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Smart ways to protect your work online

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PHOTOSHOP A WINTER'S TALE

Combine striking photos with freehand drawings



Printed in the UK

FEBRUARY 2005

COVER: CRUSH/AUTUMN WHITEHURST



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Latest firewall protection	✓	
Redundant server disks	✓	
SSL secure web space		✓
SSH secure access (Linux only)	✓	
5 star online control panel	✓	
Bandwidth monitoring	✓	
Graphical web stats		✓
Point unlimited domains to your web space	✓	
Load balancing		✓
Bulk domain name registration account	✓	
Windows 2003 IIS6 (your choice)	✓	
Red Hat Enterprise Linux (your choice)		✓
NEW Custom DNS management	✓	
SITE BUILDING & SCRIPTING		
SiteBuilder website creation tool		✓
PHP, Perl & Python CGI	✓	
Compiled CGI (option) and SSL	✓	
ASP scripting on Windows		✓
ASP.NET & .NET Framework 1.1 (Windows)		✓
FrontPage Extensions 2002		✓
Custom error pages	✓	
Media streaming		✓
Password protection		✓
Advanced password protection		✓
Raw log files	✓	
XML, SHTML & DHTML	✓	
ODBC access	✓	
Choice of MS SQL database sizes		✓
Choice of MySQL database sizes		✓
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Personal control panel		✓
Custom name servers		✓
LIVEMAIL		
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Unlimited auto-responders	✓	
Unlimited mail forwarding	✓	
Unlimited email aliases	✓	
NEW Exchange Mail 2003		✓
NEW Advanced Mail 2003		✓
Spam filtering & Virus scanning		✓
Professional web mail	✓	
SMS new email alerts	✓	
Advanced SMS alerts		✓
EXTRAS & SUPPORT		
Dial-up access	✓	
Broadband access from £18.99		✓
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1000 MB direct UK backbone connection	✓	

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EDITORIAL 01225 442 244

GILLIAN CARSON SENIOR EDITOR

gillian.carson@futurenet.co.uk

DOM HALL DEPUTY EDITOR

dom.hall@futurenet.co.uk

RODDY LLEWELLYN SENIOR ART EDITOR

richard.llewellyn@futurenet.co.uk

VICKY MITCHARD DESIGNER

vicky.mitchard@futurenet.co.uk

SARAH ROBSON DESIGNER

capart@futurenet.co.uk

SOPHIE EMBLEY PRODUCTION EDITOR

sophie.embley@futurenet.co.uk

DAN GOODLEFF PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

dan.goodleff@futurenet.co.uk

JOSEPH RUSS NEW MEDIA CONTENT EDITOR

joseph.russ@futurenet.co.uk

MATT GALLIMORE SENIOR CD EDITOR

matt.gallimore@futurenet.co.uk

SIMON HOLLAND CD EDITOR

simon.holland@futurenet.co.uk

CD PROBLEMS 01225 822 743

ca.support@futurenet.co.uk

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM

Jason Arber, Vicki Atkinson, Graeme Aymer, Matt Broomfield, Jason Cook, Christian Darkin, I Love Dust, Danny Franzreb, Karl Hodge, Andy Kay, Ting Li, Mark Penfold and Nick Sneath

PHOTOGRAPHY James Wilson

PRINT William Gibbons

REPRO Radstock Reproductions Ltd

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Computer Arts magazine, Future Publishing,

30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW

01225 442 244 ISDN 01225 789 293

SUBSCRIPTION QUERIES 0870 444 8455

OVERSEAS SUBSCRIPTIONS +44 (0) 870 444 8455

EMAIL customerservice@futurenet.co.uk

ADVERTISING 01225 442 244

ROSA SMITH advertising manager

rosa.smith@futurenet.co.uk

GEORGE LUCAS senior sales executive

george.lucas@futurenet.co.uk

REBECCA BELL-ROBINSON classified sales executive

rebecca.bellrobinson@futurenet.co.uk

TECHNOLOGY DIVISION

KELLEY CORTEN publisher

DOM BEAVEN publishing director

FIONA TULLY marketing manager

CLARE TOVEY production manager

PAUL MCINTYRE group art editor

SARAH WILLIAMS software copyright co-ordinator

PRODUCTION

EMILY MOUNTER ad production co-ordinator

KATTY PIGOTT production co-ordinator

MIKE THORNE commercial print buyer

CIRCULATION & LICENSING

JASON COMBER circulation manager

PETE STOTHARD head of international licensing

SIMON WEAR overseas licensing director

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

UK DISTRIBUTION

Marketforce Ltd 020 7633 3300

Kings Reach Tower, Stamford Street, London SE1 9LS

THE FUTURE NETWORK

ROGER PARRY non-executive chairman

GREG INGHAM chief executive

ROB PRICE managing director UK

JOHN BOWMAN group finance director

T: +44 (0)1225 442 244

URL: www.thefuturenetwork.plc.uk

Computer Arts is a member of the Audit Bureau of Circulations Jan-Dec 2003: 22,888

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WELCOME

There was a time when no self-respecting designer would dare create an illustration in *Photoshop* without using halftone effects. It was practically an unwritten law that if your image was to appear "cutting edge" it must contain dots of varying sizes. But after a few years out of the design spotlight halftone and bitmap effects have made a comeback (in the same way as linear blending) as the new, retro style for commercial illustration.

We thought we'd pay homage to the brilliance of halftone and invite two *Photoshop* luminaries to show you how they incorporate the dot and the line into their creations. Firstly, we asked Crush Design, based in Brighton, to come up with the concept for our cover image. They teamed up with New York-based illustrator Autumn Whitehurst and used various halftone effects and bitmap filters to create our stunning cover. Read all about it on page 25.

We then invited regular contributor, Jacey, to lift the lid on how you can achieve different halftone effects in an in-depth tutorial, which provides all the advice you need to create your own retro illustration. His tutorial starts on page 26. Enjoy!

GILLIAN CARSON SENIOR EDITOR

gillian.carson@futurenet.co.uk

ILLUSTRATION IN THE MAG

CHRIS PELLING & AUTUMN WHITEHURST

Crush's Chris Pelling builds on Autumn Whitehurst's stylised illo to demonstrate the retro power of *Photoshop*'s halftones toolset, and create this impressive and energetic image.

INFO: www.crushed.co.uk or <http://altpick.com/members.php?id=11198>



JASON COOK

Jason exploits *Photoshop*'s halftoning options to create this vibrant bitmap image.

INFO: www.flatliner-v2.com



DANNY FRANZREB

Danny blends photos and vector effects to generate this wintry *Photoshop* scene.

INFO: www.taobot.com



123KLAN

A suitably mischievous thief dominates the scene for our protect-your-work feature.

INFO: www.123klan.com



FIBRE

Nathan's play on images and their meanings ties in superbly with our article on semiotics.

INFO: www.fibre-design.co.uk



I LOVE DUST

Stencils helped to create this chainsaw-wielding hick with its graffiti-like textures.

INFO: www.ilovedust.com



TWELVE: TEN

A cashcow dominates the skyline in this cheeky allusion to all things freelance.

INFO: www.twelveten.com



SCOTT HANSEN

Our *Photoshop* plug-in round-up inspires Scott to plug a bear with cables.

INFO: www.iso50.com



TING LI

Ting Li used *Comixware*, provided free on our cover CD, to fashion this delightful and exciting animation.



CONTACT

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

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

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WHAT'S HOT
AND WHAT'S NOT?

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Apple's gorgeous high-definition display is a beauty – but at a beast of a price

P78 **SAMSUNG CLP-550 A4**

Samsung's feature-packed colour laser is tailor-made for a corporate environment

P80 **PATTERNMAKER 1.0**

An *InDesign* plug-in for those seeking a series of easy-to-create frame patterns

P81 **INSTANT PDF 3.0**

A simple, low-cost and streamlined alternative to Adobe *Acrobat*

P82 **LACIE DVD BURNER**

Check out the sleek Porsche profile of this exciting double-layer DVD burner

P83 **XARA X'**

A blisteringly fast vector drawing app, packed with stacks of great features

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Find out why our reviewer took issue with RealViz's troubled 3D modeller

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Terrific design tomes to while away the long Winter nights, leading with the highly readable *Business Cards: The Art Of Saying Hello*

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FIVE TOP PRODUCTS
BATTLE IT OUT



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Backdrop Designer, *Creative Pack*, *buZZ*, *Pro 3*, *Xenofex 2* and *Scatterlight Lenses* circle each other warily for the ultimate *Photoshop* plug-in showdown

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Stencils, spray-paint, and a hint of *Photoshop* and *Illustrator* combined

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Discover how to blend a range of *Photoshop* techniques and materials

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Use *After Effects* to wow your clients with this great animation promo

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Ensure no-one steals your digital work with our detailed how-to techniques

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WHAT'S HAPPENING
IN YOUR INDUSTRY?



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"The first two jobs I had didn't use computers," admits Michael Place, the respected designer behind Build

P48 **ICON**

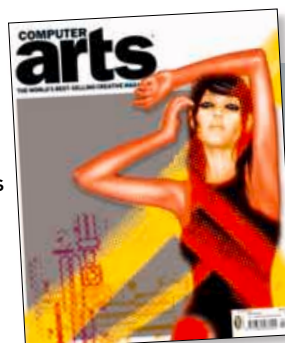
The Kitchener poster: We pay tribute to Alfred Leete, the genius behind this classic slice of design

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Semiotics: Explore the fascinating and complex relationship between images and their meanings

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Darren Wall: 16-bit games and Francis Bacon helped Darren to realise his quirky blend of illustration and design



SUBSCRIBE TURN TO PAGE 45

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WINTER'S TALE

Danny Franzreb on how to successfully combine a range of techniques and materials

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ON THE CD

THIS ISSUE'S SOFTWARE & RESOURCES

COMIXWARE 1.2 (PC)

This full storyboarding app enables you to put together your own mini-masterpieces. Full in-depth tutorial on page 104



CARRARA 4 PRO (MAC+PC)

Try out the excellent features in this superlative 3D modeller

12 INCH DESIGN CLIPS (MAC+PC)

Free full-motion video for multimedia use

FONT UTILITIES SOFTWARE (PC)

Manage your fonts more efficiently with these trials of Fontonizer, Advanced Font Catalog and Fast Font Set

PLUG-IN DEMOS (MAC+PC)

Full demos to accompany our Group Test, including Xenofex 2 and Backdrop Designer

See page 102 for more details...

PAGE 26 →

HALFTONE AND BITMAP EFFECTS

Exploit the power of Photoshop's halftoning options and bitmap-friendly tools to create this vivacious design



PAGE 104 →
STORYBOARDING
Creating short movies is easy with Comixware



EXPOSURE

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

JEAN-MARC RULIER

LOCATION London, UK

JOB Senior design engineer

CONTACT <http://jrulier.deviantart.com/>

SOFTWARE Photoshop 7 and 3ds max 5

Jean-Marc Rulier started his career with a BA in Graphic Design and has now been working in the design industry for 15 years. During this time he worked as a photographer, before turning towards CG, rendering 3D models of plants and facilities in Europe and North America.

Rulier now works for a measurement company in North London, where he uses laser scanners to acquire data and graphics software to render projects in such fields as movie entertainment, heritage, forensics and industry.

Having created a range of book and magazine covers, Rulier's personal artwork was displayed in April 2004 at the Cyberotika show in Atlanta, following a project in conjunction with the publishers of US magazine *Contour*.

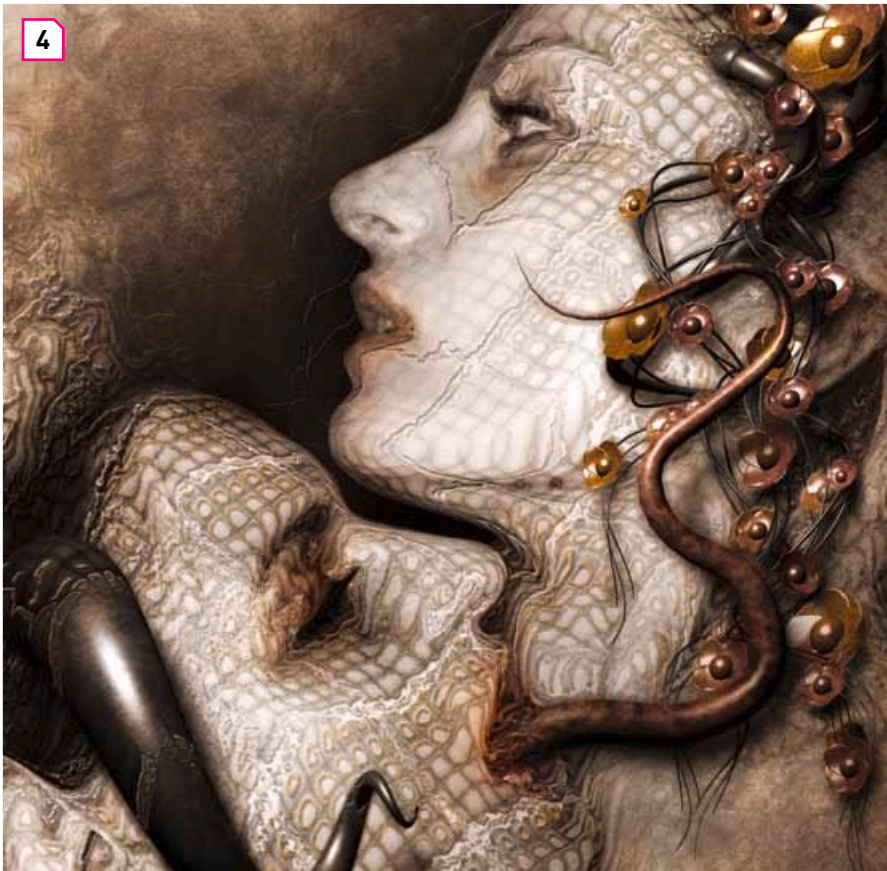
His future plans? "I now wish to meet a fashion designer so that I can apply my own "mechanical" world, mixing metal and flesh until I find the real beauty in the beast," he says.





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

4



1. Lorilei "Using *3ds max* allows me to control the light source, its intensity and direction. My technique works better on photos with nice shadows, turned into black and white. I usually start with regular colour shots, sharp and high-resolution, so that I can then choose the colours and distort the quality myself."

2. Sophia "I think this might have become one of my most successful images so far. It blends almost all of the techniques that make up my style."

3. Rozenn "This model got in touch with me. That is part of the process, the random factor that stimulates the creation. I usually know where I am heading creatively before the creation process begins, but sometimes I am sucked into it and eventually end up with an image I had not planned."

4. Melania2 "This image was created on request for a British short-story magazine."

5. Melania "In this portrait, I wanted to show the warmth of the model's personality using warm tints and enhancing her golden hair – made using *Loft* in *3ds max*. I try not to show too many naked bodies, but instead focus-in on facial features."

6. Ida "Regardless of the model, I like to show the two sides of the human kind – bright and dark. We are part product of animal evolution and part technologically generated. But we have to remember that everything will die one day – flesh will rot and metal will rust."

5



6



CHRIS PEPPER

LOCATION Sheffield, UK

JOB Illustrator

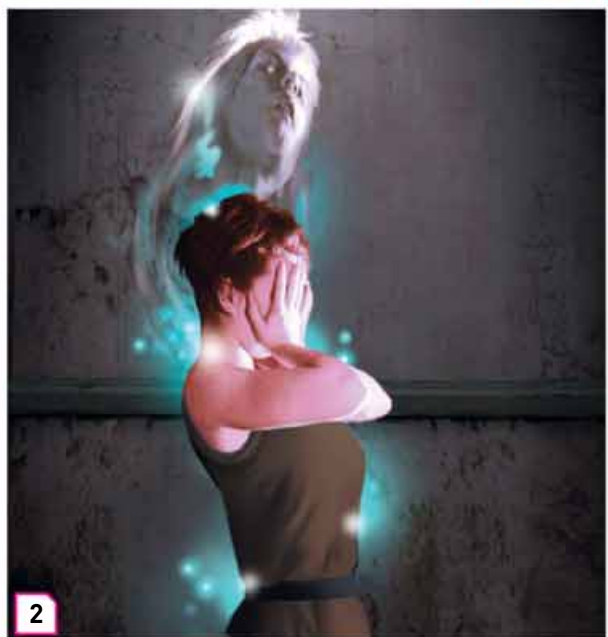
CONTACT www.advocate-art.com

SOFTWARE Photoshop, Maya and 3D Studio Max

1. Emissary "This space girl was created using 2D and 3D packages. The background was completed using *3ds max* and the foreground was painted from a pencil sketch using *Photoshop*. The two were then composited to create the finished 2D illustration."

2. Ghost1 "The image pictured here was one of two concept pieces created for a video game project, which didn't get off the ground. The backgrounds for these images were created and lit in *Maya*. This was then composited with photographic and hand-drawn imagery to derive the final piece."

3. Ghost "I hoped that this image would effectively demonstrate the designers' ideas relating to the states of ghostly possession that might overcome some of the game characters."



**CARLOS ALVES****LOCATION** Oporto, Portugal**JOB** Designer**CONTACT** ciadesign@netcabo.pt**SOFTWARE** Illustrator 8**1. Mercedes, Car and Rose**

"All of these images were created using the Mesh and Gradient tools within *Illustrator 8*. I used the same process for all of them, using a photograph for reference, but I don't use auto-tracing or any other automatic tools.

With the exception of the Car and Mercedes images, which were created using small vector shapes to represent the colours, textures and shadows, I usually use the Mesh tool to construct a wireframe with dimensions drawn from a reference photo."



3

**GET EXPOSED**

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

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

LETTERS

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STAR LETTER: MACROMEDIA PRICE MUDDLE

➔ I've been looking to buy Macromedia's *Studio 2004* with *Flash MX Professional*. While I can accept that there will be some regional variations based on tax, import duties, etc, I do believe that we should be able to buy products at more or less the same price anywhere in the world. However, this is not the case with some American-based companies.

With Macromedia, the discrepancy at this time is such that I can fly to Canada, buy a copy of studio, fly home and still save the equivalent of £27. Or I could take a two-week off-peak holiday in Turkey, buy the product while I'm there and still save £50. Or maybe I could fly to the south of France, nip into Monaco and save myself over £200? The discrepancy between euro-pricing makes even more interesting reading; a person in Germany can expect to pay 160 euros more than in France. What's going on?

Dave Hughes, UK

☞ Sarah Mowatt, communications manager at Macromedia EMEA, responds: Macromedia works with a network of around 70 distributors – who in turn supply thousands of resellers across Europe – but provides only two price-lists to its European distributors: one in euros and one in sterling. Under EU legislation, Macromedia can provide guidelines on expected price levels, but cannot force resellers to maintain any specific pricing. The discrepancies you outline may also be based on a number of other factors: Has the reseller included VAT (eg, in Germany, resellers must by law publish pricing which includes VAT)? Is the reseller offering any special promotion? Does the reseller provide value added services? Macromedia actively encourages its users to shop around for the best price, no matter which country they're in, but strongly recommends purchasing from an authorised supplier.

PRIZE: free training at Space, London

As the Star Letter winner this month, you can choose to have a day's training at Space. Co-founded by Bridget Riley, Space is one of the largest visual arts resources in the Capital, and offers a variety of exciting courses, ranging from *Photoshop* and *Final Cut Pro* to how to sell your work, tax and self-employment, and marketing strategies for designers.

Space also has a large range of high-end equipment, including video-editing facilities, technical support staff and exhibition spaces. For more information go to: www.spacestudios.org.uk

[space]

CA FORUM FREAK

This month, we just wanted to shine the spotlight on forum member Douglas 442, from Fresno in California, who created this image using the Freak bundle supplied free with issue 102. Nice one, Douglas!

Join the *Computer Arts* forum at forum.computerarts.co.uk and check out the latest work from our lively community.



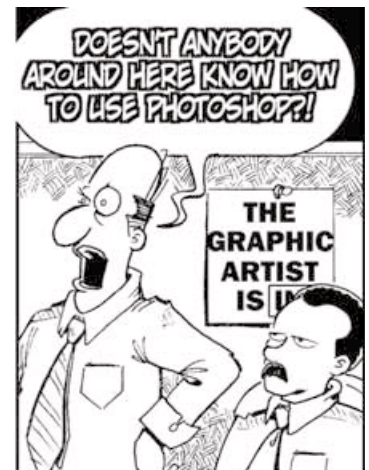
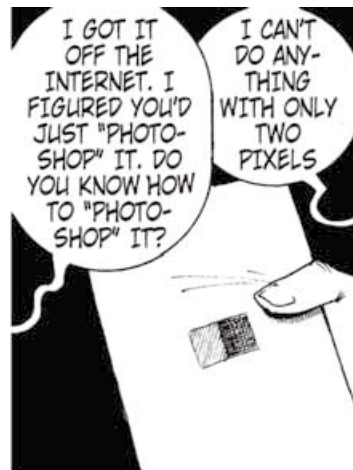
MORE MOVIES!

I was passing by a bookstore the other day when I chanced upon the "Movies On Your Desktop" issue of *Computer Arts Projects* (issue 60) – and I fell in love with it.

I'm an on-air promo producer who started off as a video editor. Other than editing, I'm quite weak in other aspects of production, such as storyboarding and lighting. I've tried getting such knowledge from the library, but to no avail. Your mag answered all my questions.

I hope to see more of digital video content in future issues of your magazine. Specifically, can you include write-ups on the "making of" Hollywood blockbusters? I don't mean interviews with directors,

IT'S A DESIGNER'S LIFE...



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

but rather articles on the effects themselves and the software used to create them. Once again, congratulations on such a job well done.
Linda Lim, Singapore

Computer Arts:

We're glad to be of service, Linda. As far as covering more movie production is concerned, we do regularly explore production techniques used by today's movie professionals. You'll often find tutorials on industry-standard tools *After Effects* and *Premiere*, for instance. However, we won't cover tools used in the effects industry that are far beyond the wallets of our readers – and a fair few are. For specialist coverage of 3D effects, why not check out our sister magazine *3D World*?

2005 CALENDAR

I'm a graphic designer/artworker based in London and I've subscribed to *CA* for three or four years. I was waiting eagerly for my calendar, which I received this morning. Please can you explain why such a beautiful gift ended up arriving with only a standard cardboard support, resulting in it being severely bent and creased? It's a shame, because it's such a lovely gift.
Haresh Ladha, UK



Computer Arts:

We always do our best to get issues out to subscribers in as pristine a condition as possible, but unfortunately the magazines are at the mercy of the postal service once they leave our possession. If any other subscribers have had similar experiences, please get in touch and we will replace your calendar as soon as we can.

THE SNAKE COVER (AGAIN)

What's with your increasingly cheesy porno covers? Are you trying to increase circulation among greasy, spotty teenage boys who spend all day in darkened rooms in front of computer screens and have never actually seen a real woman? Spare a thought for us more sophisticated readers; we're embarrassed to leave such lowbrow twaddle lying around on the coffee table. Either that or put some semi-naked men on the cover occasionally.
Grace Jackson, UK

Computer Arts:

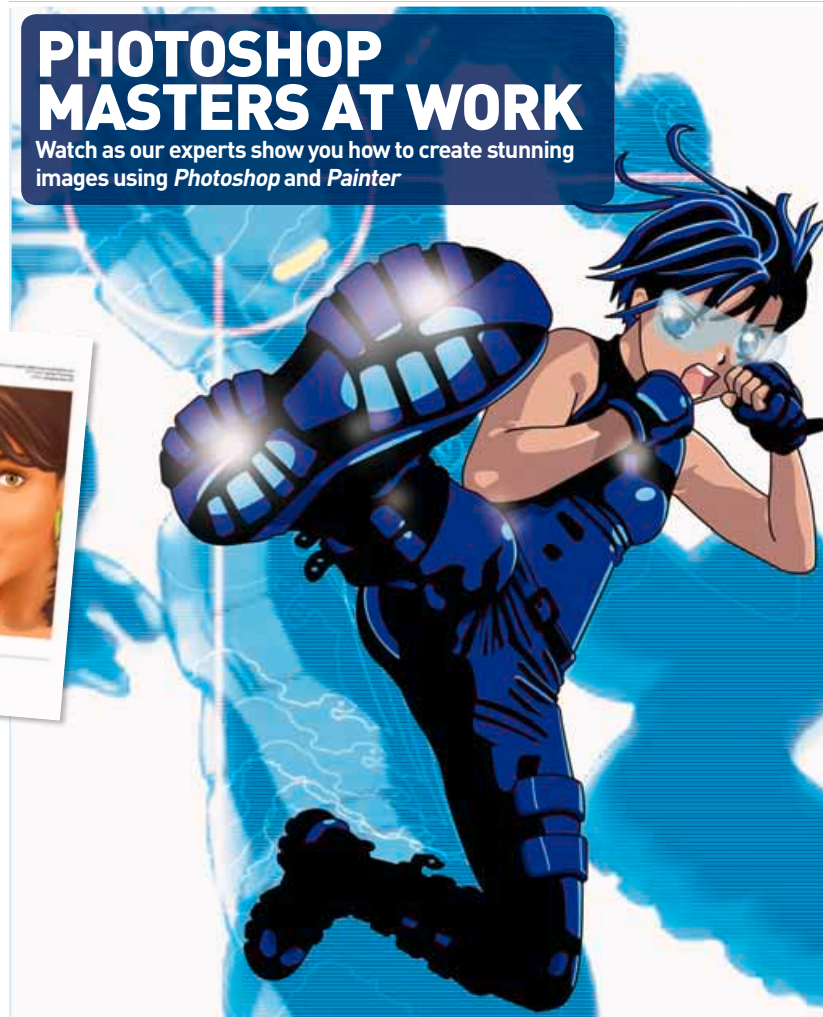
If you're referring to Sebastien Haure's image for the "Metallic Effects" cover of issue 104, we've already justified its inclusion (see our "Star Letter: An Issue Of Pornography" in issue 105). With regard to male cover models, we don't have a problem with that – but only if it's justified artistically, of course.

NEXT ISSUE IN COMPUTER arts

PHOTOSHOP • SOFTWARE • TUTORIALS • NEWS • REVIEWS

PHOTOSHOP MASTERS AT WORK

Watch as our experts show you how to create stunning images using *Photoshop* and *Painter*



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All contents are subject to change

ON SALE THURS 17 FEBRUARY

ONLINE HEAVEN

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



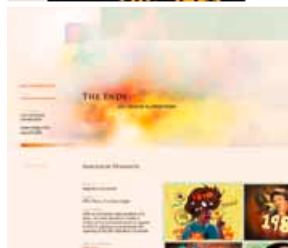
I SEE FRANCE www.iseefrance.net

Very cutely designed website for some very cute underwear on some decidedly cute models, courtesy of Chicago based Arlo. Ideal if you're after Valentine's gifts, or even just looking to waste some time ogling scantily-attired young ladies.



PRECURSOR STUDIO www.precursorstudio.com/moving.asp?page=MTV

See how Precursor Studio created an underground street race through Rome for the recent MTV European music awards. On display are the 3D models used in the animation, as well as a specially created custom font.



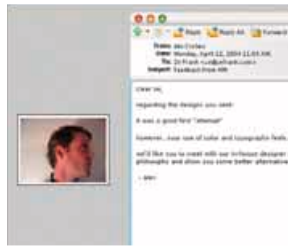
THE ENDS www.theends.info

Art, design and direction comes courtesy of this ultra-slick US agency, which combines traditional illustration, computer illustration and CGI in its work. Check out the MTV spots whipped up in just eight days to promote cult hit *Napoleon Dynamite*.



GALACTICA www.thegalactica.com

The Galactica is a stunning webzine covering art, design and music, all wrapped up in lovely *Flash* work. It's a hefty download, but well worth the wait. Highlights of December, issue two? Artwork by Jib Hunt and the songs of Autumn's Grey Solace.



COMMUNICATION SKILLS: ZEFRAK www.zefrank.com/punc/

This brilliant short animation pretty much sums up the worst aspects of client/designer relationships. It's worth checking out the rest of ZeFrank's website for tips on how to dance, make animal noises and other valuable life lessons.



DEEPBLUE www.deepbluethemovie.com

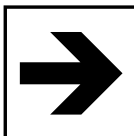
This lovely little microsite for the BBC's *Deep Blue* natural history film features a nifty *Flash*-video editing tool in addition to the usual screensavers and desktop backgrounds. The behind-the-scenes videos and creature fact files are interesting, too.



Nathan Jurevicius's ScaryGirl: appearing soon on a mobile phone near you.

Back to the small screen

MOBILES Online galleries and download services offering art for mobiles give digital artists something to think about. But is anyone buying?



A new organisation called Candyspace and stock image giant Digital Vision are preparing to transform the humble mobile phone

screen into an exciting new medium for cutting-edge digital art.

Launched this month by Tom Thorne, the man previously involved with multimedia hip-hop act Gorillaz, Candyspace is offering top-notch graphic design, illustration, digital photography, motion graphics, film and music to what its creators believe is an audience of discerning mobile phone owners eager to personalise their handsets.

Meanwhile, Digital Vision sees the mobile phone market as a key growth area for 2005 and is already licensing a variety of digital images for mobile phone content to services such as Mobile Digital Art.

Although 3G has widened the field, current content is still largely aimed at teens and schoolkids, but Candyspace creative director Martin Brierly says he's identified a new group: "the design-literate grown-up".

With a database of work from the likes of Jasper Goodall, Basher, Jon Burgerman, ScaryGirl and others, Brierly believes

Candyspace could be the service to take mobile phone content decidedly upmarket.

"It's potentially huge, because people are looking for better content and 3G will help get more people interested. Obviously, there's not as many people wanting to download the kind of content we have as there are people wanting to download an England flag, but it will grow," says Brierly.

Digital Vision is in no doubt that a broad market for high-quality digital content exists. "Mobile phone users are now looking for images full of attitude, anything to create a fashionable impression with an edge," a spokesperson told us.

And for those creating the content, the medium certainly presents a new challenge. Jon Burgerman, who has supplied some of his trademark illustration for Candyspace, believes his work suits the screen well.

"It's a new medium worth exploring," he says, "although it will take a while to see whether it becomes an established platform for exhibiting work. As phones become more able to handle video and multimedia, I can see exciting possibilities."

INFO www.candyspace.tv and www.digitalvision.com



Power chips arrive

WORKSTATIONS Key players unveil latest developments in upcoming technology



IBM, Sony and Toshiba have unveiled details of the world's first workstation built around the much-anticipated Cell processor architecture – a multi-core chip comprising a 64-bit Power processor, designed to scale up by clustering multiple Cell chips together. The chips effectively act as one very powerful processing unit, and are built for intensive jobs such as digital content creation and film-making.

The companies say that the one-rack Cell-based workstation will be capable of processing 16 teraflops (16 trillion floating point calculations) per second and will “totally change the digital content creation environment”. The possibilities look extraordinary...

There's no sign of Cell-powered workstations coming on sale any time soon, especially in light of IBM's exit from the low-end PC market, but industry rumours have suggested Apple has been testing IBM's single-core PowerPC 970GX and dual-core 970MP processors for possible inclusion in the long-expected PowerBook G5.

INFO www.ibm.com/chips

Achieve with Adobe

COMPO Adobe's fifth annual student design awards



Adobe has broadened the scope of this year's Design Achievement Awards by allowing students from Australia, Austria, France, Germany, Ireland, New Zealand and Switzerland to participate for the very first time.

The awards will also include some new categories – for Animation and Broadcast Design – which will sit alongside the regulars in Digital Illustration, Print Design, Environmental Graphics and Time-based Media.

Winners of last year's competition include The Royal College of Art's Adam Leiber, Yale's Jayme Yen and Dan Covert of the California College of Art. Students wanting to enter the competition and get a crack at winning the respectable \$5,000 prize and attending the prestigious awards event in New York in July need to enter before Friday 29 April, 2005.

INFO www.adobe.com/education/adaa/



Powering up: Adobe's Design Achievement Awards now include categories for animation and broadcast design.

THE MONTH IN BRIEF

This month's creative winners and losers, plus what's really driving broadband adoption



GOOD MONTH

Quark and Adobe competition Both Quark and Adobe should be firing on all cylinders this year, especially in anticipation of XPress 7.0 and the fact that Quark boss Kamar Aulakh is clearly looking for trouble. “[Adobe] has always followed us. Look at their history: We announce something XML, and the very next quarter they go announce something XML. We have the DMS Server, they come out with an InDesign Server,” he said in a recent interview.

Quick bucks Enterprising Australian graphic designer Chris Doyle supplemented his income to the tune of AU\$1,035 on eBay last month by selling a piece of Kellogg's Nutri-Grain that by chance resembled iconic film alien ET. There's worse ways to make money.



BAD MONTH

Website plagiarism The bane of the web design industry may at last be in retreat after law firm Brayton Purcell filed a suite against a rival for stealing large chunks of its online content and posting it on its own website. “We hope that our example will make people think twice before attempting to copy the works of others,” a spokesperson said. Hurrah!

PC companies for sale Who wants to buy a PC? Well, IBM was so sick of its PC business, it sold it to Chinese manufacturer Lenovo – and now it looks as if HP is thinking of selling its PC subsidiary and concentrating on printers, too.



AND FINALLY

Well-designed websites It would be nice to think that most web users are opting for broadband so that they can benefit from lovingly designed sites and enjoy innovative uses of Flash. Not a bit of it. Recent research by service provider Homecall suggests that a not inconsiderable 23 per cent of UK net surfers are upgrading their connections specifically to hasten their access to porn.

YESTERDAY'S PAPERS

TYPOGRAPHY Exhaustive US study of top newspapers names industry's most popular fonts



Font foundry Ascender has finished taking a long hard look at fonts used by America's top 100 daily newspapers, and named the *Poynter*, *Franklin Gothic* and *Helvetica* families as the nation's three favourites.

The study also found that most newspapers rely on custom fonts and

typefaces. Ascend reckons that this is because the use of custom fonts enables newspapers to strengthen their brand and give a distinct, exclusive quality to their publications.

“The fonts come from a variety of sources, including large type foundries, smaller independents and individual type

designers specialising in custom fonts,” explained Bill Davis, author of the report. “The internet represents a new delivery vehicle for newspapers, but the jury's still out on the best approach to creating electronic versions in a manner which preserves branding.”

INFO www.ascendercorp.com

SOFTWARE

3D CURIOUS AND E-ON REVIVE POWER BUNDLE

3D environment developer e-on software and Curious Labs have announced the return of the *Power Bundle*, updated by the two developers to include latest edition software (*Vue 5 Esprit*, *Poser 5* and *Mover 5*) at a cut-down price of \$399.

www.curiouslabs.com
www.e-onsoftware.com

3D MOTION BUILDER 6 ARRIVES

3D software giant Alias has released version 6 of *MotionBuilder* – an update the company says will include an advanced Story Timeline, as well as enhanced keyframing, intelligent character technology, such as auto-rigging with Human IK, and precision-animation tools. Alias *MotionBuilder Pro 6* will cost £2,725. The *Standard* version comes in at £645.

www.alias.com

XSI NEW SOFTWARE

Avid has announced version 4.2 of *Softimage XSI*. It boasts a series of enhancements, including crowd simulation, compositing and paint capabilities. The new release comes in three versions: Foundation, Essentials and Advanced, all of which feature robust normal mapping generation. Prices are £352 for Foundation, £1,467 for Essentials and £5,118 for Advanced.

www.softimage.com

DESIGN PRINTDEVIZOR PRICE CUT

Stonecube Software has halved the price of its *PrintDevizor* print finish visualiser system to £495. Company CEO Martin Coulthard tells us the cut follows feedback from customers, distributors and the *Computer Arts* review (issue 105) in which we said the product was too highly priced.

www.stonecube.com

DESIGN QUARK PSD IMPORT AVAILABLE

The *PSD Import XTensions* software announced recently as part of *QuarkXPress 6.5* is now available for download from the company's web site. The new software makes it easy to import Adobe *Photoshop* files into *Quark* layouts, make changes and modifications to *Photoshop* files within *Quark*, map alpha and spot channels to *QuarkXPress* colours or inks and access layers, channels, paths, 22 blend modes and opacity options.

www.quark.com



Japanese design team Furi Furi are among those whose work adorns Virgin Atlantic's new sick bags.

Wretch for the sky

DESIGN Virgin sick bags "enjoy" cutting-edge design overhaul



Those of a queasy disposition may need to think twice before reaching for the sick bag, following Virgin Atlantic's recent decision to get some of the world's leading graphic artists to provide limited edition artwork for its in-flight vomit receptacles.

The barf-bag overhaul comes after the airline launched its Design For Chunks competition in collaboration with multimedia artist Oz Dean of forcefeed:swede. The idea? To turn the mundane though mandatory bags into a talking point or even a collector's item.

Featuring work from designers across the globe, including Von Glitschka, FuriFuri and Miguzimo, the 20 designs were selected from 600 entries and will be distributed on all Virgin Atlantic flights for the next six months.

INFO www.designforchunks.com

Adobe buys OKYZ

ACQUISITION Graphics giant bags French 3D collaboration software company



Adobe looks set to integrate 3D collaborative functionality into its software following the acquisition of OKYZ – the French developer responsible for the *Raider3D* series of applications. These programs enable users to send, receive, view and publish 3D models, as well as zoom-in to specific areas of designs with ease.

"Adobe recognises the significant trend toward 3D-based collaboration," said Ivan Koon (right), senior vice president of Adobe's Intelligent Documents Business Unit. "OKYZ brings 3D technology and expertise to Adobe's ongoing effort to enable our customers to view, interact and exchange a wide variety of content in Adobe PDF." **INFO** www.adobe.com



Adobe's Ivan Koon: "significant trend towards 3D-based collaboration."

LEARNING CURVE

Short and long-term training across the UK

SILICON BEACH BRIGHTON

With courses aimed at both beginners and professionals, Silicon Beach provides a wide range of design and 3D training, from public access to bespoke sessions delivered at clients' premises.

InDesign
9-10 February, £395
Dreamweaver
14-15 February, £395
URL www.siliconbeachtraining.co.uk

ESCAPE STUDIOS LONDON

This leading West London training centre specialises in 3D computer animation and

2D visual effects skills. Escape is moving from its Westbourne Park base up the road to Shepherd's Bush this month.

Maya Level 3
28 February-25 March, £3,199
Maya Comprehensive
21 February-29 April, £7,499
URL www.escapestudios.co.uk

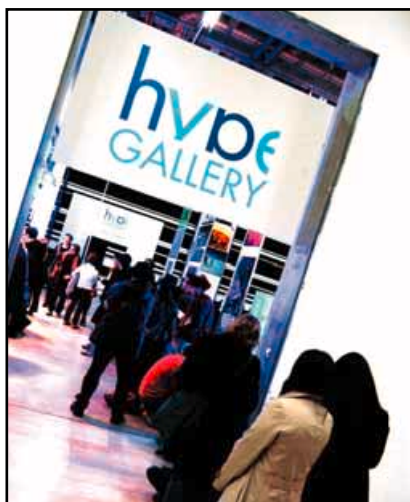
METRO NEW MEDIA LONDON

An accredited Discreet training house providing courses in web design, 3D animation, graphic design, video and multimedia, Metro offers an extensive programme to small classes and also runs evening and weekend courses.

Dreamweaver MX 2004 Intro
14-15 February, £475
Illustrator CS Intro
23-24 February, £475
URL www.metronewmedia.com

DESIGN COMPUTER TRAINING BIRMINGHAM

One-to-one and small group computer training. Specialising in Adobe *Photoshop* training and training for professional web design, image-editing and DTP. Courses cover *Photoshop* (image-editing and design for beginners) and basic web design and preparation. One-day courses start from £380, three days from £1,050.
URL www.combined.f9.co.uk/computer/



Believe the hype

IMAGING HP brings the open digital art concept to Paris

➔ Hewlett-Packard has successfully transposed its popular Hype Gallery concept to the Palais de Tokyo in Paris, affirming yet again its key role in the digital print and design industries.

Billed as a democratisation of the public art display process and based on some extremely meaty HP printing, projection and display technology, Hype – originally housed in London's East End – encourages digital artists to email or hand-deliver a piece of work which is then displayed during the exhibition.

Due to visit another currently top secret European city later this year, Hype Paris featured work from graphics professionals and students, alongside commissioned pieces.

INFO www.hypegallery.fr

Back to Nature

PLUG-INS Take a walk in the woods with plug-in gods Alien Skin

➔ Sick of the urban grind and eager to tap into some more natural textures? Then reach for the fresh range of Alien Skin plug-ins, all of which offer a suitably out-of-doorsy selection of rustic effects.

The second phase of a three-part upgrade to the group's popular *Eye Candy* range, the ten *Nature* plug-ins provide effects simulating fire, smoke, rust, snow, ice and water.

The package, available now for \$99, also improves usability by adding 500 click-and-go presets and an enhanced settings management system to make browsing and sharing images easier.

Alien Skin plans a final upgrade to *Eye Candy 5* later this year through the release of *Impact*, which promises chrome, bevels and shadow effects.

INFO www.alienskin.com

GLOBAL EVENTS

Our round-up of design events worldwide



IMAGINA MONACO

2 February–5 February
Europe's largest digital content creation show Imagina – now in its 23rd year – kicks off in Monaco on Wednesday 2 February and pulls together an enormous amount of content, including an

exhibition featuring all the big players in the digital content community. *Computer Arts* readers wanting a 50 per cent discount off entry to Imagina can take a look at www.imagina.mc/COA

FOCUS ON IMAGING BIRMINGHAM, UK

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

including all the latest digital cameras and processing equipment.

www.focus-on-imaging.co.uk

GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE

SAN FRANCISCO, USA

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

PHOTOSHOP WORLD LAS VEGAS, USA

8–10 March, \$149–\$499
Massive global *Photoshop* exhibition and conference focusing on training, with 60 conference sessions for photographers, designers and video editors – plus keynote



talks from senior Adobe staff and partners.
www.photoshopworld.com

SEYBOLD SEMINARS, PREMEDIA

WORKFLOW CONFERENCE

RAI CENTRE, AMSTERDAM

7–9 June
Seybold Amsterdam examines premedia workflow from the manufacturing perspective, with case studies on how the creative process affects production, how PDF has become a workflow workhorse, and how DAM and content management systems can act as a hub for the entire process.
www.seybold365.com/amsterdam/

HARDWARE



MONITORS NEW MODELS FROM NEC

NEC Mitsubishi is to begin shipping a new range of monitors under the Spectraview brand, including 19-inch and 21-inch models. The monitors are designed for colour-critical apps such as image-editing, and, according to NEC, boast the industry's widest ever colour gamut. Prices range from £729.

www.nec-mitsubishi.com



GRAPHICS CARDS VERY FAST INDEED

3D graphics card developer Gainward is now shipping its subtly named Gainward PowerPack Ultra/1960 XP Golden Sample GLH, the last part of which the company tells us stands for Goes Like Hell. The new kit is based on a NVIDIA GeForce 6600GT graphics processor, a PCI-E to AGP High-Speed-Interconnect and Gainward's high-performance/wide-bandwidth hardware, designed to run at 540P+MHz, using 128MB of today's fastest 1.6ns DDR3 memory. It's available now and costs around £240.

www.gainward.com

SCANNERS

XEROX UPS ITS GAME

Xerox has released the DocuMate 262 – a colour sheet-fed document scanner capable of scanning 66 images per minute and automatically scanning documents into searchable PDF files. The DocuMate 262 also includes *Kofax VirtualReScan 3.5* software for high-level optical character recognition. It's available in the US now for \$1,299.

www.xeroxscanners.com

KEYBOARD

ERGONOMIC SPECIAL

Peripherals specialist Adesso has refreshed its line of keyboards by introducing the Mac-compatible USB Touchpad – a split-key, contoured, ergonomic device. It features an advanced chipset for reliable performance, a high-quality membrane for longevity, and separate numeric and cursor keypads. You can get your hands on one for £49.

www.adesso.com



DESIGNER TALK JOHN ROBERTSON

The Gordon's Gin advert

Computer Arts catches up with respected Passion Pictures director John Robertson, who reveals the thinking behind his recent advertising work for Gordon's Gin, plus his work for Tesco's, the Mini – and the Inland Revenue

Computer Arts: How exactly did you get into the animation industry?

John Robertson: During a graphic design degree... I made a short film about the Oedipus complex. After that, animation seemed more interesting than being obsessed over fonts and kerning or going into an ad agency. Around that time, though, animation was admittedly a different industry: battery hen studios filled with *Bambi* enthusiasts making qualitatively execrable TV shows. Fortunately,

unbelievably complex, I knew we had to make an extremely reduced version of them. I just hoped the style would be something the audience would be familiar with and accept. After that, it was really about the journey through London, trying to make clear what had to be an entirely visual narrative.

CA: How do you manage artists from so many different disciplines when working on a big mixed media job such as Gordon's?

MAIN IMAGE (AND BELOW): Robertson's striking work for the Gordon's Gin advert's paint-by-numbers canvases is intricate and pretty impressive.

two. I probably enjoy the 3D process less. It can be slow. What you gain in control, you lose in immediacy – and too often you have to express yourself in technical rather than creative terms. Also, you can tweak forever. However, it can provide the most satisfying and rewarding challenges.

CA: You produced an advert for the Inland Revenue. What were they like to work for? Did you have to check your tax returns?

JR: We produced about 12 of those, actually. I certainly didn't meet Gordon Brown, but I am led to believe he was shown work-in-progress tapes behind closed doors. His mind wasn't so expanded as to waive anyone's taxes, though.

CA: How do you give inanimate objects, such as the trolleys in the Tesco's adverts a life-like feel?

JR: Probably just to stop thinking of them as inanimate objects. They have dialogue, freedom of movement, eyes and a mouth, pathos, even eyebrows... What's the problem?

CA: You designed the *War of the Worlds*-style spaceships for the Mini Martians advert. What was that project like to work on?

JR: My input was just the design of the spacecraft/tripods. I looked at loads of old reference materials, and tried to amalgamate them, keeping a vaguely retro-look to the design. It was enjoyable.

INFO For more information on Passion Pictures' award-winning work, visit www.passionpictures.co.uk.



"Back then, animation was a different industry: battery hen studios filled with *Bambi* enthusiasts making qualitatively execrable TV shows"

I stumbled in just before the mass rediscovery/revival of the craft post *The Simpsons*. I'd always loved all the surreal stuff from the twenties and thirties, the weird rubber-hose Max Fleischer stuff of the *Snow White* period, etc, that was inspiring. Idealistically, it seemed quite exciting, as if you could create this ultimately controllable world of sound and vision. The reality, though, was something different.

CA: Tell us about the thinking behind the Gordon's Gin commercial.

JR: The concept was pretty immediate. It was a graphic interpretation of iconic London in an established style. From there, it became a process of reduction and overcoming technical issues. The paint-by-numbers canvases I looked at were so

JR: It's probably about deadline anxiety. Having an organised production helps. Gordon's was very well run. It had to be, because we had a tight eight-week schedule from start to finish, and everything was thought through carefully. It never deviated much from my storyboard once everyone had agreed on it. In many ways, it was execution from that point on. Having a very good effects supervisor, line producer and crew also helped.

CA: What medium do you feel happiest working with: 2D or 3D animation?

JR: Actually, I prefer shooting live action. There's an energy there that animation doesn't have. Mostly, though, jobs seem to be a combination of both, so it's not really worth differentiating between the

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OPINION

An eye for figures

Recent statistics may make for a depressing read, but for some designers 2004 has been a great year. So don't be dismayed by the doom and gloom

➔ According to the latest British Design Initiative (BDI) report, everything went pear-shaped for British design during 2004, with turnover dropping by £1.4 billion from the previous year, a startling dip of 26 per cent. Fee income is down, overseas income is down, regional agency turnover is down... It makes for depressing reading.

But don't despair. It's worth remembering that the numbers only tell part of the story. Yes, they reveal underlying trends in the UK design industry, but what about European design agencies? US agencies? How is design in China faring? The report tentatively suggests that the USA is the top country for exporting services, but how? By sheer turnover, per capita, or what?

Reports such as this can be intensely frustrating, their doom-and-gloom sentiment tailor-made for sensationalist headlines. So you could be forgiven for thinking it's time to hang up your mouse and become a wicker-bottom chair repairer. But hold on there, Sparky. There's plenty more to this than just big, bold type.

STATISTICAL SKEW

For a start, the 2003/2004 *Valuation Survey* used an industry base of just 4,000 commercial design agencies, of which only

1,600 completed the survey in full. So there's every chance that the results were skewed in some way. Perhaps agencies that aren't doing very well have the time to answer all the questions? And what of the 2,400 agencies who didn't answer all the questions in full? Which questions did they leave out? And why? Additionally, no distinction was made

"If you're burning the midnight oil and sleeping under your desk, you can file the report in the bin"

between different types of design. Engineering design might be bringing the average down, for instance, while other areas, such as branding or design management, might be soaring.

Admittedly, you could level such criticisms at any survey (exit polls during general elections demonstrate this admirably), so I'm not having a pop at the BDI. It's just that these figures shouldn't be taken as the end of the story.

My own experience doesn't necessarily chime with the report. The company I work for is doing rather well and expanding nicely.

The company my wife works for is also taking on more staff at the moment, and a quick straw-poll among my designer friends revealed that everything appears to be on the up for them, too.

TENTATIVE CONCLUSIONS

So what conclusions can we draw from this? On one hand, we have an official report, belching fire and brimstone, and on the other an unprofessional litmus test suggesting that it's too early to put on your best pair of Nikes and climb under the purple sheet.

Many will argue, and I agree with them, that such a survey provides little to go on – it's an interesting yet limited snapshot of what's really happening, the relevance of which will depend largely on your own circumstances. If your company is handing out redundancy notices or the accountant has to wear an oxygen mask, then it's a chilling vindication of something rotten at the heart of UK design. If you're burning the midnight oil and sleeping under your desk because your company has too much work, then you can chuckle to yourself and file the report safely in the recycling bin.

I'm not suggesting that we ignore such findings, or that they're a waste of space, but they are just one of many ways to measure the health of the UK design industry. Boards of directors, government ministers and those charged with shaping company policies and tactics should ignore the other indicators at their peril. **arts**

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



FORUMS

How was 2004 for you? Post your stories, good and bad, on our forum at <http://forum.computerarts.co.uk>.

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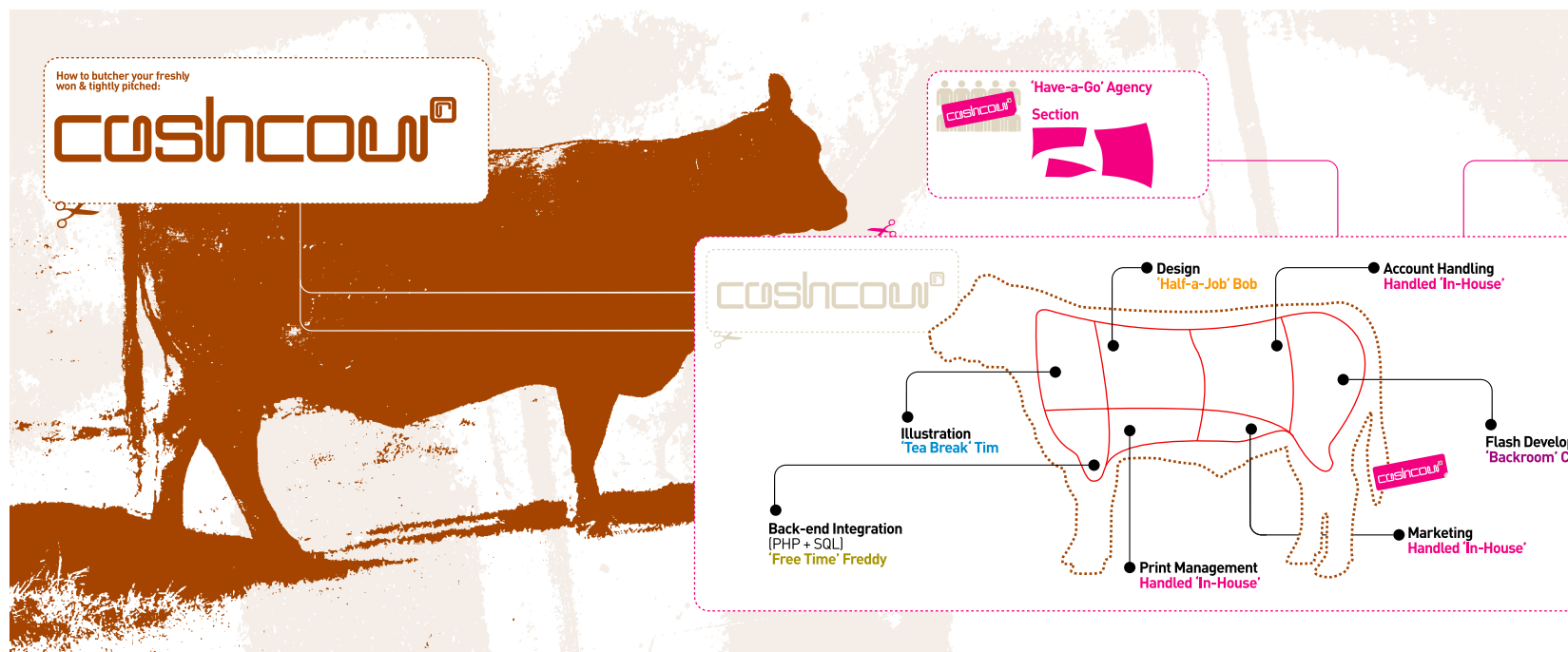
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IN DEPTH

The future of freelance

Life is getting tougher for those on the frontline, so, as a new company sets up shop to supply design services to those unwilling to use freelance help, might it finally be time to look for a full-time job? **WORDS BY DOM HALL**

➔ The creative industry has always thrived on the input of freelancers and provided a fertile hunting ground for those wanting to make their living outside the usual nine-to-five slog. But life for freelancers is changing. More people are chasing less work, and a number of new initiatives are now threatening to make the battle for commissions harder than ever before.

Two key factors have contributed to this shift. Firstly, it is now much easier for people to set themselves up as professional designers, given the right technology and contacts. There's also been a significant change in the way the design sector conducts its business. So is the writing on the wall for freelancers? Or will good work always win out, regardless of the working conditions or contract of employment under which it has been created?

Designer Steve Sharp, who's been working on a freelance basis for over five years, says the industry is under fire, particularly from inexperienced newcomers setting themselves up in business and undercutting more established designers.

"It's the easiest thing in the world to get hold of some dodgy Adobe or web design software, copy someone else's ideas and knock out pages for next to nothing. Unfortunately, there are people who will pay money for that, but probably not more than once," he says.

ISSUES OF TRUST

This is a view shared by Jason Holland, creative director at web design agency Underwired. He says his company – which developed sites for the likes of Virgin Holidays, Selfridges, Oxfam and YO! Sushi in 2004 – never uses freelancers because it doesn't want to lose creative control.

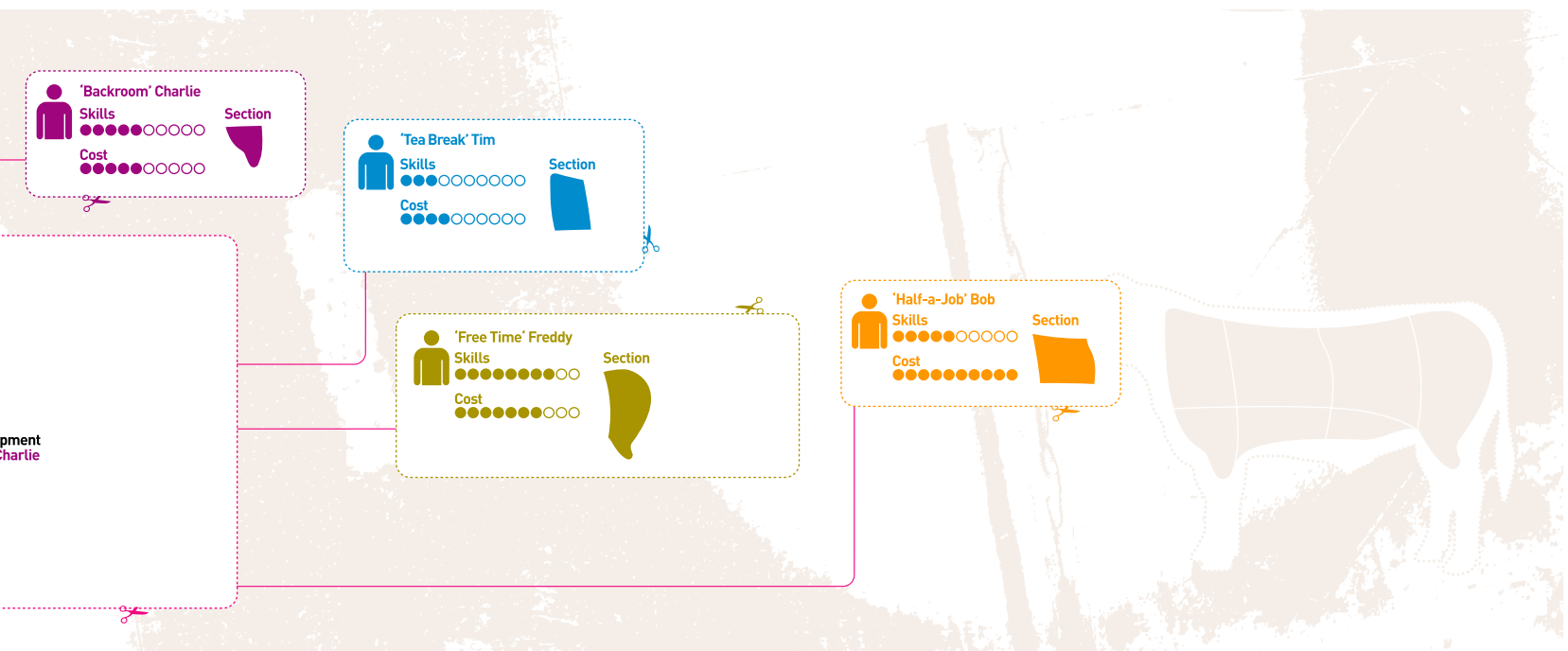
"We find it takes a lot of trust to hand over a design element to someone outside the company who is not a proven designer in both graphic and web skills, and the way we work generally," says Holland. "We much prefer to employ someone full time, nurture their qualities and expand on their skill sets, to make them an ideal fit for the agency. Our "designs" are also our visual advertisements for new business, and are therefore very precious to us – that's not something we'd put at risk by bringing in unknown variables, such as a freelancer," he says.

Looking to exploit this growing dissatisfaction are Glen Richardson and Nathan Virgin of Design on Tap, a venture



FORUMS

Visit <http://forum.computerarts.co.uk> to share your views on this topic and more with other CA readers.



the two men set up last year. The company offers design agencies an alternative to freelancing-out creative jobs they cannot handle in-house because of a lack of relevant skills or a heavy workload.

According to Design on Tap, many design agencies have had bad experiences with freelancers for the simple reason that the freelancer isn't directly employed by the company (so is less likely to hit deadlines) and lacks focus (because he or she will more than likely to be juggling a number of projects at the same time).

"It takes a lot of trust to hand over a design element to someone who has no proven graphic and web skills"

"There are three types of freelancer," says Richardson. "Good ones who are sought after and can demand high fees, those in-between jobs who are half-heartedly freelancing until something else comes up, and those who are freelancing in their spare time. None of these are ideal, so companies are looking for an alternative. Lots of them have had nasty experiences, so don't want to take the risk any more."

Virgin adds that freelancers used by design agencies on a one-off job basis can

also present a wider risk in terms of the potential loss of return business.

"If they've done a good job, there's going to be a conflict of interest – why go back to the design agency when you could just go direct to the freelancer?" he asks.

THE FREELANCE GAME

While some companies appear to have taken Design on Tap's message on board and re-evaluated their use of freelance design help, others still see it as essential. Craig Heath, creative director at London-based Fresh Lemon believes – for the typically-sized design house employing five people or less – freelancers are "critical".

"We can call upon extra staff when a large project comes in at short notice or when workloads become heavy. The beauty of using freelancers is that you have immediate access to a large pool of talent and don't have to go through any lengthy interview processes. Freelancers are usually available to start pretty much as soon as we want, too," says Heath. "Also, having access to people with multiple skill sets means we've found we are able to match the right people to the right jobs – by using their strengths we've been able to increase our turnaround and workloads."

Ed Flemming, a consultant at Four Communications, argues that design companies do actually need to employ

freelancers. He sees them as a way of keeping the company's work fresh and up-to-date with new trends and directions.

"We use freelancers on a project-by-project basis, so we get the best skills for each job. The online industry is in a constant state of flux and working with different designers and programmers who have worked in different environments is an effective way of keeping the work fresh," Flemming admits.

For those at the coalface, working as freelancers in the design field, the positive aspects of working independently significantly outweigh the negative. One such freelancer, Laura Roberts, says the freelance market has provided her with a good living over the last 12 months, despite a few minor hiccups.

"I only really work for agencies, apart from whatever separate freelance work I can get. In the past, I've been really messed around and it's been tough, but I just haven't really found the job that I want enough to give it all up and have a boss watching over me again," she says.

INFO

www.underwired.com
www.design-ontap.co.uk
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INFO

Web: *Anarcharsis* is just one of many exciting fonts available exclusively from UnionFonts.com

Price: The entire family is available for £62 (or £15 for the Unicaise version)

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

FEATURED FONT

Anarcharsis

Font designer Neil Summerour is the design brains behind this elegant offering from UnionFonts.com

➔ *Anarcharsis* is a new font by American designer Neil Summerour, senior designer at Athens-based ad agency Genetic: ICG (www.genetic-icg.com).

The font was initially developed for a book about British architecture, which led the prolific designer to research the work

of late 19th and early 20th-century type designers. *Anarcharsis* comes in 11 weights, and is flexible and dynamic enough to work at all sizes.

Summerour has designed over 250 fonts during the last eight years. He started with display fonts, but as his interest in typeface

design grew, progressed to high quality serif and sans serif faces. Other fonts fashioned by him include *Yumi*, *Ether*, *Ether Connected*, *Amp* and *EGO*.

Since the Summer of 2003, Summerour has been teaching Advanced Electronic Design at The University Of Georgia. 



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* : Imagina 2004

COVER FEATURE

COVER ILLUSTRATION

DESIGNER

NAME: **CHRIS PELLING, CRUSH**

LOCATION: **BRIGHTON, UK**

URL: **WWW.CRUSHED.CO.UK**

HOW WAS IT DONE?

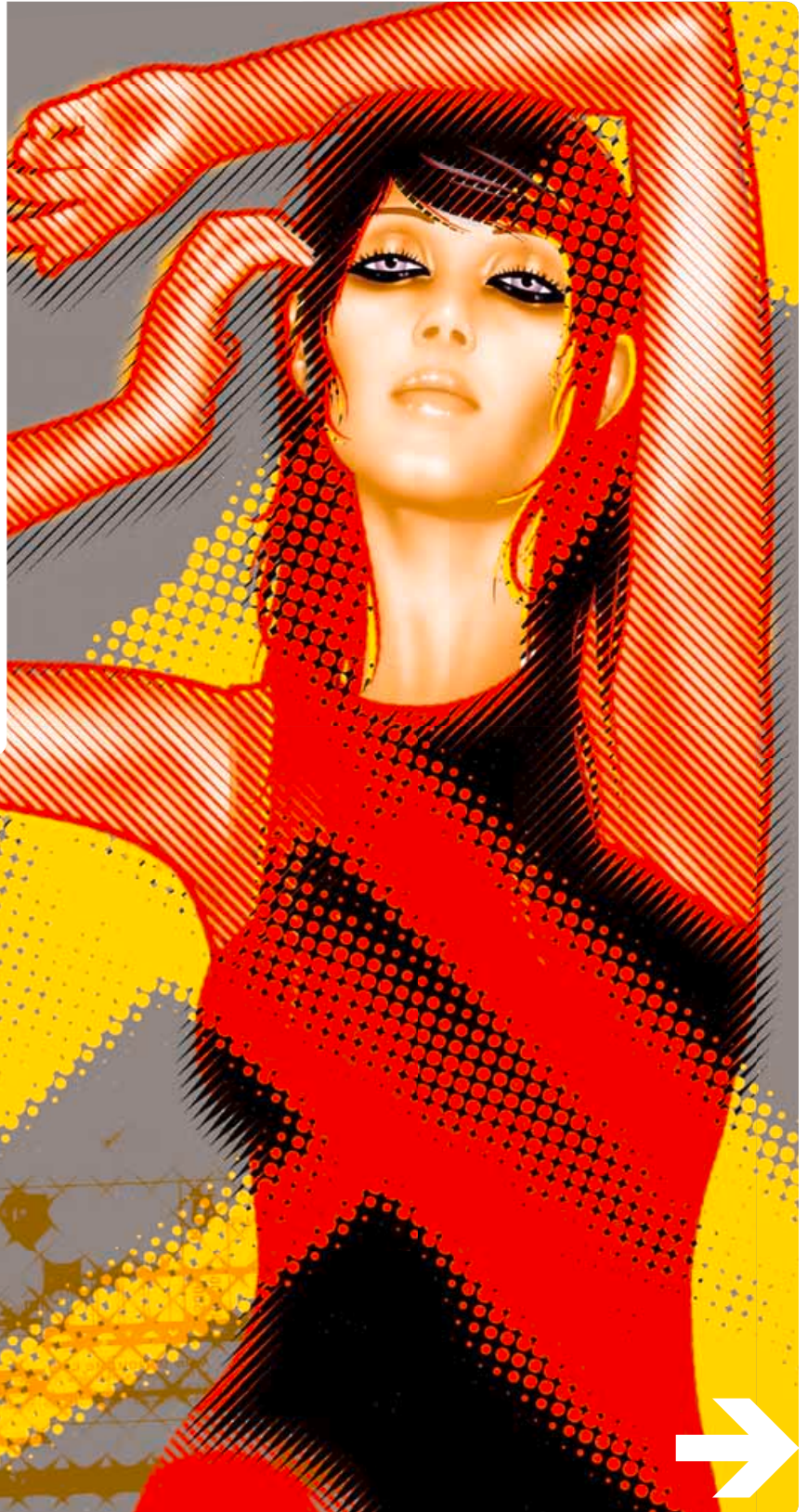
For this month's cover illustration, Chris Pelling started out with an original image created by New York-based artist Autumn Whitehurst (<http://altpick.com/members.php?id=11198>). First, he duplicated the image, layering around five versions on top of each other, before offsetting some to add more depth. "Autumn's image was very flat, so I had to give it more life," explains Chris.

"Once I was happy with the image, I added halftone effects and changed the picture into a bitmap. For the background, I scanned in an "X" I found in a sketchbook using Adobe *Streamline*, then transferred that into *Illustrator*. The other effects were added in the same way."

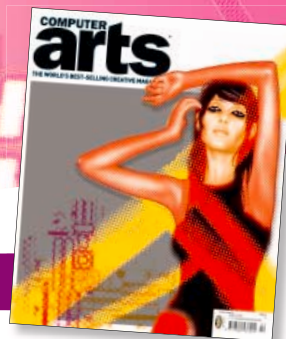
To create the final illustration, Chris admits that he had to print out and re-adjust the image over and over again until he achieved the exact halftone effects he wanted. "I like the lines you get from halftoning more than the spots," he says. "I've never got so excited about creating lines!"

In this month's cover tutorial, Jason Cook reveals the secrets behind achieving these effects in *Photoshop*.

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







COVER FEATURE

HALFTONE AND BITMAP EFFECTS

By converting an image to bitmap you can create a striking array of textures that will add an exciting twist to your illustrations. Jason Cook explores *Photoshop's* bitmap-friendly tools and effects

➔ Halftoning breaks down the continuous tone of an image into a grid of regularly spaced cells. These cells are translated into halftone spots, which vary in size to simulate the appearance of light and shade (bigger dots appear darker; smaller dots, lighter). The technique goes back many centuries, when engravers used cross-hatching to give the impression of grey in their illustrations.

When photography came along, process cameras were used for halftoning, but now they've been superseded by digital imaging technology. The principle underlying both is the same, though – the

conversion of any pixel that is grey or coloured to halftone spots.

For this tutorial, you'll use *Photoshop's* halftoning options to help create a number of patterns and effects that will build up your illustration and give it instant texture. The main core of the effects you create will be found by converting the image to greyscale, then applying the bitmap mode, which will bring up a number of options, such as Threshold, Pattern Dither, Diffusion, and so forth.

Unless you have a clear understanding of line frequency, screen ruling and all the other technical details behind halftoning,

much of this tutorial will be based on happy accident, and you should experiment to find the desired effect.

The main focus of this tutorial will be the figure and the lips, shown in the opening illustration. You'll then add the remaining elements to finish the piece. Obviously, if your colours and gradients vary from those shown in the tutorial, so will your halftoning effects, but don't worry about this; understanding the principles is the key to this exercise, so just use this opening illustration as a guide.

Illustration and tutorial by Jason Cook
www.flatliner-v2.com





→ PHOTOSHOP

→ HALFTONING TECHNIQUES

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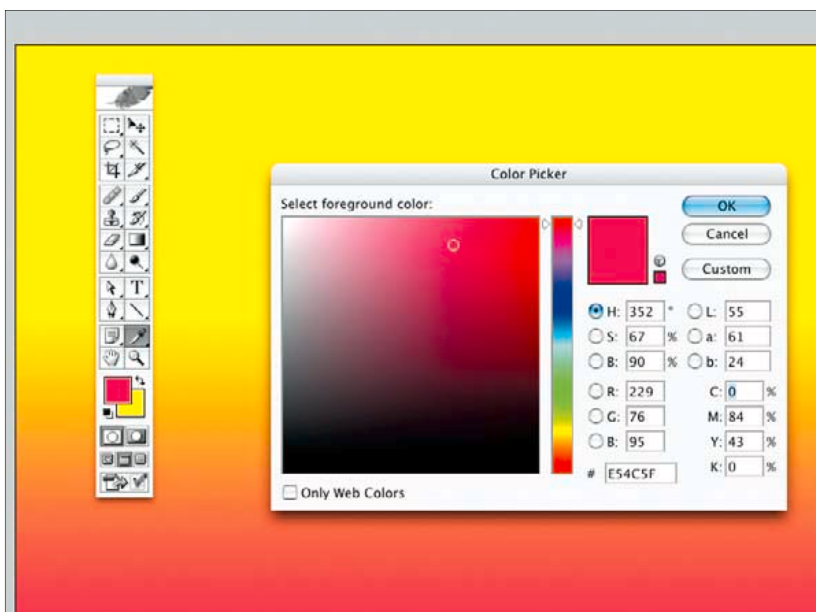
TIME LENGTH

1.5 hours

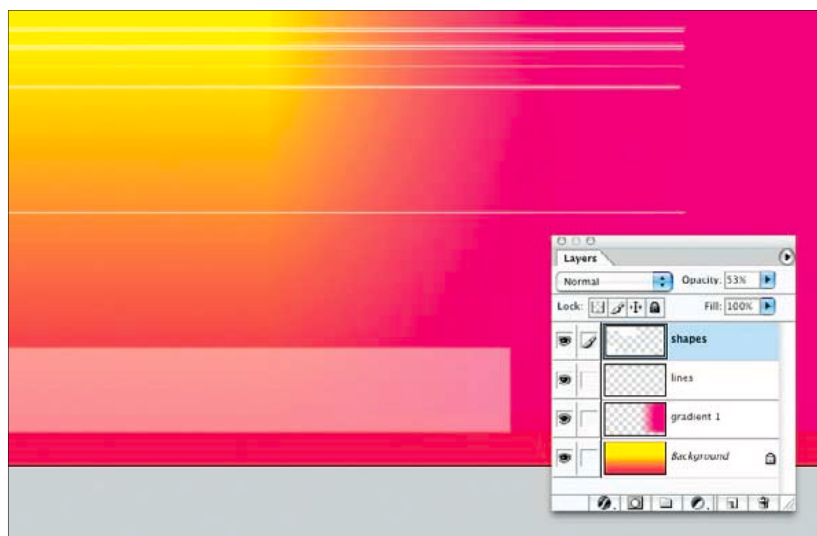
INFO



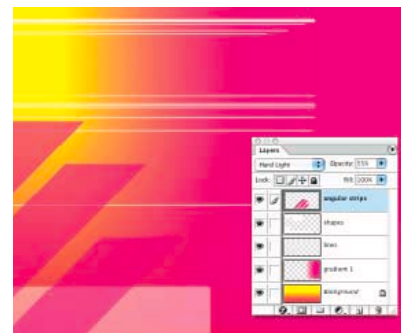
Jason Jaroslav Cook has been a commercial digital artist for around eight years, providing eye-catching work for, among others, Ford, VH1, IBM, BP and Lego. Check out his latest work at www.flatliner-v2.com



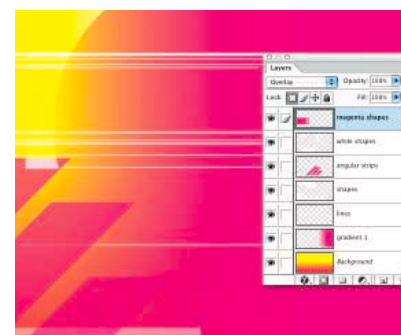
1 Create a new document around 45cm wide by 23cm deep, 72dpi (or around 300dpi if you want to work at hi-res). You'll need to treat this as if you're working for print, so set the Colour mode to CMYK. Now, using the Gradient tool, create a colour gradient as shown above. Set the foreground colour to 100 per cent yellow in the CMYK Color Picker dialog, and the Background Colour to C: 0 per cent, M: 84 per cent, Y: 43 per cent and K: 0 per cent.



2 Create a new layer and then make another gradient over the image from right to left. Make sure that the gradient fades to transparent and set the foreground colour to 100 per cent Magenta. Rename this layer "gradient 1", then create a new layer and draw a few horizontal lines in white. Now open another new layer and, using the Rectangular Marquee tool, create some white shapes. For this layer, set the Opacity to 53 per cent.



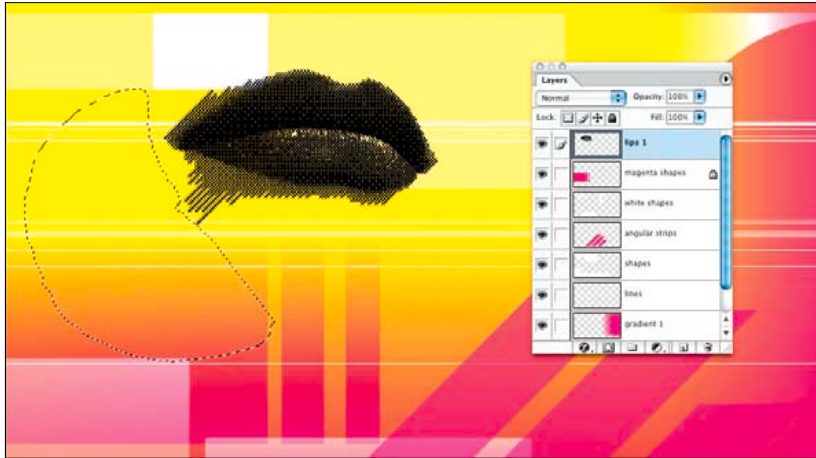
3 Create another new layer and use the Polygonal Lasso tool to make three angular strip selections. Fill them with C: 1 per cent, M: 100 per cent, Y: 1 per cent and K: 0 per cent. Set the Blending mode to Hardlight and the Opacity to around 55 per cent.



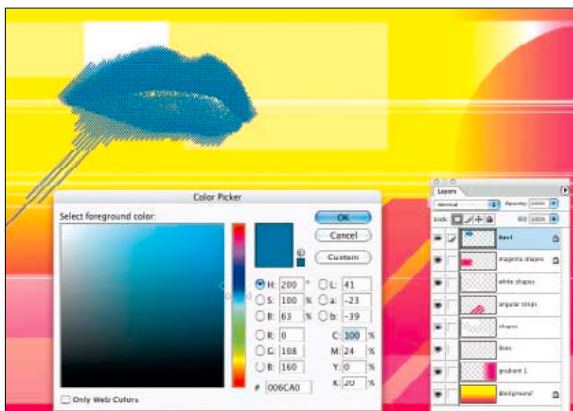
4 Create two more new layers and add some new shapes, as above: using one layer for additional magenta shapes and the other for white shapes. Try filling them with a gradual tone rather than a full solid and set their Blending modes to Overlay.



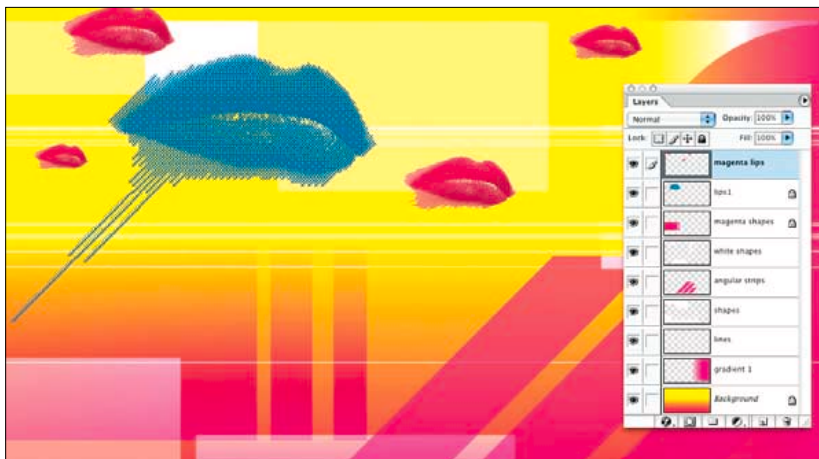
5 Open the lips1.psd file and convert it to Bitmap. Keep output at 72dpi and select Method→HalftoneScreen. Click OK and set Frequency to 22 and Angle to 45 degrees. Select the Round shape from the drop-down menu and click OK.



6 Turn the image back to Greyscale Under mode. Using the Magic Wand with a Tolerance of one, select the black area of the lips. Copy the selection and then paste it as the top layer of your illustration. You may need to delete some parts of the pasted image to make it look like the image above. Use the Lasso tool for quick selection and deletion. Call the new layer "lips1".



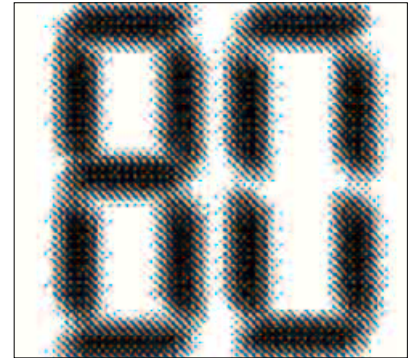
7 You may want to copy parts of the mouth shape to give it a trailing effect. Afterwards, switch on the Transparency Lock in the Layers palette for this layer and fill it with a colour made up of C: 100 per cent, M: 24 per cent, Y: 0 per cent, K: 20 per cent.



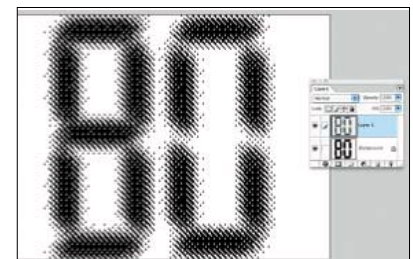
8 Go back to the lips.psd and revert to the original saved greyscale image. Reduce it in size, apply the Halftone Screen process, and experiment. Now repeat the procedure you used for the first lips, paste the results into your document and fill them with magenta. You'll now have a number of lips within your illustration (see above). Don't resize or duplicate the blue lips, as this will soften the halftone effect. Always create new ones.

WHY HALFTONE?

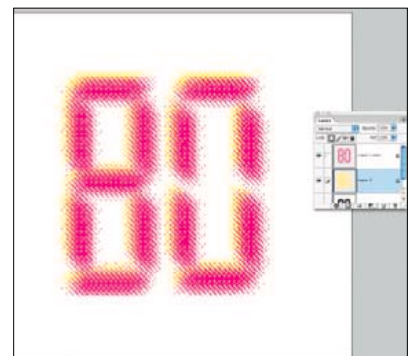
Halftoning is a great way to generate instant patterns and textures. There are endless possibilities if you experiment, but you'll get better results if the original image you're trying to convert already contains interesting detail and depth.



9 Open the 80.tif file from the cover CD and add a Gaussian Blur with a radius of around 4.4 pixels. Click OK. Turn it to greyscale, then into a bitmap. When the Halftone options appear, select Halftone Screen and click OK. Set Frequency to 22 lines per inch, Angle to 45 degrees and Shape to Ellipse.



10 Convert the result back to greyscale, then CMYK. Now, under Select→Colour Range, use the Eyedropper tool to select the white background. Click the Invert button, then hit OK. The black should now be selected. Copy and paste it, so that you create a new layer within in this document.



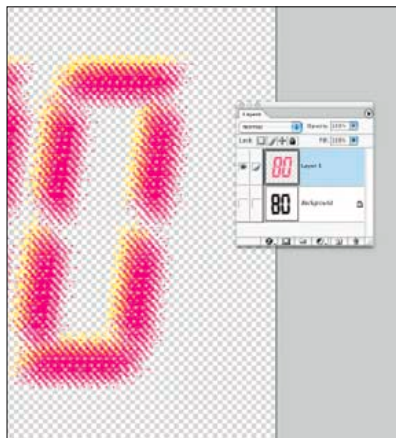
11 Deselect and then Control/Command-click the icon for Alpha 3 in the Channels palette. Fill the area within your spot channel with solid white and deselect. Switch off the visibility of the CMYK channels for a moment and you'll notice that your spot channel looks just like other alpha channels. ➔



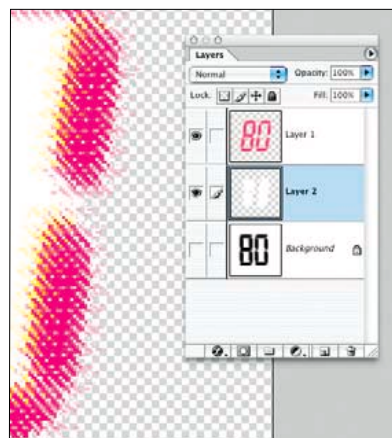
→ PHOTOSHOP

EDITING BEFORE BITMAPS

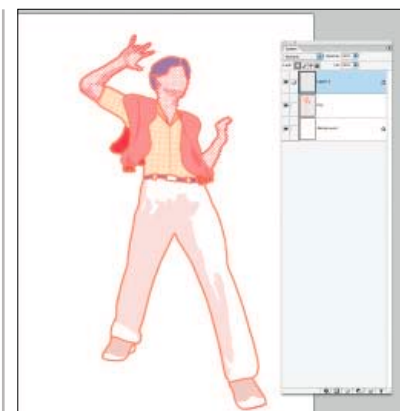
To work in Bitmap mode, you must first convert to Greyscale mode. This will remove any Hue and Saturation from the pixels, leaving just the Brightness value. Make sure you do any editing to your image in Greyscale before converting to bitmap.



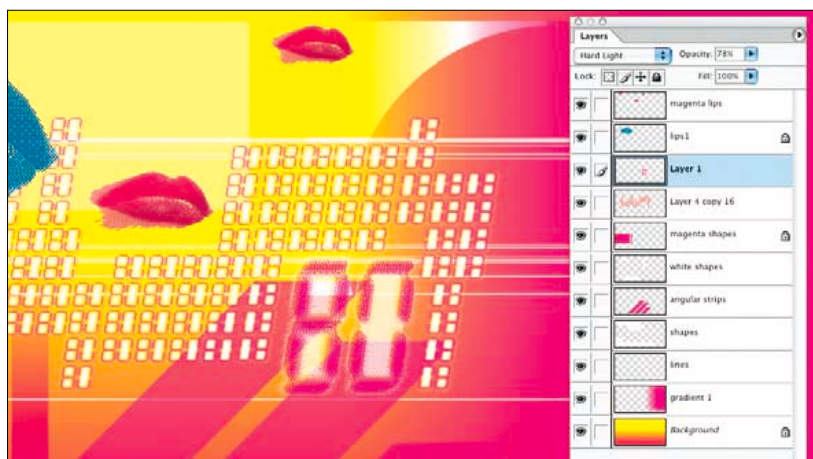
12 Now link the two layers together, merge them, then skew them slightly by choosing Edit→Transform and Skew. You may want to hide the background layer so that you can see what you're doing.



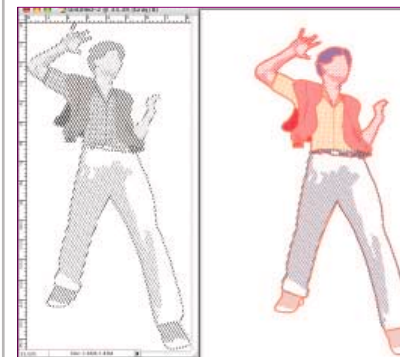
13 Using the Magic Wand tool, select the outer area of the numbers. Invert the selection and stroke it with white at around one pixel. Create a new layer underneath this layer and, using the Polygonal tool, fill the areas of the numbers with white again. Finally, merge this layer with the one above.



16 Hold down the Control/Command key and the Alt/Option key and click on the layer icon entitled Main Outlines in the Layers palette. This will subtract the contents of the Main Outlines layer from your current selection. In the spot channel, fill the selection with black and then deselect.



14 Copy and paste the layer into your illo. Move the layer below the lips layer and set Blending mode to Hardlight and Opacity to 53 per cent. Copy this layer and scale the numbers down. Duplicate again and repeat while forming a new shape with the small numbers (as above). Merge these layers to reduce the file size and set the new merged layer's Blending mode to Hardlight.



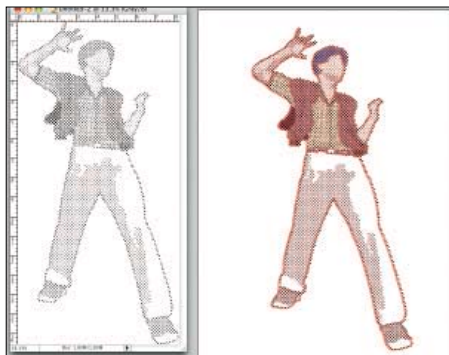
17 Zoom-in on an area of the figure's hair and use the Pen tool to draw a closed path that resembles a thin highlight, similar to the highlights that already exist in the image. Generate a selection from the closed path and fill the selected area with black within your spot channel.

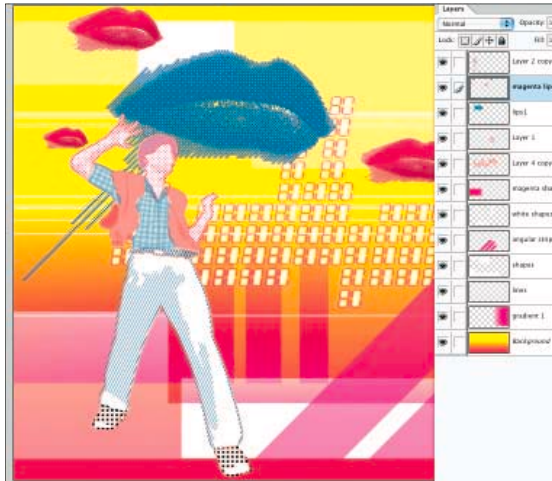
18 Deselect and use the Pen tool to draw a number of similar closed-path components on appropriate areas of the hair throughout the rest of the image. Generate a selection from the path and once again, within the spot colour channel, fill the selected area with 100 per cent black. Finally, deselect once more.

WHY COLOUR HALFTONE?

Rather than converting to greyscale and bitmap, experiment with the colour halftone filter under Filter→Pixelate→ColourHalftone. The filter will divide the image into rectangles and replace each one with a circle. The circle size is worked out by Photoshop and is proportional to the brightness of the rectangle.

15 Open dancer_b_boy.psd from the cover CD. Copy the boy layer to create a new document and paste it into it. Convert this image to a bitmap, then use the Halftone Screen method and click OK. Use a Frequency of 22 lines per inch, an Angle of 45 degrees and Ellipse for the Shape and click OK. Now convert the image back to greyscale. Use Colour Range to select the white area, then click Invert in the Colour Range dialog. Click OK. Finally, copy and paste over your original b_boy image.





19 Now paste your figure into the main illustration as the top layer, and scale and position it so that it looks like the screenshot shown here. You may want to play around with the layer's colour balance a little to make it look more vibrant and ensure that it stands out from the background.

COLOUR RANGE

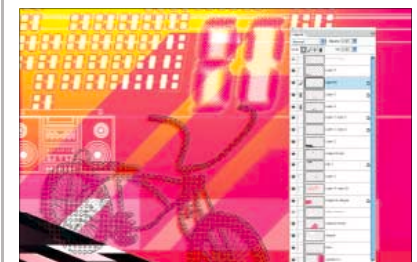
Use Select→Colour Range to select your dots and lines. Either select the black area or the white area with the Eyedropper tool in the dialog box. You may need to invert the selection, depending on the colour you've chosen. Then copy and paste it into your illustration. Remember to convert back to Greyscale or RGB from Bitmap mode to get the Colour Range command to work.



21 Create a new document and, using the Line tool, draw a simple graphic ghetto blaster. Paste it into your illustration. Again, you may want to add some halftone effects or just keep it simple.



20 In these last few steps, you'll add some simple elements. Create a new document with a gradual coloured horizontal blend and apply the Halftone Screen option, experimenting with both Frequency and Angle (but using Squares as the Shape). Crop into the result, enlarge it, then keep adding halftone effects. Place the result underneath the figure and use Transform to distort it.



22 Finally, as a finishing touch, add a lowrider bike. This is built up over three layers. The top layer is just a stroke around the halftone effect, to give the subject a more defined shape. To complete the image, use the main opening illustration as a guide, adding extra elements and halftone textures as required. This will give the illustration more depth. **arts**

TIME TO EXPERIMENT

This tutorial barely skims the surface of Photoshop's ability to generate great halftone patterns. By experimenting with angles, line frequency and shapes, you can create a range of effects. Included here are some quick examples of Bitmap Halftone options. If you create a halftone, then scale up the result while still in Bitmap mode, the effects will be exaggerated but still retain their sharpness (anti-aliasing won't be applied in Bitmap mode).



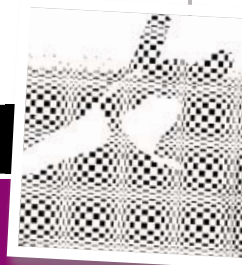
PATTERN DITHER

First, turn a section of the figure from your illustration into a greyscale image and select Bitmap mode. When the Options dialog box appears keep output to 300 pixels. Then, for Method, select Pattern Dither and click OK. Finally, double the size of the image in Bitmap mode.



HALFTONE SCREEN

Using the same figure element, select the Halftone Screen method. Another dialog box will now appear. Set the frequency to 99 lines per inch, the angle to 33 degrees, and the Shape to Round. As before, increase the size of the image while still in Bitmap mode.



CUSTOM PATTERN

Using the figure element once again, select the Halftone Screen method. Another dialog box will now appear. Set the frequency to 99 lines per inch, the angle to 33 degrees and the Shape to Round. As before, increase the size of the image while still in Bitmap mode.



FREQUENCY OPTIONS

To create something more linear, set the Halftone option to Halftone Screen, the Frequency to 22, the Angle at 180 degrees and the Shape to Line. By adjusting the frequency of the halftone, you can now generate longer and thinner (or fatter and shorter) lines – the choice is yours.



"I'm quite a practical person," says Michael C Place. "I really just enjoy getting on with stuff... I let the work speak for itself."

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Build

Professional graphic designer Michael C Place all but established The Designers Republic look and was voted one of the most influential industry figures in a recent Creative Review poll. Now he's taking his new company **Build to even dizzy heights...**

WORDS BY GRAEME AYMER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAMES WILSON



→ BUILD



Consider the old saying, “A new broom sweeps clean, but an old broom knows the corners.” Not that Michael C Place, once of Bedale, North Yorkshire, now of Clapham, South London, is exactly an old broom, you understand. But as a man born at the tail-end of the sixties – and having worked in the pre-digital heyday of London’s Bite It and Sheffield’s infamous The Designers Republic – Place knows a thing or two about design. The sweat and grime, the knives and spray-mount...

“That’s the sort of arrow in my quiver that potentially a lot of people don’t have,”

tracing paper photocopies, has certainly helped Place build up an impressive body of work. Currently, Nike, Lego and a yet-to-be-announced magazine redesign project clamour for his attention.

Bite It!

Place’s complete approach to his craft began at the age of 14, when his art teacher noticed the boy’s aptitude for drawing and suggested he pursue design as a possible vocation. His first step was a foundation course at Scarborough – where the young man discovered his true calling: record sleeve art. It was the mid-eighties, and the

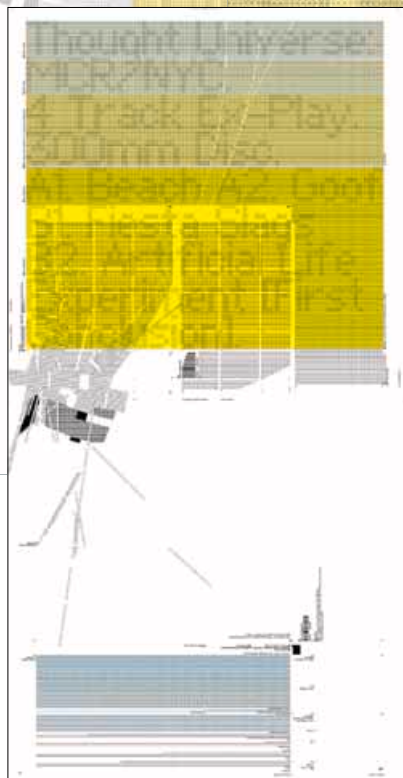
“The first two jobs I had, we didn’t use computers. I have a very honed knowledge of the print process”

he says. “The first two jobs I had, we didn’t even use computers. I have a very honed knowledge of the print process, so you know how you do things, or why you do things. Now it’s just a case of press a button and it prints.”

He laments the loss of that traditional, getting-your-hands-dirty education. “I get mails from people who know I’m a bit of a print nut, and they’ll say, ‘How do you do this?’ Or ‘What’s that?’,” he says. “And you just think: ‘Wow! These people have just come out of college and they don’t know this?’ I know the computer is important, but I think there’s a school of thought that what you do is buy a computer, do a nice bit of design, press the Print button and it comes out at the end looking nice. But there’s so much more to it than that...”

Understanding how to mix colours, reverses, overprint, and mastering a range of skills from the days of bromides and

THIS PAGE: *Thought Universe*, an experimental album by Manchester-based musician Mark Pilkington, features digitised snippets of audio culled from discarded audio tape found on the street and in parks. To reflect this idea in his sleeve design, Place composited his own photos of Clapham Common trees and dismantled audio cassettes using *Photoshop*. He laid the piece out in *Freehand*.



LEFT: More designs for Mark Pilkington's *Thought Universe* work.

RIGHT: Japanese paper company Takeo commissioned Place to do a piece for a recent show. He was one of many designers invited to illustrate six objects: a tape measure, a compass, a set of coloured pencils – and three of the artists' choice. Place chose paperclips, a Ventolin inhaler and a floppy disk. He also created fonts for the project.



likes of Neville Brody, Malcolm Garrett and Vaughan Oliver were showing the world just how innovative and exciting album covers could be.

Intrigued by the possibilities, Place took an OND in Graphic Design at York. "The tutors were very good in that they really helped you to do whatever you wanted to do – the career path you wanted to take," he recalls. "So I did really well, and then applied to Newcastle University. They said it was a very hard course to get on. I got in there, and then had the worst time."

Back then, the course – an HND in Graphic Design – focused highly on mainstream graphic design. "It was tough, because I didn't want to do that," remembers Place. "I just wasn't interested in doing wine labels and the usual. But just through personal belief that I could succeed, I used to do my own projects and just muddle through the coursework. I came out with an all right portfolio."

He got a job straightaway in 1990 doing record sleeves at Bite It! in London,

working with the company's founder Trevor Jackson. Bite It!'s client list included record labels Champion and Gee Street, homes to such celebrated acts as Robin S and The Stereo MCs.

"I just rang him up, because I really liked his stuff, and he said he wasn't really looking, but he needed somebody," Place recalls. "So I did a year-and-a-half at Trevor's, which was fantastic: a real steep learning curve; he's a real good guy."

Place believes his style at the time – a mix of collage and cut-up type – appealed to Jackson. But then news reached him of a company based in Sheffield, a company he'd already worked for while studying at Newcastle: The Designers Republic. He instinctively knew his material would suit them even more. So in 1991, Place moved back to Yorkshire, where he spent nine prolific years working for the highly influential design company.

Towards the end of the nineties, Place began to feel restless once again. ➔

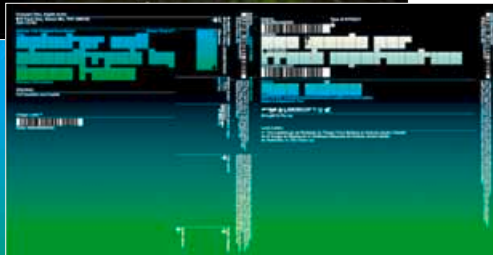
RIGHT: Heat Sensor is a radical hip-hop crew on New York's Sound-Inc label. This is the sleeve for the first single. Build will shortly set to work on the group's album art.

BELOW: The idea behind Place's famous Brussels Nike billboard was to represent speed in the lead-up to Nike's Olympic campaign. It's composed of five shots of hurdler Dwight Philips, and is so enormous that Place needed to buy a new computer for the job. The final artwork is 20 metres long and output at 300dpi. The *Photoshop* file weighed in at 2GB and took ten minutes to save!





→ BUILD



the next NBA Big Thing, LeBron James. Place is also responsible for the design behind the innovative Sony Ericsson t610 screensaver Dead Format. It's based on Place's interest in the form of manufactured goods, from which he draws much of his inspiration.

"I tend not to go: 'Today I'll have half an hour's inspiration'," he explains. "For instance, doing the Dead Formats thing came from just looking at a tape and thinking that it would be interesting to take that to bits and create something else out of. I don't enjoy looking at design books. It's so boring, because you're just following other designers."

Place is also moving into the world of motion graphics. "I was very anti-motion at first, but I'm actually quite enjoying it now," he confesses. "It's something that I can quite get into now, but not as much as print. Print will always be my first love."



ABOVE: Place's love of print and slight disdain for the internet couldn't be better illustrated here. It's his attempt to create a website in printed form, showing individual pages of an old holding site, with the interactive actions represented by text.

ABOVE: Place designed a sleeve for Amon Tobin's soundtrack to the *Splinter Cell* computer game, but label Ninja Tune thought it too radical a departure from the previous album art. Place also collaborated with 3D artists Open Mind, responsible for the main illustration. Again, though, Build's contribution was considered too far removed from the game's content.

Nine years on, things were looking different at The Designers Republic.

"Just before I left, work was leaning towards advertising kind of stuff," says Place. "There's a level of compromise when you come to big advertising jobs and I hate compromise. I guess I just thought it was a good time to stop, because I knew I was going to set up on my own and I didn't want to water down anything I was thinking about. It was an appropriate time for me to do my own thing."

Travel the globe

So in 2000, Place left The Designers Republic and, with his wife, went travelling around the world. "It was nice to get away from the computer and, you know, live life a bit and enjoy ourselves and not worry about doing long hours. When the biggest decision was 'What are you going to do today?' and 'Where are you going to have your dinner?'," he explains. "It was a real recharge of batteries and just a fantastic time."

Of course, this couldn't last, and in late Summer 2001, just after 11 September, Place established Build.

"I think it was strange coming back and

having to get back into work, where you've got to do things at a certain time," he recalls. "Getting back into working a computer's easy – it's like riding a bike – but it was hard to start thinking about things in a graphic way again. Once I got back into it, though, it was fine, and I really started to enjoy it again. I really enjoy it so much more now, more than I have ever done."

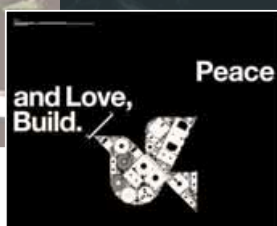
Currently, the creative bike-riding is largely handled by a G5 Mac, *Photoshop* and *Freehand MX*. "I'm completely anti-*Illustrator*," he says almost animatedly. "It's just a horrible clunky thing. It's almost like *Freehand* is a bit of an old-school thing. It's probably the first piece of software that we used, so that's what I use. I'm a very staunch *Freehand* fan."

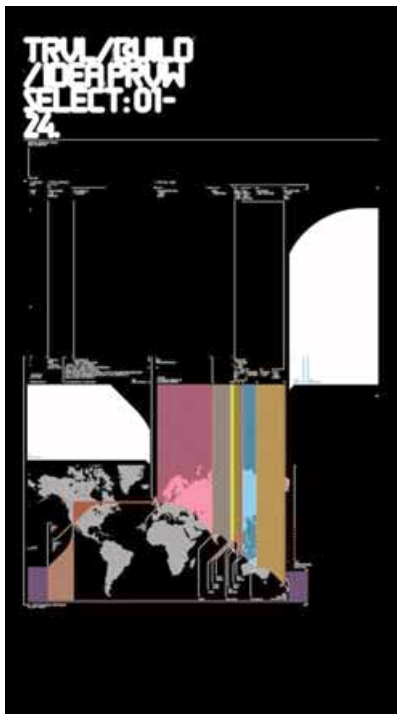
He's even more staunchly behind using a sketchbook. "Every single thing starts its life in my head, and then goes through to pen on paper. I can't stress that enough," he says emphatically. "Always. Sometimes I can sketch my ideas, because they can be quite simple. But because some of my work is complex and detailed, to actually sit down and to draw the thing would be almost impossible. So I make notes. So it will be, like, 'Remember this type doing this' or 'Chair upside-down, fused with comb.' So my sketchbook's a real mix."

Building a reputation

Place's uncompromising approach has certainly won him fans. Although he currently has agency representation by This is Real Art (TiRA) to find work, he's won several of his latest jobs by the sheer quality of his portfolio. An art director at Nike's European operation was a fan, which led to Build's famous speed billboards for the 2004 Olympics. Similarly, the company's US HQ was home to another fan, which led to Build being awarded a job to design a logo for

LEFT: Place's fascination with the form of manufactured products is keenly illustrated in this poster, *Chronological Order*, which shows stylised "dismantled" VHS, audio cassette and floppy disks. The idea is reflected again in a Build "Dove" logo, entirely constructed from the components of obsolete or near-obsolete technologies.





ABOVE: Place's work was hugely influential at The Designers Republic, but in 2000 he felt it was time to leave. He and his wife took off on a round-the-world trip to the destinations shown. The work was designed to commemorate the journey, and comes with specially customised fonts.

There are plenty of fonts jostling for pole position in his portfolio now, including B FUQ (its name was derived from its rather painful birth). "I have always threatened to get a website together for Build, but I never liked any of the fonts that were available on the internet for it," he says. "So I designed a font specially. The idea was that it would be only available to me, just on my site, and that's it. And it was a font that nobody else could have and I think looks really



beautiful. It's a pixel-based font, designed specially just for the internet. It took so long to create, with help, to actually get it properly functioning for dynamic text. It's like black magic to me, honestly."

But when the site failed to materialise in a hurry, Place decided to sell it, to prevent the proliferation of cheap imitations.

Despite the countless accolades, the head-hunting by Nike and others, the hordes of admiring Sony Ericsson users and *Creative Review* readers, Place isn't likely to let success go to his head. He's perfectly happy to keep his corner clean in a humble and hard-working way.

"I'm quite a practical person," he says, "so I really just enjoy getting on with stuff and not talking about it. I really just enjoy doing the things and hopefully I can let the work talk for itself." **arts**

ABOVE: Actuaire are music stylists based in New York who compile music for songs, which they then load onto an iPod. Place designed a promotional booklet for them using *Freehand MX* – and "a fair amount of overprinting".

MICHAEL PLACE Q&A



NAME: Michael C Place
ROLE: Owner, founder
FROM: The North of England

Inspired by: Malcolm Garrett and Vaughan Oliver. "I did my thesis on Malcolm Garrett. He's somebody I admired. And people like Vaughan Oliver. I really loved his stuff. I admire people who have taken their own path and stood out because they were doing things that nobody else was doing. They had real integrity."

Favourite designer/illustrator: Malcolm Garrett. "He's really quite a fan of The Designers Republic and we met him when we were both in an exhibition at the V&A. It's quite nice to hang out with people when you can say, 'I did my thesis about you!'"

Favourite website: "I don't think there is one. The net isn't something that I've disregarded, but I don't enjoy the whole technical side. And I have this thing about always trying to look forward. A lot of people, if they've got a new project, the first thing they do is open up a copy of the latest whatever for inspiration. For me, that's, well, that's cheating, you know? Why do that when it's been done before?"

A PASSION FOR PRINT

IT'S NOT THAT PLACE DOESN'T LIKE THE WORLD WIDE WEB. IT'S JUST THAT HE LOVES PRINT SO MUCH MORE...

Print is Michael C Place's passion. Although he has designed for other media, it's good, old-fashioned ink on paper that really holds his interest. That's why many of his designs appear to be instructions to printers about cropping, folding and the like. This also explains why his face seems to go all but blank when you mention the net. "I understand that there's this thing called the net," he begins. "It's a valuable tool and it's great, but the reason I haven't had a website for three years is... I don't know. The web can be brilliant, but I can't quite muster the enthusiasm for it. Tactility is a big thing for me."

Still, he has dabbled from time to time. "I've done a few websites, designing and directing, which I've

enjoyed," he admits. "I'm not a very technical person. I don't enjoy the whole technical side."

While Place acknowledges that a site may have led to more work in the long run, he feels lucky that he's never been short of commissions. Furthermore, the lack of a web presence hasn't prevented him from coming second in the recent *Creative Review* peer poll.

"How can you *not* be bowled over by it?" Place enthuses. "I was very proud. And I don't subscribe to or buy *Creative Review*. The fact that it's a peer poll is really nice. I've been working on sort of the frontline for 14 years and it's great to have some kind of accolade. I'm incredibly honoured to be in the list."

COMPANY INFO

You can contact Build by calling Michael Place on 020 7738 2397 or emailing michael@designbybuild.com. Alternatively, write to: Studio Build, Second Floor, 73 Clapham Common North Side, London SW4 9SB.



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➔ PHOTOSHOP • ILLUSTRATOR

DESIGN A STENCIL

If you're looking for a new, original and hands-on approach to illustration, then look no further. I Love Dust comes over all practical to produce this stunning image with stencils and spray paint, and a little help from *Photoshop*

ON THE CD

All the files you need to get started with this tutorial are in the folder marked Tutorial\Stencil on the cover CD.

TIME LENGTH

3 hours

INFO

I Love Dust is a design agency, based on the south coast of England, that

specialises in brand identity, illustration and web design. Clients include Hugo Boss, Marks & Spencer, Ash and Charlotte Hatherley, Double Dragon Music, Three Gut Records and sneaker artist Dave White. The team is currently working on projects for NYC-based store Deluxe. Visit www.ilovedust.com.

➔ Stencil art was once an underground art form, a subculture with a hold on the streets. From amateur tagging to masterful artwork from the likes of Banksy, the disparity of styles and talents was wide ranging, embellishing the urban landscape.

But in recent years, graffiti techniques and styles have re-emerged on a more mainstream stage, showing a strong influence on the visual language of graphic design, advertising and fashion. On T-shirts, on TV and in magazines, stencil art has had a huge impact – and become a vital aspect of contemporary illustration.

Using the computer as just one of many tools, this tutorial will give you basic guidelines and tips to help you get your head around stencilling techniques. Although the overall style can be achieved using computer software alone, we think it's far better to get your hands dirty.

The combination of both tools provides more control, and you'll quickly achieve bold stencilled artwork to be proud of. Once you've mastered the technique, there's no limit to how it can be applied. For this tutorial, we'll show you how to create a five-colour stencil, which you can then use as a stencilled piece on a background of your choice, or photograph and incorporate into a digital illustration.

However you plan to apply the final results, the main character and layered *Illustrator* files have all been included on the cover CD to help you get started.



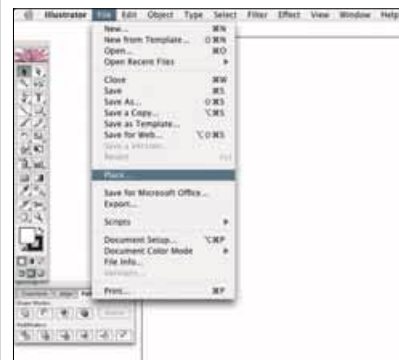
1 To provide a subject for this illustration, we looked for a theme or an existing symbolic/iconic figure that was due for a comeback. The lumberjack was a fitting candidate, so we searched the internet for some wood-chopping inspiration. We decided a modern day Paul Bunyan would be ideal. An image has been provided on the cover CD.



2 The best way to get the perfect lumberjack is to make your own. Keeping checked shirts and chainsaws firmly in your mind, style your victim and photograph them in different poses. Crop the image from the background using the Lasso tool in *Photoshop* and make a selection. Copy this selection to a new layer in your Layer palette and either delete the background layer or fill it with white.



3 Convert your image to black and white by choosing Image→Mode→Greyscale. A high contrast image is easier to work with, remember, so go to Image→Adjustments→Brightness/Contrast and adjust the levels. Simplify the image to a basic combination of shadows, midtones and highlights. You may also want to posterize the image by selecting Image→Adjustments→Posterize. Flatten and save as a PSD or EPS file.



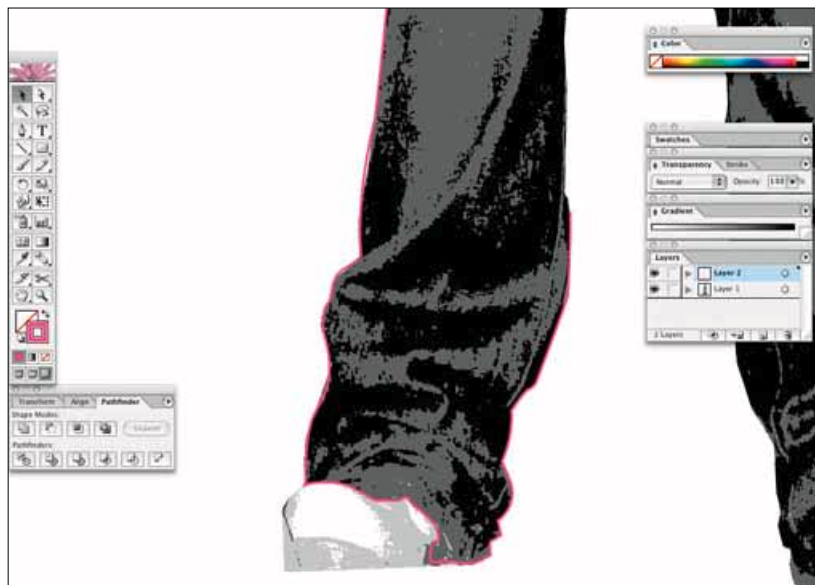
4 Now create a new document in *Illustrator*. The file size for this tutorial is 235x290mm. Import the image of the lumberjack by choosing File→Place and then navigate to the image. Once you've selected it, choose Object→Lock→Selection.

Illustration and tutorial by I Love Dust
www.ilovedust.com





➔ PHOTOSHOP • ILLUSTRATOR



5 Create a new layer. You can now start to trace the basic lumberjack shape using the Pen tool with a thin stroke set at 0.25. Start with the basic shapes – the trousers, for instance. On the same layer, trace other parts of the image that have the same tonal value. On a new layer, draw the basic shape of the shirt and any other details of a similar tonal value.



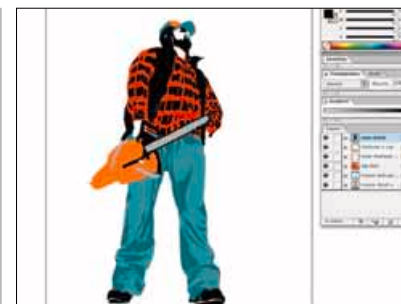
6 Trace the image to different layers, and restrict yourself to a few spray-paint colours. Group the shapes as shadows, midtones and highlights. For example, the folds of the trousers will go on the shadow layer and will be sprayed in black ink.



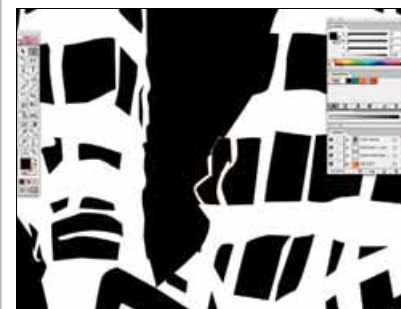
7 Apply colour on screen to work out how your stencil will work. Limit yourself to four colours, plus black: red (shirt), light blue (trousers and cap), orange (chainsaw and front of cap), silver (chainsaw blade) and black (shadow detail). You can also have areas that are not sprayed – we used paper/card/wood surface as a skin tone.



8 Choose your colours in the Colour Picker and drag the swatches to your Colour Palette. Then, selecting each layer, apply the colours you want by clicking on the swatch in the Colour Palette. Think about how the paint will build up layer by layer. It may be helpful to unlock and move the photograph at this point to use it for reference only.



9 You should now have up to six layers: one for each colour of the illustration and one for the photograph, which you can now delete. You may need to re-order them by dragging and moving each layer in the Layers palette into the sequence in which they will be sprayed. For instance, finer details will be on the top layer, to be sprayed in black.



10 Each layer will now represent the five stencils you are going to cut. You need to check for "islands" in your vector shapes as floating white space will not work when you start cutting out the coloured shapes. Add "bridges" to join these details to the white negative space of the stencil.



11 On a new layer, make cross marks at each corner of the document so that when printed in separated layers each stencil can be aligned more easily. These marks must be big enough to cut out later, so make them out of 5mm black rectangles

🎯 FEELING CONFIDENT?

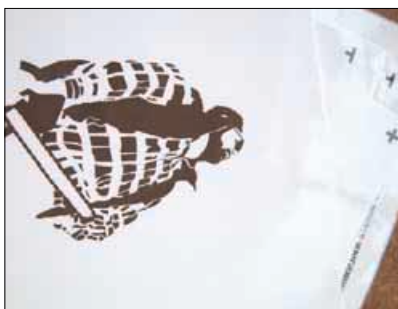
If you get confident with the spray can, use a combination of colours blended together to create a subtle gradient. Try this technique out on the shadows on the trousers with a base of black paint and a light spray of dark blue on top. By laminating the stencils, you should be able to re-use them again and again, so practise lots of different techniques, surfaces and colours until you create a truly professional piece of artwork.



12 At this point, we decided to separate the shadows on the trousers from the other dark elements, and spray them first on a separate stencil. We then sprayed the blue trouser colour on top of this to create a subtle dark blue. If you also want to do this, copy the trouser shadows onto a separate layer.



13 You should now have a simplified illustration of the lumberjack with each different element on a separate layer. Now to print them out. Add numbers and names to the different layers by adding some text, which you can print out along with the graphic. This will eliminate confusion.



14 Print out each document, making sure you keep the paper size the same for each one. If you want to be cost effective, change the colours to black before doing so. Take your five sheets of paper to a local stationery shop or printers and have them laminated. This makes the stencils much easier to cut and re-use.

KEEP IT CLEAN

Consider trying different nozzles on your spray cans to create different spray effects. It's also worth checking that your nozzles are clean before spraying your artwork. If they get clogged then the spray will be uneven, so soak them in warm water before you start.

15 Use a sharp scalpel to carefully cut out all the black and linked sections from the laminated sheet to create your stencil. Start with the simplest one to help you hone your scalpel skills. Try and spot any errors such as islands while you cut: you can cut in little bridges to floating sections to retain these little details, without altering the final image.



16 Next, cut out the registration marks. Place one of the stencil sheets on your cutting surface and, using a pencil, make a mark through the stencil registration marks. This will make it easy to line up each stencil.



17 Lightly cover the reverse of the Trouser detail stencil with spray mount to help it stay in place. Position the stencil on the surface you have chosen to spray on. Make sure that the surface is light enough to pass off as skin colour. It's a good idea to test each stencil before trying a layered version so you get used to how much paint is needed for each section.

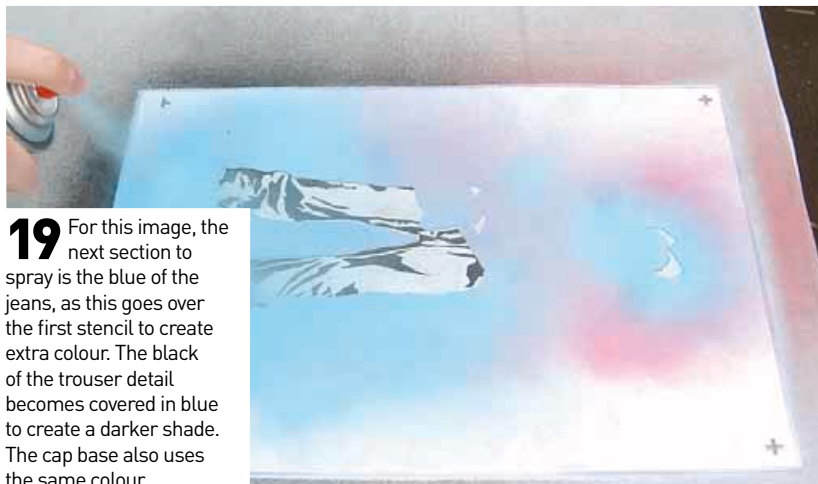


18 Point the nozzle of your spray can directly downwards, about eight inches away from the stencil, and spray lightly over the entire image. Do not aim the jet in one place – make sure you keep it moving. Leave the paint to dry for a few minutes before carefully removing the stencil.





→ PHOTOSHOP • ILLUSTRATOR



19 For this image, the next section to spray is the blue of the jeans, as this goes over the first stencil to create extra colour. The black of the trouser detail becomes covered in blue to create a darker shade. The cap base also uses the same colour.



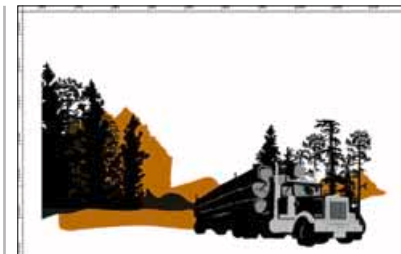
20 Colour by colour, build up your artwork by repeating the previous steps with each stencil. Make sure that you align the registration marks each time.



21 The stencil image soon starts to take shape as you add the colours. Here, the red shirt layer is sprayed in position.



22 Once you've sprayed all the basic layers onto the surface, it's time to add the most important stencil. Because this has the most detail, it should be sprayed with extra care. Once the image has dried, you should have a finished five-colour stencil, as shown.



23 Using the same techniques, you can easily create a background for your image – as seen in the main illustration on page 40. This is a collage of photographed stencils and graphics. We used elements such as fir trees and log trucks to help stick with the lumberjack theme.



24 If you're looking to create a simplified version of this image, why not try creating a stencil that uses just two colours?



25 Alternatively, try stencilling onto a blank sheet of sticker paper. This is easier and means that you can plaster your art everywhere – without being caught! **arts**

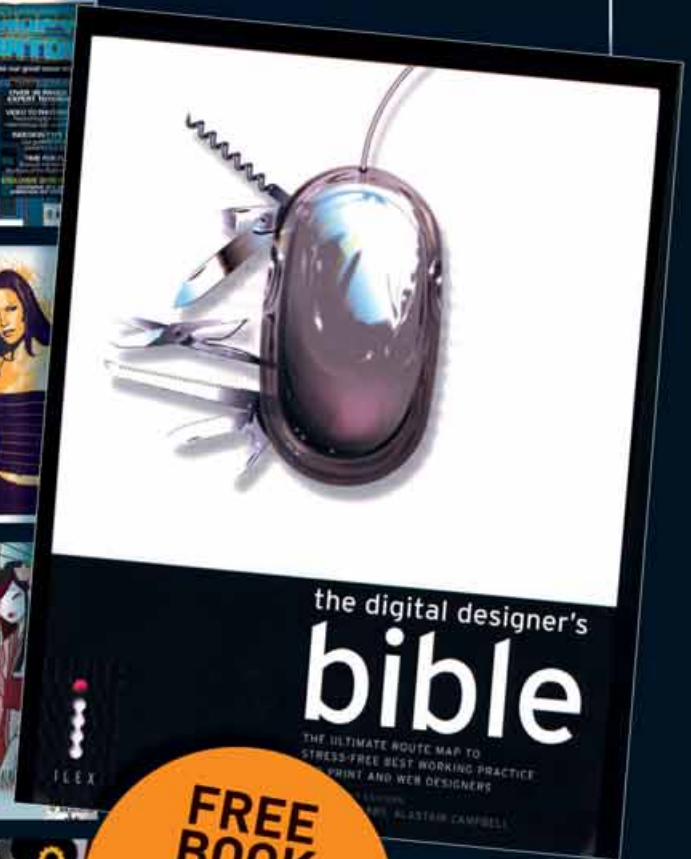
GO STEADY

When you're cutting out the more intricate parts of your stencil shapes, don't think you need to cut one area all in one go. By cutting the stencils in segments, you'll be able to get your blade into the tricky angles more easily, rather than bending it meticulously around the perimeter of the inked area.

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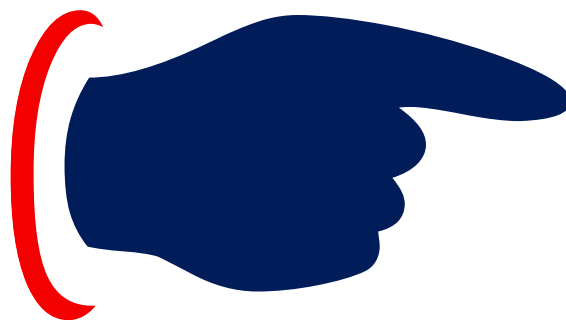


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THE KITCHENER POSTER

How could a recruitment poster be so powerful that it drew three million British soldiers into The Great War?

Vicki Atkinson explores the making of an iconic design that continues to evoke strong feelings nearly a century on...

➔ It's the world's best known World War I poster, it persuaded over three million men to sign up to fight for their country – and it's been copied by armies and advertisers alike for decades since. Do a straw-poll and many Brits will identify the domineering officer as Lord Kitchener, Secretary of State for War at the time; ask them who illustrated the original image, though, and you're unlikely to get such a swift response...

Alfred Leete, born 1882, is the artist behind the work, which was first produced for the cover of weekly magazine *London Opinion* in September 1914. It was immediately picked up by the Parliamentary Recruiting Committee, who, with permission, changed the words and turned it into the most successful army recruitment poster of all time. Although this is the most famous of Leete's work, he also designed posters for the London Underground and provided hundreds of illustrations for *Punch* magazine right up until his death in 1933. He mainly used pen and ink in his work, which was often more colourful and lively than this acclaimed, yet stark, call to arms.

disbelief of the cabinet, and launched a huge recruitment campaign.

The poster and its star, with his stern expression and the words "Your country needs you", was hugely instrumental in building up the army. Kitchener was already recognisable from the papers, but now his face was posted over towns and cities, calling on men to abandon jobs and families to fight. Few printed materials have had such an impact on their audience, before or since.

Leete's impression of Kitchener's strong features and magnificent moustache no doubt contribute to the power of the image. But other features, notably composition and typography, played their part, too.

"The stern imagery of the father figure urging each to 'do his part for country' touched a nerve within many people," explains California-based illustrator Scott Hansen of ISO50. "This, combined with the efficiently designed typesetting and layout, lends an effectiveness that has since then spanned the generations."



ABOVE: Thought to be inspired by Leete's original, this American recruitment ad featured a fictional figure known as Uncle Sam, dressed in bright, stirring patriotic colours.

BELOW: As with Leete's original, the American counterpart was ripe for reinvention – as this anti-Vietnam ad from the early seventies illustrates.

"His face was posted over towns and cities, calling on men to fight. Few printed materials have had such an impact on their audience"

A familiar figure

Leete chose his subject well. Lord Kitchener's military career as Commander in Chief of India and Viceroy of Egypt and Sudan had been widely reported in newspapers. As well as leading many successful and bloody military campaigns, he was also renowned for fiercely defending the rights of ordinary people in the provinces he governed. At the outbreak of WWI, Kitchener returned to Britain and was soon appointed Secretary of State for War. He predicted a long battle, much to the

The words appealed to the viewer's sense of national pride, something felt strongly by many Britons at the height of the British Empire.

"The gothic typeface and bold setting help the words jump out at you," continues Hansen. "To pull the viewer in, only the most pertinent details have been brought to the front, with extraneous information subdued for closer inspection."

The familiar pointing finger and face-on image also serve to relate directly to the





KITCHENER REVISITED

TITLE: *SFX* magazine

ARTIST: Paul Garner

WEB: www.gawkagogo.com, www.sfx.co.uk

FORMAT: Illustration and digital photo manipulation in *Photoshop*

Each month, sister magazine *SFX* calls on its readers to volunteer their opinions on all manner of subjects, from *Buffy* to *Doctor Who*.

To make this request leap off the page, they needed a striking image. Illustrator and character designer Paul Garner was approached with the job of taking the familiar poster into the next millennium.

"I'm far more attracted to the low-tech rivets 'n' bolts steampunk take on robots than any shiny futuristic approach," explains Garner. "In this case, clockwork gizmos seemed to fit the old poster parody well."

A pencil and marker pen illo forms the background of the image, which was taken into *Photoshop* for further treatment.



TITLE: British Army

Recruitment campaign

ARTIST: Army Careers Office

WEB: www.army.mod.uk/careers

FORMAT:

Digital photo manipulation

Kitchener was replaced by a black army officer in a 1997 update of the original poster for the Army Careers Office. At the time, only one per cent of the British Army were from ethnic minorities, who account for up to eight per cent of the population. The Army Careers Office was intent on changing the public's perceptions of a career as an army officer in order to reverse the low figures. The effect was strong, as the familiar imagery, still using the classic fonts and yellowing paper, got an update befitting the new millennium.



TITLE: The "You Twat" T-shirt

ARTIST: Meat and Cheese

WEB: www.meatandcheese.co.uk

FORMAT: Printed T-shirt

Meat and Cheese are kings of the cheeky poster and this one's no exception. It's Lord Kitchener with his pointy finger again, this time accompanied by an insult, rather than a strident call to action.

viewer. It's a device that had not been used in abundance before 1914, but has since become almost ubiquitous in advertising, poster design and album artwork. Is the face-on image still the best way to relate directly to a modern day audience? Chris Pelling at Brighton-based design agency Crush Design does believe there are alternatives.

"A face-on image is not the only way to elicit a reaction to a poster. If you did use a similar composition with the pointing finger, you wouldn't be able to disengage yourself from the baggage that the Kitchener poster brings with it."

As well as connecting on a personal level, emotions have also been stirred by the composition. For a 21st-century audience, the affect of the original poster is heightened by their knowledge of how many soldiers died in WWI and how an even more devastating war was to follow. But for a 1914 audience, the poster was authoritative, compelling and exciting, as willing recruits could join The Great War leader in their brave crusade against the German forces.

This audience weren't able to draw on the experience of a constant barrage of marketing images to protect them. "I think it's the time it came from that makes it such an enduring image," suggests Pelling. "I'm no historian, but before WWI

advertising was a very cosy industry – think Pears' soap and Bovril. The wars brought propaganda and with it the "shock" image. Perhaps when we look at the poster we are seeing the first examples of the kind of advertising we know today."

The US wants you, too

Venture into the world of international war propaganda and similar posters have appeared in Italy, Germany and the States. One of the most famous is the Uncle Sam poster, featuring a pointing figure in American colours with the words "I Want You for US Army." It's widely believed this image, by James Montgomery Flagg, was inspired by Leete's original. It, too, first appeared on the cover of a magazine in 1916, before becoming one of the most widely distributed posters of all time – over five million copies were posted across America.

Replacing Lord Kitchener in the stern-faced pointing role is a fictional character known as Uncle Sam, a popular legend thought to be based on a fair and patriotic butcher who supplied the US Army with meat in the 1812 war. Dressed in bright American colours, unlike the dark uniform of the original, this figure also inspired many American men to sign up, and has been used repeatedly in American advertising. Flagg went on to illustrate



ESSENTIAL VIEWING

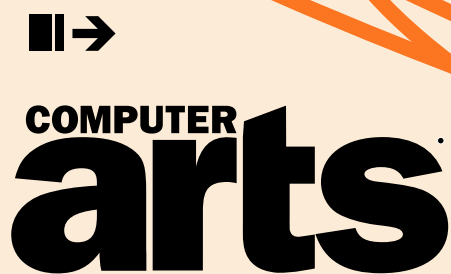
Take up the Sword of Justice

View a superb collection of WWI propaganda and recruitment posters in this online gallery. The collection is part of an exhibition of British Posters of WWI from the Roger N Mohovich Collection, held at the Fairchild Memorial Gallery at Georgetown University, USA. American WWI posters can also be viewed. gulib.lausun.georgetown.edu/dept/speccoll/britpost/britpost.htm



a total of 46 posters for the US Army, as well as produce work for *Life Magazine*, *Harper's Weekly* and many books before he died in 1960.

The original star of the poster, Lord Kitchener, died in 1916 when his ship travelling to Russia hit a German mine, but his image has so far endured 90 years and has been replicated and parodied thousands of times. **arts**



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TUTORIALS

Top tips and tricks from the experts



PHOTOSHOP

Danny Franzreb explains how to use a host of different materials, from snaps of trees to dirty wall textures, and diverse *Photoshop* techniques to create this evocative portrait.

TUTORIAL FILES ON THE CD



AFTER EFFECTS

Three Blind Mice animator Nick Sneath takes you through the creation of an animatic that makes use of *Poser* models, parallax effects and rack focusing, with brilliant results.

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Do you want to let unscrupulous "designers" pilfer your hard work? Of course not. Web guru Karl Hodge delivers expert tips on how to protect your creative portfolio from thieves.

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→ PHOTOSHOP

MIX PHOTO AND VECTOR

With *Photoshop*, you can use practically every tool and feature to enhance your images as long as you know how to mix and match. Danny Franzreb reveals how to successfully blend a range of techniques and materials

DOWNLOAD



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

TIME LENGTH

2 hours

INFO

Danny Franzreb is a freelance interactive and graphic designer who's worked for Smirnoff and Die Gestalten Verlag, among others, and spoken at many industry events, including



Flashforward, Media Elements and SXSW. He's also contributed a chapter to *New Masters of Flash Volume 3*. For more information, visit www.taobot.com.

Chances are you already know how to work with vector shapes in *Illustrator*, and even directly in *Photoshop*, so now it's time to build on these skills and learn how to successfully apply a range of new techniques to photos or scanned images to create smooth yet detailed illustrations.

This tutorial doesn't use vectors – although the final result will partly look as if you have. By photographing elements such as trees and plants directly against the sky, with the sun as a backlight, you can create solid shapes with high contrast that are much easier to extract.

You'll use scans of solid ink that seamlessly blend into snowflakes to support the overall feeling of the piece and discover how to transform photos into hand-drawn illustrations with the help of filters, blending modes and *Photoshop*'s Brush tool.

Having created a new layer with a second version of your photo, you'll then apply a filter (such as Dry Brush) to stylize the image a little, or create a high-contrast black and white version by tweaking levels and saturation settings. Afterwards, you can add an illustrative mood to your photo by fully masking that layer out and painting back details of the stylized version with a soft brush. A graphics tablet with its support for dynamic shape drawing functions could come in handy here.

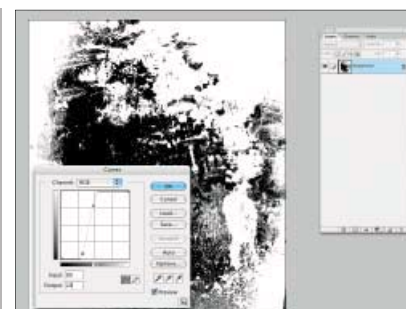
To add complexity and textures, you'll also work with resources such as coffee scans and photos of dirty walls. After all, if you know how to treat such materials, they can help you create beautiful visuals over and over again.



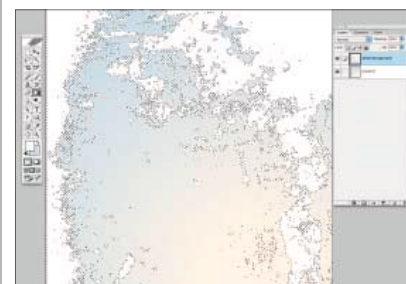
1 First sketch your piece as this will speed up workflow later. Note, however, that you'll be able to resize or colour some of the elements as you introduce them, so you don't need get everything exactly right at this stage. Ensure that you place similar elements into Layer Sets.



2 Open *winter_world_start.psd*, provided on the cover CD. Select the Gradient Tool with a Radial Gradient and colours ranging from light yellow (#FFF9E9) to light blue (#D1DCE9). On a new layer, draw a gradient from the bottom-left to the top-right corner.



3 Open *background_01.jpg* from the cover CD and invert the photo. Set Saturation to -100 and modify the Curves to Input 80, Output 20 or Input 120, Output 200 for a high contrast image. Select white pixels with a Range of 10 and copy and paste them into your main *Photoshop* file. You can now modify the size, position and rotation of the white shape using Free Transform.



4 Ctrl+click the new layer to select the white pixels, invert your selection by choosing Select→Inverse and feather (Select→Feather) with a Range of 2 pixels. Clear the selection to create a smoother border around the white area that melts into the background. If you feel the white isn't solid enough, move the right slider in the Levels dialog towards the middle.

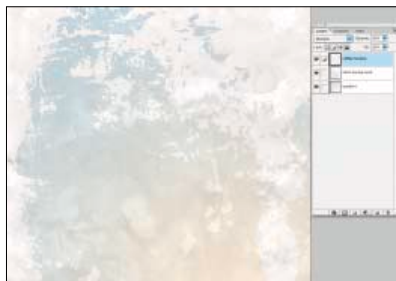




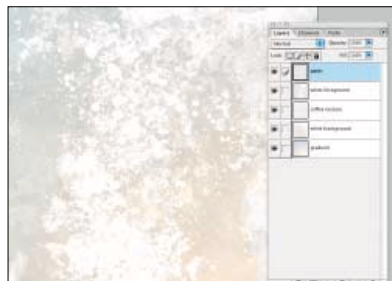
→ PHOTOSHOP

◎ IMAGE RESOURCES

Stock photography is a must. So either use an online database such as www.istockphoto.com. However, nothing can beat your own database of original photographs. Make sure you carry a digital camera wherever you go, and don't compromise on image quality. At the least, invest in a six-megapixel SLR – you'll benefit from the quality in the end.



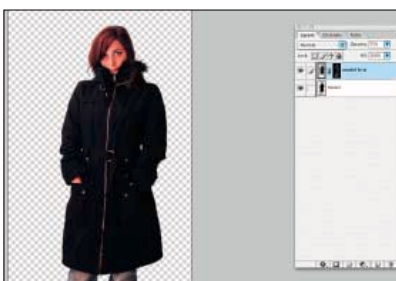
5 Open coffee_texture.jpg and paste it over the white shape. Change its Layer Mode to Multiply. I created this texture by drawing with coffee on a white paper, scanning the result in as a black and white image, and reducing the contrast a little. It adds detail to the background without being too obvious and disturbing the foreground elements you will be adding later.



6 Open background_02.jpg and do a Color Range selection (as in step 1) and paste the white structure into your main file. Modify the white area so it spans the whole background. This shape should remain white, so keep it on top of the layer stack. Open a white paint graphic from the CD (small regular dots are best), do a Color Range Selection (Fuzziness 50 or less) of the white areas and paste it into the centre of your graphic. Modify the Levels.



7 Duplicate the paint layer another four times and move the copies into each corner of your main graphic. Merge the five layers and Ctrl+click the resulting layer to select the white dots. On a new layer, paint subtle light pink and yellow colours into the selection using a soft-edge circle brush (200 pixels, Opacity ten per cent). Now merge all of the layers and manipulate the Levels of the merged layer until you are happy.



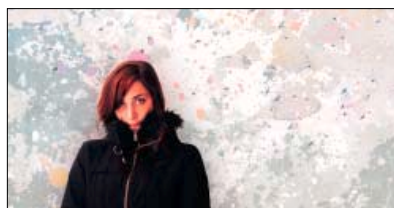
8 Open model.psd. Duplicate the model layer, set Saturation to -100 and increase Lightness. Create a Layer Mask, mask everything, and paint back some of the grey areas with a light natural Brush (low Opacity). Remove colour from the face and legs and paint highlights into the coat. Copy the image into your main psd and transform the model to the same size and position as the final graphic.



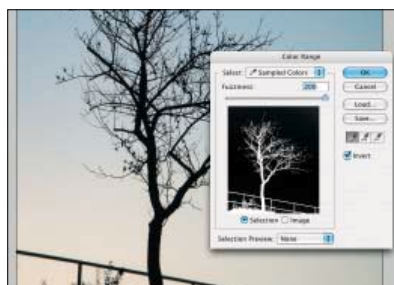
9 Duplicate the model layer and Ctrl+click to select the model. Use a soft Brush to paint light pink and yellow colours onto the model. Apply a Gaussian Blur with a Radius of 50 pixels to the new layer and move it under the first model layer. Set the layer's Opacity to 50 per cent. On a new layer below the model layer and above the blurred model layer, draw a small shadow by the feet with a soft dark Brush.



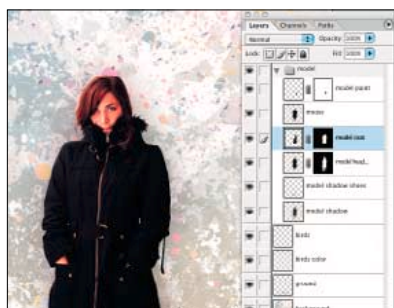
10 Next, the ground layer. We prepared a photo of a dirty street by isolating the black parts with Select Color Range and on a new layer painting over some parts with light purple and blue. Copy the graphic out of ground.psd and paste it directly above the background layer. Also add black paint to the model's left arm and to the coat (use a Color Range Selection of the black paint source files from the CD and transform them accordingly after copying them into your working psd). Merge the black paint layers into one.



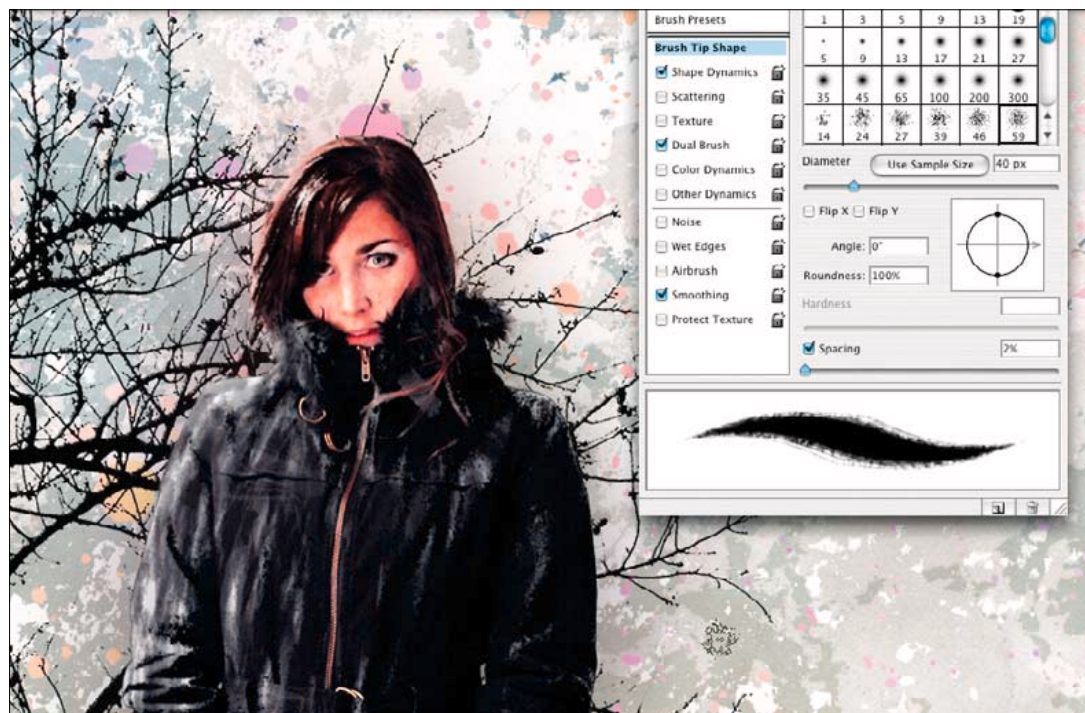
11 Open birds.jpg and select the blue background with a Color Range Selection by sampling a blue from the mid-tones (Fuzziness 150) and invert the selection. Copy the birds into your psd. Set the layer's Opacity to 50 per cent and duplicate. Move this layer beneath the birds layer. Ctrl+click into it to select the birds and paint light blue, yellow and pink into the layer with a soft Brush. Give the layer an Opacity of 50 per cent and set the Blending Mode to Multiply.



12 Import the tree from tree.jpg. Do a Color Range Selection from the blue in the middle at a Fuzziness of 200. Invert the selection and use the Lasso tool set to "Subtract from selection" to deselect the black lines around the tree. Copy the tree into your psd and adjust the Levels until it is dark. Alter its size and position it on the left, behind the model.



13 Ctrl+click the model layer and add a Layer Mask (to mask out everything around the model). Duplicate this layer twice and place both under the model layer. Name them "model head/legs" and "model coat". In the "model coat" mask, use the Lasso tool to select the coat, invert your selection and fill with black. Only the coat should remain unmasked in this layer. Make sure the coat layer is located above the head/legs layer.



14 With the "model head/legs" layer selected, apply Image→Adjustments→Threshold with a Threshold Level of 100. Do the same with the model coat layer, but set the Threshold Level to 20. Inside the mask of the normal model layer, start drawing with a black natural Brush and low Opacity settings of between five and 20 per cent. Also experiment with Shape Dynamics and Dual Brushes. The aim here is to create a subtle blend between the photo and drawing.



15 Open the bush photos from the Bushes folder on the cover CD and apply the same technique outlined in step 12 to copy them to your psd file. Resize and position each bush at the bottom of the graphic. If a few parts start to overlap, erase them until the bushes fit together well. Now Merge the bush layers. The resulting layer should be located above the model layer.



16 Create a new layer and draw a black line (solid Brush, Opacity 100 per cent) from the roots of the tree around the model's body. Now Ctrl+click the model layer and Invert the selection so that everything except the model is selected. Hold down Shift and, with the Lasso tool, add the body parts of the model to your selection where the line should be visible. Now, with the line layer selected, create a New Layer Mask. The line should now wrap around the model's body.



GET ORGANISED

Keep your work on separate layers so that you can adjust each detail in isolation whenever you want. Also name your layers, set up naming conventions and use layer sets to structure your work. At first this might take a little extra effort, but you'll be more than happy you did when you pass your piece to a colleague or open it in a few months to make small modifications.



→ PHOTOSHOP

SHARPEN IT

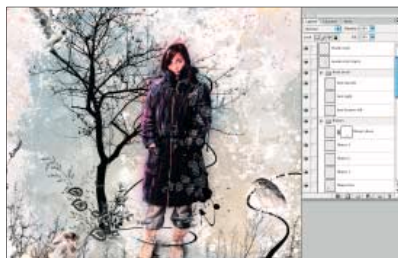
As a general rule, RAW digital photos need additional sharpening for print. The Unsharp Mask filter is the most versatile tool for this job. Here, your Threshold setting is the key to success. At lower settings, nearly all pixels are sharpened, but at higher settings, only the ones with neighbouring pixels that are clearly different in tonal brightness (ie, edges) are affected. This often leads to better results.



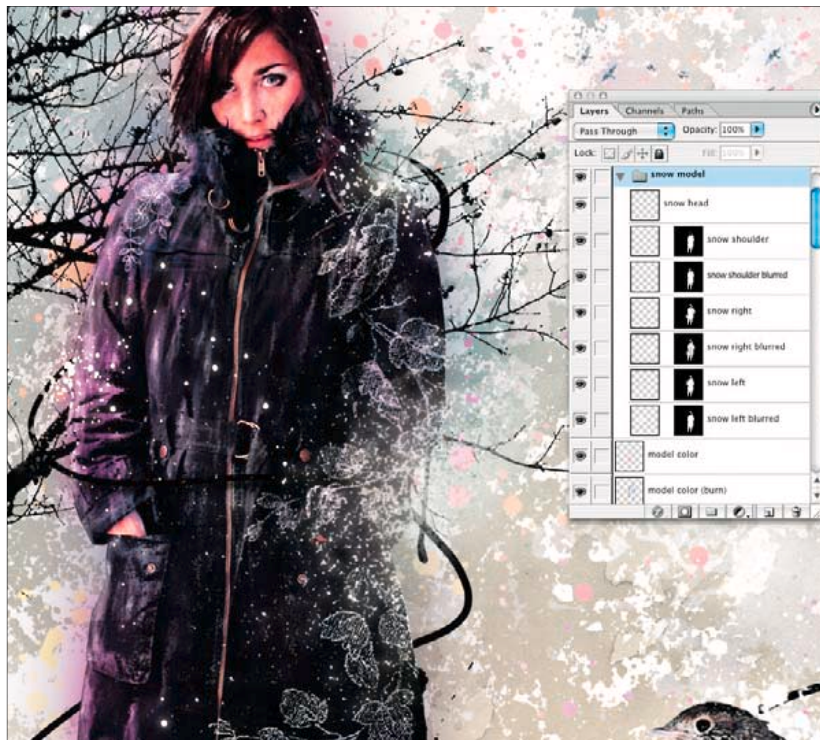
17 Duplicate the layer and place it beneath the original. In the new layer, delete the mask without applying it. Ctrl-click into the model layer, and use the Lasso tool+Alt to remove areas where the line crosses behind the body. Create a mask and use a Gaussian Blur (20px) on the line. Unlock the layer mask, move the line a little below the original and set the layer's Opacity to 90 per cent. Repeat steps 16 and 17 to create a line around the models feet and a wider line on the left-hand side.



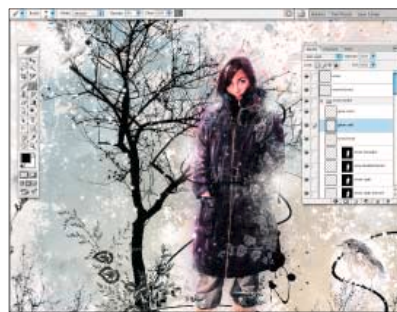
18 Open flowers.psd from the Flowers CD folder. Copy the graphic and place it at the bottom of the tree. Now open flower_01.psd, Paste and position it on the model's left shoulder. Ctrl+click the model layer and create a New Layer Mask for the white flower, so only the flower's texture is visible. Do the same for flower_02.psd and flower_03.psd. Now place flower_04.psd and flower_05.psd as if they're growing out of the model's shoes and merge them.



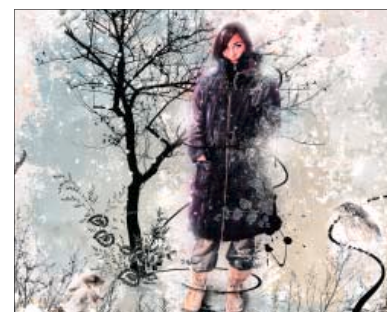
19 Paste bird_01.psd to bird_03.psd from Birds CD folder into the final image. Create two layers, one set to Normal and the other to Color Burn. Use pinks and yellows to draw with a light brush over parts of the model to colorize it. Adjust the Opacity of these layers until you find the right mix. 50 per cent and 20 per cent should be fine.



20 Open a white paint from the Paint CD folder and paste it over the model. Ctrl+click the model layer and create a new layer mask for the paint from the selection. Duplicate the layer, place it below the original in the stack and apply a Gaussian Blur of about 10 pixels. Repeat this two to three times until the model has a light covering of snow. Around the outline of the model, slightly paint into the layer masks of the snow layers with a white soft brush to fade the snow into the background and create a smoother border.



21 Create two layers: "glow soft" and "glow solid". Set the Blending Mode of "glow soft" to Lighten (only pixels darker than the colour you paint with are affected). In both layers, use a soft Brush (Opacity of five to 20 per cent) of varying sizes to paint highlights across the graphic, especially around the model and birds. Now add some more paint on new layers behind and in front of each bird, the tree and on top of everything with the techniques described in step 20. You can also use a soft white Brush with the Airbrush option enabled to draw additional snowflakes. Merge the paint layers in the layer stack.



22 By now you should have created a romantic winter illustration and be familiar with all the techniques that helped create it – even if your image doesn't look exactly the same. At this stage, you can add and remove small details such as white glow, or experiment with colour and levels. There's plenty to try out, so don't stop here. **arts**

NEXT ISSUE IN **arts**

PERSPECTIVE TIPS

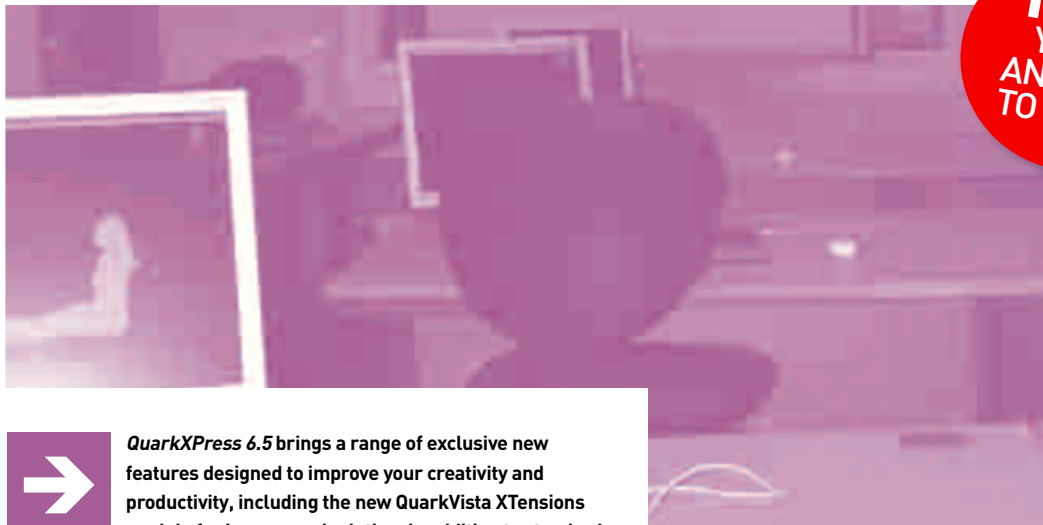
Experiment with perspective and still get it right



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QuarkXPress 6.5 brings a range of exclusive new features designed to improve your creativity and productivity, including the new QuarkVista XTensions module for image manipulation. In addition to standard

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To get you fully up-to-speed with *QuarkXPress*, Corps Business is providing a free place, worth £450, on the two-day *QuarkXPress 6.5* Fundamentals group course running on 25 and 26 April 2005.

If you can't wait for the competition, log-on to <http://euro.quark.com/en> and order your copy of *QuarkXPress 6.5* online today.



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TIME LENGTH

2 hours

INFO



Nick Sneath is an in-house animator for London-based creative services house Three Blind Mice. One of the UK's top storyboard/visualisation companies, it specialises in animation, 3D design and live action work. For details, visit www.three-blind-mice.co.uk

→ AFTER EFFECTS

CREATE AN ANIMATIC

After Effects is not only a top special effects app used by broadcast professionals, it's also a first-rate animation package in its own right. Nick Sneath reveals how to transform your *Photoshop* files into a professional animatic

→ This tutorial will take you through all the necessary steps to create an animated scene that focuses on an essential animation technique: the walk cycle. You'll create the material for this piece using a hand-drawn sketch of a character already scanned in and cut out in *Photoshop*, then bring the result to life with the help of a *QuickTime* movie of a *Poser* animation.

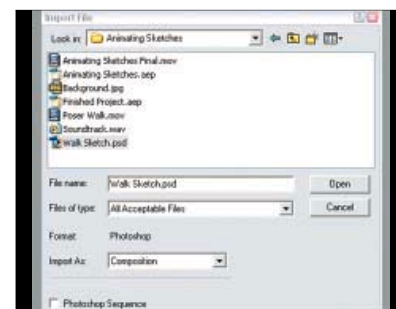
Note that such a complex animation would be an arduous process without such a reference materials, which prove valuable when your budget is limited and time is pressing. As usual, all the relevant files are provided on the cover CD.

As a final flourish, you'll learn how to duplicate and set each figure within a 3D space with an animated background.

For a full preview, open the Animating Sketches Final.mov file on the cover CD. We're sure you'll be impressed.

The imagery used in this particular piece comes from an animatic created for a London-based advertising agency. Animatics are proving very popular in film production and advertising, because they're a quick way to see how well ideas work – and relatively cheap to make. Ad agencies often use them to pitch to potential clients. Before an inch of film is shot or a dab of paint added to an animation cel, the client can see clearly how the piece will look, and make changes accordingly.

Animatic and tutorial by Nick Sneath
www.three-blind-mice.co.uk



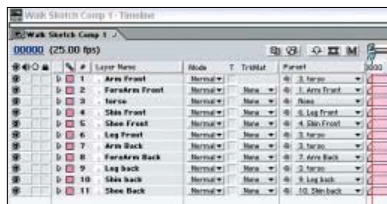
1 Copy the Animating Sketches folder from the cover CD to your computer. Open the Animating Sketches.aep file. Import the file Walk Sketch.psd, selecting Composition from the Import As drop-down list. This imports the file with the layers intact. Double-click on Walk Sketch comp1 to open it on the timeline. Make the composition 50 frames long, at 25fps (Composition→Composition Settings).



2 Select the Arm Front layer. Choose the Pan Behind tool from the Tool palette and Move the Anchor Point to the top of the arm, where it would naturally connect to the shoulder. This changes the layer's pivot point. You now need to parent the arm to the torso. Open the parent column on the timeline (Wing menu→Panels→Parent). Select Torso from the drop-down list.



3 Repeat this process for the ForeArm Front layer. Using the Pan Behind tool, move the forearm's Anchor Point to the elbow joint, and parent the ForeArm Front layer to the Arm Front layer. Select the latter on the timeline and adjust Rotation to see how the parent layer affects the child layer. Return the layer to a Rotation value of 0.



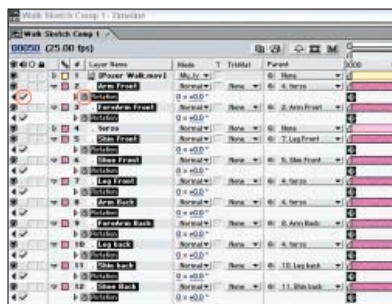
4 Repeat the process carried out in step 2 for the other limbs. Parent the feet to the corresponding shins, the shins to the corresponding legs, the legs to the torso, etc. Don't forget to alter the layers' Anchor Points, so that they're all correctly hinged to their corresponding layers.

FOR REFERENCE

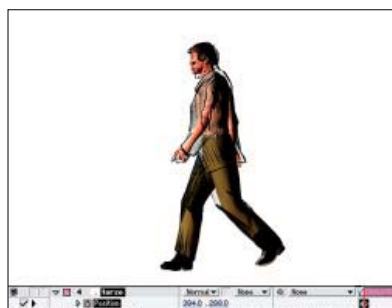
Poser is a useful tool for animation. You can adjust the Poser figure's dimensions to match your own characters, then use any of its preset poses as reference points. The Walk Designer is particularly useful for creating your own walk cycles. But if you prefer working with actual footage, there are many GIF animations of Eadweard Muybridge's work available online. Muybridge was a pioneer in capturing photographically the motion of humans and animals.



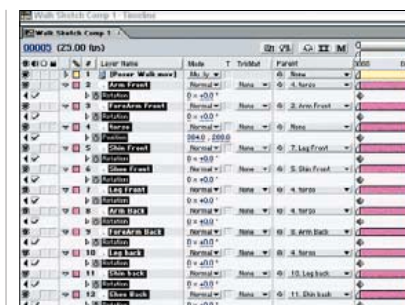
5 Drag Poser Walk.mov from the Project window and place it at the top of the timeline (Layer→Bring Layer To Front). Change its Layer Mode to Multiply – this enables you to see both figures simultaneously. Note that the images are already lined up, but not exactly, as they have different proportions. Still, it's close enough for you to trace the motion of the Poser figure's walk cycle.



6 Select all the hand-drawn layers, apart from the torso. Hit [R] to bring up their Rotation values, and make sure you're at frame 0. Click on the Stopwatch icons next to the word Rotation to create keyframes on all the layers. At frame 50, click in the layers' checkboxes to create more keyframes. You should now have a perfect loop, regardless of the Rotation values keyframed in-between.



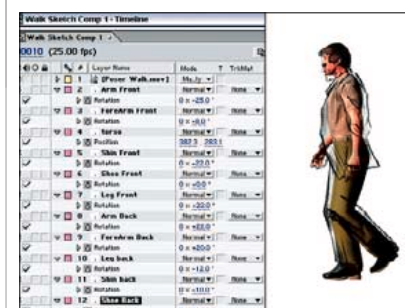
7 Select the torso layer. Hit [P] to open the layer's Position properties. Create a keyframe at frame 0 and frame 50.



8 Go to frame 5. You'll now need to move the hand-drawn figure's parts every five frames to follow the Poser figure's movements (five frames work well, but you can opt for another number if you prefer). Create keyframes by clicking the checkboxes on all the hand-drawn layers.



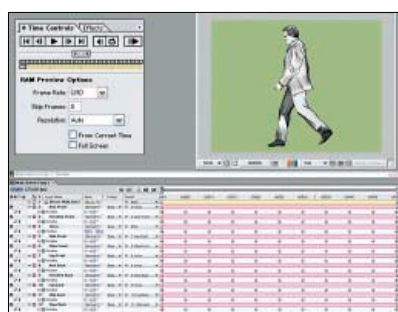
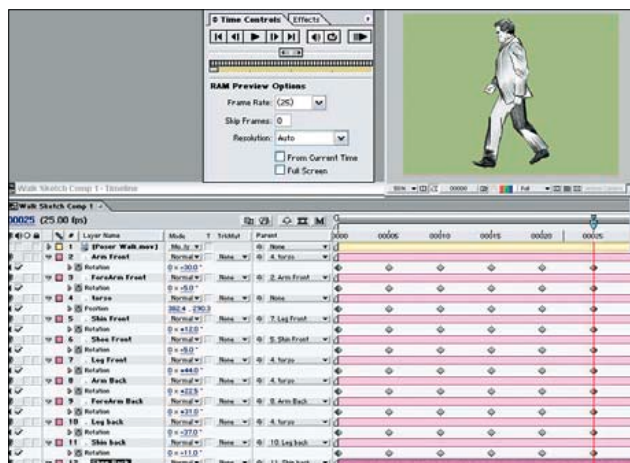
9 First, move the torso layer up or down, following the Poser figure. Now rotate the limbs one by one, starting with the layers attached to the torso. You may need to turn off the torso layer while adjusting the rear arm.



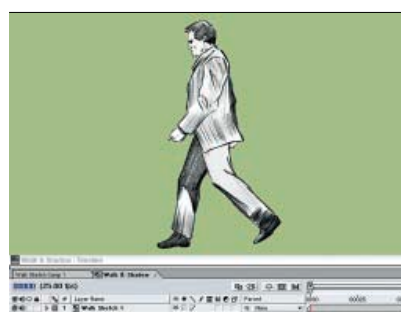
10 Repeat the same process at frame 10, then every five frames thereafter until you reach frame 25. The limbs won't always line up, but don't fret about that. As long as all the parts remain parallel – ie, the shin front layer remains parallel to the Poser figure's front shin – the animation will work.

→ AFTER EFFECTS

11 Now's a good time to do a test-run. Turn the Poser Walk.mov layer off and click on the RAM Preview button in the Time Controls palette. Reduce your resolution for a quicker result. If you hold the Shift key down when hitting RAM Preview you will greatly reduce the waiting time.



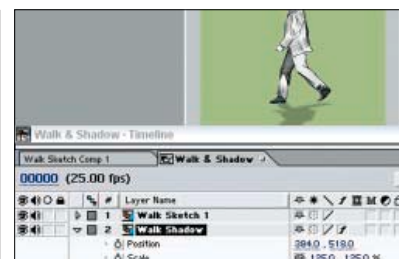
12 If everything looks fine, continue with the remainder of the frames up to 50. Then RAM Preview again to see the full cycle. If anything looks awry, you might need to check your Anchor Points. Compare your project with the Finished Project.aep file, included in the folder on the cover CD.



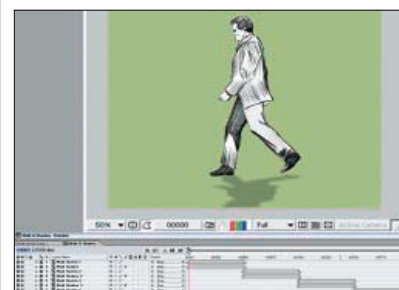
14 Drag the Walk Sketch comp1 from the Project window to the timeline (this process is called "nesting"). You'll need to duplicate this layer to create a shadow. Select Walk Sketch comp1 on the timeline, then Edit→Duplicate. With the duplicated layer selected, hit Return and change the layer's name to "Walk Shadow". Place this layer below the other layer. You'll need to change the Composition's Background Colour if it's currently set to black.



15 Now add effects to the Walk Shadow layer to give it a shadow-like appearance. Add Basic 3D and change the Tilt value to 99 (Effects→Perspective→Basic 3D). Now add Hue/Saturation, changing the Lightness value to -100 (Effects→Adjust→Hue/Saturation). Finally, add Fast Blur, changing the Blurriness value to 4.



16 You'll need to amend the shadow to complete the illusion. Hit [P] and change its Position information to 384, 518. Hit [S] and change its Scale information to 125 per cent. Finally, hit [T] and change its Opacity information to 25 per cent.



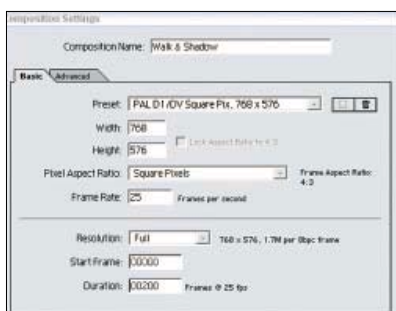
17 Duplicate both layers and position them, starting at frame 50. Create two more sets of duplicates, starting them at frame 100 and 150 respectively. There should now be a continuous loop lasting 200 frames. Create a new composition called "Man & Background", with the same presets and duration as the Walk & Shadow composition. Nest the Walk & Shadow composition inside it.



18 Make the Walk & Shadow comp layer 3D by clicking its 3D checkbox on the timeline. Change the layer's position to 208, 288, 0 and rename it "Walk Back L". Duplicate the layer, naming it "Walk Back R" and change its position to 562, 288, 0.

EASY EASE

Use Easy Ease (under Keyframe Assistant) to enhance the realism of your animations. This useful function softens the change between keyframe values, resulting in more organic and naturalistic movement. Simply apply a keyframe every time your character's foot touches the ground and adjust its interpolation with the Easy Ease settings. Without it, figures look like they're walking along a conveyor belt!



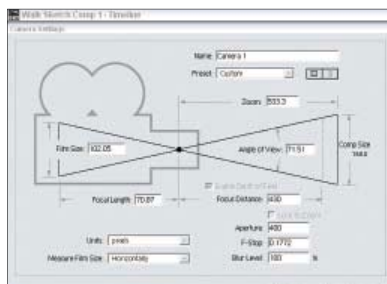
13 Once you're happy with your walk cycle, create a new composition and call it "Walk & Shadow". Choose "PAL D1/DV Square Pix, 768x576" from the Preset drop-down list, as shown above. Set the Duration at 200 frames (8 seconds at 25fps).



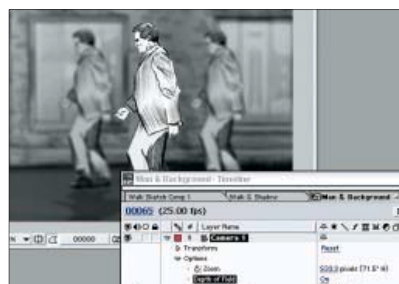
19 Duplicate Walk Back L and rename it "Walk Front L", changing its position to -87, 28, -100. Duplicate Walk Front L and rename it "Walk Front R", changing its position to 357, 28, -100. Apply the Hue/Saturation effect to layers Walk Back L and Walk Back R, changing the Lightness value to -24. (You won't be able to see Walk Front R, because it's currently off-screen.)



20 Drop Background.jpg and Soundtrack.wav into the timeline at frame 0. Select the Background.jpg layer, make it a 3D layer and send it to the back. At frame 0, change its position to -412, 288, 0 and set a keyframe. Go to frame 200 and change the layer's position to 1147, 288, 0. Set your Composition to Advanced 3D (Composition→Composition Settings→Advanced→Rendering Plug-in→Advanced 3D).



21 Create a Camera (Layer→New→Camera) and select Custom from the Preset drop-down list. Enable the Camera's Depth of Field setting. Set the Focus Distance to 430 and the Aperture to 400. Double-check that the values are as shown above.



22 The foreground figures are in focus, but the background figures are not. Select the Camera's Focus Distance on the timeline. Set a keyframe at frame 65.



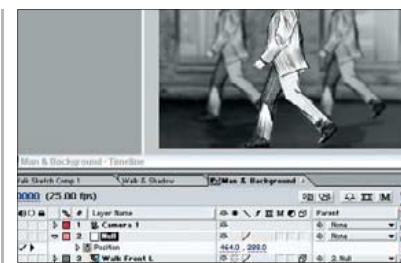
23 Now create a Rack Focus – to alter the animation's focal point from the foreground to the background and back again. Go to frame 75 and change the Camera's Focus Distance to 505. Add another keyframe at frame 140 with the same value. Go to frame 150 and change the Camera's Focus Distance back to 430.



24 You now need the two foreground figures to move across the camera, from left to right, while the background figures remain in line with the camera. Note that foreground objects appear to cover a greater distance than background objects, because of perspective. At frame 0, create a new Null Object (Layer→New→Null Object).

LOOPING

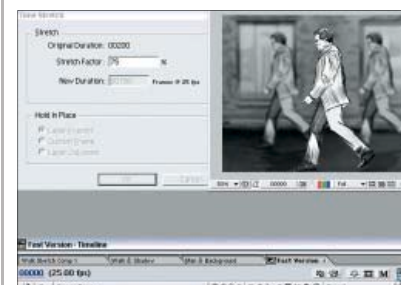
The finished piece in this tutorial loops perfectly. This can be useful when you're designing animations for use in non-linear products, such as DVD menus, CD-ROMs or for the web, where memory is at a premium. For interactive media, a looping animation is an appealing option.



25 Parent Walk Front L and Walk Front R to the Null Layer. At frame 0, change the Null's position to 464, 288 and set a keyframe. At frame 200, change the Null Layer's position to 18, 288. This loops the foreground figures walking from right to left.



26 Create a QuickTime movie and make the movie half size (384x288) for smooth playback. Now play the movie in the QuickTime Player, changing the Movie setting to loop. Notice how the movie loops and how the audio contributes to the mechanical, clockwork nature of the animation.



27 Create a new Composition called "Fast Version" and make it 150 frames long. Nest the Man & Background Comp inside it and change the layer's speed to 75 per cent (Layer→Time Stretch). Create a new QuickTime Movie and compare the two. Feel free to experiment with this! **arts**

NEXT ISSUE IN arts

CHARACTER DESIGN
Bring your characters to life with our in-depth expert guide



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PROTECT YOUR WORK

Your work can be copied, its authorship lost along the way, leaving you forgotten and unpaid, so it's well worth putting a few obstacles in the way of thieves. Karl Hodge shows you how

INFO



Karl Hodge has been building websites since 1992.

He designed and taught the UK's first Web Design degree courses and has written for *Computer Arts* since issue two. For more details, visit www.spodgod.com.

THE PROBLEM

To get your hands on new, profitable projects, you have to show others what you can do, which means putting your work out on show where it could, in theory, be stolen. Code can easily be downloaded, pages printed and images manipulated and saved directly to disk, so how can you prevent it?

→ One of the best things about digital images is that they are so easy to reproduce and distribute. But that's not necessarily a good thing when it comes to security. The same goes for website code, digital video, 3D files or digital art. To get yourself noticed, you need to put your work out there for all to see, and it's much easier to display your work in an online portfolio or a CD presentation. But how do you stop people copying your work and using it for free? Unfortunately, you can't. There is no way to guarantee that your work will be safe from thieves. The only solution is to deter them.

It's most difficult for thieves to work around a blatantly visible watermark – so you could distribute doctored versions of your images with a copyright notice that is clearly displayed, somewhere that's impossible to crop out. Less drastic solutions include using Adobe's new

XMP technology in *Photoshop CS*. This hides a copyright message within the image file. Retrieve that information and you can easily prove that you are the author of the image.

Between these two poles is digital watermarking. Shipped with *Photoshop*, *Digimarc* works by embedding information about you and your work into a watermark within your image and an online database. The watermark can then be read by any *Digimarc*-enabled imaging program. You'll have to register the plug-in, but with a basic subscription of \$49 a year you can invisibly protect up to 100 images.

The dreaded right click

Website code can be made more difficult to read (and therefore steal) by using a compression program such as *HTML Shrinker* (www.thepluginsite.com/products/htmlshrinker/), but the most secure

method of all is to fully encrypt your code or files by using an off-the-shelf script or program. Try *Secure Image Free* from www.artistcope.com, which will encrypt images so that no-one can link to or download them from your website or copy them from a CD.

Your work is particularly vulnerable on the web, where it's easy to right-click on a picture and save it to your hard drive. Luckily, there are a couple of ways to deal with this. Code-based methods using JavaScript and Cascaded Style Sheet (CSS) attributes can disable the way thieves access images displayed online. It's even easier to use a design-based method. With HTML and CSS, you can place an invisible layer over an image, preventing images from the dreaded right click.

We'll look at these different methods in more depth in the following tutorials...



**WORKAROUNDS**

A determined thief could save your entire website to their hard disk, look in their web cache for images, search your source code to find URLs to files and take screenshots of your images when access to menu tools is disabled. Streaming video can be captured using tools such *VideoLAN* (www.videolan.org). Image files with "invisible" watermarks can also be converted to other formats and the watermark may not survive the transition.

→ HOW TO HIDE YOUR CONTENT

Do everything you can to deter thieves from stealing your work with this handy "nested HTML files" trick

```

1  <html>
2  <head>
3  <title>Launch Page</title>
4  </head>
5  <body>
6  <a href="#" onClick="window.open('deterrent.html', 'floatingwindow', 'menubar=0,width=800,height=600')">
7  Protected Section</a>
8  </body>
9  </html>
10
11

```

1 The following easy-to-implement steps create a series of nested HTML files that can be used to help protect your entire website or just a single section from hacker attack. Start by creating a link that opens a new window without a menu bar. This code can be embedded in a gateway page that leads into your website. You could also use any navigation link within your site.

```

1  <html>
2  <head>
3  <title>Deterrent</title>
4  </head>
5  <frameset rows="1,99%" border="0" framespacing="0" frameborder="0">
6  <frame src="invisible.html" name="invisible" scrolling="no">
7  <frame src="contents.html" name="main">
8  </frameset>
9  </html>
10
11
12
13
14
15

```

2 Now create the deterrent.html file mentioned in the code in step 1. This is a frames-based HTML file that you'll use to nest the protected content. The frame itself is invisible to casual users – but anyone who tries to "View Source" will only be able to access the source code of the invisible frame. Insert the code shown here into an empty HTML document before the <body> tag and save it as "deterrent.html".

```

1  <html>
2  <head>
3  <title>Content</title>
4  </head>
5  <style type="text/css">
6  @media print{
7  body {display:none;}
8  }
9  </style>
10
11
12
13 Protected Content Here
14
15
16 </html>

```

3 The frameset code references two further HTML files – "invisible.html" and "contents.html". The first file contains JavaScript and HTML commands that will protect your content and the second file will contain your portfolio, images or whatever you want to protect. Create "invisible.html" by saving a blank HTML file with that name. Next, add the code above to your "contents.html" file between the <head> tags.

→ IS CD PROTECTION VIABLE?

Fact: As soon as a new method of protecting CD data is announced by the industry, devious hackers waste no time working out how to crack it. Unfortunately, CD protection often works in ways you don't want it to – some methods stop you from playing CDs on systems that have legitimate CD-burning software installed, for instance, while others prevent audio CDs from playing on any computers,

full stop. For computer artists, full CD protection mechanisms are less preferable than local file protection.

You can password-protect a folder or file quite easily, by putting it into a ZIP or RAR archive, using a tool such as *WinZIP* (www.winzip.com). Windows users have ZIP archive tools built into the operating system, while Mac users have the ever-popular *StuffIt* range (www.stuffit.com).

4 The style sheet code shown here prevents users from printing out your page. The next and final pieces of code disable the Image Toolbar and right-clicking in modern browsers – *Internet Explorer 6* and *Firefox*, for example – and should also go in the "contents.html" file where indicated. When combined, these tricks act as a great deterrent, although determined thieves will always find ways around the obstacles you've laid for them.

```

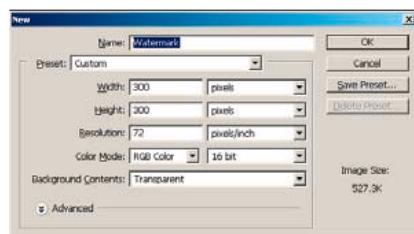
1  <html>
2  <head>
3  <title>Content</title>
4  </head>
5  <style type="text/css">
6  @media print{
7  body {display:none;}
8  }
9  </style>
10
11
12 <meta http-equiv="imagetoolbar" content="no" />
13 <body oncontextmenu="return false;">
14 Protected Content Here
15 </body>
16 </html>
17

```

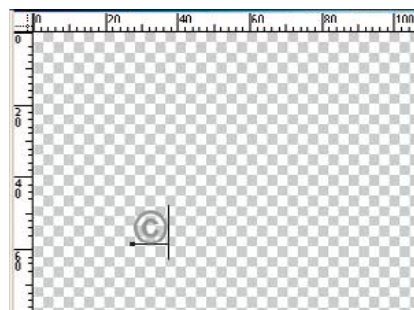



→ ADD A WATERMARK

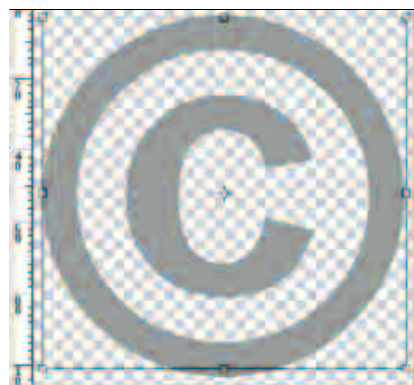
Create a transparent watermark in *Photoshop* that can be placed over your online images in a Cascading Style Sheet layer



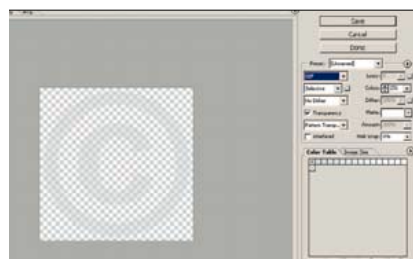
1 Create a new *Photoshop* document measuring 300x300 pixels with a transparent background. These are arbitrary dimensions, as you'll discover, so feel free to experiment with different sizes, or create watermarks that better fit your own images.



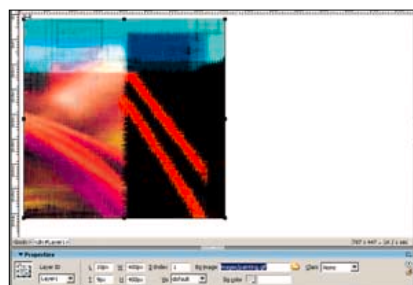
2 Select the Type tool and click within the new document to activate the flashing caret. Hold down the Alt key and type 0169 on the numeric keypad. As soon as you release the Alt key, the © symbol will appear. It's even easier if you're using a Mac. Just hit Alt+G.



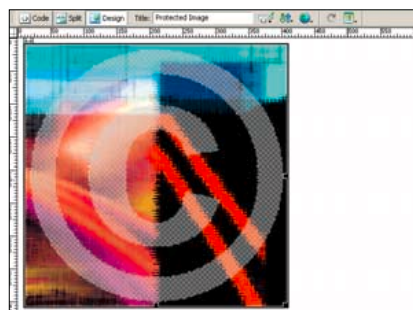
3 Select the symbol and change its colour to a medium grey. Choose a clean Sans font, such as Arial. Select the Move tool to deactivate the Type tool and then hit Ctrl+T (or Cmd+T on the Mac) to Free Transform the character. Resize the symbol so that it fills the document.



4 Select the Text layer in the Layers palette and set its Opacity to between 25 and 30 per cent. Under File→SaveForWeb, select GIF for File Format and tick Transparency. Now select Pattern Transparency Dither under Specify Transparency, and Save file as watermark.gif.



5 Create a new document in *Dreamweaver* and save it. Click the Layout tab in the Insert menu and choose the Draw Layer icon. Draw a new layer, making it as large as the image you wish to protect. In the Properties panel, set the BG Image path so that it points to the image you want to display.



6 Click within the new layer, choose Insert→InsertImage and browse for the watermark.png file you created earlier. In the Properties panel, resize the watermark to the same dimensions as the CSS layer. Save and preview the file in your browser. From now on, any user who tries to right-click and save your image will just get the watermark. **arts**

ENCRYPTION

Digital data is little more than a collection of zeroes and ones. If you scramble up those numbers in a specific pattern, you'll only be able to view that data if you know how to unscramble it. That's the basis of encryption. Your images or data are rendered unreadable, unless you have a "key" to unlock the encrypted code. You can distribute this key to others, but without it your data will stay unreadable. See www.pgp.net for free file encryption tools.

TOP TEN TIPS

1 At the top of an HTML document, before the code section, insert a brief message asserting ownership of the code. Comment this out using the standard HTML comment tags and your browser will ignore it – but it'll still be there to prove your authorship.

2 Hide a second, less visible copyright message in your HTML template. Insert half a page of carriage returns after the closing </body> tag and paste it in at the bottom. If someone does steal your code, chances are they'll leave this in.

3 Join an online copyright protection scheme, such as Copyleft (www.gnu.org/copyleft/copyleft.html) or Creative Commons (www.creativecommons.org).

4 Don't include links to high-res versions of your work online. Potential clients only need to get an idea of what your work looks like, so low-res samples will suffice.

5 If you must post your portfolio online, visibly watermark every image. It sounds drastic, but this will definitely stop others from printing or publishing your work in media you have no control over.

6 If you feel the watermarking method described here will spoil your images, use a blank image file instead. When users right-click to save, they'll download the blank image instead of your picture.

7 Digital Rights Management (DRM) is built into modern streaming media servers and producers to protect your content. Find out more at www.info-mech.com/what_is_drm.html.

8 You can insert the © symbol into your HTML documents using the ASCII code "©". Ensure it appears visibly alongside a short message on every page containing content you wish to protect.

9 Rename image files so that they're difficult to recognise in a file list. You can batch rename files in *Photoshop* or *Fireworks* progressively, replacing intuitive names with serial numbers.

10 When distributing your portfolio on CD, use a multimedia authoring tool such as *Flash MX 2004* or *Director MX* to create a standalone presentation. Content is harder to extract from this kind of file.

COMBINATION DEFENCE

No one method of protection will stop a determined code or image thief for long. So when it's really important that you deter them, combine as many methods as you can. The web-based methods described in the tutorials here can be easily used together. You can even go one step further and encrypt your pages using a tool such as *HTML Protector* (www.htmlprotector.com) or search for free encryption scripts at www.scriptsearch.com.



GET STARTED WITH... SEMIOTICS

The science behind semiotics may make your head spin, but it's essential you know the power of the messages your images convey. Mark Penfold gets to grips with the relationship between images and their meaning

ILLUSTRATION: FIBRE

➔ Designers, illustrators and typographers all practise semiotics on a daily basis, but rarely is the subject discussed in isolation. Perhaps because of this, it's seen as slightly esoteric, a discipline reserved for academics and thinkers rather than gritty urban designers.

However, conceived as a science capable of explaining the relationship between systems of images and meanings, semiotics deals with the same raw material as the graphic professions; it just uses a different vocabulary.

"In this country, what we need is more intellectual input into design," says typographer and designer Jonathan Barnbrook, voicing a

belief common among thinking professionals. Creative professionals need to give themselves credit for the work they're already doing if they are to avoid becoming "stylists".

SIGN LANGUAGE

The dictionary describes semiotics as "the study of signs and symbols" and goes on to highlight the relationship between written signs and the concepts they represent in the real world, either as ideas or objects. For the designer, the creative mark maker, it's therefore about the complex relationship between images and their meanings.

Graphic artists take various visual fields and fill them with constantly



changing symbols and signs to convey meaning. As Andrew Foster, an illustrator and lecturer at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, points out: “Illustrators are visual thinkers, not stylists.”

Yet, despite this dry reputation, Andrew Stiff, head of the Digital Arts MA at London’s University of the Arts, says, “[Semiotics] has allowed us to re-evaluate our surrounding systems and processes. No-one in a visual profession can ignore this subject’s importance.”

Barnbrook backs him up: “Deconstruction is the reason I’m a typographer,” he says. “There’s always a difference between the signified and the signifier.” A firm believer in the

potential semiotics can unlock, Barnbrook believes: “Letterforms are full of cultural inconsistencies, flukes of history and contradictions.”

The creative possibilities that emerge from the gaps between meaning and object are open to exploitation by the clever designer. According to Barnbrook, half the fun comes from playing with relationships, which are, “Often unconsciously understood by the viewer.” As Foster notes, “Illustration can change people’s opinions.”

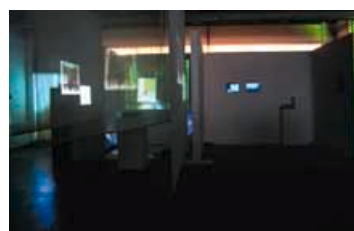
The viewer’s unconscious ability to make connections is effectively the b-side of semiotics. “There may be a desired meaning in the relationship between signifier and signified on

behalf of the creator, but it is the audience that has to interpret the meaning,” says Stiff.

CONTEXT IS PARAMOUNT

Ferdinand de Saussure, Swiss linguist and philosopher, is widely credited with the invention of semiotics. His concept? A science capable of understanding all possible systems of signs, from language to music and, of course, the visual arts.

Although de Saussure concentrated his efforts on linguistics, he and many of his followers believed that sign systems worked in similar ways, regardless of their particular make-up. One such follower was the radical French thinker Roland Barthes, ➔



Samples from this summer’s MA Degree show at Camberwell College of Arts. For further info, visit www.madigitalarts.co.uk.

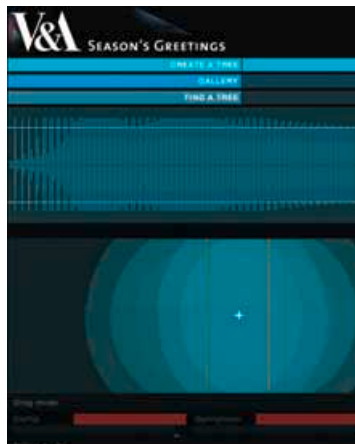


SLIM

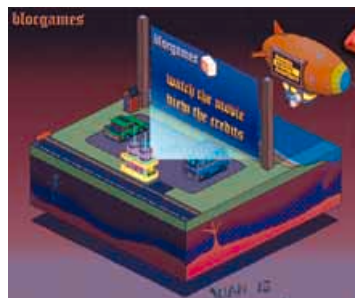
fluffy

SMALL

Times New Roman



Bloc's seasonal site for the V&A museum explores non-linguistic communication, using interaction to derive a stylised Christmas tree design. As Bloc media's creative director John Denton points out, "More fervent users of the internet now have a new language at their disposal."



Bloc's John Denton remains unequivocal about the importance of semiotics: "Our understanding of the semiology of computing is what enables almost all GUIs to have any meaning at all."

DESIGNER DEFINITIONS

Three industry experts on what semiotics means to them

"Semiotics is important for designers because it's all about the many ways design is used to communicate with a body of people. Today we have lost semiotics as an aid to communication, whether it be abstract or specific messages."
Mike Cina, WeWorkForThem
www.weworkforthem.com

"Semiotics comes with the territory. We are communicators, therefore we deal with semiotics. Whether or not we are aware of this is another matter. Semiotics is the science of communication, but we are the communicators not the scientists."
Jeff Knowles, Research Studios
www.researchstudios.com

"Semiotics is important because it helps us humans understand that reality is more than a purely objective existence, which is independent of our interpretation. It teaches us that reality is a system of signs. Seek and ye shall find."
David Johnston, Red Design
www.red-design.co.uk

whose seminal work in the field, *Mythologies* (1957), exposed the relationship between visual communication and the status quo as a kind of myth-building project.

Taken as a whole, the signs form a spider's web of interlinked meanings and symbols, concepts and the images that suggest them. But these relations cannot be taken in isolation. Context is of paramount importance. Essentially, an image relies on context to bring out subtle meanings, and an understanding of the viewer's context will enable the image's creator to better code meaning into his work.

READING THE SIGNS

Signifier and signified – together, they constitute a sign, the basic object studied by the science of semiotics. The image is the signifier, the concept or object the signified. But for graphics professionals, there's just one question – how are the two linked?

Where language is involved, it's clear that the link between either spoken or written symbols and the signified object is itself completely arbitrary. Different languages operate on the same objects, for example. A cat could have been called a dog or an abacus, it's just a convention.

However, where the meaning of visual symbols is concerned, the story gets a little more complicated. At the most basic level there's a common understanding of the meaning held by images: "There are certain symbols that have a generic meaning to us all," explains Barnbrook. "These can be manipulated just enough to make the conveyance of information or the putting over of an idea achievable."

Foster highlights the grim reaper as a symbol of death: "At this level, the basic symbolism relies on cliché," he says. "Good illustration should go beyond that. All forms of communication have a level of eloquence, but good illustration should challenge the viewer."

An obvious, up-to-date counter-example comes in the shape of the World Wide Web where signs and symbols should be unambiguous and accessible to all. "The answer is to make them as generic as possible," says John Denton, creative director at Bloc media. "As soon as you imbue an icon or image with any cultural reference, you immediately start to dilute its effectiveness," he says. It seems that playing around with meanings in this situation would be counter-productive.



"You can look at it from a personal position," says Andrew Foster, a lecturer at Saint Martins College, of his work. "I have my own purpose in making the image. It talks to me and that's my number one goal. The aim is to connect public and private understandings."

CREATIVE MISUNDERSTANDINGS

According to Stiff, "An artist or designer is someone who experiments with our understanding of objects and meaning." This experimentation is made possible because images can have multiple associations, but this can be a hindrance. The meaning can easily become buried or lost.



TOP

Barrister

MONO

SPOTS



The message behind this telling portrait, by typographer and designer Jonathan Barnbrook, is created by the switching of letters and the addition of delicate arrows.



Jonathan Barnbrook's cutting portrait of George W Bush draws parallels with the famous Nazi dictator, using a barcode – that icon of materialism – as his moustache.

Barnbrook gladly welcomes the complication: "Thankfully, there is the unknown factor. Everybody brings their own universe of experience to the perception of a piece of work. That misunderstanding can be one of the most creative acts a person can do."

But how does this help when you're trying to decide how to convince an audience of a client's message? Stiff suggests we take a broader view: "Perhaps," he says, "we should enjoy the situation and experiment with greater freedom."

"If you're producing work for a billboard, then the viewer will only have a second or two to take it all in," says Foster. "In this situation, your image has to scream its message if it's going to succeed." So the first ➔

THE WEB

The internet is a hive of semiotic development

There are few places where semiotics is more apparent than the internet. As Andrew Stiff, head of the Digital Arts MA at London's University of the Arts, says, "The internet is one obvious situation where the artist's skill in understanding semiotics is critical."

Global communication means that almost nothing can be assumed about the viewer. Consequently, information must often be conveyed without language. Bloc media's John Denton explains the value of metaphor: "It reduces the time

people have to spend deciding what things are supposed to do."

Interestingly, Denton highlights how users have addressed the identity problem confronting designers: "Previously there was a lot of talk about the equality of the net, as your identity could easily be concealed," he says. "There's now a range of ways in which people create a visible identity."

This identity building takes the shape of avatars, emoticons and even "bastard mark-up" used to denote emotional content.

JARGON

Structuralism A school of thought that considers the meanings of symbols to be determined by their difference from each other and their place in the overall structure of language.

Pragmatics The relationship between the viewer and the system as a whole.

Semantics Semantics deals with the relationship between the sign itself (eg, a word) and its meaning.

Syntax The relations between signs (what makes one combination meaningful and another nonsense).

Post-modernism An umbrella term used to refer to a cultural shift away from confidence in the progress of history and an acceptance of mistake and accident.

Taxonomy The process of classification. Re: semiotics, this is an attempt to get at the structure of the language under consideration.

Denotation The denotation of a sign is the actual thing itself. For elephant, this would be the large-eared quadruped.

Connotation Connotative meaning is the implied meaning of the word. Taking elephant again, this could include heavy, wise or endangered.

Mythology A connotative system built up around a particular sign.

Hermeneutics A kind of textual archaeology, a reading and re-reading of a text in an attempt to dredge up all its possible meanings.



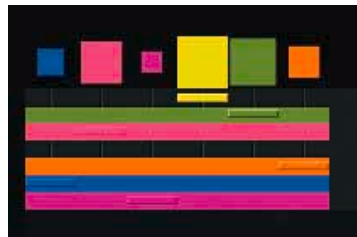
thing to look at is the likely effect it will have on your audience.

"I'm an illustrator because I enjoy it," says Foster. "Visual play is all-important – without it, your work becomes average." But as Foster ruefully points out, "One of the hardest things is trying to mix the public and the private."

Foster suggests that the real job is to match our personal set of visual meanings with those of our anticipated viewer. In a commercial setting, this is further complicated by competing messages: "This is both its great strength and its great weakness," says Foster candidly.

UNDERSTAND YOUR NEEDS

The process of choosing images and placing them in a context that will



www.playstationemotions.com challenges your assumptions about the meaning of particular forms and colours by using a specially developed visual language.

convey your intended meaning was termed by Barthes as "coding". But as we've seen, this project is fraught with difficulty if your goal is to control the exchange between viewer and image, to narrow the permutations so that only a single interpretation is allowed.

Instead, we should take pleasure in the fact that, as Barnbrook says, "There can be both positive and negative misunderstandings."

Once free of the desire to exert control, we can start to properly explore possibilities within the work we create. "It's about understanding your own needs", says Foster. Barnbrook is of a similar mind: "I could never accept the Modernist notion of a typographer being just a communicator of the client's

message." There must, it seems, be an element of personal communication.

"The method of placing signs and symbols in a piece of work – an advert, painting or film – will always be about craft," says Stiff. Which brings us, at last, to one element of a composition that can be controlled with some degree of accuracy – the production values.

"No matter how good an idea is, the craft has to hold me," admits Foster. And he's not alone in insisting that the images he consumes are of a certain quality. At least in part, this feeds back into the idea of layered meaning.

It's a balancing act, but talent is a visual language of your own which others find attractive. As Foster puts it: "With flair, you can take a subject somewhere else." **arts**

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FireWire & USB2.0 - 40GB, 60GB, 80GB, 100GB



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- Dual format DVD+/-RW (and CD-RW)
- Super fast write and re-write speeds
- Bundles include DVD authoring software
- FireWire and/or USB 2.0 (all cables included)
- 2 years manufacturer's warranty as standard

Available Models:

DVD+/-RW 16x4x12x Double layer & CD-RW
CD-RW 52x32x52x



LaCie AIT Tape Backup Drives

- Sturdy, stackable, rackable aluminium design
- Cross-platform convenience
- Easy data sharing and exchange
- Expandable, scalable technology
- AIT available in FireWire & USB 2.0 or SCSI
- Retrospect back up software bundle
- 2 years manufacturer's warranty as standard

Available Models:

FireWire & USB: AIT1 35/90GB;
FireWire & USB: AIT2 50/130GB;
SCSI: AIT3 800/2080GB 8 Slot Library



LaCie DataBank 1.8" Hard Drives

- Tiny size - only 6.3 x 11.1 x 1.6cm & 137g
- FireWire and/or USB 2.0 versions - cables included
- AC adapter free - powered by USB or FireWire
- Sleek, compact & robust - design by F.A. Porsche
- Ideal for notebook/laptop users as mobile storage
- Compatible with Windows® backup utility
- 2 years manufacturer's warranty as standard

Available Models:

USB2.0 - 20GB, 30GB, 40GB



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- AC adapter free - powered by USB or FireWire
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- 2 years manufacturer's warranty as standard

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REVIEWS

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SOFTWARE

PATTERNMAKER 1.0 **P80**
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GROUP TEST: **PLUG-INS**

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XENOFEX 2 **P91**
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REVIEWS

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



COMPUTER
arts
RECOMMENDED



MAC Yes

PC Yes

PRICE

£2,998 (£2,549 for monitor and
£449 for GeForce 6800 Ultra)

CONTACT

Apple
0800 0391 010
www.apple.com

FEATURES

- 29.7-inch viewable screen
- 2,560x1,600 pixels
- 400:1 contrast ratio
- 16ms typical response time
- 170-degree viewing angle
- Dual-link DVI connection
- VESA mounting option
- Dual USB ports
- Dual FireWire 400 ports

SYSTEM

MAC: G5, Mac OS X v10.3.4 or later and NVIDIA GeForce 6800 Ultra DDL graphics card (available as a build-to-order option for G5 buyers, or as an upgrade kit for existing G5 owners. Note that the card occupies the AGP slot and adjacent PCI slot)

PC: Any PC with full-bandwidth dual-link DVI port and DDC support

FOR

- Incredible desktop space
- Dual-display possible
- Brilliant image reproduction

AGAINST

- Steep price
- Loss of PCI slot to bulky graphics card
- Limited warranty

VERDICT

This beautifully engineered display is ideal for the creative professional who has a visually demanding workload. Its expense is its only weakness – with so many affordable LCD displays already on the market, many pundits will be put off by the steep asking price.



When size matters, Apple's 30-inch high-definition display is a real must have.

Apple 30-inch HD monitor

COMPUTER
arts
RECOMMENDED

APPLE'S FLAGSHIP LCD IS A HEADY BLEND OF LUXURY AND TECHNICAL ELEGANCE

Although it's an absolute monster of a screen, Apple's top-of-the-range, high-definition display puts in a good performance in terms of reaction times, image quality and general luminosity. Colour is fairly reproduced across the entire screen, too. No mean feat, given the inherent limitations posed by the technology.

For graphics pros with deep pockets and a need to measure their desktop space in acres, then this is a real must have. But for the financially challenged, there's comfort to be had in the old adage that size isn't everything.

Removing Apple's top display from its packaging is an experience every Mac lover will enjoy. The first thing that's immediately apparent is the build quality – there are no gaps between surfaces and no uncomfortable joints to fret over. Everything looks machined and purposeful. How many other displays look this delicious from the back or the sides? Not many.

But once you've removed it from the box, the Cinema Display is surprisingly light, too (12.5kg, according to Apple). Despite its

slightly unwieldy size, the display is also pretty easy to manoeuvre.

For its latest generation of displays, Apple has eschewed its rather difficult attachment to the ADC connection in favour of the

coming from Apple's display is certainly something to behold. It's bright, images are crisp, and there's a good sense of depth from the blacks; even fonts are well handled, right down to a reasonably

THE SHEER STRENGTH OF THE LIGHT COMING FROM APPLE'S HD DISPLAY IS SOMETHING TO BEHOLD

RESOURCE

If you're thinking of treating yourself to one of these displays then why not explore Apple's Displays_TO_06282004.pdf, available from www.apple.com/displays. The information is comprehensive and well laid out.

standard DVI adaptor. This means PC users equipped with a dual-link DVI/DDC-capable graphics card now have the option of using an Apple display without worrying about adaptors and the associated performance knock-on.

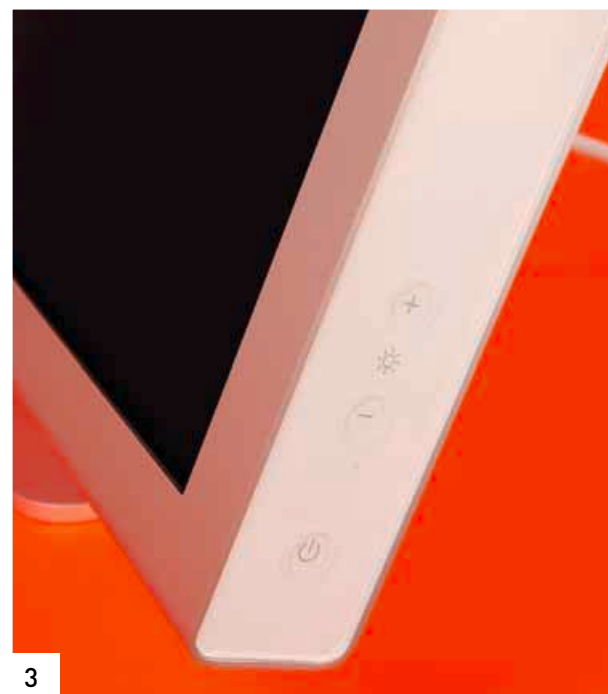
This is a sensible move by Apple, although just how far it will get the company in a market where looks don't count for much is another matter. The high cost of Apple's monitor may also deter PC users used to much lower price points.

If you're more familiar with standard LCD or CRT screens, then the sheer strength of the light

minuscule size (so typographers can rest easy). The discreet, touch-sensitive brightness controls help to tame the screen, but its strong luminosity takes a while to get used to. Still, image performance throughout is exemplary.

Although the standard colour-correction system is available (on the Mac), we couldn't fault the accuracy of the monitor straight out of the box – surveying large image files is a real pleasure right from the start.

The video market is an important one for Apple and this screen will certainly cause a few hearts to flutter among edit studios the world



over. Typical response times are 16ms – not the fastest, admittedly, but then Apple has always concentrated on quality over any headlong rush towards the cutting edge. For video, this is a good display, maintaining colour depth and image integrity to a high (although not amazing) standard, even with fast-moving scenes at excessive frame rates. Smaller screens may be slightly more responsive, but this is one area where size counts.

At 29.7 inches across the diagonal, with an optimal resolution of 2,560x1,600 pixels, there's so much space available, it makes your desktop feel like a playing field. Of course, this has its downsides (it's easier to lose icons, for instance). Still, the obvious attraction of having enough screen space to handle a full source/record/edit set-up and an extended timeline will push all the right buttons with editors. Two people can comfortably share the same viewing space, too.

If you still want more, then the NVIDIA GeForce 6800 Ultra DDL graphics card is able to run a pair of

HARDWARE ISSUES

Installation of the new 30-inch HD Cinema Display is complicated by the fact that you must first install the new NVIDIA GeForce 6800 Ultra graphics card, without which the Cinema Display won't work.

Like the display itself, the 6800 Ultra is a bulky piece of kit, but not in a good way. Twice as big as your standard card, it sports a fan the size of your hand on one side – and consequently takes up two PCI slots.

Dual-link DVI uses the same DVI connectors, but pulls a double-sized digital signal from a pair of TMDS transmitters instead of the traditional one, effectively bumping the signal up to as much as 400MHz.

If you're connecting via a PC, watch out for DDC (Display Data Channel) compatibility. DDC is a protocol that enables the display to pass its requirements over to the PC for automatic configuration.

30-inch screens side by side. For high-end HD edit suites, this may well be a tempting option.

Apple hasn't exactly piled on the pressure as far as sweeteners are concerned. The mount doesn't itself allow lateral swivel, although you can move the frictionless base to compensate. Nor are there any pointers for using it as a television.

Realistically, though, such omissions aren't going to make any difference to this screen's target audience. Creative professionals looking for such hardware are going to be more concerned with the lack of extended warranty. In terms of stats, there's nothing else that can compete with this display.

The real chink in the 30-inch HD's armour is more a matter of arithmetic. For £100 above the price of a single 30-inch HD, you could buy yourself a pair of Apple's 23-inch Cinema Displays. And you wouldn't have to upgrade your graphics card to the NVIDIA Ultra DDL.

Sitting in front of a 30-inch high-definition display is certainly an impressive experience. It's also quite commanding. From the normal

1. Apple's commanding display is superbly engineered and configured.
2. FireWire and USB ports ensure peripherals are easy to hook up.
3. The monitor's touch-sensitive controls are discreetly positioned.

viewing position, it's almost impossible to look past the screen. This may seem like an obscure point, but it highlights an important distinction between professional and non-professional usage. This is such an event of a display that it needs to be fully justified in terms of price.

If you really need that space and you won't spend half your time trying to chat around it or live up to it, then the 30-inch Cinema Display is about as desirable a piece of hardware as you could wish for. It's not the best performer in the world, but it's certainly a compelling object. **arts**



MAC Yes

PC Yes

PRICE

£476

£577 (network ready)

CONTACT

Samsung
01932 455000
www.samsung.co.uk

FEATURES

- Duplex printing
- 1,200dpi resolution
- PostScript Level 3
- 20ppm (mono)/5ppm (colour)
- Quiet operation
- Easy toner installation
- Colour correction software
- Built-in LCD

SYSTEM

MAC: Any Mac capable of running Mac OS 8.6 or above
PC: Pentium, 32MB RAM, 200MB HD space, Windows 95, 98, Me, NT4.0, 2000, XP

FOR

- Good paper capacity
- Duplex print mode
- Can handle PostScript Level 3 fonts

AGAINST

- Dodgy colour handling
- Poor Mac compatibility

VERDICT

With its 1,200-dpi duplex printing and capable font-handling, Samsung's CLP-550 is certainly not a bad printer. But it does lack the finesse required for high-end design use. However, as a day-to-day solution for small workgroups, it is definitely worth taking a look.



LEFT: The CLP-550 is functional, but the results are pretty average. It can handle double-sided printing, though, which is a real bonus.

BELOW: A small, built-in display adds interest to the printer's otherwise standard appearance.



Samsung CLP-550 A4

WORTHWHILE FEATURES, BUT THE CLP-550 IS BETTER SUITED TO CORPORATE USE THAN DELICATE DESIGN WORK

The two main prerequisites for a colour laser printer are speed and colour accuracy. Sadly, the CLP-550 doesn't excel in either area. It's not catastrophically slow and it's colour-handling can be corrected via the supplied ICC software, but results are hardly inspiring.

Not an ideal machine for a design studio, then. Still, rapid duplex printing, good paper capacity and quality font handling mean this printer could be a viable option for small workgroups with high-volume colour runs in mind.

Weighing-in at around 32kg, the CLP-550 is a pretty hefty machine. Its grey, boxy looks are typical of your standard network printer, although you do get a small built-in display.

Installing the imaging unit and transfer belt, as well as the five toner cartridges, can take a while, but once you're hooked up to a PC, the software installation pretty much takes care of itself. The same cannot be said of the OS X version, which installed, but, on our test model at least, failed to work.

Samsung assured us that this was a local problem, but we found other printers that worked perfectly

well with the same files. As a result, there was no printing from the Mac.

In terms of output volume, a decently sized drawer enables you to load up to 350 sheets at a time.

Obviously, if you use your own colour management system, then you'll be able to account for this yourself, but in that case you're unlikely to be shopping for a budget laser printer such as this.

One of the 550's greatest assets is its duplex (double-sided) printing capabilities, which hardly slows the run down at all. Also praiseworthy is its handling of typography. It can take fonts of any style down to 5 points and keep them crisp and readable. And all this while maintaining a respectable output speed of around 20ppm (mono)/5ppm (colour). Warm-up and lead times aren't particularly good in either case, but you get the feeling the CLP is best suited to the long haul anyway.

The CLP-550 has some nice features – its 1,200dpi printing, duplex support, colour correction software... It just isn't the precision machine a design office would need. As an office workhorse churning out a well-understood product, it's absolutely fine. You'd need to upgrade to the network-enabled version, but once done you'd have a reliable and affordable print server on your hands. **arts**

RESOURCE

PC users also can also install Samsung's Doctor Printer. This app provides access to online diagnoses of printer ailments, ranging from mechanical blockages to software conflicts. For details, visit www.samsungdp.com.

THE OS X SOFTWARE INSTALLED, BUT FAILED TO WORK IN OUR TEST

Meanwhile, the hefty toner cartridges are reputedly good for 7,000 pages of mono and 5,000 colour, but this is less than reassuring when you consider that replacements cost around £90 each.

Although Mac support is patchy, the CLP-550 works like clockwork with a Windows machine. The supplied software is reasonably flexible, covering colour correction, paper handling and print resolution in a straightforward manner. The main problem is that the uncorrected colour reproduction is variable enough to make correcting with the supplied ICC software a real challenge. Not good if that's what you do day in, day out.

**Certain ideas
deserve another perspective**

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MAC Yes

PC Yes

PRICE

£50

CONTACT

Teacup Software
001 212 563 9288
www.teacupsoftware.com

FEATURES

- 15 individual patterns
- Adjustable parameters for each pattern
- Simple user interface
- Integration with native *InDesign* effects
- Patterns created in native PostScript
- Highly customisable

SYSTEM

MAC: OS X 10.2 or higher;
Adobe *InDesign CS*
PC: Windows 2000 or higher;
Adobe *InDesign CS*

FOR

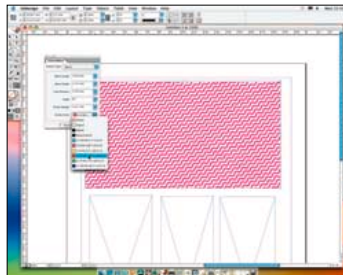
- Effective pattern creation
- Simple pattern modification

AGAINST

- Patterns often take a while to appear on screen
- Some of the patterns already seem dated

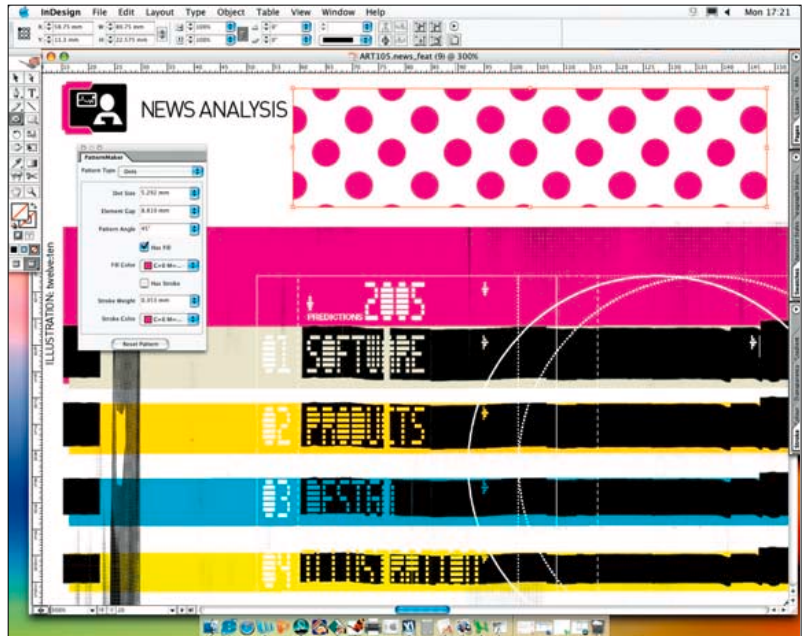
VERDICT

PatternMaker 1.0 is an effective and relatively straightforward way for you to create interesting background patterns for any *InDesign* document. The plug-in will save you time and effort, but some patterns are much better looking than others, which already appear dated.



ABOVE: *PatternMaker* allows you to choose easily from any CMYK swatch within your colour palette.

RIGHT: The software's friendly and intuitive interface makes it easy to apply a whole range of adjustable patterns.



PatternMaker 1.0

WILL THIS USEFUL INDESIGN PLUG-IN MAKE YOU SEE STARS?

Teacup Software may not be a name instantly familiar to those in the creative industry. It produces plug-ins that work exclusively with Adobe's *InDesign* layout software and is, as such, confined very much to the world of print design.

Previous plug-ins created by Teacup have focused on areas such as workspace and palette management and have steered clear of any real creative areas, but with *PatternMaker 1.0* the company is pinning its colours to the mast with an application that may or may not get your creative juices flowing.

The concept behind *PatternMaker* is simple – this is a plug-in that allows you to fill *InDesign* frames with a pattern that can then be controlled in terms of colour, size, weight and appearance.

PatternMaker provides a catalogue of 15 patterns including concentric circles, crosses, dots, lines, squares, sparkles and waves, which can then be applied to boxes and layouts as a background.

Once you've opened your *InDesign* document, *PatternMaker* appears in the Window menu and, via a prompt

THE PATTERNS CAN BE ADJUSTED IN ALMOST ANY WAY YOU WANT

pop-up, asks you which pattern you want to apply. From here, it's as easy as selecting the pattern you're after and adjusting its appearance through the variable controls.

Patterns can be altered in pretty much any way you want, by angle, stroke weight and colour, and the plug-in also allows you to choose from any CMYK swatch in your document, so the colours are always spot on.

The patterns you create can be modified in the same way as any other graphic imported into an *InDesign* document – you can rotate the pattern, mirror it or stretch it. You can also apply *InDesign* effects such as feather or drop shadow.

Because the patterns are graphics embedded into your *InDesign* document they behave in the same way as any imported graphic. So if you need to send a document to someone who doesn't

have *PatternMaker*, the pattern won't cause problems or disappear.

While the software is simple to use and certainly lives up to its name, we did have a crash during our test and some of the more complex designs took a while to calculate and appear on screen.

Another minor whinge is the complexity of designing an exact image to an exact size. *PatternMaker's* control slides show measurements in millimetres, but we found the appearance of the slides slightly bewildering. If you need the angle, size and weight of your background pattern to be exactly right, you may have a long process ahead of you.

Of the 15 patterns on offer, the square and concentric circle shapes work well, especially when modified, and the lines and dots are effective. But designs such as scallops, random lines and the decidedly unsparkly sparkles come across less effectively, no matter how the pattern is changed.

These points aside, however, *PatternMaker* is an effective tool that will certainly be handy for any professional designer. **arts**

RESOURCE

Not sure how *PatternMaker 1.0*, designed by page layout guru David Blatner, will work with your *InDesign* layouts? Why not download a demo and give it a whirl before you decide? Just visit www.teacupsoftware.com/download/ to find out more.



MAC Yes

PC Yes

PRICE

£140

CONTACT

Enfocus Europe
+32 16 77 10 48
www.enfocus.com

FEATURES

- Direct export from *InDesign*, *Quark XPress* and Mac OS X PDF creation
- Automated PDF Queue set-up
- Print settings in *InDesign* and *Quark XPress*
- Job-in-progress monitoring
- Internal Help system
- Intuitive interface
- Enforce and Forbid options
- Automatically corrects errors during pre-flight

SYSTEM

MAC: Mac OS X v.10.2.8 or higher
PC: Windows 2000 with Service Pack 4, Windows XP Professional or Home Edition

FOR

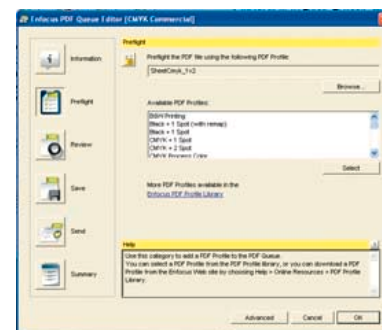
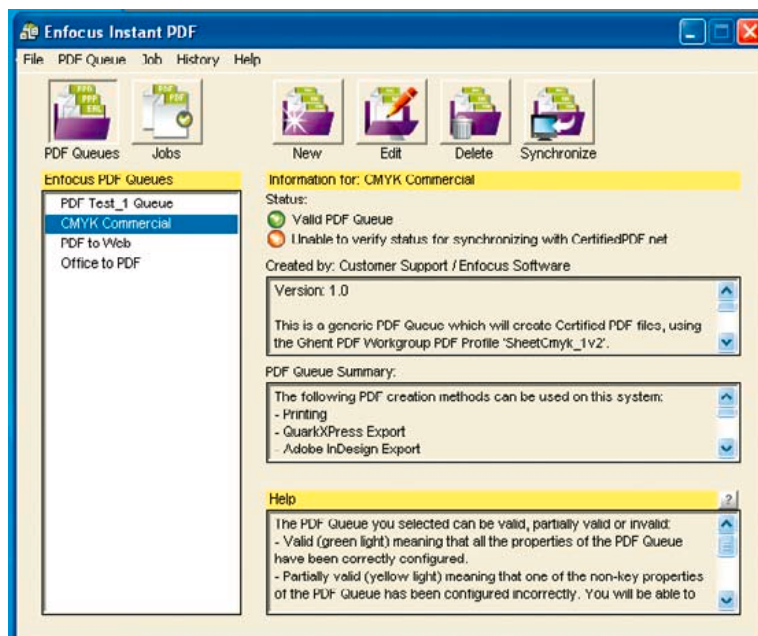
- Easy to use
- Impressive results
- Support for all the major layout packages

AGAINST

- No telephone support

VERDICT

Instant PDF 3.0 offers a wide range of functions, is relatively simple to use and delivers great results. The PDF creation process is straightforward and there are enough features included to let you know if things are going wrong and how to put them right.



ABOVE: Pre-flight checking options, courtesy of the versatile PDF Queue Editor, minimise the risk of failure when you're sending PDFs.

LEFT: Pre-loaded generic PDF Queues help simplify the PDF creation process. Simply select the most suitable option from the list.

Instant PDF 3.0

THE PERFECT FEATURE-STREAMLINED ADOBE SUBSTITUTE

Although Adobe's *Acrobat 7* set the gold standard for PDF creation software at the end of last year (see review, *Computer Arts* 105), the complete package does cost over £400 and includes features that, although useful, many will find surplus to requirements.

As a result, there's a thriving market for cheaper, stripped-down *Acrobat* alternatives that enable anyone to quickly and easily export documents to PDF. Falling into this category, with a long history of PDF application development that's aimed squarely at users requiring perfect pre-press files, is Enfocus and its *Instant PDF* app.

Aiming to streamline the process, *Instant PDF 3.0* works around the simple idea of creating PDF Queues, so that you can print or create files to the right Queue from whatever app you're currently working with. *Instant PDF* works with most major layout packages, including *InDesign* and *Quark XPress*, and integrates right into the menus with a "Save as Certified" PDF option.

Once created, the PDF Queue feature manages the complete PDF

creation process for you, from pre-lighting and certifying the file to saving and sending.

The process works well, too. If there are problems, a warning

technology, which enables recipients of your PDF to access information such as which PDF profiler was used to check the file before sending and whether or not the files successfully passed pre-flight.

Once the PDF files have been created, you can automatically send them to a specific folder or networked drive, email them to a pre-defined address, or FTP them. *Instant PDF* automatically reviews the file to let you know if there are possible errors and then generates a handy pre-flight report.

In terms of back-up and support, Enfocus offers pretty detailed help from within the app itself – simply click on the built-in question marks that explain error messages – and online, although users are automatically connected to the certifiedPDF.net site when hitting the Help button, which is never ideal.

Instant PDF is, for an app of its depth, fairly simple to use and an effective low-cost solution for professional PDF creation. If you don't want the extra functionality offered by *Acrobat* or its peers, it certainly does the job. **arts**

RESOURCE

Successful PDF swapping is based on good communication. At certifiedPDF.net, receivers of PDFs can outline their PDF specs, Queues and supporting documentation to save time and minimise errors.

message promptly appears, and an easy-to-navigate and comprehensive list of possible errors makes it easy to sort things out.

Setting up a PDF Queue is straightforward, but *Instant PDF* comes with some pre-configured. By far the easiest way to set up a Queue is to import one published on Enfocus's certified PDF.net website, accessible from the "New PDF Queue" menu. Major printing and publishing houses have supplied these Queues, basing them on their own specifications.

Instant PDF then creates files using Enfocus's own Certified PDF

IT'S SIMPLE TO USE
AND AN EFFECTIVE
LOW-COST SOLUTION



MAC Yes

PC Yes

PRICE

£105

CONTACT

LaCie
020 7872 8000
www.lacie.co.uk

FEATURES

- 4x dual-layer write
- 16x single-layer write
- 4x DVD±RW write
- 32x CD write
- Compatible with ±R media
- USB 2.0 connectivity
- Includes Easy CD Creator
- Includes Easy Media Burner
- Uses NEC drive
- Two-year warranty

SYSTEM

MAC: PowerMac G4, 500MHz,
128MB RAM, OS 10.2.3
PC: PII 350MHz, 128MB RAM,
Windows 2000/XP

FOR

- Versatile media support
- Easy to install and use
- Attractive

AGAINST

- Controls and operating light hidden by case
- No Mac software

VERDICT

Whatever format you write to, this versatile drive can handle it with ease. PC users get great software, but Mac owners lose out. Single-layer performance exceeds the capabilities of current media, and dual-layer is pricey, but this will improve once the media situation develops.



ABOVE: The minimalist Porsche design may appear stylish, but sadly it's a classic example of form over function.

d2 Dual Layer DVD drive

■ DUAL-LAYER DVD WRITERS OFFER 8.5GB PER SIDE – SO WHERE'S THE CATCH?

A single-layer DVD is capable of holding 4.7GB of data – enough to hold an hour of optimum quality video and up to three hours of standard quality video. However, most commercial movies occupy between 5GB and 8GB, so if you want to master data at this kind of level, or provide lots of extras, or simply need a high-capacity storage medium, LaCie's latest dual-layer drive will prove a real godsend.

Shame, then, that the Porsche styling is a classic example of form over function. The case covers both the eject button and the operating light, so you can't eject a disc manually or tell whether or not the drive is active. Still, it does look cool in a minimalist kinda way...

Once hooked up to your Mac or PC via a USB 2.0 cable, the drive writes at speeds of up to 4x for DVD and 32x for CD. It actually performed slightly better in our tests, and, despite rumours to the contrary, maintained this performance when writing to both the primary and secondary DVD layers. A 7.3GB movie, for example, took us 24.5 minutes to write.

Dual-layer drives have received much bad press of late, so we tested LaCie's device thoroughly with both single and dual-layer media, covering

yet offer less than twice the capacity of a standard single-layer disc. Currently, then, dual-layer DVD writing is a luxury reserved for use on a need-to-have basis.

The problem is that there are so few times when you simply *have* to use a single dual-layer disc, instead of spreading your data across two DVDs. The average movie looks great on a single disc, and it makes no economical sense to use dual-layer as a means of data distribution. So we're not seeing the economies of scale that pushed down the price of single-layer media.

Software-wise, the drive comes with *Easy Media Creator Basic*, which enables you to create every type of data, audio, and video project known to man – on the PC. Unfortunately, the Mac doesn't get a look-in.

The d2 Dual Layer DVD drive is effective and works a charm. As long as you don't pay a premium for dual-layer functionality, it's a great option. USB connectivity makes it ideal for sharing between computers, even if the case design is obstructive. Still, if style is more important than ease of use, that won't be a problem. **arts**

RESOURCE

Find out more about LaCie's external DVD writers at www.lacie.com/uk/products/range.htm?id=10014. You'll also find information about triple-interface USB/FireWire drives, full specifications and different software permutations.

both +R and -R formats. We were very impressed. -R single-layer discs using Ritek G05 dye worked perfectly on our set-top DVD player. The data could be read on a range of different DVD-RW, DVD-RAM and DVD-ROM drives. We expected the dual-layer media to be problematic, yet writing was straightforward and the resulting DVD played without a hitch.

Admittedly, we used branded Verbatim +R disks, which cost around £7-£10 a pop, but if you need dual-layer media, that's the price you'll have to pay. Even if you do opt for cheaper discs they're still expensive compared to single-layer DVDs (25p per disc). Dual-layer discs are at least 16 times more expensive,

THE DRIVE WRITES AT SPEEDS OF 4X FOR DVD AND 32X FOR CD



MAC No

PC Yes

PRICE

£118

CONTACT

Xara
01442 350000
www.xara.com

FEATURES

- Unrivalled re-draw speed
- Simple, easy-to-use interface
- Improved file handling
- Effective Picture Editor for bitmap editing
- More tools for creating web graphics
- Compatible with all other leading software
- High quality vector rendering engine and anti-aliasing
- Zero memory footprint bitmap editing
- Comprehensive toolkit
- Compatible with *Photoshop* plug-ins

SYSTEM

Pentium, 64MB RAM,
Windows 98 onwards
(including XP)

FOR

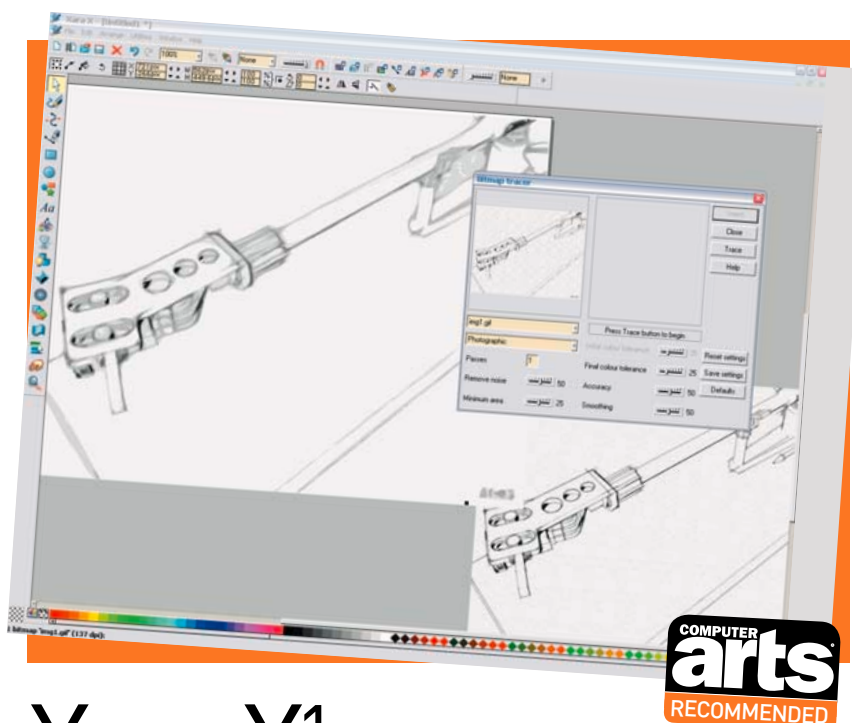
- Blisteringly fast
- Great support and resources
- Superb value

AGAINST

- Basic Picture Editor
- It's not called *Illustrator* or *CorelDraw*
- Cost – some won't be convinced by the low price

VERDICT

It's hard to find fault with software that's this good and this competitively priced. Its speed, stability and ease of use means that it stands up well against the other leading vector drawing packages. So once you've factored-in the price, *Xara X'* becomes unbeatable.



Xara X¹

AN ASTONISHINGLY FAST AND IMPRESSIVE GRAPHICS APPLICATION

High-quality graphics software company Xara has pulled out all the stops for the latest version of *Xara X'* proudly touting this latest iteration as blisteringly fast, easy to use and unbeatable value for money. Bold words indeed.

On the surface, there are relatively few new features to get excited about, aside from the Picture Editor module (more on this later), but this isn't a huge problem. Why? Because Xara has obviously been focusing its efforts on improving what's gone before, and has greatly enhanced speed and stability.

In order to appreciate just how fast this application has become, you really need to work with it. Even using a relatively low-spec machine, we found everything happening in real time – and almost instantly. Shadows are drawn and images manipulated without delay, and we're talking real-time solid colour screen updates. Impressive.

Because *Xara X'* handles the raw image data rather than the entire file, you can load, manipulate and process pictures in a fraction of the time you'd expect, and you can save

or reload them again almost instantly. Anti-aliasing, which is as good if not better than any of its rival's offerings, is applied straightaway, too. There's no waiting for anything. The only downside with this incredible acceleration is how slow

XARA HAS GREATLY ENHANCED SPEED AND STABILITY

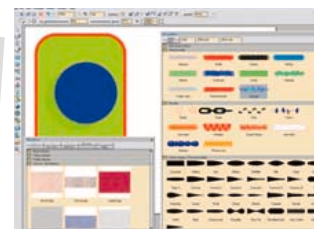
RESOURCE

One-stop shop, www.xarazone.com, is constantly updated with tutorials aimed at users of all levels. There's also tips, links, featured artists, users galleries, shareware and extras such as brushes and fills.

it'll make your regular software feel.

Xara X' has everything you'd expect to find in a professional vector graphics package. It supports all common bitmap and vector graphics formats, right up to 32-bit multi-layer images, is compatible with Macromedia's *Dreamweaver* and *Flash* software, and now – thanks to OLE support – enables you to embed its images into Microsoft documents. The bitmap tracer is great for converting bitmaps to vector shapes and can create some stunning effects.

The main improvement to *Xara X'* – the Picture Editor module – is a



Nearly everything is organised into libraries – a neat and visual system that keeps your screen uncluttered.



Rapid workflow is helped along by standard menu layouts. Combining vector and bitmap graphics is a breeze.

useful addition, capable of basic, non-destructive image-enhancement functions such as sharpening, rotating and cropping. It's somewhat limited, but is seamlessly integrated, and we're told that it will be upgraded to accommodate a range of third-party Adobe *Photoshop* plug-ins currently under development.

Xara X' is a great all-round image-composition package, with a friendly interface that's capable of matching or bettering the quality and performance of the more mainstream programs. It's so logical, easy to understand and well supported that a complete novice could be up and running in minutes. At the same time, there are enough high-end features to make it powerful enough for even the most demanding artist.

On top of all of this, there's free technical support for registered users, and, importantly, the cost to consider. This is so low that for the price of one Adobe *Illustrator* licence, you could buy several copies of *Xara X'* and still have change. A worthy addition to any toolkit. **arts**



MAC Yes

PC Yes

PRICE

1,410 euros

CONTACT

RealViz
+33 (0)492 38 84 60
www.realviz.com

FEATURES

- Create 3D models from 2D images
- Scene-measuring tool
- Extract textures directly from photographs
- Integrate CAD models with photographs
- Export work as *QuickTime* VTR files

SYSTEM

MAC: PowerPC G4, 256MB RAM, 50MB HD space, 1024x768 24-bit OGL compatible display, OS X 10.2
PC: Pentium III, 500MHz, 256MB RAM, 50MB HD, 1,024x768 24-bit OGL compatible display, Windows 2000, SP2 and XP

FOR

- Create 3D models with little knowledge of 3D software
- Pretty packaging

AGAINST

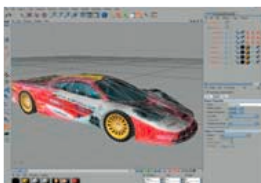
- Difficult to work with
- Poor results
- Expensive
- Inaccurate

VERDICT

A basic shareware 3D package could perform as well as (if not better than) *ImageModeler 4* for a fraction of the price. Disappointingly, at over £1,000, RealViz's application is over-priced, over-hyped and will almost inevitably find itself grossly underused.

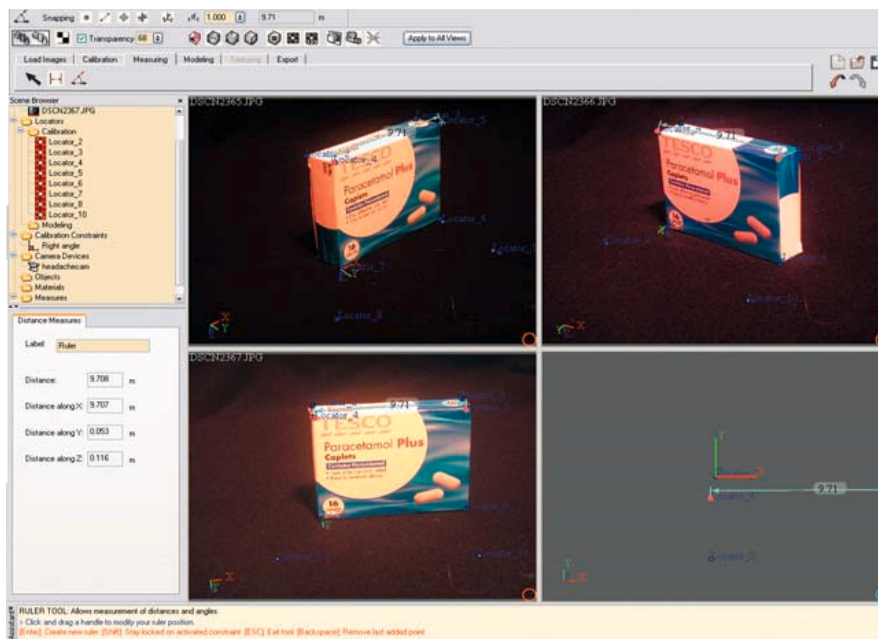


Take a series of sharp, clear photos and produce badly textured 3D models in hours.



Once you've uploaded your photos, output formats are limited, and meshes messy and triangulated.

MAIN IMAGE: The process of setting marker points for the software to calibrate is difficult.



ImageModeler 4

WILL THIS 3D MODELLING PACKAGE STAND UP TO THE SCRUTINY OF OUR LAB TESTERS?

RealViz *ImageModeler* is a software package designed to create 3D models and extract 3D data, such as measurements and angles from 2D images, and to integrate 3D models into photographs. There are several pieces of software that set out to do this: *D Sculptor* is one; *PhotoModeler* is another.

Do they work? Well, yes and no. While they help to produce a rough approximation of your object, preparing your subject is so fiddly and time-consuming, it's often easier to create the same model using traditional 3D software.

In theory, *ImageModeler 4* should be straightforward to use. You take some photographs, load them into the program, and follow a few simple steps before exporting your finished 3D model. Doesn't sound too hard, does it? In practice, though, it's not quite that easy. The disjointed manual, which constantly redirects you to different sections, doesn't help – although a better selection of tutorials is available from the recently expanded support section found within RealViz's website.

RESOURCE

Web resources seem a little sparse for *ImageModeler*. RealViz's own site at www.realviz.com has a forum for users to share tips, tricks, help each other or just to have a moan about how difficult it is to achieve the results they want.

The key to good results is good photography, but then getting reasonable photos of large objects, such as buildings, is difficult and requires a decent camera, patience and an eye for an appropriate shot.

YOU WILL SPEND TIME
CORRECTING COLOUR
AND LIGHT BALANCE

So be prepared to take tonnes of photographs and spend a lot of time correcting colour balance and lighting before you can use them.

Once your pictures are imported, it should just be a case of adding alignment points so the software can calibrate the images. But this is an incredibly frustrating process, requiring you to guess an accurate position of marker objects in each image, which is tricky and time-consuming. RealViz assures us that the more familiar you become with *ImageModeler*, the easier it gets, but we wonder how many people will put up with these failures.

Measuring suffers in much the same way – you have to guess the initial calibration setting using an object you know the size of. There are so many opportunities for error, you struggle to achieve even a reasonable approximation of scale.

Results on the whole are disappointing, with buggy and limited export options. Unless you're a *LightWave* or *Softimage* user, expect to spend time re-mapping blurry textures onto horribly triangulated meshes. Buildings look like flight simulator scenery and everything else looks like, well, not what it's supposed to look like.

We contacted technical support at RealViz to discuss the issues raised here. They were helpful, offering to check scenes which had caused crashes, and agreed the points made were fair. They acknowledged the problems but said no bug fixes, service packs or additional export options are currently planned.

ImageModeler 4 is the software equivalent of a foot spa. It seems like a great idea, but it's only when you get it home that you realise all the rigmarole isn't worth it. **arts**



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BOOKS

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↓ BOOK OF THE MONTH

BUSINESS CARDS: THE ART OF SAYING HELLO

AUTHOR: Michael Dorrian and Liz Farrelly

PRICE: £19.95

PUBLISHER: Laurence King

ISBN: 1-85669-386-4

If you've ever read Bret Easton Ellis's cult eighties novel detailing the life and times of archetypal New York yuppie and deranged psychopath Patrick Bateman, you'll know the importance people place on business cards. Because, as a memorable scene in Ellis' *American Psycho* demonstrates, the details conveyed in a simple 3.5x2-inch card can say more about you than you'd think, and although not getting the right weight, font and texture will probably not, in most cases, lead to bloody decapitation, they are important.

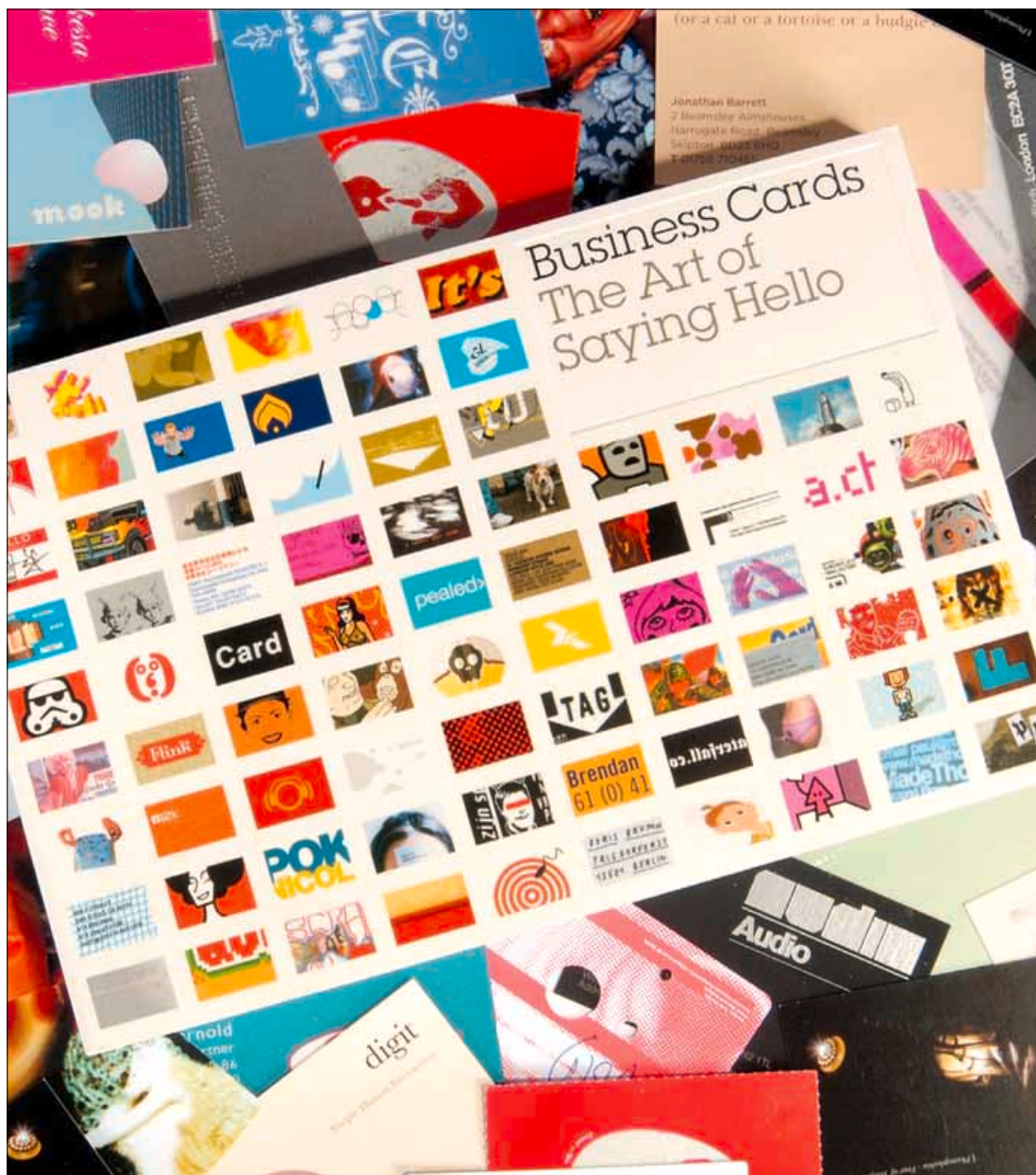
While extension numbers and lengthy Senior Acting Vice President for Internal Operations-type job titles are necessary to the corporate card, for designers, great business cards are an absolute must. They should make an immediate impact and act, pretty much, as a miniature portfolio.

Business Cards: The Art of Saying Hello sets out to demonstrate how much can be achieved within the creative confines of the business card, and does so via page after page of innovative design, creative typography and striking ideas.

From Duffy and Form's sleek and potentially dangerous etched and die-cast metal cards to Heads Inc's lumps of 5mm plexiglas, authors Dorrian and Farrelly have drawn on a massive range of design-industry cards, collected over the years from around the world.

While some have looked to re-invent the format – London-based Mysterious AI's re-purposed train tickets, for example – most are happy to stick to the standard issue, and use the card as a showcase for house design style or recent work.

Brilliantly laid out and well presented, *Business Cards* makes an absorbing browse and essential sourcebook, and if you want to get in touch with any of the designers featured, you know where to look for the phone numbers.



↓ ALSO RECOMMENDED



CRACKING ANIMATION: THE AARDMAN BOOK OF 3D ANIMATION

AUTHOR: Peter Lord and Brian Sibley

PRICE: £24.95

PUBLISHER: Thames and Hudson

ISBN: 0-50051-190-X

An updated history of the Oscar-winning Aardman Studio from *Morph* to *Chicken Run*, which takes in the development of 3D animation and, of course, Wallace and Gromit. The book also provides a step-by-step guide to developing characters and creating your own animations.



ROOKLEDGE'S CLASSIC INTERNATIONAL TYPEFINDER

AUTHOR: Gordon Rookledge and Christopher Perfect

PRICE: £24.95

PUBLISHER: Laurence King

ISBN: 1-85669-406-2

First published in the pre-DTP days of 1983 and updated in 1990, this 2005 revised edition of Rookledge's guide covers over 700 typefaces and aims to help designers recognise and identify types seen and used on an every-day basis.



MAKE YOUR OWN MUSIC VIDEO

AUTHORS: Ed Gaskell

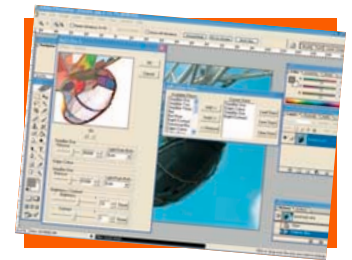
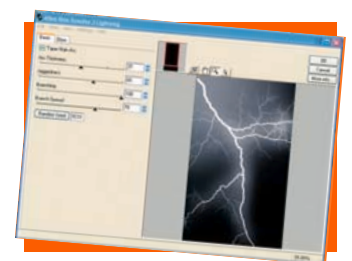
PRICE: £19.95

PUBLISHER: Ilex

ISBN: 1-90470-530-8

A step-by-step guide to creating professional music promos using digital video and readily-available editing software, covering everything from camera set-ups and location shooting to post production and marketing. A good general guide that forms a great introduction to the field.



**BACKDROP DESIGNER P90****CREATIVE PACK P90****BUZZ.PRO 3 P91****XENOFEX 2 P91****SCATTERLIGHT LENSES P92**

→ GROUP TEST

PHOTOSHOP PLUG-INS

Adobe's ubiquitous design app is tailor-made for third-party plug-ins, generating everything from simple patterns to complex natural media effects. We sample five of the latest

There are tens of thousands of *Photoshop*-compatible plug-ins currently on the market. A good chunk are free, produced by image-makers to solve their own creative problems and then made available to others online. A few thousand are available to buy, but of those, probably only a hundred or so are of real use to the professional artist.

Plug-ins don't just work with *Photoshop*, of course, but Adobe's ever-popular package is so dominant in the marketplace that everyone else has adopted the Adobe plug-in standard. As a result, these products are likely to work with most of the popular image manipulation packages. It's worth checking before you buy, however, because small

differences in implementation could mean that some products won't work well in some host programs.

For this Group Test, we've selected five plug-ins, all boasting either a spread of filters or the ability to create a wide range of effects. We've also searched out products that will suit both those working with photographic/photo-real images and those producing more graphic, representational work.

All of these filters cost less than £120 and can produce professional results. In a marketplace that contains so many products specific to a small number of users, we've selected a range of plug-ins that we believe will be of most use to most people.

Illustration by Scott Hansen, www.iso50.com



Backdrop Designer

MAC Yes PC Yes PRICE \$199

CONTACT 415-586-8434 www.digitalanarchy.com

Although primarily designed for portrait photographers, *Backdrop Designer*, which enables you to create a range of interesting textures and patterns, will come in handy for digital artists, too.

The clever interface splits the process of backdrop creation into two sections. To the left, you can pick a colour pattern from a range of presets – including repeating patterns, fabrics and textures – all of which can be edited or mutated by changing colour, brightness or scale.

To the right, you can choose from a range of textures, shadows and lighting. Options here include spotlights, cracks and grids. These too can be customised, and the colour layer distorted to take account of the shape of folded cloth. The result? An almost infinite combination of photo-realistically coloured and shaded backdrops.

You could say that *Backdrop Designer* is nothing more than a

series of textures mixed with some greyscale gradients. Indeed, there's not a lot here you couldn't do with *Photoshop's* standard filters and some snazzy textures. However, the plug-in is easy to use, fast and the resulting images, because they're algorithm-based, are resolution independent. We pushed the package up to 6,500x3,500 pixels, and the results looked good – although it took the app a while (four and a half minutes on a 2.6GHz PC).

A simple backcloth or painted texture is easy enough to create, but the full range of patterns allows for the simple production of more complex, cutting-edge textures. For this reason, we think *Backdrop Designer* would be a great plug-in for both digital image-makers and portrait photographers.

Sadly, despite offering loads of texture and shadow presets, there are few finished backcloths to use straight out of the box.

VERDICT



Digital Anarchy's extremely useful plug-in may be a little pricey for some, and you'll need to work pretty hard within the program's interface, but the results are definitely worth it.

RESOURCE

For two excellent QuickTime tutorials on getting to grips with *Backdrop Designer* and the app's Bend Editor, which controls the extent of distortions, visit www.digitalanarchy.com/backdrop/backdrop_tutes.html



Creative Pack

MAC Yes PC Yes PRICE \$39

CONTACT www.flamingpear.com

Given that most people take one look at *Photoshop's* Emboss filter, decide that it looks like a dodgy brass rubbing and move swiftly on, it seems odd that such a renowned plug-in developer as Flaming Pear should bring out not one, but three plug-ins based on the same idea.

In fact, embossing basically involves detecting the edges of objects within an image. Once you've done that successfully, you can alter the colour and completely change the look of the shot, and, most significantly, accentuate the edges to create the look of a hand-drawn, painted, or carved image.

There are three such plug-ins on offer in Flaming Pear's suite: Boss Emboss – which creates bevelled edges, successfully giving your 2D images a 3D appearance; Organic Edges – which creates painterly effects; and Wavy Colour – which cycles colour, giving an unrealistic yet entertaining rainbow effect to

your work. Aside from these three edge-based plug-ins, the *Creative Pack* includes a fourth plug-in designed to make symmetrical psychedelic patterns. It's not at all clear how this fits in with the other three filters, but it's fun and very simple to use.

All the filters include a good range of sliders and the ability to load and save presets. There's also a series of randomiser functions, which can be useful when you're generating ideas.

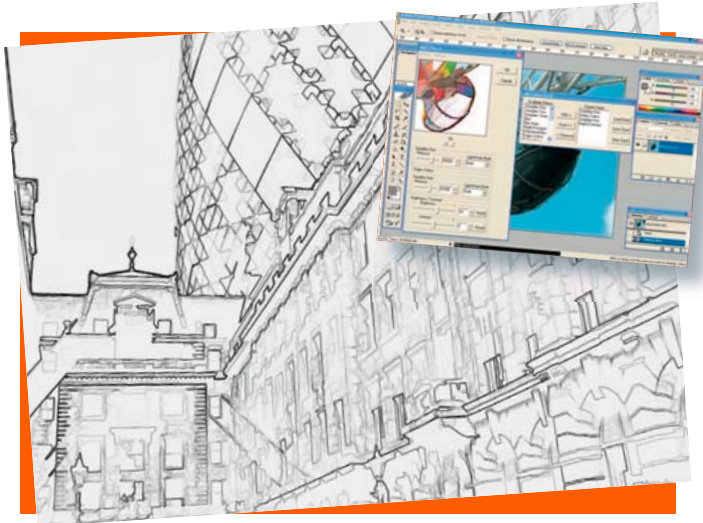
On the downside, the preview window often reveals results that are actually very different from the applied filter (the larger your image, the more obvious this can be). Such discrepancies can be a real problem, especially when effects take a while to render in full quality.

That said, the *Creative Pack* offers excellent value for money at just \$39, and you'll create some great effects if you're prepared to hold out for a few test renders.

VERDICT



This great set of tools will help transform your images with a painterly look. However, the preview function is unreliable and regularly produces effects that are very different in appearance to the actual result.



buZZ.Pro 3

MAC No PC Yes PRICE £119

CONTACT 08707 520520 www.fo2pix.com

BuZZ.Pro 3 offers a whole bundle of filters (22 in all) in one interface, which together form a system for creating a range of painterly effects. Watercolours, oils and sketched effects are all possible, and results are impressive.

BuZZ.Pro's filters cover brightness, highlighting and lowlighting, emboss and blurs, but the plug-in is really defined by its Simplify filters. These remove detail from your image, turning shaded shapes into flat areas of colour, a little like Photoshop's Cut-out filter.

The package contains five Simplify filters, each with different controls and levels of complexity. These give you control over the detail that's removed so that the important elements of your shot – the eyes of a portrait, for example – can be preserved while the trivial details, such as the background, are lost.

BuZZ.Pro has an unusual interface, which appears as two

windows – a preview and controls window, and a stack. The stack offers a list of filters, which can be added to your effect, and the preview window lists the controls for each filter you've added.

The benefit? You can apply extremely complex effects, but only ever see on-screen the controls you're using. The interface can have one or 20 sliders depending entirely on what you have added to the stack.

The other, and more creatively important, feature is that you can move filters up and down the stack. As a result, you can apply an emboss filter followed by a blur to create a blurred emboss, or swap the two around to produce a sharp emboss on a blurred image. This really adds to the flexibility of buZZ.Pro, without making it too difficult to use.

On the down side, buZZ.Pro really struggles with the resources of a 512MB PC when working with very large images (12 megapixels).

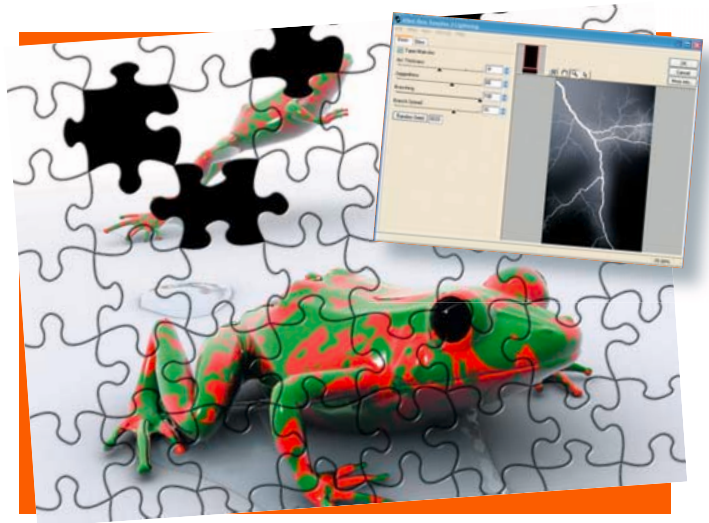
VERDICT



BuZZ.Pro 3 is a flexible and powerful plug-in that manages to combine complex, layered effects with simplicity of use, thanks to the innovative interface. It's expensive, but creates some lovely results.

RESOURCE

Fo2pix is currently preparing a community forum where buZZ.Pro users can exchange ideas, swap tips and post their work online. Check out www.fo2pix.com/community/community.php to find out more.



Xenofex 2

MAC Yes PC Yes PRICE \$129

CONTACT 1.919.832.412 www.alienskin.com

Xenofex 2 uses Alien Skin's well-known, and generally well-liked Eye Candy interface to provide a palette of 14 effects filters that offer distinctive, but quite specific effects to enhance your work. So specific, in fact, that you may find them a little limited in terms of application.

The interface consists of a large preview screen with controls down the left-hand side, and a menu complete with multiple undo, and the ability to switch from one filter to another without leaving Xenofex. When selected, each filter places around ten presets within the Settings menu, so you can often find just what you're looking for without even touching the filter's controls.

If you need them, however, these controls are pretty comprehensive, with up to ten sliders and selection boxes for each effect. It would've been nice to combine a range of filters in a single session, but the nature of Xenofex's filters means

that you're only ever likely to apply them one at a time.

Of the 14 filters provided, there are some real stars. The Lightning effect, for example, is superb. With control over its start and ends points, it's hard to tell it from the real thing if properly applied.

Burnt Edges, Cracks and Stain all distress the edges of your images, making it possible to give a damaged appearance to your photographs, and each has a decent range of presets to speed up workflow. Rip Open, Shatter and Flag distort ripple and break up your images to provide interesting effects for both graphical and photographic elements.

Crumple and Jigsaw both produce overlaid patterns to give your shots a distinctive look (the effect name gives the game away), while Constellation and Little Fluffy Clouds use random pattern generators to create detailed skies with varying degrees of realism.

VERDICT



Everything looks sharp and performs well here, but most of the filters answer very specific needs. If you want burnt edges, lightning strikes or jigsaw patterns, then this is the plug-in for you. If you don't, it's not.



MAC Yes

PC Yes

PRICE

\$98

CONTACT

805-379-4109

www.andromeda.com

FEATURES

- Light diffusion effects
- Glow and highlights
- Soft focus
- Fog
- Stars and glitter
- Resizable preview
- Expert and novice mode
- Saveable presets

FOR

- Stunning effects
- Great preview function
- Fast

AGAINST

- Limited controls
- Can't scroll through presets

COMPUTER
arts
RECOMMENDED

ScatterLight Lenses

ADD IMPRESSIVE LIGHTING EFFECTS WITH THIS ESSENTIAL TOOL

VERDICT

ScatterLight lenses offer a good range of lighting effects that work quickly and simply with minimum fuss. The results are realistic, and often quite stunning. With a package as useful as this, you can be sure you're getting real value for money.



Soft focus isn't just for greetings cards and *Penthouse* magazine; diffusion effects appear in most photographers' toolkits. But they aren't easy to achieve in *Photoshop*. Most designers use the Diffuse Glow filter – which tends to make the image pale and flat – or apply blurs on semi-transparent layers, using various overlay methods to brighten and soften the image. Either way, the process is slow and imprecise.

Andromeda's *ScatterLight Lenses* offer a great set of customisable diffusions and highlights to create effects from subtle dreamy landscapes to glittering shines.

The effects are impressive. You can use the filter for over-the-top

American-style romantic images, but you can also get softer effects to add a touch of mystery or lift the highlights of a shot. *ScatterLight* is also useful for adding atmosphere to flat 3D renders.

The finished effects are realistic, and at their best can mimic the real effects of dust in the air, diffusion lenses, real-world lighting and atmospheric conditions – although it would've been good if you could add your own highlight shapes and filters, or fine-tune the way the plug-in reacts to different levels of light. Still, the filter does give you some flexibility.

The interface can be switched between novice and expert modes,

but frankly the filter is simple enough. Once you've used it a couple of times, you'll be well and truly at home with the controls anyway.

There are presets for everything you could possibly need and they're grouped conveniently into areas such as "dream optics", "soft focus", "stars" and "fun". You can add your own presets, too, but unfortunately there's no way to click through them to see which works best for you. Instead you'll need to go back and choose each one from the menu. This is a shortfall as, depending on the lighting of your image, you may have to try out several presets before you find the one you want.

Previewing is effective, with a good-sized window displaying your filter's effects, a magnified area, and the option of a 1:1 preview. Once you've found the effect you're looking for, rendering is fast – a 12-megapixel image filtered-in within ten seconds. Impressive.

At around £50, *ScatterLight Lenses* is great value for money. The plug-in deals with lighting conditions you'll see in every-day environments, so you can expect to use it pretty regularly. This is no one-hit wonder, but a tool you'll return to time after time.

RESOURCE

Looking for a centralised resource for *Photoshop* plug-ins? Then visit <http://thepluginsite.com/resources/index.htm> for links to a host of great plug-ins, some of which are free.



CONCLUSION

Every product in this Group Test is effective. We picked them all initially because they do what they say they're going to do, and they do it well.

However, *Xenofex 2* has a range of effects unmatched by the other products, each one useful in its own right. Some are a little gimmicky and limited, but they're resolution-independent and produce high quality results.

Creative Pack is capable of creating some great looking effects, and is flexible and easy to use. However, it's hampered by the fact that what you see on the preview isn't what you get on the finished shot.

Buzz.Pro offers some neat painted and drawn effects which offer a better range than *Creative Pack*, and the approach of its interface means that you can create much more complex layered effects in a single pass, but sadly it's six times the price.

Backdrop Designer is a great tool for the photographer, and once you get the hang of it you can

produce effective and realistic backdrops very easily. It has enough elements to produce a wide range of imagery, and to make it useful to digital artists, but the package lacks presets. However, although a little ungainly to use, the results, even at the highest resolutions, are uniformly excellent.

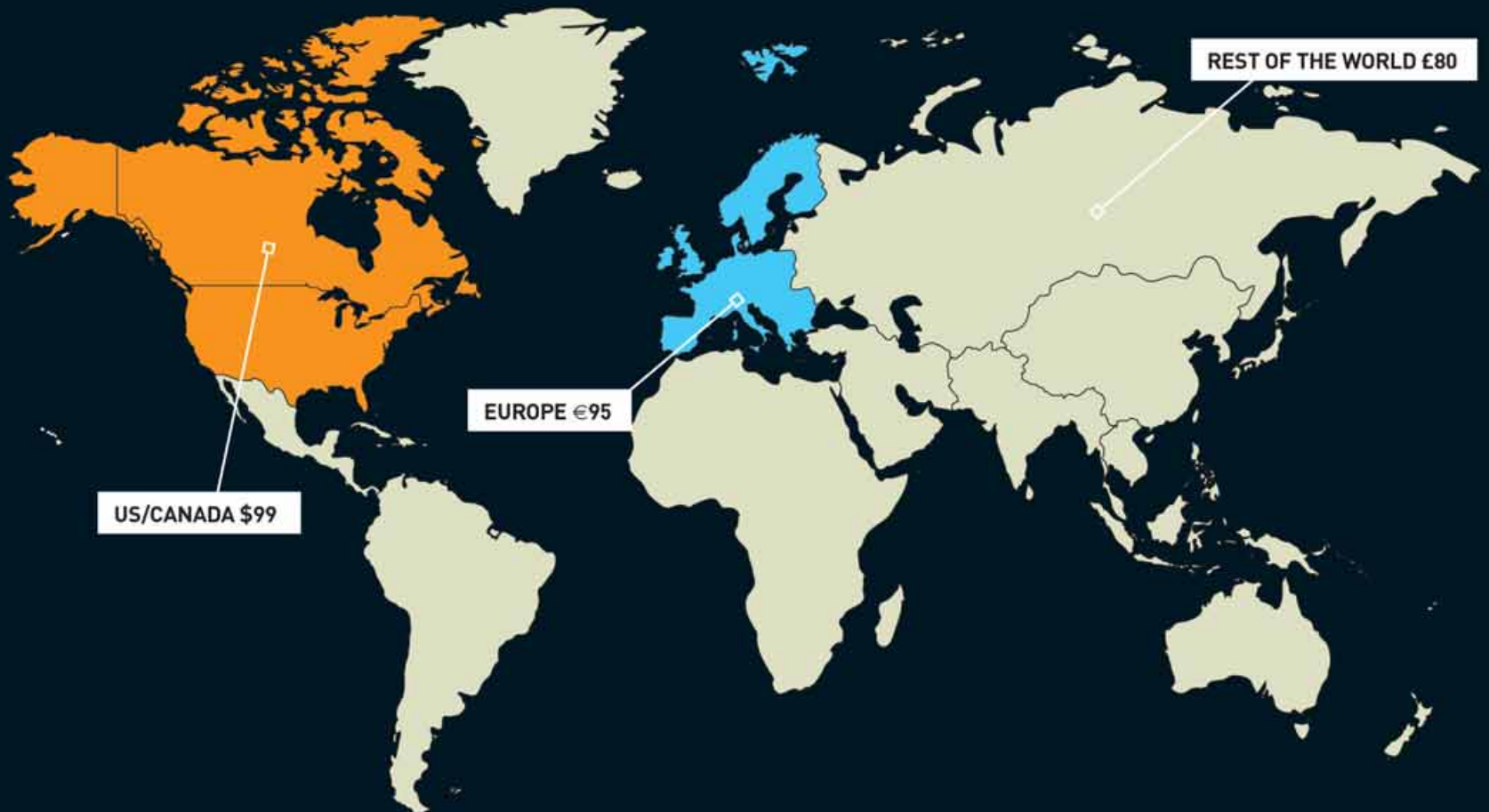
But overall we picked *ScatterLight* as our winner because whatever you're doing, and whatever kind of imagery you're working with, you're likely to find a place for it. Soft focus and diffusion effects cover a wider range than you'd think, and the ability to add sparkles, blurs, and glints can really lift a photo, add realism to a 3D rendering, or soften a 2D illustration.

Strip away the fashionable effects and clever filters and you get down to the basics. If you're working with images, you're working with light and atmosphere, and anything that enables you control that is an essential piece of kit. All of these plug-ins are available on the cover CD. **arts**

PLUG-IN SUITE	BACKDROP DESIGNER	CREATIVE PACK	BUZZ.PRO 3	XENOFEX 2	SCATTERLIGHT LENSES COMPUTER arts RECOMMENDED
PRICE	\$199 (approx £105)	\$39 (approx £20)	£119	\$129 (approx £68)	\$98 (approx £52)
SCORE	★★★★★	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★★	★★★★☆
MAC OR PC?	Both	Both	PC only	Both	Both
NO. OF FILTERS	5	4	22	14	5
PRESETS	5	49	26	150+	44
SPECIAL FEATURES	Creates everything from simple backcloths or painted textures to more complex cutting-edge patterned images.	Emboss-heavy filters for creating bevelled edges, painterly effects – and rainbow effects.	Brightness, highlights and low lighting, emboss, blurs and Simplify filters, which help to remove detail.	Loads of effects covering lightning, burnt edges, cracks, stains, rips, crumpled paper and, of course, jigsaw puzzle pieces.	Great set of diffusions and focus highlights – ideal for creating everything from subtle dreamy landscapes to glittering shines.

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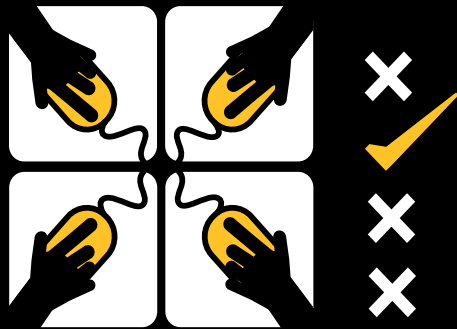
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BUYER'S GUIDE



3D ANIMATOR

A stack of up-to-date software is essential for any 3D animator, as is a fast and RAM-packed workstation and a decent monitor. So check out the kit we've reviewed and see what's best for you...

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

What sort of designer are you?



MOTION GRAPHICS DESIGNER

DIGITAL VIDEO SOFTWARE **P97**

PLUG-INS **P96**

DIGITAL SLRS **P97**



ILLUSTRATOR

GRAPHICS SOFTWARE **P96**

PRINTERS **P97**

LAYOUT SOFTWARE **P96**

GRAPHICS TABLETS **P99**



WEB DESIGNER

WEB ANIMATION SOFTWARE **P99**

DIGITAL SLRS **P97**

MOBILE HARD DRIVES **P96**

LCD MONITOR **P99**

3D PACKAGES **P98**

CINEMA 4D
Release 9

DVD WRITERS **P99**

GRAPHICS TABLETS **P99**



BUYER'S GUIDE

→ GRAPHICS AND LAYOUT SOFTWARE

WHAT TO BUY?



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



COREL PAINTER 9
Leading natural media tool – now with oil paint effects.

NAME	MAC PC?	DESCRIPTION	MANUFACTURER	PRICE	WEBSITE	ISSUE	VERDICT
ILLUSTRATOR CS	Mac PC	Industry standard vector graphics software – a vital tool for anyone who needs to design for print or the web.	Adobe	£511	www.adobe.co.uk	89	★★★★★ Offers smaller improvements across the board, but not exactly what you'd call a huge upgrade.
PHOTOSHOP CS	Mac PC	The design daddy, the creative king, and the industry standard professional image editor.	Adobe	£605	www.adobe.co.uk	89	★★★★★ Improvements across the board make this a more versatile tool than ever. arts RECOMMENDED
FREEHAND MX	Mac PC	An easy-to-learn graphics environment for designing illustrations and organising data for print/web or <i>Flash</i> .	Macromedia	£299	www.macromedia.com	82	★★★★★ A rock-solid release that offers a plethora of invaluable tools. arts RECOMMENDED
QUARKXPRESS 6	Mac PC	The tried-and-tested publishing tool of yesteryear plods into the present. Better late than never...	Quark	£1,095	http://euro.quark.com	87	★★★★★ A comfortable and familiar upgrade, but <i>InDesign</i> still has the edge, design-wise.
INDESIGN CS	Mac PC	Adobe's DTP upstart comes of age as <i>QuarkXPress</i> -killer <i>InDesign</i> approaches industry-standard status.	Adobe	£716	www.adobe.co.uk/products/indesign	67	★★★★★ <i>InDesign</i> now simply amazes – and utterly trounces <i>QuarkXPress</i> .
PAINTER 9	Mac PC	The number one natural media tool now delivers an Artists' Oils system, a batch of KPT filters, and more.	Corel	£249	www.corel.co.uk	102	★★★★★ If you want realistic digital paint, there really is no other option. arts RECOMMENDED
JAWS PDF CREATOR 3.4	Mac PC	PDF creation utility; its Jaws virtual printer drive enables delivery from any program.	Jaws	£62	www.jawspdf.com	102	★★★★★ Equally adept at outputting pre-press quality PDFs as everyday office documents.
FLASHPAPER2	PC	Enables you to create cross-platform electronic documents (SWF and PDF files) from any program.	Macromedia	£49	www.macromedia.com	102	★★★★★ A slick way of creating high-quality versions of your documents. Customisation options are limited.
CLICK TO CONVERT 5.3	PC	A mini-publisher of two file formats (PDF and HTML), which you can output simultaneously, if required.	Click to Convert	\$89	www.clicktoconvert.com	102	★★★★★ Ideal for churning out documents in the two formats, but keeping file sizes down can be tricky.
PDF CREATE	PC	Complex and sophisticated PDF creation utility, reminiscent of Adobe <i>Acrobat</i> itself.	Scansoft	£40	www.scansoft.co.uk	102	★★★★★ Not a one-click solution – but when precise configuration matters, <i>PDF Create!</i> is a godsend.
PDFFACTORY PRO 2.27	PC	This PDF creation utility offers pre-conversion document preview, batch processing and a virtual printer driver.	FinePrint	£59	www.fineprint.com	102	★★★★★ For overall flexibility, speed and compact files size, this conversion utility is a must.
QUARK XPRESS 6.5	Mac PC	Latest iteration offers expanded Print Styles, expanded PDF generation and Vista Xtension.	Quark	£1,169	euro.quark.com/en	104	★★★★★ Not quite the <i>InDesign</i> killer many were hoping for, but the tweaks bode well for <i>XPress 7</i> . arts RECOMMENDED
SIZEFIXER	PC	Enlarge your digital images by a staggering 400 per cent with no loss in quality.	FixerLabs	£149	www.fixerlabs.com	104	★★★★★ Makes some bold claims, but delivers – you can stretch images to breaking point.
ACDSEE	PC	This image-management solution supports the RAW image format and can convert to JPEG 2000.	ACD Systems	£35	www.acdsystems.com	104	★★★★★ A fast, easy-to-use and efficient image-management tool. Great interface, too.
PRINTDEVIZOR 1.0	Mac PC	3D print-finish simulator that avoids the expense of mock-ups or chromalins.	Stonecube	£495	www.stonecube.com	105	★★★★★ A great idea, especially if you work in this field, but it fails to cater for Pantone colours.

→ PLUG-INS



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

NIK COLOR EFEX PRO	PC	Fantastic set of digital photographic filters for <i>Photoshop</i> and <i>Paintshop Pro</i> .	Nik Multimedia	£280	www.nikmultimedia.com	94	★★★★★ You could create the effects for yourself in <i>Photoshop</i> , but they'd take longer. arts RECOMMENDED
SYMMETRY WORKS	Mac PC	Adobe <i>Illustrator</i> plug-in for creating eye-catching surface pattern designs in seconds.	Artlandia	\$241	www.artlandia.com	N/A	N/A Fast and effective way to create patterns. An effective time-saver when up against deadlines.
PRIMATTE 2.0	Mac PC	<i>Photoshop</i> plug-in dedicated to ultra-clean, blue-screen compositing.	Digital Anarchy	\$299	www.digitalanarchy.com	97	★★★★★ More powerful than <i>Cinematte</i> and cheaper than <i>Multimatte</i> . Results are impressive.
SAPPHIRE	Mac PC	Generate superb effects with this 175+-strong suite of movie-quality plug-ins.	GenArts	\$1,699	www.genarts.com	98	★★★★★ Without a doubt, the best plug-ins you can buy – but they come at a professional price.
PARTICULAR	Mac PC	Neatly integrated <i>After Effects</i> plug-in suite, comprising natural and technical effects.	Trapcode	£199	www.trapcode.com	99	★★★★★ Stunning, beautifully put together and boasting endless creative possibilities. arts RECOMMENDED
FURNACE	Mac PC	Two <i>After Effects</i> plug-ins for stabilising (Steadiness) and speeding up/slowing down (Kronos) footage.	The Foundry	£350	www.thefoundry.co.uk	101	★★★★★ Excellent, easy-to-use plug-ins – the high price shouldn't dissuade professionals.
EYECANDY 5: TEXTURES	Mac PC	Ten <i>Photoshop</i> plug-ins, including Fur, Brick Wall, Diamond Plate, Marble, Reptile Skin and Swirl.	Alien Skin	\$99	www.alienskin.com	102	★★★★★ A fun, versatile and (mostly) useful set of filter effects that'll suit pros and amateurs alike.

→ IMAGE EDITING SOFTWARE

PHOTOCLEAN	Mac PC	A quickfire photo clean-up application designed with the absolute beginner in mind.	Shortcut	95 Euros	www.trulyphoto magic.com	101	★★★★★ Easy-to-use and intuitive photo-editing tools that should interest pros and enthusiasts.
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→ MOBILE HARD DRIVES

LACIE BIG DISK EXTREME 500	Mac PC	500GB FireWire hard drive.	LaCie	£420	www.lacie.com	97	★★ A stylish, powerful and versatile hard drive – let down by potentially disastrous reliability issues.
MOBILE HARD DRIVE	Mac PC	20GB, 40GB, 80GB hard drive.	LaCie	£85-£200	www.lacie.com	97	★★★★★ Swift auto-installation [without drivers], top transfer rates, and a great low price! arts RECOMMENDED
IOMEGA REV DRIVE	Mac PC	An innovative back-up/storage solution. Includes <i>Norton Ghost</i> (PC)/ <i>Dantz Restrospect Express</i> (Mac).	Iomega	£279	www.iomega-europe.com	103	★★★★★ Fast and reliable, but not much cop if you're operating in a multi-platform environment.
LACIE 40GB USB 2.0	Mac PC	This elegant Porsche-designed drive delivers 40GB storage, USB 2.0 connectivity and 12ms access	LaCie	£103	www.lacie.com/uk	105	★★★★★ It's not the fastest or the cheapest, but it's durable, hard-working and easy to use.



IOMEGA REV DRIVE
Iomega provides an innovative back-up solution for £279.



→ DIGITAL SLRS

NAME	MAC PC?	DESCRIPTION	MANUFACTURER	PRICE	WEBSITE	ISSUE	VERDICT
NIKON D70	Mac PC	An upgrade of Nikon's D100, but at half the price – and a capable answer to Canon's 300D.	Nikon	£800	www.nikon.co.uk	97	★★★★★ Superbly kitted out and built to tough and reliable specifications, the D70 betters the D100.
OLYMPUS CAMEDIA E-1	Mac PC	Smart design enables Olympus' first foray into the digital SLR world to accommodate smaller lenses.	Olympus	£1,400	www.olympus.co.uk	97	★★★★★ A cracking build and a vast array of features make the E-1 a highly attractive proposition.
FUJIFILM FINEPIX S2 PRO	Mac PC	Competent digital shutterbug with Super CCD that can capture 12MP images (with interpolation).	Fujifilm	£1,500	www.fuji.co.uk	97	★★★★★ A bulky, weighty SLR that delivers crisp, clear, colour-accurate images time after time.
CANON EOS 300D	Mac PC	The first genuinely budget SLR to hit the market – with easy-to-use controls and limited functions.	Canon	£900	www.canon.co.uk	97	★★★★ An average SLR that's unfortunately showing its age – now superseded by Nikon's better-specced D70.
CANON EOS 10D	Mac PC	Critically acclaimed digital SLR that's exceptionally well put together.	Canon	£1,400	www.canon.co.uk	97	★★★★★ First class images, superb magnesium alloy body and great features.

WHAT TO BUY?



FINEPIX S2 PRO

Fujifilm's competent digital shutterbug will set you back £1,500.



→ SCANNERS AND PRINTERS

CANOSCAN 8000F	Mac PC	Entry-level scanner with FARE Level 1 auto-correction technology. Can scan up to the edge of the bed.	Canon	£175	www.canon.co.uk	98	★★★★ Good capabilities at a very good price, but none of its features are market-leading.
CANOSCAN 9900F	Mac PC	Professional scanner offering 2400x4800dpi resolution and FARE Level 2 technology.	Canon	£299	www.canon.co.uk	98	★★★★★ A competent performer at a great price. It scans all sorts of media and is very easy to operate.
MICROTEK ARTIXSCAN 1100	Mac PC	Showing its age, but this faithful stalwart's colour fidelity is second to none.	Microtek	£938	www.microtek.co.uk	98	★★★★ Valuable as part of a colour-critical environment, but slow and expensive, considering its age.
PERFECTION 4870 PHOTO	Mac PC	Proficient scanner with Digital ICE image-cleaning technology for the ultimate reproduction quality.	Epson	£349	www.epson.co.uk	98	★★★★★ Wouldn't look out of place in a pro environment or even a home studio.
BROTHER HL-3450CN	Mac PC	A3/A4 colour laser printer (size: 615x420x540mm), offering maximum resolution of 2400dpi.	Brother	£2,349	www.brother.co.uk	101	★★★★ Seems more at home with business graphics than digital artwork. Could do with more memory.
MAGICOLOR 7300	Mac PC	A3/A4 colour laser printer (size: 628x594x564mm), offering maximum resolution of 600dpi.	Konica-Minolta	£2,606	www.konicaminolta.com	101	★★★★★ High quality results. You can't ignore the low price and running costs, or the 256MB RAM.
OKI C9500DN	Mac PC	A3/A4 colour laser printer (size: 666x626x460mm), offering a maximum resolution of 1200dpi.	Oki	£4,869	www.oki.co.uk	101	★★★★★ A fast and accurate printer for both high-end graphics proofing and office documents.
XANTÉ CL30	Mac PC	A3/A4 colour laser printer (size: 665x589x462mm), offering a maximum resolution of 1200dpi.	Xanté	£4,463	www.info-tec.biz	101	★★★★★ Expect colour-accurate output every time and quickly delivered, reliable proofs.
XEROX PHASER 7750DN	Mac PC	A3/A4 colour laser printer (size: 644x715x493mm), offering a maximum resolution of 1200dpi.	Xerox	£5,779	www.xerox.com	101	★★★★★ Fast, high quality printer that's perfect for both every day proofing and mission-critical design.
HP DESKJET 6540	Mac PC	Can print up to 30ppm (black) and 20ppm (colour). 150-sheet input tray and ink status alert.	Hewlett Packard	£118	www.hp.com/uk	103	★★★★★ Not feature-packed, but delivers good results in both colour and black and white.
HP DESKJET 130NR	Mac PC	Large-format (A1+) printer with 64MB RAM, automated 24-inch roll feed and auto paper cutter.	Hewlett Packard	£1,600	www.hp.co.uk	104	★★★★★ An affordable and robust proofing machine that delivers impressive results.
COLOUR LJ 2550N	Mac PC	Fast warm-up time, 24ppm (mono) and 4ppm (colour) printing times and (upgradeable) 64MB RAM built-in.	Hewlett-Packard	£459	www.hp.com/uk	105	★★★★ A compact and elegant printer, but it desperately needs more memory.
PERFECTION 2580 PHOTO	Mac PC	Colour flatbed scanner with 2,400x4,800dpi, automatic film loader and image-editing software.	Epson	£99	www.epson.co.uk	105	★★★★★ A low-priced yet effective scanner that produces great images, fast. Great auto-loading.



BROTHER HL-3450CN

Pricey A3/A4 colour laser printer at £2,349, but offers a maximum resolution of 2,400dpi.



HP DESKJET 130NR

The HP DeskJet boasts 64MB RAM and a 24-inch roll feed.

→ GRAPHICS CARDS

FIREGLX2 256T	PC	Top-end, pro-level graphics card tailored for power-hungry users (engineers, architects, etc).	ATI	\$899	www.ati.com	98	★★★★ An amazing performer, but it comes at a price that may put off many prospective buyers.
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→ ASSET MANAGEMENT

PORTFOLIO 7	Mac PC	Leading asset-management software, now expanded to include direct-to-web publishing feature.	Extensis	\$200	www.extensis.co.uk	100	★★★★★ Nothing can touch the power of this long-respected and valuable asset management solution.
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→ DIGITAL VIDEO

VIDEO TOASTER 3	PC	A complete post-production and video mixing suite. Supports live internet streaming.	Computers Unlimited	£2,500	www.newtek-europe.com	95	★★★★★ Budget studios will find VideoToaster 3 an ideal all-in-one solution for their production needs.
FINAL CUT PRO 4	Mac	Emmy Award-winning tool for editing and finishing in SD and HD formats. Used to produce many TV shows.	Apple	£699	www.apple.com/uk/finalcutpro/	86	★★★★★ Final Cut Pro 4 is nothing short of superb. Excellent bundled applications, too.
AVID XPRESS PRO	Mac PC	Sophisticated video editing tool aimed at the higher end of the mid-range market.	AVID	£1,527	www.avid.com/expresspro	91	★★★★★ Twice as expensive as Premiere – but not different enough to warrant the difference.
AUDITION 1.5	PC	Pro audio editing/mixing environment that delivers advanced mastering and effects-processing features.	Adobe	£246	www.adobe.co.uk/products/audition	N/A	N/A An excellent tool for home users serious about audio. Superb features and easy to use, too.
FINAL CUT EXPRESS 2.0	Mac	Apple's flagship consumer video-editing app strikes a careful balance between features and affordability.	Apple	£199	www.apple.com/uk/finalcut/express	94	★★★★★ The best low-cost editing solution for DV, although effects may frustrate Pro users.



FINAL CUT PRO

Apple's tool for editing and finishing in SD and HD (£199).



BUYER'S GUIDE

→ DIGITAL VIDEO continued...

WHAT TO BUY?



APPLE MOTION 1.0
Apple's entry-level motion graphics package is now available for \$299.



STUDIO PLUS 9
Enjoy over 100 transitions and 16 video filters for only £60.



LIGHTWAVE 8
Strong rendering and good all-round performance for just under a grand.



CINEMA 4D R9
Release number 9 adds 100 brand new features, including a cloth simulator.

NAME	MAC PC?	DESCRIPTION	MANUFACTURER	PRICE	WEBSITE	ISSUE	VERDICT
AFTER EFFECTS	PC	Adobe's industry standard tool for adding visual effects and motion graphics to film footage.	Adobe	£664	www.adobe.co.uk/products/aftereffects	95	★★★★ Well-designed application with many features not available in rival software.
DVD WORKSHOP 2	PC	Consumer-friendly DVD authoring software with many professional features, including real-time previews.	Ulead	£259	www.ulead.co.uk	97	★★★★ Easy to use, but much of the (cheaper) competition has caught up since the release of v1.
FINAL CUT PRO HD	Mac	The professional editing application with broadcast quality credentials is now HD compatible.	Apple	£699	www.apple.com/uk	98	★★★★★ Pro features and top interface ensure this pro-level app always delivers. arts
AFTER EFFECTS 6.5	Mac PC	Adobe's industry standard app now includes better motion tracking and grain management tools.	Adobe	£664 (Standard)	www.adobe.co.uk	99	★★★★★ A number of new and improved features make this an indispensable tool for the video pro.
PREMIERE PRO 1.5	PC	Video-editing app with improved project management and broader support for industry formats.	Adobe	£616	www.adobe.co.uk	99	★★★★★ Premiere's allegiance to Windows ensures superior integration with related titles.
PFTRACK 2	Mac PC	3D motion-tracking software that supports tracking, zooming, passing and tilting shots.	The Pixel Farm	£3,000	www.thepixelfarm.co.uk	100	★★★★ Fast and efficient, PFTrack 2 completes what can be a dreadful job simply and quickly.
MOTION 1.0	Mac	Apple's entry-level motion graphics software comes with Behaviors and stacks of effects filters	Apple	\$299	www.apple.com	102	★★★★ Simple and intuitive to use, with many advanced features, Motion 1.0 delights on all levels.
VIDEO STUDIO 8	PC	This DV editor offers 128 transitions, DVD authoring functionality, and five audio filters.	Ulead	£50	www.ulead.co.uk	103	★★★★ Offers a wealth of flexible presets and effects filters, but unsophisticated editing tools.
POWER DIRECTOR 3	PC	DV editor with great titling functions, plus 122 transitions and 24 video filters.	GoCyberlink	£50	www.gocyberlink.com	103	★★★★ Will certainly get the job done if you're on a budget, but the DVD authoring is as basic as can be.
LET'S EDIT	Mac PC	DV editor offering 96 standard wipe transitions, a built-in wipe customiser and 26 video filters.	Canopus	£99	www.canopus-uk.com	103	★★★★ Every dialog/menu boasts a wide range of options and controls, but it's not that intuitive to use.
STUDIO PLUS 9	PC	Enjoy 126 transitions, 16 video filters and DVD authoring with this multi-purpose DV editor.	Pinnacle Systems	£60	www.pinnaclesys.com	103	★★★★★ Probably the fastest way to achieve a finished production from your raw footage.
PREMIERE ELEMENTS	PC	Benefit from unlimited video and audio tracks with this entry-level version of Premiere Pro.	Adobe	£69	www.adobe.co.uk	103	★★★★★ Your work may take longer, but the results speak for themselves. arts
VIDEO TOASTER 4	PC	A complete TV studio, with post-production suite thrown in. Includes LightWave 3D and Aura.	NewTek	£2,299	www.newtek.com	105	★★★★ Impressive specs, but you'll need a high-end system to exploit those pro features.

→ 3D SOFTWARE

SHAKE 3.5	Mac PC	Small but effective update for Apple's industry-standard compositing and visual effects application.	Apple	£2,099	www.apple.com/uk/shake	99	★★★★★ Excellent colour correction tools from Apple's pricey but powerful app. arts
3DS MAX 7	Mac PC	A popular choice for 3D artists, thanks to its broad toolset and Normal Mapping feature.	Discreet	£2,695	www.discreet.com	105	★★★★ Feature-rich, but it's beginning to show its age. Expensive, too, but many pros swear by it.
MAYA 6	Mac PC	Acclaimed industry-standard visual effects package that delivers a host of great features.	Alias	£1,470	www.alias.com	105	★★★★ A great app for the die-hard character animator or effects artist.
VUE 4 PROFESSIONAL	Mac PC	Natural 3D scenery rendering package that enables you to generate lush landscapes at the click of a button.	e-on Software	£419	www.e-onsoftware.com	91	★★★★ A cut above other 3D packages – and soon-to-be leader in its field.
SILO	PC	Affordable polygon-modelling program that aims to be a cheap yet powerful alternative to its pricier peers.	Nevercenter	\$109	www.nevercenter.com	93	★★★★★ Professional-level modelling tools at your fingertips for a fraction of the cost. Great value.
CINEMA 4D R9	Mac PC	Modular design (character animation, 3D painting, etc) gives Cinema 4D the edge in terms of flexibility.	Maxon	£2,199	www.maxon.net	105	★★★★ A superb all-purpose 3D system that can tackle most 3D scenarios. arts
MOJOPACK	Mac PC	Compendium of planets, plug-ins, terrain maps and tutorials for planet/landscape-generator MojoWorld.	Pandromeda	\$99	www.pandromeda.com	105	★★★★ An interesting collection, but hardly a substitute for a full-on MojoWorld update.
ZBRUSH 2	PC	V2 of this innovative 2D painting/3D modelling hybrid is faster than ever and boasts hi-res mesh support.	Pixologic	\$489	www.pixologic.com	98	★★★★★ A stunning 3D package that sets a new standard for detailed polygon modelling. arts
LIGHTWAVE 8	Mac PC	Ten years on, NewTek's 3D stalwart can still cut the mustard, thanks to its strong rendering performance.	NewTek	£995	www.newtek.com	105	★★★★ A great all-rounder, with a relatively easy learning curve. Weak character tools, though..
SOFTIMAGE XSI 4.5	PC	Arguably one of the best balanced high-end 3D apps in terms of features. Caters for NURBS.	Softimage	£1082	www.softimage.com	105	★★★★★ Superb rendering and a solid character toolset. Not all that easy to use, though.
AMAPI 7 PRO	Mac PC	Latest iteration of Eovia's classic app now comes with a new NURBS kernel and Dynamic Geometry.	Eovia	\$799	www.eovia.com	101	★★★★ A powerful NURBS modeller for the professional designer, modeller or animator.
CINEMA 4D 9	Mac PC	Ninth iteration introduces 100 new features, including cloth simulator, the Point Slide tool and Ngons support.	Maxon	£499 - £2,199	www.maxon.net	102	★★★★★ Not quite as feature-rich or complex as 3ds max, but capable of some equally good results.
VUE 5 ESPRIT	Mac PC	The famous 3D landscape generator now comes with Radiosity, GI and HDRI rendering.	e-on software	£171	www.e-onsoftware.com	103	★★★★ Restricted plant generation and modelling tools, but a superb rendering engine.
CARRARA 4	Mac PC	The latest version of Eovia's 3D modeller delivers improved inverse kinematics and a redesigned timeline.	Eovia	£199	www.eovia.com	103	★★★★ Easy for students and amateur designers to learn, powerful enough to satisfy full-time pros.
PIRANESI 4	Mac PC	Distinctive 2D painting app, geared towards enhancing 3D design. Natural media paintbox included.	Informatix	£450	www.informatix.com	104	★★★★ A true 2D/3D painting hybrid. The ability to import 3D objects is a real boon.
FOLDUP! 3D 1.5	Mac PC	Feature-packed virtual packaging software that can turn your 2D designs into fully exportable 3D models.	Xchange International	£292	www.comnet-network.co.jp	105	★★★★ It'll only appeal to specialists, but it works well and extends Illustrator's abilities.



→ GRAPHICS TABLETS

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

WHAT TO BUY?



WACOM GRAPHIRE3
Great all-round performer from Wacom from £200.

→ WEB, ANIMATION, CD/DVD

DVD STUDIO PRO 3	Mac	Create a complete DVD in under 15 minutes with the latest iteration of Apple's pro DVD creation tool.	Apple	£349	www.apple.com/uk	99	★★★★ Stacks creative features make this perfect for the professional.
GO LIVE CS	Mac PC	Adobe's website design application is sometimes hailed as the Pepsi to Dreamweaver's Coke.	Adobe	£394	www.adobe.com	89	★★★★ The refined look and the feel of the app make it better than ever.
DREAMWEAVER MX 2004	Mac PC	Build and maintain websites and applications with this powerful set of tools.	Macromedia	£339	www.macromedia.co.uk	91	★★★★ Good integration with Contribute; fully embraces Cascading Style Sheets.
STITCHER 4	Mac PC	Create high quality panoramas and 360-degree QuickTime VR animations in minutes.	RealViz	499 euros	www.realviz.com	95	★★★★ Not the cheapest "sticking together" app around, but still one of the best.
TOON BOOM STUDIO 2.5	Mac	2D animation package that covers everything from scene-planning to preparing output for delivery.	Toon Boom	\$374	www.toonboom.com	98	★★★★ A fantastic all-round package for anyone interested in 2D animation.
FRAME FORGE 3D STUDIO	Mac PC	Professional quality storyboarding 3D software – import scripts, pose figures, set up cameras, and more...	Innovative Software	\$349	www.frameforge3d.com	100	★★★★★ If you need to visualise your film before shooting, this is an easy solution.
AUDITION 1.5	PC	Syntrillium's former sound editor Cool Edit Pro, supports VST, ReWire and enhanced video.	Adobe	£246	www.adobe.co.uk	100	★★★★ This respected audio tool benefits from simplified features and better integration.
SWIFT3D	PC	The latest version of the Flash 3D app has matured – check out the enhanced modelling environment.	Electric Rain	\$189	www.eran.com	102	★★★★ Approachable and easy to master with a great modelling environment.
FLASH STUDIO PRO2	PC	Enjoy more power and greater functionality in this latest iteration of the industry's leading SWF2EXE app.	Multimedia	£130	www.multimedia.com	103	★★★★ An essential Flash utility for designers who know their limitations.
CAPTIVATE	PC	Redeveloped version of RoboDemo, a screen capture program ideal for distance learning applications.	Macromedia	\$499	www.macromedia.co.uk	103	★★★★ Provides streamlined and professional results via a simple interface.
ACROBAT 7 PROFESSIONAL	Mac PC	Assemble multiple files, design PDF forms and enjoy new-press tools with this latest version.	Adobe	£464	www.adobe.co.uk	105	★★★★ More evolution than revolution, this tool balances tweaks with new features.



DREAMWEAVER MX
Build and maintain websites and apps with Dreamweaver for only £339.

→ DVD WRITERS

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



ROXIO CREATOR 7
Comprehensive set of DVD authoring tools for only £70.

→ MONITORS

BENQ FP23W	Mac PC	23-inch widescreen LCD can display 1920x1200 pixels and boasts a contrast ratio of 500:1.	BenQ	£1,275	www.benq.co.uk	102	★★★★ An impressive monitor that delivers in terms of both resolution and picture quality.
MICROSCAN A904	Mac PC	19-inch LCD with a resolution of 1024x768 and 500:1 contrast ratio.	ADi	£395	www.adiuk.com	104	★★★★ A good budget entry monitor, with a punchy image that's fine for low-level usage.
GALLERY 2010 PLATINUM	Mac PC	20.1-inch LCD with a resolution of 1600x1200 and 600:1 contrast ratio.	Formac	£746	www.formac.com	104	★★★★ Gorgeous for day-to-day use, but lack of adjustability will dissuade graphics pros.
MULTISYNC LCD2180UX	Mac PC	21-inch LCD with a resolution of 1600x1200 and a 400:1 contrast ratio.	NEC	£1,291	www.nec.co.uk	104	★★★★ A gorgeous display, compact yet easy to configure for precise image control.
SDM-P234	Mac PC	23-inch LCD with a resolution of 1920x1200 and a 400:1 contrast ratio.	Sony	£1,622	www.sonymstyle.com	104	★★★★ Style-wise, it looks great, but design faults (that backlit logo on the bezel) irritate.
COLOREDGE CG21	Mac PC	21.3-inch LCD with a resolution of 1600x1200 and a 400:1 contrast ratio.	Eizo	£1,526	www.eizo.co.uk	104	★★★★★ A masterpiece – if colour accuracy is an issue, look no further.



EIZO COLOREDGE CG21
Enjoy brilliant colour accuracy and great performance from this £1,526 monitor.

THE INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE FOR 3D ARTISTS

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

IN THE MAG The ten studios we predict will influence the 3D industry this year

- **2004 - A 3D Odyssey** How Framestore CFC completed a planetary mission
- **Citroën Transformer Ad** How The Embassy created a breakdancing robot car
- **Full tutorial** Rig a tentacled villain for animation
- **Expert tips** for 3D lighting

ON THE CD Full copy of **trueSpace4.3** (worth \$595) and full tutorial in the mag

- **RealFlow 3 demo**
- **36 textures** from Amazing Textures and ambientLight
- **Pixel Corps** video tutorials
- **3D models** from Web 3D Service (worth \$290)

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Making the most of spot colours, duotone and posterize, plus a free copy of *3ds max 7* and *PrintDevizor Lite*.

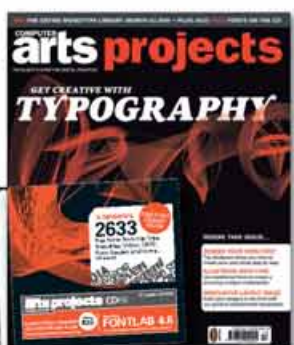
COMPUTER arts projects

IN EVERY ISSUE, COMPUTER ARTS PROJECTS FOCUSES ON A DIFFERENT AREA OF DIGITAL DESIGN - WITH TIPS, TOP TRICKS AND EXPERT TECHNIQUES...

Did you know you can receive *Computer Arts* in electronic format? Turn to page 85.



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Top advice on how to set up your own design company from scratch.



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Design your own font and discover how typography can invigorate your work.



FILTERS AND EFFECTS Special - COSB0067
Master the power of *Photoshop's* amazing filter effects feature-set.

ON THE CD



WELCOME

On this month's cover CD you'll find a full version of *Comixware 1.2*, the storyboarding app that enables you to visualise animations and films – for more details on how it works, turn to page 104.

In addition, you'll find 150MB of resources for designers, including 12 royalty-free illustrations (worth \$1,548), courtesy of I Dream Stock, a superb *Photoshop* video training tutorial, motion graphics from 12 Inch Design – and a set of font utilities from FontUtilities.com.

Last but not least, there's a trial of *Carrara 4 Pro* and demos of all the plug-ins featured in this month's Group Test. Enjoy!

Joe Russ

Joe Russ
joseph.russ@futurenet.co.uk
NEW MEDIA CONTENT EDITOR

→ FULL PRODUCT PC ONLY

COMIXWARE 1.2

Storyboard striking animations with this unique application

GO TO
PAGE 104
TO PLAN AND
CREATE YOUR OWN
MANGA-STYLE
CARTOON



Ever had aspirations to make a movie or animation? Then you'll know that planning is key to smooth and efficient workflow. With a storyboard to hand, you can break down your production into a series of scenes, make notes on where to include visual effects and transitions, and plan exciting sound effects.

Of course, you could do this on paper (in the movie industry, skilled professional storyboards sketch out scenes before they're shot), but if you're creating your own production with limited resources – or your drawing skills are a little primitive – *Comixware* is a much more flexible alternative.

The great thing about the app is that it enables you to easily manage all your digital assets, from video clips to soundtracks, in a single place. Before you've shot any footage or created a single frame of animation, you can use *Comixware* to compose scenes using drawings, photos and sounds. Simply drop your footage files, audio files and music into your *Comixware* "user" file and you can start assembling the elements you've created straightaway.

Much like a typical video editing or animation package, material is easy to arrange in *Comixware*, thanks to the app's super-flexible timeline window. Simply drag and drop media elements into the window from *Comixware*'s Asset Bin and position them where required. You can layer images to create parallax animation (which adds depth to your scenes), synchronise music, even use speech balloons in place of dialogue... You'll be amazed at just how versatile it

can be. Once your project is ready, you can also share it over the web via the app's Gallery section.

On page 104, professional multimedia guru Ting Li introduces you to the pleasures of *Comixware*, and guides you through the process of creating a thrilling animated storyboard from start to finish.

EXCLUSIVE READER OFFER



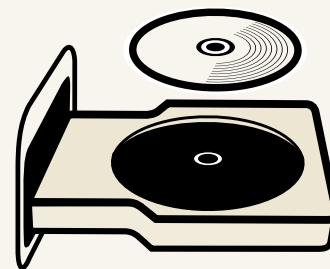
Comixware 2.1 features a range of improvements over version 1.2, including the ability to import digital video directly from your digital camera. As a special offer to readers of *Computer Arts*, the developers of *Comixware* are offering \$10 off the regular price of \$39.99, so now you can buy the full version of *Comixware 2.1* for just \$29.99! To upgrade, visit www.comixware.com/computerarts/ca_upgd_deal.htm

COMPLETE BOOK CHAPTER MAC & PC

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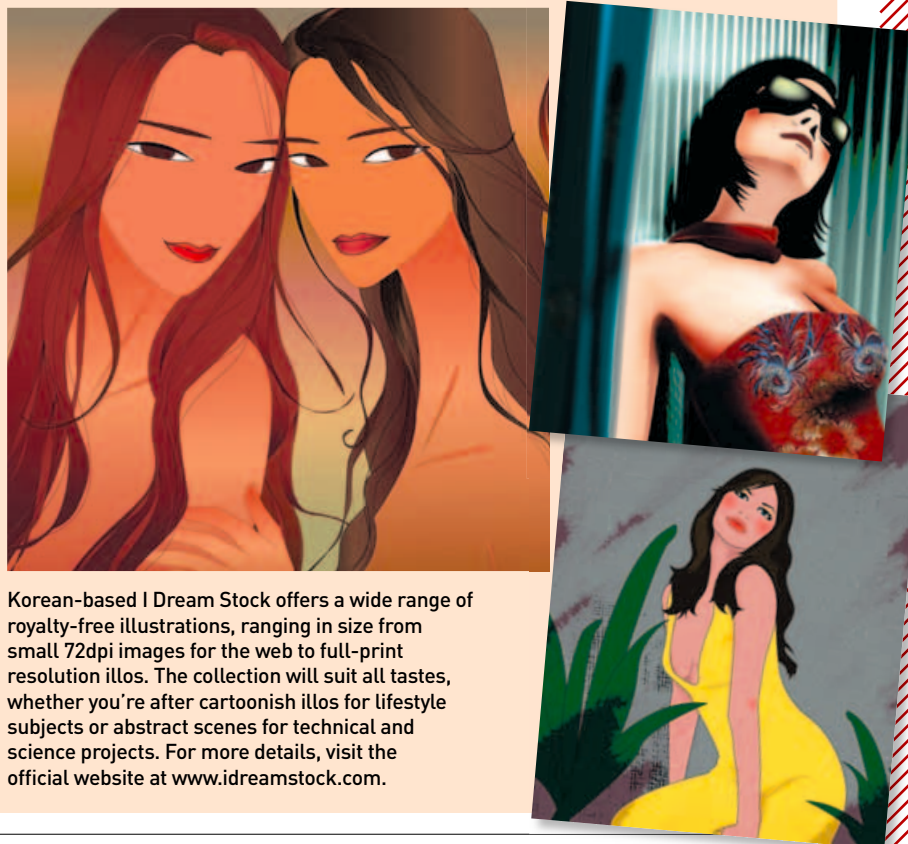
ON THE CD



→ STOCK ILLUSTRATIONS MAC & PC

I Dream Stock images

12 stunning royalty-free illustrations, worth \$129 each



Korean-based I Dream Stock offers a wide range of royalty-free illustrations, ranging in size from small 72dpi images for the web to full-print resolution illos. The collection will suit all tastes, whether you're after cartoonish illos for lifestyle subjects or abstract scenes for technical and science projects. For more details, visit the official website at www.idreamstock.com.

→ 12 INCH DESIGN MAC & PC

Motion graphics bundle

Enliven your projects with these professional video resources

12 Inch Design's motion graphics have been produced by a team of professional designers with over 20 years' experience working on television productions for ABC, CBS, Fox, NBC, WB, the Discovery Channel, MTV, the BBC and Channel Four.

The 12 Inch Design library was created to satisfy the company's own desire for a time-saving collection of motion graphics clips that it could "dip" into when required. The clips come in four different categories:

- **Animated Backgrounds.** These attractive looping background animations are really useful if you're creating DVD menus.
- **CustoMattes.** Create interesting effects by filtering out certain parts of your video.

- **Corner Pin.** Handy frames in which to place your video for that "picture-in-picture" effect. Great for showing off your images inside a picture frame!
- **Transitions.** Ideal for more interesting cross-cuts between scenes.



FULL LISTING

COMIXWARE 1.2 (PC)

FULL SOFTWARE Plan and create your mini-masterpieces with this storyboarding app, then try out the trial of *Comixware 2.1* for Mac and PC.

CARRARA 4 PRO (MAC+PC)

TRIAL

Get to grips with this smart 3D modeller.

I DREAM STOCK ILLUSTRATIONS (MAC+PC)

STOCK ILLUSTRATION 12 print-resolution, royalty-free stock illustrations for use in your own projects.

12 INCH DESIGN CLIPS (MAC+PC)

STOCK MOTION GRAPHICS Professional animated backgrounds, mattes and frames for your video.

PHOTOSHOP TEXTURING TRAINING (MAC+PC)

VIDEO TRAINING

Discover how to create successful repeating textures.

A TYPOGRAPHIC WORKBOOK PDF (MAC+PC)

SAMPLE CHAPTER Complete the "Letterform Basics" chapter from Timothy Samara's book.

FONT UTILITIES SOFTWARE (PC)

TRIALS Three superb font-management utilities, courtesy of FontUtilities.com: *Fontonizer*, *Advanced Font Catalog* and *Fast Font Set*.

BACKDROP DESIGNER (MAC+PC)

TRIAL

Top animated backdrops for your video projects.

CREATIVE PACK (MAC+PC)

PLUG-IN SET Create a range of edge effects with this set of versatile *Photoshop* plug-ins.

BUZZ PRO 3 (PC)

PLUG-IN SET 22 filters to tweak, contrast and add depth to your photos.

XENOFEX 2 (MAC+PC)

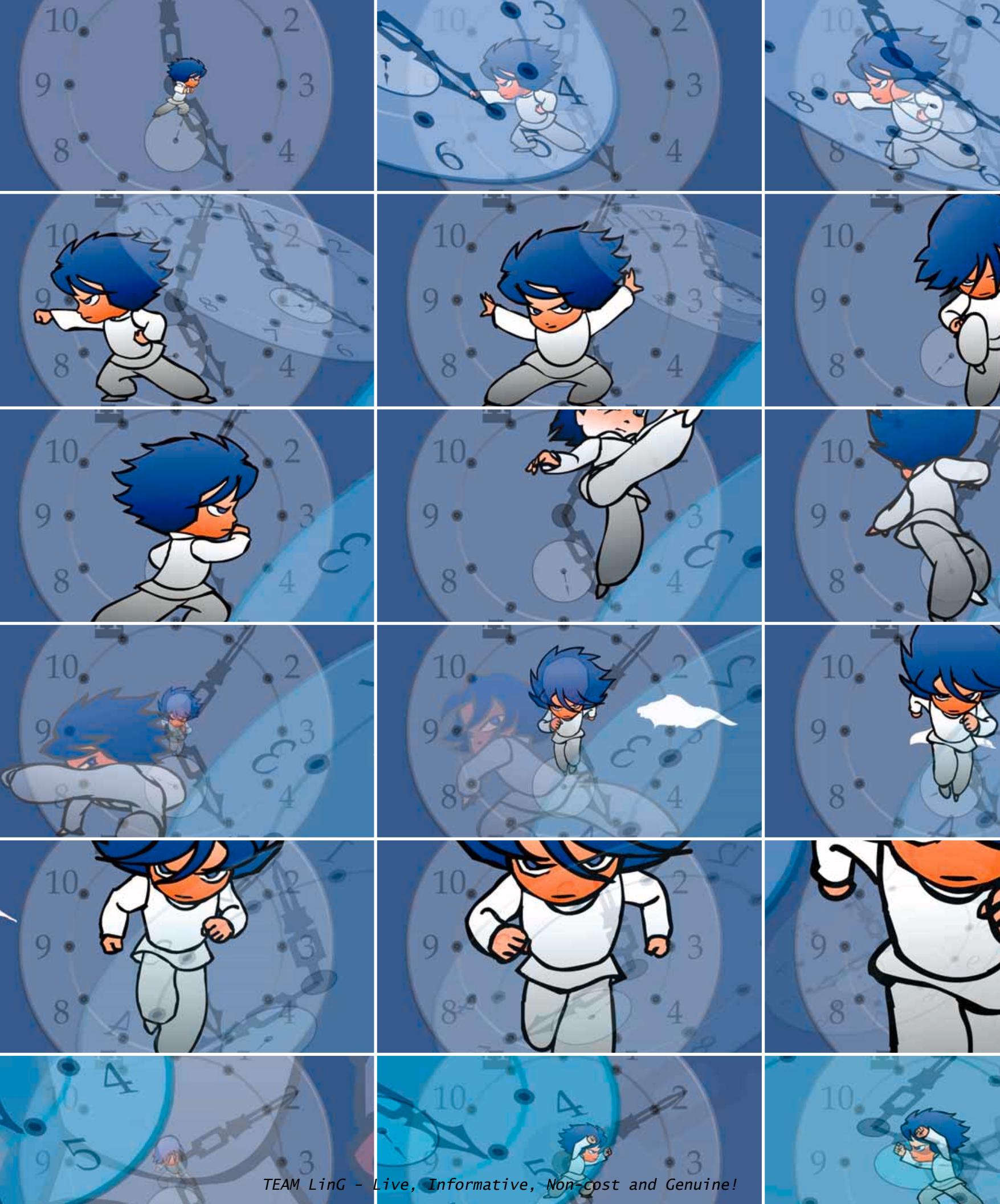
PLUG-IN SET 14 effects for web designers, graphic artists and digital photographers.

SCATTERLIGHT LENSES (MAC+PC)

PLUG-IN SET Try out this quartet of light-refracting *Photoshop* lenses from Andromeda Software.

TUTORIAL FILES (MAC+PC)

To find this month's supporting files, navigate the interface to "In The Mag" and select Tutorials.





→ COMIXWARE 2.1 • FLASH MX

STORYBOARD A SHORT MOVIE

Need to sell your idea for a 30-second commercial or music video? Nothing is more persuasive than a dynamic storyboard geared with multimedia presentation and interactivity, as Ting Li explains



FULL SOFTWARE

You'll find a fully-working trial of *Comixware 2.1* (Mac and PC) and a full copy of *v1.2* (PC only) on this month's cover CD.

ON THE CD

Since there are differences between the two versions, we've prepared two sets of files, placed in two folders. Version 2.1 source files (fla) end with "v2" and version 1.2 source files end with "v1". One source file (tuto_gz_fg_ground.fla) is compatible with both versions. Asset files (swf) bear the same name for both versions. Look in the Tutorial\CD folder for all the files.

TIME LENGTH

30 minutes

INFO



Ting Li is a seasoned animator and storyboard artist who works in television advertising and educational programming. She spends her time in both LA and Beijing.

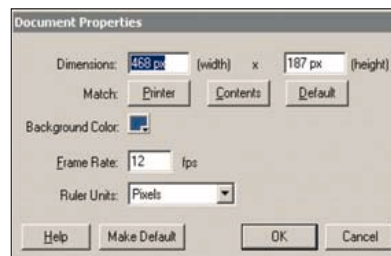
Professional motion graphic designers, screenwriters and film makers know that the best way to plan a multimedia project is by storyboarding. But a storyboard isn't just a great way of planning; it's also a powerful selling tool that can help convince clients of the power of your ideas in comprehensible visual terms.

Comixware is a specially tailored multimedia storyboarding app that enables you and other creatives to compose a story dynamically and play it out instantly in a movie-style presentation. You can then add materials, make changes and fine-tune the project in real time – even remotely, courtesy of the software's built-in communication tools.

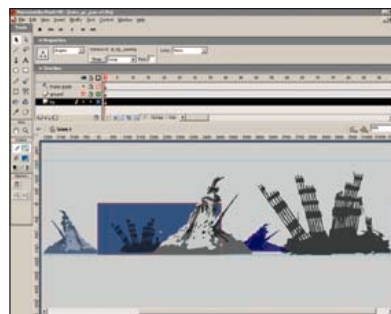
This tutorial assumes you have a basic operating knowledge of *Comixware*. If not, it's worth checking out the "Introduction" chapter of the app's Help manual.

There are three types of assets used in *Comixware* for movie composition: Timeline, Scene and Music. You'll use Timeline to build the movie's timeline, Scene to lay elements on top, and Music to provide the soundtrack. Timeline assets can include a movie clip or static pictures, and serve as the "background" layer, while Scene assets are the elements that sit on top. Note that you can use video clips and pictures as Timeline or Scene assets.

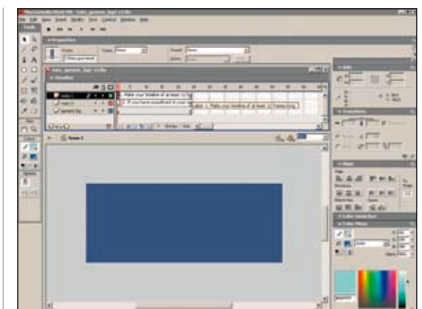
Here, you'll be shown how to prepare artwork and build a scene for a *Comixware* music video. The sample music video is called *Wadidyusay*, which has been sampled from Zap Mama's eponymous song (www.creativecommons.org/wired).



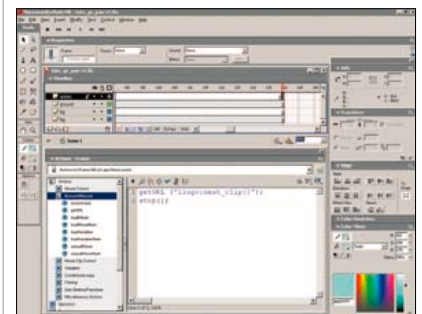
1 First, prepare the background clip – an animated panning background – for scene #2. Create a new file in *Flash MX* and name it *tuto_gz_pan.fla*. Create the document with a dimension of 468x187 pixels (or a document of the same proportions).



2 The background is an animated Movie Clip called *gz_bg_panning* at the root level of the *Flash* movie (tuto_gz_pan-v2.fla). Change the Behaviour of this instance from Movie Clip to Graphic, and select Loop from the graphic's Options menu. Make the root timeline length equal to the animation timeline.



3 To prepare a one-way animation or static image clip you should place your artwork at the root level. See sample source file *tuto_generic_bg1.v2.fla* for further details.

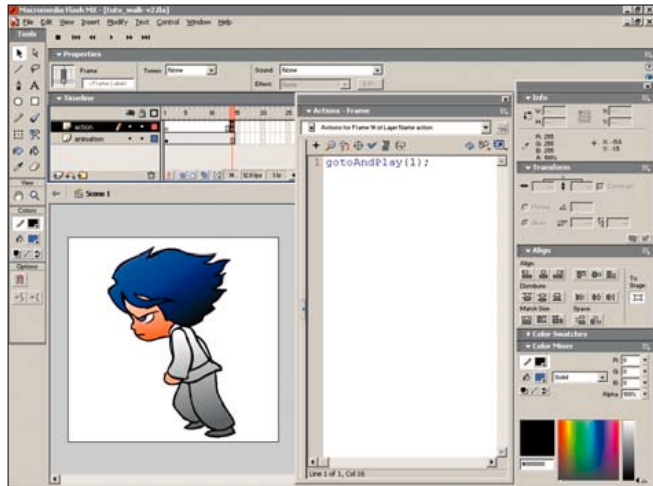


4 The preparation for *Flash* background clips in version 1.2 is slightly different than shown above. The most important difference is that you need to place two lines of ActionScript at the last frame of your movie. See sample source file *tuto_gz_pan-v1.fla* and *tuto_generic_bg1.v1.fla* for more information on how to do this.

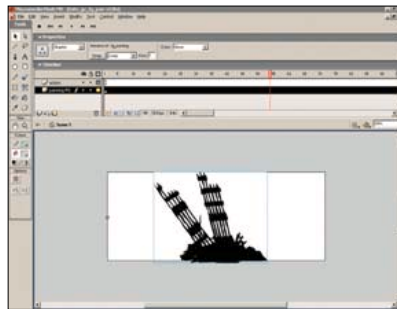
Illustration and tutorial by Ting Li



→ COMIXWARE 2.1 • FLASH MX



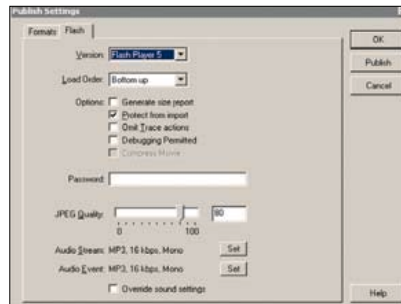
5 Now prepare a walking character for this scene. Creating an “animated” element is identical to creating an “animated” background clip – except that for a cycle animated element you need to add one line of ActionScript to the last frame of the movie (see tuto_walk-v2 fla).



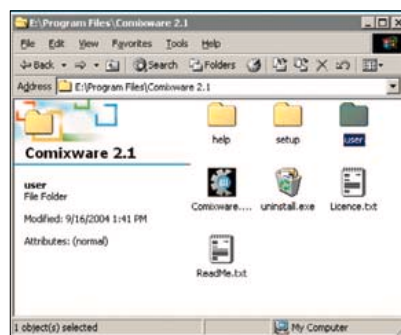
6 For static prop elements, simply place the graphic at the first frame of the movie. Take a closer look at tuto_gz_fg_ground fla to see how this is done.

🎯 PREPARE A PANNING ELEMENT

There's a twist for preparing the panning foreground element (tuto_gz_fg_pan.swf), which starts off-stage and then moves halfway into the scene. If you use the same method as described in step 5, the thumbnail won't show up in the Asset Bin. To remedy this, add a play() command at the first frame of the Flash movie (tuto_gz_fg_pan-v2 fla). This will make the thumbnail play continuously in the Asset Bin so that you can grab it.



7 Once you have all background clips and composition elements prepared, go to File and select the Publish Setting dialog. Select “Flash Player 5” from the Versions drop-down menu and publish all your swf movies in Flash 5 format.



8 Go to Comixware's application directory and select the “user” folder on the cover CD. Inside you'll find four sub-folders: “backgrounds”, “elements”, “music” and “save”. Place your assets into the respective folders: Timeline assets in “background”, Scene assets in “elements”, Music assets in “music”, and the sample movie file “Wadidyusay” in “save”.



9 Now launch Comixware and go to the Compose section. Click on the “bin” tab and go to tag #5. You should now see thumbnails of all your timeline assets.



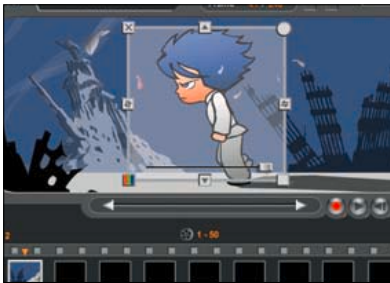
10 Drag the thumbnail of that panning background clip from the Asset Bin to the timeline and drop it in scene #2. You'll see the first frame of the clip will appear immediately in the Preview window.



11 Double-click scene #2 in the timeline to switch it to Composition mode. A larger Compose window will now replace the Preview window. The contents of the Asset Bin will also have changed to Scene assets. Click on tag #5 and to view all of your composition elements.



12 Now drag-and-drop the composition elements to the stage in the layer order that you'd like them to be composed. In this sample, we opted for: “ground”, “shadow”, “walking character”, the animated “leaves”, and lastly, in the foreground, “debris”.



13 Use the bounding box controls that appear around each element to adjust the size, position, orientation, layer and transparency of each one. You can tug the Asset Bin into the Compose window if you need more room.



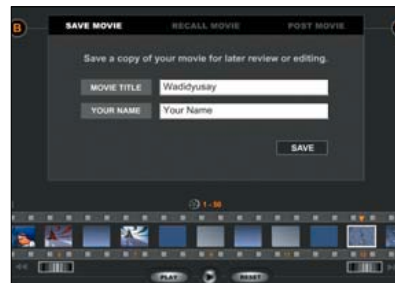
14 Use the frame-slider to navigate the frame-space within the scene. When an on-stage element is selected, the frame slider will turn into "in" and "out" marks. Drag these marks around to change the duration and the placement of the object within the scene's timeline.



15 Replace the existing total frame number [240] with the desired total frame number (84) and hit Return. Select the To End option from the Scene Length menu. Now 156 frames are trimmed from the end of the original clip, leaving the scene with a new length of 84 frames.

SCENE LENGTH CONTROL

Scene length control is a useful and unique timing device that can not only modify the length of a scene, but also change the behaviour of the animation. You can continuously make length changes to a scene by re-entering new numbers in the Total Frame field. Each change is based on the last "modified" parameter. So, by combining different options, you can change one animation into something completely different.



16 Once you're happy with your composition, press the (red) Record button to save the scene to the timeline. Click the Edit Timeline button to switch back to Timeline Editing mode and repeat the above process to build additional scenes for your timeline. Now save your movie.



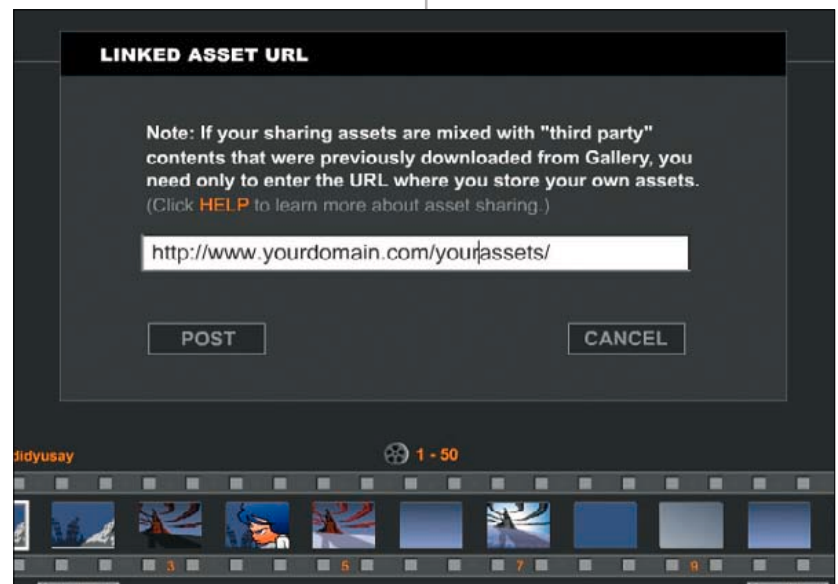
17 Double-click the Sound button on the right-hand side of the timeline to bring up the music panel. Click User and then select a soundtrack from the list for your movie.



18 Now press Play to view your movie in the Play section. Go back to the Compose section for additional editing, or to save the movie if you're happy with it.



19 You can share your movie with remote users by posting it to Gallery. Just go to the Post Movie screen in the Save section and fill out the posting form. Choose a password for later editing options and check the Restrict Access box if you want your movie to be password protected.



20 If your movie contains "user" assets, you need to upload them to a designated internet server to give access to remote users. When you're asked to specify a URL for these linked assets, enter the web directory in which you stored them and hit the Post button. **arts**

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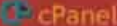
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LOCATION: Stockwell, London
JOB TITLE: Graphic designer
DATE OF BIRTH: 11 February 1980

TRAINING: Bath Spa University College
 (Graphic Design).

SOFTWARE: Out of date software, shamelessly stolen from my old college – particularly *Photoshop* and *Freehand*.

HARDWARE: A rapidly failing G4.

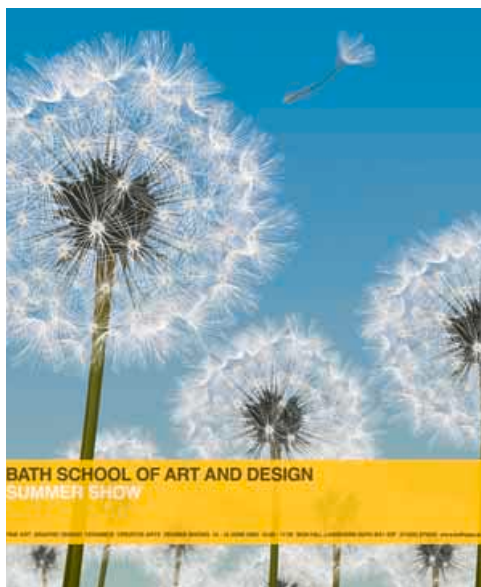
FAVOURITE THINGS: Ed Ruscha, Non-Format, Mark Farrow, overly retouched photographs, 16-bit computer games, Talking Heads, Factory Records, Francis Bacon, toy shops, over-the-top Hollywood CGI films, buying records just because I like the cover (and then discovering the record is actually rather good), industrial signage, airbrush art, Barney Bubbles and Stefan Sagmeister.

TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF: When I approach a new brief I aim to try and produce something that's new and challenging – I find it difficult to maintain interest otherwise. At the moment, my working method lies somewhere between design and illustration, producing most images from scratch myself. My love of design stems from that teenage awakening when you discover solace from the angst of growing up in, say, an album or a book. Over time these things become very emotive objects and represent a kind of escapism and romanticism that is rarely felt so deeply. My ambition to produce work that might mean this much to someone else keeps me going. I guess I'm still a nerdy teenager obsessing over his New Order records. After all, it's hip to be square.

COMING UP: Darren Wall's brand new website, www.darrenwall.com, is due to be launched in Spring 2005.



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↓ "I created two album covers for Hot Chip. The image below, for *Down with Prince*, is a deliberately silly celebration of His Royal Badness."

"The second of my Hot Chip covers, for the band's *Playboys* single, investigates the aesthetic of souped-up, rude-boy cars that probably circle like moths around a McDonalds somewhere near you. Be afraid."



← "This dandelions poster was the first piece to get me noticed at my graduate degree show. I love to use intricate, natural forms rendered in a hard-edged, graphic way. The whole thing was drawn in vectors to give it a hyper-real appearance."

↓ "Spy 51's single, *Want Some*, tackled the subjects of materialism and consumer culture. So I created a cover that featured a slightly too young, overly-homogenised girl. The idea was to simplify and sterilise her image until it became quietly sinister."



↑ "The Hunter Thompson 'invisible man' book cover was rendered in the same way as the dandelions poster (top left), then shaded and toned to give it that airbrushed feel."

If you'd like to see more, email Darren at wallzo@btinternet.com or call on 07971 663223 to receive his complete portfolio mailer.

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