

## “EEEK!” and Ye Shall Find

Written by Michael Koopmans  
Saturday, 26 February 2011 11:47

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Two years ago, the name Jason Paulos wouldn't have meant a thing to most horror fans. Now things are changing thanks to Paulos' four-issue anthology series EEEK!, a homage to the heyday of horror comics (see rave review [here](#)). Fango caught up with this Australian writer/illustrator to discuss his influences and get a glimpse into his past, present and future.

**FANGORIA:** What kind of horror films do you like?

**JASON PAULOS:** I'm not really into gore so that probably counts me out with most of your fans. I love THE EXORCIST, but I can't think of many others that could be classified as horror in the modern sense. I loved the DAWN OF THE DEAD remake. THE SHINING, BLAIR WITCH PROJECT, AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON, FEARLES VAMPIRE KILLERS, TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE, EVIL DEAD and ZOMBIELAND were all great. And RE-ANIMATOR! Maybe forget what I said before, that's a pretty good list!



**FANG:** Seen anything recently that blew you away?

**PAULOS:** That's a terrible question for somebody that's living in a cyclone ravaged country. Only kidding. I hardly get to watch anything these days except THE WIGGLES; I've got two kids under 4 years.

**FANG:** How did you get into making comics.

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**PAULOS:** I started publishing minicomics (ashcans) in the late '80s when I was a teen. I worked on a bunch of indie Aussie titles but never managed to break into the industry proper, despite a few notable jobs for big publishers like DC and the JUDGE DREDD people. I'm a self taught artist with 20 years experience in graphic art, but I now work full time at home in Sydney doing storyboards for ads. I've never made the pilgrimage to the U.S. but that'll change I hope now that I've made contact with Frank Forte at Asylum Press.

**FANG:** Talk about EEEK!, your latest addition to the world of horror comics.

**PAULOS:** EEEK! is my love letter to the horror compilations of my youth, in particular the post-code stuff from the mainstream publishers but also the odd indie book as well. I'm enjoying the new reprint books of the pre-code horror stuff too, and I aim to get a bit more of that influence into EEEK!

**FANG:** The '50s EC comics seem to always be the main influence for most anthologies that come out. Yours, however, leans more toward the '70s-'80s stuff from Warren, Charlton and Pacific. Was that intentional?

**PAULOS:** It is deliberate, as the Charlton stuff in particular seemed so simple. The stories were easy to understand, and I figured if I imitated that format I'd be safe in terms of storytelling i.e., two or three main characters and simple scenarios with a clear ending point. If people find it lame than at least they can understand what the hell's going on. Having said that, the stories really do focus around the art. Sometimes I'll draw the splash page then write the story around that. I don't enjoy typing. I'd much rather just start drawing and then sort the whole mess out later. It's risky in that I can paint myself into a corner storywise, but it can also have surprising results and hopefully there's also a sense of spontaneity as well. The stories shouldn't feel labored and hard to read. At the same time, I like old-fashioned caption boxes and a bit of over the top '70s-style narration here and there.

**FANG:** I was very impressed by the ability you have to change styles with each segment, making the book appear to have multiple artists. Is any particular one your actual style, or do you usually bounce around?

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**PAULOS:** It’s all me but I like to fantasize about art styles as I go and it kind of happens like osmosis. I don’t lift panels or swipe poses and it’s probably more my style that it initially appears. I’ll change halfway through a story sometimes, too, which probably isn’t good! I get bored easily. I couldn’t imagine having to do the same style all the time. I like to keep it interesting and certain storylines and characters bring certain artists to mind that I love. I’d like to use other artists, but it’s hard for people to deliver the level of work I require for no money! There’s a guy called Mark Bloodworth who does the same thing in his MIDNIGHT MORTUARY book. He fooled me with my own trick! I emailed him and said, “Where did you get all of these great artists?”



**FANG:** What artists have been a big influence on you?

**PAULOS:** It would be easier to list who hasn’t, but here we go. Will Eisner, all the EC guys—Crandall, Wood, Engels, Davis—and DC ’70s guys—Wrightson, Redondo, De Zuniga, Alcala, Nino, Grandenetti, Sekowsky, Jeff Jones, etc. I love the ’70s Marvel guys too—Alcazar, Sutton, Ploog—and I haven’t even mentioned Warren or Pacific comics!

**FANG:** Talk about your work before EEEK!

**PAULOS:** In the ’90s I self published a dozen issues of HAIRBUTT: THE HIPPO PRIVATE EYE, about an anthropomorphic hippo/private eye. I produced the strip regularly for the Australian MAD magazine, which ran for a couple of years.

**FANG:** What are you working on now? Future plans?

**PAULOS:** New EEEK! material is currently being published in Australia by Black House comics,

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and I'm working on that in between paid advertising work. I'm penciling a story called "Bogeyman" in a faux Jeff Jones '70s style. I'd like to do a TERROR TALE for 2000 AD, but I can't write a good enough script. I sent some stuff to Dark Horse's CREEPY with no luck, same with the new TALES FROM THE CRYPT. I also missed out on DOOMED because it lived up to its name! I'm hoping Asylum will do another EEEK! I've got 90 pages or so ready to go. I'd like to get more people involved! Any artists reading this should send me some stuff at jasonpaulos@optusnet.com.au. I've got lots of stories ready to be drawn, but it has to look right. I'm doing digital paintings of horror-type subjects; I do the odd retro style commission. I'd like to make some money from comics! I've had a few inquiries about my original art, but I don't want to give the stuff away for peanuts. It means a lot to me. I put a lot of time into my art. It's a real labor of love. A guy asked me the other day, "Do you feel like a sellout?" because I did advertising storyboards. I could have punched the guy. I just gave the guy a comic for free! That's gratitude for ya!

**FANG:** What horror comics are you currently digging?

**PAULOS:** Nothing modern, I'm afraid. I'm into pre-code reprint compilations like THE HORROR, THE HORROR by Jim Trombetta, THE WEIRD WORLD OF EERIE PUBLICATIONS, any Golden Age Ditko stuff, the Skywald book. The Mort Meskin, Jerry Robinson, Bill Everett retrospective books were nice (love Everett's horror stuff, particularly that original zombie story for Marvel). I love "The Horrors of It All" blog by Karswell. I've got an enormous jpeg reference file of great comic art solely gleaned from retro blogs. The Collectors Society website were early champions of EEEK! before it was commercially published. ZOMBIE TERRORS by Asylum is great. Aussie anthologies KAGEMONO and SOMETHING WICKED are worth a look too.

**FANG:** What's your all-time favorite horror comic series and why?

**PAULOS:** Has to be HOUSE OF MYSTERY because it reminds me of being a kid poring over my big brother's comic collection. It had all my favorite artists and the stories and sent a real chill down my spine. Even the bad stories had a certain charm, and I had a great time guessing who the artists were. One of my favorite stories was about two shop dummies in love who kept getting moved around and separated by the janitor. Of course, next day the janitor's body is discovered posed in an obscene parody in a window display. In the final panel, the two dummies are shown in their beach gear grinning evilly with their arms around each other. Silly stories but still creepy on some level. Not a speck of gore in sight.

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**FANG:** Is there anything else you want to say to fright fans?

**PAULOS:** Buy EEEK! It's still available from [www.AsylumPress.com](http://www.AsylumPress.com). I think they're selling it with the new ZOMBIE TERRORS anthology at a discount rate. The book is available through Amazon.com and can be back ordered at any comic or bookstore. Go to [www.Eeekc.com](http://www.Eeekc.com)

for updates, but I'm pretty slack with updates so check my Facebook page instead. Check out more Aussie comics creators at

[www.PulpFaction.net](http://www.PulpFaction.net)

. I'll be signing copies of EEEK! at

[Armageddon con](#)

in Sydney today, February 26.

And thank you! I'm honored to have been featured on your [top 10 horror comics](#) list for last year!

{comments on}