

"The first thing I imagine when thinking about this type of setting, is a place full of people from different social classes: knights, noblemen and merchants are altogether in a place filled with texture and color..."

PAINTING FANTASY MEDIEVAL SCENES



This series of tutorials will be split over six separate chapters, all sharing the common theme of a fantasy inspired medieval scene at its heart. Each will be undertaken by a different artist and draw upon a wealth of experience and skills perfected over years of industry practice. The authors will discuss their approach to digital /concept painting, the tools and brushes they employ and treat us to a valuable look into their artistic process. The six installments will cover a different environment each month based upon the above theme and encompass a multitude of professional tips and techniques.

The importance of researching topics through to sketching and exploring ideas will feature alongside methods used to build and refine detail. These will form an integral part of the series and through comparison we shall be afforded a comprehensive insight into the world of the digital artist.

Chapter 1 | Market - This Month Jan 2010

Chapter 2 | City on Stilts - Next Month Feb 2010

Chapter 3 | Slums - Mar 2010

Chapter 4 | Forest Location - Apr 2010

Chapter 5 | Mountain City - May 2010

Chapter 6 | Docks - Jun 2010

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Painting Fantasy Medieval Scenes Chapter 1: Market

Software Used: Photoshop

Today I'm taking on the task of drawing a medieval marketplace. The first thing I imagine when thinking about this type of setting, is a place full of people from different social classes: knights, noblemen and merchants are altogether in a place filled with texture and color, where there is smoke and several tents of different sizes and shapes. Perhaps it's even surrounded by stone walls and decorative elements, narrow roads or streets. I understand markets to be essentially social places where people gather for exchanging either things or ideas.

If you're drawing a marketplace, you can choose any viewpoint or approach; you can either draw in the foreground two people bartering or trading, or perhaps a child stealing some fruit from a stall – there are many potential stories to be told. The picture, or your point of view, will change depending on what choice you make here. If we think about it, the possibilities are truly endless! My choice is possibly the most complicated one: I'm choosing to show what happens in a marketplace as if we're looking at it from an aerial perspective.



To start working on something like this, you need to use quick strokes to get the idea down, defining it step by step as you go. Measuring perspectives is necessary for making adequate structures. In this first instance, it really works to make quick sketches, without thinking too much about the anatomy of your painting (Fig.01).

Once you have an idea established, with regards to the objects and the location of the people in your scene, you can start defining and specifying your work more accurately. Amongst

many things, digital art allows you to gloss very easily over any black-and-white drawing that has been done. Another alternative is to color your work from the very beginning. This is the most traditional way of doing things, but you have to be very sure about the palette you are going to use when taking this approach. I'm going to do something in-between: define the objects and people in grey until I get what I'm searching for, and afterwards I'll gloss over in color (Fig.02).

Painting Fantasy Medieval Scenes

Chapter 1: Market

2d
artist

The starting point will be a quite defined drawing to which you have put the first layer of color.

Blue is the selected one for me, which I apply to the base layer using the Ctrl + U command. Tick the Colorize option in the new window that has already opened up (**Fig.03**).

Look for the blue tone you want in the slider bar called "Hue", and with other options you will be able to adjust the color even more. You should now have a completely blue colored drawing which is ready to have the real color for each element applied over it (**Fig.04 – 05**).

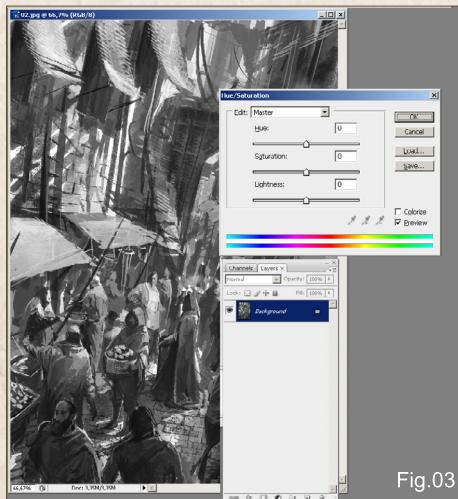


Fig.03

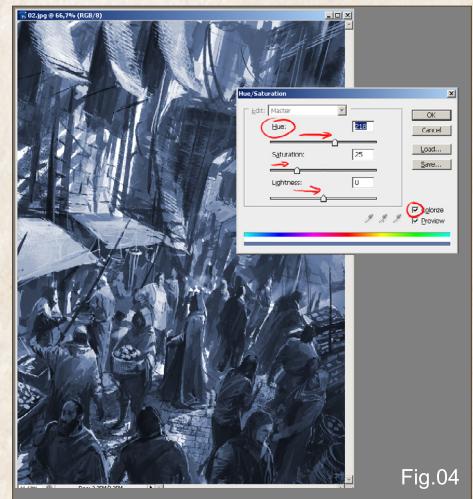


Fig.04



Fig.05

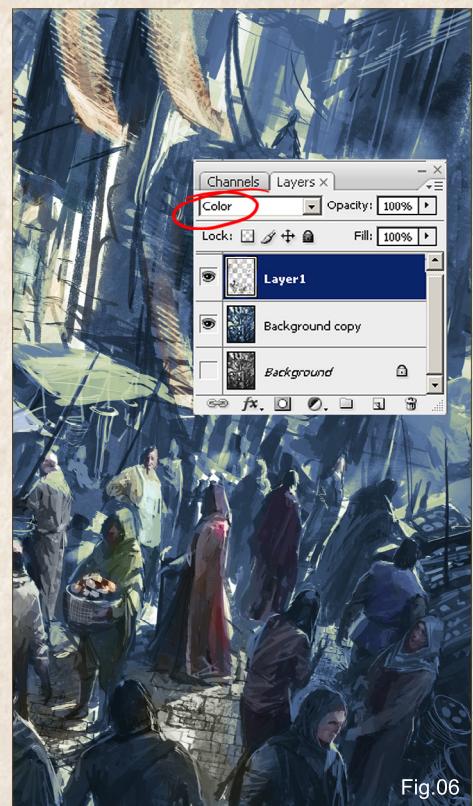


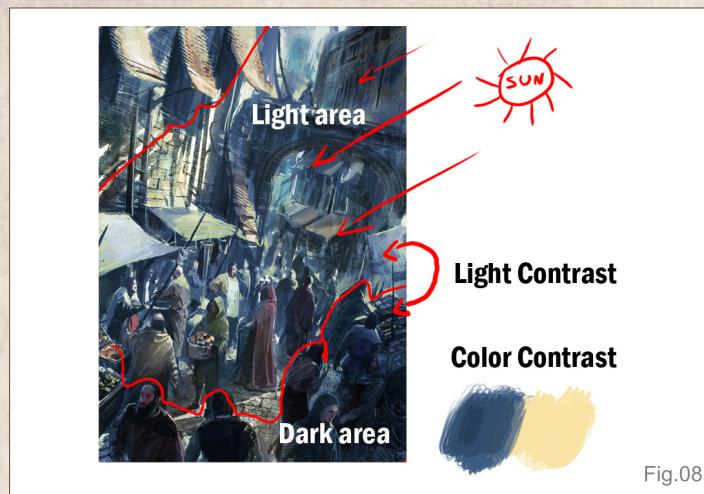
Fig.06

To color over the blue, let's create a new layer (Shift + Ctrl + N). Tick the Colorize option over the layers bar, and from now on you can paint with the colors you like (**Fig.06**).

Blue will be background color. I'm going to use it to shade all the elements included in the picture. My sketch is full of people and objects, so I'll try to use as many colors as I can to achieve variety in my composition. There are many characters that are becoming gradually defined: to the right there is a man that carries fruit in a basket; in the middle is a mysterious figure

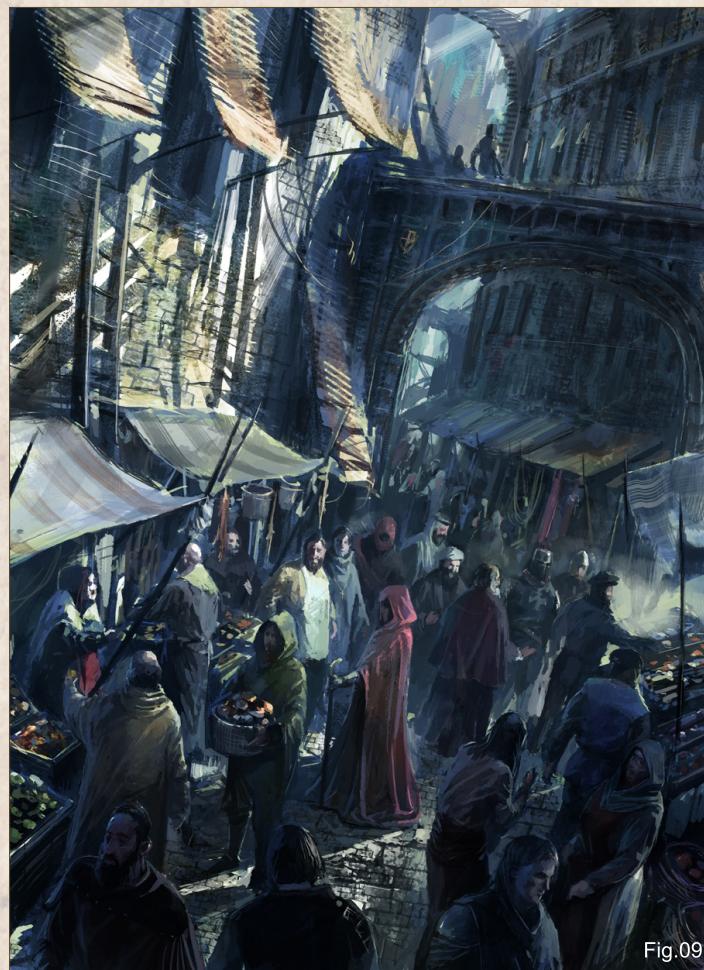
covered with a red cloak; above and below the picture you can see people from different social classes, moving upwards and downwards (Fig.07).

The second stage consists of giving basic color to each element and, at the same time, to go forth, tracing and polishing characters. The following one is to define contrasts better. There are different ways of getting it: marking the place where light comes from very well; and, at the same time, where dark and shade zones are placed; using warm and cold colors to separate elements (Fig.08).



The drawing is becoming even clearer now (Fig.09). At this stage you must control the situation; that is to say, you have to adjust the whole picture at every moment. The control is yours!

The following is without any doubt the stage of adjustment and precision. Let's use the magnifier for details now, to make elements become clearer still. I usually use the Paintbrush at 78% Opacity for this. This gives me a certain degree of sensitivity and, at the same time, strong lines to define it better (Fig.10).



Painting Fantasy Medieval Scenes

Chapter 1: Market

2d
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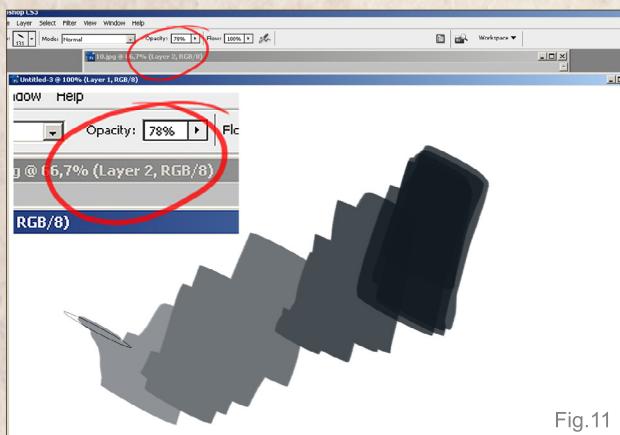


Fig.11

To explain what I'm saying, I'll now show you, from the very beginning, how I have colored the character who is dressed in a cloak and holding a cane (Fig.11).

What I want to get is the feeling that his cloak is made of pure velvet, something very luxurious. For the shadowed areas I use a basic blue; for color, I select an almost red rose color; and to brighten it I choose an orange. This way, I can move myself within the chromatic scale (Fig.12).

The trick with painting is to put your light and shade in the right places. If you are accurate with this, you can try to draw something realistic

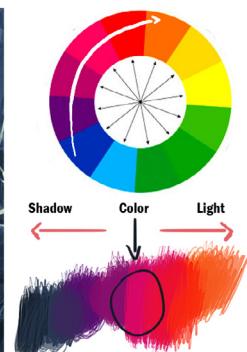


Fig.12

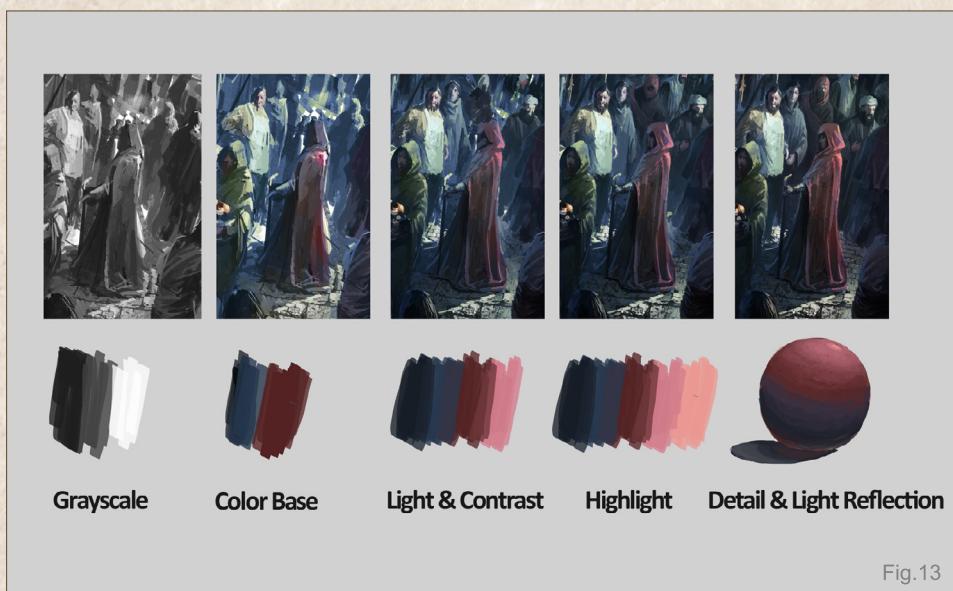


Fig.13

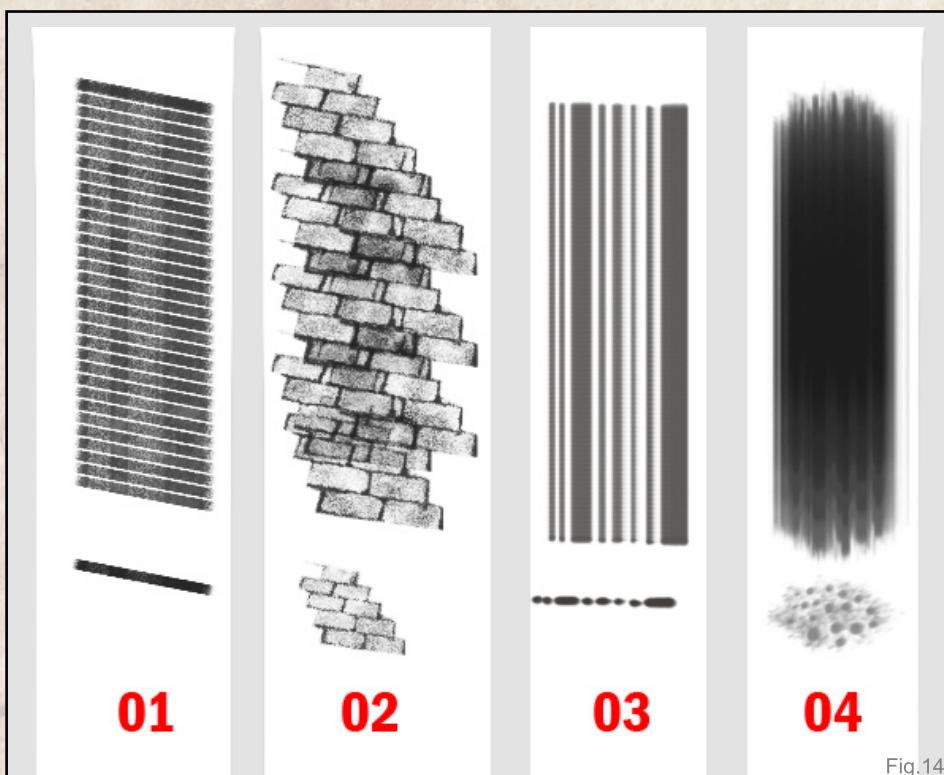


Fig.14

with very few brushstrokes. But this is quite difficult and you can only do it after observing and practicing hardly (Fig.13). I use the same procedure with the remaining elements of the picture.

With the painting done throughout the scene, and with all these details hanging around, it is fairly easy for us to imagine what kind of custom brushes we might need to make work easier for ourselves when it comes to finishing up with the detailing work. When I think about a marketplace I generally see stone, fabric textures, weave, ornaments, and so on.

So to make any kind of medieval scene you might imagine, I'm now going to take you through the process of creating four custom brushes to aid you on your way – they're all very easy to design and make (Fig.14).

Custom Brush No. 1

Select a default Photoshop Paintbrush and draw a line with different degrees of intensity to get an interesting texture (Fig.15).

Select this line with the Lasso Tool and then turn it into a paintbrush by going to Define Brush Preset and naming it. Now we've got a new paintbrush with interesting weft (Fig.16).

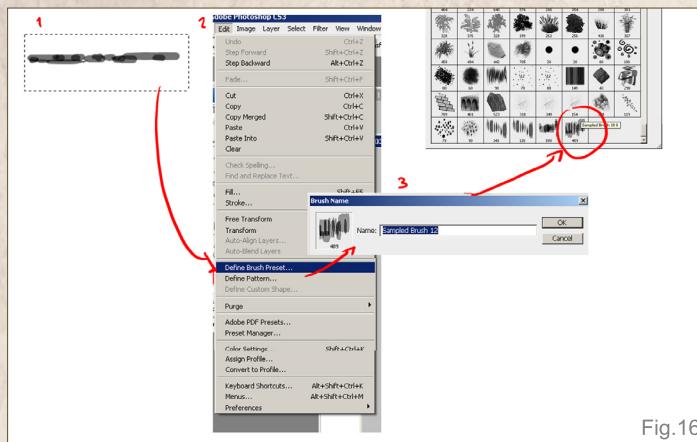


Fig.16

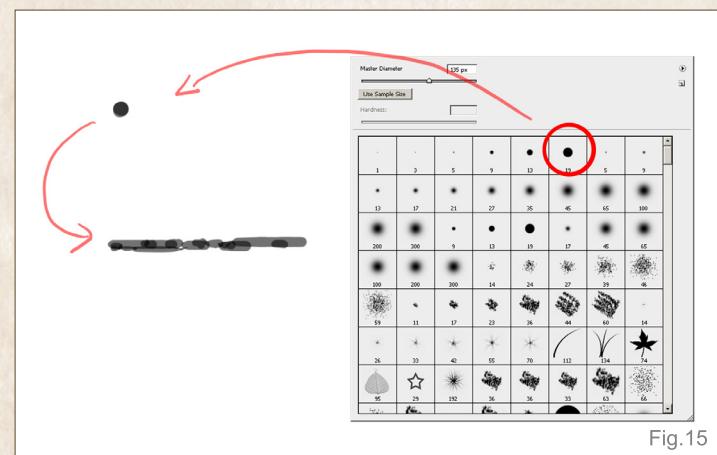


Fig.15

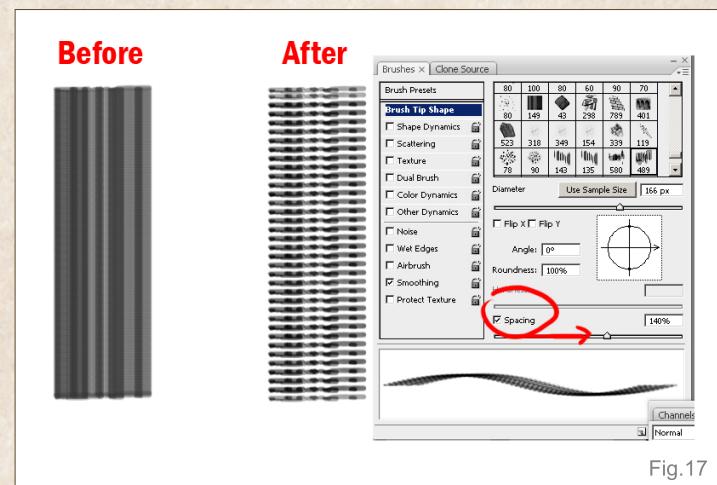


Fig.16

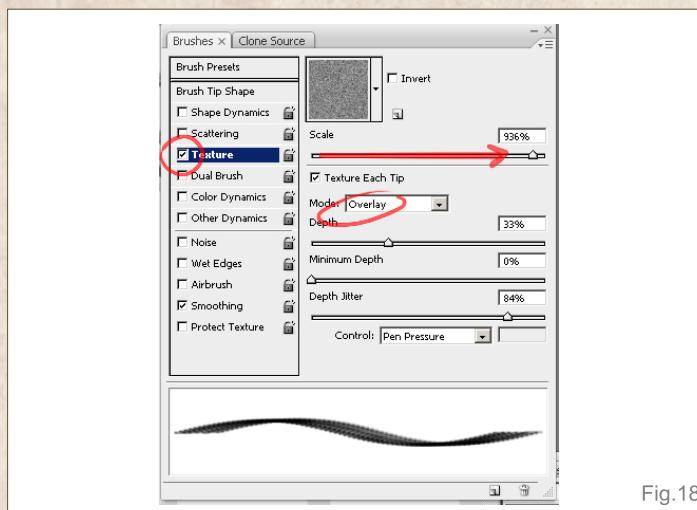


Fig.18

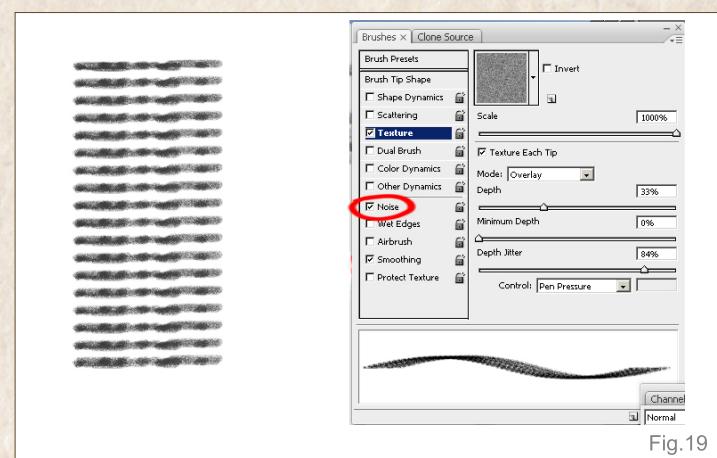


Fig.19



Fig.20

The following step is to retouch it to get the final paintbrush. Go to the Brushes menu. We're going to modify each brushstroke's distance, giving it 140% Spacing. From this, we'll get a staggered effect (Fig.17).

Next, tick the Texture option and scale it up to 1000%, selecting Overlay mode (Fig.18).

Finally, to give it a dirty texture, tick the Noise option (Fig.19).

Let's now see an example of how we can use this paintbrush in our painting (Fig.20).

Painting Fantasy Medieval Scenes

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2d
artist

Custom Brush No. 2

First of all, look for some photos where you can see bricks or stone. The idea is to create a paintbrush that will let us overlay the entire painting where stone, walls, and floors (etc.) can be found (Fig.21).

Go to the tool bar and select the Lasso Tool. Choose any form that allows you to get a tile, something that fits well when using it over and over on your canvas. Then define your brush (Fig.22) from the Brushes menu, and tick the Scattering option, setting it to 14%. This will let us repeat the texture several times within an adequate distance. The scattering can be regulated to keep the distance you wish.

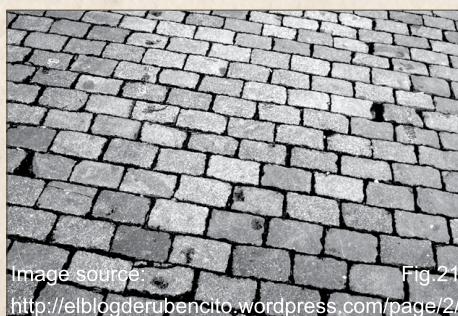


Fig.21

Select the Texture option: set 192% for Scale and 76% for Depth; tick the Noise option.

Finally, select the Brush Tip Shape option and set Spacing to 63% (Fig.23).

You now should have an excellent paintbrush to decorate the walls and floors of your painting in a quick and easy fashion (Fig.24)!

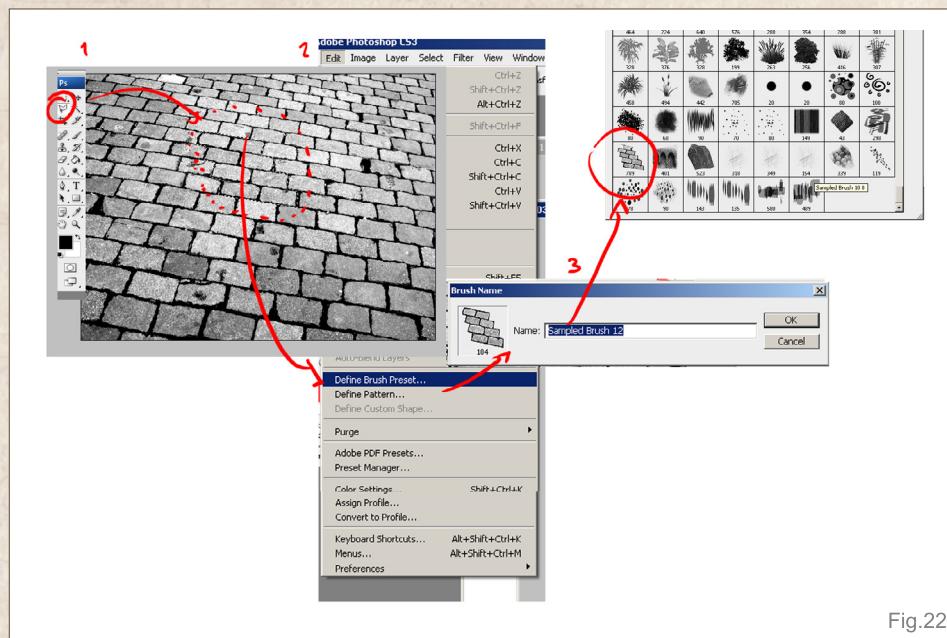


Fig.22

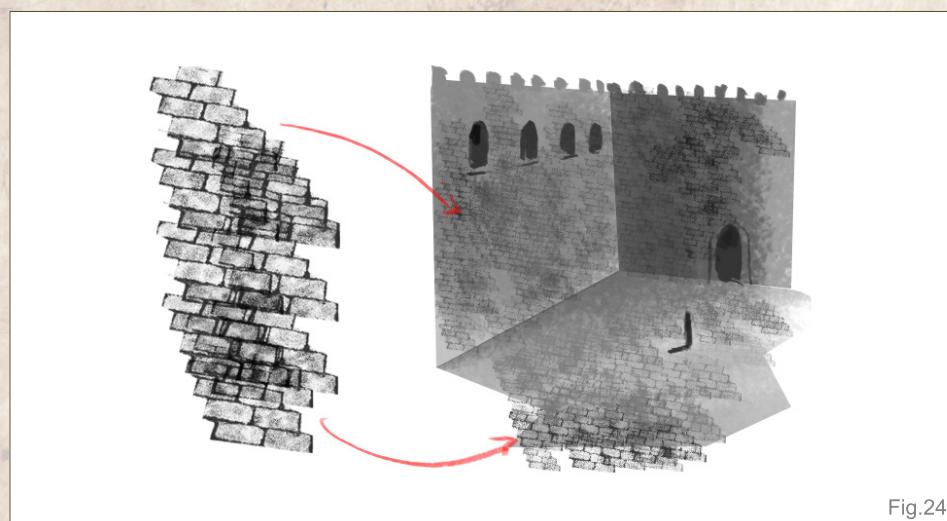
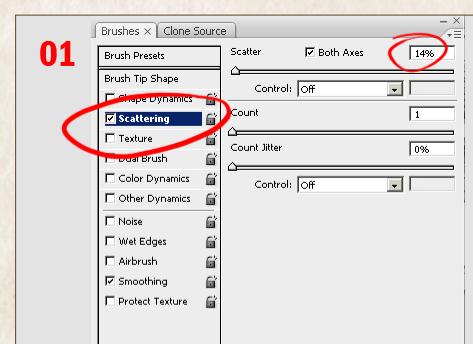


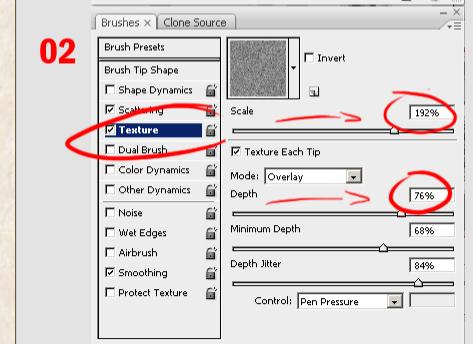
Fig.24



01



02



03



04

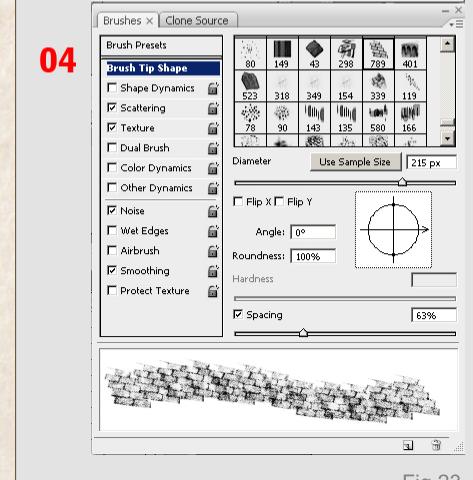


Fig.23

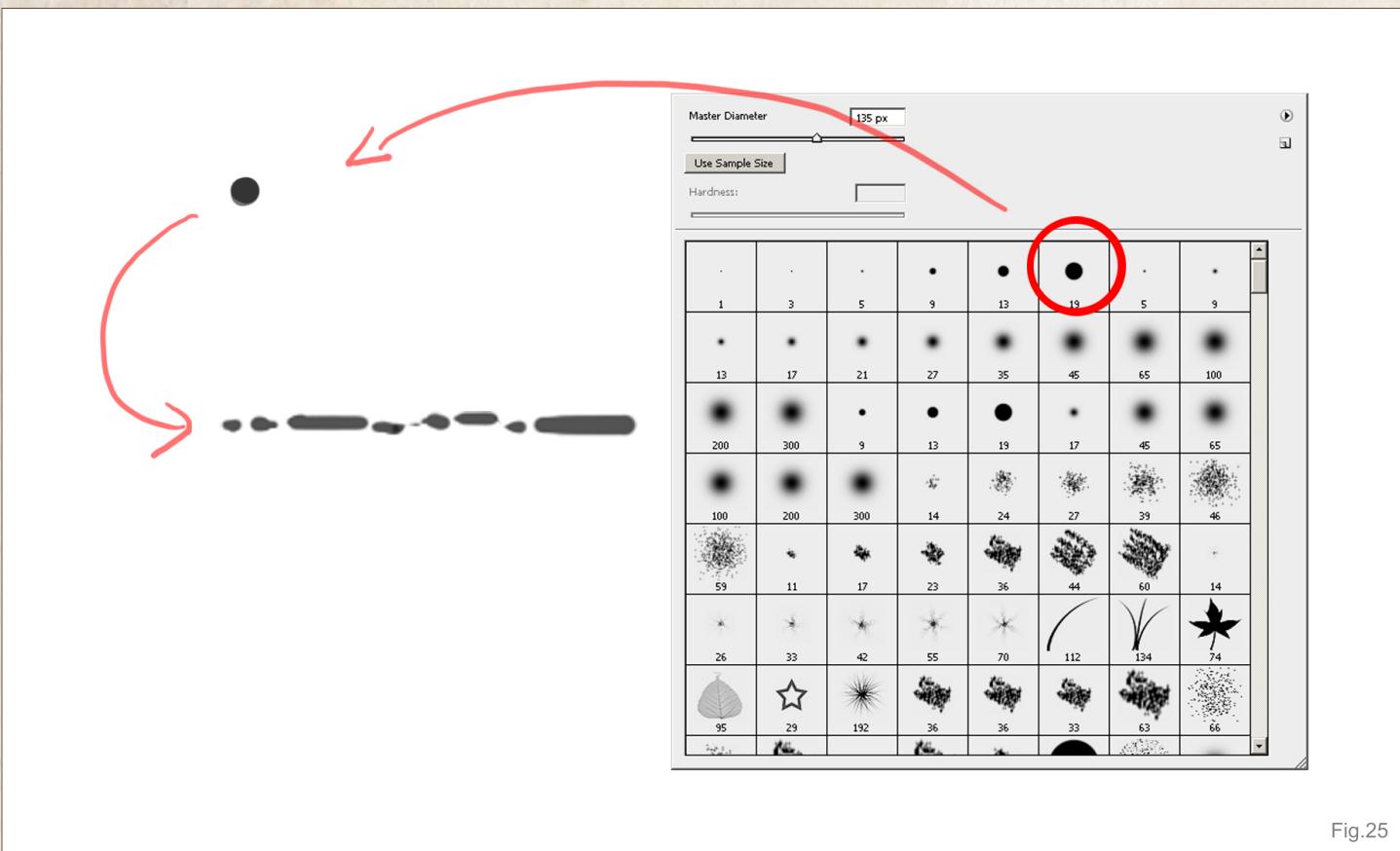


Fig.25

Custom Brush No. 3

Like in any medieval marketplace, we'd expect to find tents with fabrics and awnings. For this, it's therefore useful to design a paintbrush for weft.

Select a default Photoshop paintbrush and then draw a dotted line with different degrees of intensity in the stroke (Fig.25).

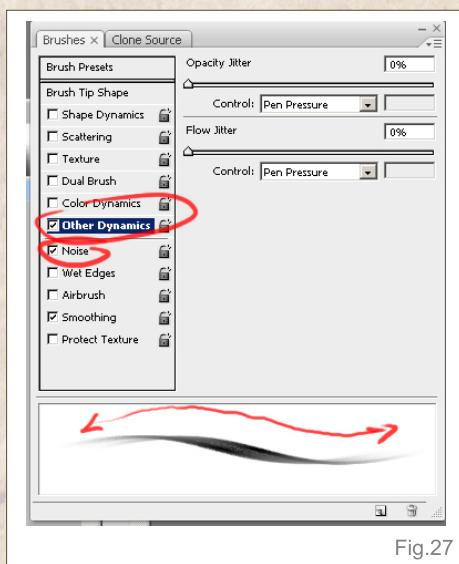


Fig.27

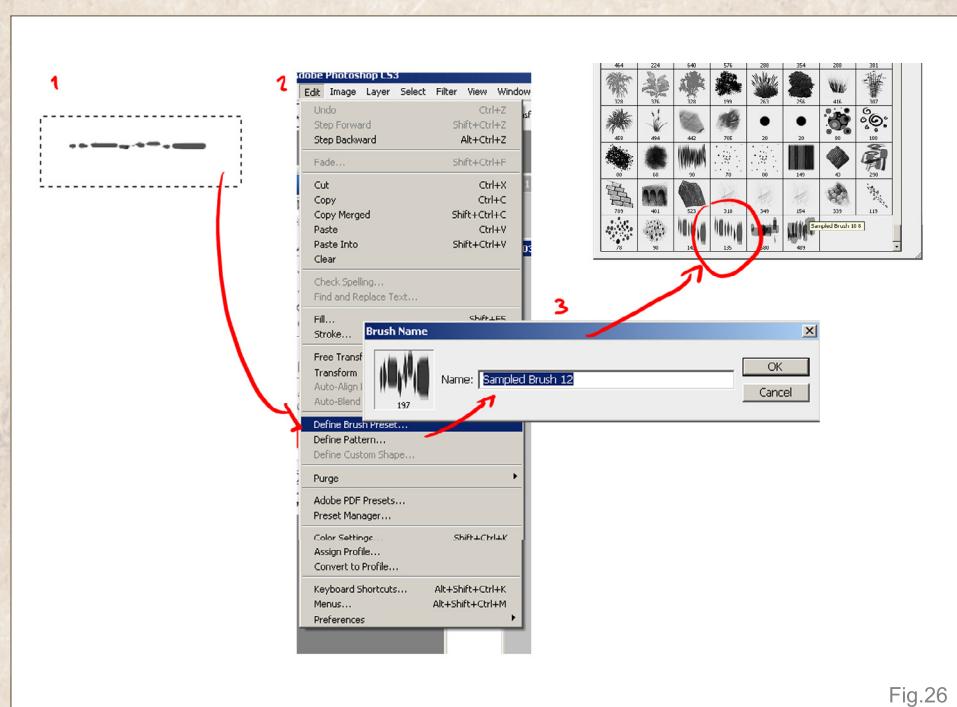


Fig.26

Select this line with the Lasso Tool to turn it into a paintbrush (don't forget to define your brush):

Fig.26.

Go to the Brushes menu, select Other Dynamics and tick the Noise option to make it smooth at

the ends. At the same time, give it a dirty texture (Fig.27).

Trying the paintbrush out vertically on your canvas should help you to appreciate the effect of this brush (Fig.28).

Custom Brush No. 4

Finally, we'll design a paintbrush to emulate a real one! Select a default Photoshop paintbrush, and with small dots try to make what would be the bristles of a real paintbrush when pressed against paper. To create variations or different strokes, make larger and smaller dots, each one separated from the other. With a suitable shape defined, use the Lasso Tool to turn it into a brush, and define your brush present, as normal (Fig.29).

Once we have the paintbrush defined and stored inside our Brushes palette, tick the Other Dynamics option in your Brushes menu to get a beautiful horsehair type brush, ready to use. This paintbrush is useful for everything: people, backgrounds ... but, best of all, it makes you feel as if you're painting the traditional way (Fig.30)!

Although brushes are nothing but tools, they are funny and simple to make and use. They help us to get good quality results in a short time, because digital art simplifies the creation process. But I think that brushes must only be used when they are absolutely necessary, because otherwise they can cause you to lose

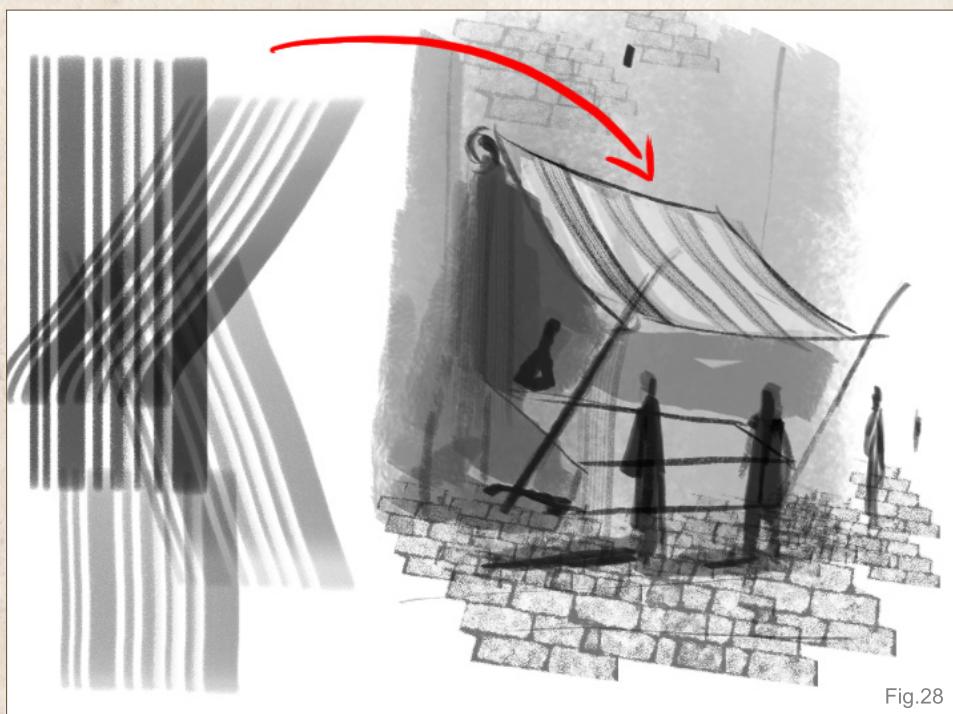


Fig.28

the challenge of art creation, and drawing becomes only a digital image with several textures applied.

Finally, to give your drawing a traditional painterly look, you can use a filter over it (Filter > Sharpen). And here we have the final painting (Fig.31). You could keep going and working your image to achieve a photographic representation of a city marketplace scene, but

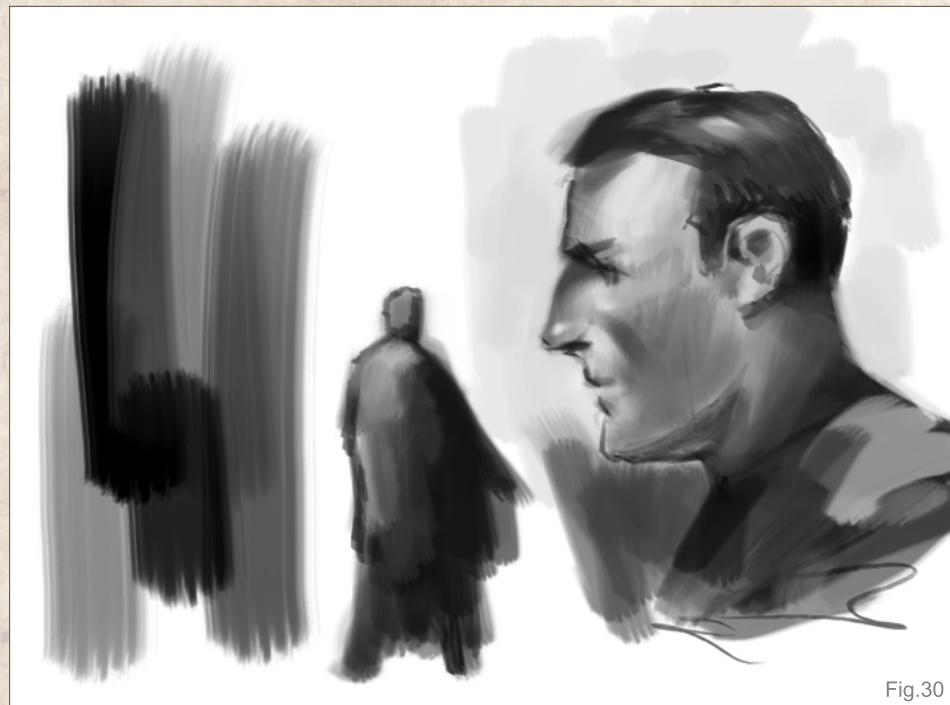


Fig.30

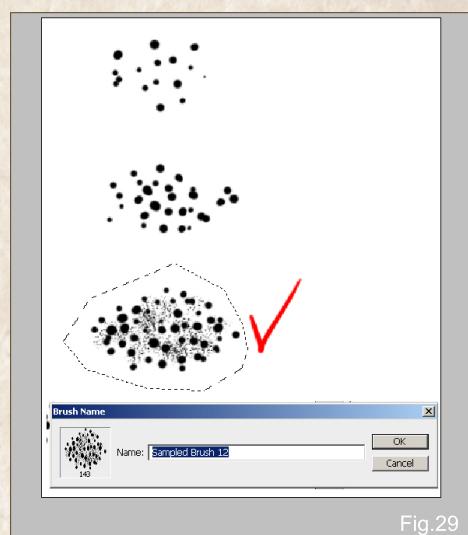


Fig.29

each of us knows when our work is done, and mine is now.

Thank you for reading and I hope you enjoy the free customer brushes – simply click on the Free Resources icon to download and use in your own artwork!

Ignacio Bazán Lazcano

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