

MAGIC Old School

The Gathering®



THE ART AND ARTISTS

By
Allan Linderup Smed

Foreword

Back in 1993, Wizards of the Coast commissioned 25 artists to give Magic: The Gathering cards their now-iconic pieces of artwork. The artwork from these 25 original artists resulted in the release of the first limited Alpha card.

The 25 original artists are:

Amy Weber
Andi Rusu
Anson Maddocks
Brian Snoddy
Christopher Rush
Cornelius Brudi
Dameon Willich
Dan Frazier
Daniel Gelon
Douglas Shuler
Drew Tucker
Fay Jones
Jeff A. Menges
Jesper Myrfors
Julie Baroh
Kev Brockschmidt
Mark Poole
Mark Tedin
Melissa A. Benson
Quinton Hoover
Richard Thomas
Rob Alexander
Ron Spencer
Sandra Everingham
Tom Wänerstrand

Several of the artists have explained that in the early days of MTG, the artists were given almost no information - pretty much just a subject item such as "*Angel*", "*Paladin*", or "*Mountain*". They did not even get the titles of the cards. This allowed the artists an incredible range of freedom. They were told by Jesper Myrfors – the art Director of Wizards of the Coast - that the images would be printed about the size of a postage stamp. The only three design guidelines given where: Keep the colors bright, the compositions simple, and the backgrounds very plain.

Jesper Myrfors' success criteria was, that the cards needed to be recognized from a good distance away, so that observers of a game could tell which card was which without seeing the titles and text. So it was imperative that the images should be strong and iconic. Several of the artists took this instruction extremely literal, which is why, so many of the art pieces in the first Alpha set have little or no background and use very bold colors.

As the sets continued to be released, the details given increased more and more, with the artist getting card titles next, then details such as card color, and eventually some extremely detailed packets of art direction, complete with concept art and extensive notes about races, creatures, and cultures.

From the interviews conducted throughout the years, it can be derived, that many of the artists do not have any single favorite piece. There are different things they like about different images -- some work better than others, and some are more special to them than others, but it is more of a spectrum with no single favorite. Things the artist like about a piece can often be different from what others think, as they are looking more at the art, technical details and perhaps the story around how it came about. This can differ specially compared to players, as their perspectives tend to be biased based a bit more on the game mechanics and the power of the card.

Even if there are several of the artists that did play magic (a few still does – while other have not tried the game at all) – most of them are first and foremost artists by interest and by trade.

It is also important to remember that most of them were young people just finishing the art studies in Seattle at the time Jesper Myrfors onboarded them into the small start up company called Wizards of the Coast. They were invited to sit in Peter Adkinson's (CEO of WoTC) garage and paint getting paid 50 USD per piece (today WoTC pays over 1,000 USD per MTG artwork).

Being professional artists most of them today have had a long career in parallel or after MTG - creating lots of other artwork for various customers and purposes. Apart from this many of them is still today mainly recognized from their status as being one of the first 25 original artist on the first set for Magic the Gathering.

It could easily have turned out differently for these people as, according to Jesper Myrfors, the original plan Wizards of the Coast had, was to use secondary rights art for Magic cards, using famous book covers and famous record albums. However, Jesper Myrfors convinced the company, that he could get original art (from students from the Cornish College of Art in Seattle) that had not been used anywhere else, and it would cost less in the short term, and in the long term, it would take these artists and their career along with the growth, so everybody would win. The company agreed and this idea became the famous original 25....

Last it is important to state that this document does not by any means try to be an artbook and I have no special art expertise or background that makes me an expert in commenting artwork. This small document has been consolidated by researching available interviews with the original artists, that has been published on the net. The comments are derived from these interviews and conveys the artists' own explanations. The document does not (yet) cover all the 25 artists. The purpose of this, is to give the reader the chance to have a combined overview of some of the fun facts and stories behind the amazing artwork in the first sets of Magic the Gathering. In addition, to provide some insight to the artists' work. Where it has made sense for illustrating or explaining the work or approach of an artist, artwork from cards after the 1993-1994 period has been included. However, the focus for the document has been collecting background information for the art in the first sets in MTG history.

Happy reading

Allan Linderup Smed, 20 March 2021

Jesper Myrfors

Honorable card mentions:

Dual lands (Bayou, Scrubland, Tropical Island, Tundra)
Armageddon
Atog
Ifh-Bíff Efreet
Bad Moon
Will-o-the-whisp
Elves of Deep Shadow
Word of Command
Evil Eye of Orms-by-Gore
Land Equilibrium
Cosmic Horror
Basalt Monolith
Phantom Monster
Eater of the Dead

Notes:

- Jesper Myrfors was born in Stockholm in 1964, his father was an officer in the Royal Swedish Navy, his mother is also from Sweden, and she ran a Swedish newspaper here in the states for many years. The family moved to Washington State when he was two years old but have kept his Swedish citizenship.
- Jesper Myrfors graduated from Cornish College of the Arts with a BFA in illustration and is a two-time winner of the GAMA award for graphic design and art direction. Late in life Jesper Myrfors has been tested at the University of Washington Autism Clinic and got confirmation of that he is actually an autistic.
- Jesper Myrfors way into fantasy and gaming was through Dungeons and Dragons in 1979. Later in 1993 Jesper played a game called *Talislanta*, which was a fantasy role playing game, and Wizards of the Coast had bought the rights to it. He contacted them with his art portfolio, but WoTC wanted something else. So, he did two new pieces over the weekend and they liked it, and that is how he got started. WoTC subsequently asked for more and invited him to become part of the company.
- Jesper Myrfors had met Richard Garfield before Magic the Gathering. Richard Garfield brought another game idea to the company called "*Roborally*" and Jesper Myrfors was art directing it and Phil Foglio (another MTG artis) was illustrator.
- Together with Christopher Rush, the most important and influential artist for the creative art design of magic the Gathering in his formal role as Art Director for Magic the Gathering. He is also the Set Director for *The Dark* set.

- Jesper Myrfors' style is incredibly varied. He also confirmed in an interview that he liked to try different approaches and techniques. The quite different artistic styles he has worked with can be seen by comparing for example *Elves of the Deep Shadow* with *Living Lands*, *Cosmic Horror*, *Wormwood Treefolk*, *Evil Eye of Orms-by-Gore* and *Land Equilibrium*. Looking at these it could look like they have been painted by different artists.



Elves of Deep Shadow



Living Lands



Cosmic Horror



Wormwood Treefolk



Evil Eye of Orms-by-Gore



Land Equilibrium

- About different artistic styles Jesper Myrfors has said in an interview that originally his goal was to give artists as much freedom as possible. His thinking was that if they had 25 or so creative people working, why not use their input to come up with things and thereby make the world a richer place. Jesper Myrfors' himself painted in different styles simply because he could and that he loves to experiment and to try new things. He believes the moment an artist stops trying to grow, they die as an artist. Then it becomes just work.
- The famous Hurloon Minotaur was named by Jesper Myrfors. Wizards of the Coast had to get a magazine advertisement out and it was late, nobody else was in the office, and the copy for the advertisement absolutely had to be done by morning. So Jesper wrote up the flavor text for the *Hurloon Minotaur*, and that is how that whole thing about their name and their long low moans came to be.

The Minotaurs of the Hurloon Mountains are known for their love of battle. They are also known for their hymns to the dead, sung for friend and foe alike. These hymns can last for days, filling the mountain valleys with their low, haunting sounds.

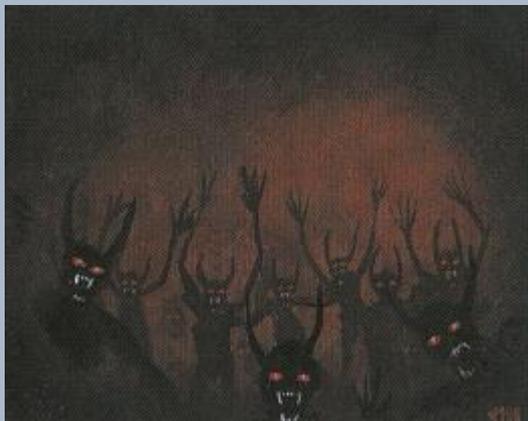
Flavor text from Hurloon Minotaur

- Art on *Tropical Island* in the Alpha set is incorrectly credited to Mark Poole but is in fact done by Jesper Myrfors. In an interview Jesper Myrfors has claimed that there is a picture of himself hidden in the artwork on the *Tropical Island* card. He claims he is standing in the center of the island, but so far, the author of this document has not been able to confirm by own sight if this is true.

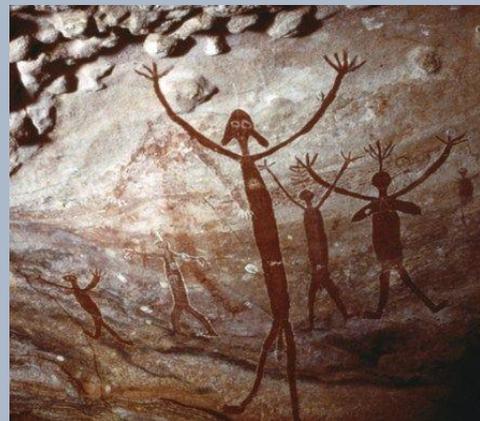


Tropical Island

- In an another interview Jesper Myrfors has stated that the inspirational sources for the artwork on *Demonic Hordes* are Scandinavian fairy tales and aboriginal art. This can somewhat be seen in the “stick figure style” when comparing to some of the oldest aboriginal art in the world – the paintings from the legendary *Quinkan Rock Art* in Australia.



Demonic Hordes



Quinkan Aboriginal Rock Art

- The art printed on *Serendib Efreet* in *Revised set* is done by Jesper Myrfors - but it is the wrong illustration used, as this art is from the *Ifh-Biff Efreet* from Arabian Night set done by Jesper Myrfors. The original art on *Serendib Efreet* is also from the *Arabian Night Set* but done by Anson Maddocks



Serendib Efreet (ARN)
Anson Maddocks



Ifh-Bif (ARN)
Jesper Myrfors



Serendib Efreet (Revised)
Jesper Myrfors

- Art on *Word of Command* was decided by a coincidence. The illustration was just a casual texture painting made by Jesper Myrfors. It was in the bag that he carried around and he showed it to Richard Garfield. Jesper Myrfors told him, that he was thinking of using it for a background, and he had drawn two stupid little eyes on it as a joke, and that's when Richard Garfield said he really liked it, and had a card for it.



Word of Command

- *Atog* is an anagram for "Goat". Jesper Myrfors was not aware of this when he painted it, and he feels stupid about that name, now knowing this today. Jesper Myrfors told in an interview that it took many years after this card was published before a player noticed that the *Atog* was on a boat. According to Jesper Myrfors the reason for this might be that when the *Atog* card was released with the *Antiquities* set, people hated the card mechanic, and they also hated the artwork – so probably did not spent a lot of time looking at the artwork. Jesper Myrfors also got a lot of mean comments on this artwork. Nowadays the card and artwork it has become kind of iconic. Jesper Myrfors goal in designing the image was to come up with a destructive creature that did not look outright evil. He wanted something friendly and sort of silly looking. The story in his mind was, that the creature was captured for transport to a rich buyer, when the creature escaped and ate most of the ship, disappearing into the wild to cause trouble in a new land.



Atog

- On the *Witch Hunter* artwork, Jesper has stated that the intention of the scene - from the hunters view in the painting, is of people being burned alive inside their home. That has not been common knowledge and has not been disclosed by Jesper Myrfors before much later. The reason was that Wizards thought it would be too controversial if it came out what the painting was really about and if it was confirmed - this would be regarded by public as a to horrifying for a Magic card.



Witch Hunter

- *The Fallen* artwork has a special background story from his youth, that Jesper Myrfors has shared in an interview:
“A bunch of us decided to take a drive to the peninsula to go to Fort Wordon, a 19th century coastal military fort that looks like a dwarven fortress. Amy Weber was there, as was my girlfriend at the time Kristin Bishop who painted the War Elephant card for Arabian Nights. Most of the fort is charming and peaceful feeling but there are two parts that are just scary. Really scary. One is an underground room that has been burned out so everything is black, blacker than you can imagine, it is very unsettling. But another area is an underground bunker one can only get to by climbing down a rusty ladder. It is the only way in or out, once in the bunker is quite big and has one long main corridor covered in satanic graffiti. All the doors down the hall have been partially smashed and hang broken from their rusty hinges. The entire place has a real “Get Out!” vibe. Anyway, at the base of that ladder I snapped a quick photo of Sandra and forgot about it. Later I was looking for some good lighting reference for hair and I remembered the photo, so I started a painting using it for reference. Before I knew it, I had painted “The Fallen”. It was not the painting I set out to paint, but that is what came out. It freaked me out a bit how easily it was created, almost as if it created itself. Given the bad mojo of the place I took the reference I always wondered if

there was something more to this piece than I want to admit. For the record it looks nothing like Sandra, Sandra is very attractive, the fallen is an abomination. The artwork as always made me feel uneasy, and this is from someone who loves to paint creepy stuff.”

Looking at the *The Fallen* it is indeed one of the most frightening artworks in the game.

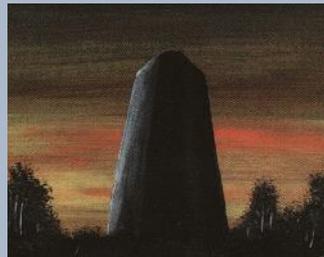


The Fallen

- Jesper Myrfors was the set Director for *The Dark* set. According to Jesper Myrfors the set is about religious intolerance, which is a theme he had returned to often. It was the horror of puritanical America. It was also heavily inspired and influenced by H.P. Lovecraft (not his racism – but his artistic style). In *The Dark* set, Jesper Myrfors wanted a chance to do dark brooding artwork, the type he loves to paint. He had been doing a lot of work for Vampire as well as Magic and his love of light and shadow was really growing as a result. He had also had requests at that time, from other MTG artists, that they wanted to do darker work.
- Lovecraftian influences in the early years of Magic can be seen from several of the MTG artists like Anson Maddocks and Ron Spencer. In Jesper Myrfors work nightmarish cards such as *Phantom Monster*, *Elder Spawn* and *Eater of the Dead* or ominous, surreal things like *Basalt Monolith* and *Season of the witch*



Phantom Monster



Basalt Monolith



Elder Spawn



Season of the Witch



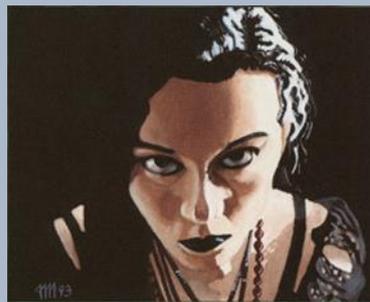
Eater of the Dead

- *Sunken City* is actually directly inspired by H.P Lovecraft and his description of “Y'ha-nthlei” – the Undersea city of the Deep Ones



Sunken City

- According to an interview Jesper Myrfors says that his art has always divided people. One time he was listed on the internet as “The worst artist in MTG”, but almost at the same time the *Elves of Deep Shadow* artwork was voted the best illustration in the game at that time. The model used by Jesper Myrfors to draw the elf is a friend of his named Amber Bird, who is the singer in the punk/rock band Varnish. The resemblance is easy to see.



Elves of Deep Shadow



Amber Bird

- Jesper Myrfors also made the artwork for the only card among the Beta set that was made on a computer. This card was *Circle of Protection: Black*.



Circle of protection: Black

The artist for the card bailed at the last moment, so the original Magic art director, Jesper Myrfors, quickly whipped up an illustration on the computer. In the confusion of this last minute rush, *Circle of Protection: Black* was inadvertently left out of Alpha set.

- Jesper Myrfors has been asked about what his favorite art is from MTG during his time as Art Director for Wizards of the Coast. He has stated he really likes:
 - *Hurloon Minotaur* by Anson Maddocks
 - *Dandân* by Drew Tucker
 - *Chaos Orb* by Mark Tedin
 - *Underground Sea* by Rob Alexander
 - All work by Quinton Hoover.
- In Jesper Myfor's opinion Quinton Hoover was an amazing artist. The very first time he saw Quinton's work, he knew it was a cut above the rest of the artists at that time. Jesper has always loved art nouveau, and in his opinion Qiunton Hoover had the style done perfectly (see under Quinton Hoover for art examples).

Dan Frazier

Honorable card mentions:

5 Moxen (Mox Jet, Mox Ruby, Mox Emerald, Mox Sapphire and Mox Pearl)

Berserk

Sedge Troll

Disrupting Scepter

Jade Statue

Mahamoti Djinn

Apprentice Wizard

Healing Salve

Sacrifice

Forcefield

Aladdin's Ring

Jandor's Ring

Azure Drake

Gloom

Ice Storm

Notes:

- Born September 28, 1945. He received his BFA at the University of Colorado and remained there teaching Art in the public schools for 20 years. Leaving the teaching profession, he started illustration in the Gaming industry in 1990. With the support of his wife Kathy, he managed to acquire enough work to soon become a full-time illustrator. Dan learned Classical Academic Painting with oil in the manner of the Renaissance masters.
- Dan Frazier illustrated the original cover for the Vampire: The Masquerade role-playing game before White Wolf replaced it with a photograph of a rose. His Dungeons & Dragons work includes Book of Artifacts (1993) and Races of the Dragon (2006). He also released the cover artwork of 2014 album Space Police: Defenders of the Crow
- Now, he is a happy artist who works out of the dining room in a new house that "Magic" built. He loves his life and is taking time to explore fine arts.
- In Alpha series *Sedge Troll* incorrectly credited Jeff A. Menges as the artist. The right artist is Dan Frazier.



Sedge Troll

- Dan Frazier is known for using same canvas for several artwork pieces – with the most noticeable being the abstract curly red background. This can clearly be seen in the artwork for *Berserk*, *Disrupting Scepter*, *Healing Salve*, *Sacrifice* and *Apprentice Wizard*



Berserk



Disrupting Scepter



Healing Salve



Sacrifice



Apprentice Wizard

- *Mox Jet* and *Forcefield* even have been painted as two almost connected pieces of art from the same canvas.



Mox Jet



Forcefield (rotated 90 degrees)

- Dan Fraizer's use of an abstract background pattern is a common characteristic in several of his early MTG artworks as well. Examples of this can be seen in the art for *Jandor's Ring*, *Aladdin's Ring*, *Mox Ruby*, *Mox Sapphire*, *Blue Ward* and *Iron Star*.



Jandor's Ring



Aladdin's Ring



Mox Ruby



Mox Sapphire



Blue Ward



Iron Star

Anson Maddocks

Honorable card mentions:

Urza's Mine set
Serendib Efreet
Falling Angel
Maze of Ith
Cyclopean Tomb
Llanowar Elves
Elvish Archers
Animate Dead
Living Wall
Sengir Vampire
Paralyse
Guardian Angel
Hurloon Minotaur
Drop of Honey

Notes:

- Anson Maddocks grew up in Sitka, Alaska, where he taught himself how to draw along with his friend – another famous MTG artist - Mark Tedin
- He has studied Graphic Design at Cornish College of the Arts in Seattle. It was when a fellow student and friend, Andi Ruso (also one of the original 25 MTG artists), introduced him to Jesper Myrfors, who was also attending Cornish. Jesper was the Art Director for Wizards of the Coast.
- Anson Maddocks was one of the more productive artists of the 25-original artist in the Alpha set as he has made the art on 10% of the cards in the set.
- In an interview Anson stated that it is extremely difficult for him to single out a favorite art piece, but he has always been happy with the art he created for *Cyclopean Tomb*, *Demonic Torment*, *Spinal Villain*, *Armor of Faith* and *Combat Medic*.



Armor of Faith



Demonic Torment



Combat Medic



Spinal Villain

- In an interview Anson has said that out of the art he has done on MTG – he is least happy about how Pyrotechnics or Lifetap came out.



Pyrotechnics



Lifetap

- *Hurloon Minotaur* art is the first iconic illustration that Magic used as “face” in their early marketing as it was featured on the front of both on Revised display/starter and gift box as well on 4th edition booster packs. In 1994 a MTG *Hurloon Minotaur* promo metal pin was also released. For a short time in 1994 a lead miniature done with *Hurloon Minotaur* was also marketed.



1994 Lead miniature



1994 Promo metal pin

The Tattoos and symbols covering the creature’s face and horns make this illustration very impactful and memorable.



Hurloon Minotaur

- Anson has strived to create MTG art that also depicts something unexpected, something the viewer might not be likely to come up with on their own.
- For the artwork for *Llanowar elves* Anson Maddocks was determined to produce an image of an elf that was unexpected, something which the viewer would not have likely imagined on their own, To Anson, this was something he felt was his responsibility as a fantasy illustrator and to him this meant no “Tolkien-like” elves. The *Llanowar Elves* were never supposed to be a pretty. Anson Maddocks had a very elaborate back story which he created in his head before doing the illustration. It involved vampires trying to take over the forest and the *Llanowar Elves* being a sort of a half-breed elf-vampire which the forest initially was not sure what to do about. The forest decides to utilize the *Llanowar Elves* against the vampires. Therefore, the art depicts a sort of a pale, gritty, punk rock elf. They have been rejected and do not quite fit in and so they are fierce and have a grudge, which makes them great warriors and defenders. When the art for *Llanowar Elves* first was published, Wizards of the Coast received numerous letters protesting to the look of this artwork, due to not resembling what they believed an Elf should look like.



Llanowar Elves

- Hidden in the art for *Maze of Ith* you can see the outline of a humanoid body that appears to be trapped in the membrane sphere.



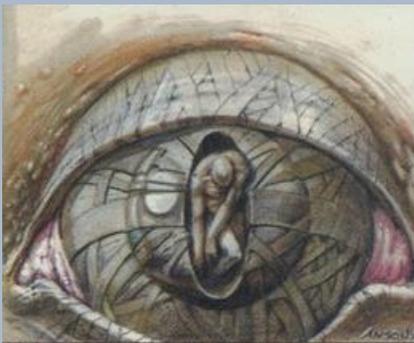
Maze of Ith

- Similar hidden in the art of *Living Wall* - If you look hard you can see the outline of a fetus of an unborn child that appears to be living inside the Living wall.



Living Wall

- The inspiration for *Cyclopean Tomb* is steeped in sexual undertones. A Cyclops is a one-eyed monster, which can be a euphemism for the male phallus. The figure inside of the eye, has no face to speak of, only one eye. And "the Tomb" of which the figure is inside, (the eye itself), is a Yonic representation. Knowing this it is hard to unsee again.



Cyclopean Tomb

- There is an ongoing story that *Guardian Angel* and *Paralyze* are two connected pieces of art – connected via the light beam shooting from the *Guardian Angel's* hands onto the chest of the creature on *Paralyze*. In an interview Anson Maddocks said that this is not intentional, but he has been asked about it several times.



Guardian Angel (top) and Paralyze (Bottom)

- In an interview Anson says that – if only mentioning one factor - Nature has been the biggest influence for his art: observing how things are put together, how systems work together or even oppose each other, the movements of an animal, the geology of a rock formation; all these things combined have had a big impact on his work.
- *Hurloon Minotaur* art was 1 out of 4 art pieces that was used to print on the first originally MTG T-Shirts that was sold by WoTC in 1994 (*Vesuvan Doppelganger*, *Nightmare* and *Armageddon Clock* were the others)



The 1994 original T-shirt

- The *Hurloon Minotaur* T-shirt was not put up for external sale. It was created only for employees at WoTC as the *Hurloon Minotaur* was the unofficial company mascot in the early years of Magic.

Douglas Shuler

Honorable card mentions:

Serra Angel
Demonic Tutor
Prodigal Sorcerer
Icy Manipulator
Force of Nature
Hypnotic Specter
Psionic Blast
Unholy Strength
Contract from below
Northern Paladin
Frozen Shade
Dwarven Warriors
Glasses of Urza
Island of Wak Wak
Candelabra of Tawnos
Falling Star

Notes:

- Throughout the late 80's and early 90's, Douglas Shuler regularly attended gaming conventions and pass out portfolios, trying to get his work in front of art directors. Eventually, he started getting his work into some of the very games he loved playing, such as Dungeons and Dragons, the Star Wars RPG, Ars Magica, GURPS, Champions, and others. Douglas Shuler been an active RPGer since high school and he was doing art for games mostly for the love of the industry.
- In the end it paid off, as WoTC onboarded him for working on the Alpha set for Magic the Gathering based on this portfolio.
- The artists last name was misspelled "*Schuler*" on the cards in the limited Alpha and Beta series
- One of the big issues facing Wizards of the Coast when it came to complaints about Magic was imagery pertaining to devils and unholy rituals. This was a huge problem with the black cards, as those commonly saw themes related to death and bloodshed. Back in 1993-1994 parents and schools across America had let their concerns be known to Wizards of the Coast, which convinced them to tone down the imagery on the black Magic cards. One way in which this happened was the removal of pentagrams from certain cards, as these are often associated with Satanism. The most obvious case of censorship happened to *Unholy Strength*, which originally depicted a man standing in front of a burning pentagram. The original pentagram in the background on the card *Unholy Strength* was removed in 1995 reprint to reduce this tension.



Unholy Strength 1993 Beta version



Unholy Strength 1995 4th edition version

- In an interview Douglas Shuler said that he does not have a definite favorite MTG artwork, or expansion, although he has enjoyed the silly expansions such as *Unglued* quite a bit.
- *Serra Angel* and *Prodigal Sorcerer* art is some of the first iconic illustrations that Magic used in their early marketing for a short time in 1994 lead miniatures done with *Serra Angel* and *Prodigal Sorcerer* was also marketed.

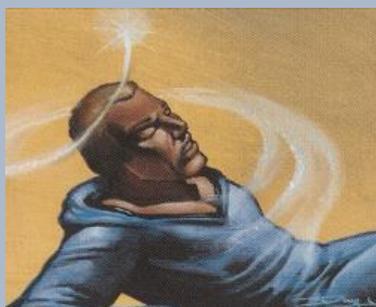


Serra Angel



Prodigal Sorcerer

- Jesper Myrfors encouraged the artists to keep the *backgrounds plain*, the *colors bold*, and the *characters simple* for MTG illustrations. Douglas Shuler made a conscious choice to use high contrast in his art so that the *characters would 'pop'*. Good examples of this are *Serra Angel*, *Prodigal Sorcerer*, *Drain Life*, *Icy Manipulator*, *Unholy Strength*, *Benalish Hero*, *Northern Paladin*, *Psionic Blast* and *Ring of Renewal*. What makes Douglas Shuler's earliest illustrations for Magic so great is how simple and recognizable they are.



Drain Life



Icy Manipulator



Benalish Hero



Northern Paladin



Psionic Blast



Ring of Renewal



Drain Power



Weakness



Glasses of Urza

- The background on *Candelabra of Tawnos* artwork and *Tawnos's Wand* seem to be sharing the same (or similar) background canvas or art. This is likely to emphasize the two artifacts having same owner or origins from the same place.

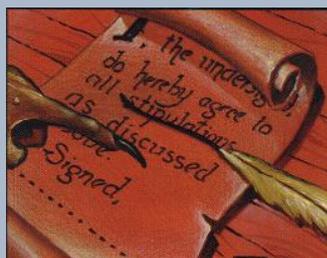


Tawnos's Wand



Candelabra of Tawnos

- Douglas Shuler is also the artist behind *Contract From Below*. This card is the most powerful card in the game but was also among the first cards ever banned for its use of the "ante" mechanic.



Discard your current hand and draw eight new cards, adding the first drawn to your ante. Remove this card from your deck before playing if you are not playing for ante.

Contract from below art and its powerful effect

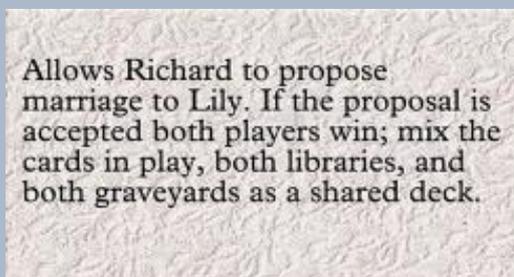
Quinton Hoover

Honorable card mentions:

Vesuvan Doppelganger
Preacher
Wrath of God
Darkpact
Brine hag
Ball Lightning
Drowned
Earthbind
Feedback
Lesser Werewolf
Nettling Imp
Hymn to Tourach
Wyluli Wolf
Regeneration
Meekstone
Pixie Queen

Notes:

- Quinton worked as an illustrator for many other card games including Middle-earth Collectible Card Games, and role-playing books, including Dungeons & Dragons books such as Monster Manual II (2002) and Book of Vile Darkness (2002). He was the co-creator of the comic Morgana X. Quinton was born in Fruita, Colorado in 1964[2] and lived in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. He was married with four grown children. He died on April 20, 2013
- Hoover drew over 70 pieces for the Magic: The Gathering collectible card game. As a favor to Richard Garfield, Quinton Hoover was the artist that made the special made Magic card "*Proposal*" which creator Richard Garfield used to propose to his then-girlfriend (and future wife), Lily Wu. According to Mark Rosewater, it took three games before Richard drew the card and as was able to play it. Lily, of course, said yes.



Proposal card art and description

- Speaking about Richard Garfield's wife, the card *Wyluli Wolf* is an anagram for Richard Garfield's wife – Lily Wu. The artwork is done by Susan Van Camp



Wyluli Wolf

- Illustrations often include incredibly beautiful and stunning backgrounds details utilizing the full illustration space of the card. Examples of this can be seen on *Vesuvan Doppelganger*, *Darkpact and Preacher*, *Nettling Imp*, *Grave Robbers*, *Wrath of God* and *Lesser Werewolf*.



Preacher



Nettling Imp



Wrath of God



Lesser Werewolf



Grave Robbers

- His illustrations are bright, sharp and leaps off the cards. One of the skills Quinton used was making each illustration of a particular color hum in that border. His color schemes blended fearlessly with the frames. *Pixie Queen*, *Darkpact*, and *Vodalian Mage* leave little doubt their color origins



Darkpact



Pixie Queen



Voldalian Mage

- From a gaming perspective some of the lesser used artworks from Quinton Hoover still deserve credit for being amazing artwork. This goes for *Regeneration*, *Headless Horseman* and *Emerald Dragon Fly*



Regeneration



Headless Horseman



Emerald Dragon Fly

- The art for the card feedback was partly inspired by an old movie from 1981. The skull hugging helmet of the Wizard in the artwork was – according to Hoover - inspired by the character Merlin in the “Excalibur” movie



Feedback



Actor Nicol Williamson as Merlin in movie “Excalibur” 1981

- *Vesuvan Doppelganger* art was 1 out of 4 art pieces that was used to print on the first originally MTG T-Shirts that was sold by WoTC in 1994 (*Armageddon Clock*, *Nightmare* and *Hurloon Minotaur* were the others).



Vesuvan Doppelganger



The 1994 original T-shirt

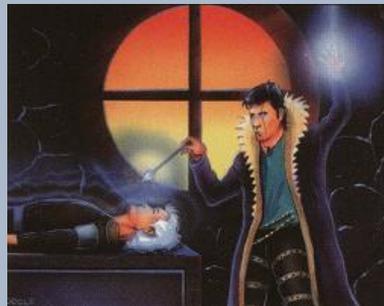
Mark Poole

Honorable card mentions:

Birds of Paradise
Basic Islands
Balance
Counterspell
Ancestral Recall
Library of Alexandria
Urza's Towers set
Amnesia
Ali from Cairo
Bronze Horse
Ashnod's Battle gear
Festival
Howling Mine
Howl from beyond
Death Ward
Crusade

Notes:

- Poole was born on August 31, 1963 in Goldsboro, North Carolina. He graduated from University of South Carolina in 1986 with a BFA in fine arts and design. Mark Poole works mostly in acrylic, oil and digital media.
- He has also worked for companies such as White Wolf Publishing (Vampire TCG), World of Warcraft, Dungeons and dragons, Sony Online Entertainment, Upper Deck and Ziggurat Games. His work was featured at Fantasy Con in July 2014
- In the Alpha series *Death Ward* incorrectly credited Dan Frazier as the artist. The correct artist is Mark Poole.



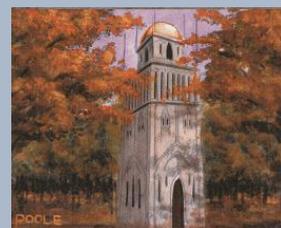
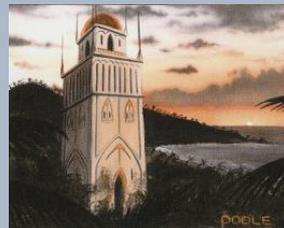
Death Ward

- In an interview Mark has said that his own favorite art pieces for MTG are *Balance* and *The Urza's Tower set*.



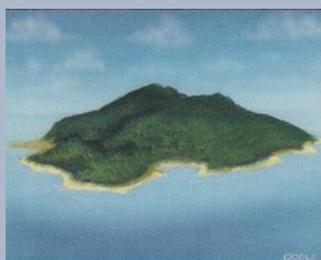
Balance

- The *Urza's Tower* set features the same tower but in different environment and season of the year. (The tower in the Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter). Mark Pole was the only artist with the approach to do a season variant set, using the same structure as in *Mishra's factory set* done by Katja and Phil Foglio. The other two Urza land sets was done by Mark Tedin (*Urza's Power Plant*) and Anson Maddocks (*Urza's Mine*) and both artists selected to do individual art for each of the cards in the set.

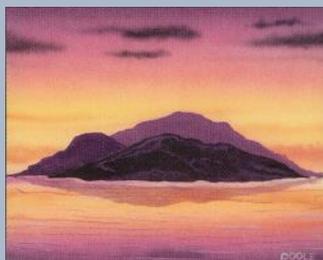


Urza's Tower (Spring) *Urza's Tower (Summer)* *Urza's Tower (Autumn)* *Urza's Tower (Winter)*

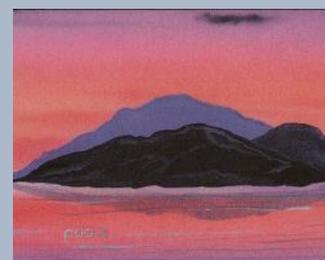
- Mark Poole also said that the card where he has been asked for most for signing with an autograph is the *basic Island*. There are two lands (the version 1 and 2) in the Alpha set – while the third one (version 3) was added in the beta set.



Basic Island v.2 Alpha



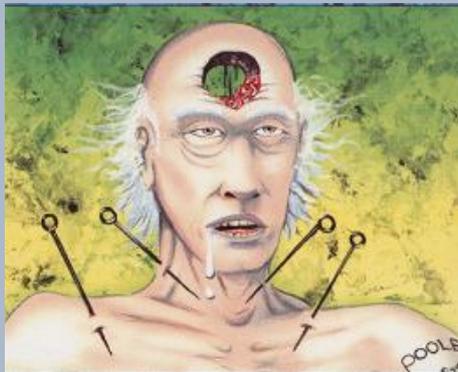
Basic Island v.1 Alpha



Basic Island v.3 Beta

- The *Dark* set, with Jesper Myrfors as both Art Director and Set Director – set a new darker tone with more horror elements in, that had to be reflected also in the artwork. Compared

to the “nicer themes” in the previous work done by Mark Poole, you can see how the also changed Mark Poole’s artwork for *the Dark set* by looking at the very remarkable art for *Amnesia*



Amnesia

- The card *Crusade* was a victim of the same kind of scrutiny that was given to *Unholy Strength* (see text under Douglas Shuler). In *Crusade*'s case, it was the Christian crosses that were the source of the controversy. The artwork of the card needed to be changed, to avoid further issues from the public with the game. In fifth edition Mark Poole’s original art was replaced by a completely new picture without any crosses but with a series of banners instead. In 2020 the card was banned completely by Wizard of the Coast together with 7 other cards due to being perceived as a racist card. (the other ones are *Invoke Prejudice*, *Cleanse*, *Stone-Throwing Devils*, *Pradesh Gypsies*, *Jihad* and *Imprison*.)



Original Crusade



5th edition Crusade

Melissa Benson

Honorable card mentions:

Shivan Dragon
Lord of Atlantis
Nightmare
Halfdane
Fire Elemental
Mesa Pegasus
Ivory Guardians
Hand of Justice
Icatian Moneychanger
Ichneumon Druid
Xira Arien
Holy Armor
Marble Priest
Syphon Soul

Notes:

- Melissa Benson was born in Connecticut and studied at Paier College of art. Her original interest in painting arised from reading and classical music. The stories she read had great descriptions of fantastic creatures and locations, but the accompanying illustrations never matched what was in her head. She wanted very badly to see them, so she started drawing herself.
- Appart from MTG Melissa Benson has worked as artist on Shadow fist, Galactic Empires, Doom town, 7th Seas, Dragon Storm, Middle Earth, and Camelot Legends
- Melissa sent out query letters to companies that I thought my art was a good fit for. Jesper Myrfors, Magic's first art director got back to her and hired her.
- The art on *Shivan Dragon* complements the flavour text very well as the angle of the perspective makes the viewer feel like a small creature (according to Melissa Benson - being grabbed) by the Dragon. According to an interview Melissa Benson has told that the little story she had in her head was someone out camping when they hear a noise. He grabs a lantern to investigate, raises the lantern and looks up to see this huge dragon's claw reaching down for him.



While it's true most Dragons are cruel, the Shivan Dragon seems to take particular glee in the misery of others, often tormenting its victims much like a cat plays with a mouse before delivering the final blow.

Shivan Dragon and flavor text

The light source is coming from below which is why the shadows go in the direction they do, and *the claw color is a brighter yellow* than the yellow on the neck by the head. She has also told that if she had realized the card was going to have a red background, she does not think she would have made it a green dragon. It also came remarkably close to being a Chinese dragon.

- Almost opposite of Quinton Hoover’s approach, Melissa Benson on several cards - like *Shivan Dragon*, *Nightmare*, *Lord of Atlantis*, *Aerathi Berserker* and *Cat warriors* - likes to work with a relatively simple background with only one or few colors, which supports that focus is on the details and beauty of the person or creature(s) in the picture. It also makes the creature and card even more recognizable – which was one of the design ambitions set out by Art Director Jesper Myrfors.



Nightmare



Lord of Atlantis



Aerathi Berserker



Cat Warriors

- In several MTG art pieces Melissa Benson’s signature is embedded in the setting; in others, it is aligned with the colors, sometimes contrasting, sometimes in the corner, others in the middle.



Signature

- For Melissa, the signature is a deliberate part of the painting and not just something added on top. In the book cover industry, the publisher would often drop the artists’ signature because they did not want the public to associate the art with the artist, but rather with the publisher. Melissa Benson’s solution to that was to make a signature that was more trouble

than it was worth to get rid of. She made it see through and put it in different spots on the painting so that they would have to reproduce what was behind the signature. Finally, it was important for her to have a neutral icon signature instead of letters. This was in order not to disclose if it was a female or male handwriting when her art was evaluated. The reason for this was that female fantasy artists in late 80's and early 90's still was struggling to get recognized on par with the more numerous established male fantasy artists.



Icatian Javelineers



Marble Priest

Examples of where Melissa Benson's signature has been imbedded in the picture are *Icatian Javelineers* and *Marble Priest*

- According to Melissa Benson, the art for Xira Arien is inspired by moths with the fuzzy antennas, and noticing how much they resemble a medieval headdress, and the illustration spiraled out from this thought.



Xira Arien



Moth

- Also, according to Melissa Benson *Ivory Guardians* was originally titled *The Skyros Titan*. That is why the creature is blue and not ivory colored and why there is only one creature in the illustration instead of multiple creatures. It is also why he is depicted as being huge – further emphasized by the large waterfalls in the background. However, the name of the card was changed after the artwork was done.



Ivory Guardians

- Quinton Hoover is the fellow artist that Melissa admires the most. They talked about doing an art piece together, but never got around to it. The closest they got to this was when Quinton Hoover, Mark Poole, and Melissa Benson were at a show in Vermont, and they all did a combined art piece together on the spot:



"Mischief in the Mountains" by Hoover, Poole, Benson

Quinton Hoover drew the faerie from the card Earthbind, Melissa herself did the creature from the card Xira Arien and Mark Poole did the creature from the card Jedit Ojanen.

- According to an interview Melissa Benson stated that she was the first to be offered to work on artwork for *Lord of the Pit*, *Pearled Unicorn*, *Northern Paladin* and *Earthbind*, but passed these on, while working on the other cards she made for the Alpha set.
- According to an interview Melissa Benson states that she does not have an overall art piece favorite – but has some favorites within the different sets:
Alpha set: *Holy Armor*; Legends: *Ragnar*; Fallen Empires: *Hand of Justice*; Ice Age: *Fiery Justice*. It is based mostly on the idea she had behind them more than how successfully the art came out.



Holy Armor



Ragnar

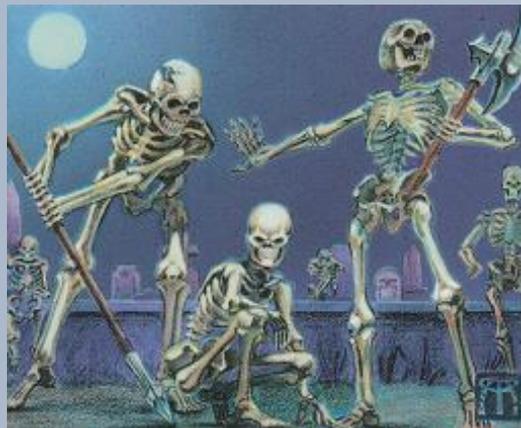


Hand of Justice



Fiery Justice

- Melissa Benson had to do the art for *Kjeldoran Dead* three times because of materials failure, however, she really like the idea for this art piece. According to Melissa the special “wait” gesture the front skeleton does with his hand is meant to pause the group, while the crouching skeleton is looking for tracks from the target they are pursuing.



Kjeldoran Dead

- *Nightmare* art was 1 out 4 art pieces that was used to print on the first originally MTG T-Shirts that was sold by WoTC in 1994 (*Armageddon Clock*, *Vesuvan Doppelganger* and *Hurloon Minotaur*, were the others)



Nightmare



The 1994 original T-shirt

Mark Tedin

Honorable card mentions:

Juzam Djinn
Chaos Orb
Braingeyser
Mana Vault
Jayemdae Tome
Lord of the Pit
Leviathan
Protection Circle Red
City of Brass
Cyclone
Fireball
Life Blood
Deep Spawn
Urza's Power Plant set

Notes:

- Mark Tedin grew up in South East Alaska along with Anson Maddocks
- He went to college at Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington, and following Gonzaga, he went on to receive his master's degree in fine arts at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. He graduated in 1992.
- Mark Tedin did freelance work for Wizards of the Coast and from 1997 - 2000, he also worked on site at Wizards of the Coast as a staff conceptual artist. He is best known for his work on Magic: The Gathering and Dungeons & Dragons. It was his friend Anson Maddocks that connected him with Jesper Myrfors the art director of WoTC and got him onboarded as artist for MTG alpha set.
- Outside of Magic he has worked on Vampire, Legend of the Five Rings, Legend of the Burning Sands, Battletech, Netrunner, and Doomtown. Since his time at Wizards, Tedin has also taught illustration, visual composition, and figure drawing part-time at the Northwest College of Art near Seattle
- His artwork has a very distinct look and appeal to it with evolving action or movement in several of the illustrations. Examples of this are *Juzam Djinn*, *Cyclone*, *Fireball*, *Protection Circle Red*, *Ashnod's Transmogrator*, *Johan* and *Braingeyser*



Circle of Protection Red



Ashnod's Transmogrant



Johan



Fireball



Cyclone



Braingeyser

- The artwork for Braingeyser supposedly also has a special story as both Phil Foglio and Mark Tedin submitted artwork for this card. In the end Mark Tedin's proposal was selected.



Braingeyser artwork proposal submitted by Phil Foglio

- To put emphasis on the scale and size of some of the big creatures Mark Tedin has illustrated – Mark has included a smaller reference point. This can be seen on *Juzam Djinn* (small human) and *Leviathan* (Small Lighthouse)



Leviathan



Juzam Djinn

- Mark does not have a specific favorite MTG art piece, but when naming a few he is quite happy with – these are from later sets: *Nacre Talisman*, *Necropotence*, *Naked Singularity* (all from Ice Age) and *Tideshaper Mystic* and *Ponder* (both from Lorwyn)



Necropotence



Nacre Talisman



Naked Singularity



Tideshaper Mystic



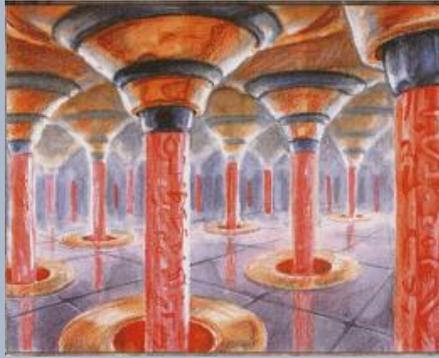
Ponder

- His artwork for the famous *Lord of the Pit* was - according to Mark Tedin - inspired by his early memories of Tolkien and the *Balrog* in *Lord of the Rings*. The Balrog was described as bathed in flames and Mark Tedin wanted the same visual presence for the Lord of the Pit artwork.



Lord of the Pit

- Mark Tedin has explained that the pillars in the *Urza's Power Plant* (version 2) was inspired by a park in Barcelona that features a massive platform supported by multiple columns. I was very impressive to walk beneath the structure and his memory of that carried over into this artwork.



Urza's Power Plant version 2



Park Güell, Barcelona, platform supported by 86 massive Doric columns.

- The name for the card *Jayemdae Tome* with the artwork of Mark Tedin is derived from the pronunciation of the initials of one of Richard Garfield's longtime friend *James Michael Davis* – or “JMD”.



Jayemdae Tome

- Mark Tedin has explained about the artwork for *Lifeblood*: “Did you ever put a flashlight in your mouth when you were a kid, in a dark room? I used to be fascinated by how the light would illuminate my hands and face.” This inspiration can clearly be seen in the illuminated skin of the female humanoid in the artwork.



Lifeblood

Christopher Rush

Honorable card mentions:

Black Lotus
Lightning Bolt
Granite Gargoyle
Ruhk Egg
Su Chi
Desert Nomads
All Hallow's Eve
Flying Men
Rod of Ruin
Dark Heart of the Wood
Mana flare
Metamorphosis
Order of the Ebon Hand
Safe Haven
Tormod's Crypt

Notes:

- In short it can be said that Christopher Rush is the artists that is known for having provided the artwork for *both* the most expensive card and the rarest card in Magic the Gathering's history – the *Black Lotus* and the *1996 World Champion* cards.
- Christopher Rush (April 6, 1965 – February 10, 2016) illustrated over 100 cards for the series. Most of his work for Wizards of the Coast was done on the earliest sets, where he also together with Jesper Myrfors created the design of the Magic the gathering logo and the design of the symbols representing the 5 colors of mana.



Black Lotus



*Magic official 1993 logo
and the five mana symbols*

- While working on art for Wizards of the Coast, Rush also worked as a Game Play Counselor at Nintendo of America in Redmond, Washington. He later continued to do freelance work, illustrating cards for various games and concept art for computer games and television.
- Christopher Rush met Jesper Myrfors through a mutual friend at the premier of Schwarzenegger's movie Conan the Barbarian in 1982 and became best friends hereafter long before they were colleagues at WoTC.
- Together with Jesper Myrfors, one of the most important and influential artists for the creative art design of magic the Gathering. Rush died on February 10, 2016, one day after fellow Magic the Gathering artist, Wayne England. Rush was 50 years old.
- His artistic work is typically easy to pick out as it bears a strong resemblance to comic book artwork featuring recognizable lines and simple backgrounds. He has worked on many extremely notable cards and has the distinction of working on three of the most expensive cards
- Christopher Rush is also the artist for the unique and rarest magic card in the world. This is the magic card 1996 *World Champion* card. This card was given out to the winner of Worlds in 1996, and all other copies of it, plus the printing plates, were ceremonially destroyed. The winner of that tournament was Australia's Tom Chanpheng, who, still has the card at his home in a screw down plastic case. Chanpheng won the title playing a White Weenie deck.



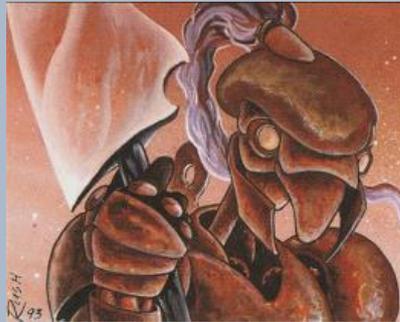
1996 World champion

- In addition to the most expensive and rarest card in magic, Christopher Rush is likely also the artist behind the most popular Magic card in the history. *Lightning Bolt* won a gigantic public poll, where the question was to find the most popular card in Magic – and *Lightning Bolt* came out as the number 1 among all the players and fans.



Lightning Bolt

- *Yotian Soldier* was actually originally called *Toy Soldier*. That is actually still reflected in the artwork. If you look for it you can see the wind-up crank at the back of the creature like a retro toy soldier. You can also wonder if the first 3 letters in *Yotian* are *Toy* spelled backwards. According to Christopher Rush he wanted to make a more streamlined creature version than his version of *Brass Man* and also made the creature more insect like.



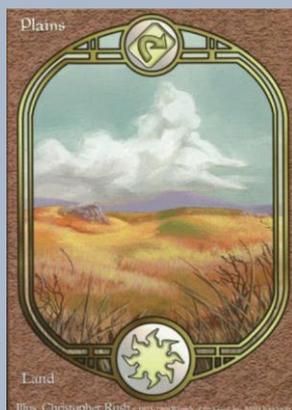
Yotian Soldier

- Speaking of *Brass Man*, the inspiration for this artwork was late night horror movies that Christopher Rush viewed in his youth and his desire to do a fantasy version for MTG of *Frankenstein's Monster*. Later a card named *Frankenstein's Monster* was actually released as part of the *Dark* set with artwork by Anson Maddocks.



Brass Man

- It was also Christopher Rush that later came up with the idea of creating *full art lands* – picture below is showing the first full art plain from 2016 (*Unglued* set) done by Christopher Rush.



Full art Plain

- As a side note it can be mentioned that while the Pokémon TCG was still run by Wizards, Rush did one illustration for *Promo Mewtwo #12*, which was released in the April 2000 issue of Nintendo Power.



Promo Mewtwo #12

Incidentally, he was the first artist from outside Japan to have illustrated a Pokémon card, and remains one of the very few.

Amy Weber

Honorable card mentions:

Time Walk
Ornithopter
Time Elemental
Argothian Treefolk
Argothian Pixies
Argivian Archaeologist
Armageddon Clock
Mishra's war machine
Concordant Crossroads
Disenchant
Dragon Whelp
Fork
Copy Artifact
Shatter
Scryb Sprites
Steel Artifact
Urza's Avenger

Notes:

- Amy earned her B.F.A. in Illustration from Cornish College of the Arts in Seattle, and an M.F.A. in Illustration from Syracuse University in New York. It was while earning her degree that Amy had the chance to work with fellow students who would themselves become part of the original twenty-five. She went to college (at Cornish) with Jesper Myrfors and Sandra Everingham. Jesper asked her to work for WoTC that he was art directing for. She was still in college and in the middle of finals when she made the art for the Alpha set
- In addition to her work with Wizards of the Coast, Amy also worked as art director for The Duelist magazine from 1994-1995
- Amy Weber is an artist who loves drawing objects, instruments, or other gear. This has resulted in that Amy Weber has illustrated a lot of artifact cards. Her inspirational sources include classical masters such as Da Vinci and Hieronymus Bosch. Amy Weber's objects often has references to Leonardo Da Vinci and the theme fits well for illustrating artifact cards.
- Good examples of the incredibly detailed instruments and objects can be seen on the *Urza's Avenger*, *Stone Calendar*, *Time Elemental*, *Ornithopter*, *Phyrexian Gremlins*, *Knowledge Vault* and *Armageddon Clock* artwork.



Time Elemental



Phyrexian Gremlins

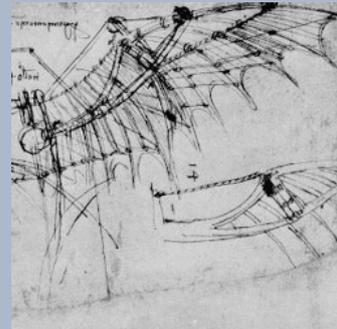


Knowledge Vault

- The art for *Ornithopter* has been inspired by Leonardo Da Vinci's drawings for his flying machine.

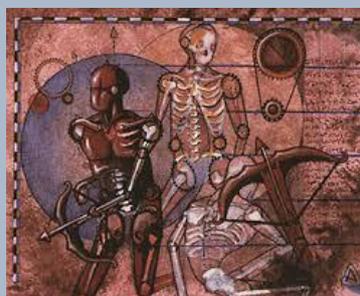


Ornithopter

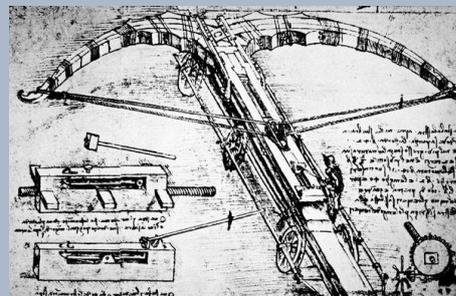


Da Vinci flying machine sketch.

- The art for *Urza's Avenger* includes a crossbow which is a reference to Leonardo Da Vinci's crossbow drawings.



Urza's Avenger



Da Vinci crossbow sketch.

- Another recurring element in Amy Weber's MTG artwork, is a sense of scale that made many of her creations impossibly large. *Stone Calendar* is an example of this. Even within her deconstructed artifacts, she uses human figures as constructs, golems that formed the moving parts of a much larger machine. *Icy Manipulator* (from Ice Age) is an example of this.



Stone calendar



Mishra's War Machine



Icy Manipulator

- In the artwork for *Divine Intervention* the reference to and inspiration from the painter Hieronymus Bosch can clearly be seen



Divine Intervention



Ascent of the blessed by H. Bosch

- *Armageddon Clock* art was 1 out of 4 art pieces that was used to print on the first originally MTG T-Shirts that was sold by WoTC in 1994 (*Vesuvan Doppelganger*, *Nightmare* and *Hurloon Minotaur* were the others)



Armageddon Clock



The 1994 original T-shirt

Ron Spencer

Honorable card mentions:

Terror
Marsh Viper
Necrite
Bog Imp
Bog rats
Goblin Digging team
Goblin Grenade
Order of the Ebon Hand

Notes:

- Ron Spencer grew up on a farm in Aurora, Nebraska and still lives in Aurora, Nebraska.
- Comic books in general started his early fascination with art. The works of Wrightson (Swamp Thing), Corben (Heavy Metal and Hellboy), Frazetta (Conan), and H.R Giger (Alien), to name a few, which serve as continuous inspiration.
- Spencer is primarily self-taught though he did attend a two-year college in Idaho. He uses various elements of mixed media, including colored pencils, ballpoint pens, watercolors, and acrylic paint.
- He has also created artwork for several books of the World of Darkness series from White Wolf, Inc, as well as the Talislanta line of role-playing games.
- His trademark on some of his earlier MTG cards is a hidden name somewhere in the artwork.
- In the art for *Goblin Grenade*, you can see the name “Mike” is hidden in the artwork. The name is hidden on the spear – spelled out by the spikes on the spear.



Goblin Grenade

- In the art for the *Order of the Ebon Hand* you can see the name “Josh“ is hidden in the artwork. The name is spelled out by the “J” blood on the hatchet followed by an “O”, “S” and “H” spelled by the flames.



Order of the Ebon Hand

- According to Ron Spencer, Josh and Mike were employees and players at the local hobby store and some of Ron’s friends. Their names were the first to appear in Ron’s card art.
- According to Ron Spencer, the name, “Andy” is hidden in one of the later Urza’s Legacy pieces and this was the last name Ron has hidden on a MTG card
- The art done by Ron Spencer is together with Anson Maddocks some of most iconic for depicting the dark and evil magic in the game. The artwork on *Terror* is a great example of depicting some element of horror in the game. The art for this card was submitted with the dimensions reversed. Jesper Myrfors, the art director for Alpha, just turned the art sideways. He thought it looked cool and kept it that way. Originally the humanoid creature should have rested on the ground.



Terror

- *Thrull Retainer* art and *Thallid* art is inspired by the Swiss artist H.R Giger, who is the Art Director for the distinctive art design in the *Alien* movies. The two cards are also good examples of Ron Spencer’s tendency to go skinless on several of his creatures



Thrull Retainer



Thallid

- In an interview Ron Spencer says that *Terror* is his own personal favorite art, as the illustration was the first card that he did for MTG and the only card he did for WoTC in Alpha/Beta sets. It perfectly depicts the emotion of being terrified.
- Ron Spencer is fond of using the eyes of the creatures to connect directly to the viewer. Examples of this can be seen on *Terror*, *Necrite*, *Marsh Viper*, *Bog rats* and *Armor Thrull*.



Necrite



Bog Rats



Armor Thrull



Marsh Viper



Goblin Digging Team



Dire wolves

- Most of Ron Spencer's artwork is after the 1993-94 sets and all the way up to 2010
- Ron Spencer's sister is Terese Nielsen, who is another famous MTG artist that have illustrated numerous cards after the 1993-94 area.

Jeff A. Menges

Honorable card mentions:

Bazar of Baghdad
Black Knight
Swords to plowshares
Divine Offering
Gizzly Bears
Moat
Bog Wraith
Rock Hydra
Zombie Master
War Mammoth
Water Elemental
Sea Serpent

Notes:

- Like several of the other original artist Jeff Menges earliest published works were in the role-playing industry. He saw it as a stepping-stone to getting book cover work. When Wizards was first publishing, he was doing work for role-playing games. When Magic came along, the first people they asked about doing cards, were artists already working with role-playing products. Jeff was one of them.
- Jeff Menges is a master at painting landscapes, especially winter landscapes. This can also be seen in several of the art pieces made for MTG cards, where wilderness, plains and especially winter themed art is widely represented. However, this can mainly be seen in the art from later sets like *Ice Age* and *Alliances*



Kjeldoran Outpost



Thawing Glaciers

- In a conversation during an old school Magic tournament in Hirtshals, Denmark – Jeff said that some of his art is from 1992 – one year before the original Alpha set was released. This is due to WoTC wanted him to do a couple of art pieces in advance of publishing the game.

These pieces were used for presentation to investors as part of promoting the idea of MTG. Examples of this are War Mammoth, Bog Wraith, Grizzly Bear and Consecrate Land, where – if you look closely - you can see the year “1992” written in the art.



War Mammoth



Bog Wraith



Grizzly Bears



Consecrate Land



- When he was in Hirthals, Denmark Jeff also told that the original painting for Grizzly bear unfortunately has gone missing. It was giving as a gift to a friend of his several years ago and after his friends death, they could not find it in his residence when it was emptied.
- In an interview Jeff has stated that the card art, that he feels most happy about and connected to is probably the art on *Citanul Druid* from *Antiquities*. This painting has always struck him as a solid success in getting what he had "in my head" down onto board. It has a good sense of lighting, time of day, shadows, and textures all come through in this little painting. The art still hangs in his house.



Citanul Druid

- From the original Alpha/Beta set Jeff's favorite art piece is *Sea Serpent*



Sea Serpent (right: Original black-white draft drawing)

- In another interview Jeff says that *Swords to Plowshares* is one he gets asked about a lot. The story behind the art versus the title of the card is this: When he was given the title (over the phone) he asked what this card was supposed to be about?' Jesper Myrfors told him it was about turning a fighter into a peaceful, non-threatening creature.



Swords to Plowshares

So based on this Jeff imagined an old warrior who was now working the fields with his military past (the castle-fortress) behind him.

Fay Jones

Honorable card mentions:

Stasis

Notes:

- *Stasis* is the only MTG card illustrated by Fay Jones.
- She is a famous established artist based in Seattle, Washington. Many of her works are exhibited in public places in the Pacific Northwest, including a mural in the Westlake Station of the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel and a painting in Seattle's opera house, McCaw Hall. The Alpha set was painted mostly by local art school students.
- So how come an established artist was convinced to illustrate a MTG card and only one? The answer is that she did it as a favor for her nephew - Richard Garfield. Fay Jones is Richard's aunt, and she only did this illustration to support her nephew.



Stasis

APPENDIX

Overview of number of cards made by each artist in the Alpha/Beta Core sets plus expansions (ARN = Arabian Nights, LEG = Legends, ANTQ = Antiquities and DARK = The Dark and FALLEN = Fallen Empires).

Original 25 artists	Artist	ALPHA / BETA	Artist	ARN	Artist	LEG	Artist	ANTQ	Artist	DARK	Artist	FALLEN	Total Cards
1	Anson Maddocks	30	Anson Maddocks	5	Anson Maddocks	12	Anson Maddocks	6	Anson Maddocks	11	Anson Maddocks	4	68
2	Dan Frazier	37	Dan Frazier	5	Dan Frazier	13	Dan Frazier	4	Dan Frazier	2	Dan Frazier	2	63
3	Mark Poole	23	Mark Poole	5	Mark Poole	14	Mark Poole	6	Mark Poole	7	Mark Poole	8	63
4	Douglas Shuler	27	Douglas Shuler	5	Douglas Shuler	9	Douglas Shuler	5	Douglas Shuler	5	Douglas Shuler	4	55
5	Jesper Myrfors*	24	Jesper Myrfors	5	Jesper Myrfors	9	Jesper Myrfors	4	Jesper Myrfors	10			52
6	Mark Tedin	16	Mark Tedin	5	Mark Tedin	11	Mark Tedin	5	Mark Tedin	8	Mark Tedin	4	49
7	Christopher Rush	10	Christopher Rush	7	Christopher Rush	13	Christopher Rush	7	Christopher Rush	10	Christopher Rush		47
8	Amy Weber	16	Amy Weber	2	Amy Weber	7	Amy Weber	10	Amy Weber	1	Amy Weber	3	39
9	Jeff A. Menges	15	Jeff A. Menges	1	Jeff A. Menges	8	Jeff A. Menges	4	Jeff A. Menges	4	Jeff A. Menges	2	34
10	Daniel Gelon	9			Daniel Gelon	11	Daniel Gelon	1	Daniel Gelon	4	Daniel Gelon	6	31
11	Quinton Hoover	8			Quinton Hoover	10			Quinton Hoover	10	Quinton Hoover	2	30
12	Sandra Everingham	12	Sandra Everingham	1	Sandra Everingham	9	Sandra Everingham	3	Sandra Everingham	3	Sandra Everingham	2	30
13	Melissa A. Benson	7			Melissa A. Benson	14					Melissa A. Benson	6	27
14	Richard Thomas	13			Richard Thomas	12	Richard Thomas	2					27
15	Tom Wänerstrand	3	Tom Wänerstrand	1	Tom Wänerstrand	5	Tom Wänerstrand	3	Tom Wänerstrand	9	Tom Wänerstrand	3	24
16	Brian Snöddy*	3	Brian Snöddy	5	Brian Snöddy	15							23
			Kaja Foglio	5	Kaja Foglio	10	Kaja Foglio	4			Kaja Foglio	4	23
17	Dameon Willich	15	Dameon Willich	5									20
18	Drew Tucker	3	Drew Tucker	5					Drew Tucker	9	Drew Tucker	3	20
			Susan Van Camp	5	Susan Van Camp	10					Susan Van Camp	5	20
19	Rob Alexander	7	Rob Alexander	2	Rob Alexander	4			Rob Alexander	2	Rob Alexander	4	19
					Pete Venters	5	Pete Venters	6	Pete Venters	3	Pete Venters	4	18
20	Julie Baroh	4	Julie Baroh	3	Julie Baroh	8	Julie Baroh	1					17
21	Ron Spencer	1							Ron Spencer	10	Ron Spencer	5	16
					Edward P. Beard, Jr.	10					Edward P. Beard, Jr.	4	14
					Richard K. Ferguson	10					Richard K. Ferguson	4	14
					Bryon Wackwitz	10					Bryon Wackwitz	3	13
22	Andi Rusu	2			Andi Rusu	9							11
					Justin Hampton	8	Justin Hampton	3					11
					NéNé Thomas	9	NéNé Thomas	1	NéNé Thomas	1			11
					Phil Foglio	8					Phil Foglio	2	10
					Harold McNeill	9							9
							Margaret Organ-Kean	3			Margaret Organ-Kean	4	7
									Dennis Detwiller	7			7
					Heather Hudson	3					Heather Hudson	4	7
					Scott Kirschner	4					Scott Kirschner	2	6
											Pat Morrissey	5	5
			Ken Meyer, Jr.	5									5
					Anthony S. Waters	3					Anthony S. Waters	2	5
23	Kev Brockschmidt	4											4
					Nicola Leonard	4							4
							Kerstin Kaman	3					3
					Liz Danforth	3							3
24	Cornelius Brudi	2											2
25	Fay Jones	1											1
							Kaja Foglio & Phil Foglio	1					1
			Kristen Bishop	1									1
					Mike Kimble	1							1
Total cards		<u>292</u>	<u>78</u>		<u>310</u>		<u>85</u>		<u>119</u>		<u>102</u>		<u>884</u>

* There are 2 less cards in Alpha set as Protection Circle Black by Jesper Myrfors and Volcanic Island by Brian Snoddy was left out by printing mistake.

You can see the top 12 of the artists that produced most artwork across all sets. The Top 12 artists have all been part of the original 25 artists and together they produced 2/3 of all artwork for all cards across the early sets. In the Alpha and Beta set – Fay Jones (Richard Garfield's Aunt) and Rob Spencer only did one card each. As it can be seen from the above overview some

artists were only onboarded for a single set. Artists like Kaja Foglio and Susan Van Champ did not join before the Arabian Nights Set. The only Card Kaja and Phil Foglio did together was Mishra's factory from the Antiquities set.

It is amazing to see how productive and busy some of the artists must have been – being involved in every set and just with just 15 months between Alpha set (released August 1993) and Fallen Empires set (released November 1994).

Impressive that Jesper Myrfors managed to be part of the Leadership in his position as Art Director, while at the same time producing more than 50 artwork pieces himself.