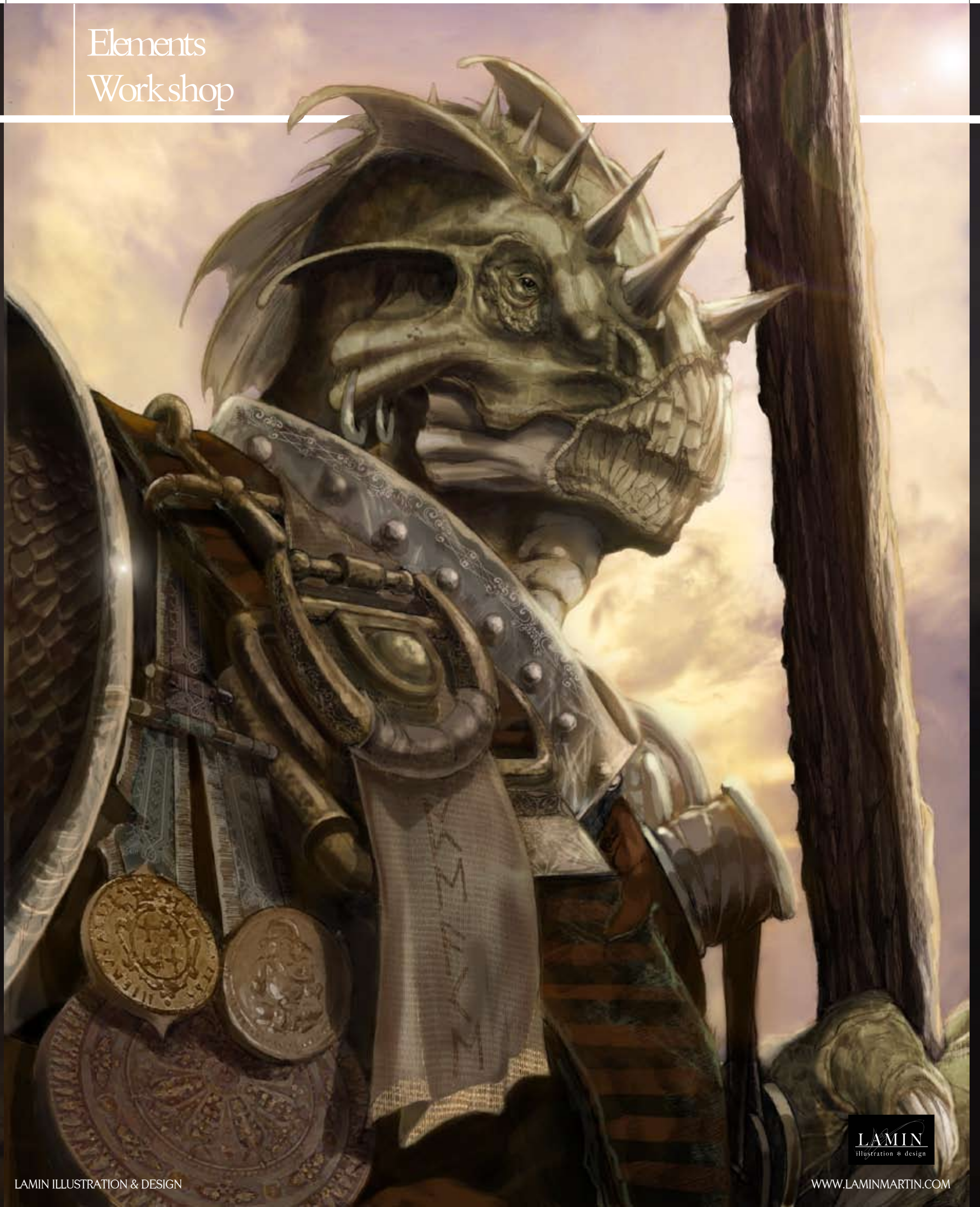


Elements
Workshop



Artist PROFILE

Lamin Martin
COUNTRY: Canada
CLIENTS: Udon Comics
Beach Studios, The Comedy
Network (MTR Entertainment
Company).



Lamin was
born in
Toronto,
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His work can

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Illustration & Design, his full
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LAMIN
illustration * design

Elements Workshop Narrative Textures

Learn to combine digital art with photographic texture overlays in Photoshop, with **Lamin Martin** . . .

To tell a story visually with a single image is a test that every illustrator must take.

It's an ongoing challenge that needs dedicated time and attention in researching and referencing visual metaphors. These metaphors are cues that tickle the back of our collective minds that we, the audience, will pick-up on letting us know the culture, texture and volume of the clothing or the items that our character carries and interacts with. In essence a visual narrative or visual cues, are an excellent way of saying

a lot about the content a character while at the same time not have to say much at all. The character we're going to be working with in this workshop is definitely one of few words. He's a decorated soldier with commendation after commendation. His will to fight doesn't come from a place where adulation is the motivating factor behind his actions but from the idealistic belief that to not fight for what you believe in is a lost battle and that idealism should be commended. Developing a rich back story for a character to exist in, is a fun and easy

way to create visual cues for your minds eye to play with long before you have to hunt down reference to back it up. And with a back story like the one just mentioned you can only imagine the kinds of visual metaphors you can come up with. So what we're going to do in this workshop is take some of the wonderful visual metaphors dreamt up in the back story and firmly ground them in reality by using photographic texture overlays. All rendered seamlessly in Photoshop.



1 Starting Off

Knowing that the character that I want to portray is one of weight I want to emphasize the bulk of the medallions that he wears along with the thickness of his skin. I do some research into what visual elements would best pull off the look that I want to achieve so I find reference material for different types of medallions, heavy armour and reptilian skin types. For the medallions I draw influence from different cultural references, one of which being Angkor (Cambodian) coin design. For the armour, influence was derived from English and Italian medieval armour. And for the skin, influence was pulled from a mix of snake and elephant skin reference. All of these elements are thrown in and pretty much finalized in the drawing stage to ensure that the colourization of the piece runs smoothly.

2 Layers

The colour palette that I decided to use for this piece is one that involves a



lot of Sap greens, Burnt Sienna's, Yellow Ocre and Burnt Umber's to give the feeling that the character, although covered in metal, is very much grounded in nature.



3 Colour Sketch

I lay in flat areas using colours from my palette to get an idea of how each of the colours works individually and within the group.



4 Grayscale Values

I work in grayscale in the beginning stages of my painting in order to figure out my values. A piece with a healthy range in values from darks to lights can save an image due to the fact that values create depth and focal points in a image even if the colours are off. A successful painting will have contrasts in value from the two extremes of black (very dark) through the midtones of grays to white (very light). An unsuccessful painting will usually have a narrower range of values within the gray midtone range leaving the image flat and dull.

TRADE SECRETS

Visual Library

Reference is vital when coming up with believable concepts. Keep an extensive library of cultural and historical reference to draw inspiration from. Understanding the worlds that you create will not only make your images believable but will also expand your visual knowledge base.

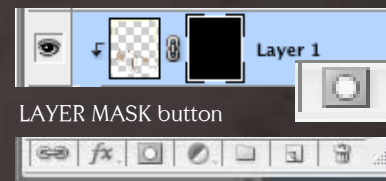
5 Multiply Layer

I create a new layer on top of my grayscale layer and set the layer blending option to MULTIPLY. I then go in with a Soft Round Airbrush and colour within that layer using what will be the base colour for the skintone of the character. I then MERGE DOWN the two layers into one by hitting COMMAND + E.



6 Scales

I use a Boa Constrictor skin texture for the reptilian look that I want. I create a new layer for the texture and desaturate the colour by hitting COMMAND + SHIFT + U. I set the opacity at 50% and then set the layer blending option from NORMAL to OVERLAY. I then erase the excess texture around the area of interest.



LAYER MASK button

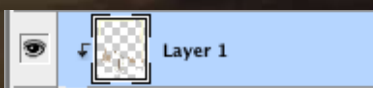
7 Burlap Texture

Using the same technique used for the skin, I create a burlap texture. However in this situation I don't want to erase the excess texture in case there are portions of the texture that I may want use later. To do this I create a clipping mask for the texture by right clicking and selecting CREATE CLIPPING MASK.

Then on the same layer I set the layer blending option to OVERLAY after which I select the LAYER MASK button at the bottom of the layer window which will then create a mask over top of the texture layer that I then fill in with black using the PAINT BUCKET TOOL.



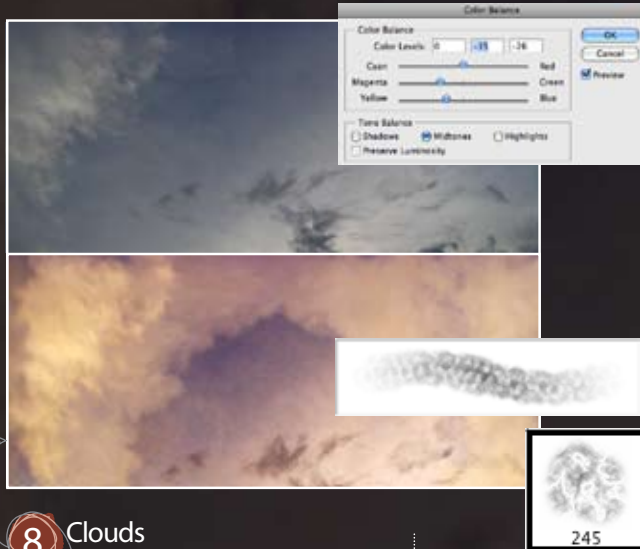
CLIPPING MASK



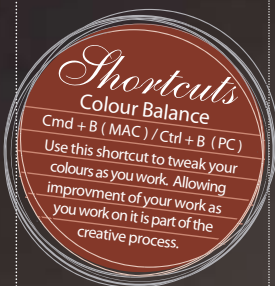
The texture will then disappear allowing the rest of my painting to show through. Now I can allow the texture to become visible again by selecting my brush, selecting white as my colour and then paint in the areas that I want the texture to show up in. And if I ever need to hide the texture again I can easily make it disappear by selecting black with my brush and painting in the desired area. It's a much more flexible alternative then erasing parts of my image that I won't be able to get back.



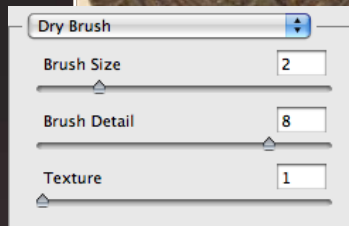
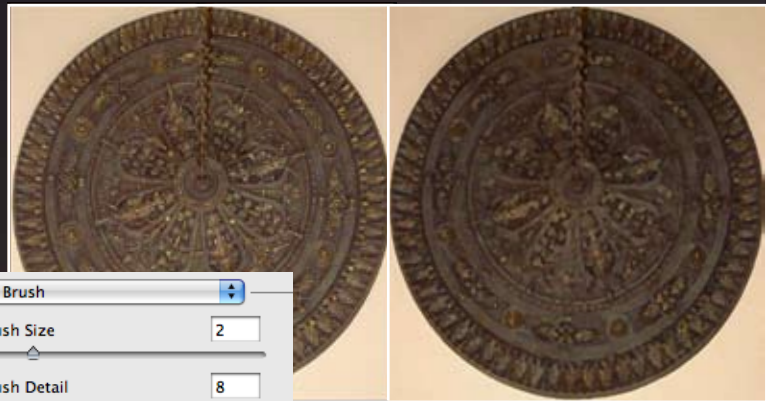
In depth Narrative Textures



8 Clouds
I use a cloud formation photo from www.mayang.com as my background. However, I'm not happy with the colour palette so I adjust it to suit my needs by selecting **IMAGE > ADJUSTMENTS > COLOUR BALANCE**. Once I've adjusted it to the palette I want, I still need some of the cloud areas to look a little fuller. Using a cloud brush found on www.brusheezy.com I paint in the areas where I want to see a few more cloud patterns.



9 Blending
I used a Hard Round-edged Brush with the opacity set at 92% and Flow at 27% to blend in the background colours with the foreground figure in order to unify the piece.

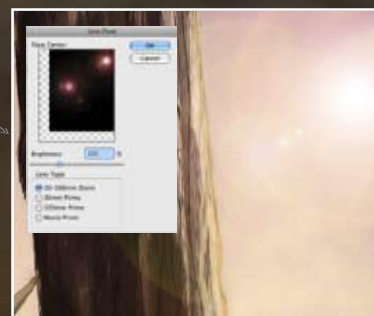


10 Dry Brush Filter
In order to prevent my photo reference from looking too photographic I add a quick and easy photoshop filter. I select **FILTER > ARTISTIC > DRYBRUSH** and adjust the photo reference to fit in with my image.

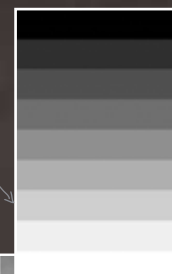


11 Perspective
The perspective of the reference is a little bit off but it can be easily adjusted by selecting **EDIT > TRANSFORM > PERSPECTIVE**. Once in the perspective function I adjust the angle of my reference to match the perspective of the overall image.

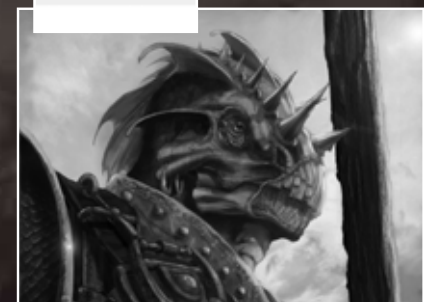
12 Light Effect
The light affect is a simple Photoshop filter found in **FILTER > RENDER > LENS FLARE**.



13 Final Touches
To finish up I desaturate my image by hitting **COMMAND + SHIFT + U** to take a look at my value range. If there isn't a



good range from light to dark, I know that I still have some work to do in order to make it look more dramatic. The wider the value range the more dramatic the piece will look.



Finally I flatten all of my layers and do my colour balances and adjustments to get a idea of alternative colour palettes if necessary.

