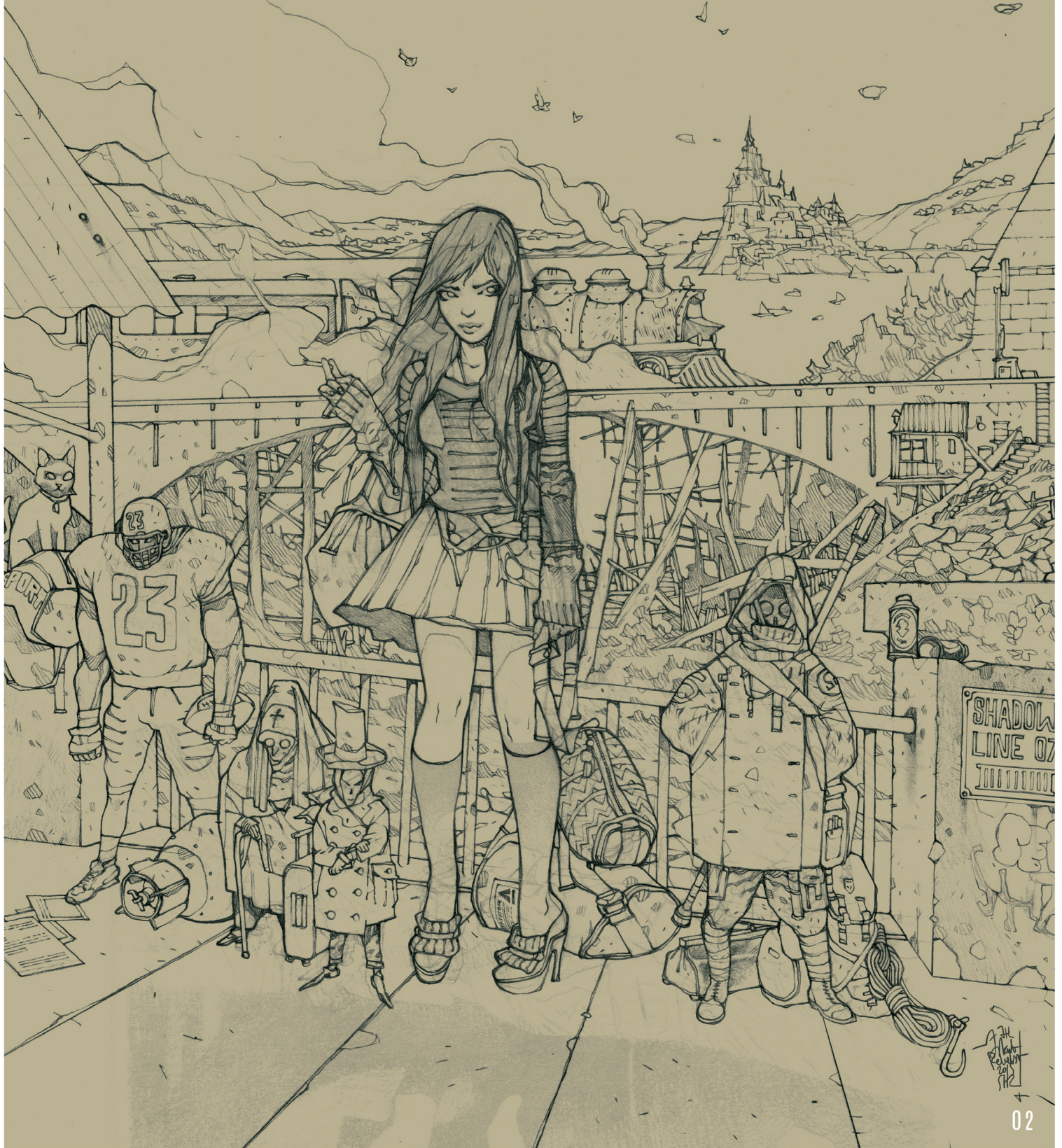


GRAPHITE

CONCEPT DRAWING | ILLUSTRATION | URBAN SKETCHING



GRAPHITE

CONCEPT DRAWING | ILLUSTRATION | URBAN SKETCHING



EDITOR'S LETTER

Thank you for picking up the second issue of
GRAPHITE magazine!

We were very proud of our debut issue, and
learned much in the making of it. Now we're
happy to present a new issue that we hope
meets – or even exceeds – the standards
of our first.

We want each issue of GRAPHITE to feature
unique, fresh, standalone content while
keeping the smart, clean structure that will
be familiar to you if you've read issue 01. This
issue covers a whole new range of techniques,
subjects, and styles, in keeping with our love
of exciting drawings and
interesting concepts.

If you enjoy GRAPHITE, please spread the
word to your fellow artists and art lovers!

We have you to thank for making these
first issues a success, and look forward to
bringing you more inspiration from around
the drawing world.

Thank you.

Marisa Lewis
Editor

WHAT'S INSIDE

04 | Cover artist: Jakub Rebelka

The weird and wonderful designs of a pro illustrator

08 | Lock and load

Design and rendering techniques with Jakub Rebelka

16 | Equipped and ready to draw

An interview with Tin Salamunic

26 | Face value

Portraiture in graphite with Thomas Cian

38 | A day in L.A.

Sketching Los Angeles with Susan Yung

50 | The Gallery

A selection of inspiring drawings

60 | Isolation

A narrative illustration project with Rob Turpin

70 | Meeting Molly M.

An interview with Molly Mendoza

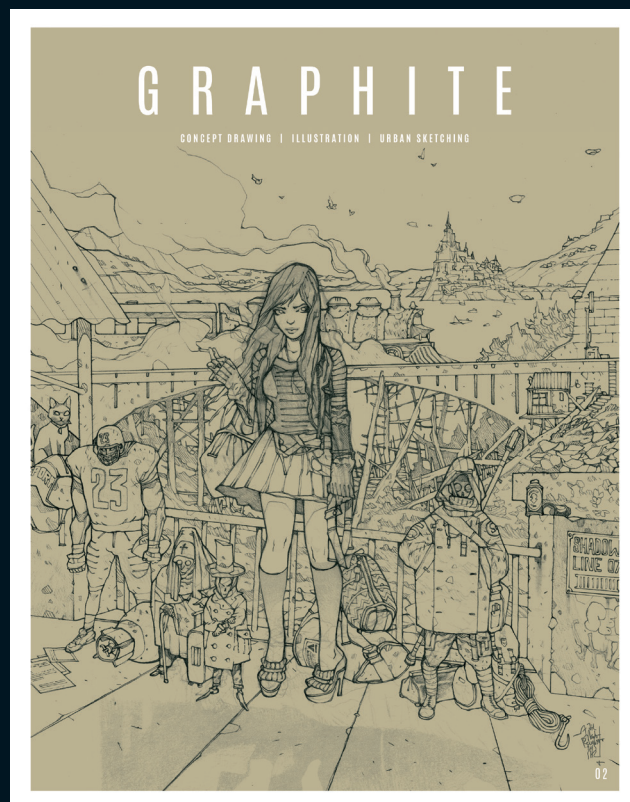
80 | Creating creatures

Sketching and concept development with Brynn Metheney

90 | Odin, the Allfather

Sketching and illustrating with Yrgane Ramon





COVER ARTIST: JAKUB REBELKA

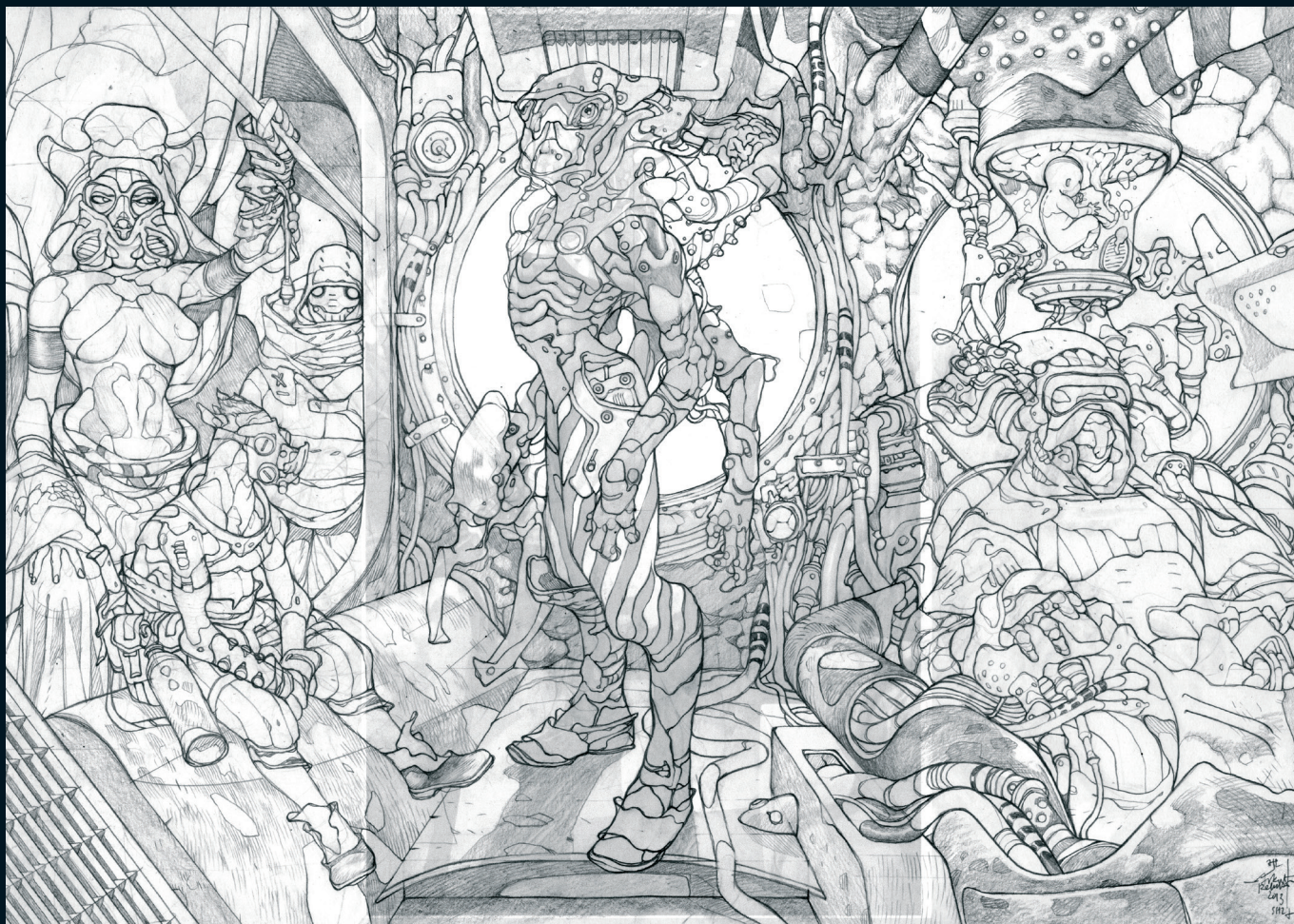
The weird and wonderful designs of a pro illustrator

Jakub Rebelka is an illustrator, comics creator, and concept artist based in Gdańsk, Poland. He graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, where he studied in the Faculty of Painting. His artwork has notably appeared as animated cinematics in acclaimed videogames *The Witcher 2: Assassins of Kings* and *Shadow Warrior*. He has created his own comics and art books, *Doktor Bryan*, *Ester Klemens*, and *ELEMENT CHAOSU*, is the illustrator for the fantasy graphic novel *City of Dogs*, and has published short comics in many Polish magazines.

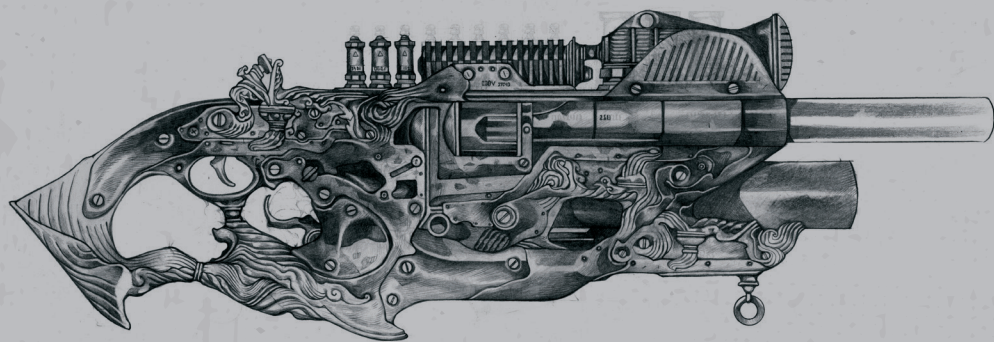
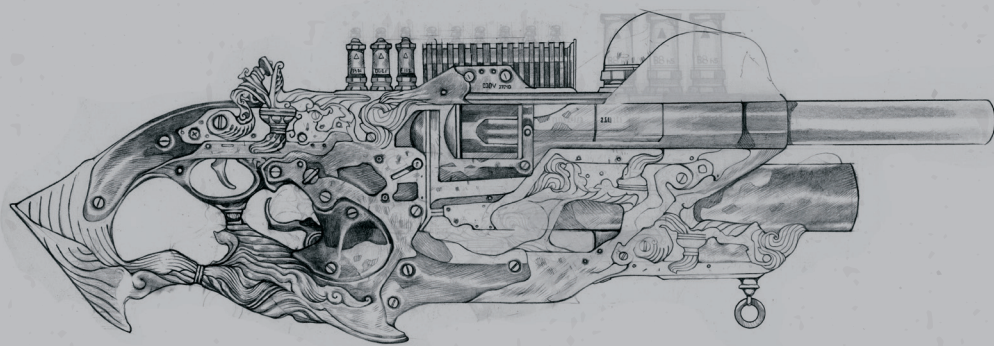
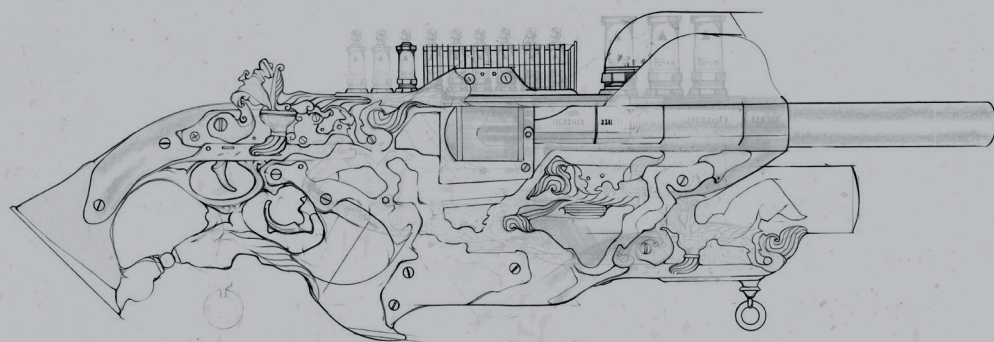
“I love that feeling
when I begin to draw
something without a
plan or preliminary
concept, just following
an outline”

Jakub Rebelka





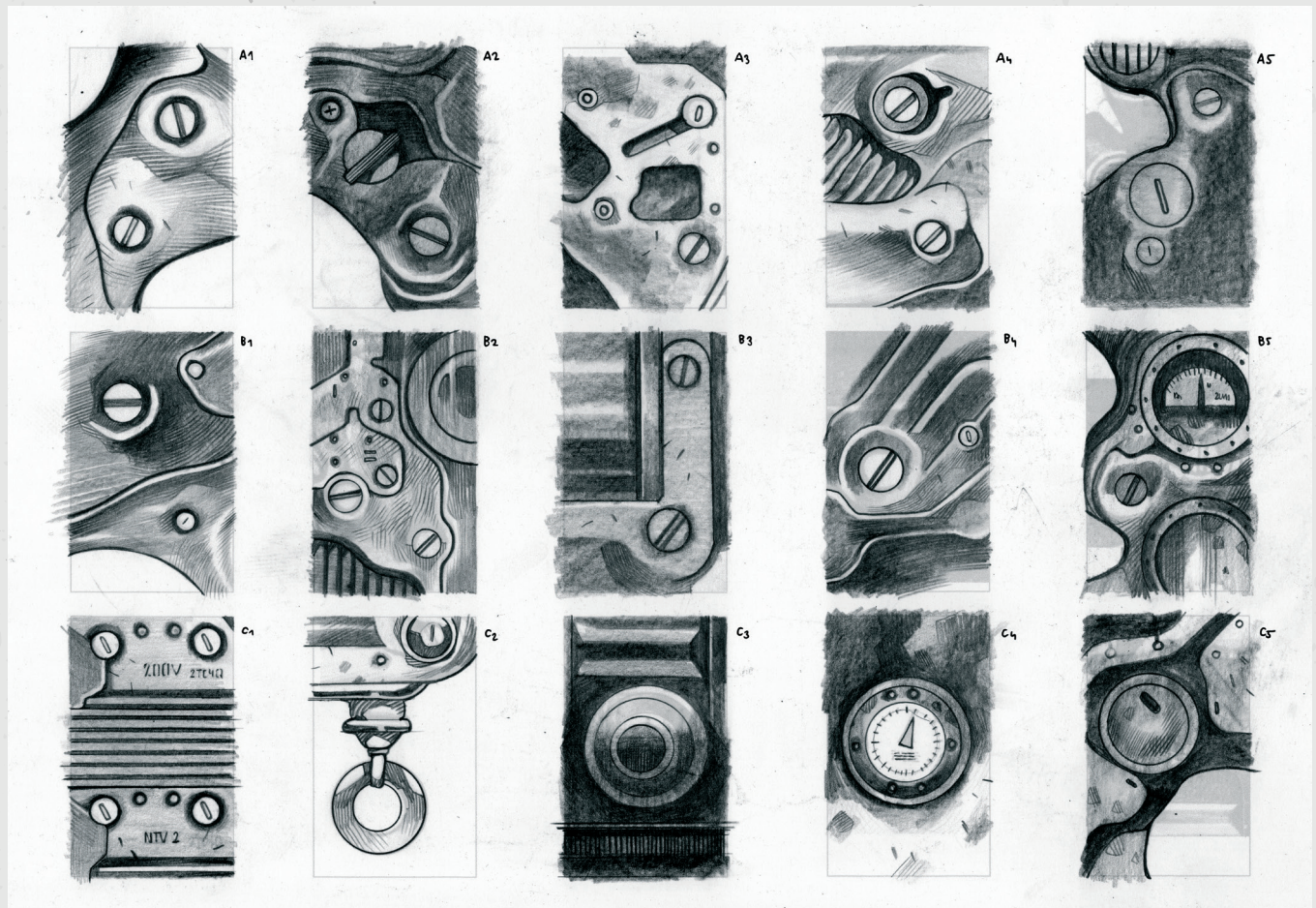




LOCK AND LOAD

Design and rendering techniques with Jakub Rebelka

In this article, we'll learn how to sketch and render a steampunk-inspired weapon design, using an imaginative collaging approach to generate ideas and experiment with shapes.



The design concept

This article will explain how I usually create my designs, from the beginning to the final piece. I hope you will find some of the information useful, and will be able to learn something about constructing and rendering forms. To create this design for a sci-fi weapon, I draw rough sketches and elements that I would like to use in my target design, then compose an image from them, like a puzzle.

I want the design to combine the look of a weapon and a sculpture, and to look like it's from a different century or non-existent age. To achieve this, I'll combine raw, industrial, rusty elements with baroque and steampunk-

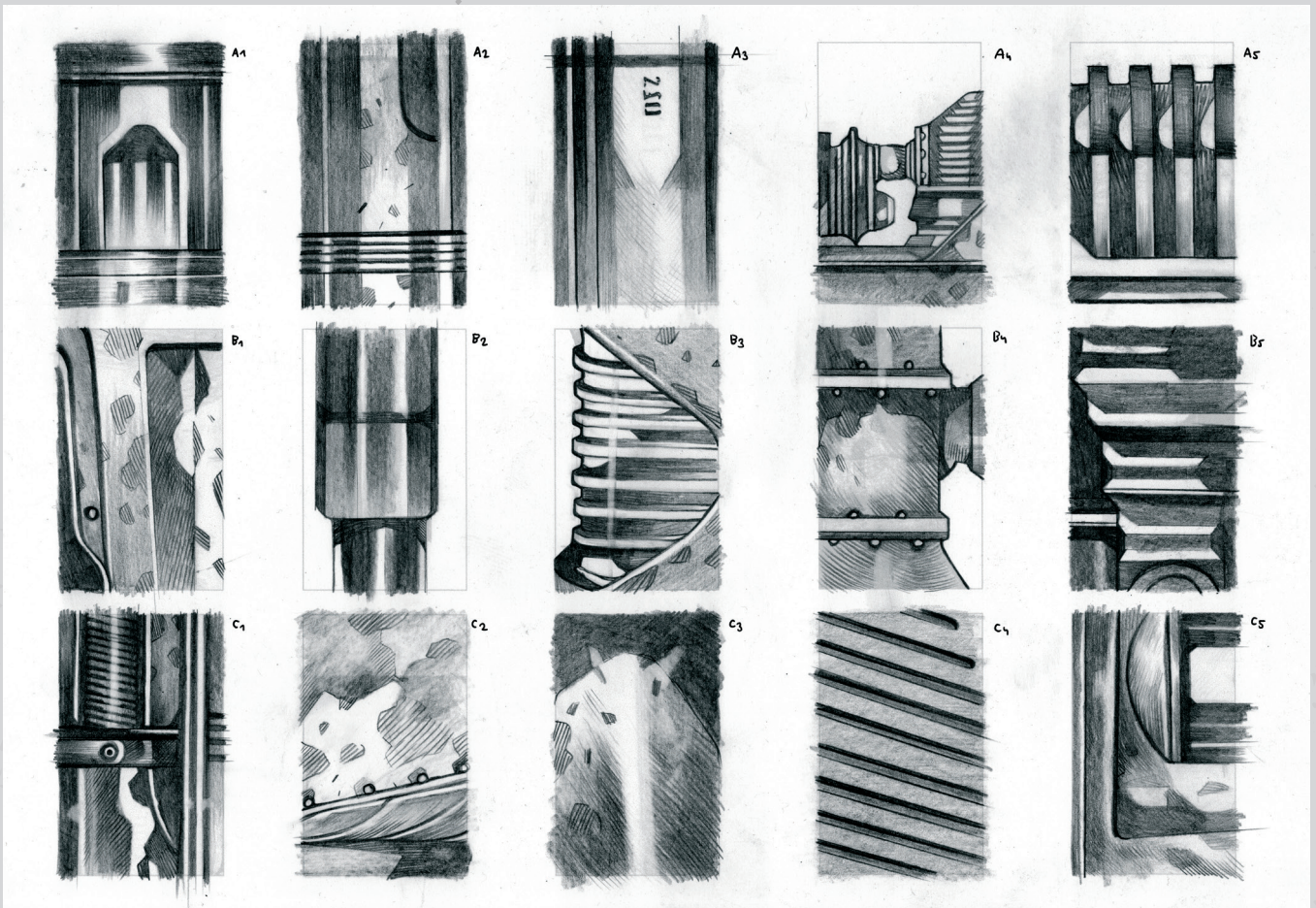
inspired details. I want to create something with a lot of decorative elements: rivets, wires, bolts, and so on. It will be a weapon that wouldn't exist in real life, but something with a concentration of elements that would fit a steampunk world.

Tools and techniques

I like to use different grades of pencil, both soft and hard, but I usually go from a 4B to a 6B pencil to create different looks. This is just my personal preference, because I like that these tools create a lot of random dust and graphite dirt, which can be very useful for creating shadows and tonal values. I try to begin with the outline rather than going

Above
Sketching circular shapes
that might become
part of the design

Right
Moving on to square or
angular design elements



straight to shading, remembering that I can make different effects by changing the angle of the tool.

For highlights, I use a variety of different erasers: putty erasers for soft gradients, and hard erasers for sharp highlights and reflections. As I sketch, I try to plan ahead where the brightest highlights will be, so I can leave blank white space.

Circular shapes

I draw random circles and circular motifs, imagining ways to use them in my design. These circular shapes (dials, screws, and bolts) will become parts of my final weapon. By building up these smaller parts, I can put together an original piece.

I use these early stages to find ways of shading, crosshatching, and rendering the image.

Remember that creating contrast with tools and techniques is always interesting, and builds tension for the eye. As can be seen on the opposite page in A2, A5, B3, and C3, a soft pencil is used to make a broad, general shadow. In A1, C1, and C2, I draw cleaner lines as another way to define shape. In A3, A4, B2, and B1, I combine the soft, flat shadows with precise line drawing.

In A5, C3, C4, and C5, I use the softest pencil to make the darkest, deepest shadows – this technique can be used for less important, less visible parts of the design.

Square shapes

Now I move on to the design elements that consist mainly of square or rectangular objects and straight lines, as highlighted on this page. This part of the process will form the base of the design. These shapes will set

everything up, and afterwards I can add details and fragments from the previous stage to build up the design.

When creating square elements like these, use a ruler to give them a solid, accurate look. When it comes to rendering them, I recommend starting with outlines and then slowly shading from the brightest to darkest parts. I plan to use A1, A2, A3, B2, and C1 (from the images on this page) for the barrel of the gun. Elements of A4, A5, B5, and C5 could be used for the core of the gun.

In B1, C1, C2, and C3, I try to use different textures to suggest the different materials of which the gun is made. For added interest, I include some industrial lettering or numbers in A3, and some lines that are perpendicular to the main lines' direction, similar to A2, B3, and C1.



Irregular shapes

This is the most interesting part of the process for me, as these are the irregular shapes that give personality to the design. To make great-looking decorative shapes of your own, try to mix shapes and elements from your imagination – don't just repeat the ones I've made here! Sketch from your own personal inspirations. This is the part where the creator can really use their imagination.

In A1, A3, B3, and C1, I use a baroque style, but for contrast I go for more industrial elements in A2, A5, C2, and C3. I use wavy lines to define the shapes in B1, B4, and C1. Compare A1 and A2 above – using curvy lines creates a more organic look, while straight lines look more industrial. As before, I use a combination of sharp lines and soft shadows.

I also start to design some specific components, like the hammer and trigger in A3 and C5. The next step will be to combine all these elements together.

Elements and shapes

I finally draw some of the last pieces that will form the base of the design, such as the handle. Now I can scan and compile all my previous elements into one image to create the shape of the gun. I usually use Adobe Photoshop to combine all the drawings, as this allows me to edit and scale elements easily. I duplicate some of the parts I drew before, and merge them together with layer blending modes such as Multiply. At this stage of the work, the most important thing is the general shape; the details are still very sketchy, as they should be. Don't be afraid to experiment

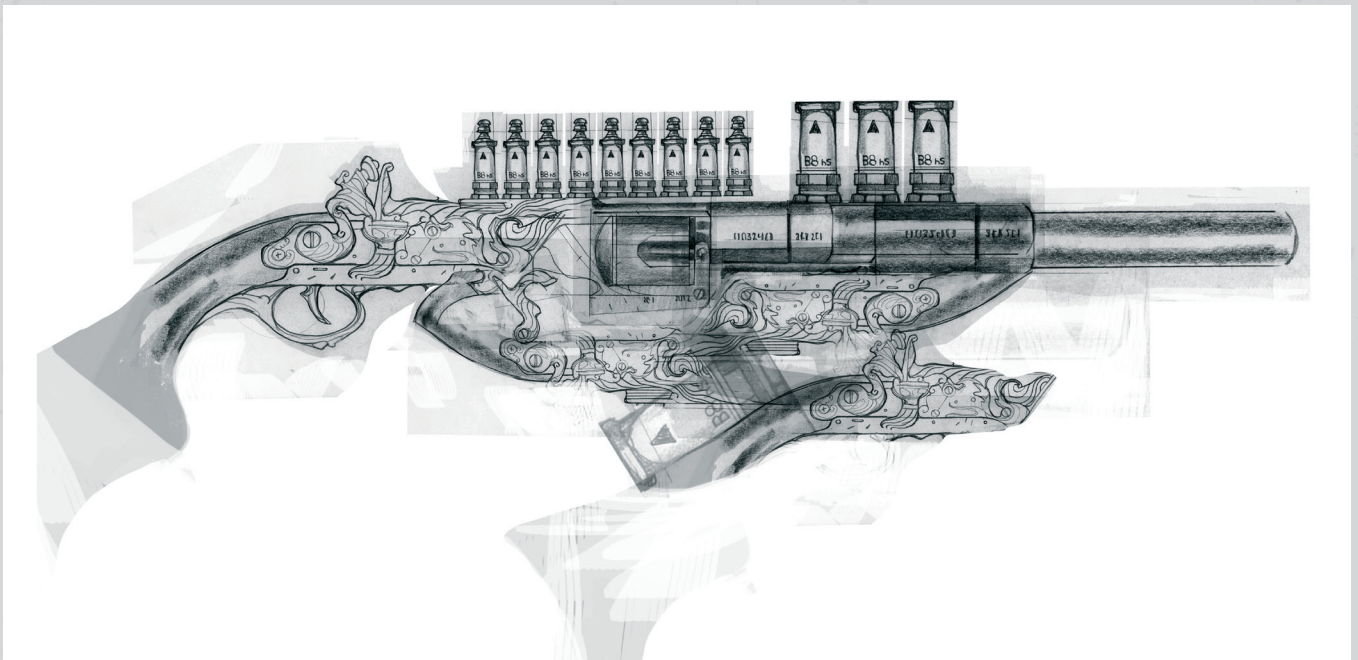
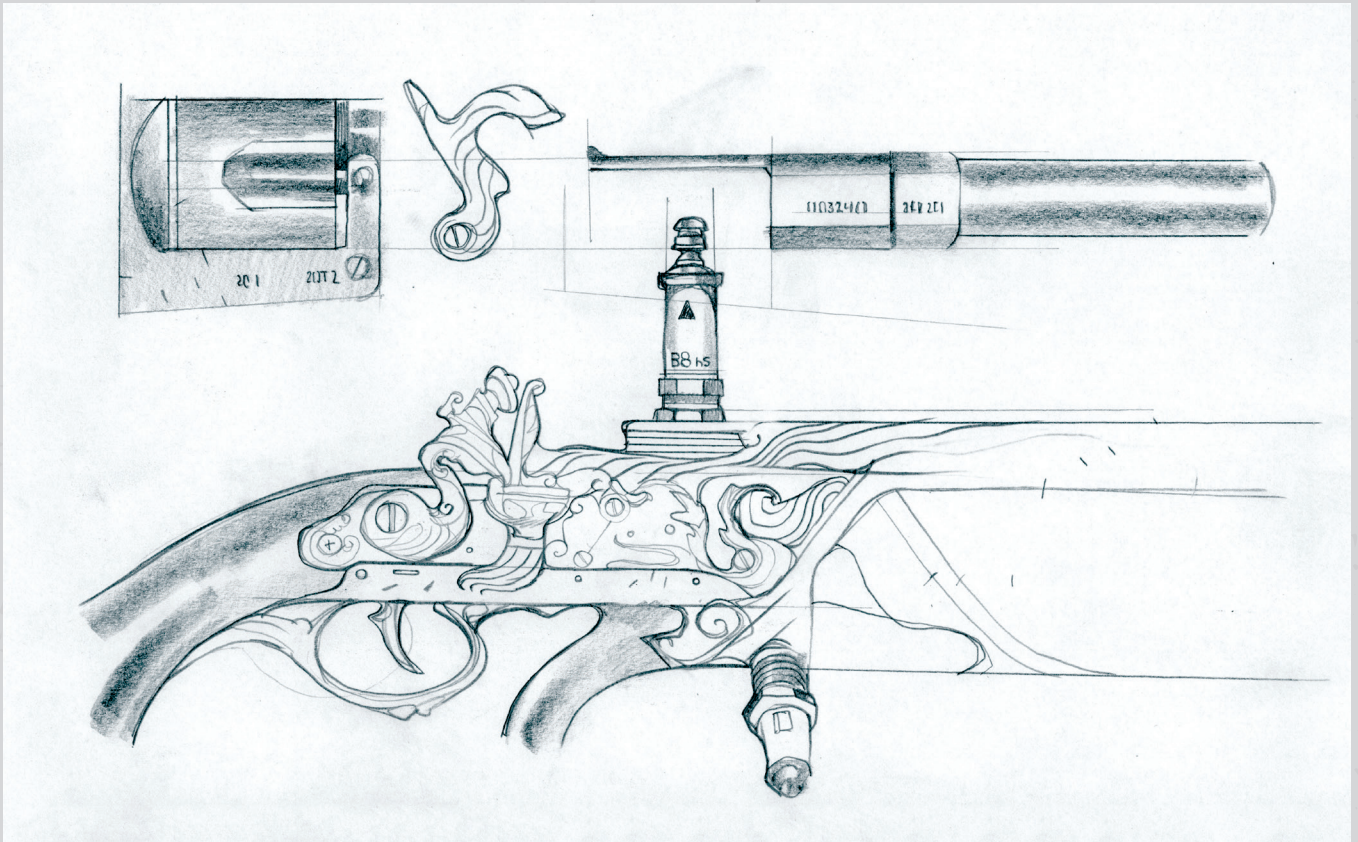
with composition and shape – sometimes the craziest idea may work with your design! Compose your shape out of the elements you find the most appealing, and when you're sure of the design, it's time to start rendering it.

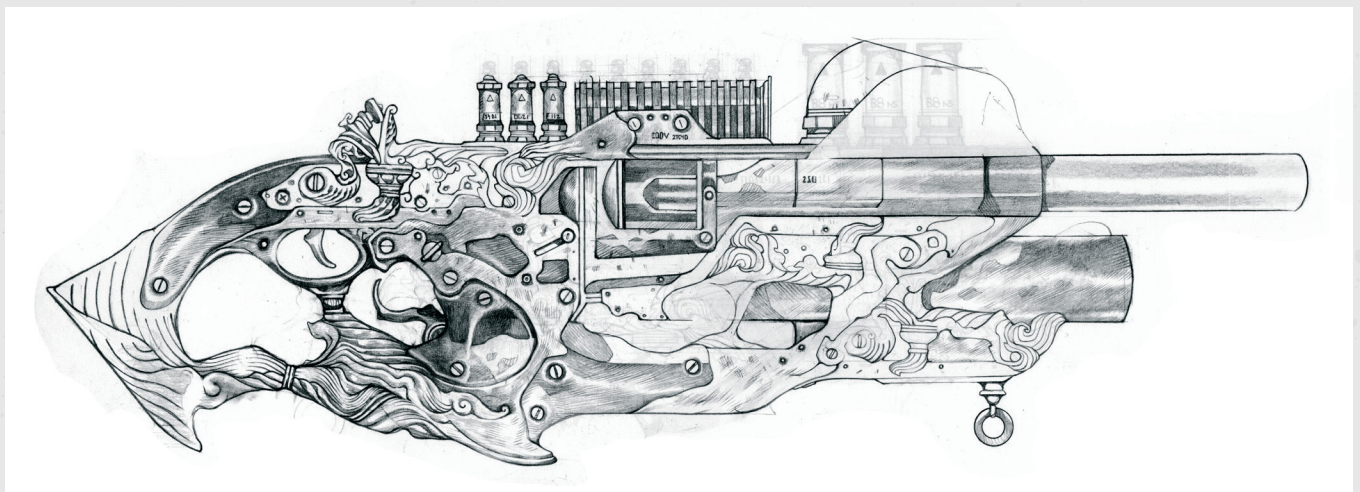
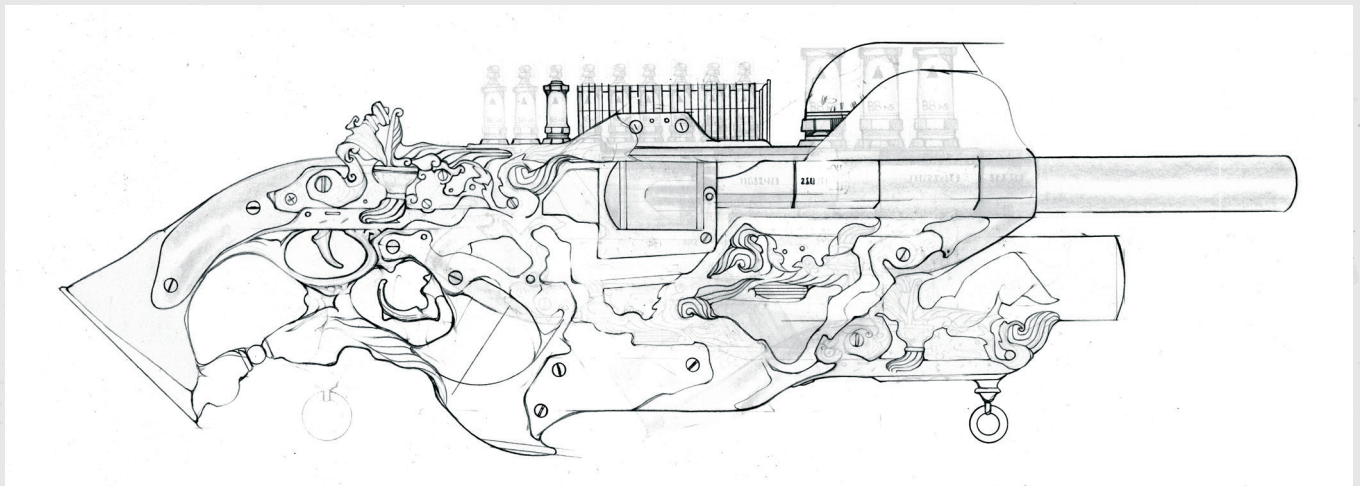
Above
Experimenting with organic
and irregular forms

Top right
Elements that will create
the base for the design

Bottom right
Compositing the
sketches together in
Adobe Photoshop

“Don't be afraid to experiment with composition and shape”





Refining the drawing

Once I've scaled and composed the elements together in Adobe Photoshop, I create a simple overall shape without detailing, which I print out in light blue. This becomes a blueprint I can further sketch on. I used to draw on a light table in the past, but using a printer, scanner, and digital software is much faster and allows you to adjust and transform your drawings more easily. I usually repeat this process a few times to add new elements and make the lines look like I want them to.

Final drawing

Even though it's a lot easier to make design changes digitally, there's something magical about pencil sketches and drawings that I look for in my work. On the right you can see the final design, and a bigger variant

made using the same scanning and collage techniques. Try to fill in your simple outline with the ideas and elements you've created so far. Creating your own designs begins with simple shapes, circles, and lines, then merging those parts and drawing over them.

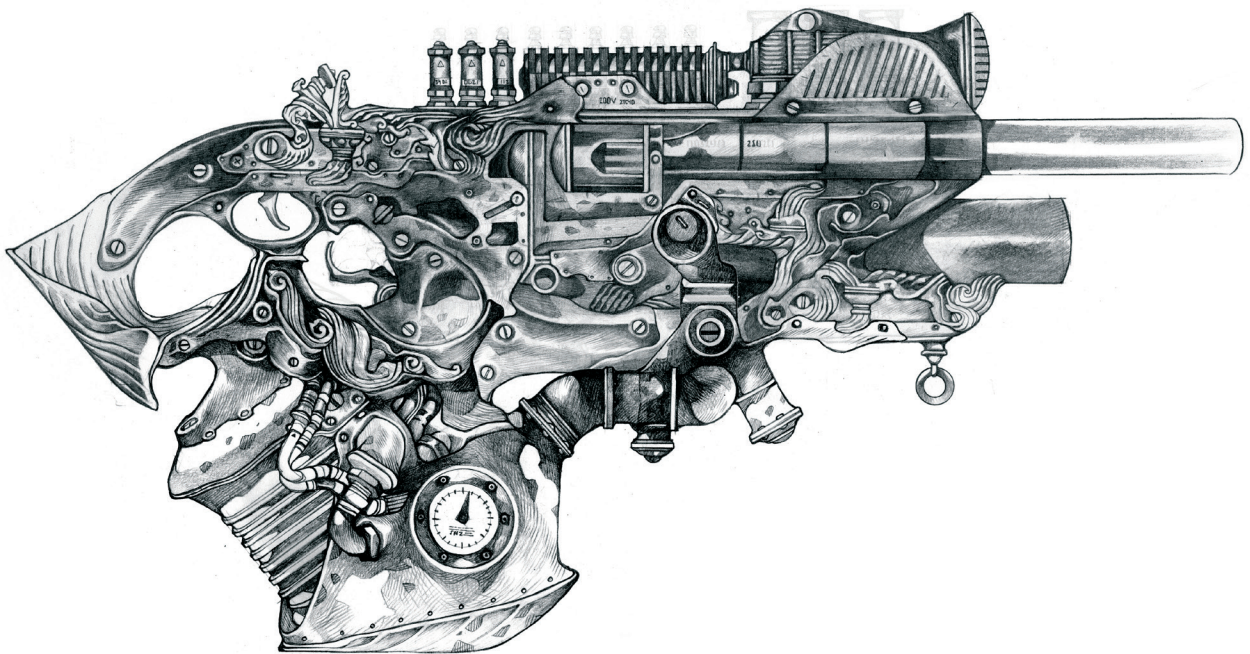
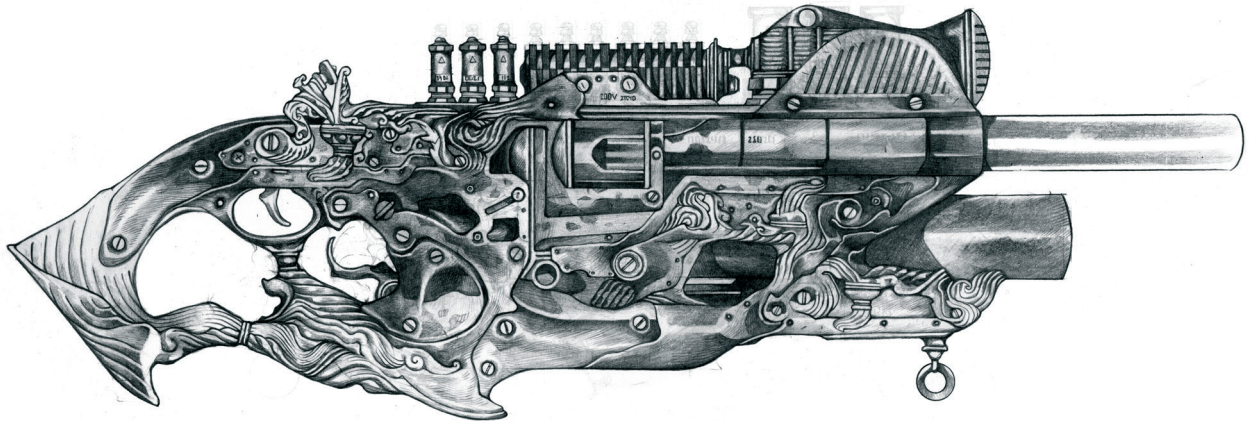
Sometimes you just have to let it go, and not try too hard to find inspiration. Inspiration is one of those things that will find you eventually, and you'll be surprised. It's like exploring the unknown – an exciting journey without moving from your place. The discoveries you make on those “journeys” can lead to interesting artistic solutions.

But if you draw for a living and you have to draw something despite not feeling inspired, the only solution is honestly to do your job;

most of the time, inspiration will come during the process of creating artwork. You have to be disciplined, remember the rules of the craft, keep to deadlines, and draw what the client demands, which is not always easy. In these cases, the “memories” from your art journeys, done just for the pleasure of doing them, will become a huge help. They're pure gold.

Top and above
Redrawing and shading
the design based on
the digital collage

Right
The final design and a
second, larger variation
© SHZREBELKA



A sketch from the
temple area in
Osaka, Japan



"EQUIPPED AND READY TO DRAW"

An interview with Tin Salamunic



Tin Salamunic is an experienced artist and designer who captures his subjects – be they human figures or urban environments – using a dynamic and versatile approach.



Q: Thanks for talking to GRAPHITE, Tin! First of all, could you tell us about yourself and your background?

A: My first official assignment was the cover and interior spots for *The Washington Post* concert edition during my senior year in college. This was my first experience as a student with a big client, and I immediately fell in love with this line of work.

As I started gaining new clients, I became more and more involved with each project, and soon my work expanded to include advertising, web and print design, and creative direction. During my earlier years, I also served as an art educator at Virginia Commonwealth University, where I taught senior studio, typography, concept art, and figure drawing classes.

After meeting my wife, who is also a designer and developer, we became a multi-service

creative team and have been working together from our home studio ever since.

Q: What inspired you to take up art as a career, and what inspires you today?

A: I've always enjoyed drawing, and I never saw a reason to quit. Late 80s and early 90s cartoons had a big impact on my love for art. I learned to draw by watching *He-Man*, *Transformers*, and *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*. For me, art is more than just a profession and hobby – if I'm not creating, I feel apprehensive.

I'm also extremely introverted, and freelancing allows me to lead a more balanced lifestyle. I've worked a lot of nine-to-five jobs, and for me personally, the traditional workplace environment has never felt right.

I believe a lot of people gravitate towards this field for similar reasons. Music, videogames,

and movies inspire me the most. I'm always connected to Spotify while working (my current playlist consists of Royksopp, Coeur De Pirate, Regina Spektor, The Do, and DragonForce) and I spend most of my free time gaming to stay motivated.

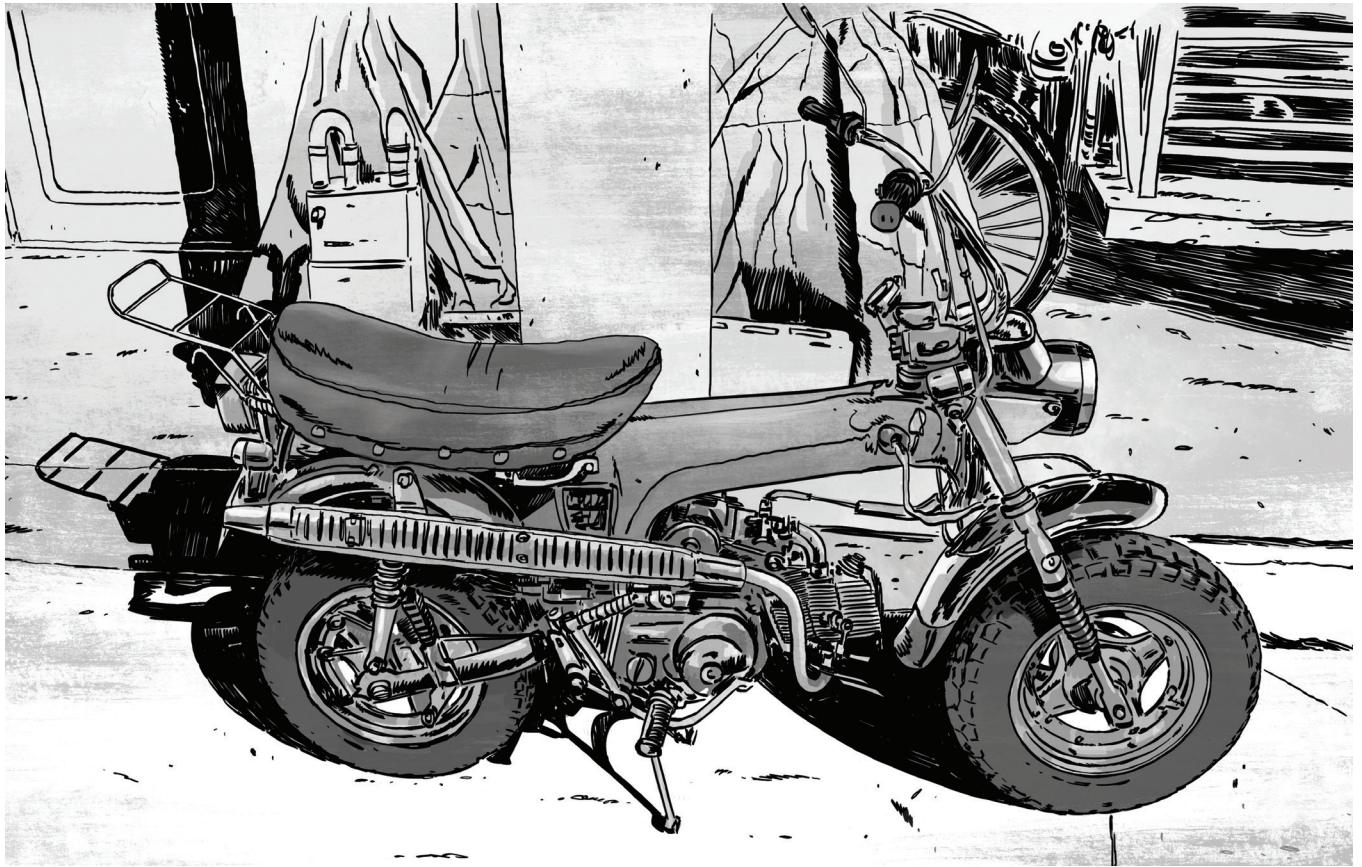
I've learned a lot about UX and UI (user experience and interface) design from working in the gaming industry. The interactive nature of videogames presents unique challenges for designers because games offer a very tangible relationship between the creator and the end user. Radial menus in games like *Assassin's Creed* or *Mass Effect* are practically imperceptible while gaming, but they're one of the most frequently used gameplay elements. As Jared Spool always said, "Good design, when it's done well, becomes invisible. It's only when it's done poorly that we notice it."



Far left
Self-portrait sketch

Near left
Sketchbook drawing of
my studio workspace

Right
Viking character concept



Q: What tools and media do you generally favor, and why?

A: I have a traditional background, but I transitioned to working digitally early on in my career when assignments became regular. For my line of work, the benefits of drawing digitally are paramount. It saves time, money, and most people can't tell whether most of my sketches are traditional or digital. I still try to draw traditionally whenever I can because I enjoy the palpability of ink on paper, and I don't think I'll ever abandon traditional drawing, but I attribute most of my success to the digital medium's versatility.

I ink in Adobe Photoshop CS6 and Manga Studio 5. When I'm inking in Photoshop, I often use the Lazy Nezumi Pro plug-in (www.lazynezumi.com) to smooth out brushstrokes and eliminate jitter. I create custom brushes when needed, but I also use Kyle Webster's superb brush sets (www.kylebrush.com).

Q: What do you love to draw the most? Any preferred themes or subjects?

A: Architecture excites me the most. Drawing buildings and environments serves as an invaluable exercise in perspective and composition. I see buildings as elaborately designed page layouts. You have the roof as your header, the windows as your body copy, and so on. In a way, this brings us back to your inspiration question. Inspiration can come from the most unexpected places, and I pick up a lot of conceptual cues from environmental sketching.

Q: Tell us more about your general process. How do you get from a rough idea to a finished image?

A: I wish I could say I have a cool and unique process, but most of my finished commercial work follows a very typical pattern of brainstorming roughs, getting

client feedback, making adjustments, and moving on to the final. The big difference lies in my sketch stage. I submit fleshed-out drawings, so the client knows *exactly* what they're getting. I draw thumbnails only for myself. It's a personal preference, but this method has led to a lot of new assignments as a result of positive word-of-mouth between art directors.

Above
Sketch of a vintage bike

Top right
Sketchbook piece of a
Japanese neighborhood

Bottom right
Sketchbook piece of a
delivery bike in Japan





Q: You’ve worked with many clients in many different fields, but what is your favorite type of project to work on?

A: In my experience, a project is only as good as the art director. If you’re working with someone who’s truly committed to their work, it doesn’t matter what the assignment is. I’ve been fortunate enough to work with all of my dream clients, but as it turns out, I’ve been the happiest when collaborating with businesses that were never on my radar in the first place.

On a personal level, life drawing remains my favorite activity. My goal is to travel the world and publish annual sketch journals of the different places I visit.

Q: What advice would you give to someone hoping to pursue a freelance career?

A: Freelancing isn’t for everyone. Some people prefer a more traditional work environment, and there is nothing wrong with that. I can only speak from personal experience: I’ve done both, and for me, freelancing was the right choice for the type of work I’ve always wanted to do.

I’ve been freelancing for about eleven years now, and I’ve seen the industry transform many times over. A lot of companies, traditional workplaces included, have become more and more amenable to remote employees. There are more working and successful freelancers today than ever before. It’s no longer this weird subject that’s difficult to explain to friends and family. The conversation has shifted dramatically. This became particularly true when the economy collapsed in 2008. People started losing jobs left and right. The myth of “security” and

“consistency” in a traditional workplace was completely debunked.

Freelancers aren’t immune to these situations, but if you handle your business properly and remain flexible with the services you offer, there’s a greater chance of recuperation since your income isn’t tied to a singular company. I’ve lost dozens of clients when they went out of business due to economic changes, and there have been long periods with little to no work, but for every loss, there’s always been a new client that eventually filled that gap.

A potential crutch for many rising artists may be the educational system. There are plenty of excellent schools that provide countless opportunities for talented students, but there are just as many universities that recycle old syllabi that no longer reflect the constant changes in the modern workplace.

“Freelancing is now more respected and more widely accepted across various fields”



There is this cliché belief among art educators that only about 2% of graduating art students end up in their desired careers. This may be partially true, but who is actually at fault? The students or the universities? There are limits to what individuals and institutions can teach, but there are no limits to what you can seek to learn.

If you want to become a freelancer, learn what it takes to run a business. If you think school was difficult *at any point*, then you

aren't prepared for the real challenges this career presents.

The good news is that freelancing is now much more respected and more widely accepted across various industries. I personally believe that the freelance (or the independent contractor) model has a place in every type of workplace, and our generation is lucky to have access to so many tools that make this career path more accessible than ever before.

Left
A light study/sketch
of a Japanese store

Above left
Sketch of my wife

Above right
Figure drawing study

"Vary your sketches between quick doodles and longer drawing sessions"



Q: What do you do when you're not busy making art?

A: I love videogames, and I operate a review site where I cover games, tech, comics, and anime: The Game Scouts (www.thegamescouts.com).

My wife and I started this site for fun in 2012, but it has grown tremendously since then. I treat the site almost like a second job, but it's ultimately something I do just for fun when I want to step away from art-related projects.

I'm also a big Netflix addict (who isn't?) and I spend an unhealthy amount of time devouring movies, cartoons, and documentaries.

Q: Do you have any tips for artists who would like to improve their observational drawings?

A: Always be equipped and ready to draw. And by always, I mean regardless of whether you plan on drawing or not. Think of your drawing tools as your wallet or cell phone. Once you turn a basic routine into a daily habit, you realize that the fear of making mistakes becomes less and less prevalent. Vary your sketches between quick doodles and longer drawing sessions. Don't obsess over mistakes, even if half of your sketchbook is filled with them. Learn to compose your sketchbook pages. Even if you're layering different doodles, layer them in a meaningful way.

Above
Sketchbook piece
of a tucked-away
Japanese alleyway

Right
Sketchbook drawing of busy
pedestrians around Tokyo





Face value

Portraiture in graphite with Thomas Cian



In this article, illustrator and fine artist Thomas Cian uses a variety of graphite to create a striking portrait image.



Drawing tools

The phase that precedes the drawing itself is very important. It is at this stage that you lay the groundwork for a good job. Not only does this step include the choice of materials and techniques that are going to be used, but also the choice of the subject. In this case, we will be creating a portrait with the following tools:

1. Tombow MONO Zero eraser pencil
2. HB pencil
3. H pencil
4. 5B pencil
5. Blending stick, for shading
6. 2B 0.35 mm mechanical pencil
7. Large paintbrush

8. Graphite powder
9. Viarco Watercolor Graphite
10. Small paintbrush
11. Regular vinyl eraser
12. Putty eraser

Base sketch

First of all I sketch the main volumes of the subject with a pencil. It is important that I make sure the drawing is well proportioned from the beginning, so that I do not have to worry about it when I start working on shading and texture.

If you elect to use a photo reference at this stage, I think it's crucial to be the one who

Above
The tools used for
this project

Right
The base pencil sketch



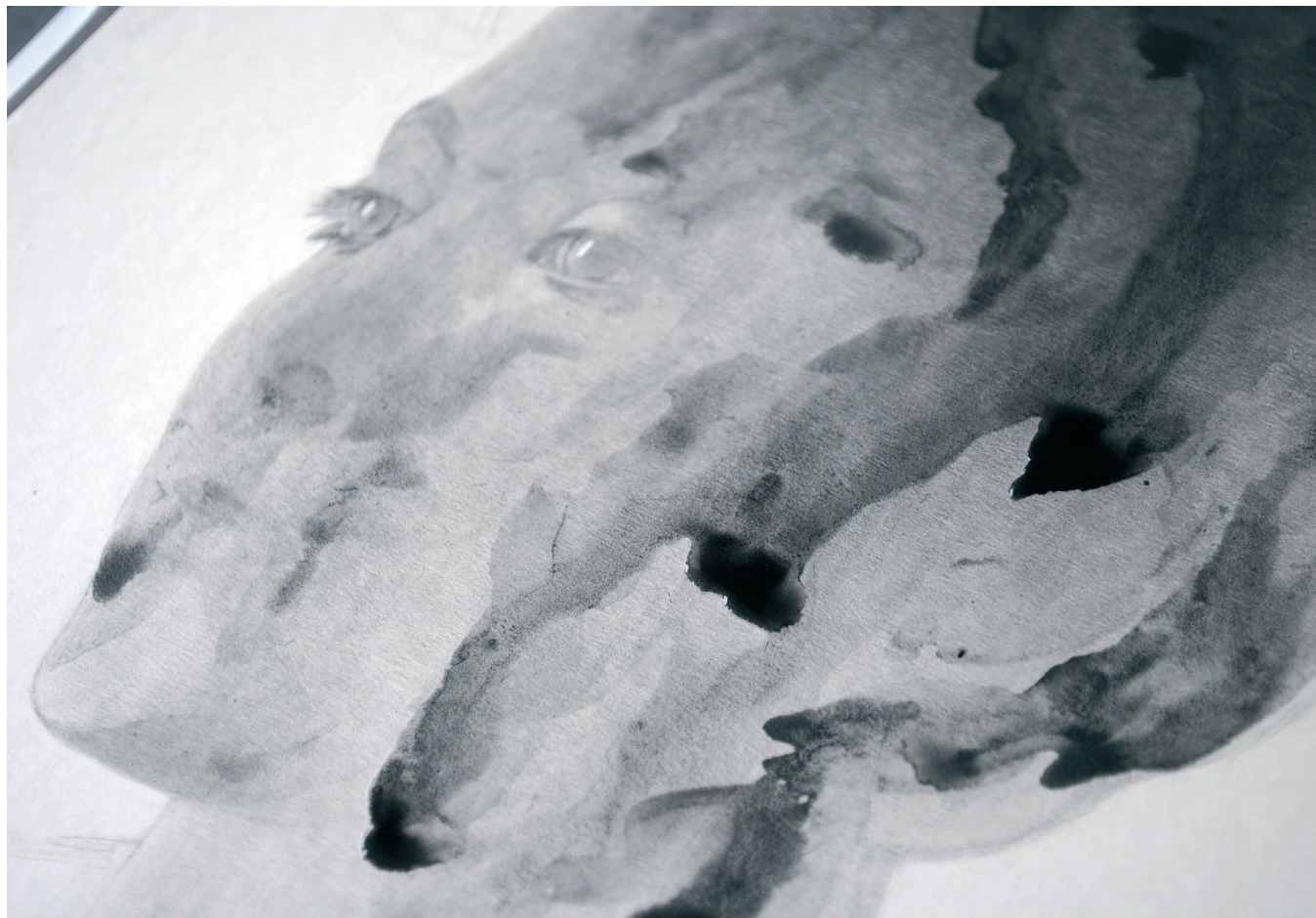
took the picture, as you are the exclusive holder of your own personal tastes. I regularly refer to images that I find online or in books, especially for animals and plants, which are difficult to study in other ways – but that's just for practice, because creating a drawing from A to Z is a whole different thing. Taking your own photos is a very important exercise

to strengthen those tastes; you'll really figure out what you like and why you like it, leading you to be more satisfied, image after image.

Drawing from real life is also essential; I suggest everyone takes the time to visit a natural science museum to sketch subjects from life.



“Remember that white and light gray are absolutely not the same thing!”



Top left and thumbnail
Using graphite powder
to create a midtone

Bottom left
Using erasers to pick
out highlights

Above
Creating visual interest with
water-soluble graphite

Graphite powder

I use a tissue to spread some graphite powder over the drawing's surface, creating a gray midtone. Creating a midtone base is very helpful because it allows you to set up highlights and shadows more easily, quickly, and with more direct “feedback” from the rest of the image. It's crucial to keep in mind that you can get the drawing dirty at any time, but keeping it clean is harder, and something you should worry about from the beginning.

Erasing highlights

I use the erasers to remove the midtone base in areas where I want highlights to be. On a face, the highlights are usually found on

the damp/wet surfaces of the eyes and lips. The highlights are the brightest values, so any other light will inevitably be darker. Remember that white and light gray are absolutely not the same thing!

Water-soluble graphite

With a big brush and Viarco's water-soluble graphite, I start to make the drawing “dirtier” in some parts. I really like to use graphite with water because it's impossible to control the results completely. When using water-soluble graphite, keep in mind that the parts you get wet will be “fixed,” and even though they will be partially erasable, you will not be able to get the paper back to pure white.

Developing the shading

To set up the next stage of shading, it's helpful to insert a very dark tone to start with: in this case, the black of the eyelashes, in order to now have both the brightest and the darkest tones applied. Once you have both your brightest highlights and darkest shadows down, it allows you to easily judge and work on the other grayscale tones that will be used in the rest of the drawing.





Making a start on the
more detailed shading



Shading process

Here you can see how I build up the forms and shading. This is achieved with all my tools shown previously, from the big brush to the very fine 2B mechanical pencil.

You can finalize the drawing according to your personal taste; I'm not interested in hyperrealism, I like it to remain "a drawing," even in the most detailed parts. I love leaving some pencil- and brushstrokes clearly visible.

Putty eraser

It may now be necessary to lighten or clean up some areas of the drawing here. The kneaded

putty eraser allows you to create some smooth, light areas without producing any kind of marks or rubbings, as would happen with other erasers.

Hair details

To draw the hair, I use a very sharp pencil and the 2B mechanical pencil. Hair consists of different shades, and will sometimes seem to "disappear" when backlit because it's so thin.

In other areas, where the strands overlap, it will appear darker and more visible. Here you can see how different tones and thicknesses of hair create variation that looks natural.

Above top

The process of building up darker shading

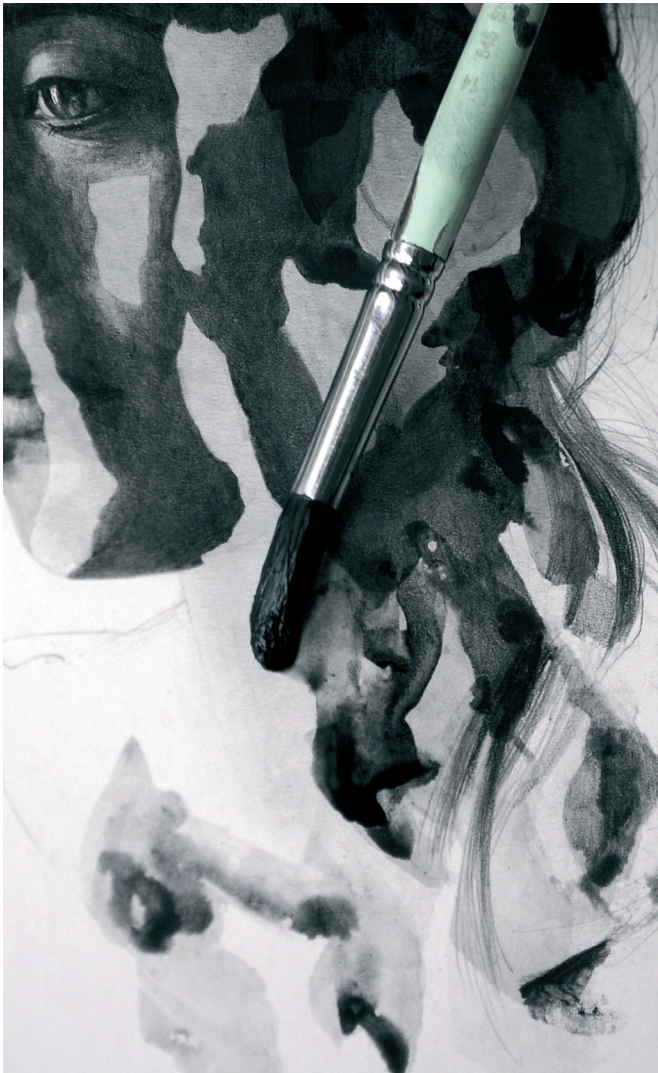
Above bottom

A kneaded putty eraser is useful for lightening areas

Right

Adding lifelike strands of hair





More painterly effects

I generally add some stains with the brush to balance the composition at this point, being careful not to create hard contrasts that might distract from the main focal point (the face). This is done using the water-soluble graphite that I used previously, but applied with the smaller brush.

Final touches

I think that adding color at this point would give something more to the drawing, so I add a few little colored details with acrylic paint. Deciding whether a drawing is finished can be very difficult. Sometimes you'll feel that you're missing something that would make the image more valuable. Sometimes

you're unable to say "Stop!" when you're concentrating on small details, hoping that the image's entire look might change.

In the former case, I suggest not looking at the drawing for a few days – it's a huge help for finding that missing "something." In the latter case, you're usually just wasting your time, and it may be better to consider starting another drawing, even if you've spent a lot of time on the current one.

After one drawing comes another, and we have to be the most productive we can. We must be able to stop when we are happy with our results, and be able to give up, learn from our mistakes, and try again. The time

you spend on a single drawing will never be wasted; your taste and techniques will improve anyway. It's very important to make a lot of mistakes.

Above left

Loose, organic brushstrokes help to balance the image

Above right

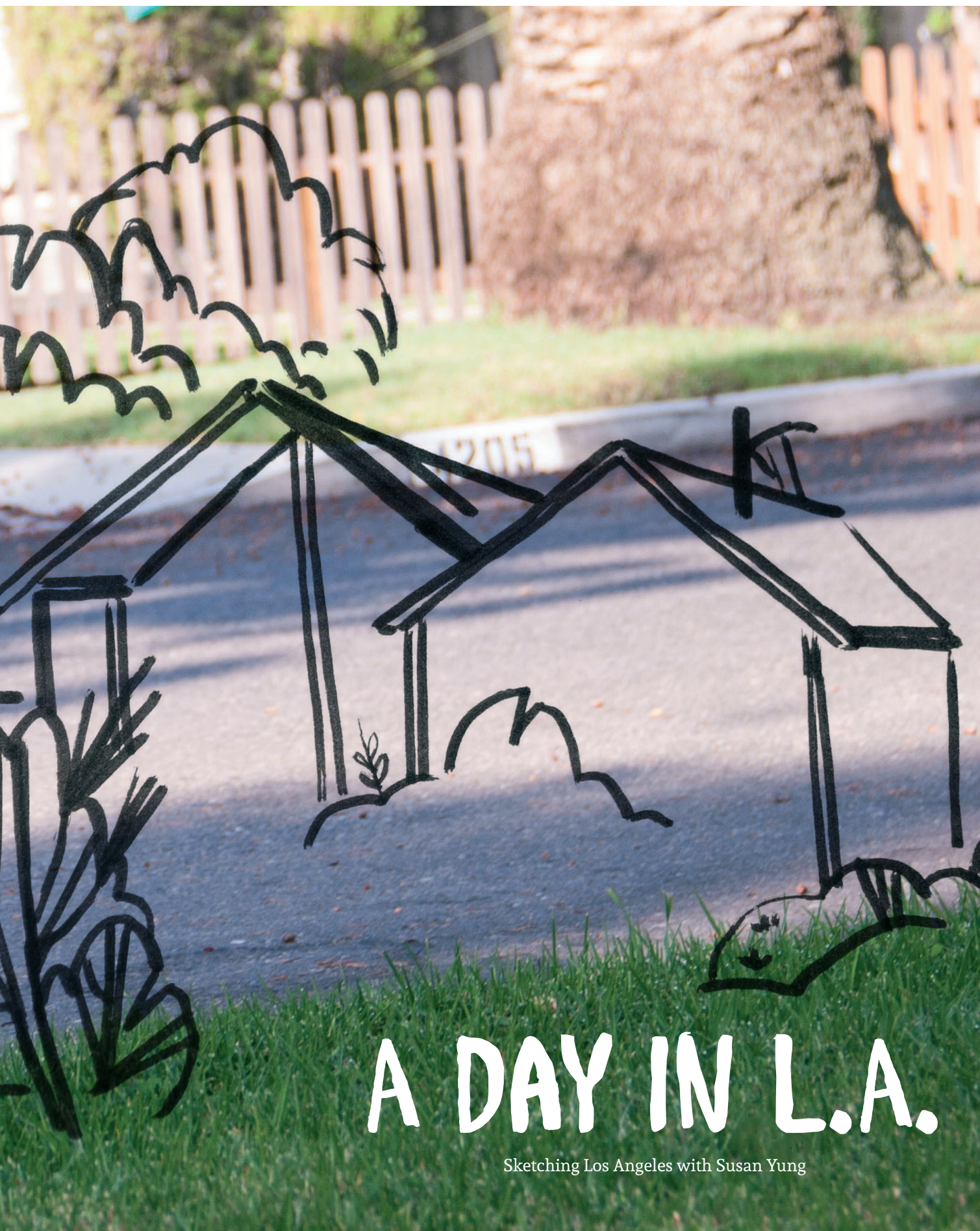
Adding some small finishing touches

Right

The final image
© Thomas Giam



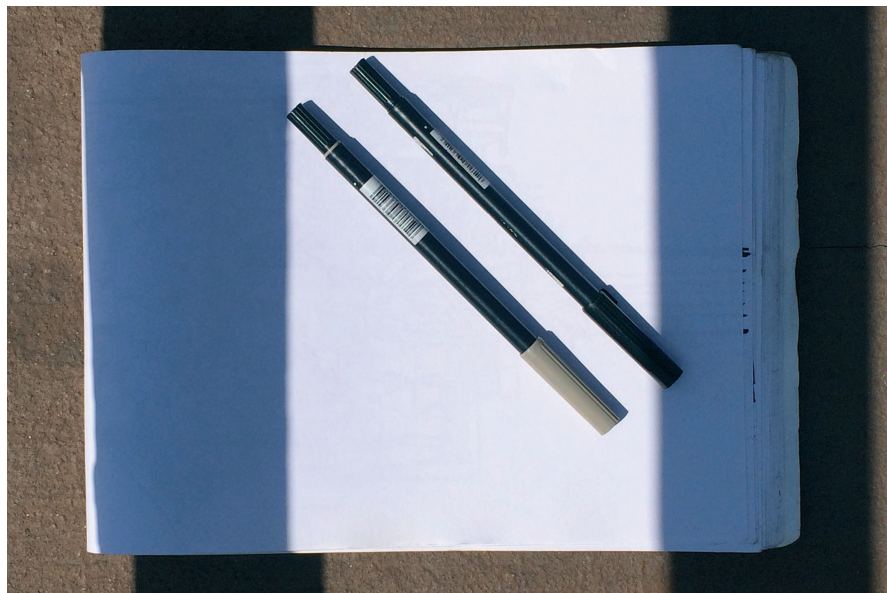




A DAY IN L.A.

Sketching Los Angeles with Susan Yung

In this article, we travel around sunny L.A. County with Susan Yung, and learn new techniques to add fun and focus to urban sketches.



My name is Susan Yung and I am a freelance concept artist currently based in sunny Los Angeles. I have worked with a number of design studios in the area and am currently working as a freelance background artist for Cartoon Network. In this article, I hope to bring you a sense of the variety of environments that are hidden in Los Angeles. I will cover my process and how I break down and simplify complicated subjects into more readable forms. My tools for this whole project are a sketch pad and two Tombow Dual Brush Pens in N15 (Black) and N79 (Warm Gray).

Hyperion Avenue, Silver Lake

Hyperion Avenue is located in an up-and-coming area of Los Angeles called Silver Lake. It is one of my favorite roads to drive through, and also consists of a lot of houses that are located on the hillsides. What I love about this area are the number of shapes that flow within each other; they can create a really interesting composition for a sketch.

It looks complicated! My first instinct is to crop down to a specific section I want

to sketch. A good tip is to not overshoot yourself; sketching everything can seem overwhelming, so it's always better to pick something that you like and focus on it. This will help your sketch to read better as an image, and it saves the trouble of getting worked up on a specific section and forgetting about the rest.

I decide to sketch the house shown in the photograph opposite. I start by quickly drawing a base outline of what I see overall; I also simplify the plants into basic shapes, which I will cover in more depth later on. I work my way through the scene, slowly adding detail to the sketch. I am selective of what I add; wanting to show that this is a house, but not inundating it with small details. I add some details to the plants to give them texture, but I don't draw every leaf on each plant – that would distract from my focus on getting the overall sketch done.

The final sketch is clear to look at, and not overwhelming. Adding dark shadows with the same black pen is the final touch that gives it depth and separates certain elements.





**“Sketching everything
can seem overwhelming,
so it’s always better to
pick something that you
like and focus on it”**

Above
A view of the houses
on Hyperion Avenue

Left
Starting the base: simple
first, before adding
details. The plants
become stylized shapes

Below
The final result, with
dark shadows added
© Susan Yung





ARTIST'S TIPS

Drawing tools

I always get asked about what pen brand I use. Pens are different for everyone, so be open to experimenting with new tools and you might find a pen that you like better than someone else does. If that works for you, use it!

Do you see what I see?

Always draw what you see! But if you see something that someone else doesn't, or want to add some elements that make the composition work better, go for it! You don't have to be exact. Sometimes the environment doesn't make for a good composition in certain parts, and you can modify that in your sketch. This is your sketch – it doesn't have to be one-hundred-percent accurate.



The Alex Theatre, Glendale

The Alex Theatre is part of a group of structures in L.A. County that are recognized by the Los Angeles Conservancy group. The building was designed in the 1940s and has been preserved to this day despite everything around it becoming more modern.

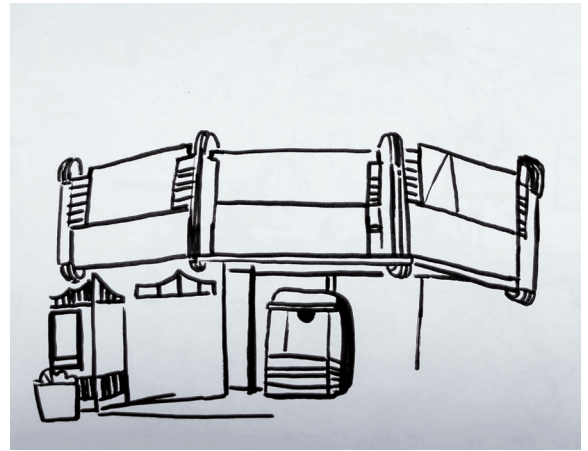
Its shapes and color are what attracted me to sketch here; in the photo above, you can see the overwhelming amount of detail present in this structure. Again, I aim to simplify what is there and pick out certain parts of it that could give texture to my sketch.

I start out with an outline to form a base for the sketch. I keep it simple, adding some lines to give a little more detail but not staying too

focused. As I build up the sketch into what I want to capture, I only add details that are necessary to show what the scene is.

As an artist, you can pick and choose what you'd like to show in your sketch. For example, I group the smaller text into shapes and blotches, as I imagine it will be distracting to write everything down.

In this sketch, I want to go a little further by adding some grays to create a sense of lighting (using my other Tombow pen). I can still stick with just the black marker to create shading, but using grays preserves the details I have. I can also go over the gray marks again to create darker grays if I want to add more depth to the shading.



Above left
The Alex Theatre in Glendale

Above top right
Starting with a simple
outline that will form the
base of the sketch

Above bottom right
Building out the sketch and simplifying distracting areas like the building's small lettering

Right
Adding lighting and shading
with a Warm Gray Tombow pen
© Susan Yung





Above
A beautiful gem of a place,
near Venice Beach

Far left
Starting out with an
outline, making note of the
different shapes that are
significant in the scene

Near left
Adding improvised
elements to the sketch

Right
Don't be afraid to
have fun with it!
© Susan Yung



Venice, Los Angeles

This is my favorite place to go sketch and paint. It took me a while to notice that it existed near where I lived! There is a large variety of architecture, plants, beaches, and canals to choose from. I love this area because I can see that each house has its own character. I could never get tired of the amount of shapes I can design within my sketches.

Picking out what I want to sketch can be overwhelming and it does take a little time. I tend to be picky but I always know that I want

my sketches to be simple, easy to accomplish, and also fun to draw.

I pick this house specifically because of the plant shapes available to play around with. When I start drawing an outline, I position the significant shapes quickly to get an idea of what the sketch will look like. I can definitely get lost in detailing every object here, so I try to see them simply as large shapes. My sketches don't always have to reflect just what's in front of me – I'm not afraid to play with my designs!

When I start adding my own touch to my sketches, I add what I think will make the sketch speak for itself. In this drawing, I repeat some of the curved shapes of the plants to make the overall sketch feel whimsical and give flow to its design.

When I add the final touches and shading to the sketch, I decide to have a little bit of fun with it and add some more specific details, showing more of what is next to the house. When drawing, don't be afraid to have fun and improvise!



Top left
Neighborhoods of Los Angeles

Bottom left
Integrating sketch studies
into new designs

Right
The final image © Susan Yung



Ince Boulevard, Culver City

The last place I have chosen is my neighborhood in Los Angeles: Ince Boulevard. I have noticed that a lot of people in L.A. like to grow beautiful plants with all sorts of shapes and sizes, especially succulents. These elements play a large part in my sketches because they're such a big representation of L.A..

One thing I love to do during my sketch adventures is to explore plant shapes. It's fun to practice sketching them as a group and stylizing them overall. Plants have varying shapes and sizes that can give character to sketches in general.

As an artist, urban sketching really helps me broaden my design vocabulary and explore new architecture. In these sketches, you can see how my shape language for plants can vary and bring something new to urban sketches. I always keep my sketches with me, as a lot of them have sparked inspiration for new work. For example, my plant studies have helped me create small pieces (shown above) that I can experiment with at home.





CULVER CITY
INCE BLVD.

the gallery

Featured artists:

Natalis Lorenz

Nicolas Boone

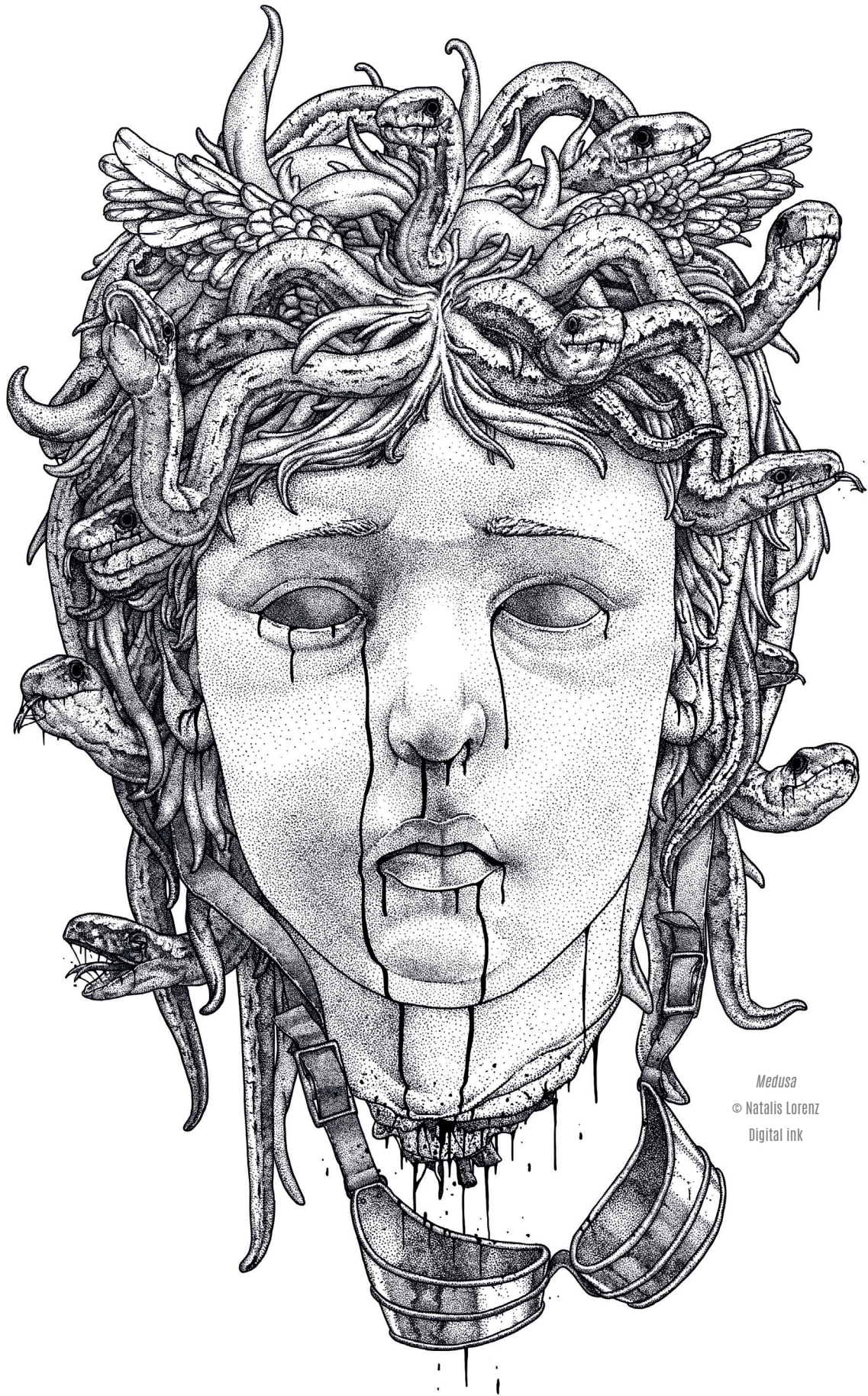
Anabel Colazo

Jens Maria Weber

Maria Luiza Tejerina Gauterio

Luke Kopycinski

Oriane Dirlor



Medusa
© Natalis Lorenz
Digital ink



Persephone the Damned © Nic Boone • Moleskine paper, HB graphite • Visit graphitemag.com to read an interview with Nic



Future © Anabel Colazo • Pencil and Adobe Photoshop

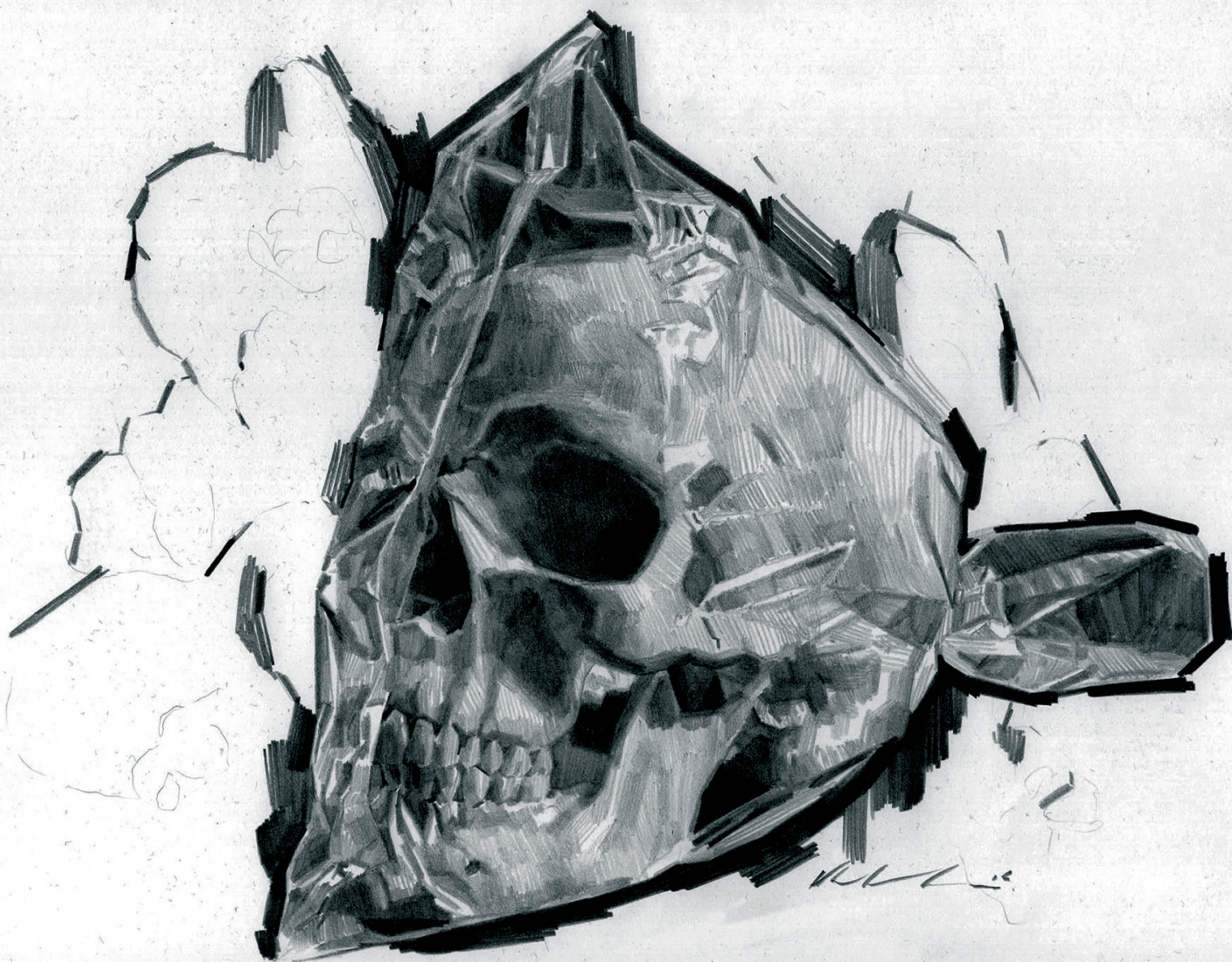


Jens
maria
Weber





Luiza 13/07/15



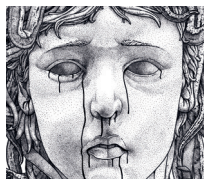


Maiko

© Oriane Dirier

Pilot BP-S Matic ballpoint

THE GALLERY CONTRIBUTORS



Natalis Lorenz works freelance in editorial illustration, poster design, and advertising. He also makes comics, zines, and drawings, creates short-run silk-screen prints in his own small printing studio, and designs and prints clothing for multimono.de.

natalislorenz.de

Nicolas Boone paints ghosts. Music, caffeine, and art keep him alive, and he finds a lot of inspiration in the world around him. He's mostly self-taught, but attended two colleges he wishes he'd dropped out of earlier, and is now an illustrator and concept artist.

nicboone.com

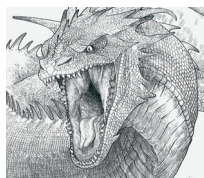
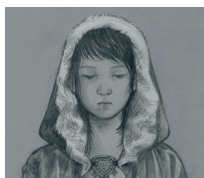


Anabel Colazo is an illustrator, comic artist, and fine arts graduate, interested in drawing, reading, and self-publishing zines. In *Future*, Anabel aimed to branch out and try more sci-fi subject matter than usual.

behance.net/holasoyanabel

Jens Maria Weber is a graphic designer, illustrator, and child of the seventies, straight out of the West German industrial districts. He studied literature and graphic design, and ever since then has been in the business of images and imagination.

jensmariaweber.de

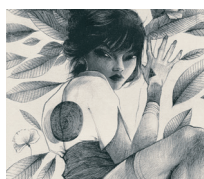
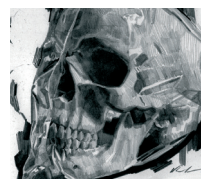


Maria Luiza Tejerina Gauterio is a student and self-taught illustrator based in Córdoba, Argentina, who works with traditional media – mostly ink and graphite, and occasionally watercolors and acrylic paint.

artstation.com/artist/luizatg

Luke Kopycinski is an Australian concept artist working in games and film, exhibiting traditional artwork at various galleries in the USA, Europe, and the UK. In his traditional work, Luke mainly uses graphite and oils.

koppa.carbonmade.com



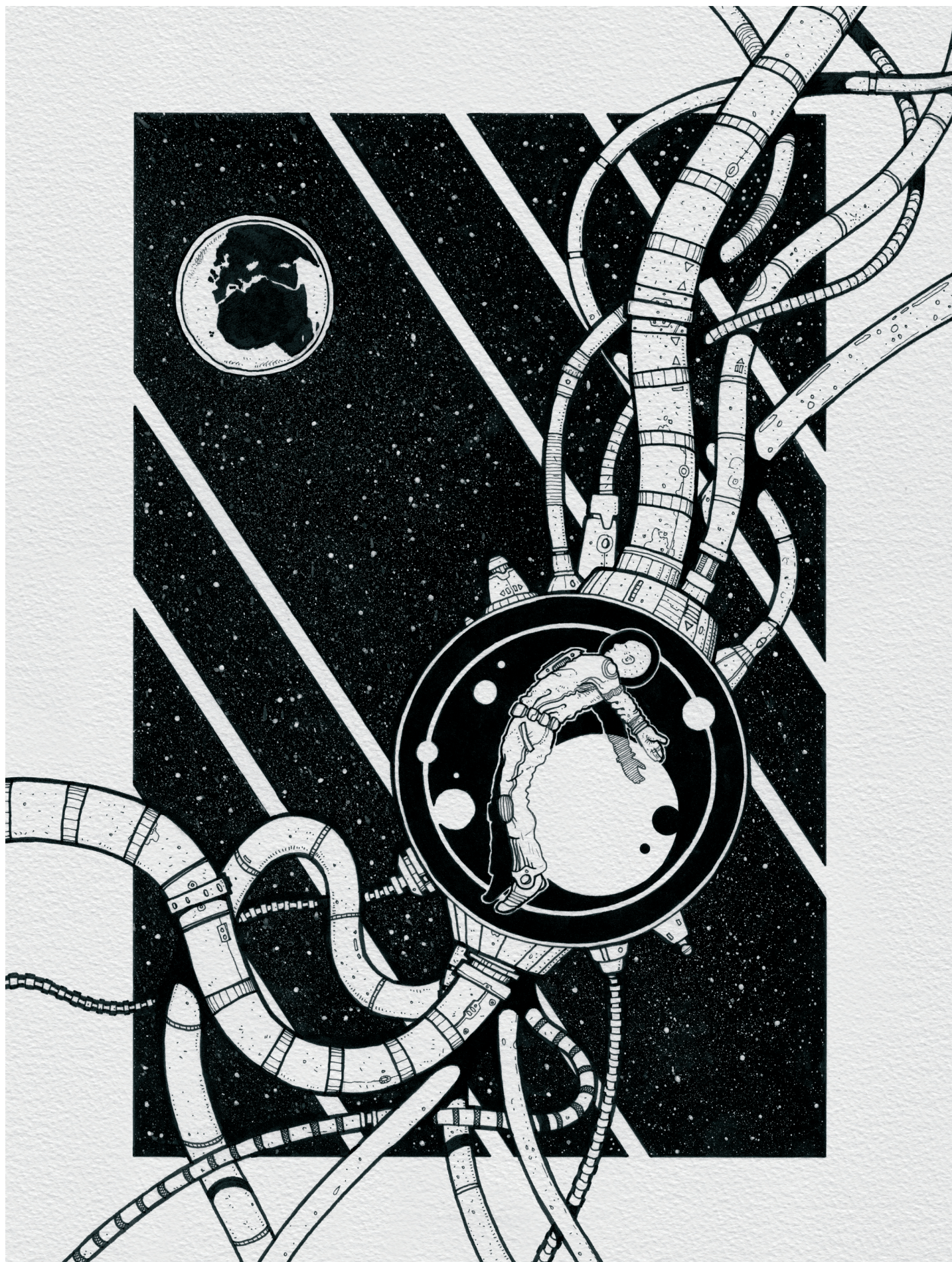
Oriane Dirler is a Paris-based illustrator with significant experience in fine art painting. Her interest for new techniques pushed her to experiment with blends of digital and traditional media, leading her to working as a full-time freelance illustrator and character design artist.

oriatedirler.mypportfolio.com

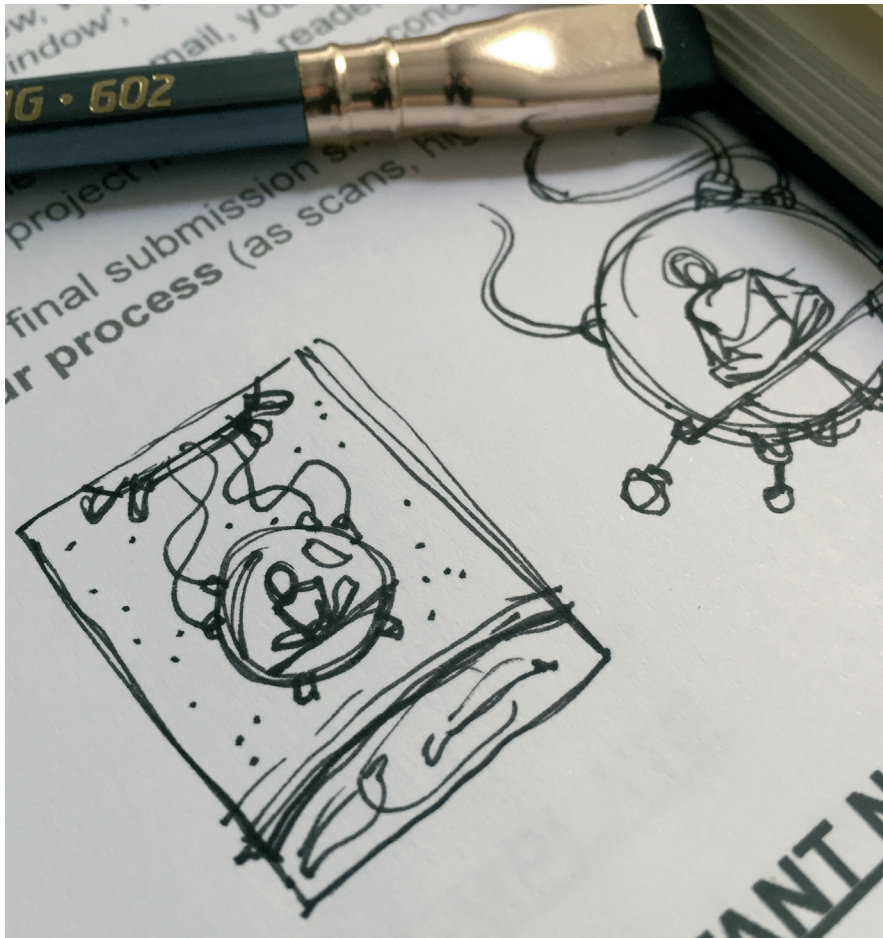
I S O L A T I O N

A narrative illustration project with Rob Turpin | Story by Adam J. Smith

“The prisoner looked towards the space station, his gaze following the snaking curve of the life support system connected to the cell bubble he was suspended inside. Its solid imposition – a colorless landscape of metal – was waning, revealing the slow rise of the Earth’s North Pole. Shadows faded to whites and blues as the Arctic Ocean crested. Inside his bubble – one clean and clear, impermeable surface – he floated and ate lunch, watching the scorched land of the Northern Hemisphere rotate into view, wondering how long before isolation, and the constant, infinite void outside his ‘window,’ would drive him insane.”



Follow illustrator and designer Rob Turpin as he captures a lonely space scene with pencil and ink.



Getting started

I'm an illustrator and designer from Yorkshire, now living and working in the leafy suburbs of South West London. I mainly draw spaceships, robots, castles, and imaginary places, and my favorite color is orange. In this article I'll take you through my illustration process, from brief to final inked artwork. I'll be using pencils and pigment liner pens mostly, and while initial doodles and thoughts are always in a sketchbook, the final artwork will be on a smooth, heavy cartridge paper. I'll also use tracing paper, a ruler, a scalpel, white emulsion, and a toothbrush.

The brief was nicely ambiguous in terms of the exact look and design of the prison.

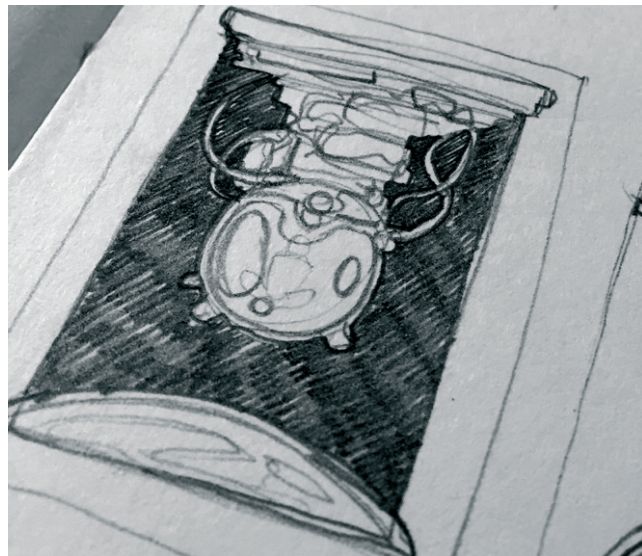
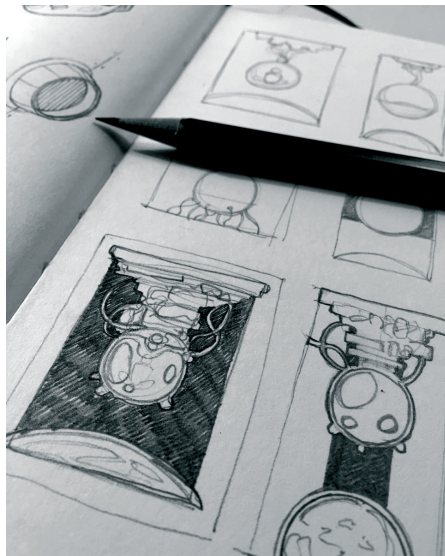
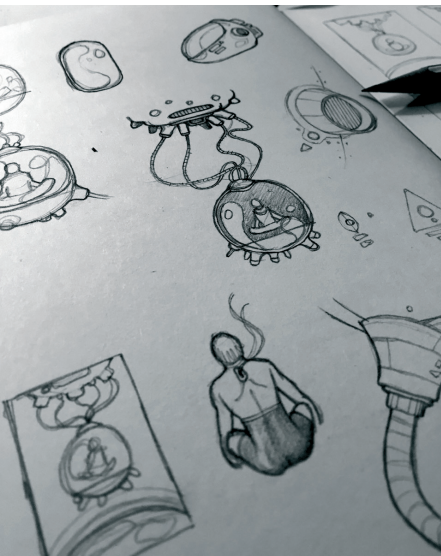
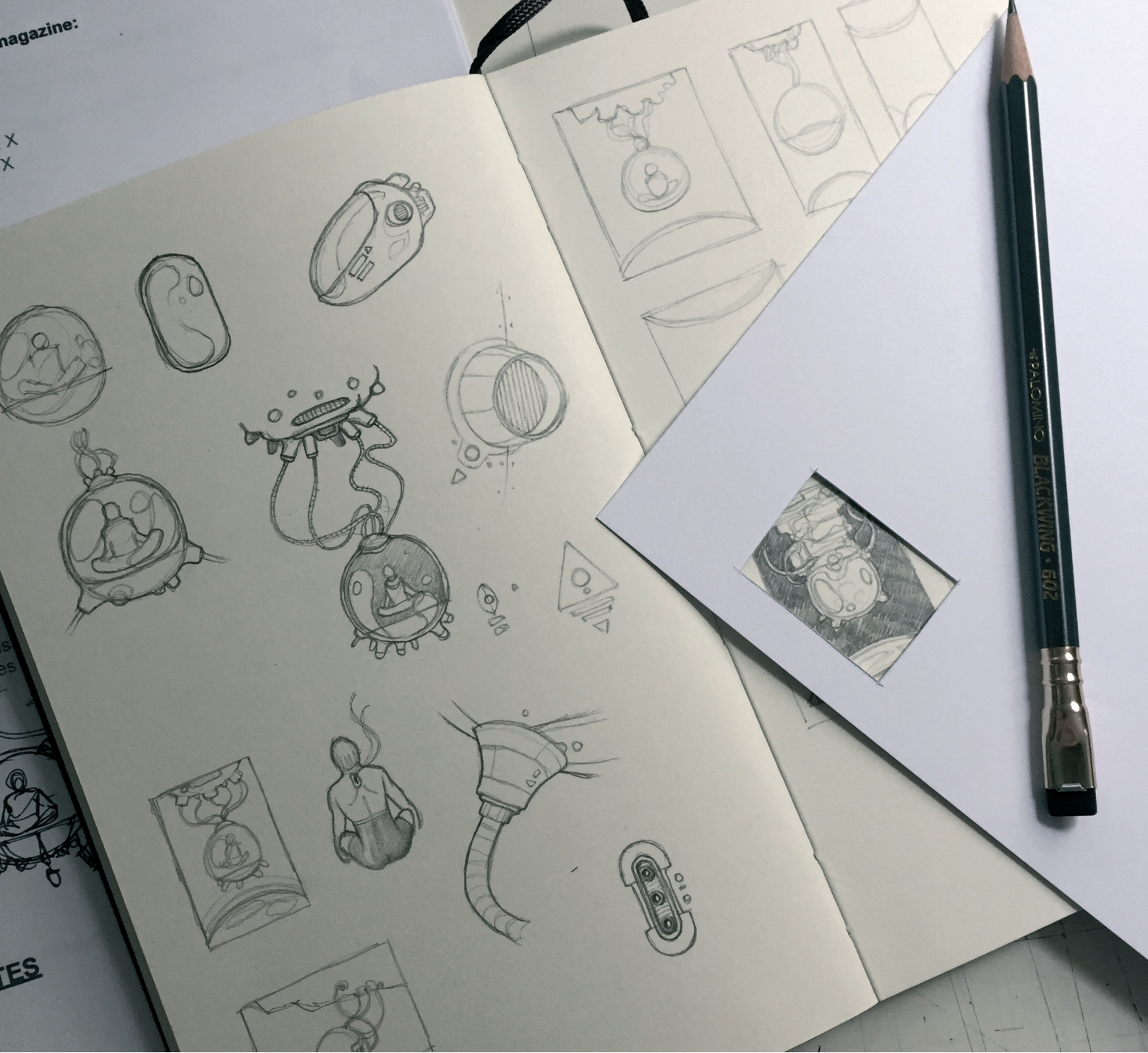
Sometimes vagueness in a brief can be a nightmare, but really you just have to see what you can get out of it. What does it suggest in terms of your own style? What are you going to love drawing that's suggested in that brief? I start scribbling while I read the brief. Often it's these initial thoughts that can end up being the best idea.

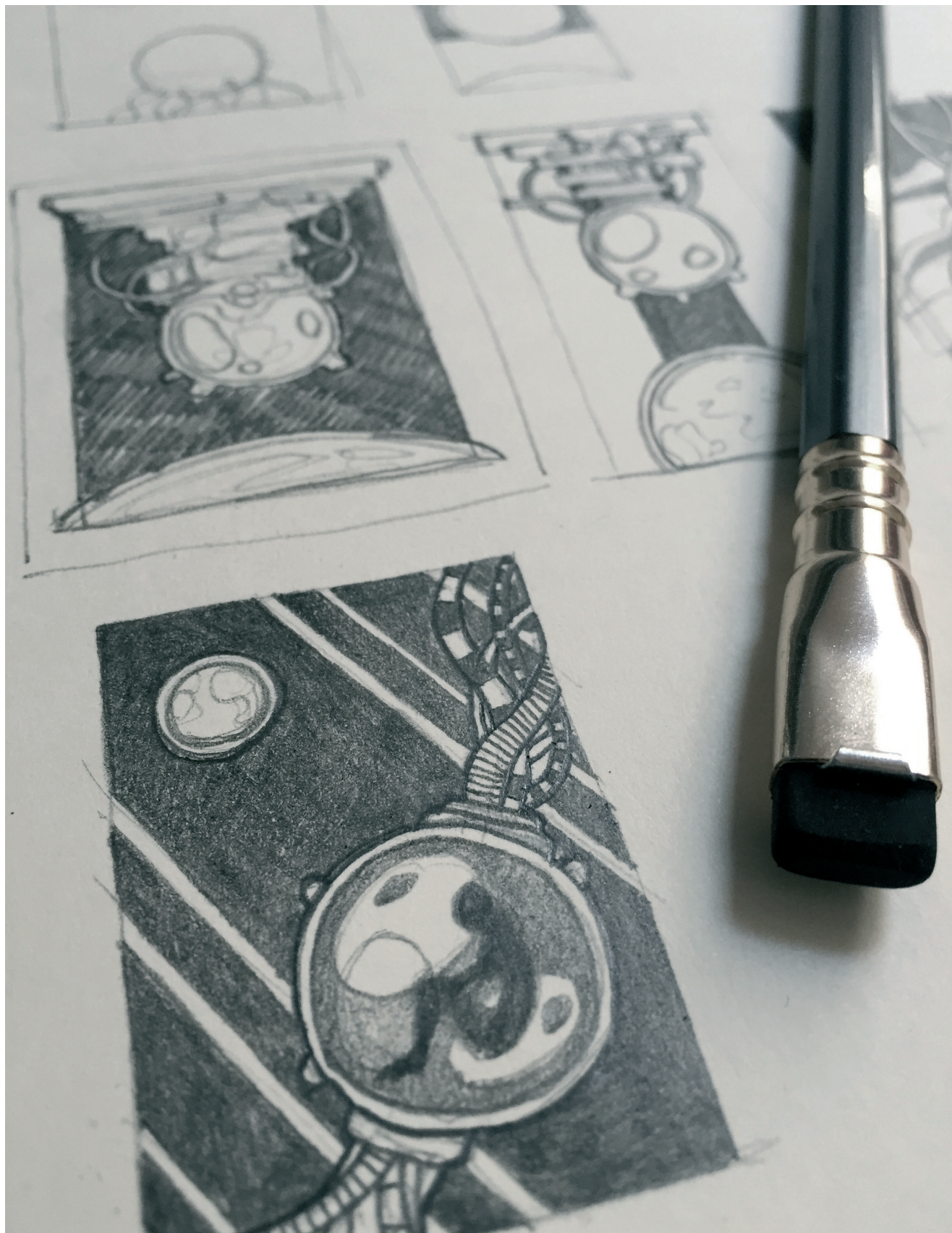
Thumbnails

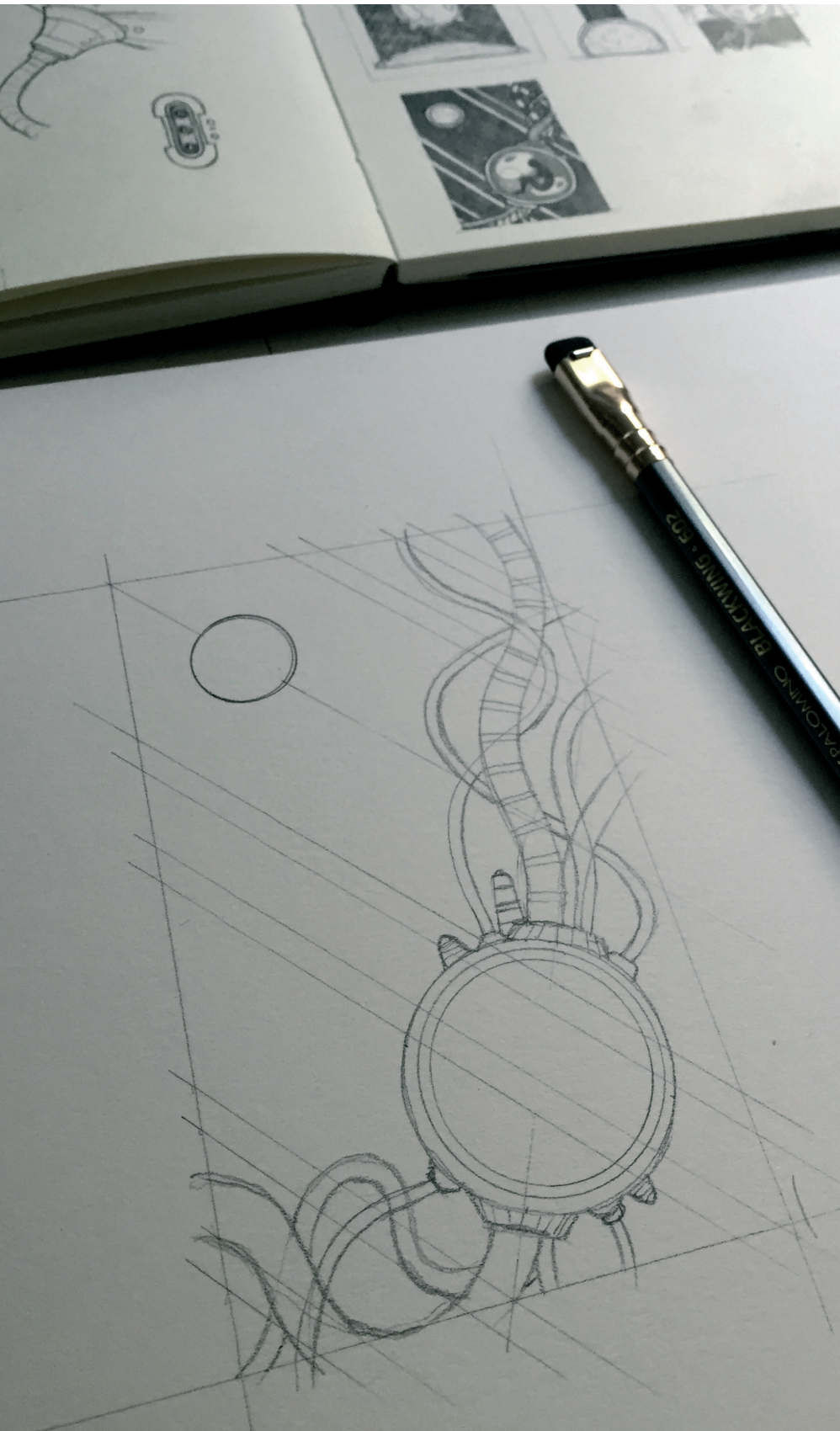
Even with this first page of thumbnail sketches there are already some concrete ideas about where I want the illustration to go: a sphere suspended in space, cables, and machinery. I also cut out a little frame so that I can look at different compositions, turning the image in the frame to make it more dynamic.

Left
Scribbling some ideas while reading the brief

Right
Sketchbook thumbnails. I have a stack of Moleskine sketchbooks full of doodles, thumbnails and ideas







Composition

After a couple of pages of sketches I decide on a layout, shown far left. This one has the main subject at an angle, the twisted cables and hoses stretching from one corner to another, which gives it more movement and interest than some of the other thumbnails. I also have an idea to extend the cables out of the frame to bring them to life. I add some tone to the thumbnail to work out how the black areas are going to work against all the detail.

Rough sketch

Now, on a larger piece of paper, I make a rough sketch based on my thumbnail, at about half of my intended final size. This is where I tweak elements, adjust sizes, and generally make sure I'm happy with the layout of the illustration. At this point I also give some thought to the balance of the whole image, roughing in some "rule of thirds" guides along the page and shifting the image to fit. For this stage, as this is still a sketch, it doesn't matter what I draw on – in this case, just a standard cartridge paper pad is perfect.

Far left
Nailing the composition

Near left and above
Making a slightly
larger rough sketch

Transferring

Once that half-size sketch is complete and I'm happy with it, I scan it, enlarge it using Adobe Photoshop, then flip it from left to right, and print it out at full size so that I can trace it. It's key here that the tracing paper does not move halfway through the process, so I often add a couple of pieces of masking tape at the top and bottom to keep it in place. This is a stage of the process I'd like to eliminate, as it's time-consuming and laborious; you can achieve the same results using a light box or light table. When the trace is complete, I turn it over and lay it on top of the heavy cartridge paper I choose for the final artwork. Using a 5H pencil, I then transfer the traced image, rubbing over every line, making sure I don't miss anything. At the end of this process I have a mostly complete drawing, on good quality paper, which just needs some details adding before inking.

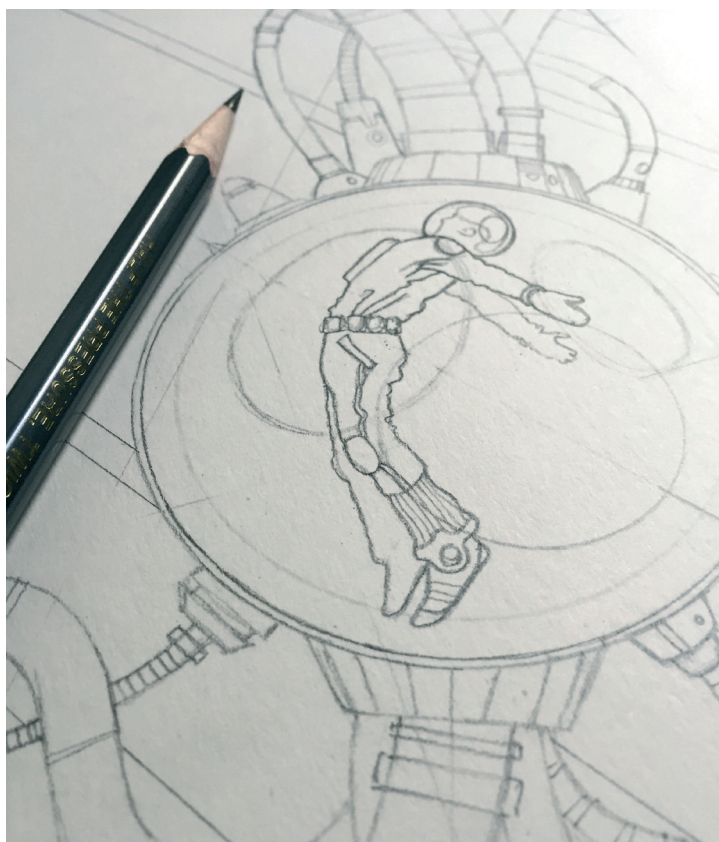
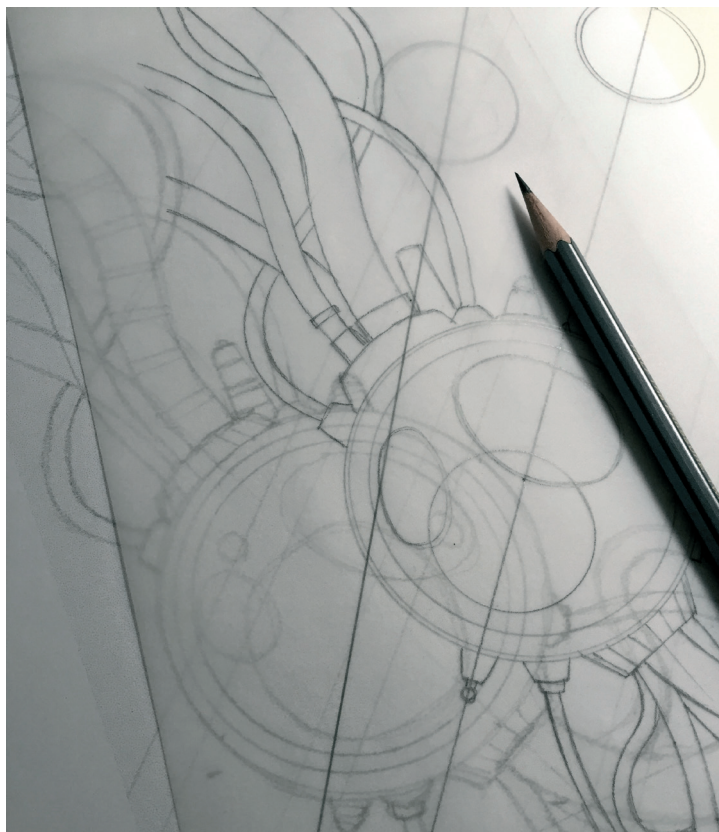
The underdrawing

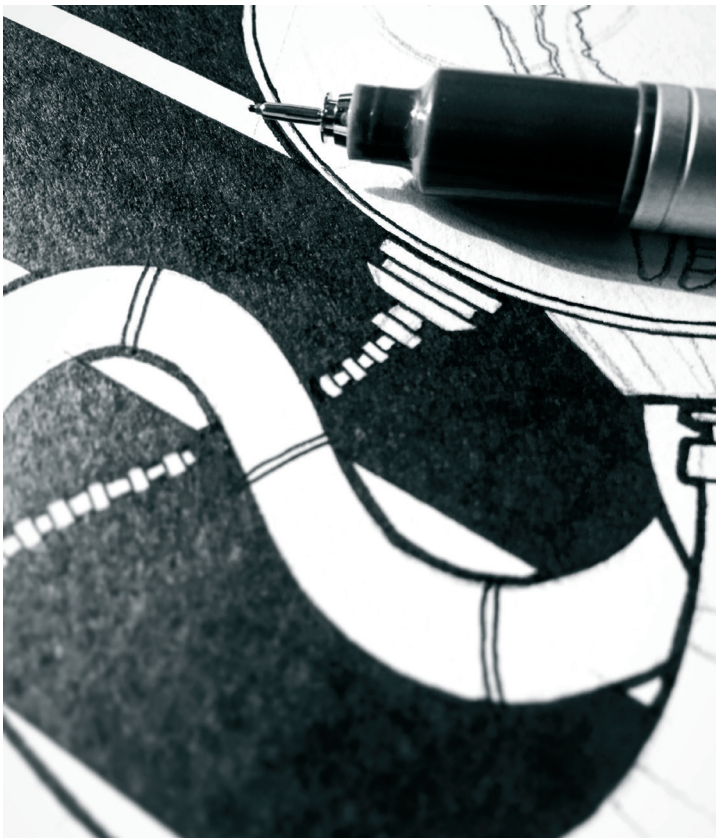
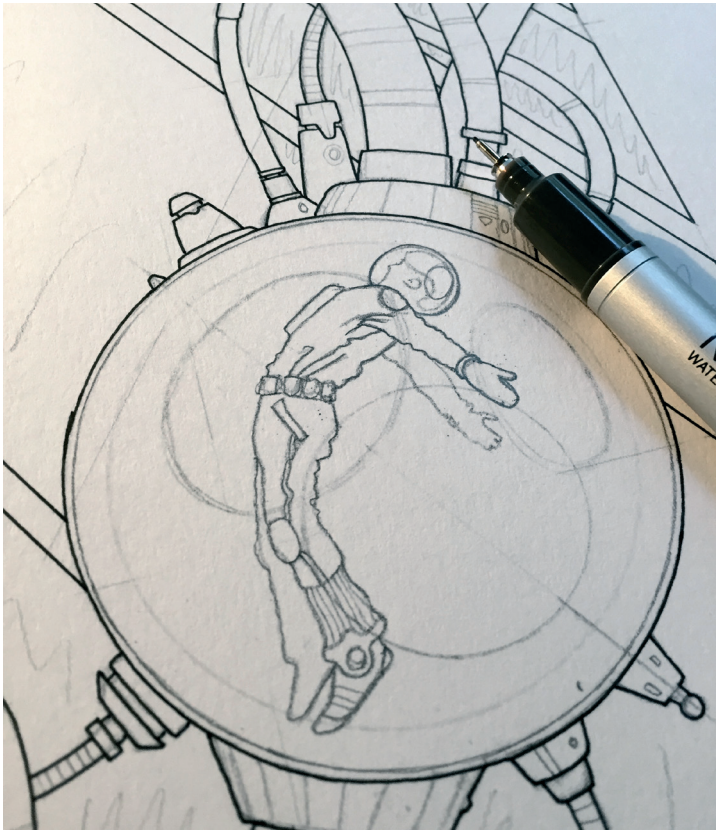
Sometimes I'll go straight to inking an illustration without preparing much detail in pencil, trusting myself to know where I'm going with a picture. In this case, as the image is quite complicated, with its twisted and overlapping cables, I draw in almost every single line that will be inked. I use a Palomino Blackwing pencil to do this, quite lightly so that it's easy to erase towards the end.

I've been using Palomino Blackwings for most of this year, after I'd dismissed them as overpriced designer nonsense previously. Once I got to use them, though, it was clear that they are just pencils of fantastic quality. The graphite is super smooth and fine grained, so you never get that scratchiness you have with some pencils, and the wood is very high quality so it sharpens easily and doesn't splinter. They are expensive, but well worth it in my opinion.

Starting to ink

I always start inking an illustration by outlining all the elements, usually in just one weight of Copic Multiliner SP. This is to make sure I get everything right before moving on. In this case it's really important to get all the cables and hoses drawn in correctly. It would be easy to rush this and make a mistake. This is also the stage at which the illustration always looks terrible, with no difference in line weight and no contrast. The key is to just push on through and not get disheartened.





Contrast at last

Once the outlines are complete I usually add all the solid black areas, either with ink and a brush, or in this case with a Kuretake Fude No. 8 brush pen – a lovely pen with deep black ink. Once those sections of flat black ink are in, I start to look at which areas need more line weight. I switch to using a Rotring Tikky 0.7 mm pen for the foreground elements that I want to stand out. This pen has great ink flow so you get really good, solid, flowing lines. My drawings are quite “flat,” by which I mean I don’t use perspective or 3D views in most of my work, so adding varied line weights really helps to give depth and add interest to my illustrations.

ARTIST’S TIP

Getting the most out of the brief

At first reading, not all briefs or commissions are going to get your creative juices flowing, but it’s almost always possible to get something valuable from them. If the subject matter is not something you’d normally draw, you can look at it as a challenge, or think of how you can draw something outside your comfort zone but in your own recognizable style. Sometimes you might just think of a technique you’ve been dying to practice and this could be the perfect moment. It’s really important to think about how you’re going to approach the job; make sure there’s something that you are going to enjoy. We’re drawing or illustrating for a living because it’s something we love to do. Try to remember that for every job you take on.

Top left
Scaling up and
transferring the image

Bottom left
Adding details to the
transferred image

Top right
The first phase of the
inking process

Bottom right
Contrast at last!



It's time to greeble!

This is my favorite part of the process: the illustration is drawn, all the elements are there, and now it's time to add the details that bring it to life. For this illustration, "greebling" (adding fine detail to an object to make it more interesting) means making the cables look like they are made of different sections and materials, adding little scuff marks and wear and tear, bits of grime, and panel lines. All these little things help to add scale and make the illustration look more lived-in.

The background

Once all the work is done with the pen, I'm left with an illustration that's almost finished. It has detail and contrast, looks layered, and is interesting to look at... the only thing missing is the background! Using tracing paper, I carefully trace all the solid black areas (which will become starry space) and then cut them

out with a scalpel. This leaves an accurate mask for the illustration that's really easy to place on the image. Using a very, very light dusting of spray mount to keep it in place, I can then add the stars without damaging the rest of the drawing. I use white emulsion for its high opacity and because it's easy to clean, and an old toothbrush to splatter the stars. It's important to have a test first to make sure you have the right consistency of paint. If it's too thin, it won't be opaque or defined; too thick and you'll get far too big blobs of paint. Leave the paint for a few minutes before gently removing the mask.

The final image

I scan the image for a little clean-up in Adobe Photoshop and tweaking of the Levels setting, and it's done. I'm really pleased with the final result – I think it's a striking image with lots to look at. Despite my very flat drawing style,

it has depth and weight to it. I think extending the cables beyond the frame is a key element, as it helps the subject stand out. Despite this not being a subject I'd considered for an illustration before, by having a good read of the brief, sketching and thumbnailing until I found something, I've created an illustration that's recognizably mine.

Above left

Adding life and texture with "greebling"

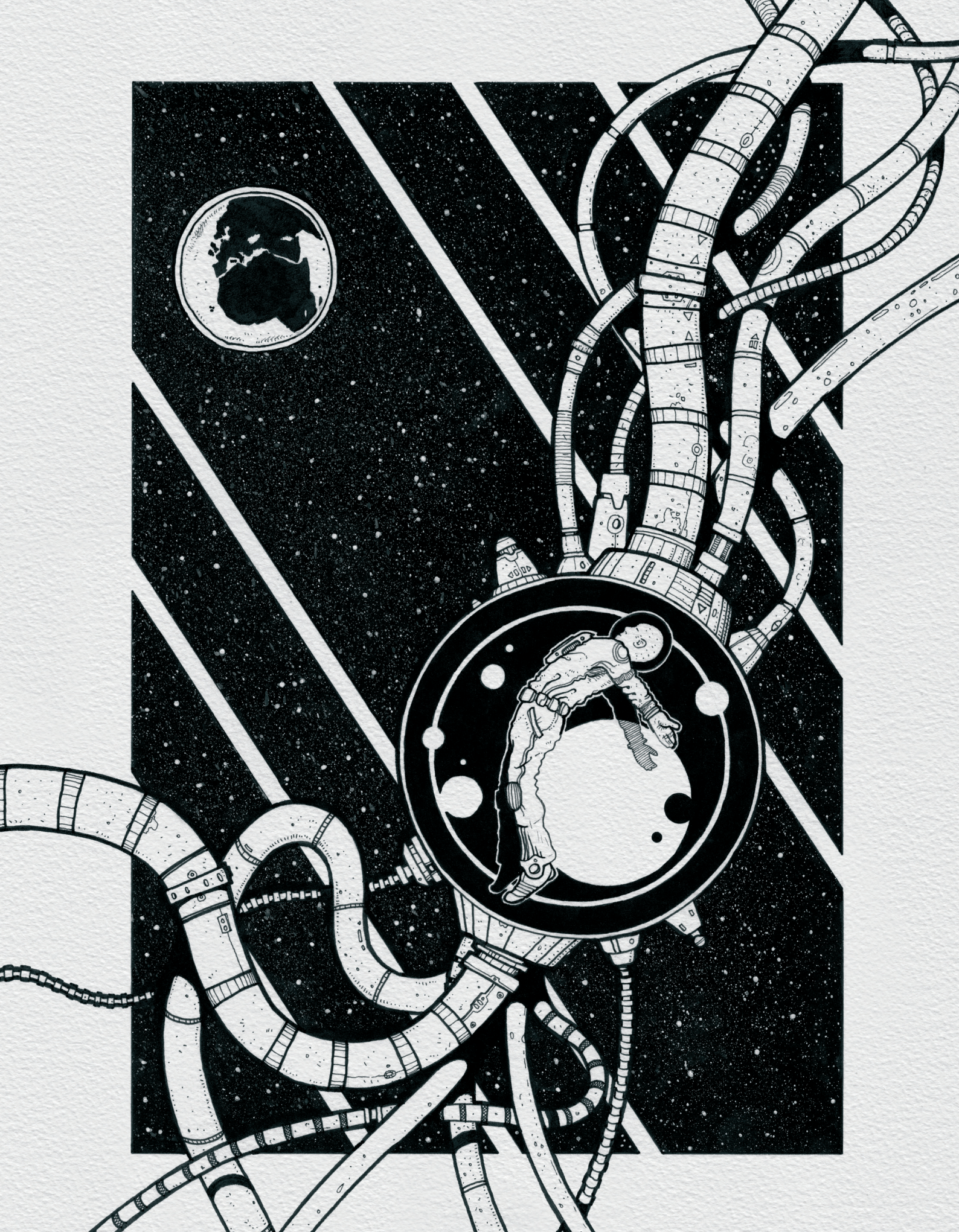
Above right

Masking out the image before splattering

Right

The final image

© Rob Turpin



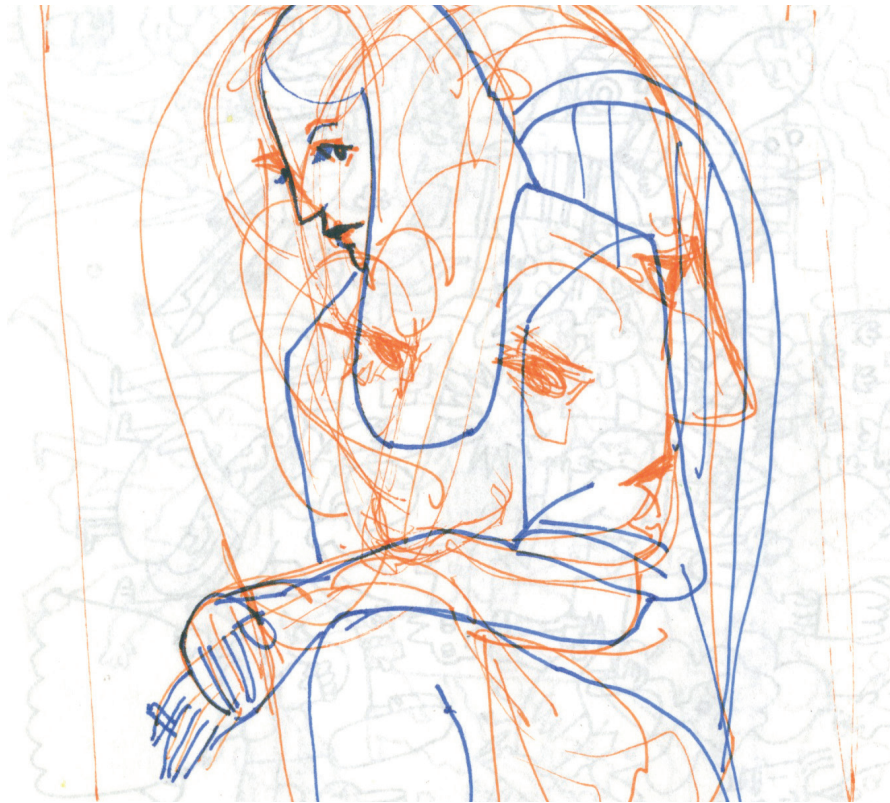
MEETING MOLLY M.

An interview with Molly Mendoza



WHO
ASKED
YOU??

Molly Mendoza is an artist based in Portland, Oregon, whose clients include Adobe and *The New York Times*. Her layered, lively illustrations burst at the seams with shape, color, and texture.



Q: Thanks for talking to GRAPHITE, Molly! First off: who are you, where are you from, and what do you do?

A: Hi! My name is Molly Mendoza and I am an illustrator currently living in Portland, Oregon. I grew up in the suburbs of Chicago and lived for a long time in Romeoville, Illinois. I also lived in Surprise, Arizona, throughout high school before moving to Portland.

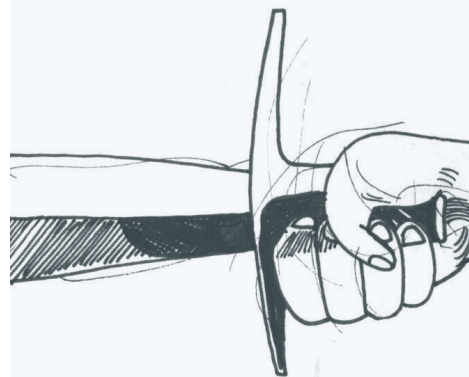
I originally moved to Portland to study illustration at the Pacific Northwest College of Art and wound up liking it so much that I stuck around when I was finished with my studies. I mostly spend my time on editorial illustration, comics, and some fine art.

Q: Tell us a bit about your artistic background. Did you always aspire to be an artist?

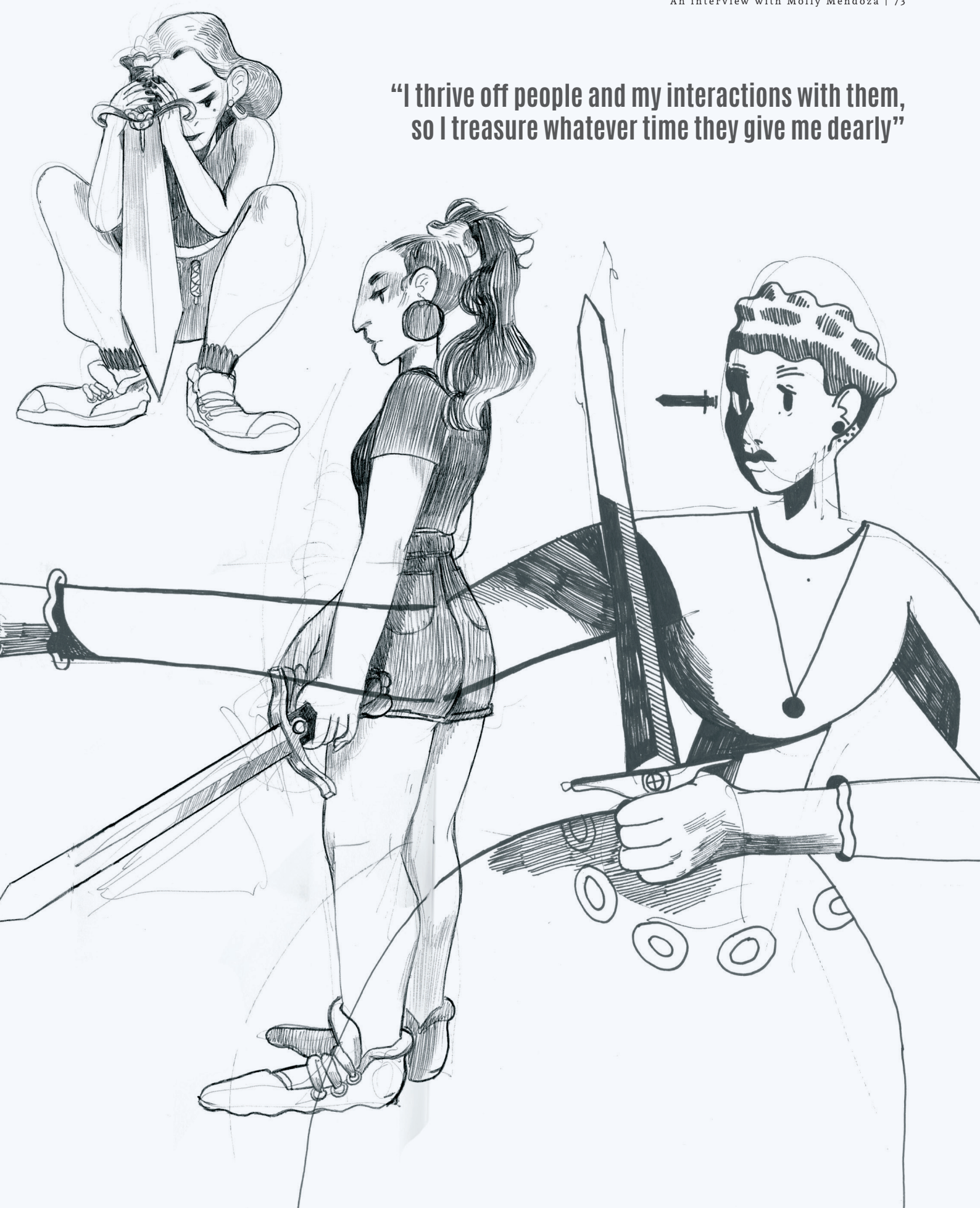
A: I have been drawing for a very long time. It all started with drawing *Sailor Moon* as a kid and that eventually evolved, through a lot of hard work, into the maker I am today. I originally only drew to have some fun and pass the time. What I really wanted to study was astronomy and be like Jodie Foster in *Contact*. The love for astronomy never went away but my love for drawing kept growing and eventually became my passion.

Above
Untitled sketchbook
study for a larger piece

Right
Various pen sketches



**"I thrive off people and my interactions with them,
so I treasure whatever time they give me dearly"**



MY LINE OUR VIBE



Q: Who or what are your biggest inspirations and influences?

A: I owe a lot to the anime and cartoons that I watched as a kid. People sometimes cringe when they hear that but I don't care. I loved *The Iron Giant*, *Sailor Moon*, *Speed Racer*, and Miyazaki films. Those sorts of films made me want to draw the figure. Drawing the figure later developed into basing my work on a combination of observation and the media that I consume. I am also inspired by the color palettes of William Eggleston's photography, which was introduced to me when I took a photography class in community college, taught by the artist Peter Bugg. I am also driven by personal experiences with the people and

places that surround me. I'd say that, whether it seems like it or not, a great deal of my work is somewhat autobiographical. I thrive off people and my interactions with them, so I treasure whatever time they give me dearly.

Q: What tools and materials do you prefer, and why?

A: I really enjoy working with sumi ink and brush. I buy cheap brushes and let them get real beat up. When they are frayed just right I can create some interesting dry brushstrokes with the sumi ink. I have a nicer brush for any fine linework. When it comes to color I usually use Adobe Photoshop but sometimes I work with gouache or water-soluble crayons.

Making sure that my viewers can't tell what is digital and what is traditional is a fun challenge for me.

Q: How do you warm up and get in the mood for drawing?

A: Usually I have to do "me" for a little while before I'm ready to get to work. This means some coffee, breakfast, maybe a videogame, watch a cartoon, walk around outside, or hang out with friends. Hopefully by 2 p.m. I sit down and start working. Picking the right music or listening to a podcast that I like helps. All in all, I think I am more getting myself into a mood to draw rather than warming up my drawing hand.



Left

My Line Our Vibe - winner of the Society of Illustrators Student Competition, 2015 (Rockstar Games Award)

Right

Ghost - ink drawing with digital color for the *Saturdējāvu* anthology, edited by Siobhan Gallagher



Q: Your work is so full of layers, textures, colors, and details! Could you explain some of the process behind creating your images?

A: I do a lot of editorial work and that usually goes in specific phases so that my art director has plenty of input. This ensures that we make the right illustration for whatever article we are working on. I start out with some thumbnail sketches to get a composition down. After we decide on a composition, I jump into tight linework using sumi ink and brush. Then I scan my linework in along with any wash or dry brush textures that I might edit into the image using Adobe Photoshop. If I could work in primary colors forever, I would, but that isn't usually what the client wants! So I color the piece one way and then create variations so that my client can pick the one that works best for them.

When it's "me time," the illustration process is much more fluid. I jump from phase to phase quickly, but the initial phase, ideation, and sketching still takes the longest.

Q: What themes, stories, or subjects do you find yourself returning to the most?

A: To this day I still make illustrations about being a preteen or kid. This sounds so awkward and lame because those are the tragic, pimply years of our lives. However, I get a lot of emotional energy in my work when recounting those times of confusion, anger, nostalgia, and innocence. I think, for me and for a lot of people, that time was transitional from being a kid to becoming an adult. It is a hard time but for once you are both your old self and your new self at the same time. In an art school phrase, it is sort of *liminal*. This content doesn't usually find itself in my editorial work but it is always a part of my comic and personal work.

I also enjoy drawing jungles, space, hot dogs, and rude or funny things my friends say.

Q: How does editorial illustration differ from other types of illustration? What challenges does it present to you as an artist?

A: It does differ, but not in a bad way. With a lot of illustration work, the artist is working with someone else: a publisher, a designer, an art director. No matter what, we are talking about some level of collaboration or outside input. Editorial illustration has quite a bit of that input but it only strengthens the image. When I sit down to work on an editorial project I want it to come out well, but I also know it will not come out how I expected. This can be challenging to accept at first but I think it pushes me to grow and think differently about the way I work. I may also find myself stumped by difficult articles and the outside input helps me clarify my thinking.

Above
Saturn, an excerpt from my
thesis project, *Voyage*

Right
Image for the *1001 Knights* anthology, curated
by Annie Stoll and Kevin Jay Stanton -
onethousandandoneknights.com







“Failure is the best thing in the world for a growing artist”

Q: What was your experience as a student like? Do you have any advice for anyone currently at art school?

A: I really enjoyed my time at PNCA. The faculty and staff meant the world to me and I made some friends for life while I was there. There are always going to be issues with the system as well as frustrations to be had in the day-to-day – I certainly had a fair share of those. My only piece of advice is: don’t think going to art school will make you the best

artist and get you a job. That isn’t what it does. Art school gives you lots of opportunities to be experimental, to meet other creatives, and to fail. Failure is the best thing in the world for a growing artist. Fall on your face over and over, then listen to your peers and professors on how you can get back up.

If you go to art school and refuse to try and push yourself, then you just wasted money and time, including everyone else’s time. It is up to you to get everything you can out of the assets and privileges that are there because no one owes you anything. Hustle!

Q: Art or hot dogs?

A: I’ll pick art because that is the right thing to do but you know I really want to pick hot dogs.

Top left
Sign illustration for
the *Yes We’re Open
Minded* campaign -
yeswereopenminded.org

Bottom left
Illustration for Adobe CC. Art
directed by Gail Blumberg

Above
Illustration for Adobe CC. Art
directed by Gail Blumberg





CREATING CREATURES

Sketching and concept development with Brynn Metheney

Using a variety of pencils and papers, Brynn Metheney covers how to invent a creature concept using animal research, anatomy studies, and rapid sketch techniques. This article will cover how to build up forms and combine characteristics to make a new and interesting life form.



Materials

Any sort of pencil that you enjoy using will work for this project. I like to use Palomino Blackwing pencils in series 602 and Pearl. They are excellent pencils – I find that their leads are soft enough to keep my hand moving quickly, but are also bold enough to not smudge as much. I also use Col-Erase pencils, as their waxy texture helps me build up a drawing slowly. I use them a lot when drawing animal studies. I also like the colors they come in, which are great for construction because I can use my Blackwings over them as I bring my drawing to final. The color simply becomes background noise. China markers (also called grease pencils) are great for bold mark-making. They are large, waxy pencils that I use for quick sketching techniques.

They are almost impossible to erase, so I become less inclined to worry about getting things “right” in the drawing, and instead focus on keeping it interesting.

Acid-free sketch paper is cheap and easy to find. I like using it for the start of my concepts; it’s not really paper I care about, so I find that I’m less worried when I start to sketch and more willing to take risks. Vellum paper is great for building up drawings and for revising design ideas traditionally. You can also use tracing paper for this.

I will also be using a kneaded eraser, a Staedtler Mars plastic eraser, and blue painter’s tape (any tape will work, just pick one that’s easy to remove from your paper).

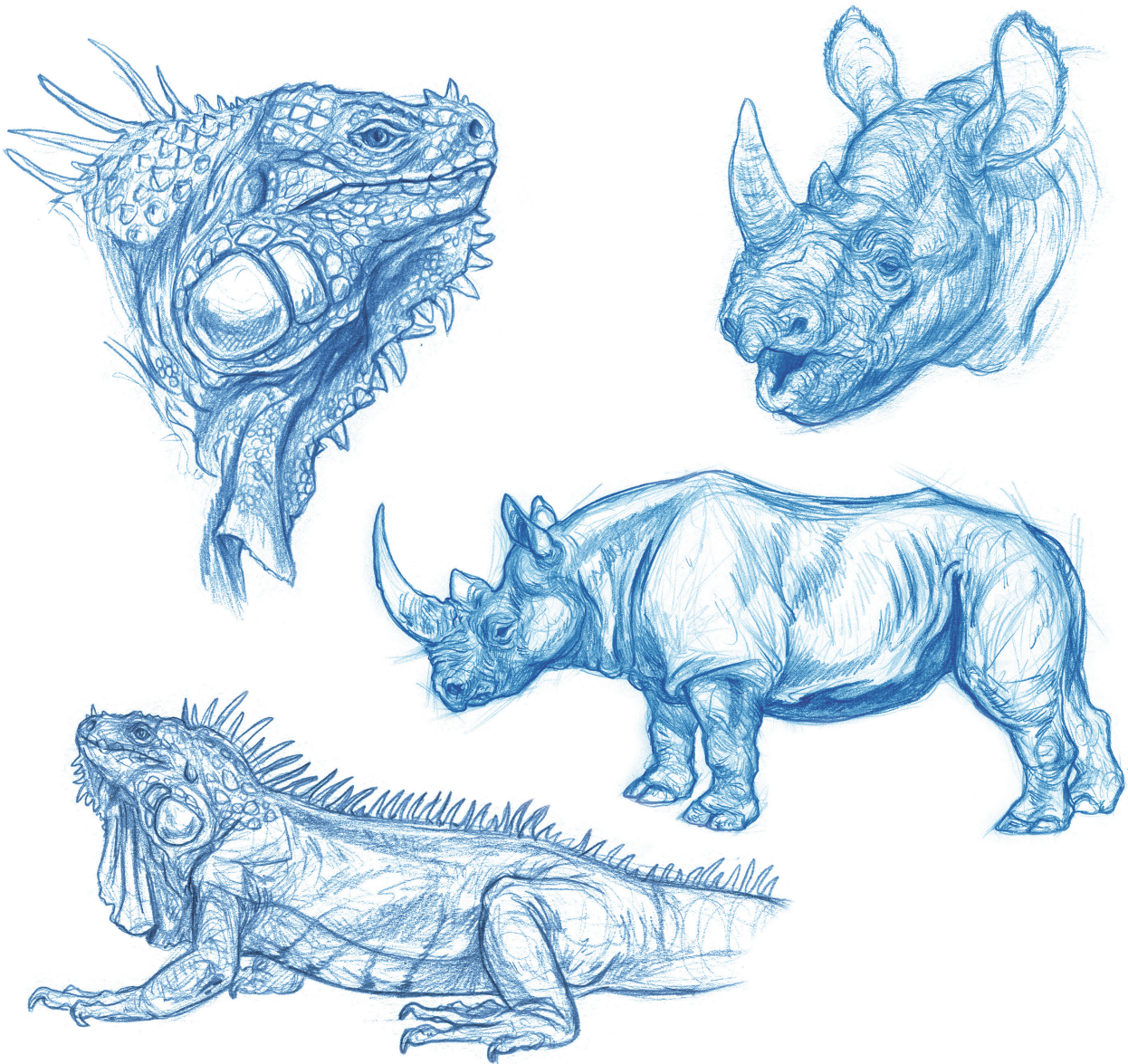
Above

The tools and materials used for this project

Right

Studies of animals that will inspire the design

“When inventing creatures, it is imperative that you draw animals as much as you can”



Fundamentals of creature design

When inventing creatures, it is imperative that you draw animals as much as you can. Understanding their forms and anatomies will help you build and conjure up your own wildlife. I will be using drawings that I've compiled from various photographs and zoo trips for this demo.

I find that drawing from life is best and can really help you understand the volume and motion of an animal. However, going to the zoo or museum isn't always a possibility, and that's okay!

There are a great number of nature documentaries available on most streaming

subscriptions and channels and, of course, there are always photographs. I like to pick a few different animals to work from, particularly from different species. This way I keep the characteristics I'm choosing from dissimilar enough to keep the design interesting. For this project, I'll choose two: a rhinoceros and an iguana.



Warm up!

Probably the most crucial step in my concept process is the warm-up phase. This step should come even before you do animal studies and drawings. Drawing takes a lot of muscle memory and so it's important that I warm up my drawing muscles so that they are ready to react. I tend to scribble a lot; I like to generate lots of little creature bodies on a sheet of sketch paper. I move quickly and usually use something permanent like pen or china marker. This way I don't stop to think, I just go for it.

Sketch, observe, and study

I've found that the more I draw animals, the easier time I have exploring ideas and shapes. Animals can always surprise you with their proportions. Notice how low the rhinoceros's eyes are, and look at the interesting shape of the head. The green iguana has some really interesting shapes and textures happening on its body and head too. The scales alone are

very unique to this species. These small details are crucial to notice. It's important to do our best to observe how the animals actually look and not what we *think* they look like. I tend to use a variety of references to create a study, but starting out, it's good to draw from references directly, whether they are from life, photos, or video.

Exploring shapes

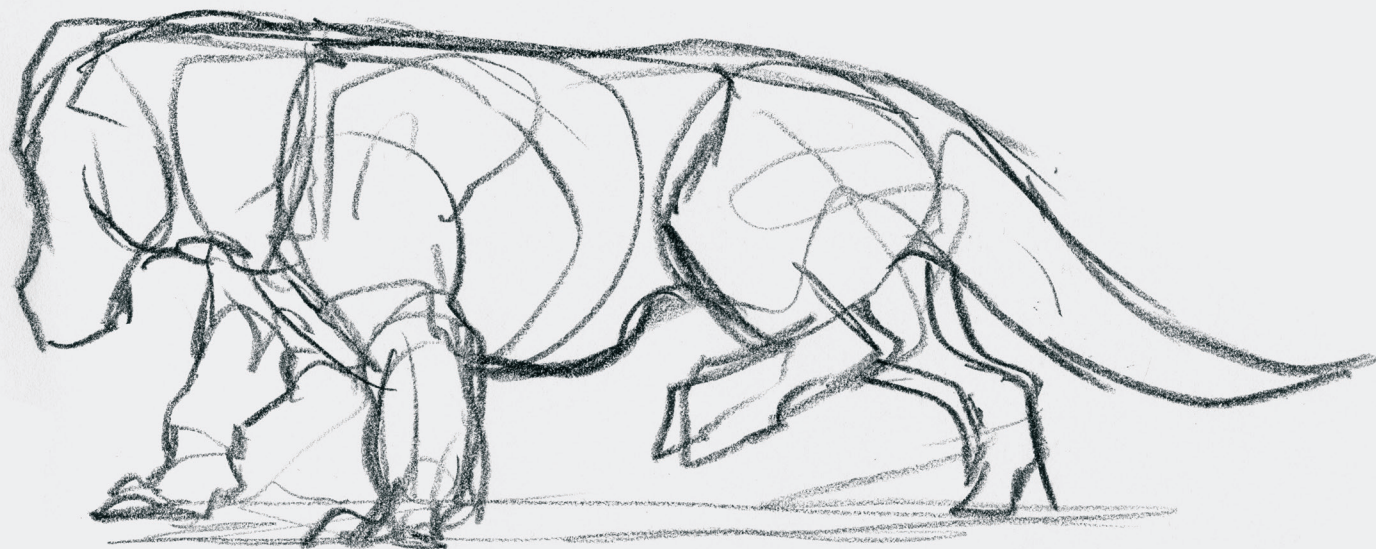
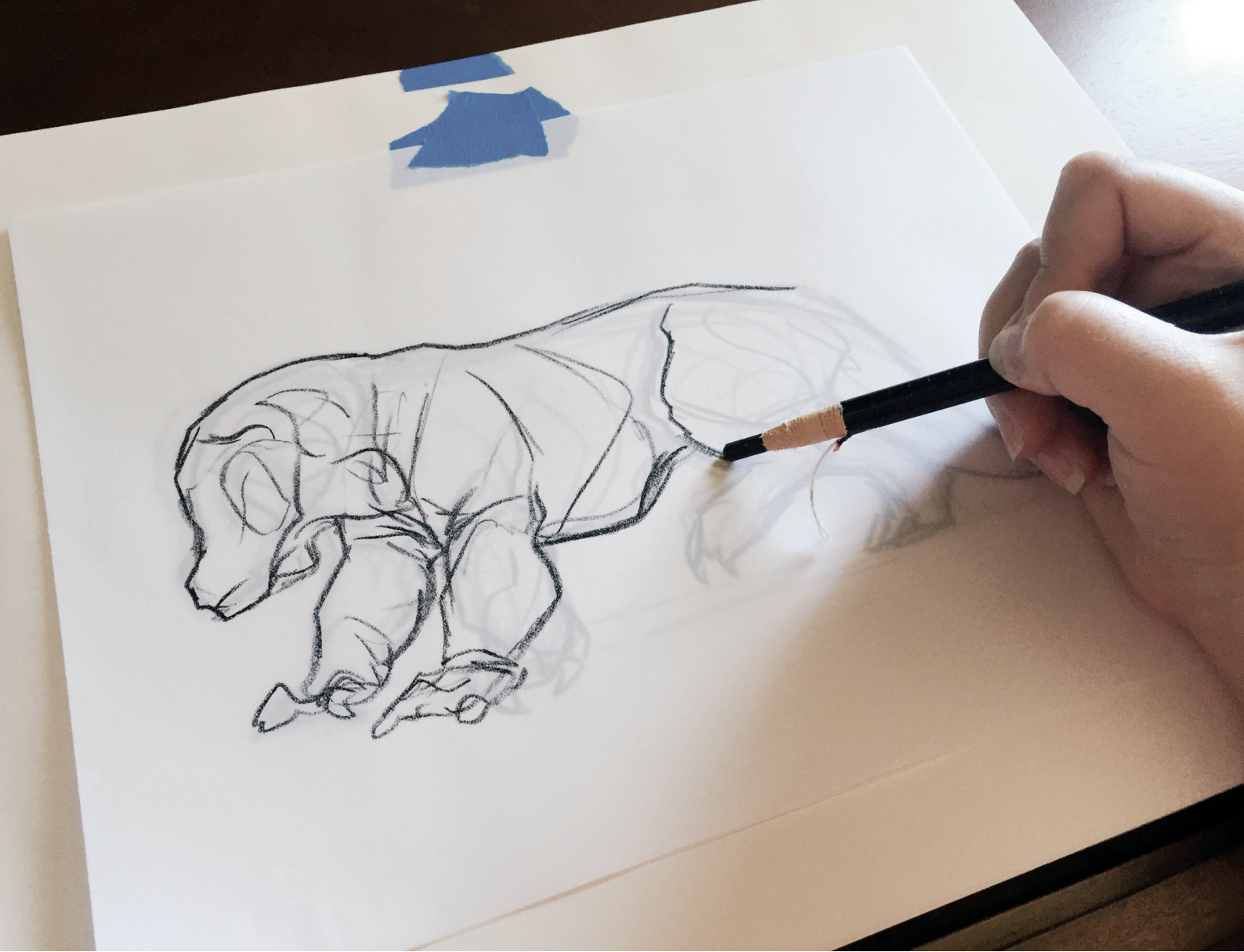
Once I've warmed up, I'll begin to look back at my animal studies and think about what sort of animal I'd like to create. I'm really into the rhino's head and body shapes; I also like the iguana's spines, eyes, and mouth. Looking back at these traits, I begin to sketch out shapes on my sketch paper using my china marker. This way, I can keep things loose and explore silhouettes. I like to explore a three-quarter composition, since it's easier to explore silhouettes this way and I don't need to worry about perspective or proportion right away.

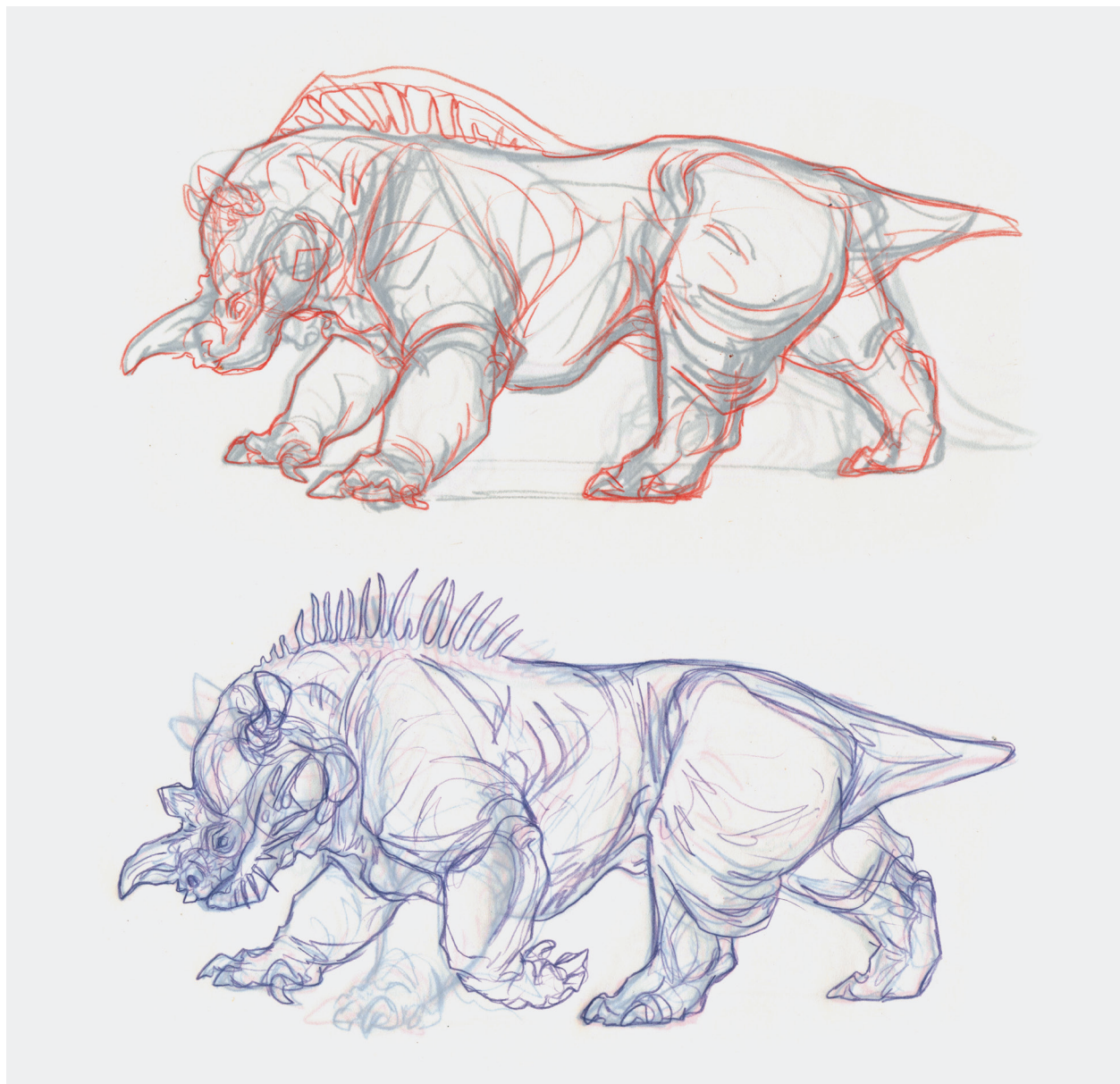
As I'm drawing, I'm also loosely thinking about what this creature will be. Is it a carnivore? How large is it? Does it live in groups or alone? Is it male or female or maybe something else? This is why it's important to not only draw lots of animals, but to study their behaviors and physiology. These details will help to construct the creature from the ground up. I hold my china marker up high, so I use it less precisely.

As a side note: it can be useful to look back at those warm-up scribbles. There might be ideas hidden in there somewhere!

Above
Warming up is an essential part of the process

Right
Developing the creature's form and pose





“I am careful about pressure as I go; I want to make sure the features I really like are bold and the underlying construction lines are light”

Layering with vellum

Now that I've sketched out a silhouette I like, I can begin to flesh out some of the characteristics of the creature. I'll use vellum to help edit the design as I start to find more details and shapes in my concept; I'll use china marker to begin, then switch to Col-Erase pencil and begin to figure out what I want to keep and subtract in my drawings. As I go, I'm looking to keep the design balanced.

Remember: form follows function. The spines along the jawline of my creature should have

an explanation for being there. Perhaps they are used for intimidation. Maybe it's a trait that's exclusive to males. That said, there are plenty of mysterious characteristics in our own natural world too, so we can incorporate things that won't be explained. I tend to practice a bit of restraint in my design.

I like to switch between colors as I layer the vellum. This way I can keep things organized. I also keep my pencils somewhat blunt at this stage – I'm only finding big shapes at this point so I don't want to use a fine point just yet. I'm



keeping things gestural. I keep layering and keep drawing.

Finding features

Now that I've got my body plan mapped out in light blue Col-Erase pencil, I begin to pull out features using the indigo Col-Erase pencil. I like these pencils because I can draw very lightly with them and slowly build up the drawing as I go. Once I've got the drawing where I like it, I will further refine it by using a darker color to pull out key features. Col-Erase pencils can be tricky to erase, but I've found

that using the Staedtler Mars plastic eraser helps to lighten the pencil quickly and easily.

I am careful about pressure as I go; I want to make sure the features I really like are bold and the underlying construction lines are light. The painter's tape comes in handy here. Taping down my pages helps keep things neat and can guard against crumpling if I decide to erase and wipe away dust. Vellum can be fragile so I take my time and am careful as I move forward. Using repetitive rendering on certain forms helps to model and give volume

to the drawing as I go. The great thing about concept art is that I can keep exploring ideas as I build up this final drawing.

Left
Drawing on a layer of vellum
paper over the initial sketch

Above
Discovering the features
of the creature





Building up the drawing

I like what I've achieved with the Col-Erase pencil drawings. At this stage, I usually scan the drawing just so I have a digital copy. It is a good idea to document steps like this, in case you need to return back to them.

I will now draw over the Col-Erase pencil using my Blackwing 602 pencil. I'm not going to use a sheet of vellum; instead I will work directly on the Col-Erase drawing. This is optional – it is personal preference if you'd like to use vellum for your final graphite drawing. Blackwings are soft pencils, so they don't need much pressure to get them to work. I work light to dark, rendering out the forms as I move around the drawing. I want to capture volumes and textures as I go. The great thing about working on vellum is that the paper texture can aid in the drawing itself. There's a "tooth" that's lent to the drawing from working traditionally.

The final sketch

Even in this stage, we can make edits to the overall design. I can add in whiskers, scales, battle damage, and wrinkles – all things I may have observed in our animal studies from the beginning. I like to work from left to right (since I'm right-handed) to avoid smudging and smearing. As I render, I imagine a light source above the creature to keep the lighting simple and easy to understand.

To complete the sketch, I use my kneaded eraser to clean up any fingerprints or smudges around the figure. If I wanted to take the sketch further with some color, now would be the time to scan it into Adobe Photoshop (or your program of choice).

Left: Building up forms and detail with Blackwing pencils

Below: Final image © Brynn Metheney

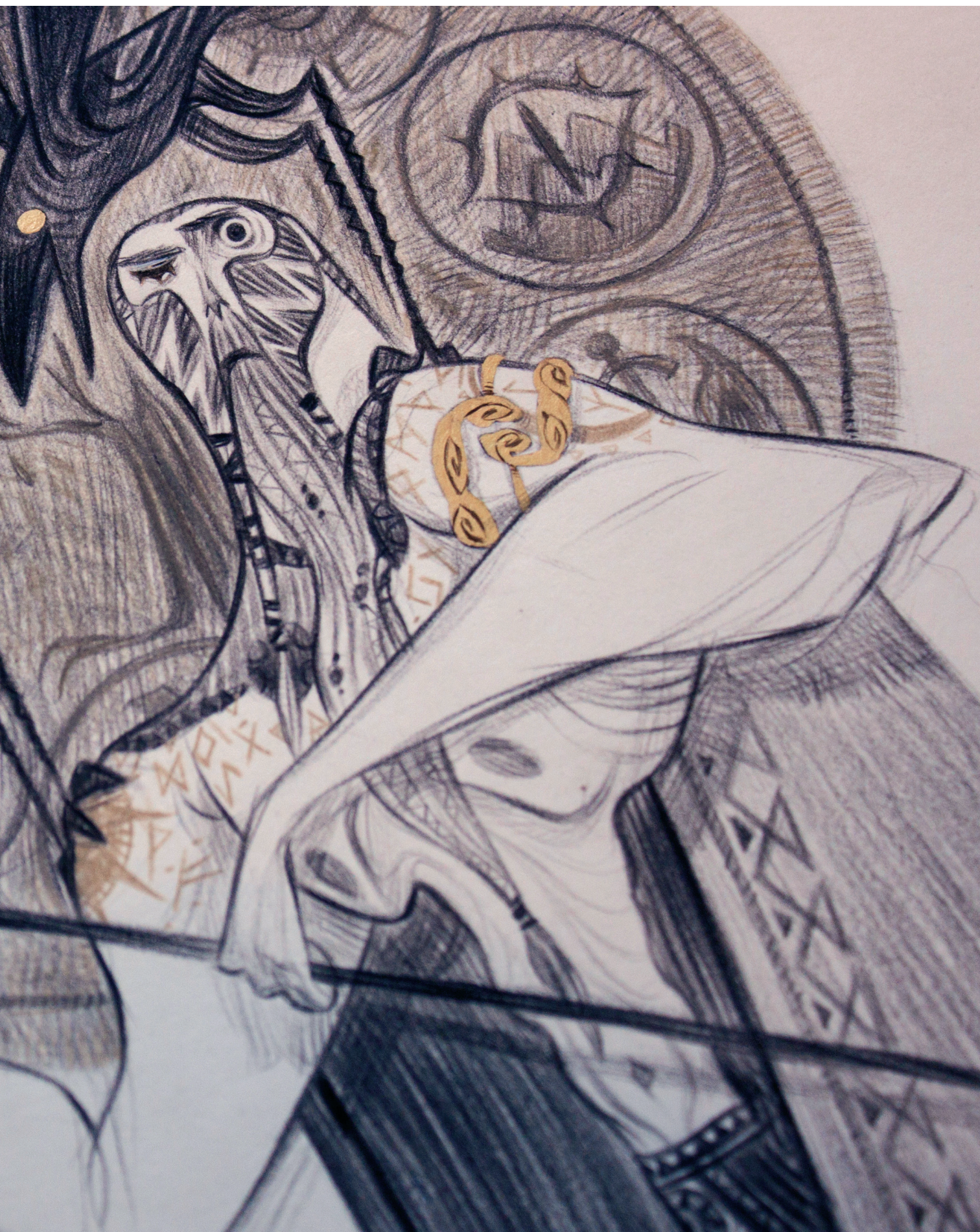




Odin, the Allfather

Sketching and illustrating with Yrgane Ramon





Join freelance artist Yrgane Ramon as she creates a stylized depiction of the Norse god Odin, accompanied by his wolves and ravens, using colored pencils and paint.



Materials

As digital art is essential for work, traditional art is essential for the heart. I love to explore and express ideas in sketchbooks or on pieces of anything that I can put paint on. I love to work with colored pencils, gouache, and gold. I find it really fun to try different new materials but, at least for pencils, I mostly use Faber-Castell and Mapped brands. (I also like to use black ink, but not this time!)

I don't think there are really "good" or "bad" materials, only those that you like to use or not. It's a very personal choice, like food or friends.

Research

I'm curious to work on a piece about Norse mythology, and decide to illustrate the god Odin, his two ravens Huginn and Muninn

(Old Norse for "thought" and "mind"), and his two wolves Geri and Freki. My very first step is to get to know Odin more, so I read several texts and find plenty of information on our old friend, the internet.

I'm surprised to see how vague Odin's story is, with such tiny descriptions of his accomplishments. Unlike a modern fantasy writing style such as Tolkien's, which is very generous in details, Odin's story is more sparse and mysterious.

Here is the information I choose to keep in mind. The two ravens fly around looking for information to tell to Odin. The two loyal, dangerous wolves wait for food. Odin does not eat, only drinks, and gives his food to his wolves. He is a wise and powerful god,

a necromancer, and ferryman of the dead. He discovered runes, and is associated with the Valknut symbol of three interlocking triangles, which is often linked with death or funeral rites.

Odin gained true wisdom, allowing him to see everything that is happening and about to happen, all at the same time – but he paid a high price for the gift, losing his right eye. Odin died being eaten by a giant wolf, Fenrir. I am also interested in Yggdrasil, the "tree of life" symbol in Norse mythology, with its roots between nine worlds.

Rough sketches

This is my favorite part. I really try to put on paper all the different ideas I have in mind. Bad ideas overlapping with good ideas – I

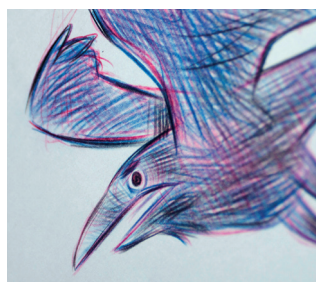
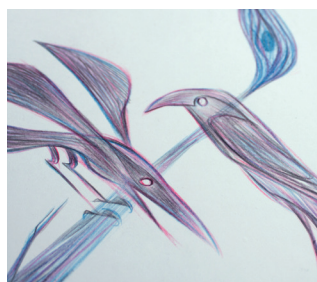
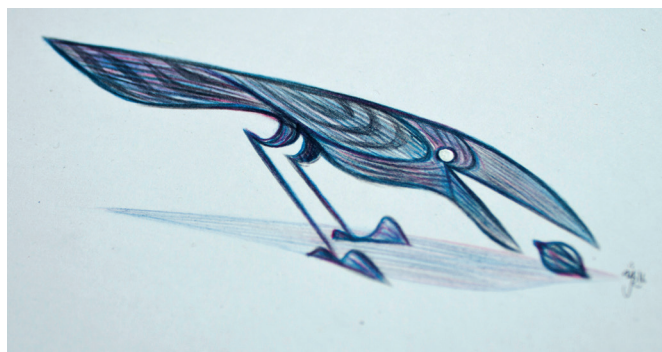


put them all on paper. It's messy, very rough. I put them all together (here on the floor or on my living room wall), then I let my brain sleep for a few! That way I can clearly see which ideas are really working. I find this step very creative and helpful, because I don't like to only work on one idea and that's all.

I just feel regret that I might miss something better. I want this image to be simple but have narrative; I love to make artwork about the emotions felt by the characters, and their interaction with what is around them. I try to keep in mind and synthesize all that I've read about Odin's story and symbols.

Far left
Testing materials. Colored pencils, gouache, and gold paint will be used for this

Above
Creating rough sketches



Testing

A test session helps me to define the tools and techniques I will use for my final illustration. On this page you can see I've made some small illustration tests. These allow me to try tricks and technical ideas that could add to my narrative way of illustrating my subject.

Starting the illustration

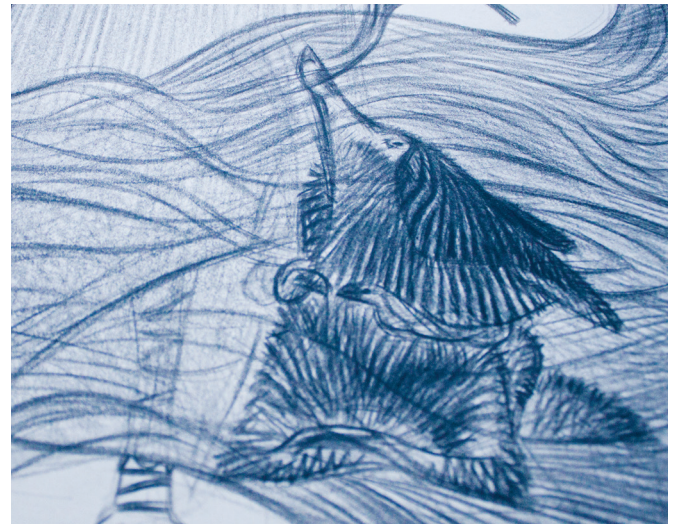
Now I'm ready for working on the final design. I select the roughs which looked the

most accurate to my vision and feelings about Odin's stories, and I hesitate between them. I use a light table to make a cleaner sketch, keeping Odin's expression of worry, and also trying to keep the shape lines I used on my rough. For this stage, I use a thick Canson paper that's slightly yellow (I don't want to use white paper). I work directly with a black Faber-Castell pencil (not a plain graphite pencil), with a light hand in case I need to erase anything.

Above
Testing techniques, shapes,
and ideas using colored
pencil and gouache

Right
Starting the illustration,
based on the rough
sketches and test pieces





Refining the design

When I'm satisfied with the sketch, I start to push my drawing. With the same black Faber-Castell pencil, I start to add more gray shades to create contrast in my image.

I want an Odin who looks like skin on bones because of the fact that he doesn't need to eat, also making him look more like a necromancer and a wise man. I put force into his arms and lean muscles. I put symbols everywhere: he has a kind of skull face, his spear is made of the Valknut symbol, and he has rune tattoos. I add fog to the scene to reinforce his worried expression, and also to

add a kind of metaphor about the mystery surrounding Odin's story and achievements.

Finishing the drawing

To the right, you can see how I add the final lines and details, such as the patterns on his clothes. I want to stay simple and not attract the eye to them. The shield behind him, as a kind of tapestry, discreetly shows Yggdrasil, the tree of life with the nine worlds; I design each symbol like a synthesis of each world. I have also added Draupnir, a magical golden ring, to Odin's arm, as I found some historical information saying that a "ring" was more like a bracelet for men in the past.

Above
Refining the initial
drawing with more
contrast and detail

Right
Finishing the drawing
with decorative aspects,
like patterns and a
background element





The golden touch

Gold time! My *péché mignon*, my little weakness. I use gold pencil for the shield, Odin's tattoos, and the fog. For the magical parts such as the ravens' eyes, ring, spear, and wolves' collars, I use my small Japanese gold pot – it's dry, but when you touch it with a wet brush, it turns to liquid. I also make Odin's magical "eye" gold at first, but it reflects too much light, so I remove it and add black gouache. I love how gold takes the light and dances with it.

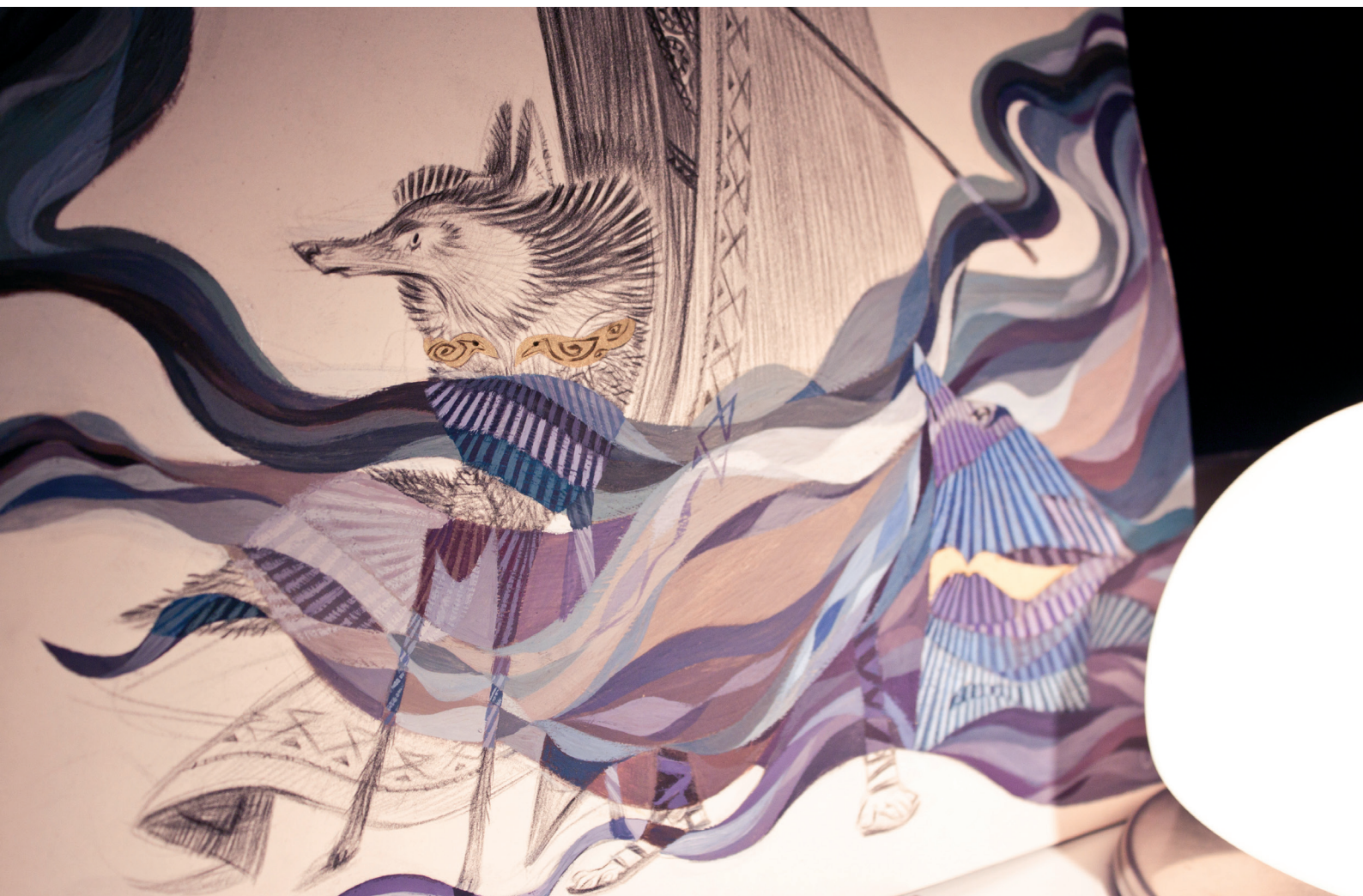


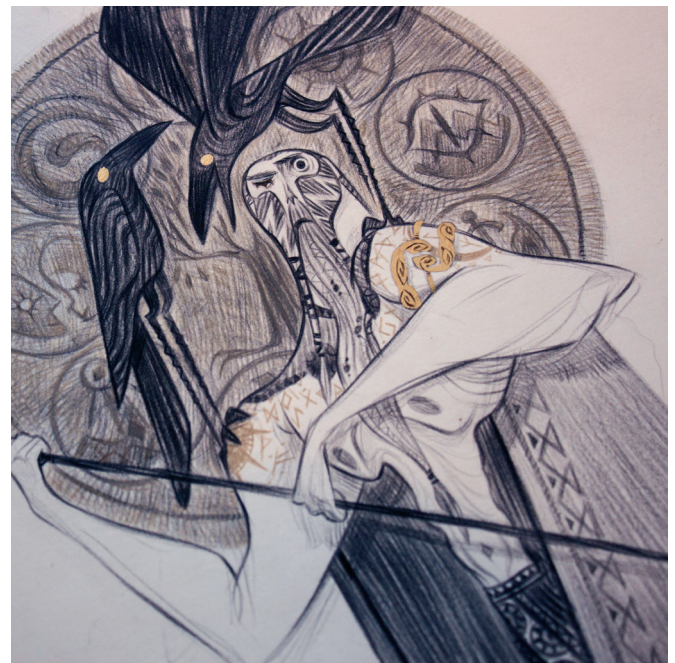
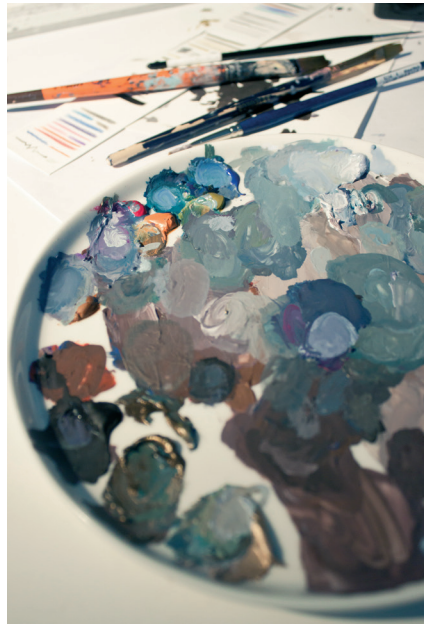
Adding gouache

I want to adjust the depth of the fog now, which looks too close in value to Odin, his animals, and the shield. At first I tried to correct it with varnish and white gesso... However, we sometimes make mistakes! Now I've lost the lying-down wolf and Odin's cloak. This forces me to take out my gouache paints, and I find it's a good idea. I have a lot of fun turning the fog into colors, pushing the wolves into simple patterns in a way that keeps them readable.

Above
Adding touches of gold pencil and paint to make the image pop

Right
An accident with gesso turns out to have good results!





Final touches with paint

I love to see the development of colors on my plate. It's also inspiring when creating new ideas for color harmonies. I always keep old brushes for strange (but cool) effects.

It can be funny to see how my workspace develops into a mess when I'm working. At first I need a lot of space to start my illustration, but by this late stage I'm

working in a space that is the size of a pocket handkerchief. It's the same for the colors on my plate. Astronomy always talks about order evolving into chaos, right?

I clean up smudged parts of the image with white gouache, and clean all the dust from my dirty left hand – this happens even if I work with a white paper between my hand and the illustration!

Above
Adding the final touches

Right
Final illustration © Yrgane Ramon
yrganeramon.tumblr.com

Visit graphitemag.com to see more images from this project!



CONTRIBUTORS

Jakub Rebelka
shzrebelka.tumblr.com

Tin Salamunic
salamunicart.com

Thomas Cian
behance.net/chanbella

Susan Yung
susanyung.com

Rob Turpin
thisnorthernboy.wordpress.com

Molly Mendoza
mollymendoza.com

Brynn Metheney
brynnart.com

Yrgane Ramon
yrganeramon.tumblr.com



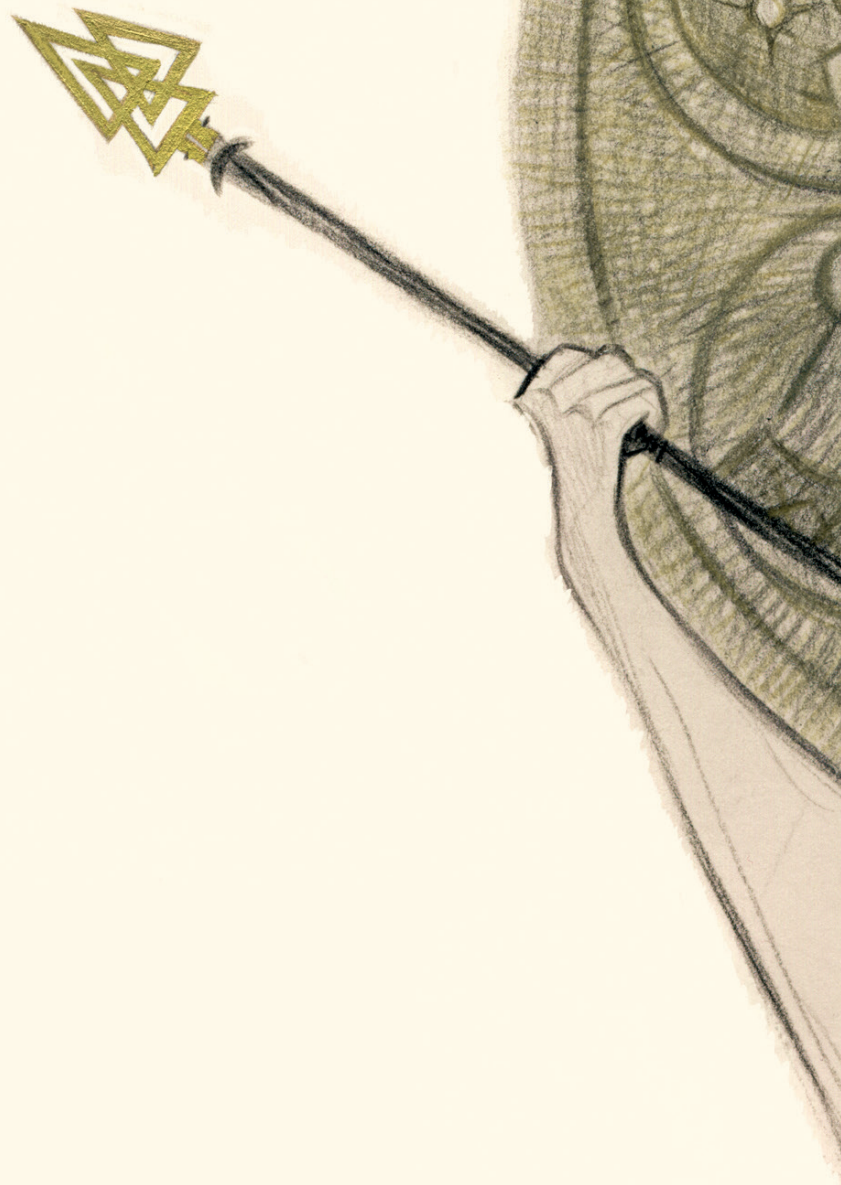
THE GRAPHITE TEAM

Marisa Lewis
Editor

Matthew Lewis
Graphic designer

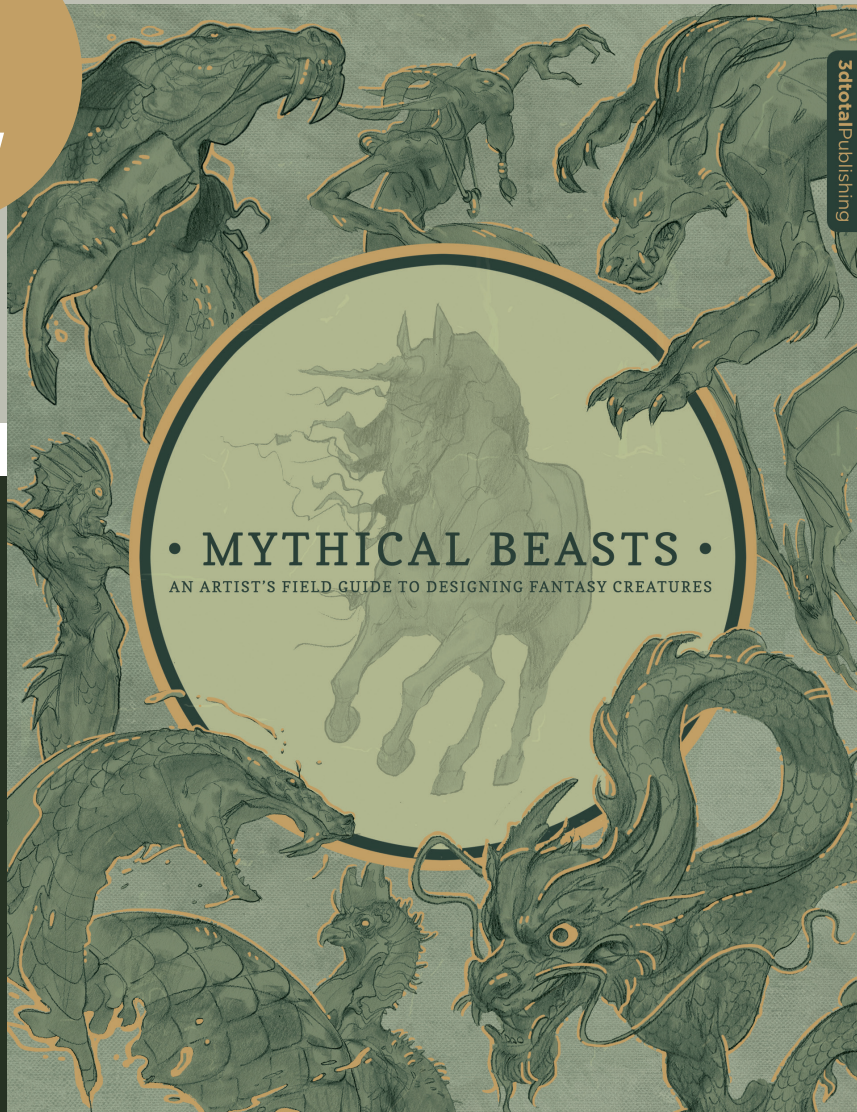
Adam J. Smith
Proofreader and contributor
adamjsmithauthor.blogspot.co.uk

Simon Morse
Managing editor





SEE MORE
FROM
BRYNN
METHENEY



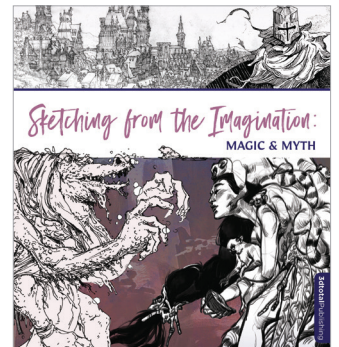
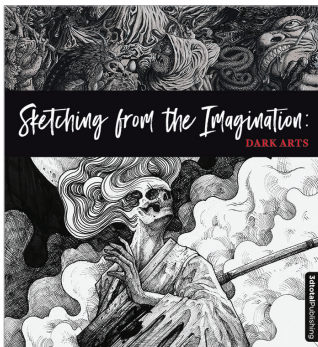
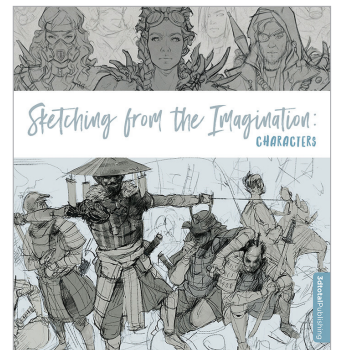
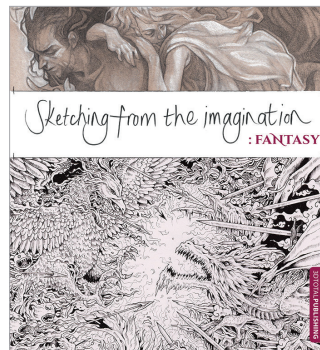
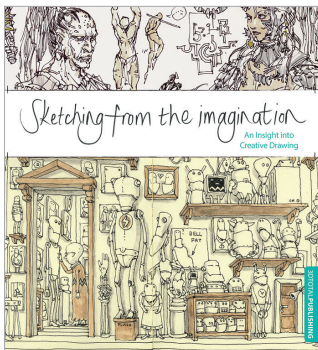
Join thirty fearless artists as they explore and develop concepts for a treasure trove of fascinating mythical beasts. Journey around the globe and unearth the secrets of fantasy favorites and more provincial mysteries, including the legendary unicorn, the elusive yeti, the Slavic leshy, and the Japanese nue, to name just a few! Each creature has its own chapter that covers an overview of its history, how to detail main elements, such as fur and horns, and the thought process behind the artist's design. Let your imagination run wild and discover the captivating subspecies of each creature, such as the Arctic boggart and humpback kraken. Mythical Beasts is a spellbinding anthology for fantasy lovers, creature artists, or any intrepid adventurer looking to investigate the enchanting world of cryptozoology.

Available now at
store.3dtotal.com

Check out more from
**Jakub Rebelka, Rob Turpin and,
Brynn Metheney (all featured in SFTI Sci-Fi)**

Sketching from the Imagination

In each book of the *Sketching from the Imagination* series, fifty talented traditional and digital artists have been chosen to share their sketchbooks and discuss the reasons behind their design decisions. Visually stunning collections packed full of useful tips, these books offer inspiration for everyone.



See the full collection at
store.3dtotal.com