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artist

Concept Art, Digital & Matte Painting Magazine
Issue 037 January 2009 \$4.50 / €3.25 / £2.25

TOMASZ JEDRUSZEK

This month we get to know freelance illustrator, **Tomasz Jedruszek** and discover why he left his study of architecture to pursue a career in illustration!



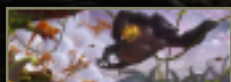
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Tomasz Jedruszek & Jim Maxwell



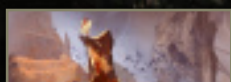
Articles

Sketchbook of Justin Albers



Galleries

Yap Kun Rong, Andreas Rocha & Szymon Biemacki, plus more!



Tutorials

Speed Painting with Richard Tilbury & Justin Albers, plus more!



Making Of's

Flower Concept by Soheil Danesh Eshraghi



Editorial

Happy New Year and welcome to **Issue 037 of 2DArtist magazine!** Being the start of a new year and all, I thought I would give a little insider info as to what you can expect from us this year. We'll soon be kicking off a brand new series, created by **Dwayne Vance** and **Hoi Mun Tham** on rendering vehicles. This is going to be a five-part series that takes us right from the thumbnail conceptual stage through to final renders, and the vehicles – well, I'll keep you

in suspense on that bit of info as I think you'll like what's in store. Another great series we'd like to start this year is on 2D character creation – not your everyday anatomy practice, but something with a little bit more 'bite'. So if you're looking for a New Year's resolution for 2009, then how about: practice painting (and buy a subscription to 2DArtist magazine)? (Worth a shot, huh?! *winks*) If you buy now then you'll be sorted for the entire year, so have a read through this month's issue and if you like what you see, why not invest in us for 2009?

OK sales speech over; let's get back to the January issue – so what's in store? Well, we have two interviews this month – our first one with freelance artist, **Tomasz Jedruszek**, who has worked for a variety of big names – *Fantasy Flight Games* and *White Wolf Publishing* to name a couple. We caught up with him for this month's issue to find out a little about what caused his career shift from architecture to illustration; check out his stunning portfolio on **page 7**. Our second artist interview is with **Jim Maxwell**, matte painter and concept artist who has worked on some great feature films of late – *Mr & Mrs Smith* and *The Incredible Hulk* being just two. So for a glimpse into the world of matte painting and concept art for high profile projects, check out **page 23**.

Bringing the sketchbook back to you this month we have a great article for you from **Justin Albers**, who kindly gives us a sneak peek at the fantastic sketches that can be found in his "junkyard collection of ideas and designs" (**page 35**). You can also find Justin's work gracing the tutorial pages in his latest speed painting interpretation of the topic, 'The approaching swarm appeared biblical in scale and straight from a nightmare'. Check out **page 75** for Justin's take on the subject, alongside in-house artist, **Richard Tilbury**'s answer to this month's brief.

Our other tutorials have been created by **Chee Ming Wong**, who this month looks at capital ships as part of his in-depth look into space transport design (**page 83**). And because we're tutorial crazy here at 2DArtist, we also asked **Joel Carlo** to create an article for us which takes us back to basics on composition (**page 69**) – what better way to start the year than to get a better understanding of one of the key components of image making? Finally, to wrap up the teaching section of this issue, **Soheil Danesh** has generously provided for you all a look at the creation of his beautiful *Flower Concept*, on **page 97**. Enjoy!

Thanks for reading, enjoy the issue and catch you next month! **Ed.**

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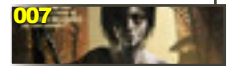
Project Overview by Soheil Danesh Eshraghi

China Town

Digital Art Masters: V3 Free Chapter Promotion

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3. Select **Two-up Continuous**, making sure that **Show Cover Page** is also selected.



Contributing Artists

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



Justin Albers

A graduate of the Art Institute of Dallas and currently working as a concept artist at Vigil Games on the Warhammer 40,000 MMO in Austin, Texas.

His previous companies include TKO Software and NCsoft.

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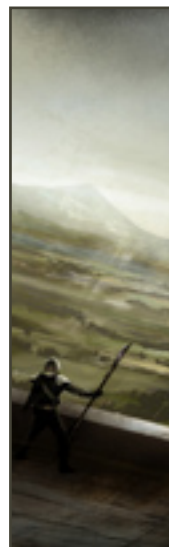
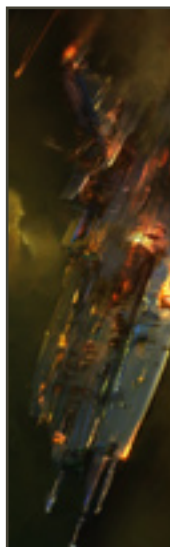


Chee Ming Wong

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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Richard Tilbury

Has had a passion for drawing since being a couple of feet tall. He studied fine art & was eventually led into the realm of computers several years ago.

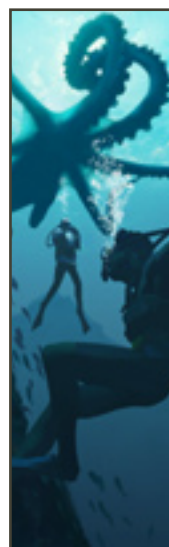
His brushes have slowly been dissolving in white spirit since the late nineties & now his graphics tablet has become their successor. He still sketches regularly and balances his time between 2D and 3D, although drawing will always be closest to his heart.

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Would You Like To Contribute To 3DCreative Or 2DArtist Magazines?

We are always looking for tutorial artists, gallery submissions, potential interviewees, 'making of' writers, and more. For more information, please send a link to your work to: lynette@3dtotal.com

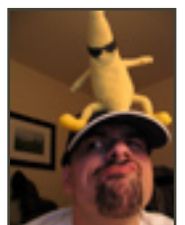


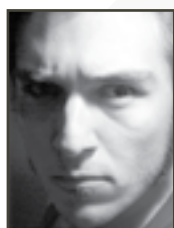
Joel Carlo

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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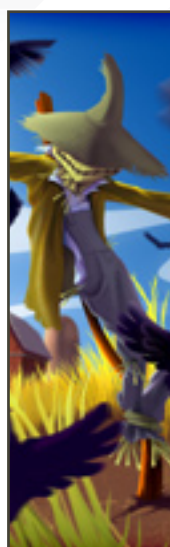
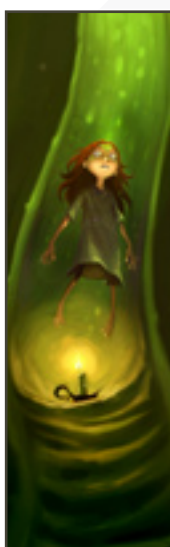




Soheil Danesh Eshraghi

Born in Tehran, 1984, he is known as a comic artist and concept designer in Iran. He started his career when he was 14, designing cartoons and comics for magazines and newspapers. He is now working as an illustrator and character and environment designer for animations, movies and video games.

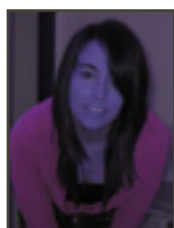
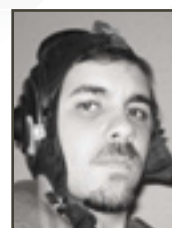
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Felipe Fernandez Morell

Studied art in Montevideo, Uruguay. He then worked freelance in Barcelona in different media, from publicity to editorial to web. He's currently working as a production and concept artist in the games industry.

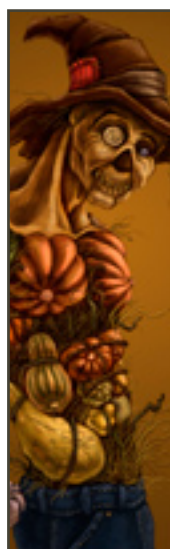
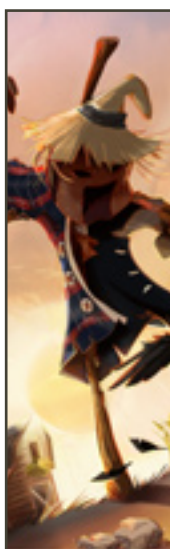
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Ruth Martinez

Studied graphic design, but always felt attracted to illustration and animation. She's currently working as a 2D animator in the games industry, and is happy to be working professionally in her hobby. She also pursues her passion for illustration through the likes of the 2DArtist stylised challenges!

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Robert L. Cron

Attended Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, PA, where he received a BFA in scenic and costume design. For the past 12 years he's been working as a professional costumer for film and television projects, most notably for the last four seasons of NBC's *The West Wing*. He's recently begun working as an illustrator for film, television and commercials, and currently resides in Los Angeles, <http://www.costumesketch.com>
robert@costumesketch.com

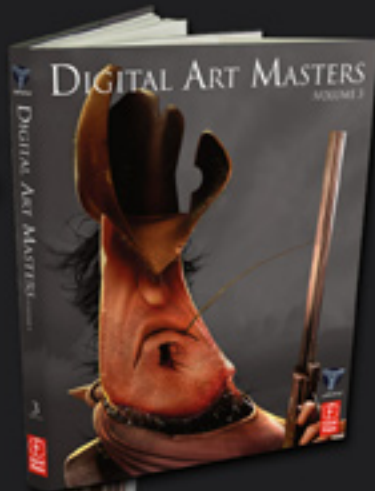


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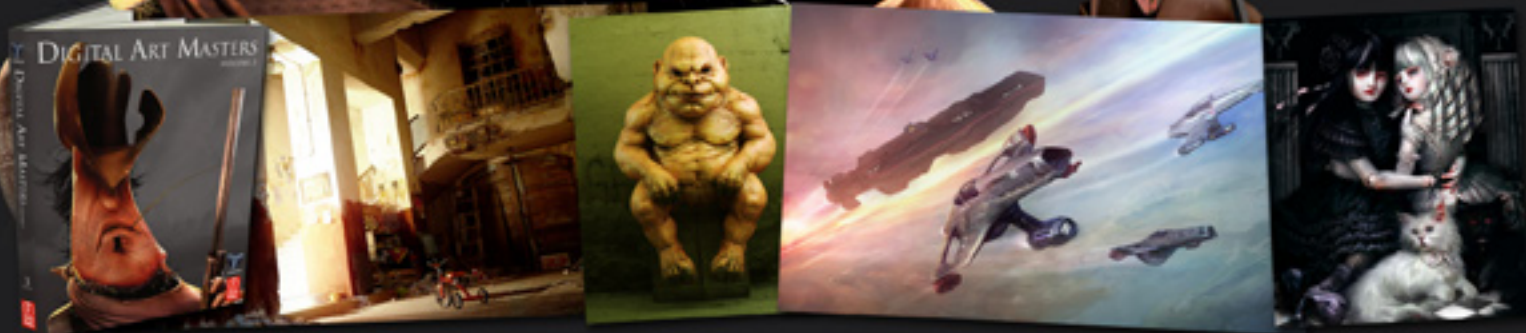
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Your name here.

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“I’m just tired of ‘artists’
who paint only fairies
or girls - or even worse,
those who paint the same
person over and over
again - is this a kind of
obsession or just a lack of
any other models?”

TOMASZ JEDRUSZEK

Tomasz Morano is a freelance artist from Poland who has worked for a variety of companies and publishers over the years. He left his study of architecture to pursue a career in illustration and believes that “digital painting” is supposed to be a new kind of artistic discipline

TOMASZ JEDRUSZEK

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"The determination and long-time desire to be a matte painter, and not necessarily classes or diplomas, is what has allowed me to do what I do"

Jim Maxwell is a matte painter and concept artist who has worked on a number of feature films including *Mr. and Mrs. Smith*, *Lust Caution* and the recent blockbuster, *The Incredible Hulk*. He has loved painting and film since childhood and in this interview he talks to us about why he thinks, "Matte painting is all about painting light, shadow, and colour".

**JIM
MAXWELL**

JIM MAXWELL

I see from your resume that you have a few year's experience as a matte artist / painter. How did you come to be involved in this area of CG and where did you learn your skills?

Well I've loved painting and drawing and watching movies since I was really young, so I think it was a natural conclusion to eventually bridge these together. As soon as I'd learned you could have a career painting and having those paintings appear in film, I immediately wanted to be a matte painter, I was probably about 13 or 14. Sitting watching movies, I'd try to find where the matte paintings were; to pinpoint exactly where the matte painting met the real footage. I'd also wait until the very end of the film to see who the matte artists were in the credits - those guys were, and still are, my heroes. I went to art college for a while, and took some night classes here and there in Adobe Photoshop, After Effects, and Lightwave. But there are obviously other software packages more or less applicable depending on job requirements, and if you're good at what you do, you learn to use additional software on the job along the way.

The determination and long-time desire I had to be a matte painter, and not necessarily classes or diplomas, is what has allowed me to do what I do. Ultimately what's important is how you put the knowledge you gain to use, how much experience you gather as you go, and to not



lose faith in yourself, as everyone operates and learns differently. That said - education and training are important, but you inevitably are the one responsible for the quality and success of your work.

Working towards your goal in your spare time is extremely important too - it gives you an edge over people who just "want" to do something. I think with matte painting or anything creative it's being active, producing work, and spending time improving your skills that will be your best advantage and serve you well in the future.



In my first studio job as a matte painter I was hired for two days a week. It was a “trial by fire” experience because I had to get used to the software in a production environment, but I ploughed through and ended up being part of a team that was nominated for a Canadian Gemini Award.

From your early interest in film who do you regard as being pioneers in the field of matte painting and whose work do you admire the most?

A lot of people might say Albert Whitlock - and he is phenomenal - but I didn't learn about him until later on. He wasn't just an extraordinary matte painter, he would composite elements together in an old-fashioned way, such as manually dragging a painted-on photographed image of the Hindenburg across a glass matte painting of the New York skyline (which would be done these days with compositing software and a 3D model of the Hindenburg). But his stuff is amazing and I think the guys whose matte paintings I grew up looking at are somewhat indebted to him.

The matte painters that really inspired me though, were guys like Michael Pangrazio, Harrison Ellenshaw, Frank Ordaz, Chris Evans, Caroleen Green, Yusei Uesugi - their early work was so impressive, and it was all done with a brush! I would try to contact them at their respective workplaces (years before most kids knew what matte painting was) and would be lucky enough to have conversations over the phone with them, asking them techniques and advice on how to break into the business.

As I wanted to be a matte painter so much, I'd sit and watch old movies with my parents, and call out “hey that's a matte painting”, and they'd tell me to shush, and for the most part they didn't understand what I was talking about. I recognised that images in *The Wizard of Oz*, and *Gone with the Wind* weren't just painted backdrops, there was something different with them... where they were situated in the frame, their composition etc.

With the digital age too there are some great guys; Yannick Dusseault's work on *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, and the *Star Wars* films is amazing.



He's so talented and I think he works very quickly and in a very smart way, which makes him successful. Other guys like Dylan Cole, Richard Bluff, and Chris Stoski are all really talented people working in the digital era of matte painting and they're the guys to watch right now.

People say a lot of romance is lost between the old ways of painting on glass and now painting through the glass on a computer screen, but for the past decade or so there has been astounding work on the screen that no one would ever recognise as a matte painting.

On your demo reel there is a sequence from the recent *Hulk* film showing a wireframe overlay across a building façade. Can you talk us through this shot and how the matte was created?

The first thing was to find specifically what production was asking for. The building represented a laboratory, so they requested that the building be extended. So you ask questions: one extra storey or two? Should it resemble the previous floor and is there any extra architectural ornamentation? In the end they wanted one more floor, same architecture - though certain windows may have lights off and there would be two large holes in the brickwork.

The shot was initially 2000 frames long, and the camera actually follows right around to another side of the building. So I had to create two façades.

Sometimes you can get away with simple geometry planes textured and tracked in 3D. But it was necessary to add a bit of depth and detail of the inset windows, as well as creating the holes in the wall. Luckily, the scene was tracked already. I have great respect for people who nail down a good track in a shot. There were basic 3D planes laid out to match the footage, and that generally makes your job that much easier (though it doesn't always happen



JIM MAXWELL (C)

that way!) Anyway, I had some photo reference of the actual building in the daytime, with a somewhat orthographic, straight-on view. I colour-corrected the photo to match the plate, and transformed the image so it was perfectly orthographic - which is important when you're applying texture to geometry. I painted up some areas, and cloned others in Photoshop. Then I took that file, brought it into Maya, put it on an image plane and spent a few days creating the needed geometry.

When I was happy with the windows etc, I rendered out the UV's and saved them out for Photoshop - then I painted on the UV's,

brought it back into Maya and mapped it onto my building geometry. I had to do a few lighting passes; the character "Abomination" throws objects through the wall so I created one texture pass with lights on and one with lights off to simulate flickering lights and damage... then I rendered everything out for the compositor.

Can you explain what you mean by: "The scene was tracked already"?

Basically when the plates (film footage that's been digitally scanned) arrive in a VFX studio, and there are set extensions or 3D elements that need to be added to the scene, someone will have to create a virtual, digital camera that

will have the exact same movement and motion as the physical, practical camera that was on set when they shot the scene. Usually roughed out geometry will be created to match buildings, landscapes, or features of the scene. For the lab shot in *Hulk*, rough geometry planes were created for the ground, for a building on the left and right, and for a distant building. The tracker then animated the camera movement while watching the footage playing within the software to make sure his "track" was as bang on as possible. So when I started working on the scene, it was already tracked for me - so I created the facades of the building and placed them where the rough geometry was, deleted

that geometry and then focused on the details of the texture I had to project onto the building. There were some tweaks here and there where I had to reposition some elements as they would fall off the track and move independently of the camera move... so there was a bit of back and forth before everything stayed put. But in the end, I thought it looked pretty bang on.

Do you do much hand painted work on matte paintings these days or is everything pretty much composed of photographic elements?

I think any good matte painter combines as many techniques as possible. It would be a hard job for me to do if I limited myself to basic photo collage - it would get old really fast. I try to hand paint (digitally in Photoshop) as much as possible, I create basic models in 3D that I eventually paint over when I don't always have good references and there's a lot of photo-cloning as well. Photo references are important. As good as your eye can be in what you know of the world (lighting, shadow, perspective etc), photo references can be vital depending on the shot. But I really think painting skills are the number one necessity - they're the glue that pulls everything else together. Just recently I had the opportunity to create a cityscape matte painting that served as the background in the last scene of a feature film. The timeframe was really short, and I could have used some photo references which I was lacking... so I painted in the majority of the rooftops of the city using colour, light, and shadow, suggestions of antennas and satellite dishes, and it ended up looking believable. When I get the chance to paint in details, or paint full skies, clouds, or landscapes, it's very rewarding and I try to do it as much as possible.

It's interesting that you mention painting in the rooftops "using colour, light and shadow", as you often hear people describe matte work as the art of "painting light". Do you think this is a good definition?

Absolutely. Matte painting is all about painting light, shadow, and colour - but light is the most significant of these in bringing the form and shape of an image to life. Apart from sunlight creating obvious contrasting shadows and form, if you look outside, regardless of the day, you have atmospheric perspective, and layer after





layer of haze. These are all different aspects of light and when added to matte paintings these elements give you more depth and a sense of reality. In some VFX shops - in their pipeline - "light" can be handled differently: instead of objects being painted up in a scene, 3D geometry may be used, and then textured, and then lit, and finally colour-corrected and comped etc. I see the modern matte painter as someone who attempts to blend certain stages of the pipeline with a traditional sense of painting techniques. I think artists like Vermeer and Caravaggio were recognized as great artists because of the way they handled light. They didn't necessarily paint "photographically" (photographs weren't invented in their day!), but they captured a "lifelike" version of reality, which as matte painter, I try to do every day.

What sort of challenges does creating concept work present compared to matte painting and what are the best aspects about doing both?

Concept work is terrific stuff to get a chance to work on. Sometimes, depending on the client and project, you can have great design freedom; you decide the mood, the atmosphere, and really put a personal touch on it. Sometimes matte painting can be limiting in that regard because everything can be pre-laid-out for you. That said, with creating concepts... not all days are great idea days - I guess it's akin to writer's block. You can sometimes work several hours and not have great results - and sometimes you can nail something down in 30 minutes. I think it's partially because you're pooling from your imagination, which isn't always 100% cooperative. Concept work is very abstract; you're presenting an idea of something rather than the reality and the hope is that the client or receiver of your work is receptive and that you're able to communicate your ideas back and forth. There is a blurring though sometimes between concept and matte work.

Some matte paintings that I've created were begun as concept images, and were eventually massaged into something more photo-real. As challenging and wildly creative as concept work can be, some matte painting requests can be very imaginative in their scope, especially when you're dealing with alternate realities - an alien landscape, or futuristic city for example.

To make those matte paintings look real can be difficult, but also exciting! In those cases you have years of film history ideas to tap into, but I like trying to be as original as possible. Being derivative can be frowned upon by an audience when they see the same ideas recycled over and over, and you want to try to be innovative, which makes the job more challenging, but ultimately more enjoyable.

I think that because I love film so much, and the enjoyment of going to the theatre, I mostly prefer matte painting over concept work. With concepts you can see your ideas translated into reality - whereas with matte paintings, (sometimes with slight adjustments from the film labs) it's as if they're transferred from your computer screen straight to the movie screen - and that's amazing!

I think seeing your hard work on the big screen, and knowing you were responsible for an establishing shot is so satisfying.

What types of shots in general prove to be the most difficult facing a matte painter and are there any subjects that are more problematic than others?

Since matte paintings are in motion these days, they're more technical, and so there are more variables to problem-solve. When it comes to 3D projection matte paintings there are new rules that have to be obeyed to garner a realistic outcome. Working with your first frame of geometry and your last frame of geometry, and then having to project your matte painting onto



that geometry sequence and making sure your matte painting is lining up and not stretching can be a difficult but satisfying process.

Although there are still matte paintings that are sky replacements, and basic backgrounds, matte painters should be prepared to have knowledge of 3D software and be able to create a matte painting that moves like a regular scene would with a camera trucking past.

Major perspective or parallel changes can get tricky depending on the complexity of the shot. Anything that's not grounded in modern day reality will be difficult because it can be interpreted and designed in so many different ways, not to mention that it doesn't presently exist!!



JIM MAXWELL (C)



JIM MAXWELL (C)

Sci-fi/fantasy films, period pieces, war epics all have their own sets of problems. On Ang Lee's *Lust, Caution*, I got to work on matte paintings of Shanghai in the 1930's - there was a lot of research and reference gathering to maintain the authenticity and consistency of that time period, and that can be very difficult when you're working with grainy photos from the 30's and you can't determine whether something is a mailbox or a telephone booth. But the film looks quite believable when you've seen the footage beforehand and afterwards. The bar is set very high these days in terms of realistic digital matte paintings. There are films where

alien landscapes and futuristic environments are absolutely believable (even though they don't exist), so you can't make excuses! [Laughs].

When being presented with a brief for a matte painting, what are the typical stages that you go through from start to finish in order to complete the piece and are you ever provided with location photography or high res reference material?

Depending on the timeframe, sometimes you may have a week to acquire all your resources - this would include gathering image references; doing research on the specifics of the location

shoot (camera lens, lighting info); setting up a 3D camera and blocking in rough geometry that will match the practical shot (if you've received scans of the footage); reading the script; and, on occasion, travelling to the film location shoot to take reference photos either during or after filming has wrapped. Sometimes the production company will ask for a style frame after a film shoot is completed.

The style frame is like a concept painting that combines a frame of the footage, and is used as a key guide for lighting, palette, and placement. For instance, if you have a scene with actors in

front of a practical castle drawbridge set that's built 10 feet high, the matte painter (usually in a day or so) could paint a quick style frame concept showing the castle extension, turrets and sky. If the shot is not locked-off, and has a camera move, two or more style frames may be required. This gives production an idea of where you want to go with the matte painting, and starts the communication.

It's always a lot of fun when you get to go scouting locations. You get out of the studio and into the real world and usually come back with great references.

From what I've experienced, VFX supervisors, and various VFX leads will shoot a lot of location references during filming, so they'll usually provide you with high res images. If the matte painter has the majority of the responsibility for a shot, they will occasionally go to the film shoot as well.

Sometimes when a change is made, or a new visual effect is introduced, the matte painter may have to go back to the original location with a still camera and lenses and shoot references.

If there are any readers out there who are interested in becoming matte painters, what advice would you offer them in terms of learning the trade and creating a suitable portfolio?

I think a solid background in painting, drawing, and photography is important, plus a love of films and movies - and not necessarily heavy visual effects movies.

As a matte painter, or any visual effects artist, you'll be working on films of all kinds. Art and design colleges that teach traditional art as well as courses in visual effects are great places to hone your skills as an artist. In most cases you'll be dealing with instructors who have, at one time or another, experienced working in the visual effects industry. Learn a popular 3D software package, and a popular compositing





package, and above all learn Adobe Photoshop. There are others, but Photoshop is the most widely recognised digital painting application in film and design.

I think some people expect that right out of school they'll immediately get work, which isn't always the case. In the studios I've worked I've seen crates and bookshelves full of demo reels - most of them from students. It's a very competitive industry and I think producing unique, original work, and working hard, is the key to success and will single you out from the rest. In terms of your portfolio, well, working at nights when your friends want you to go out is a sacrifice, but it's pretty important. You want to build up as much work as possible outside of school. There are plenty of sites out there that take submissions of artwork for inclusion in art books and web sites - the reward is recognition as an artist - and major VFX studios look at these sites from time to time which is a good motivator. Sometimes the studio you're hired by may be working on television programmes or commercials that you feel won't be useful or "exciting" enough on your demo reel - in that case, create something spectacular on your reel to get attention from some of the bigger VFX studios. There are matte painters I know whose personal work is more interesting than their professional studio work. On a demo reel, combining your own work and studio experience shows major studios that you're willing to go that extra mile. Sometimes if you want to work on feature films or blockbusters, you'll have to move to a major city - so be prepared to relocate. I've always believed that if you're determined to live your dream, then you'll do it!

Jim Maxwell

For more work by this artist please visit:

<http://www.reviresco.info/>

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Interviewed by: **Richard Tilbury**

JIM MAXWELL (C)



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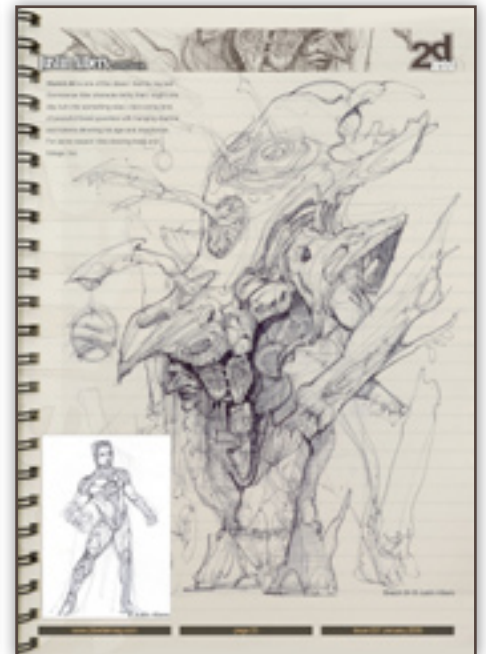
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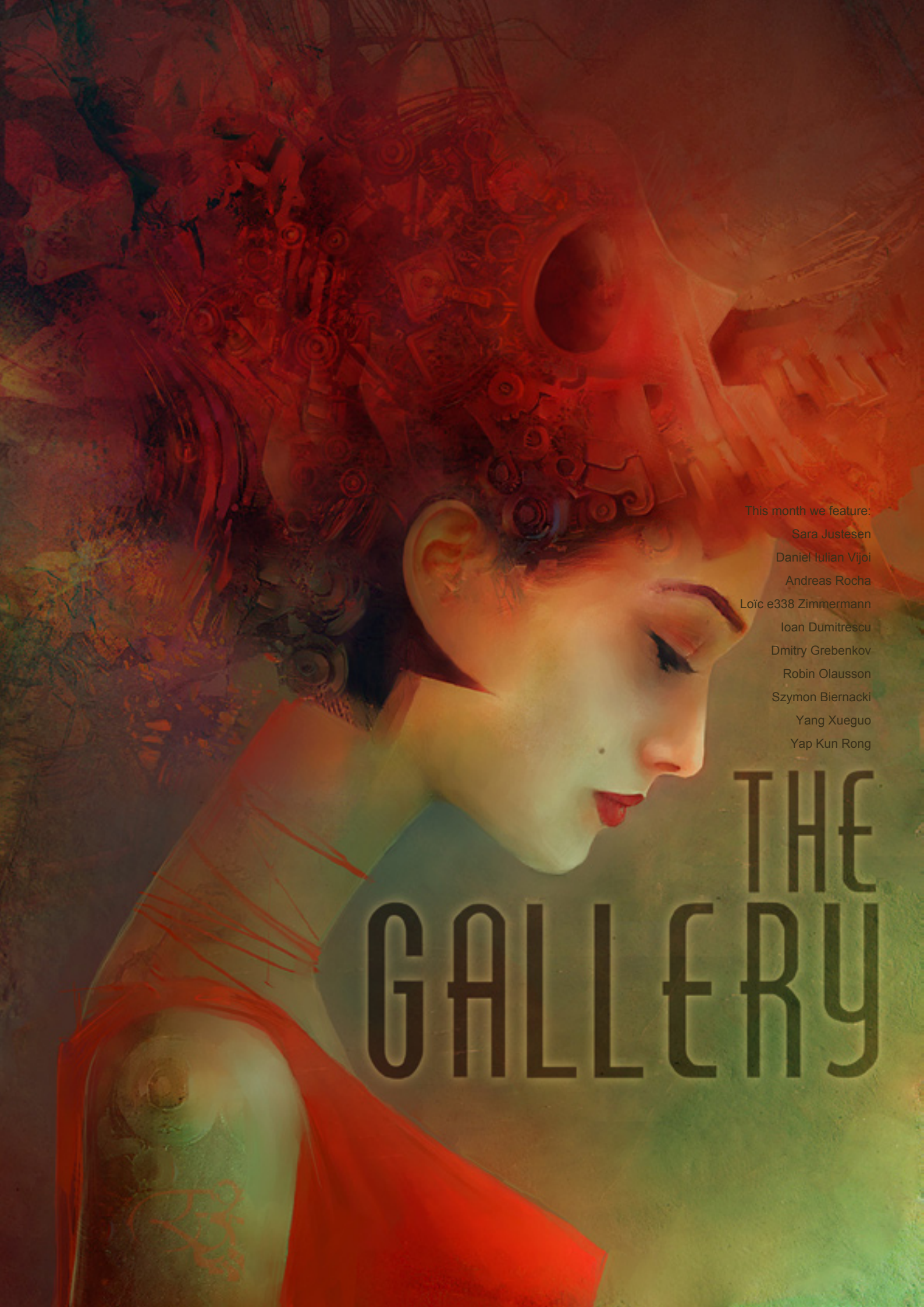
SKETCHBOOK OF JUSTIN ALBERS

In this article, Justin Albers talks about what inspires him and shares his ideas and sketches, from his random drawings, to his last Dominance War character

SKETCHBOOK OF JUSTIN ALBERS

8 TOTAL PAGES





This month we feature:

Sara Justesen

Daniel Iulian Vijoi

Andreas Rocha

Loïc e338 Zimmermann

Ioan Dumitrescu

Dmitry Grebenkov

Robin Olausson

Szymon Biernacki

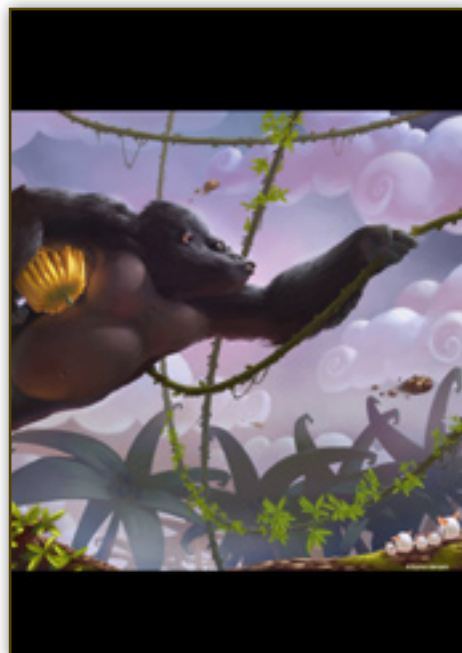
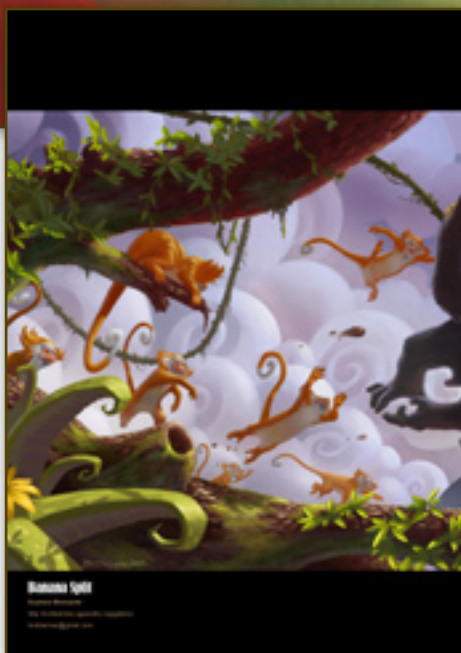
Yang Xueguo

Yap Kun Rong

THE GALLERY

THE GALLERY

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Speed Painting

digital painting tutorial series: volume 2



- Chapter 01: Alien Hot Air balloons
- Chapter 02: Steam Powered Mechanical Destroyer
- Chapter 03: The Slave Caravan crossed the Desert
- Chapter 04: The Beast was poised ready to strike!
- Chapter 05: Man-Eating Plants
- Chapter 06: The City Centre looked like a Jewel amongst the surroundings
- Chapter 07: It was a long way up but they had no choice but to continue climbing
- Chapter 08: Once a Thriving City now deserted and taken over by Vegetation
- Chapter 09: Robot Scrap Yard

Introduction

Our brand new 91-page eBook is a collection of "Speed Painting" tutorials which have been created by some of the top digital painters around today. The idea behind this tutorial series was for the artist to interpret a one-line descriptive brief (provided by us!), create a speed painting from it and then produce a tutorial showing and explaining each stage of production of the artwork. This downloadable PDF eBook can be followed in most 2D software packages that support paintbrushes and layers.

The featured artists are:

Nathaniel West
Daniel Ljunggren
Emrah Elmasli
Mike Corriero
Rich Tilbury
Robin Olsson
Ignacio Bazan Lazzano
Marc Brunet
Nick Oroc
Serg S
Joel Carlo



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Downloadable Tutorial EBook

the

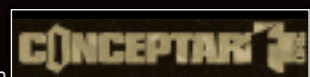
Welcome to the "Challenge" section of 2DArtist. Every month we run a challenge in the conceptart.org forums, which is available for anyone to enter. The winning entries not only receive prizes from the www.3dtotal.com shop, but also get featured in this very magazine! And as well as displaying the winners from the previous month's competition, we also showcase the "Making Of's" from the month before that, so you can see how these winning pieces of artwork



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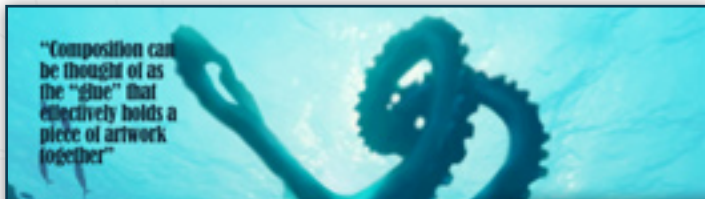
“Composition can be thought of as the “glue” that effectively holds a piece of artwork together”

UNDERSTANDING COMPOSITION

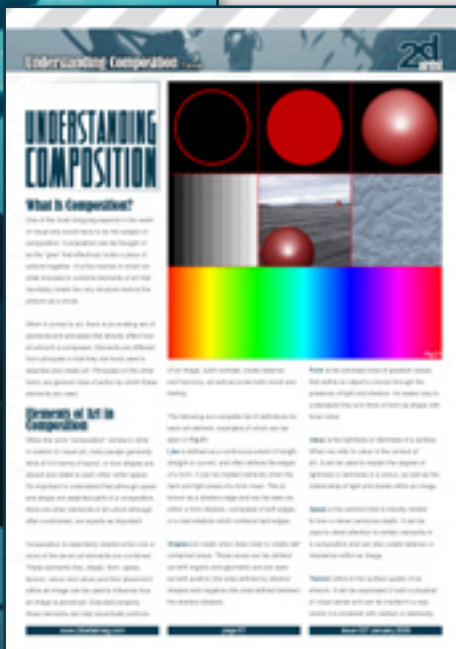
In this article, Joel Carlo discusses the elements and principles of art composition

UNDERSTANDING COMPOSITION

5 TOTAL PAGES



"Composition can be thought of as the 'glue' that effectively holds a piece of artwork together"





SPEED PAINTING

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.

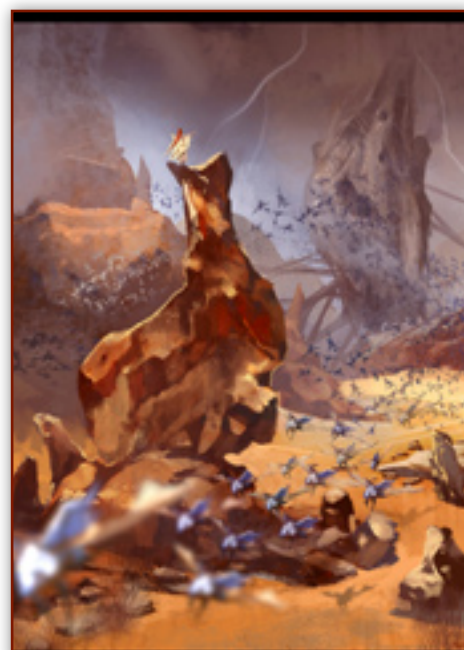
This month our talented artists, Justin Albers and Richard Tilbury, tackle the topic:

The approaching swarm

appeared biblical in scale and straight from a nightmare

SPEED PAINTING

7
TOTAL PAGES



nPower CAD Translators for Maya

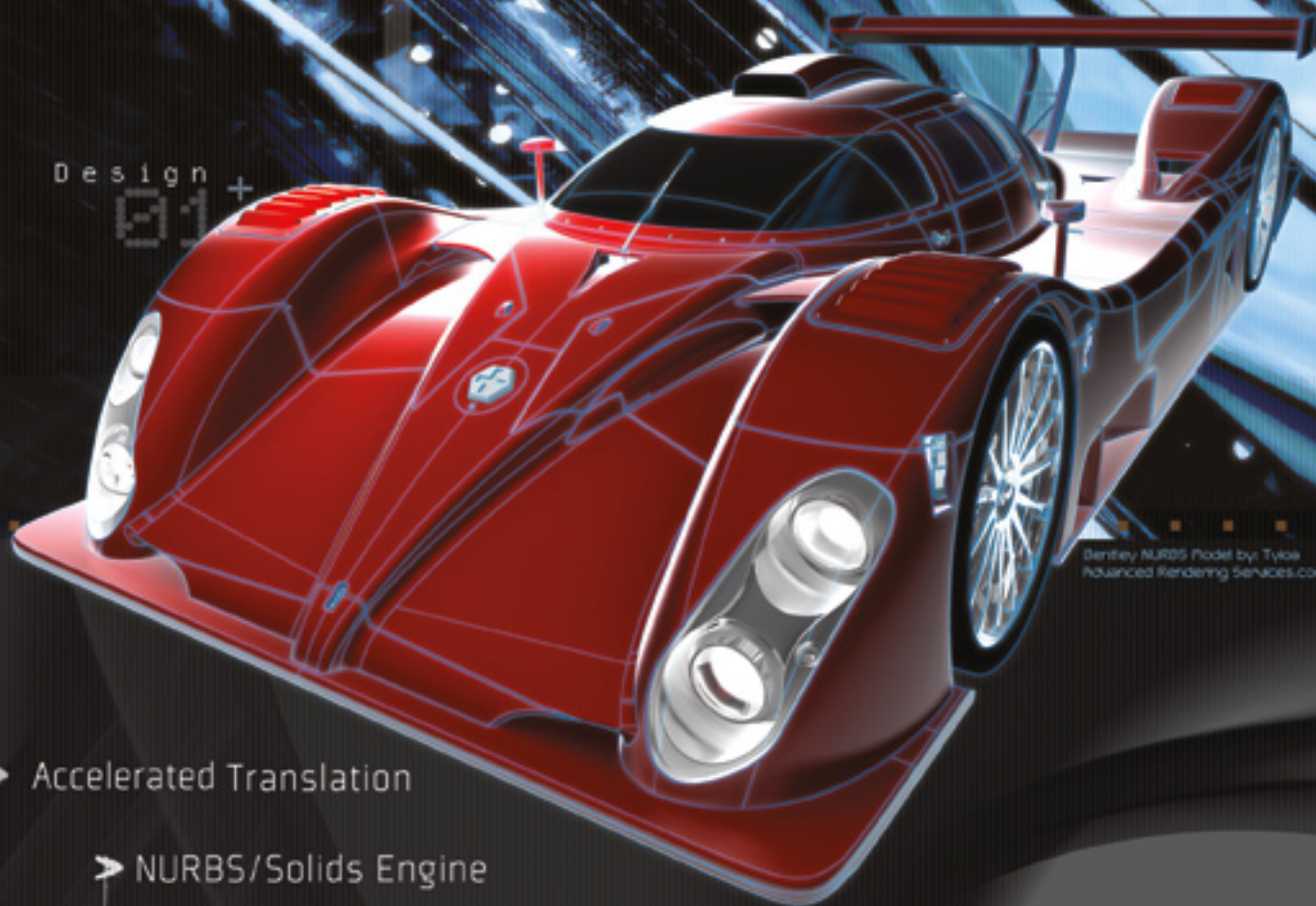
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“In space, all forms of orientation of up, down, left or right are nonexistent. There is no magnetic north or south, only the way forward or stationary.”

SPACE PAINTING

I – PLANETS AND STAR FIELDS

PART 1: STARS + NEBULAS – JULY 2008
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
PART 10: SPACE BATTLE – APRIL 2009
PART 11: MINING THE ASTEROID FIELDS – MAY 2009
PART 12: SPACE COLONIES – JUNE 2009

SPACE PAINTING

PART 7: CAPITAL SHIPS

13

TOTAL PAGES

"In space, all forms of orientation of up, down, left or right are non-existent. There is no magnetic north or south, only the way forward or stationary."

SPACE PAINTING

I - PLANETS AND STAR FIELDS

PART 1: STARS & NEBULAE - JULY 2009
PART 2: BARRON NEBULAE - AUGUST 2009
PART 3: BARRON PLANETS - SEPTEMBER 2009
PART 4: BARRON PLANETS - OCTOBER 2009
PART 5: COLLIDING PLANETS - NOVEMBER 2009

II - TRANSPORT

PART 6: SPACECRAFTS - DECEMBER 2009
PART 7: CAPITAL SHIPS - JANUARY 2010
PART 8: SPACE STATIONS - FEBRUARY 2010

III - ENVIRONMENTS

PART 9: ICE-FI MANDAR - MARCH 2010
PART 10: SPACE BATTLE - APRIL 2010
PART 11: MAKING THE ASTEROID BELT - MAY 2010
PART 12: SPACE COLONIES - JUNE 2010



“As a concept artist, I make the scenes based on the script, in a way that a 3D artist can easily recognise the lighting, materials, and colours and so on”

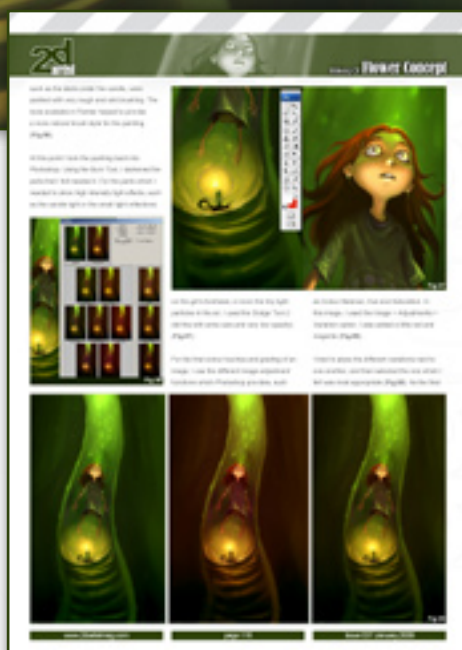
MAKING OF BY SOHEIL DANESH ESHRAGHI

FLOWER CONCEPT

Soheil Danesh has been working as an illustrator, concept designer and storyboard artist in animation and movie projects. In this article he shares how he made his character “Baran”.

MAKING OF FLOWER CONCEPT

5 TOTAL PAGES





2d artist next month

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Marek Okoń

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Concept Art, Digital & Matte Painting Magazine

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DIGITAL ART MASTERS VOLUME 3

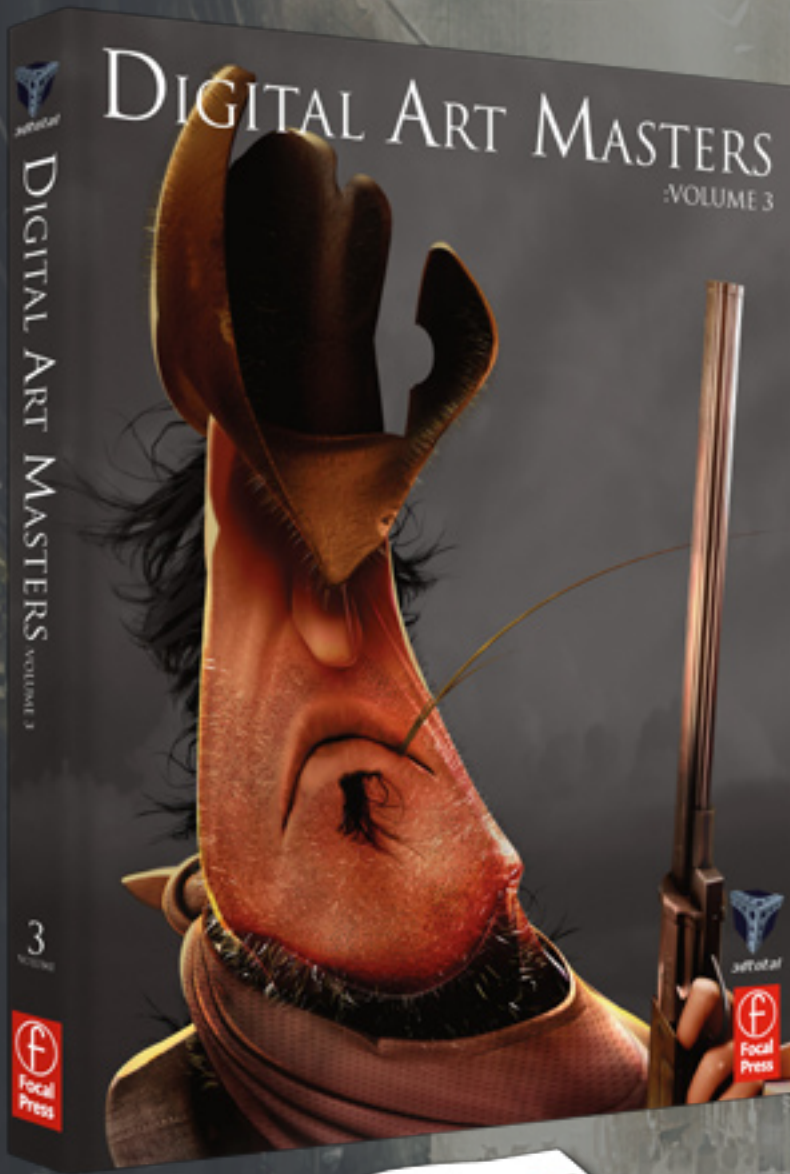
With the release of 3DTOTAL's new book, *Digital Art Masters: Volume 3*, we have some exclusive chapters for you...

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:

"Chinatown"
by Gerhard Mozsi





CHINATOWN

BY GERHARD MOZSI

THE CONCEPT

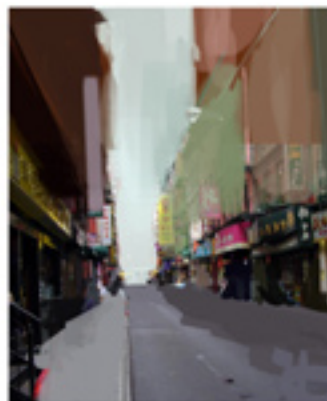


This image began, as all my work does, with vague ideas and scattered images floating around in my head. The intention was to paint a modern environment with plenty of atmosphere and detail. A city setting was chosen, specifically a 'Chinatown' in a big city. The first priority of scope for interesting detail, colors and shapes, and allowed for a great entry point 'look' atmosphere.

The process to create the image was challenging from the beginning. I wanted to do something realistic, yet quite painterly and loose. I was unsure as to whether I should go down the more 'Photorealistic' path or a mix of photos and integrated 3D elements or simply a more painterly method. In the end I went with a hybrid approach. This meant the use of photos, and painting in Photoshop (2008).

THE PROCESS

The first step was to find a suitable photo and frame it in Photoshop. This really was just a pretty busy mix of putting something down on the canvas that would give me an instant canvas and a starting point. Furthermore, I created, or at least initiated, the perspective (Fig. 80).



This starting technique allowed my mind to start working and painting out all the possibilities and permutations that the painting could have. To create a photo was selected I cropped it to a perfect orientation, this meaning was a little more dramatic than the original, and I then started to paint on top of it. This was done until I had eventually built up on painted the image to what I had envisioned.

The color composition was a simple street scene, with clear perspective and single-point lighting. Also, from the beginning the painting had to be clearly blocked out into simple shapes, so things did not become too confusing, or the composition did not become too 'messy'. Once I was happy with the general composition, I worked to harmonize the colors and values, as well as to define the lighting (Fig. 81).

In a quick note, generally speaking, I don't do much hand-drawn or preliminary sketches or sketches into images. I tend to do it all on the actual file that I am working on. That is one of the joys of the digital medium - so much flexibility. So I play with and manipulate the image in Photoshop to a great extent, until I am happy with the color components. This way I can crop, change the orientation of the image, and so on, all on the actual file. This is complicated when working traditionally, so you have to be pretty

SCENES

37

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close with what you want. For example, it's difficult to change the image orientation from portrait to landscape half way through your technique or oil painting. In Photoshop you can do this very easily, so when you have an idea you can test it almost immediately. Plus you always have a backup (one of all your experiments). This allows me to work quite quickly and a bit more freely than when I work with my work, rather than being precise and hesitant.

So when I was happy with the general composition, I started on the color and tonal values. The process began with a new layer set to 30% opacity. I used it to add detail, sharpening the image. I created another new layer, with the layer mode set to 'Color'. This allowed me to set the general color for the image. The color layer is great as it allows you to change the color without changing the tonal values (Fig. 82). This was followed by a quick adjustment to the Curves and Color Balance tools to complete my first pass. The Curves and Color Balance help to further unify the tones and define a clear lighting structure. Once I am happy with composition, colors, values and lighting, I can start to introduce detail.

When I work I prefer to use global or universal tools, like layer modes and Adjustment Layers, to help unify the image. I believe this is especially important when using photos.



This 'global' approach helps in allowing the image to have a greater sense of integration or wholeness. That way it's easier to refine the values and colors with adjustment when needed, as the general global values have already been set and you can color pick straight from the image.

On a technical note, when I create Adjustment Layers they always sit at the top of my layer 'stack'. This way I can always change things later. But the truth is that, when I am painting, it has to be on a layer underneath the adjustment layer. Furthermore, the Adjustment Layers have to be turned off if generally just from an 'on' when painting. Otherwise, when color picking from the photo, the color selected is always out and does not match the canvas color. The point with the Adjustment Layers is to keep them on and off regularly to make sure that all is going the way I intended. If you choose to paint above your adjustment layers, and then decide to change the settings, all the layers above will have different values and colors, which is pretty annoying. It's probably an overly complicated way to structure layers, but it seems to work for me!

Once I was happy with the level of detail, I started to paint in 'brush' which helped to further unify the image. I simply created a new layer, set a low opacity and the layer mode to 'Soft Light', and then painted over the whole image with my 'brush' strokes. Generally this can be as pretty fast and easy as that. The trick here is to control the opacity with the layer and not the brush, as this gives you greater control when adjusting the final amount of noise you want in the image (Fig. 83).

ABOUT DONE

Once I am happy with the way the image is looking, I like to leave the image for a day or so and come back to it when I have the luxury of time (which is rare for production work). This way I come back with fresh eyes and can re-evaluate the image (Fig. 84).

With the image I created it was a bit simple and more interest was needed. So I introduced a car and more people in the background. This was actually the first car I have ever painted (except when I was eight) as I made a real challenge for me. The process was just a real grind. I found reference photos and started to paint - no trouble, just me, and the brush (Fig. 85).

Finally, when all the elements were in place and I was certain that I wasn't going to introduce anything else, I did a final pass of noise, followed by another Adjustment Layer pass (Color Balance, Curves, and Hue and Saturation), and finally a gradient map Adjustment Layer. A final note on gradient maps - that this is the most powerful Adjustment Layer. I use it in the following way: create a final Adjustment Layer, select a gradient, as well as a color and a gradient color for the gradient map, then



once that is set, 'play' with the Adjustment Layer modes - generally Overlay, Soft Light and Screen work successfully. It's quite amazing what a gradient map can do. I use it to add subtle color to my image, especially in the shadows. This is a great tool to experiment with!

THE END

Finishing a picture is always the hardest thing for me. 'Chinatown' was no exception. Simply leaving the image alone, or trying to paint knowing when to leave it alone, is a skill in itself. I suppose it comes with greater confidence in your own art making. But it's always simply to walk away and start a new picture.

An image can only be 'finished' so much. It gets tricky with the digital medium as you can never totally destroy the image. It's easy to overwork a watercolor or even a pencil drawing, but digitally you can always hit Ctrl+Z. Plus it's unfairly addictive to play endlessly with Adjustment Layers, textures and all of the tools that come with Photoshop.

But it's always good to start a new image and carry over what you have learnt into a fresh painting.

ARTIST PORTFOLIO



SCENES

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