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Illustrator of the Future: Miguel Rojas

Interview with up-and-coming book illustrator

By Kat Avila | Web Published 9.1.2006

I was looking forward to meeting artist Miguel Rojas at the 22nd annual L. Ron Hubbard's Writers & Illustrators of the Future contest awards ceremony at the San Diego Air & Space Museum on August 18. The invitation was issued by Galaxy Press, publisher of L. Ron Hubbard's works. Though I was a bit leery about going at first because Hubbard is after all the founder of Scientology, I was assured the contests were respected talent discovery vehicles within the science fiction community. This was confirmed by the star power of the contest judges who attended the ceremony, which included such notables as Brian Herbert, Frederik Pohl, and Anne McCaffrey.



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There is a Writers of the Future anthology that includes the work of all 24 award recipients, both writers and illustrators. Miguel Rojas was one of the 12 finalists in the Illustrators of the Future contest, and he did the illustration for Michail Velichansky's award-winning tale "Games on the Children's Ward."

After the awards ceremony, Miguel greeted fans and signed complimentary copies of the anthology. A couple days later, I e-mailed him to ask what the preceding week had been like for him. I understood there were workshops for the award winners.

MIGUEL ROJAS: This was a memorable week. I have never been treated so good. Being able to talk with well-known sci-fi and fantasy illustrator Stephen Hickman was an incredible opportunity.

I was able to walk away with knowledge of the business of book illustrations and what publishers may or may not be looking for. The instructors for the workshop gave me useful information such as composition and lighting techniques that will only better my artwork. They gave us honest and professional critiques of our work. Most importantly was the friendliness of the entire workshop. The atmosphere was festive and very "family" oriented.

We, illustrators and writers, supported each other and complimented each other on the quality of our work. We all felt that we not only walked away with an award and respect from professionals in the industry, but with a new list of lifelong friends.

KAT AVILA for LatinoLA: How much time were you given to complete your illustration for the Writers of the Future anthology?

MR: We were all given one month to complete our illustration for the stories. Michail Velichansky's story was an amazing story with great visuals. I focused on the first time one of the main characters, Shawn, met the Death Man. I wanted to show the surprise that Shawn felt when he saw the Death Man coming through the walls through the pictures in the children's ward. I wanted to capture how the Death Man towered over a startled Shawn.



LLA: What are your immediate plans for the future?

MR: Right now I'm hoping to get into the video game industry as a concept artist. I am developing three different portfolios that I will be sending to various gaming companies in the San Diego area. I have a few other projects going with various clients that range from book illustrations to character designs.

I will be attending the San Diego Film Festival and have also been invited to be a judge for an art contest for kids at a Barnes & Noble in Oceanside, California.

LLA: Good luck, Miguel, on all your future endeavors! By the way, LatinoLA readers can see some of Miguel Rojas' work and support him by surfing over to his web site at <http://www.miguelrojas.com>

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