

# ARTIFACTS



## To Readers and Viewers,

Welcome to another issue of *Serpentine/Artifacts* magazine. This issue is very special because we are bringing you the best of *Artifacts*, based on their style, unique vision, and truly seeing the visual side of students, even if it just for fun or want to get noticed. Everything from drawings, paintings, graphic design, and photography from all the issues that artwork was shown. Although *Artifacts* existed officially since 2006, only being a few years old, it does have some unique history that made *Artifacts* what it is today.

In 2006, *Serpentine* was at a critical point in its existence. Previous staff had graduated and *Serpentine* was at a risk of not existing. Elizabeth D'Ambrosio, at the time a contributor for *Serpentine's* "art" had taken the reigns. Thankfully *Serpentine* had survived. Not only did it survive but Winter 2006 issue had introduced it's first full art section, *Artifacts*. *Serpentine* did have art in their issues in the past. However, this art was often times put in the backgrounds or off the side of some pieces of literature and rarely credited to the artists.

*Artifacts* was initially planned to be a sister issue for *Serpentine*. *Serpentine* would be all the literature and *Artifacts* would be all the art. The idea didn't run too well with the big shots so it was decided that instead of not having *Artifacts* at all we would split *Serpentine*. With this creating the current layout to which you all see today, *Serpentine* in the front and on the flip side, *Artifacts*. At first *Artifacts* was more of a gaming, cosplay, anime review oriented section and has evolved through the years. The success of *Artifacts* had spread through the student-body. More students began contributing and it's defined *Serpentine* as not only creative expression through words but through paint, pencil, film etc.

Because the art from previous issues of *Serpentine* have not been credited we could not reproduce too many of them. Most of the art you will see from this point forward shows *Artifacts'* growth through the years. We all hope you enjoy this. All of the Staff put a lot of work and time to make this issue happen.

Lots of Love,

The Serpentine Staff.



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Flower by Alicia Rebelo Originally from Vol. II Issue 7



Artifacts 4 Under The Big Sky by Liz Zerilli Originally from Vol. II Issue 7



The Bearer of Dark Light by Christopher Cuccia  
Originally from Vol. II Issue 7

It's Ubercon VIII), the "ultimate gaming convention." We aren't there to play games though, we're interested in a few choice guests of honor, among the most notable is the legendary Ken Kelly. He's best known for his iconic rendition of Conan the Barbarian, the Love Gun and Destroyer album covers from Kiss, and any of the hundreds of other places you're likely to see his work. [At the time of this typing, he has most recently done the album art for Coheed & Cambria's No World for Tomorrow.] His schedule at this convention is chaos, between signings, panels, and special appearances at his merchandise booth. He is gracious in giving us one of his few free moments for a conversation about his past, the future, and the industry. Originally published in Serpentine Spring 2007.

S: Where and when did you start as a professional artist?

KK: It was 1968, New York City. A company called Warren Publishing which was publishing four popular horror magazines, I had a connection in the industry and they told me to meet with this gentleman [Jim Warren] to see if he wanted to use my art... and I sold my first painting. You have to go back a year and a half if you want to know how long it took me to learn to do that painting.

S: Do you remember your first painting?

KK: Absolutely. "Lurking Terror." It's in my first book. The layout is of a lady walking down a lonely street at night, and a miserable creep in an alley with a big stick threatening her. It's all gray and dark. He liked it and bought it. That started my career right there.

S: So horror was your main genre?

KK: Yes, because that's where Frank Frazetta - the person I knew - worked, and he said to bring it to Jim Warren to see if he'd want to buy it. That's how I started. If it were drawing teddy bears, I'd be drawing bears.

S: We've been to your website, and saw some spectacular fantasy work.

KK: You mean kenkellyart.com? [Ken winks.]

S: Do you enjoy doing fantasy, or is it something that just happened?

KK: It was something that came natural.

S: You've done some covers for Conan the Barbarian.

KK: Conan. I love doing Conan. I still do it privately, and there are so many things you can do with it since it's a wide open world.

S: You use oil paints heavily, why is that? Do you find it superior to other mediums, or is it convenience?

started coming together, figuring out how the paint works. If you have that kind of dedication to oil, you'll never change mediums. I did try acrylics, and others, but there's no comparison to oil.

S: How did your work with Kiss come about?

KK: Kiss was my break out. I was doing covers for comics, horror magazines, and paperback novels. I was in that small world until Kiss came along. They tried to negotiate with another artist, which didn't work out. They sent their art director downstairs to the comic/book/magazine shop to find another artist, and I had a cover on the stand from Warren Publishing. See how it comes full circle? This was five years later, and I was still working for Warren. The Kiss manager brought my cover to them and they said "Bring him in, we want to talk to him." That is how it started. Then the hard question came up, "Can you do the work?" That was very hard for me as a young new artist.

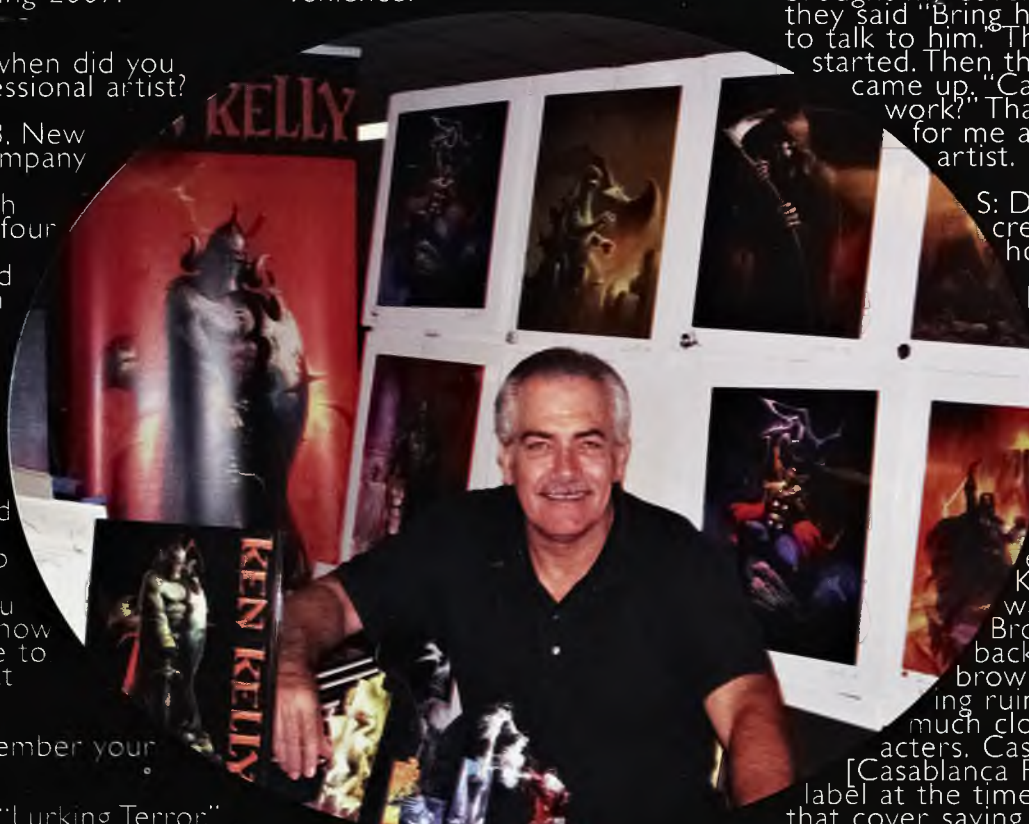
S: Did you have any creative freedom, how much?

KK: No, not that much color wise. I did have more freedom, but they were very clear on what they wanted concept wise. In fact, the first one was rejected. If you read Kiss history, it was called "The Brown Cover." The background was brown, and the burning ruined city was much closer to the characters. Casablanca

[Casablanca Records, Kiss' label at the time, -ed] rejected that cover saying it was too violent. In 1975 something like that was too violent for an album cover. I had to go back and redo the cover, which turned into "The Blue Destroyer," which had the city five miles away, so you could not tell that it was burning. This cover was accepted. So I had lenience in terms of color and poses. They wanted four men abreast.

S: Was it tough?

KK: It was, but I was up for it. I didn't know what I was doing. I was anxious. I was nervous. But I knew that I was in a put-up-or-go-home situation.



KK: At the time I'd started painting, I'd just come out of the military. I was working in a gas station making \$63 a week and I had my wife and a baby to feed. You can't live on that, choices had to be made. I had basic artistic talent, and Frazetta (who was in my family) showed me what he was working with, oil. That was the medium I worked with. I didn't know there were others.

Oil was difficult at first, it took me a year. I sold my car and apartment and moved to Europe. I was there for a year painting pictures (all of them failures), when in the tenth month it all

S: Would you say that was one of your most challenging projects?

KK: At that time, it was the most difficult thing I had ever done.



"Lurking Terror"

S: Do you constantly talk to the writers you're working with, or do you need a single description and take off from there?

KK: Now I do, before I did not. It used to be a manuscript. You'd read it if they did not know exactly what they wanted, and you'd do a rough draft and show them. If they liked it, go ahead. If not, do another. Nowadays, I'm in a different world, a better world. I actually talk to the writers, talk to the publishers, and we decide what we want to do. It's much easier now.

S: On your site, most of your art tells stories, such as "Lurking Terror."

KK: Yes it does. You need to convey a story.

S: Do you plan on releasing or making a graphic storybook where the art tells the story, as opposed to text?

KK: Sounds like a good idea. I just recently published my second book. It took two years to put it together, so it'll be a while before I put another one together. That was the hardest thing I've done, meshing the art and writing together. It paid off.

S: In terms of artists, how hard is it to get published?

KK: I do not know about other artists, but I was very fortunate. I do hear horror stories about

how people spend years trying to get noticed. I would attribute that to them not having enough talent, and don't realize it. They keep trying but their work is average. If you look on the stands and see the caliber of work that's out, it's your job to match what you see. If you do, I would venture that it would take a year to get work. Then it's up to you to keep going, to find the drive and ambition. How well you do your job, and the one after that so people want to use you again. It's up to you if you're a self-employed artist. The only way you're going to stay alive is the last piece of art you made. That's the business. If you get lazy, then you're out.

S: It's a vicious business?

KK: Yes, it is vicious. It's ruthless, it's very dog-eat-dog. It has divided me against family and other professionals, and it's not just me. Others have similar stories. You have to have your work better than the other people, and stomp them. You may like them as a person, but they're taking money out of your pocket.

S: How long would it take you to paint something after you have the concept?

KK: No longer than a month. The only one that took me longer was a five by four feet for Manowar's Joey Dimaio. It was your classical fantasy battle between Heaven and Hell, when the archangel's battle in heaven against Satan and his armies. I had two armies 10,000 strong in the clouds, a close up with Satan on a chariot, and the archangel on a chariot. That took about three months. General rule though is one month. New York publishers in the 70's, 80's, and 90's only gave you one month. They'd call you on the first of the month, and on the last you'd better have the finished product. There are no excuses, that's the deadline.

S: Are the deadlines similar to that now?

KK: I would imagine so. For me though I get some leniency. They like me, I think. For the younger people I would assume it's

rough. A deadline is a deadline, they need three months in advance for the publishing date to send it out and get ready. As much as you think it's artsy-artsy, it's a business.

S: Much of your art takes real things and blends them with fantasy in a coherent manner. This seems like it should be difficult, but you make it seem natural.

KK: I live it. As someone tells me a concept, I have it sketched out in my head. Then it's just the mechanics of putting it on paper.

S: What pieces did we miss that you think are more notable than the others?

KK: I have a career of 35 years working on covers for books, magazines, comics, records, toy coverings, and even the textile industry (designing bed sheets and pillowcases). Because many times things would slow down for one outlet, others would pick up. Books could be slow, and textiles would pick up. You have to learn to diversify. If you do not, you will die or end up with a different job. I, myself must have done tons of toy box covers for Dungeons and Dragons, soldiers, Micronauts, G. I. Joe, and many others. Then you get back into the books, next thing you know a record company calls you and you're doing album covers now. It fluctuates. Before you know it, you have gray hair and people know you. I just take them one after another as they



Kiss Destroyer Album 1976

come or call, and I still take them. I'm doing Star Trek: The Next Generation right now. I've never done a Star Trek novel before, I'm looking forward to it.

S: Do you still find it fun, or is it all work?

KK: It's always been fun. If you do not love what you are doing, then get another job. It's a lot of endless

endless work. You have to love the finished product and the process of getting there. Actually, I've never worked in 30 years. Whatever you love most in life, make it your living and you'll be a very happy person. If you do not act soon enough, life will pick a career for you. □









Photography by Mary Bradley Originally from Vol. II Issue 5



Artifacts 10

A.C.U. by Alphonse Gentile Originally from Vol. II Issue 6



Brazilian Woman by Gyon Zhu Originally from Winter 2006 man 24 Artifacts 11





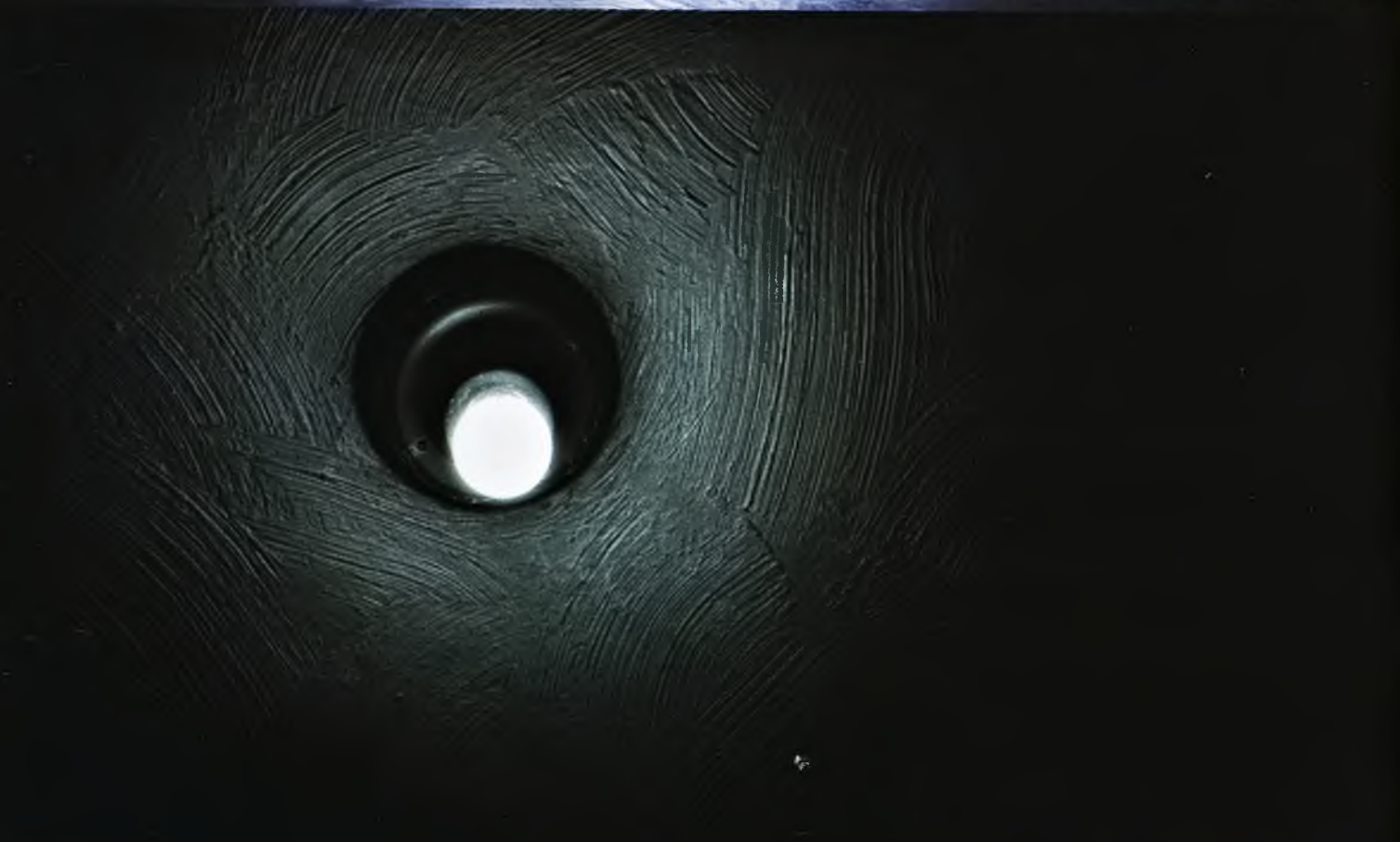
Artwork by Dennis Lowry Originally from Winter 2006



My Hand by Anthony DePrimo Originally from Vol. II Issue 5

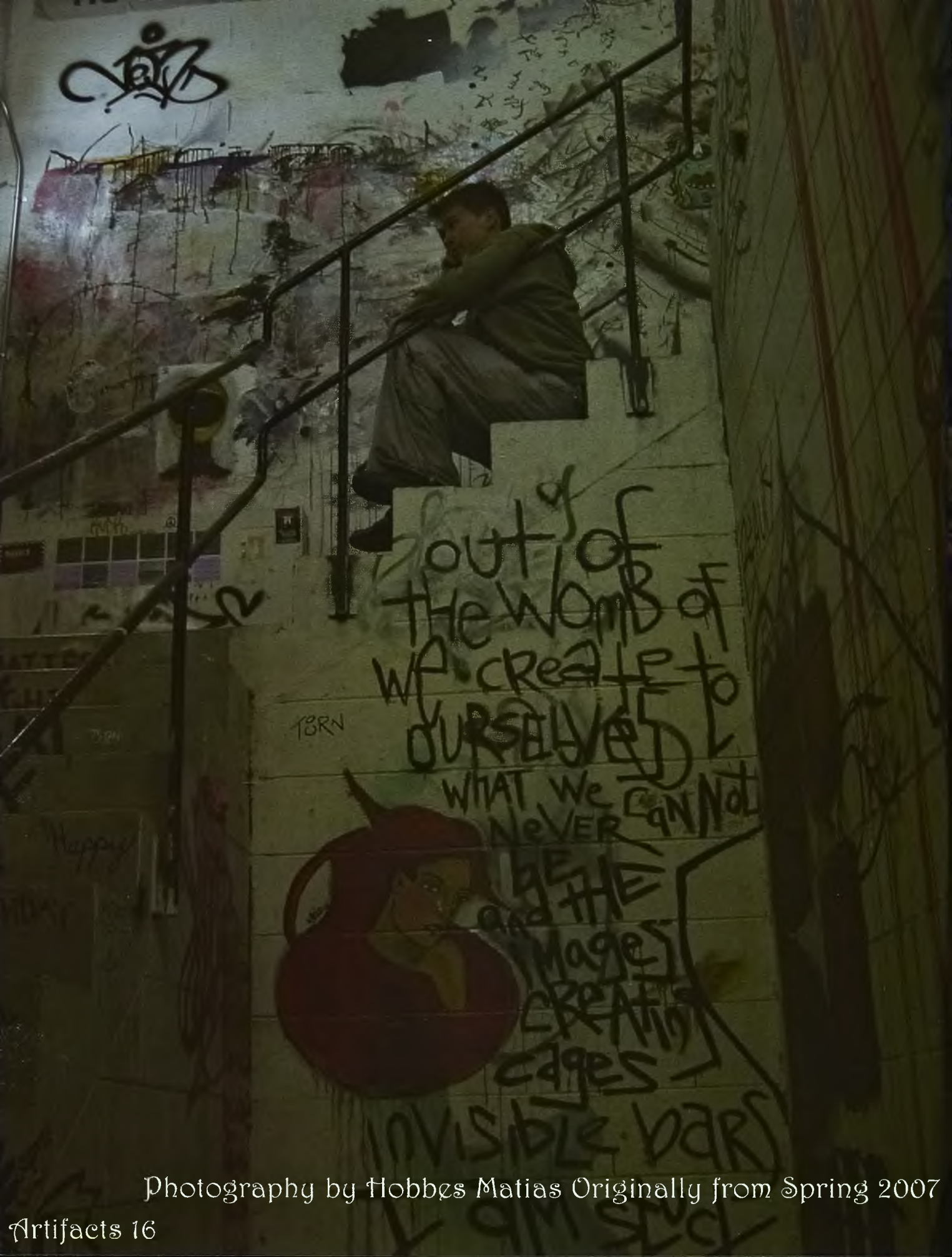


Photography by Alyssa Edgenworth Originally from Spring 2007



Photography by Amanda Gonzalez Originally from Vol. II Issue 11





Photography by Hobbes Matias Originally from Spring 2007





Photography by Roger Matthews Originally from Summer 2006



Artwork by Silver Confession Originally from Serpentine Summer 2006



Photography by Brian Gonzalez Originally from Fall 2007









Drawing by Patrick Montzro Originally from Vol. II Issue 2 Artifacts 21

Originally from Vol. II Issue 5



# Bast

Egyptian Goddess of Pleasure and Joy



# VENUS

The Roman Goddess of Love



Morrigan  
Celtic Goddess of War

Originally from Vol. II Issue 4



Isis

Egyptian Goddess of Magic and Rebirth

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"Lady Weeping" by Nick Piazza

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