

# NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX

CREATE WILD

## CONCEPT DESIGNS

Take control of a fierce  
fantasy composition  
with **Alex Alexandrov**



PRO INSIGHT

### 10 TIPS TO TAME YOUR COLOURS

Paint strong, vibrant  
artwork every time

PAINT  
THIS COVER  
IMAGE!

INSIDE

WHAT IT TAKES TO BE  
A COSTUME DESIGNER

MAKE A CITY FROM A  
BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

34 SKETCHES TO  
GET INSPIRED!

FUTURE  
ISSUE 243

WORKSHOP

### DRAW A STYLISH DESTINY TRIBUTE

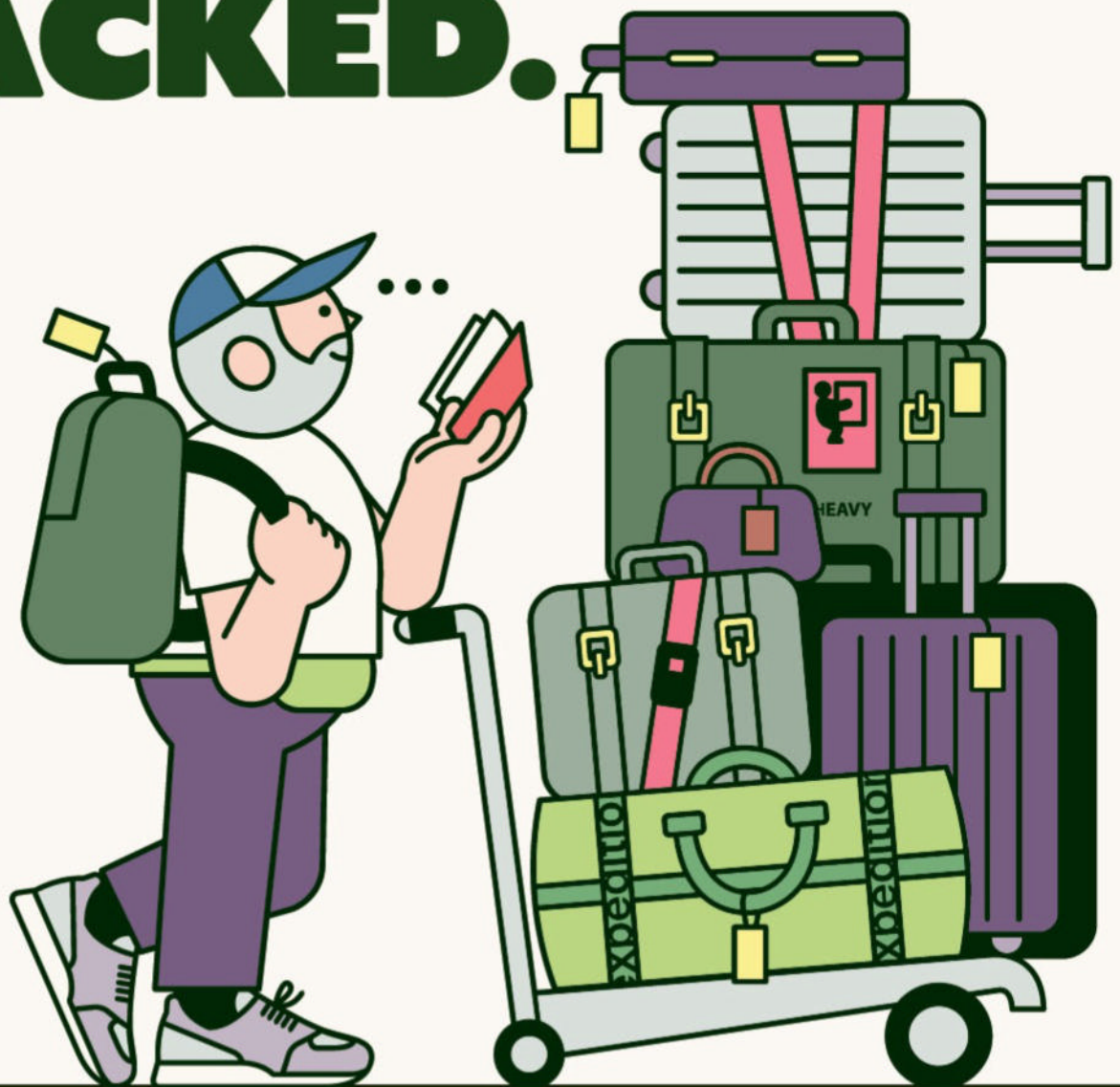
Perfect your pencil skills  
with video game fan art



FILM ARTIST **GAËLLE SEGUILLON** ON WHY NATURE IS DINO-MITE FOR CREATIVITY



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



Art covers a lot of ground and many people will have vastly different tastes in the art they like to consume and create. For some, costume design might be the way to go, and this month we have a special feature that shows you how to kick-start a career in this fascinating field.

A reader (and team!) favourite in the mag is our Artist in Residence section. This issue we have the pleasure of taking a tour around the home studio of Philippe Gaulier. It's a fantastic space!

Many of you come to ImagineFX to learn new skills or to explore fresh techniques. As always, we have a wide variety of training for you to jump into. Start off with a tutorial to accompany our stunning cover art, so you can learn to paint your own fantasy masterpiece with Alex Alexandrov's help. We also explain how to ensure your colour paintings are strong and vibrant, plus more!

There's so much on top of that too, so I'll leave you to jump right in and explore another fabulous issue. I hope you enjoy it as much as I do!

Rob

**Editor**  
**Rob.Redman@futurenet.com**

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



#### **Kick-start your career in costume design**

Discover what it takes to get started in this challenging but exciting branch of the concept art industry.



#### **The art of Gaëlle Seguillon**

Learn how a dinosaur-loving artist explores her creative impulses and passions working in film, TV and games.



#### **Draw a Destiny Guardian in pencil**

Ride along with pro artist Emily Chapman as she uses Prismacolor pencils to create stunning Destiny fan art.

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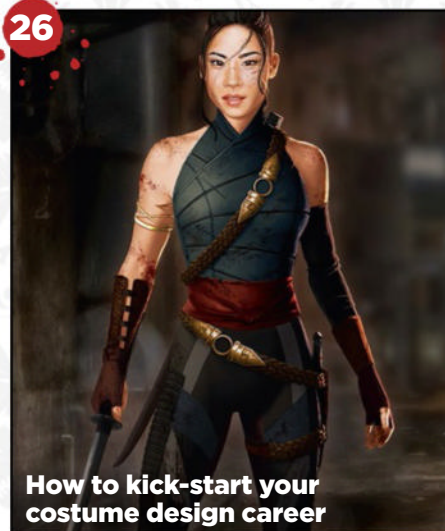
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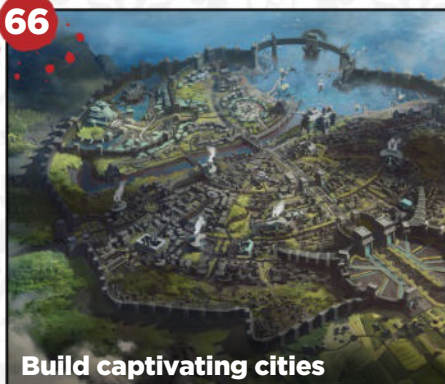
Artist in Residence:  
Philippe Gaulier



ImagineFX



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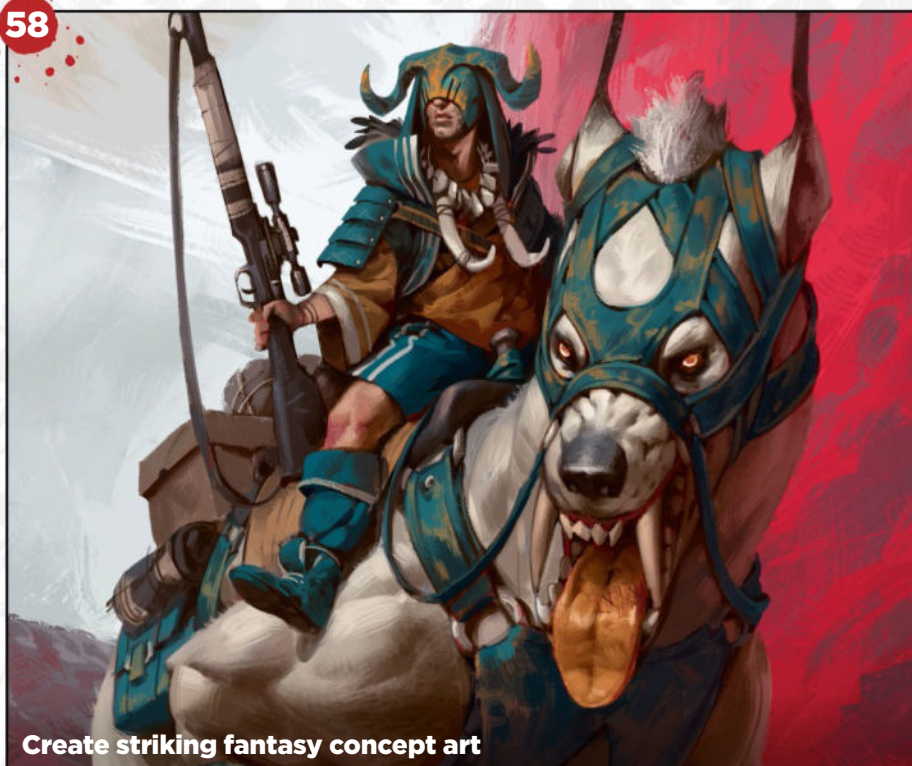
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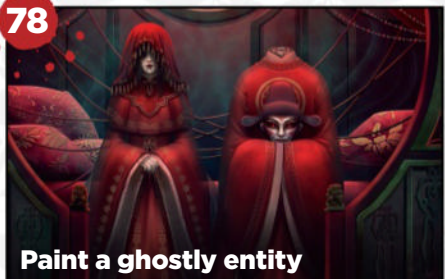
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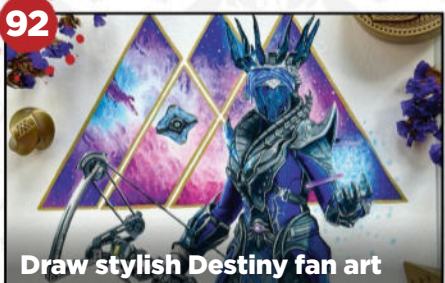
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Next month



Next month in...  
**NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS**  
**ImagineFX**

# PAINT STYLISTED CHARACTER ART

Mix bold street art style into your  
portraits with **Alvaro Escobar**

## Discover digital art's rising stars

Celebrate the next  
generation of talent  
set to make waves  
in the art industry

## Embrace your odd creations

Julian de la Mota  
shares his process  
for drawing bizarre  
characters in pencil

## Excel in the games industry

We show you how  
to grow your career  
and succeed at a  
video game studio

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**ImagineFX**

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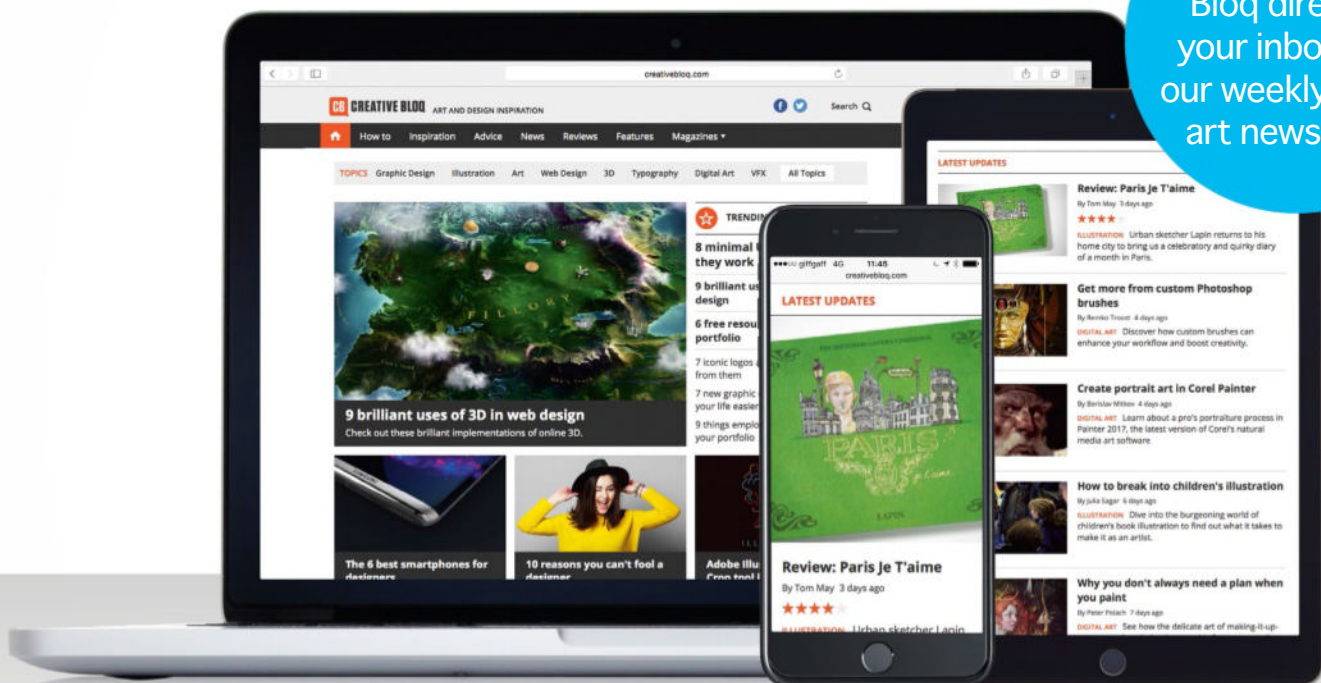


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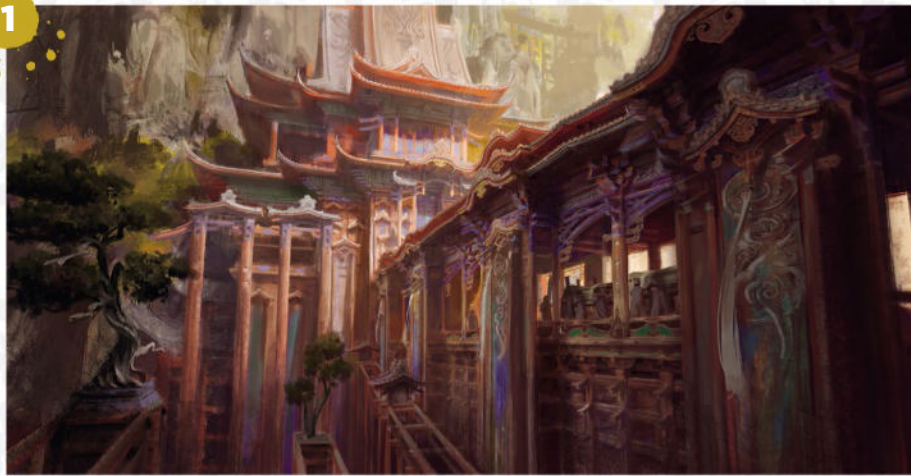
# FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

## Pei Gong

LOCATION: China MEDIA: Photoshop WEB: [peigongart.artstation.com](http://peigongart.artstation.com)

Pei is a video games concept artist with 14 years' experience in environmental design. Inspired by Chinese aesthetics, she has worked with a Dubai-based film company and NetEase.







4

## 1 HALL OF TRANSMIGRATION

"Here I experimented with brushstrokes to capture intricate details in the architecture. I also wanted a scene that pushes the deceased towards the afterlife via the depiction of the characters."

2

## STREETS OF FIRE

"This piece was influenced by the art style of Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse. I thought it was very cool and wanted to try and emulate that aesthetic."

3

## FAIRY TALE TOWN

"I explored different colour styles and compositions here. The sheer amount of buildings was a challenge. It was the most I've ever done and a struggle to keep the scene cohesive."

4

## VERMILLION CASTLE

"For this piece, I challenged myself to create a scene filled with large architectural structures such as castles and towers."





## Dusky Woods

**LOCATION:** US **MEDIA:** Photoshop **WEB:** <https://duskywoodsart.artstation.com>

Dusky studied classical arts before moving to the United States. Her art is inspired by mythology, magical beasts and nature. She also combines her background in classical arts with a touch of impressionism.

### 1 FIRST FLIGHT

"Living in Texas, I miss snow sometimes. This is a little winter tale in one picture; riding huge eagles, living with mammoths, and buildings of stone in otherworldly mountains."

### 2 CONTEMPLATION

"Here I wanted to create a more intimate portrayal than you usually get with Warcraft characters, like a person taking a break to clear out heavy thoughts."

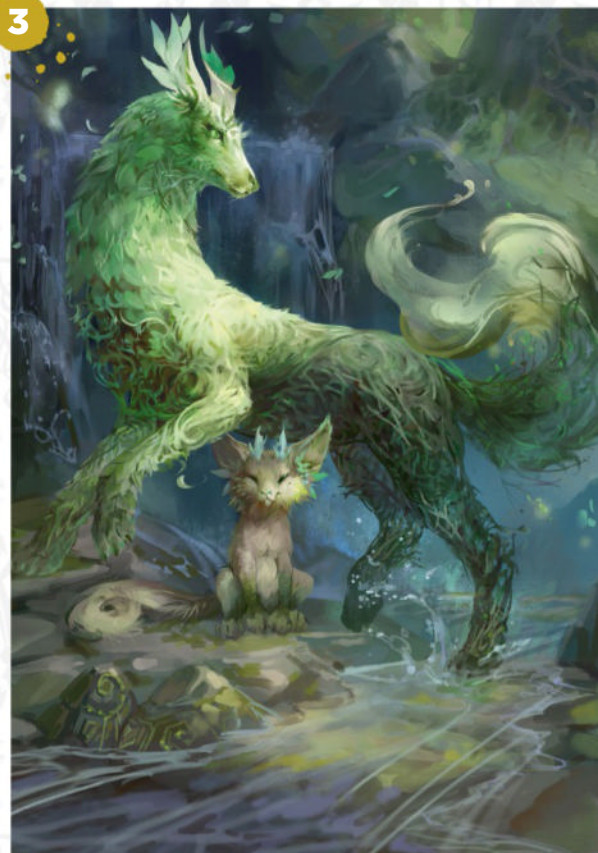


### 3 SPRINGTIME

"Spring is a common artistic inspiration. After I paid a visit to a forest creek, I wanted to draw a spiritual creature as an allegory for the season's annual rebirth."

### 4 CATCHING DRAGONS

"During Covid, my younger brother and I got into Dungeons & Dragons. His character would try to pet every monster, including this baby red dragon."











## Julien Theo Simon

**LOCATION:** Canada **MEDIA:** Photoshop, Blender **WEB:** [www.artstation.com/julienSimon](http://www.artstation.com/julienSimon)

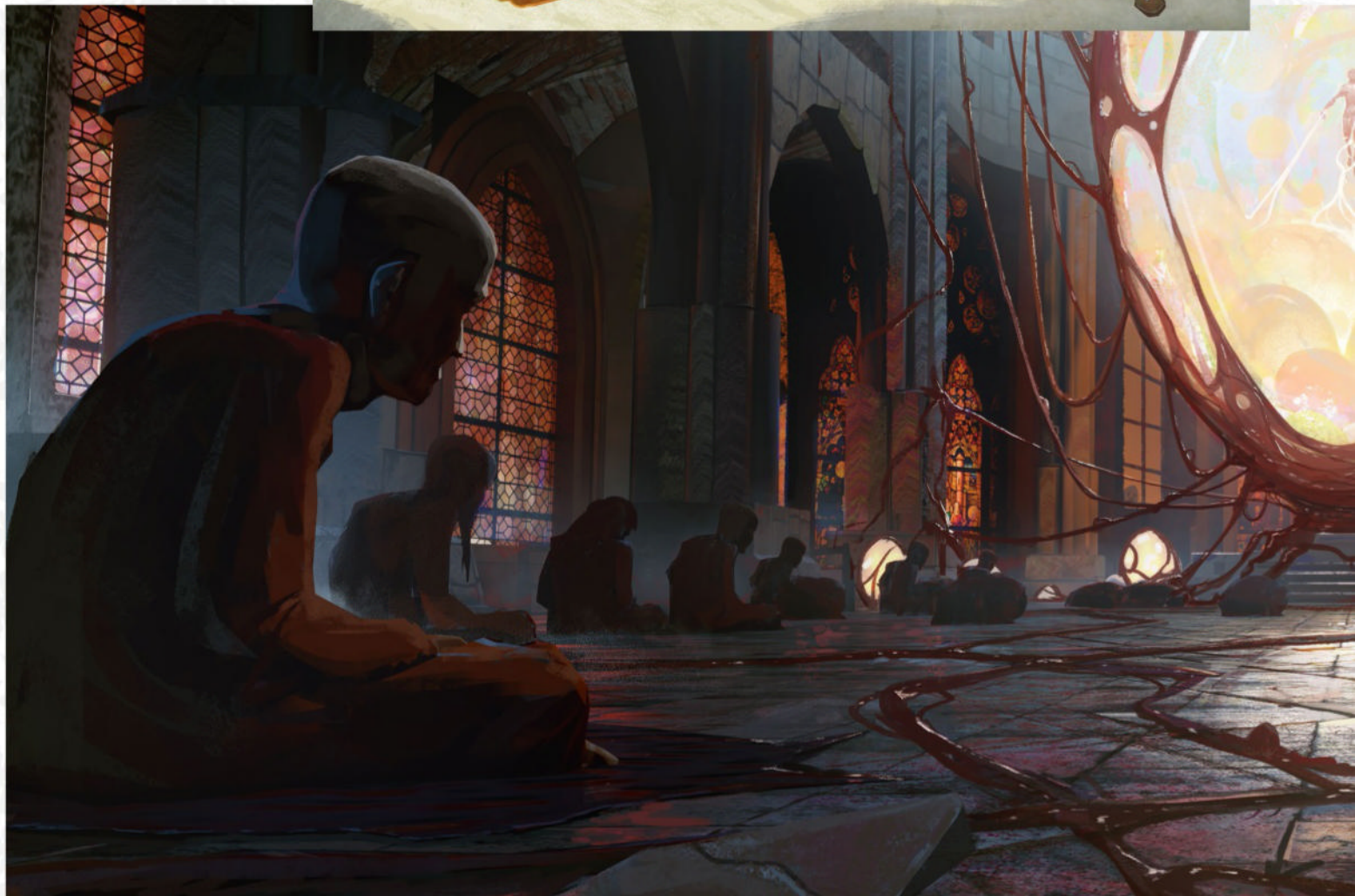
Julien is a concept artist who focuses on environments. He loves colour and tries to make it the highlight of everything he creates. Currently, Julien is working on his personal IP, Anchored, which is themed around pirates.

### 1 DANDE'S GARDEN

"A concept like this goes a long way when it feels grounded. A 3D artist can look at this and immediately feel as though they can model and ship it."

### 2 WITCH'S HUT

"An older piece, but I love it all the same. It's the catalyst that set me on my journey of making artworks that are bright, saturated and filled with colour."





2



3



### 3 REBORN

"I spent much of 2023 and 2024 working on my pirate IP, plus bright and colourful art, so I created something darker and sinister as a little break!"





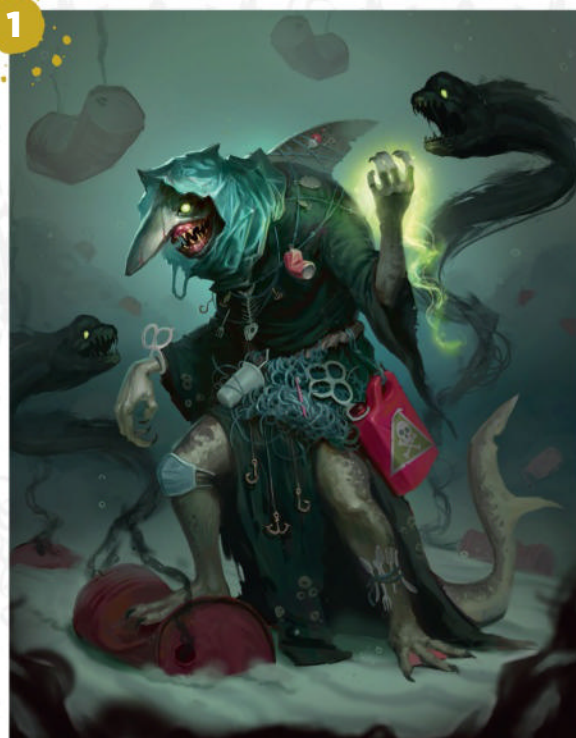
## Egor Shempel

LOCATION: US MEDIA: Photoshop WEB: [www.artstation.com/magognom](http://www.artstation.com/magognom)

Egor is an illustrator and concept artist who is inspired by fantasy games and movies. His work mainly consists of character design, and he enjoys using colours and forms to make his art more captivating.

### 1 GARBAGE SHARK

"This character concept is based on the pollution of the ocean. This is a necromancer shark, who is surrounded by tons of different waste and moray eels."



### 2 MUSHROOM SHAMAN

"This mushroom character is the keeper of a forest. Once he was a human, but he lived in the forest for so long that he became a huge mushroom."

2



### 3 NUCLEAR MUSEUM

"This illustration depicts a museum following a nuclear catastrophe. The main character is a guy who slept in a capsule for a long time and woke up in a post-apocalyptic museum."



3



4

**4 DRAENEI**  
 "This piece is inspired by World of Warcraft. I wanted to portray a Draenei paladin, as it has always been my favourite race and class from the game."







## Lera Nyukalova

**LOCATION:** Canada **MEDIA:** Photoshop **WEB:** [www.leranyukalova.com](http://www.leranyukalova.com)

Lera is a visual and concept artist from Kazakhstan. She has worked on 2D and 3D productions with Disney Jr., Capcom, Netflix and more. Her work covers game concepts, visual development and animation direction.

### 1 RED CARDINAL

"This explores the profound and complex emotions within us. Delving into the entanglement of emotions, hidden truths, and the intimate connection between our internal world and our external facade."

### 2 THE UNIVERSE CREATOR

"A woman at the centre of her universe in a moment of creation. She's surrounded by a dark forest filled with symbols of safety, security, magic and spiritual growth."

### 3 PARROT PSYCHIC

"Moon flowers bloom in darkness, providing hope for people going through tough times and giving the ability to heal. Black cockatoos are believed to guide the souls of loved ones."

### 4 FOREST SPIRIT

"The forest spirit represents the delicate balance of life and the need to protect our environment. Her concerned expression mirrors nature's fragility and the necessity of peaceful coexistence with earth."

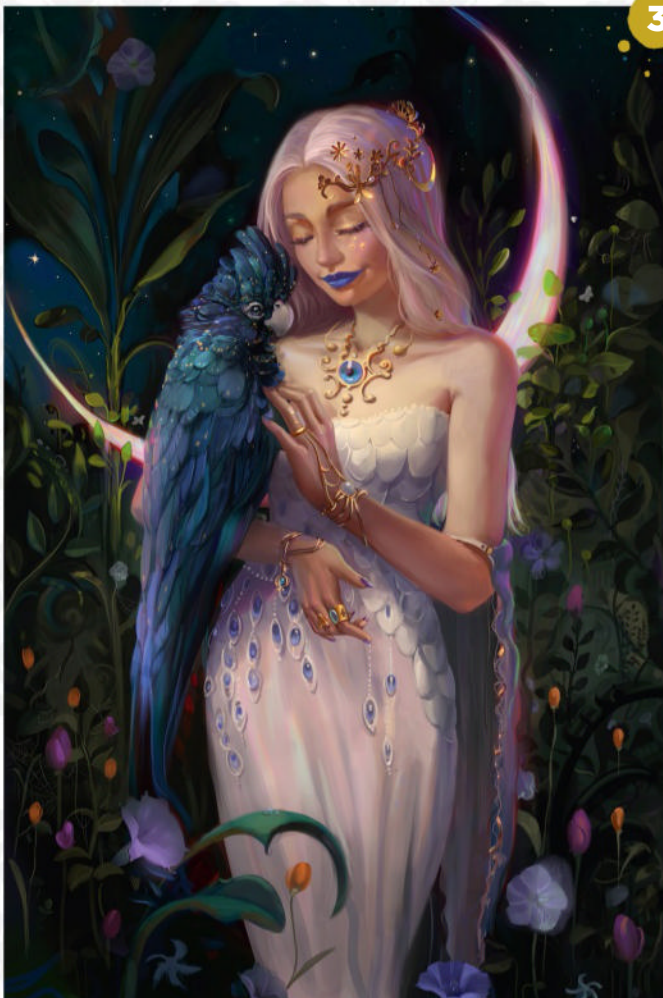




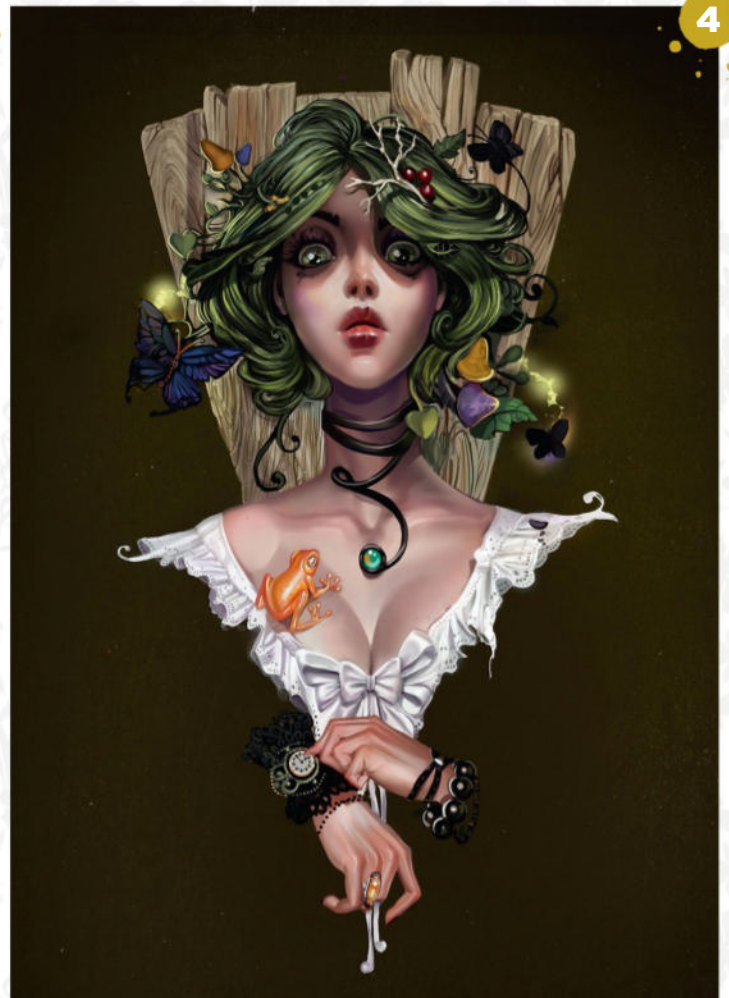
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## Jitske de Vries Reilingh

**LOCATION:** The Netherlands **MEDIA:** Procreate **WEB:** [www.instagram.com/nekouhai](http://www.instagram.com/nekouhai)

Jitske, also known as Nekouhai, focuses on portraying characters. She likes to play with magic, fashion and emotions, and emphasises colour and flow. Inspired by Loish and Gretel Lusk, she's passionate about animation.

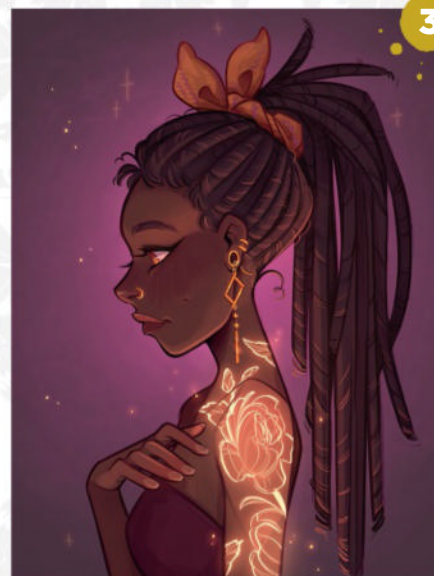
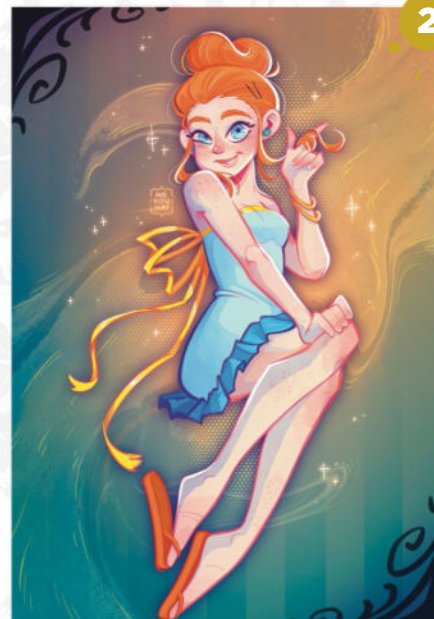
### 1 GINGERSNAP

"I love making character exploration sheets! It's a great way to practise posing, make a mood board of their personality, and have fun with a bunch of silly expressions!"



### 2 SUNRISE

"This is actually a redraw of a piece I first drew back in 2012. I like to make those every once in a while, as I believe seeing your own improvement is the best motivation."



### 3 COMFORT

"A painting depicting my personal experience of getting a tattoo, and the magical feeling of liberation and sense of comfort that came with it."

### 4 PLANT NYMPH

"This piece was originally inspired by a character from a book. The concept of an undead plant girl sparked something inside me, combining my love for both plants and the macabre."





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





THE  
ROOKIES

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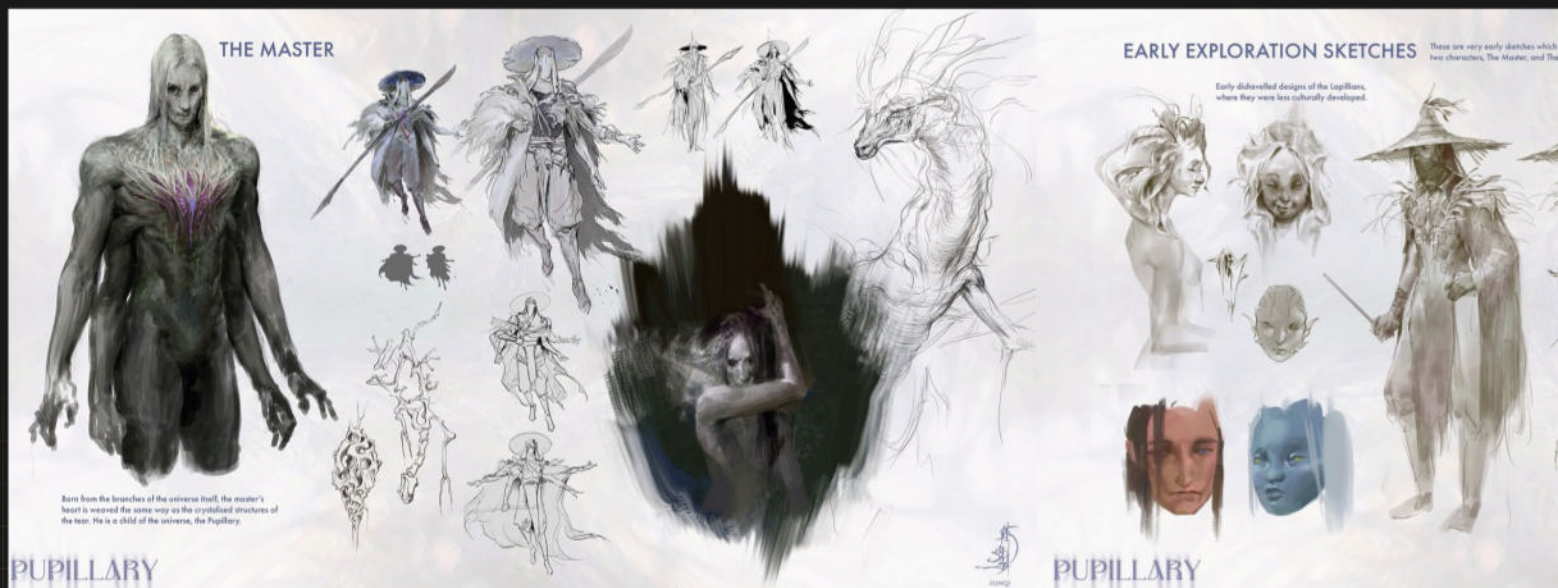
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## Pupillary

YEAR CREATED: 2024 MEDIA: Photoshop

“Pupillary is a project I created during my last semester studying at The One Academy. I was deeply moved by the photography series The Topography of Tears by Rose-Lynn Fisher, exploring the beautiful crystallised structures of tears under the microscope; they resembled the branches that form our cosmic web. I thought to myself, ‘What if a universe existed within our tears?’ Hence, the world of Pupillary was born.”





# The Rookies



## Artist PROFILE

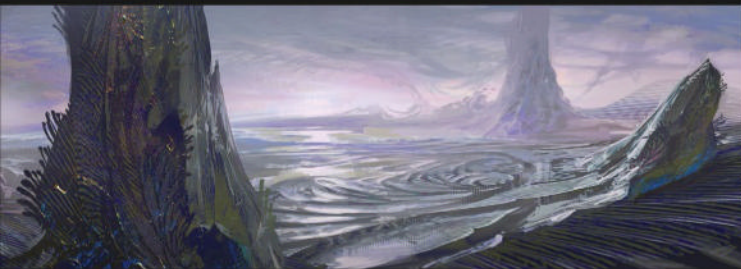
**Tan Jiun Qi**

**LOCATION:** Malaysia

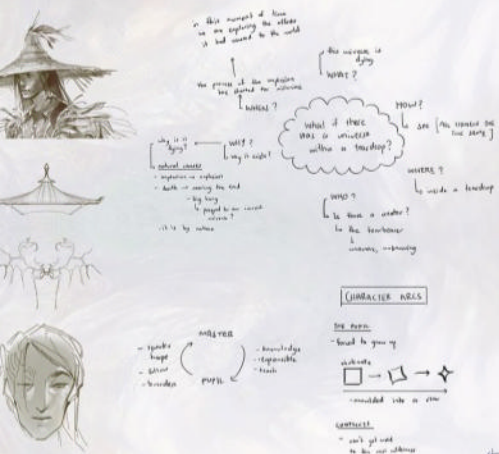


Tan Jiun Qi is a graduate from The One Academy. Growing up in Malaysia, he has been exposed to many cultural settings, reflecting on his love for all art forms.

[www.therookies.co/u/jiunqi](http://www.therookies.co/u/jiunqi)



explored the general direction I want to have for the Pupillary.



### THE PUPIL



### PUPILLARY

#### FEATURES OF INTELLIGENT SPECIES

#### THE PUPIL'S SPECIES



### THE LAPILLIAN PEOPLE

The Lapillian people are the intelligent life on the planet of Lapilli. They have advanced technology and can fly through the air using their wings.

They have impressive hearing, with helices that extend beyond the sides of their faces. They are able to draw sound waves from all directions. However, their eyesight falls behind because their eyes have adapted to the dense atmosphere.



The dense atmosphere also makes it difficult for newborn Lapillians to breathe, as their lungs are not fully developed until the age of 12. So they require a device to manually supply air through an air tube that is tucked in the pocket of their stomach, when not in use.



## The Villages

YEAR CREATED: 2024 MEDIA: Photoshop, Blender

“This the second of four images from my graduation project, Babel. The scene is the first time the viewer sees inside the tower. I tried to invoke the feeling of a sprawling, busy place that’s full of life.”







## Artist PROFILE

**Jonathan Kiem**

**LOCATION:** Italy

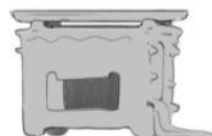
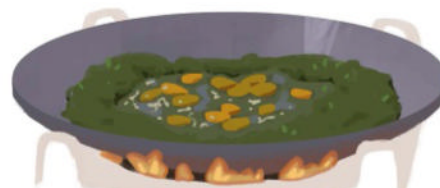


Jonathan is a concept and visual development artist born in South Tyrol, Italy. He started learning art during his high school years with online resources, and later moved to Paris to spend two years studying at New3dge Concept Art school.

[www.therookies.co/entries/31990](http://www.therookies.co/entries/31990)



Moss that is being harvested in the higher floors is the main food source for all the inhabitants. You can actually make quite a few good meals out of it with a bit of creativity and skill!





A design that Sophia created on completion of her costume concept design course with the renowned artist Phillip Boutté Jr.

Sophia's costume sketches developed for her fan art project that reimagines The Lord of the Rings as Asian science fiction.



## How to kick-start your costume design career

**Passion for fashion** Tanya Combrinck finds out what it takes to work in the competitive specialism of costume design and illustration for the film industry

**Working in costume design and illustration gives you the chance to get your teeth into a unique set of challenges. You'll be using all your creativity and imagination to design fantastical creations that give their characters visual pop. At the same time, you'll be using your technical knowledge of garment-making and human anatomy to draw something that's practical to construct and comfortable for an actor to wear.**

The job is all about problem solving for the LA-based costume illustrator



**Sophia Canning.** "To me, that's what the whole job is," she says. "How do we show who this character is through their clothing?"

And how do we make them look intimidating, cowardly, heroic, weak, pompous, or gentle with nothing but fabric? How do we show what their job is and what their life has been like through colour, cut and fit?

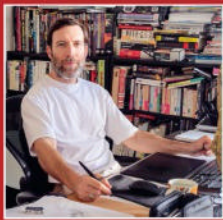
"Costume is such an essential part of a character. It tells the audience so much about someone at a glance and I love figuring out how information can be packed into that one glance."

**“Costumes are made to support and enhance a performance”**



Warren says: "Every film is an illusion, it's up to the filmmakers to use whatever methods necessary to suspend disbelief."





## A HAVEN FOR CREATIVITY

Concept artist Philippe Gaulier gives us a tour around his studio, and tells us why a massive collection of books and favourite soundtracks inspire his creations.

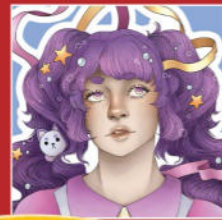
**Page 32**



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**Page 38**



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Readers write in with their art news and opinions on what we've covered in ImagineFX. Plus, we feature your art that's caught our eye on social media.

**Page 39**



© Marvel Studios

"A big thrill is fitting an actor with a costume that weeks before was pixels on a screen," says Warren.

A character artist might have a lot of freedom in terms of the visual cues they can use to create an impression, but as a costume artist you must work with practical constraints. In this sense, the work is grounded in reality.

## FORM FITTING

A veteran artist who has designed costumes for heroes like Spider-Man, Batman and Superman, **Warren Manser** tells us it's a matter of "merging aesthetics with function". He says: "In live-action projects, the actors must be able to perform. If a costume has an awkward fit or overpowers the performer, the audience notices. The actor is the primary expression of the character, so costumes are designed to support and enhance a performance."

There are a few different but overlapping roles: the costume ➡



A costume concept by Darrell Warner for the Scarlet Witch from Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness.





Warren says: "What I love most are the blue sky moments, when anything is possible. Your mind opens and floods with concepts and imagery."

➡ designer, costume concept artist and costume illustrator. "The terms 'designer' and 'illustrator' are less rigid than most people realise," Warren explains. "Design is the organised planning of a costume, and illustration is the graphic representation of its aesthetics. The industry has separated the titles to designate designers as department managers, but in reality many designers can illustrate, just as many illustrators design."

## DRESS FOR ALL OCCASIONS

Like many other artists in the field, **Barbra Araujo** works as both a costume concept artist and a costume illustrator, and switches between working styles



as is required for the particular assignment. She tells us how the two roles differ: "For costume concept art, we create design concepts based on the costume designer's or director's vision, and they have the final say on the final costume."

"For costume illustration jobs, we illustrate exactly what the costume designer has in mind, but even this requires a designer's eye to achieve the correct balance of all the elements in order to bring the character to life and work as a whole."

Regardless of the specific role, you'll need to communicate effectively and apply feedback to your work until you reach something that gets approval from the director. Often you'll receive research and reference images from



Barbra's fan art of Sally from *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, reimagined as a macabre seamstress.

the costume designer, and use your own additional research and the film's script to build up an idea of the character's personality and style.

"There's also the factor that the final costume has to be physically made," adds Barbra. "So there's an emphasis on the illustration being used as a communication tool between the costume designers and directors, the actors, and all the different tailors and craftspeople who will be making the actual costume."

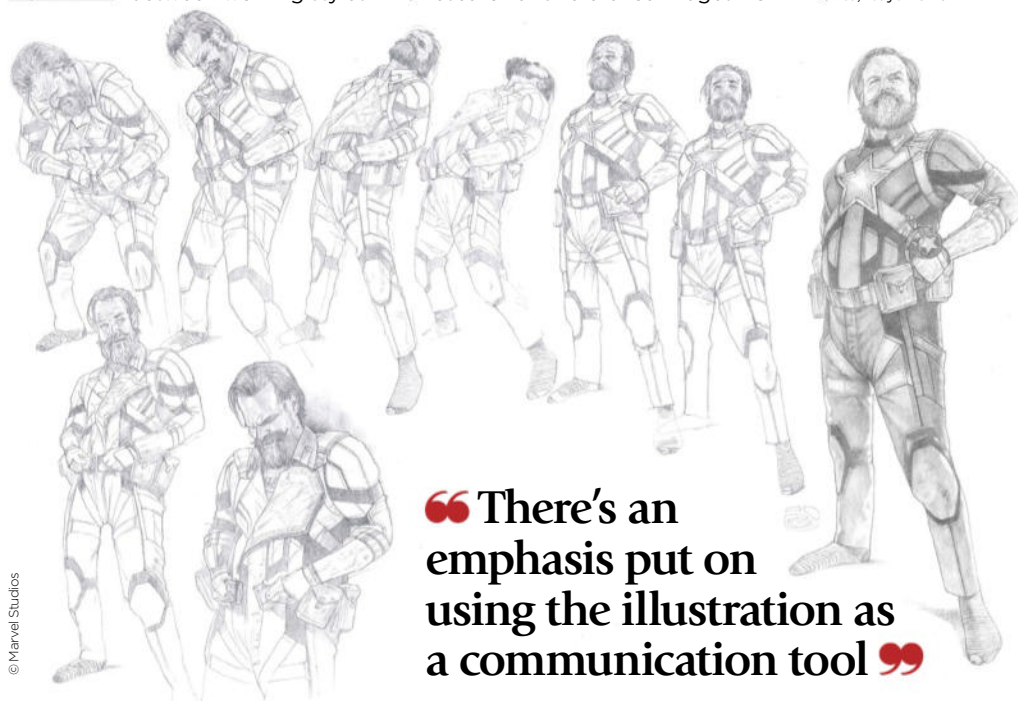
Processes for working as a costume artist can vary. One of the most well-



known costume concept illustrators out there is **Darrell Warner**, an expert traditional artist with four decades of experience in

the film industry. He works in pencil and watercolour, which offers a "very different experience" to the designers he works with.

"I begin with how best to sell the character by way of nailing a figure in the form of a pencil drawing without any clothing," Darrell tells us. Next, he makes multiple photocopies of this initial drawing. "I proceed with my design process on those photocopies seeking silhouettes, shapes, design vernacular," he says. "It's a fairly



“There’s an emphasis put on using the illustration as a communication tool”

© Marvel Studios



## INDUSTRY INSIGHT

### HITTING THE CATWALK

*Sophia Canning on the skills you need to work in costume design*

#### What interests and talents do you need to become a good costume illustrator?

An interest in fashion, clothing construction and fashion history are so important. Understanding historical garments, learning the terminology, and the reasons why clothes evolved the way they have is essential not just for working on period pieces, but also in designing fantastical new garments for sci-fi or fantasy.

Knowing where to place your seams, understanding how the fabric fits together, and what it's possible to construct is vital in creating a functional illustration. I compare costume illustration to architectural blueprints for a building; someone has to look at your drawing and physically construct it to fit a human body, so it has to make sense and the pieces have to fit together.

#### Can you give us an insight to your own process?

If the audience is the director, producers or executives, the illustration is an advertisement meant to show off how cool the costume will look on screen. Maybe the illustration has a dramatic pose and cool lighting to show off the silhouette. If the audience is the cutter and fitters whose job it is to construct the costume, then my illustration might be more technical.

The style of drawing is often the designer's preference. Some like fully rendered, photorealistic images, others the hand-drawn look. In my research phase, I always put together a mood board based on the script and the costume designer's vision so that I can constantly refer to it throughout the drawing process.



*Sophia Canning is a costume concept artist and illustrator based in L.A., and recently worked on the film Twister.*

<https://sophiacanning.com>



*Sophia recalls: "When I found out costume illustrator was a job, I knew instantly that I'd found my niche. I haven't looked back since!"*



*Darrell tells us that "being an art historian is a boon" if you want to work in the costume design industry.*

organic process, which I'll share at the appropriate junctures with my designer for feedback."

#### SUITING UP

Darrell's designs are informed by research materials, which are usually provided to him by design assistants or other researchers. "My job is to offer further visions based on that gathered reference," he explains. "I rarely offer more than three versions of a particular costume, as by dint of process and feedback I'm able to get to a pretty succinct design." He notes that digital artists often offer many more versions, which he finds "mind-numbing" as too many options can result in a "design-by-committee" element coming into play.

Success as a costume artist requires a particular set of interests and skills that combines the traits of a character artist with a practical knowledge of clothing. On top of this, Darrell tells us: "[You need to be] a very, very good communicator, both vocally and visually. Dialogue and being inside your designer's head is paramount." You should also understand anatomy, how clothing sits on the human form, and be able to keep an "open and inquisitive mind under pressure."

© Marvel Studios



Barbra's costume illustration for The Bride from Haunted Mansion, developed in tandem with costume designer Jeffrey Kurland. Find out more at [www.barbra-araujo.com](http://www.barbra-araujo.com).

“I was fortunate enough that some amazing artists have been gracious enough to give me advice and answer questions”



© Disney



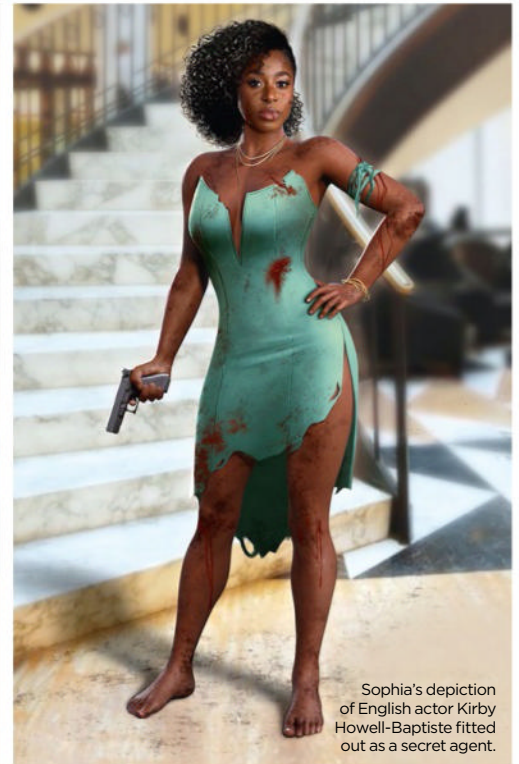
➡ Barbra explains that your technical understanding of clothing should include knowledge of garment construction, pattern-making and fabric science. As well as having good technical drawing and rendering skills in your locker, it's also valuable to have an interest in costume history, fashion and styling.

## PERSONAL STYLIST

For Warren, an interest in psychology is a key attribute for a costume artist too. "A costume designer should recognise a personality type from reading a script," he says. "People will be funny, quirky, intelligent, absurd, trustworthy, and so on. A costume's look should evoke a feeling from the audience that reinforces those traits."

He also values non-linear thinking: "There isn't a step-by-step process that always works for every situation. The designers that create the most inspired costumes are usually those who make inexplicable leaps of logic."

There are many different ways to develop the skills you need to work as a costume artist. Barbra worked as a designer in the fashion industry for 10 years, where she developed a deep knowledge of apparel manufacturing. Meanwhile, Warren has a background in industrial design that gave him the knowledge of fabrication techniques he needed when transitioning to costume design, which he augmented with further study. Sophia trained in



Sophia's depiction of English actor Kirby Howell-Baptiste fitted out as a secret agent.



© Sony | Marvel Studios

illustration and took an online class in costume at CG Master Academy when she decided she wanted to pursue it as her career.

Although formal education isn't strictly necessary, it can certainly be a helpful base to get burgeoning artists on the right track. "Technology is evolving incredibly fast and a formal education is invaluable in guiding a young artist's journey into design as

an actionable and understandable process," says Warren, who also teaches character design. He sees this as more efficient than having to hunt online for the right materials.

## TAILOR-MADE

Warren's advice for anyone that wants to break into the film industry is to watch as many films as possible, from every era, and analyse them critically to develop an understanding of the filmmaking techniques used. "Find the productions that suit your skills and interests, and build a portfolio based on their style of product," he says.

Barbra emphasises the importance of networking and developing your connections as a means of getting a break into the industry, which she did by volunteering at the Costume Designers Guild and attending events such as LightBox Expo. Although the costume design field is an extremely competitive one, Barbra's experience is of a supportive community. "I got many jobs by word of mouth when other illustrators were unavailable," she says. "I was fortunate enough that some amazing artists like Phillip Boutté Jr., Greg Hopwood, Oksana Nedavniaya, Imogene Chayes, Luca Nemolato and Daniel Lim have been gracious enough to give me advice and answer my questions when I've reached out to them."

Darrell's costume illustration for MJ from Spider-Man: Far From Home.



A watercolour costume illustration by Darrell for Lee Scoresby from His Dark Materials.

© HBO | BBC

"Characters say and do unpredictable things. In both story and design, character imperfections can be transformed into attributes," says Warren.



MANISER

THE GODDESS ISHTAR  
CONSTELLATION ORION  
THE AMORAL HUNTER





Early concept artwork for *Jupiter Ascending*, depicting the gigantic planet Orous.

© Warner Bros.

## Philippe Gaulier

### Shelves of inspiration

The artist is surrounded by books at his home studio space in LA



I've set up my studio in our Marina del Rey apartment in Los Angeles. We're lucky enough to live walking distance from the marina, the ocean, and the Venice Canals.

I have a pretty simple setup here: a PC with two screens, a Wacom tablet, a scanner, and space for a printer that's soon to arrive, plus a drawing space on my desk for every time that I need to sketch with pens, markers, or any other medium that may tickle my fancy. ➡



A beautiful lithography piece that was created by my old friend and talented artist André Palais.

My favourite A3 sketchbook pad brand for the marker and brush pen work that I do.

Among the book collection I use for reference and inspiration are some antique art history books from Japan.





This panel includes images and research for Wrath of the Titans, Jupiter Ascending, and Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince, as well as some personal and pitch work.

One of the few concepts I did for Man of Steel back at Double Negative in London. Superman is fighting a World Engine!

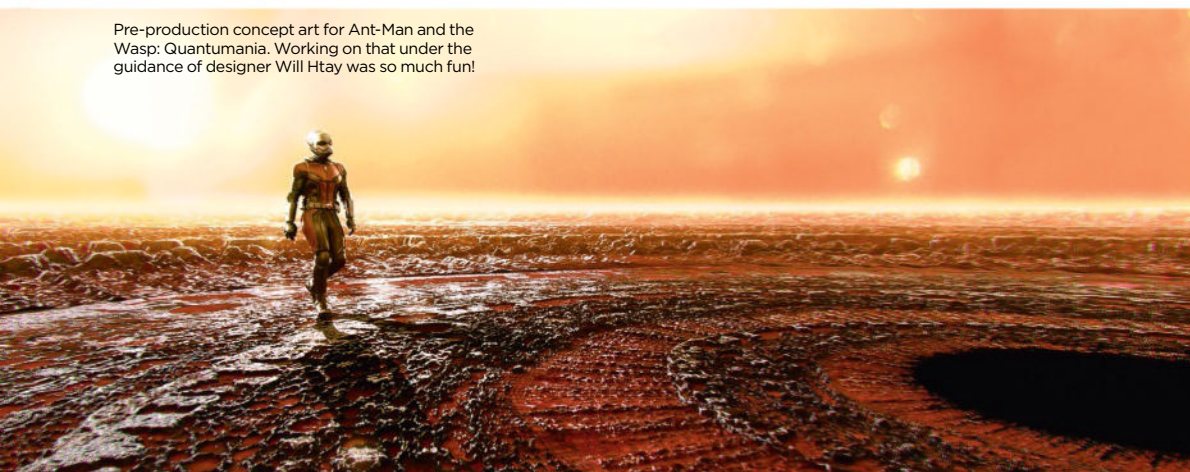
I bought this years ago and it's always on my desk: a constant and useful reminder of the beauty and complexity of human anatomy.

Some of my favourite pens, markers and brush pens. I always carry a selection of these when I'm out, just in case a sketching opportunity presents itself!



# ImagineNation Artist in Residence

Pre-production concept art for Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania. Working on that under the guidance of designer Will Htay was so much fun!



© Marvel Studios



This book holds a special place in my heart as it was a gift from Jamie Courtier, then project supervisor at Jim Henson's Creature Shop in London. He offered me the book as I left after an interview with the creative supervisor. That marked the end of a difficult period, where I was seriously considering changing career.

I'll never run out of ink or graphite, just as long as my drawers are here!

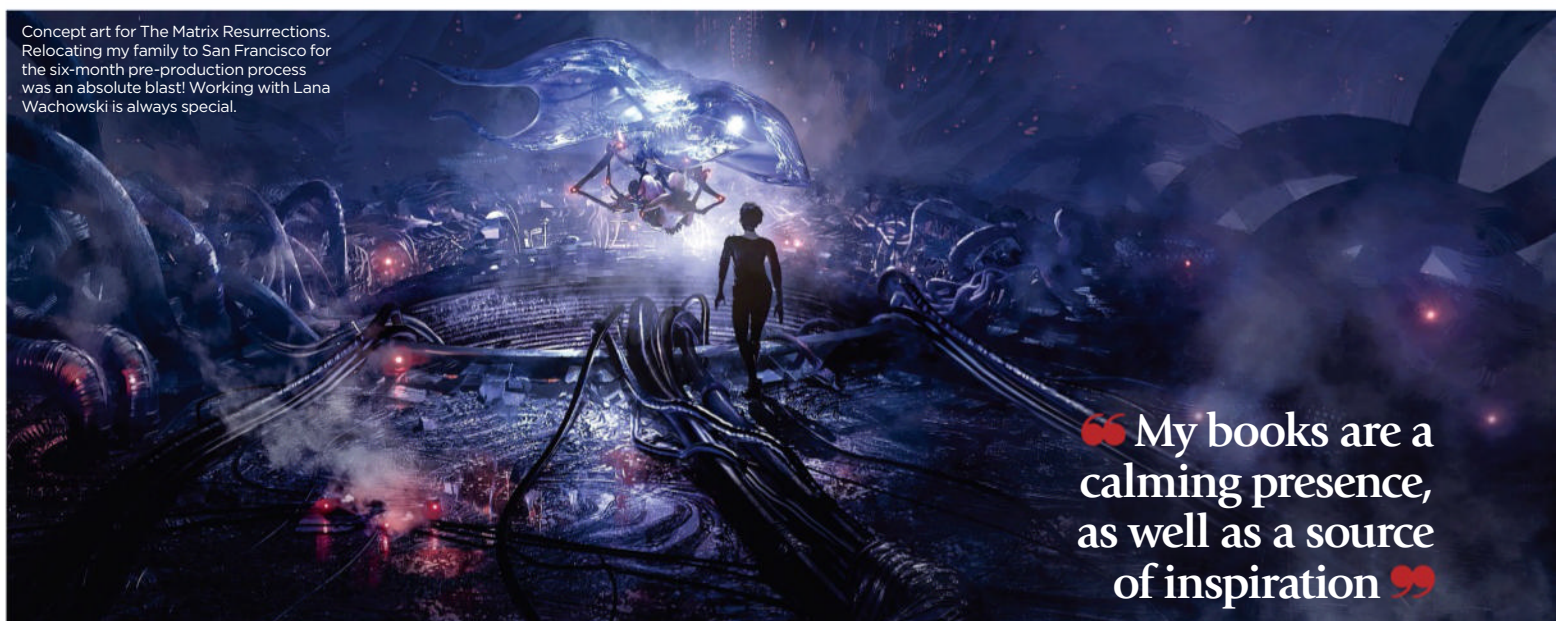


You find tons of these kaiju toys in Japan. I find all their designs absolutely fantastic!



A blu-ray of a short film made by one of my oldest friends: the super talented writer and director Yann Danh. I hope the stars will align in the future and we'll get to work together on a feature film of his, with the same energy and passion that we had when we were teenagers making short films and watching all the cinema classics on the old LaserDisc!

Concept art for The Matrix Resurrections. Relocating my family to San Francisco for the six-month pre-production process was an absolute blast! Working with Lana Wachowski is always special.



© Warner Bros.

“My books are a calming presence, as well as a source of inspiration”



ImagineFX



# Artist news, software & events



The sunshine comes through the window for a few hours early each morning; perfect for a cup of coffee to kick-start my day!

© Marvel Studios (left screen), Philippe Gaulier (right screen and sketchbook)

Kaneda and his bike, with a few Syd Mead books in the background. It doesn't get more iconic than that.



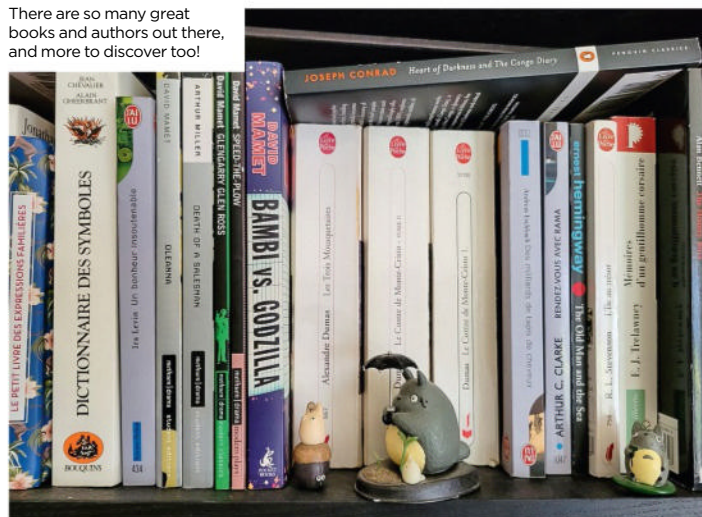
Someone needs to come up with a system that allows easy access to the second row of books. Rotating shelves?





Anyone who grew up in France back in the 70s or 80s is a fan of Goldorak, known as Grendizer in Japanese. This animated series, as well as Albator (Captain Harlock) and Cobra, was a massive influence for me.

There are so many great books and authors out there, and more to discover too!



© Marvel Studios

➡ Typically I tend to work very late, though I often have early meetings. I'm in the process of changing all that and trying to start very early instead, as I've realised, which took me a while, it feels much better this way!

When I moved my studio from the office to our home at the beginning of Covid, I didn't imagine that I'd still be working from home so many years later. I sometimes miss the daily social interactions as I'm a social animal at heart, but I've gained a better life balance. I don't have to commute to

work, and I get to spend more time with the family, my dog included! That said, I do end up working way longer hours at times, as I get carried away.

## OLD TRADITIONS

I grew up surrounded by books, so the presence of books and artbooks is something I've always enjoyed. They are a calming presence for me, as well as a source of inspiration. Also, as much as I spend time researching on the internet, flicking through the pages of a book somehow feels less

“When I really need to get into the zone, nothing can beat original soundtracks”

A bit of pre-production concept art for Jupiter Ascending. Great memories, despite the fact I had to wake up at 5.30am to be at the London studio for 8am.

passive and more gratifying. For that same reason, many years after I set out in this business and despite all the software I've learned along the way, I still sketch traditionally on a regular basis and, every time it's possible, for my client work too.

I love listening to all sorts of music while working, but when I really need to get into the zone, nothing can beat original soundtracks. Some of my favourites are Adaptation, Kundun, Akira, The Ghost Writer, Passion: The Last Temptation Of Christ, Braveheart, Interstellar, The Social Network, Conan the Barbarian, Macbeth and, of course, the original Blade Runner.

**Philippe is an art director with 25 years of entertainment industry experience and currently heads Framestore's LA art team. His recent projects include The Matrix Resurrections, Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania, and the upcoming Alien TV series. [www.philippegaulierart.com](http://www.philippegaulierart.com)**



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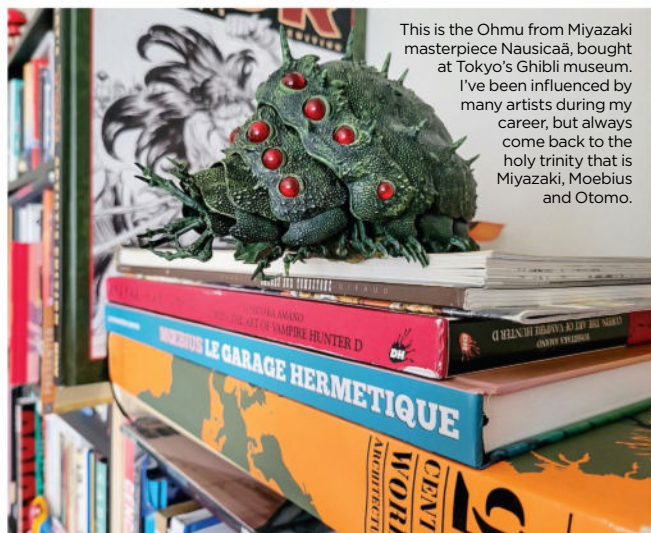
# Artist news, software & events



Personal artwork that I created for my tutorial for The Gnomon Workshop.



I have sketchbooks of all sizes and purposes – for markers, pencil, watercolour and so on – but these passport-sized sketchbooks from Muji are always with me. I never go out without at least one in my pocket, as well as a bunch of marker pens, brush pens and pencils. They're fantastic for sketching on the fly, and the size forces you to be more efficient.



This is the Ohmu from Miyazaki masterpiece Nausicaä, bought at Tokyo's Ghibli museum. I've been influenced by many artists during my career, but always come back to the holy trinity that is Miyazaki, Moebius and Otomo.



One of two chairs I bought at Pinewood Studios in the UK years ago. There was a prop sale from Oliver Stone's Alexander, and they caught my attention! I believe the chairs were handmade by local artisans while filming in Thailand.

Over the years, I've kept all the access cards I've been given for the various on-set projects that I've worked on. Here are a few chosen ones from Avengers: Age of Ultron, Jupiter Ascending, and from the latest LightBox Expo. I hold fond memories of all my time spent working on sets.



My imaginary friends. The one on the left isn't usually very popular but I just love it!





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# Letters

## YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS



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



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We had a bunch of Destiny 2 art in our last issue, giving you a glimpse into the making of its latest expansion.

how you might make changes to your own space. I'm so glad you like this section, and make sure you check out page 32 to peer inside Philippe Gaulier's workspace.

### This is my Destiny

I'm a long-time reader and an even longer-time player of the Destiny games. I'm not sure how it's been a decade since Destiny released already, but the game still feels fresh and I love it, that's why it was so good to see my two passions meet in your last issue. I absolutely loved getting a touch of backstage insight on one of my favourite games.

**David, via email**

**Rob replies** Nice to hear from a like-minded Destiny fan! It was a real privilege to get some Destiny content into the mag and I really enjoyed getting behind the scenes at Bungie myself. I'm so glad you liked it. Do let us know if there are any other games or movies that you'd be interested in seeing featured.

### Beautifully bizarre

Thank you for the tutorial from Nik Henderson in the latest ImagineFX. I'm a huge fan of his strange and quirky art, so really appreciated seeing how he works and the tools he uses.

**Sara, via email**

**Rob replies** Hi there, Sara! Nik's artwork really is wonderful, isn't it. It's so full of character and having him make a contribution to the magazine was great, so I'm thrilled to hear that you liked it. To this day it still strikes me how there are just so many different styles and techniques of art out there, and how they can affect us all in such varied ways. We'll be looking for more interesting workshops for you to explore in the coming issues for sure, so make sure you don't miss out.

Last issue we took a tour of illustrator and concept artist Ulko Smith's studio.



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### Through the keyhole

I love the magazine and have learned so much over the years, but I think my favourite parts are where I get a little look at more of the behind-the-scenes stuff. Looking through the sketchbooks is always exciting, and taking a sneaky peek through the door of an artist's studio is awesome! I'm a little messy myself and always wonder how other people go about arranging their spaces, so I always find these features both interesting and motivational.

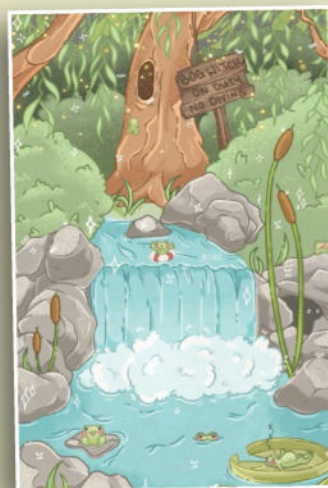
**Kirianna, via email**

**Rob replies** Thanks for writing in Kirianna! It's always good to hear from our readers. I'm in complete agreement here. While it's great to learn new skills, tools and techniques, it's also great to discover more about the other influences on our art and your creative environment is right at the top of the list.

Being able to see other artists' setups can be a real insight into how their minds work. That, and all the toy collections and reference books can shed a lot of light on



New works that have grabbed our attention



**ArtfullyFaith**  
[@artfullyfaith](https://artfullyfaith)



**Moondance Studio**  
[@mooondance\\_studio](https://mooondance_studio)



**Teigan**  
[@cupsoftei](https://cupsoftei)

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



# THE ART OF GAËLLE SEGUILLON

**James Clarke** has a conversation with the dinosaur-loving concept artist to explore her creative impulses and processes

**A**nyone who's watched some of the biggest fantasy, adventure and sci-fi movies of the past 10 years has likely, and unknowingly, witnessed the creative fingerprints of concept artist Gaëlle Seguillon. A graduate of the ARTFX School of Digital Arts in France, she was soon employed as a junior matte painter at MPC in London, working on

the first *Guardians of the Galaxy* film. That project launched Gaëlle into a career working on a number of hugely popular movies.

Her track record is an enviable one; undertaking work for feature films, episodic TV and video games. Among her credits, Gaëlle has helped to shape the visual identity of TV documentary *Prehistoric Planet* and feature films *Ready Player One*, *Aladdin*, *Jungle* ➤

## TOKYO STREETS

The inspiration for Gaëlle's artwork comes in part from the colours and shapes found within the natural world.





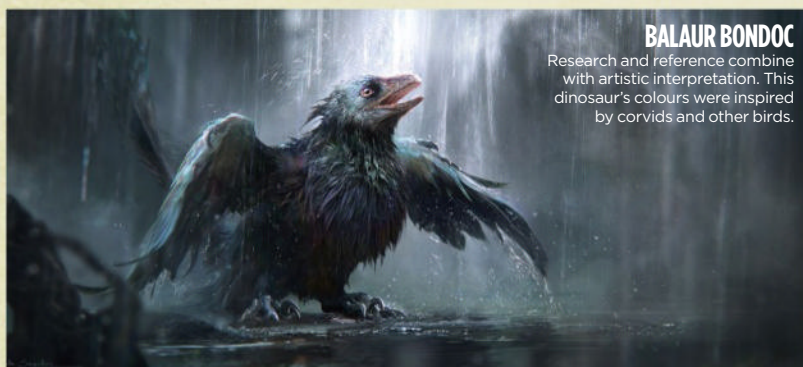
It's all about creating a powerful composition, having fun, and finding the vibe from the original sketch





## EUROPA TERRAFORMING

Neutral colours are a key part of Gaëlle's visual palette, as seen in this personal piece.



## BALAUR BONDOC

Research and reference combine with artistic interpretation. This dinosaur's colours were inspired by corvids and other birds.

➔ Cruise, Jumanji 2: The Next Level, Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom and Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny, while she has also contributed concept artwork for video game Star Wars Jedi: Survivor. These are all projects that have reached vast audiences, and Gaëlle's visual interpretation of ideas is foundational to the visual style and sense of a world audiences eventually encounter on-screen.

Her artwork draws from natural history and the visual traditions of science fiction and fantasy. In creating a diverse range of images across genres and formats, Gaëlle combines research and references with imaginative interpretations of her creative briefs to develop breathtaking images of new worlds and stories.

## Artist PROFILE

### Gaëlle Seguillon



**LOCATION:** France

**FAVOURITE ARTISTS:** Caspar David Friedrich, Ivan Aivazovsky

**MEDIA:** Photoshop, Blender, 3D Coat, Unreal Engine

**WEB:** <https://gaelleseguillon.artstation.com>

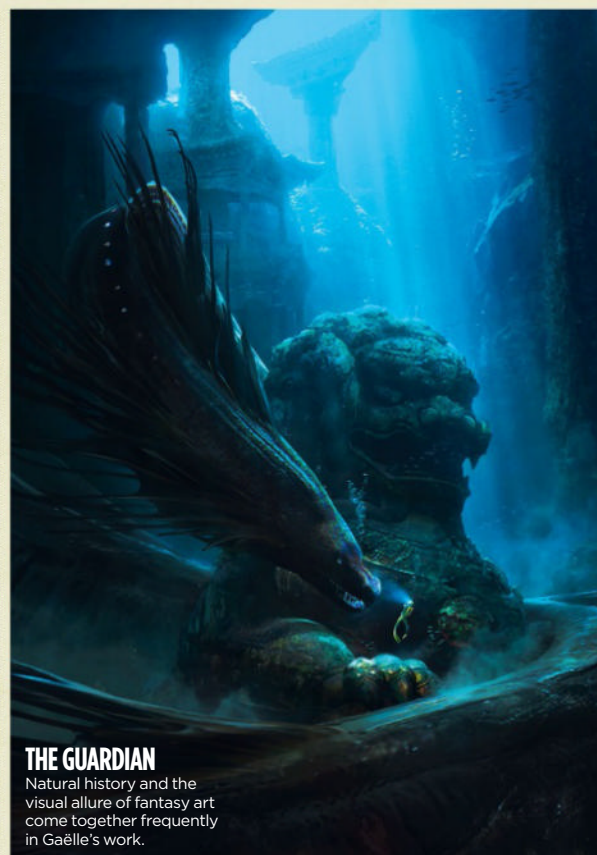
## When did you start to recognise that illustration and art could be a career path for you?

I've been drawing since I was a kid, but I never considered it as a career. I first started to become aware of that when I watched the making of The Lord of the Rings, and they showed the process behind all the movies. I found it so captivating that I began to do research about schools available in France that could teach you those skills.

I knew I wanted to work within VFX, and that's when I started to study 3D and the VFX workflow, and later concept art because it's more creative. I really like the creative side of concept art and telling stories.

## Where does the inspiration behind your artwork come from?

I've always been in awe of the Hudson River School painters; I love how they capture the sublime and sheer beauty



## THE GUARDIAN

Natural history and the visual allure of fantasy art come together frequently in Gaëlle's work.

“ Nature is what inspires me the most; that's why my art is so natural-looking ”

of nature. In that vein, I'd also mention other Romanticism artists such as Ivan Aivazovsky and Caspar David Friedrich.

But nature is really what inspires me the most; the colour and the shapes. That's why my images are so natural-looking. I tend to work a lot with really neutral colours, and strong, vibrant colours that contrast.

I think images are more believable when they're created with a natural history documentary sort of style, ➔



## NANUQSATORUS COURTSHIP DISPLAY

For textural work, Gaëlle applies detail from photos of animals and enhances with Photoshop, just like these feathery theropods from the Cretaceous period.



## CRETACEAN SWAMP

Details in the environment, such as this gigantic dinosaur skull, enhance the sense of scale.

## START DRAWING FEARSOME DINOS

Gaëlle explains her process for creating concepts of majestic prehistoric beasts

When drawing dinosaurs, most of the time I start from an existing 3D model that I'll modify to fit the species I have to draw. I'll do some resculpting and texture it using photos of animals – scales, feathers, fur and such – that I project onto the geometry. Next I'll pose and light it, with maybe some CG environment elements like the ground, close-up branches and vegetation. Then it's over to Photoshop to finish up my painting, using more photos and occasional brushstrokes to detail the dinosaur and environment. The same process applies when I'm working on imaginary creatures.



## WORLD FROZEN IN TIME

For Gaëlle, all of her art is anchored in storytelling. She found inspiration for this piece from a documentary.



## WE FOUND THE U.N.S. THARSIS

Combinations of depth of field and the effect of natural light are key to Gaëlle's visual composition.

➡ which is something I like to use in my work. For example, in my painting Storm Peaks, I wanted to display the beauty of nature by playing with the depth of field and what it could look like with different camera lenses, similar to how I'd take photographs.

### How would you describe your style?

I'd say that my style and aesthetic is highly realistic and photographic. Specifically, I like to play with depth of field and natural light to depict natural

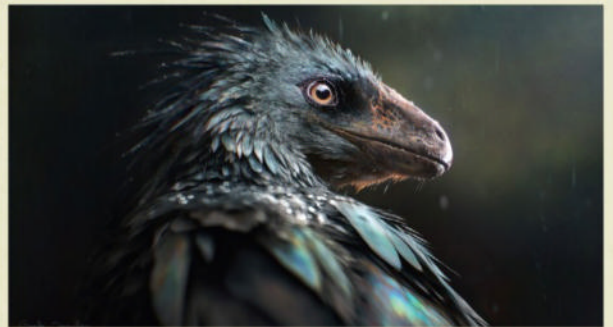
“ I simplify my images and focus on the composition and overall feel ”

environments. I'm always trying to bring storytelling to my images and that's what makes an image stand out.

I always do a mood board of the most relevant images that are going to be my inspiration. When I work with a client, this is the first step I'll show them to see if I'm going in the right direction. If that sketch is approved, then I start to think about how I go about making the final image.

### How complex and detailed do your images need to be?

As I've come from a matte painting background, I used to polish my images right down to the tiniest detail. But now I tend to simplify my images and focus more on the composition and overall feel of them, and only add in details where they're really needed. I



### PALEO PORTRAIT

Gaëlle emphasises composition over detail in her artwork.

think concentrating on that results in more powerful images.

For me, the challenge is more technical than being about finding inspiration. Usually I only have about three days to create a concept image. My favourite phase is the sketching because it's the most creative. At that point, I don't think about all of the technical stuff.

[For the final image] it's all about creating a powerful composition, having fun, and finding the vibe that I had in the original sketch. It's not easy to make it work. I often look at my image, as a work-in-progress, at a very small size so that I lose the detail and only see the shapes and the contrasts. This helps me see if the image works from far away.

Could you break down the schedule that you set for a working day when you have to quickly turn around a concept art commission?

I'll typically spend the first half of the day doing research and gather as ➡



### ON A SPRING NIGHT 66 MILLION YEARS AGO

A sense of motion and contrast in combination help tell the story in a series following the balaur bondoc.



# Gaëlle Seguillon

## DRAGONBLIGHT

Creating a powerful composition is fundamental to the visual style Gaëlle likes to imbue within her images.







## APEX PREDATOR

Blender and Unreal Engine are two of the key tools that Gaëlle uses in her creative process.

## DRAGONSHRINE

Sci-fi influences and an otherworldly setting combine to eerie effect for this demo session art.

**“I’d love to go back to sci-fi, exploring distant planets and strange worlds, while keeping the same approach”**

➤ much reference as possible to feed my visual library and better immerse myself in the project. It’s time that’s very well spent and helps me greatly later on in the process.

I’ll then spend the rest of the day creating a few sketches from those references, and show it to the client to make sure I’m moving in the right direction. The remaining time will be spent refining the approved sketch.

### Do you use 3D tools in your work?

Yes! When I discovered Blender, I thought it was so much easier to use than Maya, and it’s getting almost as fast and advanced as OctaneRender. I always try to find tools that are the fastest and simplest to use. Going back and forth between different software can be time consuming.

When I choose a tool, I don’t want to get lost in the technical side and drawn away from the creativity. More and more, for practical reasons, I’m also learning about Unreal Engine because it can handle bigger scenes, and the real-time side is absolutely fascinating for me.

### What’s your advice for emerging artists and young people who want to pursue a creative career?

Think about what your goal is. For example, do you want to work within video games or movies? And which speciality of the workflow are you the most interested in? It’s going to help you target the right school. When you know where you’re going, I think you make better choices. Also, the most important thing is your portfolio.

## FIRE!

Shape and mood are key, with a painterly look the goal for this epic personal piece.



### What is the project – for film, TV or gaming – you’re most proud of?

I’d say [TV series] Prehistoric Planet without hesitation because of the strong involvement I had in the visual development of the project and how well it was received. I’m so proud that it inspires other artists and non-artists alike, and is already becoming a reference for paleo documentaries.

### In your personal projects, do you have ambitions to tackle any particular subjects and scenarios in the future?

I’d love to go back to sci-fi, exploring distant planets and strange worlds, keeping the same photographic and cinematic approach I’m using on my dinosaur images. I adore fantasy and science fiction, and it’s interesting to mix the two. ●



## MOVIE MOOD

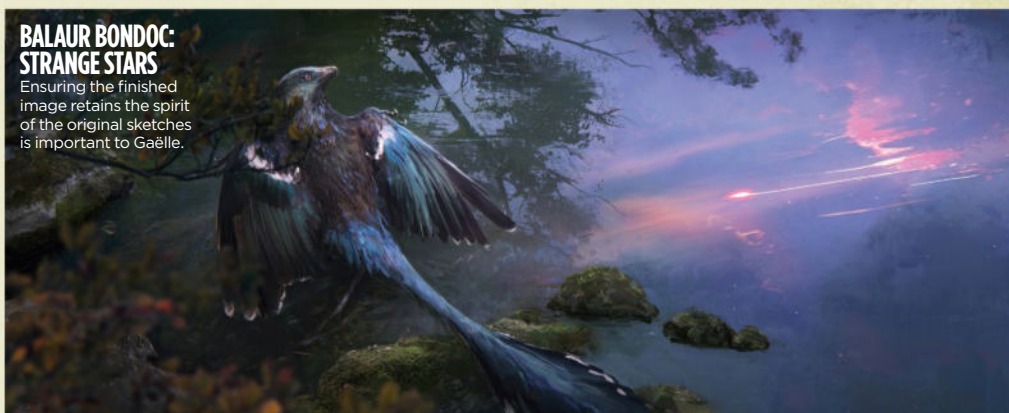
Cinematic aesthetics inform many of Gaëlle’s images, whether for her own projects or professional concept work.





### BALAIR BONDIC: STRANGE STARS

Ensuring the finished image retains the spirit of the original sketches is important to Gaëlle.



### STORM PEAKS

A Lord of the Rings-inspired artwork couples cinematic composition and vivid use of light and shadow.

## DEVELOPING YOUR SKILLS

### Why Gaëlle left her Storm Peaks project to simmer

The main challenge for my piece Storm Peaks was technical. When I first had the idea for this concept, I quickly realised that I'd have to use CG to get the result I had in mind for the ruins, especially considering the camera angle and perspective. But I had no idea how to tackle it as I wasn't particularly comfortable with those skills at the time. I left it on the back burner for a couple of years until I felt I had the necessary skills to create those ruins. I sometimes do the same thing when I have an artistic blockage; I'll just let the idea mature for a while and come back to it with fresh new ideas.



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# Sketchbook

## Ludo Lullabi

Take a break inside the playground for scribbling and doodling where the Battle Chasers artist crafts awesome new ideas

### Artist PROFILE

**Ludo Lullabi**

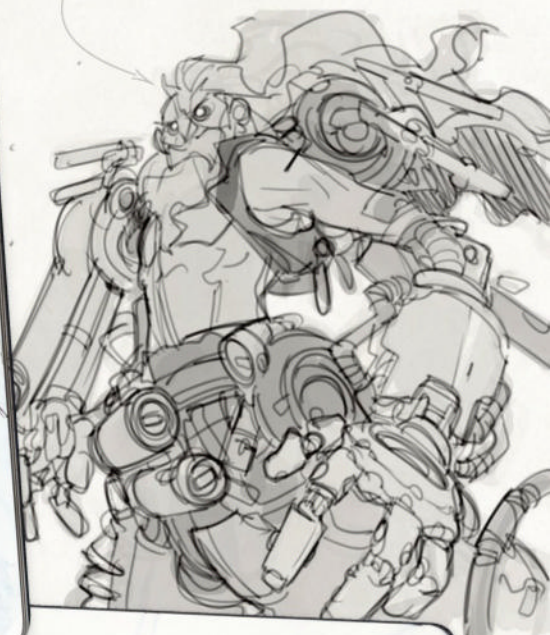
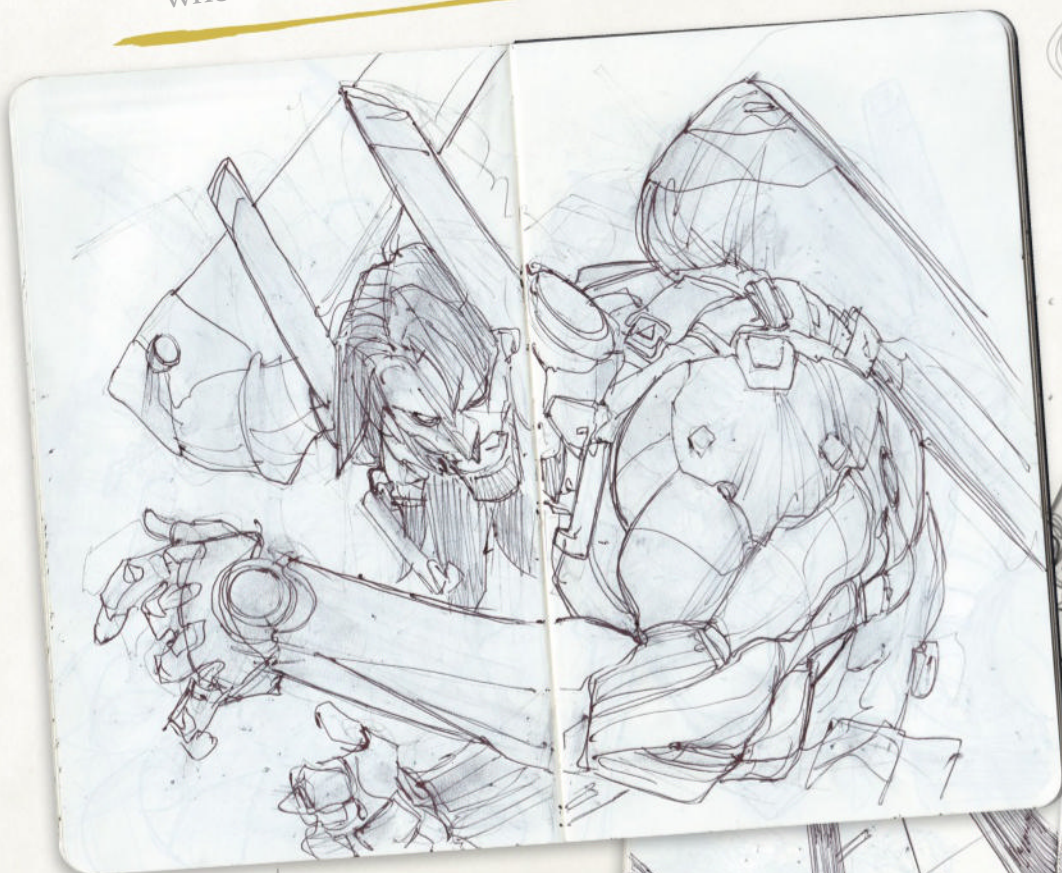
LOCATION: France



Ludo Lullabi is an accomplished artist in comics and video games and renowned for his work on World of Warcraft and Hearthstone. Recently, he has created cutscenes for games including Ruined King: A League of Legends Story and Darksiders Genesis, and illustrated the iconic comic series Battle Chasers.  
[www.instagram.com/ludo\\_lullabi](http://www.instagram.com/ludo_lullabi)

### DIGITAL DOODLES

"I enjoy doodling on my graphic tablet. I call this type of drawing a 'doodle' because my goal is just to relax and have fun."



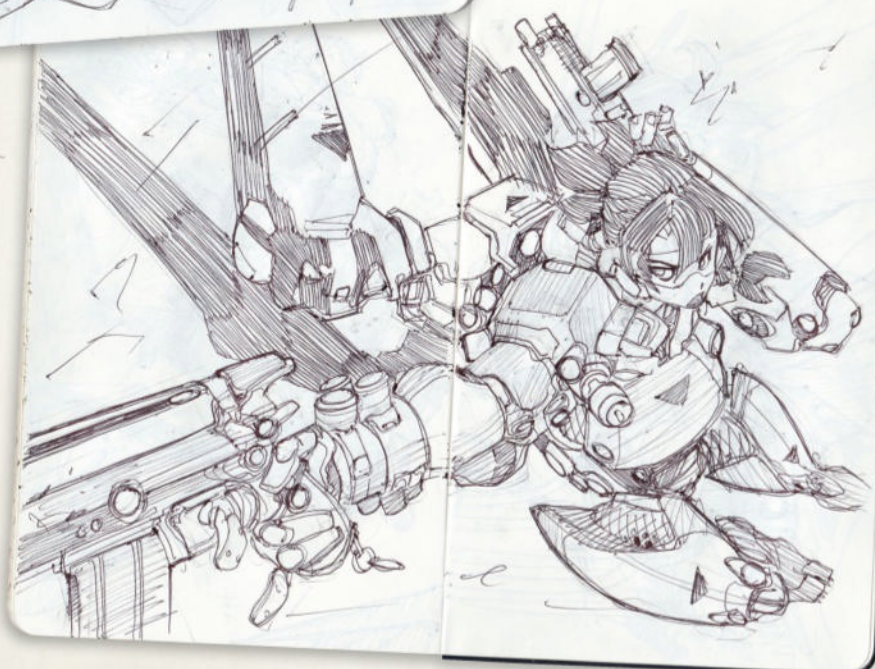
### SKETCHBOOK

"My playground and relaxation time. Scribbling in my sketchbook after a day's work just for myself helps clear my mind."

### NO IDEA

"When I start this kind of sketch, I usually have no idea what I'll do. I like letting the drawing come to life on its own."

“My work is mostly digital now, but it's nice to create away from a screen occasionally”





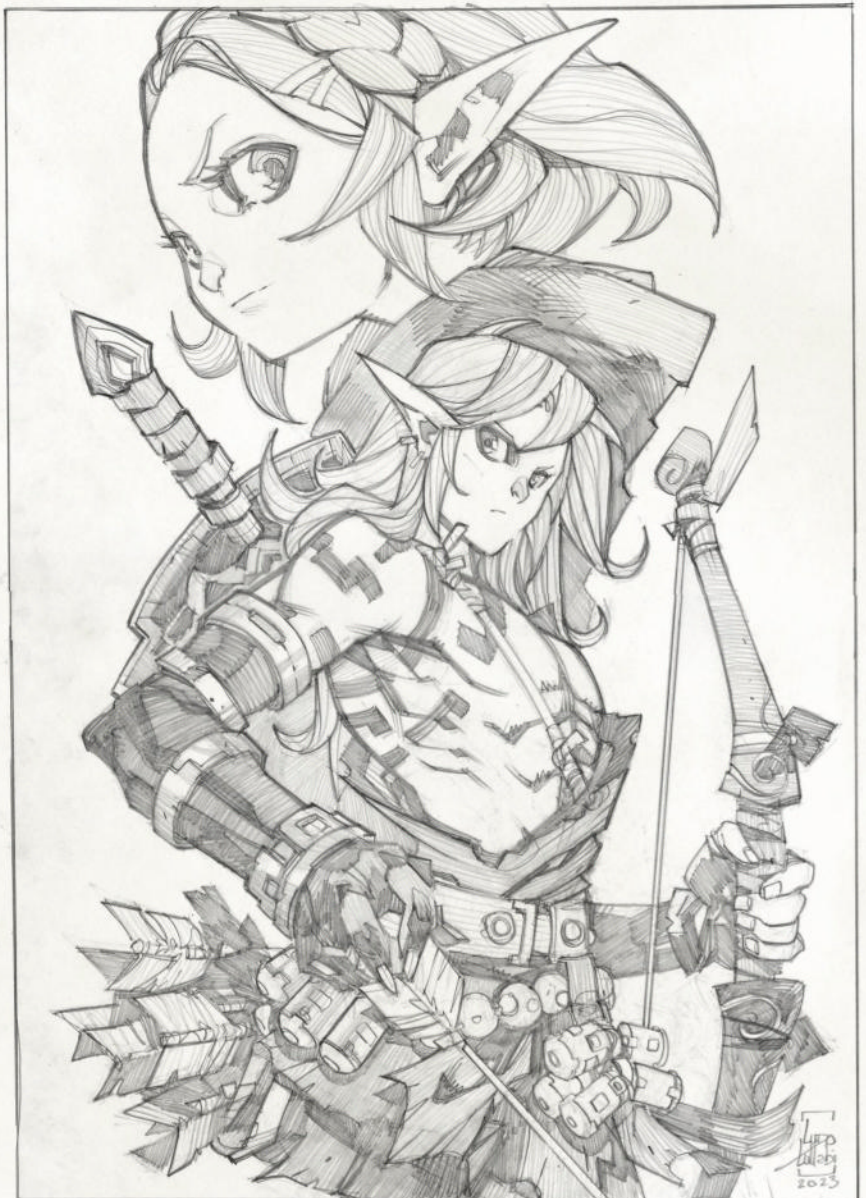


## BACKPACK

"By doodling, I accumulate many ideas that could be developed into finished illustrations. This is one of those ideas."

## STRONG ARM

"This robotic arm doesn't really serve a purpose, but I'm more attached to the composition's quality than the design's utility. This is a clean version of one of my roughs."



## ZELDA TRIBUTE

"Many know me from my pencil work on World of Warcraft comics. My work is mostly digital now, but it's nice to create something away from a screen occasionally."

## PROCESS

"This is one of my many fun roughs that got a finished version. Above it is the clean version before inking and colouring."





# Sketchbook

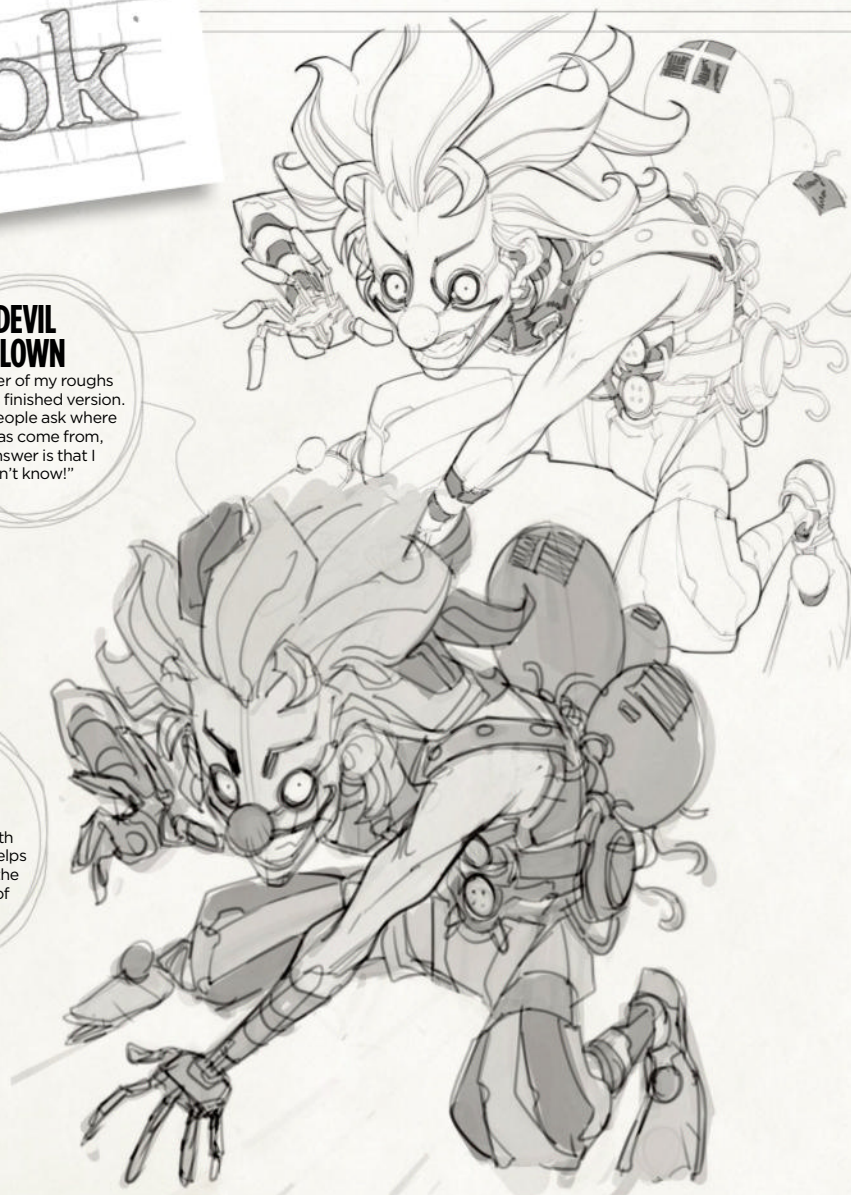


## DEVIL CLOWN

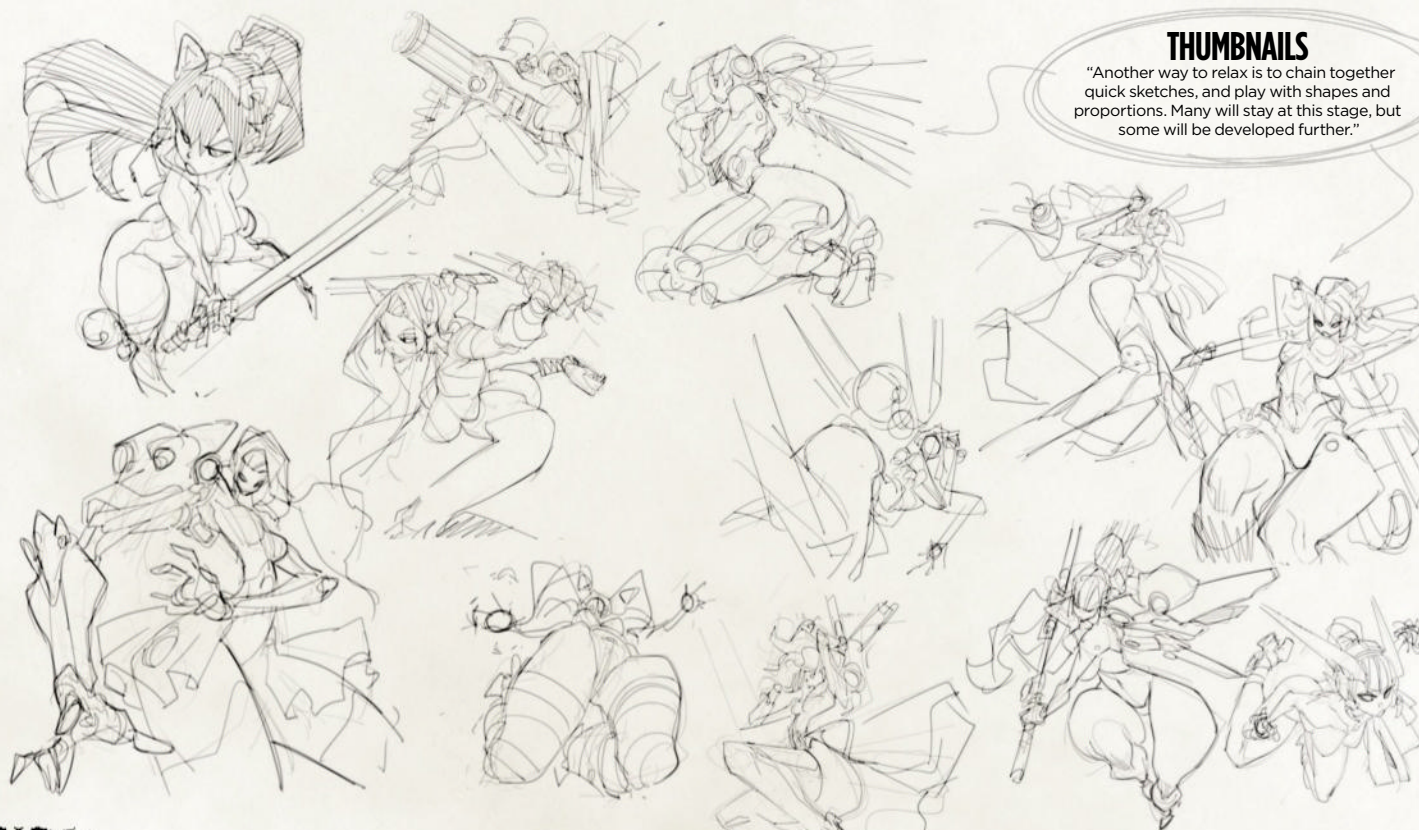
"Another of my roughs that got a finished version. When people ask where my ideas come from, my answer is that I don't know!"

## DYNAMIC POSE

"I love playing with camera angles. It helps me to emphasise the dynamic nature of my poses."



“Another way to relax is to chain together quick sketches and play with proportions”



## THUMBNAILS

"Another way to relax is to chain together quick sketches, and play with shapes and proportions. Many will stay at this stage, but some will be developed further."



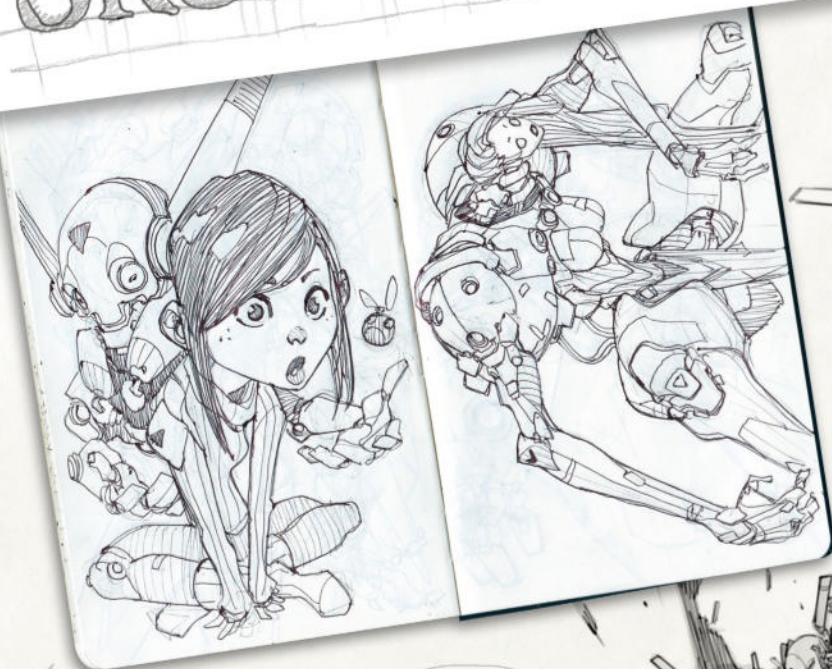


**WEREWOLF**

"Another traditional pencil artwork. Here, I wanted to pay homage to Universal's classic creature in my own style."



# Sketchbook



## FUNTIME

"More good times in my sketchbook. My favourite tool is the BIC pen. I like knowing that I can work with such a simple and accessible tool."

## GALACTUS VS GODZILLA

"A superhero-versus-kaiju-themed illustration for a friend who owns a bookstore. If you look really closely, you can also see the Silver Surfer!"

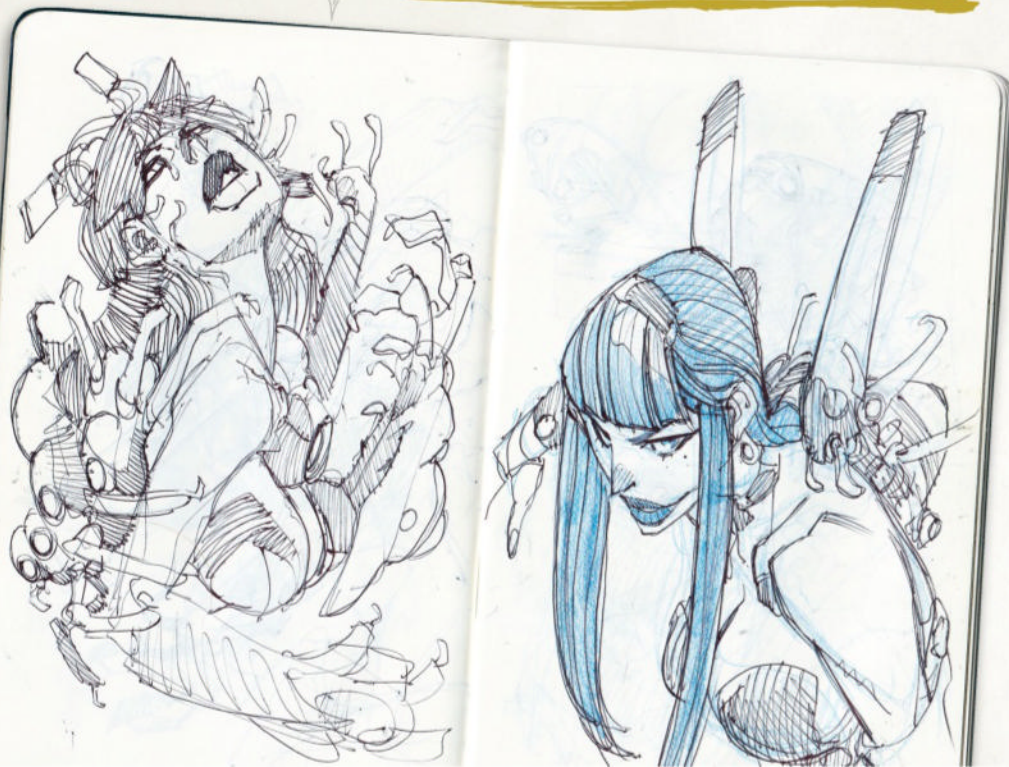
## TIRED

"Sometimes I want to draw in my sketchbook even when I'm tired. The result isn't satisfying, but often ideas emerge for something better later."

## SAD CYBORG

"I often use mechanical designs and shapes in my personal work. It allows me to go beyond the realistic human anatomy, which I find somewhat limiting."

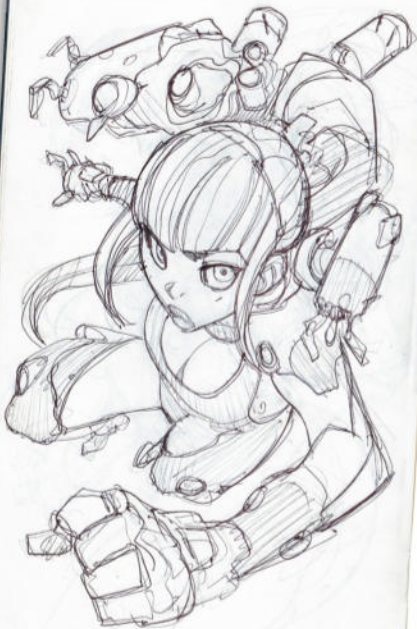
“ I find it pleasant to just draw without thinking, and I often get surprising results ”





## NO FREE SPACE

"When I'm not inspired, I tend to fill pages with anything. It's pleasant to draw without thinking. I often get surprising results."



## MICRON Pigma

"Testing and duelling between the BIC pen and the Pigma Micron ink pen. For working in a sketchbook, the BIC pen wins in my opinion."

## BAD ANATOMY

"Often in my sketches, I don't care about having exact anatomy. I prefer that it be artistically correct rather than anatomically correct. Being too realistic can stifle creativity."

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



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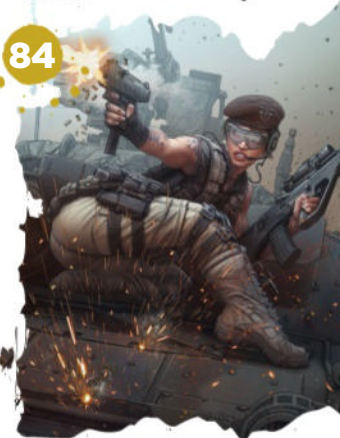
# Workshops



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Advice from the world's best artists



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Alex Alexandrov visits an alien world to concoct a deadly rider and his beastly creature.

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Jonas Nathanael goes into detail on the development of a fantasy city for a new board game.

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Kerem Beyit makes realistic military hardware for a scene that's packed with action.



## Photoshop

# CREATE A STRIKING FANTASY CONCEPT

Follow along with **Alex Alexandrov** as he explains his process for developing an intimidating beast and rider combination

### Artist PROFILE

**Alex Alexandrov**  
LOCATION: Bulgaria

Alex is a professional illustrator and concept artist. He has worked in digital art for more than 15 years for clients such as Blizzard, Sony and Capcom, among others. <https://bit.ly/3LIP3WP>



When I'm illustrating concept art, I usually work very messily. I merge layers, draw on top of things, and change software mid-drawing, but will try to control myself for the sake of clarity in the subsequent steps.

What I'm trying to say here is that the approach and exact steps are optional, and personal to an artist. If

you're feeling uncomfortable with some of the steps ahead, you can rest assured that this is just one way to reach the same end result.

Together we'll be making a cover illustration here. There are key points to keep in mind: the artwork should be clear with high contrast and vibrant colours, it needs to grab the attention of the potential reader, and must make sense instantly.

I'll use all the tricks I can to achieve these effects, such as playing with contrast in values and colour, guiding lines, and details. Think of those tools like a film director; make your set appropriate to the mood, dress your main actor in impressive clothes, and shine the spotlight on them to guide the viewer's eye. Keep this in the back of your mind at all times when you're painting.

### WORKSHOP BRUSHES

#### PHOTOSHOP

##### CUSTOM BRUSHES: SIMPLE RECTANGULAR

Used for general purpose drawing with texture. A jack of all trades and not for anything particular.

##### SCRATCHY DETAIL

I used this a lot for the background, as well as to soften some of the edges and add texture.

##### HARD BLOCK OUT

This one is cool for rocks and hard surfaces. A little difficult to control but has a sharp edge.

##### GENERAL SOFT BRUSH

I find this a great brush for fog, atmosphere and creating soft transitions where they're needed.



### 1 Starting sketch

This is the sketch my illustration begins with – a rider and his powerful mount! I know it might not be the deepest plot, but I'm a simple man and this still strikes a chord with me. It's also an excuse to paint a powerful beast, which I rarely get to do in my work. Early on, try to keep the shadow and light planes clearly separated to emphasise the forms better. While it could have been better for my piece to put some deeper thought into the design first, I was eager to draw the beast and his rider.



### 2 Begin blocking out the character

Blockout the character and background elements in different layers so you can access different planes easily, and play with the values and colours to your heart's content. This will save a ton of time, so it's worth doing to dial in the clarity of the image and focus on important elements. Keep the layers separated for as long as you can, as it will make your life much easier. Some people break up every bit of their image like skin, gear, and so on. I don't have that patience, though I do keep my planes separated every time as a rule. ➡





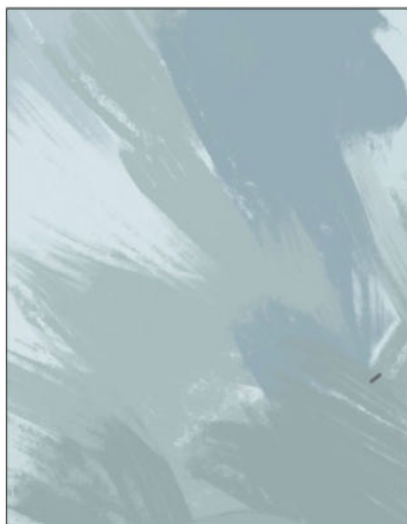
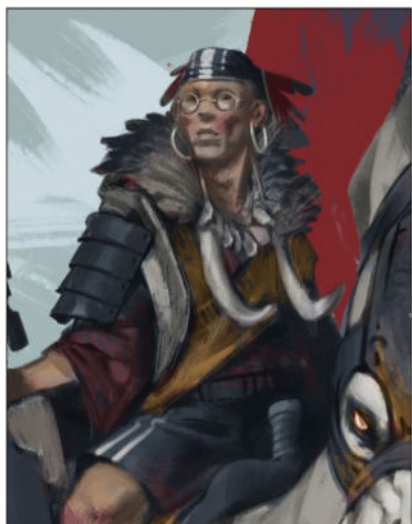




### 3 Make adjustments

Adding some colour now becomes easy. I knew that I wanted the composition a bit more alien to fit the character, but didn't know the exact direction beyond wanting crimson to be a big part of the image. Unhappy with the clarity of the beast, I decided to go for much more contrast, and also changed the rider's design a bit. I still wasn't

satisfied with most of the elements at this point, but didn't let that bother me since this is a personal illustration and I could play around and push any changes as I want. It's great to take time away from the art directors and shareholders! As one example, there was a little too much real estate on the forehead, so I placed a Roman numeral there, though removed it later as it gave me police unit vibes.



### 4 Direct the audience's attention

Be your own art director and experiment at this stage; you can lead the viewer to any elements you want them to see, for example with a specific light placement. In my piece, notice how the direction of the clouds and rocks are leading to the rider. Complementary colours are another great tool that can create contrast within your image. As they sit opposite one another in the colour wheel and create the biggest colour contrast possible, complementary colours are great for pointing out any elements in your work. However, you need to be careful how you approach the implementation of such a strong palette. I'd recommend doing it with moderation and in precise areas. I decided to add a complementary colour to the blue tones on the key points that I want the viewer to look at.







## 5 Always take your brief into account

If you're working for a specific brief, always keep it in mind. As this for a magazine cover, I'm going for striking contrast and clarity. I'm keeping it all fairly calm and muted at this point, but this being a digital piece enables me to work with moderation and pace myself. By leaving colour intensity until later down the line, I get to work on a calmer image while I draw. I also adjusted the height of the hill in the background to leave space for any text elements, and subtly teased a planet in the sky to push that alien feel a bit more. ➡





## **6 Maintain a consistent composition and develop the characters**

Bring your image to life by creating atmosphere behind your characters, which should be all too easy because we've split them into a separate layer early on in the process. Don't forget to make sure your characters fit together too! I changed the rider's design again at this point, probably going through four versions before I finally got the look that I wanted. I'm trying to at least repeat some of the design elements and colours across the beast and rider to indicate that they're a team, which is a key consideration when you're creating a consistent image.





## 7 Be clever when filling out the environment

Everything should be clear at this point. There are no major design or visual changes, it's just about pushing the detail further. For my piece, I scattered some rocks along the pathway to bring a bit of that white from the beast into the world, which shows that he fits into the environment, even if only by the colours around him. Keep your work loose and textured, and try to spread any elements evenly around the composition. You want there to be detail, but not hold the viewer's attention; they just want to take glance at them and move on.



## 8 Add depth

Remember that contrast brings attention to sharp edges, so use it wisely and strategically. Here, I changed the deeper background elements, pushing them further into the distance by adding more atmosphere and trying to introduce smaller elements. Keeping edges soft or fuzzy for these areas can help convey that they're deeper within the scene and out of focus.



## 9 Complete the image

For the final touches and polishing, I adjusted the contrast and brightness to try and make it pop, but not be overawing. This can be a long process; sometimes it clicks and others you tweak sliders without knowing if you're improving the image or not. It's good to take a break from the image, have a snack, take a walk, or just get a good night's sleep, as often that's when things will become more obvious. ●





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ImagineFX



## Technique focus

# STORYTELLING IN FILM SCENES

How **Karl Sisson** created a compelling narrative for a shot in Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes



"In this scene from the recent Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes film, our hero Noa travels alone into the

forbidden zone, though he's perhaps being watched from the shadows.

Set in a world hundreds of years after the Simian flu has wiped out most of humankind, only the most resilient structures still stand. The Wētā FX art department and I put a lot of thought into how to visually express the world director Wes Ball had envisioned. Vehicles have rusted away, and glass and plastics are long gone. The looming geometric forms of high-rises form narrow valleys, with the streets below now rendered unrecognisable by time.

For this scene, I started with a grey shaded render from our layout and

model departments. Building on this to develop the look and feel, I took inspiration from real-world reference like Roman ruins and abandoned industrial buildings. Next I blocked in 3D trees and foliage, and then made lighting choices based on photography of lush river valleys. A series of rough concepts were painted and photobashed, and I continued to iterate until the mood of the scene was fully established.

To convey Noa's emotions as he ventures into the unknown, I chose to place the character small in the frame, bracketed by pools of light to draw in the audience's eye, while surrounding him with the dark and overgrown remains of the former human civilisation. It's the quiet moments like this that give the story a tangible realism." ●

## Artist PROFILE

**Karl Sisson**

**LOCATION:**  
New Zealand

Karl is a concept artist from Canada who has now worked in the film industry for 20 years. Throughout his time on major film franchises like Harry Potter, Avatar and Planet of the Apes, Karl has always gravitated to creating environments. <https://bit.ly/3Wjp7kV>



### Photoshop & Blender

# BUILD CAPTIVATING MIXED-MEDIA CITIES

**Jonas Nathanael** develops an intricate bird's-eye view with a painterly touch by teaming 3D skills with a perfect paintover

#### Artist PROFILE

**Jonas Nathanael**

LOCATION: Denmark

Jonas is an aspiring Danish-Filipino concept artist and illustrator who has recently graduated from his studies at The Animation Workshop. <https://jonasngk.com>



Obsidian is a town made for the board game Harbor of Blight. For this painting, I was briefed to develop a fantasy town that featured a mixture of Egyptian and Native American architecture, with an extra splash of steampunk in the mix.

The biggest challenge for this painting was finding a good blend of all these styles without it feeling too

random. This also gave me a perfect opportunity to use the symbol of Obsidian and incorporate it into the architecture of the entrance and other places.

I was aiming for a painterly style, while also keeping it detailed in areas of interest given that it was going to be used as a map. As a result, I opted to go in a more 3D-based route for the commonly repeated details such as the buildings and walls.

I usually never do much in 3D when I want to create something on the painterly side, but for this image it just made sense. This process gave me the freedom to focus on painting the important elements, rather than spending months trying to polish every house. For the key buildings, I painted in Photoshop.

If you're interested in finding out more about Harbor of Blight, visit <https://harborofblight.com>.







## PLAN OUT A CITYSCAPE

### Narrative and focal points

It's important to develop some primary areas of interest. One of the main focal points in this town is the Hunter's Guild. It's a key element within the board game, so I chose to highlight the building with a wall surrounded by buildings that have oxidised copper roofs.

**GET YOUR RESOURCES**  
See page 5 now!



### 3D buildings

When creating buildings I usually do most of the sketches in Photoshop, but I decided to go for another approach in this piece and followed a 3D process in Blender. This worked to my advantage as I was able to mix and match all the different elements to my liking.

### Showing life with human elements

Often I find it's best to have some human touches such as doorways, windows and people to show the scale of the scene. In this case, the market is the best example. Here I suggested market stalls, humans walking around, and light from the main entrance and windows.

### RESOURCES WORKSHOP BRUSHES

#### PHOTOSHOP

#### CUSTOM BRUSHES: ROUND BRUSH MIXER

This brush gives an amazing oil paint feel and is good for painting over a photobash.

#### MIXER BRUSH TEXTURED

I use this brush for adding some texture on surfaces. Commonly used for foliage.

#### BRUSH HAIR MIXER

This one is good for grass, but I also use it to add details to objects with painterly strokes.



### Breaking up repetition

To make sure the city didn't become overly boring and monotonous, I prioritised creating districts that serve as narrative elements, but also create more interest for the viewer. Some of these districts are wealthier and others are poorer, but about two-thirds of the city is predominantly made up of the same buildings and districts of average wealth.

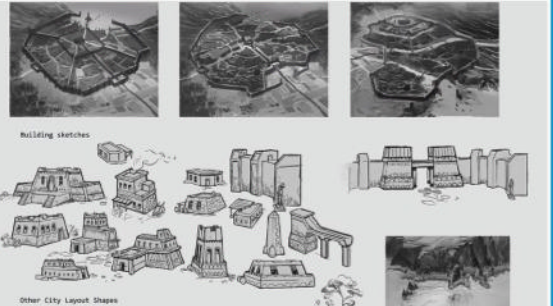


## Create scale with cloud shadows

Most of the time, repetition is enough to create the illusion of scale. However, sometimes we need that little extra. In this case, I added some shadows from the clouds. When a big shadow is extremely soft around the edges, our brain tends to automatically assume that it's from a big cloud.

## How I create...

# A BELIEVABLE FANTASY SCENE



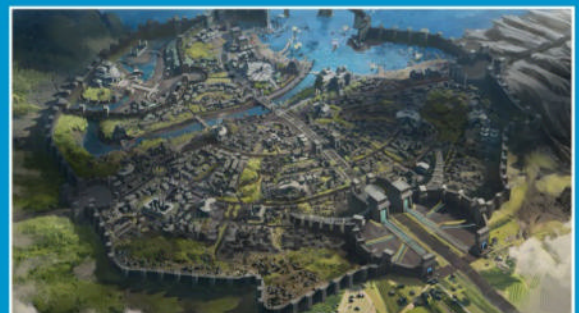
## 1 Preliminary sketches

I first make exploration sketches and thumbnails, and gather references. The references were vital, as I had little knowledge of Egyptian architecture. Before I got ahead of myself, it was important to plan the city's layout and the general value structure in the painting.



## 2 Prepare the scene with Blender

After figuring out the layout and architecture, it was time to prep the scene and buildings. For this, I made sure that I created different districts and points of interest, and added basic materials before scattering the buildings. Instanced collections and texture atlases are your best friends when making large cities in Blender.

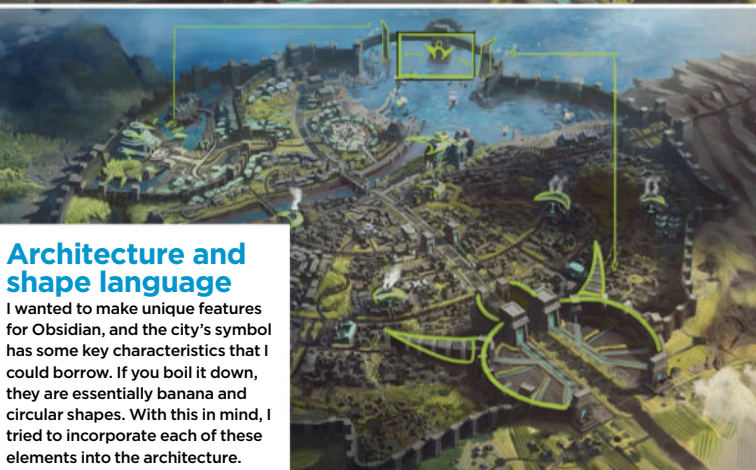


## 3 Paintover in Photoshop

The paintover process is important for breaking up repetition with special buildings and shapes. On top of this, I ended up changing the walls to make them look more interesting, as beforehand they were too square and didn't fit well with the Obsidian symbolism. This was also a perfect opportunity for photobashing.

## Building process

Some of the buildings in the scene might appear intricate, but in reality they're just instanced boxes placed on top of other boxes, with some interesting patterns for the textures. Just like working in 2D, the more you overlap shapes, the more you begin to create the illusion of detail.



## Architecture and shape language

I wanted to make unique features for Obsidian, and the city's symbol has some key characteristics that I could borrow. If you boil it down, they are essentially banana and circular shapes. With this in mind, I tried to incorporate each of these elements into the architecture.





## Artist insight

# THE SECRETS TO COLOUR PAINTING

Fine artist **Charlie Pickard** shares his top tips for how to achieve strong and vibrant colours in your paintings and illustrations

### Artist PROFILE

**Charlie Pickard**

LOCATION: England

Charlie is a classically trained fine artist and illustrator who works, exhibits and teaches out of his studio in London.  
<https://bit.ly/3R3Dcz3>



Colour and the way that it interacts with form within a piece is an area that's often confusing for students when they first approach creating full-colour artworks. There's the old adage of 'paint the values right and the colours will not matter', and this is somewhat true.

However, while proper and correct value relationships will always be the

most powerful tool to communicate form, how does colour interact with value? There are many rules for proper values within painting, but this clear tuition often ends where the colour begins. So are there not similar rules for how our colours change over forms?

Teaching generally comes short of describing how this interaction works. Often you'll find teachers are hesitant to delve too deeply into the

topic, as colour can be viewed as largely subjective. Many schools of thought leave it at that.

However, I believe that the more we can understand the rules of what it is we're seeing, the better we can powerfully and effectively bend them to our own expressive ends. The collection of pointers here are simple yet powerful ideas that I've discovered about colour on form in my own career.

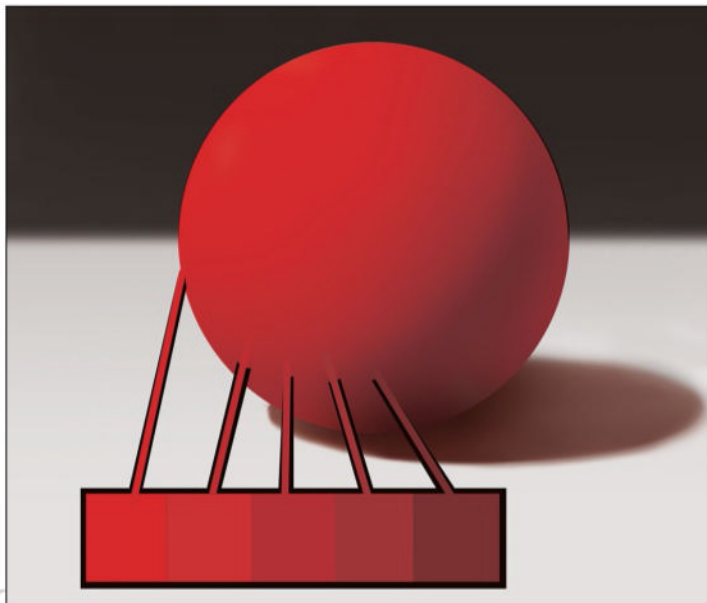
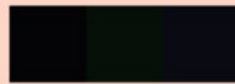


## 1 COLOUR IS INHERENTLY A PROPERTY OF LIGHT

The first element to understand is that colour is primarily a property of light; that means without light, there is no colour. Although this may feel like an obvious statement, the implications of the general theory behind it reach far and wide.

We all understand that in a pitch-black room we wouldn't see any colour. However, what's less often understood is that if you installed a dimmer switch in the same room and gradually turned down the light, the colours would steadily begin to lose their chroma and become closer and closer together, finally converging on the pure black of the room with the lights off.

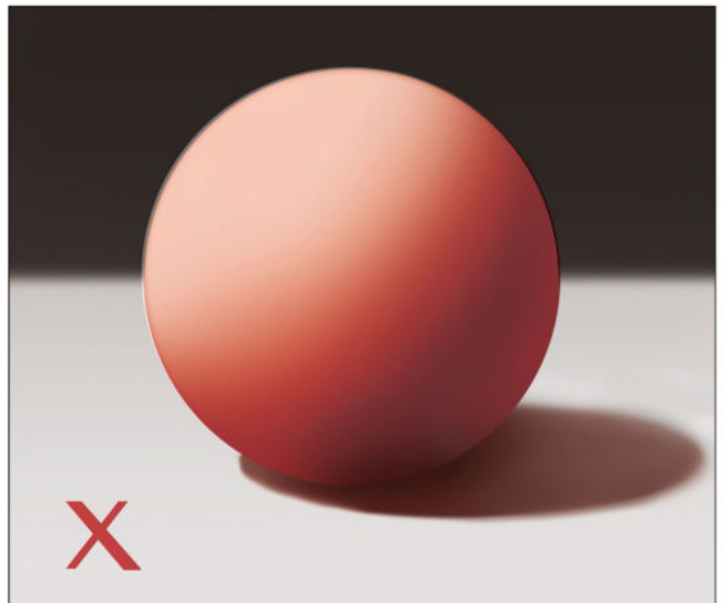
We can see this exact experiment in this image here. I took these at different levels of a dimmer switch so that you can see this effect in action. Note how the colours of the spheres gradually lose their colour identity as they get closer to black. This is the most fundamental idea of colour to understand.



## 2 INCREASED VALUE, INCREASED CHROMA

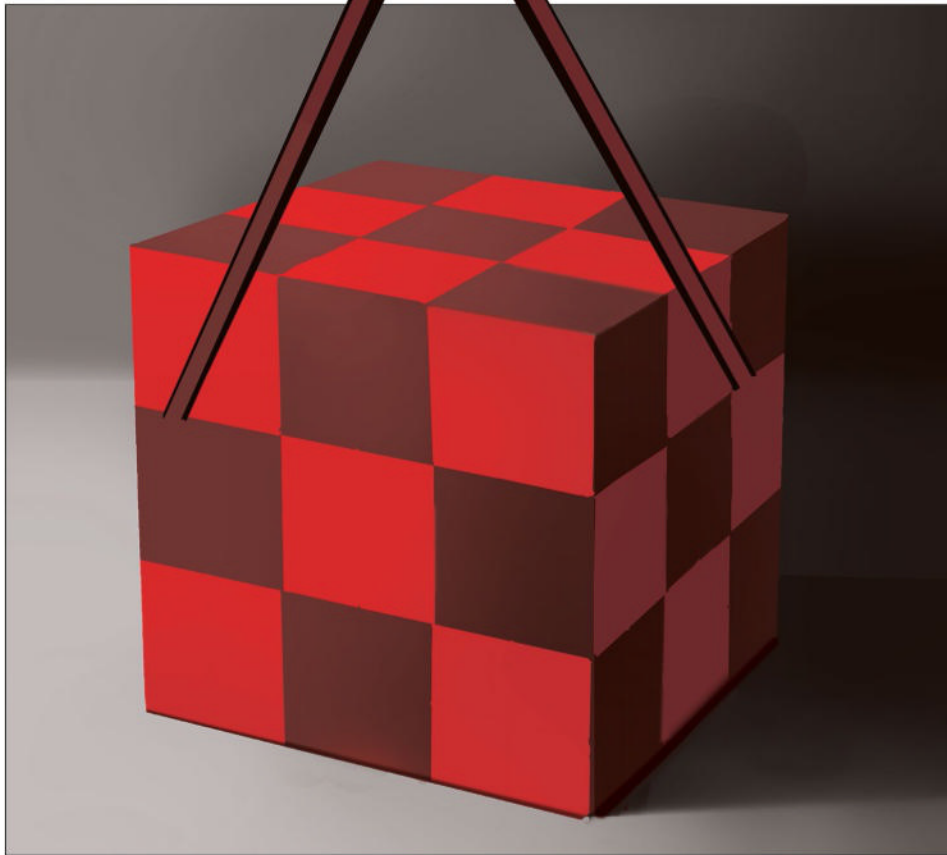
This fundamental relationship between value and chroma is the first and most important thing to understand when we're painting colour on forms. In general, chroma should increase as the value increases. This is the principle that most realist painting follows, generally speaking.

The primary principle of modelling form is that as a plane faces towards the light it must increase in value, and as it turns away it must also decrease in value until it drops off into shadow. Following this principle, chroma must increase as a plane faces the light and decrease as it faces away. Remember too that the most chromatic plane should be the one most directly facing the light.



The most common error I see in this relationship in paintings is the tendency for artists to continually add white to brighten a value until the chroma can no longer increase. However, doing this results in a chalky appearance in the lights, as seen in the image above. The way to avoid this issue is to always make sure that your lightest area is also the most chromatic. ➡➡





### 3 SATURATION ILLUSION

An interesting element of the connection between chroma and brightness is the way that our eyes overestimate how colourful dark things are. Our eyes compensate, so we're subject to optical illusions.

If we look at this image, you can see the light squares in shadow on the right side of the cube are exactly the same colour as the dark square in the light on the left side of the cube. We can see this if we isolate the two colours, as seen above the image.

This illusion is hard to dispel, so it's no wonder we often have difficulty painting this stuff – our eyes are playing tricks on us! To mix the colour on the shadowed side, we must aim for the colour on the lighter side, going generally a little greyer and darker than we might expect.



### 4 HIGHLIGHTS ARE BREAKING THE RULES

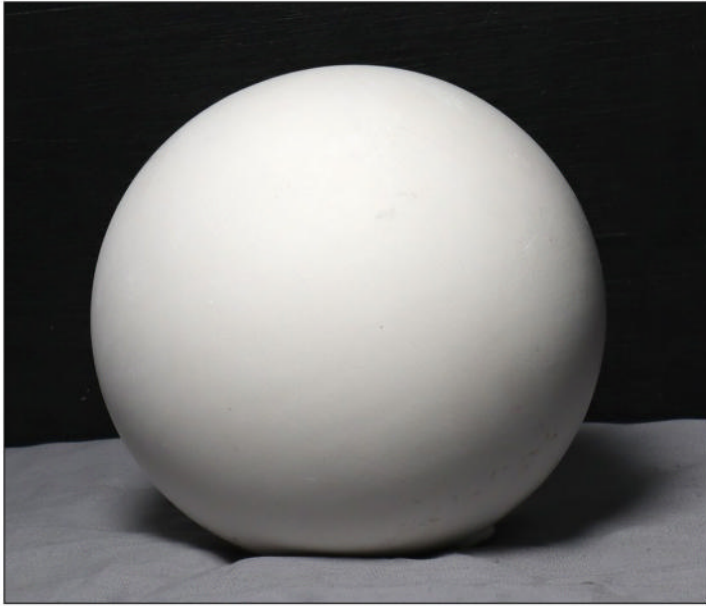
But of course, this pure relationship of chroma to value isn't the entire story when we're representing form. If we take a photograph of a sphere of the same colour, as pictured above, we can see something that messes up this whole idea immediately and confuses our simple relationship. That is of course the famous highlight!

“Colour is primarily a property of light; that means without light, there's no colour to be seen”



In fact, if we isolate out the colour of this highlight, we can see that it sort of breaks our initial rule of colour and is much less chromatic, even though it's almost directly facing the light. So what gives here? This single area of the lighting is one of the biggest culprits when it comes to confusion in the basic principles of lighting. If that's the case, then how can we understand it?





## 5 MATTE VS SPECULAR

In order for us to explain what's going on here, we need to first explain exactly what a highlight actually is in a material. And for this we need to explain the concept of specular materials and matte materials.

Matte materials are the easiest here to explain; they are the type of material that pretty much every drawing tutorial focuses on. They are the source of 'the more light-facing, the brighter the plane' rule, and also what we're talking about when we say the

chroma increases in tune with the light on a form. We'll name this brightest and most chromatic plane the form highlight.

Specular is the least talked about material as it's uncommon in nature, and more often seen in human-made metals. How specular materials work is that they are essentially mirrors of their surroundings. They'll reflect back an image of whatever surrounds them in their immediate environment. What we're seeing when we see a highlight in this case is actually a specular highlight.

A general rule you need to remember is:

**Matte lighting:** These follow the colours of the form.

**Specular lighting:** These follow the colours of the environment.

In real life, few objects are purely one or the other and most objects will display some amount of both types of lighting. That said, one or the other type may be dominant on the particular form that you're depicting, so check over your subject.

## 6 ISOLATED MATTE

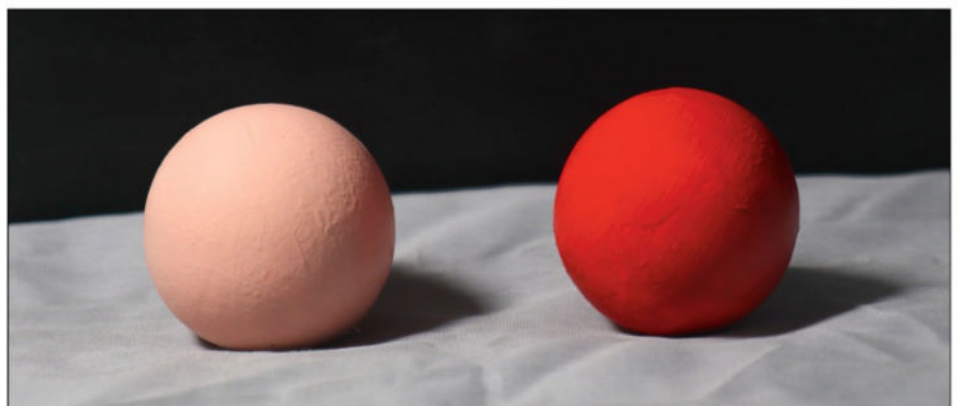
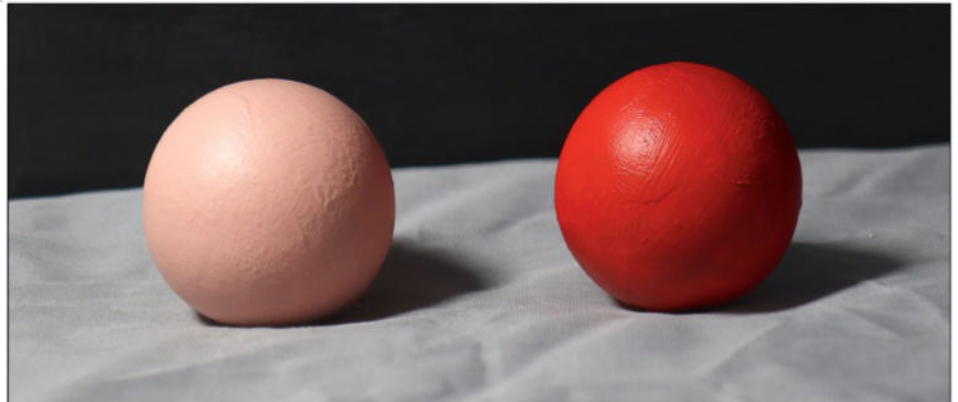
While we won't generally see these effects in perfect isolation in our everyday lives. There are ways we can isolate the effects using polaroid filters. This is the effect captured in these two photographs. The top image is how the setup looked naturally, and below is the image with a polaroid filtering out the specular highlight. Interestingly, we can see that without the highlight, our relationship of chroma moving with value is pretty much exactly what we observe! Think of this as occurring underneath the highlight.

Now we know the highlight we're seeing isn't actually breaking our rule at all; it's just a different type of lighting. Here the specular information is so weak it only displays its most prominent feature: its brightest point, which is the reflection of the light source. As we know, this specular highlight is reflecting the colour of the light source. In most cases the light is roughly white, so this specular highlight is less chromatic and brighter.

The general rule of thumb here is:

**Specular highlight:** These will have peak brightness, and low chroma.

**Form highlight:** These will have peak brightness, and highest chroma. ➡➡





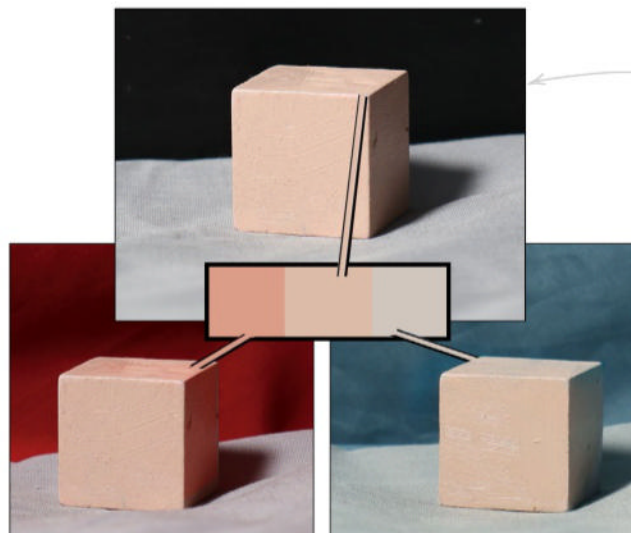
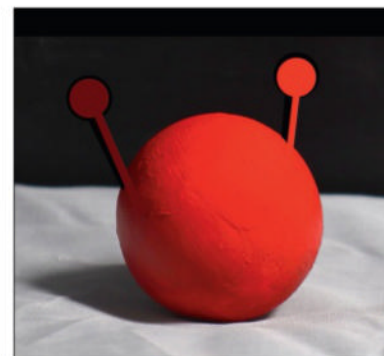
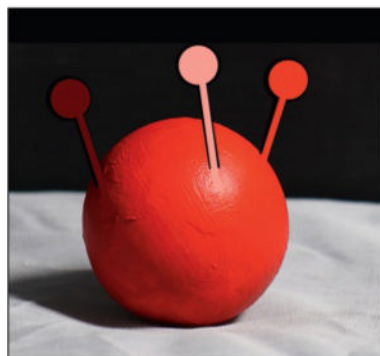
## 7 HOW WE BRING IT ALL TOGETHER

We've learned about how the light moves over form, but how can this help our painting? In general, this means we must treat the specular highlight separately from the form highlight, as we've learned they are drastically different colours. We've also learned that many of the values on the form are decided by matte shading, and therefore simple in their general relationships, getting more chromatic as they brighten and then less chromatic as they darken.

What this means for us is that within the matte surface information, we can blend things together quite a bit without disturbing our overall relationship. Blurring or smudging from the specular highlight, however, will damage the relationship as it's a spike of lower chroma (cooler) colour. Blending out directly from the specular highlight is the most common error I see in student art, and the main cause for the chalky colour effect we described earlier.

In general, look for the chromatic form highlight to be on the opposite side of the specular highlight from the shadow. If we can maintain these relationships, we'll get a believable sense for colour on the form.

“As always, these ideas won't make sense until you give them a go for yourself”



## 8 FRESNEL EFFECT

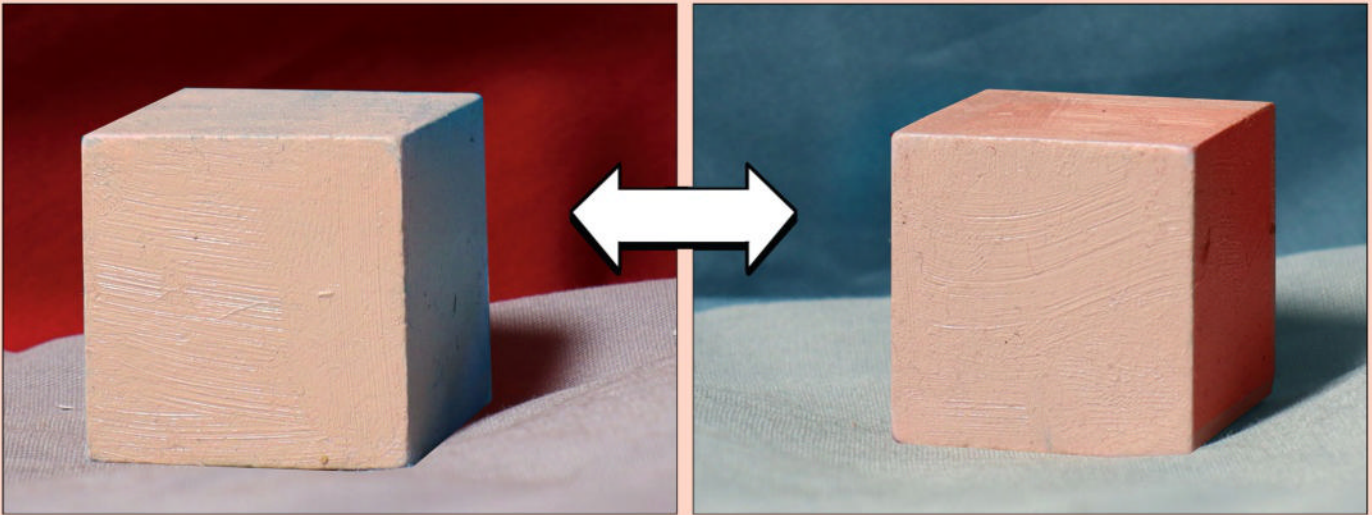
One final, important, and more subtle note about the way colour interacts with form is the influence of the surrounding environment on an object. Light has a tendency to skip along the shallow planes, and we often see the colour influence of the background the shallower a plane gets to our eye.

This is due to an effect called the Fresnel effect. I don't have enough time to delve into all the technical reasons why this happens, but in general any object will display more

specularity the shallower a position we observe it from. This happens in all objects, and as we spoke about before, the specular information is a mirror reflection of the surrounding environment. Thus, it will follow whatever colours the surrounding information takes on.

This shift would be incredibly subtle in most environments, but we can see it clearly in more chromatic ones. In the image to the left, we can see just how strongly the top plane of the box takes on the colour of the different backgrounds.





## 9 THIS AFFECTS EVERY SHALLOW PLANE

This effect is subtle, even in this strong chromatic environment, so you can imagine just how subtle it gets when dealing with more natural and achromatic environments. However, we can see just how powerful of an

effect this is if we take these objects out of their proper context by flipping which cube is in which environment.

It's interesting to see how out of place they both feel. We also notice that while the shallow planes are obviously and wildly differently coloured, the front-

facing planes remain largely consistent in colour.

This effect is one of the most powerful tools in our arsenal for properly situating an object within an environment. The object is never separate from its environment, and we must always think of them together.



## 10 LOOK OUT FOR THE BACKGROUND COLOUR

Now let's look at how this effects our approach to actually painting a subject. What we've learned is that if we want our subject to properly sit in the environment painted around it, we need to pay attention to the shallow planes and try to shift them towards the background colour.

As you can see in all of these paintings, the shallow planes lie in a mix of the general skin and the background colours. As a general

approach to this, for planes facing us the colours are that of the object, while the colours of planes facing away from us are influenced by the environment colours.

If we can try to observe these general principles, we take a huge step towards understanding some of the ever varied and interesting effects that we see in front of us in nature. As always, these ideas won't make sense until you give them a go with your own hands, so try it out for yourself. Happy painting! ●



## ARTISTS' MASTER SERIES: COLOR & LIGHT

This article is an excerpt from the Artists' Master Series book that Charlie wrote in partnership with 3dtotal Publishing. In the book, he delves into this and many more topics in greater detail, with in-depth tutorials from other artists featured. To carry on learning, check it out at <https://bit.ly/4837PM9>.





## Technique focus

# APPLY TEXTURES

**Eduardo Pena** creates visual depth in his personal project to help build a mysterious sci-fi universe

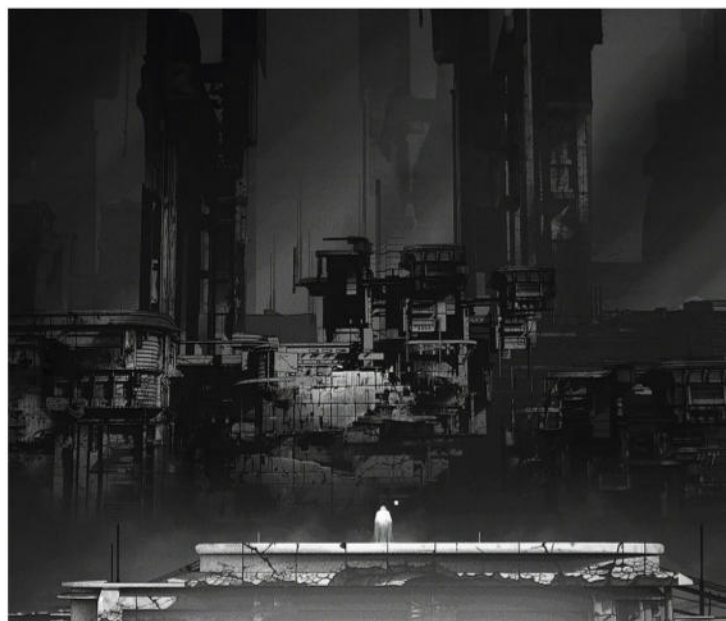


"These images are from my personal project, which follows a cosmic scavenger called King Zolido as

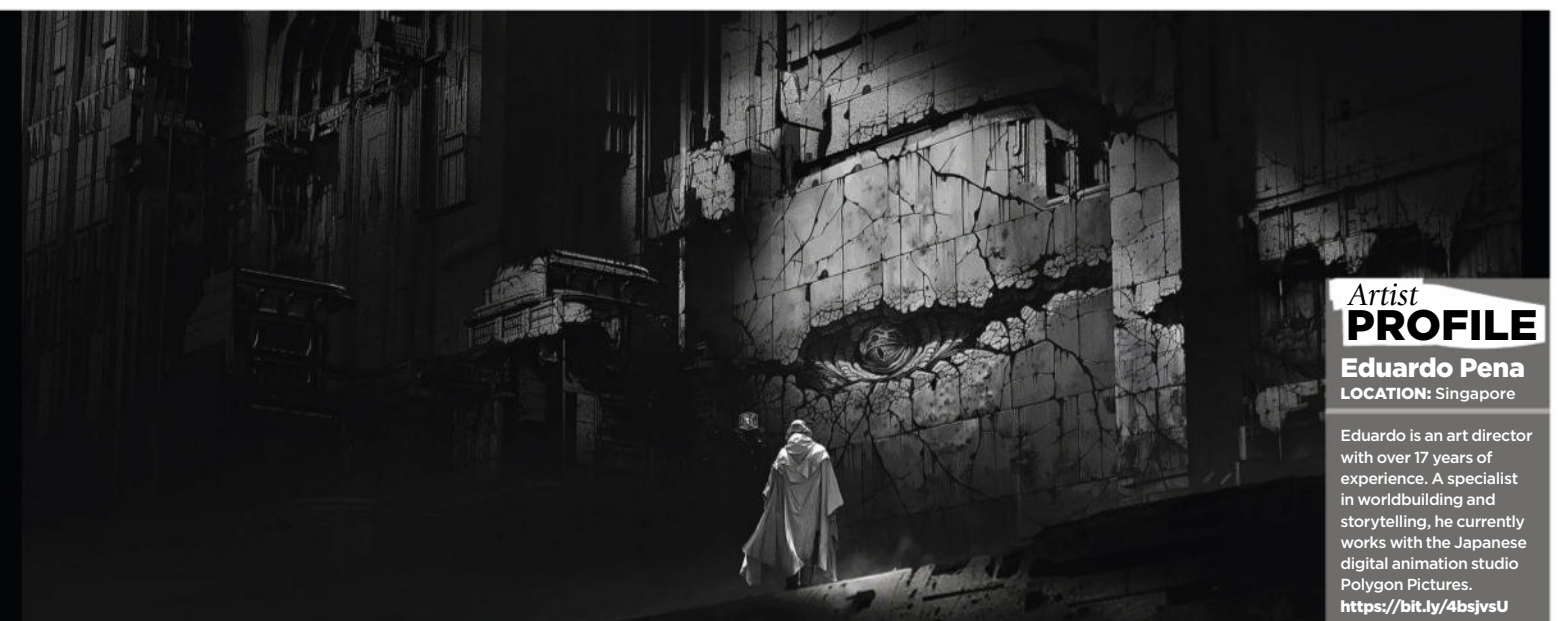
he harnesses the residual energy from abandoned civilisations using his CUBO, a hypercube-like device. I created the mysterious, abstract and inviting world in black and white due to its high contrast and shape language. Sometimes I explore

colour to enhance the visuals and match the storytelling.

My workflow here repurposed architectural elements into unique forms, and applied textures from street cracks and torn walls to add visual depth. I used KeyShot due to its simplicity, but this can also be achieved in Blender. The final piece explores space and visual storytelling through abstract techniques and innovative approaches."







Artist  
**PROFILE**

**Eduardo Pena**

LOCATION: Singapore

Eduardo is an art director with over 17 years of experience. A specialist in worldbuilding and storytelling, he currently works with the Japanese digital animation studio Polygon Pictures.

<https://bit.ly/4bsjvsU>



## Clip Studio Paint

# PAINT A CREEPY GHOSTLY ENTITY

**Jolene Yeo** teaches you how to create spectral ghouls and place them into an appropriately eerie horror atmosphere

### Artist PROFILE

**Jolene Yeo**

LOCATION: Singapore

Jolene currently works as an illustrator. She paints in a wide variety of styles and has also worked on creating colouring books. [www.collaterals.com](http://www.collaterals.com)



Horror is a hugely popular theme and spans from creepy creatures through to psychological horror, sci-fi and found footage among an expansive list. In this tutorial, we'll focus on the supernatural aspect of the horror genre, specifically ghosts.

Ghosts, ghouls, spirits and souls are some of the most commonly featured beings we find in horror media. Ghosts can either be invisible or barely visible, or can even be fully formed and almost tangible. They also sometimes take up different forms, so what's haunting you may not always be humanoid!

Colour, light and atmosphere all play a huge part in bringing a creepy image to life, so this tutorial won't solely focus on painting the entity itself, but also provide other ideas on how to make the overall image more effectively eerie. Here are 15 steps that will hopefully help you create something spooky!



### 1 Initial ideation

To start off, think about the sort of ghost you want to draw. Is it a sad, lonely spirit? Or perhaps a malevolent one? Is it humanoid? Experimenting with different spirits and expressions can be great during the brainstorming portion. Keep your sketches loose, flowing and fun, as it brings out the character more. I was inspired by Chinese ghost marriages for this piece, and in my sketches I tested out some ideas before settling on a sorrowful ghost bride with a sinister ghost groom. Reading about the different ways ghosts are interpreted across a myriad of cultures can be great in expanding your ideas beyond the typical wisps we've become so used to seeing.



### 2 Location and setting

Now moving on to the setting, even just a dark, vacant sky with barren ground can help set the mood of the illustration, instead of leaving the canvas blank with the ghost floating in the middle. Some other common but effective horror settings are dark corridors, forests, dilapidated buildings and abandoned houses. While the location doesn't always have to make sense, it's a nice touch when it does. This image would probably turn out very differently or be hard to interpret if an ancient Chinese marital bed wasn't used as the location. ➡

### WORKSHOP BRUSHES

#### CLIP STUDIO PAINT

DEFAULT BRUSHES:  
G-PEN

For sketching and lines. Used to add hard edges and specular reflections.

#### SOFT AIRBRUSH

Good to paint skin, soft colour washes, ambient occlusion and light glow.

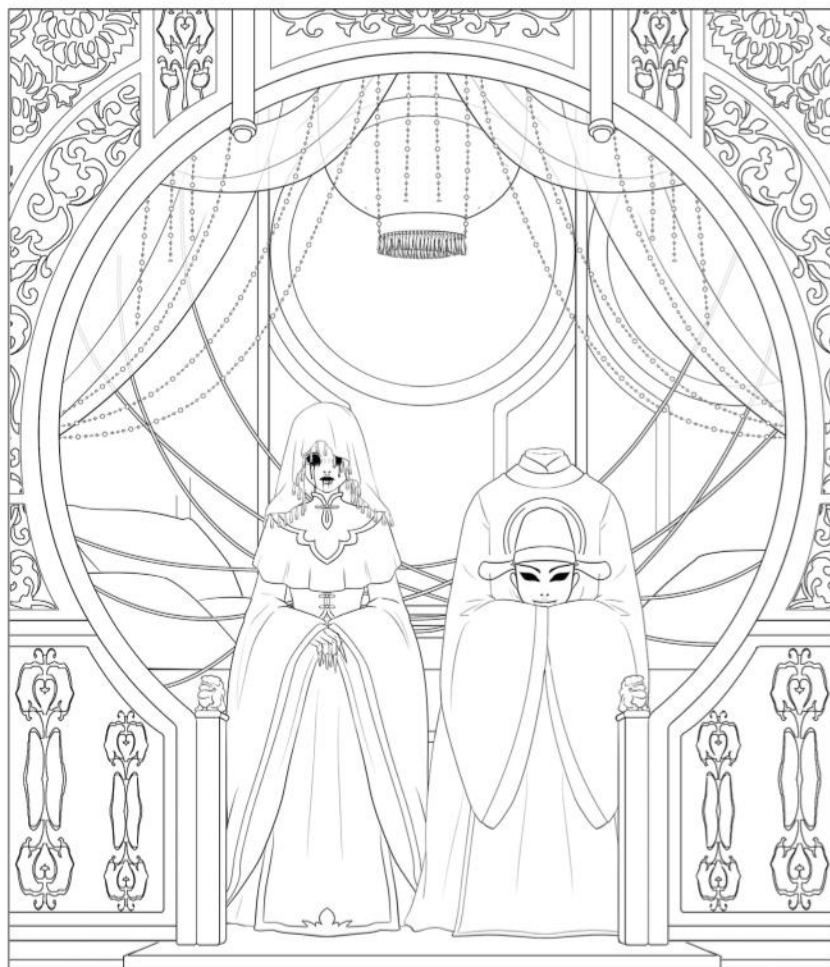
#### HARD AIRBRUSH

This is a great brush to paint clothing and parts of the background.









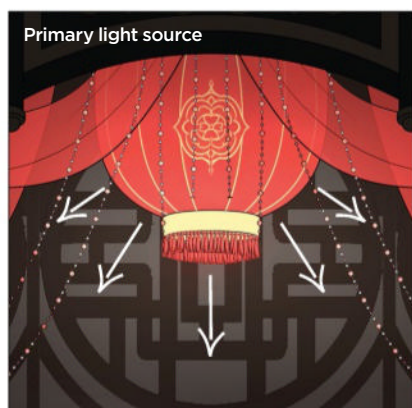
## 3 Visual storytelling

Details are great when it comes to visual storytelling. It doesn't have to be over the top and extravagant all the time, subtle details such as a little blood trickle or a slightly uncanny facial expression can draw viewers in. During this step, I decided to add some bloody tears to the bride's face as a subtle touch, while the groom was fully beheaded and holding his head in his hands.



## 4 Clean lines and base colour

During this stage, I like to polish up the lines and fill base colours. For detailed pieces, I'll split everything into different layers and folders so I can manage each one better. For example, not just splitting the background from the ghosts but even elements such as patterns and prints. I find this useful because if I feel like a specific area needs tweaking, the rest of the image isn't affected as I can zone in on that. For ghostly entities, consider using more desaturated shades that you'd normally avoid if you were creating a live human being.



## 5 Rough lighting setup

I like to roughly sketch a lighting guide at this stage so I don't get lost in the details and rendering. I usually do it using the Multiply blending mode for shadows and Colour/Glow Dodge or Screen modes for light. At this point, I also use pure shades of grey without any colour tints. Establishing the primary light source is also useful to prevent getting overwhelmed during the rendering process. Strong downward or upward lighting is great for the horror genre, and in this tutorial I'll be using strong downward lighting to help set the tone I'm looking for.







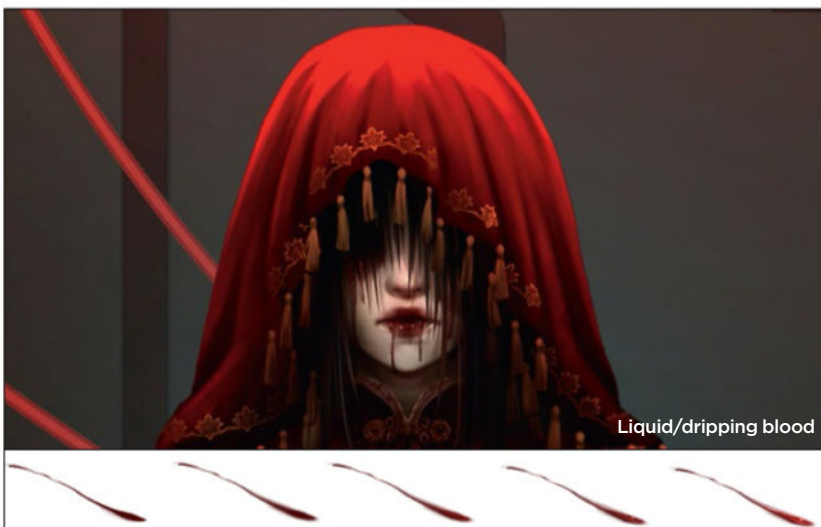
## 6 Develop mood with colour

Colours invoke different feelings and emotions; they can make us feel peace and serenity, or horror and fear. Red is a colour commonly associated with horror, and it also happens that Chinese weddings love using strong shades of red, which made it a great focus for me, so I amplified it. Not only will the primary light source, the lantern, emit red light, but the ghost's outfits are also red. Contrast doesn't just affect lighting; it plays a part in colour. When you look at the colour wheel, what you'll notice is that the colours directly opposite each other are complementary colours, as they amplify each other and help to bring out their intensities. In this case, the complementary colours for red are green and cyan, both of which work great in horror settings as well.



## 7 Paint the ghosts

While painting the ghosts you can follow a similar method to how you paint humans normally, establishing light and shadow. You can make shadows deeper and the light even brighter to bring out certain features. This doesn't always work well for live humans, but it does for our ghostly characters.



## 8 Spine-chilling blood

Now it's time to add some blood to our painting. As the blood in this piece isn't the focal point it may be a little hard to see zoomed out, so I've enlarged it as well as drawn a few samples below. For flowing liquid, blood, it helps to first establish the direction and amount of blood you need. Controlling your pen pressure is crucial here to create a natural look. From there, add shadows and highlights that bring out the form even more. For blood splatters meanwhile, try to keep the shapes irregular and random, with some speckled flecks of blood as well as longer streaks to add to the look. ➡➡

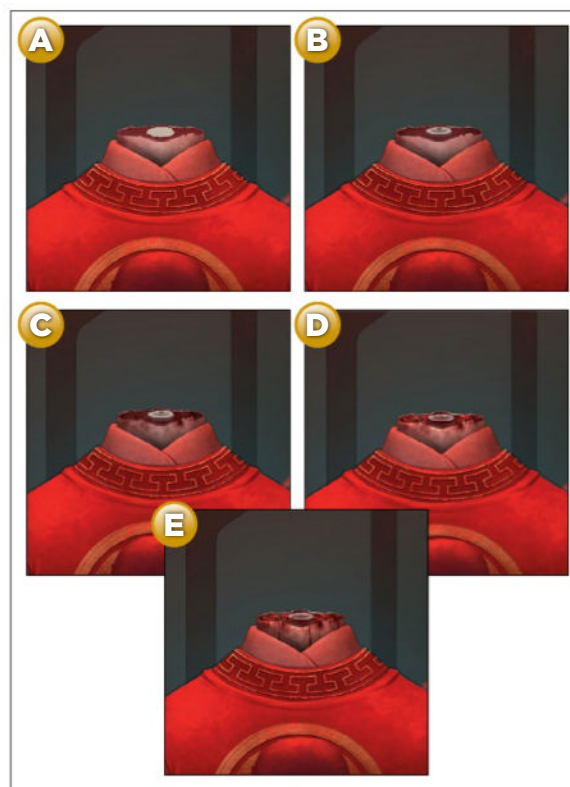






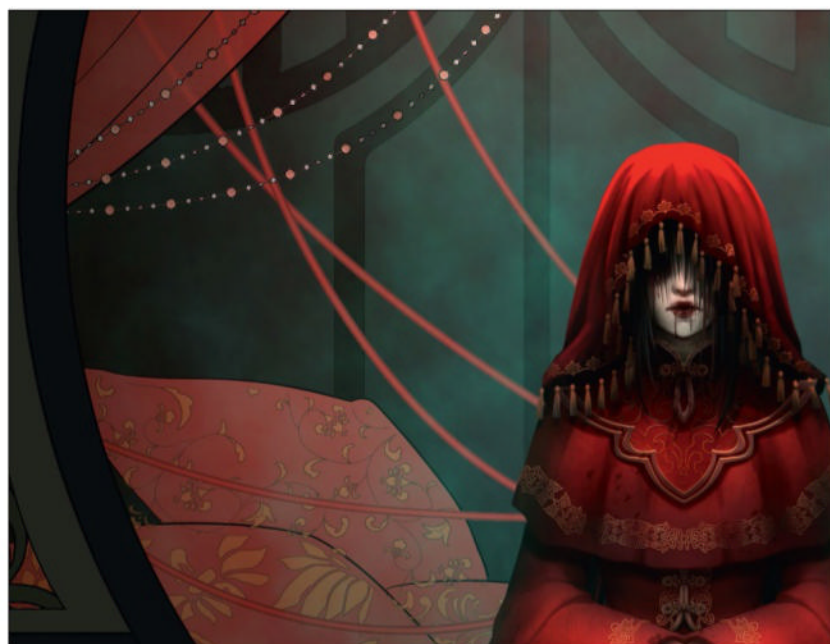
## 9 Creepy mask and eye details

While this is how I painted the mask, the same technique can be used for other effects like face paint or creepy makeup for your ghost. Create a new layer and clip it onto your ghost, set it to the Multiply blending mode, and get creative from there! Do note that the Multiply mode makes things very dark, so you may need to use a slightly lighter shade than you expect. To create the glowing eyes, I painted a base colour for them first in red, before enhancing it with a new layer set to the Colour Dodge/Glow Dodge mode to make the eyes pop.



## 10 Gory effects

If you're painting gore, it's great to look at some visual samples like special effects makeup and movies, which are a great source. Small details work well here.



## 11 Glow and aura

Now we can give our ghosts an otherworldly touch. For this, I used various colour modes, including Hard Light and Soft Light. First, I created a new layer on top of the ghost and set it to Hard Light, and using a wide, soft airbrush I painted a light cyan around the edges of the form. Afterwards, I created a new layer set to Soft Light behind the ghostly entities and painted some cyan light in with the same brush. To create the aura effect, I set yet another layer behind that and painted in some foggy texture. These can make your ghost look more mysterious and eerie.







## 12 Create a translucent effect on the ghosts

You can make your entire ghost translucent – simply done by setting its opacity lower – however, I wanted to make mine mostly tangible and fully formed, just with a slight blurring of edges. To get that effect I applied a layer mask onto the ghosts and using a soft eraser to lightly brush close to the edge, which makes the edges see-through without affecting the rest of the ghosts' forms.



## 13 Refine the background

At this stage, I painted in the details for the background. As I used a strong, vibrant red for the ghosts, I painted the background in more muted colours with an underlying green tone to complement it.



## 14 Extra details and final adjustments

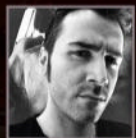
Adding in little details like smoke emitting from the candle flame and some wispy, ghostly streaks can add even more atmosphere to your painting. Tweaking the colour balance levels, level correction and curves are a great and easy way to add finishing touches. Another reason why I like splitting my layers up is because I can adjust each layer individually at this point; this wouldn't be possible if everything was done on just one or two layers. I also decided to play up the cyan colour more to complement all the green and red in the image. ●



Technique focus

## FIND PHOTO REFERENCES

**Kerem Beyit** explains how he used a little assistance for his dynamic action scene



"This is a commercial piece that I created for an FPS game. The client provided 3D renders of the in-game character, and my job was to depict them in an impressive action scene that could be used in promos.

The 3D reference model was very basic, so I was left with some room for creative licence that I used to introduce plenty of combat gear to

make her more interesting and build up the realism. Ultimately I settled on a crouched pose to meet the brief, which needed to have a landscape orientation and full-body art.

For the tank, gear and weapons, I used photo references. These are a key factor in creating any modern military illustrations. I'd advise you against drawing an assault rifle from memory unless you've been drawing them for years already."





## Artist PROFILE

**Kerem Beyit**

LOCATION: Türkiye

Kerem is a freelance digital painter who has been working in the game and publishing industry since 2004. His clients include Disney, Wizards of the Coast, Blizzard and Sony.

<https://bit.ly/4eVd9F7>

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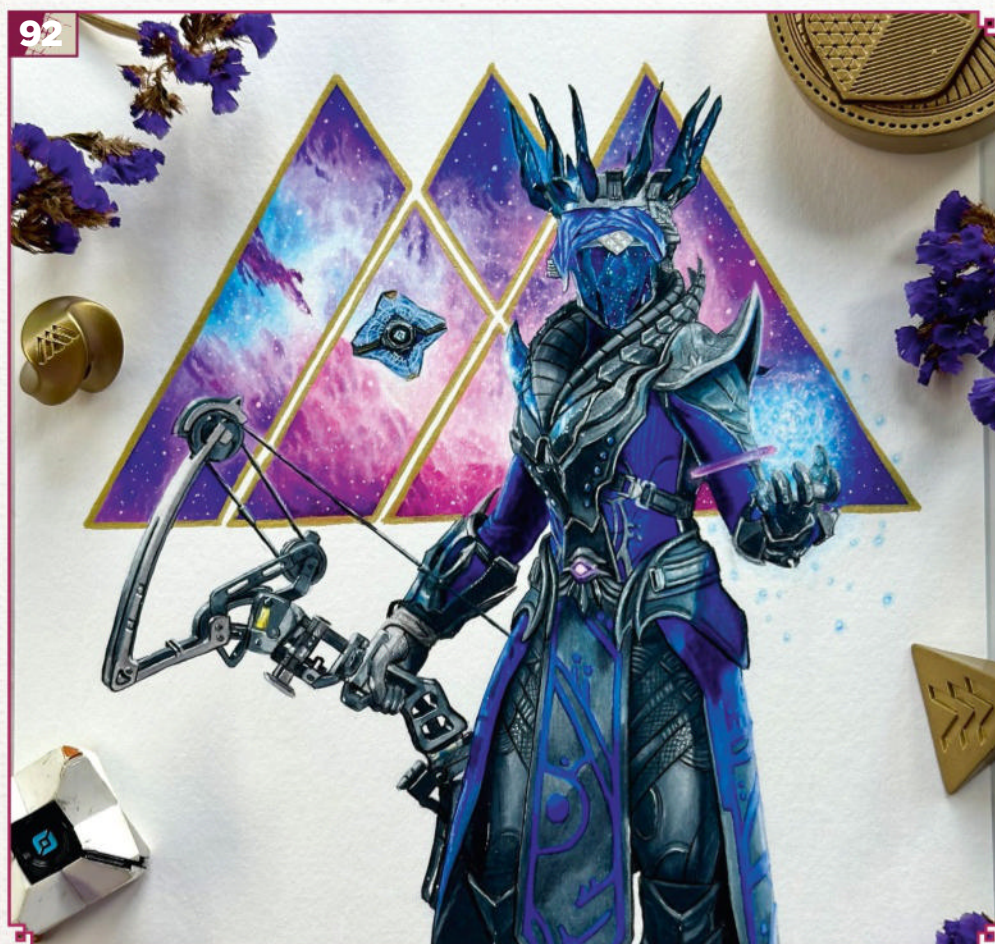
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# Traditional Artist

Inspiration and advice from the best pro artists



## This issue:



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

**92 Draw stylish Destiny fan art**  
Break out your coloured pencils and create a vivid Guardian.

**98 First Impressions: Etera**  
Find out the artist's mythological inspirations and future goals.



# FXPosé

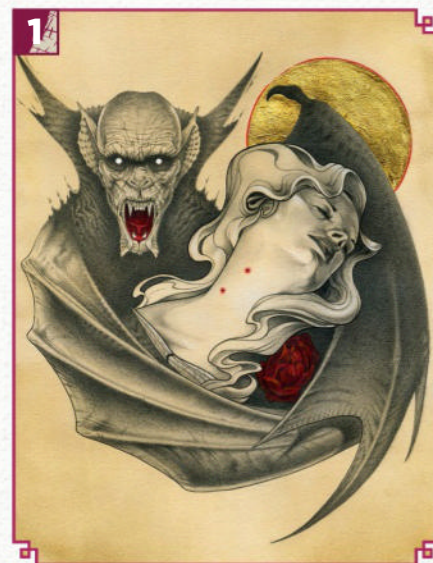
SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL ARTISTS



## Mate Jako

**LOCATION:** England **MEDIA:** Pencil, acrylics, ink, airbrush, gold foil **WEB:** [www.entenn.com](http://www.entenn.com)

Mate is a creature and character designer, illustrator and fine artist. His work is characterised by darkness and horror, with a touch of classical beauty.



### 1 MIDNIGHT'S KISS

"The final kiss. So full of horror, and yet so poetic. Is it a curse being broken or simply dinner? Only the viewer knows."

### 2 GOD INCARNATE

"I'm a giant fan of monsters. After watching Godzilla Minus One, I decided to give the King of the Monsters an updated look that used design elements from my favourite interpretations of the character."

### 3 ADMISSIONEM

"Admissionem is the Latin word for admission. A contemplation on how we face adversity. No adversary that we face is as powerful as our own selves."



### 4 AMBUSH

"I have a fear of water. And yet it's the unbroken surface that hides things from us, the surface dwellers, which intrigues me."

### 5 RED

"Sideshow commissioned me to create my own Little Red Riding Hood. She's a heroine facing the world head on."





©Mato Jakov/Sideshow Collectibles





## Nadezda

**LOCATION:** Spain **MEDIA:** Oil **WEB:** [www.instagram.com/twistedmatter](http://www.instagram.com/twistedmatter)

The main focus of Nadezda's artwork is the exploration of raw, intuitive imagination. She depicts this by creating worlds full of fantastical events populated by creatures and characters inspired by her deep creativity.

### 1 **A FAIRY AND A GRID**

"A piece from my solo exhibition Once There Was, Once There Wasn't, which opens at Modern Eden in San Francisco this September."

### 2 **ONCE THERE WAS, ONCE THERE WASN'T**

"Daydreaming, listening to the voice within, letting the inner worlds unfold."



### 3 **LITTLE WINGS**

"Hands of the creative heart. Flutter. Feathers smooth like oat milk."

### 4 **ANNOUNCEMENT**

"This piece features lots of characters, including two pieces of bread in love, The Naked King, The Midnight Opera Singer, Nope, Babbits, Stickies Trio and more."









Pencil

## DRAW STYLISH DESTINY FAN ART

Experienced coloured pencil artist **EMILY CHAPMAN** shares her personal process for creating a Warlock Guardian from Destiny

This Destiny Warlock was so much fun to make. I absolutely love the fantasy vibe it gives, and with the galaxy background it was so satisfying to see it come together.

In this workshop, I'll walk you through my process, sharing insight to help you create your own piece. We'll cover the essential techniques for using these pencils, integrating other tools like white gel pens and fine liners, and the importance of in-game screenshots as references.

We'll begin with a basic sketch. Paired with directly observing our reference, this initial step is crucial for establishing proportions and capturing the dynamic pose. Don't worry if your sketch isn't perfect; it's just the foundation we'll build upon.

### MATERIALS

#### PENCILS

- Prismacolor Premier Soft Core
- Caran d'Ache Luminance white
- H2 and HB graphite

#### PENS

- Sumihiro ThinLINE black brush pen
- Uni-Ball Signo white gel pen
- Arteza Inkonic pens
- Gold Posca paint pen

#### MISCELLANEOUS

- Winsor & Newton A4 mixed media paper
- Tissue paper
- Photoshop

Next, I'll demonstrate how to layer and blend colours to achieve the iconic smooth and vibrant look that will bring your Guardian to life!

Further on, I'll show you how to add highlights and intricate details using a white gel pen, enhancing the overall depth and realism. Those fine liners will also come into play for outlining and defining textures and features, ensuring crisp, clean edges.

Throughout this tutorial, I'll also share tips on everything from how to stay organised, to recognising and applying correct lighting. By the end, you'll have an overall understanding of my rendering method, as well as hopefully the confidence to create your own video game masterpiece. Let's get started and bring your artistic vision to reality!



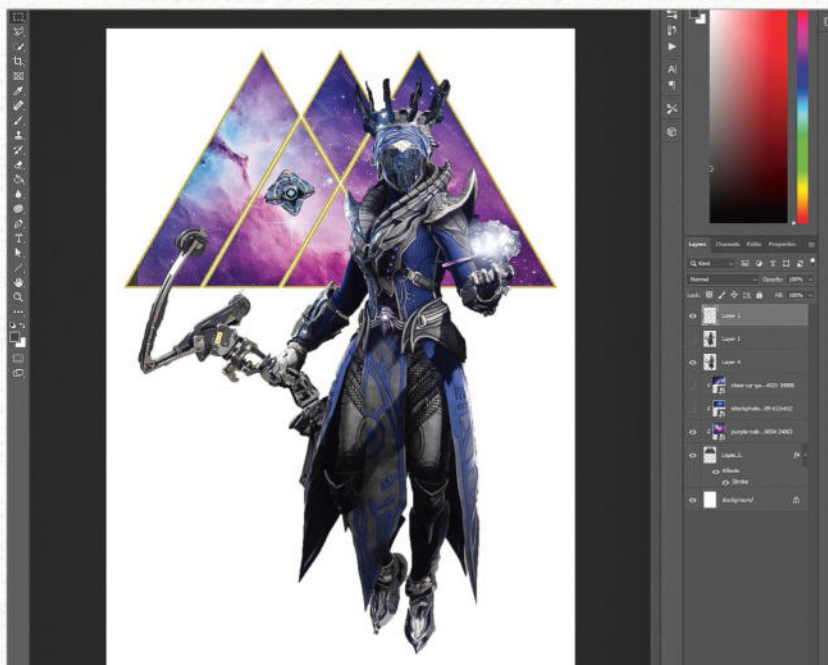
Emily is a freelance creature and character concept artist and illustrator, working in a range of mediums such as traditional drawing and digital painting.  
[www.instagram.com/emilymeganxart](https://www.instagram.com/emilymeganxart)







# Traditional Artist **Workshop**



## 1 *Compile your reference materials*

Once you've chosen your Guardian, armour and weapon, go ahead and grab a high-resolution screenshot from either the in-game character selection screen or character viewport. Make sure you choose whichever angle, lighting or view you like the most! Import the screenshot into Photoshop, cut them out, and figure out a composition that works best in front of a background feature. Here I've chosen a Warlock logo filled with a nebula-styled image.



## 2 *Sketch from reference*

Studying our reference, we sketch our character and background element using simple graphite pencils and a ruler. I like to use a light H2 pencil to start as this is easy to erase. This phase will take time arranging and testing proportions and shapes to closely resemble our reference image. Once we're happy, we can then draw in more detailed and confident lines using an HB pencil.



## 3 *Lay down coloured line-art to the paper*

When we're satisfied with our pencil drawing, we'll move on to the line-art phase. I usually use Arteza's fine liner pack as they have a range of hues and shades. Pick out a collection of pens that closely match the overall colours of your Guardian. Begin at the head and work your way down, alternating the pen colour to correspond with the hue or shade for that area.





## 4 Prepare for colouring

Once the line-art is done, erase all the graphite pencil that you can see on the page. Now study your reference image again, and carefully select every coloured pencil you think you'll need for the first half of your guardian. I always like to concentrate on small sections to fully complete at a time, otherwise the piece would get overwhelming to draw all at once.



## 5 From dark to light

There are a handful of ways you can work with these particular pencils, and one method here is from dark to light. However, the area will dictate what's best. For this instance, I cover the grey area in a mid-dark shade with very light pressure, creating a slight base for the next shade to blend, applied with a harder pressure. Be sure to study the design of the reference as a direct guide.



## 6 Highlight with gel pens

Once we're happy with the rendering of our first section, we can now go in and apply the highlights to give it a boost of realism. I like to use a Uni-Ball white gel pen for this. Looking at our reference, we'll only copy exactly where those highlights are seen, as if we start adding in highlights that aren't in the right place, the image can end up looking overdone.



## 7 Develop textures and patterns

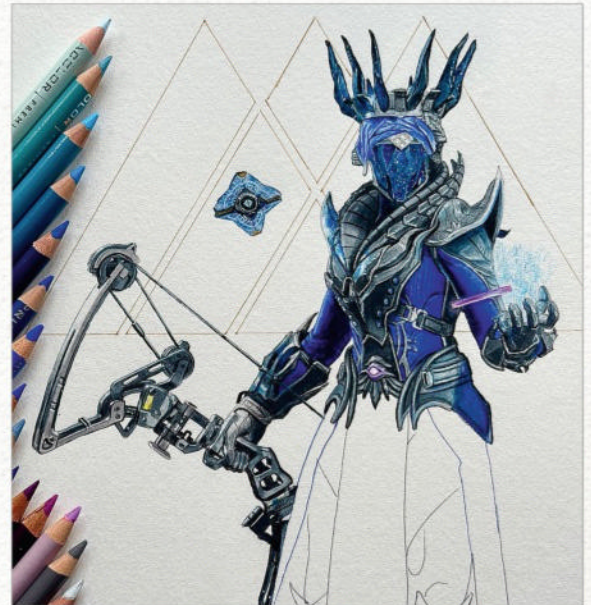
Continue using the methods we've outlined so far to carry on rendering the next section of our Guardian. Don't be afraid of the medium, as these pencils are quite forgiving and you can colour over most of them to fix small issues. To create your textures or patterns, you can draw over a fully coloured plain section with dark and light pencils to give the illusion of textures in fabric and so on. ➡





## 8 Cast shadows with colour

Most shadows aren't jet black or a shade of grey; they often reflect bounce light from either a bright light source or the environment. I wanted to elevate the realism of this piece by incorporating a hue to the cast shadow of her arm. Since the magic in her hand is blue, and I'm imagining our background element will be similar colours, I've decided to go with a dark blue shadow.



## 9 Halfway observations

At this point I like to take the time to review my drawing, and double check my reference to make sure everything looks believable and readable. If there's anything that needs improving or altering, we can usually easily colour over areas since the pencils' consistency is quite soft and waxy, and therefore can be manipulated on the page reasonably well. Always have your selection of coloured pencils close to hand.



## 10 Use a brush pen for creating blacks and lines

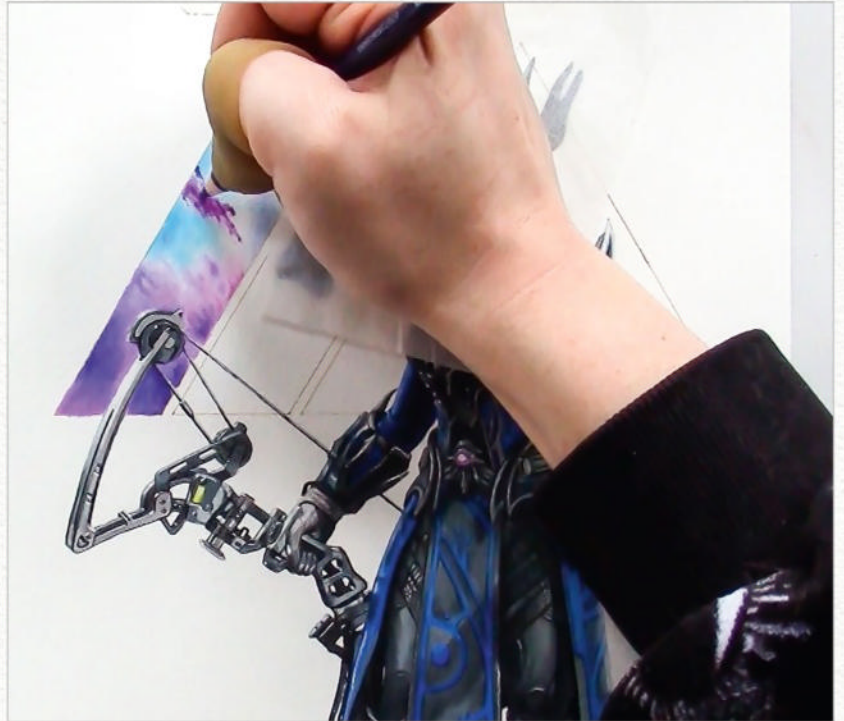
Some areas of our Guardian will have ultra black due to ambient occlusion, and I also like to outline some textures and objects in black to make them pop and be more noticeable. For this, I choose to use a fine line brush pen, as regular fine liners tend to get clogged and dry out after drawing over the coloured pencils, so the brush pens work out much better for this job.





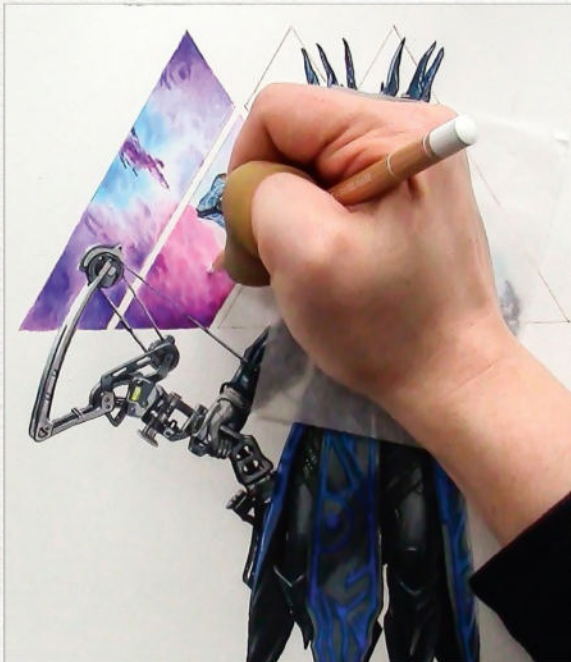
## 11 Light to dark blending

Now that we've completed our Guardian, it's time to work on the background element. Tidy away the pencils you've used for your character, and now pick out the pencils you'll need for your nebula. I always like to keep my galaxies as bright as possible, so I start layering a light blue base and plotting my darker colours with light pressure. Slowly build up these areas by blending the lighter relative shades in between.



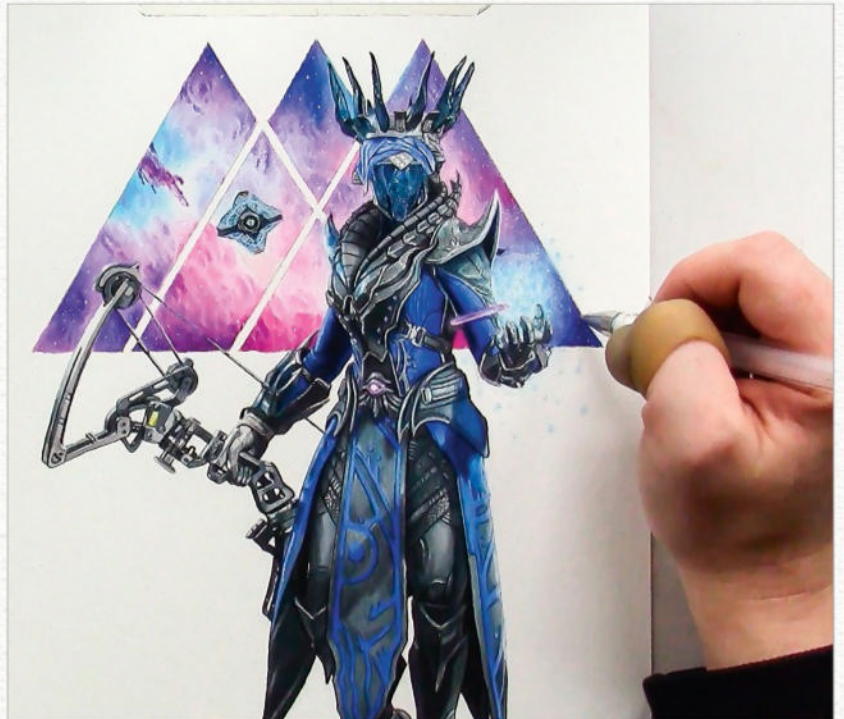
## 12 Add contrasting details

Once we've blended our first section softly with light shades, gradually adding slightly darker colours with more pressure to polish and build that smooth look, we can add in areas of interest. For example, we could draw a much darker cloud in the middle of a brighter section to push the realism and add contrast.



## 13 White pencil

We can be a bit more lenient with studying our reference for this background element as nebulae and galaxies are natural, so we have a bit of artistic liberty. I like to make up some cloud sections and shapes here, while still keeping within the rules of the nebula. Using my Luminance sharpened white pencil, I can carve in the layers of clouds to suggest depth and detail.



## 14 Make final touches

Not forgetting that the magic in her hand interacts with the background, we need to remember to blend the lighter blue shades around the magic with the gradually darker blues going into the background. Once all the colouring has been finished, we can now have some fun adding in stars. I like to keep them dispersed in the darker sections and more clustered in the lighter parts. ●



# First Impressions

✧ Etara ✧

The artist reflects on an everlasting journey of learning



Where did you grow up and how has this influenced your art? I grew up in a quiet area of northern Italy,

and I think that's influenced my art and the way I look at it. I want to convey a sense of tranquillity and calmness, trying to make people forget, even for a moment, the hustle and bustle of their lives.

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

There have been various influences, but I think the biggest came from my interest in mythology. I love everything related to folk myths; the telling of fantastic creatures that belong to folk culture and tradition, with particular attention to the bond created between natural and supernatural elements. My interest and studies over the years have travelled from Northern Europe to the Far East of Asia, and all of this has gone, even indirectly, to deeply influence my art.

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

My first commission was a portrait painting with a floral theme. It was



## OPHELIA

*With this painting, I wanted to focus on the facial shading and create a more silky effect.*

the first time I remember feeling a sense of fulfilment; I was thrilled that someone appreciated my work so much that they wanted to hang it. That was several years ago, and over time my skills have improved. My painting style has matured and attention to detail increased.

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

There are so many differences that I wouldn't know where to start. With experience and time, I've gone on to modify and improve every possible element, starting with character design, composition and balancing. Recently I've been working on a portrait, Ophelia. This painting has

allowed me to practise a lot on greater control and management of colour shading. When I look back at my old works and compare them to this one, I can see that I've achieved several milestones, but just as many await me in the future.

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

I always try to include something that reflects my being or way of thinking in each of my paintings. All of them have been important to my personal and artistic growth. Most of my characters convey a feeling of nostalgia, often with a gaze that absordedly looks away.

What are your painting rituals?

Before starting, I thoroughly clean my work surface, and clean and put each brush back in place. I remove any superfluous objects from view, as this helps me clear my mind and make room for new ideas. Once that's done, I can start painting.

Is creating art as a career all you thought it would be?

Like any work that has its focus on one's skills, it's taken years to be able to achieve good results, where the main elements are practice and perseverance. Although it feels like a somewhat circuitous path in the beginning, with the right time and patience one can find great personal satisfaction. In addition, the artistic community is large and varied, so once you choose your niche, it's much easier to find a large audience, especially through social media.

What does the future hold for you?

I have lots of projects in mind, but I've always wanted to create an artbook that collects most of my works. It would be a challenging but truly rewarding experience.

*Etara has exhibited her paintings in several international galleries. Her work is focused on acrylic colours and specialises in the representation of surreal female figures. See more at [www.etaraart.com](http://www.etaraart.com).*

“I was thrilled that someone appreciated my work so much they wanted to hang it”





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