

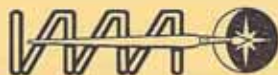
brush work, then airbrush, and so on. Right now I'm concentrating on a better use of value and color, and I'm looking to increase the apparent depth of my paintings. I'm also really excited by the use of light in helping to compose a painting.

As for my influences, aside from many of you out there, I would have to list Dali, da Vinci, Rembrandt, Michael Whelan, Ralph McQuarrie, Stephen Youll and Romas Kukalis, among many others.

The Death Valley Workshop having, so to speak, 'bitten the dust', we are open to suggestions for an IAAA workshop later this year. Please do send in your ideas, by e-mail or snail. Also, a lot of members expressed interest in the Caribbean Total Eclipse of 26 February 1998. This has great potential, but we need someone to research the best site, prices, etc. Any offers?

Below Comet Hale-Bopp over Hedon, Yorkshire, by Peter G. Goodwin.

Peter took this photograph at 3.45am on 1st April 1997, when the comet was at its closest to the Sun. In colour, the houses are strongly orange, due to the sodium street lighting (the bane of astronomers!); even so, the comet shows up strongly behind the old beacon.



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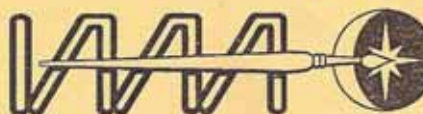
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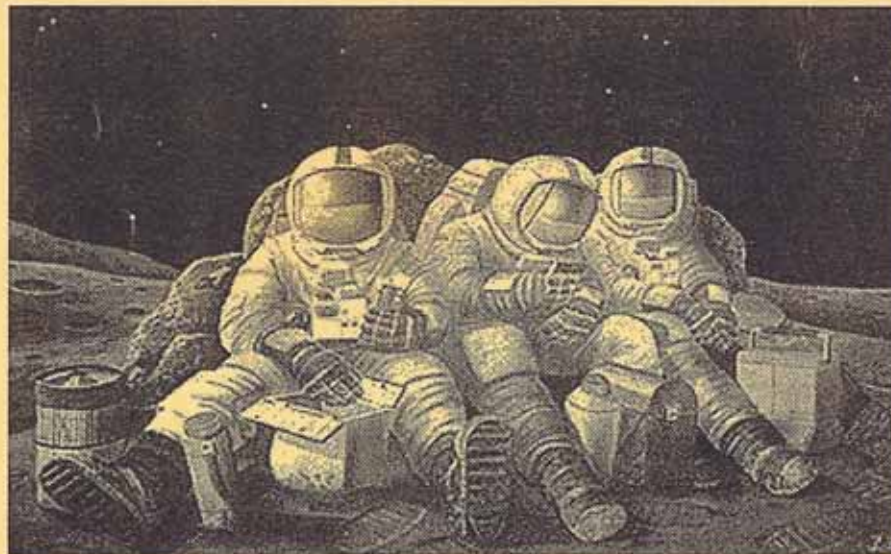
April/May 1997



The Official Newsletter of the



International Association for
Astronomical Arts



Cover illustration (untitled, but perhaps 'Picnic?') by John Platt, who was born in England but now lives in Canada. Profile next issue.

Editor: David A. Hardy

IAAA Website: <http://www.novespace.com/IAAA/IAAA.shtml>

IAAA News

Firstly, apologies (once again) for the delay with this *Pulsar*. The reason this time is that, behind the scenes, we have been trying to organize the Death Valley Workshop (see December/January issue). Sadly, Don Davis reports that the facilities which were so favourable back in 1983 no longer exist, and we have (for the moment at least) had to abandon our plans for that. (See back page.)

New Member

Welcome to Ashley Walker, who joined the IAAA as a result of meeting Jackie Burns and myself at *InterVention*, the annual UK Easter SF convention, in Liverpool. Ashley (first name actually Mark) works as a graphic designer for Matra Marconi Space in Stevenage, UK, and paints beautifully accurate and detailed satellites in orbit.

He is keen to take an active part in IAAA events, and a 'local' workshop at Matra Marconi is a definite possibility.

Exhibition

Lynette Cook has an exhibition at the Mt Hood Community College, Fireplace Gallery, located at 26000 S.E. Stark Street in Gresham, which is just east of Portland.

28 of Lynette's paintings will be on show, including several of the fine pieces which appeared in the April issue of *Astronomy*. The exhibit runs from 1 April to 1 May, Monday to Thursday 8am - 7pm, and Friday 8am - 5.30pm. The gallery number is (503) 667-7260.

Future IAAA Exhibition

Our only Argentinian member, Ana Kozel, has been in contact with the Jorge Luis International Foundation, who have expressed great interest in an international exhibition of space art to be held in 1999, on the 100th anniversary of Borges' birth. Borges was a writer with a marked space orientation, and was nominated several times for the Nobel Prize.

We have provisionally agreed to this, but of course such a prestigious exhibition (which is expected to receive much media publicity) depends entirely upon the participation of our members, so please let me know if you are wish to be included. You have plenty of time to prepare!

NB: More on workshops on back page.

How to sell your art... part of an occasional series by Kim Poor

CHEAP STUFF: Bread and Butter

(NB: this series is, obviously, written with the US market in mind. However, most of its points are equally valid in Europe and elsewhere.)

I have spent many years doing indoor and outdoor art shows. These typically consist of hundreds of artisans, though only a few are really "fine artists", or painters. Although you may not have done shows like this yourself, it's still a good analogy because it is a microcosm of the general marketplace. Lots of people and lots of artists competing for those people's dollars.

Since folks' art budgets come at different levels, and since there will always be fewer "high rollers" than those of lesser means, the artisan must have a matching hierarchy of prices in his inventory. All artists need "bread and butter" items for sale. In the shows I have done, "crafters", those scourges of low-priced, dustable knick-knacks are often the high sellers, simply because they have inexpensive items that make up for their low prices with high volume sales.

These crafters put even more pressure on fine artists to have some low-priced inventory in order to compete for a share of the art show bucks being spent. Fine art is by definition more expensive than crafts. Crafts are usually mass-produced to some extent. Fine art is hand-executed and unique.

The most obvious choice for the artist is to lower his or her prices. This is the worst possible thing to do, as it cheapens yourself, other artists, and conditions customers against paying fair prices for high quality fine art. How many hours have you spent on that painting? Have you included your learning time, schooling, apprenticeship, materials?

Do you know this is a piece of your soul? If you consider these things, original art is already a pretty good bargain. Lower your prices and pretty soon you're working for less than minimum wage. Unless your stuff is really crappy, you will be hard pressed to raise your prices as your quality improves. If you're already pretty good, you'll be stuck at that price level.

What to do? You need to produce inventory in all price ranges, in various levels of size, quality and exclusivity. If you are just a painter with no prints, cards, bookmarks, or the like, then you must produce smaller, faster paintings.

A beginning artist cannot afford to make low-priced prints (or can they? I'll address this later). One solution is to crank out paintings priced at

A Long and Venerable History

I also think that perhaps not enough is made of the surprisingly long and venerable history that space art enjoys, and again due to popular misconception it may be seen as a short-lived flash in the pan, and not worth taking seriously. Here we are, fast approaching the end of the twentieth century, and space travel (or at least the idea of space travel) is no longer a novelty, yet we are still struggling to be recognized as the forerunners of a 'brave new art movement'.

So, we need to educate, enlighten and bring ourselves to the attention of groups outside of our own little circle and convince others of the worth of what we are trying to do. This also works in reverse of course; we should remain open to outside influences as well. If we continue to paint only to be acknowledged and appreciated by our own artistic community then stagnation will quickly follow and we'll all be in big trouble.

Secondly, failure of the imagination.

As an aside, there also seem to be concerns regarding the increasing use of ever more powerful computer programs to generate images, or artwork. This just parallels earlier arguments in which the rise of photography was predicted to signal the demise of painting, and I can see both traditional and computer-produced work occupying separate niches each with their own enthusiasts, without one supplanting the other, in much the same way as photography and painting co-exist today.

Luddite

Now, while I admit to being something of a Luddite where the use of computers in art is concerned (I think I should have been born about 300 years ago!), I feel that their particular strengths will only become apparent when it is possible to create for example, convincing animations in three dimensions to illustrate events distant in time or space which would be impossible by other means.

This should provide a potential educational resource far beyond anything that could be accomplished by traditional media. However, let's not get overexcited just yet. The human imagination makes the latest state-of-the-art Silicon Graphics workstation doodad seem like a Sinclair ZX81 where the visualization and manipulation of images is concerned. Yes that's right, try using the old grey matter between your ears. The facility to use our imagination, is something that we seem to be losing sight of, and it is imagination and real substance that is sadly lacking today in an age

of virtual reality this or multi-media that.

But that's another story. Just remember there really is no such thing as a free lunch. Now I've got that off my chest I'll go and take cover. I think I can hear the sound of knives being sharpened!

Jeff Ward

I first became interested in art and astronomy when I was very young, as probably most of you did. I grew up drawing all sorts of things and reading books on space, but it wasn't until '95 that I really started painting seriously. Up until that point I guess I had come to believe (at least subconsciously) in the perpetuating myth that one could not make a living in art. When I was younger, I had three main choices of careers: astronomy, art, and electrical engineering. Well, unfortunately for me I ended up going with engineering. Let me put it this way: I lasted a whole semester - way too much math for me, I found out.

So eventually after a couple more semesters, I finally came full circle; back to what I wanted to be when I was a kid - an artist. The thing is, it has taken me a lot longer to realize that I want to concentrate on astronomical and SF art. But here I am, and I couldn't be happier to be in the company of such wonderful artists.

Once I made the final decision earlier this year to concentrate on this realm of art, there's been no looking back. In September I moved to Denver from Memphis to major in illustration at the Rocky Mountain College of Art and Design. Then in October I had a Mars painting juried into a show at Fiske Planetarium in Boulder, where I met one of my influences, Michael Carroll (which is how I became an IAAA member - thanks Mike!).

In December I realized my goal of getting published in a semi-pro magazine by Christmas. The surprising thing was, not only was I assigned an interior illustration, but the magazine's first color cover as well. In addition, I've also won first place in Portland's *OryCon 18* art show for best amateur artist, as well as placing third at *ConCat 8* in Chattanooga. My goal for next Christmas is to get published in a professional magazine, be it a SF, astronomy, or other type of science magazine.

I work primarily in acrylics, using both brushes and airbrush, mostly relegating the airbrush for large areas of color, but sometimes using a layering technique of

kends, and so it may take many months to complete a small panel. As for as my first attempts at space art, it is my goal on a purely technical level, to utilize the same procedures and materials (I work only in oils or egg tempera), while exploring the new challenges and opportunities to experiment offered by this very different subject matter.

So, how did I get to hear about the IAAA? Well, first I have a confession to make. While passing a street newspaper stall my eye was caught by the cover of the August '96 issue of *Astronomy Now* - a magazine I don't normally take - (howls of disapproval from the Brits), with a feature article on the history of space art by David A. Hardy. As a direct result of reading that article I contacted Dave, who forwarded a complimentary edition of *Pulsar* and therein was a call for members to join the workshop about to be held on Tenerife.

My curiosity was suitably aroused and several frantic phone calls and a few faxes later everything had fallen into place and I was ready to go. It was a real pleasure to meet and exchange ideas with others who, while having very different viewpoints as to the 'function' or 'purpose' of space art, all share the same underlying concerns and a common vision of our place in the cosmos, and I hope that this has marked the start of a long and fruitful association with my friends and colleagues in the IAAA.

And the future? With luck I'll eventually learn how to use a brush properly. It only took 37 years, the discovery of the IAAA, and the realization that two important parts of my life really need not run on separate paths to renew some of the sense of awe I had as a kid whenever I looked up at the heavens, and I'm sure I will continue to draw inspiration from the beauty of the night sky and the world around me for many years to come.

Garry also wished to contribute to the discussions which filled the last *Pulsar*. Oddly, he is the only non-e-member to do so. Is this because of the 'ease of e-mail', or are online members really more vociferous? Answers on a postcard. . .

The IAAA is Dead! Long Live the IAAA!

Right, now that I have your attention (I hope), I'd just like to add a few comments (at the risk of repeating what may already have been expressed) in the spirit of the recent discussion in these pages regarding the future evolution of the IAAA.

While I have no doubt that part of the apparent decline of interest in space art can be

traced to the fact that space seems to have lost its hold on the public imagination, (let's face it, most people have more pressing concerns in their everyday lives), I feel that this is only part of the story, and in fact, may even be something of a red herring. I think the problems lie at a much more fundamental level.

First and foremost the 'Art' in space art.

Do we wish to be taken seriously as artists? No artistic movement exists in isolation. I assume that one of the main aims of the IAAA is to help this rather specialized genre be accepted and enjoyed by a wider audience, but so far I haven't seen much evidence to suggest that this is being done outside of a minority of specialist magazines.

Surely if we want to be taken seriously and generate some real interest in what we are trying to accomplish then we need to get into some mainstream art publications and be very conscious as to the quality of submitted work. I suspect that the resistance of the general art community to accept this type of work as a legitimate art form is due in part to the fact that popular culture has become saturated with images of often mediocre quality or content, and unfortunately, we all get tarred with the same brush if we do not convince otherwise. >



NEO: One of Garry Harwood's very first space paintings, which aroused much interest and approval at the Tenerife Workshop last year.

less than \$100. Depending on the venue, \$50-100 is a respectable price range for small originals by a beginning artist. Try not to spend more than a few hours on them.

This will accomplish many things:

- * It will give you some bread and butter items to make some cash

- * It will protect your larger, more elaborate pieces from de-flationary pressures

- * It will make you a better artist, and teach valuable lessons on making a deadline

- * It will earn you a collector base: consider the GM methodology, "get 'em into a Chevy and work them up to a Cadillac later."

- * and finally, you'll find out what sells.

You'll also be surprised at how your repertoire grows. Every once in a while, you'll produce a classic beauty. The looseness and pressureless spontaneity of working small will let your talents shine through.

After you find out what motif(s) sell the best, it's time to think about a print. Prints are the greatest, because you just print a bunch, sign 'em and sell 'em. Of course getting to that point is an arduous and costly process.

Offset printing is expensive, but there are new alternatives.

COLOR XEROX, DIGITAL PRINTS

I have an artist friend that has been doing color xeroxes of his paintings since the inception of the color copier, over ten years ago. They look great, and it's been a great bread and butter item for him. Those of you who have seen our catalog or website may have noticed our digital prints. These are simple color xeroxes; however, these are done from a digital file, which allows more manipulation and fine color adjustment. It also allows a piece that was originally larger than the copy machine's surface, to be printed.

If you have a bread & butter piece that seems to sell well, do a real nice version of it 11x17 or smaller (to fit on the copy machine) and take it to your local color copier store. Check around first and see if there are several to choose from and call them to see if they have ever done fine artwork.

Now you can print, very inexpensively, as many as you want. You can make a limited edition, an open edition, business cards, bookmarks, whatever. Price them low, and if they sell well, you can raise the price to whatever the market will bear.

- * One perk with color xeroxes: They won't fade in the light.

Bill Hartmann, who lives here in Tucson had a work recently published on the *Planetary Report*. At least one rabid buyer wanted a print, and wrote to TPS and Bill about it. Bill asked me if I'd like to make a print, but it would be foolhardy to do a run of 500-1000 lithos based on one call. The collector couldn't afford the original at \$1900, and didn't want a color xerox, which is

limited in size to 11x17. There is another solution: Digital print.

At a cost of about \$45-\$75, you get a high-resolution "drum scan" made from a 4x5 or slide. This is archived on a Zip or Syquest disk, capable of holding a 50MB+ file. Once the scan is done, you can output it on one of several devices, ad nauseum, on almost any kind of backing, water-color paper, litho paper, canvas, or acetate (transparency). The size for LaserMaster prints is 3 feet by any length. The size for Iris prints is 30x40 or so.

The cost for LaserMaster is about \$25/sq ft. It is more expensive for the Iris print, but the Iris is ultimate quality. LaserMaster is good quality, though. Both these devices are ink-jet printer/plotters, with a very high resolution.

You can sell these prints in the \$200-\$300 price range, in a small edition (50 or less), and make them up as you need them. You can do them in different sizes, even, depending on the customer's budget and needs. And the great thing is you still have the digital scan on disk, which can be used for future cards, offset lithos, or any other reproduction purposes.

OFFSET GANG PRINTING

There are several companies in the U.S. that specialize in short-run (less than 1000) "gang runs" of postcards, greeting cards, small prints, etc. These can be done at a low price, bringing the cost per item down considerably from digital printing.

The way they do this inexpensively is to "gang" your item up on a press run with others. It's not economical to run a press with a lot of white space on the paper. If you're paying for pre-press and presstime, you should fill the sheet with image. The penalty is the lack of color control for individual images. That is why it is important to have a good color separation to avoid any on-press adjustments. Most of the volume print companies do a good job at getting your color right.

PHOTOGRAPHIC PRINTS

The age-old process for doing prints is to have photo-prints made of the originals. This is VERY expensive in the long run, and photos fade. Although it is more cost effective in small-format sizes, the color xeroxes are a better deal, and don't require a negative, and don't fade.

In conclusion, having bread and butter items will enable the artist to relieve some of the price pressures, and will allow you to take spend more time on your high-end pieces. Having prints of an original often makes the original even more desirable and more unique, and therefore command an even higher price. Promise the buyer of the original some of free prints to pass out to his more plebeian friends. If he 'big one' doesn't sell right away, so what?

This article also assumes you will be in a high-

volume selling situation like a show, SF convention, star party, or like myself, the mail order business. Prints always sell better if they're attractively framed, but they can also be presented shrink-wrapped on cardboard, or just matted (DON'T thumbtack or tape them to a display, however).

A Certificate of Authenticity is also useful and is often insisted upon by a serious print collector. These can be combined with information about the print's subject and artist (and your address) as well as the standard information on edition size and such.

Artists' Profiles

A number of these had to be held over because of the unusual nature of the last issue of *Pulsar*. Apologies to those artists! But here's another batch; most of these happen to be from UK members. But there's no bias here! - I'll include yours if you send it.

(On a disk or by e-mail if possible, please, or at least typed so that I can scan it in. Re-typing takes time!)

Richard Bizley

My interest in Astronomical Art goes back to my childhood years. I was inspired by the Apollo spaceflight programme, Arthur C. Clarke's novels and by various astronomical artists including Ludek Pesek, and David Hardy's book *Challenge of the Stars*.

I have always enjoyed painting so it was natural for me to progress to painting Astronomical scenes and paint during my spare

time. I am self-taught and paint during my spare time. I use mainly acrylics and often use the airbrush.

I was born deaf in 1959. I worked in a microbiology lab for a while before working for a model-making company. I have recently moved to South West England with my family to be self-employed. I am now a finishing artist working on scale models and work from home for several companies.

I have sold some of my space art commercially and have just completed 3 prehistoric paintings for the local Dinosaur museum.

Because of my deafness space art is very useful for me in replacing music which I cannot hear. Looking at other artists' work is so enjoyable, inspiring and soul-reaching. As deafness is very isolating, this has an interesting parallel with space art scenes, as often there is a feeling of remoteness in these pictures.

My hope for the near future is to be able to give inspiration to the general public and to show them the beauty of the Cosmos.

Should anyone be visiting this sunny (?) part of England they are more than welcome to come to my house (if you can put up with three lively children!) and my wife Ruth makes lovely cakes...

Tony Wilmott

I was born in 1967 and attended a graphic design course. I am a self-taught artist and have learned a lot about astronomy by reading various magazines. Presently I am working from home as a freelance artist in Leicester, England.

I became interested in astronomy and drawing at the age of five. The first books I had were *The Night Sky* and *The Stars and Their Legends*, published by Ladybird Books. At the age of seven I was given a small telescope, and was inspired by David A. Hardy's illustrations in *Discovering the Universe* [I'd forgotten that one! DAH] As a child I was influenced by the TV series 'Space 1999', about a Moonbase. At the age of 16 I had *The Grand Tour* by Ron Miller and William K. Hartmann. I

think this first inspired me to paint possible planets beyond our Solar System.

I like to paint using pastel chalks. My favourite subjects are planets orbiting nearby stars. Some of these paintings are of planets that have recently been discovered by astronomers. However, most of them are terrestrial planets that I imagine might orbit nearby stars. I use *Sky Catalogue 2000, Vol 1, 2nd Edition* to get precise statistics about the stars.

Sometimes I create countryside scenes on these planets. These look surrealist but might be possible using future terraforming technology. I like to keep all of my space art astronomically realistic. I also like to paint totally alien lifeforms.

I have had art published in the February 1996 issue of *Astronomy Now* magazine (page 57). Very recently I paid a local printer to produce 1000 copies of my science fiction painting 'An Alien Adventure'. These are small colour posters on 200GSM gloss art paper; they have a trade price of £1.50 each and they sell for £2.95. I am presently trying to sell them to SF shops. If they are successful I would like eventually to produce a range of posters.

First exhibition

My first big exhibition was held at the City Gallery in Leicester in April 1996. The exhibition was titled 'Planets Beyond Our Solar System', and all 24 pictures had sold within three days! After this I showed 50 slides of my artwork to the Leicester Astronomical Society.

It is wonderful that astronomers have at last actually found planets around nearby stars. I think that our planet is like a grain of sand on a vast beach. I like to show people what other Earthlike planets could be like. To show people that humanity's ultimate goal in space exploration is to explore other Earths. And what our civilization can achieve if all nations work together in peace.

Garry Harwood

Born in 1959, I live and work in London, England. I have had something of a schizophrenic relationship with the arts and sciences which goes just about as far back as I can remember, brought about I suspect by having an unfocused interest in almost everything, and an uncanny ability to get from A to B via Z! It's no picnic trying to juggle left- and right-brain activities with this kind of psychological handicap!

As a kid I went through the usual stages of drawing dinosaurs, or (influenced no

doubt, by a diet of science fiction) inventing imaginary planetary scenes. In fact, if anything stayed still for long enough (or even if it didn't) I'd attempt to draw or paint it.

Running parallel to all this, was a growing interest in astronomy, which, triggered by the chance viewing of a short series of televised programmes (in 1965, I think) resulted in the mail order purchase of a small refracting telescope, and a couple of paperbacks which were offered at the end of each programme. This instrument, consisting of no more than a pair of spectacle lenses mounted at either end of a three foot long black cardboard tube on a wobbly metal tripod (which gave marvellously blurred and rainbow coloured images dancing in the visual field) and one book, a guide to the constellations and their mythology, initiated a voyage of discovery that has deeply affected the way I look at the world around me, and has now, (by another of those chance occurrences that seem to play an important part in my life) led to the IAAA.

Gems of Art?

Although I received no formal art training, preferring instead to find my own path, I was encouraged to study art to A-level. At this time I certainly never considered a possible career as an artist ("you mean someone will pay me to do this?"), and so both art and astronomy took a back seat while I pursued other interests and instead seriously considered a post as a marine biologist. However, events were to take a different and completely unexpected turn, and I have been employed for the past nineteen years as a gemologist.

But old habits die hard. The return of Comet Halley in '85 rekindled my passion for astronomy, and coincidentally, I started to paint seascapes and still-life again. It was during this period that I decided to specialize in still-life. As a great admirer of the almost superhuman technique and minute observation of detail characteristic of many still-life painters active in the Netherlands during the seventeenth century, I began to research the methods that were employed to achieve the high level of finish so typical of these works.

I now strive to execute all of my still-life work in this manner, although I will use a more "painterly" or impressionistic technique if the subject warrants. I do occasionally sell the odd work, mainly to commission, but I have not exhibited. Unfortunately, I seldom have the time to paint even at wee-

