

# Color: An Appreciation

presented by Xin Jin Meng

# Color: An Appreciation

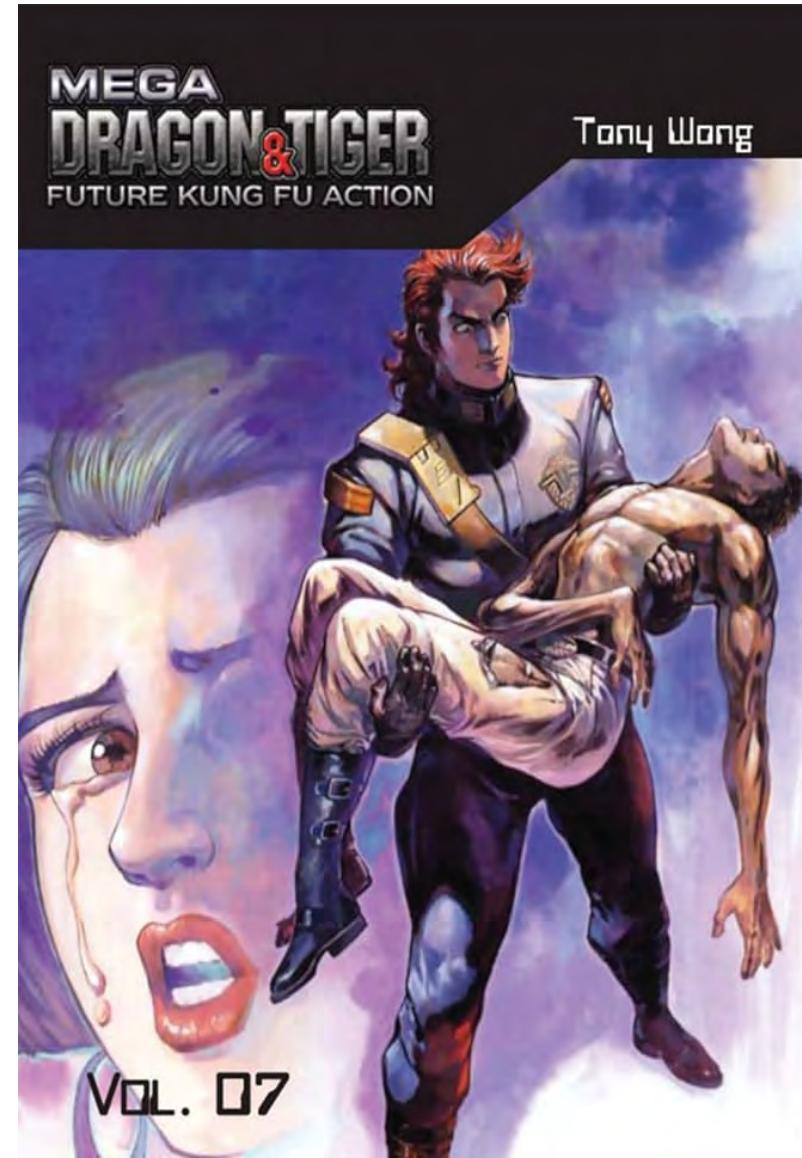
presented by Sheen Jean Mung (they/them)



# What are we appreciating?

- Where their color came from
- How they made it work
- How you can make it work for you

# Your fave comics are good, too

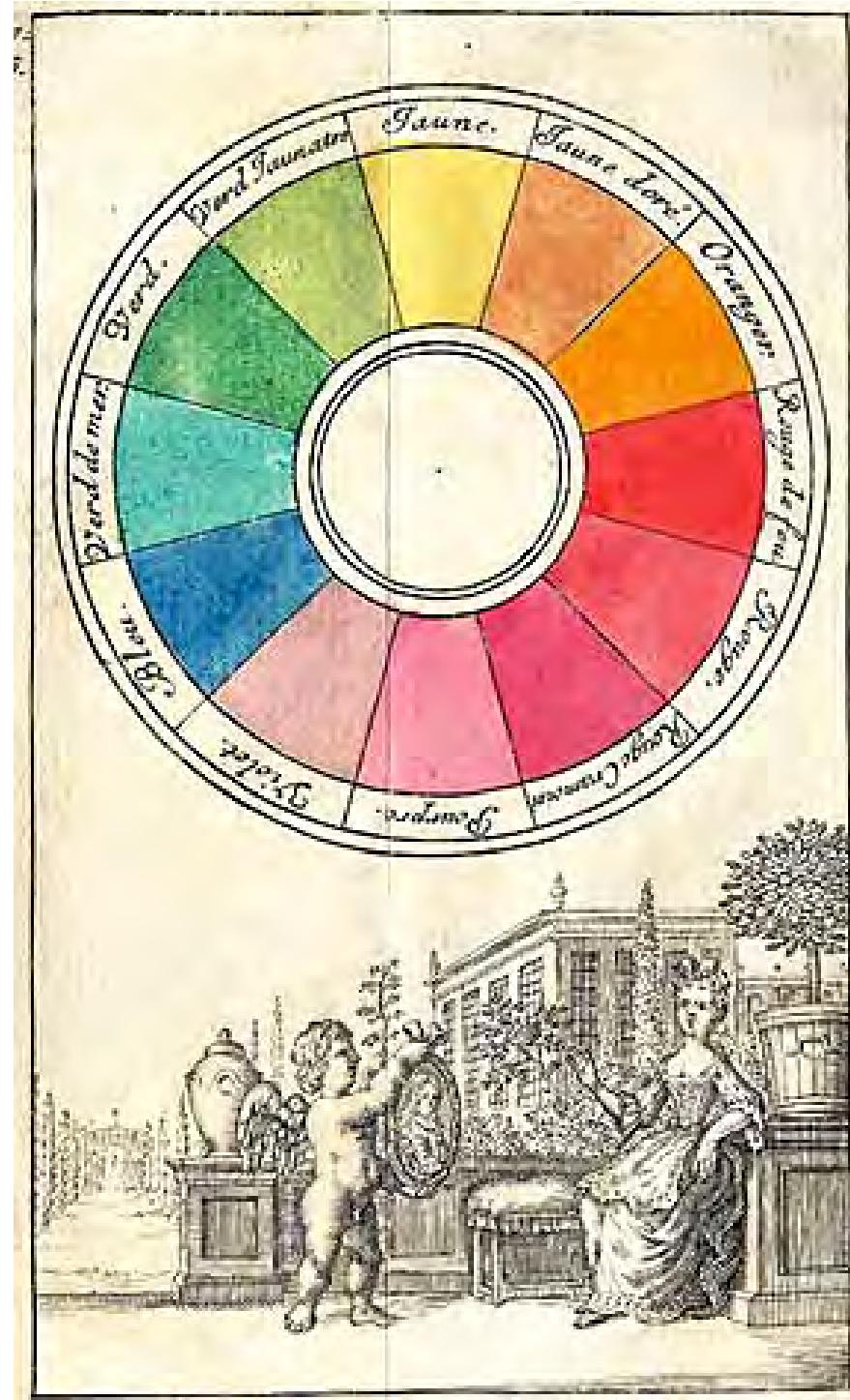


While we have tried to include a diversity of comics, most of what we will discuss is from the US Direct Market.

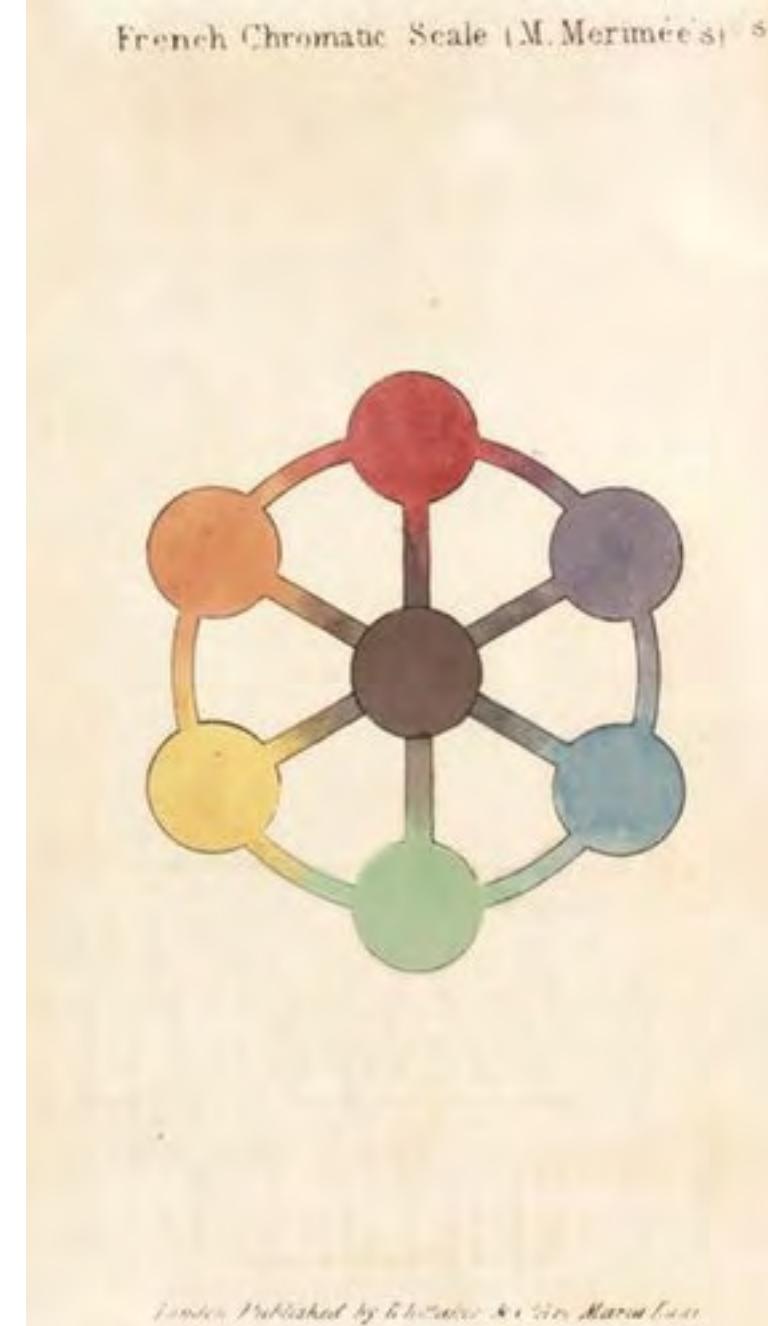
# Early Tones



# RYB Color Printing



Color Circle  
(1708)

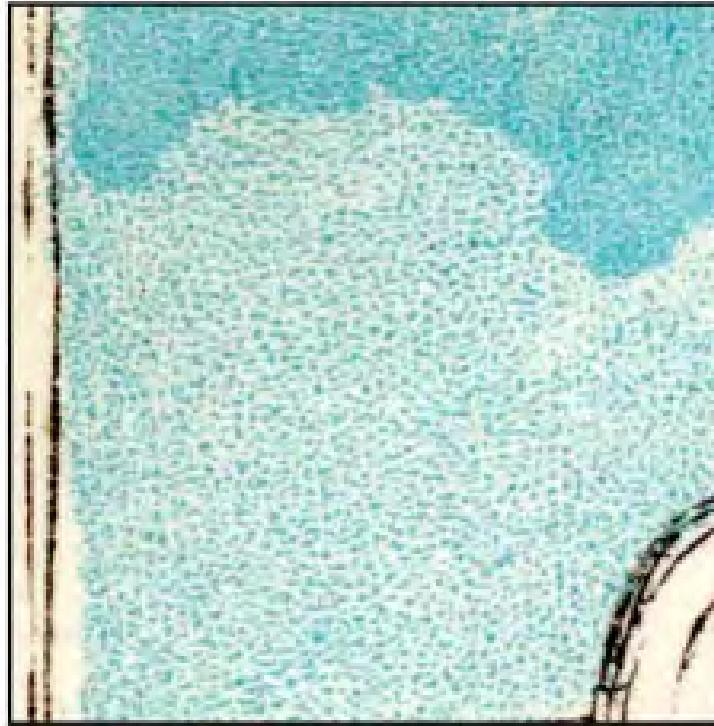


Echelle Chromatique  
(1830-9)



Color Plates  
(1902)

# Aquatint / Intaglio



FLAMBERGE. — EN CHASSE.

Relief Aquatint Process  
(1865?-1873?)

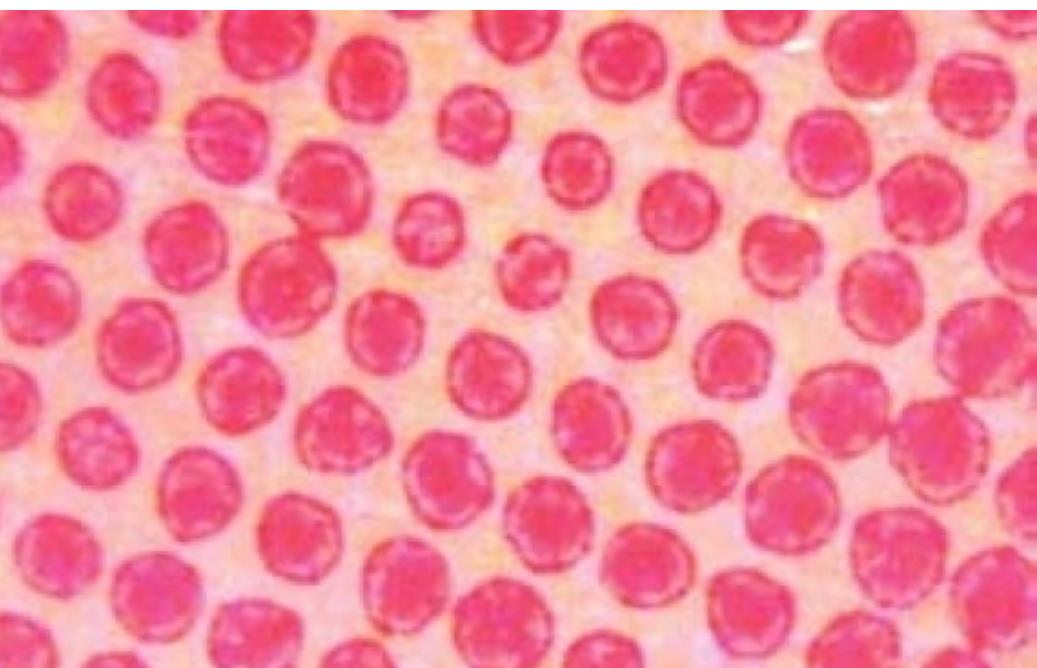
Relief Aquatint Process  
(1890)

# Aquatint / Intaglio



**Chien et Chat (1887)**  
Note registration error with red plate

# Four-Color Printing



# Four-Color Printing

(1938) illus. Fletcher Hanks



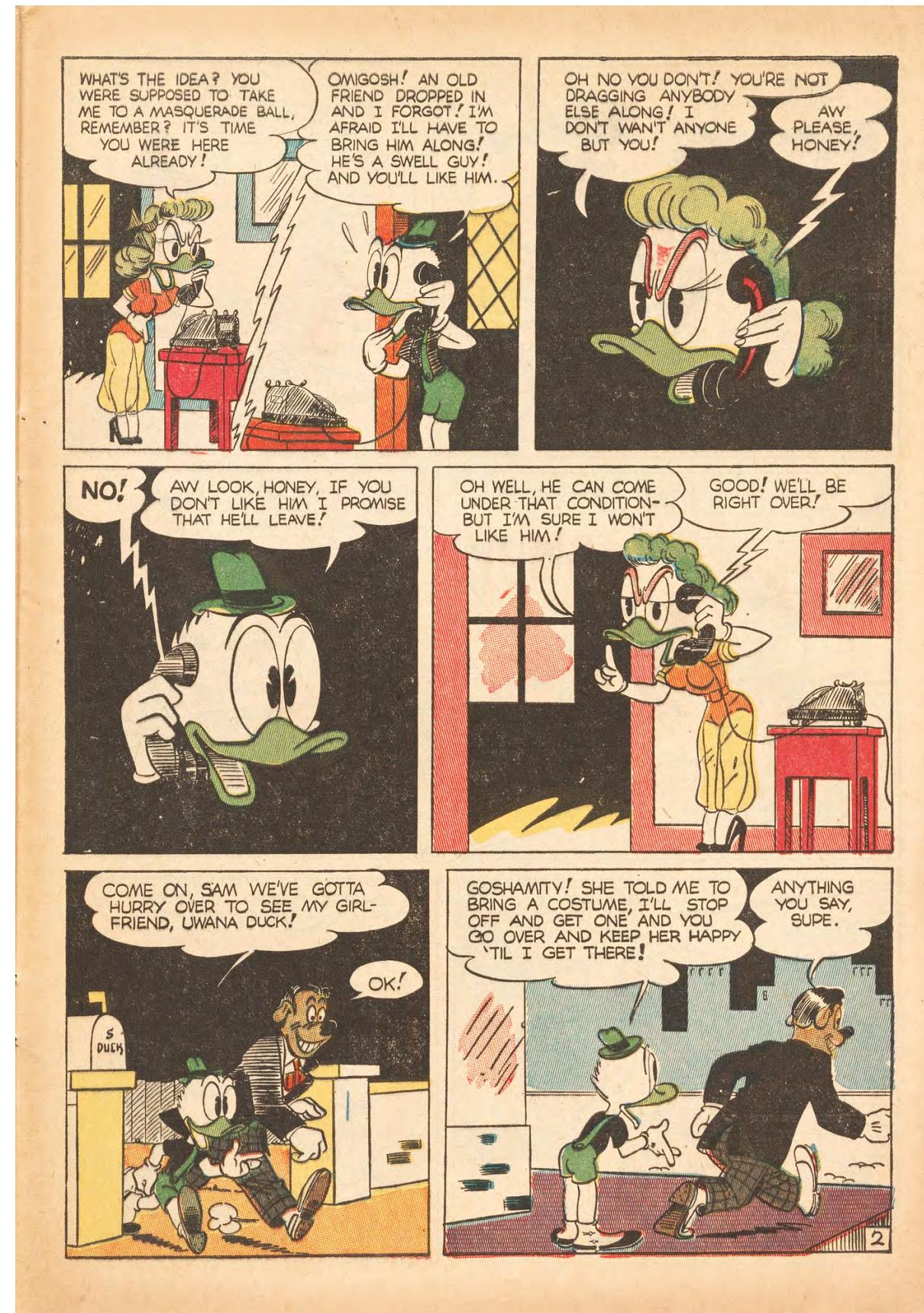
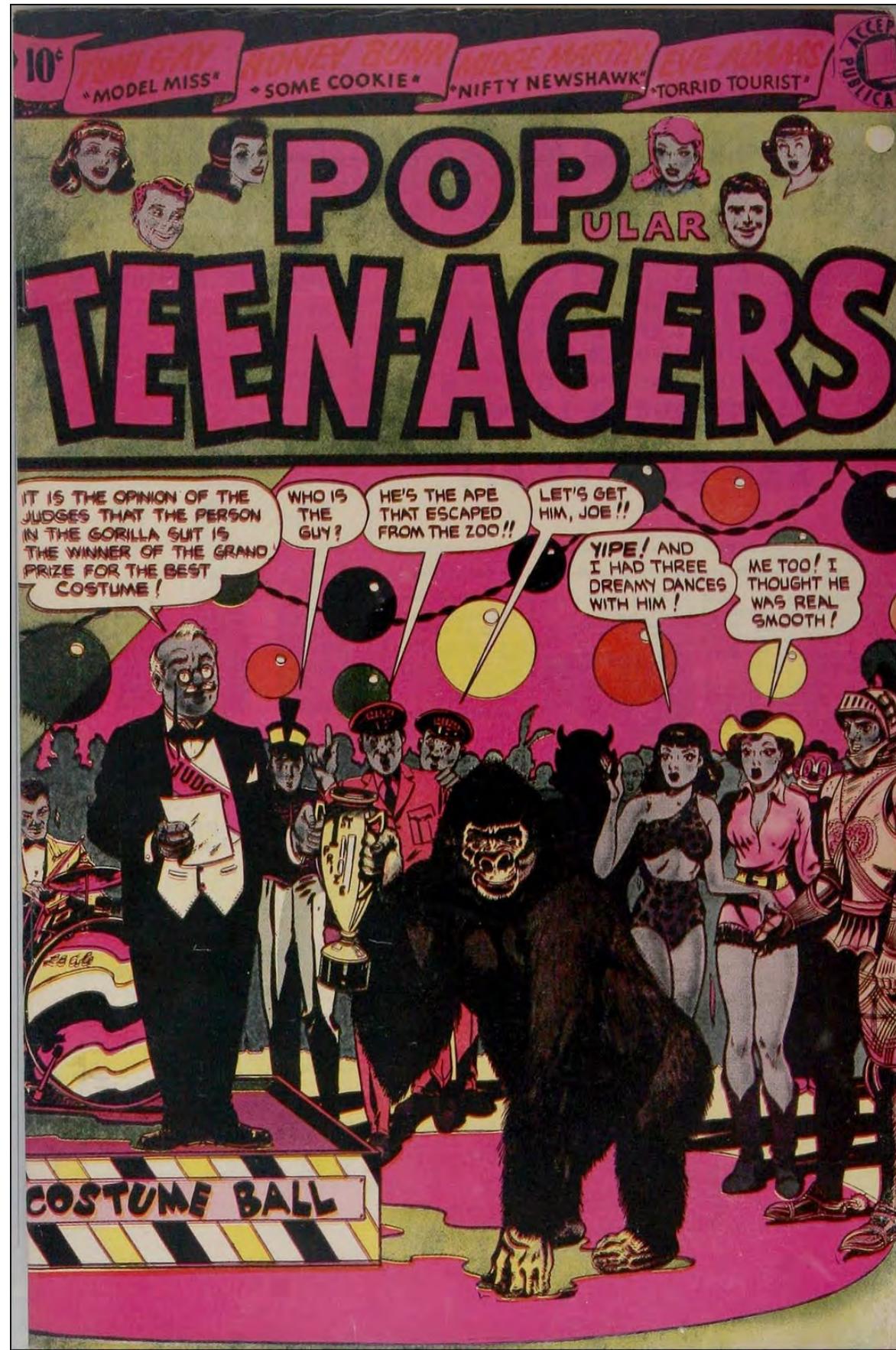
(1935-1941?) illus. Basil Wolverton



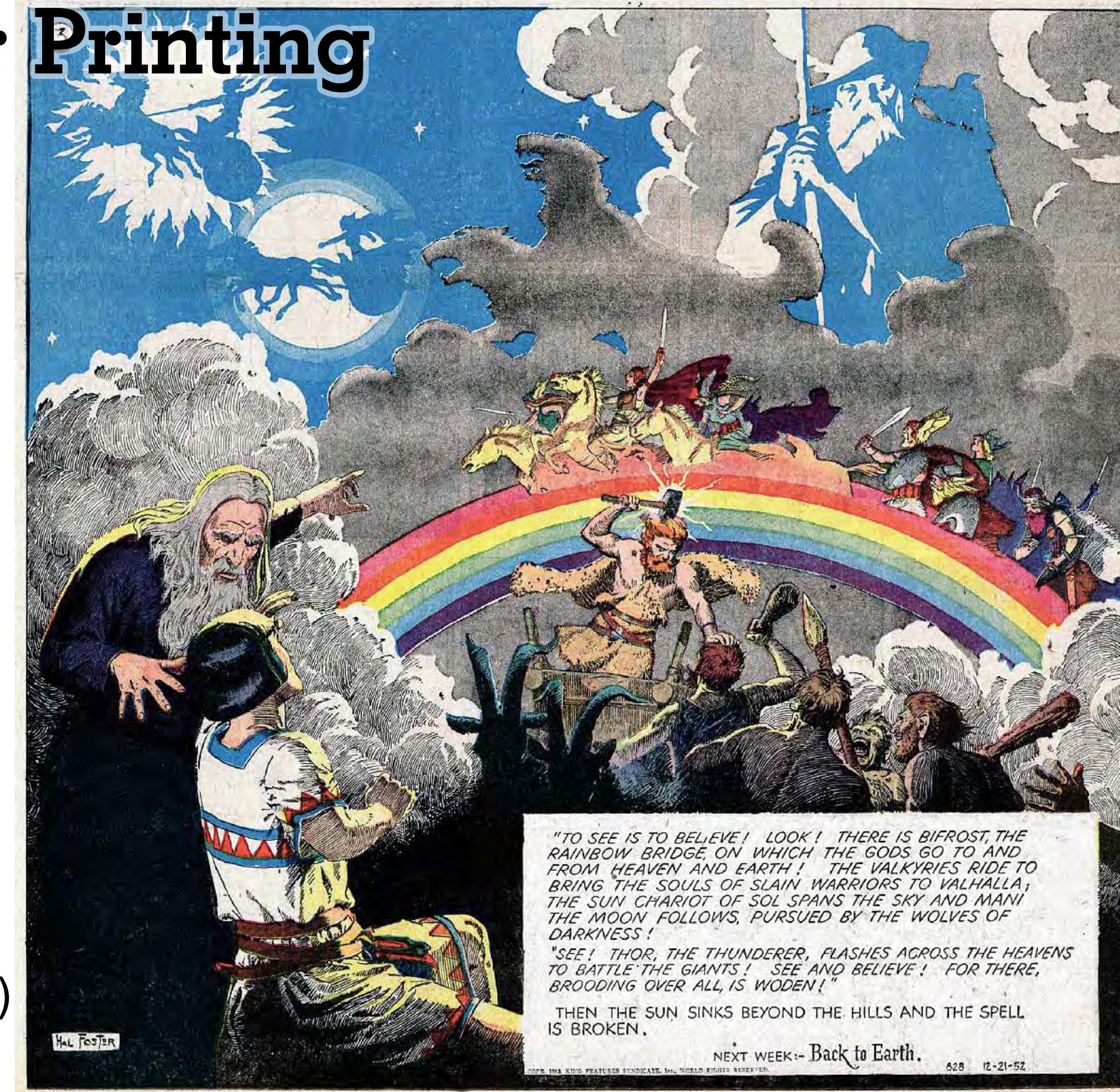
**“They didn’t want it good,  
they wanted it Wednesday.”**

— Robert Heinlein

# Color Plate Errors



# Four-Color Printing



Prince Valiant (1952)  
illus. Hal Foster

# Four-Color Printing

DC Style Guide (1982-6)  
illus. José Luis García-López



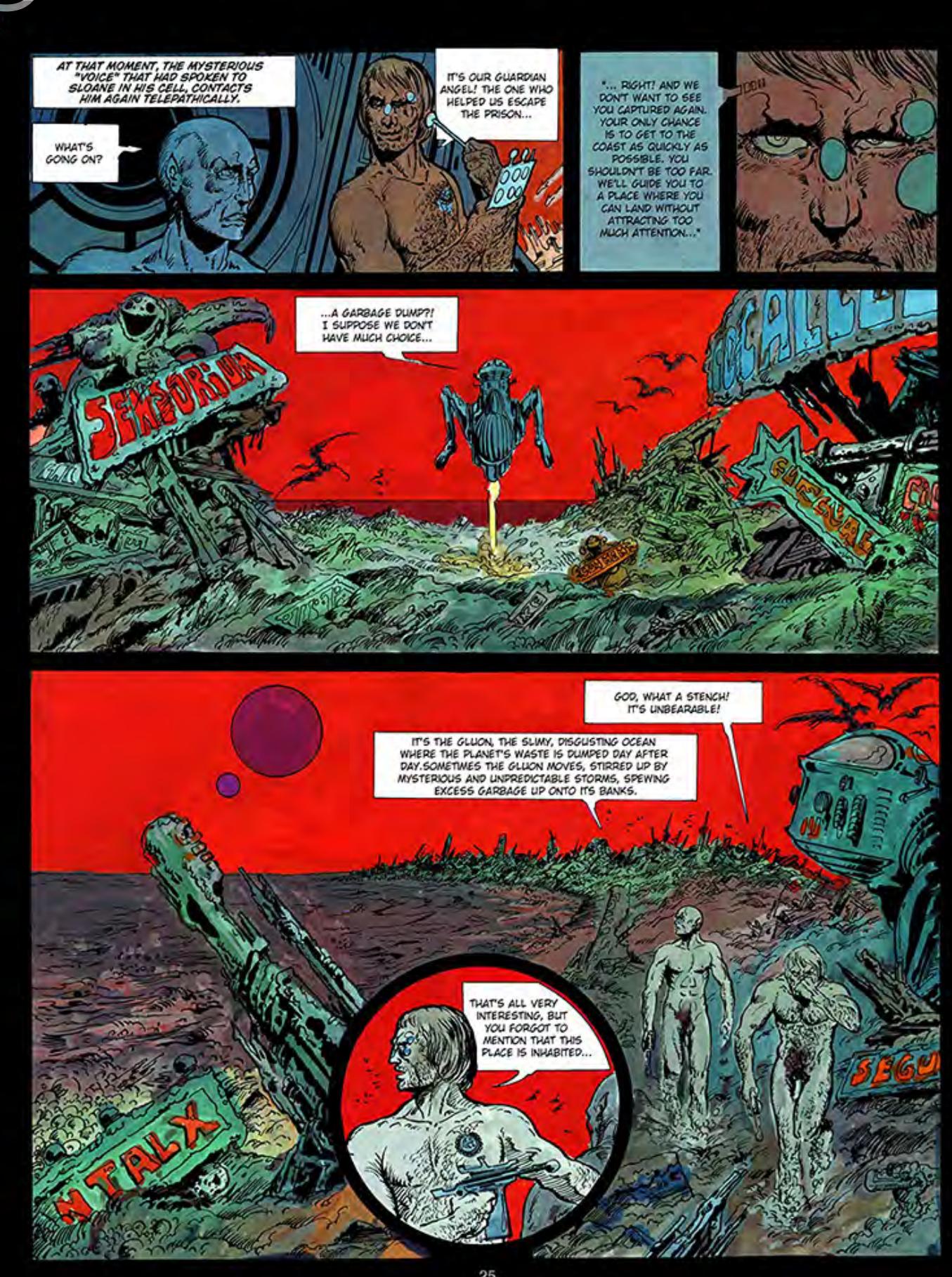
# Four-Color Printing

Valerian & Laureline (circa 1967)  
illus. Jean-Claude Mézières

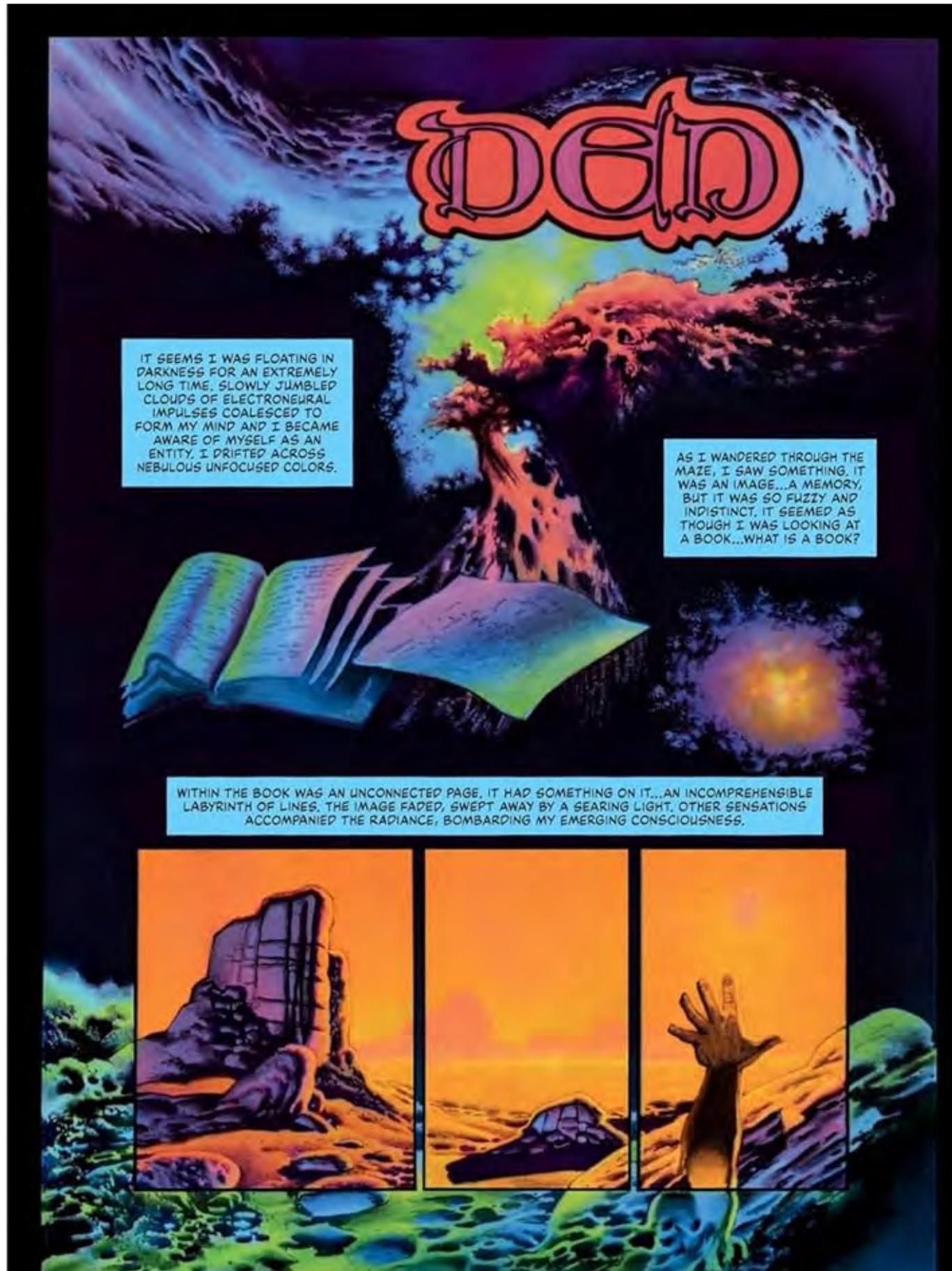


# Four-Color Printing

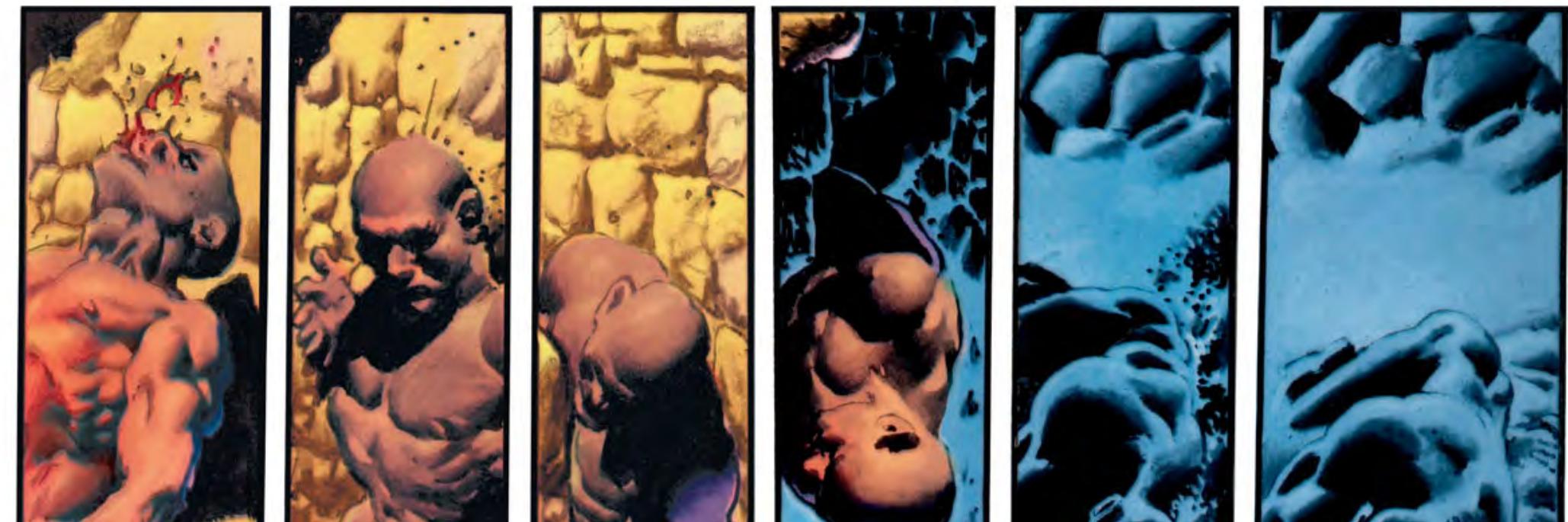
Delerius (1972), illus. Philipe Druillet



# Four-Color Printing



THE LIZARD'S STRONGEST BLOW CAUGHT ME UNPREPARED. I GUESS I THOUGHT HE WAS GOING TO CLOSE IN AND GRAB ME AGAIN. UNCONSCIOUS, I WAS THROWN AMONG THE STONWORKS AND FELL BELOW THE STAIRCASE.



Den (circa 1973)  
illus. Richard Corben

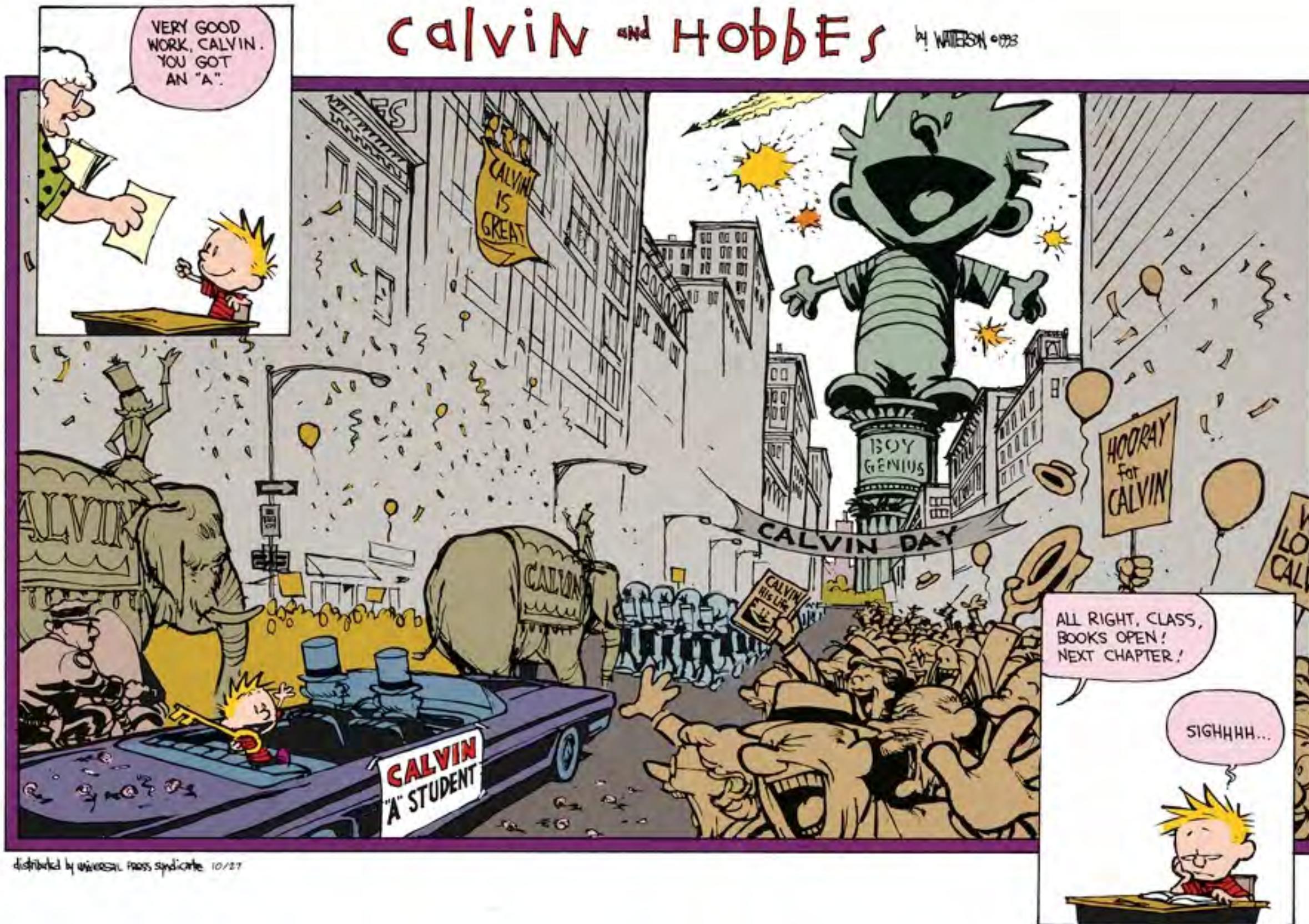
# Four-Color Printing

# Weapon-X (1988) illus. Barry Windsor-Smith



# Four-Color Printing

(1993) illus. Bill Watterson



# Four-Color Printing

illus. Bill Watterson

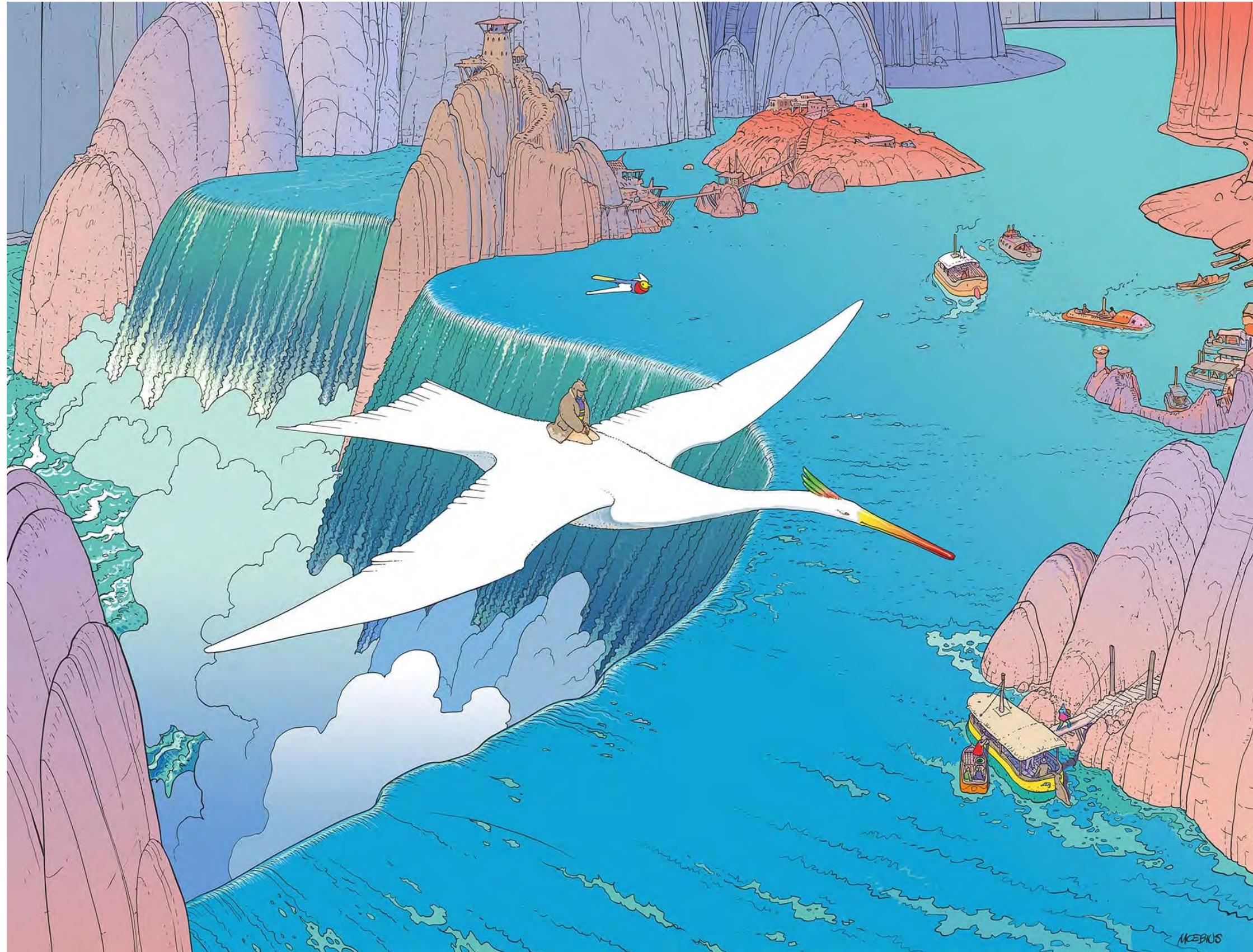


illus. Dana Simpson



# Ligne-Claire

illus. Moebius



# Ligne-Claire



illus. Moebius

# Ligne-Claire

illus. Moebius & Geof Darrow

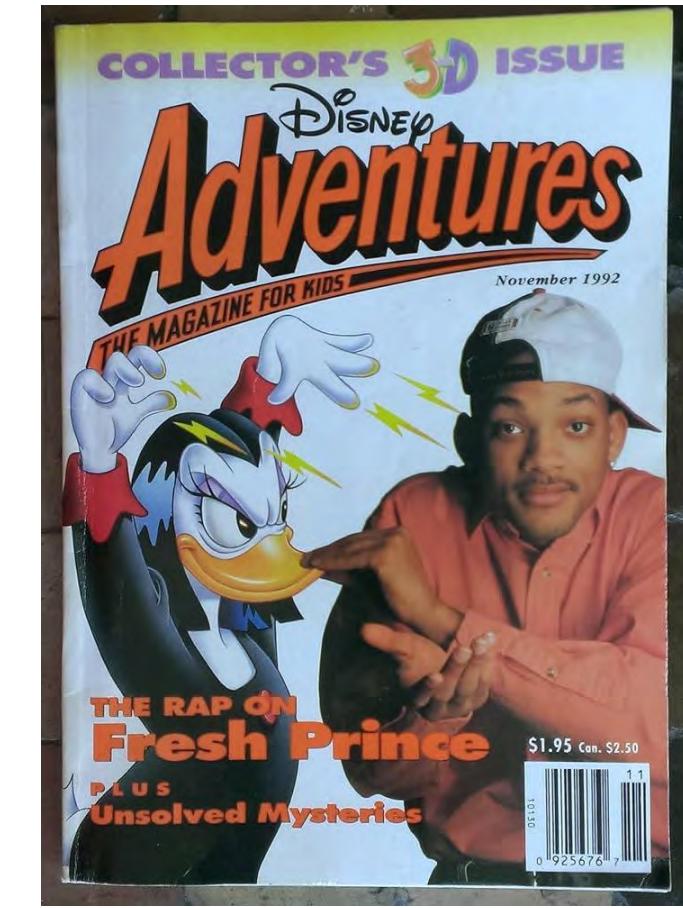
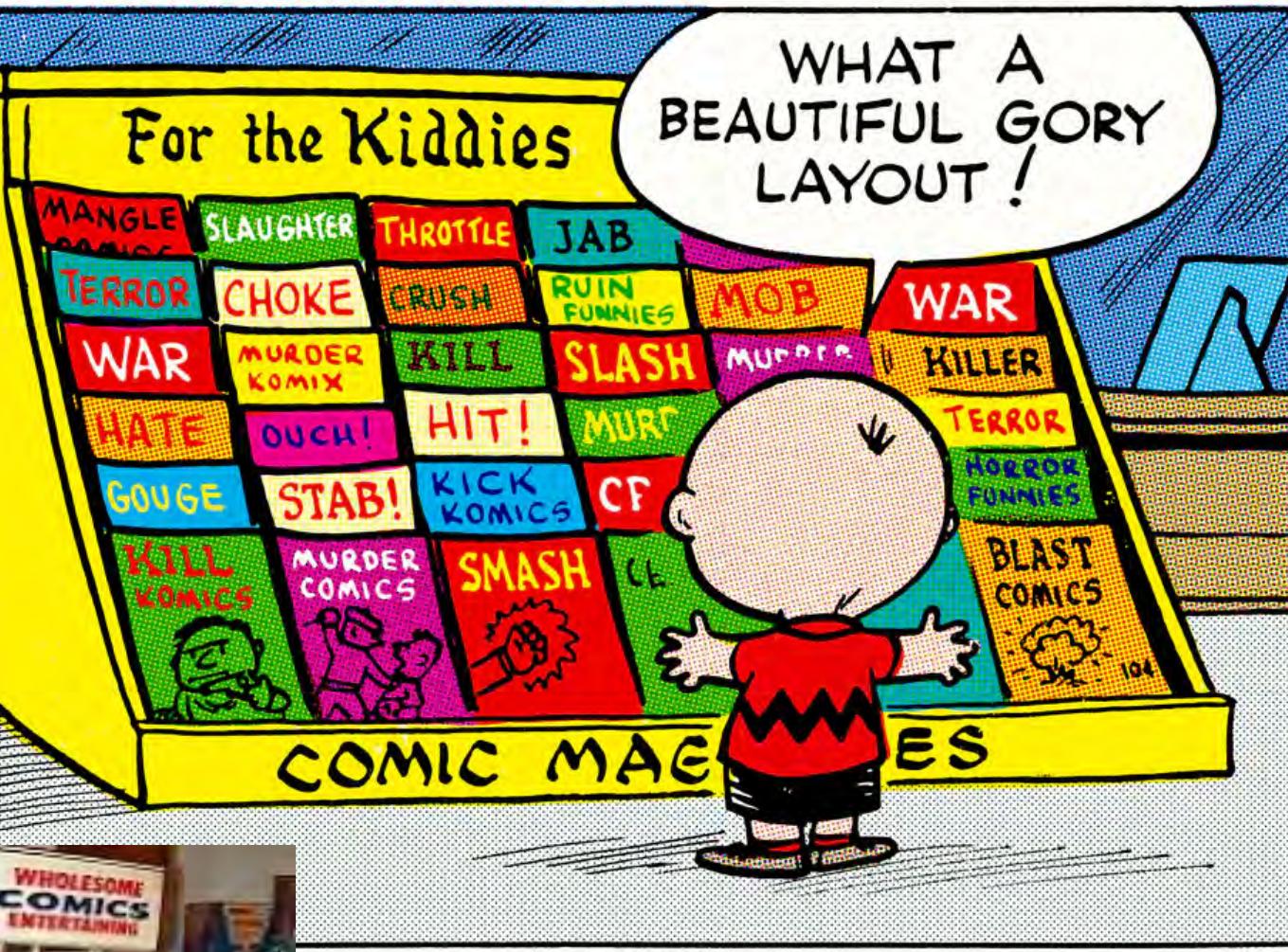


# Ligne-Claire

Halo (2006)  
illus. Moebius



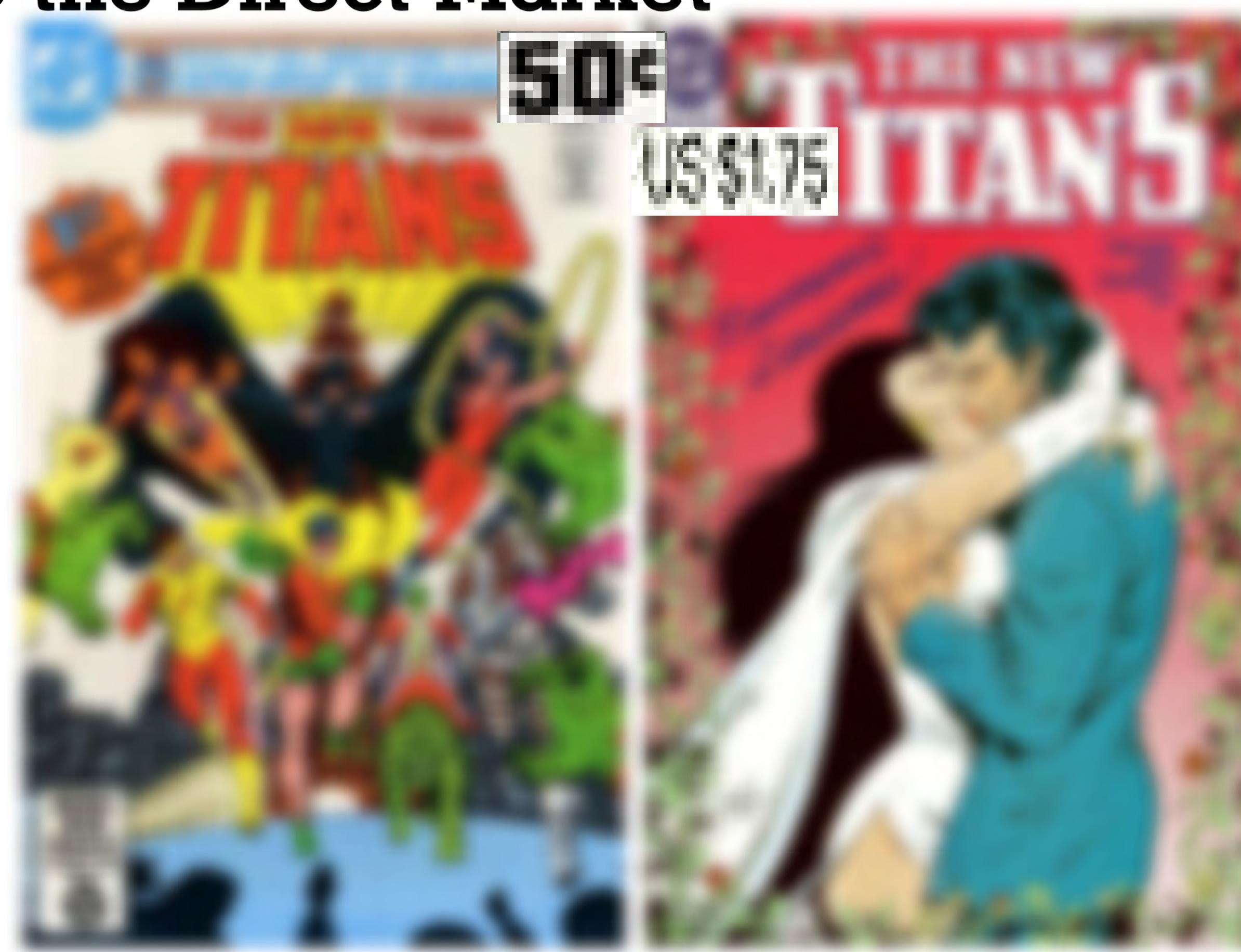
# From the News Stands ...



# ... to the Direct Market

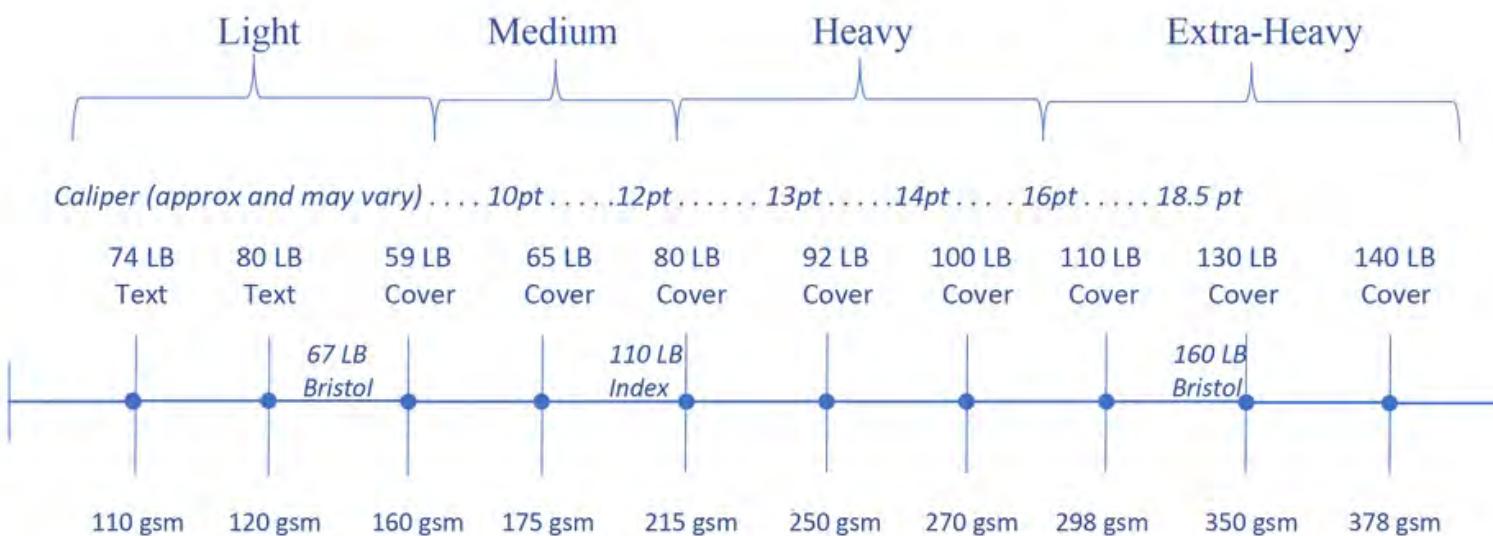


# ... to the Direct Market



# Ink Limits

## PAPER WEIGHT GUIDE



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Digital Camera



Monitor



Files



Print-outs



ICC Profile



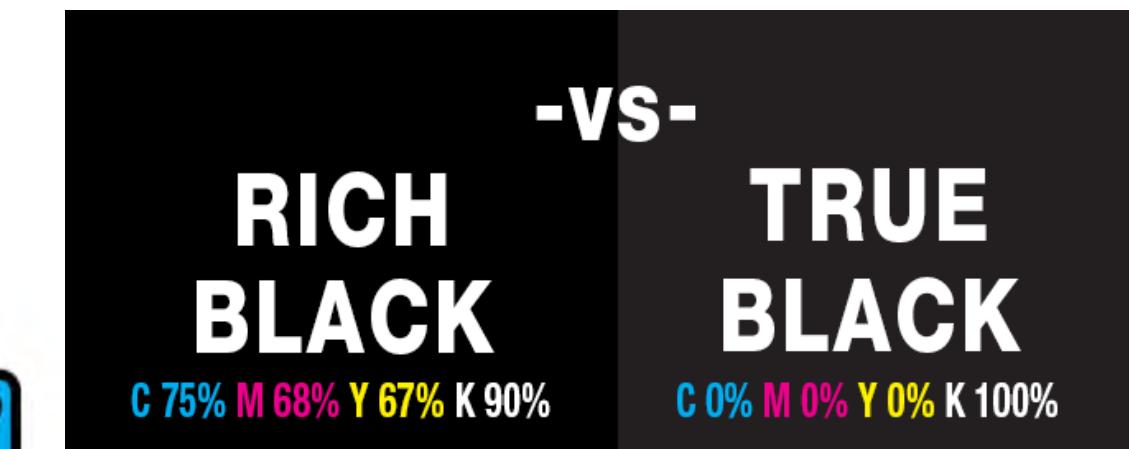
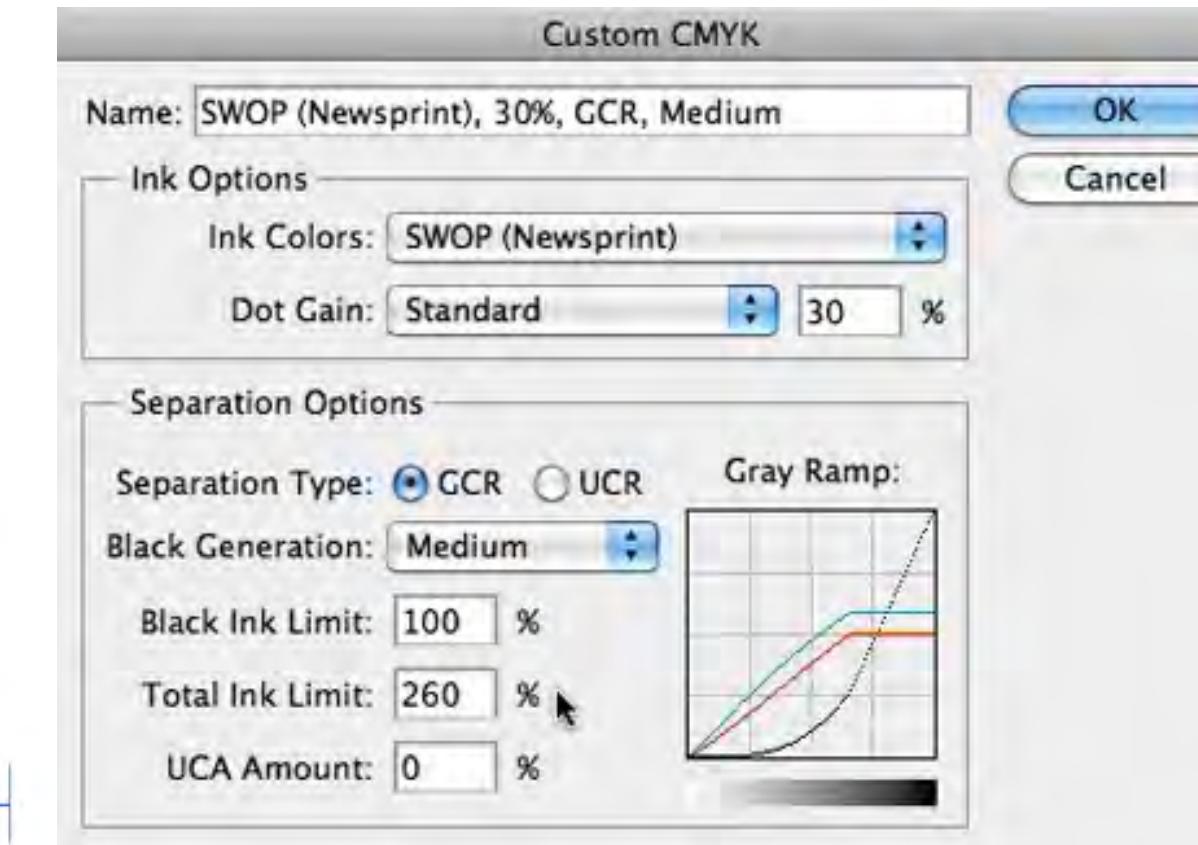
ICC Profile



ICC Profile



ICC Profile

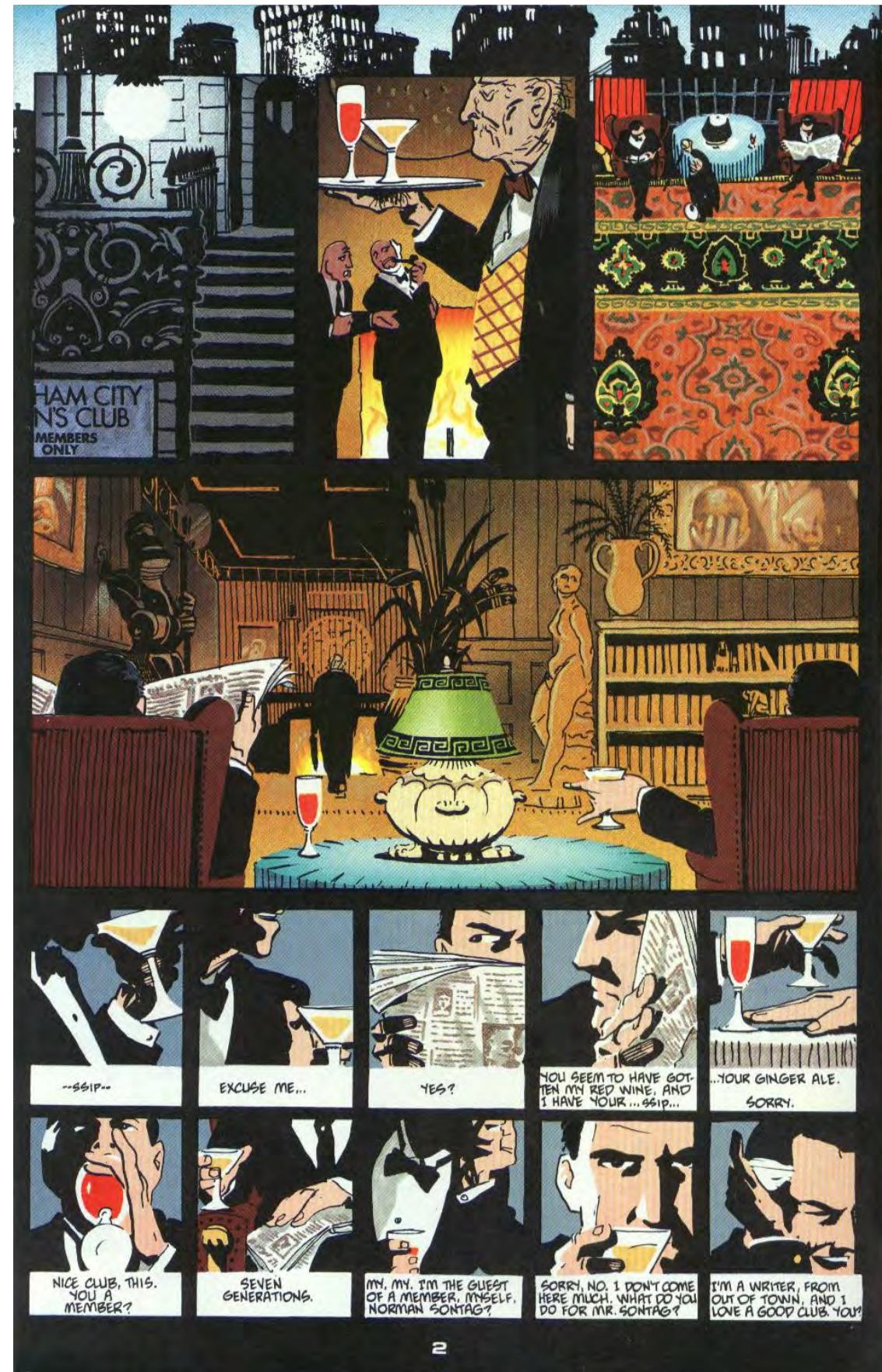


# Direct Market



Hellboy: Seed of Destruction (1993)  
illus. Mike Mignola & Mark Chiarello

# Direct Market



Batman vs. Grendel (1993)  
illus. Matt Wagner

# Painted Comics

illus. Moebius (circa 1980)



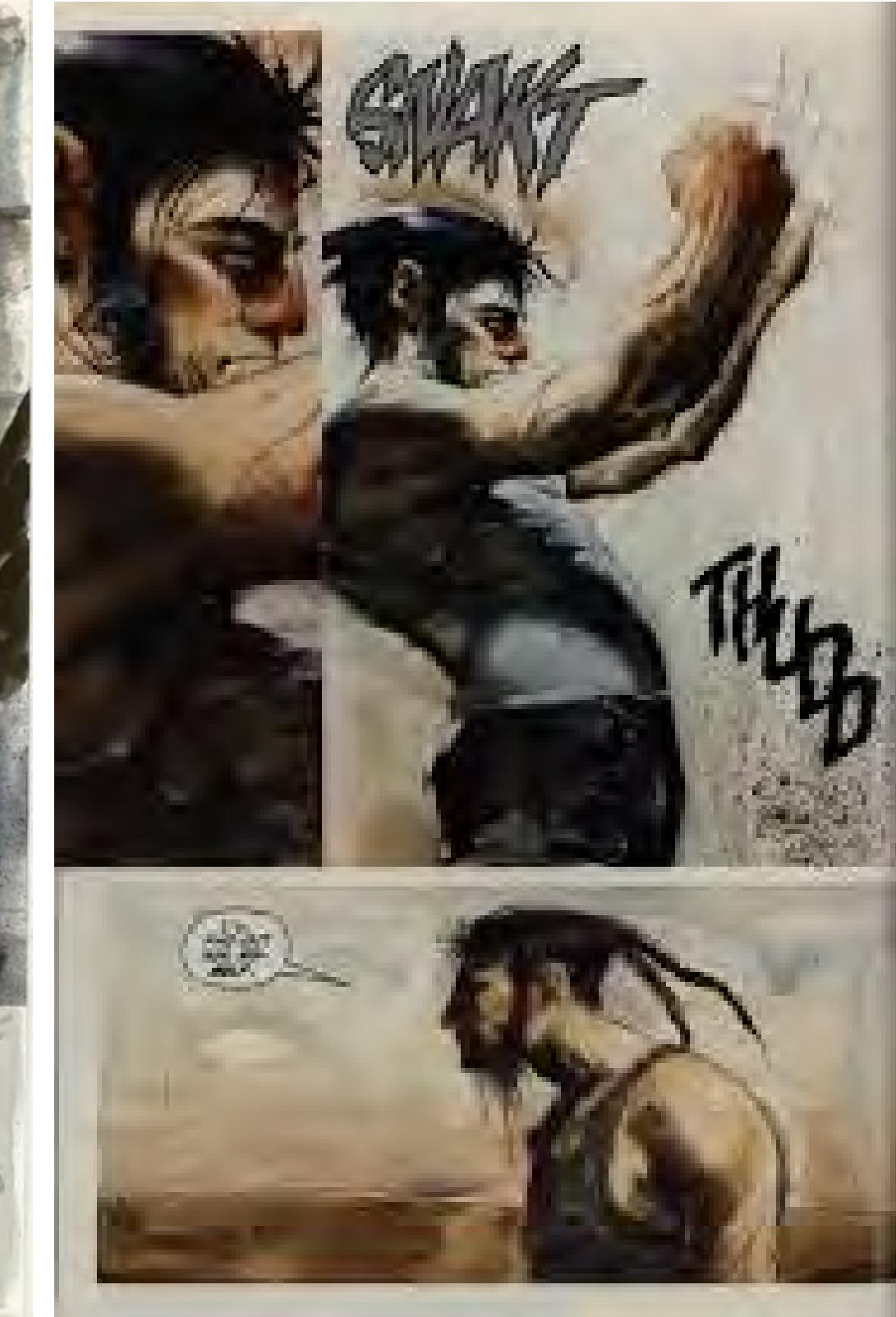
# Painted Comics

Marshal Law (1987)  
illus. Kevin O'Neill



# Painted Comics

Havok vs. Wolverine: Meltdown (1988)  
illus. Kent Williams, Jon Muth



# Painted Comics



World Without End (1990)  
illus. John Higgins

# Painted Comics



Kabuki (1994)  
illus. David Mack

# Painted Comics

Slaine (2000s?), illus. Glenn Fabry



# Painted Comics



Blacksad (2012, 2024)  
illus. Juanjo Guarnido



# Early Digital Color

Akira (circa 1987), illus. Katsuhiro Otomo, post-production Olyoptics Studio



original manga, B&W



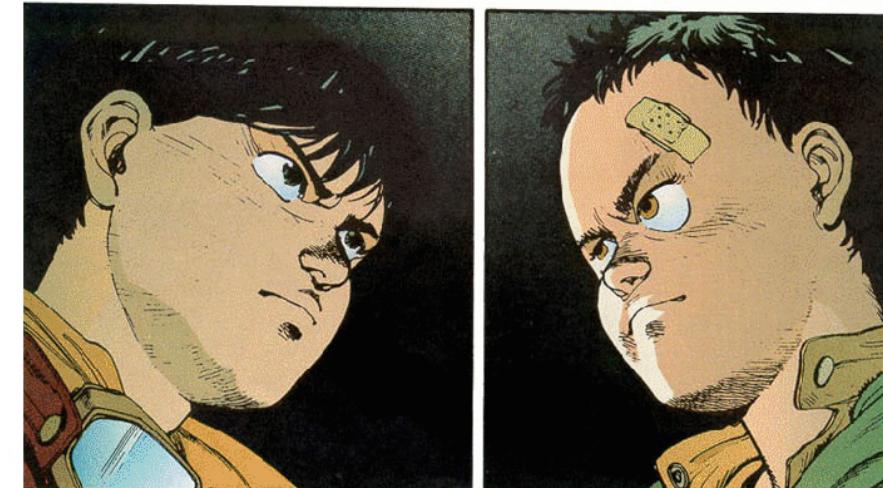
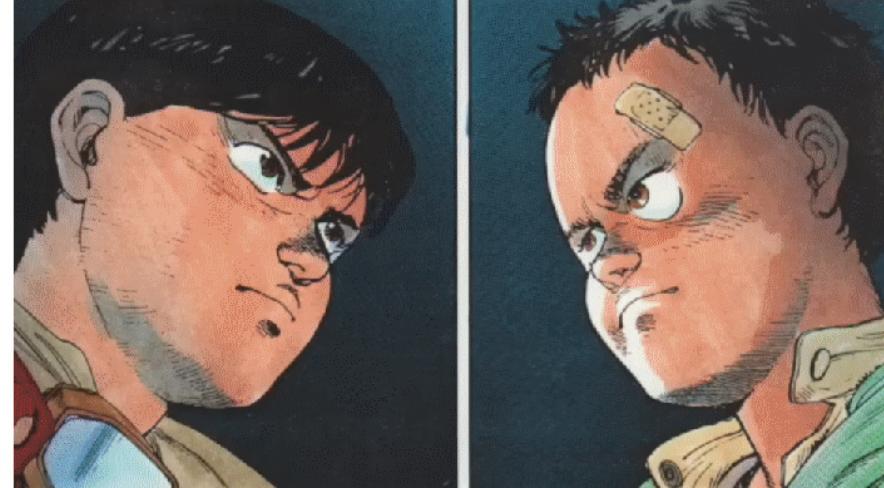
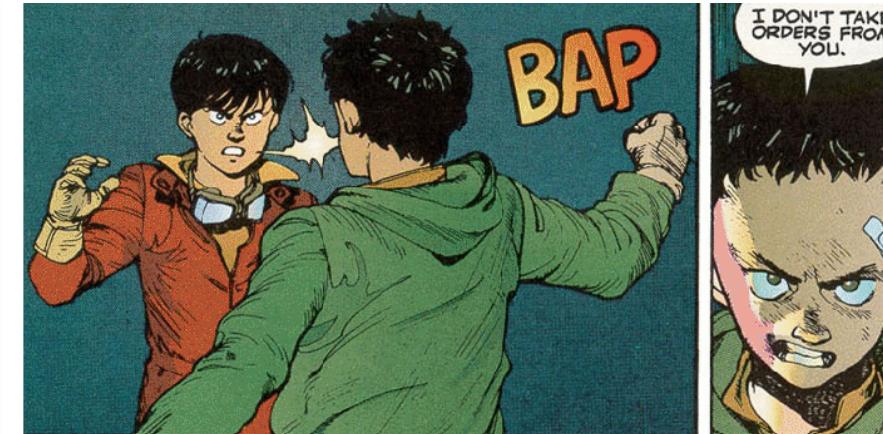
watercolors on photocopy



digital colorization

# Early Digital Color

Akira (circa 1987), illus. Katsuhiro Otomo, post-production Olyoptics Studio



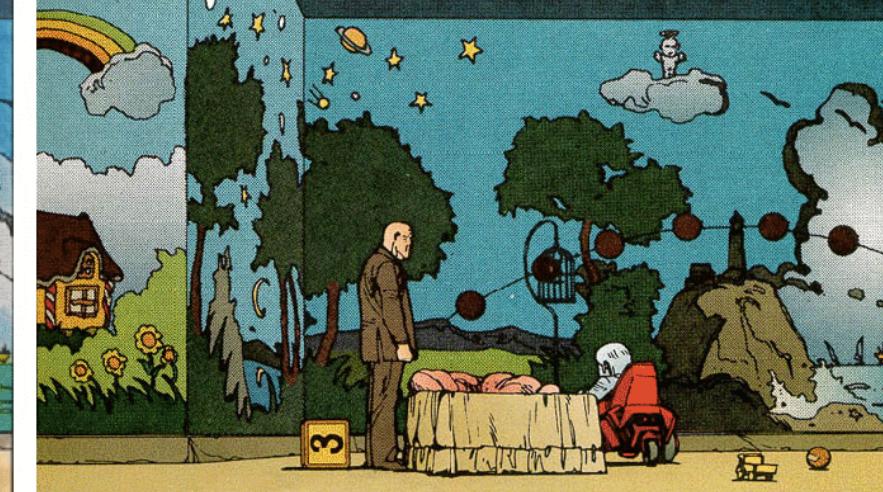
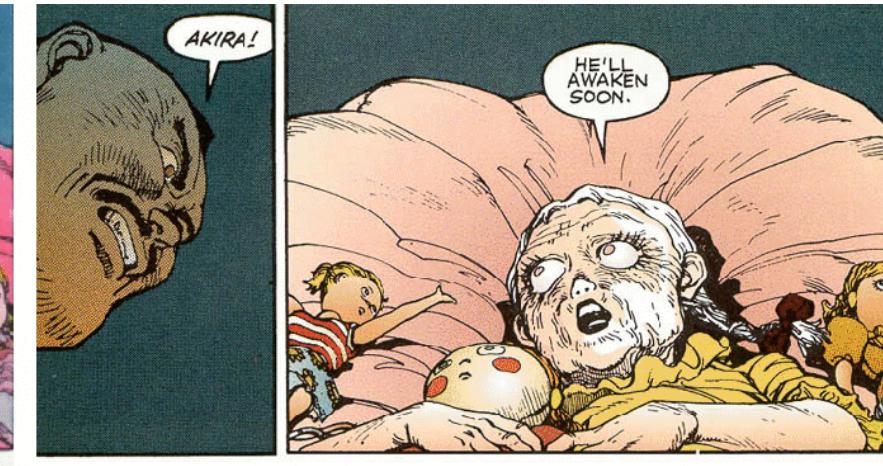
original manga, B&W

watercolors on photocopy

digital colorization

# Early Digital Color

Akira (circa 1987), illus. Katsuhiro Otomo, post-production Olyoptics Studio



original manga, B&W

watercolors on photocopy

digital colorization

# Early Digital Color

Akira (circa 1987), illus. Katsuhiro Otomo, post-production Olyoptics Studio

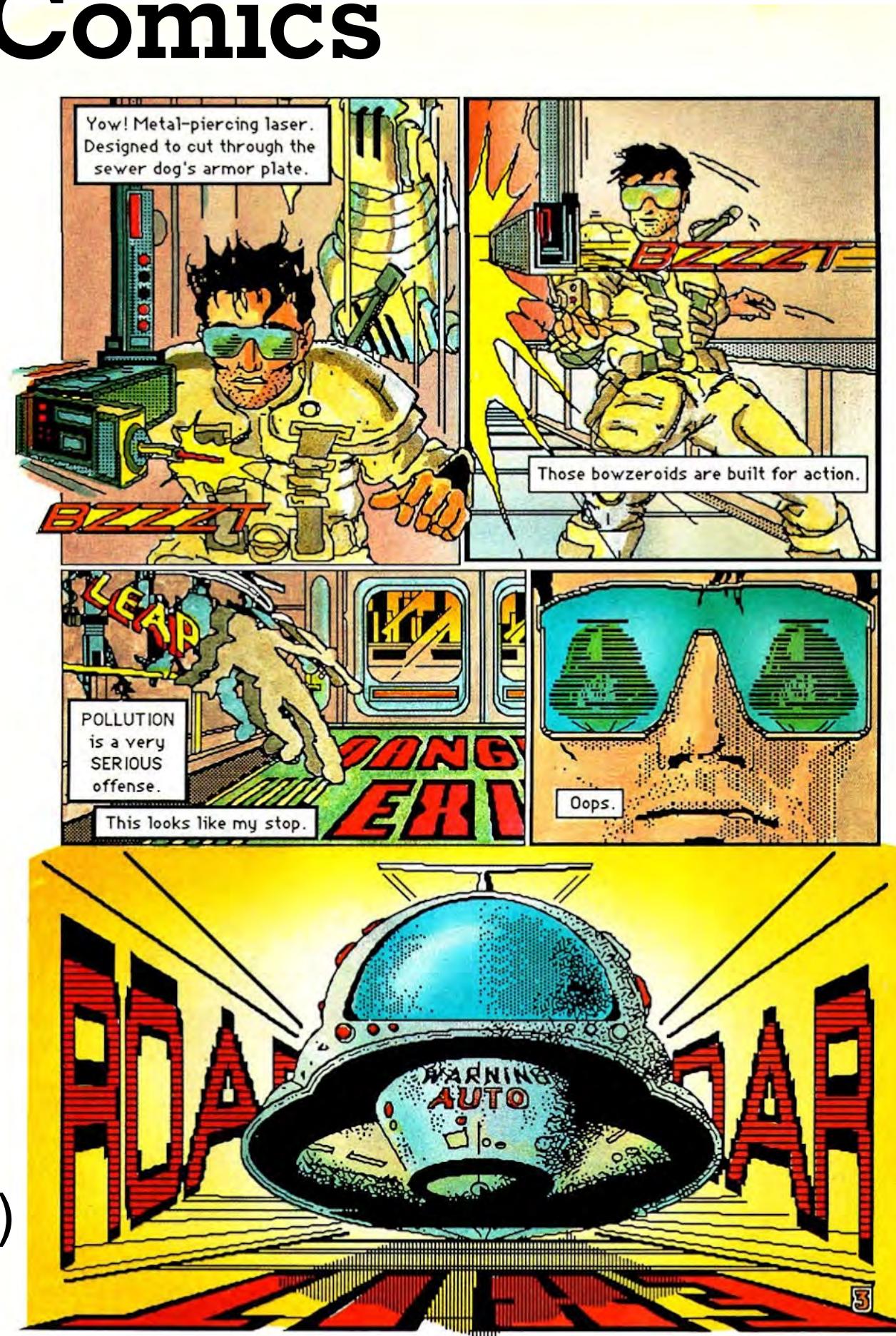


original manga, B&W

watercolors on photocopy

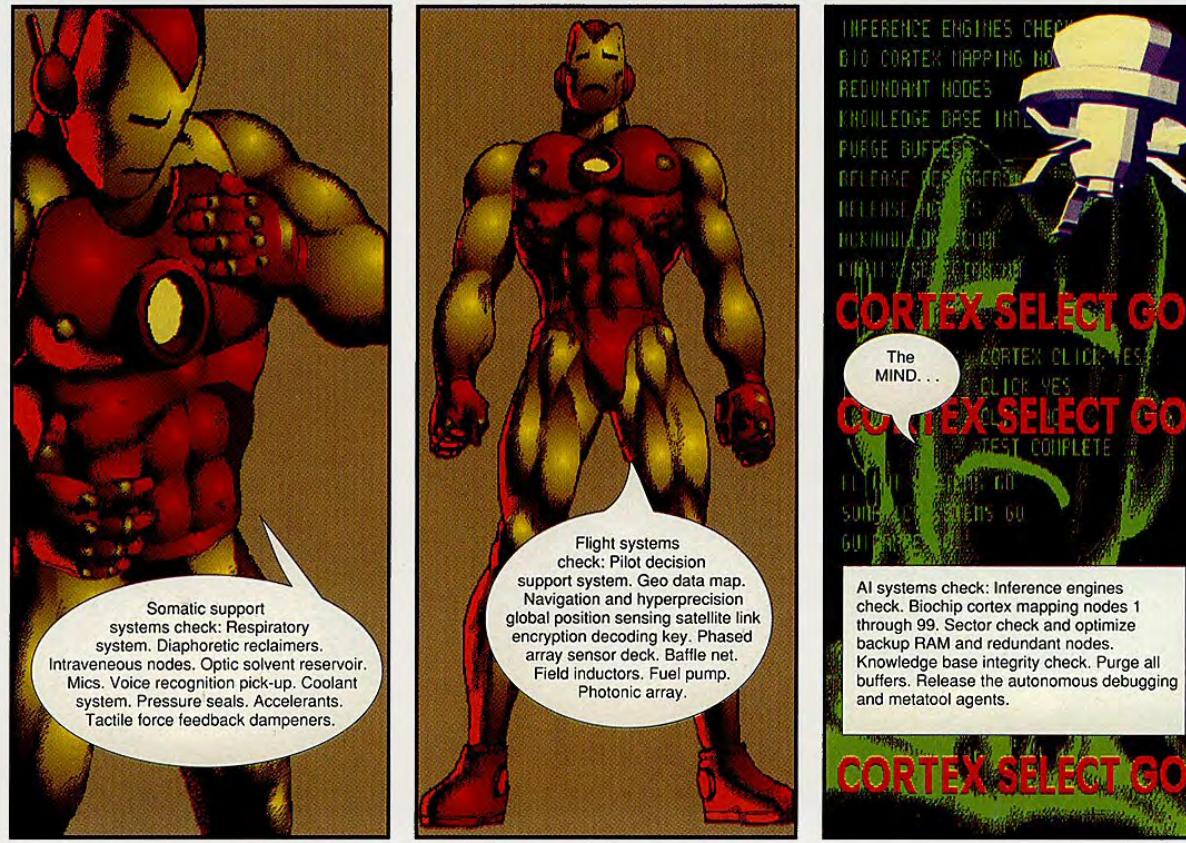
digital colorization

# Computer Comics



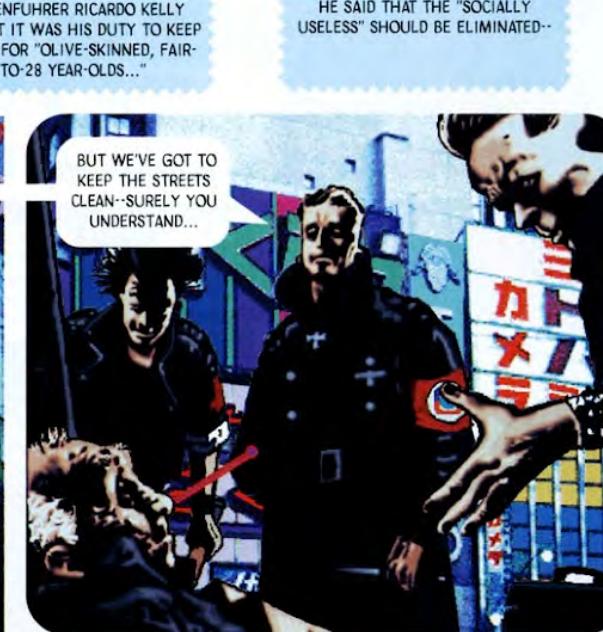
Shatter (circa 1986)  
illus. Mike Saenz

# Computer Comics

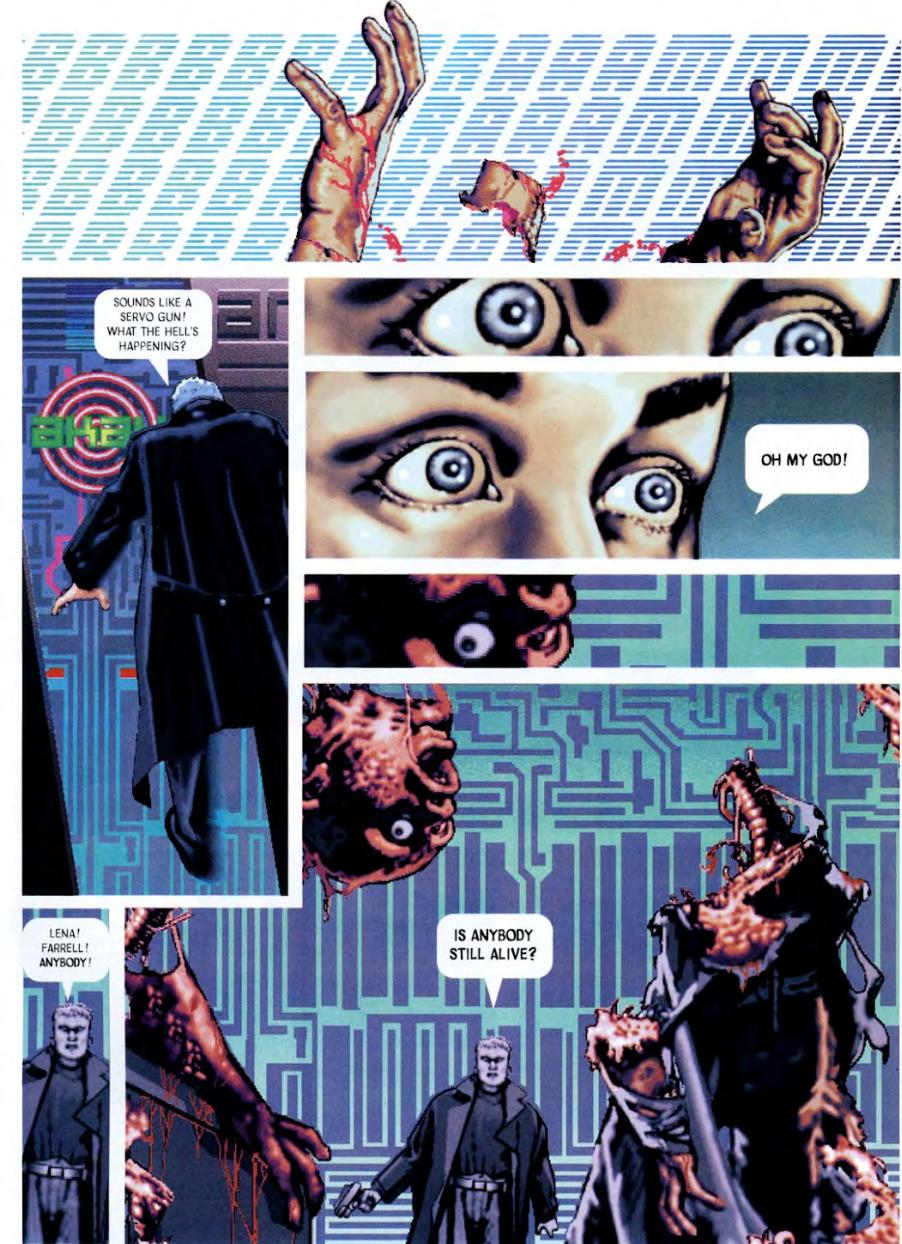


Iron Man: Crash (1988)  
illus. Mike Saenz

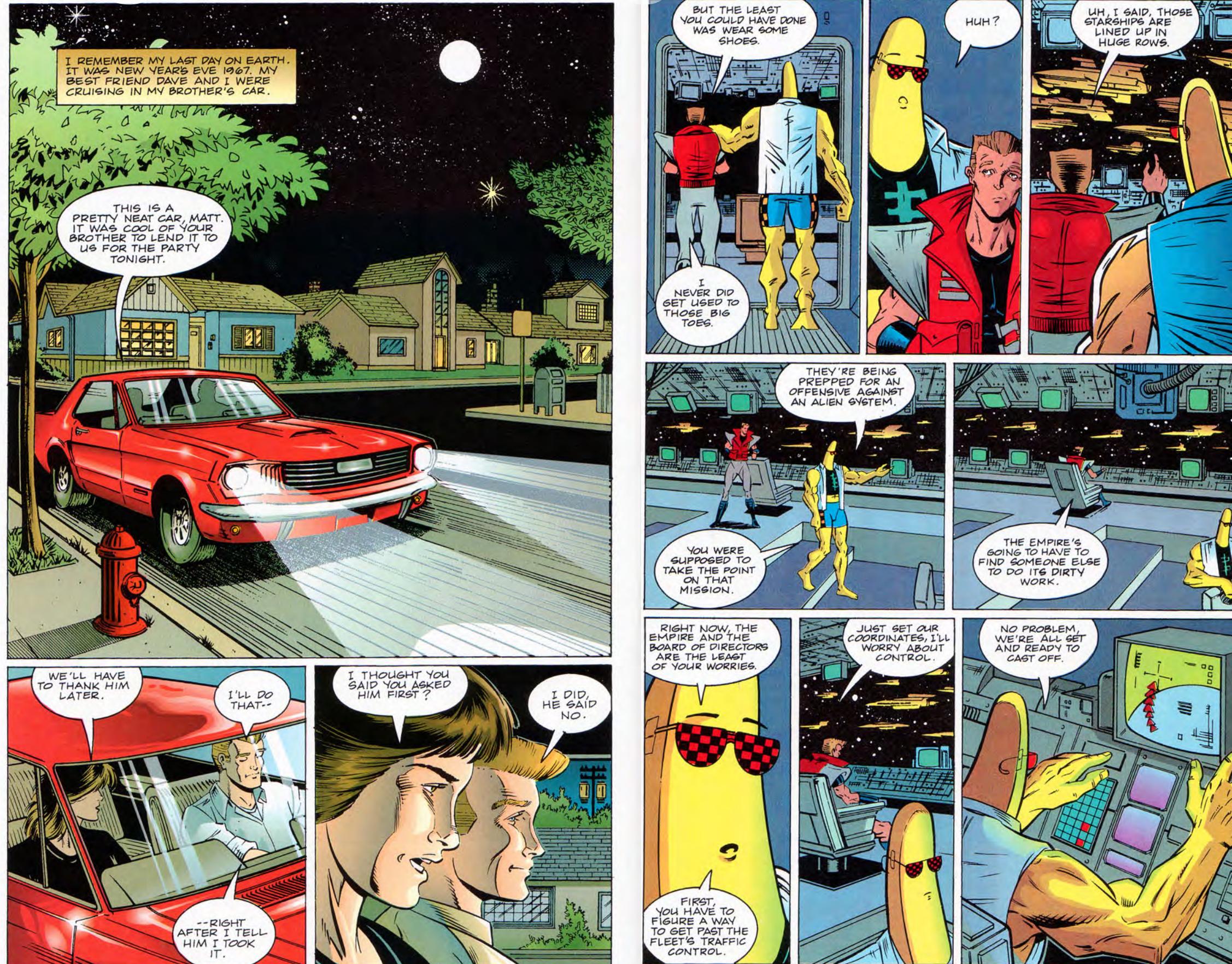
# Computer Comics



# Batman: Digital Justice (1990) illus. Pepe Moreno



# Digital Coloring



The Griffin (1991)

illus. Norman Felchle, Mark McKenna,  
Olyoptics Studio

# Digital Coloring

Spawn #2  
illus. Todd  
McFarlane,  
Olyoptics Studio



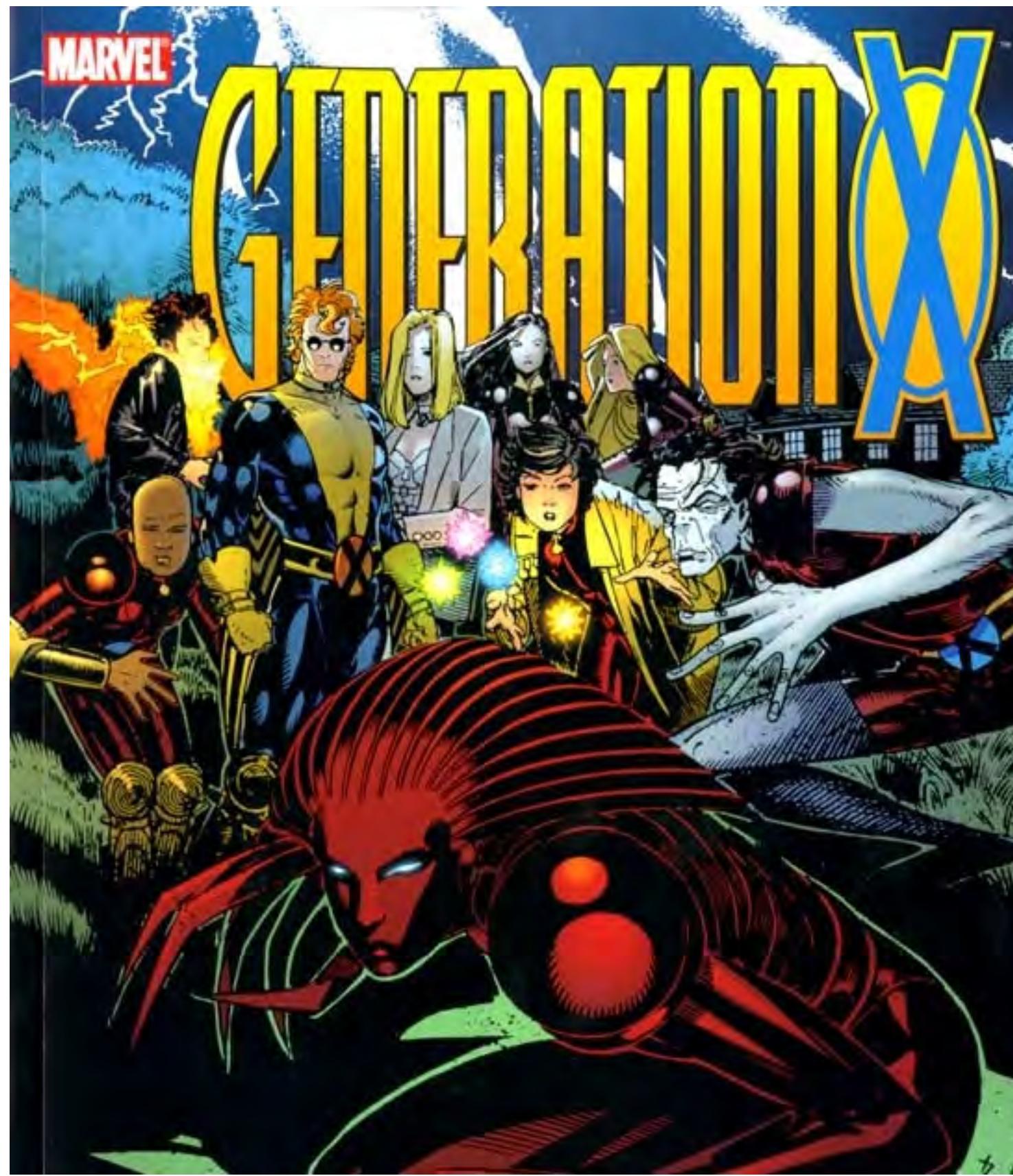
Gen 13 #2  
illus. J. Scott Campbell,  
Alex Garner

# Digital Coloring



Ultraverse promotional,  
illus. Dave Gibbons,  
Malibu Studios, et al.

# Digital Coloring



# Computer Comics

Prime #1 (1993)  
illus. Tim Eldred, Paul Mounts



Prime, Sega CD edition (1994)  
conversion by Helen Jones

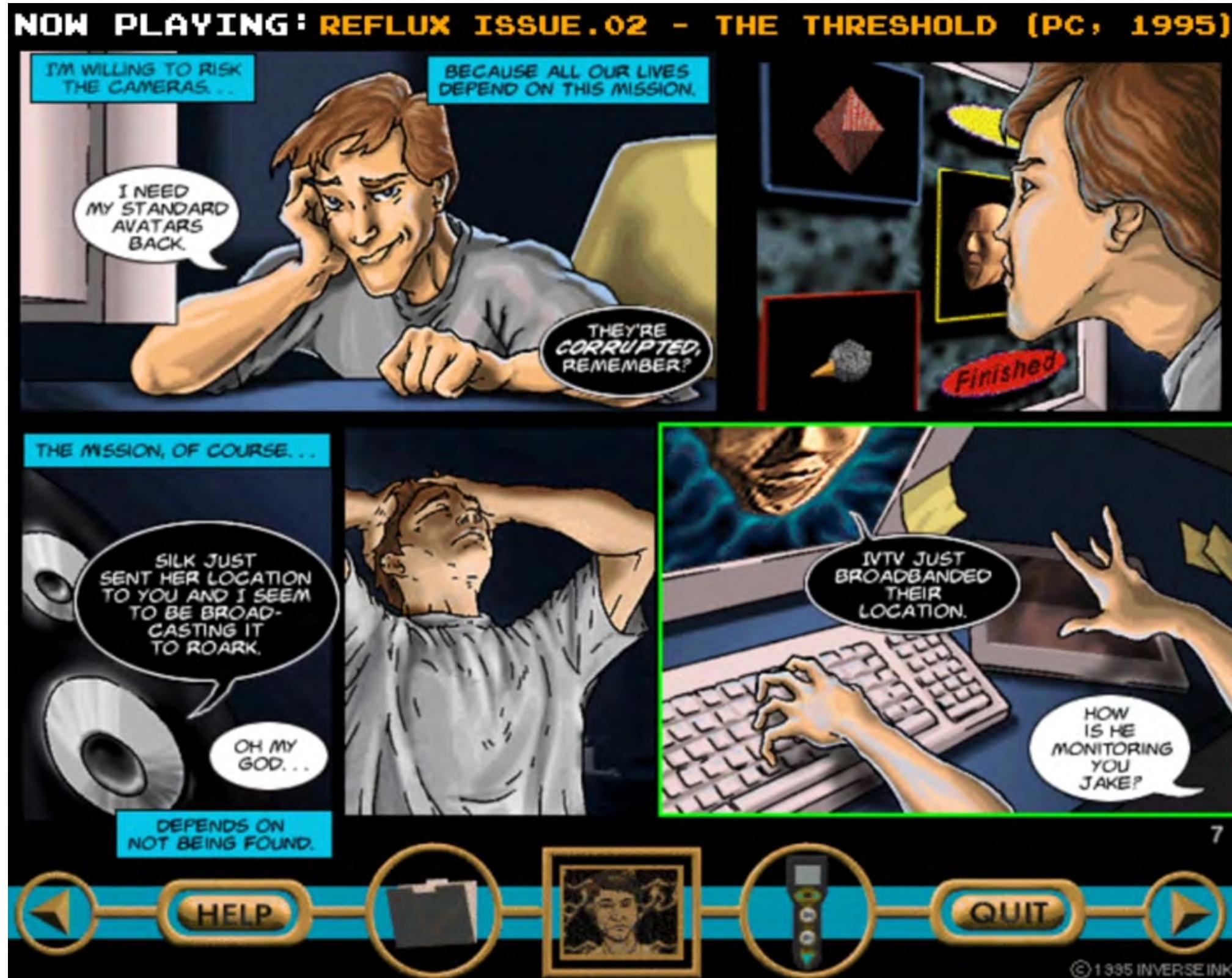
# Computer Comics

## Noctropolis (1994)

illus. Shaun Mitchell, Owen Richardson, Keith Sargent, Kelly Goodine, A. C. Comics,  
Shane Aldrich, Kane Clevenger, Ed Jamison, Chris Vodopia, Tier 3



# Computer Comics



Re:flux #2, 1995

# Digital Color



Leave it to Chance #1  
(1996)

# Digital Color

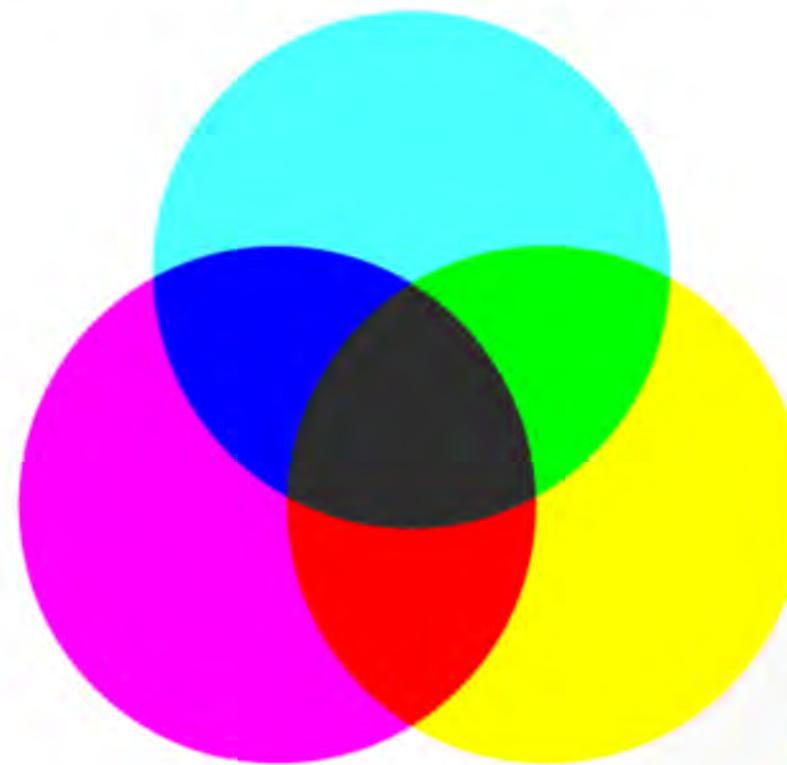


Leave it to Chance #1  
(1996)

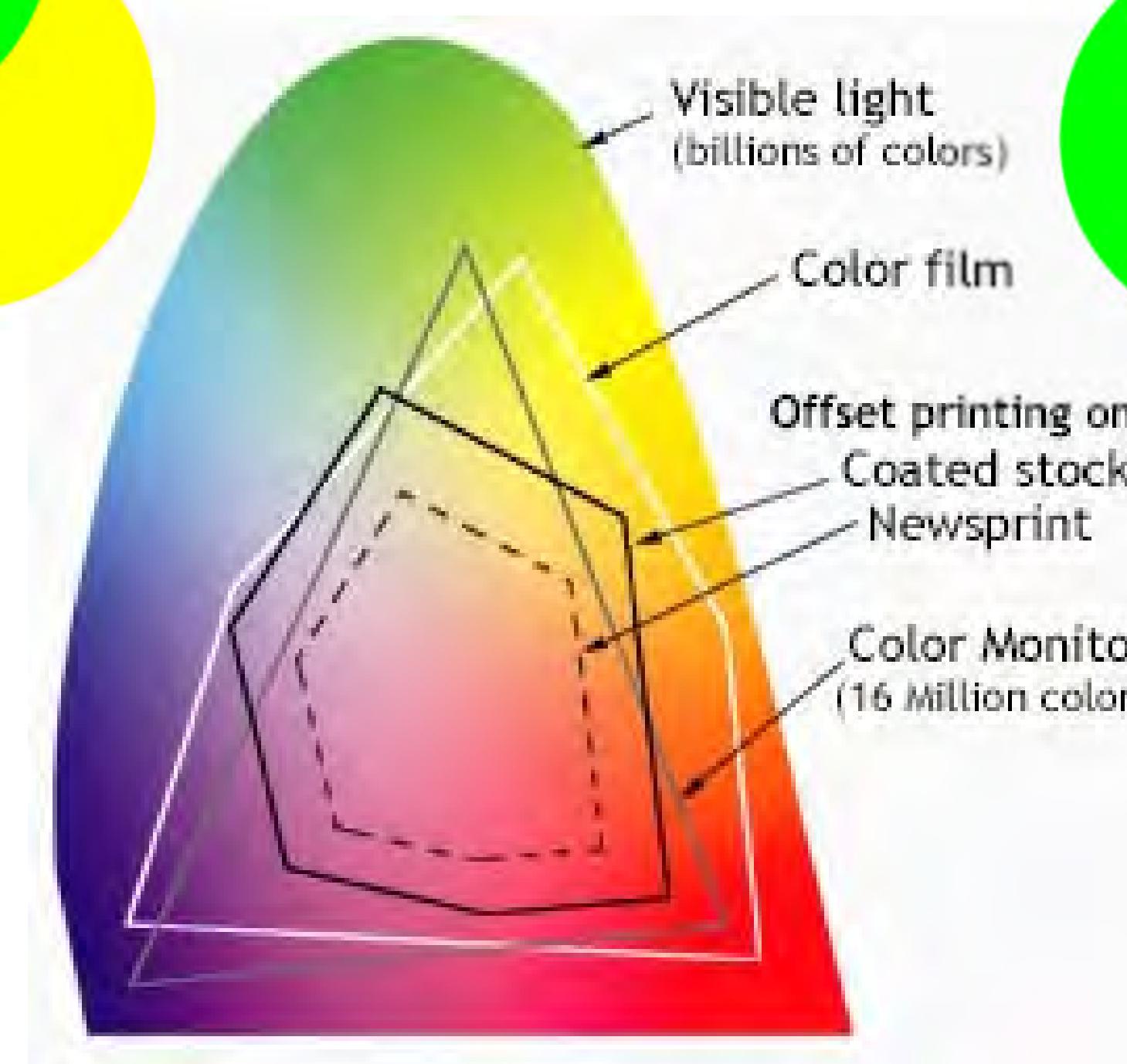
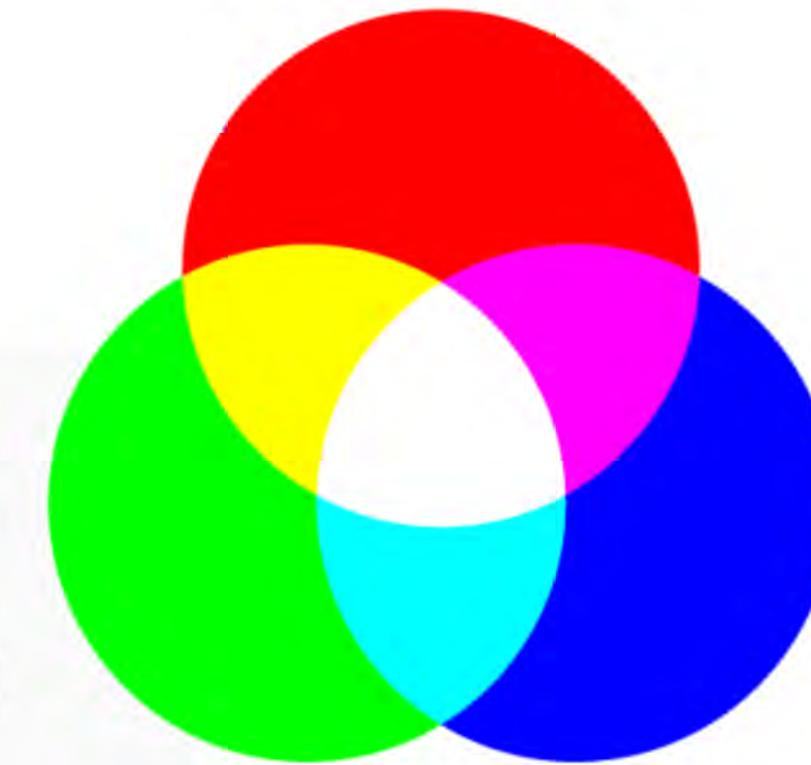


# Subtractive vs. Additive Color

Subtractive colour



Additive colour



# Digital Pre-Process



# B&E Method



Dead Island: Epidemic concept art (circa 2013)

# Practical Media vs. Digital Painting



Everquest, illus. Keith Parkinson (circa 1999)

# Practical Media vs. Digital Painting



© 2013 Sony Online Entertainment LLC.

Everquest Next, artist unknown (2013)

# Practical Media vs. Digital Painting



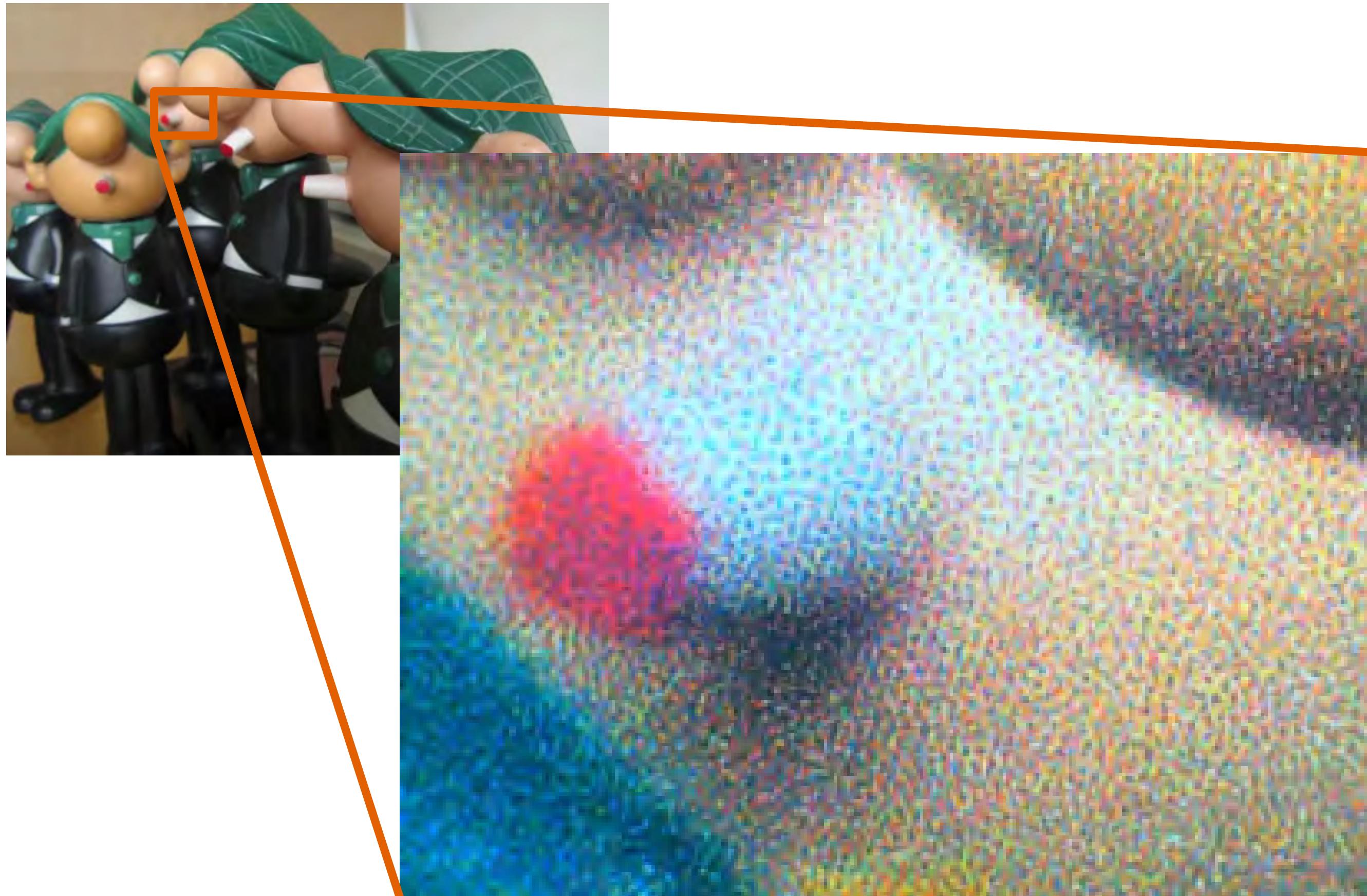
Chaos Dragon, illus. Greg Rutkowski (2021)

# Practical Media vs. Digital Painting



Firemind's Research, illus. Greg Rutkowski (2018)

# Stochastic Dithering



# They Look Like How They're Made



The final design copies the system that made it.  
(Conway's Law)

Mister Miracle (1972)  
illus. Jack Kirby, Mike Royer, et al.

# They Look Like How They're Made



Birds of Prey (2023)  
illus. Leonardo Romero, Jordie Bellaire

The final design copies  
the system that made it.  
(Conway's Law)

# They Look Like How They're Made



illus. Yusuke Murata  
and assistant(s)



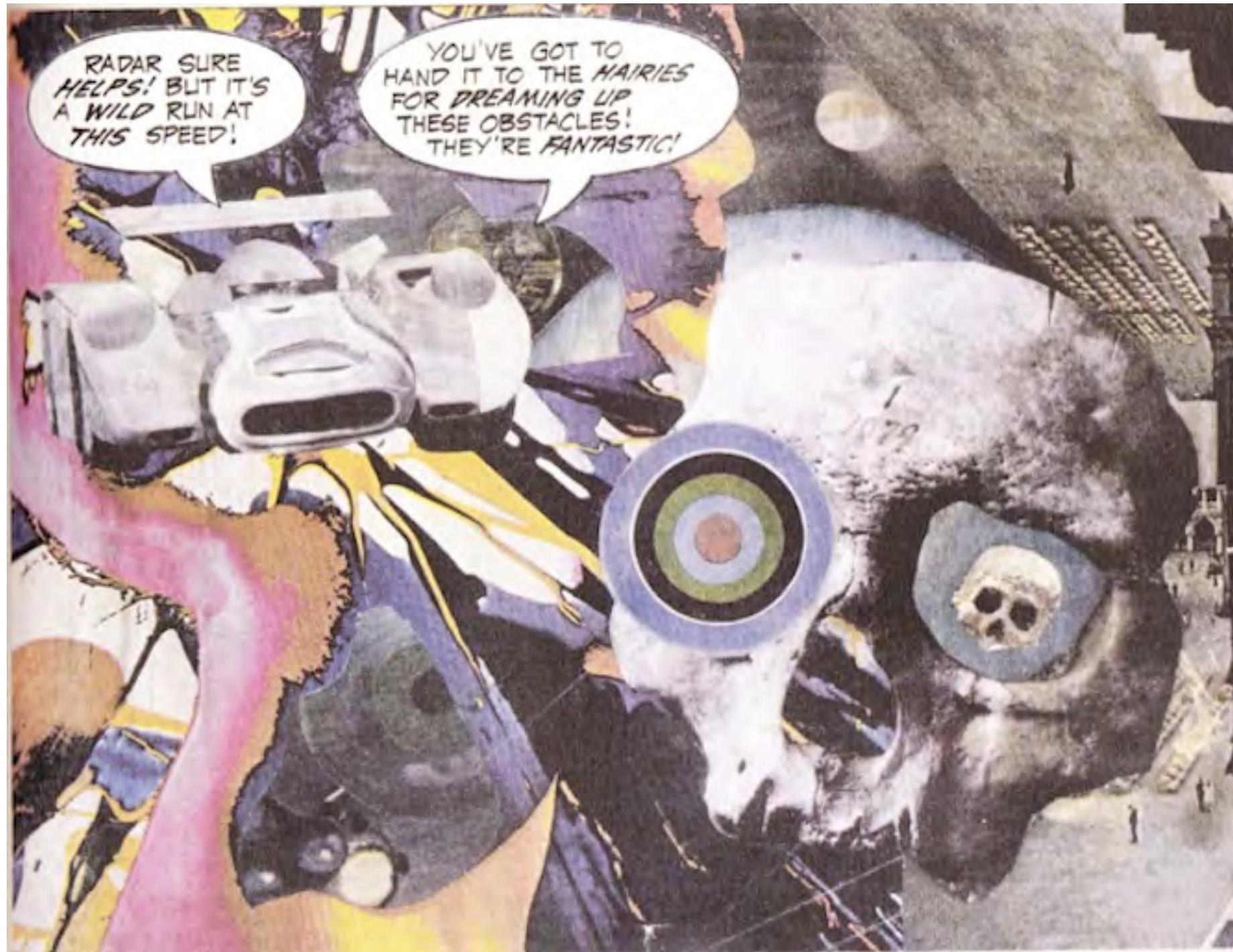
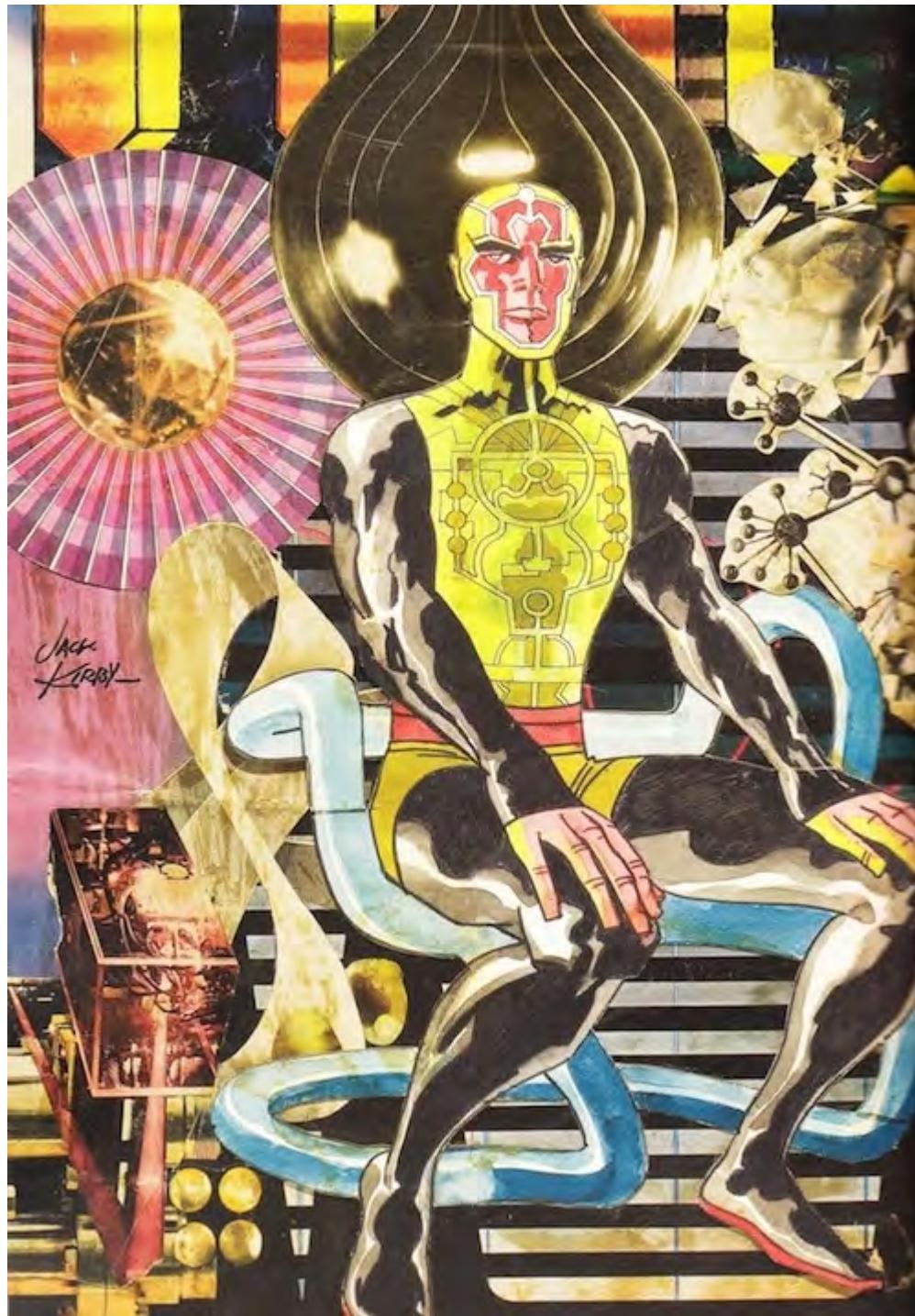
illus. Tite Kubo  
and assistant(s)



illus. Masamune Shirow  
and assistant(s)

The final design copies  
the system that made it.  
(Conway's Law)

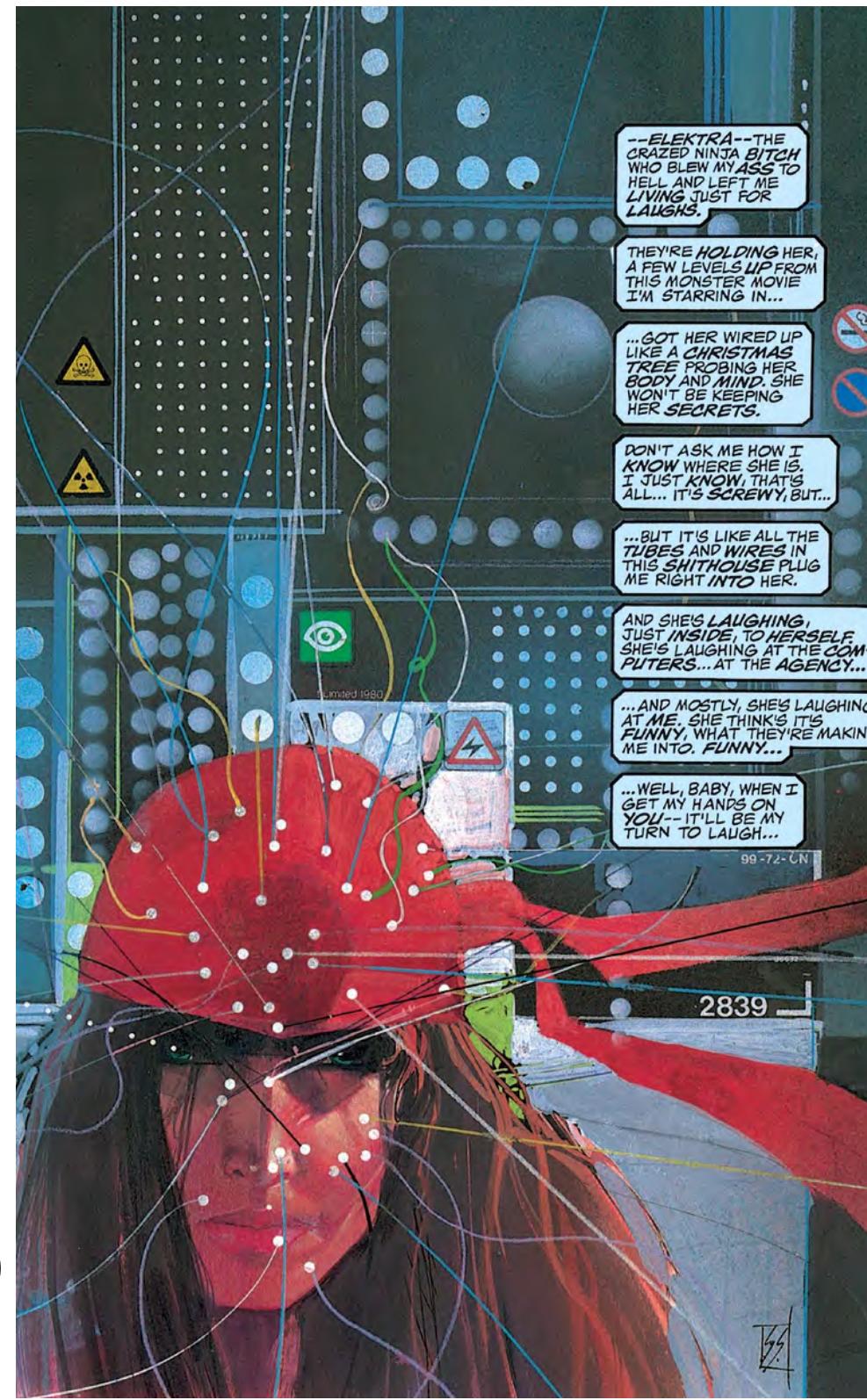
# Composite Media / Collage



Jack Kirby

# Composite Media / Collage

Elektra: Assassin (1987)  
illus. Bill Sienkiewicz



Stray Toasters (1988)  
illus. Bill Sienkiewicz

# Composite Media / Collage



Intron Depot (circa 1992), illus. Masamune Shirow

# Composite Media / Collage



Intron Depot (circa 1992), illus. Masamune Shirow

# Composite Media / Collage



Storming Heaven  
illus. Frazier Irving

# Composite Media / Collage



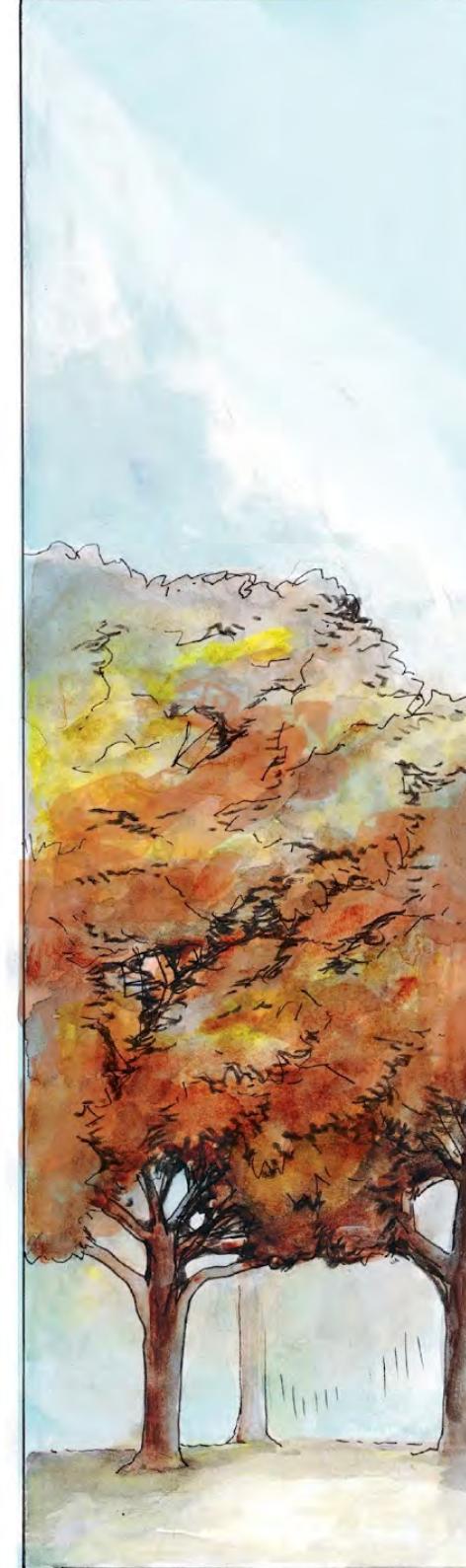
Durham Red; Empty Suns (circa 2003)  
illus. Mark Harrington

# Composite Media / Collage



Slaine: Book of Invasions (2009)  
illus. Clint Langley  
digital composite

# Composite Media / Collage



920 London,  
(2020)  
Mixed media

# Accent Color

Sam and the Firefly (1958)  
illus. P. D. Eastman

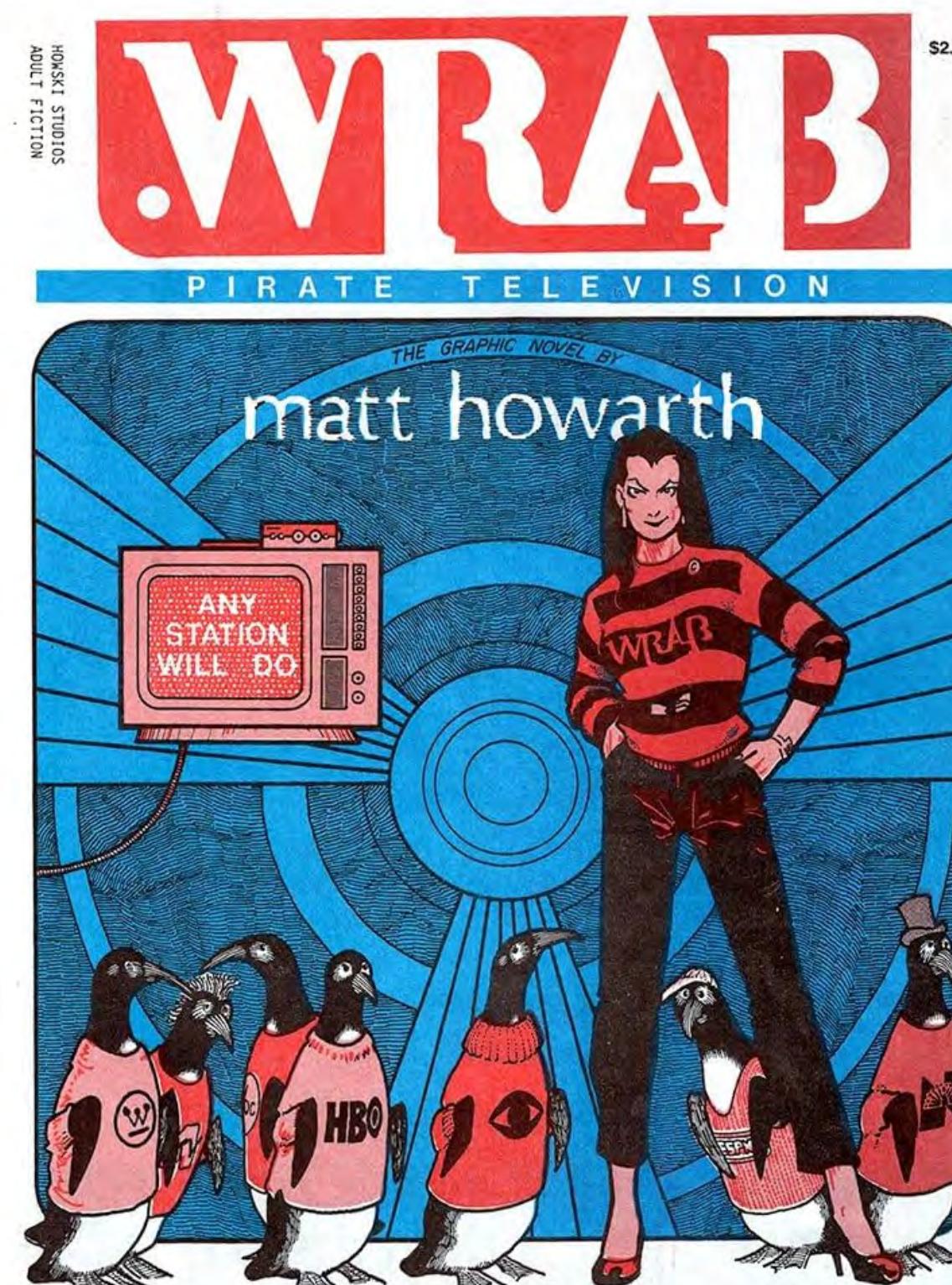


Clifford the Big Red Dog  
(1963) illus. Norman Bridwell

# Accent Color



Desperate Dan (1952)  
illus. Dudley Watkins



WRAB: Pirate Television (1982)  
illus. Matt Howarth

# Accent Color



The Magic Fish (2020)  
illus. Trung Le Nguyen

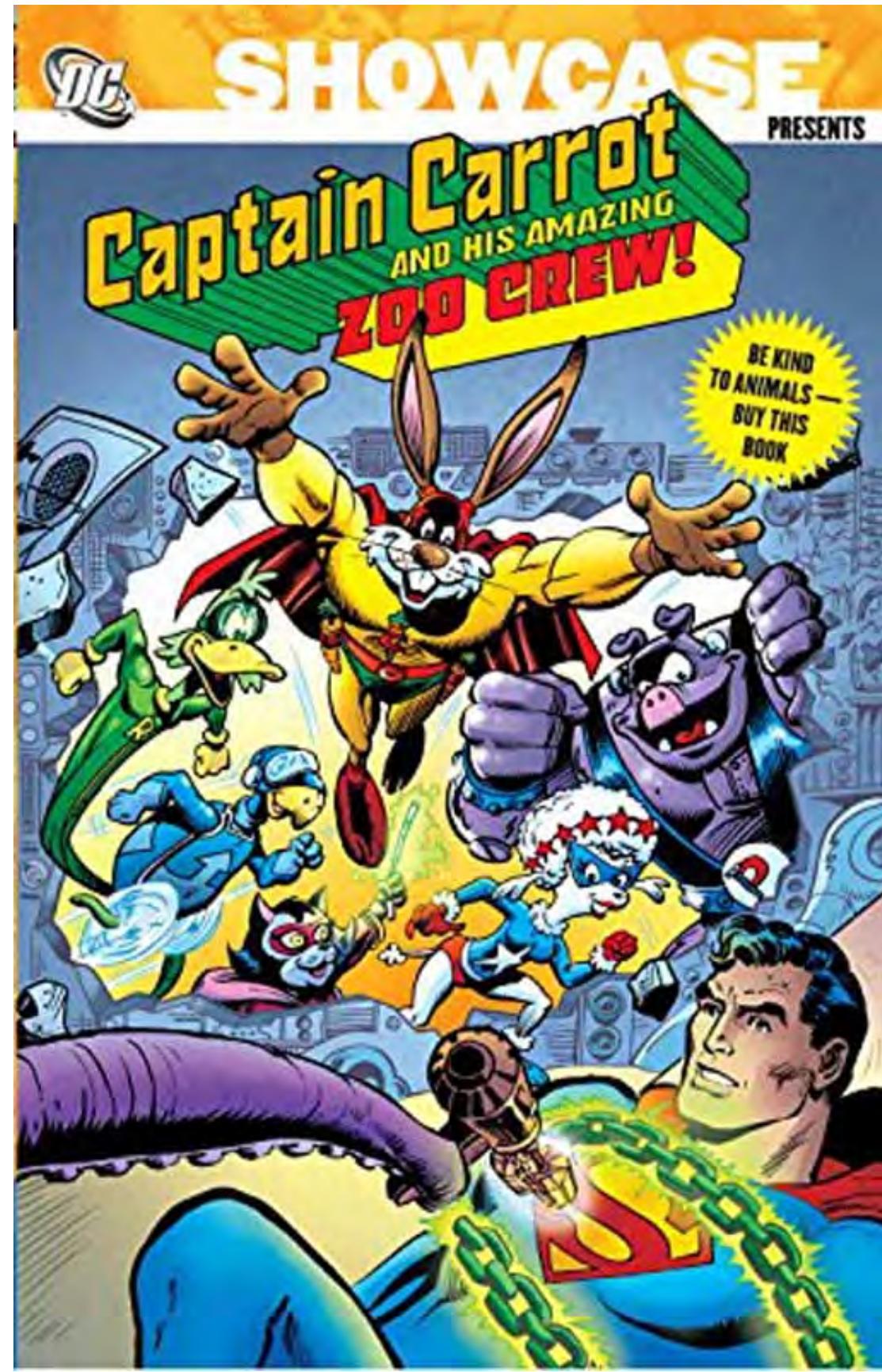
# Accent Color

# Roaming (2023)

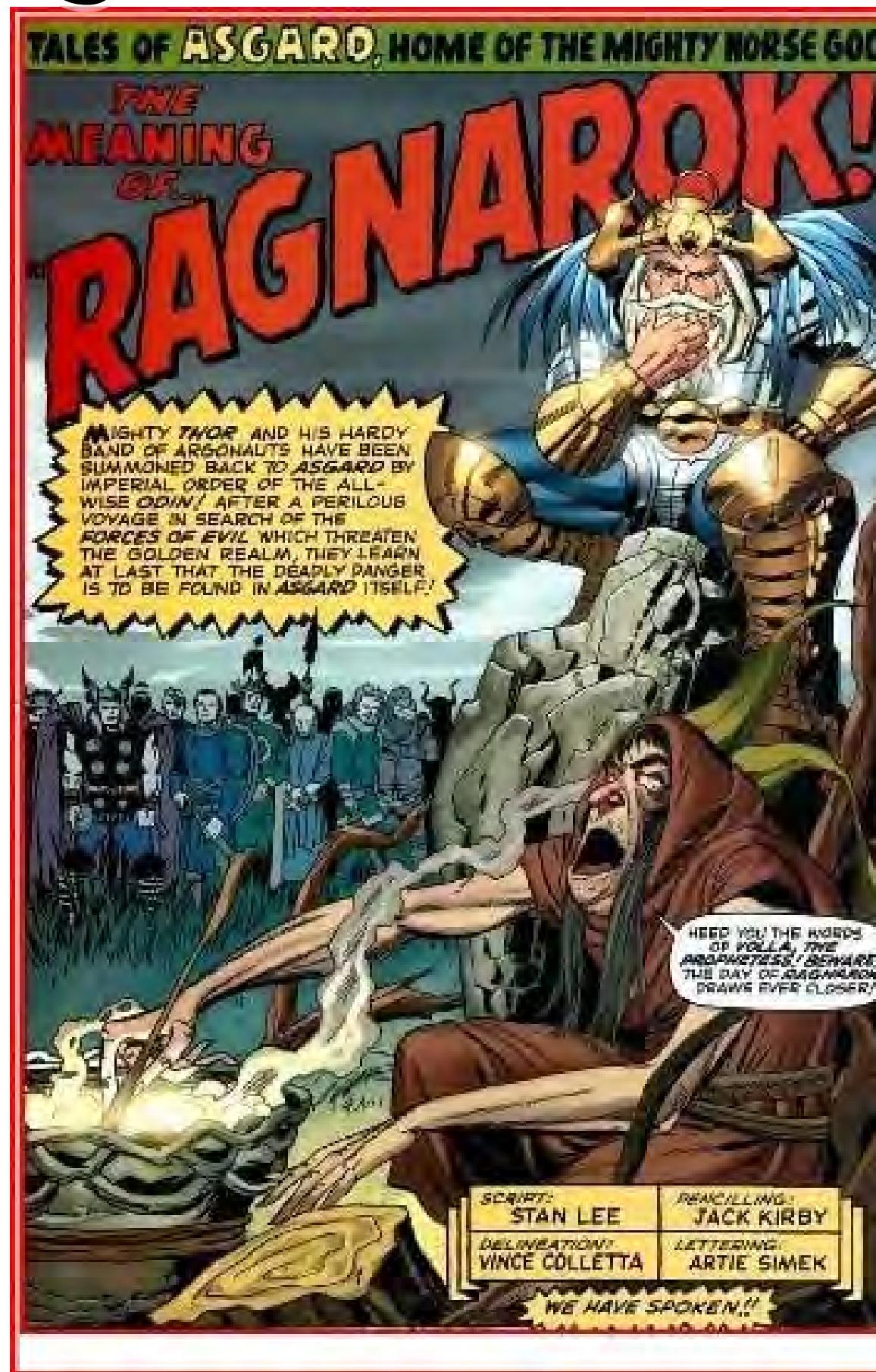
illus. Jillian Tamaki



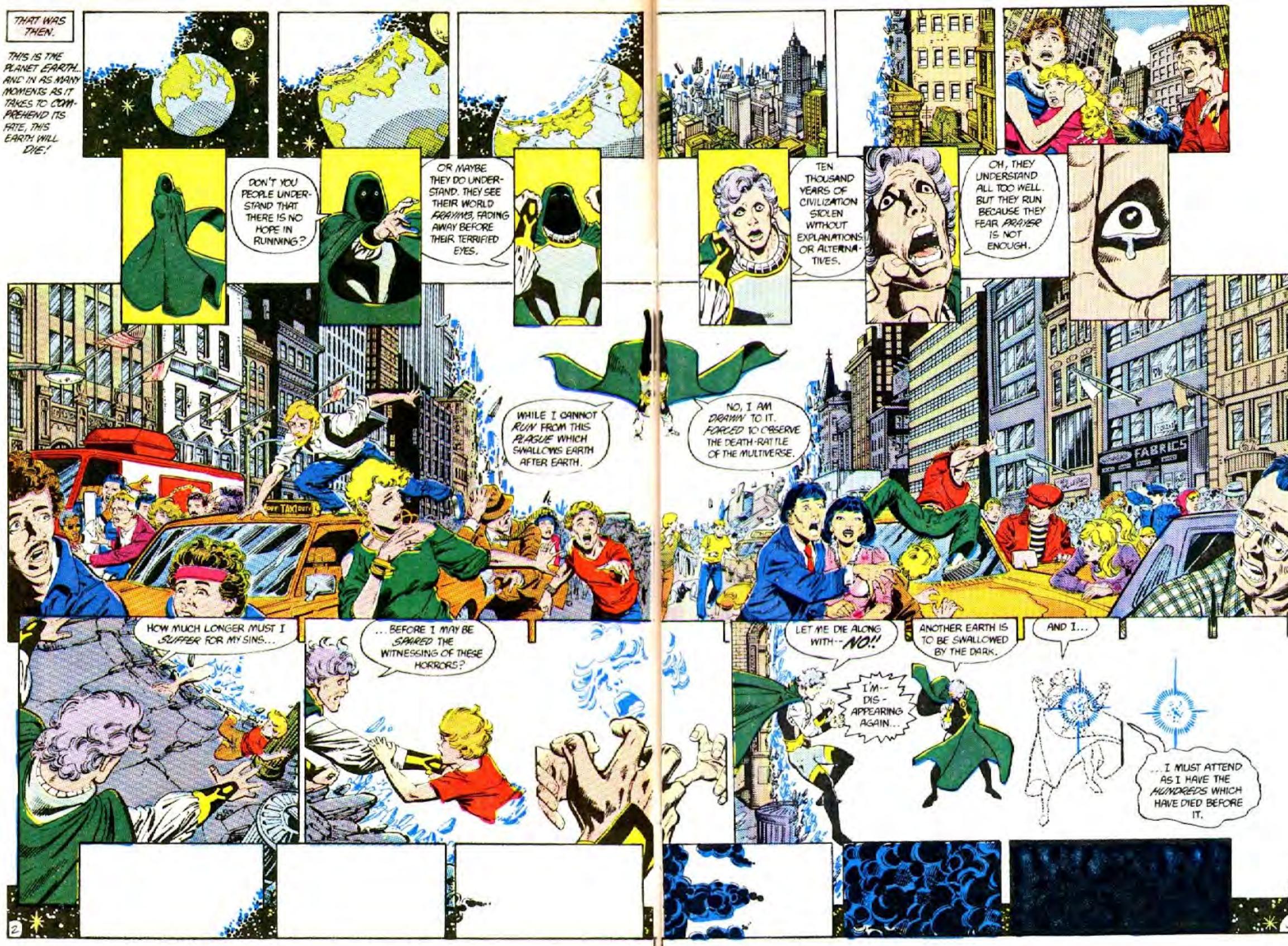
# Digital Recolors



# Digital Recolors



# Digital Recolors



Crisis on  
Infinite  
Earths  
(1985)

# Digital Recolors

12 • CRISIS ON INFINITE EARTHS



Crisis on  
Infinite  
Earths  
(2024)

# Digital Recolors



Crisis on  
Infinite  
Earths  
(1985, 2024)

# The March of Progress...



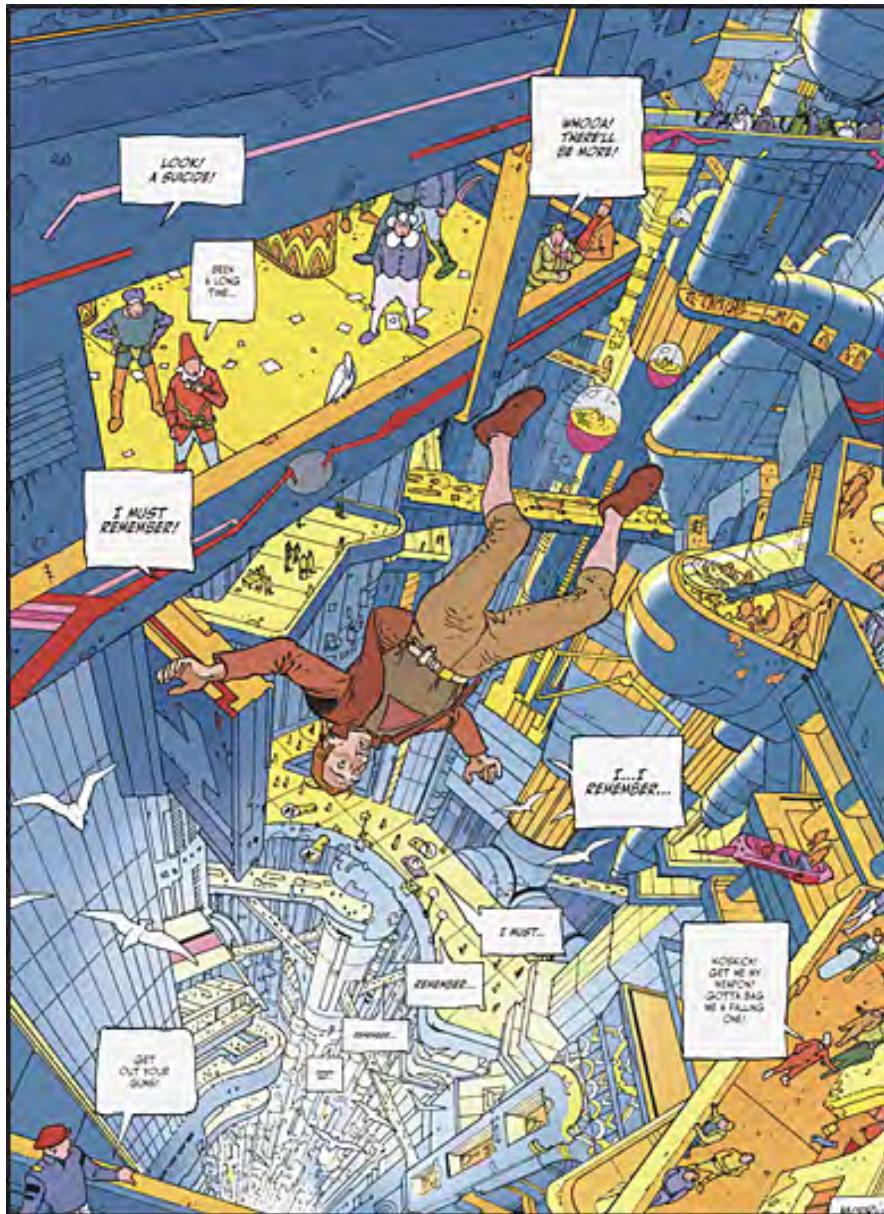
Incal, original release  
(circa 1985)



Incal, recolor  
(circa 2002)



Incal, new art  
(circa 2002)



Final Incal  
(circa 2008)

# The March of Progress...

Girl Genius, illus. Studio Foglio



Practical inks (2000)  
with digital colors  
added (circa 2005)

Scanned pencils,  
digital colors  
(circa 2005)

Digital artwork,  
no practical  
(2025)

# The March of Progress...

Ranma 1/2, various artists



# The March of Progress...



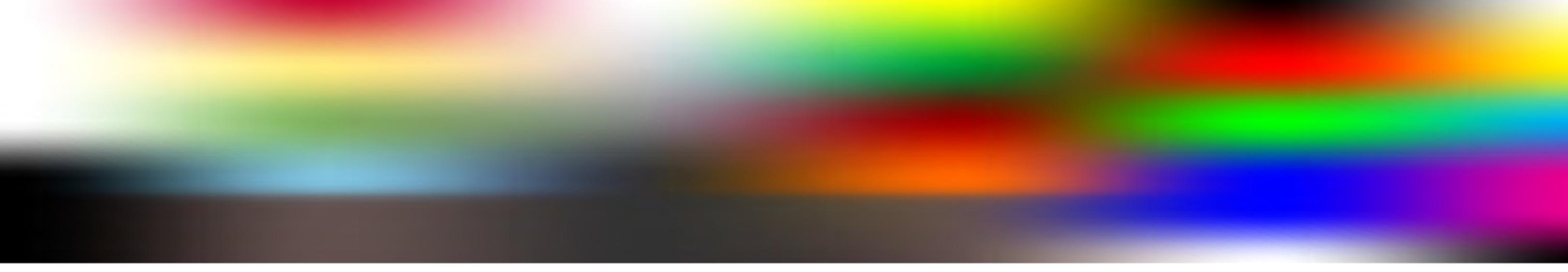
Guardians of the Galaxy #1 (2023)  
illus. Jackson Lanzing, Kev Walker

# The March of Progress...



# The March of Progress...



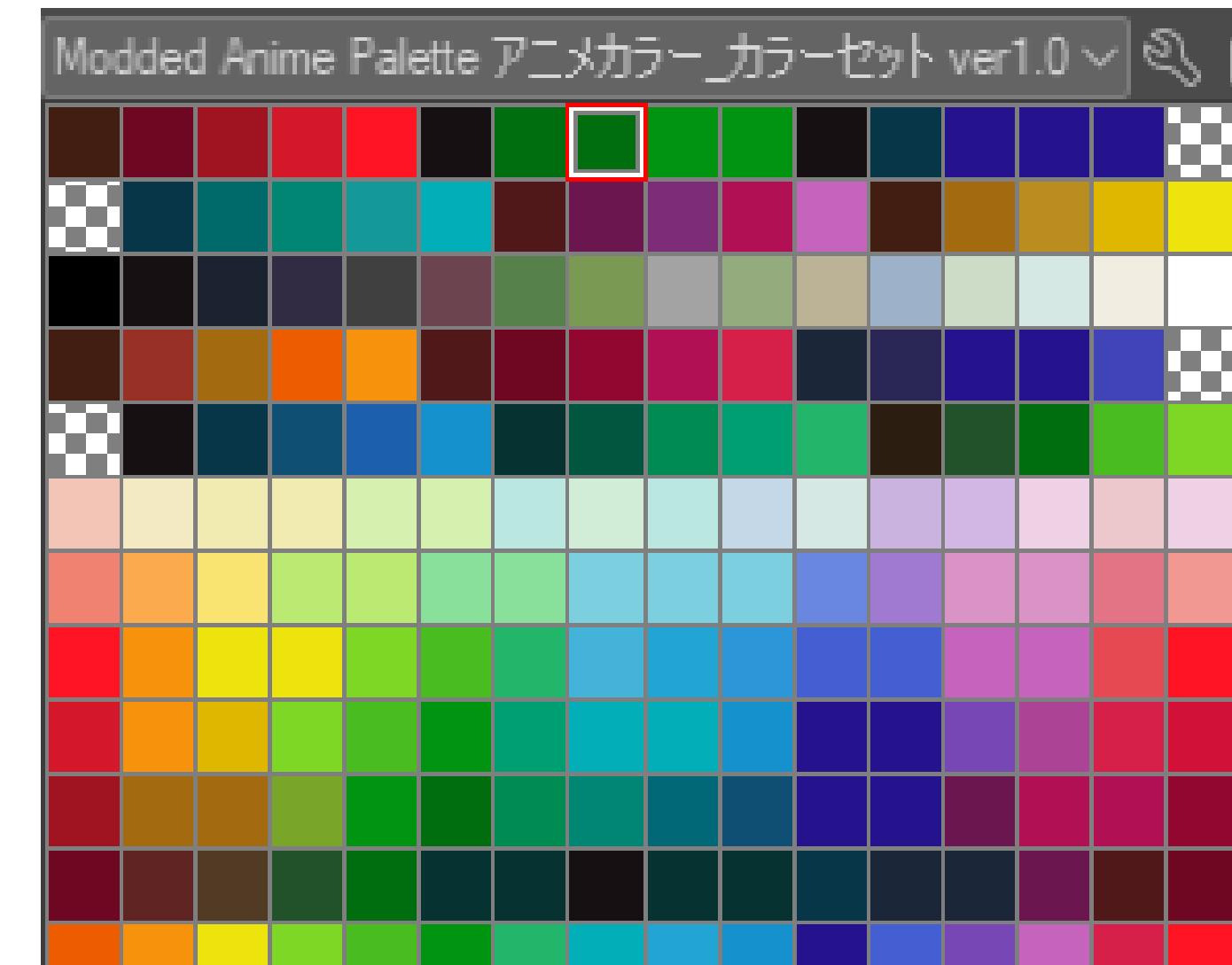
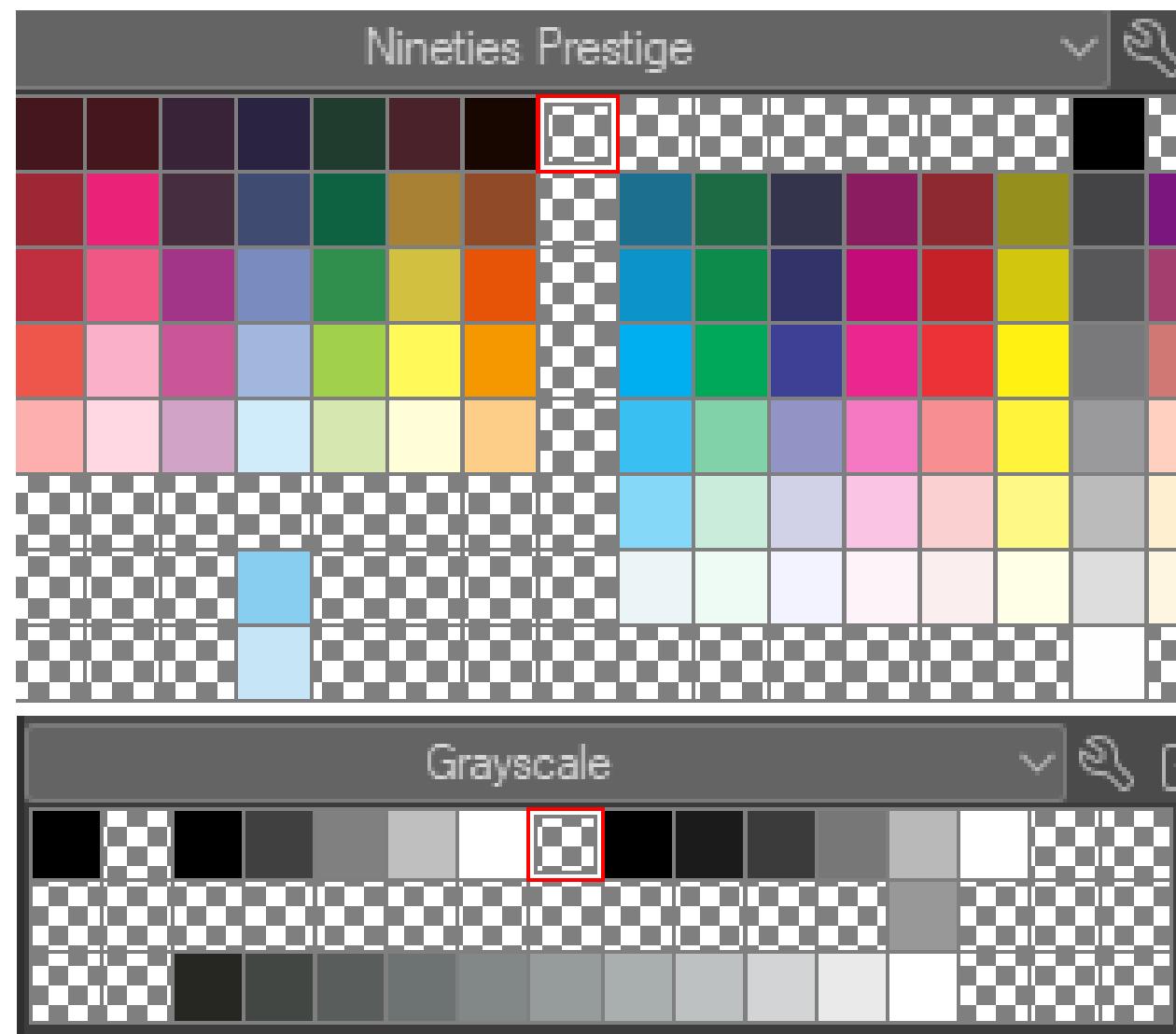


**These color tips  
should be illegal**

Doctors hate them, lawyers have no opinion

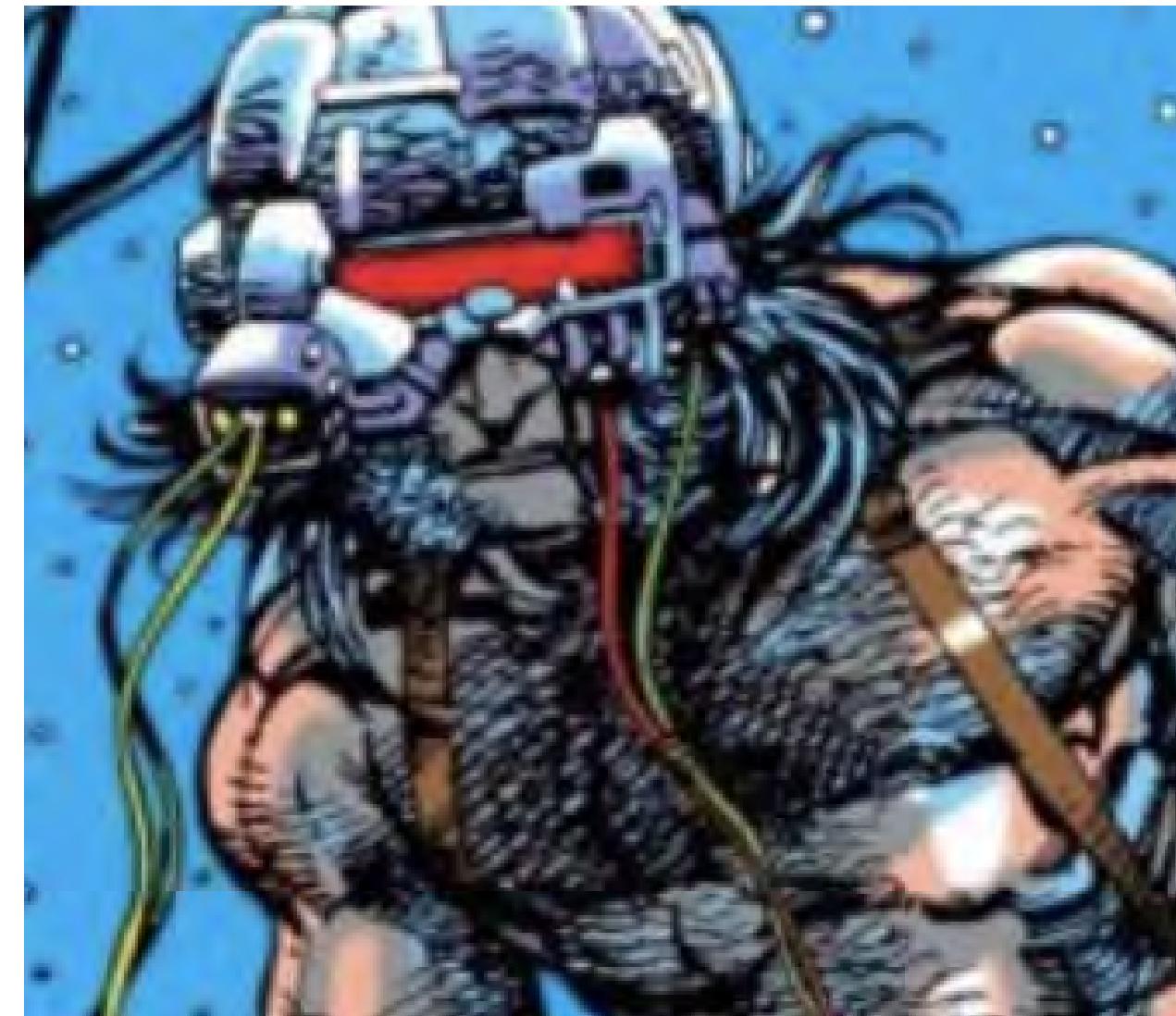
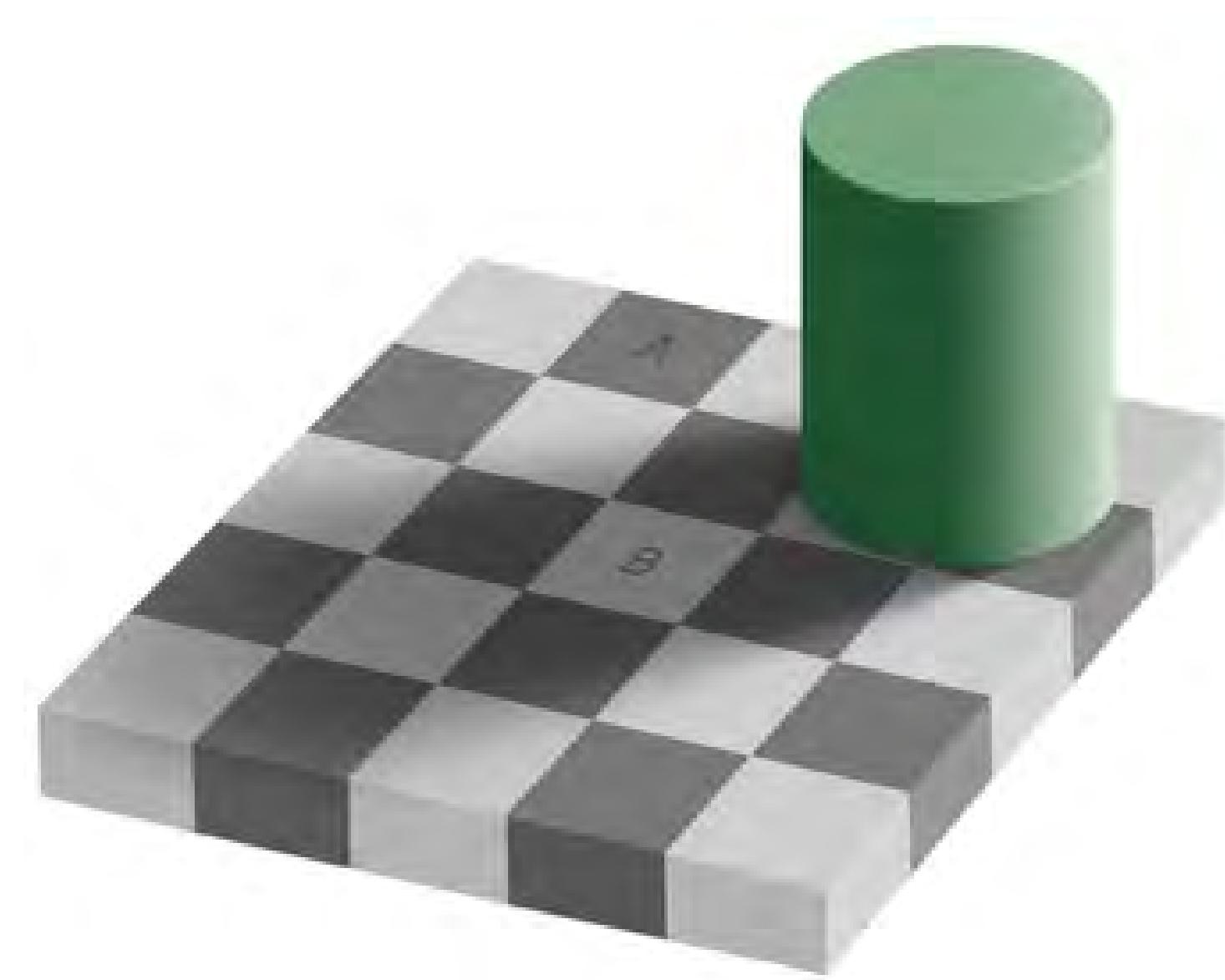
# Tip #1: Set your palette in advance

- Use colors safe for your target media
- Organize ramps in advance



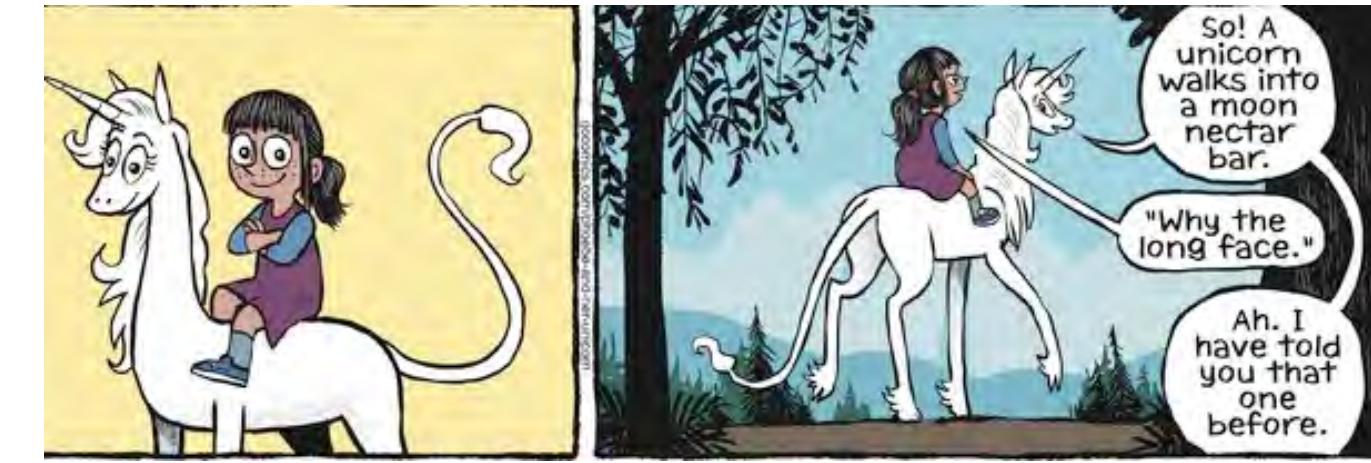
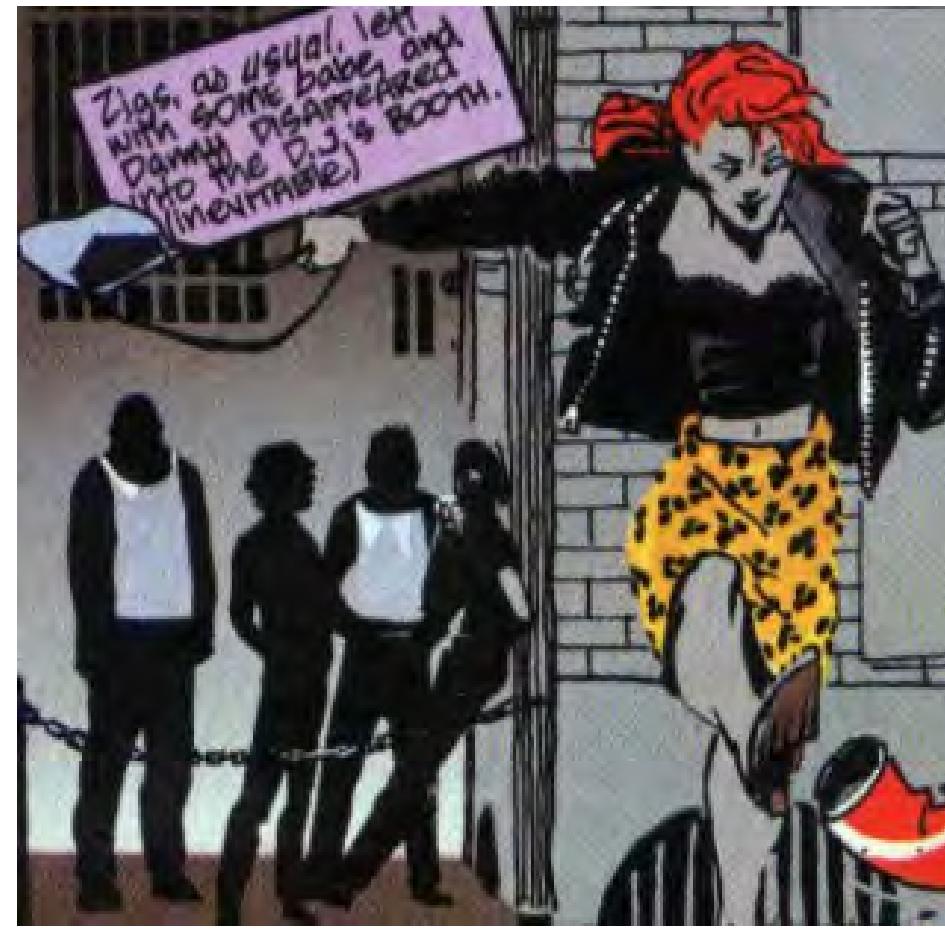
# Tip #2: Contrast is your friend

- People respond more to luma than to chroma
- Better to put something next to it to make it pop out



# Tip #2: Contrast is your friend

- Neutrals are a color! Use black, white, and gray
- Extreme values have weight, attract eyes



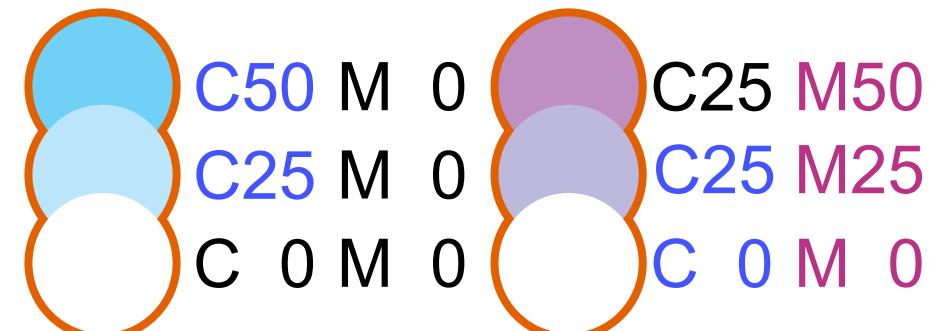
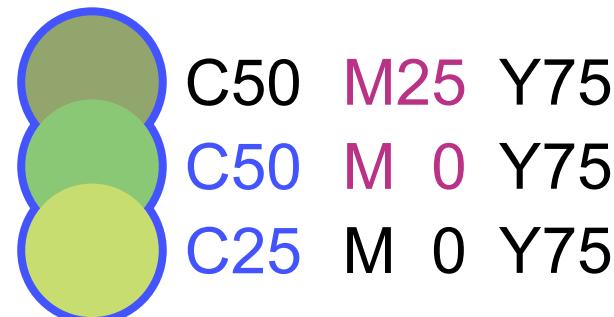
# Tip #3: Color as vocabulary

- Use specific colors for specific things
- Communicate moods and transitions



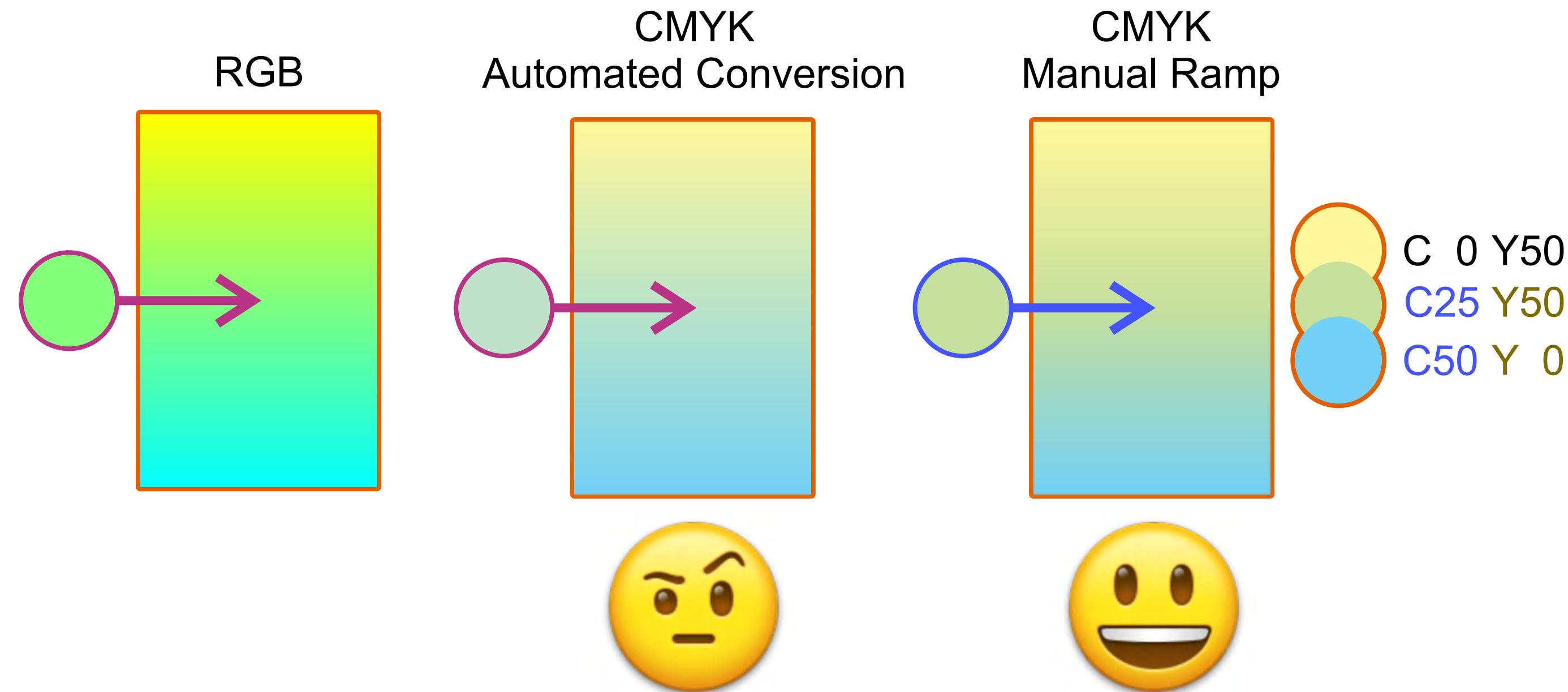
# Tip #4: Ramp your channels carefully

- Put in midpoints for clear transitions
- Lighter is safer than darker



# Tip #4: Ramp your channels carefully

- Don't trust the computer with hues across channels!



# Tip #5: US audiences think color is better.

- Than black & white? I don't get it, either.
- In a pinch, try using accent colors.



# Tip #6: Have fun with it!

- Scan weird textures.
- Composite photos or CGI or other stuff.



# Thank you for coming!

<https://xinjinmeng.neocities.org>

