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Wealthy City

Software Used: Photoshop

I always start with a simple abstract composition when developing a sketch. This helps in that if it's not working with a few simple shapes and a few simple values, all the rendering in the world won't save it. This design suggested the possibility of a futuristic city to me. (Fig.01)

Next I found a few random images from my photos (shoot your own reference wherever you travel) and overlaid them to specific layers. I kept the background and foreground on separate layers so I can link the photo to the foreground shape. That way it only affects that layer. There are several photos and I kept repositioning them till something clicked. I don't usually hit the reference this early but I was looking for something to suggest itself. Since it's a personal work it's more fun to see what develops rather than planning everything. (Fig.02a and Fig.02b)

Now the heavy lifting, I've got to establish some larger planes, and how they relate to the horizon/perspective. The photos are merely a start. Without the understanding of perspective and tone you'll always be a slave to your reference, which isn't being an artist. (Fig.03)
Big changes, I start carving up the larger planes with detail. This is all made up and hand done with a simple round brush. The image is starting to form now. (Fig.04)

Let there be light! I overlaid some more photos to start making it look like the night scene I was imagining. You might think it’s “cheating” but these are all tipped in perspective to conform to my vanishing points. You always have to do this because rarely do you get a photo that perfectly conforms to your painting. I use Free Transform and Perspective with the keyboard shortcut Command T. This brings up whichever function I need. Perspective and Free Transform being the most used. (Fig.05a and Fig.05b)

Cleaned up some edges and added the street lights for scale. Make one and duplicate then repeat. Free transform again for size and perspective. I also started adding some more
complex frames to my lit windows on the right. Again, and I cannot say this enough, the photo will only get you so far. You've got to be an artist and get in there and change it to suit your design! This is the skill that separates the photo collage artist’s from the rest. Everyone does it but with the best you can’t tell where the reference ends and the overpaint begins. (Fig.06)

People! It was always my intention to have people milling about. I made 3 different custom brushes that I used to quickly populate the ground. (Fig.07a and Fig.07b)

Some subtle lighting emanating from the dome in the distance adds a little more “coolness”. (Fig.08)

I then add more detail to the mid ground structures on the left. I’m bringing shapes forward, defining slight overhangs, adding lights to the side plane. It needs all these small touches to bring it to life. (Fig.09)

Added a lot more drawing to the lower right structure and some clouds to obscure the tops of the buildings on the left. It wasn’t the focal point so a few soft edges will keep the eye from wandering off the page. Signed and done. I consider this a sketch so I only take it so far. (Fig.10)
Introduction

The first stage in this tutorial was to do a little bit of research by looking at images of docks on the internet and of different types of ships. From the outset I wanted to create an image that had large sense of scale, namely because of the size of ships when viewed up close. Any large vessel has an imposing quality that is immediately impressive, due to the strong sculptural form and sheer size compared to the average person.

The grandeur of the early cruise liners was something that I had in mind when considering the type of composition and I decided that the eye level should be low down to emphasize the vast scale of the ship that would form the focus of the image.

Blocking In

I decided that I didn’t want to stray too far from the general design of ships for fear that it would look unconvincing. Any waterborne vessel adheres to a few basic principals regarding the shape in order that it can effectively move through water and so given this long established tradition I thought it would be best to stick to it. I find that with any interpretation of a subject it is better to start with what you know and then modify it in order to create a more plausible concept.

Due to the low eye level I decided to build a simple ship shape in 3d to give me an accurate starting point with regards to the hull in perspective.

**Fig.01** shows the basic shape that was created in 3d.

I then added in some perspective lines to act as a guide and a framework along the left which will serve to create depth in the scene. This device of repeating a motif or shape can be used as a gauge to measure scale and perspective in a scene. (**Fig.02**)

With the perspective and basic 3d shapes in place it was time to start blocking in some of the tonal range (**Fig.03**).

I usually use some textured brushes at this stage and apply some random strokes and marks which often suggest a direction or help describe details. I used the Lasso tool to create some hard edges shapes along the ground which will also help convey the perspective.
In Fig.04 I darkened the sky and boat as there was too much white in the image and made sure that the back of the boat blended into the background less abruptly. The right side of the boat at the bow also looked too bright even though it is reflecting some light and now looks far more convincing.

After establishing the basic composition I created a new layer set to Overlay Blending mode which will represent the color scheme. I painted in some provisional colours here which you can see in Fig.05. By setting the blending mode to “Overlay” it is possible to add colour without affecting the tonal range. Some artists use this method whilst others prefer to use color directly as they feel this approach produces a muddier palette.

You will notice that I have also added some structures on the deck and two large vent shapes at the front to create a slightly odd feature that help make the boat look less contemporary.

Fig.06 shows the structure of the Layers palette with the tonal composition at the bottom called Main and the color layer directly above it set to “Overlay”.

Building the Detail

Using the perspective lines as a guide I created some simple shapes on the right using the Lasso tool and then filled them in with a light grey (Fig.07). They automatically appear blue due to the color layer above.

I continued working on the base tonal layer and began adding in some detail along the ship...
Chapter 02. Docks

with some structures on the deck and rigging. I added in some shapes that could become crates or platforms but at this stage I was not sure.

When painting in symmetrical detail along the hull it is best to create some shapes on a new layer and then use the Transform tools to match the perspective. Scale and Skew are the two common ones I use but Warp was particularly useful in this instance due to the curvature of the hull.

Fig.08 shows the Transform tools under Edit and in this case “Warp” which has been used to curve the vents along the side of the ship. I made one group first and after duplicating it twice used the “Scale” and “Skew” tools in conjunction with the perspective grid. Once done I then warped each set individually to align with the hull.

At this stage I began looking through some of the free photos available at 3D Total which I could use to paste into the image and help add a sense of realism. Photos which are carefully used and color corrected can help an image immensely and suggest all kinds of textural detail and subtle effects.

Whilst sifting through the library I found these two photos which caught my eye. I imagined them fitting somewhere and so dragged them into my image, scaled them and started to experiment.

http://freetextures.3dtotal.com/preview.php?imi=6141&s=c:Mechanical&p=0&cid=12

http://freetextures.3dtotal.com/preview.php?imi=6144&s=c:Mechanical&p=0&cid=12

I finally decided that they looked quite interesting at the bow and fitted in with the vents so skewed them accordingly and blended them in using Image – Adjustments (Fig.09).

http://freetextures.3dtotal.com/preview.php?imi=7128&s=c:Vehicle_Air&p=0&cid=15

The other two components taken from the radar and tank were simply colour corrected and set to Normal blending mode.
After all of the detail that has been added from photos I decided to flatten many of the layers to keep the file from getting too complicated. These have now been merged with both the color and original tonal layer (inset top left – Fig. 11).

The background on the right is looking a little empty and so I created an abstract shape that could represent a large crane or something and then duplicated it twice before scaling it to match the perspective. I kept this on a separate layer.
for the time being as well as adding a new color layer set to Soft Light to change the hue of the top of the boat which was too blue.

With a little more refinement to the background and a better integration of the vents on the front of the ship I once again flattened all of the layers barring the perspective ones. I then added two Adjustment Layers: Curves to darken everything slightly and Color balance to add some warmer tones towards yellow (Fig.12).

You can see the layer structure here with the Adjustment layers and a further sky layer which I used to add a blue mainly to the upper left (Fig.13).

**Refining**

At this point the detail in the image was at a reasonable stage however the color scheme seemed a little drab and washed out; fine for a foggy day but not what I had in mind. The composition was also troubling me
because the ship seemed squashed and had no space to breath so to speak. I altered the canvas size by increasing the height and also added a Gradient layer set to Overlay using the colors in the small inset upper left. I then used a soft edged eraser to delete certain sections that coincided with the ship (Fig.14).

This area of space above the ship helps balance the composition which I feel is much better. With this new injection of color I started to build on the level of detail on both the ship and background (Fig.15).

I continued adding further refinements to both the background and foreground. Small highlights on some of the ships detail can make a big difference overall and the panels along the lower side of the hull have now been warped to better match the curve (Fig.16).

A gigantic building in the background helped add some extra interest along with a spaceship flying over the docks (Fig.17).

Some lamps and a character placed in the foreground completed the image and with a few more embellishments the picture was complete.

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Futuristic slums? Sound almost like an oxymoron. Nonetheless, it’s fair to assume that one day they might very well be a reality; unless we achieve some glorious hedonistic society, the chance is that a large portion of the earth’s population will be living in them. Cheerful thought I know, but I doubt it’ll be as bad as it sounds. We human beings have an uncanny way of adapting and personalizing the space which we inhabit. The people living in these slums might not witness digital streams of cash flow in to their bank accounts, but they will be human beings who work, dream, produce and play. With this piece, I don’t want to simply bang together the idea of a “slum” and the “future”; instead I want to create an environment of the future that looks as if it’s been lived in. One that suffers from poverty but nonetheless is alive and has its own charm. A place where higher members of society would not want to live, but might visit if they were feeling adventurous. So let’s see if I can pull it off!

My first objective is to establish an interesting composition, one that will engage the viewer for more than a millisecond. That’s why sketches are so useful. Keep them broad, keep them messy, keep them however you like, just make sure not to take too long on them. Remember, this is mainly to establish the bare bones of your actual piece (Fig.01).

I decide I want to aim for a somewhat oppressive setting by both pushing the scale and also utilizing the borders in order to make the viewer sort of feel pressed in upon. I imagine this as government housing that is built to vast proportions and sort of all piled in a semi-pit to literally keep the “refuse” out of the higher levels. The only official way out of this area is through heavily guarded tunnels.

Alright, as you can see this is the sketch I end up with after mixing it with a few of the other sketches. As I said, just keep it loose and sketchy. I’m painting in Corel Painter 11, using a regular hard edged Airbrush and pumping up the Grain, varying the grain size depending on how close I get to the foreground (Grain larger the closer we get). To access the Papers window in Painter (this is where you can adjust the grain) go to Window > Library Palettes > Show Paper (Fig.02).

Note: I’ll give you a heads up when I switch to Photoshop.

Using some great resources from 3DTotal’s free texture site (http://freetextures.3dtotal.com/) I then create a black and white collage that resembles rundown huts. I do this very quickly because this is only intended as a place mat to expand on and paint over later until it’s been pretty much eradicated (Fig.03a – 03b).
I then bring the collage into the final sketch, placing it on its own layer. I position it over the mid ground tenement and set the layer it was on to Overlay. From there, I fiddle with it until I’m pleased with what I’ve got. I then flatten the layer down (Layers > Drop) and continue to paint over the tenement until I’m happy.

Things are looking a little dry, so I decide to extend the composition horizontally, thus giving it a wider format and cinematic feel. I also add machinery and buildings to the side foreground, further pushing the depth and hopefully increasing interest (Fig.04).

It’s not important to make sense of all that’s there. This is more a mood piece that’s meant to tell a narrative; not really something for a modeler to build from, so don’t feel you need to explain everything. Just make sure that as a whole it all makes enough sense to be believable.

Next I start to think about the color pallet. Still sticking to the Airbrush and varying between hard edge and soft edge, I’m thinking of a somewhat polluted setting, with high contrasts of light and shadows, as if everywhere you look there is either a blinding glare or a dusky murk. I’m hoping it’ll sell both the vibrancy and the muck of the place, as a result establishing a unique atmosphere (Fig.05).

For color, I paint on a new layer and vary the blending of the layer between Normal, Multiply, Overlay and Soft Light, depending on what best suits my needs. Always feel free to experiment, especially in your own pieces because it’ll help remind you who you are doing this for in the first place: yourself. It’ll also let you enjoy the process that much more!

Okay, you are going to see a lot of this as the project evolves; me fiddling with the composition, shifting, changing, balancing, re-balancing. In this case I enlarge the mid ground, and continue to work on the colors. To the background horizon, I’m thinking of soaring skyscrapers that loom over the whole area, like great sentinels blocking out the sun… yeah, happy days (Fig.06)!
So as promised earlier, I’m continuing to fiddle with the composition. I’ve also decided to start bringing in some of the human charm, placing a neon sign to the left; it’ll be some sort of a one man fish shop being run from a junk heap of machinery. Actually it looks like two turbines … well whatever, I like it (Fig.07).

Currently I am trying to keep my lighting focused to the centre right; hopefully this will continue…

Here there is further cleaning up, and additional colors added. I get rid of the foreground tunnel. I think it did a good job of adding depth and some dynamic, but I feel that I need to expose the courtyard to some sky otherwise it feels a little too depressing. It’s difficult to stick with your initial ideas sometimes; I was appreciating that tunnel, but I just couldn’t make it seem somehow more uplifting than an open sky (even if it is now populated by two fat silos) (Fig.08).

So what would a seedy part of town be without at least one billboard of a scantily clad female?!

In this case, since it’s the future, it’s a scantily clad hologram of a female. Bask in the sweet progress of technology (Fig.09).

I’ve outlined in separate thumbnails the breakdown of how I decide to paint her.

First I start with an off-blue, white and semi hard Airbrush. I want to make her look provocative but not straight up slutty (Fig.10).

Now, on an underlying layer, I sketch out some flowing hair, erasing it out a bit just to make it feel a little sketchy. On an overlay layer I make some broken up diagonal lines, I’m hoping these will sufficiently indicate the kind of holographic images we’re all familiar with - the ones that are kind of grainy and all broken up by static (Fig.11).

And then on a new top layer set to overlay I add the final glow, really saturating the blue, making it glow (Fig.12).
There you have it. Later on I might go in and further punch up the brightness, but that’s still to be seen depending on how the piece develops. I didn’t take very long on her; didn’t want her feeling to well refined, I think it might work against the holographic sort of airy feel I’m going for.

I decide to accentuate the girl with some neon lights, trying to establish a mood here of entertainment as well, even if it might be seedy entertainment (Fig.13).

Also I add “John” to John’s Fish Emporium. Little human beings can really bring life to a piece. Use them wisely though. They can also detract from a finished environment, if they draw the viewer’s attention more than the environment itself does.

Finally, I’m defining the back buildings, making them slant in so as to give a feeling that they’re pressing down upon us.

Okay, now I add some smaller detail and add haze to the “Entertainment District” simply by bringing the Airbrush’s opacity to 20% and choosing a soft edge. Then feel free to glaze to your heart’s content until you think you’ve established enough of an atmosphere (Fig.14).

I use this same process for bringing in the smoke emanating from the tenements, except this time I raise the opacity to 60%. I feel the smoke drives the point home that these buildings are lived in. It reminds me of cooking and the aromas that accompany such memories, which will hopefully allow the viewer to relate to the piece better and make it more tangible for them. The smoke also allows for a greater sense of atmosphere.

Finally, I use the black and white collage from Fig.03 and apply it liberally to the background skyscrapers, using the same method as before. I then paint it further after dropping the layer down, making them look rundown but structured.

Okay, Now I’ve transferred over to Photoshop CS4, mainly because when it comes to many layers I find Photoshop handles the load better than Corel Painter. On the other hand, I do feel that Corel Painter is superior at mimicking the visceral qualities of traditional mediums, so yes they really do have their own pros and cons. It’s up to you to decide which better works for you (Fig.15).

Anyhow, time for a little more charm… in the form of a giant metallic arm!

Not sure what exactly it is but I want to bring some quirky menace into the piece, so I throw this arm coming off top of the screen to visit John’s Fish Emporium. I make sure it’s reflecting the light from all of the surrounding sources well enough to stick out. Things are getting rather cluttered and it’s becoming a balancing act between detail and clarity for me.

I also include happy patrons at John’s; obviously one of them has seen the arm, but whether or not he’s ridged like that because he’s pooping
himself with fear or if in fact he’s simply resentful of the machine’s sterile coldness, we’ll never know.

It’s easy enough to bring drama even to a small scale like this when you utilize harsh lights and shadows. A much grandeur example of this can be found in Baroque paintings where sometimes the greatest of tension was caught by just using one light source appropriately and letting the rest be enveloped by dark shadows. A great example of this is Caravaggio, the tennis-playing-ruffian-master-painter.

I further spruce up the lights around the hologram (same technique as before - Overlay or Soft light layer on top and paint!)

I also forgot to mention this earlier, but I added some purple lights to the left of the screen as well, to tie in the two sides of the painting a little better. It’s a simple technique if you feel your piece isn’t unifying well.

I refine the background buildings by creating a simple repeating square pattern and overlaying it over the shapes of the skyscrapers. Then I choose the option Lock Transparent Pixels from the top of the Layers window in PS. This constricts me to paint only within the shapes I have on that particular layer. In this case, I can now paint right into the windows but can’t paint outside of their borders (Fig.16).

So now it’s all refinement. I paint in much more of the populace, making sure to give them shadows to ground them. Of course I have to include flying transports because in the future you always have to have flying cars; it’s a staple (Fig.17).

Also, I decide to make the metallic arm more of a figure; creepier like that.

I also change the buildings on the right because I’m thinking they’re too cluttered so I simplify them and give the suggestion of a window.

The final significant phase for this piece is to create a new layer, make sure it’s on the top of all of the mid-ground layers and, using the Airbrush tool at about 15% opacity and a soft edge, glaze over the mid-ground with yellows and oranges to give it some atmosphere and help further divide it from the foreground.

Following that it’s just a case of continuing with minor refinements until I arrived to the finished work you see here!

I suppose this about wraps it up folks. The piece is resolved well enough. It tells a story and hopefully is engaging enough to hold the viewer’s attention for at least a few seconds.

There’s still some other things I’d like to do to it, but isn’t that always the case?

Anyhow, hope you enjoyed and if you have any questions feel free to drop me a line. Beaming out!

Branko Bistrovic

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Chapter 04
Bazaar / Indoor Market Place

Software used: Photoshop

Introduction
The aim of this tutorial is to tell you about some "tricks of the trade", and techniques to obtain a good perspective and composition. These tips should help you to be able to create an attractive image and detail it quickly.

When thinking about this tutorial, my first thought was to create a market or futuristic bazaar scene that contained a commercial center, and a zone full of shops and shoppers. It was quite difficult though to think of an original idea, because there is so much art dedicated to science fiction and films like Star Wars, Aliens, Avatar, Blade Runner, etc. It can be difficult sometimes to paint something that hasn't been done already.

Thus, to find "the idea", I made several drawings. I discarded the first two because neither seemed convincing. Nevertheless I have included one as an example so you can see the searching process (Fig.01).

I started over again and made four new sketches, but this time I did not give them color or detail. I made thumbnails so I could see the general idea better. I decided that I liked the third option (Fig.02).

The Picture
Once I had chosen the thumbnail to develop, I polished the idea and added more detail to it. I then had to recreate the thumbnail at a larger scale and in greater detail. To start with I raised the vanishing points, and defined the forms and structures by adding further detail. It is important to maintain the correct perspective and composition; to do this the first thing I do is to define the horizon, as this depends on where we are viewing the scene from. Depending on where the horizon is located, what we will show...
or tell will change. For an aerial shot it is better to place the horizon higher on the image, but if you are trying to show how an ant would view the scene the horizon would need to be lower (Fig.03).

However in this scene there is more than one vanishing point and the horizon is twisted, to give the scene a greater sense of action and movement (Fig.04).

At this point I need to say more about composition. To compose is to order, balance and locate the elements of a drawing in an attractive and interesting way. To create an interesting composition we have to break down the symmetry and find balance by means of shapes and perspective. If you center the vanishing point, everything will become symmetrical and boring. However, if you twist it clockwise then the balance and symmetry becomes far more interesting (Fig.05).

**Step by Step**

Once the composition was ready, the next step was light and shadow. When I work on an image that has a degree of complexity, I do not add any color until I have at least 60% of the detail done in grayscale (Fig.06). I started this process by masking the buildings’ silhouettes and giving them shape and color that was contrasting to the rest of the image by using much lighter or darker grays (Fig.07). Once the shape of a scene is clear you can give it more detail by starting to add textures (Fig.08).

**Textures**

What I usually do with backgrounds to save time is to draw a texture and repeat it several times using Photoshop tricks. As an example to show you how I do this I have drawn a basic structure in perspective that leaks away to a single point.

**Step 1:** Draw a texture or design on any surface of the drawing. In this example I have chosen the end of the wall (Fig.9a).

**Step 2:** Once the texture is ready, mask it and copy it to a new layer (Ctrl + C and Ctrl + V), then press Ctrl + T. You will see that the selected texture has a frame to allow you to adjust the size of your texture. In the middle of the frame you will find a circle with a cross in the middle of it. Move that to the vanishing point (Fig.09b).
**Step 3:** When steps 1 and 2 are done, place the mouse cursor on the left superior angle of the frame that contains the texture, and press Shift + Alt to move the texture to the left, while pressing both mouse buttons. This way we can repeat the same previously drawn texture and transfer it, keeping its perfect form and perspective (Fig.09C).

I’ve noted the areas where I used this technique with red marks in my drawing (Fig.09d).

**Color**

To give color to the image I distinguished each element step by step, by using color contrast. Sky on the one hand, the street and the buildings on the other. Light is always an important element (Fig.10).

**Windows**

Here I will show you step-by-step how to get “glowing window” effect by using textures.

**Step 1:** To get a realistic effect, draw rectangles on each building, using only one color (Fig.11a).

**Step 2:** Place a texture over this color. It can be taken from any photograph where light can be seen through a window. Then place the photo in the windows area and select the Linear light option from the Layers flap (Fig.11b).

**Step 3:** To light the window even more, use an almost white yellow color and create a new layer. Paint it with using the Overlay option (Fig.11c).

**Posters**

**Step 1:** Draw a poster, or some kind of rectangular, square or circular surface.

**Step 2:** Texture it with a photograph or something that will attract attention. So that it fits on the image well use the image on Overlay (Fig.12).

**Conclusion**

When it comes to making work for a client or to sell, knowing how to compose the image and use perspective correctly makes a big difference.

It is very difficult for me to tell you step-by-step how I created the final image. If I had to, I think it would be very tedious for readers, so I did my best to explain the most important steps. The search for ideas, composition and perspective were crucial to create an interesting image. I hope you have liked this tutorial and can benefit from it.

To have good ideas is what really matters.

**Ignacio Bazan Lazcano**

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Introduction
Painting a sci-fi cityscape at sunset can be challenging. There are a few aspects I have to focus on for this image: the design, lighting, and composition. For sci-fi pictures there is almost no limit to the architectural designs and this allows the exploration of some really interesting shapes and designs, but it’s also important to keep the structures believable and appealing.

A cityscape at sunset means I have to carefully control the lighting so that it works for me. When the sun is low and near to the horizon, the sunlight becomes filtered and adds a fantastic warm mood to the environment. I decided to take advantage of this and compose an image that has high contrast between the background and the foreground.

Preparing the Scene
I start this piece by preparing an image of the sky. I want to create a sunset cityscape with high value contrast; so I use an image of the sky which gives me a good sense of the light direction and brightness. I use curves to make a reddish yellow, simulating the color of a sky at sunset. I then position it higher in the scene so my horizon line is somewhere in the middle.

Blocking In
With a large Opaque brush I start to block in shapes for the cityscape. I want to create a futuristic cityscape with interesting shapes and high-rise buildings. The shapes I’m using are very hard-edged and spiky. I will roughly paint in some silhouettes to indicate the structures and try to find an interesting composition (Fig.01).

Composition
I decide to tweak the composition and move the focal point slightly to the right; I use the Free-Transform tool for this (Fig.02). I continue to adapt the composition by filling in the left side of the image. I use the Polygon-Selection tool to create selections of various shapes, then fill it in with a Hard brush (Fig.03). This technique gives some really sharp edges on the corners of the buildings.

Depth Establishment
I widen the image for a broader viewing angle, and continue to make corrections to the composition. I add in the two large buildings in the background to establish depth in the piece (Fig.04). The left and right buildings in the foreground act as cropping elements; I use this to make the image tighter. Cropping the image with shapes will give the viewer a more focused overall feel, leading the viewer’s eyes into the image.
The Planet
I start to paint in a hazy planet in the far background by adding a rim of light (Fig.05). This gives the image an alien setting and again, adds depth to the composition.

Buildings in Mid-ground
Now with the composition mostly in place, I start to layer the buildings into the cityscape mid-ground (Fig.06). I will keep the light direction in mind when I define the buildings. Because of the strong back light established in the image, most of the buildings will only catch highlights on the top and the side facing the light. Most surfaces that face the camera won’t have direct lighting, so I will keep them dark and work on the rim. I work mostly with a solid Hard Edge brush for this piece. I have the pressure set to Flow, so that it gives me enough control over the blending and provides a really fast and opaque rendering (Fig.07).

Building Details
It takes some time to define the mid-ground buildings in detail. Under limited lighting conditions it’s important not to over expose the buildings, generally keeping it darker than the light source in the background. I also decide to add a secondary color in the image, something that work as an accent to contrast the overall red hue of the image (Fig.08).

Adjustments
I start to make some overall adjustments to the painting. First I use a curve Adjustment layer to filter all my painted layers. By tweaking the red channel, I am able to add more red to the highlights, while keeping the shadows relatively blue in contrast (Fig.09). Then I switch to a Soft Edged brush, and start to blend some of the elements together in the background. This helps to produce a softer image, and makes it look more natural.
Reconstruction
I find the structures in the painting too cubic and repetitive, so I decide to reconstruct the mid and foreground, adding a lot more circular forms and sci-fi looking structures to break up the boring buildings (Fig.10).

Tuning the Buildings
After the major change in the buildings, I start to look for repetition in the shapes. In order to tune down the chaotic structures in the painting and make them look like they belong, I carefully establish some repetition between the foreground, mid-ground, and background (Fig.11).

City Lights
In this step, I’m going to bring the cityscape alive with neon lights and windows (Fig.12). I crop parts from a photo of a city at night and take advantage of the Color Dodge layer to create this effect. After I have copied and pasted a section from a photo, I use the Curves editor to darken the shadows, so that only the windows will show up in the image (Fig.13). Then I switch the layer blending mode to Color Dodge; this will allow a very nice glow from just the bright windows and eliminate any black areas in the photo.

To the Finish
Before calling this piece finished, I make some adjustments to refine the foreground elements, adding repeating shapes and trying to tie the image together overall (Fig.14). I use a horizontal platform to help break up shapes in the foreground, adding depth and definition.

I continue to fine-tune the windows and lights. I add some clouds and mists for layering and with that I’m going to call this piece done! Thank you for reading, and I hope this tutorial helped you understand the process of creating a sci-fi cityscape at sunset. Best of luck! (Fig.15).

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Chapter 06  Sky Scrapers and Flying Traffic

Software Used: Photoshop

Introduction
Hello, everybody. Thanks a lot for 2dartist magazine for allowing me to share some of my workflow with its readers.

In this tutorial I am going to show how to create a scene with some air traffic and skyscrapers. Of course, before I start to draw or paint something I try to think about the theme, and to form some basic ideas in my mind. People have seen enough of various cityscapes with flying aircraft and cars in films like Star Wars, Star Trek and other epic movies. I think recreating these scenes would be unfair and I wanted to create something a bit different, but I was still unsure what exactly I wanted to create. I think it is sometimes good to start with some uncertainty because it can give some unpredicted and pleasant results.

On the other hand, I wanted this tutorial to be concentrated more on procedure of creation rather than on the painting process and Photoshop tools, because I think learning Photoshop as a tool is a technical issue, but learning to create something creative and original depends on ability to imagine and drop that imagination on the canvas. And I also want to talk more about the procedures that can boost your imagination. Anyway, time to start.

Sketches
When it comes to sketching, I try to do it in different ways and to explore. I remember watching one of the tutorials made by the great artist Nick Pugh. He really opened my imagination. Nick showed different sketching techniques trying to show how to work with abstraction and unpredicted designs and so on. Sometimes he draws with his left hand to obtain different shapes and forms. After watching those tutorials, I tried to plug in this abstract thinking into my workflow and my sketches.

At this stage I try not to think about perspective, colors, light and other things. I just relax and paint. I start by selecting some regions with the lasso and filling them with color gradients. Some regions become flying ships, some of them skyscrapers. Some may be land or sky. I just create abstract forms that will inspire me to think about the final composition.

I use mainly Photoshop in my paintings, and everything done here was in Photoshop. For this one I started to paint using the Lasso Tool (L) and Gradient fill Tool (G). Both these tools are great to create basic shapes and form. The Lasso tool allows you to keep sharp edges while the Gradient Fill tool brings nice gradient color transitions and color variations.

After playing around a bit, I created these sketches. (Fig.01, Fig.02 and Fig.03)
A kind of desert landscape would create a good contrast with the futuristic buildings. I also thought that it would be interesting to show that humanity had eventually started to care about our beautiful mother Earth, and stopped destroying everything to build cities.

**Colors**
For me, the best way to learn about colors is to study the masterpieces of great artists of the past such as Isaac Levitan, Aivazovsky and other masters of traditional paintings. By looking at their paintings you can observe and learn how to work and manage color. Not being a master of color myself, I am still learning and have a lot more to learn.

One thing that I can say for sure is that color variation is the thing that makes things look realistic. There are no plain colors in nature;
they all contain some kind of tint and hues. And in my paintings I try to insert those variations. If I paint grass, I introduce different colors than just green and this makes my grass look more realistic. I think the best way to learn about colors is to paint things from nature. Don’t be lazy, go outside and paint. It will help a lot!

**Detail**

By refining a bit more, I come up with this. (Fig.08) I blocked the main skyscrapers and the rest was detailing the picture to head towards the final look. There are several ways that you can do this. You could paint all those details, or use photos and textures to imply the details. Both ways are good.

I used some of my previous paintings to create the details. (Fig.09 and Fig.10)

Why not? If Photoshop allows me to cut out some regions of my previous paintings and paste them into the new one, I will definitely go ahead and do it, especially when it comes to concept art, when everything has to be done in...
the most efficient way. This is good way to bring the details quickly. (Fig.11)

After that it took me some time to refine everything in the image and add the air traffic to the sky. And here is the final image. (Fig.12)

Hope you like it.

**Conclusion**

As I said at the beginning of this tutorial, I wanted to share my process of creation. Being a self-taught artist I have encountered many problems from the time I started. I looked through tons of articles and tutorials teaching Photoshop as a tool. After I had learned all of those useful tools and instruments, I realized that it is not enough at all! What is more important for me is to use those tools to bring my imagination to life. That is why I decided to share my methods that help me to imagine. Besides that I have a chance to share some technical tips with you. I hope 2dartist magazine will kindly allow me to do this again in future! Thank you a lot.

Good luck,

**Jama Jurabaev**

For more from this artist visit: [http://jamajurabaev.daportfolio.com/](http://jamajurabaev.daportfolio.com/) or contact them at: jama_art@tag.tj
This eBook series will be split over six separate chapters, all sharing the common theme of a fantasy inspired medieval scene. Each will be undertaken by a different artist and draw upon a wealth of experience and skills perfected over years of industry practice. The authors will discuss their approach to digital /concept painting, the tools and brushes they employ and treat us to a valuable look into their artistic process. The six installments will cover a different environment each chapter based upon the medieval theme and encompass a multitude of professional tips and techniques.

Original Author: 3DTotal.com Ltd | Platform: Photoshop, ArtRage & Painter | Format: DOWNLOAD ONLY PDF
This eBook series will be split over six separate chapters all of which will be dedicated to painting monsters suited to a range of habitats spanning jungle and aquatic to mountainous and subterranean. Each will be covered by a different author who will discuss their approach to digital/concept painting, the tools and brushes they employ and how to create a final image. We shall gain an insight into the thought processes of each of our industry professionals and the ways in which they develop an idea from concept sketches through to a finished work.

Original Author: 3DTotal.com Ltd | Platform: Photoshop & Painter | Format: DOWNLOAD ONLY PDF
This eBook tutorial series will revolve around the use of 3d as a starting point for digital painting. In particular we will explore the value of Google SketchUp, a free program enabling users to quickly build 3d environments using a set of intuitive tools.

As a 3d package SketchUp is easy to learn and does not require hours of training and as an artist wishing to draw complicated scenes, this approach can prove a valuable starting point for producing a template on which to paint over.

Original Author: 3DTotal.com Ltd | Platform: Google SketchUp & Photoshop | Format: DOWNLOAD ONLY PDF
This mammoth 161 page eBook is an extremely detailed exploration of the techniques and design approaches behind creating epic and lavish digital artwork relating to the theme of Space and Science Fiction. The series is divided into three main categories; Planets & Starfields, Transport and Environments and spans across 12 in depth chapters in total. The tutorials on offer cover a multitude of techniques and useful tips and tricks to painting all aspects of space and deals with the tools in Photoshop used to create such effects.

Tutorial by: C M Wong | Platform: Photoshop | Format: DOWNLOAD ONLY PDF | Pages: 161
In the second volume of our Custom Brushes eBook series, we have asked six industry professionals, from the likes of Carlos Cabrera, Nykolai Aleksander and Roberto F. Castro to show us the techniques that they use to produce custom brushes. Spread over 48 pages and split into 6 chapters, we cover topics such as Fabrics & Lace, Leaves & Tree to Rock/Metal and Stone. Our artist will show you the importance of finding good reference images to base your brushes from, to knowing your subject matter.

Also Available in this series Custom Brushes V1

Original Author: 3DTotal.com Ltd | Platform: Photoshop | Format: DOWNLOAD ONLY PDF | Pages: 049
These 70+ page eBooks are a collection of “Speed Painting” tutorials which have been created by some of the top digital painters around today. The idea behind this tutorial series was for the artist to interpret a one-line descriptive brief (provided by us!), create a speed painting from it and then produce a tutorial showing and explaining each stage of production of the artwork. Some of the artists have also kindly created some unique brushes which can also be downloaded at the end of their Speed Painting tutorials.

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