Escape your four walls with illustrator Liang Yong Yi Nan

Liang Yong Yi Nan (also sometimes known as Enan) is an American-based, Chinese illustrator with a sparkling digital style that keeps its pencil roots whether portraying dragons, DNA or daisies.

Her work so far is mostly editorial, but we can see her work being popular in picture books and educational texts for the kids. Check for yourself with a selection of some of the artist's pieces so far below, alongside an interview that reveals the artist's fees, her love for Bristol paper and how she's switched from digital to traditional and back again across her short career.

Hello Liang, what should readers know about you?

My name is and I am a Chinese illustrator. I started drawing since very little and spent lots of time at the drawing table. I'm a graduate of Rhode Island School of Design.

I have tried lots of mediums and now mostly work with colored pencil on paper. My style is hand-drawn and flat. I studied film/video/animation in college, and later decided to make illustrations and drawings.



I draw my work on paper and scan it using an Epson scanner in 400dpi for most of the drawings. I draw on smooth Bristol paper, as it captures colours well and also provides a slight layer of paper texture. White Bristol paper 300g size 19’’by 22’’ is my favourite.

I also saved some coloured pencil textures digitally and layer them onto shapes.

Who and what are your inspirations?

I am mostly inspired by Chinese *gongbi* paintings, Persian miniature paintings and Indian paintings. My favourite artists include: Norman Rockwell, Tatsuro Kiuchi, Victo Ngai, Lieke van der Vorst, Gustav Klimt, and Robert McCall.



Your works capture flora well. What tips do you have in illustrating flowers and trees?

I subconsciously make leaves and petals different in shape and size, and adjust colours or change pattern directions of them.

Flower petals have fronts and backs; I show the different perspectives and looks of them.



Do you enjoy drawing animals or people more?

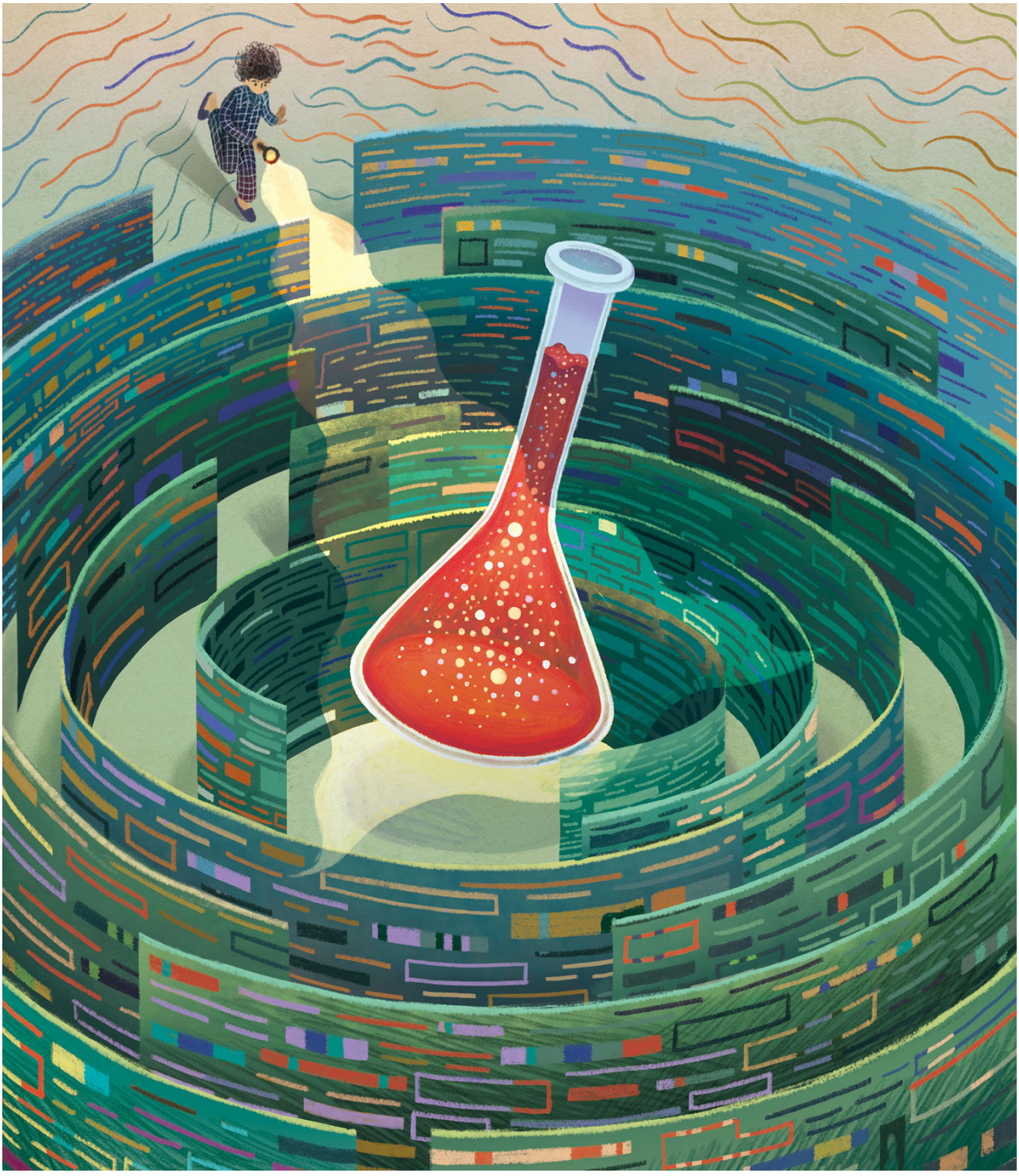
I draw people more frequently than animals. I am learning to draw different bone structures.



I like to do research and find photo references online before drawing animals. I also make concept sketches, especially when it comes to imaged creatures such as dragons, unicorns etc.

Your scientific illustrations make wonderful patterns from DNA helixes. Was it hard to adapt to a scientific style?

My to illustrate a DNA helix. I created it with a digital drawing pad.



I had submitted other sketches along with it; it took me about triple times longer than flower drawings. It was a hard job!

What tools do you use and what is

your process?

I find coloured pencils most efficient since they allow hundreds of premixed colours to pick from.

I submit three thumbnail sketches (sometimes more) for art directors to choose. Then I make sketches on proper size-paper in graphite pencils. I start colouring from light to dark, erasing when necessary.



Do you find it easy to charge fair fees for clients?

I work for both American and Chinese clients. It usually takes me half an hour to do thumbnail sketches. Depending on client’s budget, I adjust the the amount of characters, animals, trees, architecture, transportation facilities and other visual elements you can think of.

I do American works from about USD$125 to USD$1000 for a full page illustration. Similar pay from China clients. Most of my work is editorial.



How do you balance your personal

life with client work and personal work?

I seldom make personal, un-commissioned works now. Drawing commercial works make up most of my life now.

I exercise, hangout with friends and families during my leisure time. I planned to travel to India, then that got cancelled due to Coronavirus.



How has your style changed over

time and what would jobs and techniques would you like to try next?

I switched from coloured pencil to digital then have come back to coloured pencils again. Now I am looking for advertising and packaging work.

There is also children’s book illustration and educational jobs I would love to work on. Also murals and home decorations.

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