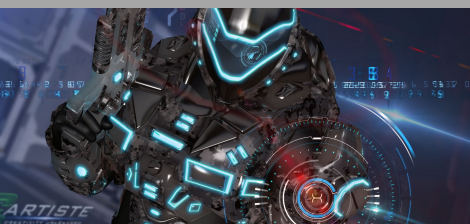


# Digital Art LIVE

## 'CYBERTRONIC' ISSUE



JAY, 'CG ARTIST'



GIOVANNI, 'KEPLIANZAR'



JACQUES PENA



ISSUE FOURTEEN  
DEC 2016



# 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:  
"SciFiGirl" by  
ShibaShake.  
DAZ Studio,  
iRay and  
Photoshop.

'CYBERTRONIC' ISSUE

# CONTENTS

## EDITORIAL

— 05

## BACK ISSUES INDEX

— 22

## ART CONTESTS

— 24

## REVIEW: UGEE 1910b PEN TABLET

— 38

## 'GLOW' ART IN THE PULPS

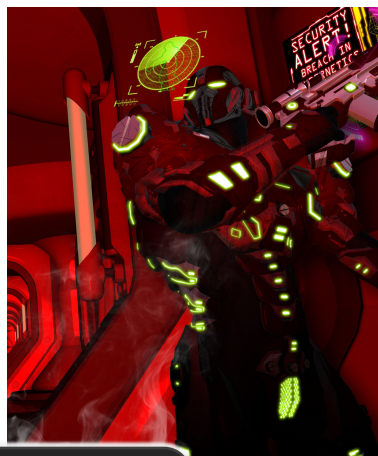
— 48

## GALLERY

— 60

## IMAGINARIUM

— 82



## INTERVIEWS

— 6

### 'CG ARTISTE'

We talk with Jay, about emerging as a 3D artist, his work with DAZ Studio, and ways of blending 2D with 3D.

DAZ STUDIO | PS

"Stop caring about what others think and do what feels right. I'm a perfectionist, but I stop at what others see as perfect. I'll be my harshest critic so I just make *me* happy."



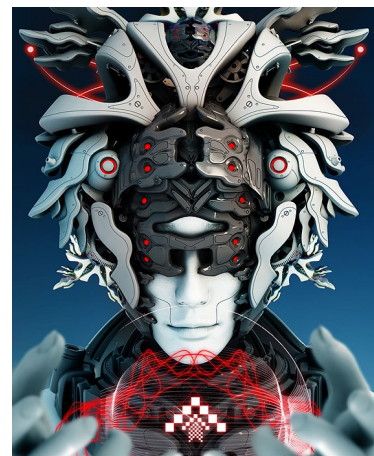
— 26

### GIOVANNI, 'KEPLIANZAR'

Giovanni designs industrial iron-ore plants for a living, and in his spare time makes impressive sci-fi and historical art.

VUE | DAZ STUDIO | PS

"I find that I can now recreate large-scale scenes in DAZ Studio 4.9 ... And recently I switched over to iRay, which ships with DAZ Studio. I like it for its simplicity, over Octane."



— 50

### JACQUES PENA

We talk with a professional game asset designer about 3dsMax, and the importance of 2D drawing skills for 3D.

3DS MAX | PS

"I'm always looking for ways sci-fi can help develop interpretations of an idea. ... how elements can look, or feel, when they are out in space. How interactions could behave and look in the future."





# MAGAZINE

Join our mailing list to get a free magazine speeding to your inbox.

Subscribe at [3dartdirect.com](http://3dartdirect.com).



# PODCAST

Our monthly fresh inspiration for sci-fi artists, available on [iTunes](#).

Subscribe to [the Podcast feed](#).



# LIVE

Join our live webinar-based workshops for digital artists.

[3DArtLive.com](http://3DArtLive.com)

Credits for pictures, from top left: detail from "Holodiagram" by CGArtiste; detail from "Get Ready to Daft" by Basse; "The Machine (part one)" by Giovanni.

## Paul Bussey

Editor, Conference Director  
[paul@digitalartlive.com](mailto:paul@digitalartlive.com)



## Dave Haden

Assistant Editor and Layout  
[dave@digitalartlive.com](mailto:dave@digitalartlive.com)



Copyright © 2016 Digital Art LIVE. Published in the United Kingdom. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior written permission of the publisher. No copyright claim is made by the publisher regarding any artworks made by the artists featured in this magazine.





## EDITOR'S LETTER

# WELCOME...

Remember the 1982 Disney movie Tron? It was a watershed in movie history since it introduced the notion of computer graphics being used throughout a movie. It was directed by Steven Lisberger, starring Jeff Bridges as Kevin Flynn and Bruce Boxleitner as Alan Bradley (TRON).

Yet despite the advanced graphical look, it's surprising to know that the movie didn't get an Oscar nomination for visual special effects; it was perceived that computer graphics were "too easy" to generate in comparison to hand drawn animation.

It's true as well that traditional matte painting (hand painted frames) was used fairly extensively, for instance the glowing circuitry on the character costumes.

Where did the idea for the movie come from? The director Lisberger saw Pong, perhaps the first videogame which pinged on screens in the early 1970s. Lisberger believed that computer graphics could be "very suitable for bringing video games and computer visuals to the screen."

In the day, something was used called the "Evans & Sutherland Picture System" (PS2). This was a high-resolution vector graphics machine drawing smooth and beautiful vector lines in real time on a CRT screen.

Frank Vitz who worked as the technical director on the visual effects at Abel and Associates, one of three companies who worked on the effects, noted that the team produced "one of Abel's signature looks, which comprised smoothly animating glowing vectors...archetypal and wildly unbounded; the art directors at Abel exploited it and produced an explosion of creative new styles."

The standout designs were the neon circuitry suits (best costume design Oscar nomination) and the light bikes, which naturally spurred a video game. With these concepts in mind and similar styled artwork, we present work from a series of talented digital artists, no doubt inspired by the original Tron and Tron Legacy movies.

Speaking of hand painting, Dave Haden our resident assistant editor gives a great review in this issue of the UGEE 1910b - a 19 inch pen tablet - a great low budget art tablet monitor.

**PAUL BUSSEY**

Editor and LIVE Webinar Director

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



FACEBOOK: [www.facebook.com/3DArtDirect](http://www.facebook.com/3DArtDirect)



RSS: <https://digitalartlive.com/feed/>



# 'CG ARTISTE'

*Digital Art Live* talks with Jay, aka 'CG Artiste' about the struggles of emerging as a 3D artist, his love of the TV series *Doctor Who*, his work with DAZ Studio, and blending 2D with 3D.



JAY, 'CG ARTISTE'

FLORIDA, USA

DAZ STUDIO | PS |  
SKETCHBOOK PRO

[WEB](#)





**Picture:** "Doctor Who: First Years" promo wallpaper, by Jay. Jay wrote a fan fiction series about the young version of the first ever Doctor Who (played by William Hartnell). His photographer was Renee Keith.

**DAL:** CG, welcome to *Digital Art Live* magazine. Shall we call you CG or would you prefer another name?

**CG:** CG works for me, but my name is Jay. Hence the name "The Big Jay" you will see in some place. CG Artiste was my attempt at being all pretentious */laughs out loud/*.

**DAL:** Yes, we've all been there. Now, judging by your online gallery, comics and Doctor Who were your first love in science fiction. How did you first get into *Doctor Who*?

**CG:** A friend of mine, whose opinion I respect, had seen the 2005 reboot with Christopher Eccleston and he knew that the new season was about to start with David Tennant as Doctor Who. Then I found that the American TV channel SciFi (pre-their "SyFy" name change) was doing a weekend long first season build up to the new series — so I jumped on and was hooked.

**DAL:** Tennant was one of the best Doctors, so you chose a superb time to jump in. How do American audiences take *Doctor Who* generally, in your experience? I get the feeling that many in America don't really 'get' the Doctor. Too eccentrically British, too ideas-led, I'd suspect.

**CG:** I think the smarter sci-fi fans... Can I say that? Sci-fi?

**DAL:** Oh yes, don't worry. We don't take any notice of the "halt, we're the Word Police!" stuff, here. Sci-fi, scifi, science fiction, speculative fiction — call it whatever name you want.

**CG:** So, I think the smarter sci-fi fans understand the overall premise and the British-focussed social commentary aspect of the show. While other, more pedestrian sci-fi fans — who only like transporters and light-sabers, they look at it as boring. I was a big Asimov fan as a boy, so 'higher thinking' science fiction doesn't scare me. It helped that the circa 2005 *Doctor Who* series took a lot of cues from the storytelling of Joss Whedon and changed a bit to fit with today's audiences.

# EVERY GREAT STORY HAS A BEGINNING



**DAL:** So... Tennant or Smith, which is your favourite Doctor? I have to say that I think Tennant was a high water-mark for the whole multi-Doctor series, although a couple of Smith episodes were admittedly classics. And I've been with it since the early days of John Pertwee, minus one or two of the duff ones who came after Tom Baker.

**CG:** I have said this for almost every Doctor, the last one is always my favourite — until the new one captures my imagination and then I fall in love with that one.

**DAL:** Ah, yes, that's often true.

**CG:** That being said, Chris Ecclestone reintroduced me to the series but Tennant took it to a whole new level for me. He brought such gravitas and and 'agedness' to the character, despite the outer shell that I loved. Now when Smith started I was unsure, but then the end of the first episode of Series 5 — when he faces the alien threat and calls them back and then asks them if Earth is protected and the alien is flashing through screenshots of the previous Doctor and he steps through David Tennant's face and says "Hello... I'm the Doctor...basically — RUN." I was sold.

**DAL:** Yes, I think was that the bit did it for me.

**CG:** Having seen the new Doctor, though I now have my absolute favorite, Smith is my favourite. Tennant will be 'my Doctor' — in that he is the one who solidified my love of the character. But Smith made him real in a way I had not thought possible.

**DAL:** I'm slowly coming around to the present Doctor now. The current one. The second series was an improvement, but they wasted so much on disposable 'monster of the week' episodes, when they had so many superb narrative arc elements such as Ashildr going to waste. But they sort of pulled it off at the end, when they went 'all H.P. Lovecraft' with the sea-castle, and then they got him to */spoiler/*. They actually ripped some of that from a recently discovered lost plot by Lovecraft, and then mashed it up with Lovecraft's "The Outsider" short story. What's your opinion on the current Doctor?

**CG:** Peter Capaldi achieved what he had intended to, with bringing the classic Doctor attitude back while still appealing to modern audiences. I thought where he excelled was that he married what I consider to be the Doctor's true nature. I mean that he is free of the trappings of a young face, but is still obviously an immortal ancient being. One who loves the material culture and morphology of what humanity would find interesting (hoodies, electric guitar playing etc). I'm ready for a younger Doctor though.

**DAL:** Yes, I think 'younger' will be next. What are your hopes for the coming third series of the current Doctor?

**CG:** Well, the trap that each series has fallen into is finding itself building the stakes so high that the next series has to reset the bar. With Tennant they did not know what to do in a post-Rose world — so the Martha series felt listless — but then Donna raised the bar again and the final "This is your life" with everyone from his run was breathtaking.

**DAL:** Yes, Donna was great. One thought "you'll never top Rose" and then Donna pops up.

**CG:** Then Smith had to start over again and you got to learn an entirely new thing — "Doctor Who?" but then paid us off with an epic ending */spoilers snipped/*. So now the Doctor is just being the Doctor. I've had a hard time believing a lot of the series' finales of late. I hope they now take a cue from the final Tennant series and start to wrap up threads we've been left. I don't know what to expect from the new Companion but the trick is most of the time these are the only batons we get handed off from one Doctor to the next. Few times does the Doctor get a clean slate like he did with Martha and eventually Amelia Pond. Normally the transition is as it was with Rose in the first regeneration of this run then Clara. The advantage is those transitions give us someone familiar, who can express all the doubt we have going in, but then seeing them come around helps us transition.

**DAL:** Yes, the Doctor is deep. Anyway, having risked boring the non-Doctor readers, let's get to the 3D graphics! I see you did a small collection



Pictures: "2013101" (top)  
and "Custom Built APC  
Interior" (below).



"I put together a three page short story  
and the bulk of the opening takes place  
inside an APC. I could not find anything  
prebuilt that I liked. So I decided to take  
what I had and build my own."



of *Tron* and *Doctor Who* wallpapers using the FX available via WowFX HD for iPad. Tell us about your interest in the websites and apps that can offer such effects, please? Which do you think are the best?

**CG:** You know, actually that was 'a phase'. I did that type of overlay work with just Photoshop, but those apps afforded me the chance to do something on the fly — something that I might not have had the time to do more fully. It's matte painting on a budget really */laughter/*. Actually I found that WowFX HD was one of the best for simplicity. That app company has actually done two more improved versions since, but they just got more complicated. If I could get it to work I'd still use the old WowFX HD, instead of the new ones. Ever since I've been doing more actual matte painting, with my iPad Pro and Apple Pencil, so for that kind of thing I'm not really sure what works anymore.

**DAL:** Ah, 2D — that's great. Yes, I think we're at a tipping point with digital sketching this Christmas. Microsoft has got behind that in a very big way with the Surface Pro 5, for instance. I was listening to a tech podcast and they had this Microsoft-watching expert on and he just couldn't figure it out — "why are they not pitching this \$3,000 tablet at the crowd who want to do email and spreadsheets, they'll sell millions more. Why are they just showing people that they can draw on it?" He didn't get it — user creativity is the 'killer app'. Of course, not everyone can get an expensive tablet — that's why we review the affordable budget Ugee 1910b pen tablet later in this issue. What are your favourite art apps for a tablet?

**CG:** Great art apps are Procreate and Sketchbook Pro for iPad. If you have a transparent PNG, you can use those but they don't come with out of the box solutions.

**DAL:** Have you since found Photoshop plugins that are as good as the online apps, for quickly adding FX to a picture?

**CG:** Going back to what I just said I don't think plugins are the solution. I have many, and also Photoshop Actions which have a lot of things they can do. But really I just keep a steady

collection of transparent PNG's of my own around. Stuff I've found on the Interwebs or my own PNG renders. Video compositing has also become a resource I use a lot. Taking alpha channelled videos of FX and opening them in Photoshop which makes each frame a layer and then saving the appropriate ones as transparent PNG's to keep in my quiver of available FX.

**DAL:** Ah, that's an interesting tip, thanks. What are two of your other favourite on-line resources related to digital art? Be it a forum, on-line galleries, model sites or other resources?

**CG:** I use DAZ Studio and as your readers will know that's a free program with a ton of great resources both bundled with it and available for purchase. There are lots of freebie sites too. For PNG renders I love planetrenders.com. I use that regularly to create 'inspiration boards'. Also DeviantArt has a ton of great stock resources to use. Google Image Search couldn't be more helpful. I never use those last two commercially but for the concept phase of things they are great.

**DAL:** Yes, Google Image Search is become rather clutter these days. I'm increasingly impressed with DuckDuckGo's image search. I see that you created a complete free-fan book *Doctor Who: the First Years*, springing from your ideas about a young 'first Doctor'. Tell us about how you went about making that major project, please?

**CG:** Well... I was on iStock.com — now GettyImages — and I was looking for steampunk stock for a completely different project. Found this model guy and downloaded a bunch of his work just because it inspired me. I contacted the photographer used, and asked what they would charge to make some original images for me and give me exclusivity for a year before putting them out on the stock website. They did and eventually the model found me on DeviantArt and we talked a lot. He's a fan of *Doctor Who*, and a story spun out of the images I got. Funny thing is that my attention is so easily distracted, which meant that I had written the entire first three "episodes" in story form — but never did anything with them because I got distracted.

"A while back I invented a story about Japanese teenagers who find out they are the children of angels and humans, and have fantastic powers. Prism was one of those characters. I took that story and laid it onto this throwaway FX render and I fell in love with it. She controls, manipulates and projects the light spectrum to devastating effect."

Pictures:

"Prism" (right) and

"Night Camo

Hunter" (below).



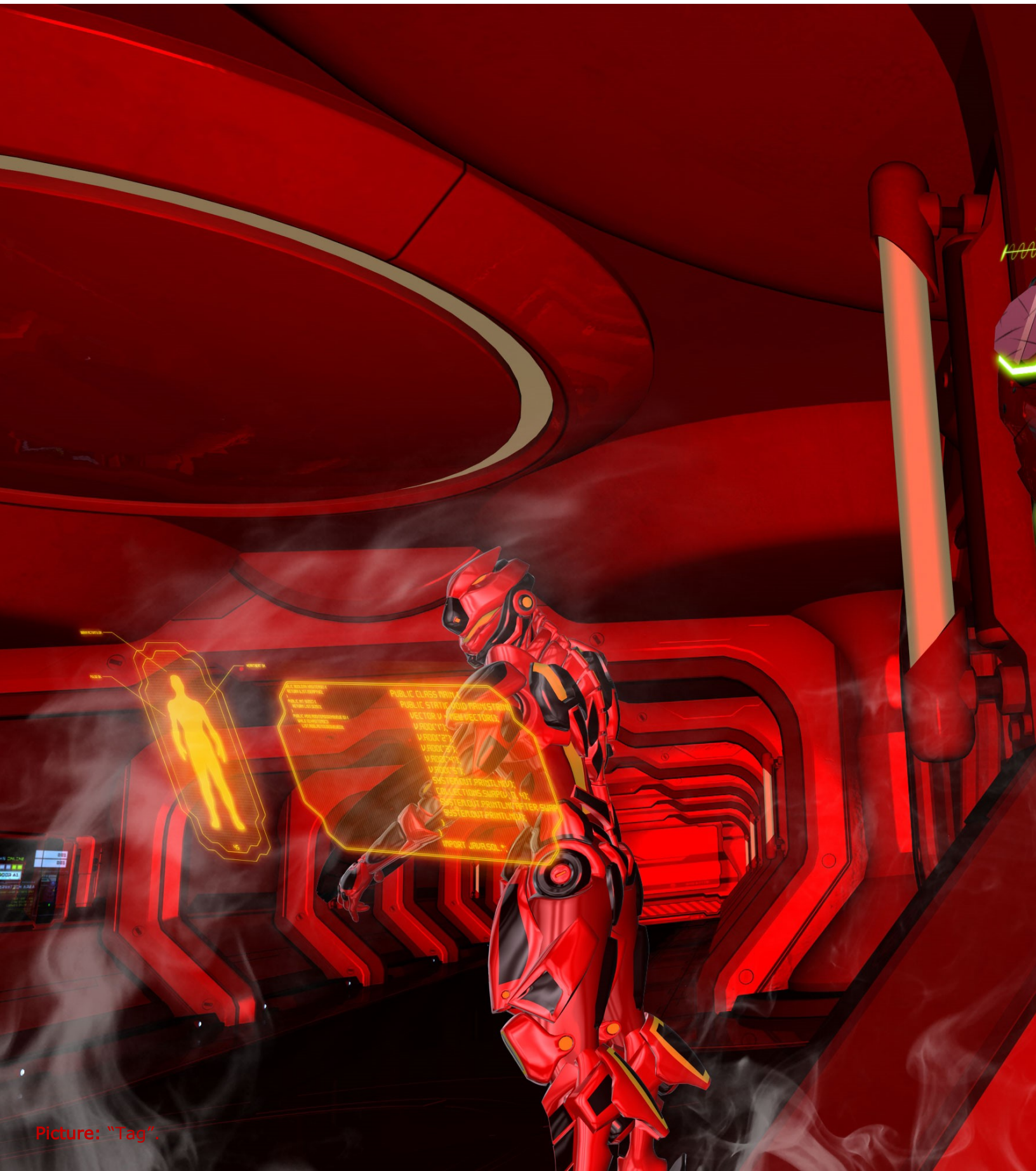


I'll need to dig this out and post it soon, so at least those episodes can also be loved. I am quite proud of them.

**DAL:** Tell us about how you got interested in 3D art, please? Were there any initial barrier on the

learning curve in digital art?

**CG:** I'm a creative person and as I just said I suffer from being easily distracted — so for me if it's not easy. I don't try to get too deep into it. So one day I was on DeviantArt and I found a



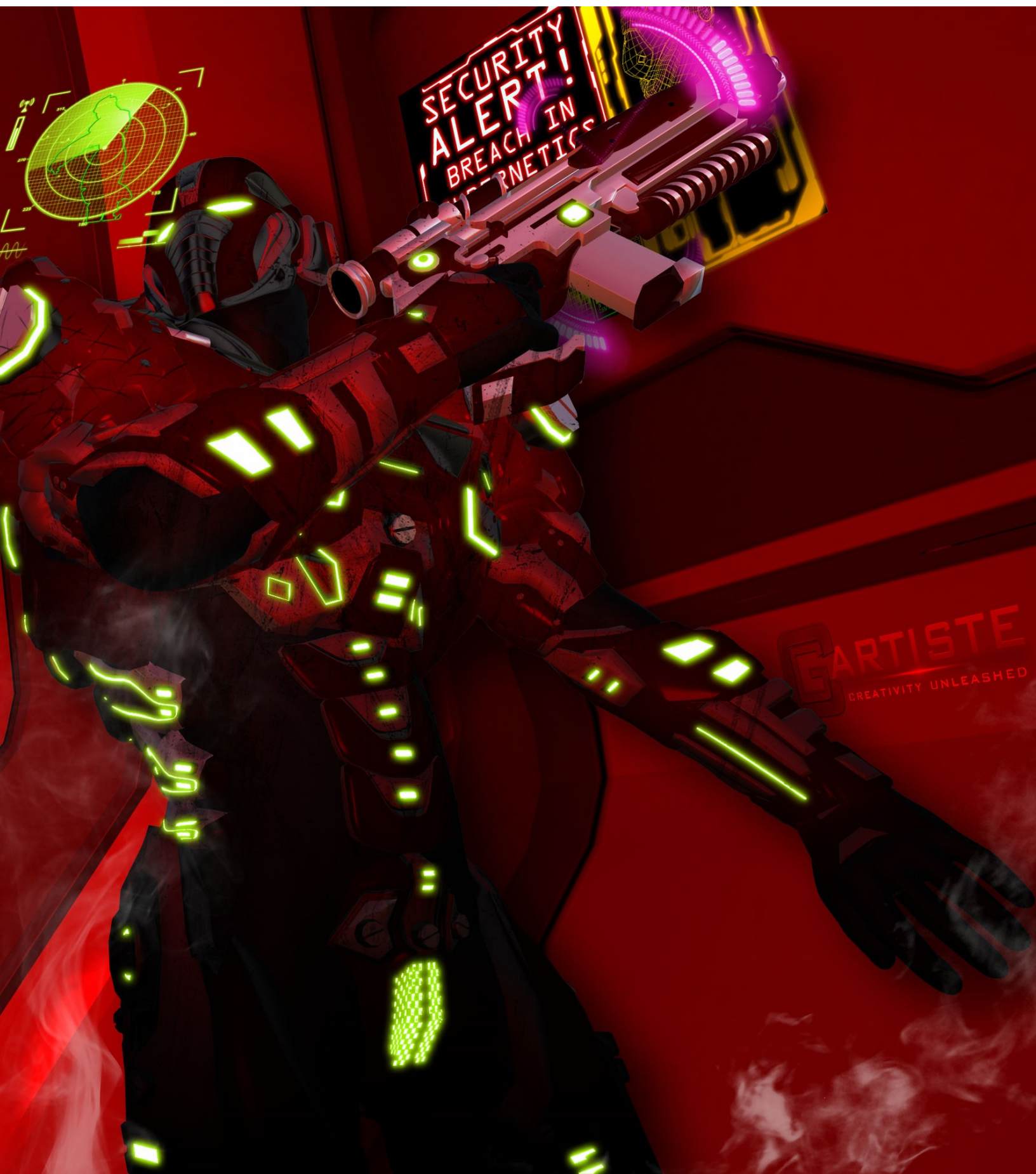
Picture: "Tag".



user who had posted pose references and noticed in the description they had been the user's first renders from Daz Studio 4 "...the newest version of this free software." It caught my attention, so I went to the website to read up

on it. I saw Daz3D had been associated with Poser — which I had tried but which I found overly complicated.

**DAL:** Yes, Poser's unusual Kai-tastic interface does put off many. I do hope they don't change





it though, as I'm used to it now. I use both Poser and DAZ, interchangeably, plus other software.

**CG:** So when I found DAZ Studio I began researching and got it and some additional resources. After using it, and seeing the range of content available for DAZ and Poser, I invested my hard earned money into more resources. I think I've tabulated it at around \$10k dollars to date. */bitter laugh/*.

**DAL:** Wow. That is a nice investment. Still, some young people spend far more than that on a car or a few overseas holidays, and get less pleasure from them.

**CG:** I found that the learning curve was minor. I think of DAZ Studio as basically Photoshop for 3D. It's straight forward and the tools you get make it almost dummy proof. Later I actually got into customizing morphs and texturing things myself. At that time I still used Photoshop for a lot of overlay FX and eventually I learned to render pieces and matte paint them together.

**DAL:** I see that you started off with comics, which were later translated to DAZ — as in your Zeek comic-book cover. And you are also doing original character designs in 3D. I like your Zeek, it looks like a lot of fun and would make a boy want to open the comic — which is what a comic book cover should do. Tell us about your Prism character, though. That's a very nice cybertronic look, and a really cool superpower. Is there any chance she'll become available on the DAZ Store at some point?

**CG:** Awww thanks. Yeah, Zeek was my first character ever. He was my boyish attempt at a Superboy analogue which later translated well into 3D. Prism is fun, she was one of the characters whose development was led by the products available. I had gotten into the bad habit of collecting 3D products, rather than using them. So after a guy I follow on DA started doing ridiculous renders and used the excuse "I decided to start doing something..." I looked inward and said "Yeah, me too!" So I began throwing things together.

**DAL:** Yes, real-world plastic model makers call it 'kit-bashing', where you combine bits from

different kits. I guess we should call it 'runtime bashing' or 'wardrobe bashing'.

**CG:** Characters and outfits and whatever came from them I would turn into something. Anyway, a while back I invented a story about Japanese teenagers who find out they are the children of angels and humans, and have fantastic powers. Prism was one of those characters. I took that story and laid it onto this throwaway render and I fell in love with it. As for seeing her in the Daz Store? I'm not big on packaging things for resale. Too many variables to think about, so I stick to end user products like character designs and graphic novels etc.

**DAL:** Right. And you currently use the latest DAZ Studio. You sound happy with that, but do you think you might also try something else such as Poser 11?

**CG:** I'm always going to stick with DAZ Studio, now that it has surpassed Poser both in available tools and ease of use. Now I know there is an entire legion of users who might dislike me for that, and that's perfectly okay. I'm a guy who has made a career out of finding the path of least resistance and DAZ Studio is that path.

**DAL:** And DAZ's iRay renders are feasible for you, in terms of time?

**CG:** Well, yes and no. Primarily I use DAZ for renders I can matte paint into finished pieces. In those instances a simple 3Delight render does the trick. When I'm going for a specific type of realism I will take the time. Even with my powerful system a solid iRay render could take hours. So if it calls for it, then I will take the time. The trouble with 3D on that level is that you still can't quite get past the pasty and "toylike" look. It's realistic as hell but expressions and movement can seem fake. So instead I use the parts and matte paint over them or merge together with painted treatments.

**DAL:** Yes, I think we'll see more overpainting of 3D in future, in general. Tell us about the making of your picture "ECHO", please?

**CG:** Okay I can actually talk about this now. ECHO was an audiobook for a Finnish author





VICTORY



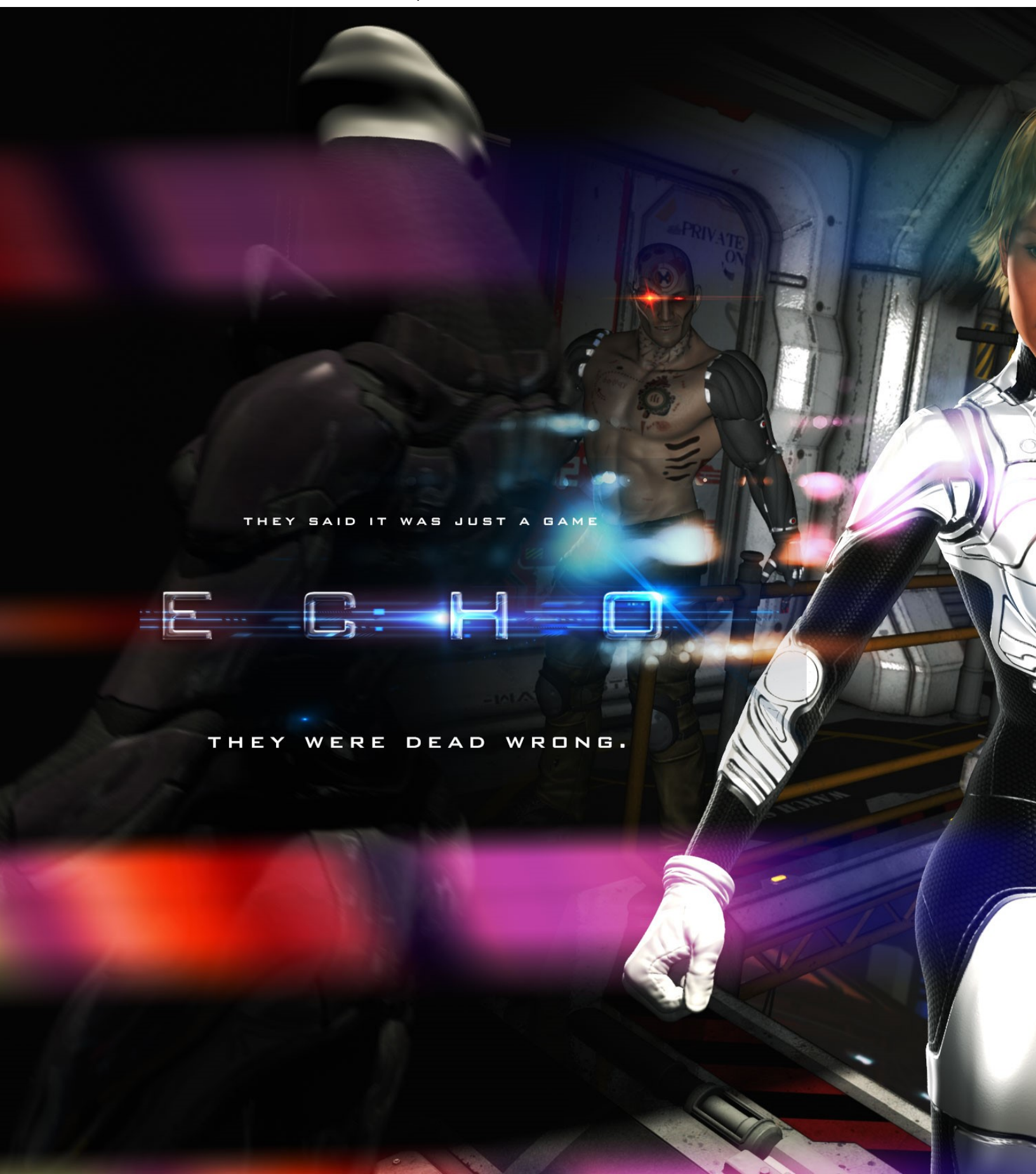
who was uber-private. I changed the story for the DA description, in case the author found my DA page.

**DAL:** Gosh, that sounds a bit scary!

**CG:** I don't even know where this is sold, but the

author sent me a paragraph describing this moment from the book. I did a few thumbnail hand-drawn sketches, which I have attached, but ultimately he chose this one.

The great thing about this one is that this is one

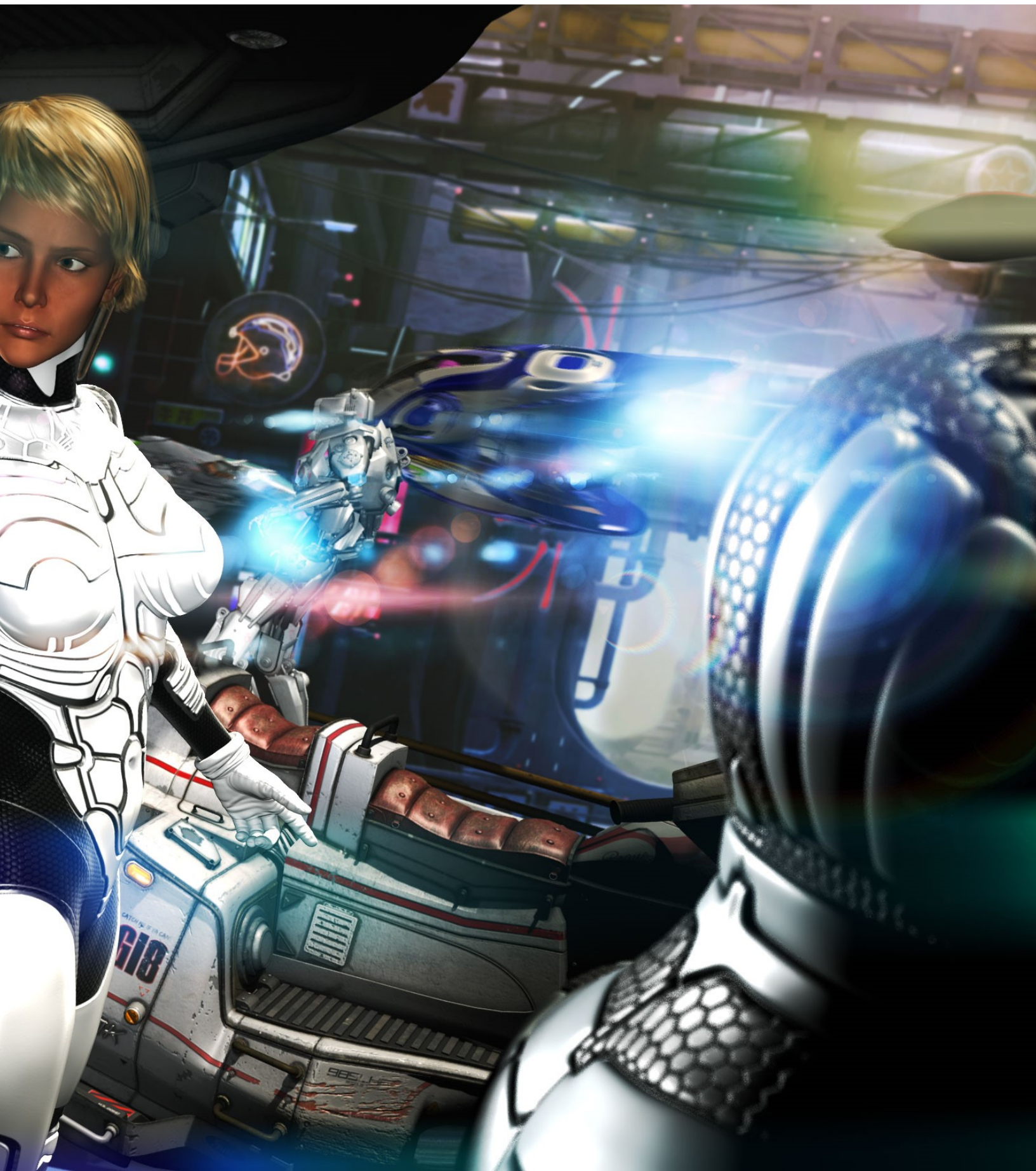




of the only renders I have done that captured *almost everything* I wanted without matte painting. Literally the only postwork I did was the lense flairs — so thanks to J.J.Abrams for inspiring me — and the text. The blurs are actual

renders from Daz and even the light from the villain's eye in the background was REAL! It was a perfect render I was really proud of.

**DAL:** You obviously have a lot of fun with your art, which I think is sometimes missing in some





older sci-fi artists. Sometimes we lose that old bootstrapping 'just let it rip' attitude and we get too serious and dour and old about it, I think. What's your best advice for ways of having fun with digital art?

**CG:** Stop worrying. Just do it. I approach 3D the same way I approach 2D. For me when I draw by hand, I am not actually thinking up anything. I see a picture in my head and I'm 'tracing' that mental image. When I begin a 3D piece it almost always starts with slapping things together and something usually comes out of it. Basically I'm letting my subconscious do whatever it wants. I use the same muscles as when I'm sketching. In fact I call it 3D sketching.

I've also learned to stop trying to control everything in a render. iRay works if you build

"Zeek was my first character ever. He was my boyish attempt at a Superboy analogue which later translated well into my early attempts at 3D."

the 3D universe entirely. I've begun doing more vignette work and just placing lighting the way I would in a drawing. The hallway hologram piece you selected was the wall and ceiling of a Stonemason premade scene. I hid the side wall to get the distance I wanted from the subject and then took a full sized building and shrunk it down. I used the sub-surface shaders to make my own hologram effect and finally (because I wanted the floating HUD stuff to be real) added a plane with a glowing shader and then added the texture and transparency for the finished HUD. I should have used some of the iRay shaders for his outfit, but I only converted the existing suit textures so they turned out super shiny.

My point of all the above is that none of that was 'overly thought out' and it turned out really great. What determines 'really great'? My own

opinion! Period. So, to circle back to your question. Stop caring about what others think and do what feels right. I'm a perfectionist, but I stop at what others see as perfect. I'll be my harshest critic so I just make *me* happy. What comes out is something people tend to like.

**DAL:** You also have a graphic and painterly style. Probably that comes from what you've learned from reading comics? I like your 2D-like "Victory" for instance, it's a very pleasing blend



of 2D-a-like and 3D. And now I see that you're also doing digital painting, with toon work like "Gun toting". You seem to be developing a workflow where 3D and 2D are both used to get to a graphic-looking finished picture.

**CG:** Yes it's funny — after years of exploration



with the advent of the Apple Pencil — I've found something that makes me truly happy. At my core I'm an old school illustrator. Even now I'm exploring the different places that can be used, but ultimately I'm finding who I am as an artist. I can go between hardcore matte painted hyper realistic stuff to what I find more "ME" in the 2D animation/comic book illustration style. I absolutely feel like 2D and 3D can marry — and yes that is 'more my style'.



Pictures: "Zeek", translating Jay's boyhood character into his early 3D work. Above: "Animated G2M SciFi Operative", experimenting with emissive glow in DAZ.

**DAL:** Was there anything that influenced you toward that approach?

**CG:** I think that began with the likes of Masamune Shirow who, as far back as INTRON DEPOT, was using 3D to add textures and even buildings and guns to his hand drawn pieces.

**DAL:** Do you think you'll ever make a narrative comic?

**CG:** I really want to. Still I'm a slave to the idea that I am lazy. Freelance concept art and character designs is easy because it takes a few hours, maybe a few days, and then I move on to the next thing. However, I have two fully realized and written scripts that I finished for graphic novels. The first is based on that 3D movie poster I did, *Hyperman* and especially right now after the U.S. elections feels really relevant. Another is a labour of love that I did called *The Corridor* which is the perfect blend of sci-fi and heart. I just finished a novelization of the graphic novel script that I'm going to produce as an audiobook, but I feel like that will be my *tour de force*.

**DAL:** Excellent, yes the audio-drama and audiobook sci-fi trade is very hot right now.

**CG:** So yes I will but I'm constantly asking myself if I can do these projects justice and what it will take for me to balls up and dedicate to doing them.

**DAL:** You've also been modding some pre-built content for special effects and looks. I like the customising and lighting work you did on "Custom Built APC" for instance. Tell us about this process, please. Also — could this become a setting for a story, do you think?

**CG:** It actually was precisely that. I had put together a three page short story and the bulk of the opening takes place inside an APC. I could not find anything prebuilt that I liked, but had plenty of pictures of what actual military APC's look like inside. So I decided to take what I had and build my own. The main part of it was actually a sci-fi hallway. I reshaped it and resized it to the size I wanted. Eliminated the elements that did not work, and then added the seats. The seats were actually from a very old Poser/DAZ product called Sci-Fi Workstation or something.

Anyway I used iRay shaders on everything to give it a new coat of paint, and then built my own textures for the door and what not. When I was finished I did see this as its own thing and



even bundled it — so I would not lose it and could reinstall it for future use. The characters all fit inside it and it was a really fun thing to build. Probably one of the most original things that showcases what DAZ is really good for. All of these prebuilt pieces came together to form something original. Now I look at my old products like *ooooold* and look at the parts and how they can be converted and repurposed into new things like this. It's breathed new life into my older products for sure.

**DAL:** Yes, there's often no reason for people to disdain old Poser/DAZ content. If the modelling was good and the material zones are good, just spend ten minutes re-texturing. Now, what's ahead for you personally? How would you like to see your art develop in the future?

**CG:** I'll never leave freelance work, that's for sure. Because it's now my bread and butter but I'm finding more and more places for my 2D art to flourish. I'd like to see my art take on more narratives that I don't usually do. Recently I did a beefcake hunky stud guy and that's a departure for me. So exploring new things, that are not tropes I've exhausted.

**DAL:** Great, good luck with that. Whereabouts are you based, in the USA? And is there anywhere you'd like to visit? On or off the planet...

**CG:** I'm in Naples, Florida, which the place in the USA where people go to retire. My grandparents brought us here from New York City where I was born, when I was eight years old.

**DAL:** Wow, a great climate. Probably a better place than New York to grow up, and you presumably get to watch rocket launches too. Best time to get to a big city is when you're maybe 24, 25, I would say, and only then if you can live in the city centre rather than the suburbs.

Although I think many people will be increasingly 'seasonal nomadic' in future. Three months of winter somewhere warm and cheap; home for the springtime and early summer; somewhere fresh and mountainous in the summer heat and humidity; home for the early fall (autumn). All enabled by mobile pods, Air B&B like services,

and ubiquitous fast satellite broadband all over the planet. A few city hops to stay with friends and relatives, in between. Where would you go, in that scenario?

**CG:** As for where I'd like to go... California for sure, and maybe Toronto. I know that sounds odd but ever since Scott Pilgrim I've wanted to explore Canadian city life.

**DAL:** Yes, Canada should be getting a lot of new arrivals from the USA about now, if people keep their promises. */Laughter/* But seriously, what inspiring science-fiction should people be looking out for, at the moment? Is there anything 'bubbling under' in games or comics, for instance, that's not yet widely known?

**CG:** *Valarian* — the graphic novels adaptation movie that is coming out from the guy who did *Fifth Element*.

**DAL:** Ah yes, we featured that in this magazine's Imaginarium section, back in Issue 7 (April 2016). 'You read it here first, folks!'

**CG:** Also West World on HBO is also really *really* good. No, it's *great*! Talk about science fiction that marries with genre and begins to ask questions. Anytime sci-fi makes you ask questions, it's a win. That's what science fiction has always done. This is a reboot I think was absolutely necessary. If you watch the original 1970's Westworld movie you realize that. It asked big questions back then and this reboot is carrying that same torch asking some of the same questions, while embracing new ones relevant to today.

**DAL:** Ok, many thanks for this in-depth interview. It's been fun.

**CG:** Oh the pleasure is mine. This was a lot of fun. Thank you!

**Jay ('CG Artiste') is online at:**

<http://cgartiste.deviantart.com/>

Opposite: cover for *Doctor Who: The First Years* — a free unofficial fan-fiction book by Jay.



# DOCTOR WHO

## FIRST YEARS





# INDEX

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...

<https://digitalartlive.com/>



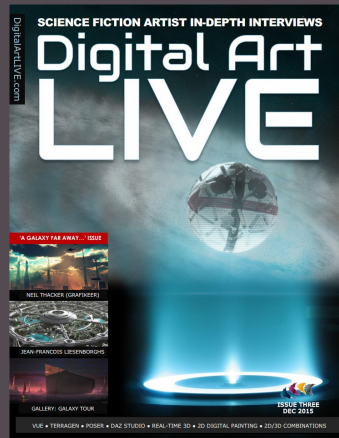
## Issue 1 Oct 2016 Designing Future Cities

- Tarik Keskin
- Christian Hecker
- Gallery: Future Cities, a huge 32 page mega-gallery!
- The Imaginarium (regular feature, in all subsequent issues)



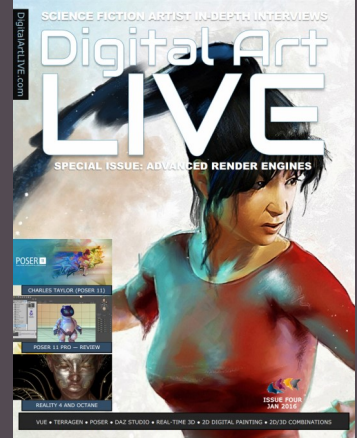
## Issue 2 Nov 2016 Alien Plants/Creatures

- Matthew Attard
- Exidium Corporation
- Gallery: *Ryzom*'s concept illustrations
- Gallery and essay: the future bodily evolution of humans in space



## Issue 3 Dec 2016 'A Galaxy Far Away...'

- Neil Thacker
- Jean-Francois Liesenborghs
- Gallery: "These are not the planets you're looking for..."
- Gallery: SpaceX manned Mars mission



## Issue 4 Jan 2016 Poser 11: special issue

- Charles Taylor (on the new Poser 11)
- Ariano di Piero
- Paulo Ciccone (on the Reality plugin)
- Our in-depth 8,000-word review of the new Poser 11 Pro





## Issue 5 Feb 2016 Cosmos (space art)

- Dave Hardy
- Ali Ries
- Tobais Roersch
- Oyshan Green (Terragen 4)
- Gallery: The art of the cosmic.



## Issue 6 March 2016 Cyber-humans + VR

- Tara de Vries (*Second Life*)
- Ludovic Celle
- Elaine Neck
- Anders Plassgard
- Gallery: Future cyber-humans



## Issue 7 April 2016 Future Female Heroes

- Leandra Dawn
- Aaron Griffin
- Paul Frances
- Troy Menke
- Bob May's collages
- Gallery and essay: Female future heroes



## Issue 8 May 2016 Our Future Frontier

- The Mars Society
- Ludovic Celle
- Gallery: Orbiting Cities in Space
- Gallery: Space Colonies and Outposts
- Gallery: Mars in the 1950s pulps



## Issue 9 June 2016 Blender: special issue

- Colin Masson
- Thomas Piemontese
- Shane Bevin
- Tutorial: How to export a clean .OBJ from Blender
- Index of past issues
- Gallery: Blender art



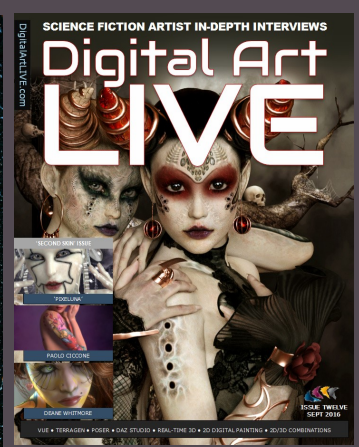
## Issue 10 July 2016 Steampunk

- Renderosity
- Suzi Amberson ('Kachinadoll')
- Bob May
- Sci-fi in PC pinball
- Steampunk gallery
- Imaginarium



## Issue 11 August 2016 Future Landscapes

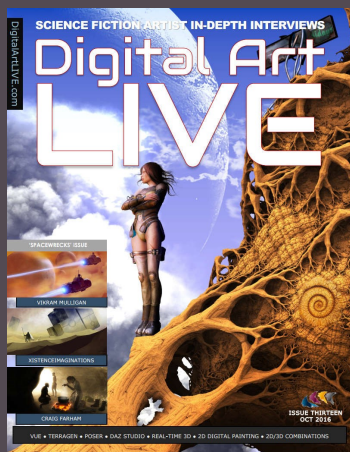
- 'Artifex'
- Lewis Moorcroft
- Rob Wildenberg
- 'Tigaer': 'making of'
- Gallery: Future Oceans and Craft
- Imaginarium



## Issue 12 Sept 2016 Second Skin

- 'Pixeluna'
- Paolo Ciccone
- Deane Whitmore
- HiveWire: their new Big Cat for Poser
- Gallery: Second Skin
- Imaginarium





### Issue 13 Oct 2016 Spacewrecks (TTA)

- Vikram Mulligan
- Xistenceimagination
- Craig Farham
- TTA series tribute
- NASA's rescue-bot
- Index of past issues
- Gallery: Space hulks wrecks, and crashes



### Issue 14 Dec 2016 Cybertronic

- Jay, CG Artiste
- Giovanni, Keplianzar
- Jacques Pena
- Review: the Ugee 1910b budget pen-monitor / tablet
- Index of past issues
- Gallery: Cybertronics



### Issue 15 Xmas 2017 Mistworlds

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

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



### Issue 16 Jan 2017 Vroom!

## NATIONAL SPACE SOCIETY International Student Art Contest 2017

### "Roadmap to Space Settlement":

1. People Living and working in Space Settlements.
- OR
2. Medicine and Medical Manufacturing in Space.

<http://www.nss.org/settlement/calendar/>



The U.S. National Space Society (NSS) is looking for student artists to create original illustrations for the NSS "Roadmap to Space Settlement". Submitted artwork should realistically illustrate one of this year's two themes. Realistic means 'as accurate as possible', both in science and

engineering. Also 'as closely as possible' to what a real space settlement would actually look like, within our own solar system. All full-time students at any grade level between the ages of 13 and 25 are eligible. Entry deadline: **16th March 2017.** [Picture by Andrew-Graphics.](#)





MUSEUM OF  
SCIENCE FICTION  
WASHINGTON DC

Washington DC  
USA: Earth / Sol: Milky Way

## Deep Ocean Research and Robotics Competition

The Museum of Science Fiction's Deep Ocean Research and Robotics Competition encourages innovative thinking within the commercial marine technology sector and is open to all high school students

The purpose of the competition will be to:

- Reward the innovation that is possible by leveraging off-the-shelf technologies, small teams, and other agile approaches to creating next-generation submersible platforms.
- Motivate the upcoming generation of explorers to reach for new heights (or new depths) and reveal the unknown, on their own terms.
- Broaden public participation in deep oceanographic exploration as part of a larger goal to commoditize marine technology and protect marine environments.
- Bring a consumer model to the business of oceanographic research, which promises to accelerate the pace of marine science.
- Break the paradigm of large-scale, expensive, government-driven science and exploration by offering successful alternatives in the form of a small-scale, revolutionary submarine demonstration.
- Infuse creativity and innovation into STEM education at the high school level.

Registration and Submission period is  
November 1, 2016 — March 15, 2017 at 5 PM EST

Judging and proposal evaluations will begin on  
March 15, 2017

Award notification will be made on  
May 15, 2017

Award recognition will be made at Escape Velocity on  
Saturday, September 2, 2017

Student teams from the United States or  
abroad may participate

Learn more at: [museumofsciencefiction.org/deepocean](http://museumofsciencefiction.org/deepocean)



# GIOVANNI, 'KEPLIANZAR'

*Digital Art Live* talks with Giovanni in Canada, about designing mining installations, moving from Vue to DAZ Studio, and his love for ancient classical civilizations.



GIOVANNI,  
'KEPLIANZAR'

CANADA

BENTLEY PLANT |  
VUE | DAZ STUDIO |  
PHOTOSHOP

[WEB](#)



**DAL:** Hi Giovanni, thanks for agreeing to an interview with *Digital Art Live* magazine. Could you start, please, by telling readers how you became involved in 3D? I hear that you are a mining engineer?

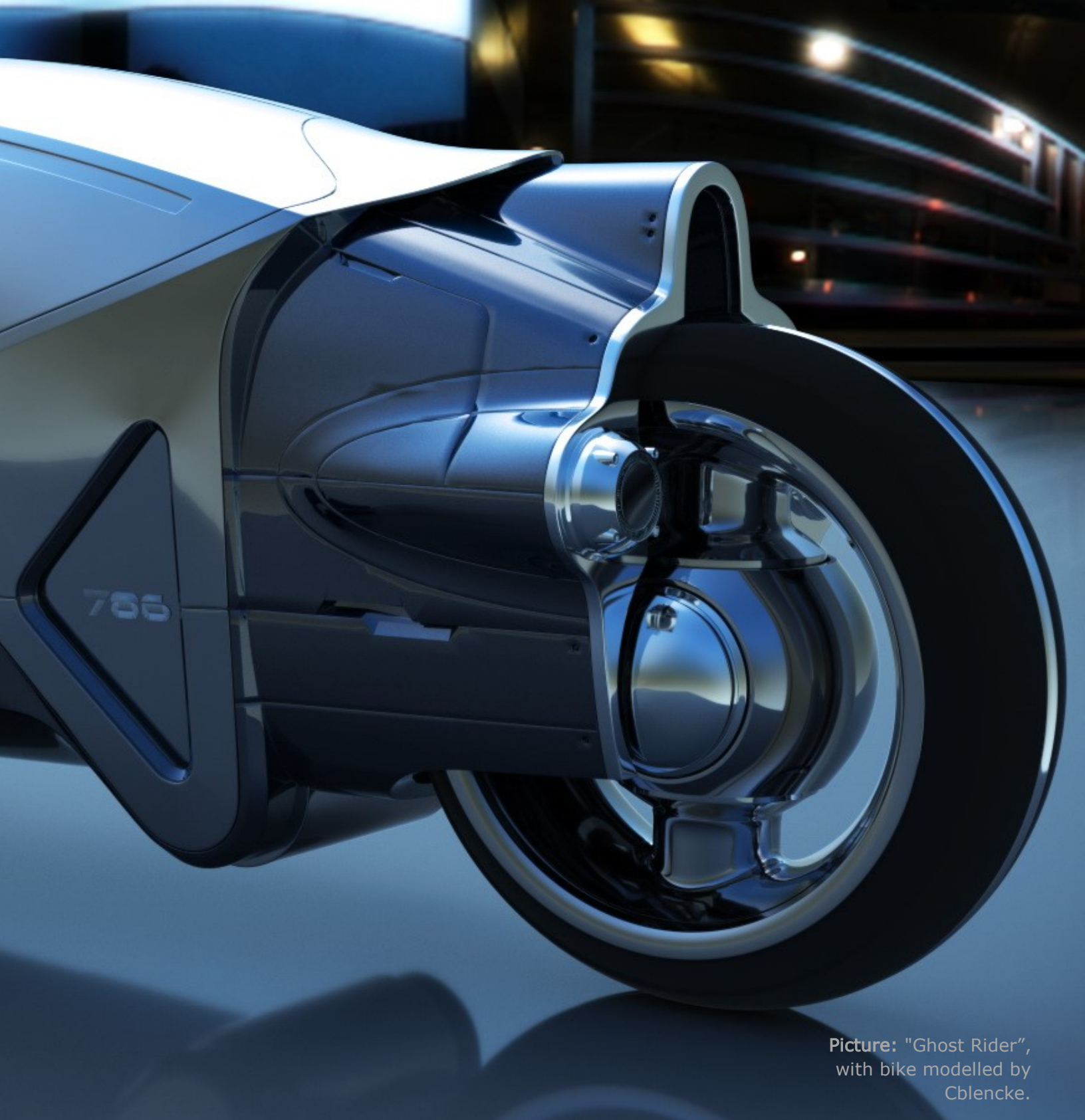
**GK:** My pleasure to be here. I am a technical designer in 3D plant layout and I use Bentley Plant Design. I use it to design petrochemical

plants, as well as process design for the mining industry. On mining projects my work is used to to extract iron ore, to produce ore that is needed by the steel companies. Which then makes the things we all use, from cars to toasters.

**DAL:** Fascinating. How did you get interested in that area, of industrial uses for 3D?

**GK:** Well, it all started when I was at a young in





**Picture:** "Ghost Rider",  
with bike modelled by  
Cblencke.

the great city of Rome in Italy. When I went to visit *Cina cita*, which was the 'Hollywood of Italy'. By that time I had read many sci-fi novels by artist like Larry Niven, and was inspired by his Ring World Engineers. Also by art covers on the *Galileo* science fiction magazine, which we could get in Italy at that time. And so I was fascinated by seeing that

type of science fiction art. Then I started to recreate that art, just by using a simple lead pencil and pen, which one can see in my UFO City picture. But then, at my employment, the work and the industry started to convert. What was regular drafting on the board in a drafting office, that turned into computer aided design. From there on I got hooked on 3D.



I explored the possibilities to recreate that art which I had loved since childhood, making it into art in 3d made on computers.

**DAL:** And how did you then make the move over to using Vue and DAZ Studio / Reality?

**GK:** Well, my first software packages were Rhino and AutoCAD. Then 3dstudio and 3dstudio MAX. Then... Bryce!

**DAL:** Yes, a lot of people started with creative 3D with Bryce.

**GK:** From Bryce to Vue 2, then Vue 10. And Poser for the figures to import into Vue. But soon I started experimenting with DAZ Studio but I used Reality to render due to the simplicity — in the end I just wanted to create beautiful art and not create complete worlds like Vue does.

Picture: "Blue Rain".





**DAL:** What do you use these days?

**GK:** Now I used the latest DAZ Studio 4.9, and have used the Octane rendering plugin, but iRay is very nice and I use it more often. Again I like it for its simplicity, over Octane.

**DAL:** Your gallery seems to show that you began your Vue work with Ancient Egypt and Babylonia. That's a fascination I share, as I've

recently looked quite deeply at the early history of the most-ancient city of Eridu for a personal project. It's a pity that historical recreation doesn't get more attention in 3D.

**GK:** Ah, that comes from when I was a young boy in Rome, in Italy. I went to *Cina cita* and my parents would take me to the movies there every night when my father came out of work.





And I would fall into the screen and live inside those huge Ancient Roman historical movies like *Ben Hur*, to mention just one. Then later I would go out into the Italian country side and touch the old stones of the fallen ruins of Ancient Rome, and would wonder what it was like there thousands of years ago. Who was walking on the flagstones here under my feet, way back then? Who were these people, and what was their world about? So my first imaginative love was for the ancient classical civilizations. The Etruscan civilization, for instance. A mysterious people that taught the Romans everything they knew. But somehow disappeared from history. From there I wanted to learn more and I started recreating imaginary 3D scenes of what it must have been like for early Egypt Rome and Babylon and Khufu to name but a few works in my 3D galleries.

**DAL:** Do you do much research for your history pictures?

**GK:** To me, history is not something in a book. That said, to me Greeks or Romans or any North African nation are our great grandfathers or past relatives. They aren't lost people from a faraway land. But we are the children of those people. To forget them or not know of their time on this earth is a shame to modern people. They lived on this earth way before us, and they have earned our respect for leaving this earth for us to enjoy. When we read about them, we are not reading about fantasy, but a part of our family history. What they did is there for all to read, and then you see the big mistake that is often made about them — we think just because they were in our past, that they were dummies with no iPhone etc! */laughter/*

**DAL:** So true, they knew a lot that we've forgotten.

**GK:** Yes, if you think for a moment all mathematics was thought of by the Greeks and Byzantines who were mixture of Greeks and Ancient Romans and bits of the Turkish empires. Without them there would be no iPhone, no iPad or digital tablets for us to draw on. Many of the laws we use today were set down by the Romans and others. So you see its not dead history. It is

valuable for us to learn from what they did. If only we would not forget, then we all would see more clearly today.

**DAL:** Indeed. In terms of your 3D pictures, what were some of the "breakthrough" images that started to get you a lot more attention? Was it the historical pictures?

**GK:** Well I think the large scale Vue scenes, like "Tempest". They were the ones most people wanted to see. I guess people like the large scale Vue scenes, showing the sort of big matte scenes that they are familiar with watching movies like *2001*, *Star Wars* etc. And I must say that I also like those type of 3D scenes myself. But unfortunately they take *way too much time* to create! And so I never really did too many of them.

**DAL:** But your main love is obviously for science fiction art. Who are your favourite SF artists?

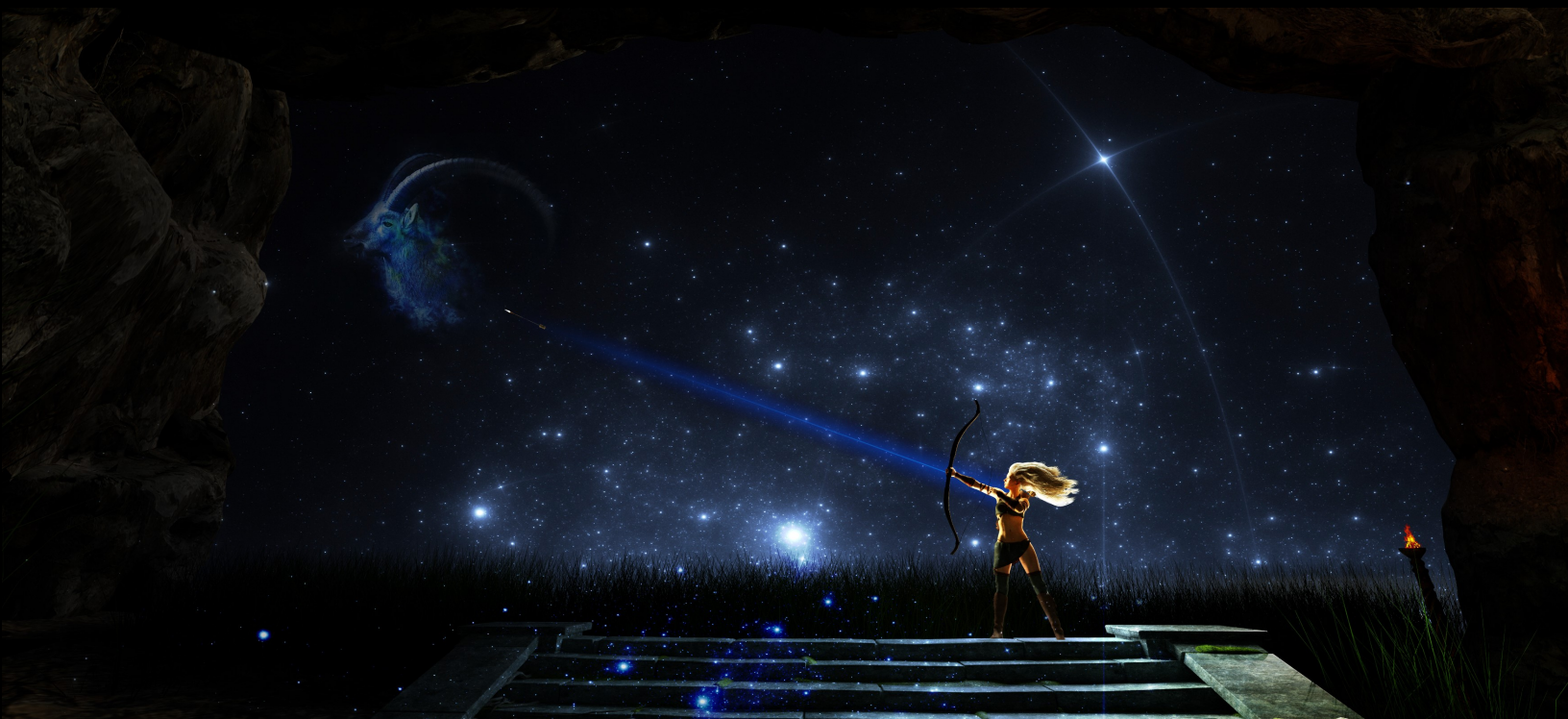
**GK:** I actually don't know most of their names, but I remember lots of great cover art on sci-fi books like Ursula le Guin, Frank Herbert and Arthur C. Clarke, and many others.

**DAL:** This issue is our *Tron* 'tribute issue', although due to copyright it is somewhat mixed with an interest in pictures that use glows and neon effects in general. What did you think of the movie *Tron: Legacy*?

**GK:** Well the movie was interesting, had a nice theme to it. Reminded me somewhat of a sci-fi book I had read. In the book the person goes into the computer and become the ghost in there. Don't remember the title. The original movie was ahead of its time in special effects, that is why it was very popular. I think I like the original and not the sequel. The sequel could have been better I think, and they could have spent more time explaining that world they were in and maybe its ties into our own world.

**DAL:** Yes, I think they were relying heavily on 'transmedia' storytelling. They assumed that the viewer would have revisited the original *Tron*, then read the backstory to the sequel in the form of the comic-book mini-series, and some other backstory stuff I can't remember now. The problem is that those comic book backstories can





Pictures: "Space: the Final Frontier", and "Capricorn".



be so difficult to get — because they tend to do tie-in deals with Apple which means it's only available on certain platforms and suchlike. Or they do a luxury hardback like they did with *Tomorrowland*. But tell us about your 3d workflow and software. Are you still using Vue, or are you tending to use DAZ Studio more, these days?

**GK:** Yes, I rarely use Vue now. As my art is more artistic, in terms of showing figures of fantasy or beauty. I find that I can recreate large-scale scenes in DAZ Studio 4.9, again because it so simple to use as compared to the

headache that it is to use Vue. And Vue can take days to render.

**DAL:** Yes, I'm planning to review the new version of Vue, the one that interfaces tightly with Poser, quite soon. Apparently it's not quite out yet, though the main version of Vue 2016 is. It'll be interested to see what the render times are like for a Poser scene, both out-of-the-box and with tweaked "make it fast, please!" settings. I'm hoping to be pleasantly surprised!

**GK:** These days I'm more interested in the outcome of the beauty of the art and not into the ego-trip that some people get into, people

Picture: "Spiders from Mars".





who spend years learning to use Really Complicated Software. Whatever software I use to paint my scene, to me 3d software needs to be like painter's paintbrush. Some painters use fancy brushes, some even paint with their hands and fingers. I find it less important what I use but what the outcome and the beauty of the art.

**DAL:** So you've given up on the Reality plugin?

**GK:** I don't use Reality any longer, too limited. As I said earlier, I used to use Octane rendering, for the past year or two. But recently I switched over to iRay, which ships with DAZ Studio. iRay I think is aimed at the more artistic 3d artist.

Whereas plugins like Octane are more for professionals who work in commercial areas of the industry.

**DAL:** As a parting shot for Vue, what three things could be improved with Vue?

**GK:** I am no expert in Vue, so my ideas might seem non-technical. But if they could make it more for artist, in the sense of adding layers — the ability to create in separate layers — the ability to create in separate layers. So we can merge a 3D mountain backdrops and 3D figure placement. Separate the 3D clouds and the sky from water and the terrain etc. A way to use Vue as a canvas.





These days you can add 3D objects in Photoshop and rotate them and then add in separate layers to finalize a 2D scene. I don't see why Vue can't do the same. All software would work this way. Look at a 3D scene as a canvas.

**DAL:** ... rather than a window into a fully realised 'physical' world. With all the long render times that entails. I see where you're coming from, although I think real-time rendering may change that in the next few years, given the abilities that iClone and the Unreal Engine are now able to display. On the other hand, it's also possible that NVIDIA will whip out a \$250 plug-in 6" hardware box that's effectively a supercomputer render farm on your desk. But let's get back to your pictures. Which of your own science-fiction pictures is your personal favourite, and why?

**GK:** Oh... well that is tough question, as I am my worst critic. I hate all my work as soon as it is finished! *//laughter//* I tend to have an idea of what I want to see or create, but my ideas are too grand and could never be represented in 3D or with the limited software and power of my PC.

As to which scenes I love most, well it's definitely all my old Vue scenes, actually. "Tempest", "Lost in Space", those would take weeks to assemble sometimes. And then take days to render, I posted only a few on DeviantArt. But most of them were lost in endless crashed hard-drives, over the past few years of computing.

**DAL:** Yes, we forget the strain we can put on hard-drives with intensive 3D work. I really like your "Blue Rain" picture, it's a beautiful sci-fi widescreen portrait. Could you talk us through the 'making of' this picture please?

**GK:** Ah, well...this is an old DAZ Studio creation using the Octane render plugin. Yes it's a widescreen render, because the widescreen effect closely resembles the way our eyes see the world. It's a simple import of a 3D .obj and modified texture shaders form the default metal shaders in Octane. The figure is a DAZ figure with my Octane shader pre-sets I make for alien skins etc. The style is from my favourite science fiction writer of the past, Andre Norton. The scene was created inside DAZ Studio and

rendered in Octane, while the bokeh effects are a simple Photoshop layers. It's easier to control *bokeh* in Photoshop than in 3d *bokeh*.

**DAL:** You do a lot of glows in your science-fiction pictures. Could you tell us about how you add these? Rendered in the scene, or in postwork, for instance?

**GK:** It is both. I use the a hidden sphere with emitter shader inside the 3D scene. And I set the glare factor inside Octane, and also set up the star effects to 4 or 6 at the angle 45 or 90 degrees. To what looks nice for the final result that I want. And afterwards, if the effect is not as pronounced as I would like then I add a copy of the effect in Photoshop, and then Screen or Overlay in Photoshop to make it pop out.

**DAL:** Thanks. You said you were born in Italy. Has the scenery from your home influenced your landscape art? Are there any art pieces you have done where you have mimicked actual scenery from near your home?

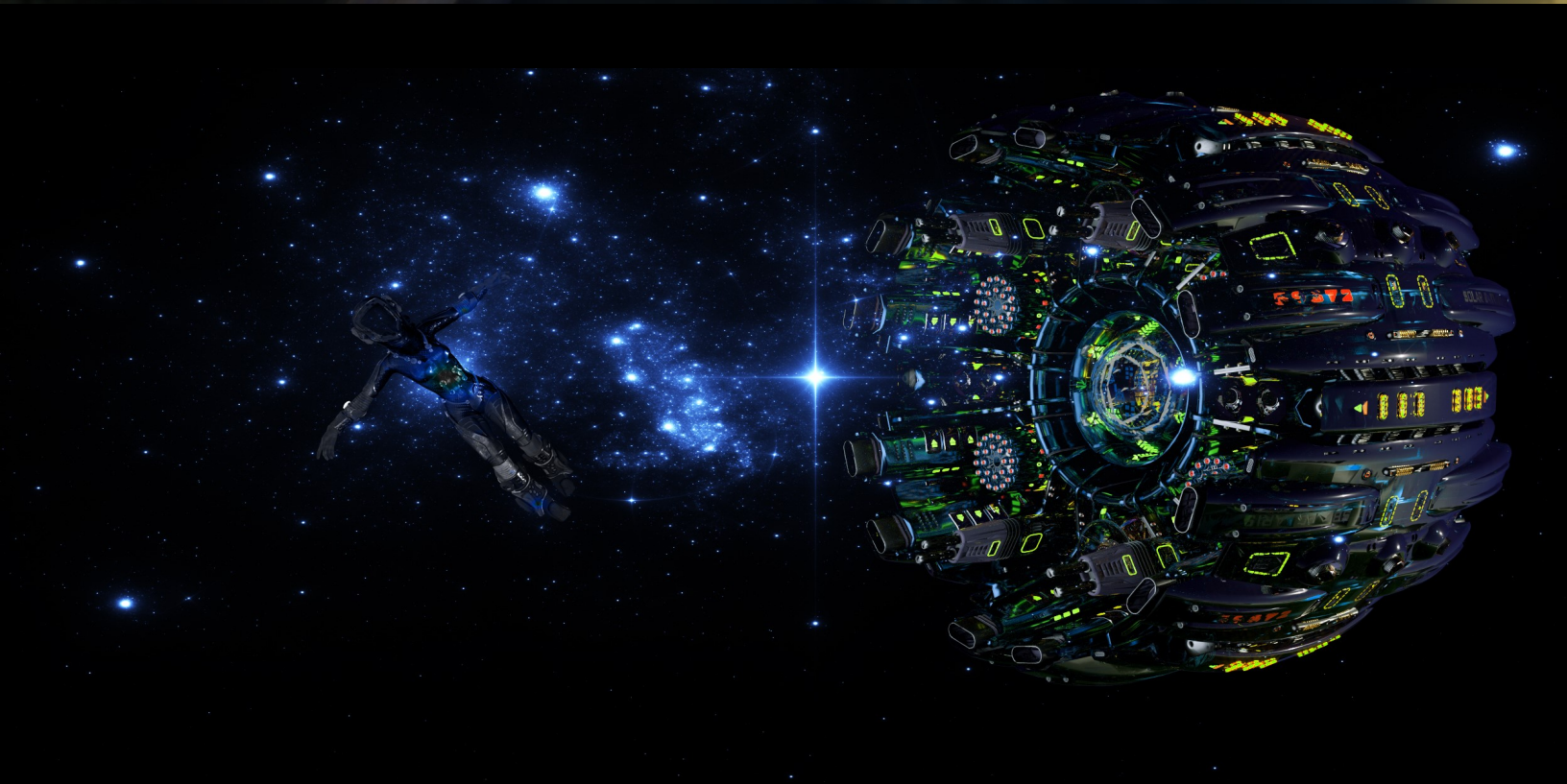
**GK:** I was born in Rome, but actually I came to Canada with my parents when I was young. And now live in Montreal, a big city in Canada. And yet... all my historical 3D art is based on all my memories of my childhood experiences in the Roman countryside! I have many 3D scenes that mimic the places I was born and that I remember well. Like my childhood apartment complex on the outskirts of the city of Rome.

It's hard to explain, growing up in Rome. To walk on the ancient *Via Apia* — a road created two thousand years ago that stretches from Rome all the way down the end of the Italy a thousand kilometres. At DeviantArt, by Roman villa is actually a 3D scene I made that reflects the park that I used to go in Rome "the Pician Hill". Also the "Piazza del Popolo".

**DAL:** So as a child you saw all that great architecture that Italy has, and now to see it with the eye of an engineer. Does that experience emerge into the architecture of your 3D pictures?

**GK:** Yes many 3D historical scenes I made in the past reflect what I see and love about Roman architecture. Actually I still see it, because a





Pictures: "Tau Ceti", and  
"Ground Conntrol...".



large amount of the major architecture in the U.S.A. and Canada are Roman in style. Just look at the Whitehouse and many court houses across North America. The influences are many, and so is the influence in my 3D art.

**DAL:** I see that you are a CORE member of DeviantArt? What is your experience of that membership level? Would you recommend it to others?

**GK:** Actually, it is hard to say if being a CORE member is any better than just being an ordinary member. DeviantArt is a nice website, but I wish they would make two versions, one for art only. And put all the selfies on another site!

**DAL:** I can't say I've noticed the selfies, but perhaps a few too many pet pictures. I suppose it's a response to the downgrading of Flickr at Yahoo. I have to admit that a "never show me ponies" filter on their user preferences or keyword search-box would be handy! What are two of your other favourite on-line resources, which are related to digital art? Perhaps a forum, on-line galleries, model sites or other resources?

**GK:** I used to see many other online resources in the past. I don't remember the site names now. But in the past few years my inspiration has been drawn from the books that I read in the past and maybe a movie I might see.

**DAL:** What hardware box / graphics card do you use at the moment?

**GK:** I use my PC which is a Windows 10 box. I have my ASUS GeForce GTX Titan X Graphics Card, a 12GB GDDR5 384-Bit, PCI Express 3.0 HDCP-Ready SLI Support Video Card.

**DAL:** What themes or pictures are you working on at the moment?

**GK:** I have just finished a 'red devil woman' at DeviantArt. Presently I'm working on a series of Spartan archers on horseback warrior series.

**DAL:** That sounds fun. I have yet to see the new *Ben Hur* movie — I hear it's fairly bad — but "archers on horseback" is something I'd be happy to see. What aspect of your artwork would you like to improve upon next?

**GK:** I definitely would like to create more unique work on female figure from mythologies, and also create unique skin textures and shaders.

**DAL:** Ok, that's great. We wish you well with that. Many thanks for this in-depth interview.

**GK:** Thank you very much for your interest in my art.

**Giovanni is online at:**

<http://keplianzar.deviantart.com/>





Pictures: "The Birth", "The  
Biblical city of Nimrud",  
and "The Fall of Troy".





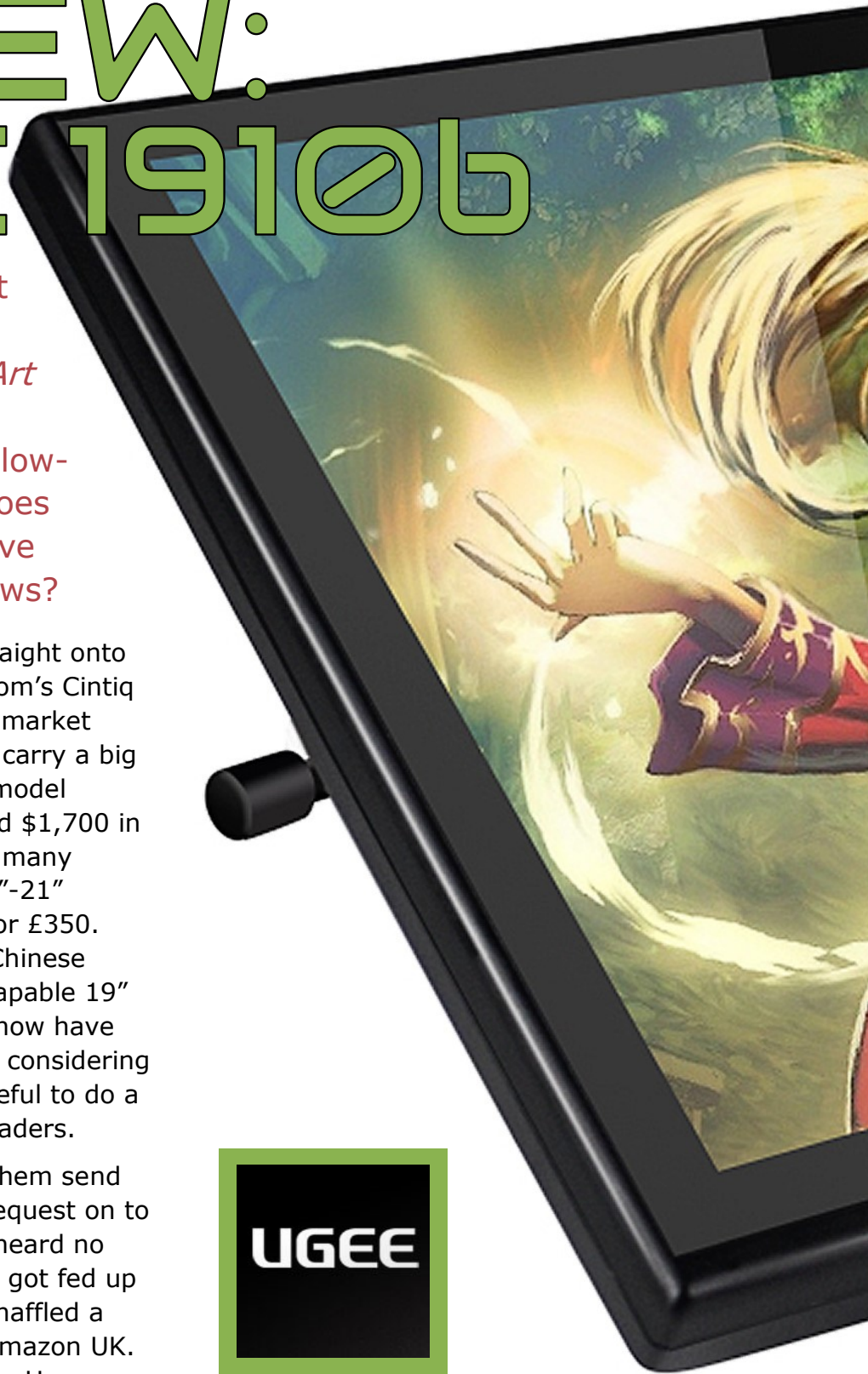
# REVIEW: UGEE 1910b

A 19-inch pen tablet, for just £350? As the Christmas gift season approaches, *Digital Art Live* gives our readers an unbiased test of the leading low-budget art tablet-monitor. Does the Ugee 1910b really deserve its generally good user reviews?

What if you could paint or sculpt straight onto the screen? Onto a *big* screen. Wacom's Cintiq is the biggest brand in this growing market niche. But their current Cintiqs also carry a big price-tag. Their flagship Cintiq 21" model currently sells on Amazon for around \$1,700 in the USA and £1,700 in the UK. For many artists the entry-level price for a 19"-21" screen needs to be more like \$400 or £350. That's the price point at which the Chinese manufacturer Ugee provides their capable 19" Ugee 1910b. As many people we know have looked at the 1910b, or are actively considering an Ugee, we thought it would be useful to do a long review for the benefit of our readers.

We did contact Ugee about having them send us a review unit. They passed the request on to their marketing unit and... we then heard no more from them. After a month we got fed up of waiting for their reply, and just snaffled a £300 bargain "£50-off" offer from Amazon UK. Thus, this review is **not** influenced by Ugee having sent us a free review unit or having otherwise incentivised us.

Your reviewer is very happy with the 1910b. It's a solid purchase, for the budget price. The protective packaging is robust and does its job well. The unit is sturdy and relatively scratch-proof. I found some drawbacks in use, but also found free or cheap workarounds.



**UGEE**

UGEE

CHINA

HARDWARE MAKER  
OF GRAPHICS  
TABLETS AND  
MONITORS

[WEB](#)





#### PROS:

- Very affordable price. Works as advertised.
- Robust packaging.
- No noticeable lag when drawing, has 2048 levels of pressure sensitivity.
- No jitter or odd jumps in the brushes.
- No dust between the glass and LCD screen.
- No hot pixels or "dead zones". Runs cool.
- Excellent pen design and balance in the hand.
- Two USB-rechargeable pens, which carry a long charge. DVI-I dual-link socket and VGA.
- Sturdy build quality and a tough glass surface.
- Highly adjustable stand.
- Works with the major graphics software.

#### CONS:

- No "quick keys" on the monitor itself.
- No DVI cable, VGA cable was very short.
- Setup, driver install and dual-screen management can all be tricky for non-technical users to get right.
- Cables connect up into the bottom of the monitor, making it tricky to lay fully flat.
- In bright environments, some may dislike the highly reflective glass screen.
- There's a small 'distance' between the pen nib and the LCD surface that sits under the glass.
- Angled and side-views of the screen are not great.
- Colour fidelity is not bad — but not professional 'studio quality', at least when using the supplied VGA cable.
- No anti-dust monitor slip-cover, just a plastic bag.

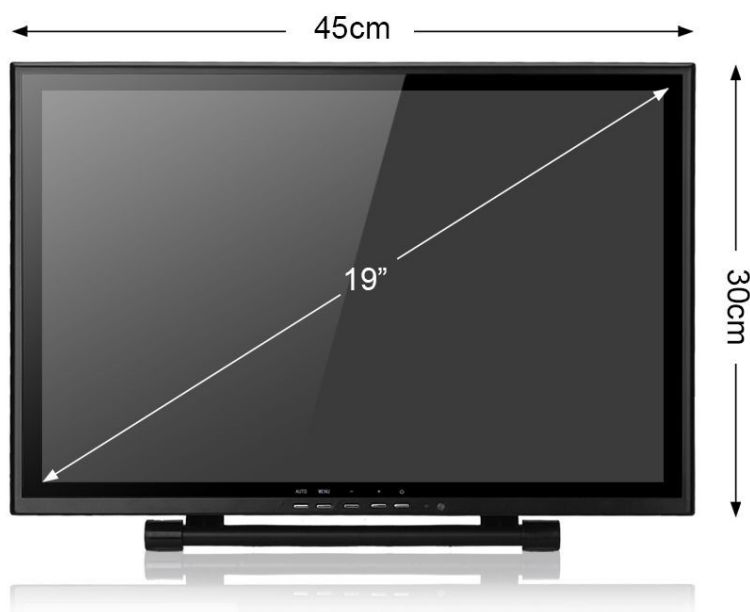


## "So... it's a tablet?"

First, I should probably say something about the term "graphics tablet". The industry talks about "graphics tablets", and so readers may initially think of the Ugee 1910b as a tablet. But it is big, it's heavy and it needs cables. It's not the sort of dinky little wireless device that many people think of when they hear the word "tablet". It won't rest easily on your lap, you can't lounge on the sofa with it, or take it for a walk outside. It's better described as a sturdy desktop "pen monitor" that you can paint (or sculpt) onto, as you would with a traditional canvas and easel. As such it needs its own good sturdy work desk, and that desk needs to be quite near to your PC.

The Ugee 1910b has no in-built operating system, so it is unlike the forthcoming Microsoft Surface Pro 5 or the various models of the iPad. The resulting need to position the 1910b within easy cable-reach of your PC may be a problem, if you only have a small office with one desk — which is probably already home to a big desktop monitor. Thankfully I planned ahead when I set up my home-office, and so have a good side-desk ready and waiting.

Buying a third-party sturdy adjustable wall-mount might be an alternative, for potential buyers who have a cramped studio or office.



## "Will it work with my software?"

**Photoshop CS6:** I had no problems. Just add a few good art and inking brushes, and many will prefer to use this tried and trusty interface. The Lazy Nezumi Pro plugin offers effortless brush-stroke smoothing in Photoshop, so there's no need to envy other software in that regard.

**SketchBook Pro 8:** There are a trillion different versions of this affordable art software from Autodesk, but I got a basic Windows version working fine. It had beautiful response, and I felt it was perfect for the 1910b. SketchBook is an elegant blend of polished UI usability and brush power, at a modest price. Older versions of SketchBook Pro may need Tablet PC support in the Windows drivers, and the Ugee drivers don't have that. Possible solutions there are apparently: disabling Windows 8 'Flicks' under Pen and Touch in Windows Control Panel; setting Windows 7 Compatability Mode on the software; and setting the Ugee to be the primary desktop.

**Corel Painter 2017:** Painter has a much better interface this time around, compared to the clunkiness of previous years. It's still bloated in size though, and it had a download and install that took about two hours (it requires the huge Microsoft .NET framework, for some reason, then 200Mb of .NET security updates), but it eventually began to load. And load, and *load*... Painter is still a beast! But once it had loaded it





worked perfectly on the Ugee, and even its big wet brushes are fast and offer no lag. Painter 2017 is your choice for serious art paintings, with all the real-world paint and ink techniques nicely emulated. It's £220+ in the UK, though.

**Clip Studio Paint 1.5 (Manga Studio):** A crowded and antique interface, but it works perfectly on the Ugee, and certainly offers some very elegant inking brushes for comics. Slightly sluggish response from its large natural-media brushes, in comparison with Painter — so I wouldn't want to use it for full-blown paintings.

**ArtRage 4.5:** I was happily surprised by its cheerful easy-to-use interface, and it worked fine. Worth the \$30, but brushes were sluggish on a large canvas. One for the kids to use?

**Krita:** The free open-source Krita 3.1 Desktop is a SketchBook Pro competitor. But it crashed fatally and repeatedly, as soon as I passed its window over to the Ugee. After some fiddling, Krita was uninstalled — and it even left a whole lot of drek behind which had to be manually removed. Apparently versions of Krita after 2.9.5 were rewritten to handle the Microsoft Surface Pro, which broke support for other tablets. Not suitable for the Ugee.

**MyPaint:** The free open-source MyPaint 1.2.1 wouldn't launch in Windows, crashing on launch with Python scripting problems. Uninstalled.

**Paint Tool Sai:** I repeatedly read that graphics software Paint Tool Sai doesn't play well with Ugee's drivers, for some unknown reason.

**Inkscape 0.91 (64-bit):** The popular free open source vector-drawing software worked fine.

**ZBrush / Sculptris:** ZBrush was not tested. The much simpler and free Sculptris worked — in sculpting, pen-pressure and in painting — but it's rather old now and seems to be rather rigidly set up for mouse-use.

**"Is it well packed?"**

I found the 1910b to be extremely well packed — although not with the sort of overkill package that needs power-tools and a buzz-saw. There's not going to be a problem here with shipping, warehousing or clumsy couriers. If you really don't like your Ugee, it's not going to be too difficult to pack it back up and send it back to Amazon — just make sure you don't pull off the protective plastic from the screen, until you're really happy with it. In fact, I've simply kept the plastic layer on the screen, and I find the pen works very nicely with it on. The 1910b does come with a spare screen protector, but apparently applying it to a screen as big as this is a very tricky job, and is said to be near impossible to achieve without getting dust-specks and bubbles trapped.





## "I read it's a tricky setup experience?"

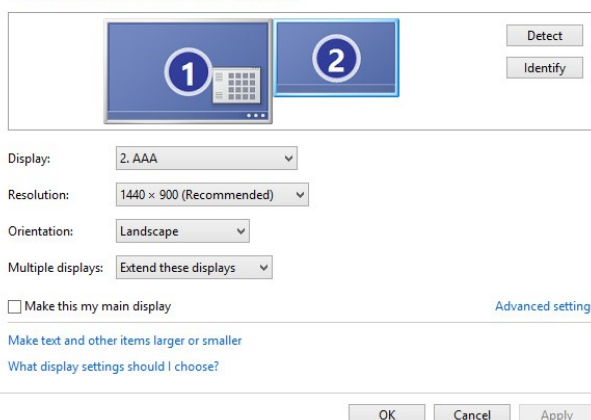
You do need to remove all Wacom drivers, and get the latest drivers from the Ugee website. I found that the 1910b Windows drivers on Ugee's Chinese site were a month more up-to-date (2016-10-17) than those on the UK and Europe site (2016-09-19). The Ugee drivers and pen calibration system was installed onto a Windows 8.1.1 PC, and with all the touchscreen and Metro 'charms/apps' junk stripped off Windows. Windows 8.1 or later offers excellent 'no fuss' support for running two monitors at once.

Before setting up and installing, get a copy of the freeware IconRestorer. This will be vital to save time later. Use IconRestorer to save your desktop layout before setting up and installing the Ugee, then restore it later if needed. You should also save your preferred Photoshop UI layout to a named preset, if you've just been winging along without saving one. Once the Ugee is running you'll have two desktops and so may want a UI layout preset for each.

The 1910b install manual is clear about the order of the setup and driver install, so just follow that carefully. After hooking everything up in the right order, your main desktop will likely boot to match the lower 1400px resolution of the new Ugee. Go to: Windows Control Panel | Display | Adjust Resolution. Switch the desktop back to its normal resolution. Choose "Extend these displays" and click OK. This tells Windows to treat the two monitors as one long extended display, albeit with the same taskbar and pinned icons at the bottom of each.

Install the Ugee drivers, and reboot the PC.

Change the appearance of your displays



Then you'd restore your desktop icon layout using IconRestorer. Then go to your main desktop taskbar and locate the new tablet driver icon (it may be hidden). From there you can launch a window to configure Ugee's driver settings, although it may appear over on the Ugee screen. "Monitor mapping" tells the system which monitor you want the pen to work with, so set that to "Monitor 2". This may cause the Ugee driver settings window to appear over on the Ugee thereafter, when you launch it.

Once set up, you start the graphics software you want to use. Then you grab its top edge and slide it to the "extended" monitor (your Ugee). With the Ugee pen you can then grab that same top edge and drag the software across to fill the Ugee screen. If you're used to having free-floating tabs, then you will need to dock them before you can drag the whole interface across in one go. The software window should fit the Ugee 1440px resolution, once you click 'fit window'. Advanced users can also use the free [Dual Monitor Tools](#) to set which monitor certain software starts on.

The Ugee screen was bright, and it made me realise that I had turned down brightness on my main monitor by quite a bit. Colour fidelity on the Ugee initially seemed fine even when using the VGA cord, and I found that the brightness and RGB colours on the monitor controls had already been tweaked for optimum fidelity. Pen tracking was also fine out-of-the-box (so don't fiddle, if it works fine for you), and art software anyway gives you a handy preview-dot of where the brush will begin to paint or draw. I had no problems with tracking 'drifting off' when moving the pen toward the edges of the screen.

So yes, the Ugee did take some time to set up and get working. The manual wasn't very helpful beyond the order of the cable hookups. But eventually it all worked as an 'extended' monitor, and without having to 'mirror' it. That meant I kept my main desktop at its native 1920px, and the Ugee at its native 1440px. My mouse cursor could then sometimes slip off the left edge of the main monitor, even when the Ugee isn't turned on — but you can fix that with the excellent free [Dual Monitor Tool](#) freeware.



"You get two identical pens, both rechargeable by USB cords, along with many replacement nibs. The design and balance of the pens is excellent."



## A NOTE ON DRIVERS

Online, I was somewhat put off by reading many early reviewers complaining about problems with Windows and Mac drivers. Since 2013 these drivers have obviously been much improved. Part of the problem, I think, is that the unit's paper manual makes a fatal mistake. It does not tell a purchaser that they should first **uninstall all Wacom or similar touch-screen drivers**. These old drivers will interfere with the Ugee drivers and cause them to crash. I can't think why this instruction isn't in the manual at the start, in big letters. If you buy a 1910b then before you do anything, if you've been a Wacom or other pen tablet user, then first turn off and disconnect all Wacom devices. Then in Windows go to: Control Panel | Programs and Features, and then uninstall anything with "Wacom" in the title, or any other similar drivers. Then reboot the PC.

Now use the Windows Explorer search function to find and delete the files tablet.dat and pen\_tablet.dat from Windows. You have or may not have these files left behind, but if they're still there then they need to go. Look for wintab\*.\* files in your C:\Windows\ folder and remove those files if they are there. After rebooting again you should have successfully uninstalled your main Wacom drivers.

However, legacy Wacom drivers will still be on your Windows system even after they are uninstalled. For instance, look in C:\Windows\ for "wacom" and you'll see a wacompen.sys Wacom driver still sitting there along with a couple of friends. It's a generic Wacom driver that appears to ship with Windows 8, and is dated 2013. As such it's deemed part of the operating system for the PC. Its presence probably won't cause a Wacom driver to pop up and want to wrest control of your Ugee. It didn't for me. But if you do get that problem then you might want to re-name that driver (and also its Windows DriverStore backups) to stop it starting.

Apple Mac drivers exist, but were not tested for this review. They may not be as polished as the Windows drivers.



## “How does the Ugee Pen work and feel?”

You get two identical pens, both rechargeable by USB. The design and balance of the pens is excellent. They come partly charged and I let them run down before recharging (that boosts the carrying capacity, apparently) but they held their charges well and can go for hundreds of hours between charges. The charging cable detaches, and as such is not required when you're drawing. The pens come with a bag of replacement nibs, but the smooth screen means you're not going to wear them down very quickly. The Ugee's digitizer unit won't support a few rare “tilt-sensitive brushes”, but you'll have no problem using the pen held at any angle you desire with normal art and inking brushes.



There is no 'eraser' nub at the end of the pen, a feature which appears to be exclusive to Ugee's competitor Wacom, who presumably have a patent on the idea. There's really no problem there — it's easy to bind the Eraser to the rocker button on the Ugee pen itself, or use the cheap game controller expansion option (see next column) and set a button to load a more complex brush or function to the pen nib. The pen holder itself is very nice, resembling a traditional dipping inkwell, though you'll want to stick it to the desk with a bit of Blu-tack. The holder allows either a standing pen or a horizontal pen, when the pen is not in use.

## “What, you say there are no configurable side-buttons?”

Yes, the Ugee lacks the Cintiq's configurable side buttons. But... if you have an old USB-wired console game controller, such as an Xbox controller for the PC, you can use this along with your pen tablet. Get the \$7 shareware JoytoKey from [the official website](#). This enables Windows PC users to configure the game controller to work like a little keyboard. It does this by binding keystrokes to the buttons and tiny joysticks. JoytoKey doesn't need to be installed. Just set it to start in Windows XP compatibility mode, or give it Administrator rights. Then load JoytoKey, click the controller button you want to configure, then Edit button assignment. It worked fine with an old Xbox controller.

You can save a configuration profile file for each software you want to use the controller with. In that way an artist can effectively get the nice buttons on the side of an expensive Wacom Cintiq, but in a quite literally 'more handy' form — actually in your hand as a cute controller! You'll have removed the need for a keyboard while you're drawing, enabling you to get closer to the screen while also expanding your options in terms of soothing wrist-ache and having improving sitting postures.

## “What's the colour like, and the greyscale?”

The Ugee 1910b is not a replacement for a good hi-colour desktop monitor like a Dell UltraSharp 24" running at 1920 by 1200px or higher. It's not a workhorse that you'd use solidly for 15 hours at a stretch with a mouse and keyboard, year after year, for a decade or more. The Ugee is rather something you might want to use for an hour of line drawing and then adding values with greyscale. Then take a coffee break, then another 90 minutes of overpainting and fine colour work on the drawing. Then close it down. It's bright, and is likely to strain sensitive eyes if used for more than around three hours a day.

After setup you will want to calibrate the greyscale and colour on your new monitor as



best you can. There are various methods, and even basic calibration of greyscale may be useful. The colour range and whites/blacks of the 1910b are slightly "off", when compared to a calibrated high colour monitor. But not by much.

A simple workaround for this is to do your greyscale and line artwork first, then view the file over on your high-colour monitor. There you would select the limited colour palette for the picture and dab your "artist's palette" colours onto a layer of the file. Hop back on the Ugee, and you can then pick colours from this palette with the paint dropper tool — and know for sure that they are the shades you want. Then even if it looks like near-black, you know it's actually that 'oh-so-luscious dark purple' that you saw on your main monitor. For those who are really confident you can set up your file with a dabbled colour palette even before you start work on the Ugee.

There are two ways of getting video into the monitor, DVI-I and VGA, and studios and semi-pros are likely to want DVI. The monitor's DVI cable socket is for a DVI-I dual link cable (not single link), which are affordable and easy to get from eBay. There is no DVI cable in the box, just a standard and rather short VGA cable to get you up and running quickly. This was about 2ft too short for my purposes, so I found an old and longer VGA cable which worked fine. You may be lucky and have a spare DVI-I cable socket on your 'top of the range' graphics card, but most digital artists will have only one such socket used by their main monitor. So they will be forced to use the spare VGA socket. If you're happy with what the VGA gives you then don't stress about the various (probably expensive) ways to get yourself an extra DVI socket. VGA worked fine for me.

The Ugee monitor supports a screen of 1440px x 900px with a 60Hz refresh-rate. That's the same refresh rate as my main monitor, which I'm perfectly happy with. A VGA cable may be good enough for you — just make sure the socket's connector holes are free of dust (they've likely been getting flugged up with dust, around the back of the PC), that an old VGA cable has no pins broken or bent, and that the cable does not pass right next to the PC's power-supply unit or cross

现在拥有任何一款友基产品，  
即可注册成为友基会员，享受以下增值服务。



**丰富的软件应用**

- 一键白板应用功能，备忘记事的最佳拍档。
- 欢乐绘图II软件，体验CG绘画全新乐趣。
- 墨客M-Brush软件，让传统国画艺术在CG舞台绽放新姿。

**友基教程百科**

- 丰富多样的绘画教程
- 名师创作心得
- 各类常用软件使用技巧

**友基在线课堂**

- CG精品课堂：汇集CG艺术圈众多名家大师，在线讲授使用各类绘画软件的精品课程。
- YY频道826198课堂：针对入门级别的CG绘画爱好者，课堂生动有趣，演示过程详尽。

**UGCG画廊**

- 下载使用欢乐绘图II软件，验全新创作方式。
- 欣赏小伙伴们的绘画作品，分享交流创作心得。
- 参与画廊活动，赢取每月一奖。

**CG精彩，尽在 Club UGEE**

**精品CG创作书目**

- 名师大家的CG创作出版书目。
- 精美的UGCG电子杂志。

**绘画知识交流**

- 互动交流绘画技巧，分享绘画创作心得。
- 技术热帖，方便交流使用数位板的技巧。

**名师体验**

- 名师使用数位板创作的亲身体验。
- CG艺术圈名家大师的创作历程回顾。

友基科技官方网站: [www.ugee.com.cn](http://www.ugee.com.cn)  
CLUB UGEE网站: [www.ugee.com.cn/Club/](http://www.ugee.com.cn/Club/)

Ugee may be a little-known brand in the English-speaking world, but in China it serves a large local market and it has its own Chinese-language 'Club UGEE' user community site — complete with forums and a user magazine.





over power cables (VGA cables are sensitive to magnetism, which can cause an unstable or flickering picture).

I found that the Ugee was slightly 'soft' in displaying the UI elements of some software, compared to crispness of the pixels on my main monitor. I suspected the problem arose from the lack of scalable vector graphics in the software tested, rather than from the screen itself. Sketchbook Pro was fine, though. Most brush and pen strokes were crisp, even when the pen line was just a few pixels wide. The Ugee had no problems displaying or working on an A3 print-sized canvas (4961 x 3806px).

The 1910b's monitor's clear glass is very flat and solid, and you could easily use a plastic ruler on it. Or the sort of physical 'curves tools' sold in traditional art shops (though some software has digital versions of these tools built in, such as SketchBook Pro). The glass is also *very* reflective, so if you have a bright studio where there's a lot of natural light then you may get problem reflections and glares, especially if there's a window behind you — this is not a monitor for a conventional office or a bright conservatory studio. Most digital artists will anyway tend to work in a much darker environment, for colour and contrast fidelity — but even there you may get slight reflections.

In terms of its looks the 1910b is not Apple-tastically sleek, but it's not going to look out of place in most studios. There's a Ugee logo badge at the front, and the monitor control buttons look a little cheap. If you were showing a client around your studio, it's not kit to hide in a drawer for the duration of the visit. That said, it's also not the monitor on which you'd want to actually demo your new work to the client.

The 1910b is not a power-hog, drawing only about 25 watts in use. In fact, I've found I can turn off my larger main monitor while using the Ugee, so I may save slightly on electric bills. The Ugee's power brick is a standard Chinese one, and the various cables are standard types and easily replaced. The only real worry seems to be that the block of digitiser electronics inside

the unit may eventually burn out. But I did not hear of anyone reporting that, during my research for the purchase. There were a few peeved reviews — but one has to wonder how many were due to user install error, early drivers, running from pitifully under-powered old laptops (most YouTube reviews seem to be in this category), or were from sly competitors trying to seed doubt among potential buyers.

I can't offer any advice for Windows 10 and Mac users, who will tend to have more trouble with drivers than Windows 7 and 8.1 users do.

## Conclusions:

There's a lot to like about the Ugee 1910b, not least its affordable price which gives it very sweet spot in the current market for creative hardware. It was shipped by Amazon UK and came well packed. It's robust and works as advertised. You get two pens and they're very well designed and by all accounts they hold each charge for months. It works with the main software, though you do need to give it a little care and time in setup and learn how it needs to work alongside your main monitor.

Obviously you shouldn't expect this budget monitor to have all the sleek buttons and hi-colour fidelity of a Wacom Cintiq, but I found a neat free game-controller workaround for the lack of side-buttons. Provided you have time and patience to set the 1910b up properly then this is an excellent budget buy for students, hobbyists and small (dark) production studios. I can't give advice on long-term durability, but there is a limited manufacturer warranty and many people seem to be happy with this.

**UGEE** is online at:

<http://www.ugee.net/>

Ugee 1910b units (and its larger version the 2050) are available from Amazon. Be sure to buy from a 'Fulfilled by Amazon' page.

Ugee did **not** send us a review unit or otherwise incentivise this review.



## FREE OR LOW-COST THIRD-PARTY SOFTWARE:

Software we tested and which enhanced the Ugee experience:

Dual Monitor Tool. Freeware, current and maintained.

Quickly move windows between monitors. Have software start up on the second monitor. Lock your mouse cursor to the main monitor.

f.lux. Freeware, current and maintained.

Tone down the colour temperature of your monitor. Save eye-strain. It affects colour, but is fine for 'lead pencil' sketching and line inking.

Windows On-screen keyboard. Ships with Windows.

Make a shortcut then drag the icon and window to your second desktop.

JoyToKey. \$6 shareware, current and maintained.

Map the buttons of an old USB videogame controller, to work with the keyboard shortcuts of your art software.

Lazy Nezumi Pro. \$35, current and maintained.

A line smoothing plugin for Photoshop, which gives your pen-stroke a nice smooth line and reduces jitter when hand drawing.

**Round the back:** The Ugee 1910b may be an unfamiliar Chinese brand, but so are many gadgets in our homes. It conforms to basic standards and safety rules. Below you can see the fairly basic ports. There's a DVI-I dual link video cable socket, and a plain VGA video socket, a power connector and a standard USB socket, which on the review unit was a square rather than a flat type.



## Ugee alternatives:

⦿ "I'm a 3D guy who wants to test out this crazy 'screen drawing' idea, but only for \$50 or so"

Buy a second-hand Wacom graphics digitizer tablet that plugs in via a USB cable. It may suit you, but many artists never really get used to the clunky disconnect between looking down at the tablet and then up at the screen, or the cramped space available on even a good 10" tablet.

⦿ "What about buying used?"

For \$400-\$500 you *might* get lucky and find a second-hand and/or 'ten-year old model' Wacom Cintiq, although some used 'bargains' may have seen heavy use. Older Cintiq models were not without their own problems, such as poor viewing angles. Pens may be gunky, old wires stressed and near breaking.

⦿ "I can afford another \$200"

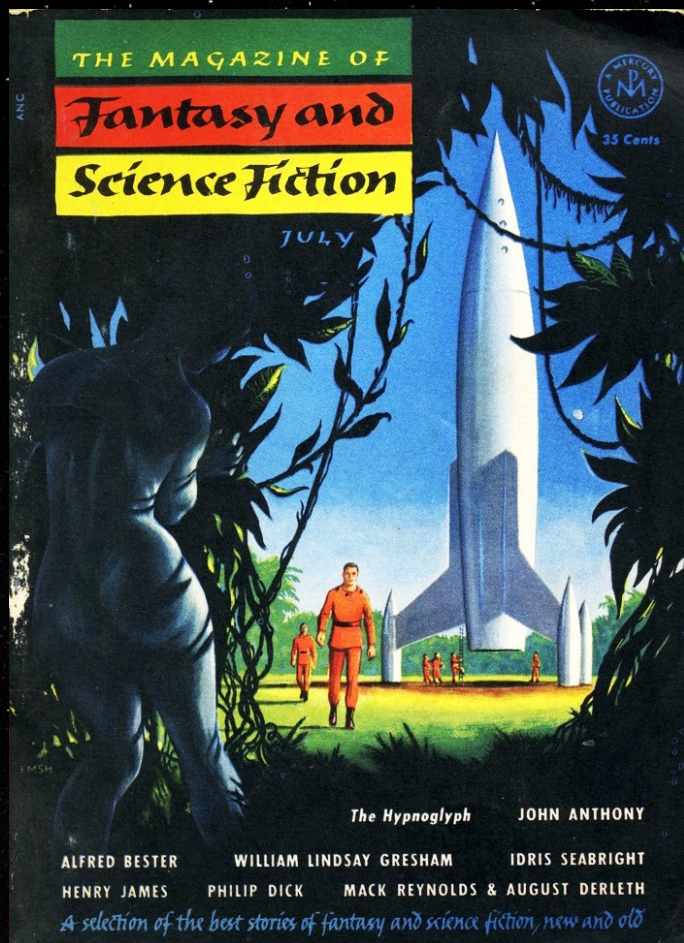
The Ugee 2150 pen monitor is similar to the 1910b. It has slightly better colour fidelity, slightly better viewing angles, an HDMI video socket and a larger 21" screen running at 1920 x 1080px. Expect to pay another \$200 for taking the step up, though.

⦿ "I just landed a big client! Here, take my \$2,000!"

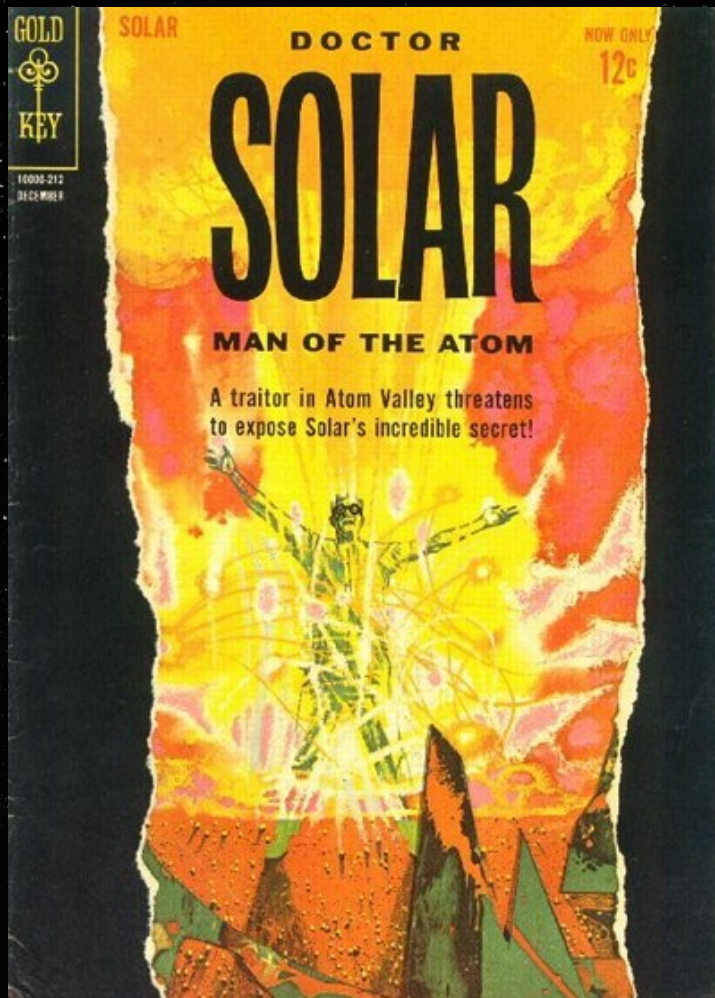
The new Microsoft Surface Pro 5 is being touted by early reviews as the perfect Wacom Cintiq-killer, but it won't ship until early 2017 and is said to be priced around \$1,600. That directly matches the price of a new Cintiq 21", but you get elegant client-wowing portability and the full Windows operating system. Expect to pay another \$250 on top for the inevitable accessories, software, and a smart new carry-bag to make the most of your new buy.



CREATIVE IDEA: looking out of dark to a bright glade.



CREATIVE IDEA: 'explosive' artwork has ripped page edges.



## GLOW LIGHTING IN SCI-FI PULPS

### Magazine of Fantasy and SF

July 1953.

Without actually adding any pseudo-glow haze or using reflective inks, the artist **Ed Emshwiller** has managed to make it seem that the central area is glowing with light, and yet we can still clearly see the blue-skinned alien girl in the trees. To have such a painting reproduce correctly on a cheap pulp magazine cover must have taken a deep understanding of what was possible at the printing presses, in terms of the ability to put light and shade on paper. The publisher has also had the July issue's cover painting neatly reflect the summer season and mood. Ed Emshwiller mainly produced interior illustrations in the 1950s sci-fi magazines, but was prolific in paperbacks during the 1950s and 1960s.

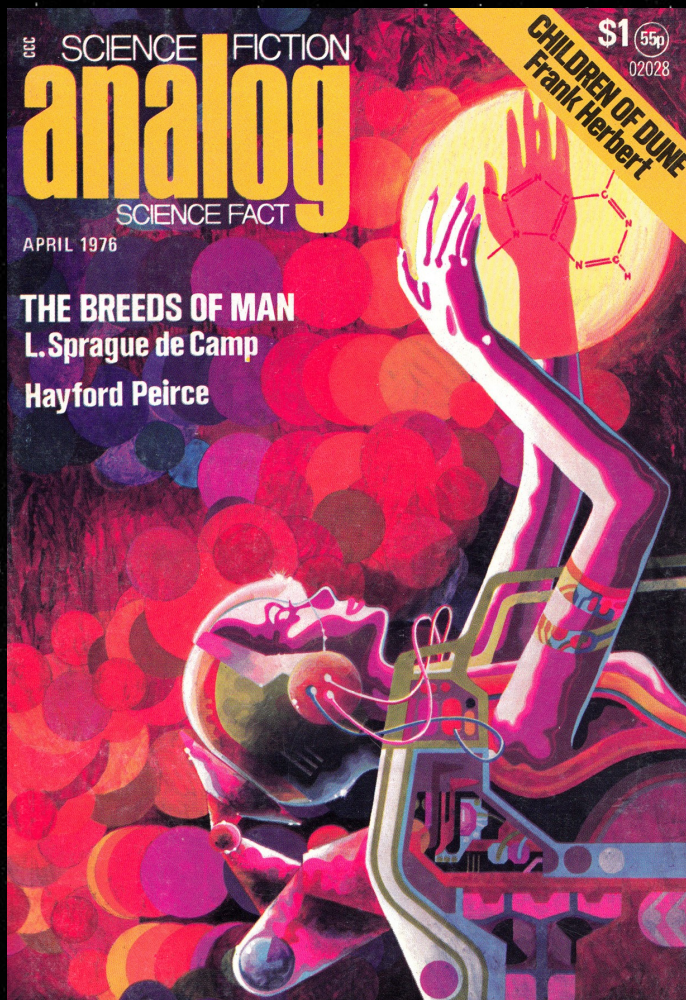
### Doctor Solar: Man of the Atom

Issue #2, on the stands December 1962.

With real-life Russian socialist 'Atom Spies' running wild in America at the time, the low-key publisher Gold Key tried their new atom scientist *Doctor Solar* sci-fi/superhero/spies title in summer 1962. By December 1962 it had sold well enough to run out #2 and try to develop a series. The cover of #2 was by **Richard M. Powers**, who had trained at the Chicago School of Art and who produced paperback and comics covers from about 1950 onwards. Although capable of straight 'space art', as seen on book covers such as Arthur C. Clarke's *Earthlight*, Powers was also able to offer more adventurous publishers his boldly surrealist style. His surrealist covers were what later made him influential among his peers, and he was also noted by the fine-art world of the 60s and 70s.



CREATIVE IDEA: side viewpoint on a recumbent figure.



## Analog magazine

April 1976.

The *Analog* spring 1976 cover was this lovely feminine portrait by artist **Mike Hinge**, in which he has toned down the harshly psychedelic approach of the early 1970s to great effect. Hinge had arrived in the USA from New Zealand in the late 1950s and studied at the Art Center School of Design in Los Angeles; then moved to New York in 1966 to earn his main living from advertising work. Influenced by the art of the U.S. and U.K. counter-culture, he landed some Warhol-like front-covers with the *Time* news magazine in the early 1970s, then did some psychedelic paperback covers in the mid-1970s. He also published a comic strip with the U.S. edition of *Heavy Metal* magazine. Hinge's artbook *The Mike Hinge Experience* (1973) is now a collector's item.

CREATIVE IDEA: two bright glowing colours, plus greys.



## Astounding Stories

January 1936.

Early pulp covers often rely strongly on a few primary colours, and this is no exception. Artist **Howard V. Brown** (born 1878) had specialised in technical subjects, and may have been an influence on the later 'machine drawings' of Jack Kirby. He trained at the Chicago Art Institute circa the early 1900s, and then did well-paid cover art for quality best-selling titles such as *Scientific American* and *Argosy*, along with children's prehistory titles. But as the Great Depression deepened paid work became scarce. As an old man he painted nearly all of the covers for *Astounding Stories* (1934-1938) and *Wonder Stories* (1936-1940). At the time he may have thought that he was 'just an old hack making his rent money', but actually he was making the art that would shape the vision of an entire generation of science-fiction fans.



# JACQUES PENNA



We talk with professional game asset designer Jacques Penna about 3dsMax, complexity, and the importance of 2D drawing skills to 3D artists.

**DAL:** Jacques, 'Jack', welcome to *Digital Art Live* magazine, and to our 'Cybertronic' themed issue. We're hoping it'll be a tribute to all things 'glowing' in science-fiction, from cybernetic grid-racing worlds to the cool use of neon and glow in sci-fi scenes. A perfect fit with the time of year, hopefully, when the evenings draw in, the streets are wet and reflective, and all the pre-Christmas lights are glowing. So when we saw your art we thought some of it would be a good fit with the theme.

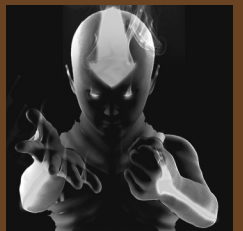
**JP:** It's an honour to be part of this month's issue, thanks for having me.

**DAL:** Let's start with your obvious interest in sci-fi. How did that originate?

**JP:** It all stemmed from how the culture was when I was growing up. That means in terms of books, TV, magazines and comics. There was an abundant amount around, from early *Popular Mechanics* issues to the English version of *Heavy Metal* magazine.

**DAL:** And you're a *Tron* fan, I see from your Gallery? Did you like the recent Legacy movie?





JACQUES PENA

USA

3DSMAX | V-RAY  
PHOTOSHOP

[WEB](#)



Have you followed any of the other content that's been developed around the world?

**JP:** Consider me a more fan of the classic *Tron*, although the *Legacy* movie did hold out some hope for the more classic type of sci-fi film genre to be revived.

**DAL:** I recently revisited the *Legacy* movie, having seen it on IMAX back in 2016-ish when it first came out. I think I may even have seen it in 3D. I thought it held up well, seeing it again in 2016. The third act was a bit flat and predictable though, I have to admit. But back to you. Did you have anyone special to help you along the way, in your early days of creativity?

**JP:** I think that some of the most help I had, it came from the art community, and from their acknowledgment of my work. When you have followers who appreciate your work, you work harder for them.

**DAL:** Yes, although they can also push you along paths you shouldn't be going. Then how did you first get into making 3D art?

**JP:** I think my biggest break in art came while I

was in college [university], when I was approached by Autodesk to promote my work.

**DAL:** Wow, that's quite an honour. Talking of early picture, tell us about the glows and projections on your early picture "Anubis Projection" (overleaf), please. Did you have to overcome things to get the software working together? How did you go about getting the striking lighting and other effects as you wanted them to appear?

**JP:** A classic image. I would say this was done in the "early" days of experimenting with 3d software. The *Wild West*, so to speak before all the fancy things we have now. This was made with Poser for the figures, Rhino for the modelling, and rendered in Cinema 4D. During that time, there were *many* issues with working with multiple pieces of software. Nothing really translated as well as the software does software.

**DAL:** You appear to have moved from Cinema4D to 3dsMax + Vray? Was that a personal preference, or perhaps something to do with commercial pressures? I see you do character modelling, and so I wondered if the game



Pictures: "On Another World" and "Relief S.O. Entry".



industry requires 3dsMax and that was why you swapped?

**JP:** It was a matter of 'finding yourself'. Eventually, you will find the tools you need that work for you.

**DAL:** Would you recommend learning 3dsMax for digital art beginners, if they did not intend to go into games development? I ask because I assume there's a learning or student edition that may attract some people.

**JP:** I would recommend it, but I wouldn't hold it up as a standard. There are numerous applications that will help beginners to understand the core concept of 3d modelling. Experiment with what you can, find your groove.

**DAL:** Tell us more about your 3d modelling, please, and how your skills have progressed in that area?

**JP:** From the early days of poly-modelling things by hand, it was rough. Especially with the character modelling. Over the years — with software like Zbrush and Autodesk's Mudbox — this aspect of the work has greatly changed

what 3d modelling is and how it is tackled. Things are faster now and with more clarity, where the artist can take more control.

**DAL:** For 3D modelling, what's your option of Zbrush over 3dsMax? Or does 3dsMax come with something like the Zbrush equivalent Mudbox included, these days? I haven't looked at it for ages now.

**JP:** They actually work hand and hand to help produce the results you want. Going from Max to Zbrush and back again, is quote considerably my day to day workflow!

**DAL:** I also see you do some very fine 2D work. You use the excellent Autodesk Sketchbook Pro and a Wacom Cintiq. We have a review of the budget Ugee 1910b (a cheap 19" budget sort-of equivalent to the Cintiq) in this issue, and in it we highly recommend SketchBook Pro for use with it.

Tell us about your 2D artwork, please. How did you develop your SketchBook skills, and do you find that 3D is useful to speed up the workflow on a 2D drawing?

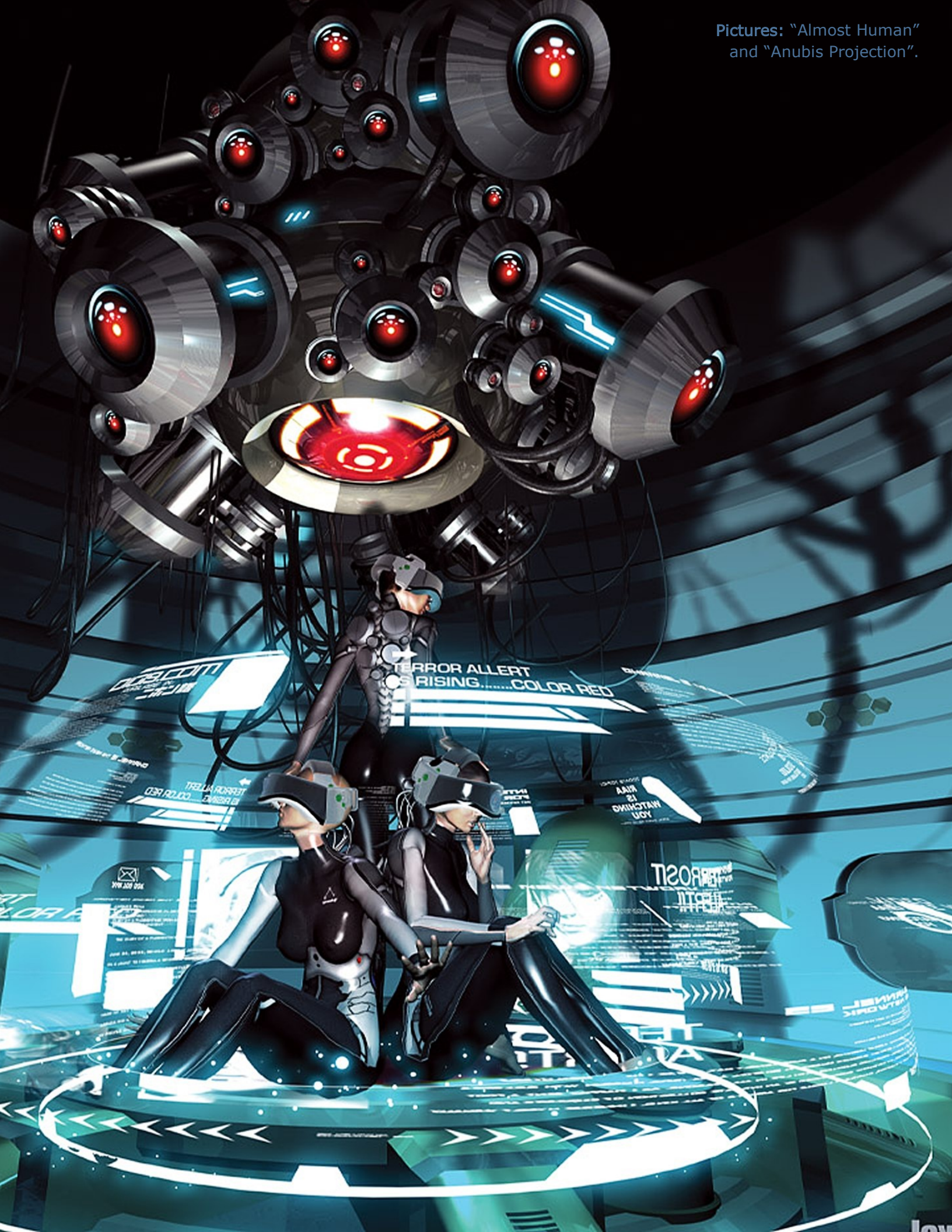








Pictures: "Almost Human"  
and "Anubis Projection".





**JP:** I actually began as an illustrator, way back before 3D was even an option. I come from a fine arts background, where traditional fundamentals stay true no matter what the medium is, be it digital or not. As an artist, it is necessary to understand both 2d and 3d. 3d as a tool for 2d comes handy in many ways, from perspective or for just laying down ground work.

**DAL:** Very true. Do you have any tips for beginners with SketchBook Pro? I think mine would be, re: making sci-fi art: "make sure you upgrade to get the latest version, simply for the glow blend-layer and the glow brush".

**JP:** Well first one must invest in a tablet, if you are thinking about taking the dive into 2d digital illustration. But also buy a physical sketchbook, and always sketch your initial ideas, and always keep drawing.

**DAL:** Thanks. More generally, what would be your 'three tips' for those starting out in digital creativity, more widely? For instance, do you have any opinions on people doing a lot of fan art to 'skill up', before they try their own original creations?

**JP:** I would say...

1. Find your style and your medium.
2. Always enjoy the process.
3. Never hold yourself to one thing. Be it Fan Art or Not, what ever keeps you creating is all that matters.

**DAL:** What appeals to you in science-fiction, these days? Visually, and also intellectually in terms of storylines and/or challenging game-worlds.

**JP:** I'm always looking for ways sci-fi can help develop interpretations of an idea. For example, how elements can look, or feel, when they are out in deep space. How interactions with humans and technology could behave and look in the future.

**DAL:** Where would you like to see sci-fi going in games, in the future?

**JP:** I would love to see it progress more in an educational way. To help inspire us to seek more

advanced knowledge.

**DAL:** Yes, there's a lot of potential there, especially in visualising complexity. Or just the way stuff moves in a different situation in space. There is software such as Kerbal Space Program and Stellarium, both doing good things in terms of teaching kids about 'real space' in a fun way. VR is perhaps a way forward there, although there will be many stumbles along that road. Have you tried/found a good VR game yet?

**JP:** *Adr1ft*. Zero gravity VR fun, and get your barf bag ready! /*Laughter*/

**DAL:** Ah, yes that's always where I part company with many space sims. *Descent* was the first game to turn me on to (and off of) motion sickness, way back in the days of the original *DOOM*. Now I just want a "just let the computer decide the outcome" skip button on every whirly space dogfight.

Now, your gallery's character designs are very appealing. How are they imagined and developed, and where do they end up? Are they being used in some commercial games somewhere?

**JP:** Most commercial work I do is indeed developed for various studios and companies for marketing purposes.

**DAL:** Ah, I see. Yes, I thought that might be the case. Sorry for asking, as you're obviously under company agreements on those. For your personal work, though, I get the feeling that you're someone who loves complexity and also 'pushing through' complexity to get to the other side and to tame it? Your picture "Pure Garage", for instance, must have taken an age to plan and realise.

**JP:** Complexity *and* Chaos I would say. "Pure Garage" spent more time in my head, then actual being built. Lots of similar ideas stay dormant for months, till the faithful day of creation.

**DAL:** You're aided in your more complex digital art by some "conceptual tools" that I've not heard of before. Such as 53 Paper. Could you tell our readers about those, please?



Picture: "Tweet".





**JP:** 53 Paper is actually an app for jotting/ drawing ideas and designs quick and easily. It's for that moment when you just don't have the time to fully 'concept' something, so why not use your mobile phone to aid you in thought and creation. Works well during client meetings. Just don't get caught not paying attention!

**DAL:** Thanks. Tell us about your most recent and very impressive works, please, such as "Kinetica" and "Digital Concerto".

**JP:** Kinetica and Digital Concerto fall into the category of Complexity and Chaos. Each themed in different tones, one being Musical in nature, the other a symbiotic relationship between man and machine.

**DAL:** Where do you hope that your art will go in the future?

**JP:** Difficult question... only time will tell. But, I hope it becomes more inspirational.





**DAL:** And finally, what are two of your favourite on-line resources related to digital art? Be it a forum, on-line galleries, model sites or other resources?

**JP:** CGTalk and ArtStation are great resources. Those guys rock and are helping artist find a place to live, learn and advance.

**DAL:** Super, well many thanks for this in-depth interview.

**JP:** Once again, thanks for having me, was a honor and a pleasure.

Jacques Pena is online at:

<http://www.artofjacques.com/>

<http://sleepinglion.deviantart.com/>

Pictures: "Kinetica" and  
"Digital Concerto".





# GALLERY

This issue's 'Cybertronic' gallery surveys all things glowing and 'cyber-neon'!



Picture: "Concepto  
detron", by [HacheDos](#).



Picture: "Gaia" by  
[JTorrevillas](#). Made  
with Blender.





**Picture:** "Get ready to daft"  
by Bazze (Anders Lejczak).  
Modelled and rendered in  
Modo.



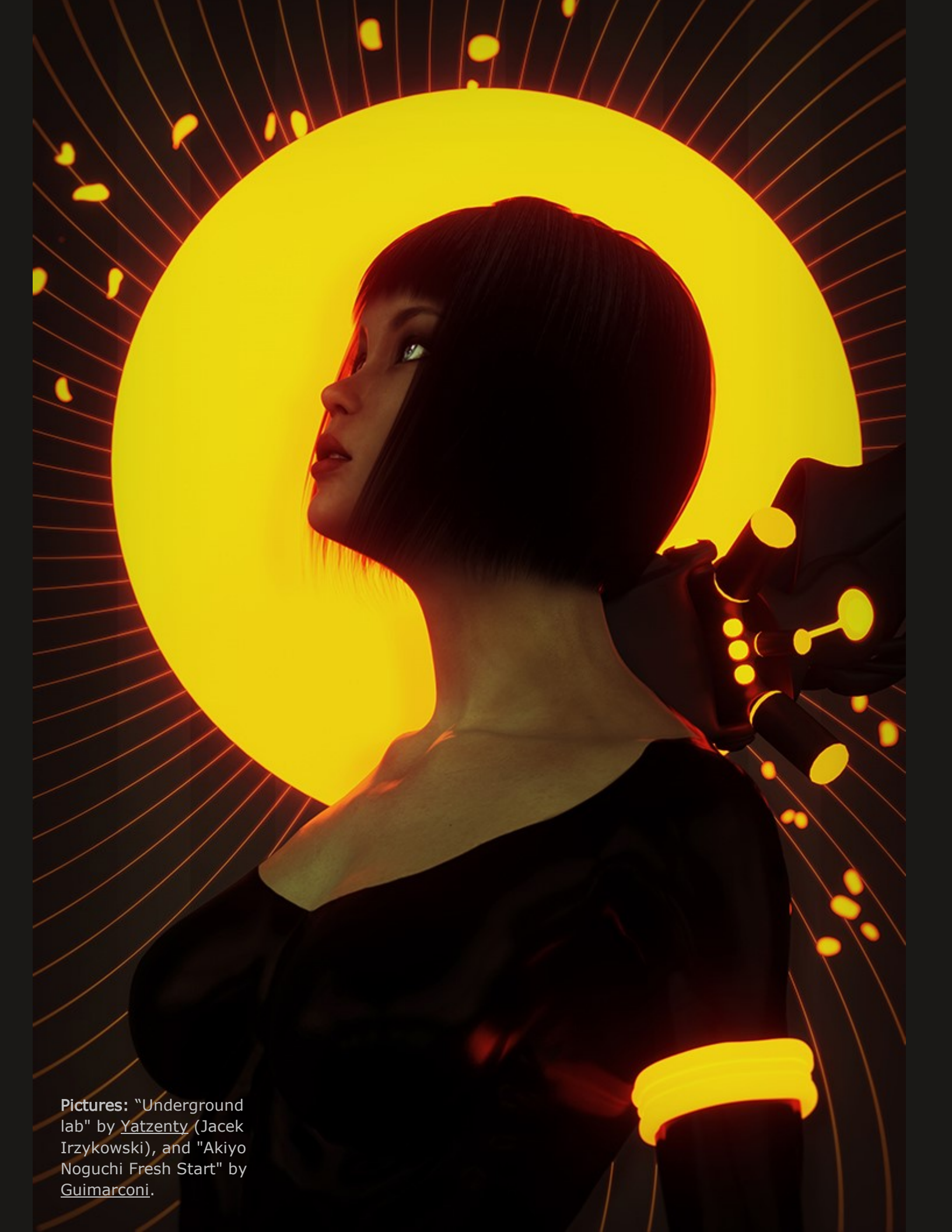












**Pictures:** "Underground lab" by [Yatzenty](#) (Jacek Irzykowski), and "Akiyo Noguchi Fresh Start" by [Guimarconi](#).





KLAUDIA JÓŹWIAK





Pictures: "Underworld" by  
[Artbyklaudiajozwiak](#);  
"SciFiGirl" by [ShibaShake](#),  
DAZ Studio, iRay and  
Photoshop.

ShibaShake



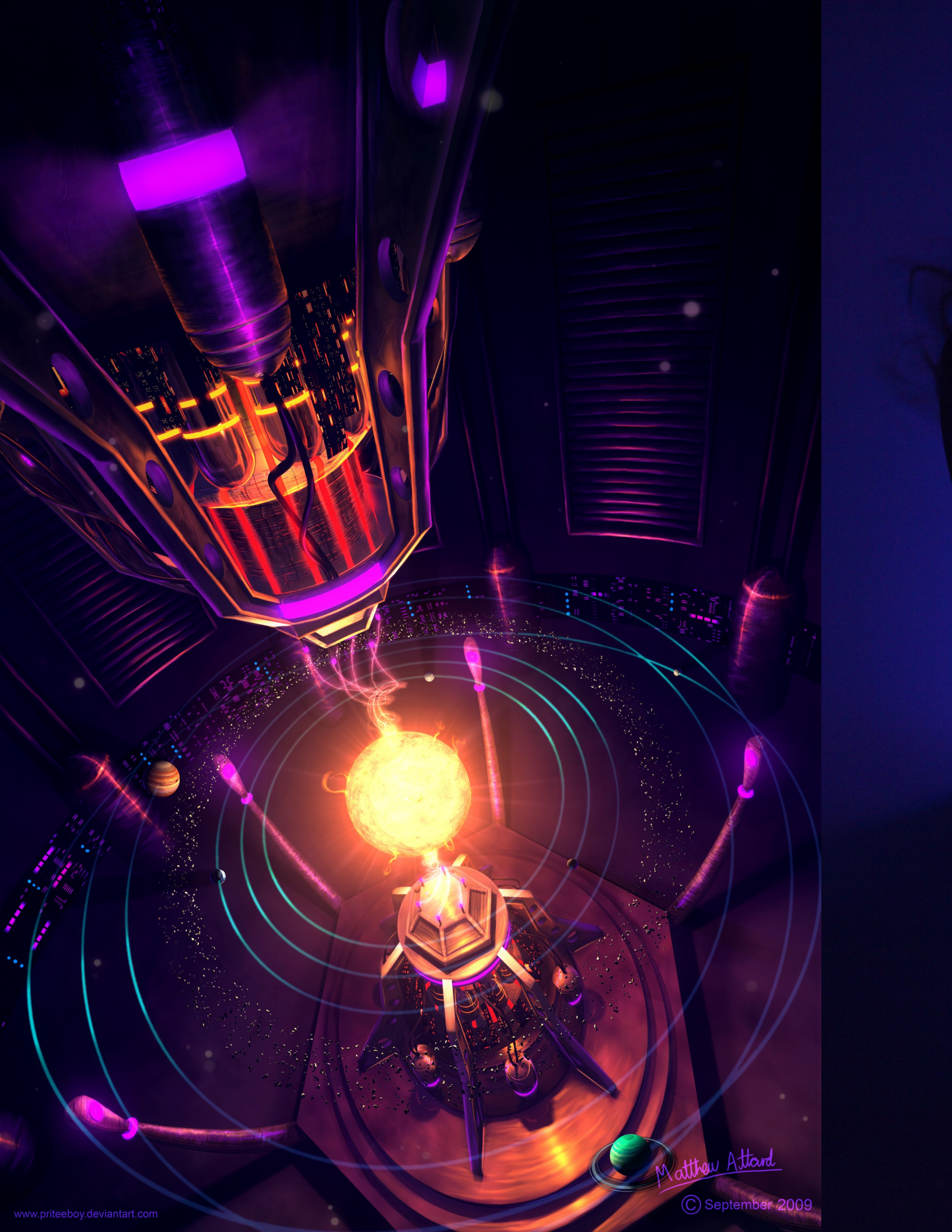




Pictures: "Neon" by [Zerj19](#), and "Akiyo Noguchi Disco" by [Guimarconi](#).









Pictures: "Synthetic System" by [Priteeboy](#), modelled in Cinema 4D, rendered in Vue and then overpainted. "LED Costume" by [Beo Beyond](#).





Picture: "Scifilandscape"  
by [Leofic](#).



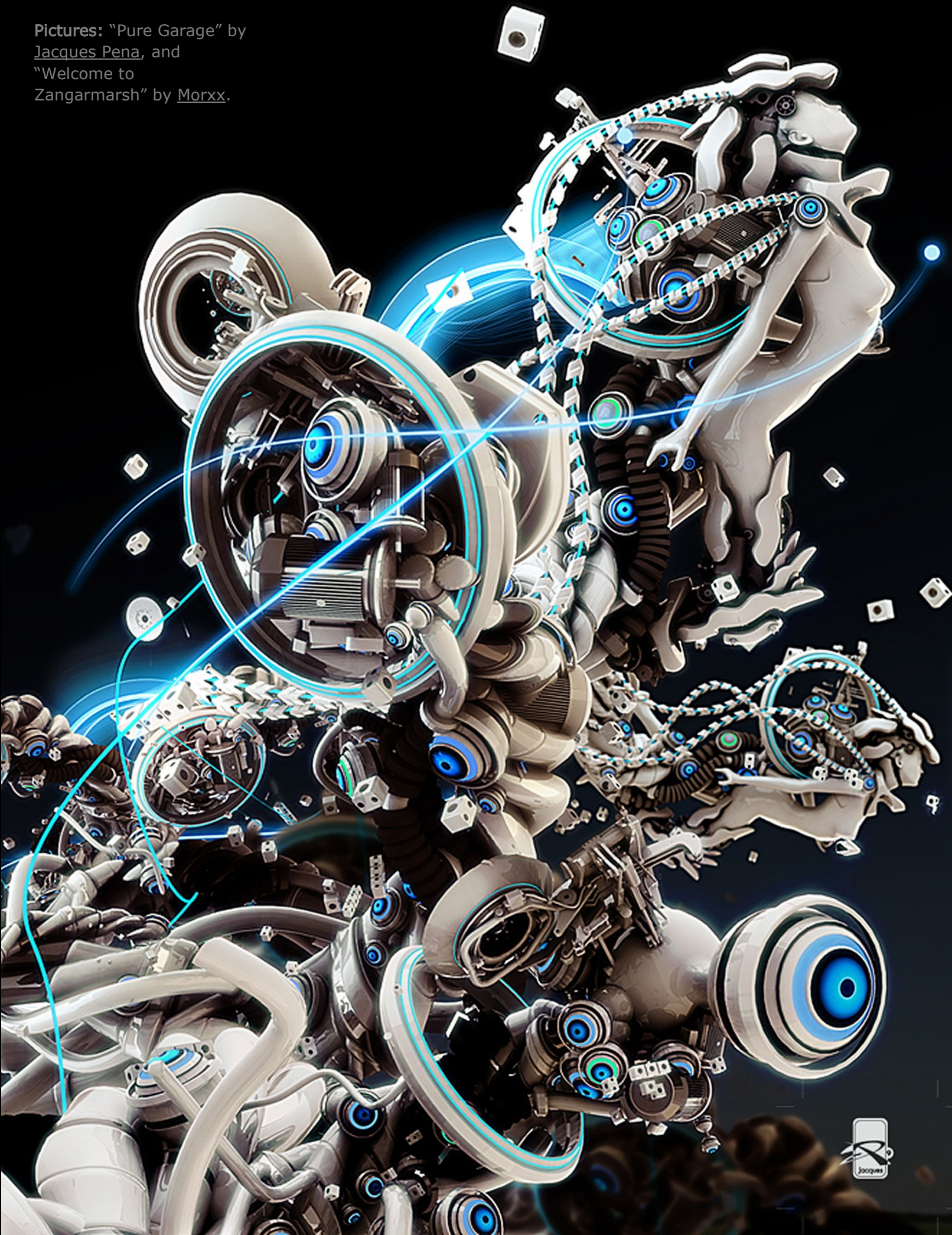




LesN



Pictures: "Pure Garage" by  
[Jacques Pena](#), and  
"Welcome to  
Zangarmarsh" by [Morxx](#).













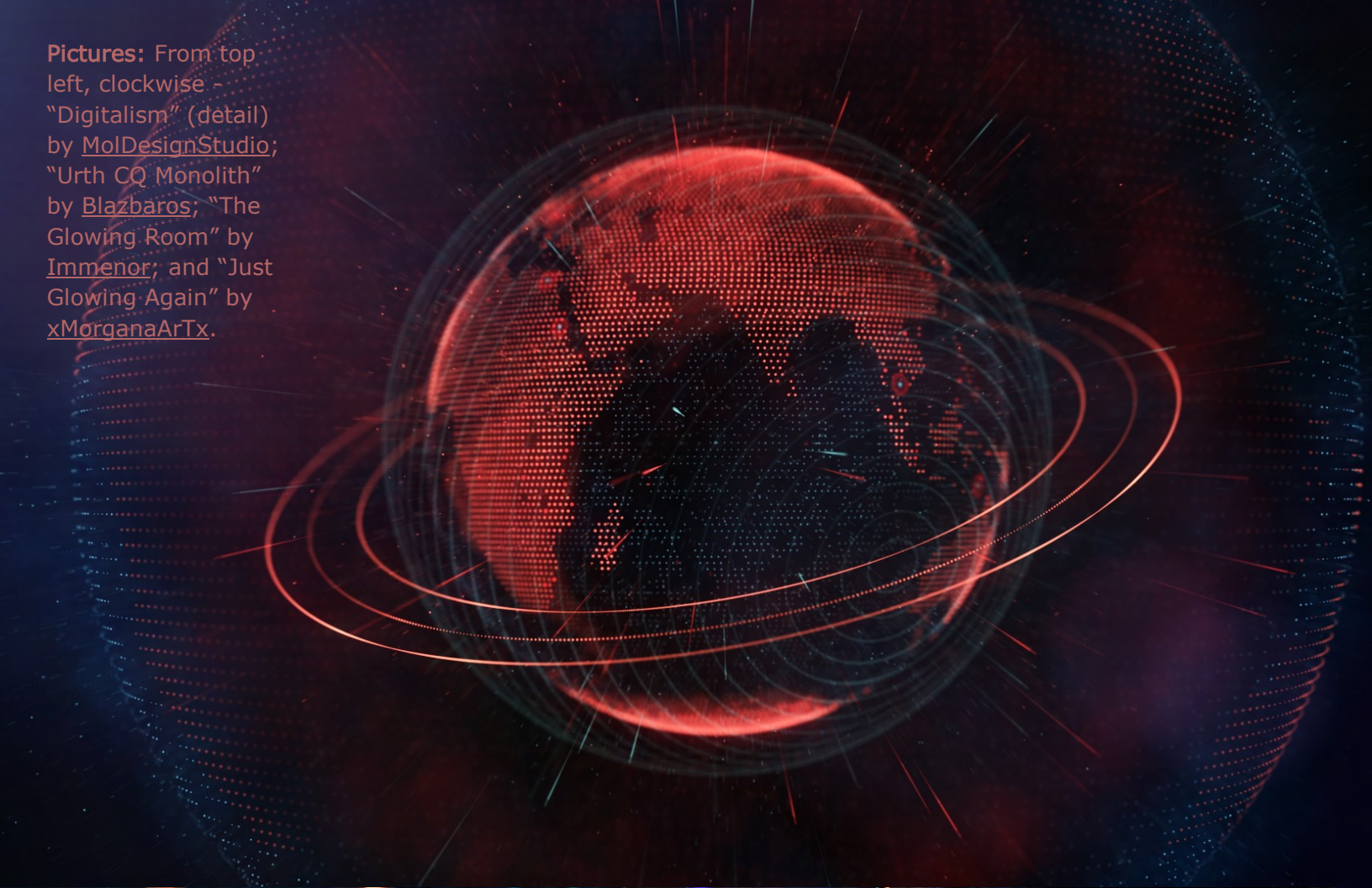
Picture: "Transmission II"  
by [Love1008](#).



TRANSMISSION II



**Pictures:** From top left, clockwise -  
"Digitalism" (detail)  
by [MoDesignStudio](#);  
"Urth CQ Monolith"  
by [Blazbaros](#); "The  
Glowing Room" by  
[Immenor](#); and "Just  
Glowing Again" by  
[xMorganaArTx](#).







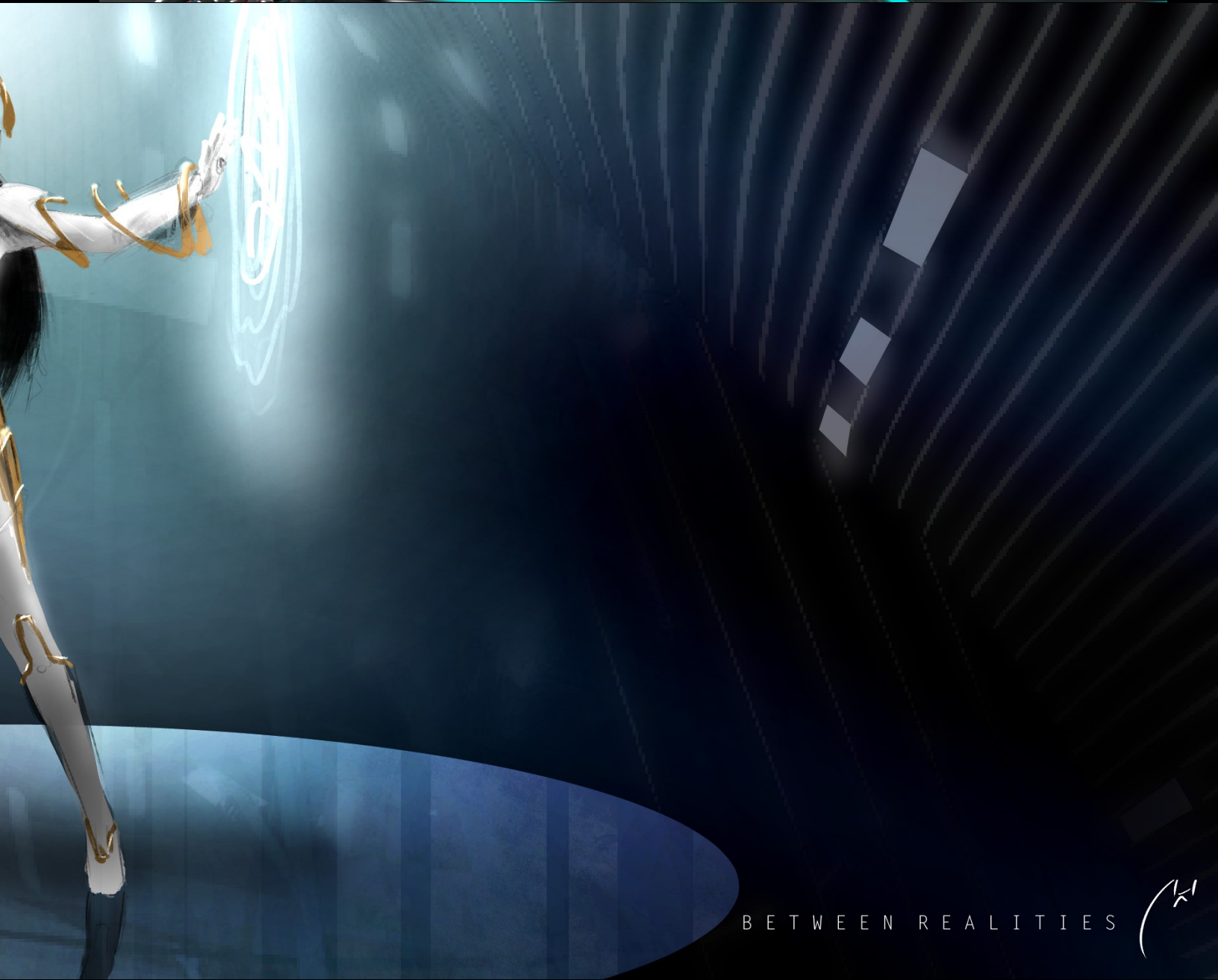




**Pictures:** From top left, clockwise - "Tronartifact" by [Betterways](#) (Cinema 4D and After Effects), "Gynoid 0110" by [Tweezetyne](#) (DAZ Studio and Reality 2.5), and "Between Realities" by [Xistenceimagination](#)s.









# Digital Art LIVE

## Dreamlands | New York

The Whitney Museum of American Art and car maker Audi together present a major gallery exhibition of how 20th century artists used immersive technologies to make dreamlike experiences. "Dreamlands: Immersive Cinema and Art, 1905-2016" is spread over 18,000 sq.ft. of space and also includes a substantial cinema programme. The show is in New York until 5th February 2017. Named for H.P.

Lovecraft's lesser-known 'Dreamlands' stories, the exhibition... "connects different historical moments of cinematic experimentation, creating a story that unfolds like a map of dreaming oneself through a series of immersive spaces". All sorts of illusion artworks are on offer: early work with lights and mirrors and 3d-glasses; through synesthetic artworks for Disney's *Fantasia*, and Syd Mead's work for *Blade Runner*; to a survey of the best dream-like artworks from 1990 to today — involving cyborgs, avatars, AI and a few thousand luminous frogs!

<http://whitney.org/>



# IMAGIN

Our pick of the most inspirational art and sci-fi. Make your imagination LIVE!



Main picture: A room in "Dreamlands" at the  
Whitney Museum of American Art.

ARIUM

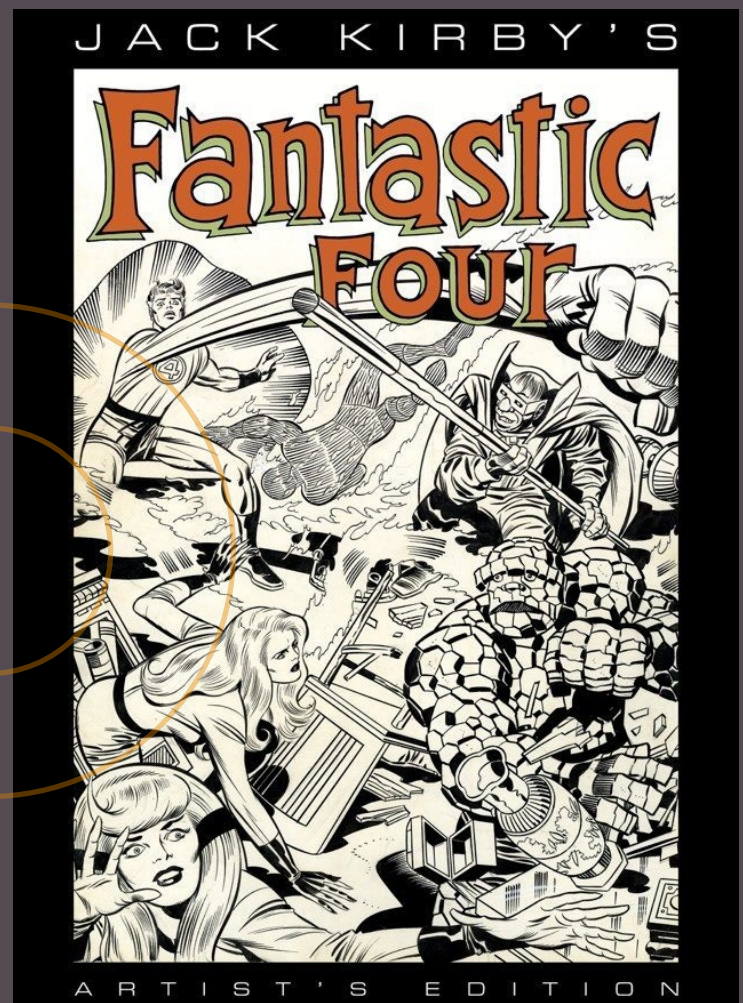




### Book: Art of "The Iron Giant"

The excellent hand-animated feature-film *Iron Giant* (1999), from the famous Ted Hughes book, was an artistic and critical triumph for director Brad Bird. Sadly the movie didn't do so well at the box office. Bird's recent terrific but misunderstood film *Tomorrowland* also suffered a similar fate, and for some reason it also didn't merit an artbook (although there is a fine fan-made artbook online, if one looks hard enough). As a consolation for the poor marketing of *Tomorrowland* Hollywood gave Bird a long-delayed artbook for his *Iron Giant* movie. In the book's 160 sumptuous pages we get a long look at the slow creative evolution of the film, including new interviews with the team, then a survey of the rapid-fire work that was turned out after the movie was suddenly green-lit for production.

<http://titanbooks.com/the-art-of-the-iron-giant-8863/>

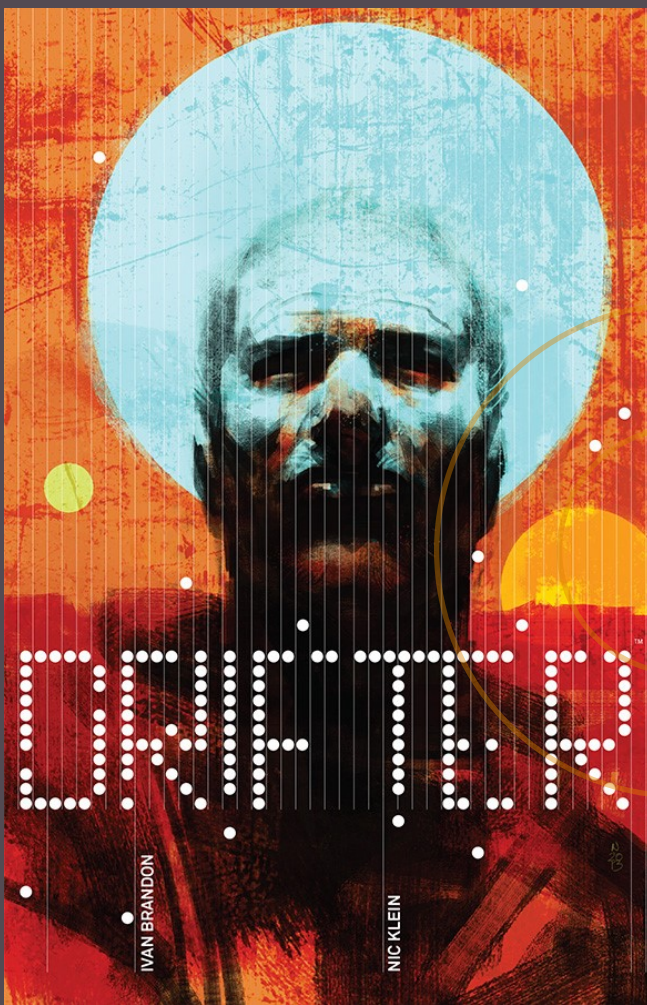


### Book: Jack Kirby's Artist's Edition

Can't afford original Jack Kirby artwork? Few can, these days. But the next best thing is the 12" x 17" 144-page *Fantastic Four Artist Edition*, which offers two complete stories. The pages are all crisply and freshly photographed directly from Jack Kirby's original art for *Fantastic Four* issues #82 and #83 (the Inhumans), the 48-page *Fantastic Four Annual* #6, and there's also a gallery section of original art for "some of Kirby's most incredible pages" for the title. These issues show the famous team of Jack Kirby and Stan Lee working at the height of their powers. We hear that original inker Joe Sinnott has embellished all the pages in this book, to remove blemishes and white-out fluid. The book is scheduled to be available in December 2016, and forms part of an acclaimed "Artist's Edition" series which provides fans something akin to the experience of owning original artwork — albeit minus the evocative smell of india ink and correction fluid!

To be available at all good booksellers.





## Graphic novel: Drifter

Artist Nic Klein and writer Ivan Brandon are currently producing one of the best of the recent wave of sci-fi graphic novels. Three trade paperbacks currently collect issues 1-14 of their *Drifter* series. The book tells the story of Abram Pollux's crashed landing on the backwater planet Ouro, and of his subsequent mind-bending attempt to figure out the planet. One part *High Plains Drifter*, one part *Dune*, one part *The Martian*, *Drifter*'s lovingly designed world is beautifully realised in painted artwork. *Drifter* #15 and #16 are set to appear before Christmas 2016, starting to build toward another trade paperback. *Drifter* is worth following, but be aware that it's one of those ever-continuing slowly-appearing series — which may annoy mainstream readers who expect a completed 'movie experience' storyline from their graphic novels.

Available at various comics outlets.



## Channel: Recursor.tv

A new webchannel called Recursor.TV collects together indie sci-fi movies, Web series and shorts from independent filmmakers. The site is neatly tagged with tight sub-genres such as Posthuman; Multiverse; Space Opera; Military SF; Augmented Reality and many more, making it easy to find what you want. Which makes a nice difference from sites such as YouTube. Thankfully the site isn't over-run with post-apocalyptic doom 'n gloom, and we only spotted two films in that category. Leading the selection is a more upbeat new Web series called "Nina Unlocked" which tells the story of a a superintelligent android girl. "Nina" currently has three episodes online. We'd suggest there's also room here for short 8-10 minute documentaries, on topics such as the history of sci-fi — there is a category for interviews, but it's currently empty. The channel certainly looks great, and is apparently well-funded.

<http://www.recursor.tv/>





## Marvel at GOMA

Opening in 2017, Australia.

Australia is getting set to unleash a major "blockbuster" exhibition surveying the epic superheroes of Marvel Comics, to be held at Brisbane's Gallery of Modern Art (GOMA) in 2017. "Marvel: Creating the Cinematic Universe" is being billed as "a world-first" and "the largest exhibition of its kind ever held in an art museum". It will aim to show how the stories go from comic book page to the big screen, and will feature original artwork, film props, costumes and more.

<http://www.qagoma.qld.gov.au/>

**Pictures**, from left, across double-page spread:

Promotional press picture for the 2017 GOMA Marvel exhibition.

Detail from a clay model of the Prague Golem, courtesy of WikiMedia.

Detail from the cover of *Comet in Moominland* (1946/51) by Tove Jansson.

Detail from "The Alchemist", by William Fettes Douglas (1822-1891).



## Golem

Until 29th January 2017, Berlin.

The Jewish Museum Berlin has a major 10,000 square-foot exhibition on the most prominent creature of Jewish legend, the Golem. The Golem has inspired science fiction and fantasy artists, filmmakers, and authors, and also influenced areas such as artificial intelligence, computers and robots. The exhibition surveys a wide range of depictions of the Golem, from its roots in Jewish mysticism through to the artificial creature of popular culture. The exhibition bring together loans from important museums and private collections all over the world, including the Jewish Museum New York, the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and the Israel Museum. There is also a 184-page catalogue with texts by Isaac Asimov, Jorge Luis Borges, and Gustav Meyrink alongside essays by historians from various disciplines. The exhibition will be complemented by a different major Golem exhibition opening in Paris in March 2017, at The Musee d'Art et d'Histoire du Judaisme.

<https://www.jmberlin.de/en>





## Tove Jansson retrospective

Opening in 2017, London.

London's Dulwich Picture Gallery has announced that it will stage the first full UK retrospective of the work of the Finnish illustrator Tove Jansson, creator of the famous *Moomins* books. 150 original works will be displayed, including a series of *Moomins* drawings only recently unearthed through the detective work of the British Cartoon Archive. This large gallery exhibition will run from October 2017 until January 2018, and is likely to be incredibly popular — tickets for the best times and days will need to be booked months in advance.

The exhibition will follow on from Eleanor Yule's recent superb documentary film *Moominland Tales: The Life of Tove Jansson*, which drew together a wealth of material and interviews to present a vivid portrait of this much-loved creative talent. In October 2016 Penguin Books also issued the first paperback and Kindle ebook versions of the "definitive biography", *Tove Jansson: Work and Love*.

<http://www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk/>

## The Art of Alchemy

Until February 2017, Los Angeles.

One of the deep "tap roots" of science fiction goes down through the centuries and into the historic practice of medieval alchemy. Alchemy's curious blend of experimental proto-science and mysticism sought to meld the human imagination with a practical individualist artisanship, intending to unleash a new golden-age of wealth and plenty. "The Art of Alchemy" exhibition at the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles surveys... "the impact of alchemy on artistic practice and visual culture from antiquity to the present." The show features over 100 rare exhibits, gathered from all over the world.

A complementary exhibition at the Getty is on "The Alchemy of Color in Medieval Manuscripts", looking at how early book illuminators achieved their vivid colours and imitation gold embellishments.

Both shows are also likely to be of interest to artists involved in gothic, steampunk, and fantasy-historical art.

<https://www.getty.edu/research/>



# NEXT ISSUE: XMAS 2016 MISTWORLDS!

**Back cover:** Detail from "Project Blue", a 2014 Evolo competition entry. The drifting 'aerobot' building sucks diesel car particulate poison out of the air and uses it to make power inside a giant cooling tower, by having the pollution particles bio-digested by genetically enhanced microbes.

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

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

