

Alejandro Bruzzese is a New York City-based artist whose body of work demonstrates an incredible breadth of technique and imagination. From two-headed mutant superhero girls to avant-garde single-panel science-fantasy comics, he does it all! Check out his [website](#), his awesome [newsletter](#) (a direct influence on my own) as well as his [tumblr](#), [instagram](#), and [twitter](#). And without any further ado, let's jump into the interview and find out what makes him tick!



Logan: So you've been making art for quite a while. You regularly post work you did years and years ago and you've stated that you've "worked in film, art installation, and the tech, food, and home goods industries." I'm wondering if you could give an overview of your "journey" as an artist and as a professional?

Alejandro: Gladly! I never had a formal art education, so my journey hasn't exactly been linear. After working in customer service and IT for a few years I began leaning on my skills as an artist professionally in the early 2010s. Most of that has been in-house work as a graphic designer and production artist, as I quickly found out work in the comics field isn't exactly compatible with the cost of living in New York. Production art has been incredibly rewarding as I've often had to jump into mediums and techniques I wasn't familiar with and just figure it out, like art installation, murals, and photography. I also happen to have some extremely gifted friends who work in other creative disciplines, which is how I got the chance to work on various independent films in various capacities (both in front of and behind the camera), and even do concept art for stage lighting, something that had never even occurred to me 'til I got the offer. Comics has never paid

the bills, but I love the medium all the same and after about a five-year hiatus the pandemic got me back into making them frequently. And I've currently got a few project pitches out there, so the journey is To Be Continued...

Logan: One of the first things that really drew me to your art is the way you design outfits- they've got all of the super-saturated goofiness of the Super Friends or old He-Man characters combined with some very modern streetwear touches that make for something truly unique. Is this something you think about consciously or do you have an idea for a character first and the costume comes along naturally from that?

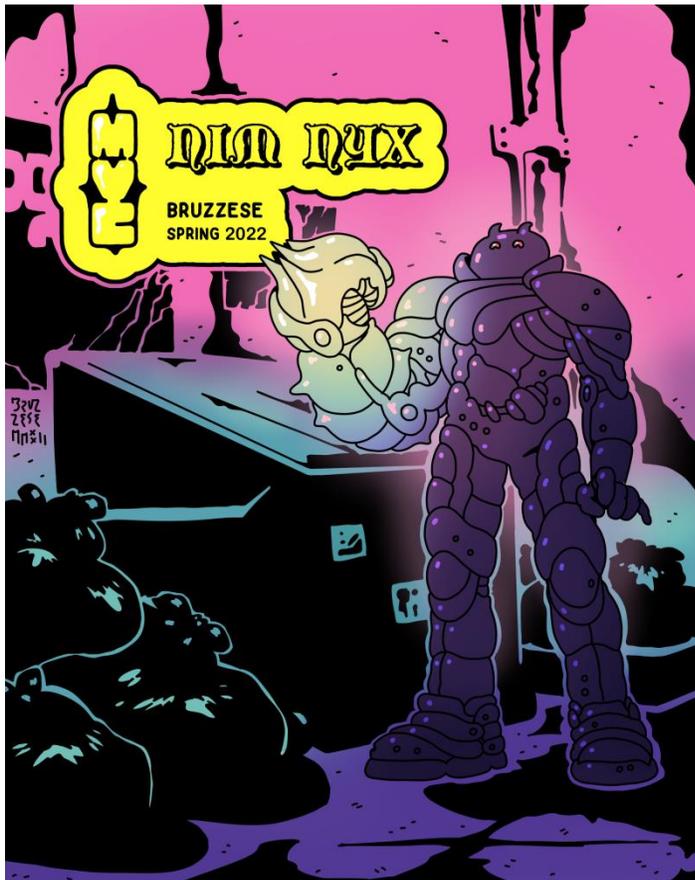


Alejandro: I like that description of the mashed elements! Character concepts for me usually come in the form of a general idea or name. Like "What about a guy who used to be a tough guy henchman, but now he takes care of a flock of sheep? Also he has a crazy axe." and then I do a few sketches to figure out the face, personality, and body type. The outfit comes out of that. I try to fight the instinct to rely on elements & shapes I've used many times before, so I'll often incorporate fashions I see on the street or subway, or even Instagram. There are times when it's outfit first, but that's rare.

Logan: I feel like you have a pretty distinctive style and aside from old cartoons and comics, it's hard for me to pin down your exact influences. Do you have any favorite artists in particular?

Alejandro: I had a period in my early 20s where I consciously absorbed the styles of artists like Mike Mignola, Junko Mizuno, Pete Fowler, Frank Quitely, and R Crumb, and it very much showed in my stuff, but for some time now I've been influenced more by different artists' approaches to their work than their styles*. I've learned about merging art and design from poring over Milton Glaser's stuff, experimental layouts and depicting emotion from Tom Herpich and Joseph Lambert, and a second layer of Mignola influence came with his wisdom about building my art around the things I like to draw. There were also two big long-term collaborations that have been very formative: I refined my storytelling style and sense of humor with Felix Negrón, my oldest friend who's since left the comics game, and working with the late Ralph Niese taught me a ton about drawing dynamic pages, use of color, and character design. Some favorite artists in general are Wayne Barlowe, Andrew MacLean, Lisa Hanawalt, and Tradd Moore.

* The exception to this is that I've been revisiting Herb Trimpe's 90s work, which I loved as a kid but this time I'm really studying it, and lately I find myself mimicking some of the incredible baroque forms and expressions he used in that era.

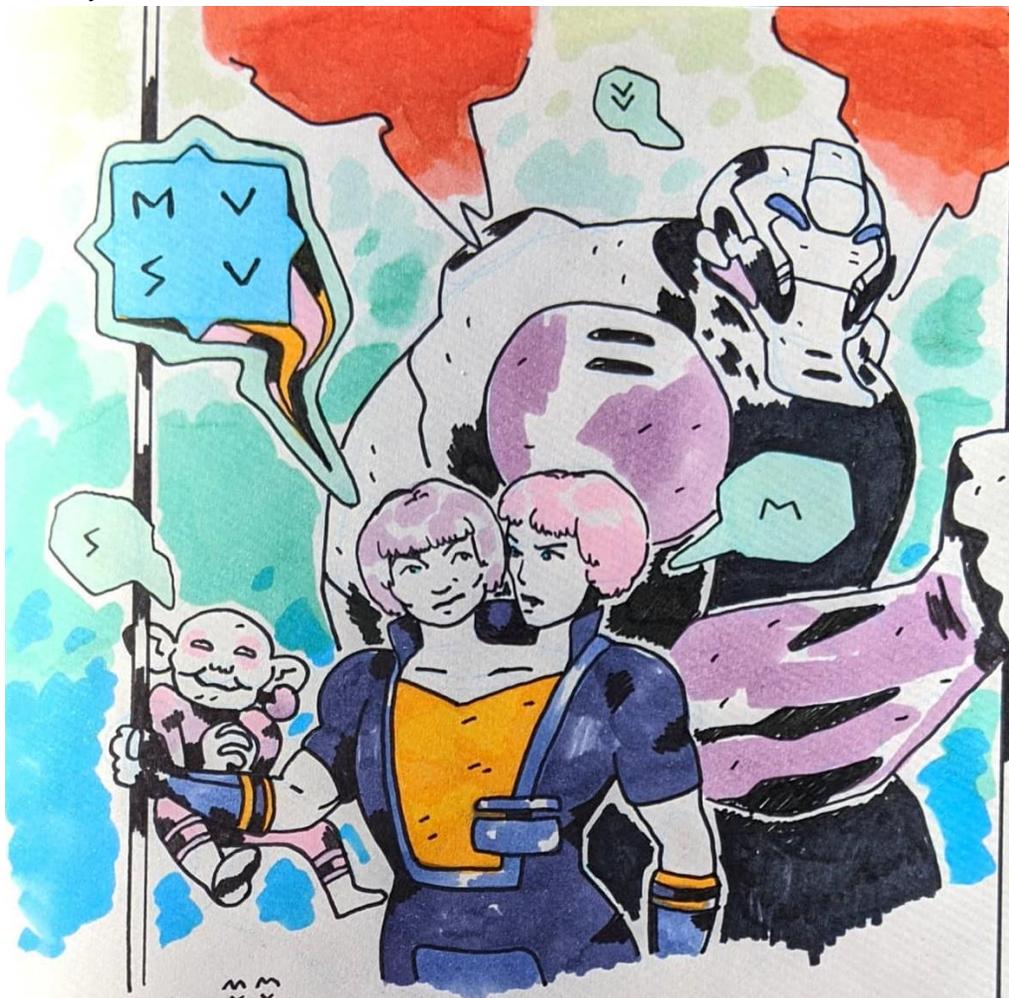


Logan: I've noticed you talk a lot online about music you enjoy and the influence it has on your drawings. Do you play any instruments? (Or are there any instruments you wish you could play?)

Alejandro: I dabble with the keyboard, kalimba, ukulele, and a type of Uruguayan drum called a tambor. I have periods where I return to my instruments, but I've never practiced music with the same discipline I apply to visual art. But I'd love to properly learn the piano and singing, and to have a bananas multi-synth set up.

Logan: What's your dream art project? Comic book, tv series, movie, novel, etc.

Alejandro: As far as comics I'd love to be able to make a living chipping away at the ol' magnum opus I've had in my head since I was a teenager. You know, give it like two decades of my life and then disappear! And I'd be all over the place as a filmmaker. From making stuff based on my own work to adapting Gilgamesh to surrealism to love stories. I love movies so much and wouldn't be able to contain myself to a single dream project, success permitting. The other dream would be writing a proper novel. I've written some short stories, so it's not so unlikely. It's more an issue of time and dedication.



Logan: Thype or Power Lords- which [forgotten old Wayne Barlowe project](#) would you revive?

Alejandro: Oh, man! Fantastic question. I find the world of Thype so compelling, but it seems like the type of thing Barlowe himself should do, assuming he still has the interest. I want to see HIS vision and personally don't think anyone else could do it justice. As for Power Lords, lemme tell you - When the revival toys came out I lobbied hard to be the artist, should a tie in comic manifest, but it never did. Before that I ran Power Lord fan art contests on Deviant Art, and when Toy Galaxy recently did a video on the toy line I tweet-shouted about being the comic book guy all over again. So yeah, whoever has the rights, lemme do a Power Lords.

Logan: Favorite book?

Alejandro: Oh damn. I'd have to do top five for fiction, which would be, in no specific order: Eka Kurniawan's Man Tiger, Jenny Hval's Paradise Rot, Patrick Suskind's Perfume (also adapted into a great movie), Mary Shelly's Frankenstein (the version I know is the 1818 text), and Stephen Mitchell's translation of Gilgamesh. For non fiction it's Peter Godfrey-Smith's Other Minds, which I recommend for any artist or writer tackling alien intelligence in their stories, and really anything by Dr. Oliver Sacks, but especially The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat.



Logan: Anything else you want to say? Any questions for me?

Alejandro: Well, you know this, but I want to say so publicly: I'm a big fan of your newsletter and your website. I love seeing you take this whole different approach to being an Artist on the Internet and I always look forward to your new initiatives there and, of course, on the actual artistic side. Thanks for allowing me to be a part of it!

But let me ask you: What Barlowe project would YOU like to resurrect or be involved in?

Logan: Oh man! That's a tough one. I think I would actually like to do some Thype stuff. Obviously I'm nowhere close to Barlowe's level, artisitically, but the world feels so expansive and is so right-up-my-alley aesthetically that I think it might be fun to take a crack at designing some characters that could live there.

As to what I would resurrect? Honestly I'd like to see him do [paleoart](#) again. No one else I can think of has ever made dinosaurs feel simultaneously so real and so bizarre. I love James Gurney, I love Zdeněk Burian, but Barlowe is always going to be my number one dino guy. Aside from that I'd love to get another illustrated book from him. He's been dropping hints [here](#) and [there](#) for a couple years about a project called "Cryptozoo" that seems like it would be ideal for the classic "Barlowe's Guide" format or as a spiritual successor to *Expedition*. Apparently he's trying to pitch it as a movie which makes absolutely no sense to me, but I guess we'll see what happens.

On a somewhat related note, we're unbelievably spoiled/lucky that Barlowe is pretty much the only illustrator of his era I can think of that is:

- a. Consistently making new art
- b. Sharing it online for people to see
- c. Not posting shitty political takes

Again the only real comparison is James Gurney who is great but whose only new art seems to be technically competent but not particularly interesting plein air paintings. Blah blah, rant over, I love Wayne.