



*Artifacts*  
Spring 2007

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Serpentine Magazine - 2800 Victory Blvd.  
Staten Island, NY 10314 - Building 1C Room 225

A publication of the Serpentine Literary Magazine.

A student Organization of the College of Staten Island.

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**Occupation: Hitman**

**Age: 23**

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# "Valhart" by AlainFequiere



# "Lopsided Bloobs" by Panayiotou













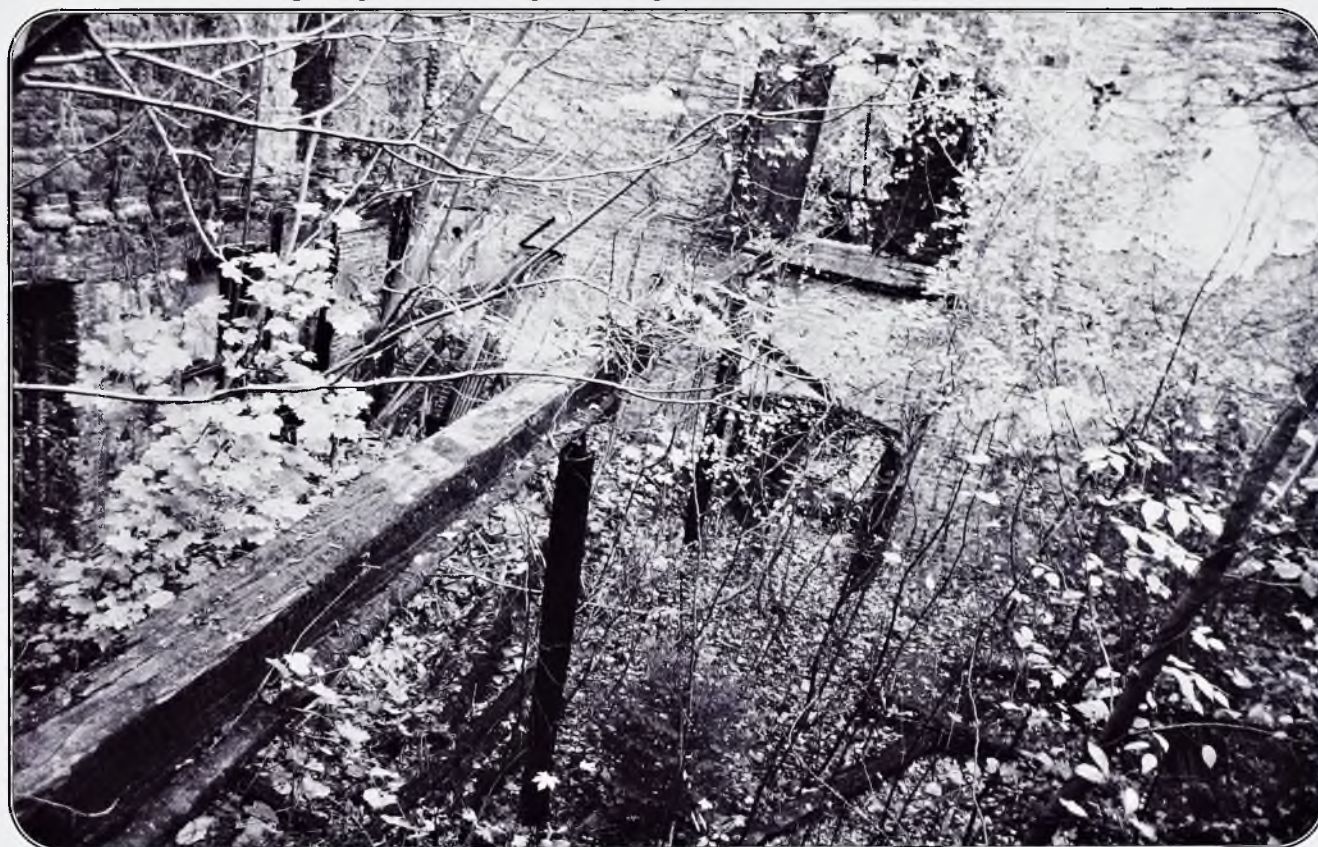




*Photography by Alicia Rebelo*



*Photography by Cindy Mintz*





# Photography by









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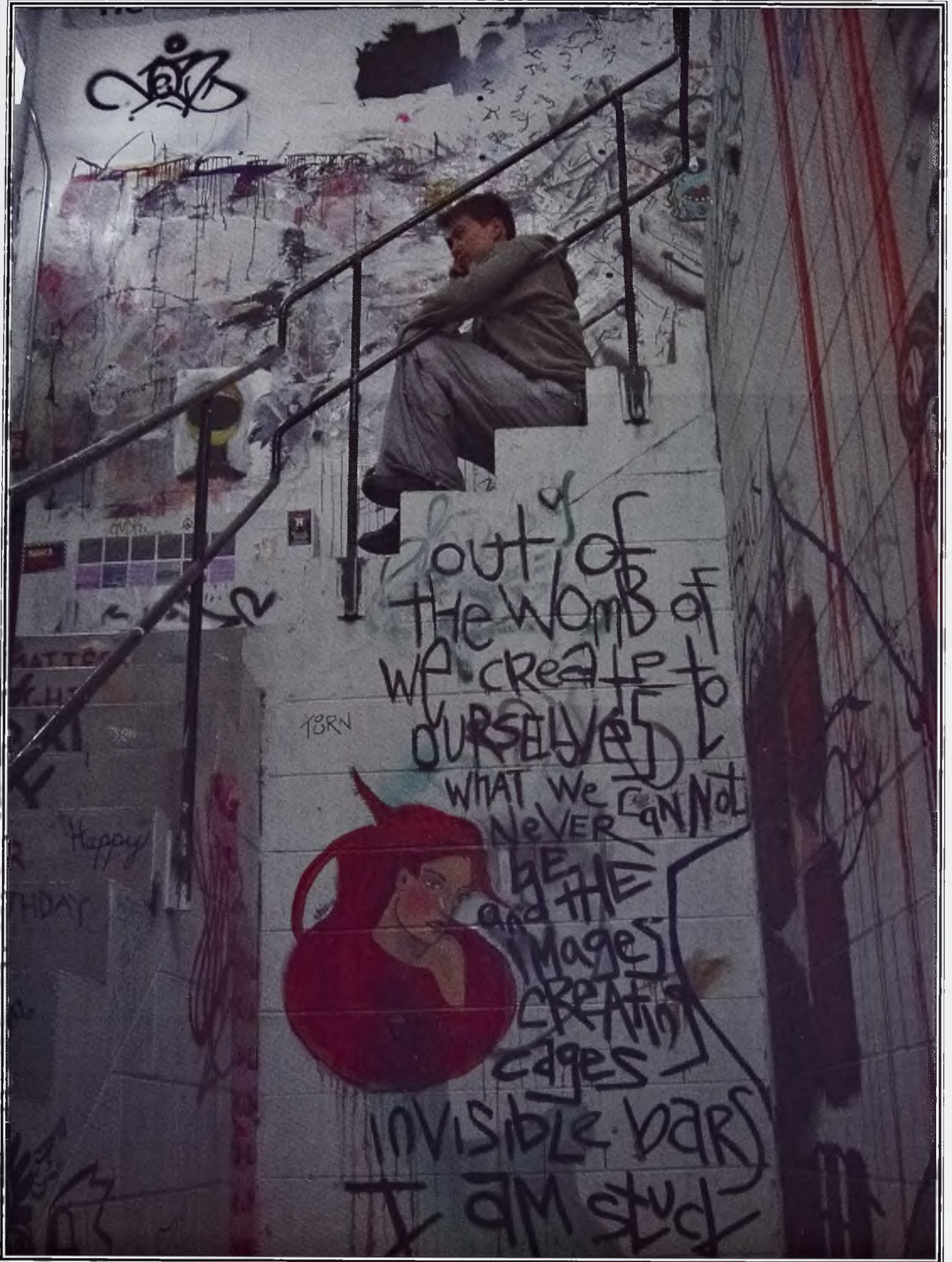




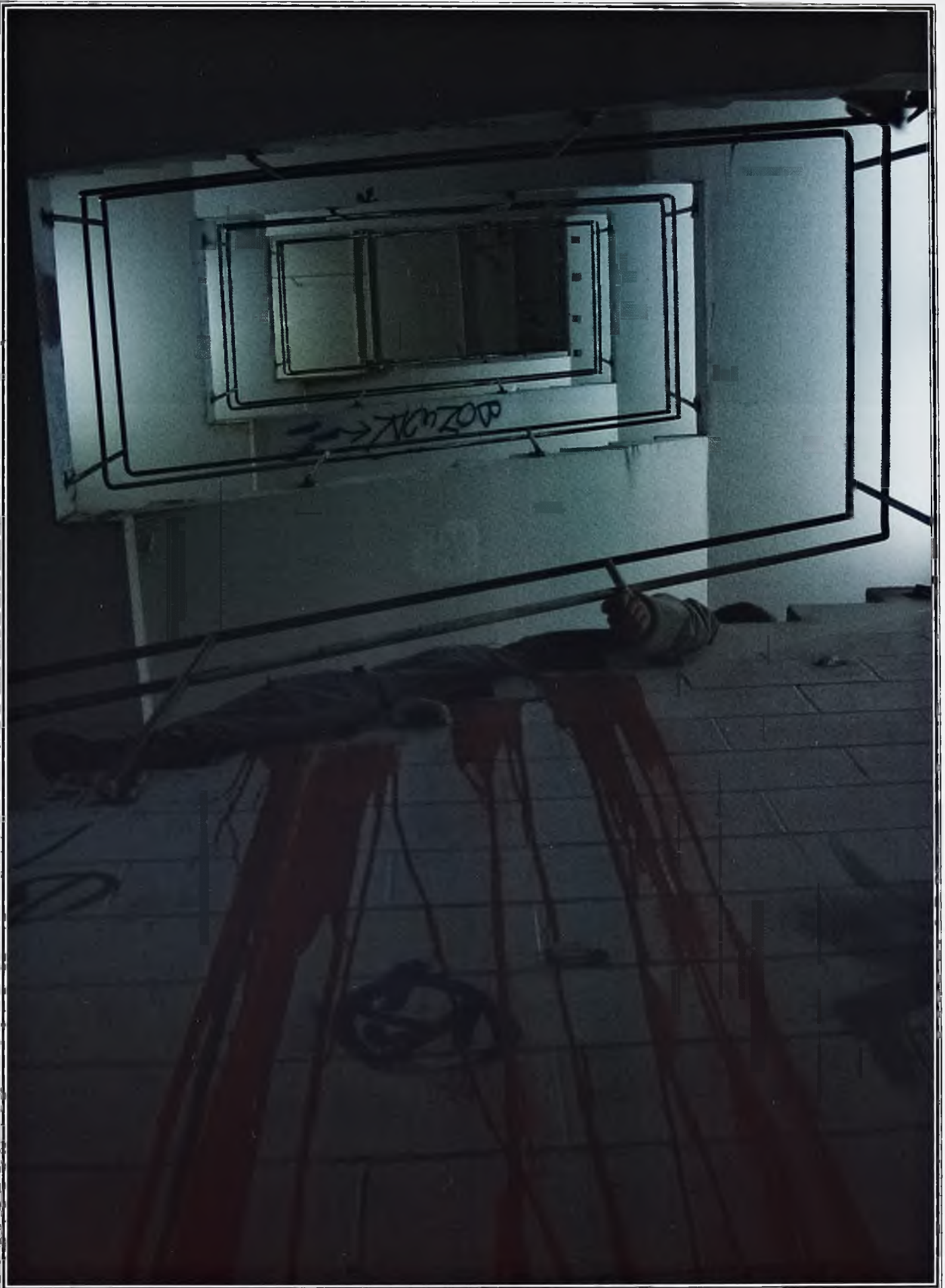
# “Message in a Bottle” by Oppenheimer













# GAMERS WANTED



In the third week of October the Serpentine staff went to a little known convention called Ubercon. Ubercon is described as the ultimate gaming convention not because it showcases new games from across the pond, like E3E, but because they cover such a wide variety of games. From Trading card games, to pen and paper RPG's, to LAN parties - they had all the things gamers feel at home.

Their anime screenings were abundant and both DRR and Guitar hero were rampant. Many vendors have littered the show floor selling everything from statues to custom-made Final Fantasy weaponry. Although some vendors were a bit unfriendly, most of them were happy to peddle their wares to us, allowing the staff to walk away with, art prints, fun games, action figures and trading cards.

The main part of our trip was sitting in on writing workshops, short story readings, and how to art panels along with hanging out with the cool people from the web comics panels. In the end we had the opportunity to sit down with the headliners of the con: writers Michael A. Stackpole (author of the X- Wing and Battle tech novels.) Artist Ken Kelly (artist for The Kiss Love gun, Destroyer and Conan book covers) and Kevin Siembida (The publisher of Palladium books). Hopefully we'll see them at the next Ubercon Spring 2007.



# Web Comics: Tricks and Tips

by Anthony Panayiotou

Comic books have always been a fun read for me, however trying to keep up and finding new titles to get into becomes expensive especially on very small budget. Have no fear though web comics are here to save us. Now web comics are exactly like they sound comics on the Internet, and they're for free. Not only are they free they're pretty good, and now thanks to advances in technology you can make your very own. Recently several of members of the serpentine staff talked to several established web comic creators and learned the tips and tricks in making a web comic and were going to share these secrets with you.

First things first establish a concept and genre in which you are going to write and draw in. Whether it be action or comedy, superhero or fantasy even sci-fi, just pick one and stick to it, that's not to say you can't have a guy in a cape make piss and fart jokes just stay consistent for your readers. After that you have your concept, story, plot, characters, and how they look on paper comes the easy part. Photoshop is key to web comics, if you don't know how to use Photoshop just play around with it and you'll learn how to manipulate it in no time. Scan your pictures and text into your pc and add color, text bubbles, details, and other ideas that pop into your head.

Now comes establishing a work ethic, if the entire process took a week then set up a time schedule around a week in churning out your comics. You should have a few done to make a buffer this way when you finally put it on the web you won't have to go crazy in making a new issue for your reader, remember your readers expect you to put out a issues within a set amount of time. To get readers it's actually easier than it seem. The best way is find a forum or board that fits your comics' concept, now post a lot so people will like you and will read what you write just keep the bashing to a minimum. In your signature place the links to your comic just don't broadcast it, eventually people on the forum will click on it, and you have yourself some readers. Stay away from big community sites such as my space, live journal, and face book this is so your comic won't drown in the enormity of these sites.

Referencing the latest video game, story, headline anything of interest to draw in your reader and makes seem that it is in the real world because you'll be making a connection through the screen. If your making a joke show it to others to see if they'll get it or if it needs edits. Use leet speak be gracious and curious. You can also be as offence as you want because it is the Internet, but think who do want reading your comic age group wise. If you want a happy, comedic, fuzzy animal comic that everyone can enjoy then watch what you say.

Some of you might use copyrighted materials, such as anime, video game, or film characters now we all know the copyright law, however web comics are pretty small so you won't get notice by these companies but to stay on the safe side tone it down or just reference it rather than do a full on rip of something that was already done.

Here are a few other items to make your run more smoothly. When scanning your pages never use photo-blue just black and white, if you do it's going to be a hassle in editing. Invest in an analog light box it'll make your inking very easy. Micron pens are very good for inking, because when you scan them in the pencil lines don't show up. One last thing hate mail will come at you no matter what you do just don't let it get to you.



# Serpentine Interviews

## Artist Ken Kelly

### at Ubercon VIII

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

**Kelly:** It was 1968 New York City in a company called warren publishing which was publishing 4 different popular horror magazines and I had a connection in the industry and they told me to meet with this gentleman and 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 how do that painting.

**Serpentine:** Do you remember your first painting?

**Kelly:** Yes, absolutely “Lurking terror” its in my first book the layout is a lady walking down a lonely street at night and a miserably creep in a alley with a big stick threatening her and its all grey and dark and he liked it he bought it. That started my career right there.

**Serpentine:** So was horror your main medium?

**Kelly:** Yes, because that was where Frank Frazetta the person I knew worked and he said to bring it to Jim warren and they were friends to see if he liked it and would want to buy it that was how I started. Now if it were drawing teddy bears then I’d be drawing bears.

**Serpentine:** We’ve been on your site and seen your work a lot of spectacular fantasy stuff

**Kelly:** You mean kenkellyart.com? [Winks]

**Serpentine:** Yes, yes we do. Do you enjoy doing fantasy or it something that just happened?

**Kelly:** It was something that did come natural.

**Serpentine:** We have seen your Conan covers and stuff.

**Kelly:** Conan. I love doing Conan. I still do it I do privately and there are so many things you can do with it since it’s a wide-open world.

**Serpentine:** May we say from looking at your earlier work to the most recent works, you have improved by leaps and bounds.

**Kelly:** Thank you

**Serpentine:** We have noticed that you use oil paints. Why is that? Is it because it was available or do you find it better than other mediums?

**Kelly:** At the time, I was starting out to paint. I just came out of the military. I was working in a gas station making \$63 a week and I had a family to feed my wife and a baby. And you can’t live on that so choices had to be made. I had basic art talent and Frazetta who was in my family showed me what he was working with which was oil, that was the medium I knew I didn’t know that there was others. And oil is difficult for at first it took me a year. I sold my car, my apartment, and I moved to Europe. I was there for a year painting pictures all of them failures, however at the tenth month, all of it’s been coming together and figuring out how the paint works. If you have that kind of dedication to oil, you’ll never change mediums. I did try others, like acrylics, but it is no compar-





ison to oils.

**Serpentine:** What about your Kiss concept art, “Love Gun” and “Destroyer?” How did that happen?

**Kelly:** Kiss was my break out. I was doing covers for comics, horror magazines, and paperback books. Moreover, you are in that small world, kiss came along, and they tried to negotiate with another artist, which did not work out. They then sent out their art director downstairs to the comic/book/magazine shop to find another artist to do the Kiss stuff and I had a cover on the stand from Warren Publishing, see how it comes full circle. This was five years later, I was still working for Warren and the kKss manger brings my cover to them and they said “bring him in we want to talk to him.” That is how it started and the hard question came up “can you do the work?” That was very hard for me as a young new artist.

**Serpentine:** Did you have any creative freedom? If so how much freedom?

**Kelly:** No, not that much really 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 and Casablanca rejected that cover saying that it was too violent. Therefore, in 1975 something like that was too violent to show on an album. I had to go back and redo the cover that turned into “The Blue Destroyer,” which had the city five miles away and you could not tell that the city was burning that cover was accepted. So I had lenience in terms of color and poses. They wanted four men abreast.

**Serpentine:** Was it tough?

**Kelly:** It was but I was up for it. However, I didn’t know what I was doing. I was anxious. I was nervous but I also knew that I was in a put up or go home situation.

**Serpentine:** Would you say that it was one of your most challenging projects?

**Kelly:** At that time, it was the most difficult thing I have ever done.

**Serpentine:** Do you constantly talk to the writers you’re drawing for or do you need a single description and you could just take off from that?

**Kelly:** Now I do, before I did not. Before it was a manuscript, you read if they did not know, exactly what they wanted then you did a rough and showed 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 decide what we want to do. It’s much easier now.

**Serpentine:** On your site we have noticed that your art is telling a story such as “Lurking Terror.” Is that intentional?

**Kelly:** Yes, it does. You need to convey the story.

**Serpentine:** Do you plan on releasing or making a graphic storybook where the art tells the story not text?

**Kelly:** Sounds like a good idea. I just recently published my own book my second one. It took two years to put that together so it will be a while before I put another one together. That was the hardest thing I did because of art and writing and meshing them together, it did pay off well.

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

**Kelly:** 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 that they do not have enough tal-



ent and do not know it. They keep trying but their work is average. If you look on the stands and see the caliber of work that is out, it is your job to match what you see. If you do, I would venture that it would take a year to get work. Then it is up to you to keep going, to find the drive and ambition to keep going. 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 your going to stay alive is the last piece of art you did. That's the business. If you get lazy, then your out.

**Serpentine:** Do we have it right that the business is vicious?

**Kelly:** Yes, it is vicious, it is ruthless, it's very dog eat dog. It has divided me against family and other professionals. And it is 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.

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

**Kelly:** No longer than a month. The only one that took me longer was a 5 foot by 4 foot man o' war Joey Dimio. It was your classical fantasy battle between heaven and hell. When the archangels battle in heaven against Satan and his armies. So I had two armies 10,000 strong in the clouds, a close up with Satan on a chariot, the archangel on a chariot, and that took about three months. General rule though is one month. New York publishes in the 70's, 80's, and 90's only gave you one month they called you one the first of the month and on the last you better have the finish product, there are not excuses. That's the term deadline.

**Serpentine:** Are the deadlines similar to that now?

**Kelly:** I would imagine. For me though I get some leniency. They like me I think. For the younger people I would assume it is rough and a deadline is a deadline. Because they need three months in advance for their publishing date to send it out and get ready. As much as you think its artsy-artsy, it's a business.

**Serpentine:** We have noticed that most of your art takes real life things and fantasy and blends them in a very coherent manner. Isn't that it difficult. You make it seem natural.

**Kelly:** 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.

**Serpentine:** What can you tell us of any art that pops out in your head that we haven't talked about?

**Kelly:** I just have a career of 35 years working on covers for books, magazines, comics, records, toy covers and the textile industry was designing bed sheets and pillowcases. Because many times things would slow for one thing, down for one and pick up for another one. Books could be slow, and textiles would pick up. So 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 boxes covers Dungeons and Dragons, soldiers, micronuts, G.I. Joe and many more. Then you get back into the books, next thing you know a record calls you and your doing record covers now. It fluctuates. Before you know it, you have grey hair and people know you. I just take them one after another as they come or call and I still take them. I'm doing *Star Trek: The Next Generation* right now and I've never done a *Star Trek* before, so I'm looking forward to it.

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

**Kelly:** It always has been fun, if you do not love what you are doing then get another job. It is a lot of endless, endless, endless work. You have to love the finish product and the process getting there. Actually, I have never worked in 30 years. What ever you love most in life make it your living and you will be a very happy person, and if you do not act soon enough, life will pick a career for you.

**Serpentine:** Thank you for the interview and it's been an honor.

**Kelly:** Thank you and take care.



Everyone likes word searches.



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