Obscuria—Darkly Unique Gothic Shop assembles a unique selection of independent artist-crafted oddities made to serve the Gothic, industrial, occult and alternative markets. Interested buyers can find Alchemy Gothic jewelry, giftware, and occult-themed T-shirts.

Owner Jeff Bronson spoke with Fango about the origins of the shop, whose official website can be found here , and his interests in the cyberpunk genre.

FANGORIA: In your bio, you mentioned designing your own restaurant and working in the corporate world before moving in a different direction. How did you come up with Obscuria Gothic Shop?

JEFF BRONSON: Well, I've always wanted to own a business; that has been my goal from day one of setting foot in the working world. I thought that dream was to become a reality in my mid-20s working on a fine-dining restaurant project, as the chef/owner. When the investment capital was suddenly no longer available, I pondered a different direction. I realized that in the restaurant business, I'd be buying myself a neverending procession of 18-hour days, and there must be a better way. Fast-forward several years later: The sterility of the corporate world became too much to bear, and I looked for a way out.

Since childhood, I've had a fondness for dark art, sci-fi, ancient societies, hard-to-find oddities and going against the grain—which has resulted in many challenges, I might add. It seemed there must be a way to bring all of these interests together in a way to not only earn a living, but make cool stuff available to a global audience. The Internet provided an exceptional medium to accomplish both of these goals and more. This is how Obscuria started, and it has been a long, enjoyable cycle of additions, revisions and tweaks ever since.

FANG: On the website, you mention that the design concepts are of the utmost importance to you, and to the image you wish to portray. Tell me more about these themes and the use of colors that goes into the process of making the items, such as the lighters or the masks.

BRONSON: The design images have changed a bit since the initial conception, and will likely change again within the next year. The original idea was to blend faded and cracked, rich tones that evoked the feeling of a blood-red sunrise in fall against the black of night, with biomechanical wiring creeping in to represent the digital age. On a philosophical level, I like hidden symbolism. The original image was a dual symbol for my views on society and spirituality.

From the society viewpoint: A woman's face, beauty fading and lackluster state of being, moving into a scene of death, shown by a coffin. The coffin represents society/mainstream media, which to me harshly represents the death of liberty and fairness, the gradual dissolution of individuality and hope and promotion of mindless conformity. Emerging from this death is the unfortunate image of a doll face: cold, plastic, numb and moldable.

From the spirituality viewpoint: Quite simply, the image was symbolic to me of dying to yourself and the world around you, in order to find yourself. By this, I mean moving past the individual ego of "I," and embracing a wider consciousness of everything around you in order to progress as a human.

FANG: Cyberpunk lovers will find plenty to enjoy with your exclusive hand-machined industrial cyber goggles, cyber masks and cyberpunk DVDs. What is it about the cyberpunk genre that interests you? How has it influenced the shop?

BRONSON: Great question! The cyberpunk genre is both a love/hate relationship for me. I grew up loving it from an aesthetic perspective, and for the rebellious nature of the main characters in books or films. I liked how the hero could sort of live outside of the system, yet

move within it for his/her own means. At the same time, in this genre, the prevalence of societies fallen into dystopia, poverty and totalitarian control by a single large for-profit entity is very disconcerting. This has had its influence on the shop. Due to the direction society is heading, and the shift toward more electronic-type music, bringing in items that complemented this direction seemed natural and profitable.

FANG: At Obscuria, buyers have a wide collection to choose from: jewelry, T-shirts, figurines… What are you working on currently?

BRONSON: Right now I'm working on slimming down the product selection even further, focusing on improving core ranges and starting additional sites. Originally, I had way too many unrelated product ranges on the site, like stained glass, occult books, Indonesian tribal carvings, Tarot decks, etc. These combinations could work great in a physical shop, but not for the web. I've got a project ongoing to procure some amazing custom cyber masks that are sculpted from clay, molded, cast and painted to look like aged metal and copper in the genres of Steampunk, vampires and postapocalypse. Plans are underway to greatly expand the jewelry and T-shirt selection as well.

FANG: What are among of the most popular items? Do you have a favorite in the collection?

BRONSON: Some of the most popular items in the shop are the cyber masks, goggles, jewelry and home decor items, like dragon collectibles. People really like the stuff they can wear out, or in an incognito way—like rings, for example, particularity the Chaos Signet Ring [pictured right]. I wish I could say I have a favorite; in fact, sometimes I get too personal with the product selection and forget to focus on what the market wants. If I had to choose, I'm partial to some of the ornate drinking goblets.

FANG: Where else, besides your website, can buyers find info or more about the shop?

BRONSON: Our Facebook fan page is the best bet currently.

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