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**NFTs - DIGITAL FAD OR
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FUTURE

ISSUE 203

KOYAMORI SHARES THE IMPORTANCE OF BALANCING LINE ART AND COLOUR



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



If you've been reading this fantastic magazine since its launch you may recognise my ugly mug, this is my second stint in the hot seat. ImagineFX has always been important and will continue to be; you should put down every issue feeling like you've experienced,

learned and discovered something new. This issue continues that great work.

The subject of NFTs is tackled on page 22 as artists debate if this crypto-trend is the future or merely another fad – a footnote in digital art's evolution. The importance of NFTs in the current form may be in doubt, but it's shined a spotlight on digital art, and the growth of our art form and artists over the past 20 years has been the real winner.

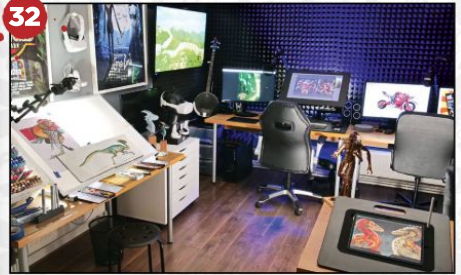
When reflecting on digital art's rise I'm struck by how artists continuously strive to embrace what's new. It's found this issue, on page 74, as Bryn G Jones combines Blender and Photoshop techniques to speed up his workflow. We have more tools than ever to create fantastic art, but ultimately imagination remains the most important.

Ian

Editor

ian.dean@futurenet.com

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



Glen Southern's art cave

This artist has evolved from 2D to 3D and now 3D prints his work. This busy studio reflects his journey.



Get inspired by nature

Watercolour painter Koyamori reflects on how her surroundings have influenced her fantasy art.



Paint with shapes and colour

Gillian Galang demonstrates how to go beyond your references to paint more inventive environments.

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KOYAMORI

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NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

Resources

Getting hold of this issue's resources is easy.
Just visit <https://ifxm.ag/improve203illo>

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

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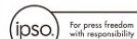
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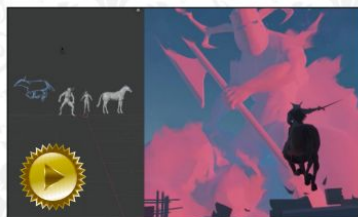
WORKSHOP VIDEOS



OVER 3 HOURS
of video tutorials
from pro artists
to watch and
learn from!

Take your environment art to the next level

See how Gillian Galang takes a simple photo reference of a building's exterior and brings it to stunning life with shapes, colours and a strong sense of storytelling. Her workshop's on page 68.



Speed up your art process

Watch Bryn G Jones use Blender to construct a scene, then paint over it. More on page 74.



Learn new gouache skills

See how Justin Donaldson uses the medium to paint realistic clouds. Turn to page 92.



Three workshop videos to help you get better at illustration

Watch how accomplished artists Daarken, Chris Seaman and Damian Schouweiler use digital and traditional tools to create a triple bill of striking fantasy paintings.



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"I have never used more advanced software for real-media mimicking. So many times people were convinced that my graphics were painted with standard tools. And they were surprised to find out my paints were digital."

Iwona Gradzka-Kurzaj, artist

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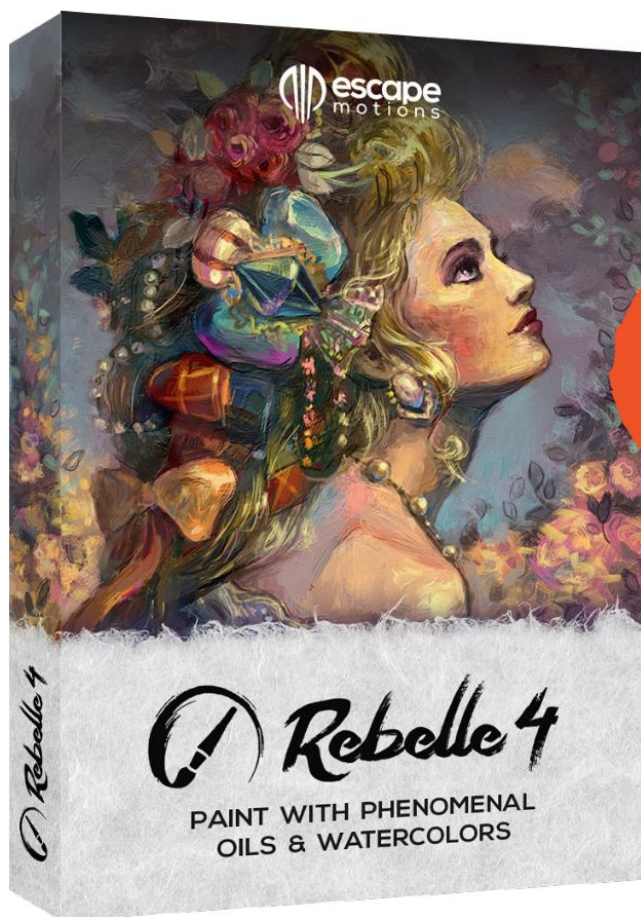


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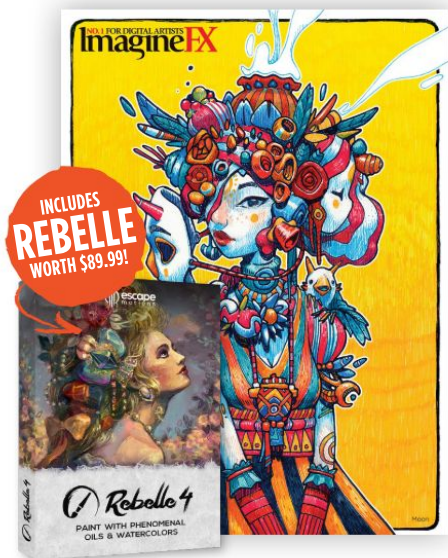
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FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART



1



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Syd Mills

LOCATION: US MEDIA: Photoshop WEB: www.instagram.com/vetyyr

Syd has been drawing all her life, but started pushing herself to get better during high school. "Since then I've settled into making digital paintings; the medium is fantastic for exploring colours, details and composition."

1 SO MANY SUMMER FIELDS

"The title refers to Jackson Browne's song Running on Empty: 'Looking back at the years gone by like so many summer fields.'"

2 DAMNED TO LOVE ONCE

"I almost always take inspiration from poems, books and songs, but I can't for the life of me recall where that title came from."



3 I WOKE LAST NIGHT TO THE SOUND OF THUNDER

"I dreamed that a storm tore through time. I was standing next to my grandmother, decades younger, in her garden."

4 IN WHAT DISTANT DEEPS OR SKIES

"This one references The Tyger by William Blake. The smoke emanating from the hair was delightfully fun to render."



Javeria Khoso

LOCATION: Pakistan MEDIA: Paint Tool SAI, Photoshop WEB: www.javikhoso.com

Javeria is a 25-year-old digital illustrator and comic artist who enjoys drawing detailed scenes featuring witches and magic. The main goal of her intricate illustrations is to try to convey stories.





4

1 WITCH'S KITCHEN

"I have a fascination with witches at work and how they'd use their magic to do daily activities. I wish I could enchant objects to do my chores for me!"

2 SUPERMARKET

"I drew this image over the course of a month, slowly rendering every package label by hand. It was weirdly therapeutic!"

3 HOWL'S BEDROOM

"This was my piece for the Twitter hashtag #GhibliRedraw, where artists draw a Studio Ghibli scene in their own style."

4 BACKSTAGE

"This drawing of an actress backstage in her dressing room was inspired by a K-pop music video that I once saw."



Amanda Kiefer

LOCATION: US MEDIA: Photoshop, Procreate WEB: www.amandakieferart.com

Amanda is a character-focused concept artist currently working at Firewalk Studios. "I'm inspired by 70s comics/aesthetics, anime/manga, fantasy and sci-fi, and love to mix those together."

1 THE STAR

"Inner power, vulnerability, hope and personal purpose are the themes of this piece inspired by The Star."

2 TEMPERANCE

"Based on the classic Tarot depiction of Temperance, which represents balance, moderation, patience and purpose."

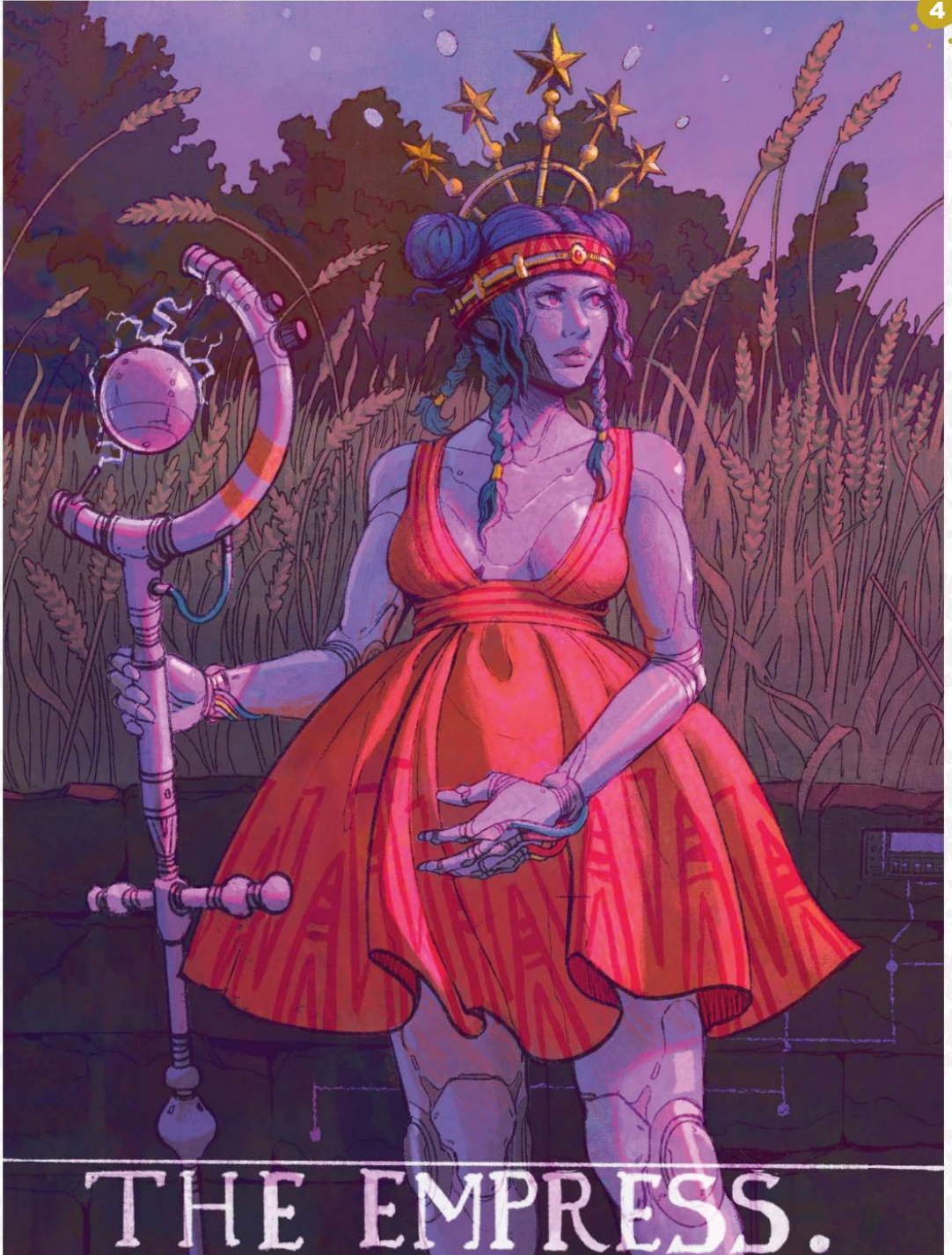
3 WATER MAGES (WAYWARD HEAVENS)

"Concepts from my comic IP, Wayward Heavens. I've put this project on hiatus, but it's fun to explore the world!"

4 THE EMPRESS

"The Tarot depiction of The Empress inspired this piece. It represents fertility, maturity, elegance and a sense of peace."







David Calabrese

LOCATION: US MEDIA: Photoshop, Maya WEB: www.davidcalabrese.com

David is a digital artist who focuses on imaginative realism illustrations. He also teaches illustration and animation. When not creating art for clients or himself, he encourages his children to draw and paint.

1 TROUBLESOME FAIRY

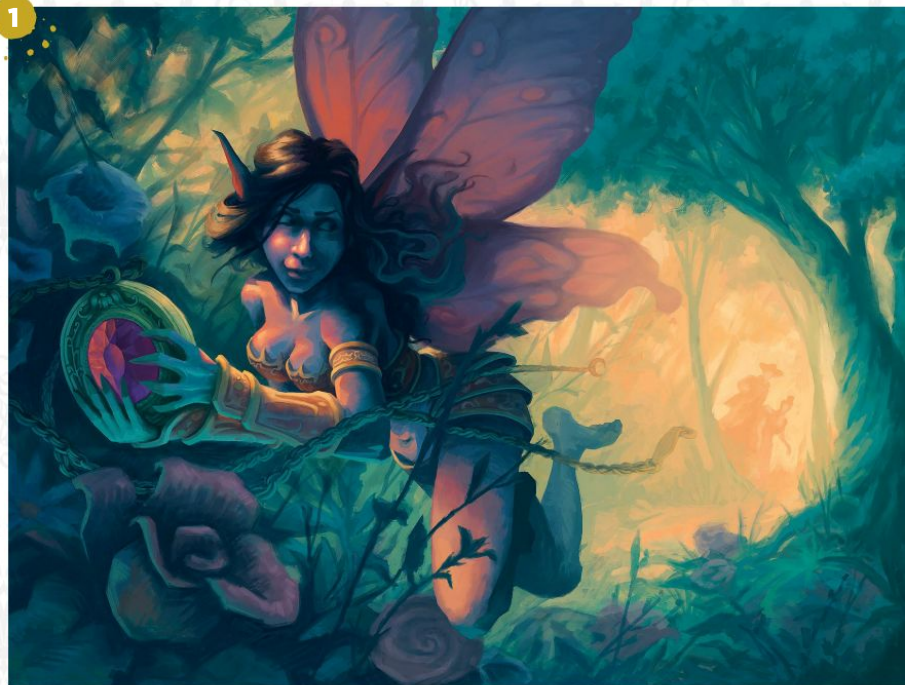
"I wanted to explore a colour scheme I wasn't comfortable with. I also wanted to create something that was nonviolent and dynamically engaging."

2 SPECTER KING

"The focus of this piece is the snaking path that the dragon's tail makes leading up to the dark king. I pushed the flame's colour to help the eye move."

3 LIONESS

"I wanted a feeling of confidence and power to radiate from this painting of a magic-wielding character and the giant lion beast."





Kait Matthews

LOCATION: US **MEDIA:** Photoshop, Artstudio Pro **WEB:** www.instagram.com/kaitmatthewsart

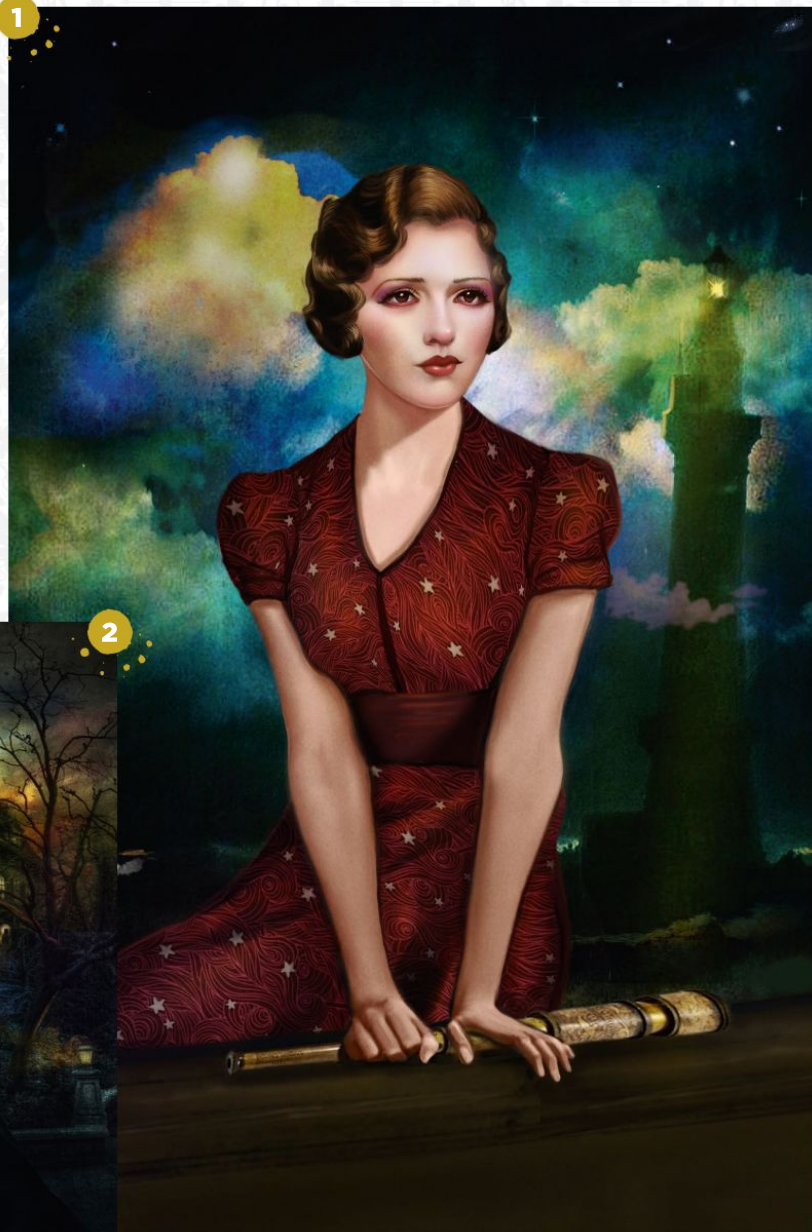
Kait has a BFA from the Laguna College of Art and Design, and has recently transitioned from traditional mediums to the digital world. She enjoys combining surreal themes with beauty and a splash of vintage vibes.

1 THE LOOKOUT

"This piece was inspired by nostalgia and hope. Is there a promise of finding what she's looking for? She looks with confidence to her future."

2 NOVEMBER STORM

"This piece is inspired by dark and chilly November nights. It's also an homage to the film noir and fashion of the mid-20th century."





João Emanuel Marques Fiuza

LOCATION: Portugal **MEDIA:** Photoshop, Procreate **WEB:** www.inkognit.com

João is an illustrator and concept artist better known online as Inkognit. He specialises in creature and character design, and is also the creator behind upcoming fantasy project Silver Giant.

1 FLAMING ZEAHL

"Exploration of a creature from my project Shagmouth. It casts white flames when it feels endangered."

2 LADY OF STONE

"Their spirit lingers in the stones and they care for those who venture in this wretched seas."

3 ALCHEMIST

"The image was a collaboration with my wife Suni. She made the character concept and I took it further."

4 GOATNAPPER

"Fans of MTG might recognise this. I always found the Goatnapper funny so I decided to do some fan art."







Eric Desideriu

LOCATION: Germany **MEDIA:** Photoshop, ink and pencil **WEB:** www.cooperativacreativa.com

Eric creates and art directs stories in collaboration with an awesome team at Cooperativa Creativa. "This is how I always wanted to spend my time on earth. The adventure is still ongoing!"

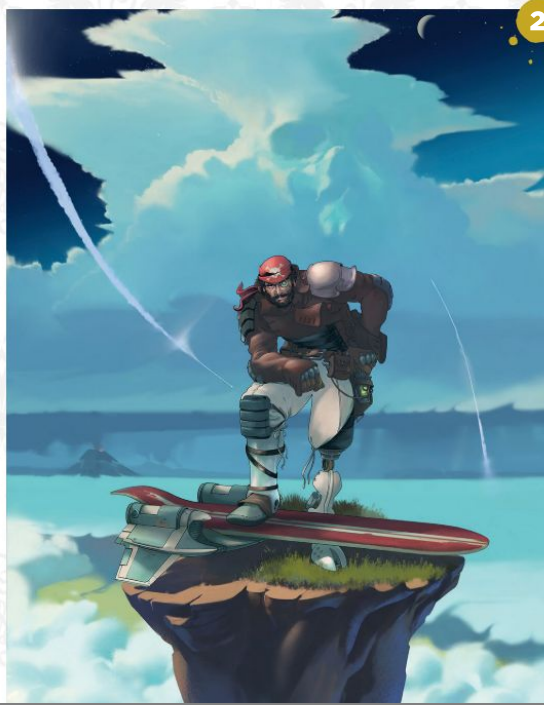


1 ESCAPE TO ISLAND

"Illustration for an upcoming book project set in a space pirates universe. We wanted a comic-art style in a Caribbean setting."

2 BLACKBEARD

"The infamous pirate Edward Teach, otherwise known as Blackbeard, appears as a character in our space pirate universe."



3 CANYON ATTACK

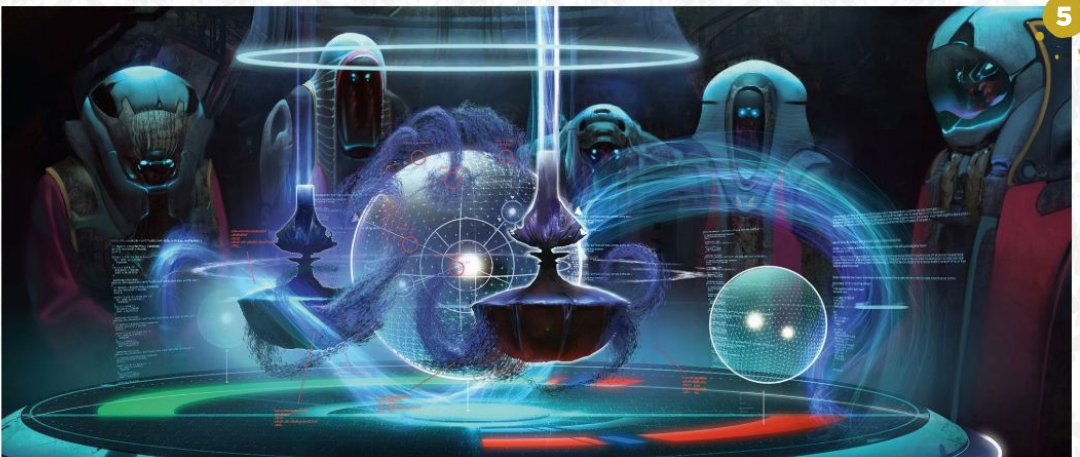
"This dynamic action scene from one of our books was developed as a double-page illustration for maximum impact!"

4 HARBOUR

"Another double-page illustration, this time to introduce one of the settings in our space pirate universe."

5 ALIEN CONCLAVE

"This is a piece of game artwork for a science fiction browser game. Until today it's remained unpublished."



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



Artists unite against NFTs

Gross profit Supporters say NFTs give creators better control over their work and more opportunities to make money. So why are many digital artists strongly against them, asks **Gary Evans**?



Digital artist Beeple sold a digital collage of his digital drawings for £50 million. The price paid at Christie's auction house for *Everydays - The First 5000 Days* was the third-highest for work by a living artist. The buyer bought a non-fungible token - an NFT.

In May 2007, Beeple - aka Mike Winkelmann - started posting a daily drawing ("By posting the results online 'I'm 'less' likely to throw down a big pile of ass-shit," the American said). The collage sold in March 2021 is made of 5,000 images, which works out at about £10,000 per image. You can look at every one of these images (and right-click and save them, if you wanted to) on Beeple's website (www.beeple-crap.com).

The NFT file doesn't contain the collage itself. The NFT that the buyer purchased is similar to a contract or a certificate of ownership. Essentially, it says: "The owner of this NFT owns *Everydays - The First 5000 Days*."

NEW KID ON THE BLOCK

A record of the buyer who bought this NFT is stored on a type of database called a blockchain. This is basically a big digital ledger, where any future changes of ownership will be publicly logged. This chain of ownership will be permanently marked in the file itself. You can right-click and save the collage *Everydays - The First 5000 Days*. You can right-click and save

A Tarot card of the witch's garden from Edinburgh-based artist Nataša Ilincić's recently released *A Compendium of Witches Oracle deck*.



Part of a series by US artist Catherine Graffam exploring "the idea of what 'pink' means in relation to my gender identity. I feel that it's impossible to reach the standards society has set for women."



every last one of its individual images. But the NFT itself is pretty much impossible to copy or forge.

Chances are, if you're reading this then you've had somebody right-click and save your own art. You've probably had somebody share or repost your work without proper credit or permission. Maybe you've even had somebody pass your work off as their own. So you'd have every right to see NFTs as a way for you to regain control of your art and maybe even make a little money doing it. You're unlikely to make untold millions, but even a small fee is better than having your work taken from you for nothing, isn't it?

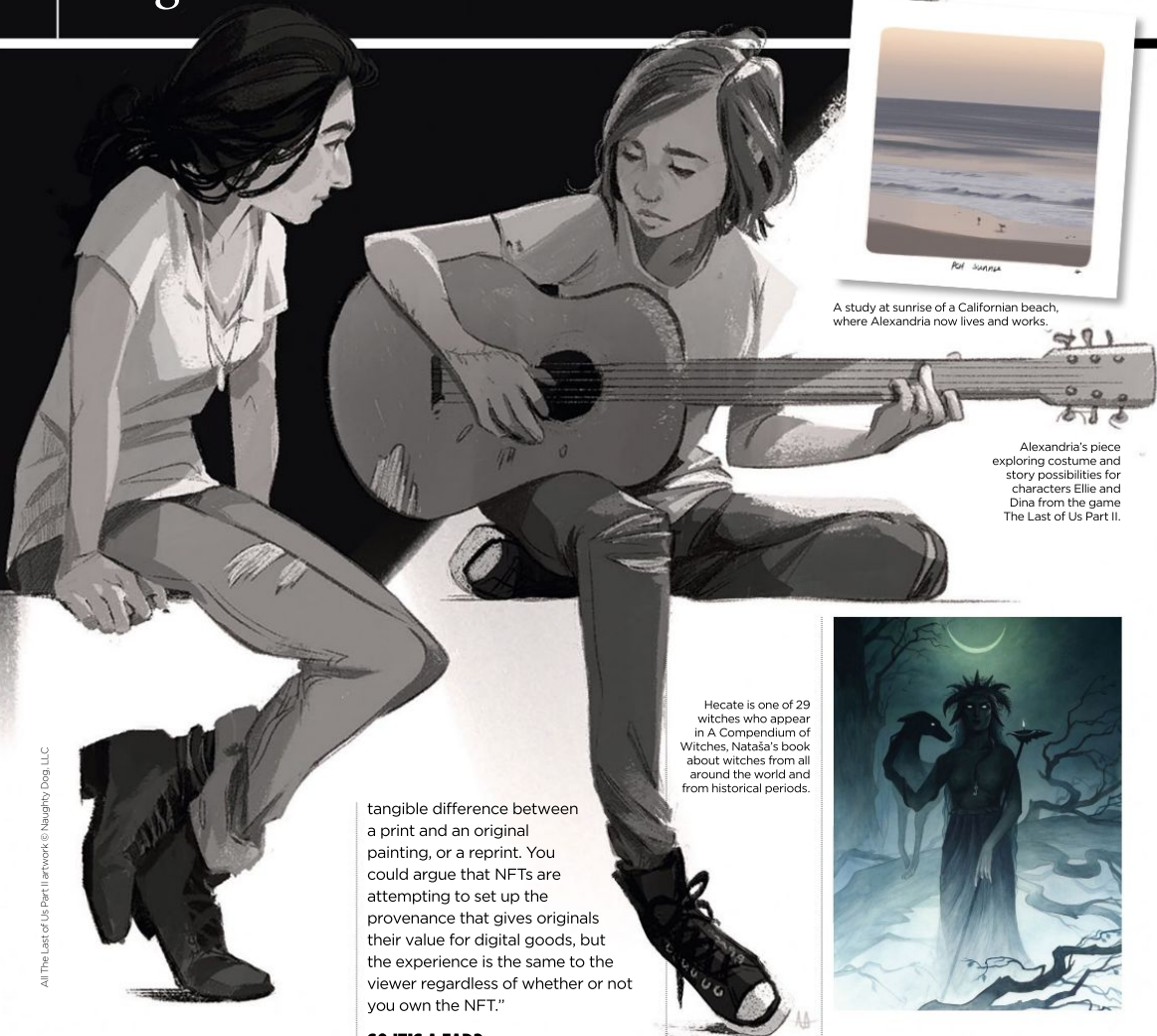


"There is absolutely an issue of redistributing and sharing art without credit," **Catherine Graffam** says. "However, I don't think NFTs solve that problem. In a vacuum NFTs can appear like a solution to this. But in reality the money made from NFT sales, especially by new artists, won't counter the fees associated with actually 'minting' NFTs."

Catherine, an artists and art teacher, recently posted a YouTube video (<http://ifxm.ag/c-graffam>) titled *NFTs (are worse than you thought)* | ARTISTS BEWARE. Catherine included research by the Canadian ➔



A personal piece by freelance Canadian artist Alexandra Neonakis, who previously worked as a concept artist at Naughty Dog.



All The Last of Us Part II artwork © Naughty Dog, LLC

A study at sunrise of a Californian beach, where Alexandra now lives and works.

Alexandra's piece exploring costume and story possibilities for characters Ellie and Dina from the game The Last of Us Part II.

Hecate is one of 29 witches who appear in A Compendium of Witches, Nataša's book about witches from all around the world and from historical periods.

tangible difference between a print and an original painting, or a reprint. You could argue that NFTs are attempting to set up the provenance that gives originals their value for digital goods, but the experience is the same to the viewer regardless of whether or not you own the NFT."

SO IT'S A FAD?

"I don't think it's a fad, but the market is so volatile - and is clearly already dropping in popularity - that it won't be as radicalising as NFT supporters believe it will. A lot of people will always want physical versions of an artwork they can hang on their wall and can experience everyday. No amount of giving digital goods inflated value and scarcity will change that!"

Catherine's YouTube video comprehensively and compellingly



lists numerous other ways NFTs are bad, a big one being their effect on the planet, which is a massive concern for Nataša Ilinčić.

A RIDICULOUS AMOUNT OF ENERGY



"My aversion towards NFTs stems mainly from their environmental impact," Nataša says, calling NFTs a "conceptually and emotionally empty ticket."

Technology magazine Wired recently reported on another high-profile NFT auction. French artist Joanie Lemerrier - a climate activist - recently put six NFTs up for auction on the Nifty Gateway website. They sold for thousands of dollars in 10

“ NFTs expend a ridiculous amount of energy to produce ultimately nothing ”



seconds. The sale consumed 8.7 megawatt-hours of energy, equivalent to two years of energy use in Joanie's studio, then sold again – another year's worth of energy.

"The system is similar to the one that verifies Bitcoin," Gregory Barber wrote in *Wired*, "involving a network of computers that use advanced cryptography to decide whether transactions are valid – and in doing so uses energy on the scale of a small country."

"NFTs," Nataša says, "expend a ridiculous amount of energy to produce ultimately nothing. Considering the current situation and global warming, I believe that participating in this scheme is deeply unethical." Nataša's latest art book, ➔



Hotaru from Nataša's *A Compendium of Witches*, which she funded through is Kickstarter campaign and is on sale now.



A new piece by Catherine, whose YouTube channel features tutorials and lectures on issues affecting the industry.

INDUSTRY INSIGHT BEEPLE MADE MILLIONS. WHY CAN'T YOU?

Our contributors caution against artists rushing into NFTs – and offer an alternative



Nataša Ilinčić:

"I have always advocated very loudly for the right of artists to earn fair wages, stand up for themselves and protect their rights, and I will continue to do so. But NFTs in their present form are most definitely not a way for most artists to earn a stable income."

www.natasailincic.com



Alexandria Neonakis

"I think that student and beginning artists should pay attention to what's going on and stay informed and make decisions for themselves. I'd caution them that all of the huge million-dollar success stories we've seen from this are very established people – most of them from a tight demographic of entertainment concept artists and art directors. I don't think that I've personally seen either a single student or newer or non-established artist make a big chunk of money off these things.

So be cautious, read about it, make your choice, but I'd never tell students to hop on a fad and I certainly wouldn't tell them to hop on one that's seemingly as volatile and likely to lose them money as this one."

www.alexneonakis.com

Catherine Graffam



"You're better off learning proper ways to protect your work from theft than attempting to capitalise on it with an NFT. Make a print of a piece. You'll make more money than an NFT with a handful of sales and people will be able to enjoy it in their homes!"

www.catherinegraffam.com

Another artwork from
Nalae's A Compendium of
Witches, featuring Kadlabou
- "the old child" who spends
afternoons playing with the
"spirits of the wildwood."





➤➤ A Compendium of Witches, is a collection of stories about 29 witches and their various historical settings: "My art explores the spiritual relationship with nature," she says. "If I were to support practices that are hugely detrimental to our planet, it would render my art meaningless. Art is about communication – if my actions undermine my message, I might as well do something else."

Joanie said he had no idea how much energy his NFT auction would consumer, and cancelled his next two auctions – priced at \$200,000. Not all artists are willing to do the same.

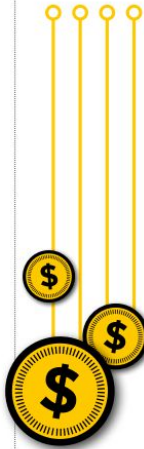
"I'm sad to say that I have lost respect for many members of the art community for this," Nataša says, "not only for disregarding the environmental impact, but also for – this applies to the big names – funnelling younger and/or lesser established artists into this pyramid scheme, ultimately exploiting them."

"Personally," **Alexandria Neonakis** says, "I think they're a fad... in the time



you've sent me these questions the whole market seems to have crashed, which is a thing crypto people swear is

A personal piece by Alexandria, who's worked on The Last of Us, Left Behind, Uncharted 4: A Thief's End and Uncharted: Lost Legacy.



Nataša describes A Compendium of Witches Oracle Deck as "a tool for reflection and guidance."



"I've been using pink as a symbol for traditional femininity," says Catherine, "and my self-portraits interact with the ideas of this femininity as a trans woman."

“There’s no value applied to owning NFTs by the public at large or even the art community at large...”

just part of it, but I dunno... it all feels so bizarre to me, I don't want anything to do with it."

PEAKS AND TROUGHS

Alexandria's right. In the time it's take to plan and write this article, NFTs have (depending on who you believe) crashed, peaked and crashed again. Early in June, Crypto news site Protos.com reported: "The NFT market has imploded over the past month, with sales in every single category almost entirely drying up. NFTs peaked on May 3, when \$102 million worth were sold in a single day. The crypto-collectibles market made up \$100 million of those sales." Other crypto news sites reported NFTs had crashed back in April, so who knows what will have happened to NFTs by

the time this article exists in the form of a tangible print magazine.

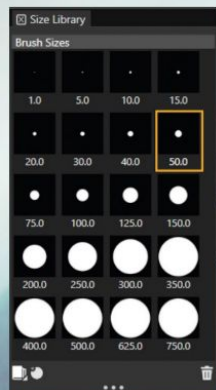
"It reminds me of those things where you can buy a star and put your name on it," Alexandria says. "I guess you can show it to your friends and family and be like 'I own this.' But it carries no weight outside of that. The rest of the world doesn't know or care that you own the star. It's just a piece of paper and that ownership is made up anyway."

"There's no value applied to owning NFTs by the public at large or even the art community at large, so just saying you own it or even showing the NFT certification doesn't mean anything to most people, because there's no consensus on whether or not these things have any value at this point, or how you'd track that over time."



Painter 2022 stamps its quality

Tooled up Art director and vis-dev artist **Isis Sousa** reflects on Corel Painter 2022's new direction



Corel Painter has long been the go-to software for artists yearning to give their digital art a tangible traditional feel, whether that's workflow, brushes or finish.

The newly released Painter 2022 is "streamlined, modernised and user-friendly," says **Isis Sousa** (www.isissousa.com), who reveals that the interface is cleaner, the workflow is slicker, old brushes have been enhanced and new brushes have been added.

One new feature is the Favorites option, where you can tag your preferred brushes. "You can easily browse your brushes by different categories, such as Favorites, Layer Compatibility, Stamps, etc. Now artists can find their most-used tools quicker and more effectively," says Isis.

The addition of Stamps enables full customisation of your brushes. Isis loves it, saying: "There are many things you can do, such as customise multiple aspects of them in Painter's great Brush Engine. You can also capture new Dabs of your own and refine them, or use the Captured Dab Library that Painter offers, creating entire new libraries with these different options."

We particularly love the new optimisation feature. Painter 2022 will

Isis Sousa has been using Corel Painter for over a decade and tried the new edition before its release.



tailor its tools to make the most of your GPU, offering accelerated performance where needed. It makes Painter 2022 the best version yet.

"It's an easier-to-use edition, where the software's complexity is broken down into more intuitive steps," says Isis. "Its tools maximise the digital drawing and painting experience."

Painter 2022 is available for order now priced \$429/£360. Visit Corel's site for details at www.painterartist.com.



A knight makes their way across an unusual bridge, in Jared Krichevsky's personal art.

A day in the life of... Jared Krichevsky

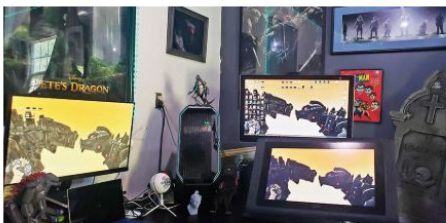
Body talk The creature concept artist has learned the importance of good physical health in his job



"To get better results learn how to talk to yourself, be constructive and not destructive," advises Jared.

"I wake up around 6 to 6.30am and spend time with my family before my son goes to daycare. I work out in the office and gym that I've set up in my garage, before settling into the work of the day."

You have to take care of your body. This job will punish you if you're not prepared for it, so stretching, exercise and hydration should be a part of your regular routine. I burned my arms out a few years ago to the point where I was plunging them into buckets of ice, so exercise is not optional for me.



"Reminders of accomplishments are little pick-me-ups for those tough art days."



Jared helped design Mechagodzilla for 2021's Godzilla vs. Kong.

© Legendary Effects/Legendary Pictures



A giant mutant crocodile tears up Chicago, if Jared's concept art for the film Rampage.

© New Line Cinema



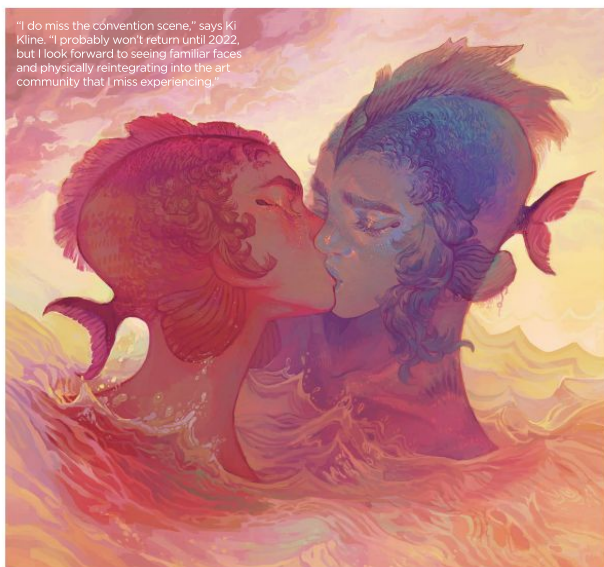
Concept Art Association is an organisation committed to elevating and raising the profile of concept artists, their art and their involvement in the entertainment industries. Its annual Concept Art Awards Show showcases and recognises behind-the-scenes individuals working in entertainment concept art.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

From 9 to 11.15am I have my most productive time, then I go for a walk and have lunch. I come back around 1.30pm and have another stretch of productivity until 3.15pm. I either do another walk or a short workout on the break, and then work until 6pm.

The next hour is family time with my wife and son. Then I go back to the office until 10pm to finish the work day. My wife is also in production so she understands the long hours. Typically, we watch some type of show before bed after work, and then wake up and start the whole routine over again.

I always tell people to make a list of your top five studios - the places where you really want to work. Next, look at artists who work there and start comparing your art to theirs in a healthy, self-critical way. Then start building a body of work and get it out there. As you progress, people will see it."

Jared is a freelance senior creature concept artist whose work on projects such as Ready Player One, Godzilla vs. Kong and Antlers. He's also a ZBrush Instructor at Gnomon School of Visual Effects. See more of his art at www.jaredkrichevsky.com.



"I do miss the convention scene," says Ki Kline. "I probably won't return until 2022, but I look forward to seeing familiar faces and physically reintegrating into the art community that I miss experiencing."



Having started traditionally Ki now paints using Procreate on their iPad.

Finding inspiration in politics and protest

Get together If Ki Kline had a hammer, they would hammer in the morning and make colourful, emotive imagery...

"It would mean a lot to me if folks learned about the violence that pipeline construction brings to the Earth and how it brings further pain to poor and BIPOC [black, indigenous and other people of colour] communities," says Ki Kline as we ask what they are working on. Ki's answer is not your typical response. Wanting to make a difference, they even moved to Minnesota to become more active with climate movement Cooperation Northfield.



But let's rewind. Ki burst onto the art scene in 2017 scooping numerous awards. Six Spectrum selections, a Spectrum Rising Star and a Gen Con 50 Juror's Choice set them up in the spotlight. Annie Fenner took to his blog to write, "Her graphic style and sophisticated use of colour makes her art stand out from the crowd."

How did this affect the young artist? "I think it was easily something that

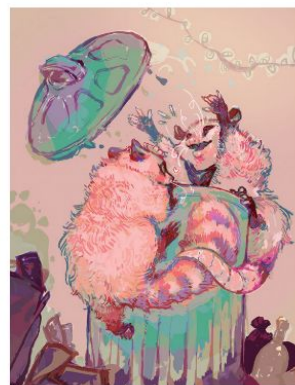
could put pressure on me or anyone in general," Ki tells us. "I think with or without the award, I'm always striving to figure out what's important to me and how to communicate that through my artwork. I truly think what the award made me feel is that I'm doing pretty well, and this was another stepping stone in my journey."

EMBRACE CHANGE

It's a journey they describe as "totally chaotic and filled with uncertainty," but one they're fully embracing. The ups and downs of being an artist are part of why Ki loves life so much. Having begun taking commissions as a teenager, they felt burnt out as their

Ki reveals that, "I just let the chaos of the process take the reins, and I make it up as I go."

“I’m always striving to figure out what’s important to me and how to communicate that through my artwork”



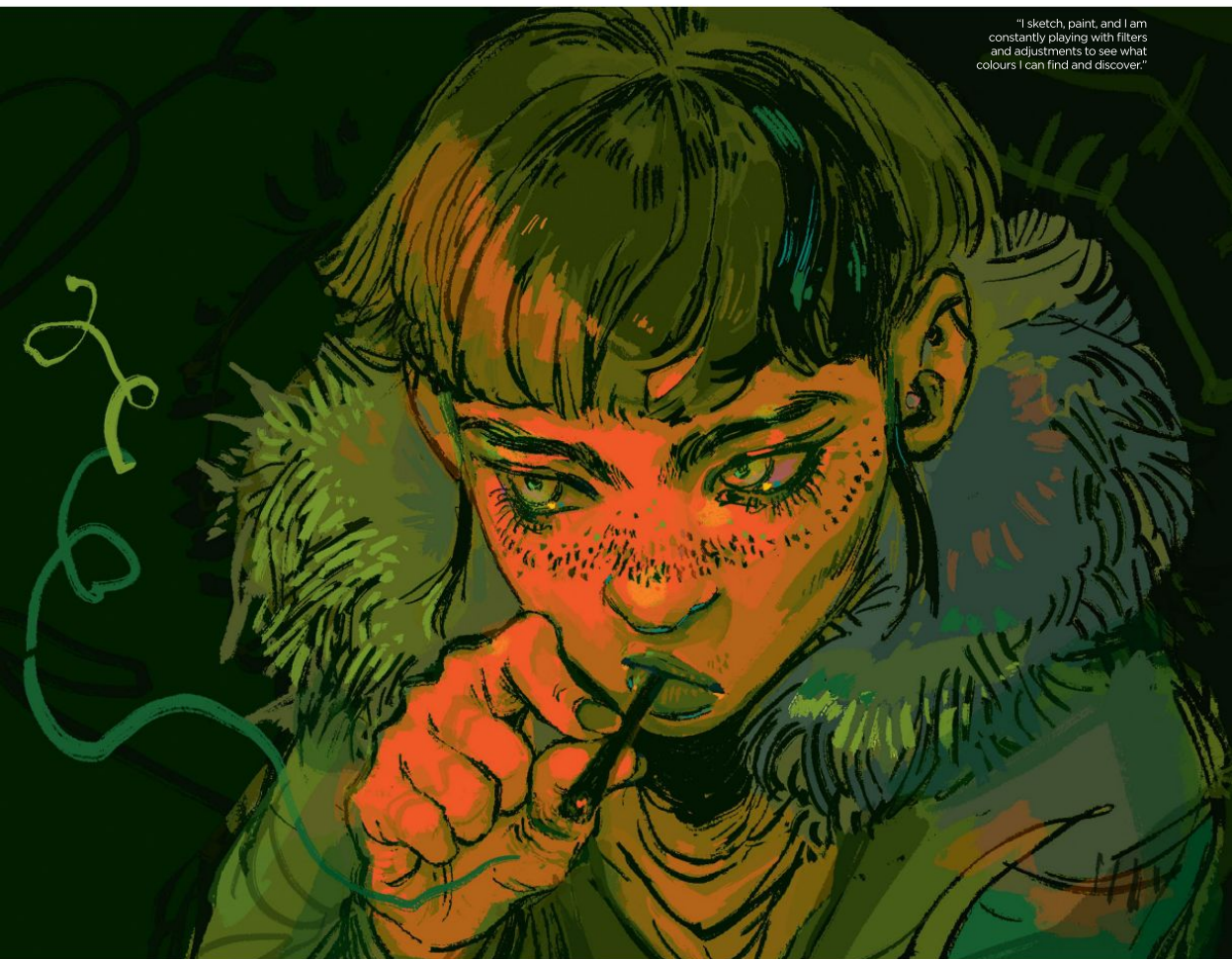
mid-20s unfurled. Ki is contemplative about the effect of overwork. "People change," they say, "so naturally I feel like my process wants to change along with the changes of myself."

Telling us people they meet influence their art, it seems Ki is channelling a sense of revolution from the friends, creators, and strangers they meet everyday.

"Art is a metaphor of life, and I think perceiving and living outside of just my artwork can keep my art relevant where I feel it matters," they reflect.

"I love seeing what other POC and queer folks do to share themselves to the world and some of the fierce ones are my favourite," continues Ki. "They

"I sketch, paint, and I am constantly playing with filters and adjustments to see what colours I can find and discover."



are only ever sorry where it matters, and absolutely try not to let the opposition, usually those who wish to oppress them, get in the way of their feelings. Their love and feelings are so passionate that they're able to concentrate their intentions and empathy, to help impact and inspire others by making adjustments in their shared spaces and communities for a greater good."

These people, their stance and lives matter to Ki. They see themselves as a mirror reflecting back the emotions and politics of friends. Art can be a powerful medium to make change, and Ki is embracing that side of their talent.

"I believe sharing art that reflects feelings I have that other folks also share can make the power behind my work feel even more fulfilling and meaningful. [...] People are cool."

That love for their friends makes Ki hopeful for the future, post Covid. "Covid took more away from others that I cannot bear to mention, but I'll always try to hold on to hope that people will continue to forge forward no matter what comes our way, even if capitalism continues to be an obstacle. We will persist, grow, and continue to look out for one another."

Ki supports the Stop Line 3 fundraiser – www.gauki.net/stopline3 – and hopes to be back at conventions in 2022.

BRIGHT FUTURE

Ki Kline describes the colour techniques they use to create art that reaches out and ensnares the viewer

Colour is a passion for Ki, and it's evident in their vibrant, positive artwork. Ki tells us they never have enough colours, saying: "I sometimes wish I could see more colours than what is possible."

They go on to explain how colour can change a piece of art, either subtly or breathing new life into painting. "You can adjust a detail so delicately with the slightest hue change and it can change the entire feeling of an artwork. You can even make an artwork absolutely piercing to the eye with a thoughtfully placed hot pink surrounded by desaturated hues like that of grey. Or you can just have a bunch of colours dancing quietly amongst themselves going mostly unnoticed to the viewer, but somehow they're perfectly framing the focal point."

ImagineNation Artist in Residence



I work closely with a company called Mackinnon & Saunders, which is a world-class puppet maker. I helped it with some digital sculpting training and I asked the sculptors from Corpse Bride to sign my studio poster.

Some time ago I realised that watercolours weren't for me. I switched to acrylic for a while and now only use gouache. I like to paint light over the top of an image.

Not a week goes by when I don't get asked to create a dragon of some type.

A huge part of our work is now done in VR and as such the studio is full of VR headsets. These shown here are the Oculus Quest 2.

I have a habit of wanting to own all the colours in a set. This gets expensive with things like Copic's, but they really are worth every penny.



Glen Southern

Analogue-to-digital Explore the jam-packed studio that's an evolving workspace for this English artist and tutor, who works in 2D, 3D and 3D print.



My studio has gone through lots of major changes as my type of work has changed over the years. When I started it was a mix of analogue and digital drawing spaces. I had a traditional A0 drawing board and all the associated pens, pencils and paints. I also had a full digital setup with a large Wacom Cintiq for the heavy-duty drawing and 3D work.

As the years rolled by I started dabbling in VR art with programs such as Medium and Gravity Sketch. Then my clients started to ask for 3D prints of the 3D models, so I started investing in my own printers. I also started to use an iPad with apps such as Procreate and more recently

I started a YouTube channel to promote my art classes and as this article was being written I was in the middle of soundproofing my studio. It's now a hybrid art studio crossed with a recording booth.

Every desk has a microphone now. We're moving to full-time content creation soon, so the change of studio reflects that.

My studio is full of 3D prints and sculptures made from clay, resin, wax and even plasticine, like this four-armed critter.

I'm a graphic hardware junkie and try everything I can in the sector. Last month I was test-driving the SpaceMouse range from 3Dconnexion.

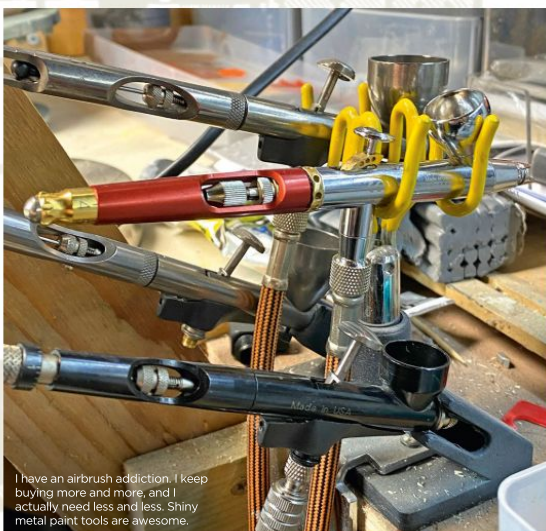
I have a few large Wacom devices in the studio, but in the past four years I've gravitated to an iPad and Procreate for a huge amount of work. And I now sculpt on the iPad every day.

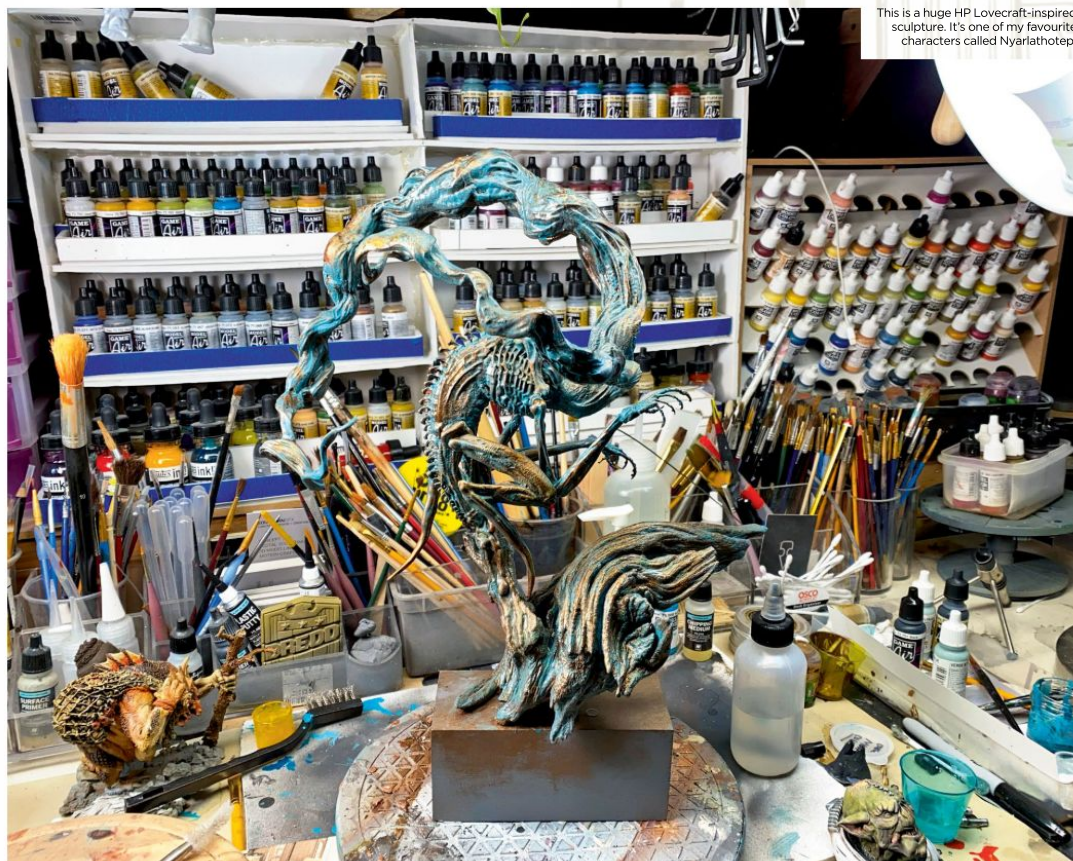
ImagineNation Artist in Residence

I spend most of my time creating creatures, so it's only sensible to have a load of creature reference models in the studio. It's now become an addiction and I buy any that I can find.



This is actually a render that's made to look like it's a clay model on my studio desk. Keeps my clients guessing!





This is a huge HP Lovecraft-inspired sculpture. It's one of my favourite characters called Nyarlathotep.

➤ Nomad Sculpt, which meant that I was much more flexible with my day and didn't need to have as much dedicated space for the digital side of things. That enabled me to mix things up a bit.

Social media has had a massive impact on my studio. Last year I finally decided I needed to set up a dedicated YouTube channel. Covid-19 had hit us hard and we were forced to stop training other artists in-house. The idea of the YouTube channel was to let people know that we were still here, helping people create in new and innovative ways - but it was all going online. That meant that the

former training space would need to evolve into a green-screen studio and edit suite, and have equipment dedicated to those tasks.

MAKING CHANGES

Adjusting to the restrictions that the virus imposed on us meant constantly reconfiguring the studio. I went from being a freelance artist to running my own studio with a team of six in a few short years. The studio was always chaotic and I was never sure that I was using all the space to its fullest potential. Then, suddenly my team were all working from home and most of them had their own workspaces



We created a Game of Thrones dragon piece for Sky to use on the side of a bus. We were sent a six-foot wide print of the approval artwork and this now has pride of place in the studio.

already set up. We now don't think we'll ever fill the studio space again, so my new, better, optimised setup is here to stay.

I still love analogue drawing and painting, but most of our work is now 3D related and often in VR. I draw every day and my studio space will always reflect that. I have an area that is 100 per cent dedicated to physical

“I still love analogue drawing and painting, but most of our work is now 3D related and often in VR”



I still love my physical books. I collect a lot of art books and often buy a few each month. They're great as a reference for me and also for anyone I'm training.



My office is full of resin MSLA printers that print production-quality models in a range of materials. It blows my mind that I can be sculpting one day and holding my sculpt the next.



I have had a few projects this year relating to dinosaurs, hence why you see them everywhere in my studio.

modelling and painting. I keep my airbrushes and airbrush compressors in there. I also keep a drawing desk with my Copic collection, which is my pride and joy. Jobs will often start in pen and pencil, move into digital and onto 3D in some way. They then often come back to the physical world in the form of a 3D print and they need cleaning, preparing, undercoating and painting. It's quite amazing that we still need all those analogue skills in a very digital workplace.

Glen runs SouthernGFX, a small Cheshire-based studio specialising in character and creature design with clients including Sky, Nike, Lenovo, Logitech, LEGO and Wacom. See more at www.southerngfx.co.uk.



This is my Wacom Cintiq, which sits at the heart of my studio. I do most of my large-format work on this screen and it's on a huge metal arm to give me maximum flexibility.

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Might and magic?

I'm a UK-based concept designer and illustrator specialising in character and creature design for the entertainment industry. I was featured in issue 152's FXPose's section and went on to have quite the artistic adventure.

I've also been a ceremonial magician for as long as I have been creative, and often used my art as a vehicle for magic.

It was terrifying for me to come out as such. Witchcraft, magic and the occult, while often portrayed in fantasy, is still frowned upon at large in our society, not counting punishable by death in certain areas of the world. It took all the courage I could gather to speak up, and I found it through art.

I created a hybrid graphic novel called *Empire Vertigo* depicting my most provocative experiences, the human and spiritual relations, and challenges I faced while being on the fringe of society, and the incredible psychological and artistic transformation I obtained as a result.

Adelaide Filipe, via email

Ian replies Nice to hear from you Adelaide. Art can be used to inform and help us all flourish through ideas and concepts we may not understand. I'm glad your art has helped you find your place in the world and continues to inspire your life.



DID YOU MISS THE PREVIOUS PACKED ISSUE?

Don't worry – you can get hold of issue 202 at <http://ifxm.ag/single-ixf>.

Melanie Delon has been a regular over the years, beginning with a cover on *ImagineFX* issue 18.



Adelaide Filipe came out as a witch... her art has helped overcome stigma and probe her feelings.

More Melanie!

Having been reading your wonderful magazine for some years I'm struck that some of my favourites artists have not appeared in these pages for some time? For example, I adored Melanie Delon's beautiful horror art – are you planning on bringing any of these artists back into the magazine?

Jenny Grove, Oxford

Ian replies Hello Jenny and thank you for reading *ImagineFX*. There are many fantastic artists we've featured in these pages over the years, and Melanie Delon is one of the best. I'll drop her an email!

Coming back to the magazine (my last issue was *ImagineFX* 100), I'm struck how the artists we've included over the years have grown – people like Cynthia Sheppard, JS Rossbach, Jason Chan and so many more are now art superstars. Don't miss out on the next generation – we plan to keep helping new artists get noticed and share their art.

See page 8 for our latest subs offer, or you can get hold of us via a print subscription from www.magazinesdirect.com or read us on your Readly subscription.

Fur-ever friends

There's a sort of stigma attached to the furry fandom; however, they have one of the most interesting art communities I've seen. Have they been featured in the magazine before? If not, why not reach out and try to educate people on how amazing they and their artwork can be!

Stacey Wuff, via email

Ian replies Hi Stacey, we have covered furry art in past issues, but not recently. Why don't you send in your art and use it to educate the world to the furry cause!

FRESH
PAINT

New works that have grabbed our attention



 **Patrick J. Jones**
[@patrickjonesillustrator](https://www.instagram.com/patrickjonesillustrator)



 **Sungmoo Heo**
[@sungmoomoo](https://www.instagram.com/sungmoomoo)



 **Maylee**
[@mayleemouse](https://www.instagram.com/mayleemouse)

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



Interview

CATNAP

"To be surrounded by a mass of napping cats would be a supremely toasty experience."



ARTIST PORTFOLIO

KOYAMORI

From China to Canada, this artist's style is inspired by the meeting of the human mind and nature, learns **Beren Neale**

Koyamori moved with her family to Toronto, Canada, on 16 January 1999, immediately after an historic winter storm had buried the city in four feet of snow. It was so bad the army was called upon to dig out the streets. She was 11 years old, and something about the epic force of nature has stuck with her since. "It was definitely a shocking

introduction to Canada," Koyamori recalls. "It was the first time in my life I saw that much snow."

This was not the first big move in Koyamori's life. Born in China, she followed her parents as they pursued studies and later jobs, first to Japan, then North America. In China, she lived in Changchun and Siping (Jilin province), jumping between the homes of both grandparents, as ➤



PLATFORM

"The painting was made during Covid lockdowns. It illustrates how life feels at a standstill, as if waiting for transport from one platform to another."



Interview



NOW

"A thought about how sometimes it's difficult to be in the present. How if you were falling, the present would be all you could think about."

→ her mum and dad established themselves in Japan. "I remember big family dinners, watching TV together, my grandfather's bag of ginger candy... In Japan, I lived in Moroyama and Ogose (Saitama Prefecture). It was a mountainous and nature-filled area, so me and friends would often bike to nearby waterfalls, catch crayfish and frog eggs from ponds."

It's here that the first theme arises in the artist's story: the looming influence and inspiration of nature in Koyamori's life and work. It's present in the artist's most vivid recollections of childhood, in nearly every organic line in her art, even in her chosen nickname. "Koyamori means a small gecko," explains the artist, who prefers not to use her given name or publish any photos of herself when promoting her work.

NOT QUITE A HOBBY

Perhaps oddly for a professional artist, growing up "art was always around, but more like an activity that didn't quite reach a hobby," says Koyamori. "In Japan's elementary school, art is quite encouraged, so we'd have classes with a variety of activities such

OCEANWALK

"Ocean taking their whales for a casual walk. As they do."



Artist PROFILE

Koyamori

LOCATION: Canada

FAVOURITE ARTISTS: Iris Van Herpen, Tove Jansson, Itou Junji, Fukaya Kaoru and Igarashi Mikio.

MEDIA: Watercolours

WEB: www.koyamori.ca

as watercolour, wood carving, clay and calligraphy, but I only started drawing in my own time in grade 10, in Toronto."

Koyamori's academic interests veered in other directions, before realigning to art. Subconsciously influenced by her mother's career as a scientist, the artist initially studied psychology and biology, then took a detour into graphic design. "I was interested in human behavioural psychology and natural sciences, but really the biggest pull for me was the idea of a stable job and income in the future," admits Koyamori. "At the time of choosing universities, I had only been drawing regularly for two years, and was entirely clueless about potential jobs in art, nor did I know anybody in the art world."

“The lack of confidence in my own abilities held me back from pursuing art as a career for many years”

Y2

"A wordplay on yuutsu (melancholy) and 'you two'. The creature is a manifestation of your thoughts that can constrict you."





PARASITE

"As the flower matures, it saps the energy from its host. How beautifully and bittersweet it blooms."

Soon after graduating, Koyamori secured herself a place in a teacher's college, "but didn't end up going," she says. "I then I applied to study graphic design, because I figured it would allow for more artistic expression, and provide more reliable job prospects. The truth is, I really lacked confidence in my abilities to have an art career. But I feel that those experiences gave me an array of information to be inspired by and a lot of design skills, so I don't regret it."

FAILING TO GET BETTER

Perhaps the second overarching theme in Koyamori's story is her fascination in the human psyche – not just in an academic sense, but also how the strengths and frailties of the human mind can bleed into action. "I find the

human brain pretty fascinating; how it shapes our own world views, how small shifts in our cognition can create dramatic change in our behaviour."

But sometimes, those pesky thoughts and feelings can lead to negative behaviour. "The lack of confidence in my own abilities held me back from pursuing art as a career for many years," she admits. "I think because art was something so close to my heart, I kept trying to find other things that I could succeed in, so that I would not have to 'fail' at the thing I really cared about... I'm very critical and strict with myself, and it's something that I've been trying to change in recent years."

This thematic blend of the human mind and grandiose nature is everywhere in her art. It's there in ➤

FILLING SPACE

Koyamori explains why she likes to make the most of the spaces in her art

"When starting painting, I think about how best to present the topic I'm going to be working with. It usually starts from a rough doodle – in this case, a concept of a parasitic flower sapping away the life force of its host. I want to have an array of such creatures throughout the painting, and because they're both the flora and fauna of the piece, the environment they're in would be rather simple. The focal point of the picture will be a single human, many surrounding creatures, and their tears."

Now that the idea is solidified in my mind, I start by doing the under-sketch with a pink pencil. (It erases well and melts into the watercolour, so I find the lines less distracting than graphite.) When doing the sketch, I like to give enough space between each focal object. If areas look a bit unbalanced from its emptiness, then I'll add some details later.

Once the pink sketch is completed it's time for painting, but the composition of the picture is mostly finished. In a busy drawing with many forms, I like to keep shapes relatively clean and simple, so they don't clash with each other. Often I like to bring them out of the background with a bolder line-art or with colour contrast. At my own discretion, I might choose to add details to each figure, but generally less is more since details can morph into one confusing shape."



WATERWORLD

"Sometimes majestic sky creatures need a bit of comfort, too. Perhaps that's where rain comes from."

Interview

BLUE CITY

"Inspired by the cityscape of Kowloon. It's interesting to think about life that goes on within these walls, so together and separate."




NEKO KINOKO

"Little cats living in their mushroom town. Slowly becoming mushrooms themselves, being recycled in nature."

Interview

50 CATS

"I have pet envy. I often live vicariously through drawing other people's pets."



“I like to explore the feelings of ebb and flow, of something impermanent that comes and goes...”

→ the dreamlike use of colour, the stream of consciousness imagery filling every inch of paper, the often solitary human subject framed within a greater world of wonder.

"I tend to draw certain themes over and over again, maybe unconsciously," she explains. "I like to explore the feelings of ebb and flow, of something impermanent that comes and goes. I often revisit the theme of nostalgia, where I try to paint scenes that are both alien but also familiar..."

After a moment's pause, the artist continues: "How can one feel like they've been somewhere when they haven't? What forms the familiar connection and feeling of belonging?

Life and death and ephemerality... it's all there."

Koyamori enjoys when things are not as they seem at first glance, perhaps like herself. "It takes time to see a multifaceted thing in its entirety, as often our understandings are coloured by our own perceptions. I feel that throughout this exploration, it can often reveal new understandings about ourselves."

QUEEN OF THE RUNWAY

So, what kick-started her love for art? Well, there were the intermittent art creations of her father, who, working at a lumber plant, was naturally gifted with his hands. "[He] likes to

make things, and he draws very well even though not often – maybe once every decade he'll doodle something," she says. But actually it was a British fashion designer that really set something alight in Koyamori's imagination.

"I remember feeling in absolute awe when I saw Alexander McQueen's beautiful and haunting runway collections in my high school days," she recalls. "I liked the themes McQueen presented in his collections. He used a lot of natural elements, and often it was quite haunting to see, because the pieces looked like they were perhaps from another realm, with a ghostly aura."

Add to that the ever-present influence of manga and anime, and you've got some of the major touchstones in Koyamori's art style. Bonobono, Yomawari Neko, the horror works of Junji Ito and Yosuke



BOTAN

"Drawn for a terrarium series way back in 2013. Illustrating vulnerability by being transparent."

NECROMANCER

"Exploring drawing different bones in time for the spooky October season."



CLOUD SHRIMP, WATER SHRIMP

"Small creatures are so fascinating. I imagine them hiding themselves in the clouds and blending into the water."



WINTER SUN

"The theme of wanting to feel warm in winter persists. How nice it would be to have your own personal tiny star space heater."



BURNOUT

"Burnout is so silent and steady. It consumes you before you even notice it."

Takahashi, and the wistful world of Tove Jansson's Moomin series. "I grew up reading manga and watching anime so it definitely influenced me a lot. I love the imaginative worlds and immersive stories. I love that more often than not, stories and illustrations are open to interpretation and are not spoon-fed. I enjoy worlds where it's quite beautiful, but also dark and melancholy. Thematically, those are things I enjoy exploring."

Like many of her more psychedelic pieces, there's something untamed about her chosen art medium,

something that she revels in. "I love watercolour the most, because it's imperfect and chaotic in my hands," she says. "Paintings never turn out how I picture them in my head. The way paint runs into each other and mixes into surprising colours make it feel new and fresh."

The process of getting to the painting is often the same. "When feeling creative, I sit down and dump a bunch of idea sketches in my journal for later," she says. "Once I feel like following through with a specific idea, I'll consider what medium to

Interview

KOMOREBI

"The sunlight filtering through the leaves. Sometimes the word is so poetic it illustrates itself."



LOUD

"Clouds are often associated with peacefulness, but they actually like to party."



DRAW THE LINE

Line-work is a key part of Koyamori's art style. Here's how she tackles it...

"Line-work in watercolour can vary greatly depending on the effect you want to achieve. What's a good balance between line and colour where they can work harmoniously instead of detracting from one another? Sometimes in detailed work, it may be faster to use India ink or a dipping pen and acrylic ink for precision. However, the results may be more line-focused and can create a different effect than what you're looking for. Your choice of tool can shift the flavour and emphasis of the painting drastically. These are some factors I like to consider before starting a piece, and deciding what type of line can translate the idea most effectively.

In this painting, a balance between vibrant colours and soft line art would be best, to highlight the organic nature of succulents. For smooth lines, I decided to use a size 0 brush and watercolour. After the initial pink sketch and underpainting, the lining is the final step. This is because painting over watercolour lines can create blurring. Since this painting is already quite loose, blurring isn't welcome here! To bring out the colours, darker hues were mixed from the colour palette to complement and accentuate. Some areas that are already contrasted and crisp may not need much lining at all (the flowers). Too many lines might make objects seem busy, so I leave some areas unlined."

HOUSE

"It would be neat if plants could tell you what they need. Here they would say, 'It's time to re-pot us please.'"

BEE

"How bees fly despite their tiny wings is simply because of magic. I like to think that a magic spark is generated each time they flap their wings."



“There aren’t slivers of opportunity that if we don’t grasp, they’ll slip away from us forever...”

➤ use to best illustrate it. Then I simply start the under-sketch with a pink pencil, erase the messy areas, and get to painting or inking. I work on one piece at a time usually, taking about one to two days to finish if it’s a full piece.”

The artist works with ink, Posca markers, sometimes alcohol markers, and pencil crayons. Maybe once a year, she’ll make something digital.

IF IN DOUBT, GRAFT IT OUT

As for everyone, 2020 brought with it some problems to overcome, and time to reflect for Koyamori. “The main issues I’ve had during Covid is maintaining a work-life balance. I live in a studio flat, where one room serves as a studio, ‘warehouse’ for my small business, and a makeshift gym... and I’m a bit of a workaholic.” But that

intense year wasn’t sustainable, and working from 9am to 11pm every day, including weekends, has since given way to “restructuring my thinking, and allowing myself more rest,” she says.

Thankfully, her old love of nature has helped her shift work focus. “My neighbourhood is peak suburbia, as I live right across from a park, and everyday at 5am the birds wake me up with their yelling,” says. “In fact, there are some really nice parks within walking distance and recently I’ve been going to a small pond with many birds around it – blue jays, red-winged black birds, cormorants...”

Perhaps things have come full circle since those days of hiking to the mountainous ponds in Japan? One thing is for sure for Koyamori – it’s never too late to make the changes you want to make. “I attended an Junji Ito

SHIFT

“Jumping from one dimension into another can often feel like a free fall. But it’s not a bad thing.”



OPHELIA

“A peaceful scene. The water plants are beginning to overtake. Soon it will just be a cover of greenery.”

TCAF Panel in 2019, and it was really interesting to hear him talk about shifting from dentistry to comic artistry,” she says. “It made me feel there’s not a ‘too late’ for pursuing what you want in life. There aren’t slivers of opportunity that if we don’t grasp, they’ll slip away from us forever. Sometimes we’re not ready, and are just incubating until we are and it’s okay to take that time.”

Len Nicholas

This concept artist enjoys drawing adorable animals getting to grips with advanced sci-fi tech. Otters are cleverer than we thought!

Artist PROFILE

Len Nicholas
LOCATION: US



Len has been working as a freelance concept artist and industrial designer for the past 15 years. Some of his clients have included Spin Master, Hasbro, Ubisoft and Silver Gate Studios.

www.instagram.com/toyagogo

TOOTH LARRY

"Honestly, in this day and age who still believes in the Tooth Fairy? Now the Tooth Larry, that's an entirely different matter. Perhaps science and technology will come full circle and bring magic and whimsy back into the world."

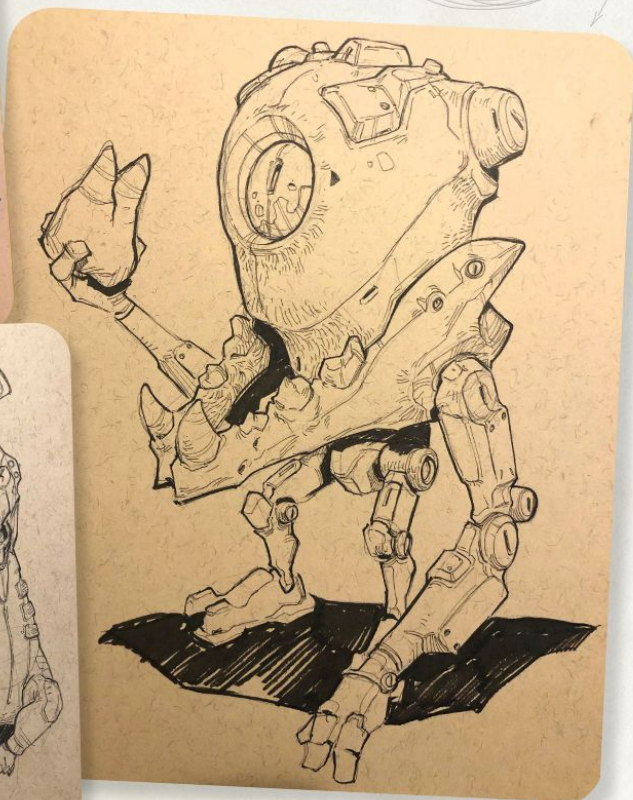
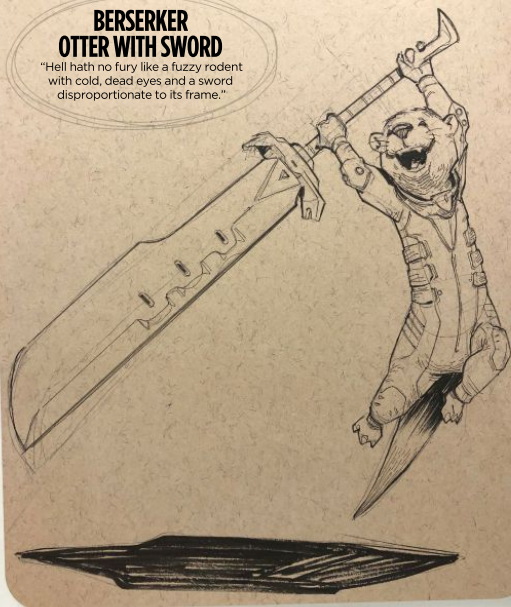
LENNY BRUCE

"This one was drawn in March of 2020. My heart was heavy with uncertainty, but I thought if Lenny Bruce was holding up, I'd be okay, too."



BERSERKER OTTER WITH SWORD

"Hell hath no fury like a fuzzy rodent with cold, dead eyes and a sword disproportionate to its frame."



“Perhaps science and technology will come full circle and bring magic and whimsy back...”

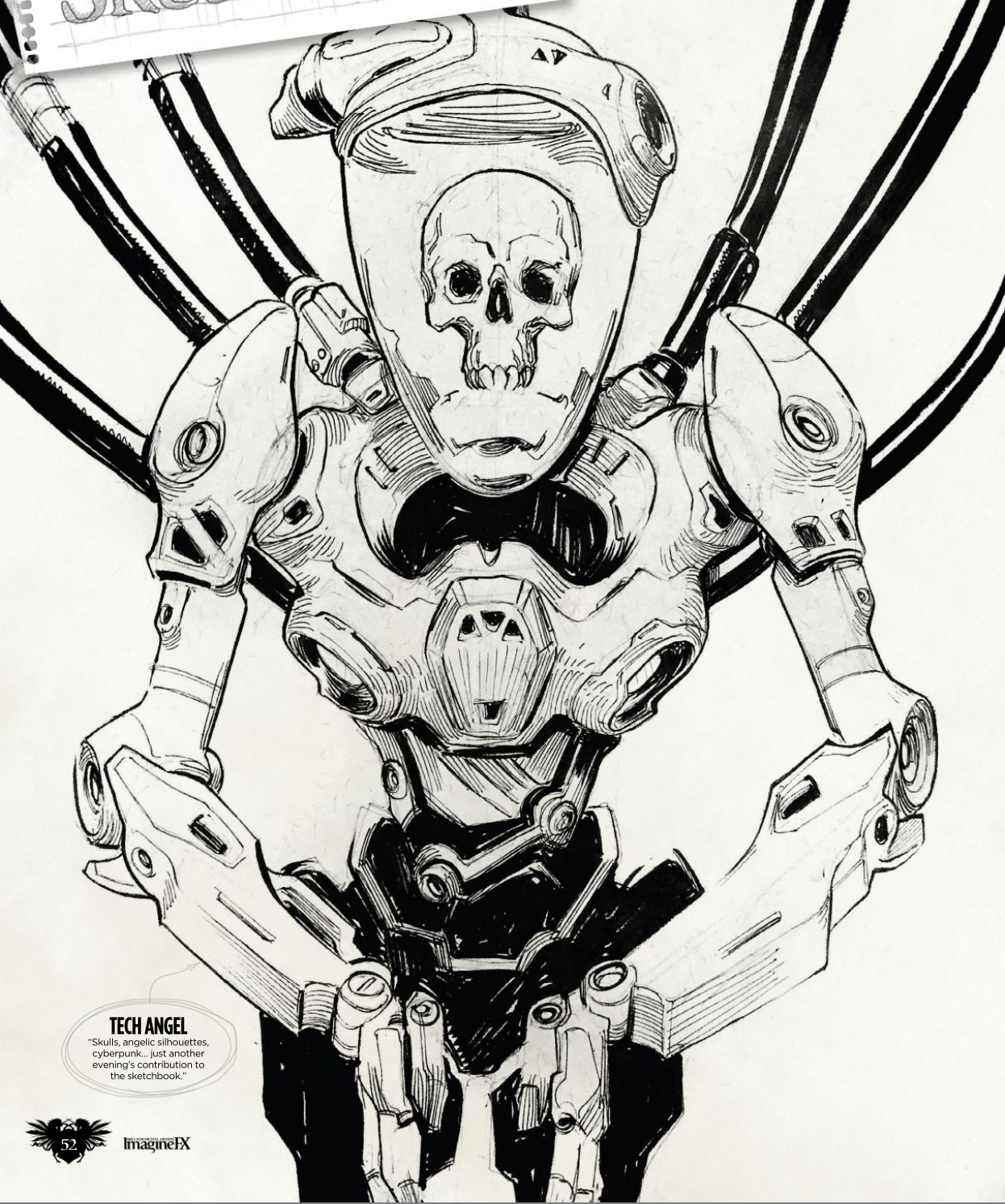
BAT PIG

"What can I say,
my client got a
French Bull dog
puppy. I had no choice
but to put it into a
mech suit, then a
space suit, and then
a sci-fi serial."



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Sketchbook



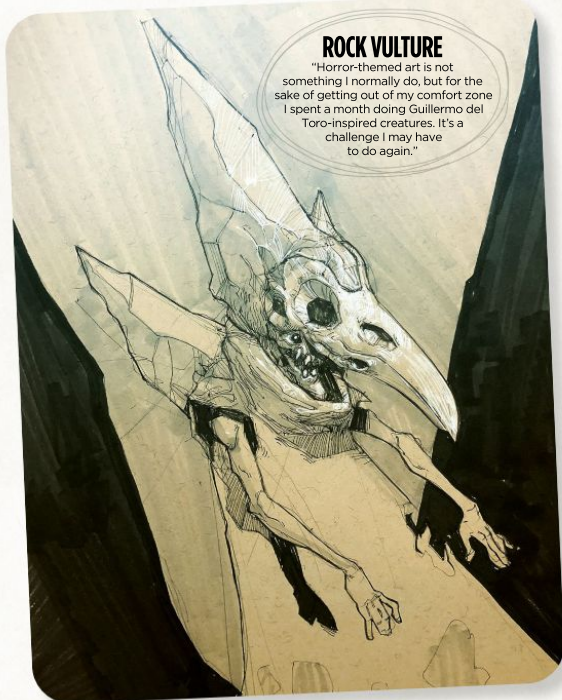
TECH ANGEL

"Skulls, angelic silhouettes, cyberpunk... just another evening's contribution to the sketchbook."



ROCK VULTURE

"Horror-themed art is not something I normally do, but for the sake of getting out of my comfort zone I spent a month doing Guillermo del Toro-inspired creatures. It's a challenge I may have to do again."



ROBOT PLANTER #2

"At some point a seed got stuck in its chassis - who knows how long that tree has been growing in there? No one around here has the nerve to check its rings."

BERSERKER OTTER

"If I were to have a spirit animal, it would be this crazy rodent. Madness abounds in the otter world, as does adventure."



SHAMAN

"I love the combination of technology, ancient tradition and spirituality. It's natural to think of them as contradictory, but I believe that these things will ultimately converge."



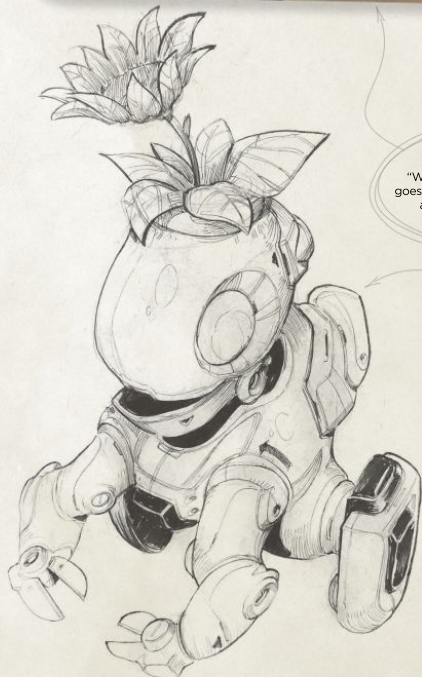
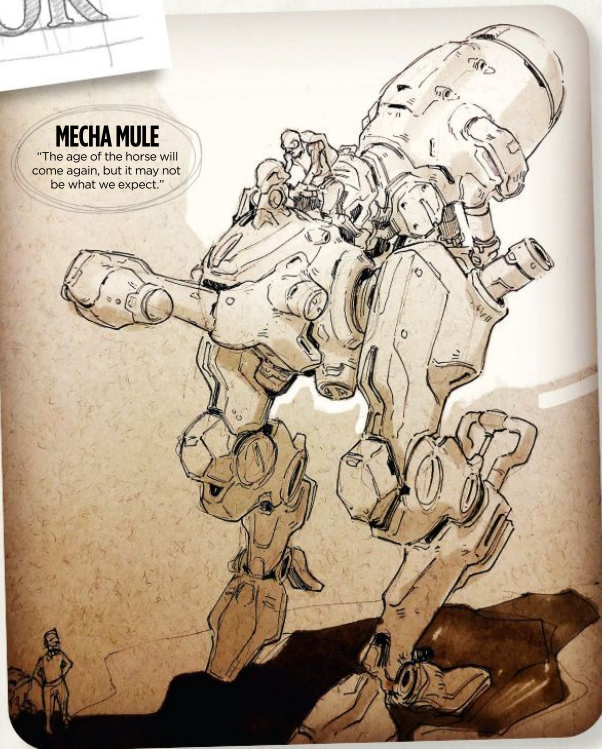
“I love the combination of technology, ancient tradition and spirituality”

Sketchbook



MECHA MULE

"The age of the horse will come again, but it may not be what we expect."



FERAL ROBOT

"What happens if our technology goes feral and occupies the space we abandoned in nature? Robot headhunters, that's what."

OVER-ENGINEERED PLANTER

"Over-design, over-engineer - that's how you get fun!"

BERSERKER OTTER WITH UMBRELLA #5

"Sometimes I get chatting nonsense with random people. This is a result of one of those moments."



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

HUNTER

"I love Battle Angel Alita. Don't get me started on how much – neither one of us has the time. I was so excited when the movie came out. I had to do my own take on the hunter warrior. Now, where is that sequel?"

“I love Battle Angel Alita. Don't get me started on how much – neither one of us has the time”

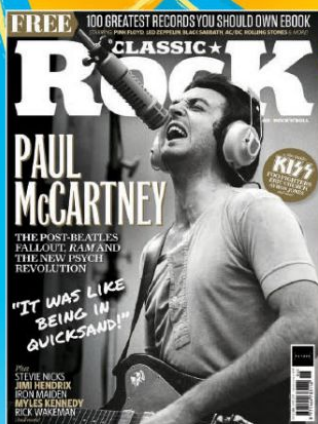


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Workshops

Advice from the world's best artists

Workshops assets are available...

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.



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This issue:

58 Fill a character with colours

Moan develops a design that features flora and fauna.

62 Controlling detail in a scene

Learn how Mariel Rodriguez visualises a complex space.

68 Painting with shapes and colours

Gillian Galang takes a building well beyond its reference source.

74 Speed-model a fantasy scene

Bryn G Jones places 3D assets in Blender, then paints over them.

Traditional art skills

FILL A CHARACTER WITH COLOURS

French illustrator **Moon** shows how to draw a colourful character with ink gel pens, developing an original design that features flora and fauna

Artist PROFILE

Moon
LOCATION: France

Moon is an illustrator and self-publisher of illustrated books. His work focuses on the symbiosis of characters with natural elements in a colourful way.
<http://ifxm.ag/moon-art>



When the ImagineFX team approached me about using an existing character of mine for the cover,

I decided to create this new illustration for the occasion. The main idea was to draw a character in my style that would maintain eye contact with the viewer. The structure of the drawing had to work with the text on the cover.

As with the vast majority of my work, this female character is associated with various natural elements from surreal fauna and flora, in turn inspired by reality and some ornamental jewellery. These natural elements and the character are often in symbiosis, inseparable from each other in order to symbolise the place of the human being in this vast system of interdependent entities which we

call nature. I'm also inspired by the costumes of ethnic groups from all over the world, so you can find various influences in my art.

I almost never work directly with references – I prefer to integrate them mentally and let them combine in my brain to come out through the pencil in a mixed form. To add a narrative to this drawing, I integrate a mask and a second face in the hair to evoke the concept of duality. ➤

How I create...

A CHARACTER USING INK GEL PENS



1 Sketching the structure

I usually start by working on a sketch with a 0.5mm mechanical pencil and an eraser. I look for the overall shape and put together the different elements that will form the final design. This stage is important because it's the only time when I can make mistakes and rectify them. From now on I'll be working without a safety net.



2 Lines and shadows

The serious stuff starts now. I choose to draw the line with a dark colour – here I've chosen to use blue. I avoid using pure black to reinforce the colourful and saturated aspect of the drawing. The same goes for the shadows, I choose a colour that matches that of the line's. It needs to be slightly transparent and not too dark.



3 Colours and texture

I start by filling in all the areas. I try to distribute the colours by applying warm contrast between them. I refine the volumes with close tones and add textures. Then I reinforce the lines and shadows from the previous step. I create the background separately, to make it easier to manipulate the elements digitally on the cover.



COLOUR & STORY

Warmness contrast

I try to distribute the colours in a homogeneous manner, using warmness contrast in particular. This makes the details easier to read and strengthens the colours' saturation. Usually, I choose one or two dominant colours for the whole picture and the others are combined in a more or less unconscious, almost random way.

Focal point

I tried to limit the number of elements in a particular area in order to guide the eye's movement, have an easily identifiable visual and to guarantee a strong dynamic. In addition, a face usually catches the viewer's attention, so I concentrate the "action" in this area.

WORKSHOP MATERIALS

PAPER

Fabiano 300gsm

TOOLS

Pentel Mechanical Pencil
0.5mm, Zebra Sarasa
Clip Gel Pen 0.5mm

Texture and layering

This shirt stripe is made up of four different colours: yellow, pink, soft orange and red. I use these similar tones to create texture and subtle colour variations, which I can't achieve with these pencils because their colour range is limited. I make sure that I start with the lighter, semi-transparent colours.

Add a narrative element

I like to add little creatures to my illustrations that focus on a character. I often draw birds, but it can also be insects. The key point is that they enrich the composition and enable the viewer to interpret the narrative without overwhelming the image.



Next month

Next month in...
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Painting Skills

Boost your creativity with pro advice
on mastering colour in your portraits

Artist Ayran
Oberto explains
how to paint
portraits with
impact!

All this... and more!

Inking masterclass

The legendary
Jean-Sébastien
Rossbach shares
his workflow.

Speed sculpt using ZBrush

Glen Southern
breaks down the
tools needed to
concept a creature.

Training book appeal

Advice to improve
your art – the 10
books everyone
should read!

Learn fish-eye perspective

Illustrator Paul
Heaston reveals
how to master this
creative perspective.

ISSUE 204 ON SALE 6 AUGUST IN PRINT & DIGITAL

Photoshop

CONTROLLING DETAIL IN A SCENE

Mariel Rodriguez shares their process for visualising a complex space, including how to avoid overdetailing, and effective lighting techniques

Artist PROFILE

**Mariel "MRZ"
Rodriguez**
LOCATION: US

Mariel is a background artist for animation, who creates illustrations of everyday adventures in their spare time.
www.mrodzart.com



The idea for this illustration came about January 2021. It was approximately a year into pandemic living as well as about a year since I had moved from Boston to Atlanta.

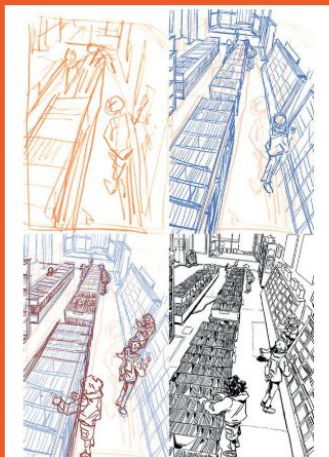
I was reminiscing about how I used to go to my local comic shop every week with my best friend and got the idea to create an illustration

that would describe this specific feeling I missed. I hoped to evoke the warmth and community of independent comics spaces as well as the layered, colourful density that these spaces accumulate over time.

The space itself is a mish-mash of local comic shops. Probably the lengthiest but most enjoyable part of this process was going through pictures of stores (Google Maps'

customer photos are incredibly helpful) and trying to decide which elements to incorporate into the composition. I ended up anchoring this composition around the rows of longboxes because the density is so compelling. In bigger stores, whether it's CDs, records or magazines, it really feels like you could rifle through those boxes forever and constantly find new treasures. ➡➡

How I generate... COLOUR AND LIGHTING



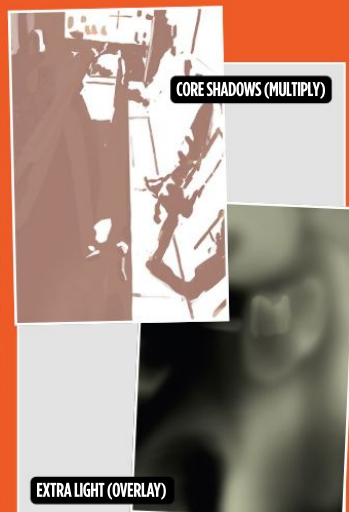
1 Layering sketches

I always start with a crude thumbnail. It's more important to explore the general idea than details. Once I've got something I like, I focus on getting the perspective of the biggest shapes down. After all that, inking is relatively straightforward.



2 Applying flat colours

Flats are probably the most grueling step, with inking coming in as a close second. It was important to make the shelves information dense, but not necessarily detailed so while they're all specific, the actual drawing work is blotchy.

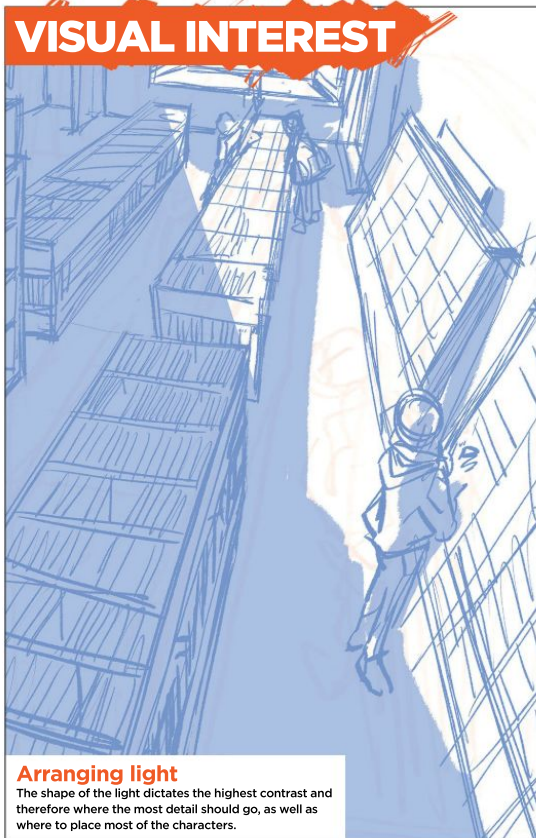


3 Placing shadows and light

Shading and lighting are purposely minimal because the lines are already doing a lot and I don't want to muddle the information that's there with unnecessary rendering. I just use a reddish Multiply layer plus a yellow Overlay layer for extra light.



VISUAL INTEREST



Arranging light

The shape of the light dictates the highest contrast and therefore where the most detail should go, as well as where to place most of the characters.



An expressive line

I painted the line-art reddish where bright light was hitting it. This gives it an effusive, glowing look. In comics, this technique is often called a colour hold.



Guiding the eye

Characters tend to draw attention, so I place them in a zig-zag pattern to move the line of sight around the composition. This sells the scale and space of the scene.

A few good tools

I used one of Shiyoon Kim's ink brushes for most of this, which is available on Gumroad for a couple of bucks. When I needed a softer brush, I just used Photoshop's default Soft brushes. Just goes to show that even a small toolbox can do the trick.



Quick visual read

Every comic on this wall is based on a real comic that came out in the weeks of January to March 2020. When drawing flat graphics in a scene whether it's ads, signs or book covers, the big shapes of design and colour are key to conveying that quick read.

Saying more with less

In high-density areas, carefully placed detail can be used to imply the rest. Here, a couple of comic covers and repeating branding patterns go a long way to show variety and complexity.

Colour fringe

Giving your shadow a lighter or more saturated edge can sell the glow of lighting or the look of light that's being reflected into the dark.



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Issue 202 August 2021

Learn how to take your manga art to the next level, with detailed workshops from Yueko, Asia Ladowska and Angela Wang. We reveal alternative social networks for artists, and talk to Zeen Chin about his unique creative style.



Issue 200 July 2021

Explore cover artist Bobby Chiu's colouring and lighting methods, create engaging characters with David Melling, and get better at inking with Jeff Miracola. We also look at rejection, and how to turn a 'no' into something positive.



Issue 200 June 2021

Cover artist Pernille Ørum helps us to celebrate our 200th issue, in which we look back at our many highlights. There are workshops from Kekai Kotaki, Will Murai and Paul Bonner, plus we delve into Donato Giancola's



Issue 199 May 2021

Get started in animation! Learn from artists at Sony Pictures, Disney, Netflix and more! We also have 15 tips on how to break into the animation art industry. Plus, get better at keyframes, colour sketching and watercolours.

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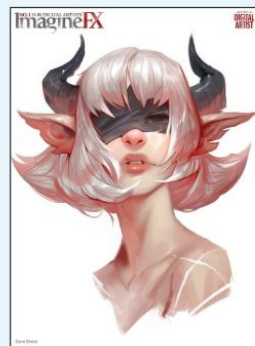
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Photoshop

PAINTING WITH SHAPES & COLOURS



Gillian Galang elevates a building well beyond its reference, using shapes, colour and composition tools to create a bright environment

Artist PROFILE

Gillian Galang
LOCATION: Philippines

Freelance artist Gillian paints backgrounds, environments and illustrations, and has worked for clients around the world. She aspires to become a background painter and vis-dev artist.
<http://ifxm.ag/gillian-g>



Making a study of an environment, landscape or background is a great way to advance your painting skills. As a freelance artist, I'm constantly looking to improve my creative repertoire, so I regularly create studies to help expand my visual library of what I can draw.

If you're new to environment art, painting an outdoor scene can be a

daunting prospect. If there are many different elements in the scene, then you may find it tricky to make a start.

My goal here is to teach you that painting an environment isn't scary, and it can become a fun project once you start to draw. In this workshop, I'll walk you through the process of how I observe my reference before I start painting. I'll explain how I break down my painting process by moving from big shapes to small

shapes, use composition guides to give your painting a strong structure, how I choose my colours, and add my own ideas to make the artwork go beyond the source material.

I hope that you'll apply what you learn here to your painting process and other projects. It's okay if your artwork doesn't look great at first, because painting takes time. Have patience with it and it'll be wonderful before you know it!

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 6 now!

RESOURCES WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES:
SOFT NOISE
TEXTURED BRUSH

Used for painting the background, shading and adding a noisy soft texture in certain areas.

INK BRUSH

I created this brush for solid colouring and painting shapes freehand in the artwork.

COLORING TEXTURED BRUSH

Used for colouring and shading with texture and colour. Best used when Color Dynamics is active.



1 Observing the reference

I love painting environments that I've been to, or want to visit. This makes it a special piece to paint. I decide to paint my friends' home. To capture the lighting and shapes of their house, my friend took this reference photo. From there, I proceed to brainstorm about its shapes and how I can enhance the design.



2 Overlay a composition guide

I paint over the reference so I can see what elements I want to develop. The Golden Ratio and a diamond-shaped guide act as a composition guide. This identifies where I can place certain elements. Their house has over 18 cats, so I want to show a few of them in this painting. Placing a girl in the foreground helps to create a story. ➔



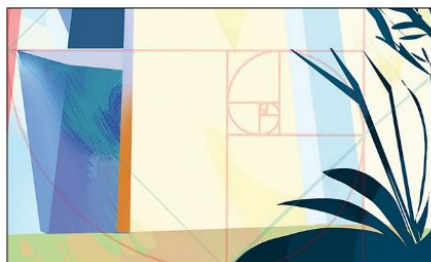
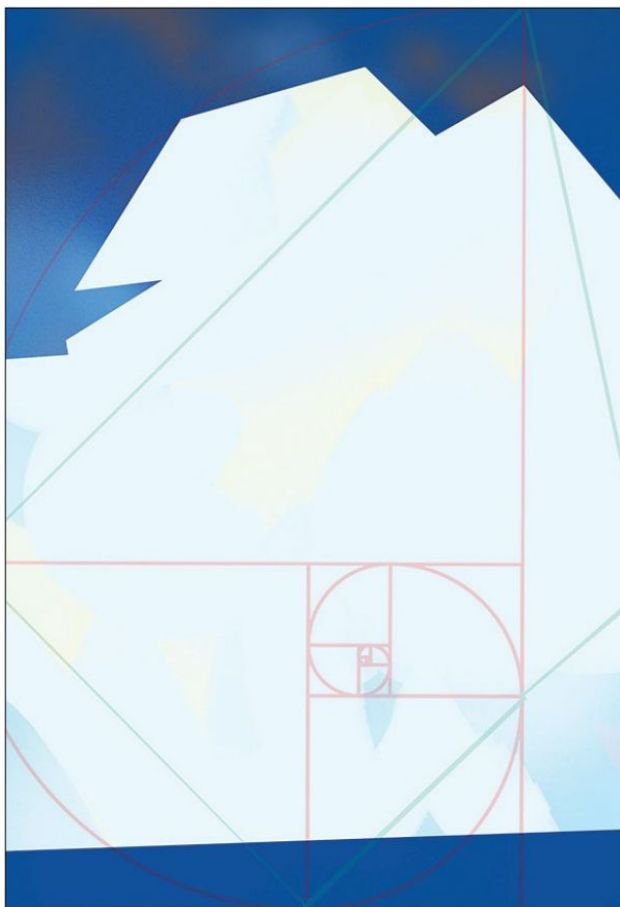


3 Preparing the canvas

I fill in the canvas with dark blue, to make a beautiful sky. Then I use my Soft Noise Textured brush to add clouds using different shades of light blue and touches of deep orange. Next, I lower the Opacity of my composition guide layer so I can still see it while I paint. I want the colours to be slightly loud, yet subtle enough to create balance and harmony.

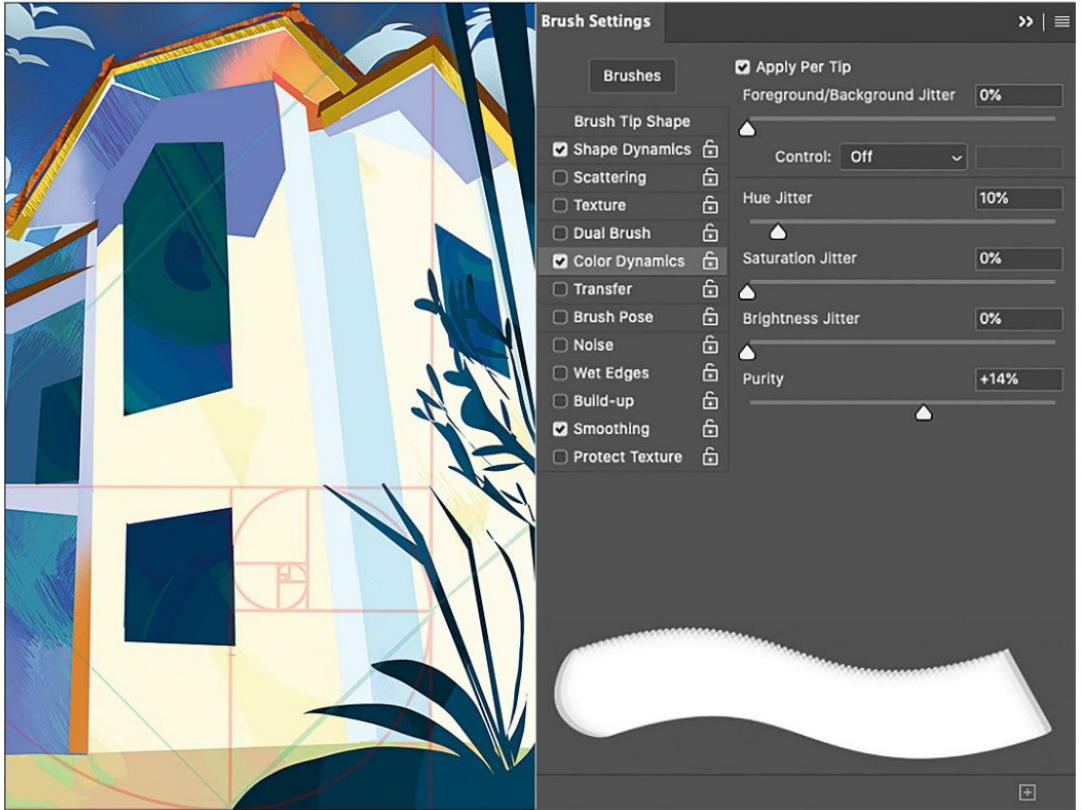
4 Drawing the biggest shape

I use the Polygon Lasso tool to draw the biggest shape of the picture, which is the house. Then I start blocking this in with a solid colour. As I build up the painting I add a few colour varieties, such as yellow and blue. I don't worry if the shape isn't looking neat yet because I usually refine my shapes as I go along.



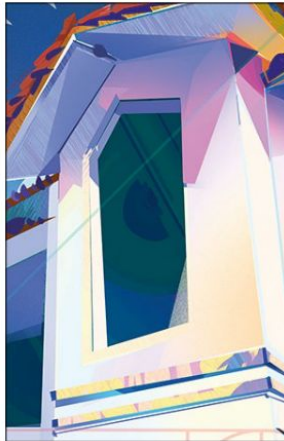
5 Adding the medium shapes and developing the foreground

After drawing the biggest shape, I go back to my reference and decide which shape I need to draw next. I decide to paint the balcony of the main house. I use shapes to sculpt the balcony and entrance – specifically some rectangles and a triangle. Then I use the Polygon Lasso tool to sculpt the ground plane and foreground.



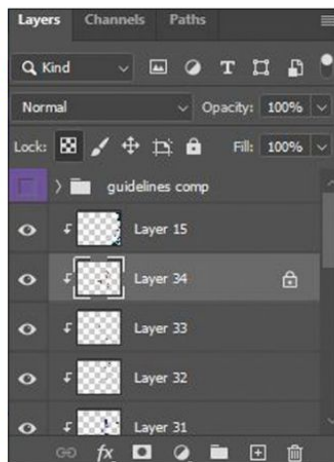
6 Drawing in the shadow shapes, roof details and windows

I base the shadows on the colour of my sky, which is a dark blue. This is because shadows reflect the colours of the atmosphere. My formula for this painting is cool versus warm, using cool colours for the shadow and warm colours for the light. I use my custom Coloring Textured Brush to add variety. On the Brush Settings panel I keep Color Dynamics turned on, then adjust the Hue Jitter setting to suit.



7 Designing abstract shapes to introduce details to the scene

I paint over the shadows below the roof and the main window. I layer a variety of shapes and colours on this shadow shape to give it the feeling of a whimsical optical illusion. Then I make the shadows pop, by adding some warm lighting colours such as purples and magenta.



8 Add visual interest to the building's windows

I draw the details of the balcony railings and window panels. I start off with a solid brown colour as a guide. Then I lock the layer (to lock a layer, go to the Layer panel and click the transparent box icon) so that I can paint within the shape or drawing within the layer, changing the colours freely until I find something I like. I then add more details to the house.



9 Painting the grass and objects from behind

I use solid colours to paint the elements near the entrance of the house. Then I use my Coloring Textured brush to add variety with the Color Jitter option. I keep Color Dynamics turned on, then I adjust the Hue Jitter setting accordingly. I'm still figuring out how to colour the grass, so it's okay if it doesn't look right for now.



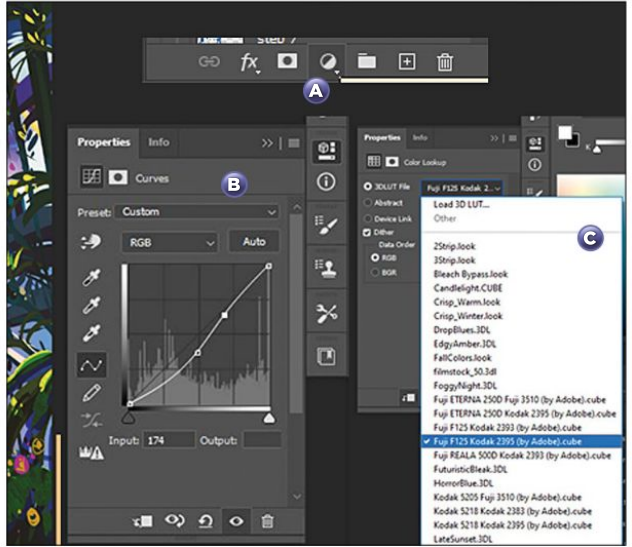
10 Foreground painting

After I establish the grass area. I turn my focus to the Malunggay tree. Because it's in the foreground, I decide to paint it in a darker colour. Not only does this add depth to the shape, but it also draws the viewer's eye towards the focal point, which is the house. That's why, for my foreground, I limit the use of vibrant colours only to some leaves, so they act as an accent.



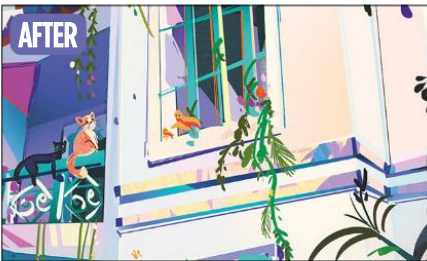
11 Painting the cats and the girl

I already knew where to place the story elements, based on my paint-over plan and the composition guide. I envision the girl as a visitor. She's holding a basket, perhaps bringing food not only for her friends, but also for the many cats who are chilling around the house. Notice that her colour values are similar to those found in the foreground. She's stepping into a different world.



12 Adjust colours with Curves and apply a filter

After finishing the foreground elements and quickly painting the small details, I start to adjust the colours using the Curves Properties panel (B), which can be accessed from below the Layers tab (A). With this I'm able to push my colours to become more vibrant and saturated. Then I add another adjustment layer (C), using a photo filter to soften the colours and create a sense of balance.



13 Correcting mistakes

I make one last check to see if I need to fix certain elements or any details in the painting. My window perspective is incorrect. To rectify this, I make a new layer and paint over it. I also adjust some elements alongside it to balance out its perspective.



14 Final adjustments and finishing touches.

I finish up by adding more details to the entrance, the girl's dress and the foliage. I also paint a chair on the balcony. Finally, I want this painting to glow! So I merge all layers and select the resulting merged layer. I click Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur. I reduce the layer's Opacity, then erase certain areas. The parts untouched by the filter look clearer, which in turn generates a glowing effect. Done! ●

Blender & Affinity Photo

SPEED-MODEL A FANTASY SCENE



Bryn G Jones demonstrates how he arranges 3D assets in Blender and then paints over them to create fantasy art in under 30 minutes

Artist PROFILE

Bryn G Jones
LOCATION: England

Bryn is currently working as a freelancer and on his own IPs. The artist's clients include Audible, Island Records, and QCODE Media.
<http://ifxm.ag/bryn-j>

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 6 now!



Before entering the world of Blender, my concept art heavily relied on finding references and

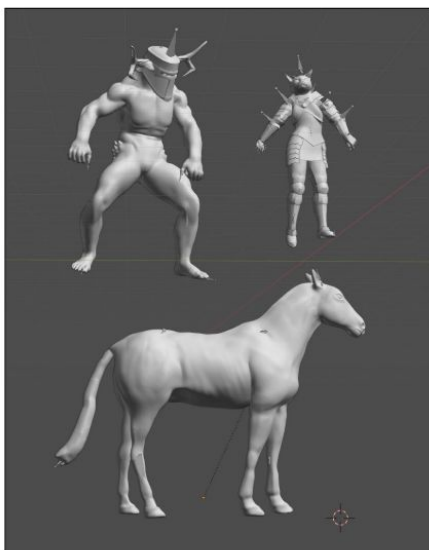
material online to help me create something that looked solid. Simulating light in 3D software enables me to create scenes that aren't tied down by finding the right photograph or doing extensive studies. I also discovered that building a library of 3D assets greatly

increased the speed at which I could create art.

I spent over a decade painting digital art in Photoshop. A lot of the skills I learned transferred over to my 3D work – things like understanding shapes and composition. After just a few months of sculpting in Blender, I'd landed my first freelance job making character sculpts for a motion graphics company. I'm so glad that I expanded my art knowledge in this way – it opened

up new pathways for both my art and my career.

Blender is a huge piece of software that has a lot of applications. It's easy to shy away from using it because of its complexity. My advice to anyone who wants to give Blender a try is to take things slowly. Navigating 3D space and rendering out simple shapes is a good place to start. By steadily increasing your Blender knowledge, you'll soon be amazed at how useful the software can be.



1 Gather your assets

The great thing about working with 3D assets is that you can rotate them or pose them to create something new with each illustration. I have a library of assets that I've created or bought. If you're using an asset that you haven't built yourself, it's important to know what the licence allows you to do with it.



2 Know your hotkeys

Learning hotkeys is something I'd usually do once I've become familiar with the software. With Blender it really helps to learn hotkeys early on. The ones I use the most include S to scale, G to grab, R to rotate, and you can combine keys like S+X to scale on the X axis. ➡

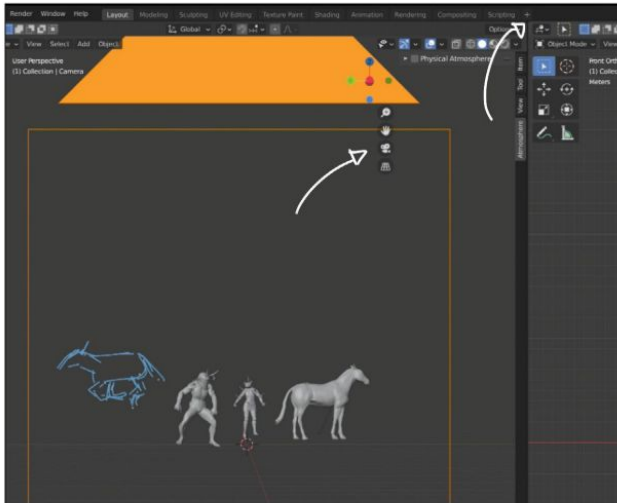
RESOURCES WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSH:
BRYN'S FLAT BRUSH

This is my main brush. It's very versatile. Photoshop brushes can be imported into Affinity Photo, but the settings will need to be edited to reproduce their effects.





3 Set up your camera view

You can create additional windows within Blender by dragging the corner where they join. I lay out my scene in one window with another window locked to the camera. It would be counter-productive to arrange everything and then realise you can't get a nice shot. I love the element of cinematography with this technique.



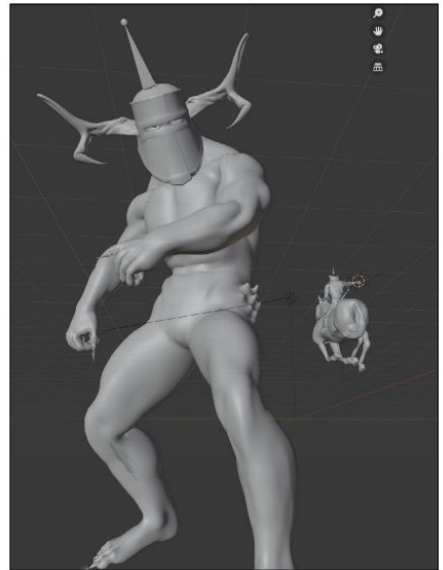
4 Adjust camera settings

There are a few settings I usually change on the camera. The first is the clipping distance. If the clipping distance is set to 100m, anything beyond that won't be visible. I also play with the focal length of the camera, which changes the field of view. A short length is similar to a wide-angle lens, and vice versa.



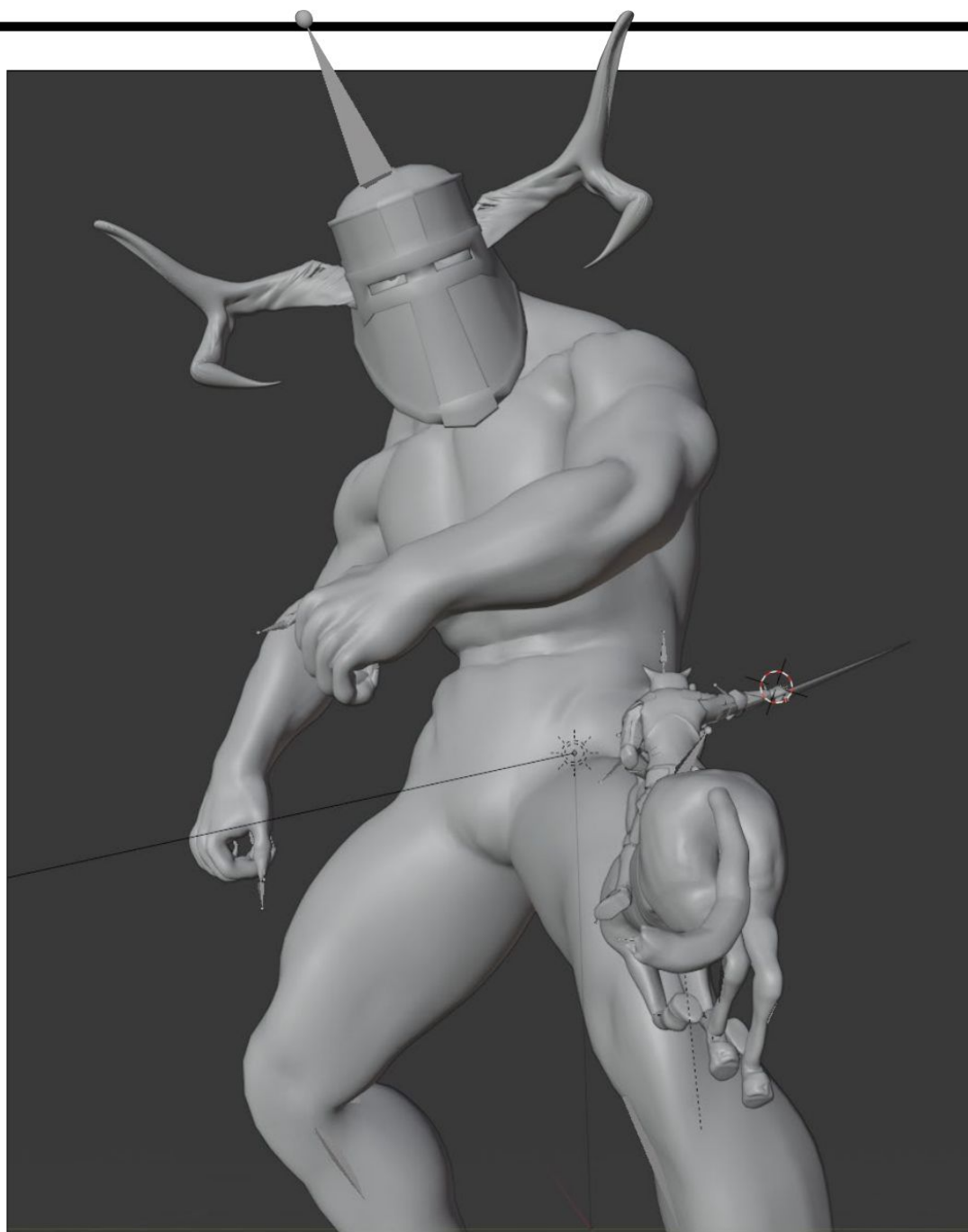
5 Sketch the composition

The Annotation tool can be very useful to make quick sketches without leaving Blender. You can customise the tool with different colours and line thicknesses. I quickly sketch a pose for my giant Viking character, and an arrangement for the foreground. I also sketch out a pose for the horse's legs.



6 Pose the characters

If you're looking for a character that already has a rig (a set of bones that you can manipulate) then head over to www.mixamo.com, which has a large selection of free characters. With the armature selected you can go into Pose mode and grab and rotate each bone to manipulate the characters.



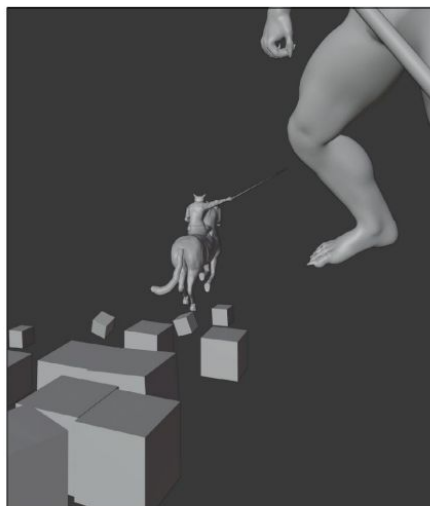
7 Work the composition

It's useful to know the rules of composition. I look for shapes that feel uncomfortable. I'm also very aware of how things overlap, and whether or not there are any strange tangents where objects meet. I know at this point that there will be a strong separation between the foreground and background once I've applied the colours. ➡➡



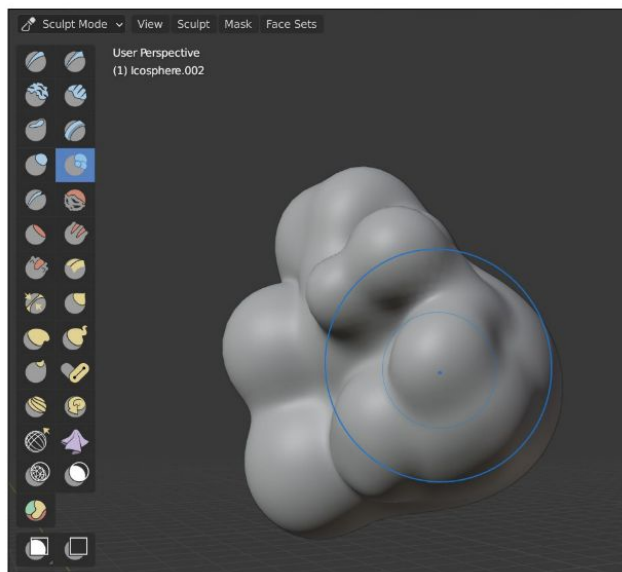
8 Assemble an axe using shapes

I didn't have an axe for this scene so I quickly modelled one using a cylinder. I press Shift+A to add a cylinder mesh and scale it on the Z-axis to make a long handle. In Edit mode I press Ctrl+R to make some loop cuts, then extrude one of the faces to make a blade.



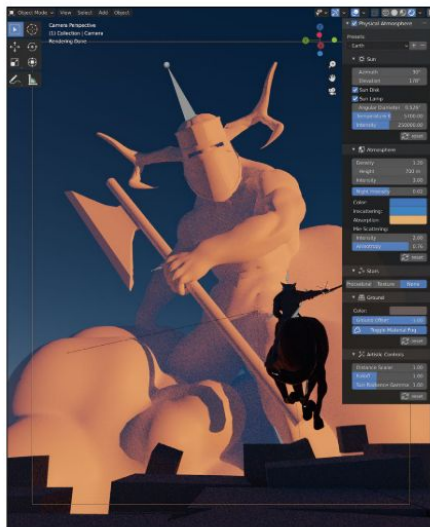
9 Adding foreground material

I love using simple shapes such as cubes and spheres when I make art. Working those primitives can give pleasing results. Once I've added a cube I can press Shift+D and drag my mouse to create duplicates. I lay these cubes out so they look like a magical bridge that's breaking or forming.



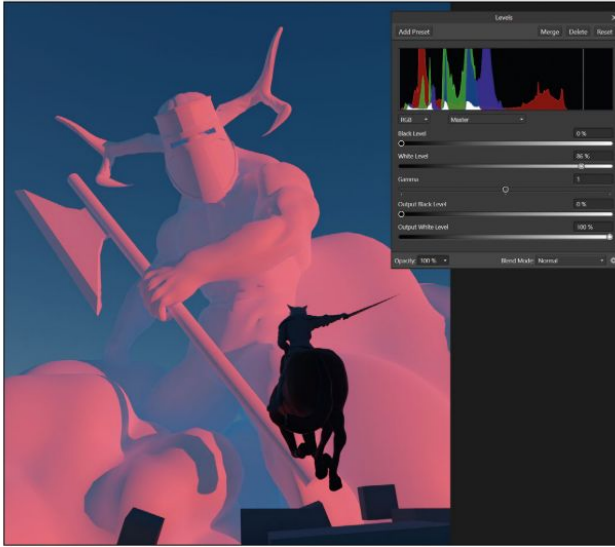
10 Cloud sculpting by adjusting vertices

To sculpt a cloud I create an Icosphere that has a lot of faces, but not too many that my computer freezes. The Sculpt mode in Blender works by moving the vertices, or points of the shape, which is why it needs to be high poly to be sculpted. I use the Blob tool in Sculpt mode to create lumps of cloud.



11 Alter lighting and atmosphere

I often use a Blender plugin called Physical Starlight and Atmosphere. The plugin enables me to quickly and easily change aspects such as sky colour, and the temperature of the sun and atmospheric colours. A similar lighting effect can be created by adding a sunlight and changing the Blender scene's World colour.



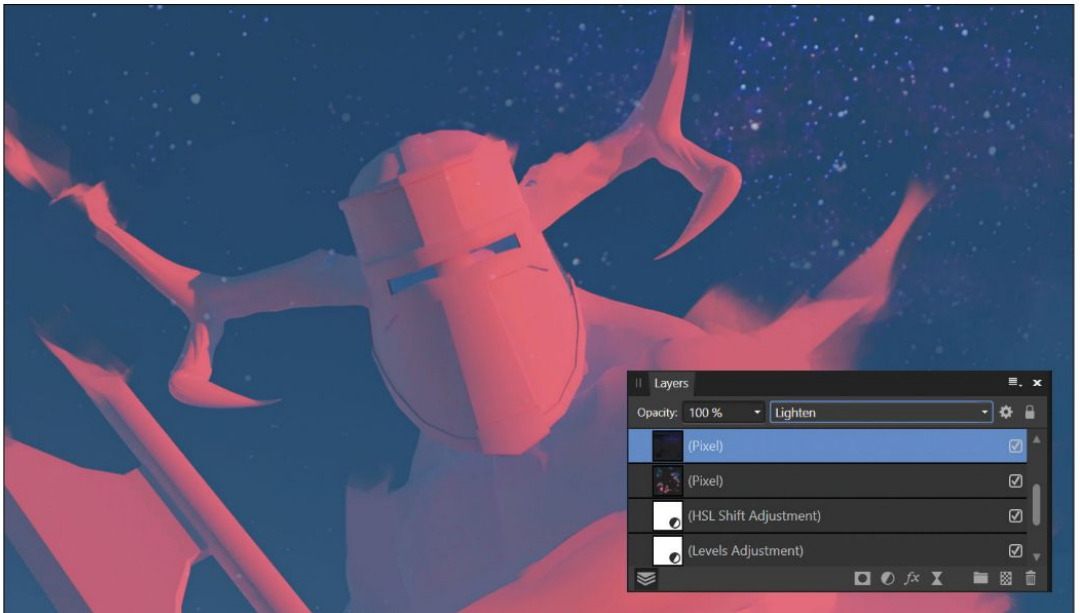
12 Carry out colour adjustments in Affinity Photo

The image has been rendered and so I take it into Affinity Photo to add the final touches in 2D. Before I do any painting I'll adjust the colours and make sure that I'm happy with the overall feel of the image. I use an Adjustment layer to give the highlights a bit more energy.



13 Adding small details

When I paint in Affinity Photo I like to work quickly. I try to avoid navigating into the menus by using hotkeys. The most important hotkey is the one that selects colours that are already on the canvas as I'm painting. In Affinity you press Alt+left mouse button.



14 Importing a star field to finish the scene

Using textures is a quick and easy way to add detail. www.pexels.com has a library of free stock photos. I copy a starry sky on to a top layer and change the Layer Blend mode to Lighten. I can then delete areas of that texture so that it fits into my scene.

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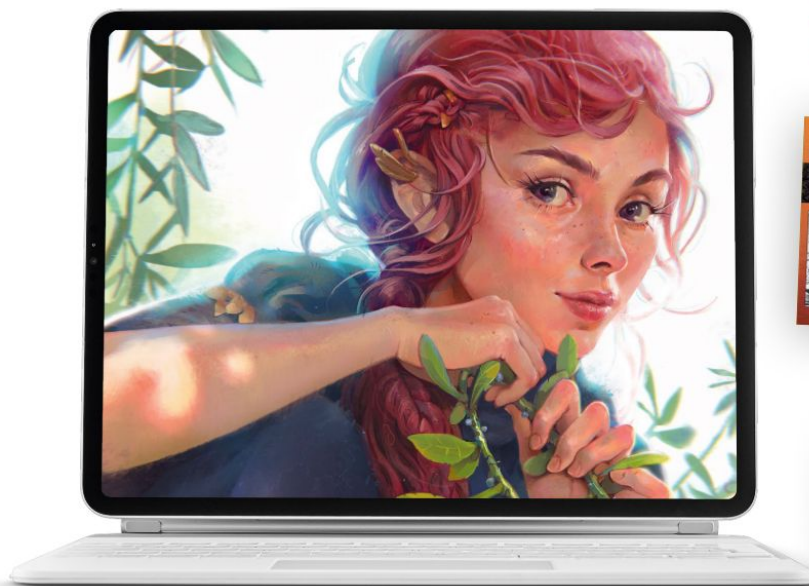
NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX Reviews



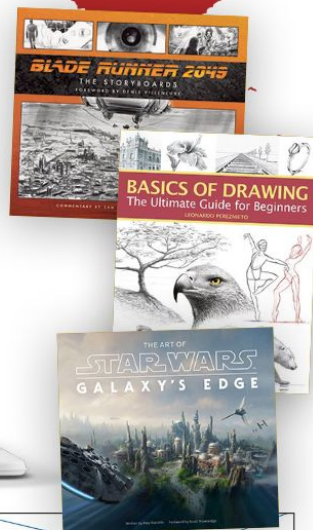
Artist's Choice Award

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...



4
PRODUCTS
ON TEST



HARDWARE

82 iPad Pro 11-inch (M1, 2021)

Apple's latest iPad Pro model is a thing of beauty and capable of handling many creative tasks. But is it worth the high price?

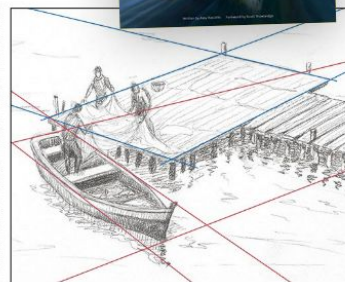
BOOKS

84 The Art of Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge

Jump to the front of the queue and explore the concept art created for Disney's Star Wars-themed visitor attraction.

85 Blade Runner 2049: The Storyboards

Discover the storyboards that helped the director of Blade Runner 2049 visualise the film, before a single frame was shot.



85 Basics of Drawing: The Ultimate Guide for Beginners

The popular artist and lecturer targets art novices who are looking to take their first steps into a larger creative world.



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



iPad Pro 11-inch (M1, 2021)

POLISHED PERFORMER Apple has done it again. Its latest iPad Pro model is a thing of beauty and capable of handling many creative tasks. But is it worth the hefty price tag?

Price From £749 **Company** Apple **Web** www.apple.com

The headline feature of the new iPad Pro 11-inch is that it hosts the super-fast M1 chips that are now in the latest MacBook Pros and the 2021 iMac. But how much of a difference does such power make to creatives' workflows?

Specifically, we wanted to see how all this power translates to the smaller 11-inch version, which lacks the XDR display tech of its 12.9-inch sibling. To find out, we tried the 1TB version with 16GB RAM, along with the Apple Pencil 2 and Magic Keyboard.

From a creative's point of view, there's plenty to make your work look great. All of the new M1 iPad Pros are calibrated for colour, brightness, gamma and white point. There's also an anti-reflective coating so you can

use your iPad Pro in harsh light. Other features include P3 wide colour, True Tone tech that adjusts the white balance of the screen and ProMotion technology, which switches the display refresh rate from 24Hz up to 120Hz.

Whether or not this display will be big enough to create artwork on is another question, and depends largely on how you work. We found it to be a good size, as it's lightweight yet big enough to create on, but this will come down to personal preference.

The M1 chip really is as good as Apple states, and means that the iPad

responds deftly to every swipe or touch of the Apple Pencil. Apple claims that this new M1 chip is "up to 50 percent faster" in terms of CPU performance compared to the 2020 iPad Pro, which has a A12Z Bionic chip. However, for most casual tasks it's hard to tell the difference.

STRESS-TESTING THE IPAD

The iPad Pro 2021 comes into its own when doing more intense tasks such as editing 4K videos on LumaFusion or working with heavy files in Affinity Designer or Photoshop. We put the iPad Pro through its paces by downloading and editing several video files in iMovie, while multi-tasking with some heavily layered files in Procreate. The videos didn't download instantly, but it was pretty close.

“The iPad responds deftly to every swipe or touch of the Apple Pencil...”



Always stay in shot with the Ultra Wide 12MP front-facing camera and the new Center Stage feature.



The screen stretches edge-to-edge, with thin bezels around the display and rounded corners.

Apple claims that the battery life of this device is up to 10 hours, and we found this to be about right. We left it playing YouTube videos, completed a software update, played around on Procreate for a couple of hours and answered some emails, and it took nine hours and 15 minutes to die. Not bad, though this may not be enough to last a whole work day.

In terms of ports, there's just one, and it's a USB-C port that supports Thunderbolt 3 and USB 4. This is fine for charging up your iPad, but it might not be enough if you want to attach other accessories. If you've got the Magic Keyboard, however, you can charge devices through that.

We tested out how the iPad connects to other devices by hooking it up to our monitor. This worked absolutely fine, and made our monitor into a handy second screen mirroring

the iPad – which could be useful when creating art. It did, however, highlight one of the problems with the iPad. You just don't have all the tools available to you that you would on a computer, and some things are more fiddly – uploading and downloading files, for example. The upcoming iPadOS 15 should improve things, though these are new features and tweaks rather than a complete overhaul.

CAUGHT ON CAMERA

Another new feature is the TrueDepth camera system, including a 12MP Ultra Wide camera on the front, and a 12MP Wide camera and a 10MP Ultra Wide camera on the back. These support the features you might expect – Face ID, Animoji and Memoji in Messages, plus bonuses such as Group FaceTime – but the iPad Pro also has got a new trick up its sleeve.

Center Stage uses the Pros all-new 12MP Ultra Wide camera to put you in centre stage on video calls. This means that when you're on calls, the camera follows you around as you move. In practice, this is a fun and handy feature for when you want to chat without staying still.

The new camera system also offers Advanced Portrait mode, for beautiful background and foreground differentiation, and gorgeous lighting for studio-quality selfies. It can shoot

Wired connectivity is limited to just one USB-C port, although attaching a Magic Keyboard gives you more options.

4K video up to 60fps, and slow-mo video up to 240 fps.

No other tablet works as beautifully with its stylus as the iPad Pro. The Apple Pencil and the iPad Pro are a dream combination, with the Pencil giving you a featherlight touch, and enough sensitivity to pick up every mark. Our two little gripes are that we kept accidentally switching to the eraser via the double-tap function, and that there's nowhere to store the stylus apart from on the top of the iPad (where it attaches and charges).

The iPad Pro 11-inch M1 (2021) is an excellent tablet. But if you can afford it, and you're a serious artist, video creator or gamer, then the superior, larger screen of the Apple iPad Pro 12.9 (2021) might be better suited to you. If you're going to spend this much on a tablet, then it may as well be the biggest and best one you can get.

Saying that, we found the 11-inch iPad Pro more than enough for our needs. The size of it is great – it's big enough to create on, without being too bulky to carry around. And although the price is still high, it's not quite as much of a sting as the 12.9-inch version, which starts at £999.

In the end, it depends on what you're going to use the tablet for. For casual users, it may not be worth paying extra for nice-to-have features such as Center Stage. For those who want a really fast tablet for their creative pursuits but don't care so much about having a top-of-the-range display, then the older iPad Pro 11-inch may be a better choice.

And of course, there are plenty of other tablets available on the market. Ultimately though, none of the iPad Pro's competitors can quite match it in terms of style, design panache and exceedingly smart tech.

DETAILS

Features

- Apple M1 processor
- 11-inch LED backlit screen
- 2,388 x 1,668 resolution at 264ppi
- ProMotion technology
- 600 nits max brightness (typical)
- 12MP (front) and 10MP (rear) cameras
- Up to 4K video recording
- From 128GB to 2TB storage capability
- Up to 10 hours battery
- 247.6x178.5x5.9mm
- 466g

System Requirements

Mac: macOS Catalina 10.15 or later using the Finder macOS El Capitan 10.11.6 to macOS Mojave 10.14.6 using iTunes 12.8 or later

PC: Windows 7 or later using iTunes 12.10 or later

Rating



Apple's latest tablet tech is housed within a sleek aluminium back and frame.



The Art of Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge

PARK LIFE Jump to the front of the queue and explore the concept art created for Disney's Star Wars-themed visitor attraction

Author Amy Ratcliffe **Publisher** Abrams **Price** £35 **Web** www.abramsbooks.com **Available Now**

Creating a Star Wars theme park ain't like dusting crops, to paraphrase a certain roguish smuggler. An entirely new location had to be literally built from the ground up, and populated with both the familiar and the strange. Amy Ratcliffe's engaging book charts the visual development of Disney's Galaxy's Edge, home to Black Spire Outpost.

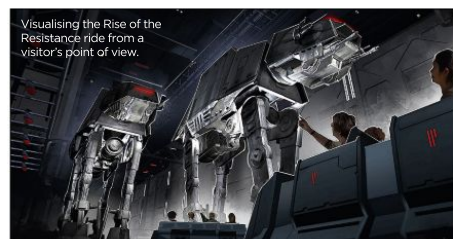
The project started in 2014, as Amy reveals details of the discussions between Walt Disney's R&D group Imagineering and Lucasfilm on the construction of an immersive Star Wars experience. Through her interviews with key personnel from both creative powerhouses, she paints



a picture of a visitor attraction that had to go far beyond a mere roller-coaster ride through Beggar's Canyon. Her text conveys the storytelling minutiae that become the bedrock of Galaxy's Edge, and by the end of the book you'll be itching to charter a ship to the planet Batuu, on the edge of the Outer Rim Territories (otherwise known as California or Florida, since two near-identical parks have been built.)

Of course, by the closing pages you'll also have savoured the concept

“By the end of the book you'll be itching to charter a ship to the planet Batuu”



Visualising the Rise of the Resistance ride from a visitor's point of view.

art created to help bring the park to life. Unsurprisingly, there's an abundance of exterior and interior visuals created by the likes of Christian Alzmann and Erik Tiemens, as the team of creatives steadily refine the geography of Black Spire Outpost, but there are also plenty of alien, droid, vehicle and prop designs to study, too. If it weren't for the occasional tourist group painted into a scene, you'd be



Iain McCaig's sketch of Dok-Ondar, the Ithorian owner of Black Spire Outpost's Den of Antiquities.

forgiven for thinking the art was for the latest Star Wars film.

Chapters covering specific attractions within Galaxy's Edge, such as Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance, help to bring order to the development process. Amy explains in detail how the artists' work helped to ensure visitors felt engaged with the park's strong Star Wars narrative, rather than being passive observers. This fascinating insight, coupled with the quality of imaginative art on show, makes this book one ride you won't want to get off in a hurry.

RATING ★★★★★

Blade Runner 2049: The Storyboards

WORLD VIEW Discover the storyboards that helped the director of Blade Runner 2049 visualise the film, before a single frame was shot

Authors Sam Hudecki and Darryl Henley **Publisher** Titan Books **Price** £40 **Web** www.titanbooks.com **Available Now**

Co-author Sam Hudecki describes storyboarding as a translation process: visualising Blade Runner

2049's script while conveying meaning or emotion. But if the aim was to enthrall the reader with the magic of this creative process, then something was lost in translation.

Sam shared storyboarding duties with Darryl Henley on the film. Their greyscale work fills this 224-page



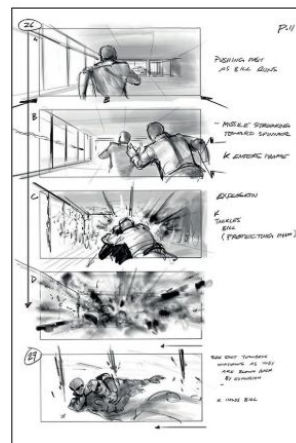
Jon McCoy's concept art showing Officer K entering Las Vegas.

book, with only the occasional piece of full-colour concept art breaking up the monochrome monotony.

The book follows the film closely. Storyboards reveal camera angles, lighting and character shots, and with 10 boards per page, that's a lot of art to pore over. Sometimes captions provide creative insight, but too often the reader is left to draw their own conclusions. We'd have preferred a more selective approach, with the artists focusing on key moments and providing in-depth analysis of how they helped to shape a scene.

This pricey book has limited appeal. Film students will demand more expert comment, while Blade Runner 2049 fans will be left cold by two-inch wide sketches of the cerebral movie.

RATING ★★☆☆☆



Two characters take cover from an explosion, in a sequence of storyboards from Blade Runner 2049.

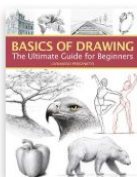
Basics of Drawing: The Ultimate Guide for Beginners

CORE SKILLS The popular artist and lecturer targets art novices who are looking to take their first steps into a larger creative world

Author Leonardo Perezniето **Publisher** Sixth&Spring **Price** £18 **Web** www.sixthandspring.com **Available Now**

Any instructional book that labels itself as 'the ultimate guide' has got a lot to live up to. Leonardo Perezniето's book doesn't hit the bullseye, although he gets pretty close on occasion.

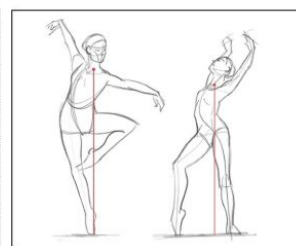
The Mexican artist, whose YouTube tutorial channel boasts over a million subscribers, begins with an overview



Leonardo Perezniето explains vanishing points in his section on two-point perspective.

of the many drawing tools available. He then goes on to show the reader how to use them, across a series of chapters on core drawing techniques. These include gesture drawing, shading and composition, with topics becoming more challenging as the book progresses. Perspective is covered in detail, but the section on faces and bodies feels too lightweight to be of much use. Each chapter ends with a series of exercises for the reader to undertake, and includes web links to relevant videos on Leonardo's YouTube channel.

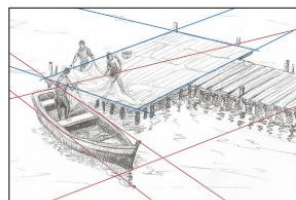
Leonardo's friendly writing style ensures his advice never becomes overwhelming. His art examples could never be described as showstoppers, but this is appropriate for a book



Leonardo applies the plumb line technique to show how a figure's weight can be distributed.

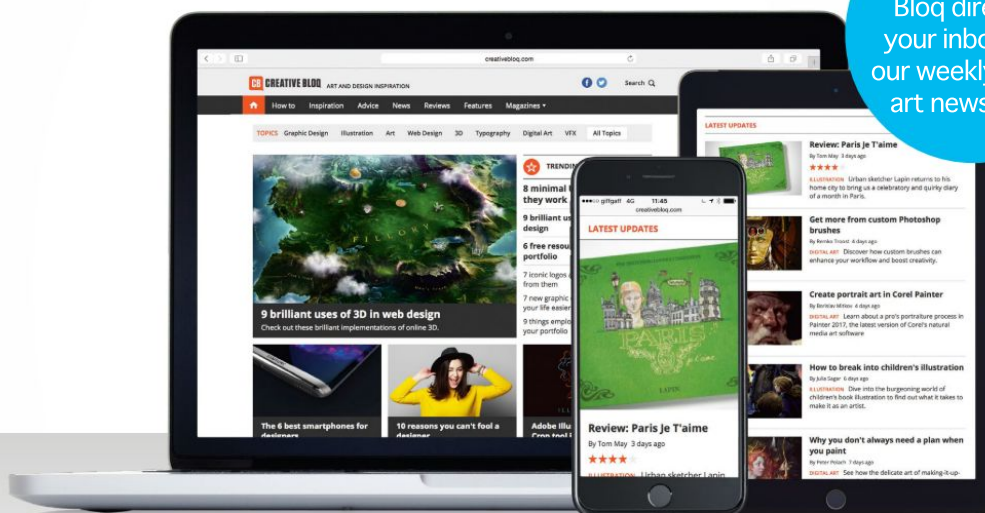
aimed at beginners. A closing chapter on developing as an artist and a helpful glossary round off a book for hobbyists that's worth a closer look.

RATING ★★★☆☆



The number one destination for **digital art** news, views and how-tos

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www.creativebloq.com

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.

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Traditional Artist

Inspiration and advice from the best pro artists

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This issue:

88 Traditional FXPosé

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

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Justin Donaldson shows how he uses a wet-in-wet technique to capture a variety of edge qualities.

98 First Impressions: David Thorn Wenzel

This US artist got his first break illustrating Middle-earth.

FXPosé

SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL ARTISTS



Victoria Gedvillas

LOCATION: US **MEDIA:** Watercolour **WEB:** www.instagram.com/victoriagedvillas

Tori is an illustrator motivated by her love of process. She works primarily in watercolour and enjoys using the flat brush to sculpt appealing shape design.



1 SER.A7V20

"I created this with a carefully selected palette. Sennelier Chinese Orange and M. Graham Turquoise take the lead to manipulate colour temperatures."

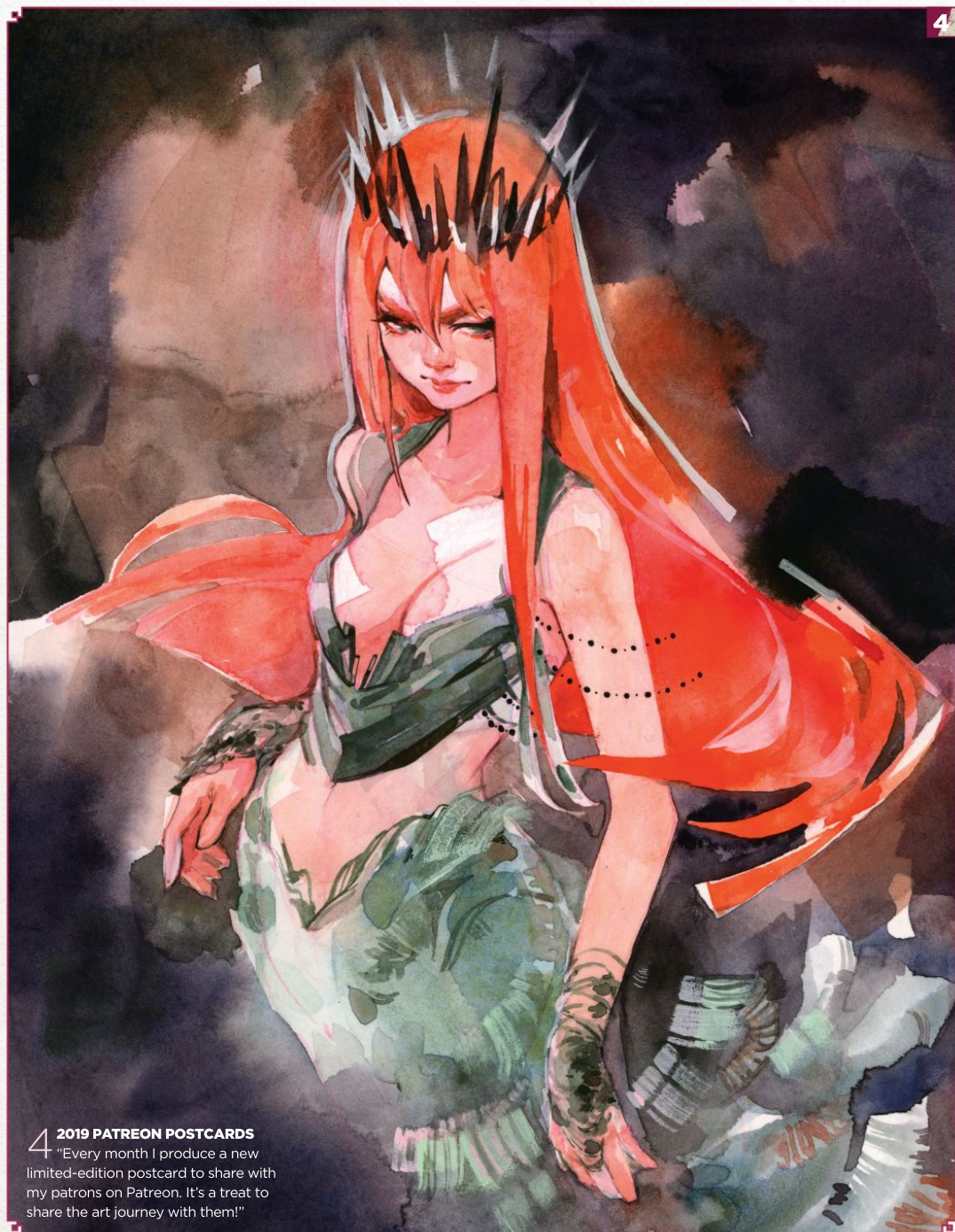
2 XENON WITCH

"It would be an understatement to say I'm influenced by magical girls. I was interested in capturing a twist in the core, then carrying that energy into the arms."

3 PEPPERMINT BREEZE

"This painting demonstrates the power of opaque watercolours. Compared to translucent watercolours, heavier opacities provide a unique brilliance versus luminosity."





4 2019 PATREON POSTCARDS

"Every month I produce a new limited-edition postcard to share with my patrons on Patreon. It's a treat to share the art journey with them!"



Lucrecia Fraile

LOCATION: Spain **MEDIA:** Markers, watercolour, inks, gouache, acrylic **WEB:** www.artstation.com/lucreciafraileart

Lucrecia is a self-taught artist whose childhood was closely linked to the sea, forests and Cantabrian mythology. "I also love science fiction and fantasy, and am inspired by organic patterns in nature."

1 STARLIGHT

"This is a tranquil place, a sanctuary where we can see our destiny in the stars."



2 PLANET SEEKER

"This picture shows an alien woman who's in charge of looking for a new planet."



3 FOREST SPIRIT

"My depiction of the wisest mythology character from the Cantabric folklore, the Musgoso."

4 DESPERATION SEA

"This is a dangerous coast, full of dark creatures on the ocean water... artwork from a personal project."





Traditional Artist Workshop





Gouache

PAINTING CLOUDS WITH GOUACHE

Discover how to paint clouds in gouache with **JUSTIN DONALDSON**, who uses a wet-in-wet technique to capture a variety of edge qualities

Working as a fine artist. I use gouache, poster colour, oil and open-acrylics in

my everyday adventure with painting. The only thing that I love nearly as much as painting is sitting down and pondering how paintings work on a fundamental level, and then how I can communicate these ideas with my many students. I've created a number of online courses around painting with gouache, and painting landscapes, and I have something up my sleeve that I have created just for you.

In this workshop I'll show you some of the major ideas that I like to use when I'm creating landscape paintings in gouache, with a focus on cumulonimbus clouds. Clouds are a difficult subject to paint at the best of times. They're full of a

MATERIALS

PAPER

■ Arches Hot Press watercolour paper

BRUSHES

■ Synthetic medium Round, synthetic medium Flats and medium Oval mop

PAINT

■ Winsor and Newton Gouache: Cerulean blue, Titanium white, Jet black, Marine blue and Cadmium red

massive variety of edge qualities, from lost edges to hard edges. For those of us who use gouache, being able to paint consistently with soft edges provides a particular challenge since it's the nature of gouache to dry very quickly. Don't fear though – there are a few tricks that I'm going to show you in order to be able to combat this particular difficulty. While what I'm about to show you might seem simple at first, I want you to sit down, have a cup of tea, and ponder how you can apply these ideas to an even wider array of subject matter.

These cloud paintings are always something that I find great joy in creating and now you can take something useful from this in order to create your own joyful artworks. We're going to dive into the relationship between gouache, paper, water and time, and come out the

other end being able to paint more quickly, effectively and be able to maintain that soft-edge quality for extended periods of time! Gouache has the capacity to create immensely detailed and expressive work, and I implore you to spend the time to learn how to use the medium to its fullest extent!

I'm bringing these ideas to you from my little studio in Clemson, South Carolina, US. Go ahead and check out where I work. I find that a clean space, lots of plants and a touch of just the right music is required to really get into the zone. So grab a coffee and put on a tune, and let's get into painting!



Justin is an Australian artist who works and lives in the US. He creates lush landscapes in gouache.

acrylic and oil and loves to teach art. See more at www.justindonaldsonart.com.



Traditional Artist Workshop



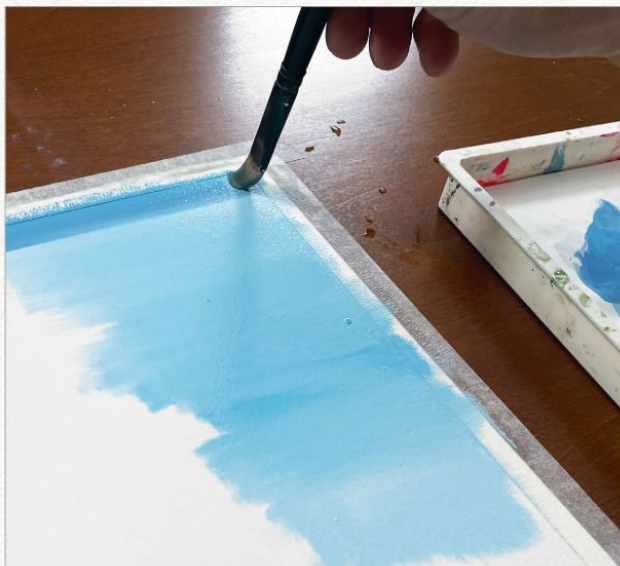
1 Soak the paper on both sides

Use your biggest brush to apply water on both sides of the paper. Warping occurs when water is unevenly distributed on the paper. By getting both sides of the paper wet we'll avoid most instances of warping as well as provide a longer time in which the paint remains wet, activated and therefore workable.



2 Sky gradient setup

Let's take Cerulean blue and Titanium white to create a layer of paint where the sky will be. Make sure that you're painting with some thick paint. It needs to be thick enough to interact with the white of the cloud when we paint it in.



3 Painting the gradient

From the top down, horizontally apply a layer of pure Cerulean blue to the area that already contains the base sky layer. As you bring your brush down the paper avoid the temptation to reload your brush. The natural mix of paint that occurs as you bring the brush down the page will result in a gradient.



4 Start the cloud

While the paint that you've applied is still wet, charge a layer of white paint into the blue sky to create your clouds. Charging requires a lot of paint and water at the same time. This technique will enable all the paint we've used so far to mix very naturally, and will result in a very soft edge for the cloud.



5 *Creating the shadows*

Create a darker mix for the shadows of the cloud.

I like to focus on the larger gradients within the shape at this point, rather than getting sucked into the smaller shapes within the clouds. This is a great time to think about the bounce light that might be occurring. Bounce light helps the clouds to feel light and fluffy.



6 *Smaller shapes within the cloud*

Next, focus on smaller shapes within the painting. At this point some of the paint has evaporated from the painting and we'll be able to apply paint with an edge quality that's not yet hard, but not as soft as it was in the initial layout.



7 *Soft brushing*

A lot of clouds shapes have a variety of edge qualities within a single shape. We can take a dry soft brush with no paint on it and drag it over an edge to soften the edge up. This is often useful when trying to describe form shadows or lost edges.



8 *Create context for the composition*

Now we get to provide context for the cloud. When we paint we're never dealing with an object in isolation, and the way our cloud interacts with what's around it says a great deal about the cloud itself. This cloud is casting a shadow onto a mountain, and this gives it a definite location in space. ➤➤



9 *Soft shadows on the mountainside*

Create a gradient on the mountain. The soft quality of this gradient tells us that the cloud which is casting the shadow is far away and has soft edges. Once again, we get to communicate about the cloud in the act of painting our mountain! Feel free to use a soft dry brush to extend the length of the gradient.



10 *Detailing the mountain*

In the mountain gradient we have communicated the larger quality of the mountains form. Now we get to go in and detail the smaller forms. Use the shadow colour and drag it from the shadow into the light. Because the paint is still wet we'll end up with edges that are moderately soft.



11 *Paint the lake at the base of the mountain*

Now we are going to create the body of water. The major movement of the water is to paint a gradient lighter nearer to the mountain and darker as it gets closer to the bottom of the page.



12 Additional elements

We want to create a little more dynamism to the painting, so let's add in a triangle mountain edge coming into view. So far we've been careful with our values, not allowing the shadows to become too dark. Now we can use the room that has afforded us to silhouette the new mountain edge in an even darker colour.



13 Re-wetting the paint

If you step away from your painting and need to come back to it with soft edges it's often helpful to reactivate the paint on the page, to achieve a wet-in-wet effect again. To do this I recommend quick, even, large and light sweeps of your brush loaded with only a small amount of water.



14 Additional details

You can then come in with a brush loaded with normal water and work back into the painting. Let's use this technique to bring in new details to our clouds, water and mountains. It can be difficult, but with practice you can apply extra wet-in-wet details and no one will be the wiser that you ever left your painting to dry.



15 Choose how to protect your artwork

Now we can step back and enjoy our piece! Gouache is traditionally framed behind glass so that it's not accidentally reactivated by moisture, but you can frame it open, use a wax sealant, or apply a matte sealant to keep it safe. ●

First Impressions

✧ David Thorn Wenzel ✧

This US artist got his first break illustrating Tolkien's Middle-earth



Where did you grow up and how did this influence your art?

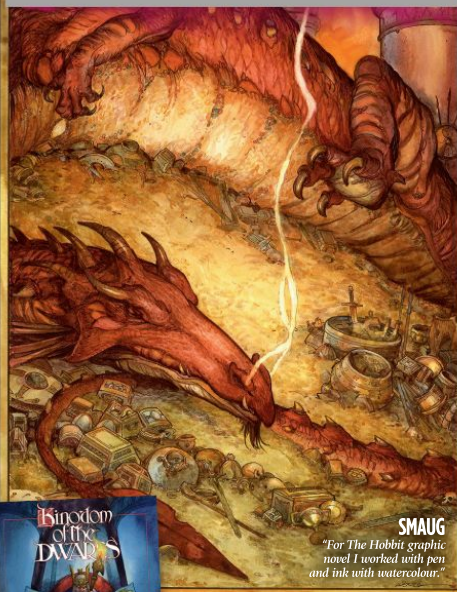
I grew up in Harvard, Massachusetts, which back then was a small country town with rolling hills and bucolic vistas. It absolutely contributed to my interpretations of the Shire when I painted its landscapes.

Where do you create your art?

I create almost all of my finished art traditionally from a studio in my home. Additionally I utilise a computer where I do digital preliminary development, scanning and enhancement.

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

I think many artists have early commissions from friends and schoolmates, but the first commission one gets from a publisher is very memorable. Mine was a commission by Centaur Books to create Middle Earth: The World of Tolkien Illustrated, as a



enabling me to explore more sophisticated compositional options. In my early illustrations I didn't understand the integration of value and shape, which is now a cornerstone of my creative process. In addition, my drawing abilities are just better because I've spent those classic 10,000 hours drawing.

Is your artwork evolving?

I've just completed a piece called Boredom, in which an apprentice sorceress sits on an ancient tree with gnarled roots. Her boredom is being taken out on her cat familiar, which she's levitating for her amusement. This piece differs from previous pieces in that for the finishing layer I used acrylic gouache over the watercolour. I've used gouache before for making touch-ups, but here I utilised it to complete passages in the manner of an opaque painting, so that the watercolour served more as an underpainting.

What's the most important thing you've taught someone?

This is what I would pass on to an inquiring young artist. If a person has that passion and drive to do art, it's simple: they have to put in the hours. This means more than just drawing or painting incessantly. It also means motivating yourself by researching fellow artists and discovering their path; creating projects that challenge; observing and engaging with the world around you; collecting knowledge about everything; and keep reading.

What advice would you give to your younger self?

Network. Talk to people. Ask questions. Meet new artists and engage. Write out short- and long-term goals and post them where you can see them in your daily routine. Take time for yourself.

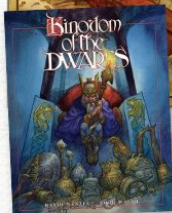
David Thorn Wenzel is the illustrator of The Hobbit graphic novel, and the recently updated Kingdom of the Dwarfs. Discover more of his art at www.davidwenzel.com.

“If a person has that passion to do art, they have to put in the hours”

companion book for The Hobbit, which at that time had not been officially illustrated. I don't think it stands up to my current paintings as my artistic perceptions have improved with experience. The Middle-earth artwork contained some naive artistic flaws, but it had several visual successes that still hold up. In fact the original book cover hangs over my bureau.

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

Since those early illustrations I've developed a more comprehensive protocol when creating a new artwork. I use multiple thumbnails to explore varied viewpoints,

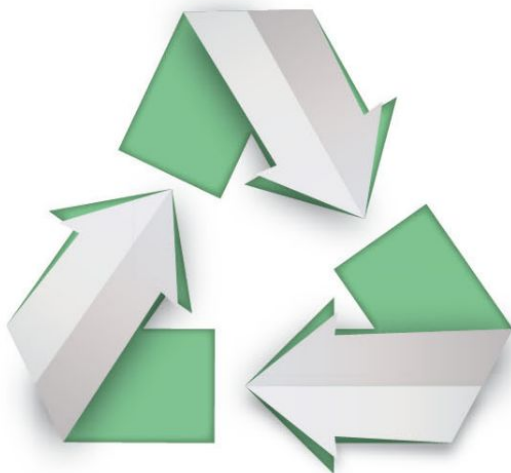


KINGDOM OF THE DWARFS COVER
“Dwarven kings and treasure hoards were important to capture on the cover of the book.”



SHIRE PASTORAL

“This is the cover for the UK edition of The Hobbit graphic novel. I wanted to show Gandalf moments before he meets Bilbo and takes him into the distant reaches of Middle-earth.”



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