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Below is a portion of the 1999 interview I conducted with Adventures of Snake Plissken cover artist Dan Brereton. Dan's dynamic painting style makes him a cult favorite in the comic world and one of my favorite artists. Image ©1997-Present Dan Brereton and used with Permission.

Why do you think so many artists don't paint their pages as you do?

DAN: "Most of us grew up reading and looking at line art comics, and that's what you learn is the standard. Plus, drawing is easier for most than painting. Also I think there are fewer opportunities to paint than to pen and ink. That's all. It could change with the advent of color computer stuff, but really, painting a book takes longer and goes against the production line ethic needed for monthly books. I couldn't do a monthly painted book. It comes down to that. If they could get a monthly painted book out of a guy like me or Alex or whoever, they'd do more, I'm sure."

I love the look, very realistic, like oil paintings. Do you work from models, photos...

DAN: "Yes, models, friends, family. I shoot references based on thumbnails and sketches, and I go from there. It helps get a lot of things correct and also allows me the ability to stray without losing structure, light pattern. The trick is to not get bogged down and become a slave to the photo ref. It's there to bounce off of, a launch pad. The stuff I do for myself, in my doodle and notebooks, looks doodle, cartoony, expressionistic: I like it, but you can't sell it to fans. So the realistic part of the formula adds that level of craft that I can't do alone. I'm just not that good."

There was and still is to a certain degree a frowning on of the use of photo ref by artists, but its largely a misconception. All good artists who want their stuff to have a credible realism of any kind, will use reference (or scrap as some call it) in their work. Obviously, it takes different forms and some rely on it less than others. But to think you can draw everything out of your head, or copy it from the way another artist did it, is not a creative or learning process. And when a thing is badly drawn, it's badly drawn and it's just too easy to get the reference to avoid that."

And now onto a favorite topic of ours, Snake Plissken. How did you land the Snake Plissken cover Dan?

DAN: "Marvel called me and asked me if I was interested and I was!"

Are you a fan of the character, the Escape films? Snake seems to be your type of anti-hero. Talks little, packs some big guns! (and of course he's a futuristic cowboy).



DAN: "Big fan of Kurt Russell films directed by John Carpenter. THE THING is on my top five all time fave movies. And I have always loved the laconic, enigmatic Snake."

Did you work from photo refs on this one (there was a shot of kurt from EFLA that was similar)...

DAN: "They sent me a few partially useful photos from ESCAPE FROM L.A., but nothing too spectacular. They also art-directed me into a corner, which is too bad. If they'd freed up on the cover image, I think I could have came up with a better image, but it came out alright, I guess."

Visit [Dan's official site](#).

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