

# JEREMY LOVE



Originally a signwriter and graphic artist by trade, Jeremy Love's career took a u-turn after a memorable seminar in Copenhagen introduced him to the world of 2D concept art. Photoshop and a Wacom took over from LightWave and he hasn't looked back since, working on high profile projects including *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* and several *Star Wars* video games.

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Hi Jeremy and welcome to the world of 2DArtist magazine! By the sounds of it you've had quite an interesting artistic career so far – from signwriter to concept artist in ten years! Could you tell us a

bit more about this journey and your experiences along the way?

Wow, sign writing seems like so long ago now... but it turns out that it gave me a solid, traditional art foundation. I actually wanted to be a book

illustrator from an early age. I was a fan of the "choose your own adventure" books and loved the cover art. Artists like Boris Vallejo and Frank Frazetta inspired me too. I could draw ok in school, but mostly failed in art as I lacked the





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discipline to follow instructions. I did, however, enjoy technical drawing and finished the subject with a distinction, so my father took me to a local architect firm. Up until that point, I was under the impression that the job was all about designing fancy buildings, but instead I was shown plans for toilet cubicles and concrete foundations. This didn't appeal to me so I set my sights on becoming a graphic artist. My first job was doing bromide paste ups and learning CAD graphics software.

## “There’s no undo when you make a mistake on a big bloke’s bike tank”

I then went to work for a small company where I designed surf t-shirts and logos. After a while the boss introduced me to the airbrush and asked me to paint a robotic dragon on a shop sign. I ended up specializing in airbrushing and painted on pretty much everything. It turned out to be great learning curve for me as it taught me the discipline I needed. I had to work within tight deadlines and deal with difficult clients, plus if I

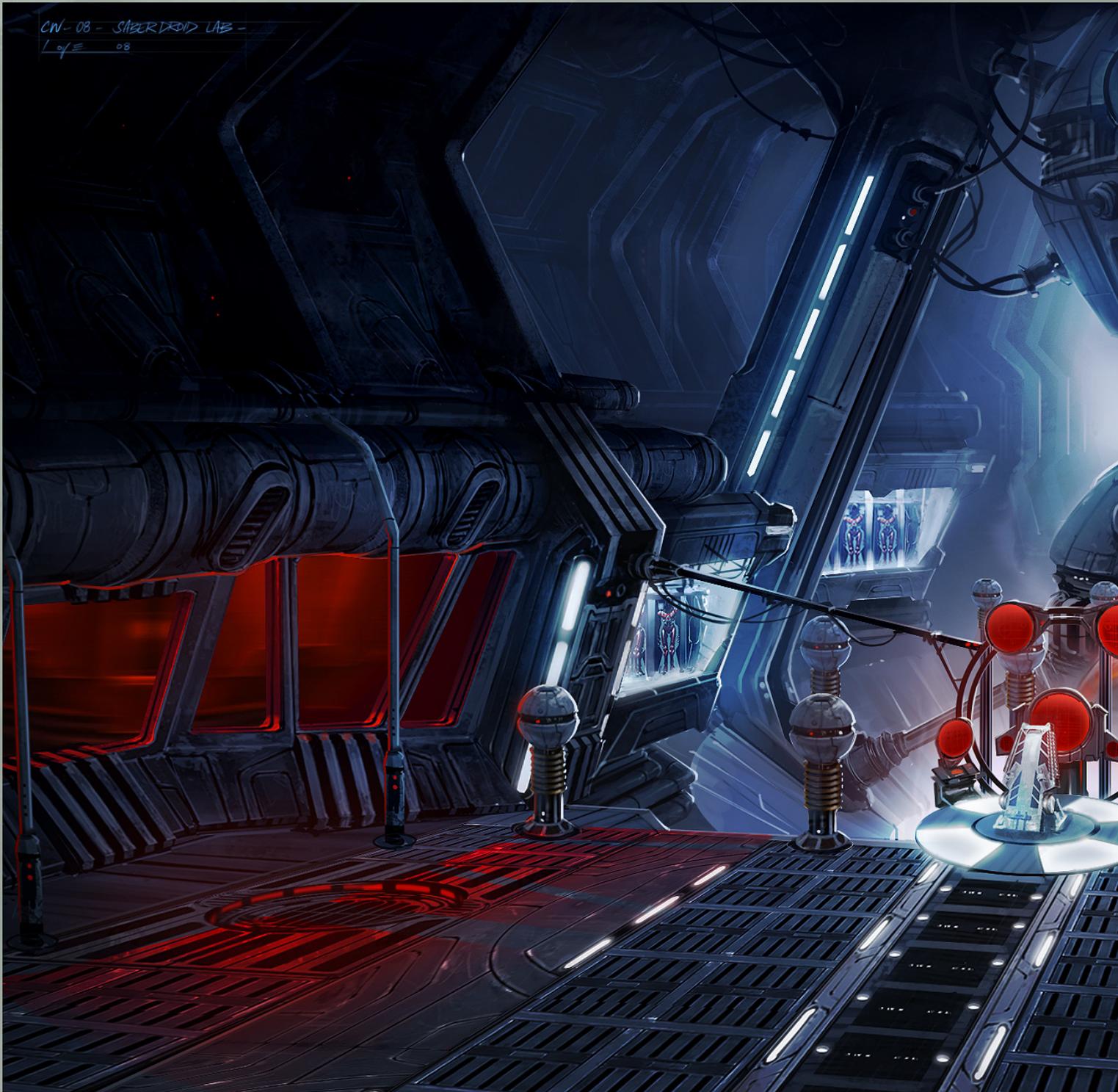


made a mistake I pretty much had to start again. There's no undo when you make a mistake on a big bloke's bike tank so I learnt to be careful and think ahead. It's an interesting profession as it taught me to be a jack of all trades. I had to design, construct, paint and install the signage. I ended up helping run a sign shop in Noosa, which was great, but I spent most of my time

airbrushing waves, sharks and dolphins on every truck, boat and shop imaginable. One of the strangest experiences was having a rotten avocado thrown at my head while installing a huge artists impression for a new high-rise development in Mooloolaba. I remember thinking, "Surely my art isn't that bad?" although, I don't blame them as there used to be a good pub there.







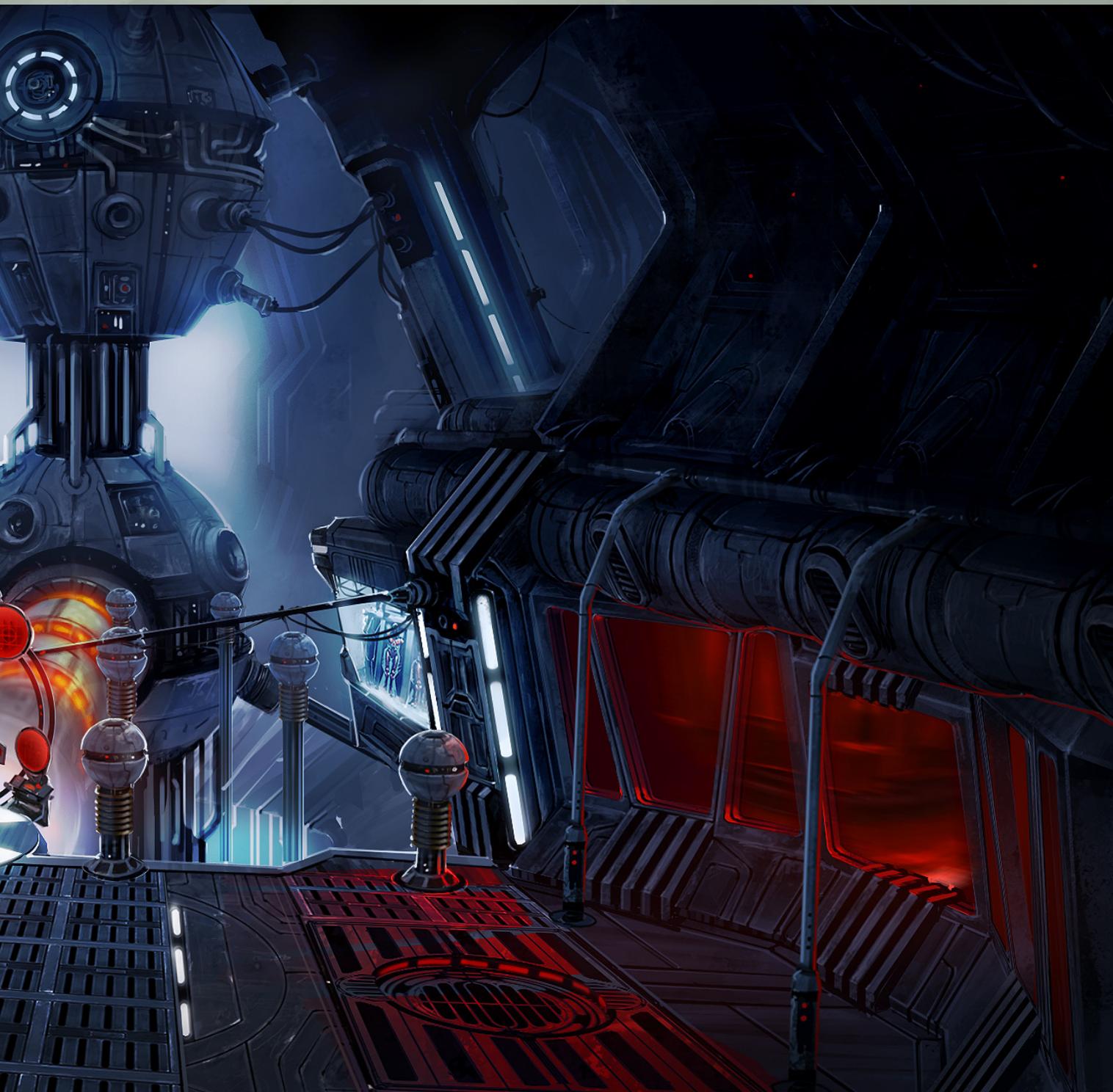
Sign writing took me all over the world and I got to work on some great projects. I think the best job I got to work on was doing the vehicles for Chateau Elan, in Saint Andrew's Bay, where they put us up for two nights with an open tab and free golf. Anyway, while doing my day job, I was also freelancing for a production house doing graphics and animations for commercials and documentaries. This is where I found out

about LightWave 3D. I was keen to make a change in career as the constant fumes from airbrushing had made me very ill.

**It's interesting because in my experience, LightWave is one of the lesser-used software packages and doesn't quite have the same prominence as 3ds Max or Maya in today's industry – was it a conscious choice for you**

**to use it, or was it just a case of LightWave being the first 3D software you stumbled across?**

LightWave seems to have taken a back seat in games development especially. Although at the time it was used extensively in TV broadcast production. The production house had a copy of LightWave v5 so I gave it a go. If an advert needed a flying logo or spinning object, I would



just learn enough to do that. Eventually an animated character was needed and I was hooked from there. I really enjoyed doing everything from storyboarding to directing. I think I stopped using it at about v6.5

**You now work as a senior concept artist for the Australian arm of THQ, is that right? What's a typical day like for you there? And**

**are you allowed to share anything about what you're working on at the moment or is it all top secret?**

Yeah that's right, but unfortunately the studio closed a few weeks ago. A typical day started with coffee and emails. We were lucky enough to have a big coffee machine, which I became addicted to – delicious! All of us concept artists sat together in a small dark corner, so we

shared the latest art links and game trailers. Some mornings the AD would call an art meeting where we would talk about our tasks and make sure we were on the same page. We used a task management application so we mostly knew what to get on with. I mainly worked on character designs for this project, but did a bit of everything so it was fun.

Wow, I'm really sorry to hear about the closure of your studio – how did that come about? And where do you see your career going from here? Freelance work or do you have a position at another studio lined up?

Thanks, it was a shame to say goodbye to a great studio and all that work for sure. We were a year into production and the team was really happy to have created something that looked and played really well. We were all excited to be part of such a cool title and were close to alpha so it came as a shock. THQ Corp. and the client were pleased with what we were doing, but ultimately I think it was down to the Australian dollar. It's just not as viable for overseas publishers to invest here anymore given the current climate. There were no doubt other factors behind it, but that's just the way of the industry.

**“The thought of creating art for IPs such as Star Wars seemed too good to be true, but somehow attainable at the same time”**



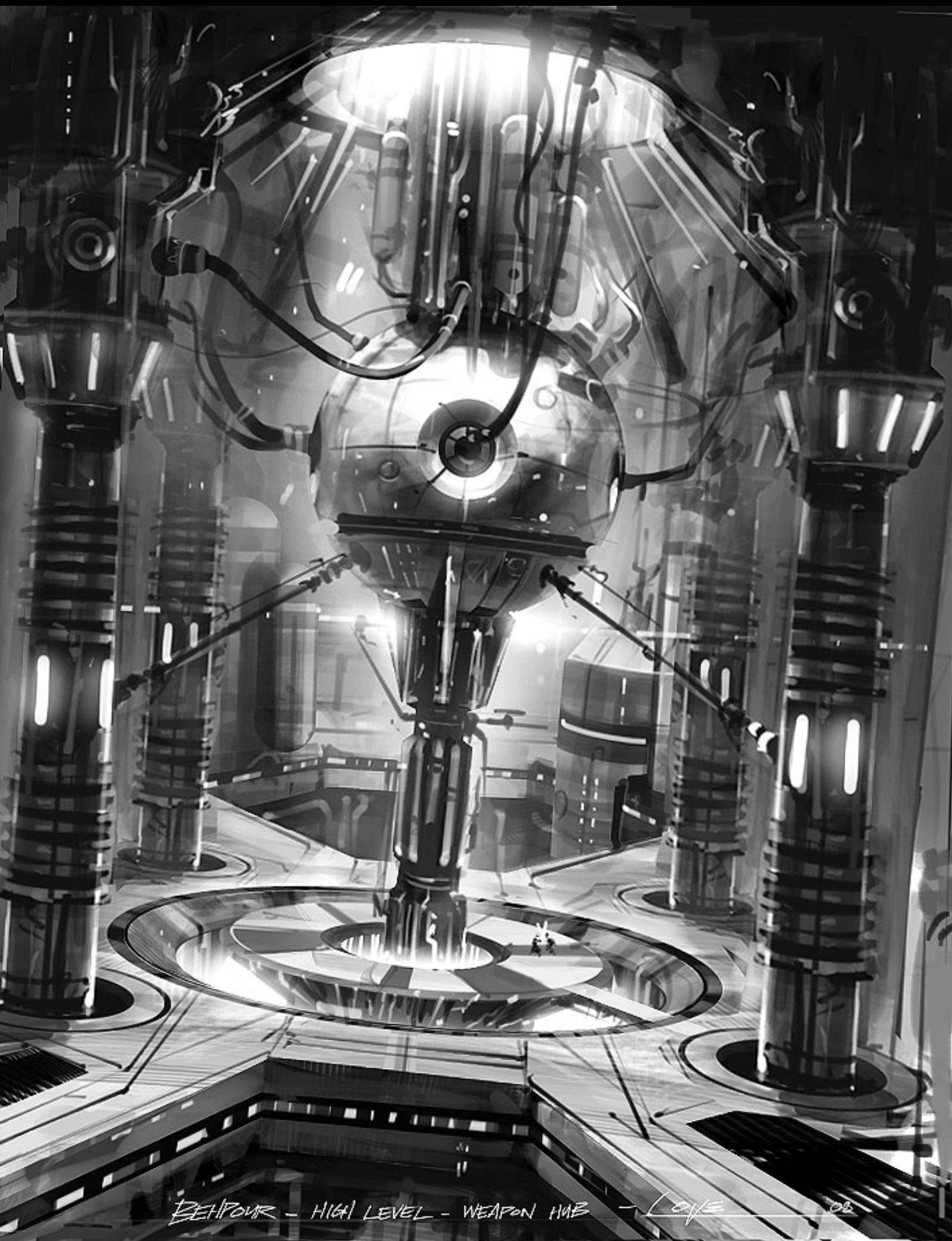
I've had a few offers at other studios and considered moving overseas, but I'm pretty happy here right now so have decided to build a small studio at home and do freelance concept work. It's going well so far and the studio is almost finished so it's an exciting time. Now that I don't have full time restrictions, I'm hoping to do some more film work.

**On your website you mention attending a seminar by Feng Zhu as a kind of turning point in your artistic career. He's an artist**

**that a lot of people mention as being an inspiration for them and we've been lucky enough to feature his work in the pages of 2DArtist. What was it about the seminar that so captured your attention? And if you hadn't attended, do you think you'd still have found your way to 2D?**

Feng is an inspiration for sure. My initial intention for attending the 3D festival was to learn more about 3D and do some networking. I had gone out the night before in Copenhagen and had a few too many local beers so was







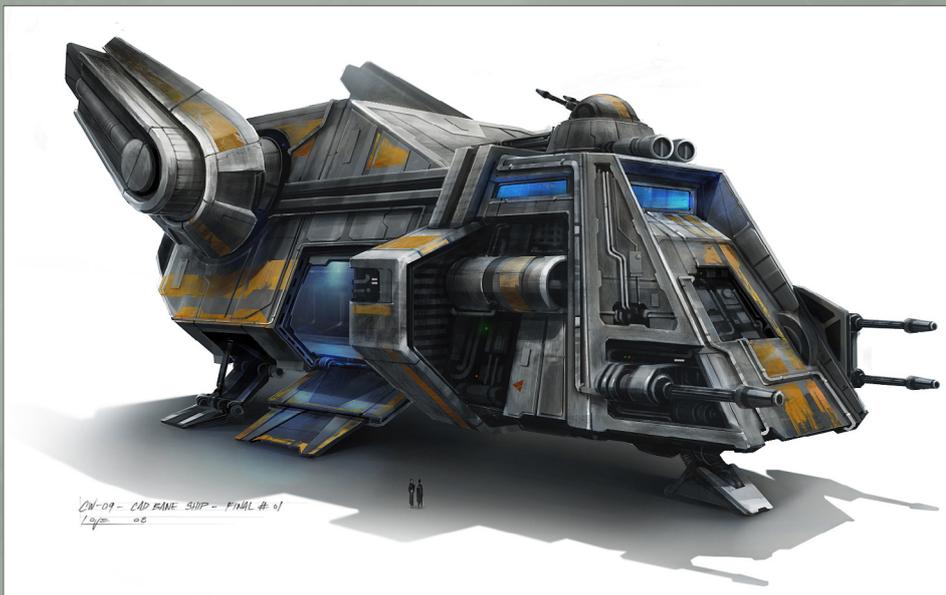
feeling a little rough. I was late for Feng's seminar and had to sit in the aisle. Up until that point I had never realized there were actually people designing this cool stuff for a living. I was blown away at the speed and talent of this guy... Something just clicked and I thought, "yeah, this is for me". The thought of creating art for IPs such as *Star Wars* seemed too good to be true, but somehow attainable at the same time. I think that with the expansion of global media, it was only a matter of time before concept art appeared on my radar as a career option. But

there's no denying that Feng's seminar had a huge impact on me. Within a week of returning home I had bought a tablet and was learning Painter. To my wife's dismay I spent hundreds of hours on that thing.

**"It's an ongoing learning curve and I'm always striving for an image that I'm happy with for more than a week"**

It seems behind every great artist there's a very understanding spouse! So how did you make the transition from 3D to 2D? Was it just a case of practice, practice, practice and then shopping your portfolio around?

[Laughs] That's true! I think technically I had a fairly solid art foundation through simply drawing from life and painting from photos. Signwriting helped me learn how color worked as I had to mix all my paints, but I had limited knowledge of anatomy or composition. Therefore my digital work started out more as illustrations and



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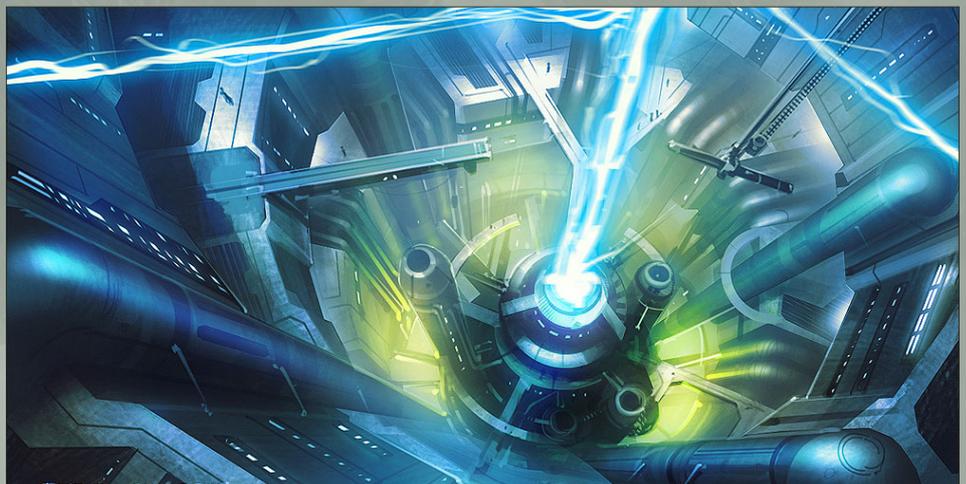


emulating photo references. But I soon realized there was more to being a concept artist than simply drawing ok and copying from magazines. There was so much still to learn, so I started doing challenges online and small unpaid collaborations. I developed a faster working method and a library of shapes in my head that seemed to work. Eventually my portfolio started to improve and attract more lucrative clients. It's an ongoing learning curve and I'm always striving for an image that I'm happy with for more than a week.

## “As a kid I used to dream about creating worlds for people to explore”

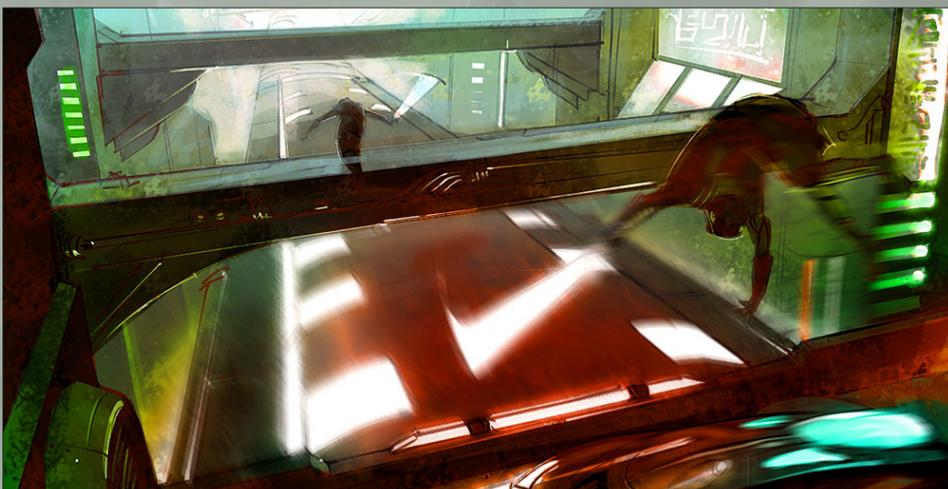
Onto the art! Which I could look at all day, by the way – I particularly love the landscapes as there's just something so beautifully peaceful about them. But landscapes aside, your work seems to lean towards the sci-fi and fantasy genres – is this a conscious decision on your part or something your work requires of you? It's definitely a popular subject within the industry and I often wonder what it is about sci-fi and fantasy that so attracts people. Perhaps just the sheer number of potential possibilities and the ability to push your imagination to the limit and beyond?

Thank you! It's funny you should mention the landscapes as they took the least amount of time. I wanted to explore a more traditional



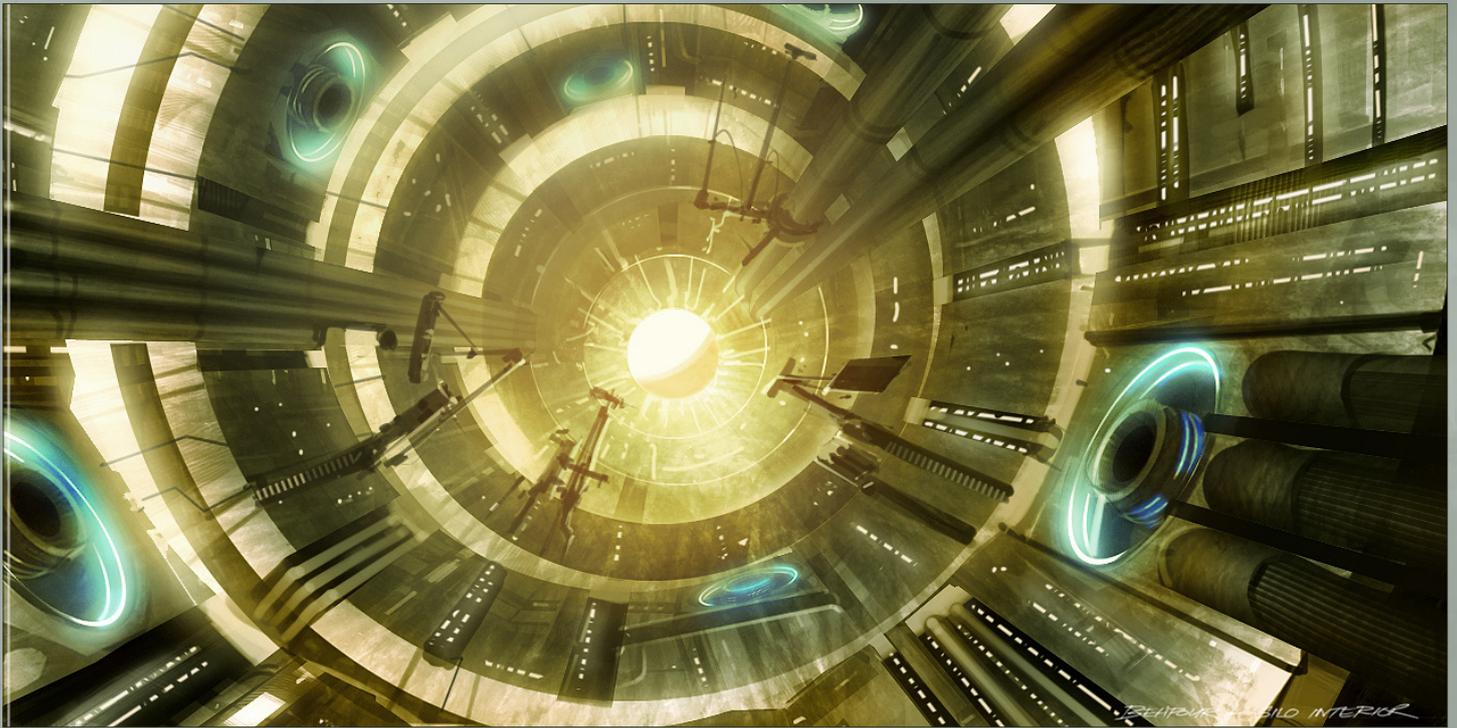
technique and use some different brushes so tried to get one finished each day in my lunch hour at work. I've always loved sci-fi though and I think films by the likes of Spielberg and Lucas captured my imagination early on. As a kid I used to dream about creating worlds for people to explore. Actually, I'd love to create a

graphic novel set in a virtual world. Like you say, the possibilities are limitless and I think it's that opportunity to really use my imagination that interests me. Working in entertainment allows me to do this to a degree so it's a good match. With that said, the stuff I paint at home is quite contemporary so there's a love for that too.



What can I say; I'm a sucker for a beautiful landscape! I'm curious about this graphic novel you mentioned – do you have a plot worked out or is it still just floating around in your head as a vague idea?

I spent about a year developing a story in my spare time back in 2007. It was just a rough plot; a bunch of notes and doodles spread out over a stack of sketchbooks. Trouble is the story I was writing was very close to a movie that came out last year so it's back to the drawing board. Writing is something I don't do all that often but



when I do, I really enjoy it. There's something about watching a story unfold. Developing the characters is the fun part. Maybe I'll get around to it when I'm old and gray... damn that's now! [Laughs].

**Coming from a 3D background, do you find yourself calling on your 3D skills in your work much nowadays? I know lots of 2D artists will mix elements of 3D into their pipeline and vice versa. Or is it Photoshop and a Wacom all the way?**

I think it definitely helps having that background as you're used to seeing your objects from every angle and get a good idea of how perspective

works. I think the texturing and lighting processes used in 3D can translate to 2D quite well too, especially with software like Photoshop where layers are used. As for my work, I haven't used a 3D application in over seven years, although it's common for me to be given a 3D mesh environment from design or an in-game capture to paint over. But definitely Wacom and Photoshop for me!

**And one whimsical question to round things off: if you were stranded on a desert island, what would be the one thing you couldn't live without? Sketchbook? Surfboard? Internet connection?**

Well that would have to be my lovely, intelligent wife! But then, the only sketching I'd be doing is SOS in the sand! [Laughs] Kidding, of course. Oh, there's surf? That's an easy one; no time for the internet as I'd be on the water all day.

## Jeremy Love

For more information please visit:

<http://coldrum.cghub.com/>

<http://jeremylove.com/index.htm>

Or contact him at:

[jez.love@hotmail.com](mailto:jez.love@hotmail.com)

Interview by: Jo Hargreaves



