

# peer pres sure

*Our pick of the best reader submissions sent to us this month*

**P**eer Pressure has, once again, been inundated with a volume of great artworks. The chosen entries this month offer an array of insights into the creative mind, sharing and revealing individual approaches and skills. Read on, enjoy and if you feel that you have what it takes to showcase your work and join the ranks of your Peer Pressure fellows, then don't hesitate to send us your entries.

We always include your email and web address, so anyone interested in your designs can get hold of you. All you have to do is send us high-quality TIFFs or JPEGs (RGB or CMYK) at 300dpi minimum, which can be printed at a minimum size of 15cm x 15cm. Send us low-res versions to [advancedpshop@imagine-publishing.co.uk](mailto:advancedpshop@imagine-publishing.co.uk) – we'll get back to you for higher resolution work if needed. Alternatively, log on to our forum at [www.advancedphotoshop.co.uk/forum](http://www.advancedphotoshop.co.uk/forum). Unfortunately, we cannot provide individual image criticisms.



## Angel

NAME: Shane Grajczyk

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Shane's professional career, which has spanned the best part of ten years, has been in design and multimedia development. However, he has always been illustrating in one form or another, "whether it's inking out a tattoo design, airbrushing a portrait of a loved one, or just drawing whatever comes to mind on the closest thing resembling a piece of paper".

Although Shane received a degree in Visual Communications from the Arts Institute of Colorado, he classes himself as a self-taught digital artist "who tends to sway back and forth between the loose strokes of digital painting and the clean lines of vector illustrations". Shane tells us that lately he has been putting wings on his subjects to portray innocence: "I wanted to mix vibrant colours and gritty textures with the feel of smooth skin and silky hair. So, after detailing the foreground image, I experimented with a few large brushes to capture the gritty background element, then proceeded to add vector wings to the foreground image."

## Water bound

NAME: Simon Rudd

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Water bound was made from four different stock pictures that Simon found on different sites. Using an Adjustment layer, he changed the lighting of the picture from daytime to twilight and then blurred the clouds and mountain to give them depth of field. "I positioned the model on the rock, trying to give her a natural pose and also added a small shadow next to her on the rock," explains Simon. "A slight blur was added to the girl's outer edge to blend her with the background, followed by smudging her skin with a small soft-edged brush, set to low strength to give her smoother skin." The ball of light and wisps on the image were added last by Simon, using the Elliptical Marquee Tool, filled, deselected and then blurred, while the wisps were drawn in using a soft-edged brush on the tablet. Final adjustments were made using a Levels Adjustment layer, giving the picture a blue tint.



**SCHOOL ROOTS (ABOVE):** "Once I got the main idea on the canvas, I had to create the environment. Using a picture of a room as the background, changing its perspective with the Transform Tool and creating the floor with shapes, textures and photos, the idea started getting its initial look"

**BRAZIL WALLPAPER (RIGHT):**

"Sincerely, this art was a shout-out from my heart. I was living this nostalgic moment in my life, thinking about my homeland, my friends, our art, my childhood and the unique nature and culture that I can only see at home. Every time I look to this art, it's like my mind takes a trip to my country"



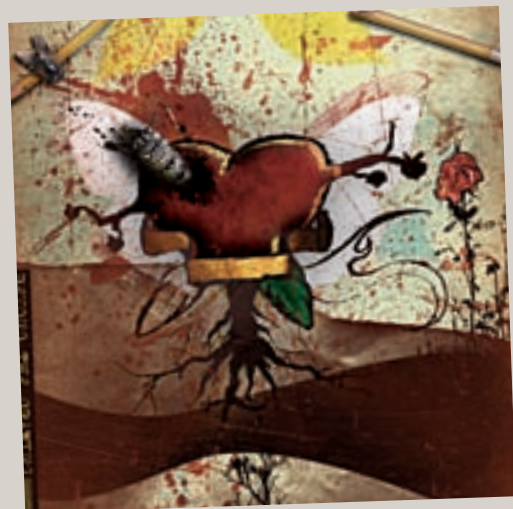
## Brazil

NAME: Renato Braga

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Renato is a freelance artist and art director in California, known as NATO or Coconut based. To create an image, he usually pictures the idea in his mind and then draws his idea, or finds a photo that can be used as a good background. "These initial elements are used like a new canvas. I start putting all the elements together, working with brushes (you cannot imagine the endless brush library that I have), working on shadows, blending modes or using pictures as textures." Renato's favourite technique is to desaturate photos and then bring the colours back in the way he wants them.



**HEART TRASHED:** "I started this art drawing on a notebook while living a crucial boring moment in one of my school classes. As soon as I scanned it, I knew that the game was on"



## Remembering a dream

NAME: Tom Law

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"This image depicts the slow process of remembering a dream after waking," explains Tom. "It is never easy and often patchy, which is why I decided to use a Polaroid theme. Polaroids are a way of capturing a moment quickly, and then being able to physically hold the image." Tom wanted to add a sense of surrealism to the image by including things that can only happen in dreams. "There are also elements of nightmares within the dream, such as dark windows and hands appearing from under the sand." Tom used a number of techniques to create the image. "Panophotography is one – it's a slow process but can be very effective. I also used simple tools such as shapes to create the Polaroid frames. The most time-consuming part of creating the image was putting it together, bit by bit, like recounting a dream. The image slowly takes shape."



## Absorbed within

NAME: Erin Williams

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Using a series of three stock images from [sxc.hu](http://sxc.hu) and a girl from a deviantART stock account, Erin began by cutting out the sky, field and girl and working on each piece separately, changing the colour values, contrast, saturation and hues. "When I felt each photo shared the same look, I combined them all. Then I did some major colour changes again, until I felt it looked perfect and like one photo." Erin is currently attending the University of Hawaii, majoring in Art and Graphic Design. "I hope to continue art as a career and be very successful at it."

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## Hope

NAME: Carl Wright

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Born in 1970, in Islington, Carl Wright recognised a deep-founded desire to express himself creatively by the age of four or five, when he read his first Spiderman comic. "Before I knew it, I was attending a course in every art style I could lay my hands on, in an effort to quench my creative thirst to tell stories. This led to a string of freelance jobs, which included making logos, poster designs, business cards and portraits." Now Carl's focus is on getting his pet project off the ground – a three-part story that he has been creating on and off for a couple of years.

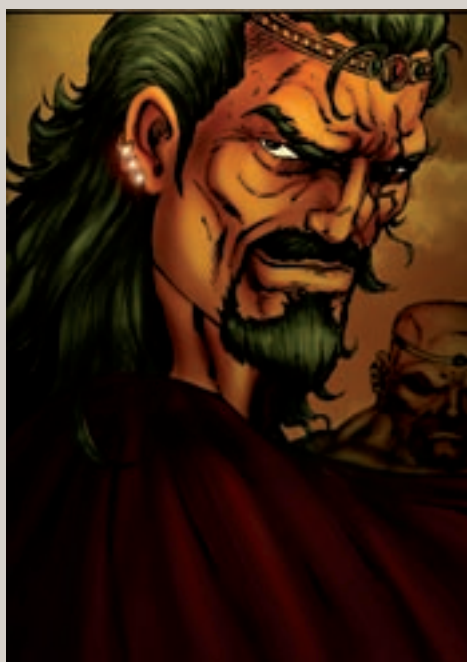
**SECRET (OPPOSITE):** "Another image from the Chronicles of Gideon project. With this one, I was really trying to capture an innate deviousness with the character's expression. I've gone for a solid black backdrop to help convey a sense of evil. While colouring, I tend to use the Burn and Dodge Tools heavily, to help flesh out various textures"



**HOPE (LEFT):** "I'm not sure why, but it's one of my favourite pictures. It started off as a rough sketch that gradually, through a steady process of layering with the Burn and Dodge Tools, developed into this simple piece"



**THE JOURNEY (ABOVE):** "An image taken from my Chronicles of Gideon project. This started off as a line art drawing of the foreground character, which was scanned in and coloured in Photoshop. I always work on a Hollywood blue screen-style method in that I always do foreground and background images separately, then flatten them"



**ENEMY OF MY ENEMY (LEFT):** "This image, and indeed character, is inspired by those old swashbuckling villains from movies such as Sinbad. I was trying to convey a sense of wilful abandonment, mischievousness and absolute deviousness"