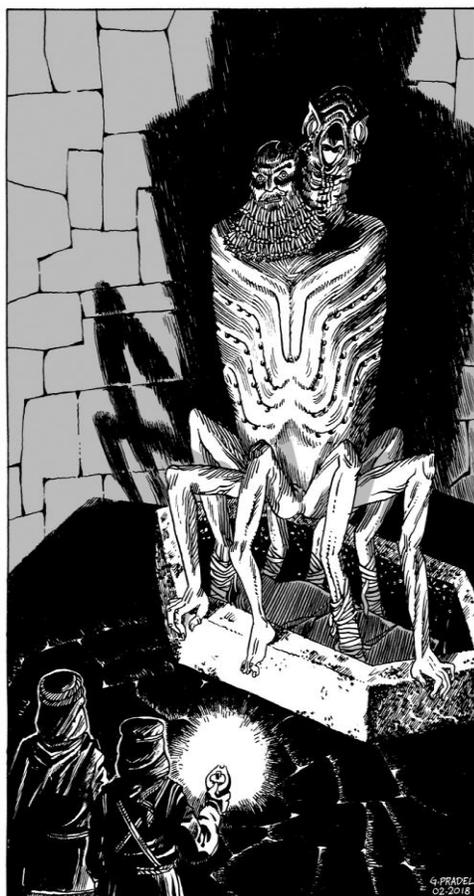


Guy Pradel is a prolific illustrator and cartoonist from Strasbourg, France. His work spans the breadth of science fiction, fantasy, and more in the great tradition of *bandes dessinée*. You can see his art on his own lovely [website](#), as well as on [twitter](#) or [instagram](#). Today, he has agreed to sit down and answer some questions for me!

**Logan:** So we're going to start off with something a little bit different. I don't know if you know this, but I first found your art in 2018 when you did this [awesome adaptation](#) of Clark Ashton Smith's "The Tomb-Spawn." I'm a huge huge Clark Ashton Smith fan (read every one of his short stories) so I gotta ask: What's your favorite Smith story (aside from "The Tomb-Spawn")? And how do you think he stacks up against the other two big names from *Weird Tales*: H. P. Lovecraft and Robert E. Howard?



LE FRUIT DU TOMBEAU

**Guy:** My mom gifted me a Clark Ashton Smith book for Christmas and at the time I was looking for things to draw. I was struck by the strong visual qualities of his writing.

I never read Howard, but I read some Lovecraft back in high school. I never was a huge fan. I think Smith is a better writer than HP, more diverse in his narration techniques. And if Smith had some problems of his own (he certainly have a weird way to look at other cultures, heavily tainted by orientalism) he feel less overtly racist, which is something. Not much, but something.

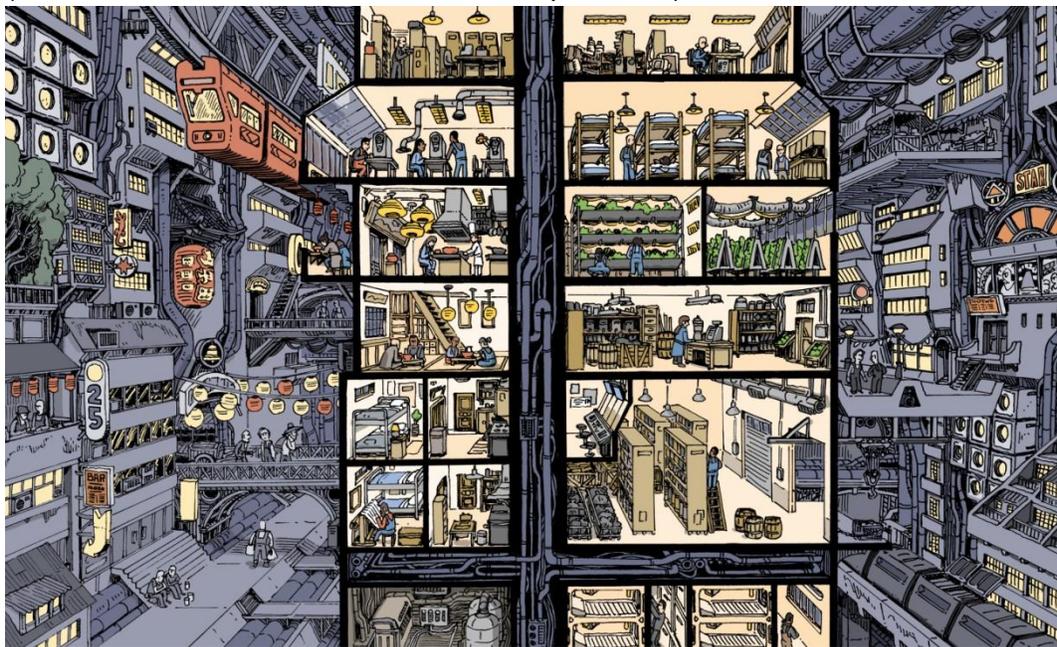
**Logan:** Alright now for the more standard question I always have to ask: Who are your favorite artists and what are your general sources of inspiration?

**Guy:** I always have trouble answering that kind of question, but I will try to do my best. Nausicaa is one of my favorite comics, it should be everyone's. Miyazaki doing comics is a real treat.

Jaime Hernandez is amazing too, but not that well known in France, sadly. Tardi I like a lot as well, especially Adèle Blanc-Sec. Shigeru Mizuki, Tezuka, Morris, Franquin if you need more dead guys. As for younger people in comic I look up to, there is a lot, Simon Roy (**Editor's Note: Simon if you're reading this I'm going to ask you for an interview at some point so head's up**) I've been following for years, Tillie Walden, Artyom Trakhanov, Linnea Sterte, Erwann Surcouf, Kamome Shirahama, Iô Kuroda, Tanquerelle, Mortis Ghost, Tarmaz, Benjamin Adam, the list goes on.

I owe a lot to Giovanni Battista Piranèse and his etchings. Félix Vallotton is another artist whom I love.

As for writers, Ursula K. Le Guin is maybe my favorite, I harass all my friends to read at least one of her short stories. I'm currently reading the Aubrey–Maturin series by Patrick O'Brian (the books Master and Commander is adapted from) and it's a feat of historical fiction.



**Logan:** You have kind of an insane breadth of mastery over different media: traditional pen and ink, paint, markers, digital, even papercraft and [person-size heraldic banners](#). Do you feel equally competent using all these different tools, or do you have a preferred way of working?

**Guy:** The banners were a project with Central Vapeur, a local small press & illustration festival. We asked 29 other illustrators to draw their own and had a parade in the streets of Strasbourg!

I like to do things differently from time to time. Back in art school I was trying all sorts of

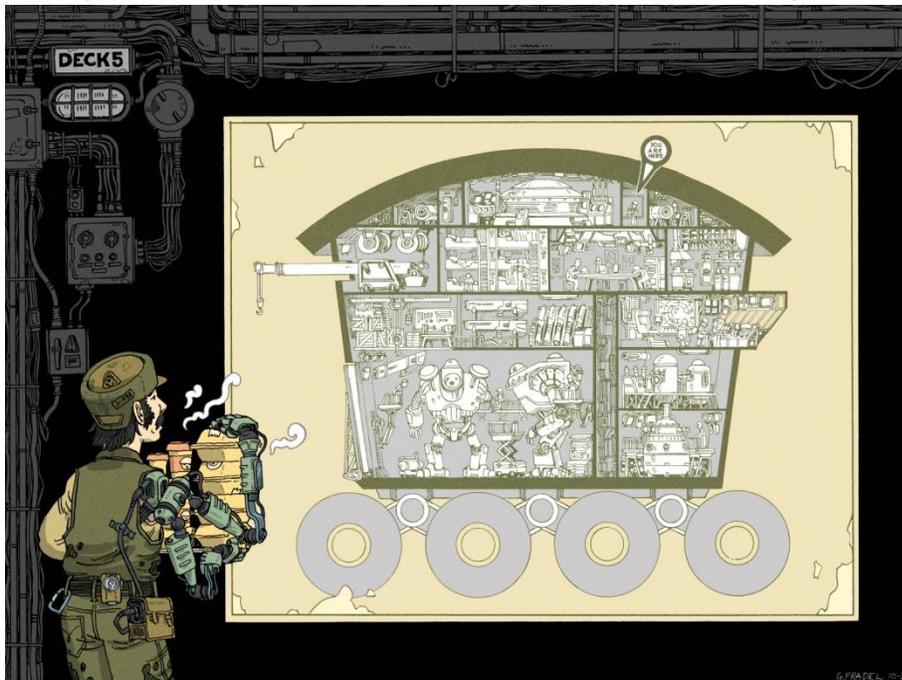
mediums but I've kind of lost touch with them since then, with drawing and comics in the way. I'm not equally competent, and I will crawl back to pen and ink after adventuring in other media. That's exactly how I feel about blender right now. I think artists should at least get a basic knowledge of other media outside of their comfort zones.

**Logan: What's your "journey" been like as an artist? How long have you been drawing, how did you learn, and are you strictly a professional artist right now or is it more of a secondary job?**

**Guy:** After high school I spent 5 years in a small provincial Art school, I did 3 months of Erasmus in Katowice, Poland. As the last year was coming to an end, I realized I was not happy with what I had learned and done. I was also really dissatisfied with the contemporary art market and environment; I still feel like books are a way more democratic and accessible way to make art and put it in the hands of people. Zines are even better. So I decided to spend more time in *another* art school, the Art Décoratifs de Strasbourg. They have an illustration and comics class there. I did my first collective zines, learned screen-printing, page layout, and made a lot of really good friends.

While in school I joined [Central Vapeur](#), an illustrators' association, as a member of the artistic direction. We organize a small press and illustration festival once a year, and created a mutual aid network for professional artists.

It's been slow but I feel I'm in a good place as an artist. I make some money, have clients and projects and it's "growing". I have a small paid job I keep to even my income but I see myself as a professional artist, it's what I do of most of my time.



**Logan: What are your goals going forward? Do you have any cool projects coming up or any projects you wish you could work on?**

**Guy:** I still don't have any book of mine printed by a “professional” publisher. It's kind of bothering me.

I'm currently working on “[Ovologie](#)” with [Lola Félin](#), a short comic anthology. She's writing and I'm drawing. The world of Ovologie is really similar from our own, but humans lay eggs. I've drawn a full 24-page story and we will start bothering publishers with it soon. I also have a self-published book in the works, [a compilation of my little architectures](#). And of course, various paid works for clients I have to prioritize to make money. I'm quite lucky, I had a lot of clients from the TTRPG scene asking me for maps and drawings recently, and they are good clients with neat projects. You're familiar with the scene! And I have so many comics projects I should work on! I have a notebook half-full projects at different stages of completion. I miss drawing comics really quickly and I didn't done much in that area lately.

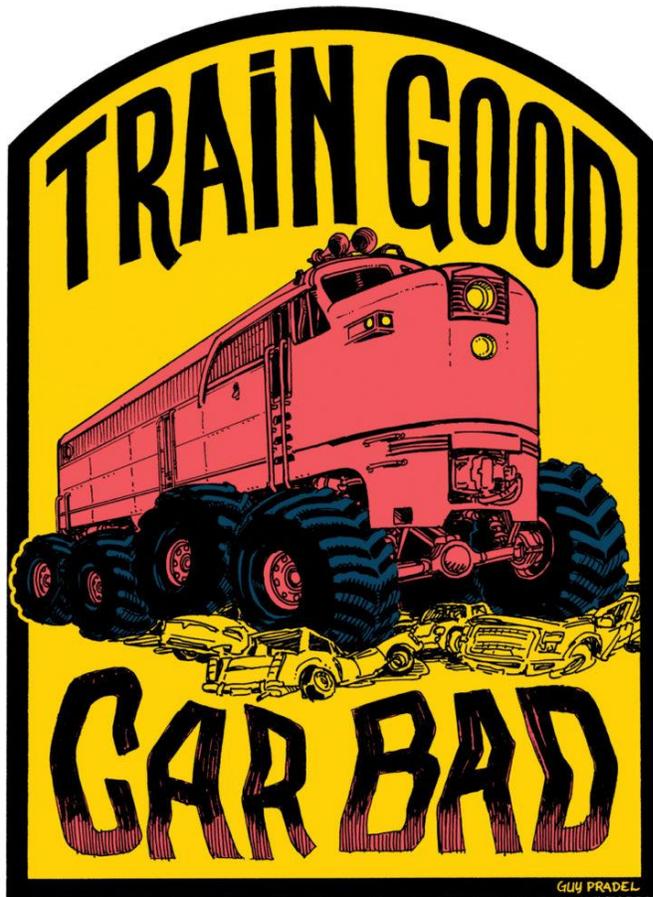
**Logan:** Favorite thing you've ever drawn?

**Guy:** This is a difficult question ! *\*scrolls my own instagram feed\** I'm still quite fond of [this short comic](#) I did for an anthology zine that was never printed.



**Logan: How much do you hate cars?**

Guy: I've been 'pilled by leftist urbanists and the [WTYP](#) podcast, so I hate them quite a lot. To be more serious, I hate the way they shape our world, not only with climate change but also how they shape our cities, our everyday lives. **(Editor's note: FTL Musings is a proud anti-car publication and wholeheartedly supports this message)**



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

**Guy:** Well first, thanks for the interview, it's a tough exercise but it's interesting to sit and think about your own career from time to time.

I'd like to ask you if you have a medium you'd like to work in? Banners maybe?

And what have you read that you liked recently?

**Logan:** I'd like to mess around in pretty much any other medium aside from pen and ink at this point since it's what I do for 100% of my work lately. But specifically I'd really like to do some oil painting. I was taking a class on it from late 2018 until mid-2020 and I *loved* it, but it was a little expensive and I haven't been able to go back since. I still have

all the paints and brushes but it's one of those things where it's just really difficult to make time for it if I don't have some kind of weekly class structure, sadly.

As for your second question: I actually read LeGuin's *Left Hand of Darkness* a couple months back and loved it! I think I avoided her work for too long because I tried to read *Earthsea* multiple times since childhood and never really got into it, but *Left Hand* was great and so was *The Lathe of Heaven* which I read a few years back. I absolutely need to dig] into more of her stuff.

I'm currently reading *Player Piano* by Kurt Vonnegut and really enjoying it. You can tell it's his first novel, there are definitely some very on-the-nose sections that I think older Vonnegut would've been able to handle with more subtlety but overall engaging and still very relevant and I find myself relating to it a bit too much. (For perhaps too deep an insight into my psyche and also a spoiler for the book, the main character is an engineer deeply dissatisfied with his work because he feels completely irrelevant to it and his skills are far too specialized to be useful in any other situation.)