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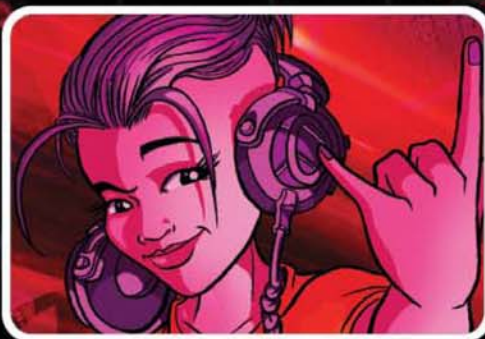
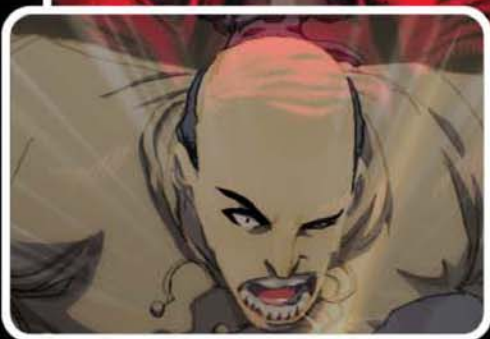
issue 01

THE HULK ISSUE

JAN / FEB 09

PLUS:
STREET FIGHTER,
B.P.M, CLOCKWORK
GIRL, SHRAPNEL,
ARKHAM ASYLUM,
AND MORE...

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What's the aim of this mag with all the pretty pictures inside you may ask?

Well, you see, a long time ago, comic books were considered a disposable medium. Something that kids read, rolled up in their back pockets and then threw away when they started to notice girls. Those days are thankfully long gone. No longer do comics readers have to whisper of their love of superheroes and disguise their passions. The world has grown up and realised something very valuable; that inside of us all there is a geek. A hungry geek starving for creative fulfilment, seeking new forms of storytelling to astound, challenge and perhaps even inform.

The fact is that the 'pop' in pop culture has never been so popular. But there is an aspect of pop culture that has yet to receive the worldwide glory its more respected cousins have achieved. Comic books.

It's a crime that too few people know of the wondrous universe that comic books dwell within. Sure, millions of film goers know Spider-Man's origin and the Hulk's secret identity, but that is the mere tip of a Titanic stopping iceberg. Attempting to capture 80 years worth of a character's history in 2 hours of screen time is a good try, but that's all Hollywood's love affair with comics will ever give us – a good try. It does open the rusty door slightly and shine the light on lesser known properties, which is a pleasant bonus. For example, how many popcorn munchers know that *The Crow*, *Road to Perdition*, *Ghost World* or *History of Violence* are comic adaptations?

Extra Sequential will represent comics with respect and honesty. Our mag exists for those who are cool and don't need to be told, those who have their toes in the pool of pop culture but haven't dived in yet. We're in the pool and are

shouting, "Hey! The water's fine! Come on in!"

Yes, there's a whole world out there hidden in the corners of pop culture. A world with more blockbusters than cinema's greatest directors. A world with more diversity and creative stimulation than the best in arthouse cinema and a world of more shocks than two forks in a toaster. We are your tour guide to that world; the ambassador to a unique place of undiscovered uber-tainment. The world of comic books.

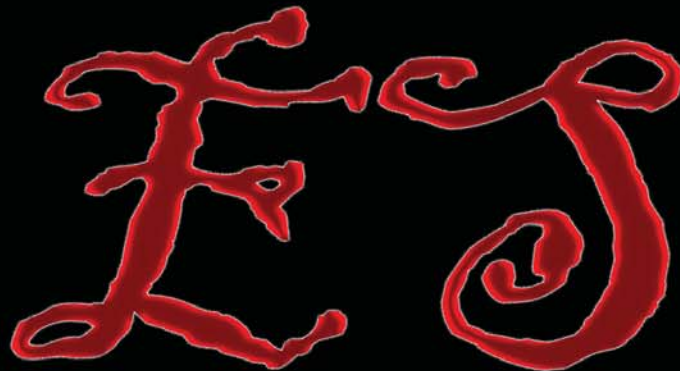
Every issue will be in digital format on our website. There are enough comic book websites out there. We don't intend to be just another one. Visit our site and you'll see for yourself.

Whether you're a fanboy (dedicated comic book reader) or a newbie, ES has something for you. Treat us as your gateway, hanging somewhere between what is cool and what should be cool, where trendys and nerdys need not be ashamed to hold hands in mutual love of the exciting medium known as comics, or sequential art if you want to get fancy. Our purpose is to present a unique bi-monthly representation of this art form and hopefully allow you to discover a few gems along the way. It will be not only new and upcoming goodies, but also recent and classic works that will get our love and attention too. Comics will be our focus, but as pop culture is an all encompassing beast we will also take a gander at other forms of creative expression, hence the Extra in our title. However, it's sequential art that forever hypnotises us with its charms and teases us into the world behind the dark curtain. Thanks for taking a peek too.

A fan
Kris Bather
Editor In Chief

Visit www.extrasequential.wordpress.com for regular updates, and March's issue 2.

FEED YOUR INNER GEEK...
IT'S HUNGRY




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Poor Bruce Banner. He's had a rough time as of late. He's been grey and green, but is usually blue (the emotional state, not the pigment). Birthed by the best pairing of inventive minds since the Wright brothers, writer Stan Lee and artist Jack Kirby concocted the Green Goliath way back in 1962, within his own series, "The Incredible Hulk." At the forefront of the Marvel Universe as we know it today, Hulk has changed more than you'd think – in personality, popularity and skin colour. And despite Lee's constant adjective love, he hasn't always been incredible. However, he certainly is these days. Infact a more fitting description might be "The Unpredictable Hulk."

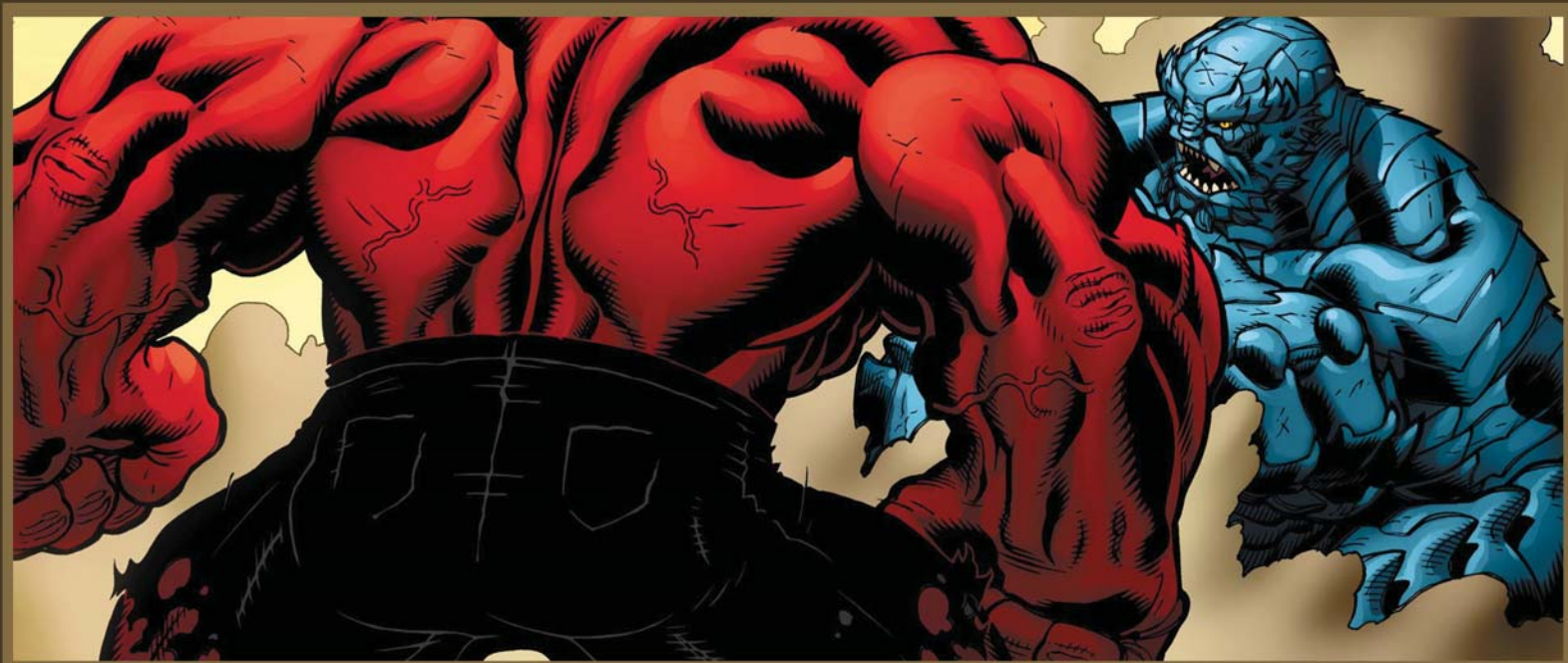


Grey in his first appearance, but primarily green ever since, the Hulk has managed to overcome other outward inconsistencies, including the unfaithful 70s and 80s TV series and 2003 film, to become a character that has smashed his way beyond any mere Jekyll and Hyde restrictions. With his first series dumped after six issues the Hulk fought his way into other Marvel titles, such as Fantastic Four and Spider-Man and even managed the time to become a founding member of superhero team The Avengers (Captain America, Iron Man, et al) before leaving after two issues. Then it was on to Tales To Astonish from #60 onwards until eventually claiming the title as his own. This renamed series lasted until just before the new millennium and gave some of the best comic stories of the character's history. This was primarily due to writer extraordinaire Peter David who cemented the Hulk's personality as more than just an angry brute and gave the world a multitude of definitive Hulk tales. In David's very capable hands Bruce Banner's personality, or personalities, became the central force of years worth of adventures, including such developments as Banner's unhinged nature, the emergence of different Hulk personalities including the grey Mr. Fixit, a suit wearing Vegas heavy, a future, balding evil Hulk named Maestro as one of earth's few survivors and much more. David created a series that was more than just a one trick pony, dealing with space faring escapism and the brutal reality of AIDS with equal skill.

David's amazing 12 year run on the behemoth is considered one of the best of any in comics, and was a hard act to follow, though with writers such as John Byrne and Joe Casey the series valiantly continued. Horror writer Bruce Jones took a stab at the Hulk for an intriguing storyline, involving Banner on the

run, using yoga to take control of the inner beast, and assistance from the mysterious Mr. Blue. These elements form a large part of the most recent film, although in the comics, Mr. Blue is actually Banner's wife, Betty Ross, not Samuel Sterns (who eventually becomes classic Hulk baddie The Leader) in the film.

2006 bought writer Greg Pak's Planet Hulk and later World War Hulk, which catapulted the angry one back into the spotlight once more, and is a must for fans of badly damaged superheroes. A secret group of leaders within the superhero community, including Professor X of the X-Men and Mr. Fantastic of the Fantastic Four, met to discuss "the Hulk problem." The problem being that, sure, the guy can fight evil like nobody's business, but no-one really understands, or likes him. And he causes A LOT of collateral damage. Like a PTA meeting gone awry, they decided the best course of action was to shoot the Green Goliath off into space, hoping he'd land on a lush planet allowing him to live out his days in quiet isolation. That was their plan anyway. Of course, Hulk's ship goes of course, he lands on a savage world, and becomes a slave, gladiator, king and father in record time. His new queen is then killed, he's betrayed and he works his way back to earth with vengeance in his heart and a to-do list which involves battling every superhero he knows. He's extremely successful at it until he relents and surrenders and is taken into custody by long-time associates General Ross and super powered psychiatrist Leonard Samson (who are also in the most recent film). Hulk's title was then taken over by sandal wearing heavy hitter, (and Lee/Kirby creation) Hercules and re-named The Incredible Herc with #113. The current Hulk series, marked Volume 4, began with a new #1 in January 2008, and begins soon after World War Hulk,



with Banner contained safely in a S.H.I.E.L.D military facility deep underground. He's soon approached by Ross and Samson. They want to talk about the Hulk. The new Hulk. He's red, he's mad, and he's **not** Banner.

Writer Jeph Loeb is known for his extensive

comics work such as *Batman: The Long Halloween* which influenced *Batman Begins*, as well as his TV work on shows such as *Smallville*, *Lost* and *Heroes* (on which his frequent artist Tim Sale is the series painter). New Hulk penciller Ed McGuinness is the perfect choice for Loeb's epic scripts that make Spielberg films look like home movies, and the massive brawls inherent in the new Hulk series. The pair have worked together before on several issues of DC Comics' fantastic *Superman/Batman* book, and with McGuinness' penchant for dynamic, muscular page busters the Hulk (whoever he may be) has never looked so good. No-one excels at blockbuster artwork like McGuinness; his pages brimming with vein throbbing, teeth clenching, bone shattering force.

The TPB (Trade Paper Back) which collects their first 6 issues is available now from comic and book stores and chronicles all the mad cap fisticuffs, eye gouging artwork and unusual plot twists. So far the series raises more questions than it answers, but the journey is fun and bewildering at the same time. To keep things simple, here's a relatively spoiler-free breakdown of the mysterious red Hulk's (or "Rulk's") greatest hits. Literally.



Issue #1. As a small CSI crew (including Samson and Banner's cousin, She-Hulk) investigate an unusual crime scene they discover the Hulk is a murderer. They get the name right, but the colour wrong.





The team also learn that this new Hulk used a gun big enough to kill classic Hulk foe The Abomination (another character in the film). The hunt is on for answers...


But in Issue #2 all they get are bruises. Rulk invades the skyward S.H.I.E.L.D helicARRIER and tears the hi-tech facility to shreds. New S.H.I.E.L.D Director, Tony Stark AKA Iron Man is not happy, but soon realises that there's very little he can do about it.



Issue #3. Long-time Banner ally, Rick Jones becomes the new lizard-like Abomination, after years of exposure to the original Hulk's gamma irradiated body. He takes the name of a bad rapper, A-Bomb, and decides to defend his friend's honour against the crimson impostor. Their massive battle causes Banner's cell to be damaged, and triggers his transformation into the Hulk.

Issue #4. Red vs green! It's Christmas coloured madness. The Hulk we all know and love returns to teach the upstart a few things about smashing. The green skinned





titan exhibits his old-school savagery, and a severe lack of vocabulary in punishing the scarlet hued foe. Rulk welcomes back Banner, like an old friend and then punishes him like an old enemy. Names are dropped and guesses are made but no answers are given as to who Rulk actually is – yet.

Issue #5. Over San Francisco Bridge the recently resurrected Thunder God, Thor wants answers too, and a chance to pummel some manners in to Rulk. It goes badly for the blonde Norse adventurer. He gets his mystical hammer, Mjolnir taken from him and gets thrown to the moon. How embarrassing. Issue #6. Battle Royale! All of the above plus more take on Rulk one last time. A conclusion, of sorts, though no definitive answers are revealed.

Hulk continues every month from Marvel with more action, and more clues in this game of superpowered Guess Who?

The Red Hulk collection is available now, as are 6 Volumes of Incredible Hulk Visionaries-Peter David.

For more info on Hulk and co. visit:
www.marvel.com/universe
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A dramatic comic book illustration showing Thor, in his iconic silver armor and red cape, unleashing a powerful lightning attack on the Red Hulk. The Red Hulk is shown in a dynamic, recoiling pose, with bright yellow and orange energy radiating from the point of impact. In the bottom left corner, the Green Hulk is shown in a close-up, roaring with a determined and angry expression. The background is filled with intense, swirling energy and lightning bolts.

IT
MATTERS
LITTLE...

...SINCE BY
MORNING'S LIGHT,
THOU WILT BE
DEAD!

I'VE
WAITED
A LONG TIME
FOR THIS!

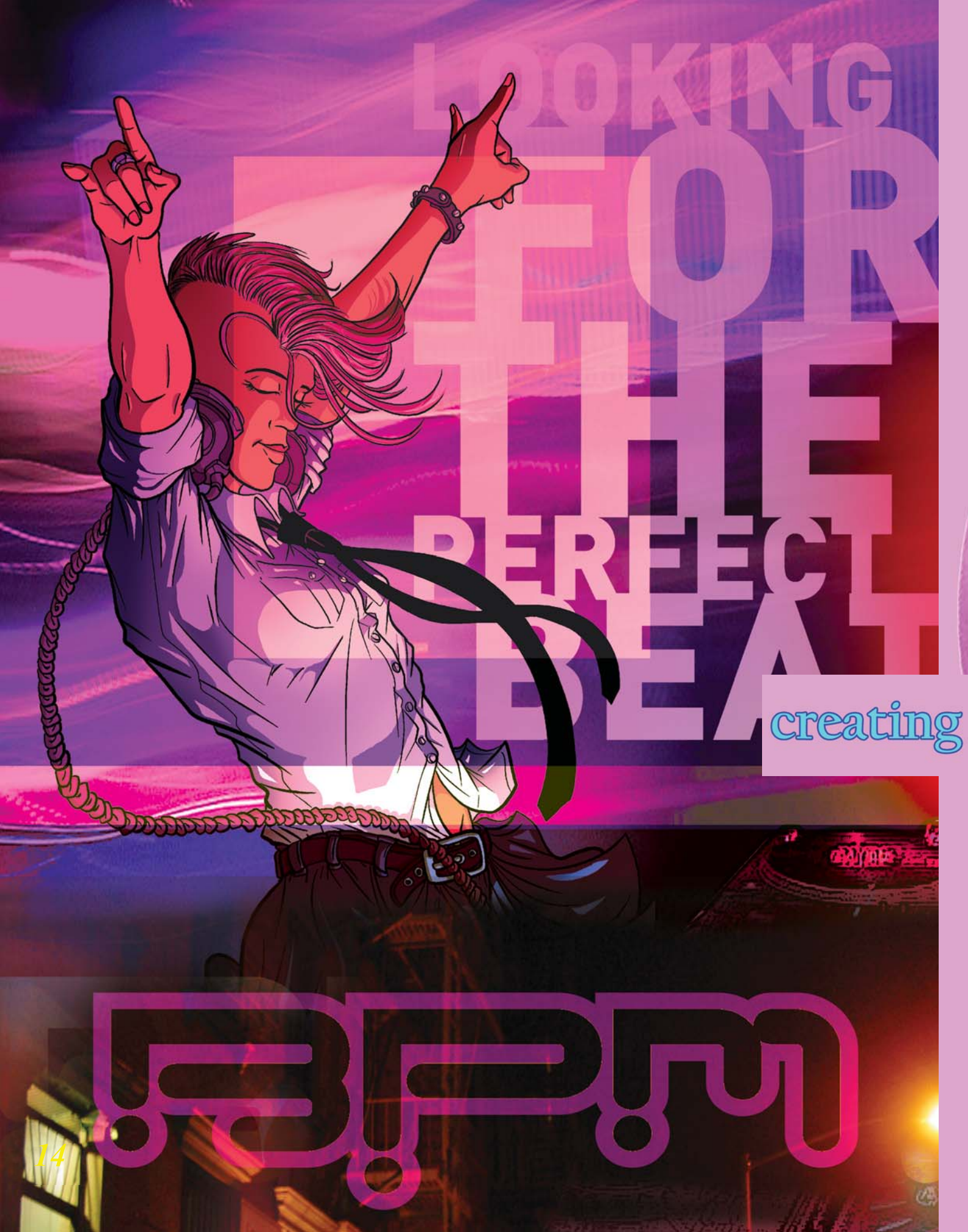
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LOOKING FOR THE PERFECT BEAT

creating

BEAT

They make beautiful music together. Paul Sizer and comic books that is. For the last few years the writer/artist/designer/DJ has gained some impressive praise for his self-published graphic novels. His first effort, the all-ages *Little White Mouse* focused on the coming of age of teenager Loo while stranded on a satellite. *Moped Army* was the more mature follow-up and centred on young Simone in the year 2277 as she befriends a ragtag bunch of riders in the depths of her city's slums. *Moped Army* was awarded a mention in 2007's Great Graphic Novels For Teens list by the American Library Association. Between bouts of creating attention-grabbing comics, Paul runs a successful design studio, Sizer Design + Illustration, which has been operating for over 15 years, and three years ago he launched Café Digital Press as the home for all his future graphic novels. B.P.M is the first



passionate about creative expression and isn't afraid to let the world know, which has allowed his books, and multimedia presentations, to gain an audience across American libraries and colleges. His latest endeavour looks set to garner even more attention.

attention-grabbing comics

release from the studio, and is even more unique than *Mouse* and *Moped*, particularly in its media bending format. With B.P.M (Beats Per Minute) fans can purchase songs from iTunes that reflect the DJs featured in the story, effectively serving as a soundtrack to the book. Also downloadable from Paul's very impressive web-site are wallpapers, a mass of art and pages from B.P.M, CD covers, the Most People are DJs podcasts and the amusing Wedding D.J Bingo game. Sizer is obviously a man

So how would you best explain the story of B.P.M?

PAUL: How about "the magical story of Roxy in DJ Land"? Actually, the story of BPM really is a journey story, focused around Roxy, a young female DJ who is finding her place in the complex infrastructure of New York club culture. In any good journey story, there's always an element of sacrifice, meaning at any time you may be asked to leave something behind to continue the journey. This is where Roxy is as the story begins. She's gotten to a certain level of DJ skill

and work, and she's seeing the limits with how far what she has will take her. As she begins acquiring new skills and talents that will take her farther along on her journey, she finds she has to leave some things behind, both physical and emotional. It's the journey every creative faces; "I love what I do, but what will I give up to keep doing what I love?"

I guess you pretty much carry a sketchbook with you wherever you go?

PAUL: Yes! Everywhere, which makes people in public restrooms nervous... Seriously, I've gotten so that I find most of my best ideas in unlikely places, so I've trained myself to keep a running sketchbook, so that I can revisit ideas at a later time. With so much stuff clogging up my brain, I'd hate to lose a good idea because it got crowded out with remembering to pick up the dog's ear medicine. I've also found that my ideas usually come from editing down from big lists, so I've gotten really fast at getting rough ideas sketched and written, so that later in the day, or month, or year, I can go back and review, edit and pick out the good parts. The ideas can be really raw and unstructured, but they can also be really fresh and unexpected, and if they shock and surprise me, that's half the battle.

Sizer Design + Illustration began over 15 years ago and your list of clients is pretty diverse. Has there ever been a job that you just struggled over?

PAUL: The struggles I've had with

clients have always been translational problems, meaning that the challenge has come from interpreting what the client really needs to solve their communication problem, which is the true job of a graphic designer; taking an amorphous communication problem and translating it into some form that a wider audience can see and share. That can be done with typography, image, sound, color, motion, or all of the above. Some clients I've had have not really



my best ideas in unlikely



understood what they really needed to do to get their message across, so my job becomes helping them get a better idea of what they want to say, then how to say it. The biggest problems come when a client sees something done for someone else and decides their problem needs to be solved the exact same way. My task then becomes showing them the similarities of their communication, where they differ, and why we need to come up with something for them specifically. Certain corporate jobs take a long time, just because of the mechanics of who has to approve what, but smaller jobs sometimes have the bigger challenges. It all depends on how well I help instruct the client on how we can best work together and solve their communication needs.

Little White Mouse, Moped Army and now, B.P.M. They all have strong female protagonists. Why is that?

PAUL: I like strong women. I like strong people. Writing female characters helps me be more objective on writing those characters. I'm very much still a writer-in-training, and I've found that getting away from writing characters like me (male, bald, sensitive, geeky) helps me better visualize how a character would act, rather than how I would react to a problem. I've been really surprised how much I've connected with readers by writing strong female characters, almost like it's my "schtick" or trademark. Truthfully, I don't care whether the character is male, female, straight, gay, white, black; I just care if they are someone that I can care about. As the writer, I have to care about the characters, because I'm going to be writing about them through an entire story, so I better have some connection to them. In BPM, I decided to make Roxy a little different than my previous female leads; I worked to make her rub me the wrong way, made her make some decisions that did not jibe with how I would solve problems she was encountering. It made me work harder to write her realistically, and have some flaws, which always makes for more interesting people.

places



What different abilities do you need for corporate design work, compared to sequential storytelling?

PAUL: I've always worked to find the common ground between my design and comic work, because I feel they are both storytelling mediums, just different in the way they accomplish their goals. But in truth, they accomplish their goals with many similar ways, when you really look at it. Both have a narrative, both use visual elements to simplify complex concepts, both rely on a community of understood forms and ideas to communicate ideas. It may have been self-serving to find the common ground between comics and graphic design, but I really do think the two forms can strengthen each other. The ideas I've worked to convey in "BPM" are as complex and subtle as anything I've done for a corporate client, and I think the better I get in either discipline helps me in the other.

With the Most People Are DJs project and the iTunes links relating to



B.P.M, how do you hope to bring in new readers to the comics universe?

PAUL: Again, the “Common Ground” answer. Recently, at SPX (Small Press Expo), I was promoting “BPM” to the attendees. One after another, people were coming up to the table and saying “I love music, and I love comics, but I’ve never seen them both together like this.” It was almost like they were asking if it was OK to like both equally, to which I would give them a hardy “Hell YES, you can! I do!” I was amazed and flattered with how warm of a reception “BPM” has gotten so far, and mostly because of how people share how they love music and how it moves their lives. The further I got into writing “BPM” the more I saw the connections and common ground, so to me, anything that further reinforces those connections is a good thing. I love sharing music, always have, back to working in a record store through college, through DJing at local clubs, even just making mixtapes for people to show them what I was digging at the time. It’s all about hooking the listener, or the reader, and giving them something they aren’t expecting, but might really like. That’s a real rush that still makes me smile.

Your wife is also an artist. Is that a good or a bad thing?

PAUL: My wife Jane Irwin is a comic artist, and from one of our first dates, we established that we would have a mutually respectful relationship as

Comic work is pulling its own weight

artists. Which seems kind of strange, but since we wanted to be together, it was essential that we would be able to respect the other person and tell each other when we were doing great, and when the other person wasn’t doing so great. It was mostly an agreement to keep criticism constructive, but you’d be amazed at how many couples never address this. It was too important for us not to, as we were (and still are) crazy for each other, and REALLY want to stay that way. Jane is a great partner, and we both benefit from the other’s pushing to constantly improve and explore as artists. Yes, we have studios on opposite ends of the house, but that’s part of the mutual respect thing; we work together, but we also need our own space to do what we need to do. So short answer: It’s a good thing!

Do comics and music have more in common than we think?

PAUL: If they don’t, I’ve just blown two years doing this book! I think the commonalities of music and comics that I’ve found is the commitment required from the creators to do either one well, and as a part of your life. More and more, my comic work is pulling its own weight, but it still is not how I make all my money. I still rely on my graphic design to pull the main bulk of my income, with comic work enhancing that. But I also find myself sometimes making sure to shield the comic work from the responsibility of paying the mortgage, because I do love doing it, and I don’t ever want to make comics the scapegoat of not being able to buy groceries. I’ve found DJs and musicians who work really long

I think music and comics share a level of geekiness as well. At SPX, I was spending an equal amount of times nerding out about my comic influences as I did nerding out about how much I love Detroit techno and Chicago house music. It was really great to switch gears like that, and equally fun to find others who loved both equally as well.

If you could play Dr. Frankenstein for a moment and create the perfect creative person, which musician and which artist would you take genes from?

Well, how about a collection of genes spliced from Thomas Dolby (for his ability to make electronic music human), Moby (for his ability to find the common links in very different music styles play well together) with George Perez* (just because he was my

hero growing up drawing comics) and Warren Ellis** (because of his ability to come up with the most twisted, brilliant ideas on Earth and make them work), with a little Kyle Baker*** and Kraftwerk sprinkled in for seasoning? Does that make any sense? And do I have to feed this new creation and clean up after it?

AND HEAR. ACCEPT
IX AND MATCH.
TOSS OUT.

TIME TO DECONSTRUCT AND
RECONSTRUCT SOMETHING
THAT SOUNDS LIKE IT'S NEVER
EXISTED BEFORE.



Do you have any desire to work with so-called mainstream comic publishers?

PAUL: I've been very fortunate to work with good, honest small press publishers, like Caliber and Blue Line Pro. In the end, I wanted to take my work under my own wing and be truly responsible for it, good and bad. I guess my answer is that the circumstance would dictate working with a more mainstream publisher. I was approached by a larger indy publisher for "BPM", and it just didn't work out, which was fine, no harm no foul. I respect writers and artists who do good work with mainstream books, but I don't think that's where my strengths lie. I would never say never, but my gut tells me that Marvel isn't going to roll a wheelbarrow up to my front door and ask if I want to do an X-Men book.

www.paulsizer.com

***Legendary penciller for both Marvel and DC since the 1980s, with great skills for realism, and group scenes**

****British writer famous for off-beat epics, and recently revamping Iron Man**

*****Indie writer/cartoonist known for his unique art and scripting style**



The world of comic books, like any world with a devoted fan base, can appear somewhat confusing to the outsider. The Terminal is a regular feature that will define the common terms used in comic circles. In other words, this is the geek speak you need to know.

LCS – Local Comic Shop. A place of wonder and enchantment. And discount bins. To find an LCS near you check out “Books” in your local business directory, or visit www.comicshoplocator.com

Jumping On Point – A story structured especially for new readers to that particular series, where a knowledge of previous issues is not necessary.

The Big Two – Marvel and DC Comics, the two largest English language comic companies on the planet.

TPB – Trade Paper Back. (Also known as TP or Trade) A soft, or hard, cover collection of a previously published series, or thematically linked issues. A TPB may collect an entire series if it’s only a few issues, or a few consecutive issues of a larger ongoing series. They sometimes contain extras, such as an introduction, cover gallery, sketchbook, or writer/artist commentary.

OGN – Original Graphic Novel. A collected edition, like a TPB, but of new material, whereas a TPB is a collected repackaging of previously published material. The term “graphic novel” is rarely used by comics fans and is often used by misunderstanding mainstream press. The average comic issue contains at least 22 pages of story, and 22 pages is certainly not a “novel.”

STREET FIGHTER

RYU





Which Gen Xer

doesn't have fond memories of clogging up arcade halls in the mid 1990s when Capcom's Street Fighter II began its rise as a cultural phenomenon? The unique game became far more than a fad, and continues to cross media and cultivate rabid fans today. More will surely be inspired after February's live action The Legend of Chun-Li film starring Smallville's Kristin Kreuk as the





title character (along with Michael Clarke Duncan as Balrog and Neal McDonough as M.Bison). We set up a match with the two warriors currently leading the charge for UDON Studios, the Canadian publisher of Street Fighter comics and associated books. UDON have a firm relationship with video game franchises, having also recently contributed to the bonus comics for Midway's *Kollector's Edition* of the *Mortal Kombat vs DC Universe* game, and *Soul Calibur IV* for Namco. Since 2003 the collective of artists have been leading the charge for original action-packed Street Fighter stories in their unique manner. With the new Street Fighter IV game on all next-gen consoles heading our way like a sonic boom, this is indeed a good time to be a SFII fan, so pick up your controller and prepare for a discussion of new characters and new movies for this classic franchise. HADOUKEN!!

KEN SIU-CHONG:

How much of a backstory did you have to create with these characters when you first came on board, and who was the most difficult fighter to grasp?

It varied from character to character, but my job was basically to fill in the gaps of the characters' histories and motivations, and make sure everything

melled well. Most of the characters have pretty elaborate back stories, so there was already a lot to work with. I'd say the toughest character to get a firm grasp on was Bison, probably just because of the fact that he's connected with so many other characters' stories in a complex web.



You've been the sole writer for Udon's Street Fighter II series so far. Is it a challenge to breathe new life into characters that you're so familiar with?

Sometimes it is, not really because I'm so familiar with them, but because we're basically telling a story that people are already familiar with. It's like making a movie based on a book.

There are specific restrictions on what we can do and how far we can go, but within those restrictions there's still a lot of room to play in. For example, I absolutely loved expanding on the master-student relationship between Sakura and Ryu to a greater extent than what we saw in the games. It's adding little touches, like Ryu chowing down two dozen plates of food at a buffet, or revealing Bison's origin, or showing Cammy's friendship with her Delta Red teammates, that I get the biggest kick out of.

How do you manage to give an equal spotlight to the large cast, without gravitating towards any favourites you may have?

Well, the story basically dictates how much screen time the characters get. For example, Honda hasn't really received as much face time as Ryu, Chun-Li or Cammy. Sometimes it is hard to resist the urge to include more Dan fights, but I think that wouldn't be too well received!

What can you tell us about new character El Fuerte? Did you develop him in conjunction with Capcom?

Capcom created him completely before I started adapting the SFIV book, so they can take all the credit. He's a really fun, wacky character. I mean, a lucha libre wrestler who searches the world for recipes? What's not to love? I'm having a blast adding small touches, though, like making him a crazy Rainbow Mika fan.

You're also writing the new Chun-Li series. Will there be any similarities between your version of Chun-Li and the upcoming live-action film?

It might have some similarities because they're based on the same character, but we had no real input or access to what they're



doing in the movie. Any similarities will be coincidental. In fact, we've had the concepts for this series brewing well before there was even talk of a Chun-Li movie. So in a nutshell, no, the mini-series isn't anything like an adaptation of the movie. It's our take on Chun-Li's origin based on what we've established in the comics.

You must get a kick, so to speak, out of writing these well loved characters. How have the fans generally responded to your interpretations?

The fans have really been great and I want to thank them profusely for their support! While every fan has their own favorite character they'd like to see more of, or think we should've done something a little differently with a certain character, in general I think they know that we've tried to make a story very true to the spirit of the games. I think the fans have appreciated the respect we've given the original source material.





Do you still enjoy playing the games when you can, or is too much like work?

I do enjoy it, though I'm not very good. I'm sure half the readers of our books could totally kick my ass! I actually don't play as much as I wish I could! I'm anxiously awaiting SFIV to come out on home consoles, just like everyone else!

Which character most closely resembles you? Though I don't have blonde hair, I'll have to say Ken since we share the same name!

JEFFREY "CHAMBA" CRUZ:

First up, what's the origin of your nickname? Well, I was playing pool with my brother and cousin, and I kept getting my balls in by fluke. In which I'd simply say after getting the ball in, 'Chamba Lang' which roughly translates to 'was a fluke' from Tagalog (spoken language in the Philippines) to English.

How much of a challenge is it to capture the kinetic energy and power of the games onto the printed page?

It is a bit of a challenge, but really fun also. I like to picture the shots as if they're still frame captures of an animated feature adaptation of the game.

How much freedom do you have from Capcom when deciding upon the look of these characters?

Well, I'm not entirely sure really. I myself try my best to uphold how Capcom have depicted the characters through the many many (different at times) visual representations of the characters. I pretty much try and adapt the Capcom style into what I already know and do.

How did you come to work on this series with UDON?

After a few jobs working on card illustrations with UDON, they just simply asked if I was interested on tackling the tournament arc of



the SFII book.

Which character most closely resembles you?

I don't really think any do. None that I can see anyway.

Do you play SFII with Siu-Chong, and if so, who wins?

Hah, nope. Never played SFII with Ken. I mean, with him living in Canada and me living in Melbourne, Australia I can't really see that happening often if ever, heh.

www.Streetfighter.com

www.udonentertainment.com

Street Fighter © 2008 Capcom, Entertainment

Street Fighter II Turbo #3 is out now. It's set in Hong Kong where Sagat hosts the Chinese leg of the SF tournament and features Chun-Li, Fei-Long, Adon, Dhalsim and the new character, El Fuerte. Street Fighter Legends: Chun-Li #1 (of 4) launches in January and centres on her early days as an Interpol agent, and the Street Fighter IV 4 issue mini-series hits home in February. It's also written by Ken Siu-chong, with art by Joe Ng.

Should you hunger for more Street Fighter action, Eagle One Media can satisfy your cravings with their animated DVD films. According to President Eric Reichert the company uses UDON's artwork,"and with the addition of voice-overs for the dialog, animation, music, sound, and special effects, create a running video that the viewer can watch with their DVD player. We create two versions of the video. One version will show the dialog word balloons on the screen as the words are spoken, much like subtitles but having more of a comic book look. The other version has the word balloons removed so the video plays a bit more like an anime." Their first SF release, Street Fighter: Round One-Fight! Will be released on February 3 and will be approximately 70 minutes long. Eagle One also have similar comic based films on Voltron: Defender of the Universe, The Terminator, Archie and Micronauts.

eagleonemedia.com





SEPTAGON
STUDIOS 01
SEPTAGONSTUDIOS.COM

M A S K S



Five years ago Nicola Defina and his two cousins founded Septagon Studios, a welcome home for new comics talent. Writer/artist Aaron Rintoul is the company's latest find, with his new series *Masks*. The inventive series follows Sara on her hunt for a killer, but is anything but a straight-forward story, with its exploration of dreams and poetic language. The beautifully rendered art is a hybrid of photography and digital image manipulation, serving to weave an ethereal landscape. According to the creator, "It can be very time consuming but on good days pages fly together. A lot of it is still a big learning process for me, which can slow things down a bit. The first issue is available now for free download at www.maskscomic.com with two more 22 page issues to come.

What's your creative background, and how did you come to create Masks with Septagon?

Aaron: I'm self taught and very much a student still. I have only been creating digital art seriously for about the last year. I work mainly with my digital camera and in programs like Photoshop & Painter. Before Masks I hadn't tried to send out any work for publishing consideration. Masks began as single images I had created, all with a similar style and wasn't really sure what to do with. One day I had them open in Photoshop and was messing with them, and I really liked how they complimented one another so I began paneling them, never really intending to make a comic book. It wasn't until my wife Erica suggested I try doing a graphic novel using the work (she's the comic collector in our house) so the idea for Masks came out of that. Masks was going to take some time to finish, so in between I wrote and illustrated two shorter comic stories, an 8 page horror tale called "The Dollhouse" and a 22 page sci-fi thing called "Black Milk." Both are now published by Asylum Press for their anthology graphic novel "The Asylum Of Horrors. Once I had about 12 pages of Masks finished I showed a friend who told me about Septagon and how they were looking for creator owned projects so I sent them what I had and they wrote back right away saying they were interested.



What's the process for creating a page? Do you start with photos and then incorporate other imagery later?

Aaron: I usually start with photos, bringing them into Painter or Photoshop to manipulate them and create new backgrounds to place people and objects in. I do a lot of digital painting and layering over the photos to give them a dramatic or surreal quality. I usually create each panel as a single piece of art to start with and then chop it up into panels to create my final pages. I have recently started playing around with some 3D programs as well that add elements to my work I wouldn't be able to create with just photography.

You describe Masks as a “graphic poem.” What do you mean by that?

Aaron: Originally I was not going to letter Masks at all, I was going to let the imagery do the storytelling, So when that changed and I decided to letter the book I felt the writing needed to do something different, something that matched the dreamlike feel of the artwork, so the first issue of Mask's story is told in a very poetic or fairy-tale style of writing. And that poetry style becomes less so in issue two and three as the story becomes less surreal and my main character moves out of her own head a bit more.

What inspired you to create a comic in this unique style, rather than something more traditional?

Aaron: It was easy to be original with Masks because it came about so organically and it evolved over time with me working on it and never really knowing in the back of my mind this is going to be a graphic novel. Originally I wanted to do book covers and I hadn't really thought about working in the comic industry, so I never tried developing a specific style for comics.

Masks is quite a brave choice for the comics world. What's your goal for the series?

Aaron: Masks was my first attempt at getting my artwork published and out into the world. Hopefully its something new and interesting for people who buy comics regularly and also for those who normally wouldn't.

Visit septagonstudios.com to discover more of their work, and even pitch some of your own.





MUCH OF THE PAST I
HAVE FORGOTTEN..



..BUT ALSO A MAN.

HIS WORDS WERE
SMOOTH AND SHARPENED
TO POINTS, AND WHEN HE
SPOKE IT WAS IN
SYMBOLS AND RHYMES.

WHO'S DREAMING WHO

Please help me
Please help me
Please help me
Please help me
Please help me

-18-
Dreamer
+

BUT HE OFFERED A WAY
OUT, A WAY TO SWITCH
OFF THE LIGHT.

The image is a dark, atmospheric collage. On the left, a close-up of a woman's face with pale skin and dark, smudged eye makeup. In the center, a woman's face is shown from a slightly different angle, with her hand near her head. Below her face, a hand is visible, resting on a surface with a hexagonal tile pattern. In the bottom left, a razor is shown with blood splatters. On the right, a vertical strip shows the intricate, dark architecture of a gothic building with arched windows and detailed stonework.

WHEN I MET HER
AGAIN SHE SHOWED
ME HER FACE.

SKIN OF IVORY
WHITE AND COLD
GRAY.

WHEN SHE LEFT,
SOMETHING INSIDE
DECIDED TO STAY.

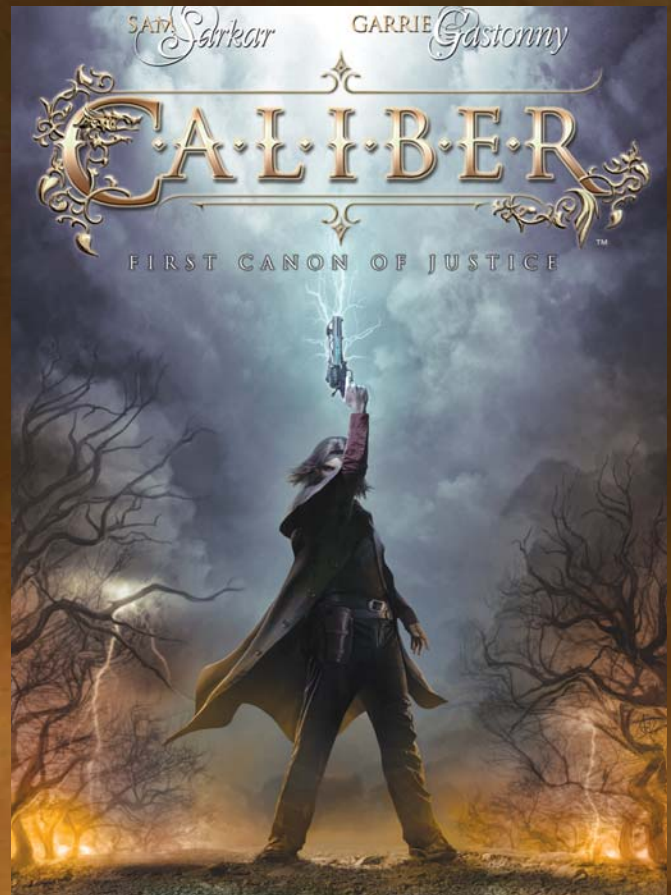
RADICAL PUBLISHING

Radical Publishing is a bold company. Bursting on to the scene a year ago with gorgeous artwork and high-concept titles they have managed to stand out from the superhero crowd. With its deal with the Singapore-based collective of artists, Imaginary Friends Studios, Radical's titles have become immediately recognizable. Hercules: The Thracian Wars is currently available as a collected edition, showing Zeus' son as he roams the earth with a band of blood thirsty mercenaries. The first five issues of Caliber are also available in collected form and re-imagines King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table in a wild west setting,

STEVE MOORE • ADMIRA WIJAYA

HERCULES

THE THRACIAN WARS



with supernatural themes. Both these series have gained interest from Hollywood, with directors Peter Berg (Hancock) and John Woo (Mission: Impossible II) attached respectively. With current series such as the futuristic City of Dust written by Steve Niles (30 Days of Night) and the upcoming maxi-series Shrapnel, the future looks Radical indeed.

The premiere 48 page issue of Shrapnel debuts in January 2009. The first issue of a total of 18 (divided into three separate five issue mini-series) Shrapnel: Aristeia Rising follows Sam Vijaya, an exiled soldier on Venus who must take action once more when a war for humanity's survival lands at her feet. On the following pages you can feast your eyes on some art for the series.

Hercules TM & © 2008 Radical Publishing

Caliber TM & © 2008 Sam Sarkar & Radical Publishing

Shrapnel TM & © 2008 Zombie Studios & Radical Publishing

www.radicalcomics.com

SHRAPNEL™

◆ ARISTEIA RISING ◆



R
RADICAL
1 of 5
\$1.99

SHRAPNEL

ARISTEIA RISING

SAGAN.SHERMAN.HUTOMO



039



Batman: Arkham Asylum

A part from Gotham City itself, Arkham Asylum is undoubtedly the most well-known and feared location in the Batman mythos. One of DC Comics' most successful graphic novels, 1989's *Arkham Asylum: Serious House on Serious Earth* by writer Grant Morrison and innovative artist Dave McKean cemented its gothic creepiness. Then Rocksteady Studios had the bright idea of setting a next-gen game there. Hitting consoles in 2009 its dark atmosphere, varied combat and multitude of guest stars make it compulsory for geek gamers. Throw in a story written by comics scribe Paul Dini (*Detective Comics*) and voice-overs by fan favourites Kevin Conroy and Mark Hamill (who voiced Batman and the Joker respectively in the excellent *Batman: The Animated Series* from the 1990s) and this seems like a winner. For all those who know that the Dark Knight is so much cooler than Sam Fisher, this one's for you. Cameos from characters such as the monstrous Killer Croc, Joker's girlfriend Harley Quinn, and Oracle (the crippled Barbara Gordon and ex-Batgirl) mean *Batman: Arkham Asylum* caps off a good few months for DC devotees hoping to experience the DC Universe away from the printed page.

www.batmanarkhamasylum.com




Hitting consoles in 2009



cemented its gothic creepiness







Arcana is Canada's biggest comic book publisher. This is due to the very busy founder, and writer, Sean O'Reilly's emphasis on quality and diversity. And also charity. Arcana has been a regular participant in Free Comic Book Day since their inception and have also donated many comics to the Boys and Girls Clubs of America. Clockwork Girl, written by O'Reilly, is perhaps the company's biggest hit. Its tale of a naïve robot girl and her friendship with an outcast mutant boy, and their bickering father figures, is both endearing and humorous. It is the latest venture for the company in to the worlds of other media, with a TV film in development, and the latest accomplishment in an impressive resume. So Far Arcana has worked successfully with Disney, HBO, THQ and more in their short time in existence.

You started Arcana Studios four years ago, which was perhaps a volatile time in the industry. What was it that drove you to create Arcana in the first place?

SEAN: On one hand I say to myself it was only four years ago, but on the other hand it feels like it's been with me my entire life. As with most things in this world, to be successful I believe it requires 110% commitment and as a result it sometimes feels like I've lived three lifetimes of comic books. But why did I do it, and why do I continue to do it? It's so fun. Honestly, I don't know if anyone could do this if they weren't passionate about the medium and loved to work in it. I've always been a creative person and Arcana started as an outlet for my creative ventures. From Arcana's perspective, the industry has changed quite a bit over the years and it's imperative that I have changed our business plans with the changing environment.

But being both the head of Arcana, plus one of its main writers must be equally frustrating and rewarding at the same time I'd imagine. Do your two roles come in to conflict at times?

SEAN: At times. Truthfully the projects I started writing, I'm now finding it difficult to focus on full time. I've soon realized that I will need partners and I've been extremely lucky to work with so many talented professionals. It's sometimes a difficult exercise, but ultimately the projects have been much better off. I'm still hoping in time to get to a place where I'm able to participate at more of a creative level, and less of a 'business level'.

What would you say has been the highlight of Arcana's journey thus far?

SEAN: Hmm. I would have to say moving to Los Angeles was one I really didn't see coming and it's been a great learning experience for me and my family. During Arcana's journey I've been blessed with two beautiful children and have watched our little company grow. It hasn't been easy, and there's still a lot to do, but it's nice to see how far things have come.

Clockwork Girl really seems like a classic Disney film in print. Apart from Kevin's original Tinkerer 3D model, were they an inspiration at all?

SEAN: I think it's hard not to be inspired by Disney. Disney, and specifically Pixar, were definitely foundational touchstones for inspiration. We wanted to create a unique look (Kevin was instrumental in this), while we delivered a classic story. Brad Bird (Director of The Iron Giant and The Incredibles - Ed) has been another inspiration for me and I've had the chance to meet him a couple times even giving him a copy of Clockwork Girl.

Both yourself and Kevin have had quite enviable careers over the years. How did they help you both when creating Clockwork Girl?

SEAN: Kevin is truly an incredible talent

CLOCKWORK GIRL



and I've simply loved watching him go from Microsoft to Disney to Google. He's continually reinventing himself improving his natural abilities as he takes on more responsibilities. I see myself as a hard-working blue-collar with humble beginnings who is getting the chance to live my dreams. Kevin and I work exceptionally well together and I'm excited about some of the more projects we have coming up, as he truly has become a confidant and friend.

jammies' and when Todd Demong and I talked about doing this as a licensed property at Comic Con, I knew it was something I had to go after. When I met Chris Folino and William Katt, at Catastrophic Comics, well it was a match made in heaven. Since then we've been working away at the first issues, the trade paperback and the animation. I'm excited to bring back GAH to the fans and to work on such an exciting property.

Clockwork Girl is now on its way to becoming an animated film, which seems like a natural transition. Was that always the plan, or the hope?

Arcana also donated thousands of Clockwork Girl comics for the REACH program, which was obviously important to you.

SEAN: Honestly, a little bit of both. It was something we wanted to tackle from the inception, yet neither of us have done something so ambitious. We're developing the project as Arcana Studio and we are looking for a partner to assist in the development. Hopefully we will have more to announce soon, and until then we're working hard behind the scenes.

SEAN: Extremely important. I did Clockwork Girl, inspired by Disney, Pixar and ultimately my kids, Summer and Kiefer. Having the chance to work with the Boys & Girls Club REACH program was an amazing opportunity for me to go back to my educational roots and to promote literacy. I am hoping at doing more of these types of donations in the future.

And how much involvement have you had in its production?

What forthcoming plans for Arcana has you most excited?

SEAN: Full involvement and full control. This is due to Telefilm, John Dippong and the other great people who have given us the chance to turn Clockwork Girl into a great film. It's incredibly exciting, but honestly it's kind of scary because at this stage we put on screen is exactly what we want. I'm positive before this is done we'll have another development partner, but for now it's just been Kevin, myself and Jennica Harper (our very talented screenwriter).

SEAN: I'm really excited about our graphic novel plans as well as some great new licenses, movie announcements and the announcement of great partnerships.

What's Arcana's involvement with William Katt and the new The Greatest American Hero comic?

SEAN: As a kid I simply loved the 'red

The CLOCKWORK GIRL





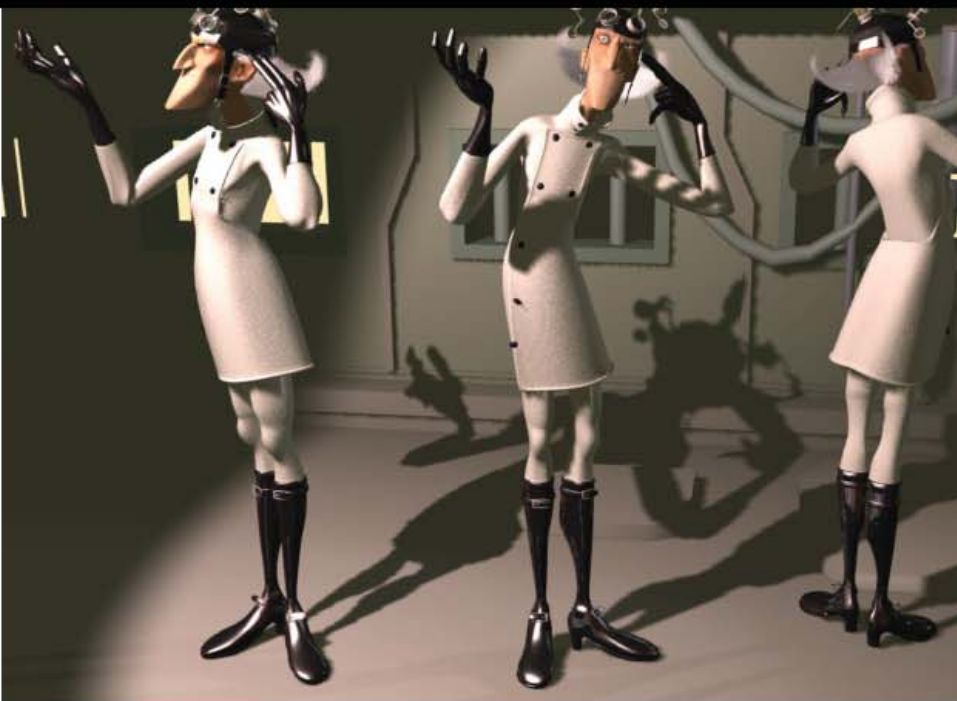
Clockwork Girl is the first in your Arcana Kids line. Can you tell us about any other projects coming from that line?

SEAN: The Gwaii is next in line and I'm taking the same care that was put towards Clockwork Girl. Also in this line for now is

Mighty Mighty Monsters, Ralph Filmore, an untitled fairy project, Howard and the Frozen Kingdom and Creature Academy (the next project from Kevin and me). We're also doing a new website for this line and ultimately am looking for an imprint to publish these books. www.arcanacomics.com



Tinkerer





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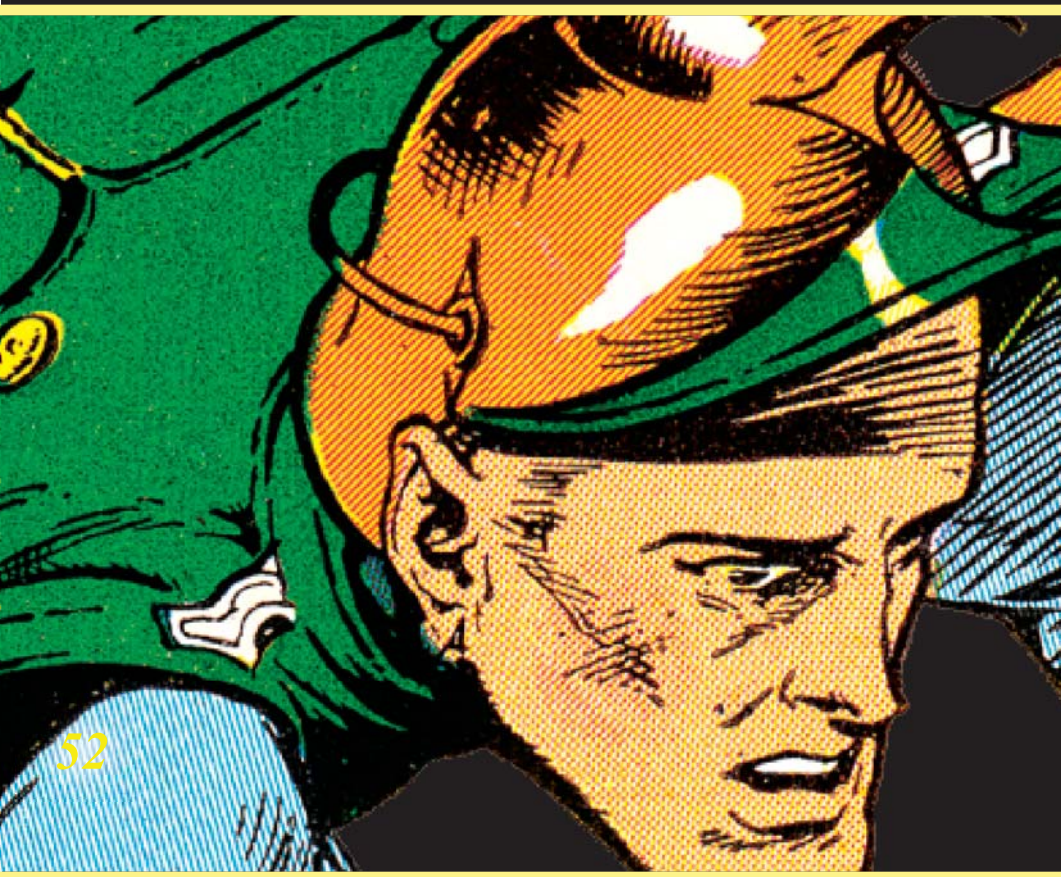
Wonderworld Comics

Thrilling Adventures of
THE FLAME
in Every Issue

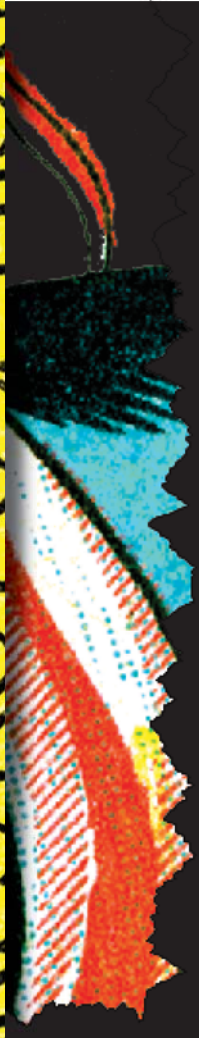
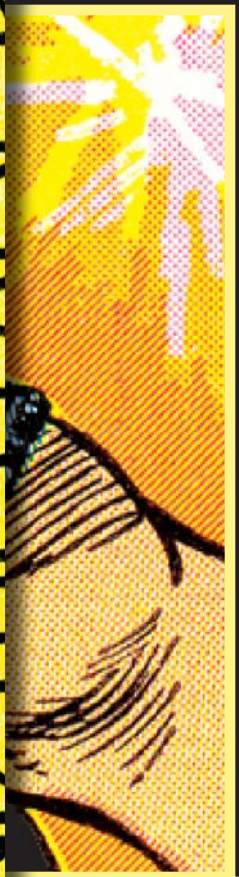
64
PAGES
IN FULL
COLOR




According to Greg Sadowski, it's up to comic fans "to figure out why this stuff is significant. I've already done *my* job." And Sadowski's job is a doozy, as the editor of a 192 page book from Fantagraphics Books entitled *Supermen!* which presents a varied collection of unusual work from 1936-1941. Essentially this era was the beginning of the superhero as we know it today, but you won't find any overly familiar characters in this marvelous compilation of forgotten work from pioneering creators of the medium. With an introduction by novelist and comics scribe Jonathan Lethem (Marvel's *Omega the Unknown*) and colourful heroes dispatching justice with a ruthless glee the envy of *The Punisher*, this is one tome that every fan of comic book history needs to own.



HE ODDS AGAINST HIM ARE TREMENDO
ND THE FLAME DARES NOT USE HIS G





What issues did you face when choosing the final 22 stories?

GREG: The main issue was locating the books. I never could afford them myself, even when they were a lot cheaper (though they always seemed too expensive). I was helped tremendously by collectors. I easily looked at a few hundred comics, and the cream rose to the top. Out of five hundred or so stories, only about ten percent of them were in the running. There was a lot of junk then, too. I'm pleased with my selections, but I could easily do another volume.

Do you have a favourite?

GREG: Fletcher Hanks and Basil Wolverton immediately come to mind as personal favorites, but every artist I show is interesting, unique, and a first-rate storyteller. How can you choose among Jack Cole, Will Eisner, Lou Fine, Jack Kirby, or Bill Everett? These guys are still remembered for a reason - they were the "A" list. It takes a great deal of imagination, wit, and skill to come up with something truly entertaining.

What do you think today's creators can learn from these tales?

GREG: Who knows? It's always fascinating to find out about the origins of things, isn't it? I thought the original comic book heroes might be an interesting subject for a book. My main criteria was that it be fun to read. So I just tried to find the best examples I could and present them as handsomely as possible.

www.fantagraphics.com

Supermen! is available in January for \$US 24.95

American Elf Vol. 3 Review



You can't help but love James Kochalka. Portraying himself as an elf (hey, why not?) the artist has successfully presented his daily life since 1998. That's an impressive enough feat in itself, but when you actually start to read his daily entries the depth and variety hits you like, well, not like a brick, but more like a pillow.

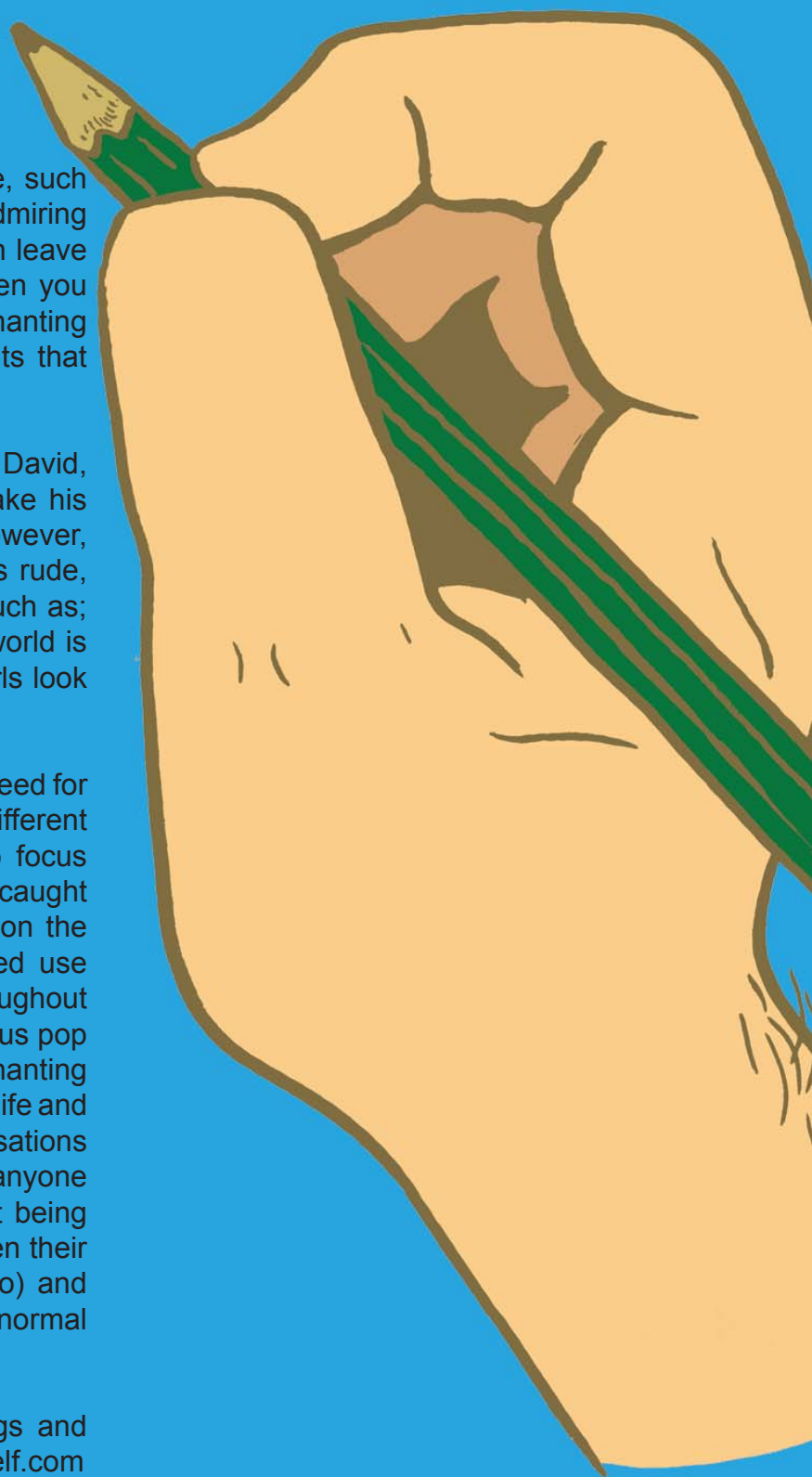
You can pick any random comic strip in this collection from Top Shelf, which covers January 1, 2006 to December 31, 2007 and be amused. There is no real sense of a cohesive narrative but Kochalka is not trying to tell a story throughout these pages. Rather each strip, usually consisting of 4 panels, is simply a random moment of activity. We all have them, but it's not till you read American Elf that you realise how often they appear in your own day, and what a joy they truly are. Avoiding a demeanour of forced humour, it becomes quickly obvious that Kochalka isn't trying to make his life seem hipper than the rest of us, even though he's a well known independent artist. Not every strip is laugh out loud. Infact, few are, but the majority manage a quirky smile or an understanding nod when something relatable jumps out

at you. To quote the writer/artist/diarist himself, "This book itself isn't so complicated. It's just another volume of my diary comic strip. But it's also my life." That life entails his thoughts, his interactions with his family (Amy and young Eli), his musical career and stuff that the rest of just achieve as part of our existence, such as driving, shopping, sleeping or admiring nature. This is the kind of book you can leave by your bedside table and pick up when you need reminding that life really is enchanting and full of joy in those hidden moments that our busyness has trained us to ignore.

Like Curb Your Enthusiasm's Larry David, Kochalka has the strange ability to make his ordinary life seem entertaining. However, Kochalka swears a lot less and isn't as rude, but is able to come up with thoughts such as; "How can I rock with a pimple?" "The world is sure filled with a lot of stuff." "All the girls look beautiful! Even the ugly ones!"

Kochalka's art is simple, but there's no need for detail. Every person he draws looks different and when he occasionally chooses to focus one day on just drawing something that caught his eye, like his hand, or even mould on the ceiling, it looks attractive. With a varied use of panels and even artistic styles throughout his daily entries this volume is a gorgeous pop art tome, full of vibrant colours and enchanting distractions. A showcase into one man's life and the emotions and daydreams and conversations that goes with it, Kochalka shows that anyone can be an artist. That's not to say that being an artist is easy, but true artists can open their eyes, (and through their work, ours too) and reveal the splendour of a seemingly normal existence.

You can follow Kochalka's meanderings and mutterings every day at www.americanelf.com



DADDY STAR WARS

HE'S AFRAID OF FLIPPING

UPSIDE DOWN

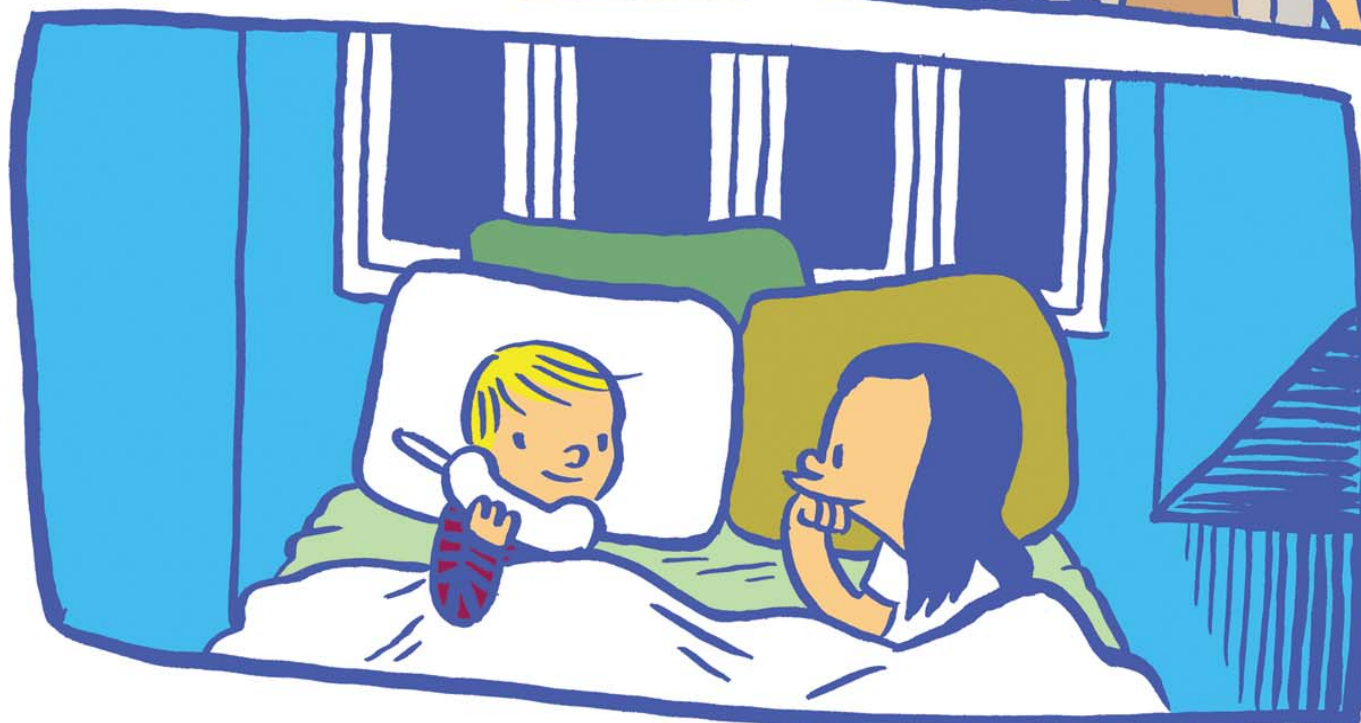


JANUARY 19, 2006



yes. I am.

LONG DISTANCE BEDTIME STORIES



JUNE 8, 2007



Ron Marz

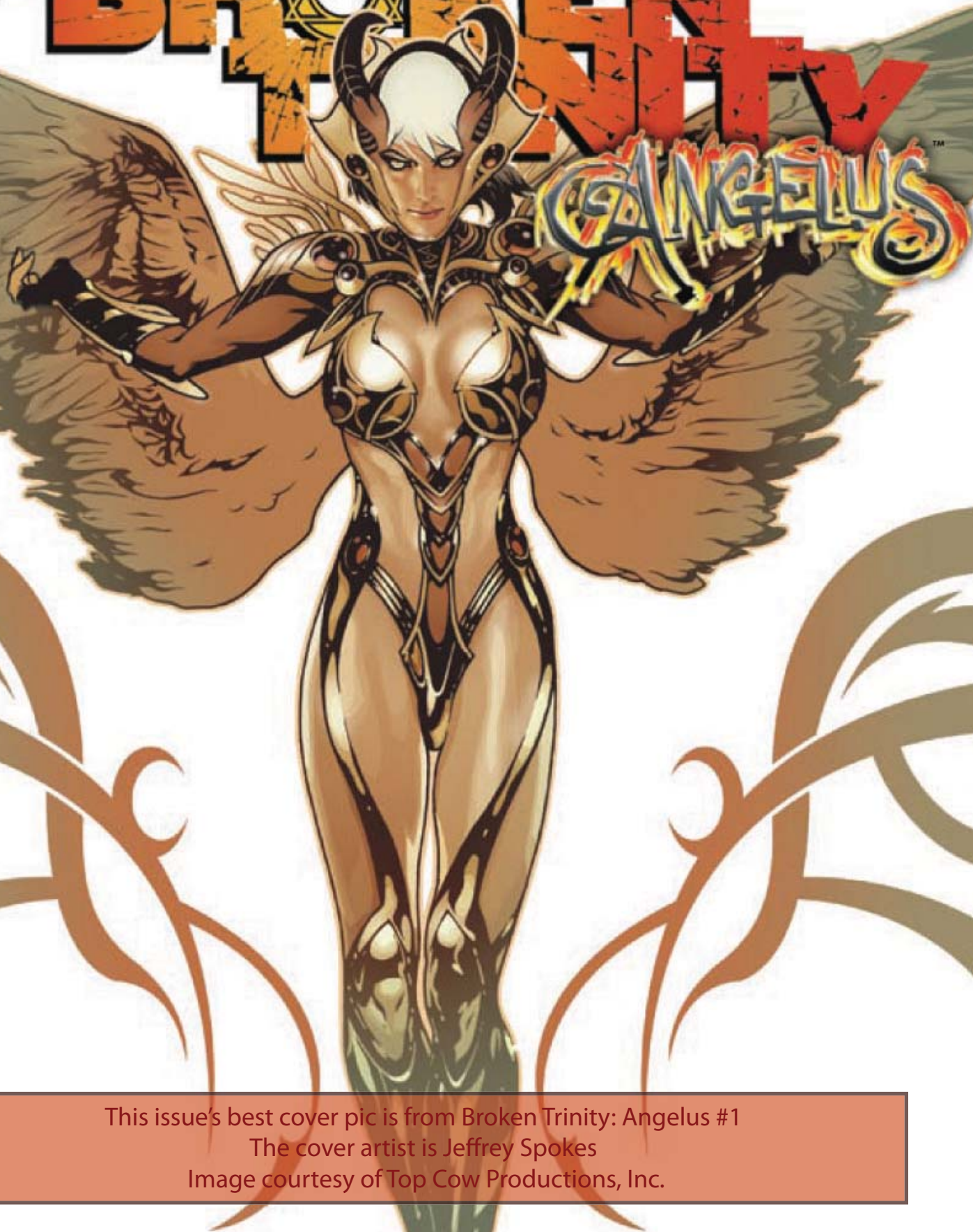
Brian Stelfreeze

TM

#1

BROKEN TRINITY

ANGELUS



This issue's best cover pic is from Broken Trinity: Angelus #1
The cover artist is Jeffrey Spokes
Image courtesy of Top Cow Productions, Inc.