



ZBrush Character Creation: Advanced Digital Sculpting

By Scott Spencer

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ZBrush's popularity is exploding giving more CG artists the power to create stunning digital art with a distinctively fine art feel. *ZBrush Character Creation: Advanced Digital Sculpting* is the must-have guide to creating highly detailed, lush, organic models using the revolutionary ZBrush software. Digital sculptor Scott Spencer guides you through the full array of ZBrush tools, including brushes, textures and detailing. With a focus on both the artistry and the technical know-how, you'll learn how to apply traditional sculpting and painting techniques to 3D art while uncovering the "why" behind the "how" for each step. You'll gain inspiration and insight from the beautiful full-color illustrations and professional tips from experienced ZBrush artists included in the book. And, above all, you'll have a solid understanding of how applying time-honored artistic methods to your workflow can turn ordinary digital art into breathtaking digital masterpieces.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Amazon Exclusive: Scott Spencer's Favorite ZBrush Tricks

- 1. Move your light often.** When sculpting try and use the basic material instead of the matcap shaders. The basic material allows you to interactively light the surface as you work. This makes judging your forms much easier since you can see shadows moving across the surface.
- 2. Use specular highlights.** When working make sure you have some level of specular shine on the surface material. Specular highlights allows you to easily see the high points of the sculpt as well as pick out the fine details of the surface texture.
- 3. Store morph targets.** When adding high frequency details it is a good habit to store a morph target of the model with no high frequency details. This will allow you to use the morph brush as a kind of "detail eraser", blending out the skin texture partially or completely as you work.
- 4. Use custom alphas.** While ZBrush has many wonderful alphas preinstalled, get in the habit of finding useful images and storing them as your personal alpha library. You can quickly build up an in-depth and original collection of skin textures. Not only will this help you avoid clichéd alphas, it will also help you learn about the various kinds of wrinkle and scale patterns in nature by looking at the reference you collect.
- 5. Create and use custom menus.** Use the custom menu options under preferences to group your most used buttons and options in one personal menu. This menu can then be mapped with a hotkey and called up at the touch of a button from anywhere in the user interface. This is an incredibly useful tool for speeding up your working time.
- 6. Create and use hotkeys.** Another method to increase speed is using hotkeys. ZBrush has default hotkeys which can be found in the tool tip when hovering over a menu option. You can change these keys and set new hotkeys by pressing control and clicking on a menu option. ZBrush will then ask you to press the key combination you wish to assign as a hotkey.
- 7. Combine extraneous subtools.** Your subtool menu can quickly become cluttered with extraneous parts. Two separate eyeballs for example are unnecessary and just add to the length of the subtool menu. Using meshInsert to take one eyeball and combine it into the other reducing two subtools into one. This can also be accomplished with the ZBrush plug-in SubtoolMaster. For this to work make sure the two tools have the same number of subdivision levels. This will ensure that both models retain their multiple levels of resolution when combined.
- 8. Frequent the ZBrushCentral website.** The ZBrush user community is one of the most supportive user communities I have encountered. Visit ZBrush Central for updates on new tools, techniques, and plug-ins as well as conversations with other artists seeking critique on their work. If you have a question, posting in the forum will get an answer for you in no time.

9. Use ZMapper to check UVs. ZMapper's morph UV function is a quick and easy way to verify the UV set on a particular ZTool. This can be extremely useful in a production pipeline where you need to verify UV coordinates before proceeding. By simply loading the ZTool into ZMapper and activating morphUV you can check for the correct UV layout as well as visually can for any obvious overlaps or errors in the UV shells.

10. Sketch in ZBrush. Using a ZBrush primitive or a generic mesh, sketch characters often. These don't have to be show reel pieces just little experiments in using the tools and learning about form. I do at least one sketch a day I never plan on showing publicly. This frees me to make mistakes and just relax. It also helps me learn new things about both using the ZBrush tools as well as sculpting form. Just like you may keep a private sketchbook for ideas and fragments, keeping a ZBrush sketch folder will help you stay active. It can also serve as a great source of inspiration when you want to pick up a rough character and take it to a finish.

11. Use reference. Always have reference handy when working. I personally use photo of real people as well as figurative sculptures when I work. It is hard to go wrong referencing how Michelangelo, Bernini, or Giambologna approached a particular problem in figure sculpture when you work. By referencing the masters you will learn while your work benefits. It is also a good idea to do master copies in your spare time. By trying to copy your reference exactly, you learn an amazing amount about how an artist thought and dealt with specific problems.

From the Back Cover

Break Free from the 3D Mold

ZBrush is taking the world of 3D modeling by storm, allowing CG artists to create spectacular organic models in a way that feels like traditional sculpting and painting. Like the software itself, this beautiful four-color guide perfectly blends technology with artistry to give you a thorough, hands-on tutorial in creating 3D characters with this revolutionary software.

Digital sculptor Scott Spencer guides you through the full array of ZBrush tools, including brushes, textures, and detailing. You'll learn how to sculpt in ZBrush, design a character bust, and dazzle viewers with your creations. Above all, you'll discover how to apply time-honored methods of traditional sculpting and painting to a digital format—and emerge a better artist, no matter what the medium.

- Bridge the transition from traditional sculpting to digital
- Explore the ZBrush interface and toolsets
- Learn valuable techniques for texturing, posing, and rendering in ZBrush
- Master ZScripts, macros, and other methods for customizing the interface
- Transfer your ZBrush creations into Maya® and prepare for use in film, game, or other formats
- Gain valuable insights and tips from guest artists throughout the book

VALUABLE COMPANION DVD

Support files for the book's tutorials are included on the DVD, so you can try out the techniques as you go. It also includes ZBrush movies to further illustrate the step-by-step sculpting process, as well as a trial version of ZBrush 3.1 for the Microsoft Windows operating system.

About the Author

Scott Spencer is Digital Art Director at Gentle Giant Studios. Creating creatures and characters for film, games, and the collectable figure market, Scott's credits include Iron Man, Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix, Golden Axe, Species 3, and others. He teaches digital sculpting and anatomy at The Gnomon School of Visual Effects, and serves as beta tester and consultant to Pixologic.

Users Review

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