A GUIDE ON SETTING UP A DIGITAL HOME STUDIO
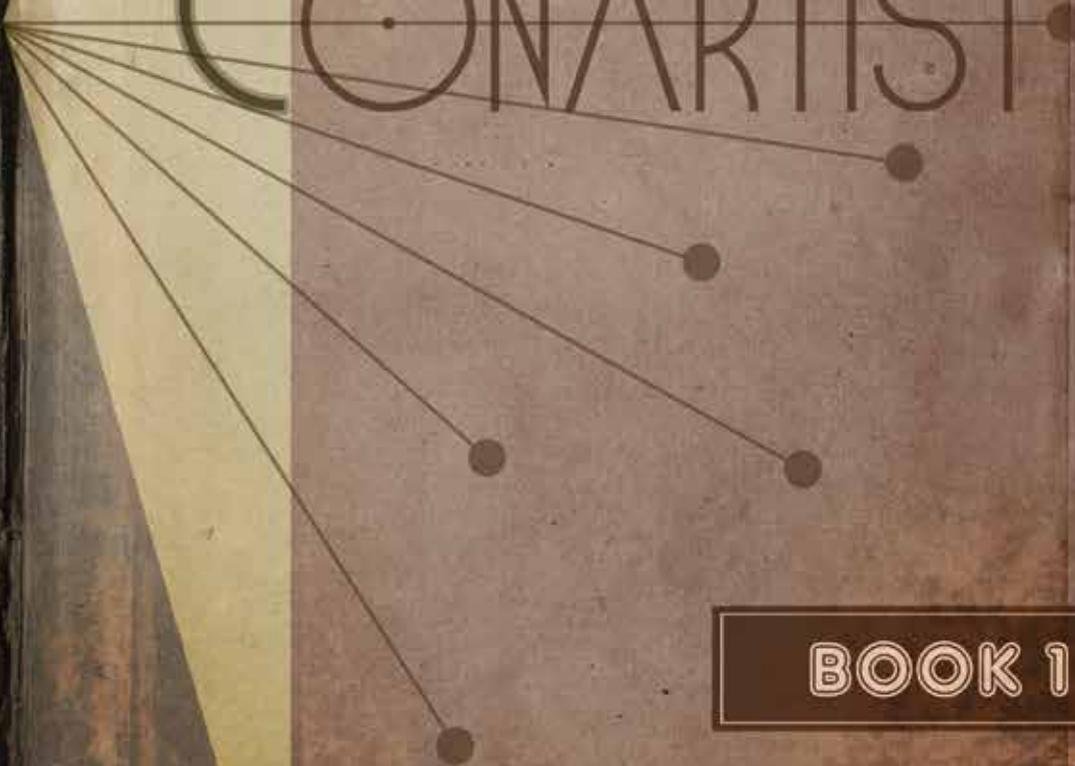
CONARTIST

Home Set-Up

A basic digital guide on the essential bits of hardware and software you need to setup a digital home studio.

COMPUTER:

If you can afford it, try and invest in either a PC or iMac desktop computer with at least 6 gigabytes of RAM, 256MB of VRAM and a powerful graphics card. (64bit).

MONITOR

Keep it real and hook up two monitors to your computer. The first and primary monitor should be a proper, professional 22 or 24 inch Multisync monitor (such as an NEC, EIZO or LaCie brand). This will be used for viewing and creating your artwork. Although these babies can cost anywhere between $500 and $2000 dollars - they are specially built and made for professional colour digital work. If you are serious about photography, illustration and design - you really should be using one of these. They are also kinder to your eyes. Oh, and by the way - put a hood on your monitor to cut out any glare or unwanted light hitting the screen.

You can then use the monitor that came with your Macbook or iMac as your secondary monitor to house and display all those pesty windows and tool boxes that clutter your screen.

CALIBRATOR

A calibration device such as a Spyder4 or x-Rite (approx $200) is an essential tool for calibrating your screen to achieve a colour-accurate workflow.

WACOM TABLET

A WACOM pen/tablet is essential for professional digital painting and illustration. These days an Intuos 5 will cost around $350 (student price). The Bamboo model is okay if you really can't afford the Intuos.

SCANNERS + PRINTERS

Too many to mention but you can't go wrong with a professional Photo scanner such as the Epson Perfection V600 and perhaps an A3 Epson Stylus Photo R2000 printer.

EXTERNAL HARD DRIVES

A bloke called Murphy reckons that things will go wrong when you least expect it. Don't be a mug and trust your valuable work to fate. Back it up baby and back it up often. In fact, get yourself a couple of Terabyte hard-drives to be sure. Some creatives use the utility 'Time Machine' to automatically back up their work once a day. There are lots of other utilities that can do the same job. You should investigate.

SOFTWARE

Adobe of course. As a student you can get the CS Design Suite which includes the top 3 programs (Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign) for around $280. That's around 85% cheaper than the commercial price. Don't risk using a 'happy version' (illegal) if you want to be a professional artist, illustrator or designer.

Check out the store JB hifi or buy online at www.estore.com.au for the special education price.

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