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ISSUE 204

LAUREN BROWN "THIS IS FANTASY. WHY WOULDN'T THERE BE PEOPLE OF COLOUR?"



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



Overthinking projects can destroy creativity, so it's refreshing to discover this issue's cover artist embraces the accidents that can happen when creating art. Ayran Oberto loves to paint with spontaneity and on page 54 you can follow his process to discover how you can harness your impulses.

There's more control in Jean-Sébastien Rossbach's watercolour masterclass. The award-winning illustrator reveals how he directs his paint and explains how a dash of kitchen salt can make all the difference.

The joy of editing ImagineFX is we can present these two extremes, and everything in between. Whether it's using the latest digital tools and techniques or developing your core traditional skills, we have you covered every issue.

Never forget that this is your magazine, too. We love supporting new artists in FXPosé – our global showcase of amazing new art. If you want to feature in a future issue visit [ifxm.ag/getinifx](http://ifxm.ag/getinifx) and submit your portfolio.

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Make use of ZBrush to speed-sculpt a life-like dinosaur, and the artist shares his 50 texture brushes!



## Subscribe today!

Sign up to ImagineFX and receive a copy of traditional media art software Reebelle 4! **See page 8 for details.**



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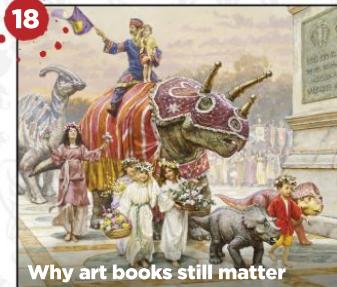
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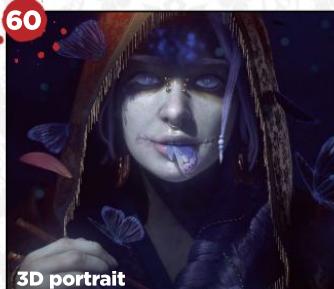
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NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

ImagineFX

# Resources

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ImagineFX

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## WORKSHOP VIDEOS



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

### Be spontaneous in your art

Watch Ayran Oberto develop a portrait in Photoshop. His workshop's on page 54.



### By the power of Grayskull!

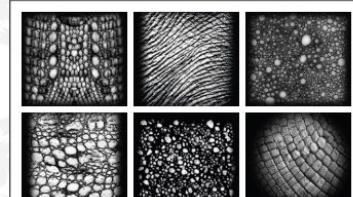
See how Ken Coleman creates retro He-Man art using 3D scans and Painter, on page 62.

## PROJECT FILES



### Bring a dinosaur to life

Watch Glen Southern as he sculpts a dinosaur using ZBrush. His workshop's over on page 70.



### 50 ZBrush Alphas

These Alphas from Glen Southern will help you add realistic texture to your dinosaur art.

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**INK COLORVARIATION**  
Ayran Oberto uses this brush to sketch out his ideas.



**KEN THICK PAINT**  
Ken Coleman applies paint effects with this custom brush.



**OILY 2**  
Another of Ayran's custom brushes, which he uses to paint hair.



ImagineFX

Next month

Next month in...

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secrets to compose  
and draw perfect  
comic covers.

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Marvel's David  
Nakayama reveals  
how to redesign  
an iconic character.

### **Craft intricate comic panels**

Master the classic  
'ligne claire'  
comic-art style  
with Igor Wolski.

### **Judge Dredd celebration**

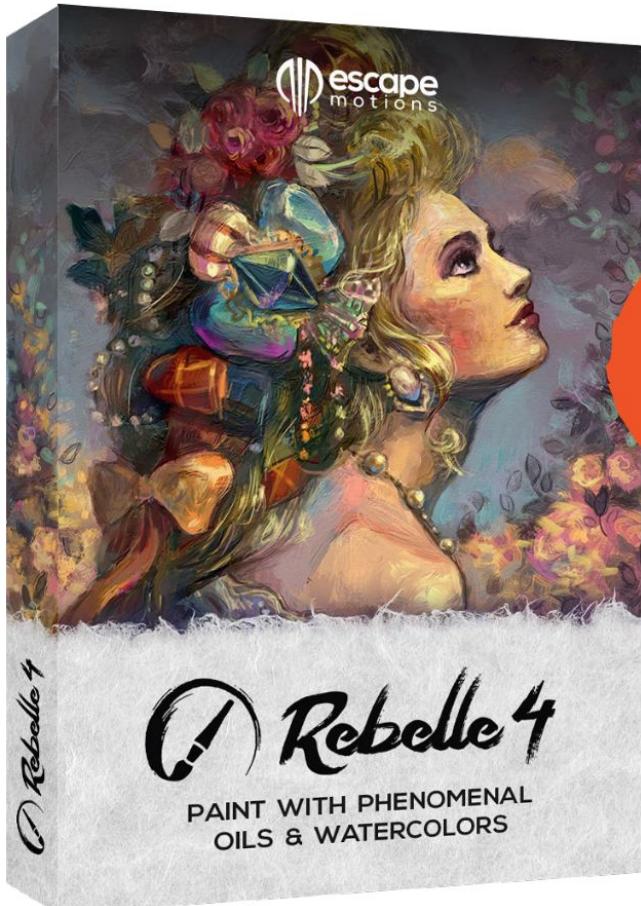
2000 AD's leading  
artists reveal why  
the world of Dredd  
remains vital.

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# FX Posé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART



## Ahmed Rawi

LOCATION: US MEDIA: Photoshop, Procreate, Maya, ZBrush, Keyshot  
WEB: [artstation.com/rawi](https://artstation.com/rawi)

Ahmed is a concept artist and illustrator who's worked for the video games and film industries for over a decade. Nature and music are his main inspirations.



1



### 1 WARRIOR

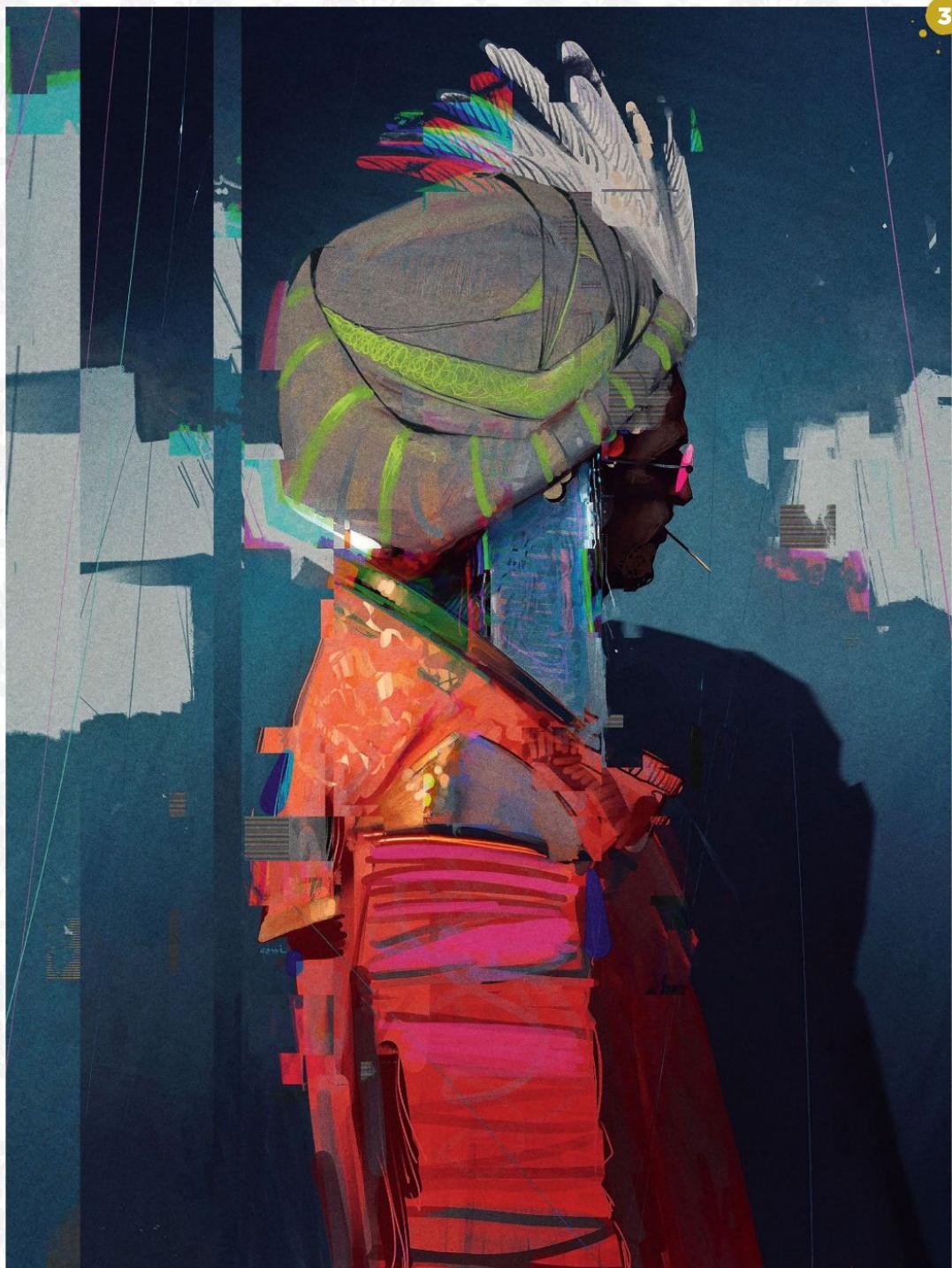
"A personal study I did during a new brushes/palette exploration session. It ended up with an undead warrior design."

### 2 THE CHASE

"Part of my series The Gleed Ghost. A colourful flying spirit is chased by characters to find the secret behind its beauty."

### 3 RUMI

"Jalal ad-din Rumi in a sci-fi setting. I was keen to try Procreate's glitch FX feature, so I thought of a way to use it in a painterly style."





## Ben Bauchau

LOCATION: Belgium MEDIA: Black ink (brush pen and Micron pens), Photoshop WEB: [benbauchau.com](http://benbauchau.com)

Ben's main inspiration is ukiyo-e art, engravings and comics. His work, which often involves surreal worlds, is also influenced by past cultures, war, nature, movement and even the unconscious mind.

### 1 BLESSING OF THE OWLS

"Exploring the idea of an imaginary afterlife ritual that occurred to me after hearing the mesmerising screams of an owl at night."

1



### 2 CAGLAN THE GREY

"Part of a series of warriors called Clans of Kimmeria. An exploration of feudal society and the culture of war."

2



3



### 3 GORGE OF THE LIMBS

"This illustration takes the point of view of a creature in the midst of battle, keeping its defined form hidden to the viewer. I was inspired by cosmic horror and pulp literature."



## Davood Moghadami

LOCATION: Iran MEDIA: Photoshop WEB: [davoodm.artstation.com](http://davoodm.artstation.com)

Davood had a childhood fascination for traditional painting, but turned to digital art while studying graphic design. "I particularly enjoy drawing and painting nature," he reveals.

1



### 1 OLD OAK

"In this piece I used personal pens that I made myself. This helped to distance myself from analog painting techniques."

2



3



### 2 MOUNTAIN GLORY

"This is another piece created with pens that I made myself. The different textures result in different, more interesting work."

### 3 TOXIC FOREST

"As well as acrylics and oils, I've long been inspired by watercolours. This piece replicates the watercolour technique in Photoshop."



## Gabriel Rubio

LOCATION: Brazil MEDIA: Photoshop, Procreate WEB: [artstation.com/gabrielrubio](http://artstation.com/gabrielrubio)

Gabriel has been working in the games industry for the past five years, with clients such as IGG, NetEase Games and West Studio. He's influenced by comic books and illustrators such as JC Leyendecker.

### 1 RAYGUN

"It was nice to have the freedom to play with a retro-futuristic vibe."

1

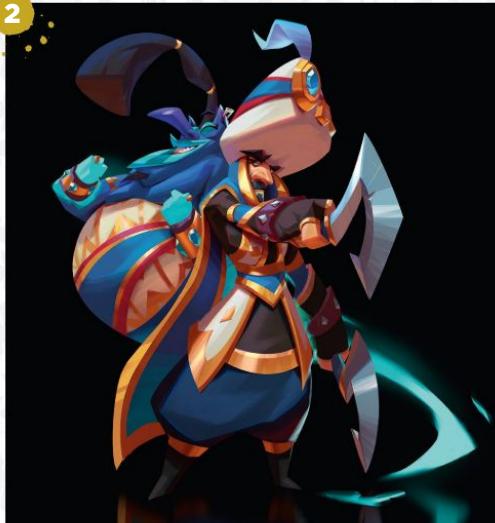


Done in partnership with West Studio for Riot Games. All rights reserved

### 2 SALADIN

"It was super cool to play with the contrast between the grumpy sultan and the flamboyant genie."

2



### 3 THE RED DRAGON

"This piece helped me to find my own way of rendering shapes. It was a challenge to bring unique shapes to all the characters."

3

### 4 THE DRUNKEN MASTER

"I revisited the first piece of art I rendered in Procreate. I tried to create a good vibe with vibrant colours."



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## Edit Ballai

LOCATION: US MEDIA: Maya, Unreal Engine, Photoshop WEB: [editballai.com](http://editballai.com)

Since her early childhood, Edit has loved to write and illustrate stories about imaginary worlds. "Nowadays I only focus on visual storytelling for video game and animation studios," she says, "but I might continue writing later!"



### 1 UTOPIA

"I created this scene for Kitbash3D's Utopia contest. I really loved doing this piece."

### 2 SKYSTEAD

"This has a little bit of a Star Wars touch, created from Jonathan Berube's industrial photo pack with some love and Maya."



### 3 LEFT BEHIND

"In this personal piece I was just playing with forms and shapes. Obviously, there's a huge reference to the film Prometheus which I liked a lot."



# Marby Kwong

LOCATION: US MEDIA: Photoshop, Blender, 3ds Max WEB: [artstation.com/marby](http://artstation.com/marby)

Appearing in FXPosé is something of a dream come true for concept artist and illustrator Marby. "I've been reading ImagineFX since I was a wee art student over 10 years ago. It was what initially got me into concept art!"

## 1 MUSHROOM KNIGHT

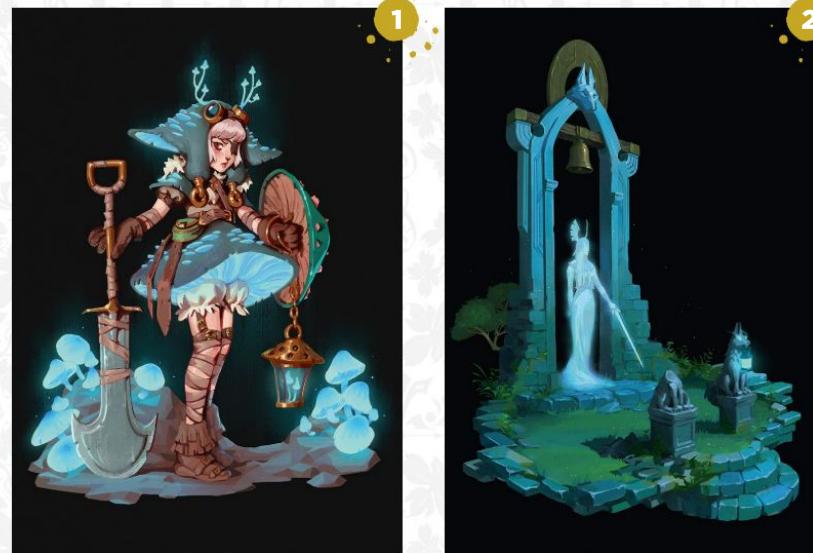
"Here I pushed the fantastical character design angle. I exaggerated elements to tell the narrative that she's also a miner."

## 2 VALKYRIE

"A more sombre piece, inspired by Viking mythology. I love using teal and green in my paintings."

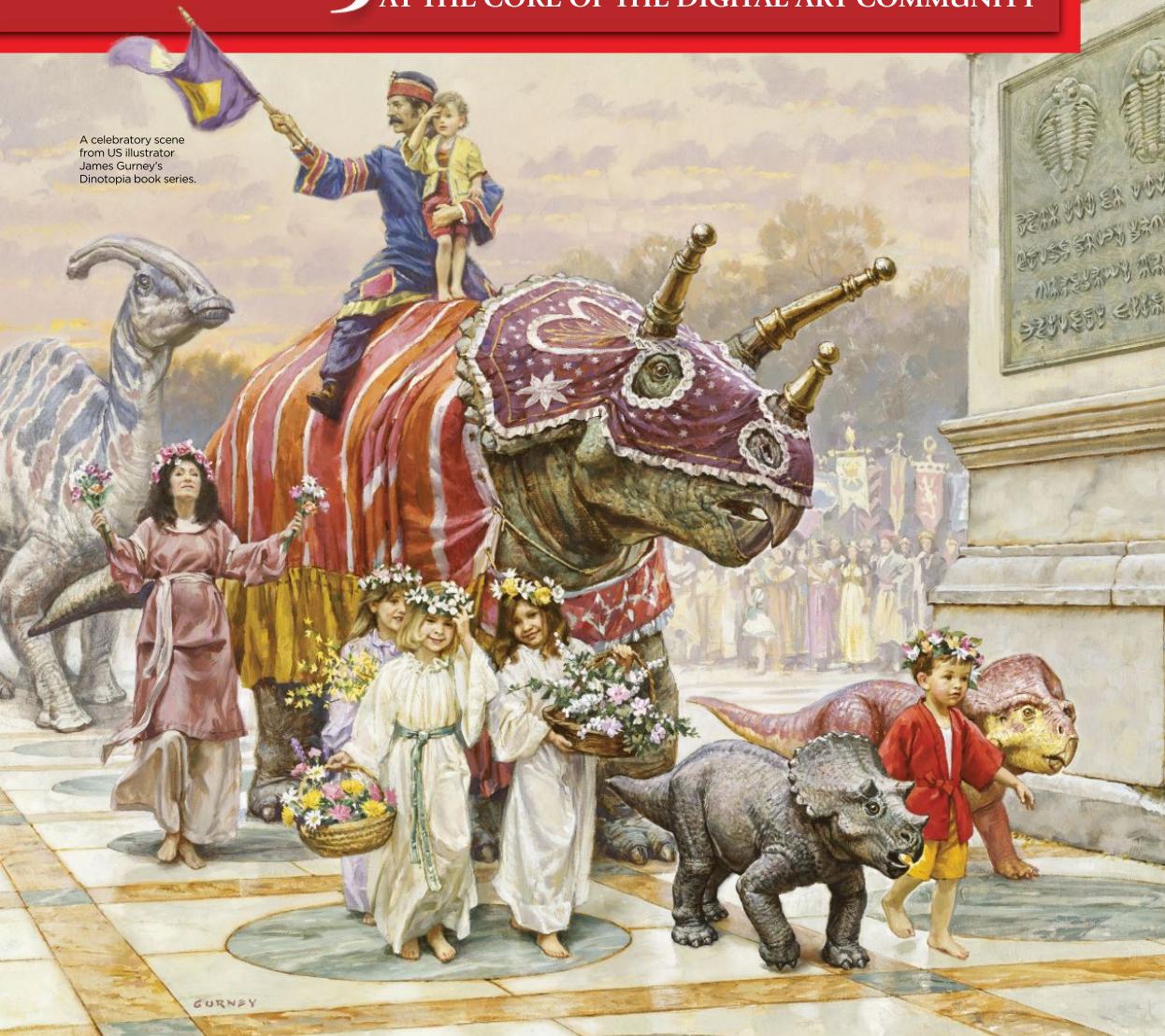
## 3 PALALUMA ISLAND

"I wanted to convey a bustling fantasy town. The unusual building shapes help to communicate that it's otherworldly."



**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](mailto:fxpose@imaginefx.com)

A celebratory scene from US illustrator James Gurney's *Dinotopia* book series.



# Why books still matter to artists

**Page turners** Book sales are on the rise and when it comes to art training the printed page is still important, discovers **Ian Dean**

We live in the internet age where training is just a click away. But despite this we continually return to books. Even when learning could be gained online, educational book sales brought in £6.4 billion in the UK in 2020. Consumer book sales fared even better, rising seven per cent to £2.1 billion last year.

Clearly the printed word hasn't lost its appeal, and for artists in particular,



Kan Mufic reveals that studying books on the technical aspects of filmmaking helped take his art in a new direction, and created new career opportunities, too.



Kofi Ofosu prefers books to online learning, saying it's easier to access advice when it's printed.

improve my figure-drawing skills," he says. It was a moment that took the illustrator full circle back to his artistic grounding. Kofi's first book that he owned was Drawing Heads and Hands by Andrew Loomis, and his most recent acquisition is Force: Dynamic Life Drawing.

He tells us: "There are so many great art training books available that contain lots of gems of advice. I have gotten a lot of invaluable information through reading art training books - much of this information is difficult to find online."

For Kofi it's about being able to get as close to an artist's work and thought processes as possible. The pitfall can come if you follow the advice too closely and fail to interpret and instead merely copy.



many have returned to the page. "Always," states concept artist and director **Kan Mufic** ([ifxm.ag/kan-m](http://ifxm.ag/kan-m)) as we

ask if he still relies on art books for advice. "A book is an object with a physical and mental presence in my life," adds the artist, whose own book Figure Drawing for Concept Artists has proved popular.

Kan reveals that "The beautiful books of Marcos Mateu-Mestre" got him through lockdown. The love of a physical art book was instilled in him at an early age: his parents had a collection of Sergio Toppi books that inspired him growing up.

You can track a person's life through their book collection, and see the influences in their work. Kan himself

has grown beyond the fantasy and comic art of his childhood and now directs for TV: his animated short Kiss Me First is on Netflix. Reading film theory has not only aided him in making the leap to film, but helped his art, too. "Learning about camera lenses in various filmmaking books completely changed the way I create images," he tells us.

## BOOKED IN

Art books enable us to focus and challenge ourselves where perhaps other mediums fail. During lockdown

**Kofi Ofosu** ([ifxm.ag/kofi-o](http://ifxm.ag/kofi-o)) turned to



Figure Drawing and Invention by Michael Hampton. "I wanted to get back to my anatomy fundamentals and

“There are so many great art training books available that contain gems of advice”

On this matter Kofi says: "This advice wasn't necessarily a technical one, but it was a quote from Frank Frazetta, which goes something like this: 'Don't be a second-rate Frazetta, be a first-rate you.'

"It greatly helped me because as a young artist I always wanted to become like other artists. I had never thought about getting truly in touch with my own artistic voice. Reading these words from Frazetta helped me to understand that as a creative, we're most powerful when we're fully ➤



This is Kari's concept art of Tabaqi, a jackal that appeared in the film *Mowgli: Legend of the Jungle*.



expressing our unique artistic vision rather than pretending to be someone else."

This is a balancing act that all artists walk. Interestingly, one of the most popular art book authors, James Gurney ([jamesgurney.com](http://jamesgurney.com)), has managed to side-step the problem altogether.

"I became an artist in a vacuum," James says with clarity. "No one else in my family was an artist. I didn't have art friends until after college, and there was no internet back then. That absence of community and

connections made it a lonely quest, but in retrospect it was the best thing for me. It helped me develop completely independently, and I didn't suffer through the nonsense that art students around 1980 had to endure."

James reveals how he had to create his own artistic training programme to learn how to paint and draw. His self-diagnosed training focused on the instructional books of Golden-Age illustrators and academic painters, such as The Famous Artists' Course, and the books by Andrew Loomis, and Harold Speed and John F Carlson.

Kofi recommends *Dynamic Life Drawing* by Michael D Mattesi: "It teaches how to create drawings that evoke emotion."

"But I knew that you can't become an experienced painter by reading about it, any more than you can learn to draw by binge-watching YouTube videos," he cautions. "I knew I had to face the real world with my sketchpad and just draw, draw, draw from memory and imagination. I made regular trips to the zoo and the natural history museum.

"When I got the job painting animation backgrounds, I learned to paint a lot and paint fast. Working as a National Geographic illustrator taught me the importance of research and accuracy."

## A BALANCING ACT

For James, who has a number of must-read books to his name, including the *Color and Light: A Guide for the Realist Painter*, there's still ➤

**“I knew I had to face the real world with my sketchpad and just draw, draw, draw from memory and imagination”**



Given the choice between online art advice and a printed tutorial, Adam Hughes will likely plump for the latter.

## INDUSTRY INSIGHT WHICH BOOKS DO OUR PROS RECOMMEND?

*This issue's professional artists pick the training books that they can't do without...*



**Kofi Ofosu**

Force: Dynamic Life Drawing by Michael D. Mattesi.

The reason I'd recommend this book is because it teaches how to create drawings that evoke emotion – how to capture the soul of your subject matter rather than just copying down what you see in front of you.

[ifxm.ag/kofi-o](http://ifxm.ag/kofi-o)



**Kan Muftic**

Cinematic Storytelling by Jennifer Van Sijll

is an absolute must for anyone interested in creating art with narrative depth. There's an endless supply of superficial 'popcorn' artwork created solely with the purpose of gaining followers on social media with no substance whatsoever. This should help.

[ifxm.ag/kan-m](http://ifxm.ag/kan-m)



**Adam Hughes**

Figure Drawing For All It's Worth, by Andrew Loomis.

It's got everything you need to go from the basics to full illustration. And it's got some nifty techniques for drawing figures in perspective.

[instagram.com/atomhues](http://instagram.com/atomhues)

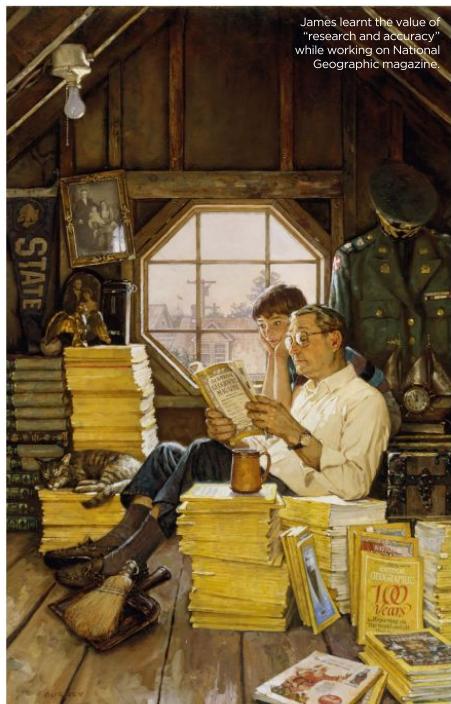


**James Gurney**

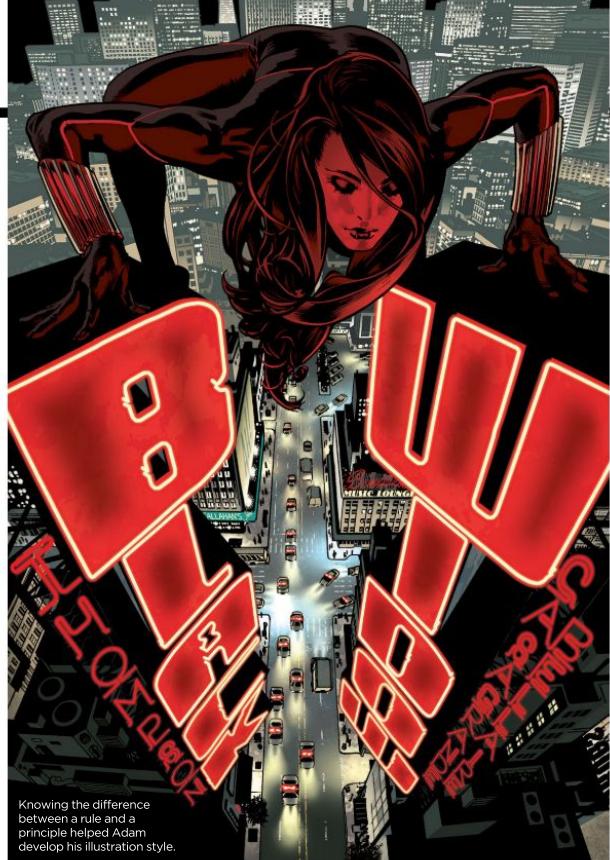
Recently I've been focusing on how new findings in neuroscience can help us better understand the process of painting. I've been revisiting the classic book on that topic, Vision and Art by Margaret Livingstone, and I enjoyed the recent book Seven and a Half Lessons About the Brain by Lisa Feldman Barrett.

[jamesgurney.com](http://jamesgurney.com)

©DC Comics



James learnt the value of "research and accuracy" while working on National Geographic magazine.



© Marvel

► the need to balance relying on training with the act of doing. His first book, *The Artist's Guide to Sketching* (co-written with Thomas Kinkade) grew out of this belief.

He explains: "We left art school for a summer, riding the freight trains from Los Angeles to New York City. After sketching portraits of lumbermen, gravestone cutters and ex-cons, we had the crazy idea of writing a book about sketching from life – a topic that was rarely covered by art training books. This was before anyone talked about urban sketching or plein-air painting. We didn't go back to art school because the process of writing that book was our education."

So what's left to learn? How about writing your own book? James shares some insights he's gathered over the years from his own writing process. "The most important principles are

© Marvel/Disney



Concept art of The Ancient One from Doctor Strange, as painted by Kan.

brevity and clarity," he says. "If you can say the same thing with half the words it'll probably be more forceful. If something is a fact, such as the inverse square law of light, state it authoritatively. If it's a debate, such as whether there's such a thing as a muddy colour, present both sides of the argument. If it's a myth, such as the notion that our eyes move through a picture in a smooth spiral, blast the myth and offer the facts."

Comic art legend Adam Hughes ([instagram.com/atomhues](https://www.instagram.com/atomhues)), agrees, "Robert McKee, in one of his



screenwriting books, pointed out the difference between a rule and a principle," explains Adam.

"A rule says, 'You can't do this' while a principle says, 'This has worked since time immemorial and will always work for you.' That positive idea applies to illustration and it really made me look at the rules in a different way."

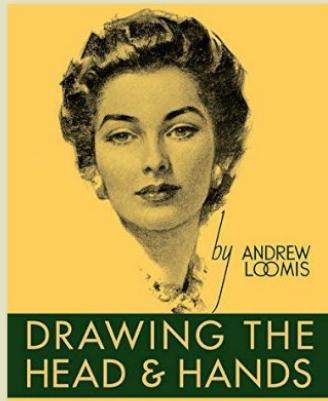
During lockdown Adam found himself not looking to an art training book for inspiration but a novel: JRR Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. "I just keep rereading it, planning future fun drawings," he says, adding jokingly: "All my other favourite stories keep getting recontextualised – looking at you, Star Wars – and I like one thing to never really change by telling me Frodo was a robot the whole time."

Yet Adam is a traditionalist when it comes to the internet versus book training. "The Internet is quick and easy – 'WebMD, do I have a brain cloud?' – but cracking open a book is like discovering the Secret Knowledge of the Universe." ■

**“Cracking open a book is like discovering the Secret Knowledge of the Universe”**

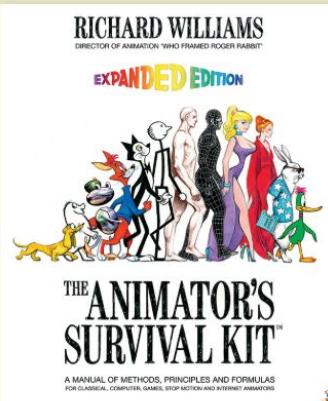
## THE SIX BOOKS EVERY ARTIST SHOULD READ

If these aren't on your studio's bookshelves, put your order in at your local bookshop today!



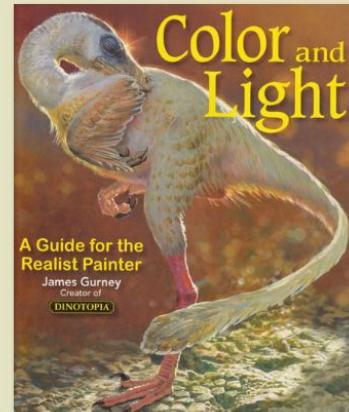
### Drawing the Head and Hands

Andrew Loomis' explanations are detailed and engaging, and it's hands-down the best anatomy reference book despite its age. The author's systematic approach will help you understand the principles behind drawing realistic portraits. Aside from the artistic advice on offer, Drawing the Head and Hands makes an excellent coffee table book, too.



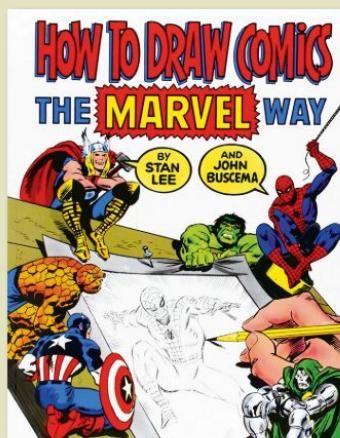
### The Animator's Survival Kit

Richard Williams' book represents the 50-year career in animation of an artist who won three Oscars, three British Academy Awards and over 250 other international awards... and he created Roger and Jessica Rabbit. It's blend of tips, tricks and insights for all forms of animation will teach newcomers the ropes and make old hands rethink their work.



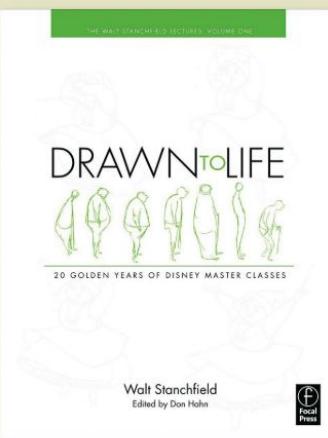
### Color and Light: A Guide for the Realist Painter

James Gurney mixes art and science, theory and practice, and delivers easy-to-understand tuition. The impact of light and colour on a painting is one of the hardest concepts to grasp, but this book makes it accessible to all. A perfect companion to James' Imaginative Realism: How to Paint What Doesn't Exist.



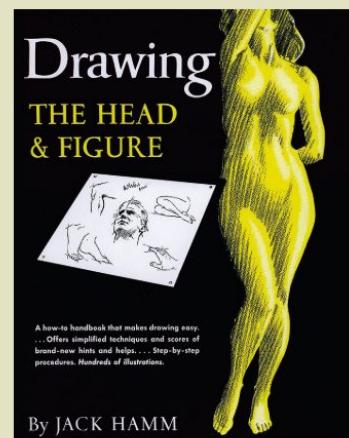
### How to Draw Comics the Marvel Way

If you're looking for a crash course in figure drawing, or if you're an aspiring comic-book artist, animator or illustrator, grab a copy of Stan Lee's How to Draw Comics the Marvel Way. You'll also learn about composition, shot selection, perspective, character dynamics and more. If you're an artist and comic book fan, then you need this book.



### Drawn to Life: 20 Golden Years of Disney Master Classes

Walt Stanchfield's advice focuses more on the emotions, life and action than proportions and technical accuracy. With the emphasis on gesture drawing, don't expect a book filled with finished art; it's more about capturing the moment. If you're interested in creating drawings with character, this is a must-have.



### Drawing the Head and Figure

You could say that this publication is in direct competition with Andrew Loomis' books, and you'd be correct. However, Jack's approach to drawing the figure is more simplistic than Loomis'. His step-by-step approach will have even the most inexperienced artists drawing better and more confidently. An excellent primer for learning how to make marks.

Creature art by Bobby Chiu, who co-founded LightBox Expo with Jim Demonakos in 2019.

# Wake up to online conferences

**Web event** LightBox Expo Online's co-founder **Jim Demonakos** reveals how to get more from virtual events this summer

**Imagining what this year's LightBox Expo Online (LBXO) will look like is easy – it's like last year's, but bigger! Founded by Jim Demonakos and Bobby Chiu, this online event aims to bridge the gap between a physical space and a virtual show.**

Once again the event, which starts on 7 September, will be split into different areas: demo-based programmes, an artist alley and social hangouts. The LBXO approach feels like a festival of talents.

The show's Artist Alley is a live virtual space – an interactive booth experience that you can wander around. As **Jim** explains: "[Last year] we were able to let our attendees discover the artists in the same way they would in-person, by 'walking' down the aisles of the convention floor. The virtual Artist Alley generated over one million clicks alone."

Magma Studio, one of the highlights of last year's show, is making a welcome return. This software was co-created by the LBXO team and

enables artists to collaborate on the same canvas, in a browser window. "It was a hit," says Jim. "Being able to draw with your friends in real time on a shared canvas was a game changer."

For 2021 the team is bringing this all back with improvements. It's now a six-day event, enabling more people to explore the virtual Artist Alley without competing against scheduled sessions. New to LBXO are Activities: challenges for people to take part of, and the show will be on Discord.

## EXPO TIPS

Does Jim have any advice for getting the most out of LBXO? "Do your research and plan," he says. Last year's show ran for three days and had 400 programmes. You can expect this number to double for 2021's show.

He continues: "What's your goal for the event? Make sure you attend all



Clear your diaries – this year's LightBox Expo Online kicks off on 7 September.

the lectures that are of interest to you. Use a calendar app to remind you of what you want to do, and make sure to manage your time so that you're able to get food and take care of yourself while participating."

Part of being a creator is being part of the creator community. "Make sure to jump into the chat if you can on a video you're watching and find fellow peers," advises Jim, who says parts of LBXO are relationship builders.

"Online Portfolio Reviews are a great thing to participate in. Even if you're 'not there yet,' you'll have an opportunity to make an impression on a recruiter, who might just jot your name down for future reference."

**LightBox Expo Online will take place on 7-12 September. Book your tickets now at [lightboxexpo.com/expos](http://lightboxexpo.com/expos).**

“Jump into the chat on a video you're watching and find fellow peers”

A keyframe that Luca Nemolato painted for the popular real-time strategy mobile game War Dragons.



© Pocket Gems

## A day in the life of... Luca Nemolato

**Healthy living** Discover what colourful beverage sets this Italian concept artist up for a hard day's work

**"I wake up at 8.30am and do some stretching, then shower and get a tea. I drink a lot of green tea because I really got into fasting and meditation - if I don't get a tea, I can't really function. I start my morning slowly by tidying up the house and answering emails.**

Around 9.30am, I get really into my work and I don't take a break until around 4pm. If I stop for lunch then

I get sleepy and I'm not productive at all. At 4pm I eat a quick protein snack and meditate. Then I work out for an hour and get ready to cook dinner. I've been doing keto for a long time and I really like cooking.

After I eat dinner and clean the kitchen, it ends up being around 9.30pm. I usually go back to work until 3am, then I go to sleep and do it again the next day. The weekends are for friends, gaming and cheat days.

As a freelancer, I usually have one full-time client and then some side part-time things that I can handle. My main advice is to be communicative and set boundaries with clients, so you're able to meet your deadlines and live a healthy life. When you don't underestimate deadlines, you're able to deliver quality work every time."

*Los Angeles-based Luca's projects include The Shape of Water, Godzilla: King of the Monsters and Jungle Cruise. He's currently busy at Netflix, working on Gore Verbinski's untitled animated film. You can see more of Luca's art at [artstation.com/lucanemolato](http://artstation.com/lucanemolato).*



Luca graduated in fine art in 2010, and continued to sharpen his art skills at Ghomon School of VFX.



Concept art of S.T.R.I.P.E., an armoured robotic suit that appears in the show *Stargirl*.

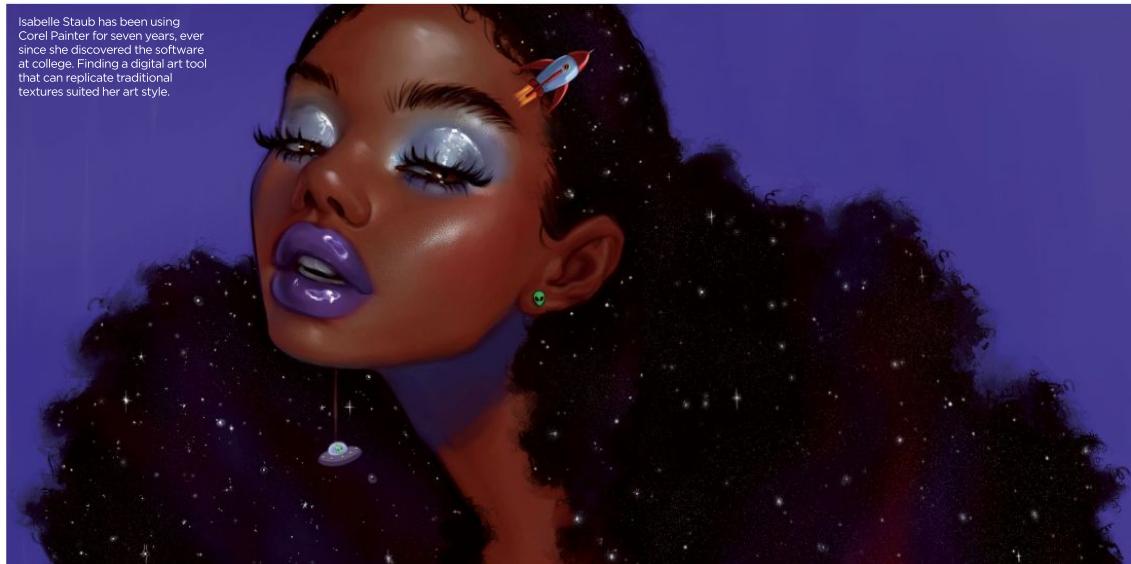
© DC Universe



Luca's concept art for Blackstar, a supervillain from the Netflix superhero show *Jupiter's Legacy*.

 CONCEPT ART  
ASSOCIATION  
  
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. [conceptartassociation.com](http://conceptartassociation.com)

Isabelle Staub has been using Corel Painter for seven years, ever since she discovered the software at college. Finding a digital art tool that can replicate traditional textures suited her art style.



## Painting a successful freelance career

**Brush up** Corel Painter has been used by professional artists for 30 years. **Isabelle Staub** reflects on how Painter has helped her...



**Today, Isabelle Staub is a successful digital artist who's worked with Marvel, Dynamite Comics, Wacom and TikTok. Shooting to fame by interpreting Disney's Princesses in her own unique style, Isabelle has since gone on to create clothing ranges as well as illustrations.**

Reflecting on her first freelance gig Isabelle says she was daunted and excited by the job. "I was ecstatic when I landed my first freelance job, but I honestly felt like I had no idea what I was doing," says the artist. "At the time, I was a few months out of college and I still felt like a student with little business knowledge at all. It was definitely daunting, but I pretended like I knew what I was doing when speaking to the client."

She admits to using Google and pestered her college professors for advice on pricing, invoices and how to tackle the basic business aspects of

going freelance. "[In] hindsight, I don't think I would have ever felt 'ready' to start freelancing. For me, it was something I just needed to jump in and figure it out along the way through trial and error," she says.

### BRUSHING UP

While Isabelle's business knowledge has grown over the years (social media and new art trends have changed how she works), some aspects of her process have remained. The artist is committed to using Corel Painter to achieve a traditional texture in her portraits.

She tells us: "I learned Painter during my freshman year of college in a

Created as a throwback to her Disney Princesses range that caught the eye, this portrait was inspired by the absent-minded Dory from Finding Nemo.

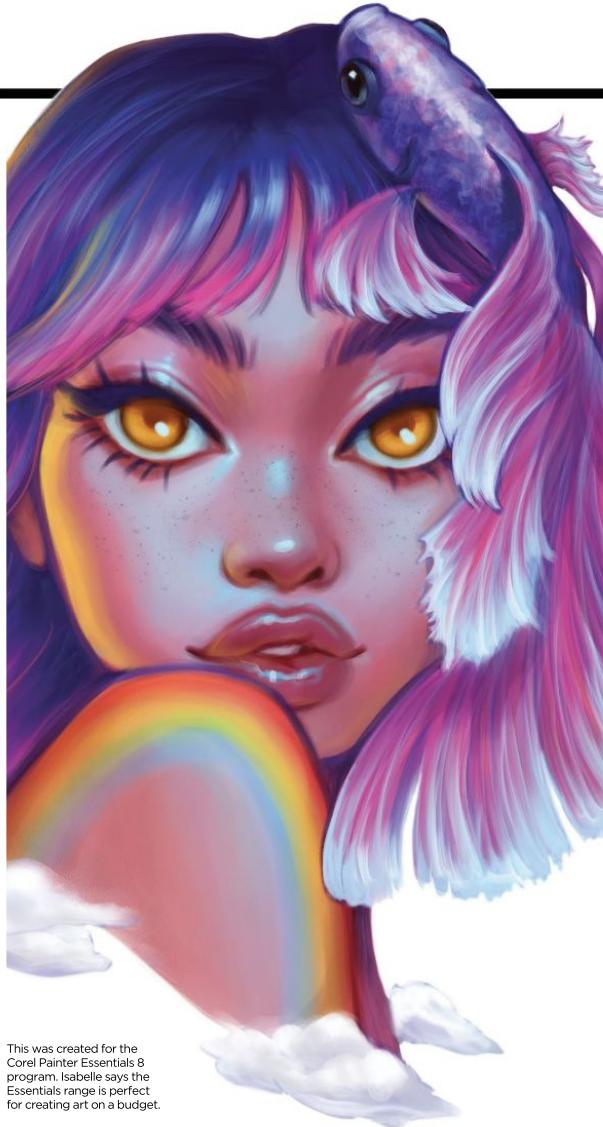


digital painting course. I was very much a traditional artist and Corel enabled me to continue that painterly style with its program. Being able to use brushes like oil paint, charcoal and chalk made learning digital painting much easier and comfortable for me."

That textural connection to traditional painting is why Isabelle has remained a Painter artist all these years. "For my work," she explains, "I still want that feel of paint and movement that you achieve with traditional mediums."

Even after all this time Isabelle remains loyal to just five different brushes to create her work. We expect Painter 2022's new Favorites feature

**“I was very much a traditional artist and Corel enabled me to continue that painterly style”**



This was created for the Corel Painter Essentials 8 program. Isabelle says the Essentials range is perfect for creating art on a budget.

- that enables artists to select their most used brushes - will be part of Isabelle's Painter workflow.

She particularly loves the Concept Art Jitter Smooth brush and the Glazing blender. "I use layer commands a lot as well, especially Gel or Colorize, to glaze or change colours easily," she adds.

## TRY IT NOW

If you've not yet experienced Corel Painter, Isabelle says there's no better time to try it out. She has some advice for novices: "Play and experiment! Don't jump into doing a full-blown piece. Take time to sketch with different brushes, layer commands

and paper textures. Once you find things that work for you, it'll make digital painting a lot less intimidating!"

When not experimenting digitally Isabelle loves getting back to her roots and throwing real paints around. The two disciplines can work together. "The other day I took a giant canvas outside on a beautiful day and just splashed paint all over it - it was awesome! Art as a job can be creatively draining, so it's super important to keep things fun and light when you get the chance," she says.

**Download a free demo of Corel Painter 2022 at [painterartist.com/future](http://painterartist.com/future) and try the software for yourself. The new Painter 2022 is on sale now.**



Corel Painter enables a traditional feel to brush strokes and textures.



Isabelle Staub has used Painter all her career, including to create merchandise such as these beautiful phone cases for CASETiFY.

## CASE STUDY

*Isabelle Staub has used her Painter skills to create art on almost anything, including mobile phone cases*

Painting portraits and illustrative art is one thing, but Isabelle has found herself adapting her skills to new ranges and styles of work. Recently, she created a series of designer phone cases for lifestyle brand CASETiFY. This demanded Isabelle step outside of her comfort zone and think differently about her art.

"Formatting my art to fit a phone case was surprisingly challenging for me," she tells us, explaining the art was already created in Painter. "I had to tap into a design and marketing-oriented thinking when creating my line with CASETiFY. It was a different experience for me, but it has been so rewarding to see my art in that way!"

Get inspired to go freelance and see more of Isabelle Staub's art, shop, and projects at [isabellestaub.com](http://isabellestaub.com).

# ImagineNation Artist in Residence



# Erin Hunting

## Cluttered fun This

Australian artist says she's used to being watched, by real and unreal eyes...



I live in a quiet suburb in Melbourne, Australia and on most days you'll find me in here. The room

doubles as a lounge room, so there's a good chance I'll be curled up watching TV, movies or reading – even on my 'off days'.

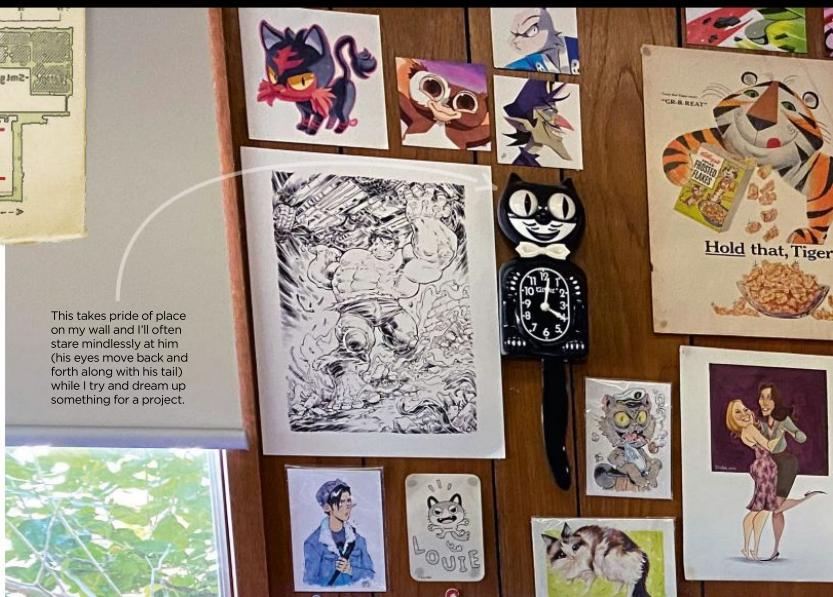
My collection of toys and figures are everywhere: from glass cabinets, to spilling over and overcrowding my bookshelves. Along with hand-drawn pieces from friends and colleagues hung up around me, inspiration is everywhere I look!

I've always loved collecting toys, starting with Garfield and Care Bears PVCs, and ALF plush dolls during the 1980s.



Hey, it's Tony Tiger! One of my favourite things to draw is iconic characters in my own style.

This takes pride of place on my wall and I'll often stare mindlessly at him (his eyes move back and forth along with his tail) while I try and dream up something for a project.



# Artist news, software & events



# ImagineNation Artist in Residence



» my childhood, and somehow that love has followed me all the way into adulthood. As I've grown older I've found myself getting overly nostalgic about the vintage toys. So most days – whether it's in between jobs or after a long day in front of the computer working – you'll find me pouring over eBay listings.

Before Covid, you'd see me often at the local Melbourne toy fairs, but since Australia is such a small and isolated

## “I prefer to work in the quiet of home rather than opt for a shared workspace”

Among the many bookshelves and books, you'll find a few that I've illustrated, with the most recent being *Labyrinth: Straight to the Castle*, published by Insight Editions.

island, we never have had an abundance of collectables. So a lot of my latest items are from all over the world – mainly the US – although my most recent find has been an old Count Duckula moneybox from South Australia.

### CHANGING ART

For client work I always work digitally these days, almost exclusively on my Wacom Cintiq. Around 10 or so years ago I would pencil and ink my work by hand, scan and then colour my scanned line-work with a no-name tablet in Photoshop. The art world is quickly and ever-changing and evolving, and sometimes it's hard to catch up. For downtime sketching I still like to pencil and ink by hand, and will colour my work with Copic

markers, which I discovered around 15 years ago. I find using traditional tools help keeps me excited and feeling somewhat fresh about my artwork.

I've been freelancing for about 10 years now and have worked with companies like Sesame Workshop, Nickelodeon, Penguin Random House and Netflix, and still get a thrill when I receive an exciting work opportunity.

Most of my communication is done via email so it's quite a solitary existence, but I prefer to work in the quiet of home rather than opt for a shared workspace, which I've found distracting in the past.

I'm lucky to have my cat Louie to share my space with. He's great company, although he's known to steal my office chair whenever I leave it for a loo or drink break!

*Erin is a character designer and illustrator who has illustrated books for Penguin, Random House and Insight Editions, and drawn comic covers for Jughead, Adventure Time and Rick and Morty. Discover her art and portfolio at [erinhunting.com](http://erinhunting.com).*



# Artist news, software & events



Here's Louie (who is by far the most photogenic out of the two of us) bidding his time to steal my seat.



In 2019 I was commissioned by Will Smith and his team to create art for his social media. This one was 90s characters, including the Fresh Prince.



I have so many Copics (after collecting them for over 15 years) and have my favourite colours in this plastic case for convenience - because there's nothing worse than trying to find a colour mid-drawing.



Yet another bookcase full of toys and books. Those Grumpy Cat salt and pepper shakers (right) were based on my designs and hey, there's my second Garfield phone!



Here's Tony Tiger again, plus a heap of retro and for some strange reason, food-orientated toys.



The one piece of work I have on display is the Adventure Time cover that I drew for BOOM! Studios in 2016.

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**LAUREN BROWN** "THIS IS FANTASY. WHY WOULDN'T THERE BE PEOPLE OF COLOUR?"

**ALSO INSIDE**

CREATE RETRO FANTASY ART USING 3D SCANNED MODELS  
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**FUTURE COVERS**  
ISSUE 204



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# Letters

## YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS



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



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### Scrap ImagineFX?

A short while ago I purchased some duplicate issues of ImagineFX and cut them up to make a scrapbook of inspiration for my concept art course that I begin this September.

I've found this scrapbook to be incredibly useful for inspiration, especially since the magazines provide so many pieces of art that I otherwise wouldn't have ever discovered! I would like to expand on my scrapbook, but I don't want to cut up any of my current magazines as they're such an amazing read. So I was wondering if you had any magazines anywhere that were damaged, misprints or just old issues and if it were possible for me to pay shipping to receive them.

Thank you so much for making such an amazing magazine. It's given me so much to learn and has helped me tremendously on my art journey.

**Rebecca Wathen, via email**

**Ian replies** It brings a tear to the eye, but turning ImagineFX into your personal mood boards sounds like a great idea for recycling old, damaged or duplicate issues. I'll take a look under art editor Dan's desk...



**DID YOU MISS THE PREVIOUS PACKED ISSUE?**  
Don't worry – you can get hold of issue 203 at [ifxm.ag/single-ifx](http://ifxm.ag/single-ifx).

**Rebecca Wathen** loves to chop up her ImagineFX to create scrapbooks (oh, the horror!). Readers – do you have spares?



© Wizards of the Coast LLC

Crystal Sully make his break in EXPosé. We're always keen to give new artists a platform.

### Kickstarted career

Six or seven years ago my work was featured as Artist of the Month in ImagineFX back when my career was just starting to take off for the first time. Years later my work is now the face of Dungeons & Dragons with Wizards of the Coast, having just released my latest piece to announce its upcoming book Fibzban's Treasury of Dragons. I've published my own art book after an incredibly successful Kickstarter that funded at 1,000 per cent, called The Untamed Bestiary: A Field Guide to Marvelous Monsters.

I would like to thank you for featuring me so long ago when I was just getting my career started.

**Crystal Sully, via email**

### Art exposure

I've been a subscriber of your wonderful magazine for the past few years. Since my mailed copies run a little behind, I decided to take a sneak peak at the digital copy of the September issue. What an awesome and wonderful surprise to see my work featured in the EXPosé section of artists! I want to say thank you very much for including a sampling of my work!

It's truly an honour to be recognised and included among so many of the talented and innovative artists that are always featured within your pages.

In the meantime, though, I continue to create, and continue to enjoy and be inspired by your publication and the ImagineFX community.

**Kait Matthews, via email**

**Ian replies** EXPosé is one of my favourite sections of the magazine. Every issue uncovers new artists who I know we'll see more of in the future, and it's a pleasure to have them all be a part of ImagineFX. Keep submitting!



New works that have grabbed our attention



**Eric Messinger**  
@ericmessingerart



**Marcus Williams**  
@marcusthevisual



**Matías Bergara**  
@matibergara

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



## IN A LATE COUNTRY: NEODYSTOPIA

"Created for Marc Trummer and his band Mycelia's concept album," reveals Logan Preshaw. "What looks like dark sky is just more dense cityscape hanging overhead."

## DREAMCATCHER

"I still see this stage of my life as an 'incubation' period, constantly learning new skills that I can use when the right opportunities arise," says Logan.



# THE ART OF LOGAN PRESHAW

Ian Dean discovers a vis-dev artist and art director whose approach to life is as bright as his paintings



Many of what I consider to be the most successful and influential concept artists are unconventional and highly stylistic," says Logan Preshaw, who acknowledges that defining a new style in concept art is difficult. "But when I think there couldn't possibly be any more originality left to be explored, a fresh new artist crops up and blows that presumption away. I think the key to that is working towards a style that combines all of your most treasured influences, because the result of that probably doesn't exist yet."

All in A Late Country artwork © Eclipse Records

In Logan's work that often means painting colour with abandon. It's a refreshing approach for an artist with a

career that's seen him work at Weta Workshop, Studio Mosh, Working Dog and numerous studios in and around his native Australia and New Zealand. For an artist who's CV lists video games Valorant and League of Legend, as well as films such as Men In Black: International, and the forthcoming Avatar sequels, that's impressive.

His paintings, both personal and professional, feature explosions of colour. They're loose and active, and rarely let the eye settle. He tells us it was never a conscious choice to make

**Computer screens can't capture all the subtleties of colours in real life... ■**

colour a dominant part of his art. "While I was defining my approach to painting I played with colour in many ways until it began to look appealing to me... and I mean not just realistic, but appealing and pleasurable," Logan explains. "I do that with many elements in my work, but I think the general audience notices colour first and they're less likely to pay attention to other fundamentals like perspective, contrast and form language."

He goes on, telling us colour in his art is "hedonistically motivated" and tuned to bring pleasure. "It goes beyond simply using it as a utility to describe a scene, and more into the realm of exaggeration and idealisation to make it 'juicy' and almost tactile. Computer screens can't capture all the subtleties of colours in real life, so ➤

» I think that's almost necessary to fill the gaps."

There's a sense of joy to Logan's work – a vitality that keeps you looking. He says experimentation was the most important aspect of his art education. It's a motivation he continues to work with, and believes once you've learned the rules of art and have understood the theories behind good paintings, you need to break them.

"You need to push the limits of your tastes and treat art on a whole as organic and constantly evolving," he says. "How far can you push something before you feel it start to break? When you approach those boundaries you're probably farther than many others would dare to tread."

In respect of his own art, shape and colour are a focus of Logan's experiments, but stresses you can realistically play with and find new ideas in anything. "Drawing some armour? Make the pauldrons ludicrously big. Give that pirate character 20 more parrots. Make that sunlight 10 times brighter. You don't know what works until you try it!"

## STUDIO VS FREELANCE

Some of Logan's desire to find a bold style can be drawn from a need to stand out from the crowd. Working in studios around Melbourne proved encouraging, but the artist says it pales in comparison to industry hotspots like Los Angeles. Logan knew if he

### TANTRUM

How do you paint angry yet colourful characters? This is Logan's skill: His characters can offer a range of emotions and remain bright and engaging.



wanted to be part of bigger projects while continuing to live in Australia, he needed to go freelance.

"This affected my art by giving me a good reason to 'stand out' from the crowd. Online you're competing with the entire art world, so if your work is memorable, affecting and highly expressive you're more likely to be remembered," he confides. "Clients will feel like you're offering something to their projects that they can't get anywhere else. I think that knowledge encouraged me to push the boundaries more, because to even survive in the scene my work needs to resonate with a lot of people."

## How far can you push something before you feel it start to break?

Going freelance was a big decision for Logan, but he reveals the work he did in various studios laid the groundwork for his move. The two types of work have competing demands. The life of an artist in a studio is like a "pressure cooker" where you're expected to deliver high standards every day.

"You have constant deadlines and a burning desire to prove yourself to the team," he explains. "These experiences helped increase my skills exponentially in a short time-frame. I was pretty much drawing for eight to 10 hours every day and it was usually stuff that intimidated me. Studio work prepared me well for freelance life afterwards and I recommend every artist gain some sort of studio experience early on, regardless of whether they want to go freelance or in-house in the long term."

Freelance has its own pitfalls. The biggest one, says Logan, is how many artists undervalue themselves. He admits to definitely undercharging for



### DAYLIGHT HORROR

"Part of a series of unsettling horror-inspired monsters with the unusual twist of bright colours and joyful personalities not usually associated with the genre."



### CITY SKETCH

"Many of my artworks are artistic experiments that evolve into fleshed-out new worlds. This is no exception!"

## Artist PROFILE

### Logan Preshaw

**LOCATION:** Australia  
**FAVOURITE ARTISTS:** John Liberto, Craig Mullins, Theo Prins, Sparth, and Muyang Xu  
**MEDIA:** Photoshop, Blender, Procreate, Tilt Brush and 3D-Coat  
**WEB:** artstation.com/wickedinsignia



## THE MELTING LIBRARY

"It was a challenge to create the feeling of a deep data repository and design the enigmatic character residing there. From *In A Late Country*."

his work in the past. His advice to new artists turning freelance is to consider everything in your fee. Every hour should be accounted for, as well as electricity, tax and superannuation. Don't fear negotiation, either. "You need to know what's fair, when to push back and what you can realistically live on," he says.

## REIN IN YOUR WORK HOURS

Maintaining a healthy work-life balance is vital too. Without a studio organising your time you need to show restraint. He explains: "It's easy when working on your own to go over usual work hours, work through nights, or not eat well. Maintaining healthy sleep, eating and work habits will increase your efficiency and it'll take you less time to complete

work, as counterproductive as taking breaks and sleeping longer hours may seem at first."

It's interesting to discover that even with years of experience behind him Logan's not always good at taking his own advice. The work he did on the forthcoming video game Ark 2 was the most satisfying in some time, but was "highly intensive [...] I was eating, sleeping and breathing that project, [I was] just absolutely consumed by it because I wanted to get it right".

The work on that game directly led to landing his role as art director at leading Californian creative production house, West Studio.

Life as a pro artist, either studio-based or freelance, is undoubtedly stressful, but Logan has a clear ➤

## STAY CREATIVE

Discover Logan's advice for maintaining focus...

You may not have heard of it, but Logan recommends the Pomodoro technique for staying focused on the job. It's a simple idea: work for 25 minutes and then take a five-minute break. Do this throughout the working day to relieve stress and return to a job with fresh eyes.

The artist explains: "The value of these breaks is that you can get up, stretch, eat some fruit, step away from the artwork for a bit, or do some quick house chores. I find I lose the 'core' of an artwork if I spend too long looking at it, so hitting reset with a quick break is an essential part of my process."

Thinking more broadly, Logan will often take a break from painting altogether and exercise the right-side of his brain in other ways. This time is spent learning new skills, such as 3D software, playing the guitar or mastering the drums. "Sometimes even playing Minecraft with friends," he jokes. "It really depends on what interests you, but if you have an interest, pursue it! Don't believe that you need to sacrifice everything else for painting, since creativity is cyclically reinforcing itself and all of it contributes to making you a stronger artist."



**TANGO AND JIG**  
"Spawned from my desire to create a dynamic duo worthy of a team-based hero shooter. Doubles as a loose homage to a certain sci-fi video game franchise..."

## CREATING HAPPY HOLIDAYS

Logan shares his painting process as he develops an epic celebratory scene

### 1 START IN COLOUR

"Most times I like to begin painting directly in colour. When doing this I work broad and flat from the outset, which enables me to select areas quickly to paint into later and gives a good indication of my overall values. Here I'm only concerned with the largest shapes and a vague indication of where details may go. This gives me an idea of the value composition, the distribution of shapes and whether everything's working together in the simplest terms."



### 2 FINDING BALANCE

"As I work into the image and move onto secondary details, I'm constantly aware of the value scheme and image balance. It's my goal to indicate materials, break up the large forms in a pleasing manner and define areas of detail and rest. I'm also pushing and pulling values to alter the balance of the image and direct the viewer to my focal points. A little brighter highlight here, dipping an area into shadow there; every decision you make affects the balance. It pays to be aware of what areas in your image are "blending" into a large mass of value and what areas are popping out."

### 3 SETTING THE SCENE

"It's time to make the focal areas interesting with some tertiary details. Small contextual scene-setting elements are created here, such as the hanging lights, decorations, crowds inside the tents, fireworks and foreground figures. All the while you want to be polishing the image and fixing any mistakes. I also recommend leaving any special post-work (levels, colour balancing, adding glow or special effects) to the very end, since these adjustments will make painting slower and more difficult and it's usually better to keep them available for editing later if needed."





## ANY PLACE YOU WANNA GO

The rodent has the tickets you want: "Just a painting for fun. Always great when I get some time to do something for myself," says Logan.

If you maintain this mindset when committing to a large painting you can get into trouble. While sketching is about invention and the promise of something, painting complex scenes requires a different direction.

Logan explains: "If you paint with carelessness and inaccuracy early on, that may lead to mistakes you need to fix later. To solve this I break things down. The more you can break a big painting down into decisive chunks, the less pressure you'll feel and the more confident you can be in your execution. If you know what your first stages are setting up for, it's easier to be confident in them."

## FINAL THOUGHTS

Logan is the kind of artist who wants to share and help other artists, and just like his bright and positive painting, his words matter. We ask him what piece of advice he can share that could make a difference, and he leaves us with these words...

"You're in a massive gallery, and the walls are covered with all the amazing art that's ever been produced, today and throughout history. However, there's a gap. On the far wall in front of you, there's a space between all the gilded frames and incredible artworks. That space represents the artist that would blow your mind... you would die for them, you're their biggest fan and their work is everything you ever wanted to see. Except they don't exist yet – it's just a blank space."

"I believe we all have that 'blank space', but it's different for everyone. No-one's dream artist is the same. I think the most fulfilling goal you can have as an artist is to fill that space with your own work." ■

» outlook to overcome the hurdles thrown our way and stay creative. "Take in life!" he states. "Inspiration is everywhere, and sometimes all it takes is 'switching on'. When you step outside, don't just take it for granted: observe the light, shapes, history in the architecture, the way people move, the clothes they wear. Read books – anything that interests you. Look at some of your favourite artworks, but

really look... dissect them and let them take you in, reverse engineer them. I'm at my least creative when I forget to observe and be inspired by the small things."

When it comes to creating his art Logan has some particular ways of working that can benefit all artists. Some of this comes from gaining the right perspective. For example, he says the defining feature of sketching is confidence. "You aren't setting up for any big finales, so it's easy to commit to inaccuracy and looseness. That is fun to look at as a viewer, since they'll see the possibility of the artwork as much as the art itself."

**■ Inspiration is everywhere, and sometimes all it takes is 'switching on' ■**

**SKYLINE**  
"Another piece from *From In A Late Country*. The goal here was to... create the feeling of being trapped in a sprawling futuristic city, with freedom far on the horizon."

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### Issue 201 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.



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## LAUREN BROWN

“We’re out here too and there’s a lot of stuff that we can do with these characters and the way we present ourselves”

Inspired by nature, fashion and the desire for greater diversity, this illustrator’s reputation is sure to grow, finds **Ian Dean**

W himsical, ornate and elegant, Lauren Brown’s illustrations for her own series, humorously dubbed the nouveau garden by the artist, are striking interpretations of the traditional art movement. Each one is themed around an element in nature we all take for granted, but in Lauren’s hands becomes a window into a new world.

“The moment I saw Alphonse Mucha’s work, I was just like, ‘Oh my God, this is exactly what I wanted’, because there was something so beautiful about the graphic design approach, but also the way that he treated his figures as women. The drapery of fabrics, the elegance... it’s almost like royalty of how they were framed by flowers.”

To get to that wow moment Lauren talks like it was a turning point, but revealing more about her artistic

journey it’s clear this was always where she was meant to be. As a child Lauren drew copiously from nature and sketched animals. “I just loved everything: how animals worked, and how they moved and how they interacted,” she says, revealing how she would create stories and adventures for them. Later, her interests took in fashion as well as fantasy art, and everything began to click.

### LIMITED IMAGINATIONS

There was something missing, however, and that was herself. Growing up, Lauren never saw herself in the art she loved.

“I remember walking around halls of many conventions, looking at the fantasy art displays, and just seeing no people of colour whatsoever,” says Lauren. “This is fantasy. Why wouldn’t there be people of colour? This is the lowest common denominator of diversity you could put in these realms, and yet we just don’t see any people who look like us. So a part of my aim is meeting people who look like us in those settings that I love to see. [...] We’re out here too and there’s a lot of stuff that we can do with these characters and the way we present ourselves.”

The Mushroom Queen illustration, part of the nouveau garden series, ➤

### Artist PROFILE



Lauren Brown

LOCATION: US

FAVOURITE ARTISTS: Geneva Benton, Loish, Alphonse Mucha, Sachin Teng and Claire Wending

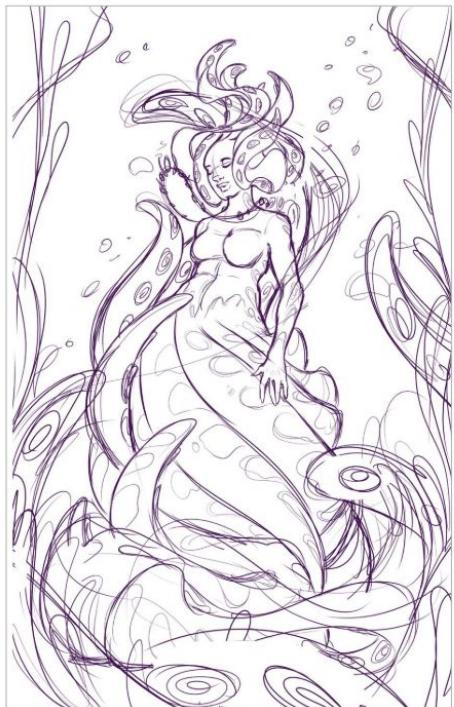
MEDIA: Pen and ink, Photoshop  
WEB: labillustration.com



## LOC JEWELLERY

"Someone actually reached out to me saying that they wanted to make loc jewellery that was actually mushrooms. So I'm going to be collaborating with this artist to make some actual wearable mushroom loc jewellery and I'm super-excited for that to happen."

# Interview



» is representative of the artist's approach. This grew from an unusual cluster of mushrooms Lauren had spotted. Starting with a simple sketch she began peeling apart the panicle to craft the character's outfit. Her own hair and jewellery inspired the Mushroom Queen's long elegant locs that mirror the mushroom stalks, framing the character. Inspired by Alphonse Mucha? Of course, but the

## OCTOPUS MERMAID

"It's amazing to see how much space there still is to create positive representation of black characters or black presenting characters."



## “It was really important to me to make a character that had hair like mine...”

artist's own life is represented in her illustrations, too.

"It was really important to me to make a character that had hair like mine, because I just love seeing that, and I love seeing that representation in art," she shares. "And I'd like to represent people who look like me and my art, because historically we've been extremely underrepresented, especially black women, in illustration and fantasy illustration."

Even in her own art, when starting out Lauren says she fell into the same



trap of drawing largely white characters, which restricted her own imagination. That's what the media around her had reflected.

"It was interesting," she comments, "because I look back at my younger self, and I'm like, 'Why were you making these characters?'; but really I wasn't to blame. It was just what I was exposed to."

## DEALING WITH CRITICS

The more of herself Lauren puts into her art, the harder it could be to take criticism. But she's become far more philosophical about critique over the years. Life in a video game studio's art team, and now as art director, means she can easily distinguish between constructive and destructive criticism.

"Every artist has gotten different criticisms over the years. I definitely have. It can be really hard at first because it's like taking a little piece of your soul and putting it on the table and telling people to look at this part of me and tell me what you think about it. It's basically thinking that somebody is criticising a fundamental part of who you are. And that can be really painful for a lot of people."

Now, she says, it's possible to separate herself from what other people think, and take on board other people's opinions. Yet that anxiety can still creep in, and it was notable during lockdown when Lauren examined her work. She discovered a lot of unfinished paintings and illustrations held back by her own internal ➤

## FRAMING THE SPORE CROWN QUEEN

The artist reveals that a love of animation is her secret weapon to creating dynamic portraits...



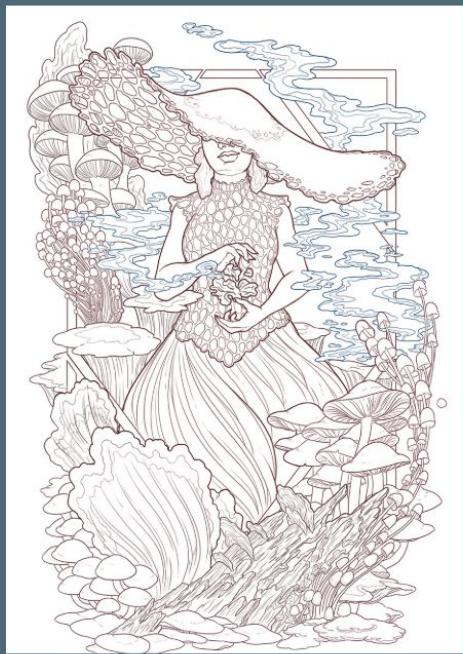
### 1 DEFINE THE POSE

"I explore movement in each painting like an animation. [...] It's basically a sole frame of animation."



### 2 COMPOSE MOVEMENT

"There's usually a very clear line of direction where the viewer's eye goes when you see any of my illustrations."



### 3 USING PHOTOSHOP

"The graphic design aspects don't come until the final part of the process [...] I have a general idea of the framing I want to use, but it usually comes at the very end once I have everything else. It's like, 'Okay, now how do I frame this the best way possible?' And that's where the last day comes in."



# Interview



## TIEFLING

Inspired by Adeyanju Adeleke, Tiefling caused a stir: "Why wouldn't there be a Tiefling with an afro?"

» critic. What would happen if she finished a piece? Or completed it in a way that didn't make her proud? Would she let people down if her art didn't match up to expectations? The anxiety was evident.

"I was putting this invisible expectations of myself, on my own art, and it was holding me back from actually producing more content," Lauren says honestly. "I've put that pressure on myself to have to make each piece the best of the best, or it has to be my magnum opus, or it has to be something that's stellar enough to be featured somewhere, or get, you know, a certain amount of likes on social media."

The spectre of social media has "definitely put a lot of pressure on



## EASY RIDER

"With a lot of my illustrations, there's usually some kind of narrative being told – whether big or small – and I want to continue to be able to create that."

“I have this big world in my head that I haven’t gotten a chance to put out there”

many different artists," she says, "including myself," to create art that looks good presented in your online collection, in your established style, in a nine-by-nine grid on Instagram. The life of a modern illustrator is fraught with anxieties. It's why Lauren set up the Painted In Color podcast, where

guest artists discuss their issues and raise awareness of mental health concerns, and offer advice. "It helped me establish a better relationship with social media," she says.

## WORDS AND PICTURES

Lauren is now working up her old ideas, including the graceful Rose Queen design that has sat dormant for a year. It's ignited her imagination and drive, too. She's always loved exploring narrative in her illustrations and explains every character she's created has a story to tell – one that fits into a broader project.

"I have this big world in my head that I haven't gotten a chance to really put out there. Part of my exploration is really exploring that writing, exploring that narrative, developing characters, and developing a world," she says.

Lauren is putting the same detail into her written words as she is the line-art that brings her queens to life. The goal for Lauren is to create stories where the language and beat of her words match the whimsy and sense of movement found in her art.

"It's going to be a process; writing is really scary. But it's something that I really, really love to do," she says. "That's what one of my objectives are for the rest of this year." ■



## FAMILIAR

On Alfonso Mucha's influence: "I just love that presentation of women because it just made them look so elegant and powerful. I took a lot of influence and inspiration from that influence."





**WE ARE NOT PREY.**

"I didn't get any training on how to render dark skin or how to texture hair [...] And I think that's such a loss, because that's such a big part of art."

# Dela Longfish

This vis-dev's sketchbook is a delightful rogue's gallery of skeletal characters, amphibious samurai and wandering aliens...

## WANDERING WARRIOR

"One drawing always inspires other ideas and what began as one character can quickly turn into a cast of characters."



## SPACE PILOT

"Side-kicks and secondary characters allow the opportunity to add visual variety to your cast of characters."

“What began as one character can quickly turn into a cast of characters”

## SKELETON CREW

"I tend to do multiple explorations on a character, exploring all the different looks one design could take."

## Artist PROFILE

### Dela Longfish

LOCATION: US



Dela has been working for over 10 years as a visual development artist in video games and film for clients including Santa Monica Studio, Lucasarts and ILM. He's currently the lead character concept artist at Santa Monica Studio where he's working on the next instalment in the God of War game series.

[artstation.com/delalongfish](http://artstation.com/delalongfish)

# Sketchbook Dela Longfish

## DAY OF THE DEAD

"Day of the Dead celebrations were a big inspirations for these designs."



## ALIEN TRACKER

"Sometimes I start with just a mass of scribbles and see what emerges out of it."



## SCI-FI HERO

"I tend to jump around between subject matters. One day I'll be drawing fantasy characters and the next something more sci-fi inspired."

# Sketchbook

“I first started using blue pencils while doing animation pencil tests back in school”

## SKIN 'N' BONES

“At one point this rooster skeleton was going to be the side-kick.”

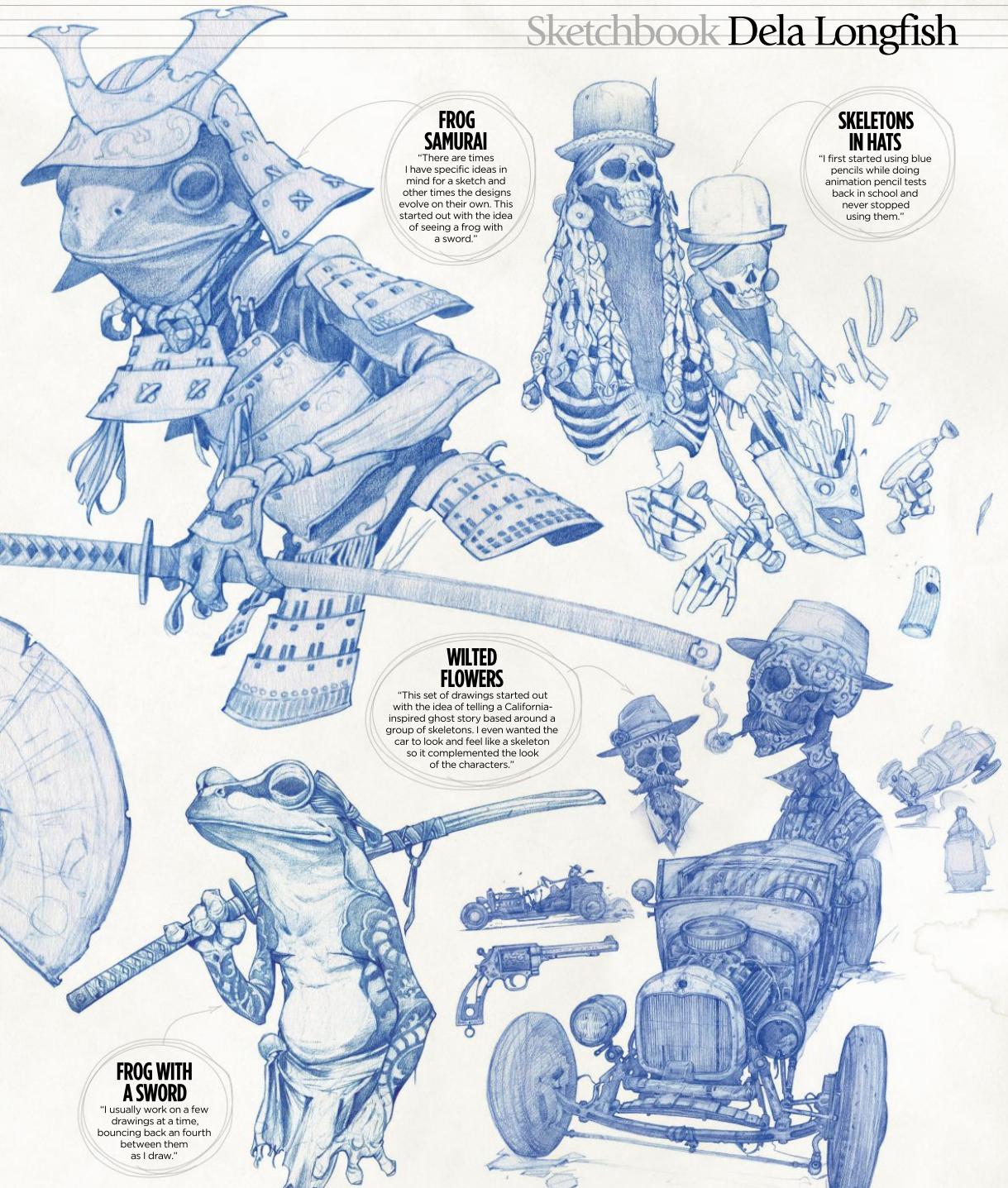
## PUMPKIN FAIRY

“Another version of a character who keeps watch over all the pumpkins. This version is a bit more benevolent.”

## SCI-FI ZOMBIE SAMURAI

“Sometime I don't know where ideas come from, but I always love seeing where they end up.”

# Sketchbook Dela Longfish



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

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Advice from the world's best artists



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Aryan Oberto paints a portrait without overthinking anything.

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Character artist Anna Cavasos balances beauty and horror.

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Ken Coleman mixes scanned action figures and digital paint.

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Combine CG techniques with photobashing, with Oliver Beck.

### 70 How to sculpt a real dinosaur

Glen Southern breaks down his ZBrush sculpting workflow.

## Photoshop

# HOW TO CREATE SPONTANEOUS ART

**Ayran Oberto** demonstrates the creative approaches he uses to produce colourful portrait art without overthinking anything

### Artist PROFILE

#### Ayran Oberto

LOCATION: Spain

Ayran's digital art explores the stylisation of the human portrait. He also freelances in the advertising, film and video games industries. [artstation.com/ayran](http://artstation.com/ayran)



When ImagineFX contacted me, I was interested to hear that the theme of the cover was to experiment with a painting. This has always been my mission with my personal work, so I was more than happy to approach the cover in the same way.

The idea was to paint a female portrait and for this I went to my comfort zone. My lines, which are always flawed, tend to produce features that I consider particularly

attractive: thick lips, large eyes with long eyelashes, small pointed noses and hair that flows in all directions.

As with my other client work, I start by visualising various options. During this stage what's foremost in my mind is to avoid drawing the same angle. I look for natural angles of the head that would allow for a logical movement of the character's eyes towards the viewer.

Once the sketch with the strongest composition is chosen, it's time to give it maximum visual impact,

using colour. My approach during this stage is to create a sense of randomness using a range of Photoshop tools. I want to combine effects that on initial viewing appear like mistakes, but with a little vision can end up having potential towards the end of the painting process.

Once the colours are finalised, it's time to enjoy discovering the image, using design rules that enable me to reveal attractive shapes in each area that are gradually refined as the painting progresses.

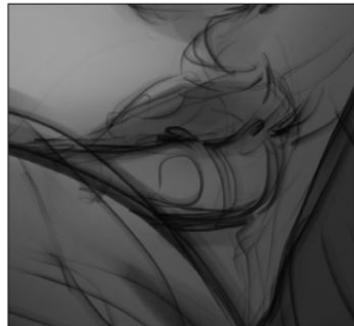
### 1 Sketching the ideas

It all starts with the sketch. A few key words spark ideas and help me write this workshop. My aim is to create different angles of a female head using my visual and muscular memory, and give the viewer the sensation that they're being observed. ➤

In depth Spontaneous art

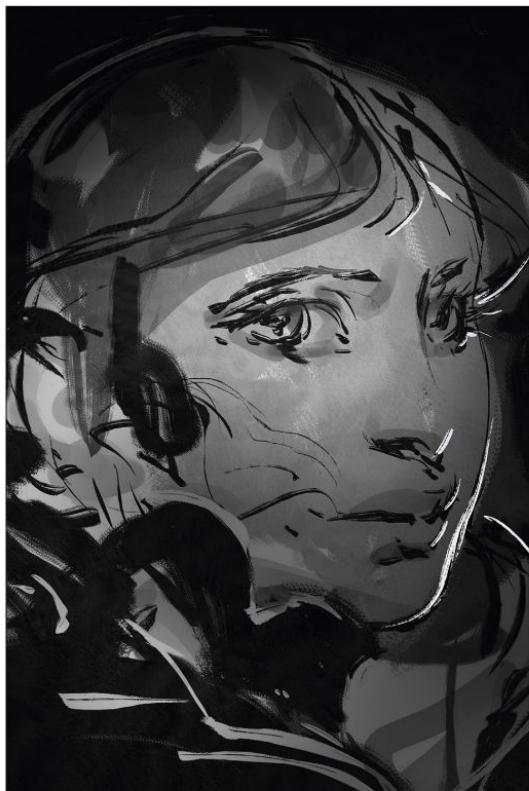


# Workshops



## 2 Wrapping lines over my sketches

As I work on the sketches, I create geometric shapes using lines that seem to surround them. I need to visually feel the shapes and how they change direction, which is dictated by the general angle of the face. With these geometries I seek to create features that attract me – the thick lips, refined nose and large eyes that I mentioned earlier.

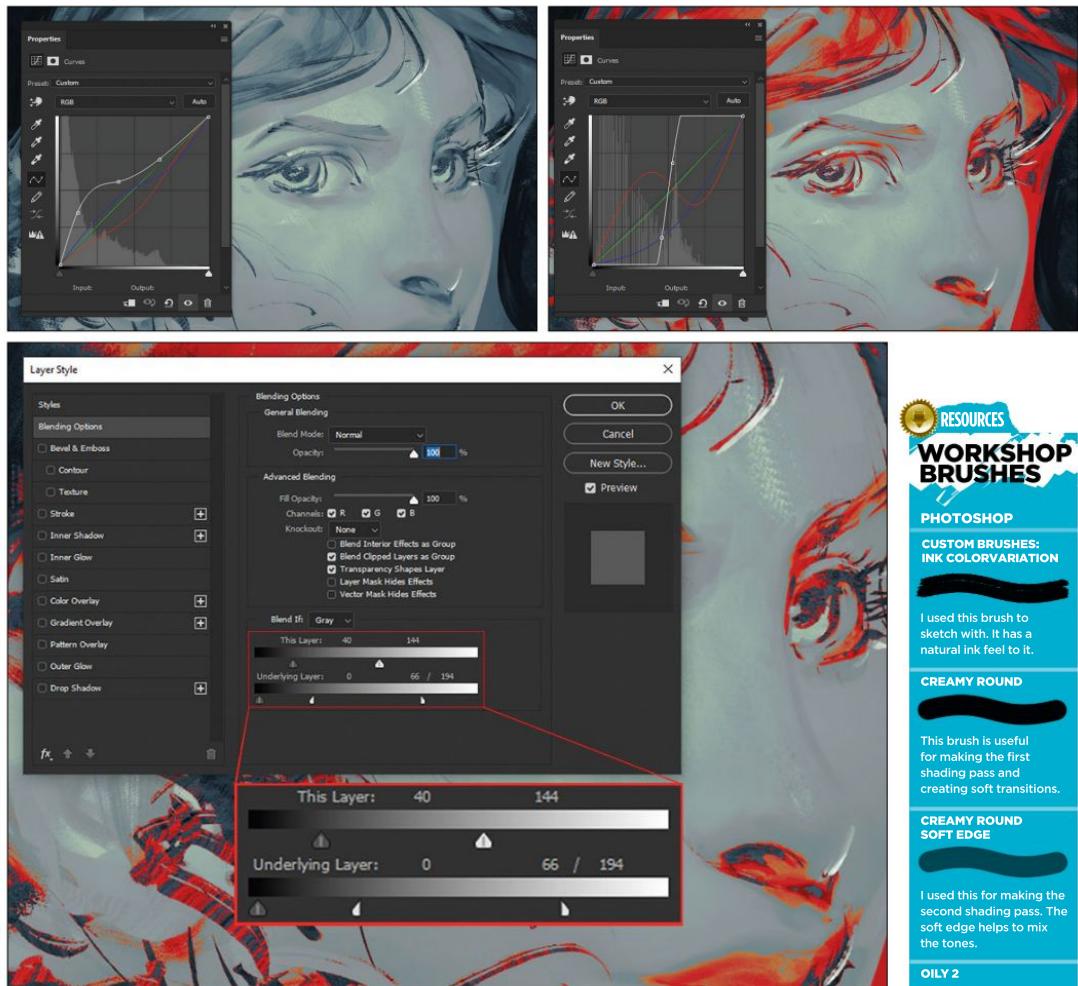


## 3 Finding the light spots

To create the lighting scheme I think that the ideal approach is to centre the light so that all the characteristics of the face can be appreciated in detail. I don't want the face to become lost in shadow. To enhance the silhouette a little more, I draw a second light that gently brushes the edge of the face.

## 4 Form shadows everywhere

With the light already established I have an idea of how to shade, as a result of using a more central light source. I focus on creating form shadows on all the geometric shapes. One feature of the central light source is that it doesn't create large shadow projections, resulting in smooth transitions across the entire face.



## 5 Exploring colour options

For this step I go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Curves. I switch between channels using Alt+2, Alt+3, Alt+4 and Alt+5, and move the curve as I please, which creates colour breaks. Next, I double-click this Adjustment layer to determine how much it blends with the one below in the Layer style>Blending options menu.

**WORKSHOP BRUSHES**

**PHOTOSHOP**

**CUSTOM BRUSHES: INK COLORVARIATION**

I used this brush to sketch with. It has a natural ink feel to it.

**CREAMY ROUND**

This brush is useful for making the first shading pass and creating soft transitions.

**CREAMY ROUND SOFT EDGE**

I used this for making the second shading pass. The soft edge helps to mix the tones.

**OILY 2**

With this brush I was able to give the hair volume and richness.



## 6 Creating a variety of colours

I focus on identifying the potential of each of the results from the previous step. Using the Color Picker, I select the colours that emerged and bring them to other areas of the face by applying brush strokes and taking each of the options in slightly different directions. ➤

# Workshops

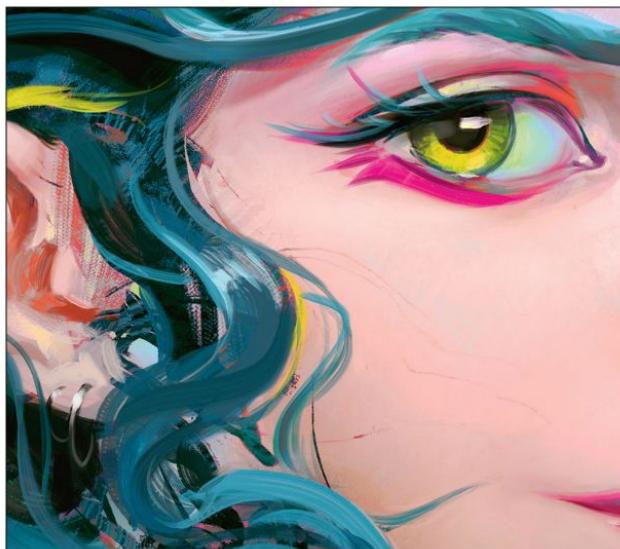


## 7 Combining the options

The art editor likes two colour options: one with a yellowish-blue palette and the other one with a more saturated skin tone. I place the saturated option on a layer beneath the other option and erase the face of the layer on top. This reveals the saturated face and achieves the best combination of the two options.

## 8 Let the game begin

The colour option has already been approved and I'm still aware that there are many errors that I must correct to bring the image to its maximum expression. The most difficult stage has been overcome and now I can start jumping in all directions. I fix and give definition to all the chaos that's still present in the image.



## 9 Contrast and duality

To balance the image I need to think in terms of contrast, which extends to more concepts than just value contrast. My intention is to create a lot of life and information in the hair so that the softness of the face stands out more. In addition, the eye of the viewer will naturally try to settle on these areas.

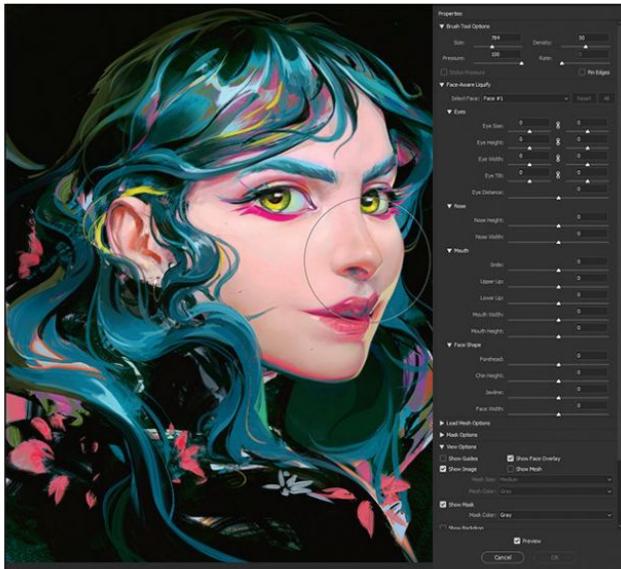
## 10 Breaking down the big parts

The sketch is the record of a very general idea and each element of the portrait itself is a simple one. Much like a rendering engine that subdivides clustered pixels to increase definition, I decide to break all those elements into smaller ones. This will increase the feeling of high definition within the illustration.



### 11 Everything flows

In this step I check that the lines of the image always guide me towards the face. The curved lines are an excellent tool for this: in addition to supporting the viewer's gaze, they can also be used to generate a sensation of movement, removing any possibility of the illustration coming across as static and rigid.



### 12 Liquify without remorse

I use the Liquify tool to correct elements that have already been refined. I move them while checking the thumbnail to achieve a more coherent positioning of the facial features and hair. For this I go to Filter>Liquify, click the Forward Warp Tool on the left-hand panel and push the forms as required.



### 13 Picking out the highlights

To give a final touch to the image, I create a new layer and set the Blend mode to Color Dodge. Then I apply very soft strokes with a neutral, desaturated colour over the highlights with the Soft Airbrush from my custom brushes collection, slightly increasing the unreal magical tone and quality of the light.



### 14 Letting go of the illustration

I can't deny that all the work I do for clients increases my nervousness, and that as a consequence I find it difficult to know when to stop adding details. If I can't control myself at this stage, I may end up destroying the image. The solution is to draw on my experiences, send the file as finished and wait for feedback.

# Maya, Mari & Photoshop FROM 2D CONCEPT TO 3D PORTRAIT

Character artist **Anna Cavasos** balances the themes of beauty and horror to visualise a mysterious sorceress enjoying a delicate snack



Something draws me to the contrast between pretty and repulsive. That's what initially caught my eye with Lena Richard's concept piece ([lenarichards.artstation.com](http://lenarichards.artstation.com)); the woman was beautiful enough to capture your attention, but what she was doing was so gross you couldn't look away. As a student, I was

searching for a concept that would give the most intrigue.

This piece starts with the sculpt. I look at classical beauty Emilia Clarke, whose features would work well contrasted with the scars. When considering the robe, jewellery and props, I want to go for the essence of a mysterious sorceress, whose intentions are unknown. I want her to have hand-carved wooden props,

real gold jewellery and a beautifully embroidered fabric to all tell a story.

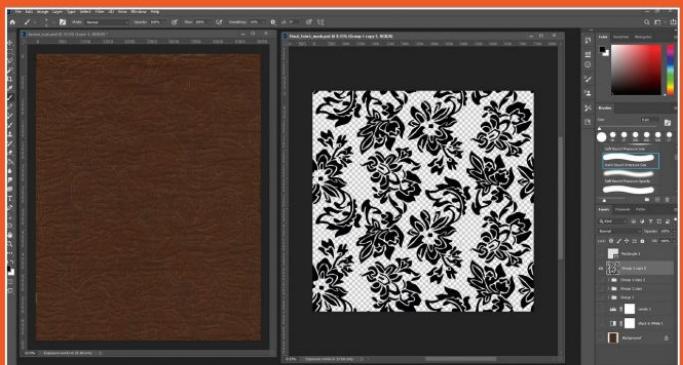
I also want to show her skin being pale and discoloured, as if she resides deep in a cave, and the viewer has just stumbled upon her. I study cave-dwelling animals and albino humans. Albino skin has the lack of red that I need, but the patchiness and translucency of salamander skin was necessary for the creepiness.

## How I create... A CUSTOM PATTERED FABRIC



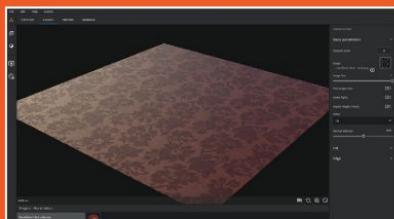
### 1 Finding the perfect fabric

I search online for a fabric texture, but can't find the right one. I decide to search a few fabric stores, and end up finding this brown floral print. Knowing I only needed the perfect pattern helps me to whittle down the examples to the one that works.



### 2 Creating the seamless texture

I scan the fabric and import it into Photoshop. Using the Offset tool and with careful painting, I create a black and white mask that can then be taken into Substance Alchemist.



### 3 Using Substance Alchemist

In Alchemist, I use a base fabric with a small thread count and coppery colour. Using the mask that I created earlier, I make an embroidery layer that has a large thread and lower roughness. This creates a nice breakup in the specular pass.

# In depth 3D portrait

## Animate the head glow

Her animated head glow is done using Nuke. I paint a floral black and white pattern in Mudbox, and assign it as a V-Ray extraTex pass. I multiply it with a Noise node in Nuke and then animate it so it has some slow movement.

## Create the hair

The hair is done in XGen. The braid is done with a tube groom, with three cylinders braided around one another. The eyebrows and eyelashes were lighter to evoke a sense of albinism and unify the portrait.

## Skin texture

I texture the skin using scans from Texturing.xyz. Using Mari, I projection paint the multichannel displacement maps and albedo maps (using the Paint Through tool). I make adjustments to ensure the skin is nice and pale, as well as add veins and blotchiness. In Maya, I use V-Ray's AlSurface material for the subsurface scattering.

## Make the butterflies

I sculpt these in ZBrush, making a high poly mesh and a lower poly. I sculpt the veins and breakup, so that the specular would catch those details. The specular map is an opalescent colour, and the material is a blend between a normal material and a subsurface one.

## Craft the jewellery

Her sleeve, hood, and braided jewellery are all achieved with MASH inside Maya. I create simple small meshes that would capture specular well, and place curves where I want them. I also create a few variations so they wouldn't look repetitive. MASH is great for modelling quick random forms like this.

## Lighting and compositing

Less is more when it comes to lighting. It's hard to hide parts of a piece you're proud of, but the viewer can fill in the blanks. It also tends to add more intrigue when you can barely make out what's there.



# ZBrush, KeyShot, Photoshop & Painter CREATE RETRO ART FROM 3D SCANS

**Ken Coleman** mixes scanned action figures and digital painting to create 80s-inspired fantasy production art



**Artist PROFILE**  
**Ken Coleman**  
LOCATION: Ireland

Ken lectures in game art and design at Clonmel Digital Campus in Ireland. He also designs for clients such as Catalyst Games and Morbid Angel, [artofkencoleman.com](http://artofkencoleman.com)



Combining my love of customising action figures and kit-bashing 3D models for concepts is exciting for me. Over the past year, I've developed a library of 3D scanned assets, including character heads, armour and weapons to composite scenes of my favourite characters from the world of He-Man, Skeletor and the Masters of the Universe.

The vintage toy box art, 80s iconic movie poster art and Frank Frazetta are strong influences on the type of finish I go for in my nostalgic imagery. In this workshop I'll explain my process, from how I 3D-scan and prepare the models, before importing them into ZBrush. I'll show you how to use basic ZBrush navigation tools such as Gizmo, Transpose, Subtools and Brushes to build a character,

combining a model I previously posed and exported in Daz 3D.

The workshop will continue on the lighting and rendering of different passes of the model in KeyShot. These KeyShot renders will then be combined in Photoshop to build an image mixed with my own hand-painted backgrounds and textures and then given a final paintover in Corel Painter to get that 1980s-style oil-painted finish.



**GET YOUR  
RESOURCES**  
See page 6 now!

## 1 Preparing for the 3D scans

I prepare a figure in Daz 3D – I have a favourite for my Masters of the Universe projects called Dark Guard. I combine him with some animal and beast morphs to get the clawed hands and feet. I then export this as an object file to be used in ZBrush. I scan the various parts of the figures with my EinScan-SE 3D scanner. The larger-scale models are great for detail on the face, but the armour parts on the seven-inch scale figures are perfect for blocking in 3D.

## 2 Building the ZBrush figure

I import the Daz 3D model into ZBrush and press T to make sure the model is functioning in the 3D space. Using the Subtool palette on the right of the screen I duplicate the figure and press Import. I select the 3D scanned elements by repeating this process. Every time I duplicate a Subtool and press Import, the new model part will replace the previous one in the composition. I have to be careful to scale the 3D scanned parts using the Gizmo and Transpose tools – not all scanned parts are correct when imported.



## 3 Lighting in KeyShot

To import the model from ZBrush to KeyShot, I go to the Render menu, select External Render, turn on KeyShot and then press the BPR button. This will import the model directly to KeyShot. Once the model appears in KeyShot I go to Edit>Add Geometry-Sphere. I can then make a light source. To do this, I double-click the sphere model in the scene window in the top right of the screen. When I click the light bulb symbol that opens beneath it, I can change the material to Area Light>Set to Watts. ➤



# Workshops



## 4 Materials in KeyShot

KeyShot enables you to drag and drop a material on to any of the separate Subtool elements to colour it. You can also apply a material to the whole model by dragging the material over to the Scene section and dropping it on to the ZBrush label, which is the model and all its elements. If you do this you must press the Lock button in the bottom window twice and Press Unlink Materials to add different materials individually.

## 5 List of KeyShot materials

I use the same materials apart from the character colours to achieve the right look and translucency of light. Skeletor's face is bone, his skin is electric blue and I use metallic and non-metallic colours for his armour. The other KeyShot materials are GOZ Human Skin and Blue WHITE RIM LIGHT. I export each render as a hi-res PSD file with the clown option turned on to create a silhouette to use for selections in Photoshop.

## 6 Combining the layers

Once my renders have completed I open the basic colour one in Photoshop. Next, I drag the other layers into this file as Smart Layers. I set the GOZ layer and Blue Rim layer to Soft Light Blend mode. Once I'm happy with the level of translucency of all my layers, I select them all, copy them and merge them (the shortcuts are Ctrl/Cmd+J followed by Ctrl/Cmd+E). I duplicate this layer one more time for the next phase.



## 7 Face lift with Camera RAW

Photoshop's Camera Raw filter is a powerful tool for adding a degree of punch to your illustrations. Select the top-most merged layer copy and press Filter>Camera Raw Filter. You can see from the image how I've placed my sliders. My approach is always Shadows up, Clarity up, Saturation up slightly and Highlights and Whites down. This extra tweak really gives a burst of colour and detail to your 3D render.



## 8 Adding texture and detail

I find that using photos of rusty surfaces and stained concrete are fantastic for creating detail and depth in images. The concrete and porous stone is my favourite textures for the skin. I drag these elements on top of the figure and I mask them using the silhouette from the clown layer that I exported from KeyShot. My painted Polyfilla layer is especially useful and fun for creating a bone-like effect on Skeletor's face.



## 9 Composing a layout

Now that I'm happy with the overall figure, I group all the elements. I create a new file the same size as an ImagineFX page at 22x30cm but at 450dpi for higher resolution. Most of my work is at least A2 in size at 300dpi. I now drag the figure group across and start to place background elements and particles to build a scene. I have folders of hand-painted backdrops, particles and objects to help build scenes quickly.



## 10 Hand-painted backgrounds

I add stock photos of some Irish coastal landscapes and one of my hand-painted backgrounds. I'm lucky that there are many local landscapes and textures to help enhance my work. Using my local environment in my art is important to me. My hand-painted clouds were created on various large canvas, photographed and combined in Photoshop to create a set of various backgrounds that I can drag and drop into my art.



## 11 Adding my own particles

I create my own particles by taking a photo of baby powder on black craft paper, as well as creating particles with Painter's Particle brushes. I add these elements by placing them in the scene and setting the Blend mode to Screen. I also create gradients of green by selecting the colour from the glows on the 3D figure's body. Using the Gradient tool and cloud brushes I create directional light that matches the model.



## 12 Final prep before paintover

Before bringing the composition into Painter for a paintover, I click Image> Duplicate to create a copy of the file. I select the figure's outline, then flatten the image and copy and paste just the figure over itself. I now have options to use Blender brushes on the figure and background separately in Painter. Using large oil brushes for the background and more refined fractal brushes for the skin gives a nice sense of depth.



## 13 Breaking up the image in Painter or Fresco

You can save the file to the cloud so you can open it on an iPad and use Blender and fine art brushes in an art app such as Procreate or Fresco. However, I choose to use Painter on the desktop. I use a limited number of Brushes on the merged layers. My favourites are Stencil Oily Blender and Fractal Blender. I also place some white or brightly coloured, thin highlight lines on a new layer with the Spring Concept Creature brush. Shown here: the before and after versions in Painter.



## 14 Finishing up in Photoshop

I reopen the image in Photoshop and set the highlights to a Soft Light blend mode. I also experiment with the Opacity of the painted layers and sometimes mask off areas where I may have gone overboard with Painter. The idea is to balance the abstract brush work with the detail and silhouette of the final image. Sometimes I merge and duplicate everything on one final layer and use an Unsharp mask set at 200 per cent at 0.2 pixels for clarity. Finally, my 3D scanner is costly, but try experimenting with smartphone apps such as Bellus3D and LIDAR 3D to create 3D models of everyday objects to use in your artwork. ●

## Blender, Cinema 4D, Houdini & Photoshop

# APPLY CG SKILLS TO A FANTASY SCENE

**Oliver Beck** reveals how to get more from your digital tools by combining advanced CG techniques, photobashing and digital painting



## Artist PROFILE

### Oliver Beck

LOCATION: Germany

Oliver is a freelance concept artist and illustrator. When he's not working for clients he enjoys finding new challenges in his personal work and improving his art skills. [ifkm.ag/oliver-b](http://ifkm.ag/oliver-b)



When it comes to personal work I rarely have a clear idea of what I want to do. I constantly carry out small experiments here and there, and sometimes they evolve into something larger.

Before I started this artwork I had been exploring foliage scattering and creating vegetation in CG for a couple of weeks, and decided that it was time to bring everything I had learned together in a larger piece.

Eighty per cent of the foliage in this illustration was done in 3D, and it was surprisingly straightforward.

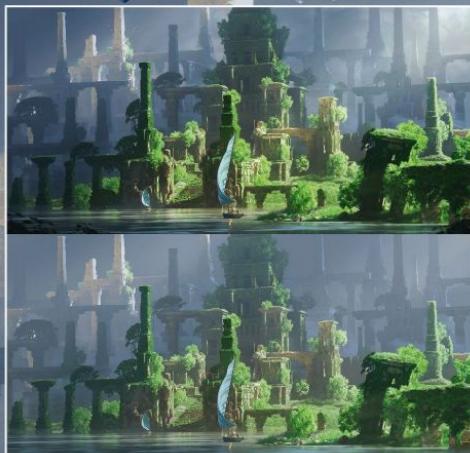
Aside from pushing my technical skills I wanted to create an artwork with a sense of adventure. I love portraying huge architecture in my art, usually with a touch of fantasy or a bit of a Dark Souls vibe. I've only recently begun to get into characters, which gives me better opportunities to tell stories and incorporate storytelling in my pieces. So I thought it was about time to bring

these two elements together. I'm very excited by the possibilities this approach opens up for future artworks, I'm sure that this piece is only a glimpse of what is to come!

For now, though, I'm looking forward to continuing my work in the realm of fantasy environments. I've been reading The Silmarillion – the origin story of Middle-earth – and am very inspired by Tolkien's tale. Maybe I'll illustrate a scene or location from the book for my next work, but no promises yet!



## SAVING TIME IN 3D



### Make a difference

One of the most important steps to finalising the image is applying some post effects. Motion blur, noise, vignettes and lens flares can make a world of a difference. Experiment with them on different layers and see what you can come up with.

### WORKSHOP BRUSHES

#### PHOTOSHOP

#### CUSTOM BRUSHES: TWO-SIDED

I've been using this brush for as long as I can remember. It can handle pretty much anything you throw at it.

#### JUICY EDGES

This brush is great for applying final touches on fog, waves or grass! But don't overuse it. Both of these brushes are from One Pixel Brush ([onepixelbrush.com](http://onepixelbrush.com)).

### Atmospheric touches

I like to incorporate fog and atmosphere in the later stages of the artwork. I'll mask out an area, then apply brushstrokes with a low Opacity and using the Smudge tool to refine the edges. The detail in the architecture was added by masking and using various blend modes on my ambient light render pass as well as photobashing.

### Reusing a side-project

The statue with the missing head is a side experiment done in Houdini. I bring in one of the statues, remesh it, and split it into parts using the Voronoi node. I could have just removed the head by painting over it, but I love doing these small experiments and Houdini is always a lot of fun to use.

### The details matter

To make these little guys I pose some characters in Daz3D, give them basic clothes, and even swords (although you can't see it here). They're cautiously walking up the stairs ready to defend themselves. The torches were created in 3D, with an image of flames used as an emissive texture.



## Composing the scene

I utilise the characters as well as the foreground elements to lead our eyes to the focal point of the image, which is the bottom of the staircase. This is additionally framed in a window composition by the broken pillars in the image's centre. All of the other elements either point towards, or lead the viewer back to this point of interest.



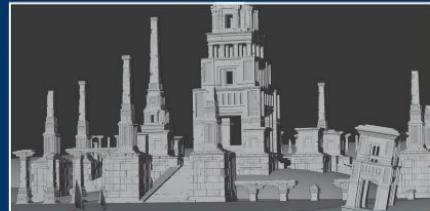
## Photoshop tweaks

The 3D render gave me a great headstart on the foliage. Later on I used some motion and Gaussian blur effects as well as the Smudge tool to remove the detail and sharpness from the Render. In some places I used the Mixer brush or cloned existing elements to make the foliage more dense or to add variety.

## Create the water

The water in this image is, aside from a few brushstrokes and colour adjustments, fully 3D. I create a simple material in Octane, using the internal autogenerated noise texture in the Bump and Roughness channels. I then adjust the Noise settings until I achieve a result that I'm happy with – easy and quick!

## How I compose... A DRAMATIC ENVIRONMENT



### 1 Quick blockout using Blender

I start with a quick layout in Blender. I use some pre-made assets for the architecture, stretch out a couple of ellipses for the terrain, and place a simple plane for my water material. I later add some boats from another project for scale and storytelling purposes. I'm just looking for an idea and a striking composition.



### 2 Materials and lighting

I import my Blender model into Cinema 4D. I make use of Cinema 4D and Octane for most of my artwork. I establish some basic materials, add fog and create a quick lighting setup. If you have a good composition, this can get you pretty far and give you a good idea if the image is heading in the right direction.



### 3 Final render

This step involves the most amount of work. I expand the temple structure, add characters and foliage, refine the lighting and materials, and set up passes for the final render. What you can see here doesn't involve any painting or photobashing – it's all 3D with some quick colour grading! Don't be afraid to embrace 3D tools and techniques in your 2D art.

# ZBrush & Photoshop HOW TO SCULPT A REAL DINOSAUR

**Glen Southern** breaks down his sculpting workflow and techniques when tackling a concept sculpt of an aquatic, aggressive dinosaur



**Artist PROFILE**

**Glen Southern**  
LOCATION: England

Glen runs SouthernGFX, a character and creature design studio. He's been using and training ZBrush for more than 15 years and is a Wacom Ambassador. Recently, he's been creating in the VR space working with companies like Adobe and Gravity Sketch. [southerngfx.co.uk](http://southerngfx.co.uk)



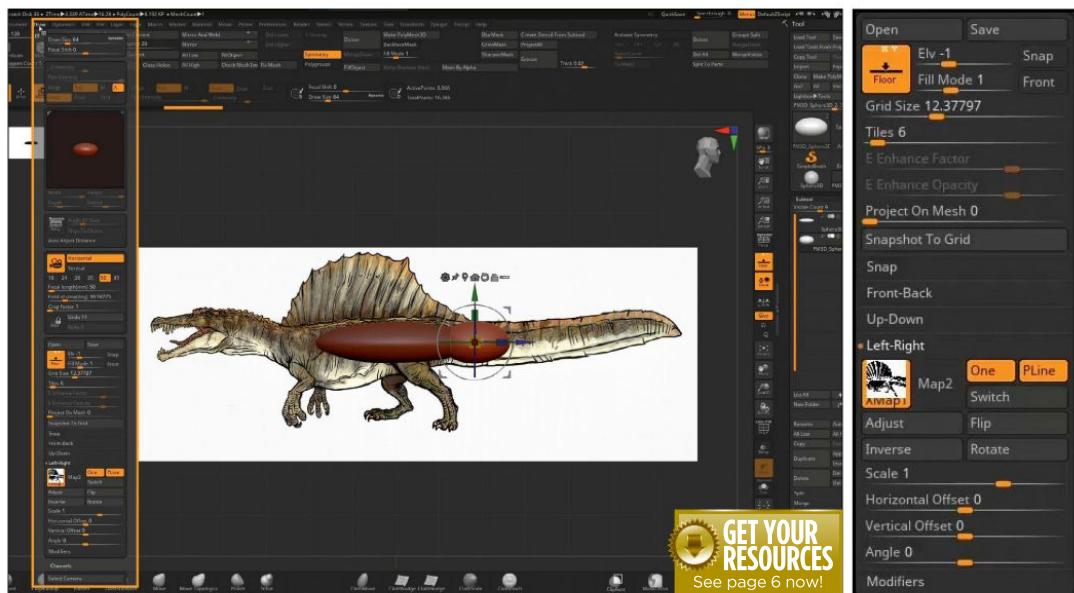
ZBrush is my favourite sculpting package by far, but people can find it intimidating when just starting out. Here I show how to tackle creating a large dynamic dinosaur sculpt.

There are so many ways to start a project like this in ZBrush, and there are lots of confusing tools and feature names like Dynamesh, ZRemesher or the popular ZSpheres. To get you up to speed and simplify the process, I'm using the most basic

of techniques, which is to add simple primitive shapes to block-out the primary form and then use just three or four of the most popular Brushes to add detail. Understanding this sort of workflow, where you block out primary forms and pin down scales and dimensions, then focus on secondary forms (which includes large muscle groups and major landmarks) will help you grasp the fundamentals of ZBrush.

The final step (tertiary detailing) is the one that I love the most. It's

where you get to add the finer details such as scales, wrinkles, pores, creases and cracks in a large dinosaur's skin. I've made alpha images to use with the detailing brushes and I include them with this workshop's resources. With a range of detailing alpha-textures you can really make your sculpt 'pop' off the screen. Whether you go on to paint-over the model for an illustration or use it as part of a 3D print project, you'll have some amazing details on the underwater creature.



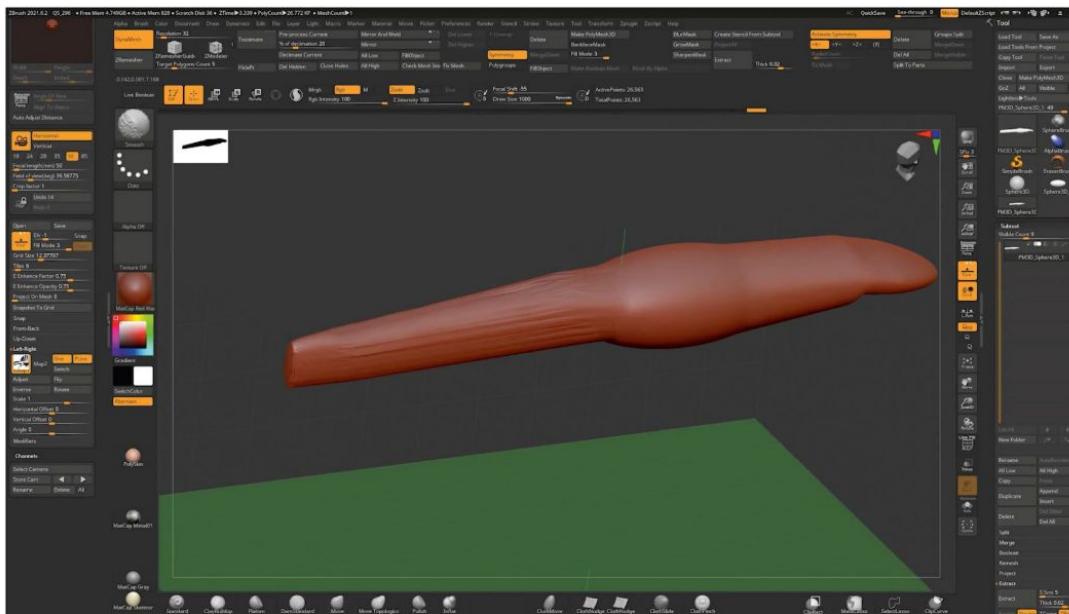
## 1 Reference is king when creating realistic art

Collecting references is how to make something believable. I use a mix of references for this version of a spinosaurus and I start with a skeletal image. In ZBrush you can add your reference to the model rather than to the Viewport window. I decide I would only need a back image, not a full set of back, side and top. The reference images can be added at the bottom of the Draw panel as shown. ➤

In depth Sculpt & detail

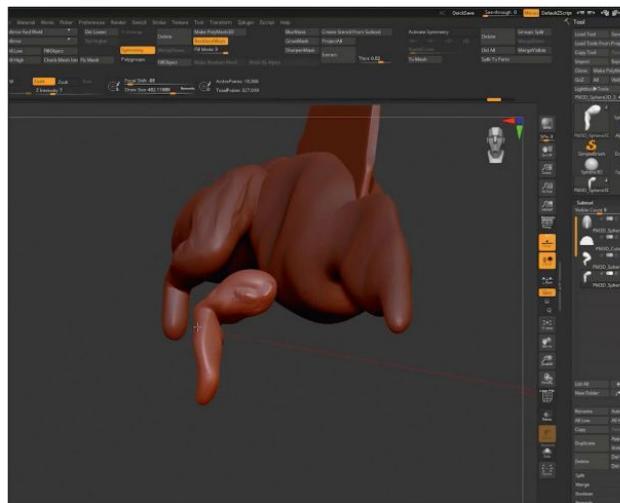
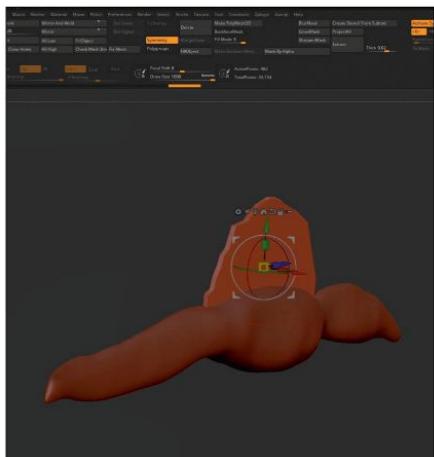


# Workshops



## 2 Different ways to create

There are many ways you can start a model in ZBrush. I was going to use something called ZSpheres – a kind of a virtual clay that contains no geometry – as a base, but decided that building up the form using primitives (simple pre-made shapes) is a better way. I add two spheres and a plane, move them to match the reference images and then used a feature called Dynamesh to merge them all together and remesh them.



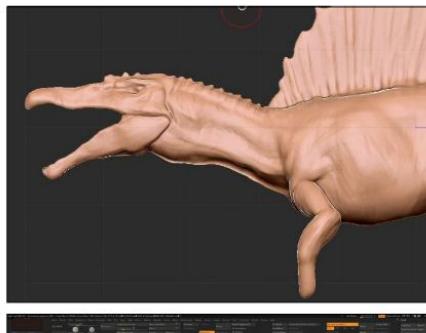
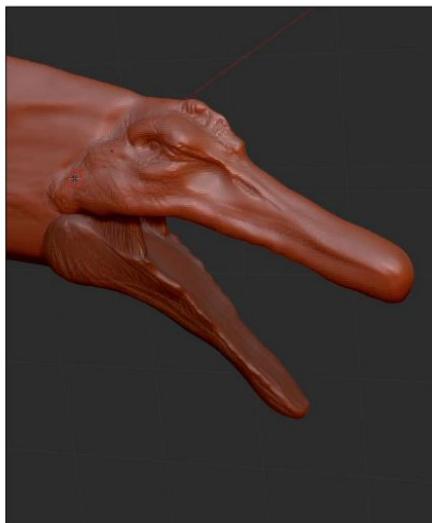
## 3 Primary forms

Primary forms are the building blocks that we use to start creating. They help to establish the overall scale, length, volume and shape of a sculpture. I use a limited amount of ZBrush brushes including Move, Clay Buildup, Flatten and Inflate. I drag the geometry around to match the reference and also kept looking at it from the top to make sure it's reading well from that angle.

## 4 Add basic limbs to the body

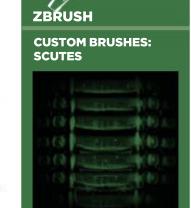
For the limbs I add basic Cylinders from the Tools menu. I use the same brushes to pull and shape them and I keep the Dynamesh feature on so that I can remesh the model as needed. Dynamesh is in the Tool menu and is activated by tapping with your stylus (assuming you're using a graphic tablet) and is perfect for free-form sculpting.

# In depth Sculpt & detail

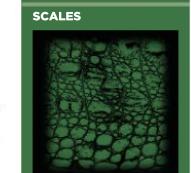


50  
ZBRUSH  
ALPHAS!  
INCLUDING

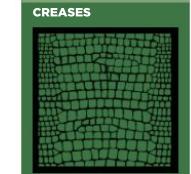
RESOURCES  
WORKSHOP  
BRUSHES



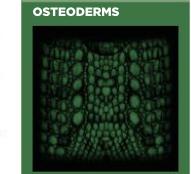
I add a range of 50 alphas to the pack. Scutes are the hard bony plates on the back of the dinosaur.



A well-used brush that's just for adding basic scales down the body.



Crease brushes help to put some deep-score lines all around the creature's underbelly.



Osteoderms are like scutes and are found mostly on the back of the creature.

## 5 Generate a separate jaw

The head is the most dynamic part of this creature and as such I'm happy sculpting him with a closed mouth. I mask off the lower jaw and separate it from the main body (I use Split-hidden in the Geometry panel). With a separate jaw you can try different poses easily and really focus on the corner of the mouth, which is a crucial part of the design.

## 6 Move into secondary forms

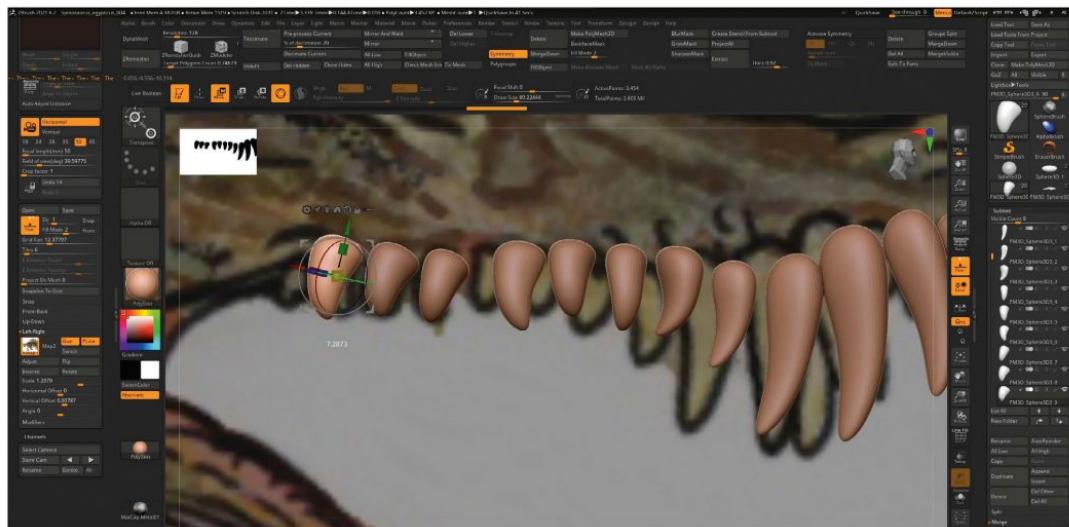
The initial reference I use was a skeleton and it gave me a good start. The plan is to sculpt the spinosaurus in a neutral pose so that I can sculpt symmetrically (X) and leave the posing until much later. At this stage in the project I'm still looking for the primary forms, but beginning to think about the next part, which is about forming the secondary details such as muscle groups.



## 7 Be sure to sculpt around an eye,

One tip is to always sculpt around something that's going to be there eventually. If you try to sculpt an eye without any geometry you may make it look unrealistic. From the Tool menu add a poly sphere and scale it to the right size for the spinosaurus. Mirror it across with Geometry>Modify Topology>Mirror, and Weld. Now you can sculpt the eyelids more accurately and with confidence. ➤

# Workshops



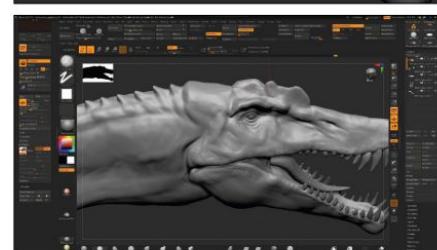
## 8 Create the dinosaur's toothy grin

To sculpt the teeth I again use a primitive sphere and then use Dynamesh on it. Now I use the Move brush and the Flatten brush and keep smoothing it down until I reach the desired shape. Flatten gives a realistic look to the edges. If you go too far in reshaping, use Inflate to bring back some volume then re-Dynamesh the resulting mesh. Continue this process to build and shape the teeth.



## 9 Position the teeth

In the Sub Tool panel start duplicating the teeth and repositioning them to fit your design. Don't forget to look at more references to make sure you're making a realistic set of teeth for a spinosaurus. Once you've done a full side, merge them together and then use Mirror-and-Weld again to flip a copy across. Repeat this step for the rest of the teeth.



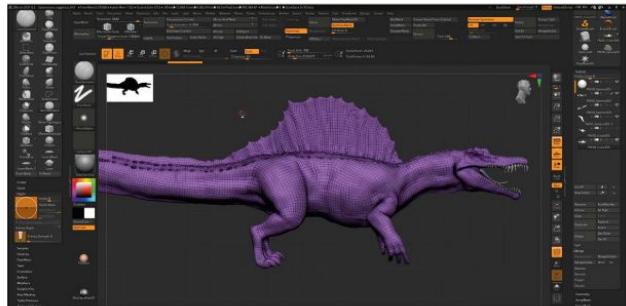
## 10 Build up the creature's form around the teeth

At this stage we're well past primary forms and looking at major muscle groups and specific areas of skin. Pay special attention to the corners of the mouth, the lips and the volume in the muscles that close the jaws. Don't do any surface detail – rather, just try and get the overall shape to look right. I add a tongue at this stage to achieve a fuller sense of proportion.



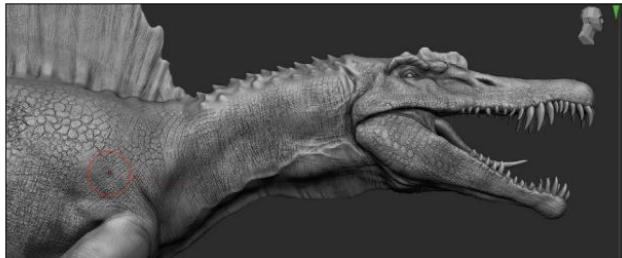
## 11 Adding the limbs

I add hands and feet by making separate digits from primitives following the earlier process, then I merge them together. I make one hand and one foot and mirror them for speed. I then Dynamesh them into the main body by merging. Once all the limbs are part of the main mesh I use Smooth and the Clay Build-Up brush to fix the joins and unify the sculpt's elements.



## 12 Use ZRemesher to create a low poly version

To be able to pose I need a low polygon mesh. To do this I use ZRemesher in the Tool>Geometry panel and set the level to about 10,000 polygons (10). This gives me a decent low poly mesh to work with. I then subdivide it a number of times and use Project from the Sub-Tool panel to add the high-resolution detail back into the sculpt. This means I'm now ready for the final skin details.



## 13 Using Alphas to add details

Black and white Alpha maps are a great way to add surface detail. I'm sharing all of mine with this workshop. To add them in, import them into the Alpha panel via the Export button. Now use the Standard Brush that's set to Drag-Rectangle in the Stroke Panel. Change the Alphas to suit your need and add cool surface details.



## 14 Introduce some colour

The final step is to add some colour. No one really knows what a spinosaurus looked like, so you can go a little crazy here. I use the Standard brush with some of my alphas and I change the colours a lot over the surface of the creature. I keep him dark on top and light underneath. This is called countershading in nature. I pose him in different ways using masking on the lowest level model. I use the model in several projects including painting over for this workshop and also a 3D print.

## 15 Place the model in an environment

I generally do a lot of over-painting on projects like this. I take the final renders right out of ZBrush and composite them in Photoshop. If I need different background elements I'll either render other models and add them in the background or paint them right there in Photoshop. I use a lot of reference material when I'm doing this stage. It all depends what the final image is going to be used for and I often use stock photography to enhance my compositions. 

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ON TEST



### SOFTWARE

#### 78 Painter 2022

Corel's painting tool still targets those who are serious about being painterly, but makes concessions for beginner artists, too.

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See how artists reimagine Studio Ghibli's animation work for a popular exhibition.



### RATINGS EXPLAINED

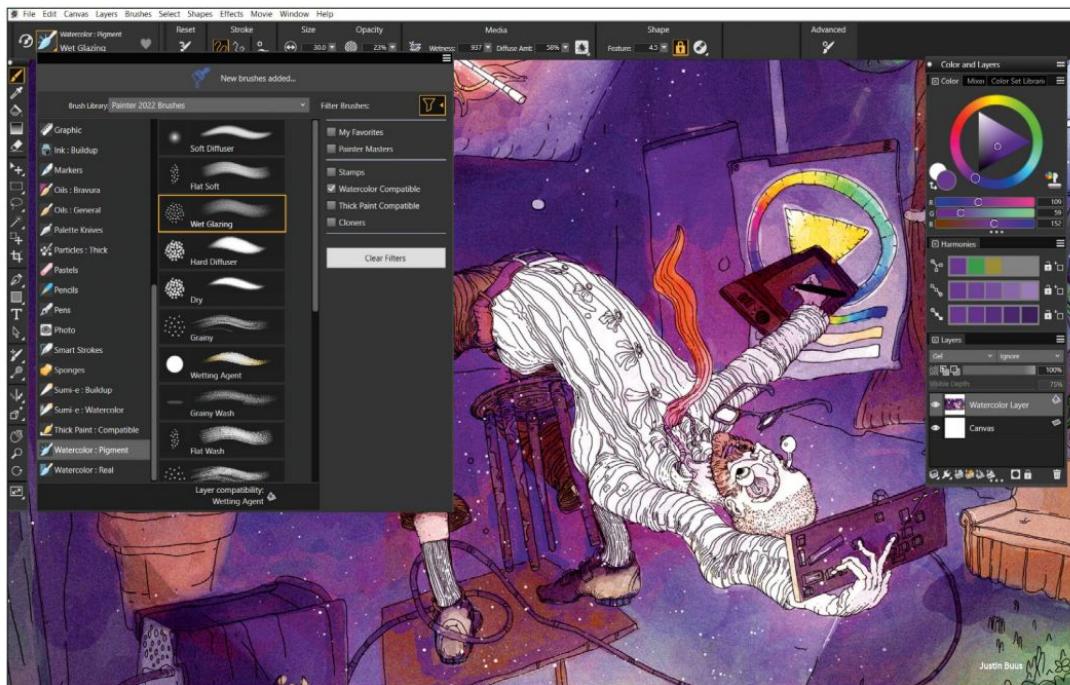
★★★★★ Magnificent

★★★★★ Great

★★★★ Good

★★ Poor

★ Atrocious



# Painter 2022

The latest version of Corel Painter enables further customisation of its watercolour brushes.

**MARK MAKING** Corel's flagship digital art software still targets those who are serious about being painterly, but makes concessions for beginner artists, too.

**Price** £360 (£180 for upgrade version), £159 for 12-month subscription **Company** Corel **Web** painterartist.com

**P**ainter 2022 continues Corel's goal to simulate the use and feel of real paint. There are few programs that can hold a wet brush to Corel's software, so what's new?

An overhaul and, some might say unnecessary, reorganisation of the Brush library is the first thing that grabs you. It's perfect for beginners though, because every brush is now alphabetised and re-ordered into easy-to-remember categories.

Better still, use a filters search such as Watercolor Compatible and hey presto – a list of every compatible brush from every category appears. You can now add the texture of wetness to dry media brushes, directly on watercolour layers, too. The possibilities just rocketed in terms of experimenting with mixed media

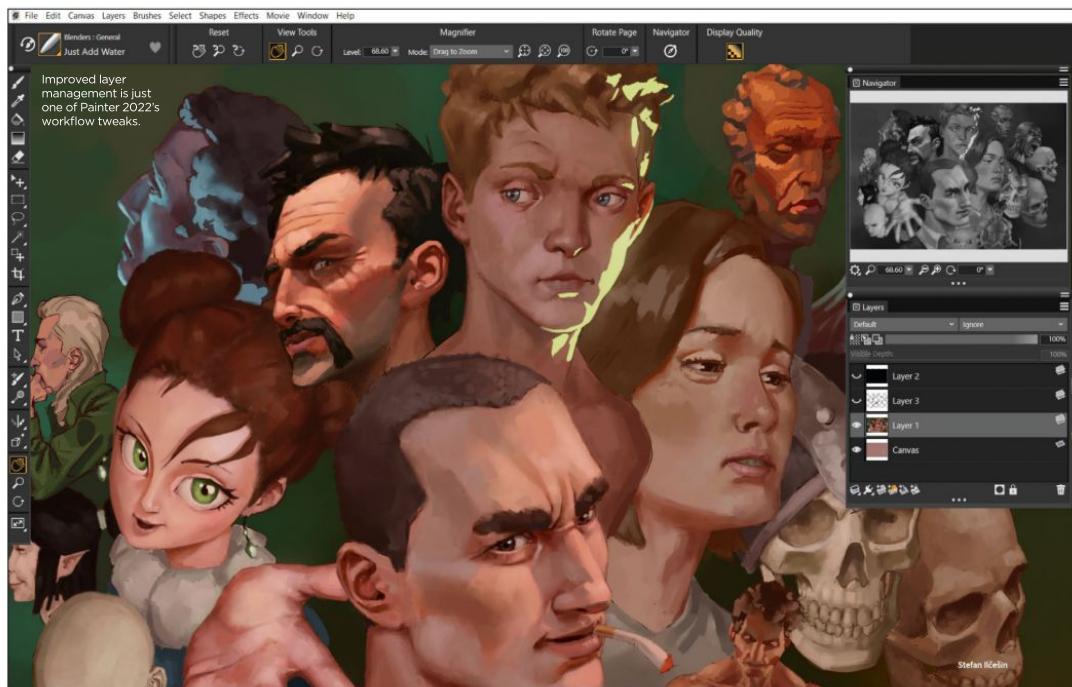
Another handy addition to the brush library is the Like button. You can keep a selection of your favourite brushes at hand in a custom palette, and the Brush Size library gives you easy access to your most-used sizes. If you know what you usually need before you start painting it's now even easier to have everything at hand. If

you draw comics for example, you may only use a couple of sizes and brushes to ink your art - now, your custom palettes mean your workflow is even smoother.

If there's one overriding upset when it comes to making digital work of any kind, it's that a digital painting can look, well, too digital. Some valiant efforts in replicating impasto mark making, or the wetting and drying of watercolour on textured paper, have been made over the years with Corel Painter, but the introduction of stamp-type brush customisation heralds a sharp increase in what's possible with variation in mark making.

With an overhauled Dab library you can change the Dab effects of your favourite brushes, bristle by bristle, giving you much more of a painter's hand. Putting an end to repetitive





strokes, you can edit Dabs on the fly using slider changes, giving you all the variance you could need in any single brush.

Another noteworthy addition is the ability to view your work in greyscale via the Navigator panel. This works wonders for getting those tones and values right, much the same as being able to view a mirror image of your work – so you're getting your eye in compositionally. These are age-old

'heavyweight' painting techniques can seriously eat into your memory and graphics processor, but the Brush Performance Accelerator you're presented with on launching Painter does a fine assessment on how well the program will run on your setup, and offer handy suggestions as to how certain upgrades or tweaks might benefit your user experience. It shows you how well your baseline, CPU, and GPU are contributing to brush



## With an overhauled Dab library you can change the Dab effects of your favourite brushes, bristle by bristle

artistic tricks, but it's nice to see that Corel is taking a forward-thinking approach by looking back. A second screen works best for both of these painting methods, but isn't mandatory.

### PERFORMANCE

Painter 2022 is heralded as the fastest version of the program. The GPU acceleration, added in 2020, has been tweaked to deal with those new and enhanced brushes. Some of those

performance, offering you a score in red, amber, and green.

Because Corel Painter is aimed at replicating real media in immense detail, the program will clearly put a strain on your system's resources. If your budget limits you from immediately purchasing hardware upgrades, we'd recommend not running much else in the background.

For serious painters and wannabe serious painters alike this is a well-

priced one-time purchase, or an even cheaper upgrade from an earlier version. An affordable annual subscription option will suit those who can't afford the up-front cost. There's a free 15-day trial available if you are unsure about taking the plunge, too.

If you're serious about capturing the look of traditional media in your digital art then this is definitely the software to go with. Slick upgrades to brushes and Dab customisation means greater variance in painterly mark making, ensuring that Corel Painter 2022 is still a pioneering – and affordable – digital art platform. Screen mirroring on an iPad Pro is a nice way to use the venerable program, too. ☺

### DETAILS

#### Features

- Stamp customisation
- Revamped watercolour brushes
- Refined brush library and selector
- Improved workflow
- Greyscale navigator
- Better Layer system

#### System Requirements

PC: Windows 10, Intel or AMD 64-bit CPU, 8GB RAM, 3GB HDD  
Mac: Big Sur 11.0 or OS 10.15, Intel or M1 CPU, 8GB RAM, 1.5GB HDD

#### Rating





## Creating Stylized Animals

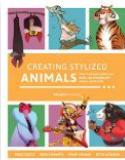
**MARVELLOUS MENAGERIE** Learn how to walk on the wild side and make your animal character art stand out from the herd

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

**W**hether it's for an animation project, a children's picture book or a line of posters for your Etsy store, being able to design animal characters with visual impact is a skill worth learning. 3dtotal Publishing's guide aims to sharpen those skills.

The book's first 80 pages contains chapters that cover core animal design and illustration topics. These include boosting character appeal, drawing faces and expressions, and an overview of anthropomorphism.

Each topic is explored in-depth by a different artist, which adds visual



variety across this section. Better still, the visuals are backed up by detailed, clear advice that takes the form of explanatory paragraphs, extended captions and standalone tips. In Gervais Merryweather's chapter on gesture and pose he passes on numerous insights gleaned from his career as a freelance animator. Meanwhile, the jaguar rockstar that's conceived, stylised and refined by César Vergara is only a gig away from their own children's streaming show.

**“Being able to design animal characters with visual impact is a skill worth learning”**

The main portion of the book sees seven artists take on an animal-themed project. They're led by two-word prompts - 'villainous hyena' and 'greedy pony', for example. Each artist follows the same structure: they start with a mind-map of related words, before going on to tackle research, thumbnails, basic shapes, details, facial expressions, poses, and values and colours. The artists doesn't stop there,



The eyes have it – Nathan Pangilinan's chapter covers how to stylise animals, such as their facial features.



Tata Che's snowy owl is delivering warning letters to naughty children in the lead-up to Christmas.

though: they all take their finished conventional animal design and give it the anthropomorphic treatment. Sometimes there's a bit of a disconnect between the four-legged design and the two-legged variant, but there's plenty of good advice on offer nonetheless.

Creating Stylized Animals concludes with shorter animal projects, an extensive list of idea prompts and biographies of the 19 contributing artists. Credit to editor Marisa Lewis for marshalling their collective talents for this enlightening guide.

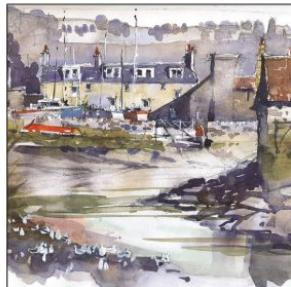
**RATING** ★★★★☆

# En Plein Air: Light & Color

**AIR BRUSH** Take your watercolour art outdoors with the help of this book, which even advises what to pack for a plein air painting session

**Authors** Iain Stewart **Publisher** Walter Foster Publishing **Price** £15 **Web** [quarto.com](http://quarto.com) **Available** Now

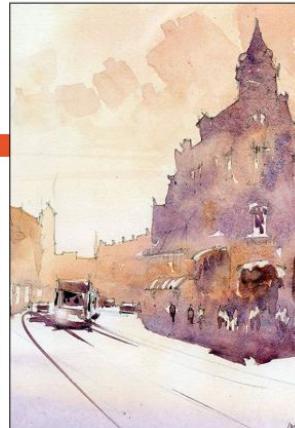
**T**he warmer weather of the summer months are a great incentive to practise your art in the great outdoors. The expert advice within *En Plein Air: Light & Color* aims to make your time outside your studio more productive.



Iain Stewart sketched and loosely painted this Scottish harbour scene, before refining it back in his studio.

The subtitle of Iain Stewart's book refers to watercolours. Iain shows how to capture a variety of outdoor locations in this challenging medium – ranging from New York's Times Square to a shipyard in Gothenburg. Yet a good portion of the book is also devoted to sketching the scene, ready for painting. The artist explains how to visually simplify a location, identify perspective, action lines and more. Despite the book's selling itself as suitable for beginners, the tone and language feels more suitable for intermediate artists.

Iain's coverage of watercolours backs up this impression. Alongside practical advice on the nature of watercolours are workshops on painting outdoors, but there are also general artistic insights that will chime with more seasoned illustrators.



Iain explains how he simplified and selected the colour palette of this Amsterdam street scene.

The author's experience as a watercolour instructor is evident. There's plenty to discover in this book. It covers a lot of ground, but in a manner that always feels encouraging rather than overwhelming.

**RATING** ★★★★☆

# My Neighbor Hayao: Art Inspired by the Films of Miyazaki

**NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH** See how Studio Ghibli's animation work was reimagined by a variety of artists for a popular exhibition

**Author** N/A **Publisher** Cernunnos **Price** £22 **Web** [abramsandchronicle.co.uk](http://abramsandchronicle.co.uk) **Available** Now

**H**ayao Miyazaki and the work of Studio Ghibli is celebrated in this compact hardback, with over 250 artists contributing more than 400 eclectic works.

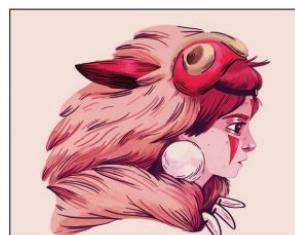
Some of those pieces were created for a 2017 exhibition at San Francisco's Spoke Art Gallery. As the exhibition toured over the following two years it



Ponyo takes human form in this detail from an illustration by US artist Stacey Aoyama.

grew in size, as more creatives interpreted characters and key scenes.

Following an introduction from the curator of the exhibition and a potted history of Hayao Miyazaki, the reader is then free to explore 240 pages of incredible work filled with unique takes on *My Neighbor Totoro*, *Howl's Moving Castle*, *Spirited Away* and more. The media is varied: from traditional materials such as inks and watercolours, to paper lanterns, embroidery, sculpture and digital prints. It's a credit to Hayao's strong vision that his designs remain recognisable in even the most extreme interpretations, such as Princess Mononoke's headdress being turned into a gas mask by Freehand Profit (aka Gary Lockwood).



Self-taught Los Angeles artist Nan Lawson painted her version of Princess Mononoke for the exhibition.

While it's a pity that there's no creative insights on offer, this book remains a solid collection of art that Studio Ghibli fans will lap up.

**RATING** ★★★★☆

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NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS  
**ImagineFX**

# Traditional Artist

Inspiration and advice from the best pro artists



## This issue:

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

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**94 Workshop: Develop your fish-eye art skills**  
Learn how Paul Heaston is able to create a wide-angle sketch.

**98 First Impressions: Wylie Beckert**  
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# FXPosé

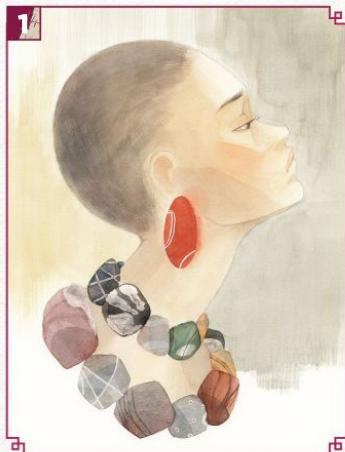
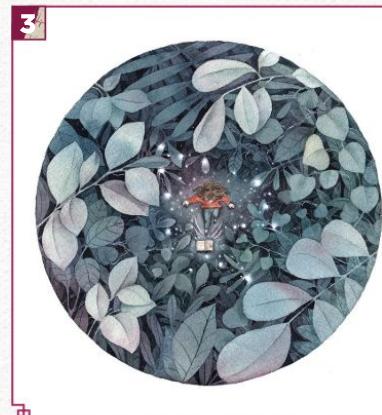
SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL ARTISTS



## Madalina Buzenchi

LOCATION: Italy MEDIA: Watercolour, pencils, gouache WEB: madalinartz.com

Nature is Madalina's main source of inspiration – she finds it best enhances the human figure: "I capture the most delicate feelings in dreamlike portraits."



### 1 NATURE JEWELS

"I used to collect stones when I was a child, so I wanted to impress this beautiful memory on the paper."

### 2 MAGIC INTO THE WOODS

"Nature at night is a mysterious place where magic can happen. I used the negative painting technique to obtain a 3D effect."

### 3 SENSATIONS

"A single leaf that touches us can evoke a series of memories. I made this piece for my watercolour illustration course."

### 4 LIGHTS

"I was inspired by my favourite Disney movie, Tangled, and especially by the lights on the lake. In this case the protagonists are me and my husband."



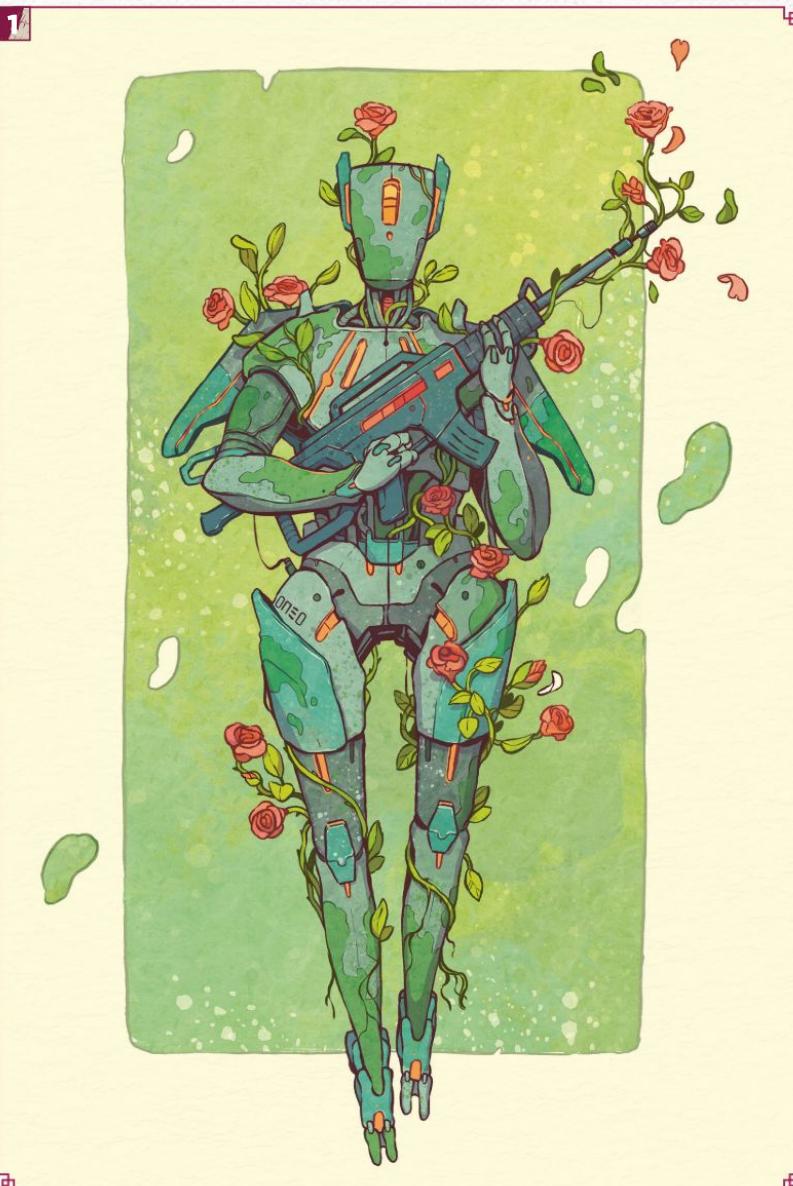




## Johanna Puhl

LOCATION: Germany MEDIA: Oil, inkpens and watercolour WEB: [johannapuhl.com](http://johannapuhl.com)

"Beside video games, nature is a huge inspiration for my art," says concept artist Johanna. "I love the organic nature of watercolours, but also the control you have over a digital drawing, so I try to combine both."



### 1 ROBOT AND ROSES

"My botanical bot series depicts humanoid machines, overgrown by different kinds of flowers and plants. They are digital drawings, done with watercolour brushes and paper textures for a natural look."

### 2 MUSEUM DRAWING

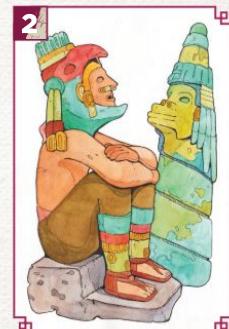
"I love to get inspired by actual history and culture, so I go out to museums or the zoo with artist friends from time to time. This page was done in an Aztec exhibition and coloured at home later."

### 3 CREATURES FROM IMAGINATION

"This is one of my favourite sketchbook pages, featuring organic plants and fantastic creatures. I want to make more time for my analogue sketchbook again."

### 4 THROUGH THE FOREST

"A spontaneous little watercolour painting of two riders and their unusual horses. I love creating little fantastic worlds like this, which make the viewer want to join on an adventure."





3



4



5

## 5 GRUNLINGS

"These cute fruit and veggie creatures are probably my most-known characters and I have a huge collection of them now."



## 11 TIPS ON RENDERING PERFECT PORTRAITS

JEAN-SÉBASTIEN ROSSBACH reveals his methods of working with watercolour  
– the classic traditional medium that's both simple and complicated

“ You have to stay open to how watercolours interact with pigments and the paper, and readjust all the time ”



Watercolour is my preferred painting medium. It's easy to work with, and safe because it requires neither solvents nor mediums. But as with many things in life, simple can also be hard, and achieving the art goals you have in mind can be challenging if you're not aware of a few techniques and tools, which we'll review together here.

Inclined table

I often make the analogy between watercolours and dance, because the colours somehow have their own life and flow. When working on a new painting, you enter a game of suggesting and reacting. And this is what I like about the medium. You have to stay open to how watercolours interact with pigments and the paper, and readjust all the time. Over time I've found it's become a philosophy of letting go.

As I'll explain in this article, the amount of water you use, the type of paper and the granularity of your pigments are all important factors when helping to take your colours where you want them to go.

 **Jean-Sébastien has been painting for over 20 years. His art has been displayed in galleries worldwide, and sold at auction. Discover more of his work at [jeansbastienrossbach.bigcartel.com](http://jeansbastienrossbach.bigcartel.com).**

# Traditional Artist Workshop

## 1 What paper should I use?

The answer depends on your personality and the result you want to achieve. There are papers with grain, there are permissive papers, there are smooth papers, papers with tooth, and so on. As an illustrator who likes precision and details, I prefer cold press paper with no grain. I rarely go under 300g/m<sup>2</sup>, and my big paintings (which are over a meter tall) are 600g/m<sup>2</sup>.

My advice is to begin with the best paper and avoid those designed for students: the quality is poor and you never achieve good results with them. My preference is Arches and Fabriano. Arches accepts no compromises. Select it if you're a fiery artist who likes sharp results. Fabriano is a smoother paper, but you can still be precise. It's also more forgiving, which means you can erase mistakes more easily than with the Arches papers.



## 2 Consider calligraphy brushes

I'm the first to say that good tools make good artists. Yet while you can buy \$20 brushes made with luxurious animal hair, I tend to find them unnecessary. After using watercolour brushes for a decade, I've started using Asian calligraphy brushes. They're affordable, durable and have a big reserve, which means you don't have to reload them all the time. You

can make washes and then switch to detailing in the same movement, without having to change brushes. I've found that they're also ideal for creating dry effects and gradients. However, I still use spatters when I want to cover large surfaces quickly, because I like to paint on large format sheets.



## 3 Work on an inclined plane

I paint on a slightly inclined plane. When attending watercolour events I discovered that many professional artists do this, especially those who paint portraits. The reason is that it leads the pigments down the paper, which reinforces the illusion that the sun in the sky is illuminating the portrait. Letting the pigments settle down when applying watercolour makes it easier to paint volumes and gradients. It results in your portraits looking more natural because the viewer is used to seeing a face with the source of the light coming from above (in other words, sunlight).

“Letting the pigments settle gently down when applying watercolour makes it easier to paint volumes and gradients”



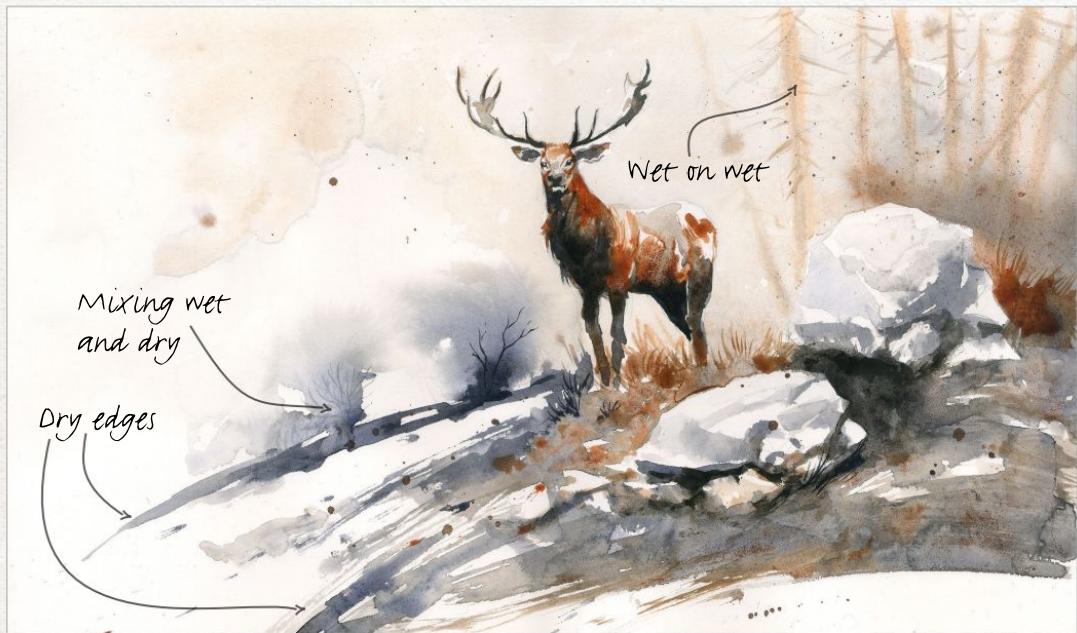
## 4 Staining, granulation, transparency

Depending on the pigment used, each colour has different properties. For example, Turquoise blue stains easily, which means it's hard to lift up with water if you make a mistake. It's also very transparent. Burnt sienna is easier to wash away and it's granulated and more opaque. Granulation is something I look for when painting backgrounds or non-organic elements because it adds texture and a mineral aspect. For painting the skin I prefer a smoother colour that's less prone to staining, such as Alizarin crimson. This information is usually provided directly on the watercolour tubes, or on colour charts available from the brand's website.



## 5 When to use coloured pencils

When making those finishing touches, I use coloured pencils. They are ideal for highlighting certain areas or creating precise edges. There are different kinds of pencils. Some are very hard and precise (Prismacolor), but not really good at coverage, while others are thick and loose (Derwent), but more pigmented.



## 6 Alternate dry and wet

The magic of watercolour resides in one's ability to make it dance between wet and dry areas. Working wet on wet means you paint on a wet surface. The colours can then mix and create abstract shapes that you can barely control. This is my favourite bit: the moment when you're the co-creator of the painting, the other one

being the water itself. Don't be afraid to make bold, confident marks and see what happens. Then react to the actions of the water.

Working on a dry surface is for blocking shapes. I try to connect dry and wet areas all the time because it brings a painting to life. It's not important that the blue of a fabric enters and mixes with the pink of a person's belly. The colours aren't as important as the values. ➤

# Traditional Artist Workshop

## 7 Create contrast in your watercolour art



### A THE BACKGROUND

To fire up my motivation I begin this portrait of a geisha with the fun part: the background. It's a wash of Payne's grey, Raw umber and touches of Burnt sienna loosely applied wet on wet to encourage granulation and staining effects. This is also the stage when I block in my composition.



### B SUPPORTING COLOURS

I place the darkest colours all around the character's face because I've decided that I'll keep her face completely white. Watercolour is very often a matter of finding a way to create contrast, because the medium itself is rather pale and desaturated. By putting all the darker tones around her white face I'll make it stand out from the rest of the composition.



### C UTILISE THE WHITE OF THE PAPER FOR THE GEISHA'S FACE

Her face is the last thing I paint – or should I say I actually don't paint, because I keep the white of the paper preserved to convey the white make-up on her skin. Even the bottom of the composition is covered with a light grey wash so that the only pure white is that of the geisha's make-up.



## 8 The secret to painting volumes

Painting accurate volumes can trip up artists, whatever their experience level. One's attention is taken up by the style and the splashes of overflowing colours, but the volumes are neglected and the finished portrait looks flat. This is mainly due to the desaturated nature of this medium. If I want to convey the illusion of a realistic portrait, I need to focus on tones, not colours. Good tones leads to good volumes, which results in a good portrait. Unlike oil paint, I'll go from very light washes to strokes that are gradually more loaded with pigment in order to build up the volumes. It's exactly like adding Multiply layers on top of each others in Photoshop!



## 9 Expressive background

When I paint lively portraits, I don't want to overdo the background. Details are unnecessary here and can even be counterproductive. The most important element in a portrait are the eyes. This is where I want to concentrate the viewer's attention. So this is where all the details, the smooth gradients and



transitions need to go. On the other hand, what will make my piece stand out is its painterly feel – its expressiveness. I'll put all this in the background, like an abstract case that stores the beautiful figure I spent so much time and effort on. The background is the playground where I experiment with water effects. I use salt to create texture, and let the water drip and make stains.



## 10 Preserving white areas

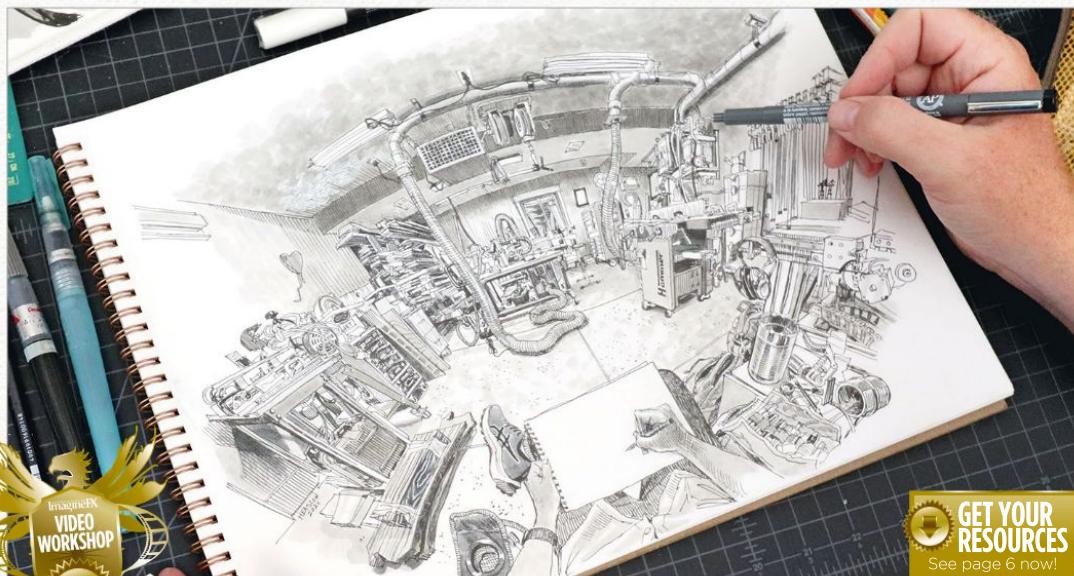
The natural white colour of the paper is the purest white I'll ever get. Before applying any paint on the surface I identify all white areas I need to preserve. I try not to apply any water there, and use masking fluid if required. I try to avoid the use of white paint because it always ends up looking greyish and dirty.

“The most important element in a portrait are the eyes. This is where I want to concentrate the viewer's attention”



## 11 Using salt to create textures

I recommend trying this simple and fun watercolour technique: prepare a wash with lots of water and a fair amount of pigment, then apply it and spread kitchen salt over it. Let the paper dry. The results may be a pleasant surprise! ♦



Pencil

Pens

Ink wash

# DEVELOP YOUR FISH-EYE ART SKILLS

Learn how US illustrator **PAUL HEASTON** is able to create a wide-angle “point of view” sketch from life using pencil, pen and ink wash

Look as far as you can to your right and to your left without turning your head. Now do it again but looking up and down. Everything you can see in front of you without turning your head makes up your “field of view.” What if you were trying to draw every single thing in that space? How do you reconcile all of that information within the confines of a rectangular picture plane?

Years ago, when I first started doing sketches from life, I was trying to draw a row of buildings from across the street. I wanted to include everything I could see; the whole city block. I sketched the top and bottom

## MATERIALS

### DRAWING TOOLS

- Tombow Mono 4B pencil
- Staedtler 0.3 Pigment Liner
- Molotow One4All white acrylic paint marker
- Pentel grey brush pen
- Kuretake water brush and diluted Noodler's Lexington Gray ink
- Pentel Hi-Polymer Eraser
- Stillman & Birn Epsilon paper

edges of the buildings parallel to the horizon but it just didn't look right.

Then I remembered how buildings in panoramic photos are wider at the centre and they taper down to the right and left as they recede from the viewer. In doing this, the top and bottom edges of the buildings curve to meet vanishing points on the horizon to the right and left. I tried this in my sketch and it worked!

While it felt like a breakthrough for me, it turns out, many other artists had been exploring the concept of curving perspective for years, from Parmigianino in the 1500s to MC Escher in the 20th century to Kim Jung Gi today.

Odds are by now you have encountered wide-angle art before. Whether you've heard it called fish-eye, bubble art, curvilinear perspective or something else, the idea is the same: to fit a lot of space on the page you have to bend that space a bit. There are a few ways to go about doing that, and I'm going to show you how I like to approach a wide angle drawing or “point of view” sketch in a few simple steps.

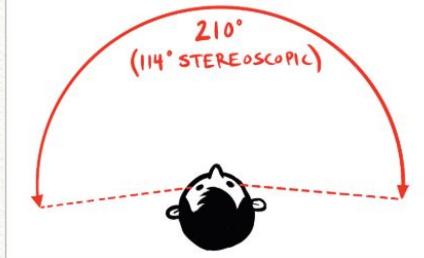


**Paul is an urban sketcher and illustrator who's taught workshops internationally on sketching space in wide-angle perspective. Follow him on Twitter at [twitter.com/paulheaston](http://twitter.com/paulheaston).**



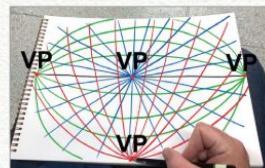
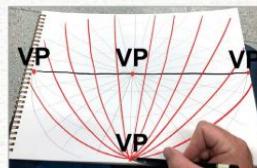
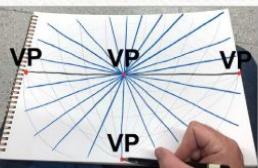
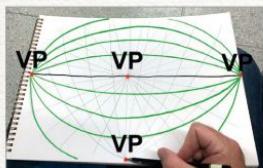
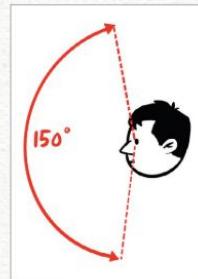
## 1 Select a suitable space.

You can do a wide-angle sketch in practically any outdoor or indoor space, but for sheer volume of detail in all directions I love a cluttered interior space. I chose to sketch my friend's woodworking shop because there was just so much visual information in every corner of the room.



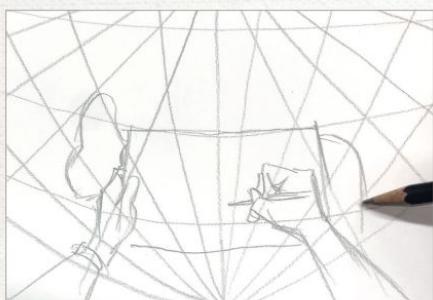
## 2 Adopt a wide-angle mindset

This is the most challenging yet crucial step in tackling a wide-angle sketch from life. We're used to zooming and cropping to select small portions of our field of view to render on the page. Think "wide" – your drawing will include what's to your right and left and what's above and below you.



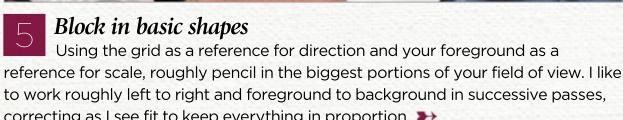
## 3 Draw a curved perspective grid

Start with a horizon line just over halfway up the page. Add a centre vanishing point (VP) on the horizon, one VP each on the left and right edges of the paper, and one at the bottom directly beneath the centre VP. Draw increasingly curved arcs connecting the left and right VPs above and below the horizon. Add straight lines radiating from the centre VP and lines gently arcing up and out from the bottom VP.



## 4 Foreground first

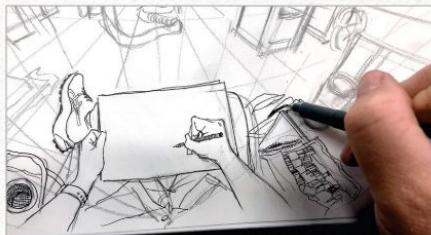
In pencil, loosely sketch your hands, sketchbook or drawing surface, and anything else that might be in your immediate foreground (legs, chair, work surface and so on). The scale you choose for this portion of the drawing is important because this will establish a scale reference for the rest of the drawing.



## 5 Block in basic shapes

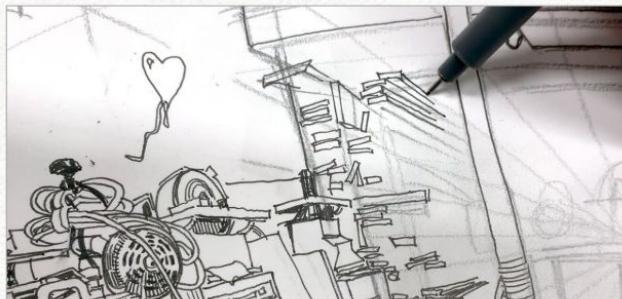
Using the grid as a reference for direction and your foreground as a reference for scale, roughly pencil in the biggest portions of your field of view. I like to work roughly left to right and foreground to background in successive passes, correcting as I see fit to keep everything in proportion. ➤

# Traditional Artist Workshop



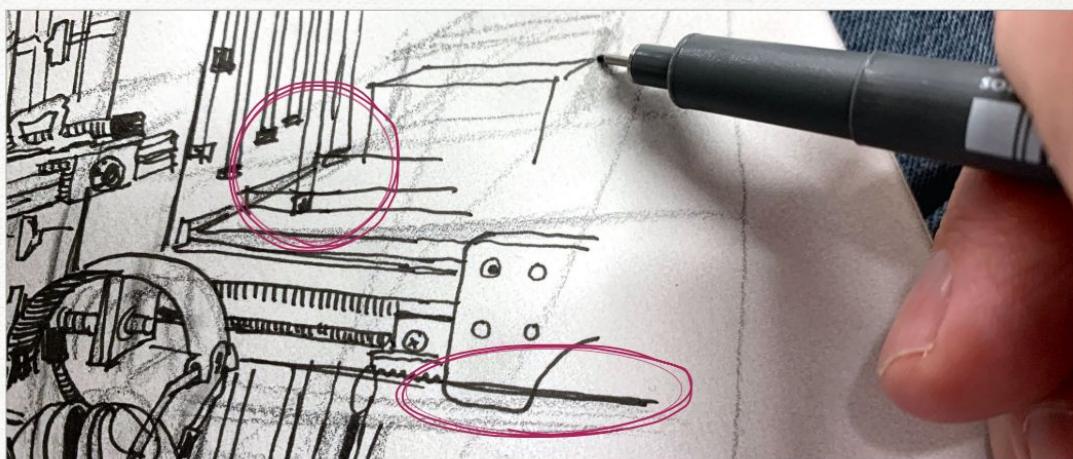
## 6 Inking isn't just tracing

An underdrawing is a rough draft. As you add ink you'll encounter things you want to change as you go. Feel free to move elements, change scale and proportion, and fix perspective issues right then and there, and add any information that wasn't in the underdrawing. You're not beholden to earlier choices that you made in the pencil sketch.



## 7 Leading edges/surfaces first

When you have a big, messy visual element like a pile of lumber receding away from the viewer, it can be tricky to know where to start. Keep it simple; address all the nearest surfaces and edges first and then draw the lines receding toward the vanishing point once the foreground portion is done.

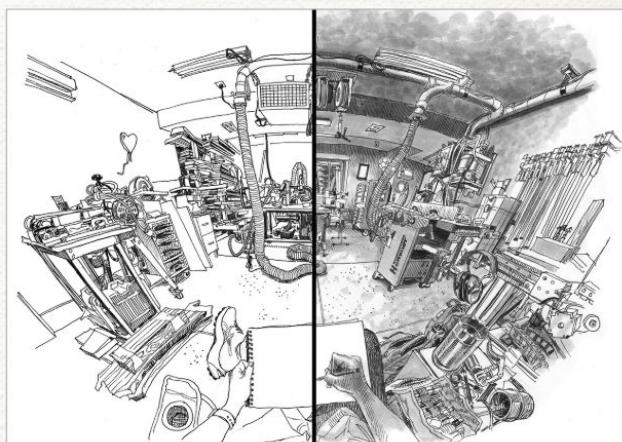


## 8 Just keep drawing and erase as you go

Of course, ink is permanent and you will make mistakes. I make tons of 'em. Just draw right over them. Of course you should fix the stuff that isn't working, but don't worry about the mistakes still being visible. In a wide-angle sketch the visual impact of the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. This sounds obvious, but even I need to remind myself to tidy up now and then so I have a clearer picture of what's happening in the drawing. Often it's only after you erase the underdrawing that you can see where additional ink work needs to be done, as well as any mistakes that need addressing.

## 9 Value makes it pop

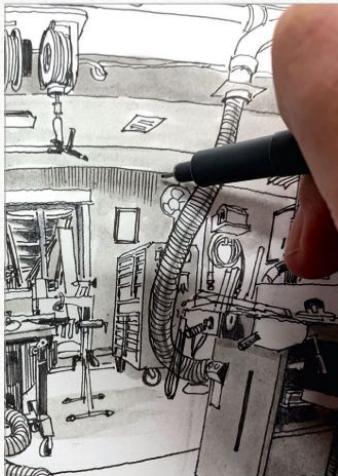
The heavy lifting in a sketch is done when the values are added. I use hatching and ink wash to push contrast and transform the linear forms into something that feels three-dimensional. Don't be timid here: a good, contrasty drawing is much more appealing than a washed-out, halfway finished one.





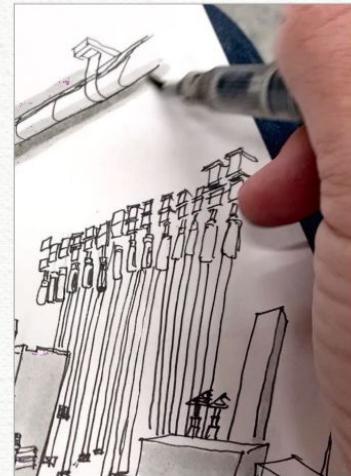
## 10 Ink wash in a brush

This is a trick I learned from artist Ed Mostly out of Bath, England. I use Noodler's Lexington Gray fountain pen ink in a Kuretake water brush diluted with water to add grey values. It's an ingenious way of making ink wash portable and it's so convenient and mess-free, I use it in my home studio as well.



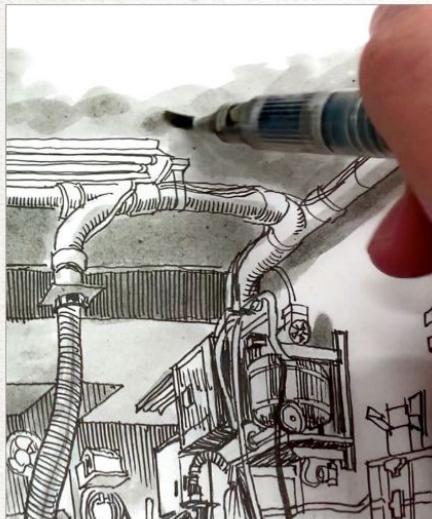
## 11 Vertical hatching

To create a lot of my values I use a mix of hatching and ink wash. Vertical hatching is a good way to lay down a lot of value quickly and it's hard to screw up. I use the word "vertical" loosely, as I like to keep my hatch marks consistent with the perspective and point toward the bottom vanishing point.



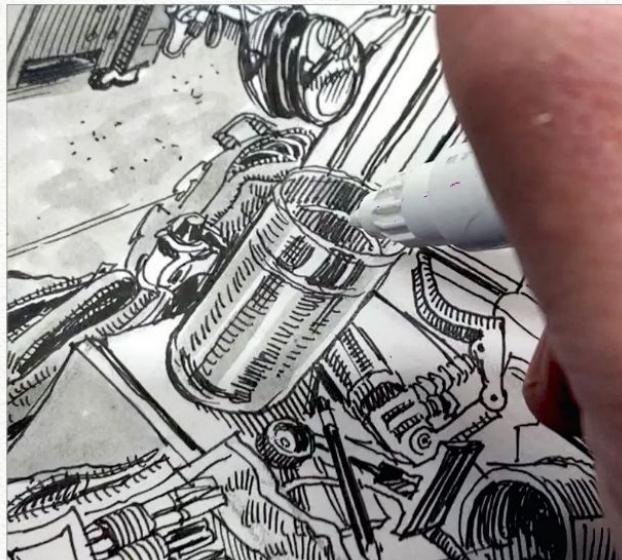
## 12 Layer your washes

The nice thing about a waterproof ink wash is, once dry, you can apply more wash to get darker. This way you can build up to the darkest values without worrying about overdoing it on the first pass. Keep several water brushes handy with different shades of grey to speed up the process.



## 13 Dab large flat areas

To keep a large flat area from appearing either unaddressed or overworked, attack the space with light dabs, flecks and speckles of wash. You can layer these marks to make areas darker gradually without the frustrating streaks and tide marks that come with trying to achieve a smooth gradient in wash.



## 14 White pen for highlights

It's a small thing but when done correctly, adding a few white highlights can make a black and white sketch sing. Look for where the whitest whites should be in your drawing (lights, reflective surfaces and so on). Just a couple of subtle white highlights on the rim of this metal canister really make it pop and feel metallic.

# First Impressions

★ Wylie Beckert ★

**This Magic: The Gathering artist thanks social media**



How did your post-college years affect your art?

I lived in a miserable, unheated house in rural Maine and worked a part-time job that paid \$260 a week. The upside of this was that the low cost of living meant that transitioning to the unprofitable life of a newly minted illustrator wasn't too much of an adjustment for me, and with no distractions and (nearly) nothing to lose, I was able to devote myself to studying art fundamentals and building my illustration skills in a way that someone with a cushy studio job in an expensive city would never have been able to. That period of my life was both a hardship and a luxury.

**Is the online social side to modern art a burden or an aid?**

A burden, but an indispensable one. Long before I was getting hired professionally, social media allowed me to build a sustainable career for



## WICKED KINGDOM : THE KING OF CLUBS

"A traditionally painted playing card deck with a narrative twist and a dark fantasy aesthetic."

myself rather than sitting on my hands waiting for the emails from art directors that never came.

I was first hired by Magic: The Gathering – now my main client – in late 2019. A full three-and-a-half years after I Kickstarted my first self-directed project, Wicked Kingdom. If it hadn't been for social media channelling support to my crowdfunding campaigns on Kickstarter and Patreon, I would have had to quit art in favour of a 'real' job years ago. Even if your work isn't perfectly polished, perfectly professional, social media lets you put your work out in the

world and start building a following – even if you're beneath the notice of art directors for now.

**What art has most affected you?**

Seeing Jacek Yerka's work made a huge impression on me early on. Before that, I had thought of fantasy art as a genre that existed solely in an alternate-universe medieval England: knights in armour, dragons, fairies, castles. Yerka's paintings are much more personal: they feel real, habitable and familiar despite their strangeness. Yerka is still my favourite artist to this day.

**Has the art industry changed?**

When I was getting started as an illustrator [2014] many of the big fantasy art brands were very rigid in the type of artwork they would hire – it seemed to be the peak of the shiny, photorealistic digital painting; with my line-based, traditional-media style, I was more or less unhireable. In recent years I've noticed this status quo starting to shift. Magic: The Gathering in particular is starting to move towards a less homogenous look that's allowing a lot more unique voices into the industry. Given the positive response from players and collectors, hopefully more companies will follow suit.

**What's next for you?**

I've been more or less tied up with one project over the past three years (my playing card deck Reign of Sin). Doing a large-scale project like Ros has meant being locked into one very narrow style and painting process; now that it's almost finished, I'm looking forward to starting something a lot less structured! Creating an illustrated fairy tale collection has been on my list ever since I saw Shaun Tan's amazing book The Singing Bones – it's certainly on the horizon!

**Celebrated Magic: The Gathering artist Wylie shares her artworks and process at [wyliebeckert.com](http://wyliebeckert.com).**



## FAE OF WISHES

Card art created for Magic: The Gathering's Throne of Eldraine expansion using ink and pencil on paper.



“If it hadn't been for social media [...] I would have had to quit art”



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