



Photoshop NO FEAR TO CREATE

Artist PROFILE

Marko Djurdjevic

COUNTRY: Serbia
CLIENTS: Marvel Comics, Massive Black, Wizards of the Coast, White Wolf, Dark Age Games



Marko has 10 years of experience as a freelance illustrator

and concept designer. He's worked in multiple fields, including comics, video games, RPGs, and films. He says he loves dogs, but doesn't like cats so much. He loves his wife the most.
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DVD Assets

The files you need are on the DVD

FOLDERS:
Screenshots

Art means limitless possibilities, but to be able to create freely, we must shed our fears. **Marko Djurdjevic** shows us how

Creativity is one of the things that makes us human: it's what separates us from monkeys. Too often we hinder ourselves in our creative process, because we're afraid of the outcome. But who is to judge us for what we do? The paper? The art police? Confidence in every decision is what makes art become relevant. This workshop focuses around making confidence your weapon of choice when creating art.

Rules only apply if you let them dominate your work. A free mind can

achieve anything, and whatever others may think of your work, it doesn't matter as long as you enjoy what you're doing. Don't let questions hinder your process, make them become your process.

Every line you put down on a sheet of paper is a question – "Where am I going?" If you let the answer scare you, you'll never find out. But if you enable yourself to become part of the journey, art becomes easy and fear can be forgotten. There's no right or wrong in art: you either love your trade or you don't, and denial will lead you nowhere.



1 Enter

I start out with a white document. Loose lines are my first choice, since they offer me the chance to pick up any direction I want to go to. I zoom out as far as possible, because I want to keep an eye on the entire image. I really try not to think at this stage, as thinking hinders the exploration of my work. Magic always seems to happen when I'm not worried and in this case I'm completely relaxed.

2 Access granted

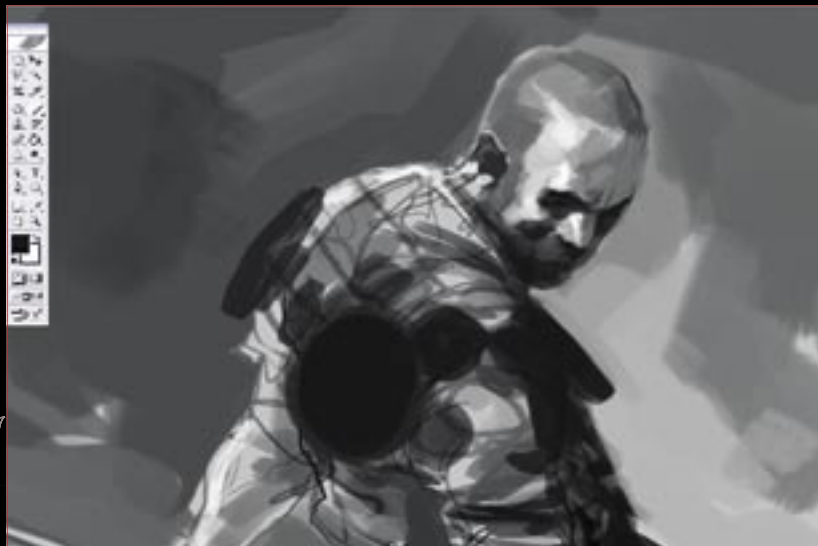
After my first lines start to roughly resemble a human figure in motion, I begin adding values in black and white to apply volume to my forms. I still have no idea where this is going, what it will resemble or if it's going to look good. What matters most is to keep my mind free for the possibilities of each randomly applied stroke, to see patterns in the painting that will help me figure out what I want to achieve with it. Every line means limitless possibilities, even if it's apparently a wrong line. I work with a default Charcoal brush set to a 100 per cent Opacity, with Pen Pressure applied.



3 Fear is a lousy friend

I'm making some stronger decisions as I come along. I add a diagonal shape to the bottom of the character to complement the diagonal of the back arm. I'm also washing the white background with a mid-tone, to make the highlights on the figure stand out more. I'm not afraid of screwing

up, so I paint on one layer only, throughout the entire image. I approach each digital painting as I would approach a real-life canvas. I never use undos – if something goes entirely wrong, I prefer to fix it by painting on top of it. I consider the lessons learned by doing so to be much more valuable than just going back a few steps with a shortcut. After all, real life doesn't have an undo function. ➔



4 Multiply
I copy my layer and set it to multiply to achieve stronger darks, and give the entire piece more contrast. Afterwards, I flatten the layers. But I will need a focal point to keep myself interested. I decide to flesh out the face a bit more, to add expression to this otherwise rough sketch.

5 Instinct
I'm far enough into the piece to start adding colour and spice it up a bit. I put a colour layer on top of my black and white image and apply a quick wash of browns, blues and reds. The palette is rather intuitive at this point; I just try to have a nice contrast between cools and warms, to make the forms read better. I flatten the layers again.

6 Are you talking to me?
I quickmask the figure, desaturate the background a little and use the Hue slider to push towards a deeper red. I grab a Texture brush to paint some more interesting clouds for the background. I use the Dodge tool to enhance the highlights on the character's armour,



and then go back into his face to render the expression more. This will be the key to my image, so I want to put some extra love into it.

7 All that glitters...
I realise that the armour sucks. So what? I just paint over it. To always stick to one idea is like driving a truck against a wall. If you can make a decision during your process that makes your painting look better in your eyes, but it means destroying what you've already created, then by all means do so, no matter how attached you are to a detail in the first piece. Attaching yourself to a piece of art or a single detail breeds stagnation. A



PRO SECRETS

Kick undo

Ctrl/Cmmd+Z just isn't worth your time. Learn to make strong and confident decisions and your art will improve tremendously. Don't rely on going back in time to save things. Make them right the first time, or paint right over it. You'll learn more from your mistakes by facing them instead of running from them.

good artist must always be able to destroy his own creation and use it as a foundation for something entirely new.

8 Consideration
Now that I have my expression for the character down and the mood captured to a certain extent, I want to flesh out some other areas. I focus on the arms, define the sword at the back a little more and keep working on the armour.

9 Characterisation
I put more definition into the armor plates and add a dash of red as a colour variation to the background. I add scratches to the armour to give the character more story. What is this guy about? Why is he so angry? A lot of questions shoot through my mind and help me define the characteristics more.



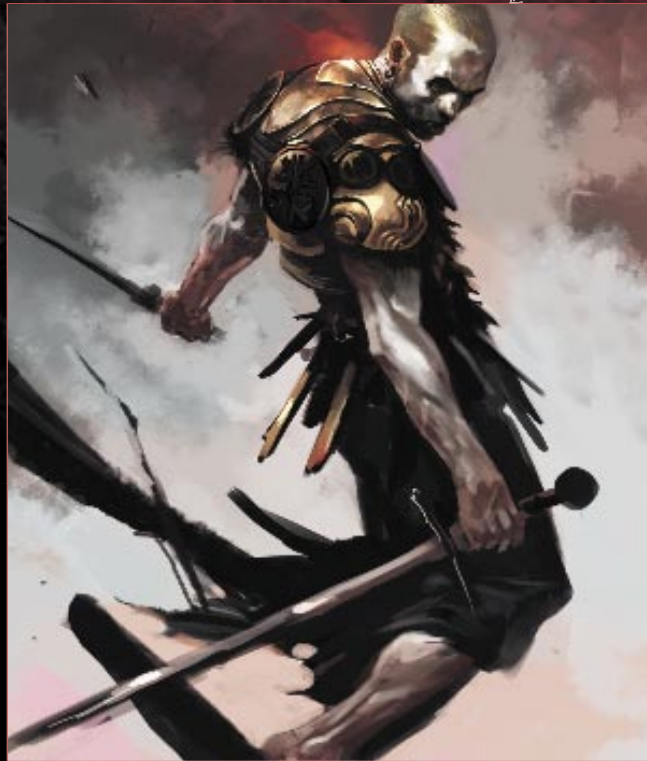


10 Embrace change

The character now carries a secondary sword in his other hand and I apply another red splash with a Texture brush to the background. I use the Dodge tool to make it juicy and pop. But I'm running out of space here, so I copy my image on to a new layer, flip it around, then scale it until I have new room to enlarge the entire composition. Again, change is a constant factor in my work and I embrace that feeling.

11 Pseudo-dynamics

Looking at the piece compositionally we have multiple (almost) parallel diagonals that are intersecting each other now. This helps the picture achieve dynamism without actually being a dynamic representation. The intersecting diagonals also add depth because they show what is in front and what is at the back. These diagonals are achieved if you apply tension to your



figurative work. I enjoy having my characters suffer from gravitation, carrying heavy objects or just being bent by the burdens of life to introduce these dynamic diagonals into my art.

12 Eagle eye

I zoom out again to double-check whether everything within my painting reads from afar. This is essential to every piece and the best way to figure out if an image needs visual punch in some overlooked areas.

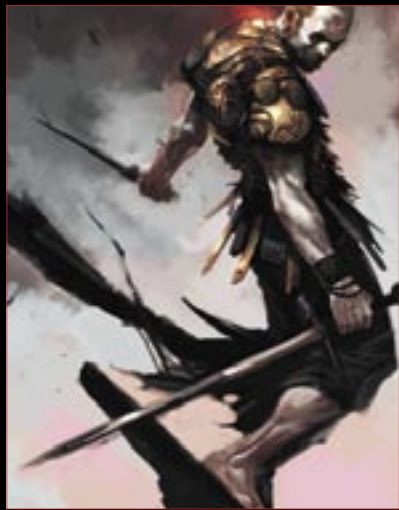
13 No rules

I move back into the painting again, defining the arm in the front more and putting some attention into the sword. Overall, I want to give my character a supernatural sort of feel, so I keep my skin tones pale and dominated by neutrals. The red variations towards the hands work as a temperature shift to make the arm as a whole visually more appealing. Next, I throw a light purple overlay layer on top of my painting to put more colour variation into the lit areas, then I flatten the image. This entire process continues to be intuitive. I'm following no plan or set of rules. I'm just applying what I like and taking away what I dislike, so the rendering never becomes boring. This mindset keeps me fresh throughout the entire image creation process and I don't fall prey to getting lost in my details.

14 One brush

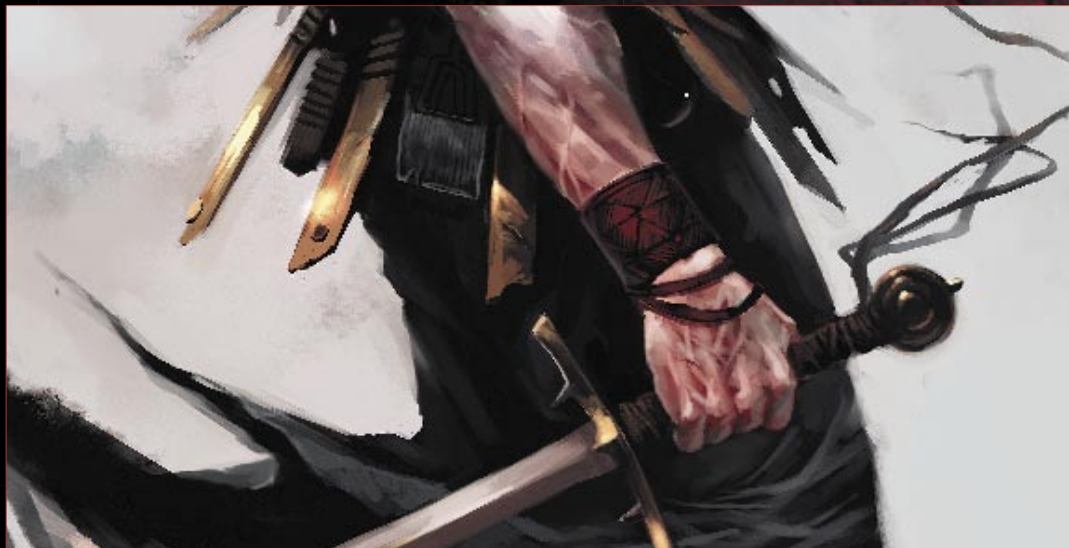
The next thing I do is add some veins to increase the surface texture of the arm, since it's one of the more important compositional elements of the painting. I try to emulate all kinds of surfaces and textures by just using one brush (default Charcoal). I always enjoy a challenge in art and I try to avoid using shortcuts as much as possible. I firmly believe that great art doesn't depend on the medium used, or the perfect brush for every situation, but on the will to create believable images. I know people who can make great art with a pen on toilet paper – all that matters is how willing you are to make it look right. ➔





15 Abstraction

To force more drama into this piece, I add flying pieces of pattern and cloth. These random shapes generate mood and bring a new dimension to the piece. There now seems to be atmosphere and wind; the character exists within a living environment, even though we only see an empty sky in the background – the visual elements that we're being presented with make our subconscious minds fill in the blanks. These abstract shapes aren't clearly defined and so they're great for leaving room for imagination. On top of that, they're close to the borders of the image,



PRO SECRETS

Keeping a fresh eye

Always sleep one night over a finished piece and take a fresh look at it in the morning. You'll always find multiple little flaws that you can get rid of immediately by just taking the time to distance yourself from your work and see it with a fresh pair of eyes the next day.

giving us the feeling that more is happening outside of the frame. I also add a wristband to the character's forearm, a small element that will make the area differ from the rest of the arm.

16 Last minute realisations

I suddenly realise that I've made a logical mistake throughout the entire painting. The neck armour simply doesn't work, since he wouldn't be able to lift his head. I will have to correct this soon, before I forget about it. I've blocked the entire figure in and now I'm checking on areas that still need work. The left arm and sword are considerably undefined and I'm not happy with the position of the arm. The hand looks like a stump since we see it from the underside and there are no fingers to define the form; I'll change that too. I throw a colour layer on top of my

painting and make a quick red wash over the front arm to give it more life. I start pushing volume into the character's skirt – the painting is now dominated by the three primaries, red, yellow and blue.

17 Final touches

I apply final touches here and there across my image. These steps are almost invisible but require the utmost care. I zoom into a detail of choice and start pushing volumes and values around, adding areas of reflected light. I focus on making temperature relationships between cool to warm, instead of pushing too far into the contrast between dark and light areas. At this point I have the feeling that I could take this image even further by just picking detail after detail and rendering it until it reaches a more realistic state.



18 Endgame

The finished work. I change the neck armour into a more functional piece. I also flip the arm at the back so we can see the fingers grappling the sword. I pour some more love into the shadow areas, using reflecting light to flesh out volume. I try to find the right balance between finished and unfinished areas, but to know when to stop working on something is an entire workshop all by itself... ●

