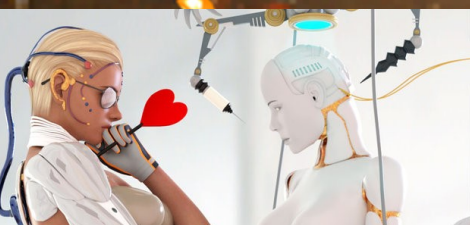


# Digital Art LIVE



ELIANE CK (DAZ STUDIO)



TARA DE VRIES (SECOND LIFE)



ANDERS PLASSGARD (POSER)



ISSUE SIX  
MAR 2016



# VICTORIA 7

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GENESIS



# Community Webinar



On **Saturday the 19th of March** we'll be having an exclusive and different type of community event, where you are invited to bring along your some of your own artwork or modelling content and have the opportunity to do the following:-

- Have your artwork or model shown during the webinar to other attendees. Share the story behind your artwork, how was it inspired and if there's a "backstory" to it.
- Ask for assessment on your artwork.
- We'll provide some positive feedback as well as improvement points on aspects such as composition, lighting, materials, figure posing, colour scheme and so forth.
- To complete the process we'll set some actions for you and then follow up at a similar webinar next month.

Bring along as few or as many pieces as you like, but please notify me as to how many you'll be sharing. You'll need to submit it to our dropbox (see [event page](#) for link) as well. This will help me plan and time the event. Since we're talking about resulting artwork or models, it doesn't matter how you've created it digitally – you are very welcome to attend.

Be aware that generally we have a focus on sci-fi and fantasy genres, but we're open to other types of artwork for this session.

Depending on time left over, there'll be a presentation on some amazing artwork pieces we've published in 3D Art Direct and Digital Art Live and I'll talk about the best aspects of each of these artworks, but also comment on some potential improvements for each piece.

## **BONUSES!**

Bonus 1 : If you have your work showcased in the webinar, we'll consider your work to be promoted in the Digital Art Live magazine, in a gallery or in an article.

(We've had 1,699,705 impressions so far on our on-line publishing platform from our magazines)

Bonus 2: We'll give you a **free \$25 voucher code** that you can use once at the Digital Art Live store (we'll let you know the code if you are with us at the webinar).

**Reserve Your Seat at this Live Webinar**

<https://digitalartlive.com/events/>



## SCULPT OF THRONES



Fan art is an incredibly useful tool for channelling inspiration and motivation into a real project that can get your work **noticed**. After all, the most useful inspiration is that which is acted upon, rather than left in the back of our minds.

Creating fan art can generate understanding of design and techniques during the process, which may not have otherwise been learned.

In this 1.5 hour webinar session, **John Haverkamp** provided live sculpting of the character Tywin Lannister from the HBO TV Game of Thrones!

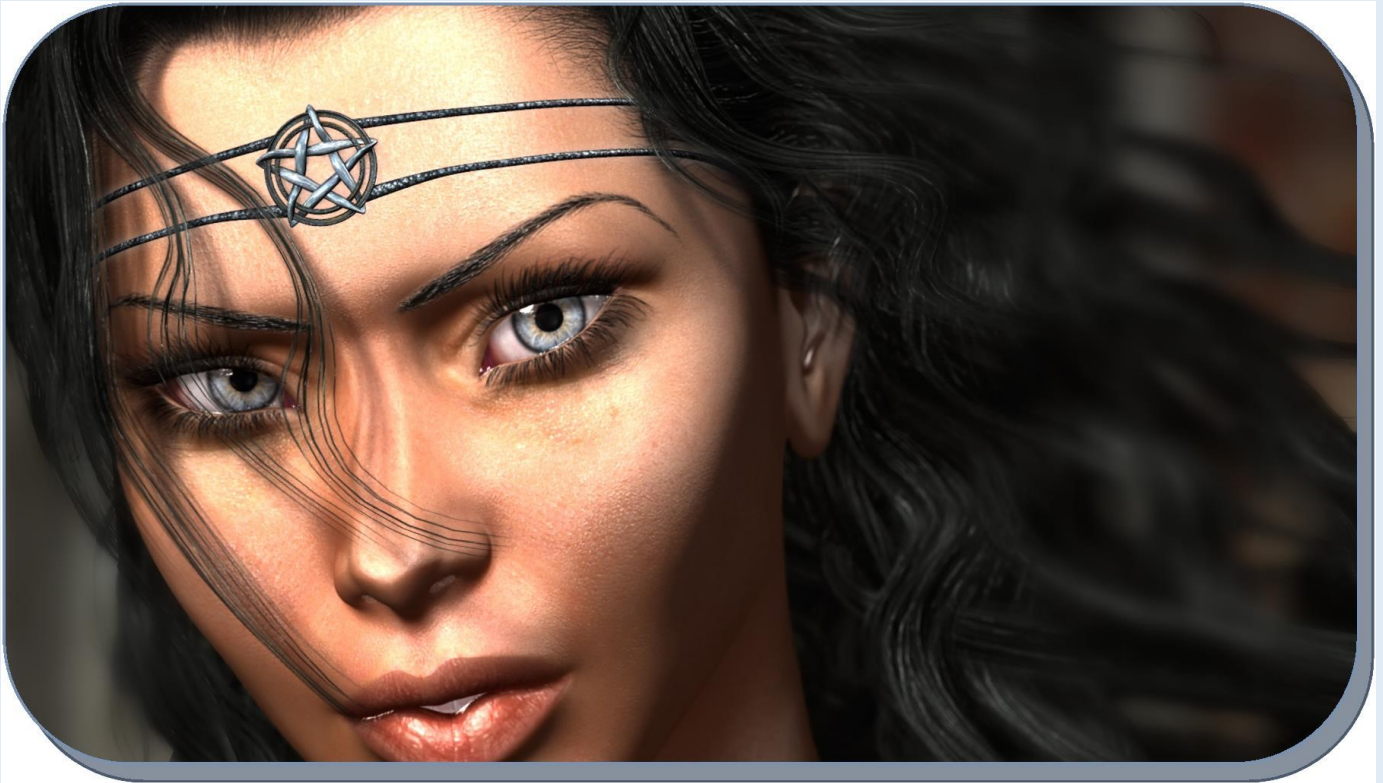
From this recorded session you'll learn:-

- The importance of strong proportional and anatomy knowledge so the photo reference doesn't mislead.
- "Reading" the reference correctly to get essential particulars of the features; starting from broad to narrow.
- Using a reference to inform details like wrinkles and skin pores.
- The sculpt technique with the paintover process
- Adding and Subtracting: standard brush, clay build-up brush and dam standard brush.
- Smoothing and trimming: smooth brush, trim dynamic brush and trim curve brush
- Use of the move brush, move topological brush and snake hook brush.





# Hexagon Intermediate



**Adding eye catching ornaments to a character** can make them “pop” and stand out from the crowd. This intermediate Hexagon two-part webinar recording goes through the process of creating a “pentacle” headband from scratch and gives useful insights to the workflow of a successful and experienced vendor of Poser content.

Kim Schneider goes through a step by step process to create a beautiful and intricate ornament using an effective yet low cost modelling tool. Through the two sessions she covers:-

## Session 1

- Research: secure your idea.
- Setting up the Hexagon workspace to save time and effort throughout the workflow.
- Using the line and surface modeling tools (part 1)
- From rough shape to fine detail
- Essential touch up techniques

## Session 2

- Using the line and surface modeling tools (part 2)
- Using the curve tool
- Smoothing and fine detailing
- Assign Shading Domains and Materials
- Simple UV mapping

Join us for two creative, informative and fun sessions!





# Having problems viewing this magazine in two-page spreads? Here's our handy guide on how to set up your desktop PDF viewer:



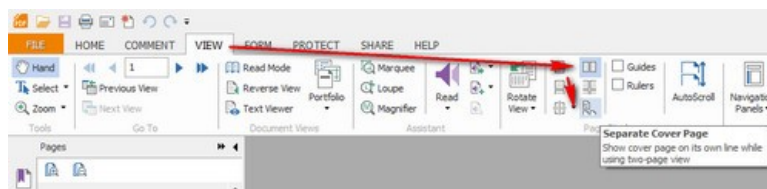
## For users of Adobe Acrobat Reader:

1. Open Adobe Acrobat Reader. In the top menus, select VIEW and PAGE DISPLAY
2. Make sure that the option for a TWO PAGE VIEW is ticked.
3. Make sure the option to SHOW COVER PAGE IN TWO PAGE VIEW is ticked.

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3. Then highlight FACING PAGE and SEPARATE COVER.





Front Cover: Detail from  
"Golden Woman" by  
Eliane CK.

SPECIAL 'CYBER-HUMANS' ISSUE

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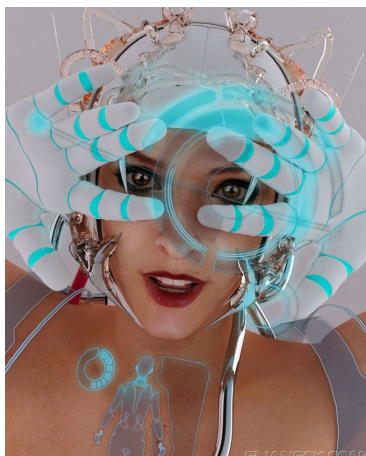
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### TARA DE VRIES

*Digital Art LIVE* straps on the shiny cyber-suit and flies into the virtual world of *Second Life* !

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"The allure of virtual worlds has been ingrained into me since I was really young. *The Virtual Boy* from Nintendo may have been a commercial failure, but just the *idea* of a digital world inside of this little headset..."



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"The secret is often just in simple observation. Many objects come to life with a certain light or shadow. You can brighten up a simple apple with a play of light and shadow..."



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### POSER | PHOTOSHOP

"I am also a 'Urban Explorer' and love to find new abandoned places to explore. I take a lot of photos of places like that, and use them as elements in my textures and pictures."





# MAGAZINE

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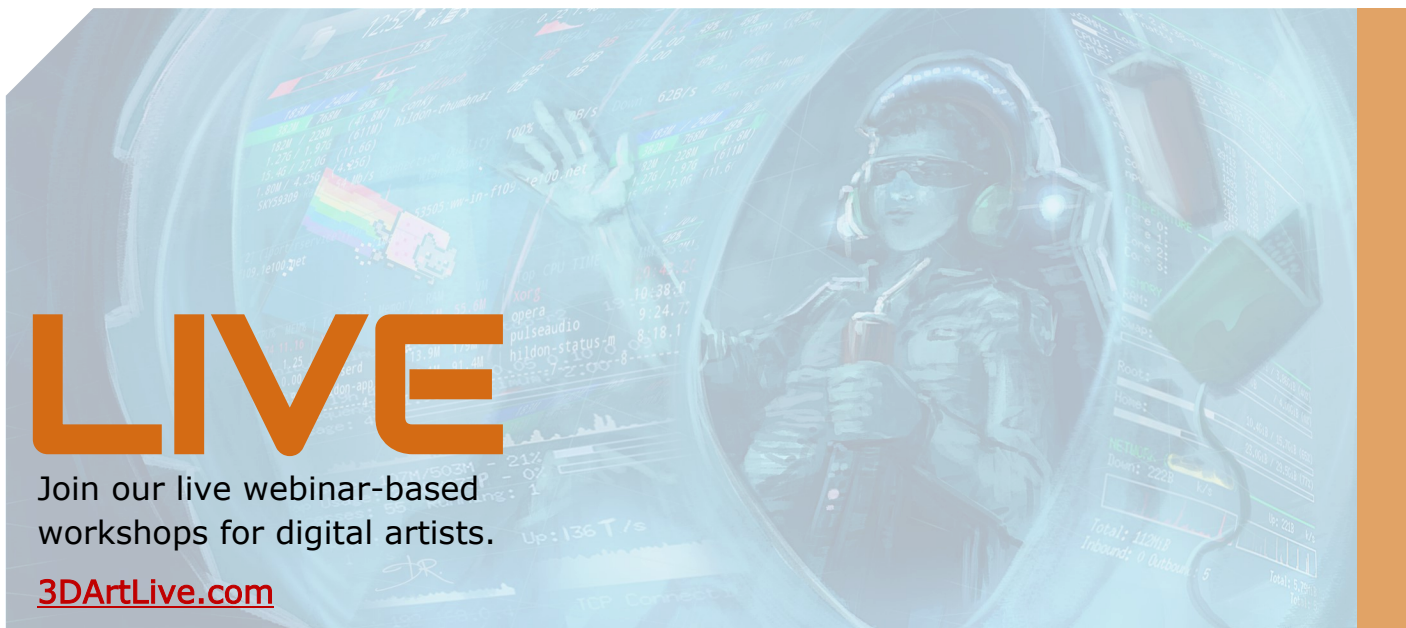
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# LIVE

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Credits for backgrounds, from top left: **Eliane CK**; **Fred Blair**; and **David Revoy** for the Blender Foundation.



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## EDITOR'S LETTER

# WELCOME...

“Sitting on our shoulders is the most complicated object in the known universe” said Michio Kaku, who is a well known futurist and theoretical physicist. Our brain consumes only 30 or 40 watts of power, yet has a capability of more than a super computer. What if we're able to interface our minds with machines and enjoy a symbiosis? That, in one sense already is happening. We're already cyborgs.

Every time we use a cell phone, a watch, a computer or other devices, we're acting as a cyborg. One definition of Cyborg goes back to this— “an organism to which exogenous components have been added for the purpose of adapting to new environments.” . So these components may allow us to go deep sea diving, explore space or climb high mountains or operate more effectively in an open plan office.

Tool use from the beginning of time started with extensions of the physical self, allowing us to reach further or hit harder. Now we are using tools that are extensions of the mind, allowing us to do calculations faster and predict things with more accuracy. Modern communication has already created a “borg” like hive mind; we can connect

instantaneously to virtually anyone on the planet that has a cell phone or computer.

Since we are pouring a fair amount of our identities onto social media sites, we are creating a “second self” that others are interacting with. To take things further, you can have a whole “second life” played out virtually, using the same named largest ever 3D virtual world created by users. See our interview with Tara De Vries giving an excellent tour of the Second Life world and culture.

As cyborgs though, we may need times where we can disconnect ourselves from our mind extending and communication devices, allowing time for self reflection, creativity and art. These are the times that may be best for defining our selves, rather than reacting to all of the input we gain at an ever-increasing rate. Once we've had time to gain extra realisations about who we are, then there's an opportunity to plug ourselves in again and reflect this back to our fellow cyborgs.

**PAUL BUSSEY**

Editor and LIVE Webinar Director  
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# TARA DE VRIES



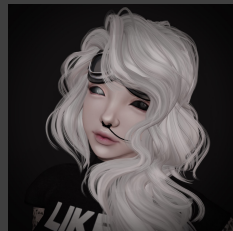
*Digital Art LIVE* straps on our VR cyber-goggles and launches into *Second Life*. Yes, the venerable virtual world is still online — and now has a GDP greater than some real-world nations! Plus it's VR-enabled. Our expert guide is **Tara De Vries**, editor of the *Second Life* sci-fi magazine *Bright Metallic*.

**DAL:** Tara, welcome to *Digital Art Live* magazine. 2016 is set to be the year the world gets consumer VR headsets — and their demo games and worlds — so we thought it would be great to interview an expert on the virtual world of *Second Life*. Specifically, on making science fiction 'come alive' as an experience in *Second Life*. You're also the editor of the excellent and regular *Second Life* sci-fi magazine *Bright Metallic*, so you're an expert on the art and aesthetics of SL.

Let's start by asking — how you first became interested in virtual worlds?

**TDV:** Hi! I think the general allure of virtual worlds has been ingrained into me since I was really young. *The Virtual Boy* from Nintendo may have been a pretty miserable commercial failure, but just the *idea* of a digital world inside of this little headset...





TARA DE VRIES

USA

SECOND LIFE |  
INDEPENDENT  
JOURNALIST

[WEB](#)

Picture: *Second Life* photography in  
the 55 55 55 ... sector, by Elif Ayiter.



That started dreaming of what it *could* be in the future. Obviously, things have come a long, long way since then.

I spent time as a teen in graphics-based chat rooms, a 2D version of what I dreamed would be possible eventually. Then I moved on to modding video games, which I think gave me a more solid sense of what virtual worlds in general could offer people, and what voids it could fill.

**DAL:** Yes, all modders seem to say, after, that it was a great training for what they later went into. And then you progressed to *Second Life*? So, what were your first experiences like in SL?

**TDV:** Honestly, they were *awful*. I first joined about seven years ago, and it was just not friendly to new users at all. I moved around awkwardly, never knew where I was, and almost immediately got banned from a plot of land while trying to get my bearings — and before I'd even spoken to my first person. Luckily, I eventually met some people, and they helped me get the hang of things.

**DAL:** I tried SL for six weeks or so, a *long* time ago. I remember various virtual raves, and wrestling with trying to fly, lots of half-empty islands and tasteless stores, and not having the Linden dollars [the in-world money] to buy cool gear. Then I got caught up one night in some kind of pseudo-terrorist attack by 'griefers'... and after that I rapidly drifted away to open-world storytelling games like *Morrowind* and *Oblivion*.

So... what was it about SL that then made you stay on and become a part of the community?

**TDV:** Your first experiences are what a lot of people first experienced, and I think that steep learning curve has been the hardest part of selling the idea of *Second Life* to "outsiders". If I hadn't met people early who helped me learn my way around, I don't think I would have stayed. One of those people was Thohi Torok, a talented scripter and my original mentor in creating in *Second Life*, who is now my business partner and one of my closest friends.

Once I got past that initial shock of being dropped into a new world and actually got to exploring, I was amazed at what people had created. Even back then, before mesh was implemented, people made these amazing creations out of very basic tools, and it was akin to the amazing things humans built in the real world early on in our world history. Once I got into creating things there myself, I was hooked.

**DAL:** So, more widely, how has SL changed and developed aesthetically, and experientially, over the time you've been a participant?

**TDV:** Depending on who you talk to, it's either gotten better or worse. I just think it's evolved and refined over time. Social dynamics are a little different, but it also seems like the artists who have been working with SL as their medium have really got a grip on creating in a virtual space. The biggest change happened when mesh was finally implemented. Like I said, I was a video game modder way before I got seriously involved with *Second Life*, and it seemed for a long time that SL was woefully behind the times when it came to creation tools. Sculpties, the closest equivalent before mesh, were just not practical for a lot of things. With mesh, we can import our 3D models *as they should look*. We didn't have to "dumb them down" anymore. Then there was the implementation of materials, which is my favourite addition to the SL creator's toolbox. Though it's restricted to just the standard 3D diffuse, normal, and specular maps, I think it's one of the most important improvements implemented for creation for *Second Life*, aside from mesh itself.

**DAL:** And graphics have become more powerful, to handle that. Has the SL economy changed? I remember that when it was started it was touted as very much a wild experiment in a free-trade economy, more or less. SL may have left the press headlines, but I heard it had a GDP totalling \$500 million in 2015, with merchants cashing out \$60m of that. That's pretty good, bigger than some small nations in the real world. So what factors led to the once-'experimental' economy becoming that large?

Picture: *Second Life* photography  
of Tara De Vries's own SL avatar.



<https://secondlife.com/>

*Second Life* is a free-to-play online world launched in 2003. SL is multi-user and is largely player-created. It had massive media coverage in the 2000s, but is now considered *passe* by the media. This has enabled its communities to flourish beyond the media spotlight, and SL continues to be actively developed. SL's in-world economy uses 'Linden Dollars' and in 2015 had a GDP of \$567 million in real-world money. Users and vendors cashed out around \$60 U.S. million in 2015.



**TDV:** It, like everything else, has evolved. That's not always a good thing. The economic atmosphere in *Second Life* can sometimes almost feel war-like. While the implementation of mesh to *Second Life* was great for creators, it also led to a huge surge in IP-infringing items, mostly ripped copyrighted content from videogames. A lot of popular creators are disheartened by this, since they don't feel they can compete with all the ripped content.

**DAL:** Yes, that's less common in the Poser and DAZ world, but it does happen. I can think of one small store in particular that people have to be wary of using commercially. Obviously, if it's just used for genuine fan works then that's ok.

**TDV:** There's also a dramatic shift in *where* things are purchased. While before, people would actually go to a store to buy things, we had a big wave — that has only just started to wane a bit — of shopping events. That's where many creators offer things, usually following some sort of theme, in one central location. For example, a current one right now is 'Multiverse', a sci-fi themed event with 20-some stores that are all offering sci-fi items.

**DAL:** Sounds great, and useful for those who want to see the items demo-ed on an avatar before they buy. I guess the SL sci-fi / cyber community must be especially strong, since it supports your own regular magazine *Bright Metallic*? Are there any other comparably strong communities? Furries, perhaps? I guess there must also be lots of *Star Wars* style spaceports and recreations of sets from TV shows. Or are trademarked and copyright media franchises not allowed in SL?

**TDV:** Yes, the sci-fi community is very large, and very active in Second Life. It's also very splintered, in places. Part of the reason I started the *Bright Metallic* magazine was to try to pull some of the community a little closer together, and I like to think it has worked.

The furry community is also a *very* large, active group, with some really talented artists. There's also the fantasy community, which is as broad or broader than the sci-fi community, but there's plenty of overlap there. There are a lot of *Star Wars* role-playing groups, and there's plenty of locations in SL that will be familiar to fans of that franchise, though the legitimacy of

**Pictures:** *Second Life* photography of Alpha et Omega, by Michelle Hyacinth (left) and Wildstar Beaumont's picture (right) of the island on which the first SL science-fiction convention was held.





those places can be debated. It's the difference between copyright infringement and fan-art. A popular *Dune*-inspired role-playing sim went through a lot of legal hassle, and they now make it very clear that they are NOT the planet from *Dune*. Regardless of the legal implications, it's sad to see people who love a fictional universe so much get trampled on by the estate of the creator of the thing they love.

**DAL:** Yes, and very often the estate has passed down to some very distant relative. There's one case, in the circle of supernatural and sci-fi authors who were around H.P. Lovecraft, where the copyrights went down to some distant second-cousin or other who obviously hates weird fiction — since he refuses to allow his relative's stories to be reprinted. There's not even a big fan base to protest about that, since almost no-one has ever read these great stories — unless then can find a rare hardback anthology from 50 years ago.

**TDV:** Linden Lab lays it out on copyright in their terms of service, and — in the test you have to take before you can upload mesh — you cannot create IP-infringing items and upload them to the grid. For *any* reason, commercial or fair use.

It's fair to say these guidelines are not followed by a lot of users, but the majority of it isn't malicious or commercial. Most of the role-playing communities based on popular franchises are not businesses, they're just groups of fans who want to role-play in their favourite fictional universe, and I think most franchises would be smart to see that that is a good thing, not a financial threat.

**DAL:** Yes, a lot of franchises are loosening up a lot on what they'll permit fans to use non-commercially. For respectful fan-art, fan-fic.

**TDV:** Of course, there are always people who take advantage of the system who sell known ripped content and just get away with it because, if the copyright owner doesn't file a DMCA notice with Linden Lab, then nothing is going to happen to them.

**DAL:** Could you tell our readers about some of the better-known *original* sci-fi creators in SL?

**TDV:** Oh, this question could get me in trouble, because there's *so many*. Neurolab Inc, owned by Ono Zinner, is one of the first to come to my mind, because I'm a huge fan of their cybernetic arms. Very cyberpunk items.





**DAL:** Yes, that was one of the first stores I can across while researching this interview.

**TDV:** Then there's Greeble/Mesa 5, which is a store and a sci-fi RP sim [section of *Second Life* land] run by a group. Mesa 5 seems like it's constantly 'under construction', and it's always been a place I like to visit occasionally just to see what's been added. Greeble sells a lot of sci-fi building components there that are top-notch. Beth Delaunay is another that comes to mind, the owner of Isil Designs. You see her stuff everywhere, and for good reason. There used to be a lot more, since there's so many creators who have quit because they were tired of fighting against ripped content.

**DAL:** Yes, I saw a lot of screenshots saying "and this cool clothing is no longer for sale in SL". You get that in the Poser/DAZ world too, though it's probably rarer.

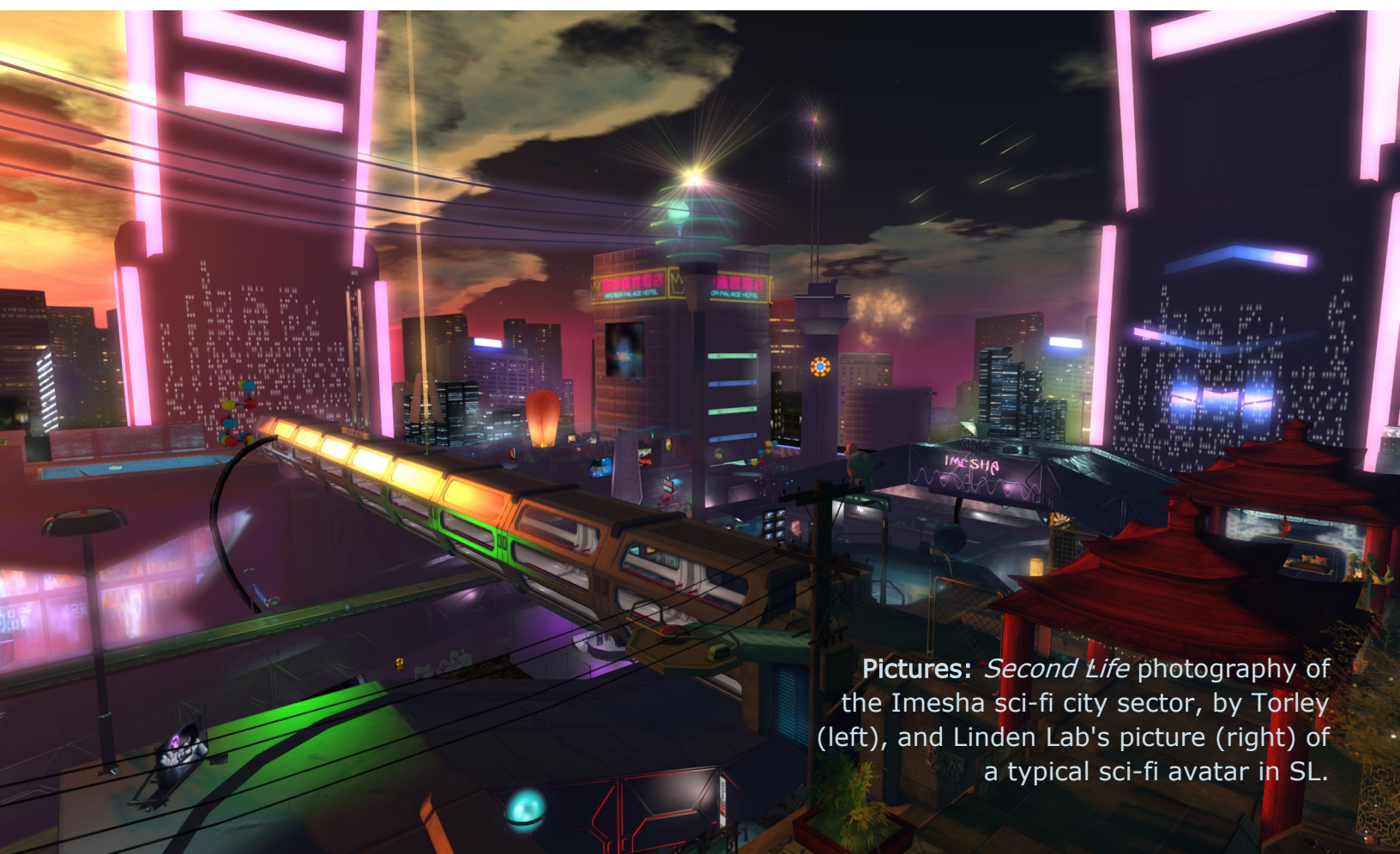
**TDV:** Thankfully, there's also a lot of new creators I've seen recently step into the picture who have a lot of potential.

**DAL:** Now... 'helmet hair'. It's always been a problem in 3D. Looking at some SL screenshots

it seems that the SL community has developed ways to get around that problem? Maybe borrowed some techniques from AAA game developers?

**TDV:** You don't see "system hair" in *Second Life* very much anymore. That's the ugly hair built right into your avatar that looks like 'helmet hair'. Most of the hair you see now is mesh — either rigged to the avatar's skeleton to prevent clipping [passing through the body mesh] for longer styles, or unrigged for short ones. There has also been some great strides made in realistic movement of hair in *Second Life*, but it's still a far cry from what's implemented by AAA videogame developers, simply because their engines they build for are better suited for the work. *Second Life* is always a little behind there, but you do see methods from AAA studios being used by *Second Life* creators, especially since the advent of normal and specular maps.

**DAL:** What are the community's various naming conventions and terms, for different types of SL art? And what's the attitude toward touching up



**Pictures:** *Second Life* photography of the Imesha sci-fi city sector, by Torley (left), and Linden Lab's picture (right) of a typical sci-fi avatar in SL.

or filtering screenshots with Photoshop? Is there a “purist” wing in SL art that frowns on such things?

**TDV:** We're lacking in naming conventions, since that requires an awful lot of cooperation. When talking about specifically SL photography, there's a couple different types. First, we say *photography* rather than *screenshots*, because the process most SL photographers go through is much closer to photography than just taking a screenshot a game. Retouching photos is the norm, and the majority of the most popular SL photographers do it, to varying degrees. Fashion bloggers get the most flack for editing their photos, since it changes the appearance of the items they're showing, and people end up disappointed when they buy the item — it doesn't look as good, because the photo of it they saw had been heavily edited. So you have a whole range of different photography styles. From raw photographs that only use the graphic settings in *Second Life* all the way to 'Pile-Up Artists' and 'Overpainters', who take a raw photo and basically paint over it to create a finished product.

**DAL:** I've seen a few very impressive overpaintings. So... it's definitely a platform for visuals — and also audio, performance, dance, fashion, prop making, architecture. But tell us also about SL as a platform for *story-telling*. I'm guessing that people make things like screenshot comics, maybe even captured VR that might then have a sort of choose-your-own adventure storytelling aspect bolted on? And of course short stories and *machinima* movies.

**TDV:** SL is an amazing platform for story-telling, and I think it's partly because it's possible to actually *live out* the stories, in a virtual world. A lot of the popular SL comics and storylines were born out of role-playing.

Some of the ones I'm really familiar with are *VOIDAR* by Ashley Carter and *Agent Orange* by Flit Ulrik. They're both really great storytellers, and I've been lucky enough to associate with them.

There's also the recurring *Adventures of Nat & Joey* that we feature in the magazine, done by German first life author Sabine Schäfers, known in SL as joeytwoshoes.





The machinima movie-making scene definitely has its share of talented artists, too, but I think what's come out of it so far is just a small peek into what machinima will be in the future. There's so much that can be done with it.

**DAL:** And are there more treasure-hunt-y + role-playing sort of storytelling games in *SL*, which in the real world tend to be called ARGs (alternate reality games)?

**TDV:** Oh, yeah! A popular in-world store, Sn@tch, run by Ivey Deschanel, did a game this past October called *Carver's End* that I heard nothing but good things about. Hunts and games are very much a part of *Second Life* culture. There's also MadPea Productions, which does mainly fairly large-scale interactive games in *Second Life*. They're a bit hard to describe, but they're definitely worth experiencing.

**DAL:** And your own free online magazine *Bright Metallic* is able to host some of the rich variety of storytelling. Which *SL* sci-fi stories have been your favourites, from the past few years?

**TDV:** Another question that could get me in trouble, because like children, I love *all* our contributions. However, there are two recent

stories I think of immediately. In January's issue, there was the first submission I got from a writer known in *SL* as BitterPanacea called "Welcome to The After Life" that I just thought was a very poignant look into the future, and how our morals will have to evolve as our civilization and technology does. It just really made you think, even though it's only a short, two-page story.

**DAL:** Yes, I suspect we will eventually have to come to a broad social decision that the virtual online world is simply un-policable and it's basically 'free speech in private' and in members-only communities, but that the mainstream and public media is also voluntarily *very* locked down and self-censored in the real world. We're moving that way already, although many aren't yet ready to admit it.

**TDV:** Then, most recently, a story came out of *Eisa*, a sci-fi role-playing sim, which was called "Return of the Marquise". That was just haunting, and also makes you think of our moral obligations as technology advances. The rights of artificial intelligence entities is already a strongly-debated topic, and one of my favorite philosophical debate subjects at the moment.



Pictures: *Second Life* portrait photography of Injuria by Sinful Rhapsody (left), and by Miele Tarantal (right).



I think science fiction gives people a platform to really feel out our future problems — and their solutions.

**DAL:** So true. Just out of curiosity, are you familiar with the large ecosystem of 3D content for Poser and DAZ Studio, via stores such as Runtime DNA, Renderosity and others? If so, how does the content range compare with that in SL? I'd imagine that the number of leading content creators is perhaps about the same in both? Or is SL larger in terms of quality content makers? Is there any crossover between these realms?

**TDV:** I am familiar with them, though I'm not an active part in those communities. I do know that there has been some tension between SL creators and some non-SL related 3D model creators, mostly because of the IP-infringement copyright problems I touched on before. I know there's some cross-over, but I don't know how much. SL has a lot of quality content-makers, but also a lot of poor content makers, simply because it's so easy to try in *Second Life*. I don't think that's quite as true in other 3D modelling communities. I do remember hearing that TurboSquid completely banned the use of

any of the assets they sell for *Second Life*, because of *Second Life*'s lackluster IP protection. I wouldn't be surprised if other places followed suit, if Linden Lab doesn't figure out a better policing system.

**DAL:** How did the amazing rise of *Minecraft* impact SL? Did it become a training ground for SL. Or did it just take people away from SL?

**TDV:** This may be surprising, but I have rarely heard people talk about *Minecraft* in SL. I've seen references to it, but I don't think the two are similar enough to really compete. Most *Second Life* users will tell you *Second Life* is not a game, and as far as I know, that feeling doesn't seem to be true for *Minecraft* players.

**DAL:** Interesting. Do you think that SL will benefit from VR kit, or will the large businesses (Oculus, Sony, Samsung, Steam etc) want to create their own similar worlds?

**TDV:** Pre-existing VR communities will definitely benefit from the rise of consumer VR the most. I think that large companies seeking to create virtual worlds will struggle with their lack of understanding of how these communities work.





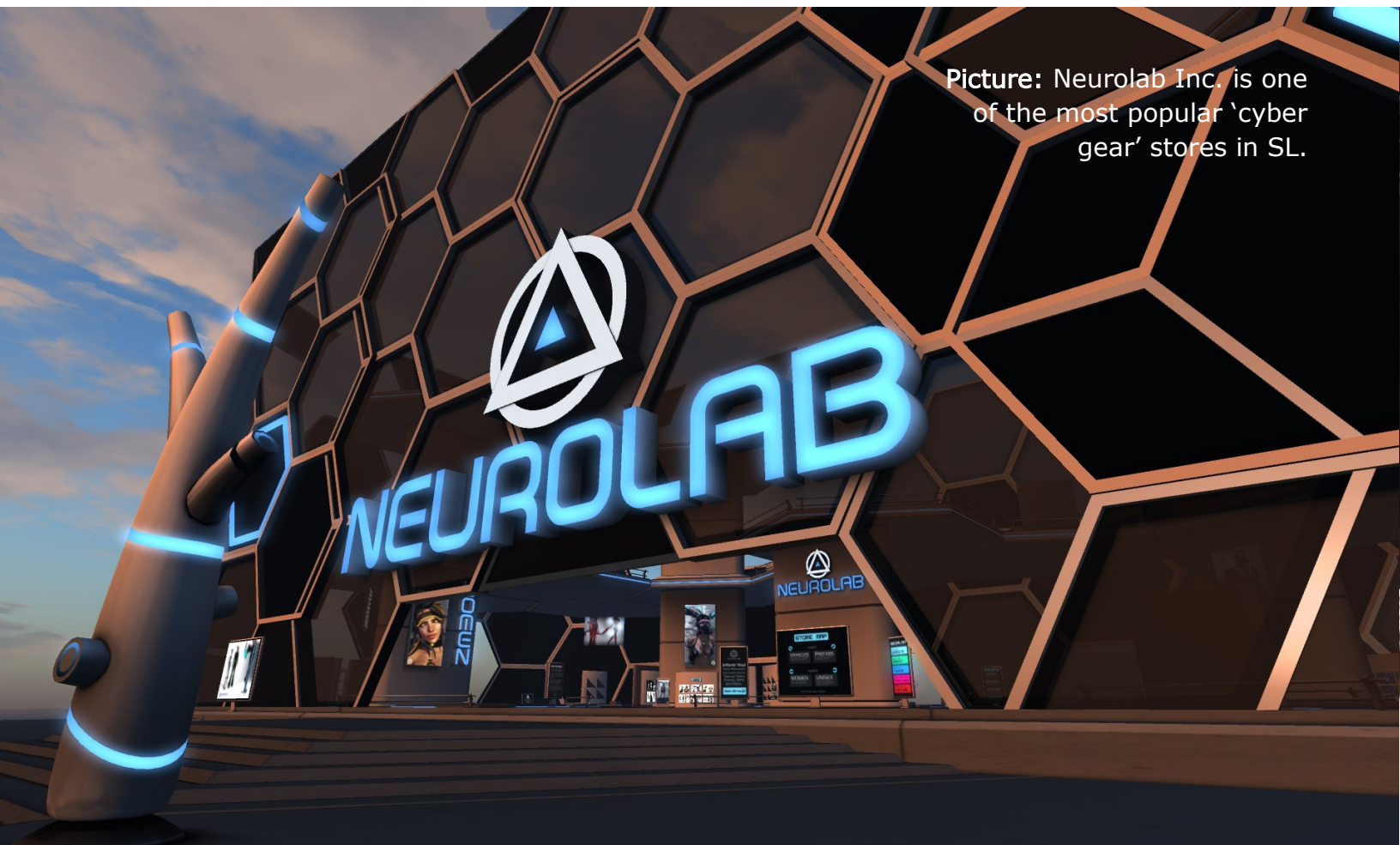
It's the same as a big corporation which wants to do business in a new country for the first time. The culture is different, so you've got to figure out how to work with the existing culture, rather than trying to make them adjust to your product. I think *Project Sansar* will be the "next big thing" in virtual worlds, because LL has a grasp of VR culture already. None of the other VR projects I've seen have particularly impressed me — and I've seen a lot.

**DAL:** Yes, I suspect a lot of those new VR worlds will likely fail. That's always the risk with any vast open game-world (such as *Fuel* etc), that there's just not the creative *oomph* and time to fill it all. So people visit a few times and then they've seen what there is to see, and they go away and never come back. Or there's really bad navigation and getting anywhere and then back again is a huge hassle. I've sure we'll also see some duff 'educational' and 'VR business meetings' VR worlds.

But... if they gave the cash to *you* and your community, how would *you* do it so that it works?

**TDV:** There are two very key things I'd want to have covered: I'd want the world to be built over an engine that was familiar to creators, and I'd want user-created content. You can throw a ton of money into a world, creating content for it... but you'll never be able to make all the things that are needed to keep people satisfied. Tastes and styles are simply too varied. Most people don't want to get all of their things from one source. They want variety, novelty, and timeliness. So rather than pouring money into a content-creation department, I think it would be more practical, and more beneficial to the growth of the community, to put that money into overseeing user-created content and making sure you're creating an environment that doesn't make artists worry that their works will be stolen.

Then one would want to have an engine that will be familiar to creators. That just encourages experienced creators to create *in* your world. For artists to come into a world and to have to learn a new scripting language that isn't as strong as other languages, or to have to figure out how to convert their models to be



Picture: Neurolab Inc. is one of the most popular 'cyber gear' stores in SL.

compatible with this world and then finding that it lacked a lot of capabilities required... that will hinder enticing quality content-creators into the world.

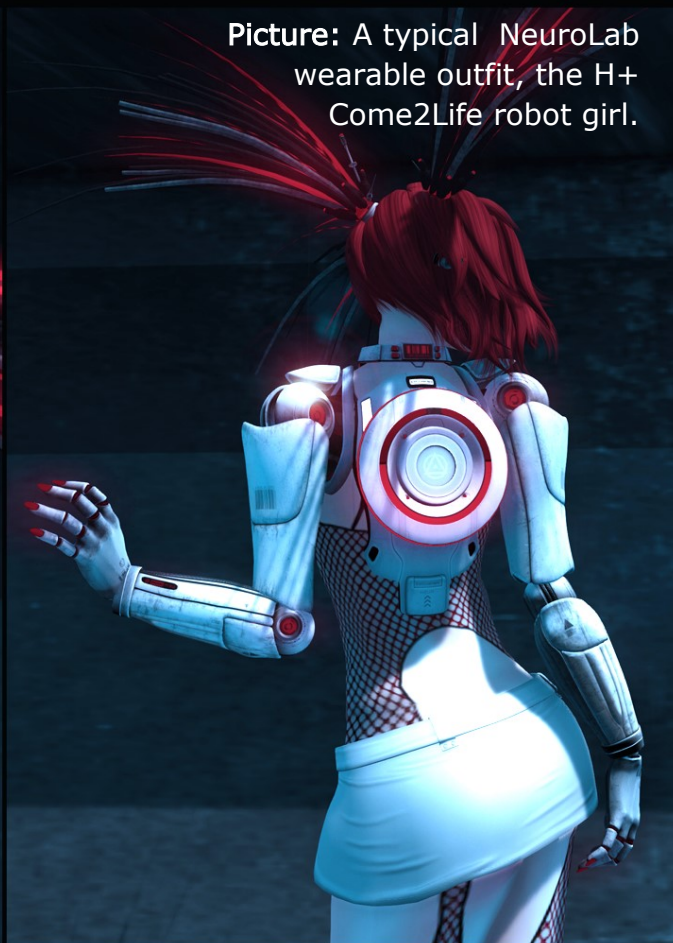
I've always thought that user-created content is the pivot upon which *everything else* should turn. Great older open-world AAA games like *Oblivion* are still being played partly because there is a user community that continually adds fresh mod content, and *Oblivion* isn't even an MMO.

**DAL:** Yes, I recently saw installed a complete mod of the older *Morrowind* game, in the *Oblivion* engine. Done as a free mod, so you can play through *Morrowind* but get all the visual quality of *Oblivion*. Amazing that that sort of work is still being done, some 12 years after the release of the final cut of *Morrowind*.

**TDV:** This happens because people love the game, and the franchise, so much. It boils down to the necessity to create a world that people really love and relate to that encourages them to participate and contribute to the community.

**DAL:** Do you think that VR storytelling needs to be different, will be, different than other types of media and game storytelling. I've read some wild claims recently that VR is "what TV was to 1946". Meaning something that needs a whole new visual and aural language, a new creative industries to serve it. What are your opinions?

**TDV:** When you look at VR, I mean the whole of the idea of virtual reality, it's just such a vast, promising concept that it does really seem like it's an entirely new thing, but it's not really. VR is, and will be amazing, because it can literally be *anything*. I'm sure there will be plenty of new mediums, especially new sorts of mixed media art with augmented reality, but what I expect we'll mostly see happen is the transition of all of our current mediums to the virtual world. There are already virtual museums filled with art, virtual movie theatres, virtual plays. Entire lives lived out in virtual worlds. The new creative industries that will serve the virtual worlds will seem a lot like the creative industries that came before them. Except that they'll take virtual reality seriously, a thing that a lot of people seem to struggle with.



Picture: A typical NeuroLab wearable outfit, the H+ Come2Life robot girl.





**DAL:** I've recently become a big fan of comics and graphic novels again, after mostly putting them aside for a decade or so. Not all of them, I just cherry-pick the very best. Do you think a fully cel-shaded toony style might work as well as semi-photoreal, for a VR world? I mean, obviously it does work for kids and early teens, but what about for grown-ups?

**TDV:** I think it could be successful, but it would be a niche market. Cel-shading certainly has its fan base, and you can find it in *Second Life* as well. So, it could work as well as semi-photoreal, but I don't think it would be as widely used.

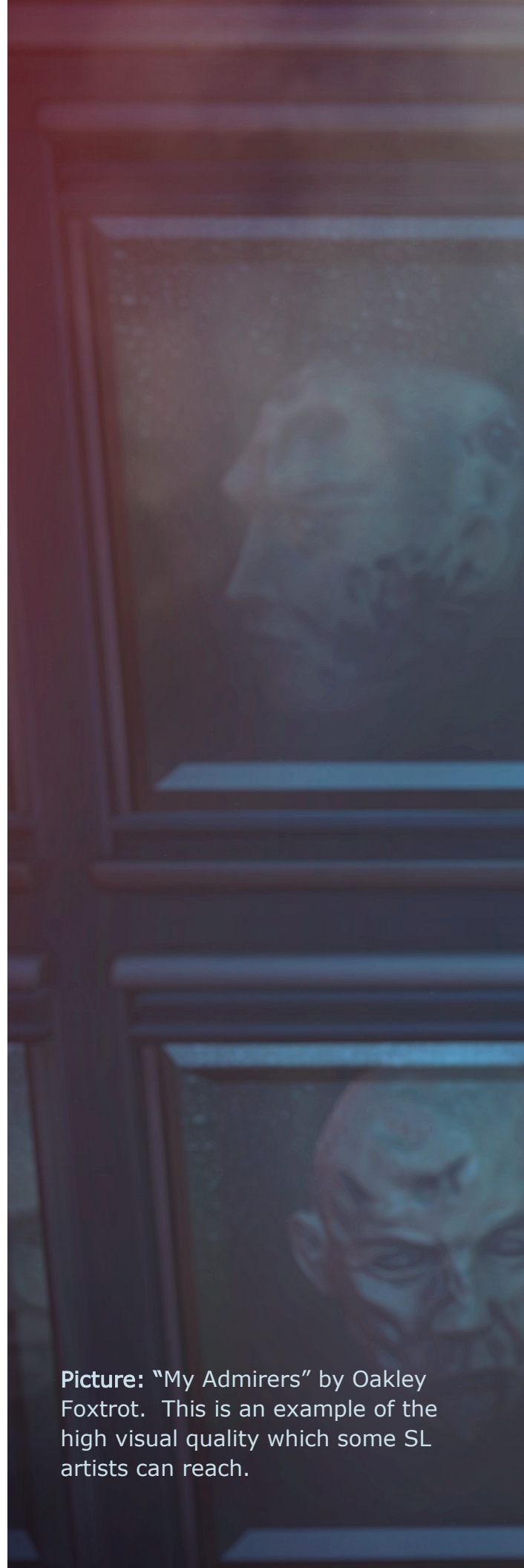
**DAL:** Yes, we open this interview with a photograph from *Second Life* of a 555... a location that seems to use a similar graphic stylisation. A B&W banknote-style engraving style, rather than cel-shaded.

I hear that the makers of SL have something called Sansar, which *may* be a sort of "VR platform for hire"? You mentioned that earlier, actually. Sounds like sort of: 'big company needs an off-the-shelf VR space for a temporary event or meeting' type of space, like hiring a concert hall in the real world. But then I guess the said company might then gift what they've built to the SL community, after they'd finished with it? But that's all just my guesses, as a SL outsider. It would make sense business-wise.

**TDV:** Project Sansar is the big talking point in *Second Life* right now. There were whispers so long that it was going to be "the death of SL" or, at the very least, would lead to Linden Lab abandoning *Second Life*, but everything LL has released to the public has made it seem more like it will be an improvement to *Second Life* for VR headsets.

**DAL:** Aha, I see.

**TDV:** A lot of details have been hush-hush, and there's plenty of non-disclosure agreements being signed, so details are too scarce for me to really even begin to guess how it will play out. A lot of SL users are upset they're starting over, rather than fixing bugs that have plagued *Second Life* since it started. But sometimes it's better to start with a clean slate. I don't know anything about how LL plans to use *Sansar*, or how successful they'll be this time trying to pull in corporate interest, but I do know that a lot of SL creators are prepared, and even excited, to transition.



**Picture:** "My Admirers" by Oakley Foxtrot. This is an example of the high visual quality which some SL artists can reach.







**DAL:** Let's turn to academia. There's been a smattering of insightful socio-philosophical theory from academics about *Second Life* and similar virtual worlds, in the last decade or so. Especially around core academic concerns such as 'deconstructing' identity — virtual identities, fluid sexualities, online status-display and conspicuous consumption/potlatch-style destruction, also the role of a virtual world in wider fan cultures and communities. What's your own philosophical stance on SL?

**TDV:** Like nearly anything else, virtual worlds can be beneficial or harmful, depending on how they're used. A lot of people use *Second Life*, or other virtual worlds, to be something they can't be outside of it. Plenty of transgender individuals have found it beneficial to be able to be the gender they identify with in *Second Life*, long before they feel they can transition in "real life". I'm a robot in *Second Life*, and I guess you can say that I identify with my avatar — because she is who I would be if I had as much control over myself as I do her.

I use *Second Life* to connect with people from all over the world and to create things in a community that I cannot get in my area. I've

worked with authors from Germany, VR programmers from Spain, DJs from Brazil. We all live in vastly different places around the globe, but we're all residents of *Second Life*, and that bridge across cultures is the biggest benefit I can imagine from any virtual world.

**DAL:** Have you "seen it all" in SL, or can you imagine that there are *even wilder* creative acts/performance/places?

**TDV:** I always say that nothing in *Second Life*, or on the Internet, surprises me anymore, but I can still see trends and branches growing and evolving. Live performances, especially. Musicians who live-stream their performance while their avatar stands on stage in *Second Life*, that's what I'd like to see evolve. I think one day, concerts, theatre, burlesque, etc. in virtual worlds will be *more* dynamic than they are in real life.

**DAL:** Imagine that one of our readers now wanted to go download a copy of *Second Life*, fire it up and then work through one of the basic intro newbie tutorials, and *then* get out into the main SL. They're standing there and the broadband is flying, and they want to get as quickly as possible to the sci-fi stuff and places.







**Pictures:** the Liqueur Felix dome photographed by reBourne (left). "Lay me down" by Sinful Rhapsody.



Where should they go and what should do first, to have a really good six-hour introduction to the sci-fi content in the SL world?

**TDV:** First, they should take a deep breath... because SL's tutorial just kind of throws you into the world without much information, and it's immediately overwhelming for most new users. After that, I may be biased, but picking up a copy of *Bright Metallic* magazine is a great way to get introduced to the wide world of sci-fi in SL, since it features stores, locations, and RP [role-playing] groups. I'd really suggest starting in a sci-fi RP sim like *Eisa* or *Metroplex 17*, who have mentors to help new users figure out what they're doing. Some of the other really large sci-fi RP sims aren't always newcomer or noob-friendly, though once you get the hang of things, I encourage everyone to explore and find a place that fits *exactly* what they're looking for. There's also some SL Skills classes including 'Role Play Basics' by New Citizens Inc.

**DAL:** Thanks. How much would be a 'minimum in-world spend' for a really enjoyable and good-looking first month in *Second Life*?

**TDV:** While it varies, depending on what is important to the person spending the money. There are some basic items most people agree you need immediately: an AO (animation override), a skin, hair, and clothes. There are free AOs you can get on the Marketplace that will get you by for a long time, until you find one you really want. Skins are a little trickier. While you can find a lot of free and cheap skins, especially with the help of sites like [slfreestyle.blogspot.com](http://slfreestyle.blogspot.com), if you want to purchase a skin from one of the big-name skin creators, you're likely to spend L\$1000 just on that. Hair is a bit more reasonable, at around L\$200-500. Clothes vary widely, since you can pick up some good items for free or very cheap, but you can expect to pay another L\$1000 on clothes. This totals out at about L\$2500 or about \$10.39 USD. There are some people who insist that you need mesh hands, feet, heads, or whole mesh bodies — but that can wait until you've had time to settle in and look around.

**DAL:** Right, so it sounds like anyone with \$30 in

PayPal pocket-money, converted to Lindens, could afford to make mistakes in purchases, then start over again to get it right. And what about if they then wanted to start to buy SL property and build their own space?

**TDV:** There are two starter options for people who want their own space in *Second Life*: they can get a premium account from LL, which allows them to purchase land and pay tier (rent) straight to LL. You get what's called your "Linden Home" for free, but I don't know much about what those are like these days because I don't use mine. This option gets a little complicated, because depending on how much land you want, you need a certain tier level.

The other, probably more beginner-friendly option, is to rent land from someone who bought land from Linden Lab. You can rent any sized piece of land, with any level of development on it. For instance, you can rent a giant empty chunk of land if you want to create your home from scratch, or you can rent prefab houses that you decorate, or even fully-furnished homes. One example of one of the SL 'land barons' is the Anshe Chung estates. There are also a lot of smaller groups that rent out land, including a lot of the sci-fi role-playing communities, like Metroplex17.

**DAL:** Ok, that's fascinating information. Thanks very much for this interview. Our readers can of course find out a lot more about *Second Life* and its sci-fi communities by subscribing to and reading your magazine *Bright Metallic*.

**TDV:** Yes, we have a list of all of our in-world SL kiosks on [brightmetallic.com](http://brightmetallic.com), or they can read the issues free on the Web at: [issuu.com/brightmetallic](http://issuu.com/brightmetallic). This month, we'll have a special limited-edition variant cover out at the SL Sci-Fi Convention, in support of Relay for Life of Second Life — another good place for people to learn about the science fiction community while supporting a good cause.

**DAL:** Super, ok, thanks very much.

**TDV:** Thank you for asking me!



*Bright Metallic* magazine is online at:

<http://brightmetallic.com/>

And can be read for free on Issuu:

<https://issuu.com/brightmetallic>



# ELIANE CK

*Digital Art LIVE* interviews Eliane CK of Brazil, on her signature sci-fi style and her recent move to using DAZ Studio.

**DAL:** Eliane, welcome. First, I should ask... these days, do you prefer to be called Elia, Eliane, or EliaNeck or Eliane CK?

**EN:** I prefer my real name, Eliane.

**DAL:** Thanks. So, Eliane... for our readers who may not be familiar with you or your work, how would you describe your creative self?

**EN:** I love sci-fi, with a little touch of eroticism.

**DAL:** Tell us about the picture that opens this interview, "Golden Woman", please?

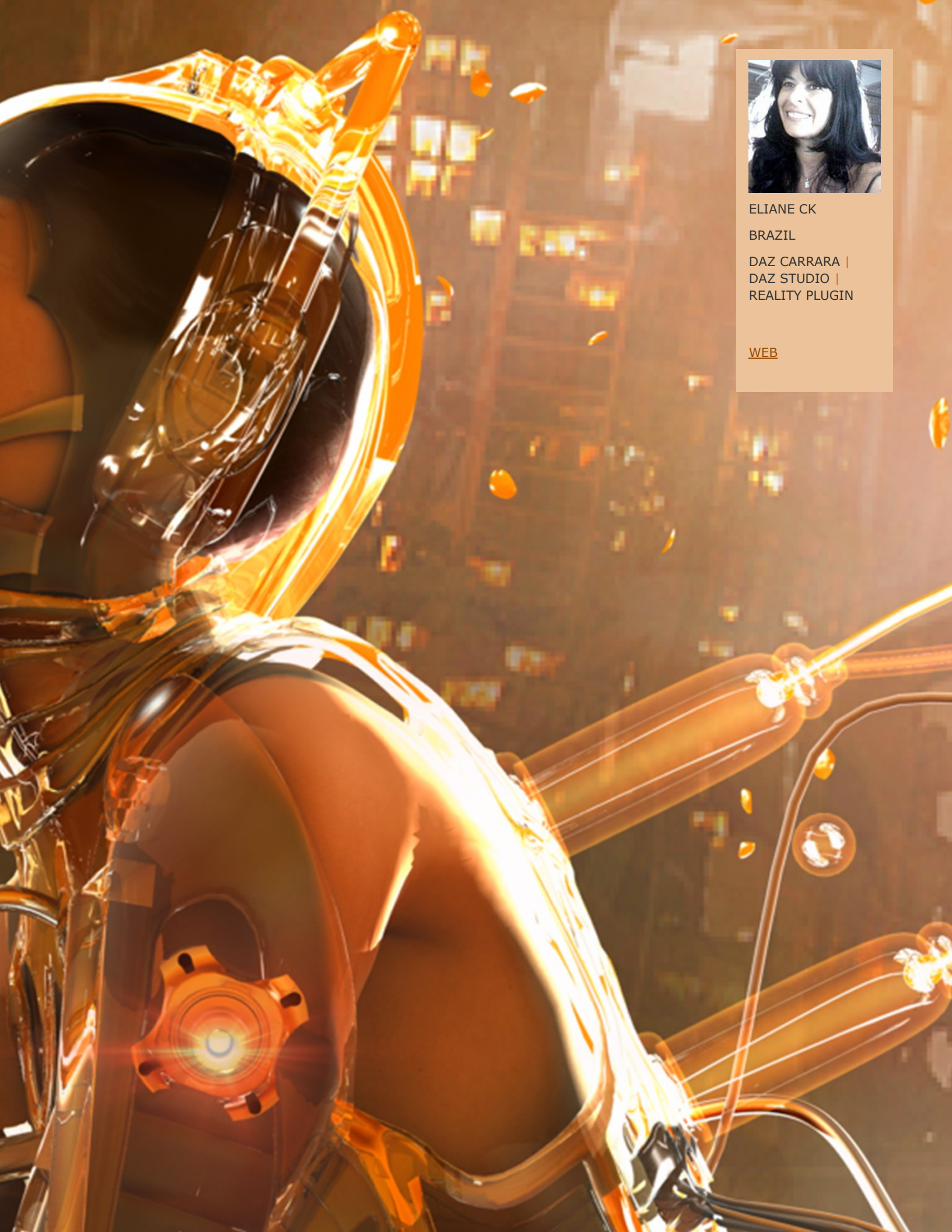
**AN:** "Golden Woman" is an older work of mine, from a time when I used the Carrara 3D program, which is still part of the DAZ family along with their flagship DAZ Studio software. All my works overlap with my previous works -- though each one was a new learning, a new light, a new technique or a new software.

The best word to define my style is: ELIANECK. In all these years I have heard many comments about my work, which was published without my signature, that are recognized by the style. Comments are of the type — "This is a 'genuine' ELIANECK.", or, "has the same style as ELIANECK." I don't wish to be boastful, but for many people my style is different and unique, easily recognised.

**Picture:** "Gold Woman" (2013)  
(detail). DAZ Carrara render.







ELIANE CK

BRAZIL

DAZ CARRARA |  
DAZ STUDIO |  
REALITY PLUGIN

WEB



**DAL:** In the past you've said: "there is no perfect 3D programme". As you've transitioned from being a DAZ Carrara expert to using the main DAZ Studio, do you still think that statement is still true for you? Or these days are you finding that DAZ Studio 4.x + Reality can do more and more of what you need?

**EN:** It's a fact that there is no perfect program. I always want more to be able to use more my creativity, and not to have the software get in the way.

**DAL:** What's your personal opinion of DAZ's new iRay renderer, compared to Reality?

**EN:** The Reality plugin is very good, in my opinion. But now Daz has innovated by putting the iRay render option within the DAZ Studio, which is Reality's competitor, and this made quality rendering much easier for the wider public.

**DAL:** Now that you've moved on from DAZ Carrara, might you be able to share the secret recipe for what you once called your "way" of "doing a render fast using Carrara"?

**EN:** Actually Carrara itself has the mechanism to render fast, there is no real secret — just let your imagination take over!

Many of my works have actually gone through two or three different software applications. So I finally learned after all these years that there is no perfect 3D program. What exists is the user's ability to transform their "mental image" in a digital result.

**DAL:** You also make creative work in non-rendered mediums. Your recent digital painted picture "Pink world of cats" (opposite column), for instance. Tell us about that 'digital painting' side of your creative work, please?

**EN:** I have always loved to draw, and I drew from an early age. Since as a kid I've loved to draw, and also loved to see illustrations and good scenes being depicted. My first art works were on paper using pencil, also in ink and crayons, until I discovered 3D art software.

These programs give me a chance to amplify my options, and to show my creativity. But in the case of this recent work in 2D, in my spare time I now do some sketches on my digital tablet, just to spend time in being creative.



**DAL:** And does that interest in painting feed into, or help, your mastery of 3D lighting? You're well enough known for your superb 3d lighting, for instance, to have recently been able to launch a popular set of iRay light presets at the online DAZ Store.

**EN:** Yes, I believe that always helps, I always loved lighting. Lighting has always been my biggest interest in my 3D work.

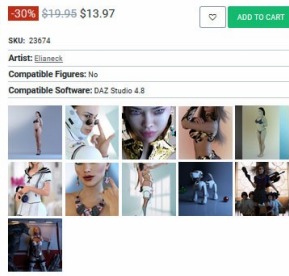
The secret is often just in simple observation. Many objects come to life with a certain light or shadow. You can brighten up a simple apple with a play of light and shadow and give the beholder feelings of sadness, joy or serenity.

For a long time now various people in the 3D world have asked me to shed light on my lighting methods. So the interest was very big, and then I decided to put some of my lights up for sale on the DAZ store.

**DAL:** I'm sure that they will be very popular there. Are you planning more saleable products at the DAZ Store?

**EN:** Yes, I already have my second package of DAZ Studio lights, which has just been released at the DAZ Store. This pack is titled the "Elianeck Lights Package 2" and it has 6 iRay Environments, 6 iRay Lights, and also 6 HDRI Maps.

Elianeck Lights Package for Iray



Eliane CK has two light sets for sale, over on the DAZ Store.

The first, the "Elianeck Lights Package for Iray" contains five light presets for DAZ Studio's iRay, plus a bonus light and 5 HDR maps.

The second pack has just been released and is titled the "Elianeck Lights Package 2". This new pack features six iRay Environments, six iRay Lights, and also six HDRI maps.

The picture seen opposite is the promotional render for the first pack of lights.

**Inset picture:** "Pink World of Cats".



ELIANECK



**DAL:** Super. Could you tell our readers how you set up a scene, in more detail, so as to get the best lighting? Perhaps you might use your "I need you" picture (below, centre)?

**EN:** Yes. This work was not rendered with the Reality plugin. This was actually a pure DAZ Studio render, in the default 3Delight renderer. Also, for this work I used only for HDR lighting, though I did change the robots a little. I tweaked the body shader to brighten them up.

Generally I do not use the light to the figure, I use the figure to light. The light tells more than the object itself, as I said before. The right texture, the choice of colors and reflection causes the lights to be used in a way that is much more enjoyed by the viewer.

**DAL:** Tell us more about the subject matter of your work, please? Most of it is erotic but not

actually explicit, and it's also very playful with its eroticism. Very little of it gets blocked by the "Adult content" filter at DeviantArt, for instance. Do you specifically try to make a picture that will be erotic, but which won't trigger the DeviantArt censor?

**EN:** I do not see my work as as 'erotic' as such. I believe that many people will see more in my pictures. But I try to balance the eroticism out, in a comfortable way, so that the picture can be seen without much censorship. My images are not direct. Each person sees or wants to see. A flower in a different place, a screw, a glow, a facial expression, a look, a reflection. Each image carries much more information that is only recognized if seen more than once. Most of the time what was seen at once becomes secondary when seen again, another detail why it attracts attention.





**DAL:** Where is your Japanese influence coming from? It's quite strong in your work, and seems to have become stronger over time. Do you have a big following in Japan? Japan is, of course, a place where both erotic art and doll art is more valued and is understood differently than it is in the English-speaking world. Or are you a big fan of certain types of Japanese art or popular culture? Or all of the above?

**EN:** I love the Japanese art and the potential of artists there -- either 2D or 3D -- I so have a fascination for their culture and art. In fact I have no control of my followers. Indeed, it is difficult to say if I have any followers or not! But I hope so!

**DAL:** How are your pictures, and your themes, understood in Brazil? What do people in Sao Paulo think of it, both the more mainstream

people and also the creative people?

**EN:** Here in Brazil, creative works made in 3D are not highly valued. Nor are they widespread. My work has always been directed to the public in other countries. Brazilian culture is very eclectic, there are many good artists — but unfortunately they are not as widespread as in other countries. I did not plan to be where I am today — my goal was never to 'go international' with my design work.

**DAL:** I read in another interview that one of your strong initial early artist influences was in fantasy art, art of the Boris Vallejo type, which I know has a strong following in the Latin world. How did you then make the move over to cyborgs and robots? Was there some strong influence that prompted the new subject matter?





**EN:** In my years of working only with "paper and pencil" Boris Vallejo was one of the artists who influenced me most, through his use of style, color and light. For those who don't know him, his works are fantasy; more in the realm of dragons, warriors and fighters. I think everyone who starts off creating in the 3D world, they begin with fantasy, and so it's logical to look at Boris. He made a big difference in the way people created fantasy portraits.

But I do not get jobs by working to a point of reference [of influence from other artists]. Rather, I will make work to please my own eyes. Usually I have only one idea, and during the work it turns into another image quite different from what I planned.

**DAL:** What part does technology play for you?

**EN:** We are connected 24 hours a day to some mechanism, whether a computer, mobile phone, tablet or even our cars. The fascination for technology affects us all. Machines that do not have feelings, and any robot in real life is manufactured for a specific function. I try to romanticise these situations, in my work.

**DAL:** I also sense there's an element of horror — as in, 'the horror genre' — underlying some of your work. There are a few obvious pictures by you which are in the genre, but I sense you're also slipping some of the horror genre into your more futuristic pictures, even though everything is shiny and there's actually no bug-eyed monsters or blood to be seen. Am I correct on that point?

**EN:** I do not only hold to the science fiction styles, though the genre is — of course — my favorite. But I do like to vary themes, some horror themes and other cuddly themes.

**DAZ:** Are people shocked by the eroticism?

**EN:** My erotic side is very strong. The human figure, whatever the sex, arouses the viewer an insight into each image particularly well. That may shock some viewers, but others will identify aspects of themselves.

**DAL:** And in a sense, many of your pictures are relatively tame compared to some of the more 'transgressive' aspects of popular culture, which count as mainstream media. Some of Lady Gaga's imagery, just as one mainstream instance. You've made several 3d portraits of her, such as the one we shown on the right.

**EN:** The colors, lighting, style and wardrobe of Lady Gaga videos are close to the type of images that exist in my mind. Lady Gaga's style is very similar to my style, I identified the figure mounted around this artist. The clothes, props, lighting and sensuality around Lady Gaga comes pretty close to my style.

**DAL:** So you're now nearly '10 years in' to making your digital art. Has anyone approached you with the idea of a book and/or staging a solo gallery show with big prints?

**EN:** My works have been exposed in several countries, including the United States. But in none of these countries was there an actual gallery exhibition.

**DAL:** What do you have planned for the future? Projects, new themes, new ideas to explore?

**EN:** Right now I'm focused on doing my lights for DAZ Studio. I can create new things for the people of the 3D world, who are always asking me for more. And I also need to also keep up with the development of my creative process. I am always learning new techniques and looking for new challenges.

**DAL:** What tips would you give to someone starting out in 3D art, who wanted to make high-quality science fiction art, perhaps with erotic elements?

**EN:** For creative people there will always be place. My advice to those who begin in this area is to try to overcome a challenge every day. In a 3D movie I once heard the apt phrase, "If you only do what you know, will never be more than you are now". New artists should think about that.

**DAL:** That's great. Well, thanks very much. We wish you all the best.

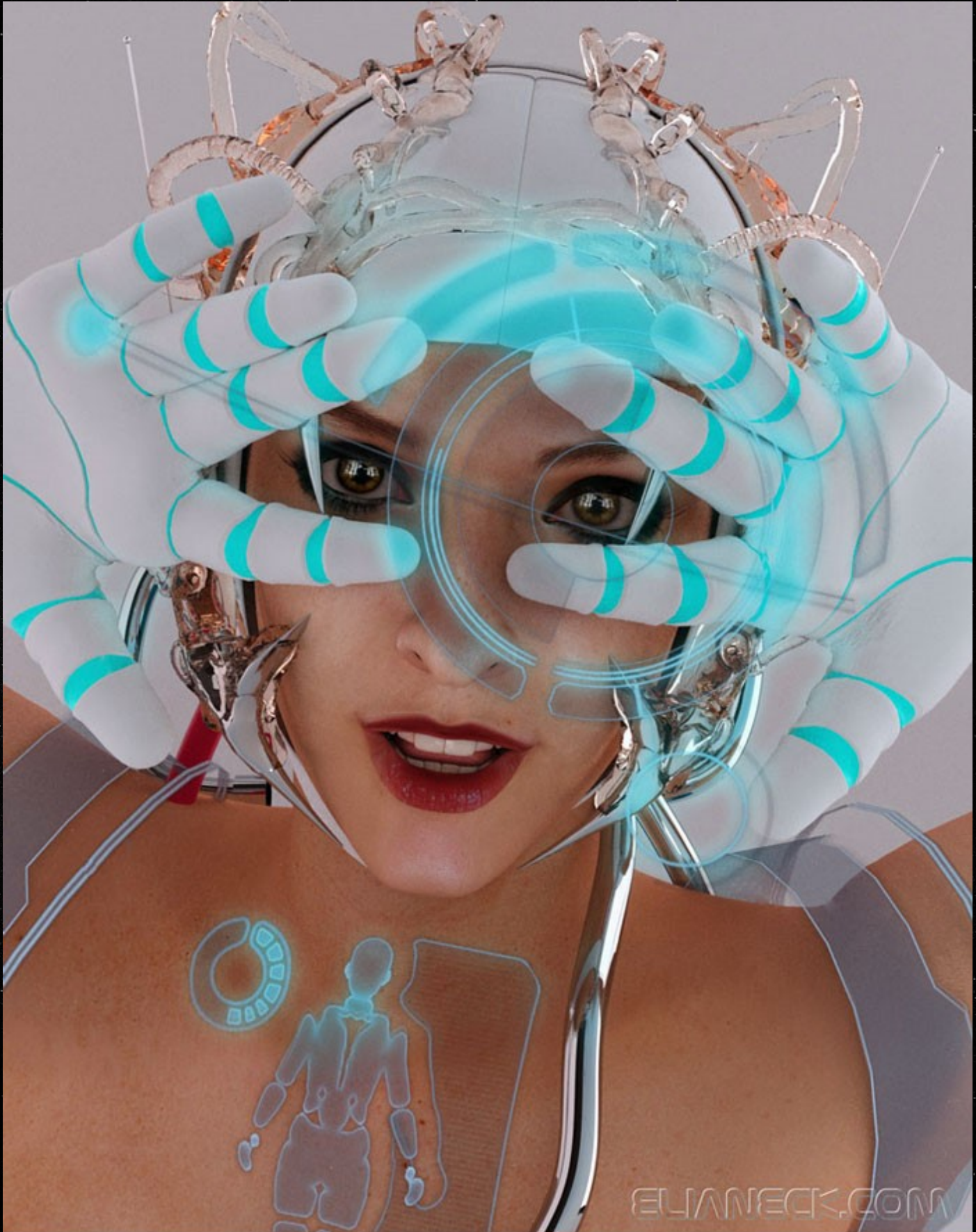
Picture: "Cyber-GAGA".





Eliane CK is online at:

<http://elianeck.com/> and <http://elianeck.deviantart.com/>



**Pictures:** "Gold Woman" (in full), right. "Blue Face" (this page).





ELIANECK





ANDERS PASSGARD

SWEDEN

POSER | VUE |  
REALITY PLUGIN |  
PHOTOSHOP

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# ANDERS PLASGAARD

Picture: "Monotonia".

Anders Plasgaard is a 3D artist from Stockholm, Sweden. We talked with him about his urban explorations, distressed textures, religion in art, the new Poser 11, and — of course — his amazing pictures of cyborgs!





**DAL:** Anders, welcome to *Digital Art Live* magazine. First, could you tell us how you first became interested in 3D digital art?

**AP:** Thanks, My first contact with 3D was a simple ball. I made that with my Amiga computer, way back in time — and it took three days to render. But the real first experience was a free copy of Poser 2 which came free

with a magazine. I had already worked a bit in 2D at that time, but 3D opened a whole new world for me.

**DAL:** Yes, I think those early free copies of Poser reached a lot of people. It'll be interesting to see if Poser return to that successful model in the near future. So what do you currently use to make your pictures?



**AP:** I use Poser 11 Pro, Vue Complete 15, Zbrush 4.7, DAZ Studio 4.8, Cinema 4D 9, and Photoshop CC. Also Sony and Canon Cameras and a Wacom tablet.

**DAL:** Talk us through the themes you have in the range of your visual work, please. Obviously, with this being our 'cyber humans' special issue, we're focussing somewhat on that topic. But you have a much wider range than that.

**AP:** I would say that sci-fi or 'dystopic cyber' is my main theme. But I also do a lot of dark art with a little twist. I have a love for broken, gritty and rusty details. I also do quite a lot of photography and used to have a part in a photo portrait studio, so sometimes I just feel like rendering portraits too. I've started to do some animation for my music, too — and that's a field that I want to explore more and hopefully I'll make some short cyborg movies in the future.

**DAL:** Yes, you're very much into music. Does that influence your style and subject matter? Is there a particular style of music, for instance, which has developed an aesthetic that feeds into your work?

**AP:** Well music and the visual arts are *so* related for me. I write, produce and record music too, and the songs and the art often go hand-in-hand. Some of my art is pretty dark, and when I am in that mood the song I write tends to be dark too.

When I create I often listen to hard rock or industrial metal, but I like softer music too. Aggressive music can be stressful for some people — but it's the opposite way for me. I get calm and focused when I listen to metal music, and I think it all blends together when I'm in a certain mood, listen to the right kind of music and create visual art.

**DAL:** So I hear that you do quite a lot of album covers, rock concert posters and suchlike?

**AP:** I used to do a lot of covers from scratch, but nowadays I mostly sell pictures instead. Making a cover from scratch is *such a lot* of

work, and I also have hard to find time for it. I work as IT-Coordinator during the daytime, so I do all my visual work in the evening, 'till late in the night.

But I'll do covers again if the concept and the money is right. I know a lot of people in the music business, but there's not much money in music anymore and the bands are struggling with really tight budgets. Unfortunately, that means less money for cover art.

**DAL:** Do you feel any influence from Sweden itself — from the landscapes and the seasons there, the Swedish people's cultural worldview, the architecture and art history?

**AP:** I'm not sure, but maybe the long dark winters *have* influenced my interest in making darker art. I think growing up during the Cold War, in which Sweden being so close to East Europe and the Iron Curtain, have influenced me more. I grew up near a military base and I used to watch the fighter jets a lot, and I still have a fascination with military stuff.



I am also a so-called "Urban Explorer" and love to find new abandoned places to explore. I take a lot of photos of places like that, and use them as elements in my textures and pictures. This has led to an interest in industrial history, and I have visited most of the industrial sites left in Sweden and a lot of abandoned industries in the rest of Europe too.

**DAL:** Wow, that must be very exciting. And, as you say, stimulating for your art.



Pictures: "Portrait of  
Anders with goggles",  
and the early picture  
"Almost Human".





**AP:** Abandoned industries, their structures, have a dark mood that I find very beautiful and I think it goes hand in hand with sci-fi and futuristic cyber.

**DAL:** Yes, I think immediately of a sci-fi movie from Eastern Europe, Tarkovsky's famous *Stalker*. Tell our readers about your picture "Monotonia", please, which is the picture that opens this interview. I like this a lot, and it seems to have something to say about the sort of political situation you grew up in. It's also a very pleasing composition, and the subtle colouring is perfect. And it's very seldom I've seen that 'comic-book look' done so well and so subtly. Could you talk us through how it was made?

**AP:** The idea for this scene is a futuristic version of the fall of the Berlin Wall, the infamous wall which prevented East Germans from escaping. I started off with the characters in Poser, and

then made some headwear in Zbrush. I also made the buildings in Zbrush and imported it all to Vue.

In the next step I placed and duplicated both buildings and characters, until I was pleased with the scene's composition.

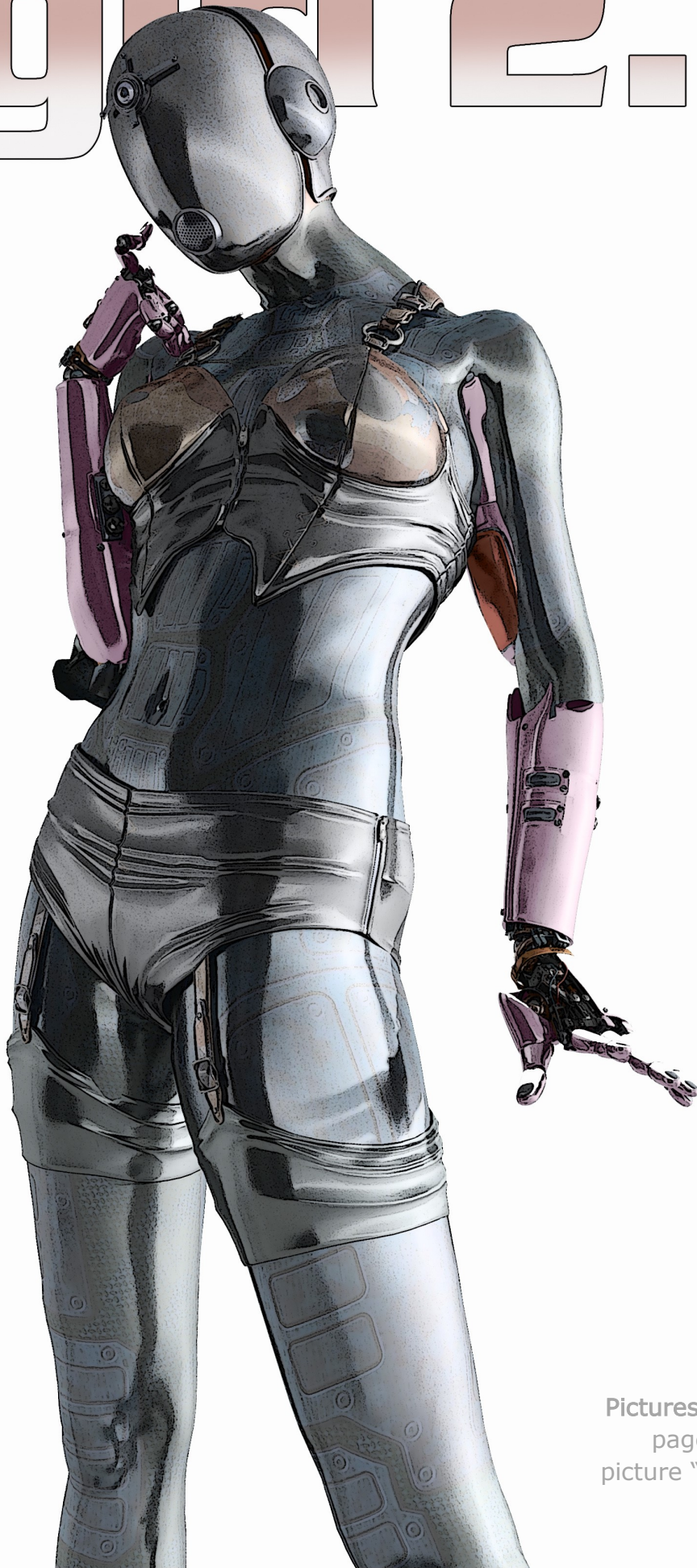
After that I did some small test renders with different atmosphere, of the type that Vue can apply very easily. I remember that the scene was pretty heavy on my computer with all these meshes in it.

I can't remember all the steps I then did in Photoshop, but there's a lot of blending layers with different filters like Oil Filter and Poster Edges involved, to get the comic book look. I also added noise and some fog. I often use some of my photos of grit and rust as soft overlays too. So that is probably involved at some stage.





# i-girl 2.0



Pictures: "iGirl 2.0" (this page); and the early picture "201" (opposite).



The final steps was the colouring and some dodge and burn in Photoshop.

**DAL:** So tell us about how your early cyber pictures emerged? What attracted you to the theme? And what made you follow it through, and test how far the theme could go?

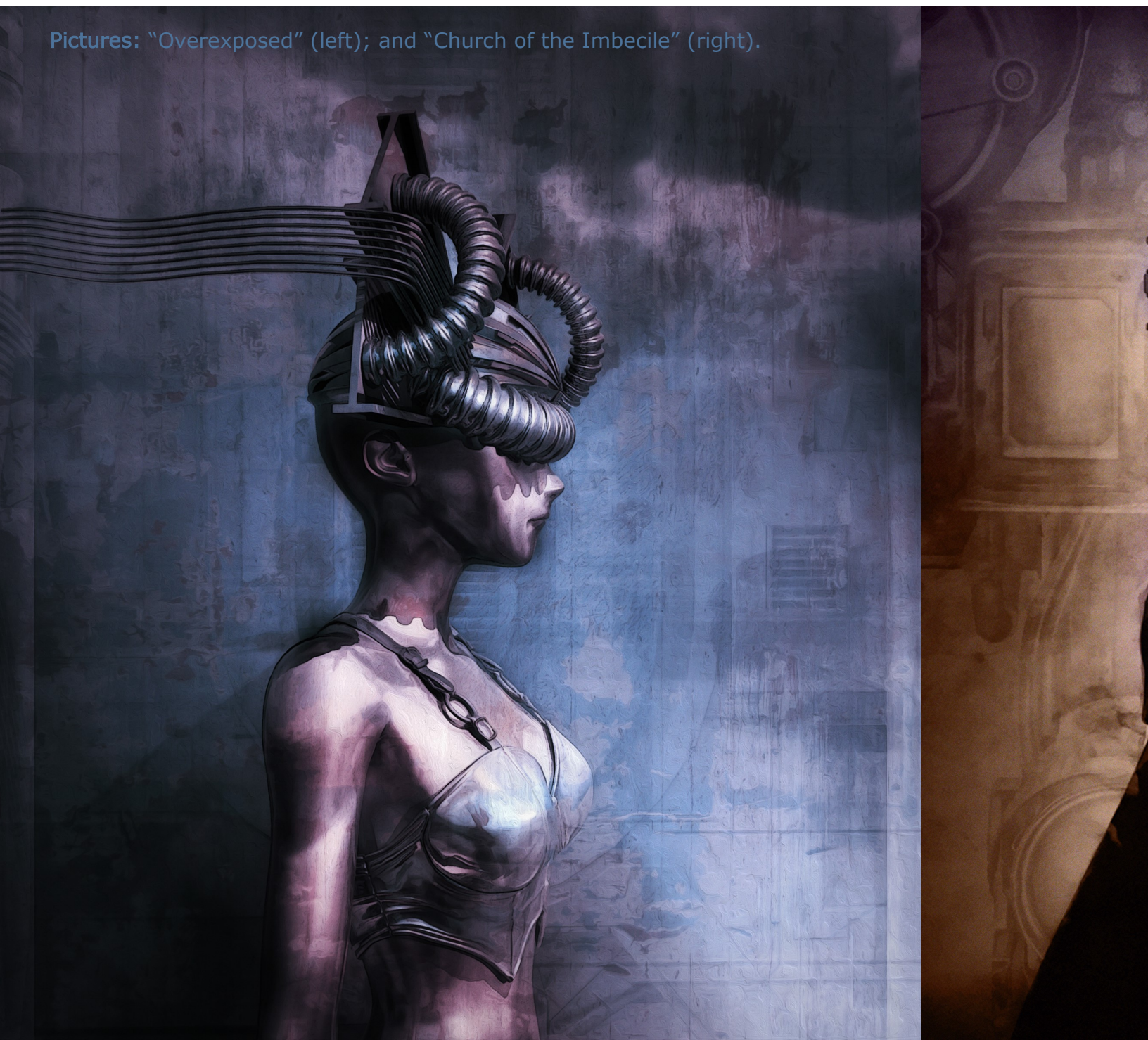
**AP:** I can't really say where it came from, but I've always liked Hajime Sorayama, H.R. Geiger (*Alien*) and similar art. And one of the movies that had most impact on me is *Bladerunner*. I recently watched it again and it strikes me every time how fantastic the lights and

environments are considering that it's done in an era before computer graphics. I also used to draw and paint robots, so that theme came very natural to me.

**DAL:** And your cyber pictures have become much more sophisticated over the years. I'm very impressed by pictures such as "Church of the Imbecile", for instance, which we show below. Could you tell us more about this one, please? Both the symbolism and the production technique.

**AP:** The symbolism isn't pointed to a certain

**Pictures:** "Overexposed" (left); and "Church of the Imbecile" (right).





religion. It's more of a general statement, that so many people put their blind faith in something so abstract. They put their lives and beliefs in something that can't be proved, and has caused more pain and war to the world than anything else.

I don't say that it's wrong to believe in God or to have spiritual beliefs. I just think organised religions have too much power over people and are the cause of much misery.

The production technique in "Church of the Imbecile" started with a very plain Firefly

render in Poser, with a white background. I used the Cyborg V4 and Ravier Suit from DAZ, combined with a couple of props. The rest is made with layers in Photoshop. Some of my photos of grit, and the usual dodge and burn for shadows and highlight. I blended in an artistic filter in Filterforge, if I remember correctly.

**DAL:** More recently you have made a couple of nature pictures, "Abandoned Earth" and "Flower Princess", which we show overleaf. Might these signal a new direction in your work, toward nature?





Picture: "Meditation at the Power-Plant".









**AP:** Most of my art has some kind of futuristic theme and I found that I wanted to make some pictures where nature has taken over. I'm not sure it will mean that I will my direction change too much, but I think I will integrate more nature in some of my art. I'm quite fascinated by the way nature takes over an abandoned factory for example and I think you will see more of that in my art.

**DAL:** Yes, nature is quite amazing at healing a place, I like in what in the 1970s was one of the most polluted industrialised cities in Europe. Nearly 50 years later, it's incredibly green, full of trees, wildlife returning, and is probably one of the greenest cities in the UK. There's definitely a story for science and science-fiction to tell, about such remarkable transitions. Talking of which, what science fiction has inspired you recently?

**AP:** Oh, three movies comes to my mind right away. *Chappie*, which is South African movie about a robotized Police Force with a robot with a great soul. The usual story between good-and-bad, but a really good one. *Ex Machina* has a bit of a different story, about humanoids with artificial intelligence. Also the wonderful Japanese feature animation *Space Pirate Captain Harlock*. Beautiful use of CG graphics in that one.

**DAL:** *Harlock* was a lot of fun, I saw it twice. So, specifically, how have your output methods changed from the early days — in terms of rendering via Poser or Vue, and finishing using Photoshop?

**AP:** I am actually rendering more in Poser now than I have in the past 10 years. For a long time I mainly set up files in Poser and then exported to Vue for rendering. But nowadays I do a lot of renders in the Reality plugin for Poser too. I haven't really dug in to the possibilities in SuperFly yet, which is the new realistic render option in Poser 11, but I will try it out when I find time.

**DAL:** It's definitely worth trying, even for those who only have a CPU to render on. Our Poser 11 Pro review a couple of issues ago looked at

it, in depth. So are you still happy with Poser as a production tool, in 2016?

**AP:** Yes I am. I still find it so easy to quickly set up a scene when I have an idea, and with Poser's integration with Zbrush I can quickly do the morphs I want. I have done a few renders in DAZ Studio too but for me DS is more a point-and-click tool and I prefer the workflow in Poser. I guess it's because I've used Poser for so long and it feels like a natural tool for me.

**DAL:** Yes, I think most people will have both, since DAZ Studio is free and Poser Standard is fairly affordable, and use them for slightly different things.

**DAL:** Do you have any other digital interests you'd like to talk about? 3d modelling?

**AP:** I like 3D modelling when it's fast and intuitive. Over the years I've done some modelling in Cinema 4D and Rhino, but my favourite tool for modelling is Zbrush and it's just getting better and better. I mostly do strange headwear and helmets for my characters and Zbrush is perfect for that.

**DAL:** Finally, if you were to give three tips to emerging 3D artists, what would they be?

**AP:** Spend a lot of time learning the tools, and find a workflow that works for you. Find your own unique style. It's very easy these days to just use presets, but go beyond that and create what's really *you*. But most of all stay curious and have fun. My best art comes when I don't try too much and just let the imagination guide me.

**DAL:** Great, well thanks very much for the interview. We wish you well!

**AP:** Thanks, I'm glad you're interested in my small part of this universe, and wish you the same!

**Anders Plassgard is online at:**

[plassgard.deviantart.com/](http://plassgard.deviantart.com/)

[www.abandonedearth.com/](http://www.abandonedearth.com/)





Picture: "Flower Princess".





C y b e r i z e d

© Anders Plassgard



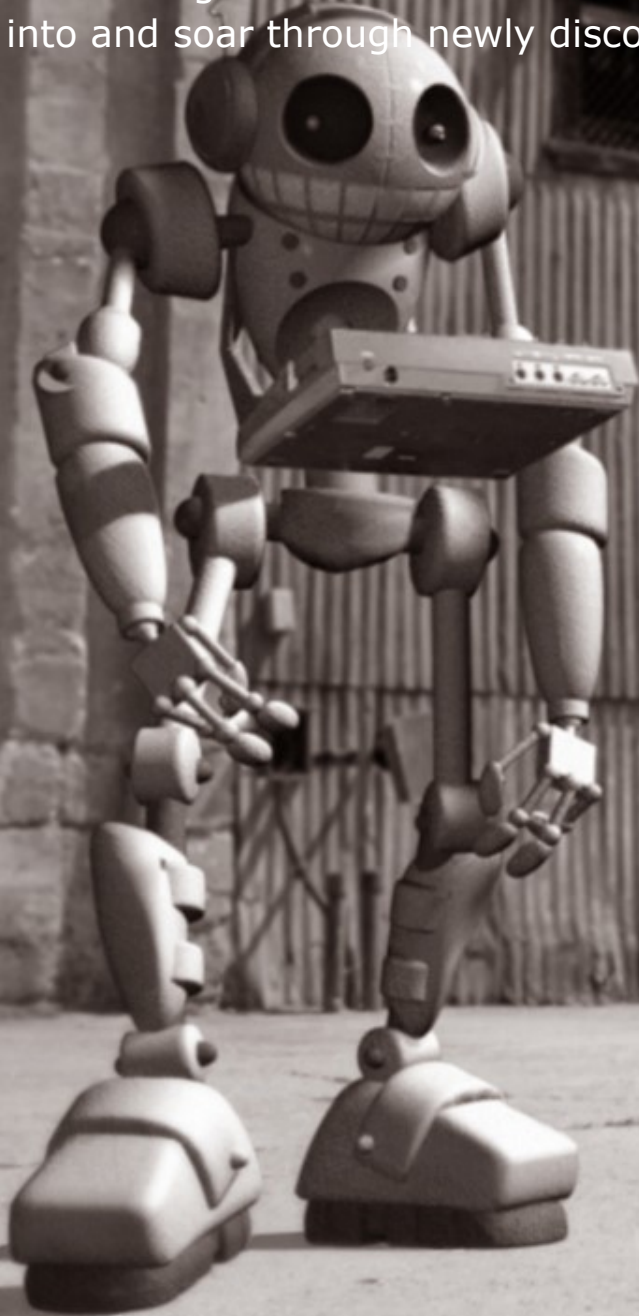
Pictures: "Meditation" and  
"Cyberized", both by Anders  
Plasgaard.





# GALLERY

Since the 1920s robots and cyborgs have been associated with the 'mad scientist' goggles and headsets often worn by their creators. Naff and clunky though today's early VR headsets are, they still evoke something of that old pulp idea of the visionary scientist — the one with the power to 'act at a distance' through his control of robots or intangible forces, to see into and soar through newly discovered dimensions...



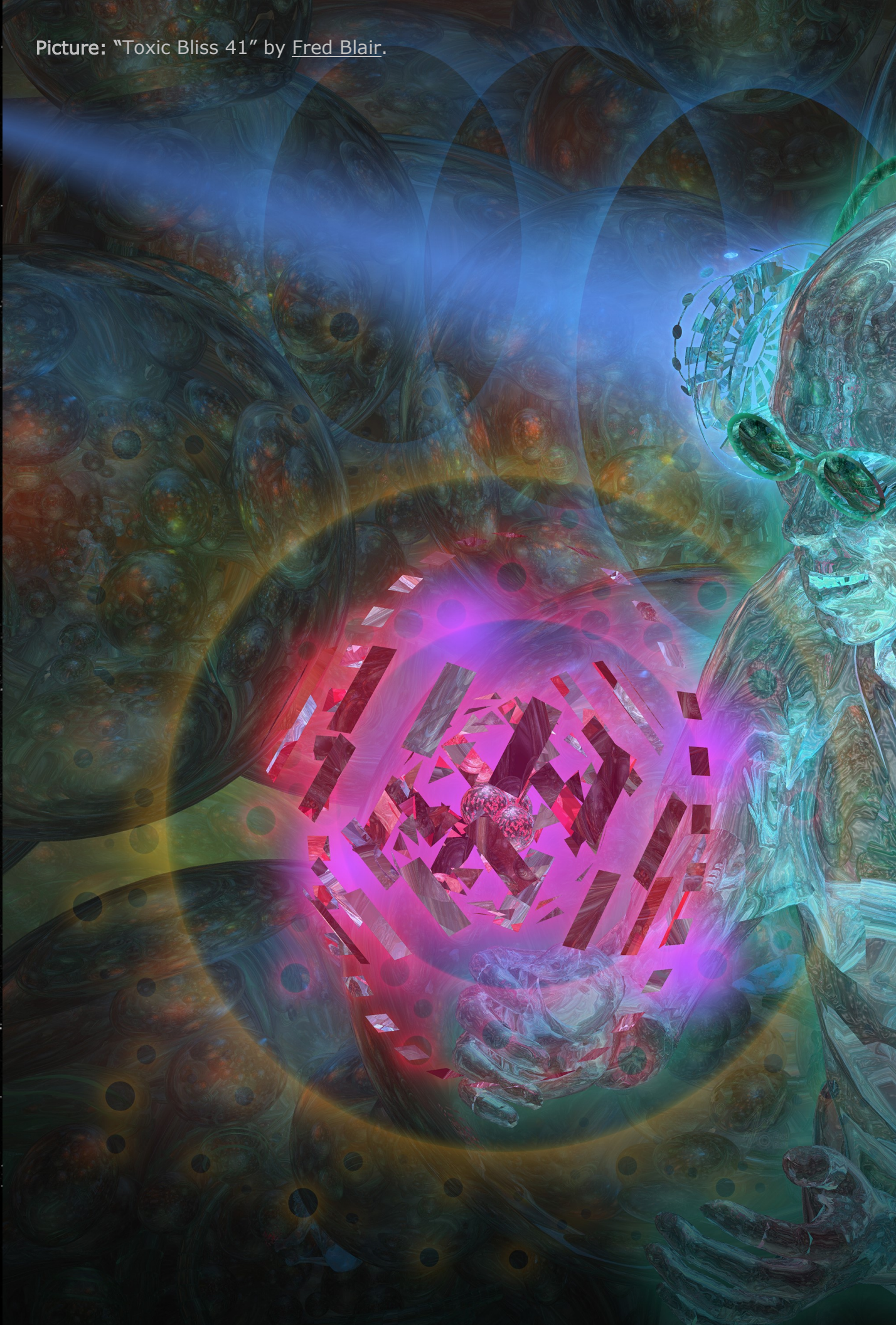




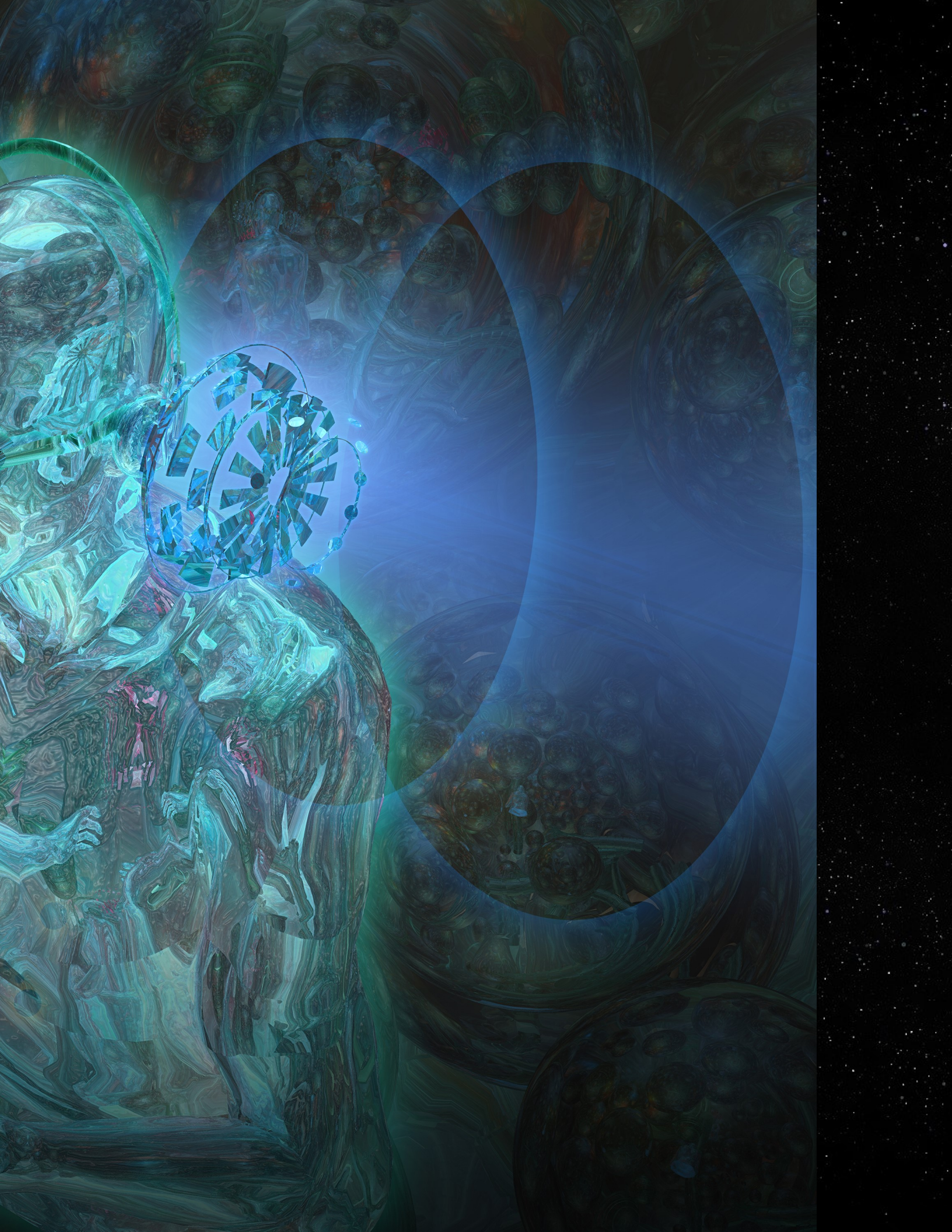
Picture: Doctor Phineas Waldorf Steel seen with his Robot Band, early 2000s.



Picture: "Toxic Bliss 41" by [Fred Blair](#).









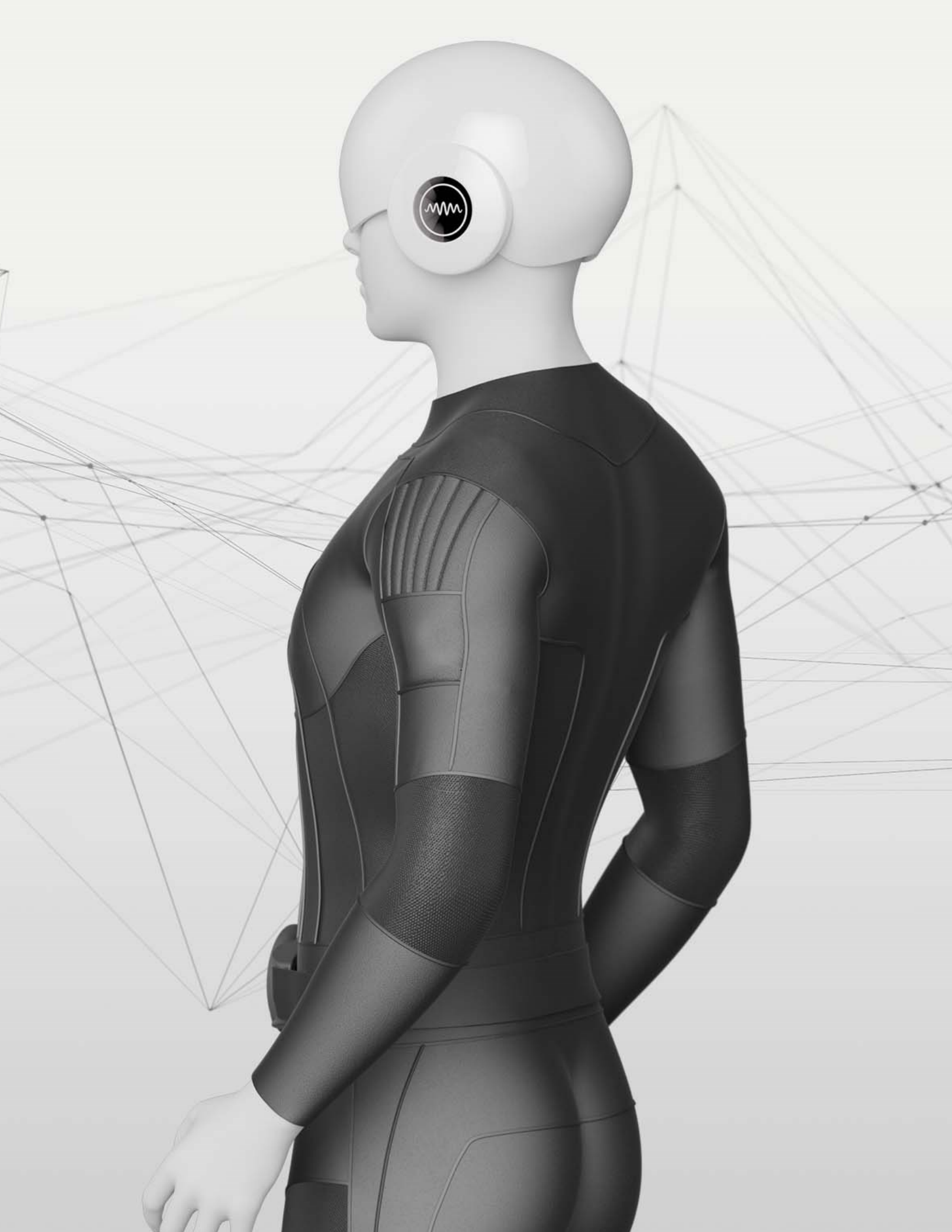






Pictures: "Poly-dynamics" (opposite) and "Cipher" by Maxime des Touches.







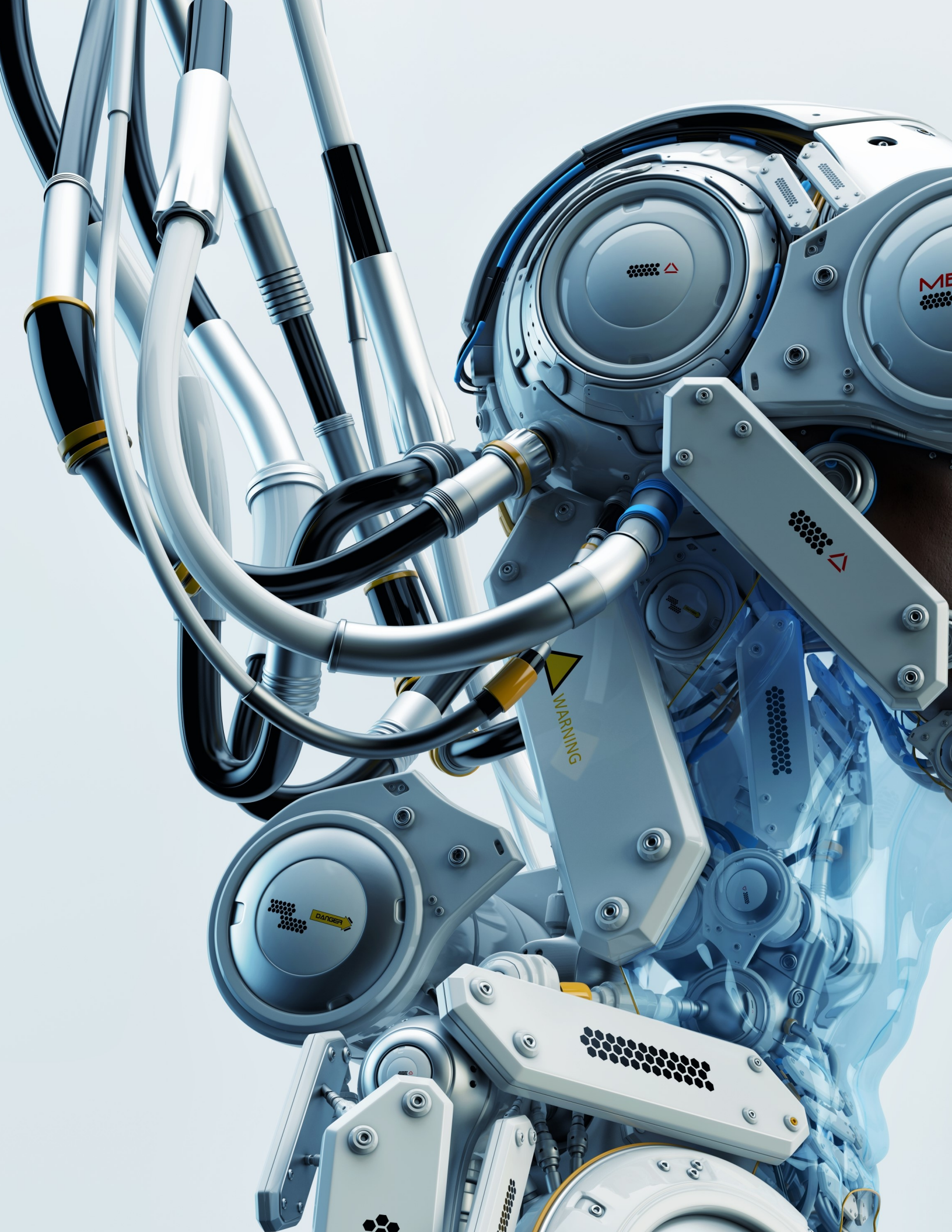
**Pictures:** The Teslasuit was a design and tested prototype for the world's first full 'body smart' textile tactile feedback suit, a suit that lets you feel the virtual reality. Despite the recent failure of its ambitious Kickstarter campaign, the Teslasuit successfully set the tone for VR suit design and has captured the attention of the world's media. The introductory DK Teslasuit Pioneer is modular and upgradable, with 32 points of body contact, and takes advantage of all the

R&D that has been poured into scuba diving and hi-tech sportswear kits over the decades. Teslasuit stimulates the human body, evoking a range of sensations from touch, virtual hug, even heat and cold. 52 points of contact would have been added to the retail version. Despite its lack of Kickstarter success, similar cyber-suits cannot be more than a few years from retail, if VR headsets are a success.

[www.teslasuit.com](http://www.teslasuit.com)











There are already a number of real-world Robotic Surgery Systems, which can be operated remotely by surgeons — who may be located many miles away, or even on another continent. There are even autonomous robot surgery systems, whose manufacturers have been very optimistic about their capabilities, and sometimes rightly so. But the likelihood — for any procedure beyond the routine — is that man and machine will operate together in many cyber-surgery situations. We will increasingly see cyber-doctors who don goggles and sensor-gloves that link them in real-time with robotic surgery machines in hospitals around the planet.

In time, it may be that non-invasive diagnosis is also undertaken in much the same way. Instead of a patient in Uganda hearing "the doctor will Skype you now", they may hear that "the doctor will robo-diagnose you now" — inside the VR unit which a U.N. medi-drone just landed outside the remote regional hospital.

Much of the R&D for such technologies has already been heavily invested in. First by the military for remote aid to our battlefield soldiers. Then by national health-services in co-operation with commercial makers of robotic surgery units. Mass production of consumer VR and AR headsets in 2016-2020 may even feed into lowered costs in the remote health sector, making it simple for a hospital consultant to make a preliminary inspection of a patient 'in' the office of a humble general practitioner.

Alongside this high-end VR technology we will see the rise of the medical exo-skeleton market. Making the whole body frame into a strong cyborg, these cyber-frames will have the potential to not only instantly transfer eyesight and touch to another place, but to transfer the precise configuration of the whole body to a remote humanoid robot.

**Picture:** Seen left is [Vladislav Ociacia's](#) visualisation of a future cyber medic. Part robot, part organic, part autonomous exo-skeleton. In many parts of the world in 2100, he may come to be seen as the preferable option to a human doctor.

**D.F**

**DRAGONFLY  
MEDIC DRON**

CONCEPT DESIGN  
BY VLADISLAV OCIACIA  
PRODUCER OF PROJECT  
ANGEL ALEKSANDRA







74

F 87.2%  
BR 49.6



VR will also start to interface with the much-hyped Internet of Things and also with Augmented Reality. We can imagine new types of hybrid games that will seamlessly switch a headset from Virtual to Augmented Reality on-the-fly, and back again. Imagine the tried-and-trusted form of the tabletop board game, brought alive as a playable story with AR elements and board pieces, but with unlockable VR 'episodes' ("VR-odes"?) in different parts of the board, into which you can 'fly' in VR — *if* you land on the winning square.

**Picture:** detail from a promotional picture for [NVIDIA GameWorks VR](#).









There have long been worries about the 'addictive' nature of videogames, and anyone who has played a super-compelling game such as *Plants vs. Zombies* knows there may be some truth in that. But such addictive games tend to be rather simple and formulaic, and so we quickly tire of them. Huge virtual worlds may well entice people to spend entire days exploring them, perhaps to the neglect of their humdrum real-world life. But society has already had a long discussion about such matters, during the height of worlds such as *Second Life* and *World of Warcraft*. We have

become more relaxed about such virtual worlds, and generally agree that pretending to be a giant three-headed Fire-Fairy for five hours at a stretch is not all bad for most people. Certainly no worse, and perhaps more sociable, than watching a double-bill of mediocre TV movies for five hours. Of course, it may be that a tiny minority will always take VR too far. But they are probably the same people who — if they had no VR world — would lose themselves in a religion or in reading escapist fiction all day.

Picture: "Reality" by [Eran Fowler](#).





It seems likely that, for at least the first three years, most VR games will need to be simple and relatively unsophisticated. This will be due to the primitive nature of the VR headsets, and the lack of refined skills among the game and VR experience developers.

But the simplicity of such games is likely to be a useful creative constraint, forcing designers and creatives to find new stylised and 'shorthand' methods of indicating content, space and movement — while still engaging the player and convincing them they are in a 'real' navigable world.

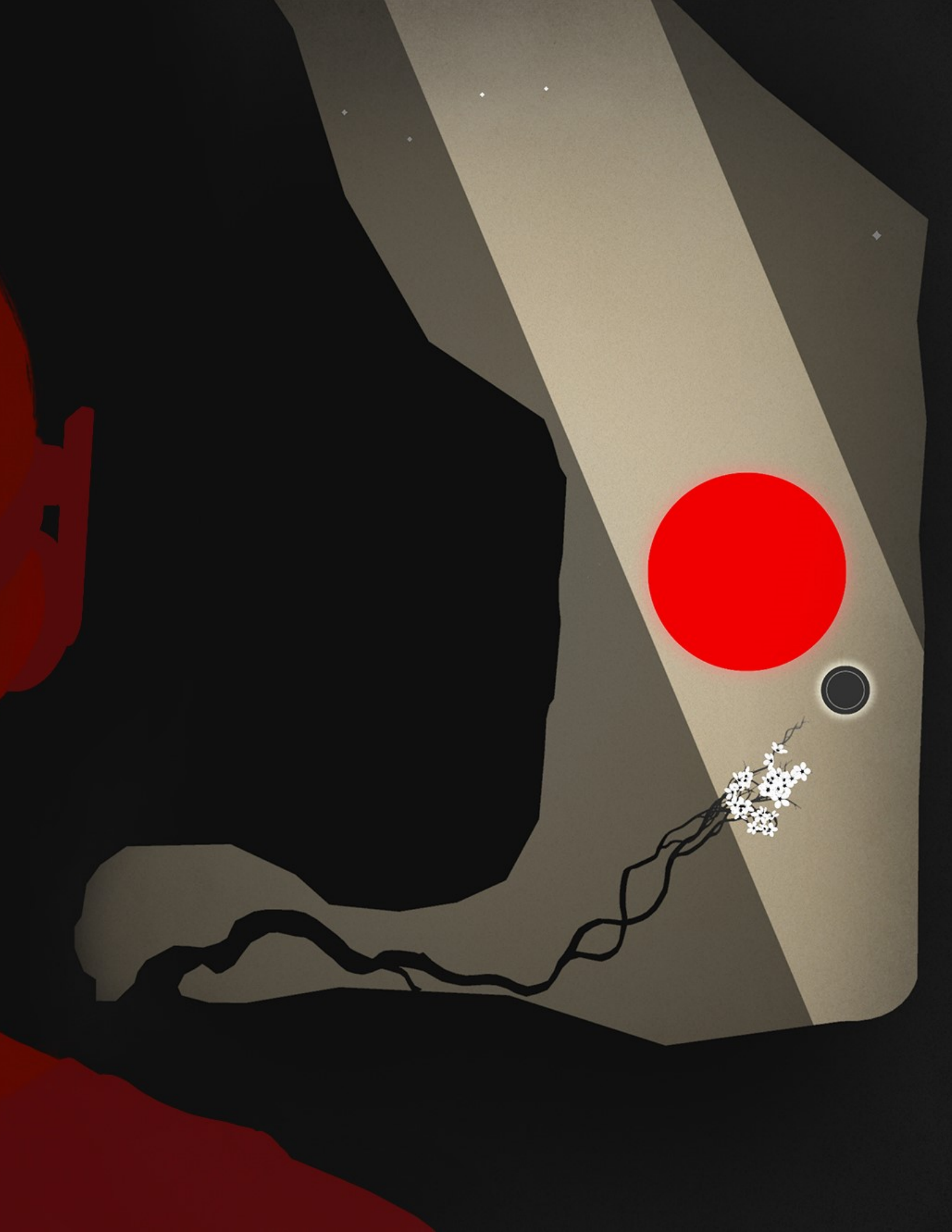
Art-games such as *Prune* (by Joel McDonald (*Prune* seen here as a screenshot paired with a silhouette of a Oculus Rift VR headset seen from behind)) seem to point the way to a new simple elegance in VR game-world design.

Even in limited games immersion can be greatly enhanced by the clever use of sound. We expect that VR developers will likely call on all the audio tricks and techniques that AAA videogame developers have used over the past two decades. No doubt they will also invent a few new ones of their own.

**Picture:** a Photoshop combination of graphic elements kindly supplied by Joel McDonald and Oculus VR.









2D

# DIGITAL ART LIVE's GUIDE TO

## CHEAP

ESTATE AGENT VR — showing space for sale via a photo-panorama VR 'bubble' in a phone and Google Cardboard. Basic ability to change time of day?

SCHOOLS VR — simple educational VR as a photo-panorama VR 'bubble', which limited hotspots to trigger audio prompts and progress to a new space.

PRESENTATIONAL VR — Microsoft Powerpoint done as an amateurish-looking VR space, with bullet-points hanging on VR walls, and spinning clipart. The presenter's voice drones on and on...

NAVIGATIONAL VR — interfaces with car, sat-nav or phone to guide you to a destination — or to familiarise you with a place or building before you visit.

NEWS REPORTING VR — showing space where a news incident happened — via a photo-panorama VR 'bubble' with audio overlays.

SOCIAL MEDIA VR — show your kid's birthday party on Facebook as a photo-panorama VR 'bubble' — click on faces to show names and the gifts they gave! The gifts appear above people's heads as interactive 3D VR game objects, supplied free by the makers.

HYBRID VR / AUGMENTED 'AR' — guided retail store purchase experiences, using headsets that switch on-the-fly between VR and AR (augmented reality) to better show and explain the product to the buyer. The system learns from previous decision data and bio-feedback monitoring of purchasers.

ENTERTAINMENT VR — immersive films, movies, theatre and theme-park experiences. Possible addition of audience configurable virtual actors — 'choose your cast' as well as 'choose your ending type'.

HERITAGE VR — guided theme-park like experiences of the world's great historic places, buildings and landscapes, faithfully recreated down to the last pebble. Just don't stray off the tourist route, because they didn't recreate that bit...

TRAINING VR — training in specific tasks and processes. Somewhat passive — you can get it wrong in *multiple* ways, but have to keep trying the exact *same tasks* until you get it right!

## PASSIVE

3D





# THE FUTURE VR INDUSTRY

EXPENSIVE

**EXERCISE VR** — Hi-res VR headsets that work with expensive treadmills, scented air-fans, tactile cybersuits and more. Walk or fly the Grand Canyon from your living room, with the aid of online 360-degree photography or even a camera fed from a rented real-time drone that you control! Then relax with a visit to a sensual VR gambling-dome...

**STATE VR** — Forensically detailed photo-VR of space for use by police, military and city planners. Able to geo-locate and overlay both real-time and archival Big Data, as well as autonomously pick out and isolate novel patterns in that data. Able to be easily used in courtrooms and police investigations. These systems interface with a host of databases.

**SIMPLE SOCIALISING VR** — Complex 2D/3D multi-user virtual worlds like *Second Life*, enabled via low-poly 3D meshes with 2D textures and streaming audio.

**PURE SEX VR** — Expensive personal VR systems, cyber-suits and kit. Purely focussed on one purpose only — the realistic simulation of specialised desires leading to sexual fulfillment.

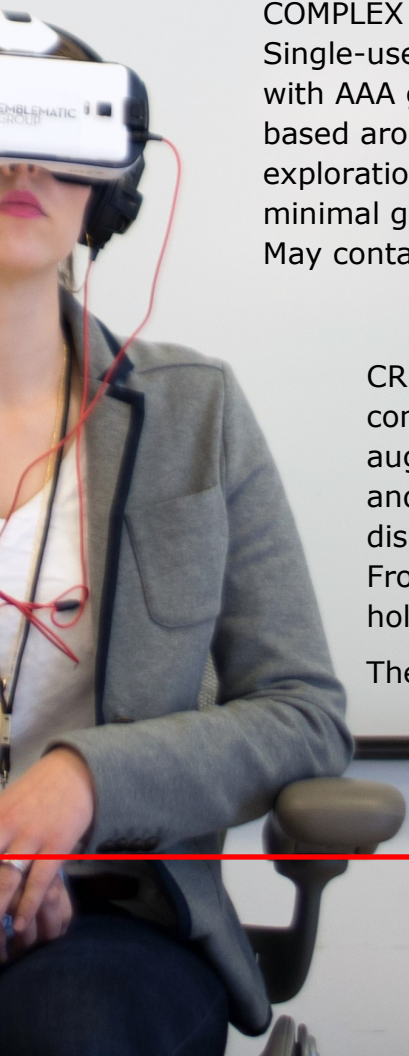
**COMPLEX RELAXATION VR** — Single-user virtual worlds with AAA game quality, based around meditative exploration, relaxation and minimal game elements. May contain cute ponies...

**COMPLEX ACTION VR** — Single-user and co-op virtual worlds with AAA game quality, based around fast and violent masculine action-game genres and complex 'very hard' gaming. May contain pimply teen boys whining about 'lag'.

**CREATIVE VR** — artists use a combination of VR and augmented reality to shape and control large-scale 3D displays in the real world. From light/audio shows to holographic actors on stage. The rise of the elite VR-DJ.

**INDUSTRIAL DESIGN VR** — highly complex, detailed and interactive design work in real-time, with on-the-fly production, shaping and texturing of virtual objects — and the application of real physics to all of these.

INTERACTIVE







# Digital Art LIVE

*The Next*

# IMAGIN

Our pick of the hottest inspirational art and science. Make your imagination LIVE!



With sci-fi and “Starman”-era David Bowie styles prominent on the fashion catwalks at London Fashion Week and New York Fashion Week, it seems timely to recommend the free hi-tech fashion documentary *The Next Black: A Film About The Future of Clothing*. The film examines the near-future convergence of fabric, design and technologies. The documentary makers secured access to some of the biggest names in the business, such as StudioXO and Adidas, as well as to small startup firms using microbes and fungi to 'grow' their futuristic fabrics. The film is officially available in full and for free [on Vimeo](#).

For more creative fashion film — and yes, “fashion film” is now a thing, apparently — take a look at [SHOWstudio.com](#), a website dedicated to bringing the two forms together in creative ways. Mostly they just look like slightly ‘experimental’ pop videos with superb wardrobes and lighting — but we especially enjoyed their parodic over-the-top “[Evening in Space](#)” sci-fi video and Alexander McQueen’s goth-tech “[Black: 2015](#)”.

THE NEXT BLACK

ARIUM

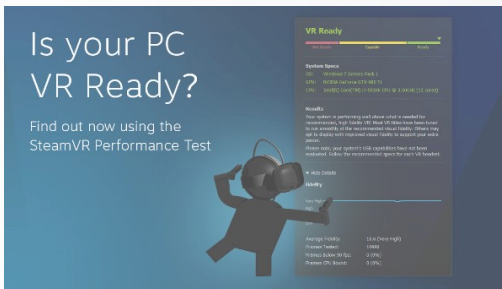
Picture: Lady Gaga’s bubble-blowing dress, seen being made in the film *The Next Black*.





From the mind of Chris Roberts, creator of classic PC space games *Wing Commander* and *Freelancer*, comes his new game ***Star Citizen***. 100% crowd-funded with \$108m, four studios and 300 people are now working to realise the vision of a massively multiplayer online (MMO) space sim for the PC. And, of course, the game makers aim to support VR virtual reality in "all major headsets" by the end of 2016.

[www.robertsspaceindustries.com](http://www.robertsspaceindustries.com)



The popular gaming platform Steam has just released **free software** that will test if your PC is VR ready or not. Many won't be, especially those without a high-end slot-in gaming graphics card.

Just keep in mind that Steam may also try to sell you their own \$799 SteamVR HTC Vive VR headset, which is due to ship in April 2016.

Expect more such free VR performance testing software to enter the market soon.



**Microsoft HoloLens** (above) is shipping its \$3,000 Development Edition to content developers at the start of April 2016. The retail version is likely to be around \$900, given that it's a completely enclosed standalone computer plus storage. The HoloLens lays holographic images, interfaces and animated avatars over your real life environment and lets you interact with them. Much of the depth-sensing R&D has



Interested in the art and craft of cyber-reality design and aesthetics? The now-defunct magazine *AR[t]* has five issues (2012-2014) online for free, exploring augmented reality, art and technology. Even if you're not interested in the magazine's sometimes dense and abstruse discussions, the issues are worth perusing just for their pictures and visual diagrams.



already been done via the Kinect for Xbox 1 and 2, so we have strong hopes for the HoloLens's accuracy and speed, and ability to interface with The Internet of Things. The stylish looks and stunning on-stage demos will appeal to product designers and architects, and perhaps 3D artists who want to sculpt and paint in holographic 3D. But will it send 60fps video to *each eye* in real-time, with big textures and 3D mesh detail?



## IF MAGAZINE ARCHIVE:

The complete run of the U.S. science fiction magazine *If* (1952-74) is now legally available for free on [Archive.org](https://archive.org). Full scans of these vintage magazines are provided in PDF, complete with artwork, adverts and editorial. See how sci-fi stories were experienced in print, back in the day.

Shown opposite is *Digital Art LIVE* magazine's pick of some of the most striking front-cover art from the magazine's history. Credits — Spaceship: 1954 by Ed Valigursky. Green girl: 1970 by 'Gaughan'. Hunted man: 1965 by 'Gaughan'. Pipe dream: 1959 by Kelly Freas.

## GRAVITY FALLS:

It's not meant for adults, but the two seasons of Disney's superb TV cartoon show *Gravity Falls* are a must-see for anyone who has an imagination (or who wants one) and is aged from 8 to 12. Treat your kids or small relatives to this show, if they haven't already seen it. It's *very* funny, thoroughly charming, and has just the right amount of genuine scariness and deft dabs of moral philosophy. Set in the small town of Gravity Falls, Oregon, the series melds the old weird backwoods Americana of H.P. Lovecraft with intelligent junior fun-fun-fun-and-COSMIC-MONSTERS! Then strings it along a genuinely grand sci-fi/horror storyline that plays out right across the show's entire 26-hour run.

<http://disneyxd.disney.com/gravity-falls>

"There's never quite been a show like *Gravity Falls*..." — Nerdist.com.

"*Gravity Falls* is the best thing on TV [...] consistently, laugh-out-loud funny every week [yet] It's neither vulgar nor stupid [...] I don't care how old you are, if you're not watching *Gravity Falls* you're missing out. [...] the perfect TV show." — *Forbes*.

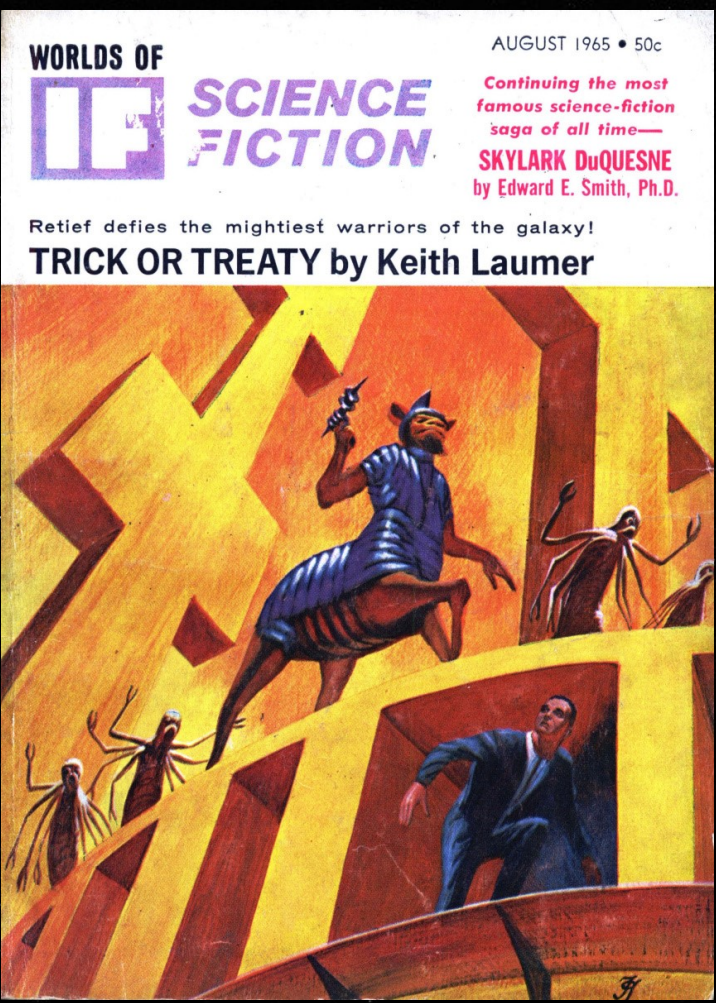
"Saying goodbye to *Gravity Falls* is like saying goodbye to childhood all over again [...] something that's almost unheard of in entertainment [...] uniquely wonderful" — *Polygon*.

"*Gravity Falls* is a clever, clever show [that] takes care to layer its delivery, slowly building nuance, offering relatable scenarios and interludes of silliness to balance out its more philosophical elements. You need to watch *Gravity Falls*. [...] the narrative arc is positively balletic in its elegance." — *Ars Technica*.

Promotional pictures: courtesy of Disney.









Back cover:  
Detail from  
"Back To Home"  
by Elia CK.

Interested in being interviewed in a future issue of *Digital Art LIVE* magazine? Or offering a webinar for our conference series? Please send us the Web address of your sci-fi gallery or store, and we'll visit!

[paul@digitalartlive.com](mailto:paul@digitalartlive.com)

**NEXT ISSUE: APR 2016**  
**FUTURE HEROES**



ELIAN