

Special Interview

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I first became aware of *BEAUTY & THE BEAST* because my girlfriend at the time watched the show. As I joined her on the couch to watch the episodes, I was impressed with the characters and storytelling and moody photography. Then I realized this would be an ideal comicbook series to add to our roster of projects at *Innovation*, which already included *Dark Shadows*, *Quantum Leap*, *Lost in Space*, and such novel adaptations as Anne Rice's *The Vampire Lestat*.

I was so enamored of the show that I wanted to write the project myself.

The key concern was, I did not want it to look like a typical comicbook project. It needed special care. It had to be painted, not colored line art. The art had to feature the same color palette, the same soft-focus lighting the show had. Without that, the project wouldn't feel authentic.

Fortunately, we found artist Mike Deodato, Jr. down in Joao Pessoa, Brazil. He was excellent with likenesses and magnificent with airbrush color techniques. Every few weeks we'd receive a big FedEx package from him, and it felt like Christmas to open those packages and peruse the pages. It made me very happy. The faith we had in Deodato's talents not only showed in fans's reactions to his work, he went on to become one of the all-time top comics artists at Marvel Comics for decades.

One of my biggest disappointments was when I resigned from Innovation, the company I founded, back in March of 1993. I realized the investment team was looking for a tax write-off to offset other investments they'd made, and they were making deliberate choices to make the company fail. It had reached #4 in market share, with only Marvel, DC, and Dark Horse ahead of us, and they started dismantling pieces of the company in ways I saw would damage it. So sure enough, nine months later they closed their doors.

By that time, I'd written the full scripts for issues #7, #8 and #9, and Deodato had painted a magnificent cover for #7. Sadly, that's as far as the project went. Those three scripts have sat all these years without being drawn.

A lot of fans have asked me, "Why did you adapt the TV episodes instead of writing new stories?" The short answer is: "Because that's what Ron Koslow wanted." He'd already seen two new *BEAUTY AND THE BEAST* stories done by Wendy Pini, and he decided he wanted the series broadcast episodes to be memorialized as painted comics. So we did exactly what

Ron Koslow wanted. Sure, I would have preferred doing new stories, as we were doing with *Dark Shadows* and *Quantum Leap*, but that wasn't our call. I was happy to be publishing *BEAUTY AND THE BEAST* any way I could.

Some fans may not be aware, painter Olivia DeBerardinis painted a magnificent depiction of the characters for an episode of the show, and Innovation published the licensed limited edition poster of that. I have a few of them left that I'm selling on eBay. Also, if someone is looking to fill their comics collection with missing issues, I have a few copies in my personal collection that I can make available, especially the various editions of issue #1.

Did you know *BEAUTY AND THE BEAST* #1 had an autographed special edition of the comic with a poster in the center, that was available only through the Home Shopping Network? That was pretty cool. We flew Mike Deodato up from Brazil, into a snowstorm in West Virginia, to sign the comics. He was painting the third issue, and we met face-to-face for the first time. It was his first experience with snow!

Since that time working on *BEAUTY AND THE BEAST*, Mike Deodato has gone on to draw *Wonder Woman*, *Batman*, *The Avengers*, *Spider-Man* ... just about every major DC and Marvel character. Now he's co-creating and drawing his own projects at a new company called AWA.

As for me... I started Glass House Graphics back in March of 1993 to represent artists from all over the world, and we're going strong 27 years later. I've also gone on to run Glass House Studio animation, do some cartoon character voices, and do a lot more writing. I wrote the book *Stan Lee's How to Draw Comics*, penned a lot of comics series, and am currently writing a six-volume graphic novel series called *GREEK MYTHADVENTURES* for Abdo Publishing for schools, for release next fall. I'm also writing two graphic novel series for Simon & Schuster, *GODDESS GIRLS* and *HEROES IN TRAINING*, that will hit bookstores in 2022.

If anyone's interested, my websites are www.glasshousegraphics.com and www.ghsanimation.com, and I write an occasional blog for artists at davidcampiti.com.