

2d Artist

Concept Art, Digital & Matte Painting Magazine
Issue 032 August 2008 \$4.50 / €3.25 / £2.25

Simon Dominic Brewer

Find out how this IT professional finds the time to plug in his Wacom and create amazing pieces of artwork in our in-depth interview with Simon Dominic Brewer!



ARTICLES

Sketchbook of Stephen Cooper



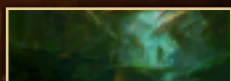
INTERVIEWS

Simon Dominic Brewer, Justin Albers & Leonid Kozienko



GALLERIES

Ryohei Hase, Per Haagensen, Levente Peterffy, plus more!



MAKING OF'S

Shroom Valley by Min Hyuk Yum, plus more!



TUTORIALS

Speed Painting: "Robot Scrap Yard", plus more!



EDITORIAL

Welcome to Issue 32, and whilst some of the team are at Siggraph '08 the rest of us are busying ourselves away on the next issues of 2Artist and 3DCreative for you (but we're not complaining as we're at our happiest when we're creating these magazines – who wouldn't be?). The guys seem to be drumming up lots of interest in the magazines over in LA, so here's hoping for a great end to 2008!

So what have we got for you

this month? Well, I think I must have had a sneaky suspicion that **Simon Dominic Brewer** was heading for big things when I contacted him a couple of months ago for an interview. I recall him modestly saying that he probably wouldn't have much to say "on account of not being a very interesting person" (his own words), but I'm really pleased that he came around to my way of thinking and jumped on the 2DArtist interview train, as he's actually the funniest guy and a seriously talented artist, who we're going to be keeping our beady eyes on in the future! He still refers to himself as a "hobbyist", but during the interview he only went and won himself first place in CGSociety's 'Uplift Universe' Challenge! We were all really pleased to hear this fantastic news, and if you check out his portfolio then you'll see exactly why he was awarded "Master Award Winner" of the prestigious CGChallenge [PAGE 007]! We've also got hold of two of the Dominance War III judges for interviews in this month's issue: **Justin Albers** and **Leonid Kozienko**. Justin Albers is currently a Concept Artist working at NCSoft who has a mind-blowing collection of concept work for our eyes to feast upon [PAGE 021], and Leonid Kozienko is a freelance artist who works on everything from video game character design to magazine covers, and you'll instantly recognise some of his most famous pieces when you check out the interview with him on PAGE 029.

Our tutorials feature the finale of our Creature Concept Design series from **Mike Corriero**, with part six on PAGE 107, and we get stuck into more sci-fi painting with **Chee Ming Wong** on PAGE 091 in the second of 12 parts on Space Painting. This time Chee takes us boldly where many artists fear to paint, as he talks us through the painting of a "barren world". And as if that's not enough tutorial content for you, we also welcome back Ignacio Lazcano and Joel Carlo for this month's Speed Painting tutorial topic: "Robot scrap yard" (PAGE 081).

Finally, our Making Ofs feature something slightly different for 2DArtist in the form of **Kamal Khalil**'s Making Of "Dream" [PAGE 121], and **Min Hyuk Yum** has kindly painted us a brand new image with an accompanying Making Of especially for this issue, so please do enjoy this month's offerings and get in touch with your inner artist – I can hear him or her scratching to get out, so don't let your Wacom collect any more dust, it's time to get painting!

ED.

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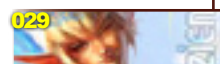
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MONUMENT

Digital Art Masters Free Chapter Promotion

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Zoo Publishing Information & Contacts



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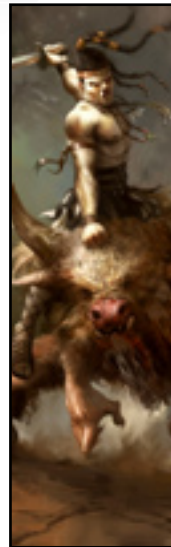
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10.2.2017

CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS

Every month, many artists from around the world contribute to 3DCreative & 2DArtist magazines. Here you can find out all about them! If you would like to be a part of 3DCreative or 2DArtist magazines, please contact: lynette@zoopublishing.com



Simon Dominic Brewer

Is a digital painter living in Lancashire, in the North of England. He's been painting for five years, most of which time using Painter and a Wacom tablet. It's still a hobby for him, although he does have professional aspirations for the future. He specialises in fantasy, science-fiction and horror – actually, anything weird, with a special liking for mythology!

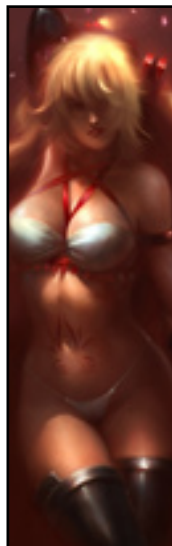
<http://www.painterly.co.uk>
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Leonid Kozienko

Likes to visualise many things, from alien worlds to fantasy realms. He works mostly digitally in Photoshop and Painter using a Wacom tablet, but for sketching and research he often switches to pencils and paper. His artwork experience includes concept design and illustration for videogames and film, and he also helps people with visuals and idea development for their projects.

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Stephen Cooper

Is a Concept and Environment Artist in the computer games industry. He has over 5 years' experience and has contributed to titles such as Haze and Silent Hill Origins. He has a BA in Illustration and an MA in Computer Animation, and he is currently looking to expand his career in concept art. He currently works in Maya, Photoshop and with traditional media.

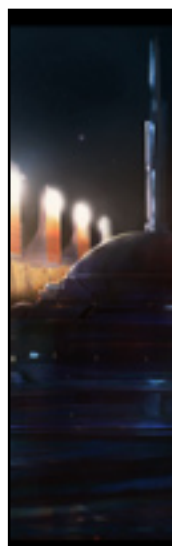
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Dr. M. Wong

Has over 8 years of creative visualisation and pre-production experience, having worked on various independent game projects, publications and CGI pre-production artwork. He is currently the CEO of his own digital art studio, Opus Artz, based in London. Previous work includes his role as Senior Concept Artist and Visual Lead for 'Infinity: The Quest for Earth MMO 2009', plus numerous commercial publications.

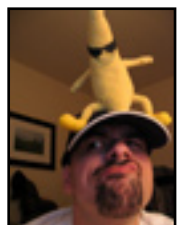
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Joel Carlo

Is a multimedia developer residing out in Denver, Colorado. His career as an artist has spanned over the last 14 years and includes work in both traditional and digital media, web design, print, and motion graphics for broadcasting. His client list is varied and ranges from Commissioned work for small studio projects to larger clients such as Future Publishing, Burrows & Chapin, The Ayzenberg Group, NASCAR, Dodge, Toyota and Fox Television.

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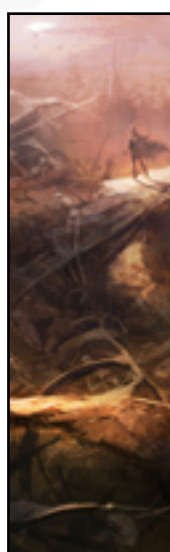




Mike Corriero

Currently produces assets as a Freelance artist for various companies including everything from creatures, environments, structures, illustrations and icons. Some of his clients include Radical Entertainment, ImagineFX and Liquid Development to which he has contributed work for projects delivered to Flagship Studios and Ensemble Studios through the art direction and outsourcing of LD.

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Ignacio Bazán Lazzano

Is a Concept Artist/Digital Illustrator in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He worked as a Game Artist and Illustrator for 4 years, and now works as a Concept Artist. He's worked for NGD Studios, Globalfun, Gameloft and now works with Timegate Studios and Sabarasa Entertainment. In the future he hopes to study in another country and work with the very best concept artists!

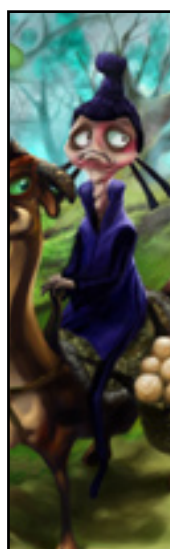
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Kamal Khalil

Is a freelance artist currently residing in Miami, Florida. Art was the one thing he knew would always be a part of his life, whatever the medium. Recently discovering the world of concept art and the limitless possibilities, he has fallen in love with this area of the industry and hopes to become an integral part in its continued growth. His hope is in finding a place within the video game and movie industry in the near future.

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Rodny Mella

Is from the Philippines and is currently working as a product designer and freelance artist/illustrator in Hong Kong and Shenzhen, China. His background is in art advertising, but for the past 8 years he's been doing product designing professionally, and previously worked as a game designer for 2 years at Micronet, Japan. He enjoys digital painting and 3D modelling and animation.

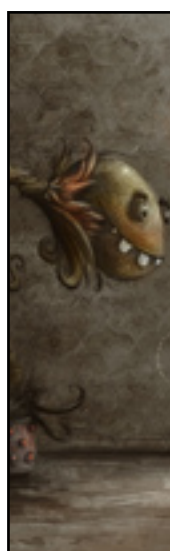
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Kim Sergey

Aka Locito, originally studied English Philology at Tashkent National University. He later realised that it wasn't useful for him to be a philologist of English in Uzbekistan, and so dropped his studies to pursue another path. He got carried away with design since his friend was also a designer, and he decided that he could do it too! His first attempt to get a job was crowned with success and he became a graphic designer at the biggest media company in Uzbekistan: TerraGroup.

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Sean Thurlow

Was born and raised in New Jersey, 1986, and has been drawing since he was a kid. He was inspired a lot by classic horror movies, like "Frankenstein", and independent classics like "Crawling Eye". When he moved out to Tucson, Arizona, he went for a career in illustration, and along the way was introduced to the digital medium. He's currently working towards a degree in illustration and freelancing as he goes.

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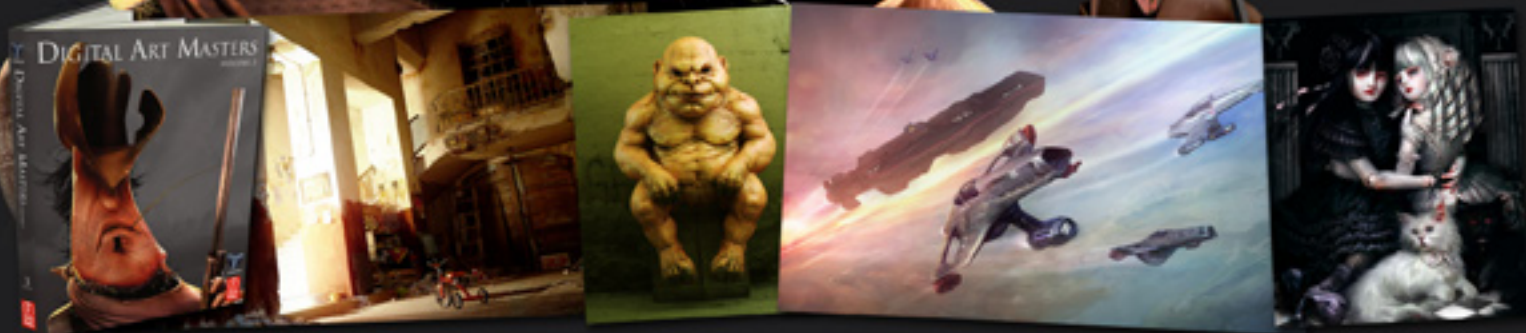
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SIMON DOMINIC BREWER

"BY DAY I'M A WORLD-RENOWNED EXPLORER AND TREASURE HUNTER. BY NIGHT AN ARTIST. COMMITTING MY ADVENTURES TO DIGITAL CANVAS AND PASSING THEM OFF AS FANTASY BECAUSE NOBODY WOULD EVER BELIEVE THEM."



By the high quality of his work, you might expect Simon Dominic Brewer to be a full-time, freelance artist, with commissions coming out of his ears. He's not; he's a full-time employee of the IT industry, with commissions coming out of his ears and barely enough free time to take part in this interview. Read on to find out more about this unusual artist, his love of myths and legends and the answer to the ultimate question: what he would do if he had a pet monkey ...

Simon
in 2006

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SIMON DOMINIC BREWER

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"IT'S INSPIRING TO BE
ON A PROJECT FROM THE
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JUSTIN ALBERS

Justin Albers is a concept artist, working out of Austin, USA. He's become something of a veteran of the MMO world recently, having worked on *Tabula Rasa* before moving on to the upcoming *Warhammer 40,000*, and we wanted to take this opportunity to find out about how life in the gaming industry is treating him ...

JUSTIN ALBERS

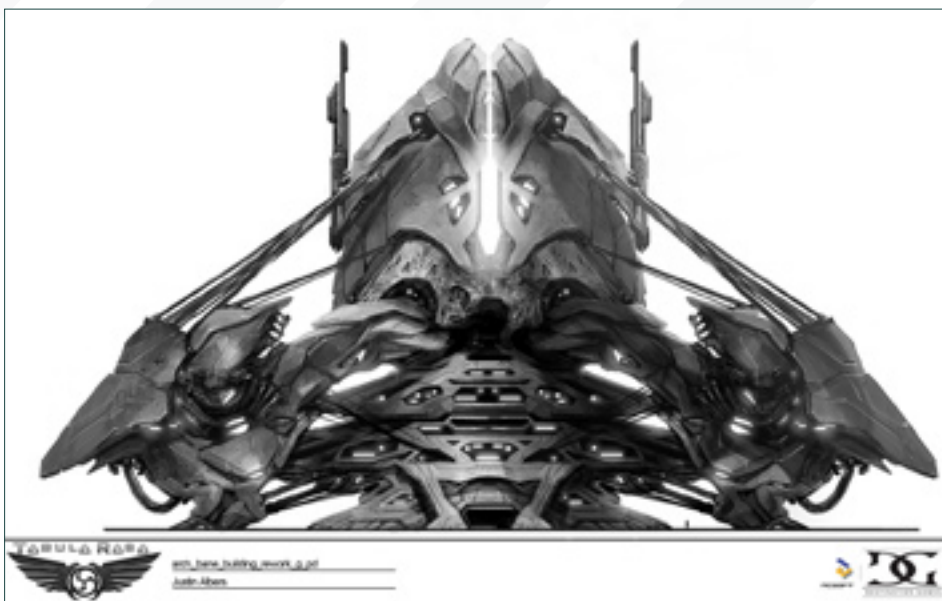
Hi Justin and welcome to 2DArtist! Can I kick-off this interview by asking you to introduce yourself and tell us a bit about how you came to be where you are today?

Thanks for having me on here! I'm Justin Albers, one of the concept artists at Vigil Games. I'm a graduate of the Art Institute of Dallas and have been working in the games industry since 2004. I started out working for a company called TKO Software in Dallas, then moved to Austin to work for NCsoft and am currently at Vigil Games working on the *Warhammer 40,000* MMO.

Sounds like you've been pretty busy over the last few years! Was there one particular moment in your life when you decided that you wanted to be a 2D concept artist? And did you always intend to work in the games industry, or was that just something that you fell into?

After I saw *The Matrix* for the first time when I was in high school, I was fascinated by the pre-production process involved - all the concept designs, production paintings and storyboards that went into the making of the movie - and that was what pretty much sealed the deal for me. I really enjoyed the designs Geof Darrow created for the look of the machines - I had never seen such meticulous work.

For a long time I wasn't sure what I wanted to

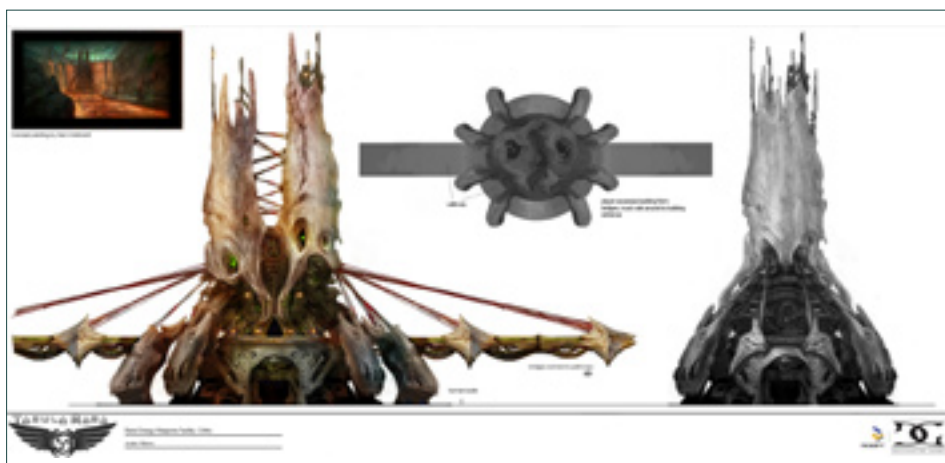


do in the art world but after that I knew where I was going. I wanted work in the games industry when I started out; it seemed like it offered the

greatest variety of projects, the most stability, and was the most accessible to me. Having played video games for the greater part of my life, and drawing a lot of my inspiration from games like *Zelda*, *Final Fantasy* and *Starcraft*, I was definitely thrilled to have the opportunity to finally work on the development side of things and give back to the gaming world.

It must have been amazing to get the chance to follow your dream - not many people are lucky enough to be able to do that! Was it a difficult industry to break into?

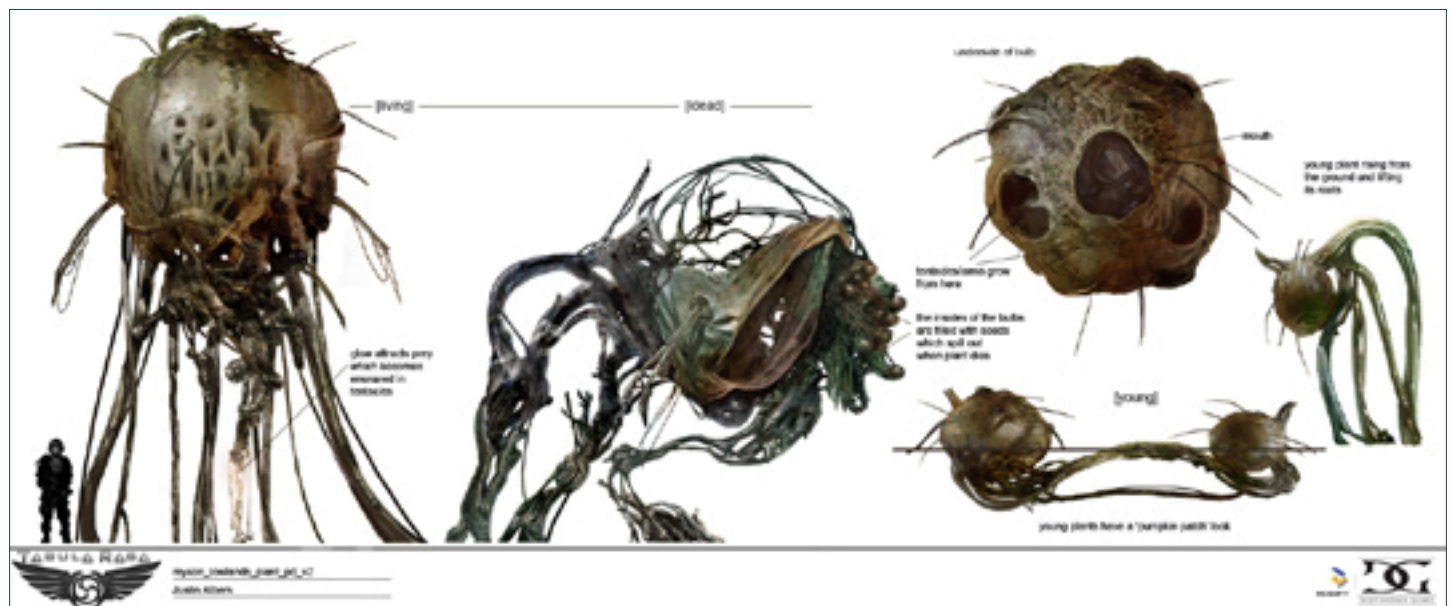
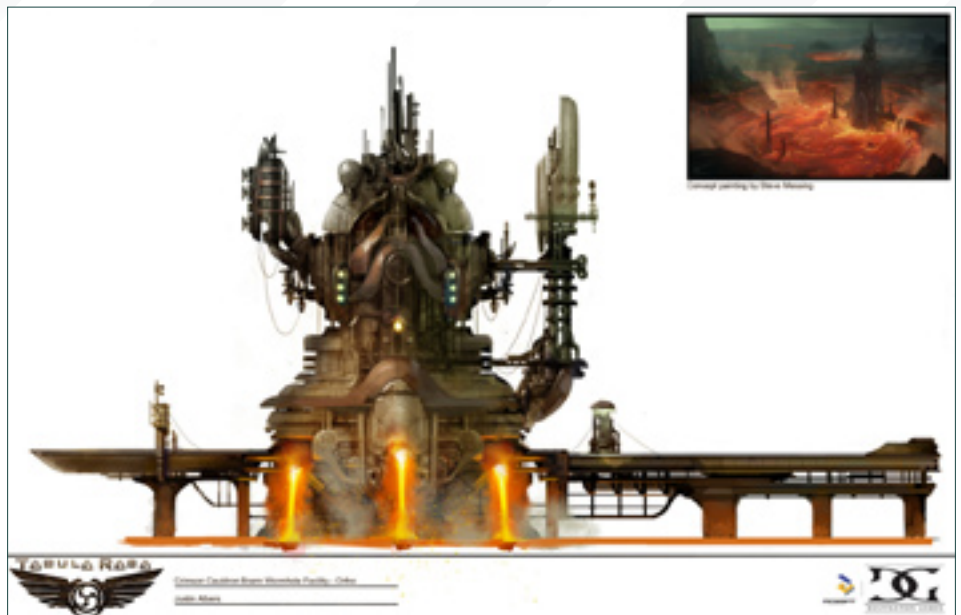
I was able to make some great friends in the industry through the school forums and I was



offered a job as soon as I finished my studies. It's a hard industry to break into for sure; there are lots of artists out there but only a limited number of openings. Regardless of schooling or degree, I think it all comes down to having the best portfolio possible, getting your name out there and networking every chance you get.

I can see from looking at your website (<http://www.justinalbers.com/>) that you recently spent several years working as a concept artist on the development of Richard Garriott's *Tabula Rasa*. How did the experience of working on such a huge MMORPG compare to other projects that you've worked on in the past?

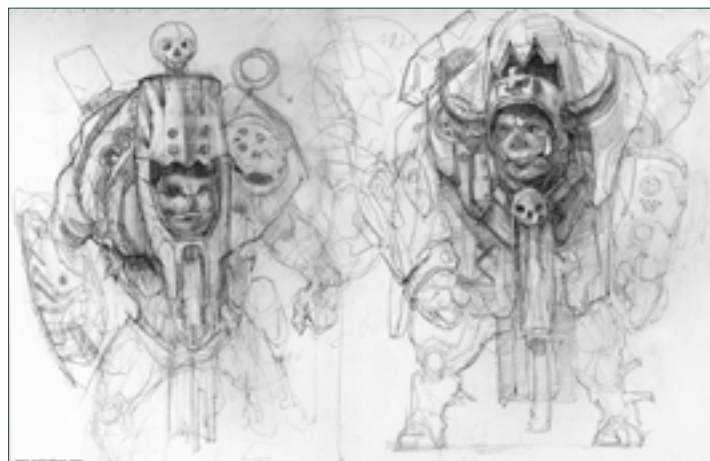
On a project like *Tabula Rasa* there was a lot of ground to cover – from different planets, races, and architecture down to individual trees and foliage. There was a lot to consider and there were many different artists working together to flesh out these visuals. I was coming from TKO, where we had three concept artists including myself, as opposed to the entire department of concept artists they had at NCsoft (including those on contract). The longest I had been on a project at that point had been a few months, whereas I was on TR for a good two years. At TKO, I worked with my art director to determine the look of the games in production; on TR there was a whole team and an entire pre-production schedule dedicated to just that



purpose. Although being at TKO was a learning experience for me and I met a lot of great people there, I was happy to move onto TR because it was more ambitious and exciting in terms of scope.

The concept designs that you produced for *Tabula Rasa* are fascinating - did the futuristic, sci-fi setting of the game give you free rein to be as creative with your concepts as you wanted? Or were you restricted by the need to consider the working practicalities of what you were designing?

Thanks! For everything on *Tabula Rasa*, and I'm sure games in general, there's always a balance between creating what would be cool and what would be attainable with time and hardware limitations. There's an opportunity to come up with some genuinely innovative designs when working in a genre with as few limitations as sci-fi. When I started on TR, style guides had already been established, so it was more designing elements based on those already existing visuals. I created mostly production drawings and breakouts based on designs that the other artists came up with in their



concept paintings. I had the chance to create designs for a few different landscapes, terrain, and new architecture later on for a certain area of the game and that was really rewarding for me.

So do you prefer to be on board with a game in the early stages of development, so that you get the chance to establish those style guides yourself?

Absolutely! It's inspiring to be on a project from the beginning, when very little's been decided or planned and the style, look, and feel are still undetermined – that's what I find really fulfilling and enjoyable. Being brought into Vigil at the beginning of this new MMO is really exciting.

Speaking of this new MMO of yours, (*Warhammer 40,000*), I've noticed that there seems to be a bit of a trend in the projects you've been a part of over the last several years. Are these multi-player online games something that you've been consciously choosing to work on? Or is it more a case of being assigned a particular project by your company?

Honestly, aside from a few projects at my first company, I've only worked on MMO projects so far – it's been something that I have just sort of fallen into, most projects in the Austin game circuit are MMOs. In a way working on these types of games is great because you have to create this vast world that needs to be populated, which means a lot of art needs to be produced. There are lots of different gameplay scenarios and instances that provide a variety of design prospects for the concept team. Unfortunately it's also easier to get burnt out on projects that are in development for years and years. But I personally really enjoy the art style



of the *Warhammer 40,000* universe and it's had a lot of influence on me and my own, personal style of artwork.

Now *Dominance War III* was the word on everybody's lips a couple of months ago (particularly ours, thanks to our unexpected success in the 3D challenge!) and I noticed from my web-browsing that you came 7th in the 2D challenge – congratulations! Your image looks amazing; I can see why you placed so highly. Was this your first experience of the *Dominance War* competition? Can you tell me a little about the creative process behind your image?

Thanks! Congrats to you guys at 3DTotall as well. This was actually my second attempt - last year I teamed up with a friend of mine who's a character artist and we came up with a big half-mechanical alien guy and did fairly well overall.

For this year, once I found out what the topic was, I started sketching out some ideas – working old school on actual paper – and I

tried to come up with a design based off each element so that I could see which one had the most potential. I narrowed it down to a few sketches based off “vegetation” and “death” – I thought these might be worth taking further. I also received a lot of great ideas and tips from my fellow artists on the forums which was crucial for me in narrowing down the design.

I ended up going with “vegetation”, because I thought that this would allow me to create some interesting shapes and textures and could give me a nice colour palette to work with. At the time I didn’t see too many people using that particular element, but turns out it ended up being really popular! I worked on variations of this theme and took the best idea out of those and started to plan out my illustration and model sheet. For the illustration, I worked up a few black and white thumbnails to get my composition straight and my values right – usually if I go headfirst into painting in Photoshop it turns into a disaster, so a little pre-planning at the beginning really saves me in the end. I thought it might be cool if this was a creature that could be summoned from the ground – it’s intelligent but at the same time controlled – which would give me a way to tie in the artefact that would bring this guy to life. The model sheet took forever – what I thought looked cool from one angle would



look really bad or uninteresting from the side, or back, etc., so I had to do a lot of variations on that. But it was all good practice for me.

Looking through your portfolio, I can see that vegetation features in several of your works

while others, such as your WIPs, have a definite sci-fi/futuristic feel. Much of this work was clearly produced for the particular project that you were working on at the time; with this in mind, do you get much free time to devote to your own artwork? And when you do, what do you choose



to draw and where do you get inspiration from? I try to work on personal projects for myself or for other people as much as possible; I think it's in every artist to want to create pieces that are your own, to bring your own ideas to light and to get down some of your own personal designs. I think it's what keeps your work fresh and saves you from getting burned out as well as gives you time to experiment with different techniques and processes and to take chances on pieces that you might not feel comfortable taking on at work.

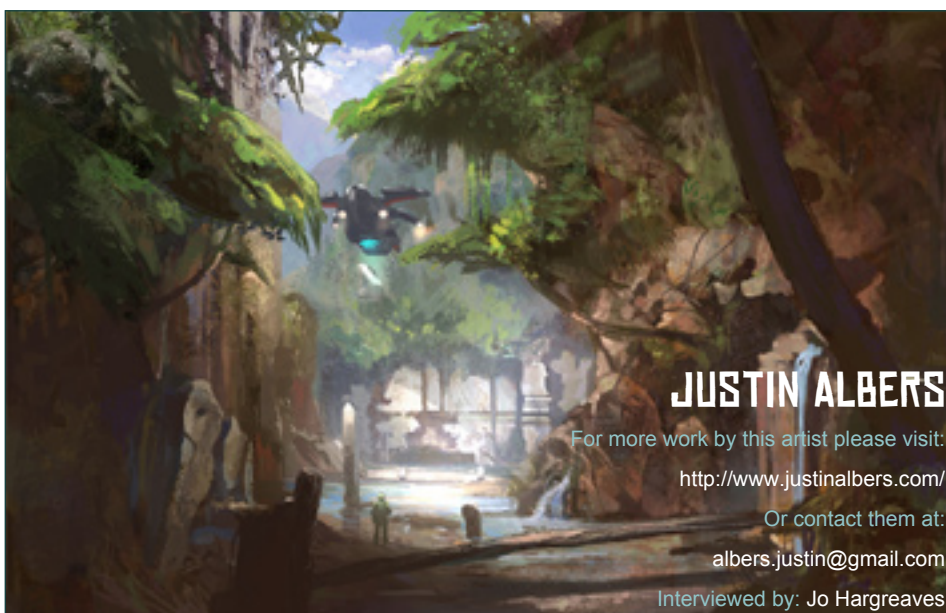
For whatever reason, I like to draw worn, beat up, post-apocalyptic stuff. I like coming up with all sorts of different shapes and details for robots and vehicles and characters, and I really enjoy coming up with alternate ways in which machines and mechanical stuff could work. I also love hazy, bleak atmospheric perspectives in environments – in no way influenced by *The Matrix*!

I pull inspiration from movies, music, and books, as well as other artists – from old school guys like Sargent and Wyeth, to a lot of my fellow current concept artists and illustrators. I also draw inspiration and reference from places like junkyards, construction zones, and industrial areas – junked cars and machinery, old buildings. That stuff has a lot of history and character.

Well we've talked a lot about the past and the present, but I'd like to finish off by asking about the future. Do you have any particular plans for the next few years? Any burning ambitions that you hope to fulfil?

I hope to continue to grow and improve as an artist, to improve my drawing, painting and design skills, to learn some traditional media like acrylics and oils, and to keep working on a variety of cool projects. If I can keep that up I'll be happy.

Thanks Justin – and good luck with that future!

**JUSTIN ALBERS**

For more work by this artist please visit:

<http://www.justin-albers.com/>

Or contact them at:

albers.justin@gmail.com

Interviewed by: Jo Hargreaves

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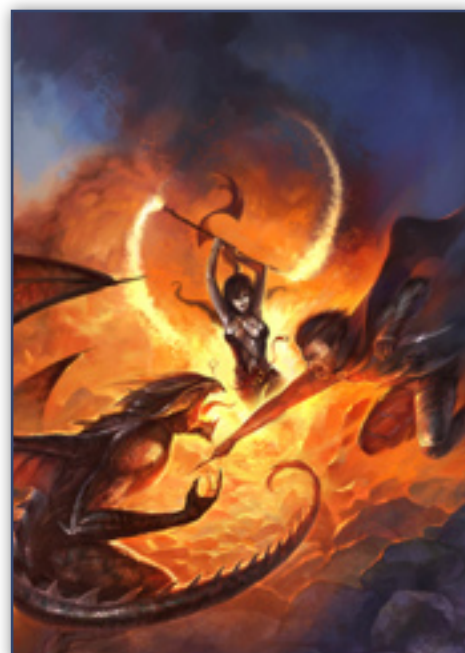
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FUTURISTIC THEMES: THE
FUTURE IS A REALITY
AHEAD OF US. SO IT'S
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HOW IT WILL TURN OUT.
WORKING IN THE FANTASY
GENRE ALLOWS YOU TO
PLAY WITH MYTHS, FAIRY
TALES AND IMPOSSIBLE
THINGS. AND FANTASY IS
ALSO A WAY TO IMAGINE A
BETTER REALITY."

Leonid Kozienko

Leonid Kozienko
is a digital artist
and illustrator from
Siberia, whose artworks
vary from sci-fi to fantasy.
We took this chance to find
out more about him.

Leonid Kozienko

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the Sketchbook **of Stephen Cooper**

In this article Stephen Cooper tells us about the different techniques he has used in creating his sketches.

This is the **FREE LITE ISSUE** of **2d Artist** to purchase the **FULL ISSUE** [click here](#)

the Sketchbook of Stephen Cooper

9
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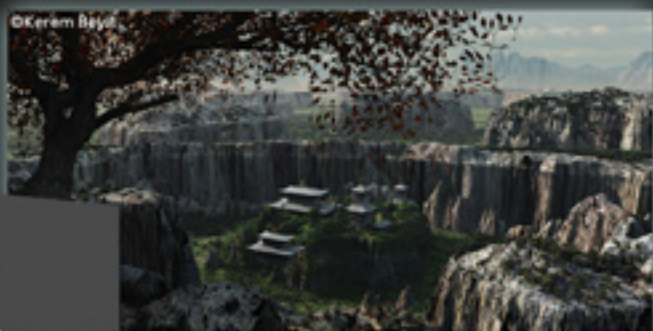


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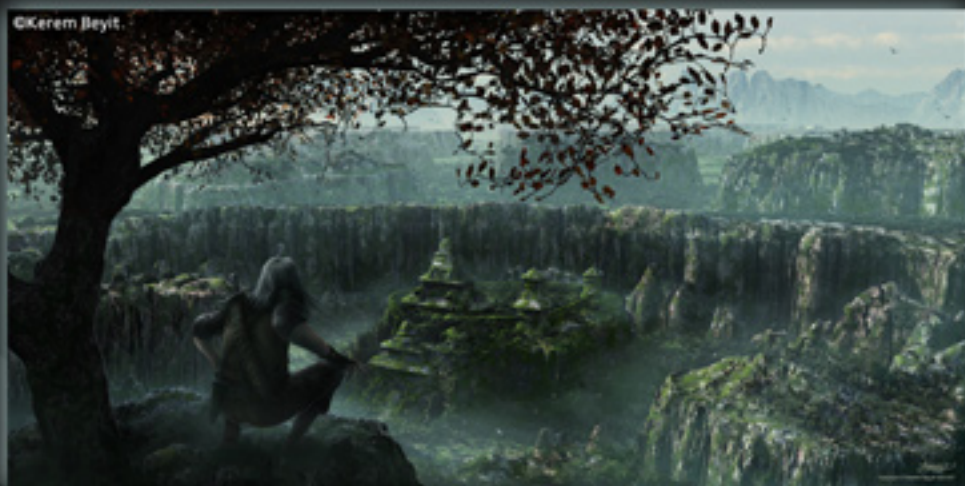


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*Kerem Beyit
Freelance Illustrator*



Final matte painting



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The Gallery

This month we feature:

RuanJia Iskof

Ryohei Hase

Per Haagensen

Levente Peterffy

Andy Jones

Jian Guo

Robin Olausson

Frederic St-Arnaud

Tiziano Baracchi

Marek Okoń



The Gallery!

10

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Match-moving and Stabilization



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Challenge

2DArtist Magazine introduces the "Challenge" section of the mag. Every month we will run the challenge in the conceptart.org forums, available for anyone to enter, for prizes and goodies from www.3dtotal.com shop and to also get featured in this very magazine! Here we will display the winners from the previous month's challenge and the "Making Of's" from the month before that.

Spaceship

Stylised Challenge



CONCEPTART

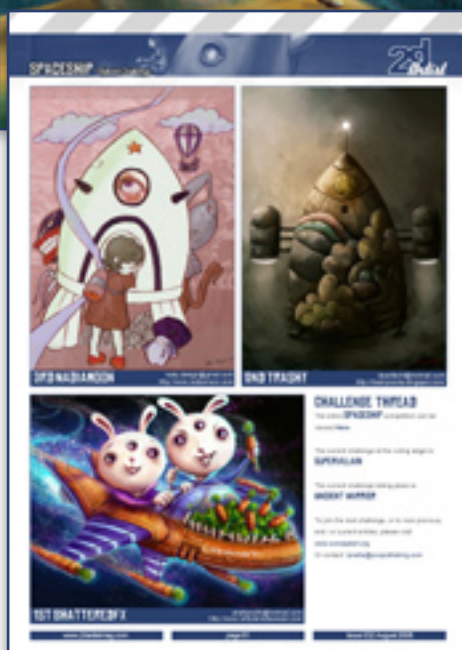
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Stylised Challenge













Spaceship

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Welcome to the Speed Painting section of the magazine. This month we've asked two artists to produce a speed painting based on a simple, one-line brief. Here we feature the final paintings and the overview of the creation processes.

This month our talented artists, **Ignacio Bazán** Lazcano and Joel Carlo, tackle the topic:

ROBOT SCRAP YARD

SPEED PAINTING

9
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VFS animation is all around you. Every year our graduates start careers at the world's best production studios. You've seen their work in *Iron Man*, *Transformers*, *Cloverfield*, *The Golden Compass*, *Horton Hears a Who*, *Lost*, *Family Guy* and *Battlestar Galactica*.



VFS student work by Zack Mathew

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PART 2: BARREN WORLDS - AUGUST 2008

PART 3: BARREN PLANETS - SEPTEMBER 2008

PART 4: GAIAN PLANETS - OCTOBER 2008

PART 5: COLONISED PLANETS - NOVEMBER 2008

II - TRANSPORT

PART 6: SPACESHIPS - DECEMBER 2008

PART 7: CAPITAL SHIPS - JANUARY 2009

PART 8: SPACE STATIONS - FEBRUARY 2009

III - ENVIRONMENTS

PART 9: SCI-FI HANGAR - MARCH 2009

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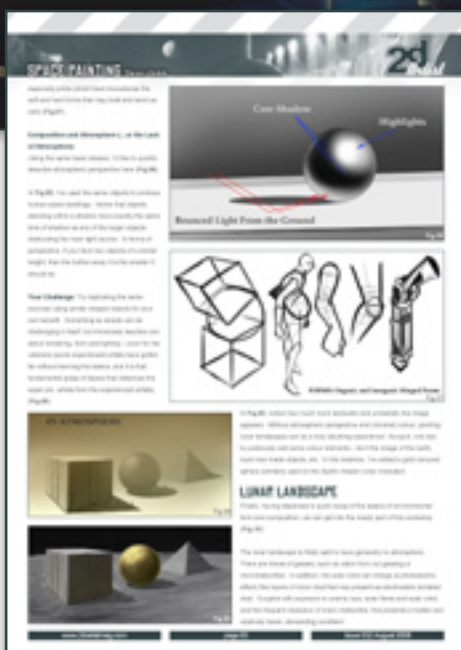
PART 11: MINING THE ASTEROID FIELDS - MAY 2009

PART 12: SPACE COLONIES - JUNE 2009

SPACE PAINTING

PART 2 BARREN WORLDS

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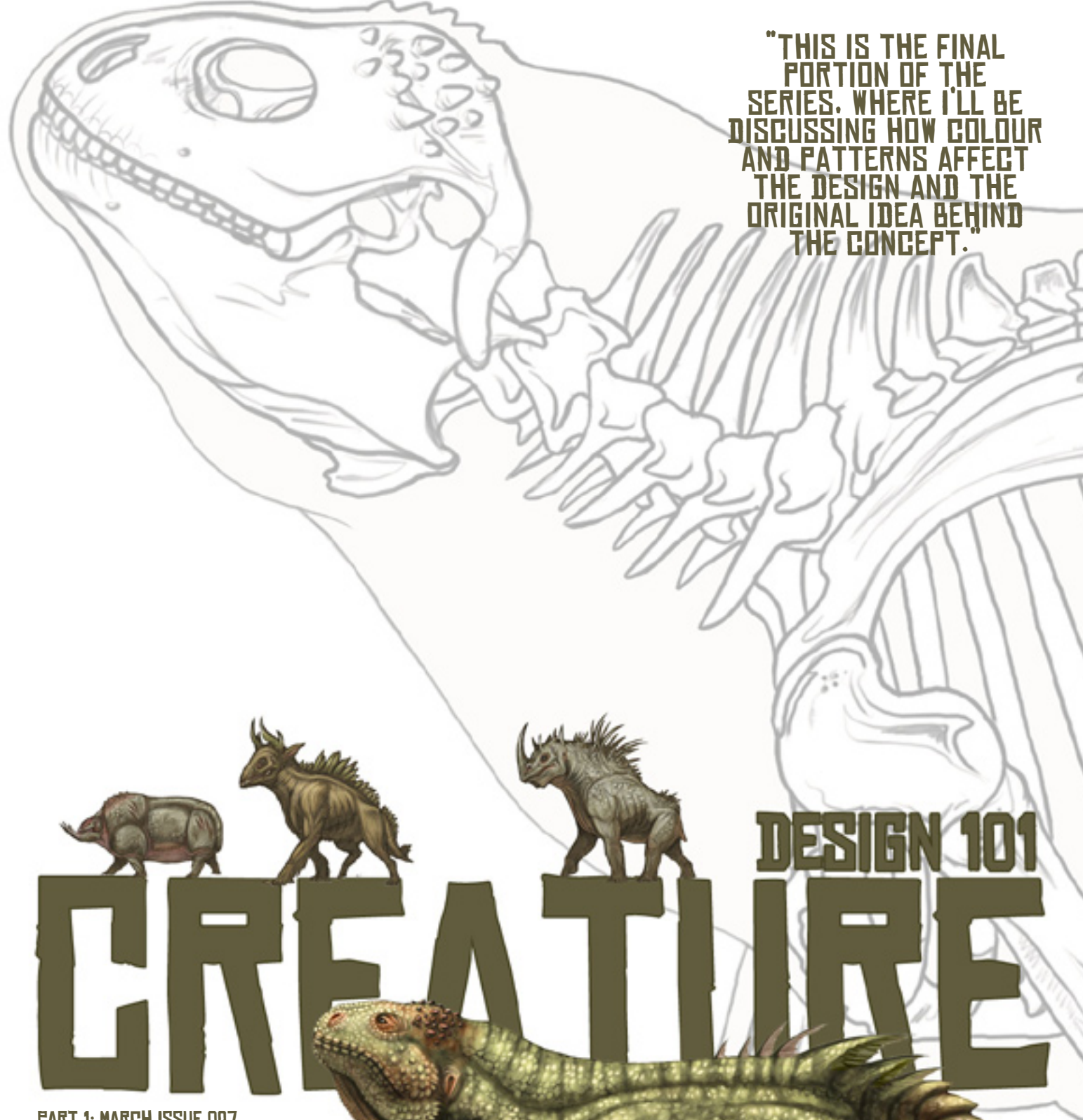


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"THIS IS THE FINAL
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DISCUSSING HOW COLOUR
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THE DESIGN AND THE
ORIGINAL IDEA BEHIND
THE CONCEPT."

DESIGN 101



CREATURE

PART 1: MARCH ISSUE 027

Starting Base for Your Designs: Reference Library

PART 2: APRIL ISSUE 028

The Next Step Into Imaginary Creature Anatomy

PART 3: MAY ISSUE 029

Design Process, Bone Structure & Skin Texture

PART 4: JUNE ISSUE 030

Head Design, Eyes and Construction of the Mouth

PART 5: JULY ISSUE 031

Body Structure, Body Variations, Hands & Feet

PART 6: AUGUST ISSUE 032

Colours, Patterns and Final Renderings



CREATURE DESIGN 101

PART 6 - COLOURS, PATTERNS AND FINAL RENDERINGS

6

TOTAL PAGES



"THIS IS THE FINAL PORTION OF THE SERIES, WHERE I'LL BE DISCUSSING HOW COLOUR AND PATTERNS AFFECT THE DESIGN AND THE ORIGINAL IDEA BEHIND THE CONCEPT."

CREATURE DESIGN 101

PART 6 - COLOURS, PATTERNS AND FINAL RENDERINGS

INTRODUCTION

The final portion of the series, where I'll be discussing how colour and patterns affect the design and the original idea behind the concept. This is the final portion of the series, where I'll be discussing how colour and patterns affect the design and the original idea behind the concept.

THUMBLIN' AND ROUGH VALUES

Having a rough idea of a creature's colour and patterns is a good start. It helps you to visualize the creature and to communicate your ideas to others. This is the first step in the process of creating a creature's colour and patterns.

COLOURS AND PATTERNS

Colour and patterns are two of the most important elements of a creature's design. They help to define the creature's personality and to make it stand out from the rest of the world.

ROUGH THUMBLIN'

Mark a White Rough Thumbnail



REFINED THUMBLIN'

Mark a White Refined Thumbnail



BASE COLOUR

Mark a White Base Colour



COLOUR PALETTE

Mark a White Colour Palette



"MY INITIAL THOUGHT
WAS TO PAINT SOMETHING
WITH A VERY STRONG
EMPHASIS ON LIGHTING.
A MOODY ENVIRONMENT
WITH LOTS OF DEPTH AND
CONTRASTING COLOURS."

In this article, Min Hyuk Yum explains how he
created his image "Shroom Valley"

Shroom Valley

making of by Min Hyuk Yum



Shroom Valley

6

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nPower CAD Translators for Maya

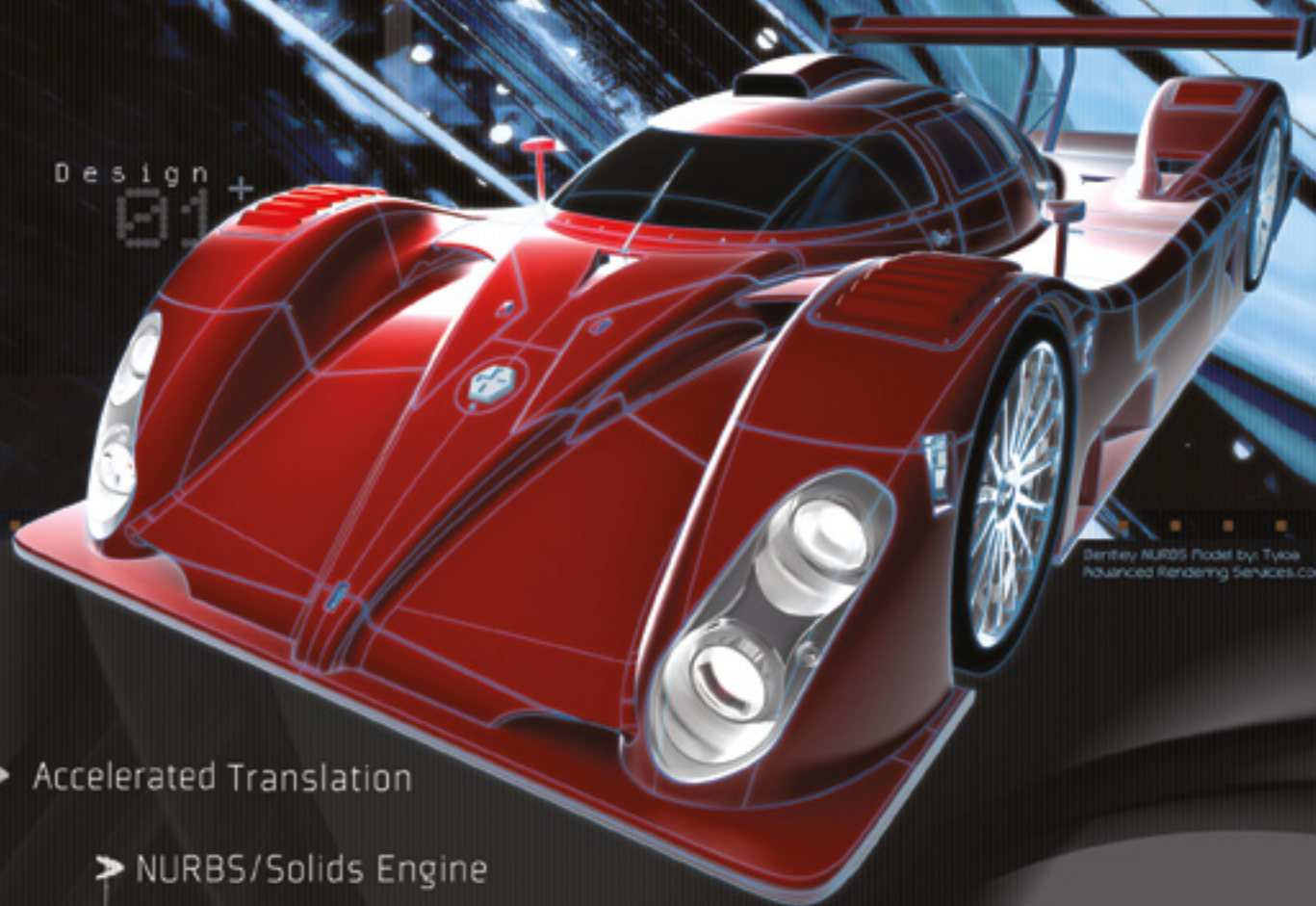
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OUR FZ OWN



"THE OVERALL INTENT FOR DREAM WAS TO CAPTURE THAT SENSE OF FREE SPIRIT - A FEELING OF CONTENTMENT. IN A SINGLE WORD."

making of by Kamal Khalil

DREAM

Kamal Khalil shares how he created his image 'Dream' in Painter X.



making of dream

12

TOTAL PAGES



DIGITAL ART MASTERS VOLUME 2

With the release of 3DTotal's book, *Digital Art Masters: Volume 2*, we have some exclusive chapters for you...

This book is more than just an artwork book. Not only does it feature full-colour, full-page images, but each artist has given a detailed description, in their own words, of the creation process behind each piece of published artwork. And they've done it especially for this book!

This month we feature:

"Monument"
by Mikko Kinnunen





MONUMENT

BY MIKKO KINNUNEN



INTRODUCTION
This painting started as a result of my curiosity for trying new artistic approaches. I was planning to do a painting derived from an abstract composition. Usually I would start a new image with a clear vision of what I wanted to do in terms of subject matter, mood, color palette and so on. This one started much more vaguely, with spontaneous brush strokes and very little idea of where I would be going with the piece as it progressed. This is an interesting yet risky approach, and something that may need to be reserved for personal works. I'm going to write a bit about my thought processes and how I approach a digital painting in general.

ABSTRACT SHAPES
The start is by doing the first few strokes, the thinking that I might be doing something that's grounded in nature fiction. I begin with dark brush strokes on a bright background, trying to find interesting shapes. This is probably the most important part of the sketching process, to try to nail the basic composition as well as possible. It helps to squint your eyes, or step back from the monitor screen to get a better idea of how your shapes are working. Important things to consider when designing an abstract composition are the relative sizes of the shapes, their position in relation to each other, and their placement within the whole frame. You should be looking for some repetition in the shapes, but I'm sure, lines or maybe even optical elements.

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The following shots of the "Monument" book pages are featured here in full-resolution and can be read by zooming in...

Repetition can unify the design, and having something that contradicts the major elements can play a vital part in tying down the focal point. For example, if you happen to use solid shapes, you could add a sphere where you wish to have your center of interest. People often use contrasting colors (lightness/darkness) to enhance the focal point, but you should also try to lead the eye with curves which can act as "strong instructions" for the viewer. Every now and then I flip the canvas horizontally to frustrate my eyes. I'm not afraid of mistakes at this point, since every stroke can always be erased or changed later on (Fig. 17).



UNDERPAINTING

There are several options available when starting to add color to the abstract sketch. Painting "alla prima" with hand-picked colors will give vibrant results, but is by far the most difficult way to add color to your painting. That's why many successful artists start with an underpainting, which is essentially a monochromatic rendering of the values (Fig. 18). Some people prefer to use complementary colors in the underpainting, which means if you plan to do an image that has a lot of red colors, you would start with a green underpainting. I usually try to pick a tone that would represent the final mood of the image instead. I'm going for a warm scene with a strong light behind the background structure.



I don't want to make the image orange or red though, so I try to find an interesting mixture of warmth and contrast using a warm mixture as my main color. The contrast can be too much highlighting in your paintings, so I have to temper it. You may get a strong graphic silhouette that works, but this lighting condition has its downsides. For example, you can't really do this and use a dark sky. That would be most cases, require objects to receive some light from the sides or front. Since this is a rather abstract piece, I'll go for a strong backlight anyway. At this stage it's a good idea to use a black frame around the image. It's not how your overall colors work. This also reduces the temptation of using too much black in your darker areas when doing the underpainting.

DEFINING THE FORMS

I gradually add more three-dimensional volumes to the piece (Fig. 19). The idea is to find the planes that are facing forward, and make them brighter than the planes facing away from the light. Note that the sun doesn't reach the shaded areas, which are lit with a cool ambient light to simulate the light coming from the sky. I'm also adding some photo textures at this stage. I'm not using a part of a photo to directly depict an

element in my painting, but I'm trying to find interesting variations and so-called happy accidents. You can always paint everything using brushes, but sometimes it's much quicker to just attach a some photo textures and see what you get. This time I used parts of a photo I took in Hull, England, to create some variation in the sky (Fig. 20). Many artists copy elements from someone else's photography - there are too many examples of this and I wouldn't recommend it. But using your own photos for interesting surfaces is really useful in a production environment. You can put an interesting texture on top of your painting and play around with it, erase areas and see what happens. I'm always experimenting with different techniques, but I'm also careful not to let those experiments dictate my artistic decisions.



At this stage, I'm not afraid of using too much saturation or contrast, since these can always be reduced at a later stage. I'm painting very boldly, and subtle adjustments can be done since I'm sure of how the finished piece will look. At this stage it's better to scale up the image to a minimum of 1000 pixels wide or high. This allows you to paint without using overly complex custom brushes. Most of my painting work is done using standard Photoshop brushes. I have included an example of some textured acrylic paint studies to give some idea of what you can use as textures to get rid of that "digital look" (Fig. 21).

FINISHING TOUCHES

Many people tend to overwork their digital paintings as there are no physical restrictions as to the amount of detail that can be added to a piece. I try to leave some room for the viewer's imagination, and all I'm doing here is adding a bit more texture and edge contrast to make this more suitable for print (Fig. 22). A good idea is to keep the original in shadowless state in a bright file mode. The careful not to make everything too sharp or too blurry. Many successful paintings use different types of edges, ranging from sharp edges in highlights

to isolated gradient the edges in the darkest shadows. When I usually paint an assembly as possible. I build the painting with a watercolor-type technique. I build transparent strokes of saturated color to create areas where intense and soft focus for most in each other (Fig 10). This subtle atmospheric technique makes the scene "come alive" in a way. You begin with the color of an area that's composed of many different tones, resulting in a vibrant effect. Some people like to carry optical mixing. As a final step, I also add a bit of grainy texture to the piece, to make it look less clean and artificial.



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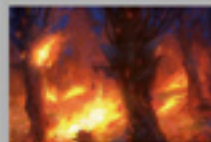
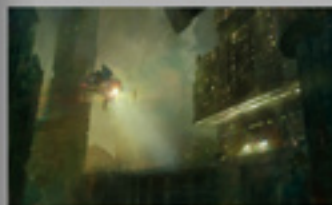


CONCLUSION

My finished work has a resolution of 5000 pixels wide, but there's not always the need to work this large. It goes up to 16-bit color and is also when you need more detail. This allows your computer to run more smoothly but it also depends on the kind of hardware you use. If you rely heavily on local brush settings in Photoshop, you may want to keep your image resolution reasonable to ensure a smooth workflow. Then again, with abundant hard-disk space and only a couple of layers, you could work somewhere around 8000-10,000 pixels without too much slow-down.

I always think that my work can be improved in many ways, but I'm happy with the result. I don't have to start before you when I started and get the outcome is, in my opinion, one of my better paintings so far. It's important to be your own critic, but it's much more important to get feedback in some aspects of each of your images, in the commercial world. I think you can easily lose the enjoyment of the creative process. Doing small personal works on the side allows you to experiment and "test your own water" - something that may not be easy to accomplish under tight deadlines. When I started out a few years back, I had no clue how to approach a digital painting. I hope some of these thoughts prove helpful to other people who are going down this self-taught route. Just remember, there's no one right way for doing things. There's usually more than one good solution to every problem (Fig 10).

ARTIST PORTFOLIO



FANTASY

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