



Artifacts

SUMMER '06

Artifacts

Serpentine Magazine
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Note from the Art Director

Hello everyone! A lot has happened since the last issue and I'm amazed at the impact Artifacts has had on the students at The College of Staten Island. I received so many submissions this time,

I was so pleased and I think everyone will be too. This section is growing extremely well and I'm very happy everyone is contributing.

I must introduce you to the amazing submissions we have in this issue. Our staff attended two conventions. New York Comic Con and I-Con, where we met many well known people such as Joe Quesada, Editor in Chief of Marvel Comics. We have photographs, drawings, paintings, comics, and more interviews! A lot of work has been put into this issue and I really hope you enjoy it. Keep on sending in those submissions! Artifacts is growing bigger by the day.

So with great pleasure I present to you,

Artifacts, Summer 2006

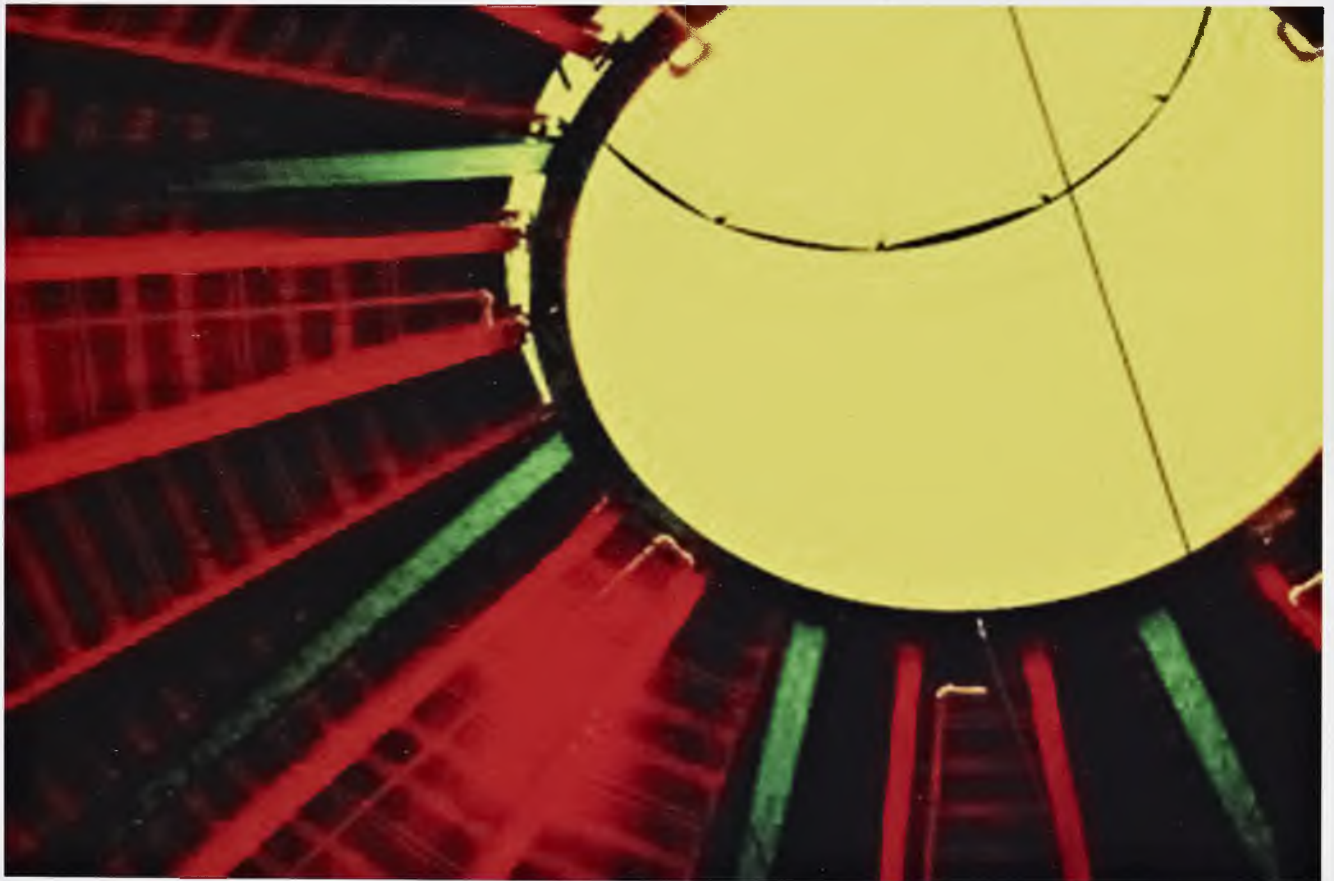
~Alicia Rebelo~







Artwork by Jihane Tamri



Andrew Fattorusso meets Jennifer Rodgers

As an art enthusiast, I love finding new styles of art and artists. I first found out about Jennifer Rodgers in my first gamers convention, **Ubercon VII**. What caught my eye at her display table was a picture of a girl in a green dress with mechanical limbs. The details in the piece were amazing. After talking to her about her artwork, I asked her if she would like to do an interview with me. Sharing my excitement, she agreed.

Andrew Fattorusso- First off, thank you for the chance to get an interview with you. I don't wanna sound like a blushing school girl, but when I first saw your artwork, I was blown away by the details and your creative imagination that is shown in your works.

Jennifer Rodgers- Hey, no problem. You can sound like a blushing schoolgirl for me anytime. Seriously though, thanks! I'm glad to hear that you like my work so much.

AF-Now on to the questions, how long have you been drawing?

JR- Pretty much my whole life. I was always drawing, but I trained to be a professional artist from 1999 to 2003 at Moore College of Art and Design in Philly.

AF- What are your inspirations in your drawings?

JR- Money? ^laughs^

AF- ^laughs^ Well said. At least you're honest.

JR- Well sort of. Since illustration is my full-time job, most of my art is commissioned by my clients. Usually, they give me a basic concept and I research and sketch it and really flesh it out and give it life. But I usually go for fantasy and horror themes, because that's the stuff that thrills me.

AF- Was there any influences that lead you to a career in art?

JR- Mostly my natural drive to create art. If you can make ends meet by being creative all day, then life is good. But I was also inspired by my love of comic books and fantasy art too.

AF- When did you realize that you could make a living by drawing?

JR- Not sure, either sometime shortly before or during college. Having business classes really prepared me though.

AF- What type of job do you use your art in?

JR- I work mostly in the game industry. Cover art and interior art for role-playing game books. I do comic book work as well. Often, it's colorist work since color is one of my strengths.

AF- Who have you worked for so far?

JR- In gaming: Decipher Inc., Galileo Games, Blue Devil Games, Anvilwerks, many more... In comics: Archaia Studios Press, Caption Box, SkyDog Comics, more... My complete client list can be found on my site. (www.jenniferroddgers.com)

AF- How did you promote your talent so that people looking for an artist can find you?

JR- Mostly the internet and conventions. My website. Art, RPG and comic communities on the web, a surprising number of jobs come in through word-of-mouth actually.

AF- What advice do you have for all of those wanna-be artists that want to live off their art work?

JR- Work hard. Work work work or you're not gonna make it. Sounds harsh, but it's a tough industry and there's a lot of competition. If you want it bad enough, you'll get there though.

AF- Thanks again for your time. I hope you get rich off of your art in the near future.

JR- Thanks! You know what? Me too!



If you want to see more of her artwork, check out her website at www.jenniferroddgers.com

Tyrael Ethran

Race: Human
Age: 23
Hair: Black / Blue highlights (dyed)
Eyes: Blue
Height: 6'0"
Weight: 190lbs
Class: Warlock/Fighter
Deity: Sovereign Host
Alignment: Chaotic Neutral
Home: Sharn
Birthplace: Shadow Marches
Languages: Common, Under common (Kyber's Tongue) and Orc
Weapons: One Greatsword (adamantine), One Longsword (byeshk), Eldritch Blast (ranged)
Likes: N/A (Tyrael is a very mysterious character. There is very little known about his likes and dislikes)
Dislikes: N/A
Cherished Items: Arcane Signet Ring, bearing the Dragonmark of the House Tharashk.
Goals: Obtaining the true reason behind his powers and his family's past.



Tyrael Ethran of the House Tharashk was born into a noble family and grew up very comfortably with his mother and father in the Shadow Marches. From an early age he was told he was a blessed child with great powers within. He grew up training and learning how to control them with very little understanding as to what they were for.

When Tyrael was 18, he and his family traveled to an underground auditorium where he was told a ritual was to be performed. This ritual was not only a turning point in Tyrael's life but it drastically changed the way he thought of his family's beliefs. His Mother joyfully told him the news

that she was chosen as a very important part of this ritual. He and his Father sat in the front row of the auditorium while his Mother and a few others stood on stage. Not long after, a group of gods appeared. These gods were not pleasant looking creatures. They were very tall whose heads bore the resemblance of octopi. After a long speech about the importance of the "chosen people" Tyrael's mother was used as a sacrifice. Devastated by watching her death, Tyrael became outraged and began expressing his thoughts but his Father scolded him for speaking such blasphemy.

Tyrael kept quiet for the trip home but not long after this incident, he began having nightmares. These recurring dreams were often of his Mother's death and of another woman who kept telling him to leave the ways of the house of Tharashk. Torn by the decision to abandon his family, Tyrael decided to at least try and solve the mystery of why his family would decide to worship such horrible gods. Tyrael packed up his things and headed for the city, Sharn.

Upon reaching Sharn, Tyrael didn't have many dreams. He had settled down, doing a bit of research along the way. A few years later, he had another dream. This time the woman had told him to visit the Eldeen Reaches to search a cave for a blueprint that would help him on his quest. After debating on whether it was wise to listen to his dream, he decided that he would try and check. There he met up with Lavena Ashtai (a half elf Paladin) and Druce (a Druid). They too were seeking the same item. Tyrael joined them to at least discover the origin and the reason behind this mysterious blueprint. Lavena Ashtai was part of an inquisitive called, "After Watch Rising." A Professor had hired her and her crew to retrieve this blueprint. The three later learned it could create a machine capable of altering the orbit of planes.

Tyrael is a mysterious person with a bit of an attitude. His cold shoulder often leaves the impression he is an antisocial person. He is a bit of a loner who likes to solve his own problems by himself. He does, however, value the bonds of friendship and trust with the people he does know. In battle, Tyrael tends to take the easy way out which leads him to trouble quite often. He is a man of impulse, and will stop at nothing to obtain his goal.

Druce



Race: Shifter
Age: 23
Hair: Red
Eyes: Blue
Height: 5'4"
Weight: 137 lbs.
Class: Druid-Ranger
Deity: N/A
Alignment: Neutral Good
Home: Druce belonged to a nomadic shifter society; home to him is never farther than his knapsack
Birthplace: Eldeen Reaches
Languages: Sylvan, Common, and Druidic
Weapons: Claw Bracer, Heavy Pick, And Composite Longbow
Likes: Talbot (His owl and traveling companion), Nature, his friends
Dislikes: Kalashtar cuisine, Goblin cuisine, People who don't take him seriously
Cherished Items: He has no need for physical items, the only things he has of value are memories.
Goals: To perform his duties as a Druid

Druce is the only son of Riesa, a shifter widow whose husband has long been lost to battle. Though his body was never found, his absence left many to accept his passing. Even his wife, left with a young boy to care for, eventually gave up hope of her husband ever returning. The boy grew quickly enough and learned the ways of his people, honing his abilities as a ranger. But like most young boys with dreams of bigger and better things, his ambition proved too much one day when hunting deep in the forest. A ferocious beast of immense power burst forth from its position in the dense bushes. It had a likeness to a bear but far more massive and menacing. Only one word could accurately describe it. "Horrid"

The beast charged ever closer, with fangs and claws ready for the kill. There was nothing to do but count the last few seconds of life Druce had left. Backed against a tree and with weapon drawn, he was defiant to at least go out fighting. Just feet away now, the beast still rushed when from the treetops there came a mysterious figure. It came between the animal and the young hunter with hand outstretched, gripping within it a gnarled staff of no particular design. The beast suddenly halted and paused for several moments, both figures stood in silence with gazes locked; then the monster turned, and departed, as if nothing had occurred.

"You saved my life. How can I ever thank you?" Druce asked the stranger.

"The only thanks you should give are to the forest." Strange words from a strange man. He spoke softly but powerful and vanished into the nearby thicket, leaving not a trace behind. The young hunter quickly ran home to recap the events to his mother.

The feelings of loss that lay dormant for so long were reawakened when her son chose to follow the same path as her late husband; wanting to leave the community and pursue the teachings of the Druid. After much arguing and pleading, he was on his way with the blessings of his mother. She was both proud and full of grief as her son set out to carve his own niche in the world.

The Journey to become a druid was long and hard, just like Druce himself (Just ask the nymph). After a rigorous trial to prove himself worthy of the powers of nature, he was accepted by the reclusive society of moonspeakers, a group of elite shifter druids, and studied with them for several months.

As time passed and his abilities grew, Druce began having dreams of a lost citadel, which housed a lost artifact. Though this dream didn't tell him what exactly he was looking for, he knew that he had to at least go and explore. Upon reaching the entrance he was greeted by a blue-haired half-elf, hysterical, panicked and warning of a great danger that claimed the lives of her two friends. That was now on her heels. Druce reluctantly joined her and turned away from the citadel with none of the answers he came to seek.

The party of two also ran into a rather ballsy young man who was also heading towards the same citadel. After they exchanged insults and threats, the young fighter also joined the party for fear of his own life. The trio now journey's together, under the roof of the After Watch Rising Inquisitive Agency located in Sharn. Under the employment of a professor interested in ancient artifacts, they face many perils like hoards of undead minions and booby-trapped rooms, all of which seek to claim the lives of the young adventuring team. Druce faces his obstacles with great courage and a keen mind, doing his best to aid his party as best he can.

THE FLIRT
BY ENRIQUE IGNACIO
4-10-06
INOLENTE

JOSE! I'M SICK AND TIRED OF YOU FLIRTIN' IN FRONT OF ME! I SWEAR THE NEXT TIME YOU PULL THAT SHIT I'M KNOCKIN' YOU AND THE BITCH OUT!

YEAH. WHATEVER.



WHAT?! YOU THINK I'M PLAYIN'?! YOU TRY TO KICK GAME TO SOME GIRL, AND I SWEAR I'LL SMACK YOU AND DA HOE INTO A COMATOSE STATE.



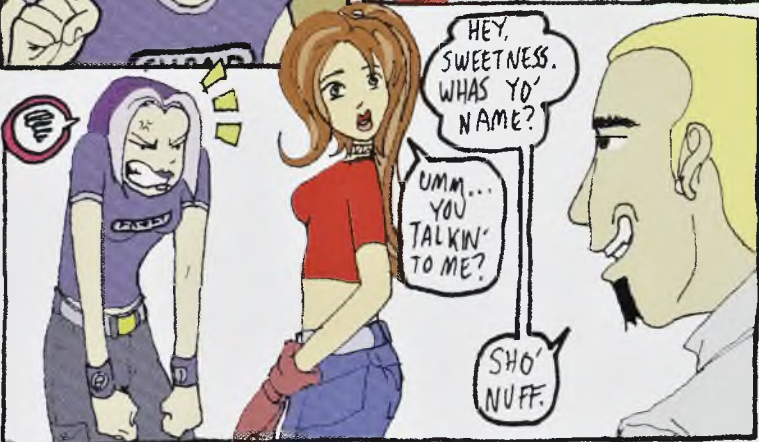
LET'S TEST THAT THEORY, BRO. I'M MACKIN' IT TO THE NEXT FINE CHICK THAT COMES THIS WAY.



GIGGITY GIGGITY AW RIGHT!



OH HELLS YEAH! TRIM AT 12 O'CLOCK.



HEY, SWEETNESS. WHAS YO' NAME?

UMM... YOU TALKIN' TO ME?

SHO' NUFF.

UH-HUH. WELL, I'D APPRECIATE IT IF YOU DIDN'T BECAUSE I CAN SMELL YOUR BREATH FROM HERE AND IT SMELLS LIKE ASS. BY THE WAY, THAT SOUL PATCH ON YOUR CHIN LOOK LIKE PUBIC HAIR.



YOU BITCH!



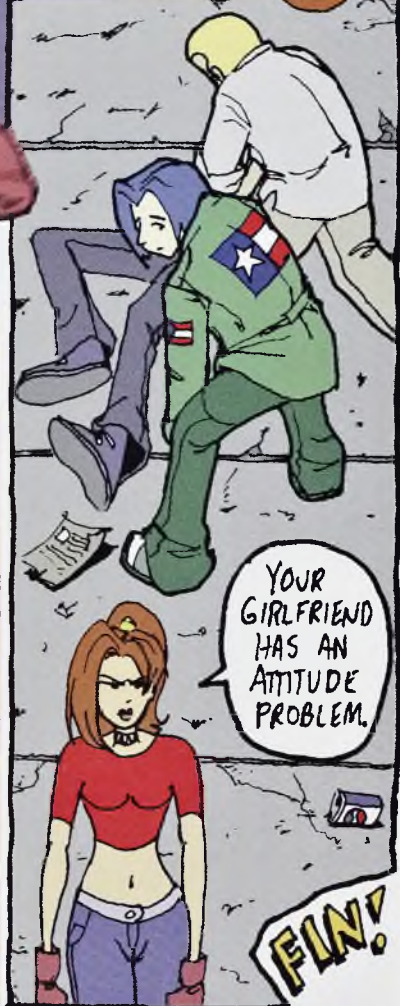
COMO?



TOMA!

PLA DOW!

OH SNAP!



NYC Comic Con Review

By Daniello Cacace

Lets see, where shall I start? I suppose I'll start with the good. There were a number of well-known guests attending this year's con. A few notable ones are:

Todd McFarlane, the creator of *Spawn*. He is also the man responsible for the incredibly popular McFarlane Toy line that recreates various comic book and sports characters in amazingly detailed figures.

Kevin Smith, the award winning independent filmmaker who is responsible for such great movies as *Clerks*, *Dogma*, *Chasing Amy*, and *Jay and Silent Bob strike back*

Joe Quesada, the new Editor-in-Chief of *Marvel* comics.

Voltaire, a man of many talents. He is an animator/director, goth rock artist, and the writer of *Chi-Chian* and *Oh my Goth!*

David Mack, the creator, writer, and illustrator of the *Kabuki Comics*.



Aside from the special guests, there were a lot of big names in the dealer's room as well. Viz, for example, the company responsible for the licensing and dubbing of such anime as *Naruto*, *Zatch Bell*, *Hamtaro*, *Inuyasha*, *Megaman NT Warrior*, and *Sonic X*. As always, their stand was huge and full of manga (Japanese comics). They usually give away free stuff as well; this year was free tote bags.

Wizards of the Coast definitely stole the show as the largest gaming stand at the con, They are the ones who put out such great games as *Dungeons and Dragons*, *Magic: The Gathering*, *Yugi-oh*, and even some less popular card games like *Neopets* and *Harry Potter*. Their constant demonstrations always draw a large crowd and they even gave away prizes for completing a few of their demos.



All this great stuff and more awaited you in the NYC comic con, that is...if you could get in. which brings me to the bad. An estimated number of 35,000 people showed up to attend this years convention, which would have been no problem for the Jacob Javitz Center. That is,



if there weren't 2 other conventions happening at the same time. As well as the Comic Con, there was a Travel expo to the right, and an art exhibit to the left;



both of which taking in at least 10-15 thousand people. Because of this, the NYC comic con was forced to stop selling tickets as early as 11 AM, letting in only pre-registration. Around 1 PM they stopped letting in Pre-registration because the convention was so overcrowded the fire marshal had to come and regulate the attendance. In fact, it was so bad they were even turning away press and exhibitors. We were fortunate enough to have gotten our passes when we did.

The line to get into the Dealers room was so long it took an average person hours' to get in; that is if you could get in. Most of the patrons were greeted by a short angry man with a bull-horn, yelling at people to form lines. Naturally no one listened. This convention was so poorly organized it was difficult to do anything. Unlike most conventions, I'd say about 80-90% of the events took place in the Dealers room. So everyone was waiting quite restlessly to enter a room that had reached its maximum capacity before lunch. The only reason we were able to enter was because we were escorted in as members of the press. Once in we had to make our way through seas of people and bear with incredible background noise to try and make out what everyone was saying which made interviews with the special guests rather difficult.

Overall this con wasn't terrible, just poorly organized. Granted this was the first time they were here in New York, but they greatly underestimated the turn out. We have heard that they already booked a much larger space of the Jacob Javitz Center for next year. Hopefully it turns out to be much better. If not then I fear Comic con might not last for too much longer. I give this con an A for effort but a D for functionality.





Photographs by Todd Vilkov



By Ra'Chaun Rogers

Sam Abbinanti, Creator of Atomika, Mercury comics

R.R: What made you start Atomika and Mercury comics?

S.A: Atomika was a real product of frustration. I went around for 7 or 8 years trying to get work at the major companies like Marvel and DC, but my style wasn't mainstream enough. They said it was very European. It was very different so you know I just got tired of rejection so I said, "you know what I'll do it myself." I had some ideas and I decided to do a Russian character because I thought Russia was a cool setting. Growing up in the 70's, it was the big bad evil empire so I thought it would be a great setting for a cool book. Something a little dark and not so mainstream, cause I can't draw like Jim Lee or Michael Turner. This is a product of frustration and rejection.



*Sam Abbinanti &
Ra'Chain Rogers*

R.R.: How did you get your start?

S.A.: Well if you want to do small press now with desktop publishing and computers there's a lot more things you can do on your own. I did some research, and it was a struggle. I made some mistakes. I had to fire some people. Something's did not work out so well. I saved my money, pieced it together, I learned from my mistakes, and then I went to a printer and printed it. I advertised through Diamond, which is the comic books solicitation magazine that all the comics stores order their books from, put an ad in there and if they like it they'll order it. If they don't they won't. Small press and independent comics in the U.S, it's hard because the newer generations have a lot more options then when I was young. People gravitate more towards the Internet and cable and things.

David Hutchison, Creator of OZ, Anime Press

RR: Why did you join Anime Press?

DH: Well as an artist I wanted to be able to create comics and own what I created. That opportunity with Anime press isn't an opportunity I would have had with larger companies like Marvel and DC so that was the way to go for me. It allowed me to do what I wanted when I wanted.

R.R.: With the state of the industry now, do you think that the company that you were working with is going to be the next big thing or something big in the future?

DH: Uh yeah especially seeing some of the trends over the last few years towards Manga and towards English language created Manga, I feel really positive about it. Anime Press has been around for 20 years and is probably going to be around for twenty more.

R.R: How did you get started?

DH: I was a lonely guy in school, but I found out while I drew, I met a lot of people and it was just something I continued doing. I started having aspirations for creating things and that's how it started.

R.R. How did AP pick you up?

DH: I sent in submissions and talked to some editors. It eventually came down as my abilities as a colorist, but later on they decided I could do a series so that's where it began.

Charlie Huston, Writer for Moon Knight, Marvel comics

R.R: How'd you get on the Moon Knight project?

CH: I'm a Novelist and I have written two crime novels called "Caught Stealing" and "Six Bad

Things.” It’s been a trend at Marvel and DC lately where they’re trying to find writers outside of the traditional comic book sphere. So they were looking for talented people who were interested in comics, so when they called my agent looking for people my agent asked me if I was interested and we started talking about it. I got in touch with Marvel. One of the few characters that they mentioned was Moon Knight, that was a character I had been excited about and had read about as a teenager during the late 70’s and early 80’s. That was it. We built from there.



Charlie Houston

RR.: What do you hope to bring to the new Moon Knight story?

CH: What I want to do is take all of the things that I loved when I was a kid which were stories that were more mature, with a harder edge. They were a little more graphic in tone and they seemed to be settled in the real world and to take more chances. So I wanna take that sensibility and be true to it. I’m a big fan of Doug Munch, the person who wrote the original series, and we’re doing the series in continuity. So we’re not just re-launching the character from scratch, we’re taking the old continuity and showing you this is where this guy is today after all that stuff happened to him.

RR.: How do you see the Moon Knight Character?

CH.: I see him as a crazy MF. He’s unhinged. Back in the day he had three personalities and I’m going to be toying with that in the first story arc which is going to be completely on edge. He’s a killer, an Ex-mercenary whose killed people for money, and now he’s trying to redeem himself by putting on a mask and beating people up. To me that’s his essence. He’s very poorly equipped to exist in a world that isn’t at war.

Jerry Robinson, Creator of the Joker and Co-creator of Robin

RR: What was your inspiration for the Joker?

JR: Visually, It came from the Joker playing card. There were no super villains back then and I thought Batman needed somebody worthy of him. All great heroes in history had antagonists so it was my idea to come up with a memorable villain. A good character has what’s called a contradiction. In terms a villain with a sense of humor was always different so that was my idea.

RR: Are you ok with the direction the Joker has been steered in by other writers since your creation?

JR: Well some of the more recent versions are different from what I envisioned, but after 60 years new artists come out and they have their own ideas. It’s part of the comic’s evolution. Some I like some I don’t but every body thinks they did the best one.

RR: What was your idea for Robin?

JR: Well we felt that Batman needed somebody to work with. To expand the material, one could save the other. The demographics changed the parameters of the story so that the young readers could identify with Robin and the older readers with Batman.

Joe Quesada, Editor-in-chief of Marvel comics.

RR: How did you become the editor and chief of Marvel?

JQ: I wish I could tell you. (JQ laughs) They asked me to create some books for them and I did the Marvel Knights line. Then they asked me to run the whole thing. I guess it was right place, right time.

RR: I won’t ask any questions to make you spoil anything but could you give me the gist of what Marvel Civil War is about?

JQ: Civil war is really simple. People in the Marvel universe start to become fearful of the super powered people because they could be dangerous. The government catches wind of this and they decide that they want everyone to register who they are as well as their powers. They wanted to train them and make sure they're all licensed. Some of the hero's think it's a good idea, some hero's that don't want to give away their secret identities say no. So it was the question: "Would you give up your civil liberties for public safety?"

RR: For people trying to get into business, what advice would give them?

JQ: Just be persistent and keep an up beat attitude, whether you're an artist or a writer, just study your craft.



Joe Quesada

Graig Wiech. Beyond comics . TV

RR: First off how did you get your start?

GW: I got my start as an image feature poster artist for Spawn issue # 30. That was the first tour that I got in comic books, and it was really a fun adventure. I was in school of visual arts at the time and the way that I came about was Todd McFarlane was doing an autograph signing at Philly-con and I thought how the heck was I going to meet this guy cause there were like thirty people in line and I ended up building a latex molded Spawn costume before the one they made in the movie. So I walk in with the huge cape and all these muscles, and the line parts like the red sea. McFarlane sees me walking up and he says "Is that guy a psycho or is he just trying to get work?" I showed him some of my stuff, and we ended up meeting at Toy fare later. He gave me the opportunity to pencil and ink the third year Spawn anniversary poster.

RR: Now "Civilian Justice", what are you trying to convey with this character?

GW: Well Civilian Justice really started out as one type of character that has really grown into a new character we're bringing out called "Code Name, Justice." Now originally I launched Civilian Justice as a way to raise money for the overlooked victims from the 9/11 fund, and it was really sad because a lot of people who were not born in the U.S. were not eligible for the funds. So we donated the first year's profits from Civilian Justice to the Victims there.

RR: Your character Raveydacl where did the inspiration come from that.

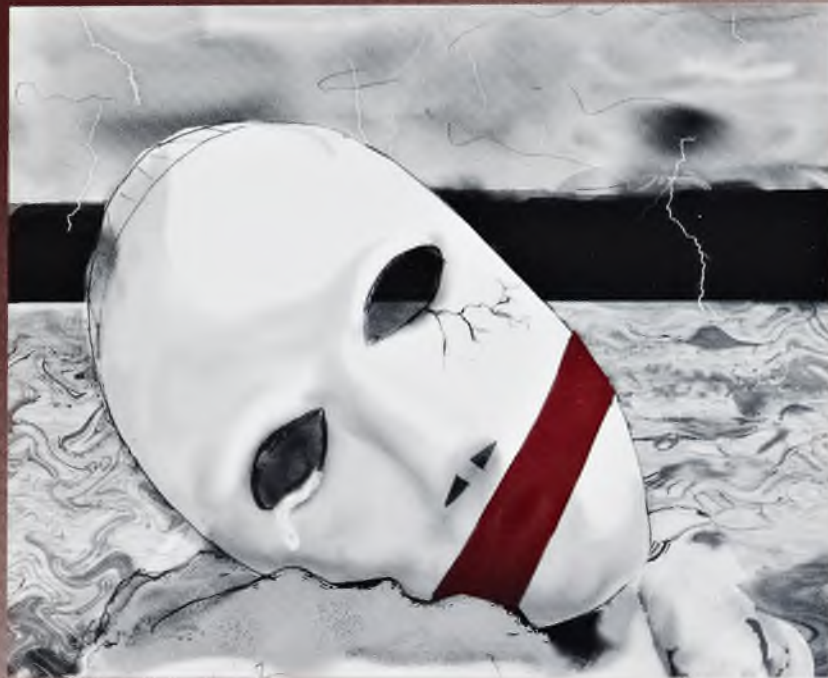
GW: Well the costume design was supposed to be a new version of Robin from Batman. I submitted the designs to DC comics and Bob Ringwood back in 1989. I was a young kid in high school, and I drew this badass picture of Robin and they said "Gee we would like to take it but he looks like he could beat Batman up." So I decided to redesign the cape and make, just go crazy with it. I started studying aerodynamics and how I could make the character more sleek and stealth in design and I started writing a whole story line on the creation of existence an purpose and life, parallel universes, a whole bunch of insane topics and I wrote this book about that and combined it with the character, so Raveydacl became the missing link to a power he couldn't control and tap into our seventh sense, unleashing a power that each person possesses within each of us.

RR: Besides Todd McFarlane who were your inspirations?

GW: Great question! Jose Louise Garcia Lopez who I had the pleasure of meeting here, who designed the Justice League and the Galactic Guardians. Neal Adams who inspired people like Jim Lee who is another one of my inspirations. Story-wise I trained with Dennis O'Neal and John Oshander. They helped me learn how to organize and write comic books.

RR: Final question, you seem to be from what I'm looking at, the next big thing. How do you feel about that?

GW: (GW laughs) Oh my God from your mouth to God's ears, it's really a scary feeling because it's a lot of pressure to turn out work that's high quality and it's very hard being an independent artist. I work about 17 hours a day including weekends, I made the terrible mistake of working 3 days straight without sleep and ended up in the hospital. I think the main thing is it's hard to really launch and get out there because we're not the size of Marvel or DC who have hundreds of people. We're a few guys in a studio who try to make our ideas a reality, hence why we're not just comics we're Beyond Comics.



Artwork by





Silver Confession



I-Con Review

By Elizabeth D'Ambrosio

If you're looking for a convention that's a source for just about every geeky hobby you can think of, well, I-Con is the place to be. It never gets dull with its dealers' room, art gallery, and panels jam packed with diversity. Usually during the early months of spring, the expansive and scenic campus of Stony Brook University in Long Island has been home to I-Con for many years.

Although the convention began Fri, March 24, the Serpentine staff was only able to attend the festivities Sat the 25 and Sun the 26. However, there was still more to do than we could possibly cover.

The first place to rush to is always the dealers' room. Many favorite vendors had returned for yet another year. The anime stands were flooded for their posters, rare imported cd's, and sugary cute plushies. Fans of traditional Japanese fashion would be a bit disappointed, though, by the poor selection of kimonos offered by only one vendor this year. Seems it would be best to wait for Anime Next in New Jersey or even Maryland's Otakon during the summer.

Exquisite handcrafted Celtic and medieval fashions are a must see at I-Con. Stunning leather masks, delicate silver circlets, jewelry, armor, corsets, cloaks; this is just a small taste of what can be found, for a price. Coats and dresses can easily range in the hundreds of dollars and accessories like leather bracers just under a hundred.

Trekkies and Sci-Fi/Fantasy novel readers would be pleased to find whole tables dedicated to their loves. A library of Dungeons and Dragons guides were at the fingertips of gamers as well as bucketfuls of dice to chose from. Kids begged their parents to buy them some of the cuddly stuffed animals sold as a specialty by two vendors(I myself getting suckered into purchasing a large adorable griffon). Comic book geeks could definitely get their fill of figures and statues, but best stick to The Big Apple Con in Manhattan if rare back issues are priority.

There was something for everyone even in the long list of events. Tabletop and video gaming were open all weekend while several choices of screenings could be seen at any given time. It was obvious when a popular guest was offering an autograph session by the long lines that filled the halls of the campus buildings. Some of the guests, though, could be found right at the entrance of the dealers' room. I got a glimpse of Cassandra Peterson, more commonly known as Elvira, Mistress of the Dark. I was taken by surprise to discover red hair to go with those green eyes and quite a natural look. For a woman who's been around as long as she has, she is rather stunning without all the gothic garb.

Two panels in particular caught the interest of the staff: "Breaking into the Entertainment Industry" and "Creative Writing". Both featured experienced members of the industries answering questions and offering their experience. If you would like to read more, there are articles covering these events within this magazine.

Just outside the Sports Complex is the battle ring where most of the fast paced action happens. Fighters in European garb duke it out with safe weaponry usually constructed out of foam and duck tape, displaying their training in medieval swordplay. From one on one to group battles, axe or club to rapiers; the competition lasts for hours on end.

Considering the range of interests found at I-Con, costuming wasn't left to the otakus alone.



Nobility and elves graced the rooms with lavish gowns and knights were masked by steel helmets and heavy armor. Clone troopers and Jedi couldn't walk a few feet without being stopped for pictures. With a sharp enough eye I was lucky enough to catch a glimpse of Monty Python's Black Knight and even a Knight of Ni, herring and all. Wesley, AKA the Dread Pirate Roberts seemed to walk straight out of *The Princess Bride*.

The Anime Masquerade features nearly two hours of skits written by fans and serves as a runway for those looking to be judged on their costume's workmanship. Usually this is one of my favorite events, filled with delightful, clever ideas and brilliant costumes. I have never been so disappointed. Most of the time featured many of the same popular characters as well as very dull performances. One torturous display involved a girl as Kairi from *Kingdom Hearts II* lip-synching the long version of the theme song "Simple and Clean" by Utaka Hikaru. I was surprised to find that the audience was kind enough to save her humiliation by amusing themselves until she finished. Another group, however, stood out and shined with hilarious and ridiculous combinations of characters and scenarios. It was too obvious who would win the competition this year, so many left early, feeling that there was no point in wasting their time any further.



We did manage to catch the tail end of Voltaire's performance, pleased to seem him

again after the unexpected run in at the NY Comic Con. Hilarious as always with only a mic and guitar as his tools, he effortlessly lit up the room with his comical folk music. Of course an encore performance was in high hopes and he was quick to comply singing a song called "Fuck New Jersey". It was the comedian's way of giving dues to his hometown.

Unfortunately there was yet another big disappointment in I-Con's programming. The anime dance was to be a promising all night party. Just as we were arriving, the building was being evacuated. Apparently one of the speakers had caught fire and the dance had to be cancelled. Further questioning proved that not all the equipment provided to I-Con employees by the University was in safe, functional conditions. This led the staff back to the hotel, closing out Saturday night, where the only thing left to see were hentai screenings for more mature tastes.

Sunday was the calm after the storm. Most of the time was spent checking and rechecking previously visited areas, especially in the dealer's room making sure that nothing was missed and that advantage could be taken of the sales. Since the activities were ending earlier in the day, many of the attendees left their costumes packed away, staying in more comfortable wear.

With the crowds dying down, it was a good opportunity to check out the art gallery. In the 3 years I have been attending this convention, this is an aspect I have been hoping to see change. I was out of luck, though. For as beautiful and unique as the art can be, unfortunately it's more of a professional gallery only. The prints available were few and originals were well out of any student's league. It's a show for those who are already in the industry. What I prefer about other conventions is that their artist alley is mostly comprised of those trying to break in. Dozens of tables are lined up selling original comics, fan art, and commissions at horribly cheap prices just to get noticed and create a fan base. It is these people, so much like myself, that I am most willing to lend my support and money.

Overall, I found the convention to be a success and would urge anyone to check it out. It's convenient and you're almost guaranteed to find something or meet someone that you're interested in. If this doesn't convince you then definitely see for yourself at www.iconsf.org.



BY DAN CACACE





Get A Life

By Roger Matthews

Amidst more serious convention discussions, the panel entitled “Get a Life” took a lighter (yet well done) take on the sci-fi / fantasy world.

The discussion took place inside a well filled classroom hosted by two local Stonybrook students, with a guest appearance by anime voice actor Bill Rogers (Gravitation, Madara). The three offered their frank (and sometimes brutal opinions) on people who, in their own words, need to “Get a life!”

For the uninitiated, there are people out there who take their hobbies very seriously. Whether it’s showing up for jury duty in a Star Trek uniform or practicing Halo eight hours a day. There are fans that simply eat and breathe their obsession.

Sadly, no one admitted to being that kind of a fan. While there was a good deal of banter back and forth, ultimately the room seemed to agree that such obsessions were often unhealthy.

Using his life story as his own example, Bill Rogers explained that he felt hobbies could help pave careers. Others in the room chimed in with their own stories of finding jobs through their love of anime, video games, or other hobbies.

Talk was turned upside down, however, when our own Alicia engaged the hosts. They had mentioned a girl who “... thinks she’s Sailor Moon...”, but apparently this was pure hearsay. In reality this girl was rather sane. She was simply harmed by malicious word of mouth by other fans.

This prompted a rather serious discussion of false impressions, and how socially damaging they can be. Banter essentially stopped at this point as everyone moved to more serious matter.

The host delved into her own personal life to illustrate a point when she said, “People are impressed by my obsession with Disney and working for Disney, as opposed to my obsession with anime. I think people get hurt by that”.

Topics then ranged from videogame violence, Marilyn Manson, and the “Miyazaki Murders” (a Japanese killer who gave anime a bad name). While the variety was large, a fair amount of insight was offered into how stereotypes are formed and perpetuated.

As time was running out, our host tied the discussion together with a simple message – She finds nothing wrong with an obsession. “It’s how you use it. How you think about it. It’s how you treat the obsession. You need to have some kind of a balance in your life”.

We all then left the room to continue our rather unbalanced and obsessive convention weekend.

Breaking Into the Entertainment Business

By Dan Cacace

This is everyone's greatest dream, isn't it? Finally being discovered as that magnificent Actor/Actress you always knew you were, while sipping on your Decaf Grande mocha frappuccino at Starbucks. Of course, nowadays people have more of a chance to win the lottery and get struck by lightning than be discovered randomly by some talent scout or big-name director. Excluding the fact they might just want to get into your pants, the tips I have for you today will aid you in your future.

First off, beautiful does not always mean talented, though it does help when auditioning for one of the many...MANY unoriginal, time consuming, horror flicks that Hollywood seems to produce, much in the same fashion vomit is produced after a College Kegger party. You know it reeks and it's probably really awful, but the moment someone screams "Puke" you can be sure a crowd will form and take in the spectacle. And it works every time. Horror movies will be produced till the end of time, which is why there's always a huge market for sexy cannon fodder...just don't expect to be called back for the sequel. (And I pray there won't be any)

Mind you this also works in reverse, Talented doesn't always make you a sex symbol, I mean, just look at Sarah Jessica Parker, someone fetch me a saddle please, and be sure Miss Parker has enough oats in her feed bag. And do I even need to mention Michael Jackson? Yes the man is a talented singer and songwriter and he was even an OK actor...but MY GOD!

Personality is probably the most important factor in this business. It's all about networking. Who knows who and what not; remember that kindness is the key to unlocking most doors so if you're a jerk, no one will want to work with you. Just like the quote by Wilson Mizner, popularized by the talented Jackie Gleason who played Ralph Kramden on *The Honeymooners*, "Always be nice to people on the way up; because you'll meet the same people on the way down." You'd be surprised how far a favor can go in this business and never turn down an invitation to some party where a little charisma pointed at a rather respected guest can land you a good job. People skills are crucial so if you don't have any, find someone who does.

There's also the dilemma most artists face of whether to sell out; to take on cheesy, tacky projects that appeal to a larger audience, or to retain some self respect and do projects with more class, but may not get you a whole lot of money. The solution? Compromise! The problem in this business is that the person with the money calls all the shots. And since junk makes money, they want junk. So you might have to force yourself to sell out and do a few jobs you really don't like, but rest assured because while the big bucks roll in, you can take some time and do something for yourself, whether it be writing, acting, directing, or what not. It won't gross a lot of money, but at least your conscience is appeased and you can still add the work to your resume.

Entertainment is a tough business, which requires a lot of time, patience, and work. You can't expect to have your name in lights right away and if you're waiting for that rush of people screaming your name after that first low budget film... Keep waiting. But hey, I wish everyone loads of luck in trying to make it big. Who knows, maybe someday you'll have a star on the walk of fame. All it takes is a little confidence and a lot of hard work.



Lilith
Stone

Melidoul art © Lilith Oya
Character © John Anthony McColgan
& Blizzard Entertainment*



Art by Dennis Lowry

Art by Eden Kwok





Photographs by Roger Matthews





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