Arches Workshop Update

The deadline for the IAAA Arches Workshop is rapidly approaching! We still have about half of the slots at the house available. The reason for the deadline is simply one of logistics: we must get a payment in to the facility in order to hold it for our members. So please help us out and send in your registration fee. Here are just a few comments from excited IAAA members after the 1989 workshop in Arches: "The desert is such a spectacular experience anyway, but the geology and wildlife around here is just amazing, I learned so much." "This is one of the most beautiful places I've ever seen." "I thought we were going to die in that Jeep-I'm no longer riding with [deleted] again." "What was that thing splattered all over the road back there?" As you can see, it is quite the experience for both seasoned artists and new ones. Workshops provide an opportunity to learn how to depict light, form and texture from a natural environment which bears some geologic resemblance to other worlds.

For many who are primarily studio painters, a field experience such as this will have a profound effect on the quality of their painting. The natural beauty around Arches is astounding. The vibrant red sandstone erodes into long fins which stretch for miles across the landscape. These fins fracture preferentially in area, which then weather into free-standing arches. But there is more to Arches than arches. The multi-layered stone takes on spectacular forms which conjure images of other worlds. One such magical place, unique in the world, is called Goblin Valley.

The visitor is greeted by a forest of stone mushrooms ten to fifteen feet tall (below).

The rich and varied formations which we will see here are a valuable reminder that other worlds will have many natural permutations which we can only guess at. The Park Service is trying to arrange for a resource person to give us the inside scoop on some of the strange geology, if their schedule permits.

**CALLS FOR ART**

Pat Dasch, Editor-in-Chief of Ad Astra, the National Space Society's magazine, writes:

"We frequently have to find artwork to illustrate our articles at short notice. This means that we don't often have the luxury of calling individual artists to ask if they have anything appropriate that we could use.

One of my predecessors had solicited 35mm slides of available work from members of our organization to be held on file, available for use, with the understanding that a price would be negotiated at the time of use. Those files are now sadly out of date. Could you spread the word amongst your members that I would like 35mm samples of work, particularly more recent pieces, that might be appropriate for publication in Ad Astra?"

"Dear Fellow I.A.A.A. Members,

I know that this is very short notice, but . . . I am a member of the I.A.A.A. and also a member of the Sacramento Valley Astronomical Society. We have an event every summer called the 'star b'ique'. About 500 or more astronomy buffs get together in the mountains and have a large scale party. I would also like to show an art exhibit for that day also at the science center and possibly the local art galleries.

The S.V.A.S. would furnish the appropriate insurance and a good time would be had by all. All interested fellow artists are welcome to come. The event will be on June 3, 1995 and you should contact me A.S.A.P. My address and phone number are below. Keep the spirit alive!

Dale Darby, 6248 Carl Sandburg Circle
Sacramento, CA 95842 tel. (916) 331-0147"
with a performance scheduled for 1996.  (B.A.)
Contact: Mark Mercury, 1307 N. Lincoln Ave.,
Pasadena, CA 91103; phone 818-791-1480,
fax 818-794-5751

Photo/painting courtesy Mark Mercury/Odyssey.
Photoshop montage by Dave Hardy.

IF YOU would like to be featured in "Member
Profile" send info to: Beth Avary 18380 China Grade,
Boulder Creek, CA 95006, phone/fax 408-338-8362
e-mail 75202.11044@COMPUTER.COM

COMPUTERS & SPACE ART by Dennis M. Davidson

I asked for your views on computers in space art, and
this time I have contributions from two of the best:
no less than our President and an ex-President
and founder-member. But you can ALL join in...

made with computers? (Now we are getting somewhere!) So much hype about anything connected
with computing. Where is it all going? What does it mean to space art? Does it matter? I can’t promise
to answer all of these questions, however I will relate my experiences as an artist who uses comput-
ers and the Internet as creative tools and in an indirect manner address some of these issues.

As a caveat, I will not address the notion of ‘good’ or ‘bad’ art in this article. That is left to another
conversation. I will concede that there is a tremendous amount of ‘new’ computer created imagery out there, much of it devoid of spirit and can hardly be described as art. Computer graphics is

at a similar point desktop publishing found itself in
the early 1980’s. Simply because dozens of fonts were
available to anyone with an inexpensive word pro-
cessing system, the most mundane memo or brochure
was filled with six different fonts, cluttering the page,
and often confusing the viewer. Similarly, because
computer graphics tools are inexpensive and available
to millions of consumers, there is a tendency to over-
use milty CG features to the detriment of the message.

I feel that we stand, as a culture, at a real transition
from the post-Industrial Age to the Information Age.
For so long, the pundits have declared the Age of
Information. Well folks, with the advent of inex-
pensive, and tremendously powerful personal comput-
ers, replicating by the millions, we are finally there.

Borrowing a metaphor from Nicholas Negroponte
of MIT’s Media Lab; translating our words, work, and
commerce from atoms to bits gives us unparalleled
freedom of interactively and interconnectedness.
The Internet and the World Wide Web (WWW) provide
the infra-structure to make this ‘connectivity’ real.

Visual artists are just one group out of many who are
skilledly using computers and the Internet to
communicate their ideas in new ways to an ever
expanding audience. A defining characteristic is
beginning to divide all creative artists into two
groups: those who are computer and Internet literate
and those who are not. On a deeper level, the division
can be described as between artists who can work
with new technologies and those who cannot.

As astronomical artists, we are versatile users of
technology and its products. Many of us trained as
scientists before turning to art. For most of us, the
science and technology of astronomy has been the
prime source of inspiration for our work. Unlike most
of the art world, science and technology are familiar
areas of study to us. It is not something to be feared
or overly glorified. Because of our unusual background
as astronomical artists, we are well positioned to
become leading visionaries in the techn-world of
the Internet and computer graphics. My initial contact
with computers as an artistic tool was disappointing,
mostly because the machines were so damn expen-
sive, and the software was not easy to use. Over
the last few years this changed. Computers became
powerful and relatively inexpensive. Software became
easier to understand and began to approximate what I
could imagine in my mind’s eye. In fact, computer
graphics has enabled me to visualize concepts that
would have been either highly laborious or impossible
to achieve with traditional paint and canvas.

The turning point for me professionally when my
employer, the Hayden Planetarium, found the means
to “go digital”. It was not without significant input on
my part consisting of countless memos, reports, and
proposals. Once the funding was secured, I had to make
the hard decisions. As most of you know, computer
technology is in a constant state of flux. New models
are released every six months or so, usually becoming
cheaper, but always becoming faster, with more memory, new tricks. Software is always changing, with a flurry of upgrades to choose from.

What to do? First define your use of the comput-
er. Will you be creating work for paper publication,
such as books or magazines? Or will you be creat-
ing work which will solely be viewed in the elec-
tronic media? You may need a scanner to utilize
your own illustrations as source material, and you
might want a graphics tablet to be able to digitally
draw and sketch.

My advice is to go to a computer graphics trade
show to view and try out the merchandise. The best
in the world is the annual meeting of SIGGRAPH,
which is being held in Los Angeles this year, August 6-11. For U.S. $25, you can walk the huck-
eters of booths at the trade show with every major
computer graphics software and hardware company
in the world represented. It will be overwhelming,
but it is the best opportunity to try out all the latest
products. Additionally there are courses ranging
from basic concepts in computer graphics to advanced programming, but these are expensive.

After attending last year’s SIGGRAPH, I settled
on Apple’s PowerMac supplied with 80 MB of
RAM to run Adobe Photoshop. We plan on archiv-
ing our entire art and photography collection of
some 8,000 items, so I needed a large flat bed
scanner as well as a slide scanner. We haven’t
decided on the best way to store our images, so to
start with we are using a Bernoulli removable hard
drive. I can store image files on a disk that can be
shared with other computer users or be sent out to a
service bureau for slides or prints. Also, image files
on the removable hard disks can be sent directly to
a printer or publisher. We have a film recorder in
house since we produce thousands of slides per
year. Because our funding was limited and the
technology is still very expensive, we chose not to have
in-house color printing capabilities. Most service
bureaus will have high-end Iris printers which can
output exquisite prints from your digital files. Also,
Iris printers can print on most anything: canvas,
dich, cloth, paper, plastic.

Most large printers are going digital as well, so it
is easier for them to use a computer file of your
work than a transparency or original. Color separa-
tions can be made from the computer file. In fact,
Adobe Photoshop allows you to make your own
color separations with the click of the mouse.

In New York and elsewhere, most of the magazine
and book publishers are becoming digital. They are
not demanding that artists produce their work in a
digital form – yet. However, the day will come
when the artist who work in a digital environment
will have a clear advantage over the traditional illus-
tration to transparency to color separation mode.
This does not mean that we must create all of our
work on a computer. Often, I will use my acrylics to
paint elements or entire compositions, then scan in
the art so I can manipulate it further using Photos-
shop. I can then output my work in different forms. I
do not foresee abandoning pen, brush, and paint,
however I do know that my time to create is limited
and I will use any tool available to be able to produce
more work and to do it in different ways. I will
still sketch out ideas, but then I’ll scan in the
drawing to use as a template for a more detailed
painting.

I’ve found that working in a digital environment
has given me unprecedented flexibility. I can take
an original image and make a dozen iterations, each
differently. If a composition is too light for a
particular publication I can darken a copy while
saving the original. Elements in a composition can
be moved or rearranged. This allows an artist director
to make changes that previously would require the
illustrator to rework the art. Now major changes can
be accomplished in minutes. This is not always a
good thing. The indecisive art director could drive
an artist batty, but at least most changes can
achieved with little effort.

Up to now I have been discussing the use of the
computer as a digital adjunct to the traditional
process of painting. This has been a liberating
experience, nevertheless, I expect more from the
computer. To stretch my creative proclivities via
this digital tool I’ve had to change the way I per-
ceive myself as an artist, and transform how I work.
Some of my work is created only to be viewed on a
computer monitor; a printed version is only a sim-
plification. In progress projects utilize sound and
motion, further blurring the boundaries between
disciplines. To be honest, I don’t know where these
digital tools will take me. I do know they provide
new ways of communicating my ideas to the
world, and with access to the World Wide Web
that access becomes much easier. I view this article
as the continuation of a dialog on issues of comput-
ers and art. I invite any and all IAAA artists, visual
or aural, to continue the discussion.

There you have it: a conversation about computers
without using the affix “cyber”!!

(But read on . . .)
THE CYBER SPACE ARTIST
by Kim Poor

Hello, all! This is my first article for Pulser since 1988. I've decided to do a semi-regular column on computers and space art since many of us are already into it, but mostly because too many of you aren't.

There's no room for technophobes in space art. If you shun using a computer to assist your painting, you may as well be shaving airbrushes, acrylics, faxers or any other modern convenience. The computer is only a new tool, and if you aren't hip to new tools, you risk becoming extinct as an artist.

You don't have to be directly doing art with your computer to benefit. There are many other advantages... e-mail comes to mind. Being on-line is important not only for the communicative advantage, but there are several online forums and discussions pertaining to art, graphics, and particularly, space.

I could go into a long discussion about the online services, the internet, computer types and such, and I may in future columns, but I'll give you a quick synopsis on what I believe will serve you best: Get a Mac, a modem, and America Online. Why a Mac? Well, because it is geared toward art and artists. Most of the graphic, 3D and artistic software is written for Macs. More importantly, ALL of the high-end output devices for graphics are geared for Macintosh files. If you have a PC (IBM), or someone gives you one, fine, but if you have a choice in the matter, go for the Mac.

I have both. I've got four networked PCs at the gallery. In fact I'm writing this column on one, but I've got my Mac workstation at home, and that is where the real creativity happens. It takes a lot of additional hardware, savvy, and patience to get a PC as graphic capable as a Mac already is, right out of the box. If you just want to do e-mail, a PC or anything with a monitor and keyboard that can use a Mac modem will work fine.

Why America Online? A number of reasons. Again, I've used others. In fact, the IAAA owes a lot to CompuServe, as Rick Sternbuch and I converted daily over CompuServe e-mail when we were hammering out the IAAA in 1985. I like America Online (AOL) for a number of reasons: It is more Mac-friendly, Internet e-mail is FREE (CompuServe charges 10 cents per letter, which is outrageous and adds up quickly) and AOL lets you pick out your own "handle" which can be anything you want, like a name which is easily remembered (mine is Kpoor). CompuServe assigns you an inmate number like 77472,22244, which no one can remember, not even if it is your own! AOL also lets you choose a second mainname (I use Novaspace, which is also my Internet address, for gallery mail).

AOL also seems to have better graphics forums (discussion groups), including one specifically for KPT Bryce, which many of you have heard of. Bryce is a good reason in and of itself to get a computer. As of this writing, it is only available for a Mac.

There are other online services, such as Prodigy, which has the advantage of having a World Wide Web browser (Internet), although the other services will have similar service soon, and they already have limited Internet access, including e-mail. They all have basic service for about $10/month.

What about the modem? Get the fastest one you can. The fastest is currently a 28,800 bps @ about $200. Like most computer hardware, the speeds increase rapidly over the years as the price decreases. My first modem was a 300 bps. It cost $300 in 1985. 14,400 bps modems are easily available now and used, at about $100.

So, if you haven't already, take that next big freelance commission check and take the plunge. Or, take your credit card up to its limit and get the best system you can. You won't know how you got along without it. If you're waiting because it may become obsolete, you'll wait forever, and you'll be the one who's obsolete. Lease my Mac, and I'll probably be upgrading the lease for the rest of my life. I consider it my technology payment. I'll always have a house payment too. That's life. It's really a small price to pay to keep current. Most businesses have to lease equipment, whether it is tools or technology, in order to maintain competitiveness in the marketplace.

That's all for now. I'd love to hear your comments & questions.

Kim Poor owns Novaspace Art Gallery in Tucson, Arizona. He was a co-founder and first President of the IAAA, 1986-1988. His e-mail addresses are kpoor@aol.com, novaspace@aol.com or kpoor @novaspace.com. His "e-mail" address is P.O. Box 37197, Tucson, AZ 85740.

OMNI MAGAZINE CEASES PRINTED PUBLICATION

Omni magazine has ceased publication of its printed magazine after over 15 years in existence. Omni plans to continue to retain its electronic version on America Online and (presumably) will also be up on the Internet's WWW, which already has a highly successful version of Omni's sibling publication, Penhouse (http://www.penhouse.com).

This is bad news for artists. Omni was one of the heaviest users of artwork, illustrating each issue lavishly, paying well and issuing checks promptly. Over the years, Omni showcased many IAAA artists' works.

Omni's printed circulation has been purchased by Discover magazine, a Disney publication. Subscribers will receive Discover for the duration of their subscription. (K.P.)

Rover on Mars - via Hawaii
In March this year Arthur Gilbert (bravely struggling with a "flo virus") along with thousands of students, 'went to Mars'. Here's his report:

During the period of February 27 through March 11 1995, England, along with the rest of the world, was able to experience the Mars Rover in action live from Hawaii, in association with the Jason project which was founded by Titanic-discover Dr Bob Ballard. The theme was, 'just as Hawaii is an island in the sea, the Earth is an island for life in the vast universe'.

The main aim of the Jason project is to motivate students to study science and technological subjects, as well as bringing a greater awareness to the public - hopefully bringing about funding for future worldwide scientific projects.

Various venues with downlink facilities were situated around Britain, including London, Liverpool, Southampton and Nottingham. The latter, famous for the legendary Robin Hood, was my closest Primary Network Site (PINS), so I set out on a dull, wet day for the British Geological Survey (BGS) establishment at Keyworth, just outside the city. A small sample of Apollo 11 moonrock was a central exhibit.

The theatre was full, and live images were projected onto three screens simultaneously. It being mid-afternoon in the UK meant that dawn had not yet broken in Hawaii, but even so there was plenty to observe and learn members from Volcanoes National Park included those from McDonnell Douglas, NASA Ames Research Center, and the Planetary Society, in addition to the Jason Foundation.

Unfortunately there were no facilities at Keyworth for actual Mars Rover interaction, but we were able to watch it being activated live, by students in Liverpool. "How am I doing?" asked one, and "Am I going too fast?" asked another, each student receiving an answer from halfway round the world. At the end of the drive each student's 'Interplanetary Driving Licence' was shown on the screen, stamped and approved.

Another part of this two-hour programme was a series of spectacular images of volcanic eruptions, views across vast lava fields as desolate as the Moon. Magnificent views from land, sea and air of the volcanic islands of Hawaii, as well as a fascinating insight into a wide range of plants and wildlife which have developed on the slopes of (mainly) extinct volcanoes. Plus wonderful images from Voyager of the outer planets, with particular emphasis on the volcanoes of Mars and Io.

This section also included a number of space paintings, none of which I recognised - and unfortunately they didn't acknowledge the artists' names, simply carrying the caption 'an artist's impression'. So here's a message to anyone out there who carries any weight: how about giving credit in future to those who did, after all, contribute significantly to the beauty of the programme? [Any artists know whose work was used? D.A.F.]

And so back to Earth and out into a wet and dreary outdoors. But if any of you overseas (to us) members are thinking of visiting the UK, don't let that put you off, we do get good weather here too!

Treasurer's Report:
April 1994 to April 1995

Starting balance $10,122.75
Deposits $ 1450.00
Debits $ 43.00
Balance 1417.00

Membership:

Exhibit 000.00
3250.77
Interest 80.68
00.00
Office 1112.92

Total 1529.68
4406.69

Ending balance $7225.74

!!!STOP PRESS!!!

Laurie Ortiz, who has served the IAAA so well as Memberships Officer, needs to give up the position due to pressure of other commitments.

SO WE NEED A VOLUNTEER, URGENTLY! Please contact our President - address etc. on file.

7
IAAA CONTACT ADDRESSES 
AND NUMBERS:

IAAA President: Dennis Davidson
Hayden Planetarium
Central Park at 81st St.
New York N.Y. 10024
e-mail: ddavid@amnh.org

IAAA Membership: Laurie Ortiz
4160 Willesco Road
Alpine CA 91901
Annual Subscription: $40.00

PULSAR

General Editor: David R. Hardy
99 Southam Road Hall Green
Birmingham B28 0AB England
Tel: (044) 121 777 1802
Fax: (044) 121 777 2792
e-mail: Dave@hardyart.demon.co.uk

Coordinator, USA: Michael W. Carroll
6260 W. Chestnut Ave.
Littleton
CO 80123
Tel: (303) 933 1645
e-mail: 76472.2541@compuserve.com

OUR COVER

Our cover this issue is again by a British artist (because I’ve still received none from the US... Aren’t any of you working?), Richard Bidley, who, as reported last issue, is one of our newer members and paints ‘imaginative pictures, but keeping within the bounds of scientific realism’. It’s reproduced from a colour card, and he asks: “How do artists take good photographs, and should one take transparencies or prints?” Anyone like to answer that one? (Yes, I could, but let’s hear someone else’s views – D.A.H.)

E-MAIL

It appears that NONE of you, except our Board, are on the Net? At least, none of you have responded to my request that you let us have your e-mail addresses, so that we can compile an IAAA list, set up a Home Page on WWW, etc. Really? (Read Kim Poor, inside... )