

SCIENCE FICTION ARTIST IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

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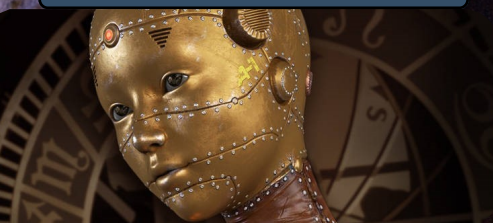
SUPER SKIN



DAVEY ABBO



AS DIMENSION



PIXELUNA

ISSUE 38 | APRIL 2019



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

10 STYLE SECRETS FOR SEQUENTIAL ART

By Linwelly

Saturday April 6th 20:00 BST (London) : 15:00 EDT (New York) : 12:00 PDT (Los Angeles)



<https://digitalartlive.com/events>

MOTION GRAPHICS

EASY ANIMATION FOR VISUAL STORYTELLING

By Peter von Stackelberg

Sunday 28th April 20:00 BST (London)/12:00 PDT (Los Angeles)/15:00 EDT (New York)



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Tasos Anastasiades



'Esha'



Daniel Seebacher



Chris Hecker, 'Tigaer'

Just a few of the talented webinar presenters who have partnered with Digital Art Live!

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We're particularly looking for artists and content creators who work with DAZ Studio and/or Poser, Vue and other landscape software, or digital comics production.

We will also consider webinar ideas which relate to your specialist skills, or which help users to fully use a software plugin that you've developed.

Webinars are recorded, and we profit-share with our presenters on any future sales. We sell on the popular DAZ content store, which has strong traffic and sales.

Please use the link below to submit your application, and we'll be in touch!

<https://digitalartlive.com/presenters>



Front Cover:

Detail from "Alien Queen face 2" by Davey Abbo. DAZ Studio. Davey is interviewed in this issue of our free magazine.

THE 'SUPER SKIN' ISSUE

CONTENTS

OUR LIVE WEBINARS!

— 02

EDITORIAL

— 07

INDEX OF BACK ISSUES

— 18

LA FEMME REVIEW

— 24

CONTESTS

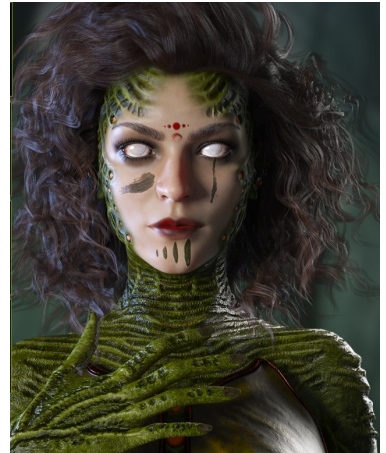
— 38

GALLERY

— 50

IMAGINARIUM

— 58



INTERVIEWS

— 08

DAVEY ABBO

We talk about tools and more, with this leading maker of unusual 3D characters for the DAZ Store.

DAZ STUDIO | ZBRUSH

"When sculpting onto a Genesis figure, this is helped greatly by DAZ's Morph Loader Pro plugin, which I was kindly granted access to. It allows me to export a Genesis figure at Sub Division level 4 to sculpt on inside of Zbrush, giving great results with nice definition."

— 26

AS DIMENSION

We visit sunny Greece to ask Anestis Skitzis about his intense work with ultra-real human skin shaders in DAZ Studio.

DAZ STUDIO | SHADERS

"I have been learning traditional painting for 15 years ... I always observe humans and nature, their perspectives, how lights falls and shadows gather, on what materials, and how the light reacts on them. I always tell new users: Observe! Observe! *Observe!*"

— 40

PIXELUNA

Pixeluna talks about her latest creations, how to create great store renders, and how picture research becomes new skin types.

DAZ STUDIO | ZBRUSH

"... I am working on a morph set that is 'something fun' to play with and can be used for different types of genres. ... we try to put ourselves in the buyer's shoes and give them options to play with the set. 'Build your own style' and you will be known for what you build."



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Credits for pictures, from top left: Detail from promo picture for 'Cosmic Synx for G3F', by Pixeluna; detail from promo for 'Lil' Patch Girl' and 'Lil' Patch Boy' by Piexeluna; detail from 'Lex Skin Test' by Davey Abbo.

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WELCOME..

>Welcome to the "Super Skin" themed issue of your free *Digital Art Live* magazine. We have a bumper issue this month, with artists who make super skins that range from hyperreal human skin to alien, cyborg and superhero-type skins.

If we had been so inclined, this issue's focus on skin might have been extended out to include what might be thought of as 'strap-on skins' — which can range all the way from skin-tight body-suits and close-fitting light armour, to industrial exo-skeletons, and perhaps even the future ability for anyone to 'hop inside' a semi-autonomous 'AnyBot' robot thousands of miles away, much as we do today with a virtual 3D bot in a videogame. But we must leave those interesting visual possibilities around exo-skeletons and telepresence mecha-bots for another issue.

In the meantime it's interesting to observe that our software is starting to develop its own 'exo-skeleton', in the form of automation. It is increasingly able to automate what once had to be done manually and tediously. Of course we already have an army of silent servants working for us every day, quietly fetching our RSS and podcast feeds, auto-updating our WordPress install, checking to see if a new Web browser is available, selling on our behalf, and popping up alerts on the time-based apps on our mobile device. But now this level of automation is also starting to happen in graphics and 3D software. It's partly here already — and we're all familiar with Photoshop's automated features in this area. For instance Photoshop's ability to work with multiple renders to "Load files into stack..." (64-bit only) and align them in a layered .PSD file. Also the popular Photoshop 'Actions', which allow anyone to record and then play back inside Photoshop a complex set of menu items, keyboard shortcuts, filters and layer-switching. JitBit Macro Recorder allows one to record and automate such a creative workflow in any Windows software, even Poser and DAZ.

But software now offers glimpses of a future where automation takes some quite significant creative grunt-work off our hands. For instance the free Krita 4.x now has auto-colour of line art (such as that from Poser 11's Comic Book Preview), as does the latest Clip Studio (aka Manga Studio). Krita can also autocolour a greyscale digital painting just by picking out its grey values — if the painter makes all the skin areas a certain light tone then they are coloured in as skin, for instance. Clip Studio also has another interesting new feature — automated pose extraction from photos. Feed it a middle-distance outdoor photo of a guy kicking a football, and Clip Studio's stock 3D manga figure assumes the same pose. 3D hairpiece generation is also coming, using similarly basic photographs. While such new features are 'not quite there' yet, they show that creative automation is on the way.

A little further off in time, machine-learning could be replacing parts of your runtime. Algorithms distilled from billions of mundane YouTube videos may make your 3D human face blink, breath, and emote — all without any need for canned animation scripts or motion-capture. Animation always unique, always subtle, never with the same expression or glance twice. This may be especially suited to working in tandem with automated storyboard creation that is driven by your comic or movie script's basic scene-descriptions and dialogue keywords, plus some simple markup.

Of course some human tweaking will be needed, and thus the workflows will likely be iterative and cumulative. The art-bots of the future will be our creative assistants, not our replacements.

DAVID HADEN

Editor of *Digital Art Live* magazine
david@digitalartlive.com



IS THERE ANYBODY
OUT THERE

DAVEY ABBO

Digital Art Live talks with a DAZ Store artist about sculpting Genesis in Zbrush, working with DAZ, and his ambitions in learning to rig characters and create clothing.

DAL: Davey, welcome the *Digital Art Live* in-depth magazine interview. It's a pleasure for our free magazine to interview such a fine maker of content and characters for the DAZ characters.

DA: Thank you very much.

DAL: Firstly, let's start at the beginning. When did your creativity first emerge, and what form did it take?

DA: From a young age I've always enjoyed drawing and making things. Art was my favourite subject when I was at school, along with Technical Drawing. I had good teachers as well which does help and there was plenty of encouragement.

DAL: Ah yes, I remember 'Technical Drawing'. I'd find it highly fascinating today, but at age 12 I had no interest in it all. The way I remember it, it was taught in an incredibly dull and rote manner by the Gym teacher. But was there someone in those early years who helped you to nurture your talent?

DA: I guess my Mum was someone who inspired me to draw. She's very good and she dabbles in watercolour, inks, pastels and acrylics. Seeing her drawing and painting landscapes, animals and portraits from an early age... well now, that makes one want to have a go too, or at least it did so with me. I'm not as good putting pencil or brush to paper though, so I tend to doodle nowadays.

DAL: What was your first encounter with creative digital software? Did you go straight to DAZ Studio, or did you find your way there via a more circuitous route?





DAVEY ABBO

UK

DAZ STUDIO |
ZBRUSH | COREL

[WEB](#)

Picture: "Is There Anybody Out There?"

DA: About 20 years ago I was working in Visual Management, they used all kinds of software, some of which I've stuck with. I still use the Corel products on a daily basis, Coreldraw X7 is used for all my vector work and Corel Paintshop Pro X8 for image editing. One colleague who worked with us was 'into 3D' and he had a version of Poser. Working in 2D myself, I was amazed at how you could alter the 3D figures and pose them and so on.

I think I've been using DAZ Studio for around 10 years, now. Just as a hobby really. I also bought a copy of Bryce and Carrara which was mind boggling at first.

DAL: Wow, trying to juggle the learning of both at once would have been a bit of a handful!

DA: Bryce was the one that really got me going, and I found it easy to create simple 3D scenes and objects and then I was able to import DAZ Studio figures into these when needed.

DAL: Ah yes, we had a review of the final Bryce a few issues ago, and looked at the bridge between them if any reader is interested.

DA: So eventually started to use DAZ Studio a lot more. The more I used DAZ the better results I was getting, and after a while I had built up quite a product library for Genesis 2 figures, thus allowing me to create some lovely work.

DAL: What difficulties did you have to overcome with the DAZ software, when you were first learning it?

DA: Pretty much everything! I prefer to just muck around with software programs, as opposed to sit reading tutorials on how to do things. To give yourself a little project and see how you go, how hard can it be? Posing is straight forward, fitting clothes and accessories to figures again is very simple, Lighting is the one thing that I struggle with and still do now. Not that it's hard to light a scene but in my opinion it's the one thing that can really make a scene.

So most of my time spent in putting a render together was spent on lighting, I now have presets that I've created to save me rendering

50 to 60 images until I was happy with the outcome. I'd just like to say, as well, that the Team at DAZ has been a great help. They've given me plenty of encouragement and guidance and I wouldn't be creating the morphs and items I am now without their continued support.

DAL: That's great to hear. Also, then you found Zbrush? Zbrush has developed quite a bit, and now we have Zbrush 2019 which has been just released. Which are the features that you're most pleased with, or find most useful — I mean the new features that have been added since the version you first started using?

DA: I'm only really scratching the surface of Zbrush, and actually I have yet to really produce any 'hard surface' models, I purely use it for sculpting onto the DAZ Genesis figures for making High Definition Morphs. The Zremeseher is a great tool for me, helping with the creation of items of clothing. Alpha brushes are great, I've created quite a few of my own, only simple ones but they come in really handy. When sculpting onto the body of a Genesis figure, this is helped greatly by being able to take advantage of DAZ's Morph Loader Pro plugin, which I was kindly granted access to.

It allows me to export a Genesis figure at Sub Division level 4 to sculpt on inside of Zbrush, giving great results with nice definition.

DAL: Nice, so there's a bit of 'secret sauce'. What three pitfalls or bad habits should a brand-new Zbrush user seek to avoid falling into?

DA: Well... classing myself as being fairly new to it, I guess I've been using it for a couple of years now... I'm not too sure other than: save your work regularly. But that goes for everything. Zbrush is a joy to work with, I've had no real issues, the way it lets you sculpt and manipulate objects is great. There are plenty of tutorials and help out there for those starting off or for the experienced user.

DAL: Thanks. And are you looking forward to using Zbrush 2019? Are there things in it you're eager to use? I'm not a Zbrush user — but I hear everyone raving about getting 'Folders' with the 2019 edition, for instance?



DA: I've only been using Zbrush 2019 for about a week now and I really like the new BPR/NPR filters, I think this feature will come in really handy in the future. It has some really cool effects and I've seen plenty of Zbrush users putting them to good use.

DAL: Great. What is your favourite outfit (or alien skin) that you've made so far, for the DAZ Store, and why?

DA: That's a tricky one, there are a couple I like that I never actually produced as finished products, more just to teach myself a few things. 'Deadblade' was my first product and I have a soft-spot for her, as I learnt quite a lot producing her and had plenty of late nights and brain numbing evenings getting her finished.

'SOF-1A' seems to have gone down really well, even though she's a fairly simple sculpt/morph with a few additional items.

I'm slowly getting to grips with creating more

clothing items and my next challenge is getting to grips with rigging.

DAL: Are you generally happy with the sort of response your work gets from the DAZ Studio buyers and users?

DA: Yeah... I'm really happy, I use various platforms to post my ideas for forthcoming items I'm working on, and it's really good to get feedback from potential customers and other content creators. I find the input really useful and they often hit upon ideas or options that I've missed exploring. For that reason I tend to post my ideas and renders quite early on, and then continue with updates for more feedback.

DAL: Thanks good to hear. What science-fiction comics and movies have you most enjoyed over the last 18 months or so? Or, novels, stories, games, TV series...

DA: I tend to watch films, and when I feel like letting — or blasting — off a bit of steam I jump

ALIEN
QUEEN
Level 4 sculpted morph for genesis 8 female



Pictures: This double page spread and previous page, all previews of the "Alien Queen" character for DAZ Studio.

ALIEN QUEEN

Level 4 sculpted morph for genesis 8 female



DAZ STUDIO
RENDER WITH



on the Xbox gaming console. At the moment I'm hooked on *Star Wars Battlefront* but sometimes feel like having a drive so *Forza Horizon* fits the bill nicely.

DA: Film wise, I'm a huge fan of the Marvel collection of movies although I haven't seen the newest one yet. I have films I have to watch on a regular basis, *Jaws*, *Alien*, *The Thing* and quite a few others.

DAL: Thanks. Given your interest in cyborgs I imagine you've seen the new *Alita* movie at the cinema? Obviously it's quite a breakthrough, not only in the pore-by-pore skin but also in

having a CG character as the main character in a huge movie. What are your thoughts on it?

DA: It's on my list to watch, but my days of going to the cinema to see movies are long gone. I think the last film I watched at the cinema was the original *Jurassic Park*. I much prefer to sit in the comfort of my own big chair in front of a big TV and have the sound at just the level I want. From what I've seen of *Alita* it looks fantastic, and I'll definitely be watching this as soon as I can. To see how far CG has come over the years is quite amazing and no doubt it's only going to get better.



IS THERE ANYBODY
OUTTHERE

"I don't think I've ever played anything in videogames that's really scared me..."

ALIEN

GENESIS 3 HD MORPH



DAL: You also have a horror interest, judging by your gallery? Is that from videogames?

DA: No... I don't think I've ever played anything in videogames that's really scared me...

... although I'm sure there are plenty of games out there that *could* scare me. I was a fan of the *Hellraiser* films, and I quite like the *Paranormal Activity* films, but don't tend to watch much horror now.

DAL: I see. What's your home studio and workstation like?

DA: I have a modest setup, a couple of Acer 24" monitors, a small Wacom tablet for a bit of painting in Zbrush. A GTX 980 Ti graphics card. I'm a sucker for backing things up, so have 3 x 3TB Buffalo External drives so I can backup, then backup again... then again if need be.

DAL: What the view like?

DA: The view from my window is somewhat built up, although I can see some greenery in the form of trees and it's south facing — so I do get plenty of light which is nice.

DAL: Great. So are you still based in South Benfleet in the UK, these days?

DA: Yes but there's a possible move on the horizon, although it will still be local. Nothing set in stone yet, but maybe in a year or two.

DAL: For the benefit of our readers I should say that's just 30 miles east from the centre of London. I'm not sure if the locals there class it as part of London or not...?

DA: ...yeah ...it's fairly close, I guess. But I wouldn't say we class it as part of London.

DAL: But I'd imagine that it allows you zip in on the train and see much of London's abundant cultural offer — exhibitions, conferences, IMAX screens, one-off events and suchlike?

DA: I've never really gone out of my way to visit London. London, in my opinion, is manic. I've been to the museums, but when I used to go out and watch a film or a live band it tended to be local, maybe popping in to Southend.

DAL: I see. What kit would you most like to add to your studio, over the next year?

DA: I'm really tempted by a larger Wacom tablet, and I quite like the idea of drawing directly on to the screen, I think being able to draw would help speed my workflow up and be more enjoyable.

DAL: Yes, there are some nice £350 options now, for pen monitors where you draw on the screen.

DA: I also really need to think about upgrading my PC as well, but there's no immediate rush. It's served me well, but...

DAL: And what you like to see added to DAZ Studio 5.0, when it eventually arrives?

DA: Oooh... I don't know to be honest, I'm still discovering things with the latest version. I never really knew that DAZ Studio was as versatile as it is. Once you really start using it, it becomes quite a powerful tool. I guess over the last 18 months I've stopped creating rendered scenes and focus more on promos and putting together my creations and packaging. Some of the artwork I've seen really is fantastic and to see users creating their artwork with something you've created makes it all worthwhile.

DAL: More generally, what plugins have you found to be useful, for any of your software?

DA: I use the Morph Loader Pro for DAZ Studio which I mentioned before. I use that on a regular basis. I haven't really checked out many plugins, I use Particle Shop in Corel Paintshop Pro X8 to add smoke and various effects to some of my renders. But I try to avoid postwork if I can.

DAL: What exciting things might be on the horizon for you? 3D printing? VR? Animation?

DA: Have often thought about getting a 3D printer and also having a go at some animation. But I think, for the next year or so, I really want to concentrate on creating content. I still have lots to learn and I think rigging will be my next challenge. Although I haven't really produced much clothing I'm quietly working on things and testing when I get the time. So... hopefully I'll be able to offer a wider range of content.

DAL: That sounds great. We wish you all the best with that. Davey Abbo, thanks very much for this in-depth interview.

DA: Thank you kindly, it was a pleasure.

L.E.C.S

Latex Enhanced Combat Suit

IVI 4 Morph for Genesis 8 Female



DAZ STUDIO
RENDER WITH



Davey Abbo is online at the DAZ Store and...

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

<https://www.artstation.com/daveyabbo>

DAVEYABBO

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...

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Inset: Issue 28 ('Future Oceans' issue) cover art by Artur Rosa.



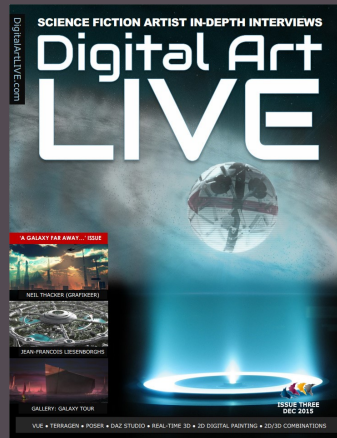
Issue 1 Oct 2016 Designing Future Cities

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



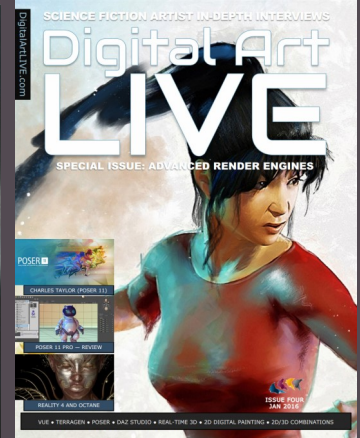
Issue 2 Nov 2016 Alien Plants/Creatures

- Matthew Attard
- Exidium Corporation
- Gallery: *Ryzom* 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 The new Poser 11

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



Issue 5 Feb 2016
Cosmos (space art)

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



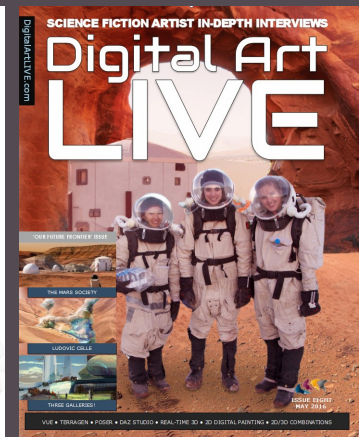
Issue 6 March 2016
Cyber-humans + VR

- 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/Outposts
- Gallery: Mars in 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



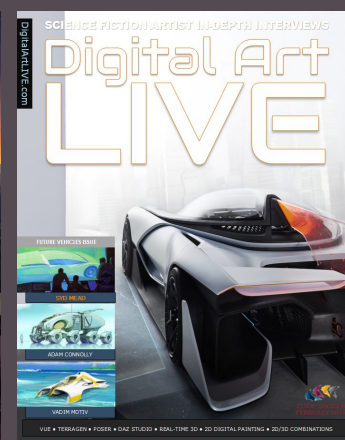
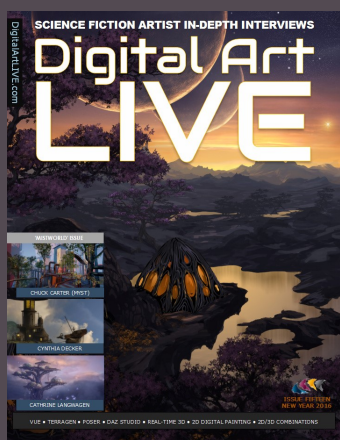
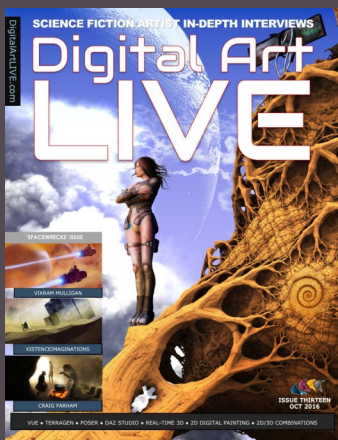
Issue 11 August 2016
Future Landscapes

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



Issue 12 Sept 2016
Second Skin (tattoos)

- 'Pixeluna'
- Paolo Ciccone
- Deane Whitmore
- HiveWire: 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, crashes

Issue 14 Nov/Dec 2016
CyberTRONic

- 'CG Artiste'
- 'Keplianzar'
- Jacques Pena
- TTA series tribute
- Ugee 1910b pen tablet—in-depth review
- Gallery: Neon and 'cyberglow' artists

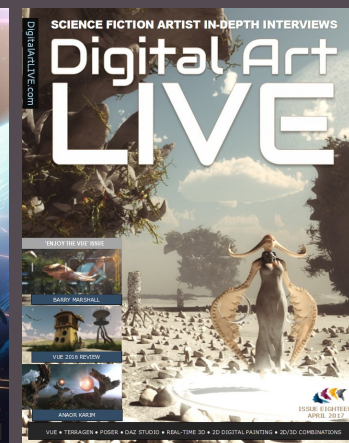
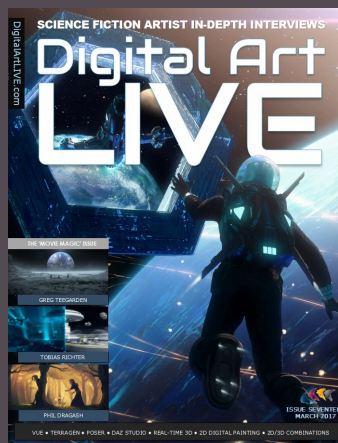
Issue 15 Jan 2017
Mistworlds

- Chuck Carter (*Myst*)
- Cynthia Decker
- Cathrine Langwagen
- Ulco Glimmerveen
- Evolo competition
- Index of past issues
- Gallery: *Myst*-like digital art

Issue 16 Feb 2017
Future vehicles

- Syd Mead interview
- Vadim Motiv
- Adam Connolly
- Mark Roosien
- UK's Bloodhound supersonic rocket-car
- Index of past issues
- Gallery: "Vroom!!"

A FREE MAGAZINE



Issue 17 March 2017
Movie magic

- Greg Teegarden
- Tobias Richter
- Phil Dragash
- ESA's Moon Temple
- Scott Richard
- Index of past issues
- Gallery: the spirit of the cinema

Issue 18 April 2017
Vue 2016 special issue

- Barry Marshall
- Vue 2016 R2 review
- Anaor Karim
- NASA's tunnels
- W.P. Taub
- Index of past issues
- Gallery: Nature Grows on You!

Issue 19 May/June 2017
Sci-fi comics

- Patrick Gyger (leading sci-fi museum curator)
- Georges Peters
- Arne Cooper
- RoboSimian
- Index of past issues
- Gallery: comic-book

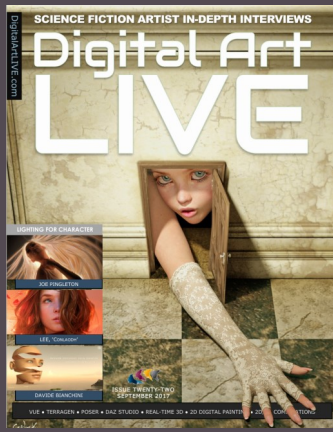
Issue 20 July 2017
Digital clothing

- Kim Schneider ('Arki')
- Melissa Moraitis ('BlackTalonArts')
- Marvelous Designer 6.5—in-depth review
- Jepe
- Index of past issues
- Gallery: Future Fashion



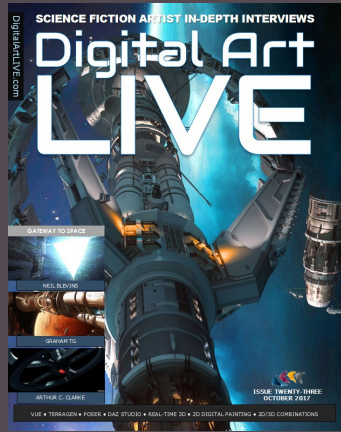
Issue 21 August 2017
Ecofutures

- Hal Tenny
- Frank Little
- Organics in pulp art
- Linda Granqvist
- Index of past issues
- Gallery: visions of the 'ecofuture'
- Imaginarium



Issue 22 Sept 2017
Lighting for effect

- Joe Pingleton
- Davide Bianchini
- Characters in the public domain
- Lee (aka 'Conlaodh')
- Index of past issues
- Gallery: characters
- Imaginarium



Issue 23 Oct 2017
Gateway to space

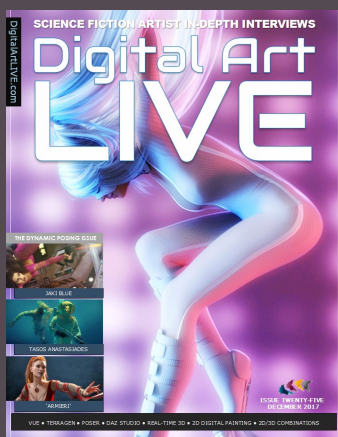
- Neil Blevins (assets artist at Pixar)
- GrahamTG
- Arthur C. Clarke
- Oshyan Greene
- Gallery: Arthur C. Clarke tribute
- Imaginarium



Issue 24 Nov 2017
Abstracts in sci-fi

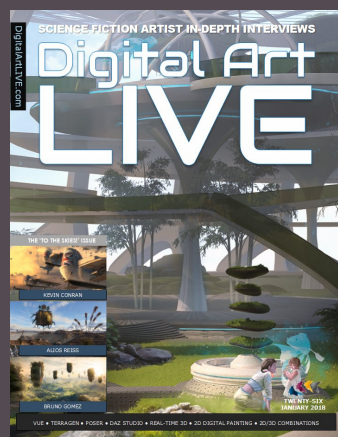
- Andy Lomas (*The Matrix*, *Avatar*)
- Erwin Kho
- Alastair Temple
- Gallery: 'At the borders of abstraction' in science fiction art
- Imaginarium

FOR DIGITAL ART



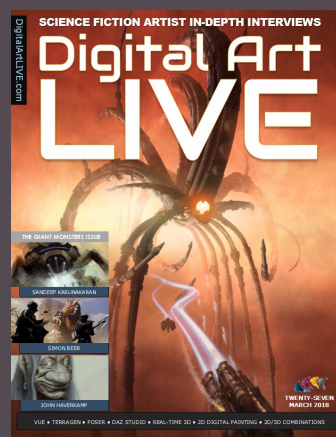
Issue 25 Dec 2017
Dynamic posing

- Jaki Blue
- Tasos Anastasiades
- Brian Armieri
- Sugary Ashes
- Index of past issues
- Gallery: World of Wearable Art
- Imaginarium



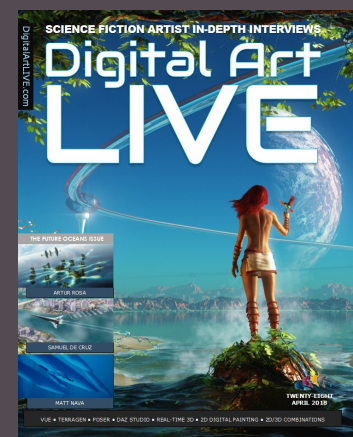
Issue 26 January 2018
To the skies!

- Kevin Conran (*Sky Captain* movie)
- Alois Reiss
- Airships over Venus
- Vladimir Yaremchuk
- Index of past issues
- Gallery
- Imaginarium



Issue 27 Feb/Mar 2018
Giant monsters

- 'Sanskarans'
- Simon Beer
- Jean-Marie Marbach
- John Haverkamp
- Index of past issues
- Comic strip
- Gallery
- Imaginarium



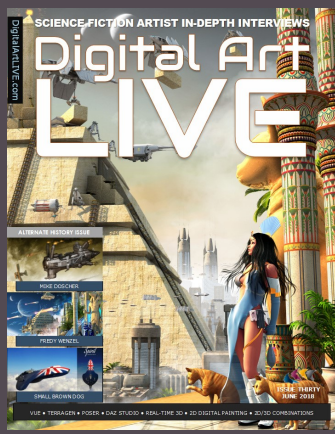
Issue 28 April 2018
Future oceans

- Artur Rosa
- Matt Nava (*Journey*)
- Samuel de Cruz
- Future oceans timeline
- Index of past issues
- Evola mini-gallery
- Gallery
- Imaginarium



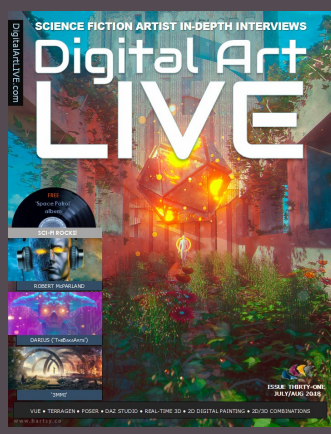
Issue 29 May 2018
Fantasy portraits

- Kevin McBriarty
- Rebecca Elsey
- Mirjam
- Index of past issues
- Gallery: fantasy portraits
- Imaginarium



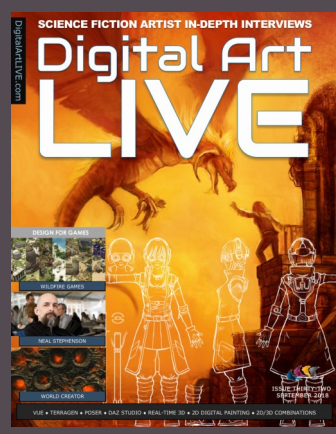
Issue 30 June 2018
Alternative history

- Mike Doscher
- Fredy Wenzel
- Small Brown Dog
- Index of past issues
- Alt.history tour-guide
- Gallery: alternate histories
- Imaginarium



Issue 31 July/Aug 2018
Sci-fi rocks! (music)

- Robert McParland
- Darius (TheBakaArts)
- 3mm
- Index of past issues
- Classic album covers
- Gallery: Rock album inspired art
- Imaginarium



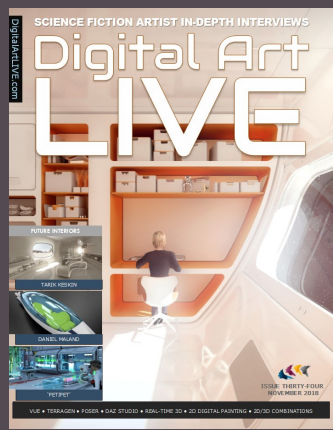
Issue 32 Sept 2018
Design for videogames

- Wildfire Games
- Neal Stephenson
- Stefan Kraus
- World Creator review
- Index of past issues
- Gallery: Game themed artwork
- Imaginarium



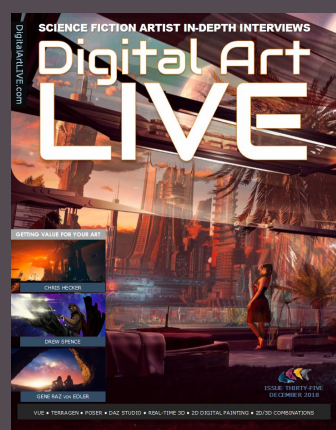
Issue 33 Oct 2018
Abstract characters

- Ulrick V. Jensen
- E. Golavanchuck
- Lovecraft posters
- Claudio Bergamin
- Index of past issues
- Gallery: Abstract Characters
- Imaginarium



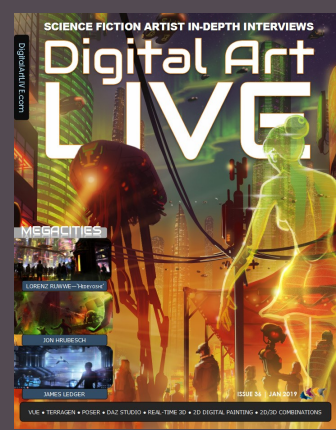
Issue 34 Nov 2018
Future Interiors

- Tarik Keskin
- Daniel Maland
- 'Petipet' (Petro Apostoliuk)
- Index of past issues
- Gallery: Future Interiors
- Imaginarium



Issue 35 Dec 2018
Getting value for your art

- Chris Hecker
- Drew Spence
- Gene Raz von Edler
- Index of past issues
- Mini-review: Meshbox 'H.P. Lovecraft 3D'
- Gallery: To the Beach!
- Imaginarium



Issue 36 Jan 2019
Megacities

- Lorenz Ruwwe
- Jon Hrubesch
- James Ledger
- Index of past issues
- Review: Bryce 7.1 landscape software
- Gallery: Megacities
- Imaginarium

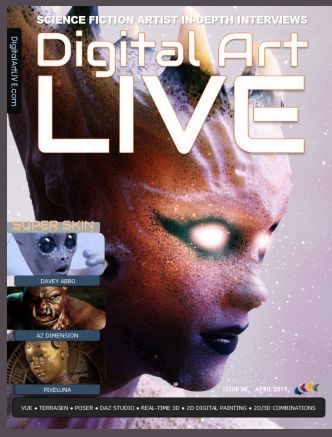


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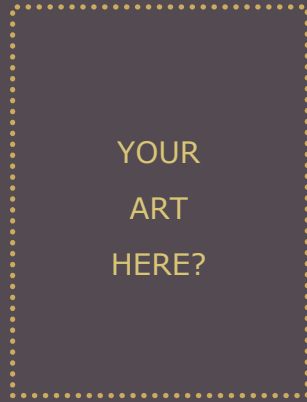
Issue 37 Feb 2019
Giant Historic Creatures

- 'AM', aka Alessandro Mastronardi (LAMH)
- Arthur Dorety
- Herschel Hoffmeyer
- Index of past issues
- Gallery: underwater prehistoric creatures
- Imaginarium



Issue 38 April 2019
Super Skin

- Dave Abbo
- Anestis Skitzis
- Pixeluna
- 'La Femme' review
- Index of past issues
- Gallery: exotic and alien skins
- Imaginarium



Issue 39 May 2019
Deserts



Issue 40 June 2019
Depicting character

Are you interested in being interviewed in a future issue of the magazine?

Please send the Web address of your gallery or store, and we'll visit!

paul@digitalartlive.com

OUR IN-DEPTH REVIEWS:



Poser 11

#4 | January 2016



Ugee 1910b (pen-monitor)

#14 | December 2016



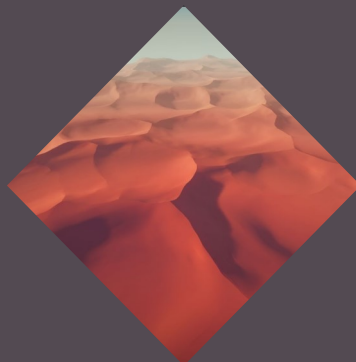
Vue 2016 R2

#18 | April 2017



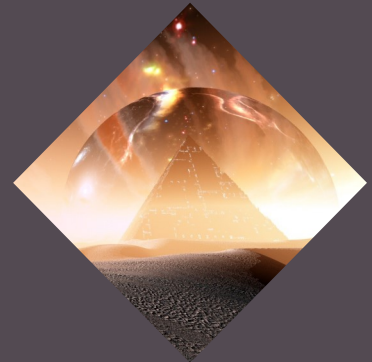
Marvelous Designer 6.5

#20 | July 2017



World Creator 2 RC14

#32 | September 2018



Bryce 7.1

#36 | January 2019

REVIEW

Welcome to another in our series of occasional 'budget' product reviews of low-cost 3D content for Poser and DAZ Studio. Here we look at the new flagship base figure for Poser 11, 'La Femme'.

There's a new flagship female base character for Poser, arising from the new Smith Micro / Renderosity partnership. 'La Femme' looks great and is **free** — when you spend more than \$3.50 on purchasing other content at the well-known Renderosity store.

Broadly speaking, and without going into all the technical details, 'La Femme' is a highly advanced and easy-to-use figure. She gives the Poser software parity with DAZ Studio's latest G8F base figure. She has natural joint-bending, muscle flexing, and many of the latest advances in skin shaders and rigging are all ready to render. Such matters are especially important for animators and creatives who work at the '8k hyper-real' end of things, where it's not so easy to just 'fix it in Photoshop'. If you want all the technical details on her, Smith Micro has a free one-hour webinar available now on YouTube.

Install: Once installed and indexed, typing 'lafemme' in Poser's native Content Library will show the range of newly installed content. You'll see that she comes with a basic set of 23 'starter' Body Morphs, and a more extensive set of Head Morphs. At Renderosity there are also two \$20-each packs which will add lots of further Body Morphs and HD Morphs, if that's what you need for shape tweaks or whole new characters. There's no clothing in the bundle.

Face-control and Expressions: Her face has Poser 11's face-control chips, though apparently these are only meant to fine-tune her underlying expressions. There are six basic expression presets in the free package. These new face-chips really can enable amazing expressions, both subtle and over-the-top! There are also dials for moving both her eyes at once up-and-down and side-to-side quite easily.

Note that we found that no legacy expressions (e.g.: A3 or V4) will work with La Femme's face.

Poses: We found that La Femme can work perfectly with old A3 and V4/M4 pose presets. V4 playing a musical instrument, the Cello, was posed perfectly — including hand and subtle finger poses. A preset for M4 driving a truck was also successfully applied, including precise finger positions on the steering wheel.

Hair: There's no hair in the free download, but the four presets do work with the Pauline hair that shipped with Poser 11 as free content. Excellent hair such as V4 Supersleek hair needed only the slightest nudge upward on the Y-axis for a 'La Femme' fit. Poser auto-parented this hair and it then moved with the head.

Renderers: As you'd expect, she renders beautifully in Poser's Firefly and SuperFly render engines, with lovely skin 'out of the box'.

Clothing: There are now a good range of basic clothes on the Renderosity store, and this range is growing. If all you need is the some basics then you'll likely be fine with these. But, as yet, there are no fantasy or science fiction outfits and only one steampunk-ish set of dungarees.

What about conversion? At present there is only a \$7.50 stop-gap route for V4 clothing conversion, via a plugin ('La Femme injection for Prefitter') that enables pre-prep of the V4 clothing for the Poser Fitting Room. But note that the Fitting Room is a Poser Pro only feature, so Poser Standard users don't have it.

Conclusion: Despite the currently rather limited range of clothes, La Femme is an exciting figure in all other respects. She is to be welcomed, and her appearance bodes well for the forthcoming Poser 12!



POSER

For use with
Poser 11
Standard and
Poser 11 Pro.

La Femme



La Femme has been created as a collaboration between RPublishing (Nerd 3D), Blackhearted, Deecey, and Rhiannon. Together they have nearly 100 years of Poser experience, and have built La Femme "from the ground up" to take advantage of all that is now possible in Poser 11.

She ships with 24 body maps and 4k textures, and "Procedural SSS skin shader by Blackhearted, for that 'EZ Skin' look". The body includes "gens and no gens bases" as standard presets, and body handles for easy posing.

The head has an extensive set of morphs and many face-control chips for exact tweaking of expression presets.

There are 'hair fits' for the older hair that shipped with the previous flagship Poser figure, Pauline.

There are eye presets for green, brown and blue eyes.

La Femme ships with 144 face and expression morphs, 13 phoneme morphs (mouth shapes for use with lip-sync), and 23 basic body morphs.

Please note that a minimum \$3.50 spend is needed, before she unlocks as 'free' in your shopping cart. Note also that a Body Morphs pack is an additional \$20, and a clothing prefitter for the Fitting Room is \$7.50.

La Femme is available now at [the Renderosity store](#).

"We found that 'La Femme' can work perfectly with old A3 and V4/M4 pose presets."

AS DIMENSION ANESTIS

In a sunny port city in Greece, Anestis Skitzis ('AS-Dimension') is hard at work on his forthcoming NGS3 skin shaders for DAZ Studio. We talk with him about the power of observation from nature, and his work on a skin shader that can be applied to any texture map on any DAZ Studio character.

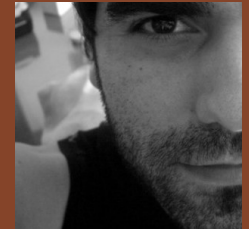
DAL: Anestis, welcome to the free *Digital Art Live* magazine, and to our in-depth interview. This issue is themed 'Super Skin', and we thought that your ongoing skin shader work would suit the issue very well.

AS: First of all, I have to thank you for choosing me for this interview. I'm glad to be a part of your current magazine issue and talking about a theme that I love to work with. Congratulations

of keeping your magazine being produced regularly, and your hard work. These in-depth interview and reviews help a lot of DAZ and Poser users and I'm sure also the general community around the world.

DAL: Thanks. Firstly, can you tell us how you started to be interested in 3D creativity? What first got you started? Did you go straight to DAZ Studio, or did you try other software first?

Picture: "The Orc".



ANESTIS SKITZIS

GREECE

DAZ STUDIO | SKIN
SHADERS

[WEB](#)

AS: Well... actually I'm a painter and a graphic designer. I have been learning traditional drawing and painting for about fifteen years now. I started working with DAZ Studio back in 2008, and I was first interested in it because it was very close to what I have been learning all those years about human anatomy. I'm not familiar with much 3D software, but I'd love to learn more — as I am

always searching for new workflows and tools to create my art.

DAL: What do you most enjoy about using DAZ Studio?

AS: Firstly DAZ Studio as it currently exists has a friendly user interface, that lets you get working with more passion. It gives you the chance to think more about artistic decisions

and less about being the IT technician and expert. But the most important aspect for me is the easy way it has in camera and lights. I like that you can handle so many cameras and light sources and you can easily jump from one to another with one click, and with full live OpenGL render preview. It's so amazing.

DAL: Yes, DAZ's OpenGL is nice. I think they changed it with the move from 3 to 4. I still keep version 3 as I think it has slightly nicer OpenGL Preview. There are probably some who would quibble about the idea that DAZ Studio is a "friendly user interface", but it's certainly friendlier than it was and is infinitely better than something like Blender.

But let's talk about your work. We see you've been hard at work on developing and refining some amazing skin shaders for DAZ characters. Which is your favourite, among the demo pictures you've made for the shaders?

AS: Yes. This was my goal from the beginning. As I prefer to work more with photoreal than stylish renders, I decided to take the chance that DAZ Studio gives me — with all these thousand of possible royalty-free assets. I'm not the kind of man that can criticize any content vendor's work. I know how difficult it is to create any kind of character. It involves a *lot* of developing work, such as morphing, sculpting, texturing, make-ups and much more other stuff.

DAL: Yes, Jenny — 'Pixeluna' — talks about that in her interview in this same issue. She talks about long days of work, week after week.

AS: As I also actually don't believe that doing the skin shader work is the main job of a character creator. So I was not surprised that I was looking at characters with plastic skins or skins that were too waxy or too glossy. But I must say that it was very annoying when that shows up in my photoreal renders! So that's how I started to work with DAZ Studio characters and how I started to set about refining their skin shaders. But then I found out that it was also annoying for me to make, again and *again*, the same tweaks for every character.

Thus I had to find an automatic way to bypass some basic shading steps, such as mapping,

SSS, except for the skin toning which always differs from skin to skin.

DAL: And you have a muse for that, who keeps you working at it?

AS: Yes. I expect you already know what it's like when you work creatively at something, there is always a 'favourite part' that brings you closer to the core of what you are trying to do. In my case, this is my favourite character model. My muse is 'Clara' by Digital Touch. She has the most natural nose I've ever seen on a DAZ Studio character model!

DAL: Cool. And she's encouraged you to develop quite a talent for making photo-real characters look really 'believable'. It's perhaps something from the combination of framing and expression? I'm not quite sure *what* it is, perhaps several factors, but you've got 'the knack' of making them look alive and human.

AS: I'm sure it's a combination of things. You know, the shaders, lights, camera, pose, expression... But I would say that the most important are: firstly the camera; then I'd say secondly the pose; and last the lights. I have made believable renders without having to work very hard on the lights and pose. The work was more focussed on the camera. In my view the camera is everything! The camera frames and directs the viewer's observation of the picture, and then you must also think about how the viewer *wants* to see things — behind our eyes, behind our retinas.

DAL: Interesting. Yes, so it sounds to me you take into account the psychology of human vision. Have you trained in illustration, perhaps at degree level, or are you self taught?

AS: Well, as I said I have been learning traditional painting for 15 years. But for me that's been something that slowly accumulates, from one day to another. I have been always observing humans and nature, their perspectives, how lights falls and shadows gather, on what materials, and how the light reacts on them. And that is an important point. I always tell new users: Observe! Observe! *Observe!*

Picture: "Another Lacie". Character is [MMD Lacie](#), available at [Renderosity](#).



If you have noticed my signature on my DeviantArt page, says: "Machines don't make Art, People make Art".

DAL: Right. That's the theme of this issue's Editorial, actually, and I come to much the same conclusion. Despite the imminent arrival of advanced automation in creative software over the next few years. In the meantime, have you tried other new technologies? 3D printing, perhaps?

AS: No, I have never used this feature yet. But I would love to. 3D printing is the future of art. Every single artist will have a 3D home printer in less than five years from now.

DAZ: Turning back to digital, your DAZ test model — 'Lacie' — looks amazingly realistic with your skin shaders applied to her. Is she your own character, or is she available somewhere?

AS: Yes! She is kind of an amazing character with awesome texture maps. Nope... unfortunately is not a character that I have created 'from scratch'. Actually it's easy for everybody to find her at Renderosity: just search the Store there for MDD Lacie for G3. She is a Maddelirium (MDD) model. MDD is one of my favourite character creators.

DAL: MDD. Yes, a maker of some excellent characters for photoreal rendering. She also has a range of V4 characters which still hold up very well, and with the right lighting they can look great in Poser's Firefly too.

AS: Yes, there are a wide range of awesome models from this creator. All well worth the price.

DAL: What are the three most important things for a new user to remember or do, when working with a high-quality out-of-the-box character such as one of MDDs? When starting to then go on and learn to tweak and try refining things in DAZ Studio 4.x?

AS: The most important thing there is the lights. I always use neutral lights when I play with skin shaders. Another important thing is SSS Toning. And Glossiness.

DAL: Thanks. Ok, let's turn now to your own skin experiments. Am I right in thinking that your

shader system uses only one diffuse map on each surface? And yet it still gets excellent results. And that this is due to the skin being driven mostly by the shader?

AS: Right. NGS2 works only with one Diffuse Map. My first thought was to make a universal shader system that could handle every single character in the same way.

As you know, every DAZ and Poser vendor has his own way to create the maps. Different Diffuse Toning, different Specular Grayscale Toning, and different bumps. So it was too difficult for me to balance all those kind of maps with just one click.

DAL: I see. But you managed it. Some people will wonder if doing it with one diffuse mean that the iRay render times become shorter?

AS: No. The render times still remains the same. As we all know, render times depend partly on the light sources. The only other way to make a difference is to have fewer or reduced texture maps. Fewer maps means less GPU memory usage.

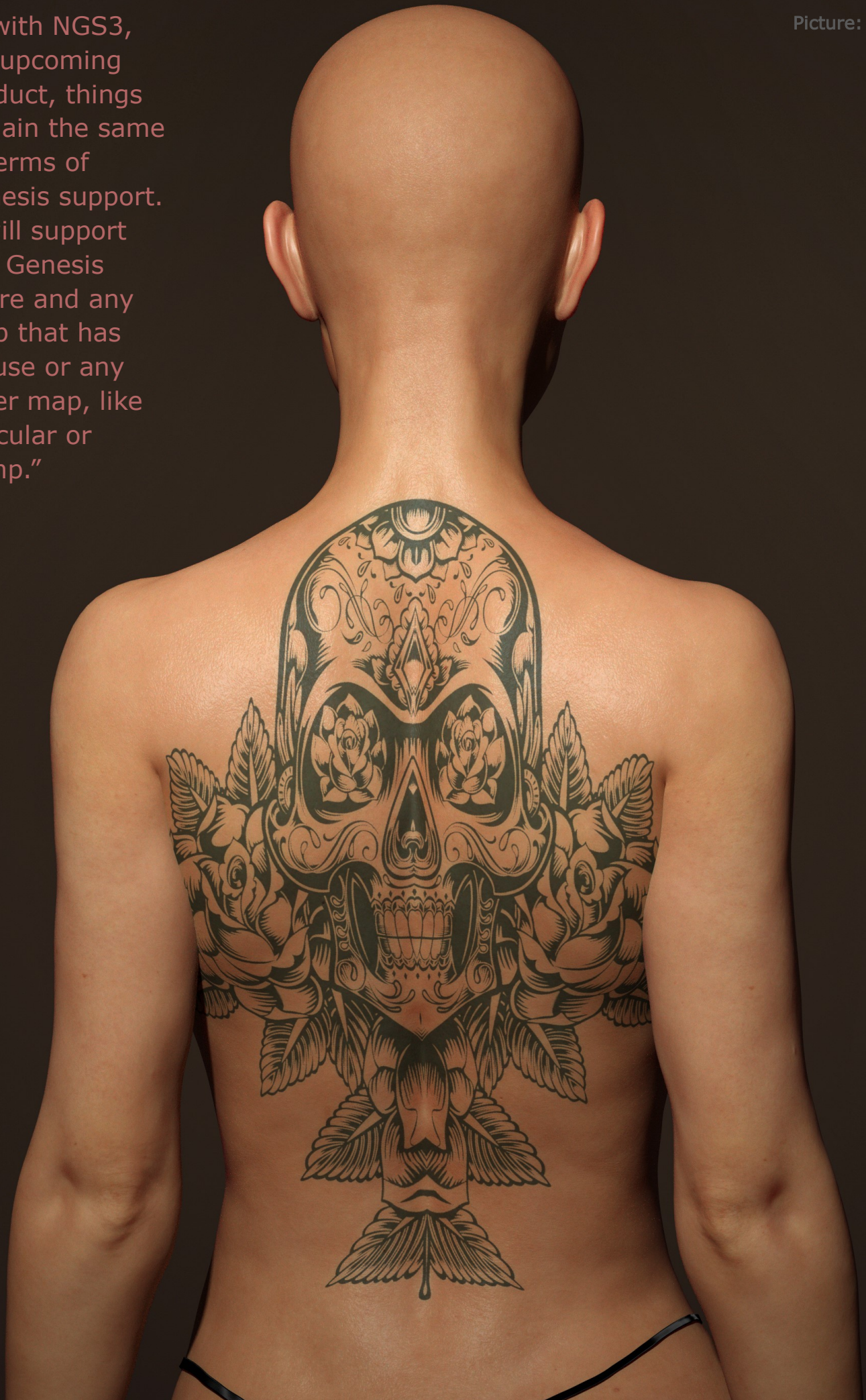
DAL: Right. Yes, the 'Scene Optimizer' plugin can work wonders for DAZ Studio users who don't have a ninja graphics card. It swiftly reduces the size of your texture maps, and can also do other tweaks. It makes iRay renders from DAZ Studio feasible even with onboard non-NVIDIA graphics.

But back to your skin shaders. I read that you've also designed your shaders to be easy to apply, for new users of DAZ Studio? And also it will support M4 and V3 / V4. It will be very interesting to see how good an old V3 can look in iRay!

AS: Yes. I always focus on trying to make a friendly user interface for new users. NGS2 already had this feature to support every Genesis Figure. Now with NGS3, my upcoming product, things remain the same in terms of Genesis Support. It will support any Genesis figure and any prop that has diffuse or any other map, like specular or bump.

DAL: Great. And will it also be easy to apply for creature and monsters, such as the Orc picture which opens this interview? Which use non-human textures?

"...with NGS3, my upcoming product, things remain the same in terms of Genesis support. It will support any Genesis figure and any prop that has diffuse or any other map, like specular or bump."







Pictures:
"Happiness" (this page)
and "Hand and
foot" (opposite). Both
show Anestis's skin
shader at work.

AS: Sure. My NGS3 will support any prop — as long as it has the specific maps.

DAL: Super. I see from your Gallery that you're also been experimenting with adding a tattoo layer to the skin?

AS: Well, let's just say that NGS3 will have a very powerful feature. But please forgive me, if I can't tell you more about that right now, for the obvious reason...

DAL: Sure. Wonderful, well we'll look forward to seeing the shader sets on the DAZ Store. Talking of DAZ, what would you like to see in DAZ Studio 5.0 when it's eventually released?

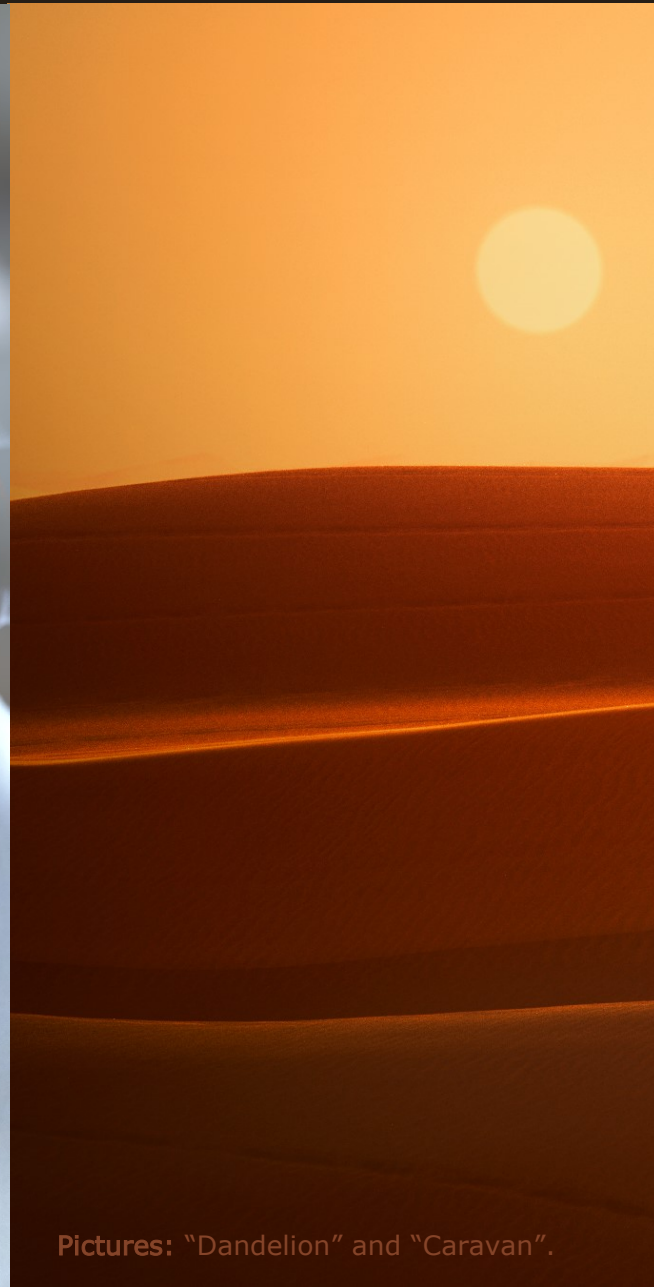
AS: Thank you very much. The most important feature that I enjoy seeing in a new DAZ Studio 5.0 would some way to get better hair props. Actually fiber hairs.

There *are* some very good 3D hair tools out there, but they are not so compatible with the current DAZ Studio version.

DAL: Ah, now that was another thing that my Editorial mentioned, in this issue of the magazine. It looks like it's going to be possible soon to automatically create a unique hair prop just from having the software examine a photo of hair. It will detect the volume, flow, position related to the face. The create a point cloud colume, and drape 3D hair in the same way. Filling in the gaps that it can't 'see' in the picture.

What's your home studio and workstation like? Does it have an interesting view from the window?

AS: I have to say that I have a very good home studio. The place has plenty of natural lighting. As for kit, I always work with dual monitors and



Pictures: "Dandelion" and "Caravan".

my basic system is Apple Mac, but I also work with Windows for further tests.

DAL: You're in Greece, at the sunny south-easternmost edge of Europe. Are you in a city, or in the countryside, or by the sea?

AS: Greece, yes. It's a very beautiful country. I live in a city called Piraeus, which close to the nation's capital city of Athens. Actually it is the port, so yes... I live very close by the sea.

DAL: Nice. That's always good for light, and I expect that's especially the case in somewhere sunny like Greece. Is there much of a digital / 3D art scene in Greece, these days?

AS: I believe we are on the road to it, as are most nations. It is a one-way road to the future now, and there is no turning back. 3D has become so embedded in our life already, and will

become more so. We will need to learn all the tools, at all levels, that will let us handle and work with 3D information.

DAL: Right. Are there any creative people in Greece, who make science fiction work, that we should know about? Not only artists, but perhaps also comics artists, movie-makers, game makers?


AS: Surely they are. Unfortunately I can't give the names of all of them! But I have seen a lot of awesome works here, over those years, people who make work in the 3D world.

DAL: OK. More generally, what are your own favourite science-fiction stories of the last 18 months?

I imagine that the movie *Alita* interested you, for the digital skin?







AS: Yes, definitely that is one of the best movies yet with great skin shaders in the visual effects work. It is yet another great movie from James Cameron. As good as his previous movies.

DAL: Great. If you were to be asked to work on a big movie, as the “digital skin guy”, what would you like to help make a movie of?

AS: Ha! Well, first of all it that would be something great for me. As it is one of big dreams, after the birth of my little daughter! But I would love to help not

only on the skin shaders, but on crafting the facial expressions too!

DAL: OK, that seems like a good point to end on. Anestis, thanks very much for this in-depth interview.

AS: Thank you.

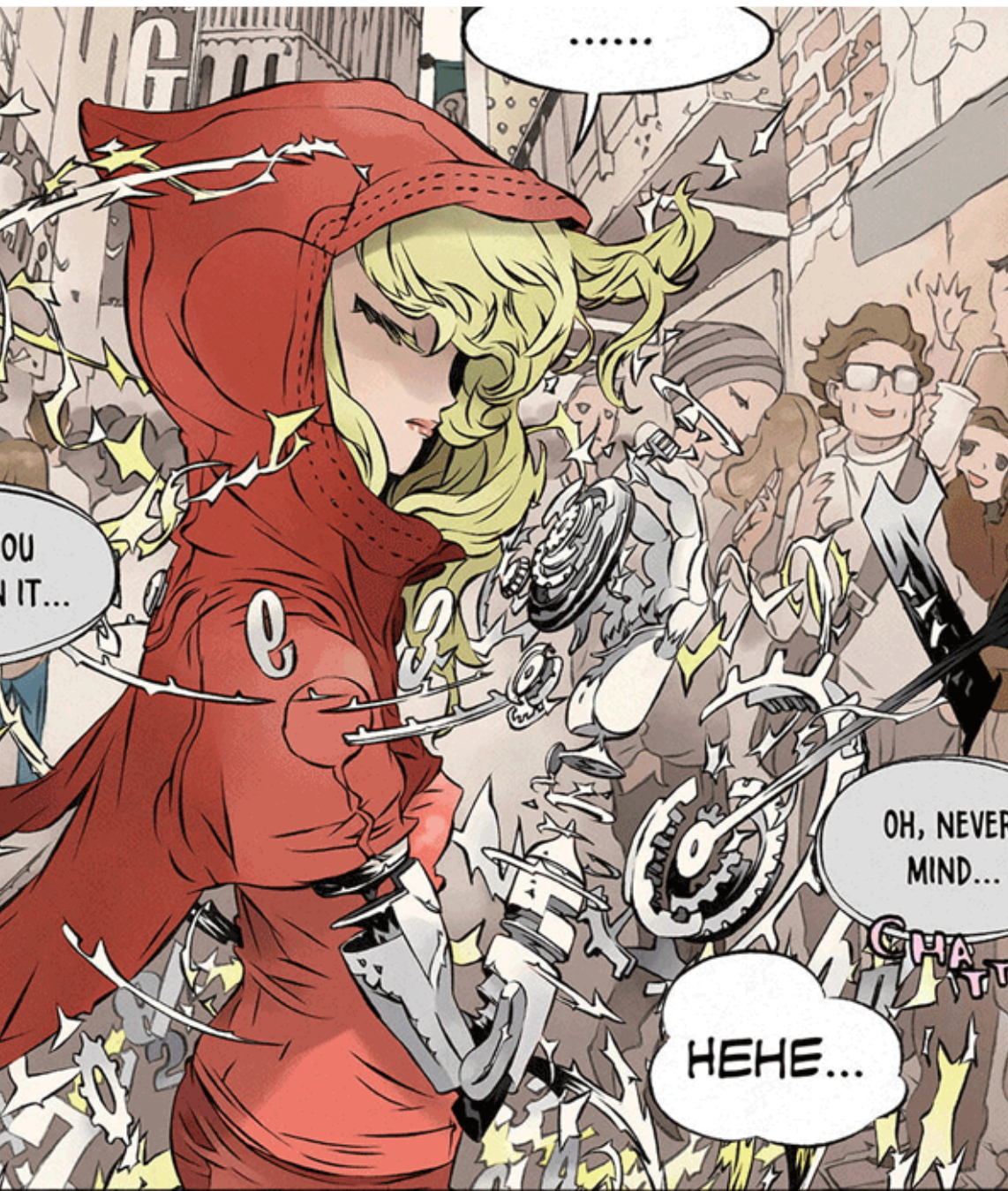
AS-Dimension (Anestis Skitzis) is online at :

<https://www.deviantart.com/as-dimension-z/>

Picture: “Pure Morning”.

CONTESTS

International Comic/Manga Schools Contest



Comics Competition

There's a new worldwide student competition from the makers of the Manga Studio software (now called Clip Studio).

Celsys is calling for entries from digital comics artists who are at degree level, in a technical/vocational school, or even in a formal "school art club or extracurricular art program".

All *bona fide* contest registrants get a free three-month license for Clip Studio Paint EX, the top level of the software. But there is no requirement to use the software, as Celsys say... "You can submit artwork made with any digital or traditional tool or software. If you create your submission using traditional tools, please submit a digital scan of the artwork."

This seems to open it up for 3D artists using the Poser Comic Book Preview tools in Poser 11, Cinema 4D Sketch & Toon, ZBrush 2019 NPR, or Blender's advanced cel-shading tools. However, we guess they may prefer that you at least heavily morph and kit-bash to make the character unique — rather than just popping a stock V4 character onto the Poser stage and turning on the 2D comic filter!

There are loads of prizes, from Celcys and their partners, including shiny new Wacom Cintiq pen-monitors!

Entry is free, and the deadline is early May 2019. Full details are at:

<https://www.clipstudio.net/>

ENTER OUR WORLD

Download the 2019 Entry Guide

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2019 World of WearableArt Awards

The World of WearableArt (WoW) Awards 2019

Artists and makers from all parts of the world are invited to make costumes for the 2019 WoW catwalks. You should... “create the unimaginable, ignore the conventional, and defy creative expectations” and also be able to make your garment and ship your finished work to New Zealand for live modelled display in front of 60,000 people! In 2019 the competition includes six themed sections:

‘Aotearoa’ — New Zealand has its own deep sense of place. Draw on culture and history, the landscape, and the nation’s independence and inventions.

Avant-garde — Dare to defy the boundaries of fashion and create a work that is cutting-edge, rejecting the ordinary and nurturing originality.

Open — The only limit is your imagination!

Mythology — Gather your inspiration from a vast treasure trove of tales. Dark and mysterious; exuberant and outlandish; ethereal and dreamy.

Transform — Create a work that changes in form, nature and appearance. Play and innovate with different mechanisms for revealing unexpected aspects of your garment.

White — Inspiration in white may be found in pure simplicity, sculptural boldness, intricate detail or experimenting with layers, light and shadow, proportion or scale.

Free entry!

<https://www.worldofwearableart.com/competition/>

Future Of Money Award 2019

Creatives are invited to employ a ‘speculative design’ approach and design a future financial crime! A crime which perhaps exploits a new loophole, a change in social attitudes, or a specific new technological development. Submit a three-page overview of your initial concept in PDF, and a Web link to examples of your previous work. Deadline: 5th April 2019. Entry is **free**. Shortlisted entrants will get \$1,000 to develop their idea and produce a short video. The videos will be showcased at Europe’s largest financial technology event, Money20/20. <http://futuremoneyaward.com/>

MediBang! 2019

Tokyo’s MediBang! and Manga CPO have a new art contest with two sections, ‘Manga’ and ‘Illustration’.

For ‘Illustration’ they want unpublished comic-style illustration on the theme of “Journey”.

There’s free entry, and the contest appears to be open worldwide — though they obviously expect to see a Japanese manga/anime art style in the entries. The entry deadline is 7th May 2019.

MediBang! is a leading Japanese store/platform which lets indie manga creators sell their digital comics and illustrations in the Japanese market.

They also offer the free MediBang Paint software, now fairly mature at version 23.x, and Jump Paint which is more of a guided experience with embedded tutorials for new manga creators. The contest doesn’t appear to restrict you to just this software.

Their website may be interesting to explore, as it’s fairly well translated into English and (assuming they accept overseas vendors) may even offer an affordable and pain-free route into selling your digital comics into Japan.

<https://medibang.com/contest/3rdmcpoillust/>

PIXELUNA

We have a new return interview with 'Pixeluna', catching up with her latest activities, and discovering her latest fabulous skin work on DAZ Studio characters, ranging from steampunk robots to bio-organic insect warriors!

DAL: Jenny, welcome back to *Digital Art Live* and our in-depth interview. We last interviewed you back in issue #12 (September 2016). Could you give us a quick recap of your background, please? Readers can find the old interview at Issuu or in their PC's local PDF collection, but could you save them time here by just giving us the outline of your creative background please? Training in advertising, discovering Poser, working with RuntimeDNA...

PL: Sure. In college, I studied Fine Arts at the University of Santo Tomas in Manila, Philippines, majoring in Advertising. This gave me a broad base of knowledge to apply in various art fields. I discovered Poser in 2008 while browsing for a 3D program at Fry's Electronics, and thought that I could use for my magazine layouts. It was more out of curiosity that I got hooked on it... and the rest is history. In the early days with Poser, most everything I learned was self-taught. As I got more involved in the 3D community, I met several influential friends. Some of the earliest friends were Shadownet, Ghostman, StudioArtVartanian and Midnight Stories. I worked on several projects together with Ghostman and Shadownet, and continued refining my skills. We eventually moved to RuntimeDNA where I met Syyd and Eric (Traveler), who were very helpful in learning DAZ Studio. We had some collaborative works together, one of them is the 'Domina' character who was very popular, and the 'Synx' and 'Cosmic Synx' outfit which we released at DAZ.

DAL: Great, thanks. And so let's get straight into talking about your latest work, which is well suited to this issue's 'Super Skin' theme. Firstly could you outline the new DAZ Studio characters, and what they are and what they include and do — such as 'Pyrida', and 'Li'l Patch Girl' (seen right) and 'Li'l Patch Boy'.

PL: Yes, 'Pyrida' is a half-human, creature-like fantasy character. The name was derived from *Lampyridae*, which is the scientific name for the firefly family of insects. The idea came to me after our team brainstormed about what style and genre we're going to make for the DAZ character 'Zelara 8'. She comes with the Firefly outfit created by Arki, a skin-tight fitting armor suit, mask, scarf, hood, two different styles of wings and antennae.



PIXELUNA

USA

DAZ STUDIO |
SUBSTANCE
PAINTER | ZBRUSH

[WEB](#)

Picture: "Li'l Patch Girl HD for Genesis 8" (2018).

The success of Li'l Patch Girl led to her getting a boy companion, in the form of the new Li'l Patch boy!



2018
pixelfuna

'Li'l Patch Girl' (seen right) is a robot teen, inspired by steampunk art and the sci-fi genre. It is about an imperfect prototype that was thrown in the junk bin to be scrapped for recycling. She has lain buried for years outside, but she wakes up and wanders. And she is going to make something of herself, now that she is sentient and aware...

DAL: That fits nicely with the new *Alita* movie...

PL: And then 'Li'l Scrap Boy' was created after the success of 'Li'l Patch Girl'. I received a lot of requests that I should make the male version. And now here he is!

DAL: Nice, thanks. Your 'Pyrida' is also fabulous and very appealing for 'science fiction foresty-swamp planet' type scenes. What sort of research did you do for her textures? Was it totally invention or did you find inspiring insect and plant forms in your picture-research?

PL: I usually research for names and inspirations, but at the same time I change the entire look by just using my own imagination. For the textures, I made my own brushes and tiles that I painted in Substance Painter to create the slimy, leathery look of the skin to match the outfit — which is very organic and insect-like.

DAL: How long does it take to develop a complex skin like that?

PL: It usually takes about a couple of weeks, from 10 to 12-hour days of work each day. That includes research and tons of test renders. I studied close-up images of insects and bugs and melded the texture idea with an amphibious reptile skin — and I came up with the 'Pyrida' textures.

DAL: I see. Does ZBrush have a growing place in your workflow, these days?

PL: Yes, ZBrush is part of my work flow in creating HD morphs for my characters. It can be as simple as a head and body shapes, some skin texture details such as pores, wrinkles or something more complex such as cyborg arm details. It is definitely a must-have for a 3D content creator.

DAL: And obviously you've made the transition from developing in Poser over to DAZ Studio.

What were the three main problems that you overcame during that transition?

PL: The three main problems? It is more of main *challenges* to me, rather than problems. First, you'll need a faster rendering graphics card when you render in iRay. That leads to the second one, which is choosing the right lighting for the render in order to create a realistic image. That means rendering more than a dozen times... just to get the *right* render for the promo art. It is somewhat tedious but it's worth it. And lastly, in order to keep on making unique products my work includes a wide search at the 3D marketplace to see what was already been done, so as not to find that I am imitating another product that is already in the store or anything similar.

DAL: Right... yes, and of course these days there is also the need to know what's been done not only in movies and TV, but also in games and comics. And so far as I know there's no mega-tastic 'Directory of All-Content Ever Made in Science Fiction & Fantasy', where one can just look that up. Although I guess a hard search of the DuckDuckGo and Google image searches approximate, once one has the keywords. Did all of your characters make it to the DAZ Store?

PL: Pretty much all of my products were ported over to the DAZ Store. Eventually, some of the older products were phased out as I built up my store catalog with new products.

DAL: Ah, I see. For someone who was starting out now, with talent and drive, what would you say are now the best opportunities to 'learn and earn'?

PL: To keep an eye on the forum threads, most of them have helpful tips and ideas. Also to search for tutorials, webinars. Make use of the 30-day trial version of the programs while also getting a hands-on training from the video tutorials. It is free and they are usually easy to follow. Create some freebies and send it to your friends who can test it for you.

Once you are ready to sell your products, find out the procedure for product submission where you want to sell your work. That's it, "learn and earn."

Picture: "Li'l' Patch
Girl HD for Genesis
8" (2018).





"I studied close-up images of insects and bugs and melded the texture idea with an amphibious reptile skin — and I came up with the 'Pyrida' textures ... I made my own brushes and tiles that I painted in Substance Painter to create the slimy, leathery look of the skin to match the outfit..."



DAL: Great. Now, obviously not all content creators are also great at making the promo pictures at the end of the process, and I'd imagine that many creatives just want to get on to starting the next project and being creative. Are there now people who work with the more prolific content-makers, to take all the tedium of 'making promos, uploading to the stores, listing etc', off their hands?

PL: There are ways to do it if the content creator is not into creating promos. And I agree too, that at the end of the project, we vendors, we just want to drop on the couch and sleep the rest of the day! It is a tiresome job which is usually underestimated. Imagine sitting in front of the computer screen for at least sixteen hours, everyday, non-stop and turning your desk into a breakfast and dinner table at the same time!

The best way is to send a copy of the work to artists who can do all the rendering for you. Though I pretty much do all of my promo art from rendering, making the library thumbnails and product submission. I have also teamed up with Elite 3D Artists in the past to help publicize a new release. They can create beautiful art pieces and are quite imaginative with their work.

DAL: Interesting. What would you say are the top three things to look for, when a content maker is looking around to find a new promo maker for their store listings?

PL: The first thing to look at is the quality of the render. For a character product, the image should clearly show the head and body, without any distractive elements such as a 'busy' background. If it is a full body promo art, then the pose must show the tattoos if there are any. Next, the lighting must *emphasize* the character instead of hide (too dark) or flash (too bright). The composition is also important as it portrays the mood and setting of the rendered image. Let's say you have a cyborg female and would like to show the character in action, the render must contain some hair and clothing movements as well. And maybe a blurry background and some debris or floating objects around her to simulate an action scene.

DAL: Thanks. You have a fascinating studio situation. In the last interview you told us that...

"From my studio windows I can see cacti, xeriscapes, and scorpions." And that it's very seasonal, very cold in winter and very hot in summer. Has anything changed in that studio view over the last three years?

PL: No, not actually. It is still the same place where we lived for over sixteen years now. Except that my work office is next to a big mesquite tree where all the pigeons are now hanging out during the normal changing over of the seasons. I hear their *coo-coos* almost 24/7! Somehow they come up with a rhythmical sound pattern that turns into a musical tune. So that comprises my day of work.

DAL: I see. So you're not snowed in by the deep winter that most of the USA is coming out of?

PL: There's no snow in our part of town, just some strong winds and heavy rains. And also, the dust storms that come every now and then.

DAL: Wow, right. Have you made any major new hardware or software investments over the last three years. If so, what are they and how have they helped you to create?

PL: Yes, I have upgraded my Photoshop subscription, Zbrush and Substance Painter, Marvelous Designer as well as a new NVIDIA graphics card. All these investments definitely made a tremendous amount of boost with product creation.

DAL: Great. And have you been pleased with how Photoshop has progressed in its features and power, since 2016?

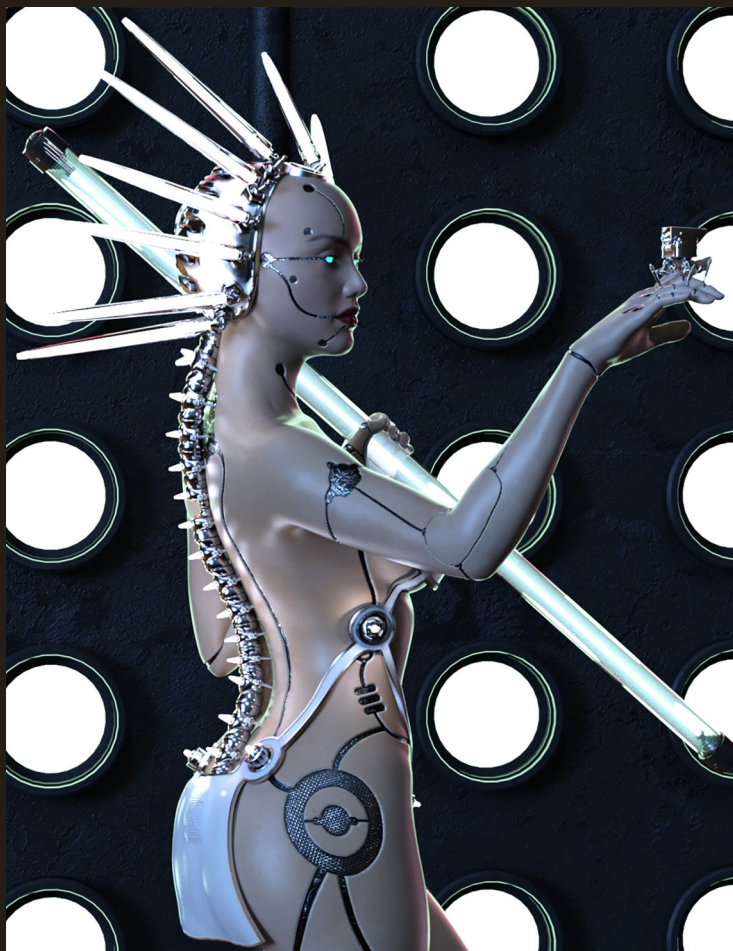
PL: Definitely. The multiple-undo mode, the transform proportionally by default, blending mode preview, and you can also generate normal maps from the diffuse maps in the 3D panel. There are too many features to mention and it makes the work flow easier.

DAL: You also design clothing in real-life. Obviously Marvelous Designer has now significantly improved since 2016. Have you looked at Marvelous Designer as a possible bridge between making 'real clothes' and 'digital clothes'?

PL: Yes, I had been playing with Marvelous Designer for a while now.



I have seen some helpful video tutorials that made Marvelous Designer so simple to follow. I have made a few clothing samples, but that is 'on the back burner' for now. Eventually I'd like to develop them to sell, later. It is almost as close as making your own clothes pattern in real life and applying it to a virtual mannequin. It is fun to see it taking shape without worrying about cutting or sewing a real fabric and if you made a mistake, you can always fix it.



DAL: That sounds great. Have you been inspired by travel since 2016? If so, what fab places have you visited, and what inspiration did you draw from them?

PL: I'm just bouncing between two states and not much of a travel bug. I just gather inspiration from everyday life, movies, TV, people, shows, and many other things.

DAL: And have you discovered any favourite new artists in the last few years? Or film-makers, game-makers, musicians...

PL: Yes, I did. A couple of years ago, while trying to find some interesting playlist to listen to, I have stumbled upon Caro Emerald, what a great find! And I've become an instant fan.

I also like Parov Stellar, 11 Acorn Lane, and most 'electro swing' music. It's a great sound to stay awake to. I am not really one for videogames, but I love movies. Any Guillermo del Toro movie is a must-see for me, Jordan Peele and his *Get Out* film is also great and John Krasinski's *A Quiet Place* is a master work.

DAL: Fab. What are you most looking forward to, by 2020?

PL: To keep on creating unique, fun characters, more clothing projects, or some cartoon characters eventually. I'm looking forward to modelling my own 3D clothing and props as well.

DAL: What are you working on at present, or have planned for over the spring and summer?

PL: Right now, I am working on a morph set that is 'something fun' to play with and can be used for different types of genres. When creating, I ask myself sometimes if this is something that people would like. It is not easy to determine what would sell or not. There were times... there was one project where we spent a *lot* of time working on it. But it did not sell quite as good as the one we worked on for less time! So we try to put ourselves in the buyer's shoes and give them options to play with the set. 'Build your own style' and you will be known for what you build. As for future project plans, there are too many in my list! But we can only take one step at a time and cross out each project one-by-one once they are finished.

DAL: Excellent, well we wish you well with that. Jenny, thanks very much for this in-depth interview, and people can see your 'Pixeluna' work at the links below...

PL: You're welcome, and thanks too for the interview. It's been an honour to be featured here again.

Pixeluna is at the DAZ Store and...

<https://www.deviantart.com/pixeluna/>

<https://www.renderosity.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/jenny.pixeluna.9>

"ZBrush is part of my work flow in creating HD morphs for my characters. It can be as simple as a head and body shapes, some skin texture details such as pores, wrinkles or something more complex such as cyborg arm details."

Pictures: "Cosmic Synx" (opposite) and "Venus 500".



GALLERY

This month's *Digital Art Live* gallery surveys unusual skins on unusual beings. From cyber-fae to gene-spliced humans designed for life on distant planets, and far beyond!



Picture: "Orchid Experiments II" by [Wen-JR](#) (Romeo Jonathan) of France, for [Orchid Creation](#).





MYRHO YMXVII

Pictures: "Nymia 2017" and "Sichu 2018", both by [My-Rho \(Mathias Rolfs\)](#) of Germany. DAZ Studio.



MYRHO MXXVII





Ahmet Can Kahraman

Pictures: "Ray man" (left) by [Mitkoogrozev](#) (Dimitar Grozev); and "Extraterrestrial" by [Ahmetcankahraman](#) (Ahmet Can) of Turkey.

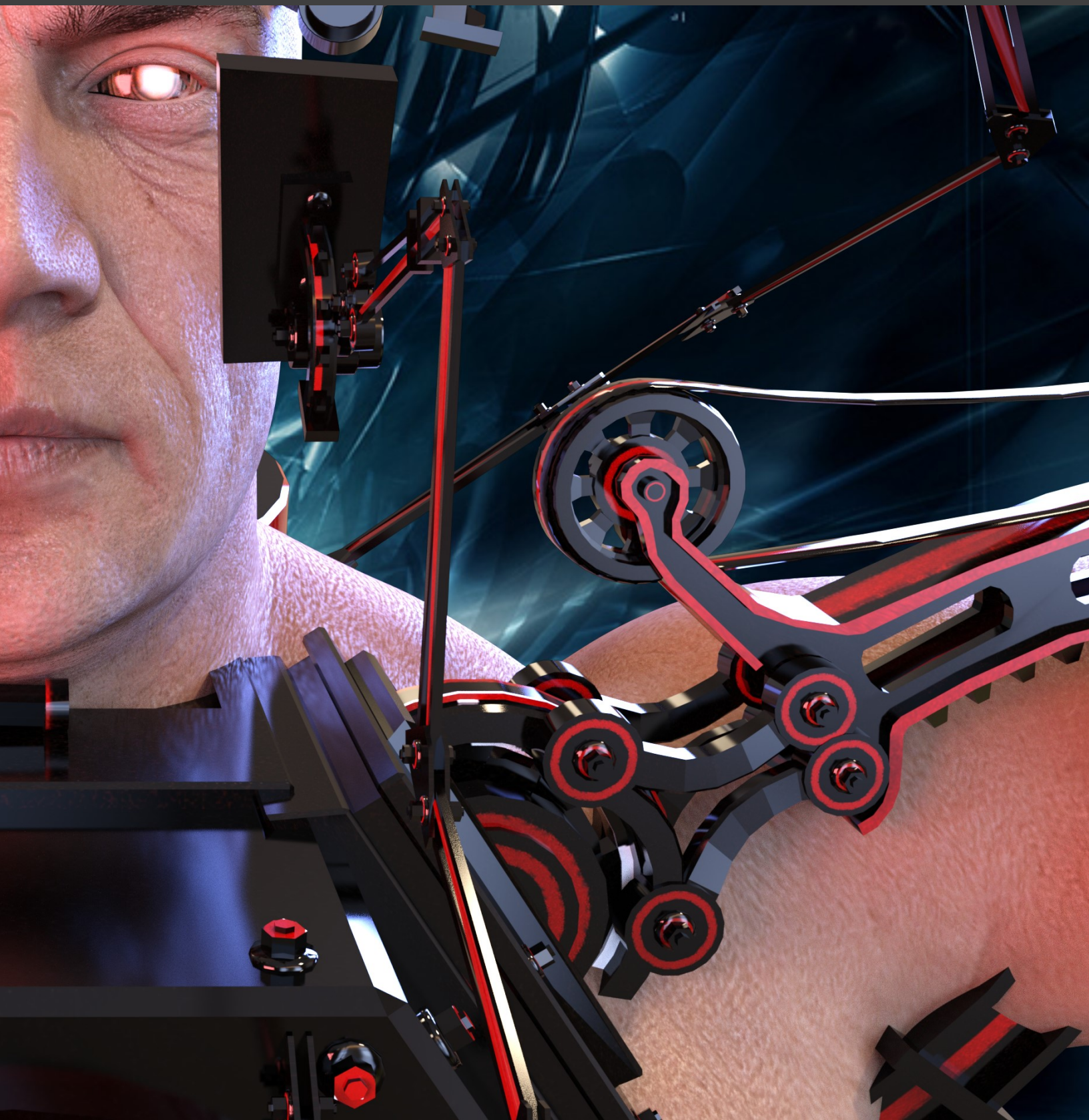


Courtesy of 'Tsetson', here we conclude the Gallery with an imaginary behind-the-scenes look at the 'skin work' of the future. The software bots are hard at work grooming on our robots on our behalf, and we're sunning ourselves on the terrace with a cold ginger beer in hand!

It's not impossible. We may well prefer to have our future semi-autonomous robots clad in a synthetic

skin that has a look and feel that is appealing to humans. By the year 2200 the idea of hard white plastic casings for robots may be something that humanity has long since discarded. Organics and softness may be the 'in thing' by then, and we may have all the advanced materials technologies to make it happen and make it durable.

Such skin would likely probably be grown in a vat,



cured, and then fitted with great precision to the robot frame and quasifoam base-layer.

It would probably be partly self-healing but would still need regular monthly overhauls and repairs to keep it in top form. Just as we take a shower, or our cars and bikes get a regular tune-up, so our domestic robots may in future need to take a regular 'skinover' to stay fresh!

Picture: "Skin Mech 0 0" by [Tsetson987](#) of the USA.

Digital Art LIVE

MOVIE: Alita: Battle Angel (Fox, 2019). Rated '12A' in the UK.

Finally, a reasonably successful transfer from Japanese anime to Hollywood! After expecting the usual big-budget flop with an impenetrable plot, the nay-saying critics were rather surprised that the new movie *Alita* powered its way through their negative reviews to become the #1 movie in its opening week — and went on to \$350-million at the box office in its first three weekends. And at time of writing, *Alita* has taken \$500 million worldwide.

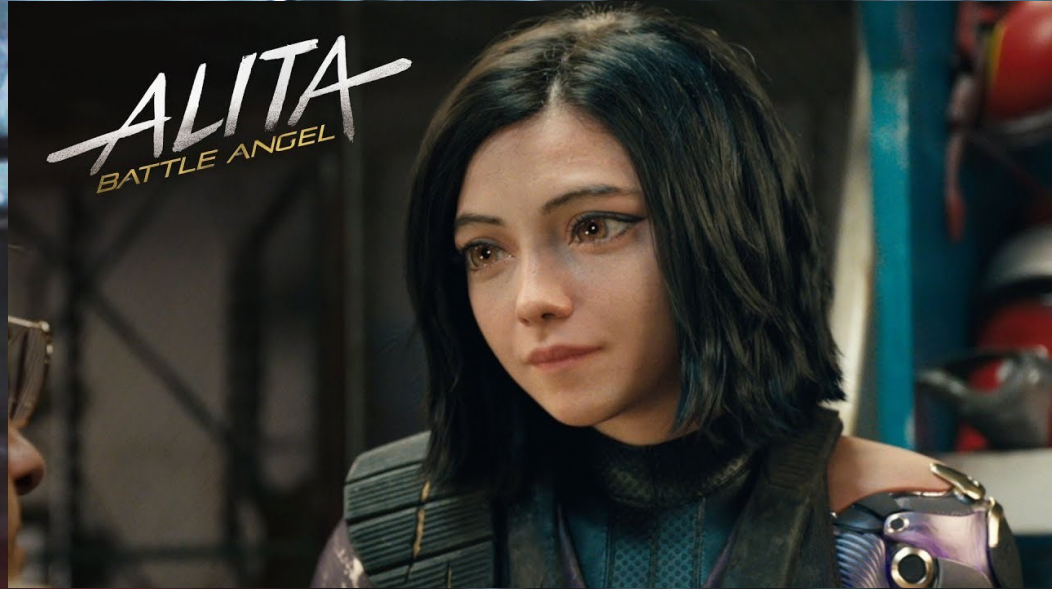
The film features state-of-the-art motion-capture, Weta-made CGI skin and effects, and a superb lead actress.

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

When Alita (Rosa Salazar) awakens as a discarded cyborg shell, with no memory of who she is, she finds herself in the year 2563 — a future-world that she does not recognize. Alita is taken in by a compassionate doctor. As she struggles to piece together clues to her mysterious past, the deadly and corrupt forces that control the city become aware of her...

Alita is a visually splendid action-thriller, full of amazing robots and set in a world and plot that (unlike most anime) doesn't confuse the heck out of the audience — go see it on the big screen while you have the chance.

IMAGIN



ALITA
BATTLE ANGEL



Alita is a completely computer-generated actress who appears for the entire running time of the movie. In a movie-making world where digital actors have only sometimes been successful (such as Gollum), but have usually been rather creaky, such movie was a huge risk. Even with the latest technology.

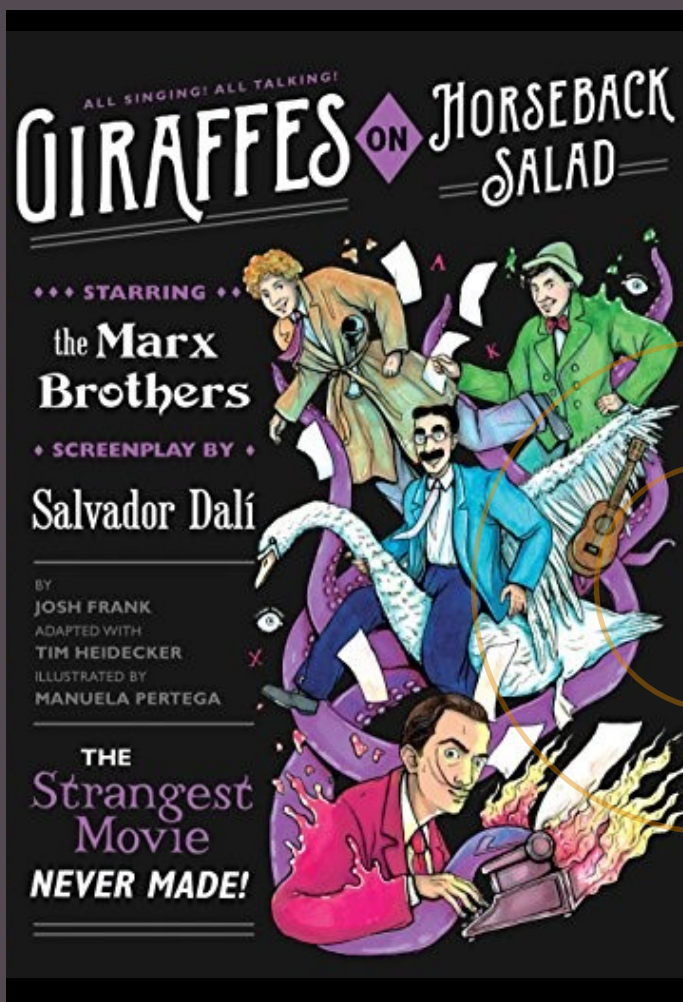
But James Cameron (*Avatar*) went to the best, Weta Digital in New Zealand, who digitally crafted a 3D Alita fit for the latest motion-capture tech.

Not only motion-capture, as an extra camera was added to the motion-capture helmet which even tracked wrinkle depth on her skin and lips! Lighting information on the skin was also captured by the special helmet.

When it came to generating the skin, the Weta team built pore by pore, rather than patch by patch, enabling them to add tiny imperfections such as a scars and wrinkles. Alita's huge cyborg eyes were created with 8.5 million polygons per eye!

ARIUM

Pictures: Press pictures, with thanks to Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation.



Graphic novel: Giraffes On Horseback Salad

Dali worked with Harpo Marx. That fact alone is quite enough to expand one's mind with endless surrealist possibilities. But there's more. The two men became friends and together they devised a screenplay for a major Marx Bros. movie — in which a man of mundane reality falls in love with a dream-woman from the realm of comical absurdity. A notebook and treatment for this was presented to the MGM movie studio, but the studio declined the project.

The movie's materials have now been painstakingly tracked down, and much research undertaken. The resulting 'graphic novel re-creation' of the planned movie will be published, albeit without the Marx Bros. distinctive physical comedy and syncopated wisecrackery, on 19th March 2019 as *Giraffes on Horseback Salad*.

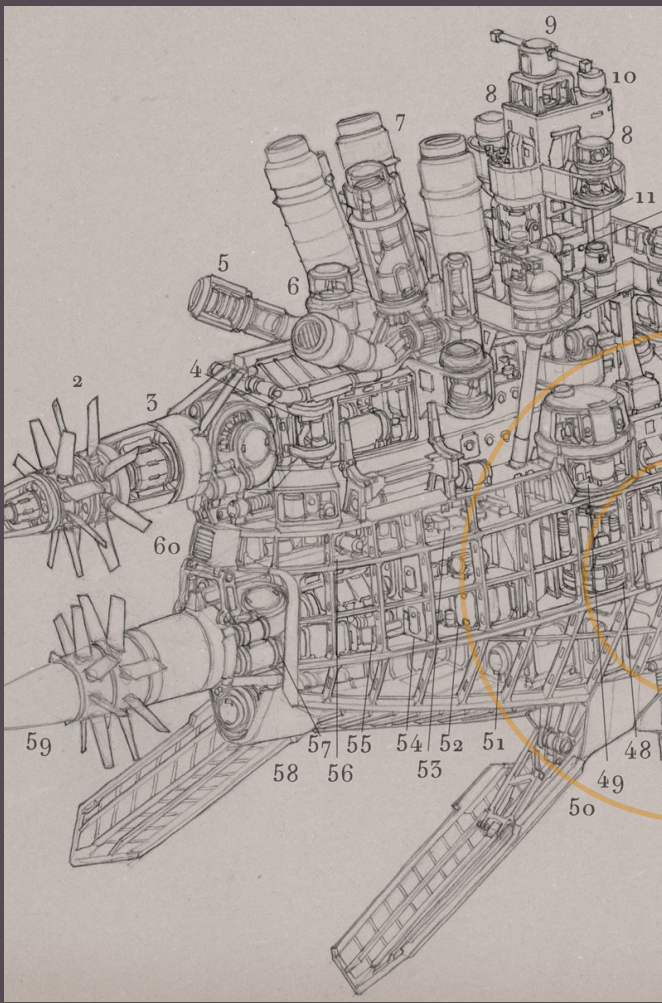
Available now at all good booksellers.



Book: The Art of Jim Starlin

The Art of Jim Starlin: A Life in Words and Pictures is a 328-page hardcover book which devotedly tracks and illustrates this famous comic artist's entire career. The book is an expanded edition, issued in 2018 after the first 2010 edition sold out. This timing took advantage of the movie-generated interest in the Thanos character, which Starlin created.

While the book begins as an honest memoir, it becomes a strong warning to creative talents who want to work in the cut-throat world of monthly comics publishing, as Starlin works for Marvel in the 1970s and then has an even worse time over at DC Comics. But the book is also a tale of how channelling one's own personal demons into creative characters can produce compelling human stories — even if they are super-powered space gods on the edge of the known universe. Now finally free to produce work as he wants, Starlin can now tap into crowd-funding and similar, to make new work for his own indie graphic novel company.

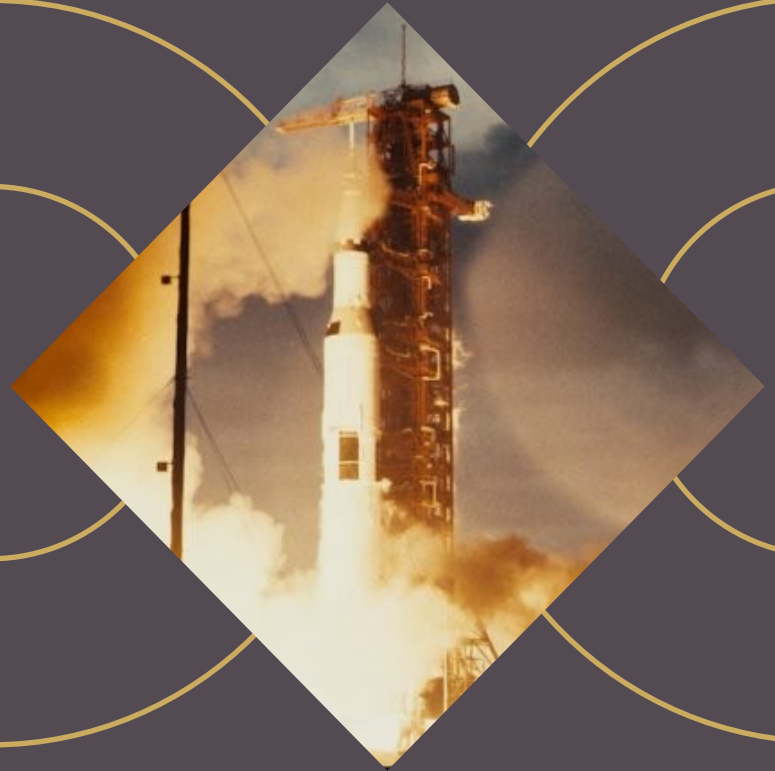


Artbook: The Spacecraft of the First World War

Mike Doscher was interviewed by our magazine in #30 (June 2018, 'Alternative History' issue). He has now published his new *Spacecraft of the First World War* artbook. His book is a "Jane's Guide"-style book surveying the fighting spacecraft of "the war after The War of the Worlds", thus aligning with the story famously told by H.G. Wells of the attempted Martian invasion of Earth. Mike's book... "covers the fifty major spacecraft classes of Earth vessel that saw action in the conflict. Also covered are "the strange vessels of the Neomartian Secession". Details are given of "development and combat histories, background information about the war they fought in, and the world they fought for. The mysteries and paradoxes of this first space war are also touched on." Available now from Amazon as an ebook. Picture: detail from "Charles Martel Cutaway".

Art novel: Above the Timberline

Above The Timberline is a hybrid book that you might have missed hearing about or overlooked. It's part artbook and part short novel. In 2017 illustrator Gregory Manchess published this lavishly 'painted novel' about a near-future dieselpunk Earth locked in a new Ice Age. Manchess's 120 cinematic illustrations grace an oversize landscape-format hardback of 240 pages. With fairly minimal and well-integrated text the book tells the gripping story of the son of a famed polar explorer who goes searching for his lost father. If you enjoy movies such as *Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow*, or recent acclaimed short novels such as *Pirates of the Electromagnetic Waves*, then this is for you. As for the art, it's of high enough quality to have merited its very own exhibition at the famed Norman Rockwell Museum in 2018! The book is also worth seeing just as an outstanding example of a new format in which you might present a visual story made with Poser/DAZ. Only available in print hardback.



NASA — A Human Adventure

Summer 2019, Brisbane, Australia

"NASA – A Human Adventure" is billed as the most comprehensive and extensive touring space flight exhibition in the world. This substantial exhibition comes to the Queensland Museum, Australia, as part of the World Science Festival Brisbane — and runs there until 9th October 2019.

<http://www.worldsciencefestival.com.au>

Pictures, from left, across double-page:

Astronaut Michael Collins, prior to Apollo 11 launch. NASA.

A NASA 70mm frame from the filming of an Apollo rocket launch to the Moon. NASA.

Detail from a Chesley Bonestell picture of Mars, from a NASA Technical Report. The picture was made in the late 1940s when the thought could still be entertained that there might be some biological traces of an earlier 'green Mars' remaining on the dry surface. Today it rather evokes a future Mars in the early stages of terraforming.

The Shropshire market town of Shrewsbury, home of the Comics Salopia festival.

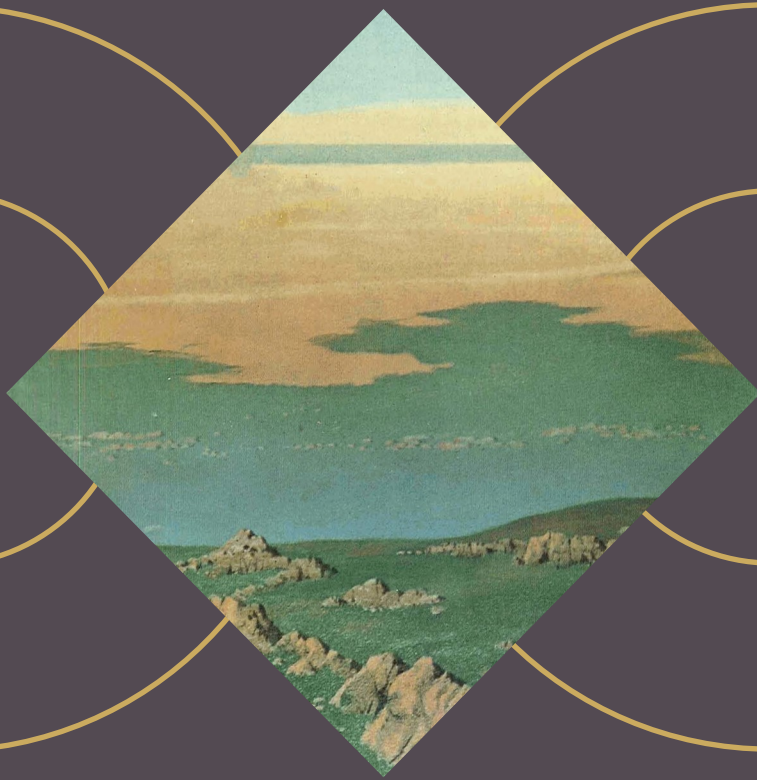
Apollo 11 in IMAX

March 2019, IMAX screens in USA

There's a new 70mm 90-minute IMAX documentary, titled simply *Apollo 11*. In March 2019 this will be playing at 120 IMAX screens around the USA. This is part of the national "Apollo 50" events for the anniversary of the Moon landing.

While 70mm cameras documented the Apollo 11 launch quite closely, most of the resulting footage was then cropped to 35mm for regular movie screens and TV news. The Director of this new 70mm documentary movie, Todd Douglas Miller, found NASA's original 70mm film reels stored deep in the U.S. National Archives. He and his team have restored the footage and carefully melded it with original audio tapes and the film footage that was made in space by the astronauts. The film lacks a narrator or interviewees, and simply presents the restored footage of the launch in its chronological sequence.

If you miss seeing this in March, this is definitely a movie to badger your local IMAX cinema manager to re-book for the anniversary of the Moon landing, later on in 2019!



Chesley Bonestell

Summer 2019, around the USA

Chesley Bonestell: A Brush With The Future is a major new cinema documentary about the life and work of the American pioneer of 'space art'. This award-winning documentary had its official world premiere in his home town of San Francisco, at the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, in February 2019.

The new movie is now set for screenings in cinemas around the USA in summer 2019, as part of the 50th Anniversary of the Apollo 11 Moon Landing.

Chesley Bonestell was a visionary artist who from 1944 onward inspired a new generation of young astronomers, engineers, writers and visionaries with his remarkable paintings of space and space travel. He mostly worked in the era before space mission photography, making his work all the more valuable in giving a glimpse of the raw possibilities and potential grandeur of space exploration. His work was widely seen on the covers of magazines such as *Fantasy and Science Fiction*, and in science books on space.

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

Comics Salopia

Early June 2019, Shrewsbury, UK.

Comics Salopia is a huge international, free entry festival celebrating comics creators. The long-term aim is for the festival to grow from its former incarnation as the well-respected Shrewsbury Comics Festival, into something more akin to the internationally important Angouleme comic art festival held in central France. Salopia's focus is firmly on the creatives who make the comics, from British names such as Hunt Emerson to international star names, and Salopia 2019 will attract the biggest names in British comic art to offer exhibitions, workshops and panels. Leading creatives from Scotland, a powerhouse of British comics, will also be in attendance from DC Thomson and Beano Studios. The Festival also benefits from having a number of the UK's top artists and writers living and working relatively nearby — places such as north Shropshire (the 'Salopia' of the festival's title) and adjacent north Staffordshire are relatively cheap and pleasant to live in, but still offer excellent travel connections to London and also Dundee (home of the British publisher DC Thompson).

<https://comicssalopia.com/>

Back cover: "Distant
Worlds" by TK769
(Adrian Mark Gillespie)
of the UK.

NEXT ISSUE: MAY 2019 DESERTS

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

