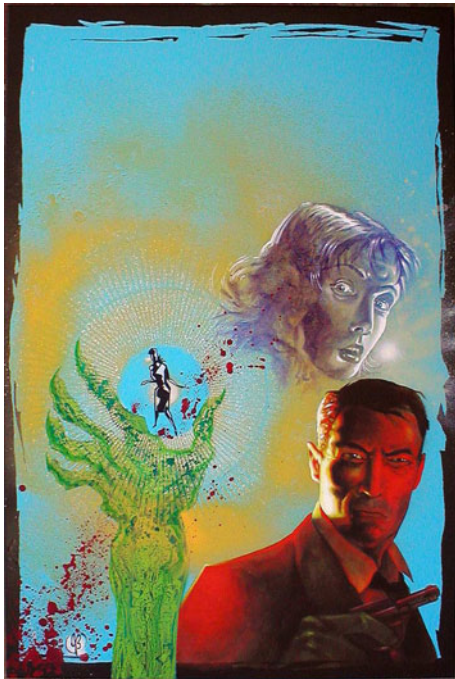


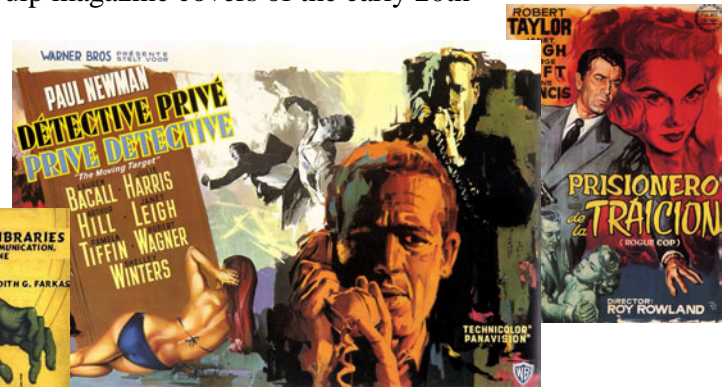
## Painting Tutorial: Jonathan Baker



My name is Jonathan Baker. This is a documentary of my process for making a painting using many different techniques to accomplish the following illustration. I incorporate many various mediums, and rely on both spontaneity and careful planning to create what you will see here. In this tutorial, I will show you both my process and my reasoning when attempting to create an image.

This painting called *Monster Noir #2* is 24 by 36 inches on a store bought pre-stretched canvas. The painting is both an example of my fine art, and will be used as an illustration for my comic book called *Monster Noir*, with the approval of our writer David Goldberg and producer Dan Goldberg. The painting is made to resemble the pulp magazine covers of the early 20th century and vaguely describes some of the events that take place in the issue. The

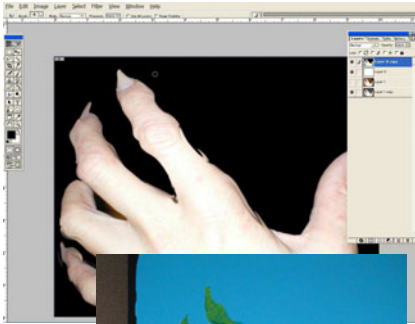
theme is a film-noir detective story set in the late 1940's, featuring monsters and a damsel in distress. For the covers and interior art, I was heavily influenced by these movie and magazine covers, and tried to emulate them with this painting. I preferred its ambiguity and vignettes of story like the movie posters you see here.



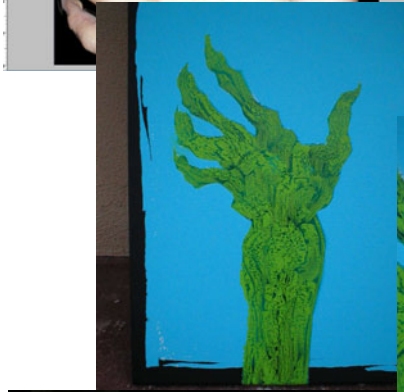
The 1st step was to create a thumbnail sketch arrangement of the elements. I deliberately kept details to a minimum in order to allow for spontaneity in the design, and allow what I call "happy accidents" to occur. The image is based very loosely on the events of the issue, but is ambiguous enough to use the image for any issue or advertising.

The 2nd step is to paint the canvas in a solid color in acrylic. I wanted to have much of this color show through the end product. My first choice was to create a torn-paper or deckled look to the edges of the canvas using removable masking tape, and black spray paint. This creates a framing effect and is reminiscent of the first *Monster Noir* painting I have done, thus continuing a theme.





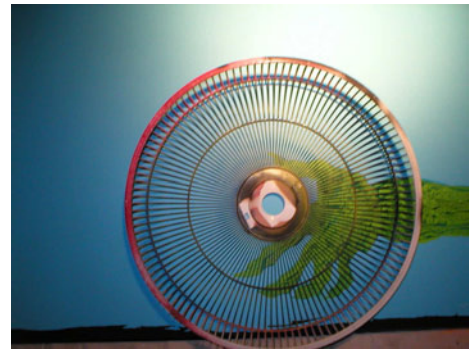
Next was to create the highly stylized clawed hand. I decided to make a hard edge stencil. I took pictures of my own hand, tweaked the image in Photoshop, printed it out 10 inches wide, and traced it onto thin adhesive shelf paper you can buy in the kitchen department of supermarkets or department stores. This can be used as a substitute for airbrush friskett. It is not as tacky or retains a sharp line, but serves as a fair stencil.



I cut and placed the stencil, and sprayed a dark undercoat of green. I wanted a gnarled texture, so I used crackling texture acrylic medium over the dark green, then painted the light green acrylic over that. Within minutes, it created a random cracking of the light green paint, lending to the sinister look of the hand. This is again one of those “happy accidents” where I can allow unforeseen elements and events to come through the painting.

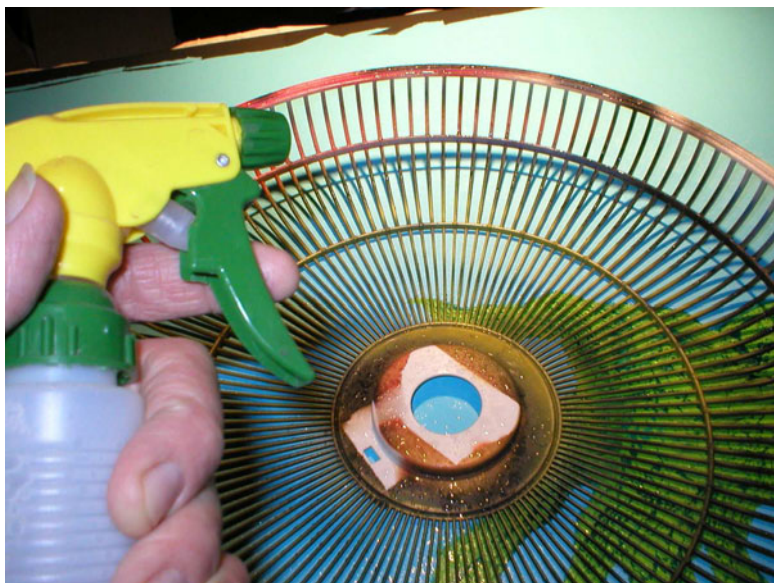


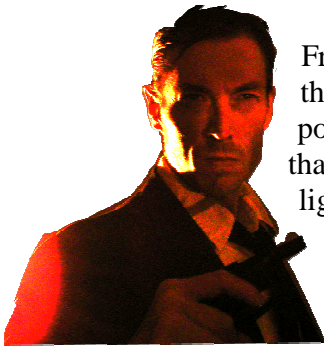
I hastily decided to use another stencil. In this case, radiating lines would highlight what the hand was grasping for. An old tabletop fan was perfect for the task. To add to the chaotic dispersion of the paint, I used a strange technique for spray paint.



If you spray heavy drops of water on a flat canvas, and then spray oil based enamel paints on top, the sprayed enamel rests on the water droplets until the water is dry, then the oil based paint sticks to your canvas making a textured look. This makes for some strange and random texture that I have used in other paintings.

I sprayed white and yellow, and the paint dried with a moderately random texture.





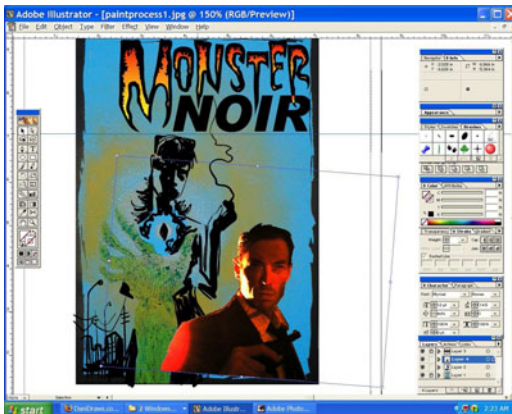
From there, I had choices for my composition. I knew I wanted to make this painting resemble pulp magazine covers and old-fashioned movie posters, and I needed life models. While working on the hand, I decided that the only model I had available was myself. I donned my suit, set up lights and camera against a mirror, and tried to look like the main character from our comic. I have a passing resemblance to our private detective, so I knew I could modify the end result with

Photoshop and creativity. I took pictures, making random poses in the time allotted by the camera. Finally I came across a workable pose. The gun would have to be modified from a bb gun to a PI's snub nose.

Now I had to decide some of the elements of the final composition. In Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator, I altered and played with arrangements that would work well together, as well as incorporating the title and edition info on the cover.

I decided to use a better image of the female lead in the issue of the comic, so I needed another model. I found a good model from a

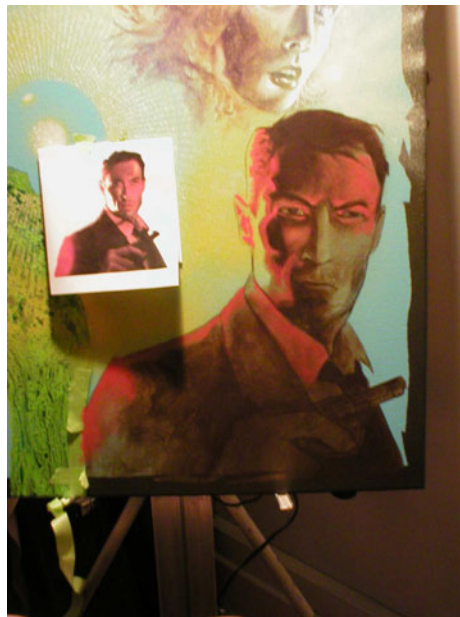
photo in a collection of gossip magazines from the early 1950's that had expired copyrights. I used Photoshop to clean up and adjust levels, printed them out on paper, and used an overhead projector to trace both images on to the canvas. This is a form of cheating. *Forget freehand.* Even the maestros used a camera obscura. Besides, the end result would be modified greatly.



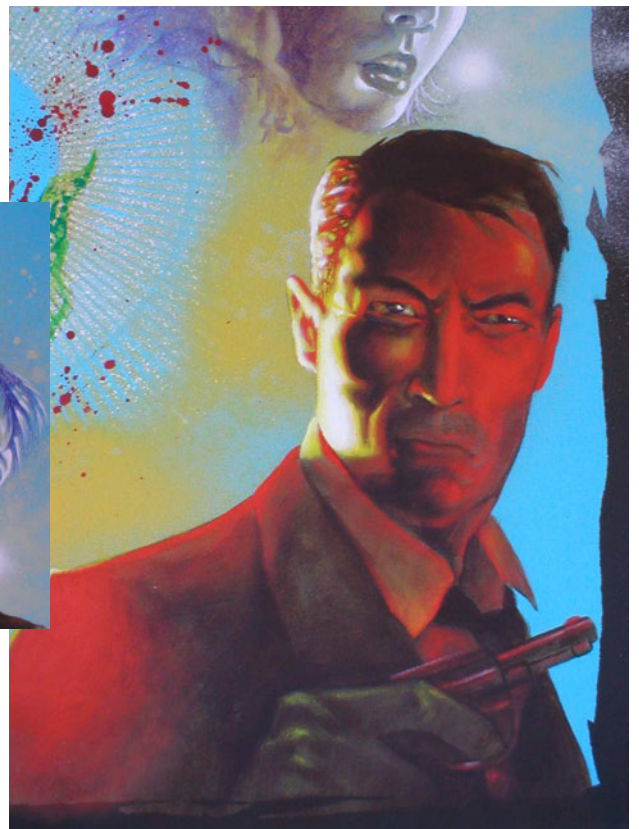


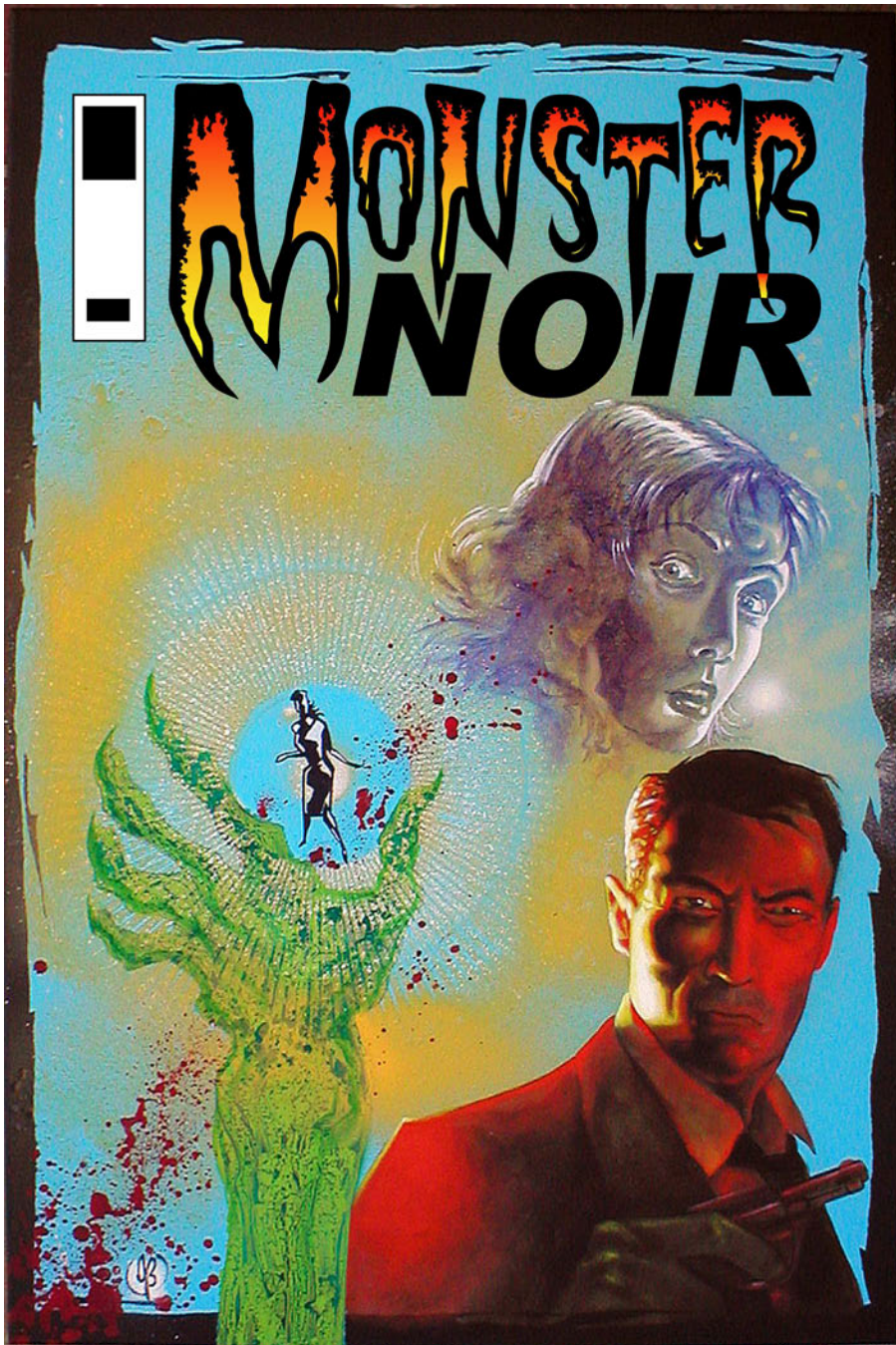
I kept the female lead muted, in the background, and concentrated more on her being an acrylic under painting, very vague and ghostly. She appears to be reacting to the hand but has her own light source, from her left hand side.

Next, I painted the private detective using a print out as a reference. I decided to keep the same color scheme, as it would contrast heavily with the light blue of the overall canvas. I wasn't using realistic light sources in the composition, but this was a conscious choice. One main trick I like to use with some paintings is to use an under painting of acrylic, in one solid color. From there, I can paint on top of the solid color using oil paints. The reason I do this is that the under painting shows through, and I can sketch out the painting in water based acrylics. Sometimes the acrylic is a wash, or sometimes it is sold color. This dries quickly, and I can use the oils on top to finish the image. The oil paint is easier to fix, as there is a guideline underneath the oil. The acrylic shows through, making a complete image that is quicker and easier to paint.



From there, I made some snap decisions about the last of the graphics. For comic book illustrations in general, I will leave some room for type or copy, in case the writer and producer want to see some blurbs or statements bracketing the characters. I made a hard-edge graphic of our lady in peril, about to be snatched by the creature's hand. On the last cover mockup, I used a trail of splattered blood to imply the terror, and as a texture element to guide the eye around the image.





This painting is by no means the final product for the cover of one of our comics, but serves also as a part of my fine art series. A lot of my recent work is based on pulp magazine covers and old movie posters, so the large 24" x 36" canvas can be shown as part of an art collection, and matches with the rest of the paintings. It is both an illustration to convey story, and fine art in which the viewer can determine their own emotional reaction to the large canvas. Without the context of it being a comic book cover, viewers must determine their own story and response to the piece. It is both colorful and lively, but ominous and confrontational. It implies danger, but also compelling whimsy that is approachable. It is a tawdry image, but is not too gory or over the top. I find the contradiction very satisfying. It may be processed more in Photoshop after it is submitted for approval to my creative team.

Please feel free to contact me at [www.jonathanbakerart.com](http://www.jonathanbakerart.com). Thank you.

Copyright 2008, Jonathan Baker.