

This issue features a section on figure drawing, which contains nudity. Intended for mature readers.

NUMBER 2
FALL 2001



DRAW!

\$5⁹⁵
IN THE U.S.A.

THE PROFESSIONAL "HOW-TO" MAGAZINE ON COMICS & CARTOONING

**BONUS COLOR
SECTION FEATURING
SAMURAI JACK!**

GENNDY TARTAKOVSKY
KLAUS JANSON
JERRY ORDWAY
BRET BLEVINS
PHIL HESTER
ANDE PARKS
STEVE CONLEY



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INTERVIEWS AND STEP-BY-STEP DEMOS BY
TODAY'S TOP PROS IN CARTOONING, COMICS AND ANIMATION

DRAW!

THE PROFESSIONAL
"HOW-TO" MAGAZINE ON
COMICS & CARTOONING

FALL 2001 • VOL. 1, NO. 2

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Transcription • Brian K. Morris

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Another funny and probably too accurate caricature of your erstwhile editor by Mr. Blevins.

year) through the biggest crowd of comic, sci-fi and toy fans I have ever seen. I was on a mission, though: To track down and get some of my fellow pros to agree to do some articles in future issues. I won't spoil the surprises yet, but just about everyone I asked has agreed. So you can look forward to many of the top comic and animation professionals from Disney, Marvel, DC, Cartoon Network, Image and Europe doing articles on tips and tricks and how-to demos in the upcoming issues of *DRAW!*.

The *DRAW!* message board is up and running, so please post feedback and ask questions at: <http://66.36.6.76/cgi-bin/Ultimate.cgi> I plan on building up more of a web presence for *DRAW!* in the coming months, so surf on over. We'll be back in stores with #3 in December, just in time of the Holiday season, so pick up a few extra issues; they make great stocking stuffers!

MIKE

Mike Manley, editor

E-mail: mike@actionplanet.com

Website: www.actionplanet.com

Snail mail: PO Box 2129, Upper Darby, PA 19082

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ADVENTURES IN THE INK TRADE

AN INTERVIEW AND INKING DEMONSTRATION
WITH **KLAUS JANSON**



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Despite all of this, or maybe because of it, few inkers have stayed on top and in demand like Klaus Janson. From his early journeyman work at Marvel and DC to his memorable collaborations with Frank Miller on *Daredevil* and again on *Dark Knight*, Janson has stayed hungry, influential, in demand, and in style. His bold, distinctive and textural inking has lavished the pencils of just about every top penciler in comics and elevated the work of many weaker pencilers. In his career he's worked on just about

every major title for Marvel and DC.

Not content to merely ink the pencils of others, Janson has also successfully taken his turn at penciling as well, applying his dynamic and noir-ish style to several works like *Batman*, a *Punisher* mini-series for Marvel, and *Batman/Spawn* to name but a few.

DRAW! magazine caught up with Janson at his NYC studio to get a "how-to" demonstration and interview from this master of pen and ink.

In the last three decades the comic book industry has gone through more than one changing of the guard, a myriad of "hot" styles, and is currently being impacted by technology, in ways that can't be predicted yet. The traditional roles of penciler and inker are shifting, changing, as are the tools and techniques they employ in their craft. While many artists struggle to deal with these changes, the comic book inker—and his or her pivotal role in the creation of the modern comic—is undergoing perhaps some of the most rapid changes due to the prevailing styles of more open art, the looming "Boogey man" of "digital inking," slicker printing, and the heavier, more dominating role of the colorist in the final look of the art.

DRAW!: At what age did you decide you wanted to become a comic artist?

KLAUS JANSON: I remember the exact first time when I came across comic books. I was about 6 and walked into this Ma and Pop store two blocks from my house. Although I came in to purchase some candy, this homemade rack of comics mesmerized me. It was a sunny afternoon and the dust was floating in the light right above the rack. I bought a few and I was hooked from then on. This was the late Fifties, '58, '59. My family and I emigrated in '57 from Germany. At that point there was really nothing to buy except the Weisinger Superman line. A few years ago, when the family house was sold, I went back to clean out the attic where I stored the billions of comics I bought in my childhood. What surprised and amused me was the high amount of comics I had from that period: *Lois Lane* and *Jimmy Olsen* and *Superboy* and *Superman*. I had to adjust my self-image a bit when confronted with evidence that I wasn't as cool a kid as I remember.

I learned a lot of English from comic books. I was able to put the words together with the visual and dope out the meaning of the words. I think this left a huge impression on me and to this day my obsession is storytelling—the ability to communicate both as it applies in general and the specifics of comic books and art.

Shortly after I started buying comics, I began to cut the figures of characters out and reposition them on a blank sheet of paper to create my own stories. Actually that is a lot of fun and I recommend it as an art exercise, but thankfully the thought occurred to me that I was losing these books so I started drawing comics instead of destroying them. That was the moment when I realized that drawing was not only fun, but could be done for a reason.

I remember the exact moment that I decided to be an artist. I was raised in a fairly dysfunctional family. One of the spokes on that dysfunctional wheel was my father, whom I have never met. As a kid there was nothing I wanted more than a dad. We had a watercolor hanging up in the apartment we lived in and one day I asked about it. I was told that my father did it. I remember standing and looking at it with new meaning. If I couldn't be with my dad, I thought, perhaps this was the next best thing—to be like my dad. It was precisely that moment that I committed to being an artist.

DRAW!: Now I understand you worked at Continuity Studios, the studio run by Neal Adams and Dick Giordano that did advertising as well as comics. Can you tell us what your duties were there and how you came to work there?

KJ: The way I found myself at Continuity was through Dick Giordano. I had read about the tours

that DC was offering in one of their books. I took it upon myself (I think I was 17 at the time) to join one of these tours. So I dressed up (a tie, even—can you imagine!), got on a train (I was living in Connecticut) and went up to DC Comics one Friday afternoon during summer break. The receptionist told me they didn't do tours anymore. I was, of course, heartbroken. So I went into this spiel about coming all the way from Connecticut and I was wearing a tie—couldn't they give me a break? So they turned out to be extremely nice.

The receptionist called some people, and Jack Miller (the editor of "Deadman") came out and took me around. It was a very nice thing to do. That was my first exposure to "real" comics and how it was connected to a larger industry. I also met Neal Adams who was in the offices working on an Adam Strange cover for *Strange Adventures*. He was interested specifically in a certain color combination (the red of the costume against an olive green in the background) that he believed created more depth in the cover. It was cool. Then I met Dick



GREEN LANTERN AND THE ATOM, ARTWORK AND SCRIPT BY AND © 2001 DC COMICS.

Giordano who recognized my name from all the letters I used to send him at Charlton Comics. As it turned out, he lived in Stratford, which bordered the town of Bridgeport, where I lived. Through some effort on my part and some very funny coincidences, we carried on a friendship from that point. I was involved in producing a fanzine with my good friend David Kasakove, and we of course decided to exploit the only pro we knew and interviewed Dick for the second issue. From there I did a bit of ghosting for Dick, some backgrounds, and some work for Sal Trapani, Dick's brother-in-law. Actually, a story I never told was about my first professional ink job. Sal was inking Herb Trimpe on the *Hulk*. I might've done some background

work, but Sal called me up and said he was in a jam. Could I ink the last three pages while Sal went out of town on some business? "Sure," I said, "lemme at 'em." He gave me three pages on Friday which had to be done by Sunday night. So I did them. I think this was the first time the Wendigo was introduced. As every young artist does, I got extremely cocky and smug about how easy this was. I remember the next day meeting Dick and being so self-assured that I was being falsely modest—"At least they were printable, Mr Giordano." Well the punchline was—they weren't! John Romita yelled at Sal and said they couldn't use these pages—and Sal wound up re-doing them. Something about the line being too fat. Needless to say it took me awhile to recover from that one. I didn't emerge from my cave till six months had passed.

DRAW!: There seemed to be a whole group of you "Crusty Bunkers," a nickname for the group of young turks working there in the early- to mid-'70s, who definitely had the Adams and especially the Giordano influence in your work. Some of you guys even did backgrounds for a while. I remember that first *Spider-Man vs. Superman Treasury Edition*. Boy I poured over that comic studying all the technique in there and that *Giant-Sized Howard the Duck* with the Sal Buscema story in there inked by you. Can you fill us in a bit on that, and if Giordano or Adams ever sat you guys down and specifically showed you certain techniques or explained theories?

KJ: So, as an extension to working with Dick, I occasionally found myself at Continuity. It was a great time and I did do some of the Crusty Bunkers work but probably not as much as some other guys. I remember sitting at a desk once and inking "Fahfred and Grey Mouser" over Howard Chaykin. I was noodling the backgrounds and decided (which the studio allowed) to broaden out and do some unimportant clothing elements. I was working on a knife and a belt buckle when Neal comes strolling by, glancing at what I was doing. I was so in awe of Neal and Dick that it was all I could do not to vomit, let alone do a decent inking job. My hand starts



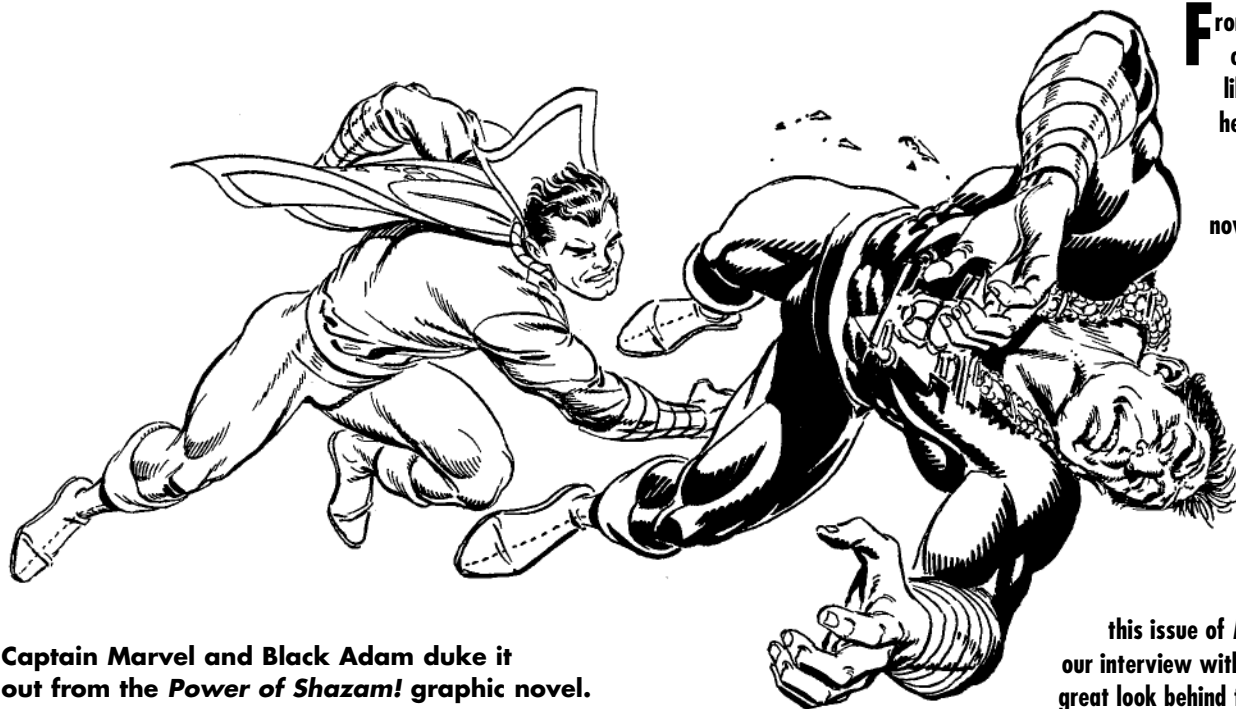
TECHNIQUE

JANSON: One way an inker can work hand in hand with a penciler is by adding blacks. My goal here was to help make the focal point of the panel more obvious.

PREVIOUS PAGE: Pencils by Gil Kane.
ABOVE: Janson's inks of the same page, spotting blacks to help direct the reader's eye through the compositions.

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THE POWER OF ORDWAY



Captain Marvel and Black Adam duke it out from the *Power of Shazam!* graphic novel.

CAPTAIN MARVEL, BLACK ADAM AND ARTWORK © 2001 DC COMICS

From his longterm runs on mainstream icons like Superman, to his heralded work on the *Power of Shazam!* hardcover graphic novel, to the series by the same name for DC Comics, to his just completed *US Agent* three issue mini-series for Marvel Comics, Jerry Ordway has stayed in demand and in the top echelon of the comics field. In

this issue of *DRAW!* we finish up our interview with Ordway and get a great look behind the scenes with this writer-artist, his working process and techniques.

INTERVIEW WITH JERRY ORDWAY, PART 2

DRAW!: In the first interview with you in *DRAW!* #1, we left off at the inking stage of doing comic art, something which you really excel at, being to my mind and humble opinion one of the best ever in the business. And nothing against the many talented guys who've inked you, but no one inks you better than you. Your inking is "drawing in ink," as opposed to trying to make a series of really cool slick lines. Your inking is full of a variety of line weights and textures that not only describe the human form and the super-human form, but also make brick walls and sofas appealing to.

JERRY ORDWAY: Thanks a lot, really, but I'm neither as brilliant, or terrible as some think. There are days when I feel like I've lost the ability to draw, let me tell you! Comic work is so dependent on keeping your drawing muscles limber, that a weekend off can put you off your game. I took years off from drawing interior work following the *Power of Shazam!* graphic novel, with few exceptions. When I agreed to draw *Gog* for DC a few years later, I did so just to see if I could still do it, and on a monthly schedule. I survived, and succeeded, but just barely. Now it's a few years after that and I still am not up to speed compared to before my hiatus.

DRAW!: So I guess my first questions will be more technical just to get that out of the way fast. What pen points do you use?

JO: Well, I started out using a Hunt #102 Crowquill tip, switched over to the Gillotte #659 crowquills, and am now back at #102s again, after twenty years, due first to the scarcity of the Gillotte's and then to the poor quality when I finally found them. Like every art tool known to us, none are as good as they used to be. The Hunt tips are not the inflexible "nails" I got used to so long ago, either. They are now closer in feel and flex to the #659 quill. Only inkers will get this, Mike—the rest of the world will think I'm talking gibberish.

DRAW!: Are you primarily a pen or brush man?

JO: I am a pen man, with few exceptions. Occasionally, when inking a large drawing or cover, I'll use a brush, as an ink line would seem too "slight." I love doing textures with a brush, though. That Joe Sinnott rendering on rocks and debris from his Kirby days on the *Fantastic Four* is always inspiring. You need a brush to do that.

DRAW!: Do you have a particular way of working, say all the pen work first and brush work second?

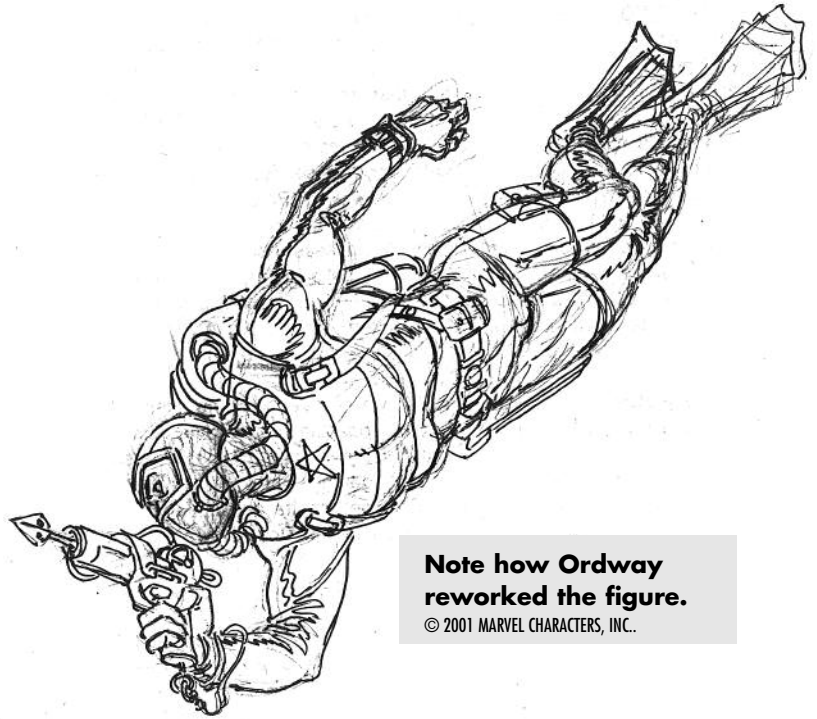
JO: I generally do that, though there are times when I can't wait to fill in the black areas on a panel or something, and I'll get out the brush and finish it. I tend to work on a batch of pages, in order, leaving blacks to be spotted and erasing, until I'm ready to send the work in to the editor. Then I erase the pencils and go over everything, filling in solid areas and looking for places that need a beefed-up ink line to make the figures "pop," all the while watching the clock for the Fed-Ex pick-up deadline!

DRAW!: Do you prefer to use the pen for one type of inking, and the brush for another, like inking hair?

JO: Well, I struggled with that in the beginning, like most folks, trying to use pen for everything, until I learned that some things look better in brush, like the rock textures I mentioned before. Dark wavy hair, for example, needs a brush to keep you from trying to draw every single hair. A brush helps me pick out the highlights with feathering.

DRAW!: Who were the artists you learned from and emulated when you started?

JO: I started out trying to be Neal Adams, as inked by Tom Palmer, but two things conspired against me. First, in the late 1970s, there were dozens of artists trying the same thing, and second, it was an absolute low point in comic book printing. Even Tom Palmer's work wasn't reproducing well. In reaction to that, really, I looked to Wally Wood, whose work was simple and solid at the time. He kept the rendering to a minimum and spotted plenty of blacks to compensate for the generally weak coloring. When I got my first regular assignment, inking an Adams clone at the time, Rich Buckler, I stood out. I inked it in a simpler way. The book was *All-Star Squadron*, set in the 1940s, and Roy Thomas, the writer, made sure I was exposed to lots of great old work by Mort Meskin on "Johnny Quick," Joe Kubert on "Hawkman," Jack Burnley on "Starman." I also did a lot of swiping in ink of Alex Raymond's *Flash Gordon* from the 1930s, transforming Buckler's figures into a more appropriate retro look.



Note how Ordway reworked the figure.
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FAX TO TOM BRADBORT FROM ORDWAY



RIGHT: Ordway's original cover sketch, paying tribute to the classic *Nick Fury* cover by Steranko.

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COVERS - ILLUSTRATION QUALITY



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ABOVE: The final inked cover.

As a kid, I was in awe of Wood and John Buscema. On *All-Star*, I studied the guys who inspired *them*, and added all sorts of rendering tricks into my repertoire from Hal Foster, Alex Raymond, Noel Sickles, Milton Caniff, Roy Crane and others. Then, after a while through repeat use, they became my own bag of tricks, so to speak. It was like comic book school. Doing a period book as your first ongoing title is quite the crash course—I had to draw and ink World War II-era soldiers, planes, boats, locales. It was really daunting, but a great experience.

DRAW!: And whom do you admire today? I know I admire many artists whose style of craftsmanship wouldn't be necessarily compatible with my style.

JO: I think Carlos Pacheco and Alan Davis are terrific. I like Erik Larsen's dynamics. Bryan Hitch's work on *The Authority* was great. There are a lot of talented people out there. The competition is overwhelming, really. Gil Kane told me once how hard it was for him to compete with the level of drawing in the industry, and that really floored me, but I understood. In a way, though, as good as they are, I can't imagine anyone delivering a body of work as great as Hal Foster's or Raymond's or any of the greats from the past. I mean who among us can have the impact of a Jack Kirby, John Buscema or Wally Wood?

DRAW!: Are you conscious of an "Ordway style" when working? Or is it more like handwriting? Automatic, unconscious.

JO: I think when you've been around a while, your work becomes like your signature. As much as I strive to get better, I am still following a certain path with my work.

SAMURAI JACK



From creating, producing and directing the hit cartoon *Dexter's Lab* to producing the mega-hit and 300-million dollar merchandising phenom *The Powerpuff Girls*, Genndy Tartakovsky is the driving force behind some of the best and most popular (and Emmy winning) cartoons on the Cartoon Network—a growing cable titan which draws an average of 1.26 million viewers daily. From watching Tartakovsky's shows it's obvious that he loves and knows good cartoons, from the classic Warners and MGM cartoons to UPA and *Bullwinkle* to the stylized art of Disney and Mary Blair.

DRAW! Editor Mike Manley interviewed Tartakovsky from his office in the Cartoon Network studios located in Hollywood just after the big premiere of his new show, *Samurai Jack*. Jack, a Samurai warrior, is thrown into the future by the demon Aku after a great battle. Landing in the far distant future, Jack searches for a way back to his time as he travels an Earth which is now controlled and run by Aku. The Earth is overrun by aliens and villains of all sorts. In his search for a way home Jack has many adventures, and using the ways of the Samurai, he helps many people who are also victims of Aku.



JACK

AN INTERVIEW WITH CARTOON NETWORK'S GENNDY TARTAKOVSKY

DRAW!: So you were born in Moscow? And you moved to the States when you were seven with your brother, mom and dad, who was a dentist.

GENNDY TARTAKOVSKY: Yes.

DRAW!: Where did you move to?

GT: We moved to Columbus, Ohio for about three years and then finally settled in Chicago where I mostly grew up.

DRAW!: Did you read comics and watch cartoons at all in Moscow before you moved to the US?

GT: Yes. There were some but there wasn't anything like here. There were a couple of news programs, some variety programs and there was one cartoon that I can't remember. When I moved here, then it's like an explosion of entertainment, like *Super Friends* and all that, Hanna-Barbera shows, and *Wonder Woman* and *Batman*. Then I saw comic books and I saw they had so much to offer.

DRAW!: So you saw the cartoon versions of the characters before you saw the comic book versions?

GT: Yeah, I first got into cartoons and like all kids, I was kind of in love with cartoons. Then I saw comic books for the first time and I was like, *wow!* I was into the super-hero thing, so I bought up as many *Fantastic Fours* and *Captain Americas* and *Spider-Mans* as I could find.

DRAW!: Were those the *Marvel's Greatest Comics* and the *Marvel Tales*? The classic reprints?

GT: The original stuff. This was back in the John Byrne run of *Fantastic Four*. I wasn't trying to buy the old Kirby stuff.

DRAW!: So as a kid when you discovered comics, did you discover any local comic shops and did you go to a regular comic shop every week?

LEFT: Young Jack looks up at the demon Aku from the first episode rough storyboard by Tartakovsky.

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GT: Yeah, we had this place right in the neighborhood called Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow. It was where I went and I would spend hours there looking at comics. We didn't have a lot of money and this was when comics were thirty-five cents so I'd buy a little bit here and there. I really liked to take my bike on weekends and ride around to all the garage sales and pick up as many comic books as I could at those places because those comics were ten cents, fifteen cents.

DRAW!: Same in the shop I used to visit, the owner would have a rack put aside where he'd have ten cent comics or fifteen cent comics that were kind of damaged so you could find all kinds of cool stuff there. So at that age, were you thinking, "Well, I want to be a cartoonist," or "I want to be a comic artist or animator"?

GT: Well, I couldn't draw very well and so I copied from comic books, but my brother who was two years older was actually better than me. I kept trying but it was definitely a struggle to draw when I was young. But I loved it and I kept doing it. Then I found myself a Senior in high school, and I loved animation and I still loved comic books. I decided what I wanted to do was to go to college. I didn't think that I could really make a living being an animator. This was in Chicago and there's no animation industry, so I was kind of sheltered and didn't realize that there's all this stuff going on in California. So I decided, well, I'll make animated films on the side and I'll go into advertising. I was aiming to do storyboards for commercials so I went to Columbia College straight out of high school. But in the first semester they had alphabetical registration. So my last name begins with a "T" and so every single class that I wanted to take was closed, full.

DRAW!: Aw, jeez.

GT: And you take your other classes, and the second semester you take the ones that were closed. I was like, "That sucks," so I saw this animation class and it would fill one of my elective credits. "Oh, great. I'll take animation and learn more about it.



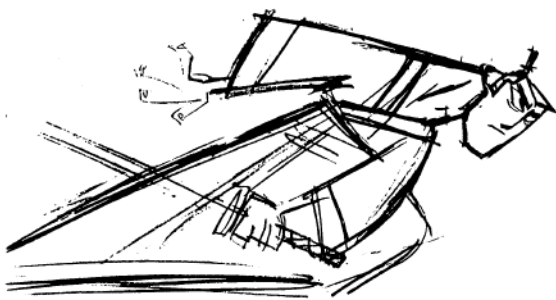
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ABOVE: City scape of the future Earth now run by Aku, designed by Dan Krall.

THE EVOLUTION OF A CHARACTER



FEWER LINE - KEEP SIMPLE. BIGGER, BLOCKIER SHAPES.



BIG EYES - THE BIGGER THE BETTER BECAUSE OF SELF COLOR LINES



ROUGH
* FOR REFERENCE ONLY
Revision
12-18-00

FRONT VIEW

JUL 25 2000

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ABOVE: In the course of developing the show the design of Jack underwent a variety of changes. Like a clay figure he was remolded and pushed, stretched, shrunk and altered by the designers and the storyboard artist pencils under Tartakovsky's direction until the final feel and design were arrived at. The goal was always to keep the design dynamic

yet simple, a very difficult and demanding process. The designs on the top of the page show the drawings from the storyboard artist that best captured the feel and helped define the character and the direction for all the artists working on the show, especially the storyboard artists.

I love animation, so I'll just fill a credit and learn more about my "hobby." I took the class and suddenly a whole new world opened up. You know, I really got into it and I was pretty good at it. I mean, I went to the top of my class in a couple of years. Then I decided to switch my major and study Film and Animation.

DRAW!: They had a Film course at that college?

GT: Yeah, they had a Film department with a really small animation department. Like tiny.

DRAW!: Now what year is this?

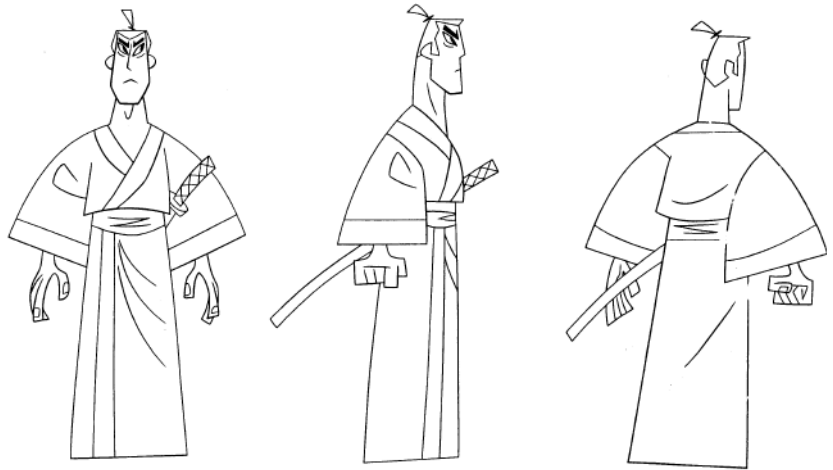
GT: This was '88 and '89.

DRAW!: Did they give you the principles like the old "Squash and Stretch," the old Preston Blair kind of thing?

GT: Yeah, I just learned all the foundation stuff. I also took Life Drawing classes and all that kind of stuff, too.

DRAW!: Were you still thinking that you would like to try comics at that point or had you pretty much decided you really wanted to go into animation?

GT: No, because I could see how good a draftsman you had to be for comics and comics purely relied on your skill as an artist. I would go to some of the mini-cons in Chicago and I would stand there and watch John Byrne draw for four hours and I knew that I was nowhere near anything as good as him to even attempt to make a career of that.



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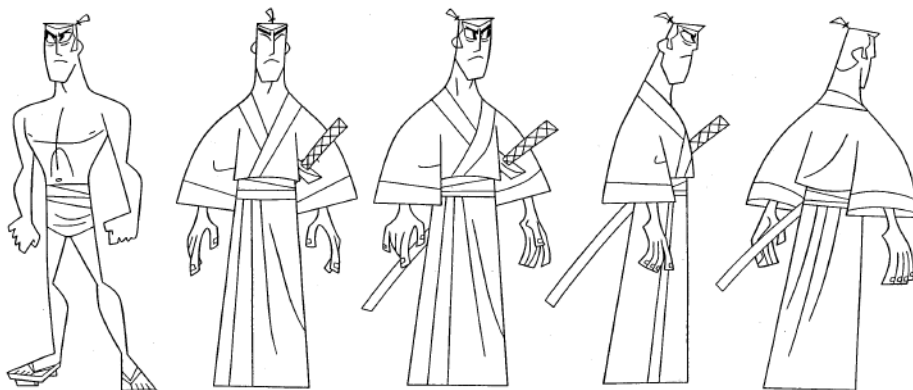
Being a comic book artist seems even a harder career than animation because, I don't know, it just seems like it was even more unrealistic. [laughs] Because there's just so few comic book artists and it's only some who are successful.

DRAW!: Well, I think in animation, there is more specialization. You can find artists who are really good at doing backgrounds but are not good at doing people or are good at doing people and not good at doing something else, where in comics, you have to do everything well.

GT: True. And the passion that I had was more for animation, too. Even though I loved comics and I would become a better comic book artist if given the time, I still had this inner drive to make films.



MAIN MODEL PACK



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TURNAROUNDS

DRAW!: So, actually getting to do *Dexter* now as a cartoon, and doing the *Dexter* comics, you've sort of achieved both dreams.

GT: Yeah. I mean, when I got to do the first *Dexter* comic it was amazing. It was like a dream come true.

DRAW!: And I know you just did the twenty-fifth issue and is that out yet?

GT: That's coming out in September.

DRAW!: So now you graduated from college in Chicago, right?

GT: No. I finished two years in this college and then I realized that there was this college in California called The California Institute of Arts which is founded by Disney and has been around for a while.



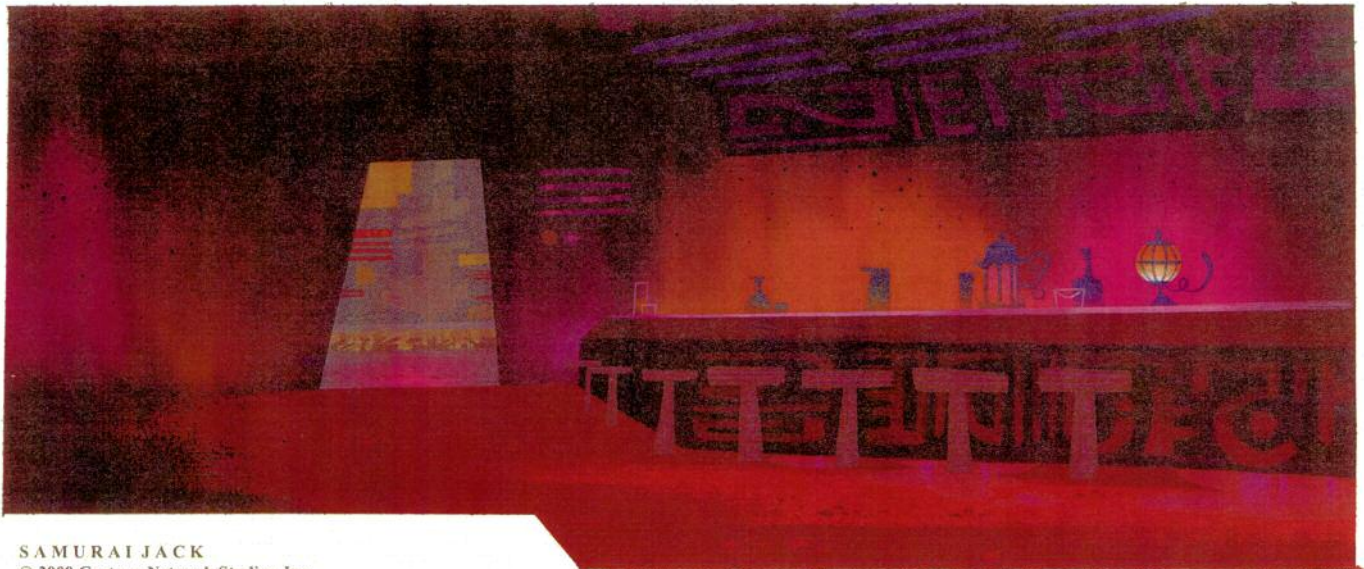
THIS PAGE: Some of the odd and alien characters that inhabit the future Earth of *Samurai Jack*.

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SAMURAI JACK
© 2000 Cartoon Network Studios, Inc.

BG-256
607-002



SAMURAI JACK
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BG-245
607-002

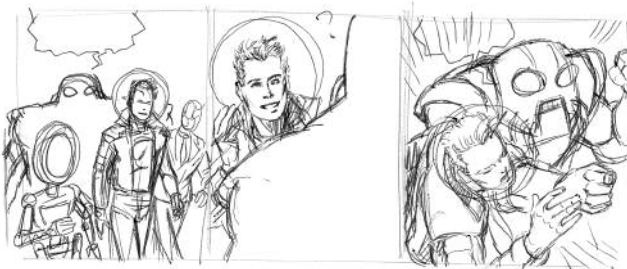
THIS PAGE: Two background paintings by background supervisor Scott Wills.

FROM WEB COMICS TO PRINT COMICS A STEP-BY-STEP AND INTERVIEW WITH THE ASTOUNDING STEVE CONLEY

Steve Conley has one foot standing in the past traditions of comics and sci-fi, and the other rushing or surfing toward the future of both mediums. From his own Eisner and Eagle award winning daily web comic, *Astounding Space Thrills* to his partnership with Rick Veitch in the 24-7 virtual comic book convention and destination portal *comicon.com* to the *Toonarama* web comic syndicate, Conley is an artist fully positioned at the nexus of the changing artform of comics.

DRAW! editor Mike Manley interviewed Conley from his busy Alexandria Virginia studio between juggling jobs for major clients like THQ, GTE and overseeing the several websites in the web empire he and Veitch share including *The Splash* daily news page and the ever busy message boards at *comicon.com*

STEP 1



DRAW! I guess the best place to start is to give us a little background on where you hail from and how you got interested in comics.

STEVE CONLEY: Sure. I'm originally from Long Island, New York. I was born smack dab between the moon landing and the birth of the Internet, in '69. And I've been drawing for as long as I can remember, drawing comics for as long as I can remember, reading comics as long as I can remember.

DRAW! You were drawing comics in grade school and high school, doing your own comics?

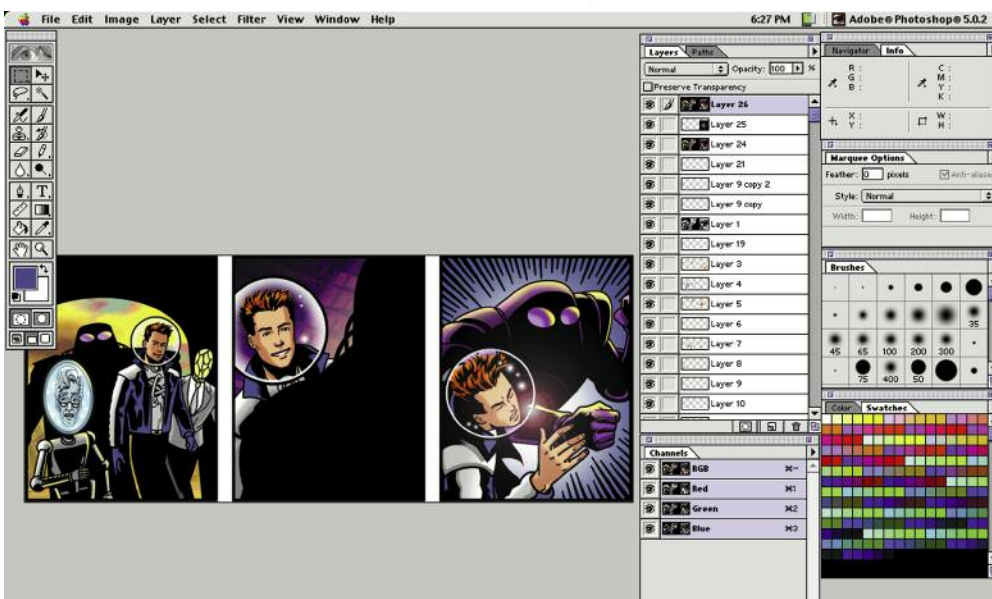
SC: Oddly enough, I don't ever really remember drawing other people's characters. I don't know how that relates to other self-publishers. I don't know if self-publishers always drew their own characters or if they were drawing Marvel's characters or DC's characters. I never found myself drawing Spider-Man or Superman. I was always drawing my own guys.

DRAW! That's interesting. You're saying that you were always drawing your own characters as opposed to drawing characters like the Thing or the Hulk or Captain America or whatever.

SC: Right.

DRAW! Were you more interested in science-fiction or adventure?

SC: In the best sense, I think they're one and the same. I'm sure that having films like *Star Wars* hit when I was six years old and having *Star Trek* in reruns when I was growing up helped a little bit.



TOP: Scan of the original ballpoint sketch for an installment of the *AST* online comic strip.

BOTTOM: The daily comics are colored in Adobe Photoshop. Each color shape starts on its own layer and the linework (as "inked" and imported from Macromedia FreeHand) resides on a layer above the color layers. The black linework layer is then set to "Multiply." This preserves the line quality and reduces the appearance of off-color pixels on the borders between colors. For the effect in panel 3, the entire comic strip is flattened onto a new layer (option-"Merge Visible Layers") and a small lens flare was added to the point of impact. © 2001 STEVE CONLEY



STEP 2

The top image shows the higher-resolution file as created in Photoshop. That image is then reduced to 72 DPI and brought into ImageReady for lettering and placement into the “tooncasting” framework of buttons and branding (seen below). In *AST*, the word balloons are translucent. “Word balloons are a very peculiar literary device and I wanted to see what I could do to mitigate their intrusiveness.”

© 2001 STEVE CONLEY

But I always dug comics. Fortunately, the first comics I ever had—growing up, I didn’t have a lot of money—I grew up in not the most well-to-do surroundings on Long Island. I mean, don’t think *Great Gatsby*. [laughs] Think Steve Buscemi film, something like that. I had a lot of the smaller, paperback versions of the Marvel comics. Remember when *Spider-Man* and *The Hulk* and the *Fantastic Four* were all reprinted in paperback size?

DRAW!: Right, I have some of them. They’re great reprints, too.

SC: Those are the comics I remember reading, devouring.

DRAW!: So, as a teenager, you were obviously a fan of science-fiction, I take it, and reading science-fiction novels as well?

SC: A lot of Ray Bradbury. Really, any kind of material. I tended to like history better than I liked other subjects. Some of my favorite teachers were history teachers.

DRAW!: Really?

SC: They were just really terrific people. I think they understood the material and they were enthusiastic for it. I

remember math teachers appearing particularly uninterested in the work they were doing. I tend to think that if you’re good at math, the last thing you want to do over and over again is go over basic addition or geometry. [laughs]

DRAW!: Probably.

SC: But a person who really loves history can probably find something of interest in going over the smallest event of the Civil War or something like that. Or the causes and ramifications of those events.

DRAW!: Yeah, that’s true. Now, did this lead you into being interested in retro science-fiction, which is, of course, what *AST* is—sort of a combination. It’s like modern retro, where you take some of the really cool stuff or the iconic imagery of some of the retro science-fiction, but you’re doing it with a modern take. You’re not a slave to the past.

SC: I don’t know if I really grew out of anything or if it was just a reaction to things by the time. I produced a few comics in high school and in college, some super-hero, some science-fiction. The first science-fiction comic strip I did in college was called *Anomaly* and it was about a Buck Rogers-type who ends up in a Mad Max-type future. It was full of weird animals and weird situations and lots of puns and was very goofy. Basically, one

Along with this fieldwork, invent figures that express an inner state of mind. Think about people you know—each individual has a temperament that guides his or her physical expression of emotion. Use your experiences of them to create imaginary personality types that can be described in a word: Taciturn, vivacious, withdrawn, jolly, gloomy, quiet, raucous, timid, brash, sensitive, boorish, intuitive, obtuse, aggressive, obliging, etc. Imagine them angry, surprised, disappointed, delighted, frustrated, amused—then try to capture some of their character traits or emotions in simple gesture sketches like these:

Worried



Distraught



Confident



Tired



Defiant



Curious



Angry



Frightened



This aspect of visualizing figures requires you to develop acting skills. You must feel the emotions in your own mind and body, then project yourself into the character you are drawing. Become that person while you are making the drawing—get “inside” them.

In my view this is the most rewarding pleasure of drawing people, because the subtlety and variety of human emotion is endless. Exploring an infinite range of body types and facial features experiencing the breadth of the human condition is an inexhaustible, intensely fascinating adventure. Delving into cartooning or fantasy images escalates the fun into a gaudy, carnival excitement—any flight of fancy that creates a convincing personality is its own delicious reward—reality poses no limits.

I’ve fashioned the rest of the article as a sort of annotated “talking sketchbook” of expressive figures. Mostly human, mostly female, but all united by the presence of a mind animating the body. You’ll find a wide range of styles—but they all share the indispensable quality—the illusion of life.

Note the changes in posture and expression that reveal the person's shifting thoughts throughout these sequential "snapshots."

The artist is completely focused on her drawing.



She pauses to judge it...



...then returns to work on a troublesome spot.



from the indies to the MAJORS

A CANDID INTERVIEW AND DEMONSTRATION
WITH PHIL HESTER

Until recently Phil Hester almost seemed to be one of comics best kept secrets. The easygoing mid-western manner and jovial demeanor of this father of two, belied the dark and gothic stories and images churning in the mind of this writer-artist dynamo who toils away from his Iowa studio. In this bucolic setting dark worlds of occult heroes and sci-fi adventure spread out to fill comic racks across America.

With seeming ease for most of his career Hester has straddled two worlds, jumping back and forth between the small press "indy" comic world with books like his Eisner-nominated "The Wretch," to mainstream hits like DC's top-selling book *Green Arrow*, written by Kevin (Clerks) Smith.

The Coffin, his latest mini-series for Oni Press, has been optioned by James Cameron for a big budget Hollywood movie.

DRAW! editor Mike Manley caught up with Hester at his home studio between fielding Hollywood phone calls and fixing lunch for his kids.

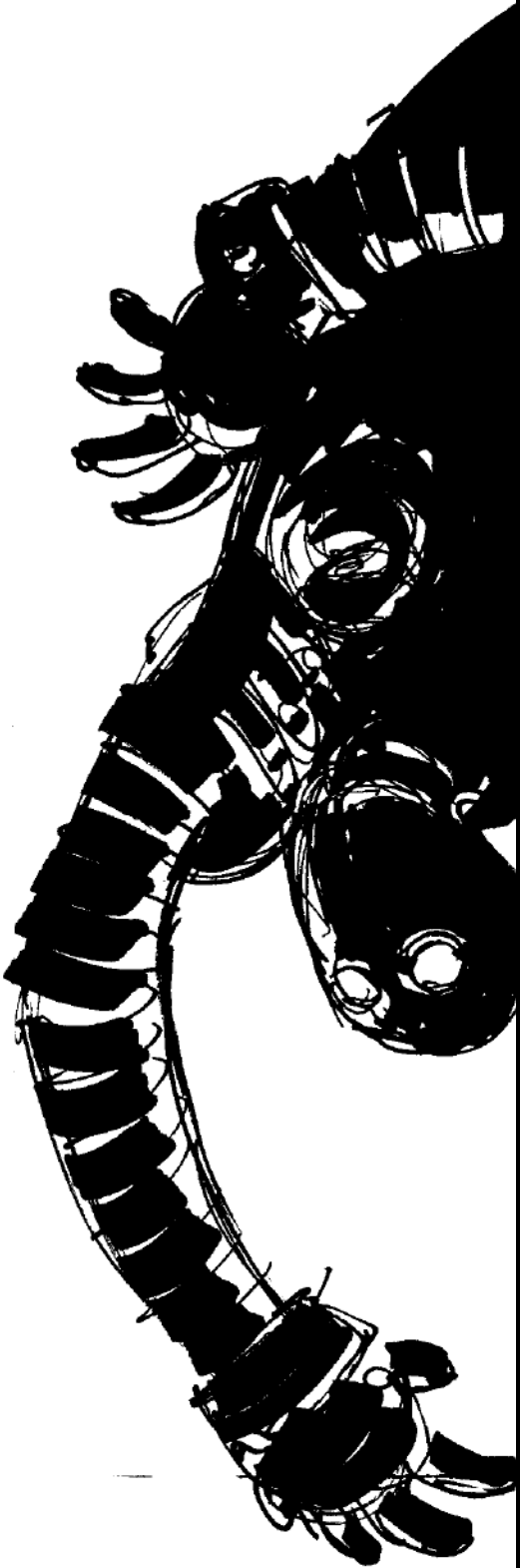
DRAW!: So, Phil, why don't you go ahead and tell us a little bit of how you got into comics, just a little bit of the origin of Phil Hester.

PHIL HESTER: The secret origin?

DRAW!: The secret origin of Phil Hester, yes.

PH: Well, I started during that black-&-white explosion, Turtle Time. And basically, what I keep saying is, if you could hold a pencil at that time, you could probably get work and I was the proof. I was, like, nineteen, twenty years old and I couldn't draw but there were so many little companies that were hiring people then because there were so many books glutting the market. I was pretty good about sending my work in on a regular basis to get reviewed and get advice from editors and publishers.

DRAW!: Who was on your regular hit list of people and companies you were submitting to?



PH: Well, when I got out of high school, of course, I was ready to draw *X-Men* immediately, like everybody that came out of high school, thinking, “Here I go! [laughs] New York, here I come.” Eliot Brown, I think, sent me a really constructive note on a form letter that sort of put me in my place, even though it was pretty helpful. And that actually inspired me to send my stuff to as many people as I could as often as possible.

DRAW!: What time was this? 1985, '86?

PH: 1984. And so, for the next two years, I had this regimen. I would send a packet every four to six months to *everybody* and in '86, there started to be a lot more comic book companies, and so my odds improved.

DRAW!: So you were sending pencils of established characters like Superman, or whatever?

PH: Yeah, established characters. I would try to save work by having a submission that had both a Marvel and a DC character in it. [laughs] I'd have the Hulk fight Robotman and I could send it to both Marvel and DC. And I'd throw Airboy in there so I could send it to Eclipse. But I would send it to everybody. You know, I still have at home a bulletin board with all my rejection letters on it and it's *huge*. It's gotta be over two hundred rejection letters.

DRAW!: Wow! So your stick-to-it-iveness is really a Phil Hester trait.



© 2001 PHIL HESTER

PH: Yes. That's probably the only secret I'm going to impart to anybody. I mean, no one's going to learn any draftsmanship skills from me but my career's all about perseverance, I think.

DRAW!: Well, every freelancer, every artist you talk to in the business, basically, it's the same thing. You go through that gauntlet.

PH: Oh, yeah. I have all these buddies from both high school and art school that were really super-talented, guys that I thought were much more talented than I was, and they didn't make it past their first portfolio review. Mike Carlin ended their careers in one swoop just by saying, “Your anatomy needs work.” [laughs] And then they bailed.

DRAW!: I still remember my first trip to Marvel was the same way. I remember Carl Potts just looking at some inking sample I did and pointing to something, like some stomach muscles I inked and that was it.

PH: A lot of guys can't take that and luckily, I don't hold my work in that high regard. [laughs] So when somebody says, “Change something,” I go, “Okay.”

DRAW!: Well, I think that's an important thing, also, to impart to younger people reading the magazine too, is that you have to be open to criticism. I mean, that's part of this collaborative medium.

PH: I think that's the number one thing I got out of art school. I have a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Drawing from the University of Iowa, and that program does not teach you how to draw comic books. That program teaches you how to draw and paint and part of your first year or two in art school is dumping out all the crap you learned before, all the bad habits you learned in high school from tracing Frank Frazetta drawings or whatever. And that's what I think art school just kinda busted me open and let me take in as much as possible. It made me ready to see stuff like Bill Sienkiewicz or Dave McKean when that stuff came along.



© 2001 PHIL HESTER

LEFT: A page from *Freaks Amour* drawn by Hester and inked by Ande Parks.
ABOVE: A design for *Boneshaker*.

I think the worthwhile idea I took away from art school relates to the value of ambiguity. Art, whether it's painting or music or comics, really only becomes valuable when it's challenging. When you don't know quite what to make of it and have to grapple with it a while. I know that runs counter to a lot of the solutions we look for as cartoonists as far as creating idealized icons, or coming up with economical storytelling, but that instant of confusion leads to the most satisfying viewing.

Now, most of the quirkiness in my work is unintentional. It's just the way I draw, but I'm aware of some of the contradictions there and try to exploit them. When I'm drawing a heroic or graceful figure there's still brutality and blockiness in there. When I'm drawing some idyllic scene a high contrast shadow or something will spill across. Even when I'm being purposefully ugly and scary, something cartoony will creep in to set things off a little. That little moment of doubt is what draws me to great "weird" artists like Ditko or Krigstein, or even Tony Salmons.

DRAW!: So now, as a young, young aspiring comic artist coming along, did you have your favorite artist guys you aspired to be like?

PH: Even as a kid I tended to lean towards weirdness. I mean, I liked Ditko a lot and I liked Wally Wood before I even knew who he was. I could see that darkness on an occasional job he'd ink, like a Power Girl story, or something, over Ric Estrada and

you go, "That looks different from everything else." I liked Jack Kirby, of course, and I loved Gene Colan. And I give myself credit for liking Frank Miller and Will Eisner even when I was a kid. I craved anything that was outside of the norm.

DRAW!: So you tended to like dark, spooky and moody stuff, stuff with atmosphere?

PH: Yeah. Mike Ploog, Wrightson and all that, Frank Robbins, anything that was a little bit off-kilter appealed to me.

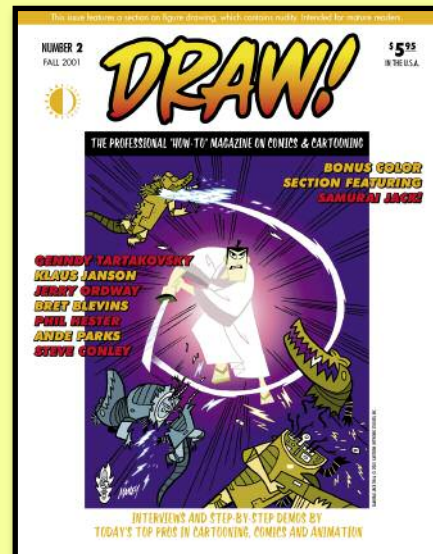
DRAW!: So you were not going in as much for more attractive mainstream heroes?

PH: No, I loved that too. I love guys who draw pretty. Back then, I loved Pérez and Byrne and Don Newton—Cartoony, shiny, pretty. But at the same time, I would turn around and read a Jim Mooney "Supergirl" just as happily. But I could see that I was getting drawn towards horror stuff and weirder stuff. When you see Basil Wolverton and it makes sense to you, you know you're basically going to be messed up. *[laughs]*

BELOW: Two pages from *Boneshaker* published by Caliber, written, drawn, lettered, and inked on tone board by Hester. BONESHAKER © 2001 PHIL HESTER.



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DRAW! #2

Interview with Samurai Jack's GENNDY TARTACOVSKY, inking tips and tricks with KLAUS JANSON, PHIL HESTER on creating and self-publishing comics like THE WRETCH and GREEN ARROW and conquering Hollywood, in-depth interview and How-To by STEVE CONELLY, tutorial by BRET BLEVINS, and more!

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