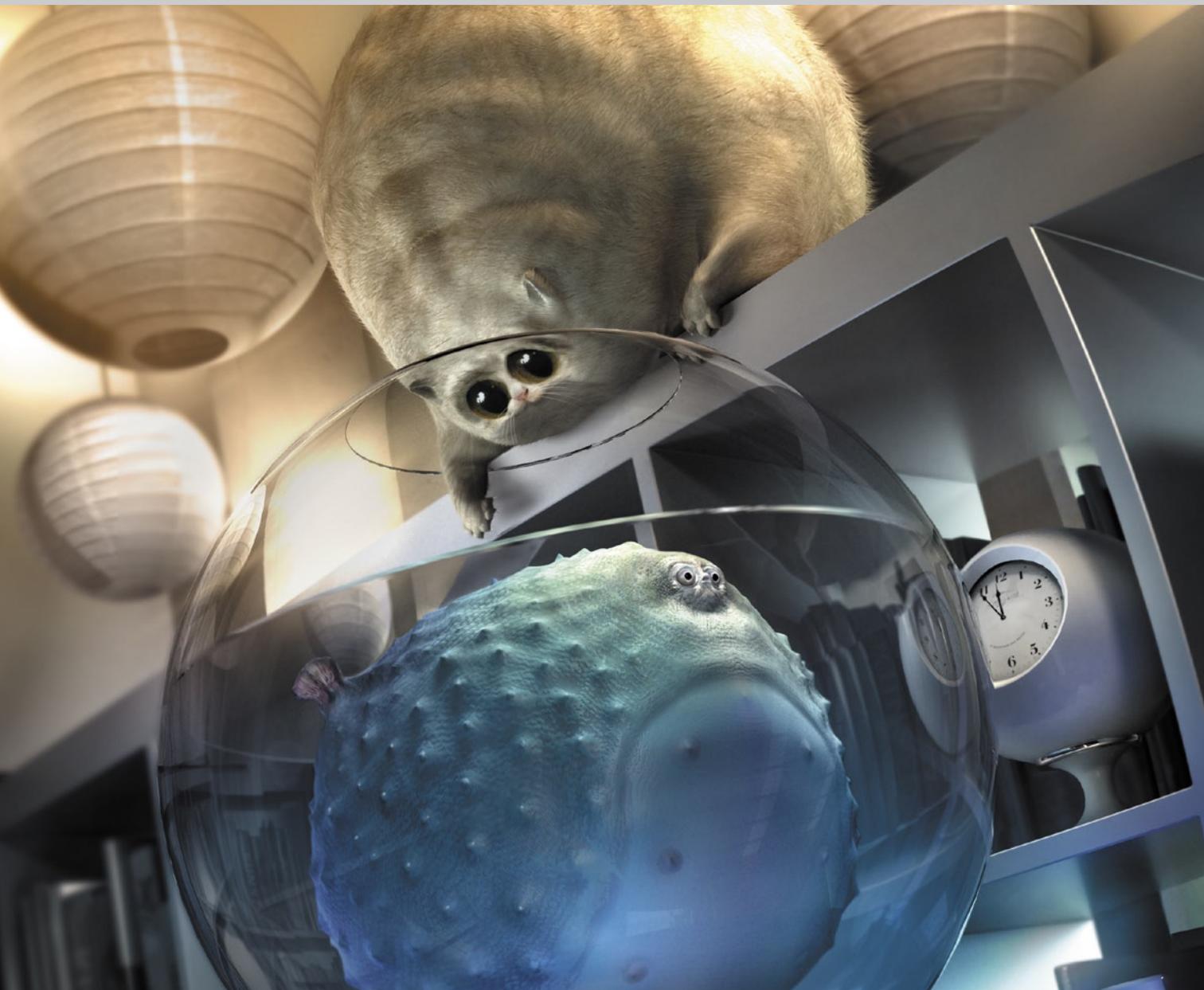


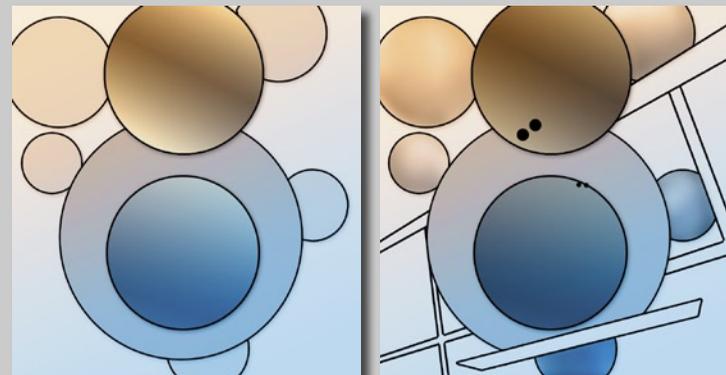
THE MAKING OF
**Can't smile
without you**



T I L L N O W A K



>> "Can't smile without you" is a free project, a computer generated image created in October 2008. The image is based on the geometrical concept to use spheres as the basic shape of all main objects.



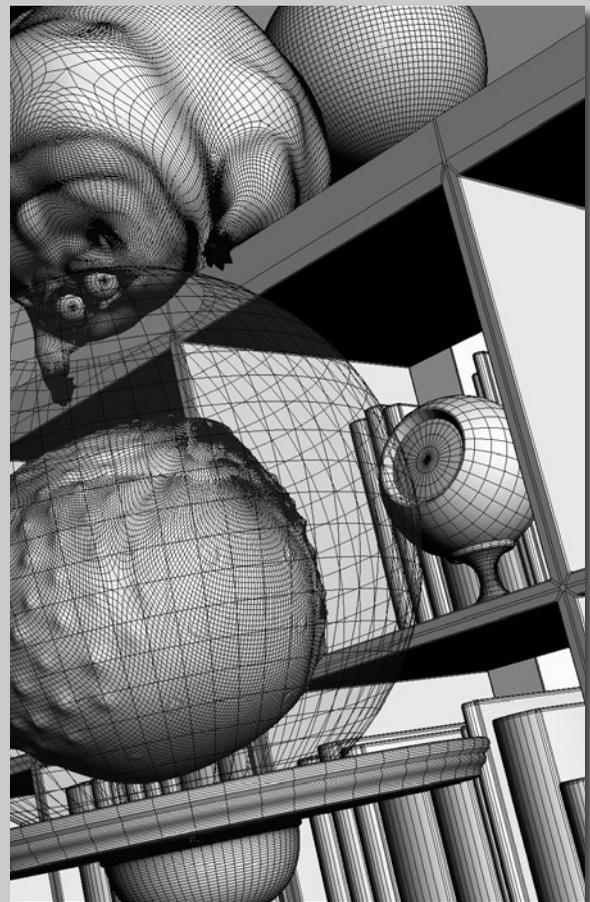
The whole scene is based on spherical objects and an overall color scheme.

THE SCENE

It was one of these very few weekends when I find the time to play with an idea. Somewhere I had seen a blowfish (also called globefish or just Fugu) and I was so amused about its spherical form and the helpless look in its eyes that I started to model a totally overexaggerated big Fugu in Zbrush. It was not the first time I had modelled "spherical" creatures. The attraction of pitiable Fugu was similar to the impact bumblebees had on me, so I decided to create a sequel scene to "the shaved bumblebee".

This time I wanted to go further with the concept, I wanted to create a "spherical world" - an homage to the sphere. Spherical concepts had always impressed me, this most basic and purest form of our universe has some inimitable attractiveness and perfection. Good examples for impressive spherical concepts can be found in the Star Wars movies, like the federation ships in Episode II or the death star.

In contrast to this very geometrical concept I also extended the pathetic aspects of these creatures. The hole in the glas bowl is so small that it would be impossible for the cat to get close enough to the fish and even more impossible to get the fish through the hole after catching it. An impossible mission for the cat, a protective prison for the fish, a pitiful love-hate relationship.



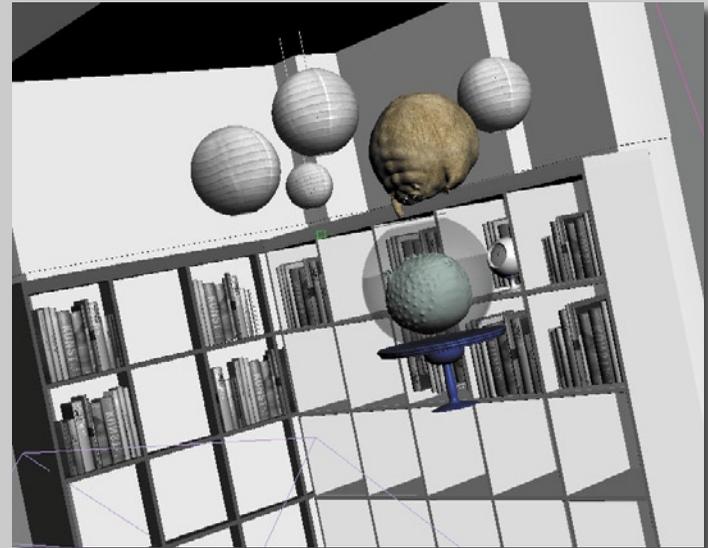
Wireframe in 3ds max



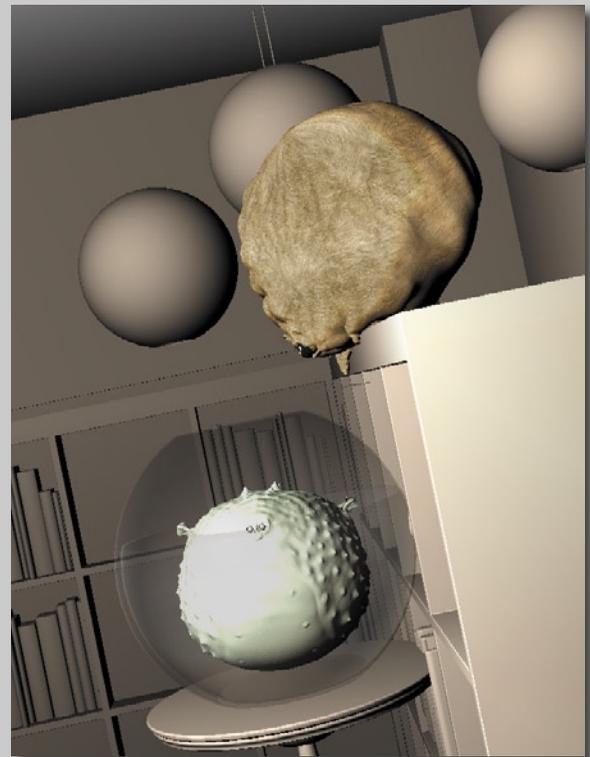
"Can't smile without you"



"The shaved bumblebee"



Scene overview



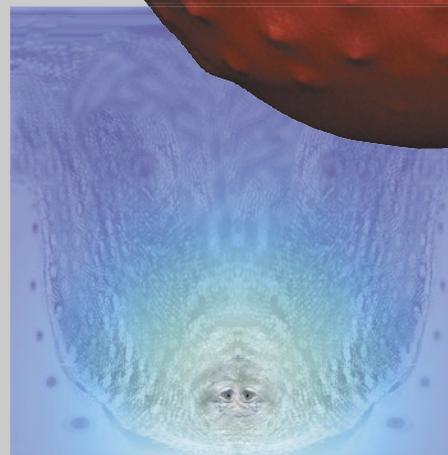
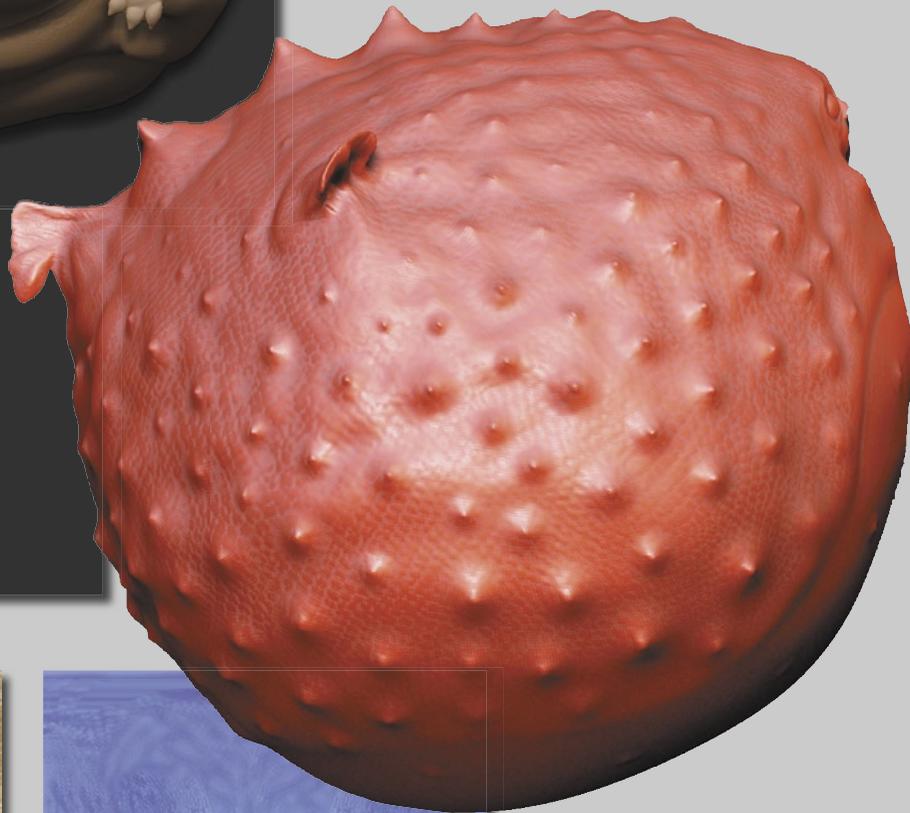
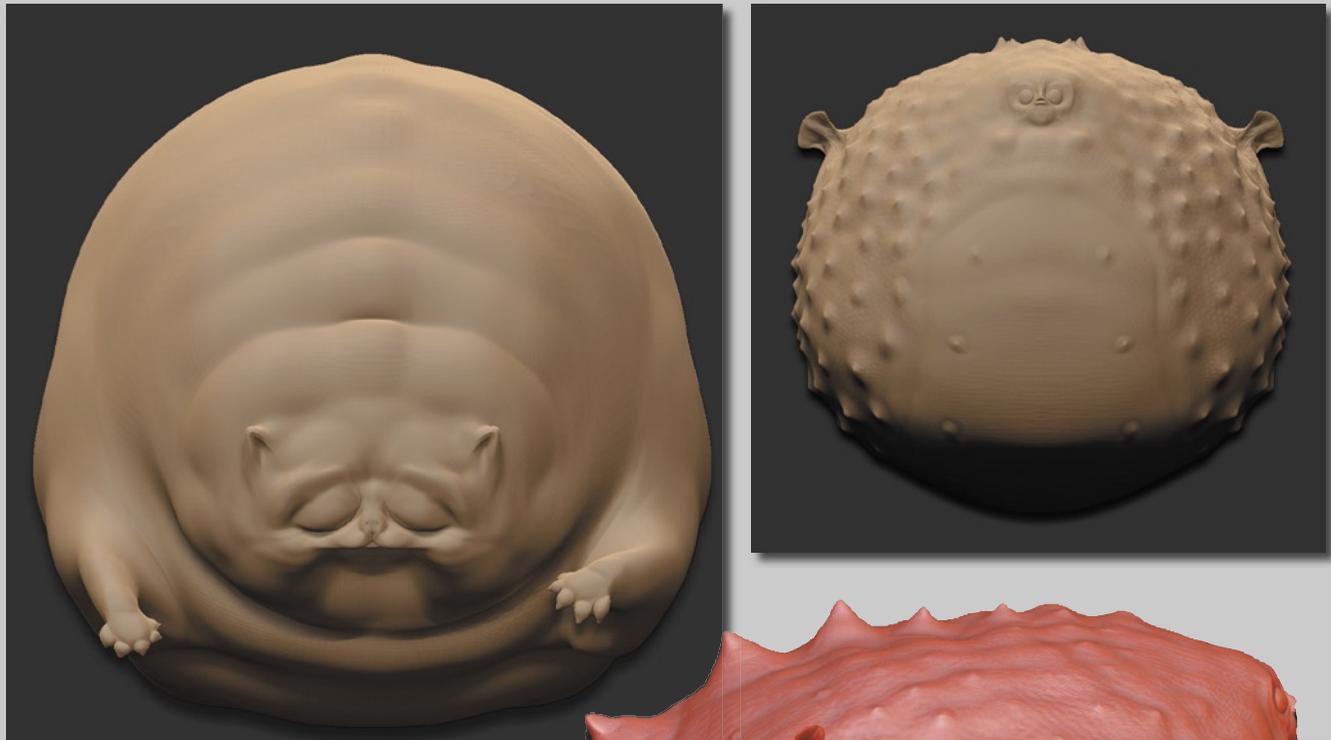
Side view

>> Till Nowak is working as a freelance media artist since 1999 in his own studio in Mainz, Germany. He studied "media design" and graduated with his award winning shortfilm "Delivery".

As an autodidactic generalist Till has worked professionally in nearly every field of digital media. He has been hired by creative agencies, TV stations or industrial companies to produce designs, animations or interactive tools as well as printed brochures and books.

Today, Tills work mainly consists of computer generated 3D images. After the success of "Delivery" he decided to put more effort into filmmaking and concept art.

Home of frameboX studio



THE ANIMALS

The project started with the fish. The totally overexaggerated Fugu fish came into my mind one weekend. I quickly modelled it in zbrush and started to think about a scene around it. The cat was textured with a repeating fur texture while the fish texture was painted in zbrush.

PHOTOSHOP EDITING EXAMPLES

RAW RENDERING



FUR

The fur on the edges of the cat was painted in Photoshop based on the textured cat body. On one of the next pages you will find a more detailed description of the fur painting process.



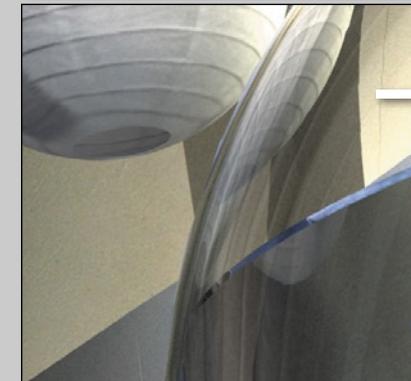
CATS FACE

The face of the cat was not finished in 3D. I simply decided paint the nose, hairs and shadows over the basic 3D model instead of modelling it.



FIN

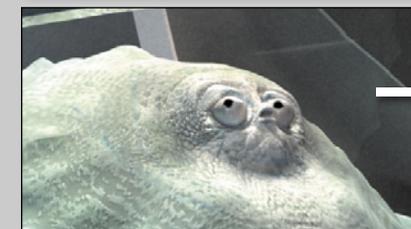
The fine structure and texture of the fish's fin was added in Photoshop using photo references.



DEPTH BLUR

Depth blur is often a good tool to strengthen the image composition and focus the scene on the important parts. It's also great to cover up less detailed parts which maybe have been modelled less detailed because you knew it would become blurry

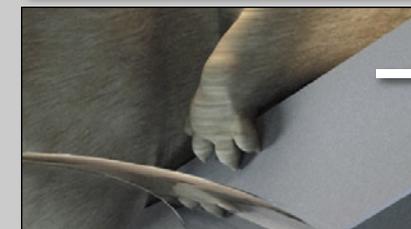
later. This scene however is a typical example for a wide angle shot in which no depth blur would appear if it was a real photograph. But luckily it isn't a real photo, so as an artist I can choose subjective modifications if it helps the overall composition.



FISHS FACE

Originally the fish had looked at the cat - and this is what I still get often as a suggestion in peoples feedback about the image. Anyway, I decided on purpose that the fish should not look at the cat, because he looked more cute and more pitiful by

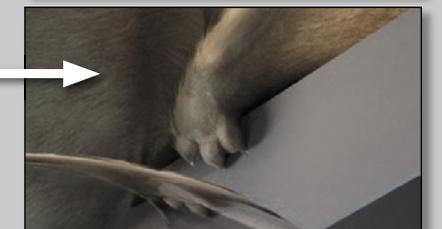
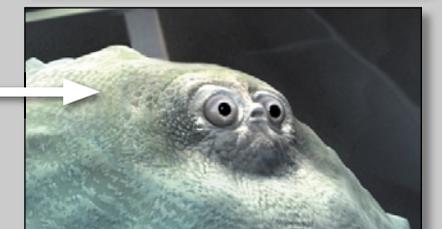
looking somewhere into nothing, as if he already had got used to the situation and sees his fate as being inevitable anyway. So I changed the eyes in Photoshop and enhanced the skin texture.

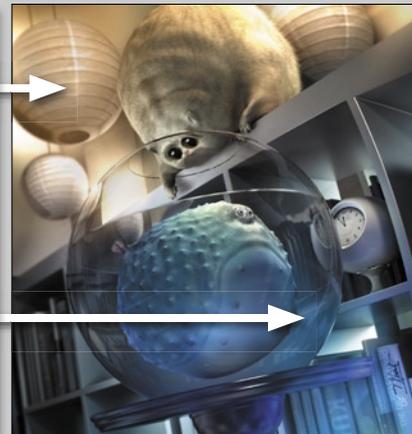
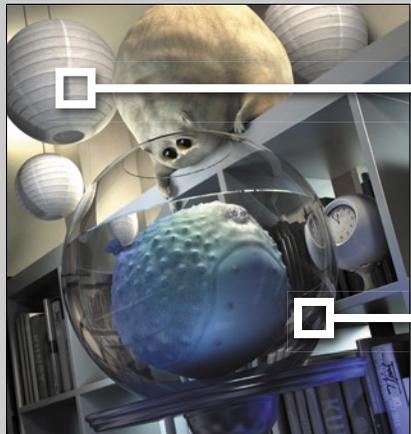


PAW

The badly textured paw was fixed using my fur-brushing-workflow. When working on still images I sometimes just don't care about correct texturing because I know I will work it over in Photoshop later anyway.

FINAL COMPOSITING





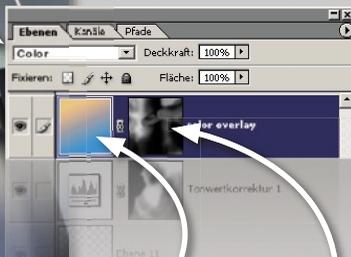
COLOR SCHEME

As usual I tried to solve everything in photoshop which would have become difficult or time intensive in 3D. But besides solving detail problems there are also some essential editing steps which have to be done in postproduction. One of them is the definition of an overall color scheme. In my images I usually create a tension between warm and cold, light and dark. The upper half of this image belongs to the cat, so it will be warm and soft, the lower half belongs to the fish which results in a cold and more underwaterlike composition. To define the color composition I usually use a simple gradient in photoshop which I then selectively blend with the original.



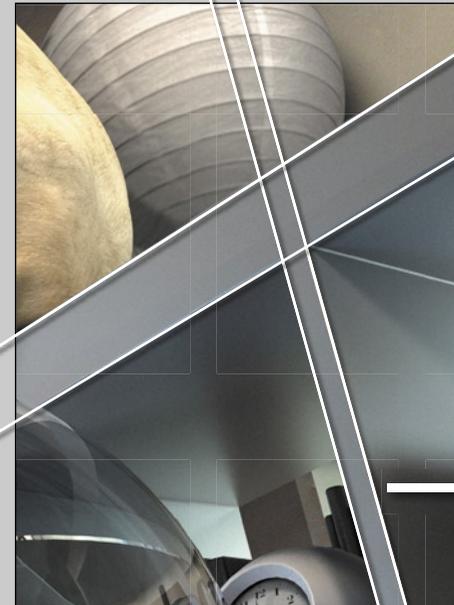
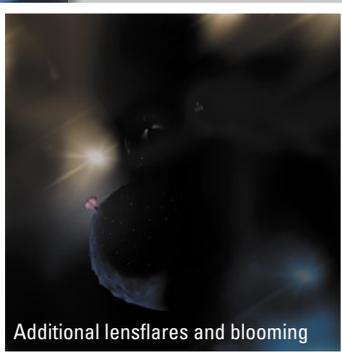
FINAL COMPOSITING
RAW RENDERING

Using "Color" as the overlay mode



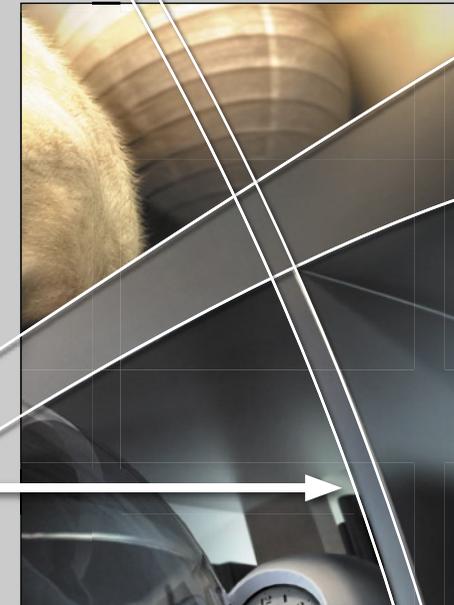
I create a simple color gradient from one edge of the image to the other

Using a mask to adjust the influence on selected parts of the image.



DISTORTION

In reality every lens creates a distortion, but not in the 3D world. The degree of distortion in real photography depends on how wide the field of view is. A wide angle shot like this would be visibly distorted, but in a 3D rendering all straight lines stay straight unless you add the distortion manually. I used the distortion to underline the glass bowl as the central spherical form. A slightly curved line creates more tension than a totally straight line.



PAINTING THE FUR

For the cat I obviously needed a solution for nice, fluffy fur. From my earlier experiences with fur tools I knew that I usually needed hours to configure the hair and still needed a lot of editing and fixing afterwards. Maybe I just never learned it properly or I am just not the right person to use 3D fur tools, I just wanted to try a much easier and faster solution for short hair. I finally solved it in photoshop which needed only 20 minutes of my time instead of the hours of finetuning and tweaking I would have spent in a 3D hair tool. As a starting point I needed to texture the cat with a basic fur texture. Then I

used the "smudge" tool in photoshop to just smear the color of the textured object in thin hairlines over the edge and away from the object. By using the "fade" option in the brush panel you will get a nice soft end of the line which gives it the fluffy look. The number 200 is the length of one hair in pixels. If your image has a low resolution a smaller number like 30 or 50 may be better. Adjust the "fade" length and the size of the brush until it looks furry. To paint the hair just click on your object near the edge and smoothly drag the cursor in a slightly round line outwards the object.

1. Create a new layer above all other layers
2. Choose the "smudge" tool from the tool bar
3. In the option bar choose "sample all layers"
4. Choose a small brush size (for example 3 pixels)
5. Open the brush panel (menu > windows > brush)
6. Use the "fade" option with for example 200

