



FOOTWEAR AND APPAREL

Skechers USA Boosts Productivity by Adding Wacom Cintiqs to Its Graphics Pipeline



Anwar Madrigal (above) enjoys the intuitive nature and responsiveness of working directing on screen.

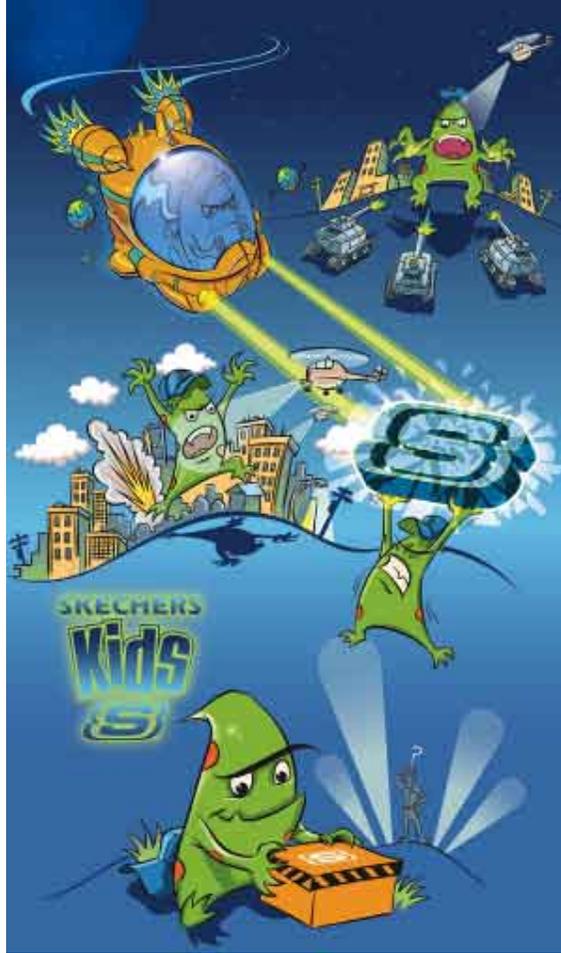
Skechers USA designs trendy shoes for every age group, catering to the lifestyle footwear market with more than 2,500 individual styles. The brand image has been built with eye-catching graphics tailored for each demographic, ranging from kids' cartoon characters to bold designs for teens.

As Graphic Artist and Illustrator at Skechers, Anwar Madrigal designs advertising graphics, packaging and illustrations that are applied to the shoes. Working in an art department that functions as an in-house agency, Anwar originally used a Wacom® Intuos® graphics tablet for design and illustration until a behind-the-scenes television special turned him on to the incredible benefits of the Cintiq®.

"The special profiled the latest technology for Hollywood animators," says Anwar. "I was amazed to see them combining a traditional drawing approach with editing in-betweens directly on the Cintiq screen. It was clear the Cintiq was way ahead of the technology curve and I knew I had to have one."

Anwar lobbied Art Director Fred Machuca for a Cintiq, selling him on the benefits of Cintiq's all-digital workflow. Skechers made their first order for two of the Cintiq 21UX LCD displays. Those soon proved their worth in productivity gains alone, and more Cintiqs were ordered for the art department's other illustrators.

The Cintiq made an immediate difference for Anwar. Previously, he spent a lot of time scanning his line art illustrations. It was a time-consuming process, especially with larger illustrations. With the Cintiq, he no longer had to do that. "Simply by eliminating the



“I love the freedom of experimenting on the Cintiq.”

– Anwar Madrigal
Graphic Artist,
Skechers

scanning process, I would say the Cintiq increased my productivity by a good 25 percent,” Anwar continues. “It has become an essential tool that I use constantly.”

A typical Cintiq-enhanced task for Anwar involves working in Adobe® Illustrator® to create characters in vector art from scratch to adorn the boxes for kids’ shoes. Opening a template, he draws with the natural-feeling cordless, battery-free pen directly onto the Cintiq screen. Anwar was elated to find the Cintiq fit perfectly into his workflow.

“I’ll actually ink the character in Illustrator and then take it over to Adobe® Photoshop® to color it,” Anwar says. “I’ve developed workspaces specifically for the Cintiq that have all my tools set up on the screen. We have multi-monitor setups here and when I switch over to that environment, all my palettes appear on the other screen, or vice versa. It provides an ideal work environment.”

Word quickly spread around the company about how the art department’s new interactive pen displays were enhancing creativity, saving time and boosting overall productivity.

Eventually the footwear designers came upstairs to see for themselves and were equally impressed. Not long afterward, the Skechers design department upgraded to Cintiqs as well, where 10 technical designers are using them to create the 2D shoe designs. As a result, new footwear designs are taken to completion much more quickly than in the design

department’s previous workflow, which included pencil and paper and Intuos tablets. This has greatly increased productivity and design flexibility.

Anwar is proud to have been the pioneer blazing a trail for Cintiqs at Skechers, and the Cintiq has transformed not only his work life, but his personal artistic endeavors as well. One of his passions is comic book art, and he is currently using the Cintiq to develop a comic book called ‘Tech Support.’ “I’m pretty excited about it, and the Cintiq has made things much easier for me in that regard, too,” he says. “I love the freedom of experimenting on the Cintiq to develop characters. Whether I’m at home or at work, the Cintiq is an indispensable part of my workflow.”

That kind of versatility has made the Cintiq an essential tool throughout the Skechers organization, freeing artists and designers to concentrate on their craft while boosting their productivity. With some of the strongest graphics and shoe designs in the competitive footwear industry, the commitment Skechers has made to Cintiqs is clearly paying off.



In his free time, Anwar Madrigal uses his Cintiq at home to produce his comic series, Tech Support. Visit www.madpencil.blogspot.com to see more of Anwar’s work.