

**Overarching Philosophy:**

## 1. Care deeply about the craft.

- Be able to distinguish between skill and taste.
- Be good at art and nice to people.
- Life drawing and painting is important for everything in art (even if you want to be a 3d modeler), and drawing is the backbone of art.
- Develop your own mark making.
- Voice = What you paint. Style = How you paint.
- Change your attitude or change your career. If you don't like to do the fundamentals of art like drawing spheres, perspective, and such, then art is not for you. You cannot just like painting the fun stuff.
- There's composition, and there's *composition*.
- For character composition: Choose your lighting, color scheme, and pose.
- But for narrative composition, you must also have a sort of stage direction (where they will be in space), and you must pay attention to abstract shapes to tell the story. Example is Andrew Wyeth's painting, *Christina's World*.



- Know what your characters are like. Know their personality, motive, and quirks.
- For composition, don't just put everything on thirds! It would look good in the end, but what about the meaning? If Andrew Wyeth had done that in his piece, it wouldn't have had the same meaning.
- Have layers of narrative.
- Less is more!

## 2. Find yourself in the story.

- Find something about the character or environment that relates to your own experience.
- Illustration Masterclass (2012) = 50 thumbnails of classic Tarzan (swinging on vines, with gorillas, etc.) looked uninspired and lacked emotionality, so related self to the character in a scene after reading the actual book and finally illustrated Tarzan learning to read from his father's books = breakthrough to sympathize with art pieces.



## 3. Community matters

- Find like-minded, serious people and keep in touch with them.
- If you're the most serious person in the group it's time to leave.
- Share experiences and information with each other. If one of them rejects a job offer... you may be the one to get it!

### **The Working Artist:**

- *Strength* = How well you've mastered your craft, *Dexterity* = How comfortable you are with your process, *Constitution* = How many assignments you can handle at a time, *Intelligence* = How well you problem solve and communicate, *Wisdom* = How you use the past to improve

and inspire new ideas, and *Charisma* = How you present yourself to your peers, art directors, and the public.

- Don't just pile all your energy into one skill set.
- Don't get defensive about your art during a portfolio review.
- On social media, you don't have to be the loudest one to get the job. So, put your work online, but don't over do it.
- Spitpainting (30 minute quick paintings) isn't really that good... yes, you may become fast, but your art won't necessarily become good.

### **Mistakes I've Made:**

#### 1. Under delivering

- "Baldursgate"
- Company asked to create fantasy portraits in the original style to fit seamlessly into the old art. Original art was created in 1992 with a mouse, so a mouse was used on the client work and they really disliked it.
- You can do everything a client asks you to do and still fail.

#### 2. Being inconsistent

- D&D assignment... didn't work for them another 5 years because of the terrible painting.
- The piece below was made before the D&D work... it was good, so the client didn't expect bad work.



- If you agree to do a low-paying assignment, don't give the client a low quality art piece.

Your name will be attached to your art piece forever, and it would look bad for you.

- If you're not willing to knock it out of the park, then don't accept an assignment.

### 3. Start too early

- Don't rush!
- 2006 card art piece example... naïve and didn't get paid.

### Demo (Working from a live model):

- When you're working, photo references are good (not when you're learning and practicing art though).

- Take as many photo references you want.



### 1. Start with a toned canvas and not white

- In traditional painting, you can use unbleached titanium/ titanium bluff instead of pure white at first for mixing lighter colors.

- usually start in 600 DPI.
- Make your reference work for you; don't work for your reference.

### 2. Measure the shadows on the face first, not just the outline = mixture of line and shadow

- Lasso tool can be used to adjust proportions.
- Top down lighting looks good for the figure.

### 3. Identify the core shadows

- For character illustration, decide early on what the quirks are on the face.

- For scanned pencil art, or even line art on the computer, use a gradient tool and colorize it, so it's not black. For example, a warm tone can be used.... you don't want to mush black into your shadows by having black lines.

4. Put in a ground that will slightly show through

5. After values and basic colors are put in, get a new layer and smooth things out and cover the lines

- Use the fade tool if colors get too dark.
- For color consistency, use colors from within your piece.
- Move your brushes around the form, not through it.
- Command Shift E

#### **Demo (changing the ethnicity of the model):**

- For dark skin, use multiply layer.
- Dark skin usually had cooler and brighter highlights than light skin.
- Use the liquify filter to change things.
- Alizarin Crimson in the shadows.
- Changing shadows can also change the form.
- Know when to hold back on the rim lighting (this is overused in portfolios).
- Keep hard edges for cast shadows.
- Don't fiddle with little details and keep your brushstrokes.
- Don't zoom in too much for too long... work around the whole piece and keep your hand moving.

#### **Q&A:**

- If you want to work for Magic, you do not need to have played the card game. But if you want to work in house, you will need to be able to play.
- Know your clients.. tone, level of detail, cinematic, etc.
- Don't do fan art of the company work.
- Be able to paint for the company... you can't just be a good artist.

- Be versatile in subject matter. You will get more work if your hand is academically accurate.

- It's not about the subject matter, it's the treatment/ style.

- Do things for yourself in your art pieces over others.