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Opening extract from

Steampunk Characters

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 4
DRAWING TOOLS 6
IDEAS 8
POSES 10
STEAMPUNK ROBOTS 12
SKY PIRATE 14
INVENTOR 16
BIG-GAME HUNTER 18
WINGED GIRL 20
SCIENTIST 22
AVIATRIX 24
GENTLEMAN INVENTOR 26
COMIC STRIP 1 28
COMIC STRIP 2 30
GLOSSARY 32
INDEX 32

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Steampunk – an artform that explores what the world might have been like if history had taken a slightly different turn. Taking its inspiration from a 19th-century view of the future, Steampunk shows us a world of high technology, but powered by steam and clockwork. It takes the fantastic ideas of writers such as Jules Verne and H. G. Wells, and updates them for the modern age. Futuristic equipment made of cast iron and brass, mahogany and leather, has a character that today's plastics and electronics can never achieve.

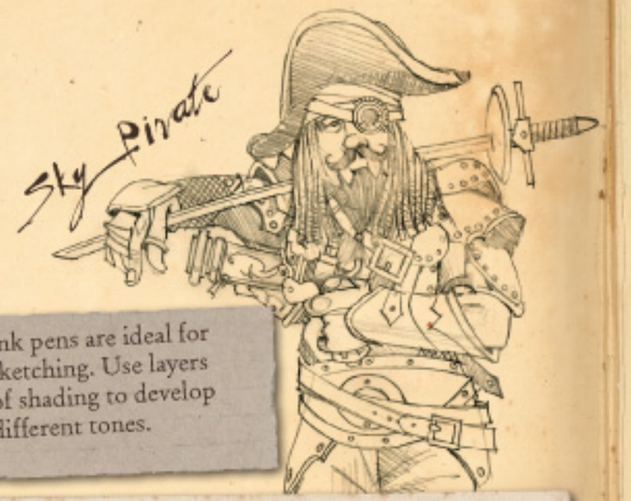
This book introduces you to some of the ingenious gentlemen and indomitable ladies who inhabit the world of Steampunk. Before you draw a character, take a moment to consider what kind of person they are and what kind of story they have to tell...





DRAWING TOOLS

You don't need a vast range of equipment for your Steampunk drawings – the pencil is your most versatile tool. But experiment with different ways of making marks, and find out what suits you. Here are some possibilities worth exploring.



Ink pens are ideal for sketching. Use layers of shading to develop different tones.

Tone

Using tone (shading) makes your drawings look more realistic and three-dimensional. The darkest areas can be inked in solidly, leaving the lightest parts ink-free. Use hatching for midtones and cross-hatching for darker tones.





Cross-hatching

Hatching

Felt-tips are great for filling in areas of flat tone.

Dramatic use of light and dark tones is called chiaroscuro – an Italian word for 'light–dark'.



Pencils

Pencils come in different grades, ranging from fine greys to soft, deep blacks.

Hard pencils are usually graded from H to 6H (the hardest). Soft pencils are graded from B to 9B (the softest and blackest).

HB pencils are between H and B. They are ideal for general sketching, but experiment with different grades of pencils and explore the range of tones they can produce.

Draughtsmen's pens

Draughtsmen's pens and art pens are ideal for creating fine, regular lines and surface texture, as in the Inventor portrait opposite. Pen nibs are available in a variety of widths.

Paper surfaces

Paper textures range from smooth to very rough. Rough paper is ideal for use with charcoal, whereas smooth paper is best for fine line drawings.



The Scientist portrait is constructed from washes of ink diluted to different shades.

IDEAS

Steampunk uses a mix of styles rooted in an alternative 19th century, when the British Empire vied with other colonial powers to rule the world with its coal-powered technology. Look for inspiration in old artefacts and vintage photographs such as these.



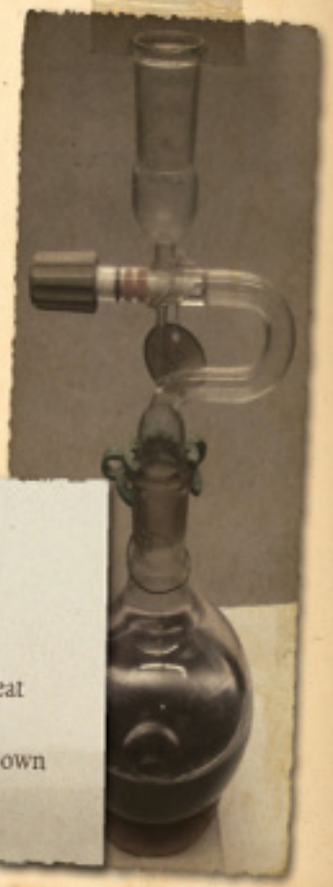
Fashion

Old fashions can give you a starting point for Steampunk outfits.



Army uniforms

Old army uniforms are a great source of inspiration. Pith helmets and leather belts are among the staples of Steampunk costume.



Science equipment

Scientific apparatus and gadgets from the gaslit past can make great accessories for your characters. Combine objects to invent your own mysterious accoutrements.



Hats

A hat can give a character a distinct personality. In Victorian times, a gentleman was not properly dressed without a top hat.

Welding

Welding goggles and equipment make good accessories for mechanically minded characters.





Aviation outfits

Aviators' clothes from the early 20th century are ideal for depicting the Steampunk legends of the skies.

Keep your eyes open!

Get inspiration from old costumes, photos and inventions found in museums. Interesting details are all around you.