

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART
ImagineEX
PRESENTS

FANTASY ART EXHIBITION

THE BEST DIGITAL ART FROM AROUND THE GLOBE **VOLUME ONE**



INCLUDING STEP-BY-STEP WORKSHOPS AND ARTIST INTERVIEWS



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Welcome...

Welcome to volume one of Fantasy Art Exhibition, a showcase of some of the very best artwork from ImagineFX magazine. Over the following 224 pages, you'll meet some of the world's most talented amateur and professional digital artists. Browse their portfolios in our FXPosé galleries, learn from them in our Master of Art workshops, and delve into the minds of some of the true visionaries of fantasy art in our Legend interviews.

We've grouped the artists and artwork by country – which proves what a global phenomenon fantasy and sci-fi art has become. I'm proud to be able to showcase some outstanding talent every month in ImagineFX magazine, and I hope you'll join us in applauding the artists who've made this exhibition so rich, diverse and spectacular.

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ImagineFX
FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART

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 **Michael Stewart**

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Michael Stewart has been drawing since childhood: "It's always been an escape for me," he says. His love of fantasy and science fiction art started with comics and continued later with videogames such as Resident Evil. "But nothing inspired me more than HR Giger's work," he adds. Perhaps a little worryingly, Michael relates that "Most of my imagery comes from my dreams." Having taken up graphics, he was smitten: "I had the tools to make my imagination come alive." Using fire as a medium came about by accident. How it's done remains a trade secret.

1 PYRO Pyro is one of Michael's first fire paintings. "It is basically a demon casting a spell rejoicing in the inferno that surrounds him." Job satisfaction in the underworld.

2 LURKING IN THE DEEP This depicts a deep-sea angler fish, searching for its prey. Somehow it also makes the viewer feel a bit like a vulnerable, curious prawn.

3 HELL SCREAMS One of Michael's personal favourites, it depicts a demon screaming in anger and agony.





1

Christopher J. Anderson

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Although he first got into fantasy and sci-fi art through movies such as Indiana Jones and Alien, videogames had the strongest impact on Chris, "especially the more story-based, fantasy-oriented ones. My style has developed from being incredibly cartoonish to being more realistic but without losing that style," he says. "Today, I continue to push myself with understanding and challenging realism with styles that will make people perceive the images I create in a different light."

1 THE COLDEST DAY This bruised woman is trying to escape from shadow-like phantoms. "Being chased by wicked beings makes this the coldest day she will ever have."

2 AFFAIRE DE COEUR OF THE YOUNG "This is about a feeling of infatuation that one has for another," says Chris. "In this case, a young boy falls for a girl he's drawn. And then he finds her."

3 ORC WARRIOR GARDREGON While studying rapid painting methods, Chris wanted to "create a feeling of strength and terror with a powerful-looking character."



2



3



Steve Holt

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SOFTWARE: Painter 9



As a boy growing up in the south east of England, Steve would spend much of his free time daydreaming, drawing and painting.

Inspired by classic sci-fi books and movies, he has always enjoyed using his imagination to explore the fantastical. Why sci-fi? Steve replies: "I like using my imagination to create artwork that no-one has seen before." Steve worked as a 3D artist in the UK computer games industry before moving to the US as a freelance 2D/3D digital artist.

1 ESCAPE FROM FIRE MOUNTAIN

This piece was painted just for fun. "It depicts a young couple trying to escape boiling rivers of lava and the giant creatures set free by the volcanic eruptions," says Steve.

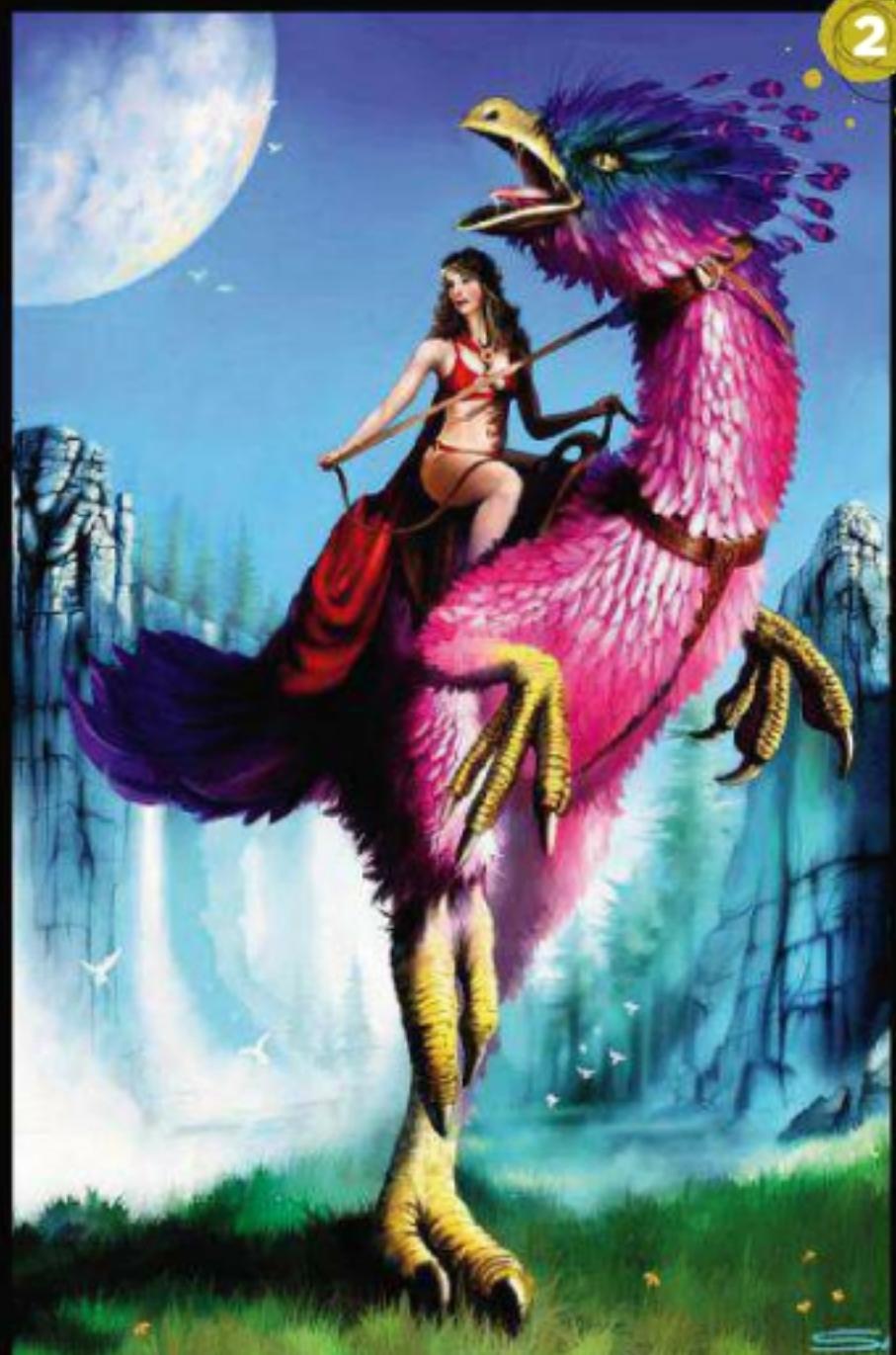
2 MOON CANYON "Over the years I've seen various fantasy and sci-fi artists paint the classic image of the beautiful babe astride the giant beast," muses Steve. "Well, this is my version of that popular theme."

3 FIERY FINGERS "Here she stands at the beginning of her journey, staring wide-eyed into a damp and darkened tomb," begins Steve. "Behind her, outside the tomb, there is light which represents hope and all things that are good and true in the world."

1



2



3





1

 **James Paick**

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop CS



James picked up a pencil at an early age and copied anything that he thought was intriguing. "My art became a voice for me to communicate, to just let loose and have fun," he remembers. In terms of subject matter, he just did whatever art came naturally. Now he works full time as an illustrator and art director in entertainment advertising, working on many game titles and films. James is not one to let the grass grow under his feet: "I also juggle many freelance projects ranging from videogame concept designs to graphic novels."



2

1 DOWNTOWN MANHATTAN This digital matte shows off James' futurescape capabilities perfectly.

2 CATHEDRAL A concept illustration in the space opera style.

3 WATERFALL FORT A work that depicts a kind of future idyll we might enjoy.



3





 **Adam Geyer**

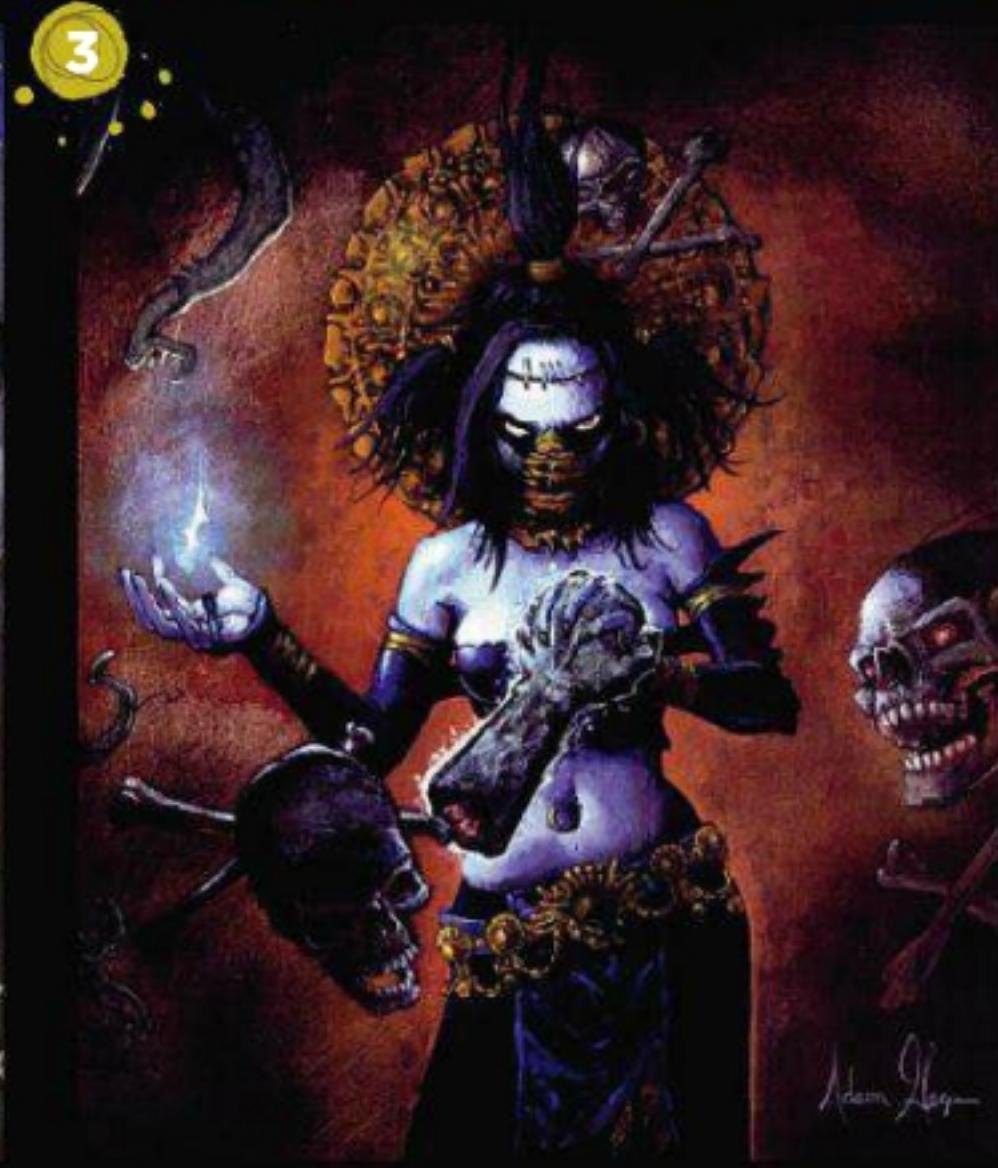
LOCATION: US
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SOFTWARE: Photoshop over acrylics

 Adam gets asked lots of questions about the subject matter of his paintings: "I paint this stuff simply because it's what I like to paint," he explains. "It's my state of mind. Art is reaching into your mind and exposing your vision. Not everyone is going to like my vision." Adam is not that keen on some of them himself, but there is one unalloyed good: "Painting keeps me out of trouble." Inspiration? "Well, lately I've been spending a lot of time in the attic. And occasionally I make trips to the cellar." We're not entirely sure what he's suggesting when he adds: "That's where THEY are."

1 VOODOO PRIESTESS Adam met Stacey E. Walker at a comic convention. "We agreed I'd paint her and I turned her into my Voodoo Priestess." This is the cover for an as yet unpublished comic book, called Papa Zuzu.

2 A DARK CLOUD RISING Frankenstein is one of Adam's favourite characters because "Like me, it's hard to tell what he's thinking or what he'll do next."

3 THE WELCOMING "She's something I had in my head for a long time that needed to get out. I had to force her out."





1



2

 **Camille Kuo**

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop, Painter and Paint BBS



Camille began drawing comics secretly when she was a young teenager, for her own entertainment. She recalls: "I thought I would never be allowed to become an artist – there was a strong view that art was low class and useless!" However, her parents helped her out when she moved to the United States to continue her education. "They have now accepted me as an artist," she smiles.

1 DRAGON AND PHOENIX OF ANCIENT CHINA "I've always been interested in ancient China," says Camille. "The dragon and phoenix have represented the emperors throughout Chinese history."

2 KING OF THE BEAST Another Chinese subject. "This one is basically influenced by one of the creatures in the famous book, Journey to the West," explains Camille.

Frank Frazetta

Influential artist Frank Frazetta is a grand master of fantasy. His lifetime's work captures the magic of the genre...

*F*antasy art owes a lot to Frank Frazetta. Conan, Tarzan, Death Dealer... just a few of the man's famous pieces would have been enough to exert a defining influence on the field, but his output has been far more prolific than that. Not only have his powerful and versatile images made him a force within the genre, he has also helped to put fantasy itself on the artistic map.

Anyone who's even had so much as a passing interest in fantasy art will probably have wondered how Frank managed to be so far ahead of the competition; however, a brief history of the artist himself is very illuminating. Born in late 1920s Brooklyn, Frank was always going to be an artist. Family legend has it that he began drawing at the age of three and had outgrown junior school by the time he joined it. Enrolled at the Brooklyn Academy of Fine Arts aged just eight, the boy's talent was nurtured by his tutor, Michele Falanga, himself a talented painter. A cry of "Mama mia!" went up when Frank proved he was a prodigy and not a precocious brat.

LET IT SNOW

At 16, Frank went to work for the famous comic book artist John Giunta, and a year later his first comic, *Snowman*, hit the shelves. He learned a lot from Giunta, commenting: "You can see a lot of his influence even today in some of my ink work." By 1952 Frank had turned down a career in professional baseball and was beginning to find his feet as a professional artist.

Magazine Enterprises published his first (and last) full-length comic book, *Thun'da*, and he had a regular strip – *Johnny Comet* – in a national paper. This was the high point of Frank's involvement with comics; his work on *Flash Gordon* was even name-checked by George Lucas. But he then took a job with Al Capp, ghosting his strip *Li'l Abner*. This, Frank admits, was a mistake: "I shouldn't have done it, but I was lazy."

AND THE GOOD NEWS

When Frank and Al Capp parted company eight years later, the world of comics had moved on and the great man found himself out in the cold. The break came when Frank's best friend, Roy Krenkel, suggested he produce covers for novels.

Frank's wife, Ellie, credits a caricature of Ringo Starr, painted for *Mad Magazine* in 1964, as the true beginning. This is an astute observation because it was during the '60s that the now iconic images of barbarians and buxom slave girls began to appear. It was also during this time that Frank began to hone his compositions.

The fact that Robert E Howard's Conan series sold millions meant Frazetta covers were de rigueur for fantasy novels. Luckily, for Frank, few people could work as quickly. Paintings such as *Neanderthal* are reputed to have taken just six hours to complete.

LEGEND

His reputation established, Frank went on to produce a series of increasingly amazing images,

notably *Death Dealer* and *Silver Warrior*. It was all there: composition, subject matter, style and audience. *Princess of Mars*, from 1970, produced as part of an Edgar Rice Burroughs re-release program, shows a more considered, mature side to his work.

He began to cut back his production in the '70s, however, and by the '80s he was plagued with illness. A comeback was cut short in 1995 when, returning from being presented the first Spectrum Grand Master of Fantastic Art award, he suffered a series of strokes.

Through his determination and flair, Frank Frazetta has made it okay for artists to plumb the imagination without feeling the need to kowtow to the art establishment. He made it acceptable to produce images of warriors and monsters. Fantasy art took a step forward into the light of possibility with Frank Frazetta; for that alone he deserves the status of *ImagineFX Legend*.

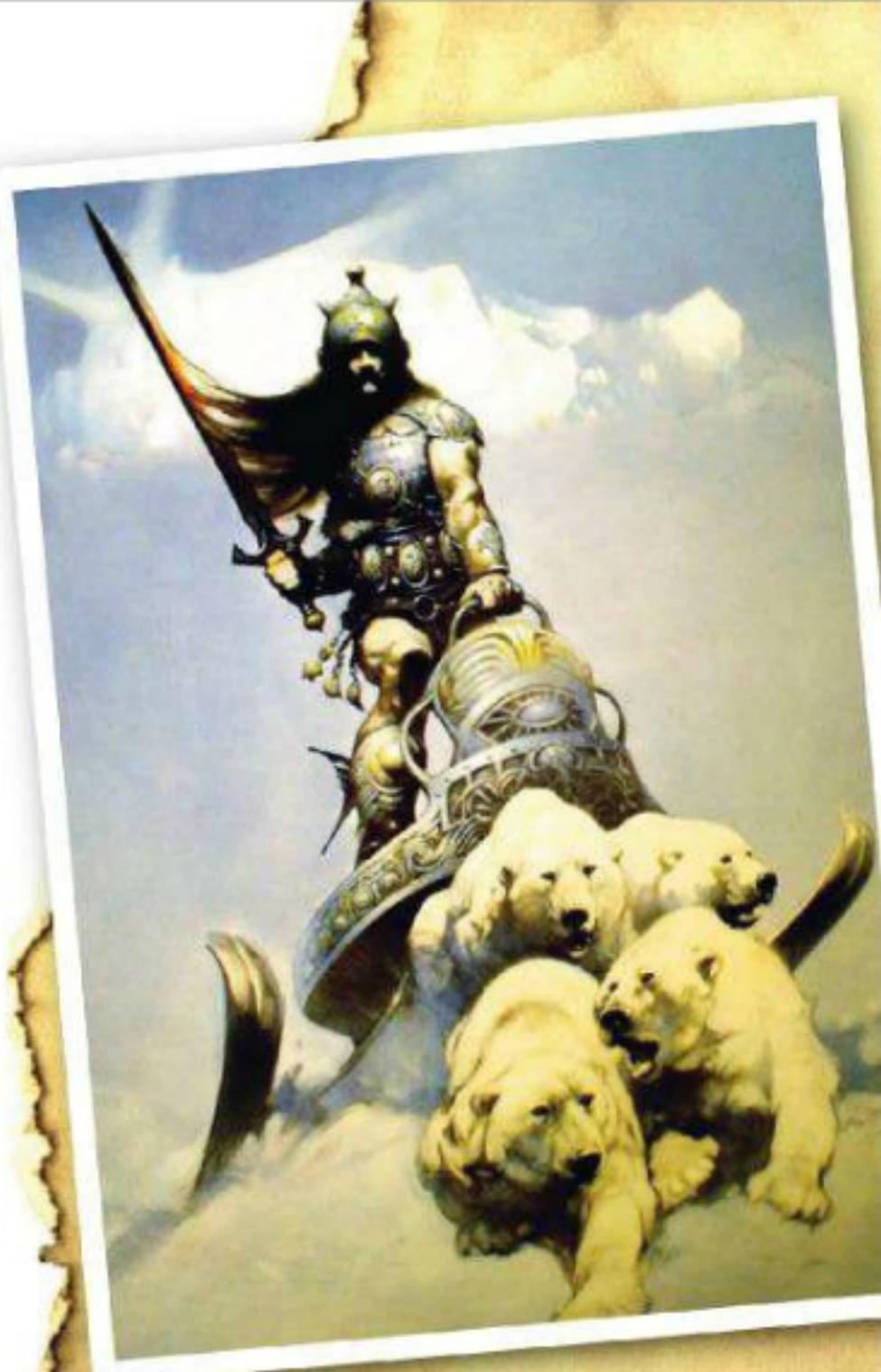
Artist PROFILE

Frank Frazetta



Frank Frazetta, child prodigy and father of modern fantasy art, was born in New York in 1928. At his peak, covers for titles like *Conan the Avenger* were credited with selling the books as much as the stories within. His style will continue to hold fantasy artists in thrall well into the future.

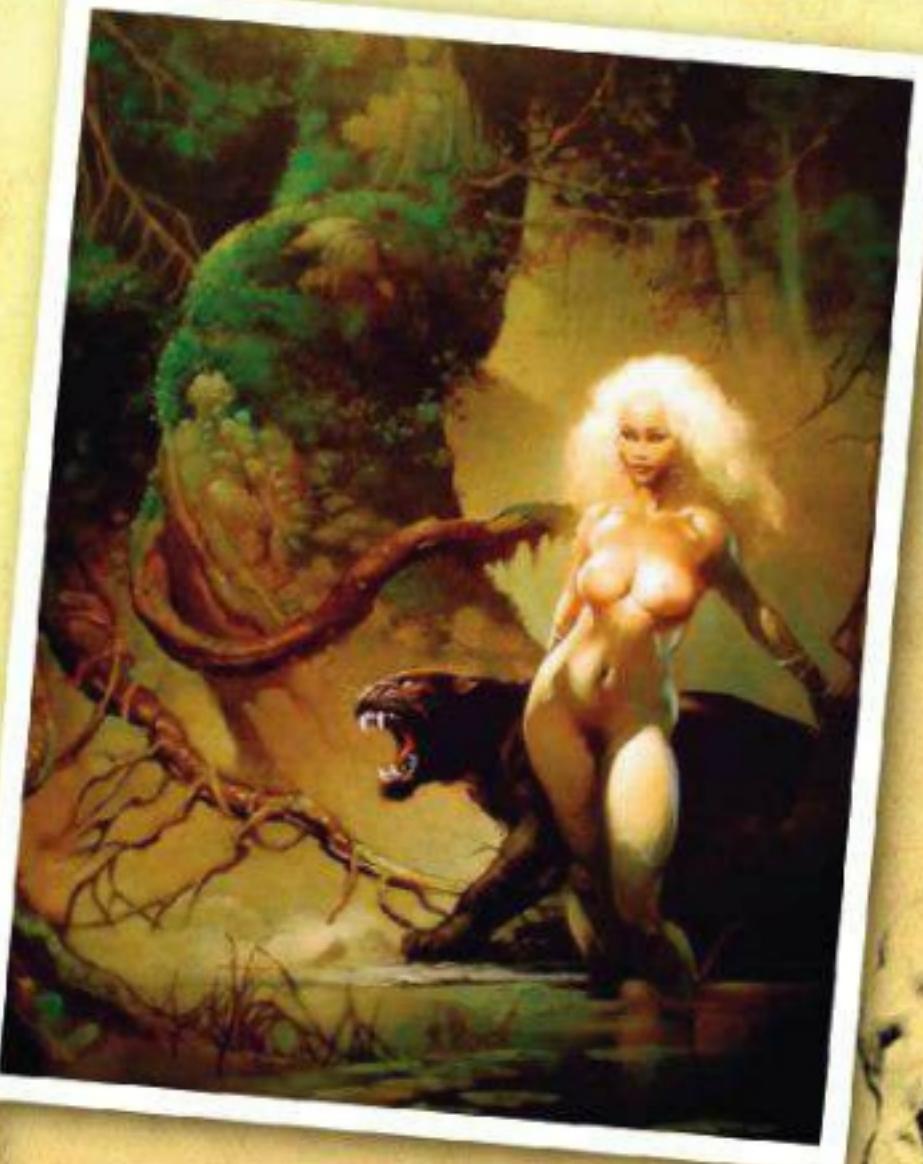
WEB: www.frankfrazetta.com



SILVER WARRIOR

Produced for Dell Books in the 1970s, *Silver Warrior* was not only a return to form but one of Frank Frazetta's most memorable pieces.





CAT GIRL

Easy, Tiger. Cat Girl became something of a theme for Frank as his later work clearly shows.



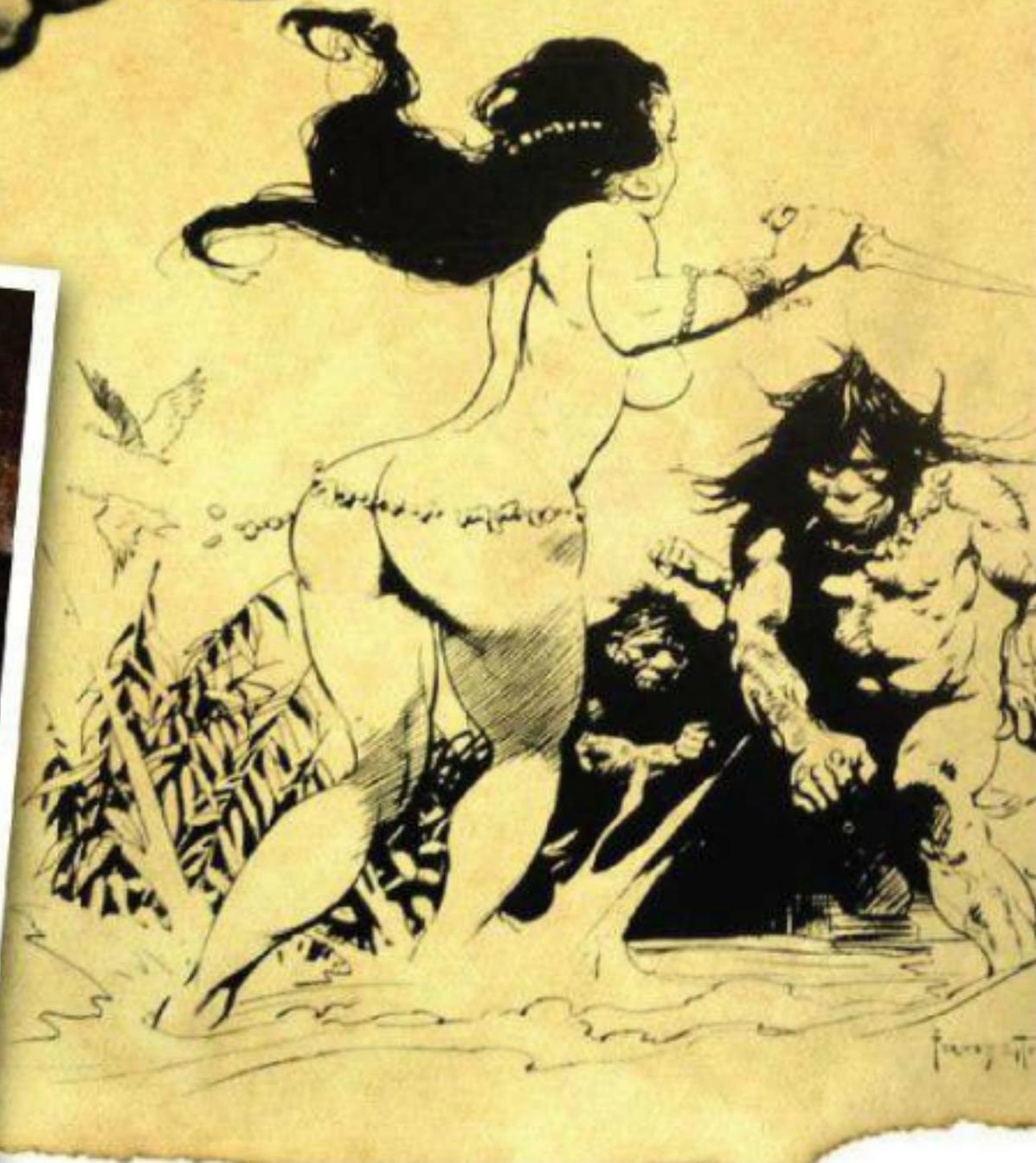
PENCIL SKETCHES

Frank's pencil work, much of which has only recently been published, shows the amazing grasp of human anatomy which underpins his imagery.



CONAN

The leaping warrior Frank produced for the cover of Conan the Avenger.





James Wolf Strehle

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Boston based illustrator James Wolf is clearly very talented. Formally trained in the traditional arts, he has recently entered the world of digital. "I focus primarily on fantasy, sci-fi, and horror, taking inspiration from emotional qualities of life," he declares.

As things stand, James tries to avoid using reference material, "because I feel that my style is represented more accurately direct from my head," he explains. Referencing is dangerous: "It can impair your style if you're not aware of what you're doing."

James cites his favourable skills as "imagination, highly conceptual thinking and detailed knowledge of the visual world." James believes he has the passion and drive, not just to make it "but to be the best in my field."



1 LICK This shows a creepy woman doing what comes naturally: "being creepy," says James.

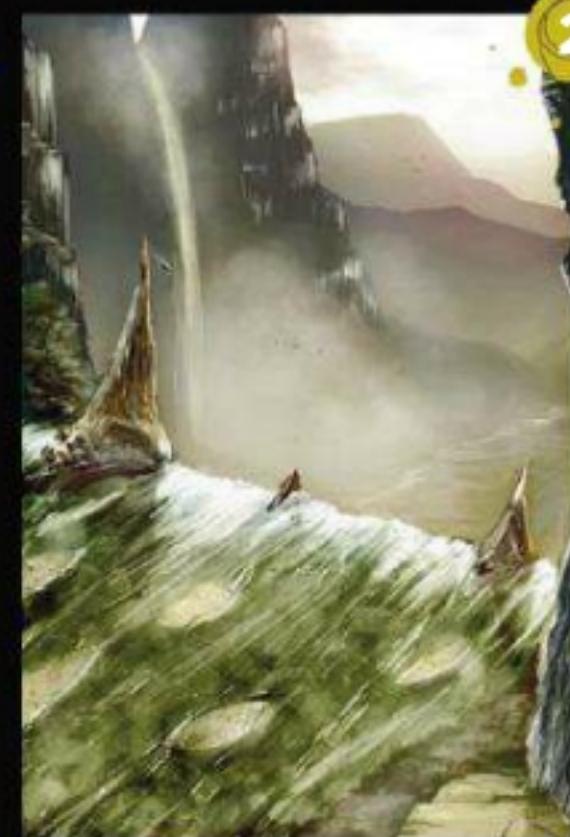
2 QUEENS IMAGE "No matter how high her status," explains James, "she is still susceptible to vulnerability."

3 THROUGH THE FIREFLIES "A warrior and her companion searching through a dead forest with fireflies lighting the way," he explains.





1



2

 **Becky Pennock**

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop CS



3



"Digital art and fantasy is my passion and it may take several lifetimes for my interest to fade," says Becky. "As a child I would spend hours poring over book covers and drawing them for myself."

Aged 16, "after quitting art for almost five years, I became very interested in digital art," she explains. And while her early work was inspired by anime, "I have steered away from the manga/anime style and gone off on my own."

Constantly inspired by the masters of the digital medium, Becky loves browsing art forums, "stalking the masters of the craft to keep up with their progress and uncover just what it is that makes their work unique."

1 EN GARDE Created as an experiment with some new brushes. "This is a picture of a forest standoff," says Becky, "with a foreboding dark knight."

2 DIVE "Some take this figure launching itself from a waterfall to be a suicide picture," says Becky. "But I like to think of it as a prelude to flight."

3 DRAGON Becky's first attempt at drawing a dragon turned out pretty well: "I conceived it as a mech initially, so it has a kind of mechanised feel to it. I particularly enjoy the blue glow on the backside," she says.

 **Stephanie Kao**
LOCATION: USA
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SOFTWARE: Photoshop, Painter



Stephanie has always loved fantasy art: "Sometimes I do simple images, and sometimes I do something more complex. However I draw, the style and technique is just another way to tell the viewer something." Her real goal is to bring across emotion and story.

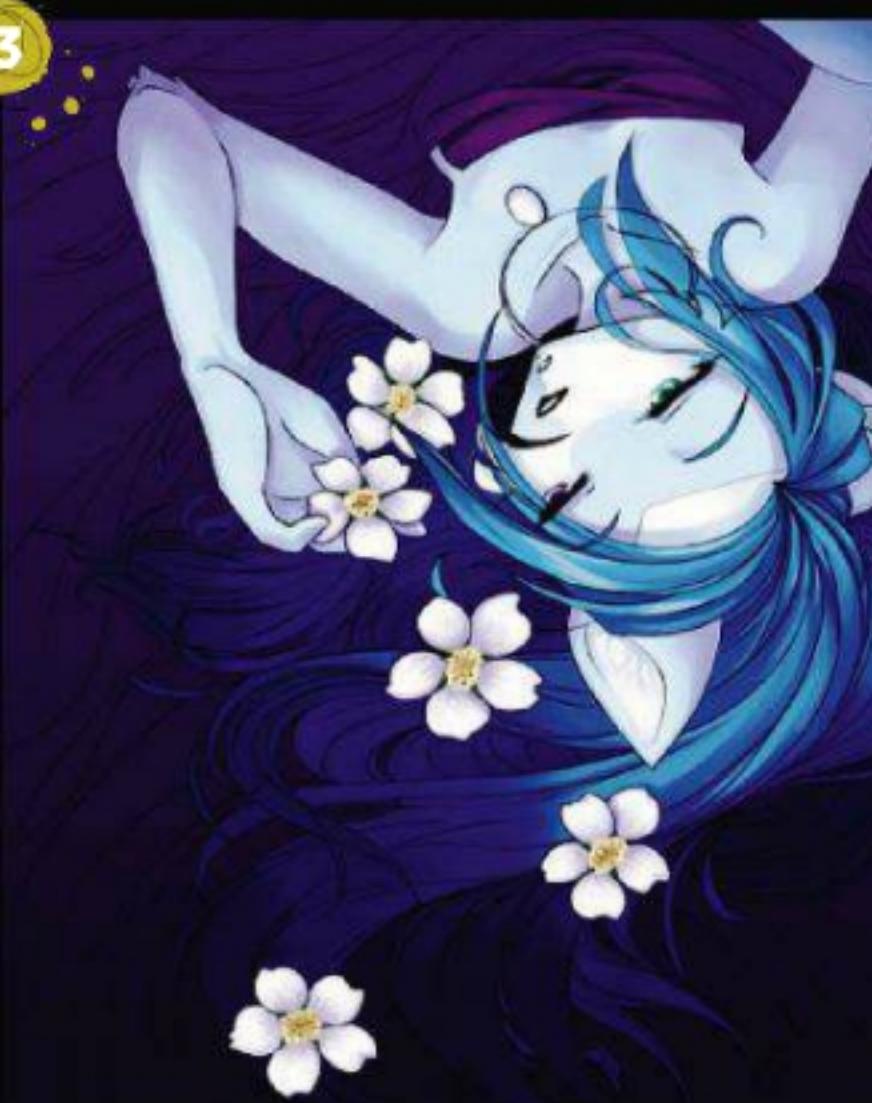
Sometimes that communication is hidden away, "a subtle aspect of the image for those willing to look a little deeper." Sometimes it's riding on the surface for all to see.

Stephanie works in digital as well as more traditional media, for cross-fertilisation. "I feel that many techniques from one media can help you become better at the other. Also, it's just plain fun."

1 DARK A tribute to Andrea Koupal's character, also called Dark. "I often imagine him as a spirit of the night rather than something that simply dwells in the darkness."

2 AUTUMN KITSUNE "I love drawing elegant characters and the mythical Japanese, multi-tailed foxes," Stephanie reveals. "So it's kind of natural that this came about."

3 ONI "I wanted to play with an elegant vertical design," says Stephanie. "White flowers floating down a dark stream of cloth."





1

 **Amelia Stoner
Mammoliti**

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop CS, Alias Sketchbook Pro



"My first itch for fantasy, so to speak, was when I was a child interested in dinosaurs," Amelia reveals. "After that, dinosaurs became dragons and people became knights or even the undead." It's a slippery slope!

Now an illustration major at the Academy of Arts University in San Francisco, Amelia continues to develop her digital skills. "I was introduced to Adobe Photoshop 5.0 at the age of 16. I knew nothing about the program, and eventually built up my knowledge without much instruction."

Now that she's familiar with Photoshop and has been introduced to the likes of Alias Sketchbook Pro, the sky's the limit. "I'm constantly striving to improve myself, as well as my artwork, and I plan to continue so until the day I die."

1 ROOFTOP SERENADE This rogue character goes by the name of Rivin.

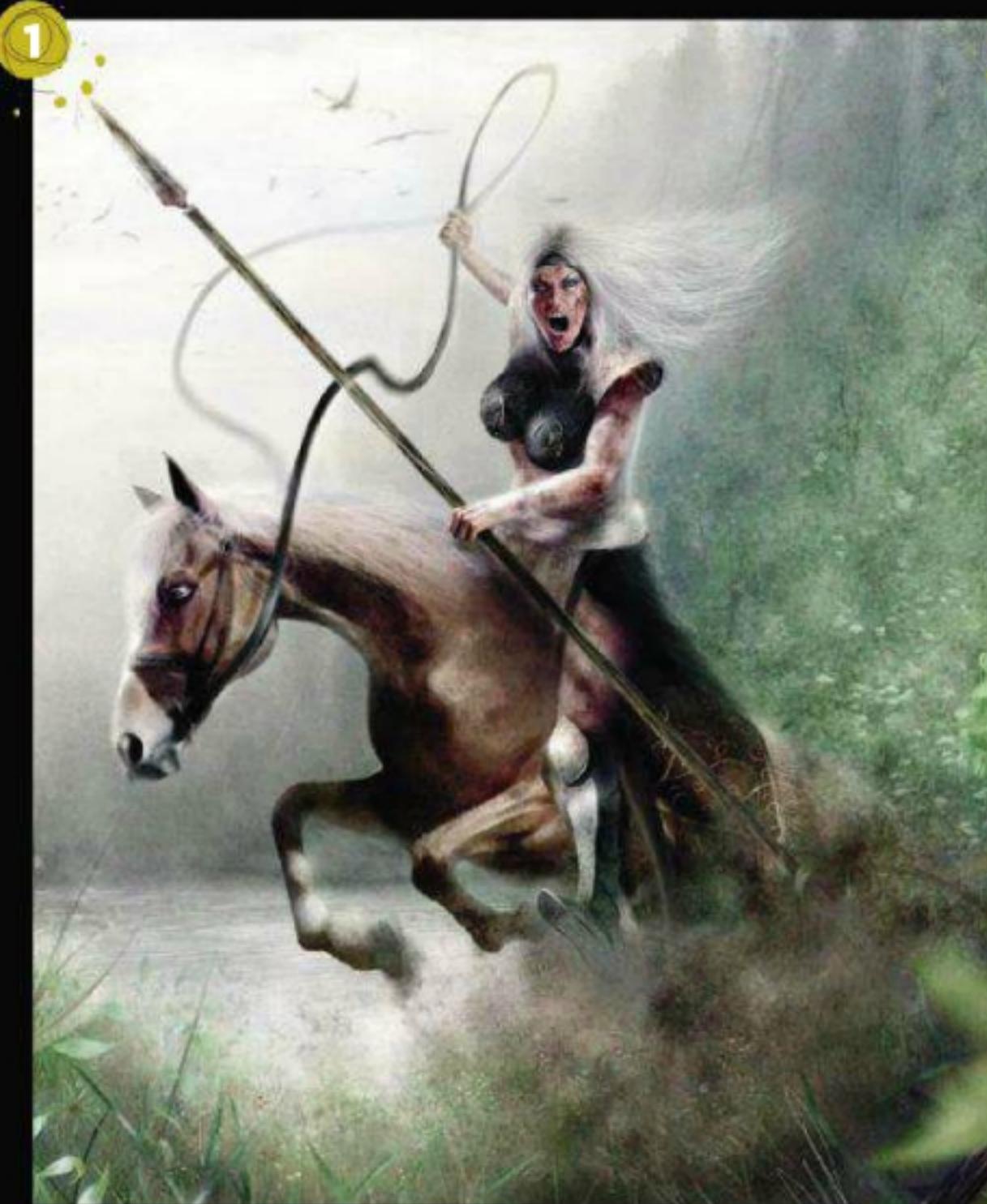
2 LIKE A DEMON SHOULD Alias Sketchbook Pro all the way this time, "with an image of a demon named Rufio," reveals Amelia.

3 VOLATILE Amelia's Graphite and Photoshop creature design.



2

3



George Patsouras

LOCATION: US
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SOFTWARE: Photoshop CS



"I've been an artist for most of my life," says George. "But I only began experimenting digitally a couple of years back."

George began to work on a new scale of painting. "The advantage with the digital medium is the fact that you can experiment as much as you want."

George's style varies: "I usually do art related to the Greek myths, as well as portraits."

1 ROAD TO REDEMPTION George wanted to depict feelings of rage, "so nailing the expression was the most difficult, but most important, task."

2 PHENOMENON At more than 100 hours, this piece is certainly the most time-consuming George has ever produced. "I included the Goddess Hera to represent my Greek heritage."

3 TEMPTATION "I began to render the figure without much thought on the background, which proved to be a huge mistake." George did the only sensible thing: "I learned from it."





1

Erik Hilliker

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop 7



A tattoo artist for the last 16 years, "I started doing digital art about five years ago, mainly because I didn't have the room in my apartment to set up a proper painting studio," says Erik.

Erik enjoys working digitally: "It can give you a lot of creative freedom." But there are risks: "It's really easy to get bogged down in the minutiae of a piece, which can suck the spontaneity out of it."

1 SURCUSUS, LORD OF GUNS "The first in a series that I would like to do based on demons and angels of the modern world."

2 ANTIPHAMUS, DARK LORD OF BATTLE This started out, like most of Erik's work, "with a pencil sketch on plain old paper," he explains. This migrated to Photoshop, where it became the topmost layer in a stack. "I set the blend mode to multiply at 50 per cent opacity and used the sketch as my guide."

3 HA... YOU MISSED! "The inspiration for this came from a rib-roast that I had seen earlier in the day. Check out the tail and you'll see."



2



3



 **Michael Pedro**
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SOFTWARE: Photoshop CS



Growing up with such '80s influences as Transformers, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles and Masters of the Universe, how could Mike fail to become an SF and fantasy art fan?

Likewise comics: "They were a form of art that I could get my hands on, so I grew up drawing comic book fantasy/sci-fi almost exclusively."

Now working for Electronic Arts, "I feed my fantasy/SF art addictions by painting during my free time."

1 KELDOR Mike sat down to do a simple character concept piece, "and ended up with a fairly dramatic, war-torn painting of the villain Keldor."

2 TRIKLOPS "I redesigned a Masters of the Universe character to see what I'd come up with," muses Mike.

3 MARSCAPE "A speed-painting I did of a future Mars landscape... just something fun to do on a lunch break."



1

 **Susan McKivergan**

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop CS, Poser 6,
Vue 5 Esprit



"I used to draw unicorns and horses as a child, but I put art aside as a teenager and into my adult years until my interest was sparked again while taking some courses at St. Petersburg College in Florida," Susan muses.

Switching her major to Fine Arts, Susan began work at a local art gallery, providing her with an even greater learning experience. "I am more interested in art than I have ever been," she declares. "Being a stay-at-home mom and wife, some days I have hours to work on a new project. I love it."

1 NIGHTMARE Susan's vision of the equine fantasy creature known as 'Nightmare'. "I wanted to show the creature with fire and red eyes, while keeping a dream/nightmare setting."

2 THE HIEROPHANT Fifth card of the standard Tarot Deck, "it was part of a project with 19 other digital artists online. We were assigned a card from the deck to complete and upload."

3 SONG OF THE SEA One of Susan's mermaids. "So far there are seven in the series and I hope to have 12 by '07."

2



3





DANCE OF BLADES

"I still find myself playing games or watching anime and saying 'Wow, that's cool', then somehow incorporating that into my own work." One of Jason's goals is to work on a quality videogame.

Artist **PROFILE**

Jason Chan



AGE: 23

COUNTRY: US

Soon to graduate
from San Francisco

Academy of Art, Jason Chan
has a passion for comic book
art and a newly discovered
love of traditional masters.

SOFTWARE USED: Painter
and Photoshop

WEB: www.jasonchanart.com

The art of JASON CHAN

"I guess I live in the clouds more than on the Earth."
The fantastic and ethereal art of Jason Chan.



UNDERSEA ROMANCE

This piece aimed for a 'beauty and the beast' feel with two otherworldly creatures. 'It's not my most technically impressive piece,' Jason says, 'but the mood was dead on.'

*L*ife is made up of many moments, but Jason Chan is clear about which ones he prefers to paint: "I love to depict tragic beauty, loss of innocence, sadness, pain, and silence, the feeling of otherworldliness and mystery.

"I used to draw a lot of love themed images and more sexual images. Before that I drew a lot of monsters and demons," says Jason. "I've always loved to draw. I would draw Mario and MegaMan, then I moved on to X-Men, Final Fantasy, then Warcraft. I learned by drawing the art that I liked.

"My work is a sort of mishmash of manga/anime style with traditional western painting aesthetic. I came from a background of drawing videogame characters that were mostly Japanese in origin," explains Jason, "but in college, I began to study the western aesthetic.

"Growing up, my favourite movies were Aliens and Terminator. My favourite books were all fantasy books. It was only natural for me to want to illustrate those as well."

Asked about software and equipment, Jason says, "the key to digital painting is not in the software. The computer is just a fancy pencil. A good artist could make an amazing piece of art with a piece of coal," but to do that takes practice as well as talent: "It's studying anatomy, people, objects, colours, composition, and light that make my pieces work."

Jason's goal is to move people, to affect them directly with the power of his imagery. "I'm always happy whenever I get a reaction from people," he says. "Whether it's warm tenderness, sadness, or disgust." ➤

WHITE ANGEL

Jason's Angel character. 'She's a characterisation of self-reflection and innocence, as well as a lost soul.'



ANGEL KISS

"Angel Kiss is a simple yet shocking image," says Jason. "It's not overly gory or complex, but it's very potent for so few elements."

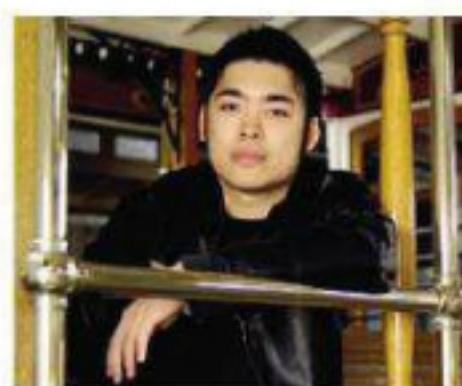


WATERFALL

Jason likes to foster a feeling of mystery in his work, of otherworldliness. *Waterfall* is a great example of his desire to paint "quiet images."

Jason Chan's **VITAL STATISTICS**

You'll have to get up early to compete with Jason...



because it's very peaceful. I like the feeling of being awake when others are asleep.

Favourite traditional artist?

John Singer Sargent.

Favourite digital artist?

I have many. Oliosman, Linda Bergkvist and Aleksi Briclot, to name a few.

First record/CD you bought?

I think it was a science fiction movie soundtrack collection.

Most prized possession?

My computer.

Average time spent on an image?

That really varies. I'll just say 20 hours.

Figure from history you most identify with?

I'm not sure. I'd like to think Leonardo da Vinci!

Left or right-handed?

Right-handed.

ANGEL FLIGHT

This image was actually born from Jason's observation of a fence on an overpass. "If anything sparks my interest," he says, "you may see it again somewhere in a painting."

**JASON
CHAN'S**
Artist tip

TEXTURE

"It's good to incorporate natural texture, either through using textured brushes or through overlaying textures onto an image. I have some high-res scans of gessoed boards on my computer that I overlay onto some images to give a more natural, gritty look."



WISH

Jason wrote a short story to fill in the back story for this folktale picture. "I think it is helpful to have a story in mind when illustrating," he says, "because the story will tell you who each character is."



Artist
PROFILE

Jason Chan

COUNTRY: US

CLIENTS: White Wolf

Publishing, BioWare

Corp, Acony Games,

Animation Farm



Jason was born in Stockton, California, in 1983. His passion for drawing led him to study illustration and conceptual design. Since then, Jason has freelanced on RPGs, card games and video games. www.jasonchanart.com

Try it yourself

Download a Zipped PSD file from <http://tinyurl.com/2gn7py>.

For a trial of Photoshop CS3, go to www.adobe.com/go/trvphotoshop.

For a trial of Painter X visit www.corel.com/paintex.

Painter & Photoshop GOTHIC BEAUTY

Learn to create a dangerous beauty from start to finish in Painter and Photoshop, with **Jason Chan**...

Life is made interesting by the existence of contrasts. For instance, good exists because there is evil. Happiness is enjoyable because there is despair. The same rule applies to art, of course. Simply painting a beautiful woman is fine, but in order to make her look more beautiful you need to balance her alongside something terrible.

In this image, I have painted an innocent-looking beautiful girl in a very dark and tainted situation using gothic imagery and heavy shading to conjure up an unsettling feeling in the

viewer, thus playing innocence and sin against each other.

I often change my process to fit both my mood and the specific image. I think a flexible process such as this keeps things intuitive and fresh, which makes it fun. Always try to have fun while working on your image, no matter how much you might hate it after having worked on it for hours. It shows when you love or hate your art. Also, try to work while you're in a good mood – this will affect your work.

This workshop follows my steps in creating this specific image. I firmly

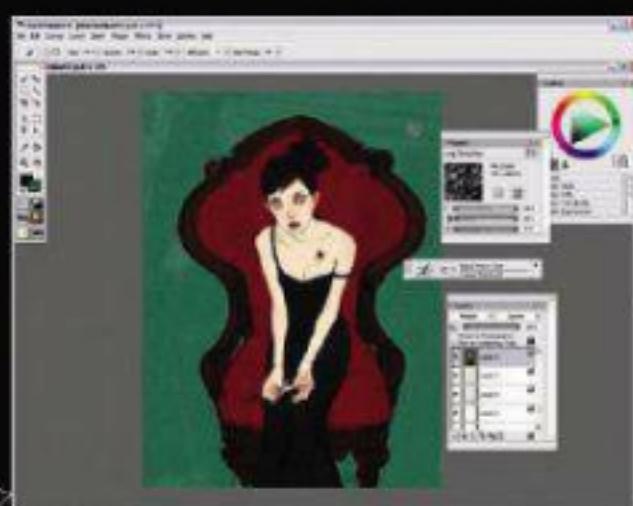
believe the computer is simply a tool and you can paint no better with it than you could learn to paint with any other medium. I was initially taught to paint with oils, I have worked in acrylics and watercolour, and have drawn illustrations throughout my whole life. All of this is what really counts when making an image.

Your artwork is the culmination of all your years of study and hard work. With each new piece you hopefully come up against new challenges and grow as an artist. Practice, in whatever form you prefer, can only make you better.



1 Sketch

It is important to know what you are going to paint ahead of time, so thumbnails, sketches and studies are always a good starting point for projects. Some people spend more time preparing for a painting than actually painting it, which is not a bad thing. The more you plan ahead, the less you have to work when actually painting.



2 Base colour

Once my sketch is ready to go, I create a new layer for laying down a base wash of colour. I'm using Painter for this step. I select the Coarse Mop Brush. This gives me large strokes that also show paper texture. You can choose a paper texture from your Paper Texture palette. I lay down simple washes of colour on a

new layer to give myself an idea of what I want the colour scheme to be. You can also do this step in Photoshop using a Multiply layer and any brush you like.

3 Shadows

Now I create another layer for laying down basic shadows. I go with warm shadows because I plan on using a cool light source later on. Light works in contrasts – cool lights/warm shadows or warm lights/cool shadows. Lights and shadows are actually opposite colours, but you don't necessarily have to adhere to this rule. I use light peach for all the shadows. The reason I do the shadows on this layer is so that the difference between light and shadow is the same on every surface without having to guess what colour to use.



Workshop



PRO SECRETS

Multiple saves
Be sure to save often and save multiple versions. Sometimes your computer can crash while saving, which can destroy the file, or the file itself can become corrupted. A less tragic problem is when you do something you can't undo and you want to go back to a previous state. Always take the precaution and just save a lot. It's worth it and you can always delete the extra saves in the future.

4 Temperature changes

With watercolour washes, I usually do one more layer for temperature changes. I put light washes of green into the warm colours and warms into the greens, etc. This helps to unify the image. Make sure you pay attention to how colours will react. For example, the girl's shoulders are surrounded by the red chair, so light will bounce off the chair casting red light on her shoulders.

5 Circular oil brush

Create a brush for the opaque painting by modifying the Oils Round Camelhair. With the Camelhair brush selected, go into the Brush Creator to change settings. Make sure the Dab Type is Circular, Opacity is under Pressure control and the Size control is off.

6 Skin palette

Skin is difficult to paint because it is translucent and often misunderstood. Use a simple colour palette, and choose a

light blue light source to provide variety – it also adds a cold and mysterious feeling.

Painting this is simpler than it looks. First, create a new layer. Start with the local colour and paint most of the face. Next, add in the shadow shapes with the shadow colour. Using the brush we created, blend between the shadow colour and base colour to create a variety of shades. Next, add in the warms for nose, ears and cheeks.

Finally, take a light colour and gently add that, keeping one spot of the head brighter than the rest. This will give a sense of the entire head as a shape. Be careful that you never mix your light and shadow colours together, and keep the lighting consistent. You can also add reflect lights into your shadows, which add form to shadow areas. They are darker than the light source, but never darker than the shadow. Never add lights, including reflect lights, that are darker than the local colour. Light sources only make things brighter, so a red light on white skin will not make white red.

7 Opaque base

Continue in this method to paint the entire body and dress in opaque

colour, covering the underpainting and outlines. If you are having trouble with any of your lighting, anatomy, forms or pose, don't be afraid to model it in a mirror, take a photo or have a friend model for you. Try to avoid copying directly from the photo, but use the forms and observations to make your own work look better. Don't be a slave to references. They are tools for learning and understanding, not to be copied.

8 Surface variety

Create another layer and start painting the chair opaque. Notice how I have tried to mimic the look of finished wood. I have strong highlights (again in light blue for consistency), and stronger reflected lights.

It's good to know what material different objects are made of when lighting them. The wood on the chair behaves differently from the cushioning, for instance. The cushioning is softer and doesn't have bright highlights. The dagger in the sitter's hands, on the other hand, is reflective and very shiny. All of these are different from her skin, which is soft and glossy. Her dress is less shiny than her skin, but not as soft as the chair cushion.





9 Chair clean-up

Go back over the chair to define its edges more clearly. I don't render my work in a super-photorealistic way, as you can see, so there are still some loose brushstrokes in there. If you like, you can keep on painting until it looks real. I'm still using the Custom brush.

10 Chair pattern

Add a suggestion of pattern to the chair. To do this, create a new layer for the pattern. The layer should be set to Multiply to apply the pattern to the chair. Note that you can only darken the chair on a Multiply layer. If you want to add lighter areas, you will have to go back and lighten your chair or paint on a new layer later. You can spend your time and make a really nice pattern, but I'm just going to do a quick pattern for demonstration purposes. This is what the pattern looks like with the layer turned to Normal/default. Pretty ugly, right?



11 Chair pattern multiply

Now, turn the layer that the pattern was on back to Multiply. Make numerous tweaks to this until you're happy with it. You can easily change the pattern later if you like.

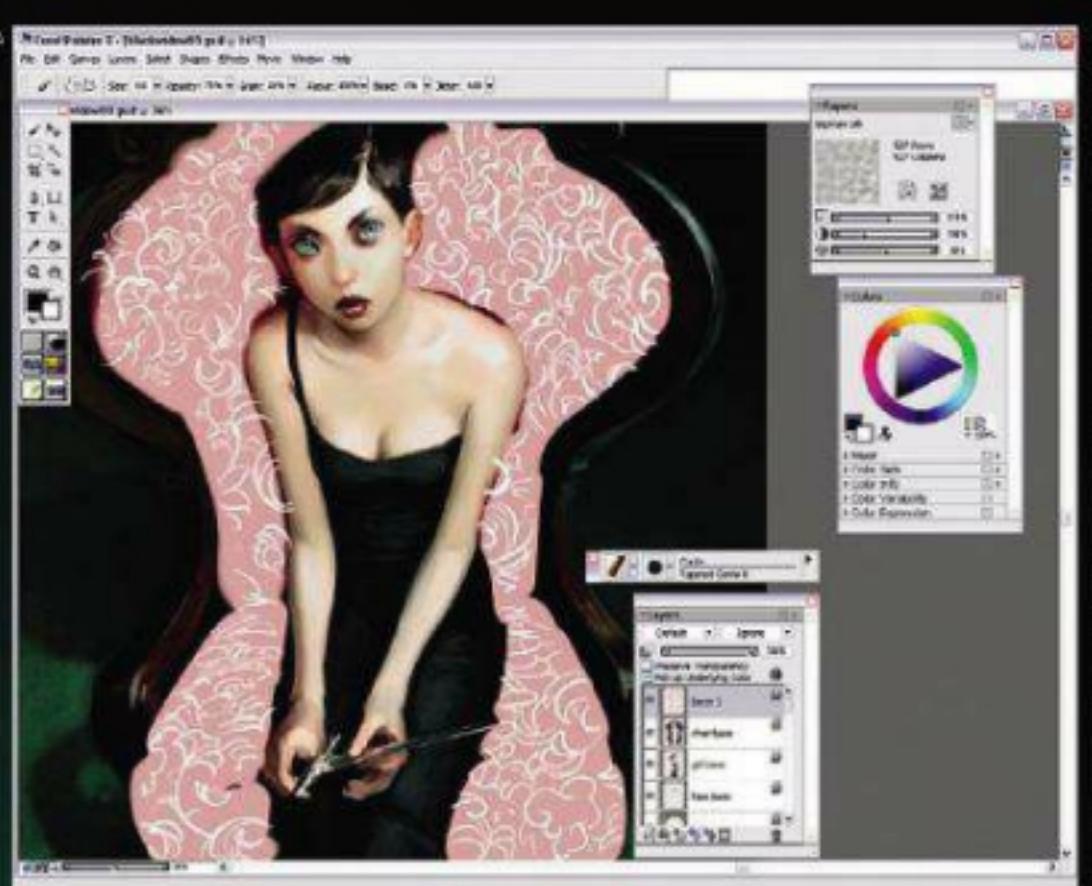
12 The face

Go back through the image to clean things up some more. Start with the face – I'll talk a little about her face in general. I wanted her to be innocent, yet scary. This is a normal convention of mine. I do this with large eyes and small lips. I also use almost child-like head proportions, and tend to space the eyes widely and make them opened wide.

I do not normally paint the stereotypical beautiful face; I like to change it and make it mine. Find out how you like to paint your faces and it will give your work a unique flavour. I suppose mine are almost anime-like.

13 Clean up

I don't know if you can see the difference, but I'm slowly cleaning up her body. I'm not aiming for a tight finish, but nothing too loose either. You can get a very smooth effect easily in Painter by using the Blending tools. I like the Just Add Water tool. I don't use it so much in this image, but it's good for when I want a smooth finish.

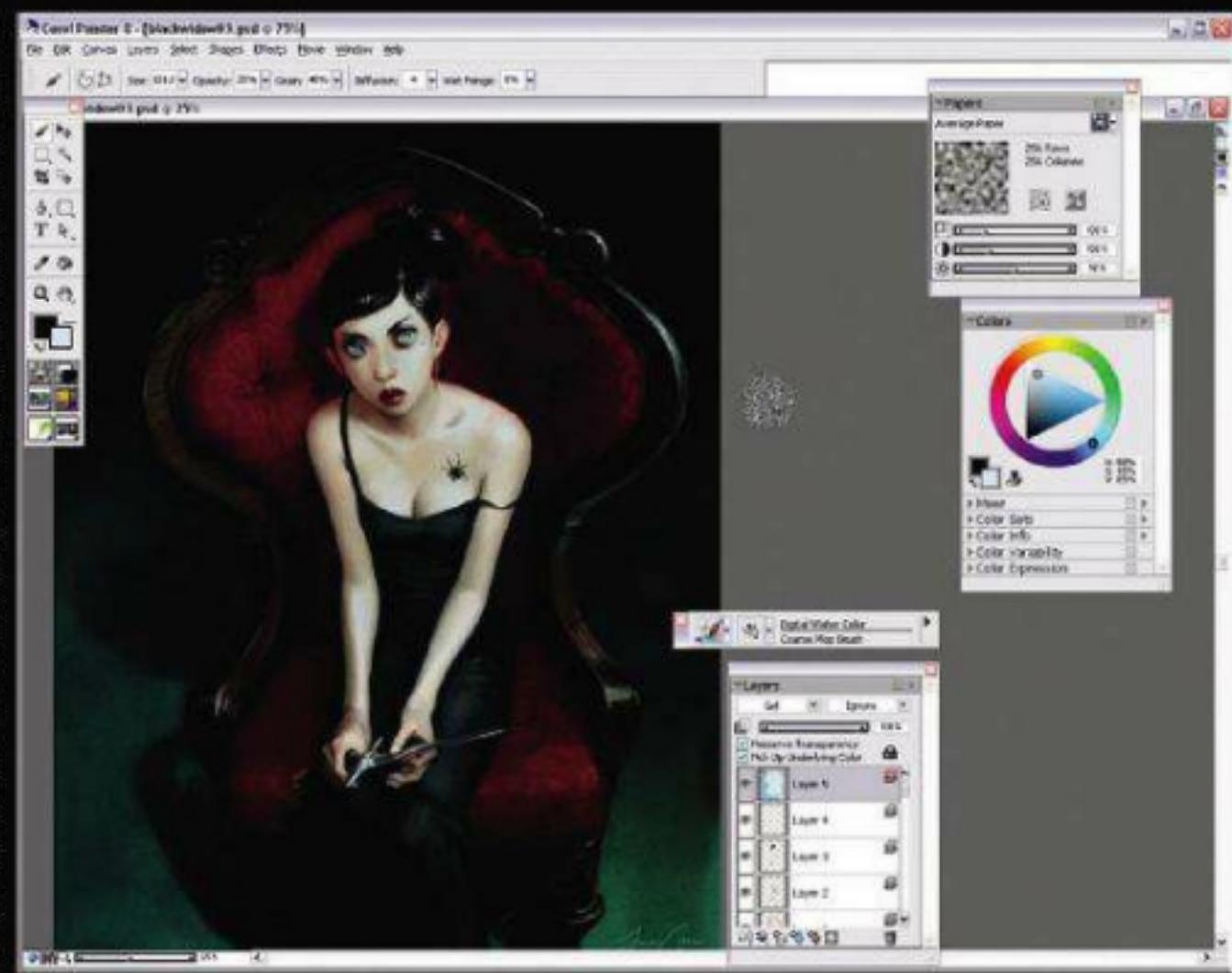


Workshop



14 Hands

Hands are hard to illustrate. Each one of them is just as complicated as drawing the entire human body, complete with its own set of limbs. I highly recommend getting references for hands – they're not hard to find.



15 Hair

Hair can be tricky. Painting strands can become too busy very quickly, and they don't always look good. Paint hair in masses. First, put down the darkest colour of the hair over the whole shape. Then layer lighter shapes on top. Finally, add a few loose strands for detail.

disgusting can make your beautiful elements more beautiful in contrast.

17 Tinting

It's going well, but the image should be colder and less friendly. I create a new layer and bring out the digital watercolours again. I put washes of blues and greens over the image, which gives everything a cold tint. The mood looks better, but it's getting a little too dark.

18 Finishing the image

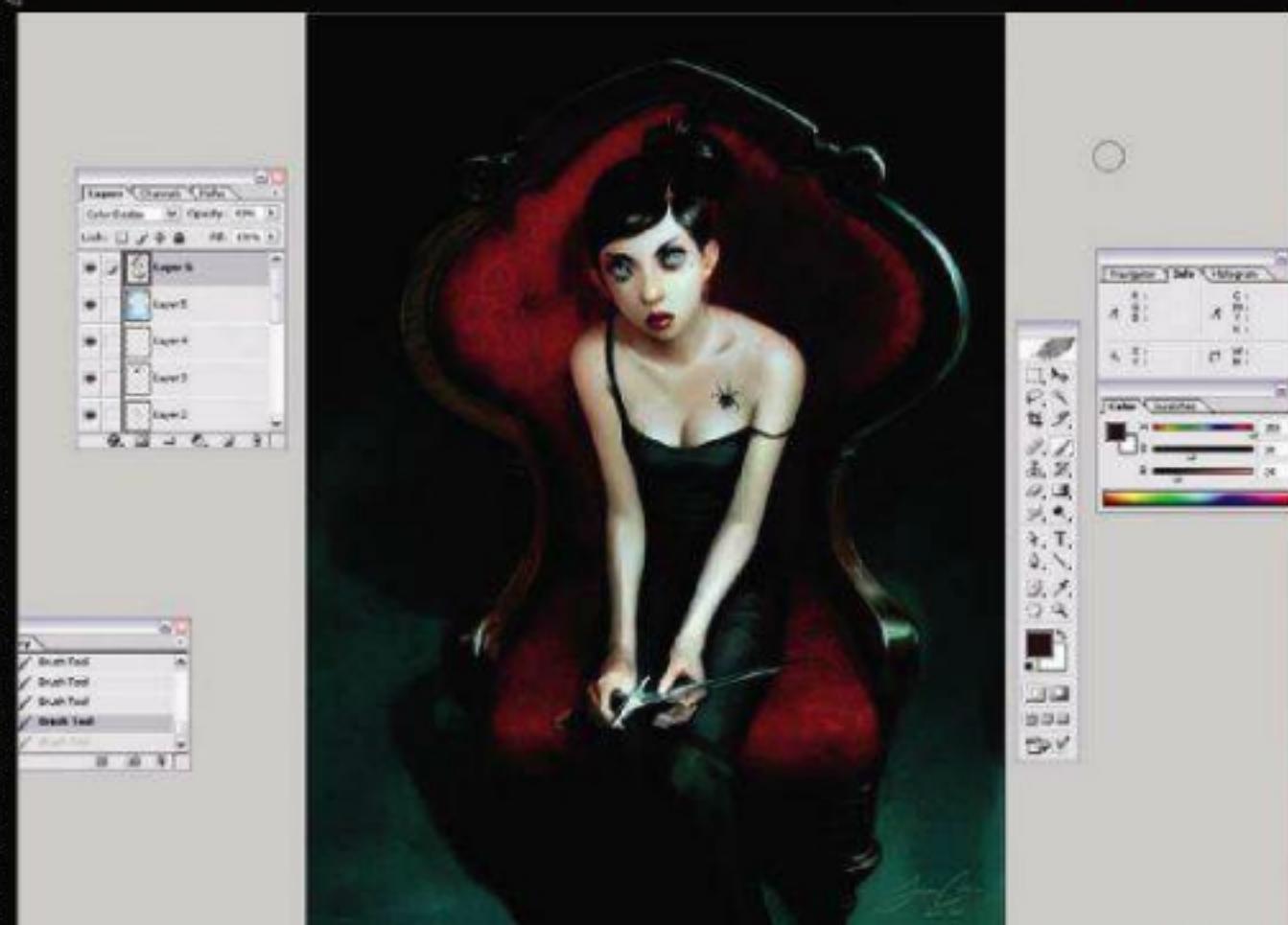
The image is almost done. I just want to bring out some of the highlights a little more. For this, bring the image

into Photoshop. If you have been working in Painter, you need to change all of the Gel layers to Multiply. These were all the layers that were used for watercolours. Then save the file as a PSD.

Photoshop is great for finishing touches. Create a new layer and set it to Color Dodge. This layer enables you to paint in lights. Use fairly low value colours for this, and use cool colours to intensify the highlights around the image. Be fairly loose with this and let the strokes bleed out beyond the highlights to create auras of light. After affecting different areas with colour lights, the image is complete. ■

16 Black widow

I decided early on that I wanted a black widow spider in this image. Let's make it sexy, scary and disgusting all at once by making it crawl up her chest. Remember, creating something scary or



PRO SECRETS

Keep layers to a minimum

Layers are great, but they are not always essential. Don't be a slave to your layers. I do entire paintings sometimes on just two layers. Sometimes it's liberating and feels more like working with real paint. Simply paint on layer one and when you like it, drop it to the canvas. Then, when you paint something new, create layer one again and likewise drop it when you're done.

1

Neil Blevins

LOCATION: US

WEB: www.nellblevins.com

EMAIL: nell@soulburn3d.com

SOFTWARE: 3ds max and Photoshop



"I've been making fantasy/sci-fi artwork for as long as I can remember," says Neil, "first with paper and pencil, then with acrylics," and now on the computer using a hybrid 2D/3D approach.

Neil has mixed feelings about the precision you can get from 3D software, "so I manipulate my images with layers of dirt and grime in Photoshop and other software to get a more organic feeling."

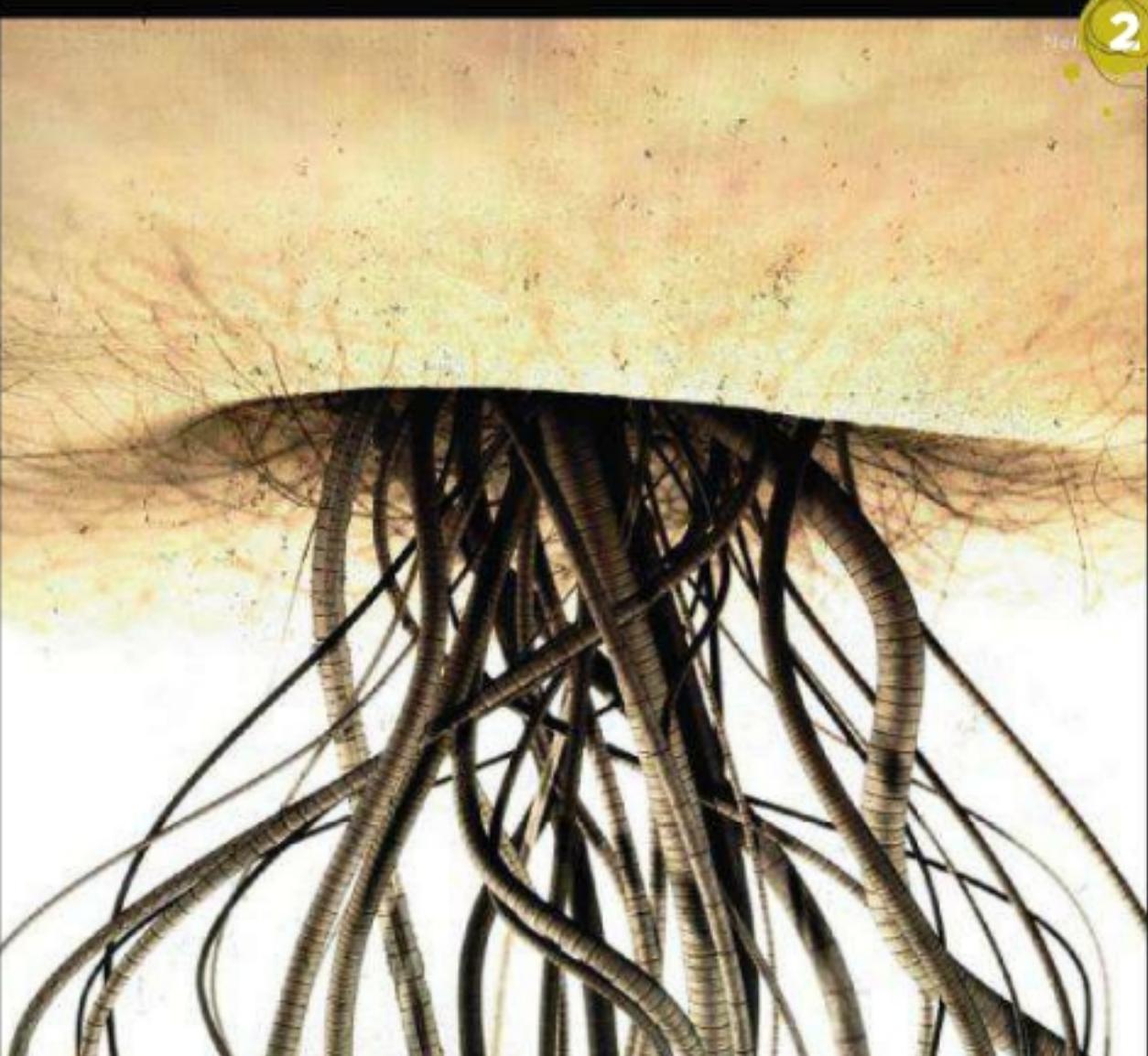
The immediacy of painting as opposed to 3D work is also attractive: "It takes so long to make a pure 3D image that much of the time you lose that original inspiration along the way." Neil is always pushing his technique to help him hold on to that original spark.

1 THE GATHERING 2 "The second instalment in a series of images which depict variations on a being whose purpose is to collect the dead for the next stage of life," he reveals.

2 ALTERNATIVE BIRTH Neil is fascinated by wires, "especially when they relate to human flesh." This image combines both in a somewhat disturbing fashion. "The name gives it a bit of extra 'ick' factor," laughs Neil.

3 BLOOD PLANET A CD cover for the band Element. "They wanted the shore of a blood sea and old ruins where a giant war was once fought. I approached this piece as a matte painting, combining beach photos, a few 3D elements, and a lot of painting."

2



3



 **Peter Mohrbacher**

LOCATION: US
WEB: www.vandalhigh.com
EMAIL: bugmeyer@gmail.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop CS



Peter has been drawing for about seven years and painting only four years, "but since I started, I feel like I've been out adventuring in the wilderness of the creative field."

It's not always enjoyable, though. "Howls of self-doubt linger in the distance," he muses. "Shrouding fog is always concealing my path." Peter is just glad to have his friends and family to keep pushing him forward.

"When I get lost on a piece or if I start to look away from my art, I just look back inside myself and try to remember why I started to do all this." Peter treasures his imagination above all: "I don't really like things like sci-fi or fantasy as much as I like the things I see in my head when I stare out of the passenger seat window of a car."

1 AZRAEL "This is the angel of death," explains Peter, the 11th from a series of 12 angels. "I wanted to create something that was identifiable as death without making him a cliché."

2 ANATHEMA This is a glorification of Peter's favourite villain character, "an experimentation for both symbolism and surrealism for me," he explains.



2



 **Jim Pavelec**

LOCATION: US
WEB: www.jimpavelec.com
EMAIL: genethq@comcast.net
SOFTWARE: Photoshop 7/Painter IX



After working exclusively in oils for a decade, Jim decided to try out the digital world.

Explaining his hybrid technique he says: "I lay out some rough colours using acrylic based inks that I allow to flow into each other randomly, then I scan this in and drop my drawing on top in a multiply layer in Photoshop 7."

Once fully digital, Jim can work the image up to its final full glory, experimenting as he goes. "The malleability of the digital medium makes it ideal for illustrators," he says, highlighting this aspect of the process.

1 OLIVE SKINNED IN COBALT FUR

"This piece was done for Kevin Eastman at Heavy Metal Magazine, one of my earliest influences," says Jim. "It was an honour to work for someone who had such a huge influence on me as a young artist."

2 MASTERS OF WAR "This piece just won runner-up for best action piece in the New Masters of Fantasy Volume III," boasts Jim.

3 WERESPIDER Using a live model for the human portion of this piece really helped Jim achieve the look he wanted. "Taking photos of spider webs and closely researching spiders brought it all together," he says.





1

Karl A Nordman

LOCATION: US

WEB: www.xenoform.deviantart.com

EMAIL: karlnorth@aol.com

SOFTWARE: Photoshop, Illustrator, Painter



"In my youth," Karl explains, "I was drawn to fantasy and sci-fi art." So it's only natural that he chose this genre of art as his career.

Right now, that means creating art for T-shirts and working as a freelance artist in his spare time. "But my ultimate goal is to make the transition to full-time freelancer," says Karl.

Karl learned to paint and draw with traditional media but he's embraced digital art, not just for its mass appeal but also "for the mess-free creativity it allows me. Now I use the techniques I learned in traditional media to create everything in the digital world on my Alienware computer.

"Art is a passion of mine," says Karl. "I'm always seeking new techniques and applications to improve my skills, so that I can grow as an artist. I yearn to paint because it's all so very exhilarating and exciting watching my dreams become reality. I love it. I'll never stop creating."

1 THE ECLIPSE Karl had decided that his first encounter with horses had to be epic. This led to an interesting question arising: "Can there really be harmony in chaos?"

2 DANGEROUS GAMES "I was thinking of a way to have a heated battle in the serenity of a forest grove and not disturb the calm atmosphere." The solution: "A simple game of chess takes on a whole new meaning when it is played for life or death."

3 DRAGON DAWN "Dragons. Could there be a more ideal symbol of grace and power?" asks Karl.

2



3





 **William J Meyer**

LOCATION: US

WEB: www.robotika.org

EMAIL: wjm@robotika.org

SOFTWARE: Photoshop, Poser, LiveType, Motion, After Effects



"I have a vague childhood memory of doing a watercolour of a Star Wars AT-AT when I was 9 or 10," says William. "And I've enjoyed drawing ever since."

Within the last year or so, William has embraced the digital approach to art. "I start by creating a collage with my own photographs, 3D renders, and particles and texture effects grabbed from motion graphics software."

This collage then gets drawn on paper with a soft pencil. "Using Photoshop, I composite my drawing with the collage, over which I apply digital paint." William's looking to open up his images with greater scope, more evocative lighting and some suggestive diffusion. "I'd like to develop a freer, looser approach as well."

1 HIS RELUCTANT GIRLFRIEND "Even monsters just want to be loved," says William of this picture, which features bold use of colour.

2 STOP HERE ON RED "I like imagining fantastic characters in mundane circumstances," says William. "A simple window can separate us from another world of ebullient experience."





1

Kenji Bliss

LOCATION: US

WEB: www.kenjibliss.blogspot.com

EMAIL: Kbliss.722@gmail.com

SOFTWARE: Photoshop 7



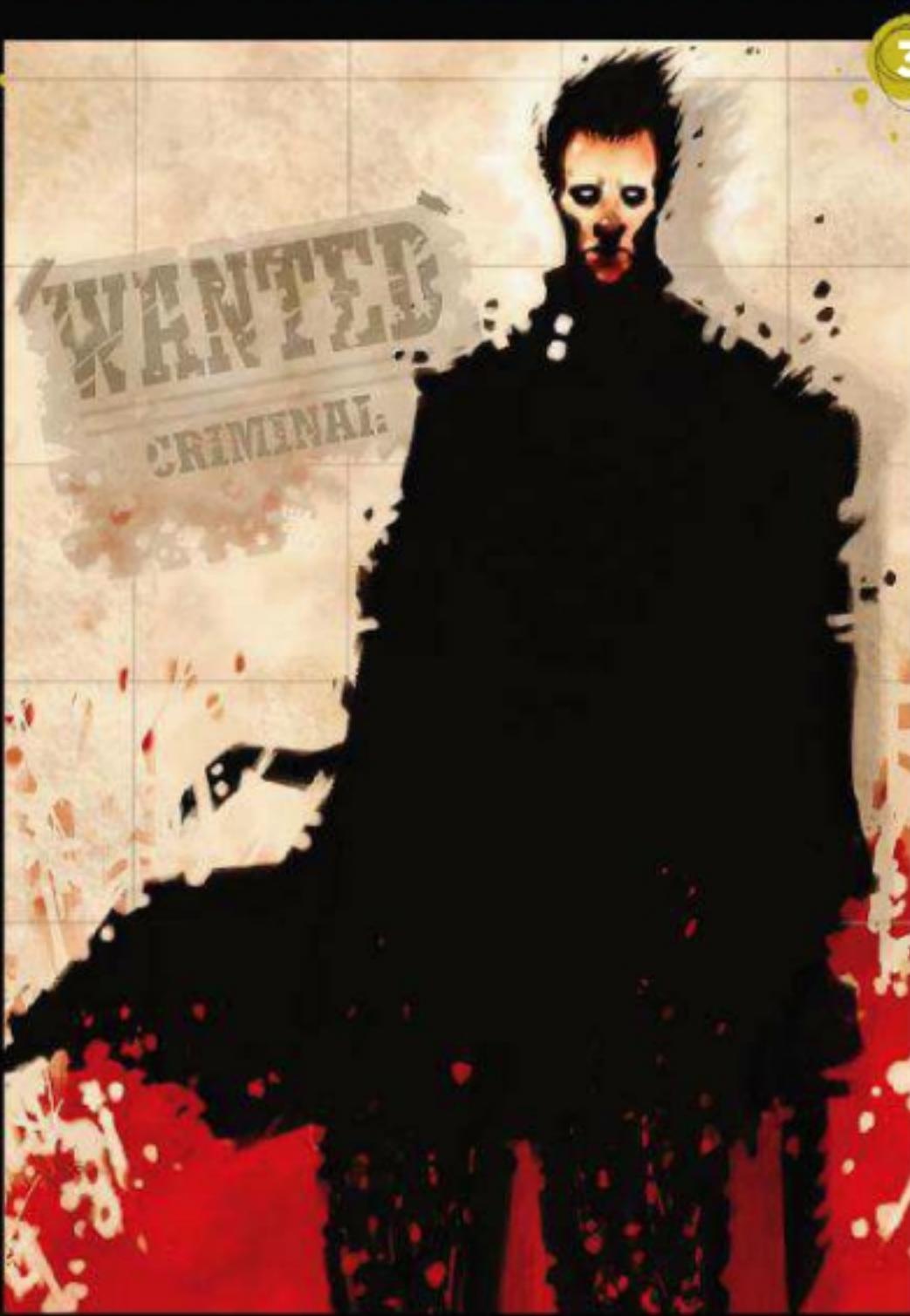
Kenji is a senior student at Columbus College of Art and Design, Ohio, where he's studying Illustration. He's been inspired by his studies to explore digital art.

"I really enjoy sci-fi and fantasy work," he says. "I was inspired by many artists from back in the days, and still am." Kenji's own work moved towards digital in his later years at college. He enjoys it, and is also inspired by many of today's talents. He says: "The work they produce is more than enough to make you want to draw every day."

Kenji's immediate goal is to "keep developing more work as this year progresses, and to keep learning."



2



3

1 REINCARNATE With this creature Kenji was trying to depict resurrection. "Using a very decayed and skeletal-type facial structure helped the whole design process," he explains.

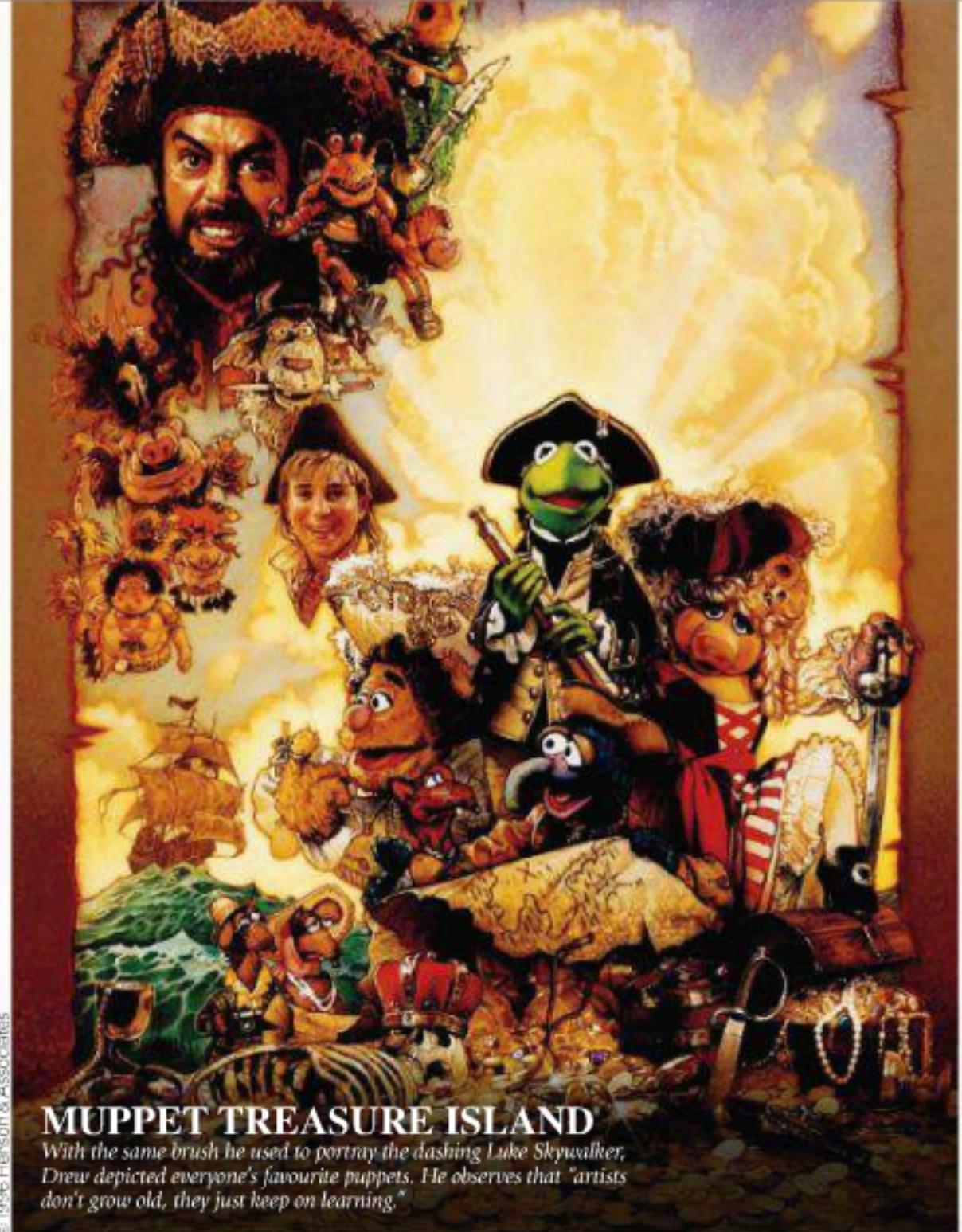
2 GEISHA "For this illustration, I was thinking of creating a Geisha but with more of a futuristic feel." Kenji's favourite trick was her dark outfit. "This helped the design a lot, because it's really up to the imagination of what it looks like."

3 THE MODERN CRIMINAL This character is a serial killer and criminal. "Since the subject was very graphic," Kenji explains, "I tried for a graphic-style design and composition to help get the message across."



BLADE RUNNER

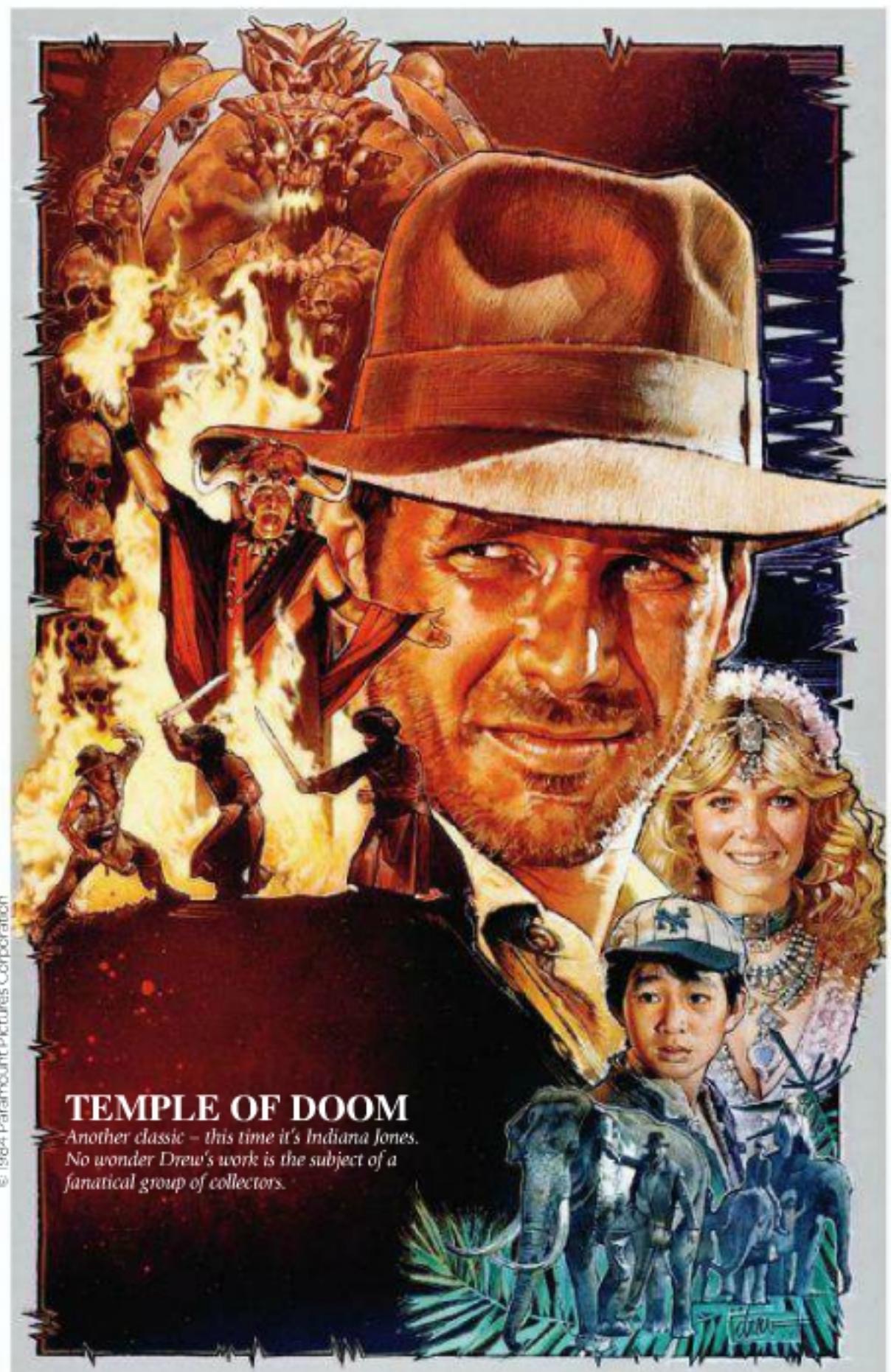
Drew began working on this poster for *Blade Runner* in 1982. His design was never used. In 2001 he was asked if the sketch could be used for the cover of a new director's version of the film. He updated the picture, but the DVD was never released.



© 1996 Henson & Associates

MUPPET TREASURE ISLAND

With the same brush he used to portray the dashing Luke Skywalker, Drew depicted everyone's favourite puppets. He observes that "artists don't grow old, they just keep on learning."



© 1984 Paramount Pictures Corporation

TEMPLE OF DOOM

Another classic – this time it's Indiana Jones. No wonder Drew's work is the subject of a fanatical group of collectors.

Drew Struzan

Star Wars, Blade Runner, ET, Star Wars again. For 30 years there's been only one man to call if you need a movie poster

Drew Struzan has, in his own way, become a Hollywood icon. Over a long, influential career his splendidly rich artwork has formed the perfect complement to countless blockbuster movies.

But Drew wasn't always chums with Hollywood's grandes. In fact, his beginnings were so humble that his is a true Cinderella story: "I was poor," he says, bluntly. "I didn't have anything." Now his work connects with almost the entire world.

EARLY LEARNER

Drew's ability revealed itself early on. When he was still a child, his parents were so amazed by his drawings that they took them to be inspected by professors at Stanford University. But Drew is sceptical – or modest. "You're not born a master," he believes, "you have to work at it."

Talent always needs a catalyst and for Drew this came in the form of an itinerant upbringing. He didn't have many friends because his family moved around a lot, so painting and drawing became his companions instead. Inspired by his surroundings, his ability quickly became apparent, along with his innately artistic nature. "I've always been introverted and intuitive," he reveals.

In 1965, having just turned 18, Drew moved to Los Angeles and enrolled at art school. "I was the classic starving artist," he says. "I couldn't afford the tuition, so I'd go to school in the morning and they'd kick me out. Then I'd go in again through the back door." Eventually a

scholarship took away some of the hardship and enabled the young artist to concentrate on his studies.

Not long after this, things became a little more complicated: "I met a girl, we got married and had a child," recalls Drew. He left school for a year in order to support them, but eventually his wife got a job and he went back to school. However, Drew was always working on freelance commissions. "As time went on I got better jobs," he adds. "Education really helped and I eventually became a professional."

INTELLIGENT DESIGN

When he graduated, most of his classmates headed for New York, but Drew stayed on in Los Angeles and freelanced for the music industry. "They liked young artists because they were cheap and different to what they'd seen before," he explains. It was a creative high point – Los Angeles in the early 1970s was an experimental place. "That was when the record industry was

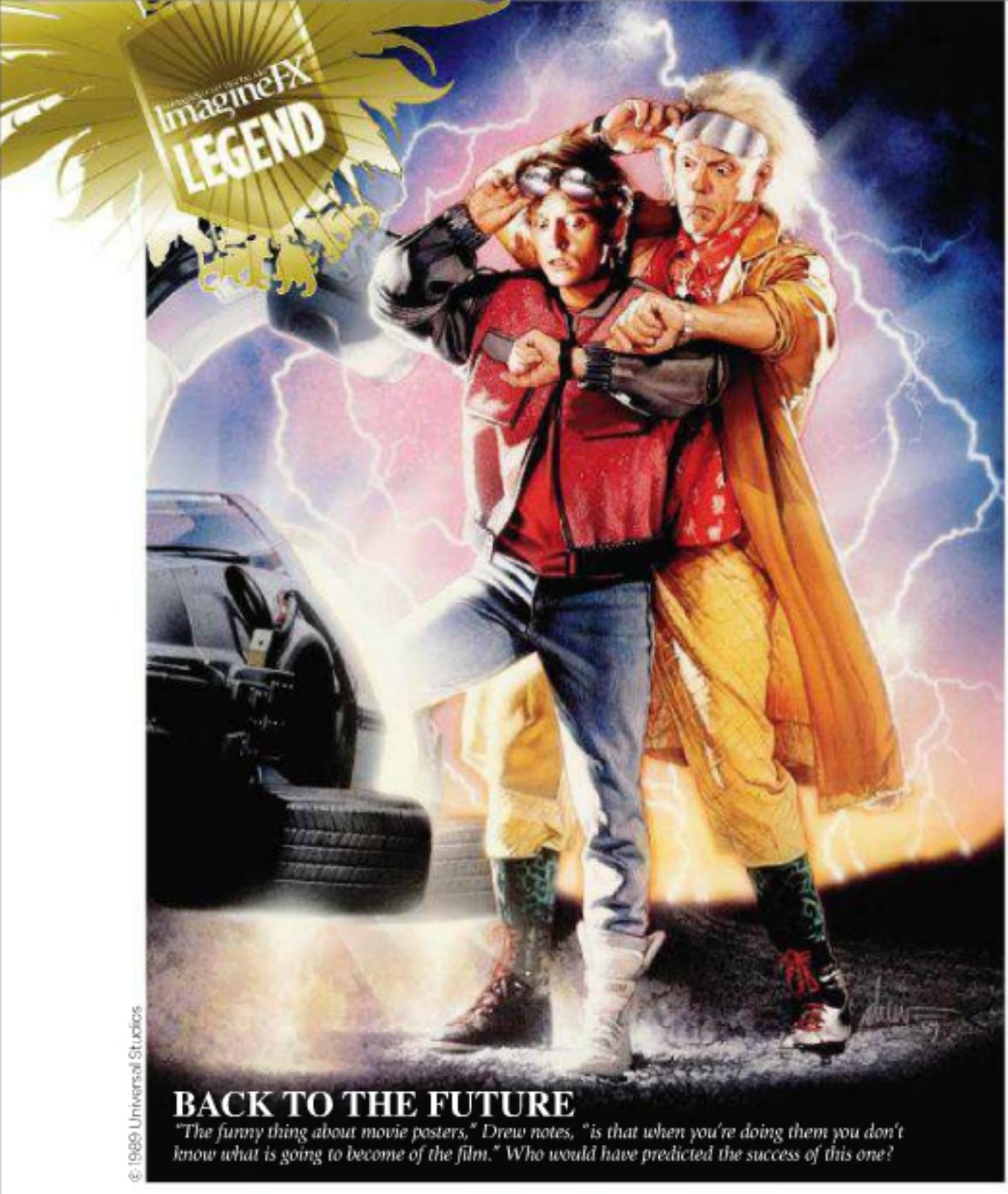
Artist PROFILE

Drew Struzan

Born in 1947, Drew Struzan has painted book and album covers but is best known for his movie poster work, from Star Wars to Harry Potter. He is the favourite artist of Steven Spielberg, who decreed he be the only person allowed to render the alien ET.

WEB: www.drewstruzan.com





©1989 Universal Studios

BACK TO THE FUTURE

"The funny thing about movie posters," Drew notes, "is that when you're doing them you don't know what is going to become of the film." Who would have predicted the success of this one?



©2004 Columbia TriStar

HELLBOY

Likewise, Guillermo Del Toro calls Drew to say: "Here's my new movie – I can't wait to have you do it." A rare compliment indeed.

really hot and they were still making 12-inch squares to paint on. It was great fun," recalls Drew.

Experimental or not, the bills still had to be paid. "I had to take a job where I got a cheque every week," he explains, "so I found a design studio where they did album covers." The next couple of years taught Drew how to be a commercial artist. "Having to perform every day, seeing the process of design, how things are printed and how it all works together really turned me into a professional," he recalls. The other advantage of this position was exposure: "Everything that I'd been doing at that studio was printed and distributed, so people were seeing my work at last."

CHANGING MAN

Even better, some of those people were movie executives. "While I was still at that studio the movie industry actually started calling and asking me to work on things," he recalls.

With the beginnings of a client base, Drew went freelance and began to hone his skills. "I don't know if I'm naive, simple-minded or just focused on making art," he says. "All I need is a way to make a living. So my focus has always been how to become a better artist." For the next few years that's just what he did, working his way up from the bottom: "I did a lot of monster movies and B-movies, things like that," he says.

As the years progressed, so did Drew. "Artists don't grow old," he says, "they just keep on learning." Drew introduced the concepts of fine art to the film business. "I brought a different sensitivity to the market, which changed it and made it a different place to be," he says. That process is still ongoing: "I'm still changing day to day. There is no single me I'm aiming at. I'm just trying to find something better."

STILL DIFFERENT

By 1978, Star Wars was a global phenomenon, and Drew's poster for the movie became an enduring fan favourite. The studios beat a path to his door and by the '80s he was producing around 10 designs a year for films as varied as Blade Runner, ET, Coming To America and The Goonies. But his personal style was still subsumed by the desires of the business. He had to become a



STAR WARS EPISODE 1

Though he had been beavering away for some time by 1977, Drew's immense notoriety kicked up a few gears when Star Wars came out. George Lucas would have no one else for his latest clutch of movies.

THE STAR WARS EFFECT

The first in a line of blockbusting commissions

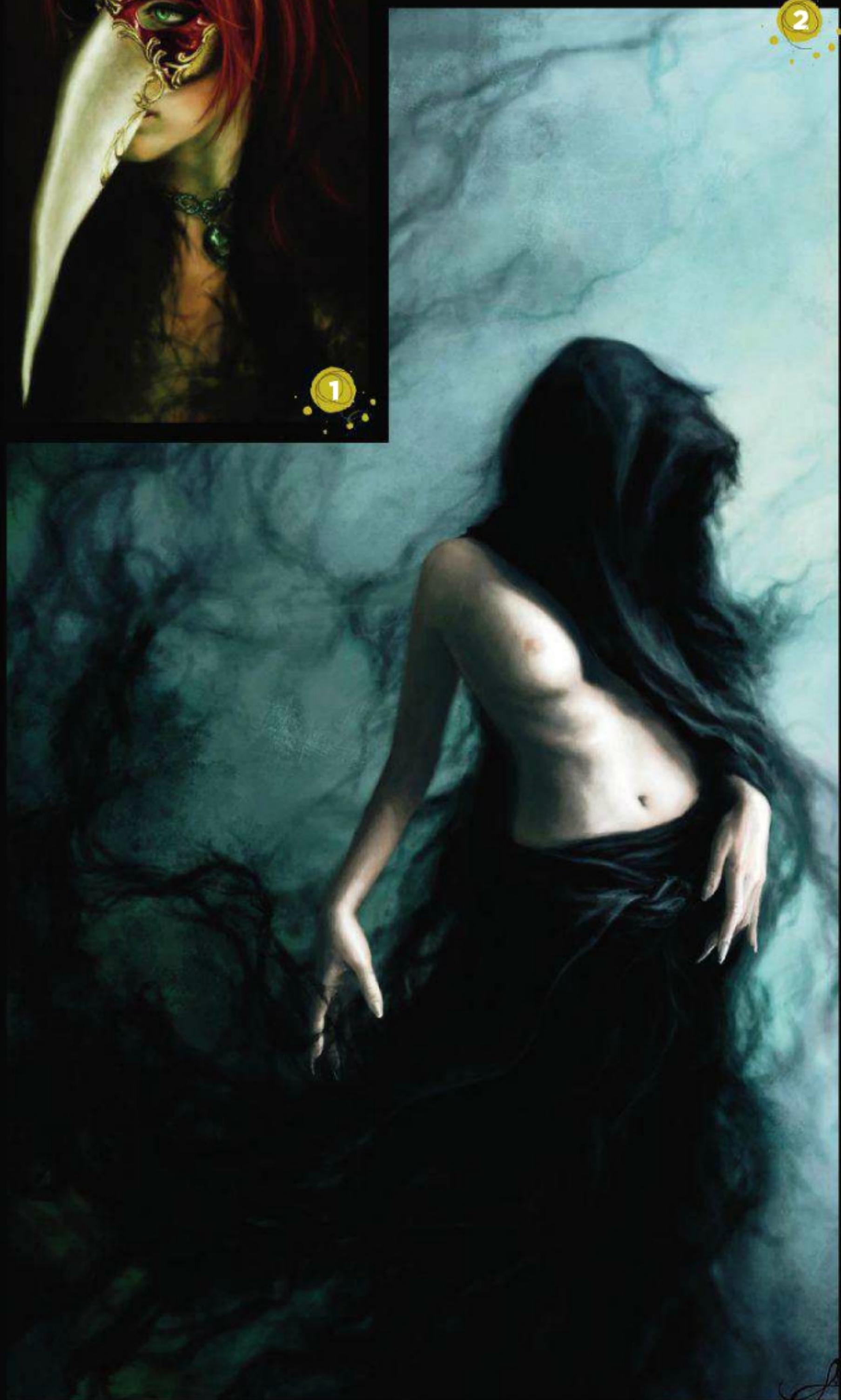
"The funny thing about movies is that, when you're doing them, you don't know what's going to become of them." That was the case when, in 1977, Drew created one of the posters for Star Wars. It was just another job. "I didn't have any expectations," he says. "I wasn't that into the movies."

Twenty years later, after huge hits such as Back to the Future, Rambo and even Muppet Treasure Island, George Lucas personally commissioned Drew for the second series of Star Wars films.

Working with the giants of the entertainment business doesn't faze Drew. In fact, it's one of his greatest pleasures. "They're big names because they're big-hearted people," he explains. "They're creative, they're giving and they're productive. Those are the things I admire in a person."

different artist for each new project.

Drew found his experimental space in the untypical studies he prepared for each new job. Showing these to clients had an interesting effect. "They saw something they hadn't seen before," he says. "They were afraid of it and they didn't want it. But they got more used to it every time they saw it, so eventually they liked it and I got to do what I wanted to do." As he says: "It's just a matter of tenacity and circumstance."



 **Lauren K Cannon**

LOCATION: US

WEB: <http://navate.com>

EMAIL: lkcannon@comcast.net

SOFTWARE: Photoshop 7.0



As a child, Lauren devoured fantasy novels. "Ever since I can remember I've been losing myself in different worlds through games, books, and art. Drawing was a way for me to put my ideas on paper, a hobby I enjoyed and had a knack for," she says.

Given a Wacom tablet when she was just 15 years old, it was about that time Lauren began to take art seriously. "I'm in college now, majoring in Fine Arts, but strangely it's the online forums which have been most beneficial to helping me learn," she explains. That and working traditionally as well as digitally, "because traditional media offers no shortcuts."

All of Lauren's pictures have stories behind them, and her work is extremely character-driven. "I call my style surreal fantasy: I'm fascinated with the strange, the beautiful, and the macabre. There are always elements of beauty in my paintings, but also a sense of something sinister," she adds.

1 MASQUERADE "This is a portrait of Katherine Dinger, based on one of her self-portrait photographs. No tracing or manipulation was used. I don't normally like recreating photos, but something about this shot captured me and I had to paint it."

2 MHOISHI A character portrait with a heavy element of surrealism. "The face is usually the most important thing for me in a painting, so making a picture without a face forced me to concentrate on the rest of the painting," says Lauren.

3 SUMMON INFINITY "This was all about mood," says Lauren. "I wanted it to be graceful, strange, lush and evocative. I focused on both the gesture of the figure and the colours to pin down the atmosphere."



1



Jason Jarava

LOCATION: US

WEB: <http://members.cox.net/jaravaj/index/>

EMAIL: jaravaj@cox.net

SOFTWARE: Photoshop and Corel Painter IX.5

Having earned a degree in Fine Art from Arizona State University, Jason had no idea what he was going to do. "Then, a few months later," he reveals, "I began working as a designer/production artist at a Phoenix-based art gallery."

Working in the fine art world was a fantastic experience for Jason because of all the changing trends and popular themes that shifted from year to year. "I considered myself lucky to be associated with such talented people that inspired me to try new things and to take risks with my art, but I had a yearning to do the fantasy and sci-fi art that propelled me into studying art in the first place."

Jason began to take night classes in Photoshop and that slowly opened up a whole new world to him. "I was introduced to an ever-changing and exciting industry. The illustrators, animators and comic artists I've met in my quest for fantasy art have been a valuable resource to me. Ever since then, I have been on the computer exploring new techniques and developing images for independent comics and websites while continuing to work as a fine artist."

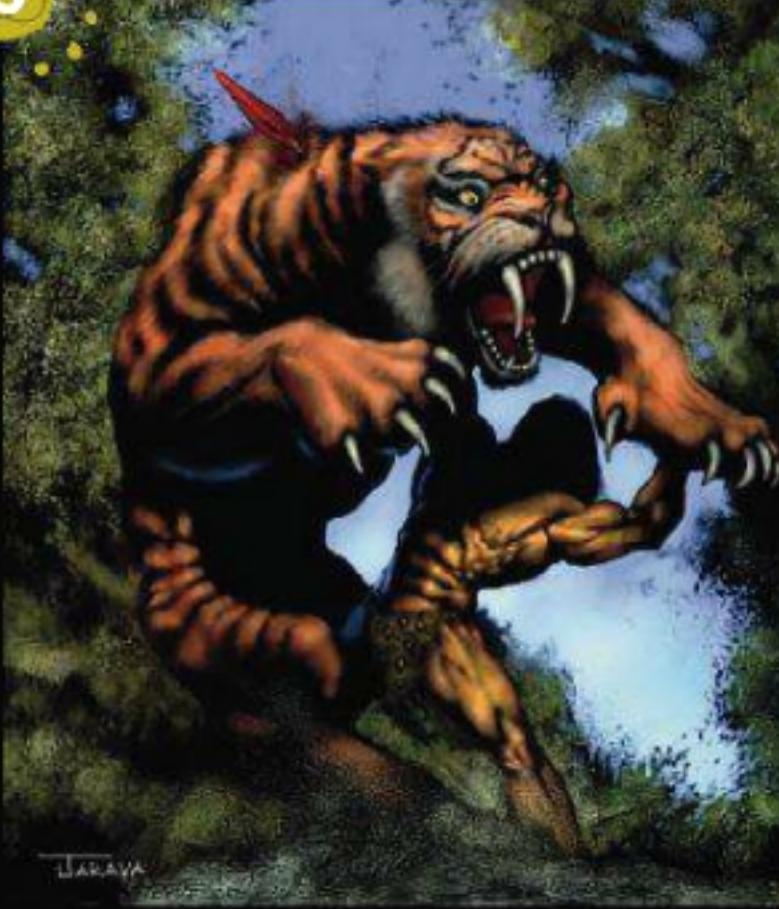
1 RED DEMON "A lurking demon high in the atmosphere scouting prey far below in the villages and towns."

2 THE CALLING Inspired by Lovecraft stories and fear of the unknown: "The witch has just summoned a demon from the sea."

3 SABERTOOTH An ancient struggle between man and beast. "An idea that goes back to our earliest memories. Movement and tension were the ideas behind this piece."



3



JARAVA



3

Francis Tsai

LOCATION: US
WEB: www.teamgt.com
EMAIL: tsai@teamgt.com
SOFTWARE: Adobe Photoshop 7.0



Francis grew up in a small west Texas town. He's been drawing as long as he can remember. He now works as a lead concept artist for High Moon Studios in California, as well as doing freelance art and design work for the role playing industry, comics, film and television. He also has degrees in chemistry and architecture.

1

BIKER "I'm one of five concept artists in our company. Once in a while, we each illustrate our take on some common theme or subject," explains Francis. "In this case the exercise was centred on the theme of vehicles and the undead."

2

DRAGON Created for Wizards of the Coast, this creature is known as Rhshaak of Haka'torvhak, and is featured in the Dungeons and Dragons book Eberron Explorer's Handbook.

3

MACROTUS Another extra-curricular exercise. This time the basis was a well known comic book character. "I tried to imagine how a character like that might appear to someone who had no idea who or what he was about," says Francis.

Nicolas Bouvier

LOCATION: US

WEB: www.sparth.com

EMAIL: nbsparth@gmail.com

JOB: Concept designer, ID Software



Nicolas Bouvier, aka Sparth, has been an active artistic director and concept designer in the gaming industry since 1996. Born in France, he now lives in Texas and works for ID Software. "I've been lucky enough to travel extensively," says Sparth. He says that he takes in all around him, resulting in wide artistic interests, "from space, to buildings, to robotics and beyond." Sparth has worked on game development since 1997, including *Alone in the Dark 4*, *Cold Fear* and *Prince of Persia - Warrior Within*. For the last four years, he's also had fun illustrating book covers.

1 HEINLEIN The first in a series of four Robert Heinlein covers, published by Folio SF of France. The covers linked together to form a long scene representing the evolution of man in space.

2 ELLIPSOID COMPLEX An epic scene showing the landing of a huge space entity. "I consider this illustration to be one of my major works," says Sparth.

1



2



NIM GROTESQUE

"This is the last example of my collaboration with artist Cara Mitten. I'm hoping we'll get to work together again, since I think we complement each other well," says Anthony.

Artist **PROFILE**

Anthony S. Waters



AGE: 37

COUNTRY: US
Washington-based
freelance artist

Anthony has worked for many famous companies including Wizards of the Coast (Magic: the Gathering), Lucasfilm (Star Wars: Episode II) and EA (James Bond).

SOFTWARE USED:
Photoshop, Painter

WEB:
www.thinktankstudios.com

the art of **ANTHONY S. WATERS**



"An image should do more than tell you what a monster looks like. It should forge a gut connection with the subject." The visceral style of Mr Waters...

For Anthony Waters, the path to fantasy art was "a steady progression from wildlife art to sharks to dinosaurs to dragons," he recalls. "My interest in sharks was kindled by the film *Jaws*, which traumatised the living daylights out of me," he explains. "Maybe drawing about sharks helped me to chew up some of that fear."

Then *Dungeons & Dragons* introduced him to the work of Errol Morris and Jeff Easley, which had a deep influence on him, and Frank Frazetta. "Frank led me to Pyle, Wyeth, Wrightson, Parrish and Kaluta. A whole world of possibilities opened to me."

"I love drawing with pencil or pen," says Anthony. "That's usually the way I start, by noodling around until I get a solid idea

and a good composition." The rough gets scanned, resized and printed, then "I do a quick trace-off from that rough, then work up a nice tight underdrawing to work from.

"I honestly don't think I've got a style," he says. "I just see my answer to a given visual problem. Style can even get in the way of your art, by causing you to develop – and come to rely on – visual shortcuts. You stop taking the time to figure out how morning light falls on snow, or what a night-time scene in a village should look like.

"Artists are visual storytellers," Anthony says. "You should be left wondering what just happened, or what's about to happen.

"I try to hold onto that thought from start to finish," he adds. "At the beginning the

connection's pretty clear. You're at the fun part, generating the ideas, and the meaning of what you're going for is hanging right in front of you. It's when you start thinking about colour choices and rendering that you can lose track of that underpinning value: what you're trying to express.

"Once you've managed to get technique tucked comfortably under your belt, you can get lost in the act of painting," he says. "You no longer penetrate the surface of your work; you become a technician, and you lose track of what you were trying to say.

"When I'm doing more than straight concept work (for a client or myself), I aim to create an image that engages on some emotional level," says Anthony. ▶



SKIN STRIP

"Here's a piece I did for Hidden City Games, explains Anthony. "I was asked to envision what a spell that stripped you to the bone would look like."



DREAD SLAG

"Another recent Magic: the Gathering card from Anthony. "I'm happy with this one," he beams."

Legend of ANTHONY S. WATERS



PUMP STATION

Wizards of the Coast is just one of many well-known companies that can call Anthony a contributor. "It's an image from that series of five environment pieces I did for Wizards of the Coast," says Anthony.

STALKING VENGEANCE

"A spirit made from those whose deaths were unjust – a paranormal juggernaut made of bone and tombstones, bound together with raging souls," Anthony explains. "I used insectine wings to suggest the eventual flight of the soul, once justice has been done."



Artwork on this page © 2006 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.



THREADS OF DISLOYALTY

"This is a Magic: the Gathering card, from the Kamigawa Block which was released a couple of years ago," says Anthony.

Anthony S. Waters VITAL STATISTICS

The one-stop-shop for info on Anthony



since it happened, around age eight or so.

Most prized possession?

The buddha figure my friend John gave me means an awful lot. The lion's tooth I got from my brother means a lot, too.

Average time spent on each image?

It depends on the subject matter and size of the image. I've had some take as little as a few hours. Others, like the big landscapes I did for the Ravnica card set, took 120 hours.

Any pet hates or phobias?

I'm scared of heights if I'm in a building, but I love flying in one- and two-engine planes, especially stunt planes.

Single most important piece of professional advice?

Do what you love. Everything else follows on the heels of that.

Left or right-handed?

I was born right-handed. My mum and grandmum trained me to be a lefty.

If you were an animal, what would you be?

Maned wolf! Unless we're talking mythological creatures, in which case it'd be a dragon. (One of my own design, natch.)



Anthony G. Waters

ARTIST TIP

Big brushes saves blushes

"I owe this tip to my buddy Todd Lockwood. He once advised me: 'Always use a brush that seems one size too big for what you're working on. It'll keep you from getting too precious with whatever you're painting.' He's spot-on about that. (He's spot-on about damn near everything.)"

PHARAOH HOUND

"I did this several years ago for a now-defunct game company. It was meant to be a promotional piece for its game universe. A group of peasants watch as a god pours forth his wrath upon some poor bastards," muses Anthony. "This piece was executed in Painter, before I switched to using Photoshop damn near exclusively," he adds.

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CYTOSPAWN SHAMBLER

Here's one of Anthony's recent Magic: the Gathering cards. Never one to miss an opportunity for an irreverent take on his art, Anthony explains what it is: "It's a blobular blobthing made up of lots of blobby blobness. Sorry for all the technical jargon."



Photoshop **FUEL YOUR IMAGINATION**

Artist **PROFILE**

**Anthony S.
Waters**

COUNTRY: US

CLIENTS: Wizards of the
Coast, Electronic Arts,
Lucasfilm, Hasbro



Anthony is
a freelance
concept
designer. "I
revel in the
manic generation of
ideas," he says.

www.thinktankstudios.com

Try it yourself

Download a Zip archive of
support files from [http://
preview.tinyURL.com/
vnqasg](http://preview.tinyURL.com/vnqasg). You'll also find a
trial version of Photoshop
CS3 at [www.adobe.com/
go/tryphotoshop](http://www.adobe.com/go/tryphotoshop)

We delve into the mind of **Anthony S. Waters** as he creates a personal piece of art called *The Grief Well*

 One thing I love doing is making use of the textures from found objects. It's the best excuse I've yet found for collecting weird stuff. You need to be careful, of course, so you don't scratch your scanner glass. I recommend building a small box frame out of paper

to place over large objects when you scan them. It's not absolutely necessary, but it does help if you're after the best scan.

Sometimes, though, an unadulterated first-pass scan of an object will present you with possibilities every bit as interesting as a colour-corrected version of the same thing. Photos of scanned

textures provide great image fodder as well. I'm far from the first guy to think of doing this, but I've got my own wacky take on it, and that's what I'm going to discuss here. (I'll also spend some time talking about where this workshop image came from, and what I had in mind when I crafted it.)

In depth Fuel your imagination



Workshop

► ROLE WITH IT

The Grief Well is a piece with very specific meaning for me. I've been doing a lot of mental excavation lately, going through my psyche and drawing what I find. ImagineFX came along and gave me a golden opportunity to take some of these visual explorations to a higher degree of finish. You rarely get the chance to make so personal a statement in the professional world. Jump at them when they come round that mountain, Hoss.

One idea in particular has been stuck in my head ever since I first saw it. There's a moment in Akira Kurosawa's film Red Beard when several of the characters are calling "Chobo" into the mouth of a well. Chobo is the name of a young boy. The boy is dying. He and his and his entire family have swallowed poison. There's a superstition in Japan that wells go all the way to the Underworld. If you shout a loved one's name down a well, you might be able to bring them back from the dead. As the final shot fades out, the boy's best

friend and her co-workers can be seen in the reflection of the well-water, crying the boy's name.

The idea that wells are a conduit to the Underworld wouldn't leave me alone. I decided I'd do an image based on that idea for this workshop. The Grief Well is partly intended as a gift to you, the reader, should you be interested in the technical side of my work. It's also meant to be an encouragement to not shy away from the scariest spaces inside your head – the personal ones that conceal the roots of our phobias, our fears, quirks and warts – but to use your own experiences actively, as fuel for your imagery. Work that has a strong resonance with the observer inevitably touches on deeper cords than superficial things like technical chops. Good art has something to say. The more an image makes a viewer think, the more of a little miracle you've made.

Now for the symbology of the piece. I believe everyone's got a vocabulary for their own feelings, idiosyncratic and

“Don’t shy away from the scariest spaces in your head – the ones that conceal the roots of our phobias, fears and quirks”



SELF PORTRAIT 2

"My own darkest feelings have taken on many guises," muses Anthony.



SELF PORTRAIT 3

"I use my extensive knowledge of history, biology, geology, archaeology, anthropology and astronomy to push an idea past the threshold of the ordinary," reveals Anthony.



SELF PORTRAIT 1

Anthony used his self-portraits as a basis for his drawings of The Grief Well.



highly specific. I've seen it manifest in dozens of ways. Some people I know use invented characters as visual surrogates, draining a surplus of emotion through sketches of their character either experiencing the same feelings or acting out in ways they can't. Others carve totems, make dolls, write music and so on. My own darkest feelings have taken on many guises but in my adult years the most common forms are desiccated figures bound in mummy wrappings or busts made of stone, bound in leather, mouths sealed with metal bolts like sadistic Easter Island Moai. Recently a new form of bust has appeared, more kid-sized and shaped. I decided I needed to do a piece that combined the interaction of the older, more adult-scale busts with this new young 'uns bust, in the context of a well... at least, what would pass for a well in this weird dream-state where the busts exist. Some form of conversation is happening in my head. That's what I wanted to illustrate.

ROUGH SKETCHES

Anthony has provided two rough sketches of The Grief Well. These sketches are done before the underpainting.



COLOUR VARIANT 01

This colour test incorporates four different texture scans that Anthony found and meticulously documented on his travels.

THUMBNAILS

I often start my images as thumbnails (small, as the name implies). It keeps me thinking solely in terms of big shapes, value, temperature and focus. Colour's a major weapon in your arsenal. Warm colours not only advance, they often favour the depiction of strong emotion (anger, jealousy, lust, hate, joy). Cool colours lend themselves to the quieter feelings (melancholy, regret, despair, affection, boredom). Colour's not the only factor, of course. Composition also plays a crucial role. If you think of an image as a gravity well (See? There's that idea of the well again), then the centre of focus is at the bottom. It's the thing that will keep a person interested in your picture. Like the sun, it sets your subject in motion and keeps the dynamic going. Camera angle and perspective also play a role. Figures looming over the viewer can imply repression. Forms in flight are often associated with freedom. I could go on and on. Better to stick with colour and suggest that, for the other stuff, you check out some Jungian psychological texts.

GLOBAL TEXTURES

I came up with three differing colour schemes for The Grief Well. As is often the case with me, I realised later what the emotional energy was behind each of them, and that awareness guided me to my final choice. I was still playing at this point, however. That's where scanned textures come in. In Colour Variant 01 I've imported a scan of some gessoed board stained with coffee plus photos of the bark from a tree in Singapore, a stone block from Prague and a plate of rusty metal from near the US/Canada border.

Each is on its own layer, set to a variety of effects (Color, Hard Light, Color Burn, Saturation). You often hear about "happy accidents" in painting. It's a misnomer in a way, since you eventually learn to create the circumstances under which those happy accidents occur. The same can be said of digital art, and this method of layering and shaping textures from found objects is how I do it. Don't think in linear terms. A leaf, when played off against other surfaces using the layer settings functions in Photoshop, can become a great foundation for skin. I've used seashells for skies, hunks of galena for stars, even my own skin as the basis of bizarre pavestones. I took this sort of visual cooking one step further and began combining the variants with each other before finally tightening up the forms a little and calling them finished.



COLOUR VARIANTS 03 & 04

Anthony tried out three colour schemes for The Grief Well. He believes there is "emotional energy" behind each colour.



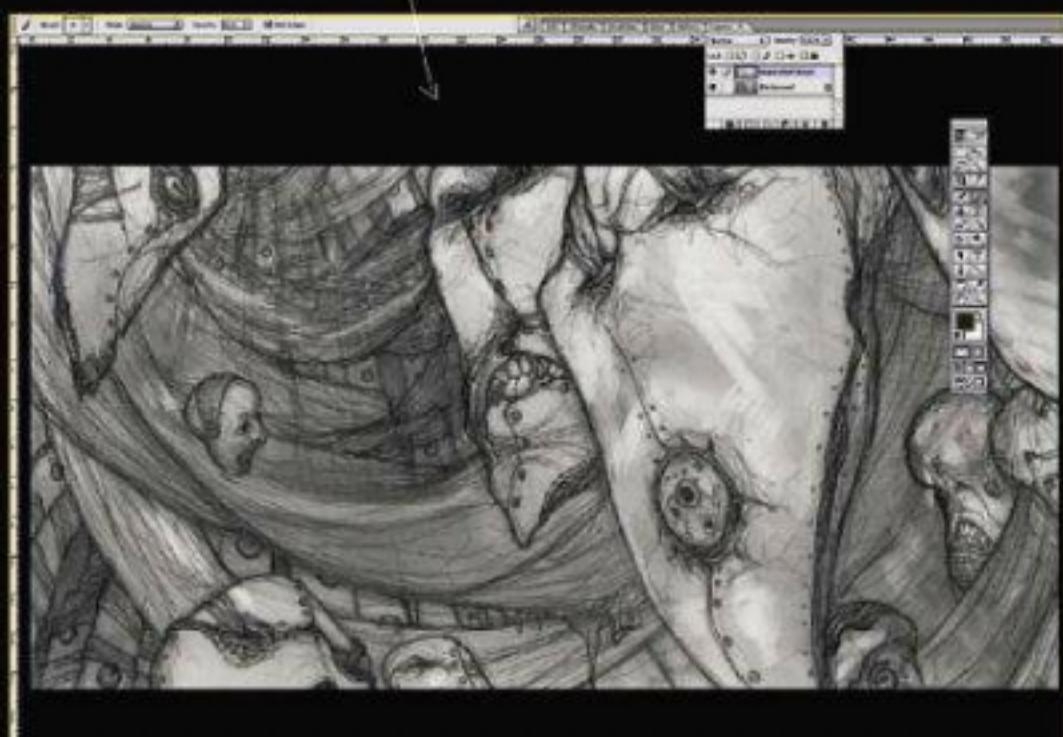
STEP-BY-STEP

1 Computer headaches

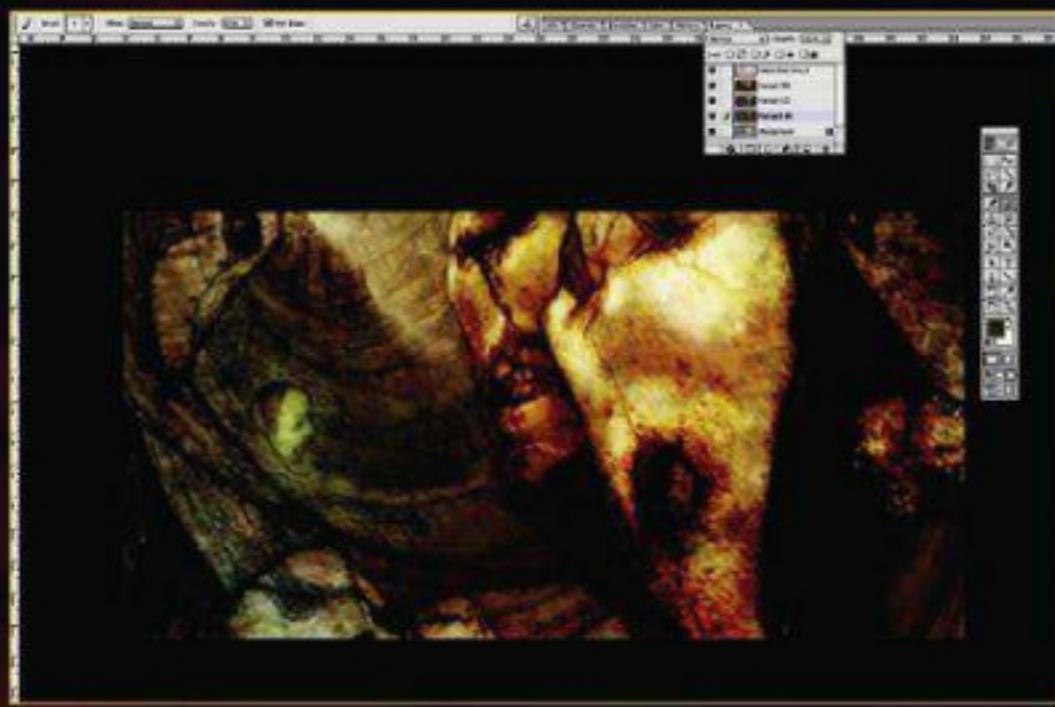
At the start I have my final underdrawing scanned in and ready to go. (For the sake of expediency I've skipped the sketching work I did to get here.) I turn off Resample Image in the Image Size dialog box and reduce the DPI to 72. It's worth doing if you're using Photoshop, since doing so takes one more thing off the list of processing headaches for your computer (your screen being 72 DPI by default). Turning Resample Image off just changes the ratio of pixels to increments of measurement. It won't change your image.

2 Just say no

Next I go into Channels, click the 'Load channel as selection' button (that little dashed circle at the bottom-left of the Channels palette, which puts marching ants around a significant hunk of the grey values of my underdrawing). Next I invert my selection, then copy and paste that selection onto a separate layer. I do this to preserve my linework in a more detailed fashion than just setting the layer to Multiply. Do this before converting ➤



Workshop



the image to CMYK, by the way – and don't flatten the image when the dialog box pops up asking if you want to. Trust me, you don't.

3 Ignore the happy

I import all three completed thumbnails and place them on separate layers, since at this stage I can't make up my mind which to use. Colour Variant 04 (previous page) attracts me the most at first. That golden light falling on the largest of the Moai implies an opening above (which has some good connotations) and the warmth makes me think of resolution and happy touchy-feely stuff. But it overpowers the screaming head. Gradually I come to accept that I don't think that mood fits. Instead I go for the scheme in Colour Variant 01, which makes a much more sombre, claustrophobic statement.

4 Mistake in the middle

Having decided on a colour scheme, I place the layer of separated greys over it, set it to Overlay, create a painting layer, and get to work. Since I'd solidified my value range at the thumbnail level, all that is left to do is



hone the detail and edge lines. At least, that's the theory. Most of the mistakes you make as a painter happen somewhere in the middle of things.

5 Start big, go small

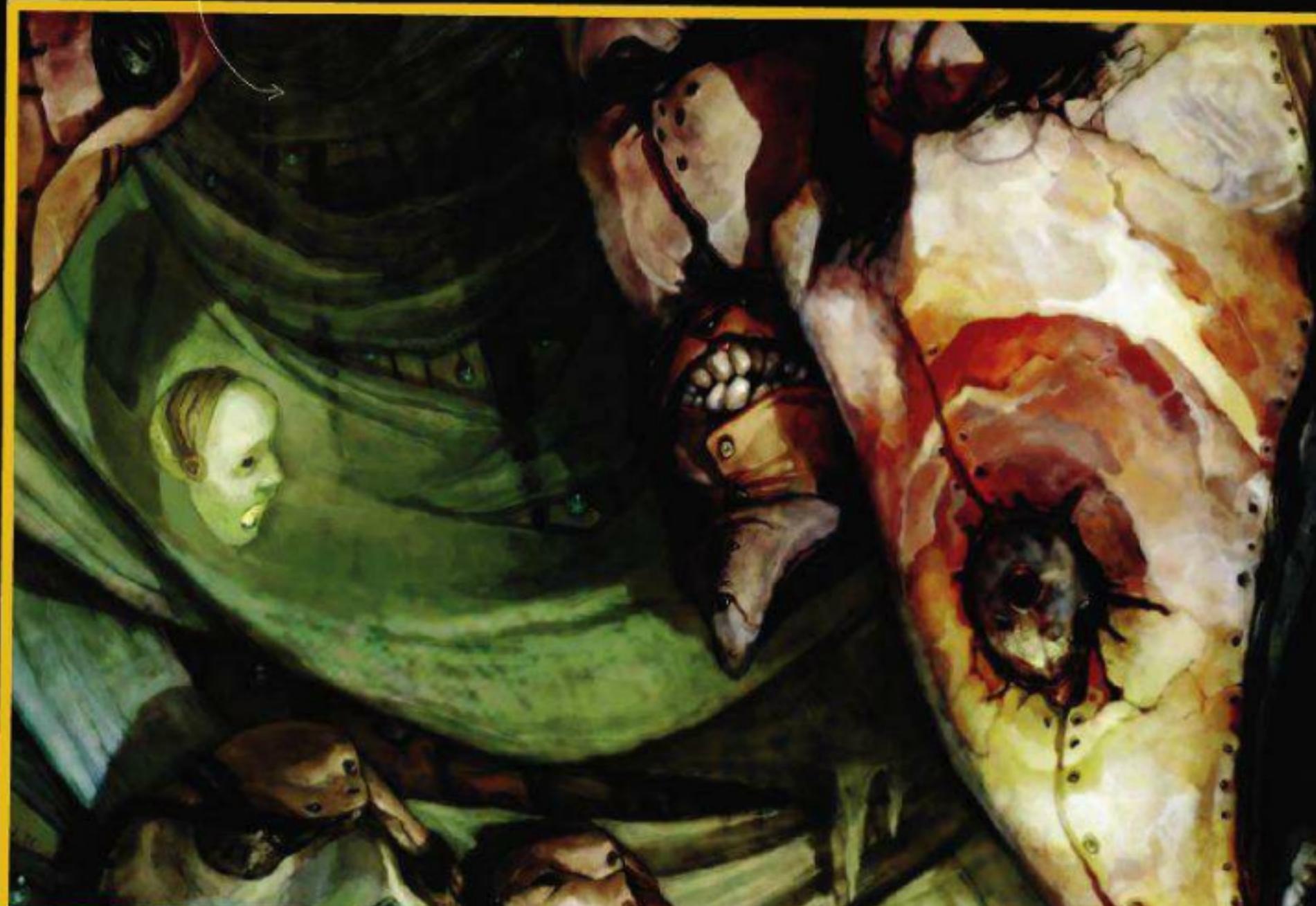
It's an old saying to start with the big shapes and work downward to the small details, but it works. I'm not really sold on the value range I've created at this point, so I import my second thumbnail variant for later experimentation.

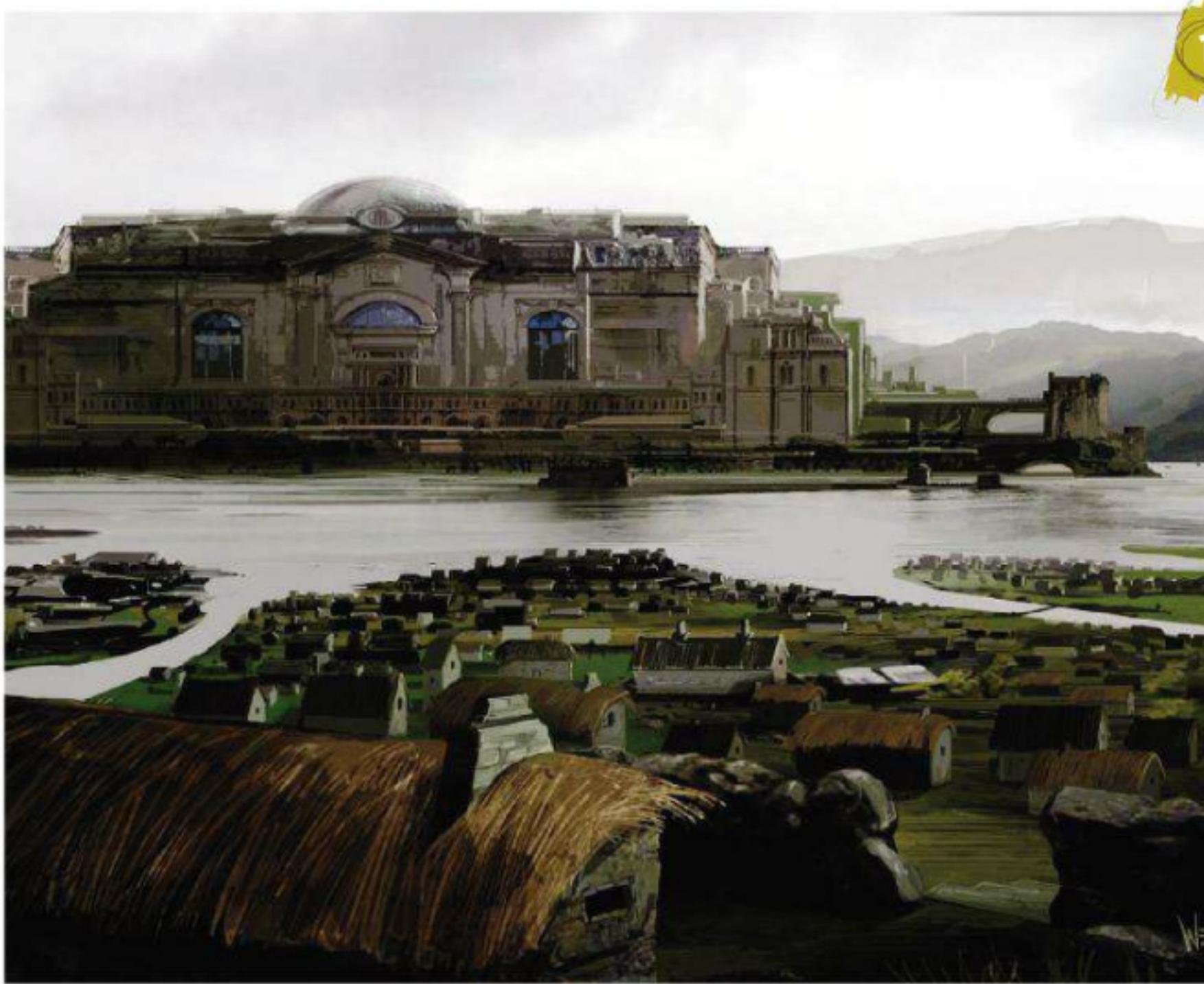
6 The sign off

We're just about there. I try setting the layer holding Colour Variant 01 to

Soft Light and like the way it livens up the darks. To keep that lower-right-hand head shape from getting completely lost, I copy it from the painting level, set this new layer to Screen, and tweak it until it pops enough. It's a major feature of the piece, despite its size, so it demands I spend some more time shaping it. I experiment with flipping the image but decide I like it best as it is already. The fabric and little head are demanding more polish. Once I have that squared away, I go back into Image Size to convert the image to 300 DPI, and lastly, a sneaky place to tuck my signature.

Stick a fork in her, boys. She's done! ■





1

Bruno Werneck

LOCATION: US

WEB: www.brunowerneck.com

EMAIL: contact@brunowerneck.com

SOFTWARE: Photoshop 7, CS2

JOB: Concept artist



Born and raised in Brazil, Bruno was given a scholarship in 1996 to pursue formal artistic training at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, US.

While there, Bruno studied illustration and graphic design. Seeking further training and knowledge, Bruno gravitated towards film and traditional animation, later attending Columbia College Chicago.

Professionally, Bruno has done everything from print design to working on TV commercials.

1 CAPITAL CITY This image was created for a movie pitch. "It shows the clash between the poor and the wealthy in the capital city," Bruno explains. "You can see all sorts of households ranging from simple cabanas to stone-built mansions and finally the super-sized royal castle."

2 SOPHIA 5 This illustration, completed for Bruno's personal portfolio, has no particular backstory to explain what's going on. However, as the artist reveals, "the spaceship design was based on the extremely elegant shapes of a saxophone."



2

Jaime Jones

LOCATION: US

WEB: www.artpad.org

EMAIL: jaime@artpad.org

JOB: Freelance artist



"At 15, I fell in love with digital illustration through the discovery of the artists Craig Mullins, Kristen Perry and Linda Bergkvist," says Jaime. "I was amazed by their ability to realistically create fictional worlds. I studied their processes and taught myself to work similarly." By his senior year of high school, he'd developed a decent portfolio of illustration to display on his website. Jones helped on 'Phantom Jack' by Mike San Giacomo and signed a contract with Marvel on his 18th birthday. One job led to another and Jaime's freelance clients now include Wizards of the Coast, BL Publishing (Games Workshop) and AEG.

1 **WARBOT** Aberrant Games needed a box cover illustration of a security robot miniature. "The idea was to paint something full of action and interesting light effects," explains Jaime.

2 **CSO PEACEKEEPERS** For Aberrant Games' Rezolution miniatures game. Peacekeepers are the fast-deployment soldier types.

1



2



1

Edward Lee

LOCATION: US
WEB: www.edleeart.com
EMAIL: edleeart@hotmail.com
JOB: Freelance concept artist



Ed trained as a fine art illustrator at the famous Pratt Institute in New York, "but I soon fell into the animation business, designing characters and backgrounds for a television series," he says. Ed was first exposed to computer graphics in the '80s, but says "I moved out to Los Angeles and got a job as a production designer at Rhythm and Hues. That forever changed how I looked at 3D." It was from here that Ed really took hold of Painter, Photoshop and 3ds max to bring his visions to life.

1 NZXT Created to accompany a print ad, for a company manufacturing PC gaming machines. "This one portrays an axe-wielding bad-ass leading an army over a fiery lava field." 3ds max, Photoshop and Painter were used.

2 ICE CAVE The concept art for ATI's ad Ruby depicts a "special headquarters set in an ice-cave." Created with Photoshop and Painter.



2



Cyril Van Der Haegen

LOCATION: US

WEB: www.tegehel.org

EMAIL: tegehel@cox.net

SOFTWARE: Photoshop, Painter

HARDWARE: pencil, brain...

JOB: Freelance artist



Swiss-born Cyril has been drawing as long as he's been out of diapers: "Unless it's a genetic predisposition," he theorises, "I think it is a passion."

Cyril is largely self-taught: "I came to the US in the early '90s and went to Rhode Island School of Design to study Film, Animation and Video for a couple of years, then got a job in the game industry, working on Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Games."

Seven years later, "I eventually realised that I was happiest without a boss and a cubicle, and decided to go independent." Cyril's been freelance for three years, "working to improve my skills and lucky enough to find work. My artistic philosophy is to try to create something different and memorable, even if it means disturbing."

1 TAAAXI! "I particularly like the everyday look and feel of this piece," says Cyril. "A blood-stained vampire hailing a taxi after a tenuous third shift at the office passes as unnoticeable. And I bet that it actually would."

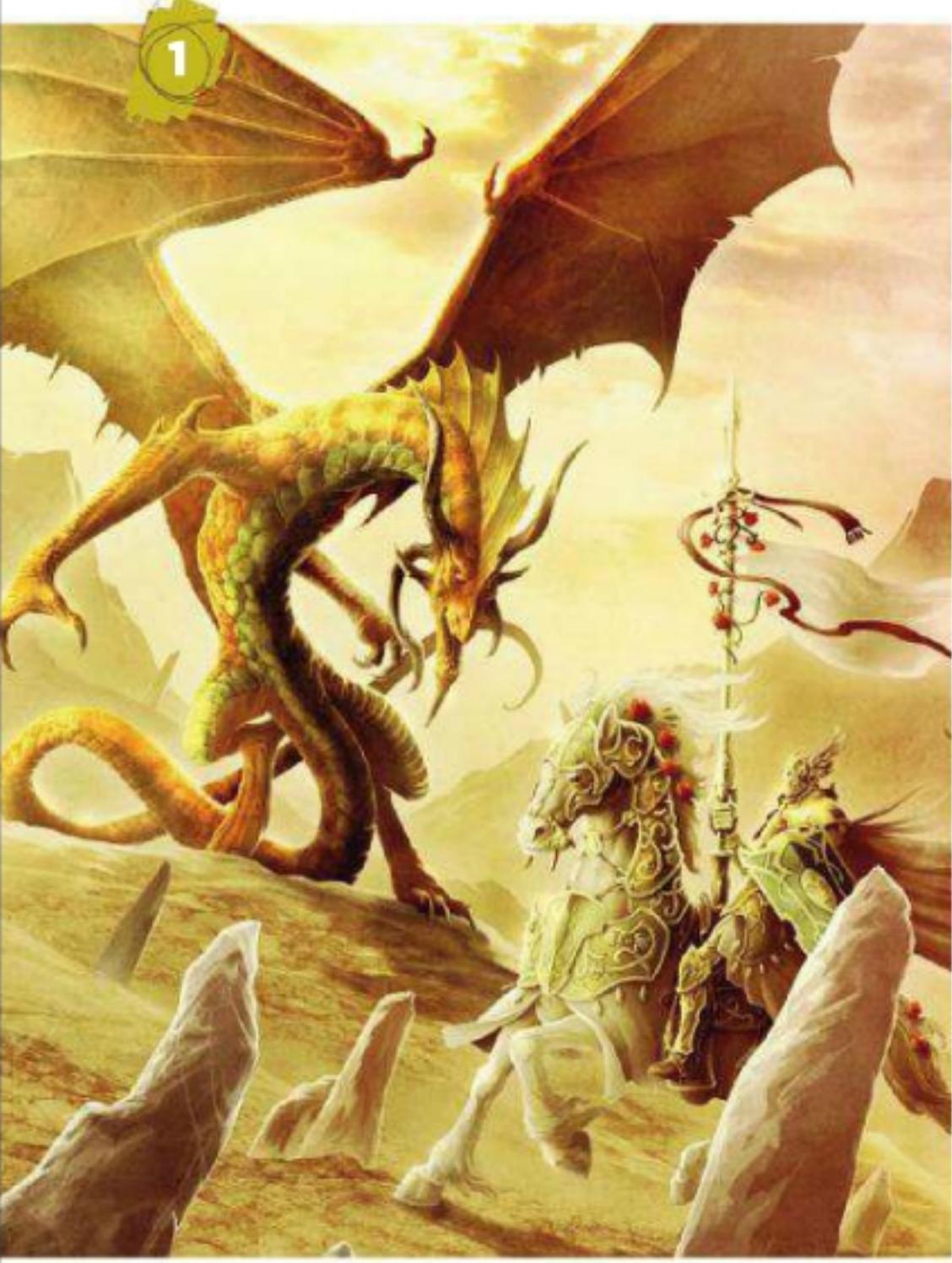
2 CIRCU, DIMITR LOBOTOMIST was created for Wizards of the Coast's Magic the Gathering card game. "I can't shake the idea that it could have easily been James 'Buffalo Bill' Gumb in The Silence of the Lambs."

1



2





 **Jason Engle**

LOCATION: US

WEB: www.jaestudio.com

EMAIL: jae@jaestudio.com

SOFTWARE: Photoshop

JOB: Fantasy illustrator



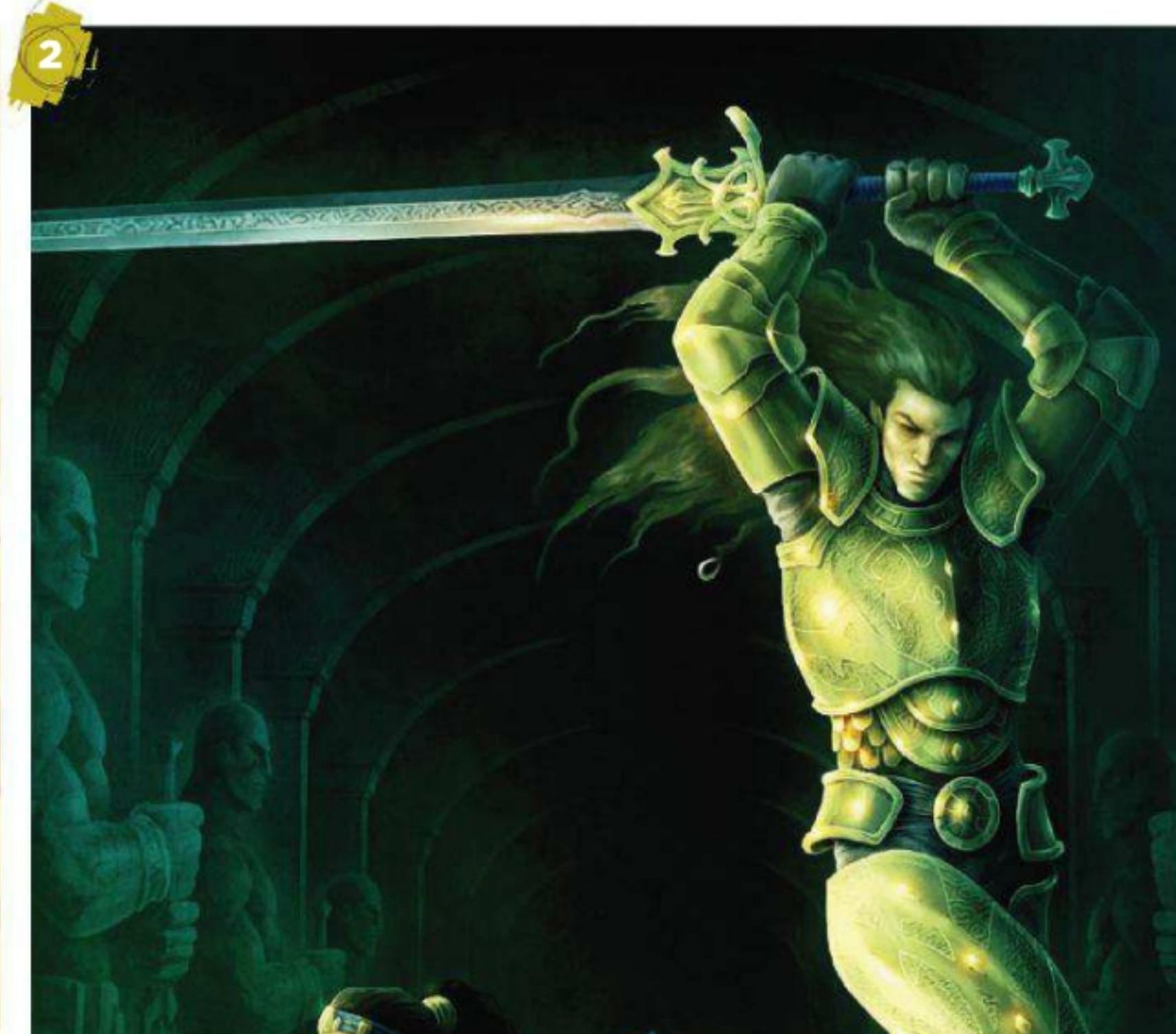
Jason Engle has always been a fan of fantasy: "I just couldn't get enough of it," he confesses. That ardour has only become more all-embracing: "As I got older, I started to play more and more computer games, and quickly became enamoured with the graphics, which were becoming better as the technology advanced."

Somewhere on the way to becoming a game artist, Jason discovered just how unstable that business can be and decided graphic design was a more reliable business. "Turns out I was right for the most part, but it can also be a bit dull, so I started working on a portfolio."

Jason is now a full-time fantasy illustrator. "It's risky compared to a steady day job and reliable paycheck, but it's worth it to do something I love."

1 RAZOR'S EDGE This is a promotional image Jason created for one of his side projects, a miniatures company named 'Magnificent Egos'. "No, I didn't come up with the name," he laughs.

2 HALL OF HEROES Jason does a lot of work for card games: "I produce more of a scene or snapshot from their game world, which is then cut into the appropriate sizes for the final card art."



1



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2



 **Glen Michael Angus**

LOCATION: US

WEB: www.gangus.net

EMAIL: gangus@ravensoft.com

SOFTWARE: Photoshop, Painter, 3ds max

JOB: Senior artist

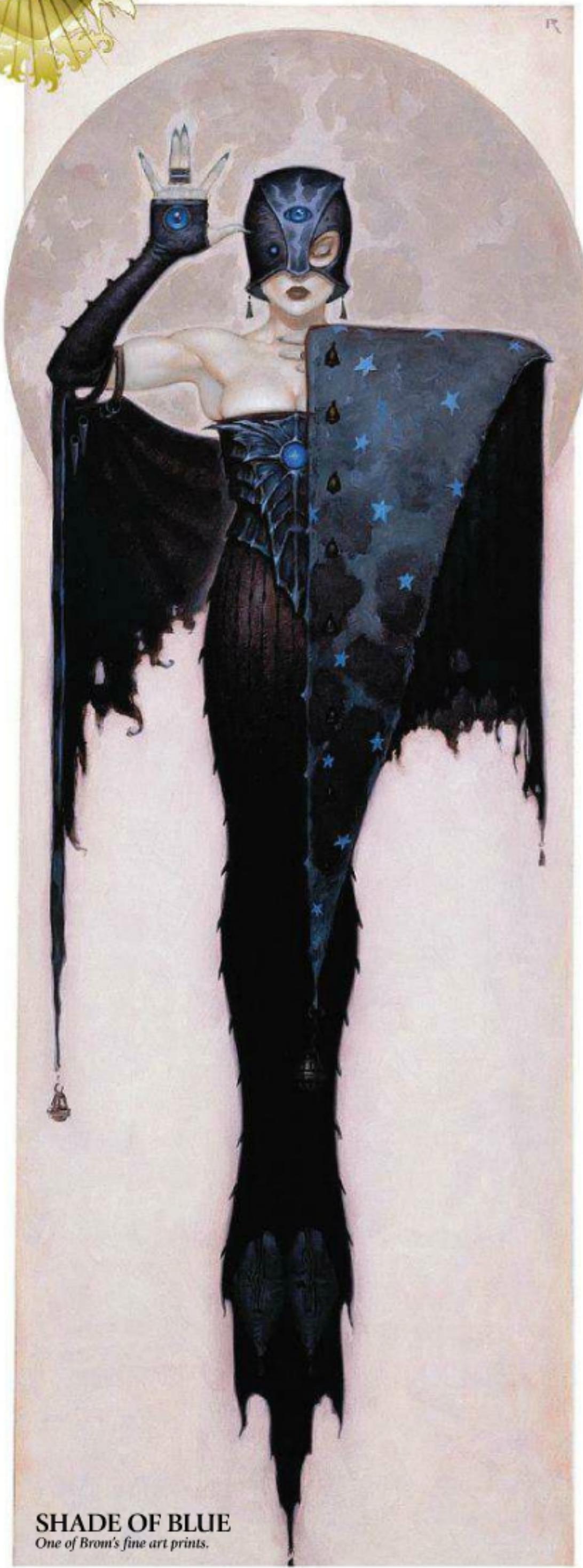


Born and raised in Ontario, Canada, Glen went to college to study graphic design. "I did a stint as an art director for BBDO, and then returned to teach as a professor," he reveals. Fantasy obviously had a hold, because "I began freelancing for AD&D (now owned by WotC) in 1994, turning totally digital in 1998, painting over 75 Magic cards to date."

Senior artist at Raven Software/Activision since 2003, Glen is also a proud father of two, with a respectable sideline as a fantasy and children's book illustrator. "I enjoy working as a concept artist, texture painter and illustrator for the X-Men Legends franchise action RPGs."

1 CAP Done for the upcoming Marvel Ultimate Alliance. "This load screen is meant to capture Cap's modern day look while still keeping a throwback to his early WW2 roots with the iconic images of the P51s and Sherman tank in the background," says Glen.

2 ODIN A piece in the collection of Norse Mythology, "this one depicts Odin on the Bifrost bridge."



SHADE OF BLUE
One of Brom's fine art prints.



BLOOD RITUAL
Original art for DarkAge, the card game.

Brom

Fantasy's dark arts have a prince of their own, and his name is Brom...

*F*rom Wizards of the West Coast and DC Comics to Doom II and Van Helsing,

Brom is an acknowledged master of gothic fantasy. The illustrator's vision has been inspiring the nightmares of fantasy lovers since he first joined TSR in the late '80s.

His often bizarre or haunting work jumps out at you from a choice selection of novels, role-playing games, comics and films. In between times, he says, he's trying to reach a "happy sing-a-long" with the many demons dancing about in his head.

Today, Brom concentrates on bringing his creative vision to full fruition, from words to pictures. The artist is currently promoting his first graphic novel, *The Plucker* - "essentially, an evil children's

book for adults," he explains. Ever busy with his work, Brom's got another instalment on the blocks.

ON THE MOVE

Brom spent his formative years hotfooting it around the globe in tow with his father, an aviator for the US Army. This he recognises as important: "I credit living in such places as Japan, Hawaii, Alabama and Germany for my somewhat altered perception of reality.

"Art," he says, "helped me to be accepted when moving into a new community and was my friend when I was alone." Though it provided a formative creative impulse, travelling the world as a child probably isn't all fun and games. Brom's early subject matter makes that obvious: "I started out with monsters eating people."



SOUL FORCE

This painting was rendered for the Brom toy line with Fewture Models.

“At last my novel is finished and is on its way to scratch out the eyes of children of all ages”

From there he progressed through standard art school fare of still life and landscapes, leading to a four-year stint “as a commercial illustrator doing cute products.” This really ran against the grain and had to be dropped: “Now I’m back to monsters eating people and am very happy.”

DARK SUN

Escaping from cuteness wasn’t that easy: “It took four years, but somehow I managed to get together a fantasy portfolio between jobs. I sent this off to TSR (now known as Wizards of the West Coast). They hired me.”

It wasn’t that Brom was mad keen on RPGs. “I had never even played an RPG before working there,” he reveals. It was the opportunity to paint fantasy full-time that made TSR irresistible.

But even at the home of D&D, things didn’t immediately click. “I did a few covers for Dragonlance and Forgotten Realms, but my style clashed with those worlds.” Until then, fantasy had a clean and soft image, while Brom was anything but. Fortunately for him, Dark Sun came along. TSR wanted

Artist PROFILE

Brom

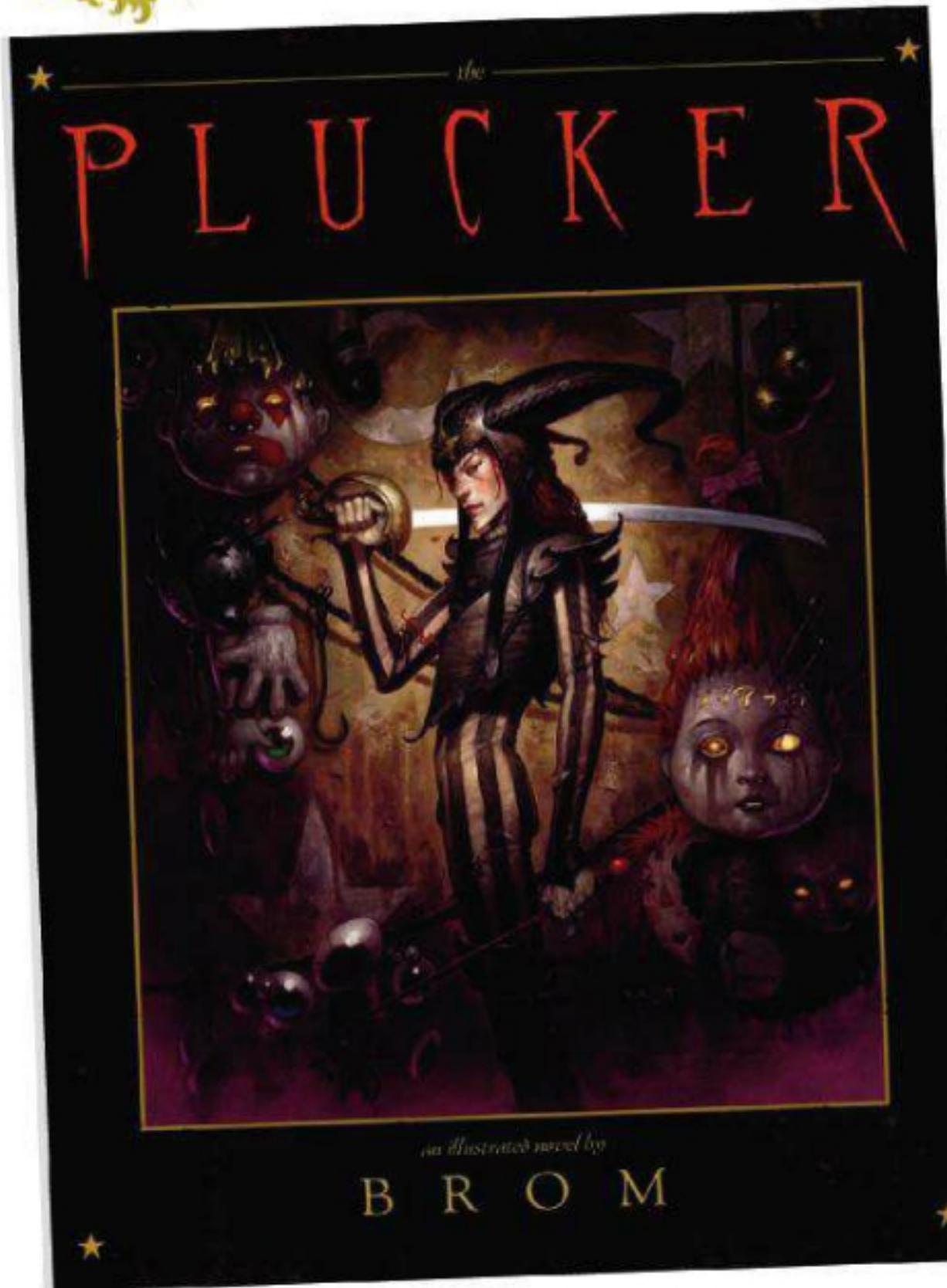


Born March 1965, in Georgia, US, Brom has become the definitive vision of fantasy’s dark underbelly. Now, added to his established works on the likes of *Sleepy Hollow*, *Doom II* and *Michael Moorcock*, the artist’s own literary vision has arrived: *The Plucker*. His online gallery gives a flavour of all things twisted – from dark pasts and futures, to things that bite and a touch of fetish.

WEB: www.bromart.com

THE PLUCKER

*The cover to Brom's illustrated novel
The Plucker, "an evil children's book for adults."*



something completely different, something gritty and nasty. Who you gonna call? "After seeing a few of the paintings I'd done on my own, the crew putting *Dark Sun* together flipped," he remembers. "It was just what they were looking for." Brom indulged in the luxury of a free rein: "They ended up writing much of the world around my paintings. It was a blast."

OIL AND WATER

Brom's works are produced in time-honoured fashion: on canvas, with oils. "I do use the computer occasionally," he says, "for pre-production and touch-up work, but nothing can replace the physical intuitiveness of brush on canvas."

For all that traditionalism of technique, Brom is self taught: "I didn't have the benefit of learning

directly from another artist. Most of what I learned came from studying and emulating the work of artists who I admired, such as Frank Frazetta, Norman Rockwell, NC Wyeth, Waterhouse, and Mucha."

AND NOW...

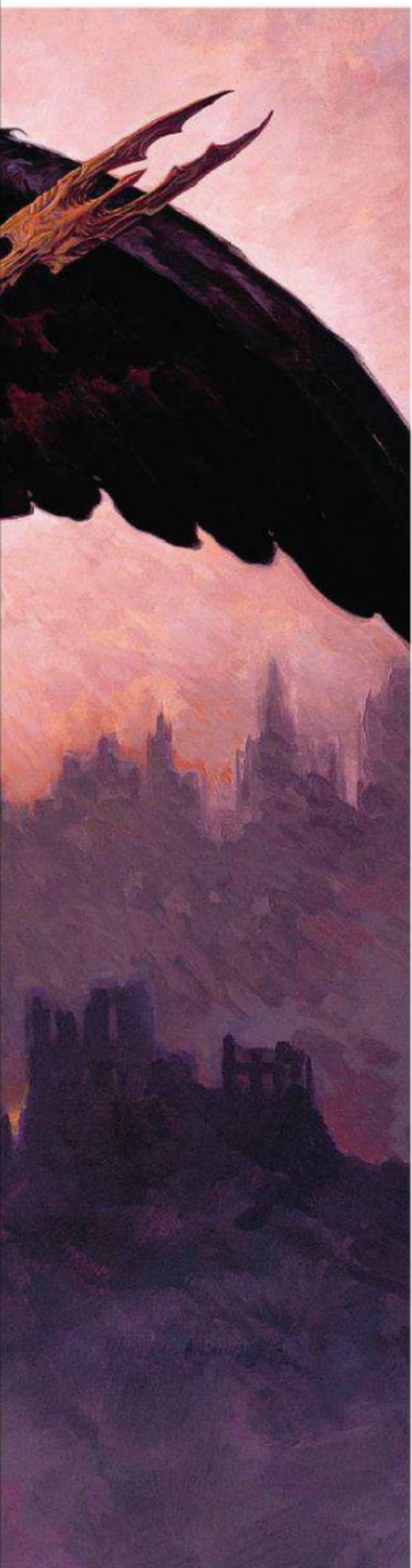
The *Plucker*, a novel, is Brom's latest project. "It's been an obsession," he admits. "Haunting my days and nights for the last several years. Now, at last, it's finished and on its way to scratch out the eyes of children of all ages."

With 160 pages and 100 illustrations, *The Plucker* is a beautiful object, a gothic nightmare disguised as a children's story. His second project? "Another horror novel." That one's due to hit the shops in 2007.



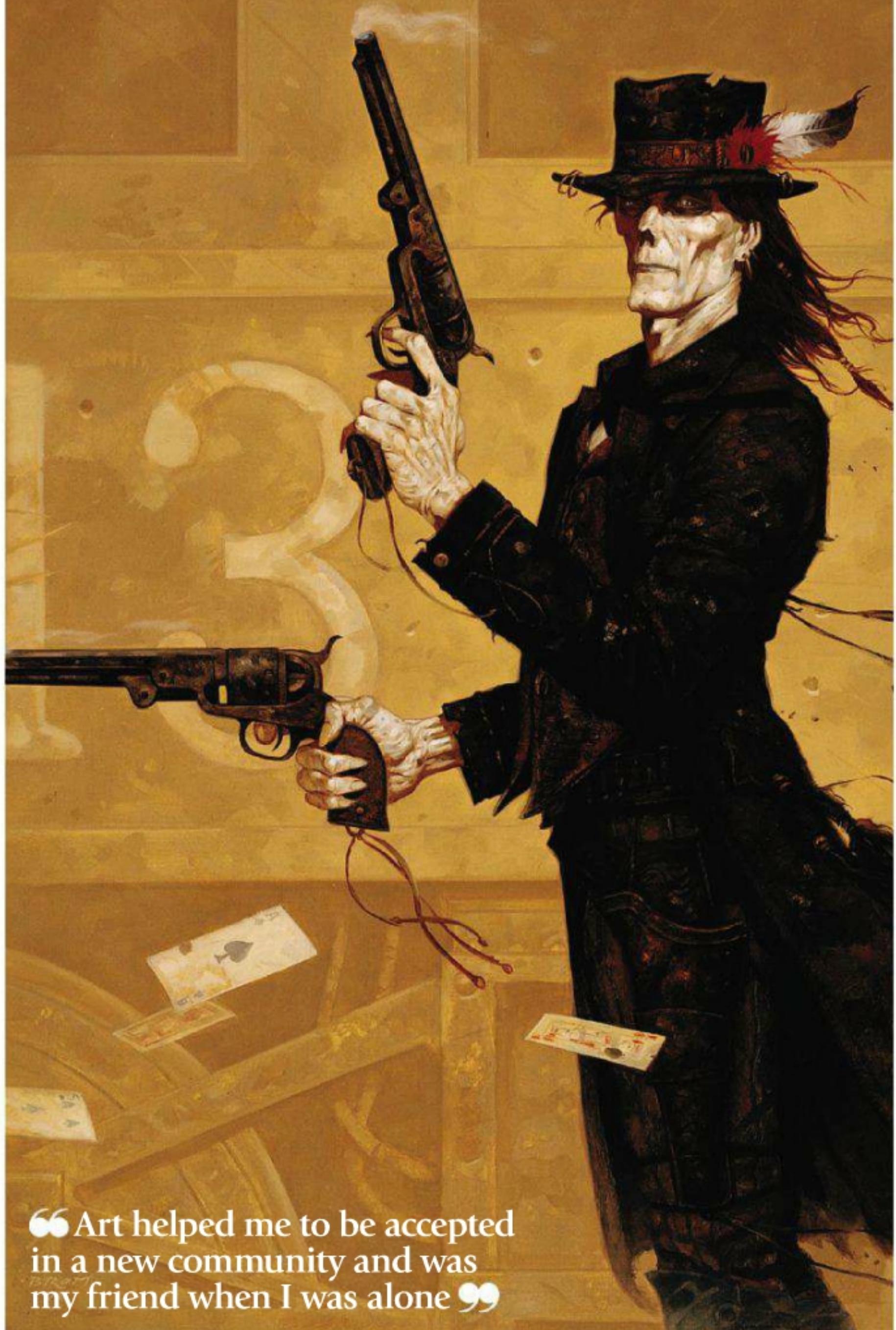
BLACKWING

Created as an illustration for the ever popular card game Magic the Gathering.



GUNSLINGER

"One of my personal favourites," says Brom. Gunslinger doesn't look like he'd miss too often.



“Art helped me to be accepted in a new community and was my friend when I was alone”

Jung Ho Park

LOCATION: US
WEB: <http://jabraniho.cgsociety.org>
EMAIL: jabraniho@hotmail.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop CS2
JOB: Concept artist



Born in Seoul, South Korea, Jung Ho Park always dreamed of being a great artist, "At the age of 16 I moved to California where I began my artistic training."

In 2000, Jung was accepted at the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, where he developed an interest in Illustration and Entertainment Design.

After graduating, Jung worked at Midway Games as a concept artist where he worked on a wide variety of video games, and began to build a freelance career within the movie industry. "I'm currently working at NCsoft as a game concept

1 RAPUPA CITY This image was created for a personal project. "I imagined a city built and civilised upon the desert in 2190," says Jung. "I was really going for the shapes, dimensions, composition, and futuristic images that we cannot see today."

2 PREPARING FOR RACE Jung took some time designing these high speed vehicles. "I had to sketch more than 30 different jets to come up with what I wanted - a sleek vehicle that can be used for hobbies," says Jung.

3 ABOVE THE CITY "I always wondered what it would be like to have a ship that is a hundred times bigger than the current aeroplanes, flying over our heads," muses Jung. "The sunlight over the clouds shining on the airship makes it stands out."

4 ENTRANCE TO UNDERGROUND For this image Jung imagined a town where people built their homes underground. "And all the temples and bridges are carved from the rock." The dark green colour of the underground makes the image cold: "So I used a strong light source on the left of the painting to give warmth to the image."

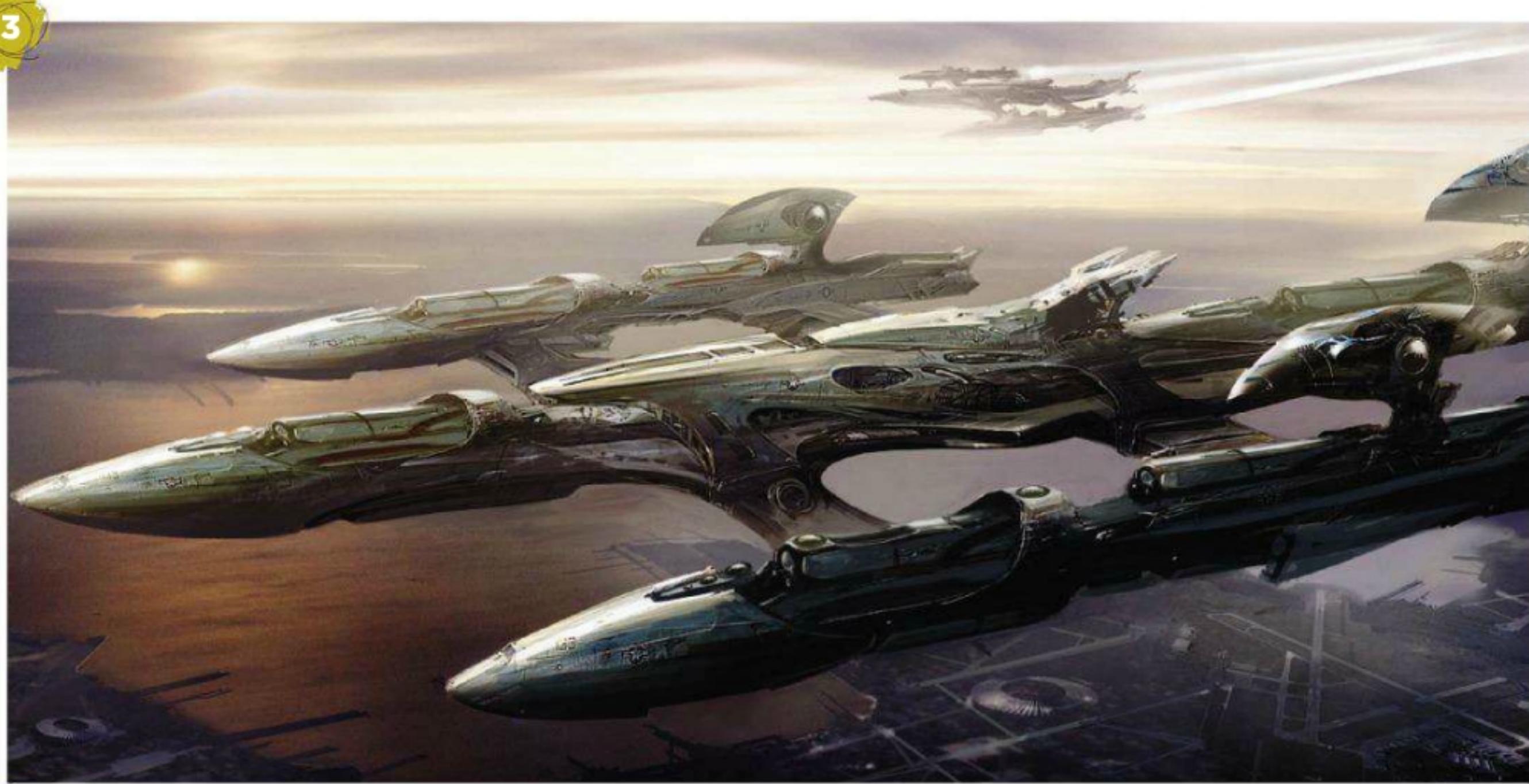
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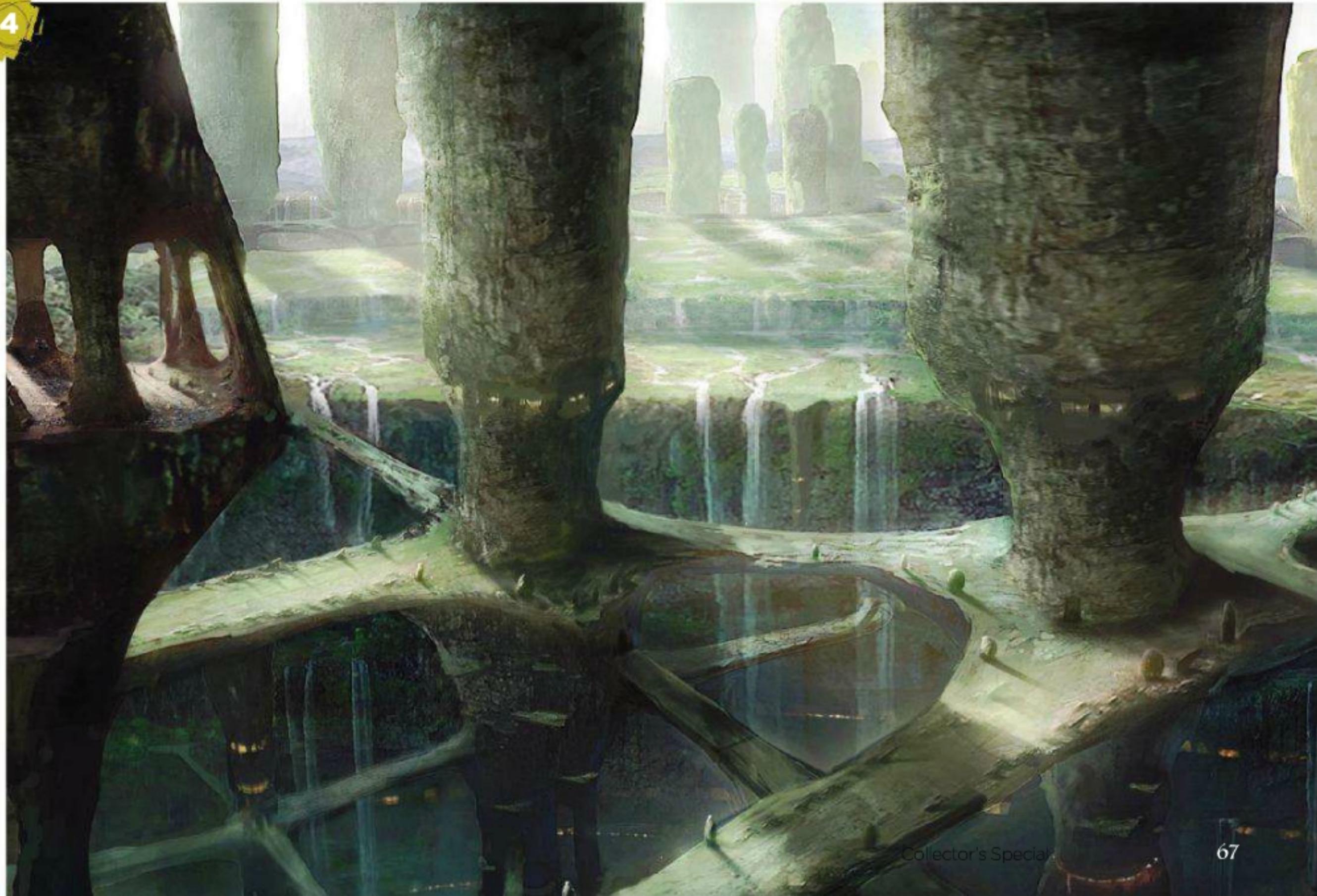
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3



4



 **William O'Connor**

LOCATION: US

WEB: www.wocillo.com

EMAIL: wocillo@comcast.net

SOFTWARE: Photoshop CS

JOB: Freelance illustrator



William reminds us of a quotation from the great Leonardo da Vinci: "If the painter wishes to see beauties to fall in love with, it is within his power to bring them forth, and if he wants to see monstrous things that frighten or are foolish or laughable or indeed to be pitied, he is their Lord and God."

This quote, says William, explains the draw of fantasy and science-fiction illustration. "As artists, the ability to captivate an audience with mere pictures, and to make unbelievable and fantastic dreams seem real, is what has always challenged me as an illustrator."

William began painting and drawing fantasy as a child, and throughout his formal training, his love of the genre always endured. "As I have evolved as an artist, I've experimented with many different media including graphite, pen and ink, mixed media, acrylic and oil - always as an illustrator of stories."

A recent convert to the digital realm, William is very excited about the potential it holds for the future: "Just as photography revolutionised art in the beginning of the 20th century, the digital medium again stands to open up new forms of expression never imagined before to artists in the 21st."

1 SWARM "The ability to create Layer modes such as Overlay enables the artist to put in glazes of colour that traditionally would take intense patience and exacting brushwork." William enjoys his digital freedoms.

2 SUN TSU William's very first digital painting, used as a card illustration and promotional piece.

3 MYSTERIES OF MOONSEA "This massive composition was only possible digitally," William points out. "In this painting I had created a full three-point-perspective grid in a separate layer which I then painted the architecture over. Once the painting was finished, I threw the layer out."

1



2



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3



© 2005 WIZARDS OF THE COAST.

1



Jonathan Ryder

LOCATION: US

WEB: www.jonathanryder.com

EMAIL: jryder@jonathanryder.com

SOFTWARE: Photoshop, Maya

JOB: Conceptual artist and matte painter



"At an early age," says Jonathan, "I became a fan of Miyazaki's animations. I particularly enjoyed his depiction of landscape," reveals Jonathan. The idea of making fantasy a reality began to grow in strength until in 2003: "I decided to take art seriously and got involved career-wise."

In the same year, Jonathan enrolled at an art school in Orange County, California, to study animation. "There, I found myself supported by other artists who were striving for the same goals and introduced to the artworks of Mark Goerner and Yanick Dusseault (Dusso)."

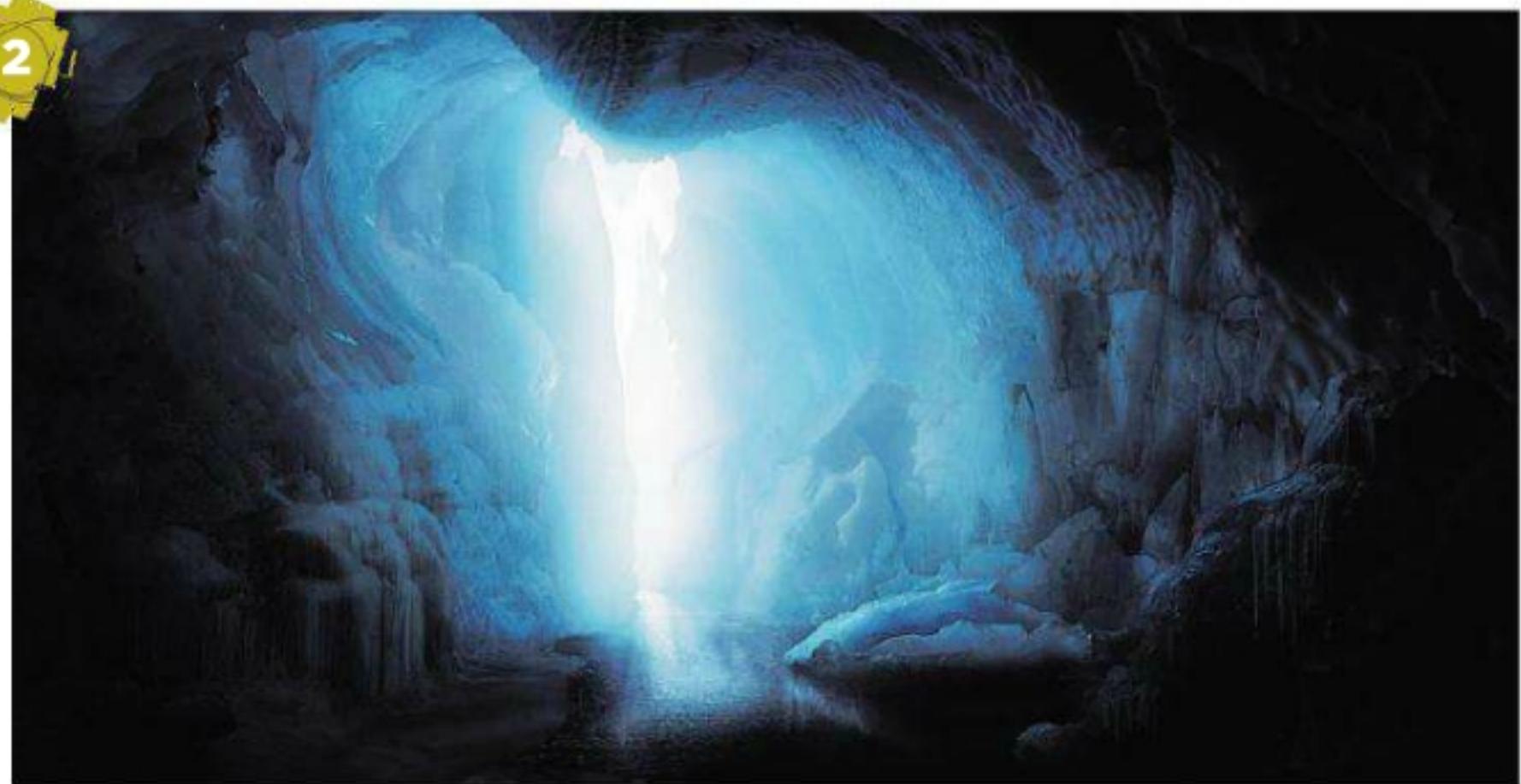
These two artists inspired Jonathan to pursue the conceptual arts, and matte painting in particular. "I hope to inspire future artists in the same way those artists inspired me."

1 ENCOMPASS This image comes from Jonathan's self-made short *Encompass*, created with 3D geometry, photos and digital paint. "I imagined the city built around a canyon-like place to be protected from invaders."

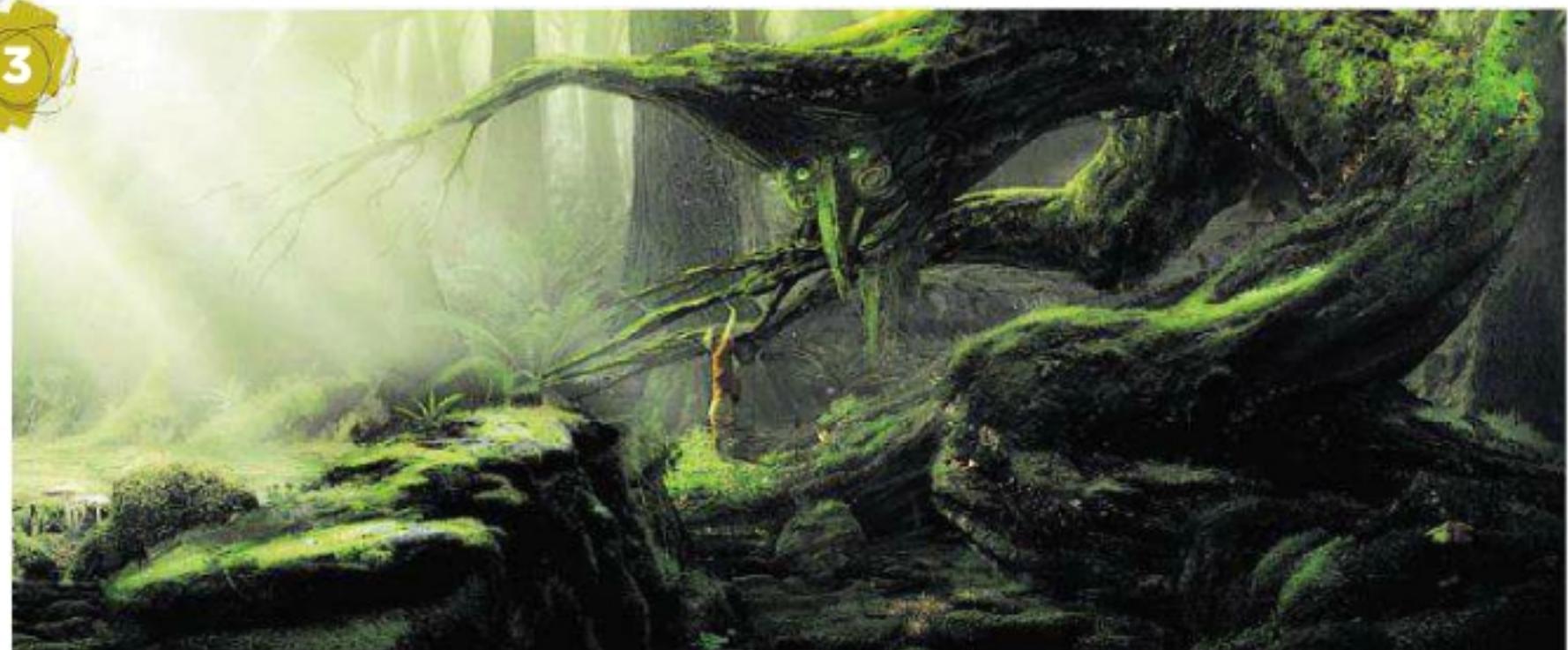
2 THE PATHWAY OUTSIDE Another image from *Encompass*: "This environment was created around the idea of the inside of a vibrant glacier," explains Jonathan.

3 EIDOLON "This was a fun project," says Jonathan. "I came up with the idea of this little boy lost in an enchanted forest who makes a tree creature's acquaintance."

2



3





1

Dylan Cole

LOCATION: US

WEB: www.dylancolestudio.com

EMAIL: dylan@dylancolestudio.com

SOFTWARE: Photoshop, Cinema 4D

JOB: Concept design/matte painting



Dylan Cole, a native of southern California, began drawing at an early age. His interests in comic books and sci-fi illustration eventually led him to matte painting.

"Up until that time, I was a self-proclaimed traditional art snob who couldn't even be forcibly dragged to a computer," recalls Dylan. However, some cursory research into matte painting as a career revealed that it was all done digitally.

"After a big slice of humble pie and several tantrums, I put down the brush and picked up the stylus." To date, Dylan has worked on many films, including *The Return of the King*, *The Chronicles of Riddick*, *I, Robot*, *The Aviator*, and *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*.

Dylan recently finished work on *Superman Returns* as lead matte painter for Rhythm and Hues. He also has a line of instructional DVDs from the Gnomon Workshop and was one of the co-authors of Ballistic's *d'artiste: Matte Painting*.



2

1 BLUEROCK "Dusk is one of my favourite times to paint," Dylan explains. "I love seeing lights on but still having colour in the sky."

2 TROPICAL CITY This painting was for one of Dylan's Gnomon instructional DVDs. "I like the juxtaposition of the sci-fi with the tropical setting."

3 MANHATTAN "I thought of this as ocean-front property gone haywire," says Dylan. "People just kept building up and eventually out."



3

 **Daniel Dociu**

LOCATION: US

WEB: www.tinfoilgames.com

www.arena.net

EMAIL: Daniel@arena.net

SOFTWARE: Photoshop

JOB: Art director/lead concept artist, ArenaNet



Born and schooled in Transylvania, Daniel staked his career on a degree in Industrial Design from the Fine Arts Academy in Cluj, northwestern Romania.

He's been living in the US since 1990 and working in the interactive entertainment industry since 1993. His list of credits include art director/concept artist for Squaresoft, Electronic Arts and Zipper Interactive, as well as freelancing for Microsoft and Wizards of the Coast.

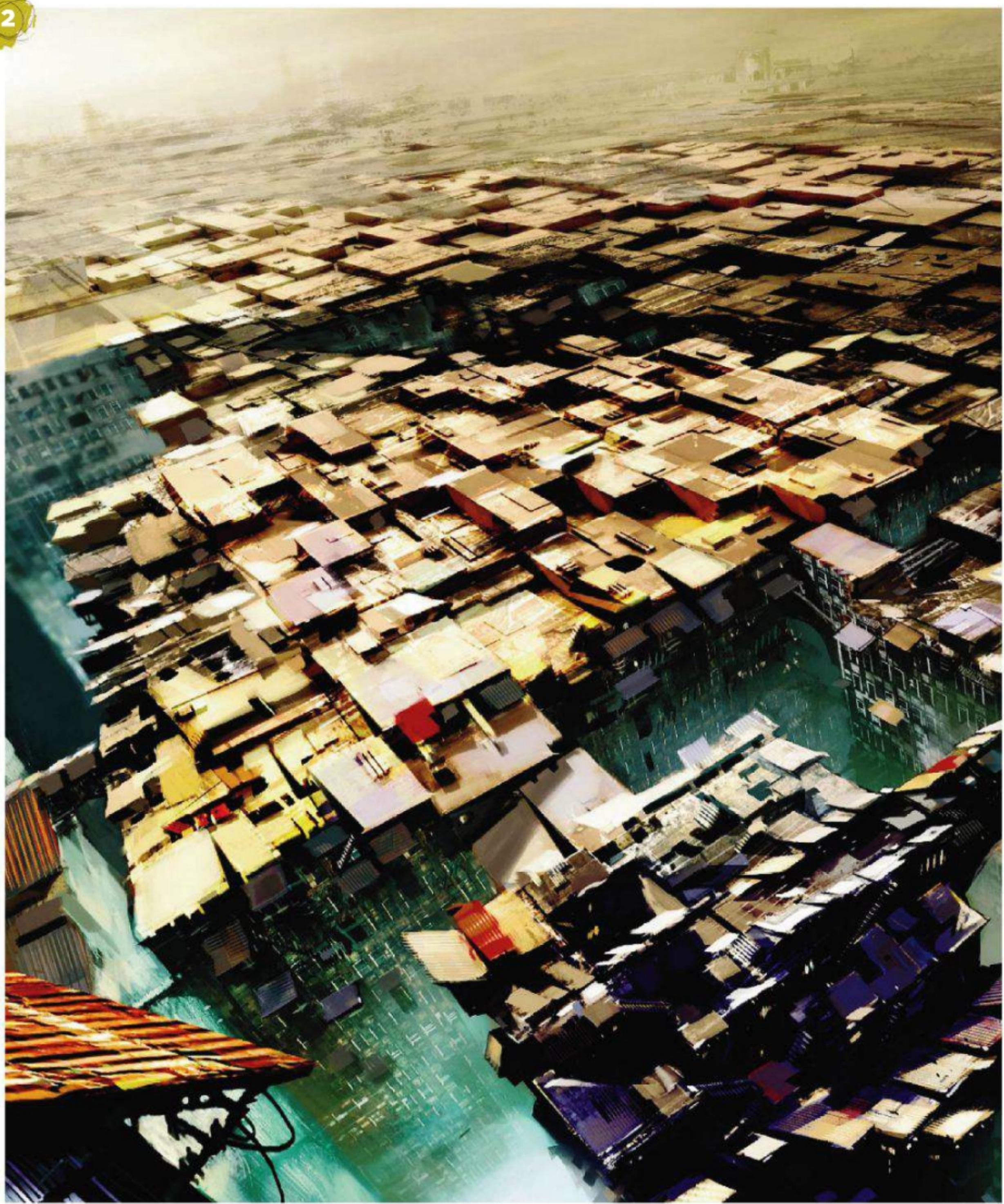
He is currently working for NCSoft/ArenaNet on the Guild Wars series, concepting for and art directing "the best art team I've had the privilege to be a part of." In a remark one imagines is typically pithy, he observes that "the main difference between digital and traditional art is that traditional artists have to wash their hands not only after but also before using the bathroom."

1 FLOTTING MOSQUE A structure design with strong influences from Moorish architecture, "yet with an infusion of fantasy vocabulary."

2 ROOFTOPS A concept for a location in Guild Wars that was inspired by what used to be known as The Walled City of Kowloon, in Hong Kong. "The gameplay was intended to take place primarily on rooftops separated occasionally by canyon-like gaps."

1







THE GATHERING

"The Gathering, like Monolith [overleaf], was produced for both my workshop and my book project, and was included in The Society of Illustrators Los Angeles 44th annual illustration competition."

The art of PHILIP STRAUB

"In a way I consider some of the more fantastic work I've done a glimpse into my subconscious." Phil Straub gives us a peek under the hood

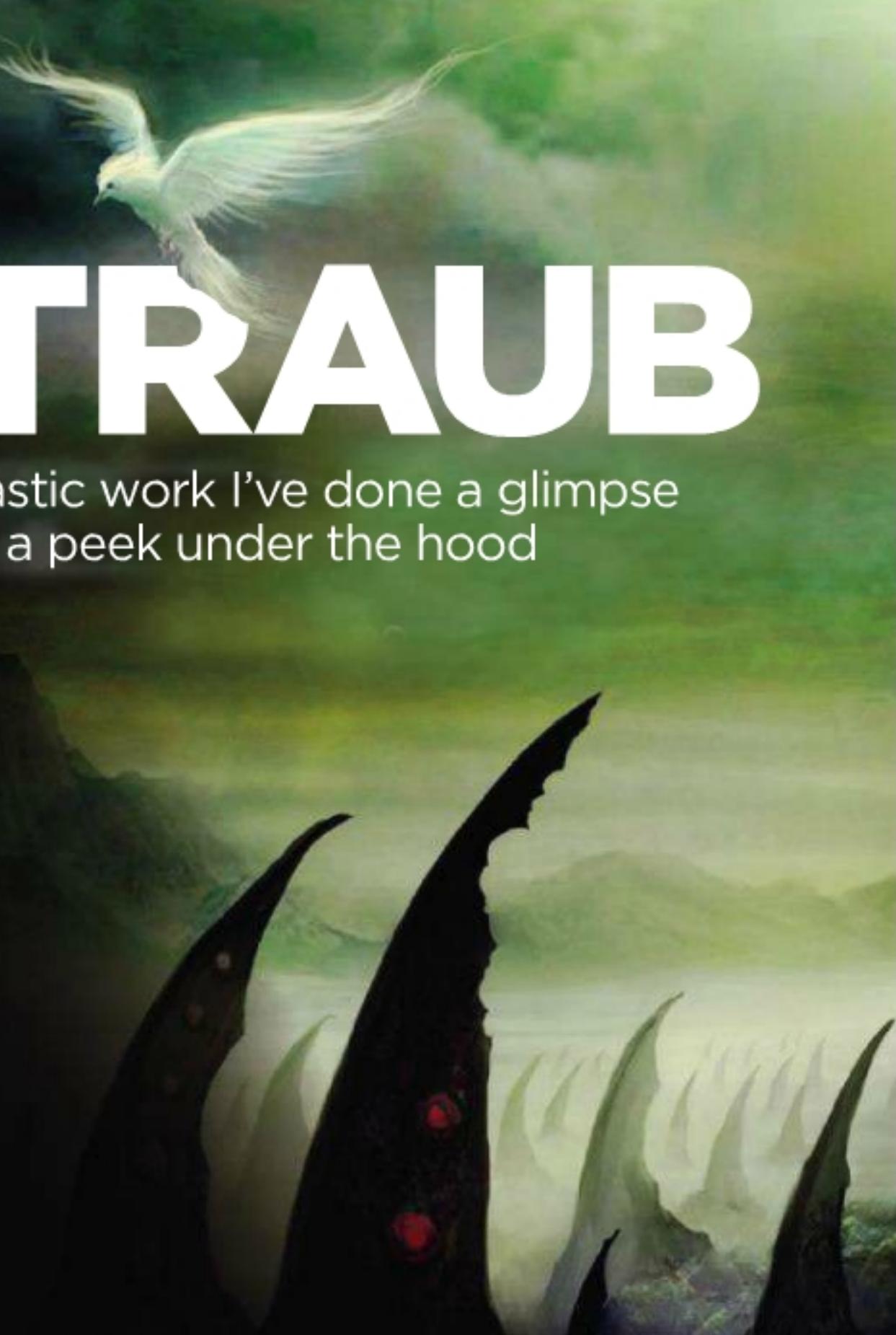
SWhen I'm painting," says Phil Straub, "I usually enter into a dream-state where it's as if everything else around me falls away and I'm focused on creating the alternate world that's developing on the canvas. This is something you'll rarely hear artists talk about," he acknowledges, "but it's this euphoric feeling that keeps us coming back."

Phil regularly gets asked how and why he became an artist, "and the more I'm asked," he says, "the more I realise I never actually chose this life, it chose me. I've just been lucky enough to make a living doing art."

Right out of college, Phil scored a job in the studio of well-known children's book author/illustrator Mercer Mayer. For Phil, trained as a traditional oil painter, this was his introduction to digital art, Photoshop and the Wacom tablet. Now, he says, "I always begin my paintings digitally. I have for a while now. Painter and Photoshop have such a variety of tools for sketching that I actually feel more comfortable with my Wacom pen than with a pencil."

Working on a variety of licences – from movies like Jurassic Park and Superman to children's books and Fisher Price – has, Phil explains, "forced me to develop an ability to change my style to cater to a particular project. I definitely enjoy doing realism, from matte paintings to landscapes, but it's truly inspiring to create something that's unique to me and my vision. I find it much more interesting and exciting to create worlds and characters that don't exist in our reality than to paint just regular realism."

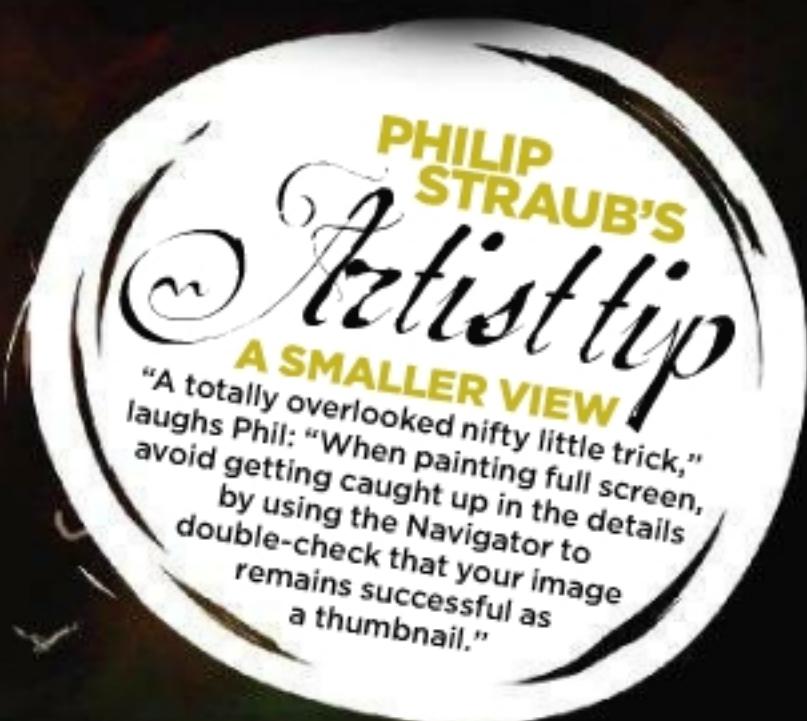
As head of concept art at Electronic Arts, Phil is kept busy: "The concept team I run works with all seven of the project teams at the studio, as well as marketing." But he makes time for personal projects including a book, *Otherworlds*: "It focuses on a group of travellers who navigate through a world which draws its visuals from human emotions. I have about 50 of the planned 125 illustrations completed." On top of that, Phil reveals, "I definitely want to bring to market a series of fantastic children's books revolving around the Secret Places brand I have in development." ➤



WHERE FEARS ROAM

"This illustrates a location depicting another human emotion, fear. The shows have been good to me with this one appearing in Expose 3, Spectrum 12, and winning the Silver award in the Society of Illustrators of Los Angeles' 44th annual illustration competition."

The art of **PHILIP STRAUB**



Artist **PROFILE**

Philip Straub



AGE: 33
COUNTRY: US

From books to feature films Philip's

work displays a sure-footed sense of style and composition. Philip's fantasy work perfectly illustrates his love of the arcane.

SOFTWARE USED: Painter, Photoshop

WEB: www.philipstraub.com

The art of PHILIP STRAUB



COHABITATION

"This image illustrates one of the many locations that defines the world in the story I'm working on. Cohabitation was included in the Society of Illustrators Los Angeles' 43rd annual illustration competition, won the CGChoice award and was included in the books Exposé 3 and Digital Masters."

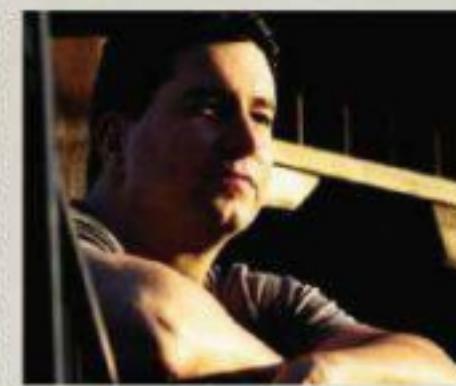


THE CONJURING

"Another painting for my upcoming book project, The Conjuring is in the same family as Where Fears Roam and The Nightmare Factory. The Conjuring will be included in the forthcoming release of Spectrum 13."

Philip Straub's VITAL STATISTICS

Hates heights and being a perfectionist



Place of birth?

Syracuse, New York, US.

Date of birth?

July 5, 1973.

Current location?

Maitland (Orlando suburb), Florida, US.

Favourite music?

Really hard to nail it down to one specific type. I enjoy quite a few different styles of music. Progressive rock/metal is definitely one of my favourites but I like classic rock, jazz, and metal, too.

Favourite traditional artist?

Another tough one. I'll name a few from different genres. In the illustration arena I really enjoy Michael Whelan's work, he balances symbolism and classical fantasy brilliantly.

Within the surreal movement I really like Salvador Dali, as well as modern contemporaries Daniel Merriam, Michael Parkes, and Gil Bruvel.

Favourite digital artist?

I really enjoy Craig Mullins' work as well as matte painter Yanick 'Dusso' Dusseault.

First memory?

Falling down the stairs at the age of two or three.

Average time spent on each image?

Probably 20 hours, although it does vary quite a bit depending on subject matter and the style.

Most annoying personal trait?

Being a perfectionist and also a workaholic.

Any pet hates or phobias?

I have a small fear of heights and flying (although I've been forced to overcome the latter).

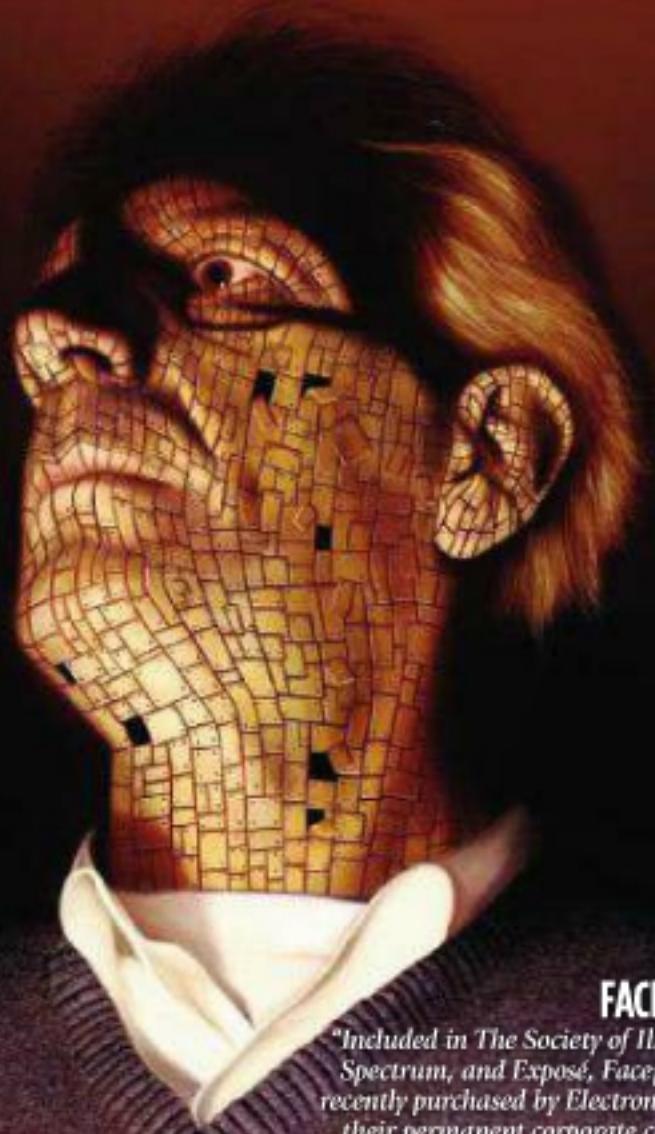
Single most important piece of professional advice?

Practise, practise, and practise! Be relentless, and believe you can accomplish anything that is important to you.

Left or right-handed?

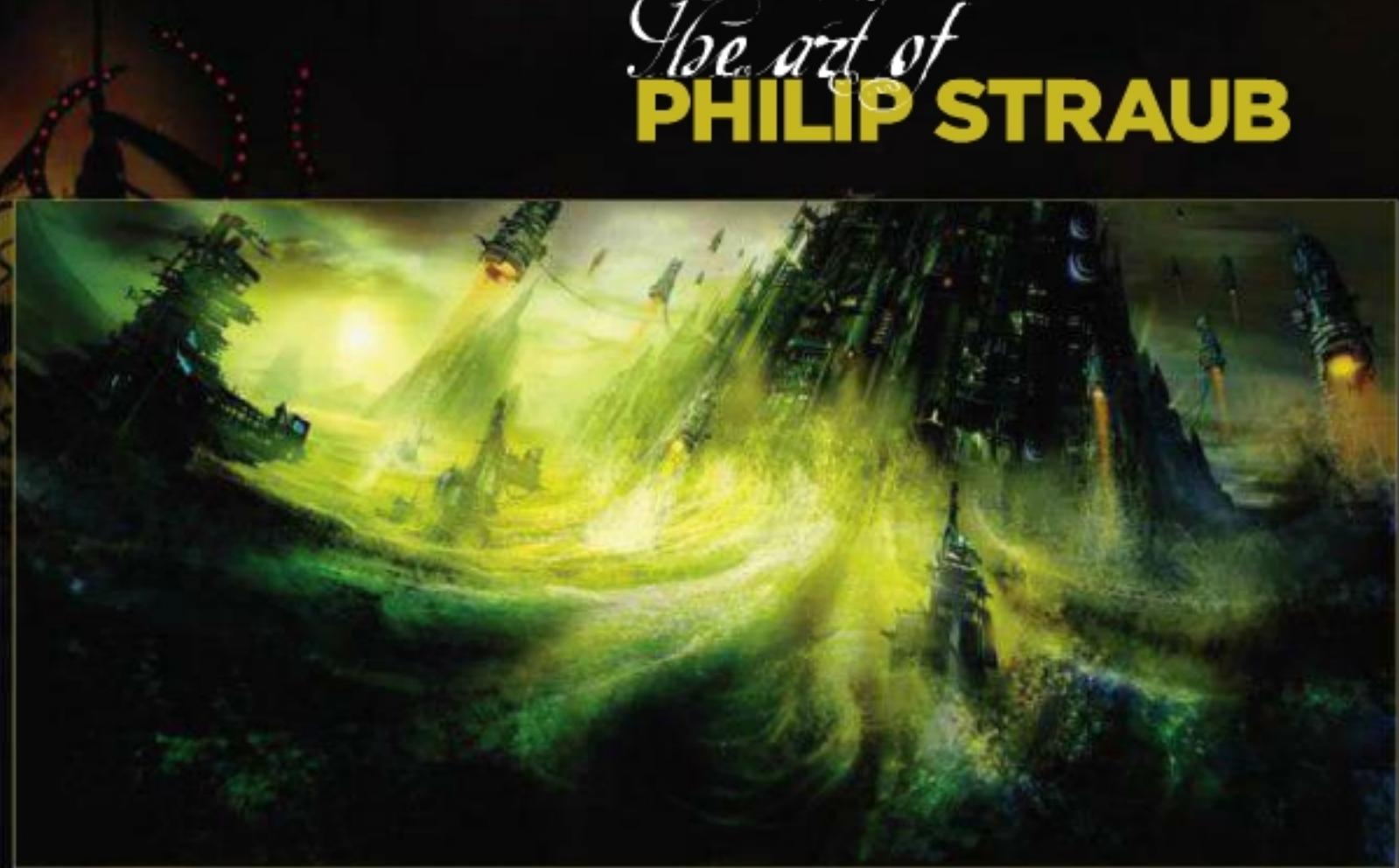
Right-handed.

The art of **PHILIP STRAUB**



FACEPLATES

"Included in The Society of Illustrators, Spectrum, and Exposé, Faceplates was recently purchased by Electronic Arts for their permanent corporate collection."



MONOLITH

"A painting created for my upcoming book project and the 'Environment Concept Art' class I teach over at the CGSociety. Monolith will be included in the just-released Exposé 4, and also Spectrum 13."

PHILIP STRAUB'S

Artist tip

ADDING COLOUR

"In Photoshop, use the Overlay option in your Layers palette on a separate layer from your sketch to quickly add colour to a value study. You can use the Gel layer in Painter the same way," explains Phil.

THE NIGHTMARE FACTORY

"Another location from my book project, The Nightmare Factory attempts to visualise a place where nightmares are manufactured. It was included in The Society of Illustrators 43rd annual illustration competition and was awarded the CGChoice award."





Artist **PROFILE**

Philip Straub

COUNTRY: US

CLIENTS: Universal Studios, Vivendi Universal, Mercer Mayer, Mattel



Philip Straub is a concept art director for video game publisher EA. www.philipstraub.com

Try it yourself

Download a Zip archive of support files from <http://preview.tinyURL.com/2a9mt2>. You'll also find a trial version of Photoshop CS3 at www.adobe.com/go/trypphotoshop.



Photoshop THE END OF THE WORLD

EA's concept art director **Philip Straub** shows you how to grab the attention of your audience with a dramatic and apocalyptic scene

Every concept designer in the entertainment industry must be able to successfully stage and visually describe a key or memorable moment that occurs in a game or film. In the following tutorial I'll discuss and demonstrate some of the finer points necessary for creating jaw-dropping and inspiring concept art.

I'll focus on fundamental illustration skills as well as some shortcuts and a few tricks I've developed over the years as a professional artist. I should mention that I'm not really a shortcuts type of artist, and I mostly apply my studies on perspective, composition, lighting, value

structure, colour theory, understanding of depth, anatomy and definition of focal point to each painting I create. These are the fundamental building blocks of all good picture making, and without them there isn't a Photoshop trick or Painter shortcut that is going to get you any closer to making a professional looking illustration.

I'll cover some of my theory on the subjects mentioned above throughout the process as well as my workflow, so you can gain an insight into how I put a painting together. While I sometimes work in Photoshop, Painter and Maya when creating my concept paintings, to

keep things simple I'm going to stick with just Photoshop for this workshop.

With this type of concept painting, staging, dramatic camera angle and camera focal length should all be considerations when you begin planning out your scene. The goal here is to create the most dramatic and visually exciting scene possible from the tools that you've been given.

Usually, a concept artist will be given a scene to illustrate or a pivotal moment in a storyline to describe visually, but you can apply this approach to your work by getting in the habit of developing a backstory to illustrate from.

Workshop

1 Reference

I've been meaning to get started on a piece that focuses on a moment in a story where a civilization is nearly destroyed by a disaster. I know I want to depict a lot of destruction and chaos, with plenty of smoke, fire and dramatic lighting. This scene is going to require quite a bit of reference-gathering for the many different subjects I'm going to be dealing with. So, I start collecting all that I need to get inspired and gain a better understanding of what happens to buildings and the landscapes around them when a catastrophe occurs. Once I have about 100 images of different architecture, explosions, fires, smoke, and other cool stuff, I'm ready to begin.

2 Composition

Before beginning a new piece, I try to visualise the final painting. I imagine the scene in my head and search for the most interesting angle, subject or character to focus on. With this painting, I know that the focal point and dramatic lighting is going to sell the piece, so identifying the highest point of contrast and main point of action is my priority.

However, before I begin defining the composition, I need to pick an aspect ratio or overall size for my canvas. Confident I want the painting to represent a fairly cinematic moment in the story, I choose a landscape type layout that enables me to cover a lot of ground along the horizon line.

I almost always begin with a greyscale canvas. As I know the piece is going to be dark, I fill the canvas with 50 per cent grey and build up from there. Nothing fancy here; I like to do my sketching with a few different brushes in Photoshop.

3 Rule of thirds

When you divide the canvas into thirds horizontally and vertically, where the lines cross is a 'golden mean', or the best spot in which to place your object of interest. 'Power points' are located on the intersections. By placing a main subject on a power point, it further defines that subject as the focal point. The golden rectangle and golden ratio (the ratio of the longer and shorter sides of the golden rectangle) also appear in many natural phenomena. The ratio between the length of your nose and the distance from the bottom of the chin to the bottom of the nose is a golden ratio.

The image below shows the division of space when the golden rule is applied to a blank canvas. It's the division of a line in two sections, where the ratio between the smallest section and the largest section is identical to the ratio between the largest section and the entire length of the line. I used this grid layout a lot when I started painting and found it helpful. I still do.

4 Lighting and value structure

Strong lighting and colour is essential to sell a concept painting. Every successful



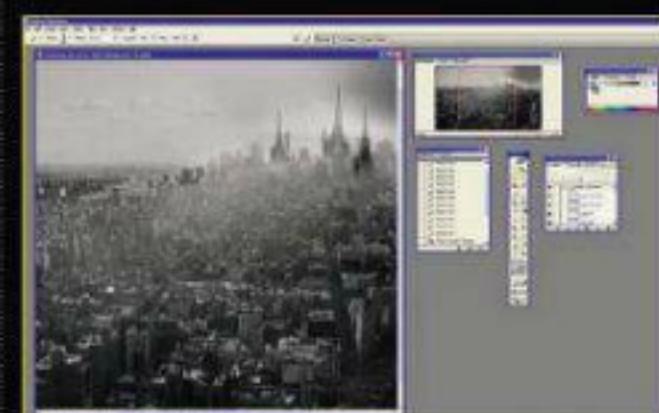
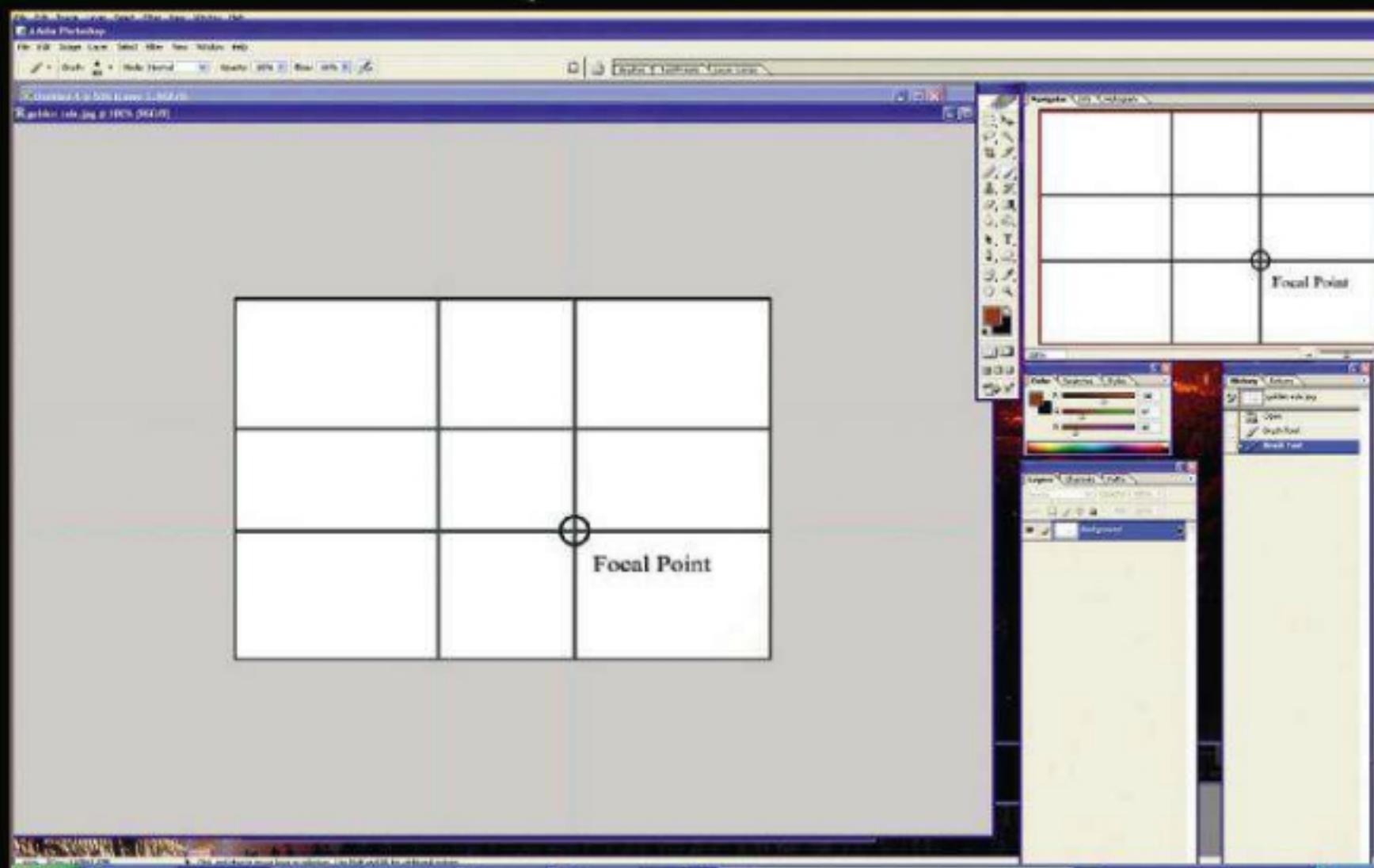
concept painting has a defined and well executed focal point. Without a strong value composition that is constructed to lead the eye to a pay-off or focal point, a piece will fall flat. Nothing is visible to the human eye without a light source, whether it's the sun, the moon or an incandescent bulb.

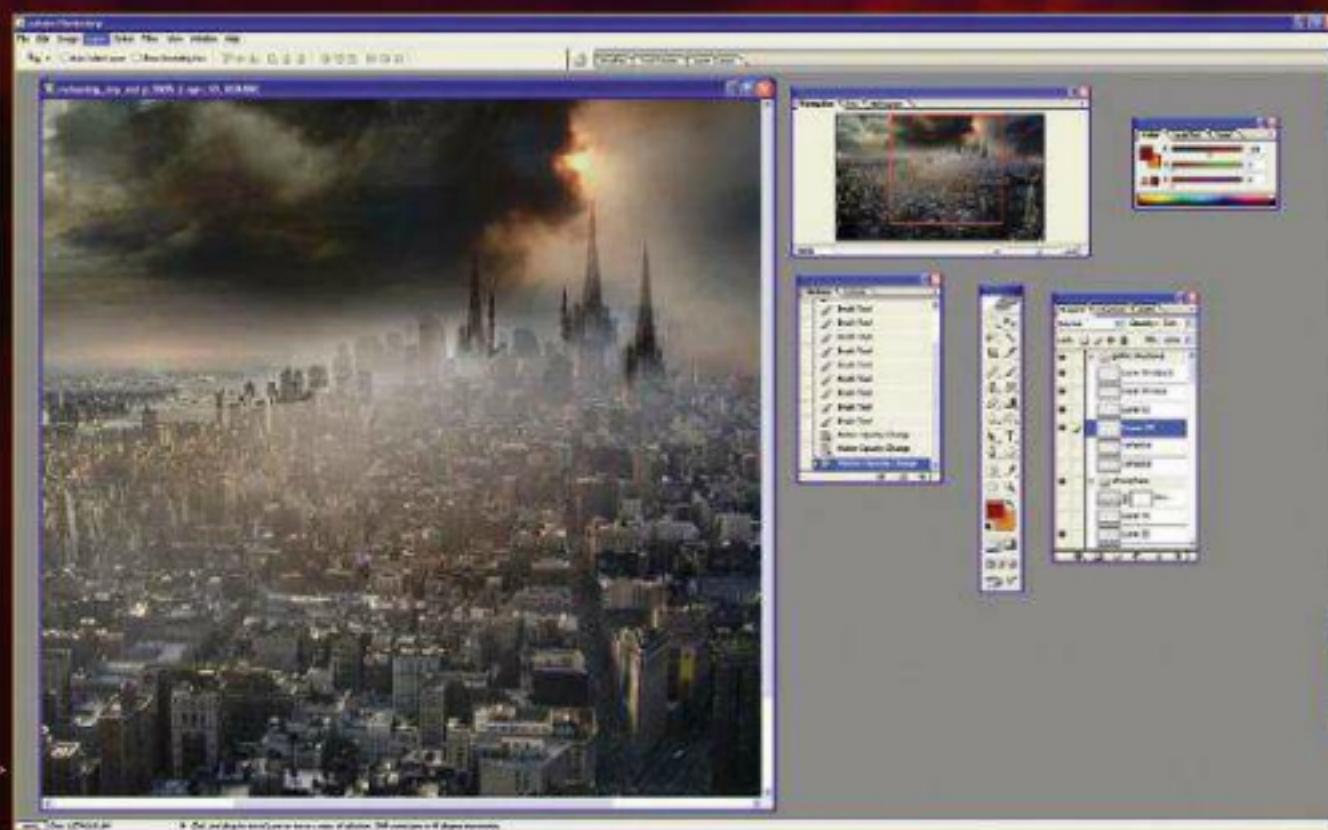
At this point I begin to define the lighting solution as well as the focal point of the image, concentrating on leading the viewer's eye across the canvas. To add to the scene I include some other smaller areas of interest in the composition to balance the main focal point and further lead the viewer's eye.

5 Scale

An artist is limited to creating the illusion of three dimensions on a flat two-dimensional surface. We need to trick the people who see our paintings into believing that what they see looks real.

Depending on the type of image I'm creating, I may spend more time in the sketch stage than I have with this painting but, as I have a wealth of reference and building blocks to draw from, I'm going to move straight to defining my scale and details. I already have a few cityscapes created with simple 3D geometry, so I grab a few renders and some of the photo reference I gathered earlier and begin to lay out the scale of the city and refine the perspective. The technique is basic – lots of skewing, scaling and distorting until the overall perspective feels right.





6 The sky's the limit

The first thing to establish here is the sky. In a landscape image the sky is your most important component; it defines the colour and temperature of your light, the colour and temperature of your reflective light, and the colour of your shadows.

I have an extremely large archive of sky reference that I've built up over the years. I've made a habit of keeping a digital camera in my car and shooting any interesting sky I see, then archiving it for later use. You'd be surprised how handy this is. On top of this, there's a ton of great royalty-free reference websites you can use to help define a sky in your scene. Just make sure to never copy images directly and to gain a further understanding of the anatomy of a sky with every photo reference you use.

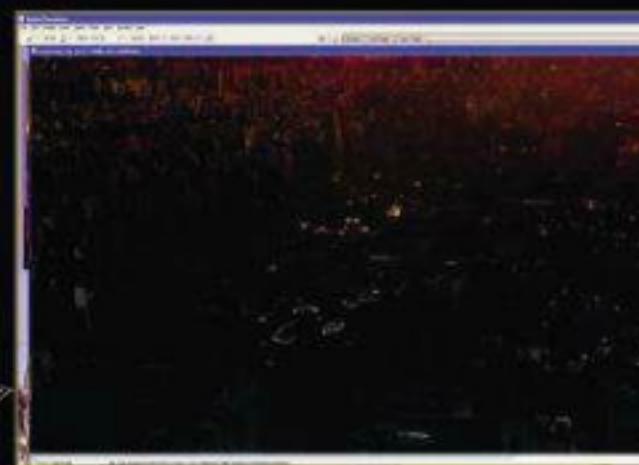
So for this painting I grab a few different sky references that I think will fit the image and begin placing them carefully into the scene. Using a variety of layering techniques, I erase and paint where needed.

7 Colour keys

Now that the basic building blocks of the image are in place, it's time for me to begin exploring colour. With my values fairly well established and the beginning

stages of the scale of the image defined, I start to apply what I call my post effects.

First I create a new layer set and put it above all the other layers in my Layer palette, focusing on defining the overall colour key of the image. I'm thinking a generally analogous colour scheme will suit this image well, so I mix up a deep orange/red colour, create a new layer in the Layer set, set the layer to Overlay, and begin applying the mixed colour to the canvas. Whenever I use this technique I usually use a large airbrush, pull the Opacity down to 30 per cent and begin with large broad strokes, experimenting until I see something I like.



8 Cool shadow

Okay, we're getting there now, but I need to define the focal point and lighting further. I mix up a cool dark blue hue (this will offset the heat of the red in the scene that is defined by the fire), create a new layer, define the layer as a Multiply layer and begin – again with a large airbrush that has its Opacity set fairly low – to paint in what will ultimately be my shadow colour.

This technique also helps to visualise how the colour structure will relate to the value structure that I created in the value study stage (step 4).



PRO SECRETS

Negative and positive

Positive space is defined by the areas of an image that are occupied by a form; negative space is the areas not occupied by forms. All areas of the art are equally important – there is no background area that can be left unconsidered. A plain background is okay, but this must be a deliberate choice. Positive and negative shapes must both be given the same compositional consideration, without negative shapes (or 'background') being neglected. In a painting of a chair, for instance, the spaces between the seat and arms of the chair, as well as the space around the chair, would be given equal consideration in the design of the painting.

9 Doom and destruction

With my basic colour palette established, I can now begin to push the destruction element that I want to depict in the scene. Since I've created a few paintings like this before, I go to one of my brush sets and load up some smoke and fire brushes. As I add these elements I need to be careful to maintain a pleasing value and colour composition. First, I create a new layer and begin painting-in the fire around the focal point, experimenting with scale and layer modes until I get the desired effect.

10 More doom

Next, I begin to add some dramatic plumes of smoke to further accentuate the destruction occurring in the city. Again, drawing from my custom brush set and photographs I gathered at the beginning of the process, I begin painting-in first the smoke around the focal point, and then around the mid-ground and foreground areas of the city. Establishing the mid-ground and foreground smoke will help to define my scale by overlapping and layering one plume of smoke in front of the other.





11 Overlapping objects

Overlapping and intersecting objects create the illusion of depth. You want to create a sort of 'hide and seek' with the objects in your scene. Layering them and creating little pockets where objects in the mid-ground overlap your background, as well as placing foreground objects that overlap both background and mid-ground, will establish depth.

12 Lightning and drama

The scene isn't nearly dramatic enough, so it's time to add some lightning. I make a new layer, set the Layer mode to Color Dodge and, using a custom made airbrush, paint in the basic shapes of the lightning, being very careful not to disturb the balance of the composition.

But it's still not dramatic enough. I need more fire! I grab some fire reference, create a new layer and experiment with a variety of brushes and layer modes to nail the dramatic glow I'm after. As I've been working below my post-effect layer set all along, I'm able to paint in a medium value red/orange/yellow combination and set the layer to Linear Dodge, thus creating the glow associated with fire and maintaining the colour key I set earlier.

PRO SECRETS

Colouring

Concept artists can and should use colour to affect their audience. Just as you would use composition, camera angle, lighting and perspective to create a mood that helps to tell a visual story, colour is another tool. When you approach a painting, think about what you want to portray, and what kind of reaction you are hoping for from your audience. As you construct a palette, keep in mind what you are trying to accomplish with your piece. If you want an area in your work to 'pop', you could place a warm against a cool or complements next to each other. Conversely, if you're after a serene mood, you wouldn't want to place complements together.

13 Derelict buildings

The city I pieced together from leftover 3D renders and photos was really just a stand-in for the final execution. Because I feel the overall mood of the piece is coming together, I switch my focus from the big picture of the image to defining some of the smaller details. Obviously, the buildings that I originally put into the scene were there just to define scale and clutter; now I'm going to start creating the character of the city.

With the amount of destruction that's occurring in the city, I need to paint in some buildings that reflect this. I create a layer set that sits below all of the post-effect layers, name it 'destroyed building' and begin painting in destroyed buildings in key locations to help enhance the composition and further lead the eye to the focal point of the image.

14 Gothic architecture

I've always felt an affinity with gothic architecture; it just has so much character and amazing craftsmanship.

Since the subject matter here has some religious overtones, it makes sense to draw from the architecture of cathedrals and churches to further sell the end-of-the-world setting.

I had always planned on adding this element to the scene, so I simply go back to all the reference I gathered earlier as well as some photos I have in my archives, and carefully place the gothic architecture throughout the city. Again, I'm very careful not to disturb the balance of the composition, and I try to find little areas to place the architecture, creating overlapping elements to enhance the background, mid-ground and foreground.

15 Foreground objects

A little trick I've picked up over the course of my career, which helps enhance scale and frame your composition, is the correct placement of foreground objects. In keeping with this concept, I make a new layer, set it to Multiply and paint in, using a semi-hard brush, a destroyed building in the left foreground.



16 Distant light

At this point the distant city in the image feels somewhat neglected, so, to accentuate scale, I grab one of my custom brushes that creates glowing city lights and paint the glow of a burning city in the distance. I'm careful to build up the opacity slowly as I paint the varying shapes in and, to further enhance the glow, I set the layer to Color Dodge.

17 More lightning, more fire

I feel the overall destruction visuals are working fairly well, but I still want to sell the idea of mass destruction and chaos. So, it's time for more fire and lightning! Using the same technique as I described earlier, I paint in some additional fire, approaching the focal point.

Next, I create a new layer that sits below all of the post effects I created at the beginning of the process, set the layer to Linear Dodge, mix a warm light yellow, choose a small, soft airbrush and paint-in the shape of the lightning. When I'm happy with the shape of the lightning, I create yet another layer, make a slightly

larger airbrush, set the Layer mode to Color Dodge, pull the Opacity of the brush down to 10 per cent, and paint-in the subtle glow of the lightning.

18 Glowing windows

Something that is a bit of a trademark of mine is the presence of glowing objects, or objects that appear lit from within. There is something magical about the appearance of light emanating from a window, and this painting is



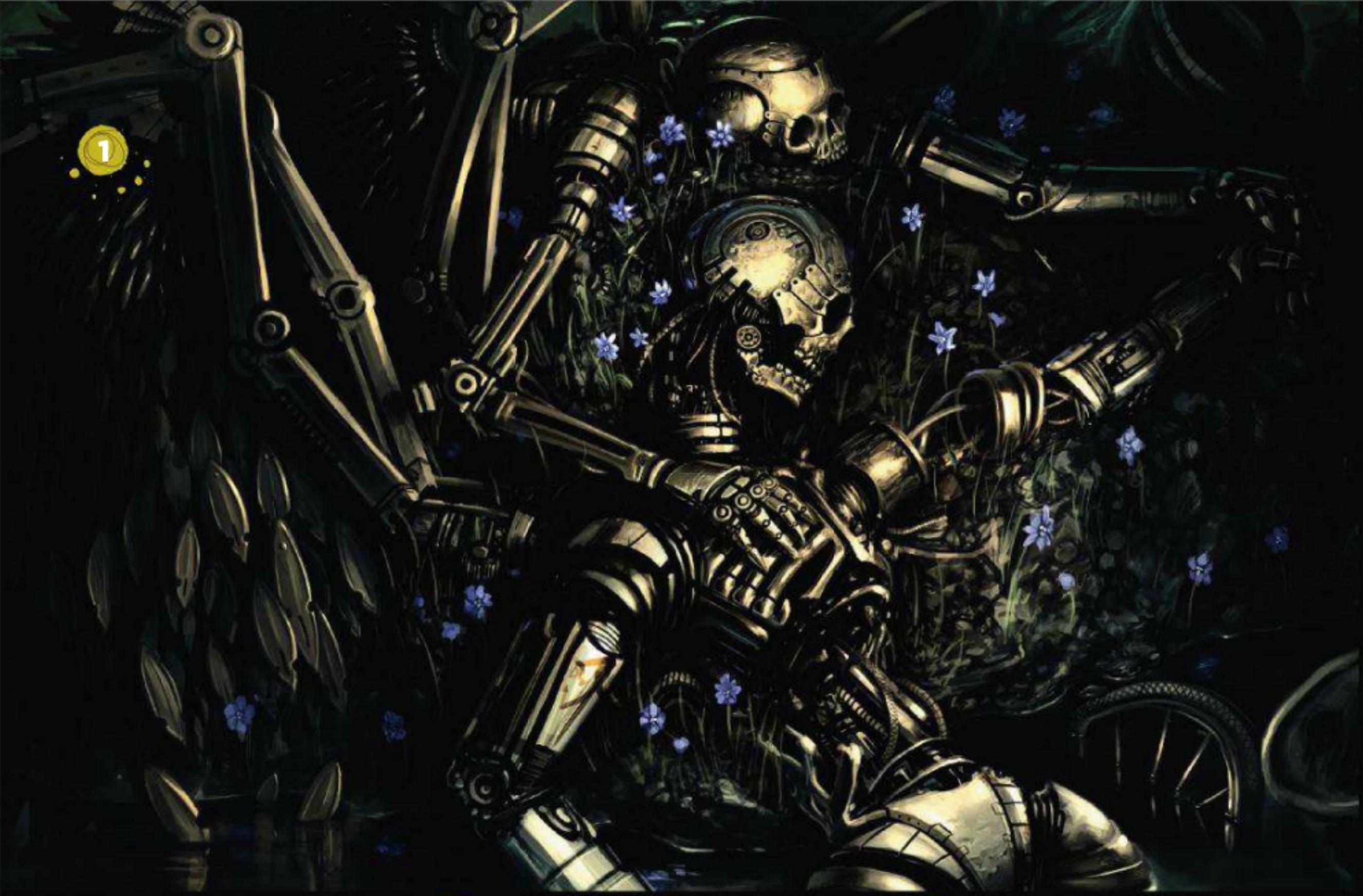
screaming out for it. I create a new layer, mix up a warm orange/red colour, make a small, soft airbrush, set the layer to Normal (much of the glow will occur as the colour I paint in blends with the warm post effects I created earlier), set my brush to Overlay (this will enable colour saturation to build as it becomes more opaque), and carefully paint in the glowing window shapes.

19 Finishing touches

At this point the painting is 90 per cent complete, but there is still quite a bit of finessing that I need to do to call the painting finished. After some reflection, I realise that the image is still not as warm as I'd like it, so I duplicate one of my 'atmosphere' layers and pull down the Opacity of the layer to 75 per cent to get the temperature I'm looking for.

Next, I spend some time refining all the crazy stuff in the painting – I add little touches like more glowing windows and extra smoke. Finally, like I always do, I flatten the image and play around with the levels to accentuate the focal point – and then I'm done. ■





1

Dan Conway

LOCATION: UK
EMAIL: arcipello@hotmail.com
SOFTWARE: Painter, Photoshop



"I've taught myself everything I know about colour, form and light," says freelance illustrator Dan Conway. "People are often surprised by the fact that I don't use any layers or texture brushes, but that's just the way I've always done it." As for the subject matter: "I'm always wanting to capture a moment in time that conveys emotion." He likes to let viewers dream up their own backstory.

1 FORGET-ME-NOT What about inspiration? "Day-dreaming is often the best method for me," says Dan. "I tend to get little snapshots of a scene and if I like what I'm imagining I'll sketch it down." This was such a work.

2 FRAGILE SHELL Inspired by the animated series of *Ghost in the Shell*, *Fragile Shell* shows off Dan's brilliant eye for detail.

3 HER SILENT SILHOUETTE Dan works with a combination of Photoshop 7 and Painter 9. "I use Painter to sketch out ideas and work out composition," he says. "Once I'm happy with this, I transfer the image to Photoshop and work out the colours."



2

3



1



Mike Hill

LOCATION: UK
WEB: www.freefallgraphics.com
EMAIL: Mike@freefallgraphics.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop



"As a kid I always loved sci-fi," says Mike, "but I was never overly interested in art, despite taking it through school." So what changed all that? "I got Halo on the Xbox during sixth form! I was instantly in love with its virtual worlds and the abundance of great designs that defined it." It was the start of something. "All I wanted to do was make something equally cool!" Next stop, Xbox central: "I discovered the craft of digital painting through the Halo promotional paintings made by Craig Mullins, and I've been hooked ever since." Mike started Freefall Graphics with close friend Tom Probert while still in college. "It has yet to get me any work as a sci-fi illustrator, but it's a great platform for creative output." Mike is now focusing his attention on 3D. Look out, Mr Mullins!

1 THE HEAVY UNIT "I wanted to capture a moment with this painting," says Mike. "I spent a lot of time exploring designs and compositions in order to guide the eye across the most important elements."

2 NIGHTSTALKER "I put a lot of thought into getting a colour scheme that really gave the impression of moonlight flooding the scene," says Mike. The disorienting composition is intended to add to the tension.

3 AN IMPROMPTU ESCAPE This piece was made as fan art after Mike first got hold of Halo 2. "It was inspired by action from the game but with a cinematic twist."

2



3



Stephen Boulter

LOCATION: England
WEB: www.epilogue.net/cgi/database/art/list.pl?gallery=14212&genre=1
EMAIL: Burning.arrrt@virgin.net
SOFTWARE: Photoshop



"I've worked as an artist for 15 years," relates Stephen. Brought up on Star Wars, he fed his imagination with Arthur C Clarke and 2000AD, but says that initially "the results were doodlings and art from a young age but I never really took it seriously." He adds: "My sci-fi and fantasy switch was flicked back on six years ago and I started to develop a style that I was pleased with." Formerly a traditional-media-only type of guy, Stephen tried mixing the two but eventually digital won the day. "I occasionally sneak acrylics in my pics, though. Old habits die hard."

1 RED Stephen really enjoyed producing this. "It has everything I like: a big robot, big armour, big guns, alien world." It was an acrylic under-painting, scanned in at 600dpi then digitally rendered.

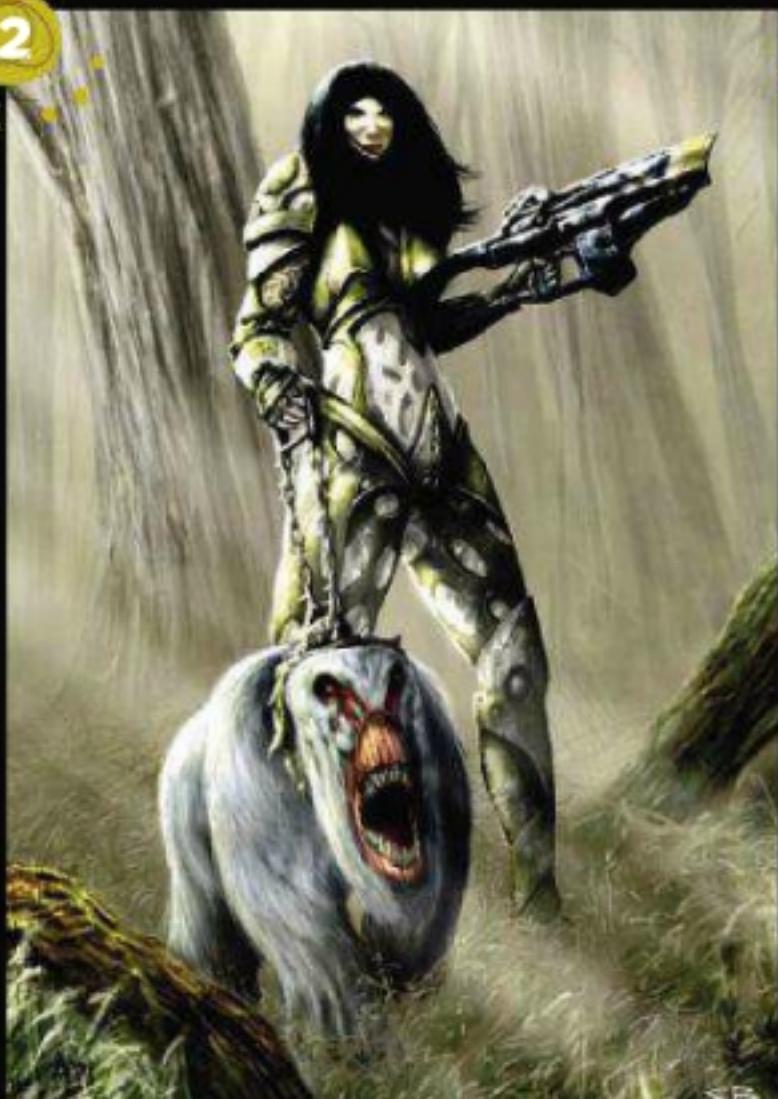
2 GREYLIGHT This is a character I'm still fine-tuning," says Stephen. "This render is the one I'm most pleased with at the moment." It's inspired by the film Nikita. "Her actions speak louder than words. This bounty hunter is in high demand."

3 BLUE 9 Stephen is working on a personal project: "I basically wanted a cool-looking alien whose name is so unpronounceable that others refer to it by the issue number of its armour."

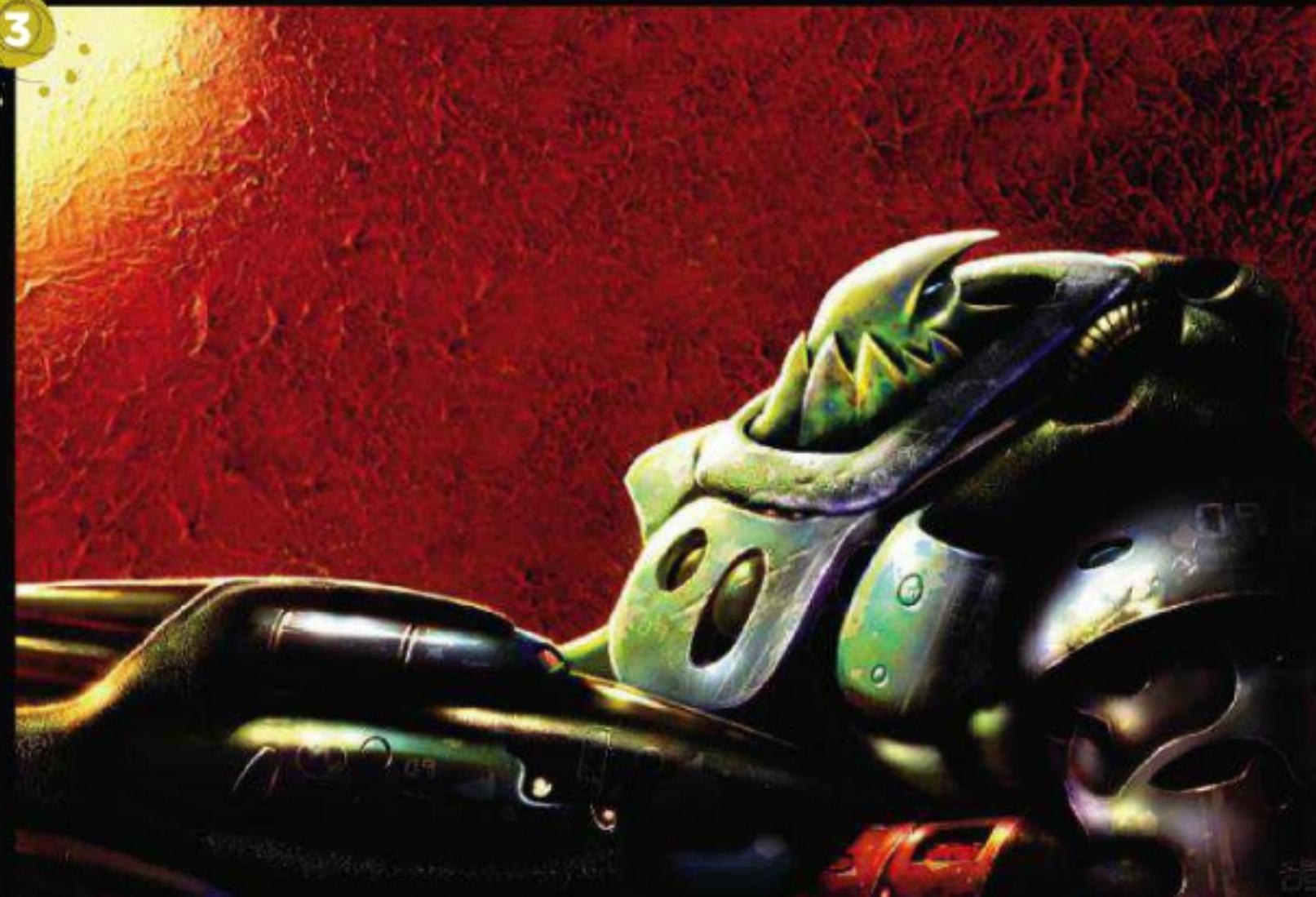
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1



2



Joe Vinton

LOCATION: UK

WEB: www.renderosity.com/gallery.ez

?ByArtist=Yes&Artist=orbital

EMAIL: joe.vinton@btopenworld.com

SOFTWARE: Bryce 5, Photoshop 7

Joe (aka Orbital), 31, got into using Bryce about five years ago. "From the start it became a pretty obsessive hobby." A window cleaner by day, he says: "It isn't the most exciting job in the world, so it's nice to be able to focus on doing something creative in my spare time." Joe modestly still considers himself a hobbyist, despite the quality of his work and having worked for AutoFX and DAZ. Mostly, he creates fantasy worlds. "I find this enjoyable as I can push my imagination as far as possible. I like to create scenes with atmosphere and perhaps a little bit of magic."

1 PLACES YOU'VE NEVER BEEN

This is part of a series. "It's about a traveller who visits many strange and wonderful places."

2 A BREAK IN THE CLOUDS "I've always been fascinated by the sky," says Joe, "so I wanted to create an image where the sky captures the imagination."

3 AUTOMATED Modelled and rendered in Bryce 5, with slight colour adjustments in Photoshop, this image shows "a vision of an alien race dominated by technology."



3

 **Matthew Bradbury**

LOCATION: UK
EMAIL: mattbradbury2000@yahoo.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop CS2 and a graphics tablet

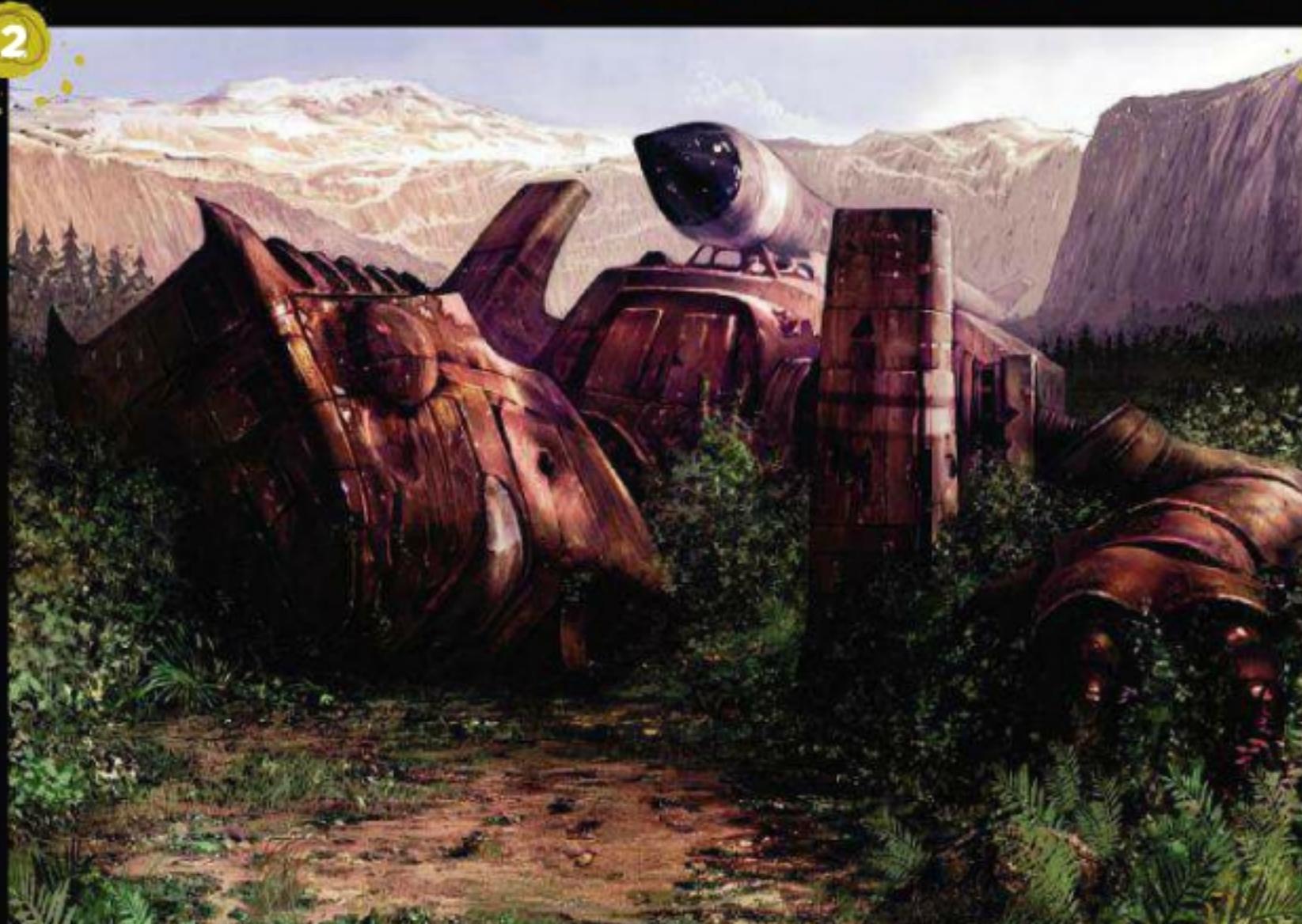


Matt turned his painting hobby into a professional occupation as a freelance fantasy illustrator just a couple of years ago. So far, his clients have mostly come from the US: "Predominantly it's been card art or RPG stuff and most of that hasn't been marketed yet," he says. "It's been a fairly steep learning curve for me and in a lot of ways I'm still learning." His work speaks of a budding talent looking for an outlet. "Only time will tell if I can survive in what is a very competitive field!" You have to keep the faith, and so he does: "I have high hopes for the future."

1 FALLEN ANGEL A depiction of Lucifer, "but not in his usual form," explains Matt. This image was created in black-and-white before being coloured using layers.

2 RELIC "An ancient relic from a long-forgotten war," says Matt. The greenery required some serious custom brush work.

3 CYBORG 275 "This was a lot of fun!" Matt imagined a world where convicts were thought of as property, cybernetically enhanced and used as workers in dangerous mining facilities. "275 is trying to escape but I don't think he's going to get very far!"



1

 **Roberto Lauro Goring**

LOCATION: UK

WEB: www.briteshine.co.uk

EMAIL: briteshine@googlemail.com

SOFTWARE: Painter IX, Photoshop

 Roberto is currently studying a BA in graphic arts at Liverpool John Moores University, as well as working as a freelance 2D and 3D digital illustrator. His choice of subject is meant to have an effect: "I love to pick up on odd concepts to get the viewer thinking about what's going on within my imagery." Although his images have their roots in reality, he adds: "I just love to exaggerate and stretch realism with psychedelic, vibrant colours and unusual, twisted characters." Roberto lists Phil Hale, Ashley Wood and Gez Fry among his influences. His list continues: "Bengal, Hyung Tae Kym, Yoji Skinkawa, Jon Foster and Adam Rex, to name a few!"

1 **HELLO MISS KATTY** "The time-honoured cat and mouse story."

2 **MY LAST HOPE** "A ghost of the woods, depicting the daunting aspects of life." A pencil sketch, painted with Photoshop CS.

3 **THE MORNING MARCH** "A fire hero and his cat." An ink sketch, painted with Painter IX and Photoshop CS.



Chris Foss

An artist who changed the future, drawing what didn't exist when film companies were feeling their way into sci-fi.

It's hard to overstate the influence Chris Foss has had on our collective vision of the future. If you have any classic SF books, chances are you have classic Foss. If you're not big on print, you'll know his film work. Familiar with *Alien* or *Superman*?

Until he arrived on the scene, the future was a needle-sharp, sleek-looking place that got less and less human. Chris introduced us to a human future, where space ships were "rumbling bumbling bangy things with bits of metal hanging off." People responded with wide-eyed recognition.

FALSE START

"All I ever wanted to do was be an artist," Chris recalls. Like parents the world over, the Fosses were sceptical about the value of an art school education. "They fought me tooth and nail," recalls Chris. "Their argument was that once you have a degree, you can go and do your art stuff." He adds: "My parents were struggling school teachers. Then mum bought a Picasso by accident in a drapers shop. She was terrific at rooting and ferreting."

The pressure was too much for young Chris, and just as the '60s

started swinging he ended up in Cambridge studying architecture. This was a mistake, though: "I went to two lectures in two years and by the end of the second was drawing cartoon strips for *Penthouse*."

ROOM WITH A VIEW

You see, Chris has more than one feather to his cap. "My first break was with erotic artwork," he says. "Because that's what they wanted at Bob Guccione's new magazine, *Penthouse*." And strangely, once you know of this 'other side' you can see that it somehow suffuses the SF images too.

It also explains something of the magic behind the peculiar Foss vision of the future: "For me a giant spaceship would have topless female stokers shovelling in nuclear nuts," laughs Chris. "Whereas for other people it was the Z-drive."

An intimate familiarity with the human form, not just as an object but as a sexual form, produces an organic way of seeing the world. Chris makes no attempt to imagine himself as a robot or an AI. "I'm perfectly aware that technology advances in leaps and bounds," he points out. "I'm just amiably waiting on the sidelines for the most usable bits of technology."

OLD JUMBO JETS

Chris has produced covers for just about every classic SF author – Philip K Dick, Heinlein, and he was the Asimov man for a long time. In the 1970s, Chris was the source of SF imagery: "JG Ballard too. I did a lot of his covers."

An editor at *Penthouse* guided Chris to recruit an agent, as he was being limited by the work he was getting on the magazine. "The first big job I got was for the *Sunday Times*, illustrating an article by Stan Kubrick on ESP."

The thing was, Chris didn't need a photo reference. "The guy I went to see at Pan Books was overjoyed. He said: 'Thank God, I can finally have spaceships!'" This ushered in a golden era: "The publishers were all located in and around Soho, so we used to drink in this lovely little pub on Poland Street with the various art directors."

FROM DUNE TO ALIEN

Drawing for *Penthouse* while still at university, cover artist to the SF aristocracy – what next? "They were casting about for an artist to illustrate this book by Alex Comfort." So Chris drew the illustrations for *The Joy of Sex*. Exciting as that was, it was not the zenith. "That began when I started on *Dune* with Alejandro Jodorowsky." This maverick genius had bought the rights to Frank Herbert's masterpiece and convinced a French industrialist to make it.

"Somewhere out there is this huge book with the entire storyboard in it," muses the artist. When *Dune* was canned by shortsighted Hollywood execs, Chris didn't miss a beat; he'd already been commissioned to do the artwork for another classic: *Superman*.

While Chris was still on a high with the caped crusader, Jodorowsky pulled a rabbit out of his hat: "The work we did for *Dune* ended up as the basis for *Alien*." Mr Foss, take a bow, your place in history is assured.

A prolific artist, Chris continues to expand his universe in many directions while attempting to marry the two threads of his work – erotic and futuristic. "People like me are the filters," he ponders. "We take in everything around us and out the other end come these images."

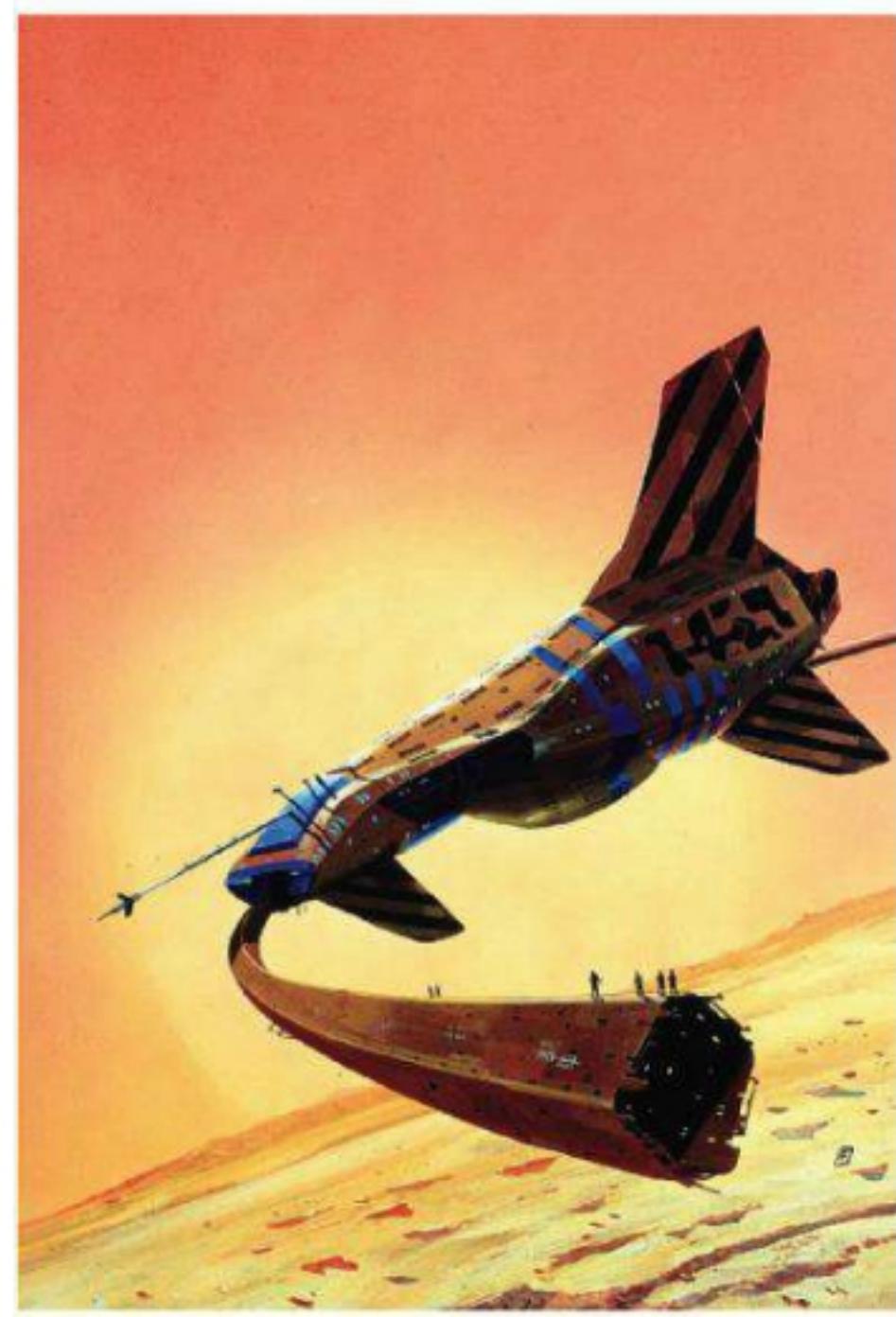


ROBOTS OF DAWN

Highlighting Chris' deft ability with character, this little chap looks as if he could turn nasty if he doesn't get his own way.

RAILRUNNER

From the elusive Chris Foss Portfolio, perhaps an example of the technology Chris is "waiting amiably for the world to develop."



Artist PROFILE

Chris Foss



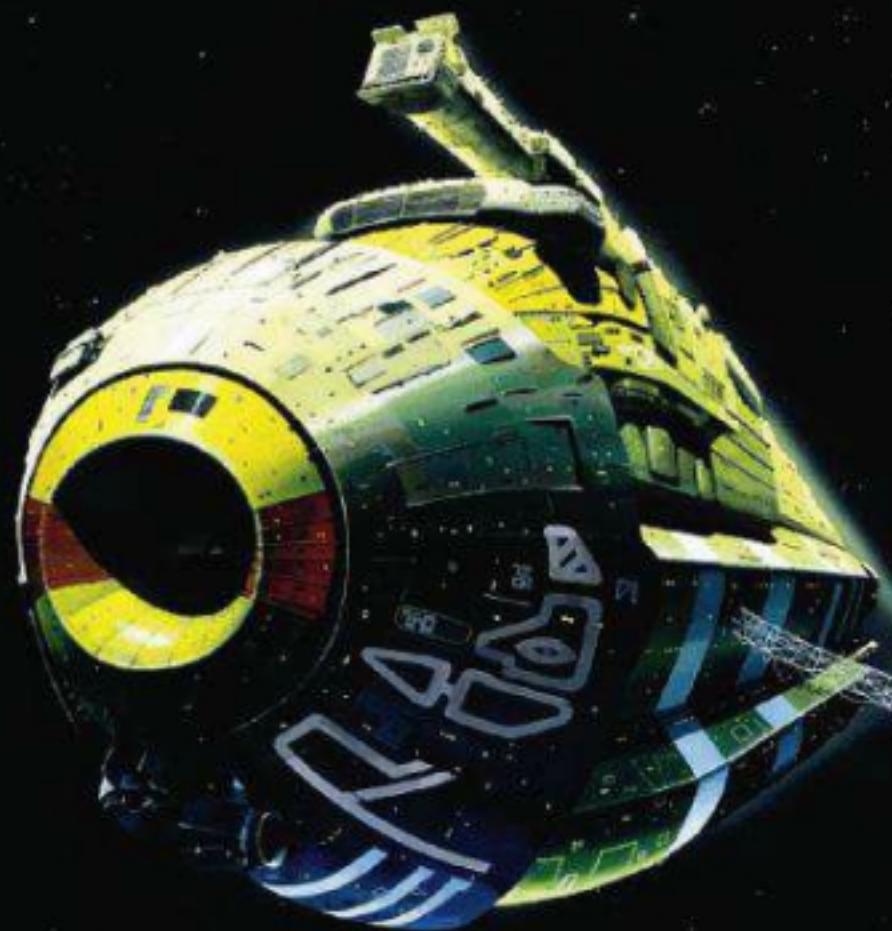
Born in 1946, Chris set the world of science fiction alight with his covers for greats such as Harry Harrison, Philip K Dick and Isaac Asimov.

Following success in print he moved to the silver screen with concept work for classics such as *Superman* and *Alien*. He works at his Guernsey studio.

WEB: www.chrisfoss.net

CAPTAIN NEMO'S CASTLE

From Diary of a Space Person, this one shows how well Chris has developed his use of strong lighting to add drama.



“The first big job I got was for the Sunday Times, illustrating an article by Stan Kubrick on ESP”

BLUE SPACE WRECK

Again from Chris' book, Diary of a Space Person, this is a fine example of the artist's ability to conjure a great sense of scale.



 **Annah Hutchings**

LOCATION: Kent, UK
WEB: www.un-seelie.co.uk
EMAIL: amaris_firebr@hotmail.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Currently in her second year at Bournemouth University, studying Computer Visualisation and Animation, Annah has long been a fan of fantasy and SF. "I always try to incorporate it into my art in one way or another," she says.

Browsing the internet got Annah interested in digital art: "I was looking through fantasy art galleries online and gradually began to trade-in my oil paints and acrylics." Annah's now been working with Photoshop for nearly four years, the first two with just a mouse before she got a Wacom tablet. That demonstrates real commitment!

1 MY RED SHADOWS UPON THE CLOUDS "I ache. The void is like death, the sky is red. And to think I loved you." Annah chose a bittersweet theme for this one.

2 THE MOON AND HER This image came about when listening to lyrics from a song by one of Annah's favourite bands, Switchfoot. "I just doodled whatever came into my head," she explains.







1 **Paul Ferry**

LOCATION: UK
EMAIL: paulferry79@hotmail.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop



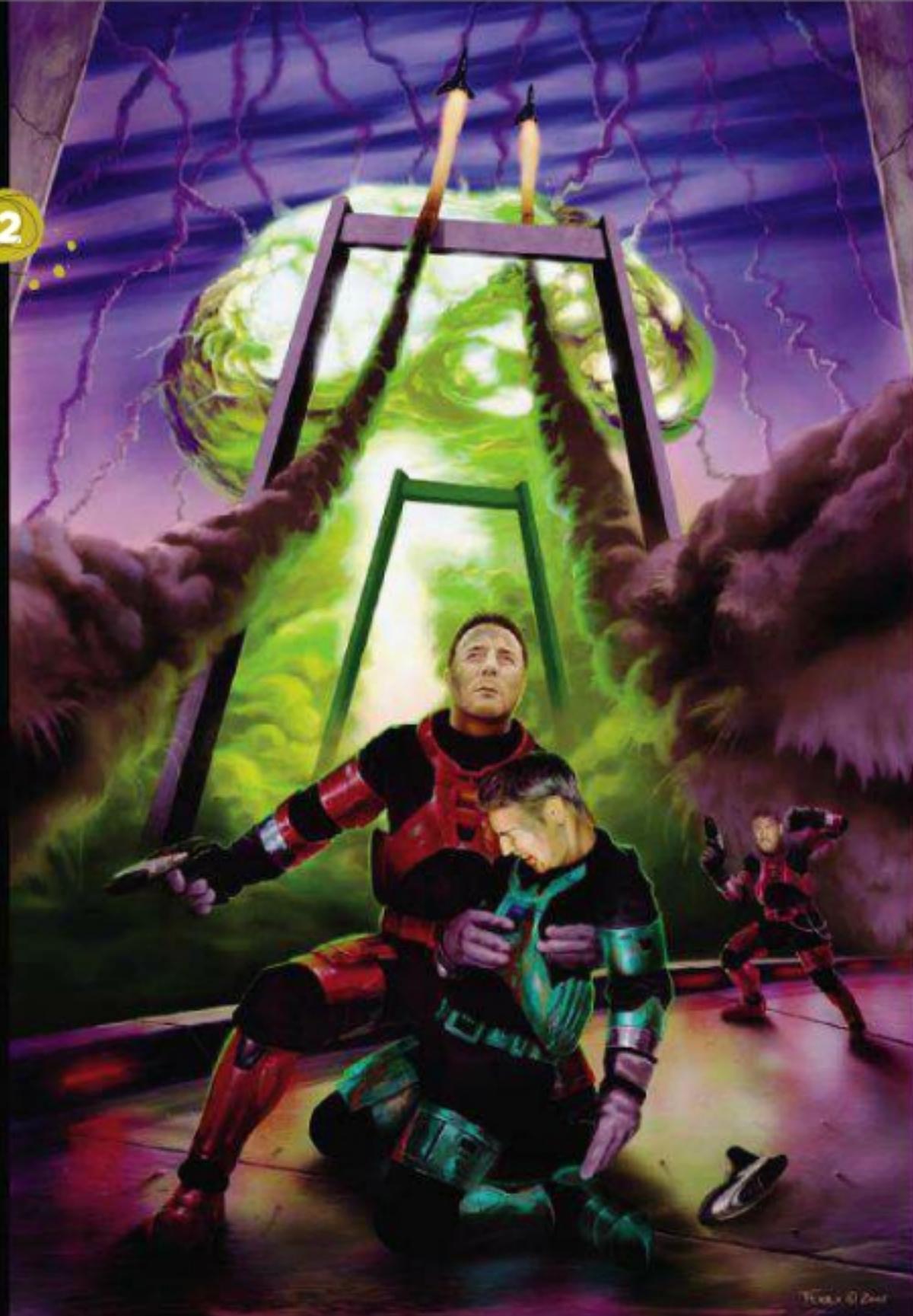
"All of the digital work I produce is done entirely in Photoshop CS with a keyboard and mouse," Paul affirms with pride. "I scan in a pencil drawing for any figures within the composition and these act as an under-drawing. I then build up the picture in layers and everything's painted using a round or oval airbrush tool."

Paul has never used Corel Painter and he's never touched a graphics tablet: "I can't say I'd be inclined to try either in the near future!" he boasts.

1 **WORLDS APART** This took a while to do as the image measures 20x24 inches at 300dpi. "It's not just a fantasy piece," Paul assures, "there's a hint of technology with the lights visible on the night side of the two other worlds."

2 **FALLEN COMRADE** Paul had fun working on this image: "I couldn't resist putting myself in at the back of the picture," he guffaws.

3 **DIGITAL REVOLUTION** "Not sure where I got the idea for this from," says Paul. "I'd never done a circular composition before, so figured I'd have a stab at it."



2



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1

 **Steven Eserin**

LOCATION: UK
WEB: www.thefiguretrader.co.uk/cgi-bin/gallery/imageFolio.cgi
EMAIL: steveneserin@aol.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Steven has had an interesting time of it. "I trained in graphic design in the late '80s but left the profession soon after to be a psychotherapist. Only in the last two years have I started to draw again, and I have been using Photoshop for the last 13 months," he says.

Steven now works as a concept artist, creating characters for games as well as making 3D models. "Initially I couldn't see the attraction of working digitally, preferring to use inks and acrylics, but now I combine the two." The huge advantage for Steven is that "I can make loads of mistakes and play with the images without feeling I'm wasting time or materials."

1 CRAZY JOE This is a piece of cover art for TFT Industries (www.thefiguretrader.co.uk). "The guy is a special operative working for a galactic corporation," Steven explains. "The scenario is pretty funky and very dark."

2 ARABIAN FEMALE CONCEPT "This is a concept sketch for 'Sabotage into the Dark', the special ops based sci-fi table top game," says Steven. "It's designed to be given to sculptors to be turned into a figure for the game."

3 VIXEN Created as part of a concept for a fantasy game that TFT is working on. "It was supposed to be a rough sketch, but I got carried away," laughs Steven.





Eddie Sharam

LOCATION: UK
WEB: <http://mysite.wanadoo-members.co.uk/cardinal-artist>
EMAIL: edsharam@hotmail.com

SOFTWARE: Photoshop, traditional



"I've always liked drawing better than anything else," states Eddie. "It's a genuine reward in itself. You do it long enough, you get better and eventually get a job." He studied animation at university and moved into comic books and illustrations before landing a job on games at Microsoft. "I use a lot of different mediums, from Photoshop to more traditional pencil, pen, ink and gouache."

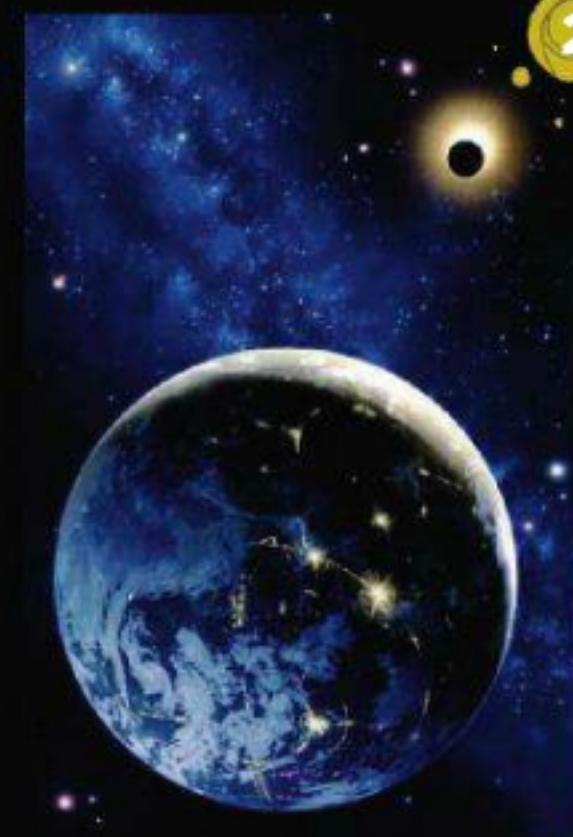
1 SAVAGE LAND Eddie likes to weave narrative into his work. The theme is 'rise of the barbarian'. "Orcs being extreme examples of the barbarian nature, the lone knight represents the last noble stand of a once dominant civilisation."

2 LEGION Eddie produced this image over a week of lunch breaks. "I found myself imagining this strange world dedicated to robot building."

3 DRAGON DUEL The idea here was myth versus steel: "No magic to save you here - this is about man's will and sinew against a big hungry beastie," he explains.



1



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 **Mark Garlick**

LOCATION: UK
WEB: www.markgarlick.com
EMAIL: mag@markgarlick.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop, 3ds max, Bryce and Terragen

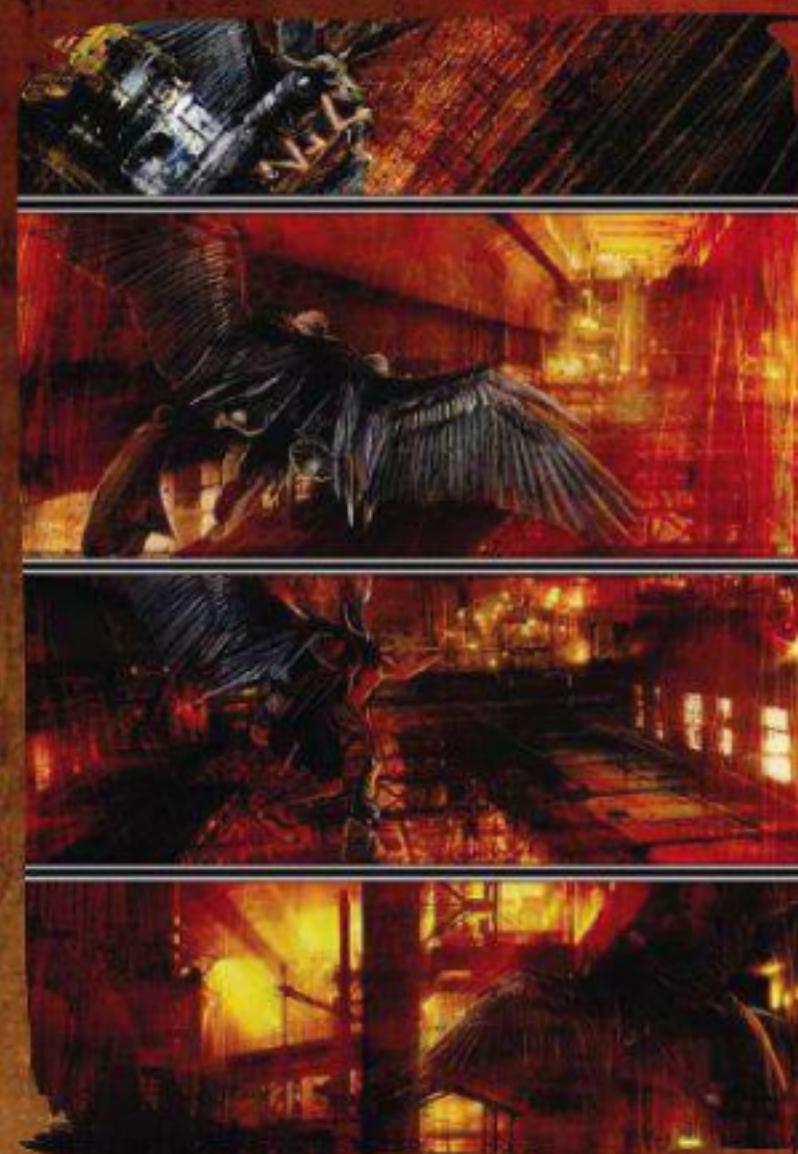
Mark has been an illustrator and writer for eight years. "I'm probably best known for my astronomical art, which stems from my background as a professional astronomer," he states. Mark also loves SF, and in his art he's partial to the odd piece of horror and even surrealism.

Mark started off painting the traditional way: "In my case I would use acrylics and sometimes oil pastels. Nowadays, though, I do virtually all of my work digitally." Mark's software of choice is primarily Photoshop, though he does use occasional 3D elements to aid his composition.

1 FUTUREWORLD For this city, Mark arranged simple blocks in 3ds max to get a general composition, "then I painted over it in Photoshop, using a graphics tablet," he says.

2 3001 EARTH ODYSSEY "This image shows the Earth in a future when our technology has reached such an advanced stage that it's clearly visible from space," explains Mark.

3 AQUARIUM CLOUDSCAPE "I've always thought that the creatures in our oceans are more alien than anything we can imagine," says Mark.



ANTHOLOGY

"I was as lucky to work with Liam Sharp on the comic strip *Necromachia*," says Lee. It was published by Mam Tor in the *Event Horizon* anthology.

Artist **PROFILE**

Lee Carter



AGE: 32

COUNTRY: UK

Liverpool-based Lee is a concept artist for Bizarre Creations who also illustrates for comic book companies.

SOFTWARE USED: Painter, Photoshop

WEB: www.myspace.com/carterworld



The art of LEE CARTER

Concept artist and comic book talent Lee Carter explains why happiness is a bad guy with a machine gun

Qee Carter didn't want a 'proper' job; he wanted to draw the things he drew as a seven-year-old boy and get paid for it. Unlike for many, this plan went pretty well for Lee. He's been a full-time artist since leaving school.

"I drew a lot as young boy, mainly due to being an only child," Lee says. "I started copying Brian Bolland and other great 2000AD artists. Unfortunately, my art teacher at school specialised in ceramics, so it wasn't until the age of 16 that I started to paint more." This led to a breakthrough move to Cleveland College of Art and Design in Hartlepool, where Lee spent two years. After completing an HND in Illustration at Wrexham, Lee moved to Bristol to complete a BA in Illustration.

After graduation, his first professional work was some cards for Wizards of the Coast, commissioned after he "met a few editors from Wizards at a comic convention in London and they seemed to like my work. I had to use FedEx to send the original paintings off to America, which seems crazy now." Nonetheless, this was a cool first job: "Gangs of vampires fighting in the streets – what more could I ask for?"

Around this time, Lee also produced illustrations for a children's magazine called The Spine-Chiller Collection. It wasn't until later that he began to work digitally. "A friend of mine drew a few Judge Dredd strips and then went on to work for a games

developer. He told me about his new job and the new industry that was springing up. I started to buy Edge magazine and began checking out the job ads at the back.

"I contacted developers directly, and the response was incredibly positive." In 1998, Bizarre Creations offered him a job on the strength of his 2D art. Lee soon joined the team responsible for titles including Project Gotham and now The Club. "The work I do now is a pleasure," he says. "I draw bad guys with machine guns all day long."

GRIM AND GRITTY

"It's strange," Lee muses: "when I studied children's illustration, my work was very different. Lots of colour and very little grit." It wasn't until he went to Bristol and his tutors insisted his work was too slick that Lee began to develop his trademark feel for the underbelly of existence.

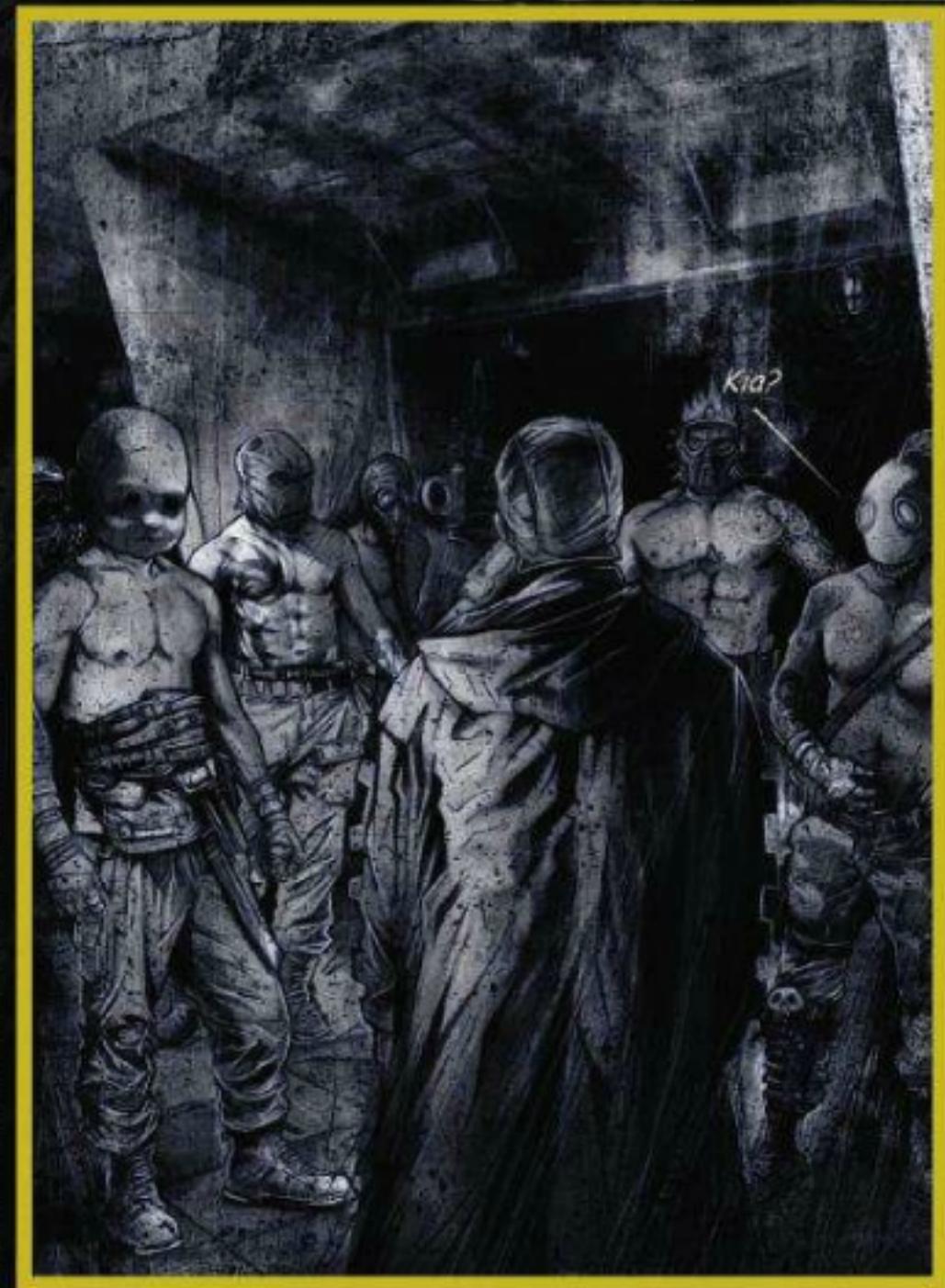
"Maybe it was living in a city," he says, "but I found myself drawn to grim urban landscapes." These became a theme: "I found beauty in decay."

Today he's sure of his goals: "I want my work to have a depth of atmosphere and detail that helps convey a place and time. And if it's a character I'm illustrating, I want people to picture his backstory."

So what's next? "I'm hoping to have time to approach 2000AD," Lee says. "I would love to work on a Judge Dredd strip." This would bring him artistically full circle. ➤

SHOT DOWN

Unused concepts are often left under the producer's desk. "That can be disheartening," says Lee, "but at the end of the day the client knows best."



DOLL'S HEAD

Lee found Liam Sharp's Necromachia character descriptions were extremely visual.

The art of LEE CARTER

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Location ideas and creating mood boards for 3D artists to interpret are day-to-day tasks for a working concept artist.

Lee Carter's VITAL STATISTICS

Dreaming of immortality

Place of birth

I was born in Hartlepool, in the North East of England. About 2 miles from a nuclear power station.



Would you take the blue pill or the red one?
Both, but red has got to be a warning, so I'd take that last.

Average time spent on an image
Around 10 hours.

Single most important piece of professional advice
Be polite and pro-active.

Left or right-handed
Right, unfortunately.

If you were an animal, what would you be?

I would be a stray dog. Being a kept dog wouldn't be as good. Strays have all the fun.

Is the truth out there?

It may well be, but do you really want to know?

Super power you'd most like to have?

Time travel, and immortality.

BLACK AND WHITE

"I like doing greyscale images," says Lee. "You can relax and not worry about colour. Instead I can concentrate on texture and detail."

STORYTELLING

"You should see the next pages... She takes off all of her clothes."



SKETCH IT OUT

A sketchbook provides a chance to explore ideas before your final piece.





LEE CARTER'S Artist tip

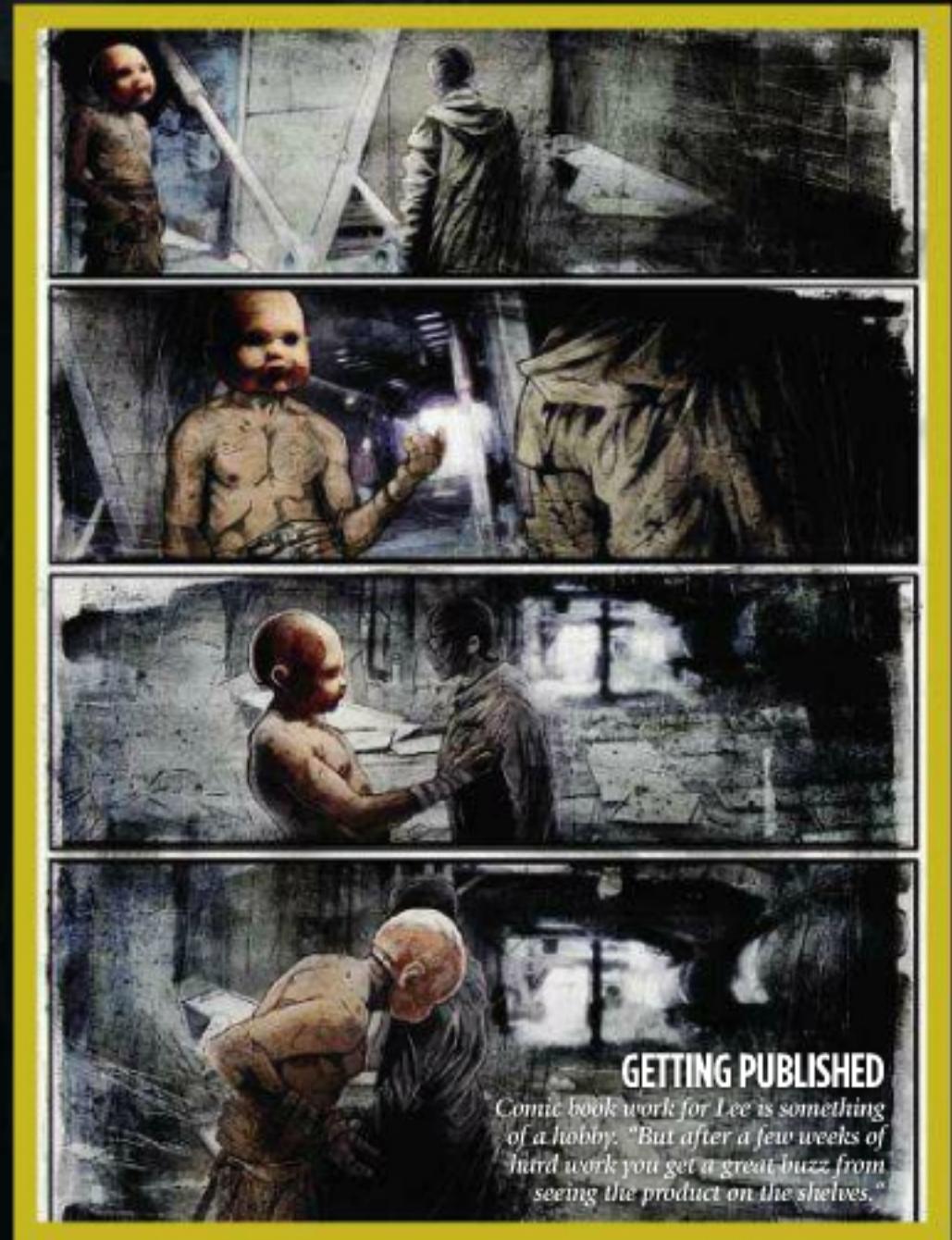
TEXTURED STROKES

"Stroking a path with the default brush is very clean. Pick a textured brush while your path is selected. This adds a more interesting quality of line when you stroke the path."



DARKNESS RISING

Lee used his daughter to represent hope in this Games Workshop piece.



ST SABBAT

Varying his approach with this piece, Lee took a very rough pencil drawing and used a lightbox to refine the characters in it.

GETTING PUBLISHED

Comic book work for Lee is something of a hobby. "But after a few weeks of hard work you get a great buzz from seeing the product on the shelves."



Photoshop CREATING A DARK URBAN NIGHTMARE

Artist PROFILE

Lee Carter

COUNTRY: UK

CLIENTS: Bizarre Creations, Boom Studios, Games Workshop, Fantasy Flight games, Mam Tor Publishing



Try it yourself
Download a Zip archive of support files including PSD working files from <http://preview.tinyURL.com/vw7vt6>. You'll find a trial version of Photoshop CS3 at www.adobe.com/go/trvphotoshop

Give your work an ominous sense of atmosphere by adding layers of textured paint marks. **Lee Carter** shows you how

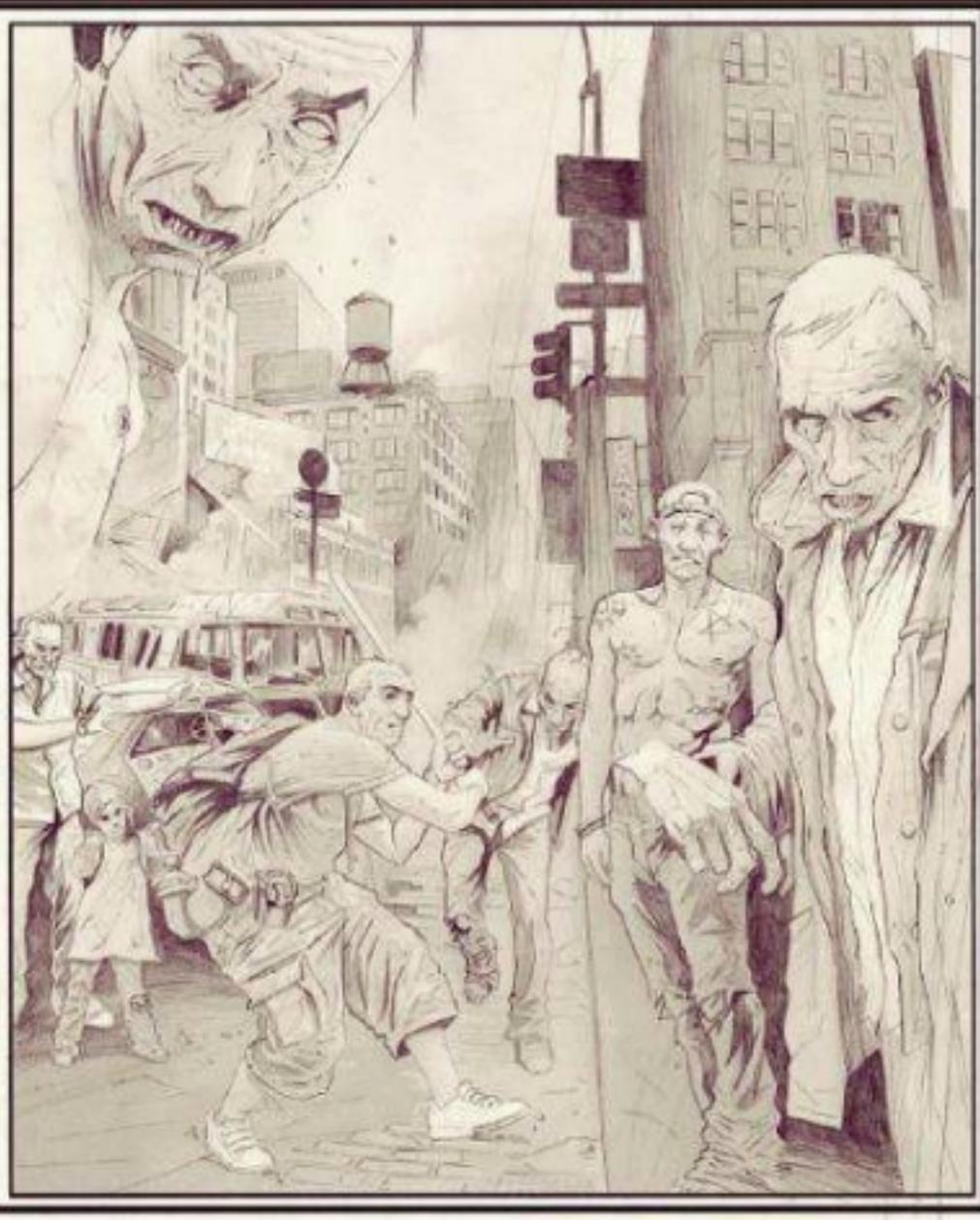
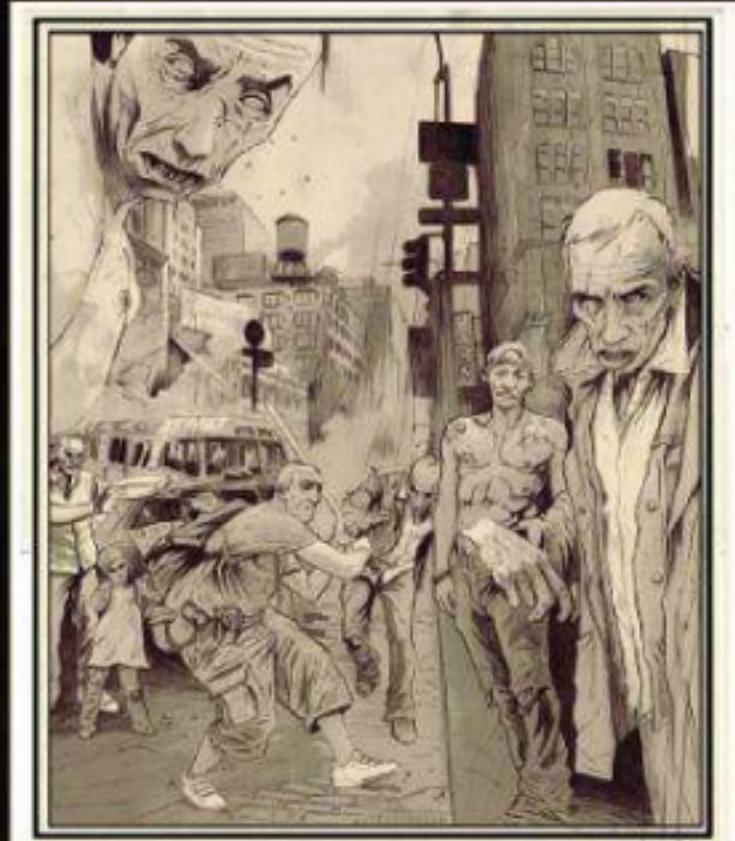
Survival horror and urban exploration are two subjects close to my heart. I love looking at the many urban exploration websites and checking out abandoned asylums, old factories and decaying mansions. I think part of my interest stems from the history, the fact that these buildings were once busy little hubs of activity and now time has left them behind.

Wandering around these places gives me the feeling that civilisation has ended and the dirt is building up. I spent some time having a look around a huge old Victorian swimming baths; it was a fantastic place with cracked tiles, broken ceilings and deep dark cellars. You could still hear the echoes of the past. Of

course, I don't want to advocate trespassing in your local abandoned warehouse, but if you do decide to go exploring, make sure you take your camera to capture the atmosphere.

Watching films such as The Omega Man, Dawn of the Dead and 28 Days Later has given me a taste for survival horror. Again, it's the idea that civilisation has gone and all we can do is watch things decay.

With this workshop I want to show how I try to capture some of the sense of foreboding and dread that a zombie apocalypse would bring. Starting off with pencil and finishing off in Photoshop, I will go through the process of adding textures and working gritty marks into an image.



1 Starting off with pencils

I normally spend a night doodling in front of the TV to get myself warmed up; you could even try drawing simple shapes and sketch out your ideas, hoping something comes to mind. If you use a lightbox, it makes it easy to refine your drawing and clean it up. Using a cool grey marker I can add another layer of shading to the pencil drawing.

When you finish your pencil drawings it's a good idea to scan them in before you start adding tonal values. This is a good backup, plus it gives you the chance to overlay the pencils later. A cool grey marker is ideal for quickly putting in a flat shade, and by using a white gel pen you can pick out highlights and push the grey image further.

2 Scanning in your image

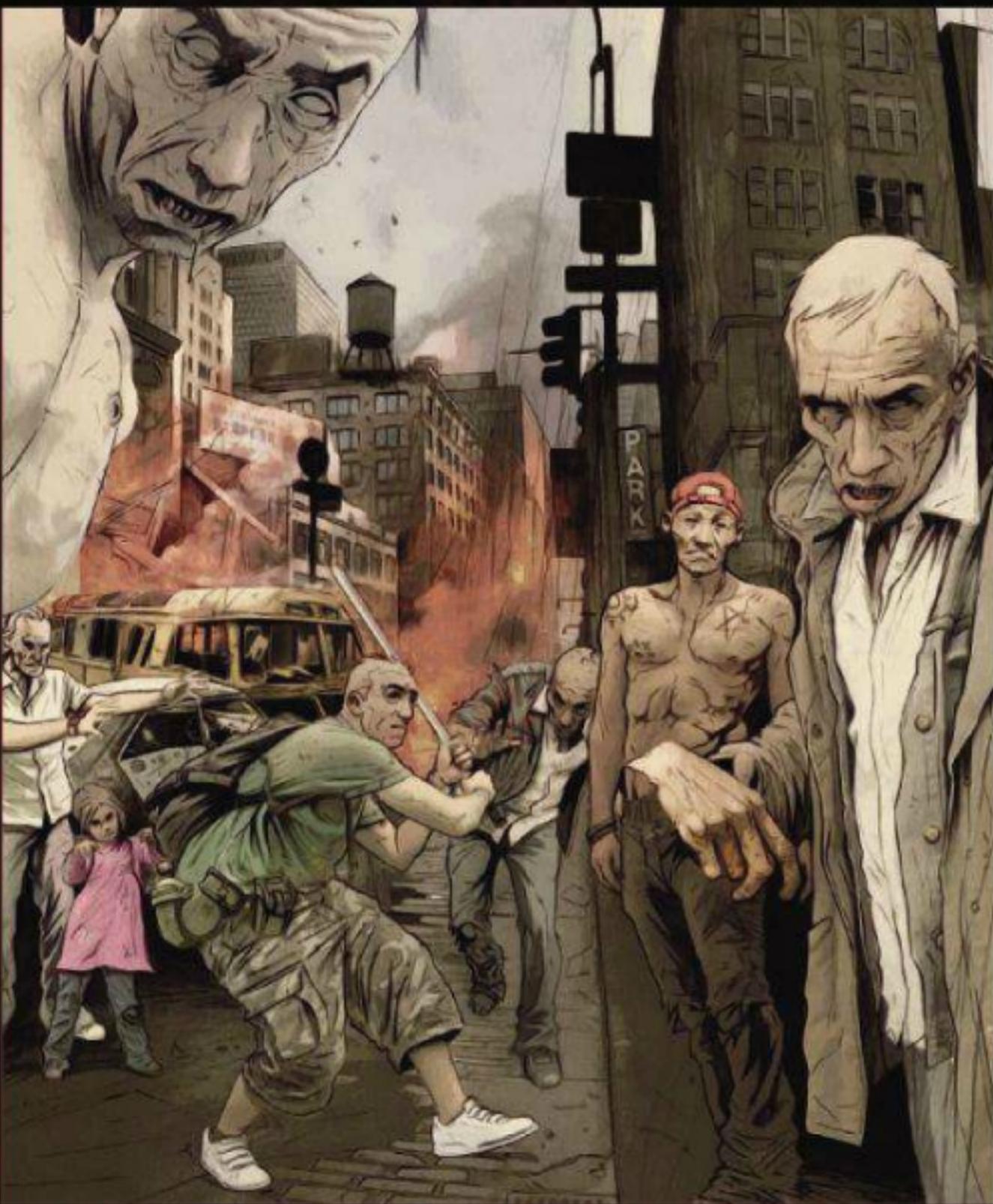
Once you're happy – and I mean only when you're 100 per cent happy –

with your drawing should you scan it in. The resolution should be set to at least 300dpi and the print size should be set to your chosen dimensions.

I desaturate the image and make a copy. I then tighten up the pencils by playing with the Brightness and Contrast levels. I duplicate my images in another layer – in fact I duplicate the image a few times. Keeping the base image set to 100 per cent Opacity, the duplicates of your base image will be used to add even more tone to your pencils.

The Cutout filter is a fantastic way of solidifying your drawing. Run the Cutout filter on the layers above your base image. I normally keep the number of levels at eight, and with each duplicate layer I change the Edge Simplicity and Edge Fidelity in the Cutout dialog box. Set your layers to Multiply and reduce the Opacity of each layer. This adds another layer of tone and creates a greater sense of depth. ►

Workshop



Shortcuts
Feather selection
Ctrl+Alt+D (PC)
Cmnd+Option+D (Mac)
Use this handy little
shortcut to soften the
edge of your
selection.

only what I call an underpainting. I've still got the original pencil sketches, so I know what detail I have lost in the process of adding textures. Using paints, toothbrushes, sandpaper and the grain of the watercolour paper helps add a more traditional feel to work. It's more of a shortcut, but it does work well.

6 More colour

Adding more colour is the next thing. I select areas that I want to change and play around with the Hue and Saturation. I want the zombies to be more deathlike – not that you can get much deader... So, using the flesh colour as a base, I start adding hues of blue and green to give them a more unnatural, undead feel. The image is still quite dark and muddy, but I find working out from dark areas is easier.

3 The colour of death

Create a blank layer and set it to Multiply. This is where I start adding colour. Keep it simple and quickly lay down the areas of colour. The Colour Multiply layer is kept at a low Opacity and again I merge the layers and play around with the Cutout filter. This is generally a

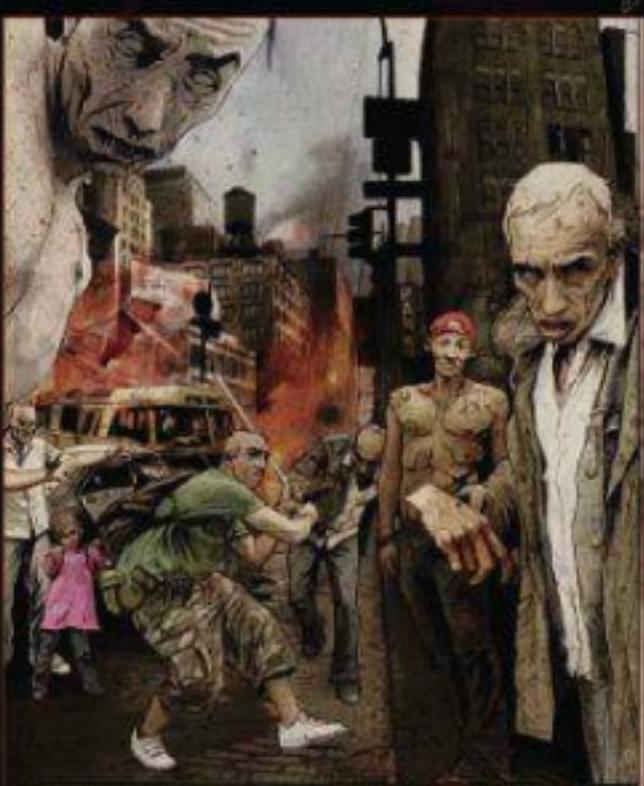
way to get around the daunting task of a white page. Adding colour to a greyscale image is a lot easier than staring afresh.

4 Adding texture and grit

At this point the image is looking pretty flat in terms of texture, because I have only added a flat colour to it. Using traditional paint and inks, I set off and make lots of marks and textures on thick watercolour paper. Keeping a stock folder of these paint textures is a good idea. You can go as far as printing out your image and quickly putting paint marks over the top of the printout. This helps you keep the flow of the drawing, and the brush marks are consistent with the image. Overlay your textures on to your drawing and play around with the layer blending modes. I find Soft Light with Multiply layers works the best.

5 Too muddy

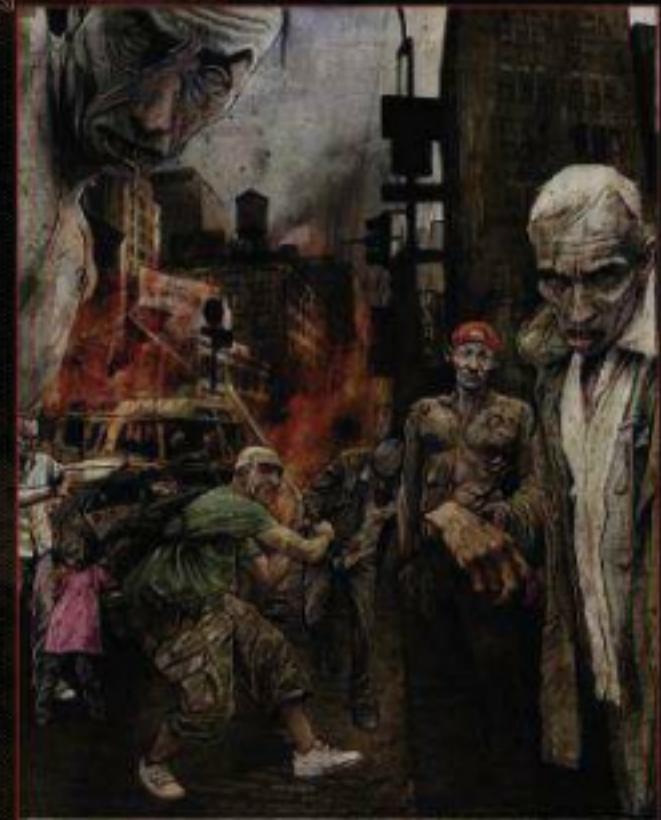
Your image will now be getting muddy and dark with all the extra layers of texture on top. Don't worry, as this is

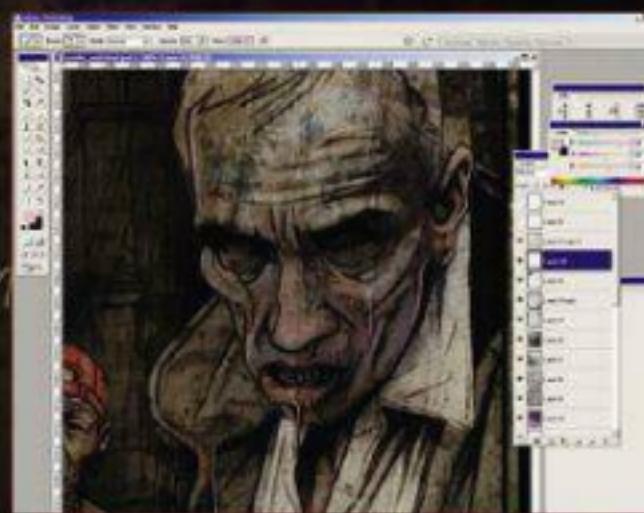


PRO SECRETS

Apply commands on more than one layer

You can select multiple layers two ways in Photoshop. In the Layers palette, click the first layer you want to select, hold down the Shift key and click the last layer you want to select. This automatically selects the layers in-between. You can also hold down the Ctrl/Cmnd key and click layers that are not next to each other.





7 Brighten up your image

Using a low Opacity brush on a separate layer, I start adding details, as well as bringing out the colour and getting away from the dark image. I have several custom brushes but I still find using a hard edged brush at a low Opacity works well for me. I have my brush set to about 8 per cent and slowly build up the highlights and details. I use a textured brush for my Eraser and slightly run it over the brush marks I have just made. This again breaks up the clean edge and helps keep the rough, gritty look.

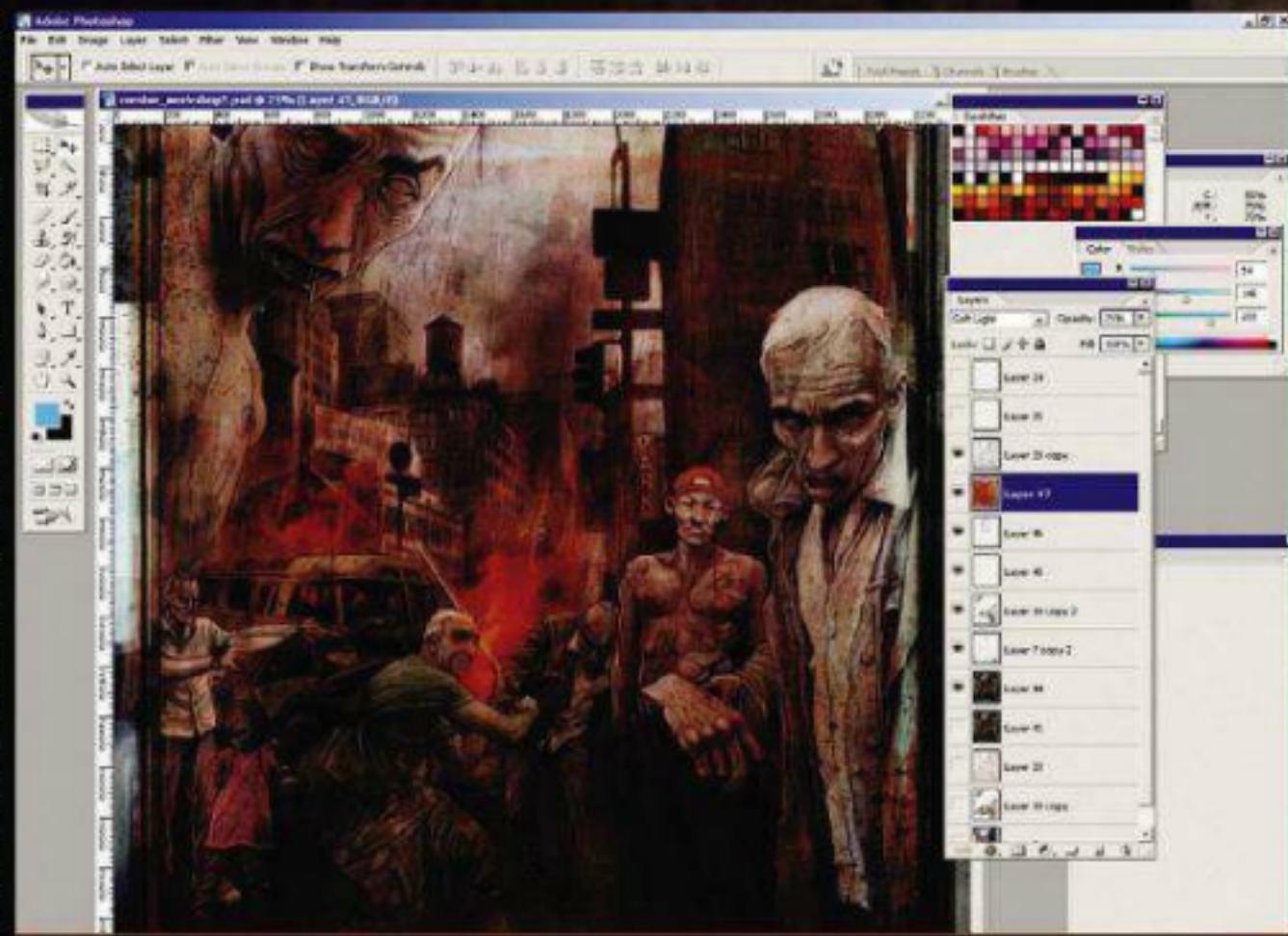
8 Adding the detail

I'm only really painting in the mid-tone and highlights, so the first few stages should have darkened down your image. Now it's time to bring it back from the darkness. I continue building up colour and detail. I want to keep my original pencil lines, so I make a copy of the base drawing and overlay on top of the new colour image. The linework layer should be set to Multiply and should be above your working layer. In the working layer I continue to add colour and detail. It's almost like comic book colouring at this point, but with more texture.

PRO SECRETS

Prepare to print

Printing out an image to work on with traditional materials can be a pain when you need to rescan it and overlay it on top of your digital picture. Before printing, make your canvas area larger and make two rectangle selections around your image. Stroke the selections, giving you two black borders. I then print it out at 300dpi and work on the image with rough brush marks and generally spill some ink over it. Once I have scanned it in and overlaid it back on to the original digital image, I set the new layer Opacity to 50 per cent. Using the Transform tool I skew the image until it fits exactly over the original. Concentrate on lining the black borders up, as they're the guides to making sure the image fits back on.



9 Overall look

The painting is really starting to come on now. But I still need to get away from the muddy monotone look. Printing out your image will give you a fresh outlook towards it, and enables you to find where the detail has become muddied and lost.

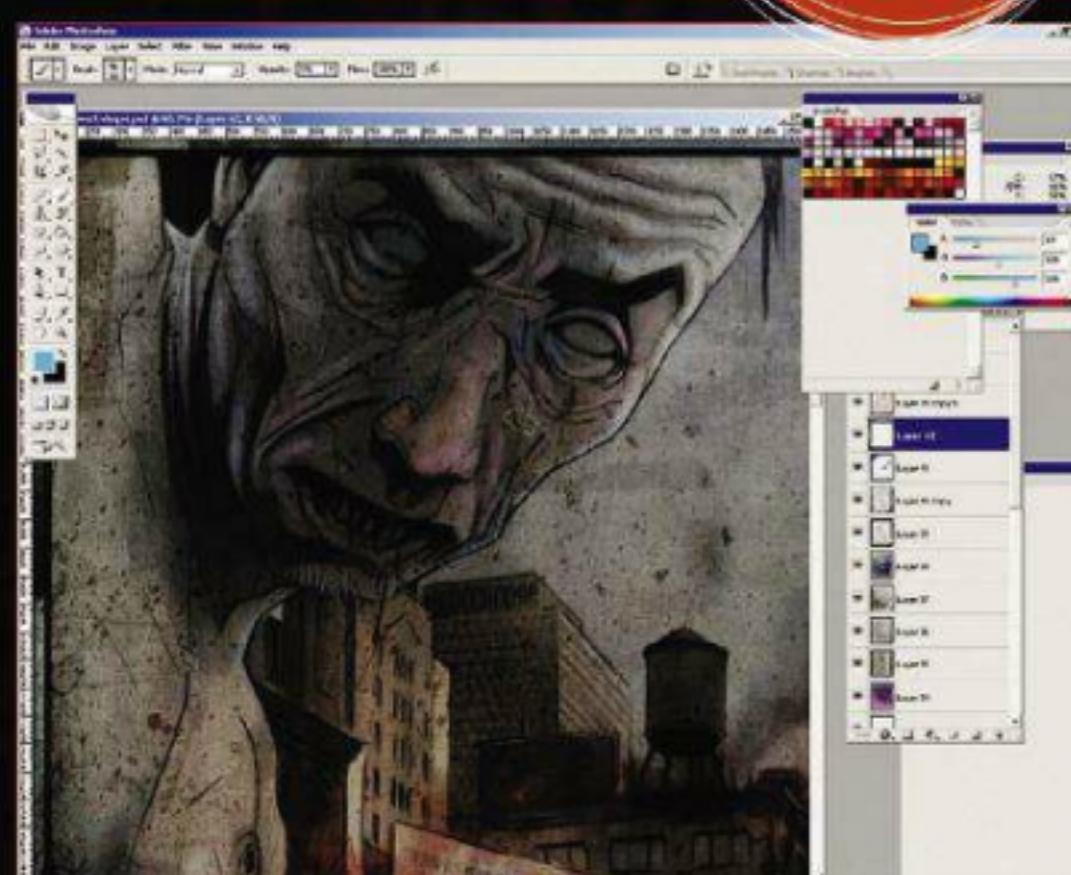
10 Creating balance

I want to try to add more warmth to the image, so I decide to try out more colour texture overlays. Watercolour paper is great if it's thick and has a good grain; acrylic paper has a fantastic texture too. I use both when I'm creating paint layers. Using this type of paper gives a

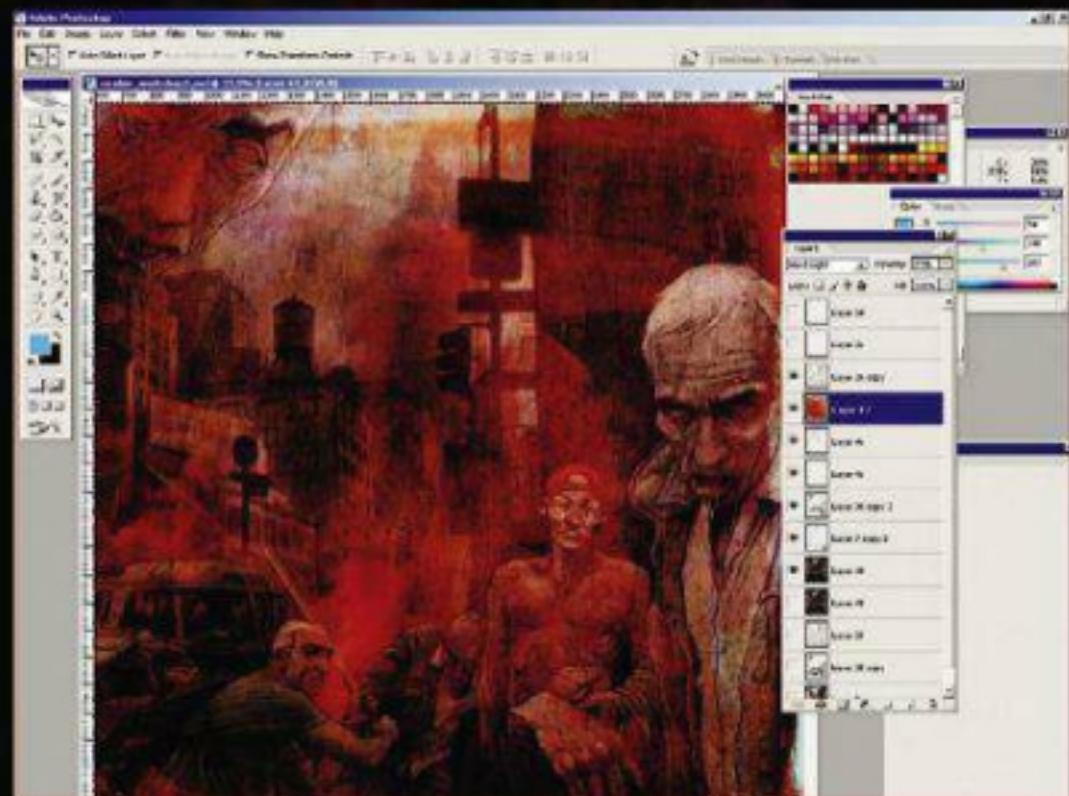
more realistic canvas texture and helps your digital image to seem more like a traditional painting. A whole range of methods and materials can be applied to mark-making. For this I want a red ink wash. Make sure your painted paper is dry before scanning...

11 Add a red hue

Scale the paint texture over your image. Set your layer to Multiply; this darkens the image but adds a hue of red. The red seems to work well with the fire and adds a deep rouge to the zombies' skin. Setting my Eraser to a textured brush, I reduce the Opacity of the red in places where it overwhelms the image. ➤



Workshop



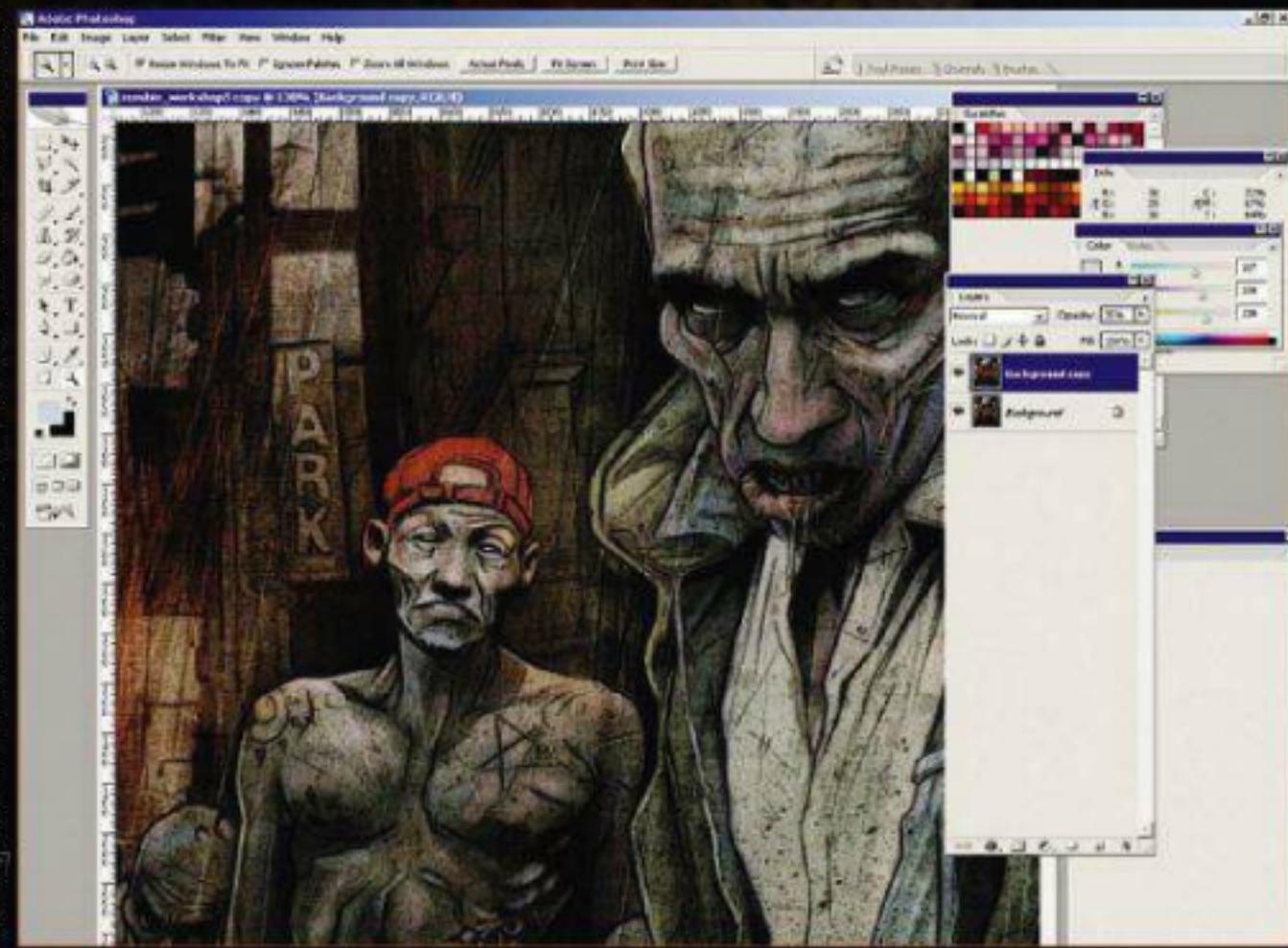
12 Add some noise

Switching layers from Multiply to Soft Light changes the intensity and lights the image back up. It's a case of what you feel works best.

I make another duplicate of my image and use the Add Noise filter on it. I desaturate the layer but keep it set on Normal and then I reduce the Opacity to around 20 per cent. Diffuse Glow adds a nice grainy effect to the piece as well, so I give that a try.

13 Filters

It's nice to play around with the Hue and Saturation levels. Now that I have a lot of layering colour, it's a good thing to play around with the filters. Be a bit wary of filters, though, as they can sometimes be too much. You can't rely on a push of a button to do your work for you. What you can try is duplicating your image, running filters on the top layer and changing the blending mode. You will get some fantastic effects.



14 Layer blending modes

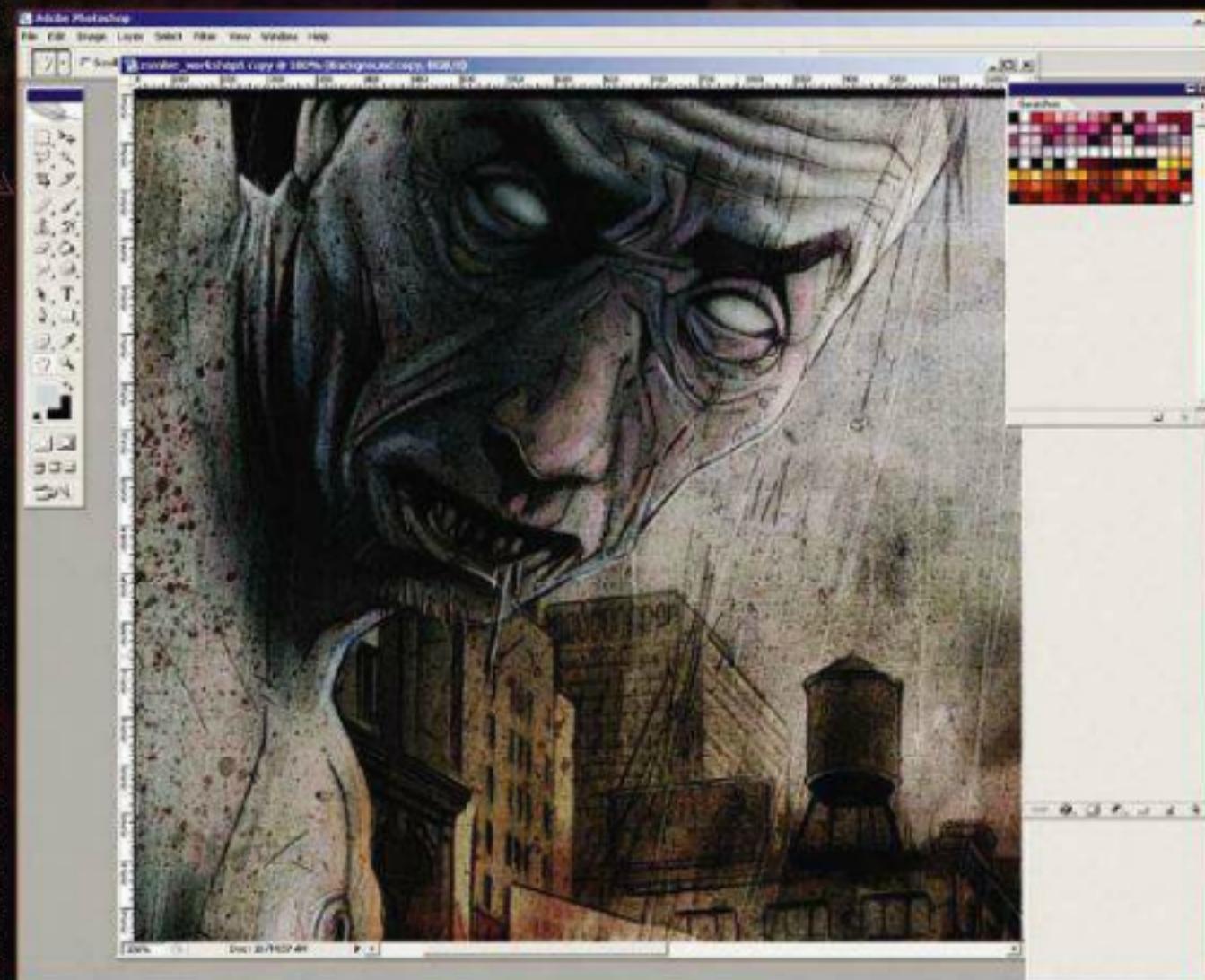
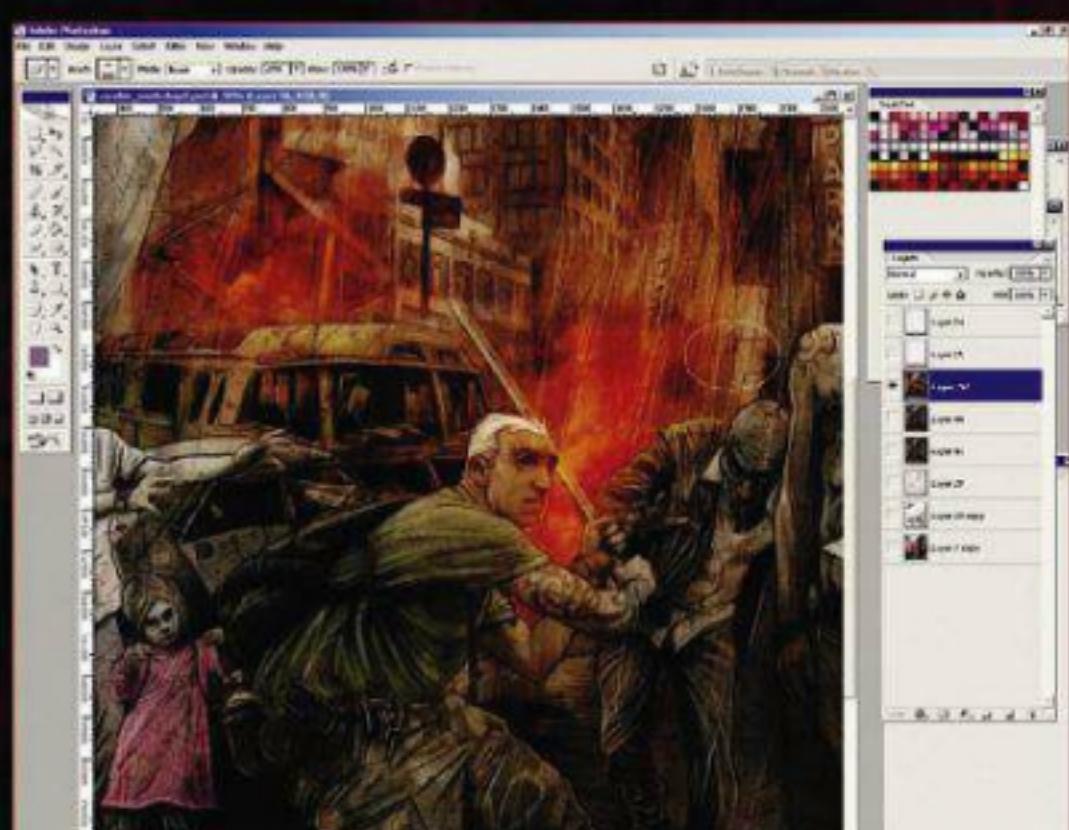
Again, I experiment with the layer types. Hard Light really brings forward the texture of the paper. I always add a simple rain effect to my work – I don't know why, or what it says about me, but it's always raining in my illustrations. Create a new layer, set it to Soft Light and using a thin Soft brush add lines of rain. Use the Eraser to break up the rain lines.

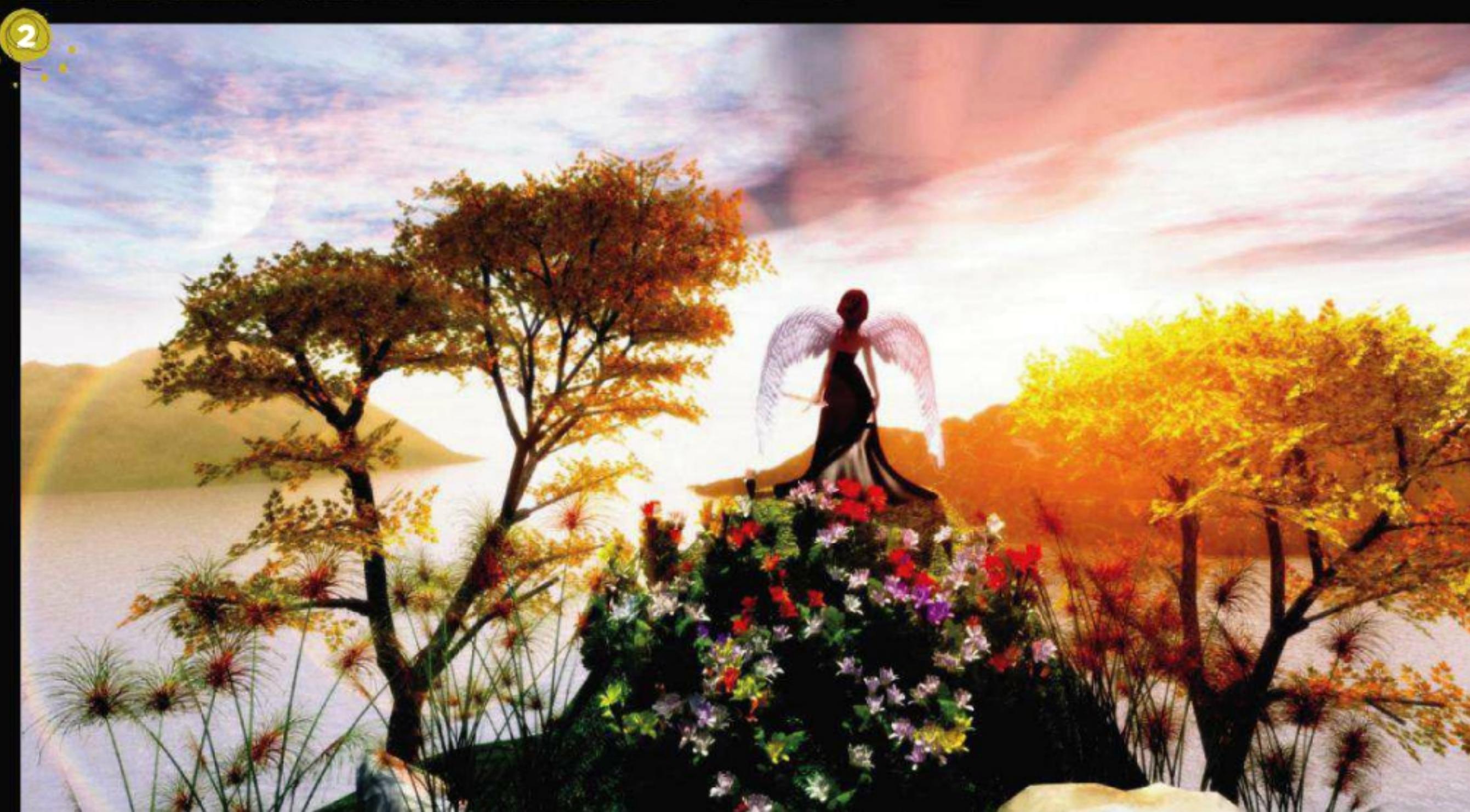
15 Final tweaks

The final steps for the image are the most fun. I add a tattoo by drawing a path with the Pen tool. I turn the path

into a selection and I feather it by one or two pixels – this takes the hard edge away. I fill the selection in with black and set the layer to Soft Light, with a copy of the tattoo layer on Multiply set at a low opacity. The line of the character face is also bothering me, so I soften it down just by simply using a soft brush.

I flatten all the layers when I'm happy that it's ready. Make a copy of your image on to another layer and run the Poster Edges filter across the whole picture. I set this layer at a low Opacity of about 8 per cent or lower. This helps the whole image gel and adds a gritty ink texture.





 **Ryan Davies**

LOCATION: UK
WEB: <http://thisstuffinside.deviantart.com>

EMAIL: ryan@phaseone.org.uk
SOFTWARE: Poser 6, Vue 5 Esprit, Photoshop



"I have always loved anything to do with fantasy, Lord of the Rings, anime and games like Final Fantasy," says Ryan. "The characters always intrigued me and it was not long before I had folders of fantasy pictures on my computer."

Ryan decided to give fantasy art a go, so he downloaded Daz Studio and set to work. "Producing fantasy artwork is becoming a real passion of mine. Although people closest to me do not quite have the same enthusiasm for it as I do, I think they are coming round slowly!" Sounds familiar.

Stylewise, Ryan says, "I'm still experimenting, trying to find which little part of the 3D art scene I should call mine."

1 MOONLIT PRINCESS This picture started out as an experiment in 3D dynamics, "but it turned into a nice semi gothic angel picture."

2 THE DREAMER This picture was all about mood. "I was trying to capture a sense of tranquility and solitude," says Ryan. "I've always tried to make my lighting add more to the picture than the actual subject matter."

 **Paul Gerrard**

LOCATION: UK
WEB: www.butterflysoldiers.com
EMAIL: pgerrard@butterflysoldiers.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Paul kept his work pretty much to himself for a long time: "It's only been in the last six months that I've decided to put it 'out there'" and the response has been great.

"My ambition and motivation for creating art has increased ten-fold from being part of the digital art community." Thanks to this, Paul's personal projects have started to come together. "Butterflysoldiers is an ongoing epic story unfolding and developing through illustration.

"Wouldn't it be great if the characters and worlds that artists live and breath were real?" asks Paul. "Well, they could be – it's just a matter of interpretation." This, he says, is the basis for the 'butterflysoldiers' concept. "I hope to finish writing the story one day and have a mass of visuals ready to accompany the text."

1 KRONOS (THE BIRTH GROUND OF KRONOS)

OF KRONOS This started as just a play with shape and form for another concept, and from it came the Kronos character. "Kronos controls the plants and the earth; he's partly nature, partly mythical thought form."

2 THE CHASE "With all my images," says Paul, "I see them as a snapshot from, say, a movie, and I try to capture the atmosphere and mood of what is transpiring. Mood is very important."

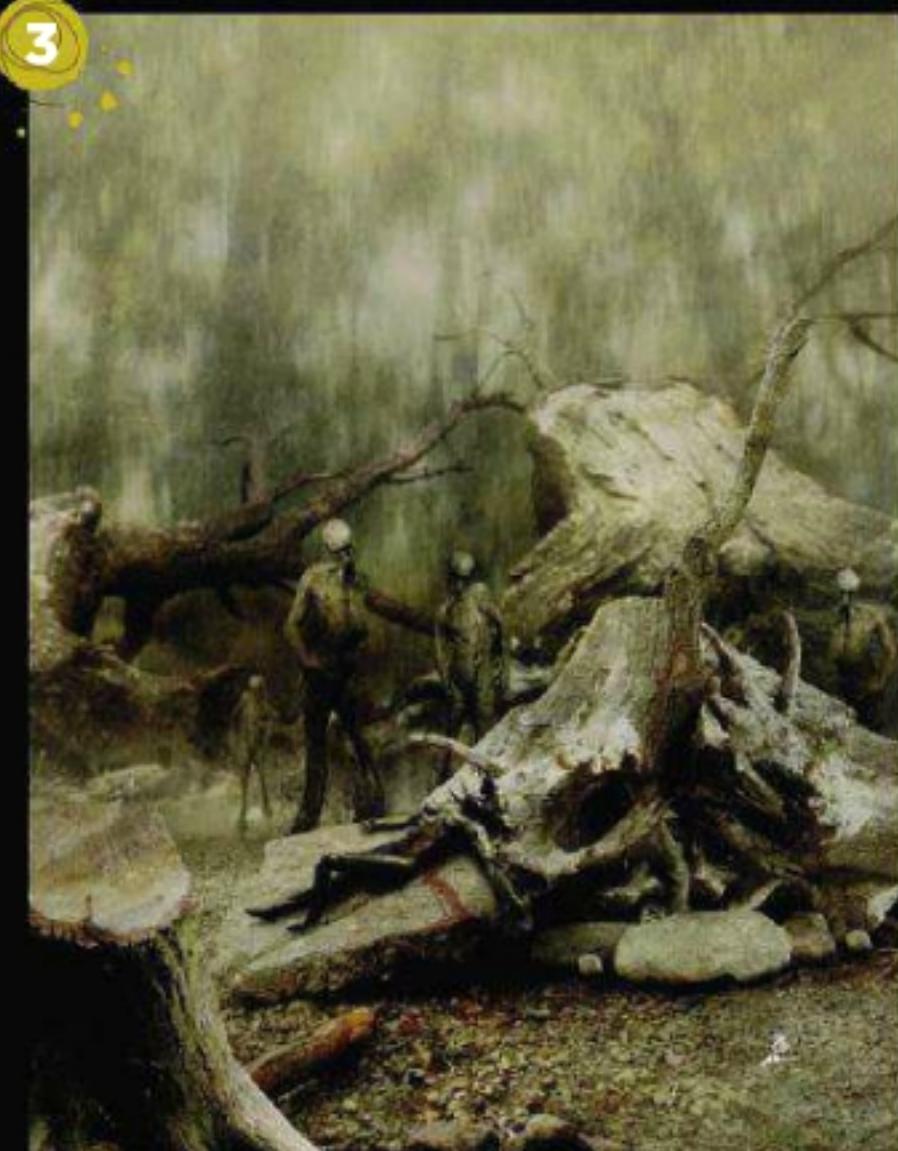
3 CHOICES "They find her at the outskirts of their land, on the brink of death. They haven't seen a creature like her before. It's within their abilities to heal her, but this will weaken both them and the land... Will she awake and help them, or kill them all?"



2



3





1

Jamie Mahon

LOCATION: UK

WEB: <http://dreamcapture.deviantart.com>

EMAIL: jamie.mahon@hotmail.com

SOFTWARE: Photoshop

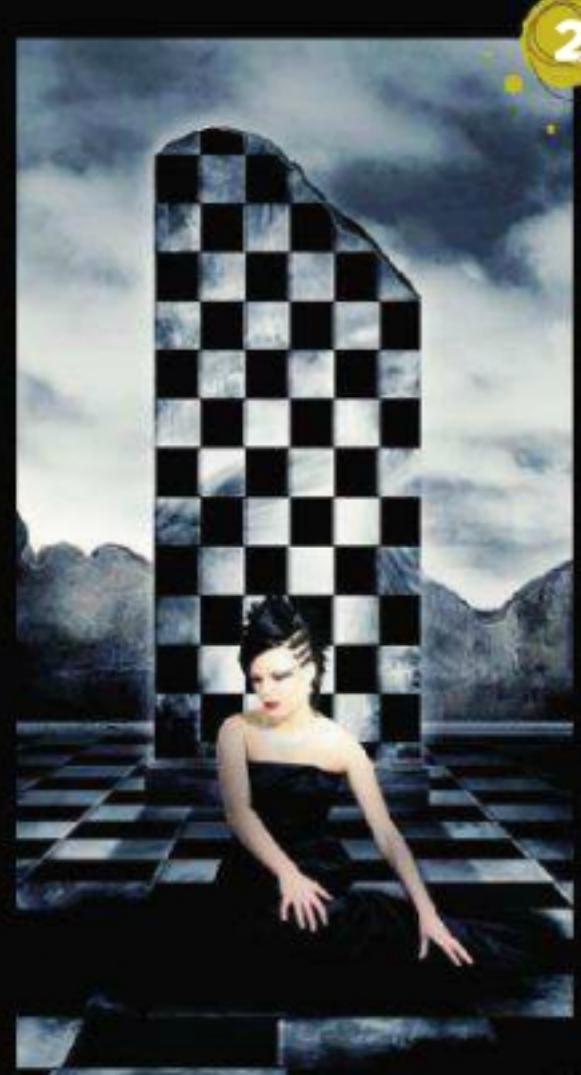


"Despite a university education in photography, everything I am capable of doing is through reading and experimenting," says Jamie, who is very much part of the growing band of artists willing to turn their hand to whatever medium suits their purpose. "I can't paint," he admits. "With the photographs I take of models and landscapes, along with some textures, I'm able to create a scene." Though the narrative structure may not leap out at you, Jamie's happy: "There's something in there."

Jamie uses a Canon 350D, Photoshop and a selection of third-party filters to create his work. "Most of my images start out as a sketch, a series of images that may or may not tell a story." And from there it's a long process of transformation. Given that there's currently some 200 sketches waiting to be turned around, Jamie has a busy schedule ahead of him. "That's okay, though. I just enjoy it so much."

1 GATEWAY "On the day I just had this image pop into my head that she (the model) could be dipping her foot into a pool or lake."

2 MONOLITH This was part of a series of images Jamie envisioned as involving a checkered environment. "I decided to create a gothic monolith to give it something extra."



2

Duncan Gutteridge

LOCATION: England
WEB: www.duncan gutteridge.com
EMAIL: duncan@duncan gutteridge.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop CS with a little-bit of Painter



Duncan grew up admiring the works of Frank Frazetta and HR Giger, "and I have always felt an affinity with the organic forms of Art Nouveau and the flowing curves of Alphonse Mucha's poster art."

After studying illustration at college, Duncan has worked in many areas, from advertising to editorial and publishing work, but until recently hasn't been able to fully indulge his love of fantasy.

"My first love has always been the fantasy female form," says the artist. "And since I've only been working digitally for 18 months, most of my work is in traditional media." Duncan plans to develop his skills with a view to entering the game industry.

1 FOREST NYMPH Duncan outlines his technique on this one: "The figure was drawn in pencil and realised in Photoshop with parts of the background as montage and parts painted directly in Photoshop."

2 FAERIE GIFT Developed from an original pencil drawing. "The fairy hides her gift of rotten food as legend would have it... the apple being disguised by the 'fairy glamour'!"





1

 **Josh "Strangelet" Grafton**

LOCATION: UK

WEB: www.aqpm75.dsl.pipex.com

EMAIL: strangelet@dsl.pipex.com

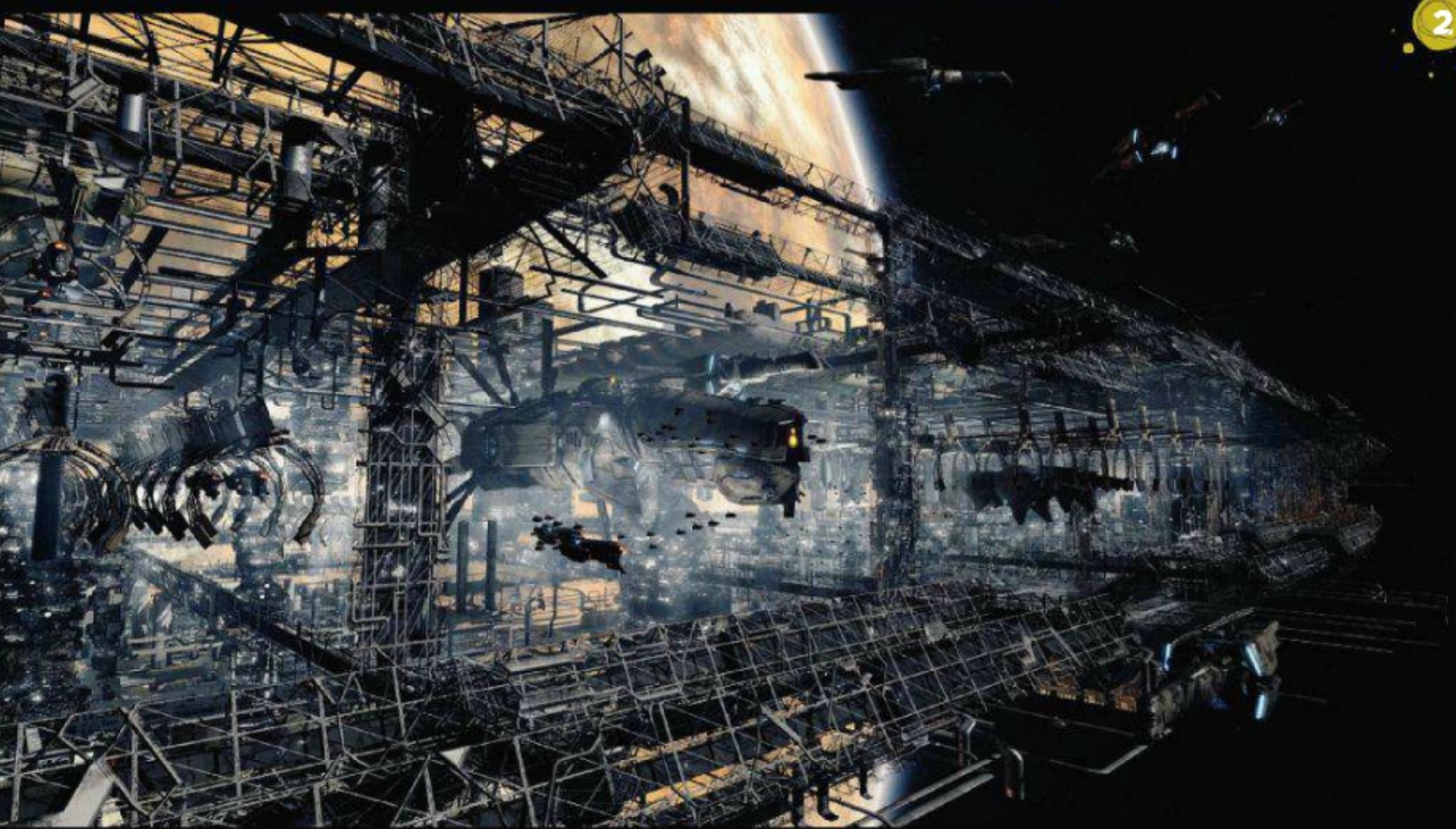
SOFTWARE: Cinema 4D 9.5,
Photoshop CS, Bryce 5, Hullgen 1.6,
KPT, Bodypaint

 Josh has been a composer and producer working in film and advertising for a long time. "But I've always been an artist since I learned to make the screen border change colour on my ZX Spectrum," he says. An undying love of sci-fi – and films like *Starship Troopers*, *Dune*, *Star Wars* and *Aliens* – and the timeless art of people like Chris Foss and David A Hardy have roused Josh.

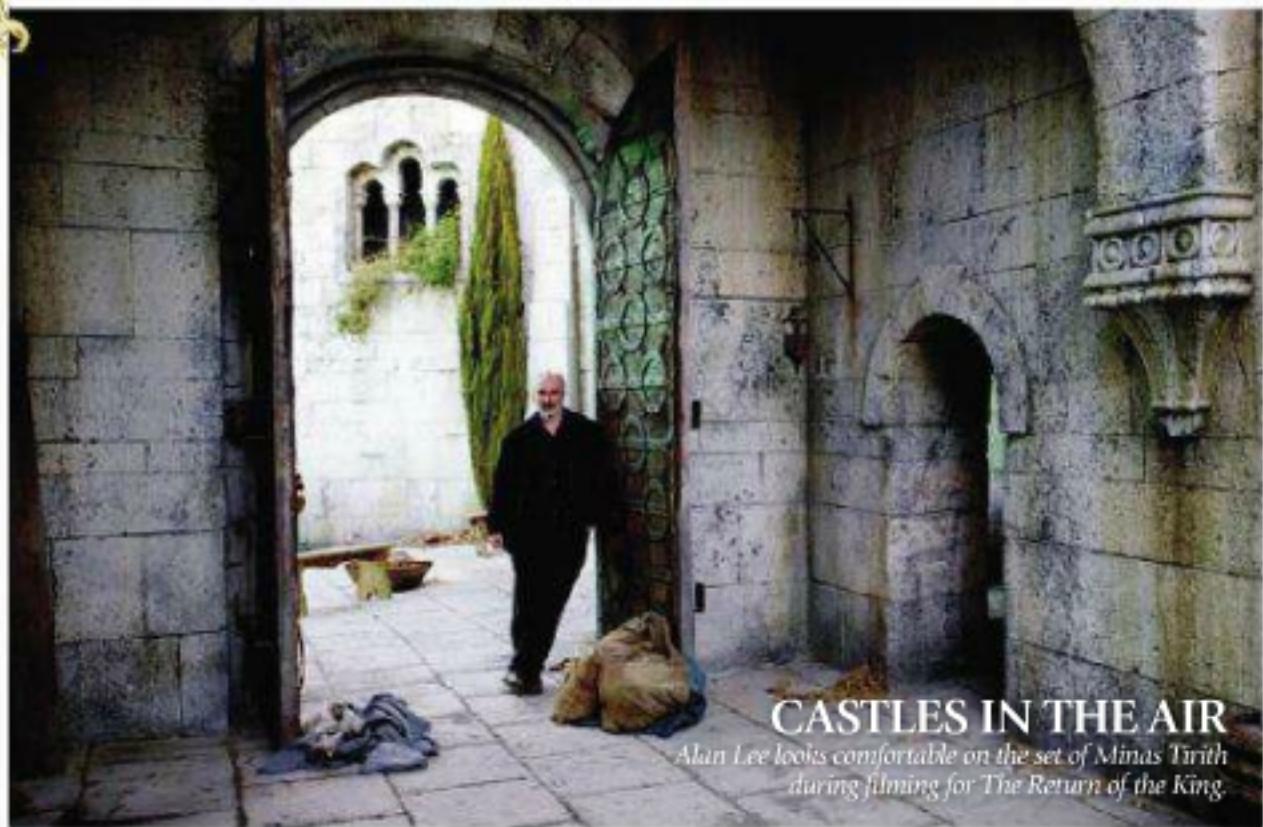
Nowadays the inspiration comes from game development teams. It's long been a dream for Josh to art direct games: "To this end I joined the dev team at Angels Fall First (AFF), and we're well under way with a space-war sim, *War in Heaven*," he says.

1 THE HEAVY 23RD "The colours in this scene are straight from Chris Foss and the old-time Terran Trade Authority books," he muses.

2 DRAGON'S NEST "The Antarean Imperial Navy's new battle cruiser, *Morningstar*, before her shakedown tour at Lasford Base planetary shipyard," explains Josh.



2

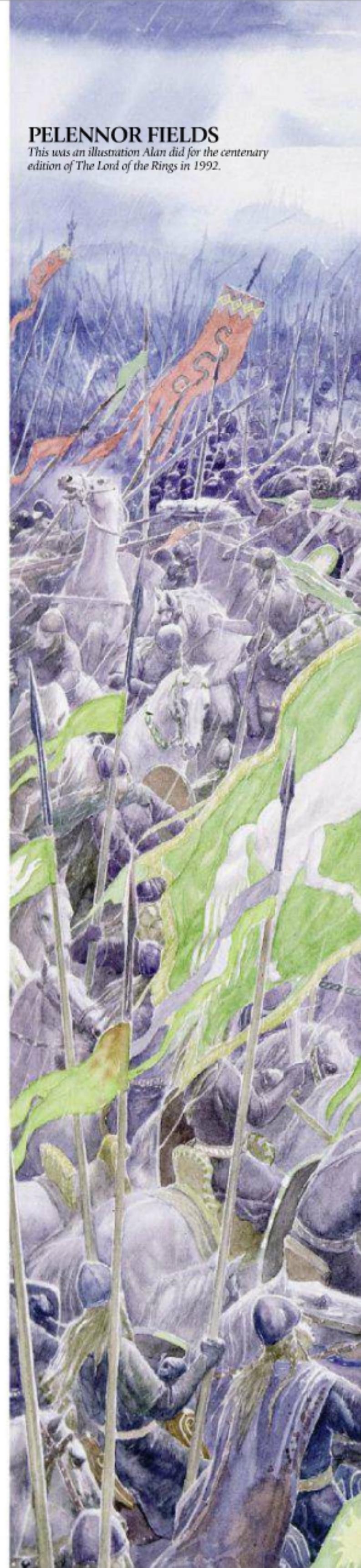


CASTLES IN THE AIR

Alan Lee looks comfortable on the set of Minas Tirith during filming for The Return of the King

PELENNOR FIELDS

This was an illustration Alan did for the centenary edition of The Lord of the Rings in 1992.



Alan Lee

Alan Lee has combined his love for pencil and watercolour with a passion for mythology to become one of the true fantasy masters

I was very fortunate that I was able to go to a school that did art as a technical subject." For Alan Lee, this rapidly led to a realisation: "I first conceived the idea of being an illustrator at the age of 15."

Taking his exams early, by 16 Alan found himself at Ealing Art School studying graphic design but specialising in illustration. In practical terms what this meant was: "While everyone else was busy with advertising, I was left to myself, illustrating Irish myths in the corner," he laughs. Not that he was being left out: "It was great!" he says – although not in a formal educational sense. "It was just a great space and time to pursue my interests," is how Alan describes it.

WATERCOLOUR

Alan's love of watercolour can be traced to his first encounter with Edmund Dulac: "I think I was about 20 and I remember being totally amazed." Dulac's work, with its often fantastic and mythical themes, inspired Alan, but there was another door to open: "The

revelation was finding watercolour paper and just seeing how different it was to any other surface and how much it interacts. You just keep on working wet into wet. Unexpected things happen then, and you respond to them immediately. It's more of a dialogue.

"I love traditional media," he goes on. "Pencil, watercolour and charcoal... I find those the most satisfying." But, thanks to his work with Peter Jackson on the Lord of the Rings, which would later win him an Academy Award, Alan Lee now works digitally.

DIGITAL WORLD

"Up until that time I didn't even have email," he recalls. "But it was the perfect environment in which to learn." His first paintings using Photoshop "ended up looking like watercolours because I tended to kind of build up with tints. I was working mainly at around 30 per cent and building them up as half-tones." Like a duck to water, then.

But there's a caveat: "It always feels to me that if you're trying to make your digital artwork look like

watercolour then it might be best to actually use watercolour." So Alan began to explore. "Becoming aware of other artists using the computer was a revelation – I was just blown away by what was being done."

TOLKIEN

To get the full story on how Alan wound up in New Zealand, we need to rewind a few years. "I first read Lord of the Rings when

Artist PROFILE

Alan Lee



Born in August 1947, Alan Lee began his career as a book illustrator with the release of *Faeries* (with Brian Froud) in 1978. Subsequently has worked as a concept artist on films including *King Kong* and *The Return of the King* – for which he won an Oscar. Alan lives and works in Devon.

COMING SOON: www.alan-lee.com
WEB: www.endicott-studio.com/gal/galalan.html

Legend Alan Lee



TREEBEARD

From the *Lord of the Rings Sketchbook*, this sketch (above) depicted Fangorn the Treebeard meeting Merry and Pippin.



EOWYN AND THE WITCHKING

This pencil drawing was first published in *The Lord of the Rings Sketchbook*, published by Harper Collins, 2005.



TROLLS

Concept sketches (above) for trolls, and a design for a part of Minas Tirith (below) for the *LOTR* trilogy.





MERLIN

Painstakingly completed in pencil, Merlin was
commissioned for the cover of *From Avalon to Camelot*,
an Arthurian studies magazine.



GANDALF ON GWAIHIR

A watercolour concept painting for the LOTR trilogy.

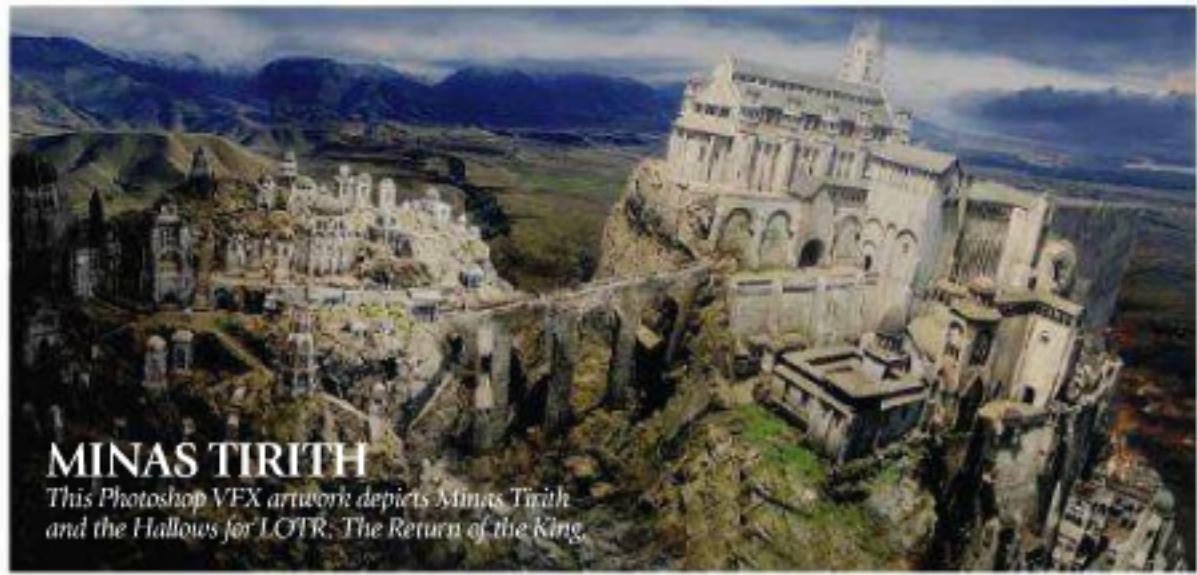
“Becoming aware of other artists using the computer was a revelation – I was just blown away”

“I was 17. I think that's the perfect time to discover it.” It had a lasting impression on him: “I was living in that world for months after.”

At college Alan began to produce ‘Tolkiennesque’ artwork, but nothing based on the books directly. Then, once he graduated, making a living as an illustrator became his primary ambition, which led to work on book covers “and a lot of romantic fiction.” It was at this time – 1970 – that Alan found an agent in the shape of Artists Partners and met Brian Froud.

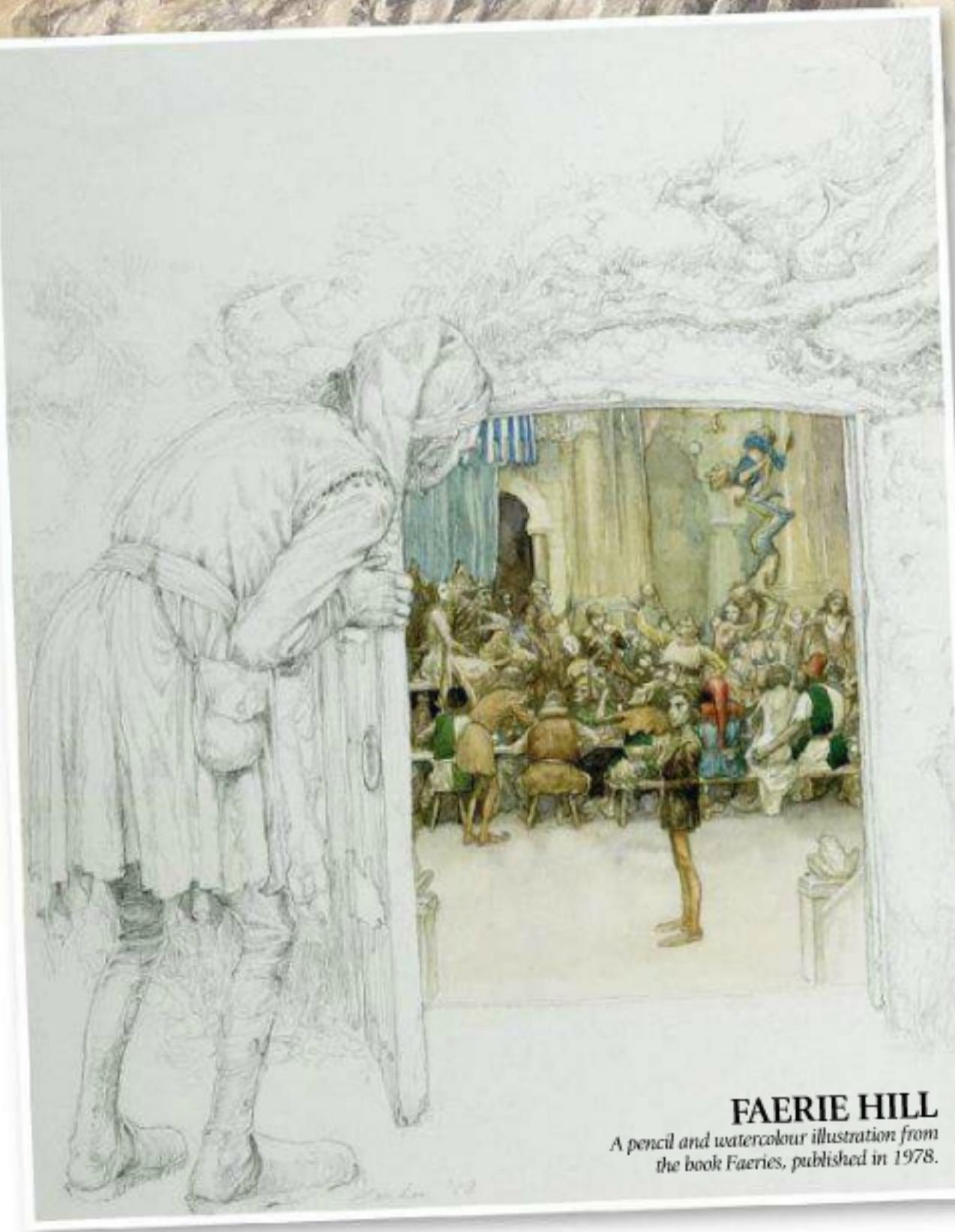
In 1978 Alan and Brian had a breakthrough with the publication of *Faeries*, and while this led Brian off to do *The Dark Crystal*, Alan concentrated on his mythical theme. “After *The Mabinogion*, the next book I did was *Castles*, a look at castles in legend.” Naturally this entailed some Tolkien castles.

As fate would have it, *Castles* was published by none other than Allen and Unwin. “They happened to be Tolkien's publishers at the time,” Lee explains. It took some time but the next step was an illustrated



MINAS TIRITH

This Photoshop VFX artwork depicts Minas Tirith and the Hallows for 'LOTR: The Return of the King'.



FAERIE HILL

*A pencil and watercolour illustration from the book *Faeries*, published in 1978.*



► LOTR. "That idea had always been batted away by the Tolkien estate but I did a few trial pieces and they gave it the go-ahead!"

MOVIE STAR

That's how Alan became a concept designer at visual effects company WETA, producing some 2,500 Tolkien drawings over six years.

"The drawings in New Zealand were done to illustrate a point," says Alan. "I quite like it when the illustrations have this other purpose so you're not really conscious of the aesthetics so much." They're working drawings, he says, "but being done quickly and loosely means they're not self-conscious."

Not surprisingly, the six years flew by. "It felt like no time at all on the plane home." But nestled among his hand luggage was a new prized possession: an Academy Award.

RABBIT IN HEADLIGHTS

"It was amazing, and really quite bizarre." Alan was enthralled by the night *The Return of the King* swept the board at the Oscars: "I was totally up for the experience. I wasn't going to be cynical about it even one bit. I just wanted to enjoy every moment, and I did."

Alan was nominated with Grant Major and Dan Hennah. "You get 45 seconds before you get yanked off the stage, so we decided if we did win, we would have 15 seconds each – Grant first, then Dan, then me, and I would thank Peter." Alan's lot were among the first up, so at this point LOTR and Peter Jackson were still only Oscar nominees.

"Grant started speaking, and we're looking out at this audience you can't really make out but you know it has all those famous faces in it." Feel the tension: "Right behind me is Angelina Jolie, and Grant seemed to be taking forever."

Finally it was Alan's turn. "I said something nice about Peter, then I looked out and there's this huge sign in the middle of the auditorium." Obviously there'd be some signal to start winding up, "but it actually said 'End It Now!'" He did, and the rest is history.



ORTHANC

Using his favourite watercolour, Alan completed this illustration for the centenary edition of *The Lord of the Rings* in 1992.



1

Dean Etheridge

LOCATION: England

WEB: www.deane.deviantart.com

EMAIL: 101637.25@compuserve.com

SOFTWARE: Photoshop, 3ds max

Although Dean's main profession is engineering design, photography and art have always been his passions. And since discovering Photoshop and 3ds max in the early 1980s, he's been hooked on 3D digital art.

Self-taught with pencils and acrylics, Dean often sketches his initial concepts to get the ball rolling, although that seems to be changing: "I now find that I'm using Poser as a starting point for most of my works, finding it invaluable in exploring different camera angles and perspectives."

Another passion is sci-fi. "I'm greatly inspired by the work of Chris Foss," says Dean. He had the privilege of meeting the living legend at a convention. "Chris is a giant in the genre and a true gentleman as well."

The third corner of Dean's creative triangle belongs to South East Asian culture. He's visited the region many times and, as a result, a lot of Far Eastern themes show up in his work.

1 TIGHT CORNER This was inspired by many different sources, including a Bryce tutorial in ImagineFX! Dean explains that these two downed pilots are "hopefully about to be extracted from a hot landing zone."

2 SHIMU This portrait was Dean's first detailed study in Poser 6. "It was rendered with basic settings in Poser," he explains, "and post-work was done in Photoshop to improve the image saturation and tidy up the hairline."

3 STRIKE FORCE "This concept portrays an off-world military spaceport, where a flight crew have just returned from a successful sortie," reveals Dean.



2



3

1



2



Aly Fell

LOCATION: UK

WEB: www.darkrising.co.uk

EMAIL: alyfell@darkrising.co.uk

JOB: Concept artist, Eurocom Entertainment Software



Aly has also worked at Core Design and the legendary Cosgrove Hall Films, on classics including DangerMouse and Count Duckula. It was at Core Design that he really started to get to grips with Photoshop "and realised not everything has to have a black line around it!" He adds: "I grew up on a diet of Michael Moorcock, John Wyndham, Dr Who and Star Trek." This gave Aly an affection for sci-fi and fantasy, and he believes this is what put the kink in his work.

1 SERRAN THE HUNTER "She's meant to be a transdimensional dragon hunter!" This is one of Aly's quicker pieces, completed in about four hours.

2 SAMURAI VAMPIRE A cover done for a magazine with a vampire-related theme. "The character specifics were done to requirements, hence a lot of blank space around the girl," he says.



1

David Freeman

LOCATION: England

WEB: www.pixelandspotions.com

EMAIL: dave@pixelandspotions.com

SOFTWARE: Painter 8, Photoshop CS

JOB: Design director, concept artist,

illustrator



Inspired by such names as Saul Bass, Syd Mead and Ralph McQuarrie, "I've been creating both digital and traditional artwork for years," says David. But it wasn't till 2004 that David took the plunge and became a concept artist.

"While working as a broadcast designer at the BBC, I by chance attended a seminar by the ILM art department, who had recently completed Star Wars Episode II." This made David rethink not just his working practices "but also what I wanted to do as a career."

When the BBC closed its design department in 2004, David used this opportunity to start working as a concept artist. He created his first true piece of digital painting for one of the CG Talk challenges. "I've since worked on a variety of jobs including features, commercials, posters and music promos as an illustrator, concept and storyboard artist along with the odd bit of matte painting thrown into the mix."

1 THE EXPERIMENT In this vision of the future, nanotechnology has become the norm. "Here, a young boy has converted his pet fish into a living home computer, part machine and part fish. Upgrades can be bought from the local pet shop," muses David.

2 PILGRIMAGE This young boy arrives at a sacred site central to his religious beliefs. "Temples have been built high in the mountains overlooking the site of an ancient spacecraft, thought to be the origins of life on the planet," he says.



2

1



2



João Paulo Alvares Ruas

LOCATION: UK

WEB: www.jp-ar.org

EMAIL: sovietarmy@uol.com.br

JOB: 2D freelancer



"When I was a kid," says 25-year-old João Ruas, "I wanted to be an astronaut, a geographer, a football player and an illustrator – all at the same time."

Blimey. One out of four isn't bad, though: "I became an illustrator – that's enough for me." João went to his first drawing course when he was 13. "It was a simple school in São Paulo with an old Spanish teacher, and I was there two times a week until I was 15," he recalls.

Then came technical high school: "I did a course that in English would be called 'communicative drawing'." Then to university where João studied Digital Design and after four years got his diploma and decided that he would try a career as an illustrator/concept artist.

1 THE WORM HERO "I didn't have any idea of what I was doing when I started this," says João. "But then at some point characters began to appear and they started to tell a story."

2 MONKEYS "With this image I tried to make one of those paintings with hidden messages," says João. "It was done using pencil, watercolor, gouache and loads of Photoshop."



1

**Kim Taylor
(aka Sketchling)**

LOCATION: England
WEB: www.sketchling.com
EMAIL: sketchling@yahoo.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop
JOB: Lead matte painter, MPC London



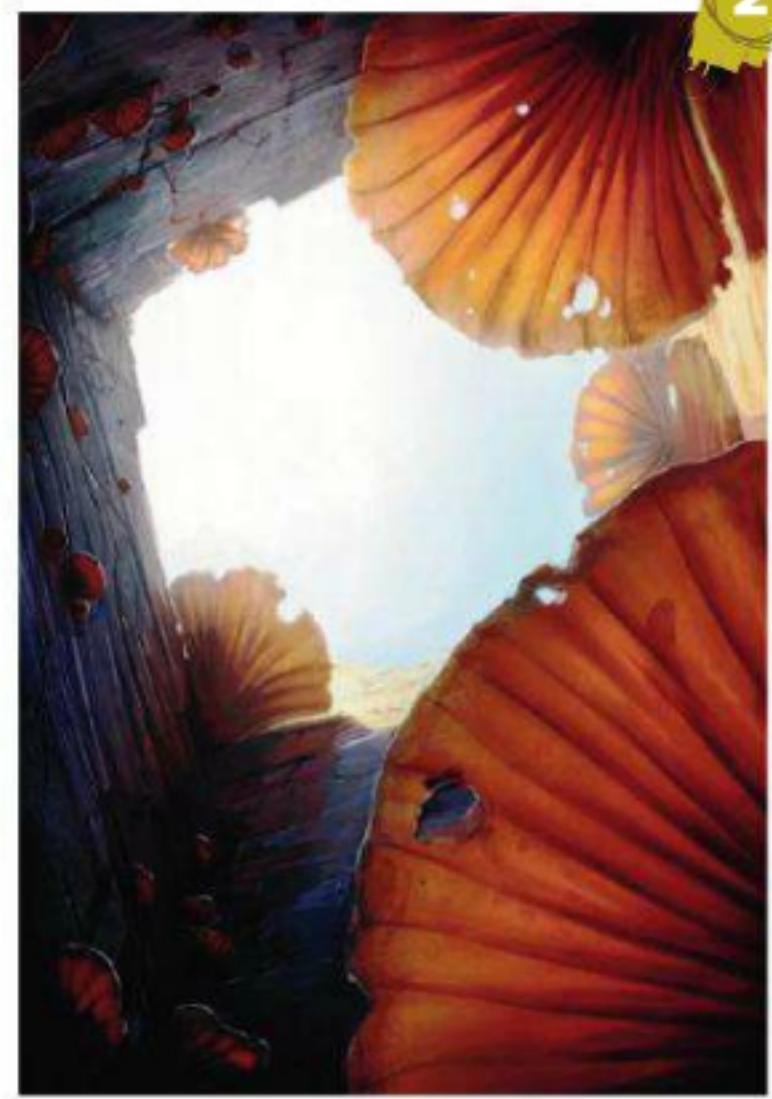
"I have always painted and created," says Kim, "but the moment I first opened Photoshop (version two point something) I was hooked on all of the possibilities of digital art!"

Kim came to London from South Africa seeking a career in games, but ended up working in advertising instead. He has been working as a matte painter and texture artist at The Moving Picture Company in London for around three years now, "working on many adverts and such projects as Virtual History, The Truth about Killer Dinosaurs and BBC's Egypt, as well as a short stint on X-Men 3."

The fantasy theme continues as "I'm currently leading the matte painting and texturing on an adaptation of Terry Pratchett's Hogfather for Sky HDTV."

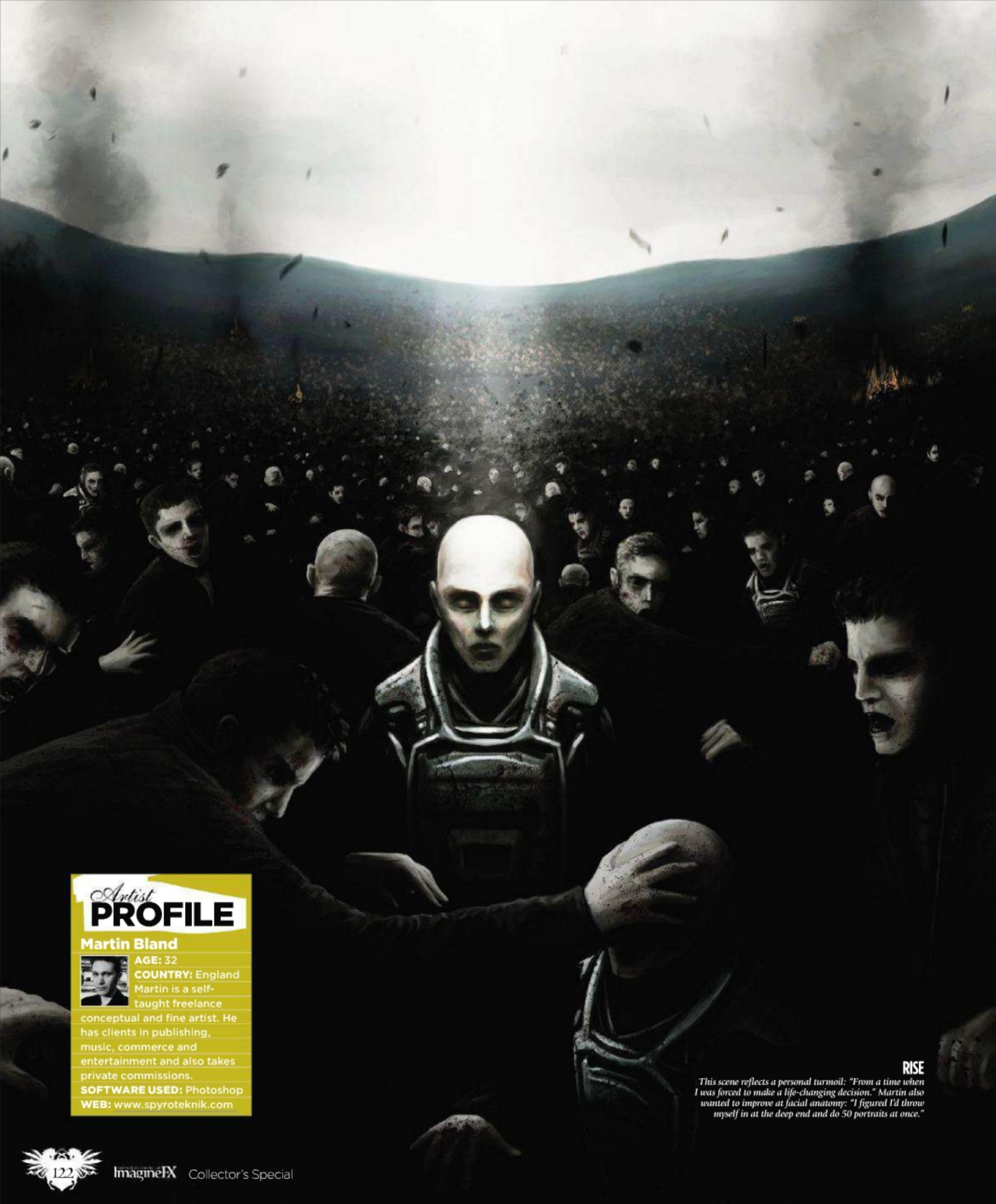
1 SPOOK_MUTAMBU "My parents used to scare my sister and me with tales of a spirit which lived at the end of our driveway in Johannesburg, South Africa" – a cunning way to stop the youngsters getting run over. Kim explains: "His name was 'Spook Mutambu' and this forest spirit is based on my childhood nemesis!"

2 FUNGUS This image depicts an abandoned mine shaft with huge plumes of fungus blocking the light. "The midday light intensity triggers the spores to release and float down to the tunnel floor. Due to the spores' hallucinogenic effects, there are usually crowds of locals waiting happily at the bottom," says Kim.



2





Artist **PROFILE**

Martin Bland



AGE: 32

COUNTRY: England
Martin is a self-taught freelance

conceptual and fine artist. He has clients in publishing, music, commerce and entertainment and also takes private commissions.

SOFTWARE USED: Photoshop
WEB: www.spyroteknik.com

RISE

This scene reflects a personal turmoil: "From a time when I was forced to make a life-changing decision." Martin also wanted to improve at facial anatomy: "I figured I'd throw myself in at the deep end and do 50 portraits at once."

MARTIN BLAND

Reckon you can knock up a futuristic masterpiece in about an hour? That's what self-taught conceptual 'speed-painter' Martin Bland does...

Currently hard at work on what he describes as "a religiously questionable death metal CD cover," Martin Bland conjures up worlds that are not exactly gothic, or even dystopic: "I'm not one for the fancy colourful visions we've been fed of future life. It'll be a lot more gritty and more subtle than what's expected. I tend to put out imagery of realistic scenarios rather than painting a shiny spaceman or an elf. Escapism just doesn't do it for me. I like to imagine worlds people can truly connect with. I want people to see parallels.

"Things aren't sugar coated and brightly coloured, they have an edge. I like to explore those edges. The world's political climate as of the past few years has been kind of 'on edge'. Those fears have a natural tendency to slip into what I'm doing.

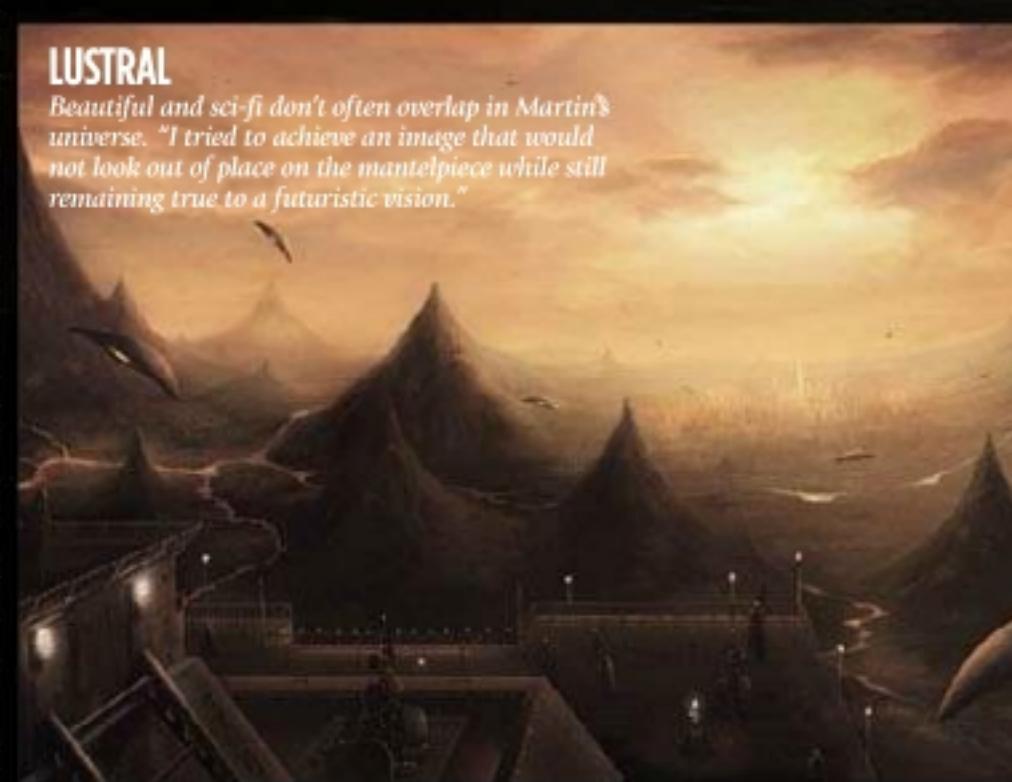
"I start digitally, working on forms and planes rather than lines. I build up an image as I go, blocking in shapes and finding forms in there to work with," he explains.

"I 'speed-paint' at least one hour a day, sometimes packing in 10 images. This is like gestural drawing, only cooler. I don't usually even save the results. If it doesn't look great after an hour, I scrap it and move on. Sometimes I come out with some nice imagery that I work on further.

"I've only been painting for three years, so I've come a long way in a short period, but I have a hell of a long way to go, to get to where I want to be. The best advice I can give is to practise, figure things out yourself, sketch like there's no tomorrow and explore the wealth of information the internet has to offer." 

LUSTRAL

Beautiful and sci-fi don't often overlap in Martin's universe. "I tried to achieve an image that would not look out of place on the mantelpiece while still remaining true to a futuristic vision."



DATA COLLECTION POINT

*Part of Martin's *Lesa* universe. At this outpost, data miners drop off their workload and are sent out to accumulate more information.*



LUCIDAE

"This is how I see my other half," Martin reveals. "Commanding and somewhat scary at times, but ultimately as sexy as hell."

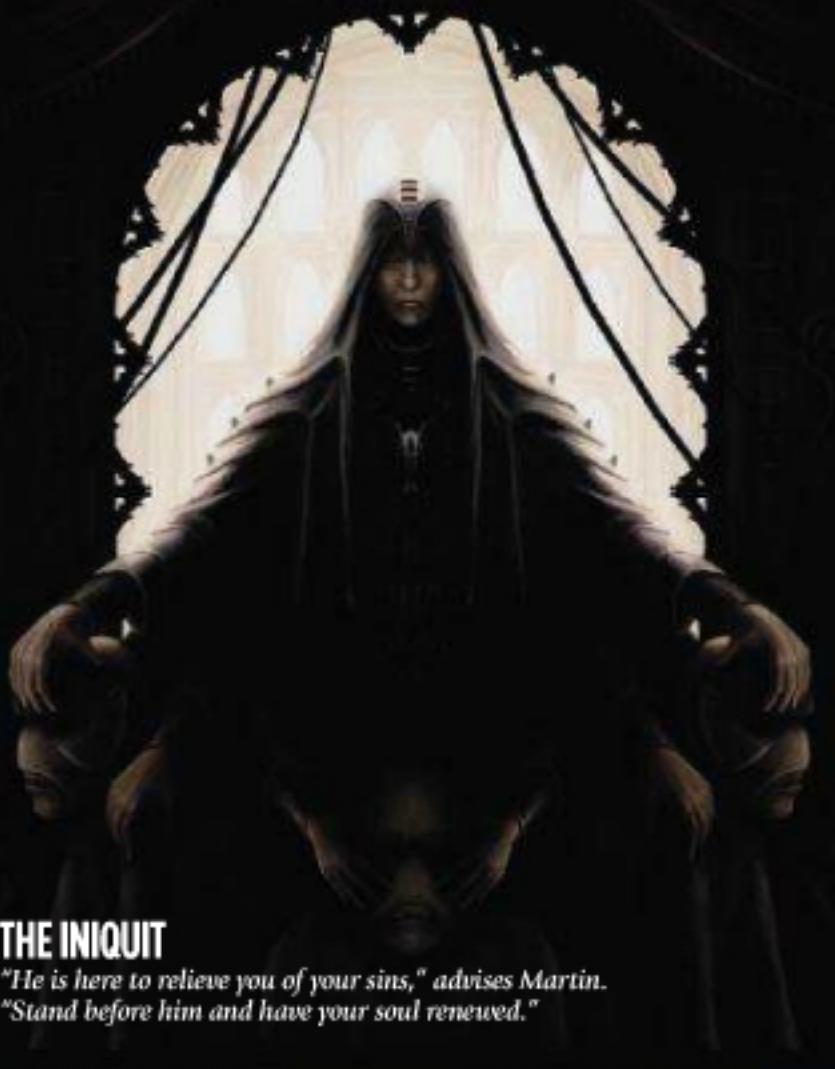
LESA

This is the opening scene to Martin's Lesa project. "I have a sequence in mind: rushing through the snowscape and up the mountain base to this point."

Martin Bland's **ARTIST TIP**

Hard round brushes

"I always paint 90 per cent of any image with the standard hard round-edged brushes in Photoshop, with the stylus set to Opacity. This gives me a solid image without relying on any fancy effects. It's easy to get lost in custom brushland and lose the focus of what you want to achieve. You don't learn anything by using custom brushes. They hide a lot of irregularities and mistakes."



THE INIQUIT

*"He is here to relieve you of your sins," advises Martin.
"Stand before him and have your soul renewed."*

THE MEDUSA FIELDS

*"Thirty years have passed and still an epitaph of past conflict stands."
This image is "a reminder of our failings, a permanent lesson."*



EXIT SCENE
*The final scene, planned for Martin's Lesa project.
"An idyllic end point to the story."*

Martin Bland's
VITAL STATISTICS

Picture a hybrid of Ghandi and a sea monkey...



Place of birth

Swindon, Wiltshire.

Date of birth

April 10, 1973

Favourite film or scene from a movie

Opening scene of *Hero*. Visually stunning.

Favourite kind of music

Radiohead, Tricky, through to Aphex Twin, Autechre, a mixed bag of indie/punk/triphop/industrial. I don't really have a favourite genre.

Favourite traditional artist

Whistler, I love the darkness to his imagery.

Favourite digital artists

Craig Mullins, Skan Srisuwan, HPX, Sparth... I could fill a page.

First memory

Being chased by a rhino in a Hillman Imp.

First love

Bernice, my partner.

Most prized possession

My son isn't really a possession, is he? So, it'd be my Wacom.

Average time spent on an image

Around 15 hours.

Figure from history you most identify with

Ghandi.

Single most important piece of professional advice

Stick to your principles and be honest.

Left or right-handed

Right.

Any views on the afterlife

I'm sure there's something there. I'm not very religious but I respect others' beliefs. If there is an afterlife, I'd like to come back as a sea monkey.

What is your motto?

It's not about the artist, it's about the art.

Any grand plans?

I'd like to publish my own graphic novel one day and pitch for a movie on its strength. It's by far my favourite illustration job. I've been building a little universe for a couple of years and a lot of my personal images are tied into the storyline.

Artist PROFILE

Martin Bland

COUNTRY: UK

CLIENTS: Oddson

Recording, Embryo

Records, Distronomicon,

Ion Systems



Martin is a self-taught freelance conceptual artist. He works on covers for CDs, books and magazines and takes commissions for conceptual and fine art from the entertainment industry. He's in talks with a producer who wants to involve his personal works in a screenplay.

Try it yourself

Download a Zip archive of Martin Bland's PSD files from <http://tinyURL.com/ysuz2r>. You'll also find a trial version of Photoshop CS3 at www.adobe.com/go/tryphotoshop

Photoshop APOCALYPTIC VISIONS

Step aboard **Martin Bland's** tour of how to paint chilling scenes in Photoshop, from concept sketch to final print-ready image...

Painting is something that takes practice, but if you have artistic ability, Photoshop offers up an exciting medium that is not only cleaner than traditional methods, but saves you time too. That's probably why it's the choice of conceptual artists worldwide.

This tutorial lays out the techniques you need to create full scenes, using nothing more than your imagination, Photoshop's default brushes and a graphics tablet with pressure sensitivity.

To start with, you need to know what you're going to paint. The more time you put into planning, the less time you spend painting, and you lessen the chance of mistakes. For this image, I had a good idea what to paint beforehand. I was given the final size and I had a few of my own similar paintings to go on as a style guide.

Use a brief and have a strong idea before going into the image. You can form your concept in a number of ways: either thumbnail (paint a number of tiny

sketches to test out composition and colour) or go straight in with a full sketch and then you can complete an image if you're happy with your sketch.

I'm usually too impatient to work on 10 thumbnails, so I prefer to go straight in with a full sketch, then, if it doesn't work, I only lose an hour, but if it does work, I gain that time I would have used in planning. This keeps things fluid and interesting for me. Besides, the more full sketches you do, the better you get through practice.



In depth Apocalyptic visions



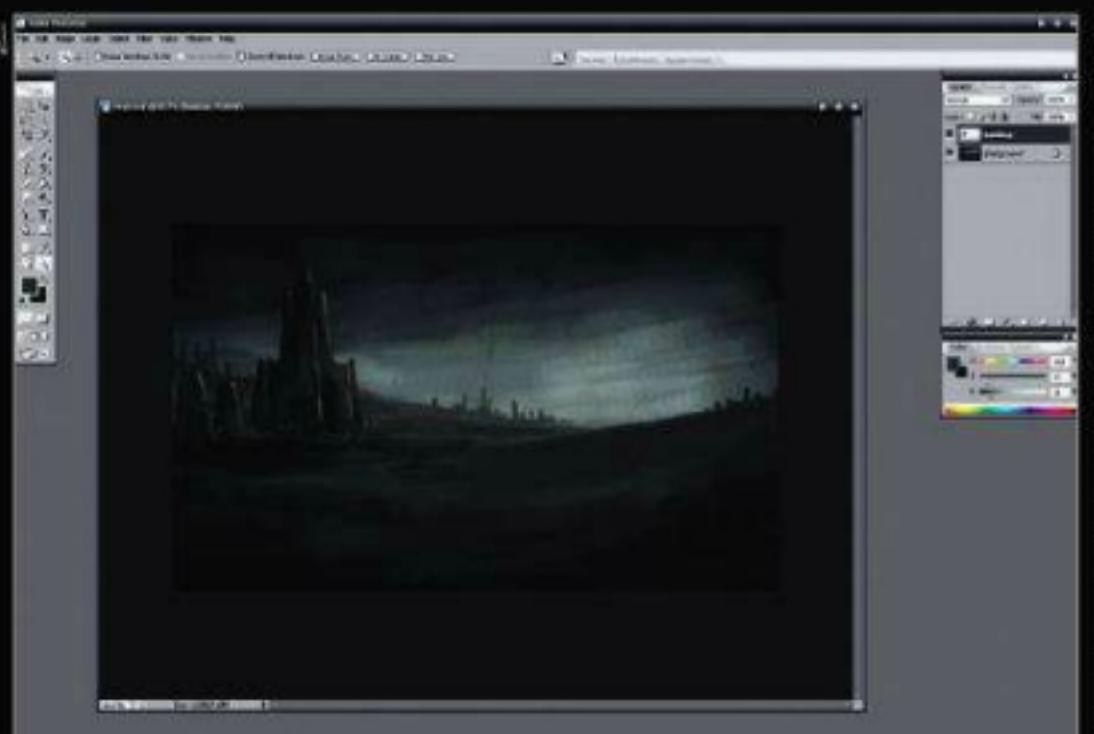
1 A blank canvas

I always start out with the final-sized canvas, set to 72 DPI (in this case at 480x290mm) and block in a background with a large hard round paintbrush. Set the brush to Opacity (everything unticked in the Brushes palette and the Opacity and Flow controls set to Pen Pressure in Other Dynamics).

With this being a wide-format image, I want to break up the horizontal feel, so I decide on a sweeping horizon. I'm going for a dark scene, so the colours I'm planning on will reflect this. The black background is a good base for this style and the green hue gives it more of a fantasy theme.

2 The environment layer

I create a new layer for the next part. I usually stick to just a few editable layers for easy handling later on. Be careful, because it's easy to keep adding until you have hundreds of layers, but it bloats out the PSD and is unnecessary. Keep it simple and it'll stay that way. As I plan to add a character to the right, I



need to balance it out, so I decide to paint in a building on the left.

Introducing a few background areas gives the image an illusion of depth which can be added to later. I use the same settings as before, but change the brush size from large to small as I go, because it's better to block in larger areas and then tighten them up with smaller brushes. This is our basic environment.



3 The character layer

The third layer is for the character. I block in his basic shape in black and add a grey highlight area with his basic features. I bring him forward to give more depth to the image, because I want him to be the main focal point while also balancing him with the building to the left.

I want to guide the eye around the image so a strong character up front will grab the attention, while the secondary point will fade back, before merging into the horizon.

4 Secondary character

Still working on the character layer, I start work on the features, general colours and lighting direction. Keeping things loose, and still working with the standard hard round brush, I build up body form and add the secondary character.

As I have chosen the theme of Aegis the Protector, having someone fragile in the scene adds more of an emotional element. It's always good to portray a story or plot in your image because this provides more interest for the viewer.



5 Adding details

Next, I create a detail layer, for tightening up and adding more areas of interest. The rock wall in the foreground fills the area of negative space and places more attention onto the main character. Think about how your image composition flows and flip your image horizontally (Image>Rotate>Flip Canvas Horizontally). These are good habits to get into. If you're right-handed you'll probably have a natural tendency to skew the image slightly to the right, and vice versa if you're left-handed. When you view your image flipped, you can counteract that problem and fix any errors. This trick is particularly useful when doing portrait shots.

6 Sketch finished

The sketch stage is over. I took around 45 minutes to get this far, but don't be surprised if it takes longer. Two hours would be a good cut-off point before deciding on whether you want to work on it further. Once you get to this stage and you are happy with what you've done so far, it's time to enlarge the image. I change the DPI from 72 to 300, without touching the physical image size. This gives a print-ready size to work with while keeping my original dimensions intact.



Workshop

PRO SECRETS

Neutral start

Change the colour of your canvas matting or background from the default to something neutral that's easier on your eyes. I normally use a 90 per cent black background to frame my work as I paint, because there's nothing worse than dealing with low-contrast shadows close to a bright white background. To do this, select your foreground colour, choose the Paint Bucket tool and hold Shift while clicking on the background.



7 Rendering

Now comes the rendering stage, where you zoom in and do the same thing over the top of what you have, gradually building up detail levels as you go. I usually start with my focal point – the main character's face – and zoom in to 100 per cent to render up his features.

I have kept a copy of the sketch open to use as a reference, to ensure I don't lose the original feel as I progress. I open a new window for my image (Window > Arrange > New Window for "filename".psd). This enables me to see the whole image with one click, rather than have to zoom in and out constantly to see what I'm doing. This is why the two background images are in there. Usually I'd drag them onto my second monitor, because with CS2 I can drag windows outside the boundaries of the program. This is a great tip for dual monitor users.

8 Lifelike features

I block in his features, roughly, with the same hard round brush. To give him a bit more life and prevent the image from becoming too monotone, I use warm shades over the highlighted areas (pinks, reds and browns) with cool shades in the shadowed areas (blues and purples), over the top of the basic skintone colour that the lighting has

given me (green and yellow tones). Although this is a muted scene as far as colour goes, it's important to add variance to make it a believable scene. Flipping my image at this stage helps with the proportions and positioning of his facial features.

9 Realistic lighting

Moving down the main character, I do the same thing with his shoulder armour and jewellery, painting over the top and generally tightening it up. It is my focal point, so I want to render this small area first, to judge how the lighting affects the rest of the scene. I consider how the light will react to different surfaces. His dull bronze armour reflects less light than his jewellery and marginally less than his skin.



10 Background

With my focal point in place, I begin to fill out the scene by roughly rendering the building. For the straight lines, I turn off Opacity in the Brush settings (untick Other Dynamics), click at my starting point, hold down Shift and click again where I want my line to end, giving me a perfect straight edge. Using less contrast on the building than the focal point gives a better feeling of depth, because the further away something gets the less vibrant it becomes.



11 Smoothing out

Carrying on from the last step, I continue to smooth out the form of my main building and begin tightening the



outlines of the background cityscape. I start to work a little on the ground, using the Smudge tool (set to Opacity, the same as my brushes) and a large soft airbrush. I smooth out the roughness and remove any visible brushmarks left behind from my sketch, using the Colour Picker and picking up tones from the ground as I go.

With the Smudge tool, I then make horizontal sweeps across the image, closer together at the back and moving further apart as I come forward. This gives an uneven appearance that works better than if you were to use a brush and paint shadows and highlights.

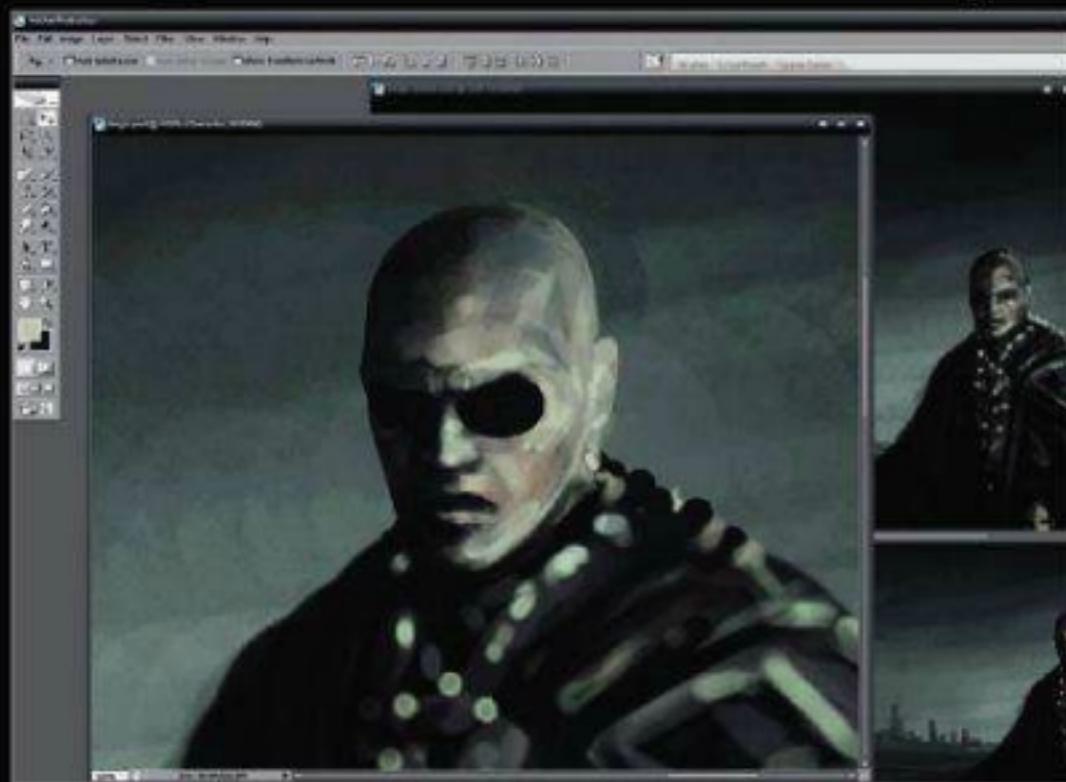
12 Fluffy sky

Next, I move to the background layer and apply a similar method to smooth out the sky. First, I choose a large, hard round smudge (about 100pt) and drag it around a little using small strokes, but just enough to nudge the pixels into large tufts.



It's time to move in with the airbrush. This process removes the roughness of the sketch and gives your sky a more fluffy look. Most of this work will eventually get painted over, but it gives you more control over cloud formations than if you started on a very smooth gradient. If you zoom in 100 per cent, you can see the rough areas that need to be fixed.

Once I have completed a basic sky, I go over it with a large soft-edged brush, set to Opacity again, picking up colours from the background and generally smoothing things out.

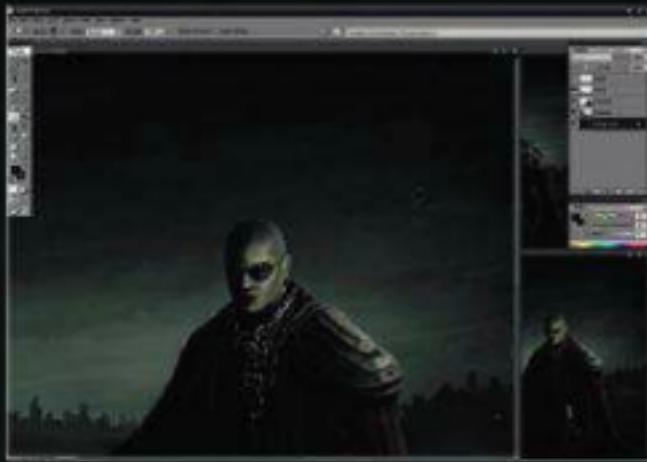


In depth Apocalyptic visions

13 Tufts of cloud

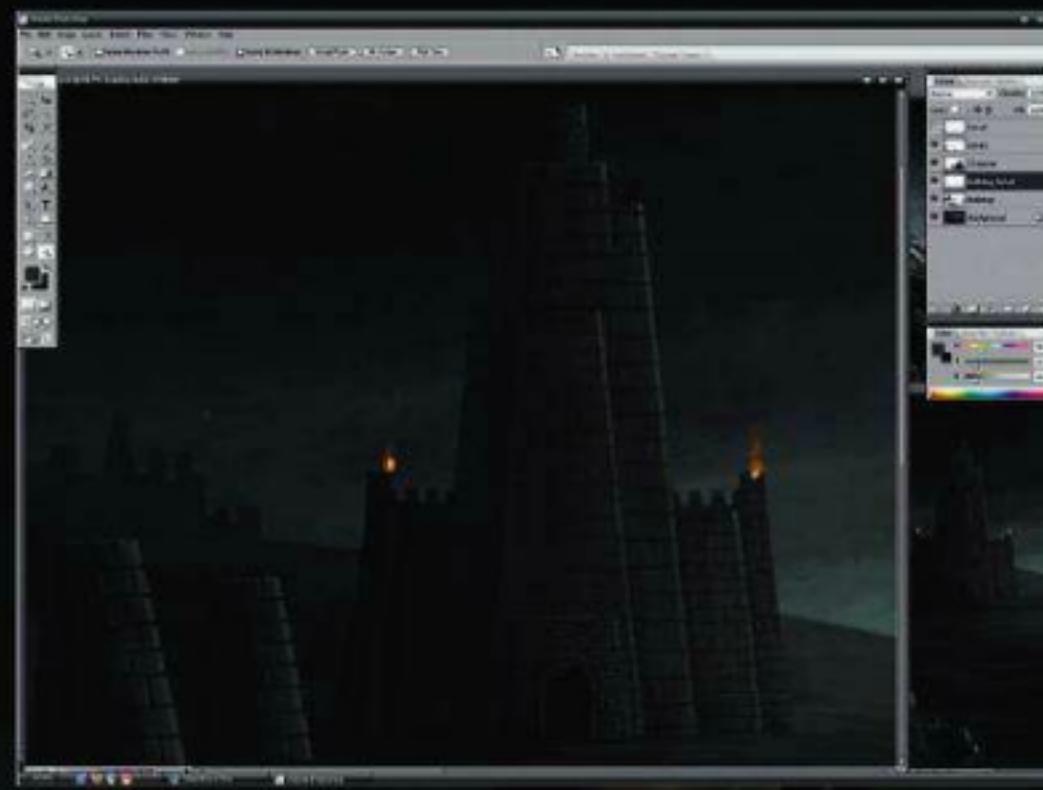
I select a hard round Smudge tool of 60pt to start work on the clouds. I gently move little areas around, creating small tufts to give the illusion of a cloud formation. I zoom out to 50 per cent for this, so I can see the whole sky.

It takes a little while before you see your formation in place, but once you're happy, zoom in to 100 per cent and repeat the process with a smaller Smudge tool (around 20pt) and tidy up the edges. Small strokes will create realistic-looking tufts of cloud. You can spend as little or as long as you like on this stage, but with a little more patience you can create dramatic skies.



14 Perfect face

Now my background has gone through a full rendering pass, I move back on to my main focal point – the characters. I start by getting the girl's face in place, because it's an integral part of the image. I decide it's necessary to get her finished before moving on to anything else. I prefer to flit between areas, painting small pieces at a time, because it helps to bring the image together as a whole and unify the lighting and mood.



15 Adding texture

Back to my main building. It's time to give it some texture. Using a small 3-5pt brush, I start painting in some brickwork using a dark colour which I choose from my shadowed area to the left. This breaks up the flatness that had let down the illustration until this point. The result is an image with more life. Once my brickwork is in place, I pick out highlights in the same way as before, but use the lightest colour on the building.

16 Unified shadows

With a small brush I start to unify the shadows where the building meets the ground. I adopt horizontal strokes, to add more detail to the ground and make the buildings look more naturally placed in their environment. I bring the sky and background together with a large



soft airbrush, painting delicately over the horizon and making it lighter as it goes back.

17 Finishing off

Finally, I return to the characters and render the cloth surrounding them. I pay close attention at this stage to the contrasts. For this stage, it's worth zooming right in and using one colour as your darkest shadow. Never use pure black because it's the most difficult shade to judge. Besides, while it might look good on one screen, on another you can almost guarantee it will stick out.

I check over my work and remove any streaks of colour that should not be there, then I unify my shadows. I start to add the finishing touches of detail to bring the image together – for example, the rock wall in the foreground, small stones on the floor and the wishing well.

We're now really close to completion. I decide that the only things I need to add are some more debris and blowing leaves to give it more atmosphere. I create these leaves by simply blocking in leaf shapes and using the Motion Blur filter to give them a little 'movement.' And of course, I finish off his sword.



Monsit Jangariyawong

LOCATION: Thailand
WEB: <http://monsitj.atspace.com>
EMAIL: monsij@hotmail.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop, wings3d



Monsit graduated with a BA in architecture six years ago. Since then he's been working as a digital artist. Now based in Thailand, his first loves are fantasy and sci-fi art. "They've always been my favourite themes," says Monsit. "It's fun to create things from your imagination, whether it's a monster or a space ship." His beautifully realised images draw on myth, film and Japanese manga.

1 DARK ASSASSIN Created with Photoshop, it features a special agent in a galactic cold war scenario. "He has the ability to sneak into the enemy base and complete the objective," Monsit explains. "But this new mission is not as easy as he thought - now it's time to test his close combat fighting."

2 MANTIS QUEEN This character is a complicated figure. Unlike your regular mantis, she isn't content to just eat her mate: "He must live as long as she wants," says Monsit. "The undead man is doomed to spend his life as her servant, lover or prey, depending on her emotion."



2



 **Guo-Shau Chung**

LOCATION: Taiwan
WEB: www.wretch.cc/album/krenz
EMAIL: hydrakrenz@hotmail.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop 6



Guo-Shau Chung, a 20-year-old artist from Taiwan, may be better known by the pen name Cushart Krenz.

His outstanding manga-style artworks are inspired by the likes of Hyung-tae Kim, Range Murata and Masakazu Katsura. "I'm hoping you can come to my website," says Guo-Shau, "and give me some advice." Well, what are you waiting for?

1 CHINESE SHAMAN This is the ultimate in cage fighting fantasy, according to Guo-Shau's imagination: "It's the Chinese Shaman vs Zombie."

2 COVER ART This manga-style image created by Guo-Shau was used as the cover artwork for a Taiwanese fantasy novel.



2



Rafi Adrian Zulkarnain

LOCATION: Indonesia
WEB: www.solidgrafi.cjb.net/
EMAIL: solidgrafi@yahoo.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop, 3ds max



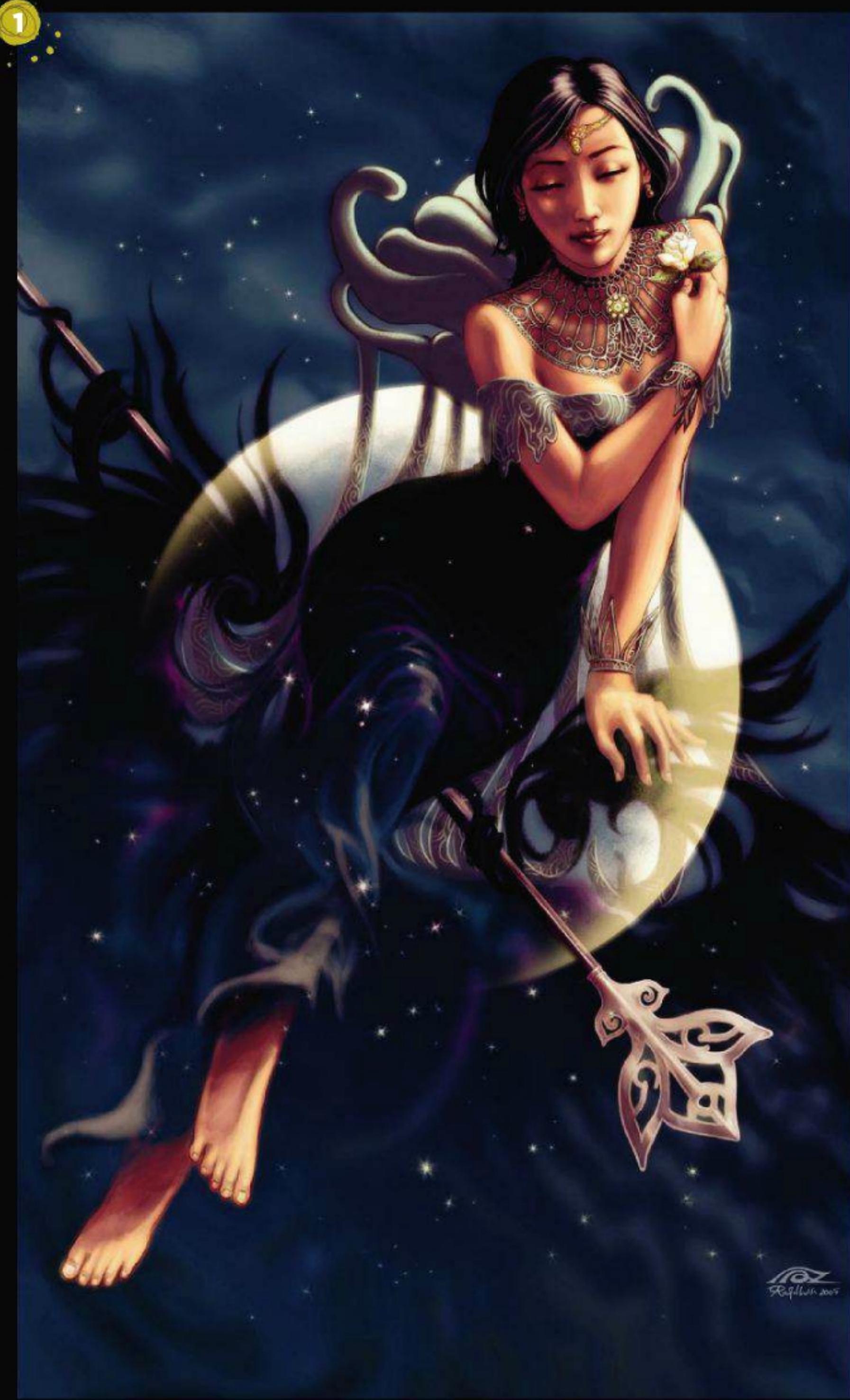
Though he has a background in traditional media, Rafi likes to mix it up with 3D and 2D computer graphics.

"My style of art developed from natural, through surreal, to fantasy art," he explains.

Like many artists, Rafi finds the technical nature of 3D a little restrictive, "so right now I'm focusing more on 2D." But he acknowledges: "It's not only technique that matters, idea are important too. There must be a balance."

1 HIGH PRIESTESS The High Priestess is a bit like a moon goddess. She's a fine example of Rafi's mastery of 2D digital media.

2 BIRDS OF PREY One of Rafi's first works of 2006, also in 2D. "I'm postponing 3D until the technology offers more freedom and usability," he adds.



Rafi 2006

2



SCYTHE WOLF

The lovely Lulu runs around with a giant scythe and a pack of wolves. Just the kind of girl your parents would love you to bring home. A demonstration of Robert Chang's amazing attention to detail.

Artist **PROFILE**

Robert Chang



AGE: 32

COUNTRY: China

Robert Chang is an accomplished digital painter, photographer, comic artist and director, based in Fuzhou, China.

SOFTWARE USED:

Photoshop and Painter with graphics tablet

WEB: www.ethereality.info



The art of ROBERT CHANG



"I have big dreams and lofty goals. Whatever I've done pales in comparison to what I'm trying to accomplish." Meet our first ever 'Master of Art.'

Robert Chang is versatile: comic book artist /writer, screenwriter, 3D artist, director, photographer; the list goes on. His list of locations is pretty cool too: Taiwan, San Francisco, Kuala Lumpur and now Fuzhou, China. A native of Taiwan, Robert moved to the US aged 11. At 13 he "fell head over heels in love with" the film *Macross: Do You Remember Love?* "I knew after watching that film that I wanted to be a storyteller who combined art, story, music and movement into one cohesive piece of work."

Straight from high school Robert became a freelance comic book artist. After four years of graft, he got the green light from Sirius Entertainment for *Enchanted*, a dark gothic/fantasy epic he created, wrote and illustrated. "The money was shit," he recalls, "but I was at least telling my own stories."

For eight long years, times were tough.

"Comic books were hard. Unless you were a superstar, you couldn't make a living, and I didn't enjoy drawing other people's stories." But *Enchanted* led to a stint in the games industry, initially on *Prince of Persia 3D*.

At the end of 2001, he went to see his mother in China, intending a short visit. But then he met and married Elena, and found the emotional support he wanted. A couple of years later, long-standing online buddy Steven Stahlberg, the CG maverick and boss of Optidigit, offered Robert a job. He and Elena moved to Malaysia and Robert upped a gear, writing and drawing as well as directing and producing.

And yet, Robert says, "I don't think I've accomplished much at all." Among his ambitions: "To win major film awards as a writer/director, to have my novels published to critical acclaim in the literary circle, to release albums of my music."

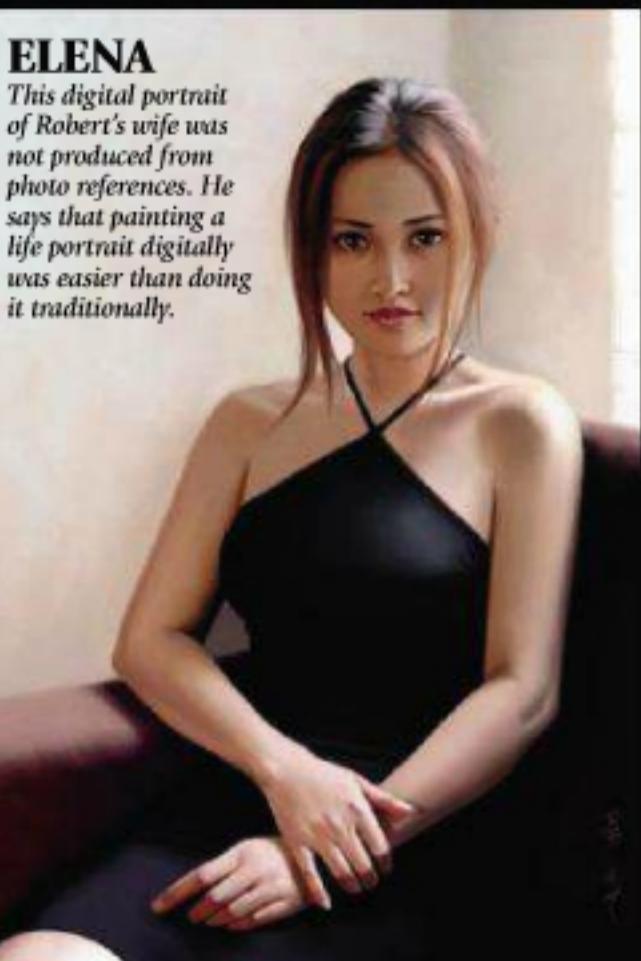


ROBERT CHANG

Above, Robert is determined to master every creative avenue. Below, his wife Elena has given him artistic inspiration; his appreciation shines out in the work quality.

ELENA

This digital portrait of Robert's wife was not produced from photo references. He says that painting a life portrait digitally was easier than doing it traditionally.



The art of Robert Chang

Robert Chang's VITAL STATISTICS

And a bit of personal philosophy...



Place of birth

Taipei, Taiwan

Date of birth

December 31, 1972

Mother tongue?

Mandarin Chinese

Favourite colour

Black, but as I get older, my wardrobe and furnishing palette is expanding. Now I also like grey, white, beige, burgundy, silver - but it really depends on what it's for.

Favourite traditional artist

There's more than one: John Singer Sargent, JW Waterhouse, Gil Elvgren, Richard Schmid, Jeremy Lipking, Pino, Ian McCaig, Ronnie Del Carmen and a bunch of others.

Favourite digital artist

Craig Mullins, Justin Sweet and Xiaoye Chen.

Favourite place

Japan, but I've always wanted to see Europe, and I suspect I'll love it. San Francisco is damn cool too.

First memory

First day in kindergarten, making a necklace by cutting different coloured straws and stringing them together. But I'm not sure if that's really the earliest memory.

First love

For puppy love, it was first grade - my first girlfriend. She was pretty, popular, had good grades, and I was the bad boy who caused a lot of trouble.

Most prized possession

A Chinese novel entitled Journey. I lost that book once after lending it to a friend, and I ended up spending seven years looking for another copy. It was long out of print. It's a profound and moving book about the choices and sacrifices we make in life.

One thing you would like to do but would be too scared

Take the law into my own hands when dealing with total scumbags of the earth.

Single most important piece of professional advice

Guarantee your financial security first, indulge your passions second. It's no fun being a starving artist.

Single most important piece of life advice

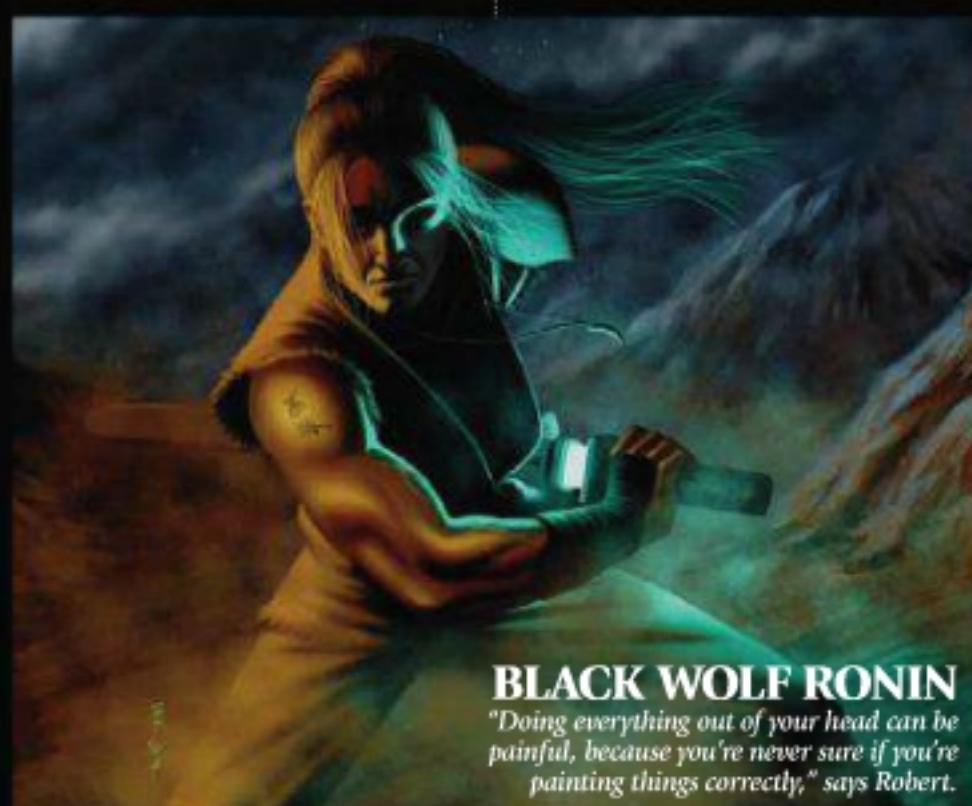
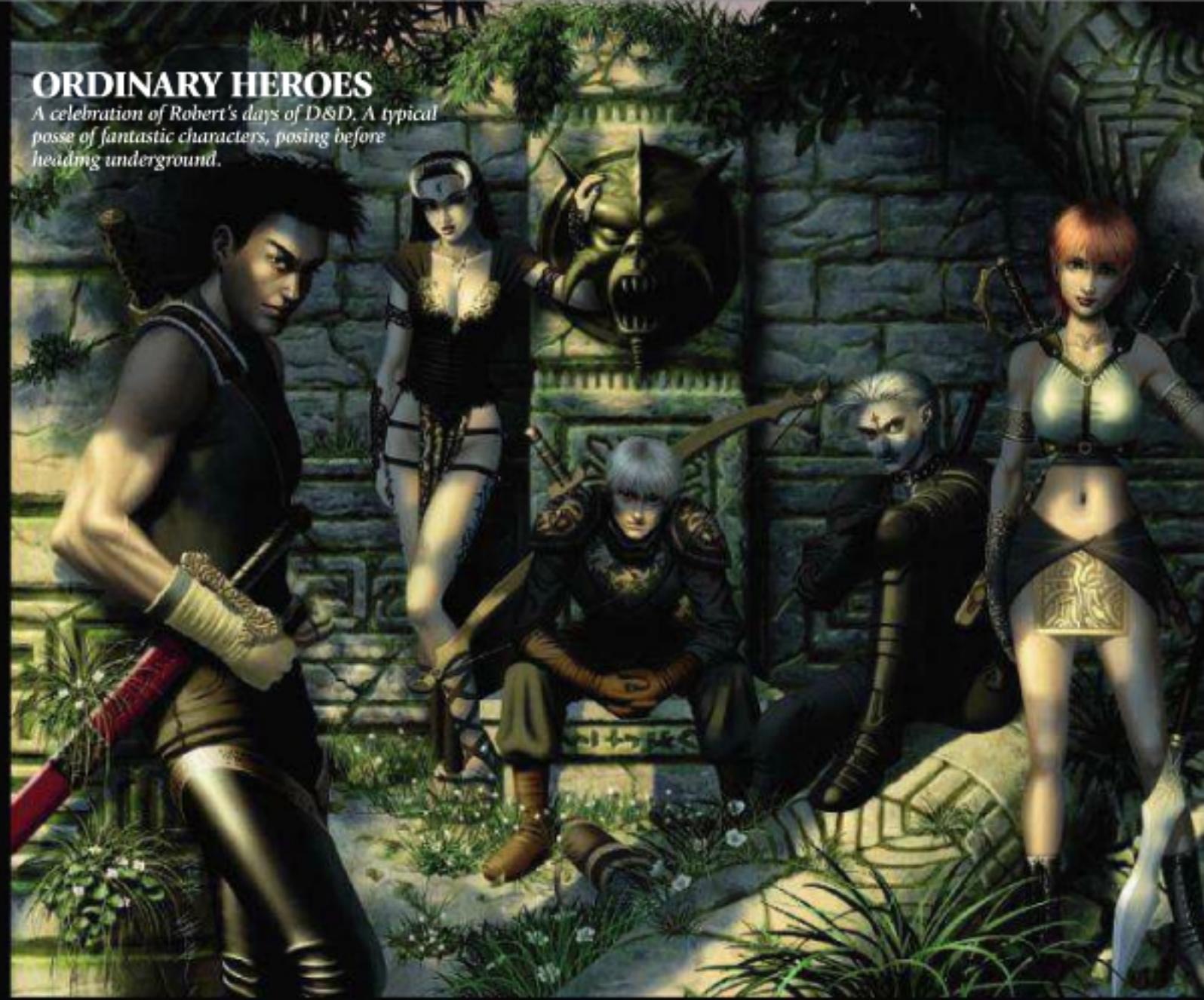
Be a good person and make changes to yourself if you had done wrong. Pay attention to the world around you - you don't know everything and it would benefit you to remain open-minded.

Fate or self-determination: which do you believe in?

Both. I think some events are predetermined, while some depend on your actions. Fate is like a main road, and self-determination enables you to choose the various little detours and paths and shortcuts on that main road, but the main direction is determined by fate.

ORDINARY HEROES

A celebration of Robert's days of D&D. A typical posse of fantastic characters, posing before heading underground.



BLACK WOLF RONIN

"Doing everything out of your head can be painful, because you're never sure if you're painting things correctly," says Robert.



MOOD

A famous cover, used for Ballistic Publishing's d'artiste book. "This was the last piece I based on reference that wasn't my own," says Robert.



ROBERT
CHANG'S

Artist tip

Impressions

"I find that the impression of something is a lot more important than the details. A lot of the time, my sketches and unfinished paintings look better, because they captured the impression of something - the essence and the spontaneity. I'm trying to get my finished work to have that kind of quality, and that means you have to be very careful to not over-render things."

BLOOD SIREN

"Blood Sirens are cursed to be forever falling in love with and longing for men they can't have and can't get close to," explains Robert. "The consequences are pretty messy. You can relive the gore via a tutorial on his website."



Painter & Photoshop **DIGITAL FANTASY PAINTING**

Artist **PROFILE**

Robert Chang

COUNTRY: China
CLIENTS: Optidigit, Red Orb, Sirius Entertainment



Robert grew up in Taiwan and the US. He's a self-taught artist, writer, composer, photographer and director. He's worked in all those fields but most recently in video games and CG animation. www.ethereality.com

Try it yourself

Download a Zip archive of support files from <http://preview.tinyURL.com/2edz9z>. You'll find a trial version of Photoshop CS3 at www.adobe.com/go/tryphotoshop, and a trial of Painter X at www.corel.com/paintex.

This tutorial guides you through each step of painting a fantasy digital painting using Photoshop and Painter. By **Robert Chang**

This tutorial is for my newest painting, *Till Death Do Us Part*, and it depicts a family of three (mum, dad and baby) being hunted by demon stalkers. The parents protect the baby with their lives, while the demon stalkers conjure dark magic using the skull of a fallen comrade as the source of power. The father counters the assault with his own magic, channelled through his sword.

This tutorial will take you from the sketch all the way to the finished

painting. You should be fairly familiar with Photoshop and Painter for this tutorial, as some of the tips are exclusive to each software. However, the best way to learn from a painting tutorial is to not get hung up on the software details, but to understand the mentality and the approach of the artist.

Today's software is highly competitive and other programs often have similar tools; that's why understanding how and why an artist uses a specific tool is more important than duplicating the tutorial

step-by-step. Ideally, you should have some basic art foundation to attempt this tutorial – whether it's from formal training or just time spent as a hobbyist.

You should also have a tablet suitable for digital painting, such as a Wacom Intuos or Graphire product, or their equivalent. Digital painting with a mouse is like cooking with a hammer – a special kind of punishment to test your tolerance for lack of efficiency and ergonomics. My motto is: gimme a tablet or nothing at all.

In depth: Digital fantasy painting



1 The first sketch

I always start with a very rough sketch using desktop resolution (either 1600x1200 or 1280x1024). I have this habit of filling the blank canvas with light grey, because a glowing white monitor is too harsh to stare at. I never draw on the background layer, because having a separate layer for the drawing is easier to deal with when you start making corrections and edits later. I always do the early stages in Photoshop because it's so much better at editing than Painter, and there's always a lot of editing in the early stages.

The first sketch is normally so rough that the only person who could understand it is myself. Once I'm happy with the composition, I'll fade that sketch layer to about 20 per cent opacity, open up another layer and then do a clean drawing using the faded sketch as a guide.

In case you don't know, flipping the image horizontally (or looking in the mirror) is an old illustrator's trick. I have never seen a scientific explanation for this reasoning, but my guess is it's because we all have a bias, depending on whether we're left or right-handed.

Favouring one would mean that your brain is wired to naturally lean in one direction, so when you look at your drawing in the mirror, you'll notice what appeared to be proportionally fine has obvious mistakes such as crooked eyes or slanted vertical lines. I flip my image horizontally as soon as my brain gets

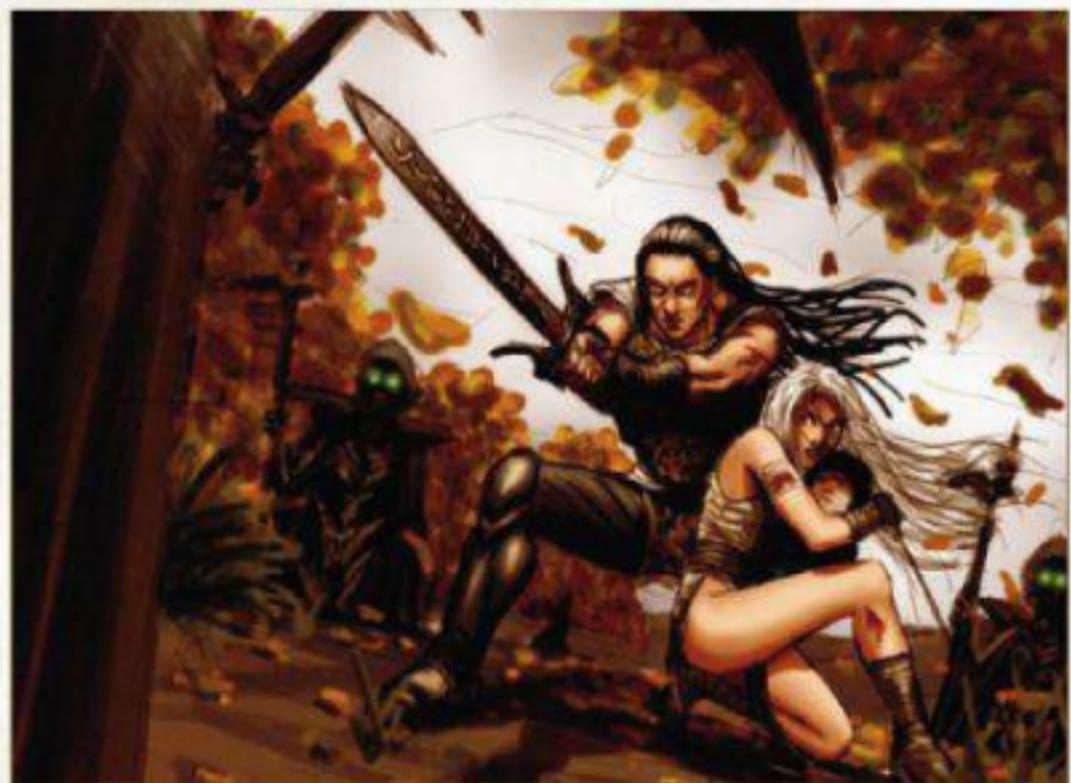
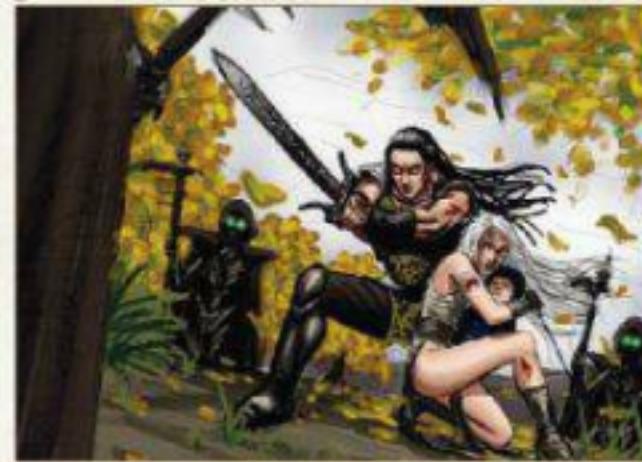
used to seeing the shapes, so that means I'll flip the image between five and 10 times over a couple of hours when I'm painting.

I wanted a dynamic feel when depicting this scene, so I used a tilted horizon and a slight worm's eye angle. Usually, when I'm happy with the drawing, I'll go ahead and delete any sketch layers I don't need any more, and I'll also turn the background back to white and save a JPEG version for the sake of documenting the steps.

2 The colour rough

This stage is what I call the colour rough stage, where colours are blocked in quickly to be tested out. I usually put the colours on another layer, and either have the drawing layer on top as a Multiply layer, or vice versa – as long as the drawing can be seen clearly along with the colours.

When blocking in colours, I'm basically testing the colour scheme to see if it works. I'll also do some fast shading as well, to get a feel for the lighting I



want. If everything looks fine, I'll move to the next stage.

PRO SECRETS

Back track

I always compare my current progress with earlier versions. The reason is because frequently, while painting, I'll refine/change/add/erase in such a way that actually has negative effects on the painting. Sometimes I would spend a long time refining a face, then when comparing it to an earlier version, realise that the earlier version looked better. When that happens, I'll cut and paste the old version over the new one (just the area that looked better in the older version).

3 Colour evaluation

In this case, I didn't like the original colours that I'd done, so I went ahead and tweaked the colour rough into something closer to what I had in mind. I knew I wanted autumn colours, and I decided either an overcast or partly cloudy sky would be best to convey the feeling I was after.

4 On with the painting

Now the painting phase officially happens. It's actually not a good idea to separate drawing and painting, because you never really stop drawing while painting, but for the sake of clarity, I make a clear distinction between the two. This helps to organise the process.

When I start this stage, I always fade the drawing enough so that it doesn't make the values/colours hard to read. I sometimes go ahead and erase parts of the drawing that I don't need any



Workshop

more, because the colour rough has already defined them. Usually, though, I just fade the lines so that I can still see them but they don't overpower the image.

Next, I throw all caution to the wind and flatten all layers. Yep, this is when serious business begins. I would then most likely start the official painting on a separate layer, so the colour rough is undisturbed. There's a good reason for that, which I'll get into later.

As you can see, I decided that I wanted to have some blue in the sky instead of a completely overcast sky. This part was done in Painter because I wanted the wet-on-wet aspect of Painter's brushes for the clouds. Photoshop cannot simulate wet-on-wet painting. I also made sure the figures' skin tones reflected the blue of the sky. I started painting dad's face with broad brush strokes. I pretty much nailed the look I wanted right off the bat, something which rarely happens!

In the early stages, I tend to be bolder with my brushwork, then as the painting progresses I become more cautious, which is a bad thing because all the spontaneity goes out the window and things start to stiff up. Ideally, I should be bold throughout the entire painting process, not just early on...

5 Work on the sky

I decided that I wanted the overcast sky back. However, this time I wanted an over-exposed look, much like in photography where the sky appears overblown. I then gave the background a hazy look, a bit like fog or atmospheric haze. I also made lots of changes to the dad's face.



6 Stop and review

I decided I liked the old version better, so I cut and pasted it back. Notice that I also wanted the blue sky back again (this time it stayed). This is why I said to save steps, so that you can compare the older versions to see if you're going in the right direction or not. Also, when I said it's good to keep the colour rough on its own layer, it's so that you can click on and off to compare and see if you're doing all right compared to the feel you created originally.

A lot of changes happened here. The mum's face and body proportions became totally different, but I hated them after comparing the new version to the older one. I can't stress enough how important it is to keep comparing to the old versions, because you could veer off the right track and not know it. I tried a different design for the demon stalkers, but it didn't seem to work. I also designed the skull scythe weapon, but it didn't feel right.

I added the mountains in the back, using one of the Wet Acrylic brushes in Painter, as it gave me the squiggly bristle lines that I wanted. I also changed the dimension of the image to be a standard desktop proportion.

7 Make your changes

I changed mum back, but altered her pose a little. Dad's legs were moved to a different angle. You can see that the leaves have gone from the top right corner. I wasn't sure if I wanted them any more, so I got rid of them for the moment and liked how the sky opened up for a different feel. I also decided that the mega shoulder pad armour cloak design for the demon stalkers looked silly, so I changed it back to a plain hood and cloak. I also thought it

might look better to have double-bladed scythes, as they look a bit like a cross, and I can't recall the last time I saw anyone design a double-bladed scythe. The mountain got tightened up a bit, and I painted the autumn coloured trees on the left. I used a palette knife with the Random jitter on for that impressionistic leafy look.

Here's an important point: if you're about to make some big changes, always do it on a separate layer, because it's extra security in case you don't like your changes. Working that way in Painter is a problem, however, because some of Painter's brushes will leave artifacts (dark, random marks) on the spot where you paint on a blank layer that has no background.

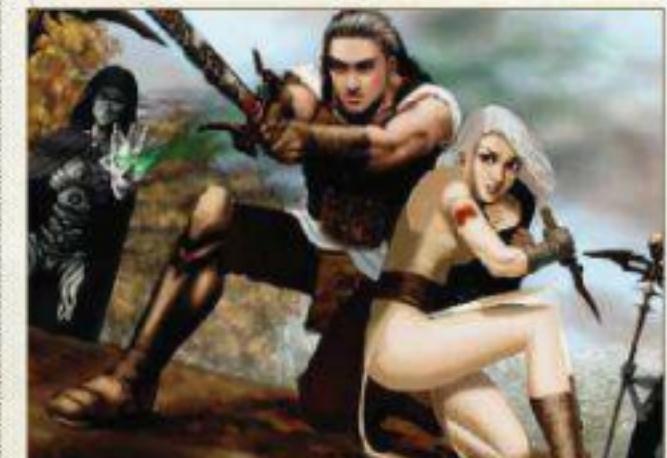


8 Character assessment

The demon stalkers got redesigned. I wanted them to be more like puppets, with empty ivory shells filled with black smoke (demonic creatures with no set shape), and I wanted the smoke to drift out of the cracks and each orifice of the puppet shell. I also thought the brown of their cloaks made brown too much of a dominant colour, so I changed this.

9 Lighting

I felt the sky was too dark, and I remembered an older step where the sky looked like it was overblown and overcast. I tweaked the sky to look similar to that older version, using the Histogram tool. I noticed the lighting on the family and the background were inconsistent, so I changed the values on



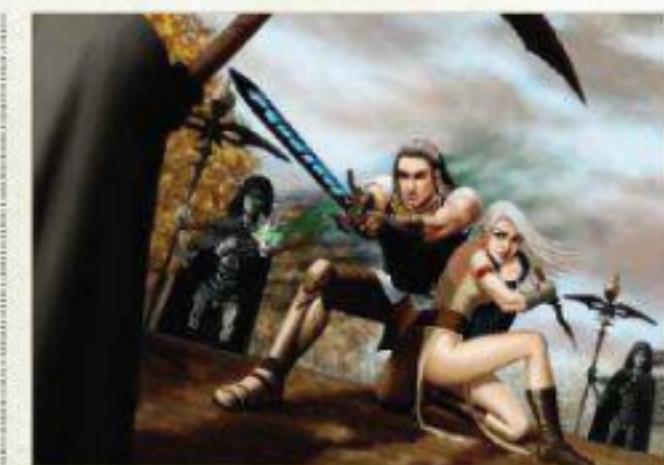
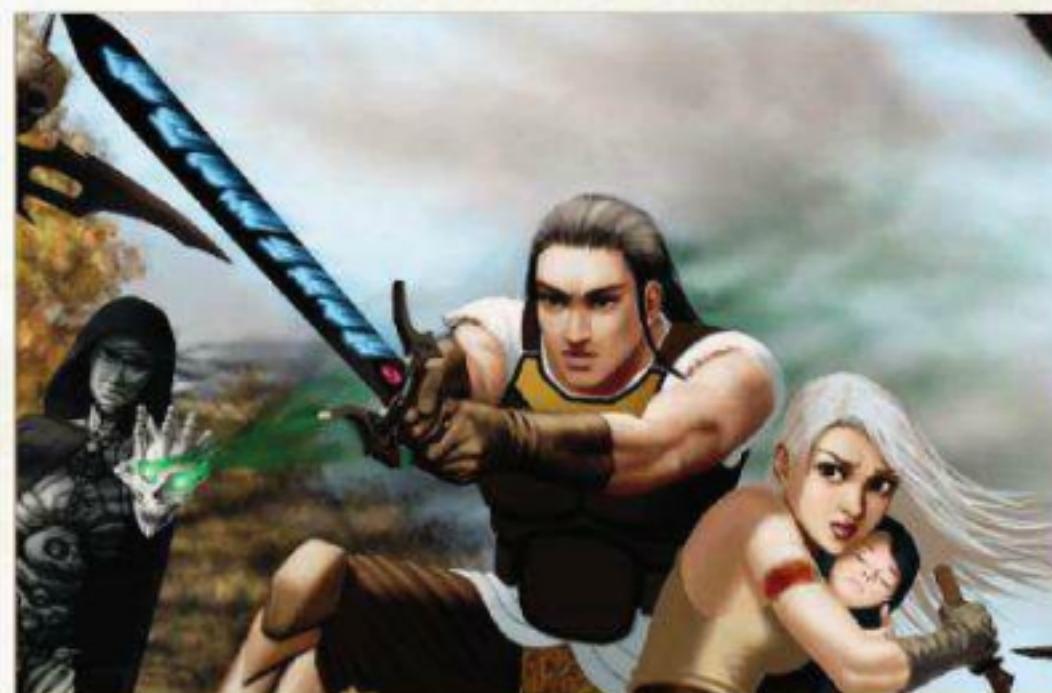
In depth: Digital fantasy painting

the background to match the values on the family. I gave the demon stalker in the middle a demon skull, so he could use it to channel the power of a fallen comrade (the green ghost fire).

Remember I said to keep things on separate layers if you can? Here, I changed the position of mum's leg and, because the family is on a separate layer, it was easy to make changes. You can see that the old colour rough is still underneath where the leg used to be, so that means I had to paint more background to cover it up.

10 Trial and error

Sometimes you get into the 'zone' and just keep on painting. Here, I was in the zone painting the dad and mum's faces. I thought that I was doing fine until I checked against the previous version and realised that the older one looked much better. The newer version had more detail and was technically more accurate, but remember this advice: it's always better to err in the name of aesthetics than to look ugly for the sake of technicality.



12 Decoration

Decorating always takes a long time, because you might paint some intricate pattern for a shirt or a sculpted relief on some building and then decide that you hate it. You'd have to go back to the drawing board and come up with a new design. In this case, I painted patterns and sculpted relief for dad's armour. The carved wolf's face on dad's belly armour plate was a spur-of-the-moment idea, which I think works well. I also spent some time refining the family's muscle definitions, skin and consistency in lighting.

13 Consistency

After the above step, I had to do some more refining for consistency in values and lighting on mum and dad, finish their hair, and add more design elements to mum's outfit. She had seemed too plain next to dad's fancy outfit. For painting the ground, I went for a new approach – I just randomly applied any colour that was remotely suitable for autumn colours, then used various blending brushes in Painter and tightened them together.



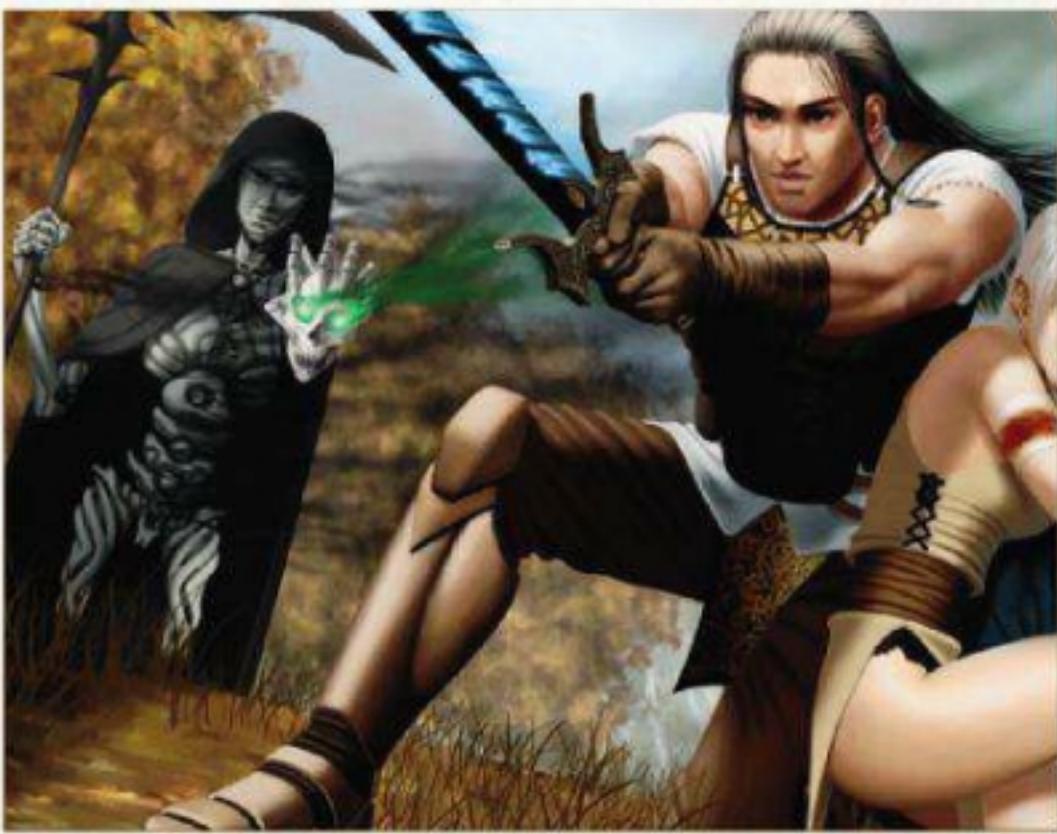
11 Body shapes

I gave the dad glowing runes on his sword and a bit of a glow trail. I also cleaned up dad's entire body. I painted in clean, flat colour bases for various parts of his outfit, so I could start painting in the decorations and patterns. I also painted his leg armour. At this point, I felt a bit insecure about the way the mum's legs were lit, so I had my wife pose for me and took some reference photos, and they definitely helped a lot.

I had put off painting the baby since the beginning, because I had never painted a baby before. I began by studying a bunch of baby photos on the internet and made some mental notes. Among the points I noticed were that babies have really large eyes and tiny noses, and their features are all soft curves, bunched together like a cat. I think I ended up with a pretty okay-looking baby.



Workshop



14 Rough him up

I noticed that the shape of one of the clouds happened to mirror the shape of the scythe in the foreground. I decided that I had to adjust the cloud shape so there wouldn't be any weird or obvious tangents. I then started to paint in the grass in the darkest value first. Dad looked a bit soft, so I roughed him up by giving him a five o' clock shadow, using one of the bristle brushes in Painter, and some loose strands of hair on the forehead.

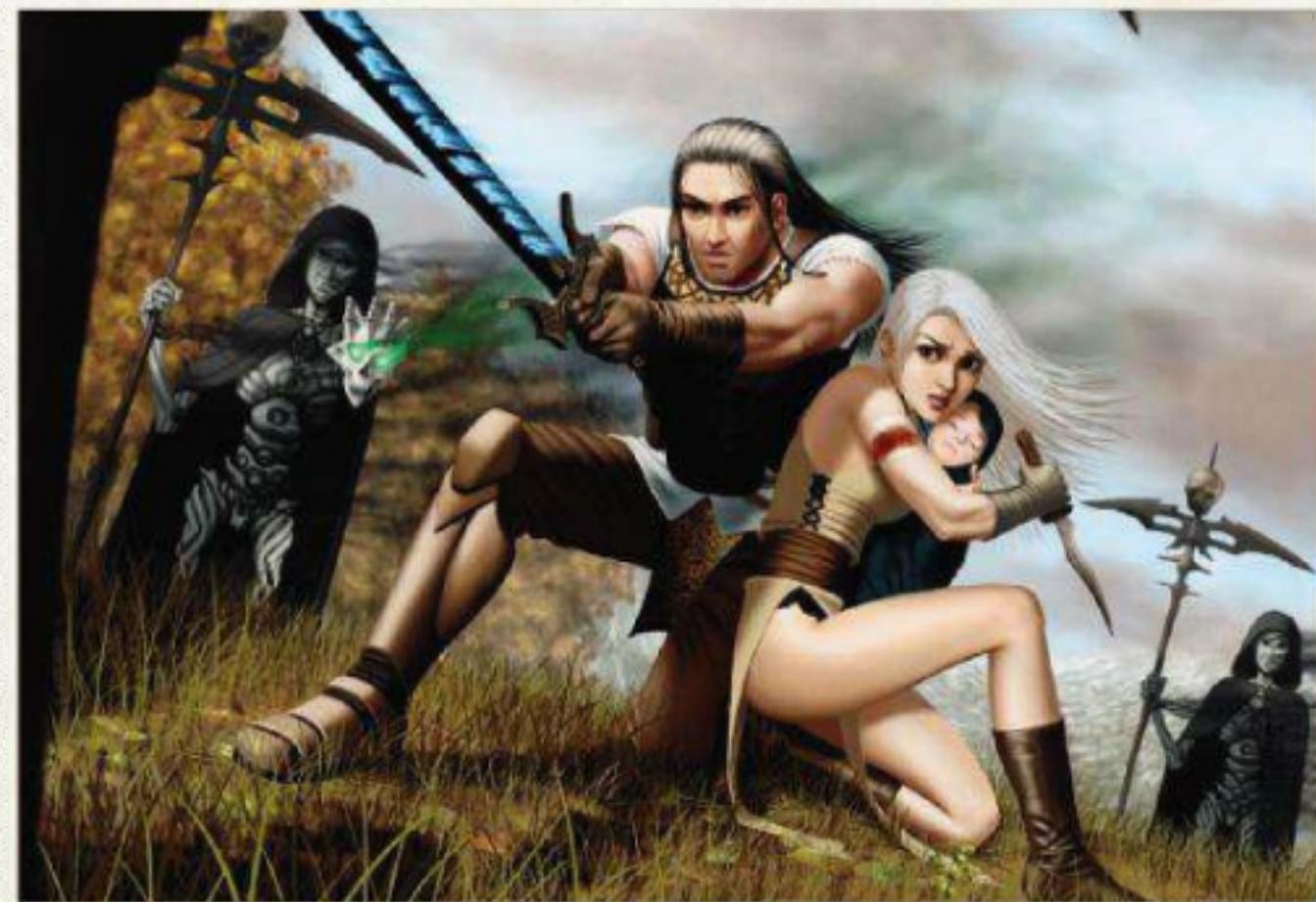
15 Grass layers

I painted the second layer of grass with a different value and colour. Then I added more layers of grass. I ended up with something like 10 layers of different colour/value of grass. I had to carefully keep track of which ones were behind the family, and which ones were crushed underneath their feet. To paint the cast shadows from the

PRO SECRETS

Layer system

Although I hate having too many layers, I try to keep them separated for as long as my sanity can take. This is especially important for complex paintings with layers of background, middleground, foreground and so on. At the very least, I try to keep the background and foreground on separate layers, because it makes drastic changes much less frightening. However, for simple paintings that aren't elaborate in composition, I prefer working on just one layer if possible - it feels more like painting.



blades, I began by collapsing all the grass layers. Then I copied that layer onto the clipboard, undid the collapse, pasted in the clipboard, turned that layer into a single earth toned multiply layer at 50 per cent opacity, then transformed it so that it sat at the angle the sun was shining down.

For better control of lighting consistency, I had to isolate each grass layer and either add shadows or add highlights. I also decided to add some fallen leaves. I chose to paint only one leaf, then I duplicated it many times into different colours and orientations. I treated the leaves with an eraser to give each one a more unique shape. I introduced a few holes, made by bugs chewing on them.

16 Never-ending story

Below is the finished painting... or not. I always find things to change or add after I've decided a painting is finished and the signature is signed. This time, I realised the mum and dad looked too clean, so I gave them bruises, blood stains, dried mud and cuts.

One of my favourite parts of a finished painting is finally being able to collapse a bunch of layers into fewer layers or just flatten the whole image. Similar to when film makers say "It's a wrap!" or the video game creators say "Ship it!"

I learned some things that I didn't expect to learn while painting this piece. I hope this tutorial reflects the lessons I've learned, and that you've enjoyed reading them. ■





1

Keun-chul Jang

LOCATION: Korea
WEB: www.keunchul.vsix.net
EMAIL: jkcl982@naver.com
SOFTWARE: Painter, Photoshop

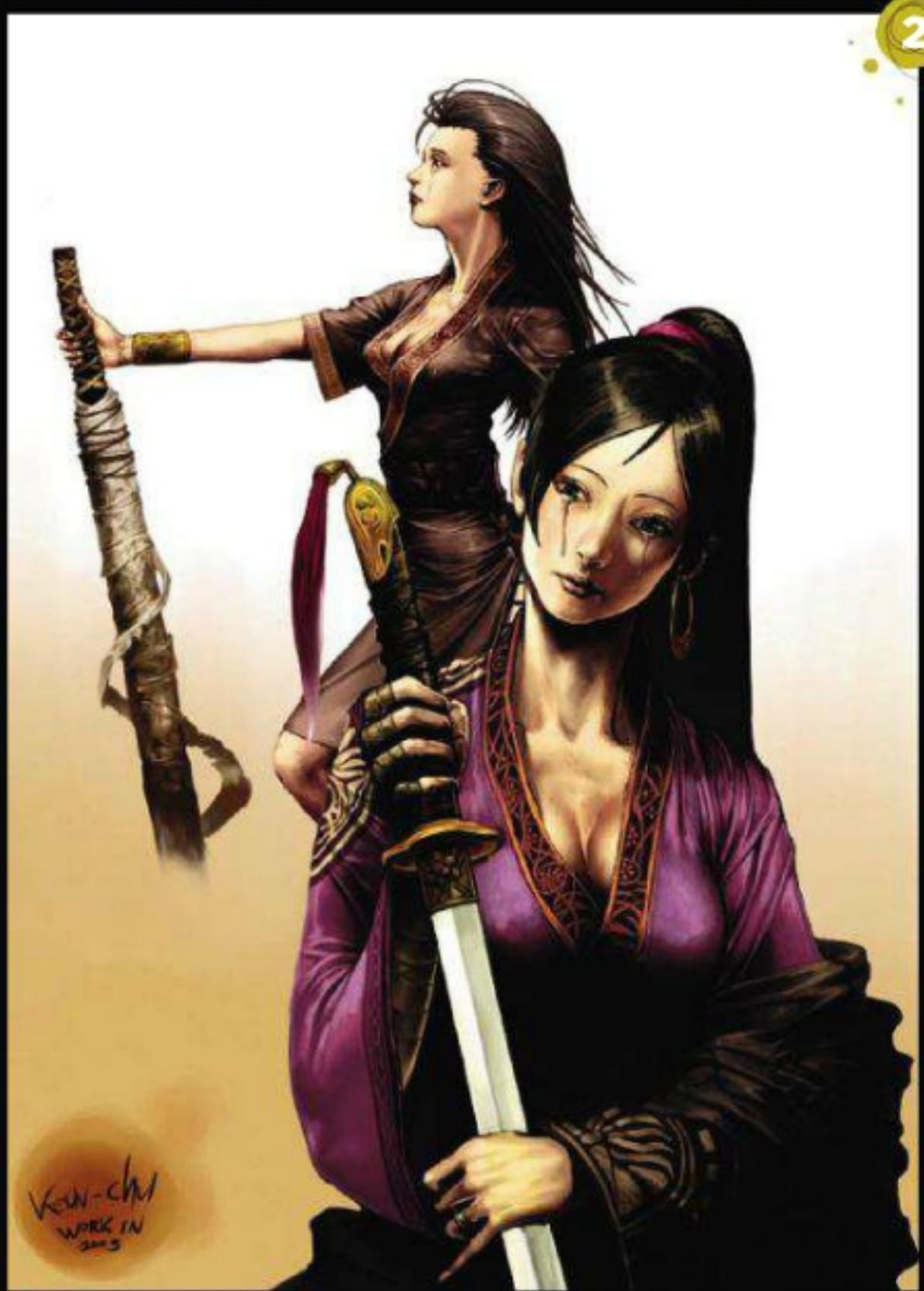


Keun-chul, also known as Iron Brush, is among a new generation of Korean artists who are producing amazing artwork. He uses beautifully deep textures, inherited from a background in traditional media. "I loved comics when I was small but I didn't paint much till I began to study illustration," he says. "Korea has loads of great CG sites. Through those I took an interest in digital art." He progressed from a manga style into his own look which has brought him work on book covers and game art.

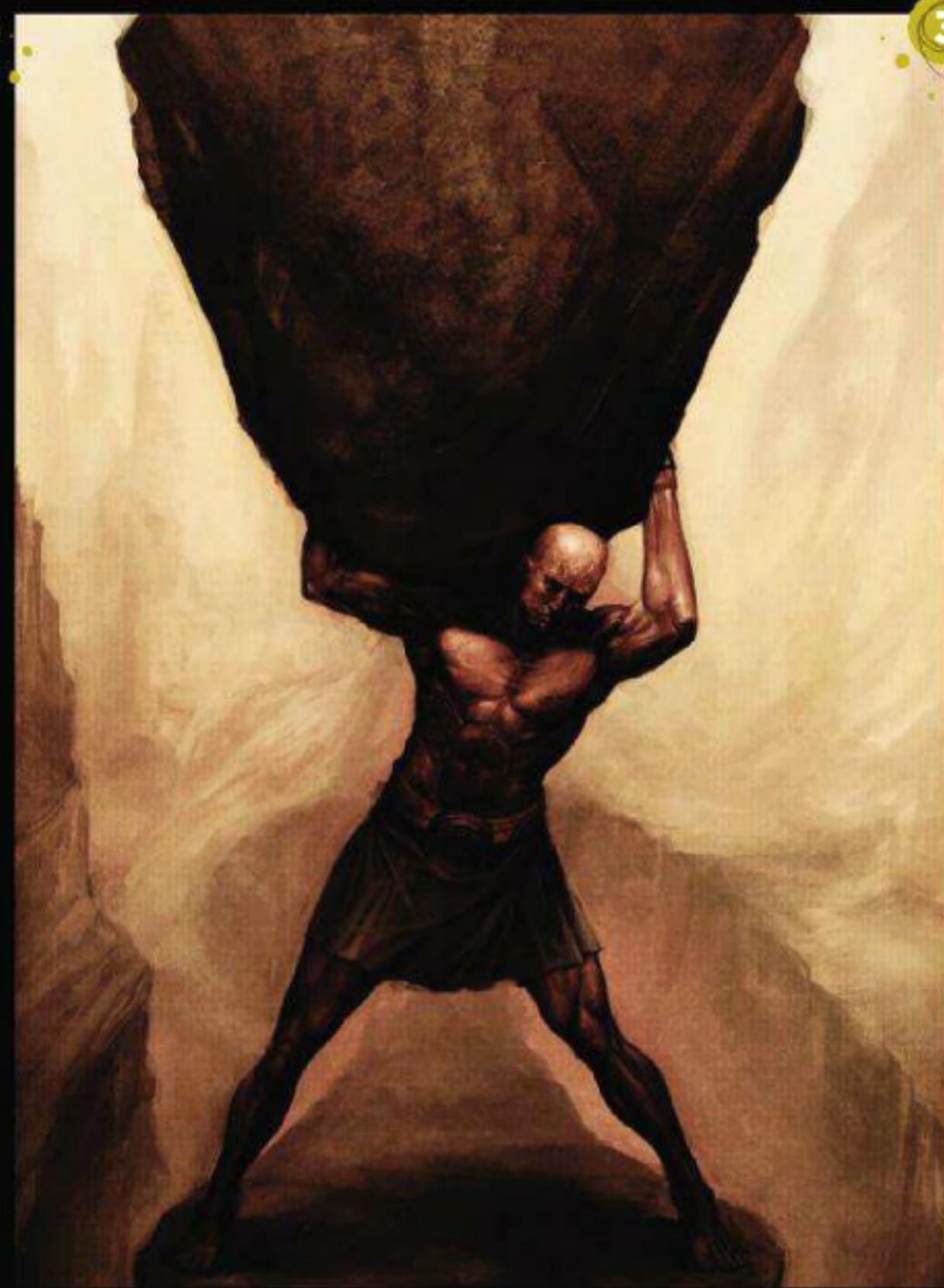
1 050719D A kind of organic future-tech from the mind of Iron Brush.

2 ILLUSTO There is a surprising amount of emotion conveyed here, but don't let that fool you. Mess with this pair and they'll have your head on a stick.

3 MACHO That looks heavy! Iron Brush shows how to convey depth, power and solidity with pixels.



2



3

 **Aaron Sng**

LOCATION: Singapore
WEB: www.aerythes.com
EMAIL: sng@aerythes.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop

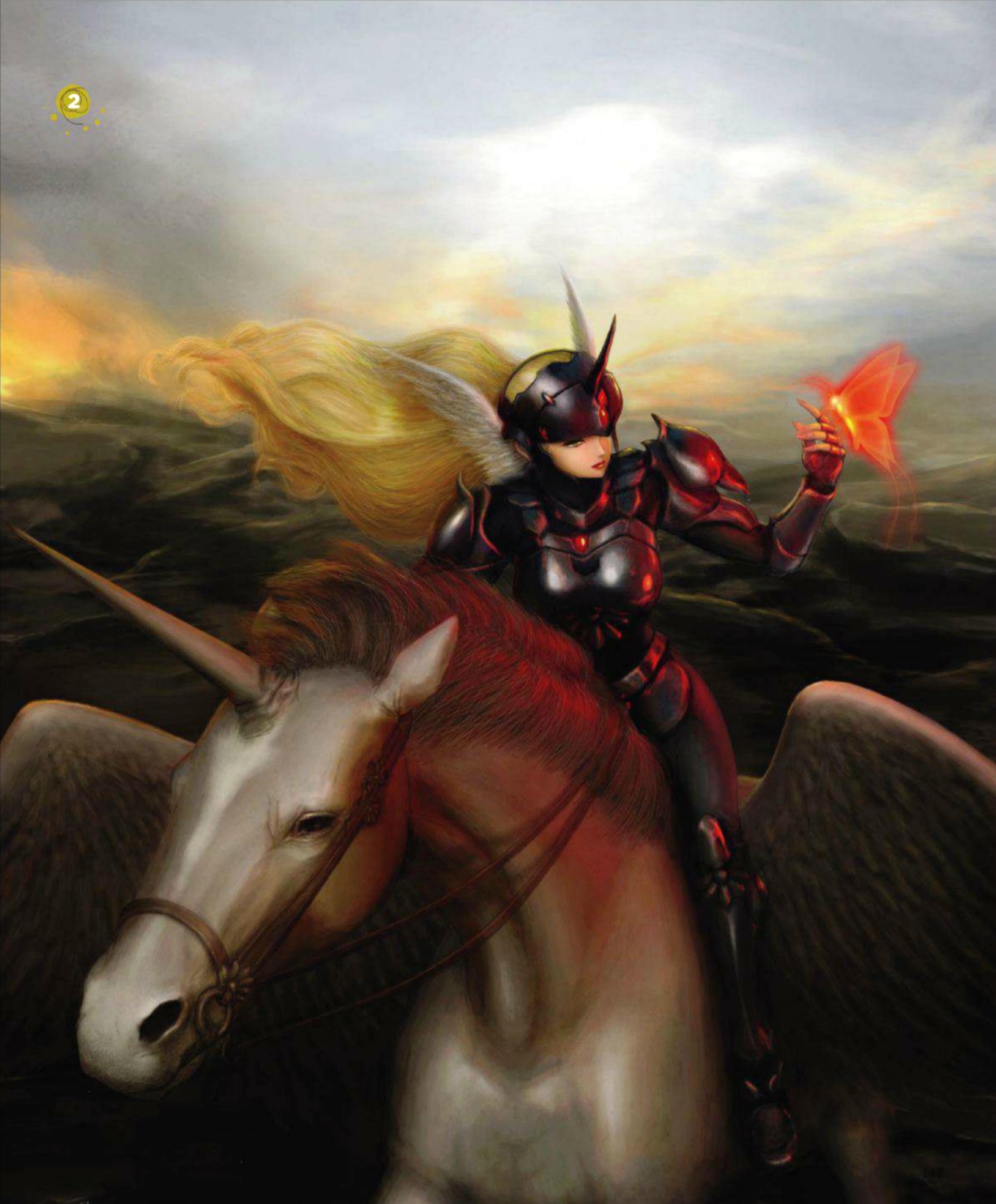


"I started doodling before I began schooling," says Aaron, poetically. As a youngster, drawing remained a hobby. "I didn't paint because I hated washing brushes!" Aaron wanted to work in either games or cartoons, but studied computer science at university. "After graduation, I finally decided to make a career out of art." Aaron trained himself as a 3D modeller and went to work for a visual simulation company that has now morphed into an animation studio. He is hooked on digital painting: "Hurrah, no need to wash brushes!"

1 ANGEL AND THE DRAGON This piece was done for the Heroes of Might & Magic V poster contest, organised by Nival Interactive.

2 THE VALKYRIE This is a mythological lucky dip: "Norse myth Valkyrie, Greek myth Pegasus and Japanese myth Spirit butterfly."





2

 **Lynsley Brito**

LOCATION: Philippines
WEB: www.dryice.weblinedesigns.net
EMAIL: renka_crest@hotmail.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop CS2



"Be around me for five minutes and you would know that I immensely enjoy drawing," says Lynsley, "because I always am!" Lynsley takes a small notebook everywhere so she can draw any time. After all, "even the simplest doodles count as practice."

This is the foundation on which her talent builds. Although Lynsley is self-taught and proud of it, naturally there have been influences, including Apapa Mokona, Yamane Ayano, Yuki Kaori and Takashima Kazusa.

With a long-standing interest in Chinese, Japanese and Korean cultures, Lynsley is now studying Nihongo and Hangul. "I also like learning about various mythologies and belief systems. Someday, hopefully, I can be a professional artist. Nothing beats loving what you do."

1 AMBITION Even pretty girls with big eyes and lacy clothing carry daggers in this place. So don't turn your back!

2 HAVEN Safe from harm, this delicate creature looks as if she recalls a terrible journey or a baptism of fire.





 **Nur Iman**

LOCATION: Malaysia
WEB: www.popia.deviantart.com/gallery/
EMAIL: popiapounder@yahoo.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop

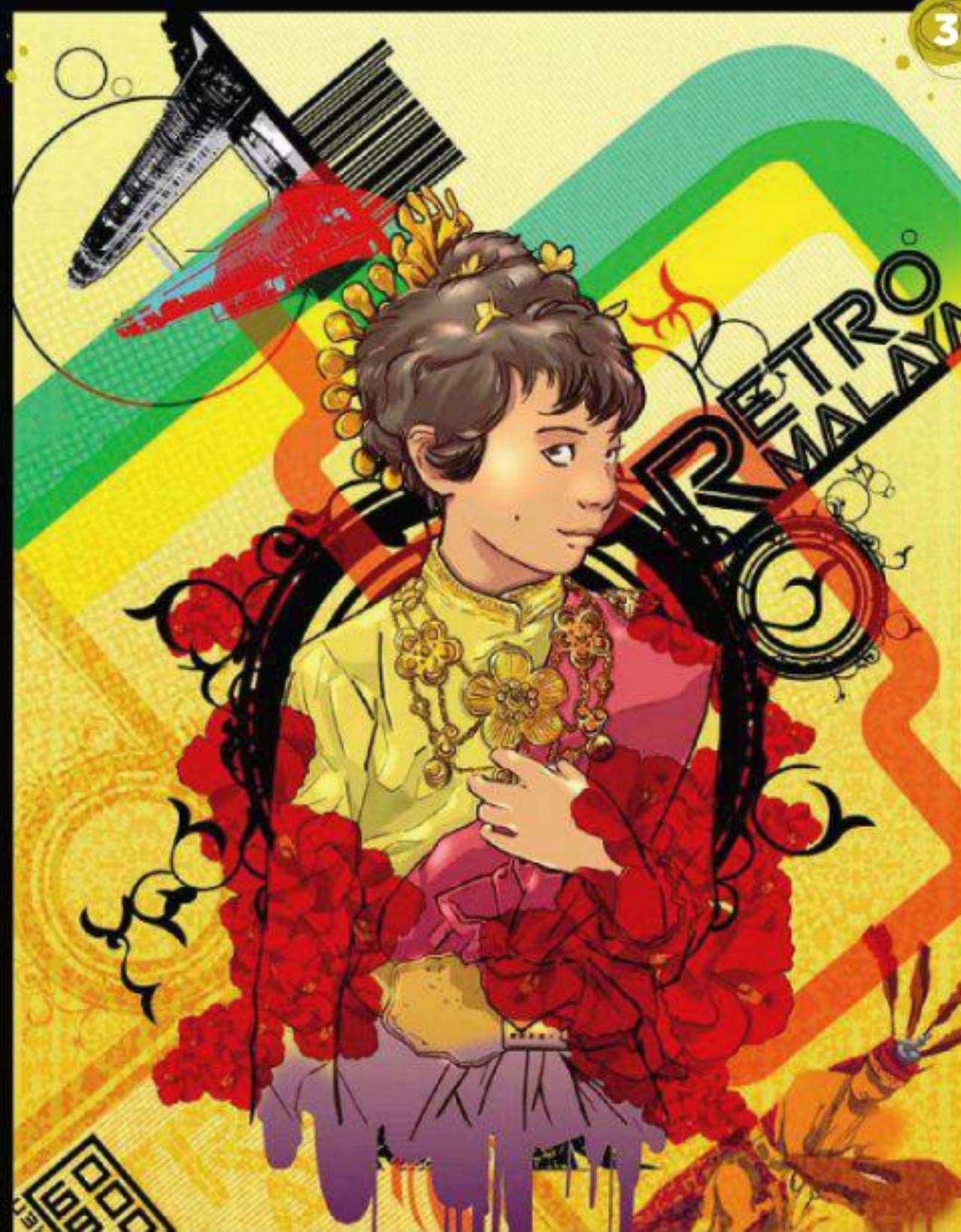
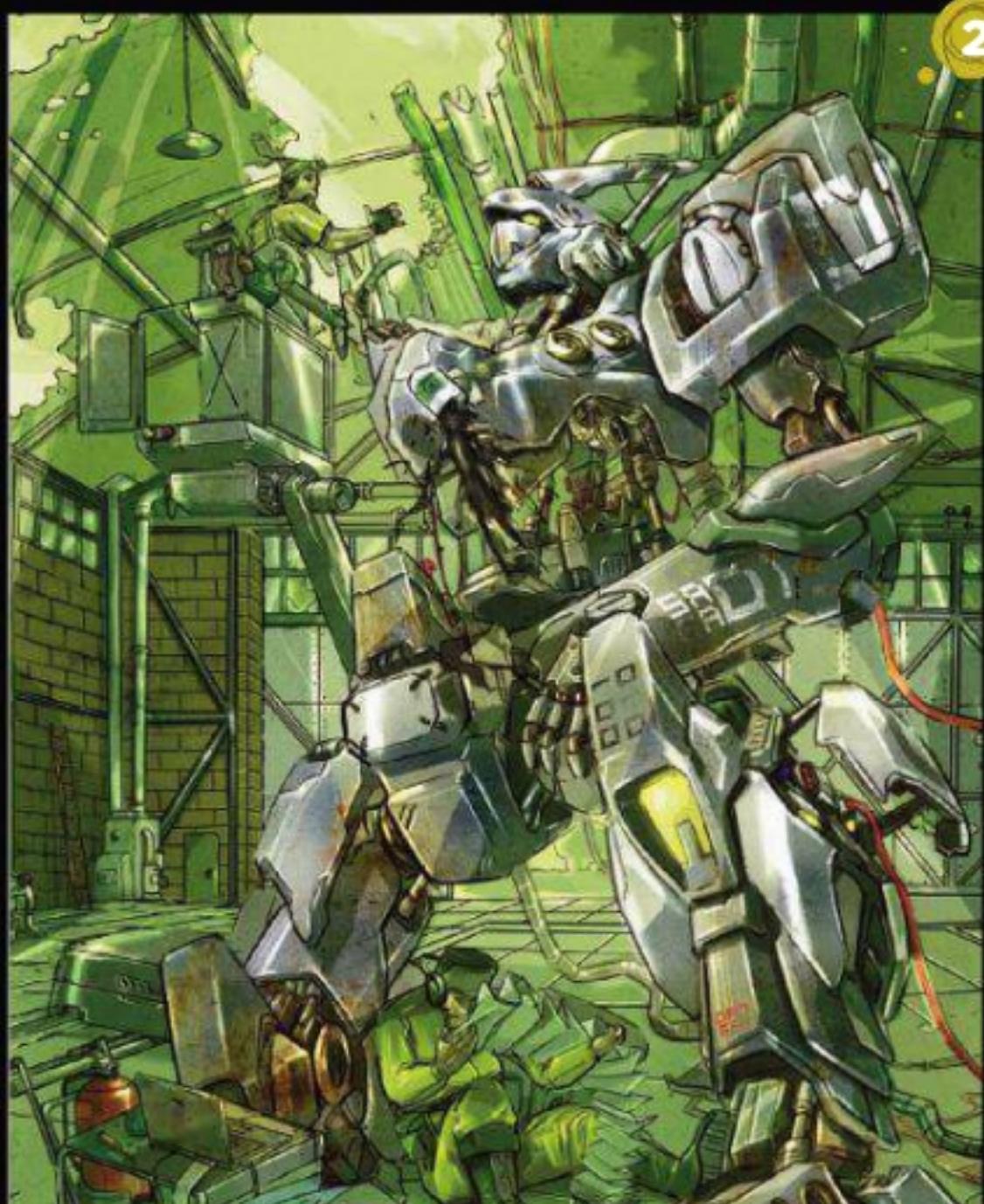


"Like many artists, I started small, doing basic illustration for children's text books," says Nur. His next break came via digital illustrations, for Malaysian folk stories. "My experience has grown. I am now doing comics for a local magazine." Nur is interested in futuristic fantasy, but admits: "Mecha and huge metal armour really inspire me the most." He has experience of traditional painting and drawing techniques, but uses Photoshop to create his mecha-inspired imagery. Nur is trying to expose Malaysian culture to a wider audience. "My ultimate wish is one day to go into the games industry."

1 MYSTICAL NIGHT 3000 Created in Photoshop, using bright colours to reflect the night life of "a boy and his bot."

2 MECHA-ANIS This concept, produced for a 3D animation studio, was called SAGA. "A military animation based on mechs. This was one of the concept posters."

3 RETRO MALAYA "This piece is to show my country's culture with a remix of traditional elements and a modern urban design."





2



**Xiao-chen Fu
aka krishna-fu**

LOCATION: China
WEB: www.krishnafu.com
EMAIL: krishna860@hotmail.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop, Painter
JOB: Concept artist



Xiao-chen is responsible for the concept design, characters and monsters, lighting and concept animation for a Chinese games company. All that and he still has time to win coveted awards: in 2006 his picture *China Summoner* won the EXPOSÉ 4 Master Award from Ballistic Publishing.

Xiao-chen has been hooked on fantasy since he came across the exquisite artwork used by Magic: The Gathering. "I imagined drawing the illustrations for Magic. That has kept me diligent." That diligence has paid off.

1 TO AVALON Avalon is a place of dreams; "there is only one way to it," says Xiao-chen. The God of Death appears intermittently in the water. "You are unable to know in advance about the danger, and no one can stop you from taking a step forward because you are in a dream."

2 KING OF DARKNESS This is part of a story Xiao-chen is working on: "He was once among the gods, but to tame the Dark Rod within his body, he was instead changed and fell. The ancient dragon in the molten lava was summoned to his side."



 **Mauro Cancino**

LOCATION: Chile
WEB: <http://maurocancino.deviantart.com>
EMAIL: mauriciocancino@gmail.com
SOFTWARE: Painter-IX, Photoshop



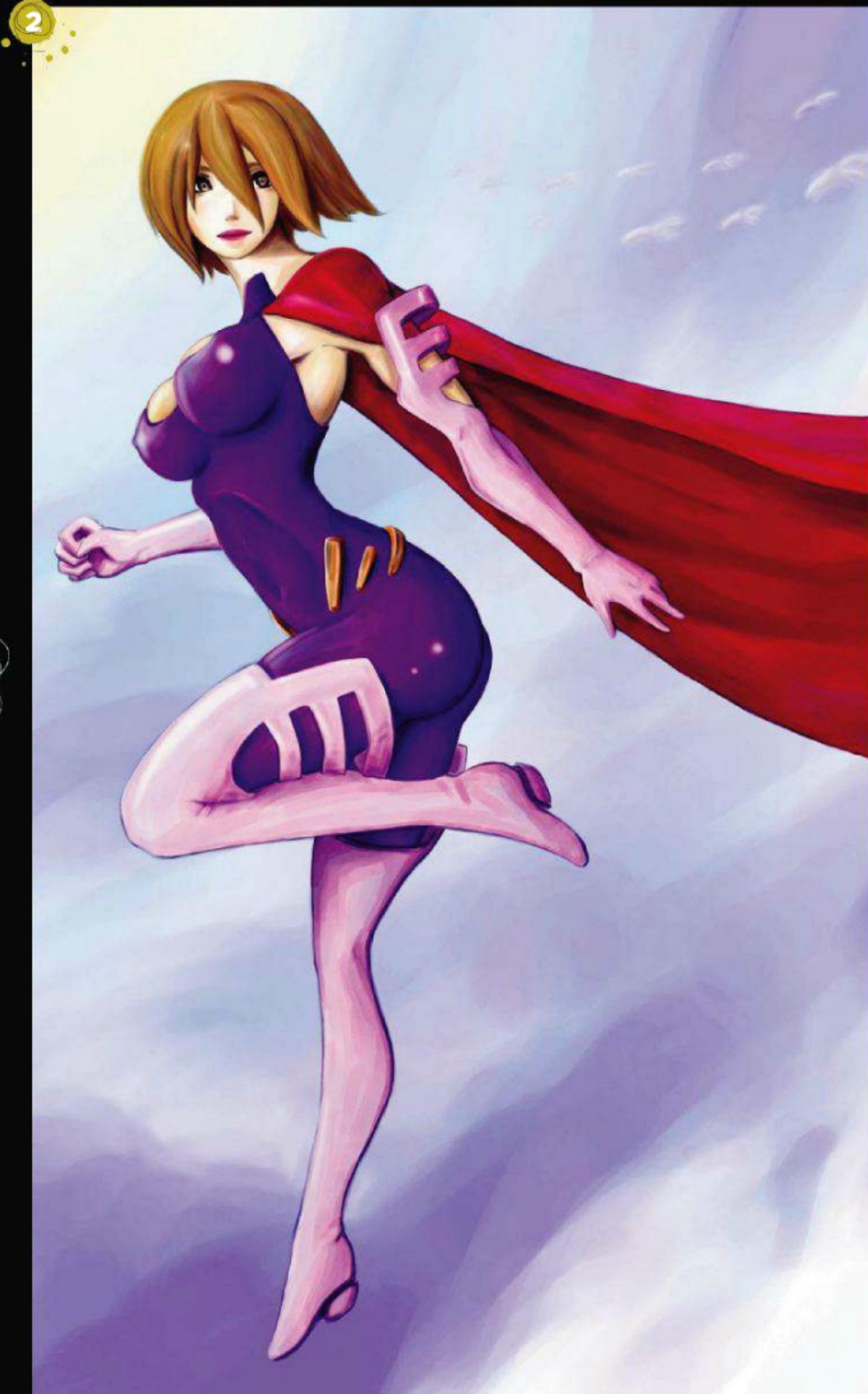
Now working as a freelance illustrator and concept artist while he studies architecture, Mauro has always been a keen artist. "From the beginning I've been influenced by the Eastern style," he says. "The world of videogames and comics were decisive in the formation of my self-defined 'pseudo Eastern-European' style."

Mauro got into digital a couple of years back and now, with the acquisition of a digital tablet, "I'm beginning my way as a digital illustrator."

Mauro's primary objective for his illustrations "is to present my personal universe, trying to make each design the most original possible." References are barely used - "I'm always trying to reinvent things." An admirable trait in a concept artist.

1 SECRET GROTTO (LA GRUTA SECRETA) Mauro's first completely digital illustration. "The handling of the light is important in my attempt to create a suitable atmosphere."

2 THE FLIGHT OF JUPITER (EL VUELO DE JUPITER) This illustration shows Mauro's superhero Jupiter "with all her glory and majesty. Jupiter is an original character created together with my friend Sebas Castro," says Mauro.





1

Goran Delic

LOCATION: Canada

WEB: www.smogboy.com

EMAIL: gdelicn438@rogers.com

SOFTWARE: AC3D, ZBrush, Painter 8, Vue d'Esprit, openCanvas, Texture Maker, Swift 3D



"Six years ago I started to notice that the industry was changing," says Goran, who at that time was working in one of the biggest animation houses in Canada.

"The company had just begun using new 3D software," and although they offered some seminars to learn these new programs, it just wasn't enough. Having previously published comic books, Goran spotted an opening. "The possibilities of digital media looked endless," he says.

The solution: "I invested in my first machine and started to develop what I call my Kung Fu chain of software, a name appropriate for my style," he reveals. At the moment Goran is sporting a green belt, "which is a long way away from a black one."

1 ARRIVAL "I do use 3D," says Goran, "but at the finalisation it is always heavily modified with drawing or painting." It has its uses - this scene uses only one spaceship model. "All the arrangement was done in ZBrush in perspective mode. Then the render was opened in Painter 8 and 'repossessed' - my keyword for my process."



2

2 FOOD MONSTER Goran had the excellent idea of making a children's book about good and evil food. "I'm still struggling with that one..." he laughs.



 **Reinaldo Arturo Quintero Torrealba aka REIQ**
LOCATION: Venezuela
WEB: www.reiq.ws
EMAIL: reiq@reiq.ws
SOFTWARE: Corel Painter 9, Adobe Photoshop CS, and Alias Sketchbook Pro 2



Reinaldo has an enquiring mind: "I started creating digital art because I felt curious to learn how the artists who inspired me painted at that time."

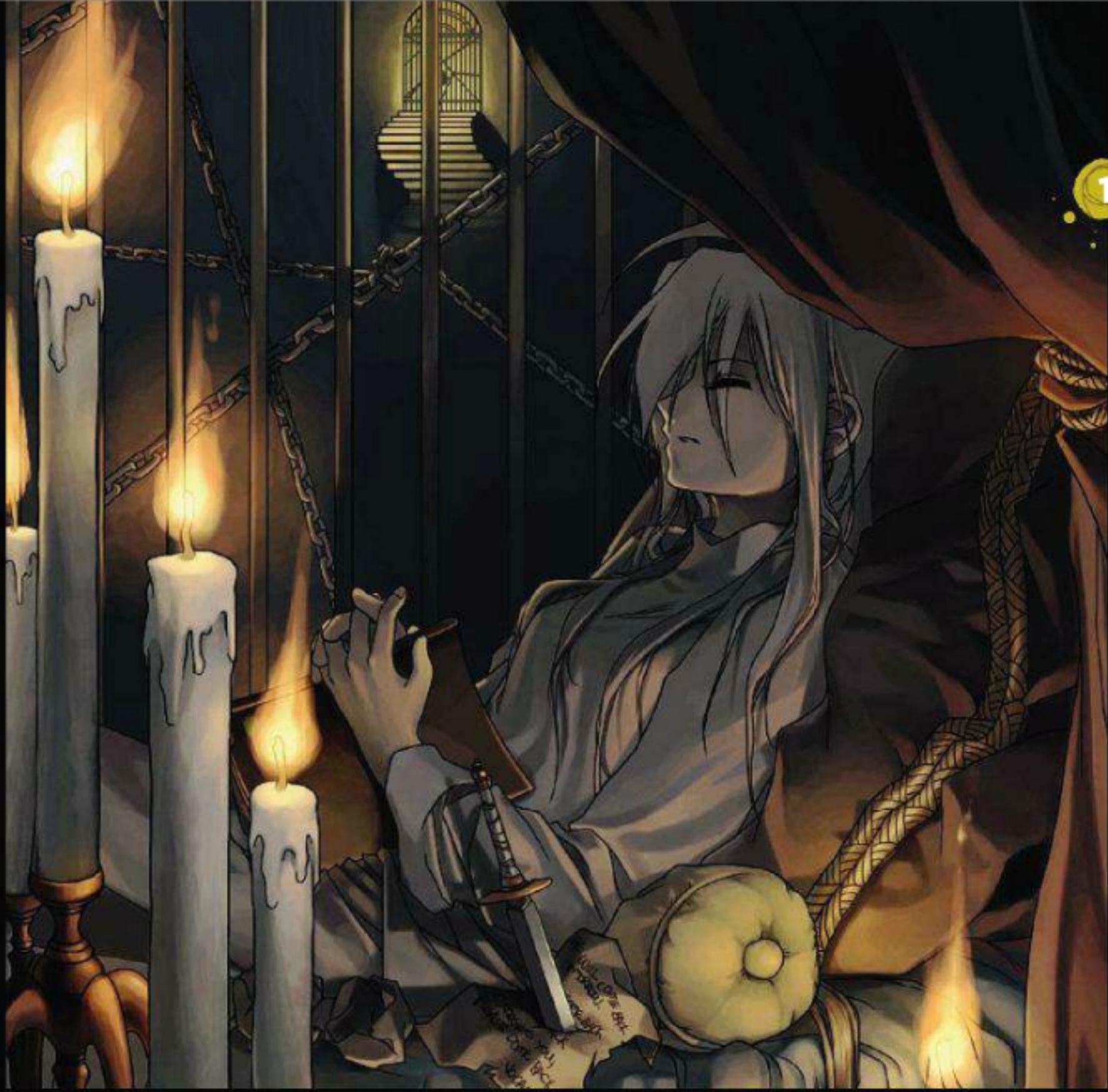
Always wondering how to get such amazing colours and outstanding characters, "I decided to rummage around and gain knowledge of how they created their amazing artwork." This is when Reinaldo started to paint using his own processes and criteria.

"One of the things that makes me work harder," says Reinaldo, "is when I say to myself 'If other artists can create beautiful images, then I can do it too!'"

1 SAMURAI WARRIOR This samurai warrior was produced as a speed painting "for practice purposes," explains Reinaldo.

2 ALEX "This character is really special for me," says Reinaldo. "It's one of the first characters that I ever painted with Painter and I really enjoyed drawing and painting her."





 **Shilin Huang**

LOCATION: Canada
WEB: www.ashen-ray.com
EMAIL: shilin@ashen-ray.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop CS



Shilin never had a proper art education. "But I have enjoyed drawing anime, as well as fantasy art, since I was young."

Drifting away from reading about fantastic worlds, in 2001 Shilin started to learn Photoshop. "I obtained a tablet soon after, which made my experiments much easier. It was one of my hobbyist ambitions to create a fantasy world with its own story. And since I lost interest in words, I turned to pictures."

Through the years, Shilin has created many illustrations for this world. "And I also finally had the chance to turn the tale into a Japanese-style comic. Aside from that, I am doing character designs for DreamSeed's Fantasy/SF game, which is still in development."

THERE HOPE LIES "I always wanted to be able to use colours and hues to create mood," says Shilin. "But all my attempts failed until this one. I drew the line art, then laid down rough colour schemes in layers and a detailed finish with a Photoshop brush."

2 RELAX "This was simply a full-colour rendition of a scene in the story that I created," explains Shilin, "with all the main characters drawn to ease my stress in school."



MACHINE FLESH

Daryl's entry into CGtalk's Machineflesh Challenge. "In a crowded field of contestants," he says, "I knew I needed to create something simple, eye-catching, and powerful."

Artist PROFILE

Daryl Mandryk



AGE: 30

COUNTRY: Canada
Daryl has a self-confessed lifelong

obsession with video games and digital art. He is currently working as the lead concept artist at Propaganda Games

SOFTWARE USED: Painter 7, Photoshop, Maya

WEB: www.mandrykart.com



BONE PRIEST

The Diablo series of games is one of Daryl's all time favourites. "The most important element I wanted to nail on this was the face. I wanted the viewer to look at the face and hear in their head the noise that might come out of this thing," he says.

The art of DARYL MANDRYK

"There's a 10-year-old boy in me who is designing the coolest toys he can think of. And the best toys scare you a bit." Daryl Mandryk feels the fear

Even when he's messing around, Daryl Mandryk doesn't mess around. "I think the only real way to develop any kind of style is to paint a lot," he says. "And the only way to evolve that style is to paint even more."

As a youngster, he recalls, he was always into art, comics and videogames, but "It just seemed like such a long-shot to actually make a living from any of that," so he did a business degree and found himself working in a real estate firm trying to save enough money to go back to school, as well as teaching himself 3D animation. His first job was as "a 3D modeller for a small startup company. We were working on a television pilot for a 3D animated show, based on a series of fairytales by the Brothers Grimm."

Now, Daryl is employed working on the next instalment in the Turok franchise: "My role is lead concept artist, so I spend a lot of

time drawing weapons, characters, props, vehicles, environments and so forth.

"I was definitely a bit of a geek growing up," says Daryl. "I've been drawing fantastic things as far back as I can remember. That's just where my imagination was." He admits the influence of videogames on the themes of his work: "Good versus evil, man versus machine, that kind of thing."

"While I work, I think about what I'm trying to convey," he says, but his initial method is intuitive: "to anyone watching, it looks like I'm just blobbing paint around." In fact, he's searching "for interesting shapes and forms. It's a bit of an abstract process, just trying to find that rhythm and harmony to build up from. I work like a sculptor – blocking things in and chiselling away until they look like something. I try to relax while I paint as much as possible, and let the brushstrokes flow."



GOOD LISTENER

"This is really just a sketch that got out of control," says Daryl, though it does have a theme: "It's based on the idea that listening to music can alter your state of mind."

The art of DARYL MANDRYK



SCORCHER

"Give me any excuse to paint an apocalyptic fellow with a gun," says Daryl, "and I'll take it."



LOVE IS MANDATORY

Nineteen Eighty-Four is one of Daryl's favourite novels, "so I wanted to try something with that sort of theme: You'd better be in love... or else."



THE HORRIBLE THING

This piece was an exercise in Daryl's "putting down shapes and carving away at them" technique. After a while, he "started to see a few creepy shapes and just ran with it."

Daryl Mandryk's VITAL STATISTICS

Dead things freak him out...

Place of birth

Edmonton, Canada.

Date of birth

1975.

Current location

Vancouver, Canada.

Favourite music

Too many to list... I'm currently listening to a lot of Ennio Morricone, Arcade Fire, and Jay-Z.

Favourite traditional artist

Frank Frazetta.

Favourite digital artist

Craig Mullins.

First memory

Bits and pieces of Star Wars. I was two years old and I must have slept through most of it, but I clearly remember seeing the part where Luke swings over the chasm with Leia. Everything else is a blur.

Pet hate or any actual phobias

Dead things freak me out... for example, seeing a dead bird on



the ground will send shivers down my spine. I also have an irrational fear of public speaking, which is probably why I do what I do.

Most prized possession

My health.

Most annoying personal trait

A workaholic personality.

Average time spent on an image

Usually around three or four hours, but it can vary a lot depending on the complexity of the image and how much I feel I need to finish it.

Single most important piece of professional advice

Always try to work with people that are better than you. In this way you assure yourself of constant growth.

Left or right-handed

Right-handed.

COMMANDER

The message here is very simple: "Never, ever, mess with someone with glowing armour and wires coming out of their heads."





DARYL
MANDRYK'S

Artist tip

SCALE YOUR IMAGE

"A good tip," says Daryl, "is to paint at a low resolution first, then scale your image up as you go." This forces you to think broadly in the early stages "and makes it hard for you to get caught up in unnecessary detailing."

VICTORY

"When I was small I watched *The Terminator* and have been scared of machines taking over ever since." Daryl painted this one "as a reminder that evil robots should have their heads cut off."

Artist PROFILE

Daryl Mandryk

COUNTRY: Canada

CLIENTS: Electronic

Arts, Buena Vista

Games, Privateer Press,

Sextant Entertainment



Daryl Mandryk is a digital artist living in Vancouver, Canada. He is currently working as the senior concept artist at Propaganda Games, and prior to that spent over three years at Electronic Arts doing concepts. www.mandrykart.com

Try it yourself

Download a Zip archive of support files from <http://preview.tinyURL.com/ynrphd>. You'll also find a trial version of Photoshop CS3 at www.adobe.com/go/trvphotoshop.

Photoshop FROM CONCEPT TO CREATION

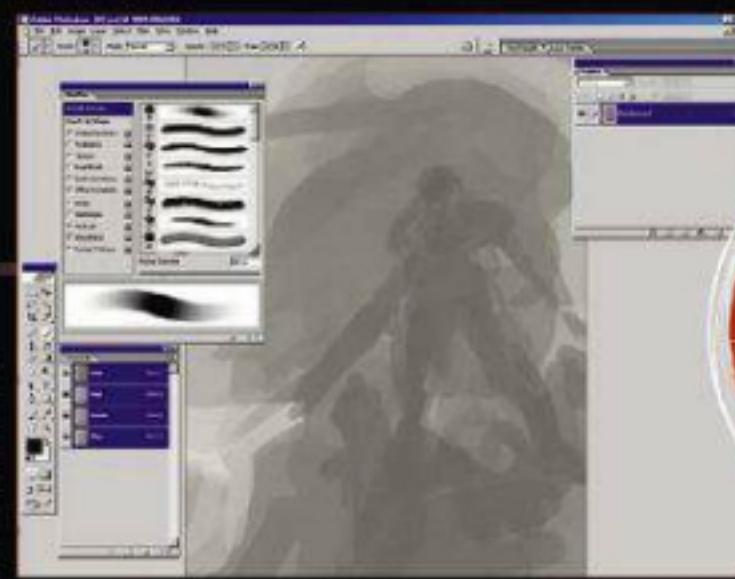
From start to finish: how to create fantastic images quickly from your imagination, by digital artist **Daryl Mandryk**

One question I often get asked is: "Do you have a process when you create a digital painting?" In this workshop, I'll show you the techniques that I use to start from scratch, begin to generate an idea, block in my painting, and then take it all the way to completion. To use these techniques well, you should be proficient with Adobe Photoshop and preferably have access to a pressure-

sensitive tablet, such as a Wacom Intuos – any size or model will do.

This workshop will focus on the fundamentals required to produce a strong image – composition, values, design and rendering – and how to do it quickly. I find that there really is no substitute for having

these strong fundamentals – no amount of photo references or Photoshop filters in the world will save an image if it is composed badly or boring to look at. So, are you ready? Let's get started...



1 Throw something down

There are numerous ways to come up with ideas – some people like to do several thumbnails, some shoot reference photos. Often if the work is for a client, they will already have a strong idea in mind and you'll have plenty of direction. In this case, however, I want to create something original and unique straight out of my head.

A common problem is that the blank page is very intimidating – so I get rid of it quickly just by laying in some big blobby shapes. I choose a big brush and just basically scribble away for a bit. I'm not interested in anything at this point, except getting something down on the canvas as quickly as possible. I usually use a regular hard-edged brush for this,

but feel free to experiment with different brushes to find one you like. Sometimes you can get interesting results by mixing and matching different brush types.

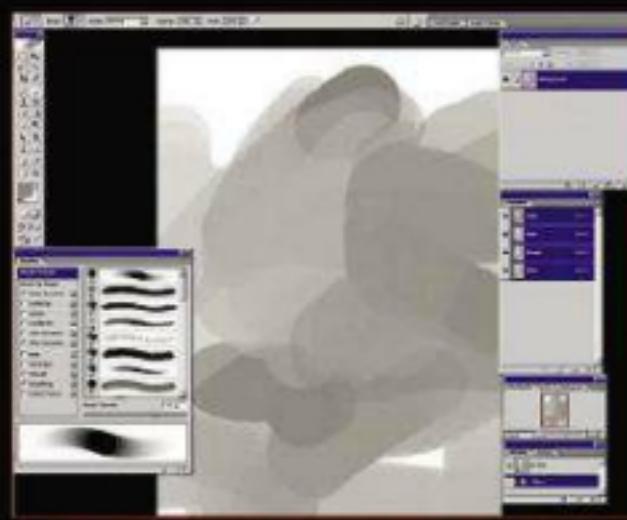
2 Find your big shapes

The main thing I am trying to do here is just find some big abstract shapes that work well together in a pleasing composition. At this point I am basically just playing around and seeing if anything sticks... This stage can actually be quite slow – sometimes ideas don't present themselves right away. You really have to take your time here and just relax and have fun. Eventually I start to see patterns emerge in the shapes that I'm creating – it's a bit like seeing shapes in the clouds. I am starting to picture a scene of a figure in the foreground and some kind of background element – possibly a mech. Notice that I'm not working with colour at this stage – it's too distracting. Using black and white lets you concentrate on value and shape – colour can come later.

3 Masking

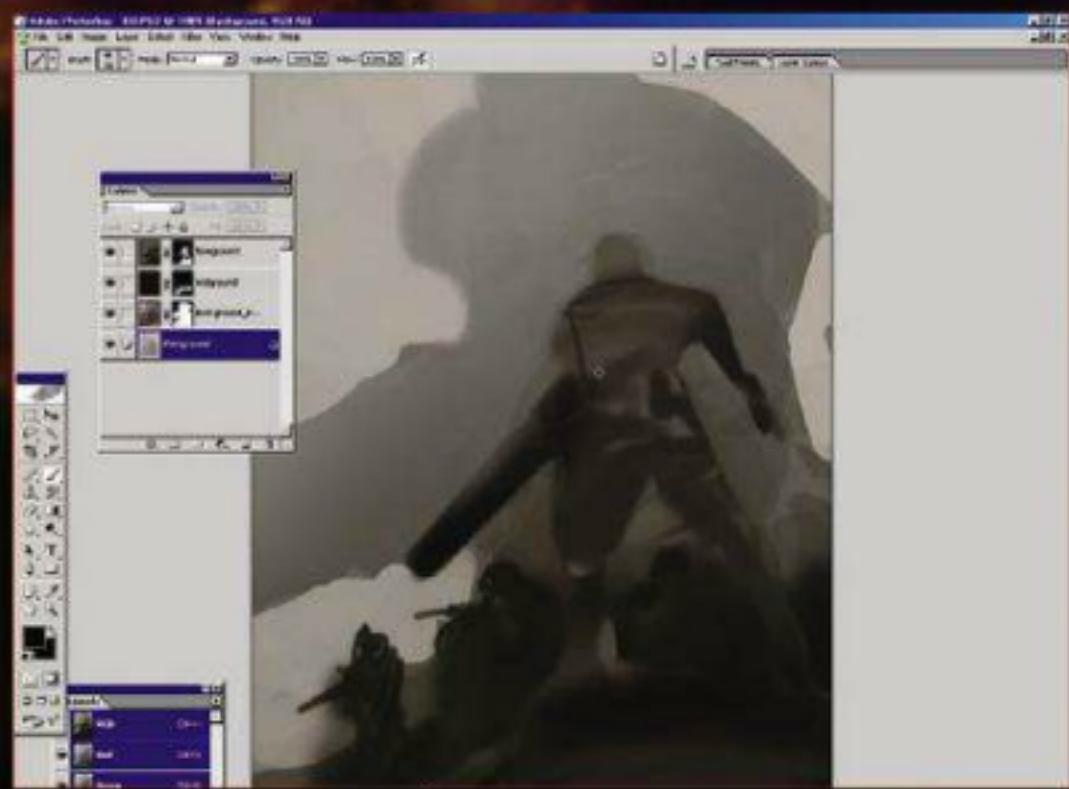
When I start to get a good idea of where this image is going, I use layer masks to break the image up into its various elements. I hit [Q] to go into

quick mask mode and quickly create layer masks for three main scene elements – foreground, mid-ground, and background. Separating these elements, at least initially, makes it easy to tweak your composition and work on the silhouettes of your shapes.





Workshop



PRO SECRETS

Experimenting

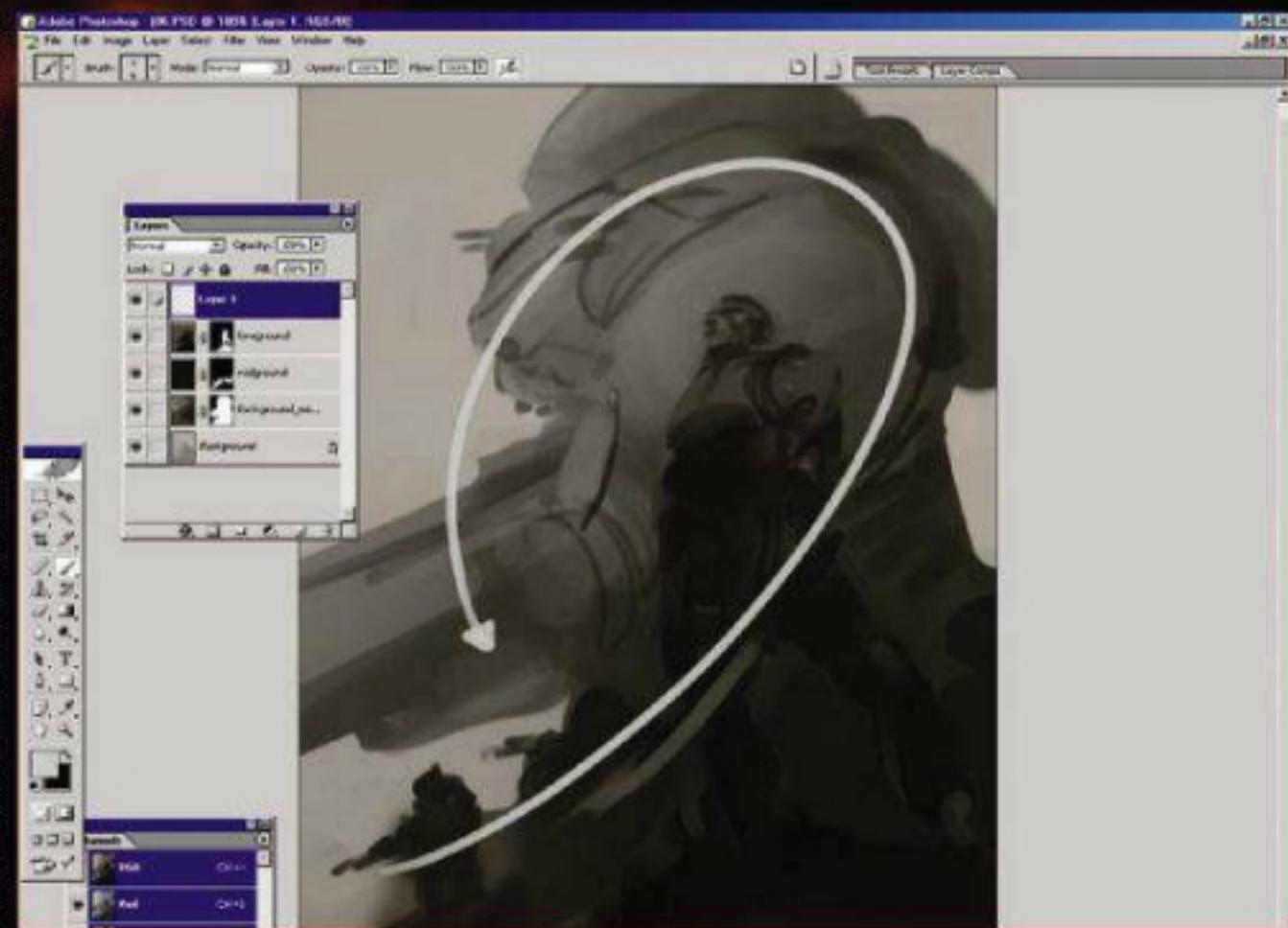
Feel like experimenting or pushing your painting in a new direction? Create a new layer, and paint your changes onto it. Then you can toggle the visibility (the small eye beside the layer) off and on and decide if you really like the change or not. Keep the one you like best.

4 Interesting silhouettes

The silhouette can give the viewer a lot of information, so I try to make sure that I create interesting and unique silhouettes for the objects in my scene. Because the main elements are layer masked, I can paint freely within the layer without affecting the silhouette. If I want to change the silhouette, I select the mask channel next to the layer. White will cut away at the layer mask, black will add to it. This does give a bit of a cut-out look to my painting, but that will go away in later stages.

5 Broad strokes

Here I am just using a few broad strokes to help solidify my idea for the scene. I know I want a warrior-type figure in the foreground, a few soldiers in the mid-ground, and a big shape to tie it all together in the background. Note that I don't go into details at all, just a few suggestive strokes here and there to remind myself of where I want to take



things. I try to use the biggest brush I can get away with and resist the temptation to put in too much detail.

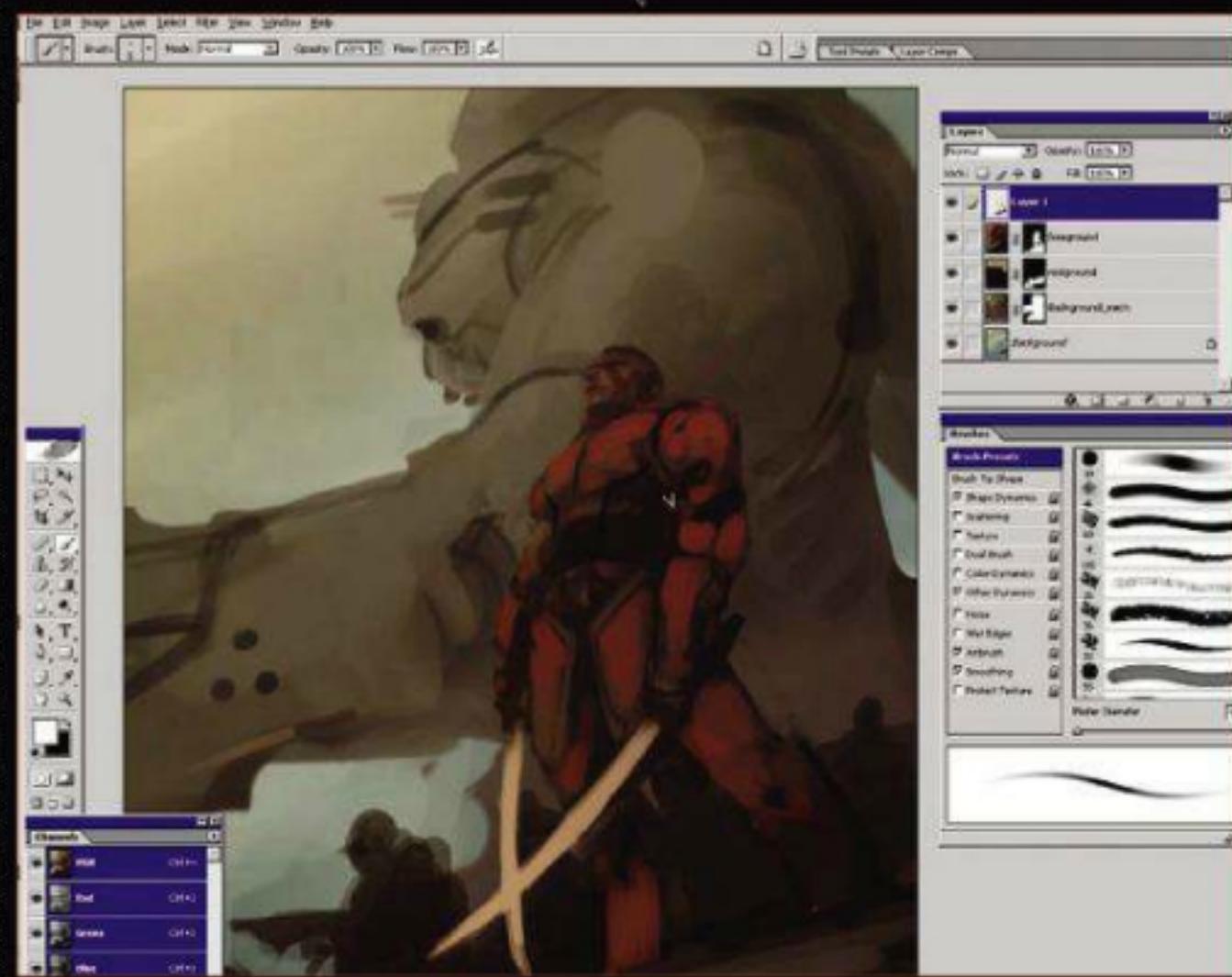
6 Eye flow

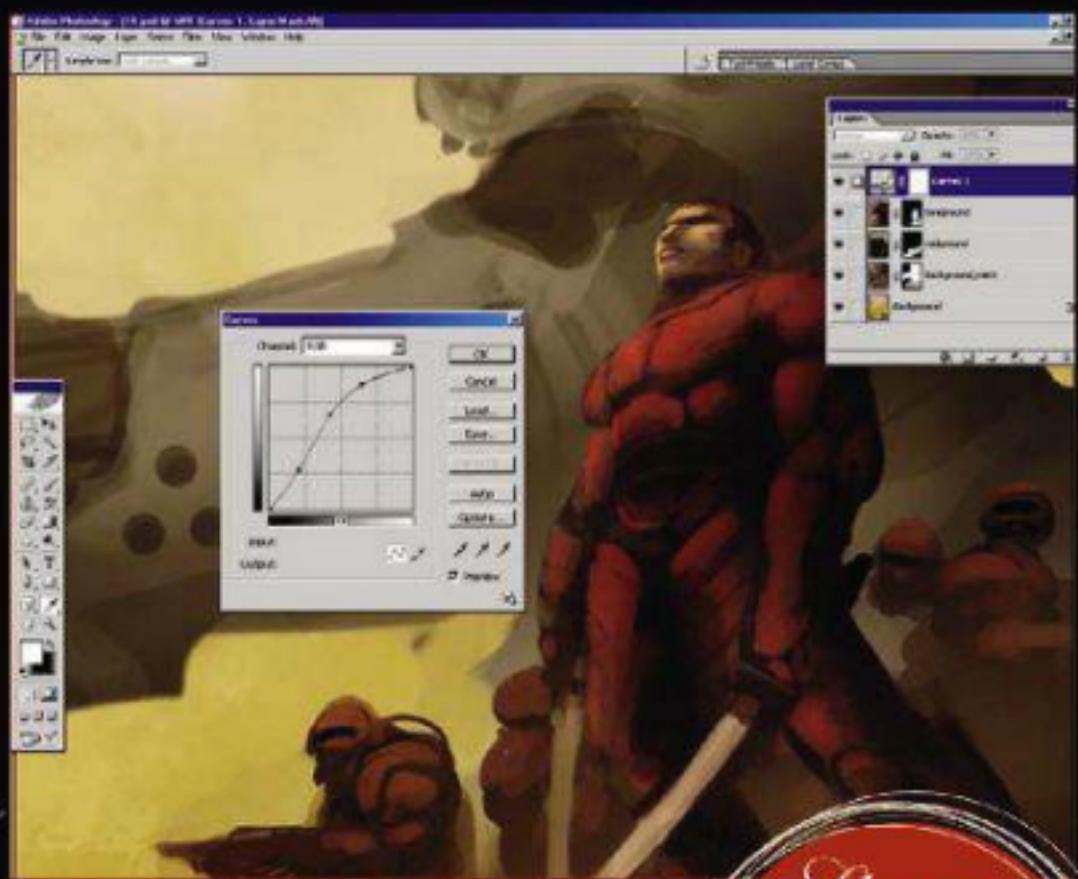
The key to a good composition is knowing how and where to direct the viewer's eye. You want the eye to flow through your painting, stopping to rest at interesting points, and then carrying on. In this way, the viewer sustains their interest in your work and finds it appealing. Notice how the eye sweeps up the sword, around the mech's back, and then down to the soldiers in the mid-ground, and finally back up the sword.

7 Establishing a quick palette

Up until now I've been painting very close to greyscale just to simplify things and make it easier to see my values. Now it's time to add some colour washes to my layers and throw down some really basic colours just to get a sense of where I want to take this.

It's important to add colour quickly and start painting in colour as soon as possible to avoid the 'colourised look'. This happens when there is no hue/saturation variation between highlights and shadows, and drains the realism from your paintings.





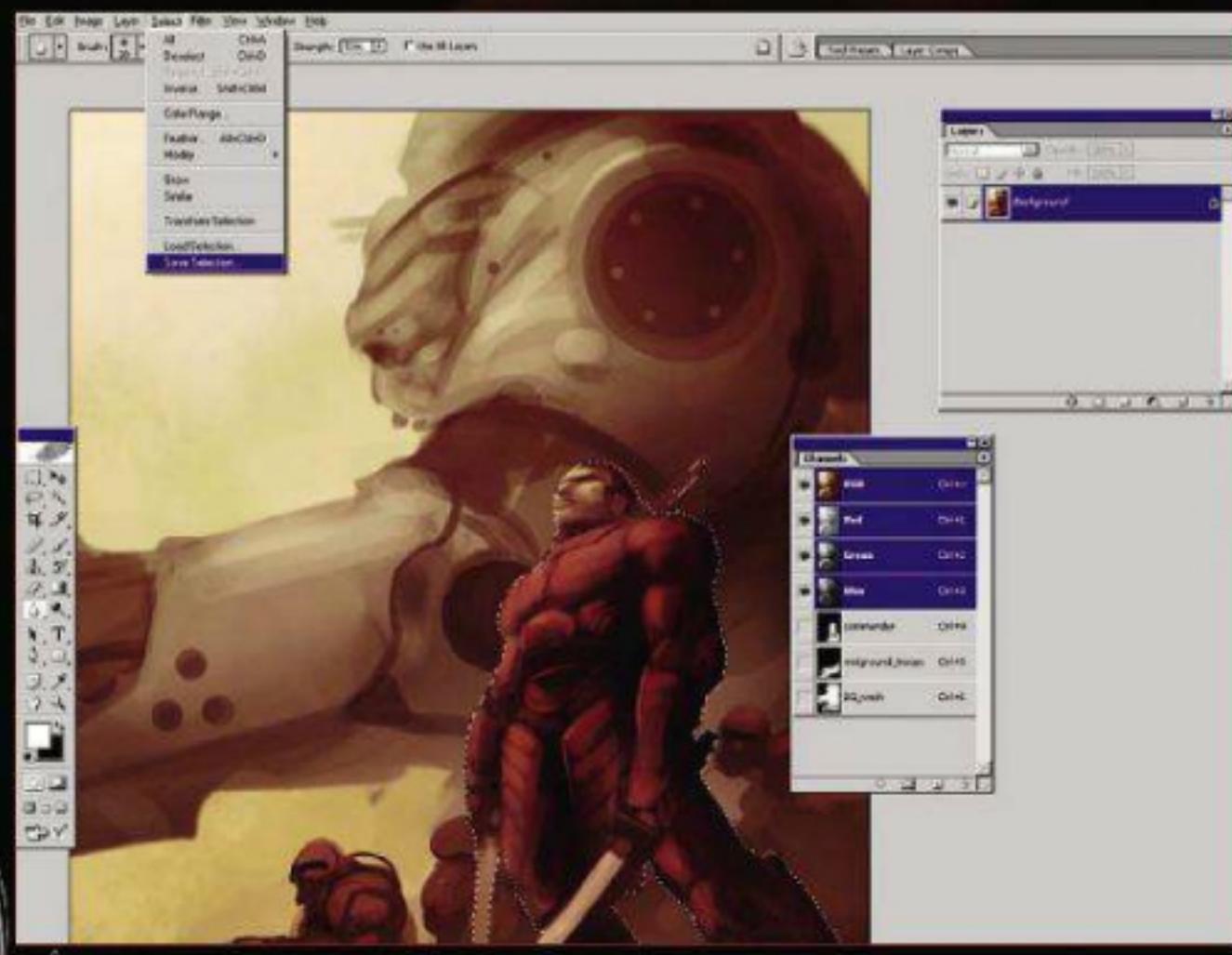
8 Adjustment Layers

Adjustment Layers are invaluable for being able to tweak the look of your painting. Here I use a Curves Adjustment Layer to give some more punch to my image. The great thing about adjustment layers is that they are attached to a channel mask, making it easy to erase parts of them and have them affect only the things you want. I use this erasing out technique all the time – it's a massive time saver.

9 Thumbnail check

Now I perform a quick check to see how everything is coming together. I use an adjustment layer to take out all the colour of the image, and then zoom out to thumbnail size. If the image still reads from this distance and looks good compositionally, I know I'm on the right track. This is a step I repeat many times throughout my painting process.

Shortcuts
Focus on painting
Tab [F] (PC and Mac)
To really get immersed in your painting, use Tab to hide the User Interface, and hit [F] to go to full screen painting mode.



10 Time to commit

At this stage I'm happy with how the painting is going, and I've made all my composition decisions... It's time to get into the nitty-gritty of painting, but first I'm going to flatten the entire image. This serves as a milestone and tells me it's time to start sculpting out the forms. I still save my layer masks as selections (Select > Save Selection), so that if need be, I can always quickly Ctrl-click the appropriate channel to act as a selection mask for me. This helps me keep my options open a bit, especially when you need paint behind objects in your scene.

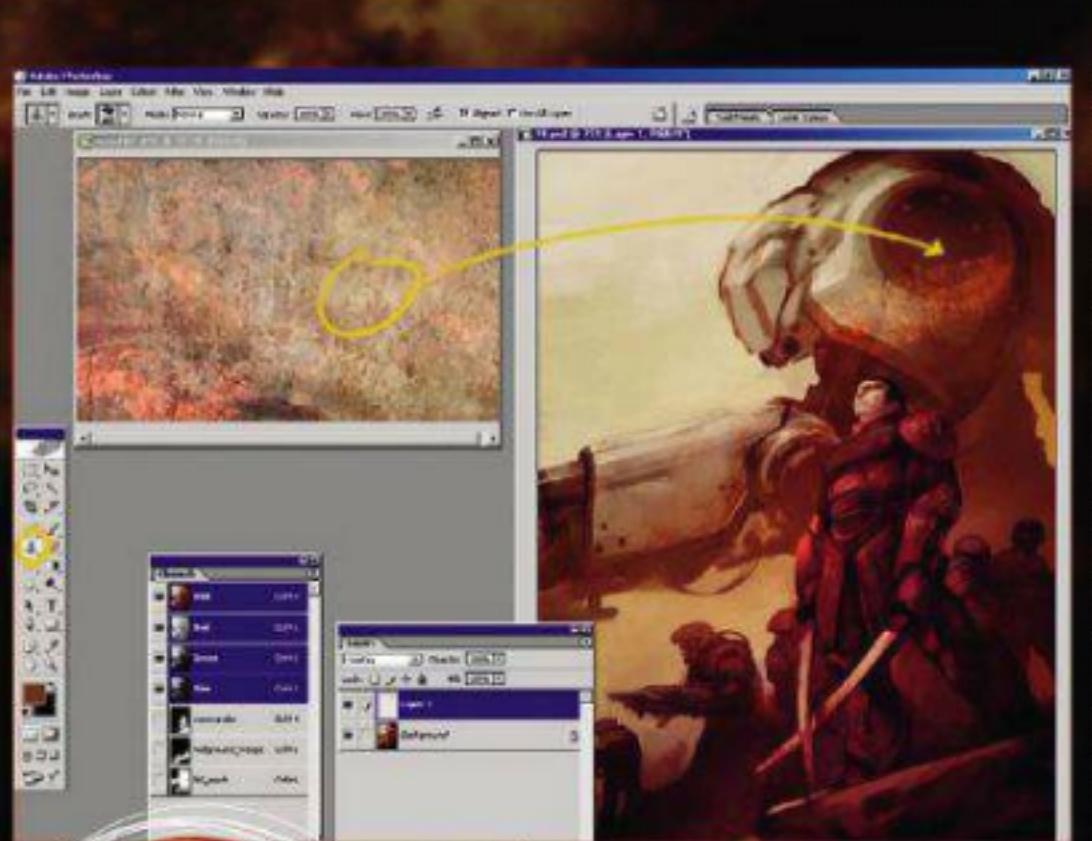
11 Sculpting out forms using light

I use a sculptural approach to the painting, always thinking about carving silhouettes and building up forms. I also work on the whole painting at once, attacking areas of flatness, trying to give them more depth. The viewer's eye will read value change and depth, so I use a lot of play between darks and lights to get the forms to really pop off the page.

Once again, I paint using the biggest brush I can get away with, resisting adding details, and I always work from the broad to the specific.



Workshop



Shortcuts

Harden your brush

Shift+[or] (PC and Mac)

Use this shortcut to make your brush harder or softer. By varying your brushes you can add interest to your painting.

PRO SECRETS

Flip for errors

Flip your image both horizontally and vertically to check for drawing errors. I recommend making an action that automates this task for you.

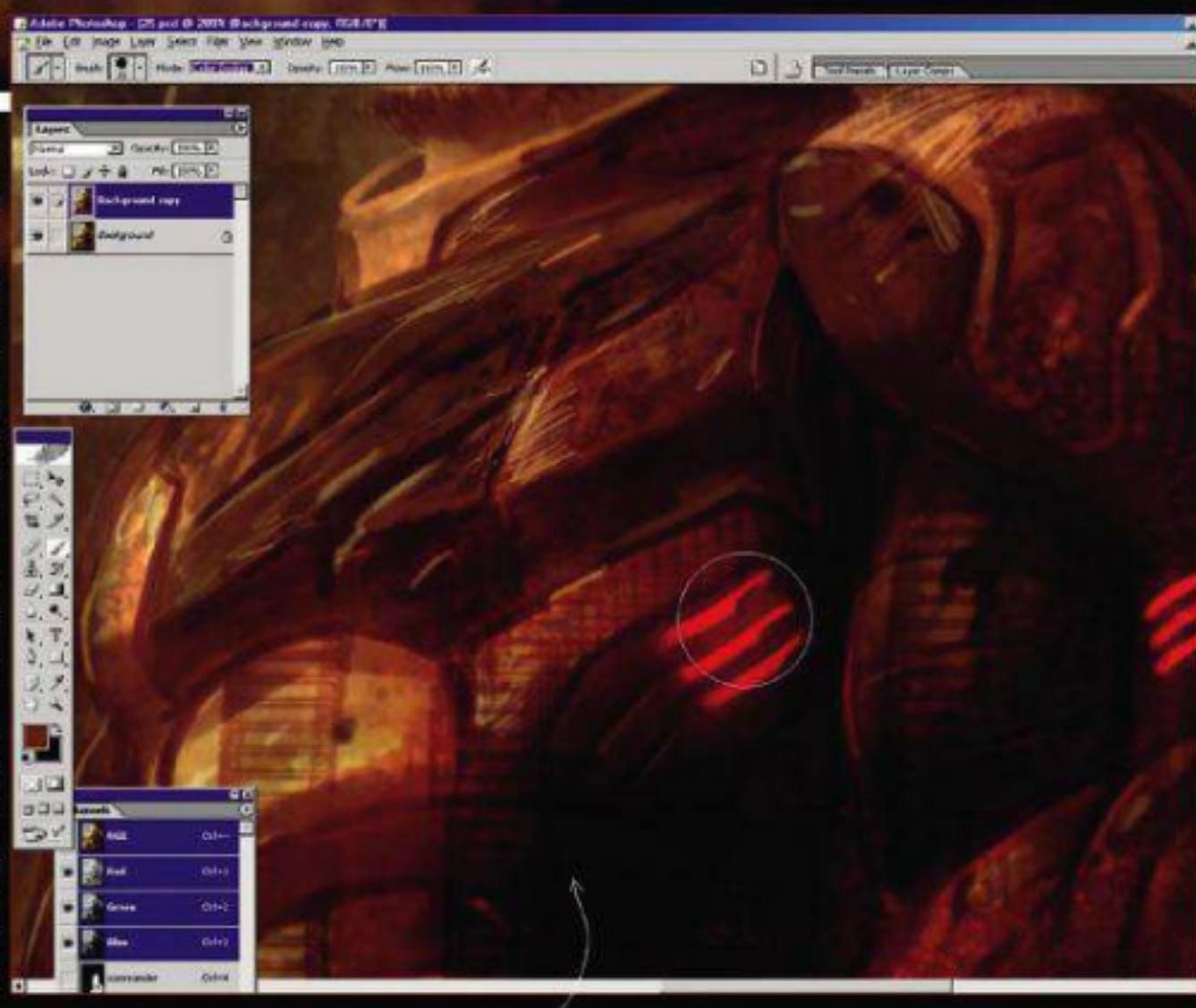
12 Adding texture

Photo textures are a great way to add some grit and life to your image, and to break up areas that are looking too uniform. The key to using overlay textures effectively is knowing where and how to use them. Generally, if a surface is rough, you want a grittier-feeling texture to it, and for a smoother surface, the opposite. I load up a previously created texture and proceed to use the Pattern Stamp tool [S] to place the texture where needed. Once the overlay is complete, I flatten the image again and paint over the top of the overlaid texture.

I repeat this process of overlaying textures and then painting over the top of them over and over, until I feel the necessary depth and surface quality has been achieved.

13 Go for the details

The way I visualise adding details to a painting is like wiping away a blurry plastic sheet that covers the painting to reveal what is already there. Think of detailing as a tool to create interest in a certain area. If every area is detailed to the extreme, the painting becomes static and overwhelming. Conversely, a painting with not enough detail will bore a viewer. My job as an artist is to find the happy medium.



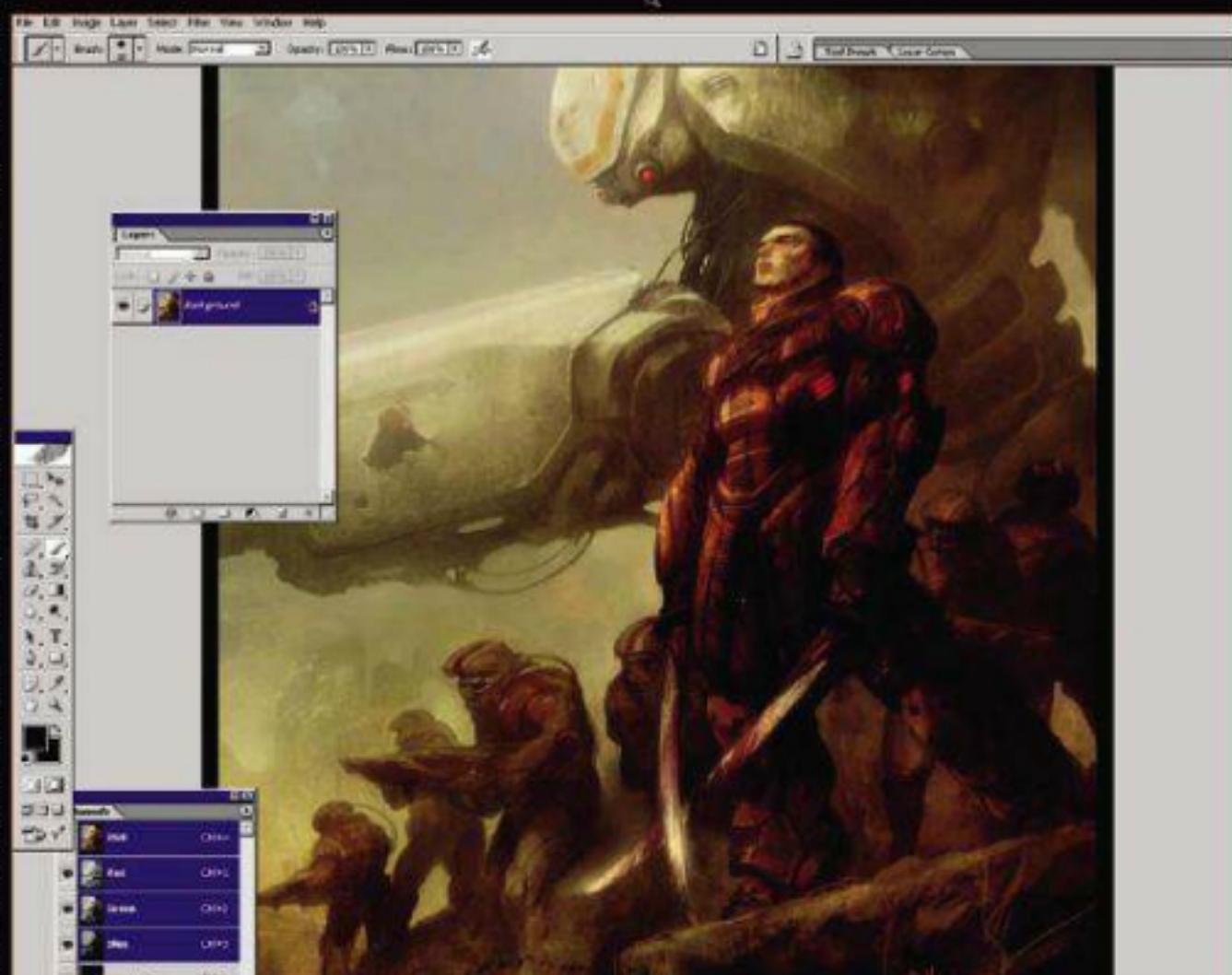
14 Special FX

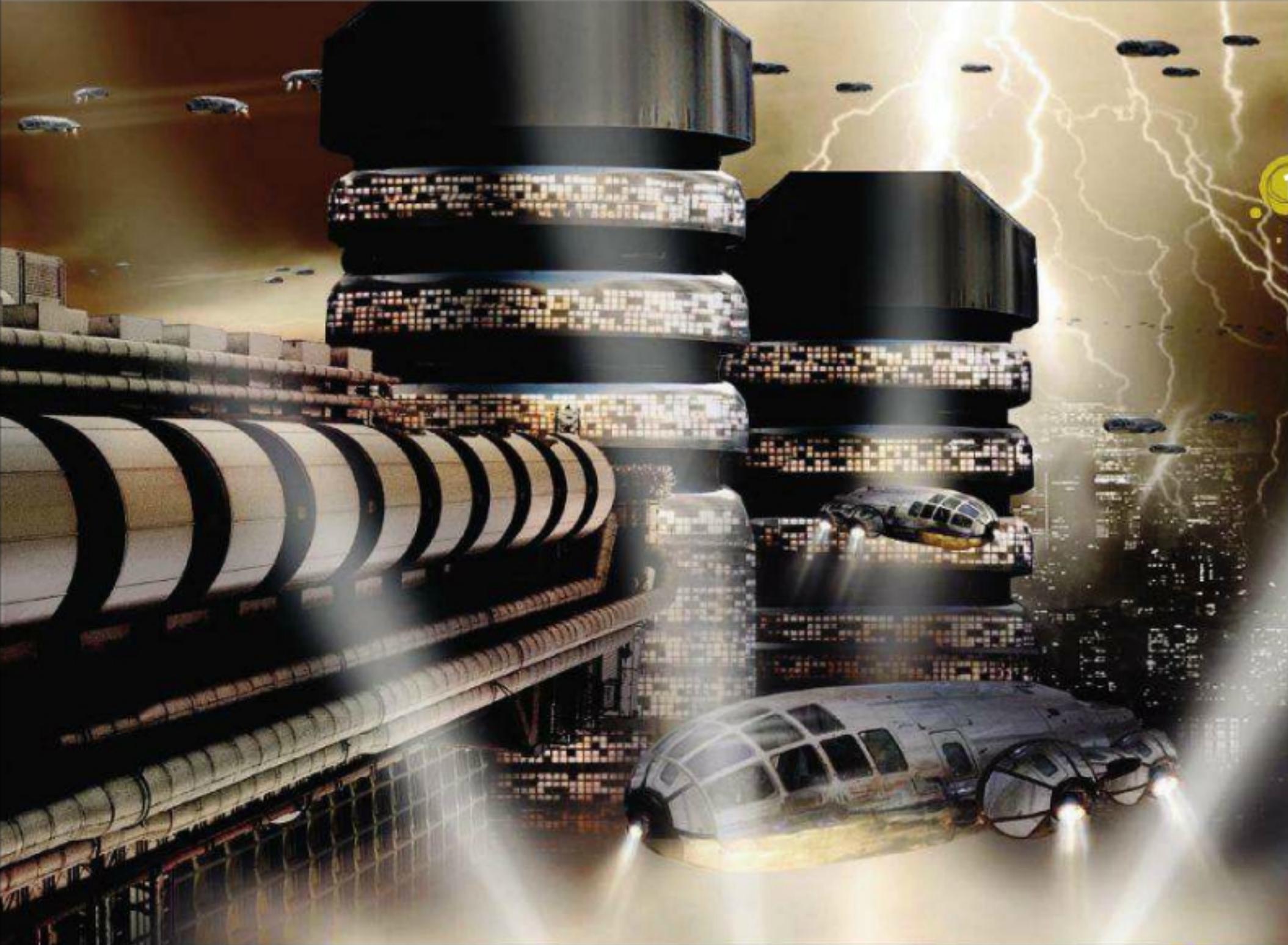
I usually leave any FX-type rendering until last. This might include things like gunfire, spells going off, lasers, etc. In this case there are a few little red lights in the scene I'd like to give a glow to. I select the entire image, copy it and then paste it onto itself in a new layer. Now, setting my brush to Color Dodge, I choose a dark reddish colour and then paint the areas around my lights. Painting with too bright a colour produces blown-out results, so it's best to choose something darker and less saturated. To control the opacity of the glow, either dust with the eraser or set the Layer Opacity lower, such as 50 per cent.

15 Self-critiquing and finishing up

After staring at something for several hours it can be hard to be critical – so I'll leave the painting for a day and come back to look at it with fresh eyes. Usually something will jump out at me – in this case I notice the central character's blades feel a bit dull, so I add a bit of sheen to them and tighten them up.

At this point I call it done – it's now that I reflect on how the image was made, what I think worked, what I think didn't work, and take that learning into the next painting I do. Thanks for following along, and good luck creating your own fantasy images. ■





1



2

 **Craig Musselman**
LOCATION: Canada
WEB: www.nightmareinshiningarmour.com
EMAIL: solipsism@innocent.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Craig has always been good at developing his skills: "Childhood arts and crafts have progressed smoothly to sophisticated models, costumes, paintings and digital images," he explains.

His love of fantasy has always been there too, "whether it be medieval dragons and armour or the far future of the world of technology," he says. Not surprisingly, then, he's torn between technology and lore – "so I completed a university degree in physics, then followed it up with a digital art program to balance both halves of my mind."

Having discovered Photoshop many years ago, Craig was immediately convinced he'd "found the ultimate tool to give form to the dreams that pour forth from my imagination."

1 LANDING PLATFORM The concept here was epic: "A futuristic city with flying personal transports and sky access on buildings in some darker world of the future," Craig explains.

2 RED DRAGON From several reptiles sprang forth this image. "It shows an adult red dragon enjoying his vast horde of golden treasure," says Craig.

 **Boram Ham**

LOCATION: Canada
WEB: www.whitedawn.com
EMAIL: boramham@whitedawn.com
SOFTWARE: Painter IX and Photoshop CS2



"I've always doodled on notebooks and such – especially when I had to do homework," Boram recalls. "My mother never liked this too much!"

Boram discovered digital art around 2002. "I started out with simple cels in Photoshop, then after I got my Graphire I started using Painter."

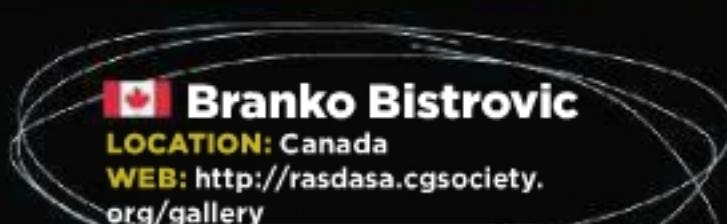
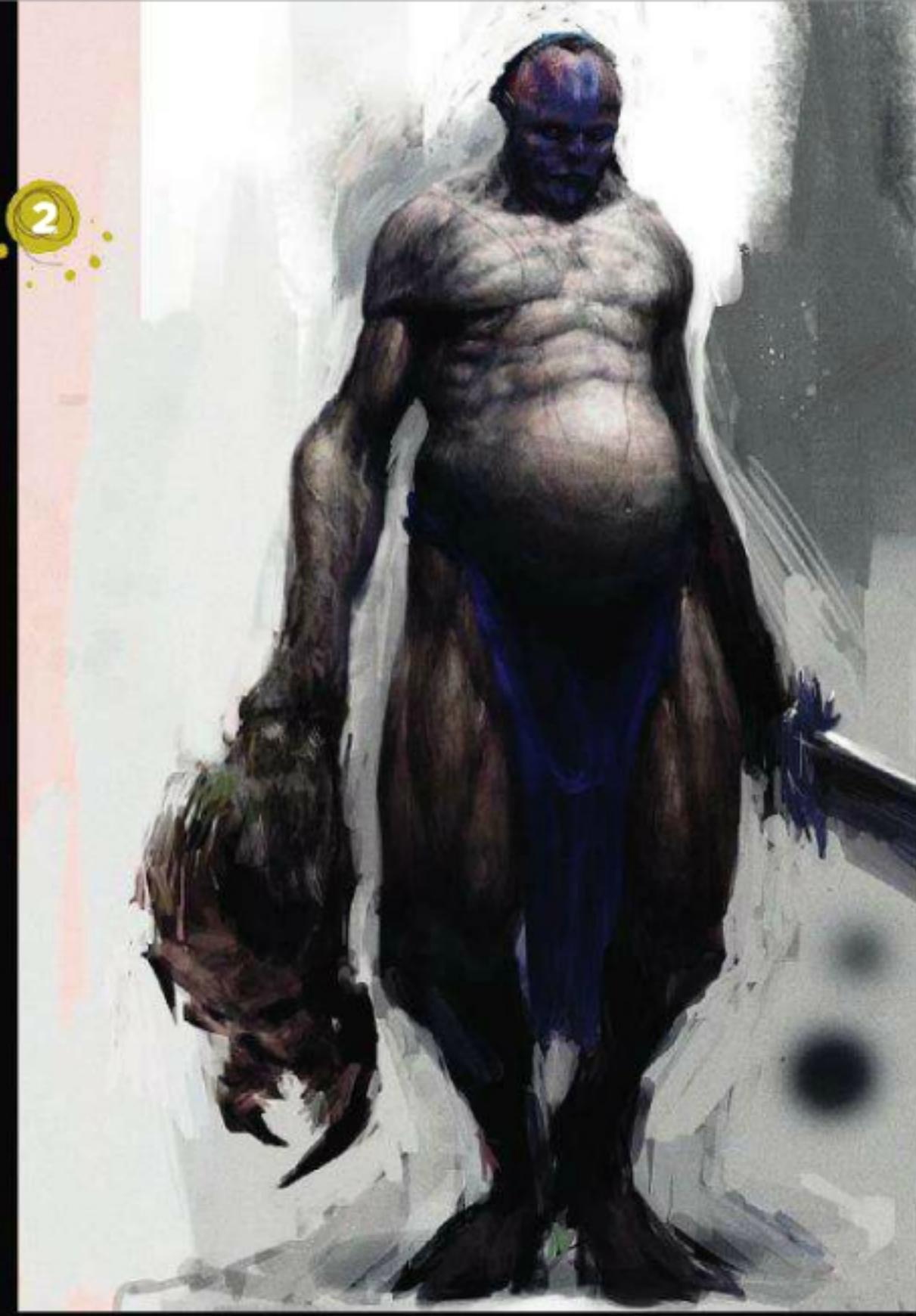
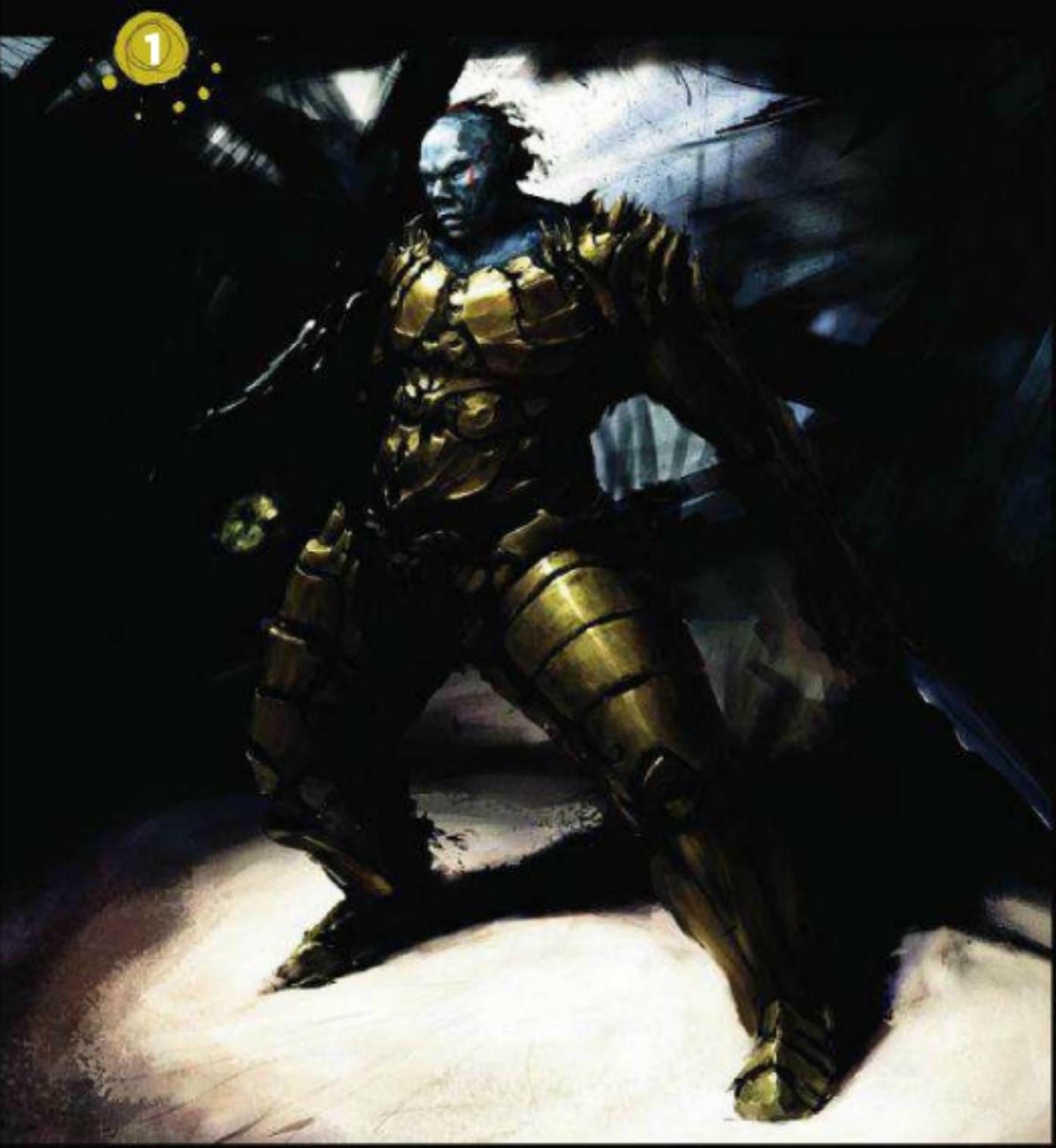
Boram has an original perspective: "I enjoy making fantasy art because I love creating my own costumes for the characters," she reveals. Fantasy art is all about imagination: "You can make it as creative as you want or as unique as you want because it's your own fantasy that you are displaying."

1 CLOUD SHAPER Inspired by a blue sky with many clouds floating around. "They come in variety of sizes and shapes," Boram observes. "I thought it would be interesting if there were someone customising all those clouds and shaping them."

2 WATER SUMMONER Boram wanted to draw something refreshing, "and what's more refreshing than water?" she asks. The aim was for the costume to be a bit Japanese looking – "I hope I succeeded."

3 WIND SUMMONER Inspired by her Water Summoner painting from 2004, Boram wanted a summoner collection. "I liked how his belt and the small ball attached to his sleeve turned out." She adds: "I have fire summoner too now."





Branko Bistrovic

LOCATION: Canada
WEB: <http://rasdasa.cgsociety.org/gallery>
EMAIL: BisVic@rogers.com
SOFTWARE: Painter, Photoshop



"I'm a big-nosed, short Serbo-Croatian," says Branko. "When I was younger, I did a lot of sketching. It was an escape."

He adds: "Until last summer I was never serious about digital. I needed to feel as though I had perfected the traditional methods first. Then I realised that perfection is a life-long ambition, so I dived into digital."

Now Branko does at least an hour of digital painting a day. This work is fed by "a stubborn assumption that if you imagine a world for each piece you do, it will help you connect with the image."

1 **MCBOB** Branko introduces a favourite character, McBob, "a Zombie who thinks he is a warrior."

2 **CORRUPTION** "Many live for the thrill of the hunt, others for the taste of flesh. This character clearly prefers the latter."

3 **JACKAL** "This guy figured he could rescue his pet from the Sumo Ogre that lives in the White Barn... At this point he is experiencing doubts."



**Vitaly Samarin
Alexius**

LOCATION: Canada
WEB: www.svitart.com
EMAIL: doctor_vit@hotmail.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop CS, Painter IX
JOB: Freelance illustrator



"I was born in the industrial city of Novokuznetsk, located in Siberian Russia, where I lived amidst coal mining and aluminium/steel production factories." Vitaly's city was one of European architecture covered with columns and arches, surrounded by forests and mountains.

"Since I was four years old," says Vitaly, "I have been drawing starships, thus sci-fi and fantasy themes fascinated me from there onward." At four, the young artist moved to Novosibirsk, the capital of Siberia. "At 11 years of age, I studied traditional painting, expecting a move to Moscow to further my studies," he explains.

Then, at the age of 13, "an unexpected twist of fate threw me around 5,555 miles across the Atlantic to Toronto, Canada, where I now live and study art/design at the Ontario College of Art and Design and illustrate books, CD covers, graphic novels, portraits and Magic cards."

1 LOST For this piece, Vitaly recalls a dream: "My brain shut down again today. The grey synapses snapped, misfiring, leading me astray. I had forgotten where I was going or why. I was lost and alone amidst nowhere."

2 PAROXYSMAL INCURSION The sudden outburst of the title was a storm: "The storm had begun in an instant. The temperature was rising rapidly. A spear of light pierced the heavens and sliced everything in its path, even metal or stone."

3 ENTER THE INFERNO This matte painting for a graphic novel has more somnambulistic inspiration: "I slept for far too long and when I woke, the world was upside down... And I was destined for hell, because I simply chose to disbelieve in heaven. Perhaps I was just still asleep, somewhere out there, many years ago? I entered a dream from which there was no waking."





1

David Levy

LOCATION: Canada
WEB: www.vyle-art.com
EMAIL: vylewind@yahoo.com
JOB: Concept artist, Ubisoft



David, who hails from Montpellier, France, studied industrial design at the European Institute of Toulon, France, where he graduated with a BTS (Brevet de Technicien Supérieur). From there he went to Maastricht in the Netherlands to study Interior Architecture and graduated in 1996 with a BA with honours in Industrial Design and Architecture.

"Upon graduation I was invited to join a large videogame company in Europe as a concept artist," David says. "I've worked in that industry ever since." David, whose credits include *Turok* and *Prince of Persia*, is a regular contributor to art workshops such as Conceptart.org, GDC and Gnomon. He currently lives in Quebec, Canada. He's got talent, that's for sure, but we'd most like to get our hands on his Air Miles...

1 FARAH Created for a marketing image on *Prince of Persia 3*, using XSI to pose a previously modelled character created by the cinematic team, 3ds max to create the drapery and grass, and Photoshop for the painting. "I had total freedom on the composition and choice of the image," David recalls. "That is extremely rare."

2 ARCHI_L This image started as brush testing in Photoshop. "It ended as an exercise in texture and composition," David says.

Ubisoft



2



The art of ANDREW JONES

As the co-founder of Conceptart.org and Massive Black, concept artist for *Metroid Prime* and a former employee of ILM, Andrew Jones is finely tuned to the dark emanations of the human spirit. His hometown is Boulder, Colorado, but his current spiritual home is the Burning Man project, an annual festival held at a temporary town in the middle of the Black Rock desert. The week-long event celebrates all forms of creative expression and attracts more than 35,000 people from around the world. On the last night, they burn a giant wooden effigy.

Andrew was always going to be an artist. "I was drawing and painting before I ever knew what art was," he recalls. His parents were painters, and his childhood efforts led to his studying art in Florida. After that, he became a street portrait artist. If not for his student loans, he says, that's what he'd still be doing. But that was before he got into what he calls "the active nightmare and dream manifestation gig." Fantasy, he says, was a natural progression for him.

Andrew was introduced to *Metroid Prime* aged just 11. "I discovered that game after undergoing cataclysmic brain surgery as a child," he explains. "The world of *Metroid* was a safe haven for me in comparison to the real world, which I had a hard time trusting and adapting to."

So when the opportunity arose, Andrew returned from painting the tiles red in Europe to work for Nintendo as the *Metroid*



LESSER EVIL

"There is so much duality in life," says Andrew. "I wanted to make an image that captured evil in opposition to itself."

Prime concept artist. "I saw it as stepping into my conceptual destiny, so to speak," he says. "I believed in the world of *Metroid* as a child and I gave as much as I could to make that world believable to the next generation."

Next came ILM. "ILM was a full-on dream vision manifestation," Andrew says. "It was the first time I learned that you can manifest reality through thoughts."

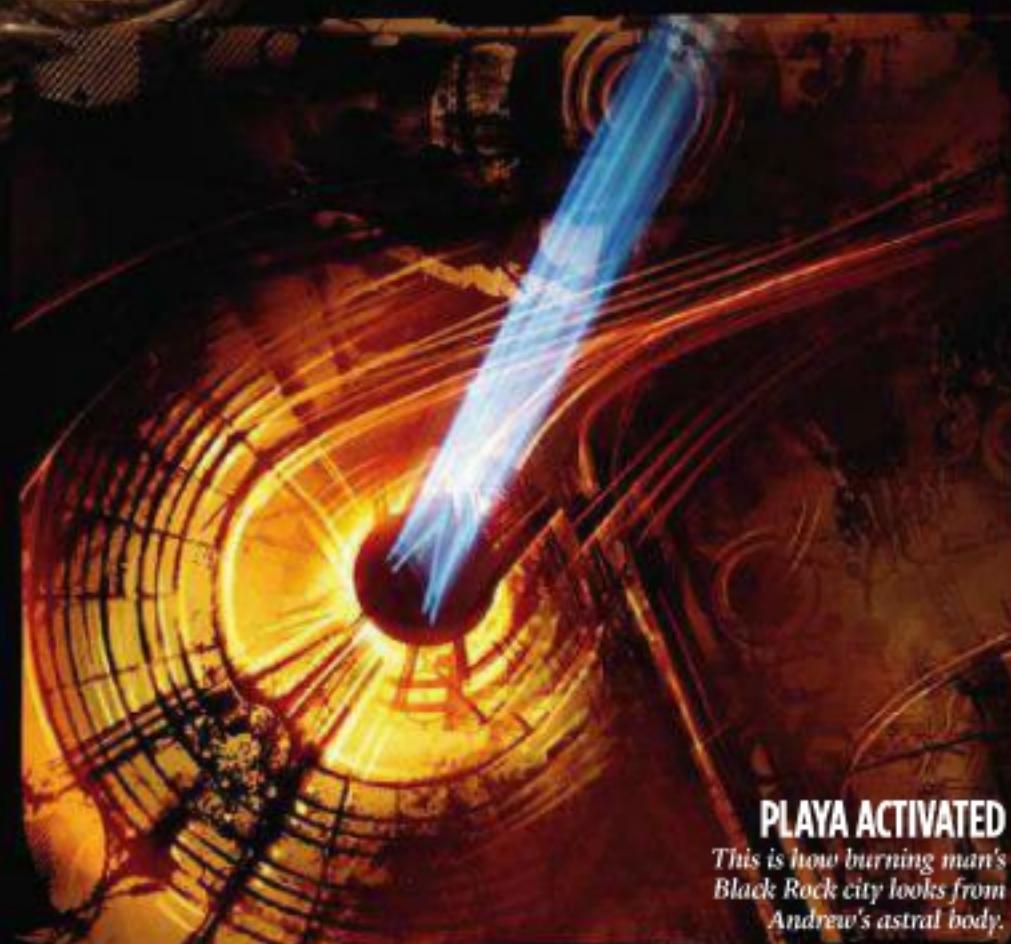
MOVING ON

From ILM, he moved to Retro Studios and Massive Black. "In short, Massive Black is the manifestation of not wanting to wake up to an alarm clock and never having to fill out a vacation form," Andrew explains. "ILM was another man's dream. Massive Black began as a dream born of the vision of Jason Manley, Coro Kaufman and myself."

Through Conceptart.org, he's helped

connect a worldwide network of artists who otherwise might have continued to struggle in isolation. "Jason Manley and I began connecting a network of six artists together. At that time, neither of us imagined that it would exceed the tens of thousands of members and hundreds of thousands of visitors that it does today.

"Jason and I are only instruments and pawns in the scheme of things. We gave it a name, a place and a home. The community connects itself. We try to keep the frequency as pure as possible." ▶▶



PLAYA ACTIVATED

This is how burning man's Black Rock city looks from Andrew's astral body.

Artist
PROFILE

Andrew Jones



AGE: 29

COUNTRY: US

North America

based conceptual

artist Andrew is also the
co-founder of Conceptart.org
and teaches workshops
around the world.

SOFTWARE USED: Painter,
Photoshop

WEB: www.androidjones.com

UNICORN OF THE APOCALYPSE

*This image was created to herald the Montréal
Massive Black /conceptart.org workshop.*



ANDREW JONES'
Artist tip

MAKE AN INTENTION FOR SUCCESS

"Before the pencil or Wacom touches the tablet, imagine your piece already finished. You don't need to concentrate on how it will look, but focus on how it will feel to accomplish something amazing. Feel your satisfaction, and release it. Visualise the smiles it will put on the faces of others when they see it. Guide the universe towards your desired result. What do you have to lose?"

Andrew Jones'
VITAL STATISTICS

Zen and the art of salty dreaming



Place of birth

Boulder, Colorado.

Date of birth

November 26, 1977.

Current location

San Francisco/fourth dimension.

Favourite music

Desert rock, Zen drums and monkey chants.

Favourite traditional artist

The spider on acid.

Favourite digital artist

I'm kind of partial to hexnoxism adaleixblackfrogsparthcorodo dowamon.

First memory

From this lifetime? Alien abduction.

Pet hate or any actual phobias

I have a recurring dream of a giant tsunami; I have even woken up with the taste of salt water in my mouth.

Most prized possession

My soul – but my soul possesses me.

Most endearing personal trait?

My empathetic nature and my open heart.

Average time spent on an image

Time doesn't really exist – it's always now. I don't spend time on my images; I infuse and invest time.

Single most important piece of professional advice

Don't do what you love – feel what you love. Serve the light.

Left or right-handed

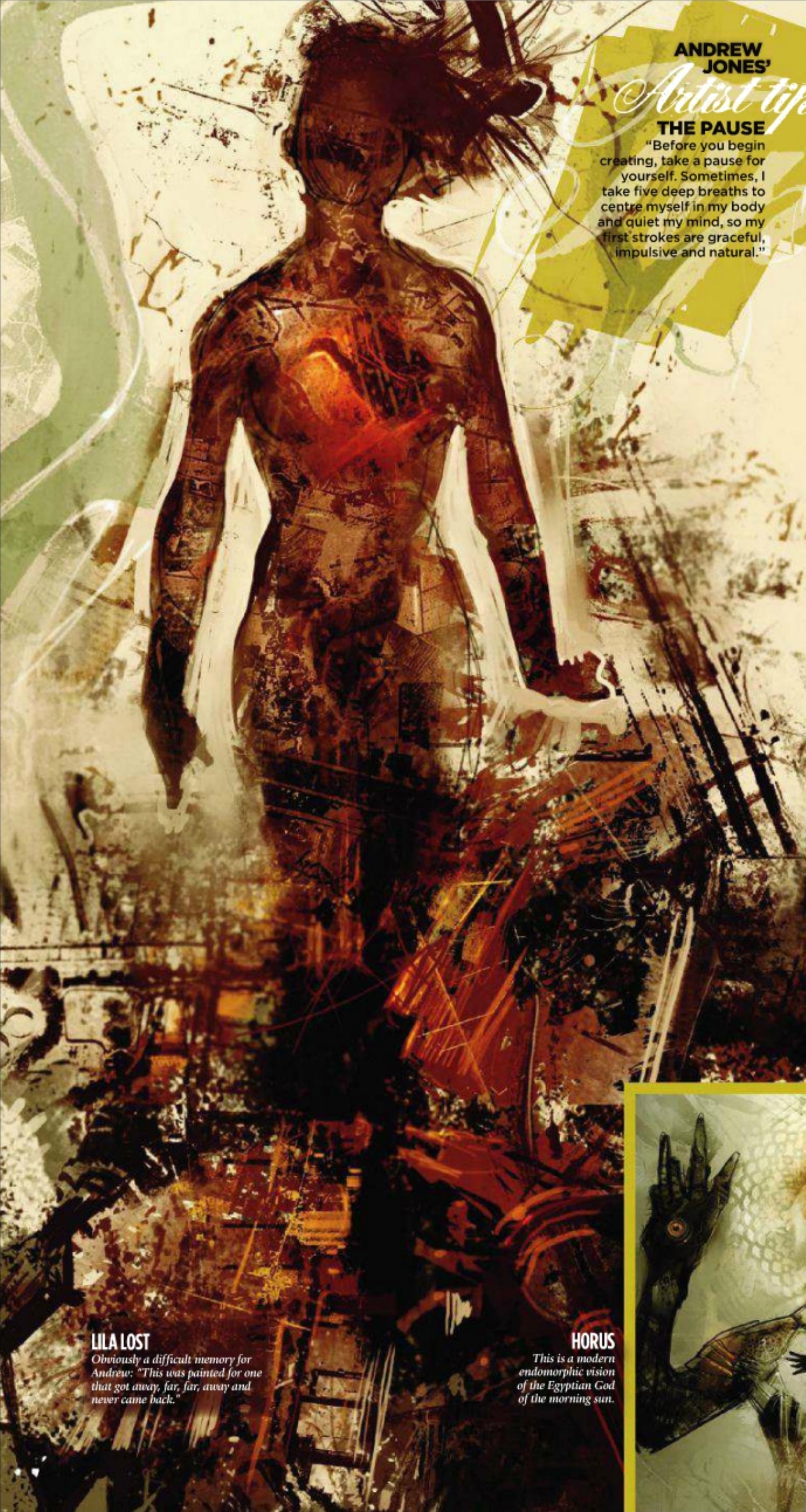
Wrong handed.

If you were an animal, what would you be?

A quetzcoatal bird.

DIE SF

Another vision of 2012, Andrew explains: "This piece was created during a great change in my life and points to a great change in the world that is soon to be upon us."

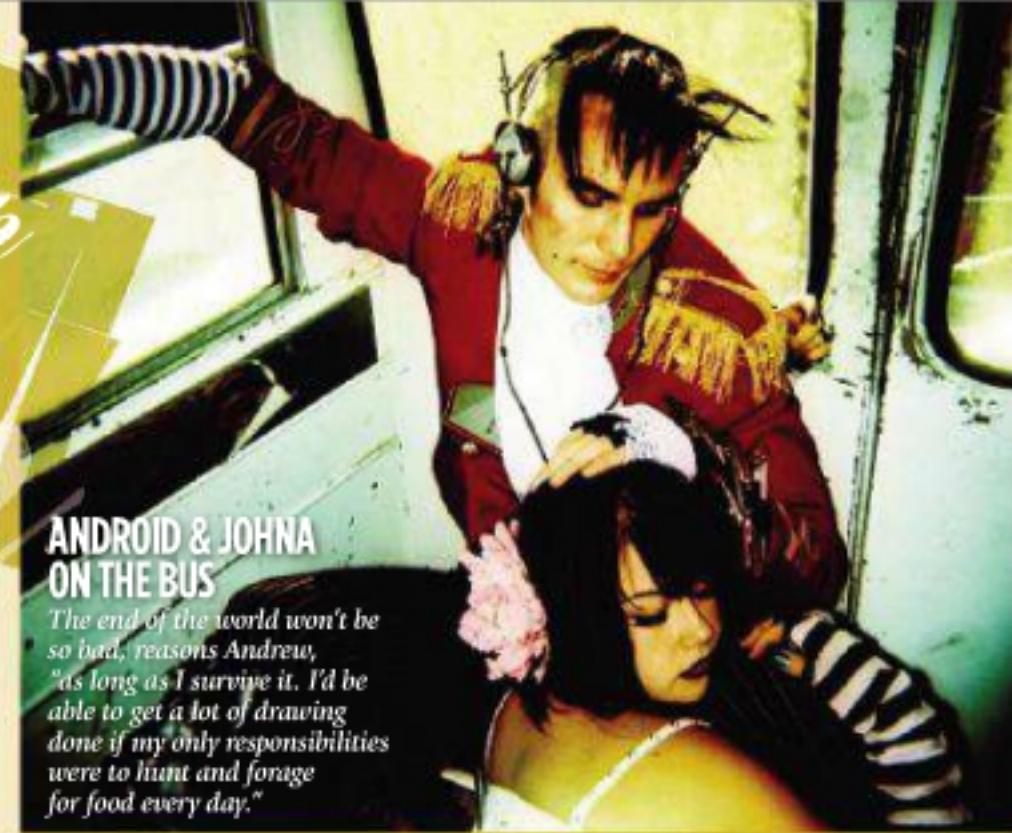


LILA LOST

Obviously a difficult memory for Andrew: "This was painted for one that got away, far, far, away and never came back."

ANDREW JONES' Artist tip THE PAUSE

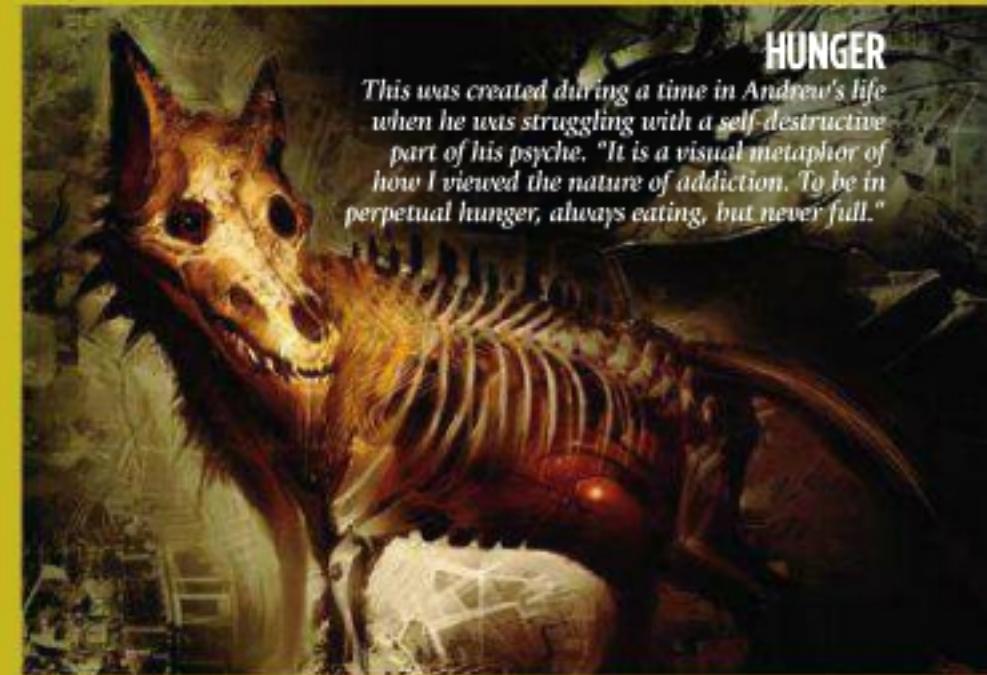
"Before you begin creating, take a pause for yourself. Sometimes, I take five deep breaths to centre myself in my body and quiet my mind, so my first strokes are graceful, impulsive and natural."



ANDROID & JOHNNA ON THE BUS

The end of the world won't be so bad, reasons Andrew, "as long as I survive it. I'd be able to get a lot of drawing done if my only responsibilities were to hunt and forage for food every day."

HUNGER



This was created during a time in Andrew's life when he was struggling with a self-destructive part of his psyche. "It is a visual metaphor of how I viewed the nature of addiction. To be in perpetual hunger, always eating, but never full."



SELECTED SELF-PORTRAITS. 2002-2005

From May 2002 to Feb 2005 Andrew created 1,000 self-portraits consecutively over 1,000 days. "This is a selection of some of my favourites from the later part of the series."

HORUS

This is a modern endomorphic vision of the Egyptian God of the morning sun.



Photoshop & Painter CREATING BEAUTY OUT OF CHAOS

Artist PROFILE

ANDREW JONES

COUNTRY: US

CLIENTS: Massive Black, Nintendo, Nike, Ncsoft



Andrew is the co-founder of conceptart.org and Massive Black. www.androidjones.com

Try it yourself

Download a Zip archive of support files supplied by Andrew Jones - including JPEG source images and PSD working files as well as work-in-progress screenshots - from <http://preview.tinyclick.com/2egj21>. You'll also find a trial version of Photoshop CS3 at www.adobe.com/go/trypphotoshop, and a trial of Painter X at www.corel.com/paintex.

Finding beauty within chaos is one of the purest forms of art. In this workshop **Andrew Jones** shows you how to embrace the chaotic aspects of your inner workings and how the force of your will can form art out of abstraction

Within my creative work, I'm always searching for new paths and ways to expand my experience. There's a freedom within the unknown, a still emptiness that beckons us to come closer and explore. I've partnered with this spirit in my art - the freedom opens me up and takes me on journeys to places I'd never have imagined on my own. In this workshop, I take an idea from its simple beginnings to an elaborate finish, while demonstrating a few unconventional techniques that can be applied to inspire creativity and idea

development. A combination of Painter IX.5 and Photoshop CS2 is used for the execution of this image, with a few pictures scanned and photographed as Painter paper textures. I focus on building up textures and ideas first to create a richer sense of depth and meaning in the image.

Painter IX.5 is an amazing program with an incredible amount of brushes, options and tools at your disposal. This can sometimes be overwhelming, so I've simplified my Painter arsenal to five of my favourite tools to demonstrate how much you can achieve with very little.

1 The beginning

I start proceedings in Painter. The white document stares back at me with its limitless possibilities and potential. I give some thought to what type of image to create. I decide on something feminine and beautiful. Beyond this simple decision everything else will exist by chance.

2 Abstract compositional theory

I start off with a simple white document - nothing fancy - and begin to divide the space compositionally with lines, avoiding thirds and halves. The rule of thirds is a cliché that I've made it my intention to avoid.

3 Division

I divide up the space using a 2B Pencil set to Cover and turn on Straight Lines in the menu bar. I start off with the perpendicular lines vertically and horizontally. Then I divide the boxes

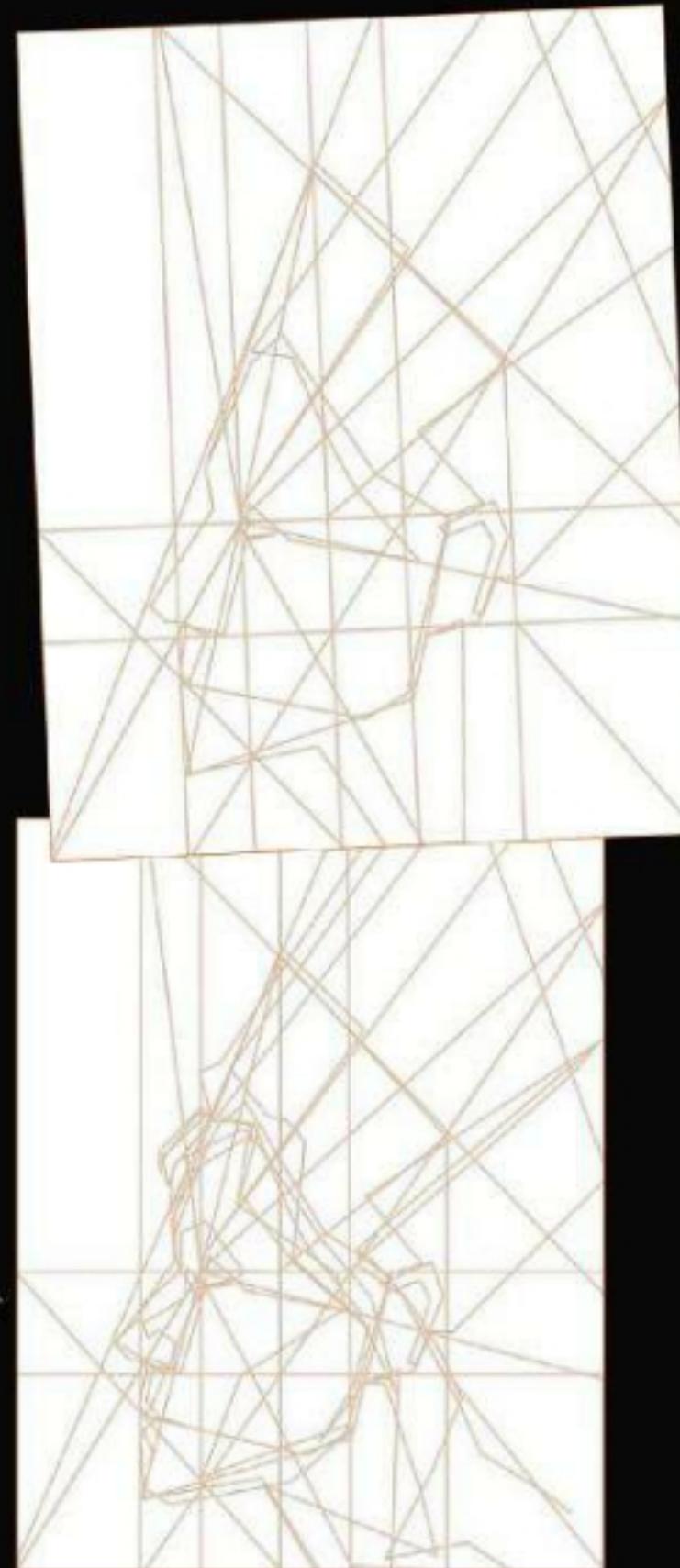
I've made with diagonal lines. Where the diagonal lines are intersecting the perpendicular lines, I draw new horizontal and vertical lines.

4 Focus

I draw even more lines. Sometimes I work as fast as my hand can move so as to not consciously determine how my shapes are forming. I want to remain abstract for as long as I can. At this point my eye is measuring the spaces and shapes that form out of this simple construction. It's like a navigation map: where the lines intersect, interesting focal points appear. I'll use these areas later when I push my rendering to final.

5 Perception

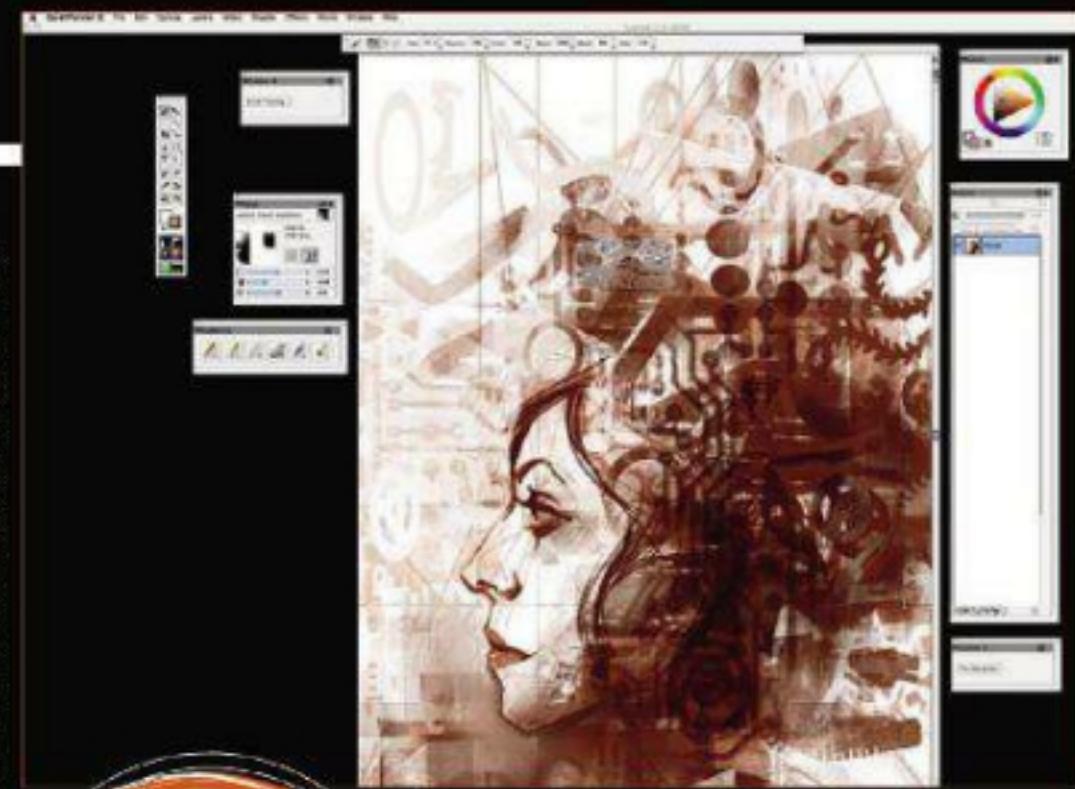
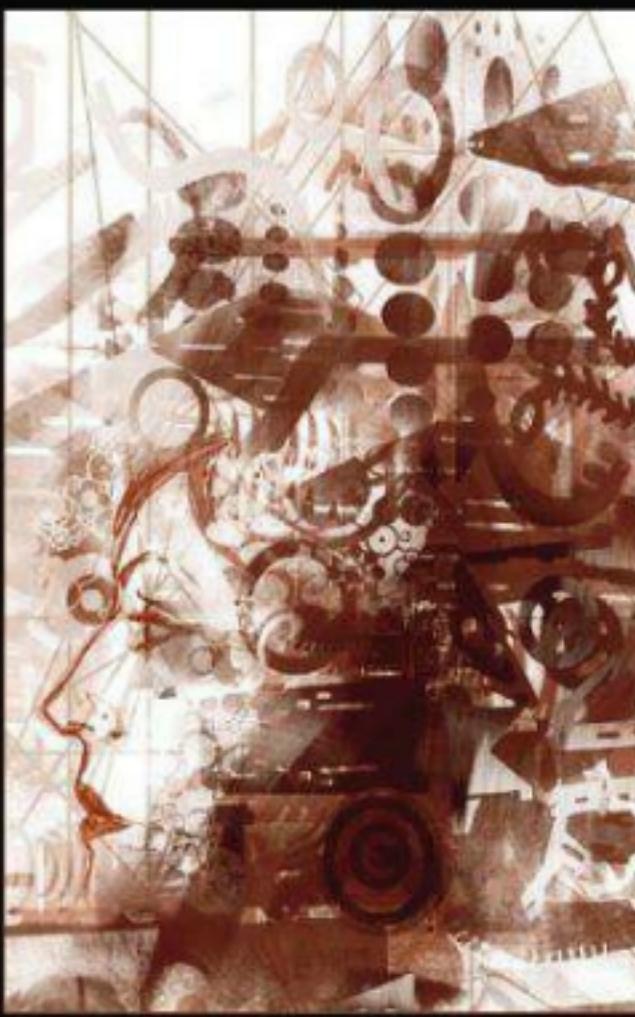
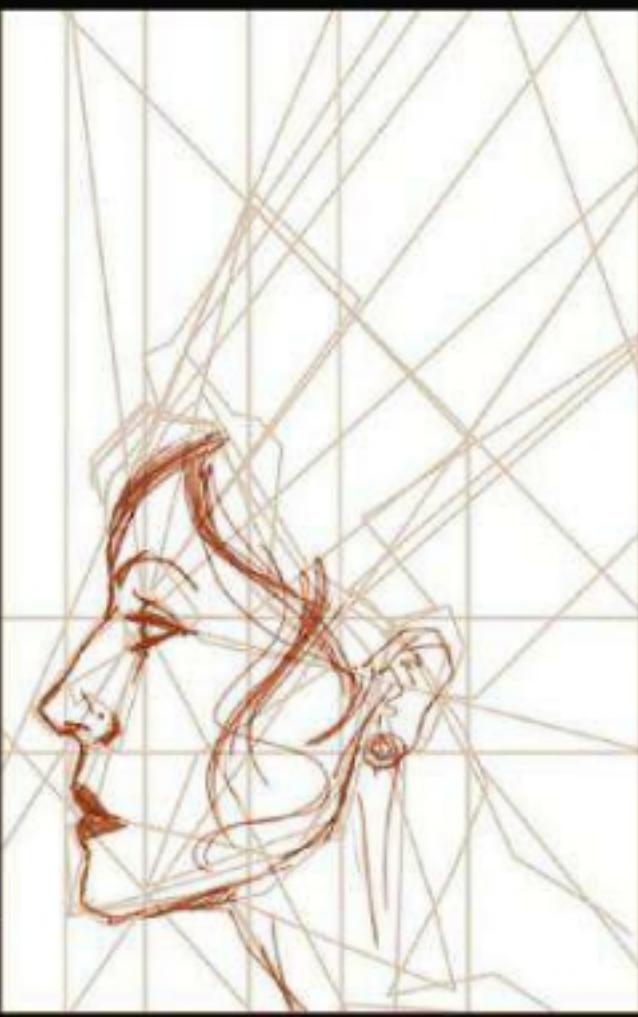
During the process of dividing the space up with geometrical intersecting lines, a dominant mental image begins to appear. I get a clear vision of a head in profile, which I can block in.





In depth Beauty out of chaos

Workshop



Shortcuts
Rotate the canvas
in Painter
Option+spacebar (Mac)
Alt+spacebar (PC)
Rotate the canvas just like a
piece of artboard to work
at a natural angle.



6 Decision

The shapes are clear now, as is my decision. Out of the random geometric forms, I start shaping a woman's face. I refine the face with curves to offset and contrast the geometry of my initial compositional approach.

7 Chaos

Now my idea is clear, and I have the major proportions blocked in, the fun part begins – chaos. I select the Sharp Chalk tool, I dig out my paper textures and start throwing them on top of the canvas, painting them opaquely over my drawing. I use the randomness of the texture to search for interesting accidents. I consider the shapes that appear to be happy chances, a unique foundation for wherever this painting goes next. I stay

loose – trying to force accuracy at this point will seed confusion and I'm trying to avoid this.

8 Paper textures

The custom paper textures I use are made by hand; photographs of the stencils and other utensils, such as ellipse sets and balsa wood puzzle pieces that I use in the course of my work as an airbrush bodypainter. I made this paper specifically for this workshop – I've never used it before. The more of a relationship there is between you and the paper texture photos, the richer and more complicated your work will become, as you create a larger visual vocabulary for yourself. I often use microscopic photography with satellite map images to contrast the micro and the macro

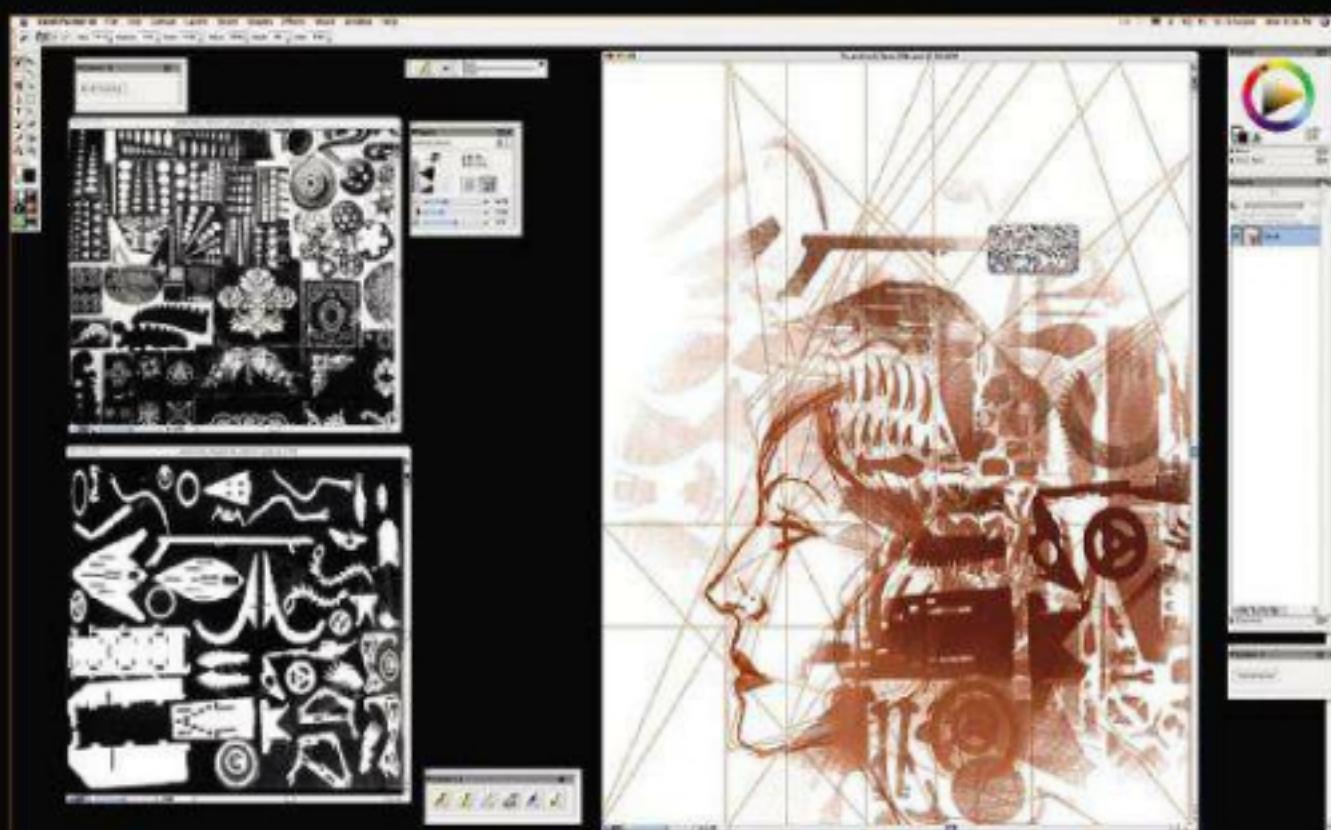
universe. I use the airbrush stencils because they represent a new love and passion for me in my creative life.

9 Shape play

At this point, all the chaotic elements are completed. Now it's time for me to start searching for relationships within the forms. The complexity of these relationships is defined by the variety of shapes and forms that have appeared through the random application of paper textures. It helps me dive into the vast landscape of abstract intersecting forms that are scattered throughout the painting. I use the Chalk tool and overlay areas opaquely and thus push them forward, while I lighten up the background to achieve more compositional depth.

10 Connection

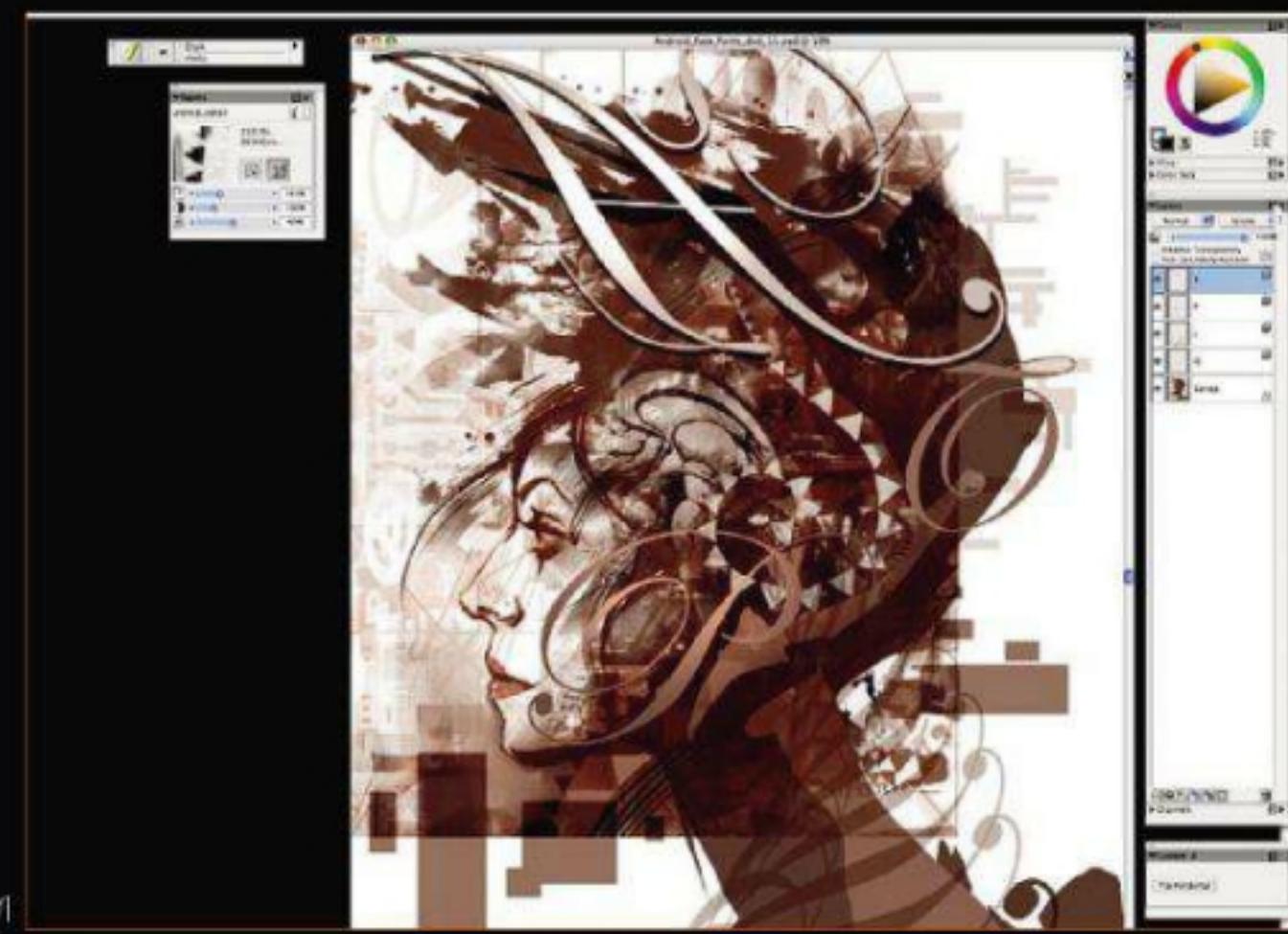
I enter the next stage by reinforcing the organic shapes. I use the Pencil tool and the loaded Palette Knife to make my marks. This is something I do to recreate the primordial feeling that I'm connecting with the painting. These organic marks push the contrast between straight edges and the more natural shapes within the composition, enabling me to create drama and manifest the prevalent relationships. I use the Painter IX.5 Pattern tool to create triangles.



1 PRO SECRETS

Take time out to freshen your eyes

Sometimes, the best decision is to take a break and leave your painting alone for a while. This gives you space to clear your mind and when you return to your image it'll be with a fresh perspective.



11 Expansion

I expand the scope of the image to introduce the beauty of the neck and create an interesting diagonal for the viewer, which will take the initial composition to a higher, more dynamic level. I select Canvas Size and add pixels to the right and the bottom of the image.

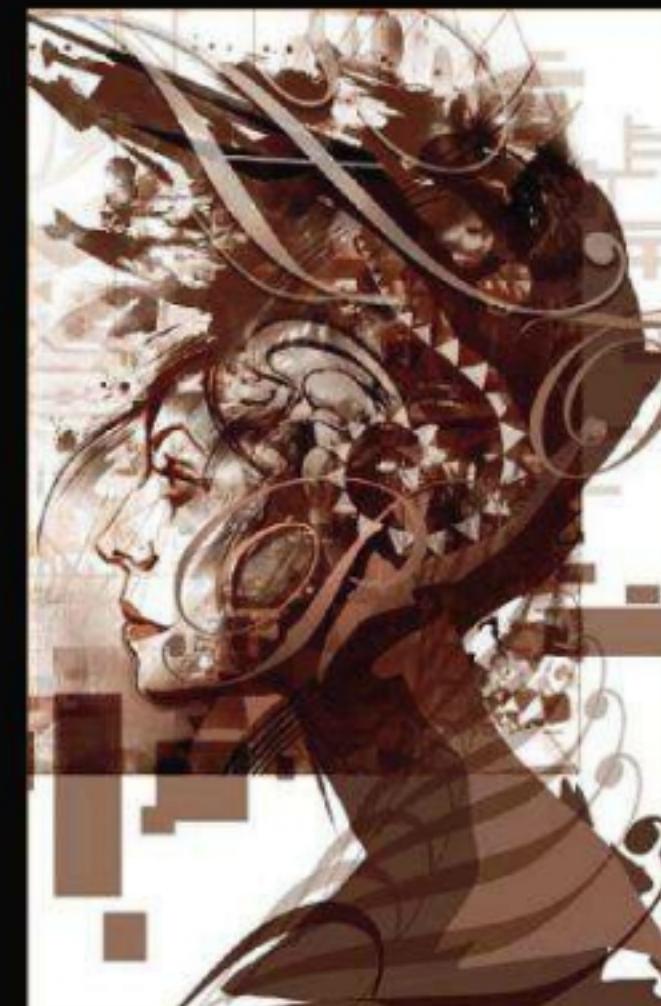
12 Fonts

Classical fonts are universally beautiful and accepted for their elegance by all western cultures. There's not much you can do to enhance the beauty of a font. Instead, I use the definite cleanliness of the Edwardian Script and my initials, APJ, to introduce static and

unquestionable countershapes in contrast to the randomness of the wild marks of steps 8 and 9.

13 Unification

Now my major shapes and points of focus are ready, I need to unify the picture by combining the textures, forms and strokes to give the painting a more focused overall appearance. I throw a cool colour wash on a Multiply layer on top to complement the underlying warm colours of my drawing and thus add to the drama. I use Correct Colours to add contrast to the image. Correct Colours enables me to adjust the red, blue and green channel contrast levels individually.



PRO SECRETS

Learn to trust in your instincts

Fear is what keeps us in our safety zone. Having faith in ourselves enables us to exceed our own expectations. Be willing to take risks with your art. When you fail, you can always reflect on where to stop next time. If you never take risks, you'll never know what you might achieve. Downfall is a better teacher than success.



14 Edges

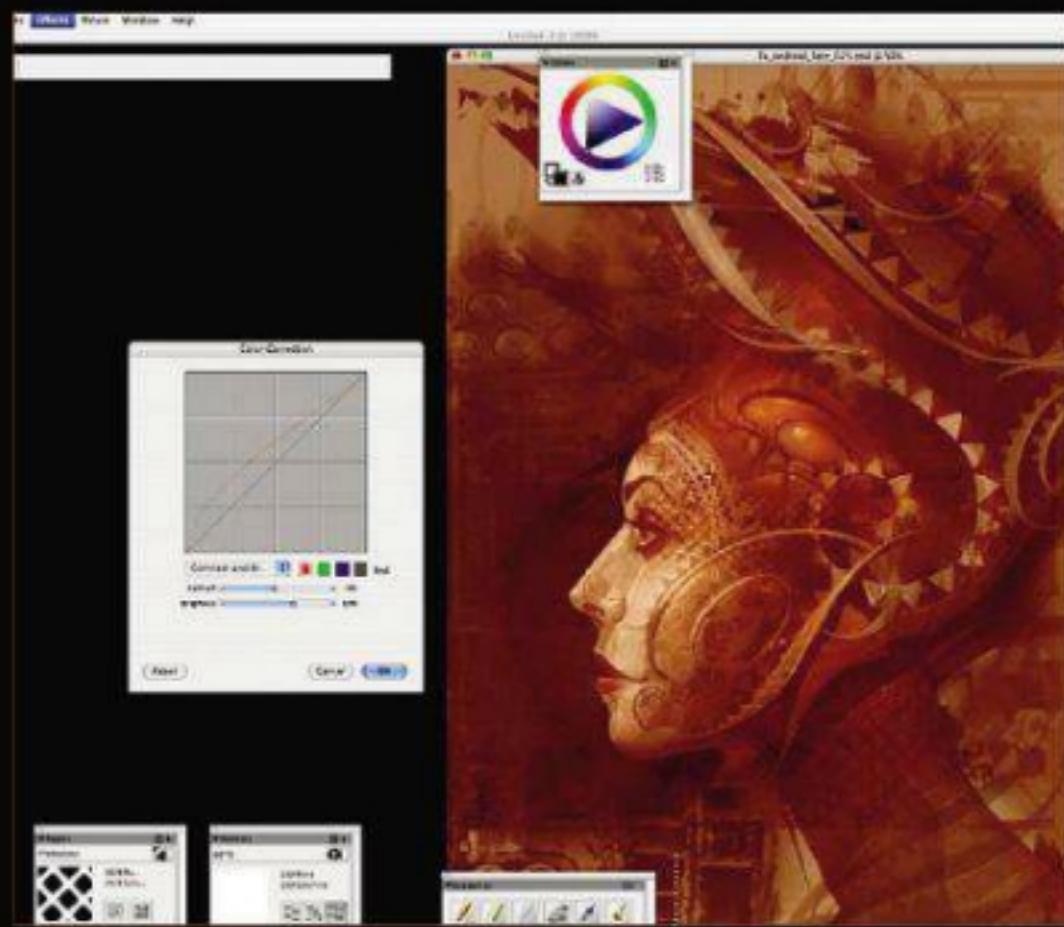
I flatten the image and use the Colour Correction in Painter IX.5 to give the painting edge by adjusting contrast, saturation and the overall tone of the piece. With the Just Add Water tool I'm able to move the attention away from the background and solidify the foreground. Edges play an essential role in this step of the painting. By applying contrasting themes in certain areas, such as dark/light, mechanical/organic, graphical/chaotic and flat/rendered, I'm able to create more dynamic relationships within the painting, which makes the overall feel more interesting.

15 Depth

I want to emphasise the face, which is the brightest part of my painting. I decide to place my richest darks around the face and make it pop, and – zang! – it immediately jumps out of the picture. I add textures of changing value to give additional depth to the painting.



Workshop



16 Flipside

I flip the hemispheres of my perception so I can see any possible flaws and mistakes in the painting. This approach gives me the ability to look at the painting with a fresh pair of eyes, which is helpful as we're prone to losing track of the shortcomings of a painting when too caught up in the creative process. I see little inconsistencies here and there, and correct them.



17 Liquify

With the painting back in its original placement, it's time for more experimentation. I bring the image into Photoshop and select the portion of the profile I want to change. Once selected, I choose the Liquify filter from the menu. Liquify provides the flexibility to make organic transformations and adjustments. It's a great tool for making subtle changes to facial features and changing the silhouette of an image. I use the Liquify filter to adjust the facial features and make the face more appealing. By adjusting the levels of contrast, I push it until it breaks. Then



I pull out to get a clearer vision of the visual scope, strength and impact of the painting.

18 Lost soul

As I'm rendering the facial details, I realise how much the soul that began this painting has aged like an elderly woman. I value that journey but want to return to the youthful state of the beginning – I'll need to adjust the face.

19 Rebirth

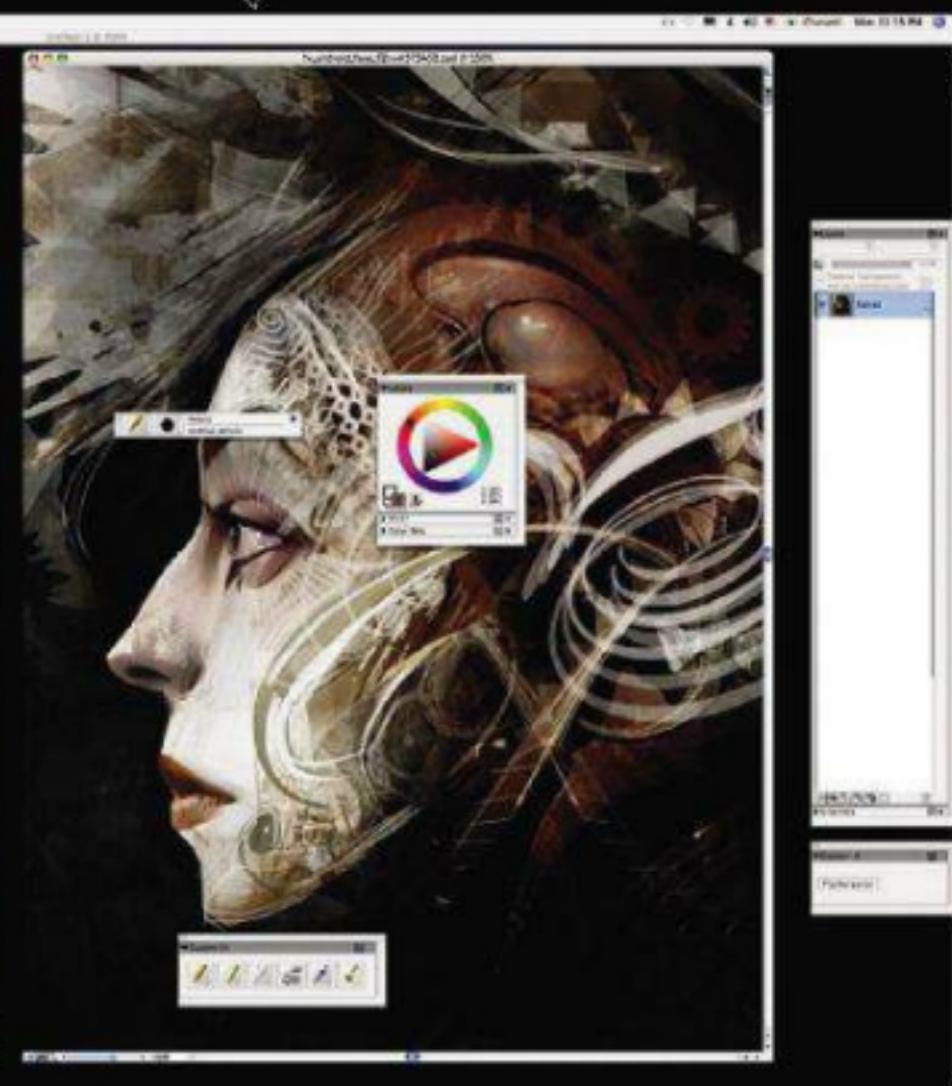
I resurrect the original sketch for comparison and bring the two images together into the present. I place and refine the woman's features by



referencing memories of past lovers and incorporate these into the final image. This combination of memories creates a pleasing aesthetic and brings me closer to the feeling I want to capture. I zoom in and focus on individual features – pushing a cheekbone here, adjusting a brow there, moving the eye, nose, lips and forehead, and inch by inch I crawl closer to the painting's final stage.

20 Conclusion

It's done. Sometimes the work never seems done, and I'll probably continue to experiment with it, but for the purpose of this workshop, I feel that it's complete.





1

 **Riana Møller**

LOCATION: Denmark
EMAIL: rm@wataqame.com
SOFTWARE: Painter, Photoshop



Riana Møller had a tough time as a kid. "Raised in a small village and with more enemies than friends, I started to develop imaginary friends and a private world to slip into," she reveals. Art came to the rescue as young Riana began to visualise her thoughts. Thinking of art as a profession came later: "I combined my concepts and ideas to design an ultimate interactive version of them: a computer game." Game designer had to be the perfect job, she added, where she could create worlds other people could enter and discover.

1 IN THE WHITE SWAMPS "This shows treasure hunting near Pearl Milk Harbour," explains Riana. That guy needs to watch out for reeds... they're a sure sign of soft ground.

2 HAPPY CAMPERS This piece depicts Riana (top) and Eufrath, "an imaginary friend from my childhood."



2

1



William Li

LOCATION: Netherlands
WEB: www.fenyx.com
EMAIL: william.li@fenyx.com
SOFTWARE: Satori Paint, Photoshop



"The driving force in my artwork is the wish to make the fantastical look real and believable," says William Li. "I guess that's why I'm now working as an industrial designer as well." Science fiction gets the lion's share of his off-duty efforts. "In this realm basically anything is possible, which is liberating to creativity." William started out with a wide variety of traditional media but gradually took up digital painting, vector art and 3D rendering as computer technology caught up with his ambitions. "Digital painting has been my preference over the years because of its flexibility."

1 ANGEL OF WAR "My preferred style is akin to classical realism," says William. This Angel of War wearing the celestial armour is a radiant example of that.

2 LIANI This is William's admittedly glamorous take on warrior women in fantasy.

2





1

Pär Olofsson

LOCATION: Sweden

WEB: www.parolofsson.se

EMAIL: info@parolofsson.se

SOFTWARE: Photoshop, Painter



"I discussed my passion for sci-fi with a childhood friend, trying to figure out where it originated," says Pär. The two youngsters used to draw epic space battles long before they were even allowed to watch Star Wars. Conclusion? "I guess it came with birth." This passion got side-tracked at art school and during subsequent years working as an illustrator at an advertising agency, but after a while he got bored with the job and slipped back to where it had all begun: "spaceships and robots."

1 FORGET "As a kid I used to take long walks in the woods, making up stories about strange looking trees as I went," he recalls. "This image feels a lot like one of those stories."

2 FIRST FLIGHT "I think this is the first robot that I ever painted without rust," he muses. But a new robot with wings is bound to develop hubris – "certain death, according to the ancient Greeks."



2

1 Loish van Baarle

LOCATION: Netherlands
WEB: <http://loish.net>
EMAIL: loisvb@pandora.be
SOFTWARE: Photoshop 7, Painter 7,
OpenCanvas 1.1



Loish cites a mixture of Disney, art nouveau and anime as forming her main stylistic inspirations. "I'm driven by a desire to capture the sense of energy, decoration and atmosphere these art styles have," she says. Working with digital media in one form or another since the age of 14, Loish relies on the traditional combination of Intuos2 and Photoshop. "The ability this gives to tweak colours, add textures and layer endlessly have been a crucial element in the development of my style," she adds.

1 SUMMER "This image was inspired by the atmosphere of summer sunsets and street performers on the boulevards of the south of France," says Loish. "It was also my first digital work done in Painter 7."

2 JANELARGE This is Loish's interpretation of a porcelain-mask-clad character called Keratin Jane, created by Heather Caulberg for White Wolf's RPG Changeling: The Dreaming. (See www.deviantart.com/deviation/21247773/.) "She wears porcelain masks and is meant to have a mysterious and slightly creepy appearance," says Loish.



2





1

2

3

Pierre Droal

LOCATION: France
WEB: www.hyperboree.com
EMAIL: contact@hyperboree.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop, Painter



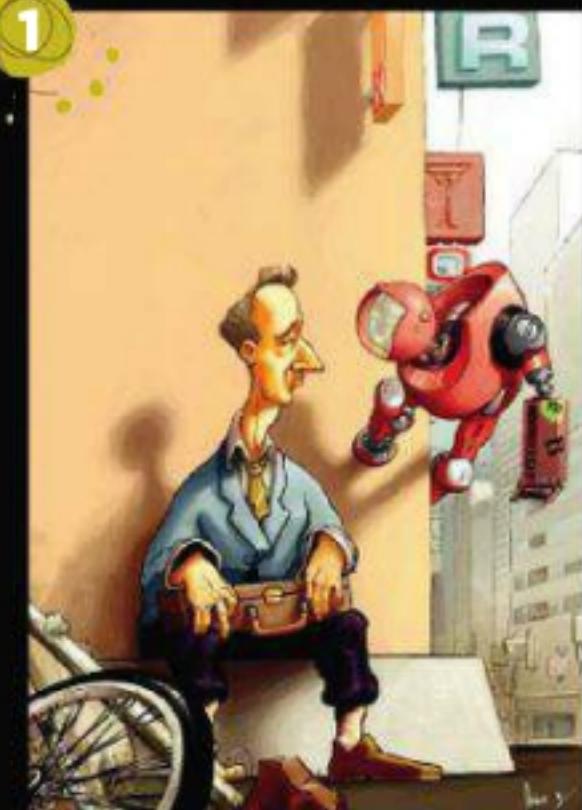
"Through my painting and my writing, I am trying to open a door leading to archaic worlds, where the stakes of today's society are expressed in a tough but clearer way," Pierre says. He is fascinated by photography, because it "immortalises every state of mankind." He adds: "Maybe it explains why my pictures tend to be realistic: I try to photograph what's in my mind, to make it tangible."

1 MIN THE PATRIARCH "Min is the grandfather of Riis and is therefore one or two steps closer to being a giant lizard," explains Pierre.

2 THE NAKED ELF Elves are often described as immortals, so Pierre wanted to express the oddness of having an old soul in a young body. "His eyes, his mouth and hands are the only witnesses of his real age," he adds.

3 RIIS, LOST IN HIS THOUGHTS "This character almost looks human, but he has a different ancestry. 'Humans' ancestors were apes, but Riis' ancestors were Saurians," Pierre says.





**Andreas N.
Grøntved**

LOCATION: Denmark
WEB: <http://www.sota.dk>
EMAIL: dreaz@sota.dk
SOFTWARE: Photoshop



"The path of my life has been very simple," says Andreas. "From the day I got a pencil in my hands, I've been working my way towards the creative industries." But the route was not without its twists and turns: "I've always been told by my parents that I should get a useful education before I consider animation, design and illustration," he adds. He complied, dutifully. "I regret it from time to time," he admits. "But right now I'm working on the final piece for my degree in character animation." This is a cause of great happiness: "It's been the best 31 years of my life". Andreas' next major decision will be whether to head for film or games.

1 MAN_ROBOT "This guy has become immune towards any form of media, especially commercials," explains Andreas. "The seller-robot on the wall is offering choco-barios for 7 kr-units."

2 ROBOT_TRAIN This is a personal favourite for Andreas: "The robot is escaping a direct attack from a rocketbox in the area. Unfortunately it hits a bridge and a train while trying to dodge the rockets."

3 ROBOT_HILL This tumbling droid would normally be at the focal point of the image. "But instead I focused in on the fall," Andreas explains, which he says was tricky to pull off. "The result is quite weird but interesting to look at."





1

Tiago M. da Silva
LOCATION: Portugal
WEB: www.tiago-silva.com
EMAIL: grafik@tiago-silva.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Tiago, aka Grafik, is a freelance illustrator who has been interested in drawing from a young age. He taught himself by studying comic books, taking his first painting classes while at university. "At that time, I also learned, through the internet, of a new way to draw and paint – digital painting." After lots of research, some contact with other artists and many false starts, Tiago finally found his feet in the digital world. "I still use pencil and paper in the sketch phase, although in some cases I develop illustrations entirely in the digital field." This enables Tiago to combine two interests: technology and art.

1 TAMI AND NARASHIMA THE DEMON SLAYER Created for an online competition themed Master and Servant, this piece took a long time to complete: "The background was a test of my patience," admits Tiago. The results are worth it, though.

2 THE KNIGHT "This was maybe the most challenging pose I've tried to do," reckons Tiago. "I also have to mention that I was playing Warcraft 3 at the time I made this piece!"

3 THE QUEST OF ARUNA Character concepts for a personal project – a comic book story Tiago is working on. "For these concepts I had some pencil sketches as guidelines, but I've started doing new sketches in Photoshop and moving forward from there."



2



3

Jim Burns

Bringing science fiction's big hits to life with shape and colour, Jim Burns is a master creator of worlds...

Illustrating science fiction literature demands an artist with a clear and convincing vision of the future. Jim Burns is that man for leading authors such as Isaac Asimov, Robert Silverberg and Peter F Hamilton. A science fiction world-builder par excellence – and the only non-American to win a Hugo Award for Art (Best Science Fiction Artist) – Jim sees through the eyes of the authors he works for to create what he calls "narrative snapshots realistically depicting things that do not exist."

PILOT OF THE FUTURE

Jim started early: "Even at the age of three or four I loved drawing cars and aeroplanes." Once ignited, his fascination with all things technological grew like wildfire: "At some point it subtly transformed itself into the love of science fiction." As for any fire, fuel was needed; it came in the form of Dan Dare, Pilot of the Future. Jim was hooked: "I adored the story lines – but even more, the fabulous artwork of Frank Hampson, and later Frank Bellamy," he enthuses.

Jim's obsession with aviation

continued to grow unabated, chiefly expressing itself in an assortment of increasingly futuristic drawings. "Common sense dictated that I should have gone straight from school to art college," Jim smiles. "But my heart spoke louder than my brain!"

And so in the spring of 1966, 18-year-old Jim was inducted into the RAF as a trainee pilot. Things didn't work out. "I never achieved the exalted status of fighter pilot – though that was very much my ambition," he sighs. That may be so but it's better by far to have loved and lost.

"It seems so long ago," Jim recalls of his Royal Air Force days. "And in such a bizarre conjunction with my life now that it acquires a more and more dream-like quality as the years go by..." With feet firmly on the ground, Jim continued to reach for the sky by

embarking on a foundation course in art and design at Newport School of Art.

FOSS THINGS FIRST

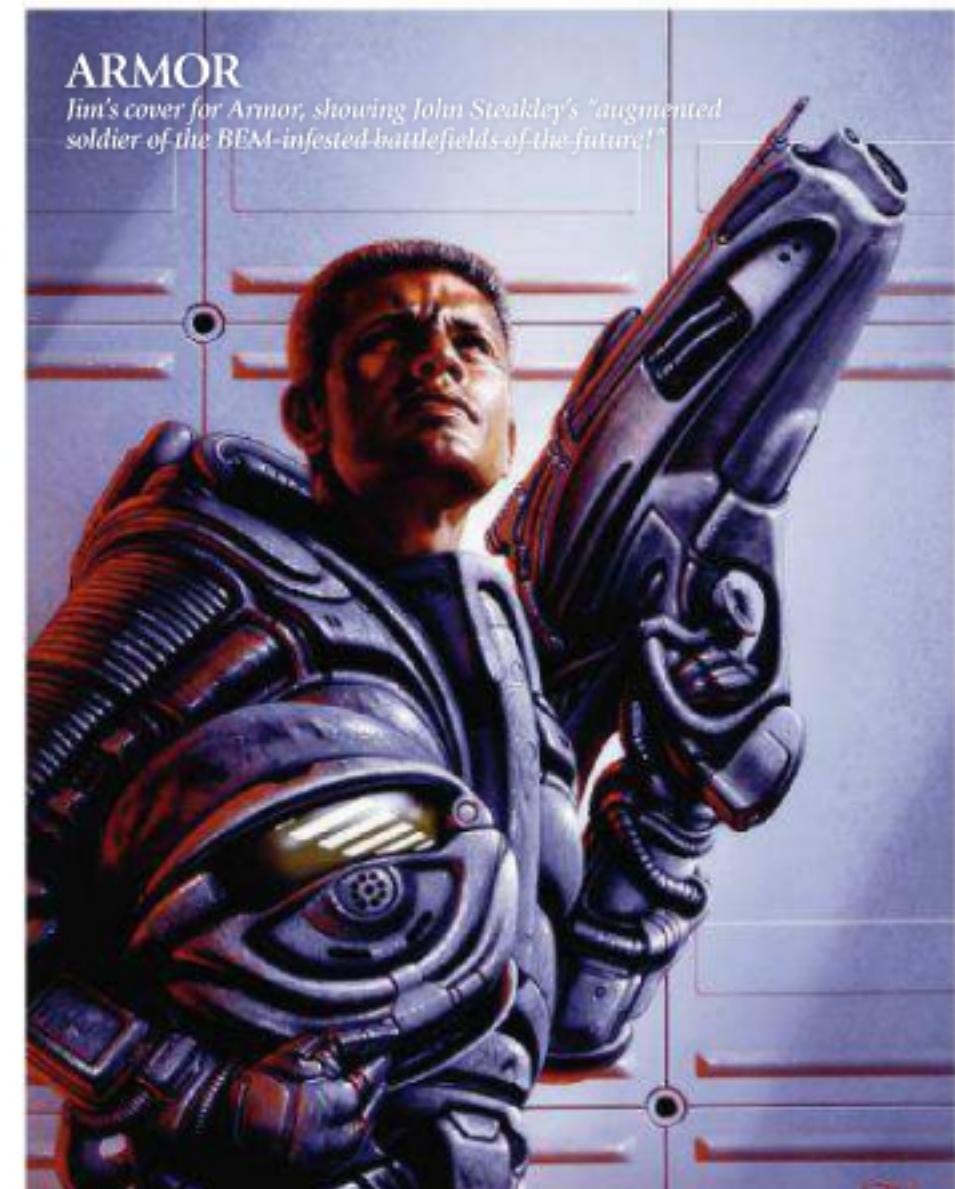
"I can't pinpoint the date," says Jim, "but it was when I first saw the work of Chris Foss spread across a Sunday colour supplement article, sometime in the late 60s." That was when the penny dropped: "In that moment I realised there was a potential career for me in this rather peculiar discipline."

The budding artist began working towards his new goal. "Everything I painted was informed in some way by that revelatory moment." Six years after signing up as a flyboy, Jim finished his first commission for Sphere Books, for a war-time thriller called The Lost Command. "The artwork was gloriously executed in pencil and coloured crayons."



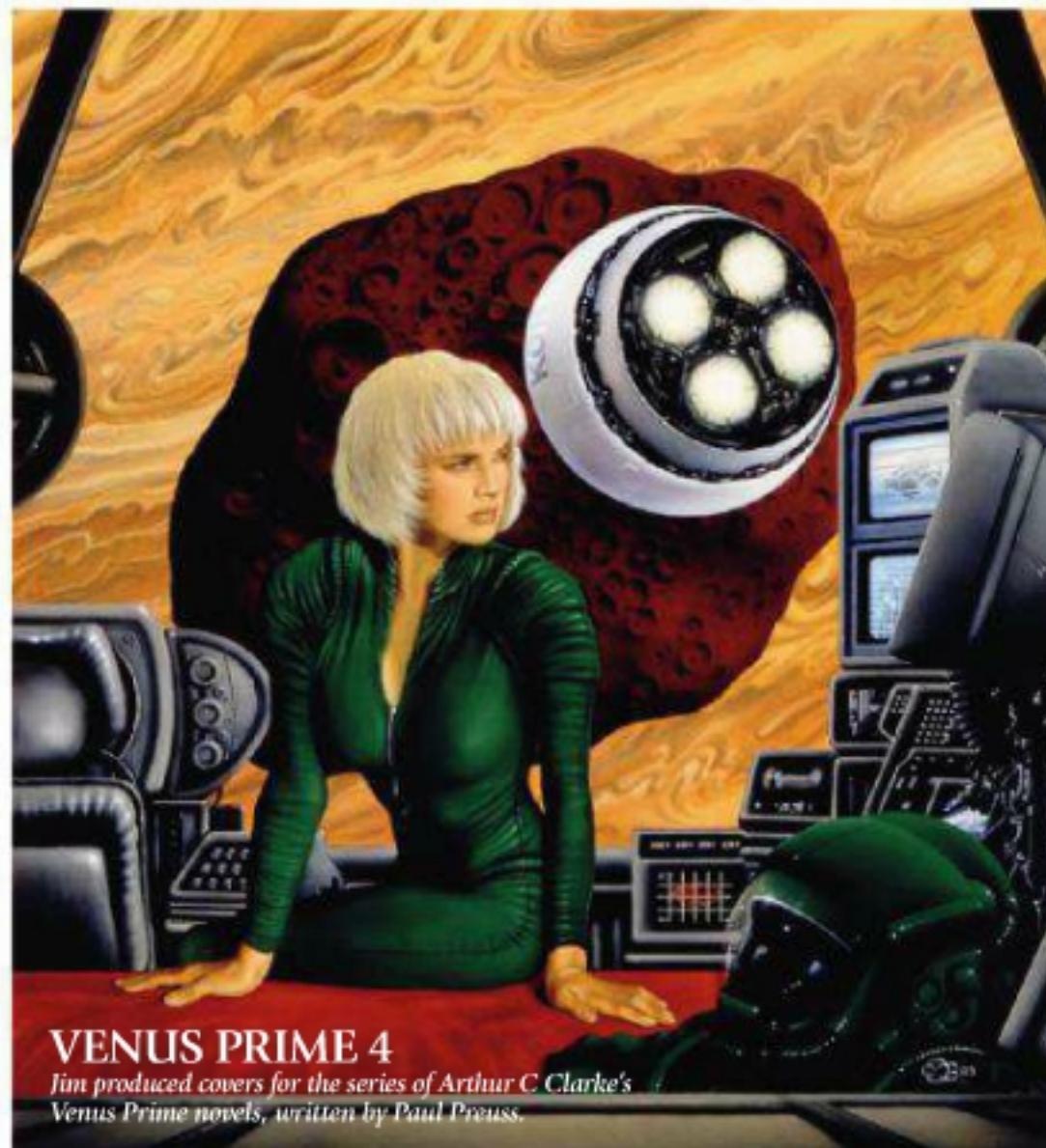
THE ILLUSTRATED MAN

From The Illustrated Man by Ray Bradbury, "Who could pass up the chance to illustrate one of the great short story collections?" asks Jim.



ARMOR

Jim's cover for Armor, showing John Steakley's "augmented soldier of the BEM-infested-battlefields-of-the-future!"



VENUS PRIME 4

Jim produced covers for the series of Arthur C Clarke's Venus Prime novels, written by Paul Preuss.

Artist PROFILE

Jim Burns



Born in 1948, the illustrator has a flair for realising the imagined future

worlds of sci-fi literature in paint and pixel. His work for authors such as Isaac Asimov, Robert Silverberg and Peter Hamilton mean his universes are carried in the minds of generations of fans, worldwide. A prolific artist, he still works for print and collectors.

WEB: www.jimburns.co.uk



“When I first saw the work of Chris Foss, I realised there was a potential career for me”





“Even at the age of three or four I loved drawing cars and aeroplanes”

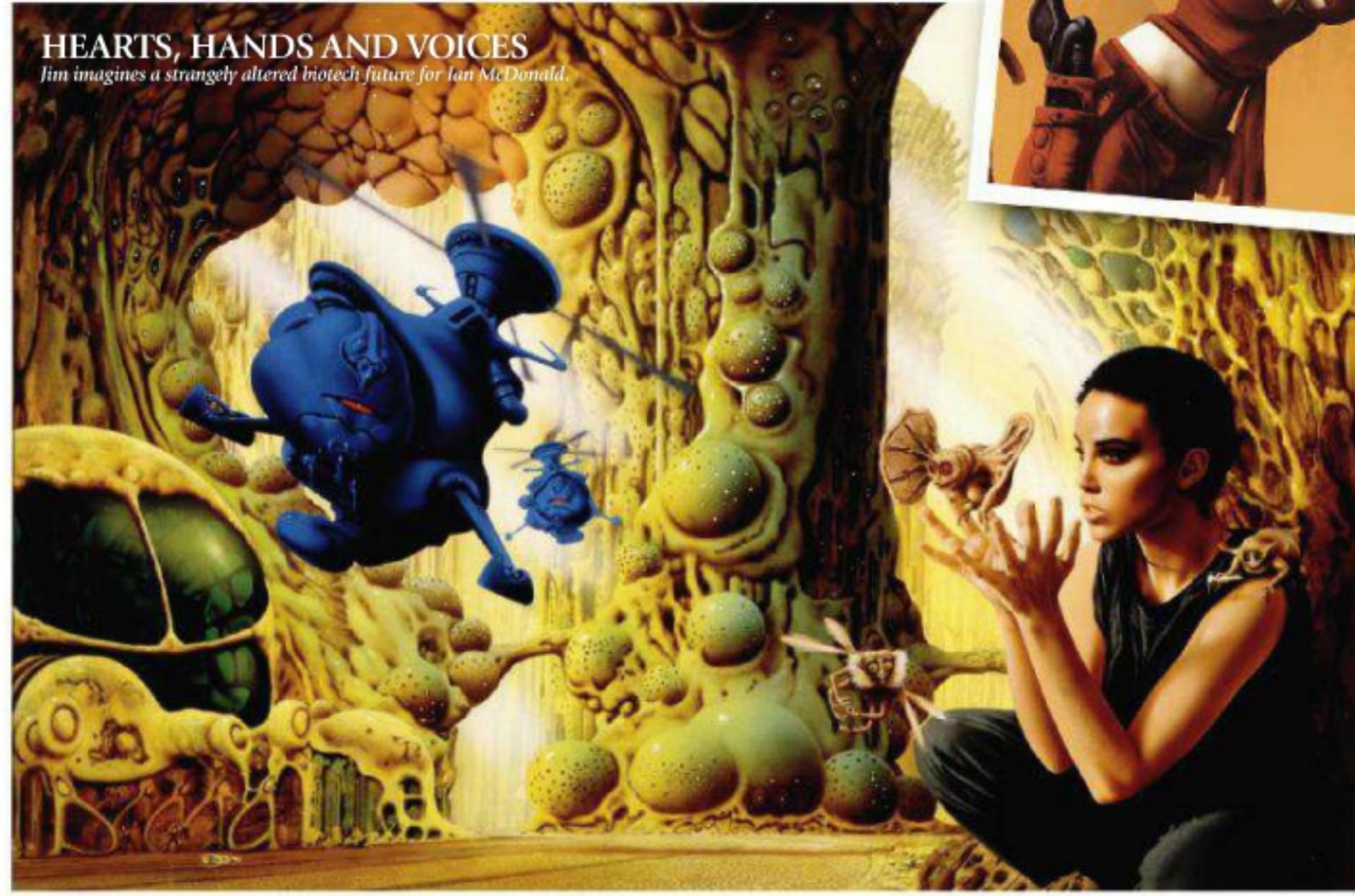
Having worked for some of the biggest names in sci-fi – even brushing shoulders with Syd Mead over the concept work for *Blade Runner* – Jim is assured his place in history. However, he is typically self-deprecating about his talent: “I would say I’m technically competent but somewhat pedestrian,” he claims.

It’s startling to learn that, even at the level Jim has reached, there’s still an element of doubt in there. “The whole thing is redeemed by a rather good imagination and the ability to convey my ideas into paint,” he reasons. So it must be true that artists are never satisfied with their work.

Asked if he’d like to visit any of the worlds he’s envisioned for sci-fi fans the world over, he’s unequivocal: “Most of them look like dystopian hell-holes to me, so I think I’ll stay put in Wiltshire!” A seat on the next shuttle launch, then? “That I could not resist.”

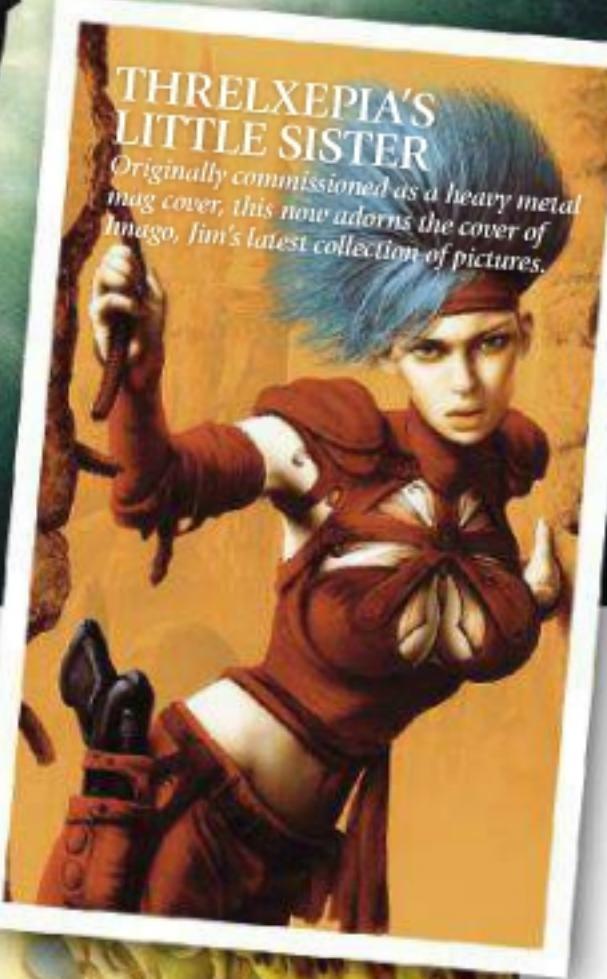
PANDORA'S STAR

Jim is proud to have produced all the covers for Peter F Hamilton’s books: “It’s fantastic to be so connected with such a huge talent.”



HEARTS, HANDS AND VOICES

Jim imagines a strangely altered biotech future for Ian McDonald.



THRELXEPIA'S LITTLE SISTER

Originally commissioned as a heavy metal mag cover, this now adorns the cover of *Imago*, Jim’s latest collection of pictures.



1

Michael Krenzin

LOCATION: Germany

WEB: www.bugshub.de

EMAIL: m_krenzin@web.de

SOFTWARE: Photoshop and Painter IX



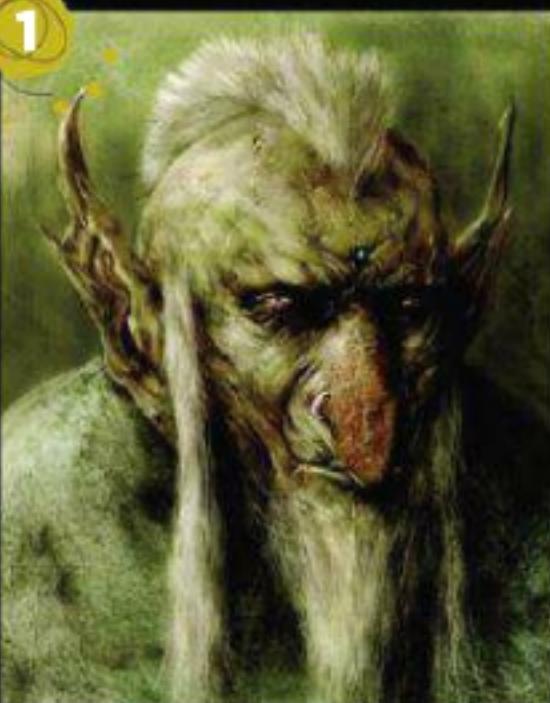
A 26-year-old Berliner, Michael works as a graphic designer for a mobile entertainment company. "I wanted to try something new, so I got into digital painting about two years ago," he says. "This art form enables me to combine traditional techniques with modern ones." Pulling these two threads together is a creative boost for Michael: "It offers me new ways for realising my thoughts and dreams."

1 FALLEN ANGEL This collage was developed from photos taken by Michael. "It shows my interpretation of an angel cast out from heaven."

2 IT'S LUNCH TIME Michael's first work with Painter. "The idea for this picture was a documentary about the black widow."



2



1

2



 **Simon Fellah**

LOCATION: Denmark
WEB: www.simonfellah.com
EMAIL: simon@fellah.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop 7



"I have had a lifelong passion for fantasy," says Simon. "It's in my blood." The freedom to let the imagination roam is what inspires Simon - "the feeling of experiencing new worlds, scary and beautiful creatures, dreamy landscapes and strange cities." All of it a product of the human mind.

That said, the straightest path is often the hardest to follow. "It took me a long time to realise that my place as an artist was in those worlds," says Simon. "Where exactly is still uncertain, but I will travel many roads in search of a home," he adds.

Orcs, demons, dragons, trolls, elves, dwarfs, knights and beautiful women filled Simon's childhood dreams, "and returning to those dreams as a man, I rediscovered that their magic is like drinking from the cup of youth," he reveals. Simon's work, like himself, has lost his innocence, "and the nature of my art is dark," he admits. "But within the darkness there is a room of light, a place of hope and change. The fight is for the light. Let the battle begin."

1 TROLL "A portrait of a very old and very wise troll." Simon can't make his mind up about the troll's allegiance: "I'm not sure whether he is good or evil. Maybe a bit of both."

2 ORC KING "I wanted to portray a strong king," explains Simon, "in a very simple way without using the usual symbols." His final image captures "a powerful but isolated leader."



1

Christian Hecker

LOCATION: Germany
WEB: www.tigaer-design.com
EMAIL: tigaers_claw@tigaer-design.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop, Terragen



"I was always fascinated by the worlds they created for movies like *Blade Runner*, *Alien* and *Star Wars*," says Christian. "My dream was to be, someday, good enough to create such worlds too."

Another of Christian's favourite things is landscapes – "wide and vast landscapes," to be precise. "My inspirations are people like Dylan Cole or Gary Tonge and the thought that I may someday be as good as these great artists."

Currently working as a freelancer, Christian is "always open to new challenges." His work is created with a mix of Photoshop and Terragen, although "recently I started to use Cinema 4D to get a foothold in 3D."

But despite this interest in 3D, Christian remains certain that the brush and the eye must come first, "so I'm always refining my painting skills. My ultimate goal is to gain good painting skills," he explains.



2

ARTIFICIAL

For Christian, this image was a tough nut to crack: "I can't even describe how much heart, sweat and blood went into this piece," he says. "I had that pic on my mind for quite some time and wanted it exactly the way you can see it today."

ASTOUNDING "Inspiration hit me when I saw the movie *Riddick*," explains Christian. "On that one burned planet when the sun is rising, there were such nice light effects." The matte painting in question was done by Dylan Cole, "so my credits here go to him."

1 Jonas Jakobsson

LOCATION: Sweden
WEB: www.yonaz.deviantart.com
EMAIL: jakobsson-jonas@telia.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop, Wacom



Jonas started drawing as a kid and quickly graduated to digital media. Beginnings are always tough, but inspiration was on hand, mostly in the shape of Craig Mullins. "Looking at his work made me continue to train hard," he recalls. "And, because I'm very stubborn, I learned pretty fast."

Jonas is a hard taskmaster: "I'm never fully pleased with what I do, and that makes me really focused, trying to get better and better all the time." This approach has obvious rewards.



1 FUTURE CITY A concept of a city of the future – "not how I think it could actually look, but with colours that I thought looked nice."

2 FOREST WALK A forest concept, but this is a "sort of a magic forest," explains Jonas.

3 NIGHT OF THE BLACK BIRDS There's an eerie feeling about this one: "Dark spies are lurking in the ruined city."





1

Mats Minnhagen

LOCATION: Sweden
WEB: www.minnhagen.com
EMAIL: mats@minnhagen.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop, Painter



Before getting into digital, Mats had struggled for years with traditional media. "Then late one night I stumbled into the gallery of Craig Mullins and realised what could be achieved with a computer. I instantly decided to switch media," he says.

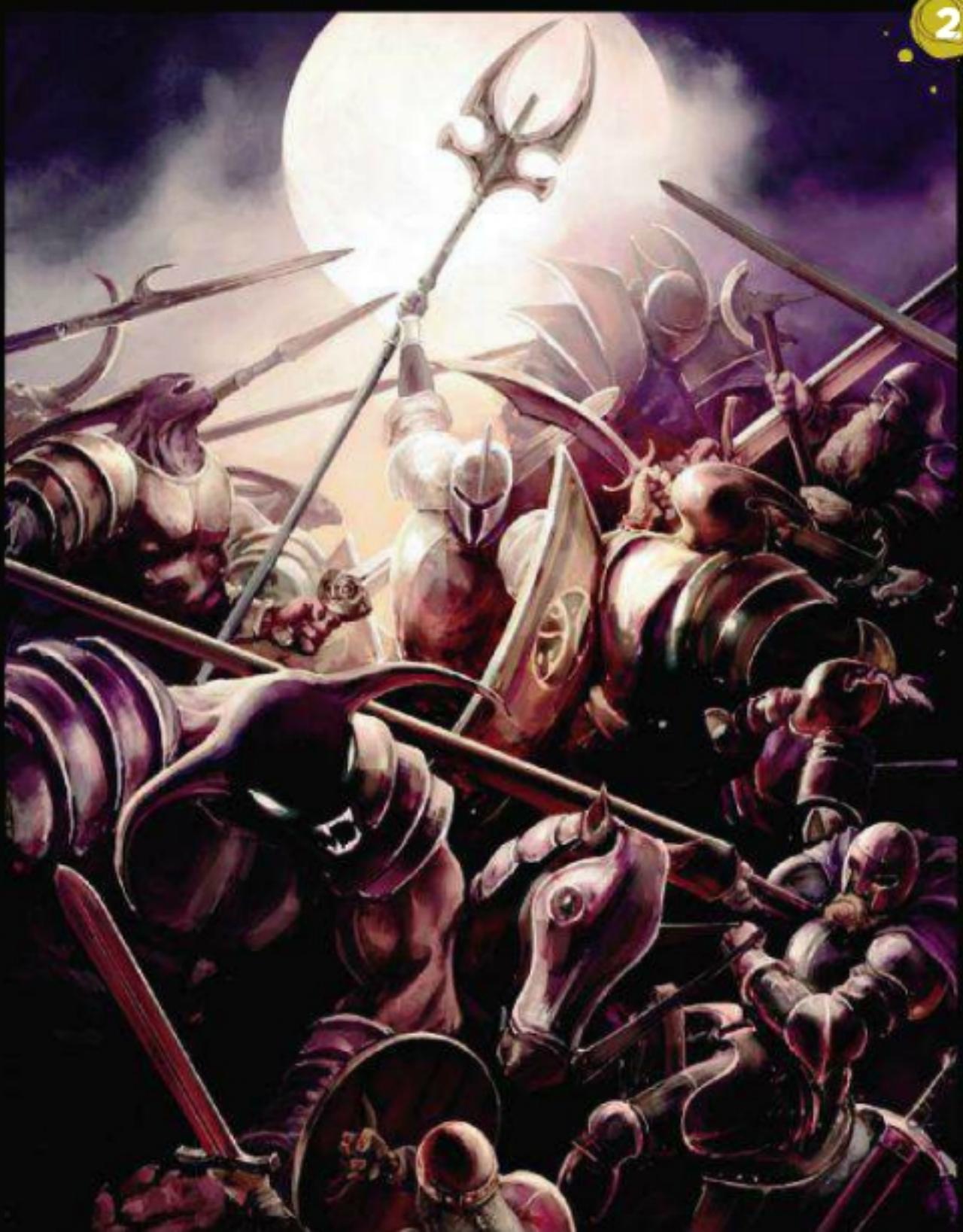
A big fan of both the stylised form of comic art and the loose look of impressionistic painting, "in my own work I often strive to unite both qualities in the same images."

Mats is currently working as a freelance illustrator, doing book covers, RPG illustrations and many other things.

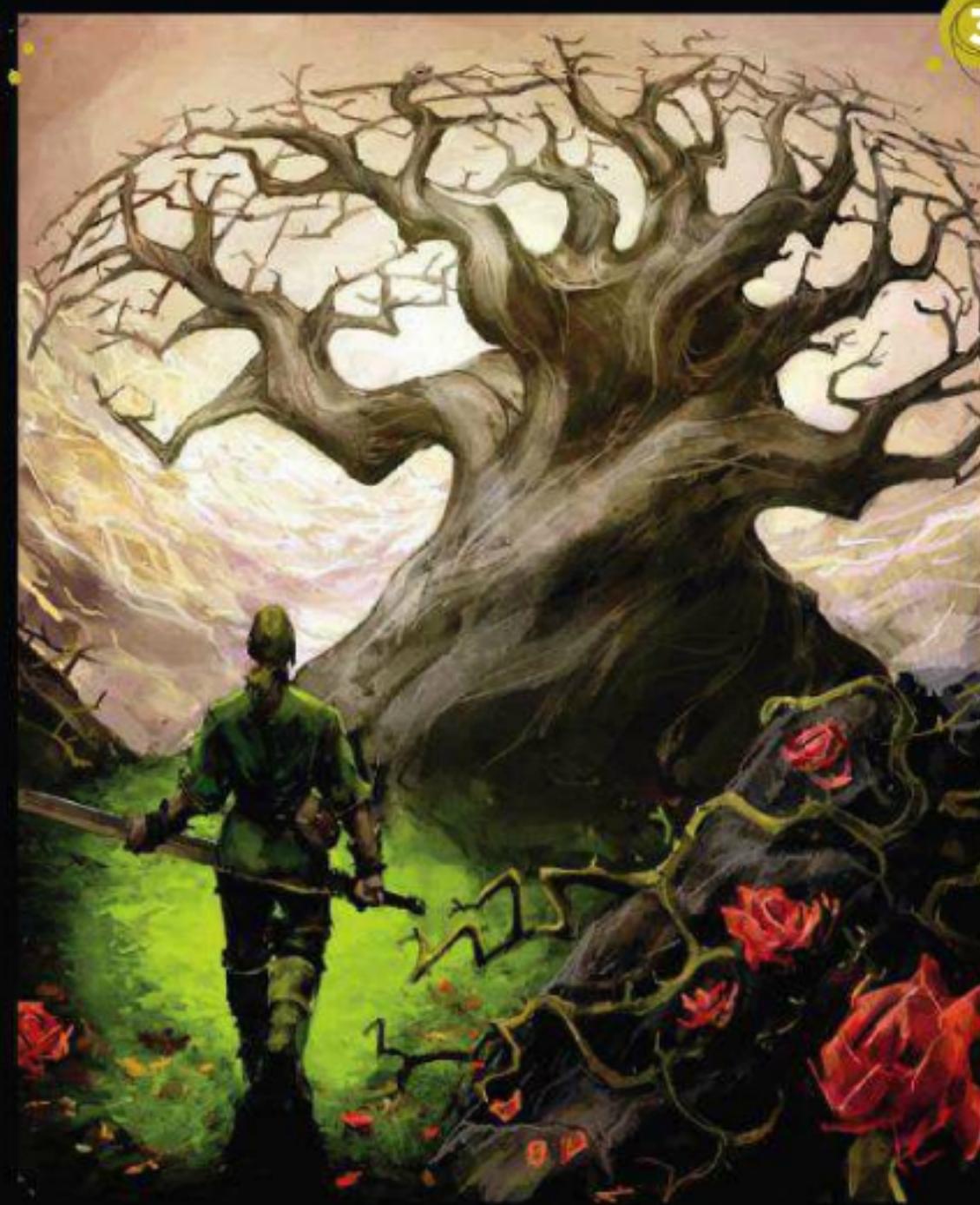
1 GUARDIAN MECHA Mats envisioned "a strange robot with shields that would be a beetle-like armour when folded together on the back and spider-like legs when unfolded."

2 THE LAST BATTLE In this scene – reflecting the force of two armies crashing into each other – Mats wanted to add "a dream-like quality, almost like a vision."

3 ODE TO THE GAMER "A cliché hero on a mission in a magical world," says Mats. This painting started out as a sort of tribute to Mats' old RPG days "but evolved to become more a story about a mysterious old tree."



2



3

Laura Racero

LOCATION: Spain
WEB: www.starcatcher.es
EMAIL: info@starcatcher.es
SOFTWARE: Photoshop CS



Laura is 29 and lives in Madrid, where she's been drawing since she was a child: "My mother discovered that, when I had a notebook and a pencil in my hands, I was happy... and, of course, quiet!"

Adding fuel to the fire, Laura discovered fantasy and sci-fi through films such as Star Wars, Excalibur and Lady Hawk. "I began to be interested in artists like Boris Vallejo, Frank Frazetta and many others." Then, when she was 16, "my father bought a PC and that was it: I changed the paper for the screen." Laura loves creating fantasy pieces, "because I can blend imagination, fears and hopes all in the same image. It's liberating." Though Photoshop is her number one choice of software, Laura also enjoys using vectors in CorelDRAW or FreeHand.

1 THE FRUIT OF SIN A concept of destruction as the origin of Life."

2 ENCHANTED PRINCE'S MAGICAL FLIGHT This piece is about fairy tales - "a Princess who flies onboard an umbrella, which is actually a little enchanted Prince... Something funny."

3 RED FEATHERS This is about a writer, "and the magical worlds that come alive in the stories he writes."





1



2

Maximilien Chavot

LOCATION: France
WEB: <http://maxarkes.deviantart.com/gallery>
EMAIL: maxarkes@yahoo.fr
SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Max has long been a fan of mythology and the fantastic. "At first, I drew thousands of horrible monsters, and little by little I began to include things that I was fond of." So from fantasy came sci-fi and, eventually, some anime styles.

"I really wanted to be a talented painter, such as Rembrandt," Max admits, "but oils and acrylics are not close friends, so the digital medium enables me to use many colours without making my home dirty!"

As to his current subject matter: "I'm actually fascinated by angels and demons because of their strong symbolic aspect, their power, and the possibility of making many different characters." Max has conceived a plan: "I want to make a complete cosmogony - I want to believe we have several lives!" He may need all that time to complete the job.



3

1 SNAKES "Marshes are not always ugly environments," says Max. "I think sometimes they can be rather poetic."

2 HEIMDALL'S HORN This comes from Nordic mythology, "but I took it as a reason to draw an old man with this huge horn! Will he announce the end of the world?"

3 ESSER VE CHALOCH "The title means '13' in Hebrew," Max reveals, "and the character is Eurynomos, the demon that governs death."



THE ASCENT

"I made this a couple of years ago," says Henning. "It has received a lot of attention for some reason that I cannot understand." With typical understatement he concludes: "Guess it was a happy accident."

Artist **PROFILE**

Henning Ludvigsen



AGE: 30

COUNTRY: Greece
Hailing from
Norway, Henning

now resides in sunny Greece. He has 12 years of design, illustration and digital art experience and is an art director for a game developer.

SOFTWARE USED: Photoshop
WEB: www.henningludvigsen.com

The art of **HENNING LUDVIGSEN**

“One thing I like to do is add strangely skewed elements that make the viewer stop and think...” Henning Ludvigsen is playing with your mind.

Like so many talented kids, Henning Ludvigsen spent his childhood with a crayon in hand. At the age of 16 he started at art school in his native Norway, but, he laughs, “my art education finished just before they started using computers as part of the curriculum.” Fortunately, he discovered the joys of digital art for himself on the Amiga.

“On the Amiga it was a trend to copy pictures by the old-school fantasy artists, like Boris Vallejo and Frank Frazetta,” he recalls. “The program I used was called DeluxePaint. It had very limited functionality. Everything I did had to be manually anti-aliased – it was more closely related to pixel art than painting.”

The practice served him well, though, when after just two years of art school he landed a job as an ad agency designer and got to know programs like Photoshop. “I had a top position as the creative director in a nice ad agency in Norway while working on a computer game project – Darkfall – on the side, just for fun.”

Henning and his collaborators had been plugging away at Darkfall for years when, he explains, “suddenly one day we got a once-in-a-lifetime proposal from an investor and we all had to move to Greece.” Unsettling? Not at all. “I am very happy things came down to this. I was more than ripe for a break from the ad industry.” Now, Henning works to “commissions from random people on the internet” and can stick to what interests him: “I’m not one for hidden symbolism in my art. I settle for simple ideas like ‘chicks on a bat’ or a ‘nurse with a sword’, just because I think it is cool.” ■ ■ ■



THE WIDOW

This is one of those rare occasions when Henning just started painting: “No planning at all. I guess I even started this one without knowing what to do with it.”

Henning Ludvigsen's Artist tip

Hard-edged brushes

Early in his career Henning experimented with “that blurry airbrush-style soft brush.” It didn’t look or feel like painting at all. “In comparison, using a hard-edged brush feels like painting in the traditional medium and it’s possible to make it look similar too.”

The art of HENNING LUDVIGSEN



EQUILIBRIUM

The centrepiece of a triptych of paintings sharing the same elongated format. The other two, representing chaos and order, are "currently in the works."



CIRCUMCISION

"I chose to give this nurse a two-handed sword," Henning says. "An axe or a bat might make more sense, but by giving her the sword, it falls out of place, which I like."

Henning Ludvigsen's VITAL STATISTICS

Darth Vader lives with his parents, y'know...



Favourite digital artist

Michael Komarck, Steven Stahlberg, Linda Bergkvist, and of course my girlfriend, Natascha Roeoesli.

Career turning point

Things started rolling once I re-arranged my life at the end of 2004, and started painting more during my spare time.

Most prized possession

It must be my Darth Vader helmet I've got at my parents' place back in Norway.

Average time spent on an image

It varies, but I'd say three evenings on average.

Single most important piece of professional advice

I've got a lot of positive feedback because of my ability to take on any new tasks without hesitation, and not being afraid to try completely new working areas. I would recommend this approach.

Single most important piece of life advice

It's very simple... be nice to other people, and treat others with respect.

Place of birth

Holmestrand, a small coastal city located one hour south of Oslo in Norway.

Date of birth

June 24, 1975.

Mother tongue

Norwegian.

Favourite place

Hydra Island. It's a Greek island, a couple of hours south of Athens. It has lots of bars and places to eat but no motorized vehicles - only donkeys, mules and cats roam the streets.

Favourite film

The Fifth Element, Star Wars, and The Lord of the Rings.

Favourite traditional artist

Boris Vallejo and Julie Bell have given me a lot of inspiration. I'm also fond of the Norwegian painter Odd Nerdrum.



THE HALO THIEF

"I tried to make it look as if she is about to kick some monster-butt, before she gets her halo stolen," Henning explains.



THORCRUSH THE JOLLY

A portrait of Henning's older brother. "He's the nicest guy ever, so I guess this is why I chose to portrait him like this," Henning offers by way of explanation...

THE DESCENT

Created to click with Henning's earlier work, *The Ascent*, this work is intended to "radiate the same feeling and emotion, only darker."



Workshop



Artist PROFILE

Henning Ludvigsen

COUNTRY: Norway

CLIENTS: Fantasy Flight Games, Future Publishing



Henning is a digital artist with basic traditional art education

and 12 years experience in digital art, design, and illustration. He is the Art Director of a computer game development company and works on commissions and projects in his spare time. www.henningludvigsen.com

Try it yourself

Download a Zip archive of PSD files supplied by Henning Ludvigsen for you to practise with from <http://preview.tinyURL.com/2zyx2j>. You'll also find a trial version of Photoshop CS3 at www.adobe.com/go/trypphotoshop

Photoshop DIGITAL FANTASY PORTRAITS

A guide to making a fantastic fantasy-themed portrait that resembles the reference model. By **Henning Ludvigsen**

This tutorial requires basic painting skills, along with a little knowledge of a program such as Adobe Photoshop. You'll also need a drawing tablet, like my good ol' Wacom Intuos.

I'll explain my methods step by step, from the taking of reference pictures, via the preparations for making the first sketch, all the way through to the painting process itself.

Firstly, when making a realistic-looking portrait, the most important thing is to sort out the personal features of the

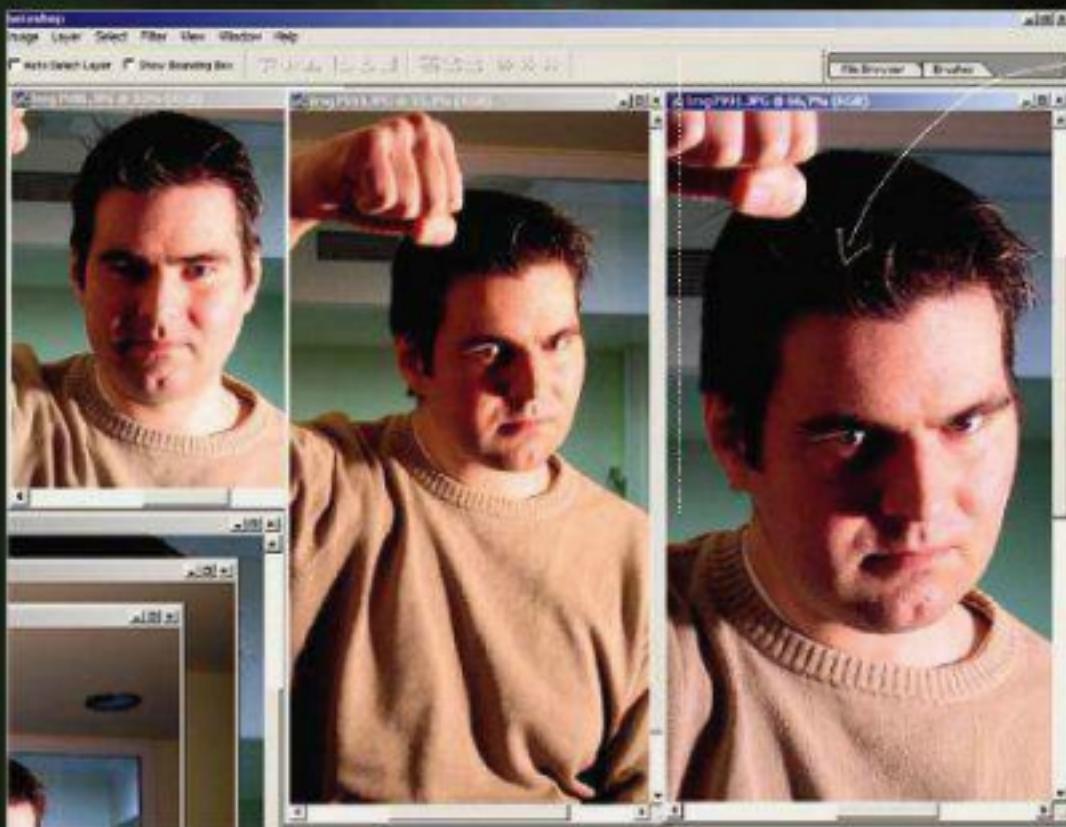
character you're painting, and to keep the proportions correct. This is why using reference pictures is crucial: the better the quality of reference pictures, the easier it is to find the most important features and recreate them in your painting.

You can easily improvise a basic photo studio in your own living room by using some bright lamps, or even better, one of those 150 or 500 Watt floodlights that may or may not be lying about in your garage! Lighting the reference model from one side, or from other interesting angles, makes everything a lot more

believable. I love playing around with light sources, to see what kind of shapes the shadows can conjure up.

My personal opinion is that there are things the mind simply can't come up with on its own, and this is why I value having reference pictures to look at while painting. This goes for anything from people to objects, and especially things like drapes and fabric folds.

In this tutorial, I'll also show you how to make a hard-edged brush, which is the brush I use almost exclusively when creating this kind of painting.



1 Shooting the reference picture

I tend to just use what I have on hand when shooting reference pictures, like a normal digital camera and a floor lamp (those really bright ones). I prefer shining the light from the side, since this creates some interesting shadows and highlights on faces and drapes. Another tip is to switch off that nasty camera flash!



2 Selecting the best reference picture

It's great to have many pictures to pick from. The way I personally like to select pictures is to look at two at a time, discarding the one I like least in each pair. For the composition, I try to find a picture with a good silhouette and an interesting look in the eyes of the model, which is important if observers are to "connect" with the piece. I also tend to pick pictures that are in semi-profile, since these look a lot more interesting than the full frontal ones.

With this piece, I wanted my friend to look a little grumpy, even though he will probably also look quite funny holding his familiar bat. I like weird combinations, and I think this particular duality fits my friend's character quite well, which is what portraits are all about.

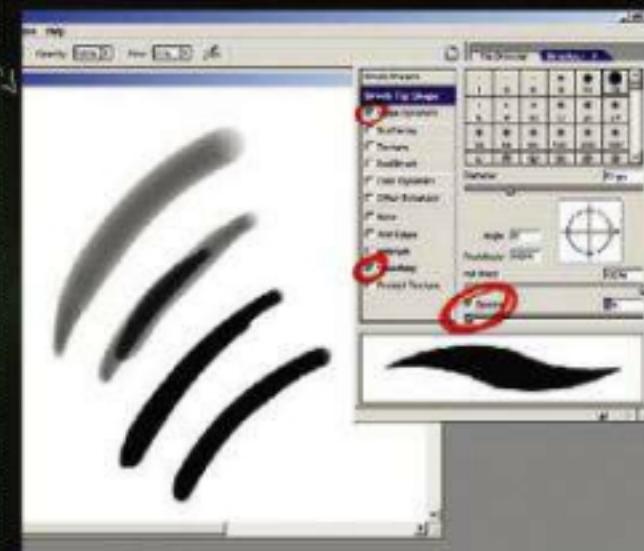
3 About brushes

When I first started out making digital art in Photoshop, I used the soft airbrush too much. This made everything appear blurry, and I didn't really get the crispness that I look for in a

piece nowadays. One day my girlfriend convinced me to put the soft airbrush away, and I tried painting with a hard-edged brush instead. The outcome was highly interesting, especially since the process felt somewhat close to painting/drawing with a traditional medium.

4 How to make a hard-edged brush

- 1) Select a custom made brush which is round and hard.
- 2) Open Window>Brushes.
- 3) Select Brush Tip Shape, and set the spacing slider to 6-7 per cent. Make sure the Smoothing option is ticked.

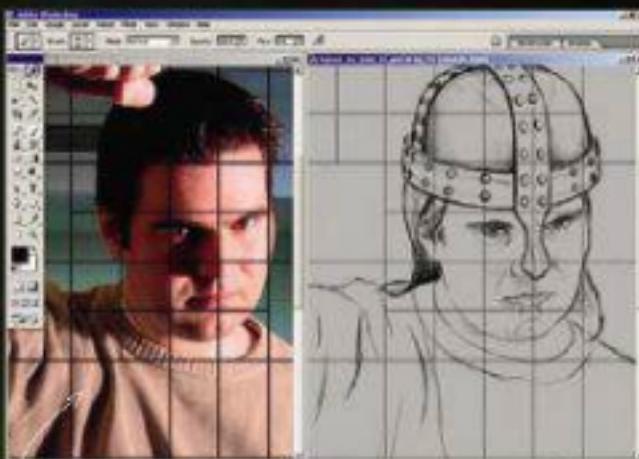


Workshop

PRO SECRETS

Backups and WIPs

It's simple: make regular backups of work you have in progress. I always make sure to have 2-3 backups on my hard drive in addition to the one I am working on, plus at least one on a separate external device. Also, saving progress steps as you go along is clever, since you'll have something to fall back on in case of errors or changes of heart - or if you want to showcase the process later.



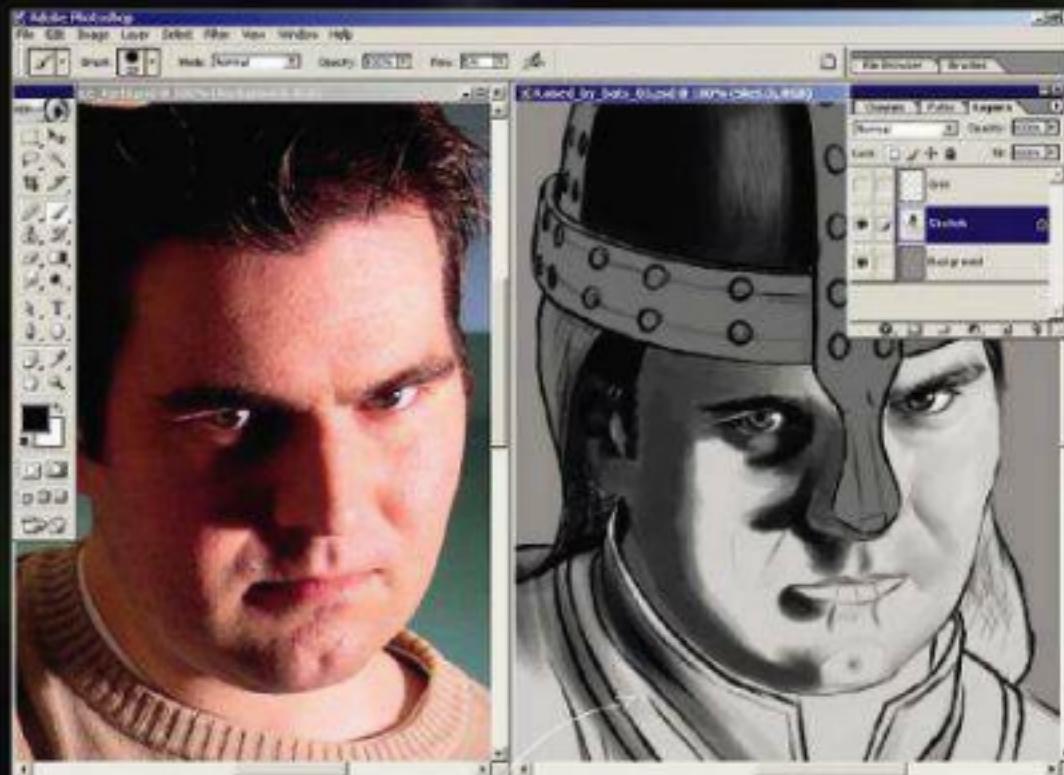
5 Starting the sketch

I start by toning down the opacity of the grid layer in my blank canvas window, and then I make a new layer, which I place in between the background and the grid. This layer is where I plan to start sketching.

While looking closely at the reference photo, I draw the outlines of the person grid-by-grid, using a hard-edged brush with black colour set to around 7-15 per cent flow. At this stage, I don't draw the character's hand.

Also, remember that even if you don't need to think about what you are drawing while using the grid, always try to keep in mind what kind of shapes you are making, to prevent you from stagnating art-wise. I still usually think in shapes, and I also add some help lines to aid me when shading later.

I want my friend to wear a helmet, so I add one at this stage of the process. When making the sketch, I usually start off in medium resolution.



6 Blocking in and shading the sketch

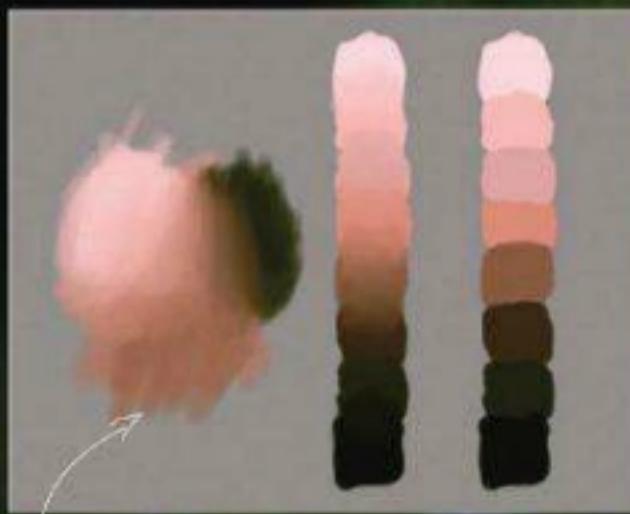
Once I have a decent sketch ready, I make a new layer between the background and the sketch. Here, I block in the character with a greyscale colour and the brush set to 100 per cent flow. Then I merge the

blocking shape layer and the sketch layer. (Link the two layers in the Layers palette and choose Merge Linked in the Layer menu.) I also add some more details to the character's outfit.

If you enable the Lock Transparent Pixels feature in the Layer menu, it ensures that you don't paint outside the already painted elements.

At this point, I start adding greyscale values using black/white colours as foreground/background colours (press X to toggle), with the brush set to 3-6 per cent flow.

I always start with the eyes because I need to get this aspect right before I can move on - the look in the eyes is a very important part of any portrait. I keep looking closely at the reference picture for inspiration while doing this, and I usually turn the grids off at this stage. I also increase the resolution around now, before I start adding details and proper rendering.



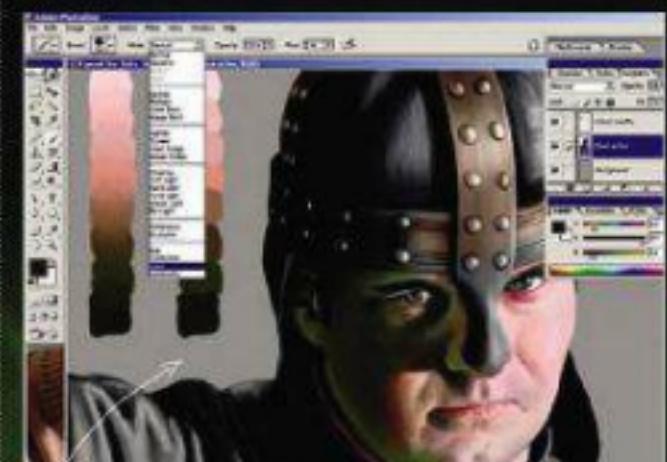
7 Making a skin tone palette

I spend quite some time thinking about what kind of skin tones I want the character to have. I follow a simple procedure, which consists of blending in the main light source colour with the brightest skin tones, and the ambient



light colour with the darkest skin tones. For this painting, I want to use a cold blue coloured light directed from the right as the main light source, and green values as ambient, which will show in shadowed areas and in backlight from back left.

Since I need easy access to a pre-made skin tone palette, I make a new layer where I include a range of colours needed for shading the basic values of the skin, from the brightest to the darkest. Try blending the values together to see if it works well, and remember: skin tones are usually darker than you think.



8 Adding base colours to the sketch

At this stage, I make sure I have the sketch layer selected, then change the brush mode to Color and the flow to 5-10 per cent. I also turn on the Lock Transparent Pixels feature in the Layer menu.

Using the Eyedropper tool by holding down the Alt key (or Option on a Mac), I pick the brightest skin colour from the skin tone palette I've made, and apply this colour to the brightest areas of the face. I do this on all the different skin tones, and add rough base colours for clothes, hair, eyes, etc. At this stage, the colours usually look a bit off, but this doesn't matter, since all you should be concerned with is establishing a good base to start off with.

In depth Digital fantasy portraits



9 Rendering the skin properly

Rendering the skin properly usually means a lot of work: painting over everything you've done dozens of times, and mixing lots of colours. Before I start, I make a new layer on top of the character, in case I do something silly that messes it all up later on. Then I change my brush back to Normal mode, and start to render the skin properly in a painstaking step-by-step fashion. The rewards are truly worth it, though.

What is really important at this stage is to mix colours, and to avoid monochrome palettes. You may prefer mixing colours on the side of where you are painting, but I prefer mixing directly where I paint. An example: in the area where the bright skin colour meets the dark green skin, I paint a translucent brush stroke with the bright skin colour over the dark area, then I use the Eyedropper tool [Alt] and pick the new value I create there.

If I need some purple or blue hue around the eyes, I make a blue colour, paint a translucent brush stroke on top of the skin colour, and colour pick this new value. Remember to look closely at the reference photo and try to sort out the different colour values of the different kinds of skin variants.

10 Adding foreground elements

The hand is made in a new layer on top of the character, and I feel that now's the time to use the grid again to aid me with proportions. The bat is something that I paint freehand after looking at several pictures of bats for inspiration. I now add colours using the same procedures detailed in step 7.

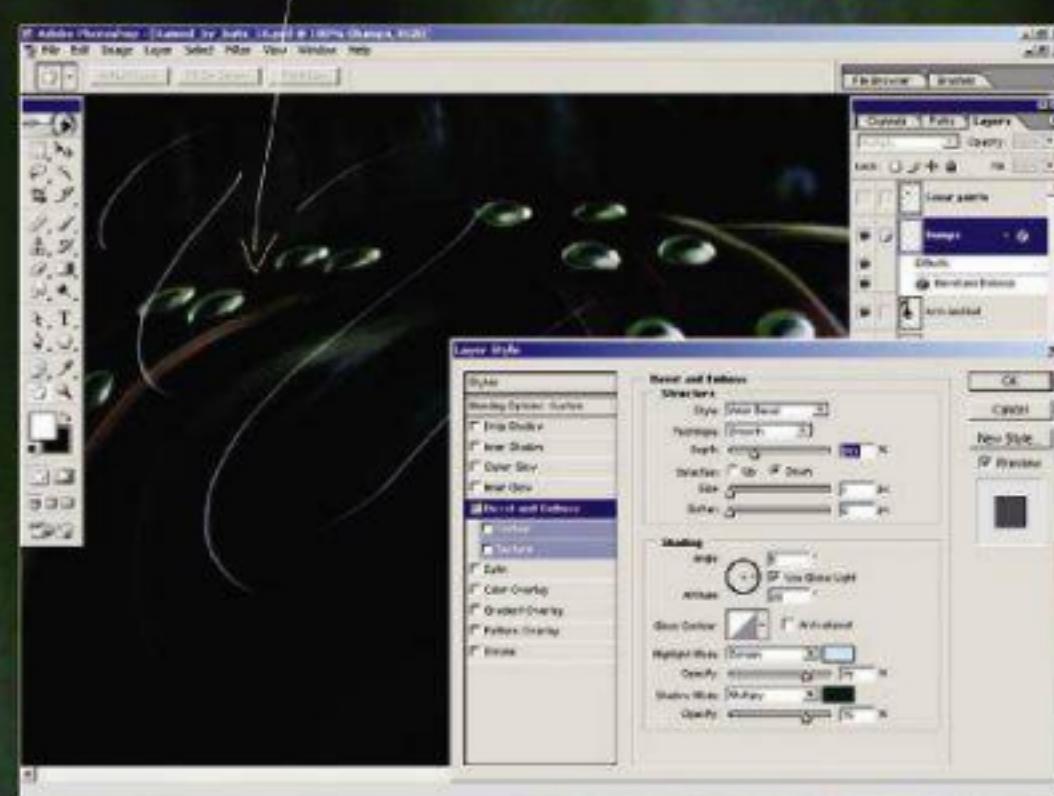
11 Brushing up and adding details

Things are really starting to take shape now, aren't they? Here, I add some proper colours to the bat and the hand, and render some semi-detailed fur on the bat. The guy's outfit is also in need of a few extra details and some better shading, so I attend to that.

12 Embossed details

A nice way of adding detail to everything from wrinkles to cracks and textures in stone is to make a new layer with a Bevel and Emboss layer style:

- 1) Make a new layer, then set the layer to Multiply.
- 2) Add a Bevel and Emboss layer style, and set the depth slider to the centre, or a little more. Set direction to Down, Size to 1 per cent, Soften to 0 per cent, and set Angle to whatever direction you're using for the light in your scene.
- 3) Use white colour on the hard-edged brush, and keep the flow around 5-15 per cent.



13 Making the background

Since this is a portrait, I want to use a simple background, and, after some experimenting, I end up with the one you can see. As I've experienced many times before, the simple solutions are usually – and thankfully! – best. For this background, I simply make a very rough and messy sketch of the inside of a cave. Try using a thin brush with a solid flow, and then paint in a dynamic and messy manner – it will create some interesting details later on in the process. Of course, I make sure the main light source is directed from the right of the picture, giving the brightest areas a blue tint and leaving the dark areas green.

At the end, I run a Gaussian Blur filter, and I paint on some moody, green fog at the bottom. This will lighten up the picture slightly, and also give it some more depth.



Workshop



PRO SECRETS

Slow down on details

Adding detail is great, but I've learned that spending too much time on them rarely yields the expected results. Instead of working zoomed all the way in, create some thin and more harsh brush strokes instead to show glints of highlights, and simple cross hatch shading will add texture to surfaces. It's all about giving the impression that things have details and surface, but it's not necessary to actually draw all the details.

14 Adding soft glow

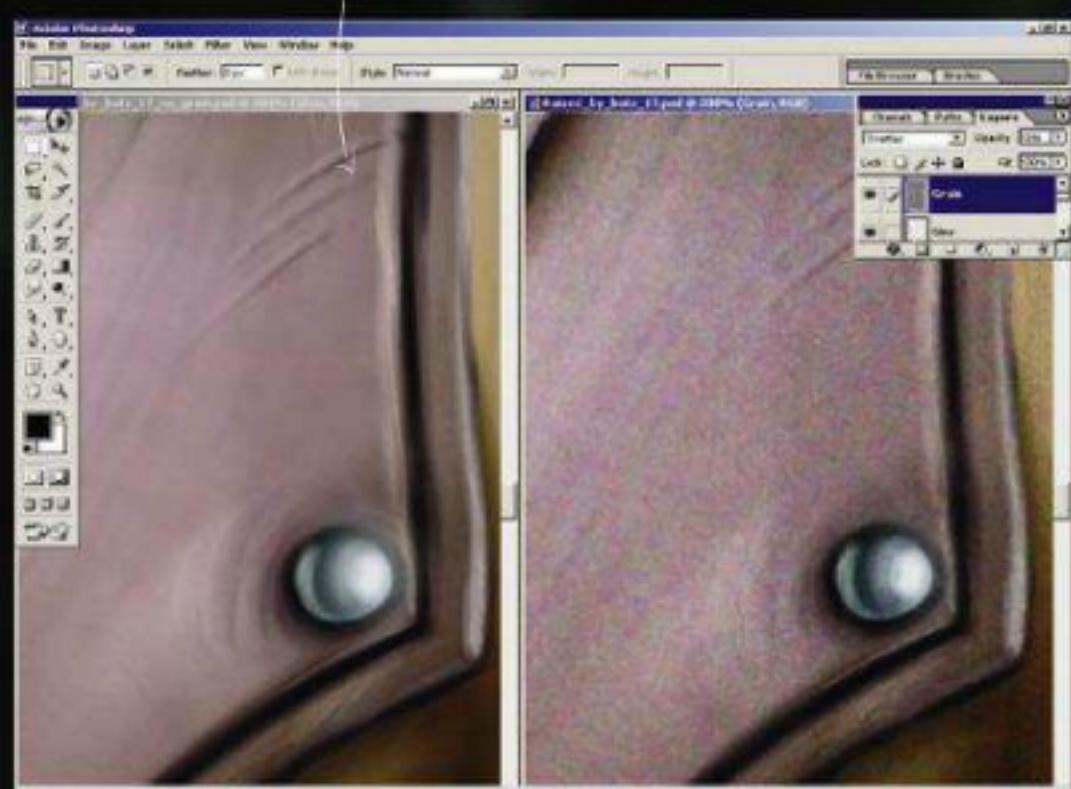
At this point, the soft brush gets used for the first time. I add a soft glow to the brightest areas in the picture in a new layer. It's easy to take the glow effect too far, and my advice would be to leave it as subtle as possible. You shouldn't notice the glow, it should only be a natural part of the picture.

15 Wrapping up

A trick to make paintings look less computer-perfect is to add some grain to them. In Photoshop, follow these steps:

- 1) Make a new layer filled with the RGB values R:128, G:128, B:128 .
- 2) Add a Noise filter, 400 per cent amount, and set the layer to Overlay blending mode.
- 3) Run the Brush Strokes>Spatter filter a couple of times.
- 4) Do a normal blur and set the layer Opacity to 5-10 per cent.

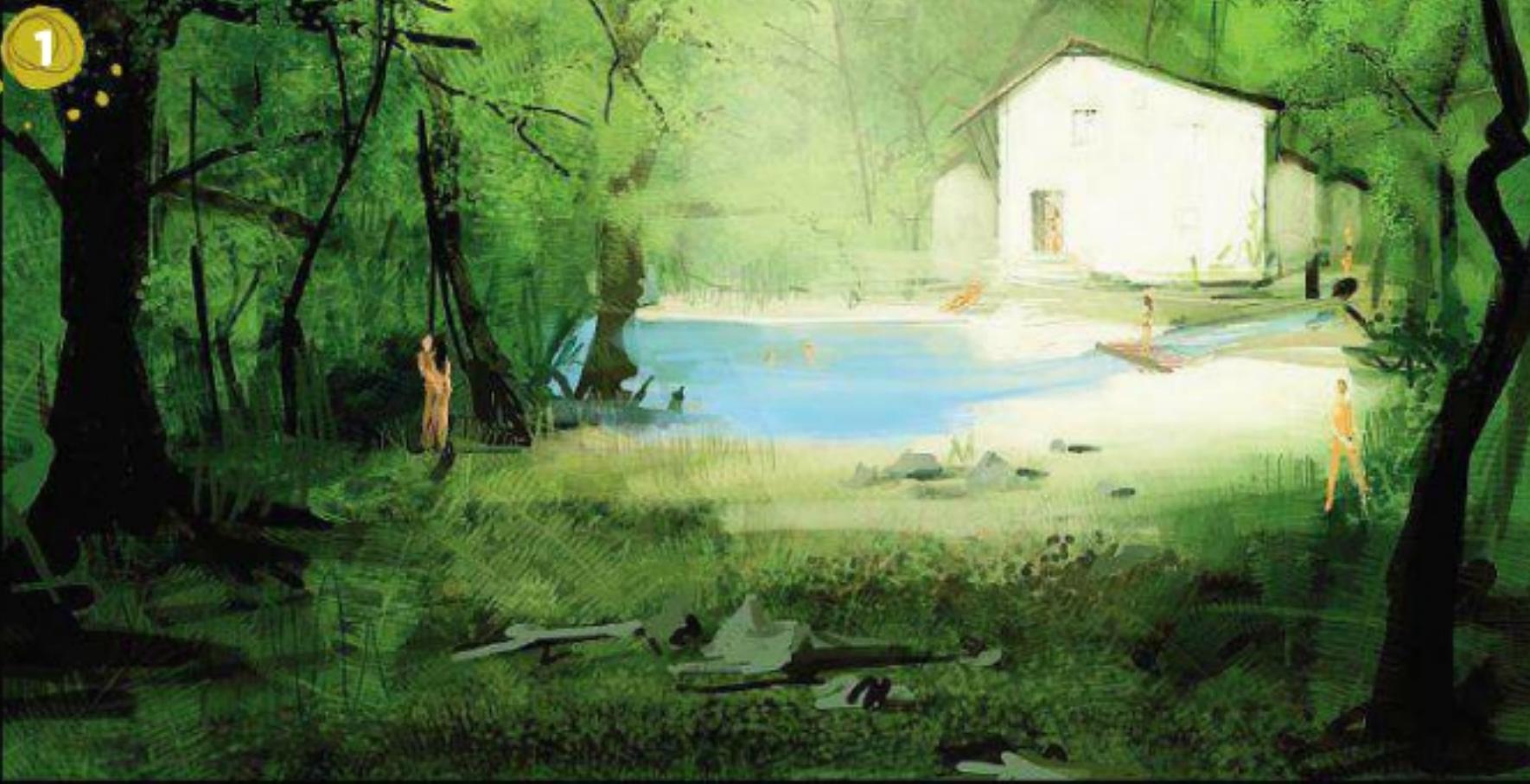
I also add a couple of overlay layers and mess around with some textured brushes to give the clothes more textures.



16 Done

Surprise your friend, and remember that you can get prints of your digital pictures on canvas so that it looks like a traditional painting. Have fun!





1



2



3

Reto Kaul

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



"I had my first contact with digital art when I happened to read an article about a Swiss artist in a local newspaper," Reto recalls. "His name was Christian Scheurer and the pictures that were printed next to his biography almost blew me away! I could stare at his fantasy artwork for hours, and I felt the strong desire to create these beautiful paintings too, or at least to try to."

So the next week Reto ordered a graphics tablet. "Before this point I wasn't really interested in art. I used to draw a lot as a child but gave that up when I was 10." Now that the bug had bitten, Reto's first wish was to become as good as the speed painters at the Sijun forums. "So I started to practise. With time I might even do some commissions and I hope that one day, when I'm better, I'll work for a film or game studio."

1 HOTEL PLEASURE "I wanted to merge a human creation – in this instance the Hotel 'Pleasure' – with untouched, wild nature."

2 DAY AND NIGHT "Every year you can watch this spectacle when the moon is rising and the sun goes down at the same time." Well, at least it looks that way: "The true reason for this natural phenomenon is a volcano that becomes active once a year. The glowing lava bathes the whole valley in an orange light while the moon rises over the city."

3 ALPINE FULCRUM "This concept shows an army fulcrum embedded and hidden in a canyon," says Reto, who is fascinated by a combination of nature and technique. "From a technical standpoint this painting is all down to the Lasso tool in Photoshop. It's great for quickly creating clean shapes and can also add a lot of depth to a painting because it's so precise."



 **Tomasz Maronski**

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SOFTWARE: Corel-Photo-Paint 11



Tomasz worked on canvas for almost 10 years, but needed to find something new to showcase his art. "I was always seeking to improve my techniques, searching for unique ways of expressing my ideas and visions." He found digital art.

"My paintings concern fantasy themes inspired by the world around me, particularly landscapes," says Tomasz. "After the pre-painting I usually determine the final aim, but in some works I am spontaneous."

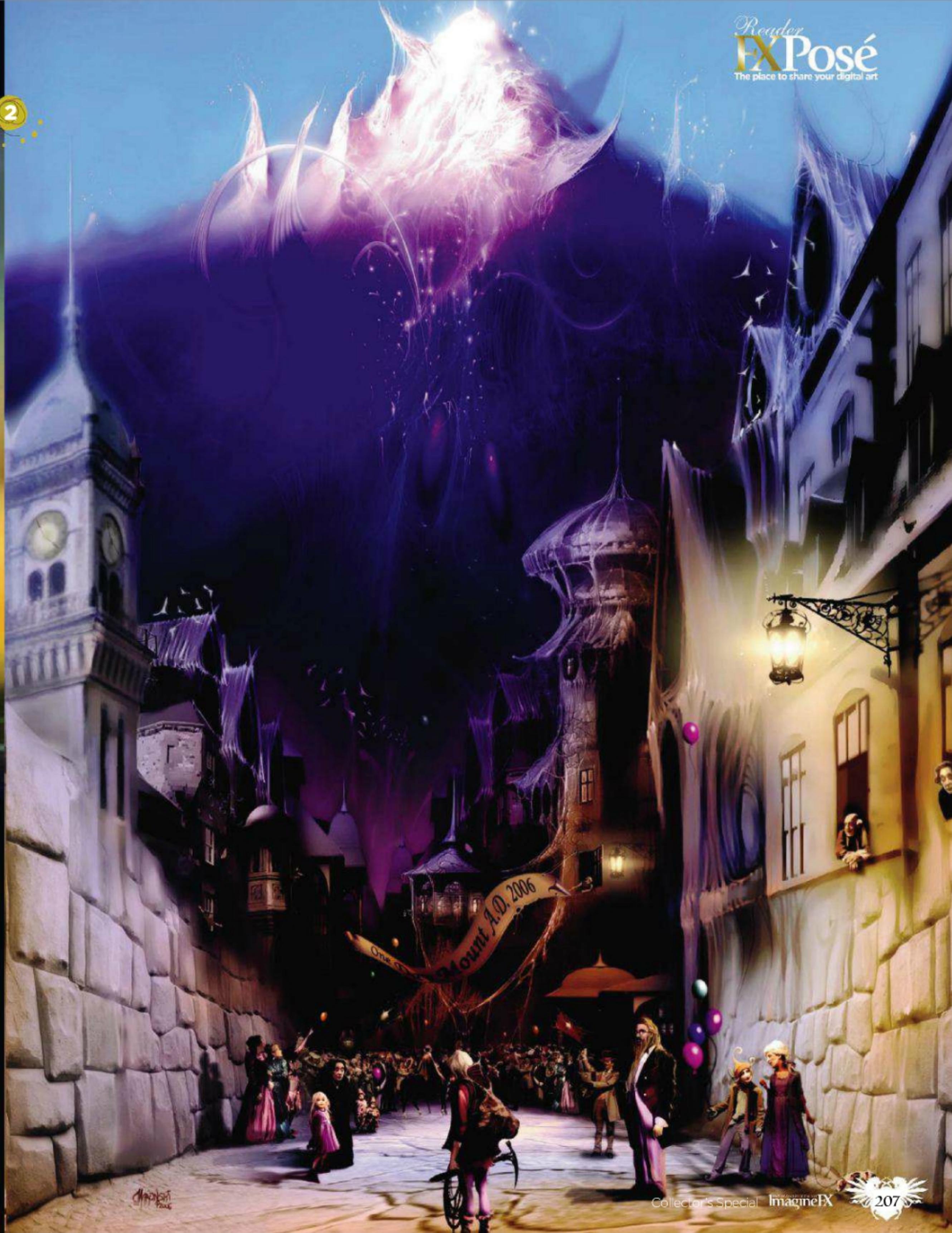
However spontaneous, one thing never changes: "I always determine the colour palette before I start to work. I like to use one dominating colour to

accentuate the main subject." Those subjects are from one of Tomasz's invented histories. "The ideas I haven't used yet will be a great part of my work in the future."

1 THE SANCTUARY "Inspired by beautiful sunsets on the Polish sea, I decided to paint a remembered holiday scene. The solitary tower is the perfect hideaway for the lonely wizard..."

2 GLORIOUS JOURNEY TO THE MOUNTAIN OF MOMENT "This is the story of the Magic Mountain, which shows its beauty once each year, when one brave man reaches its summit."

2



1



2



"Art in general has always been a great part of my life," says Lorenz. "I used to belong to that group of kids that would delve into the world of TV-series heroes and re-live on paper everything that inspired me." And, fascinated by classic Japanese animation milestones such as *Akira* or *Ghost in the Shell*, sci-fi quickly became his favourite theme.

"It wasn't until I came across Feng Zhu's marker renderings that I really wanted to become more professional in concept design and, later on, illustration." Up to this point, 21-year-old Lorenz is entirely self-taught. "I've only started to paint digitally in 2003 and have been learning gradually."

Lorenz tries to convey the spirit of authentic sci-fi universes in his paintings, something best done with narrative: "I always like to tell small stories within my images," he says. "People should be able to partake in the settings that I create and feel like they could be in the scene themselves."

1 3CH - ROBOT SHRIMP '3CH' is a random topic generator that was invented by Thierry Dolzon and other digital artists from Canada, originating from a wish for fresh and challenging topics for their speed paintings. This one took one and a half hours: "A wet robot shrimp strikes a hard-rock musician aboard a ship."

2 BURNING COLD An older piece, this one is a cover illustration for Lorenz's own manga volume. "Working on this painting I actually learned a lot about digital painting; it was one of my first finished CG renders that I was completely happy with."

1



Erich Schreiner

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SOFTWARE: Painter, Photoshop



Entirely self-taught, Erich started painting digitally nearly four years ago. "I was always into sci-fi and fantasy," he recalls. "It was a direct result of growing up with Star Wars, Blade Runner and Conan." So naturally, that's what he paints.

After graduating in economics and working for some years in the gastronomy business, Erich decided to learn drawing and painting for real and then eventually switch businesses. This he describes as "a hard long road out of hell." Right now he's starting to push his freelance work and to approach different publishers.

1 MEA CULPA This is Erich's first attempt at working in a more painterly style. "To achieve this, I switched back to Painter, and did some fine-tuning in Photoshop

2 BOUNTY HUNTER Created in Painter and Photoshop, this is an older piece. "My interpretation of a sci-fi Bounty Hunter."

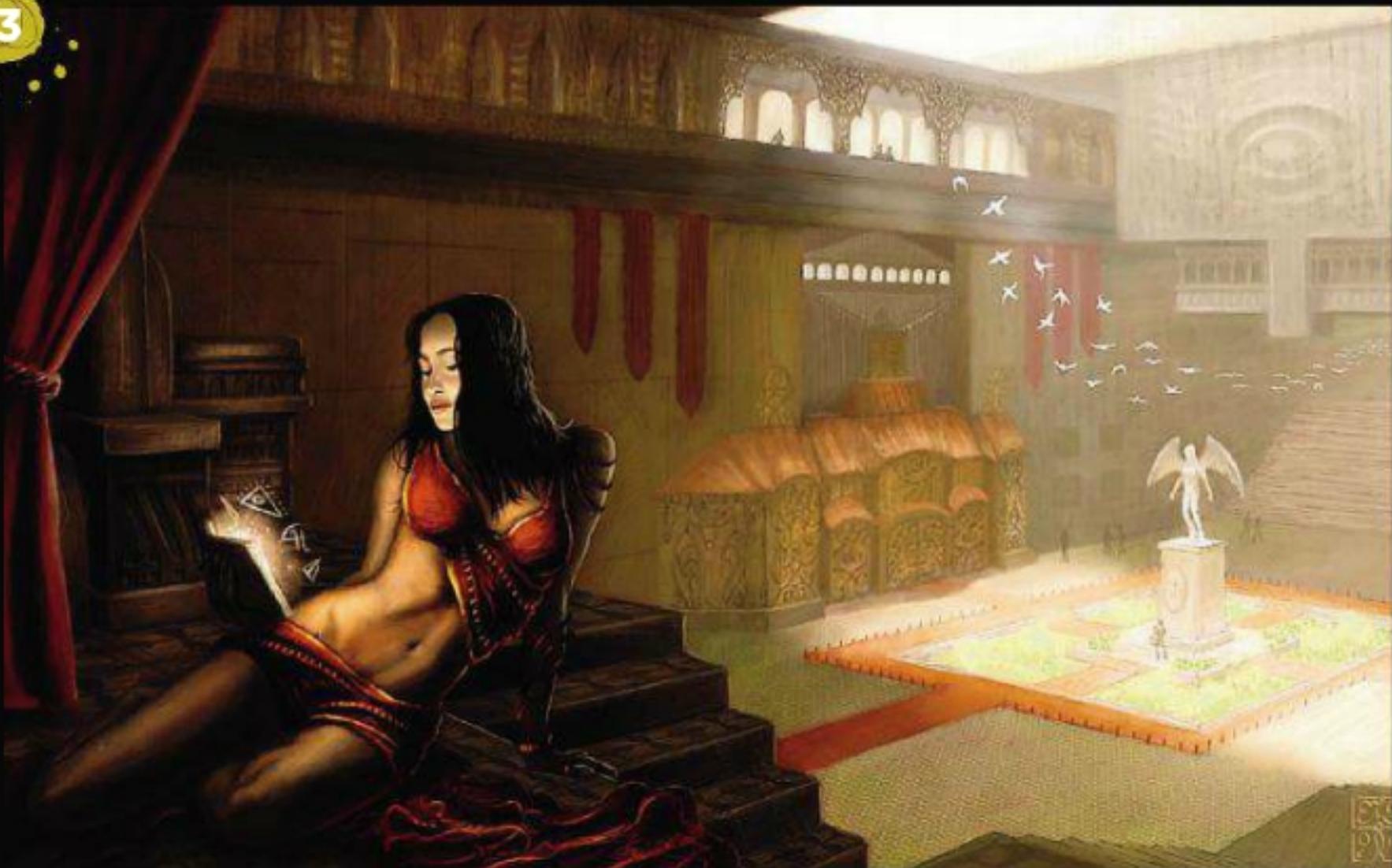
3 SILENCE Here Erich was aiming for the kind of atmosphere you'd find in a big museum or cathedral: "Whispering visitors, flying birds... and complete silence."



2



3



Christian Kesler

LOCATION: Germany
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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Christian, who recently turned 22 years of age, started drawing and painting when he was 18 years old: "That was when I got the internet at home and took notice of [online art gallery] Epilogue." Drawing with pencil only until this point, he "was stunned by the variety of works there and even more by the fact that most of them were done digitally."

This inspiration led young Christian to buy his first graphics tablet and start painting digitally. "Actually, I only coloured inked line art at first," he says, "but after I got the hang of Photoshop I began painting from scratch digitally."

Christian favoured science fiction as a genre, "ever since I watched the first Alien movie as a teenager. These visions – of new worlds and species somewhere out there, millions of miles from anywhere – are still absolutely fascinating to me, and I try to share them with people through my images, even if just for a moment."

1 END OF DAYS This image shows a couple at the world's end. "It should express a kind of a symbolism that you don't have to be afraid of the worst trouble or of things which seem to be hopeless because you have someone by your side who gives you the strength," explains Christian.

2 PATRIARCH OF THE NEW WORLD
"It's 2140 AD and around 50 years ago followers of the orthodox persuasion wiped out all remaining religions and governments in order to bring their genetic creation called 'Theodosios' into power and introduce him as the patriarch of the new world."

2



1





1

Sergey Skachkov

LOCATION: Russia

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JOB: Concept artist

SOFTWARE: Photoshop, 3ds max



Sergey grew up in Kazakhstan and before moving to Russia he trained as an architect. "I got into digital art rather recently," he says. "About five years ago I started to master computer programs."

Having worked as a 2D animator, 3D modeller and texture artist, Sergey realised: "All I was really into creating was fantastic worlds." In the early days Sergey used pencil to build his fantastic cities and landscapes, "but my ideal reality remained in my imagination."

Computer graphics came to the rescue and Sergey now works as an environment artist. His main source of inspiration is travel: "Discovering new places, you have your perception borders expanding and your consciousness immediately begins filling that space with new images."

1 DANGEROUS ENTERTAINMENTS

Crater-City arose from fiery lava. People settled there to use energy from the lava: "Their children search for inspiring and dangerous entertainment," offers Sergey.

2 BABEL This is Sergey's version of Babylon. "It's an absolutely absurd idea - building such towers to live in. But that is why I've created them."



2

Kerem Beyit

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 EMAIL: kerembeyit@hotmail.com
 JOB: Concept designer, Céidot Studios



Kerem takes us way back: "When I was a little boy, I was in the barber and waiting for my turn. I was so bored. So my dad bought me an issue of Conan." Savage Sword of Conan, in fact. "I still remember the cover art. I think that was the first spark." The artist was Bob Larkin. "I'd love to thank him," muses Kerem. He works in Photoshop 7 and CS2.

1 **WHITE TIGER CLAN** This character was designed by Kerem for the game Sovereign Symphony.

2 **GALON CITY** This architectural design was a concept illustration also produced for Sovereign Symphony. Kerem used Photoshop and a Wacom Cintiq 21UX.

3 **THE DWELLERS OF THE RED FOREST** Made for The Catalogue of Fantastic Literature, from Phoenix Publishing, this one took 30 hours.

1



2



3



Uwe Jarling

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JOB: Freelance concept artist



Uwe is a traditional artist but for the last three years, a large majority of his images have been created using digital tools. Uwe experimented with several digital tools, including 3D: "I tried 3ds max, Poser, Vue, Bryce and some others, but they just didn't fit."

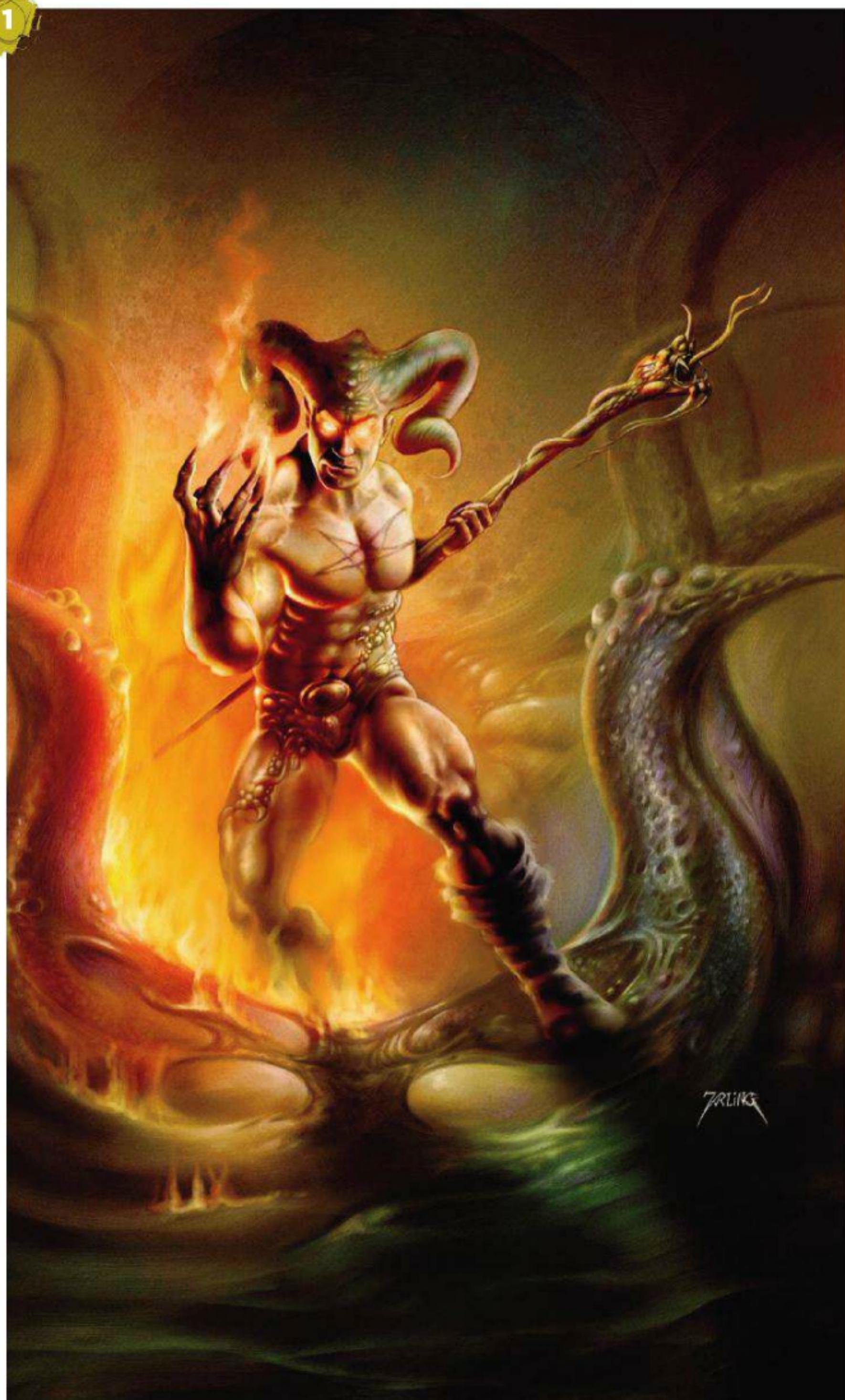
So Uwe decided to work mainly 2D with digital media: "All my paintings are done with Painter IX then colour-corrected in Photoshop," explains Uwe.

Working as a graphic designer since 1991, Uwe made an important decision in 2000. "That's when I decided to develop my fantasy artwork more seriously," he says. Since then, from his base in a little village in southern Germany, Uwe has been producing fantastic illustrations for clients all over the world.

1 BORN IN FLAMES "This image started as a character concept with a dynamic pose," explains Uwe. "But then I decided to colour the work and add a background to set the figure off, and it ended up as what you see here."

2 FALCONS Another Painterly exercise: "I mainly used Painter's oils and pastels for this one," says Uwe. "I painted here as if I were painting with oils, using mainly opaque colours and not too many glazes."

1



JARLING



1



Maciej Andrzej Kuciara

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop, Painter
JOB: Concept artist



Maciej Kuciara got started with CG just two years ago. "Since childhood I have been a huge fan of SF/fantasy literature and movies," he reveals.

Phenomena like Star Wars and Solaris provoked Maciej's great talent for painting and drawing, and before long the young artist came to the video game industry, "where I could try my luck," he laughs. Maciej now works as concept artist for leading game development company Crytek.

1 GRAND OPERA This classically framed piece "illustrates an epic moment, the arrival of a messenger at the capital city of another human faction," Maciej explains.

2 SHIP LANDING Maciej's concept spaceship lands on the deck and everyone tenses up. "The soldiers are awaiting the arrival of someone important," he whispers.

3 CITY CHASE A picture of two racing aircraft diving into a futuristic jungle of skyscrapers. "The angle and sunset build the drama and dynamism of the picture," says Maciej.

2



3



Nicklas Forsberg

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop CS2

JOB: Founder of NALF studio



"As an artist, I like to convey realism with a touch of surrealism and fantasy," says Nicklas. The viewer should pick up "strong emotions, striking messages and a 'being there' feeling."

Nicklas loves his work: "With my paintings I try to nail down my own style. This style can be seen throughout all of my landscape and scenery artwork." Developing this style involves practice: "A good way to try out different things is speed-painting. Here I can audition different styles and techniques, incorporating some later."

In 1998, Nicklas started his own company called NALF. He's now working with clients like EA Games and Ubisoft. "It's fun and creative, but the joy of painting beats it all."

1 UNTOUCHED LANDSCAPE

A waterfall with evil lurking beneath it. "I almost always add a couple of red evil eyes in my paintings," he says. "And red mushrooms in later works."

2 BEFORE THE WAR This painting depicts the calm before a big war. "The unicorn stands beside the gravestone of a fallen age."



Marc Simonetti

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop CS, Painter
JOB: Freelance illustrator



Marc Simonetti was born in 1977 in Lyon, France, where, "after a very short engineering career, I studied art at the Emile Cohl School of Arts," he explains.

Now working as a freelancer, "I divide my time between creating illustrations for books, RPG, and collectible card games, and making concept art for videogames."

Marc's main influences are SpARTH, Justin Sweet, Ryan Church, Escher and Sargent – artists who would doubtless identify with his sentiment: "I'm still looking for something personal in my work. This job is really a passion."

1 THE DUNWICH HORROR This one was made for FFG's collectible card game. "It's inspired by Lovecraft's novel and it was fun to do," laughs Marc.

2 Y-O This was created for a French RPG based in ancient China. "I tried to express some Asian poetic feeling, with the movie 'hero' in mind," explains Marc.

3 PERDIDO This piece formed the cover art for the French edition of Perdido Street Station by China Mieville, "a fantastic novel that I'd read before having to illustrate it. As it's one of my favourite books, it was a great honour for me," Marc declares.

4 BELLE This one was inspired by the tale of Sleeping Beauty: "I just wanted to represent a magic area, with a beautiful Gothic/Roman architectural environment."

1



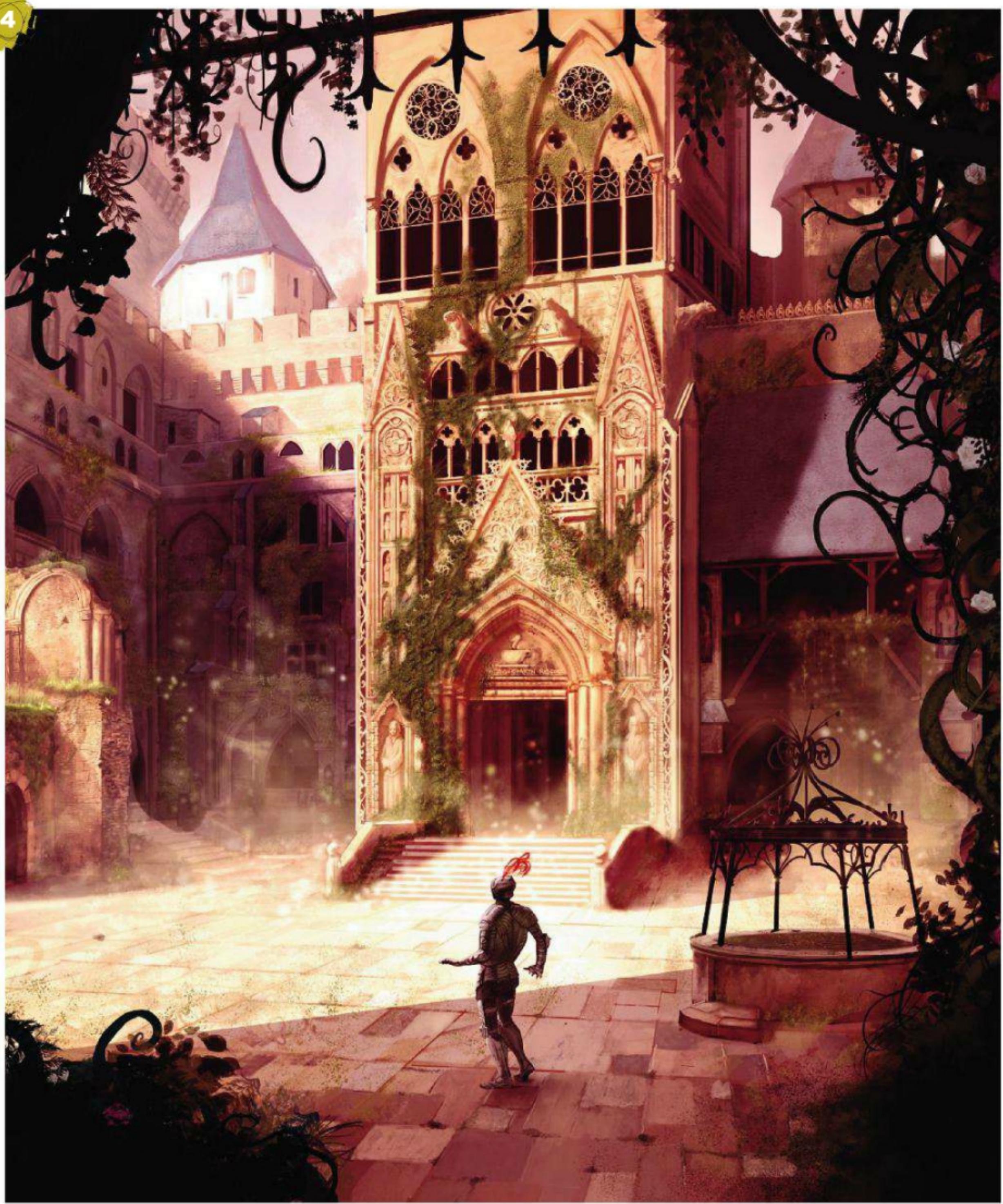
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3



4



Ales 'Artie' Horak

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop
JOB: Lead artist



Currently working as a lead artist in the game development company, from an early age Artie was fascinated by the work of fantasy giants like Boris Vallejo and Frank Frazetta. "It led me to be interested in painting and imaginary worlds," he says.

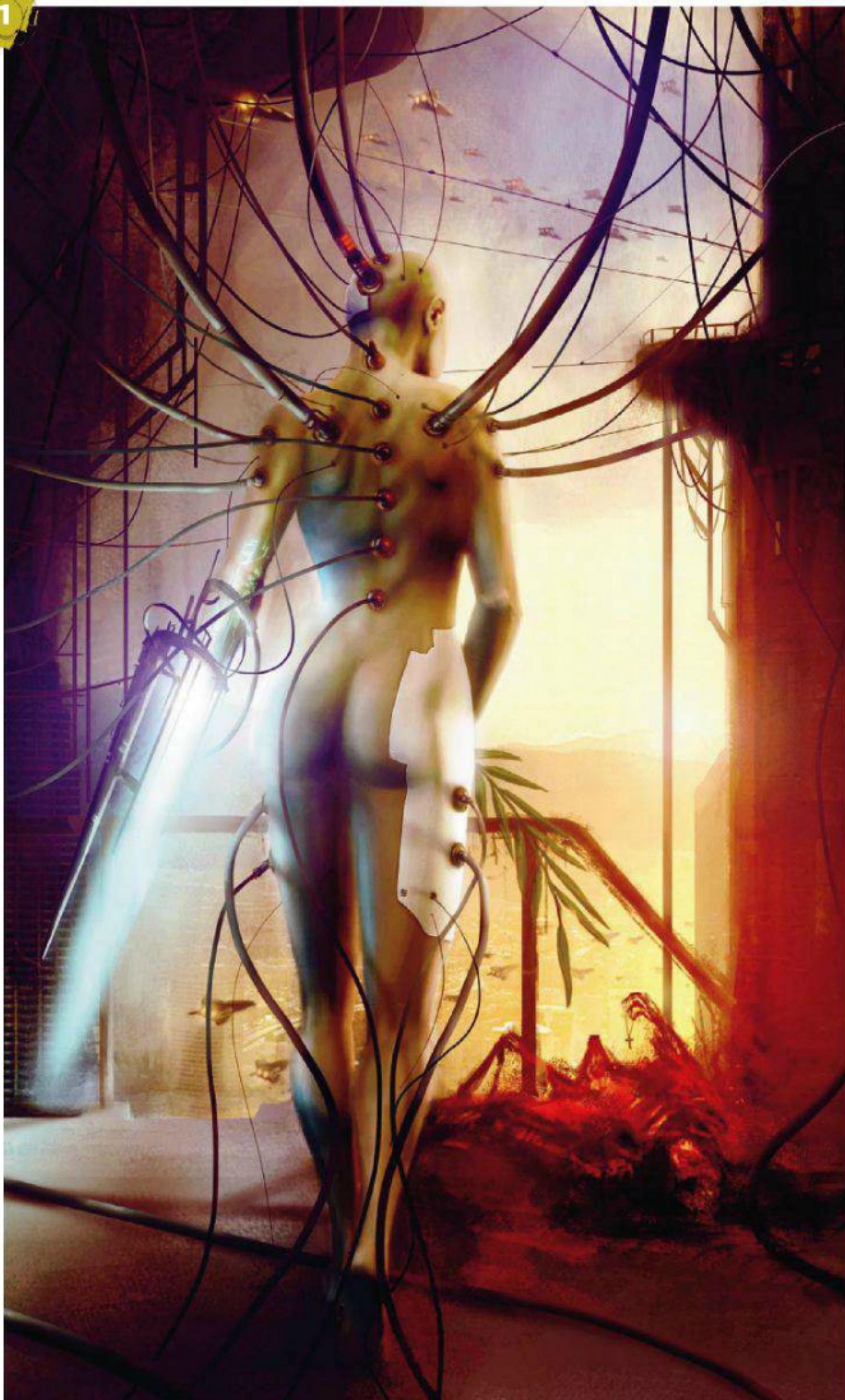
With this strong source of inspiration Artie had to paint: "My first steps were taken with a pencil and later on the ZX Spectrum." There wasn't a mouse or tablet, of course: "It was a really amusing experience, though somewhat hardcore," he remembers.

But the clock was ticking, and many other artists and influences appeared, marking the development of the genre. "I am constantly trying to enhance my imagination and how to represent it," says Artie. "My main goal is to become a better artist."

1 DIES IRAE With this piece, Artie is asking questions about the nature of good and evil: "Can the machines take the role of the neo-angels, eliminating the evil? And who is behind them – the man acting like the God?" asks Artie.

2 WYRMHOLE The young warrior from a nearby Aquian village meets his opponent. Artie takes up the story: "There is no easy way to defeat a wyrm, but it must be done..."

1



2



ALEKSI BRICLOT

LOCATION: France

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop and ArtRage

JOB: Concept artist and art director in the videogame industry



Twenty-eight-year-old Parisian Aleksi has been working in video games for seven years. "I was lead artist on *Cold Fear*, the horror-action game developed by DarkWorks for Ubisoft, and more recently on *Splinter Cell: Double Agent* and *Haze*."

Aleksi contributed to the *Heroes of Might & Magic 4*'s trailer and, as an illustrator, his credits are also numerous. "I drew pieces for RPG books, magazines and comics, and also for Tolkien," says Aleksi. He's also one of the main card and packaging artists for Wizards of the Coast, Dreamblade and Magic card games.

Before that there were comic books, an adaptation of the video game *Alone in the Dark 4* and *Spawn: Simony*. "I've also taken part in the *Legends of the Round Table*, a comic book for the European market," he explains.

Aleksi's project of the moment is *Merlin*, an ambitious 130-page art book about the legendary wizard.

1 LEGENDS OF THE ROUND TABLE

"The cover of the first issue of my comic book *Legends of the Round Table*" (Soleil Editions).

2 MEDIEVAL CROW This image was created by Aleksi for the cover of *The Crow* comic book.

1







■ ■ Mathias Verhasselt

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop
JOB: Concept artist



Mathias, 24, has been working in the digital field of art for three years and currently works as a concept artist at video game company DarkWorks. He has been drawing as long as he can remember: "Since I was exposed to computers quite early, I was fascinated by the potential of digital and video games from a young age." Despite this early exposure, though, "I only started to feel comfortable with digital art creation a few years ago."

With the help of online communities like CGTalk or ConceptArt.org, Mathias has learnt a lot: "I've discovered tons of artists and become friends with some of them." There's another benefit too: "Most of my work is a result of the motivation of friendly competition and the sharing of diverse digital medium techniques on such forums and sites."

1 WEIRD FOREST A speed painting originally created for an interview on a French CG site.

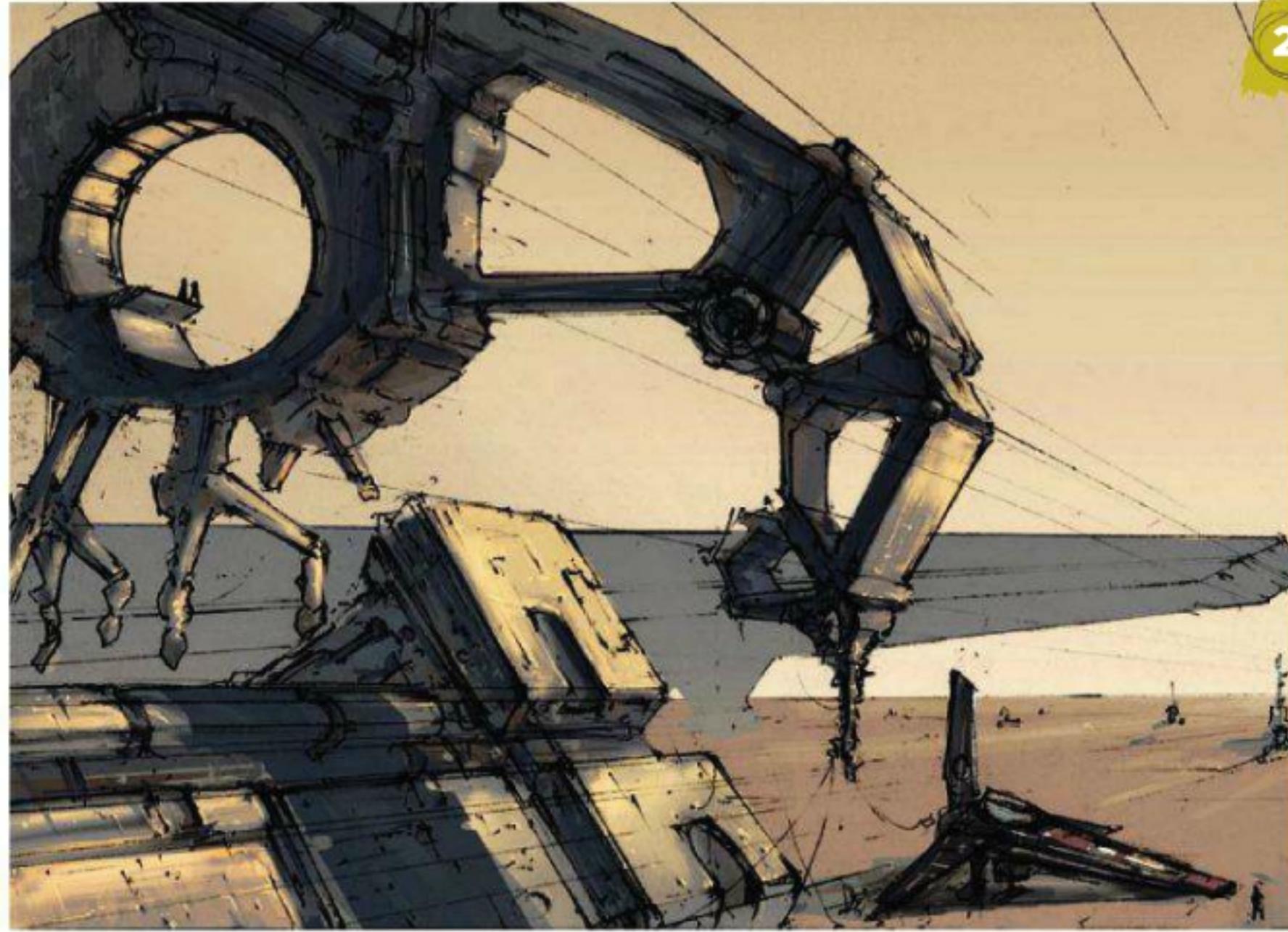
2 ICE AGE SOLDIER Another speed painting. "I was inspired by Nordic forests as I love Finland," says Mathias.



1



2



Kan Muftic

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop CS
JOB: Concept artist



"I was born in Sarajevo, Bosnia, in 1976," says Kan. "And before moving to Zürich I studied draughtsmanship at the city's school of fine arts." Once in Switzerland, Kan continued his studies, majoring in contemporary art and new media. "I now specialise in direction, art direction, music design, compositing and motion graphics."

Kan has worked for clients such as Microsoft, Philips, Pepsi and FIFA. "I have also provided art for various local and international musicians such as Alanis Morissette, Asian Dub Foundation and DJ Bobo."

1 SCOUT After couple of minutes of brainstorming, Kan had the picture in his mind: "A cold, unfriendly environment and some kind of a soldier who's looking to a distant enemy base."

2 AIRPORT "When I create high-tech environments," says Kan, "I prefer starting on a paper, with rulers, erasers and very light pencils."

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