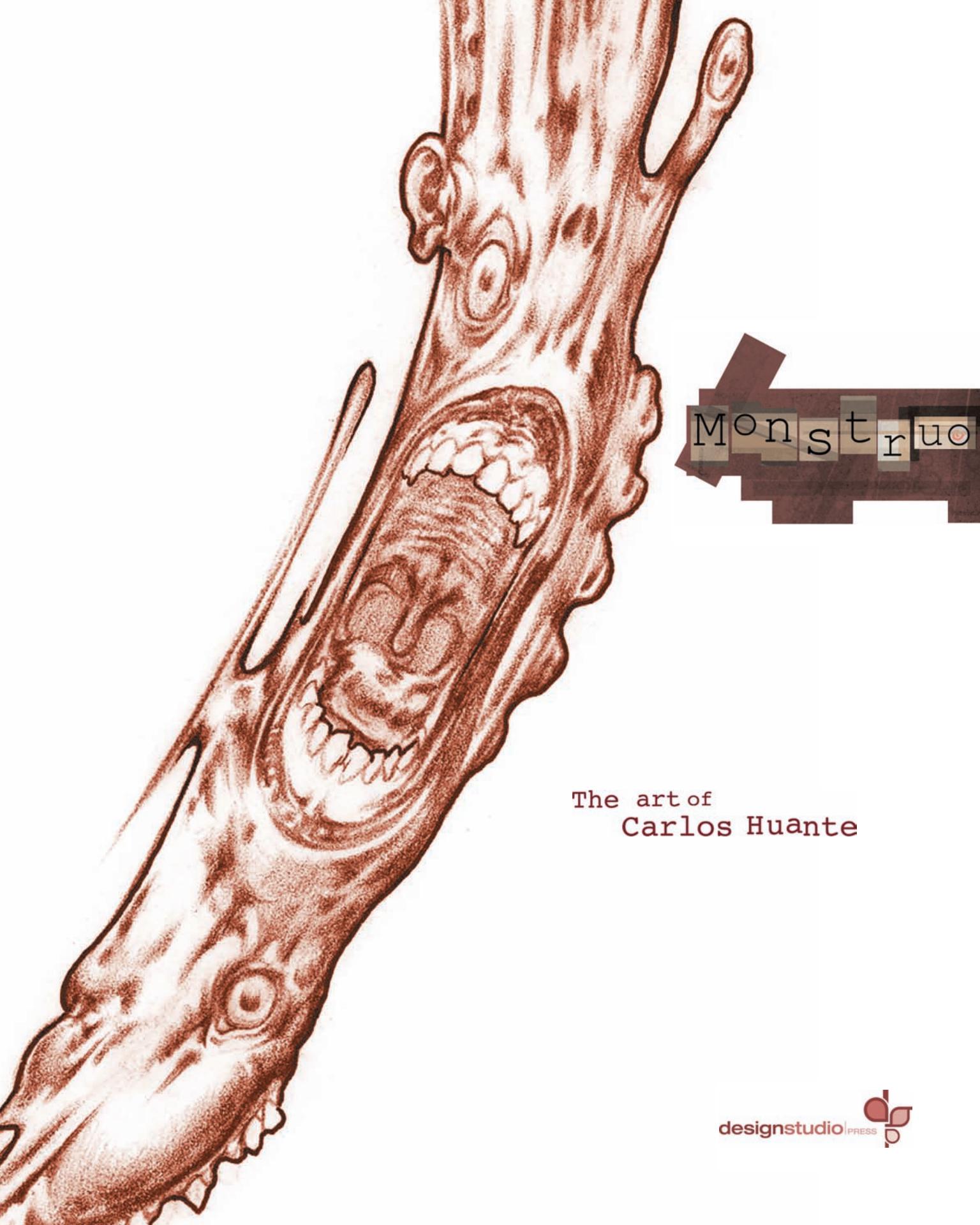


Monstruo

El Oso

The art of  
Carlos Huante



The art of  
Carlos Huante

## Dedication

Dedicated to two people. First in memory of my older cousin, Johnny Vasquez, who is my earliest memory of inspiration. Everyone has that cool older cousin or sibling that grabs their attention just by virtue of their being, well he was that to me. Whenever he'd visit, he'd take the time to sit and draw. He never made me feel like it was an imposition. We were just two guys drawing hot rods and dragsters.

The second person I must dedicate this book to is Monica Huante, my wife, my muse. Something must be said about a spouse who allows their mate to indulge themselves in their chosen vocation without complaint, without restraint. She is my inspiration, without whom my life would be a dark hallway with no doors.

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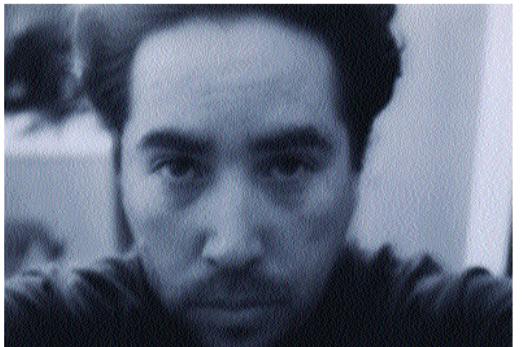
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## Introduction

Some of my earliest memories are of drawing. I remember my cousin, Johnny Vasquez from Phoenix, Arizona, who would visit us in the summer sometimes. He was at least 13 years older than I, and I remember us sitting on the tile floor of the entryway to my house in East Los Angeles, with red pencils in hand and a stack of paper. We would draw hot rods, dragsters or anything with half the engine sticking out of the hood and the exhaust pipes peeking out in front of the back tires. Man, that was some good fun. I thought his drawings were magic. They had strong shadows and sharp highlights, mind-blowing to a four-year-old kid. All I knew was that I had to draw better than him the next time he visited. I knew it was ambitious but I was determined, and though I never had the chance to show him what he inspired in me, and that I actually make a living drawing, I know he'd get a kick out of the things I'm doing now.

Besides *chilaquiles* and *Yerba Buena* (mint tea), I grew up on "stop-motion" monster movies. As everything is new when you're a child, I don't remember which one I saw first. I do believe *King Kong* was the first, then *Mighty Joe Young* and all the *Sinbad* movies, including *Jason and the Argonauts* and *Mysterious Island*. Obviously Boris Karloff, Bela Lugosi, Lon Chaney and Lon Chaney, Jr. had a great deal to do with my early memories of film, but Ray Harryhausen was the embodiment of cool for me as a child. As an adult I can see clearly that his work is still the mark to measure by.

A lot of people get caught up in celebrating the technical achievements in special effects, and forget about personality, life. I don't know if the hyper-realism being achieved in CG for spaceships and matte paintings is the solution for characters. There are few who have given personality and life to fully CG characters. I thought Go-Motion, which was used in *Dragon Slayer* for the dragon, was a perfect combination of computer,

camera and puppetry work. Unfortunately I also heard that the cost was not so perfect, but man did that thing look good! All this being said, I'm no "special effects guy". I'm just an illustrator who has worked in the film industry for the last 10 years and have seen its changes, some of which are not necessarily good.

All I've got to say is, "Where are the monster movies!?" There are none. There are lots of action-adventure movies, some superhero movies, but really no monster movies. It's a dead genre. Unfortunately, the people with the money tell us things must be this way. Blockbuster "B" movies are all the rage in Hollywood these days—bad movies with big budgets. Part of the reason, I think, is that audiences have been starved for so long for something fresh and original, that they'll flock to see any hyped-up big budget film...at least the first weekend.

What does all this have to do with monster movies? Well, it means that Hollywood won't be changing its tune anytime soon. Formulaic films will rule as long as they are making money, and innovative, inspired science-fiction stories with great monsters will take a back seat, (actually they're not even in the car yet). I'm hopeful that the day will come when Hollywood stops giving into fear, and allows some talented director to make another great monster movie like the first or second *Alien*, *American Werewolf in London*, *The Thing*, *Predator*, or any of the classics I mentioned earlier. Until they do I'll just continue drawing, painting and sculpting for myself, and sharing the art with you in books like this.

Carlos Huante  
Autumn 2003

## Biography

Carlos Huante was born in East L.A. in 1965 to Carlos, Sr. and Amada Huante, the third of four children. From the very get out of the womb, the arts were in him. Both his parents were from creative families, one conservative and predominantly musical, the other eccentric and intuitively creative in everything from drawing to music to costume-making. With his father keeping Carlos' interests in the sciences and the real world, his mother enjoyed the fantastic, which included monster movies.

Carlos' first grade class was given a course in Mexican mask-making. This first experience with clay was all it took for Carlos to realize how much he liked it, and how much other people enjoyed him doing it. They photographed him and his first sculpt for the local East Los Angeles paper.

His interest in music grew side-by-side with his interest in art. He received awards for music and art during his grade-school years, so his focus on a career as an artist (illustrator) did not become completely clear till he was faced with having to decide whether to go to a 5-year tech private high school or to a public high school where he could study what he pleased. He decided to attend the tech private school to study architecture, but as the school would have the final say as to which profession would best suit him, they decided to make Carlos a printer. After only one year he decided that this school was not for him.

His sophomore year Carlos enrolled at Schurr High School in Montebello, California, where he involved himself with music. It wasn't until his junior year, when he saw the school's annual art show and noticed how serious some of the art students were about their art, that he decided to finally enter the school's art program. He received trophies and honorable mentions during his two years in the program, and some of his drawings were purchased by the school. He graduated from high school in 1983.

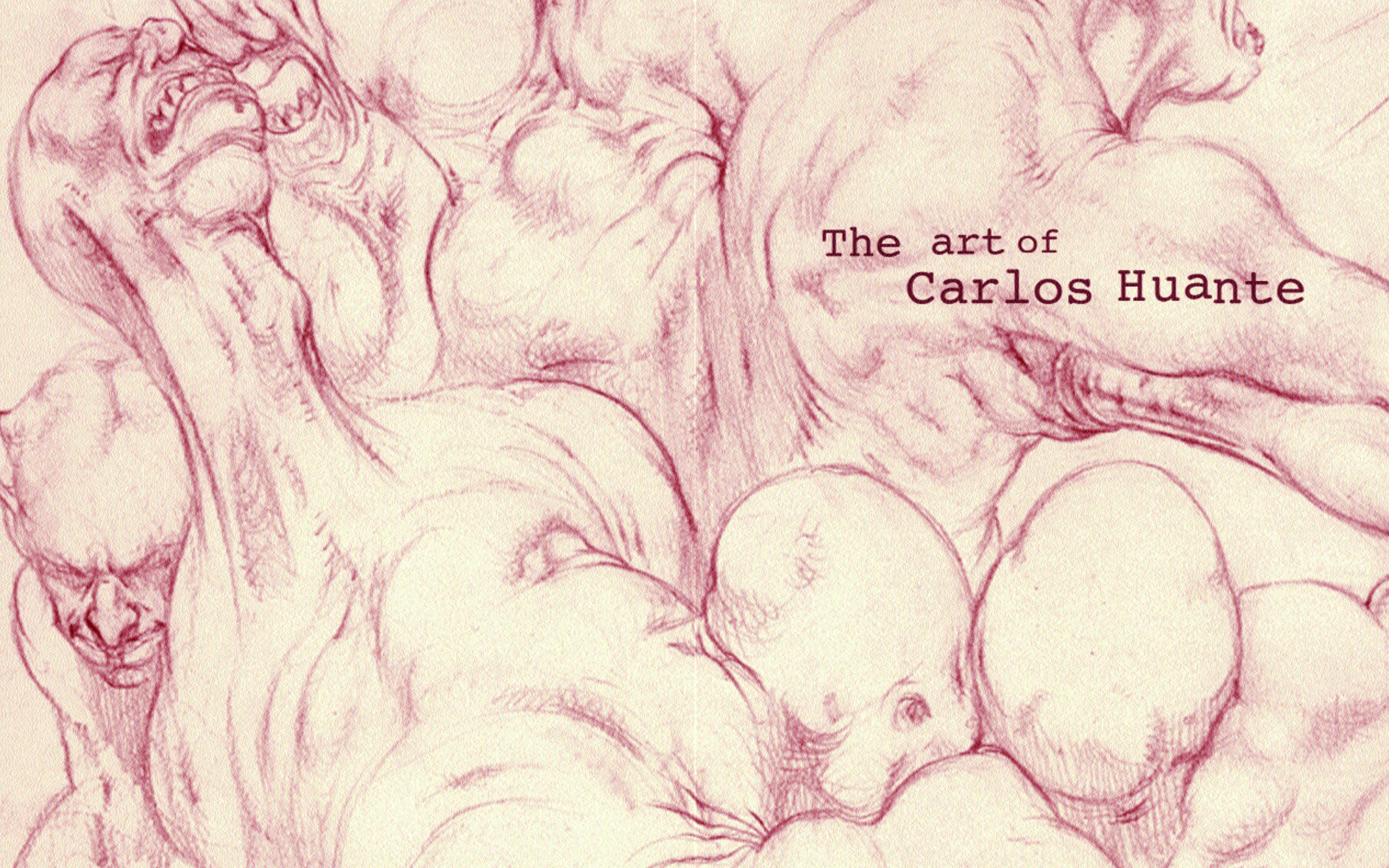
Carlos attended East Los Angeles College for a year. While taking night classes in life drawing at Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, he met Mike Spooner, a successful illustrator and great draftsman, who worked at Filmation, an animation company. It was there, thanks to Mike Spooner, that Carlos started his career. Like most young artists, he started off as a runner...running lots of errands. A year later he was working as an artist in the Layout department, where he learned a lot about politics and a little about

layout. More importantly he discovered there was a department devoted exclusively to designing characters, called the Models department, and that every animation company has one.

He left Filmation and started work as an assistant layout artist at the sister company to Hanna-Barbera, Ruby and Spears. There he worked under Cosmo Anzolotti and learned all about layout for animation. But Carlos still hadn't found what he was looking for. The next season Carlos landed a job as a character designer on the *Ghostbusters* animated series, a dream job. Carlos considers this the true beginning of his career.

After two years in the animation industry, Carlos realized that being an artist required more than just good drawing skills. The politics of the job were almost more than he could handle and after the *Ghostbusters* job ended he stopped pursuing art jobs and nearly quit the industry. Carlos held odd jobs off and on, more off than on, but never stopped drawing. Two years into what would become a three-year hiatus, Carlos met the love of his life, Monica Martinez. Carlos and Monica were wed a year later on June 2, 1989 and have been happily married ever since. Also in that time, Carlos' faith in Christ matured and he decided to commit his life, and has been a believer ever since. In the month of March of 1989, Carlos, inspired by the fact that he was about to be married, decided to give the animation industry another try, and ended right back on the *Ghostbusters* animated series. From that time forward he has worked incessantly, all over the animation and film industry. He's worked for Rick Baker, Rob Bottin, Steven Spielberg, Ron Howard, Guillermo Del Toro and the very significant Chiodo Bros. who, through his new friend at the time (in 1992) Miles Tevez, gave Carlos his first live-action job.

Carlos' professional career in animation lasted for 8 years before he decided to jump with both legs into the film industry. Today Carlos works for Lucas Digital and is part of the creature development team.



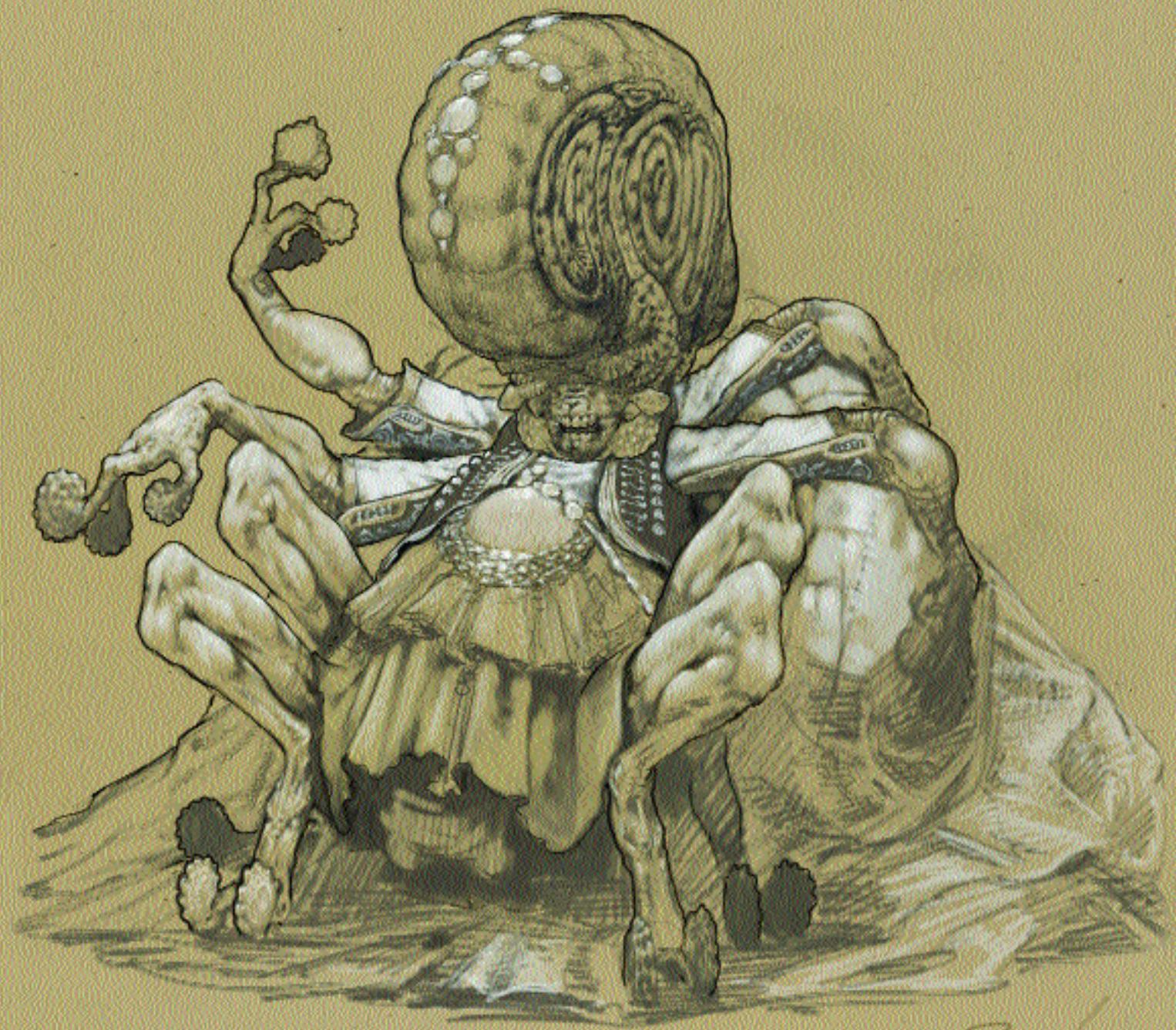
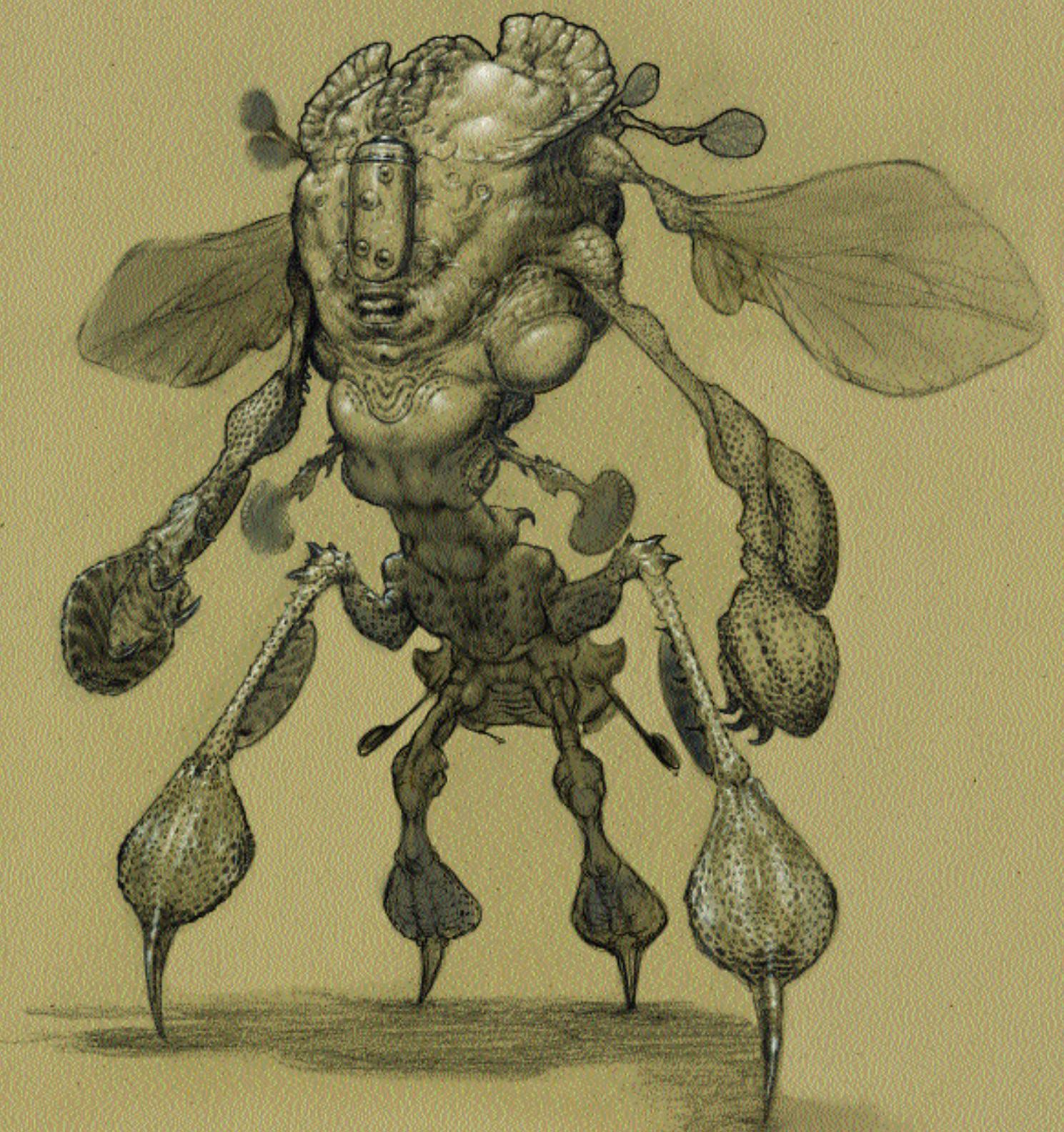
The art of  
Carlos Huante

















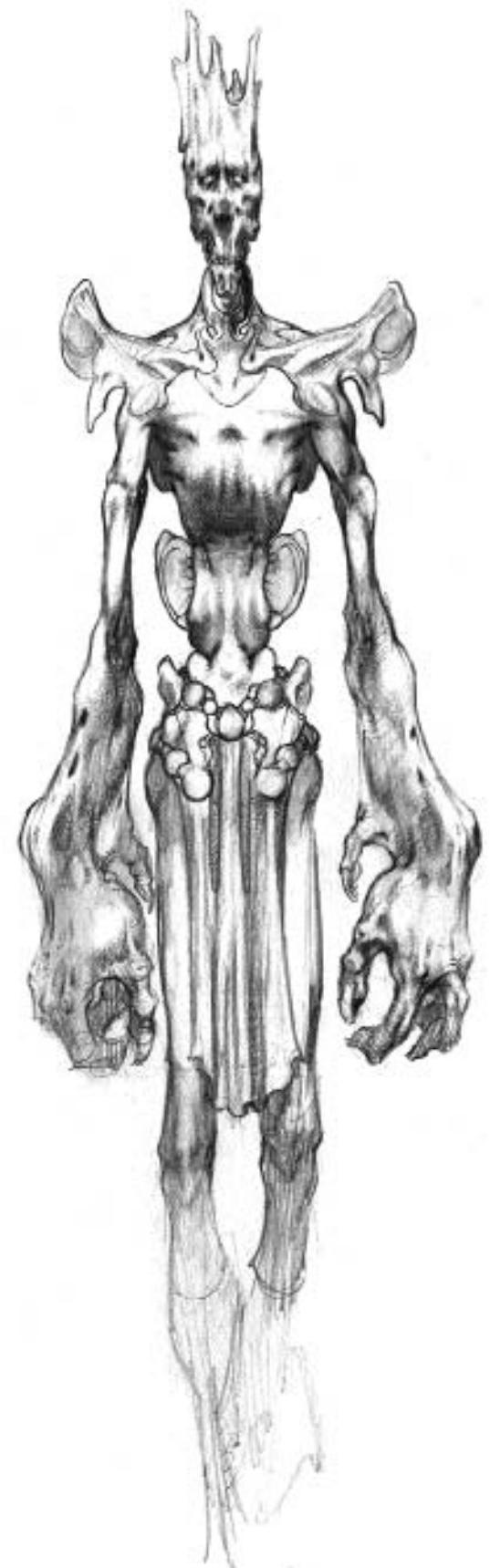
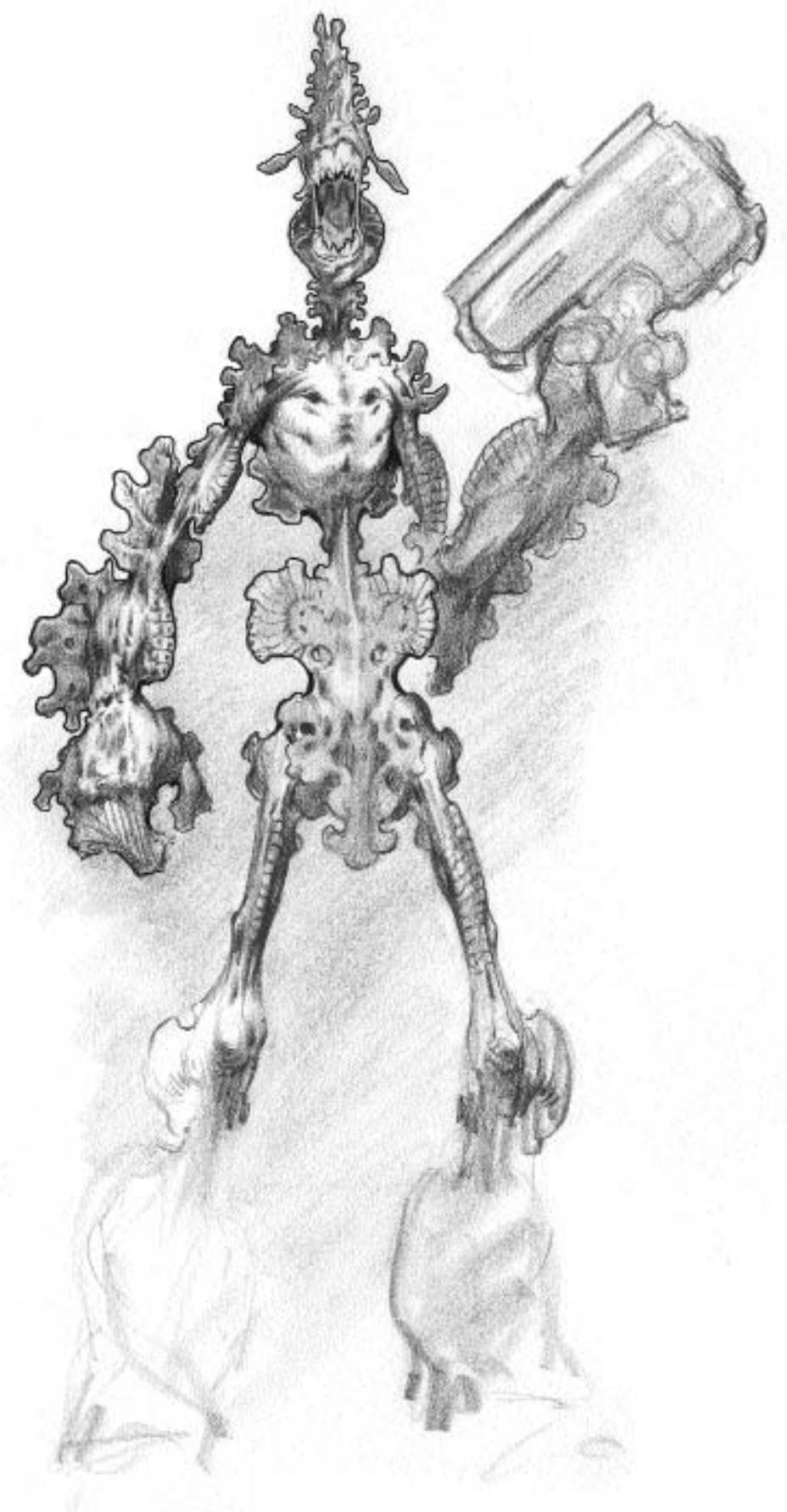


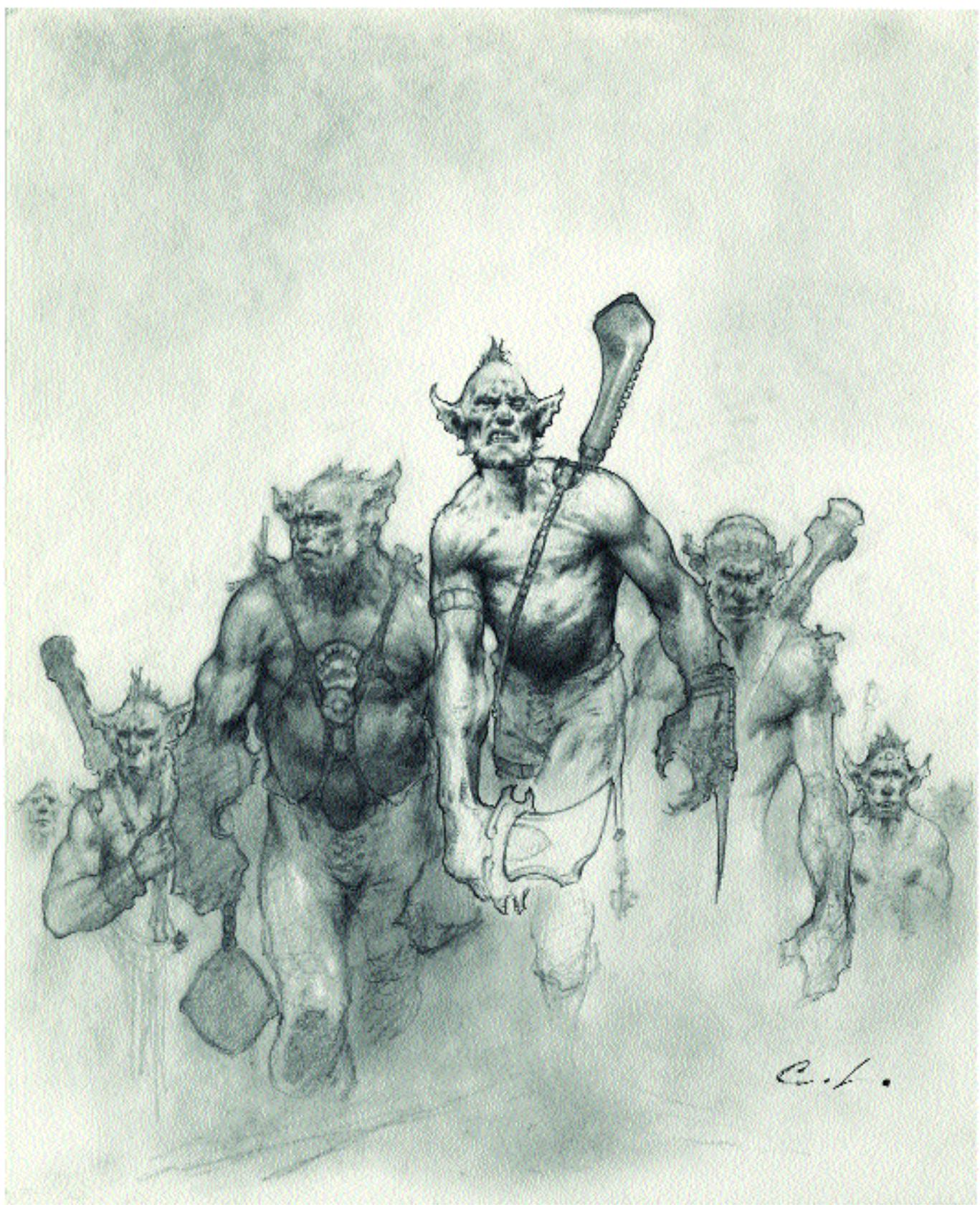


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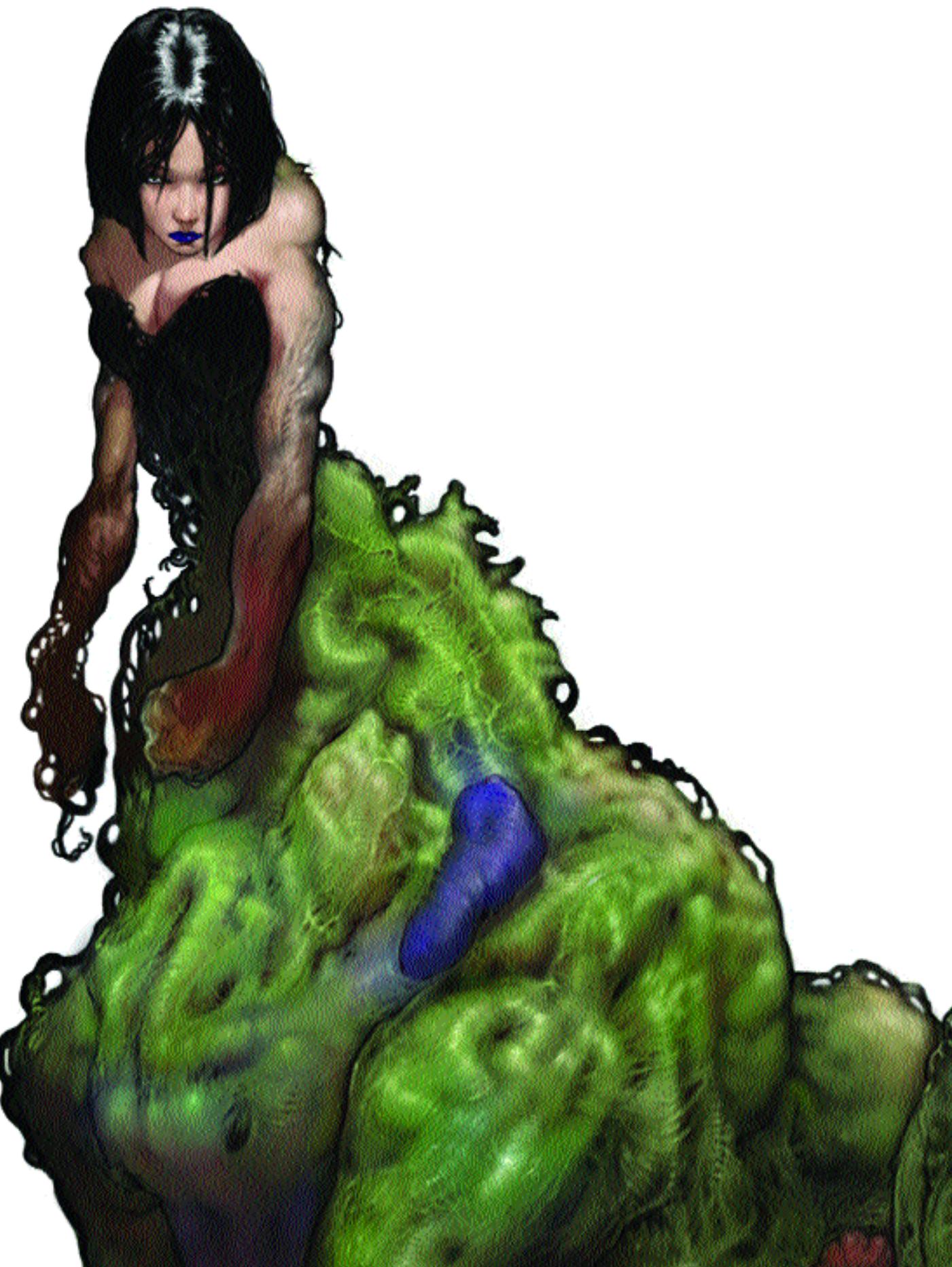














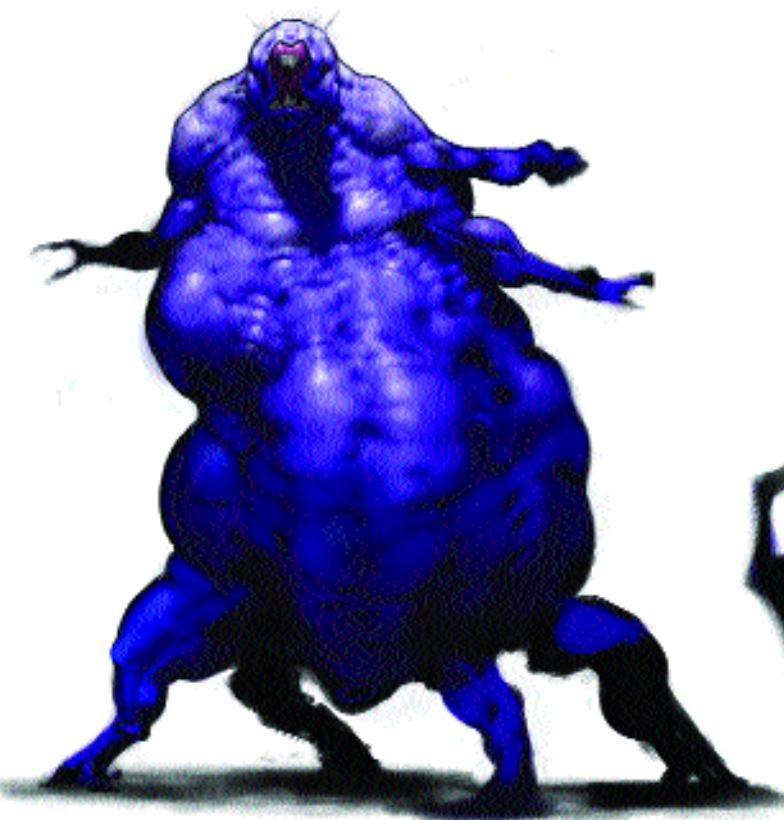


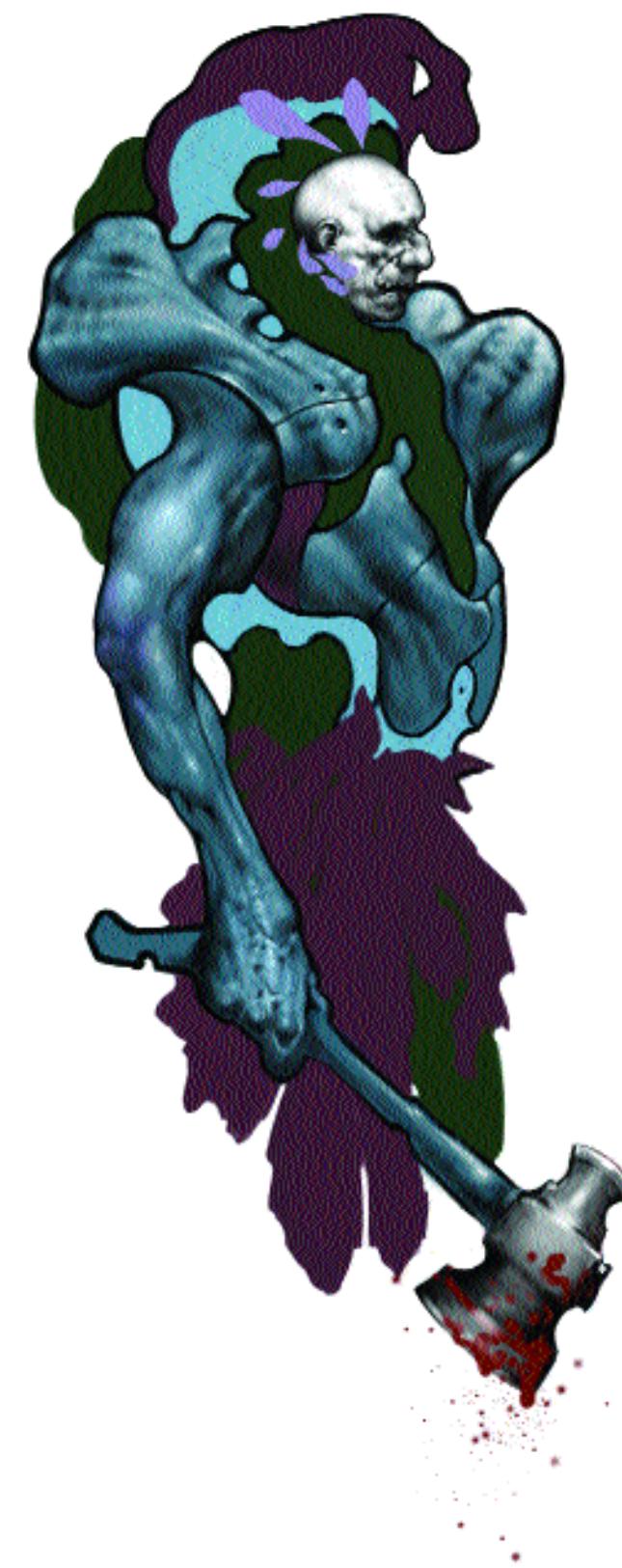






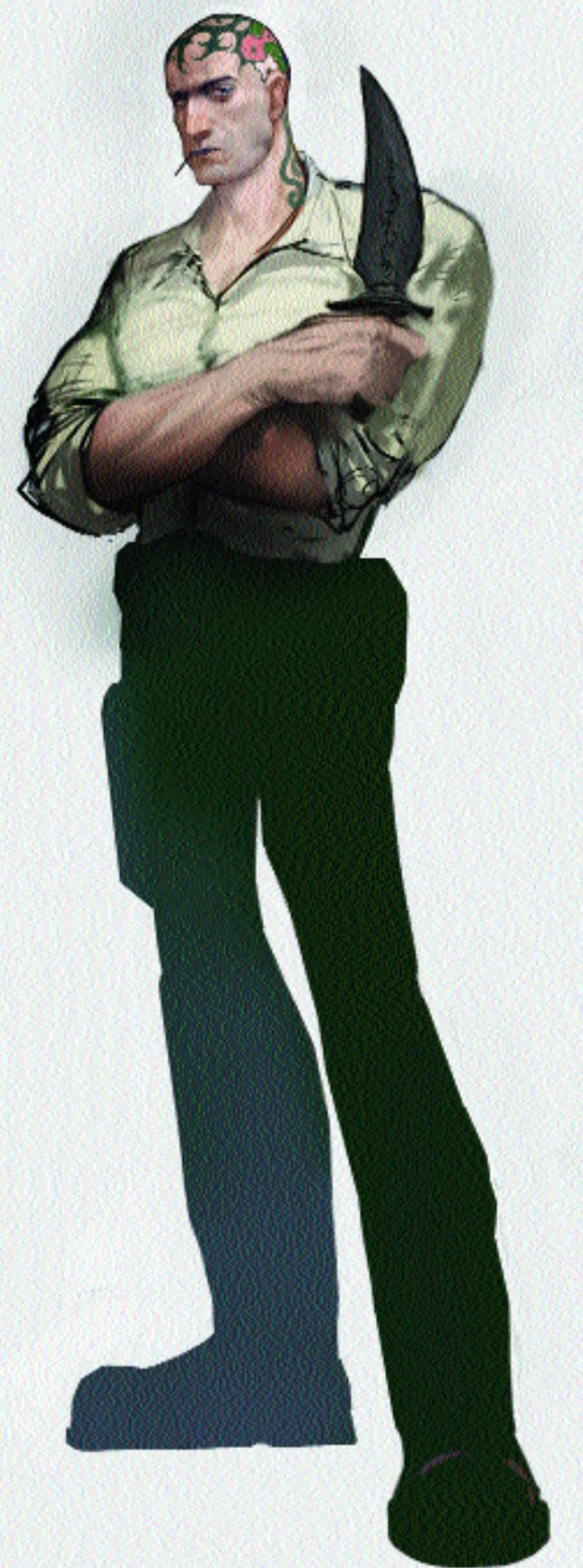












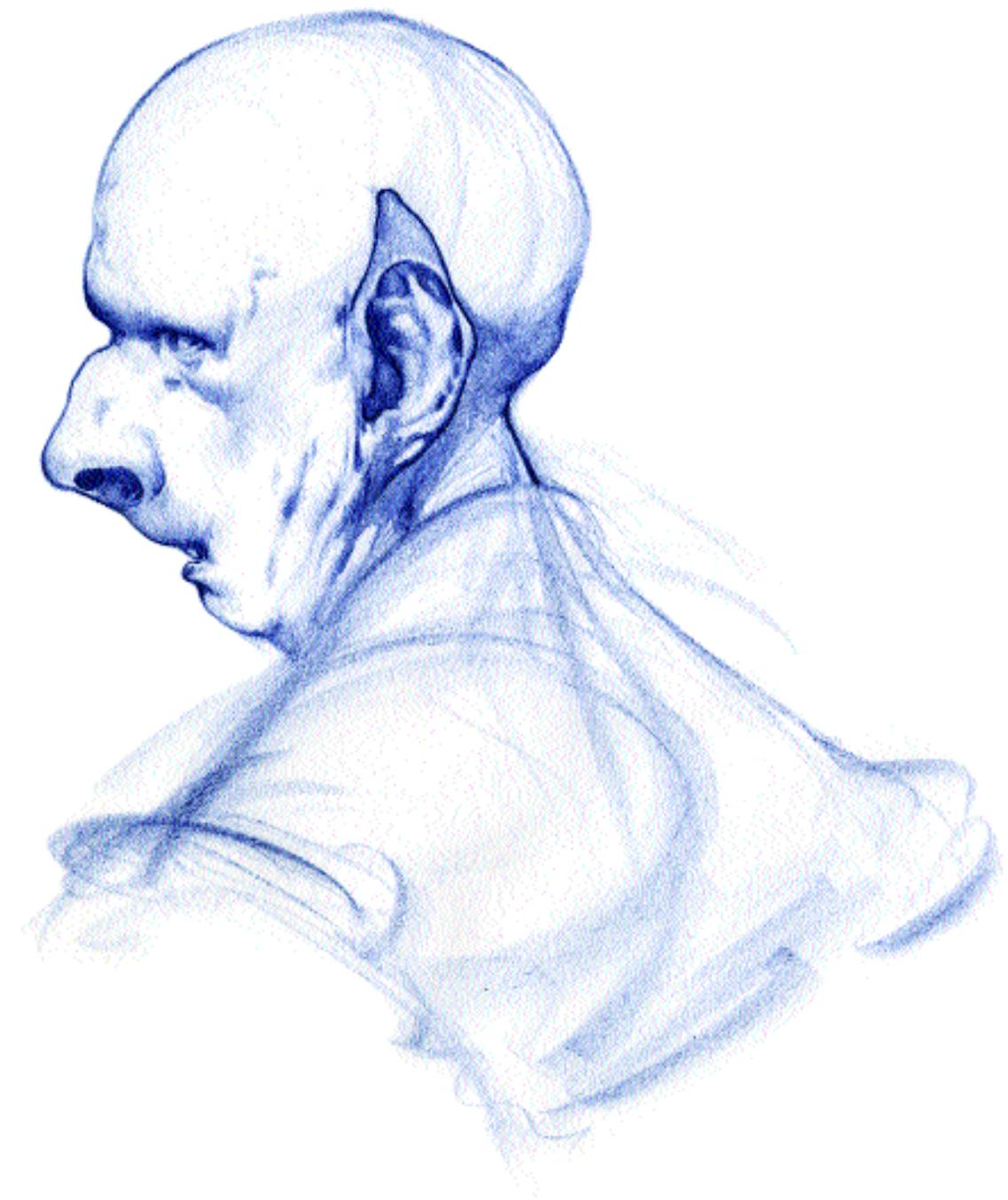


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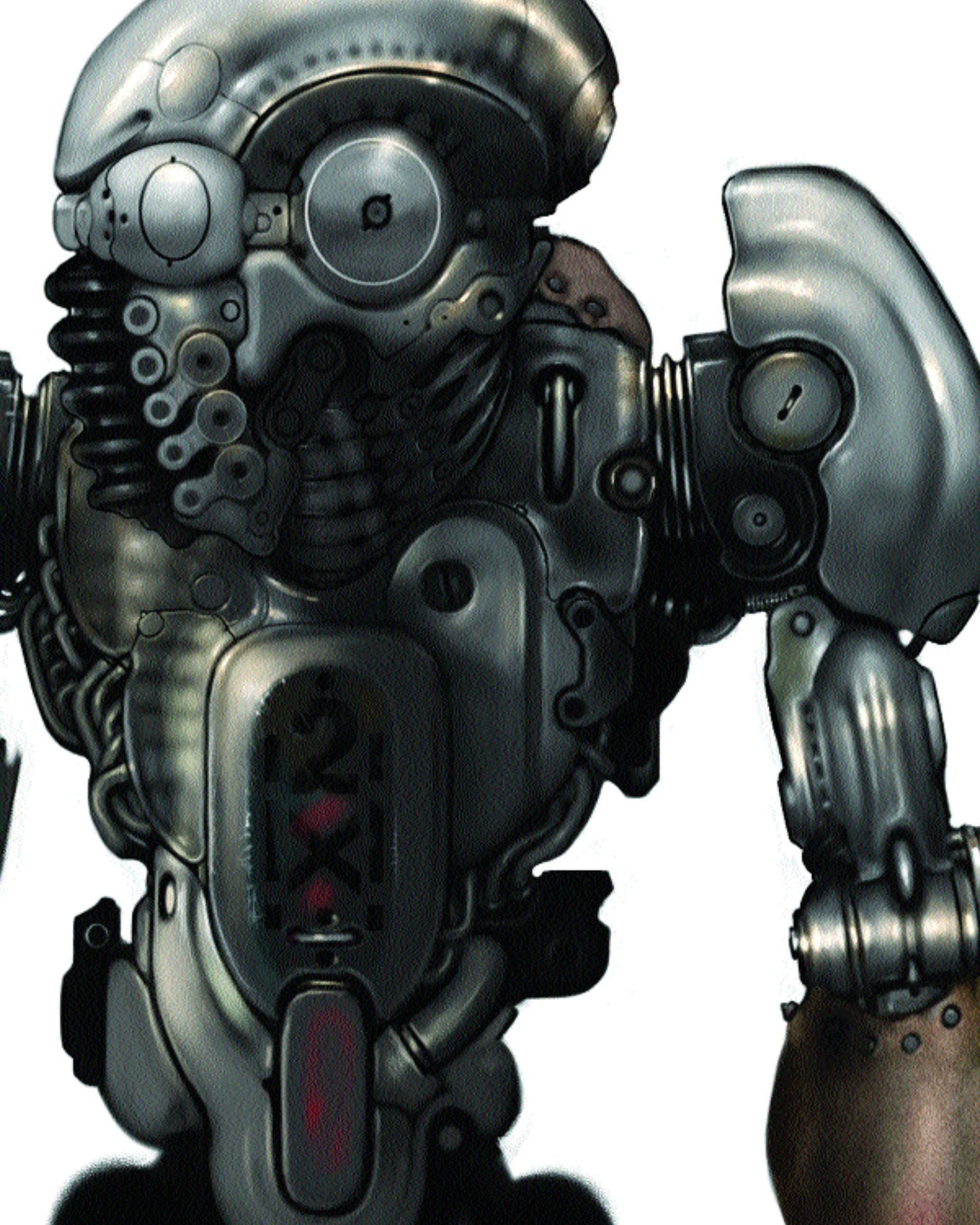
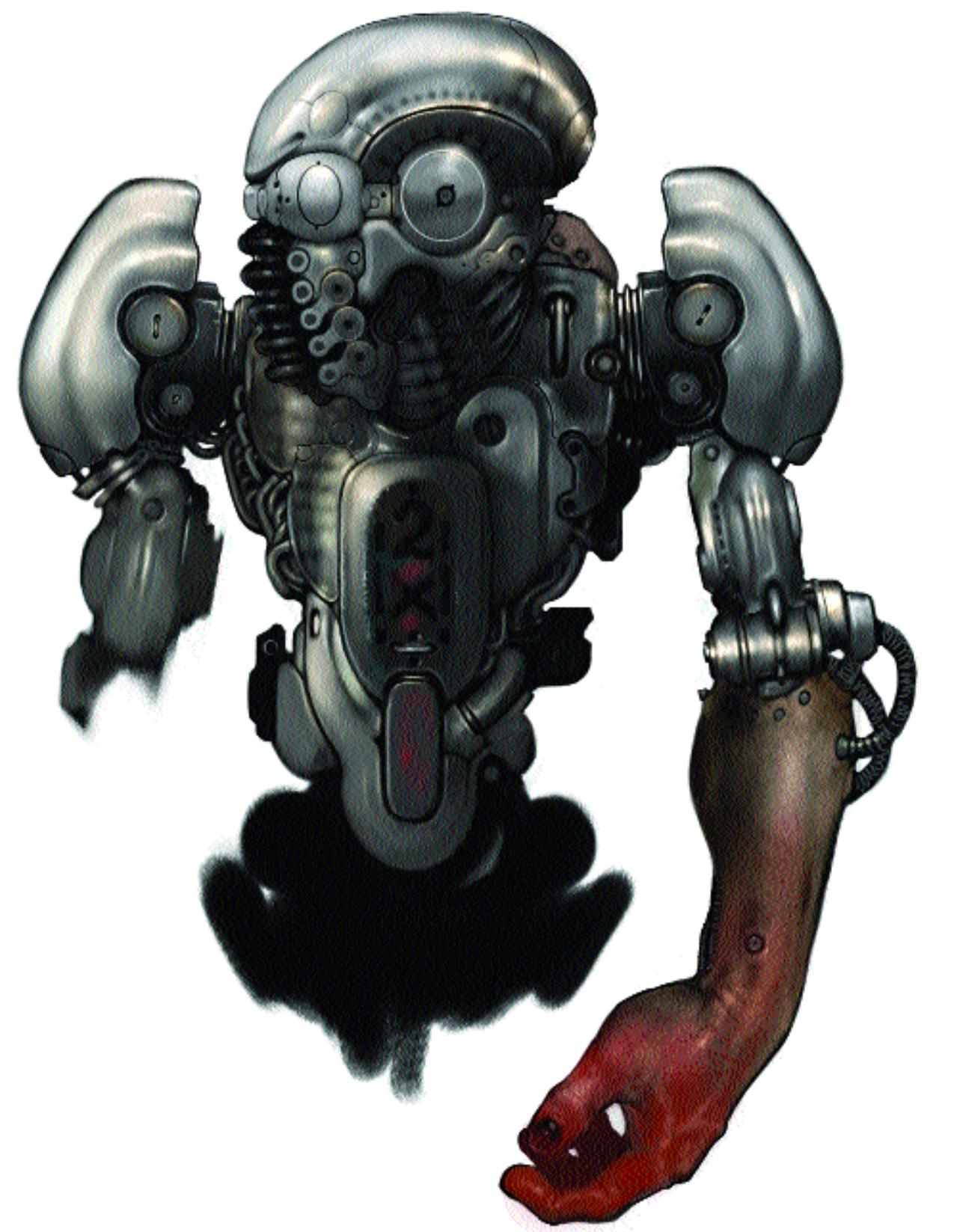


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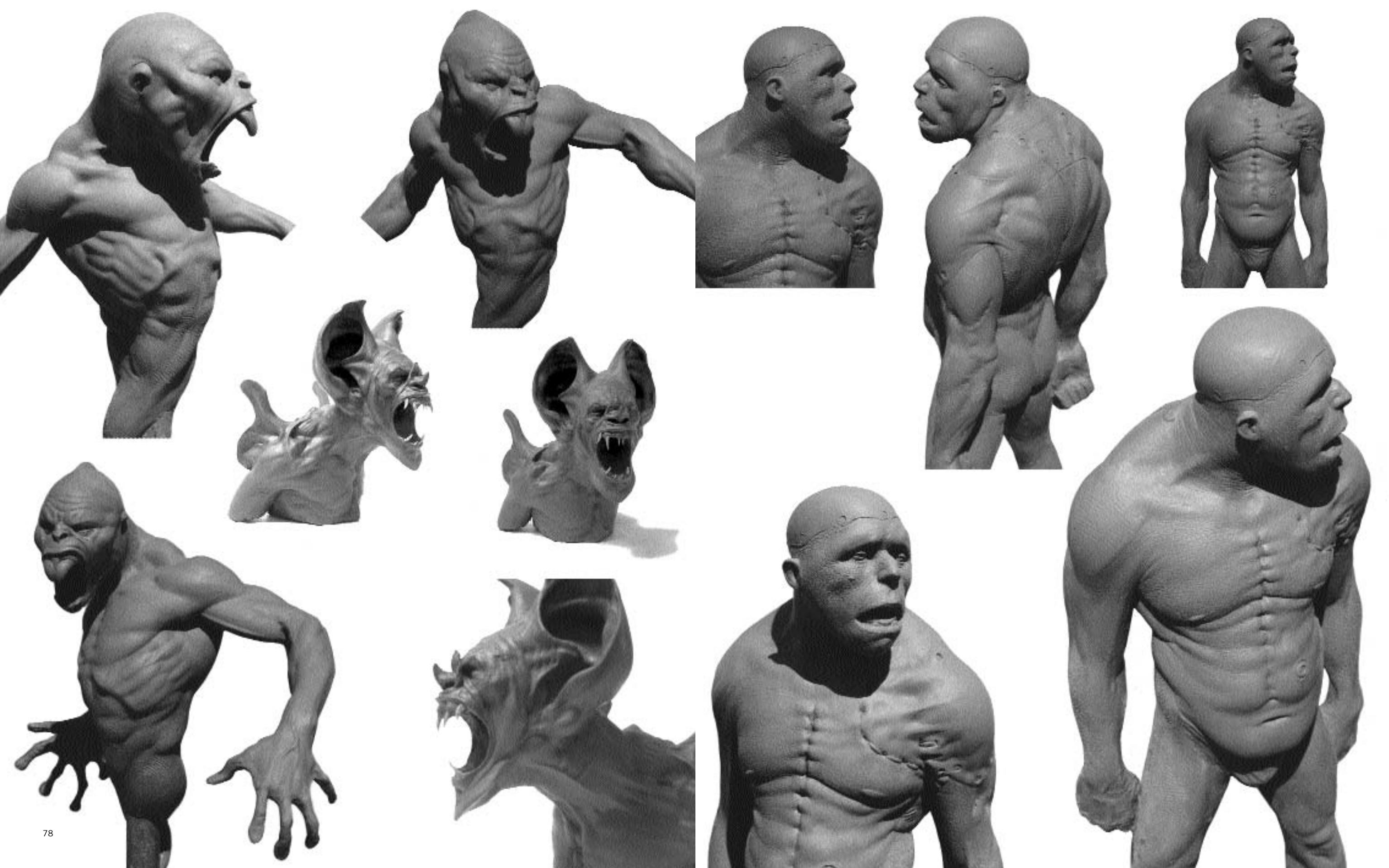






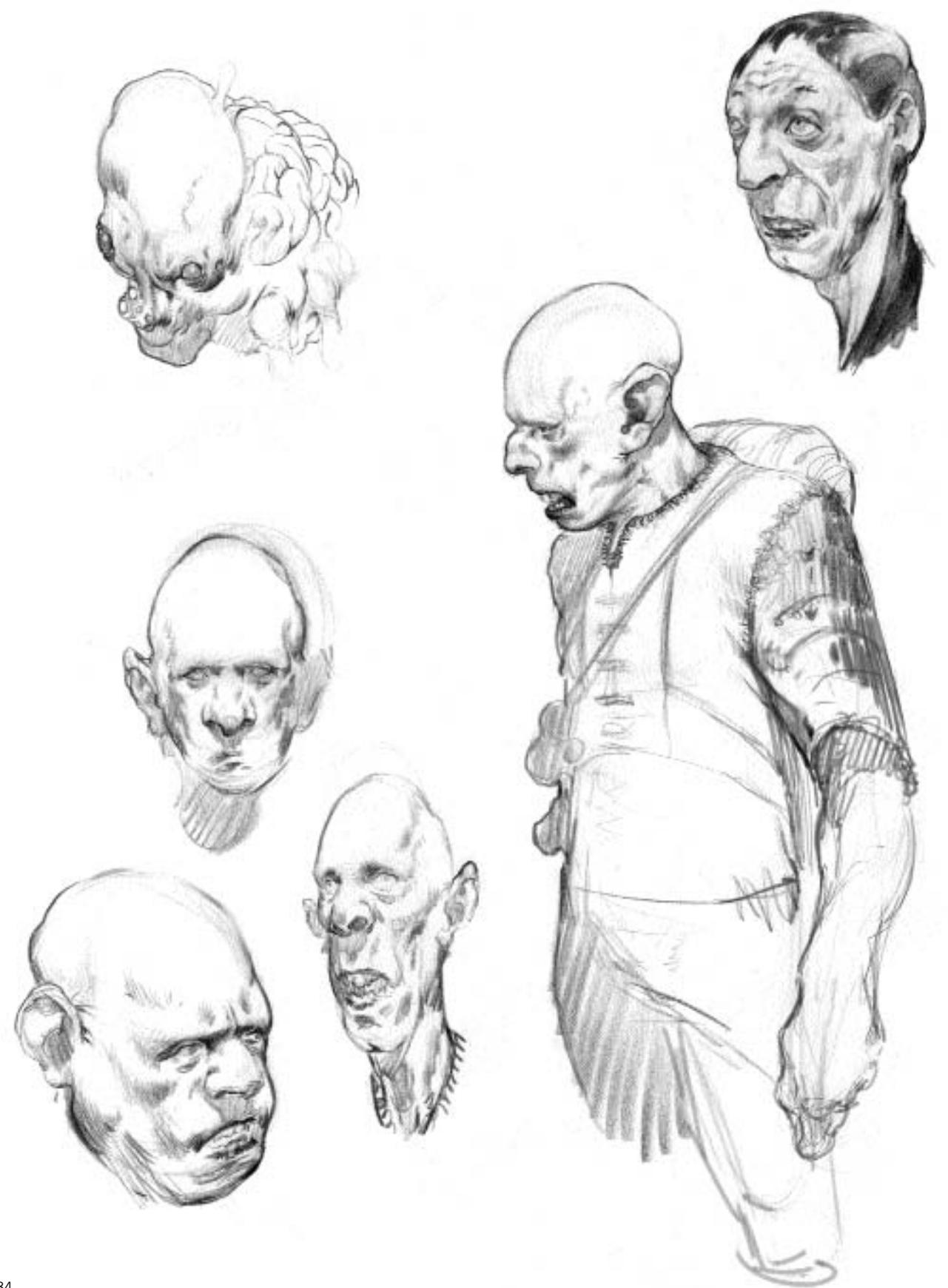


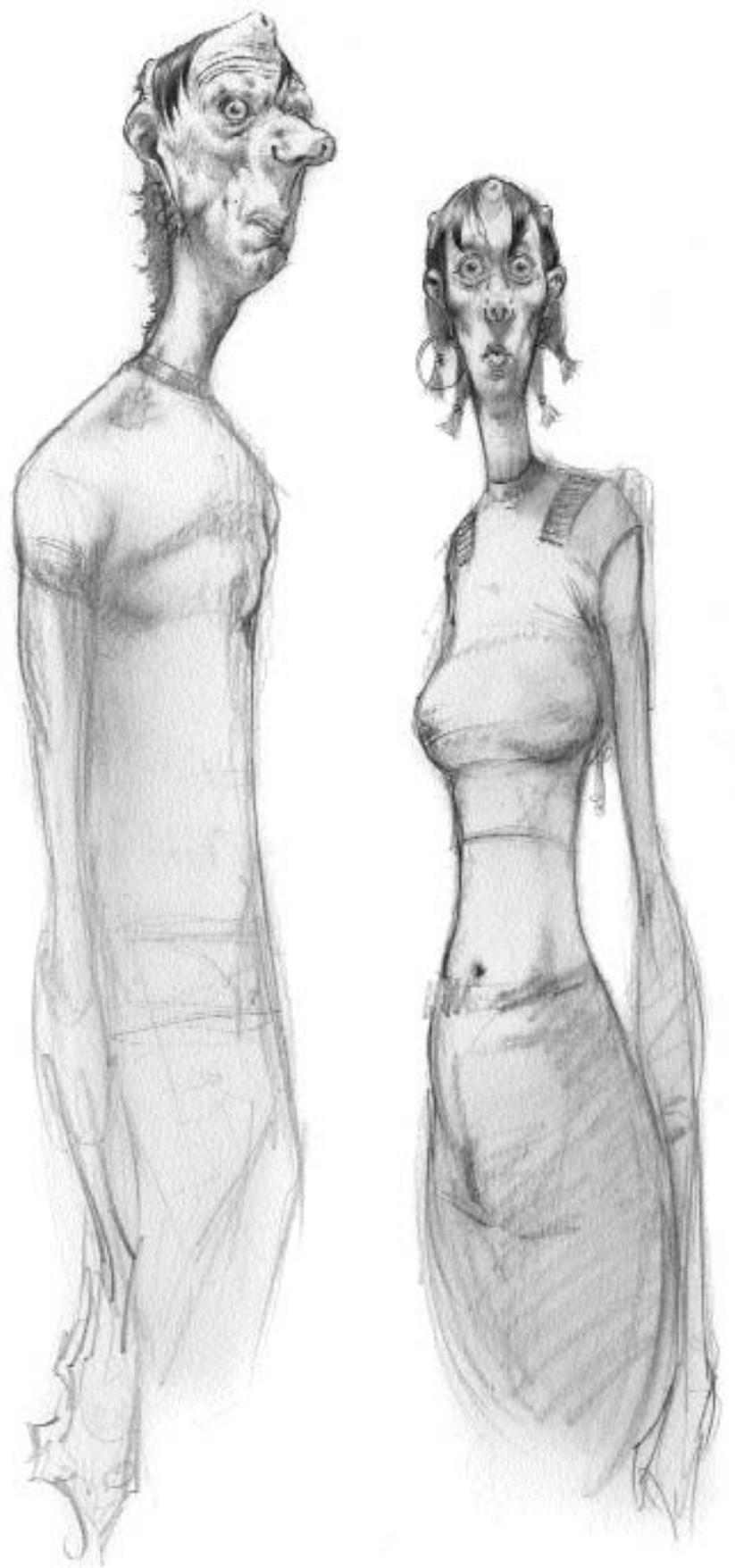


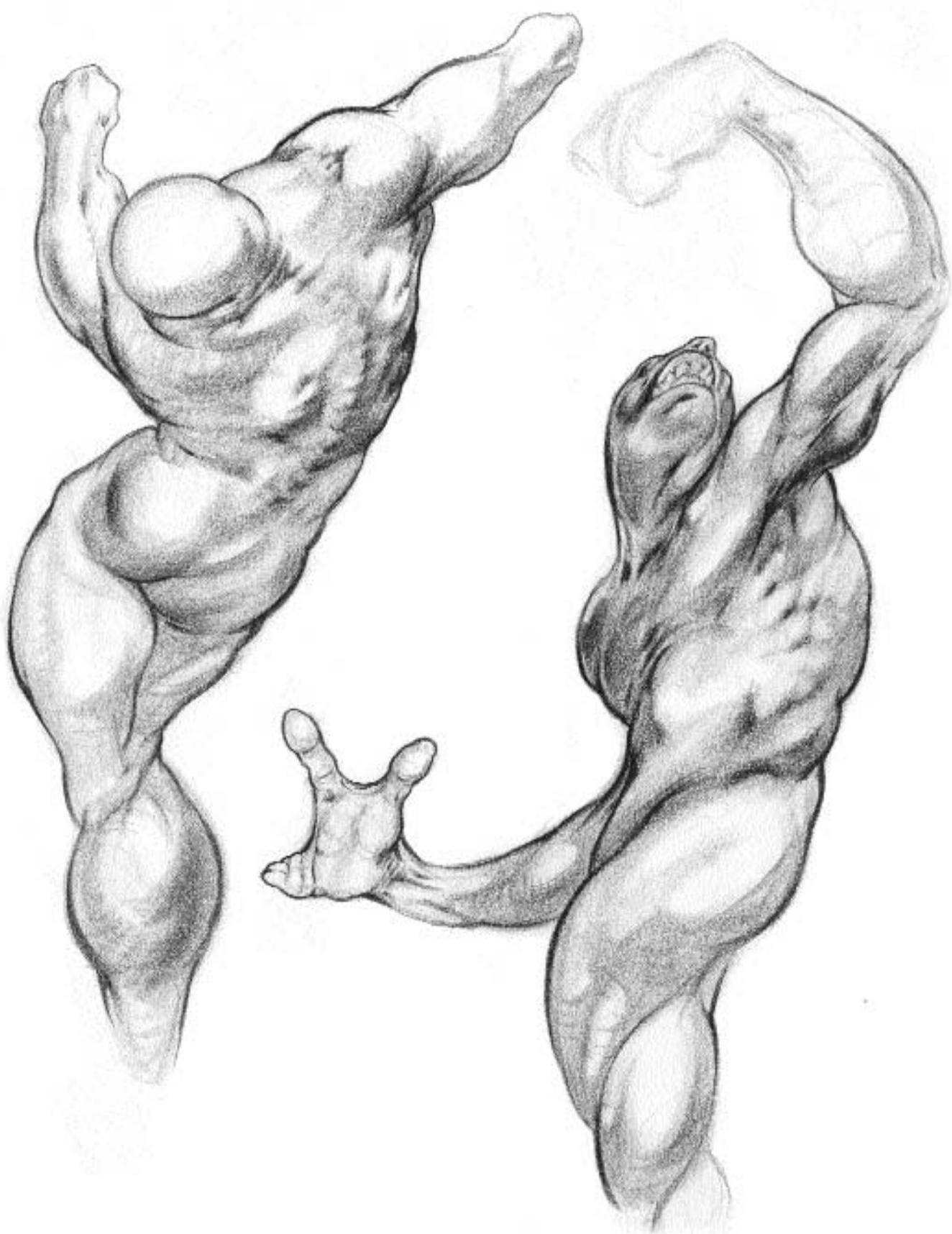






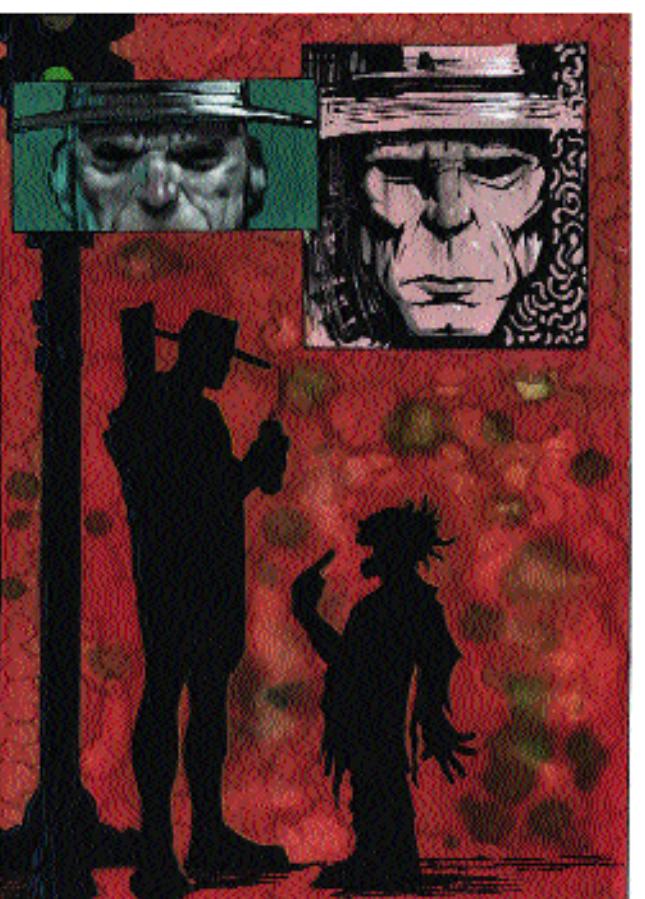
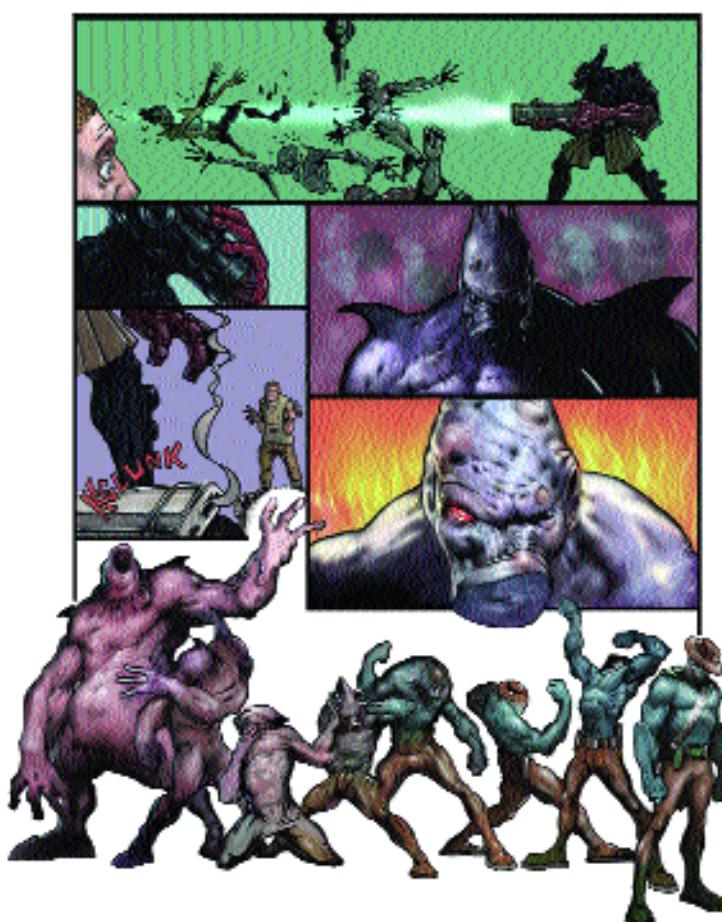
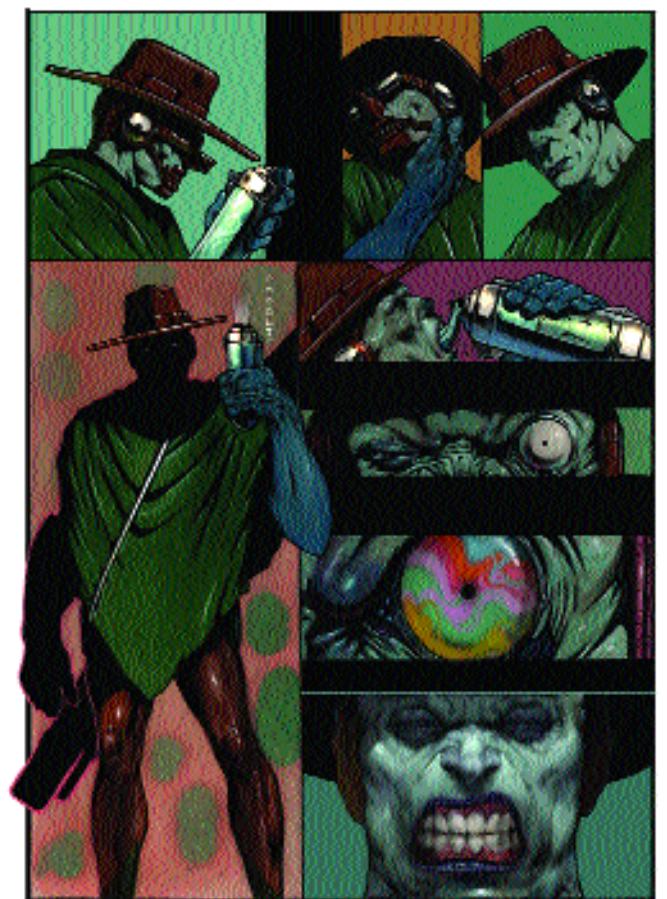
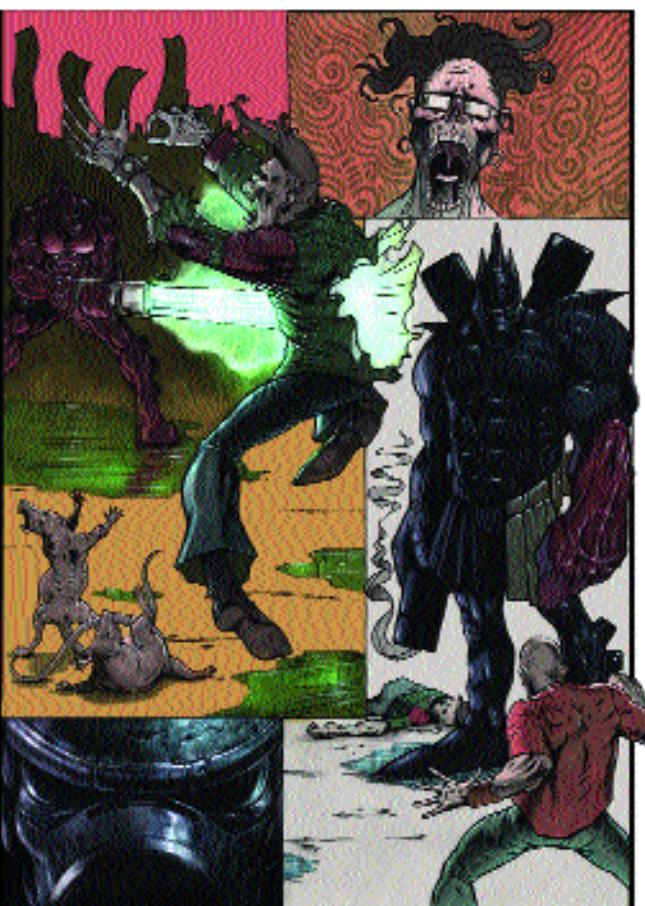








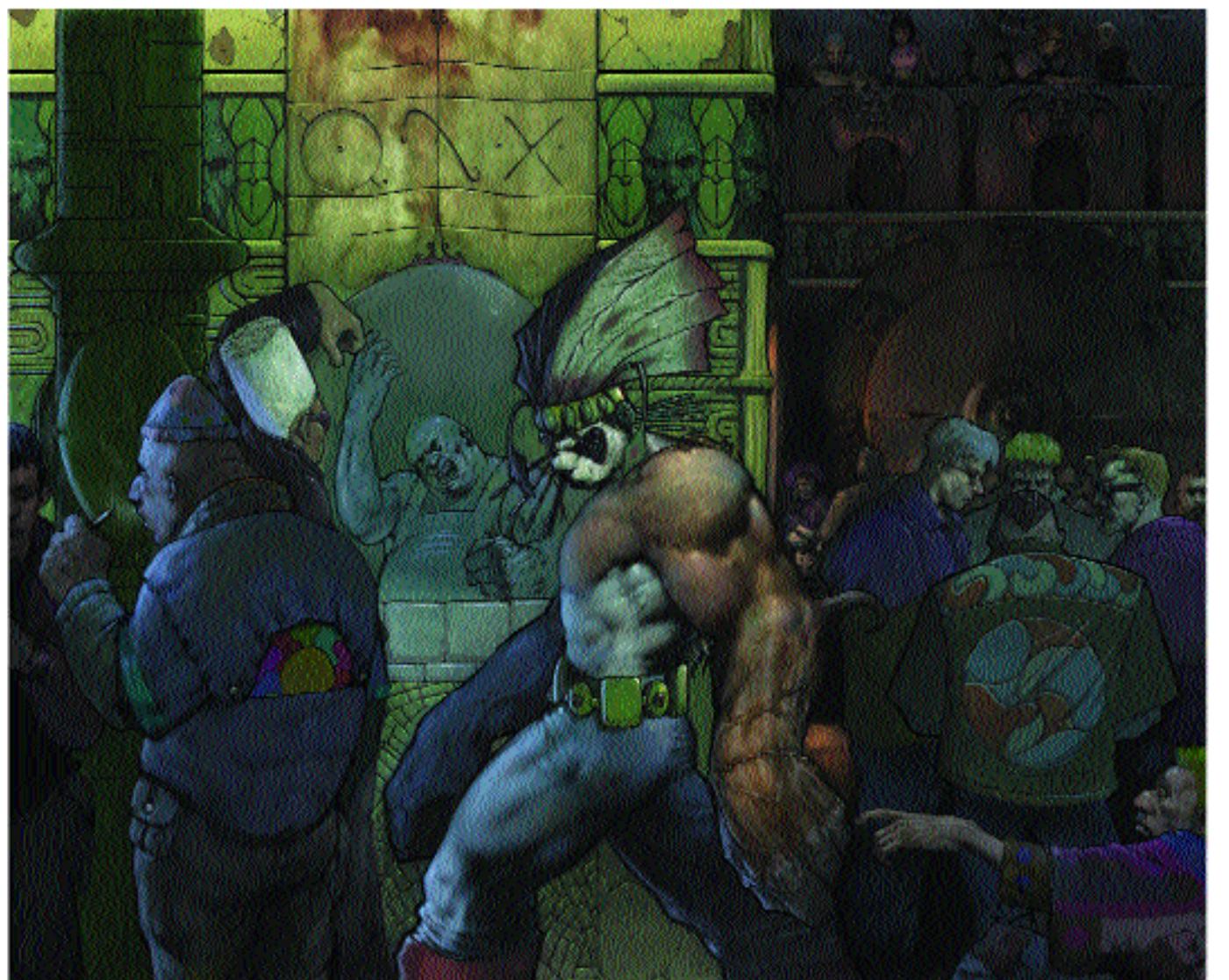


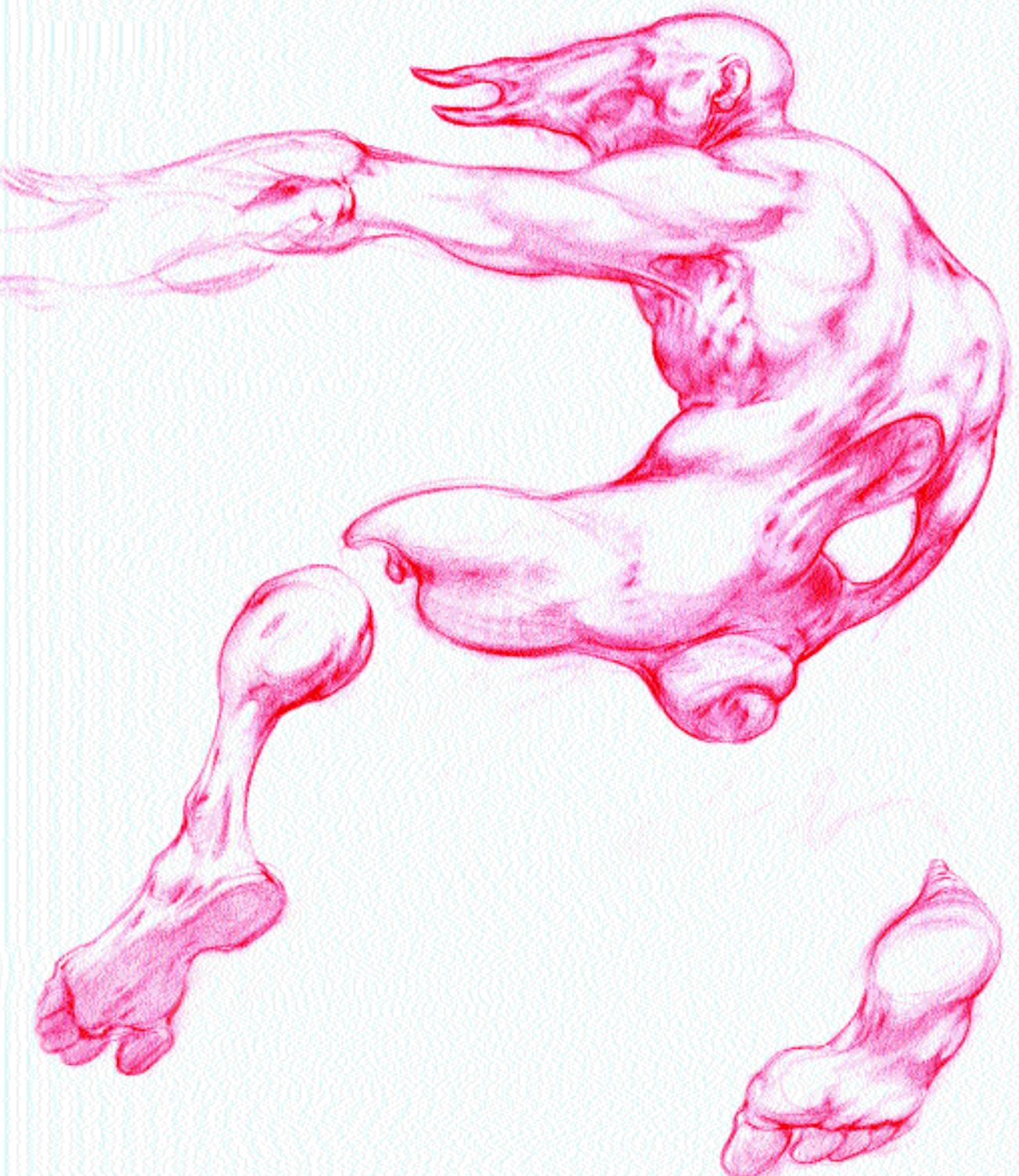








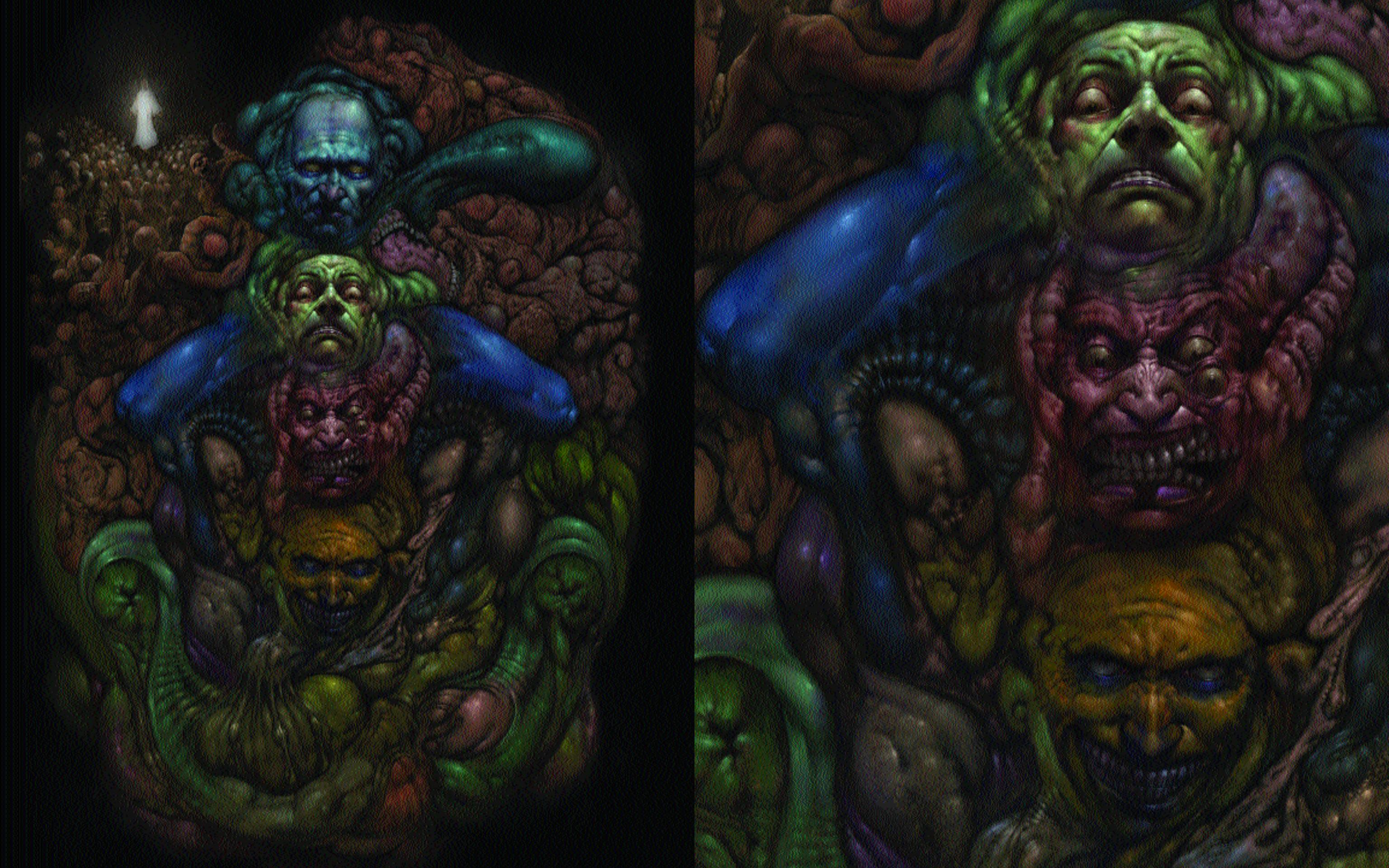


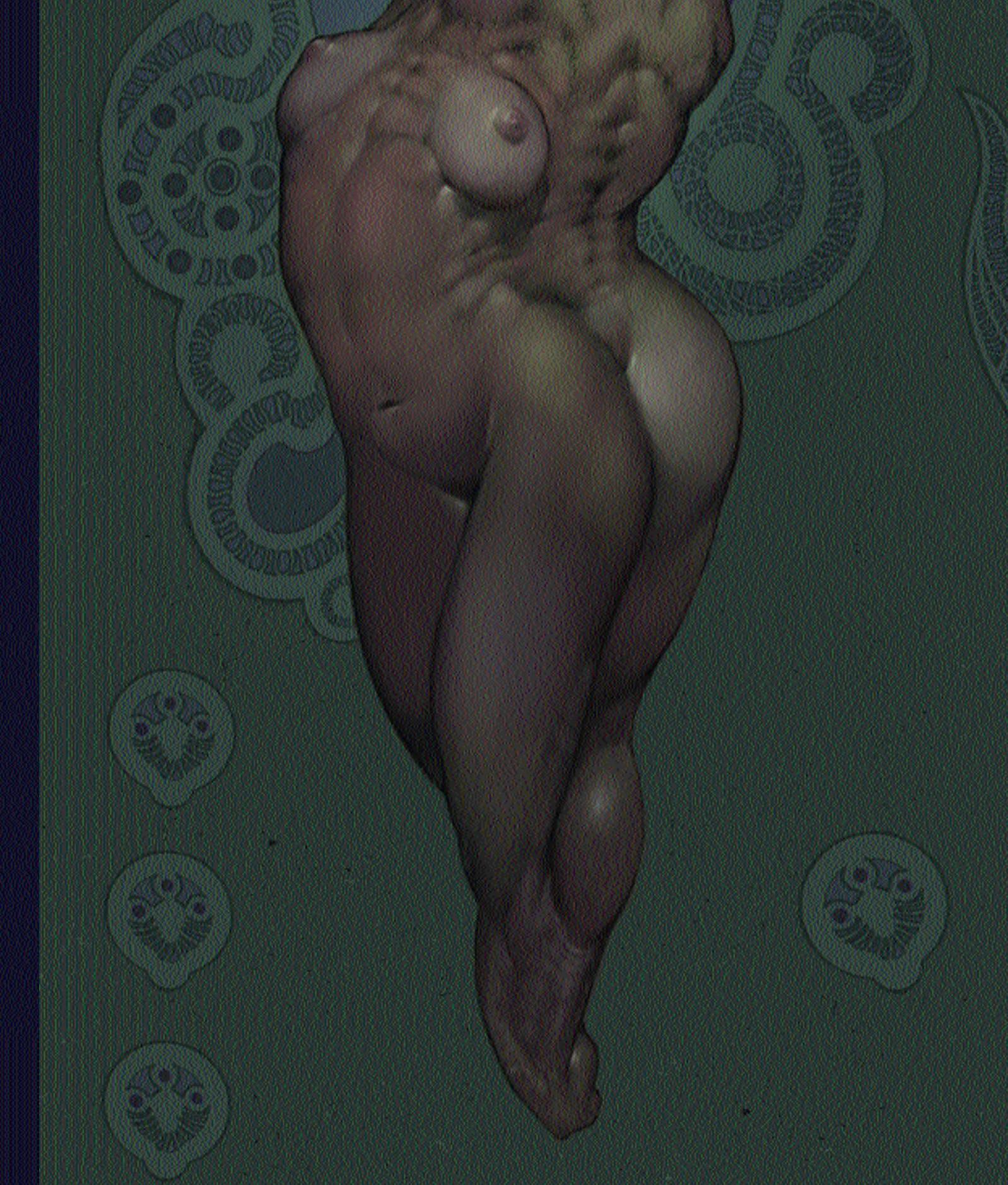
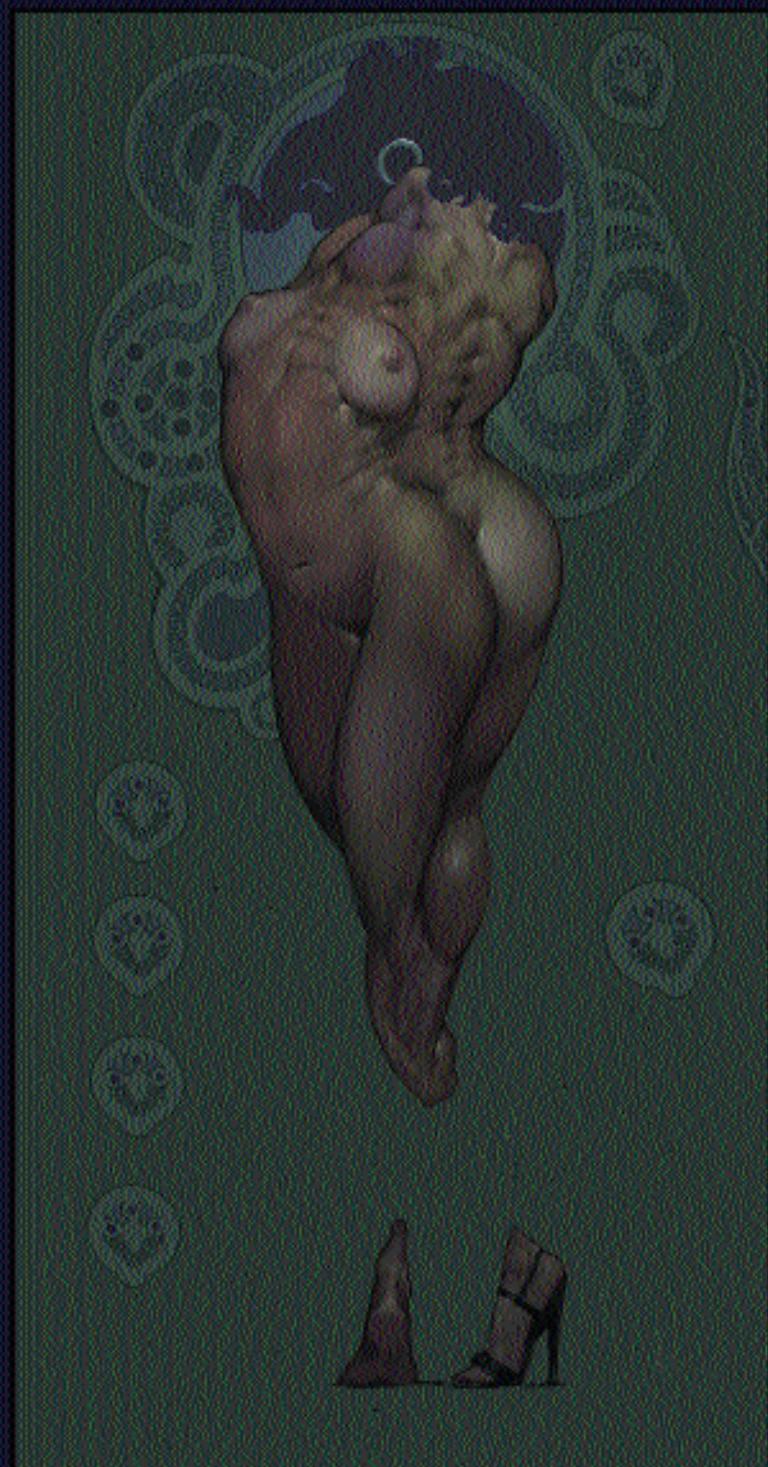


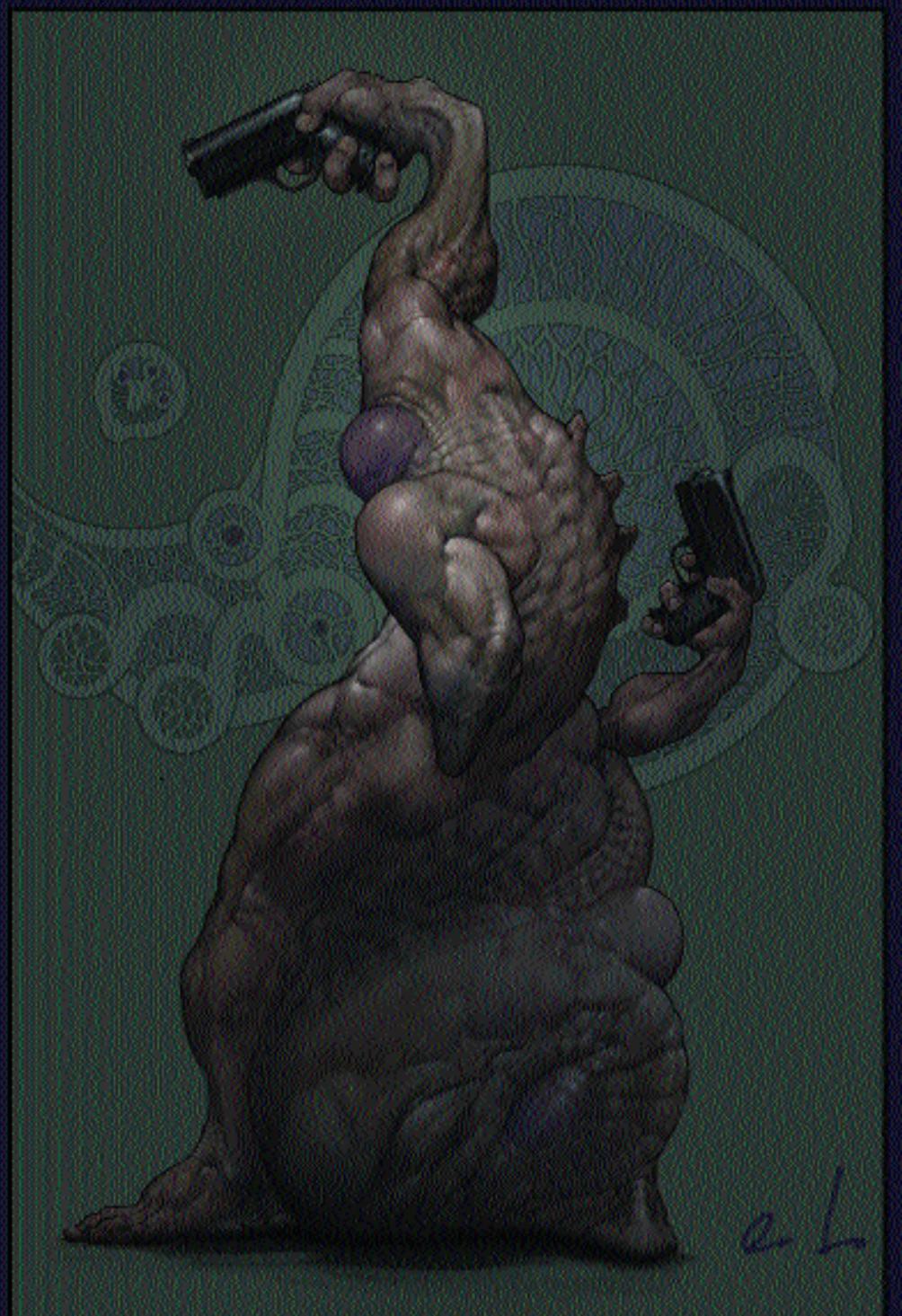




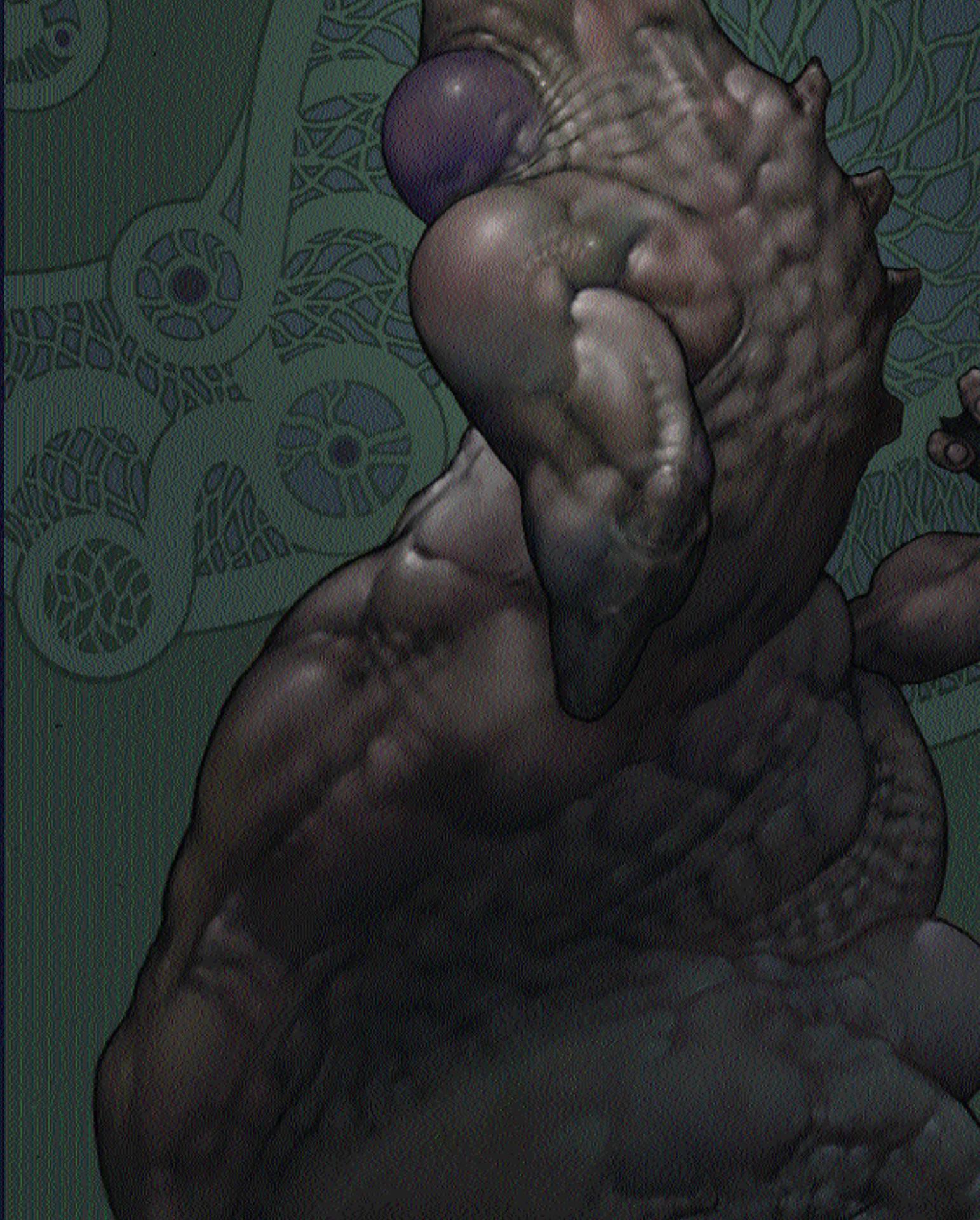


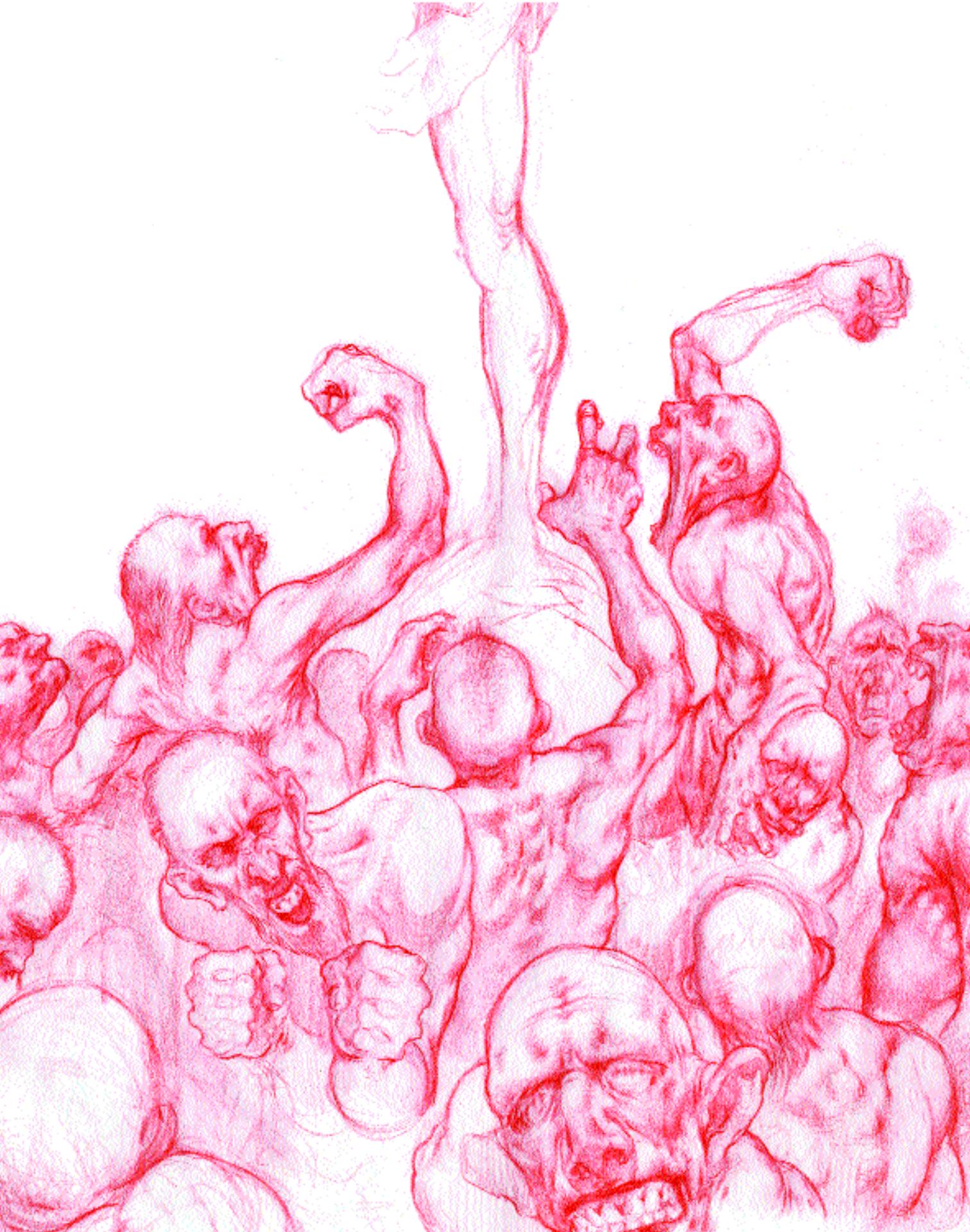
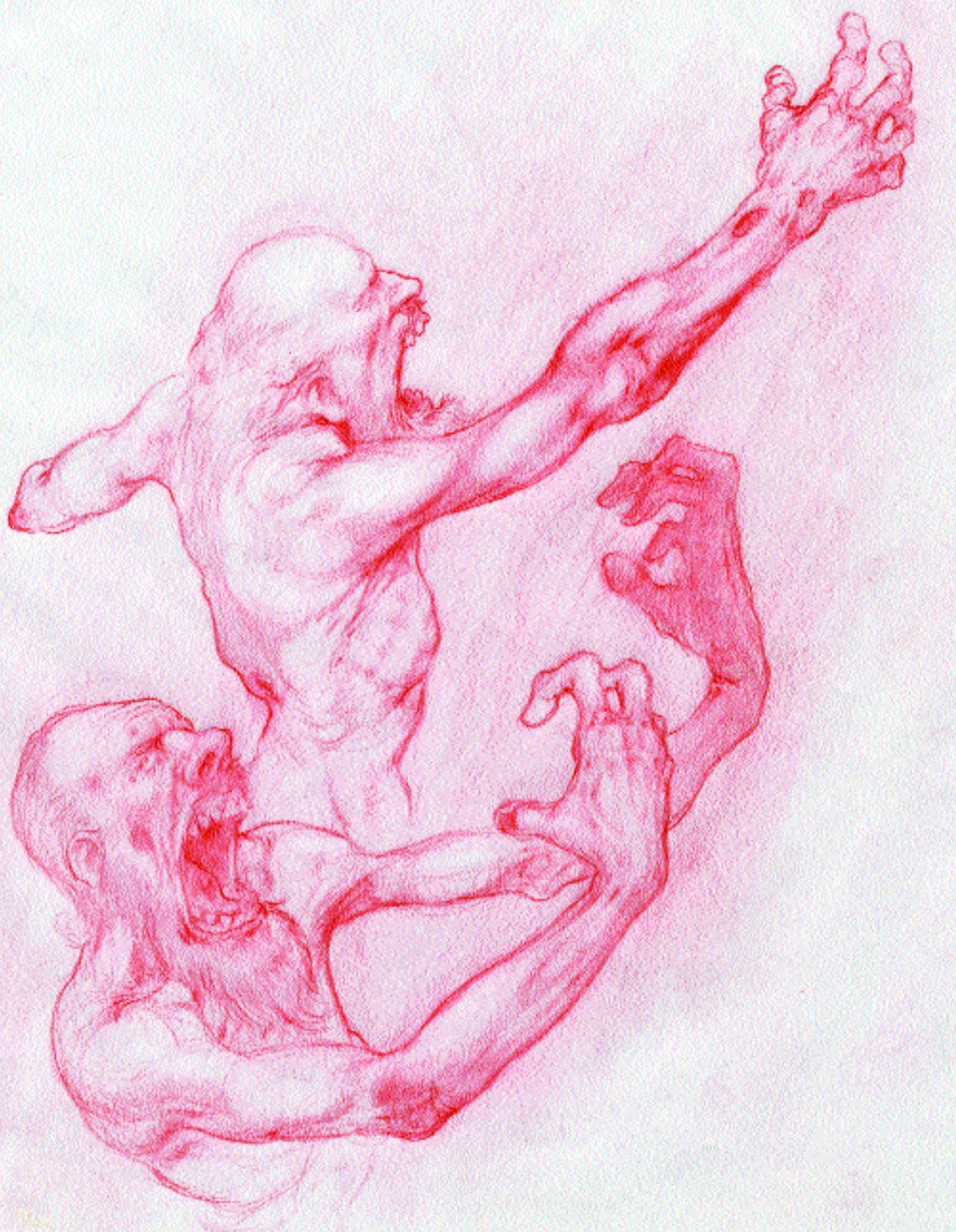


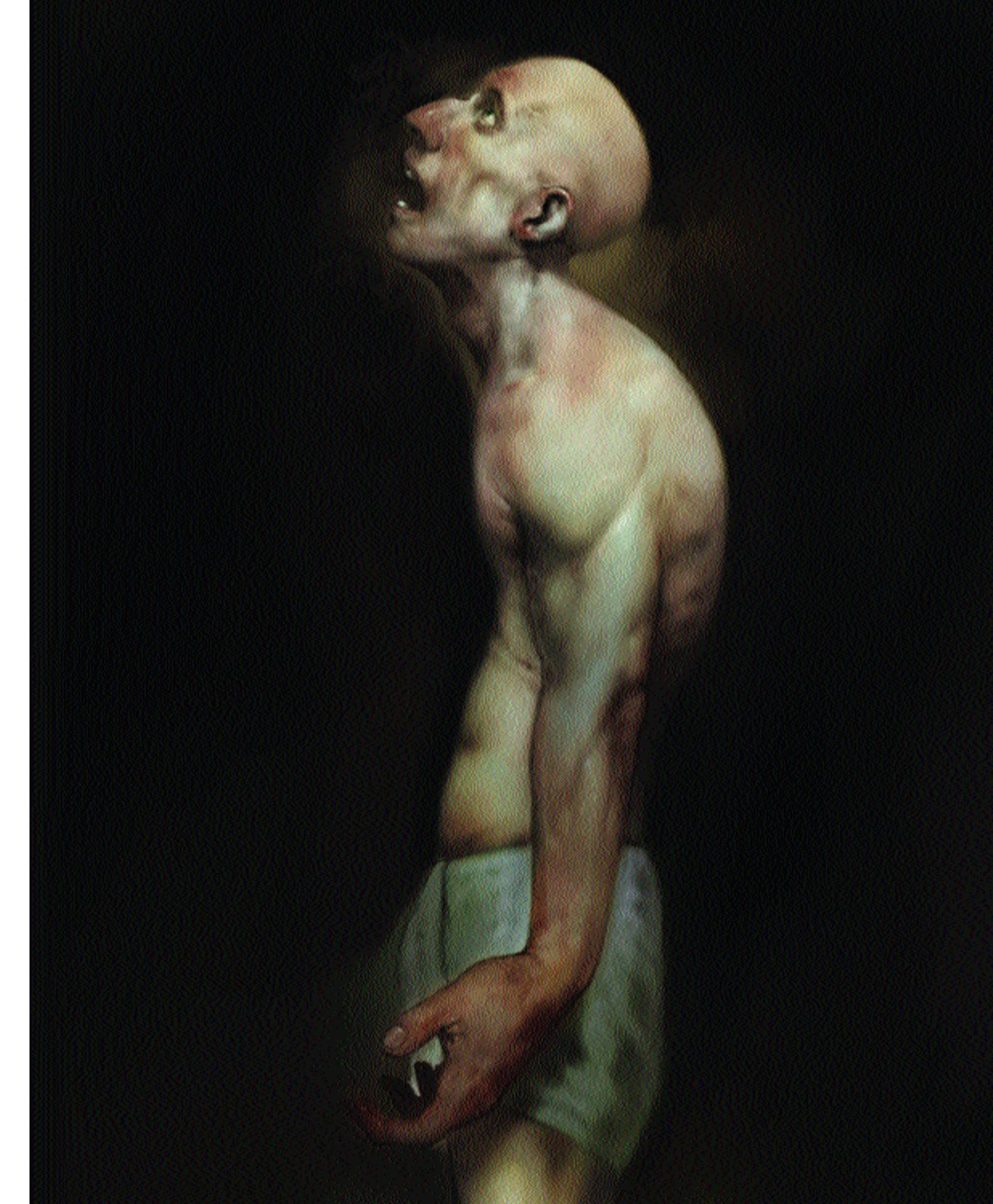




a L







Many people have asked me why I like drawing such dark subject matter. "Why don't you glorify the good?" they ask. In high school I remember my art teacher—before she realized she had no chance of swaying my interests—suggested to me that I should explore more pleasant subject matter (flowers and such). My response is that I don't see aliens and monsters as dark subject matter, but as the contrary.

Life is full of good and bad. Some of the scariest things I've ever seen or heard of are people's actions toward one another. The artwork I do is fantastic, it's science fiction, it's not real, it's imaginary, so please don't take it so seriously. Although some of my pieces are metaphorical depictions of real life, artwork of this nature should not be judged as dark, good or bad.

And to the artists...there are lots of art snobs out there so don't get discouraged. A lot of the artsy-fartsy types, as I like to call them, don't respect what we do in production (film or animation). These are the people who appreciate a square on a blank canvas.

Artists can make a good living working in film, but as far as individual expression goes, don't expect too much. Film is a collaborative effort. It's like being in a rock band with an egotistical guitar player and an exceptionally spoiled, lead singer. As an artist, you usually get treated like a roadie, even though as the artist you are probably the one leading the project creatively. You might think that this is a jaded view of the industry but unfortunately it's just the plain truth. It's what we do after knowing these things that makes us either a cynical, miserable husk of a person, or a strong, self-inspired creator who is resilient under pressure, and can continue to produce new, fresh ideas as well as inspiring others.

A few words on how I work.

I really have no single approach, except I always start with pencil on paper. I draw with black Prismacolor pencils on rag layout marker paper, made by Bienfang. For color I've used everything from markers to acrylics. Sometimes I use an Iwata Hp-c air-brush to draw or to lay down my base color, when painting with a traditional brush. Sometimes I'll scan in a traditionally approached color rough, and finish it in the Corel Painter program 6.03 or higher.

It really doesn't matter how you approach color, as long as your drawing is solid. If you have good taste in color, you can make a good drawing sing. Remember though, good drawing is the most important thing.

Nowadays it seems that because of computers, some artists have become lazy about drawing. Computers are great tools, but are not the be-all and end-all. If you cannot draw, then really what good are you? The computer can't do it for you, just like the pencil can't do it for you either.

Models are good for study, but unless you want to be a copy machine, you better learn to draw out of your head.

"Imagination on paper" is the key. If you haven't learned to draw out of your head, what will you have to offer the client? You can't offer them a figure drawing when they're asking for a plant creature with three mouths and ten legs.

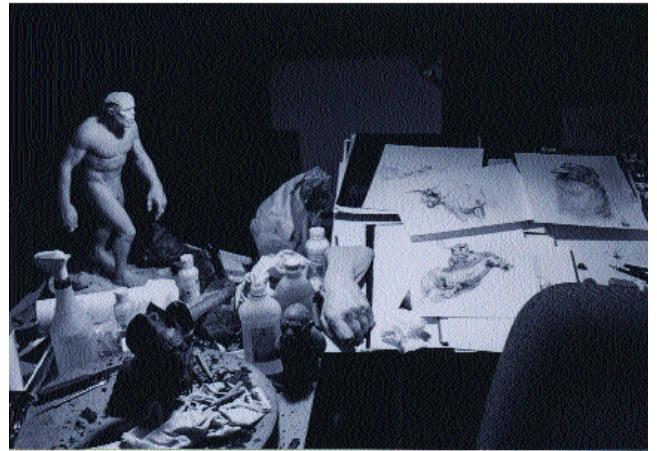
How do I approach a design? Well, after the client has given me an idea as to what they want, and/or I have read the script, I usually get an idea. Sometimes it's clearer than others, but either way at least I have a feeling for what I'm going to draw. What I'll do is take what they asked for and add it to the feelings I got from the conversation I had with them. It's a little like mind reading, I guess. There's really no science to it.

Concept is the stage where you invent and draw multiple ideas. Design is the stage where the best of those ideas are taken to the next level. Let's talk about concept first. For concept I try not to use reference. First of all there's not always the luxury of time and second of all I like to exercise my imagination. I believe it's the only way to create work that is unique to yourself and that doesn't look derivative. That's why I think the best training for artists is drawing from their imagination. Life drawing is great training and is necessary but what happens more often than not is people that have done the bulk of their training in school get locked on the human figure and things they see, and have a hard time trying to be inventive. They'll draw great costumes but have a hard time escaping the human figure. I'm not saying that life-drawing has no value. I am saying that the bulk of training should be from drawing at home from your imagination because you love it. If you don't love drawing or being creative then it'll

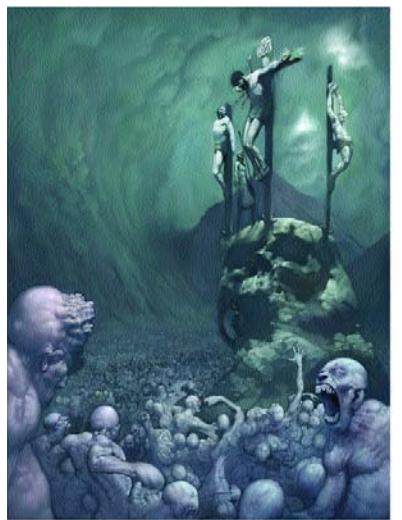
show. The work will always look substandard. Now for the design stage. Let me give you an example, when I drew concepts for the Mikey character in *Men in Black*, I used no reference except for what was in my head, my imagination.

When the design stage for Mikey began, I decided to make him "frog-like". I pulled out reference photos of different kinds of frogs, looked at them, and then put them away. This is a good way to train your memory, which is the food for your imagination, and not merely to copy what you see. Ninety percent of the time I use no reference—but when I do, I often find inspiration in the shapes of plants, parts of animals, insects, or machines.

When I look at the work of artists like N.C. Wyeth, Frank Frazetta, and Stanislav Szukalski, I use their work and that of other great artists as the mark to which I aspire. I think it's important we measure ourselves as artists against established masters; to try to walk along the path they have forged, to at least keep our eyes fixed on something solid. If you look at my drawing area at work, you'll notice among the mess are my John Buscema and Nicolai Fechin drawings. They keep me focused on what good drawing is, so I don't get lazy or bleached by the days. This is not reference but inspiration to remind me of the beauty of drawing.



## BORN AGAIN

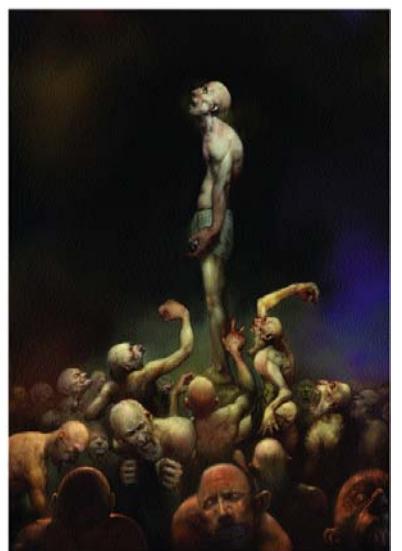


This subject has been visited for hundreds of years. Why should I attempt it after so many artists better than I have done so? Well, this subject matter is very personal to me and I wanted to speak of it as one of my generation.

The meaning: The crowd rages en masse, driven by their hatred of the truth, unbeknownst to them. They represent all of us who, before knowing Christ, are opposed to Him and His Word. Notice all the figures are deformed except Christ and the man to the right of Him, which in scripture is the one who chooses to trust in Christ.

The skull on which the three are crucified is the historical hill called Golgotha ("the skull"). The arrows embedded in the Christ figure are the curses that the crowd is yelling out.

## THE STAND



"The Stand" is a song by the band, The Alarm, which inspired me to think of this piece.

The meaning: The man standing on the rock represents anyone who, against all opposition, makes a stand for what he or she believes...in this case, his faith in Christ. The rock on which the man stands represents Christ. In scripture, Christ is called the Rock of Our Salvation; he is the cornerstone.

The crowd represents the religious, the legalistic, the politically correct, and the people who are so deeply rooted in their traditions that they blindly follow those traditions, without understanding the reasons those traditions exist—all of which are contrary to Christ and contrary to the truth.

## ADOLESCENCE



This is a piece that I first attempted at the age of 18. At the time, I didn't quite possess the ability to pull it off, but the idea was strong enough for me to want to revisit it now. For this piece, I did the drawing and painted rough on masonite, in acrylics. I then scanned the painting in pieces because the size of the acrylic rough is about 36" L x 24" W, maybe bigger, I'm not sure. I then assembled the pieces in Photoshop and finished the piece in Painter.

The meaning: Starting with the four heads down the middle, the blue head represents the gloomy expectation of what is to come, in this case, adolescence. The green head is fear and all that comes with it—jealousy, envy, insecurity—fear turns and invites anger & rage (the red head). Anger and rage settle in to complete the attitude with apathy (the yellow head).

The four heads together represent all the confusion that occurs during this period of our lives, and all the rage, joy, excitement, and apathy that accompanies adolescence. The chemical and bodily changes are represented by the abstract organic shapes.

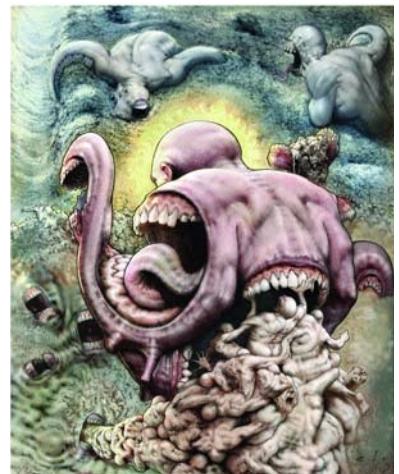
The surrounding figures represent the pressures one feels during those formative, sensitive years—the pressure of peoples' expectations, the pressure from peers and from yourself. If you look below the fourth head (the yellow head), you'll notice the hint of a figure that looks like it's moving upward. This represents his spirit moving upward toward what finally rescues him/me personally, Christ.

## VOCATIONS



This might sound strange to some of you but I have dreams (yeah, I know). Anyway, I dreamed I went to a bookstore looking for a particular book, but while looking for this book I instead found a book of my own artwork. This piece is my first attempt at trying to realize one of the many pieces of artwork I saw in this book (in my dream).

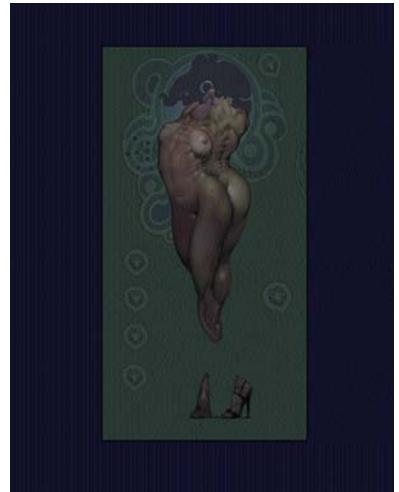
The meaning: No matter what your personal life's story is, whether you are a mechanic, minister, murderer, politician, or simply a man or woman in love, we are all fuel for the Machine. The Machine that feeds on us is of our own creation. It is the World System, the Media, the Entertainment, the Government, Social politics, Tolerance and Intolerance. Our lives, whether good or bad, feed the Machine and perpetuate its life and make it strong.



This piece was done after being bedridden for four days with the flu. I could take it no more. "Carlos can I get you anything?" "Uh yeah, my brown drawing pad and the 3b pencils and some more Thera-flu please. Thank you." Yeah, it's nice having someone take care of you when you're sick.

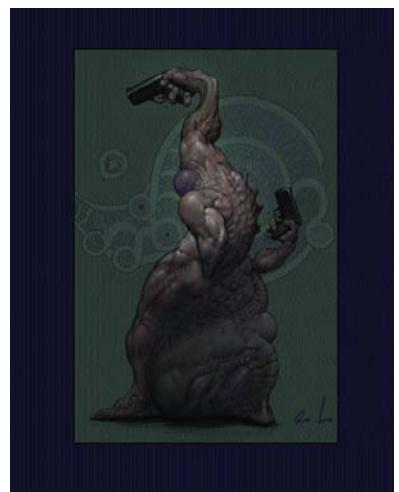
The Meaning: People being scooped up and eaten and spit out and eaten again and again by their own vices. That's pretty much it. You know I could leave the meaning of these pieces up to the viewer or to the critics, but then someone would come along and make up something about the work that has nothing to do with the piece or me. That would be unfair to you and to me. I find it really interesting when I read what an artist was thinking about when he/she did a particular piece, as long as it's not some made-up blather. If it's real and true, then it gives poetry to the art. It gives it thickness, and I think that's edifying to the viewer.

## GRACE & JUDGMENT



This piece was sketched on Masonite, then scanned in and painted in the Corel Painter program. The medium for each piece is determined by the personality of that particular work. On most drawings I'll use black Prismacolor, but there are times when I'll use graphite or Colorerase or Derwent colored pencils, etc. It all depends on, well, on two things. One is the emotion of the piece itself. What is it that the piece is saying by virtue of its design? What is the subject matter? The second is the emotion you have for it. What emotion does the subject matter stir up in you? Do you feel rage or gentleness, anger or kindness, indignance or apathy, pride or hatred? You know what I'm saying here. Whatever I feel when I think of a piece I'm about to work on is pretty telling as to the medium. I know this sounds abstract but it's the only way I can describe the reason I'll choose different mediums for different pieces.

The meaning: The feminine figures represent Grace. They are all that is feminine. If you are fortunate enough to find a woman who loves you anywhere near the way you love her, then you understand that a crude character like man has definitely been shown grace to have such a beautiful being in his life. Thus the feminine figures represent grace. The masculine characters represent Judgment, as we men have behaved as judges over each other for thousands of years. Country judging country, race judging race, gang judging gang. This is the base of what men are truly capable. I don't believe we have come even close to the potential for good that we as men are capable of. Thus man in all his rage, represents Judgment.



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