

Elements  
Workshop





Artist PROFILE

Lamin Martin

COUNTRY: Canada

CLIENTS: Udon Comics

Beach Studios, The Comedy

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Company).



Lamin was born in Toronto, Ontario

His work can be found in concept artwork published through Lamin Illustration & Design, his full service illustration studio that creates conceptual fantasy art for books and related merchandise.

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LAMIN illustration \* design

# Elements Workshop SETTING A MOOD

Learn how to establish a sense of mood with a few key techniques in Photoshop, with **Lamin Martin**...

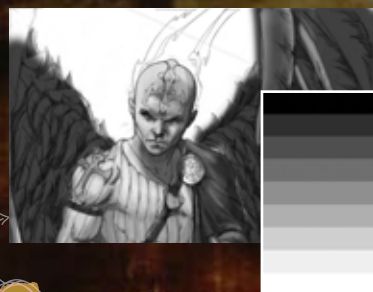
**W**hen I think of angels I've always envision them as members of an army. Each soldier has their own specialized skill set complete with their tools of the trade. Some carry a sword and shield, some wield a spear others a bible is more than enough of a weapon. However there aren't that many soldiers in heavens army that have decided to step out of the box and take on more of ballistic approach to their military service. Stepping outside of oneself when creating an engaging character design is

essential when visually problem solving in a fresh new way. But to successfully design a character means utilizing and combining a whole range of skills, as well as having some basic knowledge. One important aspect of that knowledge-base that should be established before line or colour has been laid out is mood. Mood refers to the general effect of a painting, with all the elements coming together to evoke an emotional reaction and stimulate thoughts. There are quite a few ways of creating mood, including subject matter; scenery, tonal values and

composition, to name but a few. In this workshop we'll look at how we step out of the box and take an angel that would normally be visualized as a bright beautiful herald of the holy word and make it a gritty menacing crusader of judgement.



**1 The Feeling**  
Paint something that is important to you, in terms of content, and be aware of the mood you're trying to convey when making design decisions. Take note of the feeling that stirs up when you begin a painting because it has a considerable affect on the finished piece, which is why images you paint for yourself tend to be more expressive than ones you do for commissioners. The more feeling that you've linked to the subject matter in the painting, the easier it will be for your subconscious to make the right decisions.



**2 Tones**  
Working in tonal values is one of the first steps in establishing mood. I paint in gray tones moving from one end of the value range to the other creating a healthy contrast of lights and darks.



**3 Shadows**  
Shadows ground an image and give it weight. They also help to establish a sense of implied drama when used to offset a design element of lesser importance against one of more importance. Much like shining a light on an object and casting everything around it in shadow.



#### 4 Colour Palette

I create a layer and set the LAYER BLENDING option to OVERLAY where I begin to lay in flat colours overtop of the grey tonal values. I keep a small colour palette handy on a separate layer from my image that I refer back to when doing my colour selections.

#### 5 Weapons

A character can derive much of their identity through the accessories that they carry. In science fiction and fantasy especially a character can be defined by their weapons and armour so long as the weapon and armour are prominent and unusual enough to be stylized as characters themselves.

**TRADE SECRETS**

**Sleep on it**  
When working on an image that seems as if it's just not working out or looking right, sleep on it. Looking at the image the next day with fresh eyes and a fresh mind will make it easier for you to recognize nagging little flaws that otherwise would have gone unchecked due to mental fatigue.



#### 6 Light Source

Lighting can make or break an image when you think of the use of light as being another character in your piece. Backlighting or focused light makes for a more dramatic effect in a scene, while natural light works as more of a calming effect.

#### 7 Open-minded Texturing

When combining textures it's important to keep in mind that using a specific texture related to a specific design element is not always the way to go. More often than not you can come up with interesting surprises when you use completely unrelated textures and blend them together to create something unexpected. Below is a photo that I found that has some very nice lighting effects that I combined with a couple of cloud textures.

Rainy street and headlights:



Cloud texture 1:



Cloud texture 2:



Result after OVERLAY blending options:





## 8 Clouds

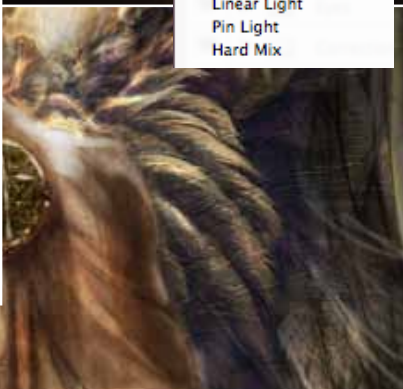
Clouds should be given their own workshop because of their ability to set a mood all by themselves. Light, fluffy clouds are known to evoke an feeling of playfulness while dark and rain-filled clouds, which are the clouds that I want, suggest tension and turmoil. Using a cloud texture, I select the ART HISTORY BRUSH and begin to paint removing the photographic quality of the texture while at the same time achieving a more painterly effect. I also paint in warm reds and oranges framed with deep burnt umbers to add to the dramatic effect that I want.

*Shortcuts*  
Adjust Hue/Saturation  
Cmd + U ( MAC ) / Ctrl + U ( PC )  
Adjust your colours with sliders.  
Clicking Colourize makes everything a single colour  
Cmd/Ctrl + Shift + U desaturates colours.

## 9 Wing Reference

Using photo reference of a birds wing I paint the wing as I see it in the reference. I then take that reference on a separate layer and after setting the layer blending option to OVERLAY I combine the two of them. Resulting in wings that blend with the painted aesthetic of the piece while at the same time retaining the subtle qualities of their texture.

- ✓ Overlay
- Soft Light
- Hard Light
- Vivid Light
- Linear Light
- Pin Light
- Hard Mix



## 10 Watercolour Filter

Adding quick jewelry elements are a excellent way of grounding your character in reality. Using a jewelry design that I found online I manipulate it using a WATERCOLOUR FILTER and then paint overtop of it to prevent it from looking to much like a photograph.



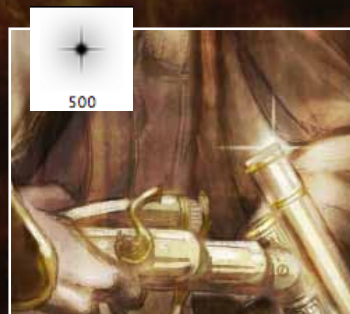
## 11 Flames

I paint the flames using a default HARD-EDGED photoshop brush with the OPACITY set at 92% and the FLOW set at 27%.

The ember effect is achieved using a DEBRIS brush found on [www.brusheezy.com](http://www.brusheezy.com).

## 12 Sparkle

The sparkle effects are also a photoshop brush that I found on [www.brusheezy.com](http://www.brusheezy.com).



## 13 Cultural Touches

If cultural references are used in an respectful way, and are combined with design elements that are non-specific the results can be very interest and add a bit of believability to an image. I used an Irish plaid pattern to add a bit more character to my angel design.



The end result, after I've collapsed my layers and I've completed all of my colour balances, is an unconventional angel that is more than ready for battle. Say your prayers!

