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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?

Good things come in threes

NAME: Miranda Adria
EMAIL: neugotisch@hotmail.com
WEB: <http://bitchinblack.deviantart.com>

Miranda Adria's deviantART page caught our eye a while back, so it is a pleasure to be able to show off her work here. Adria explains how she started off in digital art: "I've been working with Photoshop since version 3.0 and have been an avid addict ever since. Most of the work I do is photomanipulation, taking several images (my own or free stock) and creating something new and different. However, I also enjoy doing digital paintings, mixed-media pieces, fractal art and photography."

On these specific pieces, she says: "These three pieces are a triptych based on the concept of Heaven, Earth and Hell. The model in each was resized from a small stock image and completely repainted. In all three pieces, the wings were painted from scratch and all the other stock used was my own."

You can find out where the model images came from in the captions for each of the images in the bottom-right. For more about Adria and her collection of work, check out her deviantART site.

**BEST
IN SHOW**
Advanced
Photoshop



EARTH (ABOVE): Adria has painted over the original stock image and added extra details and elements for this earthbound composition. Stock ref: <http://massochrist.deviantart.com/>

HEAVEN (FAR LEFT): These images together form a powerful triptych, whereby three images work together to portray a common theme. Stock ref: <http://exbeauty.deviantart.com/>

HELL (LEFT): The darkest of the compositions is used to portray Hell, with the wings far more devilish and bat-like than the others. Stock ref: <http://tess-stock.deviantart.com/>



BIKE RED (LEFT): "I think my main goal is to surprise people that my Photoshop renders aren't 3D"

WOSPTEL (BELOW): "I hope that one day I could get a job in advertisement or commercials. A lot of 3D is used these days in commercials and I think it would be a hard but fun job to do"



Unique designs

NAME: Michael Mahy
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 WEB: www.michaelmahy.be

Michael Mahy is a 23-year-old student working towards a Diploma in Multimedia and Communication Technology from the PIH School Institute in Kortrijk. The course involves the knowledge of 3Ds Max and most of the Adobe programs, such as Flash, Photoshop, Illustrator, Premiere, After Effects, InDesign and Dreamweaver. He currently studies Digital Arts and Entertainment at the same school to become more specialised in 3D and concept art.

He explains his work: "The last few months I've been working more and more with Photoshop instead of 3Ds Max. I love creating photorealistic renders. It's actually not as hard as some people might think it is. First you sketch something that you want to render and then you scan it so you can open it in Photoshop. You then proceed by going over every drawn line with the use of paths and the Pen tool, fill these up in separate layers and add some shade by using the Burn and Dodge tools. After that you draw new paths for the reflections and that's what makes it realistic. What I like about this process is that everybody can do it. You don't have to be a skilled artist to use the Pen tool. It's incredibly easy to use and to get beautiful shapes with it. Without the Pen tool I wouldn't be able to do any of these images."



IPOD NANO: "I saw a picture of an iPod somewhere and I knew it wouldn't be too hard to make, so I just started and three hours later I had a clean, photorealistic iPod"

Traditional to digital

NAME: Jenny Hawkyard
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 WEB: <http://jezhawk.deviantart.com>

Hawkyard tells us a bit about herself: "I'm currently studying graphic design in Ontario, Canada, though I'm originally from England and I thought I'd kill two birds with one stone by coming over to Canada to study, which means I got to study and travel at the same time!

I only really got into using Photoshop in my first year of my course, when I spent the whole summer prior to my first semester trying to learn everything I could about Adobe programs, so that I got a bit of a head start.

I find most of my inspiration from deviantART, which gave me somewhere to display my work and get some critique at the same time. I'm not ashamed to say that I'm on there most days, or on some kind of portfolio site looking at new techniques and finding out what's new and what I could do next with my artwork.

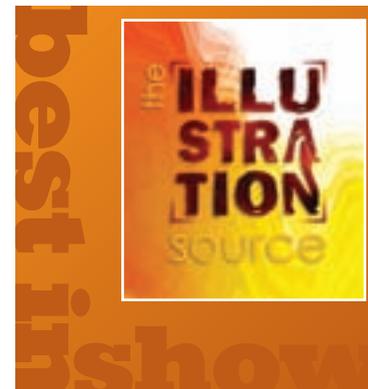
I've explored all sorts of different techniques through Photoshop, I love creating photomontages, but more recently I've been focusing on developing my illustrative work within this medium. I'm particularly inspired by some of the great traditional artists and illustrators such as Arthur Rackham, Edward Burne Jones and Susan Seddon Boulet."

JACK FROST: "Jack Frost was created when I was in a very wintery mood. I scanned in a pencil sketch and went from there. Photoshop's blending modes did a great job of making the icy wings have a more translucent and shimmery feel"



IN THE GLOAMING (TOP): "In The Gloaming was created after reading Keith Donohue's Stolen Child. I wanted to create something that had a mysterious and magical feel to it. I started from just sketching on top of a texture layer and lightening or darkening certain areas with the Dodge/Burn tools. I also used some custom shapes for certain elements"

EPONA (ABOVE): "I start with a great texture and see what pops out at me. I start a simple sketch and then add more details, using different blending modes to create a glowing effect. I use the standard brushes provided by Photoshop, as well as some of my own, which I create on the fly if I want a certain effect. I use the Eraser tool a lot too"



Sponsored by...

Not only is Miranda Adria this month's Best in Show, she has also won a year's full Option 3 membership to The Illustration Source, worth £150 and Featured Artist slot for April. 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. Don't forget to include a small text file detailing how you created your work as well.

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

Portrait pieces

NAME: Asif Iqbal

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Asif Iqbal lives in New Jersey, USA. He went to the School of Visual Arts in NYC. After he graduated from school, he eventually ended up painting romance novel covers in New York. A few years ago, he started getting interested in photography and, more recently, he is developing a 'photo illustration' style of art using Photoshop, combining his love for photography and illustration.



DARK DEB (ABOVE): "No one piece is the same. I start with the raw image and adjust exposure and settings to what I feel the image warrants"

PULP (TOP LEFT): "Recently, I have been playing around with HDR especially on the backgrounds"

LADY IN RED (LEFT): "There's a lot of playing with a lot of layers, dodging and burning, blending modes, high pass and median filters, curves adjustments, Gaussian Blur, layer masks, etc"