

DRAMATIC FIGURE LIGHTING



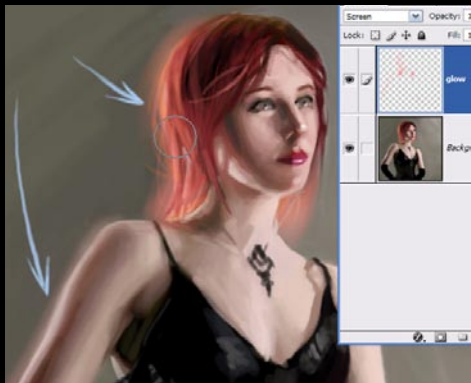
When painting a human in a fantasy illustration, a single frontal light source usually isn't the most interesting solution, so here we'll take a look at some dramatic alternatives to 'flat' lighting, and a couple of quick

digital painting techniques that can help us achieve them. Ask yourself what mood you want to achieve with your painting before you begin, and design your lighting scheme accordingly.



MAJOR/MINOR SOURCE

This technique is a favorite of movie poster designers—in fashion, adding a second light source behind a model is called a 'hair light' or 'rim light' and can be a great technique to add a suggestion of moonlight, a reflection from a shiny surface, or accentuate the contours of an otherwise shadowy creature.



Switch things around and try making the secondary source the brighter one, creating a backlit effect; add a new layer and set to Screen, then lightly brush in a local color (in this example the red in the hair was used).



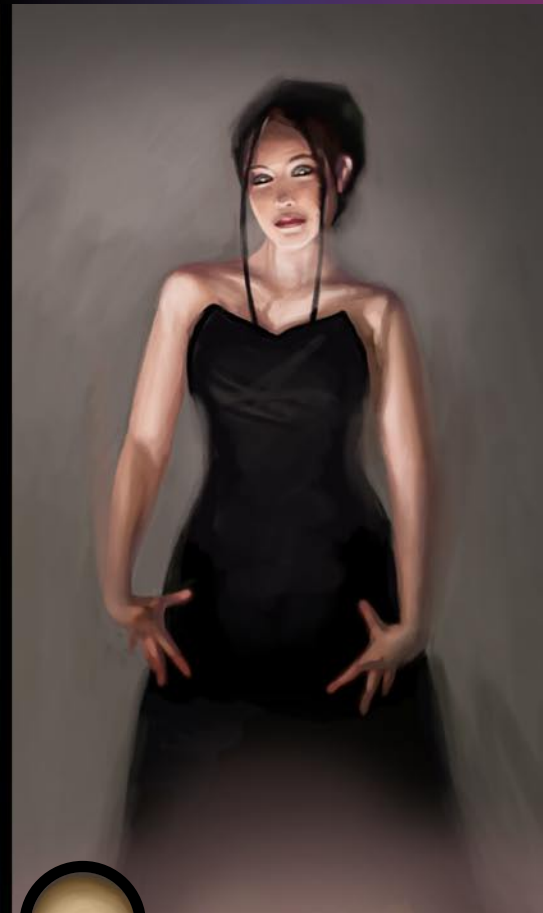
SOFT OVERHEAD LIGHT

Imagine an overcast day at high noon. Soft, natural light tends to rest in the warmer spectrum and cast cooler shadows, much like the white dress demonstrates above.



I suggest using the Dodge Tool sparingly, but when you need to create a little ambience around a highlight area, set it to a low exposure (about 10%) and set it to Highlights. Dodge over the area conservatively.

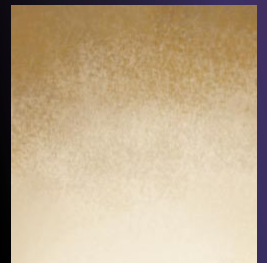
You can also use light Dodging to add suggested reflective light from below the figure, as seen in the lower part of the face above.



UNDERLIGHTING

The classic choice for a horror scene, lighting coming from below a figure distorts our perception of facial features and draws the eye upward into them.

When creating finished skin textures, consider that bright light sources create harsh pitted shadows on the skin; you may want to use a stipple brush to add extra texture in the area between the light and dark areas.



If your light source is coming from a small light or flame, use warm, highly saturated hues in the highlight areas and work on a cooler toned ground (blue or blue-green) for maximum contrast.