SCIENCE FICTION ARTIST IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

Digital Art
LIVE

THE STEAMPUNK ISSUE

RENDEROSITY

SUZI AMBERSON

BOB MAY

VUE • TERRAGEN • POSER • DAZ STUDIO • REAL-TIME 3D • 2D DIGITAL PAINTING • 2D/3D COMBINATIONS

DAZ STUDIO
CONTENT CREATION MASTERY
Modeling Part 1

Digital Art LIVE

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Ever wondered **how to create content for DAZ Studio,** but just had no road map to do so? Where do you start? What's your actual destination? How are you going to deal with the challenges along your way?

This webinar is in the first of a **NEW Masterclass Series** of creating content for DAZ Studio. It covers **every aspect of content creation from start to finish** and we go in-depth with a veteran artist, <u>Esha</u>, who has been creating content for the past 12 years.

Esha is seeking to present those things that were eye-openers to herself when she was struggling to find the best workflow. Are you in a workflow rut that needs smoothing out? Then this webinar series may assist you in finding a more streamlined flow of effort.

It all begins with modelling and we include a great overview of which model-

Saturday 23rd July 20:00 BST London/12:00 PDT Los Angeles/15:00 EDT New York

This webinar is booking fast !

Presenter : Esha

The Making of "BEASTS SHALL RISE"

Learn how to Create Detailed Cityscapes

Live Webinar Saturday August 6th

MASTERCLASS INCLUDES HD RECORDING

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Three hours of Tutorials in this one package!

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Composed in Vue and finished in Photoshop, Christian (Tigaer) Hecker goes through the "making of" this outstanding fantasy scene "Beasts Shall Rise". It's loosely based on Game of Thrones and was released at the beginning of the series just broadcast.

Chris **specialises in detailed scene making** with many elements. He's done many and some of his work has been released as part of the renowned Luminarium's artpack. The Luminarium is an art society over at Deviant Art and it's an international group geared to pursue originality and creativity, for digital and traditional artwork.

If you're interested in **creating scenes in Vue with a cityscape** in mind and wondering h**ow to handle a high number of objects in the scene efficiently,** then we'd love to see you attend and benefit from this session.

Saturday 30th JULY 2016
£25 or $37

Digital Art
LIVE

SUMMER MEET-UP EVENT
STAFFORD, UK

Picture: Ian Halsey

MEET THE TEAM, AND YOUR FELLOW ARTISTS! 12.30pm, Sat 30th July 2016.

We have a special opportunity to meet the Digital Art Live team, the magazine's readers and other digital sci-fi artists. All in the comfort of possibly the best traditional independent tea-rooms in England, 'The Soup Kitchen' in Stafford.

Stafford is a pleasant market-town in Staffordshire, in the middle of England, and it benefits from having an inter-city train station on the West Coast Main Line. Stafford is accessible by fast train from cities like London, Birmingham, Stoke, Manchester and more. The Soup Kitchen is just a five-minute stroll across a fine Victorian-era park, from the train station.

The Soup Kitchen venue lacks a certain 'sci-fi futurist' look, we admit — but the venue makes up for it with a swift waitress service with traditional uniforms, plus good food and cakes, free wi-fi, and oodles of ambience. This historic building is rather like *Doctor Who*'s Tardis — it looks small on the outside, but inside it's vast and has 400 seats plus a modern roof garden!

Your ticket (£25 or $37 US) will give you:
● A printed copy of *Digital Art Live* (issue one)
● Lunch provided
● The opportunity to connect with other artists and share your artwork

GET YOUR TICKET TODAY!

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE
SHARE YOUR CREATIVE STORY
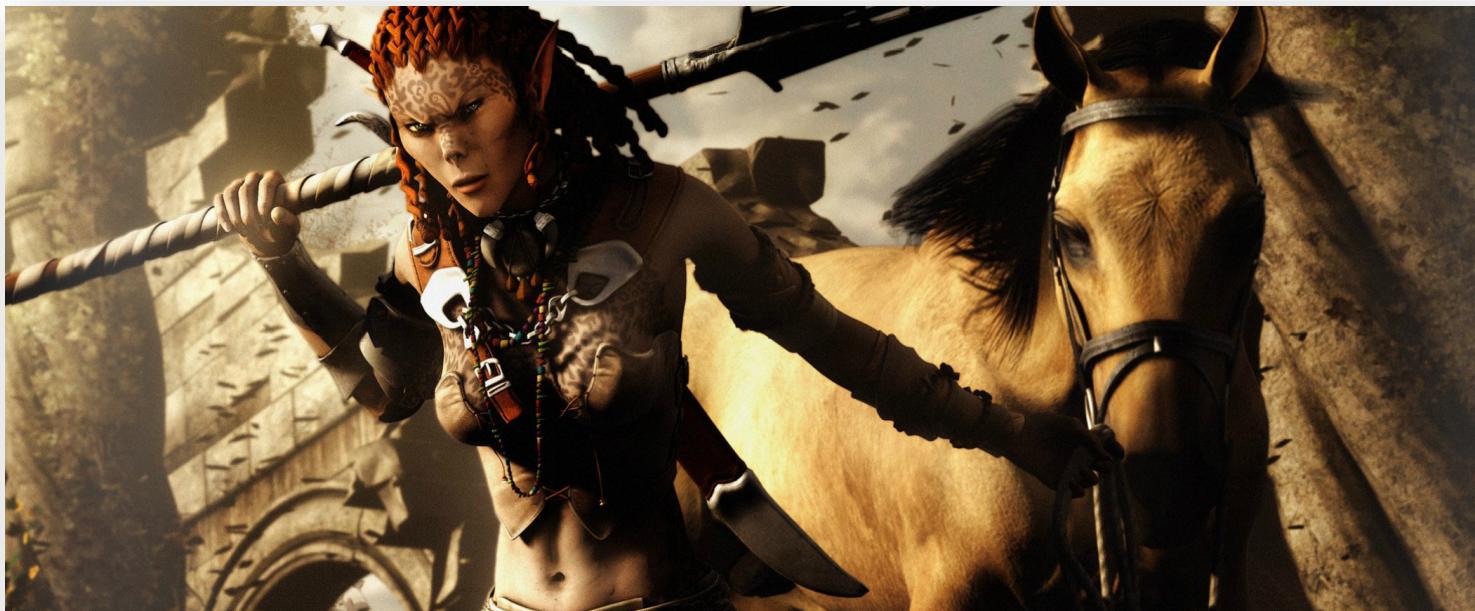
We are actively looking for artists or content creators that would enjoy the opportunity of teaching other artists in a live setting.

Would you like to work with Digital Art Live as a partner in presenting some of our live webinars? We're particularly looking for artists and content creators with DAZ Studio and/or Poser in mind.

Use the link below to submit your application and we'll get in touch!

https://digitalartlive.com/presenters

Past and Present Presenters : Syyd Raven, Eric Van Dycke, Paolo Ciccone, Kim Schneider, Charles Taylor
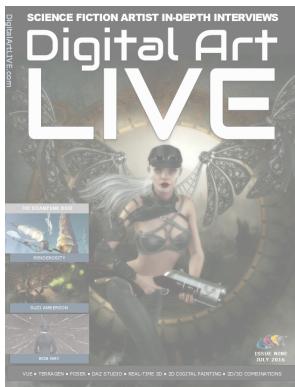
Front Cover:
"Badlands" by Suzi
Amberson. Poser
and Photoshop.

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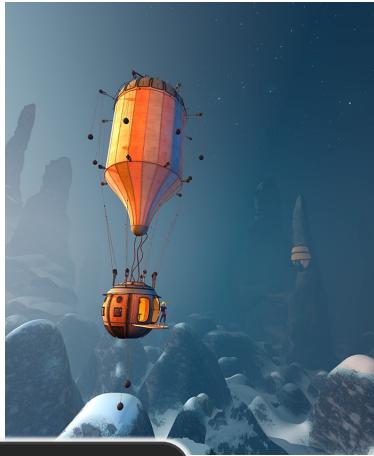
INTERVIEWS

RENDEROSITY

We talk with two of the leaders of this famous 3D art community, about the people, the store and more. Art by 1971s.

STORE | COMMUNITY

"To just have those communities there … no matter what niche you have … you'll find somebody aligned with that niche that can collaborate with you and provide support..."

SUZI AMBERSON

Suzi makes superb steampunk renders with Poser and Photoshop, and also produces her own 3D clothes.

POSER | PHOTOSHOP

"I will always be a Poser Girl! [but] my absolute favourite part of creating images is 'making magic happen' in Photoshop! It's a crucial part of my workflow and an essential tool in my toolbox…"

BOB MAY

One of the UK's finest collage artists chats about his sci-fi influences, nostalgia, and his unique personal symbolism.

COLLAGE | FOUND ART

"I have found a huge warehouse of charity-shop reject books from all over the UK. They let me rummage in their skips. There is a beauty to using material that has been given the thumbs-down by everybody else."

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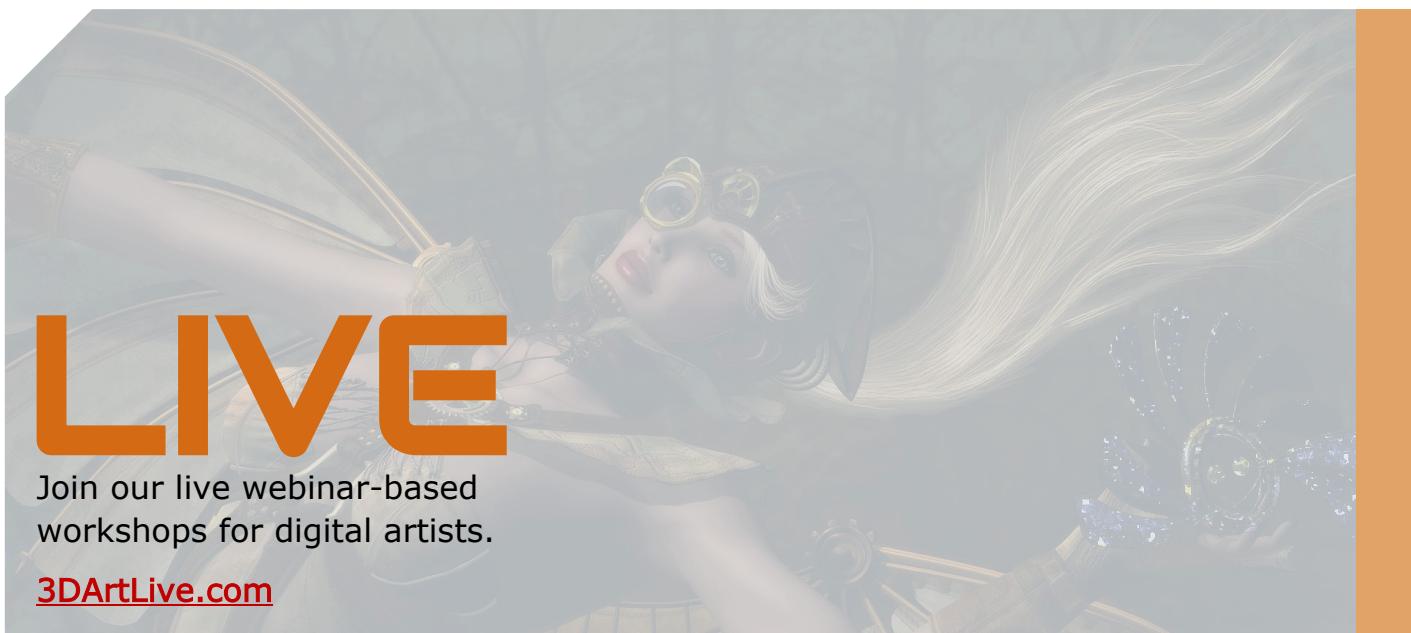
LIVE

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Credits for backgrounds, from top left: detail from "3D" by Ry-Spirit; detail from "Trapped in the Tower of the Brain Theives" by Bradley W. Shenck; detail from "Steampunk Flight" by Suzi Amberson ('Kachinadoll').

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EDITOR'S LETTER

WELCOME...

"The term of "Steampunk" was born from science fiction novels. It was first mentioned by author Kevin Jeter as a way of distinguishing him and other sci-fi writers from "cyberpunks" such as William Gibson. Steampunk is not just a visual style, it's a philosophy. It's the challenge of mixing old and new: blending the usability of our modern technology with designs and ideas from the Victorian age.

The industrial age of steam inspired new and future thinking as rapid progress was made. Arguably H.G. Wells and Jules Verne from the 1800s provided many ideas, machinery and settings for the steampunk artwork we see today.

The alternative timeline where steam technology provides retro advancements such as airships and mechanical computers continues to fascinate many. Take something modern that is sleek and small (your computer) then transform it into something bulkier, using only common materials from the Victorian era and you have an artistic and design challenge that could occupy you for months.

What draws artists to this particular age in time? The Victorian era seems particularly exciting and mysterious, with its glamorous clothes and uniforms, fearless explorers, devious villains and sooty labs. There is even a present day environmentalist element to it all: a harking back to a time before smog and global warming, when the worst emission was the steam from steam trains.

So take a look at the steampunk artwork we've collected for you in this issue and be inspired to create artwork that's a little more retro and has a certain amount of magic at its core that allows all of these retro technologies to work.

PAUL BUSSEY
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WEB

DAL: A big welcome to Tommy Lemon and Tim Haaksma, as we look we discover behind the scenes of Renderosity, the well –known content vendor for Poser and DAZ Studio users, and long-standing online community for 2D and 3D digital artists, animators and photographers. Tommy Lemon is the vice president of Renderosity, and Tim Haaksma is the manager of business development and marketing.

Tim: Thanks for having us first of all. We appreciate the time today, and look forward to answering your questions.

DAL: To begin, I know that Renderosity started back in 1999, when the Internet was still quite

young. The first images-capable Web browser was only introduced toward the end of 1995, and the Web was still very young. No broadband, and even Google was still a year in the future. What was the original vision for Renderosity in those early days?

Tim: Renderosity's parent, Bondware, Inc., decided it was necessary to build their own community

Picture: Promotional picture for the Poser content pack "Fishing Village", by leading Renderosity content maker 1971s.

related site that could highlight some of the tools that were part of their wider platform. And one of the Bondware members at the time was oddly enough playing around with a 3D software package called Poser. Well, he found it a bit frustrating that there was little in terms of an online presence where he and other Poser users could share, collaborate and further their knowledge of the software. So they thought about a Poser site to showcase the features available in the Bondware software. It seemed like a perfect match — to create a site that would serve as a virtual meeting place for Poser fans and users around the globe. And some 16 years later, here we are today, it spawned the site that now exists.

Tommy: And to add some trivia, Renderosity.com didn't take hold until October of 1999. Previous to that, it was PoserForum.com. PoserForum.com ran from somewhere around August of 1998 to October 1999. Another point is that of out first thousand members, 17% still log on actively to Renderosity today.

DAL: Wow. So that's a really good core set of members. And there must be a kind of an almost like a family feel going on with the community, to have kept people in there for so long.

Tommy: Yes, indeed.

DAL: Now let's move a little further down the timeline. The decision to sell digital content on Renderosity was a way of helping boost the infrastructure, which you'd need for the rapidly growing community. Was the idea of the content marketplace a new concept to the group and the world at the time? When did this start to happen, and what were some of the challenges?

Tim: Much like the beginning of Renderosity site itself, a handful of the original forum members who use Poser, and the other 3D related software packages at the time, were actively sharing and giving away a lot of their items to other users. Out of this suggestions started popping up. So that's when we decided there actually might be a market for this, and we assisted them in actively promoting their products on our site, and helping them sell through their own unique storefronts.

Tommy: Yeah, there was a lot of a sharing, there was a lot of learning, that was the focus. And actually, the notion of selling items was… there was a big divide about that in the community early on, to be honest. A lot of them wanted to the keep them, all the items free. Some of them were contributing a lot, and thought, "You know, it *would* make sense to sell those items." It was kind of an interesting moment in time, because it was early on, where digital content wasn't really a common thing. Not how it is now, so there was an interesting debate that went on surrounding selling things or keeping them free in fact.

DAL: And were some of the original vendors back then, are they still around today?

Tommy: Some of them are, yes. The marketplace has evolved so much, and we've seen a lot of people come and go through the years, but we do still have members here that were involved early on in day one.

DAL: So it's good to see how Renderosity perhaps, provided a template to the rest of the world showing how digital content could being sold, and how a community could support that taking place. Quite groundbreaking, really.

Tommy: I'll add one more thing to that. Bondware is located here in Nashville, Tennessee, for those who don't know, and we're surrounded by the music industry here. And to be honest the whole model for selling digital content is not too far separated from what you might find in the music industry, in terms of the way that music royalties and things of that nature play out. So ironically, we had a lot of good resources surrounding us to develop how we sell and pay royalties and all that type of stuff. So a different art form, but the same business principles behind it.

DAL: Your mission statement is: "The mission of Renderosity is to create a thriving productive community that encourages an atmosphere of respect, collaboration, and growth for 3D and 2D digital artists, animators and photographers and writers of all backgrounds and levels. We are a community created by artists for artists, because the art matters."

Would you say that this mission statement is still the same? Is there any more emphasis on any part of that?

Tim: I've been with Renderosity for about six years now, so obviously the mission statement predates me, but in reviewing it — and often — I think it holds pretty true today. What I see constantly changing, from a marketing standpoint, is how we go about maintaining that mission. Technology for instance is always changing, and it's impacted how our users interact with our site. It's not enough for us to solely rely on our own community based tools that have been so important to us and really defined us throughout the years. So instead we have to ensure that we're proactive in communicating and engaging our members in ways they're most comfortable with.

For some people, it might be simply sending out periodic emails to tell them what's going on in our community. For others, they live on social media, Facebook and Twitter. That's something we're also very proactive with. And as far as areas of emphasis, what I find most consistent throughout our community is people are always looking to learn. They want to become better in their craft, whatever that medium is.

Writing, photography, 3D animation, whatever it is, they want to find tools and resources that can help them grow and become more proficient in whatever medium or genre that interests them the most. So that's really I think, that area emphasis and things we're always looking to grow and provide more resources on our site.

DAL: And I think as well, having that community there acts for many artists as a collection of

Pictures: Promotional pictures for the Poser content packs "Clock Island", "Flying Islands", "Technomages Time Machine", by leading Renderosity content maker 1971s.
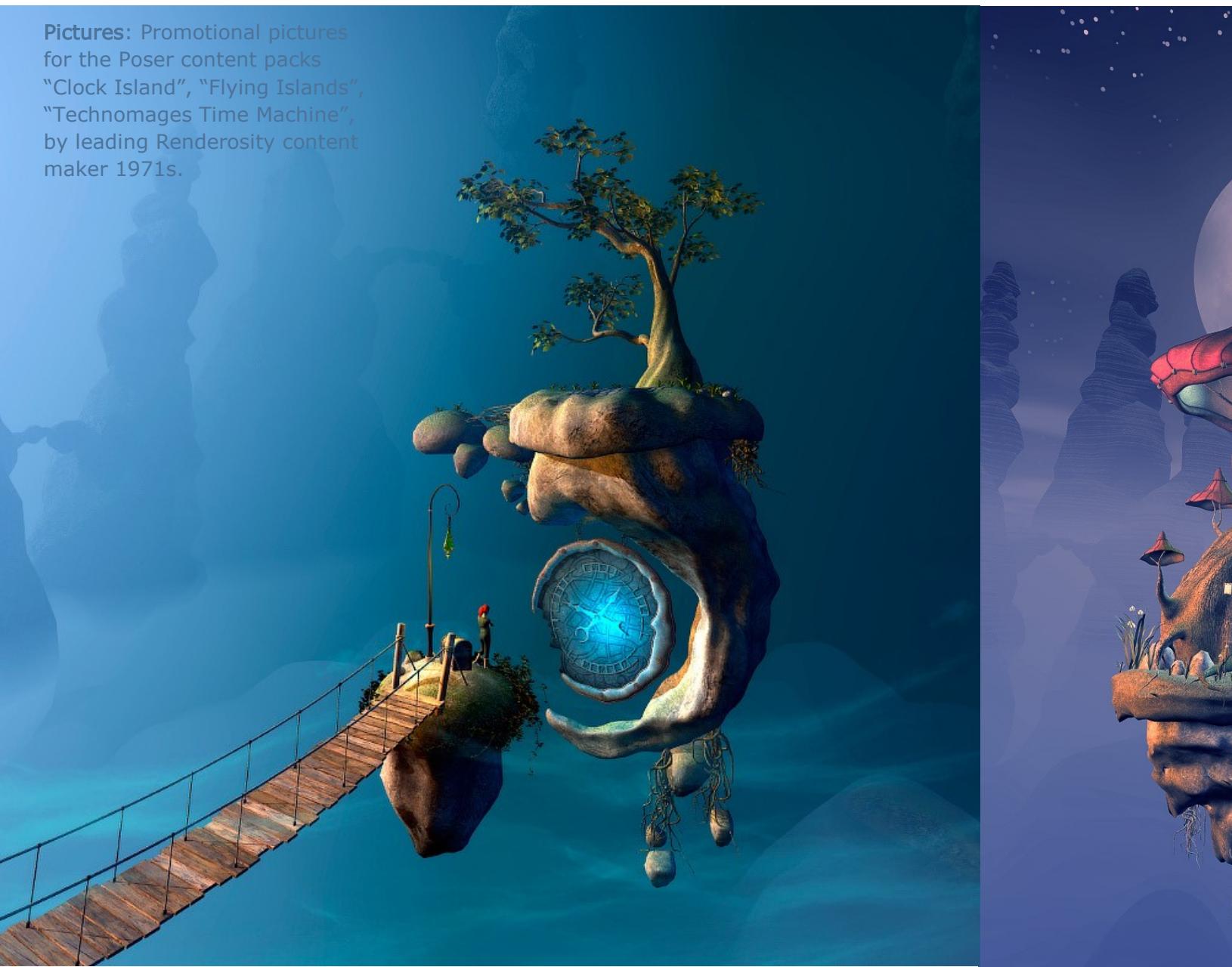
accountability partners. So whatever they post up there, they become accountable to that artwork, to make it better. And as well as saying to themselves, "Well, look what I've done," that they're then, in the act of publishing that artwork, and making it public, they become more responsible artists, they become daring, to put that out, and to get maybe criticized by it, hopefully to get positive feedback and respect, so obviously that counts for any community, but you've got such a large community that it really doesn't matter probably what software package somebody has for all 3D or 2D, I think that's the beauty of Renderosity. You're going to find that you're definitely going to get some feedback of *some* kind.

Tim: Well, I think it takes a lot of courage. I know for me, if I were to post my creative work on our site and be open to I guess friendly criticism, I think it takes a lot of courage. But it also I think helps fuel that creativity, and someone who wants to become better at what they do. And we see a lot of that around our site. Our galleries at Renderosity have grown tremendously, not only in number, but the look and feel of the kind of work that gets submitted there. So yes, I think there's that inner fire that helps people become better at what they do.

Tommy: Yes, and art is so subjective, such that what's right for one group of people isn't necessarily right for another. But we have such a large, diverse group of artists that you can almost certainly find somebody that feels the same way about certain types of art that you do. So not only can it be a place where you can post something and get constructive criticism to help

you better your talent, but you can also find people that think and feel the same way about certain types of art that you do, and help encourage you in that direction. And so there's a pretty broad spectrum of community and relationships that develop just based upon those types of topics.

DAL: Yes, because I think often what I've said to my community is that being a digital artist can be a pretty lonely experience, when you spend many hours in front of a monitor. And to just have those communities there, and even as you've said Tommy, no matter what niche you have, it could be a really narrow, narrowly defined niche, but you'll find somebody aligned with that niche that can collaborate with you and provide support, so...

Tommy: Absolutely.

DAL: Now, with this mission statement, with the aspect of respect, Renderosity has a good suite of regular programs that highlights community members, artists, and vendors. Tell us about some of these, and what are some of the newer initiatives at Renderosity that have proven popular.

Tim: I think it comes back to just the sheer volume and variety of artists that we have on our site. In hearing that question, I relate it to my own human nature, and maybe I tend to get pigeonholed into only looking at a handful of artists, only reading books by certain authors, turning on the television and maybe looking at certain networks. So pieces like our Member of The Month, or Gallery of the Week, I think it's our way of I guess maybe delivering what might be new artists, new work, new ways of viewing things through art to our community members

Pictures: Promotional pictures for the Poser content packs "Vertical Zeppelin", "Rocket Dragonfly ", "Windcatcher", by leading Renderosity content maker 1971s.

that might not have otherwise been exposed to these people. So again, it's our way of exposing the community to a new group of artists and people, that they might not have otherwise followed. We even have tools on our site that you can like and follow certain artists, certain vendors that sell in the marketplace.

So again, if we don't deliver some of these articles and interviews, people might simply rely on just the new art that gets submitted by the artists that they already know. So hopefully this exposes them to a variety of new content.

DAL: So there are the proactive pushes, each week, each month, for various different things. You've got Member of The Month, Renderer Awards, Gallery of Week, to name a few. I think there's a Staff Spotlight as well?

Tim: That's right.

DAL: Vendor of The Month and Artist of the Month. I may have missed some there, but those are the most common ones, I think.

Tommy: We also, at the beginning of every year, recognize a variety of vendors and artists in addition to just the Vendor of The Year, and Artist of The Year things as well. We try to make a point of recognizing talent and effort and those types of things where maybe it would typically get overlooked or something like that. So there's, again, there's such a large, diverse group of artists, and it's impossible to really give everyone their due, so to speak, but we at least try to emphasize those particular awards that you've mentioned, but also we have a tendency to go and search out talented works that we see throughout our community, and if we can't present an award to that particular member, we will at least make an effort to possibly interview

WINDCATCHER 2014

that person for our Renderosity magazine, or even go as far as to just make sure to share that artwork on all the different social media channels that we have out there, just to constantly help these artists along, help them get recognized, help expose their art to new groups of people.

DAL: Now to emphasize the size of the community, how many members do you have roughly now?

Tim: Renderosity's membership is just north of about eight hundred thousand people.

DAL: Wow. Starting from a thousand in the first year or so?

Tim: Humble beginnings, yes.

DAL: And what, if you don't mind sharing, are some of the rough demographics of that community, if you've got some kind of idea of the makeup?

Tim: Sure. Well, on any given day, we can see anywhere from 50 to 150 people *joining* our site, and that might include over the course of a month upwards of 200,000 unique people who visit the Renderosity site. I think what attracts people the most to Renderosity is that our membership has always been free, and I'd be pretty confident in saying that there's no other community that exists out there that can offer a vast majority of the resources that we have to its members *at no cost*.

About forty percent of our site's traffic comes from the United States. But we do see a pretty fair representation from other countries, such as the UK, Germany, France, Japan and Canada, along with a host of others. So we do reach quite a good size group 'outside of our own backyard'.

DAL: I think that's a good lead in to another question I've got here, because recently you had a virtual tour of the world, didn't you, entitled "Where in the World is Renderosity?" and how you visited different parts of the world. So tell us about that.

Tim: Sure. So I think that comes back to what we were talking about previously. Tommy made mention just of the sheer volume of artists, and the different kind of art, and the dynamic groups

that we have here at Renderosity. "Where in the World?" is one of those ways of us attempting to be creative in the way that we introduce this great variety of artists to our membership. Again, it's easy, as Tommy pointed out, to highlight either some of those people that have been around for the longest time, people that have found success posting in galleries and have lots of followers. Or to identify vendors that have great sales volume here within the marketplace. But again, things like "Where in the World?" it's just another way for us to help educate our membership of the different artists that exist on our site, where they're from, what drives them, what inspires them, and really how some of that comes out through the artwork that they place on Renderosity.

DAL: Now you've also got a regular feature to highlight staff members. Tell us about some of the longer serving staff members you've had, and what they've brought to Renderosity.

Tim: I think one of those people is on the line with us now.

Tommy: Yes, I've been here since 2002, actually. For the in-office team, Jenifer Carey has been here for 15 years. I've been here for 14 years. So we've seen a lot of variations, and people come and go, and things of our community, and we've seen all of the transitions as time's passed on. It's an interesting experience to be honest, because when I first started here, I came on as a programmer, and there wasn't really a dedicated programmer — dedicated to programming all of the feature requests that the Renderosity membership had. So when I came on in May of 2002, which is exactly fourteen years ago, what we saw was our membership that was really growing, had a lot of feature requests. I walked in to find a list of about a hundred and fifty things the community wanted, I want to say!

We've had a lot of people who participated in roles, such as our moderators and co-ordinators and admins, who have worked remotely through the years. Alot of those people will still, even if they're not participating in one of those roles, they still log in and participate in the community

somehow to this day. One interesting thing I guess I'd like to say about the Renderosity community is that a lot of the people that come and participate have had opportunities to participate on the team itself, and not just in the community, and those people tend to help cultivate relationships with new members, and help grow certain niche software areas, and help encourage others, to help teach others how to, whether it's how to use the website, or use software, or whatever the case may be.

The biggest point about Renderosity would be that people really do come here and they first start out just by participating, and then grow up into becoming a *de facto* leader sometimes, in a particular area, and then we recognize those people. We ask them if they'd like to participate on our team in a co-ordinator or a moderator role, and some of those people help promote art on our Facebook pages and things like that to this day. It's much more than just who the staff are, but the type of people they are, to be honest with you.

DAL: Yeah, and I've worked with some of them as well, so shout out to say Danny Gordon, who's one of your primary moderators for Terragen. He has been good to work with some of them, and *kudos* to them for what they do.

Tommy: We've had some great people through the years, and like I said before, those people tend to stick around and still help, even once they've moved on, and maybe their lives have gotten busier, or their time to spend on Renderosity participating in the art isn't what it used to be, as far as free time's concerned, but those people still come around and show up and communicate and still help one another out, and it's an interesting family of people.

DAL: Now what's been interesting is that your community predated Facebook. When Facebook came, and you must have thought, "Well, how is this going to affect our community?" But of course, you've got your own Facebook page, community, so, and obviously you've got interaction going on there as well, with just as much intense activity going back on Renderosity.com, so can people buy…

ABOUT RENDEROSITY

Renderosity has been an online art community since December 1998. The name Renderosity was created and voted upon by the online community of digital artists in October of 1999. As the graphic arts industry grew worldwide, there became a need for a means of communication that could link this diverse and international group. Renderosity has filled that need.

Today Renderosity is one of the leading online communities for graphic artists. The Renderosity community is made up of members who have a passion for helping others learn, share and grow in digital art. The participation and interaction among members has slowly built a family and a place known as a "home". The Renderosity membership offers a very interactive community with forums, chats, free content and a marketplace for digital products and 3D models.

The mission of Renderosity is to create a thriving, productive community that encourages an atmosphere of respect, collaboration and growth for 3D & 2D digital artists, animators, photographers and writers of all backgrounds and levels. We are a community created by artists — for artists.

Renderosity.com also has one of the largest and most creative marketplaces on the Web for digital content. Here you can buy or sell 2D and 3D content with other CG artists from around the world. They also offer competitive industry rates for people interested in selling — as well as a first-class support staff. Renderosity also offers free advertising options for anyone who chooses to sell in the Marketplace.

https://www.renderosity.com/

How does it work? Can people buy content through your Facebook page? How do people use that, as opposed to the Renderosity site?

Tim: Yes, so we haven't made that move toward using Facebook or other social media platforms as a *selling* vehicle for us. Obviously, Renderosity is not simply a bricks and mortar store, where we have an inventory of 20 different products. We have *tens of thousands* of items for sale in our marketplace, and so just logistically alone, the thought of what it is we sell there can be quite daunting. So our vision of Renderosity and its Facebook page is to utilize Facebook as a complimentary resource to what we're doing on our site. I think it's still our opinion that we use Facebook to let people share and collaborate and interact with us, if that's their comfort zone.

We're not so certain that Facebook is a place where people go to make purchases. And I don't think we're alone in that. I think some people struggle with that a bit, and it's not something that we're ready to jump into quite yet. Now, as with a lot of things that goes on the Renderosity site, we rely heavily on user input. We haven't had a clamouring for people to purchase products via our Facebook page.

If that need ever arose, it's not something we'd push to the side. We'd consider it, providing it meets some of the larger business goals that we have. But yes, at this time, we're not looking to sell anything on our Facebook page.

Tommy: And to add to that, we definitely use social media to promote certain products and those types of things, to promote sales and as the tool for awareness. But keep in mind that what we're selling are digital products. So, if you were to go through Facebook or something to purchase, you'd still have to come back to Renderosity to complete that purchase, and we're not so sure that doesn't create an extra hurdle or obstacle for the end user at that point, because in the end, they're going to have to end up on Renderosity to download what they've bought, and we can't deliver that, the digital item, through Facebook, and so...

DAL: Yeah, your toolsets that started with the Bondware core of tools, all those years ago, I think they're very specialized and you need to have that in a specialized zone on your original site. But just to scrabble together a few extra likes for your Facebook page, is it worth mentioning the address?

Tim: Yes, you can get there by going to facebook.com/renderosity

DAL: Now I know, as you mentioned, Tim, you seek out regular feedback from the whole community to help improve your services and website. And that's still ongoing. Is there anything been highlighted recently by the community that you're working on now to improve?

Tim: Tommy might be able to talk about that. 'Community as a whole', I'm not sure. I know from a vendor standpoint, some of the tools that we have available to them within what we call a Vendor Control Room — which addresses their need for reporting, setting sales on products within their store, some of the promotional tools — we've made some enhancements there, based on some of our vendor feedback. I don't know, Tommy, can you think of anything else that may be in the works regardless?

Tommy: Well, I don't want to tip our hand too much on some of this stuff. But we definitely love to hear feedback from all of the membership, and that's very much been the purpose of us conducting surveys every year. We want to know what we're doing right, what we're doing wrong. We want to hear if the membership have any great ideas that we just completely have overlooked. That being said, we do have a few things that we've been discussing in terms of the membership. To bring about some excitement, and to acknowledge people's participation in the community. And those are some things that we've been looking at, and will hopefully get implemented, probably somewhere around the third quarter of this year. As you know, well, you may not know, we do have the Rewards program as well, and we're looking at some interesting ways to make that even more attractive, coming up later this year as well.

DAL: Okay, that's something the community can look forward to. And I was going to talk about the tools that you offer content vendors on your site, and maybe you can highlight some of those tools that you believe are a little bit more unique, a bit more special than perhaps some of the other sites out there.

Tommy: Well, we have, as Tim had mentioned, we have the Vendor Control Room, and that has grown quite a bit through the past 8 to 10 years, I would say. Originally, we just created this area where basically you would just come and sign up as a vendor, and that way we could capture your vendor details for payment purposes and so forth. And you could upload products there, you could set some sales there, some things like that. It's since grown to where you can manage a variety of store sales, not just an individual item or your whole store. There are additional features that we've added, where you can set sales according to some group sales that we have, and you can participate through the tools there that way.

> "About forty percent of our site's traffic comes from the United States. But we do see a pretty fair representation from other countries, such as the UK, Germany, France, Japan and Canada, along with a host of others."

You can participate in our rapid-fire Flash Sales, and for our Prime Membership program, and things like that. You can create bundles in there, you can run a variety of sales reports for your own personal accounting and record keeping. You can not only manage some free exclusive product banner ad campaigns in your Vendor Control Room, but you can also purchase and plan advertising campaigns in your VCR now, as we call it. We have testers in our marketplace — so that once you've submitted your product to the marketplace, it goes through a review process by our in-house marketplace admins. If it passes the review process, then we assign your product to a tester.

And then that tester basically has a one-on-one relationship with you to make sure that your product works properly, that all of your product details and promotional images and things are set up correctly, and you have somebody to hold your hand through the process to make sure that the product that you're putting out there is going to work, hopefully be successful, and will not require a lot of support after the fact.

We also have a full Wiki area that outlines all of the marketplace guidelines and requirements for products, and how you become a vendor and everything like that.

DAL: That sounds really good, that you almost had like a vendor coaching person to help you through that process.

Tommy: Absolutely, and some of these people, they may be involved in 3D art, may have been involved for a long time, but they may be new to Poser, or DAZ Studio, or one of the other software packages that tends to sell a lot on our site, but we've got a group of testers there that are really helpful and experienced in those softwares to make sure that the product that you're making works well in those softwares, so that the buyers have a pleasant experience, and hopefully that ends up in the vendor being more successful over time.

DAL: One thing I think it's worth highlighting is the production of video tutorials as an important section in your marketplace. Are there any tutorials at the moment you'd like to mention in particular or highlight?

Tim: Well, in January of this year, we obviously started our third year in the tutorial series, utilising the skills of Mark Bremmer. Mark's done a really wonderful job, in stripping apart the Poser software, and really taking it down to the

fundamentals, the very basics, and help coaching some of our very beginner Poser users, and stepping through some of the hurdles that you might encounter in learning the software.

So in January this year, we moved into a tutorial series based on the latest release from Smith Micro, Poser 11, so we're again, moving through just a great dynamic series of learning tools that again are free to our membership. And we've really been getting some great response from that. If you've seen any of the tutorials before, Mark has a very, let's say clear way of presenting the information, where I think it's really digestible by all those who view it.

Again, he's done a really great job for us, and the idea behind these was to... there's thousands of different places where you can view tutorials. What we wanted to do, however, instead of the users finding piecemeal of 'how to do this, how to do that', we wanted to put together a cohesive package, where one tutorial is almost based on what you had learned in the previous month's lesson.

So that started in January of 2014. We were just going through the basics of the user interface of the software. And now we're moving into facial expressions, lighting, some basic animation. So not only can some of our beginner users gain some insight, but also some of our well seasoned artists can really find some effectiveness by viewing these.

So it's something again, that we're putting together and have delivered to our membership at no cost to them. We feel it's important, amongst everything else, that our user base are well versed in the software that they really love, and so we find that to be a really important asset on our site.

We want to limit that area to just Poser tutorials, either. Mark's done a great job with those, but I would like to also mention that we do have some tutorials for Reallusion's software such as Crazy Talk, or the Reality plugin software. And we also have Blacksmith 3D tutorials — Blacksmith 3D is one of the software products that we now own under Renderosity. It's basically a modelling,

sculpting, painting, type of tool that's really good in post-production of your own models.

DAL: Sounds good. Now is there anything else going on at Renderosity right now that you'd like to highlight?

Tim: Well, from a marketing perspective, we've been really excited about being a little bit more proactive in what we see going *outside* the world of Renderosity. And when I say that, I'm talking about a variety of pop culture events. There's some definite synergy we see between the artists on our site and things when it comes to sci-fi movies, or videogames.

For instance, we recently saw two major new theatrical releases, the latest *Captain America* and the latest *X-Men*. We thought, what a great opportunity to rally some of our vendors here within our marketplace, to coordinate their efforts in putting together a superhero release of products, with that 'comic book animation' type of flair to it. We released this first go-around of such products about two weeks ago, and it's been doing very well. People have seemed to really like it. The vendors were excited about it. It's not often, or not something that we've done a lot in the past, and that is help give some of our vendors guidance as far as what does the community want, in terms of product. And this was our way of getting this group together, and putting a cohesive package together that we could deliver to our community.

Now we hope to do that periodically throughout the year — to create some excitement, create some freshness, rather than just the mantra of vendors putting up products, that they might otherwise just do on their own. So I think it creates some excitement amongst that group of people.

Tommy: Yes, and in addition to the theme sales like that, I had touched on a little bit about Renderosity magazine earlier, but I'd like to also point people to that — there's some great content and art on there. Renderosity.com itself, we get kind of focused on, hyper focused on a smaller number of softwares and art types at times, but with Renderosity magazine, we try to

keep that completely diverse and wide open to all forms of art, even art that's not digital.

And so for anybody that just appreciates art regardless of the art form, RenderosityMagazine.com would be a great place for them to go and check out. And we have interviews, and interesting stories, and share all kinds of things there that we may not typically have room or whatever to share just on Renderosity.

DAL: Okay, sounds like another good resource to look up what's going on with Renderosity at the moment, with the magazine. Tim and Tommy, thank you so much for your time today, it has been really interesting to hear about Renderosity as a whole, from its history all the way to now. Thank you so much.

Tommy: Thank you, Paul, we appreciate your time.

Tim: Thank you, Paul, look forward to talking to you soon.

Renderosity is online at:

https://www.renderosity.com/

The **Renderosity magazine** is at:

http://renderositymagazine.com/

The Renderosity content store for **1971s** can be found at:

https://www.renderosity.com/mod/bcs/vendor/1971s

1971s sells superbly-designed unique steampunk flying craft, houses, and many other 'mechanical fantasy' items, for Poser and at a low-cost.

Pictures: Promotional pictures for the Poser content packs "Anode Technomages", "Balloon Technomages" by leading Renderosity content maker 1971s.

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HAVE you missed out on an issue of our free magazine? Please enjoy this new handy double-page index of our past issues, and check if any are missing from your collection. Our 15,000 readers are also able to access back-issues of our previous title *3D Art Direct.*

Every new issue can be sent to your email address, simply by subscribing to our mailing-list...

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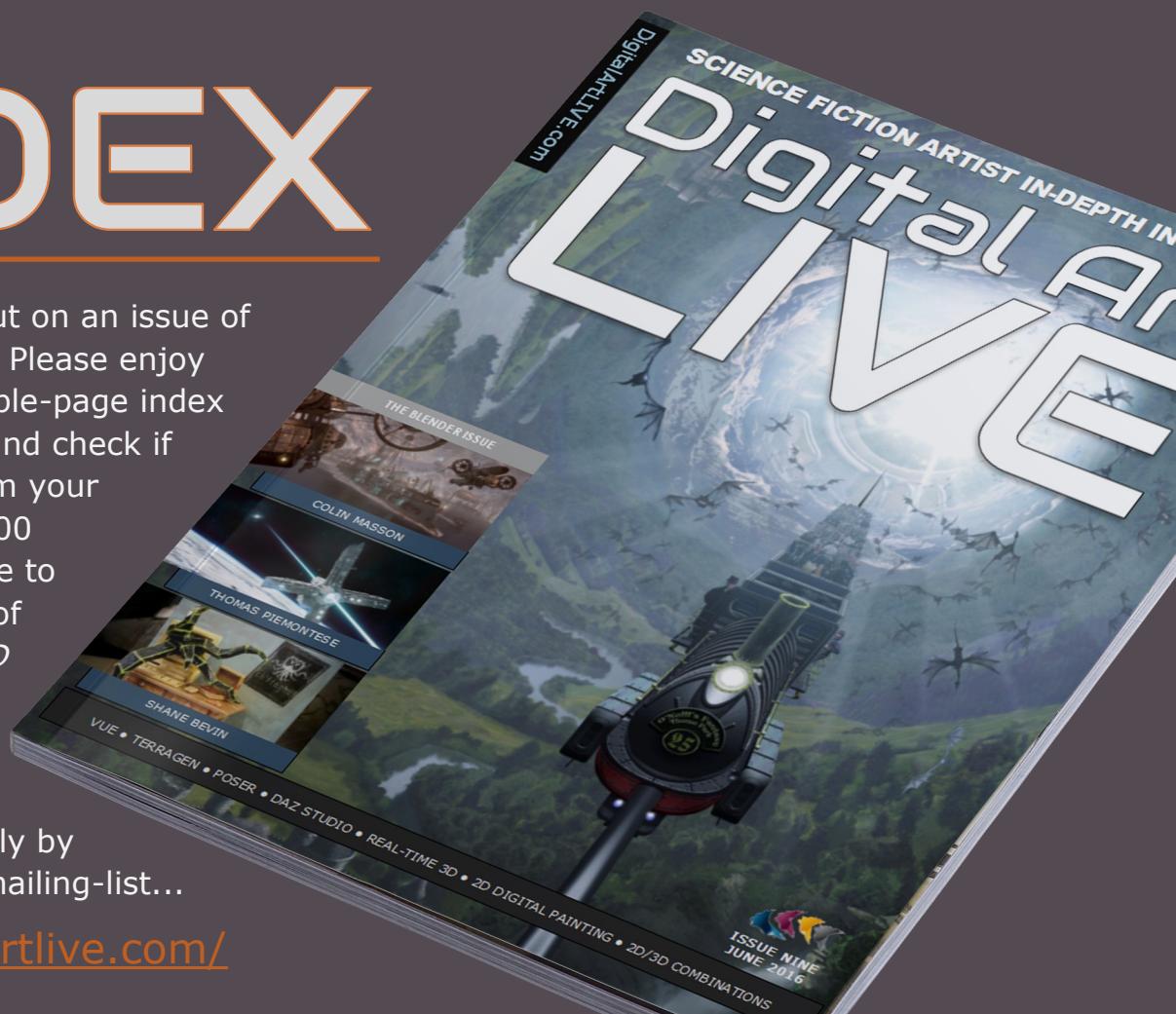
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HERE?

YOUR

ART

HERE?

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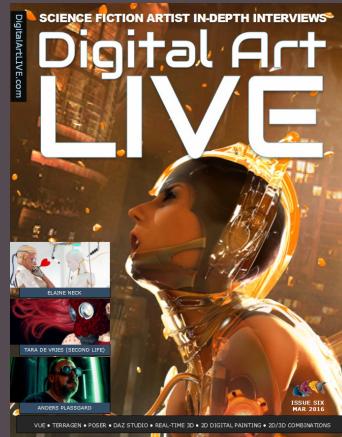
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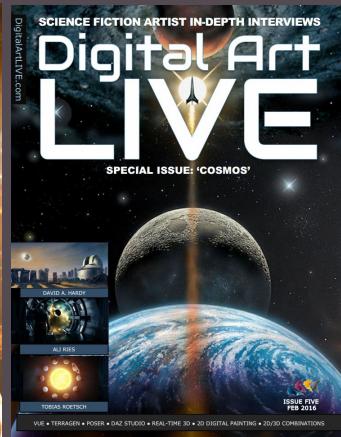
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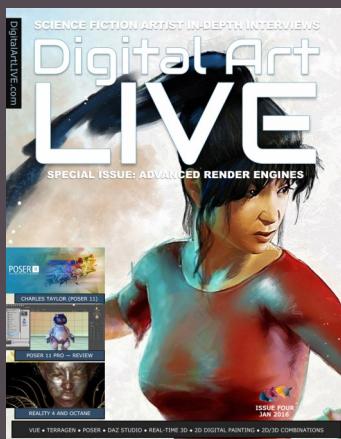
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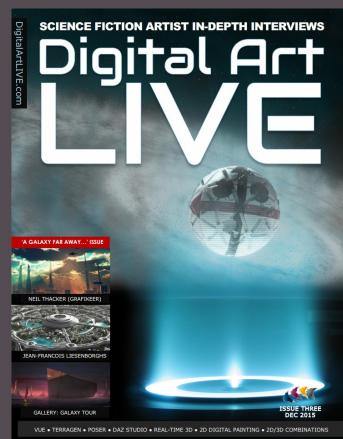
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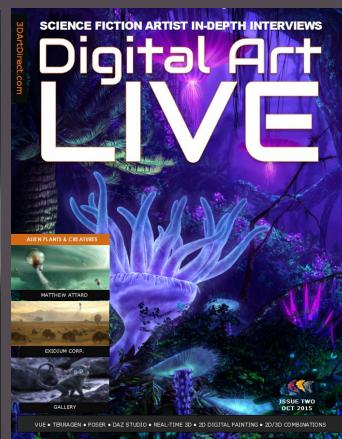
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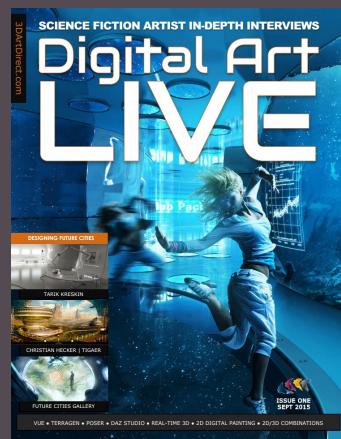
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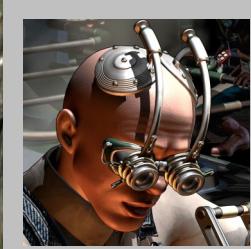
BRADLEY W.
SCHENCK

USA

3DS MAX | 3DS MAX
PLUGINS

WEB

Digital Art LIVE talks soaring rocket-cars, retro sci-fi visions, optimism, Retropolis and steampunk, with 3DS Max master Bradley W. Schenck.

DAL: Bradley, welcome. First, please tell us about yourself, where you are from and how you went from simple drawings to one of the best steampunk and valvepunk themed sites on the Internet.

BWS: I suppose I must come from an earlier age. Since, when I was young, the world was such a different place. Especially for creative people. It's not as dramatic as it was, say, for my grandmother: she was born at the beginning of the twentieth century and read all of Jules Verne when she was a

little girl — and then, she told me, she spent the rest of her life watching all those books *come true*.

But when I was a young artist it really was a different world. Printing was expensive — especially in colour. Apart from some new types of paint, we were working with a toolset that would have been familiar to artists a hundred years earlier. The only way you could promote your work was locally in art shows, or globally by contacting, wooing and usually being rejected by publishers. It's different today in almost

Picture: "Gwen and Rusty on the Prarie".

every way, and every one of the ways that I can think of is good. That's especially true when it comes to finding an audience for your work. Because today — in the developed world — every single person has a shot at finding an audience on the Web. So while the world was growing into something different I tried to keep pace with it. I switched to digital art in 1987 - just as soon as the tools were there. I was in the games business, learned HTML, got into print-on-demand (POD) publishing.

DAL: And that took you into steampunk?

BWS: Steampunk? Not quite. The fact is that although I really enjoy other people's steampunk-ery, I hardly ever play in that sandbox myself. I think the problem is that when people use the word they don't really think about it. Traditionally steampunk is based on things that might have grown out of the early industrial age; it's almost always from the nineteenth century.

The work that I do is another kind of 'used future', or *uchronia*. My sources and my inspirations all come from the 1920s and the 1930s. That's quite a bit later than steampunk, you see.

I'm happy to find that people who like steampunk also like what I do. I guess you could say that the steampunk wave was timely for me, in that what happened was that the world caught up to me.

DAL: Valvepunk?

BWS: What I do comes from that era. I'm much more about rockets and robots and pneumatic tubes, and the kind of unlikely science you find in the old pulp magazines of the 1910s-1940s. The earlier era of Victorian top hats, bowler hats, steam engines and cogged gears almost never come into it. Like I said, I enjoy that stuff a lot. It's just not the same stuff.

DAL: Whereabouts are you, these days?

BWS: I was working a day job at a game company, and that always means horrible hours. Then I reached a time in my life when I decided not to spend all my time working on 'Other People's Dreams'. I moved to an 'out of the way' place with a wide porch, which is something I value, and I try to spend my days working, and doing no harm, and being friendly, but private. So when I was a younger man I guess I would have liked to be that twentieth century knight errant, the iconic detective Philip Marlowe, who is a hero of mine. Now I'd rather be his Merlin.

DAL: You mention that you had various illustration projects on your way to digital art. What were the foundational skills that made you a better 3D artist?

BWS: In order to be a better 3D artist you have to think about things that have nothing to do with your software, because you shouldn't be in the business of making objects, or making effects. You should be in the business of making *pictures*, which is something very different. So whatever kind of artist you are you need a good understanding of how to compose a picture, how to use light and shadow, and what to do with colour. There are plenty of ways to learn those things. They're pretty much the same whether they're used in photography, graphic design, or illustration and painting. Me, I happen to like illustration and painting. But if you can drum the concepts into your head it doesn't really matter where they come from. The point is to learn those fundamental lessons so well that you don't even think about them consciously unless you're in trouble. Because being beholden to a particular form of composition is also a bad thing. The only way I know

how to reach that point — the point where it's as natural as breathing — is through doing it. A lot. And then, do a bunch more. So you work deliberately with those fundamentals so that eventually it seems like instinct, and you don't think about them very often at all.

DAL: Who were some your earliest inspirations, writers or artists?

BWS: Oh, my. Well. Howard Pyle counts both ways, so let's cite him.

DAL: Famous for his painted illustrations for pirate books and of the American pioneers.

BWS: Yes. It's especially hard for me to name writers because I learned to read very early, and I read anything that would stand still. But I guess I'd have to say that in my really formative years it was all fantasy and some science fiction, though there was also a lot of historical fiction, and retellings of legends and myths, like Rosemary Sutcliff's *The Hound of Ulster* and *Sword at Sunset*, or Kipling's *Puck of Pook's Hill* and its less well-known sequel *Rewards and Fairies*. I lost count at my twelfth reading of *The Lord of the Rings*. I loved Lord Dunsany, and Fritz Leiber, and Jack Vance, and Ursula K. Le Guin, and a cast of thousands.

On the art side I started with traditional illustrators — I mentioned Howard Pyle — but as time went on the comics artists and paperback cover artists really came to fascinate me. It was practically the Age of Frazetta back then, along with Jeff Jones, George Barr, and others. Alan Lee, who is something more than human, and a genuinely nice more than human man; Michael Kaluta, Barry Windsor-Smith, and Berni Wrightson; Wally Wood; Al Williamson. I could go on and on, I'm sure. I also got into what we now call Symbolist painting, from the late nineteenth century, with painters like Gustave Moreau, Jean Delville, and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. I doubt you could find any trace of that in my own work nowadays, except maybe in some decorative touches.

In fact very few of those influences are obvious in the work I do these days. But there's something there under the surface. Everything boils away in the same pot, doesn't it?

These days I pay a lot of attention to old pulp magazine covers and comics, especially the EC comics of the early 1950's. I went looking for them, because I felt like we were related now. They're a much more conscious kind of influence, and a pretty obvious one.

DAL: Your *Retropolis: The Future That Never Was* series, made with 3DS Max, is an extensive world created in your art and also an online presence with storytelling. Tell us how Retropolis came about and has it evolved as you always envisioned?

BWS: What's surprising about that, is this. I read a lot of reprinted pulp stories when I was young; they were all over the paperback stands. But that's not where *Retropolis* comes from. It seems like it should have, but it just didn't. It all came about because of

Dennis Potter's UK television drama series *Pennies from Heaven*. That's a great production; more people know *The Singing Detective*, but it was *Pennies*, for me. It was full of popular music from the 1920s and the early 30s. I started to listen to that music, and not much of anything else, and I was captivated by it. Also the New York World's Fair of 1939-40: The World of Tomorrow! And somehow, all the Fair's predictions — some of which came true — and the streamline art deco design, and the music — always the music, again — led me straight to Retropolis.

For me, it was all about the earliest Buck Rogers comics, streamline 1930s design, and the music. I didn't remember the pulp science fiction part until later. I just asked myself: "What would the world look like if this had really happened?"

DAL: One of your website stories is "The Lair of the Clockwork Book", an extraordinary tale about a book, a book of a different kind below Retropolis. How did the clockwork book evolve?

BWS: I love this one, I really do. In the early 1990s

Michal Todorovic and I created *The Labyrinth of Time*, one of the first videogames to really exploit the sheer size of a CD-ROM…

DAL: Back before DVDs and fast broadband, young readers — that was how games were packaged and delivered to your PC. A 380Mb disk of joy.

BWS: Indeed. *The Labyrinth of Time* was an adventure game that was completely illustrated with pre-rendered, 3D graphics. After it was released we pitched several more ideas to Electronic Arts, who'd

Picture: "Tea for Captain Scarlett".

published *Labyrinth*; my favourite was a fantasy game called *Sorcerer's Apprentice*. For that game I invented a character: a magical Book with an unfortunate attitude. The Book would be your source for hints, clues, and other information you needed while playing the game, but it would only share its stories with you if you traded a story in return. It was an obnoxious Book, really, and it would cheat. Still, you'd have to deal with it again and again while playing the game; the other things you did, and the

other things you learned, would become the stories you could trade to the Book.

"The Clockwork Book" is the new story but it is not that same Book. It's much more polite, and it doesn't cheat, exactly. But you could say that it's a descendant of my original, magical Book. It's a mechanical version of that old idea. Lurking under the streets of Retropolis for ages, and no-one would know who had built it, or when; it would collect stories from its visitors in return for the stories they

**Picture:** "Terms of Service".

wanted to hear and as far as anyone knew, it would always have done just that.

I loved the thought that it was like Facebook, or like the Web itself — because once you trade a story to the Book, no matter how personal, it's available to anybody who asks for it... provided they're willing to trade a story of their own. There could be all sorts of consequences to that. And from a practical standpoint, the Book could be the linchpin of an anthology of linked stories, each one short enough

that it wouldn't tax your memory while you read along at the rate of two pages a week. And, of course, it would be clockwork. So, yes, steampunk, at last!

I'll be writing the complete story before I ever start an illustration. Although in this case I did 3D model the Clockwork Book before I'd written its script. I really wanted to know what it looked like. Then I write, refine, and rewrite until I think I'm done, which I never am.
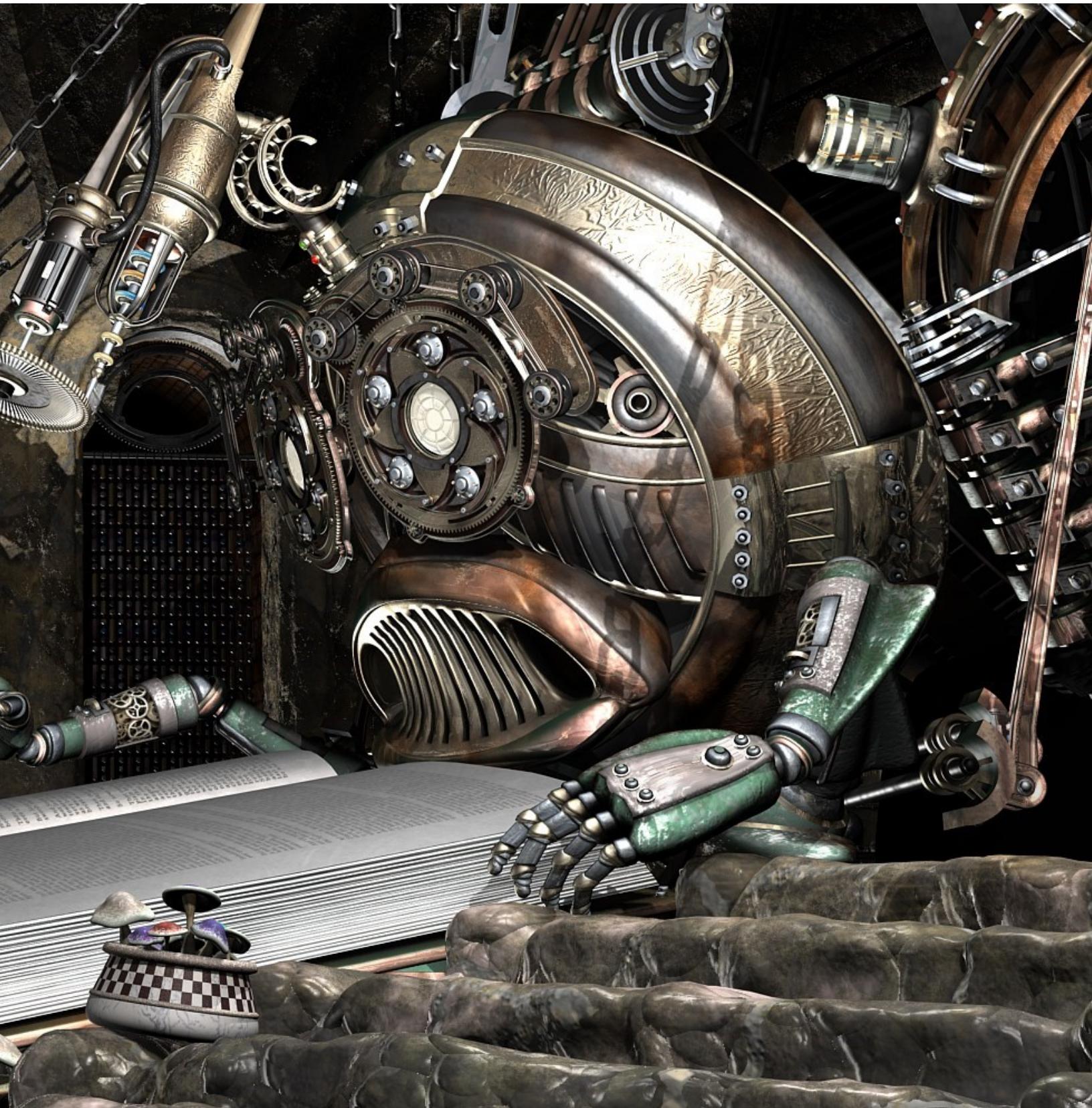
In practice I keep making minor revisions until a page appears on the site. I don't often make changes once that's done. Then the pictures take much, much more time than the script did. Doing it this way almost prevents me from being cowardly. I write crowd scenes, and nests of tentacles, and entire cities as though some *other* poor artist was going to have to do the real work.

DAL: Two of the constant themes throughout your work are Science and Transportation. Between the rocket speeders, zeppelin airships, and the monorails of Retropolis, and the mad scientists — with all their associated gear — you work these themes to the nth degree.

BWS: It's all goes back to the 1939 World's Fair, again; so much of the vision for that World of Tomorrow was about getting from place to place. It was an age when industrial designers like Henry Dreyfuss, Norman bel Geddes and Raymond Loewy were redesigning everything, always more streamlined, always more futuristic. So those guys redesigned trains, airliners, ships and cars. Everything in that vision of the future was going someplace, and at a rush.

It's hard for us to remember that in the 1920s and 30s a very large number of Americans still lived on farms, or had only just moved to the city. Everything new was about mobility and speed. So on the one hand you had new urbanites who were used to tinkering with their cars and farm equipment — and might have built their own radios, also a new thing — while on the other you had this dream of getting somewhere, and an clean streamlined *art deco* vision of what the world could be. Magazines like *Modern Mechanix and Inventions* were full of letters from readers who'd built their own airplanes and boats. Everything was possible, and folks who'd been born with horse-drawn buggies envisoned how to cross the continent in a flash — and thought they could.

And in that moment, the modern world was indeed just around the corner. For my part, the technology also comes from the earliest *Buck Rogers* comics and those old magazines: lighter-than-air metals, personal rocket ships, monorails and airships.

One of the great, or possibly less than great, forgotten movies is *Just Imagine*. A 1930's all-singing, all-dancing science fiction musical. It's just full of this stuff, and it was the movie that Flash Gordon's rocket ship was originally built for. Everybody has a plane or hovercar, and traffic cops blow their whistles from floating platforms. Just plain fantastic.

DAL: Great. We show some stills from that, below. Finally, what three tips would you have for those involved in model creation and/or digital artwork?

BWS: Firstly, that whenever practical, and some other times, work on things that *excite* you. Things that *wouldn't exist* if you yourself weren't there to help them. Secondly, the "Undo" button means that you can try *anything at all* without breaking the thing you're working on; therefore, use it often. And thirdly, if you're not running out of RAM memory in your PC you're probably not trying hard enough. Though, honestly, that's harder to do than it used to be. But you should still aspire, right?

DAL: So true. Well, thanks very much.

BWS: Thank you.

Bradley W. Schenck is online at:

http://www.webomator.com/

Pictures: stills from the movie *Just Imagine* (1930).

A Scene from the Fox Picture
"JUST IMAGINE"

RETROPOLIS

THE FUTURE THAT NEVER WAS

HENRY HALL

A ELECTRO MONICA

LEW STONE

NAT GONELLA

RUSTY THE ROBOT

FLYING CARS!
FAITHFUL ROBOT
COMPANIONS!
SPEEDY TRANSPORT!
LABOR-SAVING
DEVICES!

Sound the brass! Roll the drum!
To the World of Tomorrow we come!
See the Sun through the grey -
It's the Dawn of a New Day.

— George & Ira Gershwin

COMING SOON
TO A FUTURE
NEAR YOU

RETROPOLIS

BY BRADLEY W. SCHENCK, 2004

Picture: "Calling the Space Patrol".

THE 'AGE OF THE AIR' IN PULP ART

Thrilling Wonder Stories

December 1942.

This was a curiously topical bit of cover art, since the vaguely Russian 'onion-dome' architecture might have seen as reflecting the Nazi air attack on Stalingrad, then in its early stages. The art is by **Rudolph Belarski**, a very experienced professional cover artist living in the heart of pulp magazine publishing — Brooklyn, New York City. Here one guesses that he has drawn on his family's Galacian background to devise his superbly steampunk war-craft — that is somewhere between a early Prussian hot-air balloon, a Czarsist Russian tea-kettle and a Nazi diving bell. He has stuck to limited colours, a range of oranges and blues. Unfortunately the spinning top propellor of the war-craft is rather obscured by the magazine's logo.

Marvel Tales

December 1939.

As Europe plunged into war, in New York *Marvel Tales* threw caution to the wind, launching a weird mix of sex and bizzare thrills, in science-fiction form. "Amazing Book-Length Novel of a Lust-Mad Earth-Man Horde That Pitted Super-Science Against Eternity's Golden Bird-Girl!". Indeed. The uncredited cover artist has provided art that, while it lacks some surface finish, is dynamic in many other ways. The colour scheme is constrained to that of the title's logo. The top edges of the wings seem to shimmer. The character expressions and poses are believable — at first glance, which is all that matters for a pulp title. The artist has added a scarf at the airman's neck, to better indicate wind and movement.

POPULAR AVIATION

November 25¢

SEPT.

MODERN MECHANIX AND INVENTIONS

NOW 15¢

IN CANADA 20¢

SEE PAGE 48

saunders

JUMPING JACK ARTILLERY TOWER
And Torpedoes That Chase Battleships - for Next War
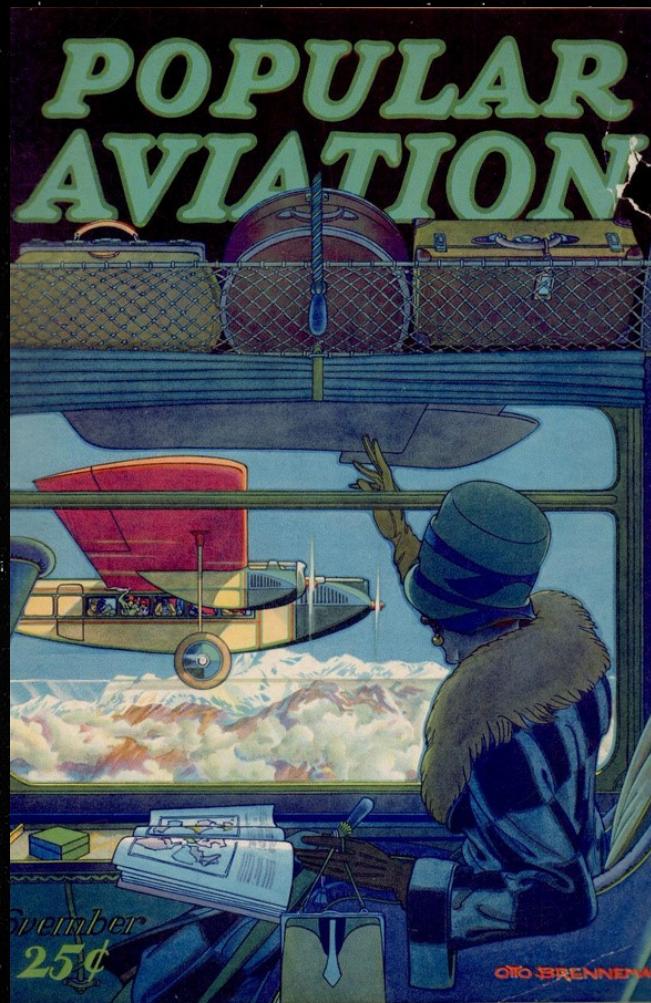
Popular Aviation

November 1928.

If you're wondering where the woman is, she's riding in stylish comfort inside a passenger airship. Yes, there were such things in the late 1920s and 30s. This striking and beautifully-lit cover is by the German **Otto Brennemann**, who came to America in the 1920s. Formerly an air observer and war hero of the German Army, Otto had experience of such travel and scenes. His early poster work in the mid 1920s is crudely heavy and Germanic, but by 1928 he achieved this much lighter and more American line-and-colour style — possibly influenced by Windsor McCay. Seen at full size, the people in the other craft would have been clearly seen. What seems to us a costume and steampunk luggage would then have been a woman's everyday travel wear and accessories.

Modern Mechanix and Inventions

September 1933.

The editor's eyes must have popped when 26 years old pulp artist **Norman Blaine 'Norm' Saunders** turned in this beauty of a cover. While the pop-up artillery gunnery tower might be a touch fanciful, the loving detail lavished on its design must have delighted readers and had the issue flying off the news-stands. By having the gunnery spotter shield his eyes, the artist both indicates his task, and also invites the viewer to imagine himself in the seat as the semi-anonymous man. Note how the artist has keyed the colours and light to those of September, matching the work to the time of year. The colour scheme also fits right alongside the bold logo of the magazine. The layout is marred by the very large "Now 15 cents" — but times were hard for the pulp magazines in 1933 and regular monthly news stand sales were vital.

KACHINADOLL

Digital Art Live catches up with our former interviewee **Suzi Amberson** ('Kachinadoll') to talk about Poser, steampunk, inspiration, selling and virtual clothes.

DAL: Suzi, welcome to *Digital Art Live* magazine. As this is our steampunk special issue, could you start, please, by telling us a little about how you first came to be interested in steampunk?

SA: Hi there. Well, I've always been fascinated by clocks and their inner workings. So when I started seeing the word "steampunk" I was curious, and I had to investigate further. I love the clothing from the Victorian era, and when I started seeing it mixed together with clocks and gears and brass fittings, I knew this was for me.

DAL: And you certainly realise the steampunk idea very well in your art, which is made under the 'Kachinadoll' name. You have an excellent grasp of shadow and lighting. Does that ability arise from the learning of the craft of 3D that you did with Bryce, do you think? Or does it come from elsewhere?

SA: Thank you! I think my eye for light and shadow stems from my Associate's Degree in Photography from Southern Illinois University.

SUZI AMBERSON

USA

POSER | BRYCE
PHOTOSHOP |
MARVELLOUS
DESIGNER

WEB
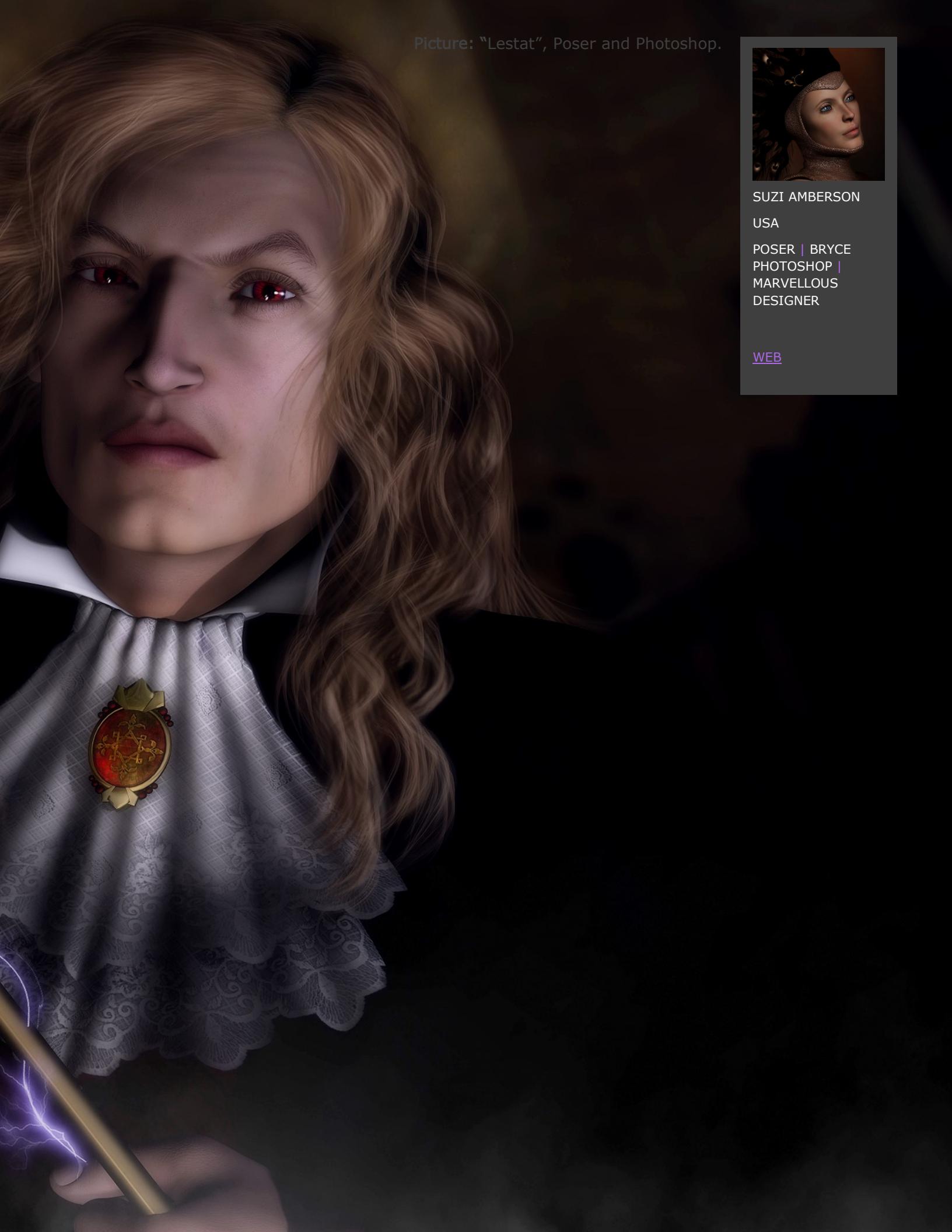
My training there was pretty intense, and it was drilled into me. So when I began creating images in Poser and Bryce, it was just a matter of applying what I had learned to the 3D environment. Lots and lots of trial and error was required, to finally bring my characters to life.

DAL: It certainly brings out the character in your renders. Tell us about your characters and character-creation, since your art often seems to have a story behind it. The process of building and portraying a character...

SA: I am a people watcher. I enjoy looking at people, their expressions, the shape of their faces and bodies, their movements as well as their eye and skin colours and how the light and shadow express them. Thus it's pretty easy to create a 3D character using my mind's eye. I think my ideas for characters mostly come to me at night. I keep a note pad and paper in my night stand and write down notes for characters as soon as I wake up so I don't forget. Ha! ha! I also love old black-and-white movies. When there is no colour or FX to distract you, the focus is on the character and dialogue. If anything, my love for the old classic movies plays a big part in where my characters come from.

When creating an image, I always begin with the character. I spend most of my time bringing out the details of their eyes and face. Then I either build the clothing or mix and match purchased clothing that suits my character. Then I work on the background and pull everything together. A lot of the work I do is in the postwork. That's my favourite part of the whole process. I usually render my characters without hair or very much makeup and these details are painted in during postwork as well as a lot of the light and shadows.

DAL: And your hard work has paid off. Your art is on the cover of an increasing number of books, including *Gothic Dreams: Steampunk*, for instance. Some of our less experienced readers might be interested, I think, to hear something about the process of how one works with a custom book-cover client? The best way to go about it, the pitfalls to avoid, and what to charge, that sort of thing.

SA: My "Steampunk Voyager" image was published on the back cover of the *Gothic Dreams: Steampunk* book, published in 2015. Plus four more of my Steampunk images on the interior pages. The author of the book purchased an extended license for my images through my Shutterstock gallery, to publish them in his book.

DAL: Ah, well, that's nice and easy!

SA: However, I have created several images for custom book-cover clients as well. Basically, I find out exactly what the client is looking for. I need very specific details about the character and their surroundings. Once I have a good idea of what the client is looking for, I make a proposal for the cost to be agreed upon prior to starting the work. I normally have the client pay 50% up front. I send the client several updates as the work progresses to make sure we are headed in the right direction. Once the image is finalized, I send the client a small version of the image to get the final approval. If no changes need to be made, I invoice the client. Once the final payment is received, I send the high-resolution version of the image to them. Every situation is different, but that is basically how it works. Just keep in mind that you are the artist and the client is paying you to create images for them. Do not underestimate your time. Charge the client a fair price for the work that is to be done. I think that is the biggest pitfall that artist's fall into. Underestimating their value.

DAL: We interviewed you way back in early 2012, for the old *3D Art Live* magazine, issue 18. Back then you had just quit your job to pursue a career in digital artwork. How has that worked out for you? I imagine there's a booming market for your style of art — in things like card games, apps, games, illustrations and suchlike?

SA: It has worked out quite well actually. I have four places where I sell, as well as working on private commissions for book covers, video games etc. There's Pixels.com with Rights Managed Licenses for: Publishing (Print or Digital); Advertising (Print or Digital); Merchandise; or for Packaging/promotional use.
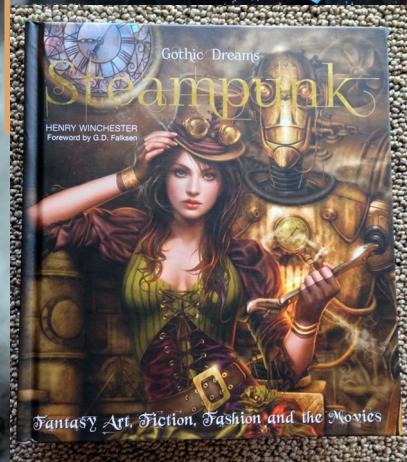
Picture: "Steampunk Voyager", and its use on the back cover of the book *Gothic Dreams: Steampunk*. Cover is also by Suzi.

There's Shutterstock for Royalty Free Licenses of my images. As well as Extended Licenses. At artistwebsites.com I sell prints, posters, canvas and framed prints, metal and acrylic Prints, greeting cards, and iPhone cases. Then of course there's my Store at Renderosity where I offer 3d rendered background packs for sale.

DAL: I see. And I think you also make some 3D content? Tell us about your work with the software applications Marvellous Designer and DAZ Hexagon, please. Many of our readers, who are not DAZ/Poser content developers, may not be familiar with those.

SA: I love Marvelous Designer! It allows you to build the clothing for your character. You actually draw the clothing patterns in the 3D program and sew it together right on your character.   It's amazing and allows you to be quite innovative with your clothing design. Once the outfit is sewn on your character, there are tools you can use to get beautiful draping of the cloth just like in real life! I highly recommend this software if you are interested in building your own clothing.

DAL: And so, do you make your own 3D clothes, these days? And have you ever considered selling them at an online store?

SA: I have made quite a few 3D outfits, however, they have all been for my personal use. I like to blend my pieces of clothing with 3D outfits created by other talented artists to come up with unique and unusual outfits. I do not have a passion to create and sell 3D outfits. I just like to push myself to see how far I can go when creating images.

DAL: I see, thanks. Let's turn now to look at a picture in detail. I especially like your "Jules" picture. Could you take us through the how-and-why of the making of this picture, please?

SA: This image was created just as a fun exercise. A good friend and a fellow artist buddy of mine, Björn Malmberg ('Ariel-X') came up with an idea.

His idea as for the 'Magic Wars' epic gathering. We were just a bunch of artists having some fun, and creating magical characters who would defend the world against the dreaded and evil 'Scarlet Council'. The idea was to come up with a story then bring the characters to life in a picture.   I dreamed up the idea for my "Steampunk Jules" character, then proceeded to bring them to life in an image. This was such fun. I love blending fantasy elements and steampunk together.   The following is the story I created about these little fantasy creatures.

Steampunk Jules:

"The Steampunk Jules are an ancient fairy race. They dwell miles below the earth's surface, very near to its molten core, and everything there is powered by steam. These tiny beings possess many magical powers. One of their powers can be used to control miniature mechanical dragonflies. An evil spirit is pinned to a dragonfly's mechanism and then carried up to the over-world. There it will seek out its intended victim. Once the dragonfly is touched, the evil spirit inhabits the victim's soul. The spirit is then remotely controlled by the Jules, while they remain hidden below in the underworld. The Steampunk Jules, and their army of dragonflies, prove to become an invaluable asset in the war against the dreaded and evil Scarlet Council…"

DAL: Which brings us to the magical world of DAZ and Poser. You're a long-time Poser user, as you've mentioned. Did you catch our recent in-depth review of Poser 11 Pro? What do you think of the new version? Are you tempted, or perhaps you already have it?

SA: I'm certainly a Poser Girl! It's my favourite 3D application and I use it all the time. I'm still using Poser Pro 2012, though. So far, it's been the most dependable version of Poser, in my opinion. I read about the Poser Pro 11 review, and it does sound quite tempting.   But why 'fix something that is not broken'. I'm sure I will update to that version in the future, though.

DAL: What keeps you on with using Poser 2012 in 2016?

Picture: "Steampunk Badlands".

SA: I tried one of the free versions of DAZ Studio first, but just could not get my brain wrapped around it. The interface seemed clunky and it was hard to find the different tools. I really did not like the file formats either. Then I gave Poser a try... and wow! The interface is so easy and understandable. The file formats are logical and easy to navigate. My favourite tool is the Material Room. I love playing around with all the different nodes to create textures and effects on the clothing. I could spend hours in there. I think the renders are better too. The camera tools and lighting just seem to make total sense to me and the render engine is so powerful. The characters render with such depth and dimension. I will always be a Poser Girl!

DAL: And you're an Adobe Photoshop user too. Did you make the move to CC from CS5/6? Have you seen the latest feature – the new Face Liquify tool? I can see all sorts of uses for that in the making of 3D character renders, since it lets the user very subtly re-work the face without damaging it.

SA: Well... I'm a bit old school, I think. I'm still using my Photoshop CS5 Extended. I have read about the new Face Liquify tool as well. It looks like a lot of fun and could be quite helpful in the work flow. However, I tend to stick with my tried and true tools. I do a lot of freehand painting in my images, such as the hair and makeup and some clothing as well. And I enjoy the fact that I actually own my version of Photoshop vs. paying a monthly fee. I'm sure I will eventually move over to the CC version. But I'm not quite there yet.

DAL: Yes, the ownership thing is important. I sometimes get the feeling that some 3D artists are wary of Photoshop either way, though. It's the "pure render" theat many want. What would you say to them, to encourage them to get Photoshop and learn it?

SA: I'm certainly not a purist when it comes to rendering images. Aside from spending time in the Material Room of Poser, my absolute favourite part of creating images is 'making magic happen' in Photoshop! It's a crucial part of my workflow and an essential tool in my toolbox. I use many applications to create "pieces" of an image. Like building the clothing in Marvellous Designer, creating and rendering the character and background bits in Poser. But to pull it all together and add those special unique touches that make an image stand out, I love using Photoshop. There are so many wonderful — as well as powerful — tools in Photshop and it's an absolute must.

DAL: I think that may be what scares some people away. It's like: "Wow, all this power, and there are three different ways to make it do the same thing, for *everything*…". It looks daunting.

SA: I can certainly understand the "purist" render artists and the amazing images they can create. However, Photoshop just takes the image to another level in my opinion.

DAL: Yes, once one learns it. I sometimes think the best thing for beginners is just to play with it like a toy for six months. Pick it up, make a squiggle, add a layer on top, then add a fun filter. Just have fun, now and then, rather than treating it as a huge boring year-long learning exercise that needs 200-hours of video tutorials and thick paper manuals and a lot of sweat.

Have you discovered or started using any new software recently? I must admit I'm falling behind a bit this year, in terms of keeping abreast of the new software releases and new features. I could do with a few tips!

SA: Technology is changing so quickly. It's certainly difficult to keep up with all the updates. As well as the cost to invest in the latest and greatest versions of applications. I admit, I tend to stick with my tried and true tools. After all, 'why fix something that is not broken'. I have done quite a bit of reading, but I get along just fine with the tools I currently use. I don't like a lot of 'bells and whistles' in my applications. There tends to be a lot of hype out there, about the new and improved tools, and then you upgrade just to find out it's not as great as you thought it might be. Sometimes 'sticking with the basics' works better for me.

DAL: True. You're a big fan of *The Lord of The Rings*, and the *Pirates of the Caribbean* movies.

Picture: "The **Steampunk Jules** are an ancient fairy race. They dwell miles below the earth's surface, very near to its molten core, and everything there is powered by steam. These tiny beings possess many magical powers. One of their powers can be used to control miniature mechanical dragonflies. An evil spirit is pinned to a dragonfly's mechanism and then carried up to the over-world. There it will seek out its intended victim. Once the dragonfly is touched, the evil spirit inhabits the victim's soul. The spirit is then remotely controlled by the Jules, while they remain hidden below in the underworld. The Steampunk Jules, and their army of dragonflies, prove to become an invaluable asset in the war against the dreaded and evil Scarlet Council…"

Have you seen similar 'big world' movies or series, since 2012, which you'd like to enthuse our readers to see?

SA: I love the *Harry Potter* films, as well as the movie *Avatar*! Can't wait for the next three instalments of the *Avatar* movie to come out. The special effects were just incredible in that movie. So much inspiration gained from that incredible work. I also loved the *Alice in Wonderland* movies. Just recently I viewed *Alice Through the Looking Glass*, which had a ton of really cool steampunk effects in it.

DAL: Interesting, I might take a look at that then. And you're also inspired by a range of fantasy art — ranging from Frank Frazetta to a host of DeviantArt artists. Is there any particularly inspiring current artist who our readers should be paying special attention to at present?

SA: Oh wow, there are so many artists out there that create the most incredible art. I really do not have any specific favourites, I love it all! I gain so much inspiration from so many different artists — it would be difficult to come up with a list. However, there is one artist in particular who I really love. Michael Kutsche. He creates fantastic concept art for a lot of the fantasy movies such as *Alice in Wonderland*. If you get a chance, take a peek at his gallery. Just the most incredible and creative work!

I also love to look at the work of the Great Masters in art history. There is always something to be gained by viewing their work. And it never gets old. Frazetta is my all time favourite fantasy artist though. Especially his images which include black panthers. Just incredible work!

DAL: I've never been to the USA, but I get the impression that Arizona is a fairly photogenic place. Big open skies and red deserts and big canyons, generally 'Old/Wild West' country, is how I imagine it. Are you inspired by your own local landscape, or have you ever thought of compositing your characters into real landscapes. The new Cycles-based render engine in Poser 11 would be able to help with matching renders with photographs, for instance. Or you could plug in Reality. I guess there must be a local market for Old West pictures, made with Poser?

SA: Arizona is certainly a beautiful state. Our sunrise and sunsets are really incredible. I love the desert look and all the beautiful cacti you can find out here. Especially in the spring, when all the wildflowers are in bloom. But to be honest, I much prefer to create fantasy and steampunk themed images. I frequently do use real landscape images, or parts of them when creating my backgrounds. Not so much the desert scenes, but forests in particular.

DAL: Do you also enjoy epic history and heroic landscapes in movies? I recently saw *Elizabeth: The Golden Age* — Queen Elizabeth the First of England against a gigantic Spanish invasion fleet — and I must say I think I enjoyed it far more that any ding-dong superhero movie I've seen — since *X-Men 2*.

SA: Interesting. I do enjoy the period costume types of movies, with all the beautiful clothing and natural landscapes. But I also enjoy the superhero movies with their incredible special effects and such. I like to keep an open mind and try lots of different avenues.

DAL: Talking of costumes, where do you see the gaps in the 3D clothing market?

SA: As far as gaps in the 3D clothing market… I would have to say there are not enough options for men's clothing. There is a ton of stuff out there for the female characters, but the poor 3D males have hardly anything to wear. I think that is why I began creating my own clothing. The males need to be dressed, as well as the women.

I also think there is a huge niche out there in steampunk type of clothing for males as well as females. The fun thing about steampunk is you can "steampunk up" pretty much any clothing, so it's fun to just play with it and see what develops.

DAL: True. Now, if Roland Emmerich and James Cameron were to roll on down to Arizona one day soon, and knock on your door and say: "Hi,

Suzi, we've been making *far* too much money recently: here's $40m! Go make a movie…" — what sort of movie would you want to make and see?

SA: Ha! ha! Boy, that would be so nice! Of course, I would have to say a steampunk movie for sure. I'm such a steampunk junkie. And there are not a ton of steampunk movies out there, so it would fill a nice niche I think.

DAL: Until that movie happens, have you ever thought of making a story with your art? Comic-books, gamebooks?

SA: Hmmmm… not really. I prefer to create static images that tell a story. I'm not much of a writer, I'm much better at telling a story with images.   I have created images for several writer friends of mine, who have used the images to tell a story, though. But I prefer to create my images and let the viewer see the story unfold through my art.

Picture: "Dragon Realm".

DAL: I see you're a cat lover, as am I. I'd imagine steampunk cats, or something along those lines, might make for an interest story with wide appeal. Maybe: cats who escape from the city of Phoenix and they go make a steampunk/valvepunk cat town in an old abandoned 1930s airbase in the Arizona desert.

Where they find old experimental US Army airships and learn to fly them while wearing goggles…   There's actually probably enough DAZ and Poser content to make some sort of quality cat story happen fairly easily now. And Poser has its excellent new comic-book mode, which is superb once you know how to use it properly.

By the way, did you get yourself a cat? You said you were hoping to get one, back in 2012?

SA: Ha! ha! That sounds like a wonderful story! Lots of possibilities there. No, no kitty. Just my imaginary evil minion kitty "Bane". Ha! ha! He is quite a handful, but provides tons of inspiration. You know, one of those low maintenance kitties! Ha! ha!

DAL: Yes, they're probably the best kind of company for artists. No need for kitty-nibbles.

Ok. Suzi, thanks very much for this interview. We wish you well in the future.

SA: Thanks so much for providing me with this great opportunity!   I love talking about art and sharing my views, especially if it can encourage and inspire other artists.

Suzi Amberson ('Kachinadoll') is online at:

Pixels http://licensing.pixels.com/profiles/kachinadoll.html

Shutterstock http://shutterstock.com/g/kachinadoll

Artistwebsites http://kachinadoll.artistwebsites.com/?tab=artworkgalleries

Renderosity http://www.renderosity.com/mod/bcs/index.php?vendor=3413973D

Deviantart http://kachinadoll.deviantart.com/

MAGNO-SAVE!

Our choice of the best **classic sci-fi pinball tables** currently available for the PC.

MULTI BALL! *Pinball FX2 VR* is a special 2016 VR version of the classic pinball game system, and includes the *Mars* sci-fi table (seen below). You can also get the standard *Pinball FX2* demo platform for Windows, into which you plug individual purchasable tables. The non-VR *Mars* table is currently an affordable £1.99 on Steam, as is the steampunk *Tesla* table (seen below). You can also plug in a wide range of licenced tables from *Star Wars* and Marvel Comics.

MULTI BALL! *The Pinball Arcade* is a 2013 Windows system for digital emulating classic tables from solid-state cabinet makers such as Williams, Bally, Stern and Gottlieb. Like *Pinball FX2* it's a free demo from Steam, then you pay to download new tables. *The Black Hole* is one of the game's best sci-fi tables. The Season Four pack added the all-time classic *The Addams Family*, and Season Five added *Judge Dredd*. *Doctor Who* is set for Autumn 2016 release.

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BALL 1 CREDITS 0

HIGH SCORE! For many years the Pro Pinball series of games was your best option to have your own pinball tabled running on a Windows PC. The best two titles in the series are *Pro Pinball - Fantastic Journey* and *Pro Pinball - Timeshock*, both with a science fiction theme. *Fantastic Journey* has a colourful and coherent steampunk take on the Jules Verne adventures. *Timeshock* presents a time-travel theme with a whacky arcade-style cheerfullness.

ALIEN ABDUCTION!
Roswell Pinball (1998, aka *Alien Pinball*). Seen above. Sold as a standalone budget CD title in the 2000s, and a very fine table. But unlikely to run on a modern Windows PC.

GAME OVER! *Pro Pinball - The Web* (seen right) was the first great pinball table on the Windows PC, its sci-fi theme launching the famous *Pro Pinball* series. Sadly it can no longer be played on any modern PCs.

BOB MAY

Digital Art Live interviews **Bob May**, one of the UK's most accomplished collagists, about his work, ideas and influences.

DAL: Bob, welcome. Thanks for this in-depth interview.

BM: My pleasure.

DAL: Many of your works have a sort-of science fictional aspect to them, or often suggest a curious or optimistic adventure into the surreal — or into 'aetheric forces' — or over some voidal edge. Does your interest in science fiction arise from your life? Are you a fan? Or does it perhaps arise more from the nature of the material you work with?

BM: Well, science fiction is the genre of choice for addressing the bigger questions of existence, it's true. But, in fact, I haven't been an ardent follower of it for the last fifty years or so, perhaps because it has become so nerdy.

DAL: Yes, the nature of literary science fiction changed in the late 1960s, and again around 1985. So you left it on that first turn, it seems, and I left it on the second.

BM: The science fiction works I like, such as the novels by the Czech writer Capek, embody an imaginative surrealism. Whenever the everyday comes up against the fantastic, as in the movies of Bunuel and Fellini, that's my cup of tea.
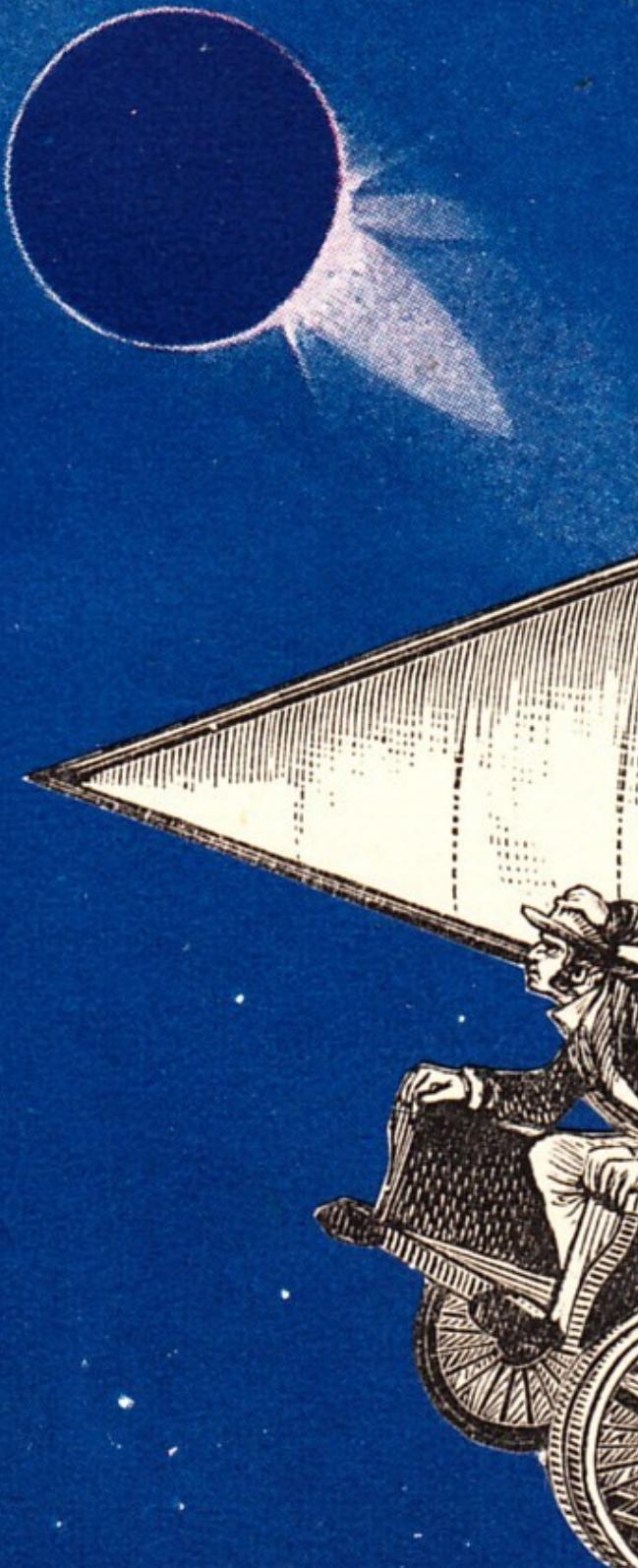
BOB MAY

UK

COLLAGE | FOUND
ILLUSTRATIONS |
SCANNING

WEB

DAL: Yes, I remember those movies from their showing on Channel 4 in the UK, in the mid/late 1980s. Very visually interesting, but — as with much Japanese film — less so for the stories.

BM: There's a sense in them that something life-changing *may* happen. Many of my pictures try to capture that moment, often showing one person leading another into a new understanding or perspective, freeing them from conventionality, conformity, or oppression. I like your phrase "adventure into the surreal" very much.

DAL: Thank you. Are you also interested in the history that surrounds your source materials? Or are you looking more for something intangible, something that history lost in the rush to record the factual — something that was happening only in people's minds, at that moment, in their hopes and dreams. But which was too insubstantial to be recorded?

BM: Pathos is steeped into the pictures I use, because of the mortality of the artists and of their aesthetic. What was once so current and vital, now seems so outdated. In making a picture I often develop an imaginary empathy with the image and its creator, which encourages me to use it sensitively. Collage, of course, announces its intentions by using vintage imagery — since this proclaims: 'Look, this is an artwork, designed to make a statement'. Often old pictures seem to evoke a less complex and more innocent world, especially if they were made for children. *Collagiste* and viewer may in that way share a heightened awareness of present-day concerns — the reworking of the old Ladybird books is a good example of this.

DAL: Yes, the Ladybird learn-to-read books — so familiar in the memory to those in the UK of a certain age — would be an example of something that lives on in the mind as well as in actuality. How do you discover your elements?

BM: I have to spend a lot of time searching through old books for images that appeal to me. I file these, after staring at them and developing a relationship with them. Usually the pictures 'tell' me how they want to be used. Trying to avoid working intuitively, I ask myself clear questions about the goal and then make what decisions I can while preserving a visual interest.

Sometimes an old album or a blank book offers itself as an infrastructure for a series of pictures linked by a theme or a visual motif. The 'Uneasy Pictures' series are such a collection, sharing an unsettling feeling. Occasionally, however, the pictures follow a development and tell a story, as in "Pass", or "Wish". Using an infrastructure such as photo frames can give an opportunity to use stored images that may have resisted an application for years.

DAL: What role does the making of a picture book or album of new collages play in your overall body of work?

BM: I enjoy using albums, but it's hard to choose ideas that can be properly resourced by my files. I think there's a place for the collage 'concept album' and maybe one day I'll make one good enough to be published! Meanwhile most of my pictures fit into collections housed in A4-sized [U.S. letter size] display books.

DAL: Yes, I once tried to make a steampunk story as a Flickr album, simply by re-organising and re-titling the pages the plates from an old book of English scenes. It didn't quite work, it probably also needed some collage.

When you look back over your body of work — if you do — do you see there some progressions and ellipses, formed as you moved in and out — and then beyond — certain concerns and ideas?

BM: There has definitely been a progression in my output. Initially I was mainly interested in making 'amusing pictures', or ones that cultivated strangeness for its own sake. While there's still plenty of humour in the pictures I make now, this is not usually their only purpose. I certainly dislike the idea of pictures whose main aim is simply to 'look bizarre'. There is a pretentiousness in that approach, because the artist is suggesting the presence of a significance that *actually may not exist at all!* I've come to think of this style as the *Collage du Look*, borrowing a phrase from 1980s French film criticism.

Pictures: Bob at his desk (top); "*Radio Times* 20" (below).
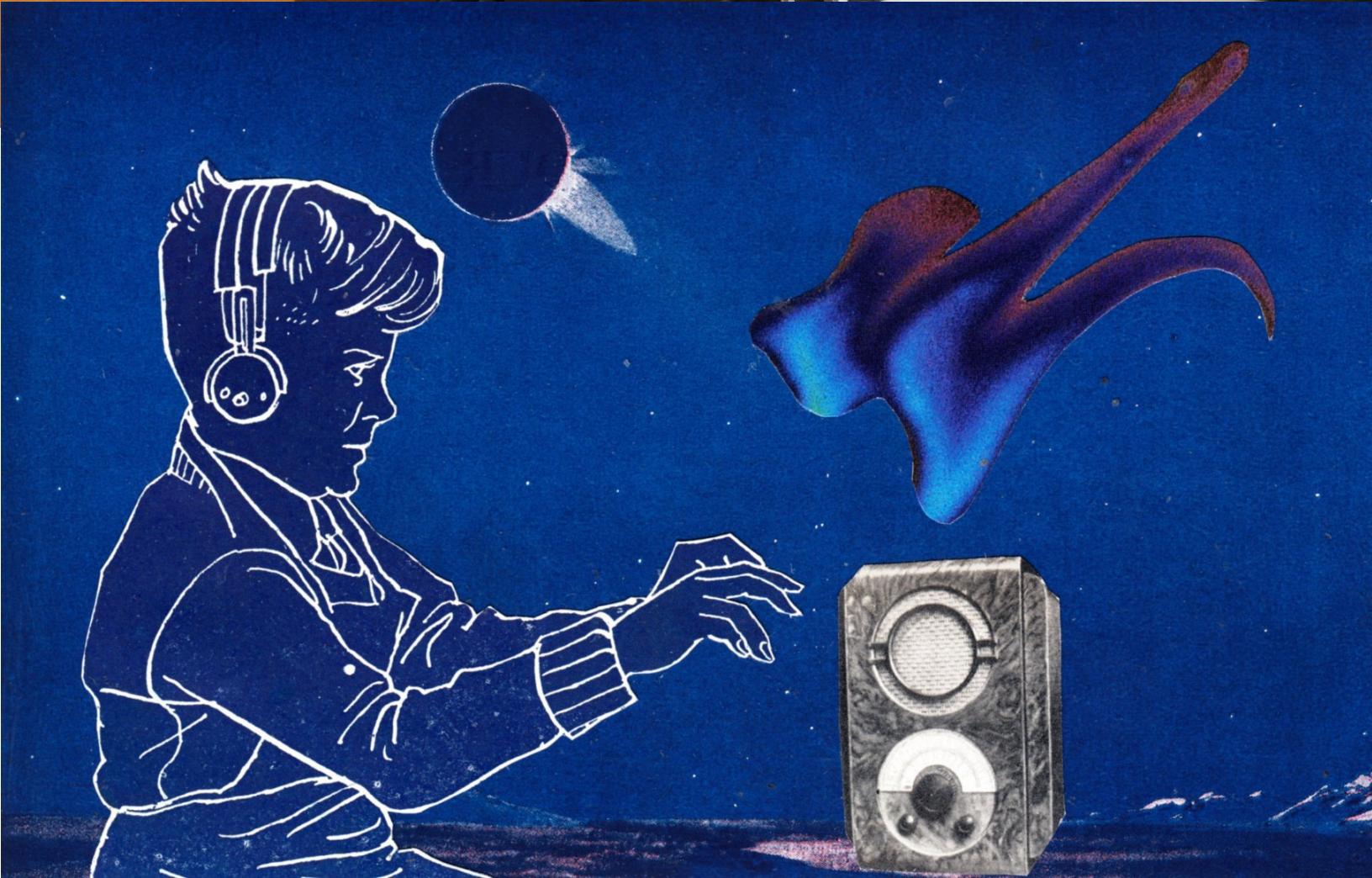
An awful lot of the collage one sees is of this essentially empty type, often given resonant titles to lend a spurious meaning.

DAL: Yes, that might well have been what was wrong with my hesitant attempt at a re-organised picture series! /laughter/

BM: Increasingly I try to make pictures that, in addition to a visual appeal, are capable of an interpretation, or more than one. They have to appeal to the heart and mind as well as to the eye.

Another thing I do less of these days is to try to match the elements in a picture so exactly that the viewer may not at first realise that there has been an alteration. This is hard to do, and less appropriate for website display, where people can't run their fingers over them to find the joins. So I refer to the pictures less often as "alternative illustrations" and more as "collages" — though I still aim for a pictorial coherence that is neglected by most other collagistes.

DAL: Do such rare collage materials cost a small fortune and take ages to find, involving attending jumble and car-boot sales and suchlike? Or is there now a small cottage industry of middlemen devoted to swiftly getting them to crafters, via eBay and Etsy?

BM: I go to dumps, car-boot sales [large open-air 'rummage' sales], and charity shops [thrift stores] all the time. Nowadays second-hand bookshops are very rare in the UK, sadly.

DAL: Yes, and their owners know 'the price' of everything and add £3 on top. There are no bargains to be had these days, even in the charity shops that also happen to carry a big range of used books.

BM: I have found a warehouse, though. One where they take in unwanted books from all over the country – charity shop rejects – and they let me rummage in their skips for things that even they can't sell online. There is a beauty to using material that has been given the thumbs-down by everybody else. Yes, it takes a lot of time, and money, but someone has to do it.

DAL: Yes, that sounds like a very useful source.

There must be a good deal of material which is rejected because crayoned or torn and grubby or spilled-on, but which has pages inside which are still good.

BM: There are websites offering public-domain images and many people work only with such electronic sources, sometimes to excellent effect. But I am happier with my scissors and magnifying visor, and I feel that this Luddite conservatism of mine gives my output a special look.

DAL: Yes, your self-portrait with goggles is rather sci-fi in a Doctor Who sort of way. By 'goggles' I mean your magnifying visor.

BM: Ah, yes, 'the goggles'. All of my cutting has to be extremely accurately done, so I have to use sharp needlework scissors and to use a magnifying visor that flips down in front of my spectacles. I bought it decades ago for identifying microfossils amongst beach sand. I'd recommend it. I actually do have a file labelled Goggles and I draw upon it when I want to show someone protecting themselves from persuasion or received ideas. Or people needing to see less of the folly and suffering surrounding us. I've got a similar file labelled Blindfold — but those pictures are used more critically. I've even a file called Puzzled. But what I'd like is one called Anxious, only I don't often find such pictures.

DAL: Yes, although I vaguely seem to remember from my sister's old comics that the British girls comics of the 1960s were fairly aggressively emotional — bullying, girls getting shut in haunted houses, falling off cliffs, etc.

In your work I can see the obvious art history influences, such as the great Joseph Cornell, the pre-1939 European engraving and photo-collagists. Which, I have to say, some of your work easily equals. Do you work within an awareness of that long tradition? A tradition that most contemporary artists have only been fully aware of since a full timeline was released in about 2007.

BM: Kind of you, but I'm no student of collage history. I never heard of Cornell, until recently.

Pictures:
"Point" (top);
"Enter" (below).

I like Schwitters' work, and I've seen some Max Ernst pictures. On Flickr people sometimes comment, referencing the animations that were made for *Monty Python*, which make me wince a bit. I love Magritte and Escher best.

There are some excellent collage artists on Flickr, people like Federico Hurtado.

DAL: Thanks. Did you get to see the Cornell exhibition in London? I think it was about a decade ago, now? Sadly I couldn't afford to go.

BM: No, but I did go the Schwitters show. I dislike London very much indeed.

DAL: Ah yes, I haven't been there for a few years now. Last time I nipped off the train at Euston Station and walked through the back-streets to the British Museum, which I suppose is not at all representative. I wonder if certain aspects of British culture are also an influence on you? Perhaps even the experience of radio for the imaginative listener, for — as we all know — on radio "the pictures are better" because one has to use one's imagination.

BM: Yes, a lot has changed. I remember the beginnings of some very important things, like skiffle music, television, and paperbacks. There was an ingenuous optimism around then, similar to that which we associate with the 1920s in America. But things develop relentlessly and lose their freshness. Modern cultures don't feel that positive to me. If radio is still painting pictures they are not so charming now.

DAL: Yes, I guess one has to be fairly selective n one's listening. But I think that downloadable unabridged audio books are a very positive development. I recent listened to the entire *Conan* stories again, mostly via their excellent Trantor recordings. Podcasts are wonderful in terms of the range of topics that they give one, and they're also not subject to the same sorts of relentless biases that one finds at the BBC. One can even find a lot of 'old tyme' radio online, though it's mostly from America. I do wish the BBC would hurry up and release all their old radio documentaries and dramas online. There were a lot of little sci-fi and fantasy gems in the 1970s and 80s. Of course, one can get the

major items — like the BBC's 1981 dramatisation of *The Lord of the Rings*, which I think is done in about 15 hours. But others seem lost. I remember *The Day of The Triffids* serialised at 7.20am in 15 minute bursts, over several weeks.

Talking of memories — what place do your own personal memories have in the making of your work?

BM: In recent years I've tired of indulging in trivial wittiness and I've tried to invest my pictures with a poetic emotionality, so inevitably my personal feelings and history require expression. At times the picture title signals this, but otherwise it's for the viewer to speculate. The pictures I'm most pleased with combine such a feeling, or an idea, with interesting visual impact.

DAL: You've certainly succeeded, on all sorts of levels. Do you have a personal symbolism that expresses itself through such work? One can see repeating symbols of course — but do they become interlinked in your mind? Such that you say: "ah, the surface of the moon, I can link that with X to express Y and Z".

BM: I use moonscapes and desert backgrounds to prompt a universalist response. I've got some favourite protagonists, like the Osram Lady and the ball-passing boys, who feature in books that come up frequently in the skips at the charity waste-yards. There are some particular girls caught in a moment of anxious indecision, whom I use a lot of in-jokes about choice and existentialist dilemmas. By the way, I've found that girls' storybooks furnish more appealing and adaptable imagery than boys' ones.

DAL: Yes, I'd imagine that the illustrations were originally designed to appeal to the somewhat more mature emotional development of girls, whereas boys of the same age — in middle childhood — tend to be more concerned with mastering speed and space, with mechanical things or schemes of classification/collecting, and with impressing other slightly older boys. Hence girls' commercial illustrations will tend to need to carry more emotional impact, in their poses, expressions, clothing, hair.

How would you like your work to be shown in the future? I'm thinking of the way that Cornell's boxes so strongly worked to enhance and frame his creations. But you seem to have gone the opposite way — no frame at all, just the frame of the viewer's desktop monitor or tablet. What would be your reaction be to a curator who wanted to put them on white-wall gallery walls?

Or do you take an anti-collector / anti-gallerist approach, where the only presentation is to be digital and Creative Commons?

BM: Once, 14 years ago, my early pictures were exhibited in a small gallery in Winchester. For that, I bought 200 old frames at car-boot sales. That made sense, then. But for the "Pass" series — of ten contiguous A4 sheets — you'd need a frame about nine feet long and one foot high, so I guess the showing of that in a gallery will never happen! Actually it's unlikely that there will be any significant call for a gallery

exhibition. So, yes, I'm reconciled to showing them digitally, on Flickr. And now I'm trying to sell the better ones as prints — via an American website. Most of my work is too small to be well suited to gallery walls.

DAL: I see. Do you think that the paper ephemera of the 2010s have the same creative re-combinatory appeal, for someone in the 2050s, as the material that you now use? I guess I'm partly asking about what role you feel nostalgia plays for the viewer, in terms of a picture having its impact.

BM: Won't people look back at this period with contempt, rather than nostalgia? Future collagistes will probably continue to mine the same periods of imagery that we do now, the Victorian and Edwardian years, the 1920s and 1950s because of their appealing naivety, their lack of the misapplied sophistication that characterises the early 21st century.

Canis Minor   Gemini   Auriga   Perseus

Orion   Taurus   Triang:
Ophiuchus   Scorpio   Centa

Aquila   Sagittarius   Ara

Cassiopeia Cepheus Cygnus Lyra Herc:

Andromeda Lacerba Delph: Aquila

urus

Crux Argo Canis Major

DAL: So you think it's the factor of a having a certain intrinsic *naiveté* that marks out 'the collagable'? That's interesting. Yes, you're right, it's then a little difficult to think of current material that's not touched with a certain crass commercialism or cynicism.

But I guess those in the 1950s may have thought the same about their own time. Nostalgia is a lens that doesn't allow much cynicism through it. And after fifty years, everyone except the academics forget the reasons for our culture's old worn-out cynicisms, or even that they ever existed. An example would be the *Monty Python* animations mentioned earlier — there's probably no-one alive now who can mentally place themselves back into that moment in the mid 1960s, who was *also* aware of what that Victoriana meant to older people in the 1950s and 60s, and how it was then re-used as form of youth rebellion. That moment in time has been lost, except to academics who could give you a dull lecture about it — that still wouldn't capture *what it felt like* to see those animations for the first time.

BM: There may be something of a set time that has to pass before images acquire collagibity – it's true that I can now use some stuff from the 1960s and even the 70s that I wouldn't have touched 15 years ago.

DAL: Yes, I'd noticed that some 1970s material was being used. What neglected current ephemera should people be saving for the

future, in 2016? That they are not already? I'm thinking: sweets and ice-cream wrappers could become rare, once sugary stuff gets all-but banned — people just throw them away; pop and beer cans; cheap mobile phone covers; kids' temporary tattoos and stickers; pre-digital printed magazines, like a run of *Wired* in print; certain beautiful shoes, hats, cheap sunglasses.

BM: Images of children got up as adults, anything pouty, petulant and provocative. Magazine shots redolent of self-indulgence and aggression. Stuff illustrative of organisations wheedling money out of you.

DAL: Interesting. Those positive/negative forces may well be looked back on as representative of our time, in the future, as we establish a more homogenised and more conformist and smoothed-down culture. The 'Spice Girls to Brexit' era may well be summed up as: defiance *and* allure / naïve charm *and* blatant commercialism. And as we become a people rather more accepting of commercialism in all corners of our lives. Talking of the future, your work generally seems to be rather hopeful in tone. Are you optimistic for the future?

BM: I'm by no means optimistic, and I worry that my Flickr followers may get fed up with the grumpy cynicism of a lot of my pictures. However, I do like to tell stories of escape and adjustment, of people making changes and trying to transcend their limiting backgrounds. A recent picture, "Spero", showing two girls

perceiving a different future (seen at the very end of this interview), is one of my favourites. What will probably happen to those two girls, though, is another matter.

DAL: Ah, well… you see I don't find "grumpy cynicism", I see a sort of wistful optimism and a very human vision — which often seems about curiosity and adventure, and bravery in the face of risk. But I guess that's what makes art — great art allows one to see multiple things in it.

Is 'less, more' for your pictures?

BM: Well, whether a picture comes out as visually very simple or as complex and busy depends mostly on the material I'm working with. Some images lend themselves to the impressively simple style, but others require reduplication or adaptation. It may take three minutes or 12 hours to make a picture. I'm quite happy to work in either manner but am usually more successful in the simple mode.

DAL: Well, many thanks for this interview. Perhaps we should end with a question from one of your own picture titles: "What shall I say?"

BM: I shall say that your questions have been very well chosen. You're the first person to have taken the trouble to articulate a sensitive response to what I've done, and thank you very much for it!

DAL: Thank you.

Bob May is online at Flickr at:

https://www.flickr.com/photos/alternative_illustrations/

Bob sells high-quality prints at:

https://society6.com/recombiner/prints
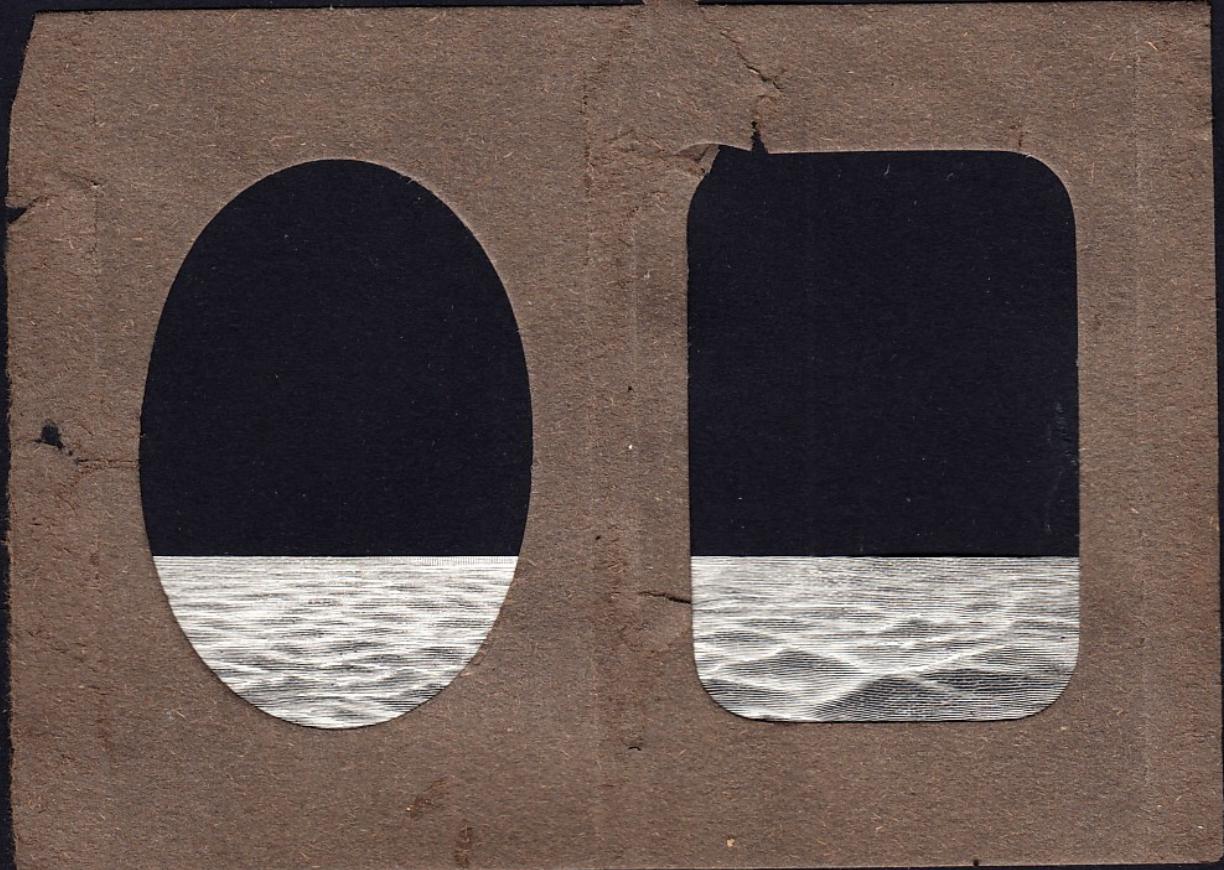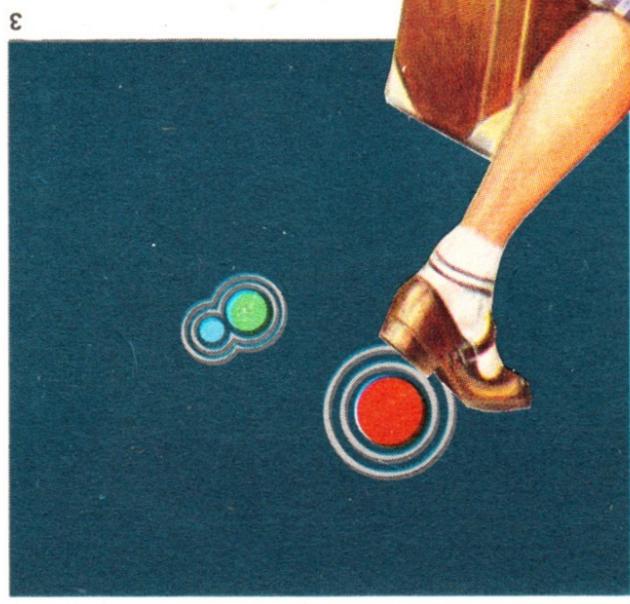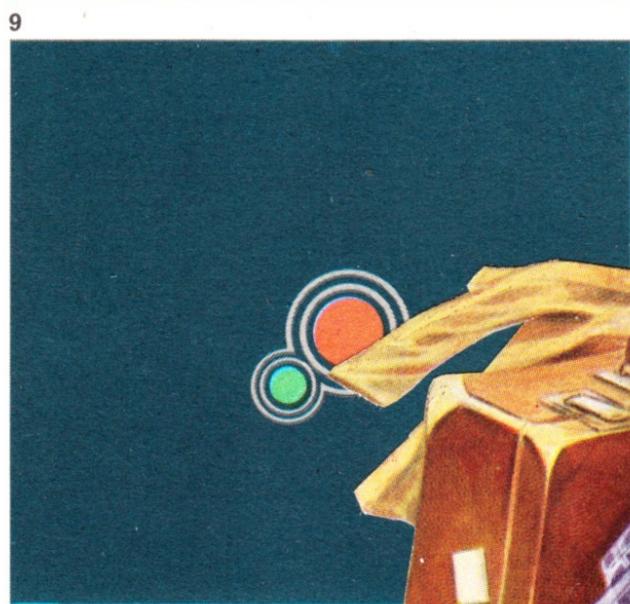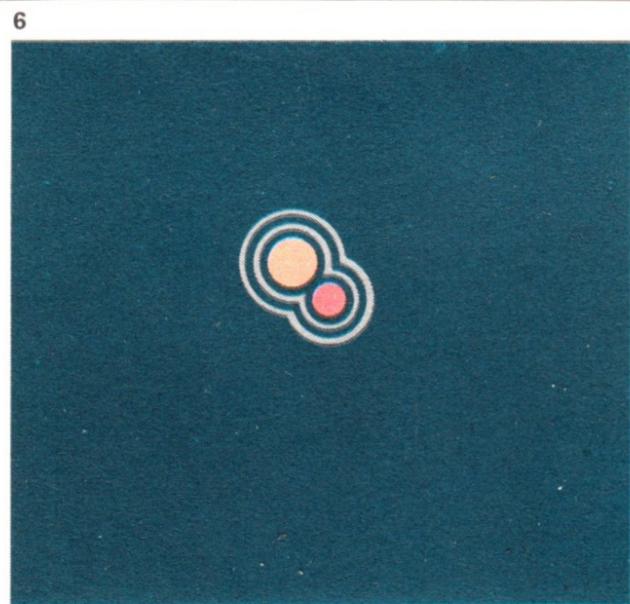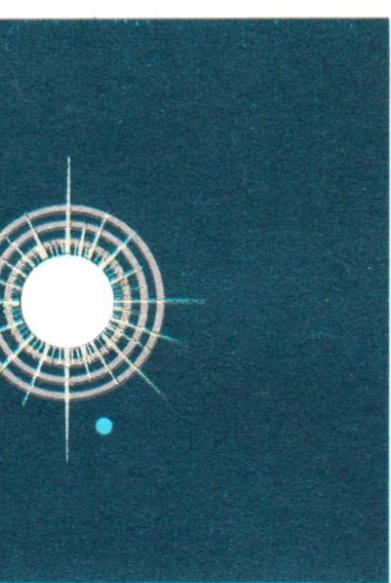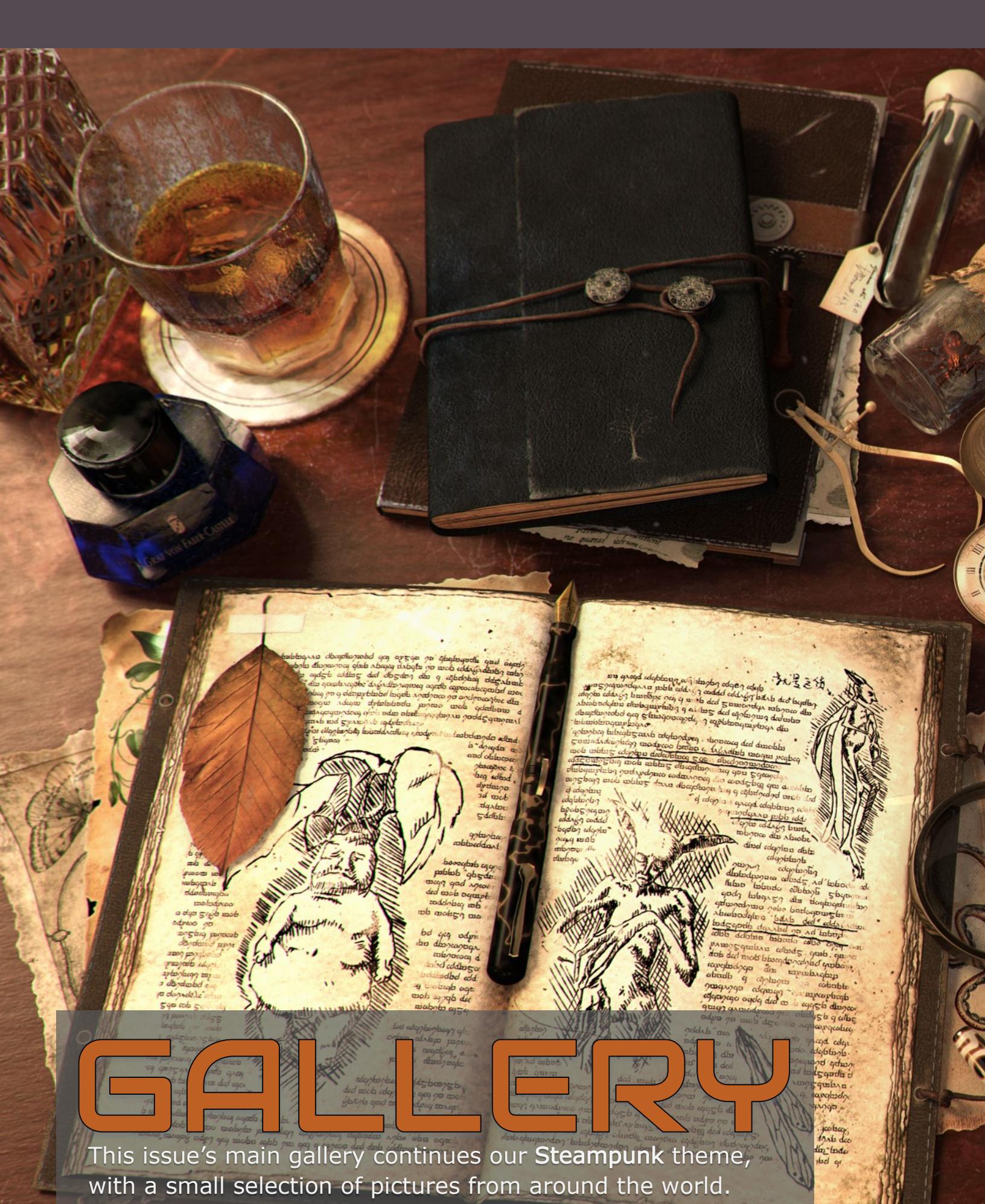
GALLERY

This issue's main gallery continues our **Steampunk** theme,
with a small selection of pictures from around the world.

Pictures: "Steampunk Robot vs. Old One" by Kaek (Chile, South America). Apparently inspired by the best-selling Chilean graphic novel *1899: Cuando los Tiempo Chocan* (Francisco Ortega and Nelson Daniel), which appears to be unknown among comics fans in the Anglosphere.

Opposite: "Steampunk Library" by Sixtine-D (Sixtine Dano, France).

Picture: "Captain's Cabin" by Uao7 (Leon Liang, USA). Maya, Mental Ray.
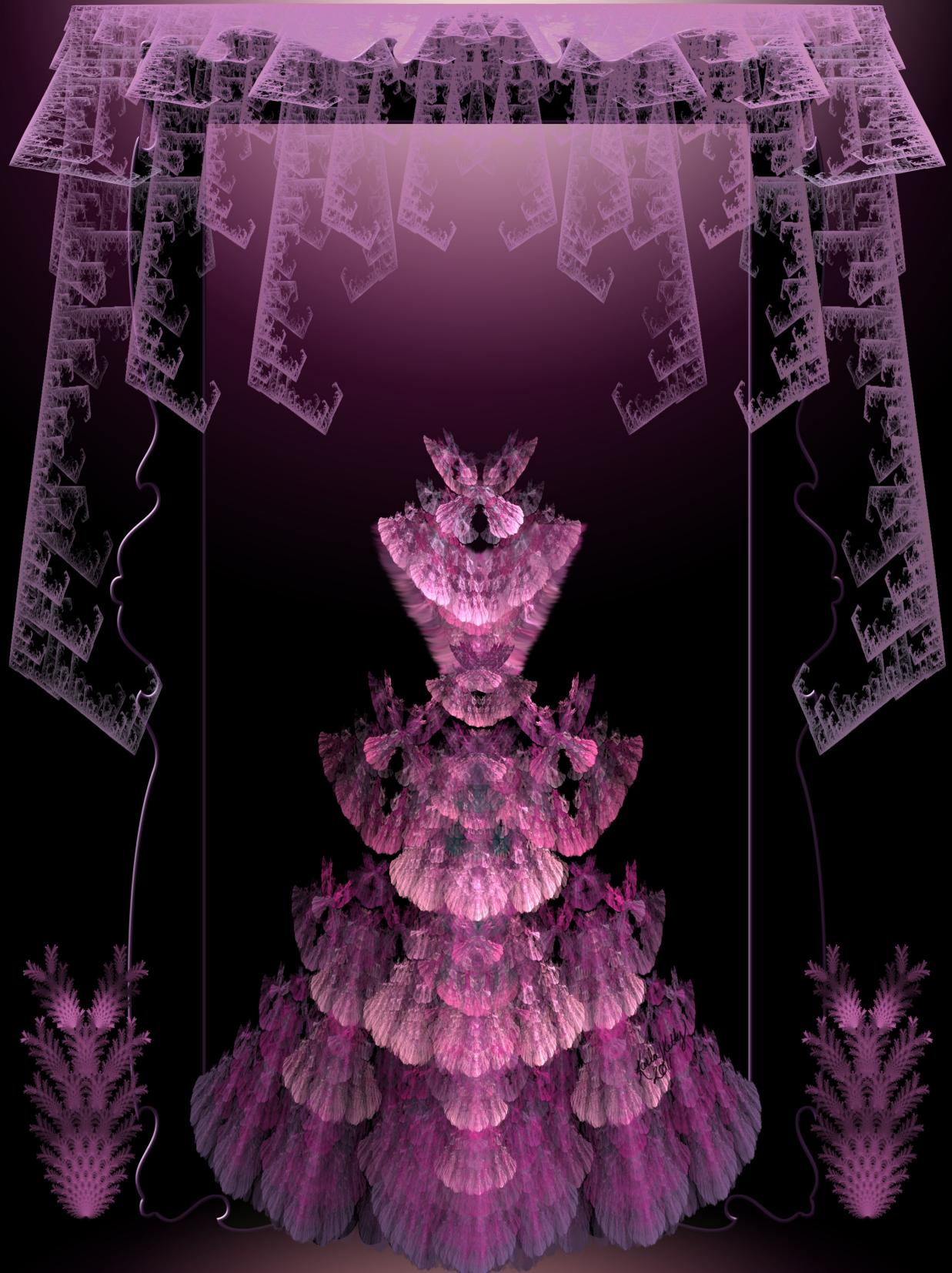
Pictures: "3D" by <u>Ry-Spirit</u> (Ry Ry Pie Mcfly, Australia). "Pretty in Pink" by <u>Karla J. Kitty</u> (USA). 3D Apophysis fractals, collaged with Photoshop.

RAGONFLY

ELLY

HUMAN ORNITHOPTER
C.H.

CAUDAL FINS
(4 CROSSED)

fig A. WING (UPPER)
(SET OF PAIRED WINGS)

All fins/wings
made of
canvas stronger th
vellum

fig C. WING (LOWER)

4 PISTON

FLY WHEEL

ENGINE SUPPORTED
BY ARMATURE UNDER WING

AMERICAN KESTREL
adult m.
falco sparverius 0412
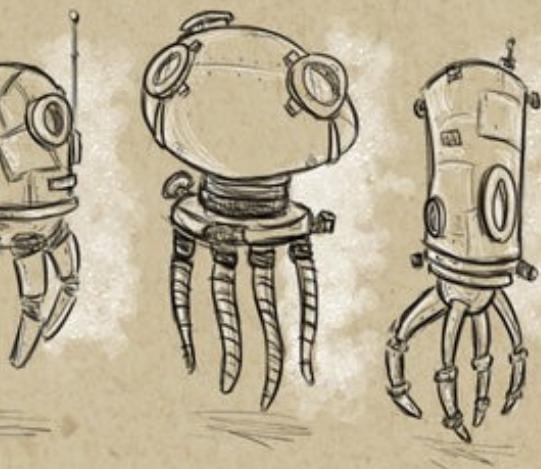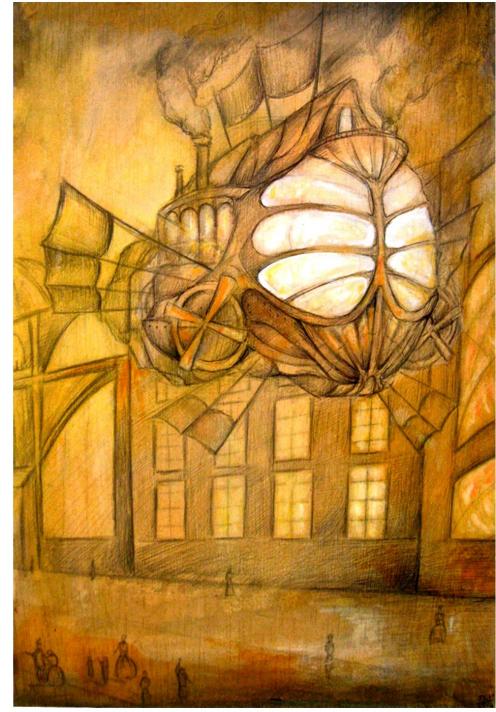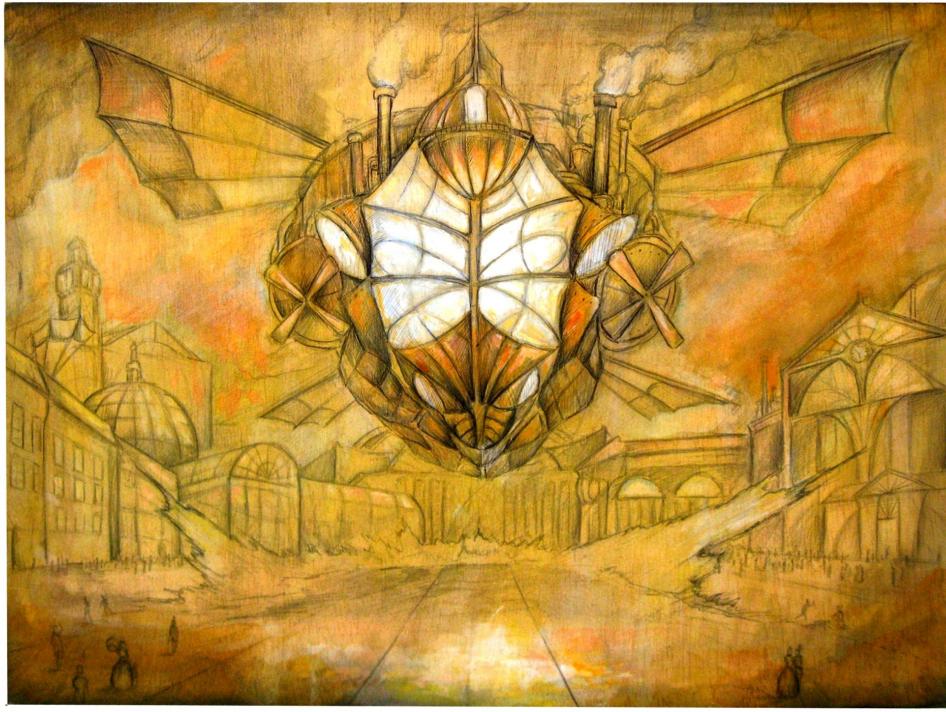
Pictures: "Airlords of Airia: Airship Bridge"; "Airlords of Airia: Airlords"; "Airlords of Airia: Wodnik City" (detail), all by Airlords (Dirk Muller, Germany).

Digital Art
LIVE

IMAGIN

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

VOYAGE OF TIME (2016)

It's been said that movie director Terrence Malick (*Days of Heaven*, *The New World*, *The Thin Red Line*) makes "cathedrals of cinema". If so, then his latest film may be his most soaring and purest cathedral yet. The new 40-minute *Voyage of Time* took Malick nearly four decades to complete, and will finally be released — onto IMAX screens only — on 7th October 2016.

Voyage of Time will launch viewers on a cosmic journey through time and space. Narrated by Brad Pitt, the film will pass through the eons, from the birth of the stars and galaxies in secret and fathomless gulfs, to the rise of life on Earth and the evolution of modern humans, then out into our 'long now' and far on into the distant future.

Malick's film is the first beneficiary of the $50 IMAX Original Film Fund, which aims to reward film-making innovation and ambitious new visions for the presentation of top-quality documentary cinema.

Douglas Trumbull (*2001: A Space Odyssey*) served as a consultant on the film, and Ennio Morricone is said to be providing the musical score. One of the key themes is that of the Minotaur and the maze — a myth that has stood the test of time in European poetry and painting for over three thousand years.

http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1945228/

ARIUM

Promotional press picture courtesy of IMAX Corporation / Broad Green Pictures.

Vintage Tomorrows

Vintage Tomorrows is a feature-length documentary that is finally set to leave film festival purgatory, thanks to Samuel Goldwyn Films. The film will be released in mid July 2016 on DVD and as a download. Loosely based on the history book *Vintage Tomorrows*, the documentary tells the story of the rise of steampunk as a creative subculture. The makers managed to interview many of the genre's current leading names, plus a few of the early pioneers such as William Gibson and Bruce Sterling (*The Difference Engine*). Today parts of the steampunk 'movement' increasingly takes it a touch too seriously — but the reviews of *Vintage Tomorrows* suggest there are also many moments of fun in the documentary, to counterbalance some apparently rather over-earnest discussion of the genre's political nuances.

http://vintagetomorrows.tumblr.com/
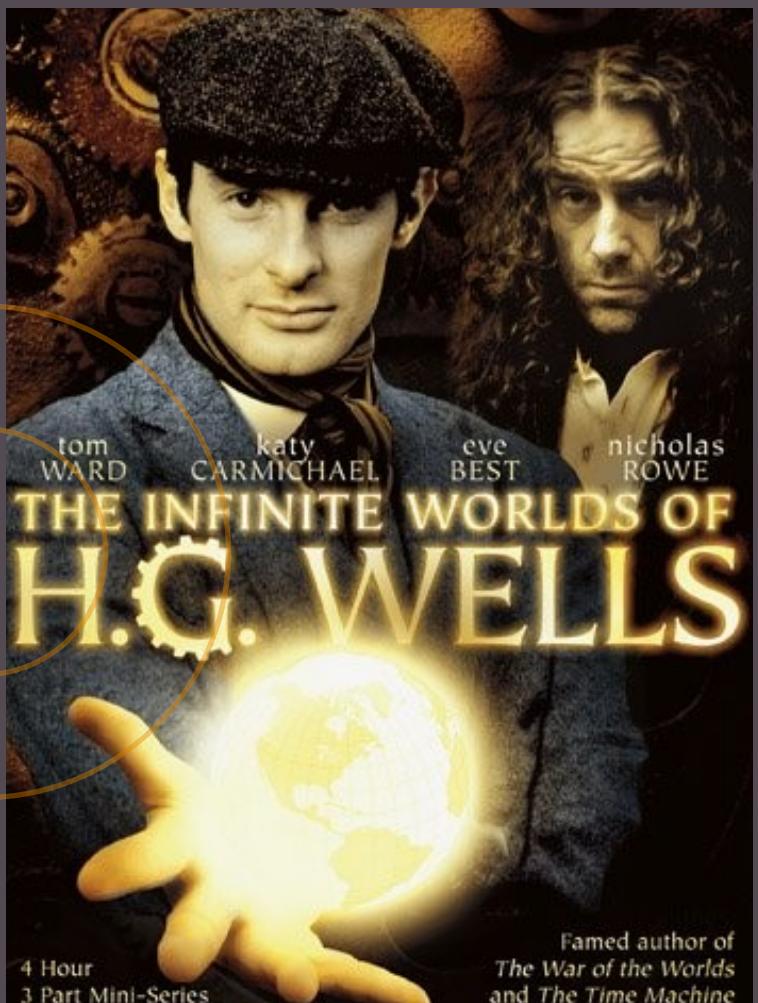
The Infinite Worlds of H.G. Wells

The Infinite Worlds of H. G. Wells is a little-known 2001 TV mini-series. Impeccably made, costumed and acted, fans of Victorian science fiction will find it well worth tracking down. The famous 'father of science-fiction' H. G. Wells (*The Time Machine*, *War of the Worlds*) is placed front and centre as the star, a sort of cross between Doctor Who and Sherlock Holmes. It shouldn't work, but it does. Each of the six episodes adapts one of Wells's stories, sometimes quite minor ones. But the adaptations are carefully enhanced and expanded — for example, the late and little-regarded short story "The Queer Story of Brownlow's Newspaper" (1932) becomes a gripping and beautifully acted time-loop tale, with stunningly good working-class actors in the lead. Due to Wells's incredibly long copyright in the U.K., the series is currently only available here on a U.S. import DVD.

http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0280770/
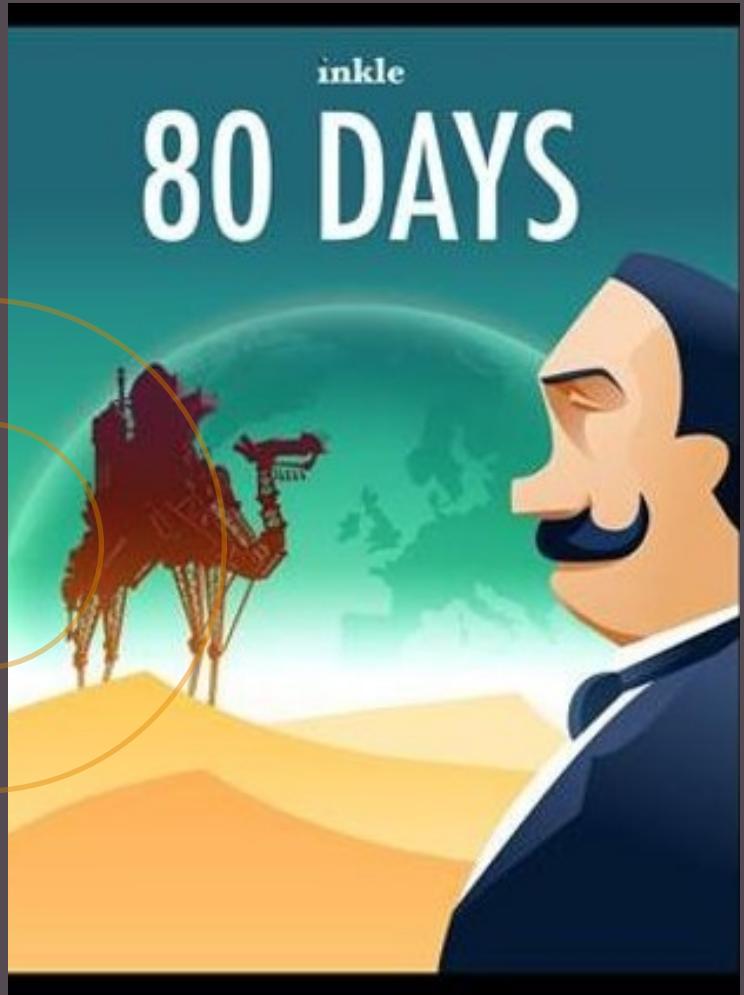
Miss Peregrine's Home ...

Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children is a highly anticipated major feature-film about strange children with weird talents. It's helmed by the famous Tim Burton and might best be described as an "*X-Men* meet *Harry Potter* mashup, via Neil Gaiman" — though it's actually adapted from the hit debut novel by Ransom Riggs. Tim Burton has had some brutal reviews for his recent big-budget studio films, so it's a little discouraging to think this film is bankrolled by 20th Century Fox *and* has had many release-date shifts. Still, we have hopes that this could be the film that will finally allow Burton's more personal vision to shine through. The film is set for cinema release in the USA and UK around 1st October, in time for Halloween, along with a good deal of tie-in tween merchandising.

http://www.peregrinesmovie.com/

80 Days

"You are now employed as a valet in the service of Mr. Phileas Fogg, a British gentleman. This is very good — but now your new employer wishes to circumnavigate the world in just eighty days! Mr Fogg's reputation, and a wager of £20,000 rides on the outcome! Do you: Book Train Tickets to Dover | Buff Up Mr Fogg's Pith Helmet | Fry Bacon and Make Mr. Fogg Some Toast."

You get the idea. It's like those old choose-your-own-adventure books, but *80 Days* (2014) is a packaged as a slick gamebook for newer digital tablets and mobile phones. It's told at novel length as a narrative adventure, and is simply but effectively illustrated. The game won many awards and was *Time* magazine's 'Game of the Year'. *PC Gamer* magazine gave it 91% and called it... "One of the best story-driven games on PC, *80 Days* is beautifully written, effortlessly charming, and thrillingly unpredictable."

http://www.inklestudios.com/80days/

Tarzan: Myth and Mystery
Until 29th October 2016, USA.

Through the summer of 2016 the Brazos Valley Museum of Natural History, Texas, will stage this unique and exclusive exhibition of Jim Goodwin's major private collection of *Tarzan* art and memorabilia. Intermingled with the collection will be the Museum's finest life-sized taxidermy animals from central Africa. Early *Tarzan* and other Edgar Rice Burroughs publications, beautiful original artwork, rare books, and rarely seen film posters will all be shown.

http://www.brazosvalleymuseum.org/exhibits/tarzan-myth-mystery

Pictures, from left, across double-page spread:

Cover of *The All-Story*, the Munsey proto-pulp magazine that contained *Tarzan*'s debut story.

Promo t-shirt design for the "Fantastic Worlds" exhibition at the Smithsonian.

del Toro's life-size H. P. Lovecraft, seen browsing in the vast collection in Toro's "Bleak House".

The famous Judge Dredd "Cursed Earth" cover for Prog 61 of *2000 AD*. Art by Mike McMahon.

Fantastic Worlds, 1780-1910
Until 26th February 2017, USA.

"Fantastic Worlds: Science and Fiction 1780–1910" is the first exhibition to debut in the newly-renovated Smithsonian Libraries Exhibition Gallery, in Washington D.C. Vistors will see a choice selection of rare books and ephemera from the dawn of science-fiction literature.

Be aware that those expecting to see lots of steampunk gadgets and costumes may be rather disappointed. Although the exhibition is presented to the usual very high standards of the Smithsonian, "Fantastic Worlds" is only a medium-sized show and is somewhat scholarly. It mostly has many laid-open rare early science-fiction books and ephemera shown behind large glass cases. But if you happen to be in Washington D.C. anyway, and have the time to make the most of the show's many small details, it definitely looks like "Fantastic Worlds" should be worth a trip across town.

http://library.si.edu/exhibition/fantastic-worlds

At Home With Monsters

Until 27th November 2016, USA.

Famous sci-fi and horror film director Guillermo del Toro (*Mimic*, *Hellboy* I & II, *Pan's Labyrinth*, *Pacific Rim)* is to exhibit 500 items from his personal memorobilia collection. This will be exhibited at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art from 1st August to 27th November 2016, and will then visit Minneapolis and Toronto in Canada. del Toro has said that he hopes the show may also travel to Mexico and Europe, but for that major sponsors still need to be found. del Toro's huge collection of 700 items normally resides in its own dedicated mansion, named "Bleak House", on the del Toro estate. The collection is famous within fandom as a masterly assemblage of macabre and weird items from the pulp, horror and gothic genres — including much original art and even a creeply like-life life-sized H. P. Lovecraft! There are also many props and concept illustrations from del Toro's many movies.

http://www.lacma.org/art/exhibition/ guillermo-del-toro-home-monsters

2000 AD art exhibition

23rd-25th September, London.

2000 AD is Britain's long-running sci-fi weekly comic book, which has long served as a proving ground for our finest young artists and writers. In late 2016 in London *2000AD* will presents a large gallery of the title's finest original comic art, including original art from Judge Dredd, Strontium Dog, Rogue Trooper, Robo-hunter, Halo Jones and many more, at the International London Tattoo Convention. There will also be a unique opportunity to meet the finest past and present illustrators of this cult comic, and purchase prints and art books.

The *2000 AD* art show will be just one gallery of the much larger International London Tattoo Convention, which is one of the largest collections of body art in the world. The venue is the Tobacco Dock in Wapping, within walking distance of the famous Tower of London. (After Brexit, London is probably as affordable for tourists now as it ever will be — visit now!)

http://www.thelondontattooconvention.com/

Are you interested in being interviewed in a future issue of
the magazine? Or presenting a webinar for our series?
Please send us the Web address of your gallery or store,
and we'll visit and take a look!

paul@digitalartlive.com

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