



In the years that I've been drawing, I've been able to confirm that for those who view the medium from afar, watching someone create an image on paper is fascinating, as if some strange magic invoked by the artist were responsible for the drawing's appearance. Watching someone draw usually produces a curious mix of incredulity and admiration in the viewer.

It is true that the entire process of artistic creation seems to have something supernatural, something subtle and abstract which brings together inspiration, imagination, visualisation and the materialisation of an idea and which contributes to the artist's creation in an essential way. That something is like an imperceptible thread and as each artist has his or her way of thinking, of imagining, of seeing and understanding things, each artist ends up finding his or her own way of giving the finishing touches that makes something particular, that is what makes us unique. But in spite of that indefinable and mysterious part that brings ideas from the soul to the intellect, what is certain is that the practical part of the job, where the work takes physical form, has very little mystery and a lot of enjoyment in it.

When Javier asked me to create this guide for "The Art Boulevard", it made me reflect on the topic as at first I thought that I wouldn't know how to create a guide that would distinguish my method of work

from many other professionals, because in the end the creation of an idea (apart from the different capabilities of each person) is merely a mechanical process for me: pencil on paper, ink and colour. That is basically what the majority of illustrators do... and yet in this matter each artist has his or her own special touch, which made me conclude that surely are not two processes which are the same. So, answering Javier's request, and hoping that this can be of interest to you, I offer you one of the ways that I work:

## **Sketch**

Obviously, drawings don't come out fully formed. Before starting on the phases where errors are paid for, it's time to enjoy making mistakes. Sketches are the initial search; they are quick notes of those ideas which reach the level of consciousness. The image, the composition, the plan, the forms, the story that the drawing will tell... all these decisions are taken at this moment, when we fill our sketch books with variations until we find that which tells us "this is how I'll draw it".

## **Pencil drawing**

For this guide, I didn't do the sketch process previously described. I simply grabbed a tool and drew what came out. If you draw without thinking of what will come out sometimes even the artist is surprised about what can appear on the paper. In this case something fairly conventional was born, a normal and ordinary character. Christen it as you wish. Frequently in this phase you usually employ a standard pencil on paper, in many occasions illustrators are inclined to use a blue pencil, (maybe nostalgically from the times when the first animated films, since it is easy to eliminate the blue with having to erase it. Erasing is a thing that I do with much loathing). For a while now I've almost completely abandoned traditional techniques and draw directly on a CITIQ 21UX. I open a document, choose blue pencil-type brush and draw a new layer. I draw the basic forms that establish the volume and size of the things and later I trace the outlines that unite them, and finally I add the details that give it personality.



Fig. 1

## **Ink**

In my case I don't finish too much with pencils. Others work more with them and I'm amazed by it, but I don't work with them much. I like staying fresh and if I work too much with pencils each previous phase loses its spontaneity; it has to do with the drawing gaining something in each phase rather than losing something (something not that rare since I've heard colleagues say on many occasions that they like the sketch more than the final drawing). For me the ink is drawing's maximum expression and the stage I enjoy most. I'm allowing myself here to add things that hadn't been marked by the pencil, including changing the outlines. It's in the inking stage when I really "draw". With pencils I basically only put things together and put them into place. It's now when I define everything. As this was an intuitive drawing, the pencil came out practically done and in this case I limited myself only to choosing the lines which need to redone. I colour it loosely and quickly; excessive control causes problems in my case, so I stick with freshness. In this phase of colouring I'm concerned with where to put more thickness or less, where to start a trace and where I finish, but I make many of the decisions in an intuitive way (based on years of practice). Just go with it. If I trace something I don't like, I hit CTRL+Z and repeat it.



Fig. 2

### **Base Colour**

Once finished with the colour I eliminate the blue pencil: if it was a scanned pencil I eliminate the blue lines and it's ready, if it was a digital pencil I eliminate the layer that I was drawing. And I keep the black ink in a layer of its own. In each section I add base colour: colours without shadows or volume. Only flat colours. I search for harmonious combinations, I'm not interested so much in any individual colour as much as its relationship with the rest, I keep tones and contrasts between colours in mind (if I don't find it at first I look for the best combination varying the values of the tools' hue/saturation). In this drawing I wanted to use the whites of the paper as part of the style so I don't colour the surface, I keep those parts blank so that they appear more illuminated. Once again these white reserves are intuitive. Only if the work requires realistic light do I worry about looking for incidences of direct or indirect light on the object. Here the spots of light do not follow a realistic pattern, only an aesthetic one, so I put them there according to my criteria. I don't know yet what colour to make the shirt, so I'll leave it for later.



Fig. 3

### **Lights and shadows**

In this simple drawing I'm not looking for complicated shadows, I'll only put some basic spots that help give a certain sense of volume and make the character less flat. Some shadows thrown in and it's ready. I use a cold tone in the new layer in a multiplying manner. I already decided the colour of the shirt, so I return to the base colour layer and I colour it.





Fig. 4



Fig. 5

### **Colour lines**

On occasions I don't want a black line. As I have it on a different layer I colour it so that it fits in better with the general tone of the image.



Fig. 6

### **Textures**

Also on occasions, if we want to take out a bit of the cold that normally comes with digital colour, we can add some texture to the image. The textures add grains, some noise, change the flat colours, and these imperfections give off warmth. The trace of coloured pencil, the white reserves and the coloured brush marks suggest that a texture that simulates in some way a colour made with aquarelle or other liquid medium would work well. So I scan some watercolours on aquarelle paper and I paste a multiplying effect or underexpose with opacity, whichever works best. With a final look, before flattening the image, I decide whether to add or modify a detail. In this case with I lightly change the tone of the skin, the right arm and the left shoulder with a soft colour brush. A signature and it's done.





Fig. 7





Fig. 8

And as it's usually better to see something than to explain it, I'll leave you with an accelerated video of the entire process: <http://youtu.be/00McMNUjRrQ>

Thanks for your patience and attention!

A guide by Santy Gutiérrez for the Art Boulevard