

# Joe Quesada's Hyper-Detailed Fantastic Four 50th Anniversary Artwork Tutorial

Submitted by [Mark Seifert](#) on August 3, 2011 – 3:24 pm(25) [comments](#)

Marvel Entertainment Chief Creative Officer **Joe Quesada** just gave us a fascinating glimpse of his artwork development process step by step on twitter, featuring how he created a piece for the upcoming *Fantastic Four* 50th anniversary:

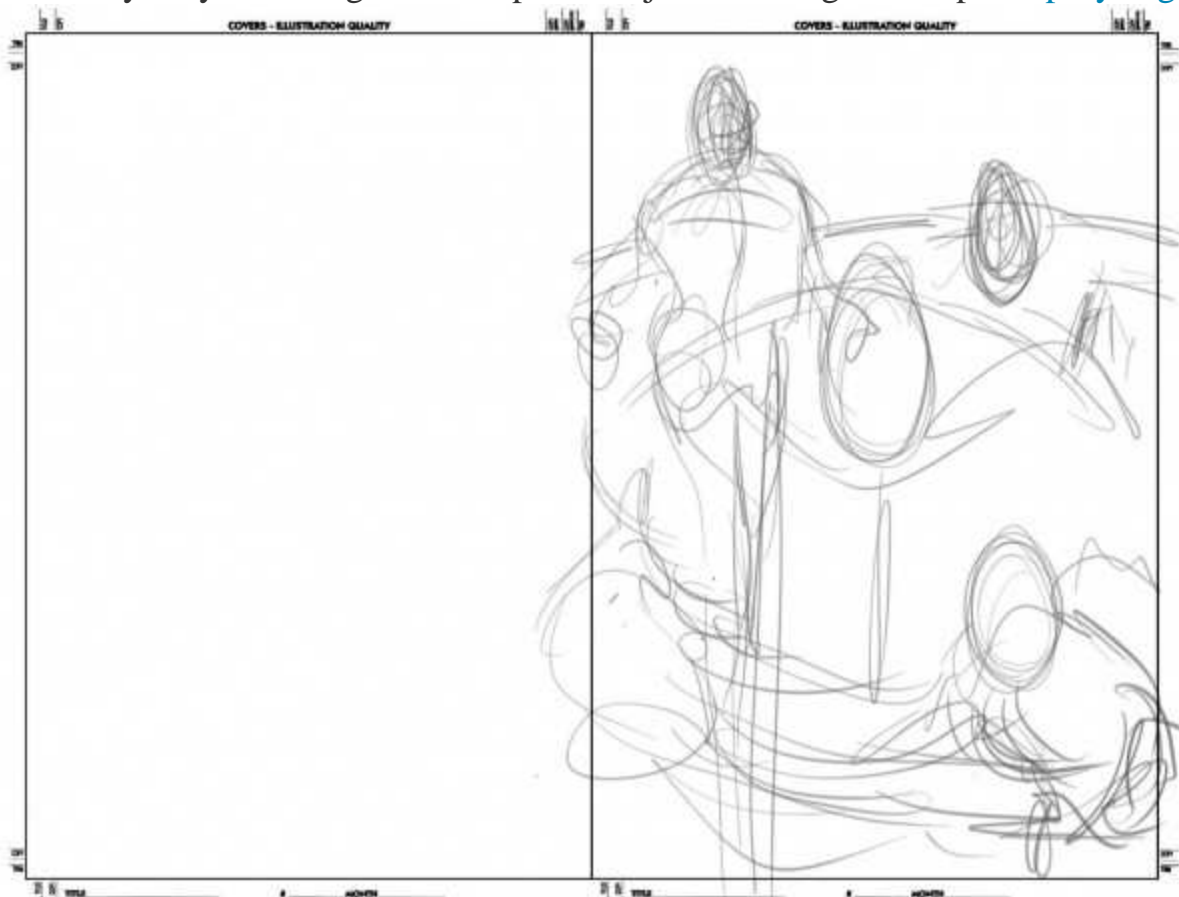
So, a couple of months ago, Marvel Exec Editor @[TomBrevoort](#) asked me if I'd like to do a promo piece for the 50 Anniversary of the FF.

The rules were simple, do any incarnation of the FF that you want from the 50 year history and design the piece for multiple usage.

In other words, it could end up being a poster, and ad or a cover.

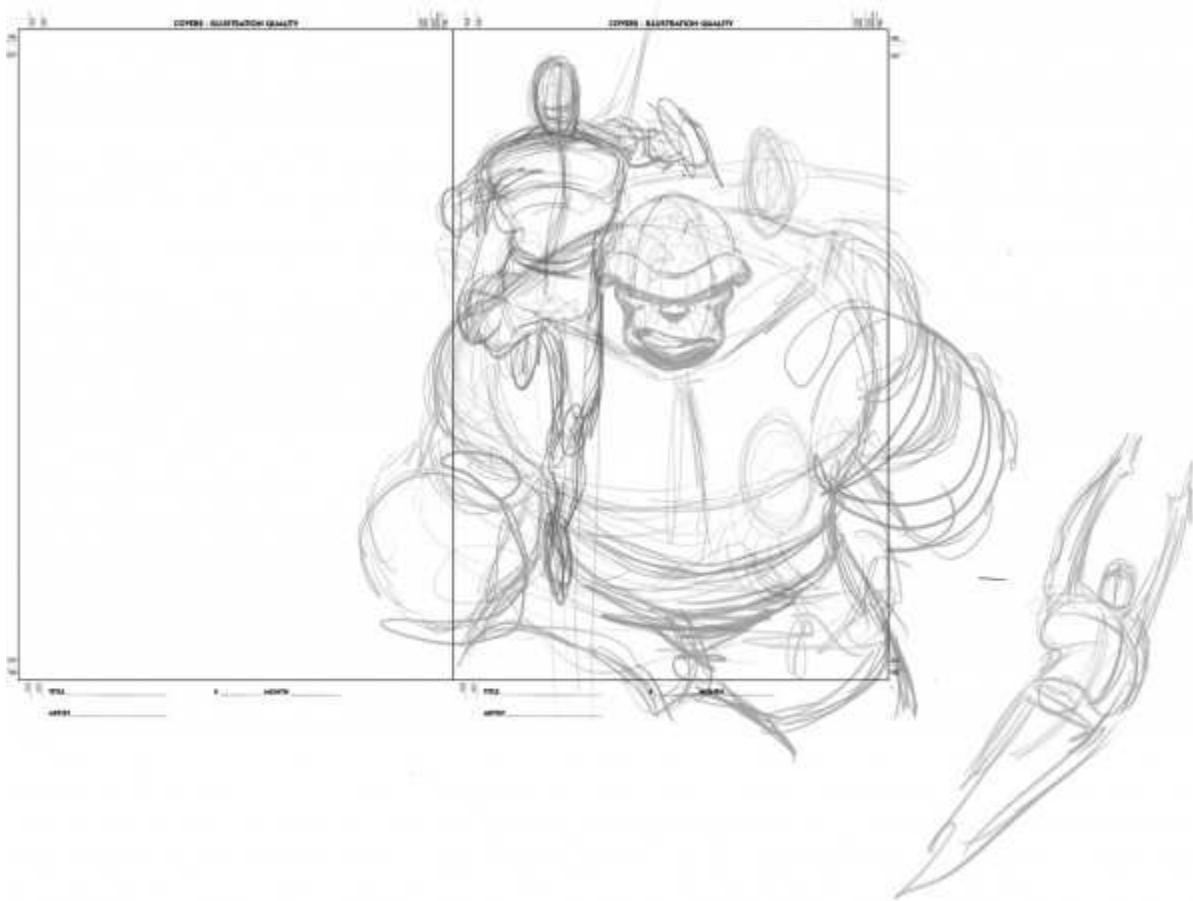
So my first thought was to do a large wrap around cover piece, but then I started to think about time, so maybe simple might be best.

Here's my very first rough. At this point I'm just blocking out shapes <http://yfrog.com/kjzocibj>



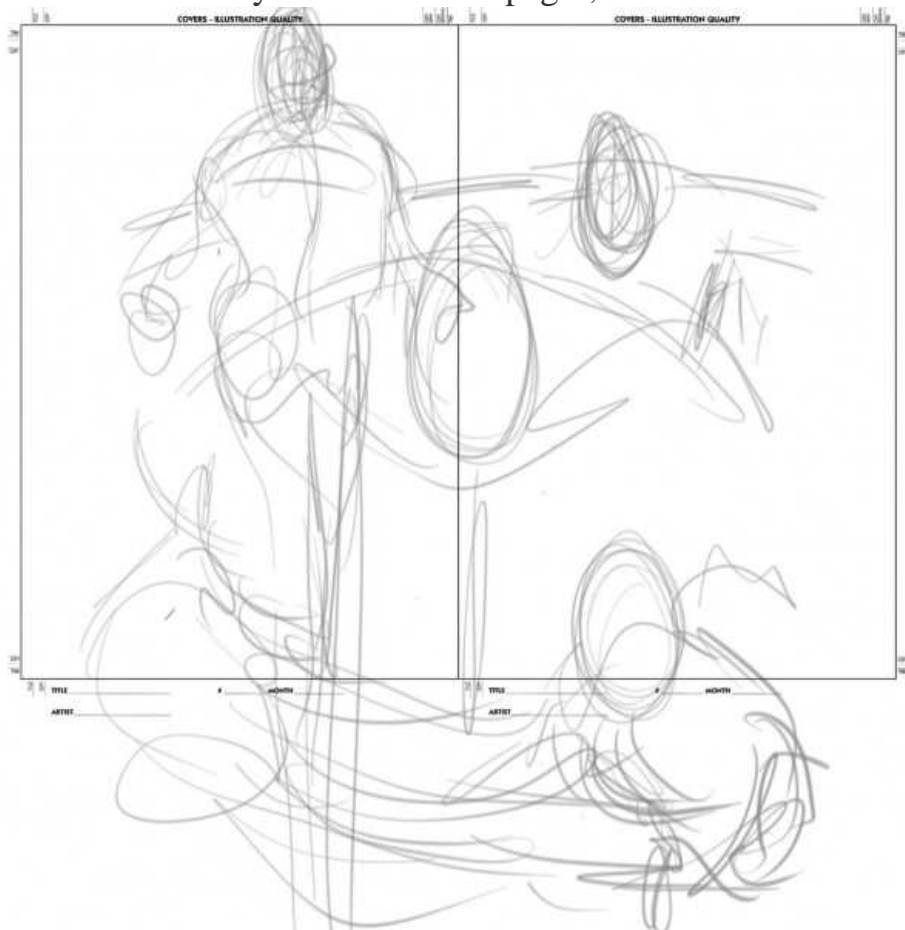
I took it a bit further and started to flesh out the characters. <http://yfrog.com/kin9rduj>





It's at this point that I realized couldn't stand this layout, it reminded of the kind of covers you would see in the 90s. Stagnant /boring.

I even tried the layout as a double pager, but it was still dull. <http://yfrog.com/kiy9wvj>





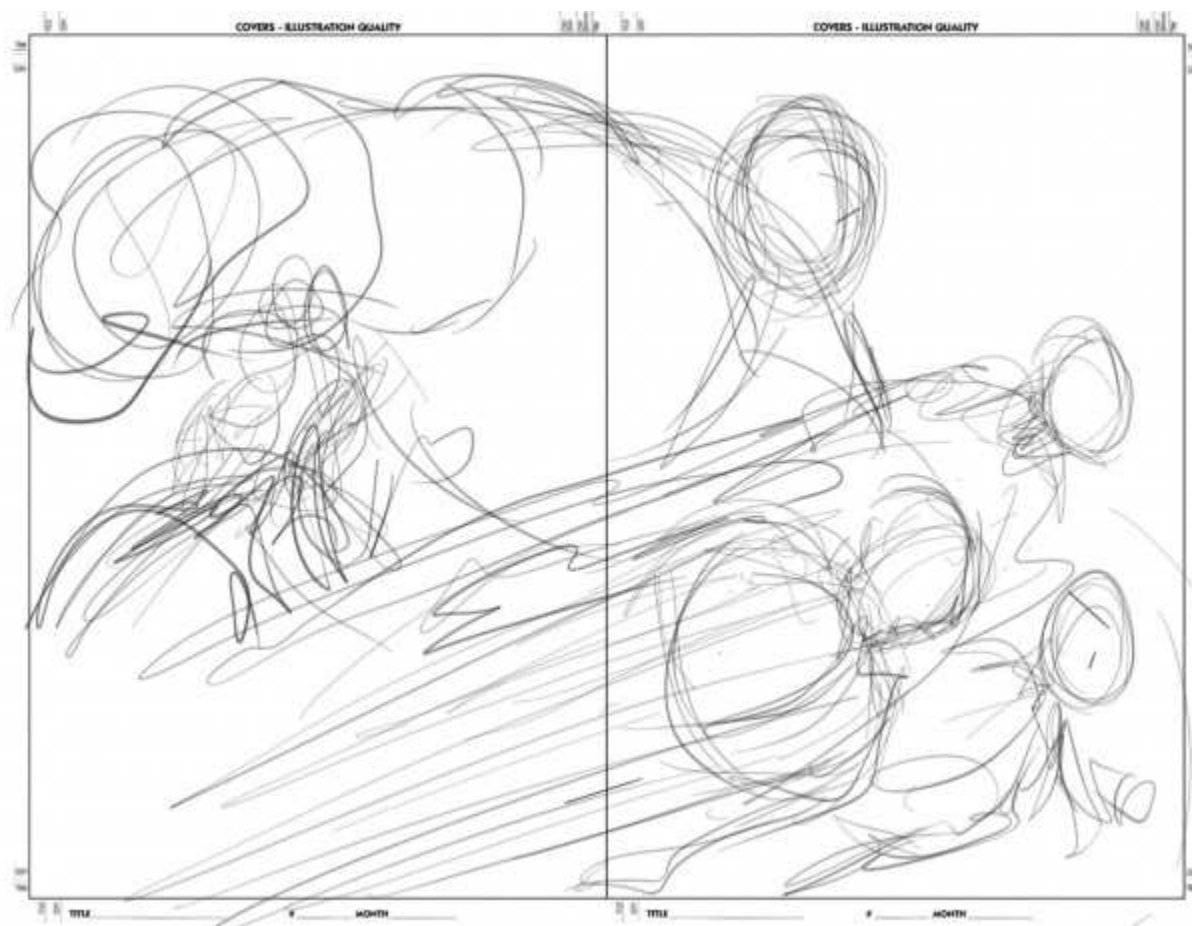
Yes, even though I didn't have a lot of time, I still felt the pull of a double page layout. I tried a variation on the theme, perhaps with the characters a bit more in 3/4 view leaning into the camera <http://yfrog.com/kjjkmhej>



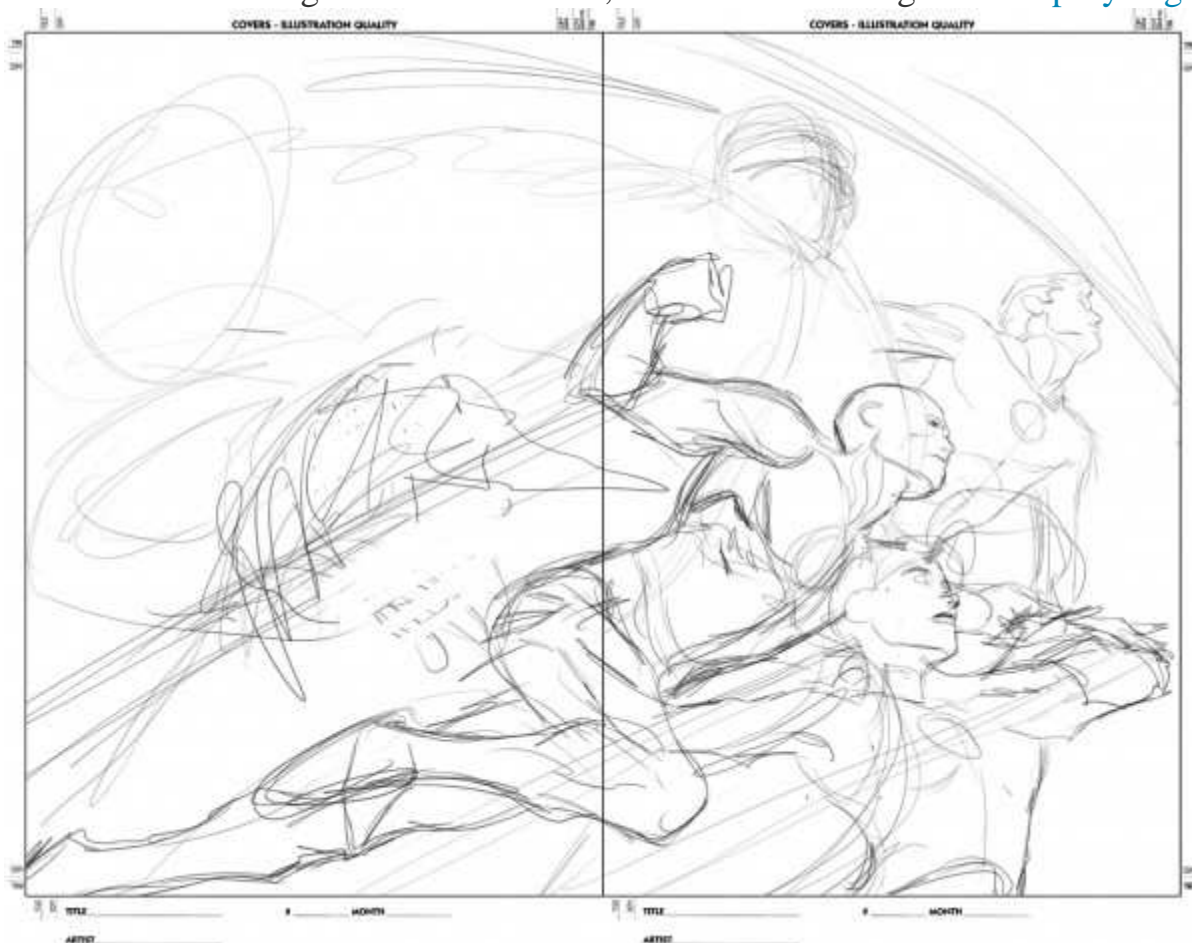
Hate it! Finally I succumbed to my natural impulse and decided to start designing for a double page spread.

The idea now, get some movement into it, show off their powers. Came up with this rough <http://yfrog.com/khe6byuj>



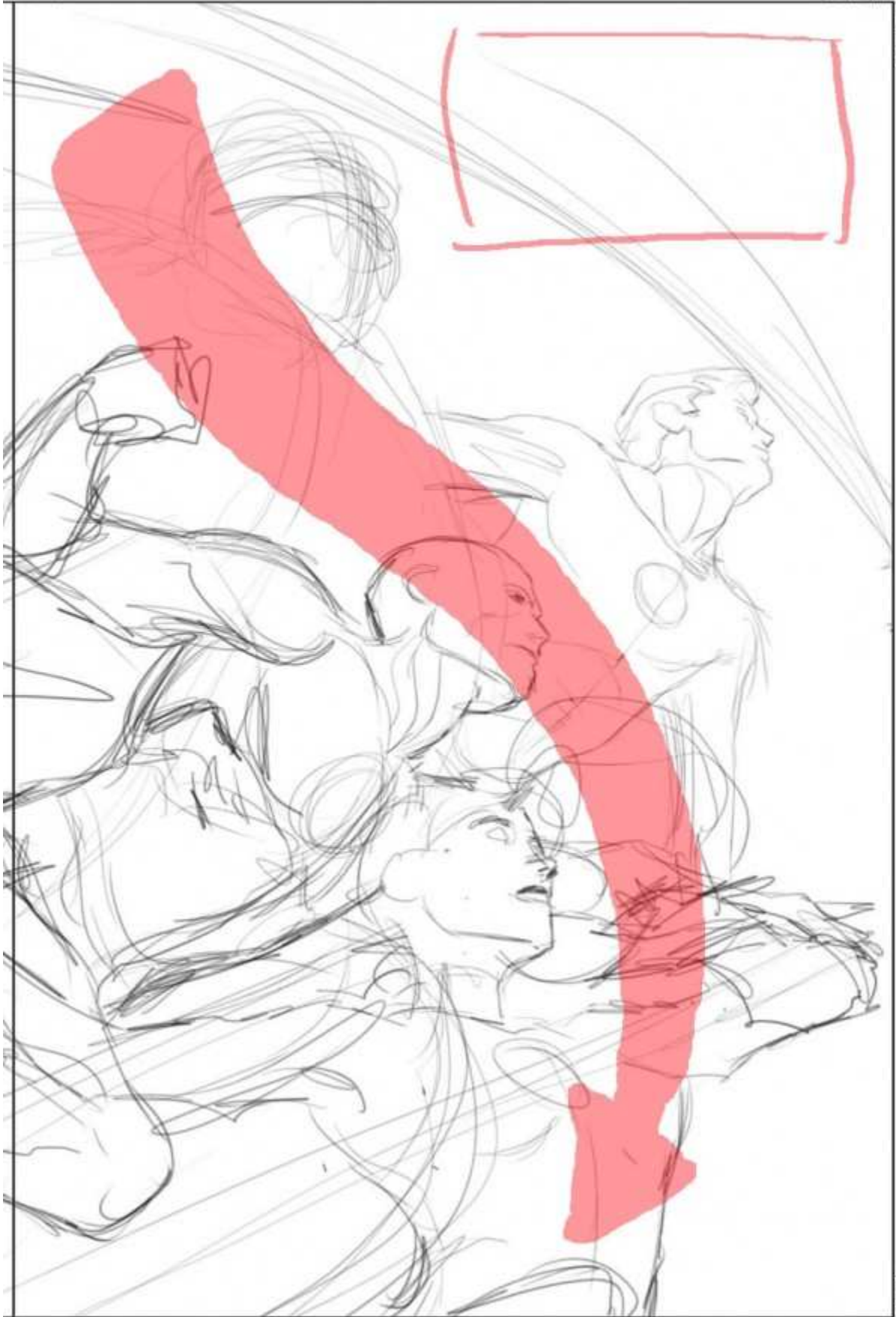


There was something there to work with, so I started fleshing it out. <http://yfrog.com/kirs7uqj>



Here's what I liked about it, if it was a wrap cover, the side facing the customer had the right composition. <http://yfrog.com/kjbc0wwj>

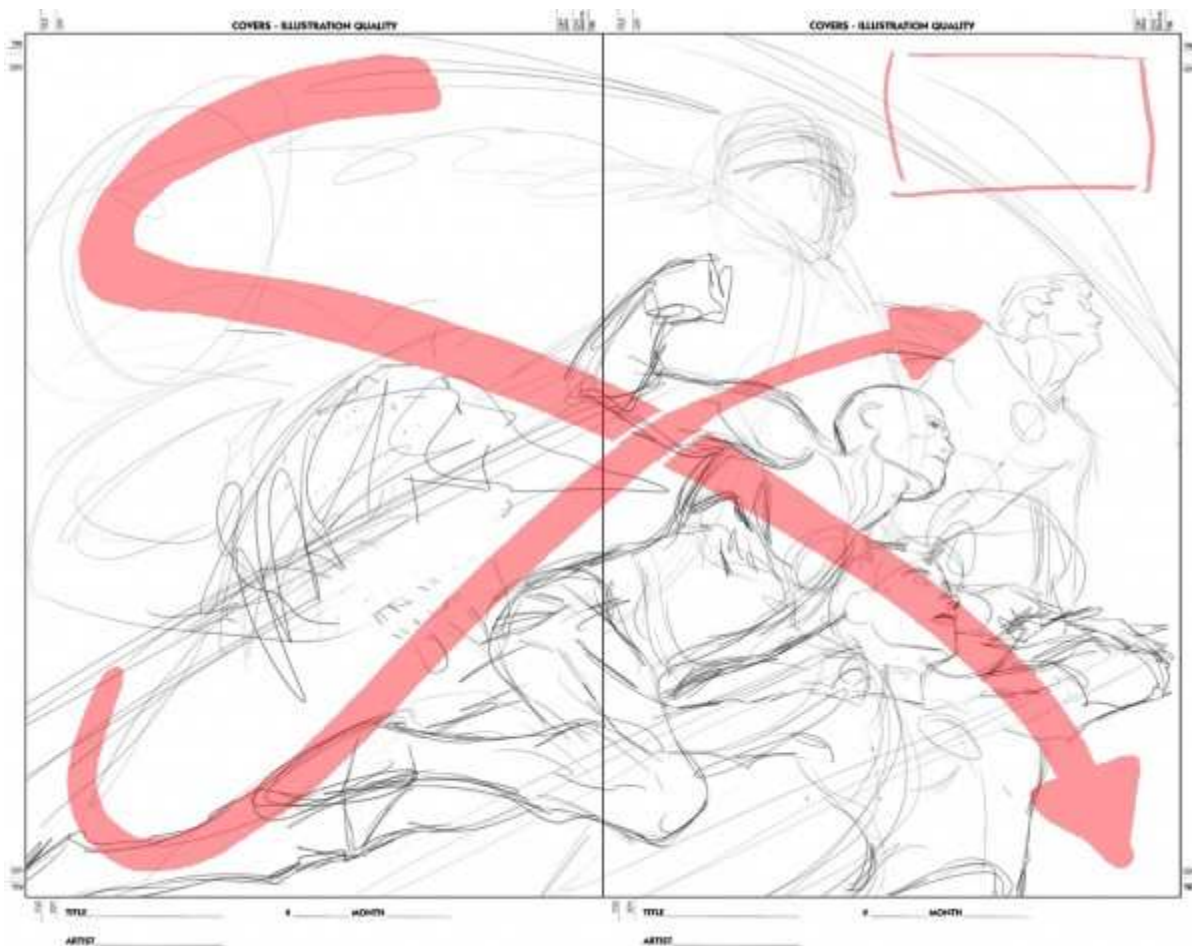




The viewers eye, led right to left and top to bottom.

As a poster or promo ad, it also had a good flow <http://yfrog.com/kkuimswj>



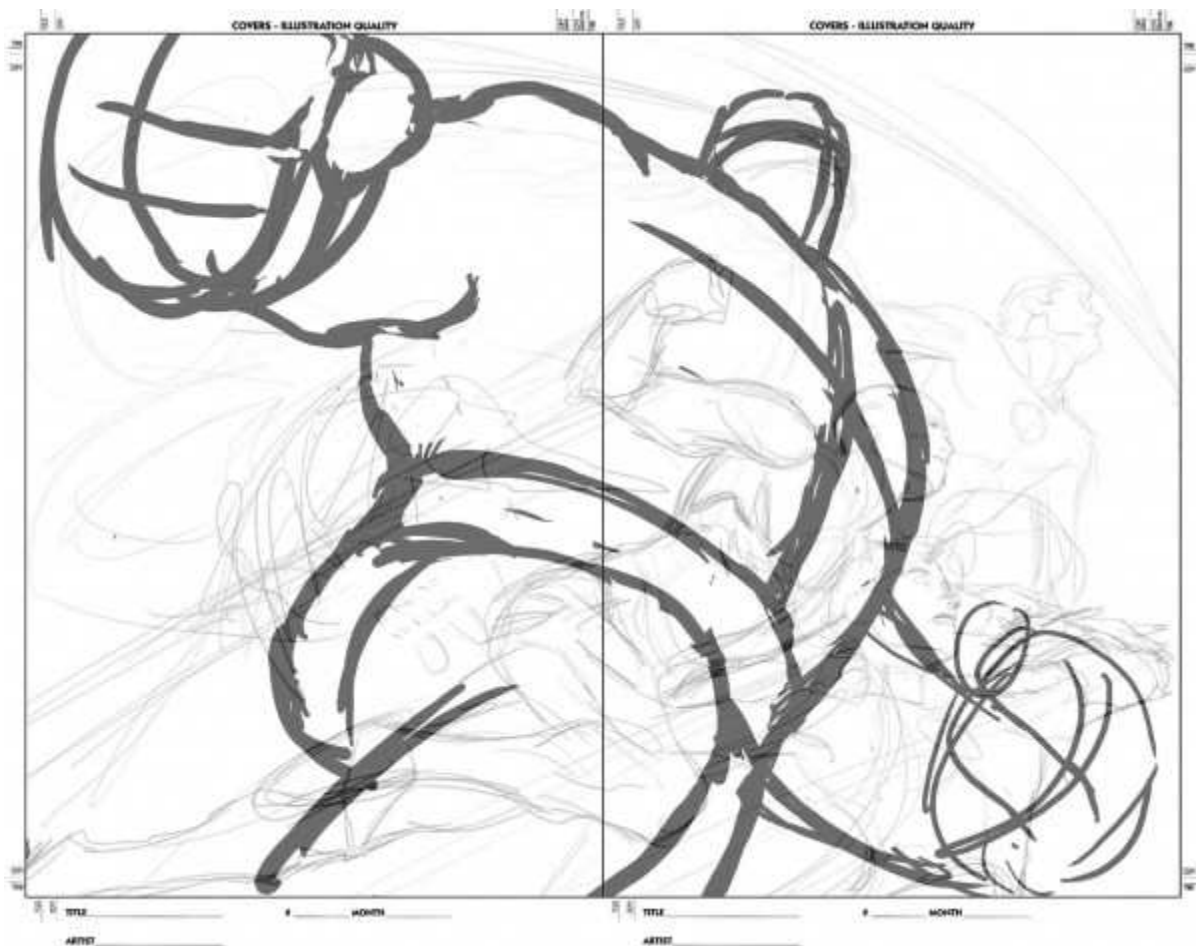


Yes, for those of you thinking it, I sweat this stuff A LOT! FYI, all these sketches drawn digitally on a Cintiq with Sketchbook Pro.

I can't recommend Sketchbook Pro enough, just an AMAZING pencil tool that feels and looks pretty darn real.

Okay, now I switched over to Photoshop, time to get into the details. Ben Grimm is the anchor to the piece <http://yfrog.com/ke44dtbj>



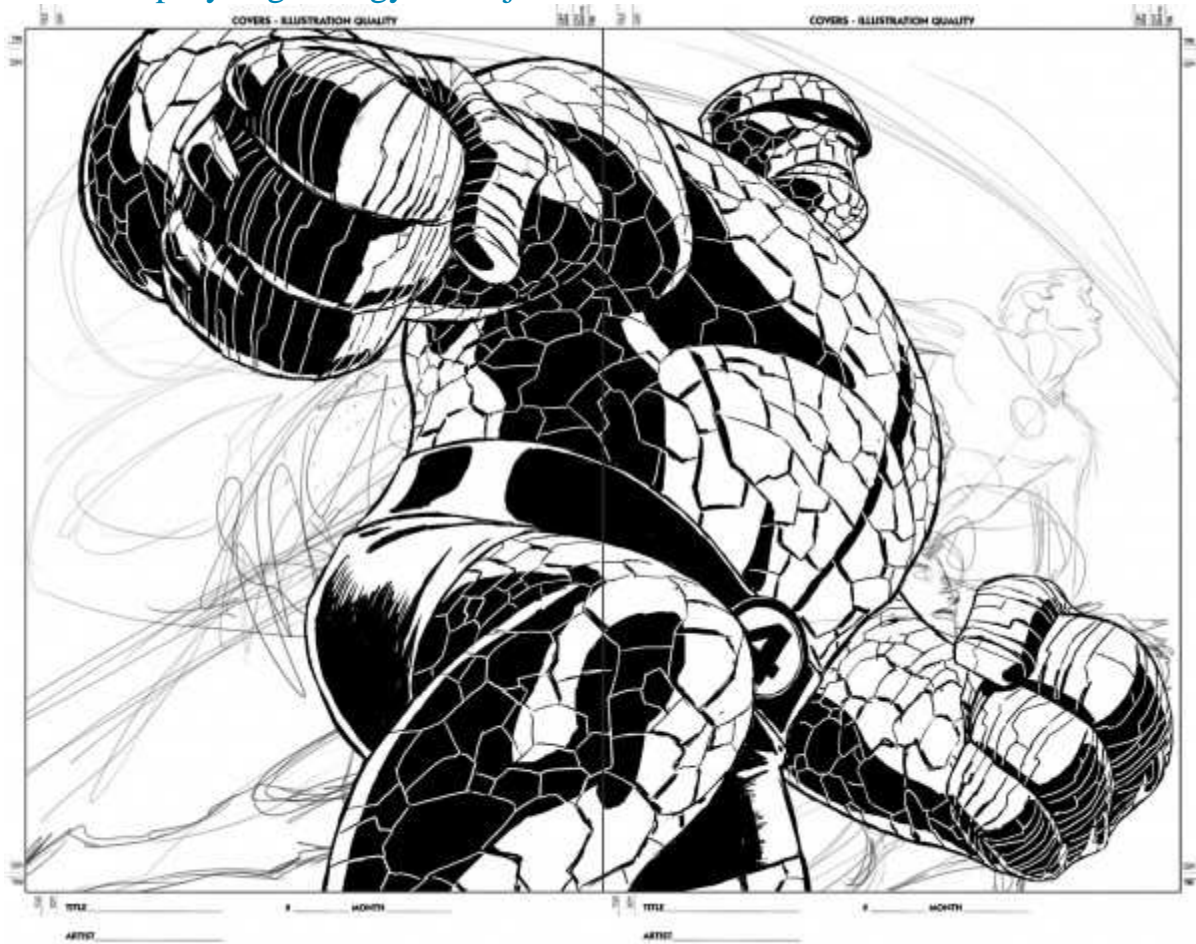


Now that I had Ben's basic shape blocked in, time to do those damn cracks <http://yfrog.com/h3aayvkj>

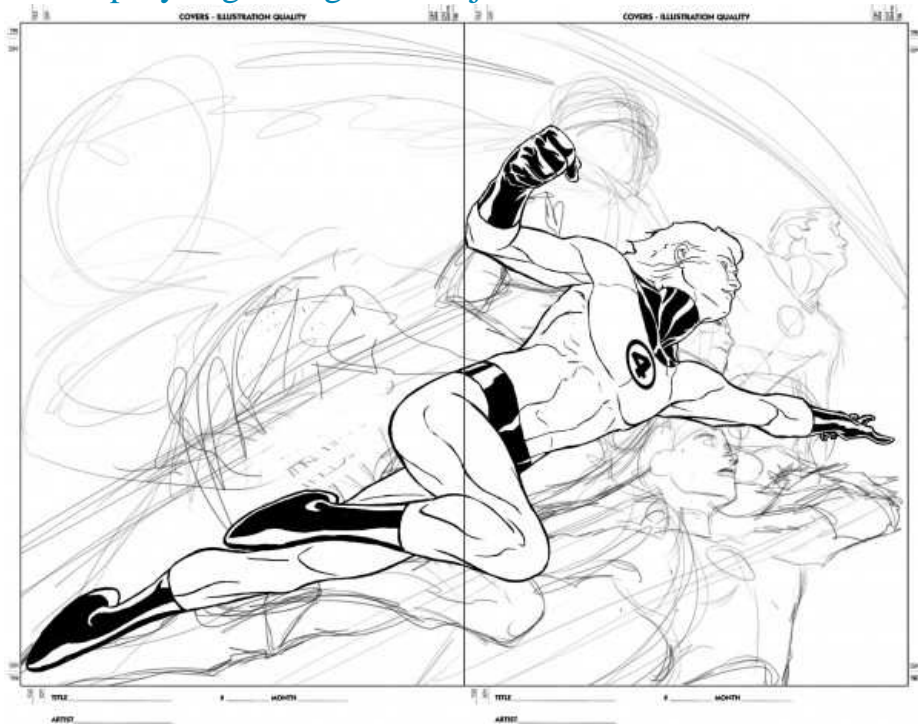




And now here's a much tighter version of Ben. THE THING IS BORN!<http://yfrog.com/gy82lasdj>



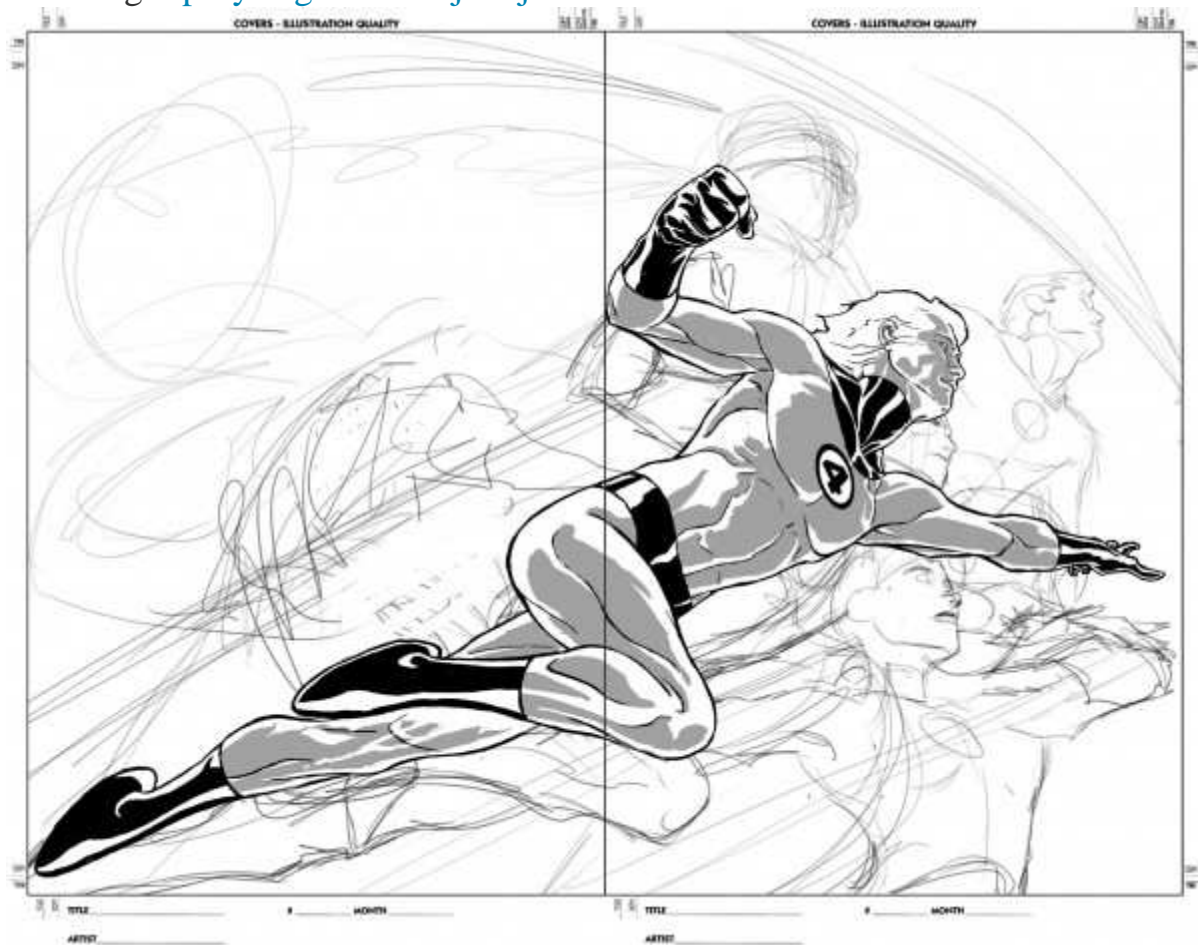
Johnny Storm, here we come. One of my fave characters as a kid, too bad he's dead<http://yfrog.com/gz16mkwj>



Notice I pushed Johnny up in the layoutt, this was a result of how Ben ended up sitting on the page after I blocked him in.

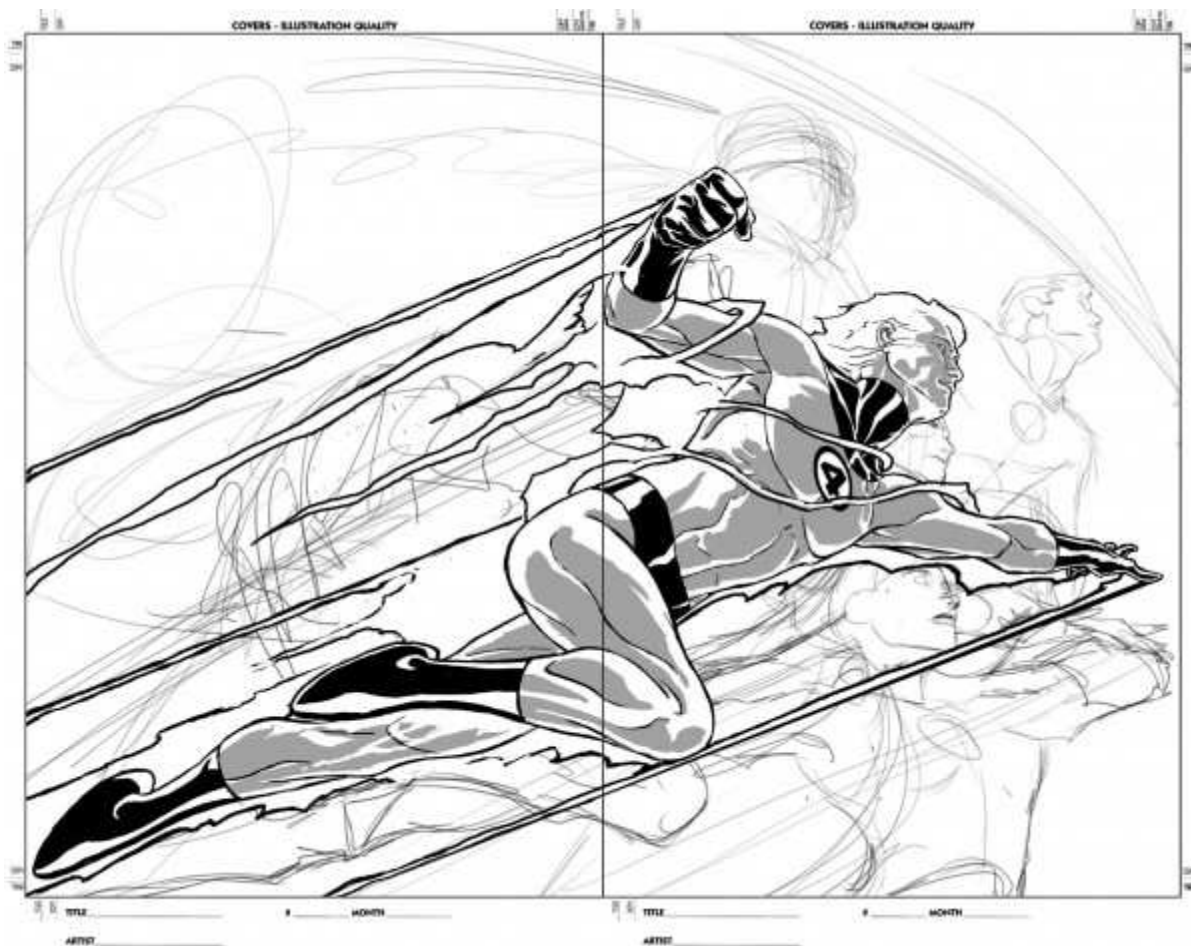


Once I was happy with Johnny's anatomy and dynamics, I added in some modeling <http://yfrog.com/kk9jkkhj>



Flame effects, keep in mind we're still in the layout stage and I'm now cursing myself for going double page <http://yfrog.com/h23w3fxej>



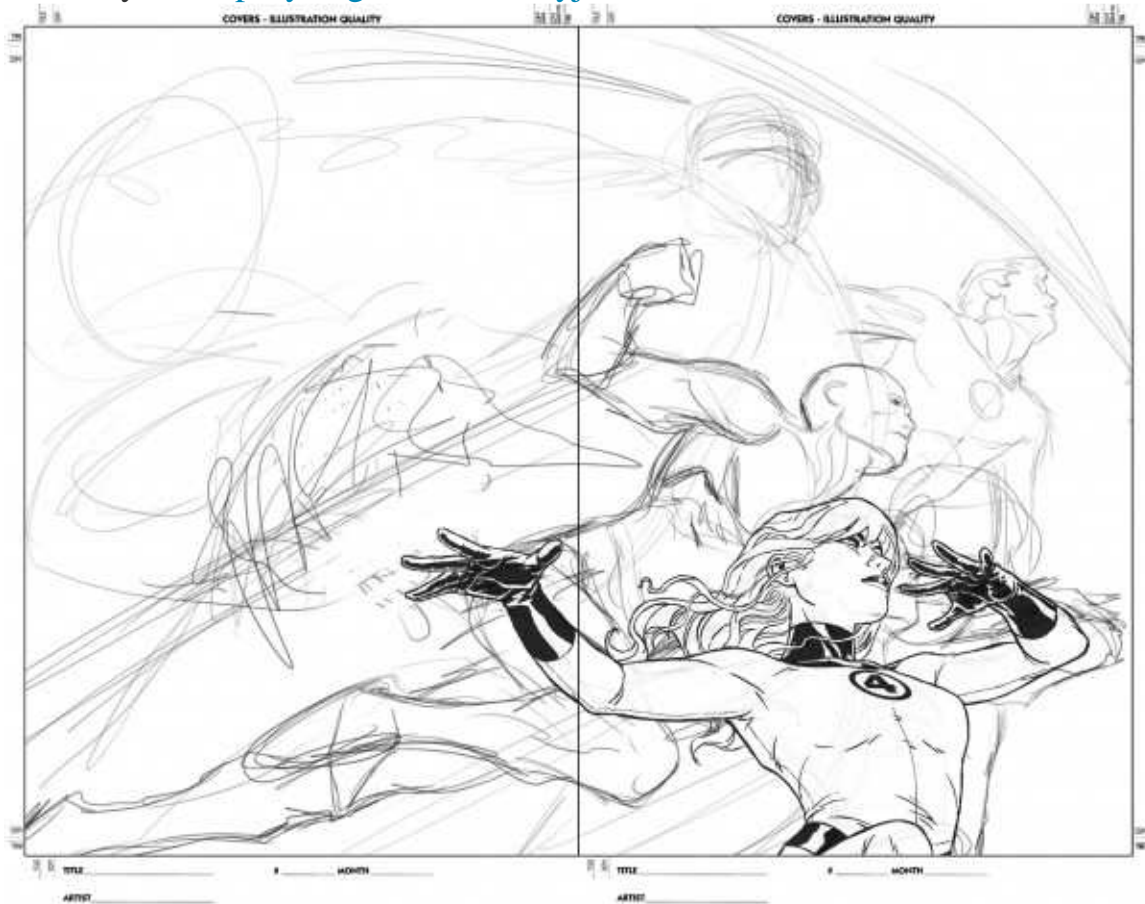


And now a quick check to see how Johnny and Ben relate to each other on the page <http://yfrog.com/hs4lstcj>





You may be asking, why go to all the trouble of drawing every character in layers? It's my process but also it serves a purpose here..  
More on that later, in the meantime, it's time for Sue Richards. Notice Sue has moved as well in the layout <http://yfrog.com/kfcmxlyj>

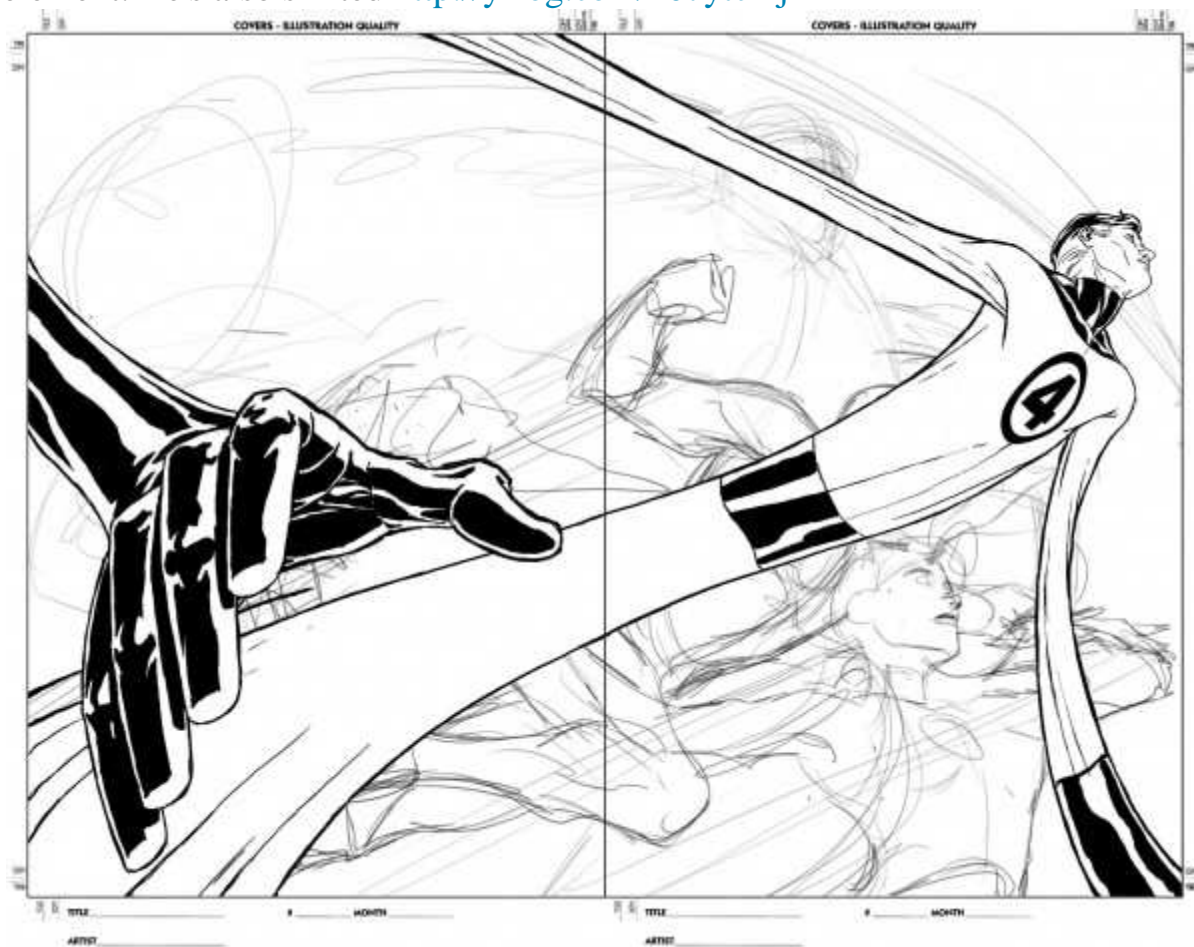


Ben, Johnny and Sue, almost there <http://yfrog.com/hszhfvxvj>





And now for Reed, he's important as his power as it allows me to use him as a design element. He's also shifted <http://yfrog.com/h07ytcnj>



The team in all their glory, but something's missing... <http://yfrog.com/gyg07uzj>





Ah yes, a background that harkens to their origins and sense of wonder that the FF brings <http://yfrog.com/h7g89hdj>



Now, what you're looking at, is my final layout before I got to pencil on board. Notice that you can see Ben, and Johnny through Sue.

The slight invisibility aspect of Sue is something that I'll work on with the colorist.

This layout done in Photoshop was done at actual art board size and 400 dpi resolution using the pencil tool.

Now, I take this layout and print it at actual art board size. I then take those printouts and tape them to the back of the art board.

Once taped and ready, I break out the old lightbox and start penciling. I use a very hard 4H lead

Here's the final penciled piece. BWS is old school comics shorthand for the inker, it means black with stars. <http://yfrog.com/kj5tsnzj>





Now comes the waiting game, like a kid on Christmas I have to wait a few days for the brilliant Danny Miki to ink it

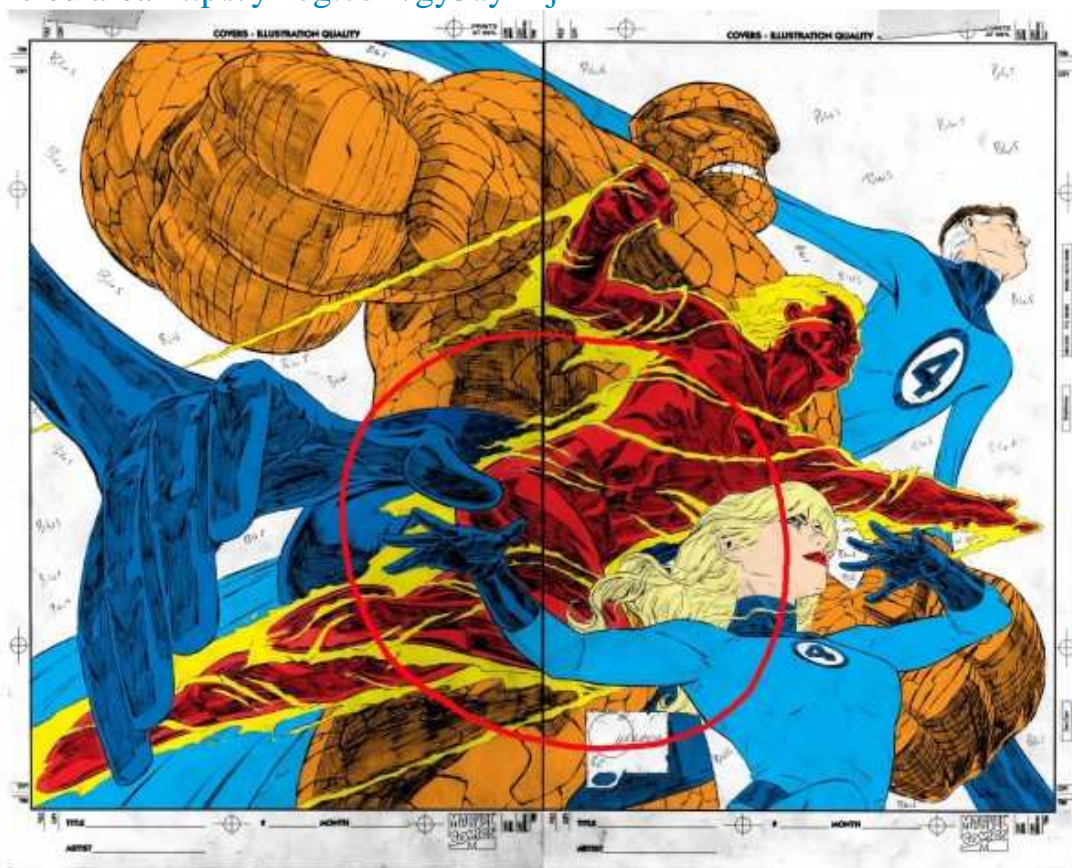
And then it comes. Once again, is there any doubt about how amazing Danny Miki is?<http://yfrog.com/h2x8ranj>





One thing I noticed was that I had some really awkward tangents around the area where Ben, Johnny and Sue intersected.

The colorist may have a problem seeing what's what so I did a quick color guide. Noticed the circled area <http://yfrog.com/gy3ayrmj>





That's where the bad tangents were. Keep in mind, this was not to indicate what color things should be, but rather what was what

Then I got the bad news, legendary colorist and my long time collaborator Richard Isanove was on vacation and couldn't color the piece :^(

Luckilly at Marvel we have an embarrassment of Riches when it comes to creators and the amazing Laura Martin was available to color it.

I was floored and flattered that Laura was going to color it. I e-mailed Richard and told him this could be his Wally Pip moment :^)

So now here is the never before seen final colored piece and remember it's just between us folk here on Twitter <http://yfrog.com/kejrkszuj>



Oh, and the reason I drew all those characters through in the layout was to be able to get Sue's invisibility power done in the color stage



Thanks to all those of you who were interested in the process and put up with my massive Tweetyness... that may have come out wrong.

JoeQuesada