The Essence of Fantasy Art
Find your creative power and become a kick-ass fantasy artist

To all of you who create a beautiful world.

Intro (book cover)
This book introduces you to fun exercises that can help you do kick ass fantasy art and make a living of it. But most of all it invites you to the essence of fantasy art, to worlds of magic and beauty and to places you don’t yet know exist. They can be witnessed through lucid dreams, induced out-of-body experiences, shamanic journeys, seeing through our illusions, and through several other ways. For some of you it can be a life-changer and the start of a grand journey into the unknown.

A hidden theme
There is an underlying theme that runs through this book. It is hidden for many and obvious for a few. Perhaps you’ll get it the first time you read it, or you want to read the book several times before you clearly see it. When you see it you’ll know the essence of fantasy art and can begin to unlearn everything you thought you knew in life.

You can do it!
A book cover shows a beautiful fantasy heroine in a surreal environment. People gather around it like bees around a honey pot and the buzzing begins:

– Beautiful!
– I wish I could do that.
– Could you do something like that, Stefan?
– Yes probably, I might answer. But many could do that, they just don’t know it yet.

Few believe me, and even fewer try. The establishment works hard at keeping you believing that you can’t: Some authorities write step-by-step tutorials on how to do fantasy art and give the impression that this is a science, art schools present long and expensive teaching programs, experienced artists say that it takes many years to get good, and you continue to believe that you don’t have the natural talent. That you can’t.

I want you to see through all that nonsense. To see the simplicity in creating beautiful fantasy art. To see that you can. You just need a clear understanding of how to get really good. The technical details and small difficulties will sort out by themselves as you… just do it.

Although, there is a secret side to it, a deeper force that gives you the power and lust to create. That force is what really makes you a kick-ass fantasy artist. This book presents glimpses of that magic which can change your life forever.
If you want some tutorials and instructions, then visit a library, YouTube or use Google. This book brings you beyond technical instructions, into worlds you’ve never visited, into ancient secrets and places in yourself you didn’t know existed. It brings you to real magic and to the essence of fantasy art.

**My first three “real” paintings**
I went from total beginner to doing these paintings after three months.

I honestly believe that also you can learn this fast. Come along and I’ll show you how.

1. **From beginner to kick-ass in three months**

I sucked at art in school. My teacher considered me to be below average. Okay, I knew the very basics, like how to draw trees, plants, and the human body – proportions and all that – but drawing never was my strong suit, and using colors seemed so advanced I barely tried it.

Learning the very basics
In my early twenties I sometimes drew nude girls in titillating positions. One day I thought “What if I could color them? Then they would look more real!” My love for girls and female beauty made me book a basic ten-hours arts course to learn the difference between acrylics and oil colors, what effect dark versus light colors have on a painting, and so on. I also spent a week getting the hang of Photoshop.

Then I started to experiment with pencils, brushes, and Photoshop and ended up doing this:

- A crappy pencil drawing of an ocean wave.
- A water color painting of a nude nun with a devilish smile and strange body proportions.
- An ice man.
A reindeer that looks like it is tilted to the left.

An acrylics painting of a woman showing her breasts and looking up in the sky.

Another acrylics painting of another, ahem, nude woman (that my girlfriend approved of).

A samurai woman in red.

A portrait of DMX (the rapper).

A couple of… abstract paintings.

Check out some of it [here](#).

**Basic Exercise**
(For the total beginner only)

**Learn the very basics**

If you want to do traditional art, then simply go to the shop, buy colors and brushes and start having fun.

Want to go digital? Learn the basics of the software programs you want to use.

Have **FUN** and don't worry if it looks like crap in the beginning.

**The way I did the Basic Exercise**
I went to the local art store and bought some cheap brushes, acrylics, and pastels, then went home and started to experiment. It felt really weird to hold a brush. I played around with the colors and learned how they work together. What happens if I put dark… here and white… there.

Hair. How the heck do I make great hair?! A difficult one. After many hours and days I learned that I could use a big and very crude brush, so that each bristle of the brush created a hair in the painting. Wow, all of a sudden it took just twenty minutes (instead of hours) to make great hair! What about the body? I searched for pictures of girls on-line and printed the ones I loved most. Then I tried to copy them from the photo to the artwork, and filled in with some colors.

I made a few paintings like that. They were something my high-school teacher would just nod at. But I learnt my tools, and that is one key to becoming a good artist.

A few weeks had now passed since I bought my first brushes, and a grand inner creative power was about to emerge, without me being aware of it. Yet.

**What I mean by fantasy art**
I am not much for defining art, but to avoid confusion, when I write “fantasy art” I also mean related genres like fantastic art, folklore, sci-fi, dream imagery, magic realism, and so on.

**What I mean by kick-ass**
If your art is as “good” as the top 1 percent in your favorite field, then you are kick-ass.
Finding the top 1 percent

My passion for magic and beauty – especially female beauty – made me roam libraries and the internet, searching for books written by authors like Carlos Castaneda and Olga Kharitidi, and for more regular photo books, art books, on-line fantasy art, and glossy magazines that oozed with beauty.

I was back in Sweden after an internship at the UN in New York, got my master’s degree in economics and was heading for an international career. Then what did I do? I threw it away. Or I lost it. It really wasn’t a choice, it just seemed to be. “It” made things go that way. “It” helped me discover new ways of existence, of shamanism, non-linearity, and of our lies about time, space, and reality.

Light began to grow within. Not because I didn’t like being an economist, but because I was discovering magic. I was rather alone at that time. Not lonely, but alone. And I started to experience magic and beauty everywhere: the perfect rhythm of the wind in the trees, the tranquilizing sound of traffic in the far distance, shadows almost coming alive, and when you’re in that inner silence everything gets very beautiful, everything is presence, and the world is the way it should always be. The way it was before we had a language, before thought, before linearity. The way it was for our ancestors.

I sent text messages to friends and described what I was seeing, but they doubted I was serious. They didn’t see what I saw.

I became an enthusiastic member of on-line fantasy art communities, like elfwood.com and epilogue.net, visited churches and sacred places, went into the forest on vision quests and once spent a night up in a tree, fell asleep and was woken up by a reindeer sniffing at me. Some winter evenings I even dressed up as a girl and went out on the street.

Doing all these crazy things was part of a larger and more abstract plot, and I will reveal it later in this book.

Found it!
One day I somehow waltzed into an antique shop filled with old furniture and big books. I opened one of them: “Illuminatus – The Art of Robert Venosa”. And I was caught. The brilliance of his technique and his feel for reality-dream was beyond words.

I studied Venosa’s art for many hours, then bought the cheapest cartoon paper I could find and started dabbling with colors, focusing on his work Dos Angeles. I picked that one, because there were no difficult figures in it. I had no idea what I was doing, just playing around with his book in my left hand and my brush in my right hand. After a while I got really absorbed, went more into detail and learned how he created highlights with white and depth with dark colors.

The result was one of my very first paintings. It is called In the Moment.
Exercise
Find your top 1 percent

Go into an art frenzy! Visit libraries and art bookshops, roam the internet and absorb all art you love the most. Dig into it for some days or weeks until you find the artworks that (to you) are the most kick-ass in the world.

Fantasy art has many related genres, with various styles and fields within every genre, and they change all the time. Soon you will find your favorite little micro-niches and dig deeper into them, ultimately becoming an art expert within your favorite fantasy art field.

You’ll get to know the top 1 percent in your favorite field and have some idea of how they created their artworks.

“The surest way to fulfill your dreams? Hang around your heroes.” Zan Perrion

When you find yourself staring at the works of your heroes, remembering that moment for the rest of your life, then you will know you have found your top 1 percent.

Give it all you have – or cut off your finger

Having found my top 1 percent I went to a nearby art shop, bought some big Masonite boards and went home to experiment with colors. I looked at Venosa’s work, looked at my own, hesitantly added
some color here, some color there, chuckled and mumbled “What am I DOING”, and continued. I laid down on my bed, still gazing at my work, looked, focused and looked. How do I continue? How!?


It was like being a little obsessed. Being a tool in the hands of the gods. Being a small part of something larger. And finally, many hours later, the painting came together in this piece.

It was now about three months since I first touched a brush.

This shows that making great fantasy art

Is NOT about experience.
Is NOT about knowing the tools to perfection.
Is NOT about taking art classes.
Is NOT about being born with talent (I will discuss that later on).

Sure, these things help, but mainly

It is about YOU finding your creative power.
It is about YOU giving it all you have.

Fantasy and Magic
Let’s begin to open the door to your creative power:

When switching off from the everyday buzz something opens up in us. I figure that sums up most spiritual teachings: Get off the main road and see that there is so much more to you and to the world.

It’s the same with Harry Potter (yes, I mean it). Sure, there is the commercial entertainment, invented drama, and excitement, but it also expresses our ancient link to the magic creature in us. In Harry Potter it is very distant, but it is there.

It’s no different with fantasy art (and related genres). I am not just talking about some wand-swinging Harry Potter now, but also about the essence of perception and that which goes beyond description.

“Scrape on the surface of anyone and you’ll find a magical being.”

Now close your Harry Potter book, fasten your seatbelt and get ready to face real magic and creative power:

Lucid dreaming
What if you are dreaming right now, in a sense?

Perhaps you know it is possible to dream and be aware of it, just like you are aware right now. Some call it lucid dreaming and many people do it.

You may become weightless and enter new worlds, or pass through your bedroom window with your dreaming body and roam the city. “It” decides what your dreaming body will do and what will happen in your dream and what fantasy art you will do. You may wake up, or so you think, and start your day, until you perhaps see that you glide through the chair. – Oops, still dreaming!

Realizing that you are still lucid you go back to bed, imagining that your more solid physical body should be out there somewhere. And perhaps you wake up in this world where you can read this book, and the lucid dream turns into some distant memory, like something that happened a year ago, or yesterday.

But that which happened yesterday, how much more real is that than lucid dreaming? Try to put your finger on “yesterday” and see for yourself. Ah, let’s make an exercise of it:

Magic exercise
Put your finger on ‘yesterday’
I bet your teachers never gave you that exercise for homework? It’s quite obvious why, since their task is to construct your rational mind, not transcend it. It is valuable to know rationality at its most intricate, because when we do, we’ll begin to see its lies and illusions and can start to transcend it, to unlearn, to understand that we never understood anything.

We begin to see magic everywhere, and can express it through creativity and fantasy art.

Now let us examine other things that seem so real and obvious: Beauty. Fame. Artistry. See? These are pretty much abstract mental concepts we confuse for reality.

It usually takes years of hard work to really see these lies that society has put on us, to clearly see the non-existence of time, space, of you, and of many other things we take for granted. So we must live in these lies as if they were the only truth, because that is the normal thing to do. No one wants to be the weirdo, right?

So we return from the lucid dream and begin to think. And our thoughts glue us to this world, give us a language which tells us that “this is real” and “that is impossible” and “you are there while I am here” and “of course I am right”. And we go to our schools and our jobs and forget about “it”.

But something in us doesn’t forget. That something feels like everything isn’t all right. It is like a vague bitter taste in your mouth. You talk, listen and laugh during the day, but still that bitter taste is there. You forget about it for a while, and then you sense it again.

A faint voice within. “It” cannot lie because it has no language. It cannot think yet it knows. And it makes you read Harry Potter, or do fantasy art or listen to the trees, perhaps making you absentminded and in love, or confused without knowing why.

Hah! You thought this would just be some instruction book on fantasy art? Sure, it is. But this book also touches on the very essence of fantasy art, whispering about ancient secrets in your ear, about goldmines for you to discover, forces that can make you burn with desire for beauty, and ignite a lust to create beautiful art. Again, that force is what really makes you a kick-ass artist.

Although this book will give you a few unusual exercises that can take you straight to the top – if you do them very well – it is the essence of fantasy art, that wordless power, which gives you the soul of a great fantasy artist. Any successful fantasy artist knows that the soul, the creative power, is far more important than technical knowledge for doing great fantasy art. It is the creative power which motivates you to learn the technique.

The lucid dream slips away and you lay there in bed, in the twilight between dream and awake, in true peace. No thoughts. No body (you don’t feel it). Being pure existence.

Now you know true beauty.

Exercise

See the beauty around you

As you move through everyday life, see what things really look like. Look at the way shadow and light play with each other, at the rich texture of things, at people’s hands and faces, at everything.
This exercise will give you a better intuition when creating art.

**Fantasy art and witchcraft**

You wake up and perhaps see that some witches actually could sneak through keyholes and fly on a broom like Harry Potter and the gang. Magic existed and they did those things, *but* they did them from another point of awareness.

There is one awareness for flying on brooms and another for buying a brush for your next artwork.

You get out of bed and… what is this?! A deep feeling of… something ineffable getting a hold of you. Maybe you are off school, and go on an adventure into the forest. No thoughts, just being. The shadows are so alive. It really feels like the trees are whispering, telling you about life. And oh, the wind that makes the dead leaves rustle and sing. You are everywhere! Bubbles of wellbeing running through your body. Sunrays reflecting in the grass. Oh yes.

And what do you find? Over there. To the left. Down. Look! It is hidden. Hidden but always there. Treasures in the forest, glimmering with gold.

Some fantasy artists have had that glimpse of the end of the rainbow. After that they started to create great art.

She wielded her magic wand and said, “Sure I love soul, heart, and magic. But I also want to get famous. So SHIZAAM! Show me some exercises and turn me into a star!”

**Your inner goldmine**

“Everyone has his own specific vocation or mission in life; everyone must carry out a concrete assignment that demands fulfillment. Therein he cannot be replaced, nor can his life be repeated, thus, everyone’s task is unique as his specific opportunity.”  Victor Frankl

Working for something larger than yourself, something beyond your personal needs, will make your acts and creative power stronger.

Take this book, for example: I started writing it because I know that being an author in one of my favorite fields is a great way to profile myself and get opportunities. That is the ego part. But to have
the energy to finish an entire book I must write about things that truly excite me, and the exciting things are the hidden themes in my life. My inner goldmine. Things that feel like I was born to do them.

What were you born to do?

When you’re expressing your inner goldmine life gets easier. You are at the right place in the universe and people can feel it. When you have found it you might forget about TV and movies and about consuming things that just make you tired. Now you can produce, create, and feel more alive.

Exercise
Find your inner goldmine

Draw a timeline of your life and point out highs and lows.
Look for the themes in your life and how they connect to your high points.
Write down your skills and passions in your life and connect them to your themes.

Is it connected to fantasy art or to something else?

At first it may seem like your life has been a mess of different themes, but if you look carefully you can find one or very few themes running through your life, defining your inner goldmine.

When you find the true answer you might feel a rush of energy in your body and an urge to get into action.

Now you can stop consuming and start producing. Stop reading books and start publishing. Stop buying things and start creating things for people to buy. Stop watching TV or reading the news and start creating something newsworthy. Stop visiting events and instead create them. Stop waiting for things to happen, but allow magic to occur right now.

The following story is about an artist who was close to his inner goldmine:

Stepping out of the studio

The other studio members have left and it is just me, the radio and eternity outside. And the painting in front of me. No reflection on how long I have been here.

“Two more sessions and then it should be finished”. Wow, a thought! He cleanses the brushes and steps outside.

Having worked visually for hours he is still in the beauty of it, seeing leaves with perfect shapes, feeling the sound of a bus in his body. Shadow and light everywhere, accompanied by the autumn rustling of the trees, adding to that particular feeling we can’t put words on.

Hopping on the bus, he sees a perfect dance of sunlight and wind playing with the hair on the girl in front of him, creating such breathtaking beauty out of nothing. The total perfection in the shape of everything, like the woman who is grabbing a seat to sit in, grimacing slightly as the bus driver stops the bus too abruptly.
Stepping back to the studio
Have you found your inner goldmine and realized that it is linked to creating fantasy art? Have you created a few artworks, know your art tools and your top 1%. Then roll up your sleeves and prepare to do your best in this exercise.

Exercise
Be a copycat
Pick a favorite artwork and copy it or do something similar. Pick an artwork you feel is on your skill level, yet is a challenge.

The painting Mona-Fia (below) is an example of copying. Almost. It may not seem so, but it was a very quick job to manually copy it. What took most time was to make her smile, chin and cheeks similar to the original, because very small variations in shade made a big difference to her smile and face.

Is this a difficult exercise to you? Then let me help you by revealing some of my tricks.

My secret tricks
I learned through practice, not instructions, and I believe that is often the best way. But if you feel it can help you, here are some tricks than can speed things up.

Copy from photo to canvas: Many professional fantasy artists copy from photo to canvas. Boris Vallejo is one of them. I’ll show you one way to do it:
Take a look at the faces in the painting below.

![Copy from photo to canvas.](image)

The faces didn’t take many hours to finish, and they look pretty similar to the photo references.

More specifically, I used photos of the faces, printed them out on paper and put a thin layer of oil color on the flip side of each paper. Now I could use them like carbon paper, so I put them on the Masonite board – the oily side down – and with a pen I pressed along the contour of the faces. In that way I got perfect proportions in a matter of minutes, directly on the Masonite board. After that I colored the faces.

As an alternative you could use a projector, letting it project the photo image directly on the board or canvas.

**Combine traditional and digital techniques:** Do a painting with traditional techniques, then scan it and shape it up digitally. You can even print the digital artwork and shape it up with traditional techniques again, going back and forth.

For example, I was dissatisfied with the water reflections around the girl in my oil painting “Bauer Revisited” (see below), so I scanned the painting into my computer, then copied the area behind the girl in Photoshop, rotated the copy 180 degrees, put it on a layer in Photoshop right below the girl, made the layer half transparent, and used the ripple effect. Now the girl’s surroundings are reflected in the water. Bazinga!
Combining traditional and digital techniques for the water reflections.

**Use a palette knife:** If you want a rich texture that feels alive, then put a dark and a light color on a palette knife and scrape it on the surface. That is how I created the stones and rocks in “Bauer Revisited” (above).

**Use few colors:** If you prefer lots of colors, then use lots of colors! Although, you get a more balanced feel in the painting if you use very few colors – for example white, dark blue and red. Besides, it is easier and goes quicker to paint that way.

Rembrandt used few colors.
Besides, if you study people’s skin colors you will see that they reflect the surrounding colors. A dark painting will normally show people with dark skin colors, like brown, blue and dark green, and a light painting would typically portray people with light skin tones.

If you use only three or perhaps four colors for your next artwork you’ll see.

**Contrasts:** Although some want small contrasts in their artworks I prefer to create maximum contrast between dark and light colors. To me every brushstroke is about getting contrast (unless doing skin tones). Contrasts will create a strong image that feels alive. If you take a look at “The Passion of Christel” below, you’ll see what I mean.
Do one kick-ass painting, not ten that are OK: This is not really a technique thing, but it feels important to repeat it: Give all you have to one painting, rather than do a few standard artworks. You will be amazed at what you can create.

Do what you love: Painting what you love will show in your artworks. If you do artworks you love and another does artworks she just likes, then you will do better than that person every time. Painting what you love keeps your spirit high, and you can work for hours without getting tired.

My greatest secret: My greatest secret for creating fantasy art is to step away from the noise of daily life for a while. Feel the world instead of think about it, or get into your personal carpe diem. Create inner passion!

Inner passion
Now let’s take another step towards the forces that really make you kick ass:

Imagine a girl, troubled by old memories, yearning for a new girlfriend, regularly fantasizing about romance and sex, so much wanting to get over old hurts, to fit in and be someone great. All this gives her tons of things to think and worry about, as she feels she must be more attractive, fun, social, charismatic, and what not.

She studies hard, worries about the future, goes out and gets drunk almost every weekend, watches cool YouTube clips to kill some time, reads the news, downloads some fun sit-coms, then studies even harder.

In such a life, how on earth is she supposed to have enough inner space and passion to create great fantasy art?

Now imagine a similar girl. She lives close to nature and has transcended old memories. She feels that the past is just a story and knows that stories can be altered. She sure loves romance and sex, but is no slave to it, and she takes great care of body and mind, is free from people from the past that bring her down, and is less caught up with social pressure and pointless worries. Perhaps she even has a mind filled with magic stories!
In such a life, how on earth could she not have enough inner space and passion to create great fantasy art?

With this lifestyle she is high on passion and free from nagging thoughts. Instead of burning all her newborn passion on sex and romance she lets it linger inside, allowing it to grow higher and higher, until finally she has so much passion that she must express it.

What if our imagined girl pushes things even further, checks out of society, yet pretends to be part of it? Then amazing things could happen.

Let us not push things too far, though. There’s no need to become a nun or monk. I just want you to see that it is possible to grow lots of inner space and passion and spew it out over the canvas.

**A walk to the grocery shop**

When high on inner space and passion, just going to the grocery store can be pure magic: Feeling the wind that creates such perfect waves in the flag buntings outside the store, hearing the rhythmic lashes when the flag ropes hit the flagpoles. The light of the entrance sign that is reflected in the wet asphalt. A distant sound of someone closing the trunk of his car. Shadow and light playing with each other, everywhere.

Then stepping into the store, seeing the heartbreaking beauty in the cashier girl, a girl who from a gloomier mindset would have seemed so average. Stepping outside, feeling the twilight power oozing all over the area. And look over there! That fat student girl walking around in her kitchen in just a bra and underpants again, making her more excited than ever. Especially since she hasn’t watched porn in ages.

Just a walk to the grocery shop.

Do you get me here? There are so many wonders out there and fantasy art is but a distant expression of “it”. More than anything else I want you to see it, because it can truly be a life-changer. You can never describe or define it, so it must be experienced. In this book I’ll serve you magical stories to get you closer to the essence of our creative power.

**How did the copycat exercise go?**

Are you happy with the result or do you want to give it another try? You can send me a link to your work and what you tried to copy. I would love to check out your art and might even send you a message.

**Try or TRY**

If you aren’t happy with your copycat artwork, have you really tried your best? People often say they have tried, but they haven’t.

Like one of my lovely studio members who said she “wishes” she could get better at doing portraits, and that she has “tried” to develop. She visited the studio three hours per week. That is not trying. I visited the studio three hours per day. That is a bit closer to trying.

Having a wonderful idea to realize, bringing the work home for a week or two and forgetting about everything else, now that is TRYING. That is what I expect of you in this exercise. TRY.
Try to make one masterpiece, not ten that are all right: To make ten artworks that are “pretty good” is not really trying. Giving all you have to make one brilliant painting is trying for real. That is what makes you kick-ass. Sure, in the very beginning you might want to just play around, but in the long run you’ll probably prefer to give all you have to each artwork.

See your goal: If you clearly see your goal then you will get there. If you love your goal so much that you have to do it then you’ll kick ass very soon.

I see the goal and I just do it. That is all I do when creating fantasy art. Some problems may pop up along the way, but I get past them by always focusing on the goal, seeing nothing else but the goal.

Don’t give up: Many artists get to a sticking point, a “what is this crap?”-point while creating. I laugh at it, knowing that this is a normal stage in the creation process. Or I get annoyed, or kick and scream. But I continue, and I don’t stop until I have an artwork in front of me.

If you give up because you are stuck for a few hours, then you have not tried. Instead, you could step back for a while. Take a break, then solve it from a different angle.

Find your own solutions: Top fantasy artists find their own solutions. They don’t waste hours in online art forums and expect that other people will answer their questions and do the art for them.

Instead of spending hours looking for instructions and Q&A on art forums you could put all your focus on the artwork and nothing but the artwork.

In the painting “Mirror” (see below) you see an example of finding your own solution. I felt the competition from emerging digital fantasy artists breathing down my neck. They had the software and skills to create extremely detailed textures and clothes on their figures. To manually paint with such detail or learn the software would take too much time, so I went to a textile store and bought some lace, then went to the studio and simply glued it on the painting. You see the lace at the bottom fringe of her “underpants” and along her shawl.
It is OK to fail: No need to go ballistic if you don’t get the results you want. As a newbie I tried to emulate some of Luis Royo’s art, working hour after hour, giving it my best, yet getting embarrassing results. If you did your very best you cannot blame yourself, can you? Just give it another try.

What is talent? Some people – people in general and professional artists – have mentioned that I have talent. I thank them, but I know that it is not talent. It is focus and a lust to create. It is about clearly seeing the goal and getting there.

It is also about getting closer to one’s inner goldmine, about getting rid of the distractions, needs, worries, and of everything that weakens you. Then let magic unfold by itself, see how pure magic is happening right in front of us all the time. It’s like witnessing live art in daily life.

At these moments I do not want to get back to the usual chatter, inner talk, pointless reading of the same old news in new versions, worries that what you said to person A got misunderstood by person B and C, or that person A thinks that person B should have been more nice to person C, because this and that, or worry that your girlfriend will break up with you, or that you’ll get fed up with the relationship, or that you will lose your money, and all the other day-to-day guff.

No, at those times I want to be free from that unnatural thing that has been installed into our minds, that foreign installation called “language”. A language that cut off our wings and locked us in a prison called rationality.

As soon as we think, we get trapped in that prison. As soon as we develop and transcend it, then we get closer to our creative force, and become more free.

Being free
It was a huge storm in the south of Sweden. Trees broke, branches flew around, roofs disappeared, and the people stayed inside. Except one lonewolf who stepped out into the stormy darkness. Nobody needed to know, right? Nobody needed to know that he broke every darn routine he could find in his crazy life. Because being free from routines meant being free in many other ways.

He was free to roam the stormy night at the risk of getting knocked down by some flying object the storm had ripped off. It was worth the risk! He wandered aimlessly in areas he had never visited before, letting the body and intuition decide each next step, keeping the hood of his black jacket covering his head, making him nearly impossible to identify. Less identity meant more freedom. Less identity made him disoriented and he felt the power of “it”.

He walked in deep angles to tackle the wind. So powerless in these gigantic forces. Awesome!

Some fifty yards behind, as if a titan hit the trees and ground with furious anger, a branch breaking, flying somewhere. Nowhere to hide. Total darkness. Not even a moon, just the lights from where the people hid inside. And that crazy guy outside who wanted to be free.

The Big Exercise
Study your favorites and try to do something better

This is the most challenging exercise in the book.
Pick one of your favorite artworks and do something similar. As your creation progresses you will probably add your own style to the image - it usually happens by itself - and you will end up with an artwork that feels genuine.

Doing the big exercise is about cutting the crap and getting your hands dirty. Now you must really TRY your very best and improvise without knowing the outcome. Just like a real kick-ass artist.

There is a lot of great art out there, but if you still want to pick one of my artworks, go ahead. If you end up doing something you feel is better, send me a link to your work and I might give you my blessings and a gift.

THE THREE MAXIMS OF A FANTASY ARTIST
Thou shall listen to your heart.
Thou shall find a goal that makes you drool.
Thou shall just do it.

How I did the Big Exercise

I bought three big Masonite boards and Artisan’s water soluble oil colors (water soluble is better for the health). Then I went home and looked through Venosa’s art book for hours, and got stunned by his painting Prana Exhalation; I so wanted to do something similar! I started to play around with colors on the Masonite boards, having little clue what I was doing.

A day or two later I entered the library at Lund University, opened an art history book and saw the painting Fisherman and the Syren. The syren girl was so gorgeous that I simply had to include her in the painting.

In the same library I saw an image of Michelangelo’s David. I thought it might fit in the painting, too.

Then I printed the syren and David on paper and quickly copied the outlines of the figures onto the Masonite board. That way I could immediately get started with the fun: the coloring!

I had no clue how this would end. The greatest mystery was how to make those long, fine white lines that Venosa created in his painting. I came up with an idea and bought a long ruler, dipped the edge of it in white color and pressed the ruler’s edge on the Masonite board, creating an arch of white lines around David’s head. I remember that when I painted the head I took a couple of steps back and thought “I can leave it like this”. That is why it looks like his head is exploding with light.

The rest followed naturally, like a constant improvisation. I experimented with colors, looked at Venosa’s work, put more color on my Masonite board, shook my head and smiled at the craziness of it, and laid down on my bed, still gazing at my work.

How do I continue? Nothing else exists in this moment. I worked a little on the other two paintings [names or links]. Colors everywhere, the smell of it filling my student apartment (is this really good for the lungs?!) Greasy colors on my fingers, under my sock, in my face, even on the floor. Darn!
I looked, focused and looked. Adjusted, stepped back, laid down and rested for a few minutes, opened my eyes and imagined how to continue. Had another look at Venosa’s artwork. Contrast, always focus on getting maximum contrast. Every brushstroke must express a strong contrast between dark and light. That became my style.

Then I let the colors dry for a day or so. Got some rest. Played tennis. Peeked at girls. Then got back to the Masonite board. Looked, focused and looked. Contrasts. Adjusted and improvised. And finally it was finished.

Different techniques for the same painting
It would have been possible to finish this painting in several ways.

Since I love to work with colors but not with pencils I almost immediately got started with the colors and improvised all way to the end.

A more common strategy for a professional fantasy artist would be to first make a detailed drawing and thereafter fill it with colors. Some would take photos of actual models and use these as a reference. Others would use copyright free material from the Internet, like the stock photos at deviantart.com.

You might develop your own methods.

There! Now you have the technical tools necessary to become a kick-ass fantasy artist within a few months. If something is missing, then search the internet or ask me at fantasyartcoach.com. It is now time to move into the deeper aspects of fantasy art.
Hunger for beauty
As an artist you work with images and not with language. That makes it easier to slip away from the language slave thing, getting closer to the presence and our ancient nature.

We can go even deeper and do some weird things, like watch the shadows of all beautiful things. Or listen to beauty instead of looking at it.

Let’s say that you now can hear tranquilizing sounds from the fridge, or a cracking in the wall in the living room, a few cars passing by, a creaky door downstairs, some vague humming, or someone of us sees moving shadows extending from a writer’s hand as she is writing, being unaware of mortality, being in a state of mind that goes beyond time.

What if it is Anne Rice who is writing a vampire story about expensive old furniture, marble chests, lit candles, original artworks, colors in blood and gold, and a hunger for beauty that has no limits?

Twilight power and flashing vampire eyes. He sees every detail of his sweet beauty with perfect clarity, causing such heart-aching thirst in him. It makes the vampire reach out with his marble white fingers and grab the beauty by the throat, lifting her up to absorb her sweet smell, her soft and delicate body, ruby lips, red hair and wide open auburn eyes.

There’s a faint shake in her ankles as he tastes every bitter-sweet aspect of her, all the emotions she ever had, her secret desires, forbidden thoughts, lusty moods, the hunger she once had, her wish to heal the world with love and care, her desire to open herself to all men that evening in a log cabin up in the North, the titillating thought about betraying her most beloved one, but oooh she could never do such a thing in a lifetime because she could die for him, as long as he could die for her.

The vampire presses her against the wall and feels it all in her fearful auburn eyes, as he leans in, his fangs against her bare skin, so much wanting to save this little rose from all evil, yet slaughter her with total desire. It gets unbearable and the teeth must sink in, and they do, as he gives her the kiss of immortality.

Hunger for beauty.

Magic Exercise
See with your ears

Listen to the sounds around. Imagine that you see things through your ears. If you must keep your eyes open, then look at the shadows.

What do you feel?

This exercise is about stepping away from the daily noise and getting closer to your inner space, to your divine creative force, and to that which really makes you a kick-ass artist. We will get deep into it in the following chapter.
2. The essence of Fantasy Art

As I have mentioned, instructions and mechanical step-by-step methods will only get you so far. Ask any kick-ass fantasy or fantastic artist about how to become a champion, and they know it is more about soul, focus and passion, and less about technical knowledge.

They are hinting at the essence of fantasy art. It is there all the time, but we usually don’t see it. Just like the fish cannot see the water.

The essence of fantasy art is so much more than the fantasy art itself. It takes you to places you’ve never visited, lets ancient secrets whisper in your ear, and gives you glimpses of something greater than life itself.

The essence of fantasy art can never be defined. It is in the unbearable beauty of the sun-goddess, making you throw yourself on the ground, kissing her feet, moaning and rolling around like a baby who just got stung by the sweetest of bees. It is in seeing a little piece of that almighty sun-goddess in everyone, being forever blinded by its trembling and brilliant beauty.

It is in the whispers in the grass, the moon’s reflection in a dirty puddle, the faint breeze on a summer evening, in oceans of inorganic beings, shark infested waters and vast universes of aware beings, some of them so old, powerful and from such distant places that few of us can imagine them.

It is the boy who turns to his girl, looks into her eyes and for the first time sees that she is him, that the entire universe is him and that he has dreamt all the time.

The essence of fantasy art might be clouded by our daily wear and tear, but behind those clouds there are angels singing on a pitch so high we cannot hear it and a sun shining straight into our hearts, making us thirst for beauty, lust to create and ache to make a difference to the world.

Let the philosophers endlessly reason or speculate whether you should believe or not. As fantasy magicians, we explore our inner realms, dreams and wordless possibilities through direct experience.

Magic through Dreams

Although most lucid dreams are reflections of daily gibberish, some can take us to realms where our ancestors roamed. To rivers, oceans, and universes of aware beings inhabiting other frequencies or aspects of existence. They may expand our human potential and take us beyond rationality, beyond that mythology of cause and effect which has hypnotized us into a limited reality for some thousand years, and to the essence of fantasy art.

Others use lucid dreams to simply have fun and learn how it feels to be weightless, to pass through roofs, to materialize cute girls and boys they can kiss, and much more.

Which do you choose?

Magic Exercise

Induce a lucid dream

This is the most powerful technique I know for inducing lucid dreams.
If you normally sleep 8-9 hours, then get up after 6-7 hours. Walk around for 10-15 minutes and then go back to sleep in another place, or at least move your bed.

As you begin to drift off, get ready to be aware in the dream. It is like fishing and waiting for the fish to bite. The fish bites when you find that gap between awake and asleep.

In everyday life we think and talk, but in dreams we **act**. It is about intuition, going with the flow, and letting a power larger than ourselves steer us. Sometimes “it” may make you spend a full day in what seems like an alternative reality, or perhaps you end up examining the trunk of a tree in endless detail, touching it with your dreaming body, feeling it with superb clarity, later realizing that the experience was more vivid and “real” than the experience you are having right now, reading this book.

I have never heard or read about anyone getting harmed from lucid dreaming. As long as you don’t obsess about your experiences it is generally regarded as a safe practise.

Memorize your dreams immediately when waking up.

**How come our world feels more solid than dreams?**

According to some traditions we are a bunch of energy fields that create this world by intending the same spot of awareness.

The more aware beings that glue their awareness on one point, the more dense and real it becomes. Perceptions outside of that point are rarely experienced and become less solid. Since we are over six billion humans, this worldly point of awareness becomes very solid.

At universities they call this type of reasoning inter-subjectivity, but of course, then the theories apply on a more mundane level that is regarded as scientific.

“... when a group of individuals maintains the same image or beliefs, the group creates, molds, and maintains a consensus reality. In effect, group thought-energy forms stabilizes and actually solidifies nonphysical energy. The larger the group (some number in the millions), the more stable the immediate energy environment becomes.” William Buhlman in *Adventures Beyond the Body*.

Why do I mention this in an art book? Well, if we want to get closer to our creative force we sometimes want to wriggle out of identification with the rational mythology we are caught in.

“**What makes this world is an agreement between people who think it is in a certain way.**”

**Magic through out-of-body experiences (OBEs)**

Suddenly you find yourself floating around near the ceiling. Ooopss! Or perhaps you sat comfortably in the sofa, about to doze off, then get propelled out through your window. Or you got hit by a car and see yourself from above, when lying unconscious on the ground while people try to wake you up.

Then you have an out-of-body experience.
You could wake up and feel your body vibrate, or something in the body vibrates and flutters, and then leaves your body, or you freak out and snap back to your physical body, or continue into the unknown and get first-hand experiences of our oldest mysteries.

Inducing an OBE can feel like you leave your actual physical body, so it gets more “real” than lucid dreaming. You might feel your entire body fluttering, or something in your body flutters and you can sometimes hear a buzzing and roaring or a loud pang right before you separate. From there you can pass through the roof, explore your hidden potential and search for any answer.

You can even intend to experience your inner soul, and awaken to insights that will change your life.

**Magic Exercise**

**Induce an OBE**

Induce OBEs by imagining yourself outside your physical body when you are about to sleep. You can use the “getting up too early” technique I described for getting lucid in dreams, or imagine in great detail that you’re visiting a place you like and know well. Relax and trust the natural process.

Formal specialists on this matter – like Keith Harary and Pamely Weintraub – have never mentioned any dangers about experiencing OBEs and do not see it as actually “leaving” the body.

Others mean that you can experience our old mysteries firsthand by having an OBE. In this state, you receive insights that forever untangle yourself from misleading ideas, doctrines and beliefs that made you a slave under other people’s opinions in your life. It allows you to immerse yourself in magic, tasting some of “it” in all its energetic and terrifying magnificence, feeling the essence of fantasy art.

*“Reality is relative to the energy frequency of the observer.”*

William Buhlman

**Shamans and Artists**

If we go back in human history we see that there was often a clear connection between artists, shamans, and creative or magic power.

For example the Inuit think that gods create the artworks, while artists are just tools in the hands of the gods. If an Inuit artist carves out a piece of wood that looks really weird, they will not think that the artist is weird, it was just the weird making of the gods.

The genuine shamans, on the other hand, were generally compelled deep into the piranha infested waters where few voluntarily wanted to go, while the artists stayed closer to the shore, passing on the god’s whims to the people through art.

As a modern fantasy artist you can be that intermediary between the gods and the people. If you want to be that intermediary, then you need to know more about magic, non-linearity and the deeper aspects
of human nature, and you better continue to read.

My top 1 percent favorite artist Robert Venosa, went into the deeper waters by using ayahuasca. Ayahuasca is a psychotropic plant that according to some effect empty hallucinations, but according to others – especially the ones who have used it – opens up to a higher or deeper consciousness and reality. When back from his journeys, Venosa presented his experience through art.

Below is a trip report from an unusually successful and powerful meeting with ayahuasca, carried out by an experienced user. There are risks involved in using substances and you could have experiences of ayahuasca that are downright horrible, so I would prefer if you read about a trip rather than have one:

I sit down in the sofa and start to drink the ayahuasca together with my friend. The taste is so disgustingly strong I barely get all of it down. We lean back and close our eyes while my stomach works hard to handle the strange substance. It feels like I’ve never had such a strong brew before, and my anticipation grows.

Time begins to lose its grip, with energy and vibrations surging through my body. The vibrations intensify and make my body shake. Waves of orgasms start to surge through my body, each new wave more intense than the previous, until a final and very slow wave with enormous power pulsates through my stomach and reaches every cell in my body.

It is a very sexual and euphoric experience. My body is given to the power, which is about to climax. Then I suddenly feel sick in my stomach, open my eyes, and walk towards the bathroom. My balance is almost gone and I wobble my way to reach it, get down on my knees and puke.

As the reality is shredded I open my eyes and see hallucinations that go beyond description, everything radiating of light and energy. Everything is vibrating. I am vibrating in a way I’ve never felt before, but on a different wavelength than the surrounding.

I move my hand in front of me and it leaves traces of millions of hands, while I feel that I don’t just touch the air, it is like I actually touch myself, like I am both the hand and the air.

I understand that I am outside of my physical vehicle, yet sitting in my sofa, seeing my apartment as clearly as I would any day. I stand up a little from the sofa and then levitate out of the apartment. Then I move further up and see Stockholm from above, then all of Sweden and the neighboring countries. Everything is so big and overwhelming, with all the lives on Earth and everything that has occurred on our planet.

I continue up into space, passing other planets in our solar system, soon seeing our entire galaxy. Questions are swirling like a tornado through my consciousness. Where am I? What is this?

Reality is now not just a memory. I fully exist in the moment that is created and shaped by my consciousness. Several galaxies are passing by, forming entire clusters in front of me, becoming as small as a pinhead. Even the pinhead disappears and I am surrounded by questions and darkness. What am I and where am I?
All of a sudden I am surrounded by a crystalline and brilliant light. Here there is no limits, nothing that isn’t everything. All is light and energy, and I am part of it. All thoughts are gone and only one feeling exists. Harmony.

I am omniscient yet don’t need to know anything. I am everything and nothing. The silence I have experienced so far is now replaced by some sort of a vibrating, wonderful and magical tone. The tone is constantly present yet changing in an enchanting and beautiful melody. It is like a symphony created by universe and beyond.

I hear a song, an angel-like humming that is accompanied by the symphony created by universe, like eternal echoes in a perpetually shifting crystalline light. This is by far the most beautiful experience I have ever had, and words cannot really communicate it.

When I woke up the next day I felt truly healed in my soul for the first time. I felt a beautiful joy for existence. A joy that still exists in me today, a year later.

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Again, observe that this is an unusually successful journey and that there is often a darker and more frightening side to it. Yet I am sharing this story with you, because if you want the soul of a fantasy or fantastic artist, then you need to see the mysteries of life.

My favorite art technique: Although I have no personal experience using psychotropic plants, one way to paint after an encounter with ayahuasca is to not think and immediately express what you have inside on the canvas.

My favorite method is to do that, like randomly smear out two or three colors on a surface, using a huge palette knife or something similar, then let the colors dry and use that as a starting point. In that mess of color I find faces, beings or objects, and I make them come alive.

Actually, that is how I created my very first big paintings, the ones I presented first in this book [hyper-link] It is a great technique in the sense that nature itself rather than the artist makes most of the painting, and the artwork come s alive.

Let me feed more of your fantasy artist’s soul by presenting another true story:

Magic through altered behavior
A modest college guy interested in sports, chess, and kissing his girlfriend transforms himself to a dumb truck-driver. He takes off his fashionable clothes and puts on some really ugly red-neck clothes, starts to limp, develops an interest in car magazines, sports cars, and red-neck women that are thirty plus with big boobs. He uses an old-fashioned farmer's accent when briefly interacting with people, drinks his cheap beer and gets absorbed by his brain-dead car magazines. He takes a walk outside, and when no one sees him he pushes things further: he pulls off his shirt and begins to mumble repeatedly and even starts to drool.

He is even creating different thoughts for himself, thinking about his (fake) father Ronald and (fake) mother Martha, and other fake memories that become more and more real the more he thinks about them. He becomes that person, and he develops feelings for (mostly fake) people and photographs of people he never met. Like what you do when liking people on your computer.

When limping across that acre on a hot and sunny summer day a train is passing by, and he lifts his arms and waves to the train like some crazy idiot. Reason disappears, and that old, slick student boy is totally gone for a moment. His deepest emotions are entirely new. He sees that his new “truck-driver
“Beauty is truth.”  Zan Perrion

– Is this magic!? you might ask.
– Oh yes, much more so than many meditations and rituals, I would answer. It can be a very powerful tool to taste magic and get closer to the essence of creativity.

There are some lone-birds in this world doing these things. “How odd”, you may think, although, they are very aware of what they are doing. Perhaps you have met one without knowing it.

Magic Exercise

Pretend to be someone else for a while

No need to get too deep into this. Just have a sweet taste of it, and perhaps you’ll get a glimpse of something.

Since we all learn to behave in similar ways we develop similar realities and possibilities. Thus a new behavior will create a new world (the way you perceive it).

Everybody wants magical experiences… until they get them

Do you want real magical experiences? I doubt that. You might think you want it, because these things sound cool when reading about them, but we are talking about a total annihilation of yourself. Things around you coming down and crashing. It is like dying.

Even a tiny shift in awareness can be really disconcerting. Sure it can be beautiful, too. The presence, the well-being inside and perfect balance in everything. But then she looks at herself in the mirror and cannot identify with the person she sees. She sees this girl in the mirror, but it is just a face. “Come on, wake up!” she tells herself. But she doesn’t.

She walks down-town and things around don’t feel as real as they used to. The brick walls, the street
and the cars are there, but more like two-dimensional backdrops. Weird! She sneaks into an Internet café and starts to work on the computer, still things feel off. Very disturbing.

Her weakened ego-strength makes her feel very insecure about herself. As she walks to a job interview she has no idea if something weird sticks out as she scans the poker face of the interviewer, and she really fights to be that easygoing person she wants to be.

Next day she got the job. Phew! Everything feels great and she is chatting with some people before hopping into her car and driving to the nearby city. Then it hits her again. Magic when it is not so cool.

“Oh no, not now!” She turns on the radio to keep her thinking going, to not get sucked into “it”, into the mesmerizing sound of the rain smattering against the windshield. So tranquilizing. It gets nearly impossible to think, and the mind starts to drift.

“I can’t lose it now!” The car is going in ninety km per hour, with cars behind and nowhere to stop.

“Come on, stay on the road, don’t drift off!” She is trying to think, think, and think. Listening to the radio. A radio talk show of course, not some music that could make things worse.

She grabs her mobile phone and calls a friend. Someone to talk to. Someone who can stabilize her. “Come on, answer!” But no one answers.

She turns up the radio and smacks herself in the face, trying to think, talking aloud to her self to keep what is left of the rational mind going. She screams, believing that if she loses its things will get really bad. From her inner eye she sees how she forgets to stay on the road for just a couple of seconds…

Then she arrives. Phew!

Things sometimes go too far in our quest for the essence.

Let the yoga gurus do their exercises and feel spiritual and good about it, but I doubt they want to have real spiritual or magical experiences either. That would force them out of the cage of perception they have lived in all their life.

Venturing into the unknown is pretty much the opposite. It crushes the cage. The ego. That which keeps the world together. Such a thing can make you feel small, insecure, uneasy, tongue tied, confused, weird, very scared, and worse. It would take a total nut to seriously want to venture into the unknown, and nuts don’t count here.

The only way left is some force outside of yourself, a force that enters a person no matter whether she wants it or not.

Here is another magic story for your fantasy artist’s soul:

The mad shamaness
It was a warm day in Mexico some fifty years ago, and an audience is gathering in front of a shamaness and her patient in a simple hut. The session starts and suddenly the voice of the shaman woman drastically changes into a deep male voice, loudly proclaiming that her body is now possessed by an ancient and powerful shaman.

The audience is caught by the shamaness’ intent, starts to believe, and their awareness travels to an ancient state of awareness. At this point the cage of rationality crumbles and anything is possible.
The movements of the possessed shamaness get harder and more resolute, almost uncaring, as she fetches a simple breadknife, cuts the liver out of the patient’s body, washes it in water, and then puts it back into the body of the patient.

In the story above I see a shift in the shamaness’ behavior and a powerful transformation of awareness to an ancient state of mind without language, which brings the audience beyond the words and lies that bind us to this world, and finally they cross the limits of rationality, which heals the patient.

Just a metaphor? Well…

Having weird experiences to not absolutely necessary for exploring your true creative power and the essence of fantasy art. Although, a keen intellect is mandatory to seeing through the lies of modern myth, understanding the non-existence of formal truth, seeing more of the essence.

Magic by transcending reason
My legs were shaking with worry and fear as I stepped into the institution of sociology at Lund University for the first time in my life. My first lecture at my first university with my first teacher. The best I ever had at that university. His name is Mats Beronius and a new world opened up at that time, when I learned different ways to look at society, history and ourselves.

He had an open discussion on the Enlightenment era in the 1700s. Most people sat quietly and took notes, or pretended to take notes, and of course one guy had to constantly question most of what our teacher said.

Our tall and lean teacher with graying hair and a laid-back attitude welcomed all of our perspectives, then moved the discussion to new areas that touched on formal and informal power structures, the creation of knowledge, how a maximum number of perspectives on a phenomenon makes it maximally objective, the difference between subject and object (if any), how social codes are created and how they affect us, and other things I don’t remember.

Then he started to talk about an anthropologist who went to live with some Native Indians. Not just that, he also was introduced to their spiritual traditions, and started to live with shamans and “men of knowledge”. They were men with first-hand knowledge acquired through direct experience and perception of reality, not just intellectual second-hand knowledge or religious belief.

Years later I would realize that my teacher talked about the anthropologist Carlos Castaneda, a man who crushed rationality, coaxed thousands of people into their toughest intellectual challenges and changed their lives forever, and who ultimately inspired me to do fantasy art.

Becoming a seasoned student I started to do scientific research, learning to create knowledge. All I needed to do was to present ideas that made sense to the people around me. The more people that accepted my ideas, the more of a truth they became. That way we connect our awareness to each other and create reality.

In other words, together we know that the bus is around the corner and that Lewinsky did it with Clinton. Or we think we know. But there is the magic:

We uphold that “reality” with our thoughts. With language. A language that upholds our reality-laws. A language dictating what a modern human being is capable and incapable of doing.

“Words and reason make us believe that we ‘know’ something.”
Imagine the monstrous effort we went through learning that language. Billions of pupils all around the world are being drilled to perceive the same world, learning that there is a sun “out there”, that there is a certain distance from your left toe to your right thumb (really?) and that walls are always solid. Sure that is true. As long as we haven’t transcended rationality.

What if we bred our capacity to, let’s say, have out-of-body experience and have a much more intense reality in our daily lives, at times free from boundaries? Not just as another empty theory, but as a real first-hand experience.

The world would change. People would not just get closer to the essence of their creativity, but would fundamentally change.

Instead we are trapped in the cage of rationality. Slaves without wings. Reading Harry Potter, dreaming about freedom, feeling that perhaps there is something out there, but still… no.

Of course there is something out there! It is right in front of us and we can tap into it all the time. We can be free, unrestrained from time, able to reach throughout the universe and beyond.

With a keen intellect it gets less difficult to see through rationality, and when you do, you see this magic. As a fantasy artist you present that magic in visual form.

Time disappearing
A guy who is driving a jeep in the night with worries and fear in his chest. Everything feels gloomy and hopeless. Just broke up with his girlfriend. Lost his apartment, now being forced to live with his parents during the weekends. The daily state of mind is a gray mess, as gray as the smoke rising from the chimney on the canteen building, in which every soldier had to eat the same food, fit into the same type of military clothes, use the same military jargon, and feel the same hopeless waiting for this crappy lifestyle to end. The antithesis of creativity and freedom.

Driving this jeep, being all this darkness, looking out the windshield, into the night, then for one instant something stops and expands. One grain of light out there grows to a giant moment. Then it is gone. But the body is now changed, filled with joy and awe.

I am sure many people have had similar feelings when immersed in something. Time disappearing, in that peculiar whirlwind, meeting a person by sheer coincidence, or seeing that the dreamer is that which is dreamt, or waiting for the bus and the wind is playing so funny around you, it is hilarious, and you are both someone sitting on a bench and someone who expands and travels up and out with the wind, and you just have to smile and laugh, because you are free.

A taste of the Unknown
If you have read this far you must be curious. You must want to get insights that go beyond description, certainly beyond a Harry Potter movie, or Nietzsche, or kissing the feet of some guru in a white robe, right?

Actually, when thinking about it, kissing the feet of someone seems like a good start, especially if you do it in public. Or read this entire book backwards, or put your shirt on the wrong way, and do all sorts of crazy things where no one can see and judge you. Look at how much fun kids can have, and they do these things all the time!
Magic Exercise
Read this chapter backwards

Do it for the sake of just doing it.

What if magic isn’t what you thought it was?

Before going back to the worldly side of fantasy art, let me serve you a final story from someone who truly opened up to “it”. Not a fake guru in a white robe, but someone real and unknown:

The awakening
Very few awaken from our lifelong slumber. Some people try hard, and years later realize that they cannot will themselves to an awakening, because it is not a choice:

I walked into the library and didn't know what I was looking for, but did not question the need for me to walk in and check it out. For months now, I had been experiencing some very peculiar events; changes were occurring within me that I was at a complete loss to explain, but nonetheless, I was enjoying the exhilarating phenomena.

For no reason I would feel the need to run or walk. I was seeing “flames” as if from the inside of my eyes. I would leave my body. Sometimes I would jerk around involuntarily, and make growling sounds or would speak in tongues.

I felt that I would burn up from the inside; that there was a hot, molten penis of light and fire coming up through me and dashing hot magical semen into my brain. I heard sound currents that at times were deafening. I attributed all this to a yogi I had met in Denver. Somehow I believed that he had manipulated my awareness.

The yogi was a friend of a friend of my grandmother's. He was visiting, as he generally does, during his itinerate rounds, and wanted to go along with us to “A Taste of Colorado”, a festive food tasting event downtown. There were carnival rides there, and when the Yogi didn't have East Indians falling at his feet, he was begging my grandmother's friend Pam and I to go on the rides with him.

It was the most incongruous spectacle one could imagine. There's this little Indian guy wearing a long saffron gown among a crowd of the most hedonistic people that one could round up in one place. He actually had Pam crying because he would not take no for an answer; he wanted to go on the rides! I finally went with him after he took the most daring of the rides, laughing and cajoling all the way.

He got me good and disoriented and then somehow manipulated my awareness. I felt lost for weeks afterwards. I felt like I couldn't – or rather didn't want to – think. I wanted to enter some kind of opening into some nameless reality for which I had a nebulous sort of remembrance. It was after that event that my life was turned upside down.

I got on the phone to talk to an old teacher of mine; an early influence in my life who guided me to The School of the Natural Order where I lived for a couple of years as a twenty and twenty-one year old kid. It was in the middle of the high desert of Nevada. The teacher I called – in Denver – had enough knowledge to qualify him for a doctorate in philosophy and religion.

I had a couple of weird experiences that had scared me and I wanted his input. I'd also had a baffling and powerful experience that I had just wanted to tell him about. The man actually scared me, but I
had known him for many years. He was an actor and a friend of my parents. That didn't seem to help promote a feeling of ease, though.

He seemed awesome and frightening to me. I was willing to go to him because I felt like I had no one else to turn to. Besides, it would be over the phone, and I wouldn't have to face him.

The experience that had me so upset happened when I was lying down on the sofa reading a book. I felt energetic and vital. Suddenly, a loud shot rang through me. I felt as if I had been catapulted from my body, and then came quickly back. It was as if some kind of psychic blood clot had been loosened, but I couldn't figure it out.

I felt that I really needed someone to tell me what it might be. My grandmother told me that what I really needed was a piece of gum. I could chew it for a while and then “park” it in the back of my mouth. And then I could chew it some more. I found the suggestion wildly hilarious and laughed so hard that I worried I'd lose my voice; that's an important consideration for radio personalities.

My grandmother is somehow a bit on the forbidden side, too, but she relaxed her noble posture long enough to laugh right along with me. She is 101 now, and still has a kind of mystical get together with students on Monday nights.

I informed her that I had received her birthday present for me – a Wordfinder – and that I appreciated it very much. I had just opened it and set it down beside myself when, for some reason I began “hearing” a lifelong on-again, off-again clicking sound, or fluttering from some kind of grasshopper or something seemingly from inside my head, or deep from within my ears.

I was alone in my loft apartment, a speck in all its immensity, and said out loud, “What on earth is that clicking?” Before I had even gotten all the words out, an answer that seemed kind of over-modulated and loud came: “It's a scarab.”

I didn't understand it. But I had the new Wordfinder right next to me, and looked up scarab. Turns out it is a dung beetle that makes a tapping or clicking sound. The dung beetle, or scarab, has been a representation for everlasting life through the ages.

I was flabbergasted. For some reason, I put down the book, and had to move the TV remote to do so. As I moved it, I clicked the TV on and the channel that came on was the PBS affiliate. There were scientists giving a CT scan to an Egyptian mummy to see what was underneath all the wrapping. They could see that it had been wrapped up with carved stone scarabs as a sign of everlasting life.

At that point, I was a basket case, although, in ever-increasing episodes, weirdness was becoming a regular feature of my life, and I was ready to accept even the most preposterous events.

A few more weeks passed and I moved back to Denver where I continued to have bizarre phenomena happen to me. I discovered that the experience was a Kundalini release. I read everything I could about it. My god! People have had the same thing happen to them! I was relieved.

Much has since happened to me. I see energy as it flows in the universe. I am shifting more and more into energetic reality. As I slide headfirst into this experience, I count the thousands of blessings in my life. I thank all my petty tyrants. I thank the seemingly bizarre events of my life; they have led me to an astounding, beautiful new vista. I stand at the edge of an abyss and prepare to jump.

Back to day-to-day
I have now served you a smorgasbord of magical stories that hint of the essence of fantasy art, of that which cannot be mentioned. If you get deeper into any of them you can find something greater than fantasy art or life itself. Therein is our creative power and strength to create masterful artworks.

3. Going Pro

Moving from the deepest aspects of fantasy art, we will now explore how you can become a successful professional artist. Let’s first have a look at the big picture and then get more specific.

The Entrepreneur Revolution

The Industrial Revolution is coming to an end and an Entrepreneur Revolution is beginning. It means that new technology increasingly allows us to produce together in real-time from different parts of the world.

Imagine a Hollywood movie project. A new movie will be released and now they look for the best specialists to create it; not just some general specialists but people that own a small and very defined niche within a niche: they own a micro-niche. A niche would be to create movie backdrops, while a micro-niche would be hand-painted backdrops resembling Victorian art.

Owing the micro-niche means that they are the best and most connected in their field, and because of that they get the opportunities.

Think about the movie Matrix II, the scene when the key-maker was hunted by the white-dressed twins, while Neo lifted his hand to block the bullets that were shot at him. It looked like they were in a classy Victorian building full of wall-paintings and statues, but in fact the movie team made it look that way by using backdrops.

At one point the Matrix-team searched for professionals specialized in creating these gorgeous backdrops. Either they had a contact list and picked the one that was perfect for that project, or they searched via external contacts, the Internet, and a phone.

Likely, they picked the one who was the very best and most available, in other words a micro-niche owner.

His or her highly specialized skills, interests, and personality are clearly visible for anyone at the click of a Google button, so that he can quickly be chosen by people who need him. As a fantasy artist you’ll need to be one of these micro-niche owners.

For example, how come John Howe was selected to do concept art for the Lord of the Rings trilogy? Well, the Jackson team searched and asked around for who was the most popular fantasy artist within a particular field. Since Howe owned his micro-niche he was selected for the Hollywood movie project.

I’ll soon suggest how you can become a micro-niche owner.

From hand to head to heart

In this entrepreneur revolution the world now moves from head to heart. It sounds goofy, but think about it:
**Hand:** In medieval times it was about using our body and hands to produce. Knights and kings were excellent with the sword as they ruled the kingdom and brought humanity forward, and Leonardo da Vinci and other artists pushed the limits of what was possible to create with their own hands. Sure, we used communication and our brains too, but it was the “best hands” that dominated.

**Head:** During the Industrial Revolution one machine could replace one hundred hands, and having the best head now was more important than having the best hands.

Factory owners created efficient company structures and outsmarted other owners, and they had to control the workers who were dehumanized and used as cogs in the industrial machinery. Employees learnt to keep their mouth shut, ignore the voice of their hearts, and do the job they had to do. As the exhausted worker returned home he got some entertainment through TV and a salary that kept him alive, but not much more.

Our society is still based on that system, feeding people with entertainment, invented drama, and endless consumption, keeping the system going. We are taught to get educated, work hard, and put some money aside every month for our holiday and retirement, and that a job is a job rather than a passion.

Many people are trapped in that old mindset. They are getting left behind without being aware of it, without seeing that people with the best heads will no longer have the same upper hand as they once did.

Having a degree does not make you stick out anymore. Instead, technological change allows the individual to listen more to her heart and do her own thing.

**Heart:** In the entrepreneur revolution you can create an entire empire using a mobile phone and a computer from anywhere in the world.

Social media is the biggest business in town, and I believe we are just seeing the beginning of social media power. It means that sharing with other people in real time, listening to others, knowing what they love, and them knowing what you love, is the new big business.

*“The universe is a perfect symmetry of love relationships.”*

Thaddeus Golas

Owners of micro-niches will rule in such a world order. This perfect for the individual artist. Some people call this new era the Entrepreneur Revolution, and it is happening as you read this. If you don't want to be left behind, you’d better continue to read.

**Become a micro-niche owner**

Already today it is about as challenging to land a decent job as it is to create and run a successful business that is based on your passion. Tomorrow it will be even more difficult to get employed the traditional way. As a creative artist you are given excellent opportunities to become a micro-niche owner in this new world order.
Exercise
Become the expert of a small micro-niche

Find your favorite micro-niche and learn everything about it.

Find your micro-niche and understand it perfectly. The fantasy art world consists of many fields, and the key is to understand *exactly* what type of fantasy art the influential people in your favorite field love.

Exactly what type of art do the contractors want? What artists are the top 1 percent in that field? Get to know the people in that field, and let them know you. Learn all the ins and outs of that field.

It is better to let your micro-niche to be too specific than too general. If you are too general you’ll have to compete with everybody. If you are very narrow it will be easier for you to stick out, to truly know your micro-niche and be best in it. Thereafter you can expand your niche if necessary.

When you truly know your micro-niche you also know which art styles will be the most successful in that field.

Exercise
Find your style

Find your well defined kick-ass style. It should go perfectly in line with the micro-niche you want to own. Then you deliver the same art over and over and to create a brand for yourself.

You can immediately identify the most successful fantasy artists in the world just by looking at their art. They have developed a personal style that people can identify, and they produce that same style of art throughout their career. That is part of owning a micro-niche and get recognized.

If going pro you need to do the same. Find what you love doing and what other people love most about your art. When you have found your style, then go for it, if that is what your heart wants.

Connect to people
Once you know your micro-niche and style it is easier for you to get the right connections. You normally begin through Internet and social media.

**Internet:** What happens when someone Googles your name? Are you the one getting the top hits? If not, you are at a clear disadvantage.

Today you can easily create a blog or portfolio via platforms like WordPress. (Check out the YouTube clip “How to Make a Wordpress Website – AMAZING!” and get started in no time at all.)

At sites like Fiverr.com and oDesk.com you can hire one specialist who designs your portfolio, another who makes it increase on Google rankings, and a third person who runs a marketing campaign for you. And you know what? It can be very fun!
On Pinterest you can open an account and get new followers while browsing your favorite art and connecting with kindred spirits. To me it is pure pleasure to “work” that way, absorbing and sharing world class art for twenty minutes a day.

**A social media rock star:** You will need to handle social media very well. You can connect your portfolio and blog to your social media channels.

If you have already found your micro-niche you can build a very specific Facebook page that displays a narrow and well defined fantasy art genre.

Let’s say that you do digital Japanese manga, primarily for girls 15 – 20 years of age. Then you can create a Facebook page and run a successful advertised Facebook campaign, where you target people exactly these people. You do that by adding very specific keywords to the campaign. Then you cough up some ten bucks a day to start the advertised campaign and get some followers, making the Facebook-page look populat and attractive. After that you invite your Facebook contacts.

On top of that you add images you love every day. Or you sit down one day and add loads of images but schedule them to be published at specific times. That way you can get a really attractive Facebook page with a thousand or more followers in a few weeks.

(As a reference, I started up the Facebook page Magic & Beauty, and it grew from zero to over 1700 followers in a couple of weeks.)

If you show great artworks, display your name and get a bit personal, plus engage with other people, then it can be the start of a success story.

**Go IRL:** Having been well connected on-line you’ll soon find opportunities to face people in your micro-niche.

You can visit events, groups and other gatherings to see the people behind the fantasy artworks. After a while you’ll become a face people recognize, and key actors will begin to trust you and even might ask you to join them in one way or the other.

**Show up:** Never underestimate the value of simply showing up. Even if you feel nervous or awkward, try to show up. Show up to people, gatherings and talks. I figure this applies to most areas in life, like seeing a new girl, getting a new job, or opening yourself up for a new experience. Show up!

Sure the outcome sometimes feels like you have failed, but you haven’t. The outcome partially has to do with things outside of your control, so a bad outcome cannot really be your failure. Not showing up, on the other hand, is you letting yourself down even though you had a choice.

“Eighty percent of success is showing up.” Woody Allen

**Give more than you take:** One common mistake for outsiders is to try to extract value from valuable key individuals. When connecting to owners of micro-niches and other interesting people, instead focus on how you can help them or give value.

It is so easy to forget this. How many artists aren’t presenting just another link to their portfolio or asking valuable people to look at their art with the hope that they will magically take them under their wings?
Since you know your micro-niche and possibly plan to be there for a long time it is better if you build a relationship with the people you find interesting. Don’t take their time, but look for opportunities to add value.

Publish and talk: Micro-niche owners often get asked to be interviewed, to show up for a gathering, or give a public speech. If you get the chance to do this then some great opportunities can open up overnight. Sure this can be challenging and make you feel uneasy, besides you risk looking like a fool in front of other people, but that is a risk every successful person takes on a regular basis.

Getting the chance to give a talk in front of an audience drastically increases your chances as an entrepreneur artist.

But just like in creating art, being successful on the marketing side is not just about knowing how to do it, but also about attitude and acting in line with your inner goldmine. That is what makes you a winner.

Winner or loser
In most areas of life I see a few winners and a bunch of losers. Arts, seduction, spirituality, sports, fishing, whatever. It doesn’t matter what we talk about, the system of a few winners and a bunch of losers is still similar.

What differs the winners from the losers? Usually the winners are the passionate ones who love what they are doing, they have been doing it for a long time, and they are the ones who give the instructions. They express their inner goldmine. They take risks but act anyway. They are scared but act anyway. They get tired but act anyway. They are the producers. No matter what, they just do it. They act like true champions.

The losers are the ones who think about acting. They want instructions. They want a safe and sure path. If it gets too tough they give up or begin to hesitate. They consume what the champions produce. They prefer comfort before adventure. They settle.

In other words, the key thing that separates the champions from the losers is not necessarily talent or a great starting point. It is a willingness to just do it. They have a clear vision of the goal and the discipline, willingness and courage to act.

Everything you desire is outside of your comfort zone. Otherwise you would already have it. That’s why the champions always have to go out of their comfort zone and just do it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Winners</th>
<th>Losers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have a clear vision</td>
<td>Have many unclear visions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just do it</td>
<td>Think about doing it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are passionate</td>
<td>Are hesitant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give instructions</td>
<td>Want instructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Push forward no matter what</td>
<td>Avoid too much risk or trouble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Produce</td>
<td>Consume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel alive</td>
<td>Feel dead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead</td>
<td>Follow</td>
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</table>
How to do something that people love

Rule number one is to do what you love. But it isn’t always that easy, is it? Some people do what they love without getting recognition, while others do what they love and become celebrities. So let us examine the weird art world to better understand the dynamics behind success.

The elite: In Stockholm we have about 20-25 art collectors that everybody tries to sell to. Most of these collectors have been in this position for decades. They know each other well both professionally and privately, they visit art gurus in other cities abroad, like New York, and bring that influence to Stockholm. All in all, there is an extremely small group of the same people that rule the art scene, year after year.

The art schools: Most prestigious art schools focus on conceptual and political art, because they must please the elite plus get media attention and funding. That is a reason why you usually don’t really learn to draw or paint in the most respected art institutions.

It is more about getting contacts and developing a mindset that pleases the elite. They are the ones with the money and the power to decide what good art should look like. They decide if you will get accepted to the finer art exhibitions, and what function artists should have in modern society.

The fantasy art world: Fortunately, the fantasy art world is not about politics but about archetypes and the connection between dream and reality. Fantasy artists are into mystery and that deep, silent voice within that whispers: “Ye are gods”. Plus it tends to be obsessed with technique, partially because we want the fantasy to seem as real as possible.

Ah yes, gods. In ancient times people could be both humans and giants, don’t you think? Since they could exist without thinking, what would stop them?

Compare that to the established art world which cherishes cool concepts, contemporary messages and new twists that please influential people. In other words the fantasy artist is outside of the established art world and can promote herself outside of that world. She expresses her passion in the emerging entrepreneur revolution in ways I have already described.

How to impress the general audience

When you clearly see what triggers the psyche of modern man it gets easier to impress the general audience.

The key is to present a strong image that most people can relate to, and give it a little twist. Here is an example:
First I picked a couple of individuals that people can relate to: Barack Obama and Fredrik Reinfeldt (the Swedish prime minister). Then I put them in a peculiar context that people recognize: Michelangelo’s famous painting “Adam and God”. Then I played with political power structures and let Reinfeldt look with reverence at Obama. On top of that I put a red bra on Reinfeldt. Politics, classic art and humiliation in one artwork. Shizaam!

Simple kitsch if you ask me. Greatness if you ask the general audience.

The same applies to your micro-niche: You’ll have to understand what gets the people in your field going.

**Top 10 list**  
**Things people pay for in a painting**

1. The initials (the artist’s name)  
2. Economic value  
3. Cool concepts  
4. Taboo  
5. Nudity  
6. Sex  
7. Violence  
8. Weird or grotesque  
9. Beauty  
10. Everything else

As you can see, typically beautiful art and commerce cannot always be best friends.
How did I get this top ten list? When going pro I got requests from people to do certain artworks. That way I got a feel for what type of art people say they prefer versus what art people really prefer and are actually willing to pay for. This is of course not a very scientific approach, but a reflection from personal experiences.

Non-commercial vs commercial
As you can see from the top ten list, one risk about going pro is that you start doing artworks you don’t fully want to do. I sincerely hope you will continue to do what you really love. Most successful commercial artists do the type of commercial art they want to do, year after year.

Also, the way you perceive art and what art you do will not be the same after you have decided to go pro. All art you see and do will, in one or another way, be viewed or created from a commercial viewpoint.

My best artworks are entirely non-commercial, since they have so much more soul. If you like, you can compare my non-commercial artworks to some of my commercial artworks.

Economics and art
What makes one artwork so much more valuable than the other?

I have already mentioned social connections, power structures and an art elite that affects people’s perception on art. We could also add traditions, coincidence, the artist’s personality, marketing skills, politics, and a bazillion other variables, not to mention psychological reasons.

When it comes to fantasy art you’ll have to be a micro-niche owner to see the value of your art drastically increase.

I suggest that the value of artworks can easily be interpreted as largely being based on social dynamics, psychological reasons, and on perception, too diffuse to define in this book. Let me instead demonstrate the dynamics behind art value by presenting a real story:

A violinist in the metro
A man sat at a metro station in Washington DC and started to play the violin; it was a cold January morning. He played six Bach pieces for about forty-five minutes. During that time, since it was rush hour, it was calculated that thousands of people went through the station, most of them on their way to work.

Three minutes went by and a middle aged man noticed there was a musician playing. He slowed his pace and stopped for a few seconds, then hurried up to meet his schedule.

A minute later, the violinist received his first dollar tip. A woman threw the money in the till and without stopping, continued to walk.

A few minutes later, someone leaned against the wall to listen to him, but the man looked at his watch and started to walk again. Clearly he was late for work.

The one who paid the most attention was a 3 year old boy. His mother urged him along, but the kid stopped to look at the violinist. Finally the mother pushed hard and the child continued to walk, turning his head all the time. This action was repeated by several other children. All the parents, without exception, forced them to move on.

In the forty-five minutes the musician played, only six people stopped and stayed for a while. About
twenty gave him money but continued to walk their normal pace. He collected $32. When he finished
playing and silence took over, no one noticed. No one applauded, nor was there any recognition.

No one knew this but the violinist was Joshua Bell, one of the best musicians in the world. He played
one of the most intricate pieces ever written with a violin worth $3.5 million.

Two days before he played in the subway, Joshua Bell sold out at a theater in Boston and the seats
averaged $100.

Copyright issues

*When do you cross the line?* Where is the line between fair and unfair borrowing? In practice nobody
really knows. We all borrow from each other. This is how we develop and contribute to a beautiful
world.

Legislation varies between countries, but a common way to look at copyright issues is as follows:

You can copy other artists’ works as long as you use it for your own non-commercial practice and
clearly state that it is a copy. If you use traditional mediums (like oil colors) then you can use
someone’s photo as a loose reference to your own artwork. If you paint with such detail that it is
almost photo realistic, then you better ask the photographer first.

*“Money makes us do things we don’t want to do.”* From the movie *Wall Street I.*

If creating digital art, then you normally need permission from the photographer. If going commercial
then the rules get tougher, and you better check the copyright issues and ask the photographer or artist
for permission.

My take on copyright issues

I find it funny when newbie amateurs put up some scribbles on a free webpage absolutely raving about
their copyrights. Sure I protect my artworks through copyrights too, but I am reluctant to do so,
because if some people want to pass it on or display it, then that’s great, since I love to contribute to a
beautiful world. If an aspiring artist wants to use my artworks to improve, then I don’t want to stop
him and scream “It is my copyright!”.

Other artists can easily circumvent the rules anyway by copying my works and adding some details to
the original. Also, I feel that copyright issues tend to regulate themselves, because if people see that
someone copied my art, then the copycat will lose cred.

Besides, if we take it to a deeper level, who or what created “my” art? Was it the brush that someone
in China manufactured, or was it the oil colors that nature itself blended so randomly but oh so
beautifully, or was it my hand, or Robert Venosa’s artwork that inspired me so much, or the
encouraging words from my friends, or Michelangelo, or some on-line portfolios I checked out, or my
wish for recognition, or some abstract power that spurs me to create beauty?

To seriously claim that it was *me* who did *my* paintings gets pretty funny, if you see it that way. We
are all interdependent, and nobody did anything by herself. We did it together, you and I and nature.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good copying</th>
<th>Bad copying</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Many sources</td>
<td>Few sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honors</td>
<td>Degraded</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>Cheap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develops</td>
<td>Conserves</td>
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Copyright issues in practice
Formal copyright rules are one thing, but how they work in practice is often something else.

Here is a few common scenarios:

**The hobby artist:** A fantasy artist created art as a hobby for some years and recently took a few paid commissions. Now she sees that someone uses her artworks as images for a non-commercial website, without her approval.

At this point the artist would normally email the person and inform that those images are copyright protected. The culprit typically apologizes and removes the images, or both agree that the images can continue to be up on the webpage if credits are given to the artist.

**The professional artist:** Copyright protected art is displayed in a large commercial setting, without the consent of the artist. The artist gets so annoyed that she files a complaint and demands compensation.

This gets us to a core point of how copyright issues often work in practice: What can a small player do against a larger commercial player with lots of money and knowledge about the legal system? Very little. It takes time, money and knowledge to process a lawsuit.

**The stealing artist:** A digital artist has not only borrowed, but almost copied other artists’ artworks as his own, and thereafter presented the finished artwork under his name and sold it as a book cover. The issue is then solved by an independent third party that decides whether it is a copyright infringement or not.

Now we get to another crucial point: The stealing artist often wins these disputes, because it is hard to prove that he was copying. To be judged you must be *proven* guilty, and to prove something as abstract as copying too much from an artwork is tricky.

**An easy solution:** A simple way to copyright protect your art is to present the images in a format that is large enough to be attractive for your on-line portfolio, but too small to be used for commercial purposes. Another solution is to insert a function that makes it difficult for visitors to save the images in your portfolio. (If you are using WordPress for your on-line portfolio, you can import plug-in programs for that.)

Living the dream
Did you get the hidden theme of this book? If you think you did and can clearly explain it, then I doubt you did.

You got the tools to become a kick-ass fantasy artist as quickly as possible, prepare you for a professional career, and had a dip in the pool of creative power through a bunch of magic exercises and stories.

You could go deeper into any of these stories to change your life.

What about the life of other successful fantasy and fantastic artists? Some of them tell their story for your inspiration in the following section.

**Artists in the sweet spot**
[Interview Kinuko Craft, Martina Hoffmann (Robert Venosa), Android Jones, etc]

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*Some thousand years ago we lived in a universe of gods and the world was flat. Some fifty years ago we landed on the moon and the world was round. What if we soon live in a world of consciousness?*

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**Back in New York**

I am now visiting the New York Public Library writing these words, just like I was sitting here during my last visit ten years ago.

Around that time is when it all begun. The magic. I could never have imagined the horizons that would open up. Life becoming a magical adventure, full of wonder and beauty, loneliness and frustration, mystery and well-being.

But alas, when venturing far and deep you usually have to travel by yourself, perhaps even check out of society while pretending to belong to the madness of the masses. In the long run it can get tough to be that guy, so I'll move on after finishing this book. There are other adventures out there.