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WORKSTATION GROUP TEST
What's the best combination?

UNIVERSITY CHALLENGE

One brief, five students: did these
aspiring designers make the grade?

GET OVERPRINTING

A five page in-depth guide
to translucent ink effects



PERSPECTIVE TRICKS

Bend the rules and create
stylish and original images



BETTER CHARACTERS

Master animation and
bring your designs to life



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MARCH 2005

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COVER ILLUSTRATION: DEREK LEA



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03

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Latest firewall protection	✓	
Redundant server disks	✓	
SSL secure web space		✓
SSH secure access (Linux only)	✓	
5 star online control panel	✓	
Bandwidth monitoring	✓	
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Load balancing		✓
Bulk domain name registration account	✓	
Windows 2003 IIS6 (your choice)	✓	
Red Hat Enterprise Linux (your choice)		✓
NEW Custom DNS management	✓	
SITE BUILDING & SCRIPTING		
SiteBuilder website creation tool		✓
PHP, Perl & Python CGI	✓	
Compiled CGI (option) and SSL	✓	
ASP scripting on Windows		✓
ASP.NET & .NET Framework 1.1 (Windows)		✓
FrontPage Extensions 2002		✓
Custom error pages	✓	
Media streaming		✓
Password protection		✓
Advanced password protection		✓
Raw log files	✓	
XML, SHTML & DHTML	✓	
ODBC access	✓	
Choice of MS SQL database sizes		✓
Choice of MySQL database sizes		✓
Control panel custom branding		✓
Personal control panel		✓
Custom name servers		✓
LIVEMAIL		
Unlimited POP3 mailboxes	✓	
Unlimited auto-responders	✓	
Unlimited mail forwarding	✓	
Unlimited email aliases	✓	
NEW Exchange Mail 2003		✓
NEW Advanced Mail 2003		✓
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SMS new email alerts	✓	
Advanced SMS alerts		✓
EXTRAS & SUPPORT		
Dial-up access	✓	
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EDITORIAL 01225 442 244

GILLIAN CARSON SENIOR EDITOR

gillian.carson@futurenet.co.uk

DOM HALL DEPUTY EDITOR

dom.hall@futurenet.co.uk

RODDY LLEWELLYN SENIOR ART EDITOR

richard.llewellyn@futurenet.co.uk

VICKY MITCHARD DESIGNER

vicky.mitchard@futurenet.co.uk

SOPHIE EMBLEY PRODUCTION EDITOR

sophie.embley@futurenet.co.uk

DAN GOODLEFF PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

dan.goodleff@futurenet.co.uk

JOSEPH RUSS NEW MEDIA CONTENT EDITOR

joseph.russ@futurenet.co.uk

MATT GALLIMORE SENIOR CD EDITOR

matt.gallimore@futurenet.co.uk

SIMON HOLLAND CD EDITOR

simon.holland@futurenet.co.uk

CD PROBLEMS 01225 822 743

ca.support@futurenet.co.uk

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM

Jason Arber, Matt Broomfield, Rob Carney, Jim Coudal, Christian Darkin, Mike Delaflor, Chris Kenworthy, Derek Lea, Martin Fewell, Mireille Frenette, Benoit Guerville, Rick Lecoat, Pocket Laboratories, Ed Ricketts, Chris Schmidt, Jerome Turner and Liane Wilcher

PHOTOGRAPHY James Wilson, Louise Broom

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SUBSCRIPTIONS

Computer Arts magazine, Future Publishing,

30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW

01225 442 244 (SDN 01225 789 293)

SUBSCRIPTION QUERIES 0870 444 8455

OVERSEAS SUBSCRIPTIONS +44 (0) 870 444 8455

EMAIL customerservice@futurenet.co.uk

ADVERTISING 01225 442 244

ROSA SMITH advertising manager

rosa.smith@futurenet.co.uk

GEORGE LUCAS senior sales executive

george.lucas@futurenet.co.uk

REBECCA BELL-ROBINSON classified sales executive

rebecca.bellrobinson@futurenet.co.uk

TECHNOLOGY DIVISION

KELLEY CORTEN publisher

DOM BEAVEN publishing director

FIONA TULLY marketing manager

CLARE TOVEY production manager

PAUL MCINTYRE group art editor

SARAH WILLIAMS software copyright co-ordinator

PRODUCTION

EMILY MOUNTER ad production co-ordinator

KATTY PIGOTT production co-ordinator

MIKE THORNE commercial print buyer

CIRCULATION & LICENSING

JASON COMBER circulation manager

PETE STOTHARD head of international licensing

SIMON WEAR overseas licensing director

Computer Arts has licences in China, France, Italy, Poland, and Spain

UK DISTRIBUTION

Marketforce Ltd 020 7633 3300

Kings Reach Tower, Stamford Street, London SE1 9LS

FUTURE

ROGER PARRY non-executive chairman

GREG INGHAM chief executive

JOHN BOWMAN group finance director

T: +44 (0)1225 442 244

URL: www.thefutureplc.com

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WELCOME

At this time of year, with Christmas fading into distant memory and summer still a lifetime away, things can seem a little gloomier than usual. But cheer up, because this issue of *Computer Arts* is jam-packed with creative projects that'll keep the winter blues at bay.

First off, leading illustrator Derek Lea shows you how to recreate this month's stunning cover image - his take on the ancient and mysterious green man, a motif that's been used in art, design and architecture for centuries. Read all about it on page 25.

Elsewhere, we reveal how to give illustrations some amazing Escher-like 3D perspectives (page 60), take a look at how to exploit translucent ink effects (page 54), catch up with French design duo Superdeux (page 32), and discover the secrets behind Shell's enduring red and yellow corporate logo (page 48).

If all of that's not enough, break open the cover CD and get cracking with our *Corel Painter IX* starter kit, build your own interactive CD-ROMs using the superb multimedia tool *iShell 3* (page 66) and check out our selection of stock images from Flat Earth. For further details, turn to page 102. Enjoy!

GILLIAN CARSON SENIOR EDITOR

gillian.carson@futurenet.co.uk

ILLUSTRATION IN THE MAG

DEREK LEA

A spritely reinterpretation of the green man motif, which delivers a suitably vernal theme to this month's cover.

Derek used design heavyweights *Photoshop* and *Painter* to add vital textured layers and subtly "age" his work.

INFO: www.dereklea.com



LIANE WILCHER

Liane's trademark skewing of familiar landmarks here takes on The Albert Hall.

INFO: liane.wilcher@virgin.net



BEAT 13

We said blow your own trumpet, and that's just what the Brum-based boys did...

INFO: www.beat13.co.uk



MARTIN FEWELL

Martin's striking overprint effects conjure up a day-glo retro-world to brilliant effect.

INFO: www.martinfewell.com



POCKET LABORATORIES

Flash animations with bona fide character. See it and weep.

INFO: www.pocketlaboratories.co.uk



BLACKPOOL AND FYLDE COLLEGE

Our expert hand picks new student talent - see p112.

INFO: www.blackpool.ac.uk



TWELVE:TEN

Why can't non-US buyers benefit from a crashing dollar? Twelve:ten sums it up.

INFO: www.twelveten.com



SCOTT HANSEN

This month's workstation Group Test is graced by the presence of a large crowd...

INFO: www.iso50.com



RICK LECOAT

Rick's stylish movie player was built entirely in *iShell*, provided free on our CD.

INFO: www.sharkattack.co.uk



CONTACT

Computer Arts, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW **PHONE:** 01225 442 244

EMAIL: ca.mail@futurenet.co.uk **SUBSCRIPTIONS:** 0870 444 8455 **OVERSEAS:** +44 (0) 870 444 8455

REVIEWS

WHAT'S HOT
AND WHAT'S NOT?

P78 **PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS 3**

This wallet-friendly, streamlined version of *Photoshop* will prove ideal for novices

P80 **POPCORN 1.0**

Slick cover-design software adds life to an otherwise so-so DVD copying app

P81 **EYE CANDY 5 NATURE**

More terrific filters from the Alien Skin stable – Snow Drift is our particular fave

P82 **TWIXTOR PRO 4.0**

Create slow-mo/super-fast DV footage with the help of Re-Vision Effects' plug-in

P83 **MIMIC PRO 3.1**

An affordable and effective lip-synch tool for pro and amateur character animators

P84 **LEXMARK X7170**

A keenly priced all-in-one printer, scanner and fax, ideal for everyday use

P85 **CHARTBOT**

This sterling plug-in whips up fine-looking charts and graphs in *XPress* or *InDesign*

P87 **BOOKS**

Everything you need to know about furniture and product design but were afraid to ask, courtesy of *The Design Encyclopedia*, plus other tomes

GROUP TEST

FIVE TITANS BATTLE
FOR THE TOP SPOT



P88 **WORKSTATIONS**

Five specially tailored top-of-the-range PCs – the 3D Boxx, Precision 670MT, 3D Workstation, IntelliStation and RM Workstation – prepare for combat...

TUTORIALS

LEARN THESE GREAT
TECHNIQUES

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Use *Photoshop*'s Overprint command to create vivid transparency effects

P60 **PERSPECTIVE TRICKS**

Reinvent The Albert Hall with digital photos, sketches – and *Photoshop*

P64 **TOOL TIPS**

NEW! Derek Lea advises on how to customise brush presets in *Photoshop*

P66 **CD TUTORIAL**

Create your own mini movie player with the help of *iShell 3*, free on our CD

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WHAT'S HAPPENING
IN YOUR INDUSTRY?



P32 **CA INTERVIEW**

"Everything is heavily tinged with fun and irony – we enjoy combining a cute design with violent ideas," Gallic design studio Superdeux admits

P48 **ICON**

The Shell logo: We trace the genesis of what is arguably the petrochemical industry's most striking logo

P70 **GET STARTED WITH...**

Self-promotion: Simple techniques to help you build up a great client base

P114 **CURRICULUM VITAE**

David Gentry: David is drawn to the macabre. No wonder Francis Bacon and Salvador Dali inspire him



UNIVERSITY CHALLENGE P112

NEW! One brief, five students. Find out how a group of aspiring young designers responded to a tricky creative challenge...

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PERSPECTIVE TRICKS

Break the rules with this bold, twisted vision of The Royal Albert Hall, as Liane Wilcher exploits the power of *Photoshop* and collage



PAGE 54 →

GET OVERPRINTING

Translucent inks can add incredible vibrancy to your work, as Martin Fewell demonstrates with this overview of *Photoshop*'s Overprint command



ON THE CD
THIS ISSUE'S
SOFTWARE &
RESOURCES

PAINTER IX STARTER KIT (MAC+PC)

Everything you need to get started with Corel's multi-purpose natural media and illustration software



iSHELL 3 (MAC+PC)

The full multimedia CD-ROM creation tool – turn to page 66 for an in-depth tutorial

TWIXTOR (MAC+PC)

Incredible slow-motion video plug-in

EYE CANDY 5 NATURE (MAC+PC)

Superb Alien Skin *Photoshop* filter-set trial. Includes fire, smoke and fantastic snow

MIMIC PRO 3.0 (MAC+PC)

Create realistic facial animations and vowel-perfect lip-synch with this powerful app

See page 102 for more details...

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Turn to page 46 for full details of great savings

EXPOSURE

Send your work to **Computer Arts** and be seen by thousands!

RYAN FORSHAW

LOCATION Manchester, UK

JOB Retoucher & image maker

CONTACT www.ryuneo.com

SOFTWARE Photoshop 7

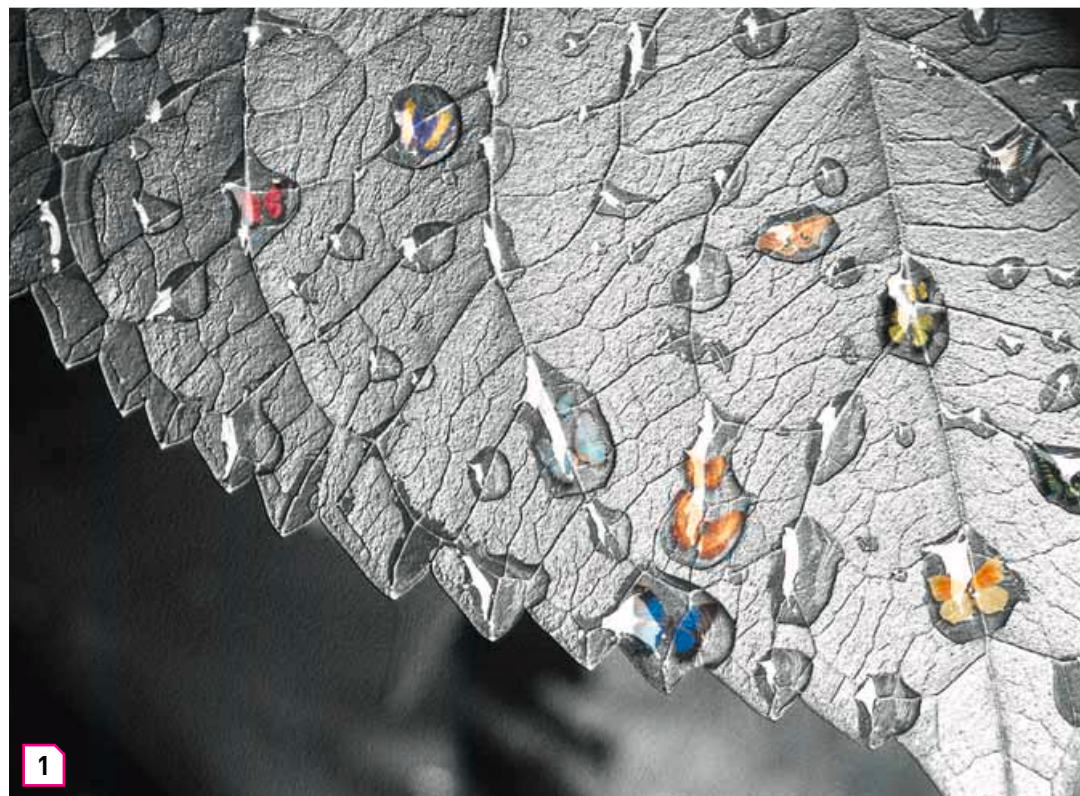
Ryan Forshaw started "playing around" with digital imaging when he was first introduced to *Paintshop Pro 6*. A friend suggested he try using *Photoshop* instead back in 2003 and since then there's been no looking back.

Forshaw believes that it's the skills he has learned from books, magazines and websites that have enabled him to develop his design work and, in turn, "work with the big boys". "I'm pretty much self-taught, but I have so much more to learn," he says.

"With the resources available today covering *Photoshop* techniques and design training I think anyone with a little talent can become successful. You just need a bit of luck – for the right person to see your work."

So from where does he draw his inspiration and how does he like to work? "When I get a job, I look at the brief and then use Google to search for keywords from within that brief," he says.

"Once I have a few ideas up my sleeve I get to work. The re-touching process is hard to describe, as once I get started on a piece one thing just flows into another until the final piece looks complete. The hardest part is knowing when to stop."





To find out more about this section, please go to www.computerarts.co.uk/gallery/



1. Waterleaf "I was inspired to create this image by an Echner piece called Dewdrop, 1948. I wanted to create a metallic leaf with the illusion of butterflies emerging from droplets of water."

2. Blue Healey "With this image I wanted to create a scene that reflected the coolness of the blues in the car. A dark blue sky was chosen to enhance the exhaust fumes and in turn illustrate how cold the scene was."

3. Red Healey "I created this piece for a classic car website. I placed the car on a dark mountain scene with a dramatic red sunset so that the colours of each element complimented the other."

4. Autumn Face "This image was created for a digital photography magazine. Her skin had a leaf texture applied to it and part of her face was blended into the tree to combine all the elements. I used a variety of blending modes and layer masks to combine the elements together. I find that these are the most powerful *Photoshop* tools when you're attempting to create realistic composites."

5. Fuse Time "I created this camera image to illustrate the theme "time". The theme was represented by the fuse slowly burning down to the camera across each section of the film strip."



MICHA LEESE

LOCATION Cheltenham, UK

JOB Illustrator & fashion assistant

CONTACT www.mochi1045.com

SOFTWARE Photoshop 7

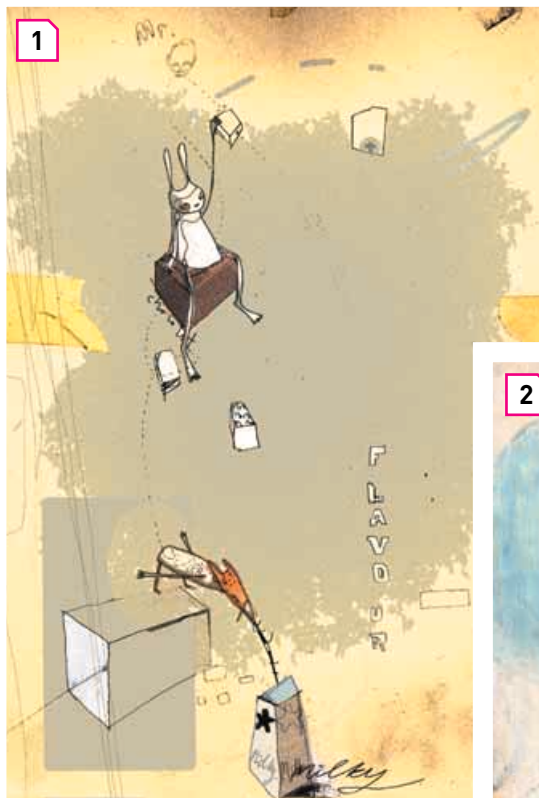
1. Milky Flavour "I created this image by scanning original sketches into *Photoshop* and then adding colours and new elements. To achieve the deep-layered effect I printed the image, reworked on top of it, printed it out again and then scanned it once more."

2. Kumera Chips "This piece, created after travelling through New Zealand, is based on the joy of finding new foods and connecting each memory with those foods. Kumera chips (sweet potato) remind me of being on the road, being free, happy, and a little lonely."

3. Tiger Style "Tiger Style was created using paint, stickers and tape. I then added characters from *Micha's World* – children's books that currently make up part of my personal work."

4. Dirge "This image combines mixed media. Acrylic varnish, transfer paper and staples were scanned into *Photoshop* to achieve a layered, textured effect."

5. Grandpa Bear "This design is being used in a range of limited edition T-shirts available soon from my website. It started with a sketch scanned from my sketchbook. I then coloured and cleaned it up in *Photoshop*."



**PETRA STEFANKOVA****LOCATION** Slovakia**JOB** Graphic designer & illustrator
CONTACTwww.illustration.animacia.sk**SOFTWARE** Illustrator, Photoshop, InDesign and Corel Draw

1. Allianz "For this calendar illustration for Allianz I used a well-known symbol of luck – a chimney sweep. I hate boring commercial calendars, so I decided to create something that everyone would want to hang on their wall."

2. On the Beach "I created this image on a cold winter's day when I longed for intensive warm sunshine and energy. The process made me feel much better!"

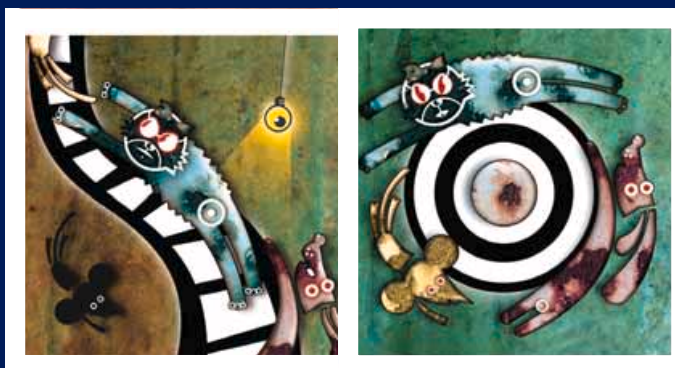
3. On Guard "I decided to create a series of images using a different idea, but the same creation principle, mood and colours as On the Beach (3). Sometimes I start with a pure circle, rectangle or square, then duplicate and modify them until I am happy with the result."

4. Macha Styri "These illustrations form part of my children's picture book about the relationship between cat, dog and mouse. At the start each one loves the other, but the situation soon changes for ever."

**GET EXPOSED**

Send your work to us, along with an explanation of your techniques and software, the titles of each piece, your website details and email address. Images should be sent as PC or Mac TIFF or JPEG files, on CD or DVD. A hard copy is also a great help. We will endeavour to return all entries that provide an SAE. All contributions are submitted on the basis of a non-exclusive worldwide licence to publish, both in print and electronically.

Post hi-res files for print to:
Exposure, Computer Arts,
30 Monmouth Street,
Bath, BA1 2BW.



LETTERS

Write to us at ca.mail@futurenet.co.uk
or join us online at forum.computerarts.co.uk

STAR LETTER: NO TIME FOR SHAREWARE LICENSING

➔ I've just spent the last three days extracting the fonts from the cover CD of *Computer Arts Projects 66 – The Typography Issue*. Much of this time was spent reading the same convoluted licensing agreements...

I have some 15,000 fonts installed on my computer, and I'm sorry but when I'm working on a project I cannot mess about trawling through folders, websites and email addresses to get the necessary permission, or make sure my \$5 goes to whoever it's supposed to. For this reason, anything that didn't say I could use it for commercial purposes, I just deleted.

Yes, I believe in shareware and, yes, we need to support and encourage artistic talent, but why don't these people just get together, put their files on a CD, and sell it for \$10 (or however much they want)? Surely it's better to sell the lot for \$10, whether or not people are going to use them, rather than ask the same amount for a

particular font when someone suddenly finds they have a use for it?

Mark Taylor, Essex, UK

Computer Arts

Mark, you have a good point, but those licences are there for a reason. Font creators are creative designers who often earn a living from their work. Some of the fonts on our cover CD would've been a real labour of love, so a donation to support the designers' work is hardly too much to ask. However, we do agree that font designers would definitely benefit from "teaming" up. In fact, this is how most type foundries are formed – when a group of like-minded font designers get together to showcase their work as a collective.

PRIZE: Rookledge's Classic International Typefinder

As the Star Letter winner this month, Mark Taylor has won a copy of *Rookledge's Classic International Typefinder*, by Christopher Perfect and Gordon Rookledge. Highlighting the essential characteristics of over 700 typefaces, this book helps designers to identify many of the most popular fonts currently in use across the globe. *Rookledge's Classic International Typefinder* is published by Laurence King and costs £24.95.



SOFTWARE POLITICS

My software vendor told me that it's no longer possible to upgrade my German version of *3ds max 4* to *3ds max 7*. Why is this? Although I only use it once or twice a month, it was my favourite program and I invested so much money last year on expensive updates and functions. Today, it seems, my *3ds max* software and *3ds max* know-how is worthless.

So now I'm forced to switch to other 3D applications, such as *Messiah: studio* (which is cheaper), and continue using Pixologic's great *ZBrush*. Can you explain what's going on, please?

I'm intrigued to hear what you think about all this software politics!

**Thomas Heidenberger,
Munich, Germany**

Discreet spokesperson Alex Micallef responds: I'm sorry that any confusion has arisen over this, Thomas. It's entirely possible to upgrade from *3ds max 4* to *3ds max 7*. The German version of *3ds max 7* has been available since mid-December and is receiving fantastic feedback from our customers. Upgrading to *3ds max 7*, you'll see a great deal of difference in the application that has developed over the four years since *3ds max 4* was released. The price of the upgrade is 1,750 euros (plus any applicable local taxes).

IT'S A DESIGNER'S LIFE...



You can buy Brad Guigar's new book, *The Everything Cartooning Book*, at www.everythingcartooning.com

TYPOGRAPHY ISSUE

You asked for feedback from the Typography issue of *Computer Arts Projects* 66. In a word: fantastic! As the most basic staple of design, typography needs covering more than most subjects, particularly as it has been around the longest and is now, in the main, ignored.

I've had several type designs in my head for years and this issue made me sit down with a pad and draw them out, using many of the tips in your mag. I now have around ten distinctive new designs, although it's funny how you start seeing "your" designs in existing typefaces soon afterwards.

I look forward to more typography specials soon.

Philip Jansseune, Bristol, UK

Rob Carney, editor of *Computer Arts Projects*, responds:

Thanks for your comments, Philip. Why not put your designs to good use and enter our Monotype competition, where you can win the entire Monotype collection, worth £2,999? If you wow the judges, your font could be included with the collection, joining the likes of *Gill Sans*, *Cartier Book*, *Mundo Sans* and *Baskerville*. See www.computerarts.co.uk/competitions for more details.



CA FORUM FANATIC

This month, we wanted to showcase the work of new forum member Corvus Flies, aka Melanie West of Maine, New England. Melanie is a dab hand with *Corel Painter* and created this image of a rusted car which reminds us of the work of Edward Hopper. Nice one, Melanie – and we hope you enjoy this month's *Painter IX* starter kit, included on the cover CD. Check out www.melanieweststudio.com.

CORRECTIONS

We've been asked to point out a few inaccuracies within our reviews of NewTek *Video Toaster 4* and *LightWave 8*, printed in issue 105. The *LightWave* review listed a special offer price of £995. The correct price is £1,056. We also said that *LightWave* was launched in 1995, when it was, in fact, launched in 1989. Please also note that shadow caching feature was actually added in version 6.0. Finally, our review of *Video Toaster* stated that the original *Video Toaster* could be run on Amiga emulators, which it cannot.

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EXPOSURE BE INSPIRED BY OTHER READERS

All contents are subject to change

ON SALE THURSDAY 17 MARCH

ONLINE HEAVEN

THIS MONTH'S ROUND-UP OF THE GREAT AND GOOD ONLINE



AGAPE CHURCHES

www.agapechurches.org

Now here's an unusual way to get designers interested in religion. Agape churches have ministries throughout a number of US colleges and universities and clearly know how to market to a young, design-savvy audience. This is religion, 21st-century style. Hallelujah!



FANTASTIC FOUR

www.fantasticfourmovie.com

Another year, another blockbuster and massive marketing campaign. A sci-fi *Flash* intro sets the scene and the rest of the site is crafted with the production values you'd expect from a mega-budget movie. Whether the film's a hit or not, the site has caught our attention.



PHOTOS.COM

www.photos.com

Royalty-free stock image libraries are ten-a-penny, but Photos.com runs an interesting subscription-based service. You can either pay per download or subscribe to an "all you can eat" monthly service and download at your leisure... The choice, as they say, is yours.



PITCHFORK MEDIA

www.pitchforkmedia.com

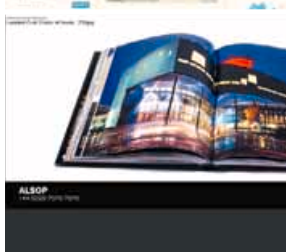
Pitchfork media is a leftfield music site that successfully marries great design with strong editorial. The website is jam-packed full of content to take in, but thankfully it's all easy to read, thanks to a really clean layout and sympathetic colour scheme.



BLAU GALLERY

www.blaugallery.com

If you're looking to buy the best in contemporary photography and illustration, check out the Blau Gallery. Featuring works from *Computer Arts* regulars Scott Hansen and Simone Legno, this is a great site if you're after a little something to brighten your walls.



ALSOP ARCHITECTS

www.alsoparchitects.com

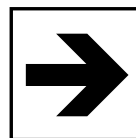
Visionary architect Will Alsop has hit the UK headlines with his controversial visions for a new Metropolis in the north of England. Take a look at the more grand designs on display on his ironically unassuming website.



The Mac mini: "the newest and most affordable Mac, ever".

Mac frenzy

MACWORLD Steve Jobs uses a keynote address at Macworld San Francisco to unveil some impressive new kit, but there's still no sign of the G5 Powerbook



Despite being noticeably light on announcements from the major creative software houses, Macworld

San Francisco, the early highlight of the 2005 Mac calendar, had plenty to get the faithful frothing at the mouth, as well as some shrewd tactical launches designed to strengthen Apple's market position and persuade as many PC users as possible to cross to the other side.

Away from the headline-grabbing iPod shuffle, the loudest cheers during Steve Job's Macworld keynote rang out for the budget headless Mac mini, costing just £339. Many believe this impressive piece of kit will be crucial to Apple's future success, specifically in terms of wooing iPod-using PC owners and cautious consumers previously put off by the cost of the Mac platform.

"People who are thinking of switching will have no more excuses," said Jobs. "It's the newest and most affordable Mac, ever."

But not everyone is convinced. Some market watchers are already warning that the headless computer is far more expensive than its light-weight price-tag suggests.

"I don't think it changes the world," said Brian Gammage, vice-president of research at analyst group Gartner.

"Although this is cheap for an Apple computer, it's still expensive compared to many PCs which come with a monitor, keyboard and mouse."

Aside from the hardware, Jobs also announced an overhaul of *iLife* and some interesting new features for *iWork* – among them a new app named Pages, which aims to help users create well-designed documents and appears to offer similar functionality to low-end, consumer-orientated graphics packages.

Other announcements lost in the iPod shuffle and Mac mini furore include an overhaul of *Final Cut Express*. The software has been given High-Definition Video compatibility and direct timeline support for Apple's recently released *Motion* application.

One announcement still notable by its absence, however, was our old friend the G5 Powerbook, which, according to the Apple fansites, is either way down the agenda or due to make an appearance during the second quarter of the year. Watch this space.

INFO www.apple.com/uk





Little and large

DISPLAYS Samsung takes the wraps off exciting monitor technology developments



With HP's recent moves to develop paper-like displays well underway (see *Computer Arts* issue 104), monitor giant Samsung has unveiled more technology firsts with both the world's largest plasma monitor screen and a five-inch (127mm) transmissive plastic TFT-LCD display for portable applications such as mobiles and notebooks.

Samsung's plasma behemoth measures a staggering 2.2x1.3 metres – some 255cm across the diagonal (near enough 100 inches!) – delivering a resolution of 1,920x1,080 pixels. Presuming your office or living room is big enough to accommodate it, the screen should be commercially available before this summer.

Samsung says that the technology for its five-inch screens was developed by replacing the glass



traditionally used in TFT-LCD screens with pliable plastic. Samsung predicts that the technology will appear in wearable displays, such as helmets, glasses and other fashion accessories.

INFO www.samsung.com

Rising from the ashes

FILM Special effects giant CafeFX pulls out all the stops for an amazing crash sequence



This month's predicted multiplex blockbuster – the Dennis Quaid-starring action adventure remake of *Flight of the Phoenix* – will feature stunning visual effects work courtesy of US CG wizards CafeFX.

Exploiting some back-breaking particle animation work, one of the movie's most exciting and visually impressive scenes – a terrifying sandstorm and plane crash sequence – proved particularly challenging. The CafeFX team relied on 3ds max, LightWave and a Simi Sati d.o.o AfterBurn plug-in to pull off the shots required.

"The sandstorm comprised some 59 shots, which CafeFX animators in Santa Maria and Santa Monica handled in tandem," says CafeFX's visual effects supervisor Scott Gordon. "One of our biggest challenges was to make the plane visible through a solid wall of sand. Director John Moore and vfx supervisor David Goldberg wanted to have a cavernous look inside the storm, with walls of cloudy sand. It needed to look claustrophobic and dangerous, yet depict all the important action taking place."

INFO www.cafefx.com

PASS THE SOURCE

SOFTWARE Quark throws open code for XTension builders



Quark's plug-in development community has been given a leg-up by the company with the introduction of QuarkXPress Markup Language (QXML) in a bid to make it easier for developers to create custom add-ons.

Quark's decision to open-source the QXML scheme will lead, it hopes, to the development of more third-party XTension modules to widen the use of QuarkXPress and meet the needs of designers using the software.

The QXML Developer Kit is available immediately to certified QuarkXPress XTensions developers.

INFO www.quark.com/partners/xtdevelopers/desktop/requirements.html

THE MONTH IN BRIEF

This month's creative winners and losers, plus how one graphic design student is paying his way through college



GOOD MONTH

New faces at the top Both Adobe and Macromedia have been busy recruiting for their top jobs. Shantanu Narayen takes up the presidential position at Adobe, while Stephen Elop becomes CEO at Macromedia.

How very non-PC Macromedia's web design technology will soon be coming to a digital display near you after embedded systems specialist Vibren signed a deal with the company to use *Flash* in a wide range of non-PC devices.



BAD MONTH

The suing of Nicholas Ciarelli

The creative industry's favourite tech company has suffered a serious sense of humour failure and sued the 19-year-old editor of Apple fansite Think Secret over its spot-on pre-Macworld product announcement scoops.

Software pirate is jailed US-based pirateer Kishan Singh has been sent to prison for 18 months and had computer equipment seized after he was found guilty of distributing pirated Adobe and Macromedia software worth an estimated \$120,000.

Qwerty's days are numbered The 130-year-old keyboard layout standard is under-fire from a US manufacturer which has developed an alphabetical alternative with just 53 keys instead of 101. The company claims the current universal keyboard design is outdated and was actually developed to slow fast typists down.



AND FINALLY

Watch this space Enterprising graphic design student Andrew Fischer from Nebraska has hit upon the idea of making an innovative move into marketing by selling the space on his forehead for advertising purposes to the highest bidder on eBay. Surely there are easier ways to make a quick buck?

SOFTWARE

3D ANIMATION POETRY IN MOTION

UK-based NaturalMotion has released *endorphin 1.6*, a 3D animation software package that delivers new and enhanced adaptive AI behaviours and a fully user-definable character. In addition, video plane back projection and camera data import will allow you to see your *endorphin* characters as they interact with live-action footage in real time. *endorphin 1.6* is available from \$12,795. www.naturalmotion.com

DIGITAL IMAGING STITCHER EXPRESS

RealViz has announced the release of a *Stitcher Express*, an app aimed at pro and amateur photographers to help with the creation of panoramas from digital images. *Stitcher Express* is fully compatible with both *Photoshop* and *QuickTime* and is available in French and English for 99 euros (excl. VAT). www.realviz.com

3D MODELLING ANOTHER DIMENSION

Start-up company Creative Dimension has sealed a successful licensing deal with Canon to sell its 3D Software Object Modeller (3DSOM) technology, which enables 3D models of a real object to be created from digital photos for use on websites or other multimedia projects. Creative Dimension Software Ltd has already released a new upgrade featuring an improved model generation engine. www.3dsom.com

MOTION GRAPHICS APPLE MOTION PLUG-IN

Motion graphics specialist Boris FX has announced that its *Continuum Complete 3.02* now supports Apple *Motion 1.01*. The release is available as a free download for existing users of *Continuum Complete Version 3* and offers over 150 filters. The plug-in is on sale now for \$795. www.borisfx.com

ASSET MANAGEMENT LOOK AFTER THE FONTS

Inside Software has upgraded its *Font Agent Pro* font management suite with release 3.0. New features include live searching and fast filtering of font metadata, user-configurable start-up sets and a new interface design. Available now for \$99.95. www.insider software.com



GLOBAL UPDATE In the first of our monthly reports from design gurus across the globe, Jim Coudal of Chicago-based design group Coudal Partners extols the virtues of the delectable *Futura*



There's a cool, mathematical feel to *Futura*, a typographic family that seems to go in and out of favour in the States every couple of years. It's amazing how a single, well-executed use can immediately ripple through the world of commercial and advertising design.

The outline version of a lighter weight of *Futura* in all-caps that was used in the main logotype for Wes Anderson's film *The Life Aquatic* is in its ascendancy at the moment. You find it on coffee cups, in magazine ads and on outdoor advertising boards, mainly in white against deep jeweltones. It certainly

has an "of the moment" feel. But what does this mean? Perhaps it's the ultra-ironic nature of *The Life Aquatic* that art directors are winking at, demonstrating their detachment from the work they produce, or maybe it's the utilitarian nature of the face, the way it can pick up a personality or voice from virtually any surrounding context.

Whatever the reason, *Futura* is totally inescapable right now, and the fact that I'm writing about it here in Chicago, means you're probably too late to use it without seeming like you've missed the boat.

INFO www.coudal.com



Caroline Phillips, academic audience marketing manager for Microsoft UK.

Dissolving the boundaries

COMPETITION Microsoft throws open its doors to student innovation

➔ Microsoft's Imagine Cup student competition, which recognises and rewards technology-connected innovation, is underway once again with prize money of \$215,000 up for grabs and global finals scheduled for Japan in July

This year's broad range of categories includes web design, visual gaming, 3D rendering and short film – with the theme "dissolving the boundaries between us".

"The ability to combine creatively the art and science of telling a story is a very valuable skill," says Caroline Phillips, academic audience marketing manager for Microsoft UK (pictured left). **INFO** www.imaginecup.co.uk

Tsunami disaster relief

APPEAL Design industry puts weight behind charity book project

➔ UK-based design agency iLovedust and the respected graphics publisher Die Gestalten Verlag have teamed up to produce a book to raise money for victims of the Asian tsunami disaster.

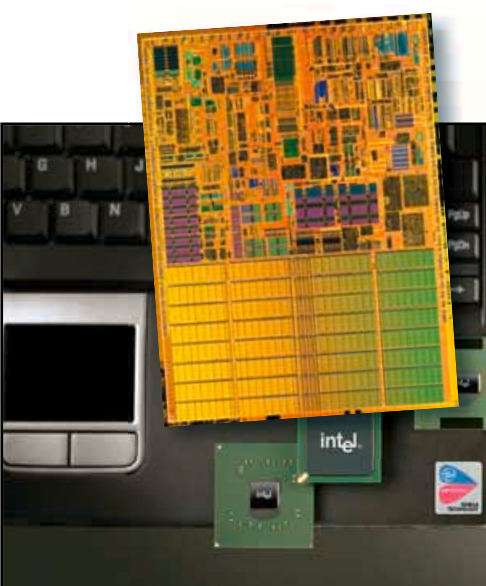
The book, currently entitled *Designed to Help*, will feature illustrations, design work and art from a huge number of designers already

lining up to help out, including the Designers Republic, Unit 9 and Tado.

"Our idea is to produce a book of graphic design, art and illustration and we have received an overwhelming response," iLovedust told us. "With this kind of support, we feel confident the project will be a total success."

INFO www.designedtohelp.co.uk





Graphics chips on the move

PROCESSORS Graphics capability of key Intel Centrino chip benefits from vital boost

➔ Intel has promised its much trumpeted and improved Intel Centrino platform for notebook computers will boost performance benefits for both home and commercial users, particularly for those dealing with graphics.

First launched in March 2003, the Centrino platform is made up of a processor, chipset and wireless

board. The new 915 Express chipset, previously code named Alvis, supports DDR2 (double data rate 2) memory, a new standard that promises to greatly improve speeds.

In terms of graphics, Intel says its own benchmarking tests have charted a 91 per cent improvement in performance. Just watch it go.

INFO www.intel.com

HARDWARE



STORAGE BIG UP LACIE

Storage specialist LaCie has unveiled the Biggest F800 RAID subsystem – new hardware offering secure storage for up to 2TB data. The four-bay tower supports RAID levels 0, 0+1, 5 and RAID 5 and features FireWire 800 and USB 2.0 interfaces for use on Mac or PC. The Biggest starts at £1,059 for a 1TB model. www.lacie.com/uk/products/product.htm?pid=10595

NOTEBOOKS CHEAPER VAIOS

Sony has refreshed its range of VAIO notebooks, with a number of models aimed at the lower end of the market. The FS Series feature multi-format double-layer DVD drives, nVIDIA GeForce graphics capabilities and a slimline design. Prices range from £899 for the VGN-FS115E to £1,344 for the VGN-FS195XP. www.sony-europe.com

ACCESSORIES CONTROL FREAK

Those who spend time watching DVDs and listening to music on their laptops are set to receive a gentle helping hand following the launch of Trust's Multimedia Remote Control NB-5100P. With an infrared range of seven metres, Trust's device costs just £20, but only works with PCs. www.trust.com



CAMERAS NEW FROM KODAK

Kodak has announced two new models designed to replace the DX7590 and DX6490. Both the 5-megapixel Z740 and the 4-megapixel Z700 come with a 10x optical zoom and 5x optical zoom respectively, and are available as bundled options with the new EASYSHARE Printer Dock Series 3. Both cameras are available next month from £180. www.kodak.com/go/easyshare

PRINTERS PRICEY BUT PROFESSIONAL

EFI and Xerox Corporation have launched the high-end Xerox Phaser EX7750 colour laser printer, which is targeted at graphic arts professionals who need to produce complex colour documents, fast. The bundled Phaser EX7750 system includes the EFI Fiery EX7750 colour server and Xerox Phaser 7750 colour printer for an estimated retail price of \$17,899. www.xerox.com

Web designers ignore disability rights

WEB DESIGN "Two-tier" internet develops as accessibility issues continue to lock out some users

➔ Web designers are still failing to take into account disability discrimination laws passed last year when building new sites, an accessibility testing group has claimed. SciVisum says the problem is getting so bad, a two-tier internet is starting to emerge, comprising websites working with multiple browsers and those designed only to work with Explorer 6.0.

"Web designers are building increasingly complex sites optimised to work on a specific browser, typically

Internet Explorer. Inevitably, the viewing experience is reduced with other browsers and so sites are increasingly locked down to work with limited browser types," said Deri Jones, CEO of SciVisum.

Jones says designers must develop sites for "lowest common denominator" browsers and meet the needs of all visitors. "The basic tenet of accessible website design is that sites should be usable by the widest range of users," he says. **INFO** www.scivisum.co.uk

GLOBAL EVENTS

Our round-up of design events worldwide

ASSOCIATION OF ILLUSTRATORS LOUGHBOROUGH, UK

9 March, £15-£35
Seminar entitled "How to Survive as an Illustrator", which provides in-depth information on all aspects of setting up a small business as a professional illustrator. Features details of how to promote your work, practical advice from art directors and the pros and cons of having an agent. www.theaoi.com

FOCUS ON IMAGING BIRMINGHAM UK

27 February-2 March, £6
Big annual imaging show, covering amateur and professional imaging, from capture through to output and beyond. Over 200 exhibitors and product launches galore – including all the very latest digital

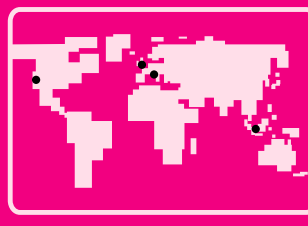
cameras and processing equipment. www.focus-on-imaging.co.uk

GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE SAN FRANCISCO, USA

7-11 March, \$150-\$1,575
Enormous gaming industry hoe-down, conference and networking event, staged "by gaming developers for gaming developers". Features over 300 lectures and panel discussions, plus an exhibition featuring current game development tools, platforms and services. www.gdconf.com

COMGRAPHICS AND ANIMATION SINGAPORE

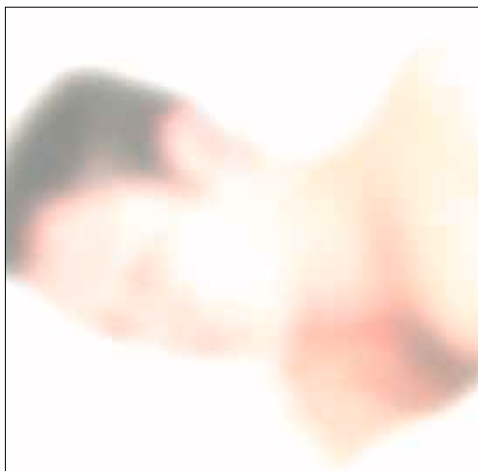
14-17 June
Asian international trade showcase for computer graphics and animation techniques, products and services



featuring a full conference programme and massive exhibition. www.biztradeshows.com/trade-events/com-animations.html

ADOBE LIVE BUSINESS DESIGN CENTRE, LONDON, UK

26-27 May
Following last year's successful event, Adobe is setting up camp in the Business Design Centre for two days of training, speakers and break-out sessions for the creative professional. www.adobe.co.uk



DESIGNER TALK GABE KEAN

Born Magazine

Computer Arts talks to Gabe Kean, art director of Born Magazine, a new online collaboration between writers and designers, and Preloaded's Rob Corradi about his artistic contribution to the project

Computer Arts: What is the thinking behind Born Magazine?

Gabe Kean: Our focus is on collaboration. As an organisation, Born's goal is to bring together talented people who don't normally mingle in the same creative circles. We push them to work closely together to create experimental arts projects.

CA: Who contributes to Born?

GK: Poets, short-fiction writers, copywriters, interactive designers, programmers, musicians, filmmakers, animators, and more. Most of the pieces we have published online are collaborations between designers and poets, but we are now expanding our list of contributors to produce projects for public art installations. Help Wanted: Collaborations in Art is the best example of this.

"Admittedly, it's an intuitive approach about who will work well together. It's very similar to match-making in the dating context"

CA: What's the main difference between the Just Born section and The Birthing Room?

GK: The Just Born pieces are collaborative interpretations of poems and prose, in which the art team will use the written piece as a starting point. In The Birthing Room, we pair writers and artists to work from scratch. They propose a concept, and everything is written and developed to support

that concept. This usually involves experiments in storytelling and with interactivity.

CA: How do you choose which artists will work with which writers for a project?

GK: We look at the artists' past work and then make combinations that we think will output something new and unexpected. Admittedly, it's an intuitive approach about who will work well together. It's very similar to match-making in the dating context. You put people together who you think will gel.

CA: What do you think the various digital media have to offer the storytelling process?

GK: Interactivity and rich media are the biggest factors. Our hope is that new art forms will emerge from this experimentation. Writers get a chance to

see their text turned into cinematic or participatory experiences, and artists have the chance to explore the still young web medium without boundaries.

CA: What plans do you have for the future as Born Magazine grows?

GK: Born has more plans to expand its reach beyond the World Wide Web. Help Wanted:

MAIN IMAGE (AND BELOW): Illustrations by Rob Corradi – his interpretation of Farah Marklevits' *How They Sleep*.



Collaborations in Art is our first step towards this. We see ourselves as an entity that will stir things up in both the literary and art worlds by bringing our ideas to a wider audience.

CA: Rob [Corradi], how did you get involved with Born Magazine?

Rob Corradi: I've had a long-held hope that I'd contribute a piece to Born Magazine one day. All the online people I've found influential have been involved at one point or another, so when I was asked to contribute, it was a real honour. I worked on interpreting Farah Marklevits' *How They Sleep*. The poem explores a romantic relationship in which the man and woman are not communicating. This breakdown affects them in different ways, and carries over into their sleep. I wanted to avoid representing the couple themselves in any way, so I could concentrate on the visions within their dreams.

CA: How did you go about creating your piece?

RC: The imagery was created mostly from my own digital photographs, retouched in *Photoshop*, with additional elements sourced via various stock libraries or rendered in *3ds max* where required. I used a fractal music program to generate the soundtrack and to give it a disharmonious sound. This helps to emphasise the characters' distance and conflict. The other benefit of fractally-generated music is that it's copyright free!

INFO For more information on the brilliant Help Wanted: Collaborations in Art, visit www.bornmagazine.org/helpwanted.

"My secret weapon—exposed."



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OPINION

I want that one

If you're the type of person who dribbles over new software and constantly updates your kit, whether you need it or not, it's hard to justify the expense

➔ When new stuff comes out for my Mac, I want it, even if I don't need it – or know I can't afford it for that matter. Whenever there's the slightest whiff of a system upgrade in OS X's Software Update panel, I check it every five minutes, and I'm proud to declare that I have one of the most up-to-date systems around. I always have the latest version of my core software: Adobe CS, Macromedia MX, Microsoft Office, even if that means file conflicts with users who are more leisurely about their upgrades.

It's the same with hardware. When the "cheese-grater-from-space" G5 came out, I wanted one, even though my G4 was doing a perfectly good job. So I invented an excuse. I announced to my wife, who is also a designer, that she could have the G4 and I would have a shiny new G5, because... I want one. "Are you actually dribbling?" she replied.

Needless to say, I got my way, just as I did with the first generation iPod, an iBook and wireless networking for my home. I should point out in my defence, though, that I do actually use these things. I always find some way of fitting them into my work flow.

This is why I'm normally in a state of great excitement when Steve Jobs makes a keynote speech, because you can bet your bottom dollar there will be new products or

software announced. This time it was Macworld in San Francisco (or iPodWorld as one commentator ruefully put it, indicating Apple's change of focus) and the time difference meant I could watch events unfold on my Mac at work. There was no live video stream, but I could read a transcript of what was happening on the Mac News Network.

"I can imagine my wife's face as I suggest we re-mortgage the house so I can buy more gadgets"

And what a keynote speech it was! Updates to *iLife*, a new *iWork* software collection, featuring new application Pages, *Final Cut Express HD*, Mac mini and the iPod shuffle. I wanted them all!

CHOICES, CHOICES

The one I'm most likely to get, however, is the iPod shuffle. It's cheap, no bigger than a packet of chewing gum and my first generation iPod has finally bitten the dust due to overuse. Before MacWorld I had been toying with the idea of an iPod mini, but my experience with my older iPod was that I

preferred to create a play list for the day and just play that. A fancy onscreen user interface was wasted on me.

I use Microsoft Word to open documents sent to me by email, but I prefer the simplicity of *TextEdit* and will often attempt to open Word files with that if I can. If I need something with a bit more visual oomph, I use *InDesign*. I can't help it; it's the designer in me. Trying to design something in Word is anathema to me, and I have to go for a lie down. However Pages looks very sleek indeed, and together with an upgrade to Keynote, it can only be a matter of time before I rush to the Apple Store on Regent Street and slap my credit card on the counter.

What I want most of all though, and what I'm finding hardest to justify, is the new Mac mini. We have Macs coming out of our ears, and I can just imagine my wife's face as I suggest we re-mortgage the house so I can buy some more gadgetry to clog up our home. But I really want one. I know that Windows users making a cheap leap from PCs to Macs are the real target audience, but plenty of Mac users will want one, too. My friend Rich rang me up the other day to see if he could use one as an email server. That's how keen he was to get one! I've made a mental note to try that excuse.

But budgets can only stretch so far, and at the risk of my wife's eyes narrowing and shooting me with death rays, I think the Mac mini will stay just out of reach. Unless I pour coffee in the back of her G4 tower... **arts**

Jason Arber is a designer and co-founder of www.pixelsurgeon.com. He can be emailed at jason@pixelsurgeon.com.



FORUMS

What do you think of the latest Apple kit? Tell us on our forum – visit <http://forum.computerarts.co.uk>.

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IN DEPTH

Where next for software pricing?

As the value of the US dollar plummets, software should be getting cheaper for us Brits, but it's not – and the vendors are trying their hardest to make sure we don't spend our money abroad. Why? **WORDS BY DOM HALL**

➔ One of the main benefits of the steadily declining value of the US dollar against other currencies during the past three years has been, for those based outside the US at least, the massive savings to be made on a wide range of products.

With one US dollar currently worth roughly 53p, that's a promise of huge savings for UK designers looking to save on the price of an upgrade of their favourite creative software package.

Unfortunately, it appears that UK punters are being forced to leave US websites empty-handed – and spend their high value sterling in UK web stores and reseller

outlets instead. The reason? The big guns simply don't want UK residents to pick up their products at US prices.

The situation is even blighting the hardware market, with the recent launch of Apple's Mac mini drawing particular criticism from disgruntled European and UK consumers. 10,000 punters felt so strongly about the price difference that they added their names to an online petition demanding fairer prices.

"We'd like to make an appeal to Apple on the pricing of the new Mac mini in the European Union," the petition states. "Based on the last long-term rate of exchange of US dollars to euros – which is 1.3293 on the spot market – both of the announced prices of the Mac mini in Europe, 489 euros and 589 euros, respectively, are much too high."

While Apple has responded to the petition in the UK by attributing prices to higher shipping costs and the need for a currency fluctuation "cushion", costs for the

software industry are obviously different, so how do the vendors justify the current regime? And what's the outlook for these price differences over the next six months?

HIDDEN COSTS

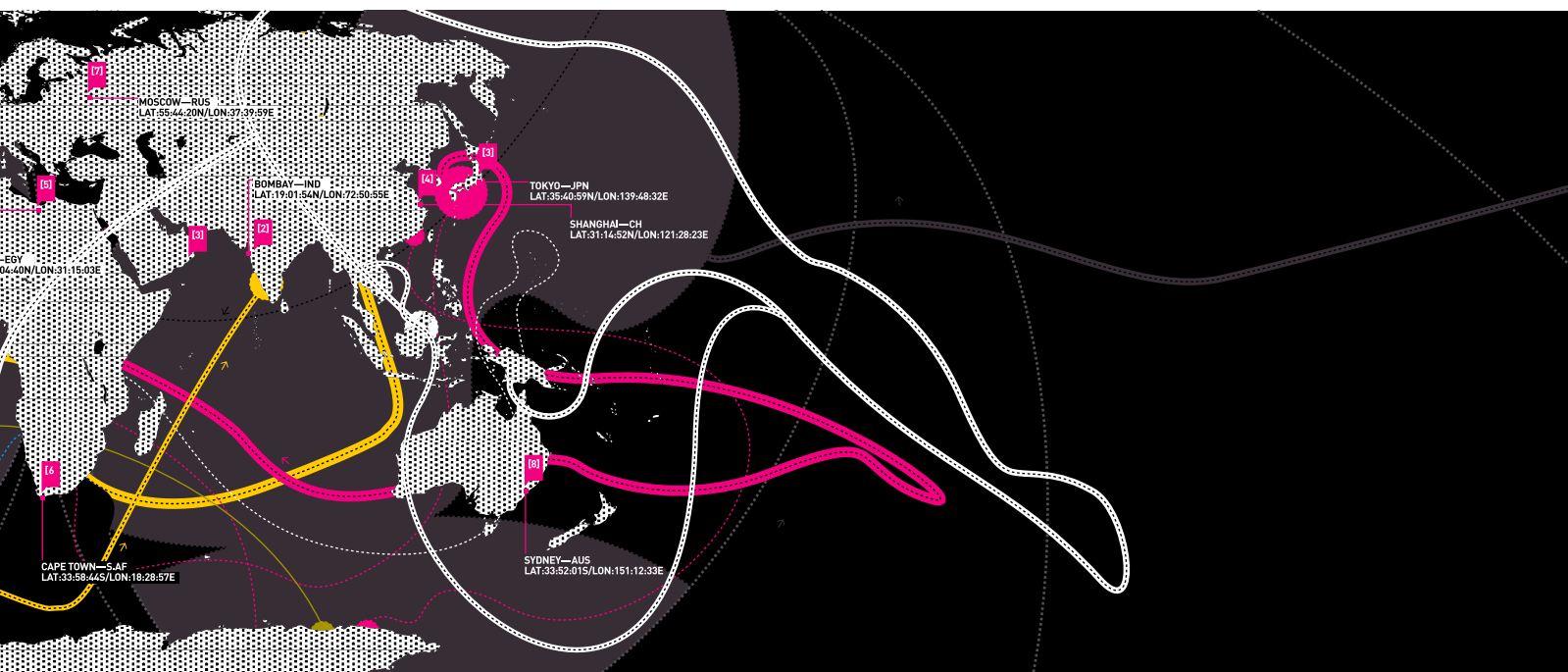
"Primarily, prices differ so much from territory to territory because the cost of doing business also differs," Quark's UK marketing director Gavin Drake, explains. "This includes staff costs, property prices, shipping and import duties, all of which can be substantial."

Drake argues that the considerable investment required to localise software across a multi-lingual territory such as Europe does much to bump up costs.

Jussi Arovaara, EMEA & APAC business development manager for Corel, echoes Drake's points. He too attributes high sterling and euro pricing for Corel's products to "market conditions".

"Most development is done in the US, but all the localisation which takes place is





carried out in the different markets in Europe. Our costs are very much tied to the local market and they are all higher than in the US,” he said.

At Macromedia, EMEA communications manager Sarah Mowatt points out that US prices do not include the routine VAT sales tax that is added in most European currencies, as well as special promotional pricing campaigns.

Fair enough perhaps, but why are the software vendors so keen to stop European punters buying directly from the US?

“In theory, it’s possible for a vendor to sell from the US to customers, regardless of

“A lot of European card companies will not cover users against fraud when used on US sites”

where they are in the world, but in practice it’s complicated,” says Corel’s Arovaara. “If you’re just selling within the US, things are easy, but once you start selling from the US to the EU, you have to deal with tax laws and customs regulations. A lot of European credit card companies will also not cover users against fraud when used on US sites.”

For Quark, the issue is a little less clear cut. Drake says European users “can buy”

software from the US webstore, but that “not all versions of *QuarkXPress* will run on all operating systems. For example, the US English version will not run on an International English operating system.”

Of course, there’s nothing to stop a UK-based punter buying from a reseller in the US, but the ever more localised nature of software highlighted by Drake may stop even this being an option.

DIFFICULT MARKET CONDITIONS

While experts predict a gradual correction in the US and sterling exchange rate over the next year, in the short term the chasm in relative pricing is likely to remain an issue. Arovaara believes price differentiation throughout Europe may level off in the future, as the technology used to localise software becomes more advanced, but he remains less confident about global pricing.

“There will be differences between US, European and Asian pricing for some time because the market conditions in those territories are so different,” he says.

Although it’s hard to have much sympathy for the powerful and dominant

software companies currently suffering at the expense of international exchange rates, the fact their positions and, more importantly, bottom lines are under fire goes some way to explain their eagerness to maximise revenue in as many different countries as possible.

A recent report from analyst group META predicted software prices across the board would decrease for the first time in over a decade during the next three to five years. This shift is being fuelled by the pressures of new application providers entering the market, the growing influence of open-source solutions, and increased use of offshore labour.

Add to this the billions of dollars of revenue being lost through piracy and it becomes clear that the software industry in general is definitely going to be keeping an eye on the pennies in the future, and is not going to let something as flimsy as currency fluctuations eat into its profits any time soon. **arts**

INFO

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Digna






A typeface developed for the public transport system of *Santiago*, which is now available to give direction to any design **for only £99.**



LIGHT REGULAR **BOLD HEAVY** SMALL CAPS
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**INFO**

Web: *Digna*, alongside a huge range of other exciting fonts, is available exclusively from the UnionFonts website.

Price: £99 for the family (nine fonts plus dingbats).

Info: For more information on UnionFonts, just visit www.unionfonts.com

FONT DESIGNER

Rodrigo Ramirez

Been to Santiago recently? Then you'll already have seen the slick work of this Chilean typographer

➔ *Digna* was designed by South American designer Rodrigo Ramirez as part of the new visual identity for the Santiago public transport system. The city needed a font that would work well in a variety of sizes, from large-scale signage through to small timetables – and *Digna*,

a clean, flexible and friendly font – fitted the bill perfectly. The sans serif typeface comes in nine weights, and features dingbats that include many of the symbols created for the transportation system.

South America is producing some of the most interesting type design in the world

right now, and Ramirez is a leading figure in this exciting new movement.

As well as creating his own fonts (check out the UnionFonts website for details), he lectures in type design at the School of Design at the Pontificia Universidad Catolica de Valparaiso, Santiago. **arts**



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COVER FEATURE

COVER ILLUSTRATION

DESIGNER

NAME: **DEREK LEA**

LOCATION: **TORONTO, CANADA**

URL: **WWW.DEREKLEA.COM**

HOW WAS IT DONE?

Derek created this cover illustration on a G5 using *Photoshop CS* and *Painter*. "I started with a simple portrait of a friend, as well as some background textures, shot with a Fuji FinePix S2 Pro," he explains. "I scanned in all the leaves using an Epson Perfection 3200 Photo scanner. To stop the lid crushing the brittle and dry leaves, I left the lid open and lay a single sheet of white paper on top the foliage. This enabled the scanner to calibrate properly, while also protecting the leaves."

The resulting image clearly demonstrates Derek's deft use of layers, channels and masks when it comes to creating each element. "I place the stack of layers for that element in a set and blend it into the main image by masking the set," continues Derek. "I repeat this method for each element until the image is complete."

While it's a technique he uses often, each composition remains quite unique. "Certain core techniques appear again and again only because they are absolutely essential for creating flexible compositions," he says.

TURN OVER TO GET STARTED WITH THE COVER TUTORIAL...





COVER FEATURE

COMBINE PHOTOSHOP AND PAINTER

Derek Lea gives the world famous green man a modern twist, using *Photoshop* to build up textured layers of hand picked leaves and then *Painter* to add a range of authentic aged effects

➔ You may not recognise the face in the leaves, but undoubtedly it is familiar to you, for the green man motif is very old and particularly abundant within architectural detail. You'll find the face in the leaves carved out of stone in columns and archways in some of the world's greatest cathedrals and churches.

So when on an autumn day last year I looked at the ground and noticed the beautiful leaves beneath my feet I was inspired to make my own attempt at recreating the green man. I'm by no means the only modern artist to

recreate this image, but the juxtaposition of scanned natural elements combined with an art form as virtual as digital image editing was just impossible to resist.

No-one knows for certain the meaning of the green man motif, but there is a huge amount of speculation that he represents the spirit of nature or the lover of the pre-Christian earth goddess. I took the word "goddess" as my cue and have changed the green man's gender this time around.

This tutorial will take you step-by-step through the skills you'll need to recreate the green woman pictured here. All the resource files you'll need to get started have also been included. So perhaps, in time, you'll see the green woman on the web and within the digital realm as often as her male counterpart appears in the tactile world.

Illustration and tutorial by Derek Lea
www.dereklea.com



➔ LAYERING TECHNIQUES

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TIME LENGTH

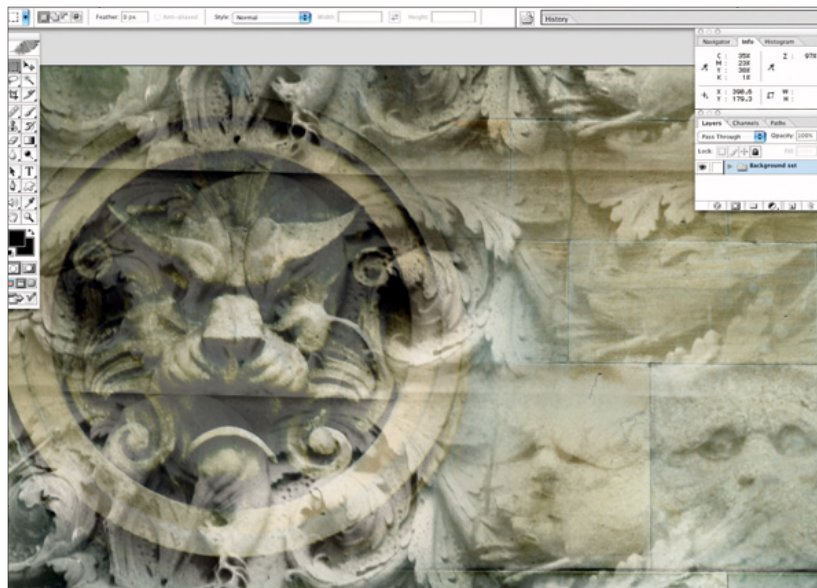
5 hours

INFO

Derek Lea is an award-winning illustrator and published author based in Toronto, Canada. His



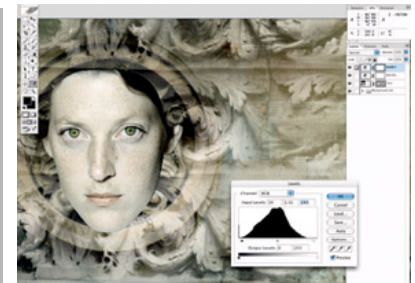
work includes disciplines as varied as traditional illustration, photography, 3D modelling, vector art and, of course, *Photoshop*. To view more of his work, visit www.dereklea.com.



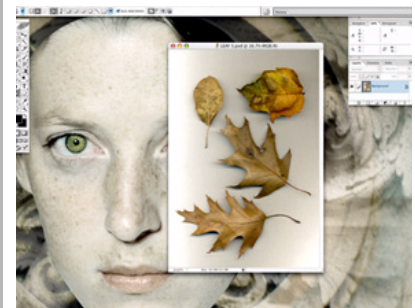
1 Open BackgroundLayers.psd from the cover CD. The image is made up of a number of layers, so, rather than provide you with a flat version, the layers within the set have been left so that the more inquisitive among you can check it out in more detail. However, if system memory is an issue, flatten the image before you start.



2 Open up the face.tiff file from the cover CD and drag the face image into the background file as a new layer. Position it over the lion carving at the left. Select the Pen tool and draw a closed path that surrounds the girl's face and the bottom of her ears. Make sure that you exclude her hair and neck from the path.



3 Choose Layer→AddVectorMask→Current Path from the menu to create a mask from the current path. Create a new Hue/Saturation adjustment layer, set the Hue to -6 and decrease the Saturation by 19 to minimise the yellow cast. Create a new Levels or Curves adjustment layer. Finally, tweak the curve's endpoints or use the histogram to increase the contrast.



4 A number of leaves have been supplied on the cover CD. At this point it's up to you whether you follow these steps exactly with the leaves provided or choose new leaves that appeal to you. Whichever you use the process will be the same. Open up a leaf file from the cover disc.



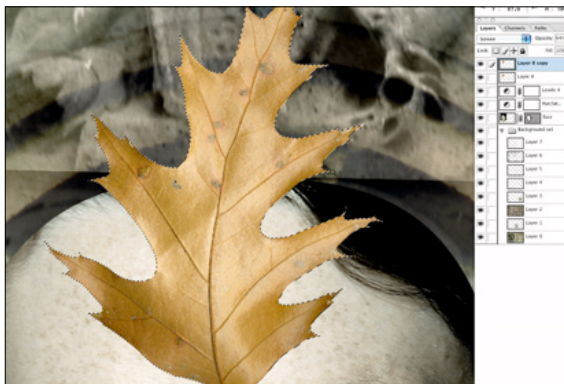
5 Use the Pen tool to draw a closed path around one of the pointed leaves and generate a selection from that path. Drag the contents of the selection into the working file as a new layer. Choose Edit→FreeTransform from the menu and resize, rotate, and position the leaf at the top of the girl's head.



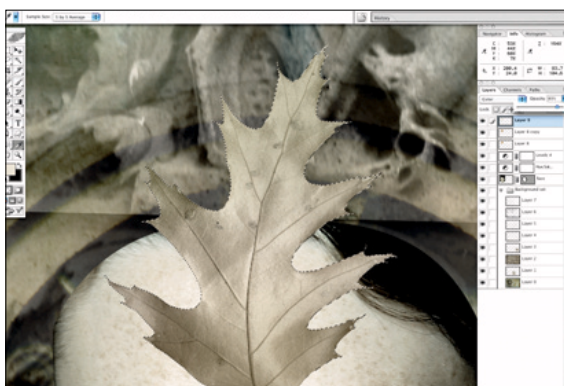


→ PHOTOSHOP • PAINTER

6 Duplicate the layer by dragging it onto the Create A New Layer button at the base of the Layers palette. Change the layer's Blending Mode to screen and reduce the Opacity to around 65 per cent. Now Control (PC)/Command (Mac)-click the layer icon in the Layers palette to generate a selection based upon the layer's contents.



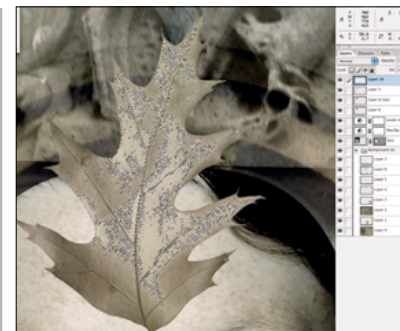
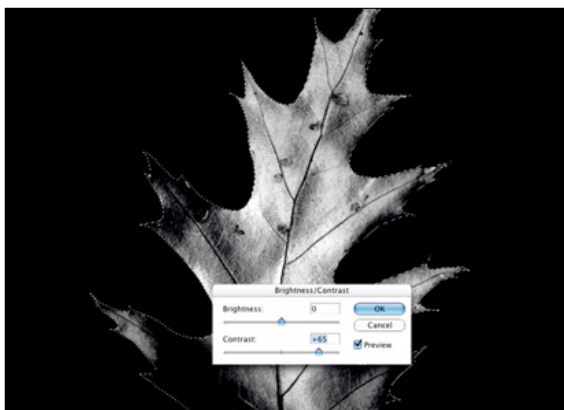
7 Create a new layer and change the Blending Mode of the layer to Colour. Next use the Eyedropper tool to click on and sample the colour from an area of her skin, specifying it as the current foreground colour. Fill the selection on the new layer with the current foreground colour before reducing the layer opacity a little.



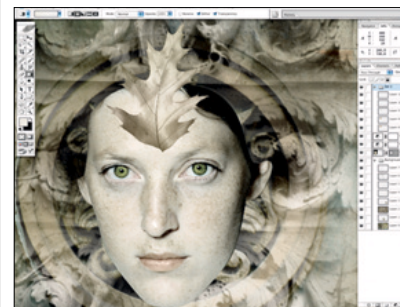
8 Choose your original leaf layer in the Layers palette, press Control/Command+A to select the whole layer and press Control/Command+C to copy it. Now Control/Command-click on the layer icon to generate a selection based on the layer contents. In the Channels palette, click on Create New Channel.



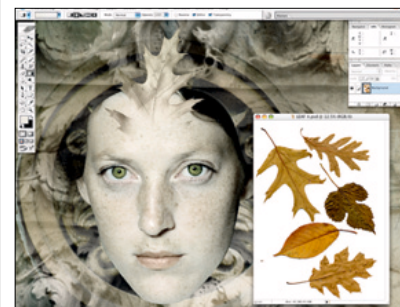
9 With your current selection active, hit Control/Command+P to paste your copied layer contents into the selection border. It is important that you follow this procedure exactly if the positioning of your channel is to match up with your layer contents. Go to Image→Adjustments→Brightness/Contrast from the menu to increase the contrast of the scanned leaf image.



10 Control/Command-click on your alpha channel's icon within the Channels palette to generate a selection from its contents. Now create a new layer in the Layers palette positioned above the other leaf layers and select the Gradient tool. Choose the Radial option and the Foreground to Transparent option from the Gradient Picker in the Tool options bar.



11 Sample a lighter skin colour as the foreground colour. Click and drag within your active selection to create a series of small radial gradients on the new layer. Press Control/Command+D to deselect the active selection. Finally, create a new layer set and drag the leaf layers into it, one by one, from top to bottom.



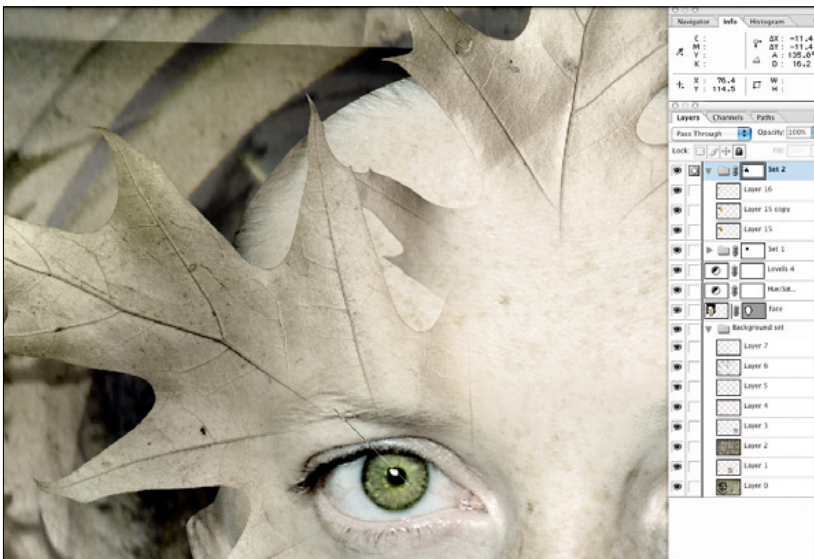
12 Click on the Add Layer Mask button in the Layers palette to add a mask to the set. Use the Gradient tool with the current settings and a black foreground colour to create radial gradients at the bottom of the leaf within the mask. Open another leaf file.

◎ SCANNING LEAVES

Some of the leaves I scanned for this image were pressed flat in a book and allowed to dry. Others were left to dry unflattened to create a great three-dimensional appearance and give the image a sense of depth. However, these three dimensions proved tricky when it came to scanning as closing the lid crushed the leaves and ruined their depth. To avoid this, leave the scanner lid open and place a sheet of white paper on top of your leaves. This will provide a clean background when scanning and leave your objects undamaged.



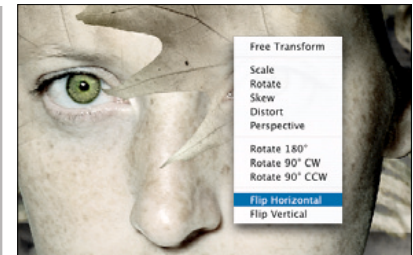
13 Use the Pen tool to isolate another leaf from the cover CD and bring it into the working file as before. You can now use Free-Transform to rotate, resize, and reposition it across the girl's eye. Change the Blending Mode of this layer to Luminosity. Duplicate the layer, change the Blending Mode to Screen and then reduce the opacity a little. Finally, generate a selection from the layer's contents.



14 Create a new layer with a colour Blending Mode and fill the selection with a foreground colour sampled from the girl's skin. Reduce the Opacity and deselect. Now create a new layer set and add your three new layers to it in their current order. Add a Layer Mask and use the same technique as before to blend the set into her face.

FILLING SHORTCUTS

You can fill the contents of a selection or a layer in *Photoshop* using the Fill option within the Edit menu, but there is a quicker way. By holding down the Alt (PC)/Option (Mac) key and pressing the Delete key you can fill the selection area or layer with the current foreground colour. Holding down the Control (PC)/Command (Mac) key and pressing Delete will fill the selection area or layer with the current background layer. You can invert the foreground and background colours by pressing the X key.



15 With your set selected, choose Duplicate Layer Set from the Layers palette menu. Use the Move tool to drag it over to her other eye. Choose Edit → Free Transform from the menu. Right-click/Control-click inside the bounding box and then choose Flip Horizontal from the pop-up menu. Finally, press Enter and the transformation will be applied.



16 Adjust the position with the Move tool and edit the mask using the Gradient tool if necessary. And there you have it. This simple process duplicates leaf layers, adds them to sets, masks the sets and duplicates them to create a leaf effect across the model's face. You can now open another leaf file from the cover CD.



17 To add more leaves to the face, repeat the same process of creating sets for leaf components until you are happy with the results. Bring in a diverse range of leaves and position them in front of and/or behind the other layer sets. Feel free to merge layer sets to keep the file size down. Just select a set and press Control/Command+E.



WHY FLATTEN?

Painter handles *Photoshop* layered files with ease these days. You can now successfully import *Photoshop* layered files into *Painter IX* with sets and editable masks intact. However, when you open up images with *Photoshop* adjustment layers such as Levels layers embedded, *Painter* will first need to deactivate them. You are warned when opening the image that the unsupported layer has been detected and you will be given the option to open the image without the adjustment layer effects. This is why it's easier to flatten your image before importing it into *Painter*.

→ PHOTOSHOP • PAINTER



18 Create some new layers in-between the sets and flattened sets with the Blending Mode set to Multiply. Use a large soft brush with a low opacity setting to paint shadows on these layers and you'll give the image a sense of depth. Now use dark colours sampled from within the image to create shadows. Once you're done, flatten the image.

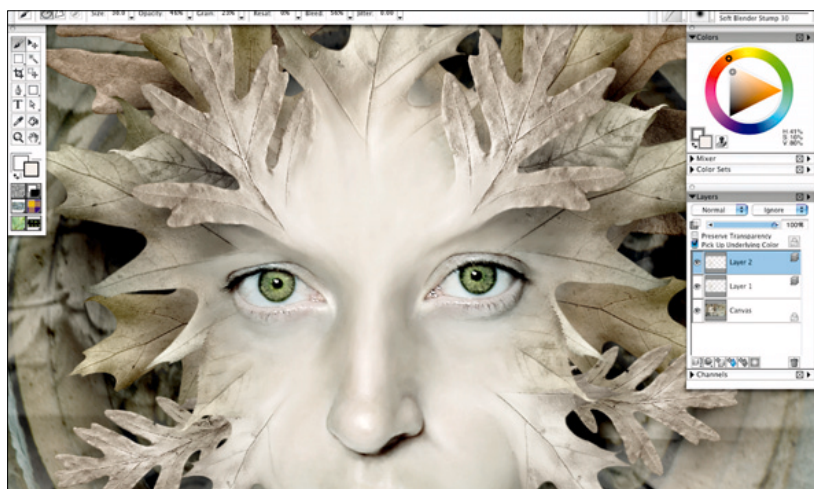
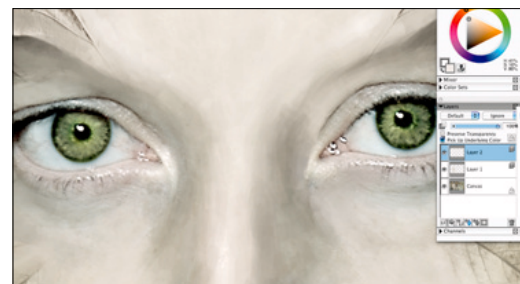


19 Save your file and then open it up in *Painter IX*. Select the Brush tool from the toolbox. Choose Artists' Oils as the Brush Category in the Brush Selector Bar and select Wet Oily Blender as the variant. Click on the New Layer button in the Layer palette to create a new layer.

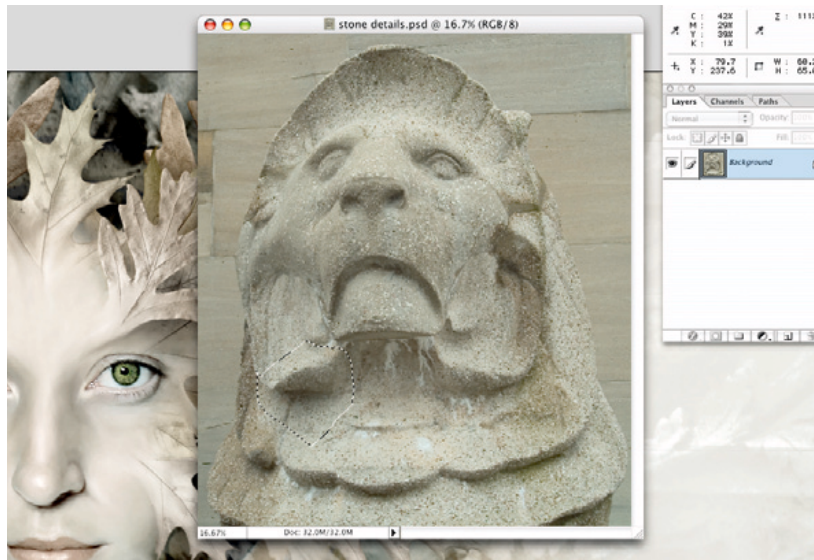


20 Enable the Pick Up Underlying Colour option in the Layers palette. Set the Opacity to around 20 and the Grain to about 16. Specify a size of your choice. Now zoom-in on an area of the girl's face. Sample a colour from her skin and paint a few strokes beside the sample area on the new layer.

21 Repeat this process all over the skin to help smooth the girl's skin and hide her freckles. Take your time and use plenty of small strokes, you don't want her face to look rough. Once you are finished, create another new layer in the Layers palette and ensure that the Pick Up Underlying Colour option has been enabled.



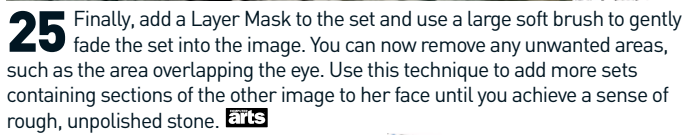
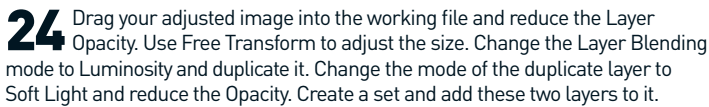
22 Choose Blenders as your Brush Category and Soft Blender Stump 30 as the Brush Variant. Use this blender on your new layer to soften all of the brush strokes you created on the underlying layer until everything is perfectly smooth. Vary the Size, Opacity, and Grain settings as needed until you achieve the look that you are happy with.



23 Open *StoneDetails.psd* from the cover CD and use the image to add a convincing rough texture to the girl's face. Look carefully at the whole lion image and choose a section of its face that you think will work best within your green woman image. You can now raw a rough selection around the area using the Lasso tool.

◎ SAMPLING COLOUR

The *Painter* toolset and workspace will seem familiar to those who have experience of *Photoshop*. There is also some familiarity within the keyboard controls and shortcuts. The best example in this tutorial is the temporary switch to the Dropper tool for sampling colour from your image. When you are using *Painter's* Brush tool, hold down Alt (PC)/Option (Mac) to temporarily switch to the Dropper tool. Release the key and you'll revert to the Brush tool.

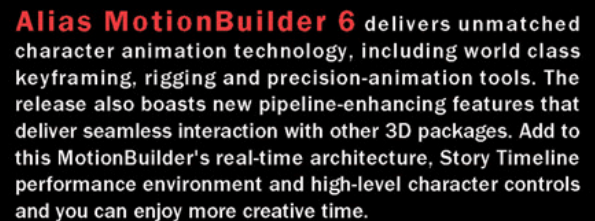


Once you've finished smoothing the brush strokes in *Painter*, save the file and quit. In *Photoshop*, open the layered file. The layers will remain intact and the colour and quality of imagery will be good.

A screenshot of the Adobe Photoshop CS2 interface. The main canvas displays a portrait of a woman's face, which is partially obscured by a mask made of overlapping, textured leaves. The 'Properties' panel on the right side of the screen is open, showing various settings for the selected layer, including 'Blend Mode' (set to 'Normal'), 'Opacity' (100%), and 'Fill' (set to 'None'). The 'Layer' panel on the left shows a single layer named 'Layer 1'.

the primary visual element and the area on the right that was lightened to accommodate the text. Flatten the image and in *Painter* add some final smoothing and paint strokes.

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The Superdeux team:
Sébastien Roux (left) and
Stéphane Huleux spend their
time formulating creative plans
to conquer the world.

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SUPERDEUX

Global graphics studio Superdeux boasts offices in France and New York as well as an international customer base, but there's no sign of flashiness or inflated egos. Superdeux has, it seems, carved a place for itself using just raw talent and the extraordinary potential of internet exposure

WORDS BY MIREILLE FRENETTE AND BENOIT GUERVILLE
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAMES WILSON





→ SUPERDEUX



→ Back in 1999, Sébastien Roux worked in a communications agency specialising in web animation, games and video clips. But he spent much of his free time experimenting with the opportunities offered by a new, exciting vector animation tool named *Flash*. It was then that he built himself a personal website to showcase his work, superdeux.com.

Initially, the site had no commercial aspirations, but Roux's images rapidly circulated across the web and, by chance, caught the eye of Peter Thaler, whose own website featured the most interesting graphic artists on the web. Thaler's site became increasingly popular, and, as a result, was transformed into *Pictoplasma*, the design bible for advertising executives that is now respected the world over.

Appearances in *Pictoplasma* and other such titles drew the attention of millions of people across the globe to Roux's inimitable style. And so, three years later, Roux left the communications agency to concentrate his efforts on Superdeux, which was already attracting work from clients. Roux teamed up with Stéphane Huleux who soon took charge of the studio's technical side together with web programming and sound design and the rest, as they say, is history.

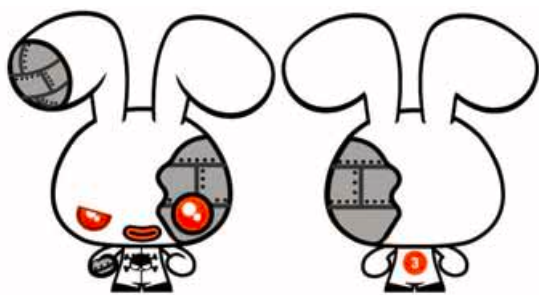
Artistic concepts

Whether for print, web, animation or toy creation, Superdeux's work is now characterised by a style that is simple and streamlined. "Our characters have very simple shapes, our images are very colourful, and everything is heavily tinged with fun and irony," says Roux. "We enjoy combining a cute design with a violent idea, perhaps even an aggressive one, and this mix produces something slightly off-centre that people seem to like."

Roux cites Japanese animé, street style, eighties culture and music as his main influences: "Music is very much present in the work we do. I often pick up and reuse phrases taken from hip hop tunes."

For the last two years, the company has spent time formulating creative plans to conquer the world. How? Superdeux develops individual artistic concepts and then attempts to apply them to everything it produces. This process usually starts with the creation of a small character, which is then liberally stylised.

Along with the character, a strong idea or a sentence is created, which forms a sort of signature or a slogan. "Once a concept has been developed, we work hard to come up with all the possible and imaginable ways it can be used," explains Roux.



THE STEREOTYPE TOYS

THESE STRANGE LITTLE TOYS, PACKED RANDOMLY IN CLOSED PACKAGING, ARE JUST ONE OF SUPERDEUX'S RECENT SUCCESS STORIES



These collectable toys were first designed as graphics, shown above. Roux then worked intermittently on the project over two years and eventually contacted toy makers the world over to pitch the idea.

A Hong Kong-based toy manufacturer loved the concept and subsequently agreed to produce the dolls. The first series was so successful that Superdeux created a second, for which 10,000 copies were

manufactured, including a limited edition sponsored by San Miguel beer.

"We usually develop two or three personal projects each year," says Roux. "We put in some work here and there, when we are so inclined, just for the fun of it, and only when the project finally starts to take shape do we start contacting manufacturers. We work in exactly the same way for our Unchi label."

"From there, we contact the manufacturers directly and, if we can work out a deal, they execute the project."

And that's really as complicated as it gets. For his toys and T-shirts Roux has taken the chance to send his concepts to perfect strangers: "I only knew the people I contacted [about his work] through their websites. I had used their site but had absolutely no personal contact with them."

Sending your own designs away to a toy manufacturer on the other side of the world may seem a little risky but, as Roux says, "The only thing I had to lose was my designs, and I thought it was worth it." And indeed it was. After several months of email communication, Roux finally signed a contract. "I guess it's not very

professional," he admits. "We had already agreed on the terms, but I didn't sign the contract until the toys were in production."

Superdeux's sales technique is thus remarkably simple. With a simple email contact, Roux can subcontract all his projects, from toy manufacturers or textile specialists, even if they are located halfway around the world. It's clear that much of the company's success comes down to the optimal use of internet resources.

From his office in Lille, a city in the North of France that few non-French advertising executives could locate, Roux attracts business from Asia, deals with his customers in the United States, and uses the internet to communicate with graphic artists worldwide.

ABOVE: Army Of Death, the second series of Stereotype collectable adult toys, features fetish characters from the first series (page 36) reincarnated into creatures of destruction.

RIGHT: It's all about advertising. Superdeux leaves its mark, and the Shikito face, on a New York Police Department car.

BELOW: Superdeux's work is heavily influenced by music, particularly hip-hop culture, as this character design for US DJ Freddy Fresh demonstrates.





→ SUPERDEUX



ABOVE: Superdeux created this stylish character design for the French electro band, Auto.

“The Superdeux touch”

Superdeux can now boast an impressive client list including huge names such as MTV, Universal Pictures, KidRobot, ITRangers, EA Sports and Sony. Another, Sony Ericsson, asked Roux to design a range of tiny pixel-art characters to be used as animation on phone screens.

“Working with Sony Ericsson was actually not too different from working with smaller clients,” says Roux. “They wanted ‘the Superdeux touch’, so we were completely free to create, perhaps even more so than with smaller clients.”

The characters, originally designed as low resolution *Flash* files, were then exported as animated GIFs before conversion to an image format compatible with mobile phones.

Technical matters proved a little more complicated during work for television network Comedy Central. “To make the short clips the

client asked for, I had to work with animators who used *After Effects*, an application I have yet to master,” says Roux. “At first, I was only asked to draw the characters and they said their animators would do the rest. But then I mentioned that I could do the animation myself in *Flash*.”

There were several technical issues – resolution, managing the frame rate and the colour space, for example. The animations were produced in *Flash* in RGB, and then transferred to *Illustrator* for conversion to EPS format in CMYK, where colours had to be tweaked. Everything was then exported to *After Effects*.

“The French have no guts”

In addition to the publicity gained from *Pictoplasma*, Superdeux has an agent responsible for drumming up international business, particularly in the United States and Japan. Roux also keeps busy as creative director of Thunder Dog Studios (www.thunderdogstudios.com), a New-York-based design company, so he regularly travels to the States to work on location for a few months at a time. Being there gives him the opportunity to make new business contacts for Superdeux.

While this international experience has increased the studio’s prestige, Superdeux, paradoxically enough, has virtually no French clients. “I guess our style just doesn’t suit them,” Roux concludes. “They have no guts,” adds Huleux, smiling.

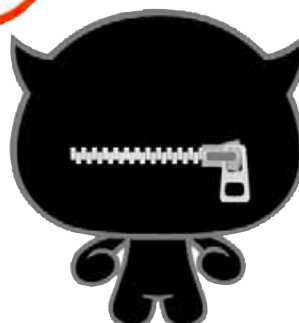
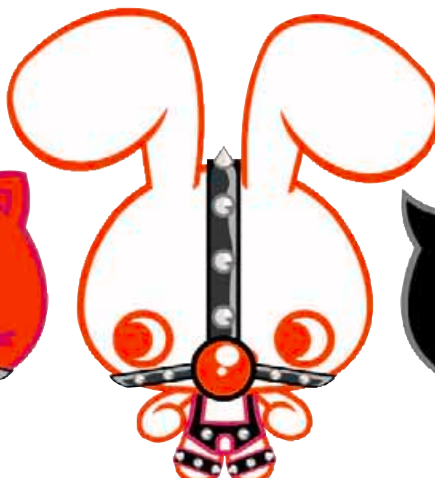
When asked what has been his most surprising experience, Roux immediately states that it’s disembodied



Shikito, the happy-faced character, is a logo designed by Superdeux for Bullshit, a creation under the Unchi label, which Superdeux is currently developing to promote the personal creations of Superdeux and their friends.



Another characteristic design for the ever expanding Unchi/Superdeux identity.



BELOW: Be My Slave was the first series of Stereotype toys created by Superdeux. “We enjoy combining a cute design with a violent idea,” says Sébastien Roux.

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→ SUPERDEUX



LEFT: Meet Dunny, a new figurine created by Superdeux and distributed by Kidrobot.

communication via the web that he finds the strangest. "There have been times when I have worked for months with a person before meeting them face-to-face. I find this manner of working increasingly annoying. I miss the human contact."

The future

Superdeux aims to substantially reduce its "made-to-order" jobs by developing its personal concept work. "Ideally," says Roux, "we'd like large corporations to contact us and say "we would like you to do some work for us, but we don't really know what". From there, we could freely develop an entire range of products."

To achieve this honourable goal, the team works by relatively modest means. Roux won't be parted from his portable Sony VAIO and Huleux works on a PC he put together himself. Of course, their favourite software is *Flash*, but, at times, they also use *Illustrator* and *Photoshop*.

Right now Roux and Huleux are launching a parallel label to Superdeux, Unchi (the Japanese word for poo). "[Unchi] is intended to host all of our artistic creations as well as the ones from the people we love," Roux reveals. "That way we can do exactly what we like and become masters of the universe which is, of course, our secret objective." **arts**

ABOVE RIGHT:

Superdeux's creative director Sébastien Roux admits that he likes to use advertising industry lingo to create funny and provocative pieces.

RIGHT: Translated, this piece simply shouts the message, "Eat hedgehog, it's so good!"



SUPERDEUX Q&A



NAME: Sébastien Roux (left)
ROLE: Creative director, designer and animator

INSPIRED BY: Music, advertising and art. Combining music with visuals is important, it's the best way to communicate emotions and is probably what inspires me most.

FAVOURITE DESIGNER/ILLUSTRATOR: Murakami, Warhol and the Designer's Republic. All the artists and designers that I like associate art with "marketing", which is a process I'm interested in.

FAVOURITE WEBSITE: www.123klan.com because they're good friends, www.freshnessmag.com for the info on art, sneakers and toys and www.kidrobot.com as that's where I shop.

NAME: Stéphane Huleux (AKA TEPAT)
ROLE: *Flash* developer, web programmer and sound designer

INSPIRED BY: PlayStation, yugop and moock (for *Flash*), d-i-r-t-y and nuloop (for music).

FAVOURITE DESIGNER/ILLUSTRATOR: I love Chickfree, rinzen and eBoy for their simplicity and graphic efficiency.

FAVOURITE WEBSITE: I often visit www.computerlove.net (for the links).



COMPANY INFO

For more information about the Superdeux team, and what they're up to now, visit www.superdeux.com or email info@superdeux.com.

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BETTER CHARACTERS

The Pocket Laboratories team, the brains behind the brilliant morejamsandwiches.com, explains how best to adapt your *Flash* knowledge to master character animation, and draw attention to your work on the web

DOWNLOAD

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Click here to download the files you need to complete this tutorial

TIME LENGTH

2 hours

INFO



Pocket Laboratories is a London-based

company that produces design, animation and illustration to bring a fresh, fun and progressive outlook to the new media, print and television industries. Visit www.pocketlaboratories.com to find out more.

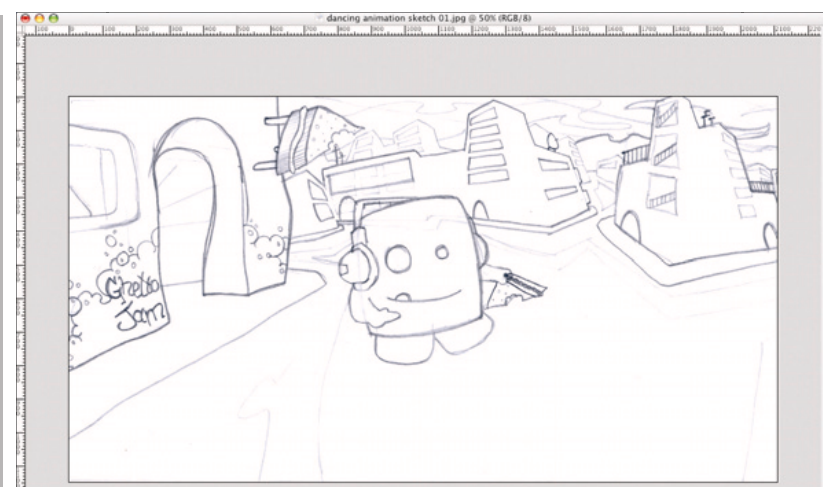
There's a huge emphasis on interactivity across the internet these days. Eye-catching, distinctive, interactive characters can be a valuable addition to any website. So if you are looking for an entertaining interruption to your day-job, some odd little web characters might just be the perfect distraction. Whether they exist in an interactive animation or an addictive little game, first-rate character-based websites gain cult and mainstream followings on the net and are a great way to draw attention to your web design work.

The secret to creating a successful interactive web character lies in the balance between fun and reality. No matter how insane or unreal your character becomes, you will reach a greater level of popularity if you add perfect mannerisms to bring that character to life, to build on the relationship between your character and the user.

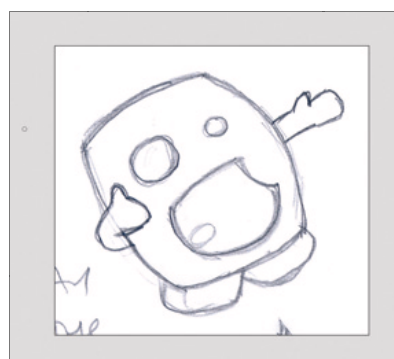
Interactive character-based sites can entertain and educate, there's an open opportunity to charm children and adults alike. Characters can be produced in an endless array of styles and, if created skilfully, add a magic element to a website, be it corporate, conventional or contemporary.

This tutorial will teach you how to adapt your *Flash* knowledge to master character animation. Step-by-step you will learn how to take a character idea through the process of design, artwork, animation and interactivity, essentially bringing your character to life. The final product will be a fresh and interesting animated character with which the user can interact fully and directly.

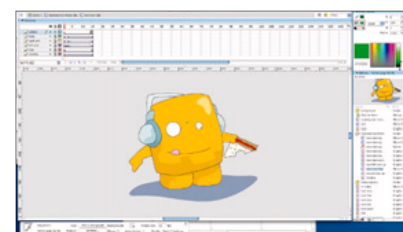
Illustration and tutorial by Pocket Laboratories
www.pocketlaboratories.com



1 Start by developing your character using some good old pen and paper. This may seem old fashioned, but it is important that your character is likeable and this preparation will help to give your character the originality it needs to stand out from the rest.



2 There are some important basics to bear in mind when designing your character. It'll need an appealing body-shape, clear and simple arms and legs, and a characteristic yet simple face (whether it's cute, dark or outrageous). As soon as you start to animate the face and limbs you will be thankful they were kept simple.

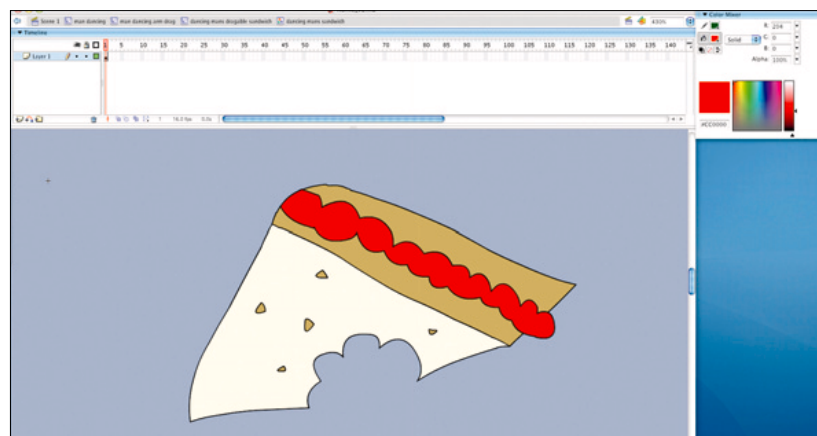


3 When developing your character in *Flash*, ensure you keep each element on a separate layer right from the start. This will make the animation process much easier. Generally, you should use a new layer for the body, each leg, each arm, the head and then different layers for the eyes and mouth, too.

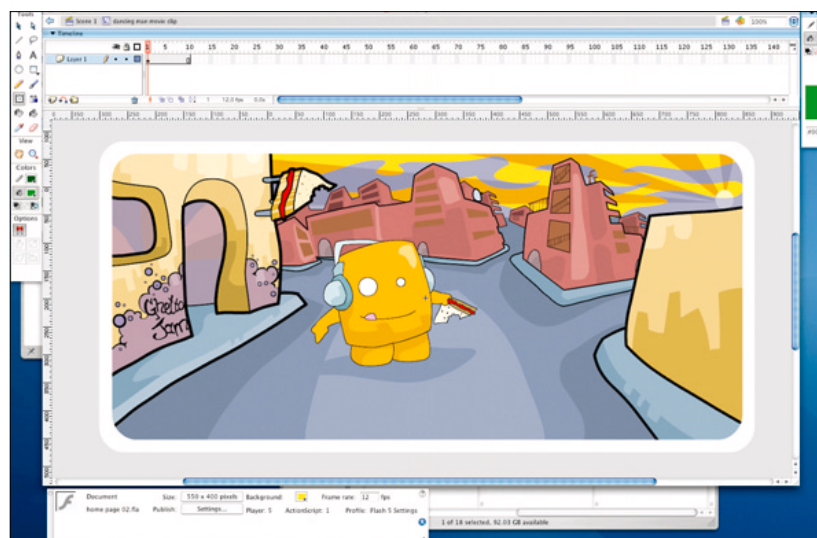




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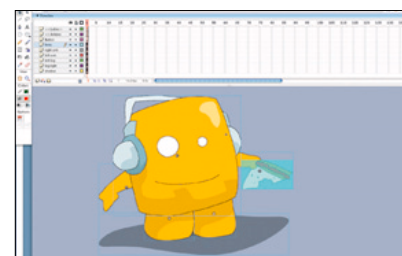
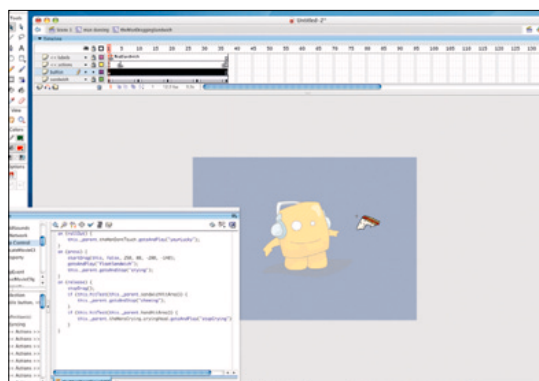


4 Uncomplicated and understandable interactive props are always effective. For this tutorial the prop will be a jam sandwich. The user will be able to interact with the character and jam sandwich individually and then make them interact with each other.

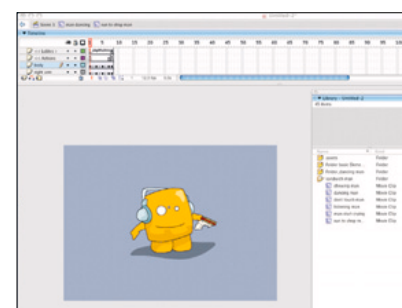


5 A simple background can add so much to your scene and create a sense of space and depth within your web creation. When colouring the background, props and character bright colours are generally best, but it pays to steer slightly away from the primary colour palette for a fresher appearance.

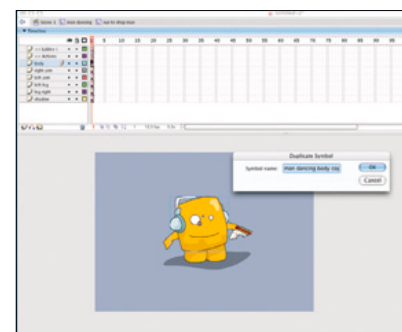
6 There are several movie clips of the sandwich, each with a different set of actions depending on what the character is doing. For example, the sandwich the character holds while dancing is a different movie clip to the sandwich the user drags around the screen while they interact with the website.



7 Turn all the character elements (legs, arms, eyes, head and tongue) into graphic symbols. This will allow you to animate each element separately. Drag-select the entire character, turn it into a movie clip, and name it "Dancing Man".



8 Duplicate the Dancing Man movie clip five times and name the clips Don't Touch Man, Crying Man, Chewing Man, Run to Shop Man and Listening Man. These movie clips will each be made into separate animated sequences. Place an actions layer and a labels layer at the top of each movie clip.



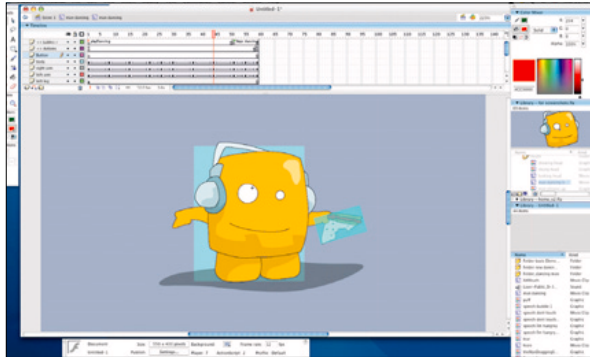
9 Within each movie clip the animation will take place within the head while the arms and legs stay still. Go into each of the six movie clips and duplicate the head, renaming it accordingly (Dancing Head, Don't Touch Head, Chewing Head etc).

INSPIRATION

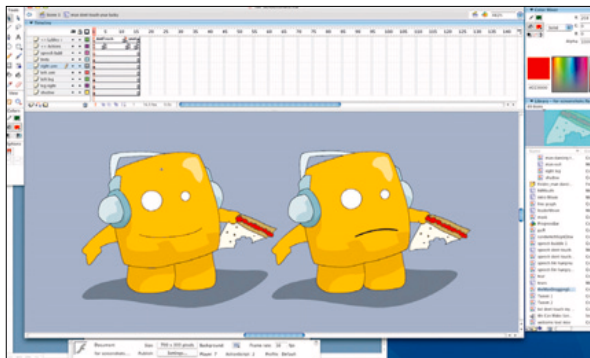
If you need some inspiration when designing your new character, take a look at other web characters, comic book characters and animated characters on TV. Concentrate on what makes them likeable and appealing. Is it the body shape, colour or facial details? www.pictoplasma.com is a priceless resource. The company publishes books based on fresh character design and also holds international conferences on the character animation.



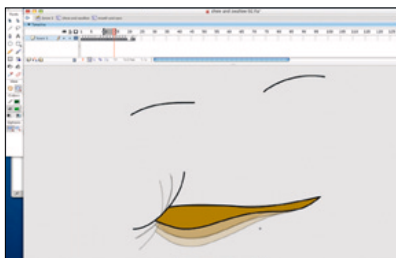
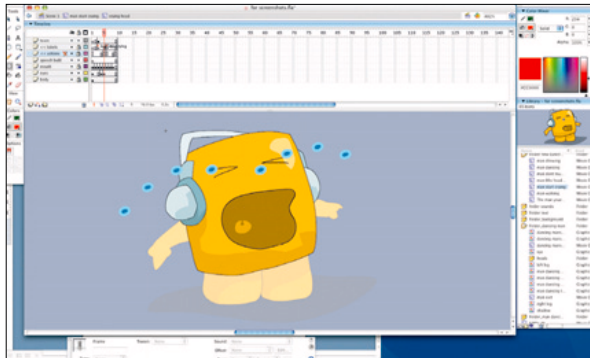
10 Dancing Man. This character will need to loop, so it is important that the first and last frames are exactly the same. Think through how it should move, taking into account its size and shape. Now Motion Tween the separate body parts in order to obtain the right dancing movement.



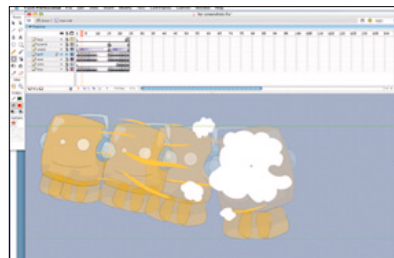
11 Don't Touch Man. Now animate a sequence where the character changes from a happy expression to an unhappy expression and back again. Try playing around with different facial expressions, mouth and eye shapes as well as the character's general posture.



12 Crying Man. To achieve a more natural reaction, animate a transition sequence to go from unhappy to crying, to looking unhappy again. The crying sequence should be a three to five frame loop that will repeat continuously until another action takes place.



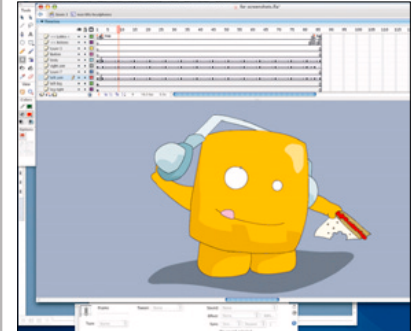
13 Chewing Man. Use frame-by-frame animation to create a more realistic movement than you could achieve with tweening alone. Use the Onion-skinning tool to double check you have created the correct movement from one frame to the next.



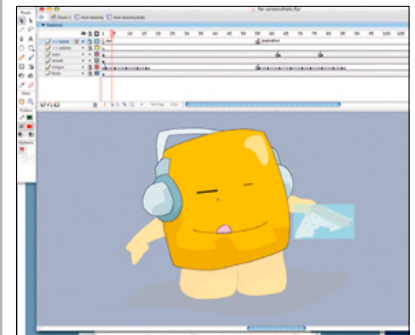
14 Run to Shop Man. Now that he has eaten his sandwich your character will need another one. In the "run to shop" sequence use clouds of dust, movement lines, and alpha transparencies of the character to create the illusion of fast movement.

BEFORE YOU START

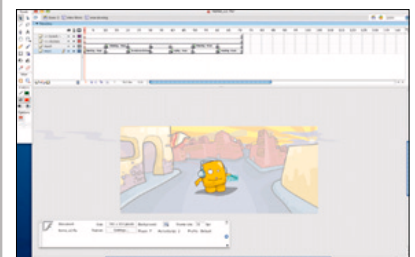
Plan how your character is going to move before starting your animation and be sure how it will interact before you start scripting. Keep your library tidy while you work by placing all of the symbols you create into folders with relevant names. This will save time when you try to find them again later.



15 Listening Man. In this movie clip the user interacts with the character directly rather than involving the sandwich. Create a short transition sequence where he lifts his headphones followed by an animated loop of him dancing. Finish off by making him put his headphones back on.



16 Add small characteristic touches such as blinking and lip licking to bring your sandwich man to life. Placing animated elements within the scenery will also add interest. Try animating the clouds, switching street lights on and off or maybe even adding background characters.

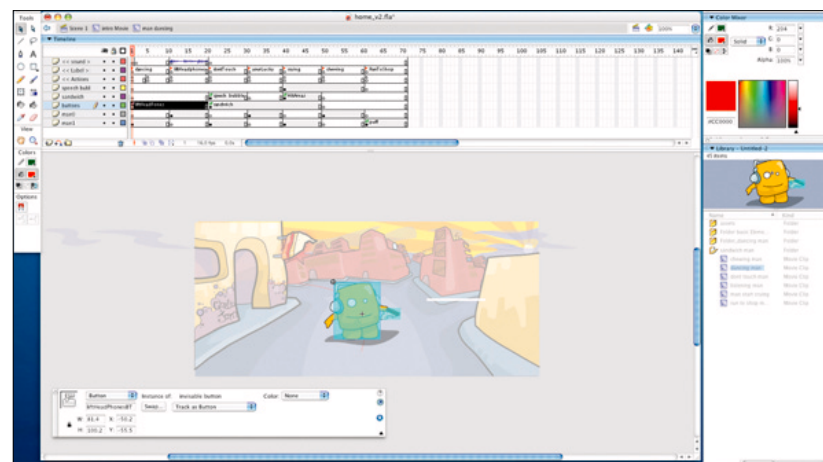


17 Create a new movie clip named "sandwichMan". Drag all six movie clips from the library onto the timeline in order and make sure that each movie clip is ten frames long. You will need to align all of the characters so that they are placed in exactly the same position on the stage.

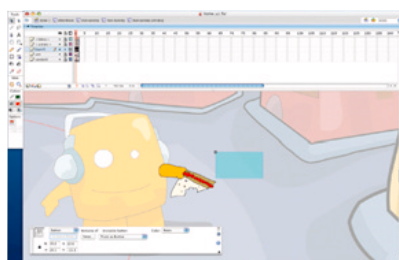




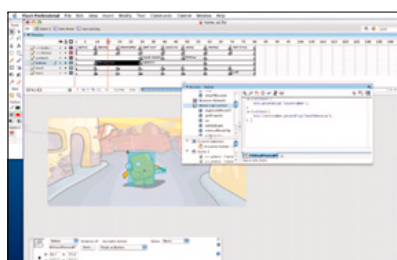
→ FLASH MX



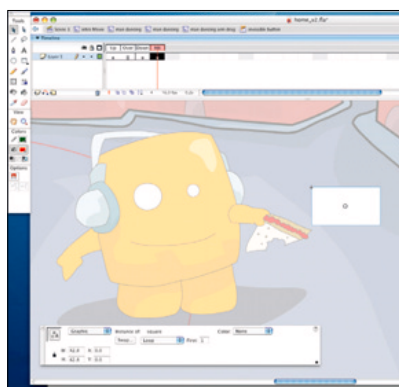
18 Select the labels layer and place a label at the first frame of each clip. Place a “stop()” action in the same frame on the actions layer. Give each movie clip sequence a relevant instance name – if the movie clip name is Dancing Man call the instance name “dancingMan”.



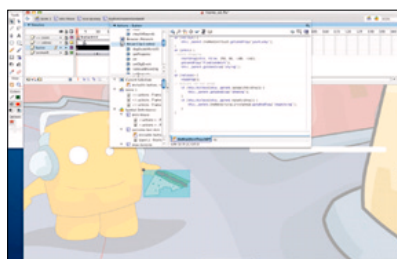
19 Drag the sandwich symbol from the library and make it into a movie clip called “draggingSandwich”. Place an invisible button on a separate layer. This will contain the action script that will allow the user to drag the sandwich around the screen and interact with the character.



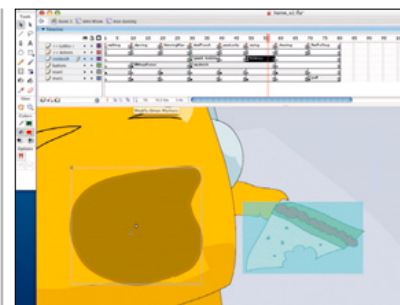
21 To make the character lift his headphones when rolled over, drag an instance of the invisible button onto a new layer in the sandwich man timeline. Add actions telling it to go to the “listeningMan” label when the users rolls over it and back to the “dancingMan” label when they roll out.



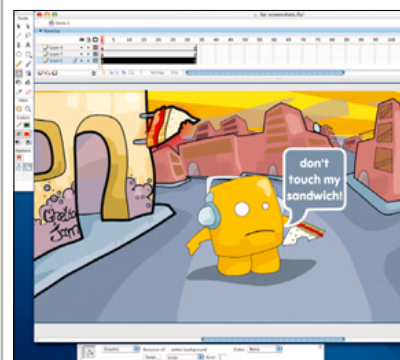
20 Most of the sandwich man’s actions will be contained within an invisible button. To create this, draw a white square and convert it into a graphic symbol called “White Square”. Transform this into a Button symbol called “Invisible Button” and place the square in the hit state only.



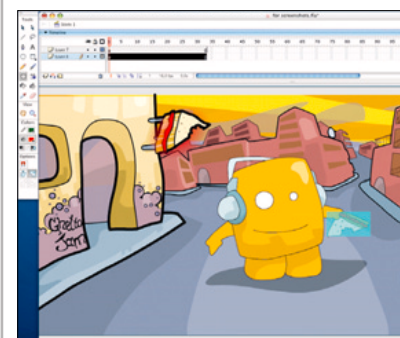
22 For varied interactivity you will need a series of actions attached to each of the sandwich’s instances. For example, the sandwich has to know what happens when the user rolls over, rolls out, presses, starts dragging and stops dragging or collides with another movie clip.



23 The actions for the sandwich have a collision test, which allows you to test if the sandwich has been released in the mouth or hand. Both the mouth and hand will need a hit area to detect the collision. These hit areas are created from invisible buttons converted into movie clips.



24 Add speech bubbles to help the user interact with the characters. When you take the sandwich, a speech bubble should say, “I want my sandwich”, prompting the user to give it back. The speech bubble should be a movie clip that plays as soon as the character starts to cry.



25 Once the sandwich man has started to interact with his sandwich, try to introduce some props of your own. Add other characters to the scene and make use of his other body parts. You could also put into practice the skills you have learned while creating character-based games. **arts**

◎ YOU SAID WHAT?

It’s worth taking some time to add //comments throughout your action script. Your scripting may make perfect sense to you when you are writing it, but come back to the same script a few weeks later and you may end up spending time trying to understand why on earth you wrote it that way. Making comments will save you time and make your file much easier for someone else to understand.

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SHELL BRANDING

It's a familiar sight on garage forecourts the world over, but the rule-breaking Royal Dutch/Shell "Pecten" hasn't always been so striking, as Ed Ricketts finds out

© SHELL LOGO REPRODUCED WITH THE PERMISSION OF SHELL BRANDS INTERNATIONAL AG

➔ Multi-national corporate logos tend to be pretty obvious beasts. If they're not simply a stylised version of the company name – Microsoft, HP, IBM and BBC, for example – they're often derived from the name itself, such as the world-famous "golden arches" of McDonalds.

Some, though, dare to be different. Nike's "swoosh" logo and the Coca-Cola

emblem are two fine examples. To be successful, it seems that a logo must neither be obviously connected to the business, or even feature its name.

The Royal Dutch/Shell Group logo is instantly recognisable to millions of people worldwide, yet on the face of it breaks all these rules. Why, for instance, should a petrochemical firm feature a shell at all?

Its origin dates back to 1833, when Marcus Samuel and Co. was born. Samuel imported seashells to collectors in London – back then seashells were much in demand.

In 1891, while collecting shells near the Caspian Sea, Samuel realised it would be far more lucrative to export lamp oil to the Far East. Thus, in 1897, the Shell Transport and Trading Company was launched.

Work in progress

The original logo, created in 1900, was a rough representation of a mussel shell. It wasn't until 1904 that the familiar scallop design, or Pecten, was first used.

A slight redesign occurred in 1909, although this Pecten was equally unwieldy. The same went for the 1915 version, though its shape was somewhat simplified. This was also the year that the previously monochrome logo began to incorporate its characteristic red and yellow colouring.

Again, the precise reasoning behind this chosen colour scheme has been lost to time. The most commonly quoted story? When the Shell Company of California first began to build service stations, it needed to compete against other companies. Bright colours would help to attract the customer, without offending the

Californians. Since many of the state's original settlers were Spanish, red and yellow – colours traditionally associated with Spain – were chosen.

Whatever the motives, these colours stuck, but over the following decades the logo underwent subtle changes. The name of the company was added in 1925 as the Pecten became ever more simplified.

But by 1967, Shell had decided that the logo was too difficult to distinguish from a distance or in poor lighting. A major redesign was needed, and Raymond Loewy was the man to do it.

"The father of industrial design"

By then, Loewy had already made himself a name as "the father of industrial design". Born in Paris in 1893, he later joined the French army and fought in World War I, before settling in New York in 1919. He started his career as a window dresser for stores such as Saks and Macy's, but soon progressed to fashion illustration and started his own business in 1930.

As the effects of the Great Depression subsided, Loewy realised that Americans were clamouring for more stylish products in all areas of their lives. He designed and redesigned fridges, trains, cars, buses, packaging, logos and even cigarette packets, including the famous Lucky Strike box. One thing he didn't create, however, despite popular misconception, was the classic Coca-Cola bottle, although he did admire it. The bottle was in fact invented by the Root Glass Company in 1915; Loewy's redesign in 1954 simply made it more streamlined. ➔

THE LOGO: 1900 to 2005



1900



1904



1909



1930



1948



1999



1955



1961



1971



1995

HISTORY OF THE SHELL ICON

After the initial simplistic mussel shell design was abandoned, the logo's shape remained similar from 1904 onwards. However, with each redesign the Pecten became ever more symbolic and simplistic, moving away from its almost photo-real origins. The company's name first appeared in 1948, was moved away from the central image in 1971, and was eventually removed altogether in 1999 when the logo became iconic enough to render it unnecessary.



A flamboyant and relentless self-publicist, Loewy had a penchant for producing clean, economical, yet elegant products. It took four years to create and test countless prototypes, but ultimately, Loewy took the ongoing simplification of the logo to its logical extreme. He reduced the number of ridges on the Pecten from 13 to seven, and did away with the lower ridges. The crenellations on the shell's edges were also removed, replaced with a simple semi-circular outline, which has since been considerably emboldened. Perhaps most significantly, he moved the word Shell from the Pecten itself to beneath the logo.

This redesign was so successful that the company has used it ever since. By the late nineties, the image had become sufficiently iconic that Shell was confident in removing the text altogether. The red and yellow colours alone, especially when combined with the distinctive shape, scream Shell and thus the Pecten fulfils the ultimate role for any logo: immediate, instinctive brand recognition.

A cultural symbol?

For illustrator John McFaul, the Pecten is both a symbol of childhood and a design triumph. "As a kid I remember sitting in my Dad's Citroën as he filled up at a Shell service station," he says. "I always preferred the yellow and red logo to the greens of BP. BP was more of an 'institution' – very gentlemanly but definitely not as approachable."

"It works on a number of levels," says illustrator Derek Lea. "First, the colour is strong. You could put it against a dark or light background which makes it really versatile for ads and signage. It is also simple enough to work for very small reproductions, such as coupons or key chains."

Lea concludes: "The logo doesn't look dated to me. It has become a fixed cultural symbol, and I really hope they don't change it." **arts**

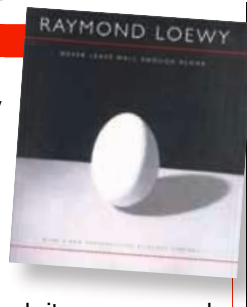
ESSENTIAL READING

AUTHOR: Raymond Loewy

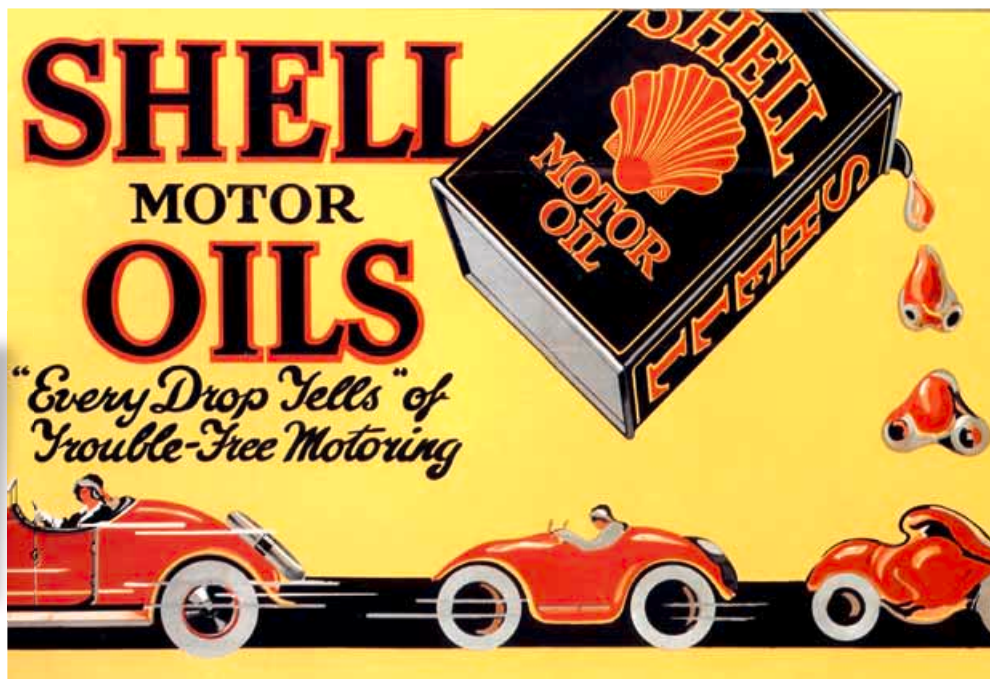
ISBN: 0-801187-211-1

PUBLISHER: The John Hopkins University Press (2002)

PRICE: \$30



Raymond Loewy's official website, www.raymondloewy.com, is a somewhat patchy affair, but it does give a broad outline of his work. Meanwhile his autobiography, *Never Leave Well Enough Alone*, is well worth a look – although some parts are best taken with a generous pinch of salt.



Shell's now famous Pecten has always appeared in some form on the company's adverts. In both of these examples (from 1923 and 1953), the colours, font and general placement of the logo varies wildly from the model. This would certainly be a no-no these days. However, the second advert does use the yellow and red colours that would go on to become the company's defining scheme, and which were introduced just five years earlier.

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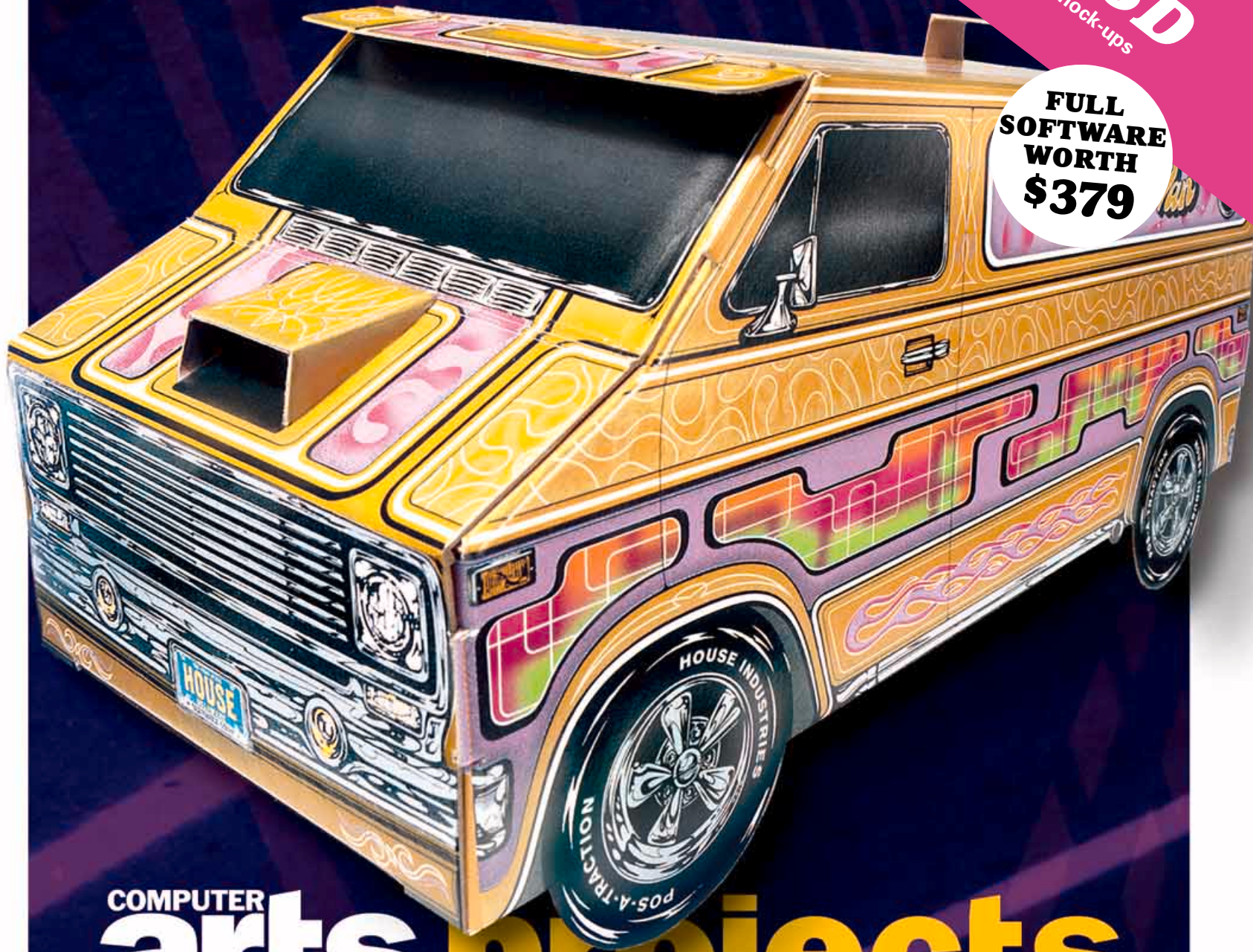


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TUTORIALS

Top tips and tricks from the experts



PHOTOSHOP P54

Looking for translucent ink effects that capture the vibrancy of coloured acetate gels? Martin Fewell reveals the power of *Photoshop's* Overprint command.

TUTORIAL FILES ON THE CD



PHOTOSHOP P60

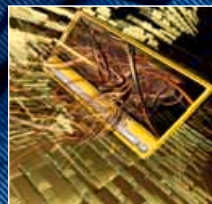
See how interior theatre designer Liane Wilcher creates this vivid perspective-skewed depiction of The Royal Albert Hall using digital photos, freehand sketches and *Photoshop*.

TUTORIAL FILES ON THE CD



NEW SECTION TOOL TIPS P64

Fed up with your Brush presets? Then let award-winning illustrator Derek Lea show you how to configure your own to better simulate natural media and exploit more traditional painterly techniques.



CD TUTORIAL ISHELL P66

Nick Lecoat creates a mini movie player using Tribeworks' acclaimed multimedia authoring app. Now you can do the same with the full version of *iShell 3* provided on the cover CD.

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→ ILLUSTRATOR • PHOTOSHOP

GET OVERPRINTING

By using basic Overprint techniques within your illustration and design work you can easily create stunning translucent ink effects. Martin Fewell gives the low down on Overprint, how it works, and how to use it to best effect

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TIME LENGTH

6 hours

INFO



Martin Fewell is a UK-based graphic designer

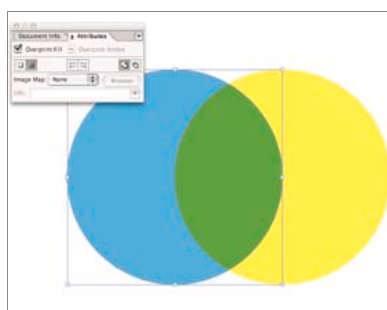
who moves between print design, motion graphics and interactive media to stave off boredom. Focusing mainly on the youth industry, Martin also designs typefaces that are distributed via T26, Union and MyFonts. Go to www.martinfewell.com to find out more.

➔ Because Overprint effects happen during the printing process and not when you're actually working in *Illustrator*, they have the ability to add a unique sense of craft to your work. Well executed use of Overprint techniques tempts the viewer to pick up an image and take a look up close, tilting it against the light as you would with a well executed spot UV.

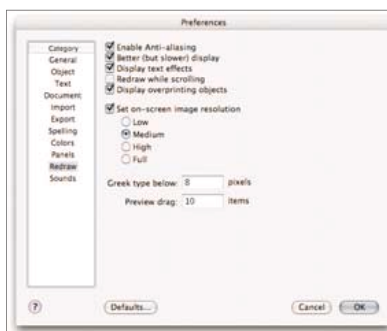
Throughout this tutorial you'll learn the basic skills and techniques you need to add Overprint to your work. We'll then reveal a range of ways to use the technique to excellent effect, starting with photographs and scanned imagery and building up to this multi-layered composition. You'll then be able to transfer these techniques to anything you're working on.

The most important thing to understand about the Overprint effect is the way that colours mix together. For example, if you take a blue circle and place a yellow circle set to Overprint over half of it you'll produce a green colour where the two colours meet. It's useful to think of your inks as sheets of coloured acetate placed on a projector, that way it's easier to picture the affect your colour mixing will have. Once you understand that process, you can easily explore the use of Overprint through trial and error in your own work.

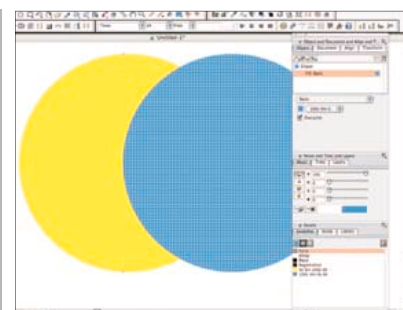
For this tutorial illustration Overprint techniques have been used to create a striking, multi-layered image with plenty of depth. So gather together some images of your own – scans and photographs – and follow this tutorial to find out exactly how these brilliant effects were achieved.



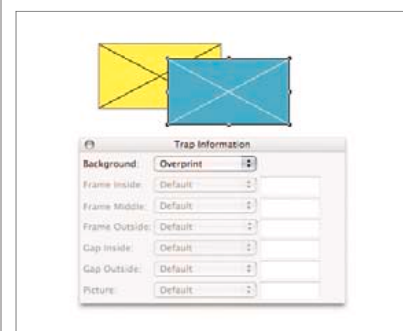
1 Overprinting is a really easy process. Start by opening *Illustrator* and selecting an object that you wish to Overprint. Now select Window→Attributes, to open the Attributes palette, and choose to Overprint either the Fill, Stroke or both. You'll now be able to preview the Overprint effect straight away by choosing View→OverprintPreview.



2 This tutorial uses *Illustrator* to create Overprint effects, but the process is just as easy if you're working in *Freehand*. First go to the Freehand Preferences and then select Redraw from the list that appears. Check the Display Overprinted Objects box and press OK to set it.



3 Now select the object to be Overprinted, open the Object palette and set the fill or stroke as Overprint. *Freehand* doesn't have the same preview feature as *Illustrator*. Instead, *Freehand* displays Overprint with a pattern of zeros on the objects. This will help you notice anything that's been set to Overprint by mistake.

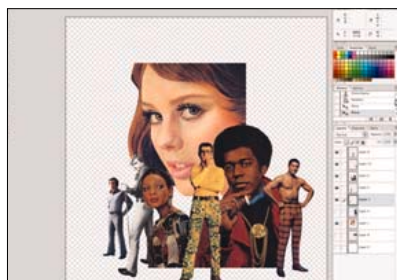


4 If you're overprinting in *QuarkXPress*, go to Window→ShowTrapInformation. Next, set Overprinting using the drop-down menus. Trapping is a term used to describe the use of Overprint to search out any misalignment on the printing press, which could result in white gaps between objects.

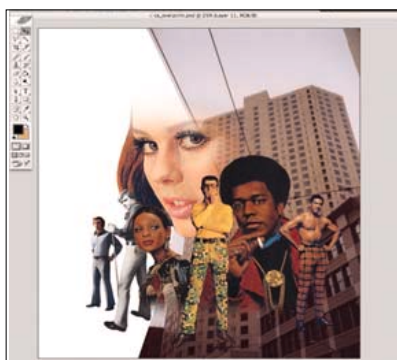




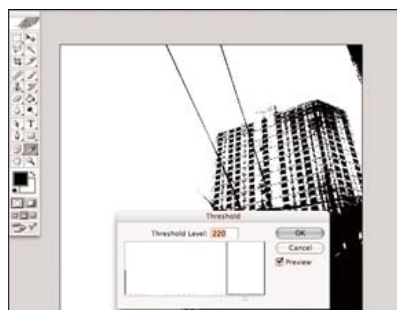
→ ILLUSTRATOR • PHOTOSHOP



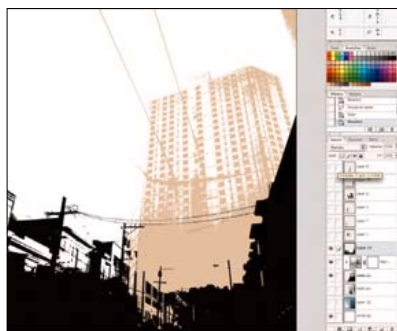
5 The composition for this tutorial image was started using a selection of images already prepared by me. Gather together a varied selection of images of people, sticking to a theme if you wish. Scan your images into *Photoshop*, cut them out using the Pen tool and save each one individually as an EPS file with a clipping path.



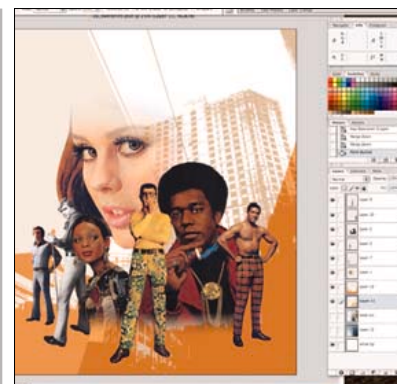
6 Although the final image is constructed mainly in *Illustrator*, it's worth using *Photoshop* in the early stages to speed up the process. Import the background images from the cover CD. Working at 300dpi your illo should now be stylised and ready to take advantage of Overprint techniques.



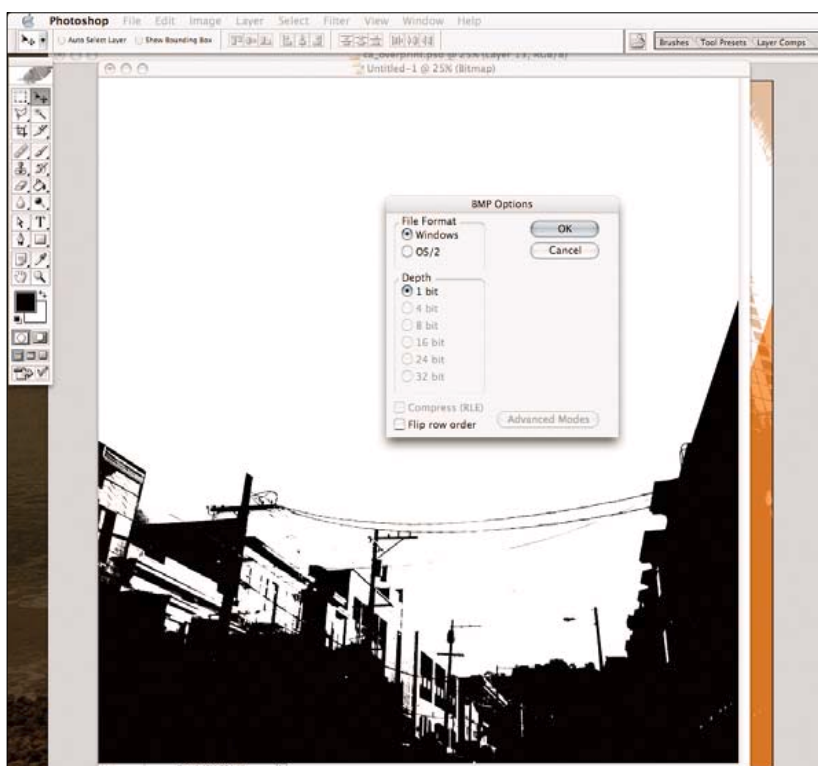
7 Select the image of the background buildings. In the Layers palette, Alt-click on the layers Eye icon to turn off all the other layers. To stylise the photograph, and turn it to a single flat colour, first select Image→Adjustments→Threshold. You can now use the slider bar to alter the image until you are happy and then press OK.



8 Treat the second background image in the same way with the Threshold Filter to establish an effective background. You can now play around with the colour using a Hue/Saturation layer. Go to Layer→New Adjustment Layer→Hue/Saturation, check the Colorise box in the window that appears and use the sliders to alter the colour.



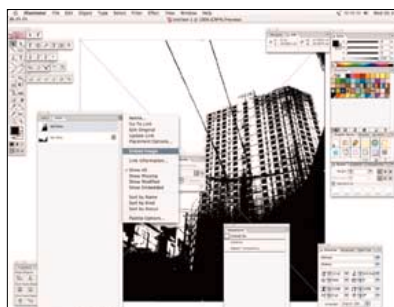
9 Colour your photos using Adjustment Layers until you are happy with the general composition of your illustration. You'll now need to start rebuilding your image in *Illustrator* using a range of Overprint techniques.



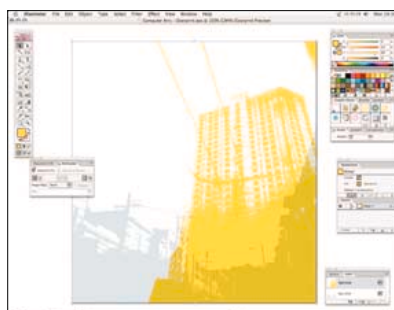
10 Paste the background building layers into a new *Photoshop* document by Control-clicking on the layer name and clicking on Duplicate Layer. Set your Destination as New. Convert the images to 1-bit Bitmaps by selecting Image→Mode→Greyscale and then go to Image→Mode→Bitmap. Finally, set the resolution to 300 pixels/inch and use a 50 per cent threshold as the method. Save the file as a .BMP.

© USING SPOT COLOURS

Overprinting is most effective when using solid colours such as CMYK or Pantone. When using these colours you get a clear acetate effect, which will help you to plan your colour combinations. You'll also find that when working on a limited colour job you'll be able to create a third colour from your two colours. Overprint works equally as well with metallic inks, so experiment and remember that spot UV should be set to Overprint to prevent you from knocking out everything underneath it.



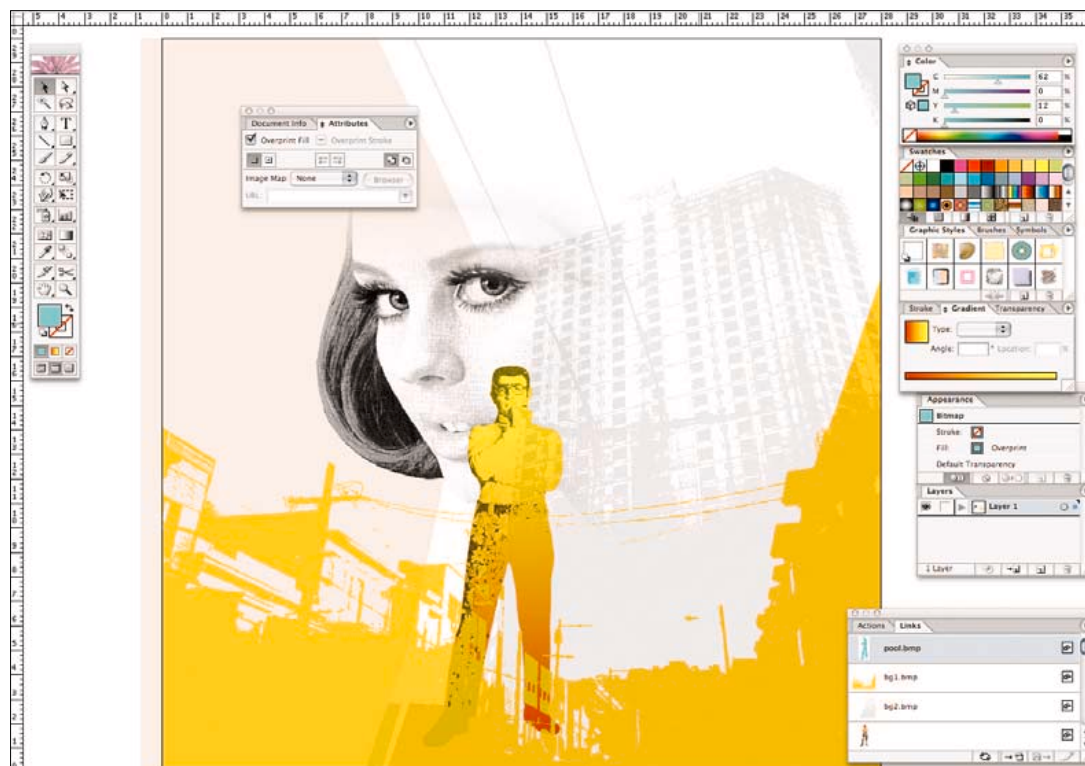
11 File→Place the Bitmaps into *Illustrator*, ensuring that you have embedded them. Do this by un-checking the Link box on the Import window or after importing by going to Window→Links and clicking the arrow on the Links palette. Look for a drop-down menu with Embed Image on the sixth line.



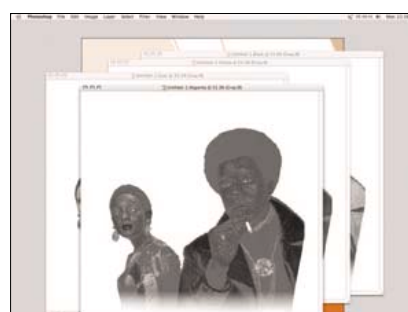
12 Once your images are embedded, colour them using a range of flat colours. In *Freehand* you can colour Greyscale images, which helps to create a more photographic look. But here we will focus on Overprint in *Illustrator*. Colour the bitmaps as you would a normal shape but use Overprint and Overprint Preview as shown in step 1. Contrasting colours will work best.



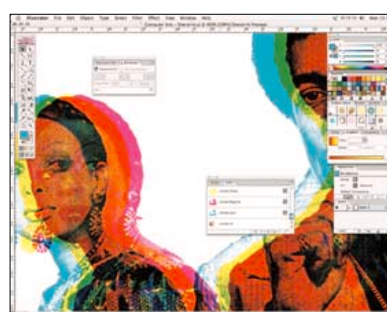
13 Import one of your figures with a clipping path into *Illustrator*. Embedding the image frees the path from the EPS. Ungroup the mask from the image, Copy and Delete. Apply a gradient set to Overprint. Group the gradient with the image and press Apple+F to paste the mask back. Select the image/gradient group and mask and press Apple+7 to mask both the image and gradient.



14 Place the figure you've been working on back into its position at the front of your composition. Placing it slightly behind the building images creates a great effect. You could also import another background image at this stage.



15 For this tutorial image, the photo of the couple was imported into a new *Photoshop* document as shown in step 10. The CMYK channels of the image were then split to create four greyscale images. Do this with an image of your own by choosing Window→Channels/Palette. Save each channel as a Bitmap, making sure that you keep the colour name of the channel within the file names.



16 Embed the four Bitmap Channels into *Illustrator* as before and re-colour them with Overprint, keeping their file names. This process effectively rebuilds the original CMYK image, but with a different effect. Now move them horizontally away from each other, to add interest.

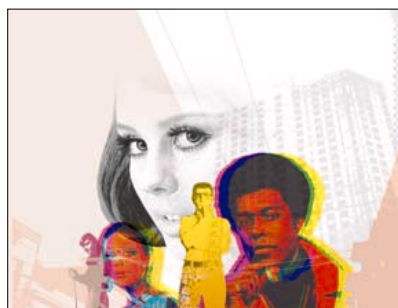
OVERPRINT AND PRINTERS

Overprinting is often an experimental process, so ensure that you make your printer aware of any overprinting within your files. They can advise you in advance of any problems they may cause. Your printers may need to run the job through the machine several times or even change the ordering of the inks on the press to achieve the effects you want. Finally, before sending your Overprint work to print, always preview it by saving an EPS of the vector/page layout file and opening it as CMYK in *Photoshop*.

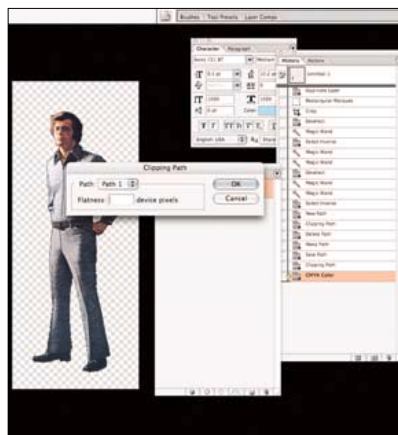




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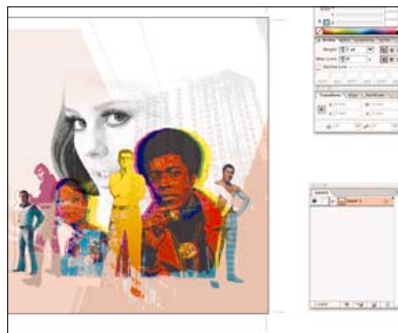
17 When working with Bitmaps and Overprint in *Illustrator* and *Freehand* it can be hard to see how your work really looks because the Bitmaps often don't render well on screen. Save your file as an EPS and open it again in *Photoshop* as a CMYK file to view a more accurate rendered version.



18 Save the remaining figures included in the composition as EPS files with clipping paths in *Photoshop* and then import them into your *Illustrator* document.

● PREVIEWING IMAGES

Software packages do their best to represent the Overprint effects on screen using their Preview features. But it's impossible for the nuances of Overprint to be previewed exactly. Inks could blend strangely and paper saturation could change the effect during production, so, with that in mind, be cautious when using Overprint or speak to your printer. Alternatively, throw caution to the wind, have fun and experiment!

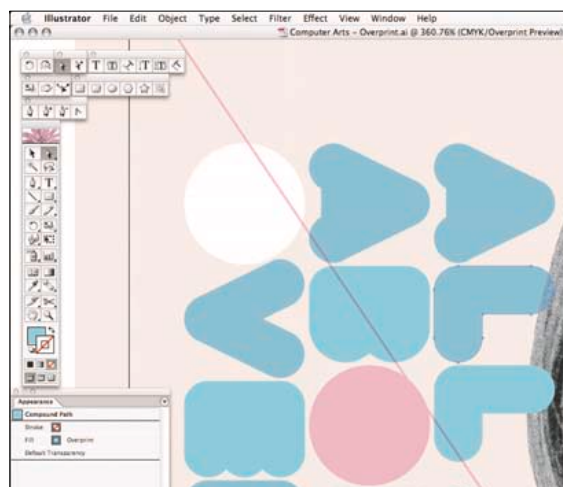


19 Your finished *Illustrator* composition should now match the original *Photoshop* version, but you'll notice that its colours have altered a bit. Overprint colours can mix quite strangely, which is annoying. Unfortunately, the only way to combat this colour variation is to experiment.



20 You can now add any typography you feel appropriate. Subtle Overprinting is really effective when used with typography, but remember to keep it as simple as you can or your image will start to appear too complex.

21 Add any other small details you wish such as line work, or textures and contrast Overprinted objects with regular Knockout objects. These small details will serve to give your illustration a real sense of contrast and scale.



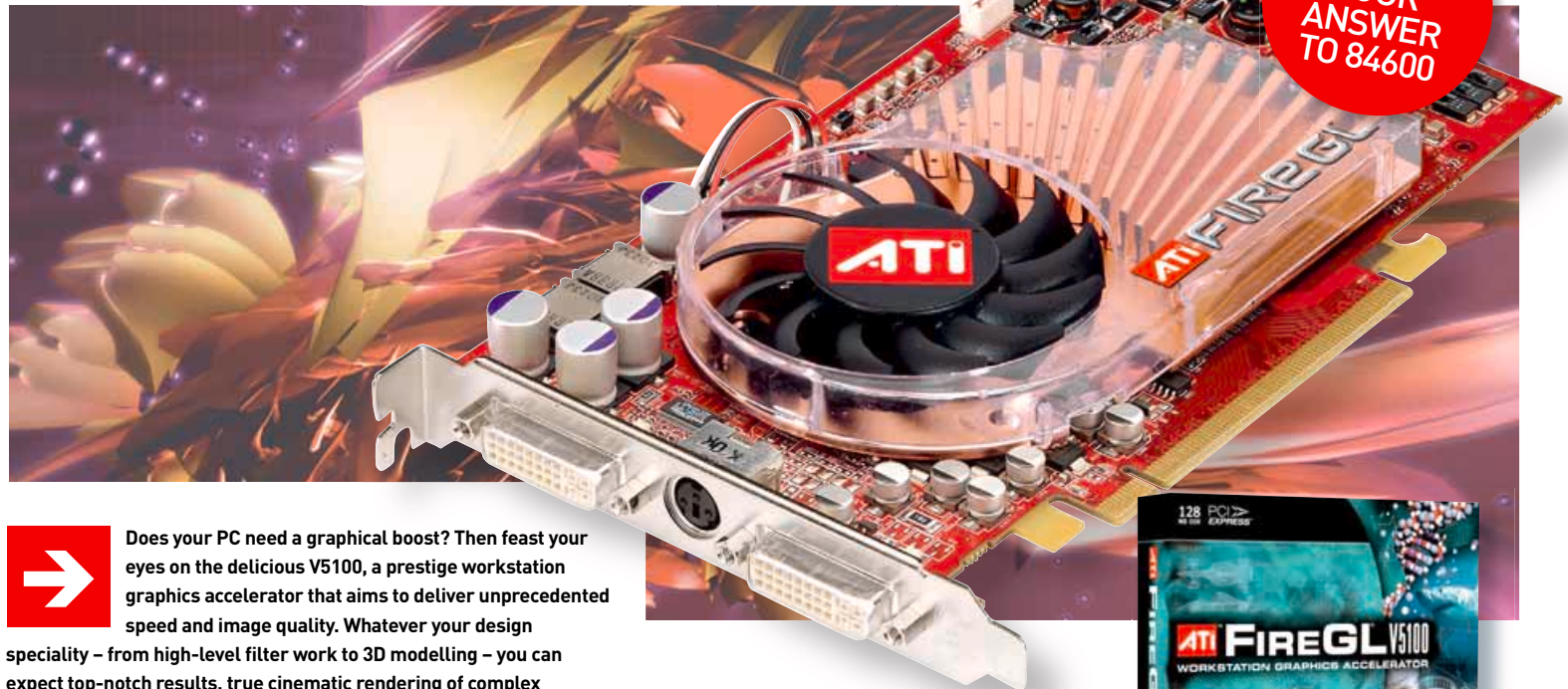
22 Finally, you'll need to make sure that your final *Illustrator* file is print ready. Save it as an *Illustrator* EPS by choosing File→Save As... and then selecting *Illustrator* EPS from the Format drop-down menu. This file will now provide true Overprint effects. And that's it. You should now have all the skills you need to experiment further with Overprint techniques within your illustration work. **arts**





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PERSPECTIVE TRICKS

With the help of a few basic *Photoshop* techniques, some freehand sketches and a smattering of visual resources such as digital photos, you can add a surreal 3D perspective distortion to your work. Liane Wilcher shows you how

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TIME LENGTH

20 hours

INFO



London based Liane Wilcher has spent the last seven years practising as a freelance set designer. She studied both interior design and theatre set and costume design, but illustration has always been a hobby. A selection of her illustrative 3D London images are available as greeting cards. Email liane.wilcher@virgin.net or call 020 7803 9889.

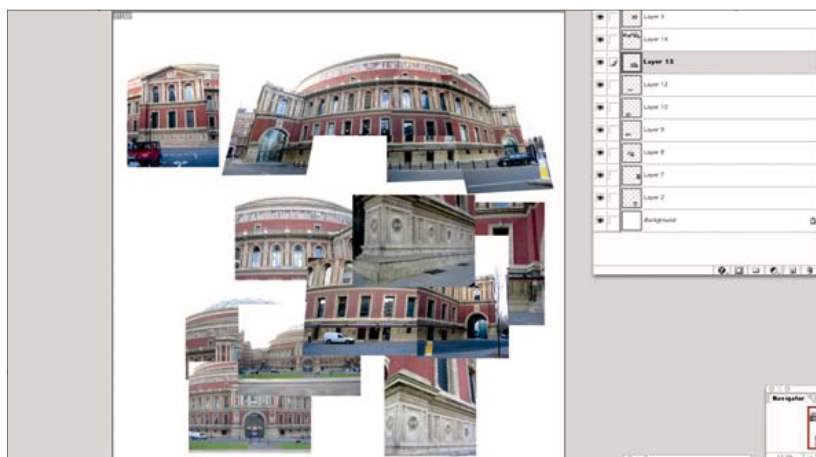
→ I come from a theatrical interior background and have learned to use *Photoshop* to construct surreal perspectives of given architectural icons. For this work, I need to rely on my own instincts and personal style, so I try to use *Photoshop* in a very basic manual and sketchbook fashion, to suggest that the work has still been created by hand.

This tutorial will take you through the initial stages of taking pictures and constructing a photo collage to use as reference material right through to the sketching and the creation of this final image. Although I'll give you all the basic methods you'll need, this kind of image relies heavily on personal instinct. So use my methods as a starting point and then establish your own taste and style.

The creation of a photomontage is a hugely useful process that will enable you to identify areas of shadow and light. The hardest part of any composition is making a personal decision regarding what works and what doesn't. This process enables you to develop a style of your own and teaches you to understand the basics of perspective. Over time, you'll also learn where you can break the rules and still create a convincing and impressive image.

I try to keep my style individual by adding surreal or humorous touches to my work. I tend to think of my images as miniature theatrical environments, so for this image of the Royal Albert Hall I added a Union Jack to the floor. It's these small details that set your work apart from the rest. Have fun!

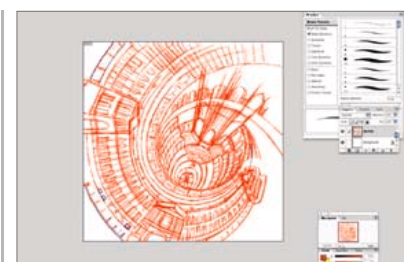
Illustration and tutorial by Liane Wilcher



1 Select a striking icon or location of interest and take a range of reference photos from different angles that clearly show any architectural detail. Combine these photos by cutting and pasting to create a scrapbook collage of the building. Alternatively, use the Albert Hall image supplied on the cover CD. You can now start to visualise it in 3D.

2 In *Photoshop*, open a new document with dimensions of 35x35cm. Ensure that you are working at a resolution of 300dpi so that you can clearly see the detail. For me, the square format results in a pure shape from which you can create conflict and contrast using angles and perspective.

3 Using your photomontage for reference, start to pull the building apart. Make sure that you make the best of the building's most striking elements. In the case of The Royal Albert Hall, it's the circular oval shape and the organ within the dramatic tiered interior that make the most impact.

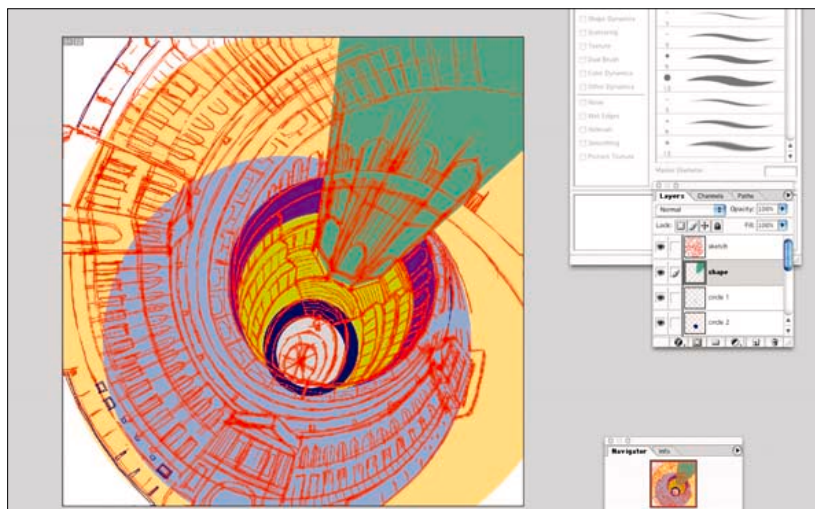


4 On a new layer, start to sketch shapes from your reference photos. Use circular forms and draw from an aerial view to give the building a broader bird's-eye view. Using a broad hard round brush, start to work up some shapes. This process can take a while, but it's important to find shapes, forms and movement that you are happy with.

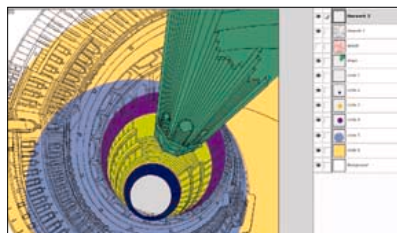




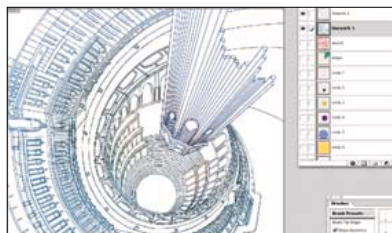
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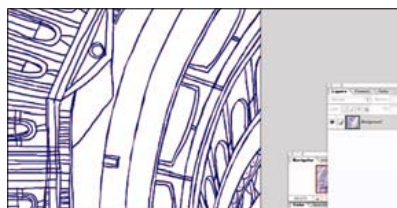
5 Once you've completed your basic sketch, use solid coloured shapes on different layers to form a tracing base so that your freehand line work remains accurate. Here, I used circles that spiralled inside each other. Use the Circle selection tool and Fill tool to draw solid circles on different layers and then move and resize into position, adjusting your sketch as you go.



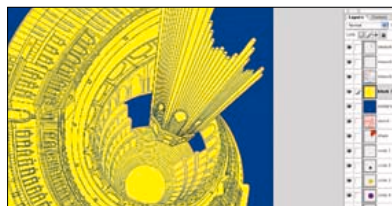
6 Use your original sketch and the solid trace forms you created in step 5 to start work on your final line work. With the Brush tool, add as much detail as you like until you are happy with the way your image looks. Check that the angles and perspectives of the building are working effectively.



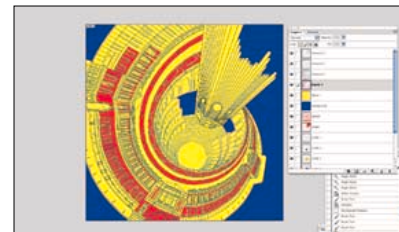
8 Break up your image by drawing line work on different layers so that you can add different levels of distortion to separate parts of your image at a later stage. For this image, the layers named Linework 1, 2 and 3 were used to break up the image. Distortion can be achieved by selecting an area, using the Freehand selection tool, and distorting the shape by choosing Edit → Transform.



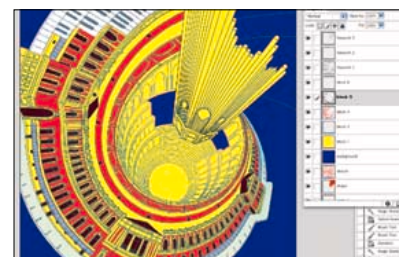
7 Don't worry if your line work appears too sketchy. This adds a hand-drawn appearance to your work, which in turn adds bags of character. Make sure that you pay attention to the detail, scale, proportion and dimension of each object you draw, including windows and architectural mouldings.



9 Once you're happy with the shape and the distortion of your line work, create a new layer below the line work layer and start to block in colour. Use any colour you like at this stage as this can be altered later using your photos as reference. Select a new layer for each colour so that you can alter the brightness and contrast at a later stage. First, start with the yellow.



10 It's common to get the colours wrong at first, so you'll need to spend time altering tones and adding affects. Blocking the colour layers is a simple way to separate the layers so that you can play around later on. Here, I used yellow as a base layer and then red as a secondary tone. I could then erase the red to expose the yellow detail below.



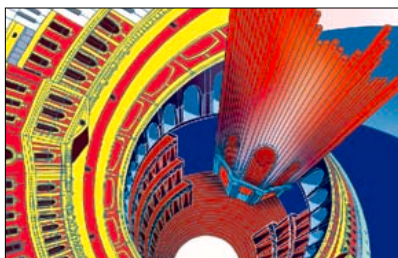
11 Finish blocking in the outside façade using a Medium to Fine round brush. Add in the pavement, veranda, keyboard and windows. Remember that you can always go back to alter shapes and add shadow later.



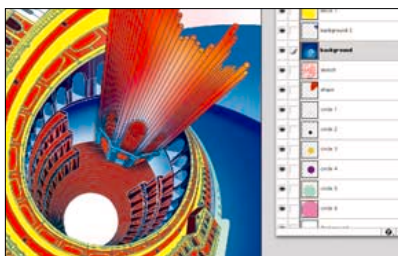
12 Now start work on the interior elements such as the organ and auditorium on separate layers. To give the image extra depth, use darker tones to give the impression of shadow inside the building. For the line work 1 layer, use the Dodge tool to lighten and give contrast.

SKETCHING

If you find it easier to sketch your initial ideas on a sketchpad then do. Sketching from scratch or using photographs for reference is a great way to ensure that you have successfully planned your image's perspective and dimensions. Just scan your sketch, import it into *Photoshop* and you're away. Alternatively, use a Wacom tablet and pen to draw your image electronically.



13 For the organ, continue blocking in detail and then start to emphasise its three-dimensional qualities using the Dodge and Burn tool. This should be set on a large airbrush with a diameter of 500, using midtones at 100 opacity.



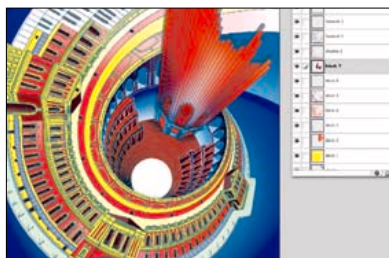
14 Now start to emphasise the three-dimensional qualities of what is essentially a two-dimensional drawing. Look for areas where you can sketch in shadow and lights to add dimension. Start with the blue background with the Dodge and Burn tool set on a broad airbrush, using midtones to give a shadow under the swirl and the outer edges of the image.



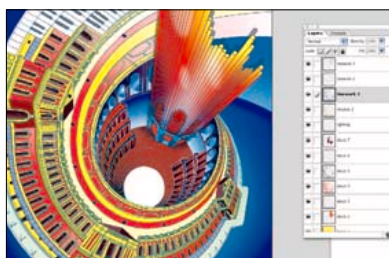
15 For the facade, select each layer and apply the effects of your choice. For the yellow base, use the Dodge tool set on Airbrush, to lighten the top section where the swirl starts to disappear. For the red layer, Dodge the inner parts where the walls meet the three entrances and Burn the walls until they appear 3D. Again, use the Dodge tool to add a reflection to the windows.

● FLEXIBILITY

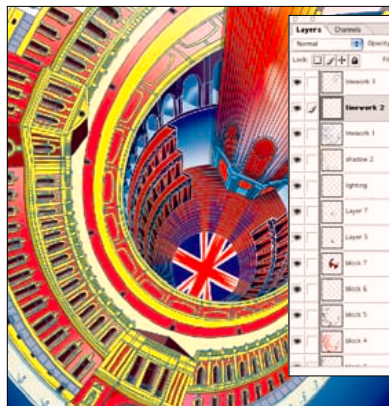
It's really important that you plan your illustration fully before you start, as this will allow for more flexibility later. Take a minute to plan layer by layer how your image will be constructed. Get it right from the start and making changes later on in the process will be much less time-consuming.



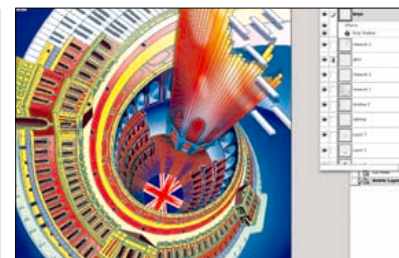
16 Imagine the shadows that would be created by the organ and balustrade. Create a new layer and a new colour tone. A deep yellow or khaki will block in these areas and make the organ appear as if it's floating.



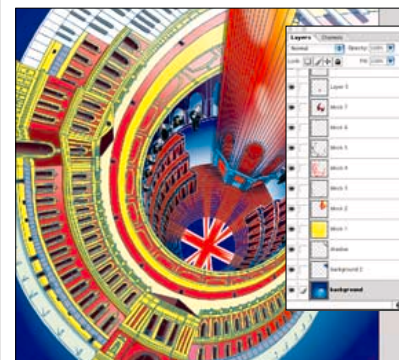
17 Select the organ layer and, with a broad airbrush, use a yellow colour to add a soft glow to the top. For the spotlight effect, create a new layer, select the Elliptical Marquee tool, fill and then deselect. Now add a Gaussian Blur to create a soft spotlight. Duplicate this layer and change the scale of each spot. Merge this onto one layer and name the new layer "Lighting".



18 You can now add a little surreal humour by introducing a stylised Union Jack to the floor. Create a new layer and roughly mark in a Union Jack shape. Once refined, select the middle section and cut and create a new layer leaving the outer part to be blurred on the first layer.



19 Set up a new layer on top of your line work. Now use the Rectangular selection tool and Fill command to create some flying keys. Select the group of keys and Distort them so they appear to fly. Create a new line layer and freehand around each one. Go to Layer Style and set a Drop Shadow with a Soft Blur. Finally, use a soft airbrush to give each key a speed trail (glow layer).



20 Create a new layer and start to sketch in the orchestra. From that sketch, refine your freehand line work and block in the relevant areas on another layer (musicians). To make this task easier, design just one character and duplicate it.



21 Once you're happy with the image, go through each layer and play around with its Colour and Saturation levels. Finally, merge all the layers and boost the entire image using the Contrast and Saturation controls to create the desired effect. **arts**

● DISTORTION

Once you've developed your final line work layer, feel free to transform and distort different parts of the perspective. You can then start blocking in the colour layers. Just select the whole layer or use the Selection tool to enlarge or reduce certain sections. This will give your image a slightly more surreal appearance.



INFO



Derek Lea is an award-winning illustrator and published author based in Toronto, Canada. His work includes disciplines as varied as traditional illustration, photography, 3D modelling, vector art, and, of course, *Photoshop*. To view more of his work, visit www.dereklea.com.

➔ PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSH PRESETS

An infinite number of custom brushes can be created using just a few simple Brush tool features. Illustrator Derek Lea reveals the essential Brush techniques you'll need to bring your *Photoshop* work to life

➔ The Brush tool is capable of creating some really interesting effects that lend themselves nicely to natural media simulation and painterly techniques within *Photoshop*.

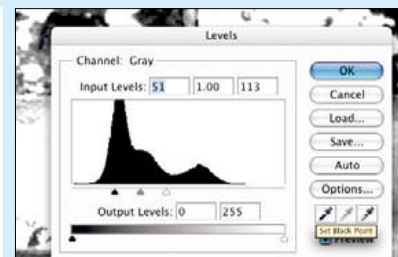
But it's important to remember that you needn't be limited to the brush preset libraries that ship with your software. You can actually create custom brush tips from sections of your own image files. They save time, aren't difficult to set up, and add a genuinely personal stamp to your work.

Rough areas of texture or small sections of images can be used effectively to create unique brush tip

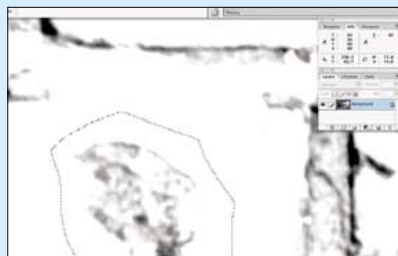
presets, enabling you to produce convincing natural and painterly strokes. Ideally, you'll want to use greyscale images as your source files, and so this tutorial will teach you just how to tweak your selected areas to create some top-notch custom brushes.

Once you've created a number of original custom brushes, take a peek at the Dual Brush option within the Brushes palette. This option will enable you to create a seemingly infinite number of different looks and effects from your new custom brushes.

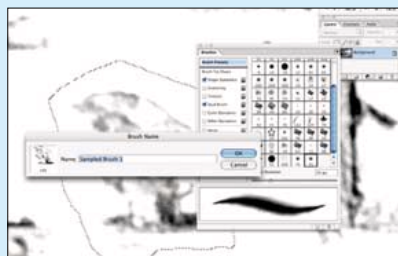
Illustration and tutorial by Derek Lea



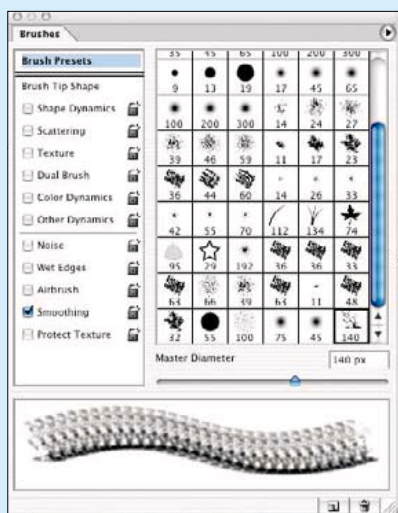
1 When creating a custom brush preset, it's worth remembering that the Brush tool understands greyscale. Black areas will apply paint and white areas will not. So convert your image to greyscale and then increase the contrast dramatically so that there is a marked difference between the areas of dark and light.



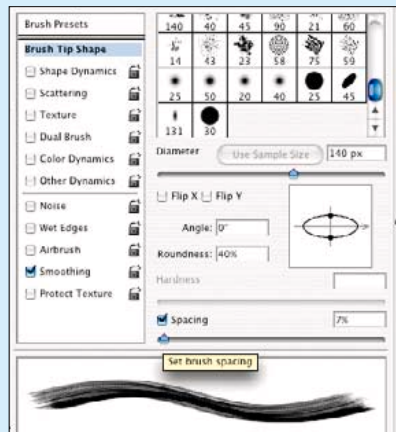
2 Look around within your image and zoom in on an irregular black shape that is completely surrounded by white pixels. Use the Lasso tool to draw a rough closed selection around the shape. Be certain that you have included a white border within the selection area.



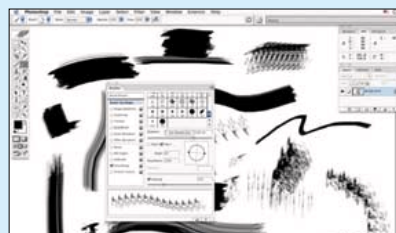
3 Choose Edit→DefineBrushPreset from the menu. A box will appear as a prompt for you to name your brush preset. A thumbnail to the left displays the size of the captured brush preset in pixels. Click OK.



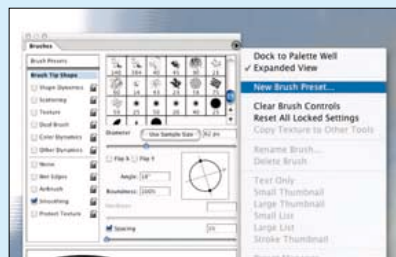
4 Once you click OK, open up the Brushes palette and you'll notice that your new brush preset is added to the end of the list of current presets. Click on the preset to select it and you'll see a sample stroke displayed at the bottom of the palette.



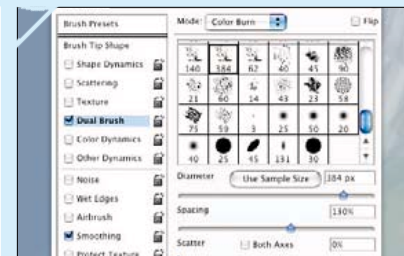
5 You can increase or decrease the size of your brush via the master diameter slider. But for greater variation on the tip preset, select Brush Tip Shape from the menu on the left-hand side of the palette. Here you can alter angle, roundness and spacing, as well as flip either axis.



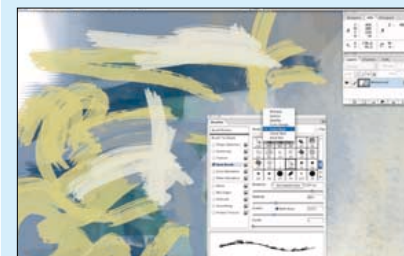
6 Altering these basic features will enable you to create an endless number of different strokes. For example, by reducing the spacing, you'll produce a smoother stroke that looks like an oil pastel. Greater spacing creates a rougher look, similar to charcoal. The image above shows the effects you could create using the same preset.



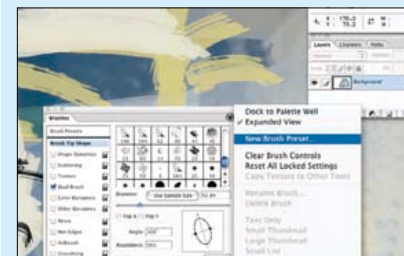
7 Simple variations in colour, size and opacity can yield impressive results. Once you've altered your brush and decided that you like a particular variation, you can save that altered version as another preset. Simply choose New Brush Preset from the Brushes palette menu and add it to the list.



8 To go a step further, alter your custom brush preset by clicking on the Dual Brush option on the left-hand side of the Brushes palette. Now you can combine two brush presets to create an entirely new preset. Select a preset from the menu provided within the Dual Brush options.



9 The options in the Dual Brush areas control the secondary tip. You can alter the diameter, spacing, degree of scatter and the amount of brush marks applied to each spacing interval. There's also a Blending Mode option at the top of the palette.



10 The Blending Mode option controls how the two brush tips are combined. If you go back to the Brush Tip Shape section, you can alter the primary brush tip independently of the secondary brush tip in the Dual Brush area. Again, as soon as you hit upon a winning combination, you can save this Dual Brush preset, too. **arts**

✪ ADDING PRESETS

There is a quicker way to add a preset to the list, other than adding a new brush preset via the Brushes palette menu. First, select Brush Presets from the column on the left. Although you can view the presets from other sections, this is the only section that enables you to add presets in this manner. Simply click in the blank area below or beside your brush preset thumbnails. The mouse pointer will temporarily turn into a paint bucket and your current brush will be added to the preset list.



TEAM LinG - Live, Informative, Non-cost and Genuine!



→ iSHELL

MINI MOVIE PLAYER

iShell's flexibility makes it ideal for creating complex multimedia projects, but it's every bit as useful for building very simple tasks. Rick Lecoat takes the software through its paces to create a small, bare-bones movie player

ON THE CD

You'll find all the files you need to complete this tutorial in the folder marked Tutorial\CD on the cover disc. Start with the Project File, located at *iShell* Tutorial→media_player→media_player.xp. A complete version of the project has also been included. All files are for training purposes only.

TIME LENGTH

1-2 hours

INFO



Rick Lecoat is the creative director

of Shark Attack, a north London design studio specialising in multimedia, record sleeves, corporate identity, websites and publishing. Visit www.sharkattack.co.uk to find out more.

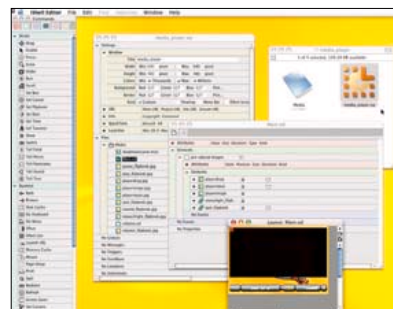
→ Tribeworks' *iShell* is regarded within multimedia circles as a powerful but easy-to-learn competitor to Macromedia's market-dominating *Director*. Much of this ease of use stems from the software's object-based construction. For example, each project contains objects and events, and each object can contain other objects and events, ad infinitum.

This process may seem odd, but make the mental adjustment and you'll soon find yourself able to create complex projects in a fast, streamlined manner. Furthermore, *iShell* projects run on both Mac and PC, while updating an image is as simple as replacing it in the Finder.

Here, you'll create a simple movie player with Play, Pause and Rewind buttons, plus a volume control. However, the process will introduce several other key *iShell* techniques and features, such as the Flipbook, which is an incredibly useful element and essential tool in any *iShell*-user's arsenal. You'll also try using Global Variables to create conditional behaviours for objects, and see how using *iShell* Messages can reduce the amount of programming you have to do. Finally, you'll make the whole project run as a discreet, free-floating object, rather than a standard window or full screen, and package it with *iShell* Runtime for distribution.

Throughout this tutorial, it's assumed that you already understand basic *iShell* terms, and can perform basic actions such as expanding objects in the outline, editing an object's attributes and dragging elements, events, commands and files from the palettes or project window.

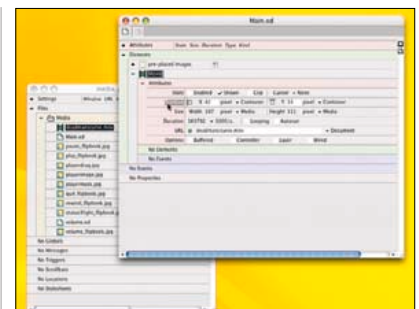
Tutorial by Rick Lecoat
Illustration composed from ©The Infinity Collection



1 Copy the media_player folder from the CD to your hard drive, launch *iShell* Editor and open the media_player.xp project file. From the resulting project window, double-click the Main.xd file to open its outline view and then open its Layout view by choosing Window→Layout from the menu bar. You'll see that some elements are already in place, grouped by a box element (see "Box clever", page 69).



2 Expand the section of the project window that deals with window settings and change the minimum width and height to 281 and 191 pixels respectively, as shown. This will determine the size of your base image. Set the window's Kind to Custom and check the Floating box. Leave Menu Bar and Effect Screen unchecked.

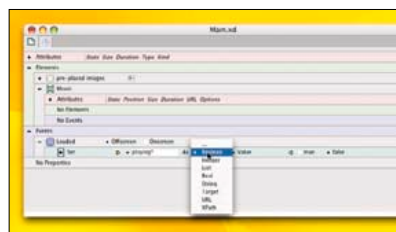


3 Locate the file named video.avi in the project window and drag it into the root Elements section of the Main.xd outline window. It'll now appear as a movie element below the Pre-placed Images box. Select its name and change it to "Movie". Expand it, view its attributes and set the X and Y positions to 42 and 18. Uncheck Enabled.

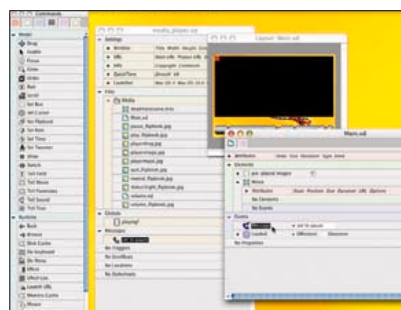


4 In the project window, select No Globals and use the contextual menu (Mac: Ctrl-click, PC: right-click) to Add a Global. Rename it "playing?". Globals are variables that can be referenced by any other part of an *iShell* project and can be put to many uses.





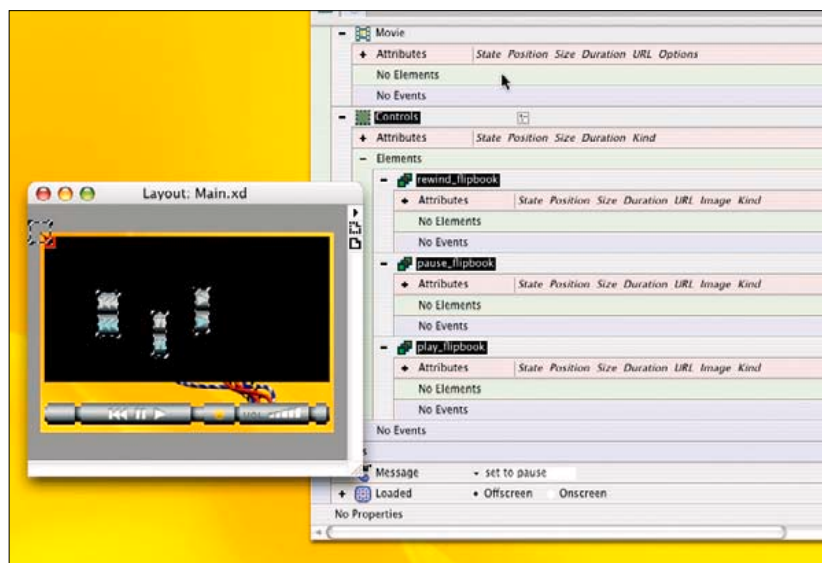
5 Now to give your Global variable a starting value. Place a Loaded Event (set to Offscreen) at root level and attach a Set command with settings to assign the Global "playing?" a Boolean Value of False.



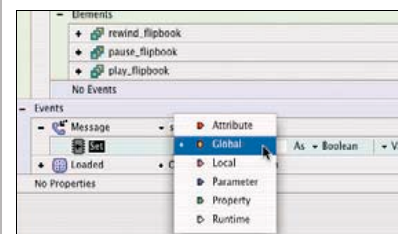
6 Select No Messages and use the same method as step 5 to Add a New Message. Rename it "set to pause". Drag a Message event to the root Events section of the Main.xd outline window. Now select "set to pause" from the event's pop-up menu. You'll return to this Message event in steps 12 and 13.



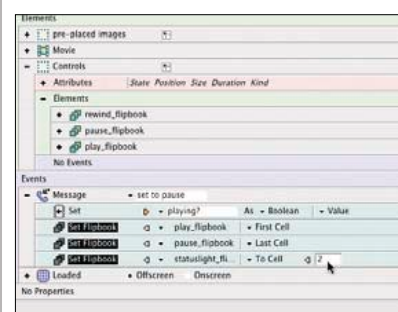
10 Select the pause_flipbook's Mouse Click event and attach a Run command (set Movie to No) and a Send Message command (select the Set to Pause message). Give the Movie a Finished event using the same commands, but activate the Run command's Rewind box. Both of the preceding events will now trigger the Message event from step 6.



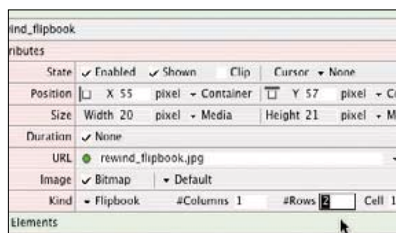
7 Now place the remaining elements. Drag a Box from the Elements palette to the root of the outline window. Rename it "Controls". (This box is purely an organisational aid.) Into this box, drag (from the project window) the "pause", "play", and "rewind" flipbooks. Arrange them within the layout so that they don't overlap, as shown above.



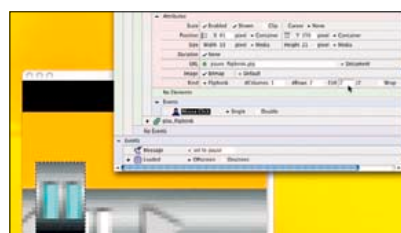
11 Attach a Set command to the Message event with the following parameters: Global/playing?/As Boolean/Value/False. This will pause the movie (hence the message's name) and update the Global variable, keeping a project-wide track of whether the movie is playing or paused.



12 With the same Message event, tell the control buttons whether they should be illuminated/dimmed by attaching three Set Flipbook commands – setting play_flipbook to the first cell (dimmed), pause_flipbook to the last cell (illuminated), and status_light_flipbook to cell 2 (yellow). That's the pause button finished.



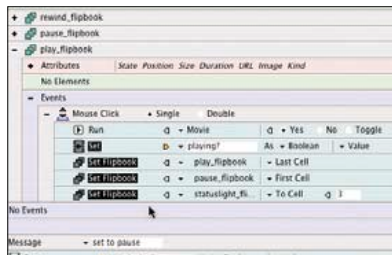
8 A flipbook is an image divided into equal areas that is set to show only one area (or cell) at a time. For each of the flipbooks in step 7, expand the attributes and set Kind to Flipbook and #Rows to the flipbook's number of image tiles (ie, two).



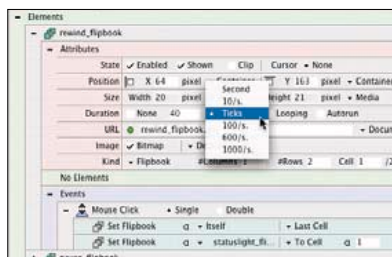
9 In the Pause flipbook's attributes, set Cell number to 2. This determines the cell initially displayed. Now position each flipbook over its corresponding symbol on the player. Attach a Mouse Click event to each of the Play, Pause and Rewind flipbooks.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

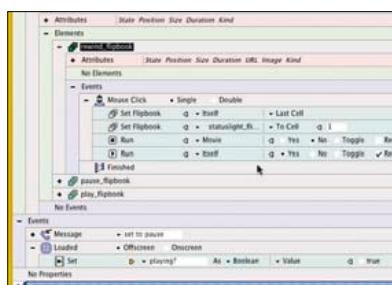
One of iShell's strengths is that your projects will run on both Mac and PC. However, not all versions of the two operating systems handle file names in the same way. To maximise cross-platform compatibility, try to restrict your file names to the lowest common denominator – use only alphanumeric characters (A-Z, 0-9), hyphens and underscores (safer than spaces). This applies to both project and media files.



13 The Play button will be the opposite of the Pause button, so you can simply copy the commands that you placed in the Message event and paste them directly into the play_flipbook's Mouse Clicked event. Just reverse the settings (Yes becomes No, true becomes false, First Cell becomes Last Cell) and set Statuslight_flipbook To Cell 3 (green). Lastly, add a Run command (Movie→Yes).



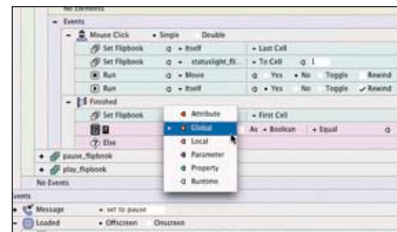
14 The Rewind button is more difficult, because it only lights up briefly when clicked. Alongside its Duration attribute, uncheck the None box and assign a duration of 40 ticks. Attach Set Flipbook commands to its Mouse Click event, to set itself to its last cell, and the statuslight_flipbook To Cell 1 (red).



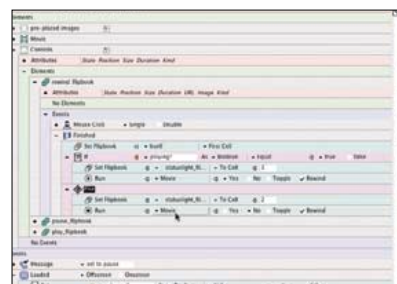
15 Now attach two Run commands to the Mouse Clicked event. The first will pause the movie; the second (with Rewind checked) "runs" the rewind_flipbook itself, using the 40-tick duration as a timer. After 40 ticks, the flipbook's Finished event will be activated. It doesn't have a Finished event yet, so attach one now.

BOX CLEVER

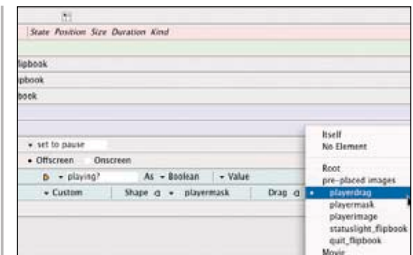
iShell projects can become very complex very quickly, so it's important to keep them organised. The Box element has myriad uses, but excels as a grouping container for other elements. A box with zero size can be renamed and treated in the same way as a Photoshop layer set, grouping objects together, and be closed to keep your window tidy. Just remember that objects within that box are positioned relative to it.



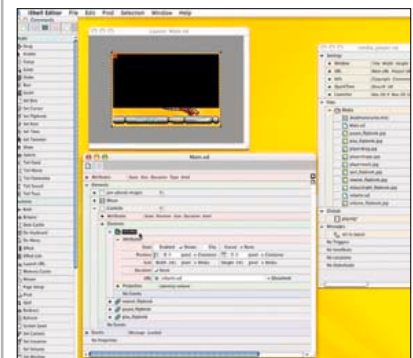
16 Now to instruct the Finished event. A Set Flipbook command dims the button again (set to First cell). But further actions depend on whether the movie was playing or paused when the button was clicked. This is where your Global comes in. Attach an If command that checks if the "playing?" Global is true or false, followed by an Else command.



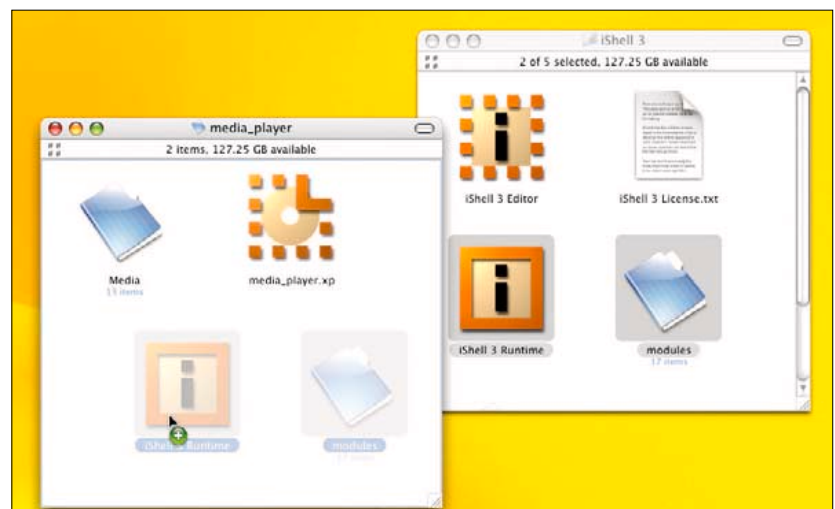
17 If true (ie, the movie was playing when the button was clicked), set the statuslight_flipbook To Cell 3 and Run the movie (Yes) from the beginning (check Rewind), placing these commands inside the If command. The same commands with their opposite settings (Run: No, Flipbook To Cell 2) will populate the Else command.



18 To free the project from the traditional window, add a Set Window command to the Loaded event from step 6. Choose Custom, and specify Playermask for Shape and Playerdrag for Drag. The effect will be seen in the Runtime only.



19 Drag the document volume.kd from the project window to the Controls box in Main.kd, placing it above the three flipbooks and deselecting the Enabled checkbox (this inserts the volume slider). There isn't space here to describe how we made it – just use the same techniques outlined above.



20 Finally, add the iShell Runtimes and relevant supporting files (according to the platforms you're targeting) to the media_player folder. This project folder can now be distributed. (See iShell documentation for more details about distributing projects.) **arts**





GET STARTED WITH... **SELF-PROMOTION**

Having the design skills is one thing, but telling the world about them is quite another, argues Jerome Turner. So how do you go about targeting your work towards those who really count?

ILLUSTRATION: BEAT 13

➔ Designers face challenges every day, but maybe the hardest part of the job is getting your work seen by that all-important client base. When work dries up, how do you keep your momentum going? And if you're starting out on your own, how do you build that momentum in the first place?

If you're about to start promoting yourself, your clients will want to know who you are and what you do, but before you can tell them, you'll need to find out for yourself. Assess your background, your skills, your unique qualities – and the services you plan to offer. Even if you think your artistic style is similar to others, maybe your manner of working and hitting deadlines is exemplary. If so, you need to shout about it.

As long as you're critical in a positive, constructive way, this will boost your confidence, as well as give you an idea of what sort of brand identity would best suit your work and whom to approach as potential clients. If you're currently working with a studio, or already have steady work and are on the verge of starting your own practice, this will also let you double-check that going solo is the right choice for you.

This self-assessment technique could also be used to identify your skills before going for an internship or job interview. And in the long term – if you've just started out – an internship could be just the thing to establish your reputation for the future, as designer R. Kyle Everett of www.staticframe.com explains:





Presstube.com exhibits James Paterson's clean-lined work to excellent effect.



2advanced.com, still one of the most talked about portfolio sites in the design community, vividly showcases the studio's key strengths.

PROMOTE YOURSELF ONLINE

Take a look at some of the better-known design sites (see left) and you'll soon see why and how they reflect their brand accurately. 2advanced.com is a great example, and one of the most talked about portfolio sites. Many would say the über-techno animation and design is overblown, but it does well to

promote 2advanced's style and illustrate its work. On the other hand, presstube.com is a simpler "black lines on white" affair and reflects James Paterson's "hand-drawn" animation style.

Another famous site, prystation.com (now rebranded as joshuadavis.com) is rendered in

sleek, elegant shades of grey, and reveals a layout and animation style often reflected in its client work. Compare www.808inc.com with www.joshuadavis.com – maybe the client saw the site and asked for something similar? A perfect example of promotion through a website.



Joshua Davis Studios was commissioned to design www.n-gage.com/worms, the mini-site to promote *Worms World Party* for Nokia's N-Gage gaming device, on the strength of its online portfolio. See www.joshuadavis.com (formerly prystation.com) for details.

"The most important thing you can get out of an internship is not necessarily the work, but rather the experience. As a student, it is really important that you have that experience on your resumé.

Even if the work isn't there to back it up, it still shows to potential employers that you can function well in real world situations, outside of an academic environment."

A clear CV and portfolio website featuring your best work is essential, of course, but these days that alone won't push your head above the crowd. "You can't depend on the website alone to land you a job," says Everett. "It really needs to be there as a reference so that you can plaster the URL on anything you send out. Some people will look at your website, some people won't; it all depends on personal preference.

"The two strongest methods for promoting yourself on the internet are through job sites and site linking," he continues. "Some employers actually do surf job websites such as AIGA design jobs, Coroflot, and Creative Hotlist looking for new talent, so it helps to get your resumé and portfolio up on as many of those websites as possible."

STYLE VERSUS CONTENT

A portfolio site, in the same way as any website, is a balance of two things – content and design. Your designs will need extra special attention, so the website's design should show off your talents without overpowering the content.

If you're a *Flash* animator, try something fun and innovative, but if your skills lay in HTML and CSS, you should perhaps display your work in a simpler, clearer layout. It's a question of showing the client

what you can do, not what you think they will want to see.

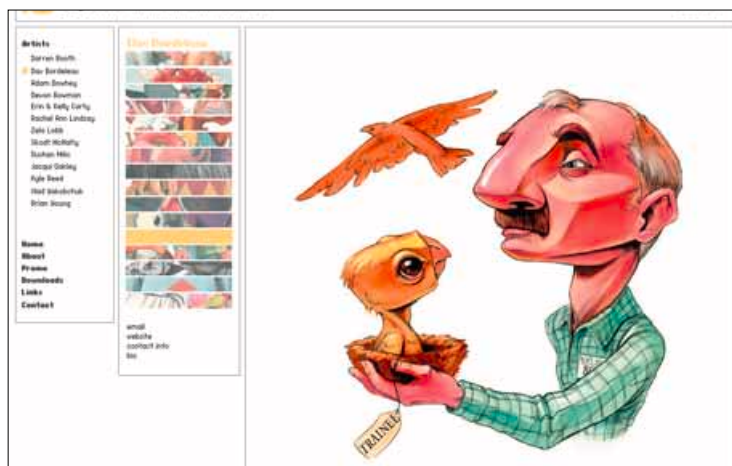
As far as content goes, be clear and concise. Pick out your best projects with a few supporting images and probably no more than 50 words to describe each. Do you need a CV link? This depends on your intention. If you're a student looking for an internship, it might be appropriate, but freelance designers should allow their commercial work to carry them.

ESTABLISHING A REPUTATION

They say there's no such thing as bad publicity, but we all know that isn't true. No client will want to speak to a designer who is known for blanket, unfocused marketing. However, if your promotion is considered and personalised to the interests and needs of each client, they will be more inclined to sit up and listen. So that basically means no spam emailing, no random fly-posting – and no junk mail. It may take a little more time to make each approach personal and well researched, but it'll be well worth it in the long run.



Giuseppe Contaldo's postcard design was used to promote the Lost Paradise Galleries project – and, in turn, his own work.



Power in numbers: the work of Dav Bordeleau, co-founder of Repless Abandon, an illustrators collective, has helped to promote the collective as well as his own work.

So get the basics right, and then consider how you can make your services known to the clients you'd most like to work with. Use creative self-promotional techniques that reference back to your site, or enable you to offer the client a printed CV, and think of both CV and portfolio as your backbone.

EVERYONE'S A WINNER

Entering competitions and, more importantly, winning them can earn you huge kudos within the design community, but, professionally speaking, this route might only be worth pursuing if your clients learn of your awards, too. They're probably not too bothered by your *Photoshop* tennis skills unless that relates to the services you're offering them.

Olly Moss, a UK-based designer, has had two T-shirts printed as a result of the www.threadless.com T-shirt design competitions. "Freestyle competitions, such as Threadless, help to inspire and produce quality, commercially viable work that functions equally well as an advertisement for the designer himself," he explains. Moss's work is recognised via the site by the design community, but, more importantly, it is also mass-produced and worn, which distributes his brand to a much wider audience. "I've had a few interesting emails that could well lead to further business, including



Olly Moss's striking T-shirt design for the Threadless competition site (www.threadless.com) has been worn all over the world – what better advert for your work?

DESIGNER TIPS



"There should be a consensus as to the goals and needs that your collective sets out to achieve. Make sure there's open dialogue between all members, as much as possible."

Dushan Milic, illustrator
www.replessabandon.com



"To be interesting – to me at least – a project must be 'different' and international."

International, because it's important to take part in collaborations with designers from around the world, and because I believe in the power of networking."

Giuseppe Contaldo, designer
www.neuville.it



"Saying that you have actually won competitions is always a big hit – they can add serious clout to your CV."

Olly Moss, design student



WE CATCH UP WITH BLACK CONVOY'S RICHARD MAY AND JOHN MCFaul

Computer Arts: How did Black Convoy start?

Richard May: McFaul and I had been saying how great it would be to get a number of people together for an exhibition. There was no name back then – just an idea.

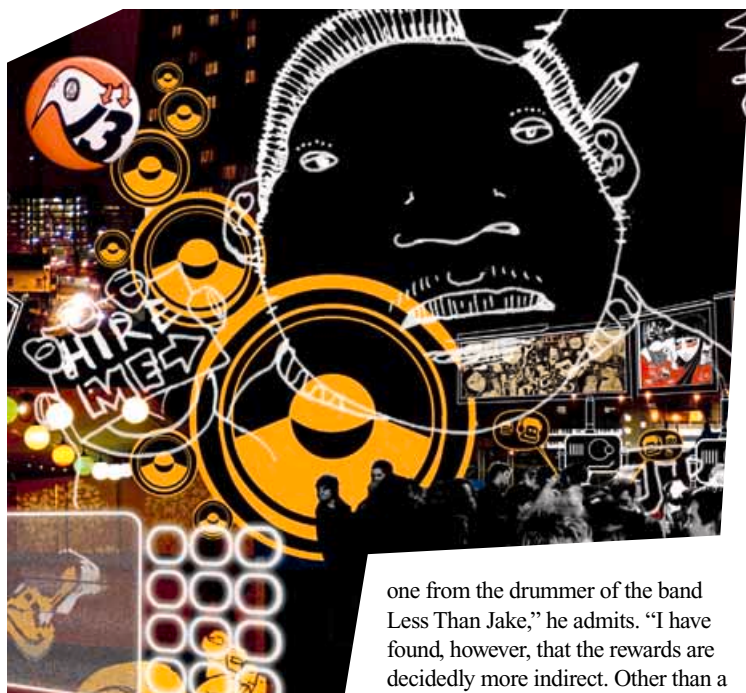
John McFaul: I'd known Rich for a little while and we felt the same way about where our careers were heading. We wanted Black Convoy as a vehicle to pull us into other design disciplines.

Computer Arts: How did you first promote yourself?

RM: The promotion just happened by chance. McFaul and I are members of Pixelsurgeon, which helped get this something rolling. We have captured people's imagination purely through word of mouth and a "quick" website.

Computer Arts: How has Black Convoy helped you pull in work?

JM: There has obviously been huge interest since we hinted at the show a few months back. Rich, Jon [Burgerman] and I have had to deal with The Arts Council bid and other associated bits and bobs both in the UK and USA, so I'm sure all this can't be doing us, as individuals, any harm. The direct relation between Black Convoy and a commission isn't necessarily there, but the desire from interested parties to work with us has been astounding.



one from the drummer of the band Less Than Jake,” he admits. “I have found, however, that the rewards are decidedly more indirect. Other than a deluge of traffic to my website, the effects of winning are more noticeable when padding out my portfolio.”

Competitions encourage designers to work with an understanding of the wider creative community, and, as a result, collaborations and non-profit projects can spring up quite easily. But can they be justified if they're not always directly connected with commercial, money-making work? Well, there are other benefits...

“You increase your website visibility, but this works in the short term only, so it's not a very important issue,” says designer Giuseppe Contaldo (www.neuville.it). But, as everyone knows, the web is worldwide, so what better way to reach a wider audience? Contaldo agrees: “You get an international positioning that enables you to work out of your local network.”

Collaborations are also an effective way to promote your work. Word of mouth, and the ability to build good relationships with people and clients, will enable you to work as a freelancer in a world of freelancers. It pays to be careful, though. If this kind of non-commercial work is taking up your time, make sure you use it wisely –

ensure that people know exactly who's created the work (you) and how they can contact you (through your URL). If the project can be affiliated to a famous and respected brand, it won't do your own reputation any harm, as Contaldo found on a recent project: “For Lost Paradise Gallery, I created a three-postcard piece of art. The project was sponsored by Diesel and is a favourite piece in my portfolio.”

WITH A LITTLE HELP...

Students taking their first steps into the world of competitive design can often find that first leap quite daunting – after all, why would a client care about just another graduate when so many professional designers are already out there eager for work? Clever promotion at this stage, therefore, is essential.

“We were just a group of illustrators graduating from Sheridan College three or four years ago,” remembers illustrator Dushan Milic. “There was a group of about 15 of us who were really good friends, brutally honest and constantly pushing each other's work. So, we graduated and, after attempting to do some promos on our own for a while and finding out how expensive it was, Dav Bordeleau and I decided to start calling in our other illustrating friends.” And so the Repless Abandon collective was born.

Milic says that around 50 per cent of his work comes through Repless Abandon (RA), but the benefits aren't as obvious as they might seem. There is now the added kudos of being part

of something “big”, but the collective also works as a sharing community. “We've got plenty of clients through other members. On numerous occasions, Repless Abandon has had work from multiple members featured in the same publication/issue, or have had multiple members bidding on larger projects.”

GET OUT MORE

A good promotional product or site is great, but sometimes it takes a bit more effort, so try getting out more. “The best way to get anywhere is still good old-fashioned networking,” says Everett. “Go to events held by the design community to mingle with other designers. If you see a lecture of someone you admire, don't be afraid to talk to them afterwards. You'll stick out in their mind.”

With a little research, you will probably find a group or organisation locally that encourages this kind of networking and business promotion. They should be able to find you information about events, seminars and networking nights. In the UK, the Arts Council (www.artscouncil.org.uk) is a good place to start. Not every handshake and business card will lead to work, but a face and winning smile to match is far more memorable than any email or CV, and people, by nature, will talk. A friend of a friend of someone you chatted to on the phone a month ago might just be your next big client. **arts**

ANOTHER WAY? THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

Eric Barlettani's idea for the promotion of his design service (www.madewild.com) was inspired by a project he'd heard about in Boston: a free art gallery where visitors could help themselves to the sculptures, pictures and canvases on display.

Barlettani transported this idea to an art event in his hometown, leaving his own hand-painted canvases for people to pick up. “Instead of glorifying paint splashes, it was about promotion. The message kind of turned into, ‘Yeah, we are creative, and we have business sense, too.’ The people who found the canvases around town were enthusiastic, first asking, ‘Is this free? Whose is this?’ My URL was on the back, written small inside the frame.”

FURTHER READING

Title **Business Cards: The Art of Saying Hello**
Author **Michael S. Dorrian and Liz Farrelly**
Publisher **Laurence King Publishing**
ISBN **1-85669-386-4**

Business cards help you promote your personal brand to the real world – a palm-sized product that not only describes your work, but in the case of graphic designers, shows off your skills, too. *The Art of Saying Hello* (see full review in issue 106) showcases over 300 innovative card designs, proving just how easy it can be to make an impact, even when space is really limited.



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REVIEWS

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SOFTWARE

PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS 3.0 **P78**
POPCORN 1.0 **P80**
EYE CANDY 5 NATURE **P81**
TWIXTOR PRO 4.0 **P82**
MIMIC PRO 3.1 **P83**
CHARTBOT **P85**



HARDWARE

LEXMARK X7170 **P84**



BOOKS

THE DESIGN ENCYCLOPEDIA **P87**
THE BEST OF BROCHURE DESIGN 8 **P87**
PHOTOSHOP CS TRICKERY AND FX **P87**
SHADER X³ ADVANCED RENDERING
WITH DIRECTX & OPENGL **P87**



GROUP TEST: WORKSTATIONS

3D BOXX **P90**
PRECISION 670MT **P90**
3D WORKSTATION **P91**
INTELLISTATION **P91**
RM WORKSTATION **P92**



REVIEWS

All our products go through rigorous testing and only truly outstanding and essential pieces of kit receive the coveted five-star rating.



COMPUTER
arts
RECOMMENDED



MAC Yes

PC Yes

PRICE

MAC £57.58 (£45.83 upgrade)
PC £69.33 (£52.88 upgrade)

CONTACT

Adobe
020 8606 1100
www.adobe.co.uk

FEATURES

- Spot Healing Brush and Healing Brush tools
- Camera Raw support
- 16-bit image support
- Quick Fix mode
- Shadow/Highlight feature
- Improved print features
- Red Eye Removal tool
- PDF slide show creation
- Improved asset management
- Adobe *Album* integration (PC only)

SYSTEM

MAC: PowerPC G3, Mac OS X 10.2.8 or 10.3, 256MB of RAM, 200MB HDD
PC: Pentium III 800MHz, Windows XP SP1/2000 SP 4, 256MB of RAM, 600MB HDD

FOR

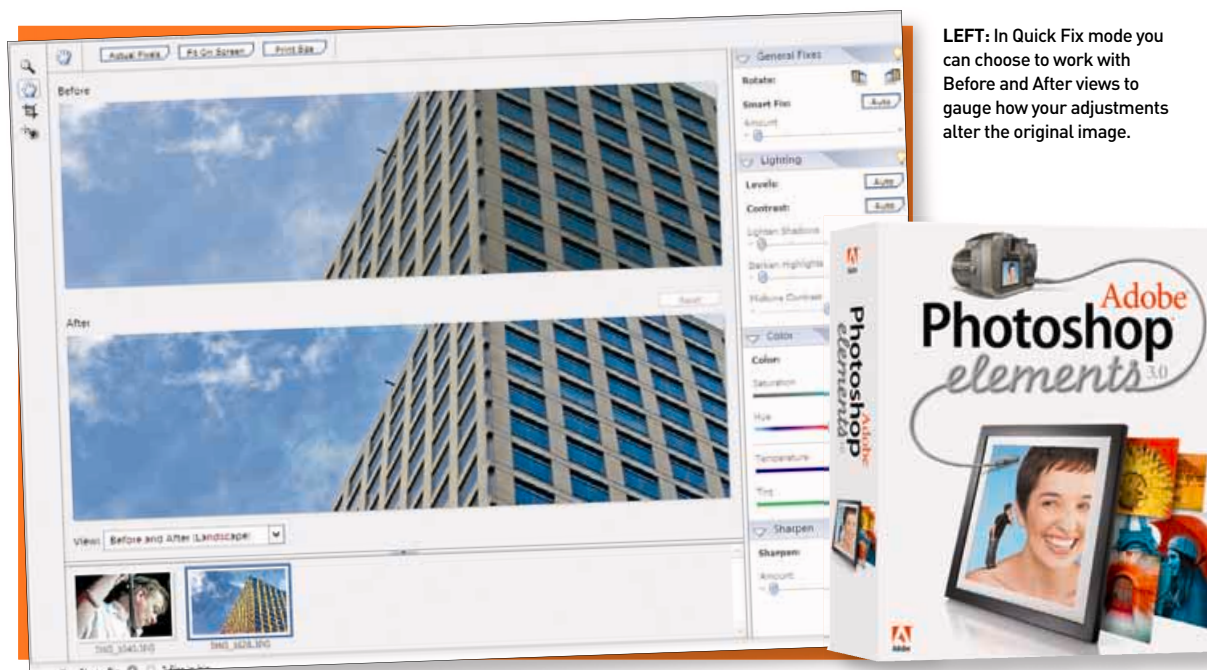
- Costs a fraction of the price of *Photoshop*
- Easy to use
- Instant results

AGAINST

- May be too limiting for professionals
- Some Wizards lack control
- *Album* features not available to Mac version

VERDICT

Although not as powerful as the full version of *Photoshop*, *Elements 3.0* provides a useful way for novice designers to get to grips with core functionality. Plus, with the integration of the *Album* tools, PC users will find an extensive suite of image management tools, too.



LEFT: In Quick Fix mode you can choose to work with Before and After views to gauge how your adjustments alter the original image.

Photoshop Elements 3.0

■ A GREAT PACKAGE FOR CASUAL USERS LOOKING FOR PHOTOSHOP TOOLS, WITHOUT THE HEFTY PRICE TAG

Adobe's popular *Elements* title should need little introduction. Offering the core functionality behind the industry standard *Photoshop* software, *Elements* has proved popular among casual pixel pushers keen to harness the power of *Photoshop* but unable to justify the professional price tag.

Needless to say, at roughly a tenth of the price, *Elements* is scaled down somewhat but that doesn't mean that the software is lacking.

The previous *Elements* iteration boasted an interface that remained largely faithful to the more fully featured *Photoshop CS*. And although some new users were baffled by the array of palettes, with some perseverance it did provide a useful stepping stone towards the full version. However, more casual users failed to warm to the interface and many of *Elements'* tools remained unused.

The main point of interest with release 3 is the noticeable difference between versions for Mac and PC. Although many of the key editing functions remain, the Windows version boasts additional utilities

with organisational aspects in the shape of Adobe's *Album* software, which allows users to view and organise their files.

Mac users don't receive such enhancements, mainly because the

image has been opened, *Elements'* core purpose, editing bitmap images, comes into play and the features and interface of both Mac and Windows versions appear to be virtually identical.

ELEMENTS HAS PROVED POPULAR WITH CASUAL PIXEL PUSHERS KEEN TO HARNESS THE POWER OF PHOTOSHOP

RESOURCE

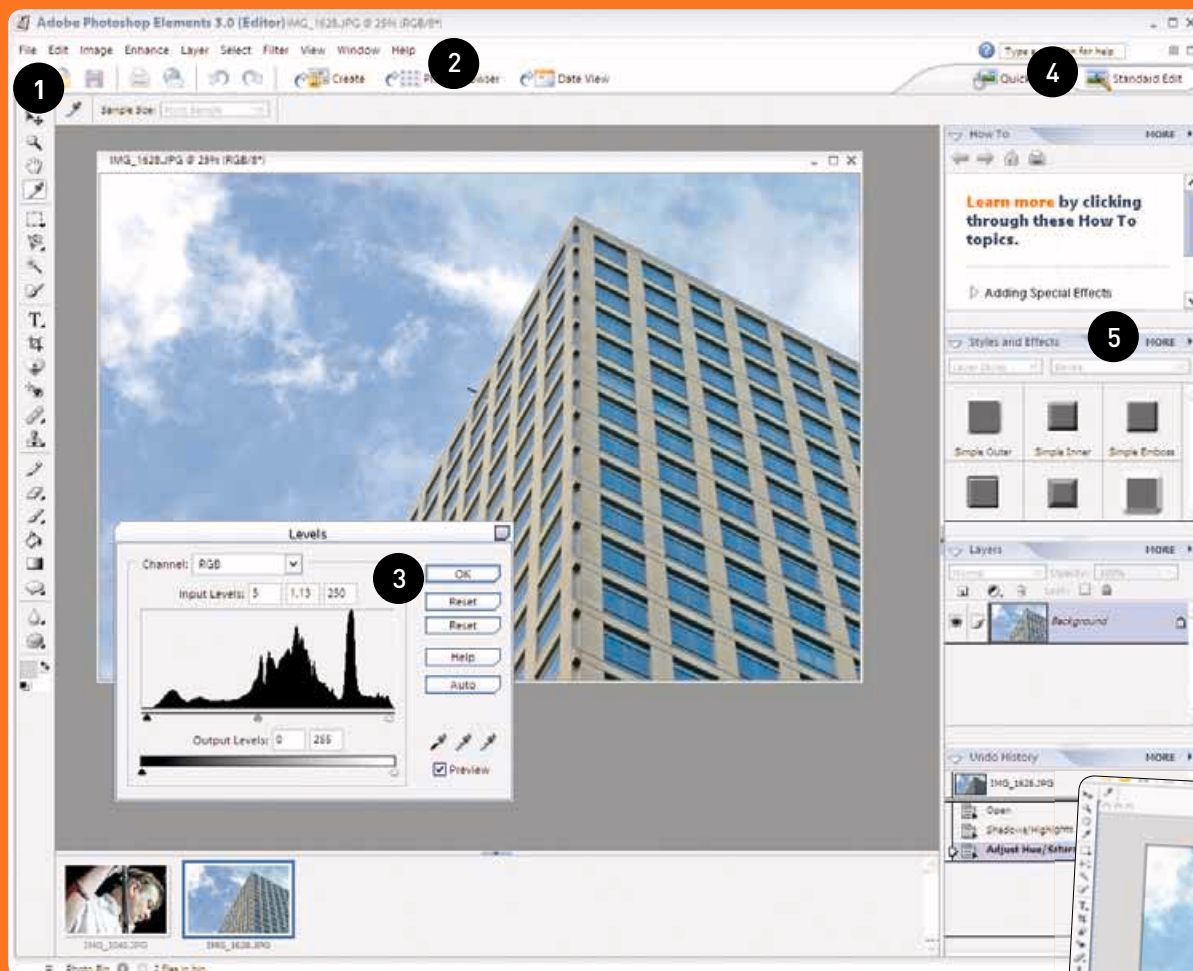
The Adobe website offers a range of tutorials for Mac and PC that will help you master grouping shots, creating slide shows and sharing your images. Just visit www.adobe.co.uk/products/photoshopelwin/main.html.

Apple OS includes similar features through the likes of *iPhoto*. This may go some way to explain the price difference, as well as the more noticeable disk space requirements.

The Mac version provides a File Browser, a feature familiar to *Photoshop* users, complete with available Metadata and editable keywords. The Windows version, however, uses the more newbie friendly Organizer component introduced via the *Album* software. This provides the same basic functionality but through a much simplified interface that will appeal to the more casual user. But once an

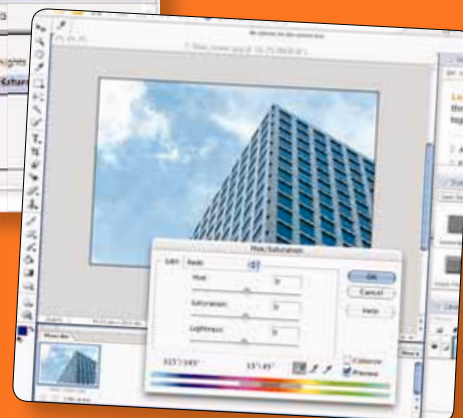
The interface draws on *Photoshop CS* for influence, although it is now a little more accessible to the less experienced user. Numerous Wizard-based effects take good care of routine adjustments, which are then further simplified by dual edit modes.

In Standard Edit mode, you get full access to all the standard features, although even these might prove a little tricky for most beginners. But switch to Quick Fix mode and you can toggle the interface into a much more immediate environment with sliders to control fundamental elements such as light and colour adjustment.

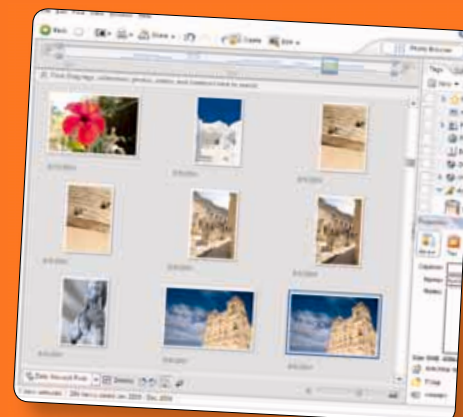


THE INTERFACE

1. The *Elements* interface introduces some sensible simplification. The tool bar icons populate the left-hand side of the screen with a range of familiar menu items.
2. The Windows version of *Elements* includes additional icons, which transfer your work to related components of the *Elements* suite.
3. The main working area allows plenty of room for your images while common commands such as Levels and Curves can be adjusted using methods similar to *Photoshop*.
4. The inclusion of Quick Fix and Standard Edit modes means you can now toggle the available options to suit your experience.
5. Like *Photoshop*, a range of palettes can be found to the right of the interface. These include Help topics and Effects in addition to the regular Layers and History options.



Despite other noticeable differences between Mac and PC versions, the core *Elements* interface remains identical between platforms.



The Windows-only Organizer replaces the *Photoshop* File Browser and introduces features previously only found in the stand-alone Adobe *Album* software.

You can still use a more manual approach. The Spot Healing Brush and Healing Brush, for example, introduce popular *Photoshop* retouching features that allow the instant removal of marks from your photographs. A new Red Eye Removal tool reduces the guesswork of such tasks with just a single click.

The Shadows/Highlight feature, another popular *Photoshop* tool, allows you to transform your images by altering shadow, highlight and midtone balance to rescue fine detail from your original photographs. For users with higher demands, the introduction of a Histogram palette will allow you a more accurate overview of your image's colour composition. Support for 16-bit images and Camera Raw format will definitely find favour among keen photographers.

A raft of special effects will help you turn even the most average snapshot into something a little more adventurous, whether you're constructing creative composites, simulating natural media or adding punch through common effects such as drop-shadows, bevels and glows.

ORGANISING ASSETS

The noticeable difference in price and installation size between the Mac and Windows versions of *Photoshop Elements 3.0* highlights a key difference between the related titles. Mac users may be more inclined to use their OS X *iPhoto* utility to manage their growing image libraries while Windows users can take advantage of Organize, a title that derives from the previously available Adobe *Album*.

With influences taken from *Photoshop's* File Browser, the software provides a more obvious method of managing your images into collections, viewing images by dates, associating keywords with images and carrying out the most basic adjustments.

Output options include regular print and email varieties such as automated image optimisation, while PDF support allows you to create a universally accepted PDF slide show in minutes. Alternatively, you could choose to create a web gallery using customisable templates and upload them to your web server.

Adobe has been quick to identify a distinct market for reduced applications such as *Photoshop Elements* and *Premiere Elements 1.0*, the popular video-editing tool for the home camcorder user. But when compared with *Photoshop* itself, professional users will find *Photoshop Elements* limiting.

Photoshop has long ruled the roost among raster image-editing apps. Its massive, comprehensive toolset caters for almost every eventuality. But such an extensive range of options is unnecessary and confusing for the casual user.

Elements successfully focuses on the more fundamental options, choosing to simplify the whole image editing process with direct tools and automated controls to make working with digital imagery a breeze. **arts**



MAC Yes

PC No

PRICE

£34.99

CONTACT

Roxio
01908 278100
www.roxio.co.uk

FEATURES

- Duplicate DVDs
- Quickly copy DVD files to your hard drive
- Create DVD videos from disk images on your hard disk
- Design covers and labels
- Compress commercial disks to standard 4.7GB DVDs
- Copy whole disks or choose to leave out menus, subtitles or special features
- Use dual layer disks (hardware permitting)
- Share DVD burners over a network

SYSTEM

Mac Power PC G3 or later, Mac OS X v10.2.8, 15GB disk space (for copying), DVD burner

FOR

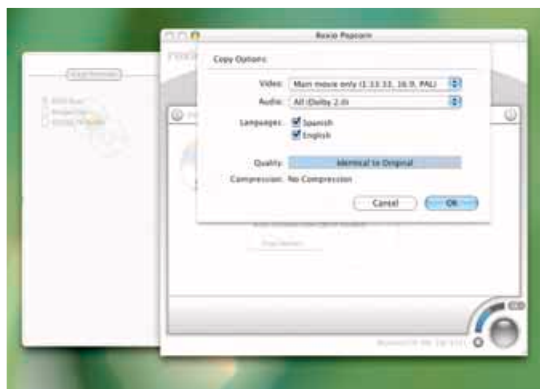
- Fast
- Easy to use
- Good label-printing software

AGAINST

- Disk compression cannot be adjusted
- There are plenty of free alternatives available

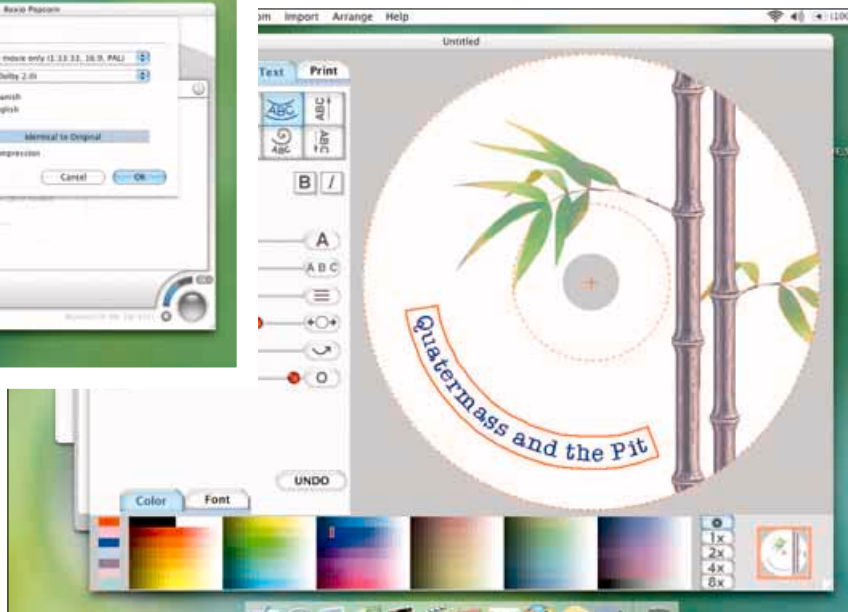
VERDICT

This cheap and easy program boasts great label and sleeve creation tools, and it can easily compress 9GB disks for a 4.7GB recordable. But everything you can do with *Popcorn* you can do for free. So do you do enough DVD copying to make *Popcorn*'s convenience worthwhile?



ABOVE: *Popcorn* makes copying DVDs really easy. Just choose to copy the whole disk, or just the main feature, and you're away.

RIGHT: The software boasts a useful set of text tools designed to make easy work of creating sticky labels for your DVD.



Popcorn 1.0

A SIMPLE, NO-FRILLS WAY TO COPY AND PACKAGE DVDS WITH MINIMUM FUSS

There's no point pretending that *Popcorn* is anything more than a one trick pony. It does a good job of copying DVDs, and that's it.

From just one simple interface screen you can choose to create a DVD directly from a disk, from a video_TS folder or a disk image file. You can also copy from a disk to a video folder or disk image on your hard drive or choose to copy either the entire disk or just the main movie.

Options to customise the copy are fairly basic, too. Once you set the software in motion, the speed of the process will depend entirely on your DVD drive speed (ours took around 45 minutes for a full disk).

When it comes to compression, *Popcorn* does the job, but isn't nearly configurable enough. It'll take a standard shop-bought DVD (which can contain up to 9GB of data) and compress it to fit onto a blank DVD of just 4.7GB. This compression is of a pretty high standard, and the program automatically adjusts so it fills the disk without over compressing. But you can't control it, so it's impossible to put more than one film on a DVD, or create a VCD or S-VCD disk.

RESOURCE

Most commercial DVDs include copy protection. As a result, *Popcorn* won't create backups. Online applications such as *MacTheRipper* will make copies, but stress that they should only be used to create backups of DVDs you already own.

COPY SPEEDS WILL DEPEND ENTIRELY ON YOUR DVD DRIVE

Popcorn isn't really designed to produce non-DVD copies of your movies (coding them as AVIs, or recompressing them to other qualities, for example). It simply produces a mirror image (or a slightly reduced quality version) of your original disk. We think a few compression adjustment tools would be a welcome addition.

One of *Popcorn*'s unsung features, however, is its rather neat cover-design software. This set of templates and text tools allows you to produce DVD covers and disk stickers quickly and easily. There's a selection of backdrops as well as a few basic painting tools and a text path function, which automatically lets you bend text around a disk label. This isn't ground breaking and you could do the same in *Photoshop*, but it's all set up for you and you can be ready to print a cover in minutes.



The great cover-design software provides a range of presets to make light work of packaging your DVDs.

Popcorn won't copy protected DVDs, which includes the vast majority of commercially available disks, and if you try to make illegal copies a helpful pop-up displays a warning message and underlines that Roxio will not condone the download of decrypting programs to assist the production of illegal copyrighted films and DVDs.

Now that DVD has become the medium of choice for anyone producing video, copying and distributing material can be a bit of a chore. But whether it's enough of a chore to make this package desirable will depend on just how much copying you plan to do. **arts**



MAC Yes

PC Yes

PRICE

£79.99

CONTACT

Alien Skin
020 8358 5858
www.alienskin.com

FEATURES

Simulate natural phenomena, including:

- Fire
- Icicles
- Ripples
- Rust
- Smoke
- Snow Drift
- Squint
- Water Drops
- Corona
- Drip

SYSTEM

Photoshop 7, Elements 2,
Paint Shop Pro 8, Fireworks
MX 2004 or later
MAC: 500MHz G3, 256MB
RAM, OS X 10.2.6 or later
PC: 1GHz Pentium III, 256MB
RAM, Windows 2000 or XP

FOR

- Original and high-quality effects
- Excellent Snow Drift effect
- Relatively inexpensive

AGAINST

- Some effects appear a little cheesy

VERDICT

Used sparingly and sensibly, *Eye Candy 5 Nature* can add some amazing effects to your imagery. Snow Drift, in particular, is outstanding. Everything is so easy to apply, and at £80 it's pretty good value, too. If you're into effects, this is a really worthwhile buy.



ABOVE: Snow Drift is by far our favourite *Nature* effect. Believe it or not, this shot of a country cottage was taken mid-summer.

LEFT: Other *Nature* effects can deliver convincing results as long as they're used sparingly. Here, we've applied Squint to create the impression of double-vision.

Eye Candy 5 Nature

THE LATEST INSTALMENT OF ALIEN SKIN'S SEMINAL EYE CANDY AIMS AT THE NATURALIST (NOT NATURIST) IN ALL OF US

Alien Skin is onto a winner with its *Eye Candy* series of *Photoshop* plug-ins – the original *Eye Candy* was released way back in 1994 under the name *Black Box*. Eleven years later, the brand is still going strong – and the second instalment in the latest *Eye Candy 5* series has now arrived.

The first in the series, *Textures* (reviewed in issue 102) was all about generating interesting effects such as fur and metal for use in 2D and 3D illustrations. *Nature*, however, takes a slightly different tack, generating ten different kinds of natural phenomena. The plug-in features four new filters – Icicles, Ripples, Rust and Snow Drift – and six reincarnated and improved *Eye Candy* “classics”.

The interface has seen little change. It's simple and user-friendly and Alien Skin continues to let the effects take centre-stage. A large preview window features a tabbed system containing presets, basic controls over each filter effect and, in most cases, lighting controls.

So on to the effects. Icicles is hardly an everyday affair, but the

filter does have its uses, especially when combined with the other effects. For example, you could use it with Snow Drift to “freeze up” your illustration or photo. The effect

impression of squinting or double-vision.

But undoubtedly *Eye Candy 5 Nature*'s most impressive feature is Snow Drift – it's one of the best filters we've seen in a long time. It does a blinding job of coating your image with a covering of frost or snow (using the dusting settings) to create a convincing winter scene with just a little extra *Photoshop* work (check out the cottage image above if you don't believe us). This process would take days in *Photoshop* alone.

Rust, a little unconvincing in its output, is a small glitch in the *Eye Candy* package, as is Water Drops, which should be used sparingly to create a realistic effect. But all in all, *Eye Candy 5 Nature* is a decent plug-in. Its effects won't be to everyone's taste, and using them within professional artwork requires careful consideration, but, like any effect, used sparingly they'll greatly enhance your imagery and productivity. Alien Skin has impressed us with the first two releases in this series, and we look forward to the final instalment. **arts**

RESOURCE

Check out the Alien Skin website at www.alienskin.com for more examples of what *Eye Candy 5: Nature* can do. In addition, you can easily download Alien Skin products as 30-day, fully functioning trials.

works with selections, too. Just select the area of your image from which you wish icicles to form and then use the sliders to adjust their length, width, density and shape. The preview updates in virtual real-time, although the more complicated the image (and this goes for all the *Eye Candy* effects), the longer the preview will take to render.

Ripples creates reasonably convincing rippled water effects, and the presets are great if you're starting from scratch. The same goes for Fire, Corona, Smoke and Squint, the latter providing a wide range of blur effects to give the

SNOW DRIFT IS ONE OF THE BEST NATURAL FILTERS WE'VE SEEN



MAC Yes

PC Yes

PRICE

Twixtor 4 Pro £318.28
Upgrade (from any previous version) £141.76

CONTACT

Re:Vision Effects, Inc.
www.revisionfx.com
sales@revisionfx.com

FEATURES

- Warping and interpolation of frames
- Smart processing of interlaced material
- Sequence stretching
- Calculation of motion vectors at each pixel
- Keyframeable re-timing
- Motion blur removal
- Re-map audio and video using *After Effects*
- Support for foreground and background separation
- Up to 12 tracking points to guide motion estimation

SYSTEM

MAC: Mac OS X or later
PC: Windows 95/98/NT 4.0/ME/2000/XP
Host applications: *After Effects* 5.0, *Premiere Pro* 1.0, *Final Cut Pro* 4.0, *Combustion* 3.04

FOR

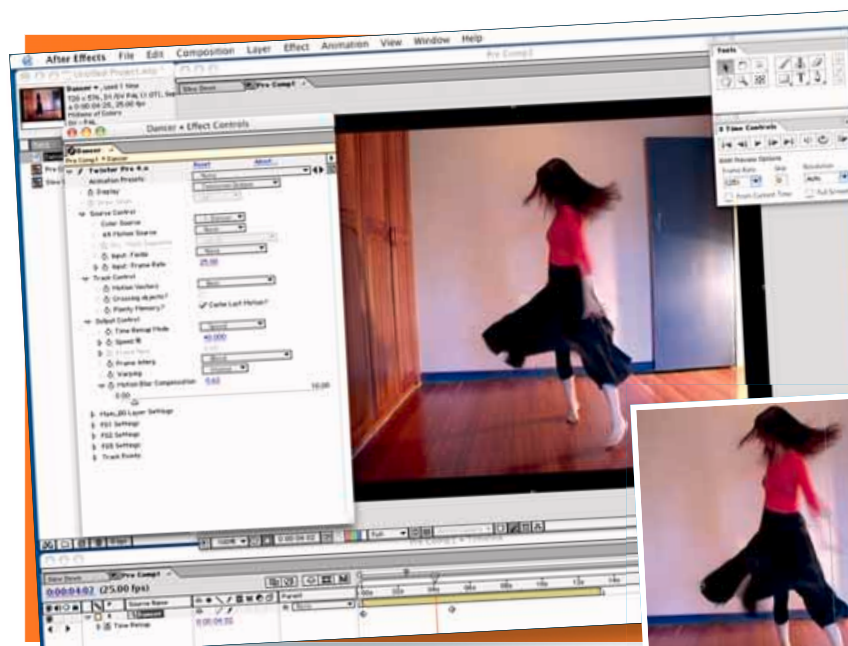
- The best results for time-warped footage
- Excellent frame-rate outputs
- Ability to track motion manually on difficult clips

AGAINST

- Steep learning curve
- Complex interface
- Confusing manual

VERDICT

Twixtor is pretty complex, takes time to get used to, is tricky to use and creates hefty renders. But if you want to change frame rates, or the speed of a clip, this is the plug-in you'll need. We think the results are beautiful and better than anything else currently on the market.



Twixtor Pro 4.0

REALISTIC SLOW MOTION, FILM-LOOK AND ULTRA-FAST FOOTAGE WITHOUT THE NEED FOR A CAMERA

It is often said that the only way to accurately speed up or slow down footage is to use a film camera. Although many video editors happily change the speed of a clip in *After Effects*, the results are often jittery, and never achieve the fluid appearance of slow-motion film. The *Twixtor* plug-in changes all that.

Twixtor Pro 4.0 has several uses, including the ability to change frame rates to create a "film-look", but the most impressive aspect is its ability to speed up or slow down a clip.

By carefully tracking each pixel, and doing calculations so impressive most people couldn't start to understand them, *Twixtor* creates new, smooth frames by warping and interpolating your interlaced footage. As expected, render times can be hefty, but not impractical.

You can speed up or slow down an entire clip, or change the pace at different stages. Imagine you've shot a fight scene, and you want to create an ultra-fast *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* effect, where the punches and kicks happen at supernatural speed. *Twixtor* enables you to speed up those exact moments with incredibly realistic results.

Slow motion, usually so difficult to achieve in DV without flickering frames and overlapping images, has the look and motion of over-cranked film. This, alone, justifies the price.

SLOW MOTION HAS THE LOOK AND FEEL OF OVER-CRANKED FILM

Changes to frame rates produce equally impressive results. You can take interlaced footage and convert it to the same frame rate as film – 24 progressive frames per second – which is essential if you want to print your DV to film, or achieve a film-look on a TV screen.

Most film-look techniques and plug-ins simply reduce vertical resolution. *Twixtor* uses pixel-tracking technology to generate motion blur and frame blending that looks like genuine footage. You can achieve a similar film look with *Magic Bullet*, although *Twixtor's* render times seem much faster.

One of *Magic Bullet's* most appealing features, however, is that

IMAGES FROM TOP:

The fast motion of this dancer is slowed down beautifully, with accurate motion blur and no flickering at all.

Difficult clips can be fine-tuned by tracking points that could otherwise be missed by the plug-in.

Changing the frame rate gives an output with a film-like quality when viewed on a television screen.



RESOURCE

As *Twixtor* is so difficult to use, the tutorials at <http://www.revisionfx.com/rstwxior/tutorials.htm> are well worth a look. They don't exactly simplify things, but they do show you how to apply the filter to achieve a range of really impressive results.

you can apply the filter, let it work out the best settings for you, and then start your render. *Twixtor* is far more complicated. It takes a good few hours to get to grips with the software, and unless you're familiar with filters, frame rates, interlacing and 3:2 pull-down, you might struggle.

In real-world use, *Twixtor* is fiddly, and far from automatic. You are always required to intelligently input settings, sometimes more than once. But at least this gives you the option to track specific pixels in the foreground and background, and ensure that you get exactly the results you planned.

The manuals are part of the problem, filled with annoying asides for each host application, and jargon that many users won't understand. It's surprising that a demo version of the software is available for download, rather than just sample outputs. We think some users might find the *Twixtor* interface so confusing they will give up.

Twixtor is undeniably powerful, and it is worth ploughing through the manuals and fiddling with the settings because the results really are impressive. **arts**



MAC Yes

PC Yes

PRICE

Full version: £107.07

Upgrade: £53.52

Lightwave plug-in: £160.61

CONTACT

DAZ Productions
www.daz3d.com
1-800-267-5170

FEATURES

- Multiple timeline tracks for Phonemes, Expressions, Gestures and Audio
- Fine control over gesture and phoneme morphs
- Import *Poser* characters
- Export P22 files
- Movie and *Flash* export
- 3D lighting
- Real-time video synch
- Enhanced camera controls

SYSTEM

MAC: Mac OS X, *Poser* (v3), G4 500MHz processor, 128MB of RAM, sound card, speakers and microphone
PC: Windows 98, 2000, ME or XP, *Poser* (v3), Microsoft Windows Media Player, 700MHz Pentium class or compatible, 128MB of RAM, sound card, speakers and microphone

FOR

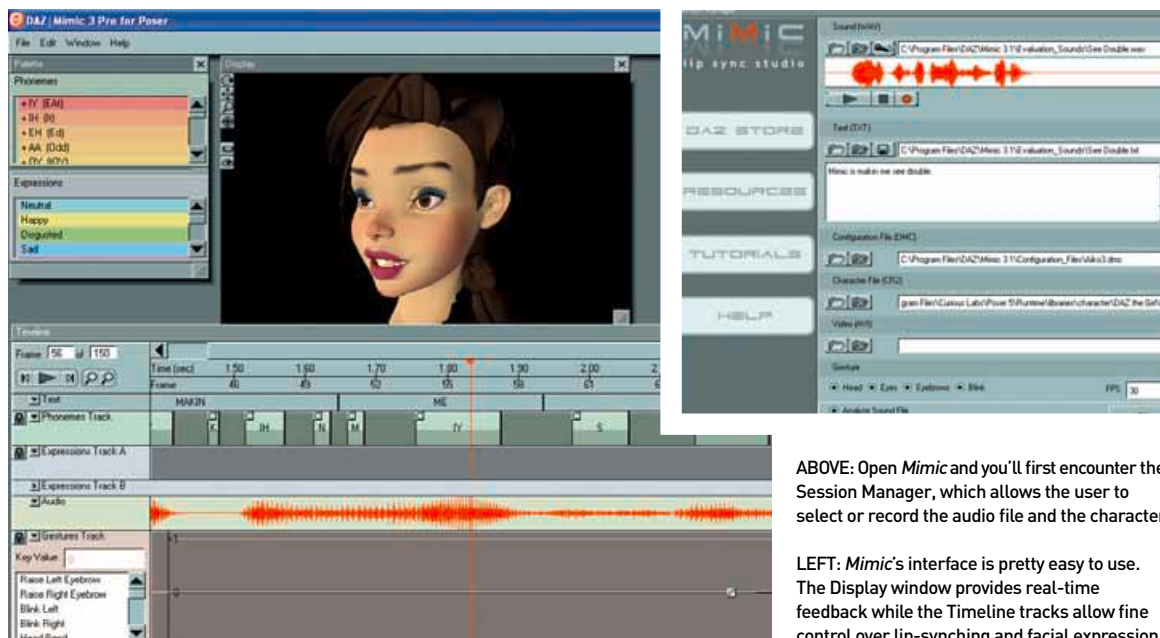
- Facilitates facial animation
- Shallow learning curve
- Good documentation and support

AGAINST

- Limited to facial animation
- Interface needs improvement
- Lacks export options

VERDICT

Although currently limited to facial animation, *Mimic* has a shallow learning curve and a comprehensive PDF manual. At only £53.52 for an upgrade and £107.07 for the full version, this great value app will free-up your time to focus on other aspects of animation projects.



ABOVE: Open *Mimic* and you'll first encounter the Session Manager, which allows the user to select or record the audio file and the character.

LEFT: *Mimic's* interface is pretty easy to use. The Display window provides real-time feedback while the Timeline tracks allow fine control over lip-synching and facial expression.

Mimic Pro 3.1

AN AFFORDABLE LIP-SYNCHING AND CHARACTER ANIMATION TOOL FOR THE MASSES

Hollywood movies featuring CG characters that speak, emote and act, often inspire us to give character animation a go. But when the credits roll it soon becomes clear that it took an army of animators, working with expensive software, years to create the animated characters on screen. So for those working in rather more average situations, upstart DAZ Productions, developer of *DAZ/Studio* and the ever-popular, *Poser*-ready characters and props, has provided a unique solution – *Mimic Pro 3.1*.

One of the most tedious aspects of bringing a CG character to life is speech animation. Thus the basic concept behind *Mimic* is simple – import any audio file (WAV) or record your own with *Mimic's* basic recording tools, and the Talkback engine will attempt to synch the audio to the appropriate mouth position by analysing the phonemes – the smallest units of spoken language – in the file, in a process otherwise known as lip-synching.

Mimic's initial attempts at lip-synching are a little rough, but to refine this the program can also

analyse a phonetic text file in addition to audio files. The phoneme track in the timeline allows users to fine tune the position and strength of the phoneme morphs to easily adjust

THERE ARE NO MORE EXCUSES FOR SLOPPY ANIMATION

RESOURCE

The DAZ website, www.daz3d.com, offers helpful forums for all DAZ software and products. The forums are moderated by the development team so it's quick and easy to get answers to any technical issues.

the lip-synching process, so there are no excuses for sloppy animation.

Mimic is more than just a lip-synching tool. The timeline's Gesture track, for example, allows the entire head and face to be animated with controls for blinking, winking and eye, brow and head movements. Additionally, users can drag-and-drop editable expressions from the Expressions palette into two timeline Expression tracks to create emotions such as, anger, sadness and happiness, or to morph from one expression to another. For added realism or to copy mannerisms the Video window loads live-action video

allowing side-by-side comparisons between live-action and animation.

A major upgrade from previous versions, *Mimic Pro 3.1* is a stand alone app that's capable of rendering basic animations and stills. However, the most practical way to render *Mimic* data is to export to a *Poser* P22 file. This file can then be easily applied to characters within *Poser* or *DAZ/Studio* and rendered. Applications such as *Carrara 4 Pro* and *Shade 7* are capable of importing entire *Poser* scenes and animation data, thus providing *Mimic* users with better and faster rendering than is possible in *Mimic* or *Poser*.

Lightwave users get the best deal. The *Mimic 2* plug-in (£160.61) works directly within the *Lightwave* environment – no exporting or importing needed. Hopefully, DAZ will consider developing *Mimic* plug-ins for other apps – *3ds max*, *Cinema 4D* or even *Carrara Pro* – thus allowing users to bypass *Poser* or *DAZ/Studio* completely.

Mimic sports an easy-to-use interface, though it would be nice to see more preferences and improvements for scrubbing. **arts**



MAC Yes

PC Yes

PRICE

£188

CONTACT

Lexmark
08704 440044
www.lexmark.co.uk

FEATURES

- Four-colour inkjet printing
- Up to 4,800x1,200dpi colour print resolution
- Up to 19,200x19,200dpi enhanced scan resolution
- Fax functionality
- Productivity Suite software
- Sturdy design
- 150-page paper input capacity
- USB 2.0

SYSTEM

MAC: Mac OS X
PC: Windows XP

FOR

- Lots of functionality
- Cheap
- Robust, practical design

AGAINST

- Slow print speeds
- Disappointing print quality
- No manual

VERDICT

Although the X7170 disappoints in a couple of key areas, most noticeably in terms of speed and print quality, it still offers a great deal of functionality for just under £200, and will be of great interest to small office users seeking a reliable, budget device for everyday use.



The X7170 crams an impressive amount of technology into its sturdy silver shell.

Lexmark X7170

LEXMARK DOESN'T QUITE LIVE UP TO ITS REPUTATION WITH THIS BASIC MULTI-FUNCTION DEVICE

The rise of the multi-function device over the past few years has found the major printer and scanner manufacturers doing their level best to cram as much technology as they can into a single package. The move makes sense, though, as improvements in technology continue to drive prices ever downwards.

The Lexmark X7170 falls straight into this hybrid category. It's a neat and compact printer, scanner and fax all-in-one that comes in at under £200. It even finds time to help you out with the creation of PDFs.

Aimed squarely at the small business or home worker, the X7170 is certainly not looking to take on professional scanners or printers, hence its low price tag, but it does offer all the day-to-day functionality required by a small studio.

But how does the X7170 perform? Printers are Lexmark's key area of expertise, of course – and many have a reputation for speed – so you'd think the X7170 would perform just as well. Not quite. In fact, in terms of straightforward printing it was disappointingly slow, outputting pages at a draft speed of 15ppm

(colour) and at 22ppm (mono), with normal speeds of just 6ppm (colour) and 15ppm (mono).

Print quality, especially in colour, is hardly breathtaking, with

PDF creation and the ability to scan and edit text. This package may be basic, but it's easy to operate and likely to prove useful. Using the Manage Photo feature, for example, you can resize, enhance and reposition images from within a library and then print them, fax them or turn them into a PDF file.

In terms of overall design, the X7170 is housed in a sturdy silver and dark grey plastic shell, with a clip-in black plastic automatic document feeder that rests on top. The glass panel cover feels tough and opens stiffly, making the X7170 feel like a sturdy machine that will more than likely stand up to a good deal of everyday wear and tear.

The printer comes complete with a short set-up guide, but no manual. Still, it's fairly easy to hook up and operate. It also comes with a standard one-year limited warranty, plus the option to phone a technical support line and seek help online.

As a printer or scanner, the X7170 is by no means the best performer in its price range, but as a versatile multi-function device for the cost-conscious small business or design studio, it more than satisfies. **arts**

RESOURCE

Why not use some of the money you saved on the X7170 to pay for an extended warranty? The Lexmark Service Pack can extend the warranty on your new purchase by up to four years. Visit the website or call 08704 440044 to find out more.

THE SCANNER TAKES ON COLOUR AND MONO AT A REASONABLE PACE

smudging on mono prints and blurring in colour, but at this price and with all those extra features, this quality is perfectly acceptable.

However, when it comes to scanning images, the X7170 does a much speedier job, taking on both colour and mono subjects at a reasonable pace. Mono pages appear in 25 seconds on normal settings and colour images take just over a minute. Results, again, are mixed, with some fine detail and shading lost along the way.

One real bonus is the bundled Lexmark Productivity Suite, which offers a number of ways to create, share and manage your documents, including basic image enhancement,



MAC Yes

PC Yes

PRICE

£569

CONTACT

Xchange International
020 7490 4455
www.xchangeuk.com
www.chartbot.com

FEATURES

- Create charts and graphs
- One-step chart creation
- Auto-layout of labels and values
- Variable depth and viewing angles
- Alter colour, dashing and width of graphics
- Supports CMYK and spot colours
- Reformat text and labels

SYSTEM

Works with *QuarkXPress* 4.1 through 6.0 and *InDesign* 1.5, 2 and CS

MAC: OS 9 or OS X; for printing: PostScript Level 2 or 3 printer (or compatible) only; for PDFs: *Acrobat* 5 or 6.0 *Distiller* only

PC: Windows, a PostScript printer or *Acrobat Distiller*

FOR

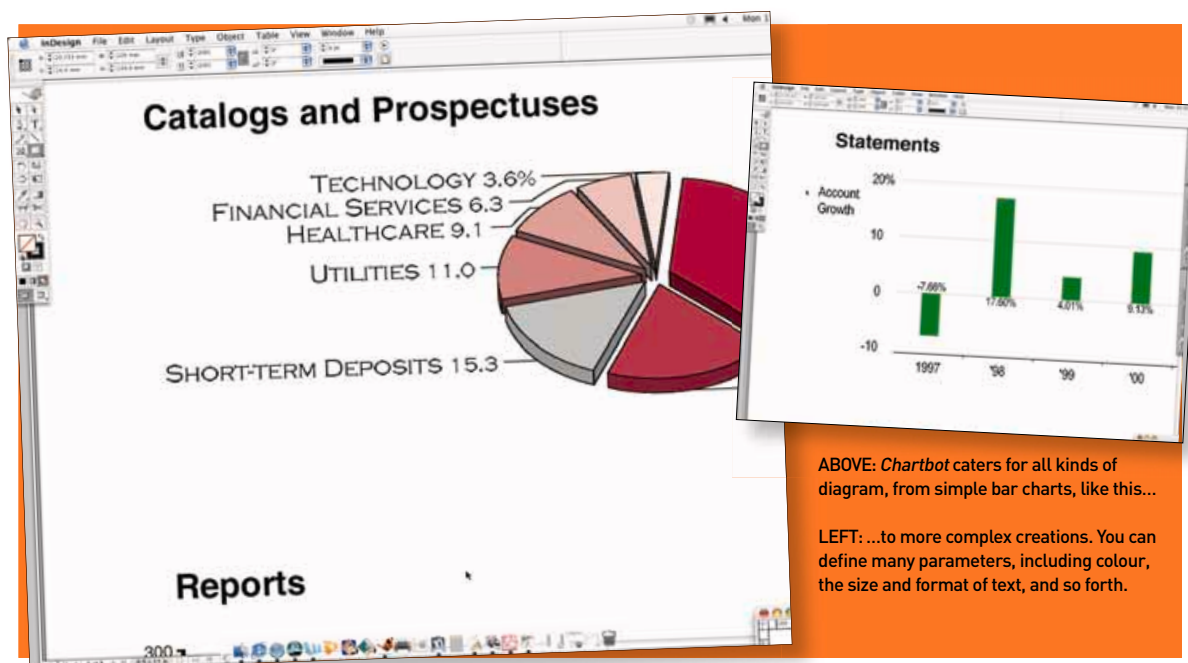
- Great graphics
- Works within *XPress* and *InDesign*

AGAINST

- Steep learning curve
- Expensive

VERDICT

Chartbot's ability to work as a chart and graph-creating solution from within *InDesign* and *QuarkXPress*, obviating the need to boot up another app, should be applauded. The results are uniformly excellent, but the process is a little tricky, which may deter some users.



ABOVE: *Chartbot* caters for all kinds of diagram, from simple bar charts, like this...

LEFT: ...to more complex creations. You can define many parameters, including colour, the size and format of text, and so forth.

Chartbot

CREATE FULLY CONFIGURABLE CHARTS AND GRAPHS DIRECTLY WITHIN INDESIGN OR XPRESS

Mention plug-ins to most designers and they'll instantly begin to imagine faraway worlds, psychedelic patterns and a host of special effects to be criminally abused and overworked in *Photoshop* or *After Effects*.

But aside from the world of stunning visuals, a whole subculture of more restrained extensions and plug-in enablers also exist. While hardly exciting in visual design terms, these enable designers to automate and simplify many of the painstaking and tedious tasks that can make or break a job.

Chartbot, an app geared to work within *InDesign* and *QuarkXPress*, is one such device. It helps designers working on high-volume corporate briefs to create data-driven charts and graphs without ever having to leave their DTP program.

Usually, a designer would use *Illustrator* or *Excel* (perhaps even *DeltaGraph*) to prepare an Encapsulated PostScript (EPS) file or PDF, then import the results into *InDesign* or *XPress*. A straightforward process, sure, but *Chartbot's* developers reckon it's a

tad cumbersome for high-volume, low-cost print runs – with corporate brochures, for instance, where you regularly need to check and even manually rework files at speed.

PIE CHARTS AND BAR GRAPHICS ARE THE BEST OF THE BUNCH

RESOURCE

To see how this plug-in reconfigures stats "live", try out the online demo at www.chartbot.com/ChartBotDemo.htm. Note how the app intelligently recalibrates the chart to suit your changes.

Because *Chartbot* works within both *InDesign* and *XPress* and uses EPS files, you don't need to pop into another app midway through design – which should seriously speed up the process of chart creation.

Once you've opened up an *InDesign* or *XPress* document and created a box for your chart, you simply import a *Chartbot* EPS file into your document, select the type of chart you want (line, bar or pie), then label the chart axes, add values, edit text and so forth in a series of on-screen boxes. *Chartbot* now creates the graphic from scratch. This basic procedure covers

only the most elementary of charts, but the plug-in does enable you to customise your graphic to make things more interesting. For instance, by entering particular commands, you can angle the chart, add 3D effects, even change the way a plotted graph looks, among other options. The pie charts and bar graphics are undoubtedly the best of the bunch.

Although results can be good, creating charts isn't quite as simple as all that. The lack of dropdown menus – oddly, data is input via a series of boxes – makes the procedure more difficult than necessary, and gives the package a rather old-school air. You also need to enter values in a very specific way to activate an effect, which leaves things wide open for error.

Still, *Chartbot* comes with a detailed 123-page PDF manual that explains exactly how to create all of the effects you're likely to need, and the results certainly look impressive. It's just a shame creating the graphs isn't as straightforward as it could be. The steep learning curve certainly doesn't help. **arts**

SUDAN EMERGENCY



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BOOKS

Get your hands on these great design reads

↓ BOOK OF THE MONTH

THE DESIGN ENCYCLOPEDIA

AUTHOR: Mel Byers

PRICE: £40

PUBLISHER: Laurence King

ISBN: 1-85669-349-X



While encyclopedic tomes covering dusty academic subjects such as fine art, architecture, typography and graphic design are fairly thick on the ground, the area of product and furniture design has been less well served.

Aiming to fill that gap and address the subject through a wide-reaching and scholarly work is *The Design Encyclopedia* – a hefty book by design historian Mel Byers that sets out to provide a one-stop reference guide.

Covering a period from 1870 to the present day and backing up the 3,500 entries with over 700 colour illustrations, *The Design Encyclopedia* provides an overview of the field, from Alessi's iconic and ubiquitous lemon squeezer to Zanotta's much copied inflatable armchairs.

While strong on hard facts, background biographies, key work and awards, *The Design Encyclopedia* falls down somewhat in terms of analysis and comparison. A major designer such as Charles Eames, for example, is allocated a fair chunk of space, but in a lengthy biographical round-up we learn only that he is one of the most "influential furniture designers of the 20th century". There's a year-by-year breakdown of major and minor work, exhibitions and suggested further reading lists, but we would've liked to see more examples of Eames's most famous work and contribution to design history.

Where the book succeeds, though, is in the sheer breadth of the subjects covered – from cutting-edge high-tech designers such as Apple's head of industrial design Jonathan Ive to vacuum cleaner guru James Dyson; Byers covers pretty much everyone who ever took it upon themselves to design something.

If you want analysis, there are more in-depth books on individual periods and designers, but for a thorough overview, this does a great job.



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↓ ALSO RECOMMENDED



THE BEST OF BROCHURE DESIGN 8

AUTHOR: Willoughby Design Group

PRICE: £29.99

PUBLISHER: Rockport

ISBN: 1-592-53121-0

The eighth instalment in this long-running series rounds up the best of international brochure design and provides a wealth of ideas for choosing type, layout and photo treatments. One of the most difficult areas of design finally gets the attention it deserves.



PHOTOSHOP CS TRICKERY & FX

AUTHOR: Stephen Burns

PRICE: £22

PUBLISHER: Charles River Media

ISBN: 1-584-50297-5

A standard and lengthy guide to a range of *Photoshop* tricks, focusing on creating fantasy images, animal-to-human face morphing and sci-fi scenes. Good step-by-step instructions, but most of the images created are pretty cheesy.



SHADER X3 ADVANCED RENDERING WITH DIRECTX & OPENG

AUTHORS: Wolfgang Engel

PRICE: £28

PUBLISHER: Charles River Media

ISBN: 1-584-50357-2

This collection of articles by industry experts provides an array of practical, ready-to-use shader tricks and techniques. Well illustrated and easy to follow, it's an indispensable guide for those needing help with vertex and pixel shaders.





→ GROUP TEST

WORKSTATIONS

Today's workstations must perform a multitude of tasks to satisfy the needs of ever-demanding designers, but just how powerful do they need to be? We test five of the best to find out

If you work in the creative industry, your computer could be called upon to perform a vast range of tasks – photo retouching, web design, video editing, 3D animation and audio restoration to name but a few. Some of these tasks can be achieved using processors that are up to two or three generations old, but there are some applications that make even the most powerful processor appear sluggish. So when you move into video rendering or 3D, CPU and GPU (central processing unit and graphics processing unit) power is at a premium.

CPUs have become much faster and more sophisticated as manufacturers realise that mere megahertz can no longer provide the required performance gains. Innovations such as hyper threading, 64-bit memory access, and optimised multimedia extensions all help to boost performance.

When it comes to graphics processors, more complex instructions, as well as more versatile rendering engines, help today's leading edge

graphics cards to get more done in each clock cycle, in turn enabling the cards to handle more detailed and realistic scenes in real-time.

Factors such as fast memory and hard-drive speed can also play a part in the creation of a computer that feels livelier and more productive to use.

We sought out five of the leading workstation manufacturers and requested systems that would be ideal for serious creative users, ranging in price from £2,000 to £5,000. Although we didn't specify an exact processor or graphics accelerator configuration, it's interesting to see that no one really agrees on what constitutes the perfect system.

Some manufacturers opted for blistering performance, some chose more affordable systems, and others concentrated on the graphics sub-system. So read on to find out who, in our opinion, provided the best workstation in town...

Illustration by Scott Hansen, www.iso50.com



3D BOXX P90



PRECISION 670MT P90



3D WORKSTATION P91



INTELLISTATION P91



RM WORKSTATION P92



GROUP TEST



3D Boxx

MAC Yes PC Yes PRICE £3,715

CONTACT +1 512-835-0400 www.boxxtech.com

We at *Computer Arts* were interested to see how one of the biggest North American specialist manufacturers would compare to the best the UK had to offer and were immediately impressed by the custom case, and the presentation, of the 3D Boxx system. The machine, manufactured by Boxx Tech, is impeccably constructed and tidily assembled with no flapping wires inside. There's plenty of room for expansion too, with space for four extra hard drives and three 5.25-inch drives.

The system uses dual 2.4GHz Opteron processors, the fastest Opteron-based solution in this round-up. In fact, when it comes to benchmarking, the Sandra Dhrystone MIPS (million instructions per second) and FPU MFLOPs (millions of floating point operations per second) tests placed it second only to the RM machine with its dual 3.6GHz Xeon processors.

The system includes a Quadro FX 4000, of which we had great expectations. After all, this card's on a par with the 3DLabs Realizm 800 and costs £1,500. True to form, the SpecView Perf 8 scores placed it second only to the ATI FireGL 7100 in the RM machine – something of a surprise when you consider that the 7100 costs about half as much and offers 50 per cent more performance.

The system boasts 2GB of DDR400 memory configured in dual channel mode for optimum bandwidth, and four extra slots for further memory upgrades.

We were impressed by the hard disk sub-system, too. Two 10,000RPM 74GB SATA drives are striped together via RAID to provide a group-winning 68MB per second of sustained transfer rate.

This system has a long warranty of three years, but its return to base terms will mean great inconvenience should you need to use it.

VERDICT



If you weren't buying this workstation for 3D work, you'd want to knock as much as £1,200 off the price of this machine and choose a lesser graphics card. But overall, the 3D Boxx is extremely balanced and its true 64-bit processors make it a very popular choice.

RESOURCE

To make the most of customer feedback, the Boxx Tech website now features the work of a range of designers who use Boxx kit. To view a range of movie, animation and special effects work visit <http://www.boxxtech.com/asp/cproj.asp>



Precision 670MT

MAC No PC Yes PRICE £4,205.33

CONTACT 0870 907 5818 www.dell.co.uk

Dell's Precision 670MT is an off-the-shelf workstation, with a few minor modifications, so you'd think that the machine would be as optimised as possible. But sadly not.

The Precision uses the same dual 3.6GHz Xeon processors as the RM workstation, yet for some reason it underperforms in both sets of processor benchmarks. But it's the floating point tests in which the system fares particularly badly, and this shortfall results in a rendering time that's some 25 per cent slower than the RM system.

Whether this slow render time comes down to differences in motherboard architecture, memory configuration, or some even less obvious factor, we can't be sure, but the slow rendering feels almost as if hyper-threading has been disabled, although we wouldn't expect this to factor in the FPU results.

The Precision workstation is the only system with 2GB of RAM and

offers two 1GB sticks instead of four at 512MB. This increases your upgrade options – an important factor for a system that's theoretically capable of addressing exabytes of memory thanks to its impressive extended memory architecture processors.

The system only comes with an FX1300 graphics card, which sits at the entry-level of nVidia's workstation cards. It's certainly capable, but many times slower than the group leaders. As a result, while this system can handle 3D perfectly well, you really wouldn't want to handle large, complex scenes with it on a regular basis.

The Precision 670MT has a custom case that weighs a ton, and it appears to have a non-standard motherboard too, but everything you see inside is beautifully designed. However, from experience, Dell systems can be pretty pricey to repair if anything goes wrong.

VERDICT



The Precision is not as powerful as it should be when you consider the expensive processors it boasts. But the budget has been allocated in other areas – the twin 160GB hard drives and massive custom server case, for example. This is an overpriced all-rounder, rather than a strong 3D workstation.



3D Workstation

MAC No PC Yes PRICE £3,399.28

CONTACT 01923 225 550 www.armari.co.uk

Everything you know about workstations says this machine is wrong. It's tiny. It's bright red. It's not at all upgradeable. It's ultra-quiet. It's gimmicky. You'd be forgiven for moving on without giving it a second glance, but you'd miss out.

Some designers may require the ability to push gazillions of shaded polygons around the screen in real-time, but in truth, the majority don't need that kind of power. A balance between moderate processing power and moderate 3D acceleration in a stable, well-constructed system is perfectly acceptable. Furthermore, if you're paying for office space by the square foot, why buy systems that are heavy, produce a lot of heat, and occupy lots of space?

We were sceptical that such a compact system could match the performance of the other full-sized systems on test here, and were also concerned about its ability to dissipate heat. We needn't have worried.

The 3D Workstation uses a Quadro FX3000 and its graphics performance is strictly average, yet strangely, it exceeds the OpenGL performance of the identical card in the IBM system. Measuring DirectX performance, both cards were comparable, and both performed badly. This isn't the best platform for games development or testing.

The dual Opterons perform as you'd expect, and rate more-or-less at the bottom of the table. However, you should figure-in the 64-bit equation when the software finally becomes available.

The system isn't really upgradeable. The only spare PCI slot is covered by the double-width graphics card, and nothing inside the case is easy to get to. But Armari has included loads of USB slots, and a combined seven-in-one flash card reader. Add to that Firewire and external SATA, and for most people there shouldn't be a need to upgrade.

VERDICT



The 3D Workstation may not be as powerful as the other workstations in this round up, and it does look a little quirky, but it is still a pretty serious machine that will be as comfortable rendering as it is handling large OpenGL-rendered datasets.

RESOURCE

Want to see what IBM's IntelliStation has to offer in a bit more detail? Visit <http://www.pc.ibm.com/uk/intellistation/index.html> and take a look at the interactive Visual Tours that show off the entire range in three dimensions.



IntelliStation

MAC No PC Yes PRICE £7,107.75

CONTACT 0800 169 1458 www.ibm.com/uk

Based around dual Opteron processors, on first sight the IBM IntelliStation seems an ideal workstation solution. The Opterons provide performance which – clock speed for clock speed – exceeds the Intel processors.

There's just one problem. While the Opterons are available at speeds of 2, 2.2 and 2.4GHz, Intel's Xeons are now available at speeds approaching 4GHz. But of course it's not all about speed, it's about internal architecture. With its 64-bit design, the Opteron offers substantial improvements in memory handling in the correct environment.

So, in terms of measurable performance, how does this system actually fare? Its raw processing power places it firmly in the middle of this Group Test, losing out to the 2.4GHz Opteron and the 3.6GHz Xeon. However, benchmarks are fallible, and we place our trust in real-world tests.

We loaded a 3ds max sample file scene and turned on Radiosity Lighting. The scene took 11 minutes and 47 seconds to render – the second slowest system, beating only the Armari 2GHz Opteron.

Many other factors affect a workstation's performance: hard drive speed, memory architecture or system optimisation. The IBM IntelliStation has an incredibly fast dual channel SCSI system built into the motherboard, and with an impressive transfer rate of 64.8MB per second, it has a really fast hard drive, even at just 33GB.

The Quadro FX 3000 graphics card makes this a good 3D workstation, but again the system is not optimally configured because the identical card in the Armari system performs significantly better.

At a whacking £7,107, you'd expect to be able to get this system up and running straight out of the box. But sadly, this is far from reality.

VERDICT



The IntelliStation is a competent all-rounder, but it's too slow, too expensive and untidily assembled. It does, however, have a great warranty! In our opinion, there are some far better machines available for a fraction of the price.



GROUP TEST



MAC No

PC Yes

PRICE

£4,130

CONTACT

Research Machines
01235 826165
www.rmt.co.uk

FEATURES

- Dual Xeon 3.6GHz with EMT
- 2GB 400MHz DDR2 dual channel memory
- 256MB FireGL 7100 graphics card with dual digital/analogue outputs
- 76GB Maxtor 7200RPM SATA hard drive
- SoundMax integrated audio
- Built in RAID
- Sony 16X dual layer DVD writer
- Windows XP Pro SP2

FOR

- Fast
- Well constructed
- Versatile

AGAINST

- One-year warranty only
- Small hard drive
- Very noisy

VERDICT

The RM Workstation is equally as adept at real-time graphics as it is at rendering and, as 64-bit apps appear, will become more powerful. RM cut corners on memory and a hard drive that undermines the machine, but it's by far the best on test.



COMPUTER
arts
RECOMMENDED

RM Workstation

A SURPRISINGLY CLEAR WINNER FROM THE RECENTLY REBRANDED RM

Research Machine's (RM) Nimbus terminals took the fun out of computing for a whole generation of schoolchildren, so it's surprising to see that the company is now re-branding itself as a supplier of professional workstations. What's more, they seem rather good at it. Perhaps all those years of working within miserly local budgets has taught them a thing or two?

The system uses dual Xeon processors – the new processors with EMT (extended memory technology) built in – running at 3.6GHz. This is Intel's response to AMD's true 64-bit processors. While it's still not the same as 64-bit processing throughout, it does enable the CPU to use 64-bit memory addressing, and this overcomes a primary architectural limitation of 32-bit computers – their

ability to communicate with only 2GB of memory (or 3GB with trickery!).

When we were benchmarking these processors, the noise levels from the machine rose dramatically. We assumed it was a misaligned CD, but it turned out to be the processor fans. RM says that this is due to the system's graduated processor performance. The processors only deliver the power needed to achieve a task – a great power-saving feature, but in the design industry there will always be long periods of time when the processors are working flat out. RM says that it's looking into noise reduction systems, which we think it desperately needs.

The processors delivered the best scores in all of our tests, and the 3ds max rendering test proved that these scores do translate into real-world time savings.

ABOVE: Changing markets: Research Machines has made a successful move into the workstation space.

ABOVE LEFT: With just four USB ports, the RM Workstation offers limited connectivity options.

The system's PCI Express FireGL 7100 graphics card was the group winner, exceeding the far more expensive Quadro FX4000 in every test. The fact that it also produced a superlative DirectX rating makes this a great all-round development platform for games – build models in OpenGL, and test them under DirectX.

But there is a drawback. Although this machine comes with 2GB of memory, the motherboard has only four memory slots, and these are all occupied. It would have better served the user if RM had used 1GB sticks instead of 512MB.

With few additional drive bays, and only four USB ports, this is not the most expandable of the systems on test here. Perhaps RM should have included more than just a 76GB drive. After all, you can buy 200GB drives for next to nothing.

RESOURCE

Confused about the range of workstations on offer? Not sure which kit is best for you? Why not let *Computer Arts* help you out. Just visit www.computerarts.co.uk/compareprices and we'll do the hard work for you.



CONCLUSION

We wanted this workstation round up to cover machines that would be suitable for a variety of creative disciplines. However, we soon realised that most projects either don't require workstation performance, or require equipment so specialist that you'd need to build a custom machine from the ground up.

Nowadays, when people talk about creative workstations, they're primarily talking about one of two areas of creativity: 3D or video. While video can require specialist hardware such as encoding and capture cards, genlocks and the like, the main attributes in a video

workstation are large, fast drives, lots of memory and a powerful processor. By good fortune, the exact same attributes are the core of a powerful 3D machine too, although you can add a decent 3D accelerator to the list if you plan to handle large data sets.

We tried to consider the balance of factors in a good workstation, and although price was not a major issue, value was. In other words, we didn't mind spending a lot of money provided the cost was justified. It quickly became apparent that most manufacturers primarily cater to the 3D market. With that in mind, we think you

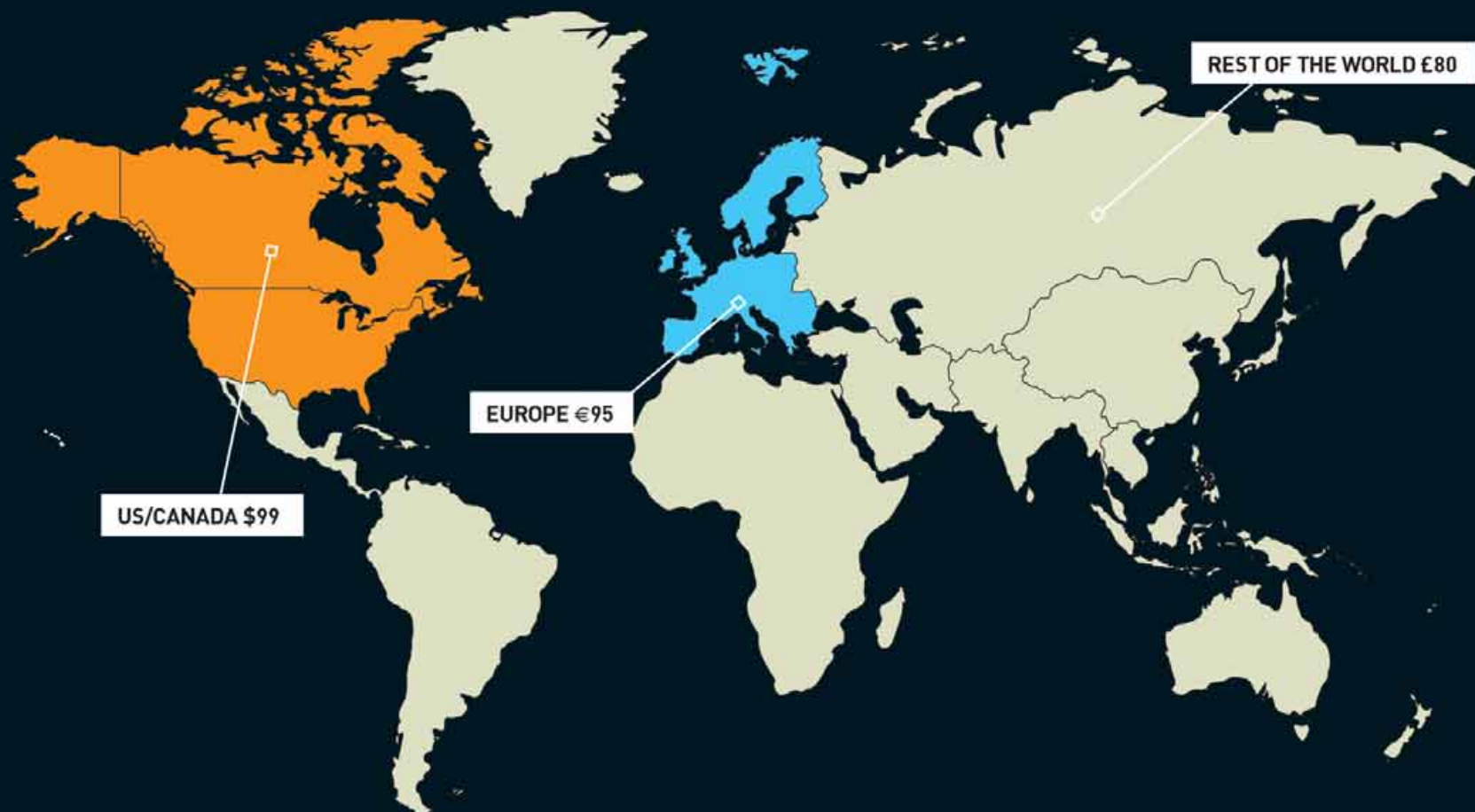
could knock as much as £1,200 off the price of some of these systems if 3D is not important to you.

It was easy to choose the winner. The RM Workstation offers outstanding performance in the two main areas of processing: 3D acceleration and general number crunching. That means that it'll feel lively and responsive as you create your designs and, if you need to do any rendering, will make you wait the least amount of time per frame. With its EMT Xeon architecture, it also gives you the flexibility to deal with 64-bit memory addressing when the software to support it becomes available. **arts**

WORKSTATION	3D BOXX	PRECISION 670MT	3D WORKSTATION	INTELLISTATION	RM WORKSTATION
					
PROCESSOR/S	Dual Opteron 2.4GHz	Dual Xeon 3.6GHz	Dual Opteron 2.0GHz	Dual Opteron 2.19GHz	Dual Xeon 3.6GHz EMT
MEMORY	2GB dual channel DDR 400	2GB 400MHz DDR2	2GB 400MHz DDR	2GB dual channel DDR 400	2GB DDR 2
GRAPHICS CARD	nVidia Quadro FX4000	nVidia FX1300	nVidia Quadro FX3000	nVidia Quadro FX3000	ATI Fire GL V7100
GRAPHICS	AGP 8X	PCI Express	AGP 8X	AGP 8X	PCI Express
GRAPHICS MEMORY	256MB	128MB	256MB	256MB	256MB
MONITOR OUTPUTS	2xDVI	2xRGB	2xDVI or VGA	2xDVI	2xDVI
AUDIO	nVidia NForce	SoundMax	Realtek AC97	Realtek AC97	SoundMax
DRIVE/S	Pioneer 16x dual layer DVD/RW	DVD CD/RW	Sony 16x dual layer DVD/RW	DVD/RW	Sony 16x dual layer DVD/RW
USB	6xUSB 2	6	8	3	4
FIREWIRE	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
HARD DRIVE	2x74GB	2x160GB	250GB Hitachi Deskstar	IBM-EXSX 36.4GB	76GB Maxtor
DRIVE SPEED	10,000RPM/68MB/s	7,200RPM/51.6MB/s	7,200RPM/58.4MB/s	10,000RPM/64.8MB/s	7,200RPM/55.4MB/s
DRIVE INTERFACE	SATA	SATA	SATA	SCSI	SATA
RAID?	RAID 1 – mirrored	RAID 0 – striped	RAID 1 – mirrored	Yes – but not configured by default	Yes – but not configured by default
OPERATING SYSTEM	XP Pro SP 2	XP Pro SP 2	XP Pro SP 2	XP Pro SP 1	XP Pro SP 2
WARRANTY	3 years RTB	3 years NBD	1 year on-site	3 years on-site	1 year on-site
SCORE	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★☆	★★★	★★★★★

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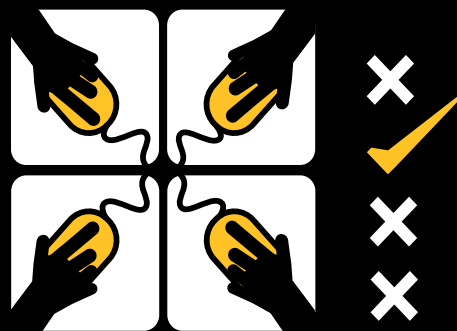
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BUYER'S GUIDE



MOTION GRAPHICS DESIGNER

If you're into motion graphics, the latest digital video software is a must, bolstered by the best plug-ins you can afford, a decent DVD writer and a top monitor. Check overleaf for our recommendations.

For the best bargains online, remember to take a look at www.computerarts.co.uk/compareprices

What sort of designer are you?



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BUYER'S GUIDE

→ GRAPHICS AND LAYOUT SOFTWARE

WHAT TO BUY?



ILLUSTRATOR CS
This industry-standard graphics software is vital for all print designers.



QUARKXPRESS 6.5
Classic page layout software gets a new look in version 6.5 and costs £1,169.



EYE CANDY 5: TEXTURES
Ten great *Photoshop* plug-ins for effects, including fur, brick wall, reptile skin and diamond plate – all for only \$99.



EPSON PERFECTION 2580 PHOTO
Colour flatbed scanner with automatic film loader and image editing software. Costs £99.

NAME	MAC PC?	DESCRIPTION	MANUFACTURER	PRICE	WEBSITE	ISSUE	VERDICT
ILLUSTRATOR CS	Mac PC	Industry standard vector graphics software – a vital tool for anyone who needs to design for print or the web.	Adobe	£511	www.adobe.co.uk	89	★★★★★ Offers smaller improvements across the board, but not exactly what you'd call a huge upgrade.
PHOTOSHOP CS	Mac PC	The design daddy, the creative king, and the industry standard professional image editor.	Adobe	£605	www.adobe.co.uk	89	★★★★★ Plenty of improvements across the board make this a more versatile tool than ever.
FREEHAND MX	Mac PC	An easy-to-learn graphics environment for designing illustrations and organising data for print/web or <i>Flash</i> .	Macromedia	£299	www.macromedia.com	82	★★★★★ A rock-solid release that offers a plethora of invaluable tools.
INDESIGN CS	Mac PC	Adobe's DTP upstart comes of age as <i>QuarkXPress</i> -killer <i>InDesign</i> approaches industry-standard status.	Adobe	£716	www.adobe.co.uk/products/indesign	67	★★★★★ <i>InDesign</i> now simply amazes – and utterly trounces <i>QuarkXPress</i> .
PAINTER IX	Mac PC	The number one natural media tool now delivers an Artists' Oils system, a batch of KPT filters, and more.	Corel	£249	www.corel.co.uk	102	★★★★★ If you want realistic digital paint, there really is no other option.
QUARK XPRESS 6.5	Mac PC	Latest iteration offers expanded Print Styles, expanded PDF generation and Vista Xtension.	Quark	£1,169	euro.quark.com/en	104	★★★★★ Not quite the <i>InDesign</i> killer many were hoping for, but the tweaks bode well for <i>XPress 7</i> .
SIZEFIXER	PC	Enlarge your digital images by a staggering 400 per cent with no loss in quality.	FixerLabs	£149	www.fixerlabs.com	104	★★★★★ Makes some bold claims, but delivers – you can stretch images to breaking point.
PRINTDEVIZOR 1.0	Mac PC	3D print-finish simulator that avoids the expense of mock-ups or chromalins.	Stonecube	£495	www.stonecube.com	105	★★★★★ A great idea, especially if you work in this field, but it fails to cater for Pantone colours.
PORTFOLIO 7	Mac PC	Leading asset-management software, now expanded to include a direct-to-web publishing feature.	Extensis	\$200	www.extensis.co.uk	100	★★★★★ Nothing can touch the power of this long-respected and valuable asset management solution.
ACROBAT 7 PROFESSIONAL	Mac PC	Assemble multiple files, design PDF forms and enjoy new-press tools with this latest version.	Adobe	£464	www.adobe.co.uk	105	★★★★★ More evolution than revolution, this tool balances tweaks with new features.
FOLDUP! 3D 1.5	Mac PC	Feature-packed virtual packaging software that can turn your 2D designs into fully exportable 3D models.	Xchange International	£292	www.comnet-network.co.jp	105	★★★★★ It'll only appeal to specialists, but it works well and extends <i>Illustrator's</i> abilities.
INSTANT PDF	Mac PC	Streamlined <i>Acrobat</i> substitute with automatic PDF Queue set-up and job-in-progress monitoring.	Enfocus Europe	£140	www.enfocus.com	106	★★★★★ This offers a wide range of functions, is relatively simple to use and delivers great results.

→ PLUG-INS

NIK COLOR EFEX PRO	PC	Fantastic set of powerful digital photographic filters for <i>Photoshop</i> and <i>Paintshop Pro</i> .	Nik Multimedia	£280	www.nikmultimedia.com	94	★★★★★ You could create the effects for yourself in <i>Photoshop</i> , but they'd take longer.
SAPPHIRE	Mac PC	Generate superb effects with this 175+-strong suite of movie-quality plug-ins.	GenArts	\$1,699	www.genarts.com	98	★★★★★ Without a doubt, the best plug-ins you can buy – but they come at a professional price.
PARTICULAR	Mac PC	Neatly integrated <i>After Effects</i> plug-in suite, comprising natural and technical effects.	Trapcode	£199	www.trapcode.com	99	★★★★★ Stunning, beautifully put together and boasting endless creative possibilities.
EYECANDY 5: TEXTURES	Mac PC	Ten <i>Photoshop</i> plug-ins, including Fur, Brick Wall, Diamond Plate, Marble, Reptile Skin and Swirl.	Alien Skin	\$99	www.alienskin.com	102	★★★★★ A fun, versatile and (mostly) useful set of filter effects that'll suit pros and amateurs alike.
PATTERNMAKER 1.0	Mac PC	<i>InDesign</i> plug-in offering 15 individual patterns with highly adjustable parameters and a simple interface.	Teacup software	£50	www.teacupsoftware.com	106	★★★★★ An effective way to create interesting background patterns for any <i>InDesign</i> document.
BACKDROP DESIGNER	Mac PC	Create an interesting array of backdrops in <i>Photoshop</i> , complete with configurable shadows and lighting.	Digital Anarchy	\$199	www.digitalanarchy.com	106	★★★★★ Extremely useful, if a little pricey, and the interface makes things more difficult than necessary.
CREATIVE PACK	Mac PC	Three great embossing filters (Boss Emboss, Organic Edges and Wavy Colour), plus Vibrant Patterns.	Flaming Pear	\$39	www.flamingpear.com	106	★★★★★ A great set of tools that will help transform your images with a painterly look.
XENOFEX 2	Mac PC	14 specific effects filters that make full use of the popular <i>Eye Candy</i> interface.	Alien Skin	\$129	www.alienskin.com	106	★★★★★ A great performer, but the filters only answer specific needs. Great lightning, though.
SCATTERLIGHT LENSES	Mac PC	Provides a host of interesting diffusion, glow, soft focus, fog, stars and glitter effects.	Andromeda	\$98	www.andromeda.com	106	★★★★★ A good range of lighting effects that work simply and quickly with the minimum of fuss.

→ SCANNERS AND PRINTERS

HP DESKJET 6540	Mac PC	Can print up to 30ppm (black) and 20ppm (colour). 150-sheet input tray and ink status alert.	Hewlett Packard	£118	www.hp.com/uk	103	★★★★★ Not feature-packed, but delivers good results in both colour and black and white.
HP DESKJET 130NR	Mac PC	Large-format (A1+) printer with 64MB RAM, automated 24-inch roll feed and auto paper cutter.	Hewlett Packard	£1,600	www.hp.co.uk	104	★★★★★ An affordable and robust proofing machine that delivers impressive results.
COLOUR LJ 2550N	Mac PC	Fast warm-up time, 24ppm (mono) and 4ppm (colour) printing times and (upgradeable) 64MB RAM built-in.	Hewlett Packard	£459	www.hp.com/uk	105	★★★★★ A compact and elegant printer, but it desperately needs more memory.
PERFECTION 2580 PHOTO	Mac PC	Colour flatbed scanner with 2,400x4,800dpi, automatic film loader and image-editing software.	Epson	£99	www.epson.co.uk	105	★★★★★ A low-priced yet effective scanner that produces great images, fast. Great auto-loading.
SAMSUNG SLG-550 A4	Mac PC	Colour laser with built-in LCD, 1,200dpi resolution, duplex printing and PostScript Level 3 facilities.	Samsung	£476	www.samsung.co.uk	106	★★★★★ Capable font-handling and 1,200-dpi duplex printing is a boon, but it's not for high-end design.



→ DIGITAL VIDEO

NAME	MAC PC?	DESCRIPTION	MANUFACTURER	PRICE	WEBSITE	ISSUE	VERDICT
FINAL CUT PRO 4	Mac	Emmy Award-winning tool for editing and finishing in SD and HD formats. Used to produce many TV shows.	Apple	£699	www.apple.com/uk/finalcutpro/	86	★★★★★ <i>Final Cut Pro 4</i> is nothing short of superb. Excellent bundled applications, too. arts <small>RECOMMENDED</small>
AVID XPRESS PRO	Mac PC	Sophisticated video editing tool aimed at the higher end of the mid-range market.	AVID	£1,527	www.avid.com/xpresspro	91	★★★★ Twice as expensive as <i>Premiere</i> – but not different enough to warrant the difference.
FINAL CUT EXPRESS 2.0	Mac	Apple's flagship consumer video-editing app strikes a careful balance between features and affordability.	Apple	£199	www.apple.com/uk/finalcutexpress	94	★★★★ The best low-cost editing solution for DV, although effects may frustrate <i>Pro</i> users.
DVD WORKSHOP 2	PC	Consumer-friendly DVD authoring software with many professional features, including real-time previews.	Ulead	£259	www.ulead.co.uk	97	★★★ Easy to use, but much of the (cheaper) competition has caught up since the release of v1.
FINAL CUT PRO HD	Mac	The professional editing application with broadcast quality credentials is now HD compatible.	Apple	£699	www.apple.com/uk	98	★★★★★ Pro features and top interface ensure this pro-level app always delivers. arts <small>RECOMMENDED</small>
AFTER EFFECTS 6.5	Mac PC	Adobe's industry standard app now includes better motion tracking and grain management tools.	Adobe	£664 (Standard)	www.adobe.co.uk	99	★★★★★ New and improved features make this an indispensable tool for the video pro. arts <small>RECOMMENDED</small>
PREMIERE PRO 1.5	PC	Video-editing app with improved project management and broader support for industry formats.	Adobe	£616	www.adobe.co.uk	99	★★★★★ <i>Premiere</i> 's allegiance to Windows ensures superior integration with related titles.
MOTION 1.0	Mac	Apple's entry-level motion graphics software comes with Behaviors and stacks of effects filters.	Apple	\$299	www.apple.com	102	★★★★ Simple and intuitive to use, with many advanced features, <i>Motion 1.0</i> delights on all levels.
VIDEO STUDIO 8	PC	This DV editor offers 128 transitions, DVD authoring functionality, and five audio filters.	Ulead	£50	www.ulead.co.uk	103	★★★★ Offers a wealth of flexible presets and effects filters, but unsophisticated editing tools.
POWER DIRECTOR 3	PC	DV editor with great titling functions, plus 122 transitions and 24 video filters.	GoCyberlink	£50	www.gocyberlink.com	103	★★★★ Will certainly get the job done if you're on a budget, but the DVD authoring is as basic as can be.
LET'S EDIT	Mac PC	DV editor offering 96 standard wipe transitions, a built-in wipe customiser and 26 video filters.	Canopus	£99	www.canopus-uk.com	103	★★★★ Every dialog/menu boasts a wide range of options and controls, but it's not that intuitive to use.
STUDIO PLUS 9	PC	Enjoy 126 transitions, 16 video filters and DVD authoring with this multi-purpose DV editor.	Pinnacle Systems	£60	www.pinnaclesys.com	103	★★★★★ Probably the fastest way to achieve a finished production from your raw footage.
PREMIERE ELEMENTS	PC	Benefit from unlimited video and audio tracks with this entry-level version of <i>Premiere Pro</i> .	Adobe	£69	www.adobe.co.uk	103	★★★★★ Your work may take longer, but the results will speak for themselves. arts <small>RECOMMENDED</small>
VIDEO TOASTER 4	PC	A complete TV studio, with post-production suite thrown in. Includes <i>LightWave 3D</i> and <i>Aura</i> .	NewTek	£2,299	www.newtek.com	105	★★★★ Impressive specs, but you'll need a high-end system to exploit those pro features.

WHAT TO BUY?



AVID XPRESS PRO
Sophisticated video editing tool for professionals, but pricey at £1,527.



ULEAD DVD WORKSHOP 2
This DVD authoring for the masses, complete with real-time preview function, costs £259.

→ 3D SOFTWARE

SHAKE 3.5	Mac PC	Small but effective update for Apple's industry-standard compositing and visual effects application.	Apple	£2,099	www.apple.com/uk/shake	99	★★★★★ Excellent colour correction tools from Apple's pricey but powerful app. arts <small>RECOMMENDED</small>
3DS MAX 7	Mac PC	A popular choice for 3D artists, thanks to its broad toolset and Normal Mapping feature.	Discreet	£2,695	www.discreet.com	105	★★★★ Feature-rich, but it's beginning to show its age. Expensive, too, but many pros swear by it.
MAYA 6	Mac PC	Acclaimed industry-standard visual effects package that delivers a host of great features.	Alias	£1,470	www.alias.com	105	★★★★ A great app for the die-hard character animator or effects artist.
CINEMA 4D R9	Mac PC	Modular design (character animation, 3D painting, etc) gives <i>Cinema 4D</i> the edge in terms of flexibility.	Maxon	£2,199	www.maxon.net	105	★★★★ A superb all-purpose 3D system that can tackle most 3D scenarios. arts <small>RECOMMENDED</small>
MOJO PACK	Mac PC	Compendium of planets, plug-ins, terrain maps and tutorials for planet/landscape-generator <i>MojoWorld</i> .	Pandromeda	\$99	www.pandromeda.com	105	★★★ An interesting collection, but hardly a substitute for a full-on <i>MojoWorld</i> update.
ZBRUSH 2	PC	V2 of this innovative 2D painting/3D modelling hybrid is faster than ever and boasts hi-res mesh support.	Pixologic	\$489	www.pixologic.com	98	★★★★★ A stunning 3D package that sets a new standard for detailed polygon modelling. arts <small>RECOMMENDED</small>
LIGHTWAVE 8	Mac PC	Ten years on, NewTek's 3D stalwart can still cut the mustard, thanks to its strong rendering performance.	NewTek	£995	www.newtek.com	105	★★★★ A great all-rounder, with a relatively easy learning curve. Weak character tools, though..
SOFTIMAGE XSI 4.5	PC	Arguably one of the best balanced high-end 3D apps in terms of features. Caters for NURBS.	Softimage	£1,082	www.softimage.com	105	★★★★★ Superb rendering and a solid character toolset. Not all that easy to use, though.
AMAPI 7 PRO	Mac PC	Latest iteration of Eovia's classic app now comes with a new NURBS kernel and Dynamic Geometry.	Eovia	\$799	www.eovia.com	101	★★★★ A powerful NURBS modeller for the professional designer, modeller or animator.
VUE 5 ESPRIT	Mac PC	The famous 3D landscape generator now comes with Radiosity, GI and HDRI rendering.	e-on software	£171	www.e-onsoftware.com	103	★★★★ Restricted plant generation and modelling tools, but a superb rendering engine.
CARRARA 4	Mac PC	The latest version of Eovia's 3D modeller delivers improved inverse kinematics and a redesigned timeline.	Eovia	£199	www.eovia.com	103	★★★★ Easy for students and amateur designers to learn, but powerful enough to satisfy full-time pros.
PIRANESI 4	Mac PC	Distinctive 2D painting app, geared towards enhancing 3D design. Natural media paintbox included.	Informatix	£450	www.informatix.com	104	★★★★ A true 2D/3D painting hybrid. The ability to import 3D objects is a real boon.
XARA X1	PC	High-quality 3D modeller that offers unrivalled re-draw speeds and a powerful Picture Editor.	Xara	£118	www.xara.com	106	★★★★★ It's hard to find fault with software this good and competitively priced. Easy to use, too. arts <small>RECOMMENDED</small>
IMAGE MODELER 4	Mac PC	3D image-creating app, with scene-measuring tools and the option to export <i>QuickTime</i> VTR files.	RealViz	1,410 euros	www.realviz.com	106	★ A basic shareware 3D package could perform as well as (if not better than) <i>ImageModeler 4</i> .



3DS MAX 7
Highly versatile 3D app tailored towards the videogames and broadcast industries. Sets you back £2,695.



VUE 5 ESPRIT
Just £171 will secure you this superlative 3D landscape generator.



BUYER'S GUIDE

→ GRAPHICS TABLETS

NAME	MAC PC?	SHORT DESCRIPTION	MANUFACTURER	PRICE	WEBSITE	ISSUE	VERDICT
NISIS EASYPEN G6	Mac PC	USB-friendly tablet: active area 304 x 228mm; tablet dimensions: 385 x 347 x 12mm	Nisis	£90	www.nisis.com	99	★★★★ Nearly there in terms of features and usability, but there are irritating signal issues.
GRAPHIRE3 CLASSIC XL	Mac PC	USB-friendly A5 tablet: active area 209 x 159mm; tablet dimensions: 276 x 257 x 18mm	Wacom	£200	www.wacom.com	99	★★★★ Great all-round performer from Wacom, although not in the Intuos league.
INTUOS2 A5 PLATINUM	Mac PC	USB-friendly A5 tablet: active area 203 x 162mm; tablet dimensions: 334 x 258 x 14mm	Wacom	£300	www.wacom.com	99	★★★★★ An incredible, feature-rich tablet that's hard to fault. A5 tablets don't get better.
INTUOS2 A4 REGULAR PLAT	Mac PC	USB-friendly A4 tablet: active area 305 x 241mm; tablet dimensions: 456 x 361 x 14mm	Wacom	£400	www.wacom.com	99	★★★★★ Customisable and easy to use, this is everything you could want it to be.
WACOM INTUOS3	Mac PC	Redesigned A6, A5 and A4 tablets with scroll and Express Key functions, and new Pen Tablet System.	Wacom	£130-£306	www.wacom.com	102	★★★★ Wacom's justly famous; these new tablets are set to attract even more admirers.

→ WEB, ANIMATION, CD/DVD

DVD STUDIO PRO 3	Mac	Create a complete DVD in under 15 minutes with the latest iteration of Apple's pro DVD creation tool.	Apple	£349	www.apple.com/uk	99	★★★★ Stacks of creative features make this perfect for the professional.
GO LIVE CS	Mac PC	Adobe's website design application is sometimes hailed as the Pepsi to Dreamweaver's Coke.	Adobe	£394	www.adobe.com	89	★★★★ The refined look and the feel of this application make it better than ever.
DREAMWEAVER MX 2004	Mac PC	Build and maintain websites and applications with this powerful set of tools.	Macromedia	£339	www.macromedia.co.uk	91	★★★★ Good integration with <i>Contribute</i> ; fully embraces Cascading Style Sheets.
STITCHER 4	Mac PC	Create high quality panoramas and 360-degree <i>QuickTime</i> VR animations in minutes.	RealViz	499 euros	www.realviz.com	95	★★★★ Not the cheapest "sticking together" app around, but still one of the best.
TOON BOOM STUDIO 2.5	Mac	2D animation package that covers everything from scene-planning to preparing output for delivery.	Toon Boom	\$374	www.toonboom.com	98	★★★★ A fantastic all-round package for anyone interested in 2D animation.
FRAME FORGE 3D STUDIO	Mac PC	Professional quality storyboarding 3D software – import scripts, pose figures, set up cameras, and more...	Innoventive Software	\$349	www.frameforge3d.com	100	★★★★★ If you need to visualise your film before shooting, this is an easy solution.
SWIFT3D	PC	The latest version of the <i>Flash</i> 3D app has matured – check out the enhanced modelling environment.	Electric Rain	\$189	www.eran.com	102	★★★★ Approachable and easy to master with a great modelling environment.
FLASH STUDIO PRO2	PC	Enjoy more power and greater functionality in this latest iteration of the industry's leading SWF2EXE app.	Multimedia	£130	www.multimedia.com	103	★★★★ An essential <i>Flash</i> utility for designers who know their limitations.
CAPTIVATE	PC	Redeveloped version of <i>RoboDemo</i> , a screen capture program ideal for distance learning applications.	Macromedia	\$499	www.macromedia.co.uk	103	★★★★ Provides streamlined and professional results via a simple interface.

→ DVD WRITERS/AUTHORING

SONIC DVDIT 5	PC	DVD writing app that sits between Sonic's entry-level <i>MyDVD</i> and the more advanced <i>ReelDVD</i> .	Sonic	£171	www.sonic.com	100	★★★ A useful introduction to the media for savvy creatives, but a little limited.
AHEAD NERO 6 SUITE	PC	A repackaged DVD version of the oft-bundled <i>Nero</i> burner, complete with <i>NeroVision Express 2</i> .	Nero	79 euros	www.nero.com	100	★★ An effective entry-level application aimed solely at consumers, not professionals.
ROXIO CREATOR 7	PC	Complete with pro authoring component <i>DVD Builder</i> and a host of useful DVD-authoring features.	Roxio	£70	www.roxio.com.uk	100	★★★ A comprehensive suite of tools that challenges the options of the <i>Nero</i> bundle.
APPLE DVD STUDIO PRO 3	Mac	Features include render-free transition preview, alpha transitions and <i>Photoshop</i> integration.	Apple	£349	www.apple.com	100	★★★★★ There's no alternative for Mac users serious about creating DVD content.
ADOBE ENCORE DVD 1.5	PC	Features include DV menu previews, <i>QuickTime</i> file support and integrated/background transcoding.	Adobe	£452	www.adobe.com	100	★★★★★ This app provides a strong range of design and authoring options.

→ MONITORS

BENQ FP23W	Mac PC	23-inch widescreen LCD can display 1,920x1,200 pixels and boasts a contrast ratio of 500:1.	BenQ	£1,275	www.benq.co.uk	102	★★★★ An impressive monitor that delivers in terms of both resolution and picture quality.
MICROSCAN A904	Mac PC	19-inch LCD with a resolution of 1,024x768 and 500:1 contrast ratio.	ADi	£395	www.adiuk.com	104	★★★★ A good budget entry monitor, with a punchy image that's fine for low-level usage.
GALLERY 2010 PLATINUM	Mac PC	20.1-inch LCD with a resolution of 1,600x1,200 and 600:1 contrast ratio.	Formac	£746	www.formac.com	104	★★★★ Gorgeous for day-to-day use, but lack of adjustability will dissuade graphics pros.
MULTISYNC LCD2180UX	Mac PC	21-inch LCD with a resolution of 1,600x1,200 and a 400:1 contrast ratio.	NEC	£1,291	www.nec.co.uk	104	★★★★ A gorgeous display, compact yet easy to configure for precise image control.
SDM-P234	Mac PC	23-inch LCD with a resolution of 1,920x1,200 and a 400:1 contrast ratio.	Sony	£1,622	www.sonymstyle.com	104	★★★★ Style-wise, it looks great, but design faults (that backlit logo on the bezel) irritate.
COLOREDGE CG21	Mac PC	21.3-inch LCD with a resolution of 1,600x1,200 and a 400:1 contrast ratio.	Eizo	£1,526	www.eizo.co.uk	104	★★★★★ A masterpiece – if colour accuracy is an issue, look no further.
APPLE 30-INCH HD MONITOR	Mac PC	High-definition [2,560x1,600 pixels] display with 400:1 contrast ratio and 170-degree viewing angle.	Apple	£2,998	www.apple.com	106	★★★★★ A beautifully engineered display that's ideal for professionals. Pricey, though.

WHAT TO BUY?



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The artist's choice – far more accurate for drawing than a mouse, and keenly priced from £130.



SWIFT 3D

Add an extra dimension to your *Flash* work with this fine 3D application, costing \$189.



ADOBE ENCORE DVD 1.5

Encore includes everything you need to make movie-style DVD menus for £452.



ADI MICROSCAN A904

A great choice if you're looking for a 19-inch LCD under £400.



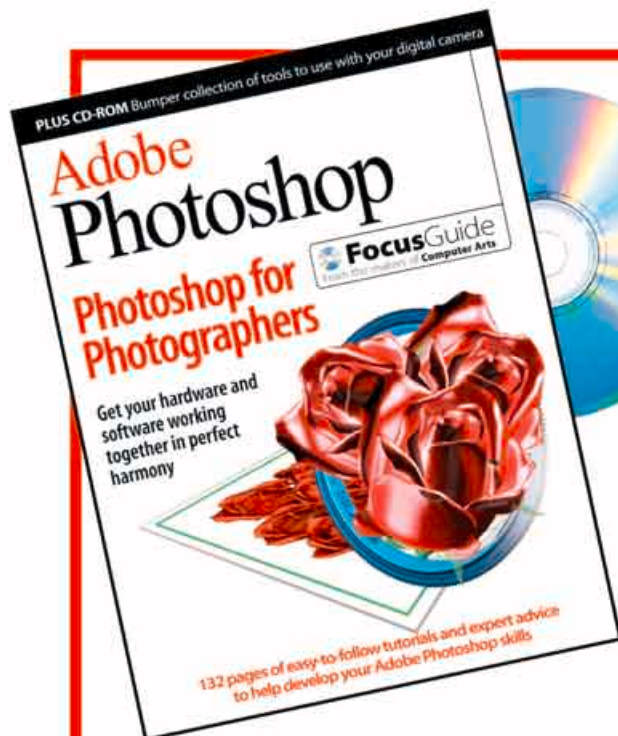
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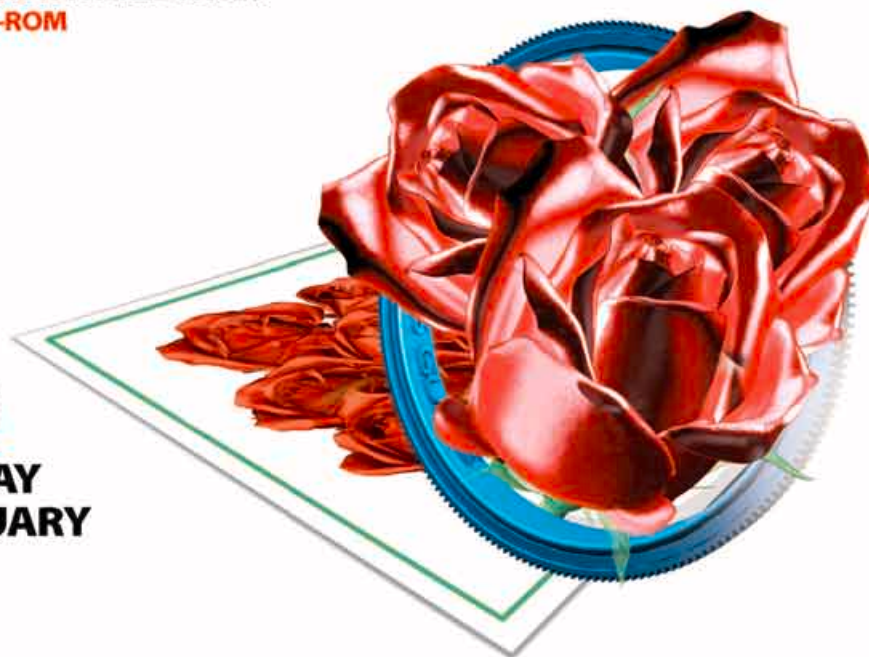
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ON THE CD



WELCOME

On this month's cover CD you'll find an exclusive *Painter IX* starter kit, including a 30-day trial of Corel *Painter IX*, 60 minutes of video tutorials from *Painter* expert Bjarne Kondrup and a 100-minute VTC Corel *Painter 8* video tutorial (for those of you who haven't upgraded to *Painter IX* yet). You'll also find an exclusive seven-page *Photoshop* and *Painter* tutorial on page 25.

In addition, you'll find 15 stock images courtesy of Flat Earth stock photography and ten fonts from URW, as well as the latest software demos of *Mimic Pro 3.0*, *Twixtor* and the latest version of *Acrobat Reader 7*. That should keep you busy. Enjoy!

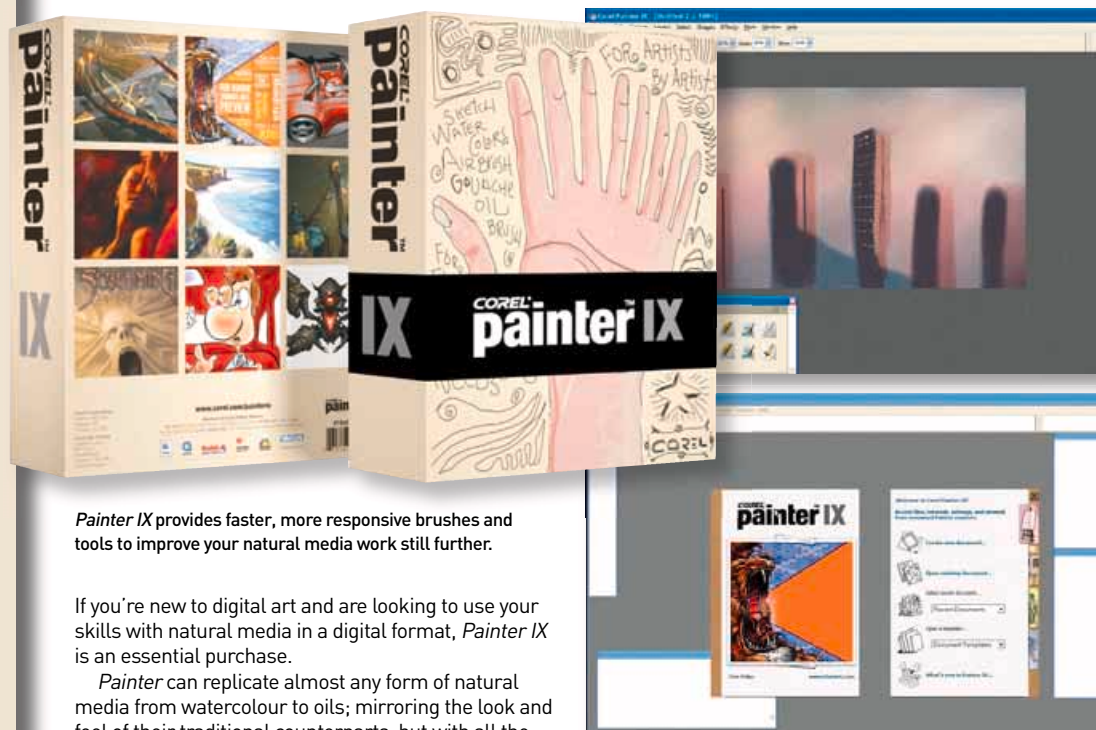
Joe Russ

Joe Russ
joseph.russ@futurenet.co.uk
NEW MEDIA CONTENT EDITOR

→ FULL PRODUCT MAC & PC

PAINTER IX STARTER KIT

Everything you need to get started with Corel's natural media painting/illustration app



Painter IX provides faster, more responsive brushes and tools to improve your natural media work still further.

If you're new to digital art and are looking to use your skills with natural media in a digital format, *Painter IX* is an essential purchase.

Painter can replicate almost any form of natural media from watercolour to oils; mirroring the look and feel of their traditional counterparts, but with all the advantages of an editable digital format.

The most noticeable improvements in this ninth *Painter* release are in the responsiveness and speed of its wide range of brushes and tools. Corel has worked closely with PC processor manufacturers Intel and AMD, as well as a group of Apple hardware gurus, to find out how to squeeze the most out of their systems. As a result, the brushes are noticeably faster – in some instances up to ten times faster – which makes working with complex brushes much more responsive and intuitive.

What's new?

For keen artists, Corel *Painter's* brushes are without doubt the most important feature and it's this that sets *Painter* apart from other graphics packages. *Painter IX* includes over 30 brush categories, including acrylics, watercolour, oil paints, liquid ink, crayons, chalk and charcoal.

These effects work just as you'd expect. As with real watercolours, *Painter's* watercolour brushes interact with your painting surface, "soaking" into the paper and revealing the textures beneath.

Painter also offers a wide range of Paper types. Varying paper textures enable you to easily achieve a range of watercolour effects. A further enhancement

to the Watercolour feature is the ability for the paint to stay "wet" between painting sessions, so now you can pick up where you left off or alter the wet fringe of the brush for impressive new effects.

But *Painter IX's* best innovation is its new Artists' Oils feature. This system imitates the way an artist works with an easel and paint brush, and the mixer palette makes it easy to mix and blend paints together. To load the brush, just dab on to the mixer palette, which charges the brush with a limited quantity of paint. Apply strokes and the paint will run out gradually as you paint.

Painter IX provides almost every imaginable tool from your artists' studio, enabling you to create convincing paint effects with the minimum of fuss.

Exclusive video tutorials

Bjarne Kondrup, a passionate artist who traded his pencil and paper for a digital tablet, has created a range of *Painter IX* tutorials and brushes exclusively for *Computer Arts* readers. His website, Reflection Design (www.reflection-design.dk), draws constant inspiration from a number of online sources and his *Painter* artwork is proof of how, with practice, you can create images of an exceptionally high calibre.



→ VIDEO TRAINING MAC & PC

Painter 8 training courtesy of VTC

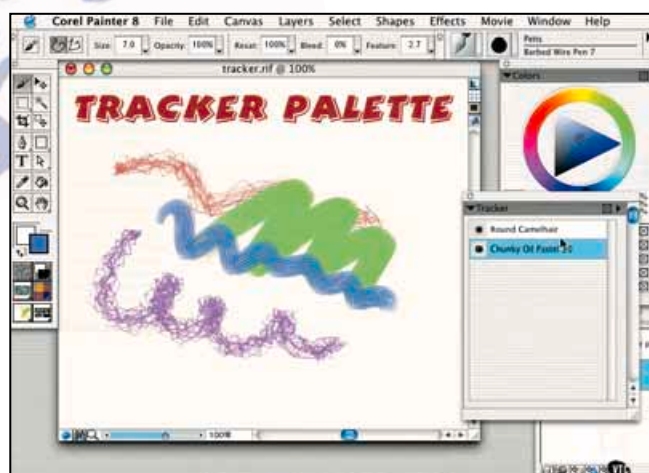
Make the most of *Painter 8* with this professional training CD

VTC has created over 300 computer-software training CDs, covering subjects such as graphics, animation and multimedia, internet and web design, programming and business applications.

The training tutorials included on this month's cover disc consist of narrated *QuickTime* movies that will take you step by step through the process of mastering complex software applications such as *Painter*, *Illustrator* and *Photoshop*.

These three sample chapters from VTC's *Painter 8* CD cover all the basic skills you'll need to get to grips with Corel's app – the software, the workspace and a range of brushes. It's easy to get started. You can use any other application simultaneously, so just call up one of the VTC chapters as soon as you require specific help with an unfamiliar task.

The first three chapters of each VTC title can be freely viewed at www.vtc.com.



UPGRADE OFFER

To buy the full Corel *Painter 8* training CD, call 01982 560 711 (UK only) and quote CA107 to get your copy for just £49 (inc VAT).

→ STOCK ILLUSTRATIONS MAC & PC

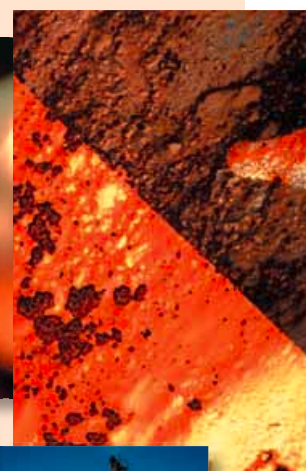
Flat Earth images

Get your hands on 15 free high-resolution images

Flat Earth is an affordable royalty-free stock library that sells high quality, original images and video for use in a range of design projects. This month, they've provided us with 15 of their most popular images for you to use, free of charge.

The Flat Earth website currently boasts a wide range of images in a resolution to suit your needs – low-resolution 256-colour GIF images are suitable for web and screen purposes, and the high resolution (2,800x1,800), 24-bit images are of high enough quality to be reproduced in print.

Flat Earth also offers a range of images of high enough resolution to be used for large-scale designs such as posters and exhibition panels. For more information, visit www.picture-gallery.com.





CREATE
YOUR OWN MEDIA
PLAYER WITH
OUR *iSHELL 3*
TUTORIAL ON...
PAGE 66



→ FULL PRODUCT MAC & PC

iSHELL 3

Design and create interactive CD-ROMS with this full authoring package worth \$795

With the advent of the web and, more recently, broadband, the "wow" factor of interactive CD-ROMS has diminished somewhat. But CD-ROMs can serve high quality media, audio, video and high-resolution images almost instantaneously without the need to wait for hefty downloads. And what about those times when you don't have access to a network connection? An interactive CD-ROM is a handy, portable medium for distributing your work, wherever you are.

iShell is a multimedia authoring package designed to create CD-ROM presentations from scratch. The software is similar to Macromedia's *Director* in that you can integrate different forms of rich media, including video, sound and graphics, to create standalone presentations.

iShell is an object-orientated programming environment, so instead of dealing with lines of code, you visually create your projects from a series of objects which are "linked" together. For example, you might want to make a button that triggers a sound when pressed. Simply link a button graphic to a

mouse-click event and an audio file and *iShell* will create the required code for the button to trigger a noise in your project.

If all this talk of buttons and code makes your head spin, why not turn to page 66 and let Rick Lecoat take you step by step through the process of creating a mini-movie player? Once you've got your head around this object-orientated approach, you'll quickly realise how powerful *iShell* really is.

Once you've mastered *iShell*'s basic tools, you can try out some of the program's more advanced features – *QuickTime* integration, for example. Unlike most multimedia authoring packages *iShell* integrates *QuickTime* into the authoring environment, so you can use *QuickTime* functions such as streaming, dissolves, filters and masks.

In addition, *iShell* files are platform-independent, so if you need to redistribute your project you can easily use them on both Mac and PC without the need for conversion. *iShell* projects can also be deployed via *QuickTime*.

GET A LICENCE FOR iSHELL 3

To retrieve the commercial licence key provided with this copy of *Computer Arts*, you must visit the Tribeworks website and enter your email address and the code "iShellArt".

Visit <http://tribeworks.com/License/iShellComputerArts.asp>, complete the form provided and your licence key will be sent to you with instructions via email.

UPGRADE TO iSHELL 4

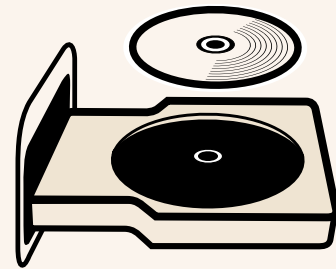
iShell 4.0 boasts a range of new features that enable you to publish and deliver your *iShell* title with ease. Using this version, you can wrap all your media and documents into one file for distribution while providing the functionality to burn a cross-platform CD, without additional CD burning software.

An upgrade to *iShell 4* for Mac or PC is available for \$495, or \$795 for both platforms. Just visit <http://tribeworks.com>.

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ON THE CD



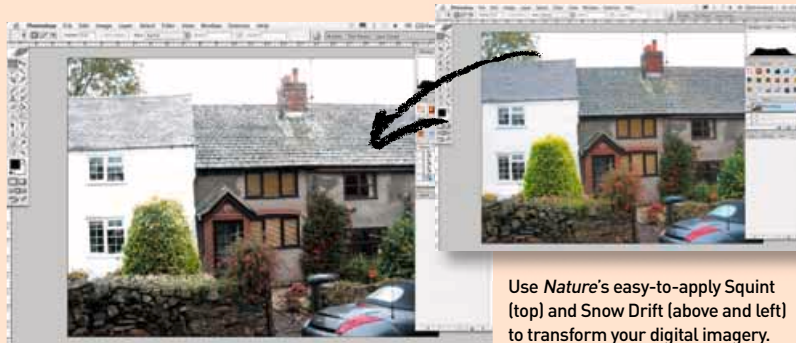
→ PHOTOSHOP PLUG-IN MAC & PC

Eye Candy 5 Nature

Ten *Photoshop* filters to add fire, smoke, rust, snow, ice to your images

Photoshop plug-ins vary greatly in quality and suitability. There are plenty of effects out there that can apply bizarre distortions and nauseating colours to your work, but only a few – like *Alien Skin's* – are worth having, providing a range of "must have" effects that you can use again and again.

Eye Candy 5 Nature is the second in a series of *Photoshop* filters by *Alien Skin*. The first, *Eye Candy 5 Textures*, enabled you to create a wide variety of texture effects, including snake and lizard skin, fur, brick, stone and wood. Now *Eye Candy 5 Nature* expands the collection with a batch of new and equally impressive effects, among them realistic fire, smoke, water and ice, and even lighting filters. All filters are customisable (you can tweak intensity, colour opacity, etc), and presets are handily included for speedy one-click results.



Use *Nature's* easy-to-apply *Squint* (top) and *Snow Drift* (above and left) to transform your digital imagery.

→ TRIAL SOFTWARE MAC & PC

Mimic Pro 3.0

Put words into your 3D characters' mouths with this lip-synch package

Words don't come easily to 3D models; in fact, lip-synching is probably the most difficult aspect of character animation. Creating a detailed and realistic character model is all well and good, but if your character's facial movements don't match the words coming out of their mouths, your characters will appear dull and lifeless.

Mimic Pro 3.0 is an animation tool dedicated solely to the creation of realistic facial animations. Using a WAV audio file of your character's voice (in any language), *Mimic* automatically synchronises the character's movements with the audio file you supply. As well as animating the lip



movements, *Mimic Pro 3.0* also enables you to create lifelike facial expressions (such as winks, nods and smiles) before you export the animation timeline to *Poser*. Simple.

FULL LISTING

PAINTER IX STARTER KIT (MAC+PC)

TRIAL SOFTWARE Recreate superb natural media effects with this artistic paint package.

iSHELL 3 (MAC+PC)

FULL SOFTWARE Complete package for creating interactive multimedia CD-ROMs.

iSHELL 4 (MAC+PC)

TRIAL Get a taste of what the latest version of this brilliant application can do for you.

TWIXTOR (MAC+PC)

VIDEO PLUG-IN Apply slow-motion effects to your movies with this powerful effects plug-in.

EYE CANDY 5 NATURE (MAC+PC)

PHOTOSHOP PLUG-IN Add elemental effects such as fire, smoke, water and ice to your work.

MIMIC PRO 3.0 (MAC+PC)

TRIAL Keep your character models in synch with this top-flight animation package.

ADOBE READER 7 (MAC+PC)

PLUG-IN The latest version of Adobe PDF viewer enables you add comments to PDFs.

TEN URW FONTS (MAC+PC)

FONTS Ten full free fonts from URW fonts.

FLAT EARTH IMAGES (MAC+PC)

STOCK PHOTOGRAPHY 15 images free for you to use, courtesy of Flat Earth.

TUTORIAL FILES (MAC+PC)

To find this month's supporting files, navigate the interface to "In The Mag" and select Tutorials.



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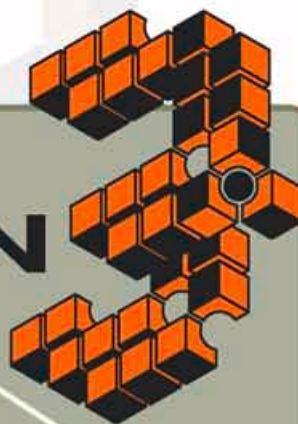


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THE TUTOR

NAME: Paul C Bennett
COURSE: (BA Hons) Information Design and Illustration
WEB: www.blackpool.ac.uk
TEL: 01253 352352

THE BRIEF

Design a professional print-based poster that successfully communicates a range of information about a specific product

"This assignment provided students with the opportunity to position themselves and gear their work towards the current market opportunities in information illustration. With a focus on print-based media, students were asked to prepare a distinctive, innovative and original image that included the kind of associated graphics often demanded by today's print-based design practices.

"We hoped that the students would demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of information design technology and produce work that had a style appropriate for the professional work place. Each student needed to use research, analysis and judgment to transform their creative thinking into a suitable image.

"The students were free to investigate and apply new technologies appropriate to information illustration. We wanted each student to display a creative and innovative approach to this brief, and to do well they needed to have successfully analysed the task, worked through a series of design options and identified the production problems they could encounter before creating the final piece."



THE EXPERT

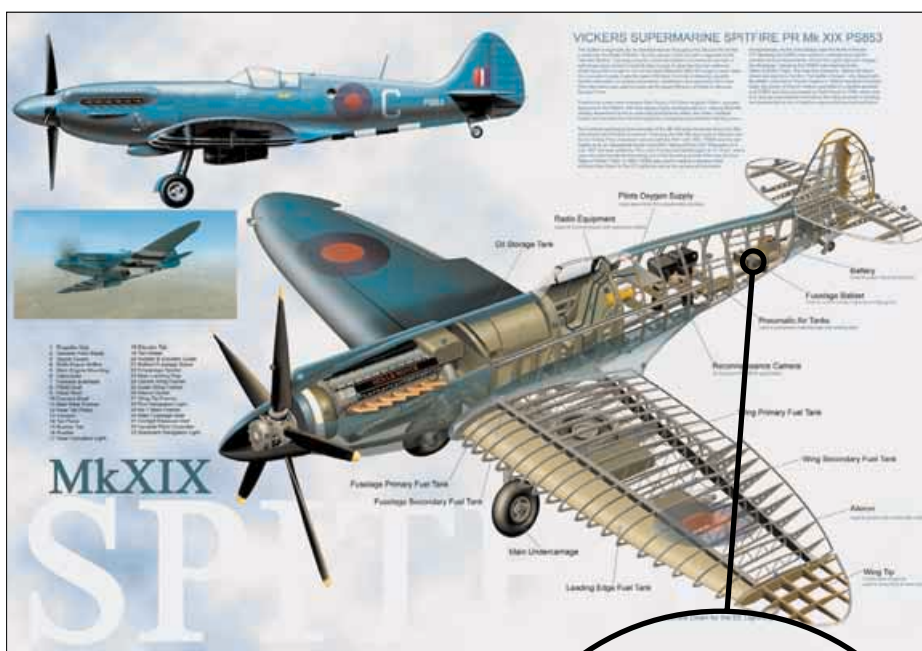
NAME: Dan Moore
OCCUPATION: Dan is an award-winning director of Studio Output, based in Nottingham, UK.
CONTACT: www.studio-output.co.uk



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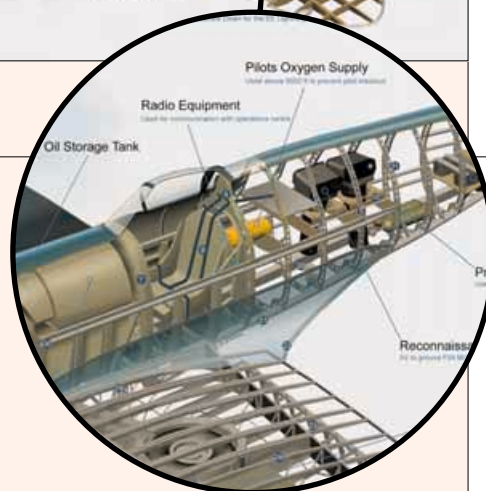


JOHN S FOX

SOFTWARE *Form-Z, Illustrator and Photoshop*

TUTOR'S VERDICT: "John has a passion for aviation and, as a result, has designed and produced a poster for the aviation enthusiast market. This involved the research, development and production of a full-colour, side-profile, highly detailed cutaway and ghosted illustration of the Spitfire, which was then incorporated within a poster design. The work, produced using modern technology, has resulted in a visually interesting solution to a traditional subject."

EXPERT'S VERDICT: "John's classic technical cutaway is presented in a very clear and concise manner that immediately catches the eye. The use of the "in-flight" image in the cutaway and the faded title type really adds a sense of dynamism to the piece. The solid type layout, which is understated and yet very



legible, helps to balance the three different illustrations, and I also like the subtlety of the faded background, which echoes the diagonal flow of the piece and helps present the poster as a very "together" composition."



THE BEST OF THE REST



GRANT WICKHAM

SOFTWARE Form-Z, Illustrator, Photoshop and InDesign

TUTOR'S VERDICT: "Grant worked on a collaborative project with Automotive Engineering MA students at Lancaster University. The team considered the work produced showed creativity in both product and visual design."

EXPERT'S VERDICT: "Hanging the images off a symmetrical composition works extremely well in this piece, although the graphic and type elements become a little lost against the white background."



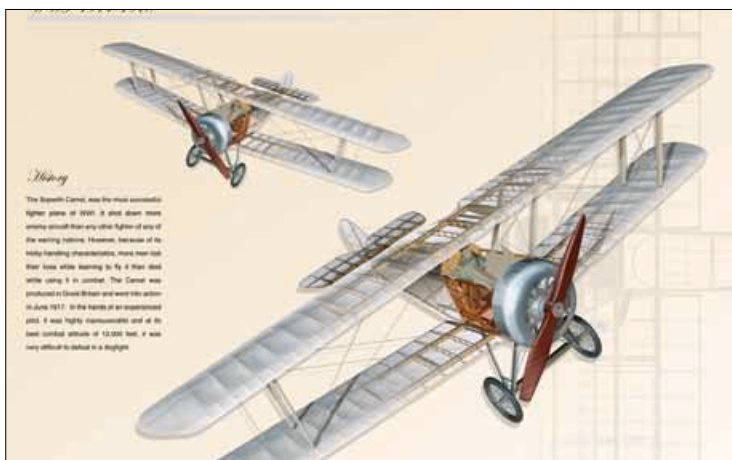
MATTHEW DOLLEY

SOFTWARE Form-Z, Illustrator, Photoshop and InDesign

TUTOR'S VERDICT: "This layout and these images were produced as part of an advertising campaign to promote the public's awareness of Seiko watches. Through the creative use of imagery and typography, a successful and

effective marketing solution was quickly realised."

EXPERT'S VERDICT: "These are great renderings, but the tinted image and layout don't quite pull together."



PETER MCMULLAN

SOFTWARE Form-Z, Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign

TUTOR'S VERDICT: "Peter's objective was to produce an information poster featuring the Sopwith Camel. His use of colour, subtle lighting and texturing cleverly emulates traditional airbrush techniques, but without resorting to a clichéd, computer-generated look."

EXPERT'S VERDICT: "Superb illustration work here, although it's not quite matched by the type layout. However, I really liked the airstream motif used as the title bar along the bottom of the piece; this could've been maximised as a larger element."

ARRON PERFETTI

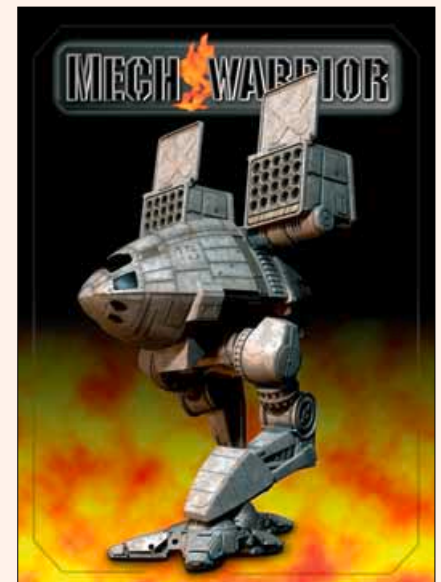
SOFTWARE Form-Z, LightWave, Photoshop and InDesign

TUTOR'S VERDICT:

"The purpose of this project was to produce a poster and video sequence to promote a new computer game. The results clearly demonstrate Arron's creative visualisation abilities and his detailed knowledge of modelling techniques. The image is highly detailed and shows expertise in the use of texture mapping and lighting developed to match the environment. This gives an ambience to the scene that really involves the viewer."

EXPERT'S VERDICT:

"A solid, simple layout with some great rendered 'wear and tear' detail."



CURRICULUM VITAE

DAVID GENTRY



LOCATION: Canterbury, UK
JOB TITLE: Freelance Illustrator
DATE OF BIRTH: May 1977

TRAINING: Self-taught

SOFTWARE: *Photoshop*

HARDWARE: Pentium 4 PC and laptop, both with Wacom Intuos2 A5 tablets

INFLUENCES: I'm often influenced by the random images and sounds I see and hear throughout the day. Listening to music while I work can greatly change how a finished piece looks, dependent on the band or composer. If a particular project feels a little daunting I will turn to my collection of art books. After browsing through the work of design greats such as Francis Bacon and Salvador Dalí, or the modern genius of Phil Hale and Dave McKean, I can't help but come away inspired.

STYLE: Odd and detached. I try to capture a key moment or feeling in a simple illustration using photographs and drawings. Previous comments about my work have ranged from "dark and twisted" to "pretty but disturbing". I'm just trying to show everyone the world as it looks in my head, full of strange and interesting characters.

TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF: I'm currently teaming up with freelance illustrator Vincent Chong (www.vincentchong-art.co.uk) to create an interactive web experience based on the darker side of our artwork. In the future I'd love to progress from illustration into the field of video games or even short films. I have some dark tales to tell, all I need is an audience. I'd also love to do more book illustration, I really enjoy the process.

CONTACT: To see more of David's work just visit his website at www.sixshards.co.uk or email davidgentry@sixshards.co.uk.



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↑ "Each year I think it's important to try to find the time to enter a few competitions. Greed is taken from my latest batch of entries."



↑ "A concept piece for a possible website. Every few months I give my site a complete overhaul, changing it from the ground up. I try to treat the look and design of the site as an extension of my portfolio so that the whole experience stays relevant. One day I'll make a decision to stick with a certain design."



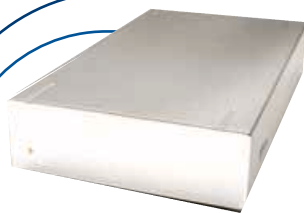
↑ "This is one of a series of atmospheric interior illustrations I created for the novel *Redskins and Reefers*. I'd love to illustrate a cover for a new Stephen King book."

↓ "Whenever I get the opportunity I try to spend a few hours drawing and experimenting for the sheer pleasure of it. This striking image is the result of one such occasion. Most of my experiments end up as textures or inspiration for later projects."



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