

## Virtual Sculpture Jürgen Ziewe

If you're an aficionado of fantasy art, the name Jürgen Ziewe will be familiar to you. He hasn't always produced science fiction book covers, fantasy posters and greeting cards, though. Ziewe started out by studying fine art at Hamburg Academy and practised for many years as an abstract painter. I asked him to describe how he made the transition to fantasy art.

"I was always fascinated by Carl Gustav Jung and his archetypes - images that speak a universal language, images that dreams are made of. I consider dreams or fantasy as another form of reality that is often closer to our real selves than the external world of everyday life, because it is here where we act out our fears and desires. To externalise this world in images gives us power over our inner world."

Creating fantastic landscapes doesn't necessarily imply the use of computers. So what made Ziewe abandon conventional artists' materials? "The computer gives us the power to make fantasy real, to create a photographic image of our fantasy world. Even better, you can make a film of this world, walk around in it. It is almost like lucid dreaming, which enables you to be awake in your dream. This is very addictive."

Are there any drawbacks or is virtual sculpture the only way to go? Are there times when even the most addicted computer artist yearns for more traditional techniques? Apparently there are. "Of course the working process is different from oil and canvas and sometimes I wish my studio wasn't packed with electronic equipment. Then I could escape into a simpler world without program crashes and lost work on corrupted disks, which frequently causes computer rage. "Whenever I walk into an old-fashioned studio, the smell of turpentine and oil fills me with melancholy and a deep yearning for a simpler life, where working as an artist means buying a few tubes of paint rather than spending a few thousand pounds on the latest program. I also miss the immediacy of traditional painting."

But digital art has its compensation. For a start, I can earn money with my work! Whereas before I only ever sold one single painting for peanuts, I was able to have over 50 of my pictures published as posters and hundreds of cards and, for a while, it provided a decent income. The other advantage is that as computers become faster, they also become more flexible and the programs, hopefully, will also become more intuitive. Instead of being an artist one becomes more like a film director."

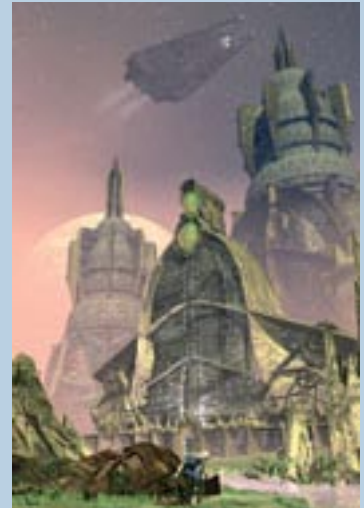
This is interesting. When I started researching this article I'd expected that many of the virtual sculptors would produce animations or fly-

throughs of their virtual landscapes. In the main, though, the end product is a 2D rendered image. So does Ziewe hope to extend his work along these lines? "Once you have created the elements of your 'painting' you move them around and experiment with lights, colour, composition and perspective like a cameraman or photographer. This is precisely what I am doing at present. I have taken the best of my fantasy images and turned them into animations in a short film. It started life as a show reel but quickly turned into a journey through the inner mind.

"The curious fact is that as a traditional painter you work with physical pigment, but as a digital artist you paint with light. It was only a matter of time to want to fathom the origin of light itself after circumnavigating Jung's archetypes. The video is aptly called Samadhi, which means enlightenment. The soundtrack is produced by my friend Patrick Wilson, who composes scores for movies, TV dramas and documentaries. You can never add sound to a canvas, but with computer art this can conjure up a visual and auditory experience that can embrace your whole being. The excitement of the digital media, visual and musical, lies in its convergence, and with it the possibility to embrace a new level of reality, which can be very satisfying to the soul. We hope to include a movie clip from Ziewe's forthcoming animation on next month's cover disc.



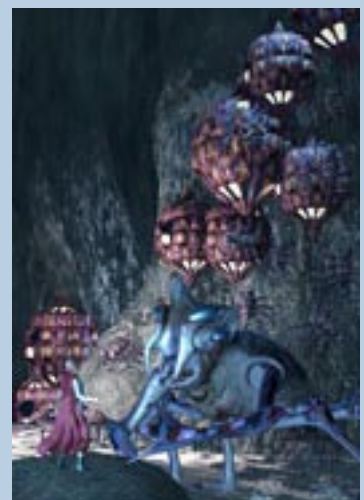
Peter Hamilton cover "Reality Dysfunction"



"Stranded"



"Lunar liason"



Vernor Vinge cover "A Deepness in the Sky"