

peer pres sure

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

Peer 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. We always include your email and web address, so interested parties can get in touch.

All you have to do is send us high-quality TIFFs or JPEGs (RGB or CMYK) at 300dpi, which can be printed at a minimum size of 15 x 15cm. Send us low-res versions to 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. We cannot provide individual image assessment.

Each issue we select one image to be 'Best in Show', and that lucky person will win a fantastic prize, courtesy of The Illustration Source (www.illustration-source.com), which is a great way to get your work seen. So, what are you waiting for?

Story time

NAME: Stefan Valent
EMAIL: stefanvalent@yahoo.com
WEB: www.stefanvalent.com
BLOG: www.stefanvalent.com/blog

Stefan Valent's career as an illustrator so far has spanned such fields as editorial, educational, fashion and advertising illustration. Since he hasn't done it yet, he now would like to illustrate children's picture books. Originally from a small mining village on the northern tip of Canada, Valent has migrated south to live among the art directors. Valent likes to use Photoshop to combine mediums in ways that nature never intended. To see more of Valent's work, and to keep up-to-date on his various goings-on, visit his website, listed above.



A BOY AND HIS DIDGE (LEFT):
"Once, before everything else, the Creator noticed a newly fallen tree trunk, now teeming with termites. He held this trunk up to his lips and blew the termites out, scattering them. These became the stars in the sky. Noticing as he did this, the deep, resonant sound the trunk made, he continued blowing his new instrument. With this first song, he sounded the world and everything beyond, The Dreaming, into existence. To this day, everything still hums to that original vibration"

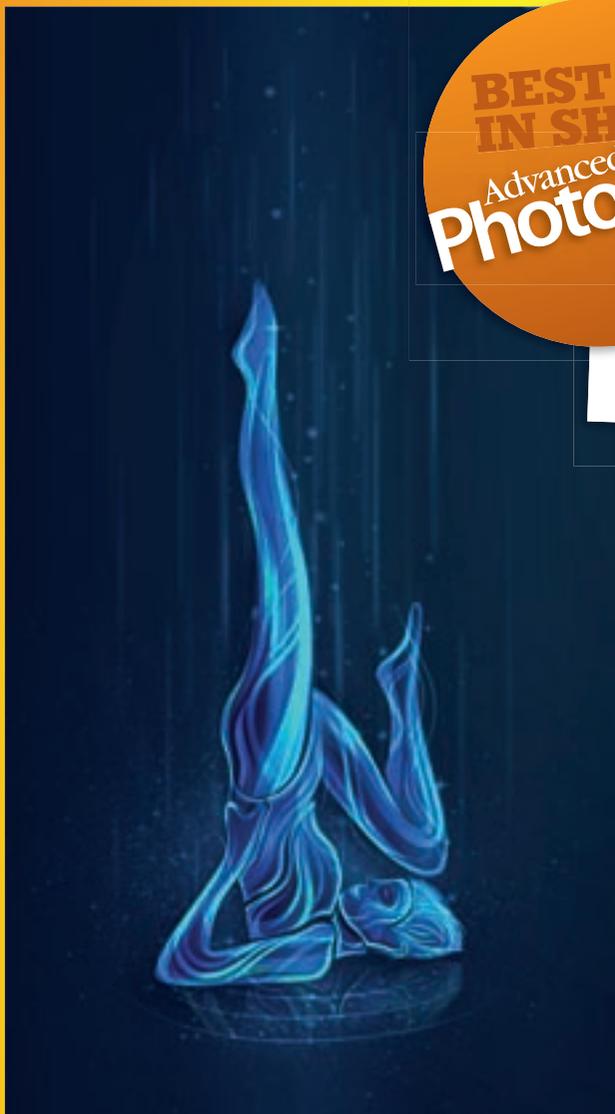
A GIRL AND HER TURTLE (ABOVE):
"Although it was the scariest place she'd ever seen, she knew that the only way to rescue her parents was to race through the burned down forest as quickly as she could. Thankfully, she had a fast ride. These images were created using Photoshop as a compositing tool to combine painted wood, acrylics, colouring pencils, charcoal, photography, sculpture, ink and digital elements"





EVOKE APPLICATION PIECE (ABOVE): "This piece combines around 15-20 separate images, with at least five of these dedicated to the rocky EVK logo. It was created for my application to the Evokeone art group"

POISE (BELOW): "Another Pen tool creation, this time making heavy use of gradient fills and the Color Dodge blending mode. A photo reference was used to keep the anatomy in check, and a few blurring effects were used in the background"



BEST IN SHOW
Advanced
Photoshop



NOKIA ADVERT: "This is an advert for my first AS level graphics project, created with a total of 16 separate images from the free stock site sxc.hu. This totalled up over 100 layers, and had to be saved in two separate PSDs to stop my (very old and slow) computer from crashing!"

Bright young thing

NAME: Nick Taylor
EMAIL: nikktron@hotmail.com
WEB: aeoll.deviantart.com

Nick Taylor is 17 years old and currently studying Graphic Design to AS level at a sixth form college in Norfolk. He has been using Photoshop for approximately two years after discovering the application on an online forum, where several people were displaying their digital artwork.

"I don't think I have a set style at the moment - I'm always skipping between genres and experimenting with different techniques," says Taylor. "I'm a great fan of the Pen tool, and I can often be found fiddling with a vector-style illustration or T-shirt design."

He continues: "Recently, I have also been trying out photomanipulation, with great success. It's a lot of fun to collage and blend a mix of completely different images into a single, photorealistic creation. And the finished piece is a real feast for the eyes."

Taylor describes online communities and showcase sites such as deviantART as "an invaluable outlet": "They're great when it comes to collaborating and communicating with other like-minded young designers, and offer a place to discover inspirational art."

Taylor hopes to continue studying Graphic Design for the next two years, developing his style and improving his digital skills further. "Hopefully, I may even pick up some small commissions along the way, you never know!"



CYLINDRIKAL MUDD: Blake combines a number of 3D applications with Photoshop to create his fantasy scenes

Jigsaw puzzles

NAME: Chris Blake

EMAIL: mudded@hotmail.co.uk

WEB: www.portfolios.com/chrisblake

Chris Blake has always been into art from way back in primary school where teachers used to praise him for his creative pictures. "Something about straight lines moved me into designing houses, bridges, etc, for friends and various other people," Blake explains. "I stumbled upon digital illustration while messing about with various animation software like Bryce, Poser and Vue, then taught myself the basics of Photoshop 6 and 7, moving onto CS and CS2."

When asked about how he creates his images, Blake says: "I use a jigsaw puzzle technique - I create a scene in one application, create characters/objects in another and put them all together. I would describe my style as simple but effective." Photoshop is used for the finishing touches of the characters that he creates.

Blake describes himself as an 'underground' artist, and finds inspiration in one of his peers: "My top favourite digital artist is another from the underground scene, Richard Amoah. [He's] full of ideas and creativity."

Looking to the future, Blake has plenty of work ahead: "I recently built a city from scratch using Vue D'Esprit 4 and Vue 6 Xstream for a personal project. I am currently working on walkpaths and detailed attention to my 'city dwelling characters.'"



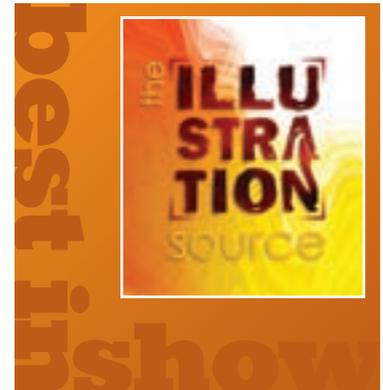
FISH 2: This aquatic number shows off Blake's "simple but effective" style

Fantasy illustrations

NAME: HanXian Chen
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 WEB: <http://chenhx.deviantart.com>

HanXian Chen, 20, was born in China's Guangdong Province. He got tired of school life and went out to get a job in graphic design. However, within a couple of weeks, he realised that this was not the career path for him. In September 2006, he met his first teacher Lorland Chain (fantasy artist - <http://lorlandchain.deviantart.com>) and was attracted by his work. Since then, he has decided to become a fantasy art painter and illustrator, and he loves his work!

LOST LOVE: "If given the opportunity, [this image] will be published for everyone to see. I hope that people will like my work"



Sponsored by...

Not only is Nick Taylor this month's Best in Show, he has also won a year's full Option 3 membership to the Illustration Source, worth £150 and Featured Artist slot for March. The Illustration Source Ltd is the newest source of original art, freelance illustrators, photographers, artists and designers on the net. Visit www.illustration-source.com for more information. If you'd like to stand a chance of winning an Illustration Source portfolio, send your images to advancedpshop@imagine-publishing.co.uk.

Image requirements

You'll stand a better chance of seeing your work in print if you adhere to the following criteria: Make sure that your images are high-quality TIFFs or JPEGs (RGB or CMYK), 300dpi minimum, and can be printed at 15 x 15cm minimum. And don't forget to include a small text file detailing how you created your work.

Terms and conditions

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THE PRIZE: Check out The Illustration Source's website to see the portfolios of previous winners of Best in Show



Peer Pressure Web Challenge – the winners

On our website, www.advancedphotoshop.co.uk/competitions.php, we run a web challenge where you are asked to create an image in Photoshop using at least one of three images provided. Each challenge lasts three months, and the winner gets a year's subscription to the magazine. Check out the website for details of our latest challenge (ref: AP 038, closing date: 21 March 2008) and how to enter.

Above are the three images that entrants had to use in the last challenge (ref: AP 035). Here we present the winner and runners-up.

WINNER – ROSS PEART – BATTLEGROUND (RIGHT):
"The only original parts are the shed and the mountain range. The robot was photomontage using various parts. Everything was placed in Photoshop and then a hand rendered lighting effect applied"



RUNNER-UP – YANICK COUYAVAH – BACK TO NEVERLAND (BELOW):
"I inspired myself from the story of Peter Pan and imagine his return to Never-land. I used mostly customised brushes, blended images and textural effects"

RUNNER-UP – DEREK BOLDEN – FINAL (BELOW RIGHT):
"The car, grass, and mountains were from the photos provided, so I used all three images. The graffiti was created in Illustrator"

