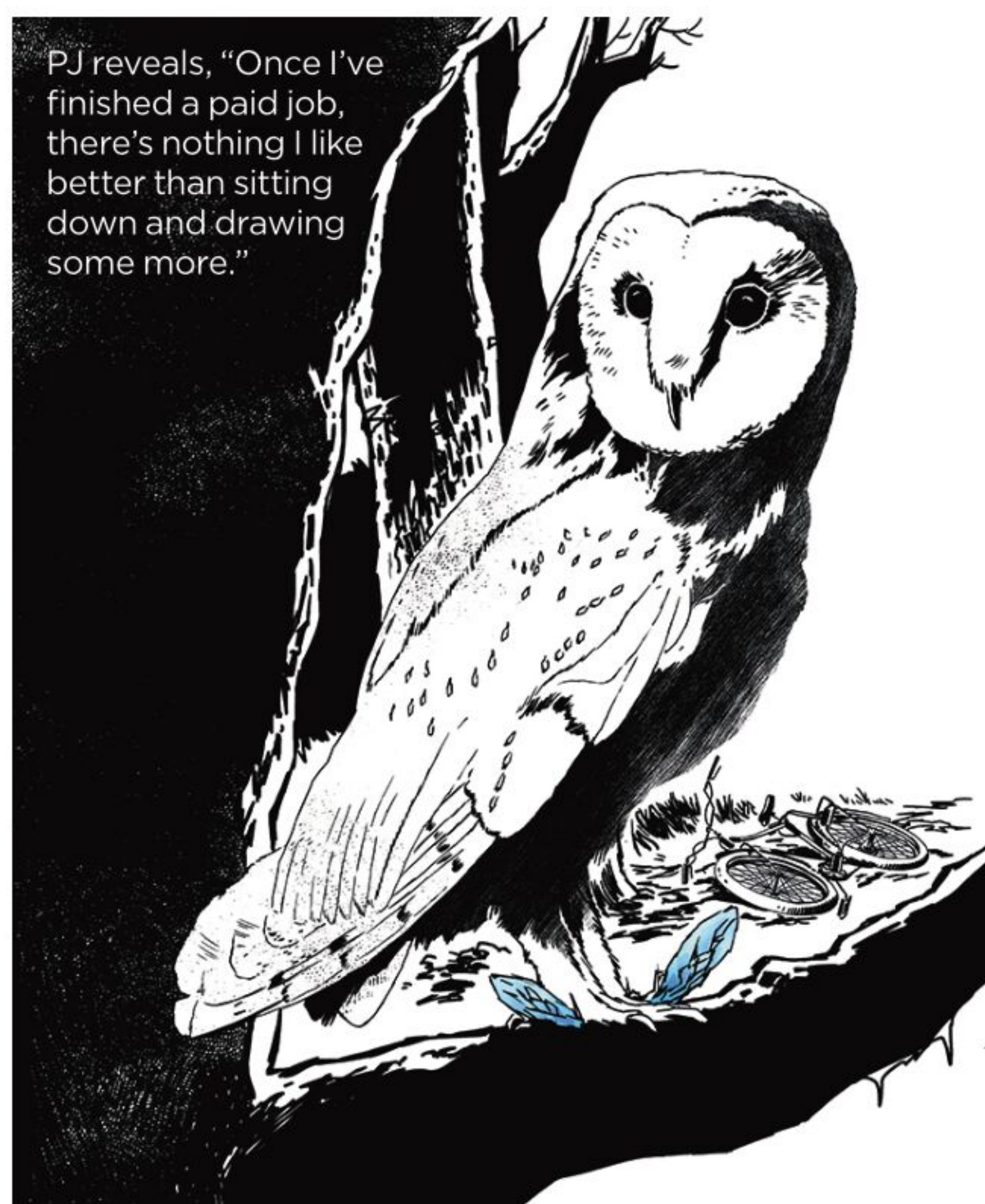
Having a support group can make all of this easier, adds Alex. “I have a group of artist friends who are like brothers to me,” he says. “We talk nearly every day, we joke, we argue, we critique each other’s work, and I talk to them about my problems – big or small,” he says. “Trusted friends can do more for your long-term career

and mental health than any tutorial or course.”

It’s also about finding work that brings you joy, believes Belfast-based comic artist **PJ Holden**. Well, eventually, at least. “Certainly in the early part of your career, you take on work that you don’t



have passion for,” he says. “And sometimes the excitement of getting paid will power you through. But as you get older, you start to know yourself and your work better. You figure out what are the projects that fire you up, and if you’re lucky, those will be the ones you’re offered.”



PJ reveals, "Once I've finished a paid job, there's nothing I like better than sitting down and drawing some more."



"Break out of your comfort zone and try new techniques," advises Paintixir.



There are things you can do on a day-to-day basis too. "First, don't compare yourself too much to another artists,"

says **Jill Becker** (also known as Paintixir), a digital illustrator based in Virginia, US. "Everyone's artistic journey is different: it's just one of the things I've had to come to terms with."

"Also, take breaks! I'd highly recommend doing something else non-art related. I'll walk around the track for a hour, play video games, read, or binge-watch shows on Hulu! Then I'll be back to work with new, fresh ideas." 🍎

"Artist burnout can result from pushing yourself too much," says Miguel, "either to meet deadlines or complete a piece of personal work."

"Drawing fan art, or watching speed-painting videos or tutorials on YouTube, can help provide new perspective," says Paintixir.

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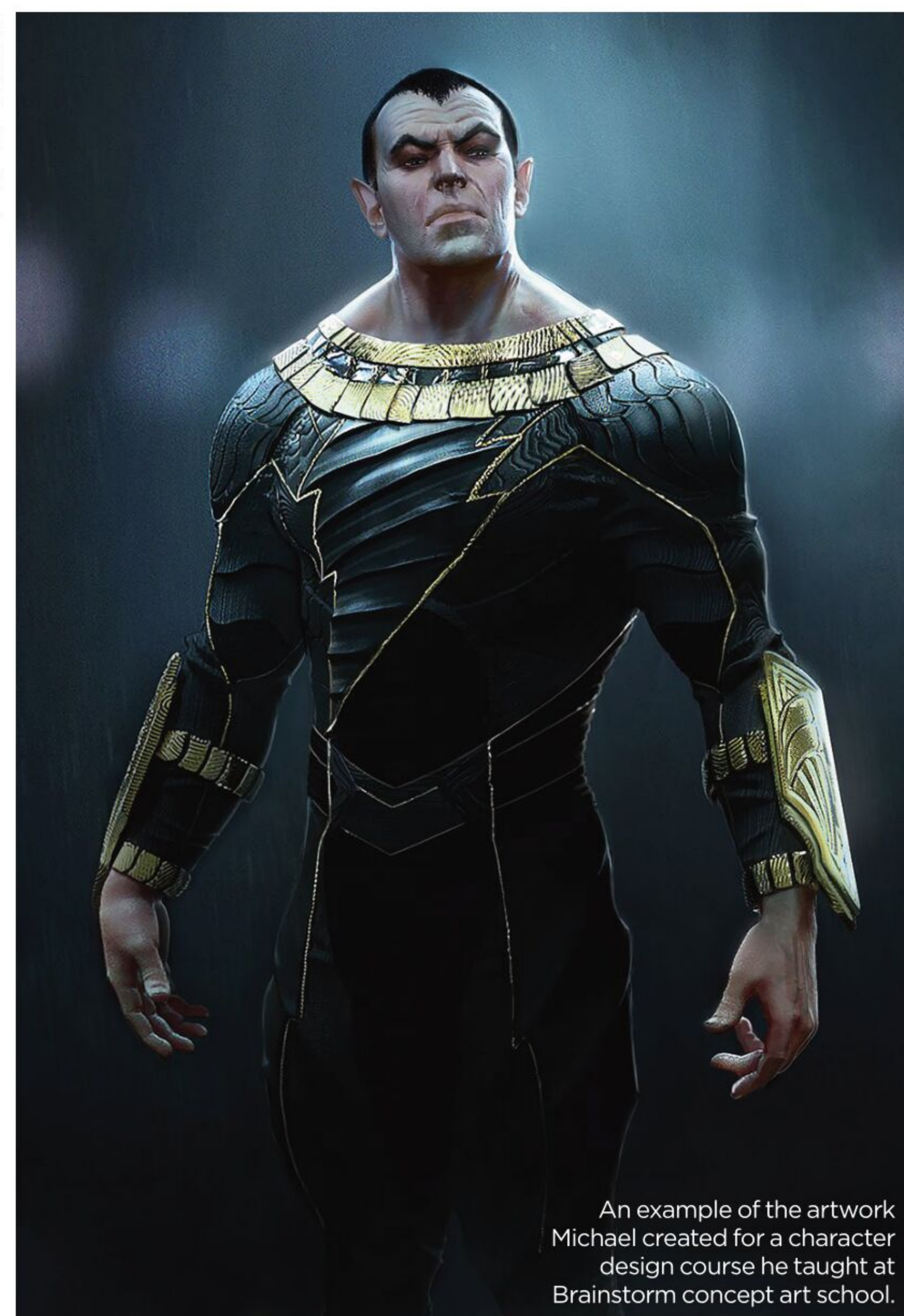


Michael co-founded 9B Collective, the first Black-owned concept art studio made up primarily of BIPOC artists.



© CBS Television Studios

Michael helped develop the look of Hugh, a former Borg drone who appears in Star Trek: Picard.



An example of the artwork Michael created for a character design course he taught at Brainstorm concept art school.

A day in the life of... Michael Uwandi

Keeping busy Time is important to this concept and vis-dev artist. Learn how he makes the most of his day

"I wake up at 6:30am and then I work out for an hour. After I come back, I'll set up my computer and start working around 8am. I'll usually turn off my phone and just do art until noon. Once 12pm hits, that's when all the phone calls flood in. Generally, I take an hour-long lunch break and talk with my best friend the whole time.

At 1pm, I get back to work, but I'm a bit more open with my phone, so if

knowing yourself and analysing when you're the most productive and forming your routine around that is a good way to maximise your workload and opportunities.

Up until now at Marvel, every time I've been at a company there's been only one black artist or one female artist, so my 9B Collective partners, Phillip Boutté Jr., Aldis Hodge and myself, wanted to create a community of artists that can work on projects

“We wanted to create a community of artists that can work on projects together and give them a voice”

I have any emails, or things that pertain to 9B Collective then I'll be able to answer those. I work until 11pm with a couple of short breaks for walks and then start over the next day.

I work for something like 15, sometimes 16 hours a day. I'm very much about trying to do the best I can. One of the big things with me is that I always wish I had more time, so I'll look at what I've done in the past and say that I can do better. I think

together and give them a voice. Our goal is to provide a shift in the entertainment landscape by working towards true inclusivity both in front of and behind the camera.”

Michael is from South Central Los Angeles. Before Marvel and starting 9B Collective, he freelanced at Lucasfilm, HBO and Paramount. His previous work includes such titles as The Mandalorian, Star Trek: Picard and Moonlight. You can see more of Michael's art at www.michael-uwandi.com.



© DC Entertainment and Warner Bros. Television



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

Michael worked with costume designer Victoria Auth and associate creative director Robin Kennedy to develop Supergirl's sleek outfit.



Liana Hee

Sense of wonder Keeping a work-life balance to stay inspired in her art is crucial to this US artist



When I set out to design my home studio, I wanted to create a charming space that felt

magical. The room is small and I wanted to make the most of it. Luckily, I had a great foundation to work with: lovely hardwood floors and large windows that let in lots of natural light.

One of my favourite additions was placing a disco ball on the floor in the sun, allowing sparkles of light to glimmer across the room. Hanging clouds from the ceiling and having a vase of fresh flowers in the room makes me feel like I'm bringing in ➡➡



Anything that reminds me of vacation makes me happy so I'm often painting Tiki-inspired pin-up art.



I recently painted Moonlight Flight for the Target House Heartwork Project (shown here on my Wacom Cintiq). Each year, money is raised for art supplies for the art room at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

“When I set out to design my home studio, I wanted to create a charming space that felt magical”



ImagineNation Artist in Residence

My one-of-a-kind Small World clock brings me so much joy! When I put my gallery wall together, I started with the clock and centred all of my art around his happy, smiling face.

My cute little disco ball on the floor catches the sun's rays and casts light sparkles all over the room throughout the day!

These floating clouds give the room such an airy, whimsical feel! Sometimes when they catch a draft, they slowly twirl and appear even more magical.



When I paint digitally, I like to keep my Cintiq screen as upright as possible because I find that it helps with my posture. I mostly use my iMac for watching a show or film while I work.

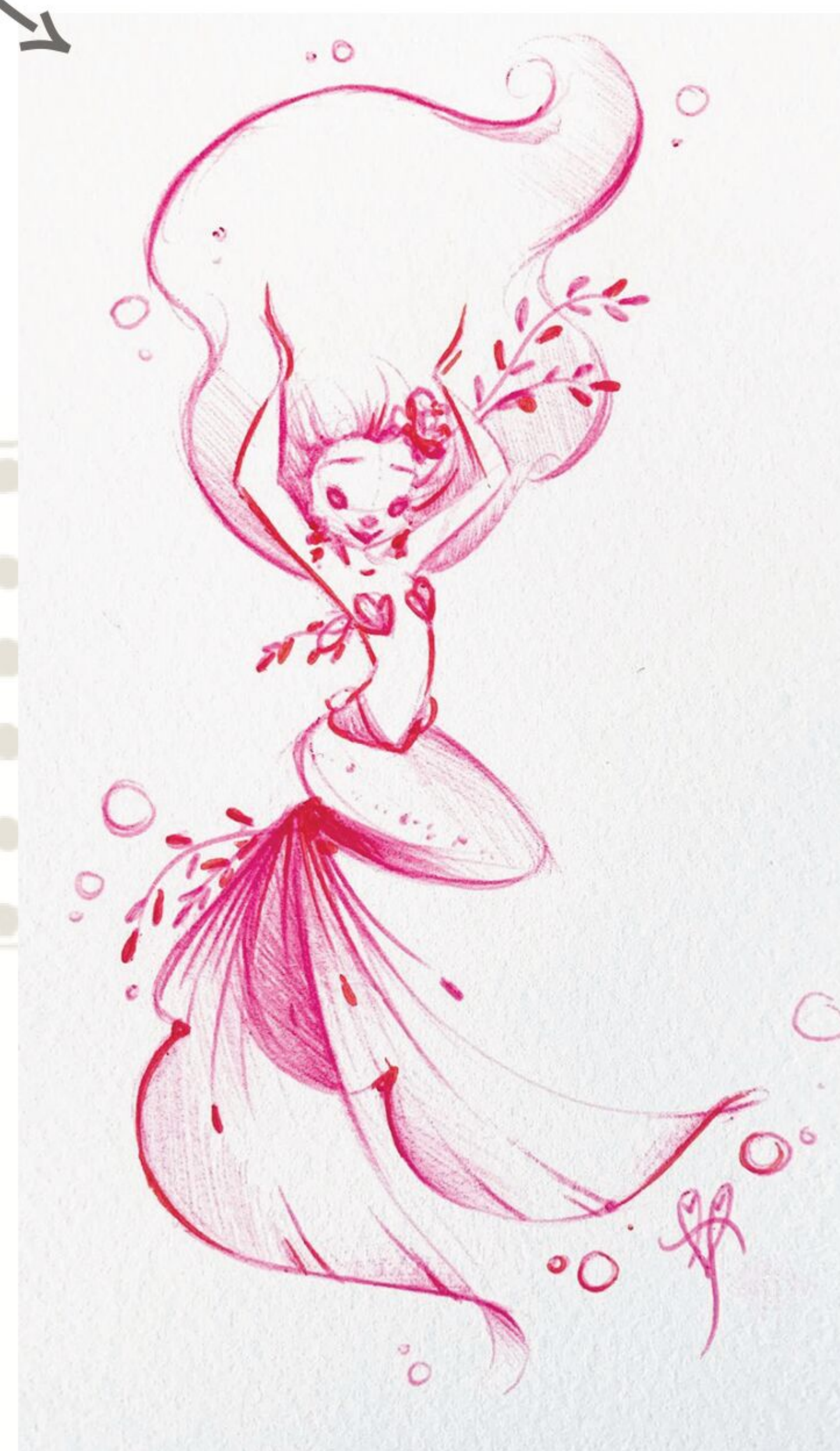
I've adored my deceptively comfortable ghost chair for nearly ten years now and it accompanies me to every desk that I've worked at!

The complex patterns and vibrant colours on my vintage Beni Mguild Moroccan rug is the perfect addition to tie the room together.

Artist news, software & events

I feel very lucky to have these gorgeous windows that let in warm light for most of the day. It's wonderful to have natural lighting for painting.

Sometimes I really enjoy just drawing with a good ol' ballpoint pen. I find that the illustrations end up looking very carefree and organic.



“I’m so grateful to have gorgeous artworks on my walls and meaningful trinkets on my table”



My seashell chair is the perfect corner addition, sitting underneath my vintage Peter Pan poster. Also, I'm obsessed with my adorable octopus plushies!

One of my favourite decorations is my Alice in Wonderland doorknob. I'd like to think of it as a quirky invitation to walk into my own little wonderland!



I've had these adorable Ariel and Sisters figurines for a long time! They were designed by Chris Schnabel and I love them so much.

ImagineNation Artist in Residence



Last year, I finally found the perfect wonderland mirror. It makes the room appear so much larger and I just love the ornate detailing!



I'm a huge fan of handwritten letters so I keep my stationery within easy reach. I also love vintage typewriters. This one is an Olivetti Valentine and the rich red hue and script font makes my heart swoon.



➡ a bit of the outdoors. I feel most creative when I'm surrounded by things that I love and am so grateful to have gorgeous artworks on my walls and meaningful trinkets on my table. Having these things to admire around me as I work continues to inspire me on a daily basis.



I love hearts, and mixing pinks and reds together. This babe was painted for Valentine's Day.

I primarily work with gouache paint on cold press watercolour paper and when I work digitally, I use my 22 HD Cintiq and iMac. My computer setup takes up most of the room on my tiny desk, but since I mostly create miniature paintings that are only about two to three inches big, I don't need too much space!

EARLY RISER

I like to start my workday early. I wasn't always like this, though. Back when I was in my 20s I couldn't even wake up before 10am; now I naturally wake up at the crack of dawn. I guess this is a sure sign of getting older. Ha!

Usually, the benefit is enjoying the rising sun streaming through the windows and listening to the sound of early morning birds chirping. Now, despite how I've set up my whimsical little office and enjoy the birdies outside, working from home is not exactly a fairy tale.

I was fortunate enough to pick up this full set of Holbein gouache paint a couple of years ago at Comic-Con. Each vibrant colour is truly a gem and these are the primary paints that I use every day!

Mermaids are my favourite subjects to paint. There's so much to work with, from the flowing tail to the hair. I painted this one as part of a set and loved her, so I decided to keep the original painting.



As a full-time artist, I definitely have my share of challenges. I often struggle with the balance of creating personal and professional art and staying motivated. I find myself swamped with online order fulfilments that happens in my other "office" (otherwise known as the kitchen), and letting my workspace become a

“I feel most creative when I’m surrounded by things that I love”

I’ve spent years collecting vintage posters and original art to put my dream gallery wall together. Most of these pieces were created by friends and artists that I look up to and seeing these beautiful works each day continues to inspire me.

complete disaster zone, becoming so overwhelmed that I don’t tidy the mess for days. I tend to become distracted by juggling too many tasks (including laundry) or zone into something for hours, barely coming up for air!

All of these things contribute to an unhealthy lifestyle for me and so I’ve been very mindful of how I spend the hours in my day. I make sure to get enough sleep at night, take necessary breaks, lunchtime walks and scheduling reasonable goals that I know I can accomplish. This way, I’m able to maintain wellness in all areas and feel good at the end of each day, knowing that I did my best.

Liana is an illustrator and character designer living in Los Angeles, California. She has worked for high-profile clients such as Nickelodeon, Disney and Random House Publishing, among others. You can find more of her work, which includes prints and enamel pins, at www.lianahee.etsy.com.



Having lovely collectibles around my desk makes me happy! This ornate jelly belly dispenser is so pretty to look at as well as offering a fun treat now and then.



This animation light table was a special gift. I treasure it dearly and still use it to figure out new pieces I’m working on.



This lovely, gold-detailed, footed water cup and paint palette set was custom-made for me by ceramic artist Kristina Kotlier.

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NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS
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Letters

YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS



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



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Seasons change

I've just started receiving my subscription. I'm on my third "how to spark bright ideas". I absolutely love and appreciate these magazines.

I wanted to compliment you on your editorial note referencing the changing seasons. Very appropriate and aspirational in these bleak times. I'm very thankful that our orange-faced clown has left the White House, but the US has a lot of healing to do. Thank you for your contributing beacon of light. Perhaps one of the magazine covers should display a lighthouse in honour of you. Take care.

Jon, US

Claire replies Jon, thank you for your kind words about our magazine. I do try to remind people to look after their mental health and to focus on the positives. It's not easy to do and – to be honest – it's something that I have to remind myself to do. This issue we take a look at burnout on page 20 and it's a timely reminder to focus on self as well as skills. I hope that you're doing well, Jon – thanks again for your email.



DID YOU MISS THE PREVIOUS PACKED ISSUE? Don't worry – you can get hold of issue 198 at <http://ifxm.ag/single-ifx>.

We ran a series of articles on how to get the most from the free painting program Krita, starting in issue 178.



This is reader Greg's version of the cover art from issue 189, which was originally painted by Dave Greco.

Art community

I wanted to take a moment to thank all of you fine folks at ImagineFX and everyone who contributes to this amazing publication. Covid and being in prison make things that much harder, but I'm paying for a crime I committed. Your magazine, however, gives me something to look forward to every month. I'm a complete addict for your Sketchbook and FXPosé.

We don't get internet access here so I don't know how to get more Sketchbook material. I thought there was a collection of them somewhere? We have a sizable art community here at my facility, but we are severely limited in materials. I share my subscription and we all like to challenge one another. It keeps us sharp.

Keep up the amazing work and thank you. The recent articles about keeping happy and mental illness prove that you guys/ladies care so much for this community. I also did the 'in your own style' challenge. Lately I'm on a (regular) old ballpoint pen kick.

Greg, US

Claire replies Greg, thank you for your letter. There have been many collections of our Sketchbook feature. I don't think any of them are currently in print right now. I do know that an entirely new edition is in the works. Thank you for your letter and I do hope that your subscription continues to inspire you and that you keep on sharing it with your art community.

Krita please

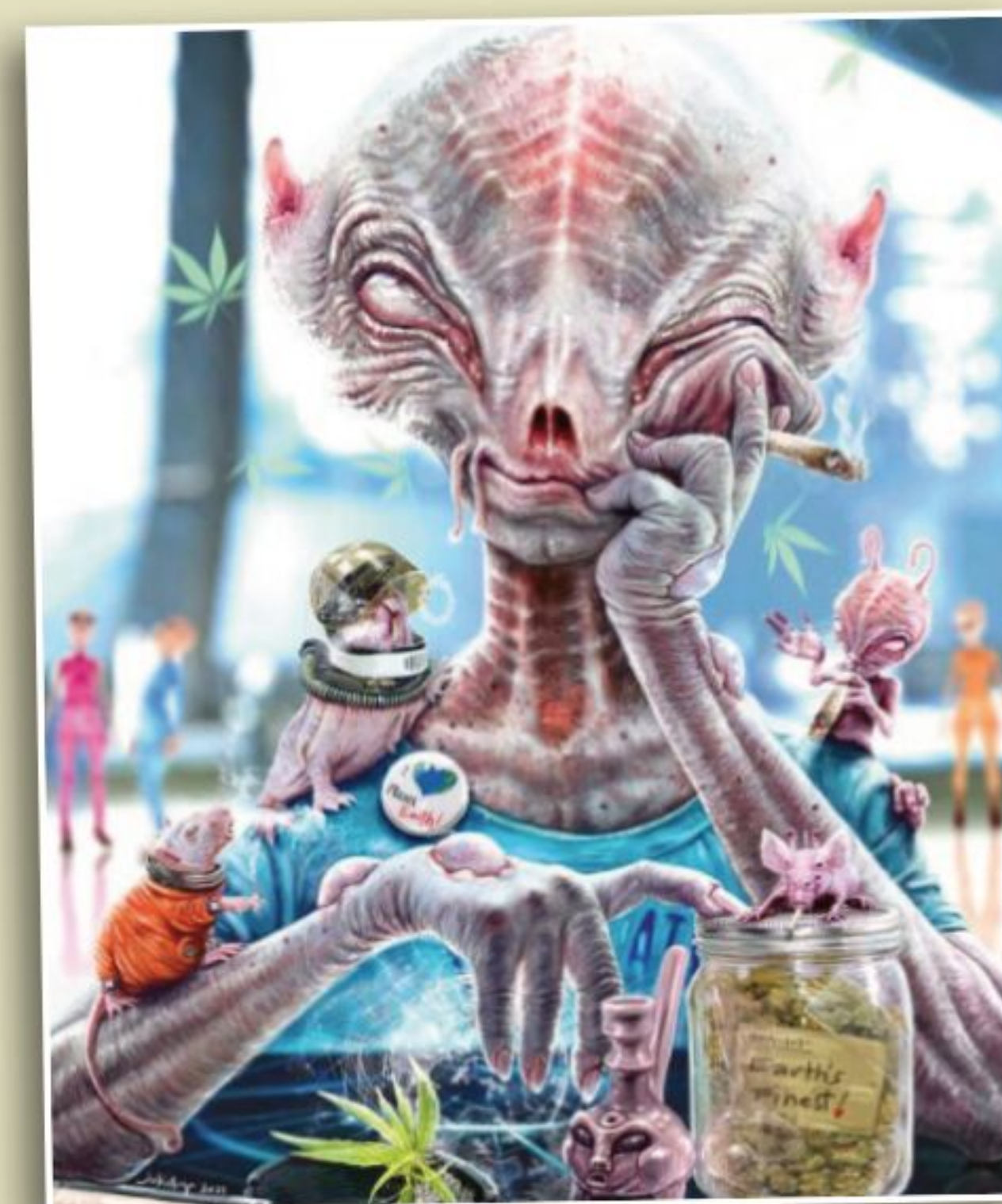
I love reading ImagineFX. Any chance down the road you could feature an artist that uses Krita? Thanks in advance.

Lew Newmark

Claire replies Lew, we have featured Krita artists in previous editions, but it's been a while. I really should get some more Krita workshops in again soon. Thanks for the reminder. Readers, what do you want to see more or less of in ImagineFX? Let me know.



New works that have grabbed our attention



Jotham
[@jokiargu](https://www.instagram.com/jokiargu)



Kait Matthews
[@kaitmatthewsart](https://www.instagram.com/kaitmatthewsart)



Camila Martyna Emilia
[@camartilia](https://www.instagram.com/camartilia)

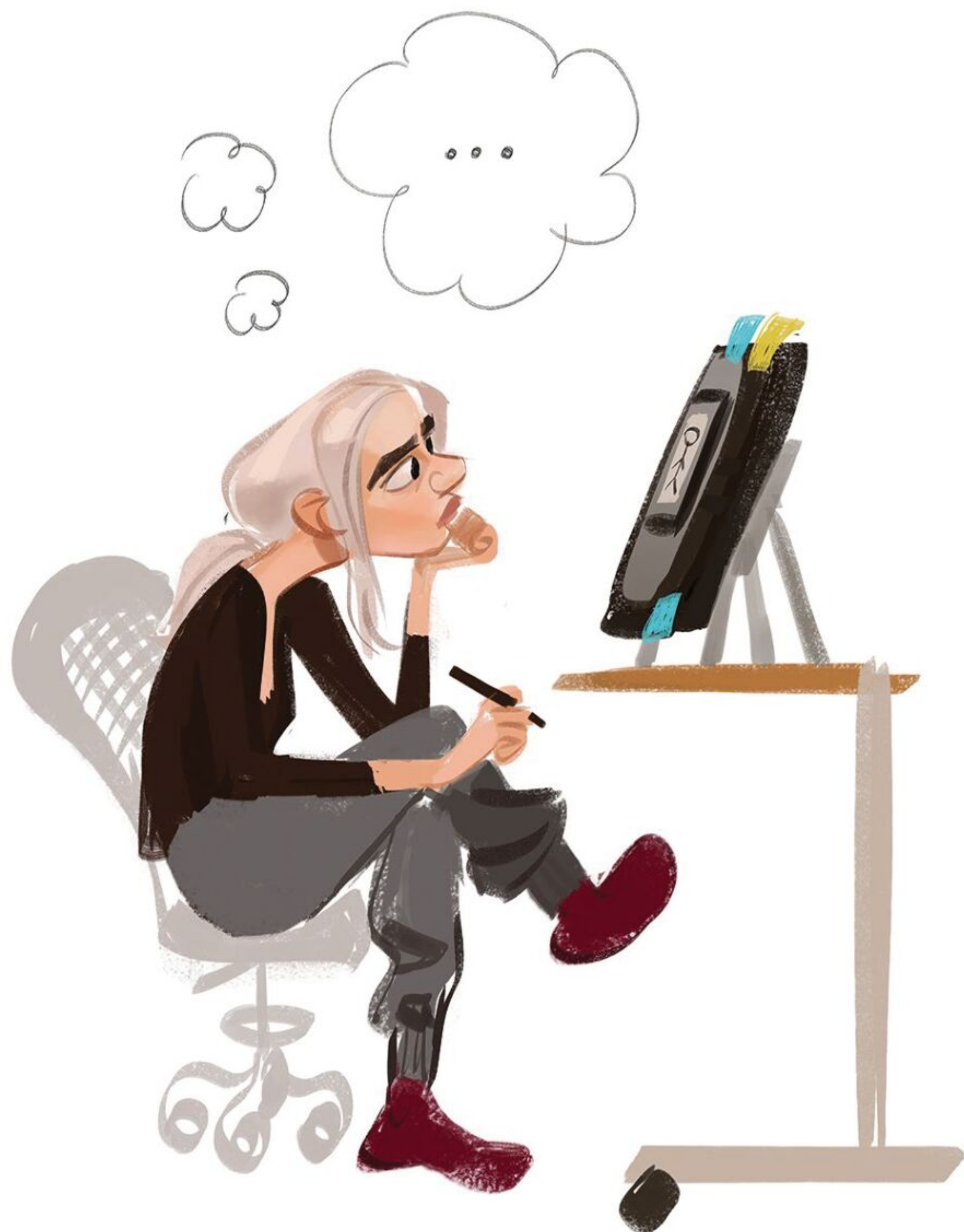
If you've created art that you want us to shout about simply tag us on Twitter or Instagram, and use the hashtag #imaginefx



ARTIST PORTFOLIO

BRITTANY MYERS

Gary Evans finds out how the American character designer landed her dream job at Netflix Animation working alongside her childhood hero



SELF PORTRAIT

"Drawing for fun to capture what my days look like working from home."



FEI FEI

"Early concept design for Over the Moon's Fei Fei. I wanted to explore what her space outfit would look like."

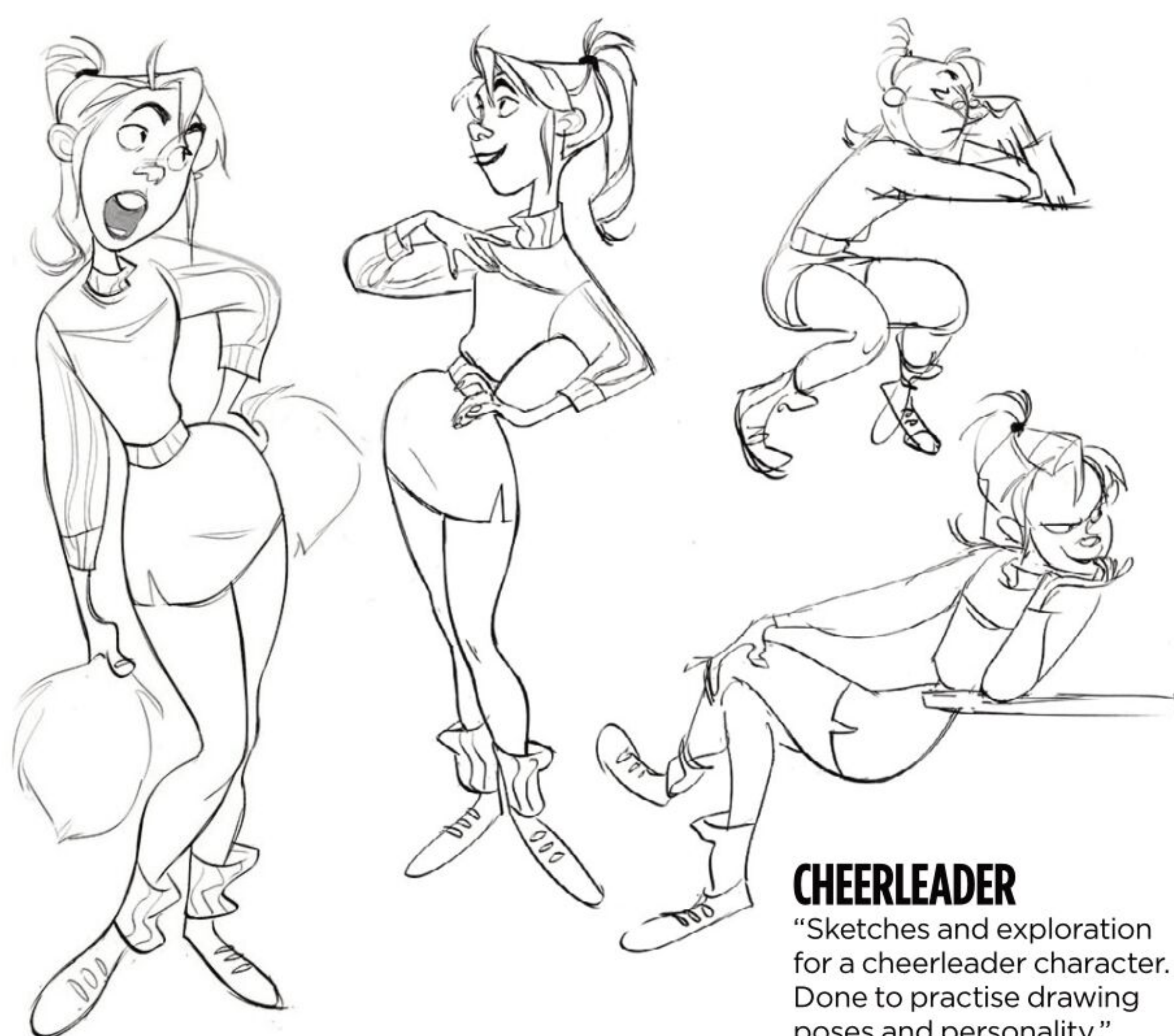
Los Angeles, 2018. Brittany Myers is starting work at Netflix Animation. Netflix hasn't publicly announced its new animation division, so Brittany joins what is for now a small team on Sunset Boulevard. She'll be designing characters for a film called *Over the Moon*, directed by Brittany's favourite artist growing up, the artist who made her want to be a character designer in first place: illustrator and animator Glen Keane.

Over the Moon has a script – it's about a teenage girl who builds a rocket ship to meet the mythical

goddess who lives on the moon – but almost no artwork. This is where Brittany comes in.

Some directors provide their character designers with precise instructions, right down to the style of haircut and particular items of clothing, with reference pictures of people the character should resemble. Sometimes the instructions are less precise, more abstract.

Brittany previously worked on a project where she was told to design a character who was "a little spunky." Too little instruction can leave you feeling overwhelmed by possibility.



CHEERLEADER

"Sketches and exploration for a cheerleader character. Done to practise drawing poses and personality."

CHANG'E

"An early concept of the moon goddess Chang'E to explore proportions and wardrobe ideas."

“ [When drawing people who are moving] it forces you to focus on the feeling more than anything ”

Too much instruction is limiting. "With Glen," Brittany says, "it's kind of a mixture."

Brittany gets to work on *Over the Moon's* main character: 13-year-old Fei Fei. Glen gives a couple of visual instructions – the story is set in China – but the rest of his brief is about Fei Fei's personality... those more abstract instructions. Brittany needs to turn these verbal instructions into character designs that tell a story.

PEOPLE WATCHING

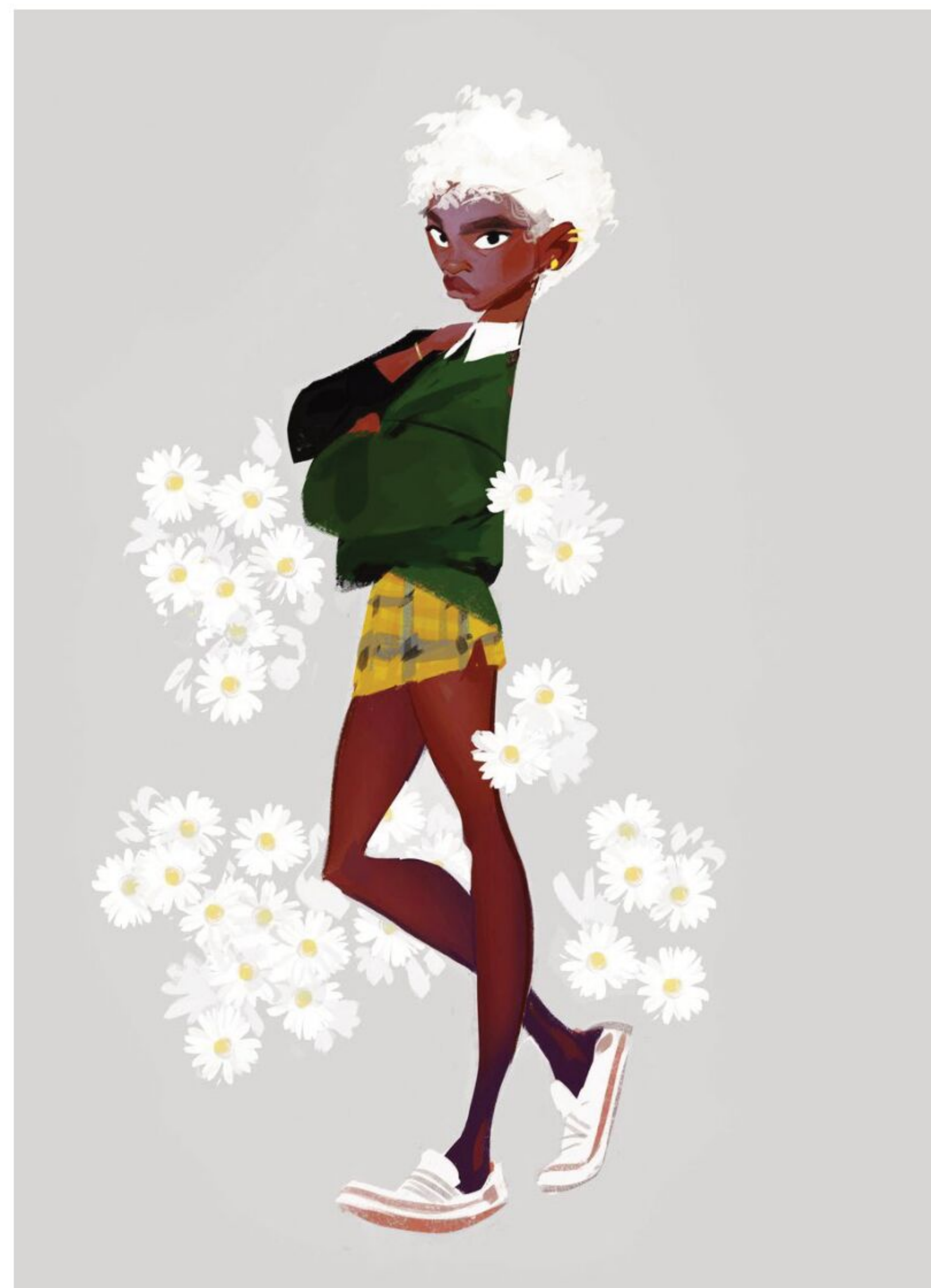
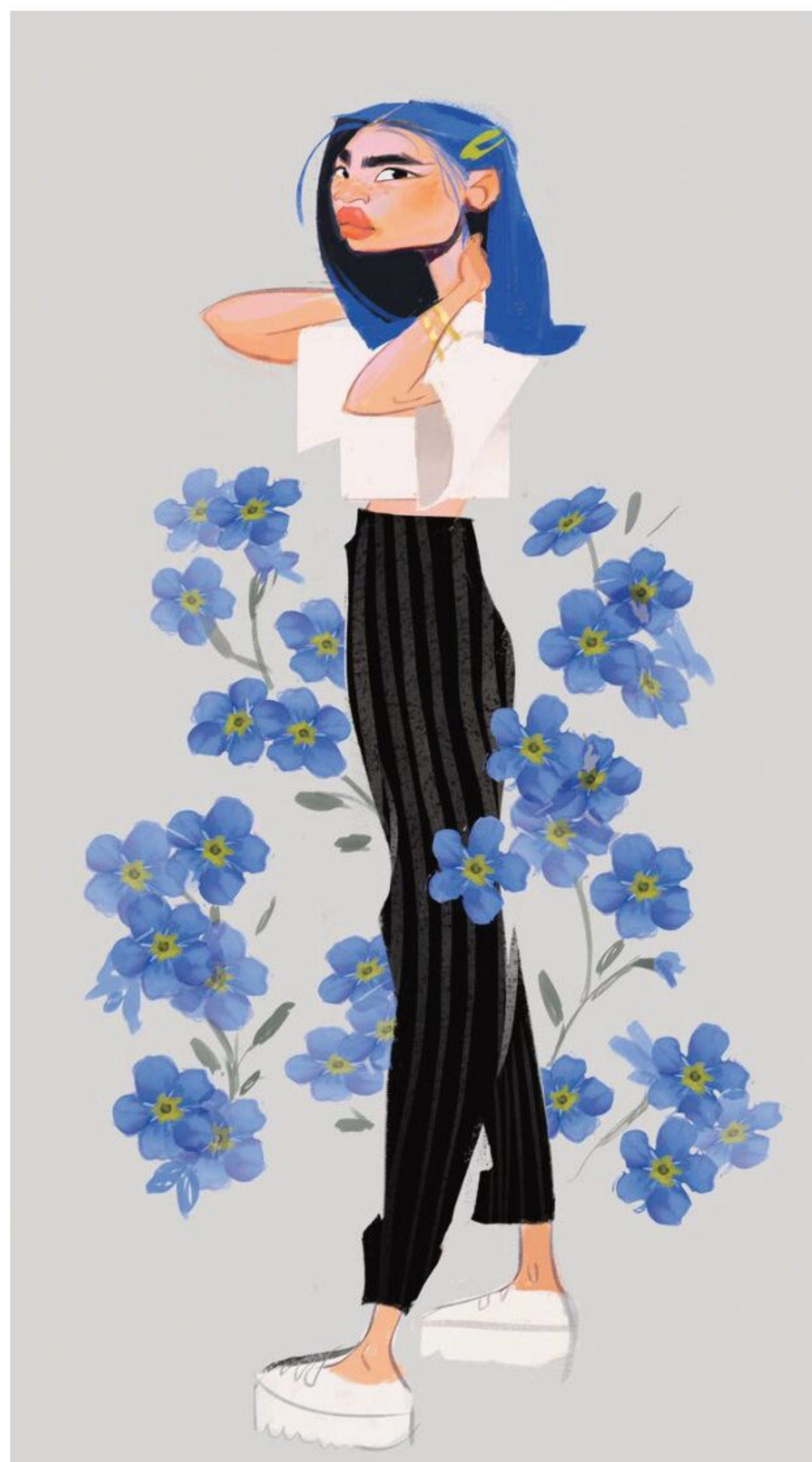
Brittany learned a valuable lesson at a very young age. She was 14 or 15, and her dad knew somebody who knew somebody who'd worked as an artist at Disney. Brittany sent this artist her work. She still had plenty to learn technique-wise, but the artist said that didn't matter – this would come with practice. The artist believed that Brittany would make it as a pro because of the way she used pose and gesture. She was already using pictures to tell stories.

Brittany says that you can learn to tell stories visually by observing people. She likes (used to like!) going to coffee shops to people-watch. She studied, briefly, at the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts), where they would bring in dancers and children to model and neither group would stop moving. The challenge was to capture that movement in a static drawing. "It forces you to focus on the feeling more than anything," the artist says. ➤➤

**MOTHER AND DAUGHTER**

"An early sketch of young Fei Fei and her mother."

Both artworks © Pearl Studio/Netflix



➤➤ Brittany makes use of pose, expression and body language to convey feeling. She often gives her characters an object to interact with or an action to do. Even the character's lines and shapes say something about who they are. It's about "taking moments and making it feel like it's an actual person."

OVER THE MOON

Brittany is experimenting with possible designs for Fei Fei, asking herself: "What kind of style of film do we want to create? How pushed should the style be? Should it go more realistic? Should I go more stylised, more extreme?"

Brittany picks out little moments from Over the Moon's script and illustrates them. She doesn't just do static standing poses of Fei Fei. She draws Fei Fei riding her bike or hugging her pet bunny, for example. She wants these images to look dynamic, to say something about Fei Fei's character.

FLOWER GIRLS

"This is part of a series of fashion drawings done for fun."

She presents these images to Glen and the team for feedback, then takes the team's notes and continues to develop Fei Fei until she has several pages of designs. On some projects, this back and forth can go on for months, but not here. Glen ("amazing eye, a master") looks over of Brittany's early designs and picks the one he wants go with. Still, this drawing of Fei Fei will look quite different from the Fei Fei in the final movie.

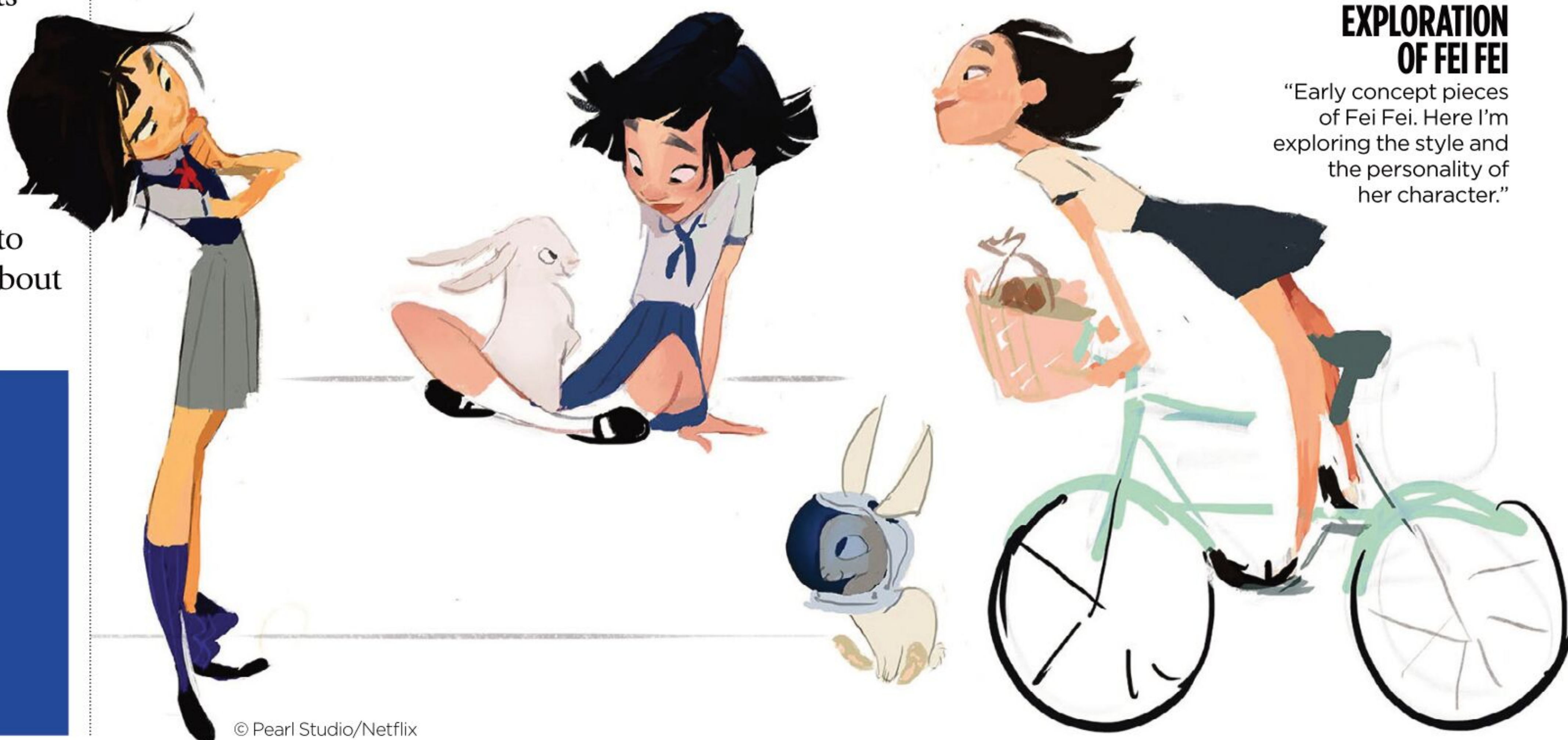
"It's a job at the end of the day. It's not art for you. It's art for the project, it's art for the studio ... You can't have an ego about your work."

Now Brittany is working on turnarounds – Fei Fei seen from multiple angles, literally turning around. Fei Fei has "pushed proportions, very long legs." The artist is trying to work out how Fei Fei's silhouette changes as the character moves about.

PERSONALITY THROUGH SHAPES

Brittany and the team put Fei Fei in a line-up with her mom and dad ("a good way to see how they play off of each other"). The dad is made up ➤➤

“It’s a job at the end of the day. It’s not art for you. It’s art for the project...”



EXPLORATION OF FEI FEI

"Early concept pieces of Fei Fei. Here I'm exploring the style and the personality of her character."

Artist PROFILE

Brittany Myers

LOCATION: US

FAVOURITE ARTISTS: Glen Keane, Shiyoon Kim, Minkyu Lee, Borja Montoro and De'Von Stubblefield

MEDIA: Photoshop

WEB: www.brittanymyersart.com

© Pearl Studio/Netflix



WITCH

"A Halloween-inspired witch. It was fun to experiment with bold shapes and proportions."



OVERALLS

"Just having some fun with character and fashion."



STRIPED SHIRT

"A fun doodle based on fashion that inspires me."

PREP GIRL DESIGN

Brittany discusses finding references, shapes and silhouettes

"For these designs the premise was to design a 'preppy' girl. I almost always start with a reference board to help inspire the product, and to give me some ideas that I may not have thought of myself. Often I'll Google-search 'preppy' and 'popular' – and similar terms – to find anything that could give me ideas for this character. I'm asking myself: What is she wearing? How is she wearing it? How does she hold herself?

From there I want to bust out on to the canvas as many ideas as I can. This stage is rough and fast. I like that it doesn't give me too much time to overthink, so I feel like I can capture some of the more genuine feelings I get from the reference.

After doing a bit of rough sketching I'll continue to finalise each design in Photoshop. This is where I'll clean up the drawing with colour, and refine the character's features.

I've started to transition from sketching into a more painterly style. This helps me to be able to think a bit more in silhouette and shape. Ctrl+Alt+Del is my best friend at this stage!"

PREPPY GIRLS

"Studies of a character I was designing for a character design class."



© Pearl Studio/Netflix

➤ of edges and angular shapes because his personality is "much more scientific and grounded in facts." The mom has a similar in personality to Fei Fei – she also believes in the mythical goddess on the moon – so her shapes are rounder, freer.

Brittany isn't just working on visualising Over the Moon's main characters. She's designing minor characters, and doing what's known as "crowd work" – animation's version of the background actor, the extra. Brittany says some character designers don't like doing crowd work, but she

SPACE DOG

"Some of my early conceptual work for Over the Moon's Space Dog."

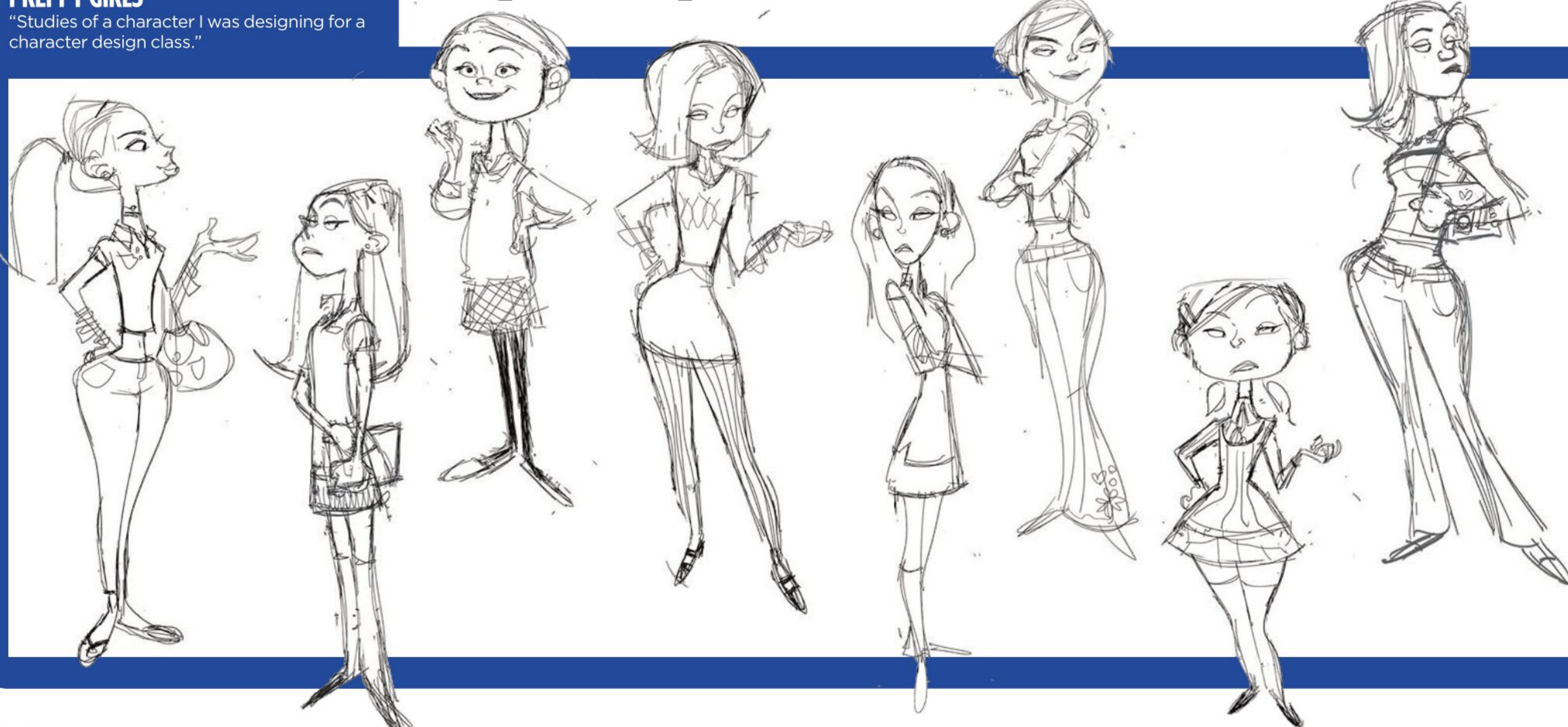
sees it as an opportunity to experiment and learn. For her, crowd work is where it all started.

CHARACTER BUILDING

Brittany grew up in small-town Illinois. She was always drawing, but didn't considered a career in art until she saw the Disney film Tangled. She was 12 or 13, and really liked the main character Rapunzel. A bit of online research led her to the Rapunzel's designs, drawn by Glen Keane.

She had an internship at Disney between leaving high school and joining the character animation course at CalArts in 2015. Most first-year students aren't sure which area of entertainment art they want to work in. For Brittany, it was always character design. After the first year of the ➤

“ I almost always start with a reference board to help inspire the product ”





© Pearl Studio/Netflix



CHIN

"Early exploration drawings of Chin from Over the Moon. Here I'm starting to explore his fun personality."

WICKED FAN ART

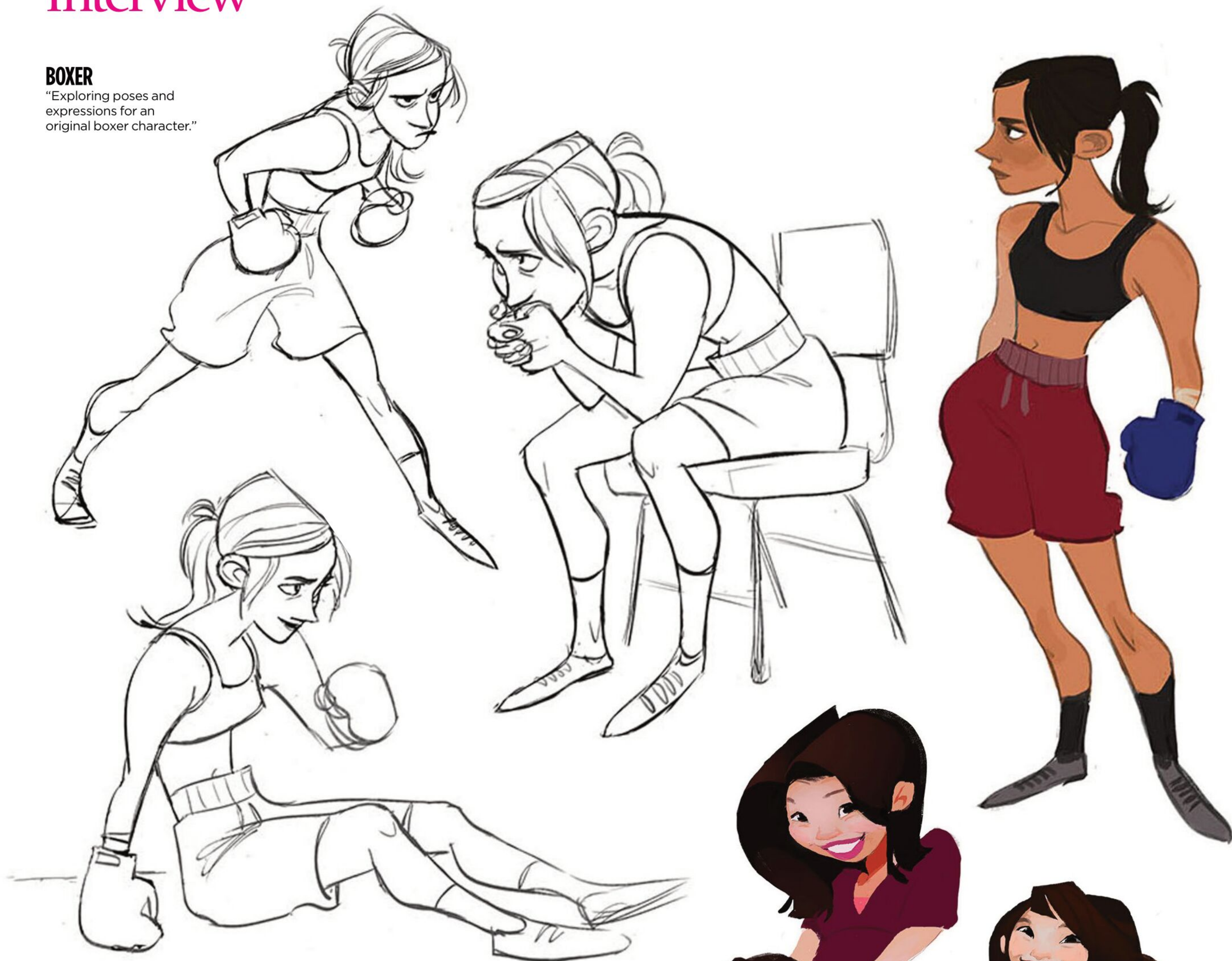
"Fan art of Elphaba and Glinda from the musical Wicked. Here I'm playing with shape and proportions."



Interview

BOXER

"Exploring poses and expressions for an original boxer character."



“I was like: I’m going to go work and make money learning instead of spending so much money learning”

➤➤ four-year course, she received a job offer from Sony Pictures Animation: “I was like: I’m going to go work and make money learning instead of spending so much money learning.”

She worked on various projects that never came out, but she also got to contribute to Oscar-winning Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse, mainly doing crowd work. “It can be really fun because it’s characters that don’t get as much scrutiny. You’re designing tons and tons of different people and you want to hit every type of person: body type, gender, race. It feels like the ultimate character-design challenge. You’re doing the biggest practice session you could be doing.”

Brittany is working with Jin Kim, Over the Moon’s character supervisor,

to put the finishing touches to characters and think about out how they might change once they’re computer-generated. Now it’s over to Leo Sanchez, the character modeller: “It’s a lot of problem solving because once you take a 2D drawing into a 3D program, you have to figure out some things that may not work.” Brittany’s part on the project is coming to an end, over a year after it began. But how did it begin?

STRONG ONLINE PORTFOLIO

Brittany posted online fan art of Ariel from The Little Mermaid. Glen Keane saw it (“somehow, I don’t know how”) and offered her a job. It was the same thing with Sony, which is why Brittany stresses the importance of a good ➤➤



MOTHER

“Some of my early concepts for Mother from Over the Moon.”

© Pearl Studio/Netflix

© Sony Pictures Animation



CROWD WORK

"Crowd conceptual work for Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse. Here I'm exploring a broad range of body types and clothing styles."

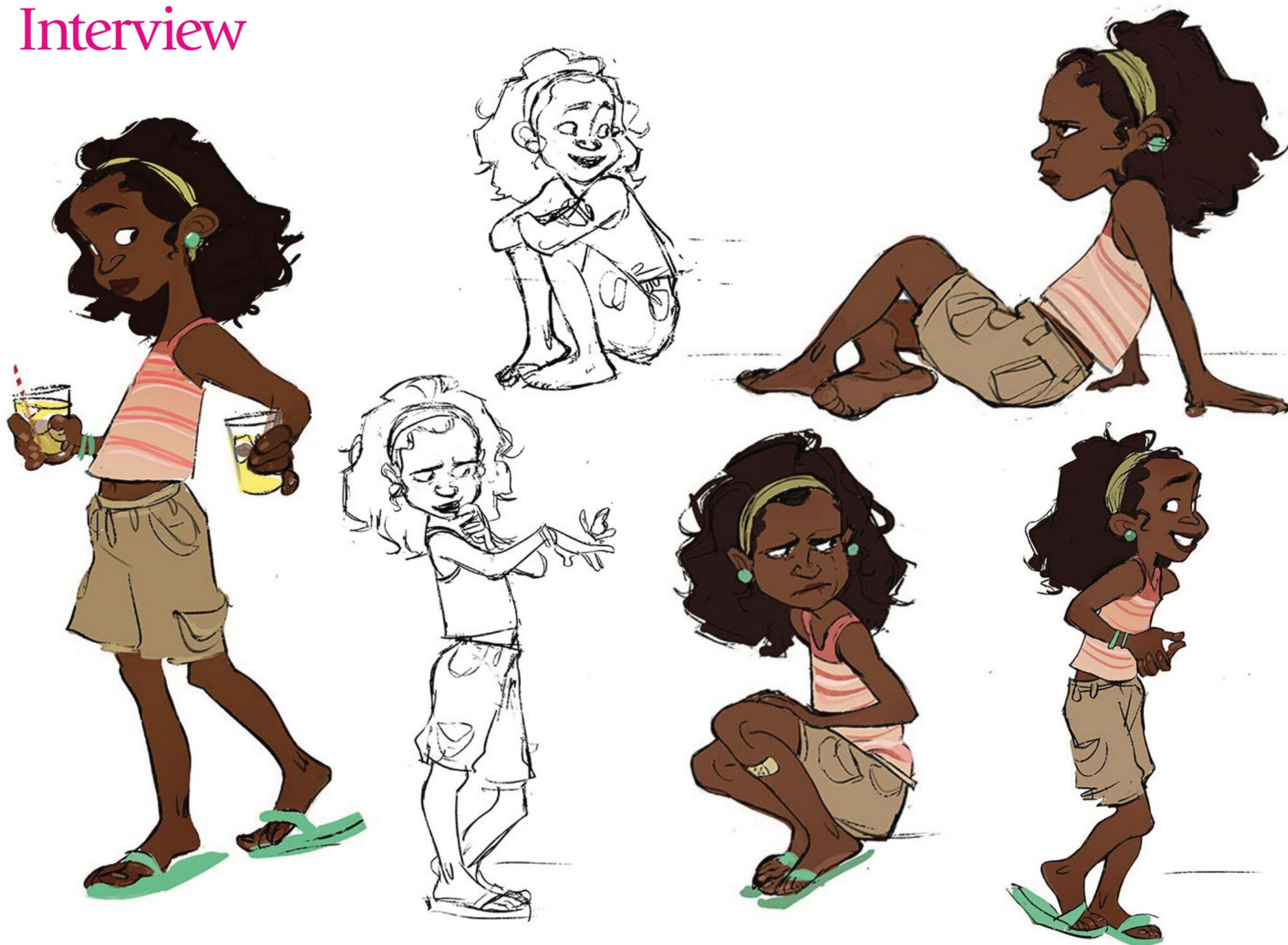
BROOKLYN



MANHATTAN



Interview



➡ portfolio. The artist suggests going online and looking up the portfolios of artists who do what you want to do, and note how they're structured and what they've included. She also advises artists who are starting out to check out art-of movie books.

The big decision is whether your portfolio presents you as a specialist or

an all-rounder. Brittany says it's easier to find work if you can do a bit of everything: visual development, environments, storyboards. But you don't want to get hired to do something you don't like or can't actually do. Brittany always saw herself as a specialist – an out-and-out character designer – so that's how she

SUMMER GIRL

"Some exploration of an original character. I had fun with storytelling and practising poses and expressions."

presented herself. But if you're going to specialise in one thing then you better be really good at it.

SHOW OFF YOUR SKILLS

There aren't many jobs for character designers, Brittany says. Competition is tough. This is why you need to research portfolios of similar artists – that's who you're competing against.

You should include a variety of work, not just finished, polished pieces. On the job, characters designers have to design characters very quickly, so show your quick sketches, your working out. You could have a full page of different designs of a character, alongside the finished piece. Add a page of different facial expressions, a page of different poses from different angles. You can even include references to show where the idea came from how you developed it. Then you have to be brave and get your work out there. Because you never know who might see it.

"It sounds like a lot. And it is. A portfolio is hard work– it takes a while. Even if you start with just one page, at least that's something you can email to somebody and ask for feedback on how to go forward. It's just about starting, I think."

“Even if you start with just one page, at least that's something you can email to somebody and ask for feedback...”

FEI FEI AGE PROGRESSION

"Some ideas of how Fei Fei would look at different ages throughout the film."



© Pearl Studio/Netflix

WINGED LIONS

"Some of my early development work for the winged lions seen in Over the Moon."



© Pearl Studio/Netflix



ARIEL

"Quick fan art of Ariel. I wanted to play around with sharper shapes."

IN DEFENCE OF FAN ART

Learn how fan art posted online got Brittany hired by her favourite artist

"I draw a lot of fan art, and I know many people think that's not the best thing to do. You're not meant to put it in your portfolio. But I was bored one day and I was drawing Ariel. I posted it, and Glen Keane commented. I was like, oh my God! I couldn't even believe he had found it, because it was on Facebook and we weren't even Facebook friends. He brought me in on Over the Moon, and it's one of the most crazy stories because Glen is the reason I wanted to work in animation in the first place."

It's a really rough sketch, but what interested Glen was that I posted the painted version and the sketch. The sketch reminded him of the feeling he used to get when he animated Ariel. I was pushing the design and using some angular shapes, elongating things. The painting was an interesting way he maybe wouldn't have thought to do himself. He brought in the sketch that he did when he was animating Ariel. It was so full circle!

Fan art is one of the best ways to practise character design. It sounds like: Why are you practising character design when the thing is already designed? But it's a good way to push style. If I'm drawing Hermione from Harry Potter, it's a way of emulating what it's like to work with a director, because sometimes that's all you have: a written text. You get a description and you get a little bit of the character's personality and then you can kind of take it from there. So I love doing fan art."



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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!

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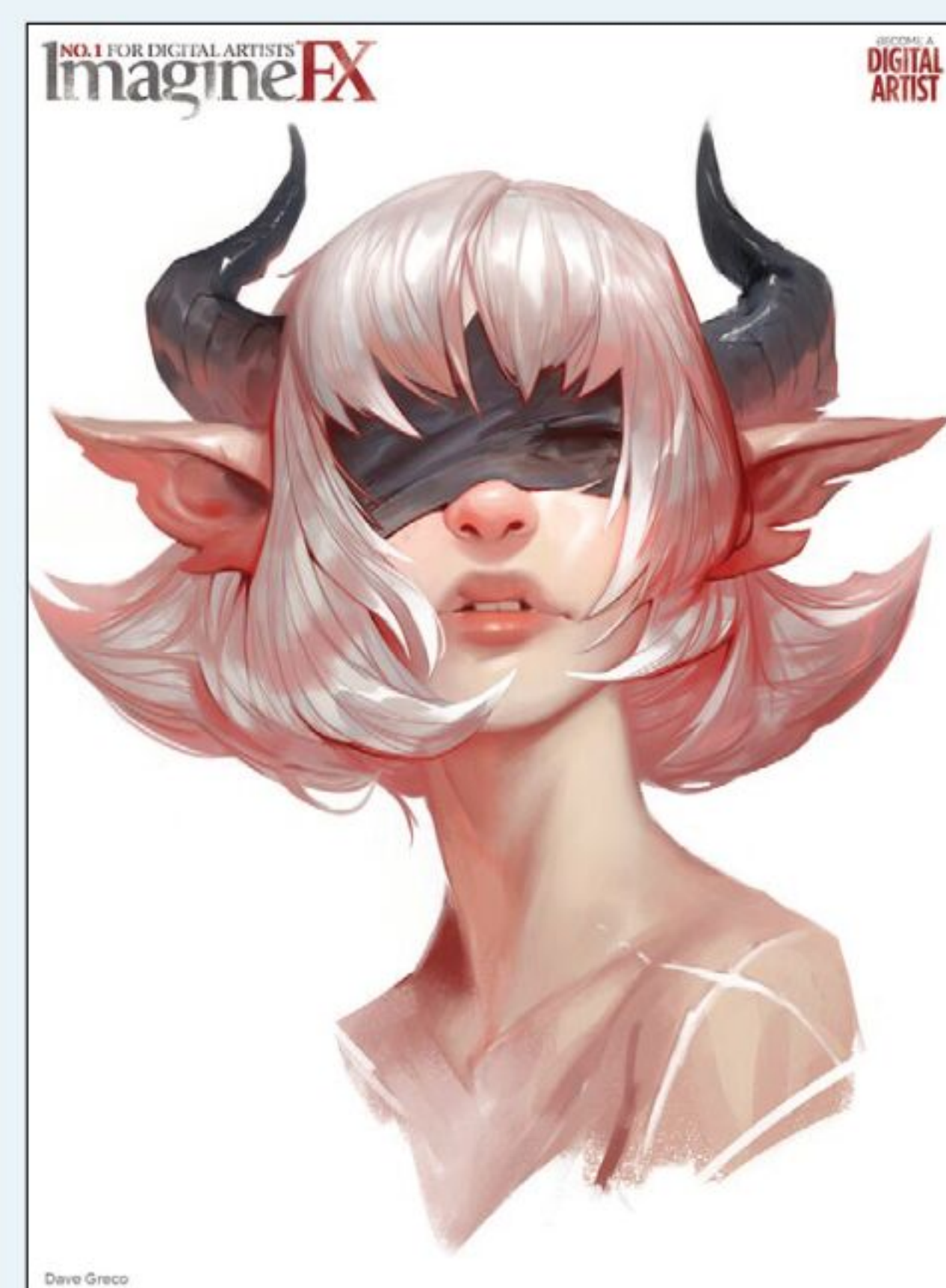
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Issue 190
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Issue 187
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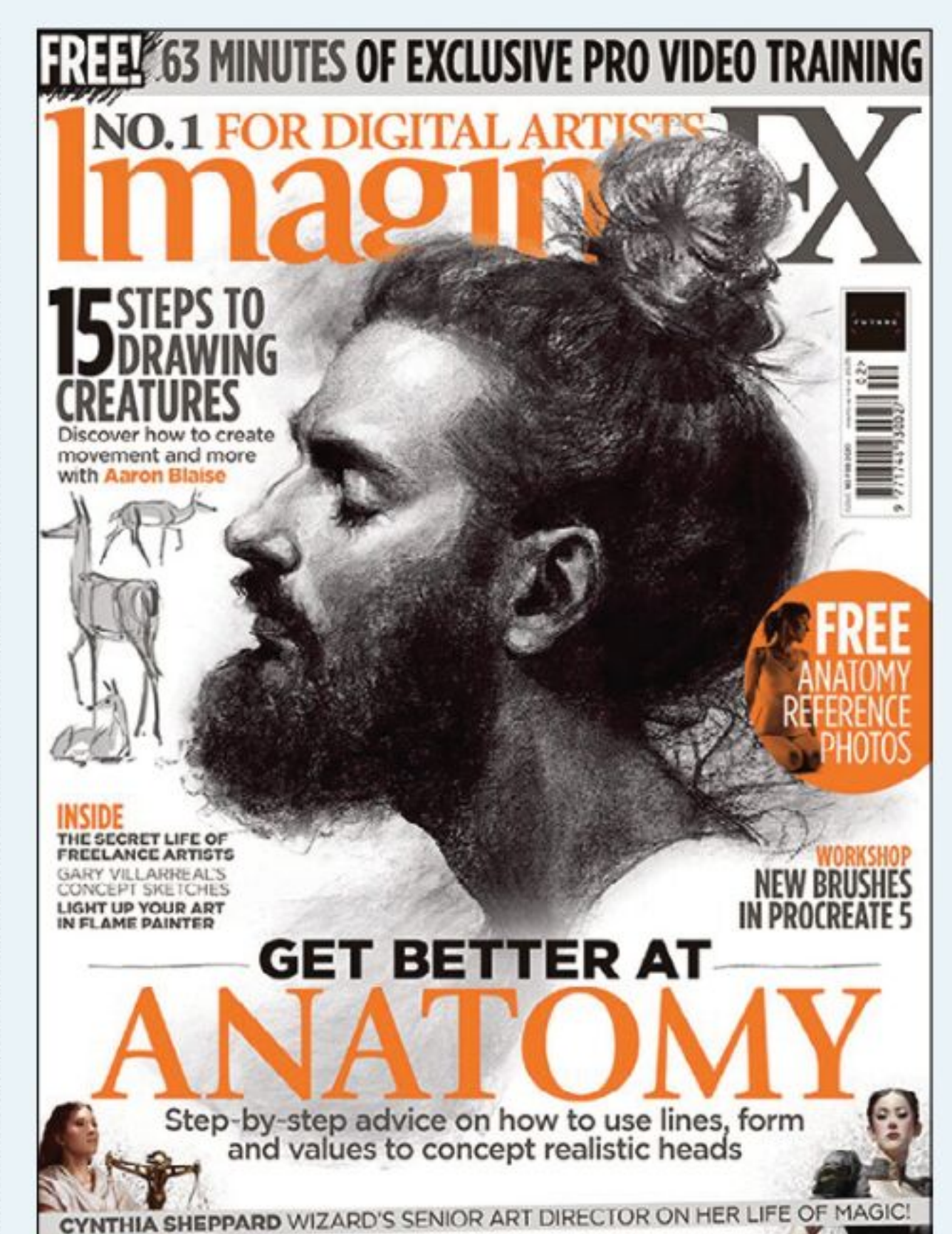
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May 2020



Issue 185
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Issue 183
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*Resource files are available from issue 85 onwards.

Benjamin Hayte

This animation artist enjoys populating his personal art projects, which feature pirate monkeys, dragon wizards and more!

Artist PROFILE

Benjamin Hayte

LOCATION: Canada



Benjamin is an artist based in Canada. Born and raised in France, he was always fascinated by graphic art and animation. For the

past 11 years he's worked at leading studios such as Disney, Marvel, Nickelodeon and Netflix, helping to design their TV shows and feature films. In his spare time Benjamin works on a range of personal projects.

www.benjaminhayte.com

THE OLD FELLA!

"This monkey pirate has been broken by a life full of adventures. He's missing an eye and a leg, but hasn't lost his ability to tell extraordinary tales to the ship's first mate."

THE WOLF KNIGHT

"This guy would make a great villain for a story set during the Middle Ages."

THE SHERIFF

"This character is important to me. Working on paper with just a pencil and being able to create the illusion of real texture fascinates me, and this sketch is the proof that I can do it."

THE BUTCHER

"The idea of a zombie butcher who's been attacked by his own knives makes me laugh."

THE CAVEMAN GANG

"These guys helped me discover my design process. I'll always remember that night when I created them: I was so relaxed and just let them draw themselves. I was so proud when I finished them, and for the first time I heard my inner voice urging me to do more character designs."

POKERGAME

"One of my rare watercolours. I really love this painting technique and would love to do more of them in the future."

“ I heard my inner voice urging me to do more character designs ”

Sketchbook

LUCKY HAND!

"Another sketch from my Monkey Pirates series. I've always loved apes and pirates. Coming up with this theme really inspired me – so much so that I ended up creating 20 more of his shipmates!"



THE SAD KING

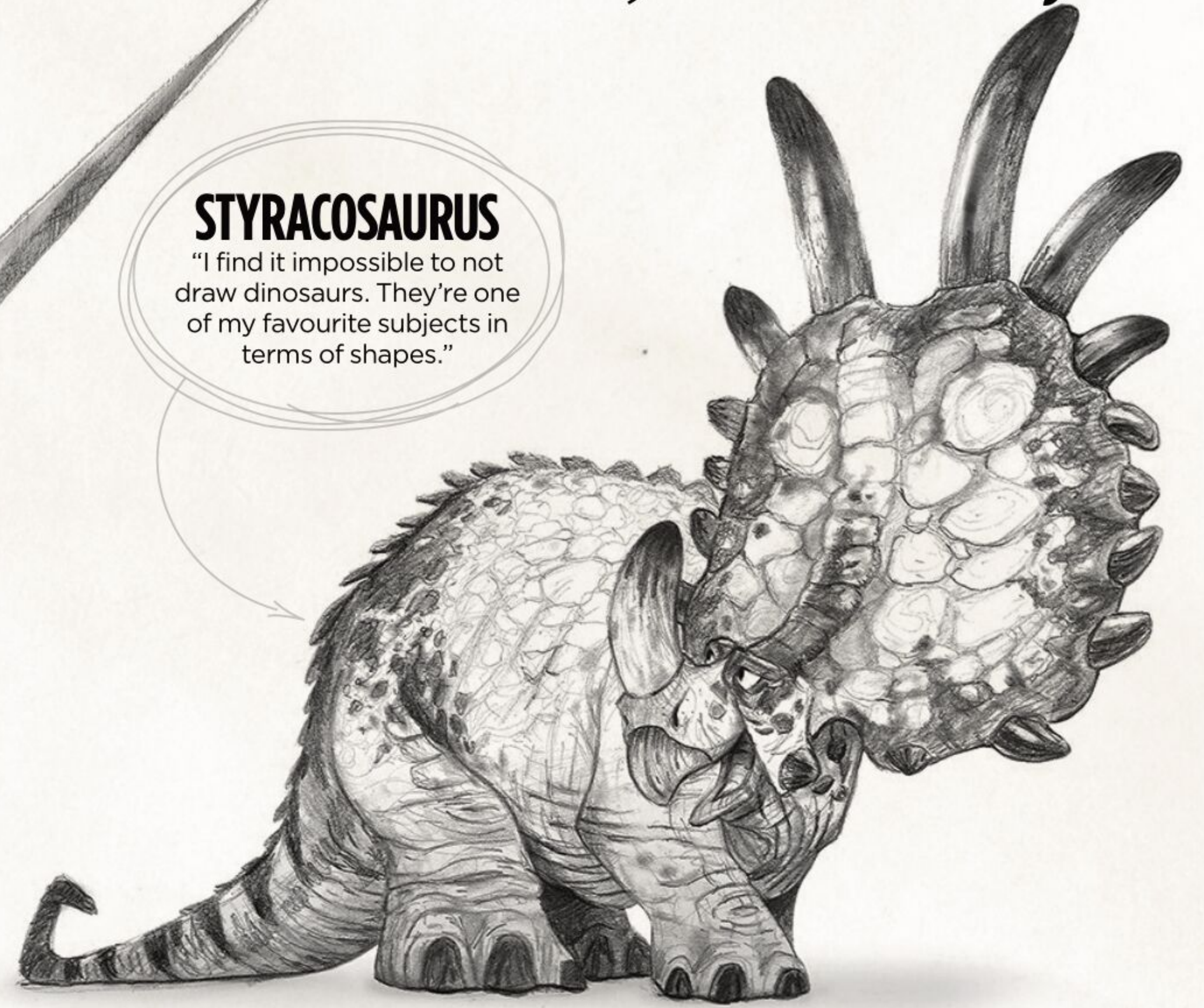
"In 2018, when I started to sketch on a daily basis, I did 29 designs in 29 days. Then I started to get tired and this character perfectly captures my mood at that time."



Sketchbook Benjamin Hayte

STYRACOSAURUS

"I find it impossible to not draw dinosaurs. They're one of my favourite subjects in terms of shapes."



THE TURTLE KNIGHT

"It was a lot of fun creating this cute character who's ready to fight the ugliest beast ever to save his village. I guess there's a bigger idea behind this little fella."



THE TARGET

"I love this figure. It makes the viewer wonder who will get hurt first."

“In 2018, when I started to sketch on a daily basis, I did 29 designs in 29 days. Then I started to get tired...”

Sketchbook

THE DRAGON WIZARD

"This guy is the first design from a personal project and I'm looking forward to drawing his journey to become a wizard."



THE BAD WIZARD

"Another character from last year's Dragon Wizards series. I can see a bit of Harry Potter influence here."



THE PHARAOH

"This pharaoh design was the second one after the caveman gang to make me proud. He has a strong silhouette that's shaped like a pyramid - it couldn't have worked out any better!"

“ This design has a strong silhouette that's shaped like a pyramid ”

CRASH TESTER

"An elf crash test dummy has crashed his remote-controlled car into a candy wall. I'd love to draw his friend who's holding the remote control..."

THE OLD COUPLE

"Two mammoths in love with each other."

THE GROOM

"The idea of a zombie groom who's left the wedding with the engagement ring makes me laugh... and you haven't seen the bride yet!"

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

SFX

The world's number one sci-fi, fantasy and horror magazine



The collage features several SFX magazine covers. The central cover is the 'THE FALCON AND THE WINTER SOLDIER' issue, featuring Anthony Mackie and Sebastian Stan. Other visible covers include 'STAR WARS' with Rey and Chewbacca, 'THE WALKING DEAD' with Rick Grimes, and 'DOCTOR WHO' with the TARDIS. The text 'THE WORLD'S NUMBER ONE SCI-FI, FANTASY & HORROR MAG!' is repeated across the covers. At the bottom, the text 'NEW ISSUE OUT NOW!' is prominently displayed in white and red, followed by the website 'www.magazinesdirect.com'.

NEW ISSUE OUT NOW!

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Workshops



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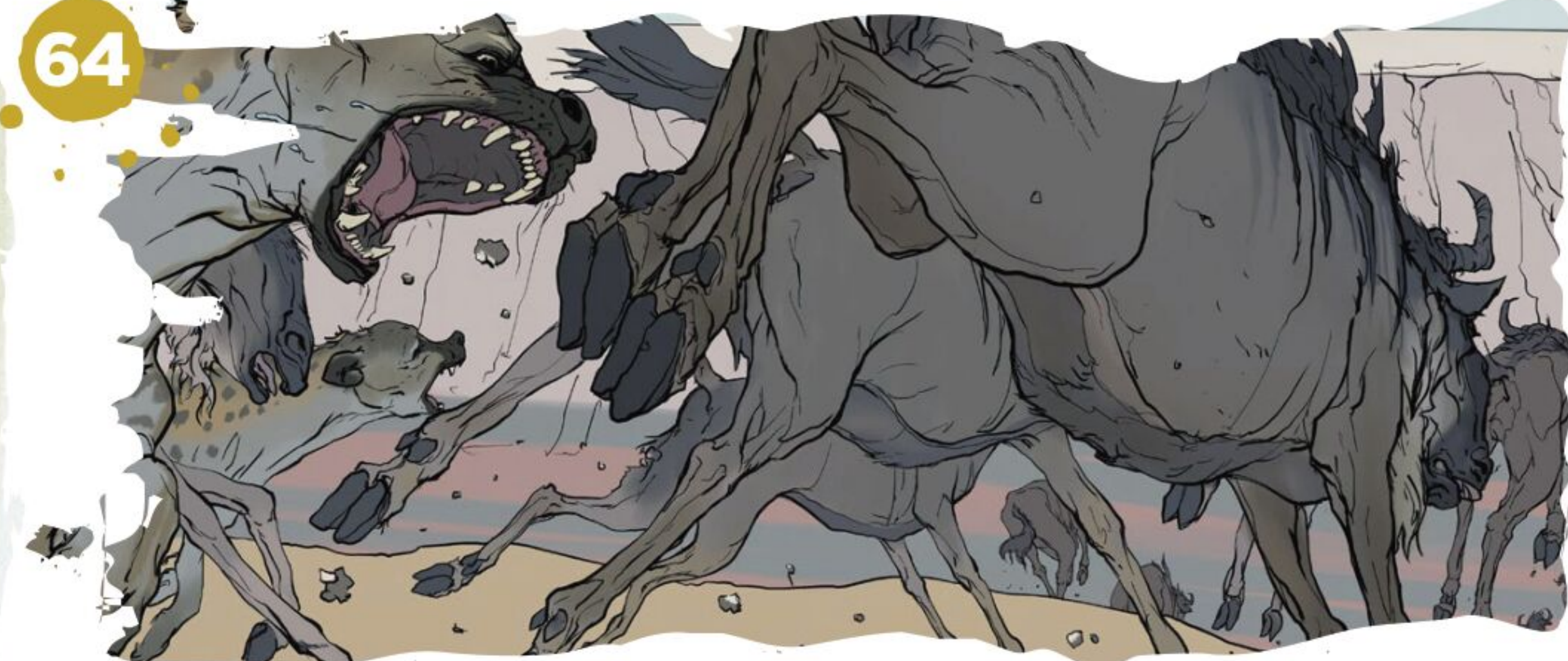
Download each workshop's resources by turning to page 8. And if you see the video workshop badge, you can watch the artist in action, too.

Advice from the world's best artists

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This issue:

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Vis-dev artist Kun Vic paints a key scene for the animated film.

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Capture an animated film's story in one image, with Kan Muftic.

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Netflix AD Drew Hartel on how to survive the "waiting room"....

76 Quickly sketch a character design

Netflix artist Jackie Droujko paints a character in a scene.

Photoshop

CREATE ART FOR WISH DRAGON

Visual development artist **Kun Vic** breaks down the process he uses when creating a key scene for the animated feature film Wish Dragon

Artist PROFILE

Kun Vic

LOCATION: Thailand

Kun Vic has worked with a range of high-profile animation studios, including DreamWorks Animation Television, Laika, Illumination and Base FX.

www.kun-victorior.com



This tutorial will show you the painting process I used while working as a visual development artist on the animated film Wish Dragon. I call it sequence painting, and it involves capturing the emotion, mood and tone during certain

sequences of the film. Here, I'll reveal the ideas behind successful visual development and illustrating a key moment in terms of developing the composition.

It's important to note the involvement of Arthur Fong, who was Wish Dragon's art director. Visual development is a team effort

and Arthur got involved at each stage, giving feedback that ensured each story moment was strong and met the film director's expectations.

I always spend time trying to understand the key aspects of a scene. I find reference material and plan each character's actions so that everything syncs with the story. ➡➡







1 Try out composition options

I start with a line sketch in Photoshop to find the relationship of the character Din (the young boy) and Long (the Wish Dragon). I explore camera angles and the composition to find the one that best serves the story moment, trying out medium, wide and close-up shots. Art director Arthur advises me to improve the shapes and forms within the composition. This includes adjusting the position of Long by placing him over the taxi so that he stands out more, and use perspective to lead the viewer's eye towards the characters stuck in traffic. I also do a value study to make sure the focal point reads well.



RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES: HARD-BRUSH

This brush is ideal for sketching or hard edges.

SOFT-BRUSH

I mostly use this brush for painting the sky and when merging colours.

PAINTING-BRUSH

This brush is a great all-rounder.

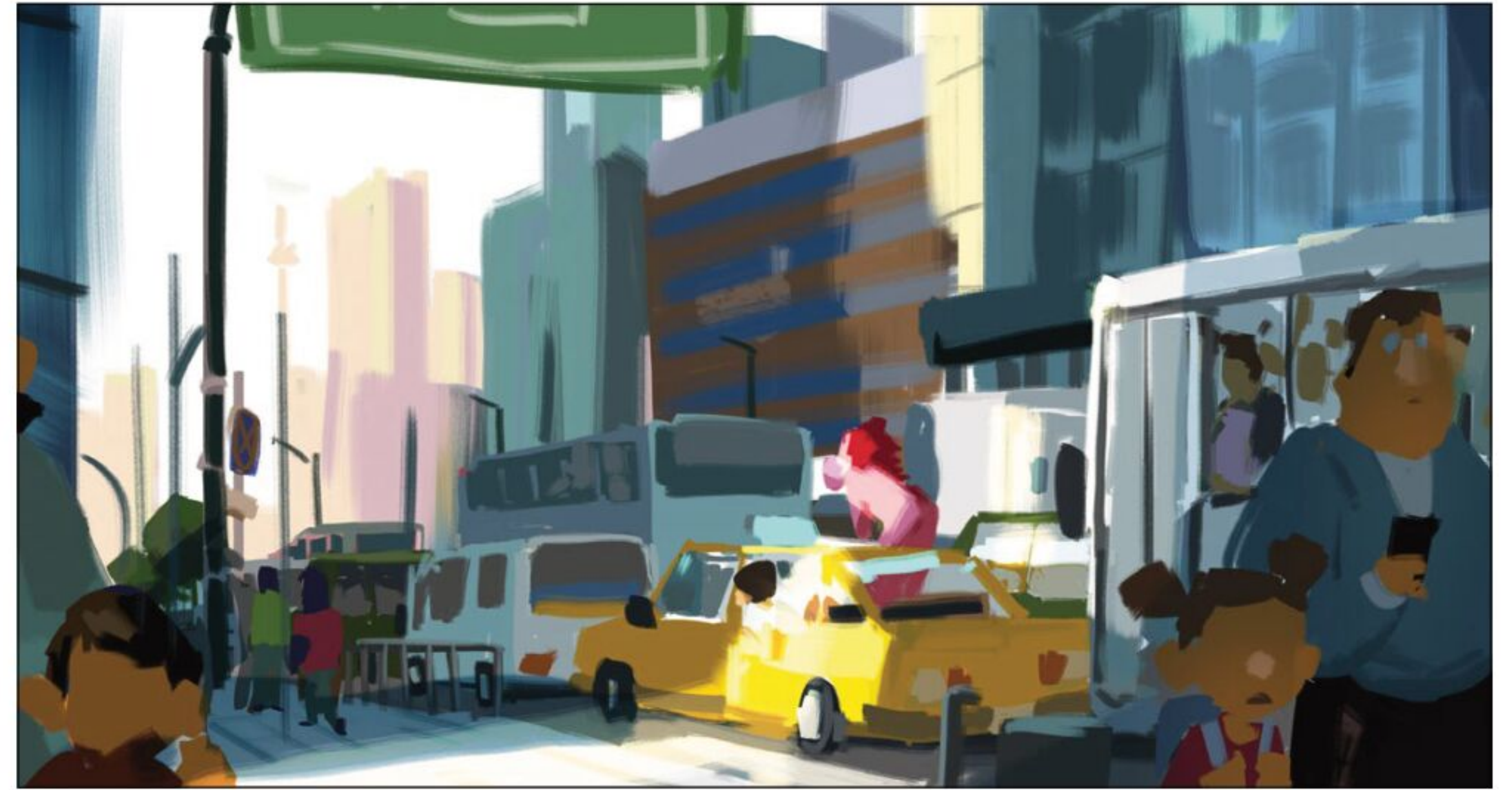
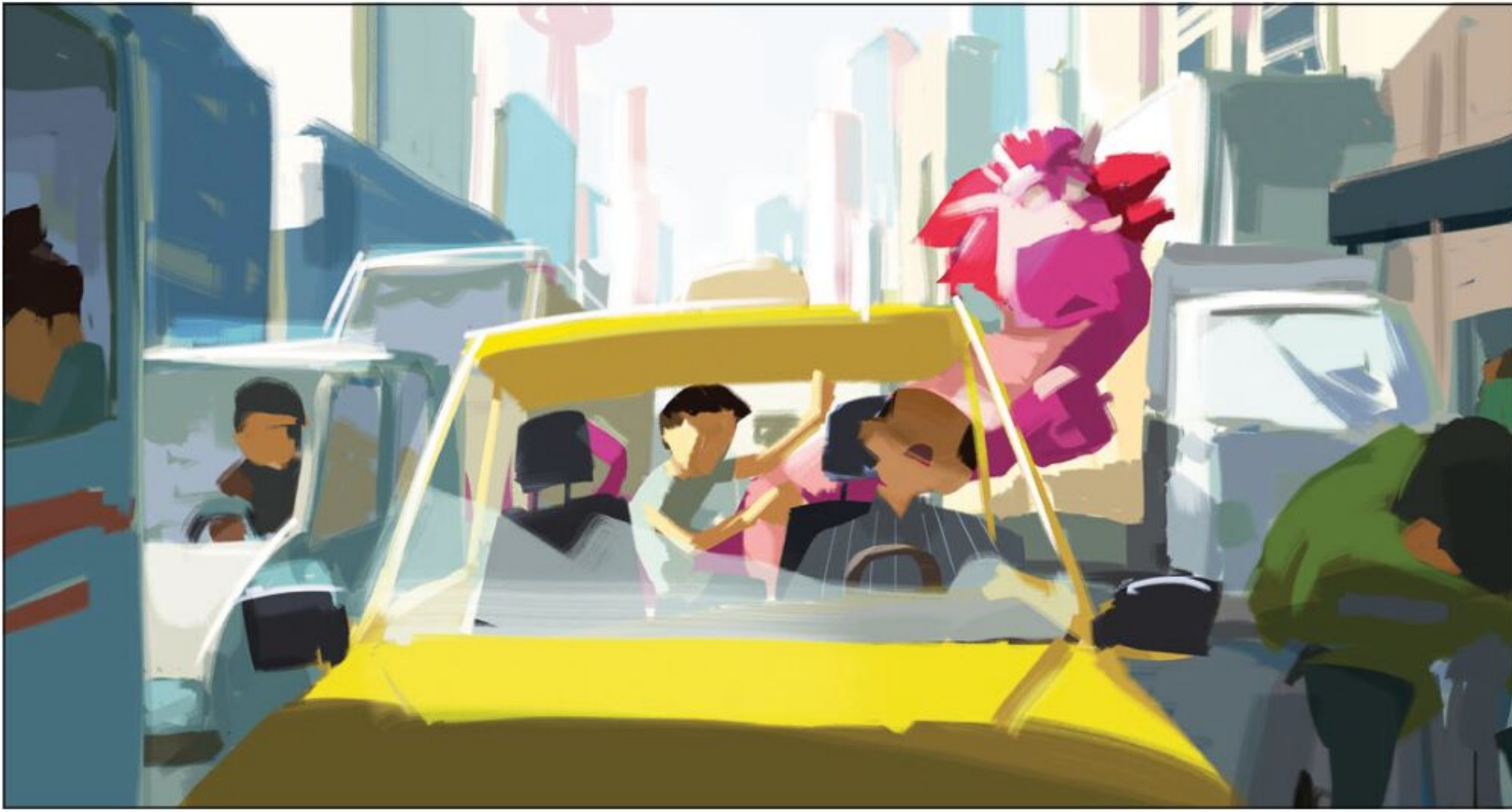
TEXTURE-BRUSH

I like using this brush with the Soft Eraser.



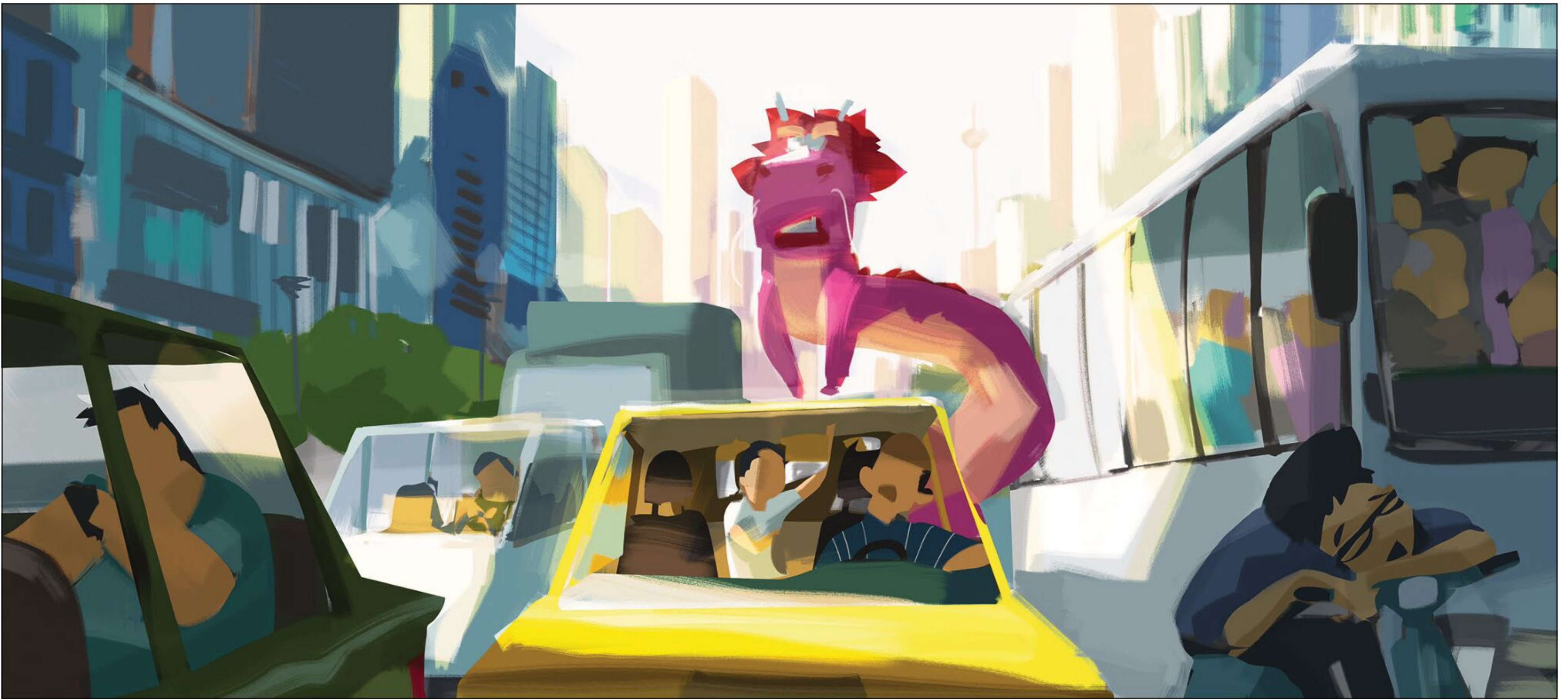
2 Exploring the layout and camera angles

Sometimes I start looking for layout options using line-art. Other times I'll begin by blocking in black and white shapes. My aim is always to maintain focus on the key story beat, while using value to emphasise it.



3 Set the mood of the situation

Once Arthur approves the sketch I continue doing some colour key experiments to set the mood and tone of the situation. I sometimes use film stills as reference for this stage. I paint directly into the image and because this scene is set around midday there's a strong, direct light source with desaturated cool, shadow. The lighting helps to accentuate the discomfort of those caught in the busy traffic.



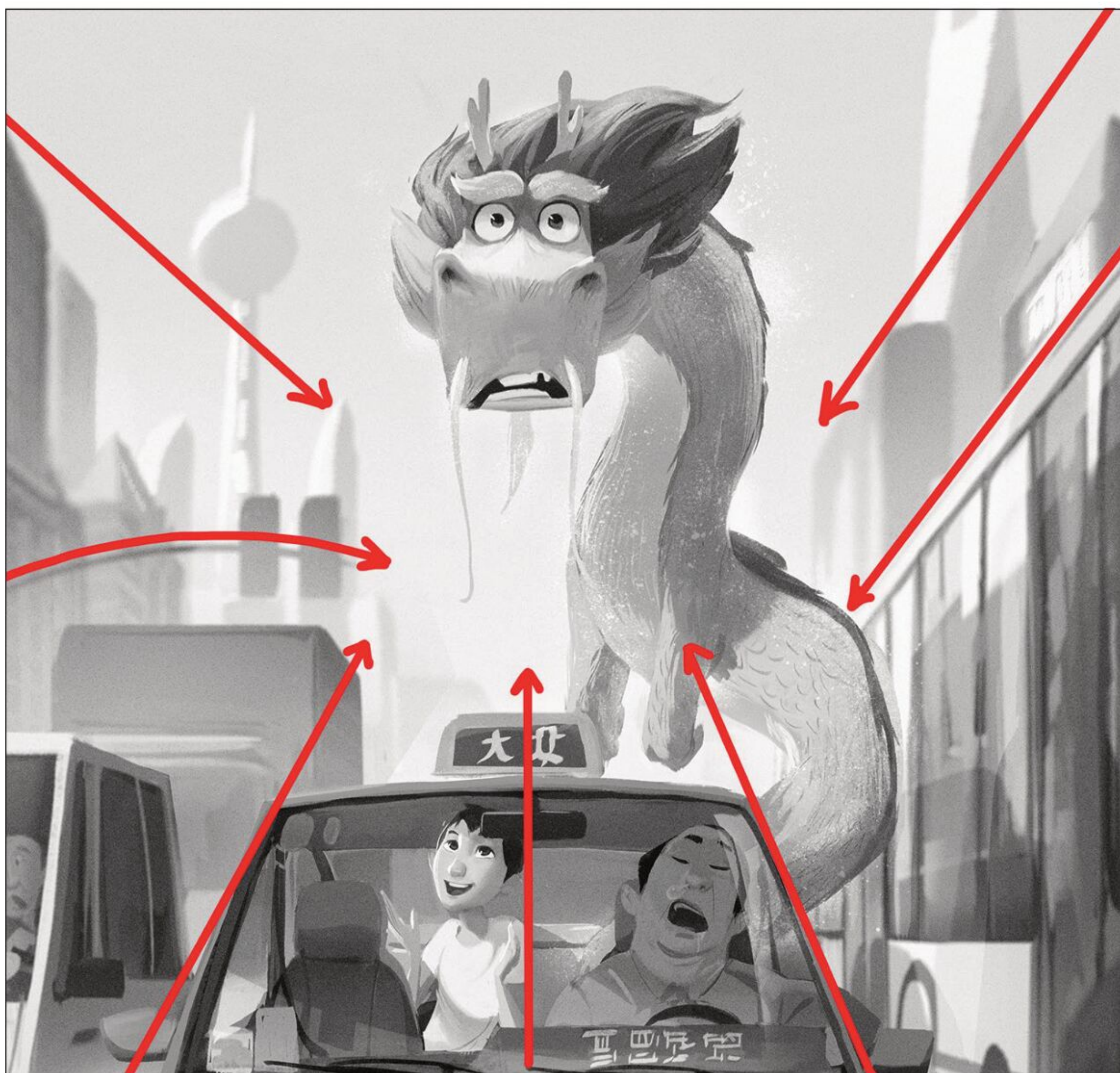
4 Play around with colour and light

Lighting and shadow are the best tools for setting up the composition. In this case, I use bright light to indicate that the yellow taxi and its occupants are the most important objects in the scene, and place everything else in shadow. Thus I'm able to accentuate my focal point.



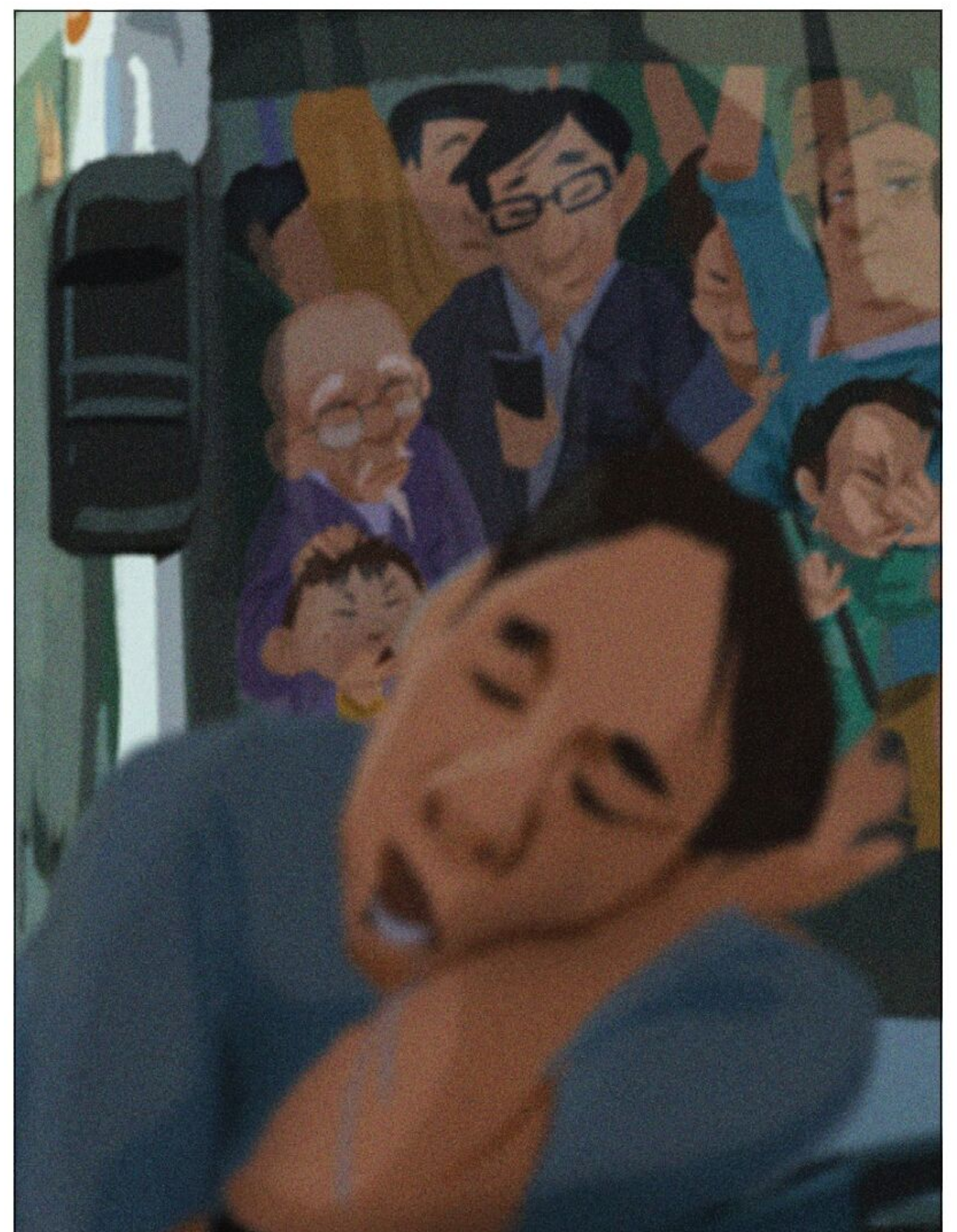
5 Using adjustment layers to manage local colour

Next, I paint the local colour for every object in the scene. This will make it easier to subsequently alter the colours of light and shadow using adjustment layers. In Photoshop you can change the lighting with Soft Light or Overlay layers, and use Multiply layers for adjusting the areas in shadow. Taking this approach means it's straightforward to change the colour of objects – just adjust the local colour layer. Once I'm happy with the composition I add some detail, and apply a little blur and other photo filters. ➡➡



6 Strengthening the focal point

There are a lot of lines – both visible and invisible – that point to the two main characters: Long and Din, and in particular to Long's body and face. The dragon's expression is the key to making this scene work. The world has changed significantly since Long was last in it, and it's important to convey his shock and surprise to the viewer as the dragon rises out of the taxi and surveys the city.



7 Adding secondary detail areas

I want to make the image more fun and relatable to daily's life. I want to show the effect of the traffic jam on people stuck in cars, buses and so on. I add detail to these elements, but take care to follow my black and white block-in so that the values of these secondary features don't overwhelm those in the focal point.



8 Using a blur filter to maintain a strong focal point

There are a lot of elements in this busy composition and I want to make absolutely sure that Long and Din stand out. So I use a blur filter to reduce detail in the surrounding elements, and manage depth by blurring the foreground and background area.

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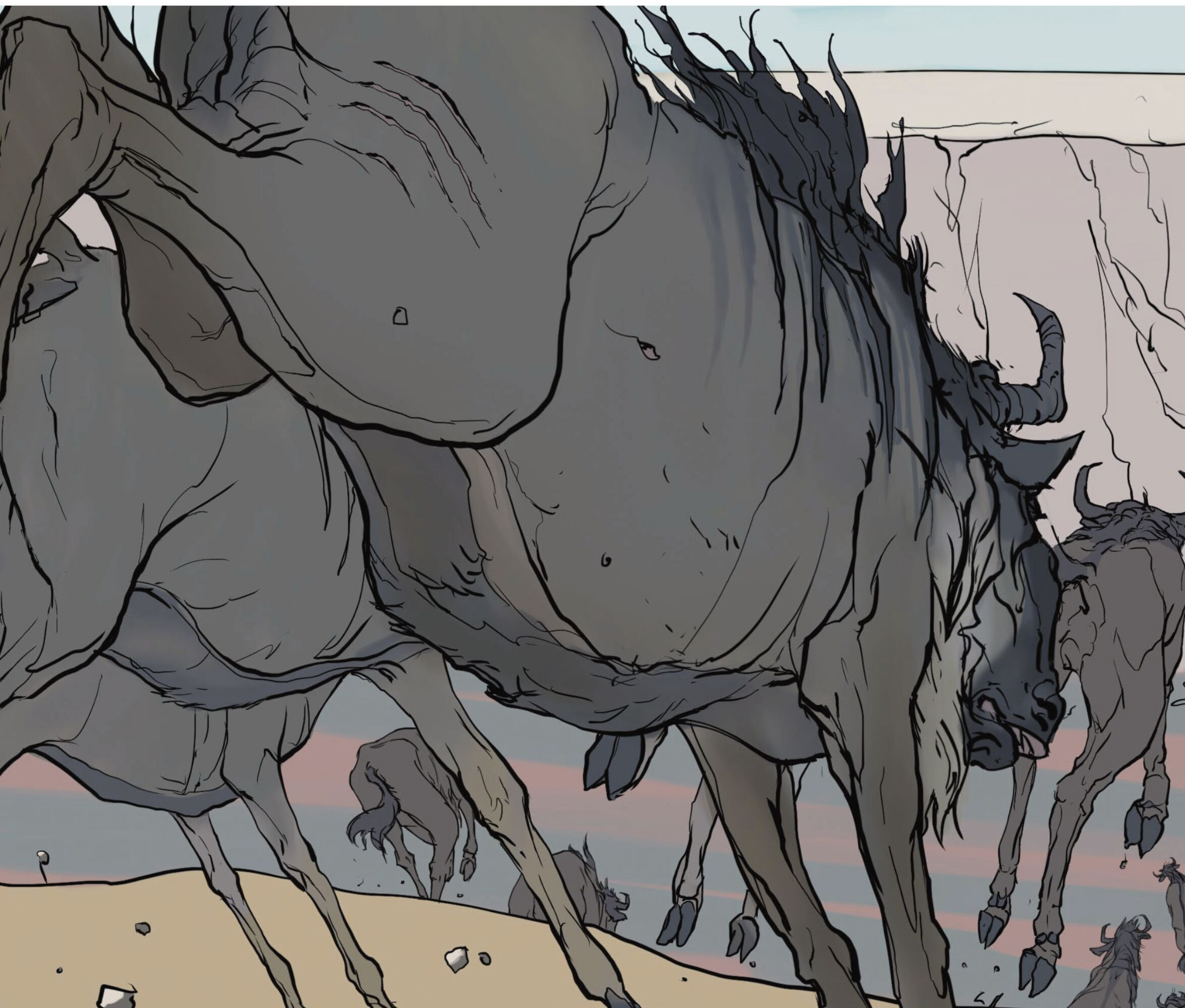
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Procreate

PAINT DRAMATIC KEYFRAME ART

Kan Muftic shares his expert process for successfully capturing a single image to encapsulate an animated feature's entire story



Artist PROFILE

Kan Muftic

LOCATION: England

Kan is a London-based director working in the animation and film industry. He also teaches life drawing and design. <http://ifxm.ag/kan-m>



As a director working in the animation industry, keyframe illustration is the single most powerful

tool to express my ideas to the team. The ability to sketch enables me to use visual language where my verbal expression fails.

I adjust the style depending on the type of animation, but I always serve the story first. I begin by asking the key question: what is this moment really about? As artists, we're often

seduced by the picture-making, but it's crucial to understand that keyframe illustration serves to capture a moment in the story.

This keyframe depicts a dramatic hunting scene from my project based around a clan of hyenas. A long-lasting drought brought hunger and despair. Led by a dominant female (Mother), the hyena clan drives a wildebeest herd into a deadly crevice.

The hunt is savage and merciless. They try to separate a single specimen from the herd, but the

beast is defending itself fiercely, kicking, ramming and stabbing. The sheer force of the stampede seems unstoppable as the herd heads towards the river, hoping to find rescue in the water. But there's no river left there; mostly mud and dust.

In a state of absolute chaos, wildebeest race across the river bank. One by one, they start falling into crevices of the shore and become stuck in the mud, getting trampled by others who desperately try to reach the other side of the bank. ➡

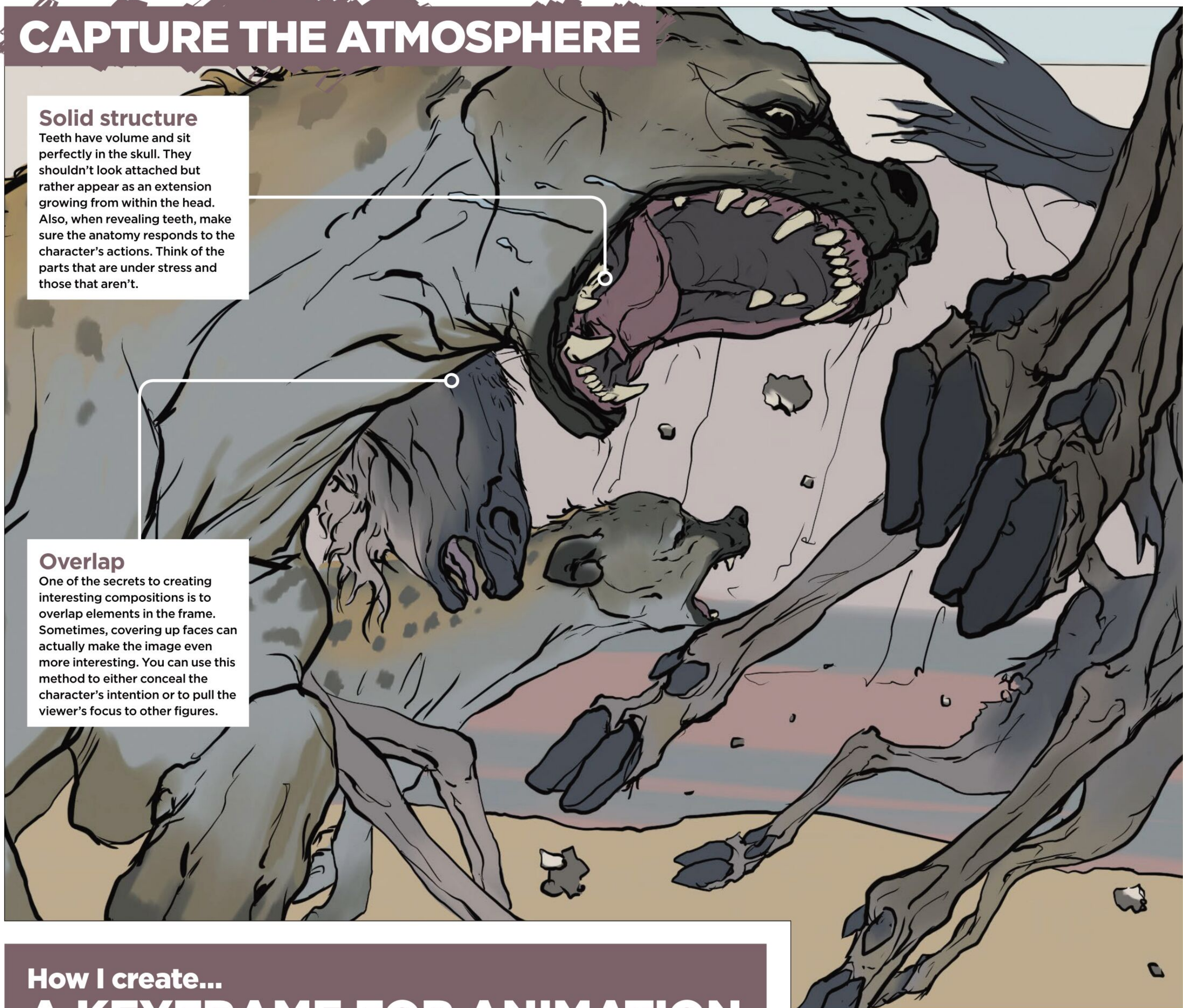
CAPTURE THE ATMOSPHERE

Solid structure

Teeth have volume and sit perfectly in the skull. They shouldn't look attached but rather appear as an extension growing from within the head. Also, when revealing teeth, make sure the anatomy responds to the character's actions. Think of the parts that are under stress and those that aren't.

Overlap

One of the secrets to creating interesting compositions is to overlap elements in the frame. Sometimes, covering up faces can actually make the image even more interesting. You can use this method to either conceal the character's intention or to pull the viewer's focus to other figures.



How I create...

A KEYFRAME FOR ANIMATION



1 Sketch the composition

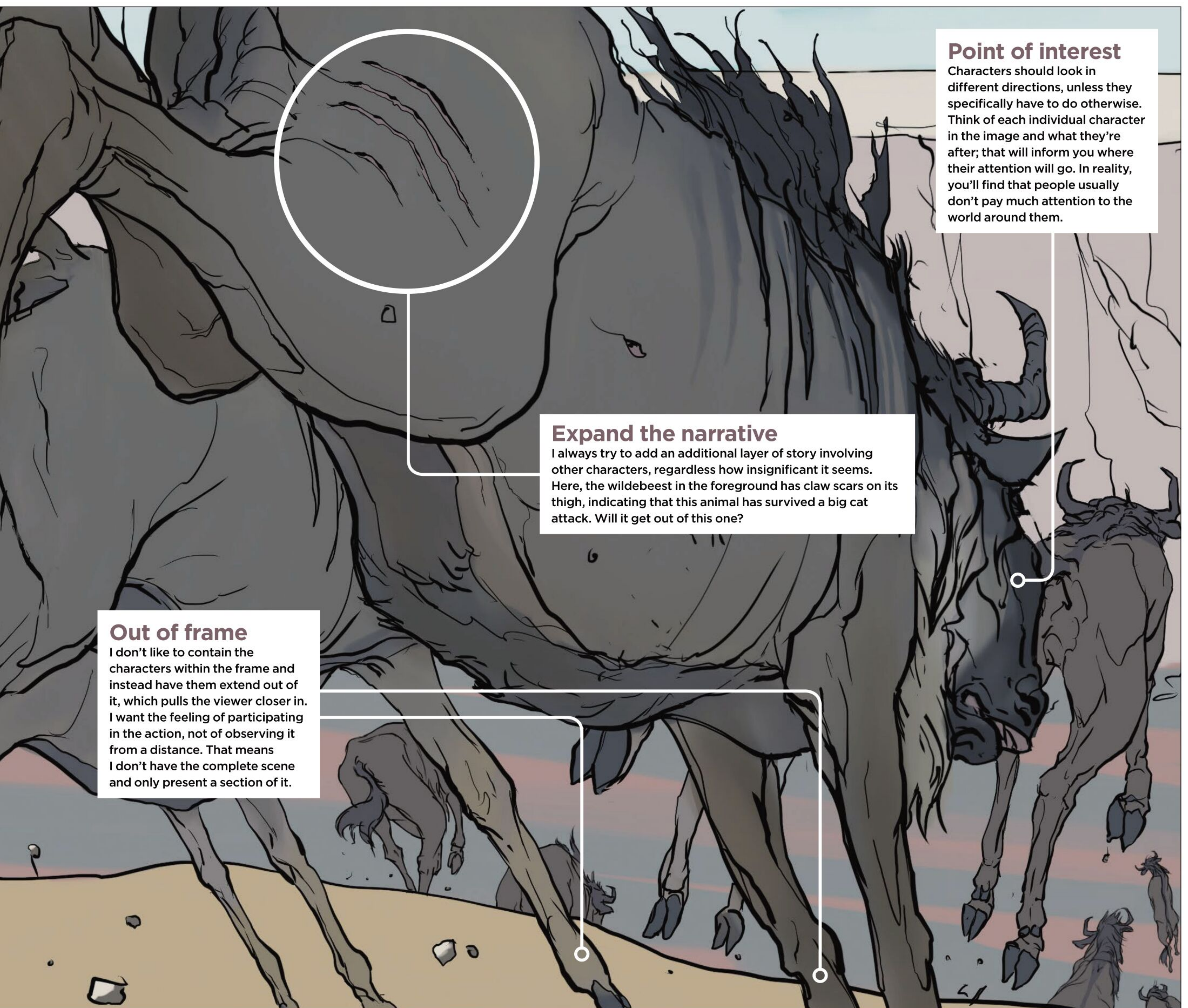
The viewer is placed in the middle of a life-or-death moment. I 'shot it' with a very wide lens to pull the viewer in, while showing the chaos around our hero matriarch hyena. Different lenses will produce wildly different results and it's important to bear that in mind.



2 Set values according to lighting

I start inking, allowing my lines to flow organically without being too precious about it. The thickness of the lines also indicates the values: the lines facing the light source are thinner than the ones in the shadows.

In depth Dramatic keyframe art



Point of interest

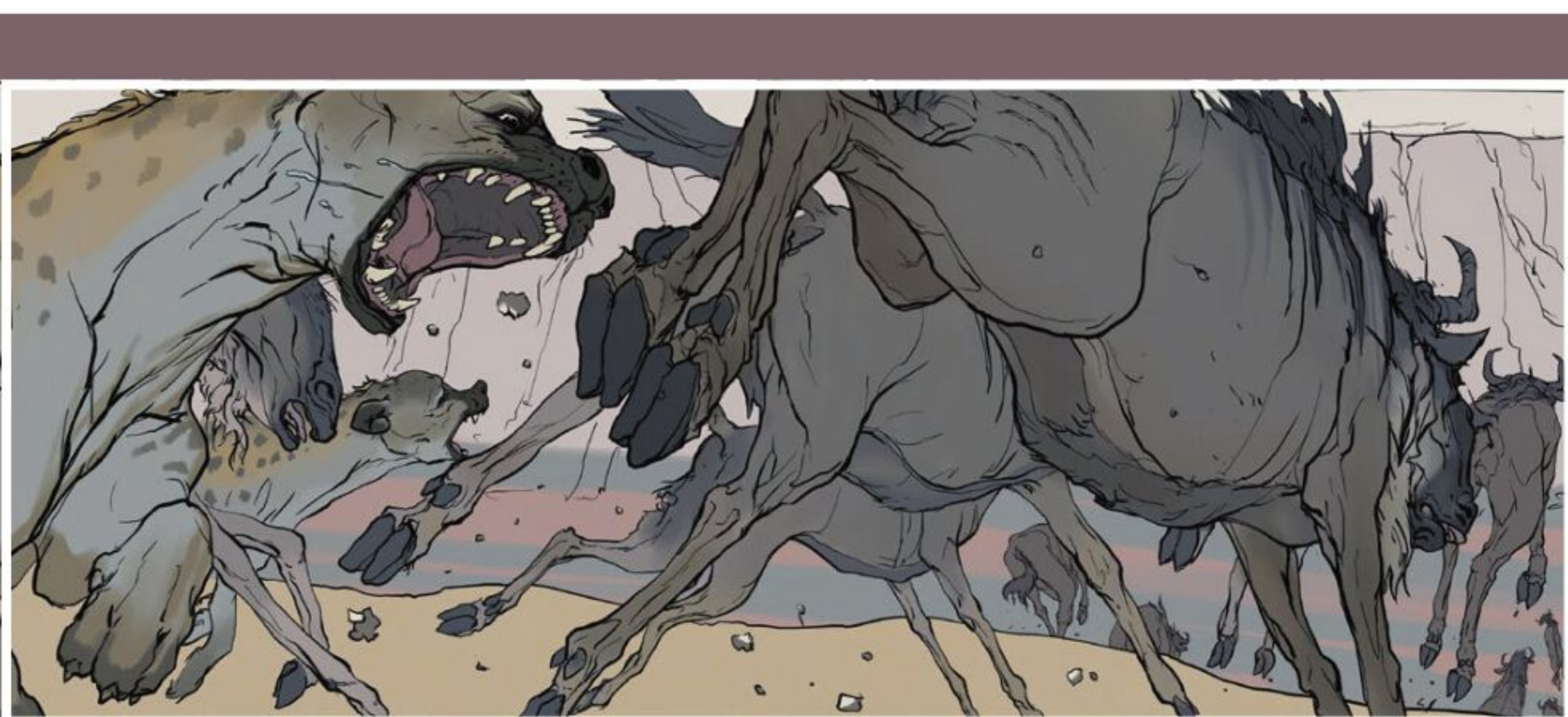
Characters should look in different directions, unless they specifically have to do otherwise. Think of each individual character in the image and what they're after; that will inform you where their attention will go. In reality, you'll find that people usually don't pay much attention to the world around them.

Expand the narrative

I always try to add an additional layer of story involving other characters, regardless how insignificant it seems. Here, the wildebeest in the foreground has claw scars on its thigh, indicating that this animal has survived a big cat attack. Will it get out of this one?

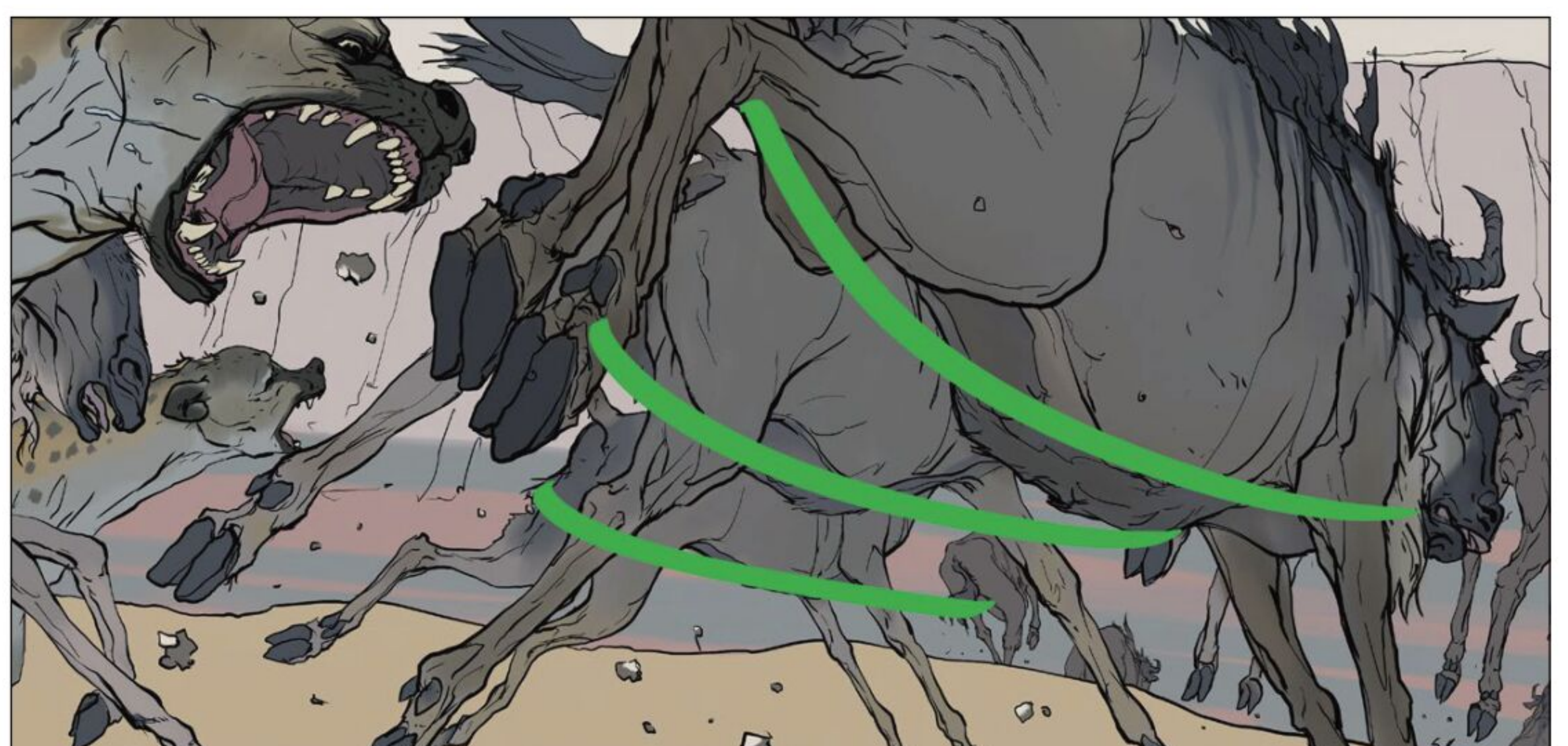
Out of frame

I don't like to contain the characters within the frame and instead have them extend out of it, which pulls the viewer closer in. I want the feeling of participating in the action, not of observing it from a distance. That means I don't have the complete scene and only present a section of it.



3 Apply colour to indicate motion

I keep values fairly flat and use elevated colours to distinguish shapes in motion. Hyenas have brown backs, which distinguishes them from the wildebeest. It's handy to save colour swatches for characters.



Avoid repetition

The trick when drawing multiple figures is to avoid repetition. Change poses, tension and angles to develop an engaging keyframe. I decide to have very little ground contact in this keyframe, which gives an impression of speed. All of this contributes to an overall effect of intense action.

Next month

Next month in...
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Bobby Chiu, Stanley Lau, Paul Bonner
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Next month

The incredibly talented Pernille Ørum creates our special cover art for issue 200!

Artist insight

15 TIPS TO GET A JOB IN ANIMATION

Are you struggling to break into the animation industry? Netflix art director **Drew Hartel** has advice on surviving the “waiting room”...

Artist PROFILE

Drew Hartel
LOCATION: US

Currently based at Netflix as an art director, Drew has also held roles at Pixar, Laika, Sony, Disney, Jim Henson, Skydance and more. When not working or spending time with his family, Drew's running a mentorship programme to help artists find their voice and get hired. www.drewhartel.com



2020 was a tough year for everybody, but along with the difficulty we faced together, there were some hidden blessings too.

As well as enjoying spending more time with my family, one of the unexpected blessings this year was getting to start a mentorship programme on Patreon to help people in all different walks of their journey either break into the industry or strengthen their skillset. There's nothing more rewarding than helping someone get their first job and although everybody is a

different case and some may take longer to get in than others, they'll get in as long as they don't give up.

The idea for this mentorship came from my own personal experiences. I remember being so frustrated when trying to figure out how to get into the industry. Do I need to go to college, do I need a mentor, or is it like a contest and if I get an internship then I'm the lucky guy who gets to be trained to work in the industry? I ended up taking out more loans than most doctors to get through art school and provide for my family. Yet once I got there I realised that this could have been a

lot easier had somebody stepped up and helped me as a mentor and charged a fair price.

So in February of 2020 when I was doing my taxes and discouraged from how much money I was paying to these student loan banks, I prayed about it and God put it on my heart to take that pain and make it into something positive and help people going through similar frustrations. I put together these 15 tips to help those who are struggling through that awkward in-between phase and don't quite know what to do while in the waiting room. I hope these tips can be of some help to you.



1 QUALITY OVER QUANTITY

A common question I get is, “When I get hired, how fast do I need to work?” To preface, this answer will vary from studio to studio. Some workplaces will give you a week or two to design a really nice set, while others will give you a day or two. Regardless of this, the thing that matters the most is the quality of your ideas. I've seen some artists churn out 25 character designs in a week while another does two or three and the director only has one thing on their mind: to pick out the right design for that character. Also, remember speed isn't necessarily about time. In my experience it's about headspace, if I'm in the right headspace then I can get a lot more work done in three hours versus three days in a bad headspace.

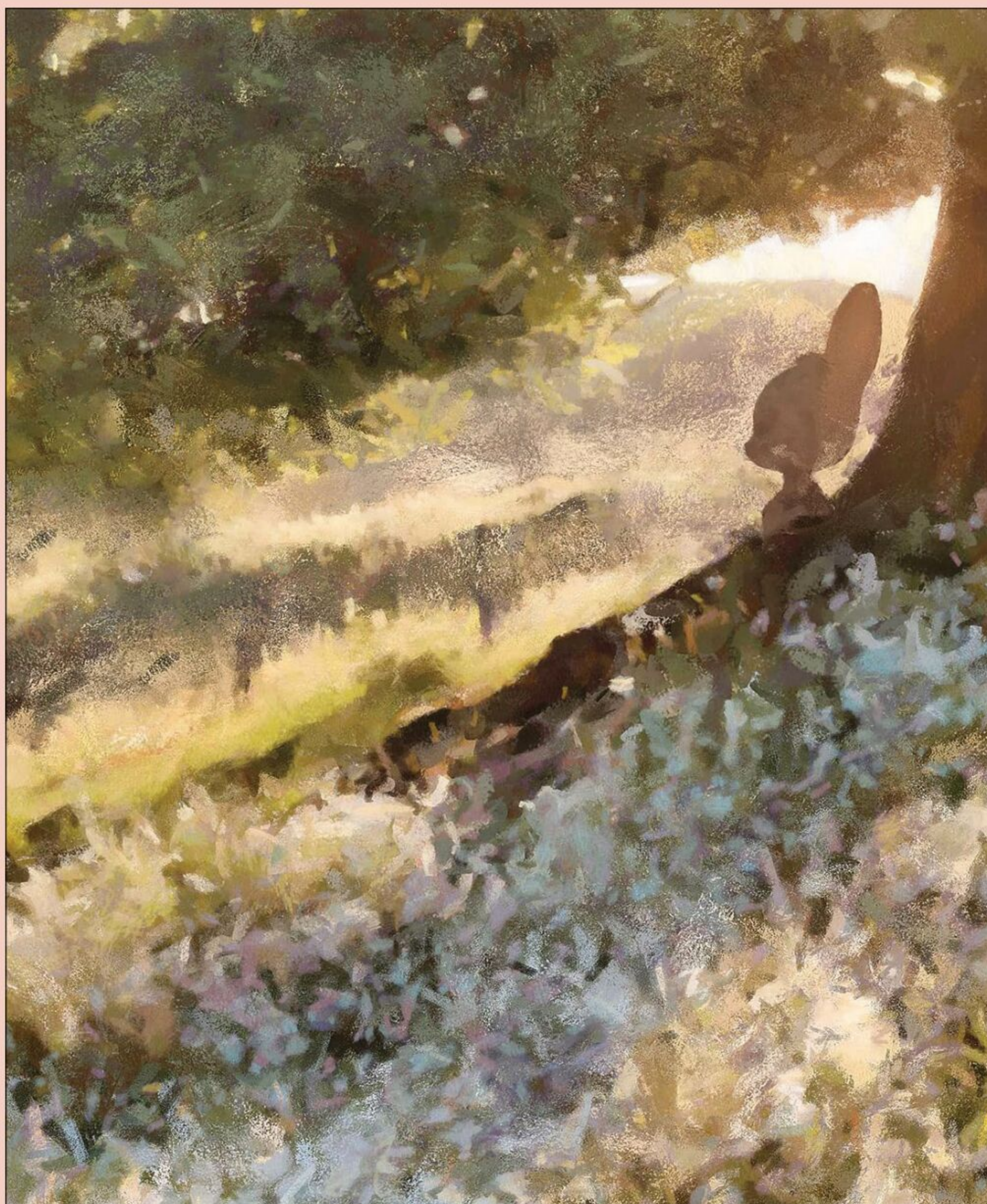
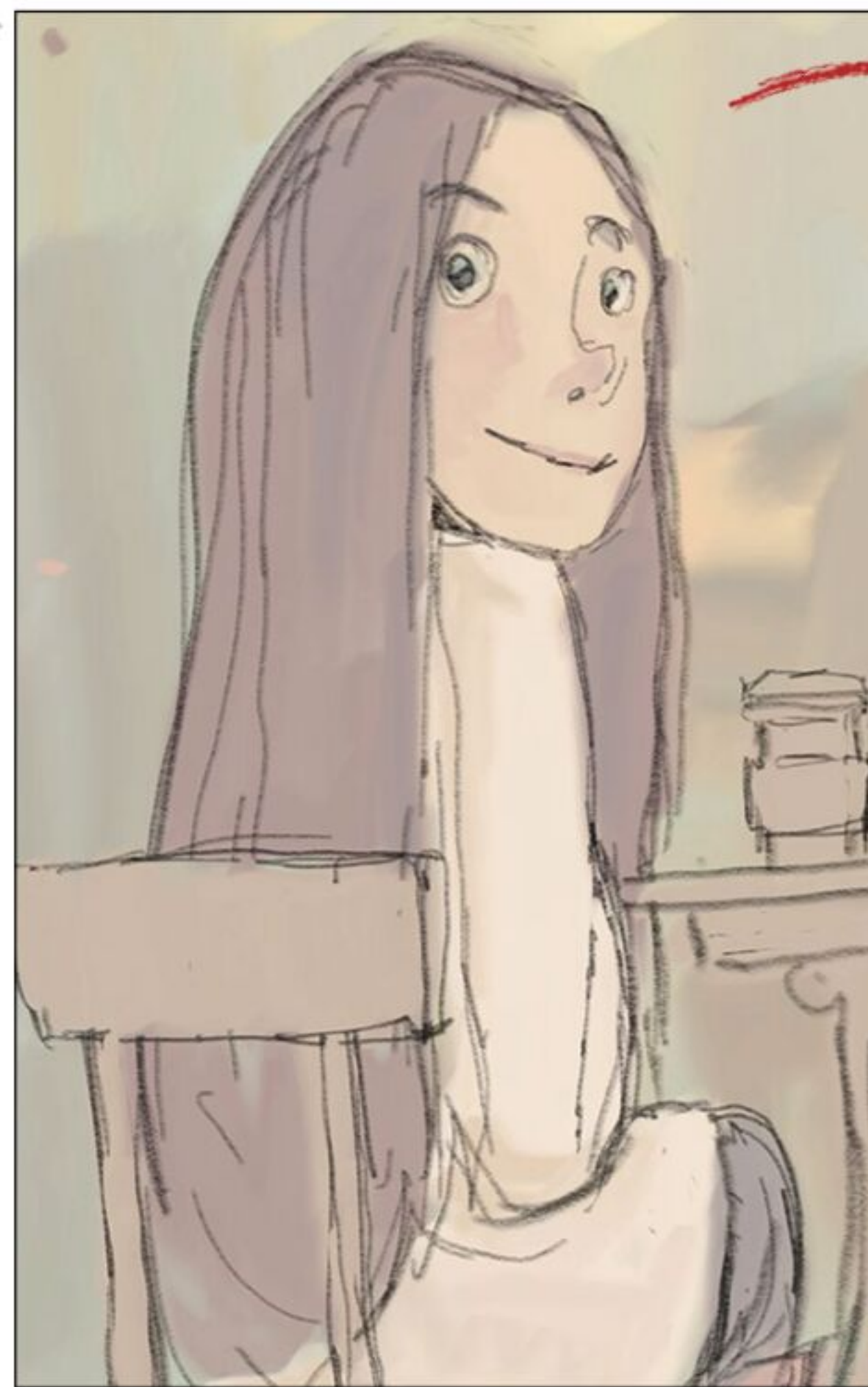


2 BRING ORDER TO YOUR PORTFOLIO

Your portfolio is your identity in the beginning. Did you know that you won't be present for your first interview? It'll be somebody meeting you via your website or your social media page. What will your portfolio say? Put yourself in the recruiter or art director's shoes. Your first piece is your opening statement, so make a strong impression by putting up your best piece. Make sure your portfolio tells your story. Organise it so that's clear and flows from one page to another. It should read like an art book: you want the viewer to continue scrolling from image to image to see everything you can do.

3 BOOST YOUR SKILLSET

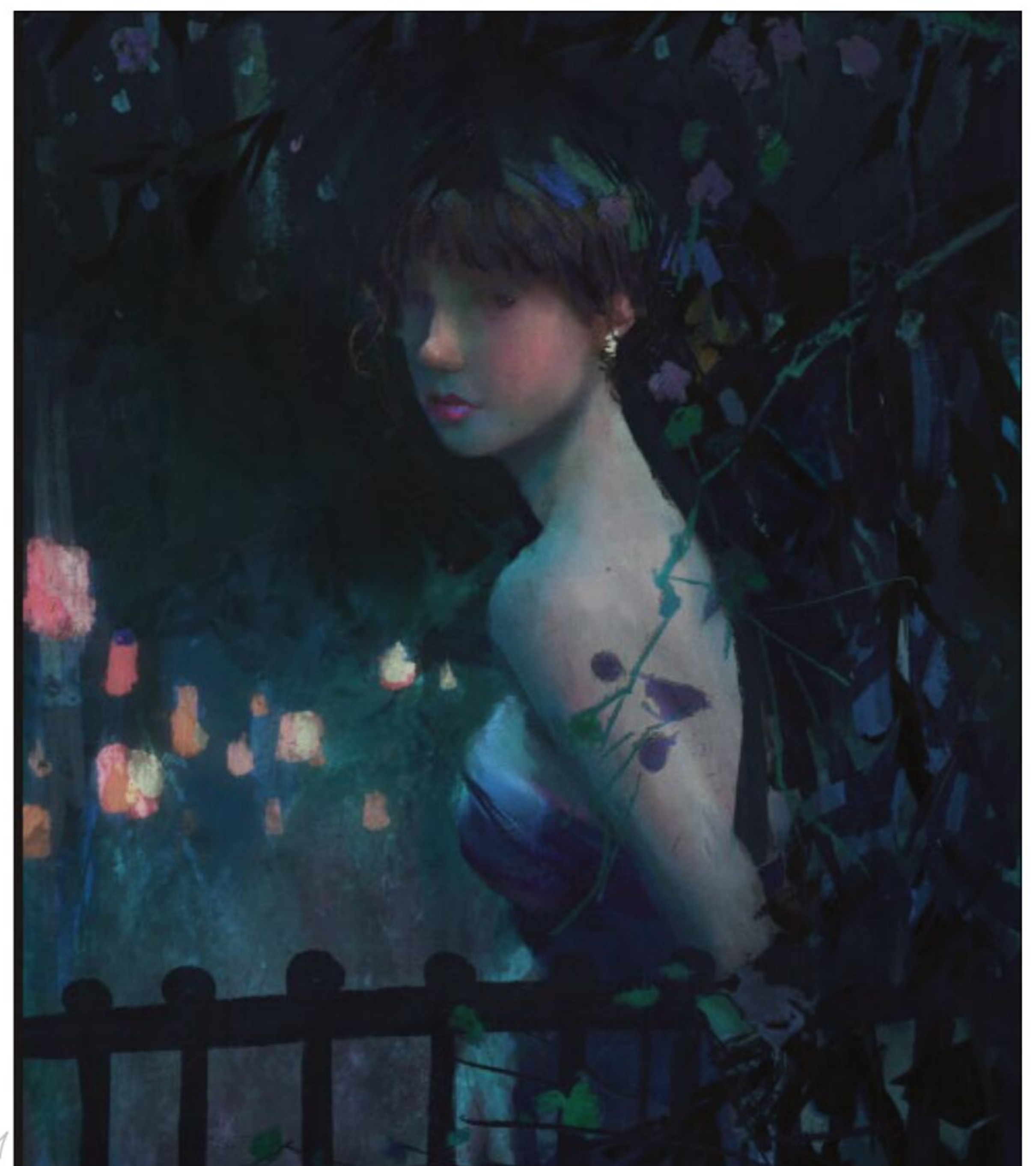
A common mistake I've seen with art school graduates is that they wait for the right job to come along. Never stop learning, improving yourself and exploring. I still hold on to this principle and sit in class weekly to learn more about ZBrush and CG tools to become a better art director who can understand what my 3D artists are facing when they translate designs. It's also so I can create new pipelines: my biggest passion lately has been thinking up new pipelines for projects. Every morning I do a sculpture to strengthen that muscle – the images here are a look into that process.



4 SHOW MORE THAN SCHOOL WORK

This one is simple. Don't fill your portfolio with just assignments – recruiters can spot this, and what does that say about you as a person? Start a personal project and be more intimate with your work. When hiring, we want to see who you are in your work, and not just what your technical skills are. This is always where I start with people in my mentorship. I get straight to the emotions of the mentee. Who are you? Where are you from? What have you been through? What do you have to say?

“Take yourself seriously, start a project and really set a goal to get that thing made”



5 NO PRO WORK? NO PROBLEM!

Have you ever been on a job search and every posting says “Three to five years’ experience”? So what are you supposed to do if you’ve never worked? Good news is in the year 2021 anyone can make anything and share it with the world. So take yourself seriously, start a project and really set a goal to get that thing made. It'll produce professional work and you can put it in your portfolio. When you're in the interview and it comes up, then you can be honest and say, “I'm currently developing my own project but I'm looking to start working at an established studio.” The other pathway is to get an internship, which I'll get into in Tip 10. ➡➡



6 YOU DON'T NEED TO GO TO COLLEGE

This one I'd like to yell from the rooftops. This tip isn't meant to bash colleges. If you can afford to go to college, it can be a wonderful chance to strengthen your skillset. This tip is to emphasise that college isn't a roadblock by any means. In every interview I've ever had in this industry, not one person has asked me if or where I went to school. Don't let a lack of money, your location or anything get in your way of breaking into this industry. It's one of the things I love most about the arts: we judge based on talent, work ethic and voice, not on academics or social stature.



7 STRENGTHEN CORE ART SKILLS

Form, colour theory, lighting principles, perspective, shape language... these are the basics of art and design. Never stop strengthening these muscles. If you spend a year mastering Blender but you haven't thought about shape language that year, it's not going to help you much in making great designs.

The art fundamentals haven't changed much over the past two millennia and it's crucial you keep strengthening them. I still spend time in nature painting and observing light because it teaches me new things or reminds me of things I may have forgotten.



8 EDIT, EDIT, EDIT!

My favourite student question is, "Should I put my best piece in the beginning or at the end of my portfolio?" The answer is every piece should be your best piece. So when you're putting together your portfolio, edit it like crazy. Strip it of every weak piece and if that leaves you with four pieces then great! Keep those four and go make some new work that can live up to those four. Art directors aren't counting pieces. They're trying to find the right work for their project, so quality sits high above quantity when it comes to your portfolio.



“This is a small industry and being kind and helpful will only help you stay in it”

9 BE NICE AND PAY IT FORWARD

This is a big one. Be nice to people. It's a simple act, but people often forget that this is a small industry and being kind and helpful will only help you stay in it, while being mean or negative is going to create a reputation that somehow you're "difficult to work with".

As I've said before, this is a collaborative industry and you really share life together at 40 hours a week. Be kind and pay those who have helped you along the way with kindness, and help others who are trying to get in. I was helped once by an artist who requested that I pay it forward and I intend to keep doing that throughout my career. ➡

Rough Sketch then Modeled in Sketchup



10 THE TRUTH ABOUT INTERNSHIPS

When I was first starting out as a student I had this false idea that an internship would teach me how to become a great artist. That maybe Disney would hire me and teach me to become a “Disney” artist. Well, at one point in time that may have been true, but today you have to be

just about as good as any employee at that studio to become an intern.

An internship is mutually beneficial. It helps studios get fresh new talent into their studios and it helps students gain some professional experience to work out any issues before starting a role where you’re more heavily relied on.

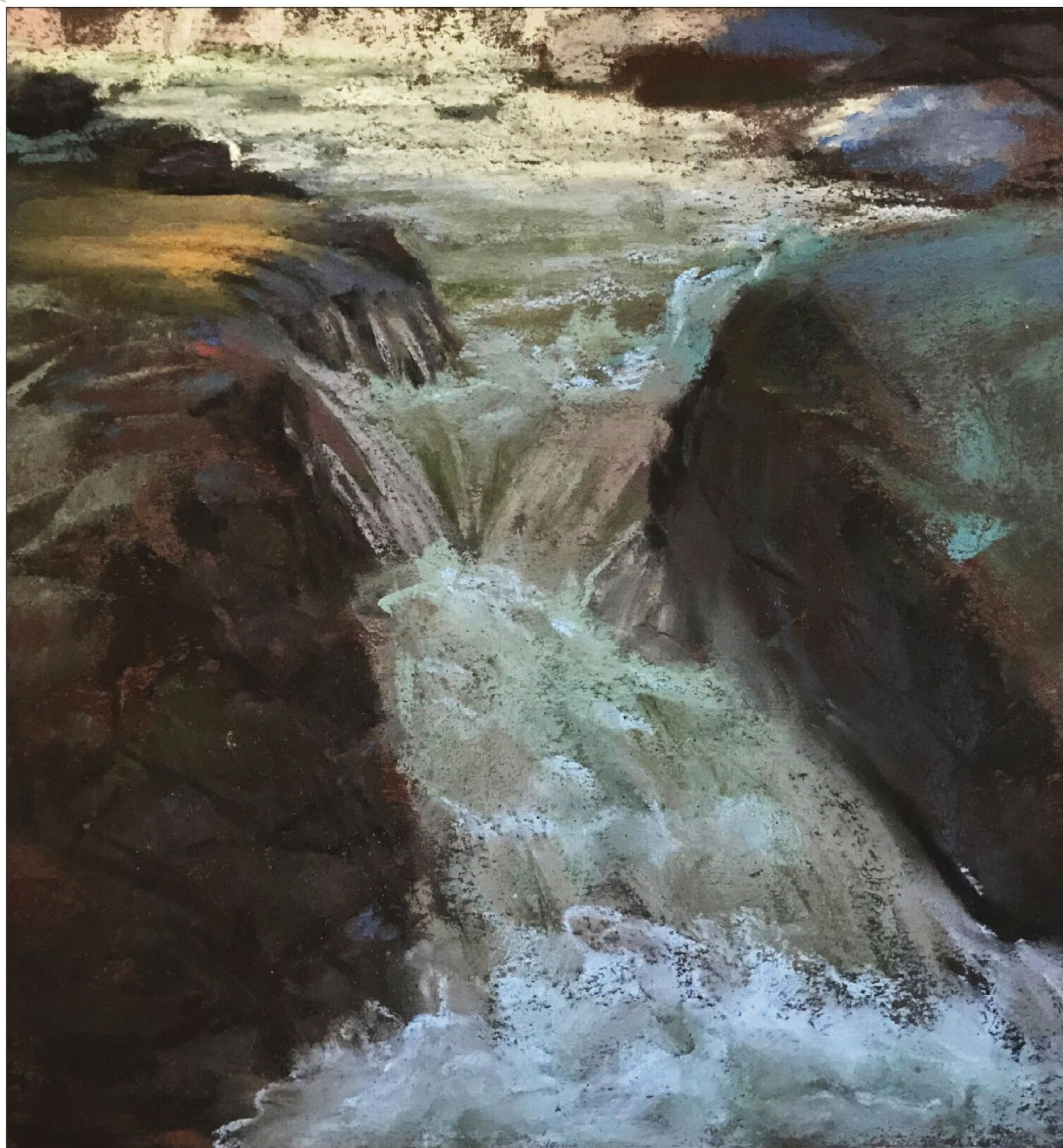
11 CONNECT WITH THE RIGHT PEOPLE

If you want to work at a studio, become familiar with the people who work there and introduce yourself. My advice would be to pick just a few people you admire from that studio and send them an email or plan to visit their booth at a convention. Be genuine and don’t treat them like somebody you just want to get a job from. That would be a one-sided relationship and rarely works. Instead, share your work, share what you like about their work, ask for some feedback and have a nice conversation.

Artists tend to be quiet and shy, but don’t forget that these films are made via a giant collaboration of hundreds of people. Get used to socialising and meeting new people.

12 CONSISTENT FEEDBACK

Find a friend, colleague or brutally honest family member who really wants to support you and show them your work often. I have this relationship with a few people and it’s so beneficial to be able to get feedback on your work and begin to see your work without any bias. Just be careful not to show any professional work of course!



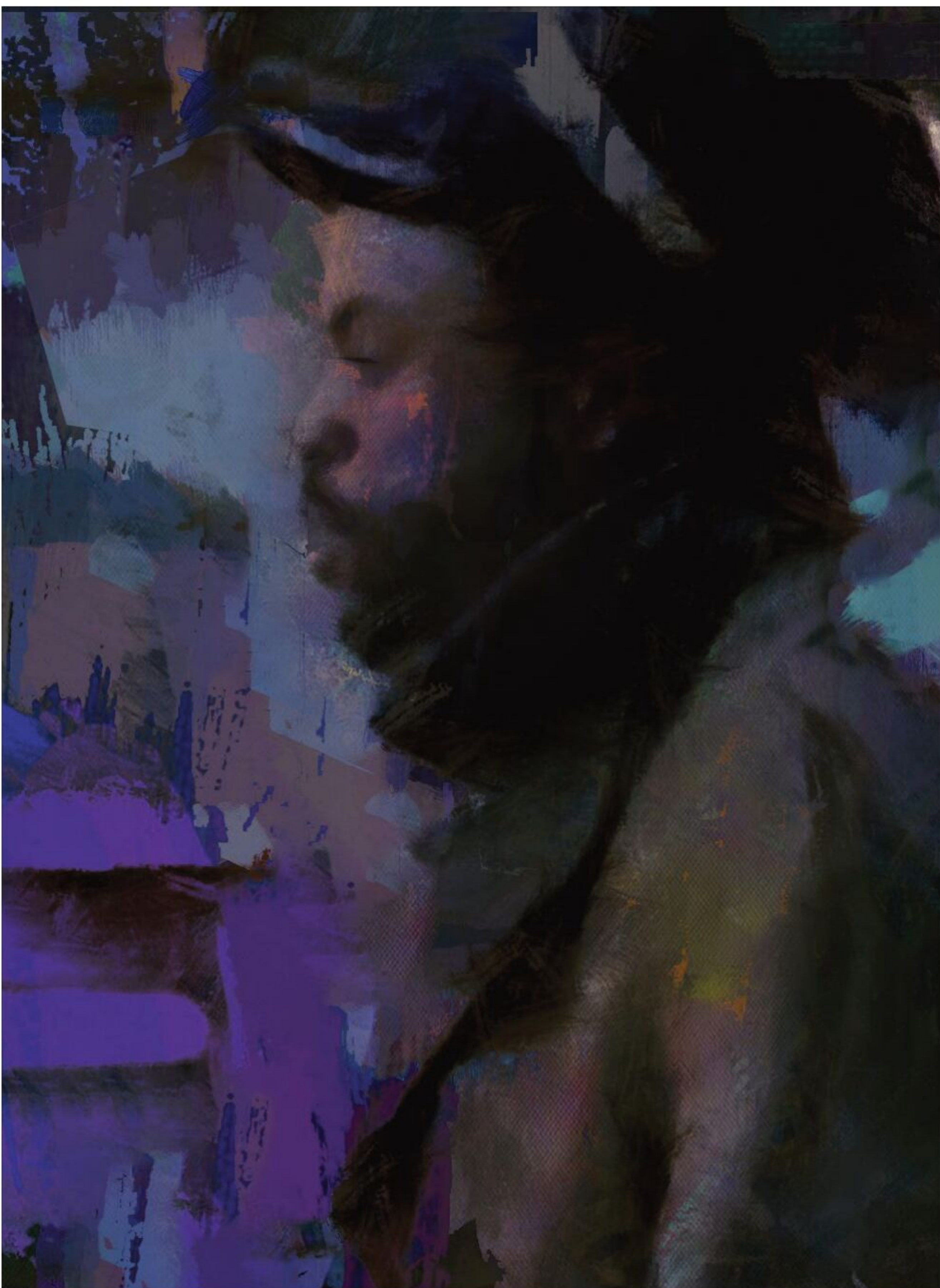


13 SOCIAL MEDIA IS A GREAT TOOL - MOSTLY

Social media is a fantastic way to share your work with the world and it can sprout all kinds of unexpected opportunities. Share your work, like other people's work, comment and respond to comments. Be a nice, genuine person and people will start to notice you.

Although social media is a great tool, it can also become a breeding ground for judgement and self-doubt. We see more likes and follows

for somebody else and it can create self-doubt when your work isn't getting the same exposure. It works both ways where sometimes those who are receiving lots of likes and follows may not be working much in the industry, and if you mimic their work it'll likely not help you much. My best advice is to be present on social media, but know that it's not a relevant guide to how well you're doing on your artistic journey. It's simply a tool to socialise and keep in touch with people.



14 CONSIDER MENTORSHIP PROGRAMMES

Mentorships are a great way to figure out the puzzle of why you're not getting hired. Find a mentor who can give you feedback and teach you new ways of thinking, to bridge the gap between student and professional. Choose someone whose work you admire. They should be someone who wants to help you become you - not them.

“ Social media is a fantastic way to share your work and it can sprout all kinds of opportunities ”



15 CARE FOR YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

This job requires a lot from you - not just your time and intellect, but also your emotions, thoughts, ideas and imagination. We all get overwhelmed, burnt out and feel unappreciated, but make sure that you're spending time taking care of your mind. Don't stop being "in love" with art - go outside for a walk or find a trusted friend you can vent at. Most importantly, never be ashamed to ask for help or seek a medical professional to help you. Your brain is like any other part of your body and there's no shame in requesting help if you feel something's not right. ●

Photoshop

QUICKLY SKETCH A CHARACTER DESIGN

Netflix artist **Jackie Droujko** shares her process for designing a character in a scene, emphasising texture, mood and lighting

Artist PROFILE

Jackie Droujko
LOCATION: Canada

Jackie is a character designer working at Netflix. Her passion lies in creating simple and appealing designs that communicate compelling stories.
www.jackiedroujko.com



This piece was created for my monthly Patreon exclusive print – each month I create an illustration to print and send to my Patrons. For this illustration, I was inspired by German artist Thorsten Hasenkamm (@thasenkamm) and the way he draws characters on bicycles so effortlessly. Vehicles aren't my strong suit, so I wanted to challenge myself

not only to create a character on a Vespa, but to do it within a short amount of time (basically while I was taking my lunch break).

I began by opening a few Vespa references from Pinterest and sketched out the idea using Photoshop. I was playing with the idea of not having any lines in the piece, but eventually decided against that for the sake of time. I ended up embracing the sketchiness that

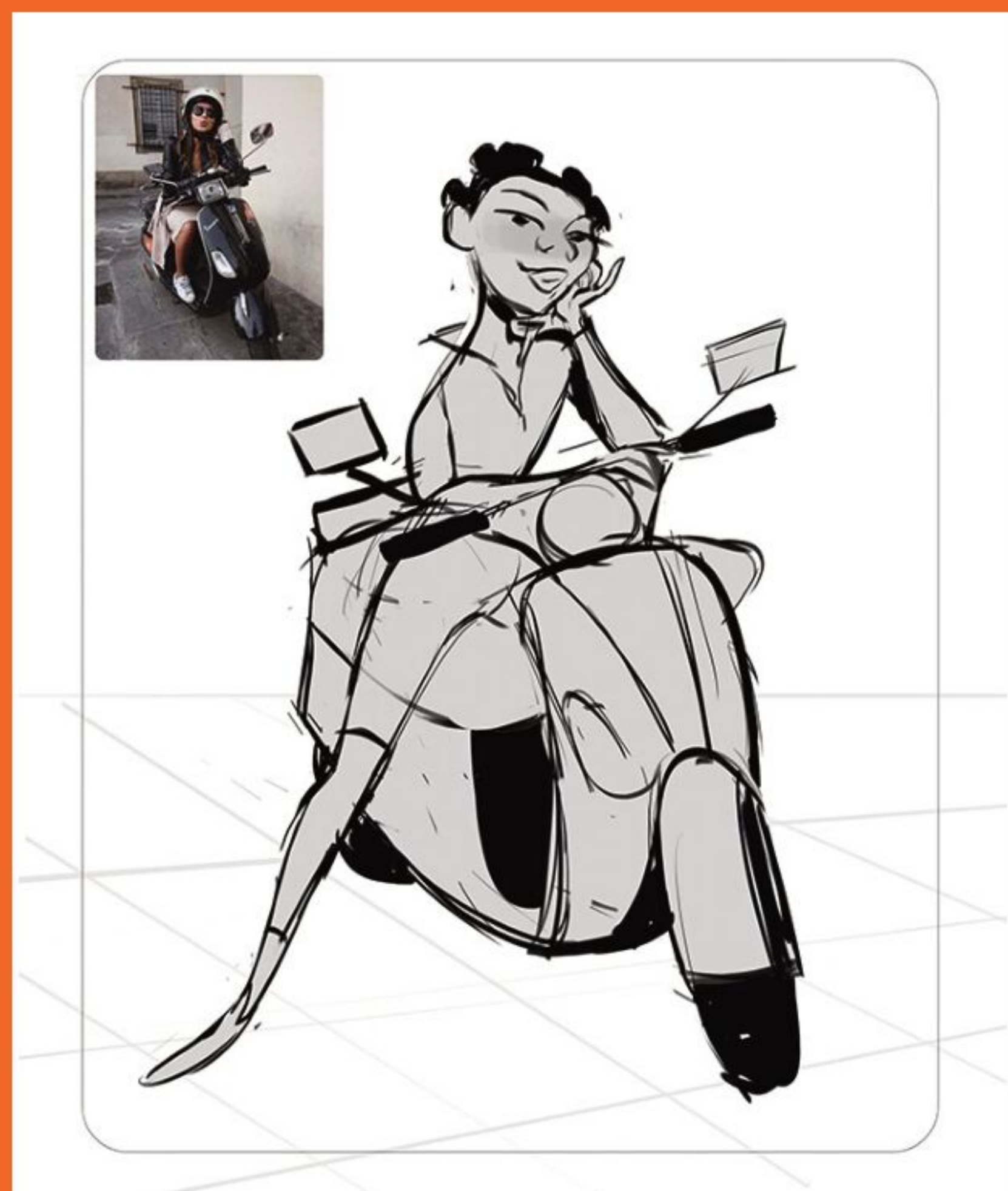
comes with rough line-work.

My main focus was capturing rich colours, strong mood and the gentle gaze of the character. I focused less on the perspective of the bike, and more on the interaction of the character and the vehicle.

When I finished the local colours, which were these vibrant green and yellow hues, it made sense for the lighting to be sunset to add to the warm glow of the character. ➡➡

How I create...

AN ILLUSTRATION DURING A LUNCH BREAK



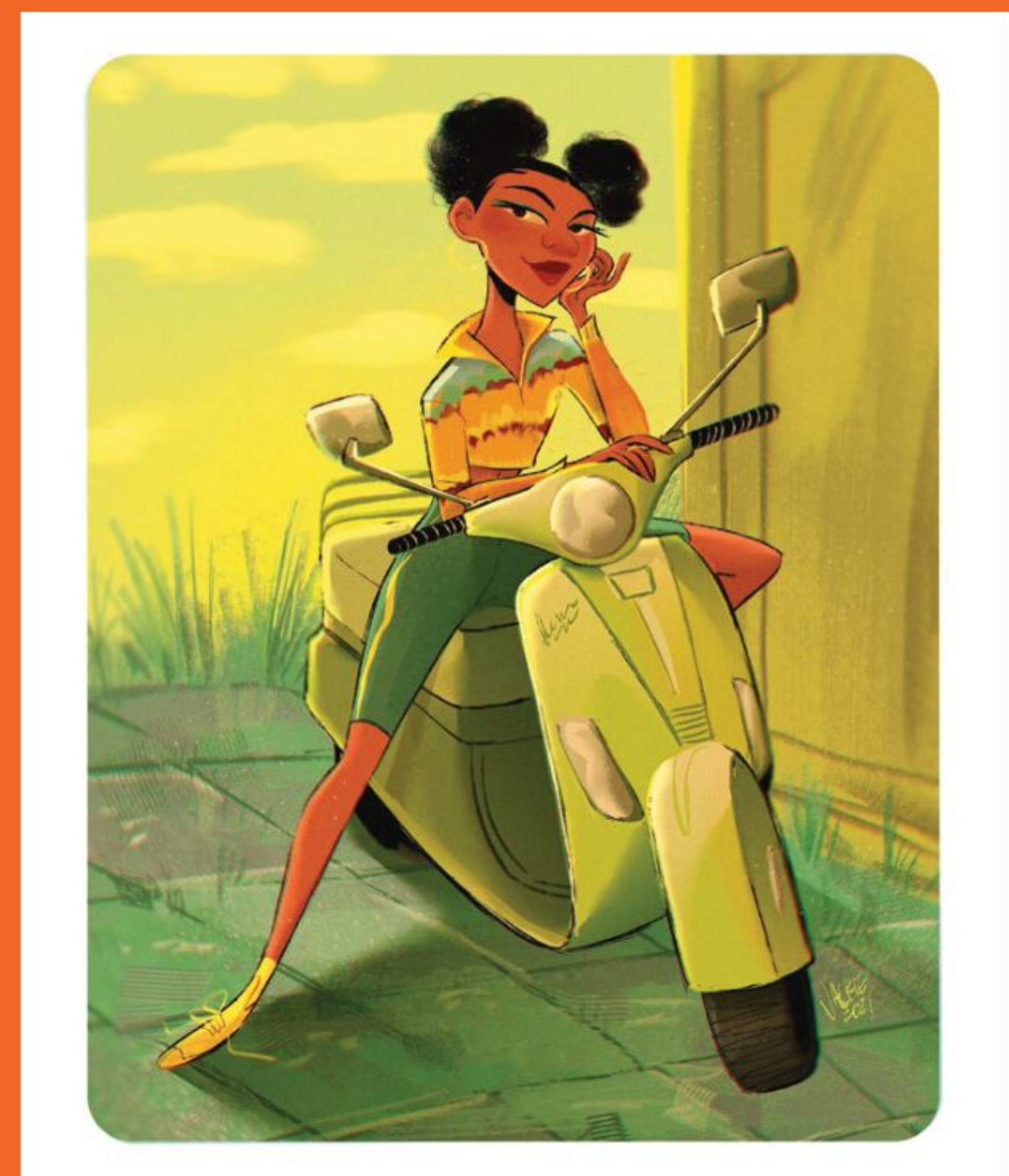
1 Sketch using a reference

I first rough out the character with no plan for the background. I know I don't want a solid colour, but have no other idea beyond that at this point. I use a reference image to guide me on the placement and perspective of the bike and how the character fits on it. I add a basic grid on the floor to anchor her to the ground.



2 Blocking in colours

With the sketch done, I line the character and Vespa. I add base colours to get the general mood I'm trying to convey. Once the base of the character/scooter is complete, I rough in the background, making sure to use colours that harmonise with the existing palette. I want her to fit in with her environment, not stand out.



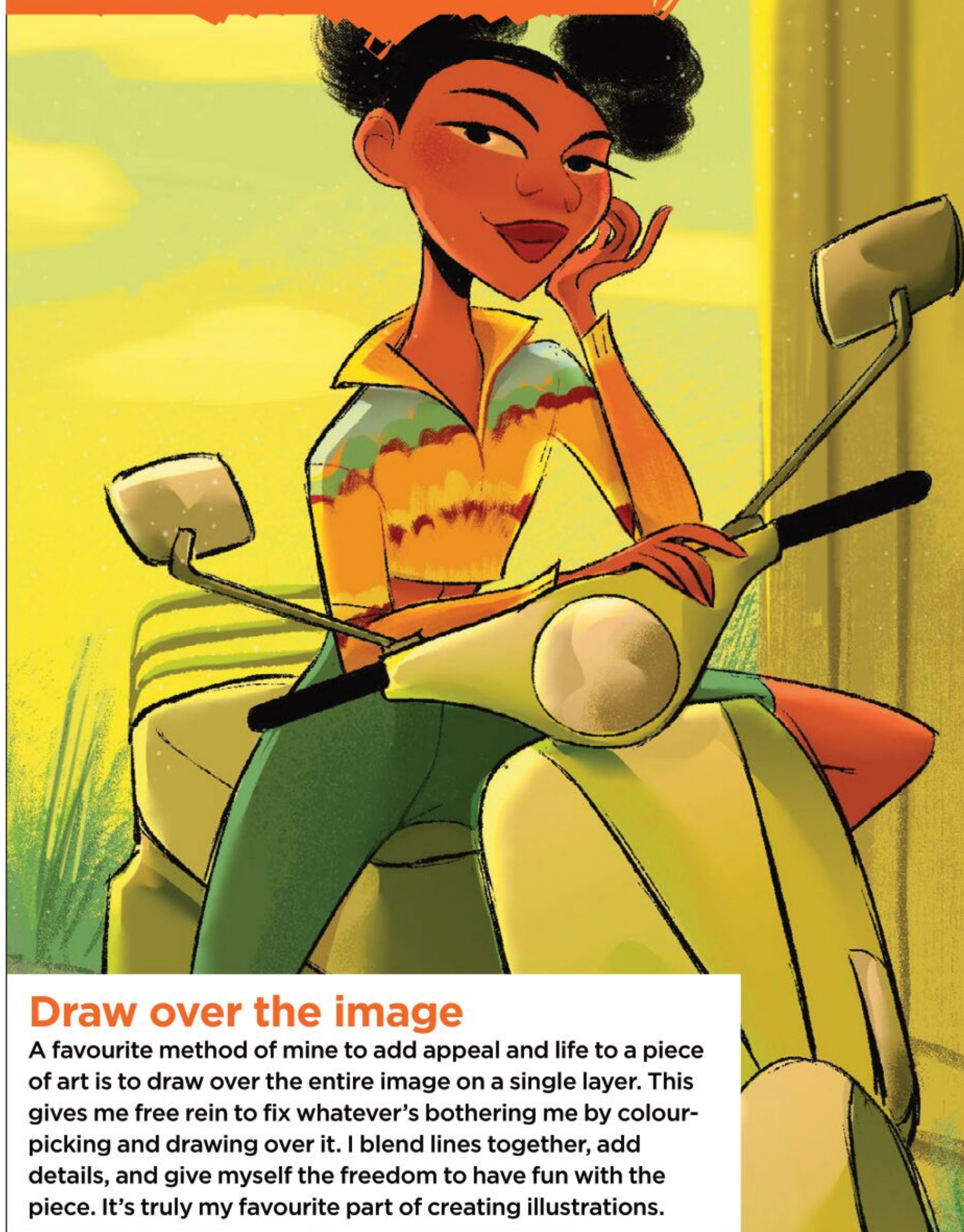
3 Lighting and background

Now I can move to the texture, details and lighting of the character and scooter. I quickly create a messy background, then refine the character. The background has enough information to show where she is and what time of day it is – I don't need more information than that, especially when the character is the focal point.



QUICK TRICKS

BEFORE



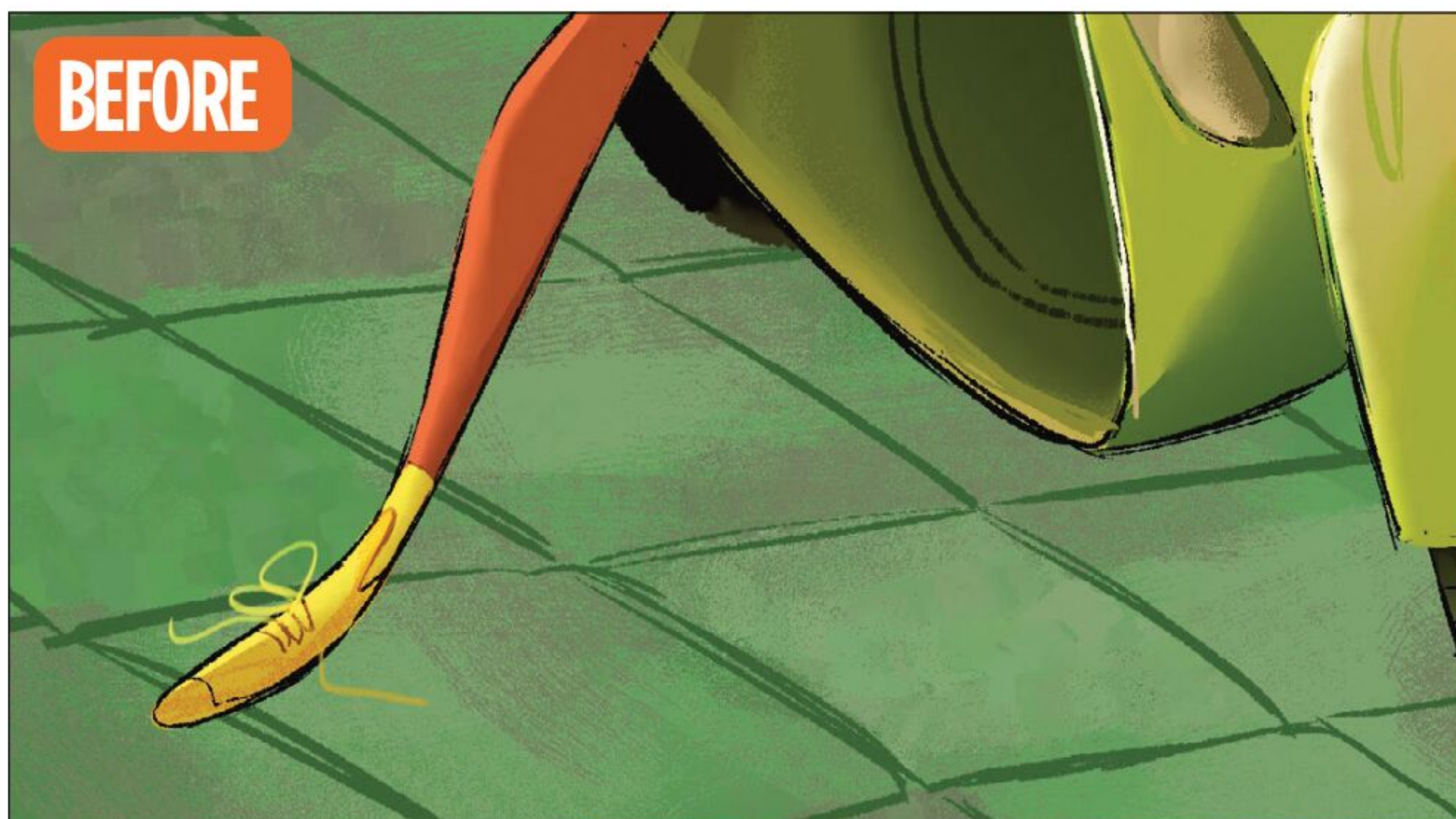
Draw over the image

A favourite method of mine to add appeal and life to a piece of art is to draw over the entire image on a single layer. This gives me free rein to fix whatever's bothering me by colour-picking and drawing over it. I blend lines together, add details, and give myself the freedom to have fun with the piece. It's truly my favourite part of creating illustrations.

AFTER



BEFORE



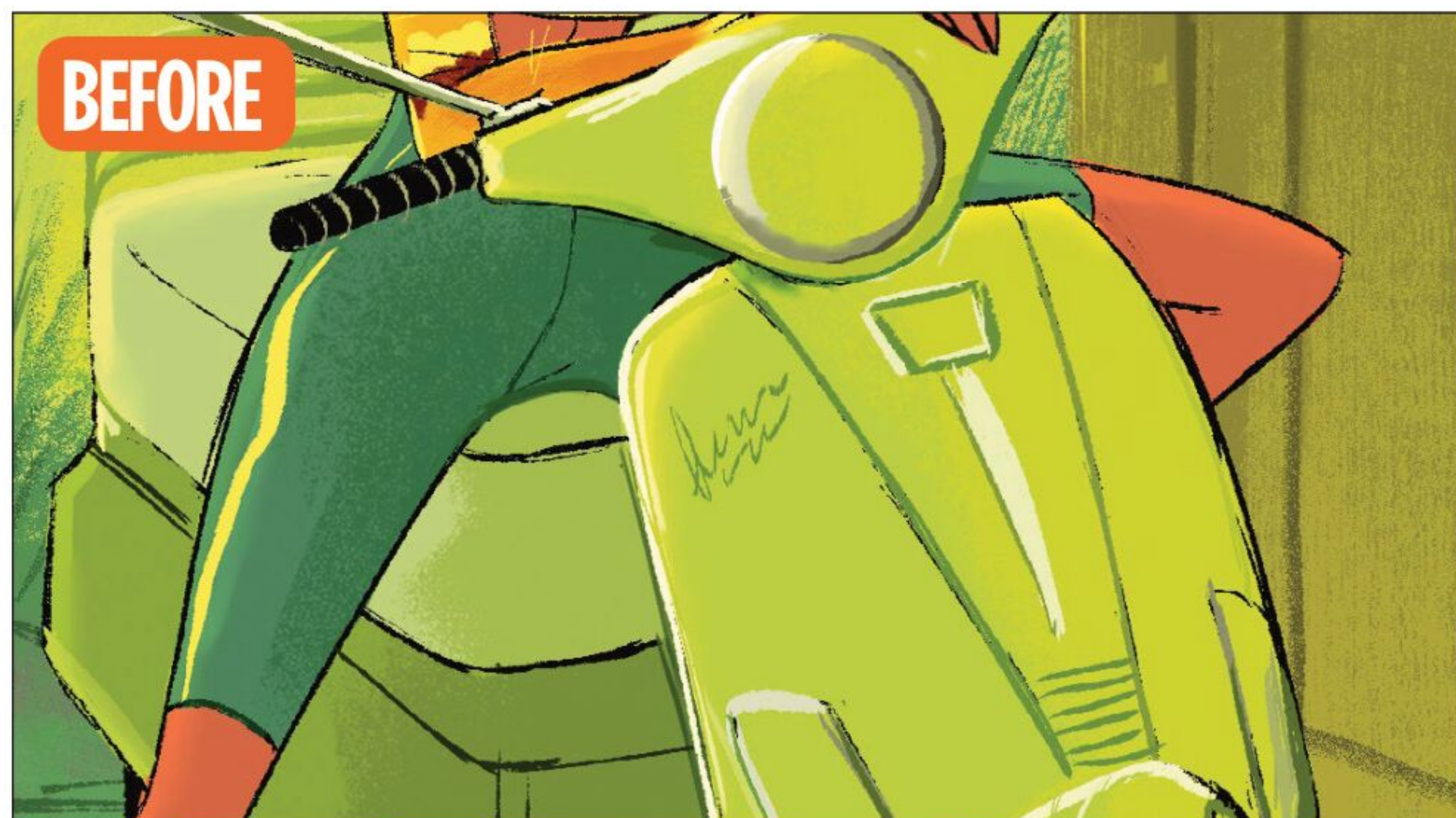
AFTER



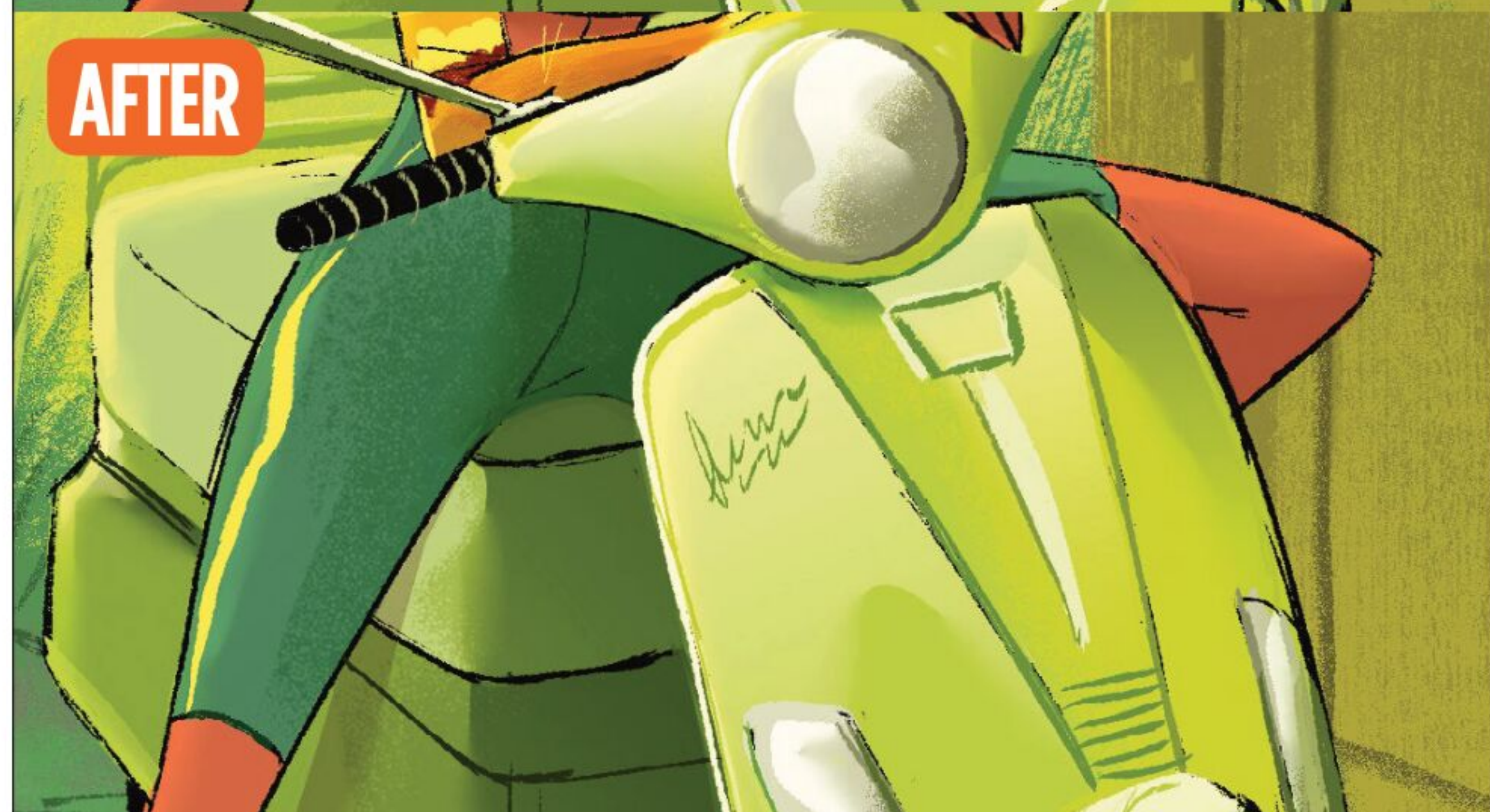
Texture: the lazy person's detail

Adding a variety of textures in the background is a great way to quickly make a simple design more interesting. Here, I place textures and similar colours over the grid on the ground to give the impression of grit. Now it looks like dirty cobblestone with grass growing through the cracks.

BEFORE



AFTER



Painting metal

In order to make the scooter look metallic, I add a Multiply blending layer for the shadows and a Lighten blending layer for the highlights over the local base colours. To make details convincingly shiny, I make sure to add mostly either hard shadows or highlights that eventually soften.

Patterns make it POP!

To add an interesting detail, I create a fun pattern in her shirt that embodies all the colours of the image. When the rest of the drawing's colours are used in big blocks, this shirt adds rhythm and variety to an otherwise simple use of colour.

Lens blur

Blurring edges of the character and background is a quick way to convey depth and push the idea that this image takes place in a real location, rather than a 2D drawing. With some of the background blurred, we can really focus on the character.



Light source

Here's an extreme example of the lighting I used to better understand how surfaces were lit in this scene. The light source is parallel to her and behind her, so I used a strong rim light along all the surfaces facing screen left. Where there's no rim light, there's a shadow to contrast.

Retro colour change

I love adding an RGB split effect along the edges of a piece to add a retro feeling. It gives a sense of wonder and draws your eye to the focal point of the image. It also subtly adds blue and red so that it's barely visible, but you can feel the change in the colour palette.

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSH:
SHIYON KIM'S
INK BRUSH

I like using this brush for line-art because it gives a rough and sketchy energy to my pieces.

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THE EXPANSE

The secrets behind the astounding effects of Amazon's prime sci-fi show

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NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX Reviews

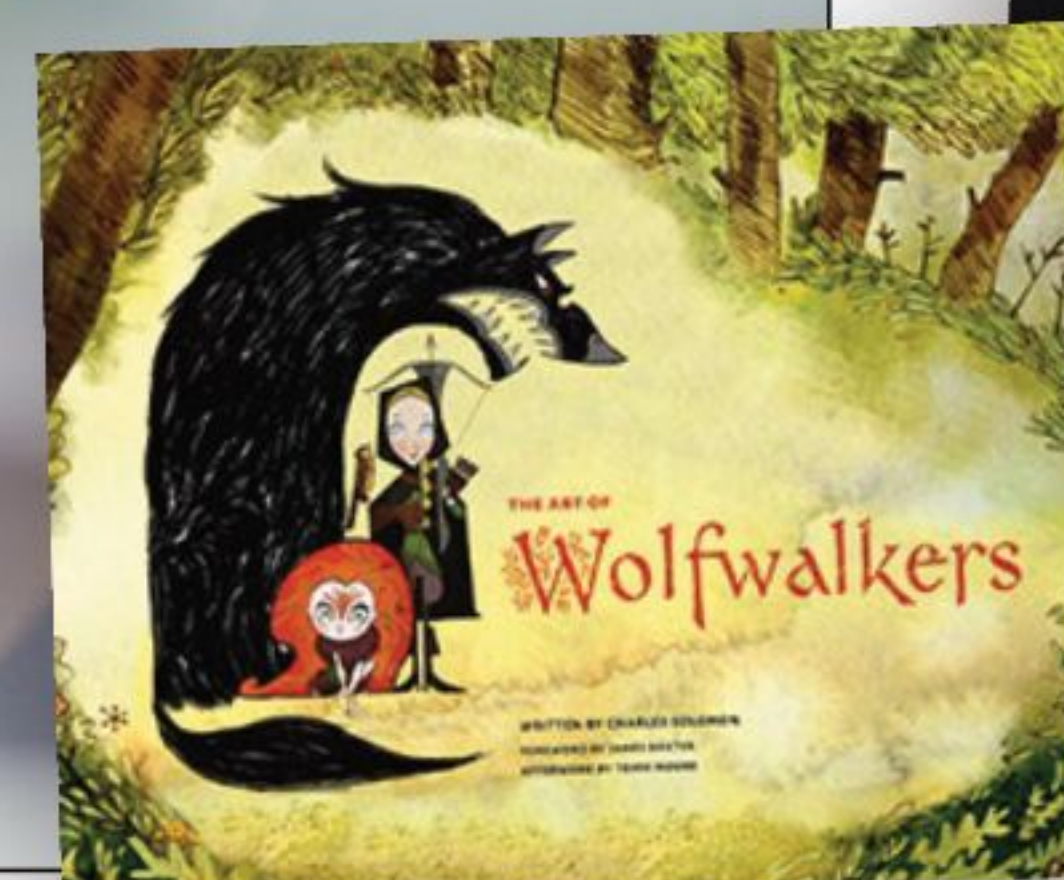
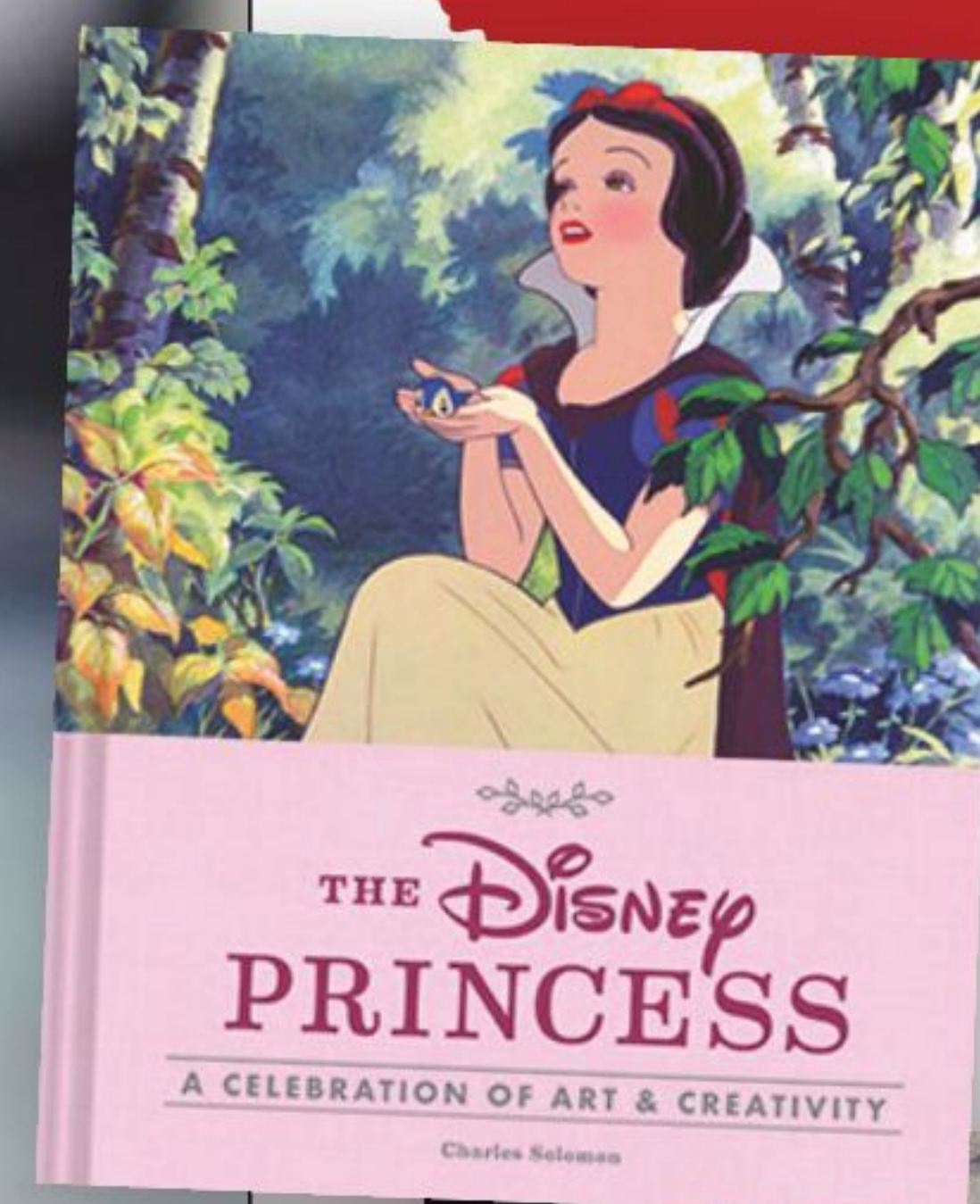


Artist's Choice Award

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

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

11
PRODUCTS
ON TEST



HARDWARE

82 The best tablets for animation art

What are the best tablets for creating art for animation? We pick the best buys for all artists, from beginners to pros.

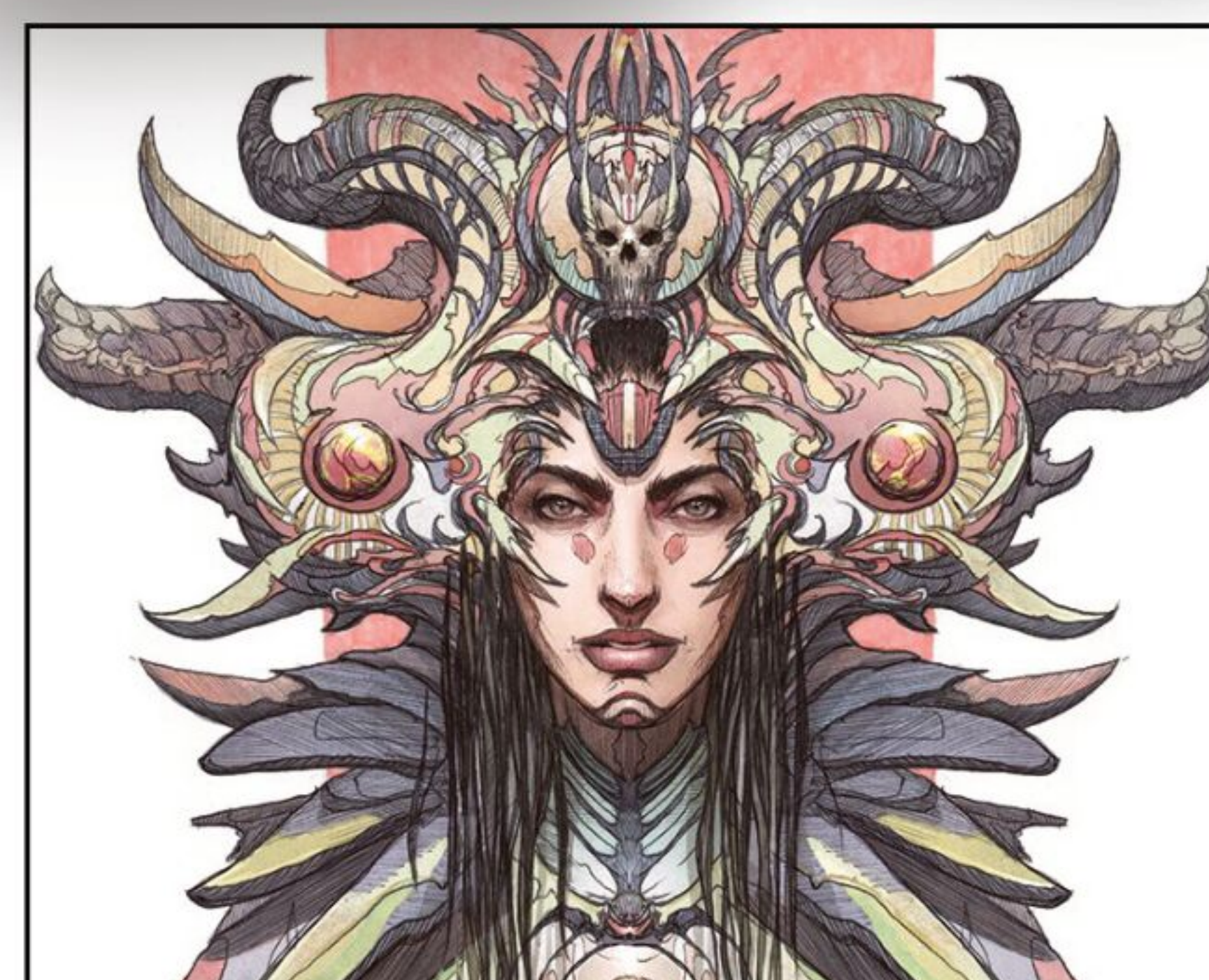
BOOKS

84 The Art of Wolfwalkers

Fans of this animation and its gorgeous visuals will wolf down this book, which goes well beyond your usual 'art-of' title.

85 The Disney Princess: A Celebration of Art & Creativity

The film-making craft behind 12 of Disney's princess films is studied in-depth.



85 Dibujante Nocturno: The Art of Fran Garcés

Step inside the foreboding art world of this popular Spanish artist and illustrator.



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

Tablets such as the Wacom One feature a built-in display, so you can see your brushstrokes appear. Cheaper tablets simply provide a touch-sensitive surface for drawing on.



The best tablets for animation art

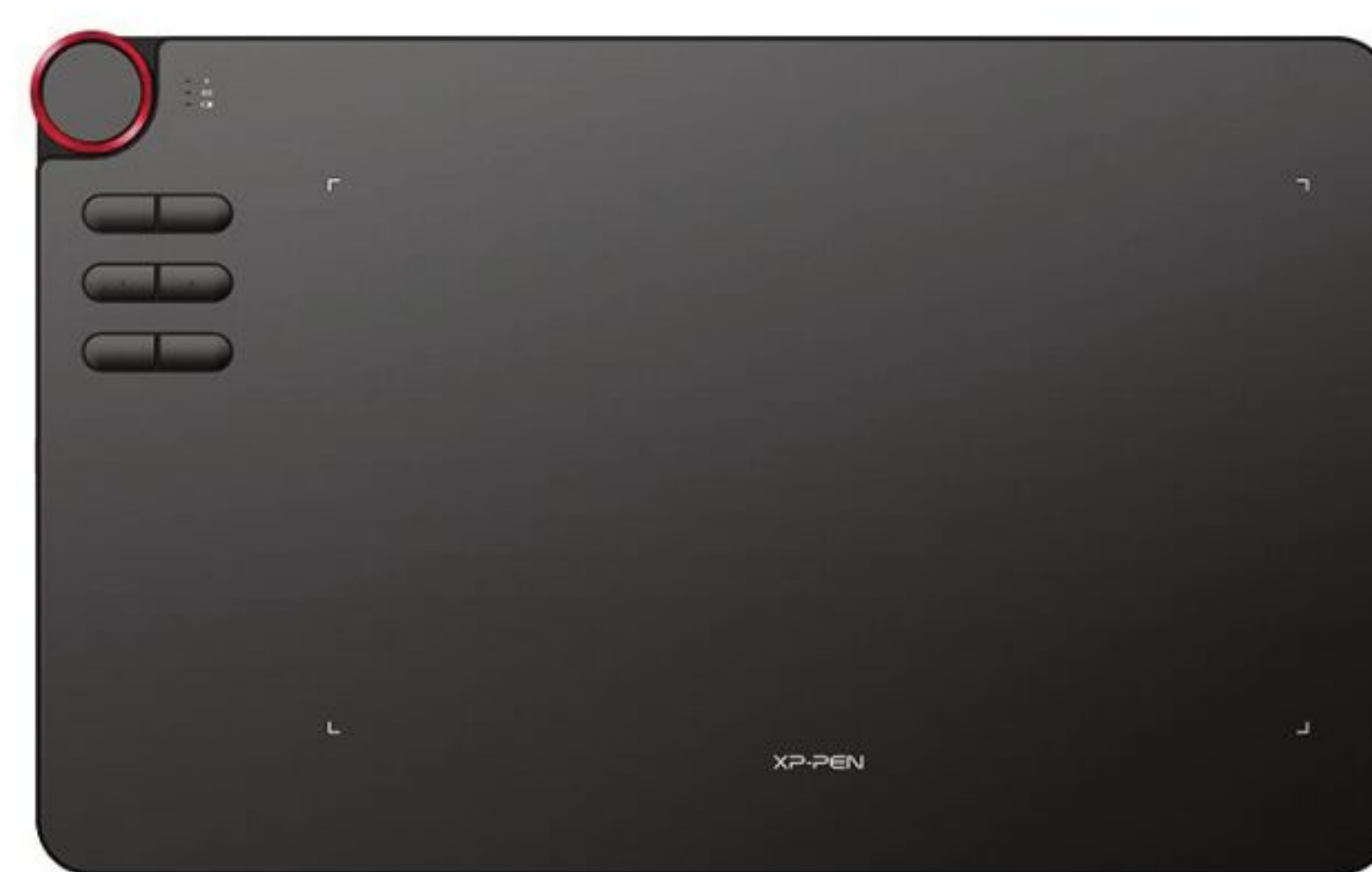
MOTION PICTURES What are the best tablets for animation? We pick the best buys for all artists, from beginners to pros

Artists of all ages and abilities are discovering how useful it can be to have a digital drawing surface for bringing your characters to life. For those looking to specialise in animation art, the good news is that there are plenty of suitable tablets available to suit all budgets.

The animation industry has largely moved over to tablets from computers. If you're looking to make a career in animation then having experience of drawing on a tablet is vital. It's an intuitive process with a distinctive feel, and once you grow accustomed to using one, you'll be one step closer to achieving your animation goals.

All the drawing tablets that we've featured here can be used with current desktop art software, while standalone tablets such as the iPad Pro or Galaxy Tab S7 can utilise the likes of Procreate or SketchBook. Either way, they make it easier than ever to progress your projects from sketch to completion. We're here to take you through our top recommendation, from industry leaders like Wacom to more affordable competitors like XP-Pen.

As well as covering a range of price points, the tablets on our list are pitched at different levels of user, so no matter your experience and your budget, there should be a tablet here for you.



XP-Pen Deco 03

Price £100 **Company** XP-Pen
Web www.xp-pen.com

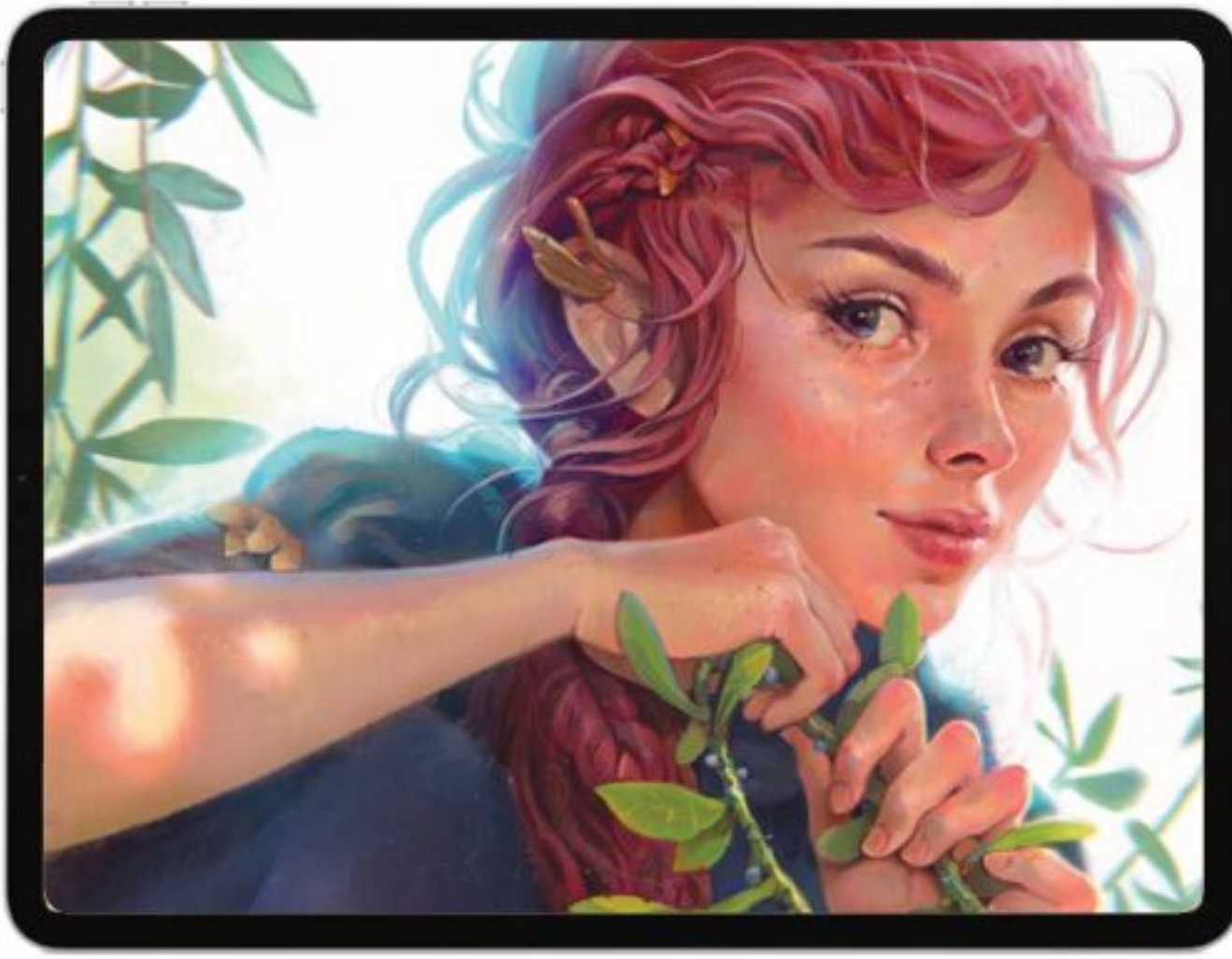
Not everyone has the funds to spend on a high-end tablet for animation, and we really rate the XP-Pen Deco 03 for those who just need a simple solution that works. Plugging easily into a computer or smart device via the USB connection, the Deco 03 provides a generous amount of drawing surface and a battery-free stylus with 8,192 levels of pressure sensitivity. You don't get the fancier features such as tilt sensitivity, but the device's broad compatibility means that this is a drawing pad pretty much anyone will be able to use. It's lightweight and slim, with a pleasingly sleek design and customisable keys that can be mapped to your preferred creative functions.



Samsung Galaxy Tab S7 Plus

Price From £799 **Company** Samsung
Web www.samsung.com

If you're already an Android user, it may make sense to use an Android tablet for creating animation art. We'd recommend considering the Samsung Galaxy Tab S7 Plus, which sits at the top of the Galaxy Tab range. Its gorgeous display is ideal for drawing on, with punchy colours and a generous working area, while the up-to-date processing power ensures that your chosen creative apps should run well. Having the S-Pen included in the price is also welcome, giving you everything you need from the moment you open the box. If this version is too expensive, consider also the Galaxy Tab S7 (from £619), which uses a smaller, non-OLED screen but still works well.



Apple iPad Pro 12.9

Price From £969 **Company** Apple
Web www.apple.com

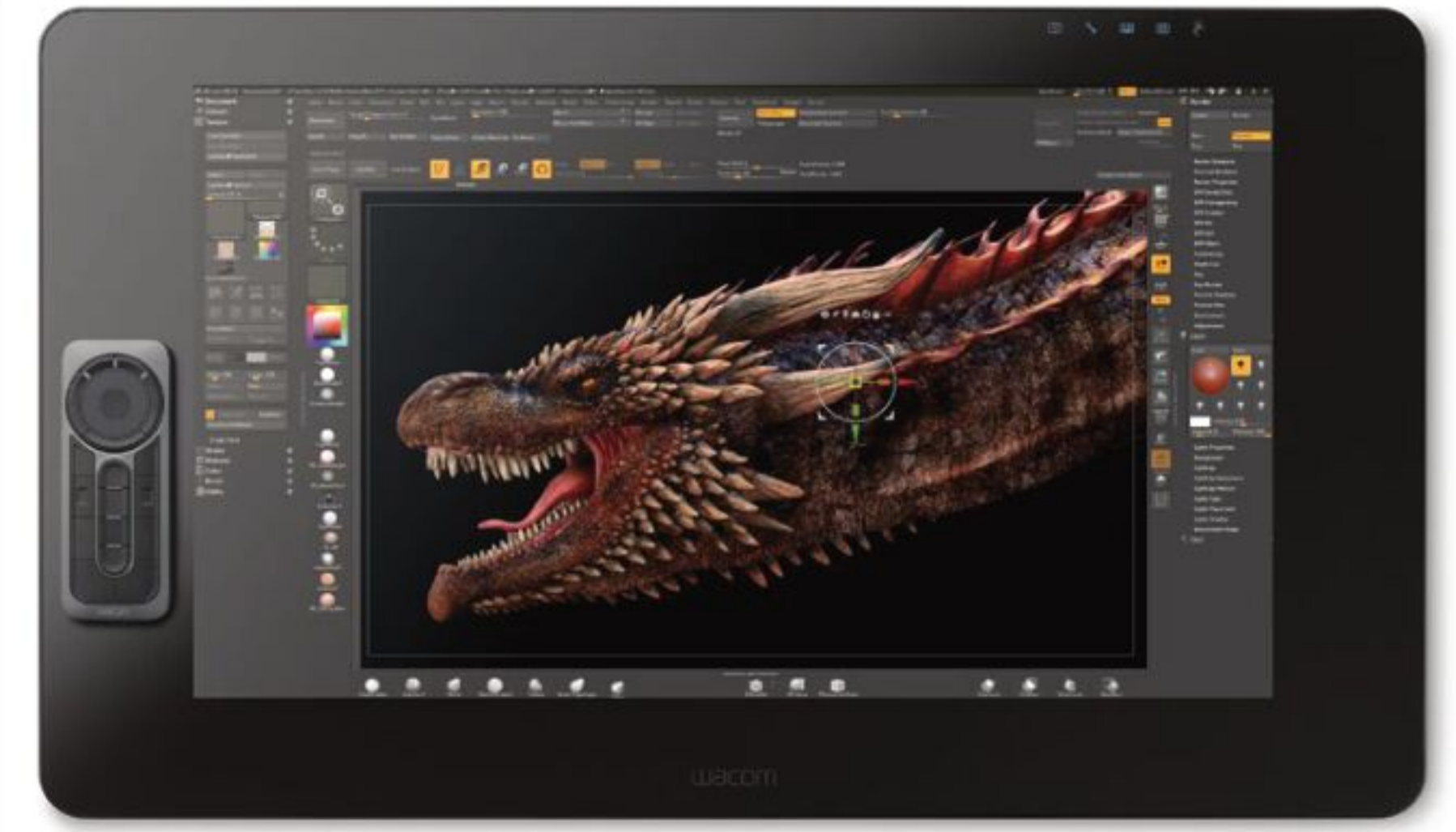
The Apple iPad Pro 12.9 (2020) is possibly the best tablet ever made. Its super-bright display is a pleasure to draw on, displaying vivid colours and pin-sharp details, and the A12Z Bionic processor ensure that it delivers best-in-class performance, making it hugely capable for all demanding animation work. You'll also be able to use Procreate, which is iOS-only. The price tag isn't small of course, although you can save a little cash by plumping for the 128GB or 256GB versions rather than the 1TB whopper (prices for this version start at £1,469). Bear in mind that however much you spend on the tablet, you'll have to fork out an extra £119 for the latest Apple Pencil 2.



Wacom One

Price £324 **Company** Wacom
Web www.wacom.com

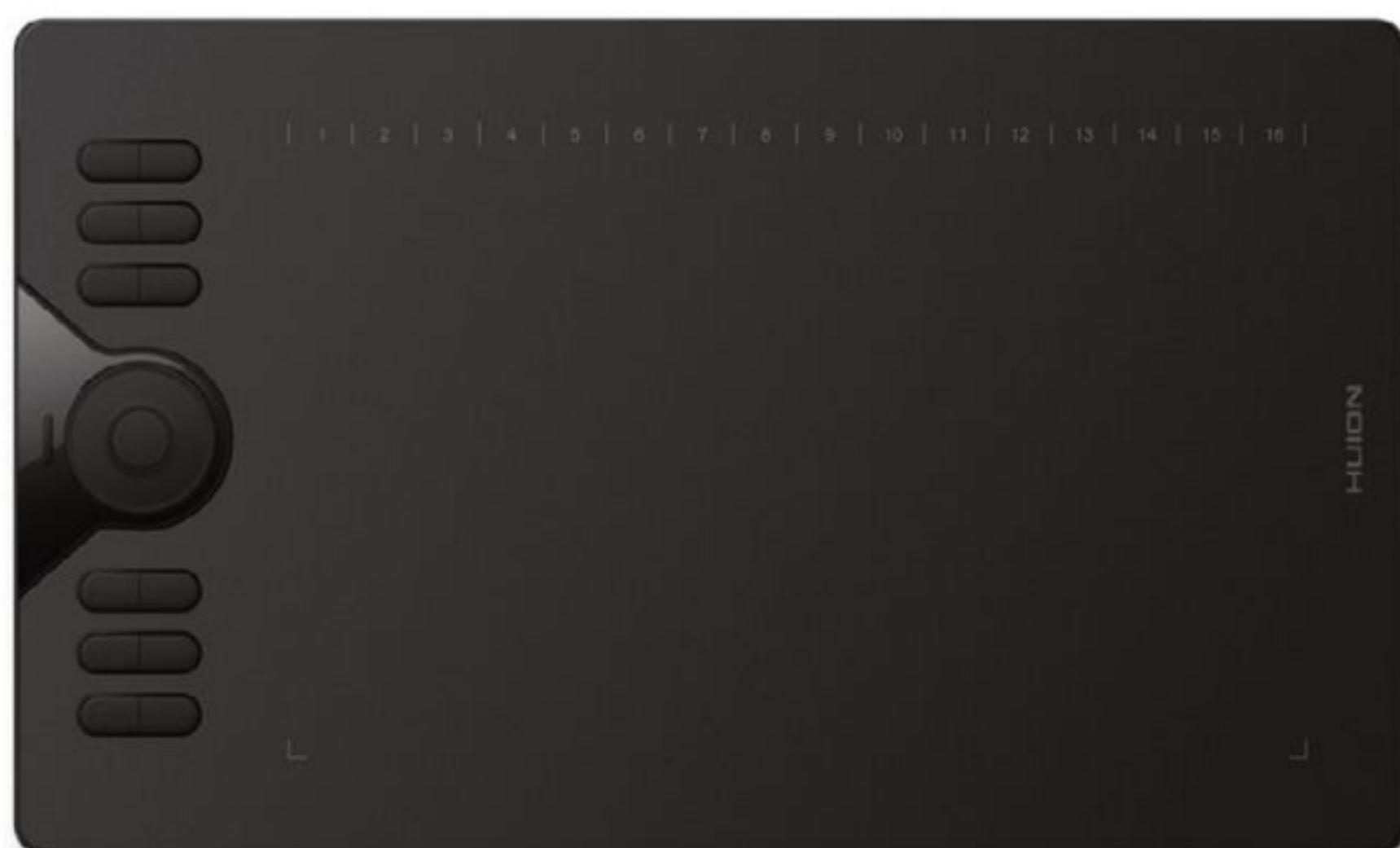
While Wacom makes tablets used by industry professionals, it also produces entry-level models for those who are just starting to dip their toes into drawing or animation. A good example is the Wacom One. This is a great beginner's tablet and offers tremendous value, providing that Wacom drawing experience at a friendly price point. It's not as cheap as some tablets mentioned here, but you're getting a Full HD screen and a tablet that interfaces seamlessly with Mac and Windows alike. The screen could be a bit brighter and the stylus is a less-sophisticated model than you get with Wacom's top-end models, but this is a fantastic starter tablet for animators nonetheless.



Wacom Cintiq Pro 32

Price £2,800 **Company** Wacom
Web www.wacom.com

The space you get for drawing with the Wacom Cintiq Pro 32 is absolutely luxurious. The 32-inch screen provides an enormous canvas with which to realise your creations, and the Wacom Pro Pen 2 with its 8,192 levels of pressure sensitivity is one of the finest styli around. Wacom's Cintiq tablets are fully compatible with animation software such as Adobe Animate or After Effects, and the superb colour accuracy (98 per cent coverage of Adobe RGB colour space) means that you can have absolute confidence in your artwork's final appearance. It's expensive of course, and if it slightly exceeds your budget it's worth looking at smaller Cintiq models like the Pro 24 or Pro 16.



Huion HS610

Price £72 **Company** Huion
Web www.huion.com

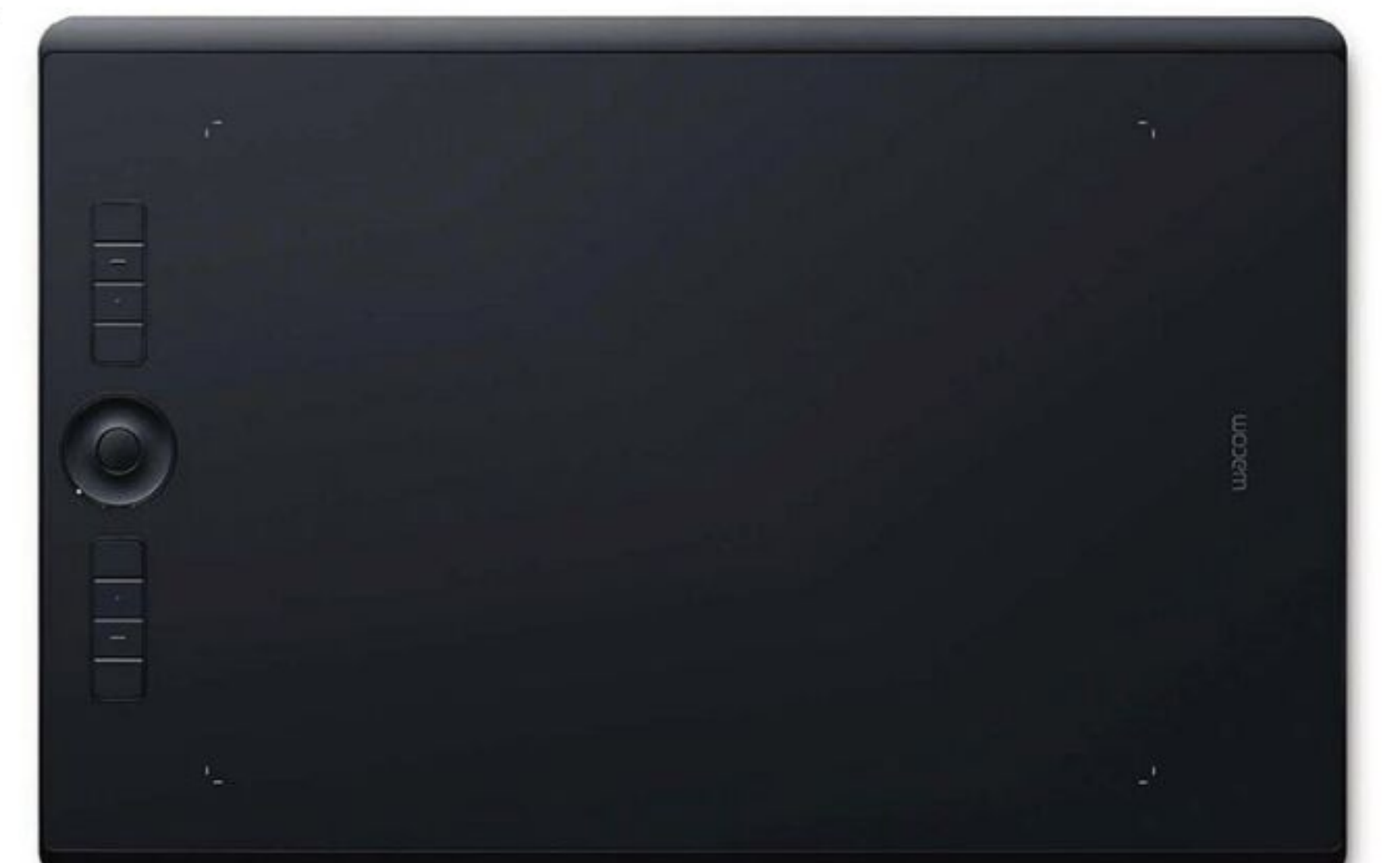
Tablets with their own displays can be pricey so if you're looking to save a chunk of change, consider something like the Huion HS610. It has no screen, so to see what you're doing you use the USB connection to hook it up to a computer, smartphone or other device. For the money, you get a tremendous amount of functionality here – with 8,192 levels of pen pressure sensitivity, 16 ExpressKeys that can be customised to suit, and a generous amount of workspace real estate that enables you to draw and create freely. Note that the tablet is a little fussy with regard to compatibility – it'll work with Mac OS but not iPhones – so make sure you check before you buy.



XP-Pen Artist 24 Pro

Price £720 **Company** XP-Pen
Web www.xp-pen.com

If you're looking to draw some manga, perhaps with the aim of working on an anime project, then we'd certainly recommend the XP-Pen Artist 24 Pro. It's a high-quality tablet that's been tailored to undercut Wacom, offering a comparable experience to the Cintiq 24 for about a third of the price. The battery-free stylus provides top-of-the-line pressure sensitivity as well as tilt response, delivering superior definition of even the finest lines. The Artist 24 Pro enables you to give your art more detail and depth than ever. The 2K QHD display also features 90 per cent coverage of the Adobe RGB colour gamut, which is very impressive for a tablet at this price.



Wacom Intuos Pro

Price £450 **Company** Wacom
Web www.wacom.com

We've discussed two Wacom tablets on this hardware roundup already – the Cintiq Pro 32 and the One, which are for professional artists and beginners, respectively. The reason why we'd also recommend Wacom's Intuos Pro Large is that it's a solid all-rounder. This is a device that's suitable for pretty much anyone keen to use a tablet for their artistic endeavours – not just for creating animation artwork. Straightforward to hook up to a laptop or other device, the Intuos Pro Large provides a dependable drawing surface, and despite its name is relatively portable. It's also compatible with the Wacom Pro Pen 3D (£90), which is a great asset if you're looking to create 3D animation.

The curvilinear forest frames a happy moment between two of WolfWalkers' lead characters. Art by Tomm Moore and Friedrich Schäper.



© 2020 WolfWalkers

The Art of WolfWalkers



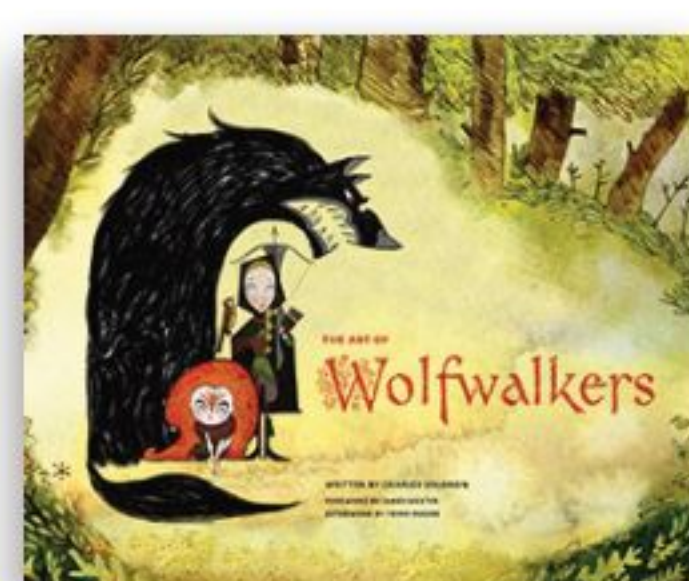
ANIMAL MAGIC Fans of this animated film and its gorgeous visuals will wolf down this book, which delivers more than the title suggests...

Author Charles Solomon **Publisher** Abrams & Chronicle Books **Price** £30 **Web** www.abramsandchronicle.co.uk **Available Now**

WolfWalkers was released last year by Irish studio Cartoon Saloon to great acclaim. Author Charles Solomon explores WolfWalkers' development, going far beyond your usual 'art-of' book.

Charles begins with Tomm Moore, the studio's co-founder, recounting how he wanted to make a film about the shape-shifting wolves of Ossory. The 12th century Irish myth resonated with writer Ross Stewart who came on board as co-director, and the project's wheels started to turn.

What follows is a treat for those interested in learning how an



independent studio sees a project through to completion. With lengthy chapters that include story, characters and direction, each aspect of the film's development is pored over. The talents of the international team of artists are constantly recognised as the film took shape during the production process.

The book doesn't shy away from creative missteps, either. One example

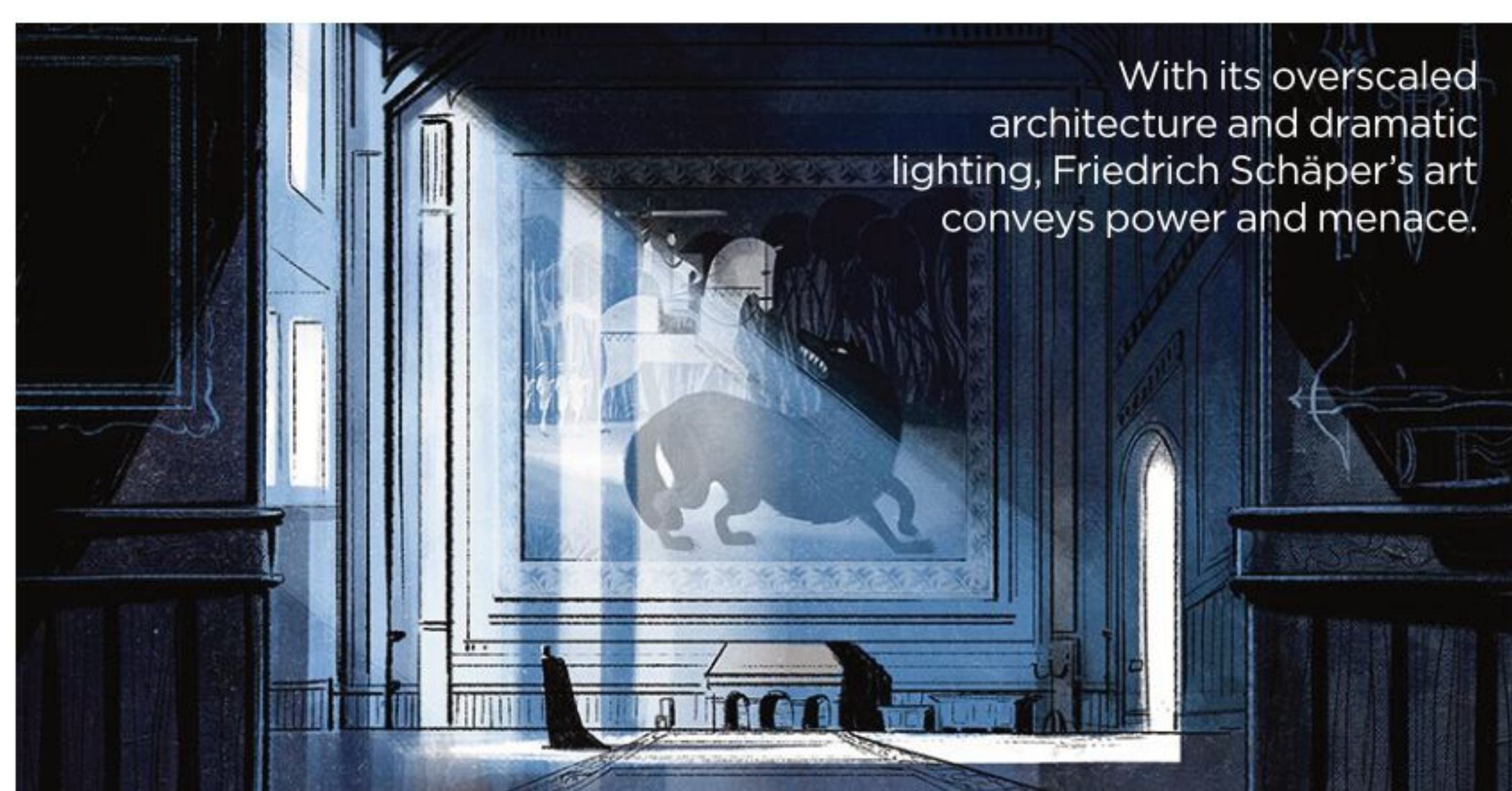
“The behind-the-scenes information is detailed but never hard to follow...”



A dramatic moment in the film is sketched out by Tomm Moore, the film's co-director.

Yet for all the insights into the production, it's the art that's the book's main attraction. Character concepts, keyframes, storyboards and more fill the book. Studying the visuals is a pleasure, thanks to informative captions. There are countless lessons on offer for those looking to improve their animation art skills, and inspiration galore for those with more than a passing interest in seeing how the film's loose woodblock aesthetic brought the story to life. Come for the art, stay for the knowledge... this book is the leader of the pack.

RATING ★★★★★

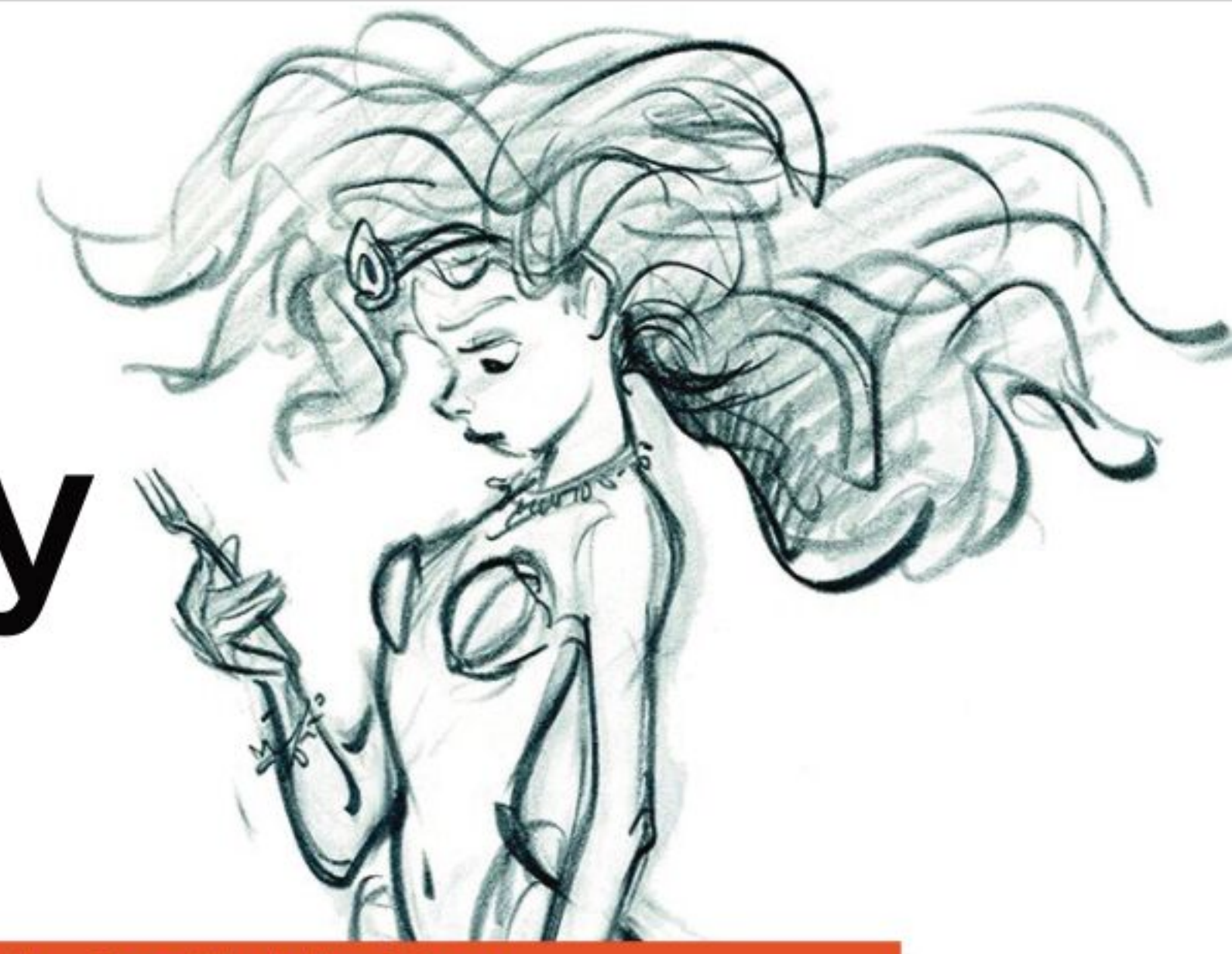


With its overscaled architecture and dramatic lighting, Friedrich Schäper's art conveys power and menace.

is when French concept artist Alice Dieudonné drew a forest, only to be told by Tomm that she'd created a woodland from her homeland, and that she needed to “find an Irish palette” when laying down the colours. The behind-the-scenes information is detailed but never hard to follow, thanks to author Charles' background as an animation critic, historian and lecturer.

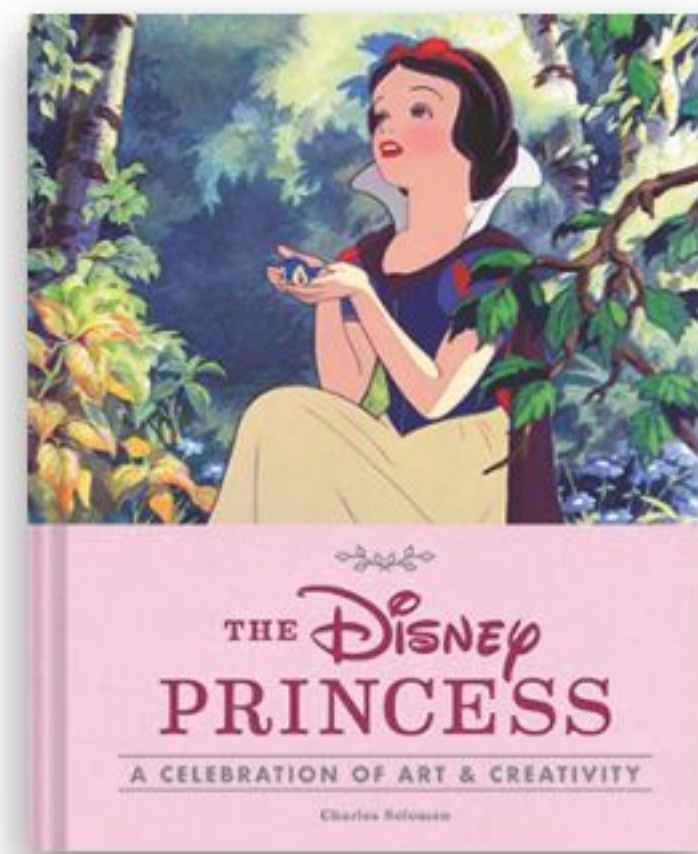
The Disney Princess: A Celebration of Art & Creativity

ART ROYALTY Disney's princesses have been entertaining the public for over 80 years. This book examines the craft behind the films



Author Charles Solomon **Publisher** Abrams & Chronicle Books **Price** £40 **Web** www.abramsandchronicle.co.uk **Available Now**

The Disney princess is synonymous with both childhood innocence and a money-making juggernaut. Charles Solomon's book leaves the fancy dress, the singalong CD and the light-up wand at the castle gates, and focuses on how the iconic films were created.



The book covers 12 titles, beginning with Snow White from 1937 and taking the reader right through to 2016's Moana. Charles provides plenty of background information and production stories on the making of each film, while animators and directors both past and present offer fascinating insights.

Disney's archives have supplied an excellent selection of artwork: pencil sketches, character concepts, reference photos of actors recreating scenes for the film, and more. Drawings of Snow White looking like Betty Boop or a stern-looking Jasmine are just two examples of what might have been, had creative course-corrections not been made.



Cinderella sings in harmony with her reflection, in this still from the 1950 film.

Exploring 80 years of animated film history is no mean feat, but Charles's text captures the imagination just as much as the visuals. If you're an animation fan, and you can afford the asking price, this one's for you.

RATING ★★★★★



Celebrated Disney production designer Hans Bacher created this gouache study of Mulan looking relaxed in her armour.

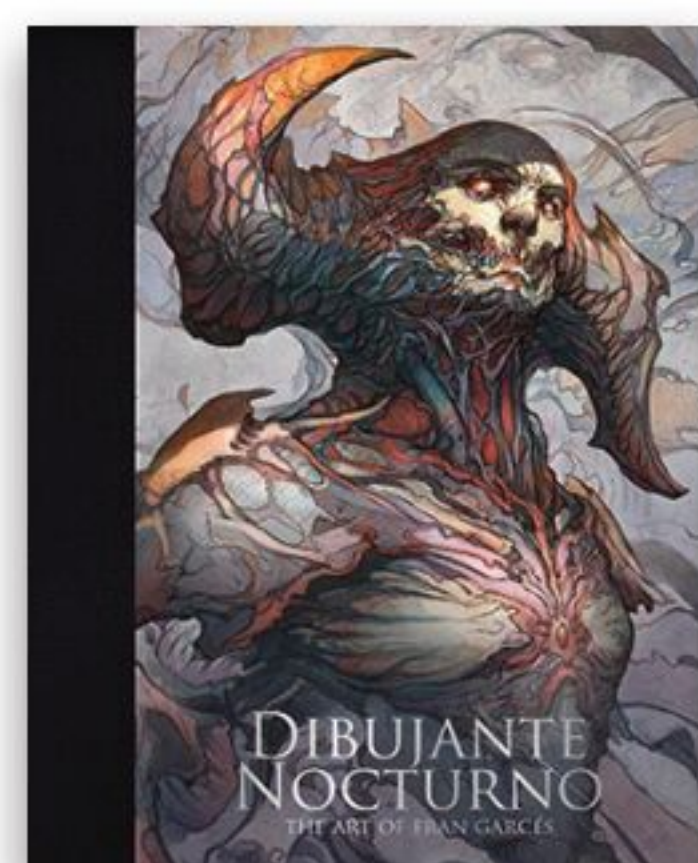
Dibujante Nocturno: The Art of Fran Garcés

LIGHT AND SHADE Step inside the foreboding art world of this popular Spanish artist, who discusses his career path and passes on his painting techniques

Author Fran Garcés **Publisher** 3dtotal Publishing **Price** £28 **Web** www.3dtotal.com **Available Now**

The dark fantasy art of Fran Garcés, known online as Dibujante Nocturno, has caught the eye of many people. Now they have a chance to see more of those paintings and learn about the artist's background.

The book's opening chapter has Fran recounting his art journey. He name-checks a local artist who provided encouragement and advice, and reveals that he worked as an



electrician for a year before enrolling at art school. He studied there for a year and a half, then decided to leave and continue his training under his own steam: "practising a lot and watching thousands of videos online."

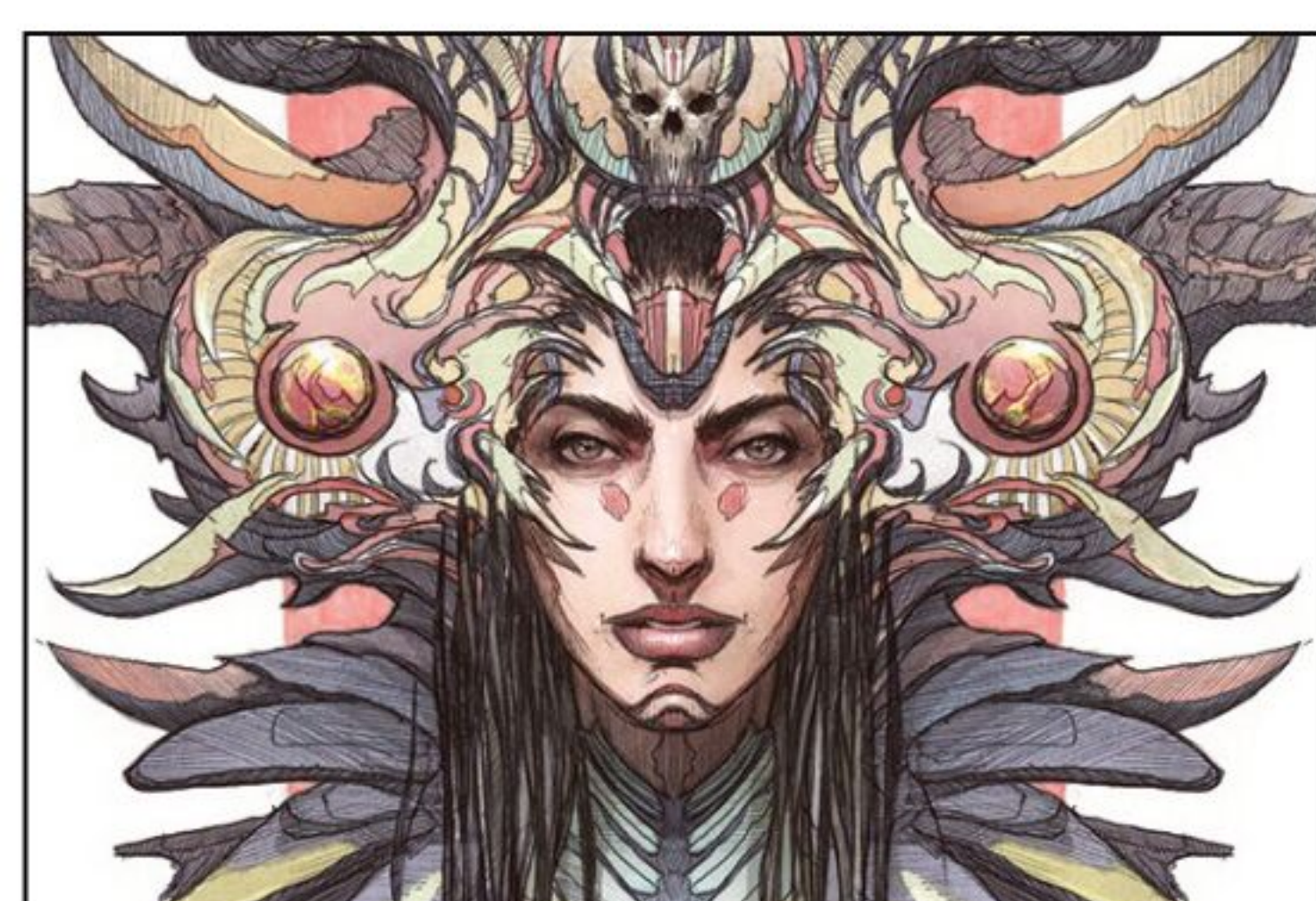
This determination to hone his skills has paid off in spades, as revealed by the many examples of his art reproduced in the book. Elegant sea creatures mingle with fearsome dragons, while demonic-looking figures loom from the shadows. Fran breaks down his creative process in the book's closing chapter, which contains plenty of core art advice.

More than just a means of displaying Fran's art, this book is a fine example of how far will-power and a belief in yourself can get you in life.

RATING ★★★★★



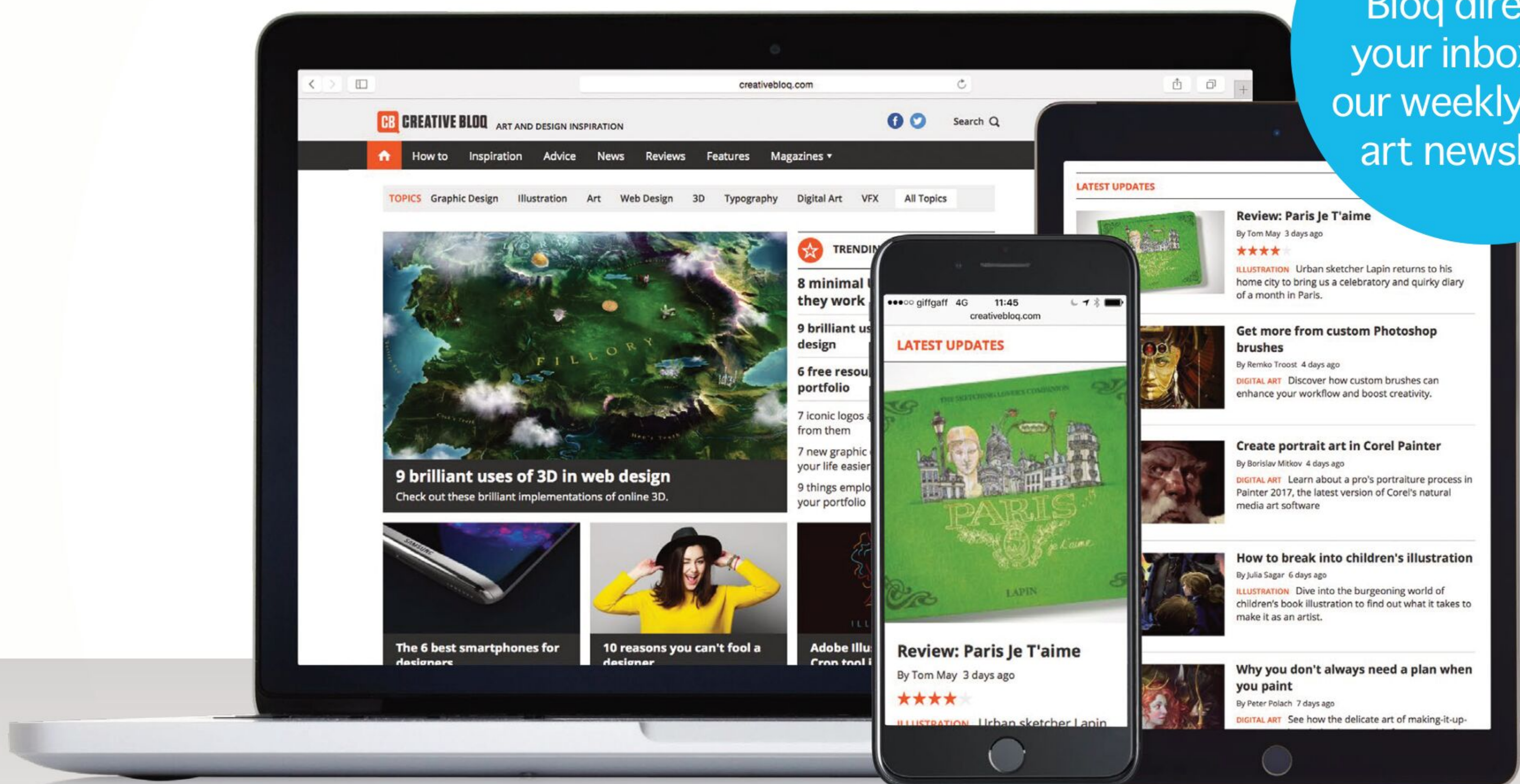
The painting was born out of Fran's idea to visualise mermaids living in a forest during springtime.



The Guardian is the result of Fran practising how to draw faces, after acknowledging that he lacked skill in this particular area.

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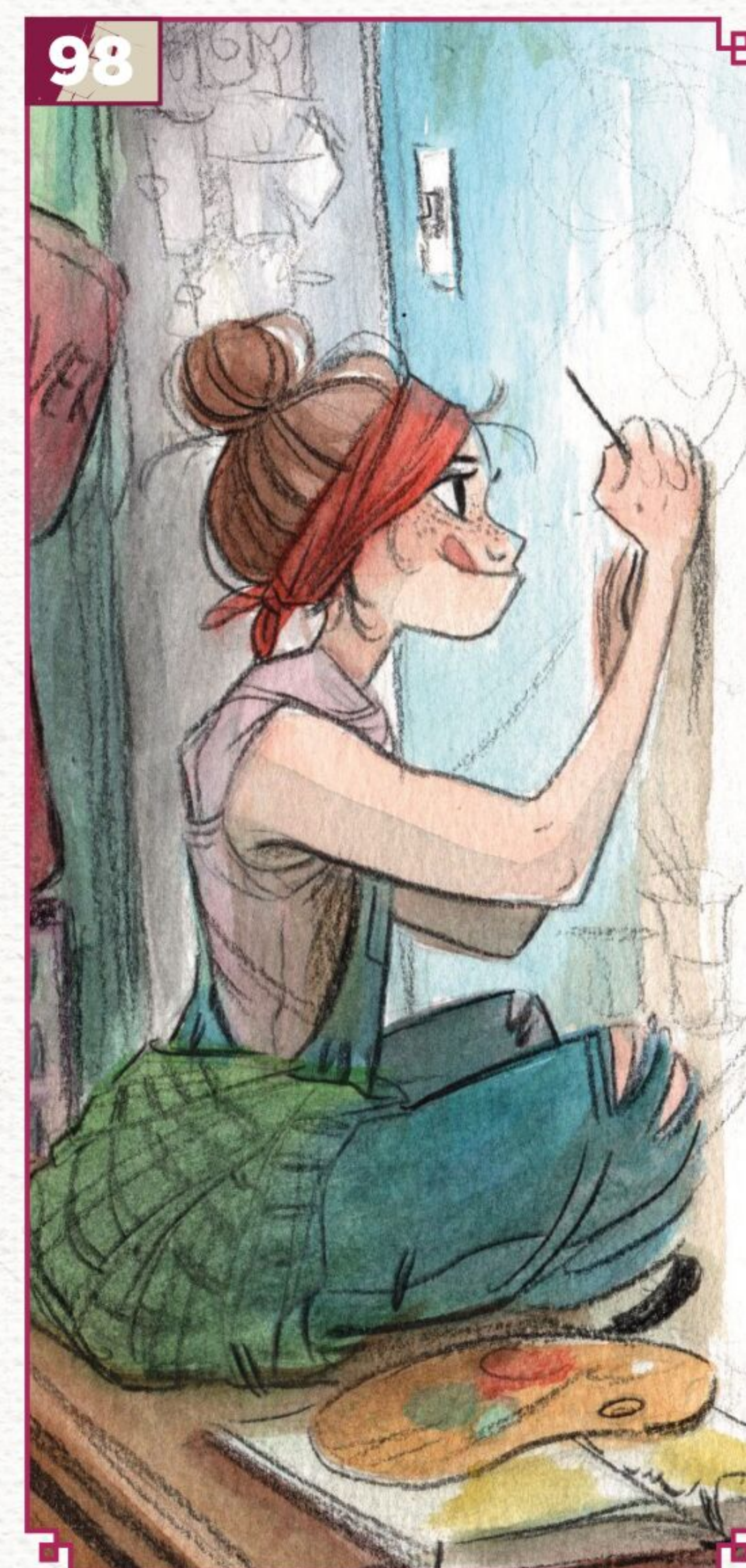
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Workshops assets are available...
If you see the video workshop badge then you can watch the artist in action. Turn to page 8 to see how you can get hold of the video.

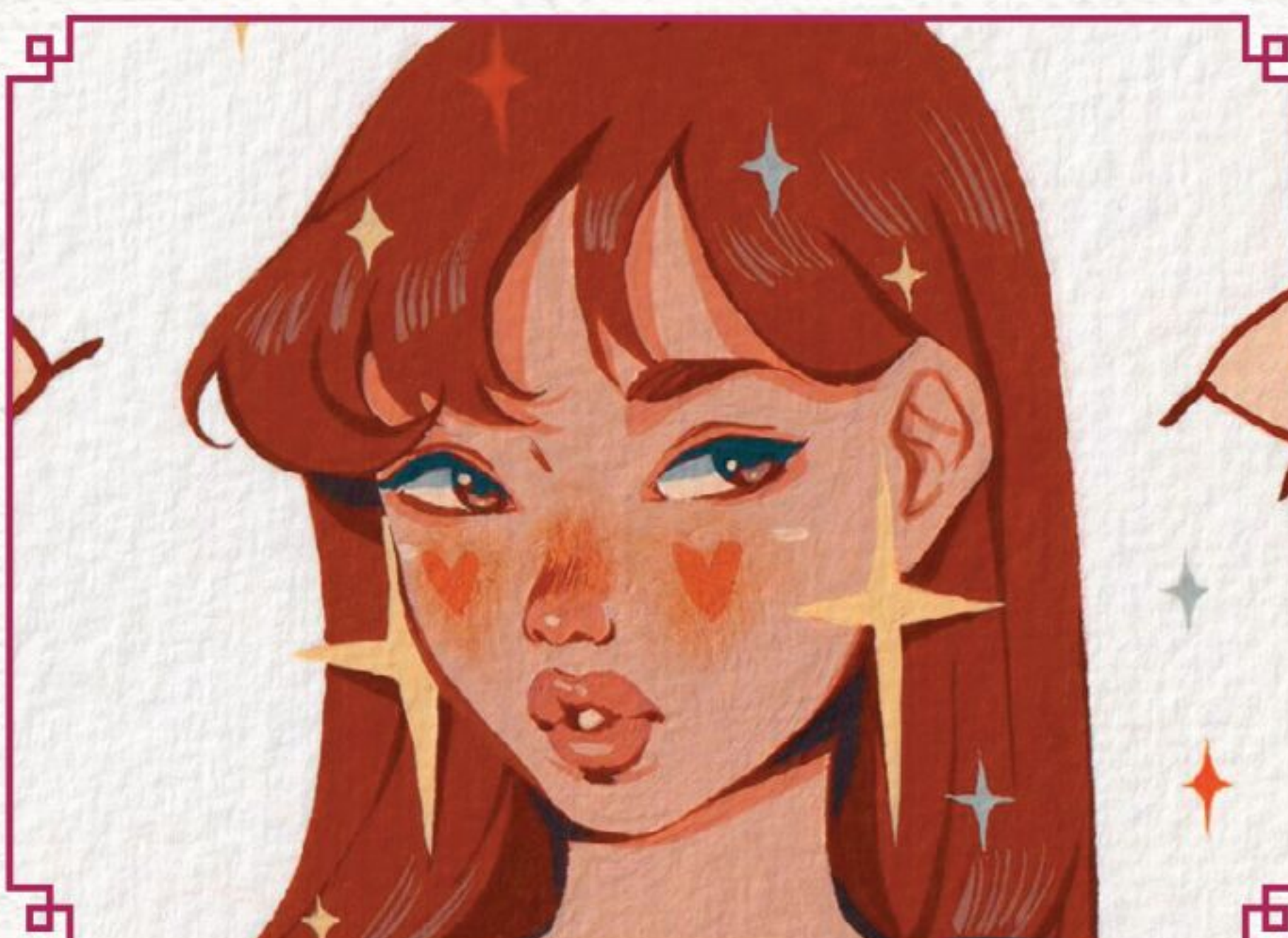


This issue:

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

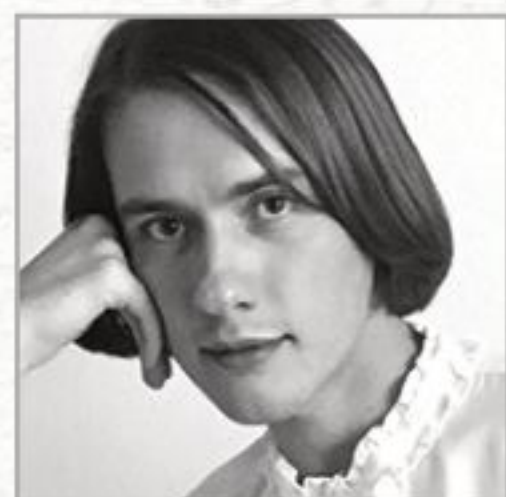
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Sarah Webb details the process, from her initial idea to working with watercolour techniques.

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This well-travelled illustrator likes to know what makes people tick.



FXPosé

SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL ARTISTS

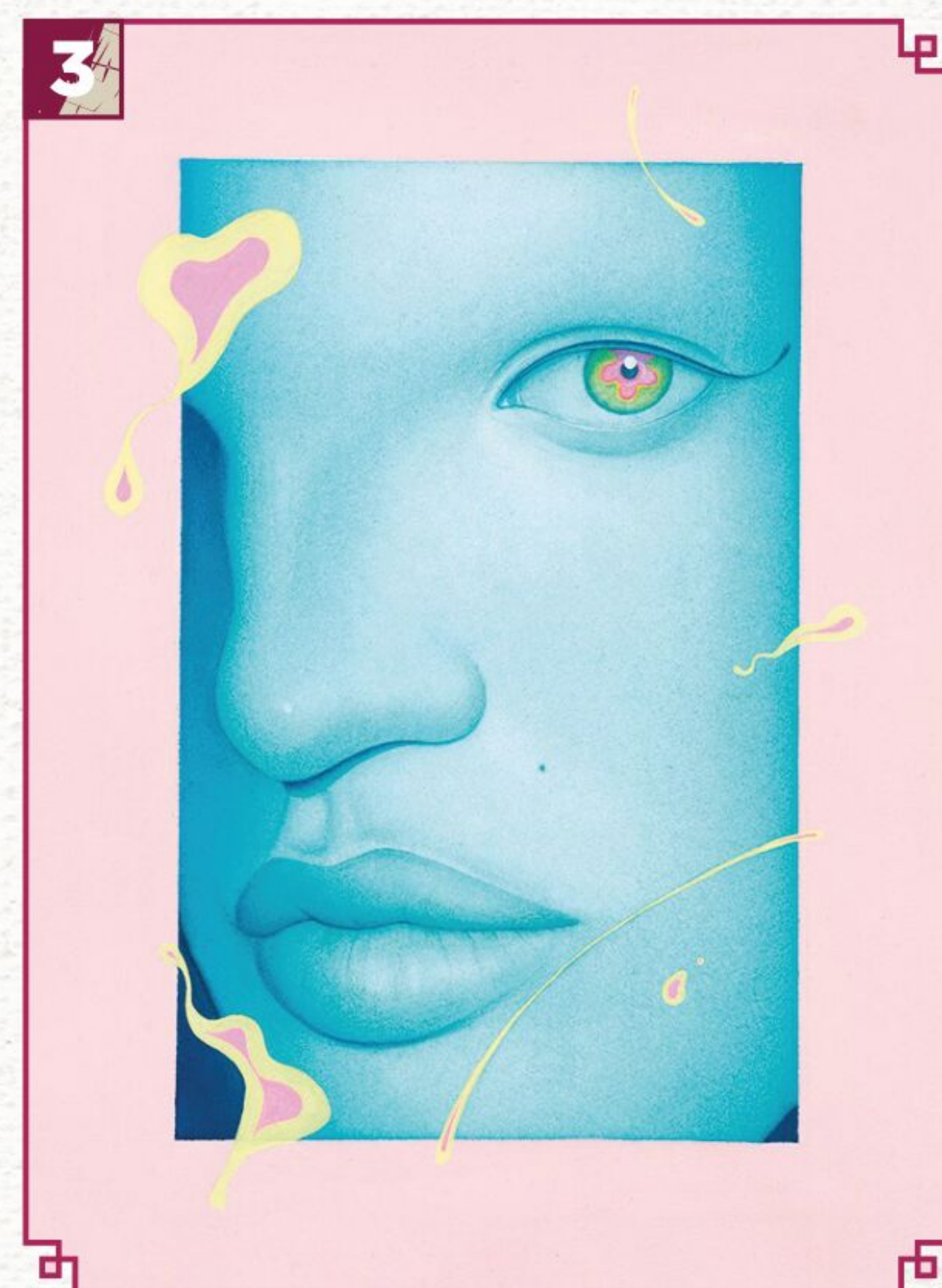


Christian Orrillo Tejada

LOCATION: Chile **MEDIA:** Watercolours, gouache, coloured pencils

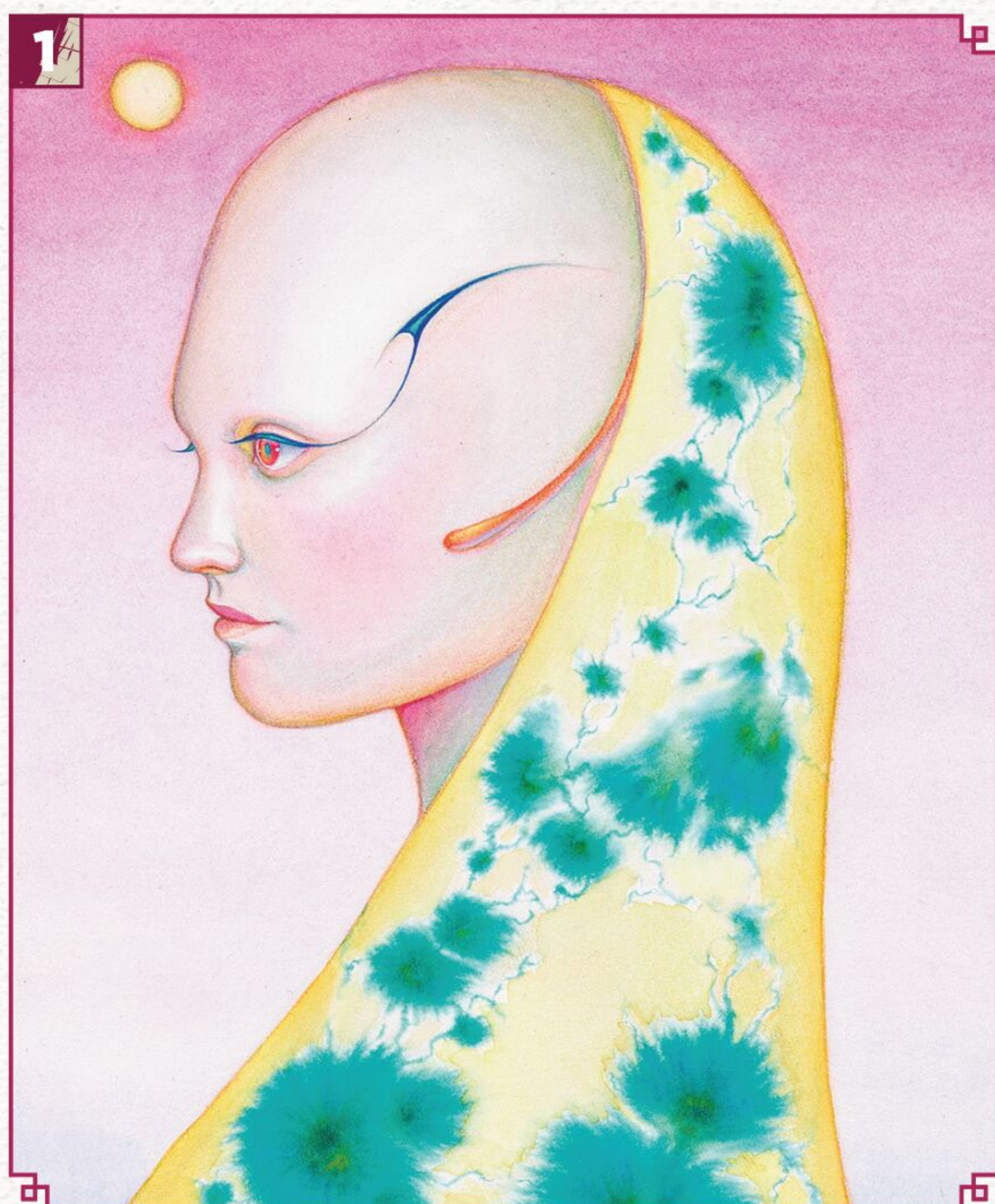
WEB: www.instagram.com/krizpii

"My art is an exploration of an inner world inspired by colour, the dreamlike, futurism, exotic nature, magic, gender identity and aliens," Christian, aka krizpii, says.



1 SILENT DEVOTION

"This piece was inspired by a dream of mine, when I saw a cloaked being in a sunset where the moon was the protagonist."



2 JUBILEE

"An ode to the world of manga and anime. A sweet and serene face is interspersed with floating, kaleidoscopic shapes."



3 HYPNOSIS

"This work is inspired by the mystery of the gaze, and how hypnotising it is to discover someone's inner world through their eyes."

4 MERCURIAL FREQUENCIES

"Interpretations resonate in the character through pearly details that run through body and mind."





Lidia Cambon

LOCATION: England **MEDIA:** Gouache, alcohol markers **WEB:** www.instagram.com/msshanh/

After finishing art school in Spain, Lidia (known online as MssHanh) became a freelance illustrator as well as a UX/UI designer. “I combine my love for tech and art, and sometimes they merge together,” she reveals.

1 LOOKING AT YOU

“Here I wanted to represent this very specific emotion you get when you experience a melancholic but soothing connection with nature.”



2 PORTRAIT COLLECTION

“This is a collection of portraits that I created with alcohol markers. The characters belong to illustrators Mumuchu, Mrsbutterd and Tabia.jpg.”



3 DANDELION

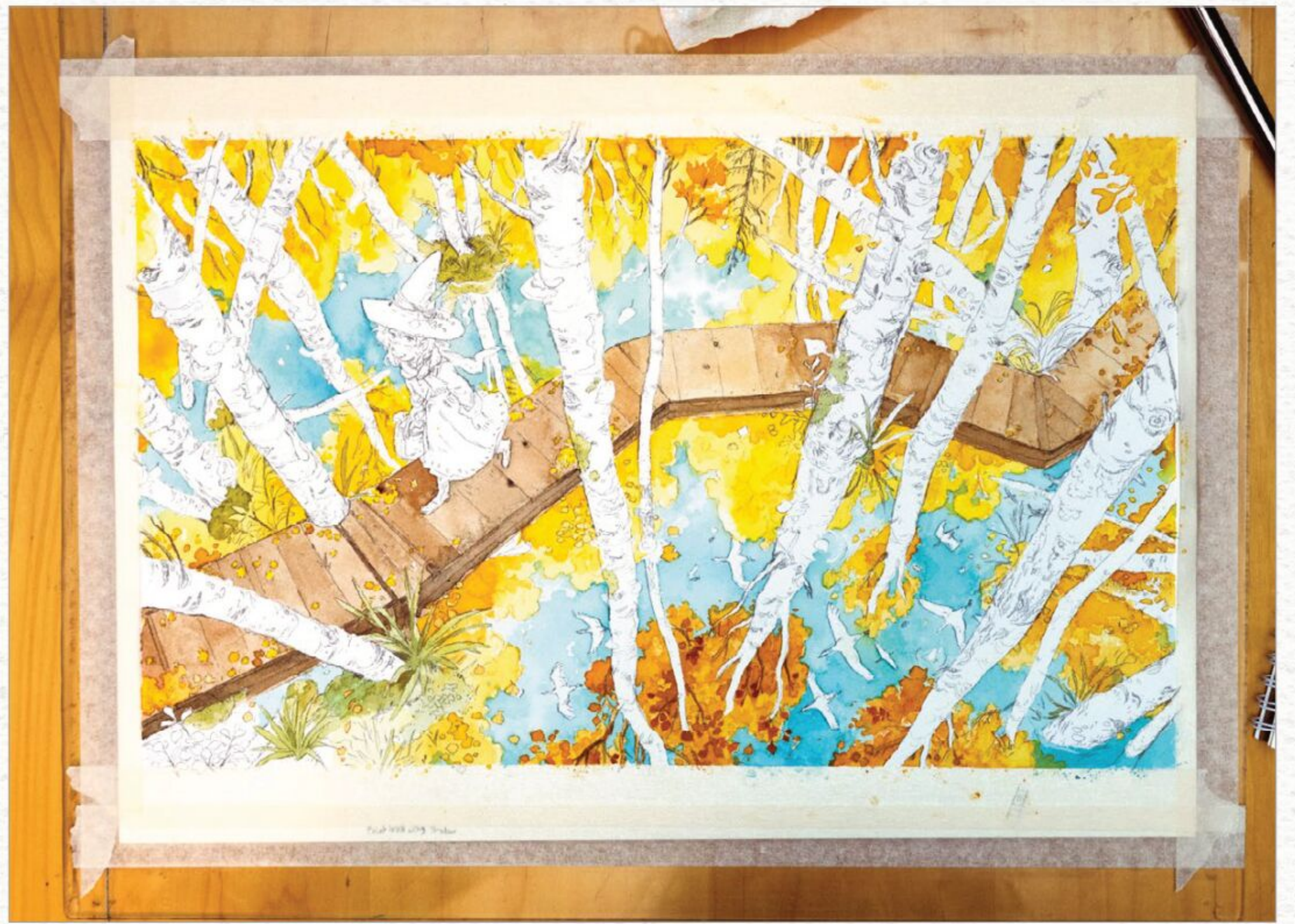
“This is a reinterpretation of a character designed by fellow artist Lord Gris. I used 0000- and 00000-sized brushes to create this small, delicate fairy.”

4 I AM THE EYE IN THE SKY

“This shows the influence of esotericism in my work. The eyes represent a new way of perceiving knowledge.”







Watercolour

CAPTURE AUTUMN IN WATERCOLOURS

SARAH WEBB creates an autumnal environment illustration, exploring the process from her initial idea, using reference and working with watercolour techniques

My aim as an artist is always to try and fit as much into the world of my illustrations as possible. Making art reminds me what I'm excited about in life and I want the world I'm creating to reflect that.

Gathering reference and inspiration is one of the most important and fun parts of my workflow; the idea for this workshop was sparked from walking in a park near my house. Having reference photos on hand makes me work faster and more confidently, because I can quickly look at images of a certain texture of tree bark or bird wings, or art that reminds me what I'd like to work towards.

Noticing what you specifically find interesting about the world around you (in cities or nature, or other art) is helpful for any artist developing



their taste and style. I'll look at my own photos for lighting or colour ideas, film stills, inspiration folders I keep on my computer, search online for specific objects, and maybe listen to music or audio books that suit the setting or mood. Think about what you appreciate in your favourite artists work or the things you like looking at, and how your own taste and experiences come together to create something new.

I don't recommend copying directly from inspiring art or photos, but rather study a wide range to pick out interesting ideas you can combine, and avoid being derivative. Austin Kleon's book *Steal Like an Artist* really captures my philosophy on learning to use reference ethically and for your own best artistic results.

I like working with traditional line-art and watercolour to allow some exploratory spontaneity and

unexpected looseness to the process, and then clean up the final image digitally for nit-picky detailing at the end of the process. Bouncing between traditional and digital tools gives me the best of both worlds, and make up for any difficulties inherent to either medium.

It's also better ergonomically to have the option to work traditionally, since many projects require digital images. Working traditionally for even part of the art process means I can sit at a different desk, easily move and tilt the painting board around to suit my drawing arm, and generally move a little differently than I do while working digitally day to day.



Sarah is a freelance illustrator, cartoonist and vis-dev artist from Alaska who's currently painting backgrounds in Los Angeles. See more of her art at www.artofsarahwebb.com.

Traditional Artist Workshop



MATERIALS

PAPER

- 140lb Arches Rough Cold-Press watercolour paper
- Watercolour pad for colour testing/study

PENCILS

- Regular 2HB pencil
- Softer 3B pencil with pencil extender
- Goldfaber Aqua watercolour pencils: Cadmium yellow, Light yellow ochre, White

WATERCOLOURS

- Winsor & Newton Cotman Watercolours 12-tube set (Alizarin crimson hue, Burnt sienna, Burnt umber, Cadmium red pale hue, Cadmium yellow hue, Cerulean blue hue, Ivory black, Prussian blue, Ultramarine, Viridian hue, Yellow ochre), plus Rose madder, Naples yellow

BRUSHES

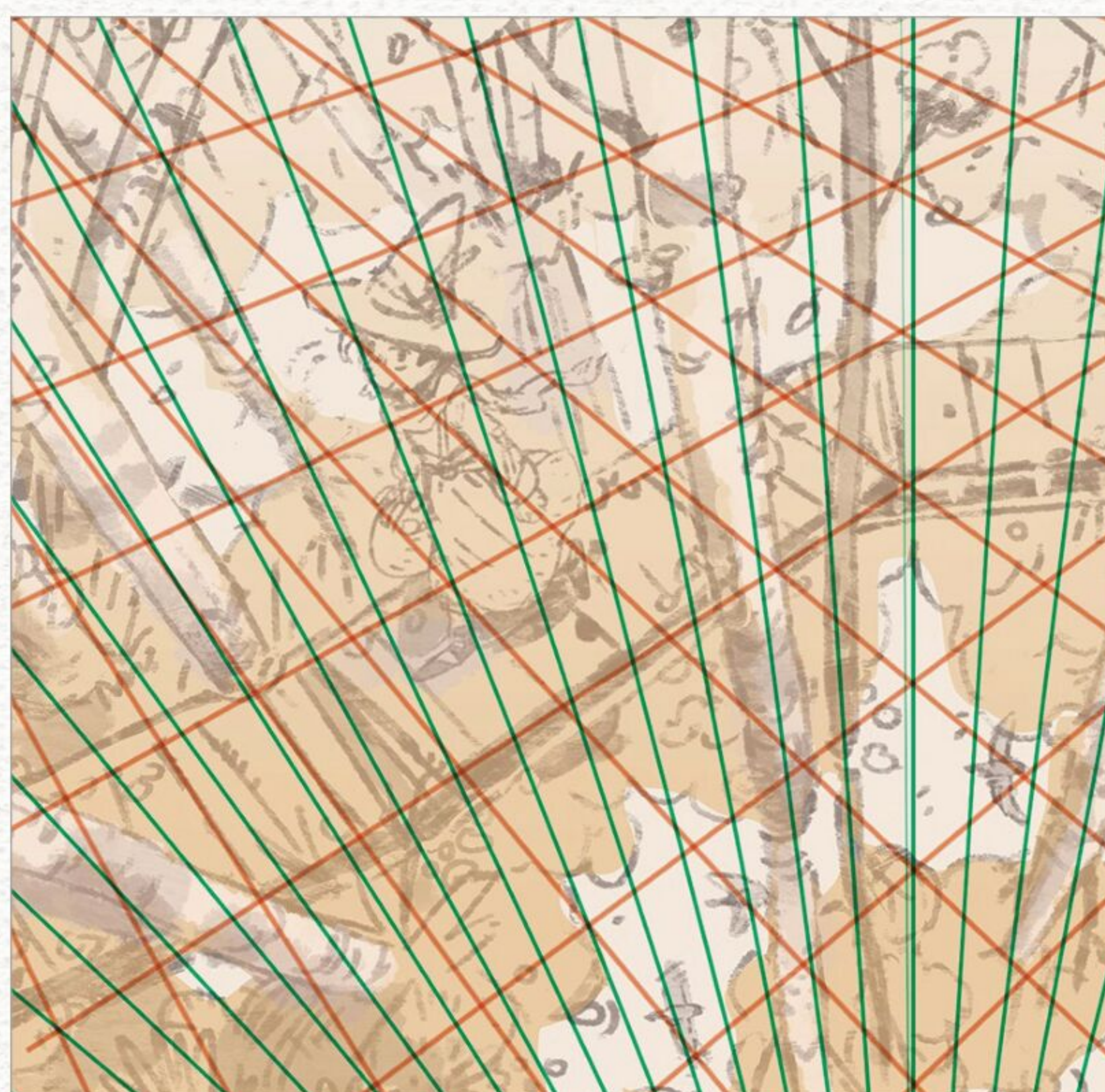
- Winsor & Newton Cotman Series 111, Round Sizes 6 and 3

OTHER

- Masking tape
- Erasers
- Pencil sharpener, Finesline masking fluid
- Lightbox
- Paper towel
- Water cup
- Photoshop
- Laptop
- Wacom Intuos Pro tablet

1 Workspace and tools

I always recommend buying higher-quality materials for watercolour. Good paints will last years when used carefully, and heavier weight paper won't buckle and wrinkle from the water as much, making learning for any experience level easier.



3 Tying down the sketch

I clean up the sketch just enough to know what to do at the drawing stage. I'm cheating how the reflections would probably work a little bit, but I do want correct perspective. This simple grid shows what I have in mind.



2 Finding references around you

Discovering references helps spark ideas I want to use to really bring this painting to life – anything from specific interesting mushrooms to shadow patterns. With all these inspirations in mind I sketch out various compositions, looking for the best way to fit everything I want into one image.



4 Transferring the sketch

I digitally scale up my rough sketch to print dimensions, print it at full size (A3 here) and tape down to the back of my watercolour paper. Now it's ready for drawing using my light box.



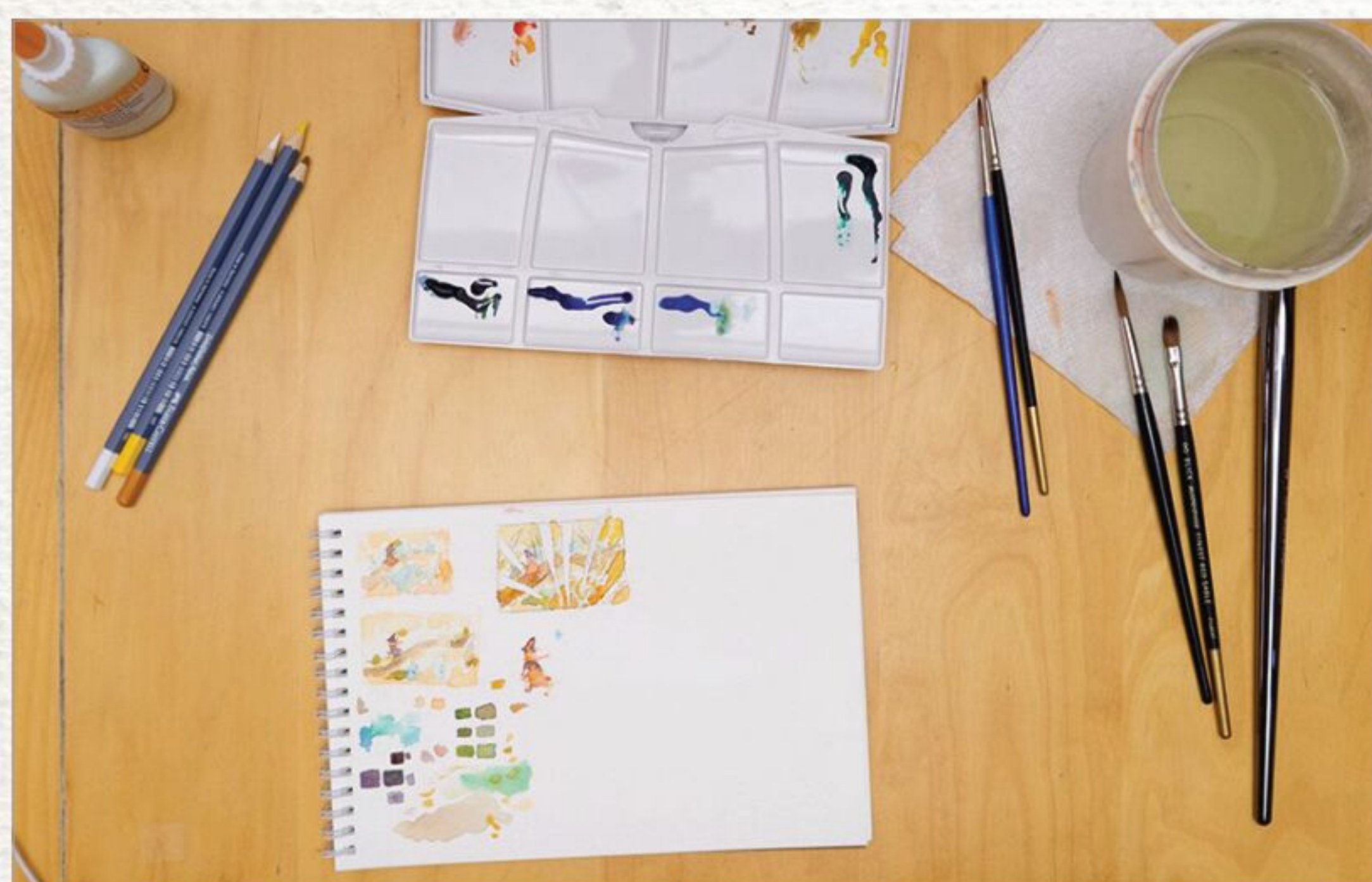
5 Pencil and paper texture

Although I like the freedom of drawing digitally, I work a bit faster in pencil where I can't make it 'perfect'. I also like drawing on rough grain watercolour paper – it gives some natural jitter and looseness to the line quality.



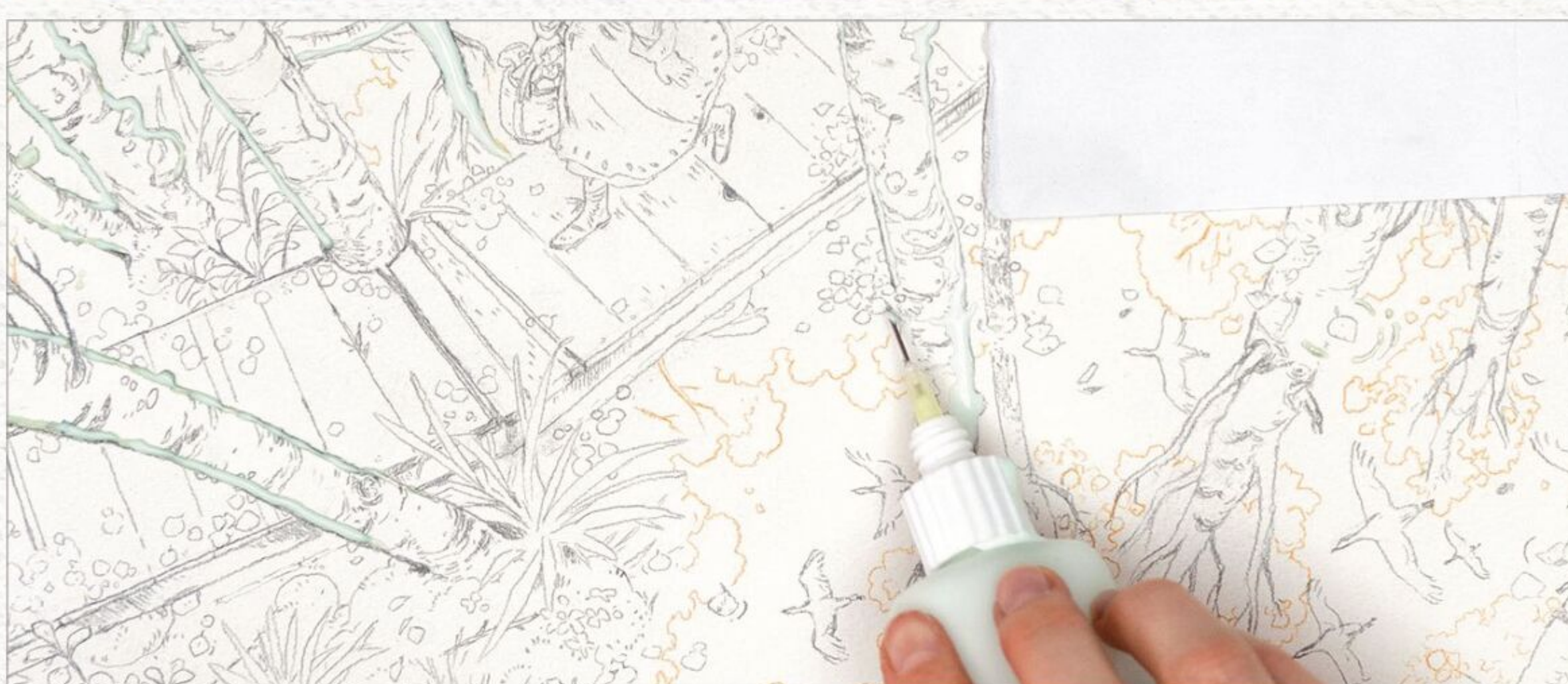
6 Use a watercolour pencil for lighter lines

Delicate details can be drawn with the lightbox brightness lowered, to make sure I'm drawing clearly even without the sketch. Flipping the drawing over is also helpful for seeing things with fresh eyes while looking for awkward shapes or final adjustments. A regular coloured pencil could be waxy and not allow your watercolour pigment to 'stick' where you've drawn, so don't mix those up. This entire drawing stage takes about 10 hours in total. Take lots of breaks to stretch!



7 Tests before final painting

I do a colour study here to check my colours, and figure out the masking fluid process. Knowing what I'm aiming for and what's possible with my paints enables me to have more looseness in the actual execution.



8 Taping down and applying masking fluid

I scan the finished lines in case I make any mistakes with the painting, then tape down. I mask out small ripples in the water, little leaves and where anything else is in front of areas where I want to paint large washes (the sky and leaves.) ➡

Traditional Artist Workshop



9 Putting down the initial washes

Getting some initial colour washes down helps lock the pencil and keep it from smudging. This whole painting process takes me about 10 hours.



10 Painting wet into wet

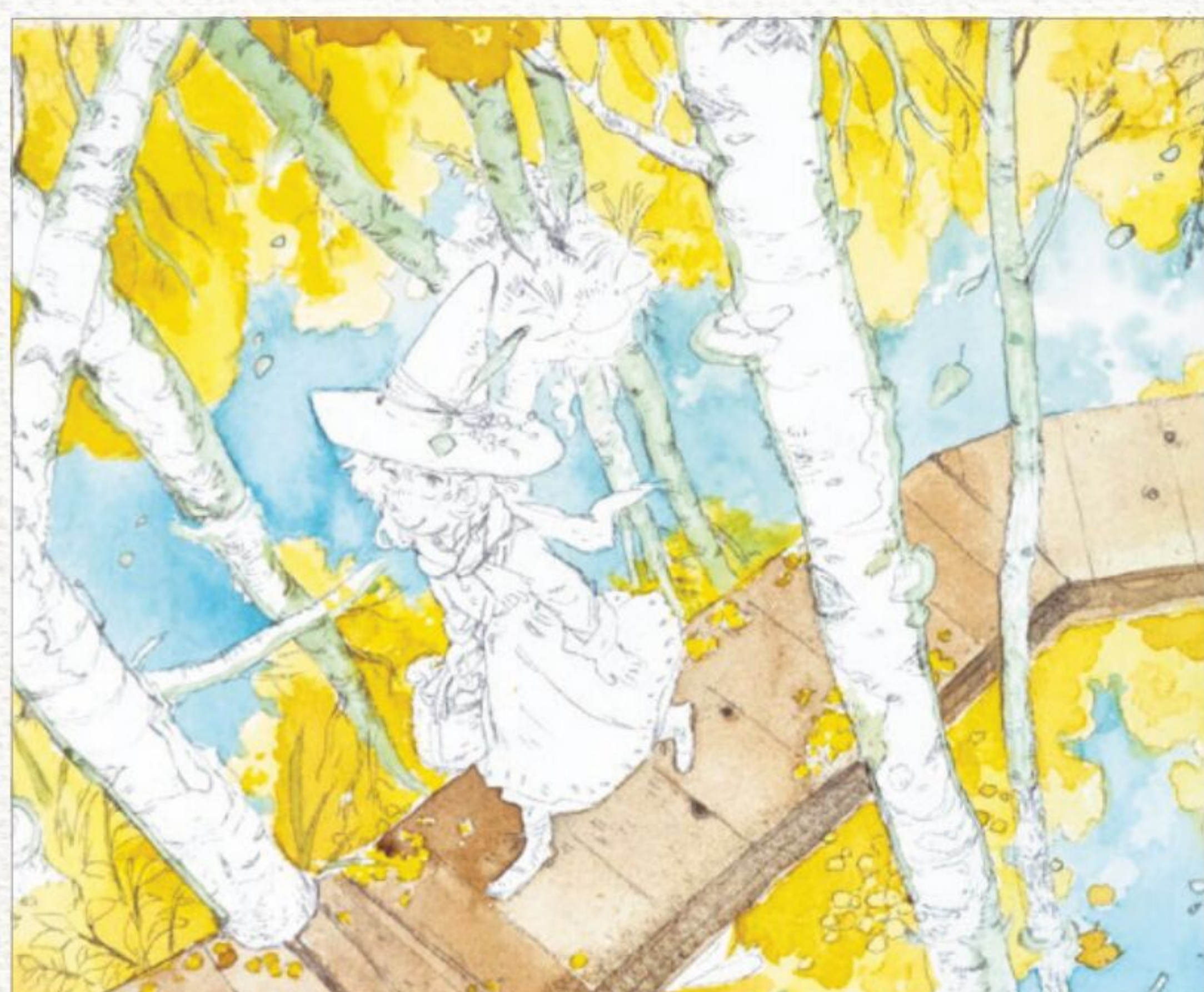
This method enables colours to 'bloom' into each other and blend naturally, and creates a unique texture. Tilting and rotating the paper means you can control where the most pigmented parts of the wash will be.



11 Work with a small number of brushes

I usually stick to one good Round brush for most of the painting, and one or two additional brushes for larger washes or small details. The extra brushes are also good for softening a fresh brushstroke's edges with plain water, without cleaning the paint off my primary brush.

In depth Capture autumn



12 Choosing colours

Warm and cool colour contrast that supports my black and white composition/value scheme is the most important thing to me here, rather than any specific colours. I want this to feel like a bright and crisp day, and choose base colours with that in mind.



13 Painting from light to dark

I gradually build up the deepest values throughout the piece. Taking this approach ensures that everything works together for the overall effect of the whole composition, instead of looking disjointed.



14 Working large areas to small details

This is just physically easier, because if you put down details first and then wash over them, they might smudge and bleed. It also helps me focus on the overall look of the whole painting, and how every element works together. Everything is finally coming together at this stage while I'm adding details and darkest colours.



15 Digital tweaks to luminosity

Finally, I digitally adjust the overall colours and luminosity with Photoshop's Overlay and Multiply layers to preserve the nice textures I built up in the watercolour painting. I also paint in any last details that were lost when scanning the final image. This takes six to seven hours, and then I'm done! ●

First Impressions

✦ Amanda MacFarlane ✦

This vis-dev artist likes to know what makes people tick



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

When I was four years old my parents moved to Zambia as missionaries. I grew up there mostly and have travelled all of my life. Living an adventure fuels a creative soul. Meeting people from around the world gave me a passion for discovery. A passion for drawing my own characters and figuring out who they are. I consider every character I draw to have a background story, and sometimes a whole other world comes with it. So I guess living in Africa gave me a passion for creativity and discovering the endless possibilities of designing characters.

Where do you create your art?

I have a home office – it's where I do all of my digital art. I paint in here traditionally sometimes too, but for everyday sketching the world is my office.

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

Life is art. I get influenced daily by being a mother of three, having four animals, running errands, seeing people along the way or just watching TV. I think every part of our lives has a sort of cabinet of topics to pick inspiration from. It could be what we see that day, or how we feel in a moment. The topics are endless when you see your world through a creative lens.

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

Artists are a little bit like sleuths. Every character they draw is a mystery and they have to figure out what makes them tick. They have to



MY ROOM

"This is me as a teenager growing up in Africa. My mom let me draw all over my walls. She encouraged art in any form and I'll always be grateful for that!"

“While creating a character you're on the hunt to find out who you're drawing”

find out what clothes they would wear, what attitude they would have, how good or bad their posture would be. While creating a character you're on the hunt to find out who you're drawing. I identify a little with every drawing I produce.

THE ARTIST

"I draw artists in creative mode a lot. It's something that I love doing, and can relate to, so you'll see this a lot through my work. This image is one of many, drawn traditionally with Prismacolor pencils and painted with watercolours."

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

It's so much more rewarding than I thought it would be. There's a lot of struggle when you decide to become



an artist. A lot of hard work goes into play, especially when you're a self-taught freelancer. You're your own agent and it's up to you to get yourself noticed and out there for jobs. When you get discovered the pressure is on and the magic is real. The longer I'm an artist the more grateful I become. Last year was the first time I saw characters I designed in a movie. It was a moment I'll never forget! A dream come true.

How has your art style evolved?

I've been drawing ever since I could hold a crayon. Early on I practised other people's stuff. I drew Norman Rockwell's pictures almost every day as a teenager, along with VHS covers of Disney cartoons. When I was around 15 I tried to draw my own characters and they were nothing like what I had practised. I would have given up if it weren't for my constant passion to put pencil to paper. Drawing from my imagination was hard for me, but like anything with practice became easy! Over time my style evolved and it continues to do so.

I don't think you ever arrive as an artist – it's a continuous growth. When I was younger I was more concerned with anatomy. Now I try to tap into the emotion or create more appealing characters through their wardrobe, environment and movement.

What does the future hold for you?

I'm working on a few cool projects, one of which will hopefully make it to the big screen. If more opportunities like this come my way, I'll take them on with open arms! In the meantime you'll find me filling sketchbooks and being optimistic in pursuing adventure.

Amanda is a self-taught freelance vis-dev and character design artist working for Warner Bros. and Warner Animation Group. She helped design the look of the 2020 film Scoob!. See more of her work at www.instagram.com/theanimatedlife.



Image by Nick Harris - Tutorial IFX 187

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