

Interview With Yuri Leitch

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Website: <https://bit.ly/2D79EIK>



I was born in the county of Devon, England, but I grew up in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. At 17 I moved to Cornwall and became a student at Falmouth School of Art & Design when I was 23; I studied Illustration. I now live in Glastonbury, Somerset; and I have lived here since 2001.

As an artist for employment I can put my hand to most anything. Many of my friends write books so I have painted many book covers and drawn many book illustrations. I have also fallen into (rather than by design) being employed to paint murals on both exterior and interior walls. My drawing style is very tight and detailed so painting a big wall is a pleasant change from being crouched over a sketch pad. My main themes are Celtic and Arthurian mythology.

What are you working on at the moment?

At the moment I am busy with a huge project called The Well Maidens of the Summerlands. I am painting thirty-nine, 4ft high, canvases. Illustrating different women from the legends of King Arthur. It took over a year just to draw all the designs; now I'm painting them. As a hobby I am also drawing my own graphic novel; it is called Maltwood and the High History of the Holy Graal.

What does a typical working day look like?

I have quite a monkey mind and I find it very difficult to spend hours on one thing so I usually do two hours of this, two hours of that, and so on... I do work throughout the day, every day of the week, but in two hour chunks; otherwise my brain gets irritable and bored. If I give a project two hours then my mind is fresh and I stop before it goes stale and impatient.

What tools do you use most for your work?

I'm Old School. HB pencils (sometimes a 3B). I paint with Acrylics. I don't like oils, they smell and take too long to dry. After I have drawn in graphite pencil I like to scan the image and uses photoshop to tint it a warm sepia colour.

What skills have you learnt along the way?

I guess the biggest skills are psychological. I don't try to be perfect, I just do my best at that moment in time then I move on. Artists can be too precious about their works; I do not think that is good. You get better with every picture you create so be prolific and creative, don't try and create a masterpiece (they happen more by accident along the way; they cannot be contrived).

What advice would you give to a young creative?

We all have to earn money and pay bills but if you do artwork just to earn money then the energy is all wrong and the image will be lacking that certain something. Do it because you love it. Put your love into a picture and the right people will respond to it. Don't try and be commercial just be you. You'll live longer.
