

Story Teller

Piero is writing a story about human nature and will use the modern media of digital art to illustrate this universal old theme.

Piero Macgowan was born in 1983, son of an Argentine father and an American mother, in Valle de Bravo, a town (or small city, as many like to call it) located 2 hours southeast of Mexico City. He grew up and lived there through his childhood and for part of his youth. Ever since he was a small kid, Piero had artistic aspirations. His earliest art pieces, long lines of cars and trucks drawn on the beach sand when he was on vacation, didn't use any other instrument but his bare hands. As he grew up he got interested in Comics, which he soon started drawing, telling the imaginary adventures of his invented characters.

well immersed in the work dynamics and was given the freedom to do real jobs for animation, illustration and design industries. At the end of this year-off, Piero moved to Baltimore to study Illustration at the Maryland Institute College of Art ("MICA"), where he acquired his B.F.A. in Illustration. His constant returns to Mexico during college gave him several professional opportunities, such as being hired as the animation director for a Mexican motion picture.

He also designed websites, advertising spots,

During elementary school, Piero was always in close contact with art, whether in the classes at school or in the company of his best friends, who also loved drawing. During middle and high school, Piero continued his artistic expression in similar ways, getting involved as an illustrator and draughtsman in the school's magazine and newspaper. However, it was not until his last year in high school that he got seriously interested in illustration and art, as a career.

He took a year off after graduating and prepared his portfolio to be sent to several schools in the United States. During this time he had the opportunity of working at an animation studio/production house, which gave him a good perspective on the professional world before going into his college education. He started off as an apprentice at the studio, but soon became



Armor

and animated multimedia presentations during his summers back home from MICA.

Piero's time at college provided him with the necessary education and tools to be a part of the professional world. He has been working as an illustrator and concept artist for the music video industry, and has been working on a long term personal film project. Although he enjoys working in the United States, he has not forgotten his origins; every time he can, he goes back home to Mexico, where he visits family and friends. He plans to eventually live there permanently.

I.A. - Could you speak about your personal artwork and the story you're working on currently?

Piero Macgowan - My artwork deals a lot with metaphors, especially in relation to current world situations. I like to address these social and environmental issues through narrative imagery. For several months now, I have begun creating a story from scratch that encompasses these concepts. The narrative tells the story of two different worlds, one existing around light and another around darkness. None, however, represents what is good or evil, just what is human. This moral ambiguity reflects how we really are, the decisions we sometimes make and our many mistakes. These two worlds used to exist together as one, but their increasing greed, power, and corruption eventually led them to separation.

With every confrontation they became more divergent, until a breaking point was reached where they were permanently divided by their actions and their mutual hate. The rulers of these societies, who represent such polarities at their highest, find themselves in moral and spiritual conflict with each other, therefore carrying their civilizations to perdition and



Oracle

decadence. This split point comes when, due to cataclysmic events caused by humanity itself, the permanent division of both worlds occurs, casting each world above and below a "sheet of shadows". After ages, this sheet vanishes and both civilizations are forced to descend to a world below them, forcing the people of the dark to live underground and the people of light to settle on the abandoned surface. They live unaware of each other, until they accidentally meet.

I.A. - Can you speak about your creative process?

P.M. - I find it surprising how different my work process is when I work digitally compared to when I use traditional media. I started using the latter much earlier than computers, so I honestly have a special affinity with them that I have yet to find with a Wacom and a screen.



Pope Color

Tangible materials give me a much different experience than digital tools; maybe they subconsciously feel more personal, because they have some uniqueness that artwork which can be reproduced endlessly simply does not have. However, I have found that working digitally allows for a lot of freedom. Creating a painting in Photoshop or Painter is as direct and seamless a connection with my creativity as I can have. The fact that I can instantly lay down any color, mark, and line I want, twist it around, delete it, undo it, crop it, move it, or assign it an exclusive layer while I do something else right on top of it without affecting it is pretty amazing. This is why I usually keep my process pretty open when I work on the computer.

Because I am completely uninhibited, I constantly favour drastic changes on the

fly against illustrating a finished initial idea from beginning to end. This keeps it inspiring and engaging; anything can happen with the piece. The only real limit is imagination.

I.A. - I've been fascinated by Exodus and its colors and also very impressed by Rediscovery. You have several different styles, could you talk about them?

P.M. - I would rather say I have no style. I try to stay away from having my work fall into a formula. I just work on trying to represent the images I have in my head as best I can. If my work can be easily given a label then I have become just another producer of conventional images, not an artist. If a certain style comes through in a piece, it is a result of my influences and inspiration at that time. I just hope I can always produce work that is as honest as possible.

I.A. - You seem to always want the viewer to imagine a story behind each of your creations, why?

P.M. - Stories are essential for any illustration. If there is nothing being told, then the artwork becomes purely descriptive or diagrammatic. Having a story behind an image is a way to make the viewer become part of the piece. The longer the viewer spends exploring the world of the image in his head, the more successful the image is for me. A painting of a vase is different from a painting of a vase with dead flowers in it.

I.A. - Is it one of the goals of your artwork? Are there others?

P.M. - Stories will always be an element I want to incorporate in my work. But other than this, I hope I can also have an important voice, not just produce pretty images. I feel



Among The Ruins (Detail)

like artists have an incredible influence on the way people understand each other. This is especially the case with commercial artwork and mass media such as film and animation. I want to be able to have a positive impact on people's way of thinking and communicating. I hope my images always reflect this ideal.

I.A. - Are you looking for a new artistic path?

P.W. - Always. Life would be boring if I didn't. I feel very excited to benefit from the avalanche of possibilities that digital tools are now able to bring, and even more excited by the fact that it will never stop changing. New and better software and hardware is constantly emerging, so I know that even if I try, it will be hard to stick to convention. It's thrilling to feel like the unexpected will always be around the corner.

I.A. - Who are the artists who have influenced you? How?

P.W. - The list is too long, but to name just a few: Rembrandt, and his sublime use of light and presence; Goya, with his incredibly overwhelming, disturbing yet fascinating prints and paintings (especially his black paintings); N.C. Wyeth, with his exquisite and innovating use of color in illustrations, DaVinci's sketches and studies; figurative sculpture in general; Craig Mullins' command of digital tools; and finally Jon Foster's beautiful sensibility in composition.

I.A. - Who are the digital artists you think you're close to? In which way?

P.W. - I can't say I am close to anybody yet I look up to the digital artists I admire and hope someday I can achieve their level of skill. Maybe I can say I am drawn to atmosphere, strong light, and a sense of space. Craig Mullins has inspired me because of his incredibly realistic understanding of atmosphere; and Jon Foster because he is capable of mixing traditional and digital media seamlessly while keeping it incredibly rich. Others would be



Silus' Advance (Detail)

Hipper (I don't know his real name), who has a color sensibility that tops anybody in the field, and James Jean (although he is not entirely a digital artist), who is incredibly precocious and unique.

I.A. - Why do you think your artwork can indeed be classified as art?

P.W. - Maybe because I am doing my best not to regurgitate artistic or commercial canons, and trying as best I can to be truthful to myself and to find a vocabulary without sticking to any particular style. The moment I become apathetic or sell out, I won't be doing art anymore. But to have such freedom and integrity in one's work is a privilege these days. I just hope to do my best not to fall into the pit of "production line" work. I always want to feel that I am creating things honestly.

I.A. Anything else?

I appreciate this interview opportunity and

I am honored by the interest of IT'S ART Magazine's staff in my work.

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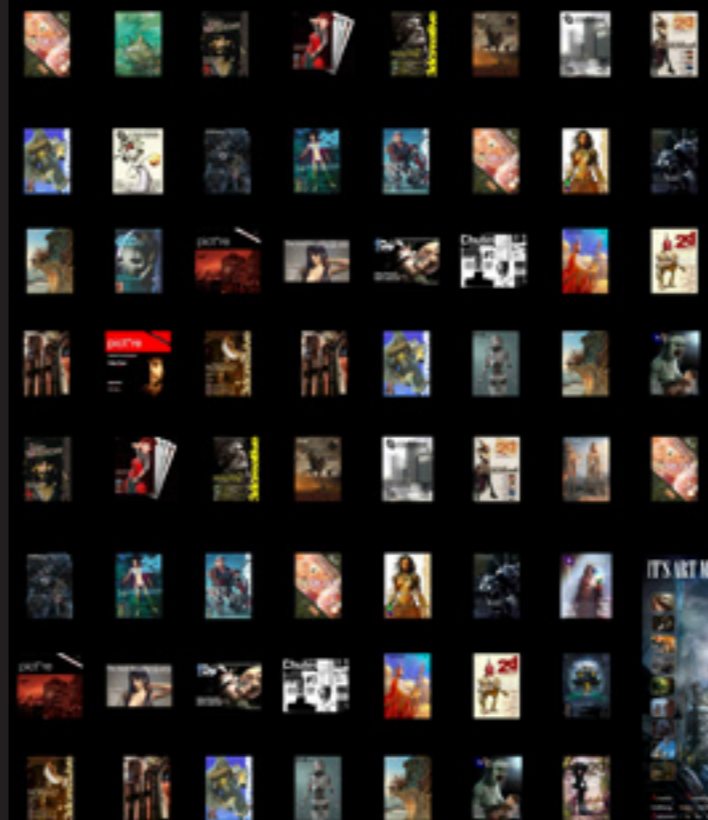


King's Rising



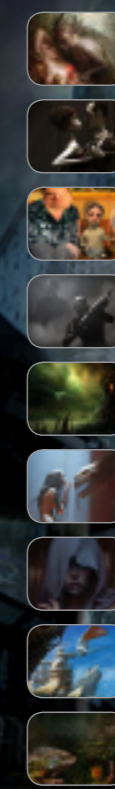
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