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ZBrush Makes Digital Painting and Sculpting Fun Again

After a slight stagnation in software development for the last couple of years, a change is here, and among the new interesting products on the market is Pixologic ZBrush -- a hybrid 2D and 3D painting program with very exciting possibilities.

....ZBrush is a unique program, a hybrid 2D/2.5D/3D application, and it uses a new technology called PIXOL, which sees each pixel you draw as a three-dimensional image including Height, Width and also Depth. The program's brushes allow you to paint with depth and volume, building up a 3D shape and adding more body to it just by pressing your brush. It is quite exciting. Each pixel also incorporates color, material, shading, lighting and orientation information.

The ZBrush interface looks beautiful and inviting with all the menus replaced by icons and scroll-down palettes located on each side of the workspace. A horizontal iconized top bar holds palettes that you are not using for the moment. The interface takes some time getting used to, but is easy to customize. By holding down the Ctrl key and dragging a palette into the workspace, you can group the most frequently used menus and commands. This is highly recommended since it can sometimes be hard finding the right menu choice deep down in some scroll-down palettes.

....Digging through Palettes and sub-menus, ZBrush is giving you much more: Selection masks based on Rows, Columns, Textures, and Alpha; Colorizing while editing an object; Clone tool; a Copy3D mode with auto masking; Fog and Depth of Field effects; and several Lighting and Rendering options.

ZBrush is a wonderful new addition to the digital artist's toolbox. The program is fast and responsive, and for being only version 1.2,

it is very well constructed and quite stable. I am sure it will grow for each upgrade and become a serious tool on the digital graphics scene -- for both 2D illustrators and professional 3D artists.

