

Interview With Pete Thompson

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Website: <https://graphiccompetitions.com/>



I'm originally from County Durham in the North East of England and have always been a passionate creative from a very young age. I was, and continue to be inspired by the great movie artists like Drew Struzan, Ray Harryhausen and Ralph McQuarrie, as well as artwork on album covers (Roger Dean & Rodney Matthews).

I studied Graphic Design and Illustration at college in Durham then spent a number of years doing small commissions and focusing on my other great passion, music. My first professional break was in the computer games industry working on everything from storyboards to character design, packaging and marketing/advertising artwork, over time I've moved into concept art for production design in movies and have been lucky enough to work with Marvel several times.

Technology has changed the way I work over the years and where I used to work with pen and paper I'm now 100% digital, however I still think it's important to have a foundation in traditional drawing and painting.

What are you working on at the moment?

I've recently completed a 2 year Avengers double movie project with Marvel. The first film 'Infinity Wars' is due for release in April 2018, the trailer is out now and everyone seems really excited to see the finished product.

I'm now working with a different production company on another exciting movie project. I can't say too much about it at the moment as it's in the early stages.

What does a typical working day look like?

For a new piece of art, I'd typically have a meeting with the Art Director and Production Designer then begin researching and gathering reference, we'd normally start quite loose on a number of ideas before committing to a fully polished conceptual image.

As you can imagine in movies there are thousands of images produced and Art Co-ordinators need to track these, so there are naming conventions to use for record keeping and version control.

What tools do you use most for your work?

Like most Concept Artists I use a very powerful laptop, a Wacom Intuos Pro drawing tablet and Photoshop.

What skills have you learnt along the way?

When working for yourself it's important to network and build up industry contacts to ensure you can keep working. Many artists/creative people are not good at self-promotion but this is a must if you want to make a solid career from your creative talent.

Work safely, you may be working at a computer for long periods so make sure you look after yourself by sitting comfortably, get a wrist rest if that helps and take short breaks away from the screen to rest your eyes.

Inspiration can strike anywhere, I take lots of pictures of things that inspire me on my phone. I also like to take time to visit art galleries, historical sites and exhibitions.

What advice would you give to a young creative?

Try to stand out from the crowd in your artwork, be influenced by artists but ultimately develop your own style.

Get on social media and promote yourself and your work, there are so many great platforms to do this now. Lots of the big creative houses offer internships and I think this is a great way to get some professional experience, so follow them on Twitter and LinkedIn and watch for opportunities.

Keep it real, don't assume that movie work is glamorous, yes it can be very rewarding when the finished product is in the cinemas and people see your name in the end titles or you win an award, but ultimately it's hard work like any other job. Often you'll be working away from home, sometimes for long periods and you always need to be on top form to deliver for your client.
