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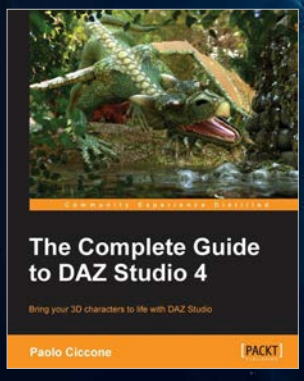
FANTASY & SCI-FI ARTIST IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

3DArtDirect.com

Master Luminarian member Maxime Des Touches discusses how he creates his sci-fi cinematic quality masterpieces with Cinema 4D, 3DS and Photoshop.



JOHN HAVERKAMP ZBRUSH



PAOLO CICCONE DS4

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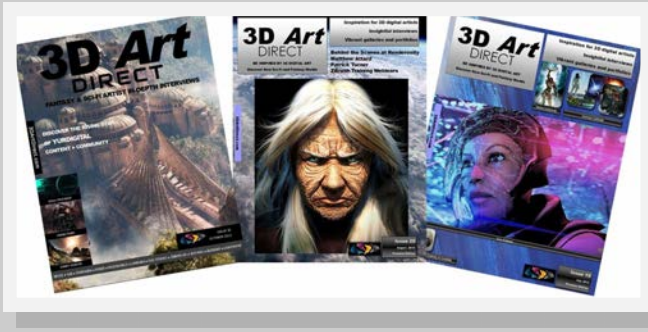
FANTASY & SCI-FI ARTIST IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS



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Front Cover Artwork: Silentyum by Maxime des Touches

CONTENTS

3D Art Live

Kim Schneider shows how to create Dynamic clothing content for Poser live from her desktop. She'll take you through the process she's learned step by step as a successful content creator.

05

Interview : Maxime Des Touches

This master Luminarian member discusses how he creates his sci-fi cinematic quality masterpieces with Cinema 4D, 3DS and Photoshop.

06



Interview : John Haverkamp

John talks to us about the cross over from experiencing real world sculpting to using ZBrush, the digital sculpting tool that combines 3D/2.5D modeling, texturing and painting. .

26



Book Review

"The Complete Guide to DAZ Studio 4" by Paolo Ciccone is a comprehensive guide to using DS4 from start to finish including posing, lighting, rendering, and content installation.

40





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3D Art LIVE

How to Create Dynamic Clothing Step by Step

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I'm a 31 years old French digital artist and designer who loves to work with his computer and dear laser mouse to create pictures of all kinds, mainly sci-fi artworks and abstracts ones.
I've learned many things in computer graphics by myself with the help of magazines and the Internet since 2008.

I use mainly Photoshop, 3DS Max, C4D and Make Human to do my work. Sometimes I use After Effects and Illustrator to add more things in my compositions if necessary. Also, I am a member of great online Art Collectives, like The Luminarium, Cosmosys and ArtBeat. These collectives help me to become a better artist and I really enjoy to work and share my creations with these groups!

3DA: 3d Art Direct is proud to have with us today Artist Designer Maxime des Touches, Maxime. Welcome!

MDT: Hi! Thank you very much for this invitation!
It is a great pleasure and a huge opportunity to share my artwork and more with you with the readers. I really hope that you will learn a little bit more about me and passion for digital art.

3DA: Looking through your Deviant Art gallery we see that you are interested in Sci Fi fantasy art. Tell us about how you became interested in these genres?

MDT: Well, I became interested in this universe since I was a child to be honest!

I grew with many sci-fi and fantastic movies, sitcoms and comics. I was always dreaming with them and of course this is why I have so many references in mind each time I create an artwork. For example my favorite ones are Star Wars, Star Trek, Dune, 2001: A Space Odyssey, 2010, Terminator, Alien, Ghost in the shell series … About the sitcoms, I was completely amazed by X-Files too, such a great concept with thousand ideas !
Obviously, I gave an "easy" list because they are masterpieces of the Sci-Fi and Fantastic world.

Another important inspiration, is music ! I can't work without it in my ears !
A few examples of my favorite bands / artists that give me a good feeling are SolarFields, Carbon Based Lifeforms, Biosphere, Devin Townsend, My Dying Bride, Nine Inch Nails, Fever Ray, Peter Gabriel and so many others of course. It depends on my mood and inspiration. So, the result is here in my artworks as you can see.
Also, when I started to create artworks and put them online, I saw other fabulous pieces and artists. These artists inspired me and gave me many more ideas and concepts for future creations.

3DA: Your works showcase some advanced compositions with brilliant colours and concepts, how old were you when you began creating and what mediums did you start off with?

MDT: Well, I started when I was eighteen years old. I began drawing first, I mean traditional drawing on paper, then one day my parents bought a PC. It was like a revelation you know! I began to buy some PC magazines with CDs inside and each time I tried the software on my computer. It was amazing because one day I tried shareware called Paint Shop Pro, so, to be honest it was another revelation for me.

MAXIME DES TOUCHES

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[Maxime des TOUCHES • elreviae]

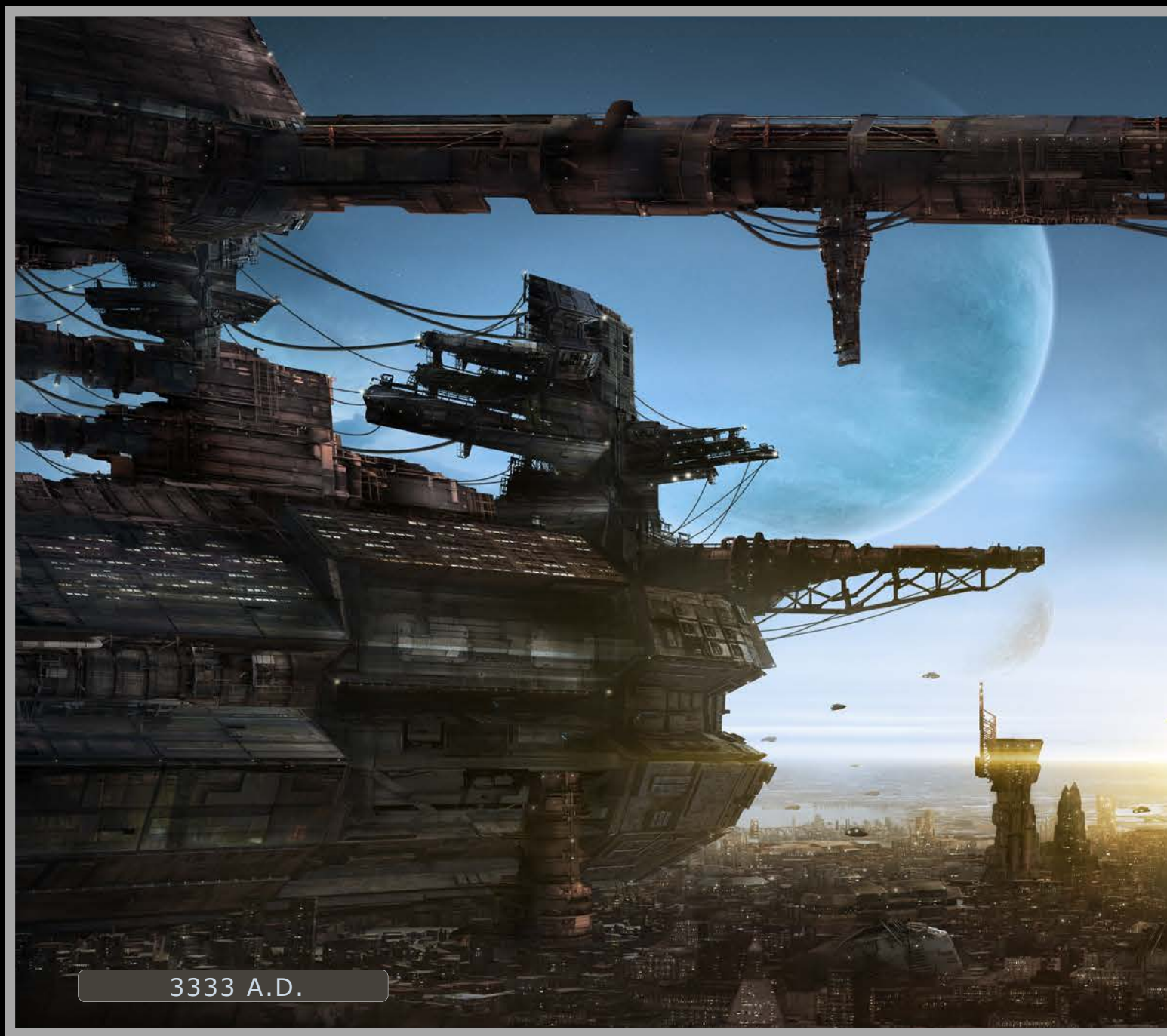
Digital Artwork

Suddenly, I discovered a new world with it then began to spend a LOT of time by creating wallpapers and some photos manipulations with it.

A few years after we had the internet at home and I saw that many artists placed their creations online and had feedback. I was really envious about that so I decided to do the same with my creations of course, just because I was a little bit curious too. Then I learned many more things on the Internet about computer graphics, social networks (like DeviantArt) and obviously about how to create serious artwork with a range of other software.

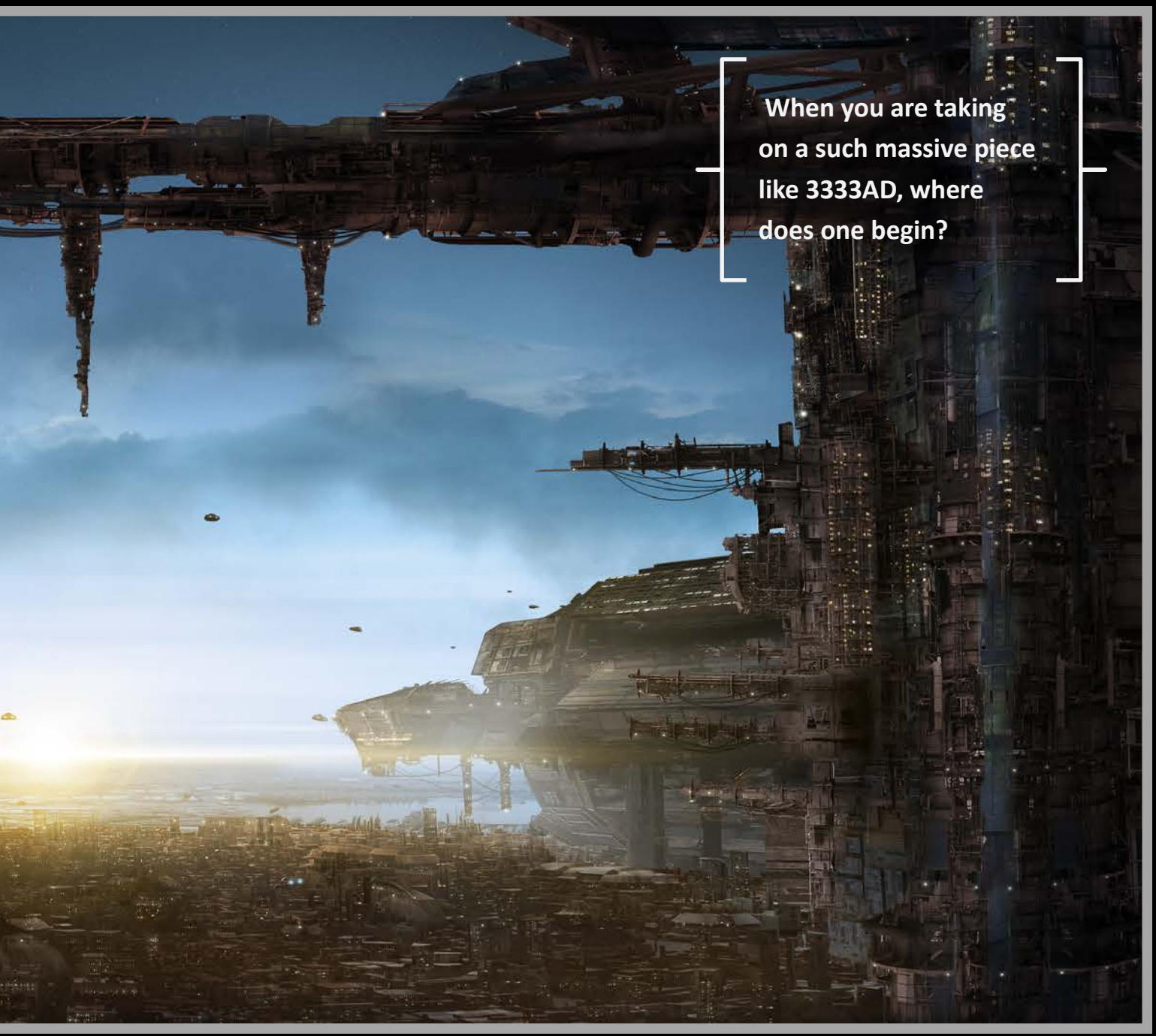
3DA: You are currently involved with several on-line projects and art collectives, tell our readers a bit about some of these.

MDT: Yes, actually, I am a member of three art collectives, The Luminarium, Cosmosys and ArtBeat.
I began with The Luminarium group as an artist, since nearly four years now then after a few



releases, the administrators invited me to become a staff member. So it was "yes" of course!
When I was involved in The Luminarium for the first time my attitude became very serious.
I had another vision about how to work and how to go further in my artworks with much professional advice for sure!

This year, I have been a member of Cosmosys, another huge international art collective and ArtBeat a French art collective. It is very interesting to be involved in these groups too because of the great variety of artists, themes and how I can improve my work with the others. I have to say that, in each art collective, there is something special. The Luminarium is more dedicated to Science-Fiction or Fantastic artworks mainly, Cosmosys offers different forms of art in general and of course it is the same thing for ArtBeat which provide many varied themes and creative opportunities. I must tell you that these art collectives bring me so many new contacts and especially on the web.
I'm very lucky and proud to share my skill with so many brilliant artists and teams on each exhibits.



When you are taking on a such massive piece like 3333AD, where does one begin?

3DA: Online communities & forums for some artists play a huge role in an artist's development. Is this something that applies to you?

MDT: Sure yes! It is always an interesting thing to share artwork and to have feedback on my work. When you upload new art online it is such a good moment to see how people will react with my creations. A lot of people and fans support me each time. Also, I have the opportunity to affect many of them because my artwork, in general, is not dedicated to only one category. I do abstract, vector, 3D, photo manipulation, Sci-Fi et cetara … many different styles for different people I think.
By the way, the other interesting side to be online is to get professional point of views from great artists ! It gives me the possibility to improve my skill and of course to learn more technical things. When you are online, people are very direct in their comments ! If you do good artwork you will know it in few hours or less but if you do something of lesser quality …. you will know it in few minutes! .. Also, with online communities and forums you can't be wrong to meet many other artists from all over the world. So yes, for all these reasons, it is a powerful way to learn, meet, share and to enhance yourself.

3DA: Composition is something that you certainly have a knack for. When you are taking on a massive piece like 3333AD, where do you begin? Do you have a structured work flow? Walk us through Maxime's creative process**.**

MDT : To be honest, my workflow isn't very structured! The composition "3333 A.D" is a very good example of a somewhat "random" step by step process. For this one, I began to have a basic idea, I wanted to create a futuristic city but at the same time I wasn't sure about how to do it from A to Z. I started to draw some very rough things on a piece of paper to have a quick idea of the perspective and depth.

Then I did some tries in 3ds Max with basic cubic shapes first to have a better idea of the whole result.
So, when I finished the stage of inserting my shapes in the scene, I started modeling the biggest elements like the huge buildings on the right and on the left. I love to use basic tools like extrude and bevel to add more and more polygons on my objects.

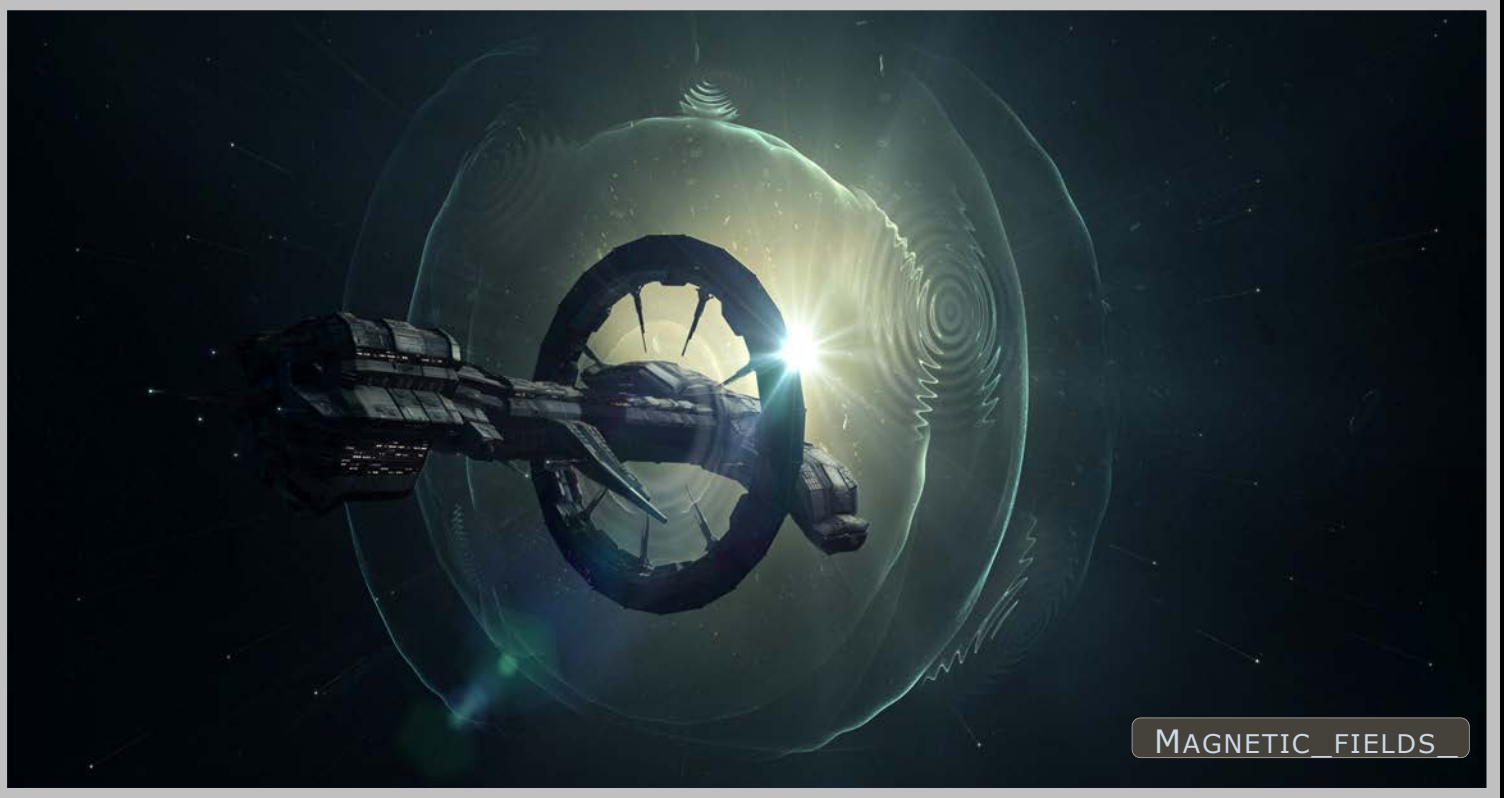
After, I began modeling a big circle plate between the huge buildings, and used a powerful plugin called Gribble to generate hundreds and hundreds of polygons on it. It gives an highly detailed sci-fi structure but not completely, this why I added more little buildings on it and rounded ones to break a little the cubic aspect of Greeble.

So, it was the very first part of the process, then I did some rendering tests before switching to Photoshop. As usual I like to try some light and materials effects before the final render.
It took me some days to be sure of what I wanted to have.
After the rendering process (with Mental Ray) I exported my scene in Photoshop to do the postwork by adding metal textures on the buildings, lights and a back ground. Also, I added more textures and cropped photos of chemical plants and industrial buildings.

Then, I came back to 3ds Max to create all **t**he little ships that you can see in the background and came back again to Photoshop to add depth and lights on them!

It was a long process but, often, when I'm doing these kind of artworks, I have one basic idea at the beginning and many other ones during the creation. This is why it is a completely random workflow but this is what I love too. I don't want to be "in a box".

3DA: You mention using 3ds Max, is this your main "go to" application for modeling? If so what are the pros and cons as you see it in this


MAGNETIC_FIELDS_


DRIFTERIUM

application? Any features that you would like to see added or improved in future releases?

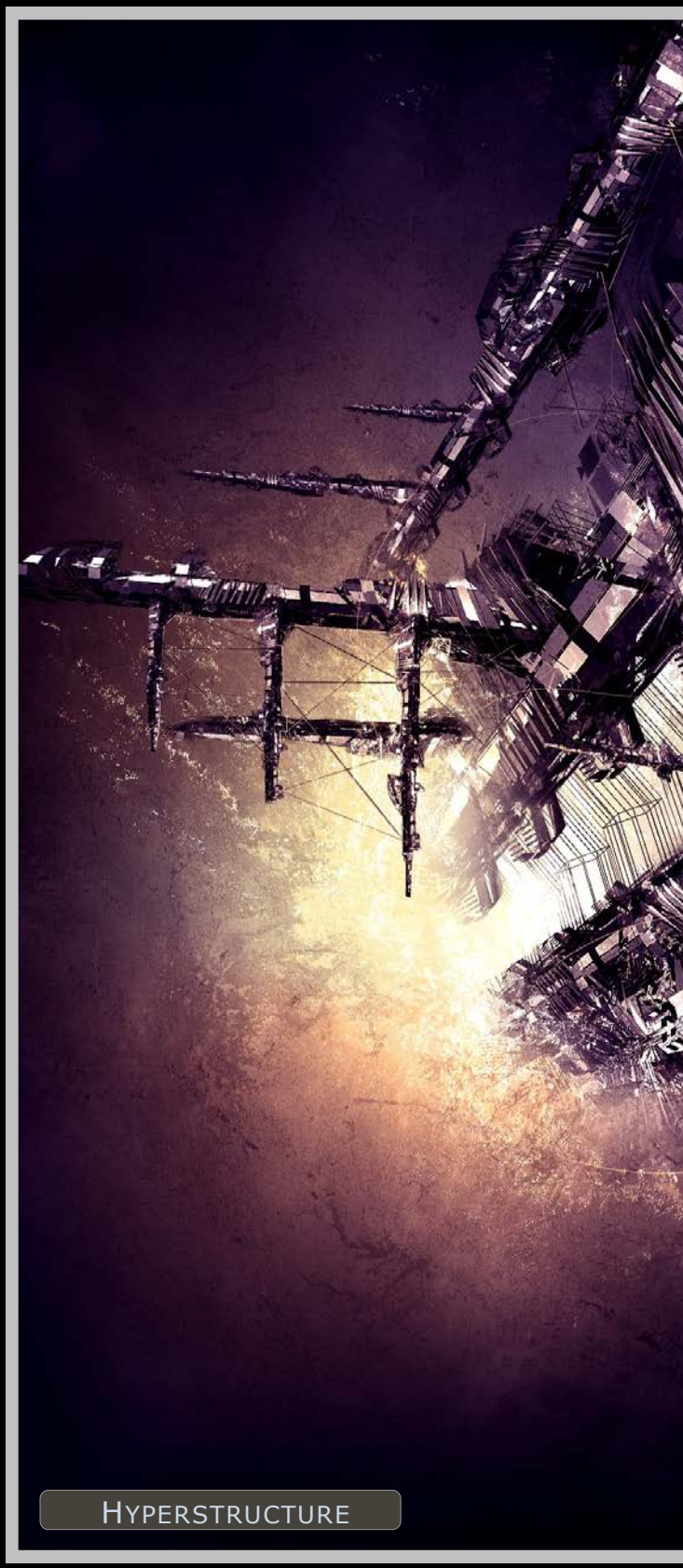
MDT: Sure, 3ds Max is my main 3d software for modeling stuff and especially sci-fi shapes and structures. I used 3ds Max for five years now and I saw some amazing new cool features and tools!

Personally, the pros are more about the way you render a scene with separate passes like z-depth, ambient occlusion, diffuse and so on. Also what I love is the material editors in that they are easy to use, a very user friendly U.I and of course absolutely powerful Default and Mental Ray render engines.
About the tools, I don't know all of them because it is not necessary for the kind of artwork I do but the extrude / bevel tools with the Graphite modeling tools are just crazy !!

For the cons, there are not so many in my opinion! Maybe the particle flow U.I, once you get it, it is ok but it is a little bit hard at the beginning. I will do a quick comparison with the particles generator in Maxon C4D. For example, the effectors / deflectors are a little bit more affordable in C4D because you put one particles generator and you drag and drop everywhere in your scene a deflector then it will affect the particles directly without setting another U.I.

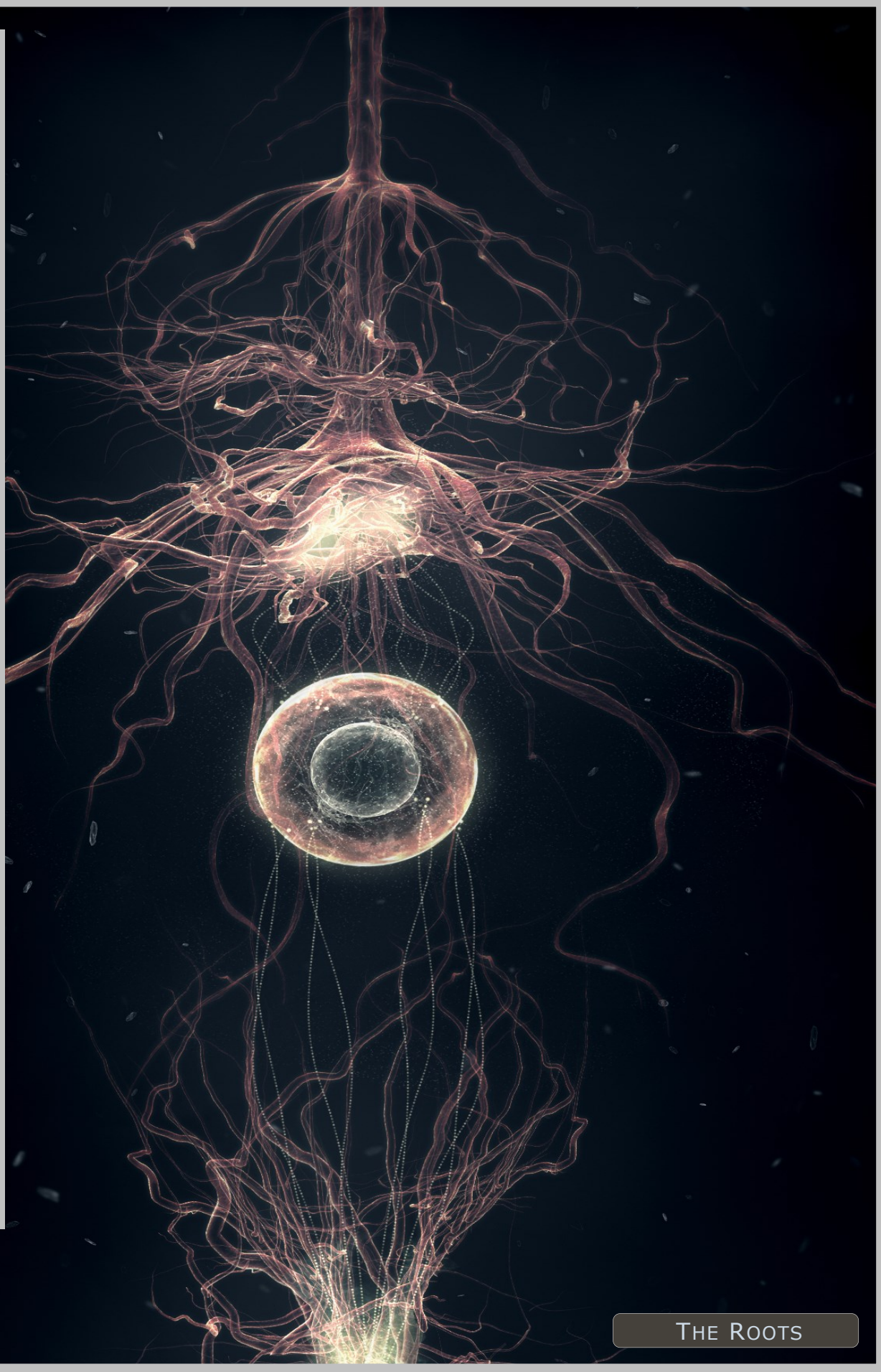
3DA: NeoTerya is a personal project of yours correct, tell our readers a bit about this.

MDT: NeoTerya is one of biggest personal sci-fi projects for me so far. I started the first chapter "NeoTerya : Dissolution" in 2011. At the beginning, I was playing in 3ds Max to create abstract shapes but suddenly I had an odd 3d structure like an alien building you know. Then I started to develop that alien structure by adding extrusions and wireframe effects on it and the result was an unusual sci-fi shape.
For this project, I decided to create more chapters after the first one, like a little sci-story, like a novel. My goal with NeoTerya is to show strange places and structures with old school modeling, I mean without plugins like Greeble for example and with a little background story.



HYPERSTRUCTURE





The Roots


DISSOLUTION



NeoTerya is one of biggest personal sci-fi projects so far. I started the first chapter “NeoTerya : Dissolution” in 2011.

About the name NeoTerya it is a mix between the word “Neo” which means something new, something that appears suddenly and the word “Terya” in reference of the latin word “terra” which it means “earth”.

3DA: *Dissolution*. WoW! Exploding with drama and a classic sci-fi mood! Tell our readers a bit about this installment to NeoTerya.

MDT: Thank you ! This is the first chapter of my project and yes for sure there is a dramatic mood inside, very dark. In fact it represents the fall of an alien structure, its falling and floating somewhere in an unknown place. As I said before, this first chapter should have been an abstract composition at the beginning but I had much more feeling to go on a sci-fi way.
This is why I worked a lot on the building and added more details like strong bump mapping and wireframe effects to enhance the details.
Also, at the moment I was working on it, I wasn't sure about what I wanted to do for the coming next chapters. You can notice here that there are no spaceships, cyborgs or any vehicles !

Also, I played a lot with the warm colors and the black and white effect, it gives a very strange mood.
We don't know if we are really in space or maybe between two parallel worlds ? When people watch this I hope they have some questions in mind, “ what is it ? ”, “ where is it ? “. Of course there are no good answers, I prefer to let people imagine a place.

3DA: *Before The Ruins” another* Epic installment to NeoTerya image tons of eye candy! What got this piece going?

MDT: Well, *Before the Ruins is* the second chapter of my project and it is a little bit more complex and colorful than the previous one. In fact, this chapter represents an exploding planet with a huge spaceship preparing the escape.
Here, I worked more on a sci-fi environment as you can see, because I had good feedback from the previous chapter and it encouraged me in this way. In this second chapter, I created a complex structure around the main ship, a sort of space station with a shed. I spent much more time in 3ds Max to do the modeling of the whole structure but I kept exactly the same materials, textures and of course the same visual aspect than the previous chapter. You can notice that I did more shapes and especially the those big circles in the background, like a big tunnel. I duplicated some of them with rotation and move then I added much extrusions and bump mapping for the sci-fi details. About the postwork, I realized it in Photoshop after exporting the render passes (Diffuse, Ambient Occlusion, Z-depth) with a lot of painting for the creation of the “ground” and the background.

With that piece we aren't anymore between abstract and sci-fi, it is definitively the real start of the NeoTerya project.

3DA: *The Last Gate* ominous lighting and fractal nebula work give this great sci-fi mood. Walk us through its construction.

MDT: Yes, ominous is THE word that could be used for this third chapter !
About the construction of this piece, it is really the next idea of “NeoTerya : Before the ruins”. The odd space ship is still here but in another situation. The idea, here, was to showed that spaceship escaping the previous exploding planet to save a part of the population “Teryans” through an huge gate.

Firstly, I did the modeling of the gate in 3ds Max with the same materials and textures that I used before for my previous NeoTerya chapters. It is important to keep the same mood. Also, about the gate, I did it with many cylinders shapes for the rounded base with a lot of random extrusions first to generate the details. Then I duplicated it twice and moved it on the Z-axis and rotated it a little bit to have much more thickness, I used the scale tool too. I use to duplicate some shapes and rework on them after by adding some more


BEFORE THE RUINS


THE LAST GATE

polys etc …
Here, I duplicated one of the big cylinder one more time to create the wires areas, it is a cheap trick but it works fine to enhance the sci-fi structures.
Also, I added some more little 3d shapes on the gate, like extruded half-spheres and cylinders plus circles splines to create pipes. About the ship, I did a basic importation / merge from my previous scene to this one because I wanted to keep exactly the same spaceship. For the floating rocks, asteroids, I used spheres with displacement modifier on them. Then I associated them with a basic material with a several noise bump mapping. After the modeling and placement of all the shapes, as usual, I did a render with Mental Ray with three passes : Diffuse + Bump mapping, Ambient Occlusion and Z-depth. Also, I did all the postwork mainly with Photoshop and a little bit with After effects.
I use sometimes After Effects to generate lens flares layer and particles, it is absolutely powerful because of the export / import options to Photoshop directly in a PSD file !
You can see in my artwork in general, lots of particles and light effects, I really love to improve the light in sci-fi compositions. In my opinion, there are no limits because we are in space so anything could happen- even strange light effects. To do a conclusion about this third chapter, it is a kind of transition to another NeoTerya chapter. Our ship is moving through the gate to another "world" or "universe".

3DA: You mention in your Bio you use MakeHuman. This is great open-source software for the any of our readers that haven't heard of it. What are some of the features available with this package that keeps it in your tool box?

MDT: I used Make Human since few years now and you can believe me it is such great free 3d software ! So, yes, I felt in love with some of the features of Make Human especially the morphing system. You can obtain a very realistic human body mesh in few steps only. There are options to set the age, the tall, the gender, the face expressions and of course the pose of your character!

What I really love is to spend time to find the best facial expressions and poses with morphing tools by playing a lot with all the settings, it is like a game!
MakeHuman is though serious software for any 3d designers, it offers high quality base meshes to work with. Of course the exportation of the meshes works very fine with 3ds Max or C4D and sure with many other great 3d software.
Personally, I use Make Human in a basic way with my 3d software. I don't do any big modifications of the mesh except for my artwork. Also, Make Human could represent an important alternative for those who don't know how to create 3d bodies from scratch, like me!

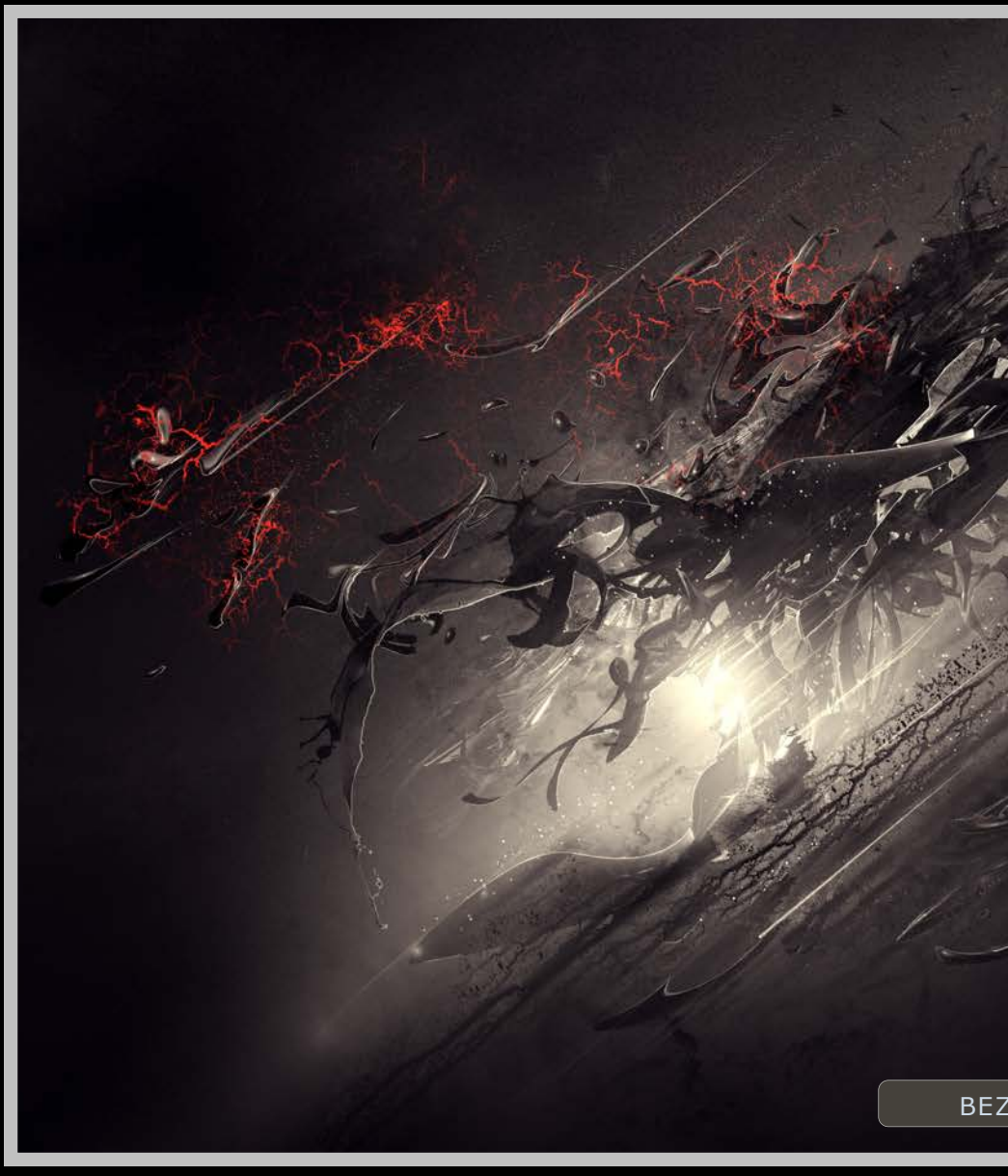
3DA: A fine example of a MakeHuman implementation is *E.K.O.* This is a brilliant show of metallic textures coupled with great use of layers and light. What got the ball rolling with this piece ?

MDT: Yes! It was hard work with that piece for sure! As you can see we are completely in a cyber sci-fi mood here. For the little story behind that piece, I am a huge fan of the manga "GUNNM" (Battle angel Alita) so my influences are clear, I wanted to reproduce a cyborg with a human appearance. So, once again, Make Human was the best tool to use for my artwork. About the composition, I started to generate a female body in Make Human with a specific pose then I exported it directly in 3ds Max. I used the selection tool first on the mesh then I extruded the areas to create the armor of the character.
I did the "explosion" of the metallic parts manually with selection tool and the detach option of the edit poly modifier. I moved and rotated all these shapes around the main character to create floating pieces. As usual, I did my renders with Mental Ray then I exported them to Photoshop to do the postwork with diffuse pass and the ambient occlusion one. I played more with the photoshop displace tool to


EKO

generate the little details like if the armor was dissolving itself in a strange substance. The aim was clearly to experiment more with the Make Human software and obviously with my favorite 3ds Max tools.

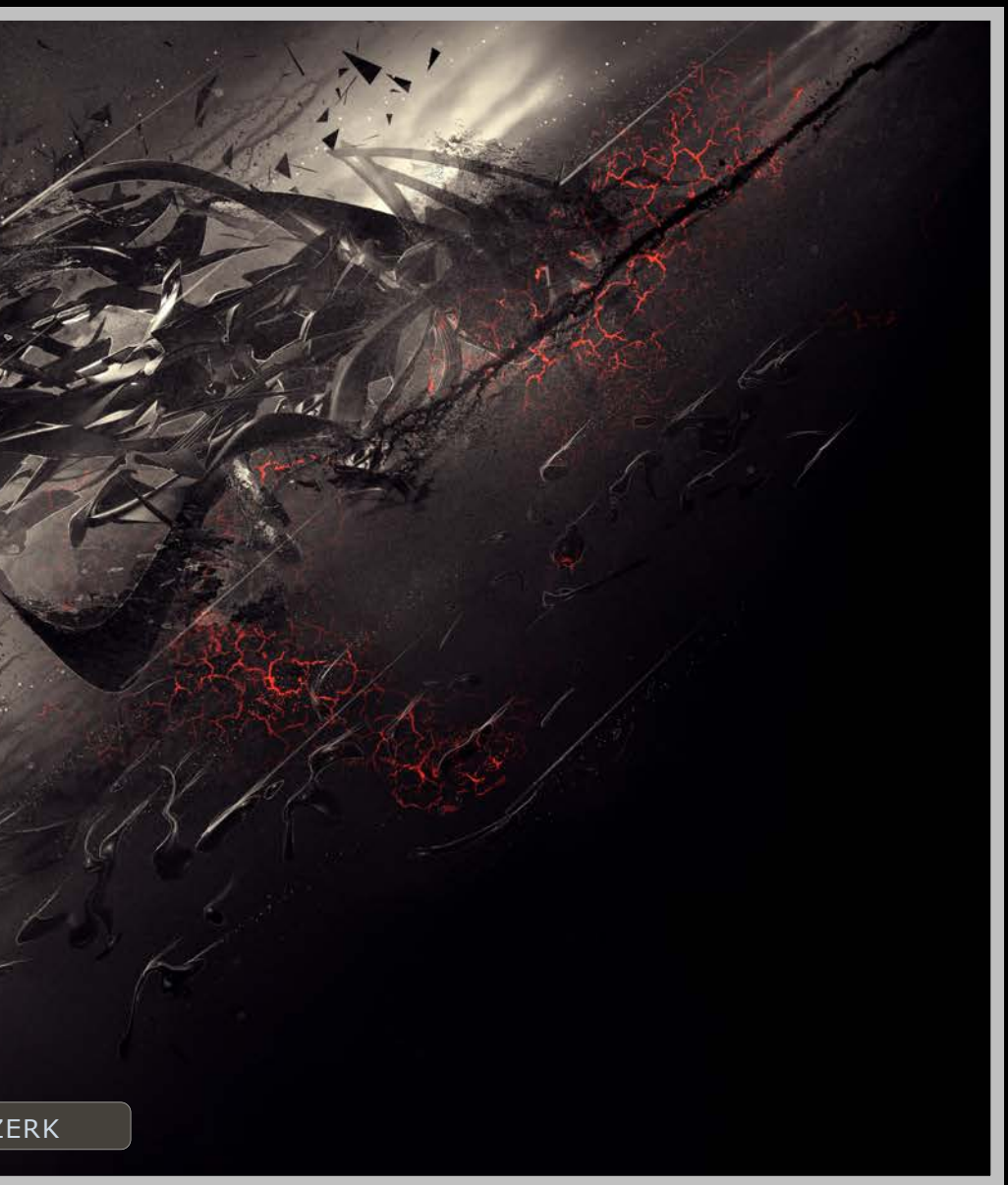
3DA: "The darkness embraced me, the doom took my hand, I became berserk forever.." you wrote on the posting of this image *Berserk.* Congratulations on this piece! created for http://theluminarium.net/ *"Dark Side Of The Mind"* Exhibit ! It certainly fits the theme that's for sure. Excellent composite image. What advice would you give our readers that would like to achieve this type of impact in a still image?
MDT: Thank you very much for your feedback. We had an important exhibit with The Luminarium and it was a very experimental and creative release, completely unusual. My advice to create this kind of artwork would be, first, have a look at the other creations not only on the Web and get inspiration with books, movies and maybe in your own life. *Berserk* is a very personal piece, I putted a lot of my personal troubles in it, this is why it is so dark and nervous !
For an abstract piece like this one, I don't think pretty much before you know, I played a lot with 3ds Max standard primitive shapes and extended ones with a bunch of modifiers to have the wanted result. For example, I used the Torus Knot shapes with a twist modifier on them. Torus Knot is one of my favorite shape for creating abstracts, there are so many settings to do and of course so many different results. With that method, you can play a lot to obtain more deformation on your shapes, feel free to increase or decrease the settings values with an high percentage and add different modifiers !
As usual, the postwork was done in Photoshop with tons of textures and painting everywhere to increase the details.



Once again, my latest advice would be, don't be afraid to experiment in any way!

3DA: *Blaze has* similar shapes as *Berserk,* however it certainly demands an audience of its own with some killer brush work and use of light. What brought this piece to life for you?

MDT: For the explanation, *Blaze* was created for the 21st exhibit of The Luminarium called "ELEMENTS ". About the similarity with "Berserk", yes you're right ! It is another nervous abstract and dynamic one with the feeling of the shapes, particles are moving in the composition. I like to work with warm colors often, so it was clear in my mind to work on the Fire element. For this one I did another experiment with C4D instead of 3ds Max, just because I love to switch between these two great applications. Fire is something that fascinating me, it is a beautiful natural event and at the same time it represents something evil and dangerous.
Also, I created that piece in an abstract way because the fire is completely random this is why my shapes are so strange again.



3DA: Mandelbulb3d has become a very popular program in the past few years, I see by your image *Fusion* that this program appeals to you as well. What is it about this application that has some many artists using it?

MDT: I use Mandelbulb3d a little bit since last year only, it is something new in my toolbox. For sure Mandelbulb3d is becoming very popular with many artists in 3d digital painting, matte painting and other kind of arts. I would like to say that this software has got a complex user interface, it is absolutely not like the well known 3d applications like 3dsmax, C4D, Maya etc …

Mandelbulb3d generates 3d fractal shapes from mathematical equations that we can set into the program. I started to play with it because, as you know now, I'm curious of new experiments!

So many artists are using Mandelbulb3d in their compositions because of the huge possibilities of creating shapes of any kind. You can do settings to obtain sci-fi like renders or something purely abstract to enhance your artworks.

Of course, the power of an application like Mandelbulb3d, is about the high quality of the generated renders with light settings, materials and camera position.

For example, one my favorite effect is the setting of the depth, it can create a crazy fog with a wonderful surface light on the shapes. I did it for "Fusion" to have inner and very intense light areas everywhere. I use to rendered two pictures, one for the diffuse and light pass and

the last one with that depth / fog nearly the equivalent of the Z-depth pass in classical 3d software. It is a great pleasure if you like the postwork and compositing !

3DA: Much of your work features some complex ships and structures. Let's talk a bit about that element of your work. What got you into modeling? What applications have you experimented with?

MDT: At the beginning I was more interested by photo-manipulation only but I saw many 3d artworks especially on the web, then it gave me the desire to try 3D.
The complex ships and structures in my artworks are the heart of my art I suppose both for sci-fi and abstract pieces. To be honest, I never attended any art schools or had effects training in my life so I tried to experiment by myself and I keep doing it. In fact these complex structures that you can see in my pieces are just the result of 3d experiments by modeling a little bit of random shapes with modifiers on them.
When I have an idea in mind I start modeling and add details again and again to obtain complex and strange shapes.
Some of the times my 3d scenes are more abstract first but I move and rotate shapes and do lots of deformations to build something complex. It is not pure modeling but more like a big jigsaw, no secrets here! At the moment I am doing 3d experiments with 3ds Max, C4D, Make Human and Mandelbulb3d "only".
Of course it is such hard work to learn how to use well these great applications- but it is so interesting. Of course I will try to develop my skills with all these applications for my future artwork.

3DA: All this set up and rendering takes a lot of time as well as processing power, what type of hardware are you running?

MDT: Unfortunately I don't have a render farm! Maybe one day …. who knows ? Since 2010 I have worked with an ASUS ROG Laptop G73, a powerful desktop replacement.
Inside my laptop we have an Intel I7-Quad processor, 8Gb of DDR3, ATI Radeon HD 5870 with 1Gb VRAM and two 500Gb HDD. My screen is an 17,5" Full HD Led system with a very good luminosity / contrast. It works very fine with big 3d applications and it is enough for what I do in my artworks, all these things … in silence too !
Also I used my old PC as a backup server now because creating is good but doing backups is essential.

3DA: Maxime you have been quite driven for years now creating and crafting your skills as an artist, what can we expect from you in the future?

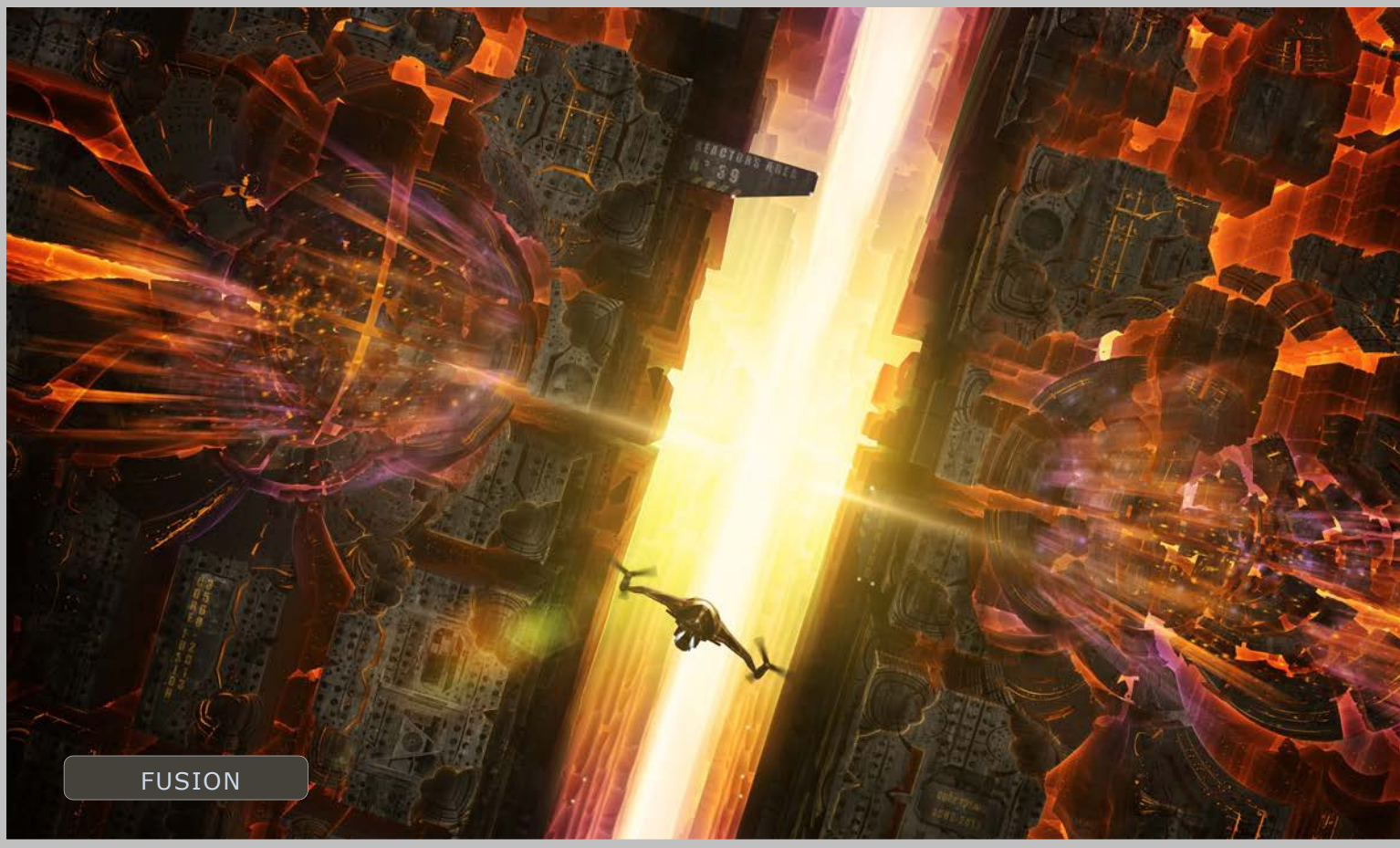
MDT: I have many projects obviously, personal ones and professional ones.
Firstly, I really want to go further with my art collectives and bring more new ideas in my artwork too. It is a great adventure for sure !
Actually I'm working on the fourth and final chapter of my NeoTerya project, I have so much positive feedback about it that I can't stop it now. I can reveal you the name of this upcoming chapter, it is "NeoTerya : Protocity" and surely it will be the most complex and craziest of all the NeoTerya chapters. Also, I will be working on a second chapter of "E.K.O" with Make Human but maybe with more 3d cyber stuff. Another thing I want to try is exploring the world of motion design and compositing. To see your work moving on a video gives you another kind of enjoyment and of course it is another way to work too.
http://elreviae.deviantart.com/

https://www.facebook.com/elreviae





Blaze



FUSION



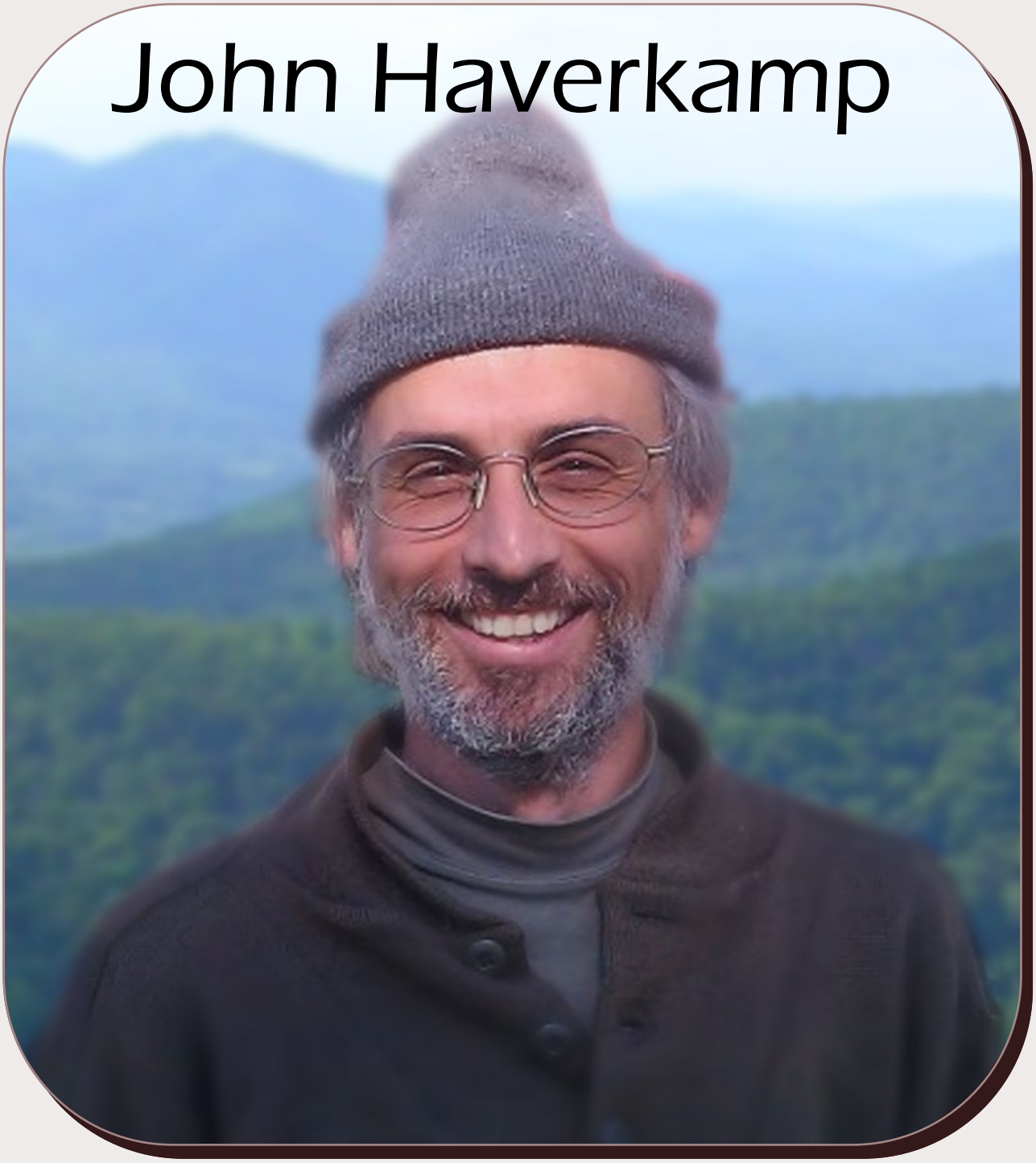
UNDERNEATH






RINGS

John Haverkamp



John Haverkamp was born in Ohio and then moved to the pristine Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia at a young age. There he spent a semi-isolated childhood re-enacting the Lord of the Rings and being corrupted by Dungeons and Dragons. Always with the fondness for the fantastical and medieval, Art school drove him deeper into Luddite territory by granting him the skills of a traditional metal-smith. This meant post-college jobs making copper fountains, welding and steel fabricating, casting and finishing bronze sculptures, and working for an architectural blacksmith throughout his twenties. When sick of being an exploited artisan (read starving artist) John got sucked into cyberspace and the arcane mysteries of 3D studio max. It was a long road climbing out of the dark-ages, but the light at the end of the tunnel was discovering Zbrush five or six years ago. Now he teaches digital arts part time, and constantly endeavours to improve his craft as a digital-sculptor and visualizer through personal work, illustration and indie game projects.

3DA: I've noted that with some of the artists we've interviewed, Dungeons and Dragons has been a springboard for them for being artists. In a way, wouldn't it be nice to have a career just based on Dungeons and Dragons? But in the real world it's difficult to do that! It does provide a bit of grist for the mill, doesn't it though, for imagination and for creativity?

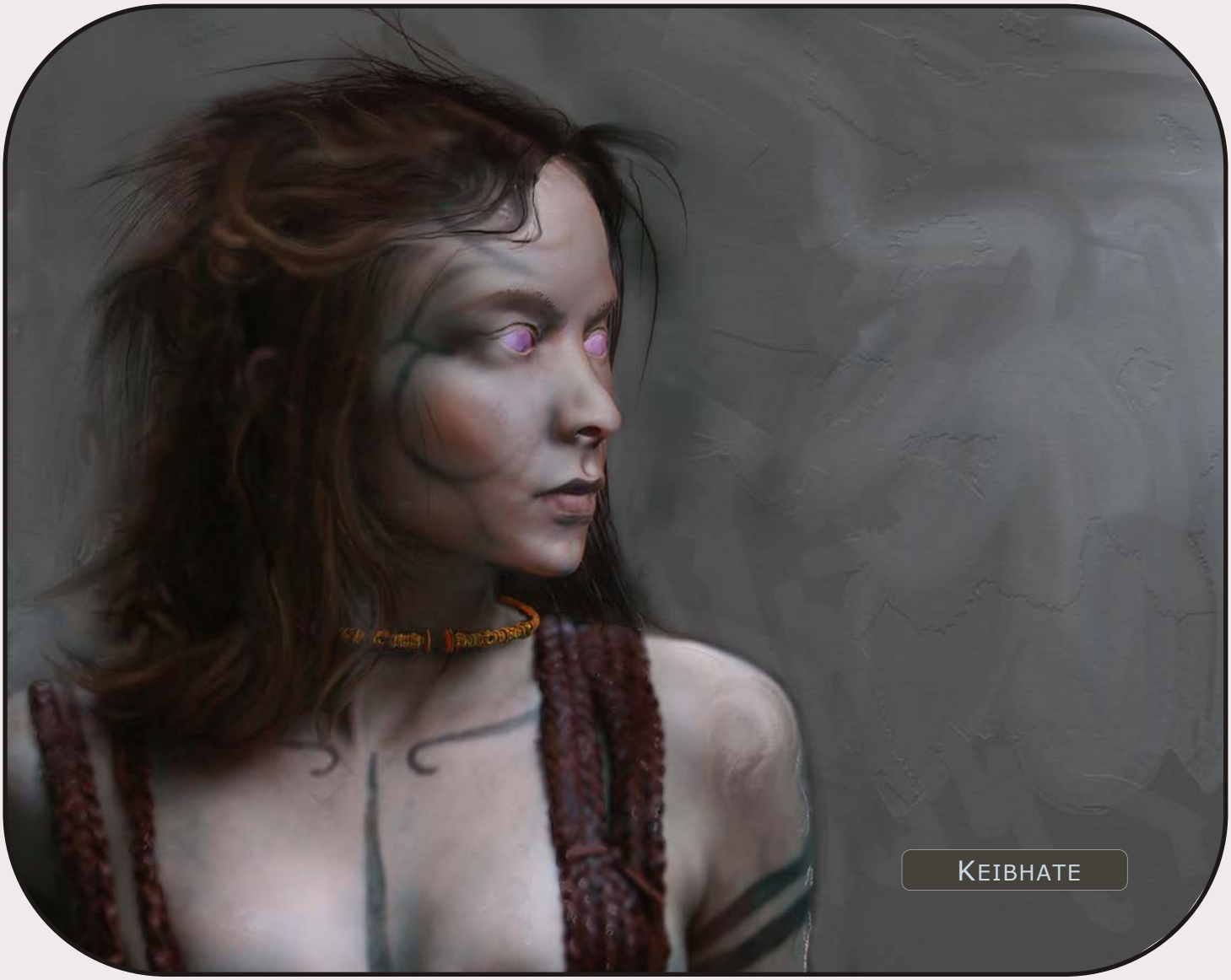
John: Yeah. It encouraged world-building at an early age. Actually I have a good friend who programs for Valve, one of the game companies. I think he's in Seattle nowadays. He was an art school buddy of mine and that's what he wanted to be when he was a kid. He wanted to be a professional dungeon master and I'm pretty sure he actually is now. He worked on that Portal game.

3DA: So you can play Dungeons and Dragons and be paid for it too.

John: I guess so. I'm not sure I'm quite to that point, but one can aim that way.

3DA: Where did your artistic roots come from and what drew you into sculpting specifically?

John: I guess I always sort of sculpted at an early age, you know, messed about with clay in art classes. I was always making things. My childhood, there was lots of role playing and strutting about in costumes. So of course you needed swords and bows and crossbows, so I made that sort of thing, just fashioning things out of bits of junk. You don't really have a lot skills when you're young. I certainly didn't have any tools. But I tried. Then I was in hog heaven when I got to art school and was



like, "Wow, they have a blacksmith forge and they have a welder and a drill press." I just went crazy. I just went crazy.

3DA: So was that particular corner of the art room attractive to you straight away, the welding and the steel working and the metal working?

John: I sort of had to build myself up to it. The first degree I did was jewelry, so I made little tiny intricate metal sculptures and made some jewelry too, but it really wasn't my thing. The welding was tricky stuff, and I didn't really take to it when I was in the first round of art school. Actually had to ease my way into it in the professional realm.

I've actually taught art school welding as a TA, a teaching assistant, and taught welding and it's just like, art school welders are horrible. So of course I pride myself, I was a professional welder. I know how to actually do it properly. You can spot the art school welders because they make awful messes, you know? I don't know.

3DA: So is there a difference between industrial welding and art school welding?

John: Oh yeah, absolutely, yeah, yeah. It's painfully obvious. It can be to the point of, yeah, the artist guy here didn't even bother to turn on the gas that keeps the weld clean and proper when he did it. Ugh! Pet peeve territory.

3DA: Right through your sculpting career and through learning sculpting, have you always had a favorite material or medium, as in metal, clay, or something else?



ANDROID POSED

John: I guess I would have to say metal. Metal obeys. It's malleable. It's predictable. Once you sort of get on the inside of its mysteries, it's difficult. It sort of bites you back, but it does what it's supposed to do.

Whereas wood, I took a lot of woodworking classes, and wood just doesn't listen. It's alive, it moves around, responds to the atmosphere. I'd say I could carve wood but I'm a horrible woodworker. If I was to make a cabinet it wouldn't necessarily look very good.

3DA: I suppose that metal has a sort of greater permanency about it, so whatever you create you know is going to last maybe 200 years instead of being burned down or shattered if it was pottery or something like that.

John: The bronze is graded 2,000 at least. That's what my old boss at the foundry used to say. When I had that job we would make lots of art and we would just laugh and go, "That thing doesn't deserve to be made but I guess it is."

3DA: So what were some of your early successes as you got into the working world with sculpting, and you mentioned about bronze sculptures?

John: I wouldn't necessarily rate it very successful, but I had a job where I worked at this foundry and we did all the grunt labor from the ground up and basically made other peoples' art for them. The best way to describe it would be almost as a vanity press. People that had money and had the art drive could bring us stuff and we'd make it into bronze for them.

We did things from small statues all the way up to double life size figures. I did a couple of those. That was fun. It was heroic to lie on your back all night and run a TIG welder and a grinder and be like, "Wow, yeah, I made that thing happen." It didn't pay terribly well when you're just an employee. That's sort of what I was alluding to in my bio where I sort of got sick of it all at a certain point. It just becomes a job.



3DA: And where did it go from there once you got past the employee stage?

John: The 3D sort of happened to me. I saw this magical world sort of open up. I guess this is early to mid-90s, I dropped that word "cyberspace", which isn't a common word nowadays, but that was the big hype back then, in the pre-2000s, '90s. And virtual reality, which is another thing which seems to be kind of blasé, but this is before the Matrix movie happened and I was already writing fictional things, what I feel like were very similar and I was sort of envisioning this magical world. I always loved science fiction and fantasy so I saw a way into that type of world, which is very counter to the fine art vibe that I had gotten into, or been forced into in art school.

3DA: Yeah. Because the early '90s were kind of the beginning of the 3D industry, where processing power and the software was beginning to shape where it could do something useful for industry, and it was becoming a bit more reachable for hobbyists slowly.

John: Yeah, yeah. To illustrate that, let me tell you, the first 3D class that I walked into in college, they had a room full of these silicon graphics reality engines. That was the second Terminator movie that had the CGI. It'd just been released and those were the type of machines that they had done all that in.

When I got into that classroom, the PC I had bought myself from working had more RAM in it than those machines. It was this sort of dead end on the evolutionary tree of computing. The school had probably spent a million dollars on these machines and you could have spent $60,000 and



bought PCs that would have been better. It was kind of this weird cul-de-sac ,I guess. So, yeah, that illustrates what you were saying there, definitely.

3DA: So with your PC, is that where you started, with 3D Studio Max?

John: It was actually the DOS version of 3D Studio Max. So yeah, definitely on the PC. I certainly couldn't have afforded a Macintosh back in those days.

3DA: And what were some of your early creations with 3D Studio Max? Was it just experimenting back then and seeing where it could take you?

John: Always making things. I dug up something the other day to post. I made an animated machine, almost like a trip hammer or something like that. I don't know why I made that. Of course I tried to make characters but I was horrible at it. It was really difficult back in those days. The tools were just horrible and it was hard to get info. Basically I had to stick to mechanical-type things for a very long time, and terrain, I got very interested in making terrain, architecture, of course, yeah.

3DA: Yeah, because back in those days the forums were pretty few and far between, weren't they? They were not very well populated, but it's how people learned. There wasn't that much training around, I think, for that many of the applications, so it was a case of hanging onto every word of whoever was in the forum at the time and making the most of those communities as they grew.

John: For sure. And if you could find a friend who had a book, you would take it to the coffee shop and copy the whole entire book because it was like a gold brick to you.

3DA: And then came ZBrush into your universe, which is a digital artist sculpting tool.

John: Yeah, it's a dream. It's an absolute dream. It just opens the whole thing up. I went, "Oh, I feel like an artist again." It's sort of like being in exile for, I don't know, it was probably almost a decade where I just slowly tried to climb into this 3D world.

It's kind of like trying to be an artist with your hands cut off and then all of a sudden ZBrush comes along and you have a Wacom tablet, which was starting to be affordable then and boom. And it simulated the exact experience I had had sculpting in wax and clay. I mean, they really went out of their way to do that. Yeah, it's great stuff, it's great stuff.

3DA: So being one of the artists that's done real-world sculpting and now experiencing ZBrush, what are some of the things that just translate really well between real world and sculpting with ZBrush?

John: I think they've tried to build the tools to be very similar. There's a rake tool in ZBrush that sort of simulates these kind of serrated-edged spatulas or knives that you use. There's of course these polishing tools, these trimming tools. There's brushes called "clay buildup", which they're just like taking little dollops of clay and dropping them on the surface.

But it's definitely a simulation. It's not the same thing. They're trying to make it very similar, but it's its own animal.

I guess the biggest thing is you're really dealing with a mathematical construct. It's



a manifold of points. In ZBrush you don't have to think about those points anymore, thank God, but they're there and you need to know the limitations of them. They've got that new tool Dynamesh, which is sort of a way around that, which is a way to dynamically update this mesh manifold that you've got.

If you start sculpting and you sort of carve too far or pull too far, you lose the tightly packed quads and you get into where you see the faces and you see the points starting to be jagged and messy and coming out at you, and you've reached the limit. This Dynamesh allows you to be able to automatically recreate a mesh that updates to the changes that you made, so you sort of restore your pristine quads that you had before you started distorting it.

3DA: So it kind of regenerates the resolution?

John: Yes, yes. I was teaching a friend of mine, who's a very good traditional sculptor, he's an amazing guy, Brush. And before this Dynamesh tool, he would reach that point and he would go, "I hate this. Now I see these nasty bits, these nasty points and I don't know how to make them go away." And I'm like, "Well, you shouldn't have done that. There are strategies." There was all this thinking ahead that had to be done prior to that. Now that that exists, a lot of the problems go away, which is very cool. So that would probably have to be my favorite feature of it.



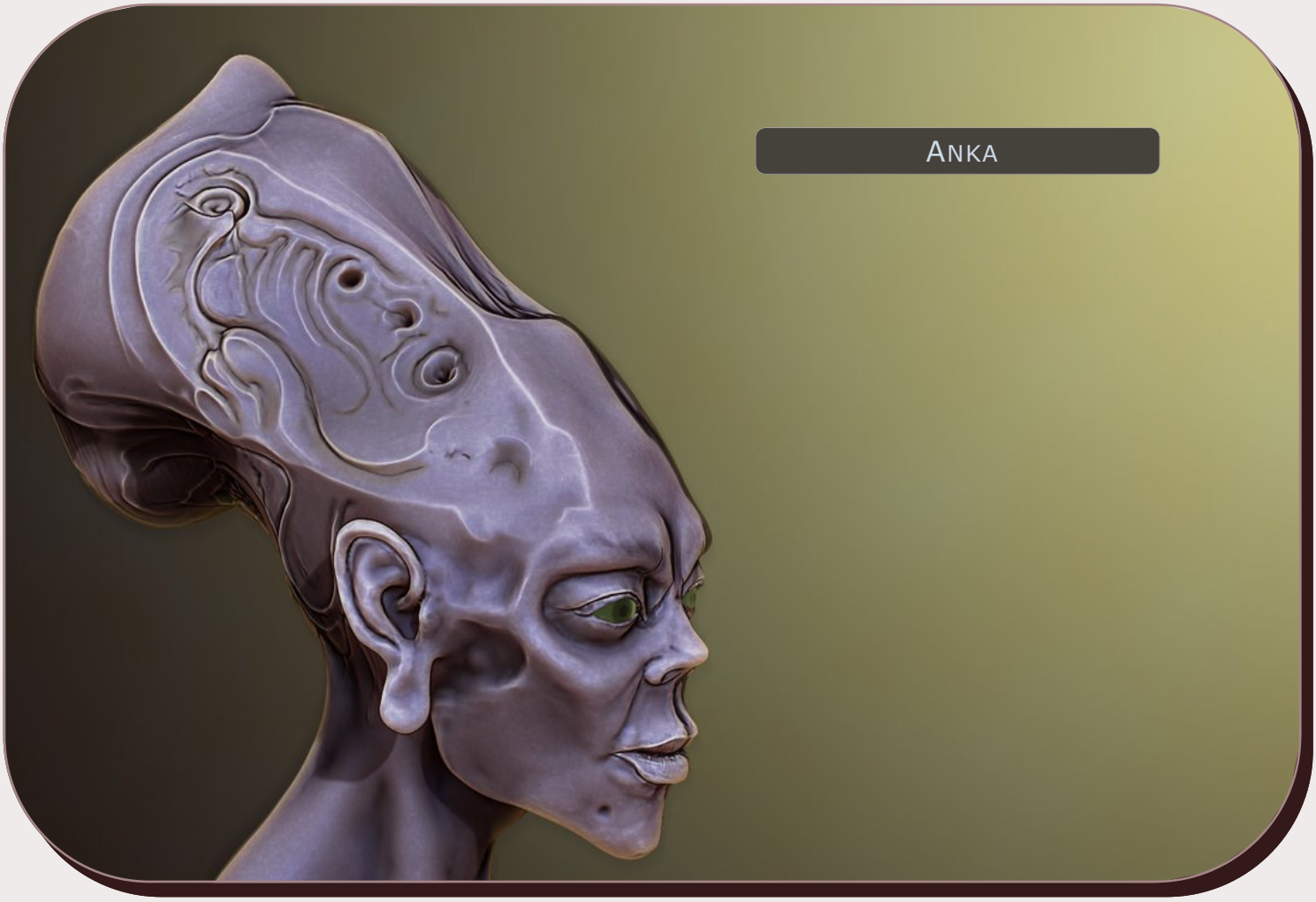
MUPWIGGLE

3DA: Now are there some things that don't translate very well between what you've learned in the real world sculpting and then trying to translate that across to ZBrush?

John: There's kind of an integrity to real materials that I'm kind of nostalgic for. I also carve some slate. So I carve some soft stone, and I carve wood. Each type of wood has its own little properties that you sort of have to work around and they're very seductive, particularly when you get to the finishing stage of it. You really have something when you're done with it that's really nice, and if it's stone or wood, you've made something that's a one-of-a-kind, and that's kind of cool too. But when I compare that with the versatility, and the ease, the not costing me anything to just muck about, I can take the trade off, I can take the trade off.

3DA: Now, I think ZBrush comes with about 30 sculpting brushes, which I imagine for the first-time user can be a little overwhelming when they're trying to first get into ZBrush. Do you think you necessarily need that quite large range of brushes when you first start or can you get away with just two or three?

John: Certainly, you can get away with two or three. I've watched whole videos for really serious pro guys and they'll use just a handful. They might sculpt for four or five hours with just three brushes. They certainly know all the brushes and their brushes are there for specialized tasks, but you don't necessarily have to incorporate them into your workflow right off the bat.



In fact, maybe as you're learning you might be better off not to.

It's kind of like going into the art supply store and going, “I want to be a painter. I want to take up oil painting,” and you look at the 60 or 70 brushes they have in the bins there and you go, “Well, what's this one?” “Oh, that's a feather brush.” “Oh, this is a cut brush.” And you think you have to have all of those things and you don't. You don't at all. It's not the tools that make the artist, it's what you do with them. Just keeping things simple sometimes can be a way to go. It really can.

3DA: So what other typical traps a beginner can fall into when they first start?

John: Well, I'll tell you the ones I've got into, which most everybody does this, is you look at the resolution. Like say you're starting with a sphere and you find out about subdivide and you go, “Well, I want this thing to be as awesome as possible so I'm going to hit this subdivide as many times as I possibly can until my computer about shuts down.” I think mine will scream to a halt at about six million, but on my earlier computers if it went over two million it was starting to not have a good time. And then you go, “Okay, now I'm going to make my amazing sculpture.”

I quickly learned. I started watching some videos of people. They would do a ton of work at the very lowest levels and sort of work their way up. I must say that I've been watching some videos of some people who are pro who start out as more traditional sculptors, and they seem to be able to get away with that initial subdivide, but that's because they're such bloody good sculptors from the get go, that they sort of don't have to play by the digital rules because they have such a strong foundation.

But if you're a novice sculptor and a novice digital sculptor, you should pay attention to the maxim of work at low poly



first and build your way up. Yeah, I guess that answers that.

3DA: Yeah. Now there's something in Brush, I think, called "polypaint". Is that something you've used, and what are the advantages of polypaint? Something particular to ZBrush, isn't it?

John: No, I wouldn't say so. It just means that you're putting color information on the polygons. Which, if you're going to stay 100 percent digital, like you're just drawing up a digital illustration for example, is a perfectly fine way to get the color information on your model. But if you're headed to animation, pipeline, or a game, you need to do UVW unwrapping, and then you will transfer that polypaint information to the UVWs. Which, basically UVW is just a fancy way of saying, taking a 3D object's mesh, which is 3D, and flattening it out. Kind of the reverse of when you make a cube out of a piece of paper that you fold six sides together. UVW wrapping is the opposite of that basically, where you're flattening out the 3D object.

3DA: Recently I think we spoke about being able to create human or animal or alien forms without a reference, which I think for many artists would be perhaps a difficult stage to get to. What can an artist apply to get to this stage, to work without reference points?

John: If you can get the reference that's great, but if you're doing a dragon, where's your reference? Anatomy, it's anatomy, human and animal anatomy, which I kind of feel like I came lately to. That's sort of been what I've been concentrating to try to get better on the last three or four years and it takes time. But that's what frees you up to be able to create from your head. You have to know how the skull works, you have to know how the bones work, you have to know how the muscles attach to those bones, how they inter-operate, which ones are on top of each other, which ones are underneath, which ones will show



Savgaz Warlord



up on skin, which ones might not show up on skin, depending on whether the person is thin or obese what will show, etc.

It's a lot to take in, but that's what will free you to be able to create. We're in this period where we're looking at movies, everybody's familiar with these movies with just these amazing CGI creations that look 100 percent real. There's so much talent that has been thrown out of making the unreal real that you have to step up to that level if you want to participate in that sort of thing. Anatomy is the key, it's the key that opens the door.

3DA: So investing your time in learning anatomy, in the end, can be a bit of a time saver when it gets to creating something new, would you say?

John: Oh, absolutely.

3DA: You just have to go to what you've learned. I suppose you end up with almost a model in your head of how it should be working, and you can just refer to that instead of just constantly trying to copy from a single reference picture or painting or something.

John: I see a lot of young people who haven't been to art school do this. They'll take a photograph of a famous person that they like and they'll do a very meticulous, painstaking pencil or ballpoint pen copy of that photo. They might generate a lot of "likes" on a social media platform. "Oh, that looks just like such-and-such." But to my trained eye, I just go, ugh, because I know that they're copying the photograph. Even if I don't know it for a fact, I can tell because they don't have a sense of the anatomy underneath that's informing how they're doing their piece.

It's just ugly. And the distortion of the photograph . . . when you take a photograph you're dealing with perspective and distortion and focus, and that's not how we see in real life. When you try to literally copy that photograph, you can end up with something that's quite distorted and strange-looking. It's just the wrong way to go about it, I think, and I think it's very clear.

The stuff that's at the top of the list, they all know their anatomy. They've done a lot of work from life and of course they use reference. They use reference as much as they can but they sort of have this map that they've built over time, and that map makes them extremely efficient. Their eye is informed. Their eye is educated.

3DA: Do you have a couple of favorite artists that have used that that that you've followed over the years, perhaps in sci-fi or fantasy?

John: Top of the list would be Alan Lee. I discovered his Faeries book when I was very young. He's amazing. Obviously he does a lot of life drawing, but obviously he knows his perspective and his anatomy extremely well. He doesn't even have to think about it. It's obviously effortless now. I've seen some direct watercolors, maybe for some Tolkien art that it just blows my mind how somebody could do that sort of extemporaneously.

3DA: Off the top of your head, what would you say some of your . . . let's name your top two features of ZBrush and perhaps how have you been using these in some of your more recent work?

John: Well, the Dynamesh has become crucial. That's replaced my previous base-meshing, or z-sphere way to generate an initial starting mesh. Nowadays I just grab a sphere and I start yanking on it just like I would with a ball of clay, and that Dynamesh that sort of regenerates the mesh frees you to do and operate that way. So that would be at the top of the list.

This new what's called ZRemesher is a way to generate a good topology low-poly mesh from say something that you've sculpted on that's already extremely high-poly. So that's pretty nice. I'm sort of exploring that and trying to get what I want out of it without having to do manual re-topology which is what I've done in the past, which is pretty time consuming and kind of meticulous. If I can sort of set up some guides and play with a few knobs and click a button in this ZRemesher and get a good enough mesh to be able to animate, wow. Or send to a game, wow.

3DA: That would be a real time saver.

John: Yeah. It's there. It's not 100 percent automatic. You have to know what you're doing. You have to know what your end result it is. I just saw a post from a friend of mine. He's a professional animator and he sort of, I wouldn't say dabbles, but he's diving into ZBrush and sculpting, and he posted a ZRemeshed female figure that he did and he said, "Yeah, two days work done in 15 minutes." I'm going to go watch a movie now.

3DA: Yeah, that's powerful stuff.

John: And this is just in the last two or three updates of ZBrush, so yeah, wow. What's next?

3DA: I think I've read a few reviews recently on ZBrush and I think the reviewers gave the sense that Pixologic really seemed to know how to improve the workflow. They think about the workflow of the artist, and that's one of the reasons why their product has been taken up really well, because the workflow, the time savers that they've introduced have been really well received. It just keeps that workflow really slick. So that's what seems to be perceived by the industry about ZBrush.

John: Yeah, I would agree. I think that they listen to their public. And the fact that it's free updates is just absurd. I bought the program probably three years ago and I've gotten six or seven free updates. That doesn't happen. If I was using some of these rival products I would have had to

spend thousands of dollars to upgrade in the meantime.

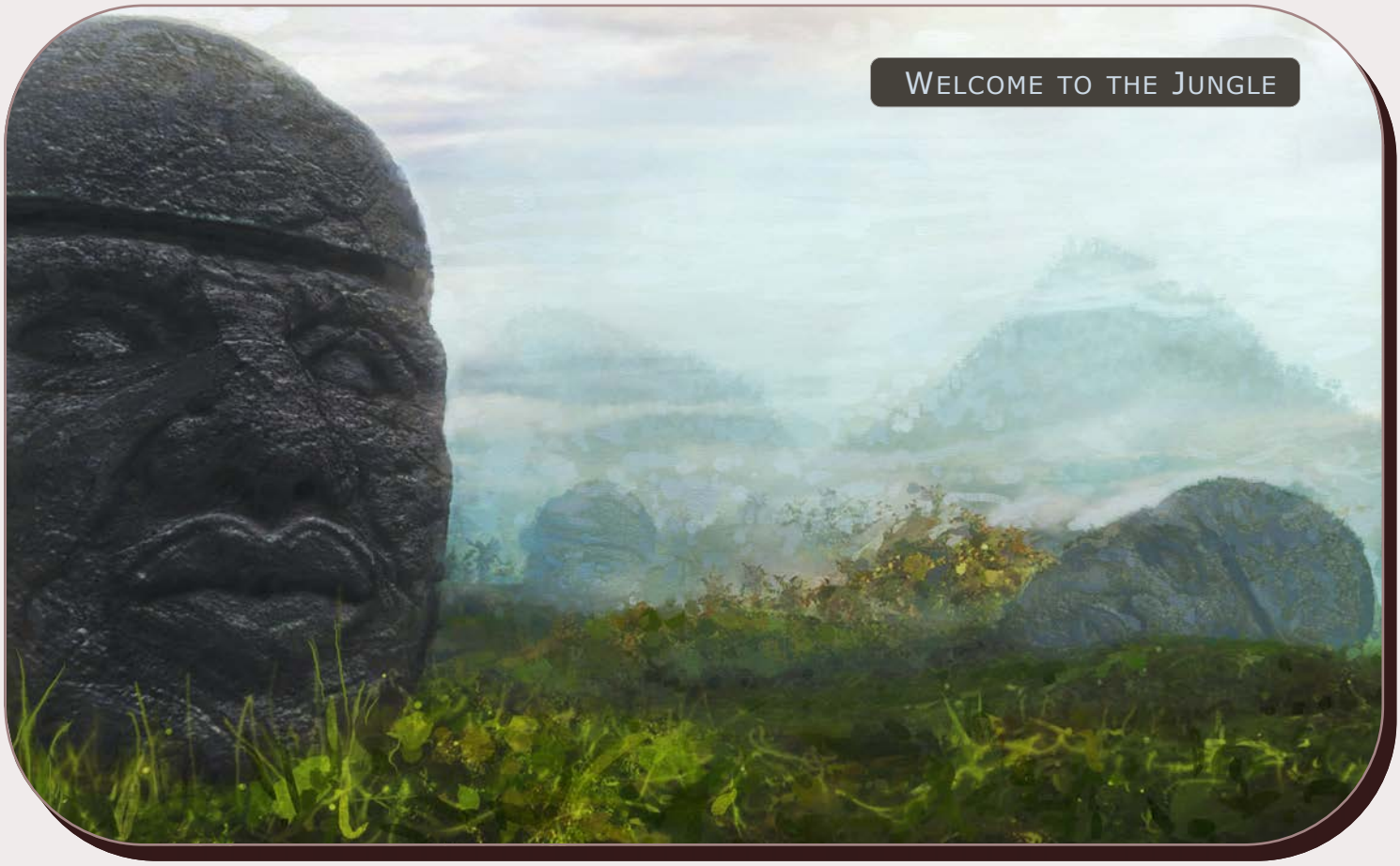
3DA: What's one tip you give to those who are starting out with ZBrush, who've just opened it up from the box and getting it going? What top tip would you give to those who are beginning with this application?

John: How to save. One of the tricky things about ZBrush that other programs don't have, is its roots. It wasn't really a 3D program when it started. It was what was called a two-and-a-half D program when it was in version one and two. If you go to your documents menu and hit "Save", you're not actually saving your 3D project. You're saving a flat picture in a proprietary 2D format, and that's not going to make you happy. I did that the first time I used it and I've had students who have done that.

Particularly if you start with a sphere and you make a rather nice face and you're very happy it's your first thing and then you save and you go to reopen it and it's not there, it's pretty annoying. So go to your Tools menu and save out your Z Tool. That's your actual 3D information.

Of course they do now have a File menu. This is new in the last maybe two versions previous where you can save your project now, and that will keep your 3D information as well as all your other settings and multiple tools. So that's great, but that's a new thing too. But that Documents menu, boy, that's not what you want.

3DA: So for listeners who are wondering what two-and-a-half D is, that's kind of like a pseudo-3D, isn't it? I think that was introduced in the early days when processing power wasn't too good. That was a sort of term. That's what some of the early games used, wasn't it, to make it look like 3D but in reality it was just . . .





John: It's like a high relief, if I can borrow a fine art term. You have some Z information, you have some depth information, but you can't actually turn it all the way around and look at it from behind, which is of course what you want if you're a real 3D sculptor.

3DA: Now, you have a deviantARTsite that we'd love people to visit and take a look at your ZBrush work there. You've got some really good stuff going on there. So if folks want to go to, this is like a shortcut, it's **3dartdirect.com/sculpt** and that will take you to John's deviantART site. So what are you working on at the moment? What are you experimenting at the moment with?

John: I started a ghoul a couple days ago. He's kind of a hulking green-skin, rotting flesh monster. Maybe make the flesh a little more convincing. I've got several aliens. Always trying new things.

A lot of times I just open ZBrush in the morning when I've got some time and with no preconceived notions, just start sculpting. And that's so much fun. It's so liberating. You don't always make something amazing, but it's just so much fun.

3DA: I think that says it all then. Hopefully your ghoul will be ready for Halloween.

John: Yeah, yeah.

3DA: Well, thank you so much for your time today, and I enjoy ZBrush. It sounds like you're having a ball with it ever since you've discovered it, and I think that goes with many other artists that I've spoken to as well. They find it just liberating and it's just a great product that gives a lot of freedom to artists that especially have crossed over from the real world, from doing sculpting from there. So thanks again for your time.

John: Thanks so much Paul. It's been fun.

John Haverkamp at Deviant Art

http://magbhitu.deviantart.com/



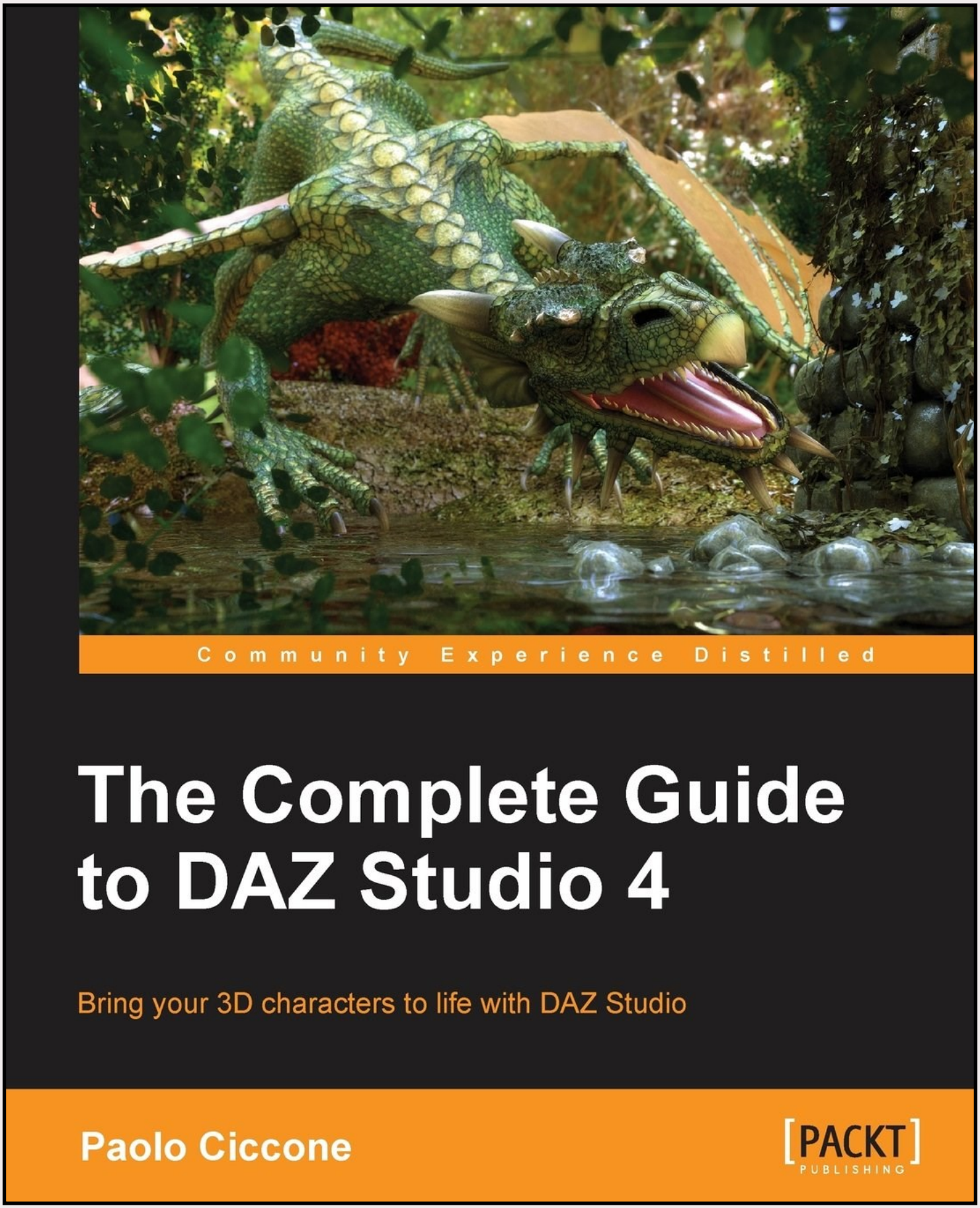
Paolo Ciccone



Transcript of the 3D Art Direct Podcast Session 21 : You Can Listen to our Podcasts HERE

Paolo Ciccone is a software engineer and photographer who now lives in Santa Cruz, California. He's an experienced software developer with over 20 years of involvement in various projects. His real field of expertise, what he focuses on, is developing applications, for both the Apple Mac operating system and Windows, that assist graphic artists achieve photo-realistic results. And to further that, he founded Pret-a-3D in 2010, a company dedicated to bringing high-end computer graphic tools to the masses. His Reality software for POSER and DAZ Studio has been used for video game illustration and for the pre-production of some Hollywood large-budget movies such as *Jurassic Park 4* and *Hunger Games: Catching Fire.*

And for more than two decades, Paolo has also taught all kinds of classes, from training for large corporations to live workshops about 3D graphics, and that includes with us, 3D Art Live, which we're grateful for. Paolo's experience with 3D software started back in 1999 with the first public version of Blender, and his interest evolved to include other programs, including, of course, DAZ Studio, which he has used since version one. Paolo is very active in the online communities, and he also publishes a weekly blog covering topics about 3D graphics.


Community Experience Distilled
The Complete Guide to DAZ Studio 4
Bring your 3D characters to life with DAZ Studio
Paolo Ciccone
[PACKT]
PUBLISHING



3DA: It's good to hear that your software has been used for pre-production of some large-budget movies as well. I didn't realize that.

Paolo:That just happened. One of my customers contacted me. I think it was for some questions about the next version of Reality. In the process, he told me, this is me, and I think his name is Ron Mendel. I have to check. But basically, he gave me his webpage, and in there I see that he has credits for an incredible long list of Hollywood movies with some of the biggest names in the business, so, wow. I said, holy cow. Who am I talking to? He said, I build props and vehicles for these movies, and what he does is he needs to basically provide a pre-visualization of how the prop or the vehicle will be. And a prop can be a weapon; it can be part of the costume, etc.

He said for years he tried to do it with 3D software but then when he found Reality, then everything changed for him because he was able to give a photo-realistic representation of this prop that he was thinking of building. Of course, this is before the prop is physically built. There is an incredible amount of money and time involved in that, so for the director of the movie to give the green light, it's crucial that they can see this in the best way possible. So he is now using Reality to produce these pre-visualizations that will give them the authorization for being physically produced. He said, oh, we used it in Jurassic Park 4. I said, wow. He talks in the past tense of something that is not out yet.

Paolo:I went, wow, can I quote you? He said, yeah, sure. No problem. I said, fantastic.

3DA: Yeah. That's quite something, yeah.

Paolo:Yeah, yeah, yeah. It's one of those moments where you realize that this little thing that I built day by day, coding, I've been doing this for the past three years, four years, actually, now. It's real now.

3DA: Wouldn't it be wonderful if they quoted your software on the extended DVD version of *Jurassic Park 4*, on the making of.

Paolo:Yeah, that would be nice. I don't count on that. There are so many tools are used internally for the work. They barely even mentioned Maya, and we know that Maya is at the center of most animations, in CGI, for all these big movies like, I don't know, man, Jurassic Park. They barely mention it. It's at the center of the pipeline. I'm very satisfied to just know that this is happening. Besides, Jurassic Park is one of my favorite franchises. I'm really thrilled about it.

3DA: Great. Well, today we're here to talk about your book, *The Complete Guide to DAZ Studio 4.*

Paolo: Yes.

3DA: But first of all, tell me about when you first came into contact with DAZ Studio, and did you see some nice strengths about the software as you started to use it? What did you pick up from it when you first came across it?

Paolo: Okay, so that was about, I think it was 2006, because at that time I was using POSER. I had been using POSER for about two years. So I wasn't really looking for an alternative, but like many others, I was buying content through DAZ 3D. So one day they announced this software, which actually was a little confusing at first. I think it wasn't quite clear what the software was doing. But this is back then. And so I checked and it was a free download. This was DAZ Studio 1.0.

It takes an enormous amount of effort to build an alternative to something like POSER. It's a very complex program. These are really complex technologies. To create a project like DAZ Studio and then give it away for free, it puts some constraints. The version 1.0 had potential, but it was a 1.0 version, it lacked a lot of features. So I looked and I said, Okay, we'll check again. Later on.

With version 2 they added some more features, but it wasn't quite there. It was okay for people who didn't want to pay for POSER, but since I already had the program, it wasn't particularly attractive. But with version 3.0, they finally got a good amount of features, and that is where I looked back at DAZ Studio, and I saw that 3.0 was a solid release, and in fact, that is the release I used to build my Reality plug-in on, because I saw that that point it had enough features that it was becoming attractive and a lot of people starting using it, and so there was a market.

That's how I started. Any effort takes time. Building software is an incredibly complex operation. That's how it happened. You checked it. The first version is okay. I mean, if you look back at Windows 1.0, it was horrible. I actually bought it back in 1986 through my company. It was tiled Windows, so they were not even overlapping. They were black and white. So, was it showing potential back then? It's kind of hard to say, but you keep improving, improving, improving, until you finally get it right. Interesting enough, Windows 3.0 was, in fact, the version that caused all the success for Microsoft.

So in a similar way, DAZ started working on their own alternative for POSER. Their business model is to sell content, so that's how the company works. It's kind of like Google. Google's business model is to sell advertisement. It's not to do the search. The advertisement is how they make the money. Search doesn't make any money.

So for DAZ, their business model is to sell content. So the reason for the Studio to be was basically, and I'm interpreting because I'm not part of the company, I've never been there, but it's clear that the reason to be for Studio is to make it easy to use the content that DAZ is selling. They lowered the entry. They removed the barrier. It takes a long time to get to that point. They started in 2006. I don't remember when version 3.0 was released but, in 2009, I was using it actively and that's where I starting thinking, okay, I'm going to base Reality on Studio 3.

3DA: I think, like you say, any enterprise like that is immensely difficult.

Paolo: Yeah.

3DA: It's just credence, really, that they just carried on and they didn't give up, and they just carried it forward. They've created this software, virtual 3D environment, in order for people to present their content and to create artwork. It does really well with that and it's improved, as you say. And now we've got to the fourth version . . .





1

Quick Start – Our First 3D Scene

While preparing for a real-life photo shoot, let's say a fashion shoot, a photographer will have to hire a model, pose her in front of a background, position some lights, and then take a few photos. This workflow is pretty much what we will follow to create a scene in DAZ Studio, except that we will work with 3D objects. These objects have been designed by 3D modelers and are prepared in a way that Studio can easily add them to a scene. Because these are 3D objects, instead of simple bidimensional images, we can move around them and photograph them from any point of view. Welcome to the fascinating world of 3D art!

In this chapter you will learn the following topics:

- Adding a human figure to the scene
- Positioning the camera
- Moving objects in the scene
- Rendering an image

Stepping into DAZ Studio

With DAZ Studio you can create 3D scenes filled with all kinds of objects, such as people, cars, buildings, animals, and plants. As the best way to learn is by doing, we are *not* going to spend any time at this point discussing 3D concepts and ideas. Instead, we are going to dive into the program and start doing something interesting with it.

Let's start!

Paolo: Yeah. 4.6 right now, yes.

3DA: Yeah. For your book, when did you start thinking about it? Was it somewhere between version 3 and 4?

Paolo: Actually, it was right in the middle of version 4. The way it happened was that Packt Publishing actually contacted me. They thought about making this book. They thought that it was time to have a complete book about Studio. So they found my name. They contacted me and asked me if I was available and willing, which I said, yeah, absolutely. So that was version 4 point something. It was before 4.5. We started outlining what topics we wanted to cover. I gave them my outline which, basically, they approved, almost unchanged. Then I started working on it one chapter at a time, started with the first one.

3DA: Was it a case of you, because I know you're very involved with the DAZ community, was it a case of you spotting and looking for the needs of the community that helped you outline the book?

Paolo: Well, let me give a little bit of background on this. DAZ Studio came out in 2006. It basically for seven years had almost no documentation. So a lot of what we learned was then through trial and error, some README's here, some little fragments of documentation there, and a lot of exchange in the community, in the forums and helping each other.

The way I see things, I see software, and software documentation is analogous to prepare for going on a trip. Now, let's say that you want to go to have a nice vacation in Paris, France. You go to a place and, well, you need a map. A map doesn't tell you how to get the most out of Paris. A map gives you a layout of the place. It allows you to map a trip from point A to point B in any part of Paris, but it doesn't tell you what kind of entertainment you can find or where is the best place for the best food, or all those kind of things that create the vacation experience. For that you need a traveling guide. For that you need an expert.

So I see the map, in the software world, equivalent to the user's guide, the user's manual. Something that is packaged, hopefully, with the software. It tells what the software does. There is your map. Books like the Complete Guide to DAZ Studio that I wrote are the traveling guide, the book written by the expert, the person who's been there before. It was designed to help the artist get the most out of Studio from the artist's point of view, not as a list of what each menu does, because that's not a way of learning. That should be part of the documentation. The documentation was almost nonexistent until a week ago.

Finally, DAZ released their user's guide, which is great. But it is a rather slim text. And it's okay. It has to give the basics. But then you need a didactic text, a textbook, that tells you more, not just the buttons and levers, but how to use all those buttons and levers, and gizmos and things, hammers, nails, all this stuff to build a great piece of art, how to express yourself. And that is where I tried to give a contribution there. That was definitely something that was missing.

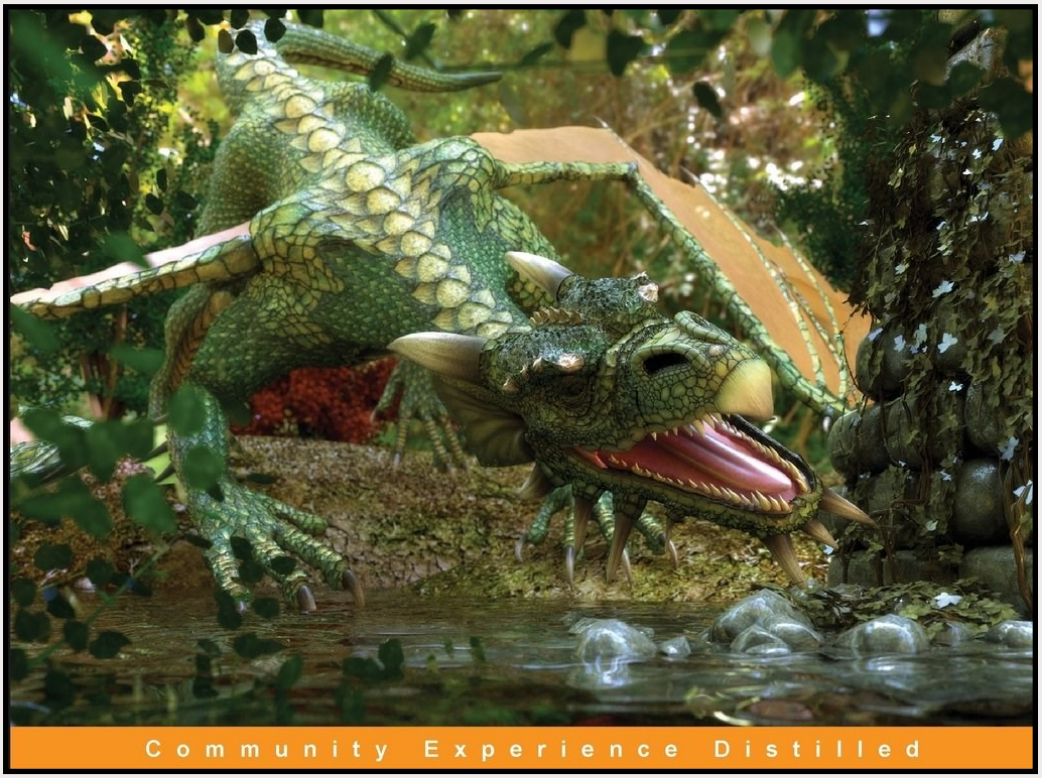
3DA: Yeah, and I like how you structured your book, which we'll talk about a bit later. So you've got some mix of practicality, but you've got lots of more of that experience that the artist should be having with the software, and that is where the book is weighted. Those key experiences of getting your lighting right, of getting your posing correct and . . .

Paolo: Right. Actually, Packt Publishing really gave me a mandate there to keep it practical. That was basically preaching to the choir because that's how I did my "Blender Survival Guide" and I did other classes. You've seen it. Generally, my approach is hands-on, let's learn by doing.

Paolo: Where I add more, my touch, if you want, is to really keep things unstructured and organic, and more of a conversation. So basically saying, okay, we are going to do this, but let me tell you more about these other things too, because they are related. For example, I found almost no books in general for all the 3D software talking about what color multiplication is. Now, that is an operation that we do routinely. It's one of the blending modes of Photoshop.

And I remember when I started thinking about, before getting my ducks in a row, it's like, what do you mean you can multiply colors? It makes no sense. But it does make perfect sense of course, because it's routinely done by our software. It is a great, powerful operation. Is it a part of the features of Studio? No, but I put it in there so that it is available and the readers will know, and hopefully I explained it in clear way. The book is filled with all these little additional pieces of information that are a part of the experience. It's part of the mindset of the way we think when we try to build an image from an idea, from a dream, or whatever those ideas come from.

3DA: I think you've got a really nice byline for the book as well. You've got the byline of "community experience distilled".



Paolo: Yes.

3DA: It's like you were saying earlier how users were struggling, they were going to forums, and they'd probably be asking the same questions again, and again, and again. Whereas a book can address those key points once and for all. You can just direct somebody to the book, and you can say, well, there you go. Just follow this guide, this expert, and he'll take you through that, and you won't have to iterate and go backwards and forwards with a forum.

Paolo: That's the strength of a book. Because sure, a lot of information that we need is available there. All the details, all the things have been explored more or less, but they're scattered there on the vast Internet, and so it can take time to find all the pieces together. So it's part of the experience of who's been there before to collect all the data points, all the little fragments, and distill it, put it in one place so it's convenient. It's so not only the information is there, but it's also arranged in a way that makes sense. That's what we do as humans. We always do this. It's part of the learning process. We learn, and learn, and then we regurgitate things, and based on our process, we're processing all the information that we perform. It's always fascinating for me to see how that happens.

3DA: Now, in order to capture people's attention with a book, you've always got to have a nice cover, so tell me about how you chose the image on the cover.

Paolo: Actually, I haven't done that. What happened is Packt, when I was writing the book, the book was written basically one chapter at a time. So we start with the first chapter, and I submit the first chapter, and they review it, and in the meantime I write the second chapter, and so on. At some point, we were in the middle of the project, kind of halfway through it, and one of the editors contacted me and said, Paolo, we've seen all your artwork. It's great. Why don't you make the cover? I explained to them that basically I was writing Reality 3 for POSER which was basically taking all my time. Writing the book in my spare time was just ridiculous.

So when I told my wife they asked me to write the book, she said, how do you find the time? I don't know. I will. I mean, literally, I was working insane hours. And it's been pretty intense. I mean, it was 7 days a week, 12, 14, 16 hours a day, no stop, for several months, which was brutal. But if that's what it takes, then you do what it takes. When

they dropped the idea on my lap, the idea on the cover, I just said, I can't do it. I cannot possibly find, you know it takes always, I'm thinking, you're building a cover, so you're killing me. You'll be so self-conscious, you won't have everything perfect. It's going to take me, like, four or five days of working on the cover. I said, I cannot do it. They insisted. I said, no but please, I said, look, what if I find an excellent artist who can do it for you and you can contact her or him?

So I asked around, and immediately, actually, I thought of Callad. You know Callad from the Reality community. I contacted her and said, look, my publisher wants a cover for the upcoming book and I thought of you. Would you do it? And she said, wow, I don't know. She's a very modest person. So I said, no, no, no. Look. You are great. You've been doing this for a long time. People admire your work. Look, I'll give you the contacts, and then you two arrange for the cover.

And that happened. I contacted Packt Publishing. I said, look, this is the person. She's a really great artist. Here you can see all her work. She's really talented. And I didn't hear for a while. Sometime later, Callad, she contacted me via email and she said, oh, my god, I'm in trouble. I said, what? Well, I sent them one of my works, a new project, a fresh new project. Callad, she does mostly pinup work, female figures in different levels of nudity or not. I said, look, for this, of course, put some clothes on them.

3DA: Yeah, please. Yeah.

Paolo: She said, yeah, no problem, no problem. I'll keep it PG. I said, no problem. But basically, she sent one of her figures. And I didn't know this, but basically, the publisher said, you know, we never have human figures on our covers.

3DA: Oh, I see. That's just a common factor across their books.

Paolo: Yeah. It's just their policy. They always have some sort of different landscapes or abstract graphics or whatever. And here her email comes and says, oh, I'm in trouble. That's not what I do. I always do human figures. I said, well, look. You're a great artist. You know lighting. You know things. You know all the elements. Just do it. Try an alternative. Step out of your comfort zone. Your talent is such that you'll come up with something great. And she did. That's the result. She created that dragon in front of the pool of water. The posing is fresh and the lighting, everything is fantastic, and they approved it immediately.

3DA: Yeah, and it is an attractive image. It does the same thing, almost, as a human character. It is a character at the end of the day.

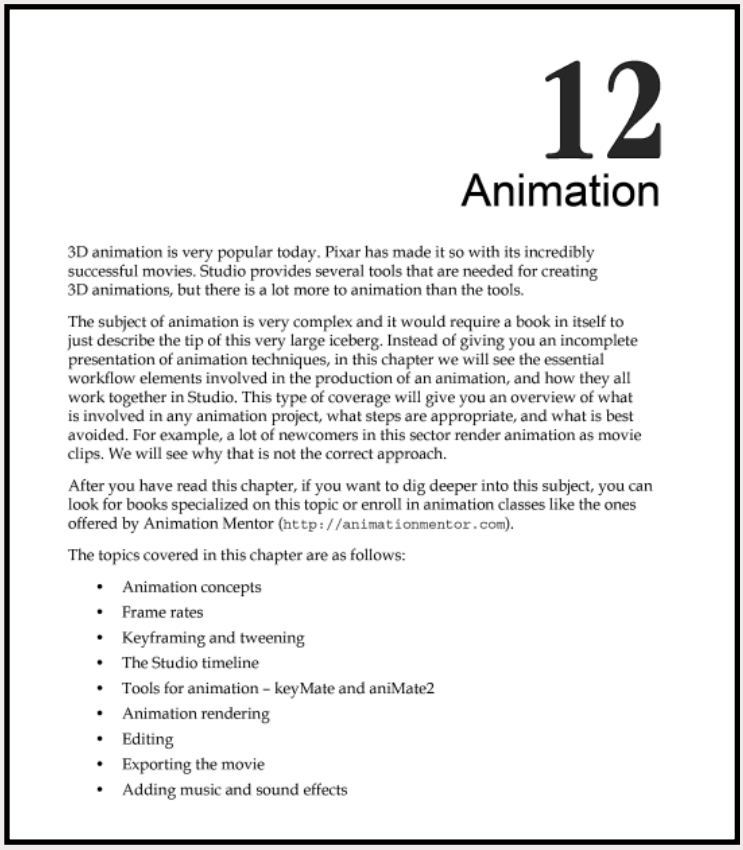
Paolo: Exactly.

3DA: And of course, that's what DAZ Studio is about. It's about characters and the content. So, yeah, it does the job really well.

3DA: So, this was your first writing project? Is that correct? Or have you done other books before?

Paolo: I haven't done books before, but when I was still living in Italy, I had a column, a monthly column in a computer magazine for years, so I was not new to the publishing world. When I released Studio initially, I wrote the documentation for it. It's 110, 120 pages-long book. It's not quite as long as this one but it was a book. Of course, I was writing on my own, and in this case, with the DAZ Studio book, I had to write it according to the guidelines of the publisher, which was a very interesting project because I've never been in that situation before. Packt Publishing is using, they have their templates.

Unfortunately, they had acquired it to use Microsoft Word. That was the biggest struggle for me. I completely dislike the program. If you give it to me, if you leave it to me, I'll just write text files



12

Animation

3D animation is very popular today. Pixar has made it so with its incredibly successful movies. Studio provides several tools that are needed for creating 3D animations, but there is a lot more to animation than the tools.

The subject of animation is very complex and it would require a book in itself to just describe the tip of this very large iceberg. Instead of giving you an incomplete presentation of animation techniques, in this chapter we will see the essential workflow elements involved in the production of an animation, and how they all work together in Studio. This type of coverage will give you an overview of what is involved in any animation project, what steps are appropriate, and what is best avoided. For example, a lot of newcomers in this sector render animation as movie clips. We will see why that is not the correct approach.

After you have read this chapter, if you want to dig deeper into this subject, you can look for books specialized on this topic or enroll in animation classes like the ones offered by Animation Mentor (http://animationmentor.com).

The topics covered in this chapter are as follows:

- Animation concepts
- Frame rates
- Keyframing and tweening
- The Studio timeline
- Tools for animation – keyMate and aniMate2
- Animation rendering
- Editing
- Exporting the movie
- Adding music and sound effects

using Markdown as my formatting system. But, hey, I agreed on doing this, so Word it is.

But also, they have very specific conventions. For example, they don't have chapter titles in the form of a question. For example, How to Light This Scene in Studio. No, that cannot be done. So all the process of going through these guidelines, formatting the book in a certain way, using the program that they want, and other few things.

For example, there are two reviewers who are basically people outside of Packt Publishing who have been asked to do independent review of each chapter. And so I would get their feedback in the form of annotations, so that part was very interesting to see what other people would think of certain passages, see what they liked, what they didn't like. In some cases, they were enthusiastic about some chapters.

For example, a funny thing is, I got the best feedback out of the chapter about animation. There was just a description of how the intermediate frames are created and that caused very positive reactions from both the editors and the reviewers, which was interesting.

3DA: I suppose because you had positive feedback for it, that was that one of your favorite chapters of the book that you ended up writing? That's towards the end of the book, isn't it?

Paolo: That is, yeah. It is actually the very last chapter. I enjoyed doing that. That might have contributed to the clarity of, but have to say that I really have a lot of fun with, when talking about photographic elements. To me, software, any 3D software, is really a virtual camera. That's the way I see it, the way I approach it. I know how cameras work, I know how lenses work. That is, to me, one of the most pleasurable experiences when working with images because you can grab a camera in your hands, and you turn the focal length ring on a lens and you see the image changing in front of you. It's a very practical, very real experience.

When I use software, I want to have those elements with me. They make sense. It doesn't get any easier than learning by doing, and learning by doing in the real world. So having that kind of experience with the software makes the software easier to use for me.

3DA: You've got that background of photography, haven't you?

Paolo: Yeah. Right. And so the chapters which I talk about, for example, the distortion, the perspective distortion caused by changing the focal length and

> ...it's been pretty intense. I mean, it was 7 days a week, 12, 14, 16 hours a day, no stop, for several months, which was brutal. But if that's what it takes, then you do what it takes....

all that kind of stuff, or the chapters about lighting, those are the ones I generally enjoy the most. I think that there is a largely unexplored potential in the framing when it comes to these programs.

What I mean is that a lot of people get the concept of a virtual camera, but how the focal length affects the feel of the composition, it's not something that is known. And so I really enjoyed spending some time explaining it and showing how the framing can completely change the mood of the scene. And that is done through the focal length, it's done by moving the camera at the same time, so those elements, I don't know. They are very dear to me.

3DA: So it sounds like those aspects of composition are sometimes forgotten by other writers or . . .

Paolo: A little bit.

3DA: Now, who is the book aimed for? Is it for beginners or more established users of DAZ Studio, or a bit of both?

Paolo: Well, I wanted to have the book accessible by people who just start using DAZ Studio today and who need some sort of a guide, exploring and explaining the topics that are involved in using Studio. So I started from zero. Literally, if you go to the appendix, it shows you how to install Studio, and I even explore the topic of why we need to install a program.

So I'm really addressing somebody who has the basic knowledge, just the basic knowledge, about computer and software. And from there we move pretty quickly to the other topics. I would say that the book is targeting beginners and I would say, how do you say the other term? Is it, not beginner. Between . . .

3DA: Intermediate?

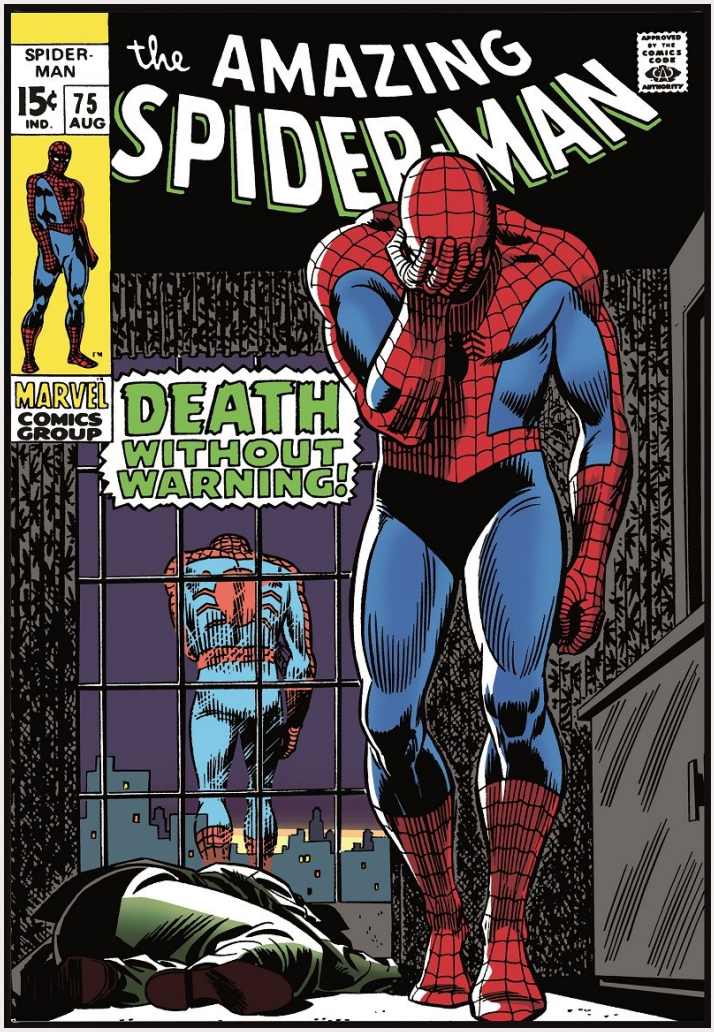
Paolo: Intermediate. Thank you. So beginner and intermediate users. But there are a few topics that

I've been told by people who are experienced with Studio that they found several topics very interesting there too. So there is a little bit for everybody. If the reader doesn't know much about Studio, the book is definitely for her. If the person has some intermediate experience with Studio, again, the book can give a lot of information about several topics. And for the advanced user, I think there are a few gems there that are useful.

3DA: Now, what attracts me to the book is learning about posing human figures in a natural and believable way. I think this is one of the largest mindset barriers when someone comes across 3D character software, any software, really, that they can't pose figures naturally when first starting. That's what's on their minds. Because they dive into it, they have a go, and it just looks a mess. And you just end up with this sort of mutant-looking figure. And it just doesn't look human or natural.

Paolo: Yes.

3DA: Now, was this one of the earlier objectives of your book, and could you give us a few gems,



maybe, from the book that could help the user get over that barrier?

Paolo: I'll try. Well, I see often a lot of images, on Deviant Art for example, that can have potential, but boy, they really look like the subject is a mannequin of some sort because the pose is not there. I always tell people that if you get the post natural and the lighting good, you're 90 percent there. Basically, those two things will make the image look more natural than any high-quality texture or anything else. So trying to get the pose correct, believable, was one of the targets I had in writing that chapter.

One of the gems, if you want, is that the idea that you can use a photographic reference is something that I don't see often. It seems that people need some sort of permit to use a photographic reference. High-end artists, people who are using programs like ZBrush, or MODO, or Maya, they use photographic references all the time. All the time. And that's why I contacted, I found a photo of a surfer, which is taken by, actually, somebody who is local to me. It's the funniest thing. I go to Deviant Art, I find this great photo, I contacted the person, and it turns out he took the photo just five miles away from where I live.

It's interesting. So I contact the person. I said, look, can I use this photo as a reference for my book? And he said, yeah, sure. No problem. I gave him credit. The photographic reference is fantastic, because when we have a photo, we can look at every single aspect of the pose and we can really investigate. Investigation, asking questions, is the best form of learning and internalizing this kind of information. Poses are complex. That's why there are so many libraries of pre-made poses.

But the problem with a library of pre-made poses is that it's pre-made and everybody has the same. If 2,000 people buy the same library, have 2,000 people basically providing the same kind of information. And I see it. You can see it. You go on the Net. You see images that have been made with the same, exact pose. Maybe the subject is different, but you see the pose being the same. So in the book I actually encourage people to not buy libraries and libraries. A few basic ones, yes. And then tweak them. Tweak them. Don't ever use them stock.

I encourage people to really spend the time in creating the pose. And in the chapter, I outline what are some of the elements of creating the pose, how to start. There are parts there are more complex than others. Fingers are incredibly

complex, you know. The head, the expression is very complex. But there are some things in the way we hold our head that are important, and if you don't follow those rules, they become a dead giveaway that the pose was artificially made. So it's actually not that complex. It's laborious.

But boy, look at the comic books. I grew up with the original Marvel comics, Spiderman, the Fantastic Four, etc. And boy, you just have to look at some of those poses to see how they nailed it. They just nailed the humanity of the characters. I see often people try to pose characters in the superhero pose. I'll say, take a comic book and remove all the superhero stuff, and look at Peter Parker when he's interacting with his girlfriend, or any of the characters when they are in their most mundane situation. Because they still have to be human. They still have to look believable.

The artists who drew those comic books are amazing, just incredible observers. One of the reasons why Frank Frazetta became so famous is the way he's making his characters so human, so powerful but at the same time so believable. There is sort of a strength and realism in the way his characters move.

3DA: Yeah, I think using a comic book as a reference, I think that's a great idea. I read Peter Parker as well. That was what I followed. Yeah, even the more mundane poses, the artist still has to get across character and something exciting or something to keep the reader reading, despite Peter Parker being an ordinary human being. Yeah, you have to do that.

Paolo: I mean, all the times where he's in school and he's getting bullied for example. And all the awkward moments, and the walking away from the scene with his head down just because he knows if he's going to do something, he's going to just destroy the other person.

The conflicts of those comic books are incredible. And one thing that is fantastic, is that they have the same requirements of static 3D images. When people create one single image, they are basically creating a story in one frame. Well, that's exactly what a comic book has to do. They have to create a whole situation frame by frame, in just a few frames. And so each frame is significant, and to analyze how the artist did that is an incredible inspiration for 3D artists today.

3DA: That's a great gem right there, so take note, listeners. I like the fact, as well, that you've got creating new characters with morphs early on in the book. So, in other words, you're giving the ability to start adapting existing characters to create new ones, getting someone out of that trap of just using pre-made characters. Now, was that your intention to have that early on?

"....look at the comic books. And boy, you just have to look at some of those poses to see how they nailed it. They just nailed the humanity of the characters. I see often people try to pose characters in the superhero pose. I'll say, take a comic book and remove all the superhero stuff, and look at Peter Parker when he's interacting with his girlfriend, or any of the characters when they are in their most mundane situation. Because they still have to be human. They still have to look believable"

Paolo: Yes. Yes, it was. Because the people who are using a program like DAZ Studio might be comfortable with modeling geometry with a program like Blender or ZBrush, or maybe they're not. And I think the vast majority of the users of DAZ Studio use a program directly for what it is. They don't work on creating morphs with other programs. But the need to create some different characters is often there, and so I wanted to show how you can still retain the ease of use of a program like Studio but overcome some of the limitations, if you want. Just think, oh, I have a morph, or have another pre-made character.

Well, in the chapter, I'm showing you how you can work on mixing things together so that you can create a new character but you don't need to learn how to model. If you see how some artists like Callad work, they often mix different morphs to create a unique face. And they work on the combination. They have, like, 15 percent of this, and 5 percent of the other, and 3 percent of this other character. And they put it all together and they come up with a unique face, for example, that didn't exist before. And so the principle is explained in action in that chapter, and I wanted to make it front and center for the reader so that possibility was clearly understood.

3DA: Yeah. Now, there's also some good grounding and practicality-type subjects in using DAZ Studio in the book, such as customizing Studio, finding and installing new content, navigating the Studio environment. So you've got some good practicality guidance. Yeah, and of course, you need that. But it's interspersed, so you didn't have all of that as a

great, big, giant block in the beginning, because that would be quite boring, perhaps, in a sense.

Paolo: Yeah, I see that happening in other books, and I always thought that nobody can learn how to use a program by having a big list of all the features. Okay, this menu does this, and this button does this. There's just no way a person can remember all that stuff. Just save the offer. Don't even do it. Because that is where a reference manual made by the developer is helpful. That is what the developer of the program has to do.

But as a teacher, that was not my role there. It would have made no sense whatsoever. But one of the things that I wanted to show, one of the concepts that I wanted to make clear is that just because Studio ships with some default settings, it doesn't mean that we have to accept them and use them because, quite frankly, I don't find the default configuration that productive. And so that's why showed how to make the keystrokes much shorter, and quicker, and more intuitive, and how to maximize the screen real estate, because what we need to do is to get as much screen devoted to the view port where the action happens, where the characters are, where the environment is, and less screen devoted to things we can find in other ways.

So it's a matter of being focused, have not so many bells and whistles around that are just a distraction, have those keystrokes really effective. Now, that is just the way I see it, but it's just one interpretation. That doesn't mean that it's the best possible. I think that it is. But it's just mine. But the real concept there is that the user can change the configuration of Studio. It's easy, it's doable; let me show you how it's done. And then if you don't like my version, by all means. But have that concept that you don't have to settle for what comes out of the factory.

3DA: Yeah. It makes sense to have as much real estate as possible on the screen dedicated to the scene, as opposed to clutter. So, yeah, that makes sense to me as well. Now, you tackle lighting in two major chapters, both for lighting a scene in one chapter, and, of course, achieving photo-realism with your Reality plug-in. And it's a topic that comes up time and time again when we interview our artists in the 3D art director magazine, because we always ask them at the end, what are your tips for those that are just starting out with 3D digital art? And invariably, they will always mention lighting . . .

> “So, lighting is complex but it is fun. It's a lot of fun. It is fun when you start understanding it. And it is frustrating when things don't go the right way. Well, unfortunately, there are no shortcuts.”

Paolo: Yes. Of course.

3DA: . . . to get that right. So it's really pleasing to see that's covered really well in your book. So maybe just go through a couple of highlights of those chapters?

Paolo: Sure, sure. Well, as you said, lighting is one of the most important aspects of creating 3D art. In other tutorials that I did with you on 3D Art Live, you heard me saying lighting is 80 percent of the image. Well, that's how I feel. I don't know if the percentage is accurate, but that's how I feel. Lighting is an incredibly complex subject. There is no doubt about it. There is a cinematographer who said, I can show you everything there is about lighting in 20 minutes and then it will take you 20 years to learn how to use it. That is about accurate. So the sooner we start, the better it is. Nobody's getting younger by the day.

So, lighting is complex but it is fun. It's a lot of fun. It is fun when you start understanding it. And it is frustrating when things don't go the right way. Well, unfortunately, there are no shortcuts. The only way to understand lighting is to light a scene, and light a scene, and light another scene. And I can tell you the first 50 scenes that you light will be just horrible. That's just part of it. So better start early, start getting those 50 scenes under your belt and be done with it so that you can start enjoying the process. It takes stamina. It takes passion. And it takes the desire to get better. But it is possible. It's not rocket science either. It's just complex.

But one thing that is great, and this might be a little biased, but the thing that's great is that we can test, we can try lighting in real life. We don't have to have permission. We don't have to buy expensive gear. We don't have to have a special place. You can do it with a flashlight in your living room. I've heard several photographers saying that they use little action figures or any object in the house, and they use different lights, like a flashlight, like a lamp, or they try diffusion, all



kinds of situations. And then use their camera to take notes of how each light works.

Well, today we have camera phones everywhere. Everybody has a camera. And it's digital, there are no barriers, no excuses for learning lighting. So my advice is to start anywhere. There are books that are available for photography, photography books, here in the States. We have libraries everywhere and you can check out a book for free. It costs you nothing. James Cameron, the director of *Terminator, Titanic,* and *Avatar*, he said he learned everything in his early years from the public library, and his tuition costs were $1.50 in late fees. That's really what it takes. Get books, try on your own, test it, and keep applying it. The things we learn by just using one light, I always suggest people if they are starting with lighting, use one light only. Create a scene, put one light only. Pick a type. Be it spotlight, a mesh light, whatever, but pick one light and force yourself to create ten different scenes with only one light. You can move the light or you can put it up, down, left, right, reflect it if the software allows you to do that.

With Reality, that is possible. With Reality, because it uses LuxRender. LuxRender is a physics-based renderer. So LuxRender really works like in the real world. If you place a light, a mesh light, you can put it in a certain position, and if you have an environment, you can use the environment to bounce the light around. Just learning that thing, just learning that trick and seeing how it works, it's invaluable. Learning lighting is probably the single most important thing you can do to improve your 3D art, so there.

3DA: So it's gratifying to know that just like James Cameron, you can go to your public library, start learning and 40 years later, you'll end up making a film called *Gravity.*

Paolo: There you go. Yeah, the knowledge is out there. I mean, really. I come from a generation where we had to buy books and try to scrounge every piece of information from different sources. Today with the Internet there is basically no barrier. I mean, we might have information overload but the truth is out there, really. Anybody can reach it, anybody can find it. We can even have access to the Internet on our phones, so you're on a train going to work or going to school, read something about lighting. There are infinite sources today, really, where we can use, we can gather knowledge, and it's fantastic. It's absolutely fantastic. Now, the downside of that, if you want, is there are no excuses.

3DA: Now, an important part of your book is the use of the new Dawn figure.

Paolo: Ah, yes.

3DA: So I'd like to know just a few highlights what can readers learn about using this figure in DAZ Studio through your book?

Paolo: Yes, well, I wanted to highlight Dawn because I'm really excited about this new character. It's a new figure. It's made by the same people who were involved in the creation of the original Victoria. So Chris Creek, who you actually interviewed in a previous podcast, people from HiveWire, but specifically Chris Creek, he's the guy who designed the original Victoria 1.

So somebody who has a lot of experience in creating good geometry, good figures. Dawn is basically the culmination of all these years he had of experience in designing figures. What attracts me to use this figure is that it's simple. You just bring it to the scene and that's it. It's going back to the old days of Victoria 4. I mean, Victoria 4 is still very, very popular, but it does suffer from some technology of the time. We have some better technology today for human figures. Well, Dawn is a figure that crosses, again, as it was, with Victoria 4, it crosses the boundaries between programs. It doesn't matter, that you use Studio or POSER, you can user Dawn, and I find that an incredible bonus. It is simple. There are no complex underling things

or some underlying technology that you have to have pre-installed. Just install the figure, double-click from the content, it appears in the scene, end of the story. Very, very simple.

Then the other thing is that I love the way it has been designed for the rigging. So there are sections of the torso that are more easily moveable than Victoria. The neck is being divided in two sections so it's much easier to move in a believable way. The jaw is, for the first time that I know, we can grab the jaw and move it. It's all fun to use the dials and the sliders in the program, but if you can actually grab something with the translate tool or the rotate tool and move it interactively, it's a lot better.

So I think Dawn is really positioned to become a great figure, a great player. I see new products for Dawn coming out every day. I monitor several sites and I see on Renderosity, and Runtime DNA and HiveWire, a new offering every day. Yeah, I'm really pleased with the way it's working. I like the business model of HiveWire. When they came out with this idea, they said something that was along the lines of, we want to unify the community, to mend the divisions that have been created before and unify the community again. I love that. I just love the sentiment, so it just made it very, very important for me.

3DA: Yeah. And, really, that's reflected with you because, obviously, your Reality tool, you've engineered to use with both platforms as well . . .

Paolo: Yeah, they were very, very gracious in allowing the readers to have it for free. I know that they've given it away for free for some time but my idea there was that no matter when you buy the book, maybe someone will buy it six months from now. Well, they will have a coupon in there that they can use to download Dawn from free from HiveWire. Plus, there is another coupon in there for 25 percent off from one of the add-on packages for Dawn.

We all have our preferences and we would love that everybody was following us in our preferences, but the reality of things is that there are people who are using Macintoshes, other people use Windows, some people use Studio, some people use POSER. Well, let's give them the freedom to use the environment that they want and have the same quality of result. So Reality is available for Mac and for Windows, for Studio and for POSER.
I'm not the one here telling people what to do and how to use their software, or how to use their machine. They are the artist. I'm here to just provide the best tool I can come up with and to give it to all the platforms, to make it able to run on all the platforms, the same as what happened with Victoria 4. That's why it became such a popular model, and so to see that configuration again in a figure like Dawn, that's really exciting for me. It means that we can have a market that can grow and flourish around this figure, and that's the way it should be. I don't care for anything else.

3DA: Okay. So finally, where can listeners purchase the book, and are there any discounts happening at the moment?

Paolo: [laughs] Good questions. Well, the book is available from both Packt Publishing, and their URL is P-A-C-K-T-P-U-B dot com, so packtpub.com. And from Amazon. Now, Packt Publishing, I think they have a special offer right now where you can buy, basically, for the price of the printed version you get, also, the eBook. And the eBook is any format. Basically, it's in .pdf, it's compatible with Kindle, it's compatible with iOS, so no matter what device you have, you can read the eBook. And on Amazon, it's available from different versions of the Amazon website, in the US, in UK, in Germany, in Canada.

Probably more, but right now, that's what I remember. And it's discounted there too. There's a good discount there. So you can buy either the printed version or the eBook which is, of course, immediate delivery.

3DA: Paolo, it's been really good to talk to you again, and it's been fascinating to hear about this project, the writing of the book, and also the content and how it came together. And it sounds very beneficial for DAZ Studio users . . .

Paolo: All right. Thank you very much, Paul. It's been a pleasure.

You can find out more and purchase the book here:-

http://3dartdirect.com/GuideToDazStudio4



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