

ASK THE ARTISTS:
PATRICK
WAGNER



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Patrick's unique design work has embellished the stages and showrooms of some of the most prestigious Ventuz gigs worldwide – the Qatar Fifa Bid, the Telstra Showroom in Australia, and many enormous events with royalty in the audience. He is now a freelance Art Director working with other self-employed professionals. We met him a week before his first child was born and spoke about the very unique collaboration concept he is following with his colleagues, and his never-ending love for comics.

Ventuz:

How old were you when you first took a pen to paper?

Patrick:

Tiny, two or three years old. I always loved drawing and painting. As a comic buff, I had a thing for characters and creatures, I read a lot of comic books and drew my first one in fourth grade. One of my heroes is Jamie Hewlett, the guy who created Tank Girl and the band Gorillaz. His style, character design and his approach to

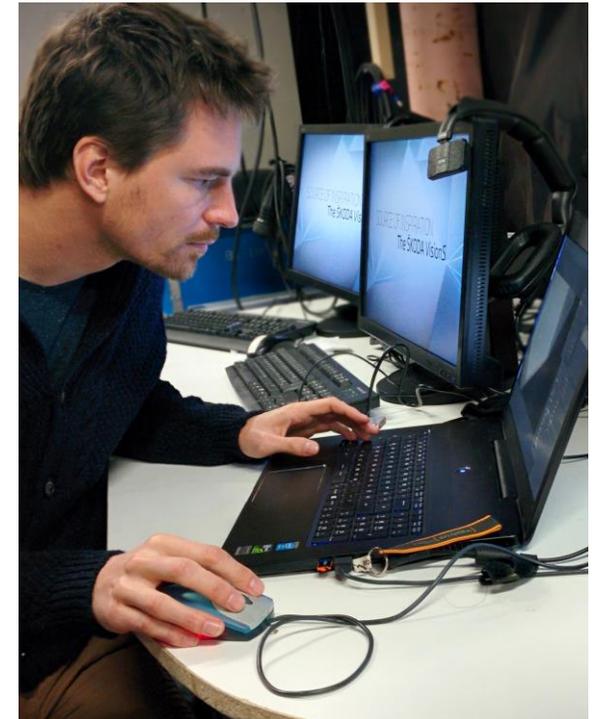
detail have always impressed me.

Ventuz:

How has your love for comics influenced your work?

Patrick:

Comics have always been an integral part of my life. At art school, I was also confronted with other artforms like still life and such. Nonetheless, I found myself tied up in one comic project after the other. That continued at



the media design school MD.H in Munich, where I won a scholarship for a comic I drew. And even to this day, it makes me especially happy when I can do character design or sequential storytelling.

Ventuz:
When did digital design come into your life?

Patrick:
At age eight or ten I started playing around with my father's 286 doing some graphic stuff.

Ventuz:
How did that work?

Patrick:
Not at all, actually. With many workarounds and several days of spare time, using the ASCII codes to build some kind of creature that I would print out on my father's plotter. But other than that, designing on a computer wasn't really my thing, not until art school, not until I needed to reproduce my art and save it digitally. And in that process, I started retouching and beautifying, which quickly evolved into a certain style and a workflow. And by the time I was in media design

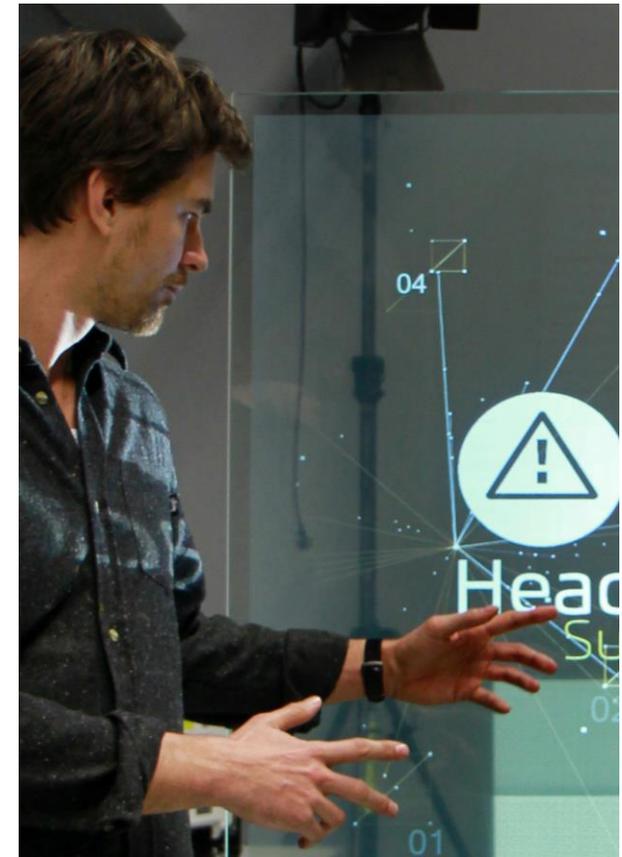
school, there was no way around the computer.

Ventuz:
What was the focus at that school?

Patrick:
We covered a pretty wide area of digital design there, structured into modules that lasted a few weeks each. We started with a module on art theory, there was one about typography, animation, which was Flash animation at the time, 3D design, even an interactive module where I created my very first installation, which I really enjoyed.

Ventuz:
What was it like to venture into the third dimension?

Patrick:
I suppose that everyone who comes from 2D and gets into 3D is stunned to have an additional dimension to work in. The speed with which you can suddenly create spatial objects is amazing. I immediately realized that there would be no going back. The next step was interactivity – the ability not only to create three-dimensional



objects, but to also interact with them, that felt like everything coming together, the supreme discipline.

Ventuz:
So you made it your work.

Patrick:
After some brief one-and-a-half years as a 3d-artist and character designer at D-Facto Motion in Munich, I found Stereolize. On my first day, I hopped on a plain to Dubai, all by myself, two servers in my hand luggage, and joined the team who was already setting up some opening ceremony show in the desert. And with that began my permanently wild seven years of Stereolize.

Ventuz:
And the company introduced you to Ventuz. Can you recall your reaction to the new tool?

Patrick:
I don't remember struggling with it too much. I was in the lucky situation that I was surrounded by a group of people who were experts in a tool that had a very small user base at the time. I learned from the best. Plus, they offered



different approaches – designers, operators and programmers all used Ventuz differently.

Ventuz:
At Stereolize, the density of designers as compared to that of programmers or operators was always very high. How was it for you to work alongside so many other designers?

Patrick:
The results was that designers ended up doing more than design. Although I was hired for layouts, concepts, and styleframes, I quickly began putting together scenes in Ventuz. But I suppose that is also due to the tool and its structure. You have to understand Ventuz to know how to design for it. So, it made sense to fully utilize that skill and also work as an operator. I had to learn many other tools as well and increase my 3d-expertise. That is certainly something I must attribute to my time at Stereolize, the ability to quickly acquire new skills and toolsets.

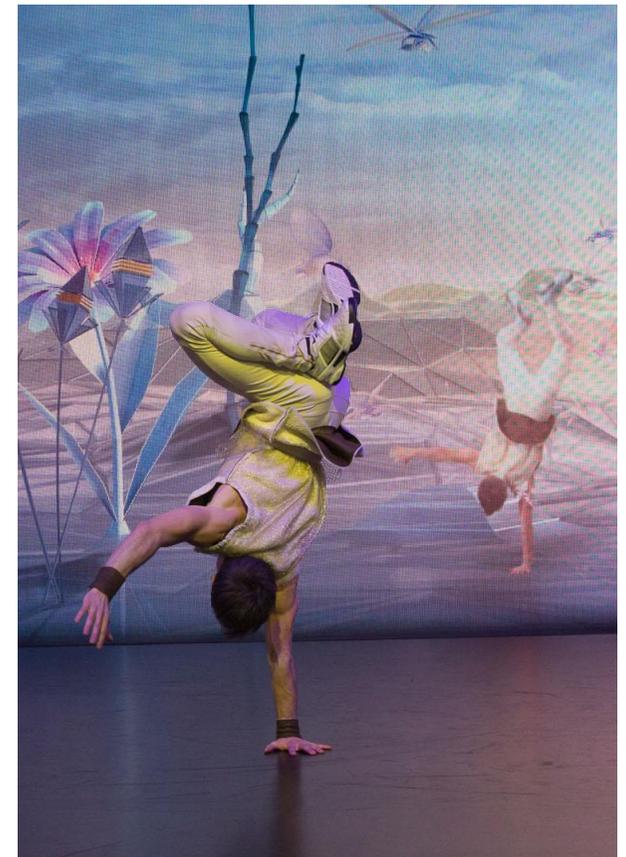
Ventuz:
Eventually, you left Stereolize and became a freelance Art Director and Conceptual Designer, but you are not really working by yourself. Tell us

about your situation.

Patrick:
Well, by the time I set out on my own, some of my former colleagues had already left Stereolize and were freelancing as well. It was not that we planned to start our own endeavor together, but we found each other naturally. We had grown together so immensely during the previous years, it would have been mad not to use that potential. Now we are a pool of freelancers with many different specialties, able to scale up or down depending on each project. And through our network we can also bring in architects, producers, copy writers, sound designers, anything that is required. This concept allows us to stay flexible and free, but it also offers the security of the group.

Ventuz:
How do you get organized as a group?

Patrick:
Whenever a project comes in, we quite naturally distribute the work. We always know who is available, who is interested in the project, which skillsets are required. For example, I am



expecting a baby in a week, so currently I am not taking on any jobs, but with two other designers in the group, every request can be covered. And when I feel that I can return to work, even if only for a few days a week, I can just slide back in.

Ventuz:
Does your group have a name?

Patrick:
Our working title is Guts & Glory Collective, but we don't have a website or Facebook page or anything. So far, we have been lucky in the sense that our customers have found us. So far, there hasn't been the necessity to really get into business development.

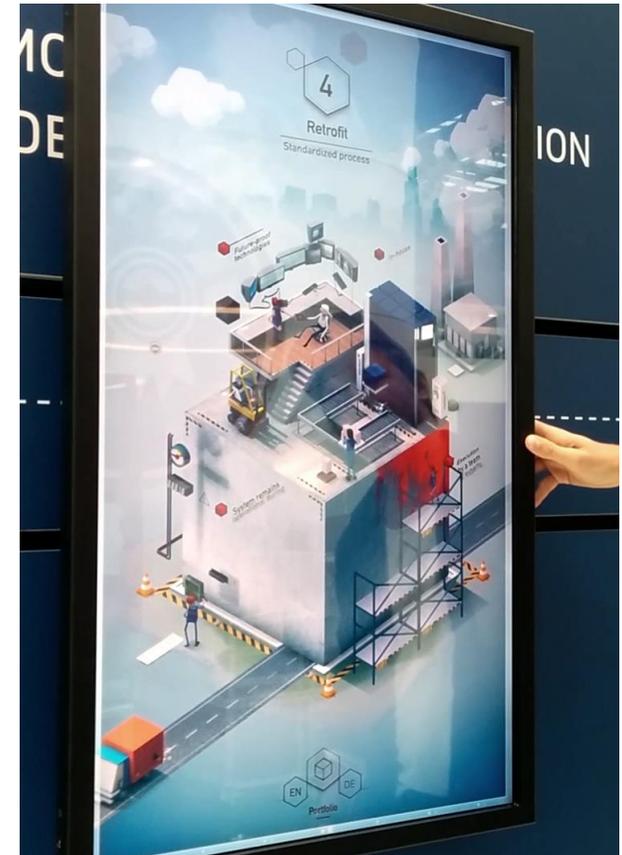
Ventuz:
Who are your customers?

Patrick:
We are often hired by communication agencies to provide the content portion of an event. There, the end customers are usually larger industry or automotive corporations. But we also take on jobs directly from smaller and medium-sized businesses, which is very enjoyable. At first

sight, their products might not look as sexy as a sneaker or a fancy car model. But a stiff industry product can trigger very interesting visualization ideas that you wouldn't have had with a more approachable item.

Ventuz:
What are the kinds of projects you are mostly involved in, and how creative can you get?

Patrick:
A lot of installations for exhibitions and trade shows. Even if the project is not directly planned for an exhibition, the idea is always to repurpose it for a future booth setup. The level of design freedom varies depending on the customer, but we have had some very interesting projects. Just recently, for example, we created an interactive installation using an isometric design. That is a way to use 3D space without a vanishing point, so all objects have the same size, no matter how far in the back of your space they are located. It gives the layout a bit of an abstract, comic-like character – right down my alley. The longer we work with certain clients, the more they trust us to come up with a look that is new, interesting and fits their products. I feel that during the last



years, too many companies have been playing it safe by using especially clean, glowish, what they consider futuristic designs. The result is that everything looks similar and companies are limiting themselves and their messages. If we can, we try to stir that up a bit.

Ventuz:
Even after having left Stereolize, you have never stopped using Ventuz. Why is that?

Patrick:
I had the idea of getting back into classic animation or illustration, but then we were flooded with jobs that needed to be done in real-time. Plus, we know Ventuz so well, that even for jobs that could be created with other software tools, we often choose Ventuz. A few months ago, we created an explanatory movie for a product. Our concept was inspired by these clips where you can see hands drawing while a speaker explains something. We did the same thing, but on a touch screen using an interactive Ventuz application. We could have done the same thing by filming the hands in front of greenscreen and adding the digital content in After Effects. But for us, it was much easier and



more authentic to create the entire project in Ventuz and film the person while using the application. Plus, the application is there and can be repurposed at upcoming events.

Ventuz:
Is there anything you would really like to get into in the future?

Patrick:
At the collective, we have been trying to explore

more cultural projects, like installations for cities, museums or concerts. The idea is that we can express even more creative freedom there and address a different audience.

Ventuz:
Have you been doing art in your spare time?

Patrick:
Not as much as I would like. Especially because I need to shut the computer off at some point

during the day. But currently I am working on an oil painting, my first time working with oil. It is a lot of fun. You can create some amazing effects using the scraper, so I am experimenting a lot. Other than that, I am concentrating on that baby-project that is starting next week. Maybe taking some time off for that will give me the chance to work on some private doodles or concepts.

Visit [Patrick's website](#).





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