

Comic-Con Artist Talent

by Kat Avila

[Comic-Con International](#) in San Diego, California, is the U.S.'s largest comic and pop culture convention (though it draws only a quarter of the attendance of the humongous biannual Comic Market in Tokyo, Japan). This year's event was July 22th through July 25th.

Among the 43 official special guests were Kinuko Y. Craft (illustrator/fantasy artist), Dustin Nguyen (DC Comics, WildStorm), Stan Sakai (Usagi Yojimbo), Romeo Tanghal (DC Comics war books), and Adrian Tomine (Optic Nerve).

What follows is a sampling of the Asian-American talent found at Comic-Con; it is not an exhaustive list. You need to come down and see for yourself!

SPECIAL GUEST: **STAN SAKAI**, *Usagi Yojimbo* samurai comic
<http://www.usagiyojimbo.com>

This year is the 20th anniversary of the samurai bunny comic *Usagi Yojimbo* (trans. "rabbit bodyguard"). Miyamoto Usagi is loosely modeled after the legendary 17th-century swordsman Miyamoto Musashi. When I checked out a copy of the well-researched, Eisner award-winning collection *Usagi Yojimbo: Grasscutter*, I had to tell the librarian that it wasn't a manga but an American comic with Japanese content.

"You're the reason I came to this convention," said a first-time CCI attendee at Stan's spotlight panel moderated by his Dark Horse Comics editor Diana Schutz. Diana is Stan's biggest inspiration for stories - "You have a deadline." The hour went by fast as Stan sketched for fans and showed game and cartoon clips.

PHUONG-MAI BUI-QUANG (PMBQ), *Tea Club* school comedy/action comic
<http://www.pmbq.com>

At the first meeting of the Tallan University tea club, Mr. Bear throws a full kettle of tea at cat girl Hana Neko and she gets in an uppercut. For Comic-Con, PMBQ left her *Tea Club* comic characters and merchandise at home. "I was primarily there to speak informally with other publishers about my work and to hang out with friends. The exhibit hall was a bit overwhelming; definitely filled with cool stuff, but I wasn't able to fully explore it because I quickly tired of the crowds."

ANDY CHANG, Metal Box Comics
<http://www.metalboxcomics.com>

Andy produces kid-friendly comics, such as *Northwood Meadows* about a group of city park animals forced by budget cuts to go out and look for work. He said, "At Comic-Con, *Northwood Meadows* (NWM) comic strip was probably the most popular series...and even the legendary Jeanie Schulz [Mrs. Charles M. Schulz, "Snoopy"] took some time in her busy schedule to visit my little small press table. She thought the characters from NWM were fun, delightful to see and read, and encouraged me to continue making these little comic strips."



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SEAN CHEN, Marvel Comics
<http://www.seanchensart.com>

Sean came to Comic-Con in 1994 with a portfolio for review and was hired by Valiant Comics, then later DC Comics and Marvel Comics. He has worked on Marvel's *Iron Man*, *Wolverine*, and *X-Men: The End* and was selling original comic art. After the original pages are scanned, they are returned to the artists - 2/3 goes to the penciler (Sean) and 1/3 goes to the inker. As we were talking (Sean's mom was there, too), he was approached for a commissioned sketch.



FADED CAMEL, original merchandise
<http://www.fadedcamel.com>

Sadie Figueroa (T-shirts), Mari Inukai (ceramic toy figurines), Sena Inukai (little helper), and Elizabeth Ito (Mr. Monster) were staffing the Faded Camel booth. They are part of a community of artists founded by Hugo Morales and "C" Raggio IV.



HENRY LIAO, *The Commitment* basketball comic
<http://otakkism.com>

Henry was at Comic-Con with Kiozen Studios (<http://www.kiozen.com>). "My personal projects are put on hold, as Kiozen is assigning me a project that is just killing me with all the designs I have to do from scratch. Juggling that and full-time work, you know. Tidbits of what you missed in 2003: I got hired by Disney & WB as a contractor, worked on *Lion King 1.5* and *Swan Princess* DVD covers and billboards, *Harry Potter* storyboards, got tired of doing the work and quit. There."

JEFFREY MOY, *Video Game Gals* sci-fi/fantasy comic
<http://jeffreymoy.com>

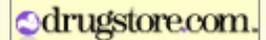
Jeffrey Moy says his 64-page graphic novel *Video Game Gals* may be out next year. "They're kinda like rescuers. They help people who get stuck in the dimensional portals, which are kind of based on video games. Every world, every dimension that they go into will be different. They'll enter a different game. They have to figure out what's going on. Some games are simple like shooters; other games are more like a mystery thing going on."

Jeffrey is the fraternal twin of comic book artist Philip Moy. When asked what he looks for in artwork, Jeffrey said, "This may sound bad but pretty women." His 32-page sketchbook *N2: Nice and Naughty* flaunted pinups of video game girls Chun-Li and Cammy (*Street Fighter*), Ayane and Kasumi (*Dead or Alive*), Mai (*King of Fighters*), Ivy and Taki (*Soul Caliber*), and Morgana (*Dark Stalker Vampire Hunter*).



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