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Got Monsters?

So does Artist Carlos Huante

By Kat Avila | Web Published 12.19.2006

Halloween may have passed, but the monsters are still with us. Next time you bring out the scary movies for a weekend marathon of horror, be sure to have copies of Carlos Huante's books "Monstruo" and its addendum "Mas Creaturas" to pass around with the popcorn.

Carlos Huante, born and raised in East L.A., has been involved in the animation and film industry for over two decades as both a layout artist and character designer. But he got his start as an artist-to-watch as a first grader who was photographed for a local paper with his creation from a Mexican mask-making class.

I discovered Huante's art while browsing the Design Studio Press booth at Comic-Con International 2006 in San Diego. His monsters represent the most virile soldiers of their species. They have to scare themselves into our nightmares, to be worth the price of the movie ticket we paid to see some of them in action.

"Monstruo" and the supplementary "Mas Creaturas" are collections of rough sketches, completed drawings and paintings, and, additionally in "Monstruo," views of sculptural models are included.

The unusual cover graphics for both artbooks are excerpted from a piece called "Punk Pirate Zombies and Alien Ghosts." The rough is published in "Monstruo" and the complete painting can be viewed in "Mas Creaturas."

In an interview I did with Carlos Huante for a comic news webzine, he shared "Punk Pirate's" backstory: "I thought, what if some pirates (my N.C. Wyeth influence), who are stuck on an island where their ship was run aground, encountered an ancient wreckage of a space ship, which carried an alien virus. The dead aliens' ghosts haunt the island. The pirates become infected by the virus and, instead of dying, become zombies."

When I look through "Monstruo," I see an ability to revisualize humans as fiercer, uglier, nastier, and stronger. But what keeps Huante's monsters appealing is they maintain souls. I asked him whether their personalities came from the backstories or if actual people served as inspiration for his monsters.

Huante answered, "For the compositional works, it's more like the emotions or the feelings, the vibe of the things you see every day, rather than the people themselves being the inspiration. Mix that with what I find interesting. For the character designs, it does come down to interesting people, but it's not quite that simple. I'll design something, and only after I have the first concepts do I start to think of whom the character best resembles, physically and personality-wise."

In addition to two artbooks available through Design Studio Press, Huante has a two-volume DVD set, "The Techniques of



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Carlos Huante." Volume 1 is "Creature Sketching and Design," and Volume 2 is "Digital Creature Painting."

"His [Huante's] work is incredible," agreed Miguel Rojas, a finalist in L. Ron Hubbard's 22nd annual Illustrators of the Future contest, after he purchased one of Huante's books and DVDs (see my writeup on [Rojas for LatinoLA](#)).

If you are passionate about monsters in art and media, then Huante's books are a must-have. As you peruse his books, you begin to understand (chillingly) a little of what he means when he says, "Artists are ronin, and art is my gun. I am aiming for the heart or right between the eyes."

You can view Carlos Huante's work or read more about him either at [his personal web site](#) or at [his publisher's web site](#).

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