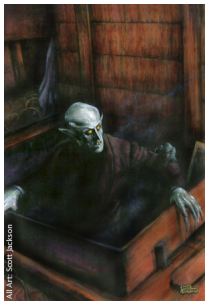
Scott Jackson is a talented artist who is truly inspired by the world of horror. His website, MonstermanGraphic.com, showcases the work he has done for several bands and musicians, such as Kiss and Megadeth, along with the custom artwork and logo designs he's done for many publications. Jackson also runs The Monster Store, where he sells T-shirts sporting his designs as well as incredible posters depicting many horror icons. In this interview, he discusses when art changed from a hobby to a career, the origins of both his websites and other ventures and what his future holds.

FANGORIA: Your artwork is incredible. Can you tell us when you first got the itch?

SCOTT JACKSON: Thank you. As far back as 3 years old, you'd find me doodling on just about anything I could get my hands on. Especially with cartoon characters, growing into the comic heroes. With only a child's skill, I gave most of them square heads—but made damn sure Superman had the trademark curlicue on his brow. I enjoyed the attention from entertaining people with these scrawlings, and ultimately got better at it.

FANG: When did you realize that art was more than a hobby, and you wanted to take it professionally?

JACKSON: I tried many different hobbies, usually entertaining folks—doing magic shows, screening horror movies in my garage, singing in a band…although they all came to the conclusion that I could draw better than sing! In junior high, I started hand-drawing hot-rod/hippie-culture posters in trade for lunch money. That was probably the first incarnation. While still in my teens, my "big break" was a $25 payment for a gig poster created for a rock band named Saffire.



Shortly thereafter, many local bands in the area were hiring me for T-shirt and poster art. By college, I had already been commissioned for album covers by GWAR producer Ron Goudie for Numskull and Montrose's Ronnie Montrose for a band he produced called Wrath. It was just happening, without much thought or choice. I decided at that time that I wanted to do album covers and band art for a living, and moved from Wisconsin to the west Coast.

FANG: Who are your inspirations?

JACKSON: Among them are Frank Frazetta, Richard Corben, Berni Wrightson, Robert Crumb, Basil Gogos, Jack Kirby, Marie Severin, Graham Ingles, Charles White III, Basil Wolverton, Wally Wood, Bill Elder…EC and 1970s underground comix, CREEPY, EERIE, WEREWOLF BY NIGHT, TOMB OF DRACULA, HOUSE OF SECRETS, MAD magazine…and Wacky Packages. Mix that with old movie posters, album covers from the '70s and '80s, and this is what comes out.

FANG: Tell us about the origins of MonstermanGraphic.com.

JACKSON: Having moderate success with the Scott Jackson Studio for many years, creating 100 or so covers for ROCK 'N' ROLL COMICS in the '90s, I turned back to my early childhood love of horror movies and created the three-part HEAVY METAL MONSTERS comics anthology. About five or six years ago, I released a trading-card set through Diamond Comics titled MONSTER MASTERPIECES: THE PAINTED HISTORY OF THE HORROR FILM, doing cover-style illustrations based on 50 of the greatest horror movies of all time. Volume one had a good run, into second printings.

It was a little over four years ago, after a chance meeting with Ari Lehman—Jason Voorhees

from the first FRIDAY THE 13TH—that I decided to try a new studio name and website. Ari brought me to my first horror convention, and at that event I was commissioned by none other than Tom Savini, The Lurking Corpses, and the Dark Carnival Film Festival. Soon after, it was VAMPIRA: THE MOVIE art, Texas Fearfest, Monster-Mania website design and so on. Monsterman is definitely my calling.

FANG: How long does it usually take for you to complete a piece of artwork?

JACKSON: Three days to three weeks, depending on the complexity. I usually ask my clients for about a month to play it safe.

FANG: You've done artwork for legendary bands like Kiss, Megadeth, Pink Floyd and many others. How did those deals come about? Did they come to you, or did you go to them?

JACKSON: My art has been either directly hired or featured by those bands as a result from my work with ROCK 'N' ROLL COMICS. In the case of Megadeth, as told to me, a young fan named Eddie Parker was backstage at a show, intent on getting his comic book autographed, but instead it was snatched by one of the band members. I shortly thereafter was contacted by Megadeth's management for a T-shirt commission. Kiss had been involved with and dictated much of the three-part HARD ROCK comic series, and those covers were included in the leather-bound KISSTORY book. Pink Floyd's official fan club approached our booth at San Diego Comic-Con requesting copies of the five-part "Pink Floyd Experience" series…and about a month later, I discovered a layout of the comics and cover art included in their SHINE ON boxed set.

So I guess in each case, it was their choosing. It has been great to meet and receive compliments from the likes of Alice Cooper, Geoff Tate of Queensryche, Jimmy Page of Led Zeppelin, Glenn Danzig, Kirk Hammet of Metallica and Frank Zappa, among others, about the

comics. Many of them I have signed, and I'm very grateful to in some way touch those artists who inspired me along the way.

FANG: You also founded Chicago's annual heavy metal conference, Metal Mergence, as well as the Annual Halloween Art Exhibit. Can you tell us about those ventures?

JACKSON: OK, let's see…a love for all three genres—horror, metal and Halloween—initially inspired these happenings, but you could say they were born more from desperation. As a commercial/comic-book artist moving to Chicago from the West Coast, I didn't really fit into the fine art scene so predominant in that area, and having minimal or no connections to the music scene whatsoever, it spurred me on to create an event that would not only advertise my own work, but speed up the process of meeting who I needed to connect to. The Annual Halloween Art Exhibit started meagerly in a little studio, and it's now in its 12th year and has been hosted everywhere from TransWorld's Haunted Attractions Show to some of the most reputable galleries, featuring over 65 artists from around the country.

Metal Mergence began as a whim to gather music professionals in the heavy metal industry, kinda like a mini-NAMM show), and it's now in its fourth year, getting response from national labels and bands. This is all just so amazing to me, and I'm extremely grateful for all the support and love from the friends, artists, bands and sponsors who have seen it through.

FANG: Social networking has become the new method of self-promotion. How have MySpace and Facebook helped you and your artwork?

JACKSON: Yes, yes…Facebook and MySpace can never be underestimated as great promotional tools. I use them both in the capacity that they drive potential customers to my website, and in many cases act as mini-versions of the site itself. Both of them have helped out immeasurably.

FANG: Have you ever considered doing animation? Your art would really kill as a cartoon.

JACKSON: Thank you. Yes, I've always dreamed of seeing one of my paintings animated—although I know myself well enough that I simply don't have the patience to redraw frames as an animator does [*laughs*]. The focus of my craft has been to make one overall statement for the story or image, and that's why I love doing cover work so much.

FANG: What is the future for Scott Jackson and MonstermanGraphic.com?

JACKSON: I'm currently enjoying the latest requests for DVD and CD art, along with website design. The future is to pursue my on-line Monster Store, continue building the events I've created and finish out the Monster Masterpieces, which will be all compiled into book form. As long as folks are diggin' the work, I'm happy to contribute to the genre that has given me so much pleasure while connecting with fans at the conventions. Retiring as an art teacher couldn't make me happier.

FANG: Do you have any advice for potential artists out there who want to create a brand name for themselves?

JACKSON: 1. Decide exactly what it is that you want to offer or work for. 2. Pay attention to the reactions you're getting from your work. 3. Be flexible in your approach to things. If something isn't working, try something else. 4. Find those artists you like who are successful, and model yourself after them…they must be doing something right. 5. If you can't get hired immediately, start your own thing.

Check out Jackson's work on-line at Monsterman Graphic , The Monster Store , MySpace and Facebook .

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